



Newsletter 144

Spring 2019

Introduction

Welcome to the GlosArch Spring Newsletter for 2019. As this is my first newsletter I should like to thank Mike Milward for his help during the handover period. Hopefully not too much has gone awry since I have taken over as Hon Sec, but there is still time. I would welcome suggestions for future newsletters and of course, any contributions. In addition to reports on recent fieldwork by GlosArch members, you will find details of the Summer programme of activities. There will be further fieldwork opportunities over the Summer months on Cleve Common and possibly elsewhere. Details will be circulated shortly. The other exciting announcement is the course in Cheltenham on recording disarticulated skeletal remains, being held in August. For further information read on.

Excavation Report

Investigations into Ancient Tree Planting at National Trust (NT) Lodge Park, Sherborne,

November and December 2018

Lodge Park is a 17th century deer park, owned by the Lords of Sherborne until 1983 when it was bequeathed to the National Trust. In the 18th century Charles Bridgeman began to landscape the park with formal tree avenues and water features, some of which still remain.

The National Trust in January 2019 was engaged in a replanting scheme to replace the missing trees on the ends of the Grand Avenue in an effort to recreate the features shown on original documented maps and plans of the park. To guide their tree location, fairly large tree holes are present where presumably the old trees once stood. These holes are also prominent on a recent Lidar scan of the park.

Prior to replanting it was decided to investigate a small number of these holes to see if any remains of the original tree planting could be found.

If so we might be able to determine the fate of the trees themselves.

Questions to be answered are: - Were the trees actually planted, did they survive or were they uprooted later. If ploughing and re-cultivation featured in this area fledgling trees may have been simply ploughed out?

In November 2018, the National Trust requested Gloucester Archaeology to excavate a group of three tree holes on the southern arm of the Grand Avenue. In each hole trench sections would be examined, drawn and photographed and subsequently planned.

The first two trenches were cut into shallow soil, lying above brash and Fuller's Earth clay layers, respectively. They yielded no evidence of tree remains. The third more prominent hole trench, dug 116m further south, however showed evidence of an organic stratum cut into the brash. A discarded tree fragment was also found. Excavation of this northern section did not show further evidence of the stratum the southern trench section was studied. With the darker soil cut more prominent here this section was also excavated. Here a rich organic layer was found, containing a substantial tree and root fragment (measuring 25cm by 20cm by 10cm). Other small finds included over a dozen 19th century nails and small specks of carbon.

The dark, organic soil encountered in this hole and the tree fragments found within it appears to have been associated with some initial tree growth, although the girths were moderate. The presence in this trench of so many nails also suggests a simple tree guard or support structure may have been in use, but all traces of such a structure have been lost. Surface blackening seen on both the wood fragments suggests that the tree was cut or fell down and stumps destroyed by fire or left to rot in the hole. Reasons for this may have been inadequate growth rates and perhaps a subsequent change in planting scheme policy.

In a written report to NT it was stated that whilst no definite answers were found for the fate of the Bridgeman trees on the southern arm of the Grand Avenue there seems to be strong evidence that some trees were planted and possibly cut off at their bases. Stumps may then have been burned. Other trees on higher ground, in poorer soils showed an absence of organic dark soil. They may never have been planted or died before they were established, since some ground preparation was evidently made.

Les Comtesse

Free Training for GlosArch Members: Recording Human Remains

By Sophie Beckett

At the members' meeting in January, I introduced myself as a new member of GlosArch and spoke about 'Public Participation in Human Osteoarchaeology'. I used the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP, www.sharp.org.uk) as a case-study example. This is a community archaeology project in Norfolk. I have worked with SHARP for over 15 years, assisting in the recording and analysis of human skeletal remains (osteology). In my talk, I mentioned a grant application that SHARP had submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the free training opportunity that this would bring to GlosArch members. What I can now announce, is that SHARP was successful in its application and was awarded the grant (*Volunteering with a Disarticulated Community: Towards Re-association of Anglo-Saxon Bones*). So, if you are interested in

learning about human osteoarchaeology – we would like to hear from you. Read on to find out more!



Figure 1: Location of Sedgeford, North West Norfolk.

SHARP was established in 1996 and is one of the largest and longest-running independent archaeological training and research projects in Britain. Its primary objective is to investigate the entire range of past human settlement and land use in the northwest Norfolk parish of Sedgeford (see figure 1). Archaeological education, development and public involvement are key principles of the project. SHARP is both managed and staffed solely by volunteers for all aspects of its activities and welcomes all volunteers with an interest in archaeology regardless of background and previous experience. It does this by providing on-site training courses and supervision. The majority of activities are carried out during a six week ‘summer’ season which runs in July and August each year in Sedgeford (see figure 2). However, once

the summer season closes, many of SHARP’s volunteers continue to work for the project throughout the year from their home bases – for me this is Gloucestershire. Thanks to the National Lottery funding SHARP will be running a training course outside of the summer season, outside of Sedgeford. SHARP is bringing its osteology to Gloucestershire as the course will be delivered by me and hosted by GlosArch!



Figure 1: Location of Sedgeford, North West Norfolk.

Figure 2: SHARP excavations during its ‘summer’ season. Boneyard field trenches.

Between 1996 and 2007 SHARP excavated approximately 300 discrete burials from a cemetery located on the ‘Boneyard’ field in the village (see figure 2). Over 100 burials have also been excavated from the same site by other groups, before 1996. The burials were west-east aligned and remains were in a supine position. Radiocarbon dating analyses have been carried out for some burials and the results have provided a Middle Saxon date for the cemetery (c600 – 850 AD). The Human Remains team at SHARP, with help from many volunteers, have recorded the articulated skeletons to current international osteological standards.

The population represented by the cemetery site is also characterised by evidence of a settlement and large-scale industrial processing area in the form of a complex of grain drying ovens. These sites are in close proximity to the cemetery and consistent in date. Such comprehensive evidence for the life and death of one archaeological population is rare. The scale, range and preservation of this Anglo-Saxon site make the skeletal

collection both regionally and nationally important for Anglo-Saxon studies (SHARP TEAM 2014).



Figure 3: 'Charnel pit' of human skeletal remains

However, many of the burials were incomplete. Due to intensive use of the cemetery during the Anglo-Saxon period and anthropogenic use of the site since, previous disturbance of the articulated burials was a common finding on excavation. A large quantity (60 skeletal archive boxes) of disarticulated remains were also recovered. Some of this was from outside of burial fills such as a collection of bones in a 'charnel pit' (see figure 3). Some was charnel placed within a grave fill around an individual when the task of digging the grave disturbed bones from a previous one (see figure 4).

Many of the disarticulated remains likely represent

missing elements from the articulated burials. Evidence for this is demonstrated by a case study example of skeleton S0221.



Figure 4: Charnel (within red boxes) placed around the edge of a grave, within the grave fill.

Disarticulated bone from nearby contexts was re-associated to this particular skeleton at the

time of post-excavation processing. This was due to a chance observation by one of the members of the human remains team and was possible because of consistency in bone pathology (probable rheumatoid arthritis, see figure 5). This re-association enabled the publication of the findings for S0221 (McKinnon et al. 2013) and the resultant journal paper has since been cited in the 2017 Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England (APABE 2017).



The National Lottery funded project will focus on the assemblage of disarticulated bones to complete the

Figure 5: Foot bones from S0221 – an adult male of approximate height 178 cm (5' 11”) with a range of pathologies including probable rheumatoid arthritis of the hands and feet and a partially healed severe fracture of the femur (thigh bone).

osteological recording of the Anglo-Saxon skeletal collection. It will achieve this by providing three free training courses for volunteers to gain hands-on experience of osteology. The course on-site at Sedgeford in July 2019 is now fully booked. SHARP will also be running this course in summer 2020. But you don't have to go to Norfolk to get involved with this project! A Cheltenham-based course is being run for GlosArch members and other groups local to Gloucestershire. See below for course details.

References:

APABE (2017) Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England, Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England, 2nd Edition, England. Historic England (2018) The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project, Historic England, Swindon, UK

McKinnon K, Van Twest M, Hatton M (2013) A probable case of rheumatoid arthritis from the middle Anglo-Saxon period, *International Journal of Palaeopathology*, 3, 2, 122 – 127

SHARP TEAM (2014) *Digging Sedgeford: A People's Archaeology*, Poppyland Publishing, Cromer

Course Details

Title: Recording Disarticulated and Commingled Human Remains in Osteoarchaeology

Venue: The Hive Community Space, Cheltenham

(within Sports Direct Gym building), Tewkesbury Road, GL51 0SJ

Dates: Monday 19th – Friday 23rd August 2019 plus presentation at GlosArch members' meeting date tbc (Autumn 2019)

Times: 9 am – 5 pm (Mon – Thurs), 9 am – 15:30 Friday

Cost: Lunch catering fee £15 (to be paid to confirm a place). Most dietary requirements can be catered for.

The course assumes no prior knowledge of either archaeology or osteology (see figure 6). Students will learn how to identify disarticulated and fragmented human skeletal elements and how to record them. This will include learning how to estimate age-at-death and biological sex, take osteo-metric measurements for stature estimation, record non-metric variation, and describe pathological lesions. Students will also learn about the different causes of disarticulated and commingled human skeletal assemblages in archaeological contexts, the common challenges encountered when recording such collections as well as different approaches to recording and analysis. In addition, attendees will consider the potential of re-association of disarticulated human bone to the articulated skeletons within the SHARP assemblage and give a short group presentation to the public at the end of the course to summarise their newly gained knowledge and findings from their recording. The course presentations will be held at a Gloucestershire Archaeology members' meeting in Autumn 2019. The course content is taught through short lectures or participative seminar sessions and practical recording sessions. During the practical sessions, participants work in small groups of 2 to 4 people to apply what they have

learnt to the direct, hands-on analysis of disarticulated skeletal remains, with the help and supervision of course tutors.

The minimum age requirement for this course is 16 years of age. Persons aged 16 and 17 may attend unaccompanied with parental or guardian permission. Course attendees must be a member of Gloucestershire Archaeology or another local participating community archaeology group. There is no course fee but there is a total cost of £15 for lunch catering. This must be paid to confirm a place on the course. Menu: (Mon) Platters of sandwiches and wraps with Crisps and sausage rolls, (Tues) Beef lasagne with garlic bread, (Wed) Jacket potato with beans, cheese and salad, (Thurs) Chicken and vegetable casserole with rice, (Fri) Sausage and vegetable pasta bake with salad. Fruit, drink and biscuit refreshments will also be available at break times. Please specify dietary requirements on the booking form, most can be accommodated.

Course participants are encouraged to reinforce their learning by also volunteering for further, free, supervised recording sessions at Sedgford, Norfolk in summer 2020 (dates to be confirmed and further details will be provided during the course).

To book a place please use the booking form at the end of the Newsletter

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2019

DAY TRIP

Saturday 15 June

Corinium Museum Resource Centre at Northleach

A rare opportunity to see items that are not currently on display at the Corinium Museum. We are promised a tour of the architectural stone store, highlighting some of the best pieces; a presentation on human remains, with a focus on two individuals and what can be deduced from the remains and burial context; a talk with a selection of pottery and small finds from some of the best sites - prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval. The tour, some presentations on foot, some seated, will take two hours.

The Resource Centre is located next to the Cotswolds Discovery Centre and Café, which also includes the Old Prison and the Rural Life collection of agricultural machinery, both well worth a visit. Also in Northleach is one of the major “wool” churches of the region, St Peter and St Paul is a masterpiece of the Cotswold Perpendicular style. A walk of less than one mile up the lane adjacent to the Resource Centre leads to the parish church of

Hampnett, one of the best Norman churches around. Besides the cafe at the Discovery Centre, there are pubs and restaurants in Northleach.

Because Northleach is not far from Gloucester or Cheltenham, **this will not be a coach trip**, but members will drive themselves; there is plenty of parking at the Resource Centre. Instead of paying for a coach, the **£11 per head** charged for this trip will cover the fee levied by Corinium for the visit. Please arrive by 10.15 for a 10.30 start.

The Corinium Museum Resource Centre is on the A429 Fosse Way at Northleach, it is located to the right of the Cotswolds Discovery Centre and Café. The postcode is GL54 3JH.

To book, send cheque to M W Milward, 1 Chase View, Prestbury, Cheltenham, GL52 3AL with a note stating how many people. Closing date for booking is Monday 10 June. Please make cheques payable to Gloucestershire Archaeology. Please book early to ensure a place as there is maximum limit of 20 people for this tour.

EVENING/WEEKEND TRIPS

Sunday 19 May

Offa's Dyke

Tim Copeland has been working with other experts on the Gloucestershire section of Offa's Dyke, and has offered GlosArch a Sunday afternoon walk to view sections of the Dyke. Park in the Tidenham Chase car park (on the B4228, NGR ST558992, nearest postcode NP16 7JR) at 2pm and Tim will lead us to the Devil's Pulpit and Offa's Dyke, and we will follow the path to overlook Tintern Abbey, learning about the Dyke en route.

Wednesday 5 June

Minchinhampton

Nick Hurst, Chairman of Minchinhampton Parish Council and GlosArch member, will give us a tour of this historic Cotswold town. Starting at the Old Lodge, in the middle of Minchinhampton Common, GL6 9AQ, we will cross the common, looking at the scheduled ancient monuments, and go into the town via the deer park. The prosperity of the 17th and 18th century, when the town was a centre for the cloth trade, is reflected in many fine buildings, and the (part 14th century) church is particularly interesting. The return walk to the Old Lodge is via Box. Park at the Old Lodge for a 7pm start. The walk will cover about 2 - 2.5 miles.

Wednesday 26 June

Bishops Cleeve

David Aldred, who wrote the definitive history of Bishops Cleeve, never stops researching and has discovered more of the past of this village. He will conduct a tour of the village for us, recounting its fascinating history. We can park in Tesco's car park, but enter off Church Road by the Royal Oak (GL52 8LR), and park at that end of the car park. Start at 7pm.

Mike Milward

Booking Form for GlosArch/SHARP Recording Human Remains Course

Dates: Monday 19th – Friday 23rd August 2019 plus presentation at GlosArch members' evening, date tbc (Autumn 2019)

Times: 9 am – 5 pm (Mon – Thurs), 9 am – 15:30 Friday

Cost: Non-refundable lunch catering fee £15 (to be paid to confirm a place). Most dietary requirements can be catered for.

By participating in this course, attendees can become an 'active' member of SHARP. This is not a paid membership but a term described in SHARP's constitution as 'anyone who has volunteered or provided services to SHARP during the last two years'. Membership includes eligibility to vote at the SHARP AGM and members may be sent information about SHARP activities, by email. Please tick this box if you want to opt out of membership.

The course is open to **paid-up members of GlosArch** and other **local archaeological societies** on a first-come, first-served basis. 20 places are available. You will be notified if you have a place once your application form has been received by the Hon Sec of GlosArch (phil.cox@doctors.org.uk) when payment will be required to secure your place. Should you cancel, a refund will only be made if your place can be filled.

By completing the booking form and participating in this course, attendees give permission for SHARP to use relevant information for evaluation and reporting attendance figures to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Name

Email

Society membership (e.g. GlosArch).....

Age (if under 18)

Name and Signature of parent/guardian if under 18 years of age

.....

Dietary requirements

Mobile Number

Emergency contact name and number

.....

SHARP membership (Please tick as appropriate)

..... Yes I wish to join SHARP

..... No I do not wish to join SHARP

..... I am already a SHARP member

Please return the completed form by email to the Hon Sec at: phil.cox@doctors.org.uk or by post to Dr Phil Cox, Hon Sec GlosArch, 15 Lansdown Parade, Cheltenham, GL50 2LH.



What lies beneath the South Lawn at Ashton Court Estate?

Opportunities to get involved in Archaeological Excavations with Archeoscan this summer

This is a rare opportunity to take part in excavations on an iconic Bristol landmark Ashton Court. This is a great opportunity to engage with the history of Ashton Court and help to add more to the understanding of the long and varied history of this famous Bristol landmark.

When is it happening?

On selective days from 23rd June to 18th July 2019, a community archaeological investigation will be conducted to investigate the results of a geophysical survey carried out in 2018. During last year's dry summer parch marks appeared on the South Lawn at Ashton Court, hinting at a hidden history waiting to be uncovered. A geophysical survey of the lawn identified possible archaeological remains that took the form of potential rooms of a building.

An engraving, dated 1791, shows a wing of the mansion that no longer exists where the scorch marks appeared. This wing was removed during alterations to the Court, at the same time that the current double frontage of the building was constructed.

It is anticipated that some contemporary garden features may also be waiting to be uncovered.

A number of Bristol schools have been invited to participate in the excavation as part of Historic England's Heritage Schools programme. Students will learn about the rich heritage of the grand Ashton Court buildings and have the chance to experience hands-on excavation.

The excavation is being conducted by Archeoscan with the kind permission of Bristol City Council and supported by Artspace Lifespace and Historic England. These popular digging experiences cost £30pp per day. Anyone wishing to participate in the excavation should contact Archeoscan on archeoscan@hotmail.co.uk for more information or to book a place. Further details are on the Archeoscan website www.archeoscan.com



Historic England