

# LANDSCAPE SURVEY GROUP

## Active Landscapes - recording change by archaeological survey

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016

**\*\* PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME \*\***

Riverview Room, The Riverside Centre,  
13-14 Okehampton Street, Exeter EX4 1DU

### Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September

**9.30-9.35** Mark Bowden, Historic England, LSG Chair *Welcome and Introduction*

**9.35-9.50** Frances Griffith, Honorary Fellow, University of Exeter, and former Devon County Archaeologist *Introduction to Devon*

**9.50-10.10** Alex Bellisario, Museum of London (CITIZAN)

#### *The landscape of the coastal zone*

As coastal archaeologists we face processes which are destructive to archaeology but cannot be protected against. The coastal zone does not, and cannot be afforded the protection that terrestrial archaeology, or even maritime archaeology to a certain degree, enjoys. When looking at Historic Environment Records the coast often looks sparse, we have thousands of records which have been identified through development archaeology but coastal development is very limited, for obvious reasons. So how do we work to identify and record an archaeological resource which is unquantified, fragile, constantly eroding and spans thousands of miles? The CITIZAN (Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network) project aims to do just this, with its three regional teams covering hundreds of miles each and working in environments from low lying estuaries to granite cliffs.

This paper will look at the recording of complex archaeological sites in the diverse coastal zone, focusing on the use of new technologies and their accessibility. The use of what may be termed standard technology is now becoming the friend of archaeologists. The project is employing a specifically designed app, unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and 3D modelling to enable us carry out rapid and detailed survey in an environment which is so unstable yet so fragile.

**10.10-10.30 Angela Gannon, Historic Environment Scotland**

***'Staggering through mud and peat, gasping breaths and sucked-in cheeks': recording the archaeology of Scottish peatlands***

Peatlands are living landscapes, growing at different rates and thicknesses dependent on the underlying geology and drainage. They are found across the Scottish uplands but are most extensive in the North West Highlands and throughout the Western and Northern Isles. To the naturalist, these wet boggy areas support a range of interesting plants and birdlife, but to the archaeologist they form a protective mantle sealing prehistoric deposits as well as providing a stage for unique types of monument that relate to the more recent exploitation of peat as a fuel resource; and to the environmental archaeologist they capture a record that speaks of past climatic conditions and change. Drawing on field survey projects undertaken by the landscape team of the former RCAHMS, this paper will explore the active role of peatlands in the shaping, creation and understanding of the archaeological record that we have inherited and use today.

**10.30-10.50 Elaine Jamieson, University of Reading**

***Extending histories: from medieval mottes to prehistoric round mounds***

Late Neolithic round mounds, such as Silbury Hill near Avebury, are among the rarest and least well understood monuments in Britain. Recent archaeological work at the medieval Marlborough Castle motte, Wiltshire, however, has shown it to be a reused Neolithic round mound, comparable in date to Silbury Hill. Could Neolithic round mounds therefore be more numerous and widespread than previously thought? Have many been hidden in plain sight for the past thousand years - incorporated into the fabric of later medieval castles? Such a link has not been drawn before, and yet, if true, could have considerable implications for the way we understand both late Neolithic round mounds and medieval castles. This paper will discuss preliminary results from the Leverhulme Trust funded project *Extending Histories: From Medieval Mottes to Prehistoric Round Mounds*, which aims to discover the history of monumental mounds in the English landscape. The project brings together evidence from detailed analytical earthwork survey, geoarchaeological techniques and a comprehensive dating programme to determine the date of construction, sequence of development and environmental context of 20 castle mottes from across England.

**10.50-11.20 Tea and Coffee**

**11.20-11.40 David Knight, Historic England**

***Crossing the Cam: a landscape defined by nature***

Historic England's National Archaeological Identification Survey: South West Cambridgeshire allows a rare opportunity to assess the broad landscape changes which took place on the gravels, claylands and chalk west of Cambridge, in one of the busiest areas of developer-funded archaeology in England. With the aerial mapping phase complete, and closely linking in with recent excavation and research, the project has highlighted the dramatic changes in land-use in the region over several millennia. Aerial sources have enhanced our understanding of the Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary landscape utilising the chalk lowlands; and reveal the development of routeways in the later Iron Age leading to the establishment of important Roman settlement and cultivation on the tributaries to the River Cam.

We see how the River Cam acted as a significant boundary into the medieval period, and how the claylands were not quite as sparsely populated in later prehistory as was once thought. The project provides a unique insight into a transect stretching from the historic Fen edge to the Chalk Downs and highlights the changes which took place over time, also examining the fossilised medieval field systems, the legacy of which remains today.

**11.40-12.00 Alice Thorne, on behalf of the Secret of the High Woods Project**

***Landscape and lasers: exploring the archaeology of the South Downs National Park***

The South Downs National Park is currently hosting a Heritage Lottery Funded community archaeology project. The 'Secrets of the High Woods' is investigating a large area of the central wooded downs using high resolution Lidar survey, alongside other complementary resources. The survey is revealing an incredibly well preserved, palimpsestual landscape of national significance.

This talk will discuss methodology, some key results, and the engagement of local community groups in exploring and recording historic landscapes.

**12.00-12.20 Chris Webb, The National Trust**

***Hidden in the woods: a new layer in Selborne's landscape history***

Fieldwork using the 'Mark 1 Eyeball' and measuring tape has proved to be an effective way of plotting earthworks within the 100ha woodland on Selborne Hill which is part of the well-wooded escarpment landscape of the East Hampshire Hangers. Generally, the wider area tends not to respond well to aerial photographic survey and LiDAR coverage is still partial. This presentation outlines some of the information gathered from a series of winter surveys (along with archival research and oral testimonies) originally undertaken for an MA thesis, which is now an ongoing research project.

From the Middle Ages, Selborne Hill has been used as common pasture and woodland and been a key resource for the settlement of Selborne and its surrounding farms – the ecology along with extant features, earthworks and historical documents confirm a long history of commoning lasting into the 1950s. Revealed by the fieldwork however, are the existence of monuments and an early field system that predates the documented land use indicating a landscape very different to the medieval/modern common land. Earthwork stratigraphy and the recovery of pottery indicate a prehistoric to Roman timeframe for the fields and enclosures that have been plotted. This survey highlights that the extent of pre-medieval land use and settlement across the wider landscape close to Selborne has been previously underestimated due to its lack of visibility in contrast to the prehistoric landscapes of the neighbouring chalkland.

**12.20-12.40 Olaf Bayer, Historic England**

***Patterns of influence and change: prehistoric and Romano-British landscapes in the lower Exe valley, Devon***

Approximately 8km upstream from Exeter the river Exe cuts across a tongue of soft Permian sandstone and forms the wide Nether Exe basin. Combining large fieldwalking assemblages, good cropmark evidence, and a well-studied palaeoenvironmental sequence (Fyfe et al. 2003), the terraces of the lower Exe valley are one of the richest archaeological landscapes in lowland Devon. Drawing on the results of new fieldwork as well as the study of museum artefact collections, lidar and historic mapping this paper considers patterns of long-term influence and change on the valley floor. A particular focus is a very large oval enclosure of presumed prehistoric date originally identified from aerial reconnaissance (Griffith 2001), and subsequently subject to extensive geophysical survey and targeted excavation (Bayer 2011). The relationship between this monument and earlier lithic scatters is examined, as is its subsequent influence on a wider Romano-British landscape of settlements and field systems.

**12.40-13.00 Discussion**

**13.00-14.00 Lunch (provided)**

**14.00-14.20 Krystyna Truscoe, University of Reading**

***Landscape, economic and social change around Calleva: the results of the Silchester Environs Project aerial photograph and lidar survey***

The landscape around the former Roman town of Calleva, in Hampshire, appears to be typical quiet English countryside. However, this area underwent dramatic change in the late Iron Age and Roman periods and was a major urban centre. The University of Reading Silchester Environs Project, in partnership with Historic England, is using multiple investigation techniques to explore the Iron Age-Roman transition and how subsequent changes to this landscape affect our understanding of the evidence from these periods. Various non-intrusive techniques complement environmental studies and excavation, including an aerial photograph and lidar survey of a large contextual area from the Thames valley down to Basingstoke. This is complemented by extensive geophysical survey, targeted analytical earthwork survey and wide ranging walkover survey and observation in woodland. The resulting picture is one of complex patterns of settlement and land use, probably reflecting changing social structures in the later prehistoric and Roman periods. New discoveries from the aerial photograph and lidar survey include a series of enclosures, some potentially originating in the Bronze Age but probably relating to Iron Age/Roman settlement. The development and abandonment of Calleva can be read in the layered remains: from the impressive Iron Age earthworks in Rampiers Copse to the medieval field boundaries which overlie the Roman town. More recent social change can be seen in the creation of large country parks and the use of large parcels of land by the military, including Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment, which continues to have a major impact on the modern landscape.

**14.20-14.40 Adrian Chadwick, University of Leicester**

***Having the time and the money? Linking landscape and diachronic change to coin deposition: the work of the Hoarding in Iron Age and Roman Britain project***

Traditional numismatic approaches to Iron Age and Roman coinage in Britain distinguish between 'site finds' (usually assumed to have been chance losses), hoards (often interpreted as having been buried for security or monetary reasons), and coin assemblages that accumulated as a result of votive/ritual activity, as with river deposits at Piercebridge and Kingston-on-Thames, spring sites such as Bath and Coventina's Well, and at shrines or temples such as Uley, Springhead and Wanborough. Hoards have also usually been studied from the point of view of their contents rather than their find spots or associated finds.

This paper draws upon the results from the 'Hoarding in Iron Age and Roman Britain' project, a joint AHRC-funded research collaboration between the British Museum and the University of Leicester, which has been examining the ever-growing corpus of Iron Age and Roman hoards in Britain. Over 3400 coin hoards are now known, some from the expansion of developer-led archaeology since the 1990s, but most from the dramatic rise in metal detectorist finds, which in England and Wales are recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Treasure Act. This project is taking a contextual and relational approach to coin hoards, investigating their landscape settings and the contexts in which they were buried, alongside their contents and associated objects.

As a landscape archaeologist, I have been particularly interested in the find spots of Iron Age and Roman coin hoards, and during the past three years I have combined field visits to selected sites in five regional study areas with detailed analyses of the find spot and contextual information from known hoards. This fieldwork and database work has been enhanced by GIS analyses undertaken by Dr Katie Robbins. The results of these investigations reveal that in many instances the landscape context *did* influence hoard deposition, but also clearly illustrate changing diachronic patterns in the landscape settings of hoards over time. Although some of these changes may have been linked to political and economic developments within Roman Britain, as traditionally proposed, others may have resulted from social or ideological change. Coins were thus part of wider meshworks and flows of agencies and energies within the landscape, and perhaps changing practices and ideologies over time.

**14.40-15.00 Adam Welfare, Historic Environment Scotland**

***Minor military posts and Roman roads in Southern Scotland***

The Roman road system in Southern Scotland is possibly much less well understood than might be supposed, but the earthworks of minor posts that have been misinterpreted in the past can correct and contribute to our understanding of the network. This short paper addresses the history of two small sites that throw light on the problem and the influence they may have had on subsequent developments in the landscape.

**15.00-15.30 Tea and Coffee**

**15.30-15.50 Phil Newman, Southwest Landscape Investigations**

***In search of the Carbonarii: evidence for Dartmoor's medieval peat charcoal industry***

The peat charcoal industry on Dartmoor has likely origins in the 12th century, when the major demand for the product was in the smelting of tin. Initially, that demand came from the tanners of Devonshire, but was augmented during the 15th century, when a royal charter allowed Cornish tanners to procure their supply from Dartmoor too.

The known field evidence for the burning and production of charcoal has been limited to a cluster of earthen platforms (meilers) and stone structures on Wild Tor Ridge, from which samples of material were retrieved in the 1960s, claimed by the discoverer to be peat charcoal, but these findings have been largely overlooked and no other archaeologist has taken this subject any further until now.

During a program of research in 2010, in which various aspects of the exploitation of peat on north-western Dartmoor were investigated, a reappraisal of a number of earthen platforms on Greena Ball was included. These were previously believed to be peat stands (the bases of turf drying racks), although originally recorded on the OS as 'Tumuli', but closer examination resulted in the chance discovery of fragments of charcoal, on several of the mounds, suggesting that they are the surviving evidence of medieval meilers, upon which peat charcoal was produced. Further fieldwork on both northern and southern uplands has revealed nine clusters of mounds with potential to be, or with proven status as, meilers.

This paper discusses the recognition of this category of landscape evidence, progress with recording, and suggestions for further investigation.

**15.50-16.10 Amelia Pannett, Louise Mees and Natalie Ward, Cadw and the Peak District**

**National Park Authority**

***Adopt a Landscape – Surveying and managing monuments in the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site***

The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage site covers 30km<sup>2</sup> of, predominantly, upland moorland on the eastern edge of the South Wales Coalfield and the north-eastern edge of the South Wales Valleys. It is a man-made landscape created by 18th and 19th century industrial activity and survives largely unchanged since the mines closed and the ironworks and forges ceased production in the late 19th and early 20th century. But, this vulnerable landscape is being impacted by changes in land use that are threatening both individual sites and wider swathes of the World Heritage Site. Since 2011 heritage volunteers have been working with Cadw, the local authorities and the Brecon Beacons National Park to carry out surveys of the landscape, building up a record of the condition of monuments and enhancing our understanding of change within the World Heritage Site. In November 2015 a project was started to formally train a group of volunteers in the skills required to undertake condition surveys that will inform future management strategies for the World Heritage Site.

This paper will explore the impact that landscape and monument surveys are having on the management of change within the World Heritage Site, and will highlight the significant contribution being made by volunteers.

**16.10-16.30 Amanda Adams and Steve Crowther, Skylarkeology**

***From bomb dump to rubbish dump? The legacy of twentieth century military infrastructure in England.***

Construction of many 20th century military installations has altered perceptions of these places during the conflicts and later. They went from green-field to brown-field, and this wartime use became the catalyst for radical land-use change. Constructed mostly from virgin farmland and parkland, or upscaled from lesser existing facilities, most of these temporary military airfields, camps, bases, depots, dumps, hospitals and gun batteries, as well as civilian hostels and factories, have never returned to their original state; instead, they have become transitional spaces and acquired new quasi-urban or peri-urban identities that remain today, whether in use or abandoned. This paper arises from a body of work on air photo mapping projects and explores themes regarding the disparate fortunes of former 20th century military sites and the multivalent nature of those spaces, landscape perception and its time-depth, not only through the physical changes recorded by aerial photographs taken over successive decades, but also in the communicative memory of 20th century generations. Use of aerial photographs at Historic England's Swindon archive provided a record of up to 100 years of landscape change, including evolving land use in both rural and urban environments. The ideas explored in this paper derive from 10 years work on projects in the west of England using Historic England's National Mapping Programme (NMP) methods. These projects used historic aerial photographic collections, lidar data and documentary sources to investigate sites and landscapes dating from the Neolithic to the near-present, including 20th century military features.

**16.30-17.00 Summary, Discussion and Thanks**

**Friday Evening Social: Walking tour of Historic Exeter** (guided by John Allan, tbc) and **Conference Dinner** at Bar Venezia, Italian restaurant on the waterfront quay [www.barvenezia.co.uk](http://www.barvenezia.co.uk)

**Saturday Fieldtrip to Dartmoor:** 9.30 am coach leaves Exeter for Lydford burgh and castle, then Brent Tor hillfort and church; lunch at Tavistock or Princetown (tbc); Merrivale multi-phase landscape; drive back across the moors to Moretonhampstead then return to Exeter with a drop-off at St David's station by 4pm.

**For further information on the conference or fieldtrip please contact:**

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**The Riverside Centre Information:** <http://www.loveexeter.com/go/conference-centre-in-exeter/>