



Charity XT29402

# SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Founded in 1969

PATRON: Prof. Malcolm Airs  
PRESIDENT: Hazel Williams

## Annual Report & Accounts for 2015

### SOAG 47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill 2:00pm on Sunday 24th April 2016

**It's not all about digging:**



Celebrations at the end of the Blewbury Big Dig 2015



A very popular 2015 Open Day at Gatehampton

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

*(Compiled by the Chairman from reports by members of the Committee)*

2015 proved to be another strong year for SOAG with major excavations at three sites and excellent series of lectures and events. Our communications have been strengthened by additional publicity and our technical capability has been enhanced by a generous donation of surveying equipment. The Group has grown in numbers and our financial position is secure. Perhaps most importantly for an amateur society, we had a lot of fun doing it.

### **Membership and Finance**

It was very pleasing in 2015 to see an increase in membership of over 11%, reversing a declining trend in 5 of the previous 6 years. There is no single reason for this – but promotion of Gatehampton and the new Highwood digs, and lecture publicity has all played a part. I am delighted that Mike Grinsted has agreed to take on a publicity role in SOAG, and this is already bearing fruit in increased interest in our programme.

Gift Aid continues to keep us “in the black” with about £300 adding to membership income, and 50% of members now pay by standing order, which is a great help in easing the administrative burden.

The policy of projects being self funding has continued. In particular, new and old avenues were explored to enable the Highwood project to go ahead, and the success in obtaining grants will hopefully be continued in the future.

### **Publications**

In 2015 ten issues of our newsletter, SOAG Messenger were published under editorship of Mike Green. The latest edition of our annual journal, SOAG Bulletin No 69, was once again produced by the editorial and production team of John Hefferan and Janet Eastment. At the time of writing the 2016 edition is already under way as we are hoping to bring the publication date forward to the first half of the year. In addition to our own publications, we also publish results of our research projects to a wider audience through the CBA South Midlands Archaeology annual report. The SOAG website continues to be maintained by Mike Green as our main channel of communication with the outside world.

Eighteen months ago we started a new project to safeguard our old paper archive which includes: (a) copies of almost every edition of SOAG Bulletin and SOAG Messenger produced since the founding of SOAG in 1969, (b) the detailed logbooks maintained by our founder, SOAG Cynthia Graham Kerr, during her 30 or so active years, and (c) the supporting paper documentation from many SOAG field projects between 1960 and 2000. By the end of the year good progress has been made. All the SOAG Bulletins and SOAG Messengers have been successfully digitised and by mid 2016 will be available on the SOAG website. Early versions in searchable form have been made available to SOAG project leaders and are already proving valuable in enabling access to earlier SOAG research and fieldwork. Cynthia's logbooks are

likely to be available in digital form in a similar timescale, and the paperwork from old projects is likewise slowly being digitised with discussions ongoing about the most appropriate place for long term archiving.

### **Lectures and events**

The SOAG lecture season ran from January to March and September to November and featured a wide range of seven very interesting speakers and topics, attracting an increased audience of between 30 and 40. Thanks are due to our new Publicity Officer, Mike Grinstead, for ensuring that the lectures are well advertised. This year, the popular new 'tradition' of devoting the meeting in November to talks by our own members was repeated, presented this year by SOAGs Lindsey Bedford and Ian Clarke. This was followed by our usual Christmas celebration, enjoyed enthusiastically by all.

Our AGM meeting was held in April and was followed, as usual, by a review of SOAG archaeology undertaken in the previous year and our annual social. The review covered a number of projects, including long-standing work at Gatehampton Roman Villa and newer projects at Blewbury, Highwood and Exlade Street, demonstrating the breadth of our research while focussing on plans for the future. Also presented was a summary of the continuing project led by Mike Green to archive the many SOAG documents and records in order to provide public access to this rich source of material.

The SOAG summer visit this year, organised by Nancy Nichols, was a well-attended guided tour of Witney, including the Bishop's Palace and local museum. In addition at short notice a visit was arranged to the excavations at Thame Meadow Park led jointly by Oxford and Cotswold Archaeology. This massive site contained remarkable evidence of Iron Age, Romano British and early Saxon activity, including SFBs, as well as a recently uncovered Neolithic enclosure. Pub lunches organized as part of these outings continue to be a popular part of the SOAG social calendar. In addition to these SOAG events, our project leaders have continued to give lectures to other archaeological organisations promoting our activities widely.

### **Fieldwork and Research**

Highwood: The first season on the Highwood Romano-British site, under the direction of David Nicholls, was focussed around a sequence of test pits excavated between March and June on 8 long weekends – an early season as work had to be completed before pheasant rearing commenced in the woods!

Because of the impact of illegal metal detecting when extensive digging over a wide area had been undertaken, it was not possible to obtain any certain results or imaging from Geophysical Surveying including sessions of Magnetometry, Resistivity, and a trial of Ground Probing Radar. The exploratory test pits were therefore aligned through the primary area of disturbance with an additional 3m x 6m grid positioned over what was believed to be evidence of an exposed retaining wall.

Two test pits revealed flint masonry, although this had been severely disturbed by the looters' activities and/or by earlier robbing to extract flintwork. These two test pits were later combined and extended, but no undisturbed stratification was encountered. However, in all test pits, each level yielded varying amounts of CBM and pottery sherds, bone, small quantities of iron slag and nails and scraps of bronze – pins, sheet and waste.

In the large trench, a 'gully' was formed by this wall, which extended over a length of approximately 6m – but this feature may have been formed within the last forty years. At the north end of this gully was a flintwork chamber and alongside, five plastic bags had been buried – full of Roman pottery sherds, some iron slag, but also five pieces of iron chain mail in conglomerate form. This has been x-rayed and a full report received confirming this remarkable

find. A reputable team of metal detectorists from Oxford scanned the site both prior and during the season, to prevent further losses of metallic elements. Their results include eight 3rd/4th c Roman AE2-4 coins and one British gold quarter Stater of Cunobelinus 10 – 40 AD, and a piece of gold foil, now with the Coroner's Office as Treasure Trove, and which has been provisionally dated to the Bronze Age but is possibly Iron Age.

Digging will continue in 2016, focussing on the masonry found in 2015 and a section of wall showing above ground, and we hope to determine something of the shape and extent of buildings on this site.

Gatehampton: Participation in this project was very good this year with over 60 people digging at the site during 2015, nearly half of them SOAG members. The excavation always attracts a steady stream of people new to the site, often with little experience of archaeology. There were over 30 newcomers during 2015 and more than half were students or children; encouraging the participation of young archaeologists is an important aspect of the project. The annual open day in September was the most popular yet with over 100 people on site including a large group from The Goring and Streatley Local History Society.

2015 saw a shift in focus to the eastern end of the villa with excavation in four smaller trenches, after a reduction in the size of the largest trench in the site field, extension of the trench in the car park area and the opening of two small trenches between. Confirmation of a different building to the east is emerging with the discovery of a clear south west corner. An interesting development late in 2015 was the presence of deeper foundations on the south side that appear to be earlier than any of the walls excavated so far. Initial work in the two new small trenches is showing that although the parallel lateral walls continue on the south side, there is most probably a different internal layout in this part of the villa and much more extensive use of opus signinum cement, a material only seen in significant quantities in the bath house. The extension of the trench in the car park is leading to a better understanding of the use of this part of the building and a further bone filled pit outside the building has added to the theory that this was a working area. It is hoped that the excavation of the eastern end of the villa building will be completed during 2016 with only minor extension of the current four trenches.

Blewbury: Last year we reported on a number of geophysical surveys in open areas within the village and on potential evidence of early Saxon settlement found by our test pit programme. In 2015 we excavated one of the geophysical anomalies (at the Rectory) revealing a lost farm track made of small flints. Finds of pottery and an iron arrow head suggest that this path may have been made in the medieval period.

With the support of a large team of SOAG and Blewbury diggers, the early Saxon site was fully excavated revealing a fine sunken featured building with two post holes. A vast pottery assemblage of over 1400 sherds was mostly early Saxon and included pieces decorated by incision and stamping. A good selection of small finds made of glass, amber, metal and worked bone was also recovered from the site and analysis of these continues.

For 2016 we have one remaining village site to investigate (the Manor) and we are beginning to move outside the village itself to examine some very interesting cropmarks showing rectilinear enclosures in the surrounding fields. It seems likely that this will take us back into the Roman period but as yet this is uncertain.

## **Thanks**

As ever the projects, the events, the administration and the support activities of the Group depend on the great efforts of its members. I am very grateful to them for their sterling work.

*Dave Carless (Chairman)*

08 April 2016

## Lecture Programme

- Jan 22      **Dr Steve Ford**, Thames Valley Archaeology Services  
Excavations at Elizabeth House (St. John's College) Oxford - a Neolithic henge, Medieval farm and the victims of the St Brices' Day Massacre?
- Feb 26      **Dr Wendy Morrison**, Oxford University  
Enduring significance: the past, present and future of archaeology at Dorchester-on-Thames
- Mar 26      **John Leighfield CBE**  
Putting South Oxfordshire on the map: from Gough to Google
- April 26     **Review of SOAG Archaeology and AGM**, followed by **SOAG Social**
- Sept 24     **Anne Dodd**, Oxford Archaeology  
Oxford before the University
- Oct 22      **Dr Alex Smith** University of Reading  
New Light on the Romano-British Countryside: Current results of the Roman Rural Settlement Project
- Nov 26      **Lindsey Bedford**, SOAG Member  
Revealing Roman Boxford
- Ian Clarke**, SOAG Vice Chairman  
Ascott Park – a small house and a large garden  
and  
**SOAG Christmas Seasonal Party**

## Events and Visits

- July 10      SOAG visit to the Oxford and Cotswold Archaeology excavations at Thame followed by a visit to Thame Museum and a walk through Old Thame  
*Guide:* Ken Welsh for OAS;  
*Organizers:* Nancy Nichols, Mike Green, Meg Latham and Roelie Reed
- Aug 28      SOAG summer visit: a guided tour of Witney  
*Guides:* Stanley Jenkins, Helen Bridge, David Moon;  
*Organizer:* Nancy Nichols and Mike Green
- Sept 27      Open House at SOAG Gatehampton Archaeological Excavation  
*Organizer:* Hazel Williams and SOAG Diggers

## Treasurer's Report 2015

### Core Activities:

The year-end accounts show a large surplus on Receipts and Payments for our Core Activities. There are several reasons for this: the largest amount (£642) is due to the invoice for the printing of the Bulletin not being received until January 2016. This payment will appear in the 2016 accounts.

It is worth noting that the remaining surplus is largely due to Subscription income being £276 greater than forecast, and our insurance policy being renegotiated with a new company, giving a reduction in costs of £215.

### Non-Core Activities:

These show a marked deficit for 2015. Please note that some large donations to fund the High Wood project were received in 2014, and now the project is underway, payments are exceeding income. The project still has a healthy cash reserve.

### Assets:

There has been a significant change in the reporting of our cash assets this year. The £10,000 bequest from Cyn has been removed from our General Fund, and is now shown as a Designated Fund, to enable members of SOAG gain an understanding of how the bequest will be used, and ensuring it does not get swallowed up in our normal, day-to-day activities.

To date, £1,000 of the bequest has been allocated to fund the digitisation (and therefore preservation) of Cyn's fieldwork notebooks, plus early Bulletins and Messengers. A trial project has been undertaken, with good results. The remaining £9,000 will sit on the accounts as a Designated Fund until further specific expenditure is agreed.

### Looking forward to 2016

Once again we anticipate subscription income to be slightly reduced, due to natural turnover. The Committee will continue to keep a tight control on Core Expenses, and expect to end the coming financial year with a small surplus.

Kaz Greenham  
Honorary Treasurer  
February 2016

### Notes:

*Core Activities: The day-to-day running of the Group, such as insurance, room hire, and lecture series. It is always the intention to fund these activities from Subscription and associated income.*

*Non-Core Activities: The various Projects currently being undertaken. All projects are expected to be self-financing, and funds for these are identified as Designated Funds.*

*Restricted Funds: Funding for specific projects as declared by the donor at the time of donation. They cannot be used to cover other expenditure.*

## South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG) Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2015

Receipts and Payments				Assets		
2014		2015	2016 Core Activities Budget	2014	Monetary Assets	2015
13,088	<b>Balance as at 1st January</b>	19,054		3,193	Main Account	772
	<b>Receipts</b>			15,861	Reserve Account	16,937
	<i>Core Activities</i>			0	BBCHAP Account	0
1,439	Subscriptions	1,610	1,556	<b>19,054</b>	<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>17,708</b>
541	Gift Aid	311	300		<b>Represented by</b>	
15	Refreshments income	23		11,385	Unrestricted Fund	2,229
3	Lecture Visitor Donations	0			<i>Restricted Funds</i>	
<u>1,997</u>	<b>Subtotal, Core Activities</b>	<u>1,944</u>	<u>1,856</u>	1,000	P Preece Trio	1,000
6,556	Grants/Donations	1,228	2	6,076	Highwood Project	4,160
0	Diggers Fees	588	3		<i>Designated Funds</i>	
15	T-shirt Sales	180	4	593	Gatehampton Project	450
0	Training fees	70	5	0	Digitisation Project	870
18	Bank Interest	76	6	0	Cyn Bequest	9,000
145	Other	0	82	<b>19,054</b>		<b>17,708</b>
<u>6,733</u>	<b>Subtotal, Non-core Activities</b>	<u>2,141</u>	<u>1,938</u>		<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
<b>8,730</b>	<b>Total receipts in year</b>	<b>4,086</b>		<i>Cost</i>		<i>NBV</i> <sup>15</sup>
	<b>Payments</b>			6,288	Geoscan RM15-D Resistivity Meter	1,055
	<i>Core Activities</i>			734	HP NC6320 Laptop	123
52	Messenger	43	90	505	Toshiba X2000 LCD Projector	85
796	Bulletin	106	7	350	Dumpy Level	59
12	Publicity, incl Website	57	75	<b>7,877</b>		<b>1,322</b>
78	Room Hire	87	87			
393	Insurance	189	8			
18	Office/Admin Costs	47	48			
148	Hall hire	178	178			
220	Speaker Expenses	200	240			
36	Refreshments/Events expenses	0	75			
57	Affiliate fees	58	9			
<u>1,809</u>	<b>Subtotal, Core Activities</b>	<u>964</u>	<u>1,901</u>			
6	Equipment	290	10			
0	Training Costs	150	11			
504	High Wood Expenses	3,116				
328	Gatehampton Expenses	781	3			
0	Digitisation Expenses	130	12			
79	Equipment Repairs	0				
38	Other	0				
<u>955</u>	<b>Subtotal, Non-core Activities</b>	<u>4,467</u>				
<b>2,764</b>	<b>Total payments in year</b>	<b>5,431</b>				
188	Surplus/loss for year on Core Activities	980	13			
5,778	Surplus/loss for year None-Core Activities	-2,326	14			
<u>5,966</u>	<b>Total Surplus/loss for year</b>	<u>-1,346</u>				
<b>19,054</b>	<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>17,708</b>				

These accounts were prepared, on a receipts and payments basis, in accordance with guidance from the Charities Commission 'Statement of Recommended Practice' (SORP 2005)  
by Kaz Greenham, Honorary Treasurer, February 2016

### Notes to the Accounts

- 1 Gift Aid Income on 2015 Subscriptions
- 2 Donations of £1,200 for High Wood project
- 3 Gatehampton income for 2014 and 2015
- 4 Sales of SOAG t-shirts
- 5 Fees received from members attending Pottery Training Course, October 2015. Additional income will show in 2016 accounts
- 6 Interest received on new Deposit Account
- 7 Costs of Bulletin distribution. Print costs will show in 2016 accounts
- 8 Insurance cover for has been renegotiated with a different company, as a significant saving
- 9 Membership of Oxford Archaeological and Historical Society, Council for British Archaeology, national and local group
- 10 Purchase of new gazebo, plus new sieve trestles
- 11 Pottery Training course, held in October 2015
- 12 First costs re Digitisation of Cyn's notebooks
- 13 Bulletin print costs not paid at year-end. If this item had cleared the bank by the end of the year, this would be £338. Major difference to budget were increased subscription (£276 higher than expected) and saving on insurance (£215 less than expected)
- 14 High Wood project expenses (large donation income received in 2014)
- 15 Assets shown at both purchase cost, and a depreciated value as at year-end

These accounts have been examined by Sue Fogden against documentation provided. In her opinion these are a true and accurate presentation of the transactions made by the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group in 2015  
A signed copy of these accounts is on file.

## SOAG OFFICERS AND ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*As they stand at the end of year 2015-2016 & including reference to any special roles*

Hon President	Mrs Hazel Williams (also Director of the Roman Villa dig)
Vice President	Mr Ian Clarke
Chairman	Mr David Carless (co-Director, Blewbury “Big Dig”)
Vice Chairman	Dr Nancy Nichols (SOAG Events Secretary)
Hon Secretary	Mr Michael Vincent
Hon Treasurer	Mrs Kaz Greenham
Ordinary Members	Mr John Hefferan (Editor, <i>SOAG Bulletin</i> )
	Mr Michael Green (Editor, <i>SOAG Messenger</i> , and SOAG webmaster)
	Mrs Janet Eastment
	Mr David Cox
	Mr David Jobling
	Mrs Lindsey Bedford (co-opted)