



Charity XT29402

# SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Founded in 1969

PATRON: Prof. Malcolm Airs  
PRESIDENT: Hazel Williams

## Annual Report & Accounts for 2014

### SOAG 46th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill 2:00pm on Sunday 26th April 2015

**Celebrating digging in the lovely gardens of Blewbury, 35 test pits on:**

*Preparation*



*Digging*



*Celebration*



*The reward*



B28 03 & 04 Decorated Saxon Pot

**and now – on to the first major excavation this year!**

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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

Having taken over as Chairman shortly after the last AGM I have come to realise what an active society SOAG really is. But perhaps more importantly it is a group where people are able to work well together to produce excellent results whilst having lots of fun. Onwards and downwards!

### **Membership and Finance**

It is the policy of the society that core activities should be funded primarily through members subscriptions and that in general projects are responsible for raising their own funds. However, for the 6<sup>th</sup> year running, membership declined, by a net 6 members to 124 - but with 18 new members and a much lesser decrease than in 2013. Members' use of the Gift Aid scheme contributed nearly £300 and has enabled us once again not to have to increase subscriptions. Clearly we would like to recruit more new members and I hope present members will do all they can to attract them.

In addition to core and project funds we have been very fortunate in recent years in receiving two substantial legacies from former members. The committee is keen that these funds should be applied to activities which will make a real difference – to do something that otherwise would not be possible. Over the course of the coming years we will give consideration to specific projects but first we are developing guidelines on how the funds should be used. We aim to publish these shortly.

### **Publications**

In 2014 ten issues of our newsletter, *SOAG Messenger* were published under editorship of Mike Green. *SOAG Messenger* depends, of course, on contributions from members. We would urge you all to let us know of any interesting archaeological events, discoveries or findings, preferably with a local interest, that can be included. The latest edition of our annual journal, *SOAG Bulletin*, was once again produced by the editorial team of John Hefferan and Janet Eastment and they are already working on the next. The SOAG website continues to be maintained by Mike Green as our main channel of communication with the outside world. 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.

We have recently started a new project to safeguard our old paper archive. SOAG's archives include; (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 1969 and 2000. Nearly all these documents exist in paper form only and continue to be held on behalf of SOAG by a longstanding SOAG member who is no longer on the committee. A project has been initiated

to determine possible methods of (a) securing them in the long term, and (b) making them available for study by future historians and archaeologists both inside and outside SOAG. A variety of approaches is likely including crowd sourcing the scanning of some documents using the computing resources of SOAG's own members, a technique recently field-tested. Visibility of this project to SOAG members will commence at the 2015 AGM and invitations to SOAG members to participate will follow.

### **Lectures and events**

The SOAG lecture season ran from January to March and from September to November and featured a wide range of seven very interesting speakers and topics, the attendance ranging between 25 and 35. An innovation this year was the additional lecture in November devoted to the researches of our own members, this time featuring SOAGs Anna Ellis and Tom Walker. This was well received and there is a consensus that this should become an annual feature of our lecture season. However Nancy Nichols, our lecture organizer, emphasizes that for this to happen, and also to maintain the high standard of our lecture series, she really is dependent on suggestions from SOAG members.

Our AGM meeting in April was, as usual, accompanied by a review of SOAG archaeology undertaken in the previous year. In recent meetings this review has become over-long and detailed, unnecessarily so given the many other mechanisms by which SOAG members are kept in touch with our activities. Starting with the 2015 meeting it is planned to keep this part of the meeting to an hour or so and to focus more on plans and activities for the coming season.

The SOAG summer visit this year, also organised by Nancy, was a well-attended guided tour of Abingdon. In addition, at short notice a visit was arranged to see the excavation of a late Romano-British cemetery at Dorchester-on-Thames. The parties at the end of our November and April meetings, together with the pub lunches organised as part of the SOAG summer outings, continue to be an important part of the SOAG social calendar. In addition to these SOAG events, our project leaders continue to give lectures to other archaeological organisations promoting our activities widely.

### **Fieldwork and Research**

2014 was a very active year with a good mix of continuing projects and some new. It looks as if this year is going to be equally busy and hopefully just as rewarding. At **Brightwell Park** we have now been contacted by the studio of the new owner (the sculptor Anish Kapoor) to suggest a future dig date, but it seems likely that if permitted, this could not be until 2016. There was no work at **Ascott Park** last year and none planned for this, but we are hoping for an update on research by Ian Clarke later in the year.

**Exlade Street:** In the 1980s SOAG's founder, Cynthia Graham Kerr, did a great deal of work on the history of Exlade Street. Ken Hume has restarted this research, and during 2014 SOAG provided him with access to Cyn's papers in our archives, and also undertook a limited geophysical survey of some interesting features in local woodland. But this collaboration is only likely to develop further if more SOAGs take an interest in the work on offer.

**High Wood:** In 1909, during excavations in a garden of Harpsden Wood House remains of a Roman bathhouse were exposed. Further evidence of the villa was found and excavated in 1921. Subsequent excavations in the area suggest dates in the late 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> C. During the late 1970s, Henley Archaeological and Historical and Group (HAHG) investigated a nearby mound, believed to be the base of a windmill. No structure was located, but large quantities of Roman pottery shards, wall plaster and 17 very worn 2/4<sup>th</sup> century coins were found. This activity, spanning several years of part time excavation unfortunately attracted the attention of illegal metal detectorists who caused much damage to the site. The pottery recovered by the HAHG has been lost, but we have obtained the site records of their work. It has also been suggested that a Roman mausoleum might be on the site. SOAG has now picked up the

investigation under the leadership of Site Supervisor Roelie Reed and Director David Nicholls. After extensive undergrowth clearing, preliminary geophysical surveys were undertaken during early 2014. From March until early July during 2015 we are undertaking excavations to establish the nature and extent of probable structure(s).

**Gatehampton** continues to be a popular project lead by our President, Hazel Williams. Participation was good in 2014 and although there were fewer diggers than in 2013 most were SOAG members bringing their usual expertise and enthusiasm. The Open Day in September was again a success with almost 80 people on site on the day, including a group of children excavating a specially prepared area. Work continues in both the large trench in the site field and in the new trench in the adjacent car park. The focus is now on the eastern end of the building, on the possibility that this section of the villa may be a separate and earlier build and on showing how the rest of the building relates to this earlier phase. Good progress was made in both trenches. In the field trench there was confirmation that a wall divides the western and eastern parts of the building and evidence of several building phases west of the wall. In the car park trench, it does appear that the eastern end of the building has been discovered, with several pits outside the building. A surprise discovery was that the enclosure ditch appears to end close to the end of the building.

Plans are in place for 2015 to link the current trenches across the line of the field hedge; to extend the car park trench; and if there is time to explore further beyond the end of the building, to see if the enclosure ditch or other features can be found.

**Blewbury:** Within the village itself there are a number of open spaces (Play Close, Hall Barn Close, the Manor and the Rectory) which are large enough to accommodate a geophysical survey. These were undertaken last year using both a resistivity meter and gradiometer and have identified a number very of interesting anomalies which will be the targets of excavations in 2015. In addition, the Big Dig test pit programme continued in 2014 and should be completed this year.

As I reported previously, at a number of sites dispersed though the village we have found organic tempered pottery dated to the early/mid Saxon period. In 2014 one test pit produced not only a large quantity (over 180 sherds) of organic tempered pottery but also a few sherds of decorated pottery and a rich deposit of small finds including glass beads, bone comb fragments, metal objects, fossil fragments and Roman pottery reshaped into discs. All of this material is consistent with a date around the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. The site was further investigated by geophysical survey, auger survey, metal detecting survey and further test pits. These suggest that the rich deposit lies in a small area of a few metres square. It is not yet clear if this is a burial site or a redeposit in a settlement site though the latter is looking more probable. Further investigation will be undertaken in 2015 by excavating a larger area.

### **Thanks**

I am very grateful to the committee for efficiently running the Group, our project leaders for driving the research forward, our support teams for making us comfortable and all our members for their continued support.

**Dave Carless (Chairman)**

*08 April 2015*

## Lecture Programme

- Jan 23      **Professor Steve Mithen**   University of Reading  
“Thirst”
- Feb 27      **Dr Jennifer Foster**   University of Reading  
“Who were the Celts?”
- Mar 27      **Dr Stuart Brookes**   UCL Institute of Archaeology  
“Anglo-Saxon landscapes of South Oxfordshire: some new perspectives”
- April 27      **AGM and SOAG Review of Archaeology**
- Sept 25      **Dr Sally Crawford** FSA   Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University  
“A forgotten archive: early photographs of archaeology in Oxfordshire from the late 19th and early 20th centuries”
- Oct 23      **Dr Vivienne Larminie**   History of Parliament Trust , and Oxford University,  
Dept. of History  
“Royalist capital and commonwealth melting-pot: Oxford 1640-1660
- Nov 27      **Anna Ellis**   SOAG member  
“Victorian Garden Cemeteries and the cult of mourning in the Victorian era”
- Tom Walker**   SOAG member  
“Sand at Gwithian, Cornwall: palaeoenvironment, molluscs and archaeology”

followed by:

### **The SOAG Christmas Seasonal Party**

## Events and Visits

- May 31      Attendance by SOAG members at the Oxfordshire Past 2014 conference (the key event in the Oxfordshire archaeology annual calendar)
- Aug 6      SOAG visit to TVAS excavations of Roman cemetery in Dorchester-on-Thames  
*Organisers:* Steve Ford and Mike Green
- Aug 20      SOAG summer visit :a guided tour of Abingdon  
*Organiser:* Nancy Nichols
- Sept 6      Attendance by SOAG members at the CIA (Council for Independent Archaeology) annual conference in Wallingford (SOAG re-joined the CIA this year)
- Sept 28      Public Open House at SOAG’s Gatehampton Archaeological Excavation  
*Organiser:* Hazel Williams

## Treasurer's Report 2014

It continues to be the intention of the Committee to ensure that Core Activities are funded by subscription and associated income. The accounts for 2014 show a small surplus of £188, but if previous year items are removed from the calculations, we show a small loss. If these previous year items are adjusted into last year's figures, 2013 shows a small surplus. If we look at the 2 years together, we are just breaking even.

The non-core income received a boost, due to receipt of a grant from the Chilterns Conservation Board of £500 towards equipment purchased last year, and a donation of £5,000 towards the High Wood project. The High Wood Project funds are included in the asset report as a Restricted Fund

Assets: Following discussion with our insurance company last year, and subsequent discussion at a Committee meeting, we are now showing two values for the more expensive pieces of equipment, to more realistically value them in our records. Each item is depreciated 20% on its value at the beginning of the year, and this has been applied retrospectively to each of our major assets. It has no impact on our cash reserves, but does affect our insurance premium quite substantially.

### Looking forward to 2015

Once again we anticipate subscription income to be slightly reduced, due to natural turnover. Our Gift Aid income is very welcome, but will be reduced in 2015 (there are no more retrospective claims to be made: only the current year is outstanding). Despite keeping very tight control on our expenses, we are anticipating a small loss to be made on Core Activities in 2015. Every effort has been, and will be, made to keep this prospective loss as small as possible.

Kaz Greenham  
Honorary Treasurer  
March 2015

### Notes

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

*'Designated Funds': Funds for specific projects, as agreed by the Committee*

# South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG)

## Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2014

Receipts and Payments				Assets		
2013		2014	2015 Core Activities Budget	2013	Monetary Assets	2014
13,497	<b>Balance as at 1st January</b>	13,088		2,245	Main Account	3,193
	<b>Receipts</b>			10,843	Reserve Account	15,861
	<b>Core Activities</b>			<u>0</u>	BBCHAP Account	<u>0</u>
1,565	Subscriptions	1,439	1,343	<b>13,088</b>	<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>19,054</b>
210	Life Subs	0	0		<b>Represented by</b>	
0	Gift Aid	541 <sup>1</sup>	268	11,495	Unrestricted Fund	11,385
11	Refreshments income	15	10		<b>Restricted Funds</b>	
37	Lecture Visitor Donations	3	9	1,000	P Preece Trio	1,000
<u>1,822</u>	<b>Subtotal, Core Activities</b>	<u>1,997</u>	<u>1,630</u>		Highwood Project	6,076
					<b>Designated Funds</b>	
1,000	Grants/Donations	6,556 <sup>2</sup>		593	Gatehampton Project	593
882	Diggers Fees	0 <sup>3</sup>		<u>13,088</u>		<u>19,054</u>
240	T-shirt Sales	15 <sup>4</sup>			<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
5	Bank Interest	18 <sup>5</sup>	48		<i>Cost</i>	<i>NBV <sup>11</sup></i>
	Other	145		6,288	Geoscan RM15-D Resistivity Meter	1,319
<u>2,127</u>	<b>Subtotal, Non-core Activities</b>	<u>6,733</u>	<u>1,678</u>	734	HP NC6320 Laptop	154
<b>3,949</b>	<b>Total receipts in year</b>	<b>8,730</b>		505	Toshiba X2000 LCD Projector	106
	<b>Payments</b>			<u>349</u>	Dumpy Level	<u>73</u>
	<b>Core Activities</b>			<b>7,877</b>		<b>1,652</b>
93	Messenger	52	60			
463	Bulletin	796 <sup>6</sup>	710			
9	Publicity, incl Website	12	25			
81	Room Hire	78	78			
514	Insurance	393	405			
121	Office/Admin Costs	18	31			
290	Hall hire	148	148			
220	Speaker Expenses	220 <sup>7</sup>	240			
35	Refreshments	36	36			
21	Affiliate fees	57	72			
<u>1,846</u>	<b>Subtotal, Core Activities</b>	<u>1,809</u>	<u>1,805</u>			
1,183	Equipment	6				
611	T shirts	0				
156	Trust exp	504 <sup>8</sup>				
311	Dig expenses	328	2,500			
251	Equipment Repairs	79				
	Other	38				
<u>2,512</u>	<b>Subtotal, Non-core Activities</b>	<u>955</u>				
<b>4,359</b>	<b>Total payments in year</b>	<b>2,764</b>				
-25	Surplus/loss for year on Core Activities	188 <sup>9</sup>	-128			
-385	Surplus/loss for year None-Core Activities	5,778 <sup>10</sup>				
-410	Total Surplus/loss for year	5,966				
<u><b>13,088</b></u>	<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<u><b>19,054</b></u>				

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, March 2015

### Notes to the Accounts

- 1 Gift Aid income of £274 received in March 2014 relates to 2013 subs
- 2 Grants/Donations include: £500 Chilterns Board Grant towards equipment purchased last year, £1k legacy from Pat Preece, £5k for the Highwood Project
- 3 Diggers Fees for 2014 have yet to be banked
- 4 There is a small 'stock' of SOAG t-shirts
- 5 A higher interest deposit account has been opened
- 6 Bulletin costs include production and postage costs, plus distribution costs for 2013 of £87
- 7 £20 speaker fee returned as a donation
- 8 Trust expenses incurred on Highwood, Greys Mound and Emmer Green projects
- 9 This is an apparent surplus on core activities. If previous year income and expenditure is excluded from these figures, we show a loss on core activities of £50 for 2014
- 10 Highwood Project set-up fees incurred from February 2015
- 11 Fixed Assets are now shown at both their purchase cost, and a depreciated value as at year end. Please see Treasurers Report for more information

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 2014

A signed copy of these accounts is on file

## SOAG OFFICERS AND ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*As they stand at the end of year 2014-2015 & including reference to any special roles*

<i>Hon President</i>	Mrs Hazel Williams (also Director of the Roman Villa dig)
<i>Vice President</i>	Mr Ian Clarke
<i>Chairman</i>	Mr David Carless (co-Director, Blewbury “Big Dig”)
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Dr Nancy Nichols (SOAG Events Secretary)
<i>Hon Secretary</i>	Mr Michael Vincent
<i>Hon Treasurer</i>	Mrs Kaz Greenham
<i>Ordinary Members</i>	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
	<i>Vacancy (Tim Southern resigned before the year-end)</i>