

Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History

AGM 6 April 2024

Officers' Reports

SIAH General Secretary's Report to 2024 AGM

We have published our annual *Proceedings* and two editions of our newsletter. We have digitized and published online Volume IV and volumes for 2019 to 2021 (inclusive) of the *Proceedings*.

We have continued our programme of regular lectures both live and on Zoom online conferencing software. We have also recommenced our full programme of summer excursions all of which have been well attended and some over-subscribed.

We were represented once again at the Rendlesham Revealed celebration event.

We have funded the digitisation and online publication (without pay wall) of Suffolk Charters held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford and celebrate completion of the project with a conference at our AGM.

We have updated our website software to improve performance

We have committed £5,000 to a joint project with the Historic Towns Trust to produce an historic map of Ipswich.

We are pleased that our Field Group is once again active.

We have reprinted our publicity/membership application leaflet.

We joined with other heritage groups to oppose the closure of the Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft branches of Suffolk Archives, sadly without success.

My thanks to our chair Jo Caruth for her leadership during the year and to all our officers and Council members for their hard work.

Nick Amor
23.03.24

Editor's Report

1. *Proceedings 2023*

Vol. 45, part 3 of the *Proceedings* (2023) was published in December 2023 and circulated to members.

The cost per copy was £10.42, a quite significant rise of 34 per cent from the cost of £7.80 per copy in 2022 (not including the cost of the send out [postage, packing and labour]). The increase in cost per copy was partly due to paper price increases which the print company which we use (Five Castles) have had imposed, but also due to the fact that there were more pages in this year's *Proceedings* (2023: 230; 2022: 174) which led to a rise in production costs as Five Castles charge per sheet.

2. *Proceedings 2024*

Work on *Proceedings 2024* is going well. The main papers for this year's journal have mostly been agreed and finalised and consist of four full papers (all archaeology), and two shorter contributions (all history) (see below). Unfortunately, for various reasons, none of the four full history papers currently in the system are likely to be ready in time for inclusion in this year's *Proceedings*. If that changes, and at least one is ready in time, I will include it.

There will also be number of book reviews, 'Excursions' and 'Archaeology in Suffolk', all of which are in progress.

Full papers:-

'Early Neolithic activity, a Beaker burial and a prehistoric funerary enclosure at Woolpit', by Tom Woolhouse.

'Late Bronze Age settlement and salt production on the Stour estuary: excavations at Stutton Close, Stutton', by Matt Brudenell, Lawrence Billington and Nicholas Cox.

'The Iron Age origins of Sudbury. Did prehistoric defences influence the layout and development of Late Anglo-Saxon settlement seen at the Gainsborough's House Museum excavations?', by Jezz Meredith.

'Medieval and post-medieval archaeology at Manor Farm, Bawdsey', by Andrew A.S. Newton, Lindsay Lloyd-Smith and Liam Podbury.

Shorter contributions

'The Ipswich ancestors of Geoffrey Chaucer', by Keith Briggs.

'Hiding in plain sight: the site of the medieval market butchery at Hadleigh', by Sue Andrews.

3. *Future Proceedings*

Going forward, there are seven archaeological papers 'in the pipeline', either out for review, having final edits made, or ready for publication. In addition, there are four historical papers which are either promised, out for review, or having final edits made to them.

There are already sufficient papers for *Proceedings 2025*.

Joanne Sear, 18 March 2024

SIAH Membership Secretary's Report

Membership currently stands at 509 – 115 of those are joint members which brings the total to 624.

As always, it is pleasing to be able to report that membership numbers remain stable as new members come on stream replacing inevitable resignations and lapses.

SIAH will have a presence once again at Rendlesham Revealed to be held in Ipswich in May. This event generated quite a flurry of new members last year and I hope this may be repeated.

Rosemary Mees
22.03.2024

Webmaster's report

The SIAH website has had some software upgrades in the last year, but there are no visible changes. The previous rearrangement with the latest news in the main panel of the homepage has proven its worth. The new Bodleian charters are now linked with a small panel in the sidebar. The "archive" section, added in 2022, now has Hollesley documents 1268-1605 and Aldeburgh Chamberlains' Accounts 1566-1649. Further contributions are welcome. At some point the purpose and role of the website will need a review; experience with the current version created about 10 years ago has shown that the concept of every posting being considered as "news" is not ideal for a society dedicated to history. There perhaps needs to be a re-design making a clear distinction between news (usually about forthcoming events), and material intended to be of long-term value (such as abstracts of previous lectures).

Keith Briggs

FIELD GROUP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The greater part of 2023 was spent in surveying by the SAFG as no new site for discrete excavation had been identified. Our excavations at Bulcamp had been finalised, as the land was returned to stewardship status in 2023. However, the landowner kindly allowed our geophysics team access to carry out some further surveying.

A magnetometry survey of the South field was completed, revealing evidence of two circular features to the south-west. A pair of ditch lines continuing into the adjacent field could be seen but any associated features were obliterated by a metal fence and gates.

Two attempts were made to carry out a resistivity survey over potential building outlines but, unfortunately, due to the extremely dry weather conditions prior to this, no results of sufficient depth were possible and this survey had to await adequate rain to percolate the soil.

Survey work was also carried out at Tattingstone, continuing earlier surveying on the land. Unfortunately, although aerial photographs were very promising for the existence of ditches, it was found that deep ploughing over many years had obliterated much of this.

Further evidence of possible enclosures was noted on aerial images but no surveying could be carried out due to poor weather conditions. It was hoped to resume this in 2024.

At Freston, on the Shotley peninsula, the SAFG carried out a survey of the SW quadrant of the causewayed enclosure in summer 2023, on behalf of Professor Tristan Carter (MacManus University, Canada) under licence from Historic England. Several difficulties were encountered – severe ferrous contamination (possibly the result of the spreading of waste material from London in the late 19th and early 20thC) and excessive plant growth.

However, the survey was successful in locating a number of the causewayed pits and a concentric circular feature, measuring approximately 50m in diameter.

The SAFG also contributed to the work carried out at Rendlesham, as part of the Rendlesham Revealed Project. A magnetometry survey was carried out of a 10H field from January to March, involving the participation of 14 members of the group. This formed part of an ongoing programme to cover sites in and around the core settlement. Surprisingly, evidence of extensive multi-period activity was found across the site. Within the Roman finds area, possible evidence of structures was found, including a square response area, consistent with a shrine or temple. Elsewhere, were responses indicating sunken feature buildings in proximity with known early mediaeval presence.

All the features found require further investigation to establish their true origin and function.

Further to our surveys of Rendlesham, many of the group's members participated in the Rendlesham project's third year of both excavation and post-ex processing. As in the previous years of the project, the group gained new members as a result of the invitation to the public to take part.

Eight of the group took part over the six weeks of excavation as mentors to less experienced diggers as in the previous year.

While some of the group were excavating at Rendlesham, other members of SAFG were assisting in the excavation of recovery of a USAF wartime plane , a very unusual and sensitive experience.

Some fieldwalking was carried out at Tattingstone in tandem with the survey there and also at Sogenhoe, where the SAFG had been asked to survey in order to determine the exact position of a known mediaeval chapel. Earlier in the year, some members assisted Tom Cox with walking some of the land adjacent to the Rendlesham settlement on behalf of the project.

Our AGM was held in November at Earl Stonham village hall, reporting on the year's activities and a very interesting power point presentation was given by Bryan Knibbs on the progress of the reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo ship.

Thanks to the SIAH, the group are now in possession of a new resistivity meter which we hope to demonstrate in action to an SIAH excursion in May of this year. It's addition to our survey capability will greatly enhance results, in conjunction with the magnetometry meter which we have used for some years.

We are grateful as always for the continuing support of the SIAH, the SCCAS and Cotswold Archaeology.

Lynda Bradley April 2024