



**Abingdon Area
Archaeological and Historical Society**
www.AAAHS.org.uk

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2006

*****Please note venue change***
for the September AGM and talk**

Julian Richards
‘Meet the Ancestors’

Abbey Hall, Abingdon, 8pm
Thursday 21st September 2006

Tickets £5

Tickets free to rejoining AAAHS members

**The AAAHS AGM will precede the talk
at 7.15 pm prompt, also in the Abbey Hall**

OCK STREET HERITAGE EXHIBITION

September 29th to October 1st

10.00 am to 5.00 pm

**Trinity Hall, Conduit Road, Abingdon
Admission Free, Refreshments available**

**Come and discover the history of Abingdon’s busiest street: the
buildings, the industries, the shops, the families, fairs, morris
dancers, oral history, guided walk, and much more**

**Organised by the Ock Street Research Group, with support from
AAAHS**

MEETINGS PROGRAMME, Sept to Dec 2006

Sept 21 st	A.G.M. (At the Abbey Hall).	Followed by “Meet The Ancestors”
Oct 19 th	Irish Prehistory.	Eugene Coyle
Nov 16 th .	A look back at the Abingdon Branch.	Ivan Cadge.
Dec.14 th	Christmas Social. A day in the life of a Roman Soldier.	The Batavi.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 21ST SEPTEMBER

The outgoing committee will be proposing the following amendment to the Society's rules:

That rule 2 sentence 3 which states that 'Committee members shall serve for a maximum of 3 years and not be re-eligible for re-election until after an interval of one year' be changed to 'Committee members shall serve for a term of 3 years but be eligible, if they so wish, for re-election for a second term. They will not be eligible for re-election after 2 such terms until after an interval of one year.'

The current committee feels that the Society has recently suffered both from lack of continuity and also from a shortage of members willing to come onto the committee.

If this amendment is agreed retiring members of the committee would be able to stand again if they are willing to do so, and continue to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Society.

The committee will also be proposing the formal adoption of an Equal Opportunities Policy as follows:

Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (AAHS) is committed to the achievement of a policy of equal opportunities in accordance with its general aims. The Society's intention is to ensure that all current members and future applicants for membership are treated equally, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, creed, disability, age or political belief. Membership of the Society and of groups within the Society is open to all applicants, subject to payment of the appropriate subscription. Any member is eligible to stand for the Committee at the AGM. All members of the Society have an individual responsibility to ensure they comply with this policy: overall responsibility rests with the Committee.

Janey Cumber, Secretary

EVENING OUTING TO WALLINGFORD.

This will be on Thursday, 5th October. It will include a trip round the castle grounds and then a talk at 7 pm in the Museum by Judy Dewey, Curator, who has given a talk to the Society about a year or more ago. The cost for entry into the Museum is £4, which will include tea and biscuits.

This will need to be an early evening visit, setting off about 5.30, in order to see the castle before dusk sets in and the local authorities close it at dusk, unless we make prior arrangements with the Town Clerk.

*Roger Gelder
01865 436081*

REPORT FROM TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

I took over this office from Manfred Brod at the start of 2006, and can report that his stewardship and forward planning have given us a sound financial basis for the 2006/2007 financial year which will begin on September 1st 2006. Part of this strategy was the agreed change in subscription for 2006/7 as shown on the membership form.

If you would like to receive the Newsletter by e-mail in the future, please indicate this on the form, it does help to keep our costs down.

Membership Form 2006/7

I/We Apply to join the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society

Please fill in the following

Membership Type	Individual	£12.00
	Family	£15.00
	Unwaged/Student	£7.00
	Distant	£3.00
Full Name		
Address		
Postcode		
Telephone		
E-mail		
I would like to receive the Newsletter by e-mail		

Please post this form **enclosing cheque payable to AAAHS to**

Julia Brocklesby
 29 Long Lane
 Littlemore
 Oxon OX4 3TN

AAAHS LIBRARY NEWS SUMMER 2006

Now the library is based at the Portacabin at Manor Farm, Mill Road Marcham, members can visit and work in the quiet and dry!. The key is available from the Farm Shop for all members. Cataloguing and stocktaking is still under way, but the new additions are listed below. The whole contents of the library are listed under "Odds and Ends" on the website www.aaahs.org.uk, and a **printed catalogue is available for searching at every speaker meeting.**

We would very much like help with the library, to ensure all members can access our very wide ranging stock. Please contact any committee member or Julia Brocklesby Tel 01865 778194 to find out more. I would also like to thank all those very generous members who have donated such interesting and valuable research results and copies of publications this last year. I have been contacted by researchers and interested individuals now that AAAHS publications and our library are visible to the world on the internet, and hope that in the future we may extend our publishing activities to ensure members' work reaches a wide audience.

Julia Brocklesby

Cat No.	Subject	Author	Title	Date	Publisher	Notes
213	Local History	Henley Archaeological and historical group	Journal No 20	Sep-05	HAHG	
214	Prehistory farming	Pryor, Frances	Farmers in Prehistoric Britain	Jun-05	Tempus Publishing Ltd	Donated by W Cumber
215	Roman Britain	CADW	Caerwent Roman Town	Jun-05	Cadw	3rd Edition donated by member
216	Roman Britain	CADW	Caerleon Roman Fortress	Jun-03	Cadw	3rd Edition donated by member
217	Abingdon Great War	local Soldiers and Sailors Family Committee	Abingdon Borough Roll of Service	?	Published in the North Berks Herald	Photocopy of original publication donated by member
218	Heritage research	English Heritage	Research News No 1 Summer 2005, No 2 Winter 2005/6	2005-	English heritage	
219	Archaeology	Portable Antiquities Scheme ed Jodi Puis	South-East Regional Newsletter No 2	Jun-05	Portable Antiquities Scheme	www.finds.org.uk Government body
220	Archaeology	Portable Antiquities Scheme	Conservation Advice Notes No 1	Jun-05	Portable Antiquities Scheme	www.finds.org.uk Government body
221	Archaeology	Portable Antiquities Scheme	The Treasure Act 1996 information for finders Finds Recording and Identification in Berkshire and Oxfordshire	Jun-05	Dept for Culture,Media and Sport	email: info@finds.org.uk and enquiries@culture.gov.uk
222	Archaeology	Portable Antiquities Scheme	Portable Antiquities Scheme	Jun-05	Portable Antiquities Scheme	Many useful addresses
223	Oxfordshire Local History	vol 7 no 5	Many local authors	Winter 2005-6	Oxfordshire Local History Association	

WALKING BIG LEAS FIELD IN 2006, Manor Farm, Marcham

The Society had been asked by Will and Janey Cumber to organize a field walking exercise across the Big Leas 40 acre field, where Will had spotted Roman pottery whilst ploughing. The field was divided north-south down the centre, so that we could avoid the very boggy eastern half, where walkers stood a very good chance of leaving boots, Wellingtons and socks behind in three wet zones. The first half of the field was walked from September 2005 until April 2006, when the wheat crop stopped further collecting of potsherds because of the growing height of the plants. Altogether we collected some 700 bags of potsherds, representing 20% of the 20 acres walked in the western half. The wet zones had not stopped us taking a peek at the edge of these where we had found some very fine potsherds of Samian ware, in very good condition. On reporting to Will and Janey, together with the Director of the Frilford dig site, Gary Lock, we were asked to do more field walking of the wet area, once the ground had dried out in summer time.

On the weekend of Archaeology week, the Society had put a stall on the Frilford site, explaining the work of the Society, including our field walking. We were approached by the Risborough Countryside Group who explained they would like to assist in our next field walk, in order to gain experience in setting out and organising such events – talk about the blind leading the blind!!

The wheat was harvested early August and the field was dry enough by then for an initial ploughing of the eastern half of the field, making it ready for the second walk. However, Will had to continue the ploughing and harrowing in order to sow grass seed to change the field from arable to pasture use and needed the field cleared within a week or so!

Now read on:-

Last week, 23rd to 25th August, I fought with GPS, tape measure and plain eye-sight, establishing an East-West baseline identical to the earlier line used through-out the winter-spring walk. Having got four out of my five points established, the fifth kept 'jumping' a couple of metres off-line, no matter how many GPS readings I took, so I settled for the old-fashioned line of sight and "bumped" the last point to match the others.

Once established, I could then use our set of 25 litre drums to mark the corners of each 50 m x 50 m square where walking was to be carried out. On the Saturday, aided by the Risborough Countryside Group, we placed our pea-sticks at 10m intervals, marking each transect where the field was to be walked – a total of 150 such transects. All was now ready for our Bank Holiday Sunday walk the next day.

The forecast was for sunny weather all Sunday, so starting at 10 am, we had walked all 150 transects by about 3 pm and even had time to collect some off-transect material which we hoped would provide solid dating evidence. This latter was kept separate from the transect collection, otherwise we would not be comparing like with like – the western half transects with the eastern half of transects, an essential procedure if we were to make any sense of all the information.

The material collected was generally sparser than that found on the western half, until we got to the final 10 transects, along-side the footpath at the most north-easterly part of the field. This was where we had found our earlier Samian and a few more fragments were turned up here, along with some three very rare Iron Age pottery fragments (we believe).

The numerous fragments of glass also found in this region were NOT our hoped-for Roman glass, but were beer bottle fragments, left by nineteenth century farm workers having their lunch, sitting along the edge of the pathway – Ah well, you can't win 'em all!

Did the Risborough group gain the experience? Well, they looked as tired as I was at the end of their two days, setting out and collecting potsherds and they departed well satisfied.

Aftermath.

Getting out of bed this morning, I nearly fell over. Five days of scrambling around a heavily ploughed field had finally taken its toll of my left knee joint – but NOT before we had completed our field walk, thank goodness!

Roger Gelder