



Registered Charity number: 1201251

Newsletter 158

Autumn 2026

This summer must rank amongst the busiest in the history of GlosArch. There have been three excavations over thirteen days, one small geophysical survey, a fabulous day trip to explore the Avebury landscape, a walk around Roman Corinium, GlosArch stalls at five different events around the county, a public guided walk on Cleeve Common and your secretary spent a Sunday recording a small historic dock that had appeared in the bank of the Severn owing to the low river levels.

But that is not the end for the year - we still have a possible behind-the-scenes tour of the Museum of Gloucester to look forward to as well as 5 more days of geophysical surveying at Uley and a full programme of lectures. It is certainly all go.

59th Annual General Meeting

The 59th Annual General Meeting of Gloucestershire Archaeology took place on Monday 27th April 2026. The meeting was well-attended with 30 members present in the room and another 18 on Zoom. The reports from the Hon Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary had been circulated in advance. The Secretary reported on another successful year for GlosArch with a busy programme of lectures, visits and fieldwork and continued growth in membership. Mike Milward, Terry Moore-Scott, Les Comtesse and Tim Copeland stood down from the committee but continued as trustees and in the case of Mike, Les and Tim, on the editorial board. Mandy Corp (Safeguarding), Andrew Wall (IT/website), Denise Vizor (Liaison) and Gareth Beamish (Outreach) were elected to the committee. Michael Hare continues as President for one more year, the other officers and committee members were also unchanged. The secretary thanked the members standing down for their work on the committee over many years. The treasurer reported on the healthy state of the finances.

Glevensis

I hope you enjoyed reading volume 58 of Glevensis. Many thanks to the editors and to the band of volunteers who hand-delivered this year's bumper edition. Every copy that didn't need posting saved GlosArch £2.40 which can be ploughed back into more useful activities.

Volume 59 is now in preparation. If you have something that you think may be suitable, please get in touch. The editors are happy to assist authors where required.

Tim Copeland

It was with sadness that I had to report to members the death, in July, of Dr Tim Copeland, Editor in Chief of Glevensis and frequent GlosArch tour guide and speaker. Tim's knowledge of the archaeology of Gloucestershire, his beloved South Wales and beyond was vast and he was always willing to share his expertise. A small gathering to mark his passing is planned in the autumn. Details will be circulated to members in due course.

2026 Visits Programme

Saturday 4th July 2026 - Avebury and its landscape

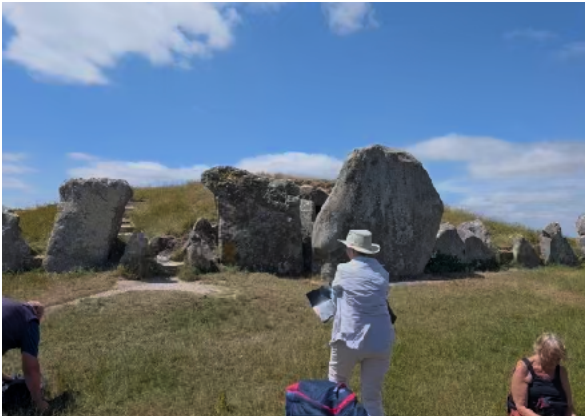
After arriving in Avebury and assembling at the barn, we met Dr Nick Snashall, who, after a short introduction by David Jones, took us into the wondrous mystery of this massive henge; every bit as impressive as the Maiden Castle hillfort, with what were originally near vertical sides into 9 metre deep ditches. The enormous stones, some weighing in excess of 50 tonnes, were erected in the third millennium BCE, to perhaps represent male and female forms, placed in circles with massive entrances, for reasons long lost to us.



DR SNASHALL DESCRIBING THE STONE CIRCLE

Next we walked between the stones of different shapes and sizes of the strange, meandering West Kennet avenue, until we reached a boundary after which the stones have gone, having been robbed out over time. We then turned to the west and slowly climbed Waden Hill, which was quite a climb, but was well worth the effort, because of the tremendous views it affords of Silbury Hill, the West Kennet Long Barrow and Swallowhead Springs, and the landscape to the south of the A4.

From this viewpoint all was so vividly described by Dr Snashall that the whole ancient monumental landscape began to be unveiled before us. From the early Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Windmill Hill, north of Avebury, south as far as Larkhill, Durrington Walls and Stonehenge, 26 miles away, the landscape is full of Neolithic, or earlier, monuments to some forgotten revered leader, deity or supernatural spirit all now lost to our understanding. The walk continued to the enigmatic Silbury Hill and ended at the West Kennet long barrow where we were able to go inside to examine the burial chambers up close. Dr Snashall didn't stop, except to



WEST KENNET LONG BARROW

drink; her enthusiasm and knowledge held us transfixed. Once back on the coach exhilarated, hot and exhausted, we all agreed to skip the Sanctuary to go back to Avebury for a break and refreshments. But, luckily the coach driver gave us the chance to view the Sanctuary and the Bronze Age round barrows from our seats on the way to Marlborough and home.

David Jones

Saturday 5th September 2026: Corinium Revisited.

After waiting for 23 of our members to assemble and sign in near the central crossroads, the umbilicus urbis, or town navel, where the cardo maximus crosses the decumanus maximus at what is now the Forum car park in Cirencester, David welcomed all at the beginning of our two hour walk and talk with Neil Holbrook, Chief Executive of Cotswold Archaeology.

Neil told us about how the street grid plan of Roman Corinium still lies beneath the current town's structure. A pillar on a plinth just a short distance from the car park may have supported a portico nearby...although we cannot tell if the pillar is still where it was



NEIL HOLBROOK LEADS THE WAY

originally laid, or has been moved here from somewhere else and re-used. We were then shown where later town houses were built directly over Roman remains with no records or drawings being made. We walked over to the north side of Dyer Street, through to the Abbey grounds past fallen masonry from the abbey's destruction during the Reformation, littered amongst the trees, to the Roman defensive town walls. But, how defensive were they? Why did a town so obviously wealthy and successful, living peacefully among the notably passive Dobunni, need defensive

town walls? And if it did, why are the walls not consistently defensive all around the town? Neil conjectured that the walls were more a boast, a statement of grandeur, a show of strength, success and wealth?



THE ROMAN WALLS

We were told how the walls extend, beneath 1960/70s housing, built directly on top of the remains, all the way to the Verulamium Gate, now London Road, below the roundabout at Grove Lane.

We then followed the line of the walls to the Beeches, where two large Romano-British villas, possibly farms, existed, unfettered by the town street grid. The famous Hare mosaic, which is now in the Corinium Museum, was discovered here. From the size of the properties and obvious wealthy lifestyle, these weren't peasant farmers, but cultured people with plenty of money. So much money in fact, that they later could afford to build

a hypocaust on top of the hare mosaic and have another floor and mosaic constructed over the top.

We next walked on along the raised bank to the Watermoor plain, where the town wall curves around to the Willows at City Bank. Below this is the lowest point in town and the gate where Ermin Street went on southeast to Silchester and London. From here we walked back north through St Michael's Park where the cardo, or Ermin Street, the main road in Roman times, witnessed the construction of the town's most impressive buildings, the basilica and forum. These buildings were as grand as any built in London, Lincoln, Chester, or York and were where law and tax were dictated and the town councils did their business. Finally, we returned to our crossroads starting point to thank Neil and digest the revelations that Corinium disguises all too well.

David Jones

Summer Fieldwork

Honeycombe 5-8 June, 2026



VIEW ACROSS THE MAIN ROOMS

This year had been expected to be the final visit to excavate the substantial building at Honeycombe. In changeable weather, the volunteers extended the excavation of the paved areas to the front of the building and worked in both of the main rooms. There is evidence of an oven and of a possible brewing tank. Towards the end of the four days a wall, to the rear of the main room, which had thought to be an external enclosure, turned out to belong to a further small, but well built room at a lower level to



THE NEW ROOM



THE WORKSHOP

the rest of the building. Time got the better of the team so this area was left to be completed at a future visit. We are still unsure of the nature of the building, but one suggestion is that it was the house of the estate manager or similar.

To be continued

Cleeve Common Grandstand. 2-7 August 2026

In August, the GlosArch volunteers were out again, for the third season of excavation on the grandstand of Cheltenham's first racecourse on Cleeve Common. This time our target



VOLUNTEERS HARD AT WORK ON DAY 2

was the northeast facing 'rear' part of the grandstand. Over six days we opened four trenches, uncovering the smaller back room, which proved to be more extensive than the specification had us believe. Notably the rear wall of the main part of the building had been completely robbed out, leaving only a sand-filled trench. Other areas were better

preserved and we found an explanation for the odd feature seen extending from the north wall towards the racecourse on the resistivity plot. It appears to have been a paved path flanked by low stone walls. During the week we talked to many members of the public and were visited by the team from The Benefact Group from



TALKING TO VISITORS FROM THE BENEFACCT GROUP



THE PAVED PATH

whom we received £5000 earlier in the summer. It was good to show them where their money is being used.

We also attempted to locate the first, wooden grandstand which had reportedly been razed to the ground in 1829, but despite lifting some 50 spade-sized turves, no evidence of burning was identified. The site of this earlier structure remains a mystery.

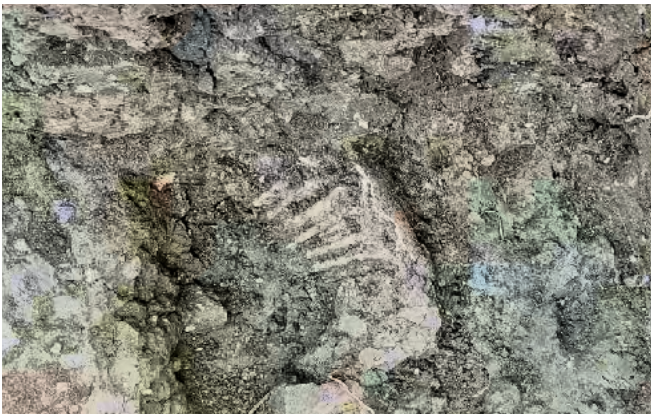
That completes the excavation and so we will be moving on to post-excavation analysis and then creation of the 3D model based on our findings and the

written sources gathered by David Aldred. Thanks again to Cotswold Archaeology and Anton Beechey-Torres for coming out at the end of the dig to record the site by drone.

Other Sites

Armscroft Park 31st July 2026

A small group of volunteers returned to Armscroft Park in late July with the resistivity meter in search of traces of Roman Ermin Street to the west of Wotton Brook. Thanks to extremely dry ground the results were inconclusive, but we hope to repeat the surveys on



SAXON HORSE JAW

either side of the brook when conditions are more favourable.

However, in exciting news, radiocarbon dating of the horses jaw found in a roadside ditch in last year's small excavation in the park has returned a date of between 774-885 cal AD with 95% confidence. This suggests that the surface identified may represent Saxon reuse of the Roman road.

Icomb

A small excavation on a hill top near Icomb, outside Stow-on-the-Wold to investigate a feature seen on LiDAR and marked on old maps, revealed insubstantial earthworks and very few finds. The nature and date of the earthwork remains unclear. The most likely explanation is of a temporary Civil War encampment.,

Uley Geophysics 10/14/15/16/18 October 2026

The next fieldwork activity will be the fourth instalment of the resistivity and magnetometry surveys at Uley. We aim to build on the great progress we have made so far. There are still places left on all days, in particular on Saturday 10th and Sunday 18th. If you would like to take part, please email fieldwork@glosarch.org.uk. No previous experience is required, but you do need to be a GlosArch member.

2026-27 GlosArch Lectures

The 2026-27 GlosArch lecture series starts on Monday 5th October with Phil Brant-Simmons of the Corinium Museum talking about '*Time Team excavations in the Cotswolds*'. Phil has talked to us previously and is always interesting and engaging. This year's programme covers a wide range of archaeological topics, from witchcraft to aerial archaeology. The full programme can be found at the end of this newsletter.

As usual you will be able to attend in person at St Andrew's URC church hall, Montpellier St. Cheltenham, GL50 1SP, or on-line via Zoom. Lectures start at 7.30pm and are free to attend. Non-members may wish to make a small donation (maybe £5) to support our work. Payment can be made by on line by bank transfer to: Gloucestershire Archaeology; Sort Code 08-92-99; A/c no. 67285787, or by cash or card if attending in person.

GlosArch out and about

Over the summer GlosArch volunteers attended five different events to show off what we do and Gareth Beamish led a guided archaeological, geological and nature walk on Cleeve Common with Giles Alder the Cleeve Common conservation lead.



WESTONBIRT



THE FOLK

On 18th July we were delighted to have been invited to have a stall at both the National launch of the Festival of Archaeology at Westonbirt Arboretum and the Gloucester launch at The Folk of Gloucester museum. Both events were really well attended and we had loads of interest from young and old alike. The mosaic game proved very popular at Westonbirt whilst in Gloucester we were even inspected by the mayor.



BIRDLIP ROMAN FESTIVAL

picnic, part of the Gloucester Festival of Archaeology and then on 16th August David Jones and his crew represented us



GARETH TALKING TO THE CLEEVE COMMON WALKERS

Two weeks later we were at the St Oswald's



GLOUCESTER DAY

at the Birdlip Roman Festival. This time it was the soil box excavation that proved the biggest hit with the kids.

Then, thanks to Sam Hyde, we were out for the final time at the Gloucester Day celebrations on 5th September. We had a prime spot by The Cross and spent the day chatting to interested passers-by. Once again the soil box was back in action.

The public walk on 31st July on Cleeve Common, led by Gareth Beamish as part of the Festival of Archaeology, proved popular and was well attended with some excellent

feedback. The walk took in The Ring, The Crossdyke and Cleeve Cloud Hillfort as well as the interesting geological formations and important natural history of the Common.

These events are great publicity for GlosArch and seem to have resulted in a flurry of new members.

BGAS 150th Anniversary Symposium

The annual Committee for Archaeology symposium takes place this year on **7th November** at the M-shed attached to Bristol Museum. The symposium will mark the 150th anniversary of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society. They are putting together an interesting programme. More details will be available soon.

GlosArch Membership

New members joining between 1st September and 30th November can pay half the full fee (£10 for ordinary members and £5 for associates and students) with membership running until the end of the membership year on 28th February 2027. Members joining between 1st December and 28th February get 15 months membership for the price of 12. To join, and for more information on GlosArch, go to our website: <https://glosarch.org.uk/>

Thanks

Thanks to all of the members who have volunteered on the various fieldwork projects so far this year, to everyone who has helped out with our outreach activities, to the members who helped with deliveries of *Glevensis* earlier this year and to the Committee members for their continuing enthusiasm and energy.

Afterthought - the Secretary goes mudlarking

On a hot Sunday morning yours truly met Minsterworth resident Ian Brookes by the banks of the Severn to explore and record a small dock uncovered by the very low water levels. After sliding about with the new GPS to record the surviving structure we went out in Ian's hovercraft to create a 3D model of the site by photogrammetry. It's amazing what you can do with a phone these days.



LLANTHONY KEY AND HOVERCRAFT



3D MODEL

Glosarch – dates and location details for autumn/winter lectures 2026/2027

Date	Location	Title	Presenter	Comments
5 th October 2026	Physical and Zoom meeting	Time Team excavations in the Cotswolds	Phil Brant-Simmons, Corinium Museum	
26 th October 2026	Physical and Zoom meeting	Witchcraft in Gloucestershire: The Archaeological Evidence	Wayne Perkins	
30 th November 2026	Physical and Zoom meeting	Excavations at Saintbury, Gloucestershire (related to an Anglo Saxon hoard) and Bristol.	Duncan Wright, Newcastle University	
21 st December 2026	Physical and Zoom meeting	Review of 2026 fieldwork – Uley and Armscroft park geophysics, Icomb, Honeycombe and Cleave hill excavations.	Neil Cathie and Phil Cox	
25 th January 2027	Physical and Zoom meeting	TBC	TBC	Bernard Rawes memorial lecture
22 nd February 2027	Physical and Zoom meeting	Archaeological Secrets of the National Trust in the South West	Cat Lodge, National Trust	
22 nd March 2027	Physical and Zoom meeting	Significant discoveries from the Slimbridge IA and Roman excavations.	Tony Roberts, Archeoscan.	
26 th April 2027	Physical and Zoom meeting	The Archaeology of the Severn Vale from the Air	Steve Crowther (Aerial Archaeology Specialist, Historic England).	The Eddie Price memorial lecture

All meetings start promptly at 19.30pm and will be in Cheltenham (address below) but with live simultaneous Zoom broadcast for the benefit of those that cannot or do not wish to attend in person.