



Registered Charity number: 1201251

Newsletter 155

Spring 2025

Welcome to the GlosArch Spring 2025 Newsletter.

After what seems to have been a long, rather cold and gloomy winter it is time to start looking forwards to a packed programme of activities over the coming months. In addition to the concluding lecture of the 2024-25 series, an exciting programme of summer visits has been planned by David Jones and there will be another busy season of fieldwork. Hopefully you will be able to participate in some or all of these activities.

Membership

GlosArch continues to attract new members, with the current membership standing at over 180, up by another 30 since the last newsletter. This is fabulous news as many societies are seeing their membership decline. I am sure this is a reflection of the great programme of fieldwork and lectures organised by Neil Cathie and the greater web visibility resulting from the website.

We are always looking for new ideas. If you would like to become more involved helping with the running of GlosArch please get in touch, we can always find jobs for willing individuals.

As I indicated in one of my recent emails, **membership subscriptions fell due on 1 March**. Subscriptions remain at £20 for full members, £10 for associate and student members. Payment can be made by standing order or bank transfer to: Gloucestershire Archaeology

Sort Code: 089299, A/c No: 67285787

Alternatively you can send a cheque to: Sally Nicholas, Hon Treasurer, 57 Church St., Tetbury, GL8 8JG

58th Annual General Meeting

The 58th AGM will take place on **Monday 14th April at 7.00pm**, ahead of the final lecture of the 2024-25 series. The agenda and other papers for the meeting will be circulated nearer the time.

Sad News

As many of you will be aware, Professor Tim Darvill, of Bournemouth University and long time friend of GlosArch passed away, last October after a short illness. Tim had been a GADARG, then GlosArch member since his teens and was guest speaker at our 50th anniversary dinner. Several of our members had the good fortune to dig with him at the Sisters long barrow, his last major dig, between 2022-24. A memorial for him was held recently at The Society of Antiquaries.

I am also sad to have to report the passing of GlosArch's former Secretary, Marta Cock. Amongst other things, Marta played an important role in changing our identity from GADARG to GlosArch. In recent years her health had been poor and she had been unable to take an active part in our society although she managed to keep in touch by email.

2024-25 Lecture Series

Once again, Neil Cathie has come up trumps with the programme of lectures.

We started in September with Dr Simon Draper, of Cambridge University and Editor of the Gloucestershire Victoria County History. He described how the Medieval manors of the Cotswolds have left their mark on the landscape.

Next up was Dr Reb Ellis-Haken from the University of York. Reb presented the latest findings from her research into the numerous carved stone heads recovered from excavations at the site of the Romano-British temple at Dean Hall, Littledean. This is the largest collection of such finds from anywhere in Britain. She explained what this told us about the likely place of this fascinating site in the wider Celtic and Romano-British religious world.

The third lecture was presented by Neil himself. The first half of his talk presented some exciting new information from the finds analysis from the excavation at the site of a now-destroyed Roman villa at Brookthorpe near Gloucester. In addition to a load of Roman building materials there were some strange dimpled tesserae and the pottery analysis suggested the villa may have been earlier than previously thought.

In the second half, Neil presented a progress report on last year's GlosArch excavations of a vernacular building on a terraced hillside in Honeycombe near Miserden. The volunteers uncovered substantial remains of a well-built, two-roomed structure. Work will continue later this year.

In December, Phil Brant-Simmons of Corinium Museum, Cirencester, gave us a whistle-stop tour of the origins, development and major sites of Roman Corinium, the capital of Britannia Prima. This was followed, in January, by Kurt Adams, the Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme for Gloucestershire and Avon. Kurt presented some of the most exciting finds reported to the scheme by detectorists in 2024. These included an early-middle Bronze Age flanged axehead, a variety of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval coins, a bulla and jettons with interesting back stories and a fine Roman ring with a carved cornelian intaglio. It is certainly amazing what turns up each year thanks to the PAS. The PAS can be accessed via <https://finds.org.uk>

The most recent lecture (February 2025) was given by Dr Peter Warry, the notable expert on Roman Ceramic Building Material. Peter's talk, was on the Brandiers tiliary at Minety, Wiltshire, a major source of the tiles and other CBM used to construct public and private buildings in Roman Corinium. He described the excavation of the three successive tile kilns, what they produced, the scale of production, an analysis of the stamps on the CBM and much more on this Roman industrial site.

In March, more than 60 people attended Tony Roberts update on Archaeoscan excavations at the Slimbridge Roman complex and the Medieval manor at Guiting Power, both of which get ever more interesting. The final talk will see a welcome return of Andrew Armstrong, Gloucester City archaeologist, with a round-up excavations over recent years in the city.

The combined in-person and Zoom audience for the talks has been between 40 and 60 and a number of talks have attracted a number of non-members. We have continued to offer our live lectures free of charge to all who are interested. We thank those non-members who have kindly made donations towards our work. GlosArch members can also watch a recording of the lectures via the members' area of the GlosArch website.

Summer Visits 2025

David Jones has taken over the organisation of our summer programme this year. Once again there will be a full day trip and several smaller local evening or weekend visits.

Fri 11th April – 18:30 hrs

Crickley Hill – Revisited

The earliest evidence of human activity on Crickley Hill dates back to the early Neolithic, around 6,000 years ago, when it was the site of one of the most important causewayed enclosures in the country. Later in the Neolithic around 2500BC, saw the building of cairns and a long mound on the promontory. After the abandonment of the Neolithic site, Crickley may have lain deserted for more than a thousand years. In the Iron Age, from about 700 BC onwards, a hillfort was built on Crickley Hill. This

survived for around 100 years before being destroyed. The defences were reinforced and the site resettled around 500BC, but this too was abandoned. The site has seen farming, battles, sacred worship, tribal gatherings and settlements. GlosArch have a long association with Crickley Hill going back to the time of Director of Excavations, Professor Philip



Dixon MA D.Phil FSA FRHS.

This evening walk is free to GlosArch members, but donations for the National Trust and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust will be appreciated.

Meet at the Crickley Hill Country Park car park GL4 8JY.

What3Words location: ///abundance.crowns.washable

Saturday 10th May

All Day Coach Trip To:

Rollright Stones at Long Compton, Oxon/Warks.

An ancient complex of megalithic monuments with three main elements, The King's Men stone circle, the King Stone, and the Whispering Knights dolmen. The dolmen is the oldest, dating to the early Neolithic, circa 3,800-3,500 BC. The King's Men stone circle was erected in the late Neolithic, circa 2,500 BC; whilst the King Stone dates to the early to middle Bronze Age, circa 1,500 BC. All are made from natural Jurassic oolitic limestone, which forms the bulk of the Cotswold hills. Used for millennia as a sacred site, the stones are a great source of myths and legends. The site is managed by the Rollright Trust.



-- **Plus**

Roman Villa at North Leigh, Witney, Oxfordshire.

This courtyard villa, managed by English Heritage, is one of the larger villas of Roman Britain. It was at its most extensive in the early 4th century, when it included three bath suites, at least 19 mosaic floors and 11 rooms with underfloor heating. The most important feature of the site is a fine mosaic tile floor dating to the early 4th century. The visit will include a talk on relationship of the villa to Akeman Street by Dr Tim Copeland.



-- **Plus**

Tea & cake in Witney

From North Leigh we will travel to the historic town of Witney where we will be free to explore and grab a bite to eat or drink.

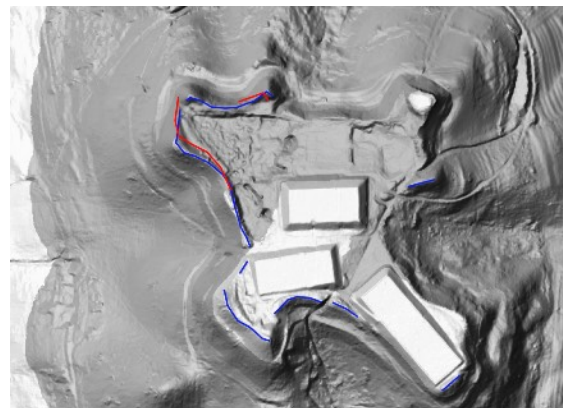


Coach trip £32 per person starting at 8:30am from Cheltenham Racecourse. The coach will also pick up from Gloucester - place and time TBC. Although both venues are admission free, if we have guides, we will be expected to make donations, which are included in the ticket price. To book a place please email David Jones at: garstanforddasilva@gmail.com before 31st March (if you have already expressed an interest in this visit you will be contacted to confirm and pay)

Thursday 10th July. 7pm

Talk on Churchdown Hill

Michael Hare and Phil Cox will lead an evening visit to Churchdown Hill. Michael will explain the geology of the hill before Phil takes us to the earthworks surrounding the top of the hill, thought to date to the Iron Age and likely enclosing a small hillfort. This will be followed by a visit to St Bartholomew's church, which has its origins in the 12th century, led by Michael Hare.



Meet at the St Bartholomew's Church car park at 18:30 – Free to members. Post code GL3 2LG. What3Words location: [///nature.record.rats](https://www.what3words.com////nature.record.rats)

Withington Roman Villa.

Date TBC

We will be taken on a guided tour of the recent excavations by archaeologist Simon Greenslade. This site comprises two Romano-British building complexes surviving as buried masonry, with associated field boundaries and trackways, situated on a limestone plateau. The first villa was excavated in 1811 by Samuel Lyons and again in 2006. At this time geophysical survey showed the second even larger building complex nearby which was also excavated. Simon Greenslade is leading the latest excavation of the site.

September/October. Date and time TBC depending on ongoing work.

Fieldwork

Plans are coming together for the 2025 fieldwork season. On the excavation front we will be returning to Cleeve Hill, Honeycombe and Severn Bank, Minsterworth. The centrepiece of the geophysics will be a major survey near Uley.

If you wish to volunteer for any of these activities, please email

fieldwork@glosarch.org.uk with your preferred dates. Depending on the number of volunteers, it may be necessary to restrict the number of days individual participants can take part, to maximise the number of members that can be involved.

Cleeve Hill - The grandstand of Cheltenham's first racecourse.

We have received further permission from Natural England to continue our excavation of the grandstand of the late Georgian racecourse on the top of Cleeve Hill. Last year we excavated parts of the northwestern end of the building, revealing well built walls of a main front building and a less sturdy rear one. This year the target is the main southwest facing front of the grandstand, which we believe will include the main entrance and



vestibule. If there are sufficient volunteers, we may also attempt to locate the site of the wooden grandstand that pre-dated the stone one and which was destroyed by fire in 1829.

The dig is planned for an initial four days, Sunday 18th, Monday 19th, Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th May.

Honeycombe, Miserden

After a successful season of excavation of this well-constructed building on a terrace in Honeycombe, near Miserden, we shall be returning to expose more of the site this summer. The dig identified a two-roomed building with flagstone floors, stone stairs and a



fireplace. This year we aim to complete the excavation of the building and understand more of the surrounding enclosure. We will also attempt obtain solid dating evidence to determine when the building was constructed.

The dates for this excavation will be Sunday 22nd, Monday 23rd, Friday 27th and Saturday 28th June.

Uley - West Hill Roman temple

We are excited to announce that following a successful application to Historic England, we have received permission to undertake geophysical surveying within the Scheduled Monument area around the site of the Uley Roman temple on West Hill, near Uley Bury hillfort and Hetty Pegler's Tump. The aim is to use magnetometry and resistivity to determine the extent the structures around the temple, which was excavated in the 1970s, within the scheduled area.



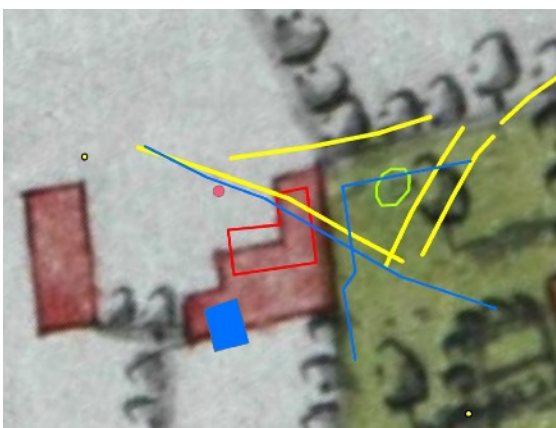
We will be aiming to undertake 6 days surveying in the first instance, although this may need to be extended depending on the results.

The work will take place later in the summer, between 9-15th August, once the hay has been cut in the fields.

Severn Bank, Minsterworth

After a year off, we will be returning to the grounds of Severn Bank, Minsterworth to continue our exploration of the lost building, seen on an 18th century map of the village. Towards the end of the excavation in 2023 we discovered the remains of the foundations of one wall of the building. We intend to extend from the site of this trench to locate the corner of the building to enable us to determine its position and size.

The dig will follow on from the Uley geophysics, from 17th-20th August.



Kingsholm Legacy Project

As featured in a previous newsletter, the Kingsholm Legacy Project has been developed to make as much archive material as possible from archaeological works in the Kingsholm area of Gloucester openly available on the GlosArch website. This includes reports of excavations and watching briefs, original plans and sections, post-excavation reports and

much more. Following a considerable amount of further work by Dr Tim Copeland the material has been updated and rearranged. To explore the archive go to the Kingsholm Legacy Project page under Resources on the GlosArch website. Tim and I are also looking into the possibility of setting up a group of members to explore the data. If you are interested in taking part in this initiative, please contact me at mailbox@glosarch.org.uk

Other Events

BGAS Committee for Archaeology annual symposium. 5th July 2025 at Corinium Museum

This year, the CA symposium will be held at Corinium Museum. An exciting programme is being planned by the committee covering a range of topics relating to the archaeology of the Bristol and Gloucestershire area. The programme will be available soon along with how to register. In addition to in-person attendance at the museum, the whole symposium will be broadcast live.

Watch the GlosArch website for more information.

Gloucester Festival of Archaeology 14-26th July 2025

As part of the national Festival of Archaeology, a series of events and activities is being planned in Gloucester. Led by Gloucester Cathedral, The Museum of Gloucester and the Folk of Gloucester museum and with contributions from GlosArch and other organisations this will build on last year's festival. Walking tours and other activities will run from 14th July and the festival will culminate in a full day of events in various locations across the city on Saturday 26th July.

GlosArch is planning a test pitting exercise over the earthworks on Castlemeads, Gloucester, that we have investigated previously using geophysics, on Sunday 20th July and we will have a stall at one of the venues during the festival day on Saturday 26th. We will be looking for volunteers for both activities.

Full details will be available soon and will be available on the GlosArch website.