

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

President: Mrs Cynthia Graham-Kerr
Patron: Prof. Malcolm Airs

Annual Report & Accounts

for

2007



Photo: Ian Clarke

*Phil Hughes and Kaz Greenham
with the new Geoscan RM15D Resistance Meter
BBCHAP survey at Cadwell in 2007*



Supported by

The National Lottery[®]
through Awards for All



SOAG 39th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill
2:30pm on Sunday 30th March 2008

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Group continued its principal activities of evening lectures from September to March and occasional visits in the Summer, together with fieldwork from Spring through to Autumn. The published programme now starts in September rather than May, which is more logical and eases the organisational workload in the first quarter of the year. The number of Summer visits was reduced to two this year and for the first time in many years there was no Summer party. A few members have expressed disappointment at this, but these Summer activities have been poorly supported in recent years and the Committee felt we could no longer justify the effort involved in their organisation. The party has been replaced by occasional, extended social gatherings after lectures, starting with 'wine and mince pies' after the November lecture, which proved a great success. The annual Review of SOAG Archaeology in April is now firmly established and this year there was more fieldwork than ever before to present. Indeed, it is in the area of fieldwork that the Group has made most progress.

In July, the Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP) secured a £10,000 award for SOAG from the National Lottery Fund: Awards for All scheme. This was a tremendous achievement and a just reward for the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm of the community volunteers over the first twelve months of this project. The grant was for the purchase of modern geophysical survey equipment: a Geoscan RM15D Resistance Meter, with supporting laptop computer, software and data projector. A small residual balance of the fund will support the project over twelve months. Between September and November, the BBCHAP field team used the new equipment to survey 4ha (10ac) of a field at Cadwell in the north of Brightwell Parish. The results are excellent, revealing evidence of occupation of this site over several thousand years. In September the community members voted that an annual subscription should be raised to offset running costs and that the simplest way to do this would be for volunteers to become members of SOAG. By the end of the year this had brought in eighteen new members. Non-members who take part will pay a daily fee, as they now do at Gatehampton.

BBCHAP is now firmly established and should continue to grow and attract new members in the coming years. It is SOAG's first Community Archaeology Project and its success provides a model for unlimited field opportunities in the future. But a complementary theme for new fieldwork in 2008 has been co-operation with outside individuals and archaeological societies.

In the early part of the year a small team led by David Nichols surveyed an undated mound near Rotherfield Greys. The surface and geophysical surveys show that it is almost certainly a large burial mound, dating from the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. The resistance survey was carried out by SOAG members under the supervision of Gerard Latham from Wallingford Museum. Gerard helped also with the early work at Brightwell. He is most generous with his time and the loan of his TR-CIA resistance meter and we are extremely grateful to him. David is planning an excavation in 2009 to try to find dating evidence for the mound and we intend this to be a joint operation with other local societies.

The successful partnership of David Nicholls and Gerard Latham extended to another new field project, this time under the leadership of Dr Stephen Miles of the Victoria County History: Oxfordshire. The work involves a search for the site of the lost church of Bix Gibwyn and the manorial centres of both Bix Gibwyn and Bix Brand. The results of the 2007 geophysical surveys were inconclusive but work will continue. I am pleased to report that Marlow Archaeological Society co-operated in part with this survey and that selected sites are based on studies by the Henley Archaeological and Historical Group.

These co-operative ventures are extremely important. In the past, there has been a tendency for local groups to remain isolated and perhaps jealously guard what they saw as 'their territory'. I believe that position to be unsustainable and that the future survival of amateur archaeology will depend upon co-operation. Fortunately, there are others in our area who feel the same and the first moves in this direction have been made. We have and will continue to encounter problems in doing this but we must persist in our efforts to be all inclusive and open in our work.

The Gatehampton Roman Villa Excavation and Landscape Project continues to throw up surprises as new areas are opened. It is proving extremely popular and provides an ideal training ground for raw recruits and for an increasing number of archaeology students looking for field experience. There is now a sizeable core team of experienced diggers, with many of them engaged in extra-mural studies leading to Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees in archaeology. We are immensely proud of their achievements and delighted by the steady growth in experience and knowledge they contribute. It is vital to the future success of the Group that we continue to encourage and support them in their training and provide challenging field opportunities. Towards the end of the year, uncertainty over the future of the project arose when we learnt of the impending sale of the land. The team responded immediately by extending fieldwork into the Winter to ensure that trenches are completed and properly recorded in case the dig should have to close. Once the new owners are known, negotiations will take place to see if work can continue and for how long; in the meantime we can only hope. Cyn Graham-Kerr, Hazel Williams and the team are to be congratulated for their excellent handling of this crisis and of the project in general.

SOAG Bulletin No 61 (2006) was produced by the Publications Team led by Hon. Editor Sue Sandford. Graphics Designer Janet Eastment worked expertly to bring a fresh and more modern look to the journal, but without losing touch with its now familiar look. The result has been a spectacular success that has had Oxford and Reading Libraries Local Studies Departments, and the British Library, checking their shelves to try to locate earlier issues of this excellent journal. Significant gaps in collections have been revealed which we are endeavouring to fill as soon as possible. I thank all who have contributed copies from their own collections. The journal was published later in the year and this will continue to be the pattern. This is a necessary change to spread the workload more evenly over the year, to give adequate time for reporting on fieldwork, and

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

to fit in with the Publication Team members' other commitments. With regard to the SOAG archives under Sue Sandford and Janet Sharpe, work is ongoing to compile an index of all the *SOAG Bulletins* which will be published on the website, with the long term aim of making the *SOAG Bulletins* available on World Wide Web. I must also report that SOAG once again featured strongly in the CBA South Midlands Archaeology journal, with reports on both Gatehampton and BBCHAP.

The number of new members who joined in 2007 was a record 53, but 20 left during the year and 5 downgraded their membership, giving a net gain over the year of 28 and taking total membership to 153 at the end of the year. Compared with 2006, this is a 22% rise in the number of members. It is the first time that membership has risen significantly above c.130. BBCHAP directly accounts for 2/3 of this gain, Gatehampton and our excellent website for most of the rest. The SOAG website, managed by Web Master Steve Gibson, continues to achieve record hits and is our principal publicity tool.

The Committee has been hampered throughout the year by the lack of an Honorary Secretary and a shortage of Ordinary Members, which has meant some reduction in efficiency. Fortunately, we have been able to recruit new people right at the end of the year and are taking steps to redistribute the work, although it will be some time before this is completed. Last year I reported that until could we secure better continuity at the top it would not be sensible to apply for charitable status, and that remains the case. The experience of other groups has also given me reason to be cautious. Provided we can continue to secure funding for fieldwork and essential equipment, we have no pressing need to pursue an application. However, we are bringing our operations in line with Charity Commission requirements, as this represents best practice and is respected by all grant awarding bodies. Accordingly, the accounts in this Annual Report have been prepared under CC guidelines and a draft New Constitution, based on CC requirements, is at an advanced stage and will be published for comment in 2008.

I thank all my colleagues on the Committee for their continuing hard work and cheerfulness under constant pressure. Each has contributed fully in their particular area of responsibility and constructively to the general discussions. I would especially like to thank Elizabeth Lawrance for her work on the New Constitution and sound advice on all matters legal, and David Nicholls for putting together a successful lecture and visits programme, whilst at the same time running two field projects; a remarkable achievement.

Many others have contributed to this particularly successful year for SOAG, not least the members of the field teams whose work is the very reason for our existence. Special thanks go to Margaret Westwood and Anne Simmins for continuing to supply coffee and biscuits for our lecture evenings. Margaret has gone on doing this long after she asked to stop, but it is proving very difficult to find others willing to take on the task. Let us hope volunteers will come forward very soon.

Finally, I thank all our members for their continuing support. Whether or not you attend lectures or take part in field activities, your support is vital to keeping SOAG at the forefront of amateur archaeology in South Oxfordshire.

Ian Clarke
25 February 2008

LECTURES AND VISITS IN 2007

25 Jan	Sue Sandford and Janet Sharpe (SOAG) Seminar on the SOAG Archives: 'Buried treasures – unearthing SOAG's past'
22 Feb	David Thomason (Berkshire Archaeology) 'Aspects of the curatorial issues in East Berkshire'
25 Mar	SOAG 38 th Annual General Meeting Guest speaker: Georgina Muskett (University of Liverpool): 'Akrotiri: the "Pompeii" of the Aegean'
26 Apr	Review of SOAG Archaeology in 2006
17 Jun	Visit to Butser Ancient Farm
17 Jul	An Archaeological Walk along Grim's Ditch
27 Sep	Prof. Michael Fulford (Univ. of Reading) 'Latest work at Silchester'
25 Oct	Cyril McCoombe MBE 'The prehistory of Caversham and Mapledurham'
22 Nov	Dr Simon Townley (Vict. County History) 'The VCH Survey – with local emphasis'

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

TREASURER'S REPORT

The most significant event in 2007 was the grant of £10,000 from the National Lottery. The greater part of this money has already been spent on new equipment as detailed in the notes below.

Another immediately visible change from 2006 in the 2007 accounts is an apparent decline in income from subscriptions, but as mentioned by John White in last year's Treasurer's Report, the timing of subscription payments has a major effect on our annual accounts. The 2008 subscriptions were received just before and after Christmas, but cheques totalling around £975 were not banked until the New Year. Had these been banked a few days earlier, the deficit of £777.64 would in fact have been a surplus of just under £200.

In fact, as reported by the Chairman, the membership statistics are extremely healthy. However, we should not let this blind us to the fact that we need to ensure our annual expenditure plans are linked to our income. Although our reserves mean that we could certainly manage some years of shortfall, this is not a sustainable strategy in the long term. We will need to budget in 2008 to ensure that a sensibly balanced cash flow and adequate reserve are maintained.

The rise in membership is of course good news, but will have a knock on effect on some of the group's expenditure items such as printing and postage. Similarly, our increased activity in new field projects will continue to drive higher costs.

Notes to the 2007 Accounts

1. General

The 2007 accounts have been prepared with the guidance of the Charities Commission 'Statement of Recommended Practice' (SORP 2005).

One minor change occurred to our reserve fund which was moved to a higher interest bearing account.

2. Payments

i) Dig expenses

There are some 2007 Gatehampton expenses which were not put through the books until 2008, but these are not such as to significantly distort the accounts.

ii) Insurance

The cost of insurance has increased considerably to cater for the equipment purchased under the Awards for All scheme. Previously, only SOAG's public liability was covered.

3. Receipts

i) Subscriptions

As mentioned above, the timing of subscription renewals and banking of cheques received, had a notable effect on the accounts, but no significant impact on our overall financial position.

ii) Grant

A major grant of £10,000 was received from the National Lottery, Awards for All scheme. As reported in the accounts, the greater portion of this has already been spent acquiring new geophysical equipment, an associated laptop PC and a new projector for presentations. Whilst the use of this money is "ring-fenced" for BBCHAP, i.e. we cannot use any of the remaining cash for financing other activities, the equipment itself is owned by SOAG and can and will be used to support all the Group's future projects.

John M. Gibbs
6th March 2008

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

**SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2007**

**Receipts and Payments Account
for Year Ended 31 December 2007**

<u>UNRESTRICTED GENERAL FUND</u>		
RECEIPTS		
<u>31/12/2006</u>		<u>31/12/2007</u>
1435.00	Subscriptions	923.00
3.00	Sale of Bulletins	0.00
72.00	Donations	0.00
8.34	Bank Interest	8.78
76.00	SOAG Party	0.00
5.00	Visitors Fees	55.50
250.00	BBCHAP Grant	0.00
<u>£1,849.34</u>	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>£987.28</u>
PAYMENTS		
105.00	Venue Hall Hire	140.00
141.00	Insurance	244.99
171.00	Printing	405.90
90.00	Speaker Expenses	240.00
66.54	SOAG Party	25.83
43.50	Standing Orders	38.50
52.43	Postage	131.98
0.00	Replacement cheque	0.00
35.94	Secretary Expenses	0.00
30.00	Publishing SMA	90.00
449.46	Dig Expenses	80.00
52.44	Office Expenses	166.97
107.32	Messenger	124.75
10.00	Reimbursement	0.00
27.00	Committee room	45.00
16.00	Website	31.00
<u>£1,397.63</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£1,764.92</u>
451.71	Surplus for year	-777.64
<u>£1,520.87</u>	Balance brought forward	<u>£1,722.58</u>
<u>£1,722.58</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>£944.94</u>

**Statement of Assets & Liabilities
as at 31 December 2007**

MONETARY ASSETS		
<u>31/12/2006</u>		<u>31/12/2007</u>
923.67	Main Account	1725.56
798.91	Reserve Account	807.69
250.00	BBCHAP Account	53.44
<u>£1,972.58</u>	TOTAL MONETARY ASSETS	<u>£2,586.69</u>
REPRESENTED BY FUNDS		
1722.58	Unrestricted General Fund	944.94
250.00	Restricted Fund	1641.75
<u>£1,972.58</u>	TOTAL FUNDS	<u>£2,586.69</u>

MAJOR FIXED ASSETS	
Geoscan RM15-D Resistivity Meter	6288.36
HP NC6320 Laptop PC	734.36
Toshiba X2000 LCD Projector	505.24
Dumpy Level	349.00
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>£7,876.96</u>

Accounts prepared by:

John M. Gibbs

<u>BBCHAP (RESTRICTED FUND)</u>		
RECEIPTS		
<u>31/12/2006</u>		<u>31/12/2007</u>
0.00	Awards for All Grant	10000.00
<u>£0.00</u>	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>£10,000.00</u>
PAYMENTS		
0.00	Equipment	8354.11
0.00	Dig Expenses	254.14
<u>£0.00</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£8,608.25</u>
0.00	Surplus for year	1391.75
<u>£0.00</u>	Balance brought forward	<u>£250.00</u>
<u>£250.00</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>£1,641.75</u>

This account was examined by J. Carpenter from documentation provided and provides a true and accurate presentation of the transactions of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group during 2007.

Signed by: **J.Carpenter** (Examiner)
signed copy on record

Dated: **6th March 2008**

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

OFFICERS AND ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2007-08

President:	Mrs Cynthia Graham-Kerr
Chairman:	Mr Ian Clarke
Vice Chairman:	Mrs Hazel Williams
Honorary Treasurer:	Mr John Gibbs
Honorary Secretary:	Mr Ian Clarke (acting) Mr David Oliver (co-opted as Minuting Secretary Jan 2008)
Ordinary Members:	Dr John White Mrs Susan Sandford Ms Elizabeth Lawrance Mr David Nicholls Dr Nancy Nichols (co-opted Jan 2008) Mr Michael Green (co-opted Jan 2008)