



## Newsletter

### Autumn 2019

Before you know it the Summer is coming to an end and the Autumn/Winter lecture series is on its way. Neil Cathie, our new autumn/winter programme organiser has put together some great talks to get us through the dark months, with topics ranging from Bath Abbey to a Neolithic long barrow. Full details can be found at the end of the newsletter.

Over the summer members have been busy. The summer events were generally well-attended and, from the reports below, were also well-received and very interesting. The osteoarchaeology course, which was hosted by GlosArch and organised and presented by GlosArch member Dr Sophie Beckett, in conjunction with Sedgeford Historical And Archaeological Research Project (SHARP), was fully booked and highly successful. 10 GlosArch members attended, along with 10 members of other local archaeology groups. It is hoped that the course will lead to follow-on projects to which the newly-trained folks can contribute. Look out for the evening of presentations by course participants, which will form the October meeting (28<sup>th</sup> October, Cheltenham).

Fieldwork continued on Cleeve Common, with magnetometry surveys of the hillfort and The Ring. The results are interesting and complement the resistivity performed last year. Further work on the Common is being planned and some other projects are under consideration, so watch out for the emails looking for volunteers to help with surveying in the next couple of months.

As I go to press, the Gloucester History Festival is about to start with 233 events between 7<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September covering history, heritage and archaeology, with a host of high-profile speakers. This year's theme is 'People and Power'. For more information and to download the programme go to: [www.gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk](http://www.gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk) . If you are attending an event,

pop along to the GlosArch stand in the Community Hub in Eastgate shopping area, close to M&S.

Offers to help Angie Newcombe on the stand would be welcome. Please contact Angie direct: [anewcombe283@gmail.com](mailto:anewcombe283@gmail.com) .

## Summer Excursions

### **Offa's Dyke**

Ten members, guests and two dogs enjoyed a walk along one of the best preserved Gloucestershire sections of Offa's Dyke, led by Tim Copeland and Dick Finch. Dick is part of a recently established Chepstow-based group dedicated to both preserving and researching the southern end of this very long Anglo-Saxon earthwork, while other groups (forming a "Collaboratory") have been set up to do the same for other sections. We joined the Offa's Dyke Path at the Devil's Pulpit, a prominent rock with a grand view of the ruins of Tintern Abbey far below. From this point we followed the Path both north and south along the top of the steep slope down to the River Wye, with our guides pointing out the numerous quarries used to produce the stone which was piled up to form a rampart along the top, fronted by a ditch. The profile was examined in various places, and a breach in the rampart, illegally made to provide access to a nature reserve, allowed us to examine something of the construction method. Dick's infectious enthusiasm and great knowledge of his subject, backed up by Tim's expert observations, made for a very rewarding afternoon.

*Mike Milward*

### **Minchinhampton**

On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019, with fine summer weather, a group of twelve Glosarch members, plus one dog set off from the Old Lodge, Minchinhampton Common, lead by Nick Hurst, a local resident, parish councillor and a share-holder of The Company of the Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation, thought to be the oldest surviving canal company in the world and formed in 1730.

Nick told us a little history of the Old Lodge, a 17<sup>th</sup> century building first mentioned as existing in 1656, now a pub, restaurant and golf club, but originally built as either as a hunting lodge or as a Warreners residence. As

we left the Old Lodge aiming east towards Burleigh, Minchinhampton village and Cirencester, we passed numerous well-preserved pillow mounds, created in the medieval period to provide the population (or at least those who could afford it) with regular a regular protein source during the lean winter months. Looking at these you could imaged that their shape was copied from the many but much larger long barrows that populate the Cotswolds, and in particular examples on Minchinhampton and the nearby Selsey Commons.

We then approached the famous Minchinhampton Bulwarks and followed their line down to The Park, a green common area area on the North side of Minchinhampton village and used yearly by Giffords Circus. The Bulwarks are a series of mainly linear earthworks consisting of a univallate bank and ditch, the ditches still standing to 2-3 metres high in places and mainly thought to date to the iron age based on Belgic pottery found during excavations in the 1930's. These enclose a huge area (most of the town and much of the common) and are therefore not likely to have been defensive. In the ditches of the bulwarks we spotted many orchids, which are quite common on the local commons around Minchinhampton.

From The Park we walked to Minchinhampton Holy Trinity Church, founded in 1086, mainly 14<sup>th</sup> century but much restored and modified, in particular in 1842. At that time Norman arches and windows were visible, but these are now covered up. The 14<sup>th</sup> century font was recovered from a local garden where it was being used as a flower pot and refurbished before being put back into the church in 1918. The spire was half taken down in 1563 to prevent it from collapsing, giving it is rather unusual shape and style today. The church was originally managed by the Covent of the Holy Trinity at Caen, Normandy, and the land was apparently given to the convent by the Matilda, William the Conquerors wife.

We returned to the Old Lodge via Hampton Green and minor roads to the south of the village, admiring many old and typical Cotswold stone cottages, farmhouses and mansions along the way.

*Neil Cathie*

## **Northleach - The Corinium Museum stores**

Fifteen members enjoyed an excellent guided visit to the Corinium Museum Resource Centre at Northleach. This is where a multiplicity of objects from the neolithic to the 20th century are stored, it includes some items which have been on display in the museum from time to time as well as many

which have never been seen by the general public. We were taken through agricultural implements and farm machinery; household furniture and utensils still familiar to some of us; a textile store with a range of farmers' smocks, wedding dresses, formal wear and uniforms of all sorts from girl guide leaders to the Home Guard. We progressed up the stairs, past public service and advertising posters, to a ceramics section which covered a huge range of post-medieval culinary, medical and pharmaceutical functions - one notable item was a large decorated earthenware jar bearing the word "Leeches" - not to mention prehistoric and Roman vessels of all sorts. Then we got to the human remains; the contents of many Cotswold neolithic and bronze age burial mounds are catalogued and stored here as are skeletons from Roman and Saxon cemeteries excavated across the region. Our guide had selected a few interesting examples, along with accompanying grave goods. As the highlight of the tour, he had laid out the full skeletal remains of the last individual to be placed in the Hazleton North long barrow, and the skeleton of a teenaged Iron Age girl from a grave excavated at Bourton-on-the-Water, her reconstructed face has appeared on Meet The Ancestors. These were eagerly examined by the bones enthusiasts amongst us. To finish, we looked at the stone store, with its voluminous collection of masonry from Roman Cirencester, much of it inscribed, and from the remains of Cirencester Abbey.

*Mike Milward*

## **Walking Tour of Bishop's Cleeve**

On an overcast, and frankly rather chilly, June evening David Aldred led around 20 GlosArch members on a guided tour of the history, architecture and archaeology of Bishop's Cleeve. We were treated to a fascinating insight into the history of this village-cum-new town. With Anglo-Saxon origins and excavation evidence, from the building of the Aldi supermarket and elsewhere, of earlier Iron Age occupation on the site, this rapidly growing village has ancient origins. David highlighted many of the surviving mediaeval cottages, some with surviving A-frames, and pointed out the wheelwright's furnace in a yard off Church Street. We saw the Old Rectory (Cleeve Hall), on the site of the previous residence of the Bishop of Worcester and the associated Tithe Barn, opposite, now the village hall. In Station Road at the other end of the village lies the C16-17 Priory, home to the local priest and the 12<sup>th</sup> century church of St Michael and All Angels. If you want to know

more about this (to me) surprisingly interesting place, David's book 'A history of Bishop's Cleeve and Woodmancote' would seem like a good place to start.

*Phil Cox*

## Fieldwork

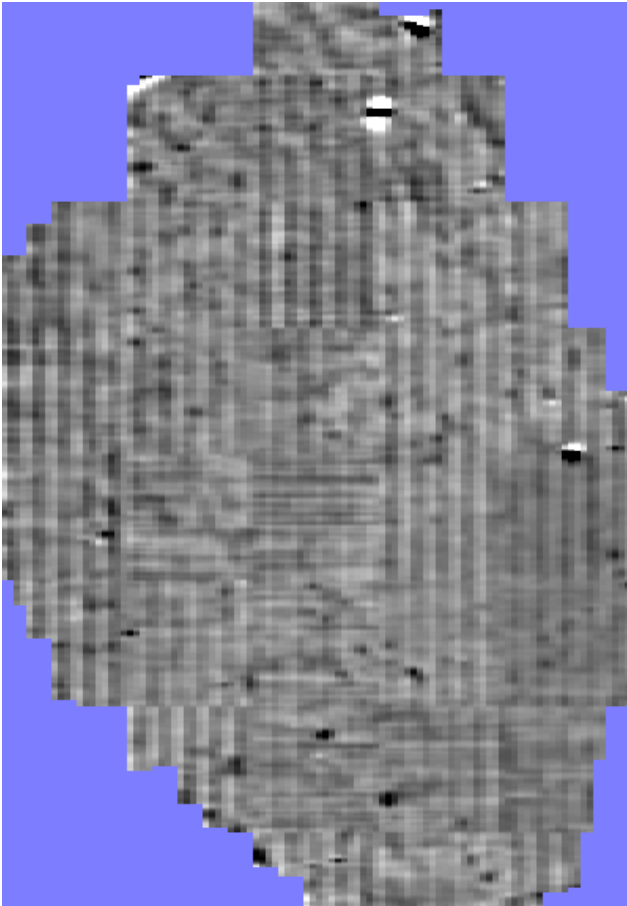
### **Cleeve Common**

Over the Summer, GlosArch members have been continuing the investigations at the Iron Age hillfort and the earthworks known as The Ring on Cleeve Common. This year, the work has taken the form of magnetometry surveys of the two sites. The equipment was borrowed from the Archaeology Department of Worcester University.

The sites are difficult to survey, but the results from the survey performed in May at the Cleeve Cloud hillfort are encouraging and complement the results of last year's resistivity survey. They appear to show pits within the hillfort, including possible 4-post structures. The survey of the Ring has just taken place and the results are awaiting processing.



GlosArch members performing magnetometry at The Ring on a windy September day.



Preliminary results of magnetometry at Cleeve Cloud hillfort.



Resistivity survey (Summer 2018)

In addition, in July, Glosarch investigated the small mound (approx 12m diameter) near the golf clubhouse that had been proposed by David Aldred as possibly the only remaining example of three possible Bronze Age barrows shown in a 1903 map of the Common, the others having been removed by quarrying. This remaining mound has itself been truncated by the deep quarry adjacent to it, and the safety fence further restricts access to the mound. The resistivity survey was conducted over one 20 x 20m square which covered the part of the mound that we were able to access, and over one adjoining 10 x 10m square and a 10 x 2m strip which covered an adjacent possible feature. The survey (see plot below) was inconclusive, it may be worth repeating with magnetometry.

Further fieldwork is planned for the Autumn. The dates will be circulated by email shortly. Any member is welcome to take part in GlosArch fieldwork activities. No prior experience is needed.



Area of resistivity survey of mound



Resistivity plot

*Phil Cox/Mike Milward*

## **Recording Disarticulated and Commingled Human Remains in Osteoarchaeology: August 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project (SHARP)/GlosArch course**

Following Dr Sophie Beckett's presentation to the GlosArch meeting in January regarding the Sedgeford Historical And Archaeological Research Project in Norfolk, five current and four new members of GlosArch (plus 11 members of neighbouring associations) signed up for the Osteoarchaeology course in August. The course was generously supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Despite having a little prior experience of working with human remains at



Wessex and Cotswold Archaeology, I found the introductory day a quite dauntingly steep learning curve...and one that never really let up!

However, with determination on our part plus the excellent tutoring and support offered

by Sophie and her assistant, Lucy Koster, we found that, by the end of the week, we had all made huge progress in our understanding and gained much confidence in applying this to 'live' remains (no pun intended!); we were taught how to examine and record real, 'active' samples from the Sedgeford site as part of our practical instruction every afternoon.



The course was incredibly comprehensive for just five days, kicking off with an over-view of the Sedgeford Project and then covering the 'basics' of anatomy, bone identification and orientation. As a non-scientist/biologist, 'basics' should probably be re-termed 'advanced' in my case but, by the end, even I was using terms such as proximal/distal,



superior/inferior, medial/lateral with something approaching confidence and accuracy, and I even feel confident in identifying a very large number of the bones making up the human skeleton. However, I now see the importance of such precision in terms of accurately interpreting remains as well as helping to re-associate commingled remains which are so prevalent on the Sedgeford site.

On the remaining days, we covered areas of theory such as dentition (who would have thought there were six terms relating to the orientation of a single tooth?), skeletal development and gender differences, pathology/trauma and, my favourite new word, taphonomy; how remains might be affected by types of



burial/deposition, disturbance and/or reaction to environmental factors. Half of each day was spent on the practical side of things, such as recording finds on the SHARP database and how to handle and measure human remains. We even started to learn how to estimate details such as age at



death, height, gender and stature, as well as being able to recognise a few pathological indicators for conditions such as abscesses, osteoarthritis and anaemia.

Having had such a stimulating and engaging experience, many of us are now hoping to work at Sedgeford itself next year and/or continue helping Sophie with this research work here in Cheltenham. Hopefully, some of you will be able to make it to the Cheltenham meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup> where Sophie and some of her 'students' will be showing you more of what we did on this exciting course and its wider context.

*Vic Stannard*

## Autumn/Winter Lecture Programme

Date	Location	Title	Presenter
Monday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> September, 2019	Churchdown, Gloucester	The archaeology of Bath Abbey : the story so far	Cai Mason, Wessex Archaeology
Monday, 28 <sup>th</sup> October, 2019	Cheltenham	Osteoarchaeology – recording human remains	Glosarch members and Sophie Beckett
Monday, 25 <sup>th</sup> November, 2019	Churchdown, Gloucester	Do trees counts as Archaeology? Investigating the landscape of Speech House, Forest of Dean.	Andy Hoan, Worcester University
Monday, 9 <sup>th</sup> December, 2019	Cheltenham	1.Research into a medieval moated site in south Gloucestershire. 2.Updates on 2019 Ashton Court, Sherborne and Doynton excavations.	Sue Adams  Tony Roberts
Monday, 27 <sup>th</sup> January, 2020 <b>Bernard Rawes memorial lecture</b>	Churchdown, Gloucester	Excavations at Cleevelands, north of Bishops Cleve, 2014-2016	Jon Hart, Cotswold Archaeology.
Monday, 24 <sup>th</sup> February, 2020	Cheltenham	Roman rural settlement in Central South Gloucestershire, staying connected.	Peter Twinn, Cardiff University
Monday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> March, 2020	Churchdown, Gloucester	An enigma within an enigma: The north Oxfordshire Grims ditch	Tim Copeland, University of Gloucestershire
Monday, 27 <sup>th</sup> April, 2020 <b>Eddie Price memorial lecture</b>	Cheltenham	AGM, followed by: Sisters: A Neolithic long barrow near Cirencester	Tim Darvill Bournemouth University

All meetings are on Mondays and start promptly at 19.30pm.

**Venues:**

<b><u>Gloucester (Churchdown) meetings</u></b>	<b><u>Cheltenham meetings</u></b>
St. John the Evangelist Church hall St. John's Avenue, Churchdown, Gloucester GL3 2DB	St. Andrew's United Reformed Church hall Montpellier Street Cheltenham GL50 1SP
Ample parking in car park next to hall.	Ample on street parking in Montpellier street on both sides of the road