

IN TOUCH

REVIEW 2022/23

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS
OF OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGY



From the CEO

Ken Welsh

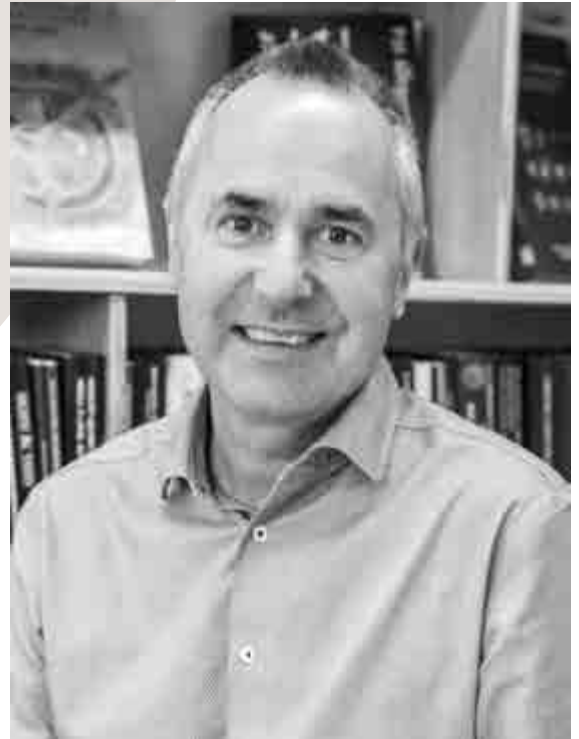
Hello and welcome to the annual review edition of In Touch in which we look back at the amazing work we have carried out over the previous year. In this edition, you can read about some of the sites we have had the privilege to investigate, including the discovery of a large flint scatter of middle Mesolithic date (c 8000 BC) in Northamptonshire. Such sites are rare and provide opportunity to really advance our standing of our hunter gatherer past. Flintwork of a later date, the Neolithic (the time of the first farmers) featured elsewhere with the discovery of beautiful leaf-shaped arrowheads in both Norfolk and Suffolk

Leaping forward in time, at a site near Newark, we uncovered the remains, in the form of more than 70 well-preserved kilns, of a previously unknown centre of Roman pottery production. The Romans featured prominently at a many other sites including Begbroke, near Oxford, and Alconbury and Wintringham in Cambridgeshire. At the last site, the remains of a probable shrine was excavated, producing a number of unusual finds, such as miniature brooches, glass vessels and a miniature pot.

We also had the opportunity to investigate sites of later date. At Eye in Suffolk, we excavated an Anglo-Saxon cemetery, dating to the 5th and 6th centuries AD. An extraordinary array of grave goods, evocative of the era, was recovered, including a sword, shields, beads and brooches. As a result of the excavation and post-excavation techniques employed, it was also possible to recover a range of textile remains, providing an insight into the daily lives of the inhabitants of Eye, some 1,500 years ago.

As well as digging the stuff up, we have also been busy telling people about our discoveries and you will be able to read about the range of outreach and educational activities we have been involved in, including events and talks in Lancashire, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire and elsewhere, working with communities and our clients to deliver public benefit.

This year has been a special for us for other reasons, with 2023 marking, as it does, the 50th anniversary of Oxford Archaeology! Since our formation in 1973 (as the Oxfordshire Archaeology Unit), archaeological research and the public



benefit that derives from it have been at the core of what we do. In keeping with this, we have, this year, launched a revamped website and, alongside it, our new Knowledge Hub which allows us to showcase our reports, publications, research and stories of great finds and sites. The Knowledge Hub will provide ways for a wide range of different audiences to access our work.

To mark the occasion, in the centre section of this edition you'll find a brief history of OA and a small selection of highlights from the last 50 years of our work. We have, over the years, worked on so many incredible projects that choosing just a few was almost impossible – I apologise to anyone who disagrees with selection made as there are dozens of equally-deserving projects that could have been featured!

We don't work in a vacuum and the anniversary also provides us with the chance to thank our partners, clients, curators, consultants and all the others we have worked with over the years. And, absolutely at the core of our success has always been our staff! Without their skill, expertise, dedication and passion there would be no Oxford Archaeology. So, I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone who ever worked for us, past and present – without you, none of it would have been possible! ■

In This Issue

HIGHLIGHTS 2022-23

DIDCOT, OXFORDSHIRE	4
WORT'S CAUSEWAY, CAMBRIDGE	5
NEWARK-ON-TRENT, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	6
NORTHAMPTON NORTHERN RELIEF ROAD	8
BEGBROKE, OXFORDSHIRE	9
HORNSEA PROJECT 3, NORFOLK	10
ASTON, OXFORDSHIRE	11
ALCONBURY WEALD, CAMBRIDGESHIRE	12
UFFINGTON WHITE HORSE, OXFORDSHIRE	13
HAMPTON COURT PALACE	14



50 YEARS OF OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY	16
CUMWHITTON, CUMBRIA	22
FRAMEWORK ARCHAEOLOGY AND TERMINAL 5	24
FROMELLES, NORTHERN FRANCE	26
PRIORS HALL, CORBY	28
WESTGATE AND THE ORIGINS OF OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY	30
50 YEARS OF PUBLICATION	32
WINTRINGHAM, ST NEOTS, CAMBRIDGESHIRE	36



MORE HIGHLIGHTS 2022-23

EYE, SUFFOLK	38
SNAPSHOTS	39
NEWS & UPDATES	
COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY & OUTREACH	40
TALKING ABOUT OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY	42
OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE NEWS	43
RESEARCH SEMINARS	43
KNOWLEDGE HUB	44
OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY IN PRINT	44
WHO IS OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY?	47
WHERE WE WORKED IN 2022-2023	48



Didcot, Oxfordshire

Gerry Thacker

In early 2023 staff from the Oxford office carried out a second phase of excavation on land north-east of Didcot for RPS on behalf of Cala Homes. In 2019 we excavated around a hectare of the site, which revealed a series of potential planting rows, or perhaps drainage channels, which extended either side of a boundary ditch and, as appears to be the norm for such features, yielded only scraps of pottery with a broadly Roman date.

The latest phase of excavation was a tale of two sites: a gravel ridge running along the north, which gave way to heavy clays to the south. We naturally anticipated more Roman archaeology, but a series of prehistoric features were instead located exclusively on the gravels, including a pit of Beaker date and a small cremation cemetery. More intriguing perhaps was a cluster of pits that were all sealed by a single silty layer yielding prehistoric pottery. One pit contained an almost complete sheep (or goat) skeleton, another most of a cow, and two others held possible dumps of ashes from a hearth or fire. In between these was a small grave containing the human remains of a juvenile individual.

Another interesting discovery was a possible sunken-featured building with a stone hearth or oven. Given the proximity of the Saxon centre at Long Wittenham, we initially assumed a similar date. However, the pottery from the feature has been dated to the late Bronze Age (1200–700 BC), possibly extending into the early Iron Age (700–300 BC).

A trackway or droveway, defined by parallel ditches of possible early Roman date (AD 43–120),

extended across the gravel ridge within the north of the site. Towards the east the trackway ditch spurred off to the south and ran parallel with the previously identified planting rows, perhaps indicating that they were of similar date. A series of boundary ditches also appear to have been fairly early in date, with large quantities of finds suggestive of an adjacent settlement (perhaps to the west). Large gravel quarry pits were located just to the south of the trackway and may have been used to provide material for a metalled surface, patches of which survived in a few areas. A well containing Roman pottery and wood fragments was also revealed to the west of the quarry.

Later in the Roman period, the southern trackway ditch was recut and a series of rectangular enclosures were added, extending to the south. They may mark a change in agricultural strategy, shifting away from the arable crops grown in association with the planting rows and perhaps towards a more pastoral focus.

Later still, a small inhumation cemetery was established within the enclosed area. It comprised five burials, of which three were broadly aligned north–south and two east–west. They seemingly respected the alignment of the trackway and field systems, though one grave had been cut into an enclosure ditch.

We will return to the area to complete further programmes of excavation and we look forward to seeing what else will be revealed about Didcot's past. ■



Overview of the site

Wort's Causeway, Cambridge

Emily Abrehart, Matt Edwards, & Laura Mitchell

In 2022 a team from the Cambridge office excavated a 6ha-site on the southern edge of Cambridge, between Wort's Causeway and Babraham Road, for Orion Heritage on behalf of This Land. The site lies on the edge of the Gog Magog Hills, a series of low chalk hills south-east of Cambridge, and adjacent to the extensively excavated Addenbrookes landscape. Preceding geophysical survey and trial-trench evaluation in 2015 established the presence of a Bronze Age field system and potential settlement remains represented by pits and postholes.

After just a day or so of machining along the western edge of the development site, in an area where little archaeology was expected, a small cluster of five inhumation and five cremation burials (two of which were urned) was revealed! Stratigraphically, it was clear that the inhumations were later than the cremations, with the burial of a child having partially removed one of the urned cremations. All the inhumations were laid out in a crouched position, with one of the grave cuts being noticeably bigger and deeper than the others. The two cremation urns have been provisionally dated to the middle Bronze Age, suggesting that the inhumations date from the middle to late Bronze Age.

At this point we thought that we had found a small cemetery. However, after cleaning the area around the burials, we found that there was a ditch encircling the group. We then realised we had discovered a barrow, with the larger inhumation burial right at its centre. The barrow itself measured just 7m in diameter with the ditch averaging 1m wide and 0.5m deep. Three more crouched burials were found cut through the backfill of the barrow ditch, including one adult male who had been deliberately covered with stones. Surrounding the barrow was a large amorphous natural feature that contained a further 11 burials (including three infants), bringing our total to 19 inhumations and five cremations.

It initially appeared than none of the inhumation burials had associated grave goods. However, one crouched burial within the natural feature, south of the barrow, contained two mysterious black circular objects near the head. After discussion with specialists these were identified as artefacts confusingly known as 'napkin rings', which are in fact shale or jet ear stretchers. These rare examples of personal adornment are usually only found in Scotland and northern England and are thought to date from the early Bronze Age. Furthermore,



Above: burial of adult male covered with stones; below: the barrow under excavation



cleaning of the stone-covered adult male revealed another pair of smaller, slightly different shale/jet ear plugs lodged within the skull. A similar shale/jet artefact associated with a burial (and barrow) discovered at Hinxton, roughly 10 miles to the south, could suggest some wider regional interaction and potential topics for further study.

While post-excavation work is still ongoing, we are starting to make sense of the stratigraphy of the barrow, its phases of use, and how it fit into the wider prehistoric landscape. ■

Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire

Adam Tinsley

For much of 2022 and throughout 2023, most of the Lancaster office's field team has been engaged at one site: the Middlebeck development in Newark-on-Trent, carrying out archaeological investigations on behalf of Urban and Civic plc, and working in collaboration with their consultant RPS Heritage, in advance of large-scale residential development.

Initially, a programme of fieldwalking was conducted to prospect for lithics (such as worked flint), specifically those belonging to the Late Upper Palaeolithic (LUP; 14,000–11,000 years before present). The teams recovered flints primarily of Mesolithic–Bronze Age date (10,000–700 BC), suggesting a focus upon the wetland margins of the River Trent and River Devon. Test pits and trenches were investigated across the wider wetland landscape of the 250ha site, revealing isolated lithic artefacts and small probably undisturbed lithic scatters, with most flints attributed to later prehistoric periods. Pit-like features containing burnt hazelnut shells, flints, and pottery of probable Neolithic date (4000–2400 BC), were also encountered, but there was, alas, no signs of the elusive LUP.

Alongside the evaluation of the wetland zone, we have been carrying out targeted excavations in several areas across the wider development site. These began with Area 5, where the team uncovered an Iron Age (700 BC–AD 43) or Roman (AD 43–410) ditched enclosure and associated features that occupied a ridge of higher ground.

Excavation of one of the larger and more complex areas (Area 1), a 7.5ha site located on the eastern bank of the River Devon, began in November last year. We uncovered a series of probable late Iron Age postholes (100 BC–AD 43), ditches, and gullies that appear to have been superseded by numerous large-scale ditched occupation areas and field systems of Roman date. An array of discrete features were recorded, including 73 remarkably well-preserved pottery kilns. They represent a pottery production centre that had until now been absent from the archaeological record. Unsurprisingly, we recovered some 70,000 pottery sherds, with early indications suggesting that much of the assemblage comprises standard grey ware belonging to the 2nd century AD. We also identified potential domestic working areas including small ovens and numerous postholes and pits suggestive of structures.

The excavations also revealed several early medieval features characteristic of sunken-featured buildings. Pottery and several antler combs have initially been dated to the 5th–9th centuries AD. It appears



Left and below: two of the excavated kilns in Area 1; note the pottery in the kiln below. Bottom: kilns under excavation



that one of the possible Anglo-Saxon buildings was constructed at the end of a 30m-long array of postholes arranged in three parallel lines. Little material evidence was recovered from the posthole alignment and so its date and function currently remain uncertain.

Some evidence of funerary activity was discovered across the area, comprising an intact crouched burial, a supine (face-upwards) burial disturbed by a Roman ditch, and three neonate burials found around Roman structures. The burials are currently undated but are likely to be late prehistoric or Roman in date based on the site stratigraphy.

Investigation of second area (Area 2) revealed a smaller array of ditched enclosures that appear to have replaced a pit alignment on the ridge of high ground. A small assemblage of potentially middle Iron Age 'scored ware' (300–100 BC) was recovered from the ditch sequences, suggesting that the pit alignment was of early Iron Age or perhaps Bronze Age date.

Another area of extensive Iron Age and Roman settlement was uncovered further to the south (Area 6). In contrast to the industrial focus of Area 1, it comprised ditched enclosures and field systems with a clear domestic and agricultural focus. Excavations also partially revealed at least one substantial stone-built dwelling of possible medieval or even Roman date. The area also contains a further three Roman pottery kilns, a series of oven features, and now an intriguing stone-lined pit, currently under investigation but of as yet unknown function.

In Area 7, we identified several features of unknown but probable Iron Age date. Excavation of Area 4 revealed a ditched enclosure and a series of Iron Age pits, one containing the remains of a large quern stone associated with probable middle Iron Age 'scored ware' pottery. Area 3 uncovered the remains of another small, ditched enclosure. Unexpectedly, it was not Iron Age in origin, but instead related to the Civil War period (1642–1651), producing a single well-dated belt buckle from a terminus slot. A further excavation area targeted the location of the former Hawton Hall, where we uncovered the poorly preserved foundations of the hall and various outbuildings and garden features. We successfully confirmed its late medieval and Civil War origins and identified later post-medieval additions. ■



Northampton Northern Relief Road

Steve Lawrence, Andy Simmonds, & Mike Donnelly



Hand excavation of grid squares

A team from the Oxford office spent a large part of 2022 excavating several sites for Balfour Beatty ahead of the construction of West Northamptonshire Council's new relief road on the north-west outskirts of Northampton. Five separate sites were excavated, one of which revealed an important Mesolithic flint scatter (10,000–4000 BC) with a Neolithic element (4000–2400 BC). The remaining excavation areas revealed evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement, land division, and agriculture, with only a single pit containing part of an early Bronze Age Collared Urn (2400–1600 BC) suggestive of activity in the intervening period.

The Mesolithic site was located on the edge of the current floodplain west of the Brampton Nene, a branch of the River Nene, on what would have been a slightly elevated sandy spur at the confluence of the river and a smaller tributary valley to the west. The flint scatter survived in a wind-blown silt deposit, 15–20cm thick, with little evidence of any post-depositional disturbance or movement of the flint artefacts.

Initial collection and plotting of surface finds indicated that the scatter covered an area measuring approximately 100m by 50m, and so the development was redesigned to preserve most of the site in situ. Detailed investigation covered an area c 30m by 25m and was designed to home in and focus on individual scatters and artefact densities. This resulted in the hand-collection of 7000 struck flints, with the total expected to increase

by a further 10,000 pieces once all the soil samples have been processed. Within the flint scatter were a number of hearths, represented by concentrations of burnt flint and charred remains.

The flints include pieces characteristic of a classic middle Mesolithic phase known as Honey Hill after the type-site, which is located only 12km to the north near Naseby. During this time, communities switched to a more advanced technology using very small flint tools known as microliths. Only a handful of Honey Hill sites have been investigated and the relief road site has produced by far the largest assemblage, analysis of which will enable us to refine our understanding of changes in technology during this period. The flint assemblage also includes a smaller component of Neolithic flint artefacts, such as knives, arrowheads, and scrapers, which could represent a more dispersed domestic occupation site or midden area, demonstrating the continued importance and use of this landscape.

A sequence of large intercutting palaeochannels (former river channels) was located just to the east of the flint scatter and the excavation of a large, stepped trench for a new drainage culvert facilitated safe recording and environmental sampling of this sequence. It is hoped that the dating of the channels and the identification of preserved palaeoenvironmental material will provide an insight into the environment at the time the flints were deposited. ■

Begbroke, Oxfordshire

Stuart Foreman

In early 2023 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by King Technical Consultancy, on behalf of Oxford University Developments, to undertake a trial-trench evaluation at Begbroke Innovation District, a proposed expansion of Begbroke Science Park. The site lies within the historic parishes of Begbroke and Yarnton, near Oxford, situated upon on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace and the floodplains of the Rowell Brook. The site is located within a landscape where extensive evidence of prehistoric and Romano-British occupation has been found, and geophysical surveys identified the high potential for archaeological remains on site.

The first stage of trenching revealed evidence of settlement dating to the mid-late Roman period (AD 120–410), most notably in the form of two broadly contemporary contemporary farmsteads or settlements of complex form. Each of the two enclosed settlements occupied a roughly 4ha area and was characterised by interior enclosure systems that seem to have been reorganised multiple times during their use.

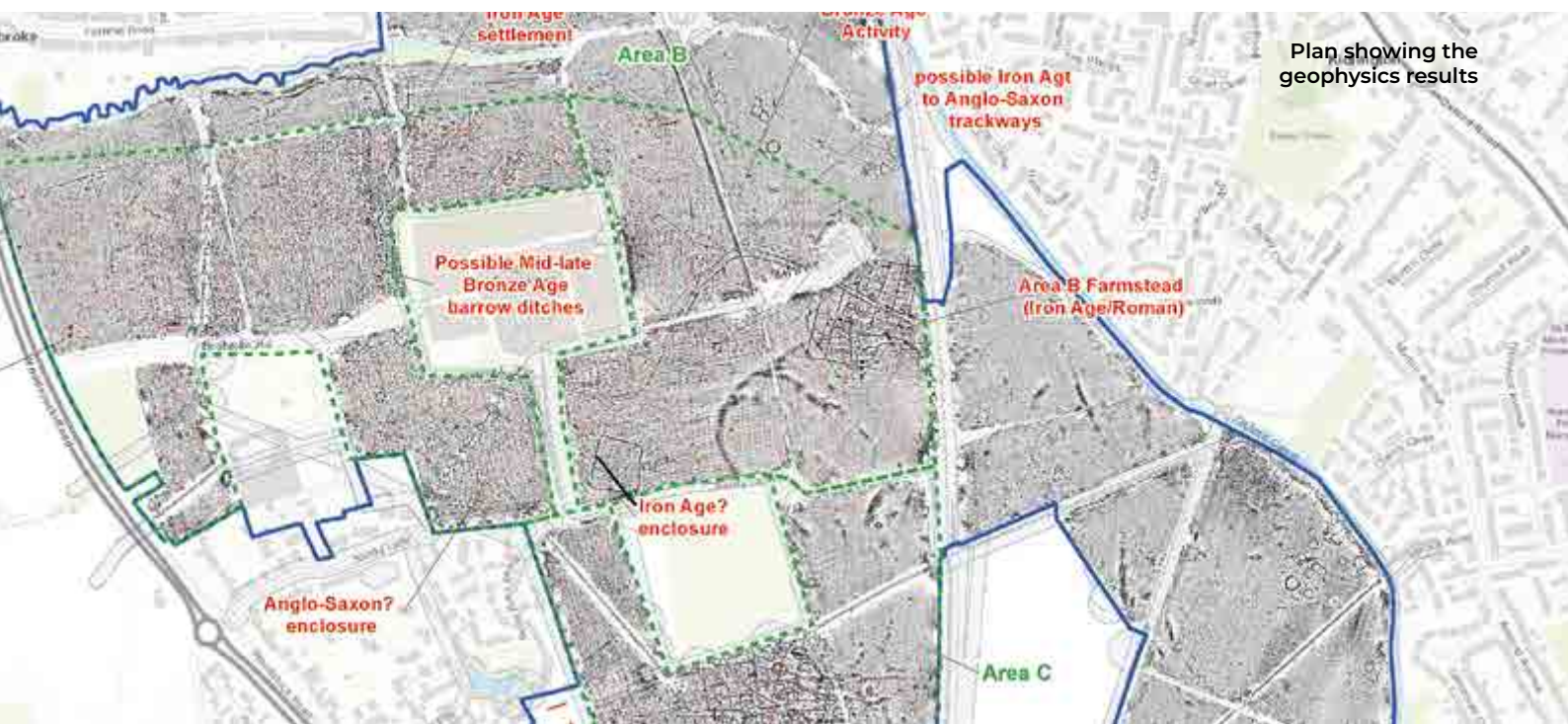
Given the density of archaeology present, the artefact assemblages recovered to date are surprisingly meagre and there is no evidence for masonry buildings within the investigated areas. While some tile and stone rubble has been found, the quantities are small and consistent with material reused from elsewhere rather than in situ structures. Drove ways extend westwards from each settlement, in one case linking the settlement to a rectangular enclosure, suggesting a possible emphasis on livestock farming.

Both settlements lie predominantly on well-drained plateaus of terrace gravel but extend all the way down to the adjacent stream floodplain, probably

reflecting the importance of livestock in the settlement's economy. These settlements may be comparable with the Roman site uncovered during Oxford Archaeology's excavations between 1989 and 1998 at Yarnton, 1.6km to the south of the science park. There are particular concentrations of complex farmsteads around the fens and along river valleys including the Ouse, the Nene, and the Middle and Upper Thames. Our settlements reinforce this river valley distribution.

We have also found intriguing evidence for an Anglo-Saxon presence at one of the Roman farmsteads, in the form of distinctive early-middle Anglo-Saxon (AD 410–850) pottery sherds. These were found in a feature provisionally interpreted as an enclosure ditch. Nearby were two east-west aligned inhumation burials that, at this stage, could be Roman or Anglo-Saxon in date. The burials were found on the western edge of the Roman farmstead beside a trackway that approached the area from the west. Elsewhere on the site a small rectangular ditched enclosure produced a fragment of copper alloy bucket rim and pottery which may also be of Anglo-Saxon date. No other remains suggestive of Anglo-Saxon occupation have yet been identified on site, though important evidence for early and middle Saxon settlement was uncovered to the south during the major Yarnton excavations. The investigations highlighted the difficulty of identifying settlements of this period because many of the structures were post-built and not reliably detectable using geophysical survey or trial trenches.

A second phase of trenching is currently taking place on the floodplain areas of the development site, where further archaeological remains are anticipated. ■



Plan showing the geophysics results

Hornsea Project 3, Norfolk

Pat Moan

For much of 2022 and 2023 the Cambridge office has been kept busy working in Norfolk on behalf of Ørsted Hornsea Project 3 (UK) Ltd in advance of onshore cable construction for an offshore wind farm. The cable route itself is one of the largest linear projects undertaken in the county, measuring 60km long and 80m wide, passing through a changing landscape encompassing the North Norfolk coast, the crag sand heathlands of Broadland, and the gentle hills and valleys of Mid Norfolk.

Following geophysical survey carried out by Oxford Archaeology in 2017 and 2021, approximately 1200 trenches were excavated along the route since February 2022. The trenching hinted at Norfolk's distinctive rural settlement pattern spanning several thousand years. In view of these results, 32 areas (totalling c 13.5 ha) were identified for excavation, with mitigation works quickly following the trenching. We have found that much of the archaeology was as expected, but there have also been a few surprises along the way. One was an early Bronze Age burnt mound (2400–1600 BC) near Salle, where the team uncovered the perfectly preserved wooden lining of a well that would have served as the main water source for activities associated with the burnt mound (a dump of charcoal and shattered stones used to heat water). Other features of note include a Bronze Age trackway leading to another burnt mound, large Roman corndryers

near Reepham, and an early Roman pottery kiln at Saxthorpe. Further excavations in the locality of the Salle Estate revealed a large prehistoric (possibly middle Bronze Age; 1600–1200 BC) enclosure, a Roman settlement, and evidence of the ubiquitous medieval rural roadside settlement that blankets the county.

A site near the southern end of the route, just outside the small village of Ringland, turned out to be one of the more exciting excavation areas along the scheme. The site contained a large ring ditch, 25m in diameter, with an internal amorphous feature. Although not dissimilar in plan to a medieval post-mill, once we started digging the features looked to form a type of hengiform monument. The large outer ring ditch (1.4m deep and 4m wide) encircled a smaller inner ring ditch and pit. These two 'internal' features may have formed an earlier monument that was subsequently surrounded by the larger ditch. Alternatively, they were contemporary and comprised the remains of a bowl or pond barrow.

Mixed assemblages of pottery and flint, dating between the early Neolithic and middle Bronze Age (2400–1200 BC), were recovered from the outer ditch. When excavating the inner ditch, we unexpectedly revealed some preserved wood at its base. Further investigation suggested wood originally lined the entire circumference of the ditch. ■



Above: a leaf-shaped arrowhead;
background: excavation along
the route at Salle

Aston, Oxfordshire

Charlotte Bishop

A team from the Oxford office, commissioned by Beard Construction on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, carried out excavations at the proposed site of a new children's home in Aston. The excavations uncovered an array of medieval remains, providing a great insight into the history of the village and an exciting opportunity to focus on community engagement. When word got out about our work, there was a steady stream of curious visitors. Whether through word of mouth, the frequent Oxford Archaeology blog updates, or the parish newsletter, the Aston excavation was a popular destination for many throughout its duration.

The blog discussed all aspects of the fieldwork: machining, methods of recording, hand excavation, and any finds uncovered. Indeed, the blog appeared to have been the reason many of the inhabitants of Aston visited the site. Tours were organised as part of our outreach programme, one for a group of local primary schoolchildren and another with the local history society. These were a great success, allowing us to show a working archaeological site but also demonstrate the importance of archaeology. The enthusiasm conveyed from staff on site to 30 young children created some budding passions. The tour for the local history society was held early on in the excavation, when the interpretation of the remains was evolving, but it still proved beneficial for



Finds specialist Anni Byard showing some of the metal finds uncovered on site



The remains of a stone building

communicating how archaeology is carried out. A subsequent presentation delivered to society members and the public—around 50 attendees in all—was also a hit and allowed people to see how our archaeological understanding and knowledge increase as investigations unfold.

The excavations revealed evidence of several phases of activity on site dating from c AD 1050 to 1900. The quantities of metalwork, pottery, and animal bones recovered from the site reflect the nature of rural settlement and the agricultural economy of the parish, particularly during the late 11th–14th centuries. Remains of a stone building were uncovered, together with associated floor and occupation layers that contained pottery dating to the late 13th–14th century. Multiple ditches pointed to a reorganisation of property boundaries and pasture during this time. A few pits dated to the 17th and 18th centuries were also uncovered, indicating that the site reverted to agricultural use.

Overall, the site generated a great deal of interest and allowed us to present an interpretation of the village's history, and it demonstrated just how much of an impact a project like this can have on the local community. ■

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

Paddy Lambert

Since 1998, works have been transforming a former Cold War airbase at Alconbury Weald, with schools, shops, and houses built on what was once a landscape of hangars and tarmac. The Cold War development of the site had damaged or destroyed much of the archaeology that might once have been present.

However, in late February 2023 and in the shadow of two enormous 1950s B38 bomber hangars, we uncovered some well-preserved and exciting archaeology on behalf of Urban&Civic PLC. Evaluation trenches had yielded very little, but excavations of an area just under 0.4ha uncovered features dating from the middle Iron Age to the late Roman period.

A ditch bisected the south-east of the site, forming the southern arm of a sub-rectangular enclosure. It was probably early Roman in date (AD 43–120) and very likely helped to drain what was once a wet and undulating landscape. It fell into disuse and silted up, along with the wider enclosure and associated features.

During the late 4th century AD, people returned to the site and they appear to have imbued this area with new importance as they buried their belongings in pits along the line of the earlier ditch. About ten whole or partially complete pottery vessels were uncovered along one stretch of the ditch, stopping at the edge of what is a now a distinct undulation on site but was then an area of water. The pots are mostly Nene Valley products dating to the latter half of the 4th century AD. Highlights include a Nene Valley flagon, decorated with painted swirls and complete except for its deliberately removed top, and a miniature globular beaker found with a penannular brooch. A curious assemblage of iron objects, coins, fragments of an antique 1st-century brooch,

and puddingstone querns were also uncovered from this part of the ditch.

Postholes were also numerous, constituting the remains of multiple structures, one of which housed a sub-rectangular pit that contained a strange collection of objects, including a set of at least 15 so-called triangular loomweights. Such items in pits are not wholly uncommon, but here the objects had been deposited with fuel ash, decorated fired clay, nails, and pottery. This does not appear to be mere rubbish but a careful selection of objects.

The dating of the late Roman activity has elicited much discussion, as there are tantalising hints that activity continued, or perhaps even reached its peak, during the 5th century AD, after the end of Roman occupation. Some of the pottery is unusual for the late Roman period and the later 4th-century vessels are clearly worn and well-used, suggesting a long life.

After five months of excavation and having retrieved approximately 80kg of pottery, 60kg of animal bone, and 224 small finds, the off-site analysis is underway, raising more questions. Are we on the fringes of a previously undiscovered villa estate or a small urban settlement? Or is it evidence of people who, during a period of immense social and economic transformation, decided that a small old enclosure in a wet area was important, perhaps even sacred?

The site will be featured on series 11 of the BBC's 'Digging for Britain', due for broadcast in January 2024. ■



Left and below: a miniature globular beaker and a loomweight; bottom left: overview of the site.



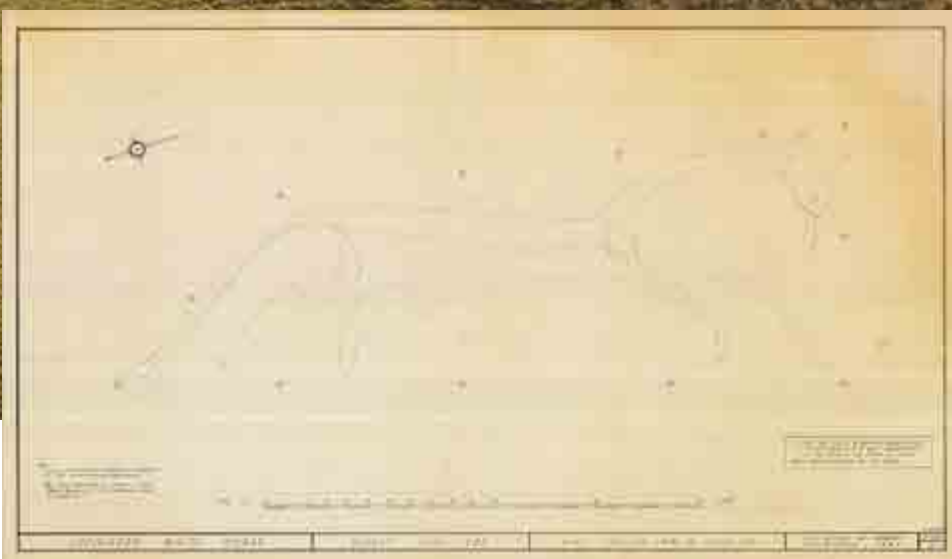
Uffington White Horse, Oxfordshire

Matt Bradley

Oxford Archaeology has a long history of involvement with Uffington and we were recently commissioned by the National Trust to conduct a drone survey of the White Horse, the oldest known chalk figure in the UK, having been dated to the Bronze Age (2400–700 BC) thanks to our work in the 1990s. The horse is formed from deep trenches filled with crushed chalk and it needs regular maintenance to ensure it remains visible, though there has been some concern in recent years that it is not only changing shape but getting smaller. The aim of the survey was to create a detailed model that could be compared with previous surveys and aerial photos to see if, and how, the 100m-long horse has changed over time.

On a suitably sunny day in September 2022 the drone survey was conducted, capturing enough data to produce a detailed 3-D model. Comparison of this data with previous surveys, particularly those from the early 20th century, has indeed found that the horse has become somewhat leaner over time.

As well as providing a baseline for future monitoring of the horse, the survey has facilitated much discussion as to the best way to proceed with the preservation and protection of the chalk figure. We hope to revisit in the future to help the National Trust develop an effective solution to monitoring the horse and to potentially expand the survey across the wider landscape. ■



Left: A 1937 survey of the white horse by H.M. Office of Works; above: aerial drone shot of the white horse in 2023 by Oxford Archaeology

Hampton Court Palace

Ben Ford

Earlier this year a team from Oxford, on behalf of Ecologia, investigated an area just beyond the west front of Hampton Court Palace that, for some 350 years, was occupied by the Houses of Offices, a large range of riverside service buildings. First constructed under Henry VIII, they included a scalding house (for scalding the carcasses of animals, as well as utensils), a poultry house (for keeping chickens), a bakehouse, a rush house, and a woodyard. Timber jetties extended into the Thames for deliveries.

The investigations revealed that the pre-Tudor ground levels fell away dramatically towards the river and that the main southern wall of the Houses of Offices was built along the base of this break of slope, also functioning as a retaining wall. Associated deposit sequences revealed how the ground floors and courtyards had been raised so that they were level with, and facilitated access from, the approach to the palace's west front. The wall was faced with high quality double-struck Tudor brickwork and the mortar towards its base was heavily eroded, suggestive of regular, seasonal flooding of the Thames.

Internally, two original principal walls were revealed, alongside evidence for other internal divisions and doorways. The massed brick core of a large oven or vat base was also encountered. Later modifications to floors and openings were evident, as well as later drainage leading to the river.

Externally, extensive rubble deposits abutted the face of the main southern wall. They probably derived from demolition waste generated by Christopher Wren's remodelling of the south-east corner of the Tudor palace at the turn of the 18th century.

These remains will be accurately located within the modern landscape with the help of historic mapping and GIS, providing further insights into the evolution of this forgotten building complex. ■



Left: Houses of Offices in 1860-70; above: working shot from the excavation trench

50 YEARS OF OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY



Excavating a site near Appleford in the shadow of the Didcot power station cooling towers in 1973

A brief history of Oxford Archaeology

Edward Biddulph



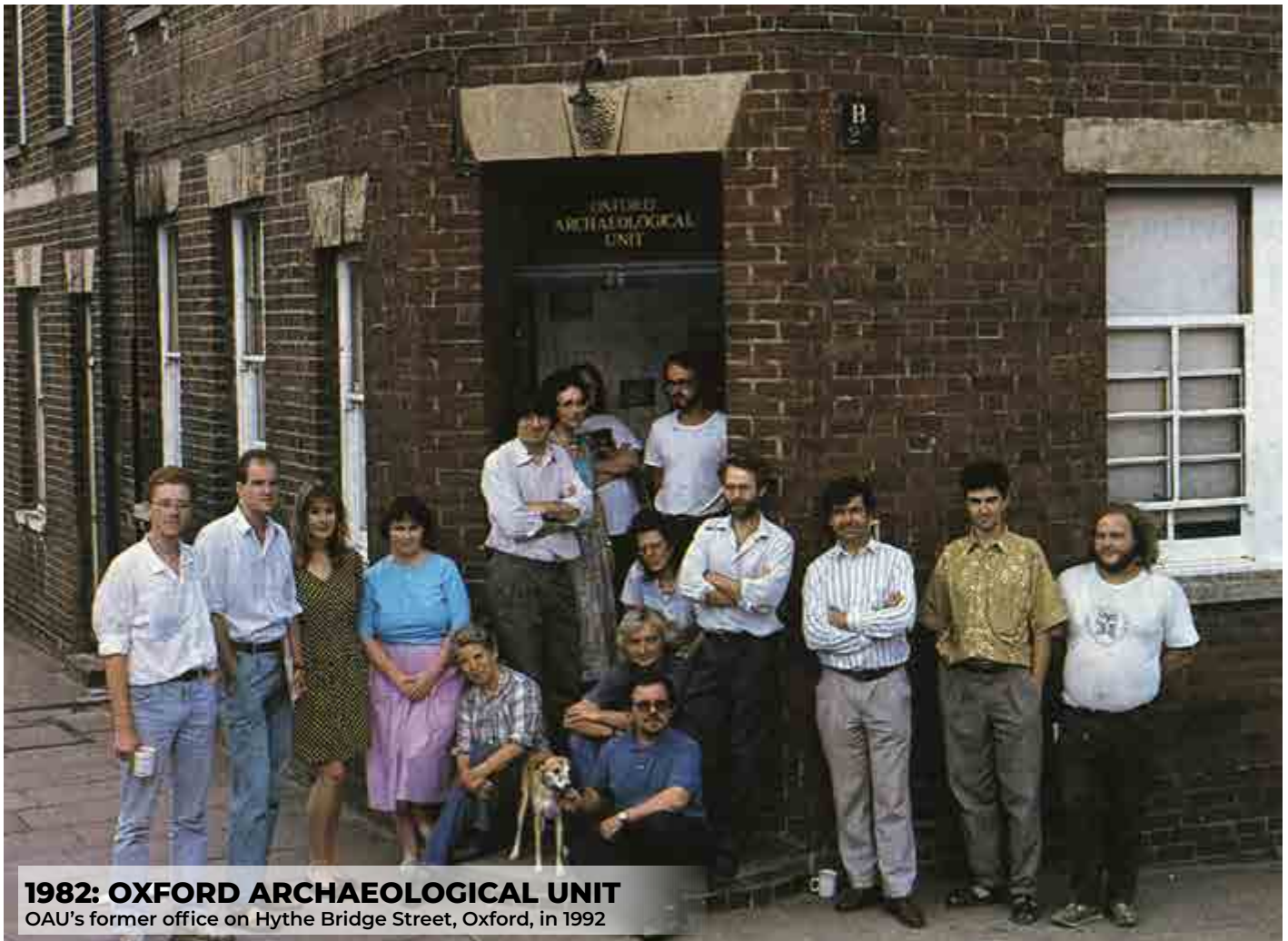
1973: OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
High Street, Oxford, 1981

In the late 1960s, a development boom across the UK resulted in an unprecedented threat to archaeological sites. Museums, archaeological societies, and other organisations raced to excavate, record and remove what they could, often in the face of oncoming bulldozers, in a movement that would become known as rescue archaeology.

The Oxford City and County Museum led the archaeological response in Oxfordshire, but it lacked the resources to tackle the rescue crisis alone. The museum's answer was to form independent excavation committees in response to specific development threats, starting in Oxford in 1967. A consensus rapidly emerged that the committees should pool their resources to provide a county-wide service for archaeological investigation and research, and thus, in 1973, the Oxfordshire Archaeological Committee and its executive arm, the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, came into existence.

Before too long, the unit's operations extended beyond the county, and, in 1982, reflecting this wider reach, the organisation changed its name to the Oxford Archaeological Unit.

The emergence of national planning guidelines in the early 1990s, which established the requirement for developers to commission and fund archaeological investigations at their sites as a condition of their obtaining planning permission, presented huge opportunities for Oxford Archaeology and it seized them with both hands. It sought to tackle some of the largest and most complex projects where reliability and quality were the main requirements. This led to a series of projects which included some fantastic and innovative archaeology – road schemes, such as the A417/A419 across the Cotswolds, the Eton Rowing Lake at Dorney, Dover Heritage Centre and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL, later High Speed 1 or HS1).



1982: OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
OAU's former office on Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, in 1992



1998: FRAMEWORK ARCHAEOLOGY
Excavating T5, Heathrow

In 1998, Oxford Archaeology joined forces with Wessex Archaeology to form Framework Archaeology. The partnership, the first ever joint venture in British commercial archaeology, carried out archaeological investigations for British Airports Authority (BAA), which operated Heathrow and Stansted, among other airports. Framework's investigations at Heathrow and elsewhere, guided by distinct theoretical and philosophical principals and iterative recording methods, were revolutionary and helped shape archaeological practice more widely. Joint ventures have since become a standard part of archaeological practice, and currently Oxford Archaeology is working with Cotswold Archaeology as Oxford Cotswold Archaeology (OCA) at Sizewell C in Suffolk and the A417 in Gloucestershire.

There was another name change in 2001, when the Oxford Archaeological Unit was rebranded Oxford Archaeology. The company was joined at this time by the former Lancaster University Archaeological Unit, which became Oxford Archaeology North (the Oxford office becoming Oxford Archaeology South). This transfer created a truly national organisation, with projects from Kent to Scotland as well as Wales and Ireland. Oxford Archaeology North took the lead in all archaeological projects carried out by the organisation throughout the north of England. It continued the wide range of work it had long undertaken – desk-based assessments, evaluations, and major excavations – and brought to the organisation its specialisation in upland survey and the excavation and recording of standing industrial remains.



2000: ZEUGMA



1996: MAYENNE

Oxford Archaeology embraced the challenge of working outside Britain. In 1996, as a result of its work in buildings archaeology, especially during the CTRL project and with Historic Royal Palaces, Oxford Archaeology won the contract to excavate and record the Chateau de Mayenne in north-west France. Then, in 2000, it led a multi-national rescue excavation in Turkey at the site of the ancient city of Zeugma; plans for new dams on the Euphrates meant that much of Zeugma would be flooded. Working in temperatures in excess of 40°C, the team uncovered wonderful Hellenistic and Roman archaeology, including some phenomenal mosaics.

Oxford Archaeology returned to France in 2007, operating there until 2011. During that time, it established two offices – OA Méditerranée in Mauguio, near Montpellier, and OA Grand Ouest in Caen – and investigated and reported on more than 30 important and fascinating projects. In 2009, Oxford Archaeology worked with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to undertake the large-scale archaeological recovery of casualties of the First World War battle at Pheasant Wood, Fromelles in northern France and, between 2009 and 2019, contributed to the identification of the soldiers through DNA and historical, artefactual and anthropological evidence.

In 2008, Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Field Unit (CAMARC) joined Oxford Archaeology to provide its third UK regional centre. The origins of Oxford Archaeology East, as it became known, began in the early 1980s with MSC-funded



2001: LANCASTER
The Hotties: Pilkingtons' No 9 Tank House, St Helens

2008: CAMBRIDGE

Recording a Roman cremation burial in Milton Keynes



community programme projects, and it continued to carry out developer-funded work as the county archaeological field unit. The Cambridge office brought to the company not only its considerable experience of development-led work and archaeological resource management, but also its expertise in designing and delivering highly successful outreach and public engagement programmes.

In 2014, we launched a public edition of our in-house magazine, 'In Touch'. Each year, we highlight the amazing results from our projects, look back on our community archaeology and outreach, and round up a year of publication, talks and conferences, and media stories. Communicating the results of our work to the widest possible audience is at the heart of what we do, and 'In Touch' continues a tradition that began with the first issue of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit Newsletter in 1974.

Over the years, our expert teams and specialists have undertaken pioneering research and collaborated with universities, museums, and other institutions. For example, we contributed artefacts and the results of our research to major exhibitions at the British Museum, one in 2014 that delved into the lives of the Vikings, another in 2022 that explored the world of Stonehenge. Since 1993, our Cambridge office has developed a long and successful partnership with the Wellcome Trust following our

2007: MEDITERRANEE

The field team on the route of a new tramway in Montpellier, 2010



archaeological investigations in Hinxton, South Cambridgeshire. We are currently leading a project entitled “‘Rewilding’ later prehistory,” a collaboration between Oxford Archaeology, the universities of Oxford, Exeter and Toulouse, the Archaeology Data Service, Historic England and Knepp Estate rewilding hub.

We have always looked to develop innovative technology and practices. In 2015, we launched our online library, making our unpublished ‘grey literature’ reports, selected primary archives, and digital copies of some of our monographs freely available to download. It has grown ever since, and today the library contains over 6500 items. This year, we launch our new Knowledge Hub which incorporates the online library and brings with it a range of other ways by which we can present our research and the fantastic archaeology we have the privilege to investigate. In 2019, we developed a digital recording system (DRS) and GIS mapping tool called WebMap which has made a real difference to the way we work on, and off, site - we are now collaborating on further

development of the system with our partners, Cotswold Archaeology.

Of course, the Covid pandemic dominated the start of this decade and, during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, we were among the first to develop and implement safe working practices, endorsed by both senior management and the Prospect union. These allowed our sites and offices to remain open and to operate safely throughout. A legacy of the pandemic is our hybrid working policy, which, with the aid of our digital systems, including video conferencing and cloud-based file-sharing, gives many of our staff the option of dividing their working time between the office and home, helping to provide a better balance between work and home life.

As we look to the next 50 years, we are confident that we will more than meet the challenges of an uncertain world as we continue to innovate, make exciting discoveries, produce ground-breaking research, and share our discoveries with our clients and the public. ■



2022: WORLD OF STONEHENGE, BRITISH MUSEUM

Our contribution included a 6000-year-old elm leaf from Windy Harbour, Lancashire

Cumwhitton, Cumbria

Adam Parsons



The living history team Cumbrialand reenacting at the Moorforge viking settlement

In 2004, a Viking-age oval brooch was discovered by a metal detectorist in a field outside the small village of Cumwhitton, just to south-east of Carlisle in Cumbria. It was reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme and, after a second brooch was found, a team from the Lancaster office established that these came from a grave. Working with the metal-detectorists, a lot more finds were made, and further excavation uncovered another five furnished burials in a small cemetery dating to the early 10th century.

Highlights 1973-2023

While no bones survived in the acidic soils, there was a staggering array of grave goods, including four swords, a shield, axe, numerous spears, three oval brooches, beads, silver rings, drinking horns, antler combs, belt buckles and pins, spurs, and the remains of a maple-wood box and its iron fittings, among many other items.

The discoveries gave a fascinating insight into the burial rites of these people and, in conjunction with the existing archaeological and historical records for the period, enabled us to look at Viking-age Cumbria in a more holistic way and see cultural affinities and patterns in the data that had not been evident before.

After the excavation was over, the excavation team held an open evening for local people to show them the site and the work we had been doing. A fellow reenactor and I went along and talked

about Viking-age burial practices. We showed them reproduction artefacts, similar to some of those found in the graves, and finished the evening off with a holmgang, or duel, which enthused the crowd. It's fair to say the event ignited my passion for communicating about this amazing site!

Much conservation work by Historic England and analysis followed the excavation and, in 2014, our Lancaster office published a monograph on the cemetery. A book launch was held in Tullie House Museum's lecture theatre in Carlisle. The event was well-attended, and we even had people queuing up to get their books signed, which was something of a novelty for all of us! Representatives from various local archaeology and history societies and metal-detecting clubs across the region were in attendance and invited us to give talks to their members. Consequently,

Rachel Newman, Senior Executive Officer at the Lancaster office, and I have spent a lot of time over the years driving around Cumbria and north Lancashire talking to various groups and clubs. And in 2015, we headed down to London to attend the Current Archaeology Awards, the project having been nominated in the Rescue Dig of the Year category. Very unusually for an archaeological monograph, the publication sold out within 18 months of publication.

In addition to all these talks, I was quietly working away on a collection of reproduction artefacts to be exhibited at Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery. In 2016, on the day the gallery launched, I was there in full Viking attire, answering questions about the project to the press and public.

Along with Cumwhitton, subsequent projects on early medieval sites at St Michael's Church, Workington, and St Andrew's Church, Dacre, have enabled us to develop our understanding of early medieval Cumbria as a whole. We have presented talks about all three sites to academic conferences, and in 2022 the sites were the focus of Oxford Archaeology's online seminar that explored early medieval identity, kinship, and community. I have also taken some of my own research, carried out on the back of Cumwhitton, further afield to roundtables, symposia, and conferences across the UK.



One of the graves under excavation



Two oval brooches recovered from the graves

My passion for talking about Cumwhitton and early medieval Cumbria, and reconstructing the artefacts and lives of people there, has been a mainstay of my life beyond my work at Oxford Archaeology. Social media has been a particularly useful tool that has enabled me to communicate to the public about the subject (especially during the Covid pandemic). I have posted short TikTok videos on individual finds (some of which have tens of thousands of views), taken part in podcasts, and given online talks. I continue to take part in in-person public engagements, for example, at the Heysham Viking festival, and have provided tours and talks for numerous graduate and postgraduate students. We have had reenactment events at St Michael's Church, as well as at the nearby Moorforge Viking settlement, and all the way to Govan Old Church in Glasgow, with my early medieval living history group Cumbraland (www.cumbraland.com). All have provided opportunities to share stories about the people of the early medieval North West far and wide, and with a diverse audience.

It's been a privilege to be able to work on and communicate about such fantastic sites for so many years, and let's hope the gods smile on us with some more amazing early medieval sites. But even if they don't, these fantastic projects still have so many things for us to talk about and there are so many people who still haven't heard about them, which means they'll keep us all busy for some time to come! ■

Framework Archaeology and Terminal 5

Ken Welsh & Edward Biddulph

In 1998, Oxford Archaeology joined colleagues at Wessex Archaeology to form what was the first ever joint venture in British commercial archaeology: Framework Archaeology.



Excavating by the runway

Highlights 1973-2023

Framework Archaeology undertook archaeological works for British Airports Authority (BAA), which, at the time, operated Heathrow and Stansted Airports, among others. Framework Archaeology was committed to a particular archaeological philosophy, developed by BAA's archaeological consultants. This was concerned with understanding how people inhabited past landscapes: archaeology as a study of people rather than deposits or objects. Framework Archaeology also developed innovative technological solutions to facilitate the rapid feedback of information to site teams, allowing a truly iterative approach to be adopted.

Large-scale excavations were carried out at Heathrow, first at Perry Oaks and then during the construction of Terminal 5. The investigations revealed a changing landscape at Heathrow, one that was

visited, occupied, abandoned, and re-inhabited over a period of some 8000 years.

The fieldwork and post-excavation analysis demonstrated how hunter-gatherers visited the edge of the Colne floodplain during the 7th or 6th millennia BC. Sometime after 4000 BC, at the time of the first farmers, a posthole complex and possible settlement were established. But it was between 3600 and 3300 BC that we see the first major human impact on the landscape. During these centuries, woodland clearance accelerated and a series of four cursus monuments were constructed across the western part of the site. Cursus monuments were long, narrow enclosures or earthen banks and the construction of four of them created a major ceremonial centre. One of the monuments, known as the Stanwell Cursus, consisted of two flanking ditches

with a central bank, and ran for more than 3.5km along the edge of the Colne valley.

In the 2nd millennium BC, the landscape changed dramatically; resources and land were apportioned not through ceremony but through the physical demarcation of the landscape by field boundaries belonging to scattered settlements or farmsteads, separated – and connected – by trackways.

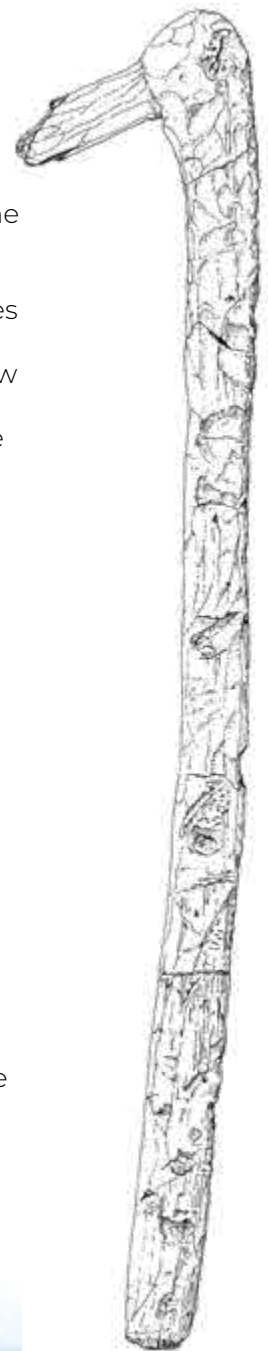
By the middle Iron Age (400 BC), people lived in a nucleated settlement of roundhouses, four-post structures and livestock enclosures but still practised an entirely subsistence-based agricultural regime that was now biased towards animal husbandry. This settlement became a focal point for continuing settlement through the late Iron Age and Roman periods. In the latter period, while pastoralism remained important, there is evidence that there was an increased emphasis on cereal crops. The inhabitants of the settlement built a new field system and droveway in response to the wider social political and economic changes of the later Roman empire. Around AD 400, the inhabitants deposited the remains of a damaged lead tank into a waterhole to the west of the settlement. This remarkable object is one of a small number of Roman Christian lead tanks, perhaps used for baptism, found only in Britain. Perhaps its deposition in the waterhole was undertaken to mark the end of this long-lived settlement.

By the Saxon period, people were living to the north-west of the main Roman settlement and by the mid-Saxon period (AD 650–850) they appear to have abandoned the landscape. However, in the 11th or 12th century AD, the land was re-occupied and the new inhabitants built a complex of stock management enclosures and post structures at Burrow Hill, to the south-west. The character of the Heathrow area remained predominately rural until the construction of the Perry Oaks sludge works in 1934 and the airport between 1944 and 1946.

The success of the Terminal 5 project was acknowledged in 2008 by the British Archaeological Awards, which named it 'Best Archaeological Project'.

Framework Archaeology also undertook work at Stansted, Southampton, Gatwick, and Edinburgh Airports. It is fair to say that Framework Archaeology had a huge impact on the way developer-funded archaeology was conducted at the time. The intellectual and methodological developments of this initiative still resonate in major projects today. But it also had a real impact on the hundreds of archaeologists who were involved in its excavations, many of whom remain active throughout British archaeology. ■

Further reading:
framearch.co.uk/t5/
intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue36/
doi.org/10.5284/1011888



**Bronze Age
wooden haft for
socketed axe**



**View of the
Terminal 5
excavation
showing the
Neolithic Stanwell
Cursus**

Fromelles, Northern France

Louise Loe



The reburial ceremony at Pheasant Wood Cemetery in 2010

In 2009, Oxford Archaeology was awarded the contract to recover and help to identify 250 soldiers who had been buried in unmarked mass graves on the outskirts of Fromelles village, Northern France, during the First World War. Here, we look back at one of the most important and rewarding projects that OA's ever undertaken.

The battle

The battle of Fromelles was an Australian Imperial Force and British Army joint operation, fought on a 4000-yard section of the German front-line in July 1916. The battle resulted in almost 2000 Australian and over 500 British fatalities. It was, and still is, the worst 24 hours in Australian military history.

The graves went unrecognised for more than half a century until researchers identified them through historical research. When non-invasive survey and an evaluation confirmed their presence, the Australian and British governments announced a jointly funded programme of excavation and recovery so that the soldiers could be reburied in individual graves.



Working on the finds

The operation

With just six months to excavate and analyse the graves, and operating under intense media scrutiny, several innovative techniques were devised to meet the unique requirements of this project. An international team of forensic and investigative professionals was deployed, and a special site compound was designed that facilitated continuity between excavation, recovery and analysis. A software programme was developed to help interpret commingled remains, and a 'chain of custody' approach meant that skeletons and associated artefacts had to be signed for whenever they were moved. In these respects, the project broke new ground and has arguably become the 'gold standard' for projects of this nature.

An unused return train ticket from Freemantle to Perth, tucked inside a gas mask, and a lock of hair, contained within a leather heart, are among some of the most poignant discoveries and are powerful reminders of the realities of the lives of the soldiers.

We produced case files for each soldier before their reburial in 2010, and in 2014, the centenary of the start of the First World War and the 98th anniversary of the battle, our technical report was published. This coincided with the opening of a new museum in Fromelles, the Musée de la Bataille de Fromelles, which displays information about the excavation and some of the soldiers.

Legacy

Fromelles is the largest recovery and identification operation of First World War soldiers ever undertaken using modern science. The project has set standards and improved scientific approaches for this type of work. It has informed similar, subsequent operations and has contributed towards the development of teams dedicated to recovering war casualties, the Unrecovered War Casualties division of the Australian Army and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Recovery Unit among them.

However, most significantly, the project has affected the lives of families and communities in ways we could not have

The identifications

Our work was employed alongside DNA and historical evidence by a team of subject matter experts, including a representative from Oxford Archaeology, for an identification board at Australia House, London. Apart from 2015, the board convened annually between 2010 and 2019, resulting in 166 of the soldiers, all Australian, having their identities restored, far exceeding initial expectations at the outset of the project.

This process, by which science transformed unnamed soldiers into individuals with names, families and stories, was a truly humbling experience. Although DNA was the prime mover in this, it had to be supported by the historical, anthropological, and archaeological evidence. Witnessing the interplay between these disciplines as identifications were made was incredibly illuminating and we shared this in a popular book, *Fromelles, Naming the Dead: The Scientists' Story*, published last year.

imagined. Every year, on the 19th July, a ceremony is held at Fromelles New Military Cemetery, to commemorate the soldiers and dedicate headstones to any who have been newly identified. We have attended some of these and have met some of the families and communities connected to the soldiers. Learning their stories of how tragedy and loss were carried down through the generations and how their quest to find a lost soldier has brought families together brings home just how impactful the project has been.

Efforts to identify the remaining soldiers have now passed to Australian specialists, under their Unrecovered War Casualties division. Today, 173 soldiers have been named. ■



Return rail ticket from Perth to Freemantle

Priors Hall, Corby

Paddy Lambert



The Potentius tile

Between 2019 and 2021, a team from the Cambridge office carried out an investigation of a landscape that represented the immediate hinterland of a Romano-British villa. The excavations were undertaken for Urban&Civic on the outskirts of Corby in Northamptonshire in advance of the construction of a mixed-use development known as Priors Hall. The villa complex, discovered via a combination of geophysics and evaluation trenching in 2011, was subsequently assigned as an archaeological protection area, but five areas that flanked the villa area were earmarked for mitigation by excavation.

Highlights 1973-2023

To the west of the villa complex, activity was focused on a large industrial complex. The team investigated the remains of several well-preserved stone structures that included numerous pottery kilns, lime kilns, and three well-preserved tile kilns, all dated to between AD 200 and 400.

Intriguingly, the tile kilns were constructed with the shell of an earlier, square stone structure, which was enclosed by a precinct wall and constructed on the edge an east facing ridge. This earlier structure appears to relate to the remains of a funerary monument or mausoleum constructed around the late 1st to mid-2nd century. The monument may have been associated with the villa to the east, or with its slightly earlier neighbouring villa and associated cemetery at Little Weldon, located just under 2km to the south.

A particularly notable find was a tile

inscribed with the name of one of the tilers just before it went in the kiln. Its inscription would have read '(PO)TENTI FECIT' or 'Potentius has made me'. Sadly, Potentius's pride may have been misplaced, as the tile was overfired and bloated, resulting in it being discarded.

A generation or so after the installation of the tileries, pottery and lime kilns (the resulting lime being used for construction) were installed. These were set within a large contemporary stone quarry and formed the focus of production for much of the last phases of the villa estate.

The archaeological evidence from the other excavated areas related to earlier periods of the villa landscape. Among the highlights were the remains of a late Iron Age settlement (100 BC–AD 43; most likely a precursor to the villa) that was abandoned around AD 100. A pottery kiln

was producing pottery between AD 70 and 100 that was based on vessels made at Verulamium (Roman St Albans), including stamped mortaria or mixing bowls.

An arrow-straight trackway was also uncovered and this would have formed the avenue approach to the early villa. However, to the east was an exceptionally well-preserved Roman road. Confirmed via a combination of comparative analysis, radiocarbon dating and ceramic dating, the road was found to have been constructed by the Roman army during the 2nd century and connected Priors Hall and its network of neighbouring villas and industrial sites.

Since the excavation, the team has been engaging with the public and talking about the discoveries, mostly via talks to local groups and archaeological societies and lectures at national conferences. An article was published in Current Archaeology magazine, and later that year, the site was voted 'Rescue Project of the Year' in the Current Archaeology Awards. A follow-up article on the results of the 2021 excavations was subsequently



The early Roman pottery kiln in Area C



The lime kiln, with the stone quarry to the top of the picture

published by Current Archaeology. In 2023, Urban&Civic invited the team to present the site at its annual away-day. Due in large part to the success of Oxford Archaeology's work at Priors Hall, the event was held in Corby.

The results of the Priors Hall excavations have much to offer in the wider study of the rather idiosyncratic story of Britain in the Roman Empire. The story of the site captured the imagination of many, but Priors Hall's biggest success has been in showcasing, and inspiring interest in, archaeology, not just among the public, but also among the developers. Teams from across the OA's offices undertake extraordinary work on extraordinary archaeology almost daily and sites like Priors Hall are a reminder of the immense value of development-led archaeology and OA's contribution to the ever-evolving visions of the past. ■

Westgate and the origins of Oxford Archaeology

Ben Ford



Aerial view of the 1968 excavation at St Ebbe's

Highlights 1973-2023

In 2015, planning permission was granted for a major revamp of the tired and out-of-date Westgate shopping centre and car park in the centre of Oxford. A comprehensive planning condition ensured a thorough archaeological response, with a team of up to 45 archaeologists from Oxford Archaeology carrying out a campaign of major excavation work at the site. In 2016, the Oxford Westgate project won the Best Archaeological Project of the Year award at a ceremony organised by the British Archaeological Awards at the British Museum.

The project, which revealed the most extensive and well-preserved remains of the medieval Greyfriars, gained international media coverage and captured the public's imagination, who flocked in large numbers to view the site on two open days (attracting some 3,500 visitors), heard a series of six talks, and visited four separate pop-up museums throughout the city that culminated in a seven-week display (itself attracting some 8000 visitors) at the Town Hall. But

this was not the first time the site had received such attention. It had previously been investigated in the 1960s. Indeed, the original excavations played a pivotal role not only in the archaeology of the city, but also in the formation of Oxford Archaeology.

In the 1950s and 1960s, there was a huge amount of post-war urban regeneration in Britain. Urban planners fell in love with concrete, tarmac and glass – an age of

tower blocks, civic buildings, shopping centres, large highways and car parks – and towns and cities were reimagining a ‘brighter’ future as a response to the societal trauma and physical damage from the conflict. Communities across Britain saw their familiar cities being transformed in front of their eyes. The loss of historic buildings and streets created a desire to preserve or at least record the physical remains of our collective past. University and local authority initiatives to conduct archaeological investigations on construction sites were undertaken with popular support, often by volunteers working with developers to ‘rescue’ what they could.

Oxford, with an already well-established local academic interest in uncovering and promoting its past led by the Ashmolean Museum and the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, was influential in this trend. The city’s first large-scale rescue excavation and historic building recording campaign was undertaken by the Oxford University Archaeological Society during the construction of the Clarendon Centre on Cornmarket between 1954 and 1957. This excavation, which revealed details of the city’s earliest Saxon buildings, increased local interest, and subsequently the Oxford Excavation Committee (1959) and the Oxford City and County Museum (OCCM; 1964) were established. Continued economic and retail growth in the 1960s brought the terraced housing in St Ebbe’s, locally called the Friaries, into focus. This working-class area, which had suffered from a cholera outbreak due to poor sanitation in the mid-19th century, had by the mid-20th century been targeted by the city council for ‘regeneration’.

Such grand plans and the resultant threat of destruction and opportunity for archaeological endeavour prompted a formal response from OCCM, who

published City of Oxford Redevelopment: Archaeological Implications (1966), which not only highlighted what we now call the ‘impact’ of such development, but also established key research aims, and concluded that a new full-time organisation was needed. And so, the Oxford Archaeological Excavation Committee was created (OAEC). The OAEC was set up as a charity with public benefit as its purpose and its first director was Tom Hassall. It was in this role that Tom directed the archaeological investigations during the construction of the first Westgate shopping centre between 1968 and 1971. The excavations revealed the complex remains of the Greyfriars church, countless neighbouring urban tenements, and Oxford castle’s barbican ditch. Such was the public interest in the past that Queen Elizabeth II visited the excavations.

In 1973, the OAEC joined with the newly created Oxfordshire Archaeological Committee, whose executive arm was called the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, with Tom Hassall being named as director. This was the birth of our company, which subsequently changed names, first to the Oxford Archaeological Unit in 1982 and finally to Oxford Archaeology in 2001.

The two major campaigns of archaeological work at Westgate, separated by 50 years, demonstrate that, of a place or site, there is always more to discover and more of the story to tell... and highlight the benefit of preservation in situ where this is possible. ■

Further information

Video: [The Archaeology of the Westgate](#)

Article: [Westgate Oxford Pop-Up Museum](#)

Reports: [Excavations in St Ebbe’s, Oxford, 1967–1976](#), [Post-medieval domestic tenements and the post-Dissolution site of the Greyfriars](#)



The Westgate excavation team, 2015

50 years of publication



We are understandably very proud of our publication record. Over the past 50 years, whether through our own monograph series, among them Thames Valley Landscapes and Lancaster Imprints, or external series, notably East Anglian Archaeology, we have published some 250 volumes. That's an average of five books a year!

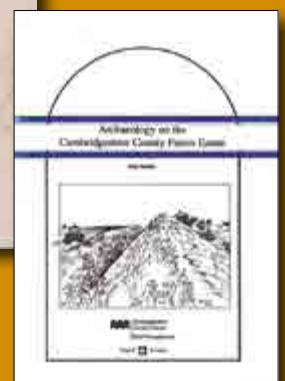
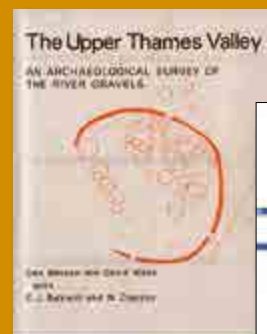
The first volume, published in 1973 as an Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit Surveys monograph, examined the archaeological implications of development in the historic town of Wallingford in Oxfordshire. The latest volume, published as an East Anglian Archaeology volume, explores aspects of 7th- to 11th-century Norwich. Our volumes cover all periods, from the Palaeolithic to the 20th century, and in a way reflect the history of Oxford Archaeology itself, as the following selection demonstrates.

Investigating landscapes rather than individual sites was always a central aim of Oxford Archaeology. **The Upper Thames Valley: An Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels** (1974) was the first of several volumes that explored not just sites, but landscapes.

The survey alerted readers to the then-current threat posed to archaeological sites from gravels extraction. It outlined the importance of the archaeological evidence and brought together in maps and as a gazetteer the results of aerial survey and fieldwork carried

out during in the earlier and mid-20th century. The volume details the threats to archaeological sites and presented recommendations for the implementation of specific policies for excavation, survey and selective preservation.

The Cambridge office has successfully combined development-led work, community-based and interpretative programmes, and archaeological resource management work, particularly the management and recording of remains in arable landscapes. An early outcome of this last aspect was the 1990 monograph, **The Archaeology of the Cambridgeshire County Farms Estate**, which resulted in



management plans for a great number of monuments, notably Stonea Camp, where England's lowest hillfort was removed from more than 40 years of damaging arable cultivation.

Britain's unimproved lands – wild uplands, designed parklands, woodlands, the lowland wetlands, and the intertidal lands – include some of the most remarkable archaeological landscapes in the UK, and Oxford Archaeology, embracing cutting-edge methods and technology, has been at the forefront investigating them.

The Wetlands of Merseyside (1994) was the first volume in of the Lancaster office's Lancaster Imprints series and the first of seven monographs exploring the north-west wetlands. It examined the landscape, ecology, and archaeology of the mosslands of Merseyside and provided a synthesis of evidence for human activity from the early Mesolithic to the post-medieval period.



From the start, we have long developed and maintained our in-house expertise in a wide range of specialist services. Our specialist teams include some of the UK's most respected experts, whose publications have become key works of reference. In 2008, within the East Anglian Archaeology series, medieval pottery specialist and former manager of the Cambridge office Paul Spoerry wrote **Ely Wares**, a typology of medieval pottery made between the 12th and 15th centuries in Ely. Paul followed this up with **The production and distribution of medieval pottery in Cambridgeshire** (2016), also published by East Anglian Archaeology.

Oxford Archaeology has a tradition of delivering high-quality, academically rigorous and stimulating research. In addition to research on significant discoveries from our sites, we undertake stand-alone projects and major works of synthesis.



The Thames Through Time series (2011–2019) provided an accessible and up-to-date synthesis of the large quantity of archaeological data recovered in more than a century of quarrying and other development on the gravel terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames and its catchment. Volume 1 examined early prehistory to 1500 BC; volume 2 explored the archaeology of late prehistory (1500 BC–AD 50); volume 3 focused on the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, while the final (online-only) volume looked at the medieval and post-medieval periods.

In addition to archaeological reports and works of synthesis and research, we have written many pocket-sized books or booklets that present the results of our investigations or explore archaeological themes and landscapes in a non-technical and highly visual way.

We are a major contributor to **Greater Manchester's Past Revealed**, a series of short books inaugurated by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service in 2010. The Lancaster office has produced 14 books (and indeed wrote the first in the series), which cover topics as diverse as Bronze Age settlement at Cutacre, the archaeology of Roman Wigan, Manchester's first purpose-built steam-powered textile mill, workers' housing at Angel Meadow, calico printing works along the Irwell Valley, and an aerodrome at Woodford. ■



The books can be downloaded here

Right: Abingdon Vinyard excavation, 1989; below: members of the international rescue team at Zeugma, 2000; below right: the Winchester Discovery Centre excavation team, 2005 ; bottom: the Framework Archaeology team at Heathrow Terminal 5, 1998



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY YESTERDAY...





... AND TODAY



Top: Oxford Archaeology team at Sizewell, Suffolk, by John Boothroyd; above: Heather showing a rare twin-holed quern, by Becky Wegiel; above left, James digging at the A417 joint venture excavation, by Camille Guezennec; left: Maranda recording Selina at the Newark Dryland Area excavation, by Jessica Ellery

Wintringham, St Neots, Cambridgeshire

Stuart Ladd & Emily Wright

Extensive excavations were undertaken on the claylands of Wintringham, near St Neots, on behalf of Urban and Civic Plc, marking the end of almost 40ha excavated in the area since 2017. Together, the excavated sites reflect a millennium of continuous settlement from the middle Iron Age to later Roman periods, as well as Bronze Age funerary activity and field systems, and early Anglo-Saxon burials.

The current phase (Site 3) involved around 90 staff members from Oxford Archaeology, Cotswold Archaeology, and Albion Archaeology. Excavations revealed an extensive middle Iron Age hilltop settlement comprising some 40 roundhouses with associated trackways and enclosures. Earlier activity in the area appears to have been limited and transitory, with only rare residual worked flints found in later features.

Settlement continued into the Roman period, focused on a more densely occupied core, with multiple buildings encountered. These included rectangular beam slot structures, post-built structures (such as a substantial aisled barn), and structures with stone foundations (a rarity in Cambridgeshire). One such building featured stone footings in a circular arrangement with an irregular array of associated post pads, which may be the remnants of the rectangular building's southern wall, as well as some demolition deposits. We also found occasional fragments of roof tile and wall plaster.

Adjacent to the circular foundations was another large structure with stone footings, robber trenches, and a clay floor deposit. It was some 20m long and 11.5m wide, formed of three rectangular cells surrounded by a corridor. Cambridgeshire's dearth of suitable building stone means that the size of this structure is highly significant. While many of the stones were local glacial erratics, one stretch of wall featured shaped blocks of Northamptonshire ironstone. Deposits of collapsed painted wall plaster and fragments of elaborate masonry (or furniture) also point to its high status. The western side of the building had partly been built over a late Iron Age/early Roman enclosure ditch. The ditch caused that side of the building to subside, and there was evidence of subsequent repair.

The function of this building currently remains a bit of a mystery. Initial thoughts were that it was a central house or administrative building constructed as the site developed in the middle Roman period. Although too small for a villa, it was clearly of high status and with a layout giving the sense of

restricted space. Its association with an unusual circular stone structure and its prominent position within the landscape (flanked by brooks and next to a natural ridge that descends to the river valley) may attest to the building's importance. Is it too early to identify it as a shrine?

It is notable that this building lay in the same area as a later Roman inhumation cemetery comprising ten burials, of which nine undisturbed individuals were decapitated. Two neonate burials were cut into the building floors and there was one buried pot. 'Placed' deposits were otherwise lacking, but a few possible votive items, including a miniature pot base, glass vessels, and miniature brooches, were found nearby. Almost 1000 samples were collected through the floors in the hope of identifying patterns of internal use.

Another small later Roman cemetery was encountered on site, comprising seven inhumation burials, two of which were decapitated. Across the two cemeteries, several of the burials were accompanied by coffin nails and, unusually, partial or complete pottery vessels situated in place of the head. Five undated crouched burials and other truncated graves were also dotted across the site, as were unurned cremation deposits. An urned Bronze Age cremation was also found (a second one has since been recognised during initial post-excavation work).

Immediately east of the large stone building was a series of large postholes, c 1m in diameter, with clay and stone packing and clear post-pipes. They were in two rows of four post settings at 2.5m intervals, just clipping the stone footings and cutting through stone and plaster demolition. This structure was roughly on the same alignment as the stone building and probably represents a later aisled barn.

Agriculture and industry during the middle Iron Age and Roman occupation of the site was evidenced by the large number of quern and millstone fragments. Environmental remains were poor, but small quantities of grains (barley, spelt/emmer) and chaff survived. There was also an early Roman kiln with wasters and kiln furniture in situ and a later Roman working surface.

The site produced an array of metal finds, mostly brooches and coins from the late Iron Age onwards, together with a votive miniature Bronze Age axe, a Roman gold ring with a gemstone (probably beryl), and a large but incomplete lead/pewter platter. The finds from the past 18 months have mostly been processed, but the post-excitation work is only just beginning. ■



Right: painted wall plaster; below: aerial view of the Roman shrine; background: general plan of the excavation

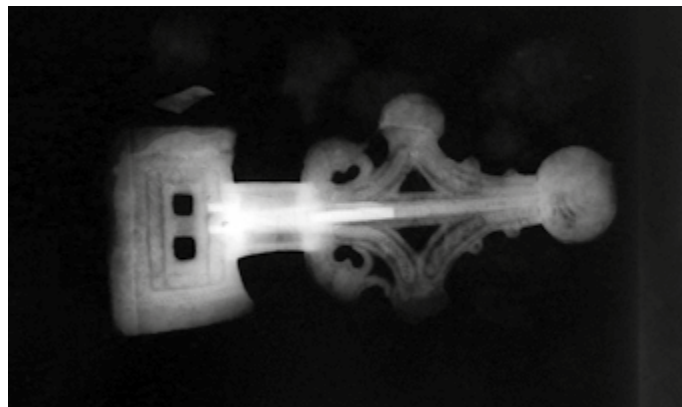


Eye, Suffolk

Louise Moan

Back in 2022, a team from the Cambridge returned to Eye Airfield, Suffolk, for RPS Group on behalf of Persimmon Homes and discovered that a previously identified Anglo-Saxon cemetery was more extensive than first thought. Following the completion of the fieldwork, the post-excitation process started with the transportation of 113 soil blocks, lifted from 99 graves, to our colleagues in Lancaster, where they carried out the micro-excitation and recording of any finds and organic remains within each of these blocks.

Each block was X-rayed and then excavated in spits, with photos of each layer taken, small find numbers assigned, and soil samples from pertinent areas collected. This painstaking process recovered 850+ individual grave goods and preserved organics. The assemblage indicates that the cemetery dates from between c AD 480 and 570, though there are some subtle signs of possible earlier and later graves. Highlights include over 440 amber and glass beads, an iron sword, a copper-alloy great square-headed brooch, a silver bracteate, two silver



Great square headed brooch with textile and its X-ray

scutiform pendants, the remnants of two highly decorated shields, and a copper-alloy radiate brooch. The radiate brooch is a very unusual find in England and was probably imported from northern France or the Rhineland. Retrieving such an item from a securely recorded grave context is of considerable importance and raises questions about the origins of the interred individual. Together these exceptional finds reveal important insights into Suffolk's early medieval past.

A key aspect of block lifting the finds was to aid the retrieval of mineralised preserved organics (or MPOs). We await analysis of any leather and wood residues that may be present, but the assessment of the textile has recorded 67 fragments, with a possible further 42 fragments in need of additional investigation. Several different types of weaves have been identified (twill, plain, tablet woven braid, cord) and, in conjunction with the types of finds to which they are adhered (in the absence of complete skeletal remains), we can suggest whether the interred individuals were male or female. The type and quality of the textile fragments recovered may also provide insights into the economy of the community, craft skills, provenance, and trade links.

Block lifting is not a new technique, but the guidance and methodology for its use in the commercial excavation of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries is still evolving. The approaches applied at Eye Airfield, the results they achieved, and the lessons learnt highlight the importance of continually questioning and adapting our recovery strategies and will help pave the way for future excavations of these important sites. ■



X-ray of radiate and annular brooches



Snapshots

Every week, across the country, our teams of archaeologists are making fascinating discoveries and uncovering interesting finds, or talking about our work at community, academic and corporate events. A snapshot of our work can be found on the project feed part of our website, which was redesigned and relaunched this year. Head to www.oxfordarchaeology.com to see what we've been up to.

75
miles of road analysed and excavated in the last 5 years

5000
items available in our library

15000
burials excavated in the last 5 years



Richard is in Birmingham



Richard is at the Highways UK exhibition in Birmingham supporting our clients Kier Group and sharing the amazing archaeology from our projects with all visitors.



in f



Fraser is in the East Midlands for a Public Information Event



Fraser delivered a presentation about some very exciting archaeology on one of our sites in the East Midlands. The Public Information Event with UrbanCivic attracted many local residents and the team loved to talk about our work with everyone!



in f



Becky is in the field in Wales



Hello from sunny Wales from Becky, Rob, Ashleigh and Aiden. Look at that sea view. (somewhere beyond the mist)



in f



The team is very busy at Oxford Down Dochs in Oxford.



Anwen is talking to visitors about her Rewriting Later Prehistory project while Mark and Emily are showing our selection of Prehistoric flint tools.



Community archaeology & outreach

Clemency Cooper & Jessica Elleray

A golden anniversary is not only an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the past, but to look to the future with optimism and ambition. Our children and young people are the future custodians of our shared past, and they are a key audience for Oxford Archaeology as a charity with an education and heritage focus.

In summer 2023, Oxford Archaeology's community team attended a series of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) events to showcase archaeological science and engage young people and the wider public with discoveries made in their local area. Archaeology straddles both the arts and the sciences and provides opportunities to explore contemporary issues such as migration and climate change.

We collaborated with the University of Central Lancashire's archaeology department to take part in the annual UCLan science fair, to showcase the significant prehistoric finds at Windy Harbour near Blackpool on National Highways' A585 road scheme. Hundreds of primary school children and local families from across the north-west attended the three-day event, learning how the arrival of

pottery changed our eating habits and how flint is shaped into stone tools. We also attended Oxford University Development's Science Wonder Garden Party at Begbroke Science Park in Oxfordshire, open to hundreds of local residents. Families were invited to take part in sand-pit digs for real and replica artefacts, and to identify different animals and their diets from their teeth.

Oxford Archaeology has considerable experience of hosting school visits to archaeological sites, working closely with our clients to ensure that visits are safe, accessible, and presented engagingly. In recent months, we worked with Angle Property to welcome nearly 360 pupils from Olney Middle School to view the incredible discovery of a Roman mosaic near their school, and we worked with Hill and RPS to open our Roman excavations at Sackville Close to neighbouring primary school, King's Hedges Educational Federation. Students had the chance to tour the sites, meet the team involved and handle some of the artefacts unearthed on their doorstep.

Inside the classroom, we offer fun, educational and interactive workshops, in schools and in partnership with other organisations. Earlier this year, we visited



"This was a great trip – thank you so much for sharing your work with us, the children were truly inspired."
Class teacher, Cambridgeshire

"Those videos are amazing! They're the right length, the right pace, the right level of detail. Absolutely perfect for use with a Year 9 class."
History teacher, Cumbria



"A huge thank you to you and your team for your work on Saturday! You did an amazing job and we really appreciate you being there to share some of the findings from Begbroke; people were so interested to see them and try the hands on activities!"

Event organiser, Oxfordshire

"Very appreciative of the opportunity and THANK YOU!"

"I am now much more confident in my wanting to pursue archaeology for higher education/as a career."

"Work experience at Oxford Archaeology has only grown my interest because I was shown the reality of archaeology as a job. Speaking to the staff frequently was informative."

Sixth form work experience students

Ermine Street Primary Academy at Alconbury Weald, on behalf of Urban&Civic, to run hands-on workshops inspired by the Iron Age discoveries near their school, and we collaborated with Oxford Castle and Prison to run a workshop inspired by our excavations at the castle for primary aged children. For the past three years, we have worked with Urban&Civic at Wintringham, another of their sites in Cambridgeshire, to hold a dedicated heritage open day for local families at the local primary school, built to emulate the shape and timber construction of an Iron Age roundhouse. Iron Age reenactors and our sand-pit excavation has been a big hit with the young and the young at heart at these events!

We find it's important to consult with educators to understand how they can build on one-off or short-term interactions, to create longer-lasting impact. As part of National Highways' A66 Teachers' Encounters Programme, our Lancaster office hosted a work shadowing day for local history teachers to learn more about archaeological roles and career pathways. Following this visit, the teachers designed a resource aimed at Year 9 students, accompanied

by a series of videos we produced about finds conservation, illustration, and environmental archaeology.

The archaeological sector offers a wide range of career opportunities, using practical, creative and analytical skills, both out in the field and inside the office. This year, we offered week-long work experience placements to six sixth form students, working alongside staff in the finds, environmental, graphics, archives and community teams. Feedback from the students highly rated the placements and praised the supervision of the staff, describing them as friendly, approachable, and helpful.

In 2023, we have reaffirmed our commitment to our charitable purpose with a new public benefit policy outlining our goal to maximise our beneficial public impact and its legacy for current and future generations. It will be the actions, decisions and values of our young people today that not only determine the fate of Oxford Archaeology in the next fifty years, but all our futures in this century and beyond. ■

Talking about Oxford Archaeology

Edward Biddulph & Maria Bellissimo

The past 12 months has seen staff from Oxford Archaeology address many archaeological societies and community groups and attend conferences up and down the country. Here is a flavour of what we have been talking about.

The year began with talks by Lancaster staff to local historical and archaeological societies about the Windy Harbour Mesolithic and Neolithic site and an early medieval site at Dacre. Cambridge staff talked to members of FenArch about King's Lynn's salterns and addressed the Cambridgeshire Antiquarian Society conference about the Roman-period discoveries from the Wimpole car park excavations in 2018 and the 2022 excavations at Wintringham, another Roman settlement. Oxford staff gave a talk on the Roman iron bloomery at Bexhill at a joint conference of CBA South-East and the Kent Archaeological Society. Oxford staff also gave a talk to the Hanney History Group about The archaeology of Oxford in the 21st century, a volume of medieval sites in Oxford published jointly by Oxford Archaeology and the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society.

In February, the Priors Hall Neighbourhood Association (Northamptonshire) heard Cambridge staff speak about the excavation of a Roman temple-mausoleum at the Priors Hall site; in 2022, the project won the Current Archaeology Rescue Project of the Year. Oxford staff gave an online talk about Hinkley Point C Connection project, where impressive Roman settlement remains have been uncovered, and another talk was given to the Weston Turville Historical Society in Buckinghamshire about the Roman roadside settlement at Fleet Marston, excavated as part of the HS2 project.

Lancaster staff spoke in March at the 50th Annual Archaeology Forum hosted by the Lancaster University Regional Heritage Centre. Staff focused on their own experiences in archaeology, as well as aspects of archaeological practice, with talks on being an early career archaeologist, delivering social value from infrastructure projects, and Oxford Archaeology's 50 years of commercial archaeology. Oxford staff spoke to the Aston History Group following the excavation of a medieval site in the Oxfordshire village last year.

A talk about the excavations at Waterbeach Barracks was given by Cambridge staff to the Warboys Local History Society in April, and in May, Oxford staff talked to the Abingdon Area Archaeology and History Society about recent excavations in Abingdon. Oxford staff also gave talks on excavations within the medieval Jewry of Oxford and at Frewin Hall, also in Oxford, at the CBA South Midlands conference. Lancaster staff gave talks on the A585 Windy Harbour road scheme to Wigan Archaeological Society and Poulton-le-Fylde Historical Society.

Several staff members attended the conference of the European Association of Archaeologists in Belfast that took place in August and September. Staff presented papers on the Neolithic landscapes of Cumbria and North Lancashire, the early Neolithic in north-western Britain, and the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition. The community archaeology team also gave a talk, presenting their experience of the Archaeology Legacy project, while the Rewilding Later Prehistory team ran a session titled 'Hunting and gathering 'big data' on prehistoric entanglements with wildlife'. ■



Oxford Archaeology in the news

Edward Biddulph & Maria Bellissimo

Amazing discoveries and research by Oxford Archaeology attracted the attention of the local, national and international press throughout the year.

In December, the Oxford office team working at Olney, Buckinghamshire, uncovered a Roman mosaic associated with a large building. The subsequent report captured the interest of the local and national press, with stories appearing in, among others, the Milton Keynes Citizen, BBC Buckinghamshire, the Times, and the Daily Mail, and even reached the news desk of CNN!

The latest series of the BBC's Digging for Britain, which was broadcast in January, featured several Oxford Archaeology sites. Three projects – Roman settlements at Wintringham and Bishop's Stortford, investigated by the Cambridge office, and the medieval site at Frewin Hall in Oxford excavated by the Oxford office – were included. An independent project led by burials team member Dr Lauren McIntyre also featured. Following their appearance on the programme, the sites were picked up by local news outlets.

Items about our sites were covered by popular magazine Current Archaeology. Test-pits at

Verulamium Park, St Albans, featured in issue 394, issue 395 extensively reported on the Cambridge office's projects at Priors Hall, Northamptonshire, and Wheeley Barracks, Essex, and news of the Olney mosaic appeared in issue 399.

During the year, filming for the 2024 series of Digging for Britain took place at Alconbury Weald, another Roman settlement excavated by the Cambridge office. The programme crew also filmed fieldwork by Oxford Cotswold Archaeology on the A417 in Gloucestershire.

The survey at Uffington White Horse, which found that the horse had become slimmer over the centuries, was widely reported by the Oxford Mail, BBC, the Times, and the Daily Mail. The Carlisle Northern Development Route (CNDR) project garnered some great publicity ahead of publication with an article in the Independent. The story was picked up both regionally and internationally, including by the Miami Herald. And finally, the extraordinary find in a Roman context of a plesiosaur's fossilised vertebra at a site in the north of Cambridge was reported by the BBC and Cambridgeshire News and was later picked up by various other outlets abroad. ■

Research seminars

Liz Popescu & Edward Biddulph

Oxford Archaeology continued its online research seminar series in 2023 with a further two events, one looking at medieval urban provisioning and resourcing, the other on life and death in the industrial era.

The seminar on medieval urban provisioning, held in January, examined how medieval towns across England were supplied with food and other goods, focusing on evidence from Carlisle, Oxford, Norwich, King's Lynn and Colchester. It explored themes linked to a wide range of occupations and related products, such as pottery, foodstuffs, metals, charcoal, timber, and salt. It also considered the use of animal by-products in medieval trades, including wool, leather and horn, as well as the environments (such as woodland) that provided resources.

This was followed in June by the seminar on life and death in the industrial era. This explored the archaeological and osteological findings from two major early modern burial grounds:



the Radcliffe Infirmary burial ground (1770–1852) in Oxford, excavated in 2013–2014; and Trinity burial ground (1785–1861) in Hull, investigated in 2020–2022. Both sites provided a rich dataset, not usually encountered in burials from earlier time periods, with which to explore aspects of life and death during the industrial era. The wealth of the information was magnified with the addition of parish records, other documentary sources and epigraphic data.

Recordings of both seminars are available to view on YouTube. You can also catch up on previous seminars, which investigate the late Mesolithic to Bronze Age landscape of Windy Harbour near Blackpool, the middle Bronze Age revolution, Iron Age farmsteads, settlements and landscapes of Roman Britain, and early medieval cemeteries in south-eastern and north-western England. ■

Knowledge Hub

Liz Popescu

In this, our 50th year, we are excited to announce the launch of Knowledge Hub, the online portal to our publications, unpublished ('grey literature') reports, research, stories and much more.

The idea for Knowledge Hub arose from our publication policy, building on concepts for layered dissemination, with linkage to client reports and elements of the digital research archive (databases and so on).

The resulting interactive hub forms an exciting showcase for our work. It will continue to be developed – coming soon: searchable maps of our sites and projects and a virtual museum! – but we have started with our library of publications and grey literature, together with research themes (such as 'Conflict' and 'Climate Change'), which highlight our staff's expertise across a wide range of landscapes, geographical areas, site types and specialisms.

Knowledge Hub reflects our standing as a national leader in archaeological publication, research and community engagement. We hope you enjoy exploring the resource and discovering stories from across the centuries. ■



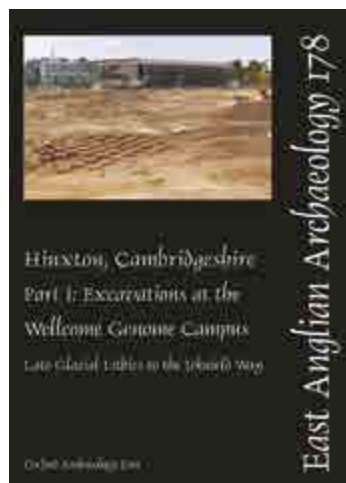
Oxford Archaeology in print

Edward Biddulph

This year a further four volumes joined our extensive catalogue of monographs and other books.

Hinxton, Cambridgeshire. Part I: Excavations at the Wellcome Genome Campus reports on investigations carried out between 1993 and 2014 on behalf of the Wellcome Trust. Hinxton's post-glacial valley landscape

of indigenous woodland, streams and seasonally flooded pools attracted Palaeolithic and Mesolithic communities to the area, to work flint and to hunt. Tree clearance to permit exploitation of the fertile valley sides began in the early Neolithic. The increasingly 'ritual' or ceremonial significance of the landscape is



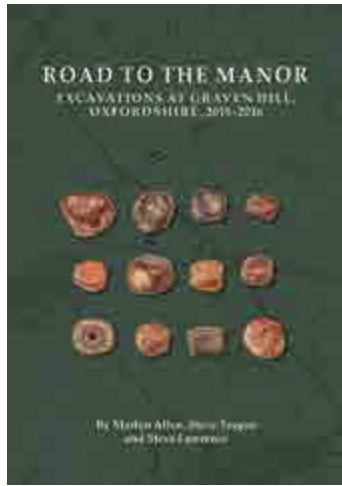
indicated by the discovery of a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age shaft containing a substantial assemblage of worked flint and Beaker pottery.

This theme persisted throughout the later prehistoric and early Roman periods, which saw the construction of two later Iron Age square enclosures – the largest of which appears to have been related to mortuary practices – followed by a small timber shrine. Agricultural exploitation of the valley seems to have been almost continuous until the middle Roman period, and on a scale commensurate with supplying the nearby fort and Roman town at Great Chesterford. During the later Roman period, the farmland lay largely fallow, with only sporadic quarrying taking place.

Road to the manor: Excavations at Graven Hill, Oxfordshire, 2015–2016 describes the results of excavations at the former site of MoD Bicester, a large military storage and distribution centre built during the Second World War. The first sign of occupation dated to the middle Iron Age in the form of a small settlement on the northern slope

of the hill. A late Iron Age settlement to the north-west appeared to have been abandoned shortly after the Roman invasion, perhaps as a direct consequence of the arrival of the army at Alchester. The town of Bicester originated in the 6th century AD. A farmstead was established in the late 11th century, developing in the 13th century with a series of masonry

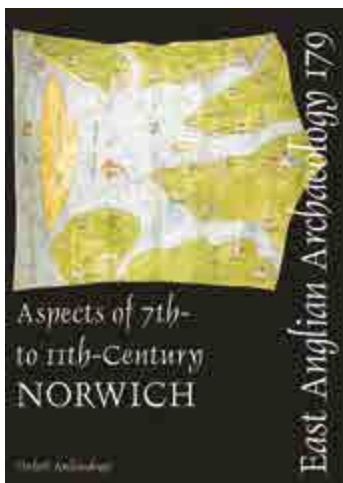
buildings arranged around a central courtyard, linked via a road to the deserted medieval village at Wretchwick. The farmstead was abandoned about the same time as the village in the mid-14th century, perhaps as a result of the Black Death. The land was subsequently used for agriculture until the development of MoD Bicester in the 1940s.



remains of the 7th to 11th centuries. The excavations were significant in revealing in situ archaeological features of middle Saxon date, along with a range of contemporary finds such as a dispersed coin hoard of the late 7th or early 8th century, sufficient to add weight to the hypothesis of an early trading centre. This new analysis provides the opportunity to review aspects such as the pre-Norman settlement and its relationship to the river, trade and overseas contacts, agricultural activity and the fishing industry.

Coming soon: **Salt-winning on the Lyn: Anglo-Saxon and medieval industry at Gaywood's North Marsh, King's Lynn** provides a synthetic overview of the salt-making evidence from the 8th century at the site of a former saltmarsh on the fringe of modern King's Lynn. This marshland was rich in salt or 'white gold', gathered from the brine-saturated muds and processed using the post-Roman technique of sand-washing. An opportunity to investigate several of the saltern mounds mapped in this area was prompted by the Lynnsport and Greenpark Avenue Primary School developments, leading to a three-year scheme of topographical survey, evaluation trenching and targeted excavation. The analysis used a suite of scientific techniques underpinned by historical research and Bayesian modelling to reconstruct the saltmarsh environment and how it changed over time.

In addition to monographs, we continue to publish site reports and research in county, national and international archaeological journals. A prehistoric site at Worthy Down near Winchester, a Bronze Age barrow and Iron Age settlement at Shinfield in Berkshire, Bronze Age activity at Eye Airfield in Suffolk, an Iron Age and Roman settlement in Abingdon, Roman enclosures in Milton Keynes, Roman sites at Longford and Eastington in Gloucestershire, and Anglo-Saxon and medieval occupation in Wallingford are among several articles published this year. ■



Aspects of 7th- to 11th-century Norwich focuses on five excavations, undertaken by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit and its successor NPS Archaeology between 1999 and 2008 and prepared for publication by Oxford Archaeology's Cambridge office, in the historic core of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian settlement. Lying

on either side of the River Wensum, linked by a crossing, the investigations revealed archaeological





Photo: Camille Guezennec

A Emily Abrehart, Rebecca Aitken, Chloe Akhurst, Ashleigh Alexander, Leigh Allen, Martyn Allen, Rebecca Allen, Tim Allen, Victor Alonso, Lily Andrews, Mary Andrews, Katrina Anker, Stephen Arrow, Gemma Asbury, Ben Attfield **B** Robert Backhouse, Edward Baker, William Baker, Narita Banks, Alexandra Baranowski, Karen Barker, Richard Barker, Freya Bates, Sebastian Batt, Maryne Baylet, Heather Beckitt, James Bell, Maria Bellissimo, Liberty Bennett, Severine Bezie, Edward Biddulph, Lawrence Billington, Oliver Bircham, Charlotte Bishop, Kathryn Blackburn, Jody Bloom, Anne-Laure Bollen, Christopher Booth, Rona Booth, John Boothroyd, Brandon Bottomley, Jacob Brader, Matt Bradley, Kate Brady, Jeremy Briscoombe, Rose Britton, Daniel Broadbent, Benjamin Brown, David Brown, Ellie Brown, Fraser Brown, Richard Brown, David Browne, Tom Bruce, Jamie Buckley, Hannah Bullmore, Ansel Burn, Anni Byard **C** Vanessa Cadman, Lauryn Cahill, Benjamin Camp, John Carne, Lauren Carpenter, Hannah Cavers, Carl Champness, Matthew Claridge, Christopher Clark, Graeme Clarke, Rachel Clarke, Stephen Clarke, Edmund Cole, Bethany Coleman, Mark Collins, Elizabeth Connelly, Jake Connolly, Sharon Cook, Anwen Cooper, Clemency Cooper, Samuel Corke, Emma Corker, Vitor Costa, John Cotter, Charlie Cox, Nicholas Cox, Martha Craven, Nicola Crawford, Erik Crnkovich, James Cross, Mark Curtis **D** Sarah Dalton, Megan Daniels, Alex Davies, Tom Davis, Rosalind Davison, Alexanne Dawson, Selina Dean, Brian Dean, Peter Dearlove, Aleksandra Deegan, Alessandro Dell'anno, Antony Dickson, Emily Dingler Cantu, Jensen Dodd, Mark Dodd, Natasha Dodwell, Ciara Donnelly, Michael Donnelly, Aiden Dooley, Denise Druce, Girija Dudhat, Paul Dunn **E** Jack Easen, Vedika Eastwood, Matthew Edwards, Jessica Elleray, Charles Elliman, Lewis Ernest, Gary Evans, Helen Evans, Thomas Evershed **F** Dylan Fabian, James Fairbairn, Aiden Farnan, Amy Farrer, Adam Fellingham, Joseph Ferrier, Daniel Firth, James Fish, Emma Fishwick, Carole Fletcher, Rosie Fletcher, Ben Ford, Deirdre Forde, Stuart Foreman, Rachel Fosberry, Abigail Foster, Hayley Foster, James Fox, Yerai Francisco Benet **G** Leo Gage, Mario Galandak, Kendall Gammon, Lucy Gane, Noah Gawthorn, Anne-Marie Geary, Mark Gibson, Nicola Gifford-Cowan, Jon Gill, Nicholas Gilmour, Emily Globe, Liberty Goldspink, Marta Golebiewska, Isobel Gooch, Mariusz Gorniak, Amy Graham, Steven Graham, Andrew Greef, James Green, Gillian Greer, Richard Gregory, Stuart Griffiths, Jordan Grimshaw, Camille Guezennec, Molly

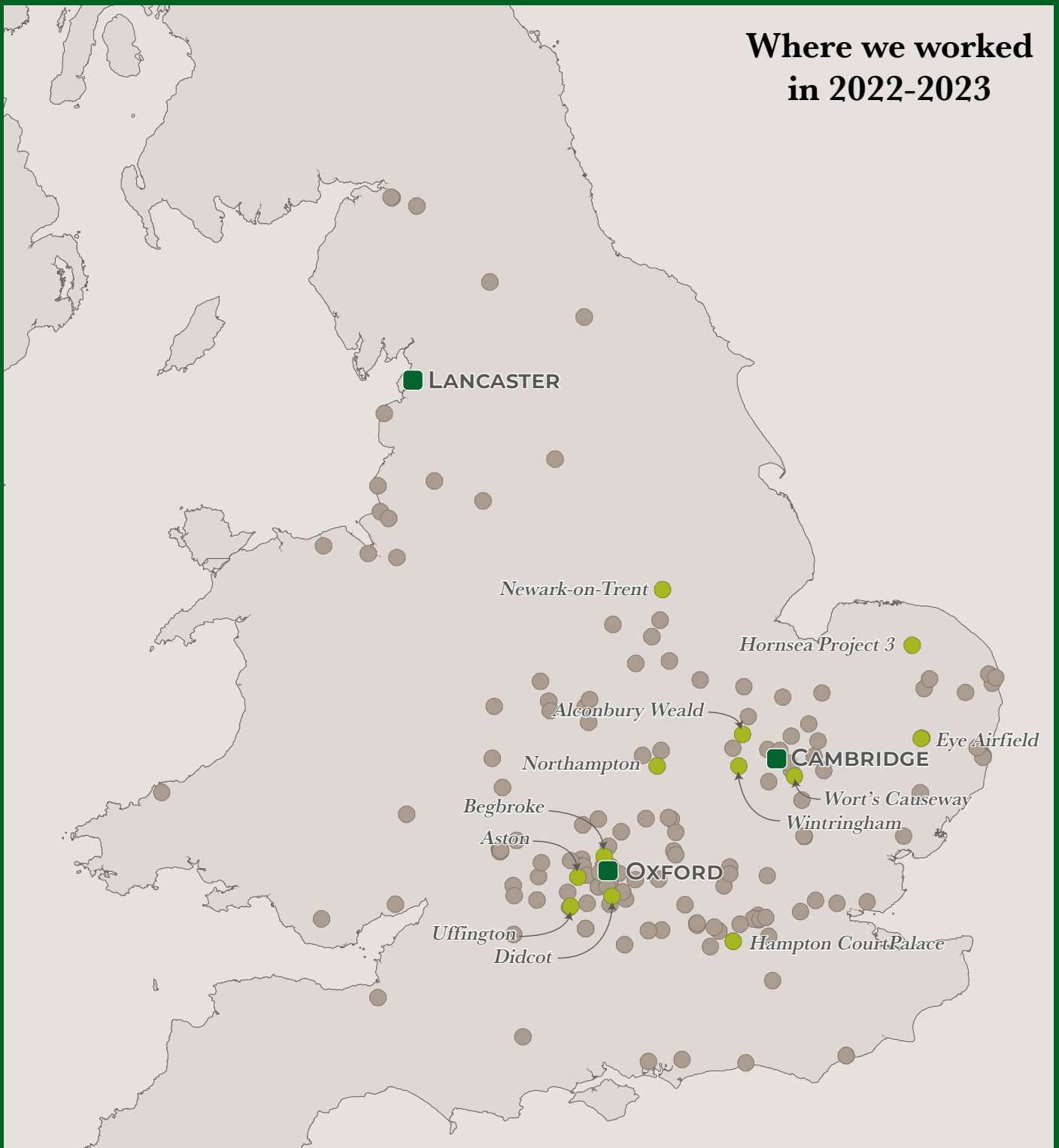
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*Includes all staff employed between November 2022 and September 2023

Where we worked in 2022-2023



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