

BAS



Active Archaeology Group
Report

Autumn 2017

Since the last Newsletter, we have been quite busy, around the county and sometimes neighbouring counties. We are still working on writing up our completed projects – progress may be slow, but it is happening. Our earlier projects are first then the more recent ones.



Quarrendon from the air

Hobbs Hill – this is now just a matter of writing up our work, and is in progress.

Hogshaw – With Kris Lockyear from UCL we have done the remaining geophysics, but there are some difficulties processing the data, which Kris is in the process of resolving. Once we have his report, we can look at the possibility of asking Historic England for permission to put a trench in, to clarify what the

geophysics shows.

Cholesbury – With Kris Lockyear we have completed the geophysics at this site, but again Kris is encountering some difficulties processing the results, which will hopefully soon be resolved.

Coleman's Wood - we did the measured survey of the earthworks as requested, and referred to in our previous report. Stuart King found it helpful. He continues to work on this site.

Quarrendon – Washing finds from the field walking of the alternative field was not very informative (though Mike Farley's guidance on identifying pottery was helpful), but we were able to walk part of the original field in

early April and wash the finds on 27th June. Mike Farley had removed a large amount of tile (now under his patio!). The remaining finds did not add a great deal to our knowledge, except that the absence of Roman finds was striking, and there were fewer finds overall than we had expected, being close to both the deserted medieval village and the Tudor manor house. Some of our group were able to participate in the very successful Quarrendon Open Day on 9th July, aimed at local residents, because of the lack of parking. The Quarrendon booklet sold well, and there was a lot of interest in the site as a whole.

Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal – there is nothing further to report at present.



Clay pipe with fox motif from Three Locks

Cheddington

Airfield – no further work is planned but the project is still being written up.

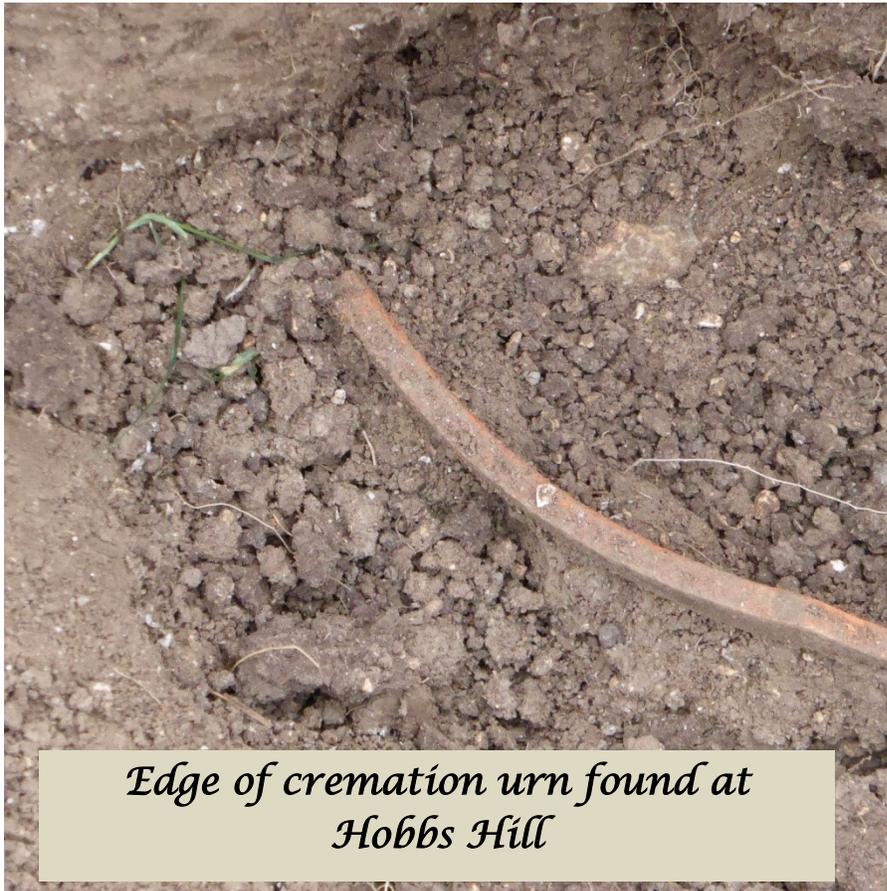
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Three Locks

Pumping Station – this is on the Grand Union Canal at Soulbury, between Leighton Buzzard and Stoke Hammond. We were invited by the Canal and Rivers Trust to

investigate this Grade II listed site, which is currently undergoing restoration. It is the pumping station for a flight of three locks, originally built as a set of narrow locks, but due to increased traffic on the canal, widened in the 1850s. The original pump did not have sufficient power to manage the increased volume of water required by the wider locks, and so needed to be supplemented. We have traced a whole series of flues and drains under the present floor, and have connected some of them up (working round piles of bricks from a wall that had been taken down because it was unsafe). In somewhat cramped conditions (spoil heaps were repeatedly moved), we have established that there were two boilers installed, but have not fully defined their relation to each other. Under a clearly disturbed area of the brick floor, we discovered the junction between drains from the two

boilers, and their connection to a drain port visible in the outer wall. Much of what we found was previously unknown, and the group received several compliments on our professionalism and skills. We failed to locate the chimney (though an old photograph seems to suggest that it was rather smaller than we would have expected). We are not planning further excavation - though this is our favourite site due to the proximity of the Three Locks pub immediately opposite on the other bank of the canal – but we do still need to do some research in the archives to try to understand the sequence of events properly, and pass this information on the Canal and Rivers Trust.



*Edge of cremation urn found at
Hobbs Hill*

Ivinghoe Aston Cremation Burial

– a metal detectorist working in a field about a mile from Ivinghoe Aston, located a piece of metal (with bone stuck to it – perhaps part of the cheek piece of a helmet). As he dug it up, he also found potsherds from probably 3 pots and bits of burnt bone. On realising that his find was unusual, he acted correctly and

contacted Arwen James (Finds Liaison Officer) and Brett Thorn from Aylesbury Museum. Brett identified the potsherds as Romano-British. He was able to get consent from the landowner for a limited excavation (1m square) to extract the rest of the burial, which was done on 16th May. Having removed the rest of the cremation burial, and defined the grave cut, we were tidying up in mid-afternoon when we encountered a second cremation, only about 0.5m from the first, but mostly in the baulk of the excavation. We removed some potsherds and bone fragments from this one, but as it was quite late in the day, and our permission did not allow us

to extend the trench, we backfilled it and left. We hope the farmer will allow us to return and complete lifting the second burial. The hay in the field has now been cut, but there are sheep grazing, so we do not know when, or even if, we may be able to return.

Bones – A small group of our members continues to work on cataloguing the human bones in the museum collection at Halton, and are still making interesting discoveries.

Other Societies' Sites - We have contacts with other societies who welcome our input.

Frith Hill near Great Missenden – the Chess Valley Archaeology and History society is planning an excavation following a geophysical survey. For details contact Yvonne Edwards yvonnehedwards@btinternet.com

Maids Moreton – north of Buckingham. The Community Archaeology project continues to investigate 'The Mound', which may be the remains of a 12th century house. Excavation had been taking place in August and anyone interested in future - contact Susan Fern suzor16@hotmail.co.uk

Wing Heritage Group – The test pit programme around the village continues, though there have been only a few test pits dug this year for a variety of reasons. Several archaeologists from Cotswold Archaeology have shown interest in the group, and one has attended some of the test pit digs. A display on the work of the group, including the history of the village and discoveries made by the Family History subgroup, was set up in the car park of the Cock Inn, as part of the Festival of Archaeology, and was quite well attended – maybe we will get more offers of test pits in local residents gardens as a result. Anyone interested should contact Sarah Roe sarah.roe01@gmail.com

Verulamium – the geophysics project to map as much as possible of the Roman city of Verulamium continues. A paddock close to the museum was investigated in March – with difficulty – the ground was very rough and well populated with nettles as well as rabbit and badger holes. It revealed less than we hoped. However, throughout August work will continue on the Gorehambury site, close to the Roman theatre. We completed the magnetometry last year and are currently doing resistivity and ground penetrating radar – and getting some excellent results. View the results on <https://hertsgeosurvey.wordpress.com> Work is done, weather permitting,

every day from Wednesday to Sunday, from about 10am. Anyone interested should contact Ellen Shlasko hertsgeosurvey@gmail.com

Many of our members belong to more than one society, and it is not always possible to keep up with what other societies are doing. If any AAG member wants the activities of another society to which they belong to be mentioned in the Newsletter, then please contact Pauline paulineahey@btinternet.com

Indoor Activities

CBA South Midlands - Pauline represents amateur archaeology in Bucks on this group – please tell her of anything that needs to be raised with the group. The Spring Conference was held in Haynes, and covered work that has been going on in Bedfordshire, which was very interesting. The autumn conference will be on Sunday October 15th and will be in Oxfordshire (venue TBA), and will concentrate on discoveries in Oxfordshire. Do remember that CBA SM is able to give grants to amateur groups for various purposes to further their activities.

Pauline Hey