

Dates for your diary

There are two events in October both of which involve Dr Ed Caswell, the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for Oxfordshire. If you are unsure what a FLO does and how their work fits in with the Portable Antiquities Scheme then look at:

<https://www.ashmolean.org/portable-antiquities-scheme>

Finds Day at Chippy Museum

This is an opportunity to have any pottery, coins and other material you have looked at by Ed Caswell who will be in the Chipping Norton Museum on **Saturday 19th October 2024 between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm**. Bring along whatever you've found – coins, pottery, etc. - whether in the garden, metal detecting or hidden away in a cupboard. Ed will identify them for you! OR just drop in to have a look around and see what others may have brought in. Free Entry for This Event



Talk on the Bronze Age

As well as being the Oxfordshire Finds Liaison Officer Ed is also an expert on the Bronze Age. He will be giving a talk on the subject in the **Lower Town Hall** on **Thursday 31st October at 7.30 pm**.

The Bronze Age is a fascinating period of our history. Modern archaeological research is highlighting that the Bronze Age was a time of profound change. Not only was the use of metal introduced but it is now thought that this may have been the period when farming really took off in this country. In addition it looks

as if there may have been an almost complete population change from the preceding Neolithic Age. Come and hear Ed talk about this fascinating period of our history and learn why the Bronze Age may have had much in common with the American Wild West!

Entry is free although donations to support the work of CHARG will be very welcome.

A copy of the poster for this talk is attached to this newsletter. If you can put one up somewhere please do so. It would be good to have a sizeable audience for Ed's talk.

More Help Needed

As you read through this newsletter you may notice that there is a theme which keeps recurring: that with more active members CHARG could do more.

The first thing to say is don't let a lack of archaeological experience or knowledge put you off joining in with our work. Many people start from nothing and make a real contribution. We know, for example, of one person who is now an authority on the pottery of his local area despite starting with no knowledge of archaeology. Give it a go and you will almost certainly end up making a valuable contribution to our work.

The second point to mention is that it is great fun 'working' in archaeology. Being part of a team and exercising the mind are significant factors in promoting good health.

Test Pit Group

The CHARG Test Pit Group (TPG) has been very active since the last newsletter in February and we have now started our programme of digging test pits. Our current objective is to try and find out more about the south western edge of the Roman settlement. Although both the Memorial Wood and the William Fowler allotments lie outside the area of the Scheduled Monument they are adjacent to the fields where the Romans settlement lies and it is likely to extend into these areas

We have now dug three test pits and, although evidence of Roman remains has been sparse, we are planning to carry on excavating in the northern part of the Memorial Wood and the allotments. If you would like to join us please do get in touch.

Incidentally if you would like to read about Chipping Norton's Romano-British Scheduled Monument have a look at the entry on the Historic England website:

[Romano-British settlement](#)

QGIS and Lidar Project

The QGIS group has continued to develop the graphical information system (GIS) for use by the Local History Society. The latest version of the GIS has been installed on the museum's computer system for use by members of the Society and any visitors to the museum. Everybody is welcome to visit and use the system. Don't be shy, have a go, there is a simple printed guide to using the GIS on the desk by the computer!

This latest version of the GIS has been re-engineered to present the records of archaeological 'finds' according to broad historical periods. This makes it far easier to see the overall picture for each specific historical period. The periods available to see are Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon. Other periods to be added to the GIS are Bronze Age, Medieval and Modern. In addition, new resources (e.g. Google Satellite, 1885 OS map) have been added to the GIS.

The planned work for the group is to update the data we have from the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) to include recent finds and to widen the scope of the dataset by adding records from the surrounding parishes. This will provide us with a much more comprehensive picture of Chipping Norton and the surrounding district. The availability of aerial photographs has recently been improved and so we are actively looking for relevant images to add to the GIS.

The current version of the GIS has a number of LiDAR images for Chipping Norton and the surrounding area. These have been optimised to meet our local terrain. The source LiDAR data are available in the model so that users can apply

visualisation techniques to create images that more suited to their particular area of interest.

Our work creating the LiDAR images and using complementary systems (e.g. aerial photographs and Google Earth images) has reached a position where we can now turn our focus to the much more difficult task of identifying real archaeological features in the landscape. For this we will need help and advice! Fortunately for us, we have an expert (Richard Oram, Team Leader Archaeology at Oxfordshire County Council) who is willing to visit us and hold seminars to explore our LiDAR findings and questions. We will be arranging a session later this year. When arranged this seminar will be publicised and all will be welcome.

Fieldwalking

We have made little progress with organising a fieldwalking exercise in the last 6 months even though many CHARG members would like to take part. It seems as if modern farming practice makes this more difficult than may have been the case in the past. Nowadays many farmers cut the current season's crop and soon afterwards plant a new one so that there is a very short window in which fieldwalking could be carried out.

To make progress on this there is a need for one or two people to take the lead in planning and organising the fieldwalking side of our activities. This would involve talking to landowners, liaising with farmers, obtaining the equipment needed, recruiting volunteers (which will not be difficult as many people seem to be keen) and coming up with the plan for the day, as well as finding someone able and willing to assess any finds.

If you fancy being involved please get in touch.

The northern part of the Tank Farm development area

We haven't become aware of any progress with regard to this land. All that we can do is reiterate what we said in our last newsletter:

We will be very interested to see what now happens with regard to the land earmarked for housing development which lies to the north of the scheduled area. We believe this is owned mainly by Oxfordshire County Council. Although the main Roman settlement did not appear to continue into this area significant archaeological features were identified by the magnetometer survey carried out on behalf of OCC. If housing developments were to go ahead on this land we would be anxious that the archaeological features are comprehensively investigated, perhaps with some community involvement, before any development work commences.

Bringing the Roman settlement to life

We are still at an early stage of thinking about how we might bring the Roman settlement to the attention of more people in the Chipping Norton area. It is very early days and there are several possible avenues to explore. One idea is to have a pop up exhibition describing the settlement which could be used in various locations around the town and in local schools. Other possibilities would include the use of digital reconstructions techniques including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Gaming. Here is one example of the work that Wessex Archaeology do in this area but to see a wider range of examples of their follow this link:

[Wessex Archaeology - Heritage Reconstruction and Visualisation](#)



If this is an area that interests you, now would be a great time to become involved – nothing is fixed at the moment and you could make a real contribution to the development of this aspect of our work.

Involving young people and schools

At CHARG we have always been keen to offer young people the chance to participate in archaeological work locally. There are a number of ways that this could be done including setting up a Young Archaeologists Club, after school clubs or by putting on special events aimed at young people and schools. To date we have made little progress mainly due to a lack of people with the necessary enthusiasm and skill to make these opportunities a reality. Again if you would like to be involved in such work please get in touch.

Interested in being involved?

If you would like to join us please get in touch via charg2022@outlook.com – you would be very welcome.

If you would like to take part in any of our practical activities, such as digging test pits or fieldwalking, you would need to become a member of the Local History Society (of which CHARG is now a sub-group) so that you are covered by the Society's insurance. An application form is attached to this newsletter.

If you would like to support CHARG financially donations are always welcome. Details of our Treasurer and bank details can be found on the attached LHS form.

A final date for your diary

You may have heard of the Bronze Age site at Must Farm near Peterborough. This Late Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlement consisted of stilted roundhouses built above a river channel and surrounded by a palisade of sharpened stakes. It was occupied for only about a year before a catastrophic fire destroyed it, with the blaze tearing quickly through the structures, causing the houses' contents to fall into the muddy river below. It was this perfect combination of charring and

waterlogging that caused thousands of objects to survive including almost 200 wooden artefacts, over 150 fibre and textile items, 128 pottery vessels and more than 90 pieces of metalwork. This unprecedented survival of material that would normally not survive has provided an extraordinary and detailed glimpse into the lives of ordinary people in the Bronze Age.



An exhibition about Must Farm is currently on show at Peterborough Museum but hurry it only goes on until the 12th October:

[Must farm exhibition at Peterborough Museum](#)

[Must Farm website](#)