



The newsletter of the Welwyn Archaeological Society Autumn 2011

Welcome to the new lecture season. I hope you have had a pleasant and successful summer, despite the grey skies and lack of sun.

A quick word of explanation for members who were unable to attend the AGM earlier in the year. At the AGM we decided that we would revert to having a simple newsletter two or three times a year, which would announce the lecture season, forthcoming trips and so forth, much as the newsletter always used to be when I first joined the Society (although those were reproduced on something like a Gestetner, which probably counts as an archaeological artefact in its own right). In addition to the 'simple' newsletter, we will have one newsletter a year which has much more content: reports on work we have been doing, planned projects, reports on trips *etc.*, more in line with the newsletters of recent years. This seems a reasonable compromise between cost, time and the need to circulate information. Burcu Urundul was made a Committee Member at the AGM with responsibility for maintaining our Facebook group and helping with the webpages. She has set up a website for us at: <http://welwynarchaeologicalsociety.wordpress.com/>. Hopefully, our registered domain website will come online in the near future too.

I am glad to report that our membership appears to be starting to increase once more. This is very good news, for without members the Society, obviously, ceases to exist. I'd like to welcome those new members who have joined in the last year and encourage everyone to try and persuade friends and family to join the Society. This is, of course, an unsubtle way of reminding you that your subscriptions to the Society are due at the start of the lecture season! You can either pay at the first lecture, or use the slip at the back of this newsletter and send a cheque to the Treasurer.

At present, we have not arranged a coach outing this autumn. Although coach outings have been a traditional part of the Society's activities, in recent years the numbers of people coming have fallen and we have either had to cancel the trip, or make a loss. We are considering having smaller self drive trips with members car-pooling to keep down costs. Any thoughts, or ideas for destinations, are most welcome.

I look forward to seeing you at this season's meetings.

Kris Lockyear

(noviodunum@hotmail.com 01582 831946)

The 2011–2012 Lecture Season

The lectures will be held at the Free Church Hall, Welwyn Garden City starting at 7.45pm. Tea and coffee are served afterwards. Visitors are welcome but we ask for a small donation of £2 towards costs. The WAS raffle will also continue.

30th September 2011	The Boudiccan Revolt.	<i>John Smith</i>
14th October 2011	Tudor Hertfordshire	<i>Daphne Knott</i>
4th November 2011	Hadrian's Wall	<i>Paul Palmer</i>
25th November 2011	The archaeology of smoking: the history & study of clay tobacco pipes.	<i>Jacqui Pearce</i>
9th December 2011	The archaeology of St. Albans City & District (Time Team, Temples & Transport)	<i>Simon West</i>
27th January 2012	Roman armour from Priory Field, Caerleon.	<i>Andrew Gardner</i>
10th February 2012	Rescue archaeology: Thirty years on.	<i>John Smith</i>
24th February 2012	The archaeology of the Fens	<i>Tim Reynolds</i>
9th March 2012	Homer's Iliad: The Trojan War in Greek & Roman art & archaeology.	<i>Peter Clayton</i>
23rd March 2012	AGM and "What we did last summer"	<i>Kris Lockyear</i>

Please note that the gap between lectures varies between two and three weeks.

Details of the Christmas Party and the trip will be circulated when available.

Update on WAS activities

As well as the coach outing to Anglesey Abbey and Ely, Members of Society attended the "Open Garden" day at St Paul's Waldenbury on the 8th May. St Paul's was the childhood home of the Queen Mother and the grand ornamental gardens were worth a visit. The rhododendrons were in bloom and the weather was lovely. After visiting the gardens we had tea in the more modest gardens at Lamer Park.

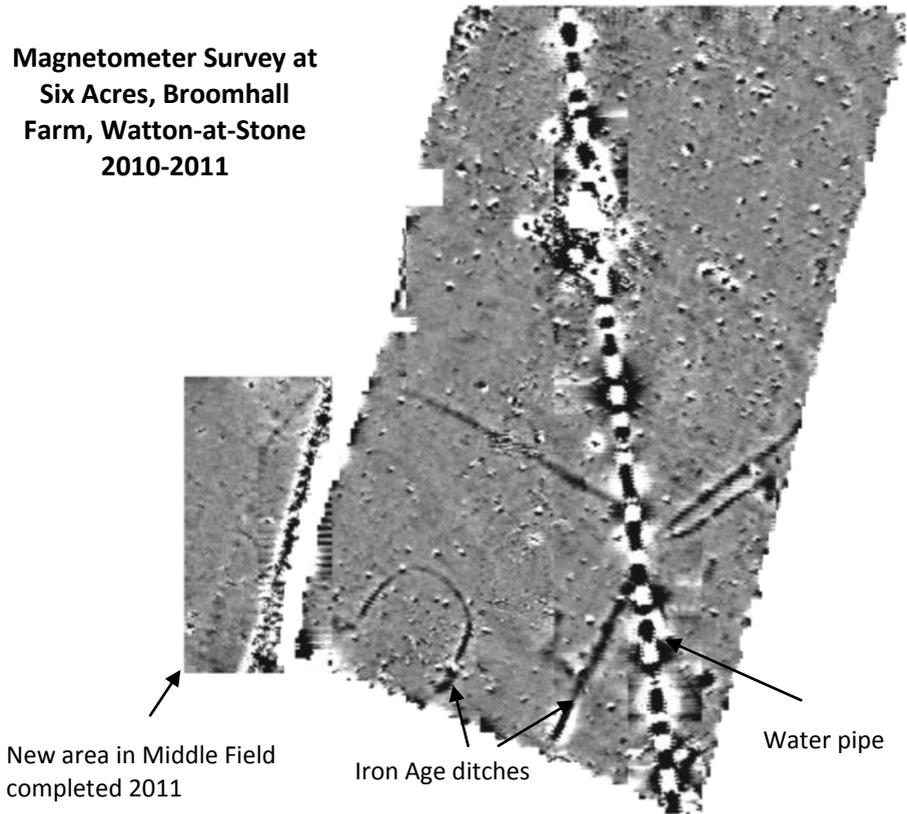
Fieldwork this summer has consisted of some geophysical survey at Six Acres and Manton Lane, Bedford, as well as one small exploratory trench at Six Acres. At the Roman Day at Welwyn Baths, Steven Cockings asked if we would be willing to undertake a magnetometer survey at the Roman site in Bedford which has been discovered during building works. It was hard to refuse a man in full Roman armour wielding a *gladius*! Unfortunately, the survey only revealed the medieval ridge and furrow that survives on the site. A resistance survey was undertaken by Bill Martin but at 1m intervals, a standard technique. It may be worth returning and re-doing the survey at 50cm intervals, which obviously takes much longer.

We haven't managed to return to Six Acres itself yet, as John Wallace wants to take a second crop of hay from it. We have, however, started the mag and res surveys in Middle Field to the west of Six Acres. So far, we have not managed to convincingly locate the west side of the Iron Age enclosure in the geophysics. We have, however, opened up a small test trench in the bottom of the drainage ditch to attempt to locate the northern edge of the enclosure. We think we have found it! We aim to be doing some more fieldwork this autumn, including digging up part of the old water pipe which obscures the mag survey at the vital point where four ditches meet.

In order to publicize the work of the Society past and present I gave a lecture in Watton-at-Stone entitled *Temples, burials and chapels: the archaeology of a Hertfordshire landscape* which gave an overview of the archaeology in our Watton, Aston and Datchworth survey area. Tony Rook kindly lent me his slides to scan. Sorting through them was a trip down memory lane. Sunday after the talk I led a walk starting from Watton-at-Stone railway station around that piece of landscape. The sheer density of sites is astounding, but I wonder if the same would be true in any part of England if dedicated people, like Tony Rook and members of WAS, had studied it in detail for forty years? The Hertfordshire *Historic Environment Record* has complete aerial photographic coverage of the county taken in 2010 which shows yet more sites in our area.

Thinking towards the future, the Society needs to find a base. For many years the finds from the excavations have been stored in the Society's hut at the end of Tony and Merle's garden, and work on the finds has taken place on the dining room table! Obviously, we need to find a new home for the finds and the tools, but it would also be wonderful if we could have facilities to work on the finds that would allow us to spread the material out for analysis. Our detailed knowledge of the landscape between Datchworth and Watton is deserving of a full publication, but we have much work to do on the finds before we could publish the results of forty years work in this beautiful landscape.

**Magnetometer Survey at
Six Acres, Broomhall
Farm, Watton-at-Stone
2010-2011**



Subscriptions for 2011–2012 season are due Sept 30th 2011.
Single membership: £12; family membership £18.

Please send a cheque made payable to “Welwyn Archaeological Society” to: Mr Alasdair Campbell, 8 Peace Grove, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 0RS.

Name(s):

Address (if different from our records)

Telephone:

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