

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
1969 to 2009 - 40 years of Independent Archaeology

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

Annual Report & Accounts

for

2008



Photo: Nancy Nichols

'Field archaeology in 2008'

*GPR survey of the mound at Rotherfield Greys
In front: Tim Astin of the University of Reading
Behind L-R: Mike Green, Gerard Latham, Tom Walker*



SOAG 40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitechurch Hill
1:45pm on Sunday 29th March 2009

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Group continued its principal activities of evening lectures from September to March and occasional events in the Summer, together with an enhanced programme of fieldwork throughout the year.

A high quality lecture programme was once again put together by David Nicholls, this time assisted by Nancy Nichols. The six lectures were all well supported, which says much for the choice of lecturers and subject matter but also the improved advertising through the SOAG Messenger under its new editor: Mike Green. Some of the success must also be attributed to our excellent venue: the Goring Heath Parish Hall is beautifully maintained and continues to attract favourable comment from new members and visiting lecturers alike. I am pleased to say that tea, coffee and biscuits are often back on the agenda.

There was only one summer visit arranged this year when a small group visited the Hook Norton Brewery. However, without the addition of two guests this visit would have been cancelled due to lack of support. Poor support for summer events has been a developing pattern in recent years and our larger field archaeology programme means it is also difficult to find organisers. The Committee will need to consider whether a new approach is needed, or whether summer visits should be discontinued. The 'wine and mince pies' after the November lecture has proved a success and more such 'extended social gatherings' may be the way forward.

The annual Review of SOAG Archaeology in April presented no less than four active field projects – indeed, we ran out of time to present them properly in one evening and the Committee will consider next year whether to allocate more time to these, perhaps with a daytime event.

The year opened with continued uncertainty about the future of the Gatehampton Roman Villa site and the team worked hard over the winter to complete evaluation of the trenches and essential recording. Happily the new owners of the land have proved enthusiastic supporters of the project. They are encouraging SOAG to continue and have generously allocated space for storage on site. The extended digging season and the impetus given to the work has resulted in more rapid progress and fascinating new discoveries. A digital survey of the whole site was completed using a total station on loan from Archaeology in Marlow, with John Laker generously providing training and assistance. We are pleased to be able to work an exchange scheme with AIM for this with the loan of our Geoscan resistance meter: both sets of equipment were Lottery funded and such co-operation is strongly encouraged. The season closed in November with the traditional end-of-dig lunch at which the guests of honour were the site owners, old and new: Robin Cloke, and Roger and Sarah Edmunds. I record our grateful thanks for their support without which this important project would not continue.

The Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP) continued to be supported by the award from the National Lottery Fund: Awards for All scheme, the residue of the fund being used to finance a summer training dig at Cadwell Farm. This was on the supposed site of the medieval manor, where the moat was successfully sectioned and an area of medieval, paved trackway exposed. A further trench sectioned the Roman road that crosses the site. The dig provided valuable training in working sections. The Geoscan resistance meter (purchased in 2007 with the National Lottery grant) was again put to good use, this time in the central area of Brightwell Park where an area of just over 4.6h was surveyed. The results have revealed what appears to be a large complex of rectilinear buildings and formal gardens that are probably the remains of the earlier manor house. This is a spectacular result that we hope will be followed up by excavation. The geophysical survey will be extended across the southern area of the Park in 2009. I have pleasure in thanking landowners: Richard and Kellie Davey at Cadwell Farm, and Nigel and Tessa Mogg at Brightwell Park, for their enthusiastic support.

The team led by David Nicholls carried out further geophysical survey work at the mound near Rotherfield Greys. In June Gerard Latham (Wallingford Museum) supervised pseudo-sectioning of the mound and ditch using new software with his TR/CIA resistance meter. The results appeared to support earlier theories about the main features of the mound but were difficult to interpret. Nancy Nichols discussed the results at the University of Reading which sparked immediate interest from colleagues in the Archaeological Science Research Group, with an offer to carry out a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey of the mound. This was completed by Tim Astin and the team in September and the results revealed that the mound has an internal structure. The tentative conclusion is that the monument may date from the Neolithic rather than the Bronze Age. This is a most exciting result, as is the continued cooperation with the University of Reading planned for 2009.

The search for the site of the 'lost' church of Bix Gibwyn, in support of Stephen Miles of the Victoria County History: Oxfordshire, at last produced a positive result when trial trenching in November revealed three adult skeletons on a roughly west-east alignment, together with significant areas of mortar. The skeletons have been

carbon dated to the late 12th early 13th century and the provisional conclusion is that this is the site of the 'lost' church. The dig was completed in very poor weather conditions and the team are to be congratulated on a very fine job done. Our grateful thanks are due to the owner Lord Alvingham and the occupants of Chapel Cottages for allowing this work.

SOAG Bulletin No 62 was produced by the Publications Team, led by Hon. Editor Sue Sandford and Graphics Designer Janet Eastment. The new look introduced last year continues to be well received and the content again presented our now wide-ranging fieldwork. On the advice of the team, the journal numbering has been unlinked from the year so that more up-to-date reporting can be included. The BBCHAP project was also reported in *South Midlands Archaeology*.

Improvements have been made to the SOAG website, courtesy of Webmaster Steve Gibson, Hazel Willams and Mike Green, with a revamped home page and a new 'members only' area. More content will be added to the members area in 2009.

We have been fortunate to have a full and very active committee throughout the year. Although Dave Oliver has been constrained by his other commitments from taking on full Honorary Secretary duties, others have compensated and proved willing to share the responsibilities. I am delighted that at long last the *SOAG Messenger* is in the new, safe hands of Mike Green; Nancy Nichols is ably assisting David Nicholls with the arduous task of programme organisation; and co-opted member Mike Vincent has taken on the new role of Membership Secretary. This has shared out duties formerly undertaken by myself as Honorary Secretary and latterly also as Chairman, bringing much needed relief. My grateful thanks to them all for their support.

I must give special thanks to Elizabeth Lawrance who has worked hard this year to bring the draft new Constitution to completion. I am delighted to say that this will be presented to the members for approval at the forthcoming AGM and, if approved, will mark a significant step in the development of the Group. Elizabeth has also completed an important Child Protection Policy document that will be published soon.

I thank the many others who have contributed to another successful year for SOAG, not least the members of the field teams whose work is the very reason for our existence, and those who attend our lectures and liven up the dark winter evenings with their questions and enthusiasm. At the close of the 2008 year SOAG had a healthy 130 memberships representing over 164 members. Whether or not you attend lectures or take part in field activities, your support is valued and vital to keeping SOAG at the forefront of archaeology in South Oxfordshire.

As the 40th AGM and celebration approaches, our esteemed 'First President' has decided that this would be an appropriate time for her to take President Emeritus. The Committee have great pleasure in granting her request and this will take effect at the AGM. It brings a fitting closure to a period of great change in SOAG.

Ian Clarke
1st March 2009

LECTURES AND OTHER EVENTS IN 2008

Thu 24 Jan	R H Bennet MBE (The Lime Centre) 'Examining an historic mortar'
Thu 28 Feb	Dr Gill Hey (Oxford Archaeology) 'Neolithic/Bronze Age settlement in the Thames Valley'
Sun 30 Mar	SOAG 39 th Annual General Meeting Guest speaker: Mr Edward Sutton – 'The Mary Rose Project'
Thu 24 Apr	Review of SOAG Archaeology 2007-8
Sat 9 Aug	Guided tour of Hook Norton Brewery
Thu 25 Sep	Dr Anna Williams (Cranfield University) 'Forensic environmental evidence'
Thu 23 Oct	Dr Fiona Macalister (Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives) 'An archaeological conservator abroad – the Middle East'
Thu 27 Nov	Prof Steve Mithen (Reading University) 'Water, Life and Civilisation'

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

TREASURER'S REPORT

The £10,000 received in 2007 from the National Lottery Awards for All scheme was fully expended by the close date at the end of June 2008. Equipment purchased as a result of this grant will continue to benefit not only the BBCHAP project, but all other projects in which SOAG is involved for a long time to come.

Two further grants were received during the year: £500 from the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust, and £312.02 from the Chiltern Conservation Board. The latter was a retrospective payment for specific project costs, hence the rather precise amount.

The healthy rise in membership is reflected in a corresponding increase in subscriptions. It should be noted that this figure is not necessarily indicative of the exact change of memberships year over year, since this amount is subject to the timing of renewal requests, the members' responses and the banking of the subscriptions.

This timing issue affects all categories with one noteworthy example being the apparent cost reduction in the cost of the Bulletin, which is a result of a production payment which will appear in the 2009 accounts. The final amount is almost the same as 2007.

Notes to the 2008 Accounts

1. General

These accounts were prepared in accordance with guidance from 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

The large increase in dig costs is a result of the society now being active on a number of fronts. This figure includes costs for projects at Gatehampton, Bix and other sites, but also includes BBCHAP expenses not covered by the Awards for All grant mentioned above. In future this figure will include all dig costs, unless we are given any other grants awarded for a specific purpose.

ii) Insurance

The cost of insurance increase is due to a full year of equipment purchased during 2007 under the Awards for All scheme. We are covered for a specific number of simultaneous diggers, and it is therefore feasible that we may see further increases in 2009 if we need to increase our cover if more than one of our projects needs to operate at the same time.

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.

4. Monetary Assets

i) Restricted Fund

The grants received in 2008 do not require separate accounting, and the BBCHAP "ring-fenced" funds have been exhausted, hence we currently have no requirement to continue with the split between restricted and unrestricted unless further specifically targeted grants are received.

John M. Gibbs
1st March 2009

**SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2008**

**Receipts and Payments Account
for Year Ended 31 December 2008**

<u>UNRESTRICTED GENERAL FUND</u>		
RECEIPTS		
<u>31/12/2007</u>		<u>31/12/2008</u>
<u>£1,722.58</u>	Balance brought forward	<u>£944.94</u>
923.00	Subscriptions	1270.00
0.00	Sale of Bulletins	0.00
0.00	Donations	812.02
8.78	Bank Interest	20.09
0.00	SOAG Party	0.00
55.50	Visitors Fees	17.50
0.00	BBCHAP Grant	0.00
<u>£987.28</u>	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>£2,119.61</u>
PAYMENTS		
140.00	Venue Hall Hire	195.00
244.99	Insurance	342.03
405.90	Bulletin	103.70
240.00	Speaker Expenses	200.00
25.83	SOAG Party	50.99
38.50	Standing Orders	56.50
131.98	Postage	99.39
0.00	Replacement cheque	0.00
0.00	Secretary Expenses	0.00
90.00	Publishing SMA	15.00
80.00	Dig Expenses	677.80
166.97	Office Expenses	59.03
124.75	Messenger	23.28
0.00	Reimbursement	0.00
45.00	Committee room	92.00
31.00	Website	17.00
<u>£1,764.92</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£1,931.72</u>
<u>-777.64</u>	Surplus for year	<u>187.89</u>
<u>£944.94</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>£1,132.83</u>

**Statement of Assets & Liabilities
as at 31 December 2008**

MONETARY ASSETS		
<u>31/12/2007</u>		<u>31/12/2008</u>
1725.56	Main Account	234.96
807.69	Reserve Account	827.78
53.44	BBCHAP Account	70.09
<u>£2,586.69</u>	TOTAL MONETARY ASSETS	<u>£1,132.83</u>
REPRESENTED BY FUNDS		
944.94	Unrestricted General Fund	1132.83
1641.75	Restricted Fund	0.00
<u>£2,586.69</u>	TOTAL FUNDS	<u>£1,132.83</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>31/12/2007</u>		<u>31/12/2008</u>
<u>£250.00</u>	Balance brought forward	<u>£1,641.75</u>
10000.00	Awards for All Grant	0.00
<u>£10,000.00</u>	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>£0.00</u>
PAYMENTS		
8354.11	Equipment	0.00
254.14	Dig Expenses	1641.75
<u>£8,608.25</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£1,641.75</u>
<u>1391.75</u>	Surplus for year	<u>-1641.75</u>
<u>£1,641.75</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>£0.00</u>

This account was examined by Trudi Kidd from documentation provided and provides a true and accurate presentation of the transactions of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group during 2008.

Signed by:

Trudi Kidd (Examiner)

Dated: **1st March 2009**

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

OFFICERS AND ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2008-09

President:	Mrs Cynthia Graham-Kerr
Chairman:	Mr Ian Clarke
Vice Chairman:	Mrs Hazel Williams
Honorary Treasurer:	Mr John Gibbs
Honorary Secretary:	Mr David Oliver
Ordinary Members:	Dr John White
	Mrs Susan Sandford
	Ms Elizabeth Lawrance
	Mr David Nicholls
	Prof Nancy Nichols
	Mr Michael Green