

Jigsaw Cambridgeshire Advisory Group Meeting

Minutes

Date: Tuesday 5th September 2017

Time: 7pm

Location: OAE, 15 Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill

Present: Stephen Macaulay (SPM) (Jigsaw Project Manager), Clemency Cooper (CAFC) (Community Archaeology Manager); Helen O'Hara (HOH) (A14 Senior Community Archaeologist); Mike Fortune (MF) (Warboys Archaeology Project); Richard Halliday (RH) (Huntingdon U3A); Rob Noble (RN), Jane Dean (JD) (Histon & Impington Archaeology Group); Terry Dymott (AD) (Cambridge Archaeology Field Group); Cathy Cantrell (CC), Lesley Bassenger (LB) (Archaeology Cambridgeshire East); Vicki Harley (VH), David Gordon (DG) (Fen Edge Archaeology Group); Janet Morris (JM), Andrew Morris (AM) (West Wickham & District Local History Club); Charles Turner (CT) (Gransden Society and Eltisley History Society); Richard Brown (Covington History Group); Kev Redgate (KR) (Sawtry History Society); Josephine Fried (JF), Bob Smith (BS) (FenArch); Sue Miller (SM) Orwell Local History Society; Philip Saunders (CAS).

Chair: Stephen Macaulay (Jigsaw Project Manager)

Minutes: Clemency Cooper (Community Archaeology Manager)

Apologies: Phil Stimson (STAG); Rog Mould (WAP).

- SPM introduced Helen O'Hara (A14 Senior Community Archaeologist, MOLA Headland Infrastructure). HOH will provide a summary about her role and the forthcoming community archaeology programme in due course.

Action – CAFC to circulate contact details for HOH

Telephone: 01480 219 777 Mobile: 07770 019132 Email:
Helen.OHara@headlandarchaeology.com
MOLA Headland Infrastructure, 97b Huntingdon Street, St Neots, Cambridgeshire,
PE19 1DU

1. Matters Arising

- CAFC confirmed that the group pages on the Jigsaw website could now be edited and saved.

2. Publicity

- CAFC reported that she had created a Facebook group linked to the Facebook page. It is closed which means that anyone can find the group and see who's in it but only members can see posts. Any member can add members but an admin or moderator must approve them. RH offered to help with admin. All members can post but they must be approved first by an admin or moderator.

- CAFC continues to email monthly updates to the Jigsaw circulation list, and add upcoming events and relevant news to the social media feeds on Facebook and Twitter.
- VH asked whether the Jigsaw meeting minutes could be added to the website, as they used to be available. CAFC said they were probably not transferred when the Jigsaw website was updated earlier in the year.

ACTION – CAFC to add the meeting minutes to the Jigsaw website.

DONE – <https://jigsawcambbs.org/jigsaw-community/meeting-minutes>

3. Group Updates

- **Eltisley History Society/Gransdens Society (CT)**

CT is the site manager for Caxton Moats, which recently hosted a visit from Cambourne Village College students as part of their Young Roots HLF project. The channel needs clearing to improve drainage and the installation of a pipe. The work will be undertaken with support from the Environment Agency and the Wildlife Trust, but requires an archaeological watching brief.

- **Cambridge Antiquarian Society (PS)**

The Conduit and programme card are in production and will be available imminently.

- **Orwell History Society (SM)**

Dug 6 test pits this year and want to dig more but numbers of people taking part has dwindled and most of them are not members of the History Society. CAFC offered to circulate details to OAE volunteers and Jigsaw email lists. Reported the discovery of a potential Roman villa on Lotfield Street during recent test pit excavations.

- **Sawtry History Society (KR)**

The Sawtry Abbey report is underway and about 40% complete. Also reported involvement in FRAG test pit excavations on 21st – 23rd October.

SPM reported that OAE will be returning to Chapel End, Sawtry from 11th September and would look into whether volunteers could join the team. An evaluation on Gidding Road is also imminent.

A Roman site they want to fieldwalk has changed landowners and is going to pasture. Waiting to hear whether they will have access.

- **Huntingdon U3A Archaeology (RH)**

Not meeting at present.

- **Histon and Impington Archaeology Group (RN)**

Three further test pit weekends were held, one each in the months of June, July and August. With the generous support of both local residents and volunteers from other groups, we managed to explore a total of nine pits. Five were on a set aside field at Abbey Farm, the other four were in domestic gardens. According to the Geological Survey map all the pits were on the 3rd River Terrace and this was borne out by the yellow silty and gravel subsoil encountered. We felt that most pits reached the natural surface, but we're always still rather unsure that this has been achieved. No evidence of earlier structures or other notable features were identified, but approximately 230 pottery sherds were recovered of which we think 154 (or approx. 67%) are medieval or earlier. One pit towards the northern limit of the village produced a third of the medieval pottery total, and was something of a surprise as it was beyond the

northern limit of what we believed to be the core of the original village settlement around the manor and churches. More pits are needed in this area to investigate and understand this apparent anomaly.

Two pits originally scheduled for the summer were deferred and we may excavate these later in September or early October if access can be arranged, in order to complete our 2017 programme. Then we plan to send all the pottery from the summer pits for expert identification and dating.

So far since we began in April 2016 we have excavated 51 pits. Now we need to dedicate more time to discussion and interpretation of what we have found, and writing up and submitting formal reports to HER.

As for future plans:

Some field walking in the coming season on farmland surrounding the villages is still being discussed.

Skills training is currently high on our group's agenda, and we are trying to arrange some workshops, possibly in conjunction with other groups, on pottery and lithics identification.

Some of us are hoping to get some hands on experience by volunteering with the commercial archaeology units.

We have arranged another programme of evening talks which begin next month. We have also arranged for two open evenings to be held in February when we will have an exhibition of local archaeology for the community and hope to generate further interest in a programme of fieldwork in the summer of next year, including another ILAFS. Next year we hope to have more pits in Impington which is poorly represented in the series at the moment.

Details of all our future talks and other events are on our website at <https://hiarchaeology.wordpress.com/whats-on/>

ACTION – SPM to inform HIAG about investigations at Histon Primary School undertaken by Nick Gilmour.

- **West Wickham & District Local History Club (JM)**

Hold one weekend of test pit excavation each year during the same weekend so everyone knows to anticipate it, during the annual Festival of Archaeology. Dug 5 test pits this year bringing the total to 33. Potentially discovered an early medieval rubbish pit.

- **Cambridge Archaeology Field Group (TD)**

Previously found the fountain at Wimpole behind the house and traced the water supply. This year, CAFG have been excavating the settling tank but the trenches are getting very deep. Looks like it was latterly used as a rubbish dump by the gamekeeper. Fieldwalking hasn't started yet but hope to begin at the end of September.

- **Fen Edge Archaeology Group (VH)**

Will be undertaking geophysics next to the tithe barn in Landbeach for two weeks from 16th-29th October. Had a display at the Fen Edge Festival about the test pits dug on Cottenham Green in 2009. Organising a visit to the Hidden Lives exhibition at the Wellcome Genome Campus in Hinxton on 16th September, which others are welcome to join.

- **Archaeology Cambridgeshire East (ACE)**

Members volunteered to help with the restoration of Wicken windmill, and hope to excavate another windmill site soon. ACE worked with Rheesearch on geophysical survey at Exning. Will be fieldwalking at Soham Moor and returning to excavate at Reach Road this autumn. Currently catching up on reports. Soham Museum will have an open day on 21st October. Looking into a suitable place to discard finds which won't be deposited.

ACTION – SPM to inform ACE about OAE excavations at Soham Easterngate in due course.

- **Covington History Group (RB)**

Since the departure of the Parsons, the group is now down to 8 members but are still active. Currently have a trench open on a Roman/Iron Age site and intend to investigate a medieval site. All reports written and pottery identified to date, making use of their reference collection of Iron Age to late Medieval pottery.

- **Warboys Archaeology Project (MF)**

We have surveyed 7.5 Ha and have detected linear features, trackways and the old alignment of Hollow Lane. A survey of Abbey Green shows a rectangular pit, which might be associated with the detached belltower built before the current church tower was built. We also detected part of two circular features with a track between them - two possible round towers?

A dumpy level survey showed up to 1.5 m of soil overburden in some places inside the precinct, which explains why many earlier surveys got null results.

A contact has put us in touch with a large defence company called Cobham who have developed GPR for mine detection. They visited the site in early August to see if our soils were suitable for their equipment. They thought they were getting around 1.8 m penetration, which is just enough to see through the deepest overburden. They will return for a week's work in October. They will give their services free as they will be making a film of their apprentices using the kit, the aim being to encourage schoolchildren to take up science and engineering and to show how it can be used in practice. They will be demonstrating their kit to the Abbey schoolchildren. At the end, they will leave their GPR with RACP for a period so we can survey more of the Abbey precinct.

We have plotted the height and thickness of the precinct wall from the gatehouse to the school's rear entrance and we are drawing the worked stones incorporated into the wall. We have arranged for Jo Richards to give us training in archaeological drawing.

We have contacted the householders whose gardens back onto the Abbey grounds and one has given us pottery from his garden to look at. Another has allowed us to do a resistivity survey in her garden and, as a result, we opened up three 1-m test pits on 4th September.

We have arranged a visit in late September to view Jesus College chapel, which is one of the few to survive the Reformation, to see how it compares with our medieval remains.

- **FenArch (BS)**

Undertaken a lot of outreach with local primary schools. Received a grant of £500 from Fenland District Council to purchase replica artefacts. Currently waiting to access sites for geophysical survey and fieldwalking, including a site at Wisbech St

Mary with lots of Roman pottery. SPM asked FenArch to check if the site was on the HER and if not, to report it. Undertaken geophysical survey near to a non-conformist chapel in Wisbech which is going to be rebuilt. Andy Ketley has done a lot of research on the history of the tunnels under Wisbech in advance of training in recording and 3D scanning as part of the Wisbech High Street project. Waiting to hear where might be excavated, currently Wisbech Museum gardens is looking like the only possible site.

- The Council for British Archaeology's Home Front Legacy team in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council Living Legacies First World War Engagement Centre are hosting a free community workshop to explore how to research, record and fund your own First World War project. This is aimed at county and local history and archaeology societies, YAC branch leaders and HER Officers. For more information and to book a free place on the workshop, visit the Eventbrite page: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cba-and-living-legacies-first-world-war-workshop-iwm-duxford-tickets-36606317481?dm_i=10MV%2C52MT2%2CK5B9UG%2CJH97T%2C1
- St Neots Local History Society talk by Simon Thurley has been cancelled but is due to be rescheduled.

4. OAE & CHER Updates

- OAE staff are currently involved in two sites on the A14 and on the EA1 pipeline. Also lots of teams working away from Cambridgeshire. Since Jigsaw first started, the field team is about twice as large and OAE is undertaking three times as many projects.
- An issue has arisen in the planning process for Waterbeach Barracks. The plan is being resubmitted and we will hear whether it is going ahead in October.
- Excavation at Wimpole car park is unlikely to take place in 2017, currently looks like spring 2018.
- OAE will be excavating a prehistoric site in Melbourn, which may be open to volunteers soon.
- OAE will be running a week-long excavation with Cambourne Village College
- Other upcoming excavations which we will keep nearby groups informed about and provide updates on at the next meeting include: Chesterton, Sawtry, Soham and RAF Brampton. SPM said that OAE will be starting a new large site which will involve excavations over several years. Details are being finalised and will be announced at the next meeting.
- SPM said that OAE are committed to running a training excavation for Madingley Hall students from 4th – 15th June 2018. Had hoped to run this at Anglesey Abbey but this has fallen through and now looking for a new site.
ACTION – Groups to contact SPM and CAFC with suggestions of excavation sites which they could offer in June 2018.
- CAFC has liaised with Karl Taylor about geophysical training but needs to find a new site now that Anglesey Abbey is not an option.
- RH asked SPM whether OAE had been involved in excavating a pipeline near Alconbury airfield.
ACTION – SPM to look into the site and provide more information to RH.
- CAFC reported that she had met with Ben Donnelly-Symes at CHER to discuss revising the county's archiving guidelines to produce guidance aimed at community

groups. We are at the initial stages of devising this but will consult groups and provide training in due course.

- In discussion with CHER, CAFC gave a few reminders about reporting findings:
 - Find out who the landowners are (not the tenants or occupiers) and gain written permission in advance. It is not always obvious who owns allotments, church land or schools so always research this fully beforehand.
 - Remember to request ECB numbers in advance of fieldwork. CHER is now back to capacity and responding as promptly as possible to requests.
 - Location maps generally need to be clearer and zoomed in to show plots of land rather than broad areas.
 - Send preliminary or interim reports to CHER so that they have copies of the raw data as soon as possible. They can wait for a more thorough analysis and interpretation and final figures but it will help to regularly send them copies of the draft report.
- RN asked about where to source maps. The district and county council will often provide OS maps for these purposes free of charge. Can take screen shots from online mapping providers such as Google Earth, OpenStreet Maps and OS Maps: <https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/> Sites such as Grid Reference Finder helps you to find grid references: <https://www.gridreferencefinder.com/>
- CAFC reported that Jigsaw was featured in Historic England's 2017 Heritage and Society report: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/2017-conservation-areas/heritage-and-society/>

5. Health and Safety (H&S)

- SPM reported that it is looking unlikely that there will be a route for volunteers to apply for CSCS cards. It is proving difficult for many commercial archaeologists. However, there are still sites which volunteers can help on without requiring one and it shouldn't affect the range and number of opportunities OAE can offer to volunteers.

6. Any Other Business

- Request for pottery identification training, on Roman and Medieval pottery in particular. Numbers may have to be limited in order to give as many different groups as possible the chance to join.
ACTION – SPM and CAFC to look into arranging pottery identification training.

7. Next Meeting - Tuesday 16th January 2018