



UNCOVERING OUR PAST TOGETHER



# NEWSLETTER 143

## Summer/Autumn 2018

### CLEEVE COMMON

Following the invitation by the CCT and their archaeological consultant, Dr Tim Copeland, to undertake a project to examine the archaeology of Cleeve Common, GlosArch began work on the project in late June. Working in teams of four or five people, thirteen members used the GlosArch resistivity equipment to survey thirty two 20m x 20m squares over eight days covering the whole of the interior of the Cleeve Cloud hillfort in scorching heat and almost unbroken sunshine. The Cleeve Common wardens obligingly transported the archaeologists and their equipment across the common each morning and back to the car park each evening, where the golf clubhouse awaited with a welcome pint if required.

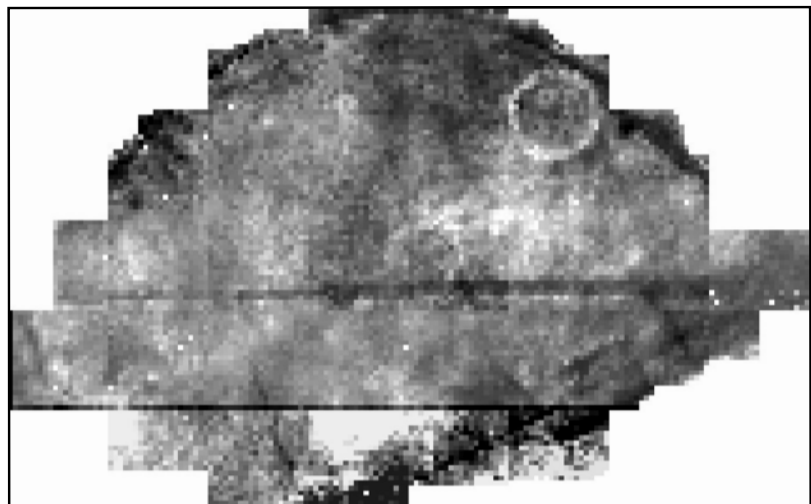
Hikers, joggers, dog-walkers, horse riders, trail bikers and golfers all appeared at one time or another, and efforts were duly made not to trip any of them up, and to answer all their questions. After processing the data from all 32 squares, the resulting plots show several circular and linear features, and from an initial interpretation, there are indications of possibly six circular structures which could be roundhouses. The left hand end of the plot shown below represents the

Photo used with the kind permission of Hamish Fenton



nearest point of the interior of the hillfort in the image above. The prominent circle on the plot is a Victorian tree planting ring and should be ignored; the horizontal line across the centre is a footpath.

The project will continue in September and all members would be welcome to participate in the next stages, just respond to the trawl.



# ALNEY ISLAND

## Castlemeads Conundrum by Les Comtesse

Castlemeads Fields is a recreational area of land, located directly opposite the Gloucester Prison (former Castle) site, on the opposite bank of the river Severn, on Alney Island. Recent Lidar images of the fields, examined by GlosArch members, show a series of apparent rectilinear features which may denote structural foundations or earthworks of some description (see fig.1). John Rhodes (1), also with Henry Hurst (2), described the existence, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, of a bridge over the river between castle and Castlemeads leading to a barbican and gatehouse. In 1928, when high voltage cables were installed under the river, a gatehouse wall was found “30 feet from the river and 6 feet below the surface”, in a cable trench. John also drew attention to a display panel which mentions that, in 1909, a bridge was again constructed for the Royal Agricultural Show. A further line of speculation regarding the Lidar features is possible activity on the Meads during the Civil War, with the possible erection of a sconce, or gun platform, close to the city walls.

More recent investigations, in June 2018, included an extensive resistivity survey, by GlosArch members, over fifteen 20m x 20m grid squares covered by the Lidar features. The resulting plot (fig. 2) essentially duplicates many of the Lidar linear features with remarkable precision, although the central round Lidar feature appears to be absent. The lower resistivity of the features implies the presence of earthworks still present. Attempts are also being made by a GlosArch member (John Wells) to obtain crop mark images using kite mounted instruments. The group is now consulting with the city archaeologist (Andrew Armstrong) on the feasibility of a small excavation designed to throw further light on the nature of these intriguing remains.

### References

- 1) Rhodes J., *The Severn flood plain at Gloucester, in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, Trans. BGAS., **124**, 19-20, 2006.
- 2) Hurst H. (with Rhodes J. ), *The Archaeology of Gloucester Castle. An Introduction*, Trans. BGAS., **102**, 95. 1984.

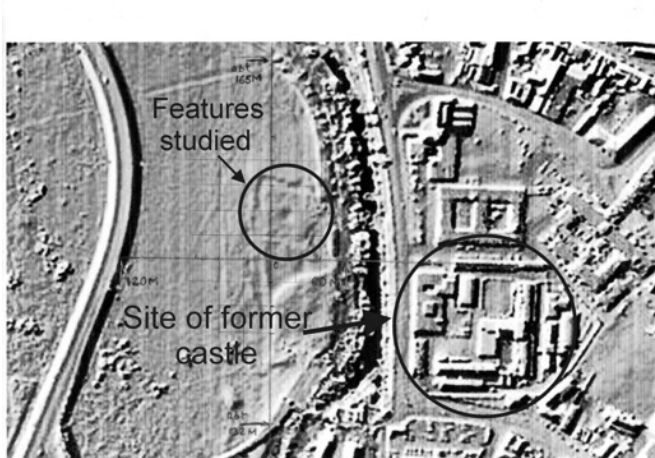


Fig.1 Lidar Feature

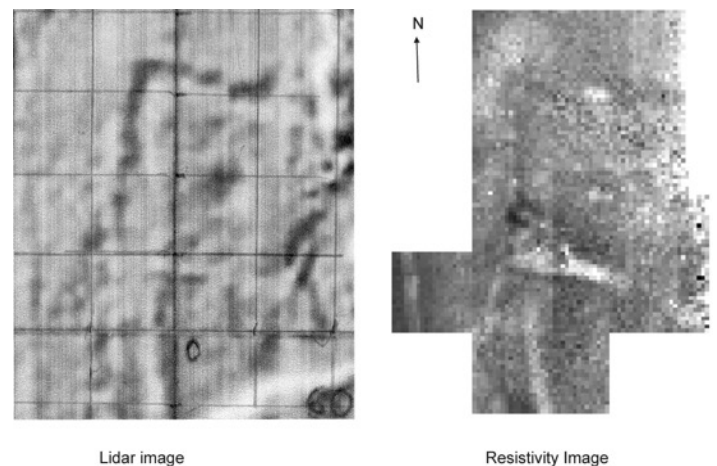


Fig.2 Comparison of Lidar and Resistivity Images

## **'GO-WILD' AT CRICKLEY HILL !** by David Jones

After some considerable preparation involving the help of Mike Milward and Angie Newcombe, Gloucester City Museum and the Crickley Hill Trust, GlosArch's involvement in this year's 'Go Wild' event at Crickley Hill took place during the hottest summer for at least 42 years. However, never one to complain about sunshine and fine weather, I set up the GlosArch stand in a scorchingly bright, Mediterranean-like, white-out, quite unlike any other British Sunday morning I can remember, but was fortunate to be quite near to the National Trust's gazebo, which provided me with some welcome shade on one side at least. Also nearby were the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, The Butterfly Conservation Organisation and activities including face painting and welly wanging, hill fort walks, archery, woodman crafts and music from various duos, groups and bands plus a ukulele orchestra of about 25 players.

The usual array of animal bones and other finds lay about the sun-drenched tables and our presentation board had an interesting display of LIDAR pictures and photographs of recent visits and fieldwork projects. Current Archaeology mags and GlosArch membership prospectuses were spread around amid the artefacts for colour and interest. Soon after lunch Tom Evans and I awaited the onslaught, and it was the large soil-box in front of our stand that soon attracted the younger children and in no time the contents were going in all directions in pursuit of whatever unknown buried treasure lay within. We had quite a few items to hide including unusual stones, Roman coins, tesserae and tiles, antique jewellery and a small replica Greek theatrical mask [Prosopon] I'd accidentally broken in pieces some time ago, but could never throw away. The shout that went up when they found a piece of the face caused great excitement and all pitched in to find the other pieces and complete the face. Later one little girl was so thrilled to have found a cheap replica of an early Egyptian Scarab beetle I had commended her on finding, that she swiftly buried it again... and then found it again, over and over, with just as much enthusiasm as the first time, just to repeat the glorious moment of 'Eureka'!

After working diligently on his second session in the soil-box, another young child told his parents, quite matter-of-factly, that the piece they were holding was "...not Samian ware, but just everyday CBM"! ...some do seem to pick things up pretty quickly especially as he could not have been more than 4 years old. Also I haven't seen the Scarab beetle since, but, if she still has it, I hope the little girl never forgets how she came by it... "From little acorns..." as they say.

Later things got busier and even hotter, more like Crete than Gloucestershire,...so hot in fact that several dogs, seeking shade near our stand found our bowl of water, originally intended for washing 'finds', and not only drank from it, but sat in it and bathed, very Cretan. Quite a few adults, probably parents of our younger patrons who were still bashing away in the soil-box with trowels and plastic spoons, asked about what we did and where were we 'digging' currently. Many seemed quite interested in our involvement on Cleve Common and Castlemeads. It did seem strange to be involved in something so busy and lively and yet be near to such an important and ancient archaeological site. And then, inevitably, I was asked when GlosArch last did anything at Crickley, but, shamefully, I realised that I didn't really know anything about GlosArch's involvement at Crickley Hillfort. It suddenly dawned on me that everything I knew about the Crickley Hill site came from the work of Dr Philip Dixon (Notts) of about 40 years ago. Perhaps I should have read up on the subject again before the event...that'll teach me!

## ARCHAEOLOGY FROM YOUR ARMCHAIR !

by Jeannette Kirkpatrick

We've had an extraordinary summer but it won't be long till the days get shorter and the weather turns more wintry. Field walking and geophysics are fine but they are better if it isn't raining or blowing a gale ! So if you prefer to stay dry and warm, how do you get your 'archaeology fix' ? The immediate answer is the GlosArch evening programme of talks starting in September but that still leaves plenty of spare time to increase your knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of archaeology, or take a virtual stroll through ancient Rome!

If you haven't already found Future Learn <http://www.futurelearn.com/> it's worth a look. The wide range of free online courses include The Fall of the Roman Republic (Colorado State University), Hadrian's Wall: Life on the Roman Frontier (Newcastle University), Rome a Virtual tour of the ancient city (Reading University) and Health and Wellbeing in the ancient world (Open University) to name a few. You can also investigate 'Culture and Heritage' or prepare for the summer holiday by learning Italian. The courses are set out showing the duration and the suggested amount of time required each week. The programmes include both articles and video clips and include a short quiz at the end of each session so you can check your understanding. You can also take part in student forums which are really quite fascinating. Students come from all over the world and often provide challenging and interesting observations.

If you are looking for something more substantial and have a fancy for carrying out some research then the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education might be the answer <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/>. There is a charge for these programmes but the standard is generally very high with a mixture of articles, video clips and short quizzes. On some courses the tutors set questions online and students submit answers or comments via the student forum. The archaeology offering is quite extensive including 'Archaeology in Practice' which offers a comprehensive introduction to archaeology.

The other one to look out for is 'Dig Ventures' <https://digventures.com/>. Set up as a social business, it designs and delivers collaborative archaeological projects and experiences in the UK and beyond. The team have developed the first ever digital archaeological recording system in the world, the Digital Dig Team, to allow data to be instantly available online. Through the website it is possible to explore the excavations carried out at Lindisfarne, Oldbury Camp and their very first excavation Flag Fen. This year Dig Ventures has started to offer an online 6 week course covering the basics of excavation.

If you want you can contribute to online projects at the Smithsonian in Washington USA <http://www.transcription.si.edu/> The museum is looking for digital volunteers to transcribe historical documents and biodiversity data making it more accessible. They have a number of current projects including the flight logs of the Wright Brothers!

## VISIT TO DEVIZES MUSEUM by David Hughes

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 30 members assembled first at Cheltenham then Gloucester for the Summer visit to the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes. After a comfortable coach journey including a brief stop, we were greeted at the museum by its director David Dawson, who gave a short talk explaining the history of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and the museum buildings themselves which had once been the local boys' grammar school among many other previous uses. David explained that the trust which owns and runs the museum is entirely independent and relies on a combination of historic legacies and voluntary helpers to supplement entry income which is a considerable achievement given what must be the high maintenance costs of the site and first-rate displays. We were made very welcome by the largely volunteer staff and given exclusive use of a large secure room for the duration of our visit and free range to wander the displays, shop and archives.

The first highlight was David's insightful tour of the Neolithic displays culminating in the spectacular display of the golden contents of the famous Bush Barrows. Members then took a couple of hours to explore the museum at leisure which gave everyone the opportunity to focus on their own particular interests. I personally was most impressed by the "Malmesbury Bucket". Only the understated British could give such an everyday name to such a spectacular piece of Celtic bronze work, which is surely on a par with the "Gundestrup Cauldron". Maybe a name change would give this treasure the status it deserves? As well as the Roman and Medieval galleries there were themed displays of the history of the town, a well-stocked bookshop and temporary exhibitions of art and the history of the WRVS.



Photo by David Hughes

Lunch was taken independently, with some members sampling local eateries and others having a sandwich in the meeting room. Most members visited the Grade 1 listed adjoining church of St John and it's fine Norman architecture at some point during the day, two members improvised parts in a wedding rehearsal which was underway during my visit ! On reassembling in the meeting room, David answered members' questions arising from the visit and then led us to another highlight of the museum's collection: the Britton Cabinet. He explained that the founder of the Society, John Britton, a local travel writer and antiquarian, commissioned the maple veneered cabinet in 1824 as a talking piece for his drawing room. The glass display on the top features a then accurate reconstructed scale model of Stonehenge with side panels of orange and red glass. The idea behind this was that the light from a candle shone through the side panel would give an impression of the shadows thrown by the stone circle at dusk and dawn. It was fascinating to realise that the current trend for reconstructive archaeology and CGI is nothing new, as Georgian gentlemen were doing the same things in their drawing rooms with plaster models and candlelight! Using a mobile phone rather than candles, the effect produced was probably less evocative of the sacred circle but interesting nonetheless. David unlocked other drawers to reveal another fragile scale model this time of Avebury Stone Circle along with original papers, plans and drawings of the county sites.

After thanks and goodbyes, the coach collected the party from immediately outside the museum and the return journey allowed glimpses of Roundway Down and Avebury before arriving home at Gloucester and finally Cheltenham. A successful visit not just because of the interesting content but also because we had in a small way supported our friends in the adjoining county in their work to preserve and protect our shared cultural heritage.

## SUMMER PROGRAMME

The visit to Lydney Park Roman temple was particularly well-attended. Tim Copeland gave a very comprehensive presentation to around 30 members, who learned about the chequered history of excavation on this very complex site. Excellent illustrations of floor plans and, especially, the mosaics were handed round and there was a visit to the museum to finish. Steven Blakes's tour of three churches in the Coln Valley also had a good turnout; the Saxon features at Coln Rogers were particularly well-preserved, and Chedworth's 15th century facade was a delight. Alistair Hodcroft's tour of the hillfort at Conderton took place on a very hot and humid evening, and this possibly reduced the turnout, but those who came got full value at this fascinating site and drew some lessons for the work at Cleeve Cloud.



Photo by Angela Newcombe

# FIRST EVIDENCE OF ANGLO SAXON COLONISATION IN CHELTENHAM

by Terry Moore-Scott

There is much good evidence of Anglo Saxon settlement at locations not so far from Cheltenham such as Bishops Cleeve and Winchcombe, but excavations carried out in 2010 by Cotswold Archaeology on the site of All Saints Academy (formerly Kingsmead School) (SO 926240) have given us the first clear evidence of early Anglo Saxon habitation in the area of Cheltenham. A full report of this excavation has now been published in the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society (vol. 135 (2017)) and the excavation archive has been deposited in the Cheltenham Museum. Such is the significance of this discovery though that a short note about it here for GlosArch members seemed appropriate.

The site produced evidence of mid-late Bronze Age and mid-late Iron Age activities (including two human burials) but by far the most significant were the discoveries of a number of features dateable to Anglo Saxon activity in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Notable among these were a set of post holes relating to a rectangular post-built structure orientated NW to SE and measuring 11 x 6 meters. Two doorways were located at halfway points on opposing sides and an interior partition was evident towards the SE end. In the same area were a number of pits producing a quantity of pottery and animal bone but also the truncated remains of several 'shallow feature buildings' from which came Anglo Saxon pottery and an animal skull radio carbon dated to the mid 6<sup>th</sup>/mid 7<sup>th</sup> century. In a second adjacent area were found a number of pits and gully features containing Anglo Saxon pottery. In all, the site produced one of the largest assemblies of early- to mid- Anglo Saxon pottery from Gloucestershire.

The evidence suggests that this was just a small agricultural settlement but, apart from a few sherds of Anglo Saxon pottery found at Arle Court (site of a much later Anglo Saxon settlement) , the discoveries at All Saints Academy provide important first evidence of early Anglo Saxon colonisation in the area of Cheltenham.

[The author wishes to acknowledge two publications which have contributed to this note, namely: *Iron Age Burial and Anglo Saxon Settlement at All Saints Academy, Cheltenham: Excavations in 2010*; Trans. Bristol & Gloucester Archaeological Society, vol. 135 (2017), 113-154; also The Victoria History of Gloucestershire, *Cheltenham Before the Spa* (2018), 16-18.]

## WINTER PROGRAMME 2018/19

We are continuing to alternate between the Cheltenham and the Gloucester venues. The Cheltenham venue at **St Andrews United Reform Church, Montpellier Street, Cheltenham, GL50 1SP**. There is on-street parking which is free from 7.00 pm.

The Gloucester venue can be found at **St John The Evangelist, Churchdown and Innsworth, St Johns Avenue, Churchdown, Gloucester GL3 2DB**. There is parking available within the church grounds.

The programme is a varied one and hopefully there is something for everyone. The annual members' meeting will be held on Monday 28 January 2019. This is an opportunity to share with members and friends any research that you have carried out. If you would like to take part in January please contact Jeannette Kirkpatrick [messier452@gmail.com](mailto:messier452@gmail.com) .

Meetings are always held on Monday evenings and start at 7.30 and last about an hour. Members £2 and visitors £3. Look out for the flyers sent out before each meeting !

Monday 24 September	Simon Draper Place names and the archaeologist	Cheltenham
Monday 22 October	Kurt Adams <i>The Eddie Price Lecture</i> The Gloucestershire dog hoard: treasure from a temple?	Gloucester
Monday 26 November	Rosemary Firman The Mappa Mundi: Hereford's curious map	Cheltenham
Monday 10 December	Malcolm Watkins <i>The Bernard Rawes Lecture</i> Birdlip Grave Group a 2000 year old mystery	Gloucester
Monday 28 January	Members' Evening	Cheltenham
Monday 25 February	Sharon Clough Weyhill; an Anglo-Norman execution cemetery	Gloucester
Monday 25 March	John Putley As sure as God's in Gloucestershire, a pilgrims tale	Cheltenham
Monday 29 April	David Aldred Cleeve Hill: the making of its Common	Gloucester