



UNCOVERING OUR PAST TOGETHER



## NEWSLETTER 139

Summer/Autumn 2016

The Glosarch Summer Programme went off well, with an all-day outing by coach to the famous Three Castles in the Welsh Marches, an evening guided visit to three historic churches in the Churn valley and a Sunday morning spent examining some rare relics of Second World War Stop Line defences near Bath.

### **THE THREE CASTLES** by David Jones (Photos by author)

An early start from Cheltenham and Gloucester saw Glosarch members on their way into deepest Herefordshire and Gwent border country in search of the three trilateral castles of the Welsh Marches. Unfortunately, our scheduled guide, Tim Copeland, had to miss the outing due an optical impairment leaving Mike to enlighten us with Tim's notes.

The White Castle appeared first from the deep, single track lanes. Taking its name from the covering of white plaster applied to advertise where Welsh aggression would be challenged, the White Castle made a strong statement of Norman intent in securing England's border with Wales in the late 12<sup>th</sup> c. Indeed, although all three castles were granted to Hubert de Burgh by King John in 1201, the White Castle remained a purely military outpost, unlike the other two which were eventually modified to provide a degree of comparatively comfortable living. It is still a strikingly impressive castle, almost a model toy with its four cylindrical towers and deeply-sunk, water-filled moat. The high curtain wall can be dated to 1184-86.



The second castle on the trip was Skenfrith which seems oddly placed in a valley overlooked by the foothills of the Black Mountains to the north-west, but it stands on the Monnow at an important crossing. Originally built hurriedly as an earth and timber motte and bailey, it was later rebuilt by de Burgh, on the same motte, as a stone construction surrounded by an impressively high curtain wall, probably in material gathered from a not too distant quarry. The overall site-plan is said to show the influence of contemporary early 13<sup>th</sup> c French fortress design on de Burgh's new castle.

A pleasant lunch at Garway was enhanced, for those who took the opportunity, with a visit to Garway church.

After that came Grosmont castle, the third of Hubert de Burgh's trilateral castles, which again shows great strong cylindrical towers on all corners, but the original simple military fortress later became more of a moated country dwelling considerably modified by the house of Lancaster during the 14<sup>th</sup> c.



Finally, and unexpectedly, we were taken on to the little known, but lovely, castle at Longtown, just into Herefordshire under the brooding eastern back-bone of the Black Mountains. Another hurriedly erected motte and bailey, again probably originally earth and timber, it was

rebuilt with a great stone keep and inner, then later, outer, baileys, of a size unusually grand for the area, commanding the long north-south street of the village. The whole plan is thought to have utilised an existing Saxon, or even pre-Saxon, earthwork.

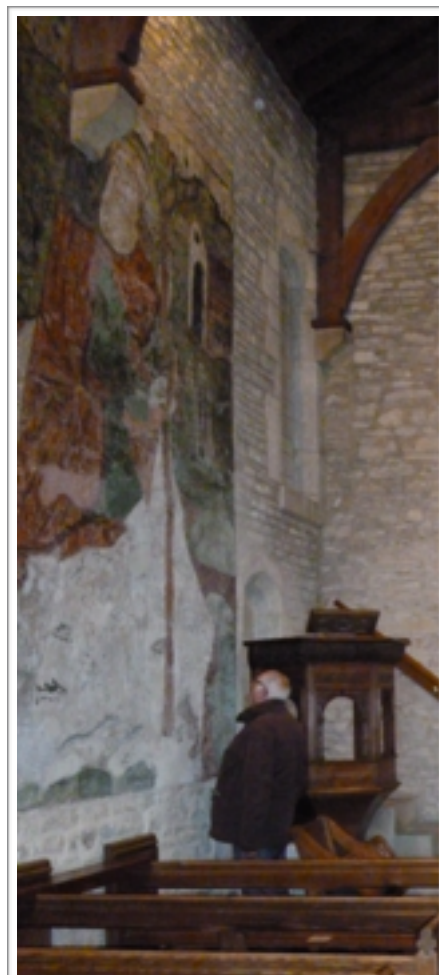
### **THE THREE CHURCHES** by Mike Milward (Photo by A.Newcombe)

Steven Blake of the Gloucestershire Local History Association led a guided tour of the churches at Baunton, North Cerney and Rendcomb, each one of great historic interest in different ways. At St Mary Magdalene, Baunton, there is the dramatic survival of the 15<sup>th</sup> c St Christopher wall painting with much fascinating detail still visible.

At All Saints, North Cerney, there is a Norman tower and tympanum and an exquisitely carved late 15<sup>th</sup> c stone pulpit as well as some early stained glass and, on the exterior, two mysterious incised drawings of a leopard and a mythical beast.

St Peter's at Rendcomb has much in common with the famous church at Fairford, with medieval screenwork and early 16<sup>th</sup> c stained glass. The quite exceptional Norman font, once used as a garden ornament, but now in pride of place in the church, is described as a superb work of art. That would have been worth the visit on its own, but the whole interior of the building, being readied for a wedding the following day, was beautiful and full of interest at every turn.

Steven brought all these churches to life for us, filling in detail and context that would otherwise have been missed. An excellent way to spend a summer evening.





## **STOP LINE DEFENCES** by Mike Milward (Photo by P. McCarthy)

Dr Philip Rowe followed up his winter lecture with a tour of the rare surviving defensive features constructed early in WWII. Philip explained how the deep ditch, still to be seen in woodland outside Bath, would have been planned and dug, and how the pillboxes and slit trenches also surviving in the wood were positioned to support the operation of the ditch in stopping the progress of tanks. The purpose of this Stop Line was to defend Bristol in the event of a successful invasion in the South-East, but a change of policy on how defence should be organised in such circumstances meant that the whole line soon became obsolete. What remains in the woods, a microcosm of the miles of defences constructed across open country, is still impressive.



## **STILL TO COME.....**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Visit the Archaeoscan excavation at **Hanging Hill**. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can read the brief report by Tony Roberts on this year's work at both Doynton and Hanging Hill. On the afternoon of Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Tony will kindly show us the excavation at Hanging Hill before it closes for the season.

*Directions: The site is East of Upton Cheyney, South Gloucestershire. Uphill from the pub in Upton Cheyney (The Upton Inn), Manor Farm shop is on the left. Just past the Farm shop is a right hand turn called Lansdown Lane. It is a no through lane but follow it all the way up as far as you can ( 1 mile) and park in the field at the very end on the left. We will meet you there and take you to site. Post code BS30 6NF.*

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> Nov.** Visit the **King's Walk Bastion** in Gloucester city centre. Andrew Armstrong, the Gloucester City Archaeologist, will show us the King's Walk Bastion, an impressive medieval addition to a length of intact Roman wall buried beneath the King's Walk shopping centre. Because this fascinating relic of Gloucester's distant past has been flooded for decades, it has been inaccessible, but it has been pumped out to go on display.

*Directions: Meet at 5.00pm on 16<sup>th</sup> Nov at the King's Square end of King's Walk covered mall, outside Costa Coffee. Numbers will be limited to 14 - first come, first served.*

## **VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY: an offer to Glosarch members**

### **A History of the County of Gloucester, Volume XIII: The Vale of Gloucester and Leadon Valley**

Boydell & Brewer is delighted to offer the members of Gloucestershire Archaeology a 25% discount on the latest volume in the Victoria County History Gloucestershire series. Edited by J.H. Chandler and A.R.J. Jurica , A History of the County of Gloucester, Volume XIII: The Vale of Gloucester and Leadon Valley describes the varied agrarian history and industrial activity of thirteen ancient parishes. The 25% discount will make the price £71.25 (instead of £95.00 RRP). Orders can be placed by phone on 01243 843 291, by fax on 01243 843 303, by email at [customer@wiley.com](mailto:customer@wiley.com) or online at [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com). Postage is £3.70 in the UK, £12.75 per book to mainland Europe and £14.95 per book outside Europe. Please quote the offer code BB148 to ensure that the discount is given. The offer ends 31st December 2016.

## **UPDATE ON ARCHEOSCAN EXCAVATIONS AT DOYNTON AND HANGING HILL ROMAN SITES**

by Tony Roberts

Over the past few years Archeoscan has been excavating at two Roman sites in South Gloucestershire located between Bristol and Bath. Some Glosarch members have participated in the digs. The first site is a Roman villa located at Doynton where we have slowly been exploring the extensive building complex. Previous years have seen a hypocaust uncovered and walls still surviving 6 courses high. This year the excavations focussed on one of the rooms at the East of the building to try and determine the orientation of the complex. It soon became apparent that we were on the rear of the building in an area of possible workshops. A small iron smelting pit complete with tap slag helped to confirm this. The rear room was built over a ditch which had been exploited by sinking a stone lined well down below the water table in the ditch to access the water. This meant that the rear of the building was less stable but very thick clay floors had been laid in an attempt to address this. Unlike last year when many coins, and a complete flask laid as an offering

were recovered, this room had a more industrial feeling. As usual much residual pottery was recovered. Next season it is anticipated that we will move to the front of the building and examine the area next to the hypocaust that was discovered in 2014. Hopefully more of the higher status living accommodation will be located there. *(photo taken by drone by Nick Turner)*



The summer dig has been at the Hanging Hill site a few miles South of Doynton. Located on the edge of the Cotswolds, with a fantastic view out over what would have been Trajectus (modern Keynsham), this site

was first noted in 1865 by John Irvine, the Bath city architect, but then lost to knowledge until we started to explore the fields again in 2012. Last year a larger excavation revealed the footprint of an outbuilding with associated ovens that had been remodelled during the Roman period. It was clear from the amount of painted wall plaster and higher status domestic artefacts recovered, as well as good quality Samian ware, that we were looking at a high status site but that the building we had exposed was not the origin. This year the excavation site is further up the hill but still within the enclosure boundary. The results have at the time of writing been spectacular. A very well constructed wall 1.3m thick with a courtyard abutting it to the East has been uncovered. This is a wall of exceptional size and quality that dwarfs last year's building and is hinting at an exceptional structure on the side of the hill. Coins of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries have been recovered alongside larger pieces of Samian ware and a wide variety of domestic artefacts. The boundary ditch is also being sampled close to the building to aid the dating and sequencing of the site. As I write there is still another 6 weeks of digging so I am sure that there is much more to reveal on this exciting site. *(photo by author)*



Photo by author

**Carolyn Heighway** is looking to dispose of a boxful of copies of British Archaeological News, no 1 Feb 1995 to no 136 April 2011 and she has kindly offered them free if any Glosarch member would like to have them. She is prepared to deliver in the Gloucester area. Otherwise they will go for recycling. Also she has a double subscription to the Antiquaries Journal which produces two copies per year and would like to make the extra copy available to anyone who would like it; vols 94 and 95, could be sent out by post, and she would be willing to post future copies to the lucky recipient.... Contact Carolyn at Past Historic, 6 Church Street, Kings Stanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3HW. Tel. 01453823172. email: [carolyn@pasthistoric.co.uk](mailto:carolyn@pasthistoric.co.uk)

### FIELDWORK NOTICE

*From September 2016, email circulars announcing fieldwork opportunities will be sent to all members (who are on email) instead of only to those members who are on lists based on stated preferences. Such lists have proved difficult to maintain and as a consequence some people have been disappointed not to have been informed of opportunities. There will not be a large volume of such announcements, so they should not inconvenience those not interested in fieldwork.*

**Gloucestershire Archaeology** regrets the passing of two valued members this summer...

Dr Evelyn Christmas MA, MLitt, PhD was before her retirement a history lecturer at Gloucester College of Education. She joined GADARG on 1 Jan 1973 and was always a supportive member. Living in Longlevens her interest in the local area was reflected in her article in *Glevensis* 97 entitled "Longlevens - The Place and the Name". Increasing infirmity meant that in recent years she was unable to take the active part in local affairs as had been her wont, and led to her moving to Leeds at the end of 2015 to be near her family. She died on 24 Jun and her funeral took place in that area, however because of her considerable Gloucester connections a memorial Service is to be held at St Catherine's Church, Gloucester on 17 Sep at 1030.

Alan Saville, FSA, a member of Gloucestershire Archaeology/GADARG for many years, and most recently senior curator at the National Museums Scotland, died in Edinburgh on 19 June. Until 1989, he was associated with Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum and was a member of the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset (CRAAGS) for whom he directed the excavation of Hazleton North long barrow between 1979 and 1982. His report on the excavation was one of the most thorough ever produced on this type of neolithic tomb, and will always be an invaluable point of reference for researchers of the period. He was an internationally acknowledged lithics expert and made many significant contributions to the study of Scottish prehistory.

**Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society  
Committee for Archaeology in Gloucestershire**

**Annual Symposium 2016  
Archaeology in Gloucestershire: reports on recent projects**

A conference on Saturday 8th October 2016  
The Guildhall, Gloucester  
10am to 5pm

**Cost £15 each**

Coffee and tea will be provided and there are lunch facilities available in Gloucester

Steve Ford of Thames Valley Archaeology Service "Late Iron Age and Roman enclosure and early Saxon settlement at Top Road, Kempsford"

Simon Sworn of Cotswold Archaeology "Living on the hill: Neolithic, Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon remains from Siddington Road, Cirencester"

Martin Watts of Cotswold Archaeology "Ongoing investigations at Llanthony Priory, Gloucester"

Rob Jarman of Dean Archaeology Group "Welshbury Hill Fort project"

Andy Armstrong of Gloucester City "Gloucester Castle"

A Forgotten Landscape project team on Oldbury Camp, South Gloucestershire

Andy Walsh of Worcestershire Archaeology "Unearthing our Heritage: Investigating the heritage of the Forest of Dean"

Daniel Sausins of Cotswold Archaeology "Stratford Road, Mickleton: Late Iron Age and Roman settlement in the North Cotswolds"

To book please visit the BGAS website [www.bgas.org.uk](http://www.bgas.org.uk) for a booking form or contact CAG Secretary, John Loosley, email [john@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk](mailto:john@loosleyj.freemove.co.uk), tel 01285 760460

**GLOUCESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL**

*Don't forget that this event will run from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September, marking the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coronation in Gloucester of Henry III. Parades, re-enactments, lectures and displays under the presidency of Dr Janina Ramirez will celebrate this and other features of the city's history. Visit the Glosarch stand in Blackfriars to see how we make ourselves visible in the community. For more information, go to the Festival website at <http://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk>*



## **WINTER MEETINGS 2016 - 2017**

All meetings will be on Mondays and commence at 7.30 p.m

**Gloucester meetings:** Friends Meeting House, Greyfriars, Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1TS - about 50m along Greyfriars St, (turn off Southgate St at St Mary de Crypt). Parking at Ladybellegate St or at Longsmith St free after 7pm

**Cheltenham meetings:** St. Andrews United Reformed Church, Garden Room, Montpellier Street, GL50 1SP. Free on street parking is available after 7.00 pm

Members £2.00 per meeting, non-members £3.00.

### **26 September Dr. Alex Smith Settlement in Roman Britain Cheltenham**

Major new research is currently underway at the University of Reading, drawing upon data from largely untapped 'grey literature' and marrying it with published material to significantly improve our understanding of the Romano-British countryside. This talk will discuss the progress of this project to date, especially as it relates to southern Britain, revealing exciting new patterns emerging in areas such as settlement, agriculture and ritual practices.

### **The Bernard Rawes Annual Lecture**

### **10 October Paul Barnett The Purton Ships Graveyard Gloucester**

Ongoing research has established that the final resting place of 81 vessels located 1.5km to the north of Sharpness New Dock entrance is the largest of its kind in the UK. The distinct layers include ocean going schooners, Severn Trows, Wich Barges, revolutionary concrete lighters and extremely rare Stroudwater and Kennet barges.

### **7 November Dr. Peter Warry Treasures in the Basement: Cheltenham What the building material in the museum store tells us about Roman Gloucester**

Peter Warry will share his findings of the examination of nearly 2 tonnes of building material from excavations of Gloucester undertaken during the last 30 years. What was left behind by the Romans and how it got there; its condition; how Gloucester compares with other sites. In some cases the tiles are stamped with the town council's mark and in some cases the names of the councillors as well. These are unique not just within Roman Britain but within the Roman world.

### **5 December Vix Hughes Pots, kilns and wells at Longford Gloucester**

Ten years after Wessex Archaeology carried out an evaluation at the site, Oxford Archaeology carried out a full excavation ahead of renewed house building at Longford, Gloucester. The site showed Bronze Age and Iron Age activity. In the early Roman period the area enclosed was reduced and two pottery kilns were constructed. In addition to the kilns, there were two substantial stone-lined wells and an intriguing pit with pot bases placed on a layer of clay. The shift in focus might reflect the establishment of the fort and settlement at Glevum, which started around AD 49 with the first fort built, and the later legionary fort built AD 64-66.

### **16 January Dr. Tom Moore Examining the birth of a capital: Cheltenham New research at the Iron Age 'oppidum' of Bagendon, Gloucestershire**

Many know Bagendon as the Late Iron Age capital of the Dobunni, but what do we really know of the purpose of this centre? New research and excavations provide tantalising evidence of how this site emerged and its role in the Late Iron Age. Focusing on the results of a long term field project undertaken at the complex (which has included large-scale geophysics and the excavation of two Mid-Late Iron Age enclosures and a small Roman villa), this talk will examine the development and role of the Bagendon 'oppidum'. This work will be used to reassess the nature of the Late Iron Age in the southern Cotswolds and how this centre continued to be a focus of power in the Roman province.

**6 February                      Prof. Chris Dyer                      Pinbury in Duntisbourne Rouse:                      Gloucester**  
**When is a medieval village not a village?**

The investigation of single medieval village can tell us much about general issues in the study of medieval settlements. How do we find a lost village and investigate its form and plan? Why is it an advantage to use both archaeological and written sources? How did the village begin and how did it connect with its early medieval, Roman and prehistoric predecessors? How did the village make use of the surrounding countryside and how did the villagers interact among themselves and their lords? How and why was the village abandoned? Studying one village can extend our understanding of the development of the countryside in general, and over a long period.

**20 February                      Members Evening                      Cheltenham**

**6 March                      Amanda Hart                      Stone Age to Corinium                      \*\*\*\*\***  
**NB. This meeting will be held at the Corinium Museum, Cirencester**

The Corinium Museum has embarked on an exciting new project and has been successful in securing first stage support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aims are to create a museum that is more relevant to today's communities, maximising on the building spaces, enhancing the visitor journey through reinterpretation and improved access, and working with new partners to produce a vibrant programme of archaeology related events and activities, which will help to make the museum more resilient and sustainable.

**3 April                      AGM. Then...                      Cheltenham**  
**Bruce Eaton, Project Officer with Wessex Archaeology, will be giving the Eddie Price Memorial Lecture.**  
Details to follow.