

Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas

Edited by Gill Hey and Jill Hind

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Resource Assessments and Research Agendas

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Summary

The Solent-Thames region, as recently defined by central government, comprises five counties from north to south: Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, providing a N-S transect across Central Southern England. This area includes a varied geography, from the Cotswolds in the north across the chalklands of the Berkshire Downs and the heathlands of Hampshire to the south coast. It does not follow previous regional divisions of England, instead aiming to provide fresh insights into the past through the grouping of existing administrative units in a new combination.

This volume presents the first two phases of the Research Framework project for this region. The first is an assessment of the current state of archaeological knowledge within this region from Palaeolithic times to the present day, the second a series of research aims and priorities both for specific periods and for wider cross-period themes. It starts with an introduction explaining the current organisation of information about the past in the region, and a brief introduction to the environmental archaeology of the Solent-Thames area. Following this, two chapters are devoted to each major chronological period, the first presenting an overview of the resource as currently understood, the second a Research Agenda for future work. There is then a brief conclusion.

In several of the chronological periods, this region contains some of the most important and best-researched sites, or groups of sites, in England. These include the remarkable series of early Mesolithic settlements along the Kennet valley, the hillfort at Danebury

and its environs, the Roman town of Silchester and the cemetery of Lankhills, and the Saxon and medieval towns and cities of Southampton, Winchester and Oxford. The region has strong royal links in the medieval period, resulting in the preservation of Windsor Forest and the New Forest, and Oxford was the capital for King Charles I during the English Civil War. Arguably the most important ships in the naval history of Britain are housed at Portsmouth, including the Mary Rose, the best-preserved Tudor warship in Britain. Among the many country estates, Blenheim Palace, the seat of the Dukes of Marlborough, is of international renown. More recently, this region has been the focus of political dissent during the Cold War, around the nuclear facilities at Greenham Common and Upper Heyford.

The Resource Assessments are written by eminent period specialists, drawing upon county assessments prepared by local experts, which can be found online at <http://oxfordarchaeology.com/research-projects-by-name/217-solent-thames-research-framework>. The Research Agendas are organised under the same headings as the Resource Assessments, and the research questions are numbered for ease of reference.

The volume is one of a series covering the whole of England, and is published with the support of English Heritage. It aims to draw together the results of developer-funded, purely academic and local research within this region, and to place the results in the context of current research. It is hoped that it will be useful to all those contemplating, planning or undertaking future archaeological work within the region.

Résumé

La région du Solent-Tamise, comme définie récemment par le pouvoir central comprend 5 comtés repartis du Nord au Sud : le Buckinghamshire, l'Oxfordshire, le Berkshire, le Hampshire et enfin l'île de Wight, créant une section transversale N-S qui traverse l'Angleterre méridionale en son centre. Cette zone dessine une géographie diversifiée, à partir des Cotswolds au nord puis sillonne les hauteurs crayeuses des collines du Berkshire ainsi que les landes de l'Hampshire jusqu'à la côte sud. Elle ne suit pas les anciennes divisions régionales de l'Angleterre, mais cherche au contraire à offrir de nouvelles perspectives du passé grâce au regroupement des unités administratives existantes en un nouvel agencement.

Ce volume rassemble les deux premières phases du Projet-cadre de recherche de cette région. La première phase constitue une évaluation de l'état actuel des connaissances archéologiques au sein de la région des temps paléolithiques à nos jours ; la deuxième offre une série d'objectifs et de priorités de recherche concernant à la fois des périodes spécifiques et des sujets plus vastes portant sur plusieurs périodes. Une introduction initiale explique l'organisation actuelle de l'information sur le passé de la région, suivie par une brève introduction sur l'archéologie paléoenvironnementale de la région Solent-Tamise. Le volume enchaîne avec deux chapitres consacrés à chaque grande période chronologique, le premier proposant un panorama des ressources telles qu'elles sont appréhendées aujourd'hui, le second un programme de recherche en vue de travaux futurs. Le tout s'achève par une courte conclusion.

Pour plusieurs des périodes chronologiques, cette région conte certains des sites, ou groupes de sites, les plus importants et les mieux documentés d'Angleterre. Parmi ces derniers, on répertorie la remarquable série d'habitats du mésolithique ancien le long de la vallée de la rivière Kennet, la colline fortifiée de Danebury et ses environs, la

ville romaine de Silchester et le cimetière de Lankhills, sans oublier les villes anglo-saxonnes et médiévales, plus ou moins grandes, de Southampton, Winchester et Oxford. A l'époque médiévale, la région jouit de solides liens royaux dont résultent la bonne conservation de la Forêt de Windsor et de la New Forest, puis Oxford comme capitale du roi Charles Ier durant la guerre civile britannique. Les navires les plus importants de l'histoire navale de la Grande-Bretagne sont sans doute à Portsmouth, dont la Mary Rose, le mieux préservé des navires de guerre Tudor en Grande-Bretagne. Parmi de nombreux domaines, le palais de Blenheim, siège des ducs de Marlborough, est de renommée mondiale. Plus récemment, pendant la guerre froide, la région est au cœur d'un désaccord politique, autour des installations nucléaires de la RAF Greeham Common et de la RAF Upper Heyford.

Les Evaluations des ressources, rédigées par d'éminents spécialistes par période, font usage des évaluations régionales préparées par des experts locaux. Ces documents peuvent être consultés en ligne à l'adresse suivante thehumanjourney.net/pdf-store/sthames. Les Programmes de recherche sont organisés sous les mêmes rubriques que les Evaluations de ressources ; enfin les questions relatives à la recherche sont numérotées pour faciliter la consultation.

Ce volume fait partie d'une série de publications sur l'ensemble de l'Angleterre et est publié avec le soutien de l'English Heritage, l'organisation chargée du patrimoine. Il vise à rassembler les résultats de différents types de recherche dans la région, recherche financée par les promoteurs, purement universitaire ou locale, et situe ces résultats dans le contexte de la recherche actuelle. Cet ouvrage devrait être utile à tous ceux qui envisagent, planifient ou souhaitent entreprendre des travaux archéologiques dans cette région.

Zusammenfassung

Die Solent-Thames-Region, wie sie kürzlich durch die Zentralregierung festgelegt wurde, besteht von Norden nach Süden aus fünf Grafschaften: Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire und die Isle of Wight und bietet somit einen N-S Durchschnitt durch den zentralen Teil Südenglands. Dieses Gebiet besitzt eine abwechslungsreiche Landschaft, von den Cotswolds im Norden, über die Kreidelandschaften der Berkshire Downs sowie die Heideflächen von Hampshire bis hin zur Südküste. Dieses Gebiet stimmt jedoch nicht mit früheren regionalen Gebieten Englands überein, und bietet somit die Möglichkeit durch die Präsentation des Kulturerbes noch bestehender Verwaltungseinheiten in einer neuen Kombination die Gelegenheit für neue Einblicke in die Vergangenheit.

Dieser Band stellt die ersten beiden Phasen des Forschungsrahmen-Projektes für diese Region vor. Die erste umfasst eine Auswertung des archäologischen Wissensstandes des Gebietes vom Paläolithikum bis zum heutigen Tag, während die zweite Phase eine Reihe von Forschungszielen und -prioritäten beinhaltet, die sowohl für spezifische Epochen als auch für epochenübergreifende Thematiken definiert worden sind. Der Band beginnt mit einer Einleitung, welche die derzeitige Organisation der Information über die Vergangenheit der Region erklärt, sowie einer kurzen Einführung zur Umweltarchäologie der Solent-Thames-Region. Hierauf folgen zwei Kapitel, die den chronologischen Hauptepochen gewidmet sind. Während das erste dieser Kapitel einen Überblick über die Quellen, wie sie momentan verstanden werden, bietet, beinhaltet das zweite ein Forschungsprogramm für zukünftige Arbeiten. Anschließend folgt ein kurzes Schlusskapitel.

Dieses Gebiet umfasst einige der wichtigsten und am intensivsten untersuchten archäologischen Stätten bzw. Gruppen solcher im ganzen England. Diese schließen die bemerkenswerten früh-mesolithischen Stätten entlang des Kennet Tals, die neolithischen und bronzezeitlichen Monumentkomplexe bei Stanton Harcourt und Dorchester-on-Thames, die Bergfestung und deren Umgebung bei

Danebury, die römische Stadt Silchester und den Friedhof von Lankhills, sowie die sächsischen und mittelalterlichen Städte Southampton, Winchester und Oxford ein. Das Gebiet hatte im Mittelalter enge königliche Beziehungen, woraus sich die Konservierung des Windsor Forest und des New Forest ergab, und zudem galt für König Charles' I. Oxford als Hauptstadt während des englischen Bürgerkriegs. Die vermutlich wichtigsten Schiffe der britischen Schifffahrtsgeschichte sind in Portsmouth untergebracht, und zu diesen zählt die Mary Rose, das besterhaltene Kriegsschiff der Tudorzeit in Großbritannien. Zu den zahlreichen Landgütern gehört der Blenheim Palace, der Sitz des Herzogs von Marlborough, welcher von internationalem Ruhm ist. In jüngerer Zeit, während des Kalten Krieges, stand das Gebiet im Mittelpunkt einer politischen Auseinandersetzung, vor allem wegen der kerntechnischen Anlagen bei Greenham Common und Upper Heyford.

Die Auswertungen der Quellen wurden von angesehenen Wissenschaftlern mit Spezialisierung auf die einzelnen Epochen verfasst, die sich dabei auf Bewertungen der Grafschaften durch Lokalexperten stützen. Diese stehen im Internet auf <http://oxfordarchaeology.com/research-projects-by-name/217-solent-thames-research-framework> zur Verfügung. Zur besseren Orientierung sind die Forschungsprogramme unter denselben Überschriften wie die Quellenbewertungen angeordnet; die Forschungsfragen sind nummeriert.

Dieser Band gehört zu einer ganz England umfassenden Reihe, welche mit der Unterstützung von English Heritage sowie der Förderung durch ALGAO South East herausgegeben wird. Ziel ist es, die Ergebnisse der archäologischen Untersuchungen in der Region zusammenzufassen, gleichgültig ob sie durch Unternehmer finanziert, rein akademisch, oder einfach örtliche Untersuchungen sind, und diese Ergebnisse in Zusammenhang mit den aktuellen Forschungen zu stellen. Es ist zu hoffen, dass dieser Band für alle nützlich sein wird, die zukünftige archäologische Arbeiten innerhalb dieser Region erwägen, planen, oder gerade durchführen.

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 Hampshire County Council
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 Southampton Council
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 Winchester Council
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members of the group, they provided very helpful suggestions during the different phases of the project and commented on draft documentation.

Thirty-eight contributors wrote the 40 period county contributions, seven writing more than one. They are acknowledged at the heads of the Resource Assessment chapters and we are extremely grateful to them for attending seminars and using their knowledge to summarise the resource of their county and helping to draw up the Research Agenda items.

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Most of the work that went into this project was undertaken by very busy people in their own time and is a testament to their dedication to the historic environment of the Solent Thames region. Other work was funded by English Heritage, county archaeological services in the region, university institutions, Oxford Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology. A number of institutions also provided venues for seminars at little or no cost and we would like to acknowledge Reading University, Reading Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, English Heritage and Oxford Archaeology.

The Research Framework was set up to engage a very wide range of people with an involvement and/or interest in the historic environment of the area, whether professionals or members of the public. Many attended seminars, read online documentation and sent in their comments and, to all these people, we would like to extend our thanks.

The volume was copyedited by Tim Allen, who would like to thank all those who supplied plates. The figures were produced by Gary Jones, and the plates and cover were compiled by Julia Collins. Translations of the summary were made by Nathalie Haudecouer-Wilkes (French) and Anna Hodgkinson (German).

We hope that the results published in this volume justify the work and enthusiasm that has been devoted to its production.

Oxford Wessex Monograph No. 6

The Solent-Thames region, comprising Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, is a recent combination of counties which provide a north-south transect across Central Southern England, and offer fresh insights into the past. Drawing upon county assessments, and written by eminent period specialists, this volume presents an overview of the current state of archaeological knowledge within this region from Palaeolithic times to the present day.

This region contains some of the most important sites in England: the remarkable early Mesolithic settlements along the Kennet valley, the hillfort at Danebury and its environs, the Roman town of Silchester and the cemetery of Lankhills, and the Saxon and medieval towns and cities of Southampton, Winchester and Oxford. Portsmouth houses arguably the most important ships in the naval history of Britain, and includes the best-preserved Tudor warship, the Mary Rose. Blenheim, seat of the Dukes of Marlborough, is a World Heritage site of international renown.

Following the assessments are a series of research aims and priorities both for specific periods and for wider cross-period themes, an indispensable tool for anyone contemplating research in this region. It is one of a series covering the whole of England published with the support of English Heritage.

