# Newsletter 129

## GLOUCESTER AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

www.gadarg.org.uk Charity no.252290

Welcome to our new look newsletter. Please let us know what you think of it.

### *What do you think of GADARG?*

To help us plan future activities the Committee would be grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to tell us what you would like GADARG to offer and how we might do so. The names of those who take part in this survey will be entered into a free prize draw with the first name out of the hat awarded a £20 book token. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary. An SAE is enclosed. We will let you know the outcome of the survey later in the year and the prize winner will be notified by end August. Those replying anonymously obviously cannot be entered into the prize draw. For those of you receiving this newsletter by email please complete and return it to Debbie-Brookes@blueyonder.co.uk Your comments will be much appreciated.

### *FIELDWALKING AT LINTON FARM, NEAR HIGHNAM*

This took place on 19 March involving around 18 people. 32 squares (each 20m X 20m) were walked, covering roughly the same area that we surveyed by resistivity last September. David Mayes was also present with his metal detector. No significant Roman material was found (which is surprising given the large quantity of finds regularly taken out of a neighbouring field by metal detectorists). Some medieval/post medieval pottery was found, an undated stone carved figurine, a small piece of flat bronze strapping and a large quantity of clay pipe fragments. The metal detector found iron nails (some possibly Roman), a Roman coin and probably Civil War musket balls. Gradually a meaningful profile of the site is being built up prior hopefully to an excavation being done to evaluate the possible Roman road features established by earlier magnetometry.

Kurt Adams (Portable Finds Officer for Gloucestershire) has sorted out and identified the material. At a feed-back session on 22 June at 7.30 p.m. in St Andrew's Hall Cheltenham he put the finds in the context of the latest understanding of the site as well as giving an enthusiastic audience of fieldwalkers an excellent opportunity to understand better the site and what they had found.

*Terry Moore-Scott*

**Committee**

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**MEETINGS SECRETARIES :**
**Autumn/Winter programme**
Marta Cock : contact details as above
**Spring/Summer programme**
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**OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**
Les Comtesse, Martin Ecclestone, Terry Moore-Scott, John Rhodes, Tony Roberts

## *SURVEYS AT SHORTWOOD, HARESFIELD, AND STANDISH WOOD, RANDWICK*

GADARG members carried out two resistivity surveys in April on National Trust land in Haresfield and Randwick. The first, at Shortwood on Haresfield Hill, was done over two mounds southwest of the topograph that might be a pair of round barrows. The mounds are *c.*3m high with linear depressions along the western and southern sides and had recently been cleared of trees and undergrowth. There is a depression in the top of each mound, and overlapping stones are visible in a hole on the summit of the southern one. Although the weather had been very dry for a long period a wide range of readings resulted, showing a circular area of very high resistance on the centre of each mound (possibly stone capping) and curving lines of lower resistance around the edges of the features (possibly enclosing ditches).

The second survey was over a mound in Standish Wood that was measured last year as part of the LiDAR project. Carrying out the survey was a challenging task because of the trees, low branches and undergrowth! The results also showed a circle of high resistance on the centre of the mound, with a less distinct and incomplete curving line of lower resistance around the feature.

It is possible that these are both round barrow sites, but only excavation would provide firm evidence.

## *UPDATE ON LIDAR PROJECT*

Members of the committee have looked at potential archaeological sites on Selsley Common and in Upton St Leonards, but have not so far found anything that needs further investigation. There are still many more sites to be inspected.

*Ann Maxwell & Les Comtesse*

## *NESLEY FARM EXCAVATION VISIT*

Members who joined Tony Roberts' Archeoscan excavation site Open Evening on 23rd June were amazed at how much has been uncovered this year and delighted by the scrupulous attention to detail shown through Tony's explanations of the site and the excellent display of labelled finds in the farmer's barn. We all got a warm welcome including the large number of non-GADARG enthusiasts, diggers,etc. One bonus was offered by John & Rosie Wells from West Lothian Archaeology who not only demonstrated kite powered aerial photography but gave Archeoscan a large number of photographs of the site, one of which is shown here.

*Marta Cock*

www.westlothianarchaeology.org.uk

## *GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVES*

If you would like to become more involved e.g. by volunteering, Gloucestershire Archives has a range of opportunities for volunteers including cleaning and packaging archives, transcribing and indexing, data inputting and digital scanning. Some tasks can be done at home and others at the archives. You can give us as much or as little time as you would like and this can be very flexible - some projects are particularly suitable for those who want to work at their own pace. Previous experience is not usually necessary, as training will be provided.

As a volunteer you will be given a free car park token for the day you are volunteering. We really appreciate our volunteers - they are a valuable part of life here at Gloucestershire Archives, and thus we aim to hold a celebratory event for you at least once a year.

Read about some of their projects in their volunteer leaflet and the volunteer role descriptions given on their website. http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=15593 There is also a short application form that you can download and return if you would be interested in volunteering with them.

The Archives has again been rated a 4* service and in the top 10 UK repositories in the National Archives' most recent survey.

The roadworks in Worcester St are now likely to run through most of the rest of the year, so it might be worth referring to the information about diversions on our home page, http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/visitthearchives

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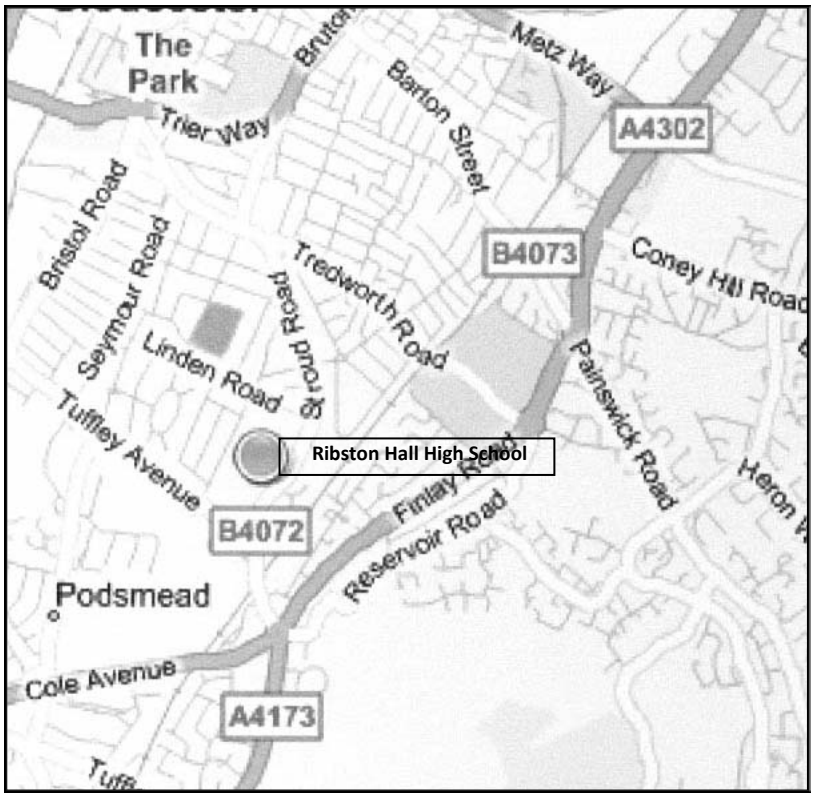
## *AUTUMN/WINTER PROGRAMME 2011-12*

If you are receiving this newsletter by post your membership card with programme details is enclosed as usual. If you receive it by email you will find the programme attached.

We have had to move from Gloucestershire Archives because we could not afford to pay £100 per meeting. We will miss it and especially Paul Evans who has been an excellent host. Our Gloucester venue is relocated to Ribston Hall High School, Stroud Road, GL1 5LE where we will use its well equipped library. There is plenty of parking and for those without a car it is on a good bus route. See map. The Cheltenham venue is still in St Andrews URC Garden Room, Montpellier St. GL50 1SP**.**




Jane Timby, the pottery specialist who has advised Eddie Price at Frocester and whose expertise is valued by so many of you suggested that instead of just talking to us she run a practical workshop where we can see and handle pottery sherds to understand them better. Her Pottery Workshop will be on Saturday 24th September from 10am to 1pm at Nesley Farm near Tetbury, GL8 8UA, in partnership with Tony Roberts of GADARG and Archeoscan who, with permission from the farmer, will host her workshop in the barn at his Nesley Farm dig. See map.

**Bookings cost £10 and MUST be made in advance for the limited number of places via the Meetings Secretary**
**email: marta.rc@btinternet.com Tel: 01453 767822. Early booking is advised.**

All other meetings continue to be on Wednesdays beginning at 7:30pm.

After discussion about our finances at our AGM in March it was agreed that we now make a small charge (Members £2.00, visitors £3.00) for each meeting you attend, instead of increasing your subscription.

## *ALF WEBB*

Alf Webb who died in February was a leading light in Dean Archaeology for many many years. He was a great exponent of recreative archaeology mostly prehistoric. He was looking forward to the launch of his new book, Dark Age Dean. His many friends, and especially members of the Dean Archaeology Group of which he was President, have brought the book out launching it on Sunday June 26th at Beechenhurst Lodge. He was also a member of GADARG and will be well remembered by many long standing members of the group. We are sure many of you will mourn his passing.

Negotiations are under way to have a display of some of Alf's finds, including an Iron Age sword, at the Dean Heritage Museum.

# AROUND GLOUCESTERSHIRE

***Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GCCAS) highlights some of its latest work:***

**A417 Brockworth Bypass:** A leaflet outlining results from the 1993-94 excavations of the bypass route has been published. For an emailed copy contact the Secretary or for more information contact Anna Morris at anna..morris@gloucestershire.gov.uk or 01452 425705.

Eighteen trenches were machine excavated during two phases of field evaluation across the **Hucclecote Centre Grounds** between 18th February and 19th May 2011. An extensive rectilinear system of 2nd to 4th century Romano-British ditches was recorded and interpreted as boundaries enclosing Romano-British fields or paddocks associated with the villa complex to the north. Tentative evidence for the presence of structures was also recorded. Finds included over 4kg of Romano-British pottery, 20kg of CBM and ceramic rooftile, four 4th century coins, a small copper alloy drop handle and a copper alloy bracelet fragment.
*Edmund Stratford*

**The Outreach Service** was recently at Cheltenham Science Festival with a range of activities including x-rays, artefacts, a tabletop dig, a lidar display and maps. The Discover Zone was open for six days and was visited by over 17,000 people., adults and children proving that everyone enjoys handling artefacts and finding out about the past!
*Anna Morris*

Between February and June 2011 the Archaeology Service undertook a further phase of **fieldwork to investigate lidar detected earthworks within Forestry Commission woodland in the Forest of Dean.** Interim results are as follows.

Detailed surveys of a small circular feature in Tidenham suggests that it may be a Bronze Age ritual monument, perhaps a ring cairn, constructed of rubble and with 10 small standing stones protruding from the bank. This represents the only monument of this class known in Gloucestershire.

Trial excavation of a group of linear and rectilinear earthworks in the Cannop Valley suggests that they represent either deliberate terracing, or lynchets created by colluvial action. The precise date of these is currently unclear, but in one area the colluvium contained abraded sherds of Roman Pottery and another was sealed by material which is currently interpreted as Roman smelting waste.

Trial excavation was also undertaken at one of four small rectangular enclosures identified by lidar. These are similar to features identified as medieval hunting lodges in the New Forest, but the Forest of Dean examples would appear to date to the late Iron Age – early Roman period.
*Jon Hoyle*

Between April 2010 and March 2011 2488 **new HER records** were added not including Listed Buildings and 16713 were amended. Work on the Listed Building entries has continued with 1173 new records and 4169 edited. Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and the Forest of Dean districts are now complete and up to date. Stroud and Cotswold districts are being worked on currently. There are currently 34880 records on the HER database. Enquiries can be made by contacting the HER on archaeology.smr@gloucestershire.gov.uk.
*Tim Grubb*

**The Severn Estuary Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey (RCZAS)** has been examining the intertidal zone and foreshore from Beachley to Maisemore Weir; and from Maisemore Weir south-west to Porlock Weir in Somerset. The work is being undertaken by GCCAS and the Somerset Historic Environment Service on behalf of English Heritage and the archaeological curators at the relevant local authorities.

Phase 2 fieldwork took place during 2010. The fieldwork allowed many previous records created by the National Mapping Project survey and also those held by the various local authority Historic Environment Records to be amended. It also provided an excellent opportunity to assess the state of preservation of many features and threats to them from erosion.

New records resulted, the majority consisting of fishing-related structures. These included previously unidentified examples of stone-built fish weirs, the majority located along Somerset's coastline; but also wooden stake-built fish traps. New examples of these wooden fish traps were identified within a known concentration at Stert Flats in Somerset, and densely constructed stake 'hedges' were recorded at Brean Beach and Berrow Flats.

At Beachley and Oldbury Flats in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, previously unrecorded V-shaped stake-built fish traps with the remains of upright hurdle panel 'leader arms' and distinctive circular wattling 'catch baskets' were identified.

At Woolaston, further recording took place of woven fish baskets. Samples taken from all of these different types of wooden structures are currently being analysed for dendrochronological and radiocarbon dating.

Later fishing structures such as putt and putcher ranks were also recorded, including previously unknown examples indicating that there were once far more of these structures along the upper Severn than was officially permitted. Other fishing or riverine-related features that were recorded. Include wattle trackways, wharfs and jetties, fish houses and the remains of post-medieval riverbank revetments or 'cribbing'.

The Severn Estuary RCZAS also recorded prehistoric peat and submerged forest deposits, reporting on the current extent and state of preservation of known exposures at sites such as Woolaston, Hills Flats, Oldbury Flats, Berrow Flats, Blue Anchor Bay, Minehead Bay and Porlock Bay; but also identifying unknown deposits at Woodspring Bay.

The full report is now nearing completion and will eventually be published online by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service and English Heritage. Completed reports can be downloaded from http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=12558
*Adrian Chadwick and Toby Catchpole, GCCAS*

***MUSEUM IN THE PARK, STROUD***
www.museuminthepark.org.uk T: 01453 763394

The Museum in the Park has recently added two axe heads to its archaeology displays. The first (STGCM 2009.50) is similar in form to Bronze Age cast bronze socketed axe heads, but is fabricated in wrought iron. It is thought to date from the transition from the late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age. It was found by a metal detector user in the south of the Stroud District. The second (STGCM 2011.12) is a large wrought iron axe head believed to date from the early medieval period. It was found at near Slimbridge, embedded in the clay of a dried up pond. Both have been conserved at the Wiltshire Conservation Service laboratory at Chippenham
*David Mullin*

***GLOUCESTER CITY MUSEUM*** is currently closed for a Heritage Lottery Funded makeover and will re-open in August 2011. Details at www.gloucester.gov.uk/citymuseum T: 01452 396396

***CORINIUM MUSEUM*** has an exciting programme of evening lectures in its 2011-12 programme which happily complements ours.. Details at www.cotswold.gov.uk/go/museum T: 01285 623476

***CHELTENHAM ART GALLERY & MUSEUM*** while closed for the new build, the learning team will continue to deliver a reduced service off-site at various venues, and at their temporary home – The Outer Space, in St George's Place. www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk T:01242 237431

***THORNBURY MUSEUM*** is a volunteer run accredited museum. Details at enquiries@thornburymuseum.org.uk or T: 01454 857774.