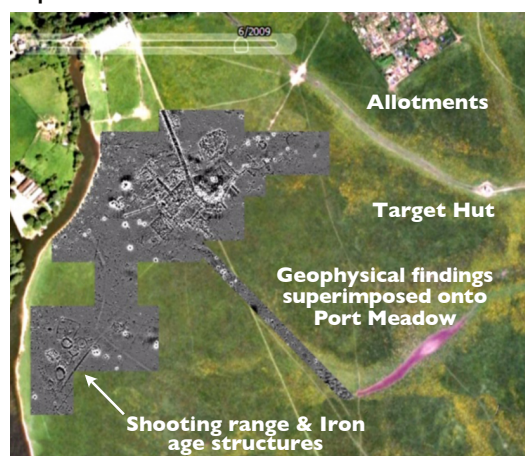
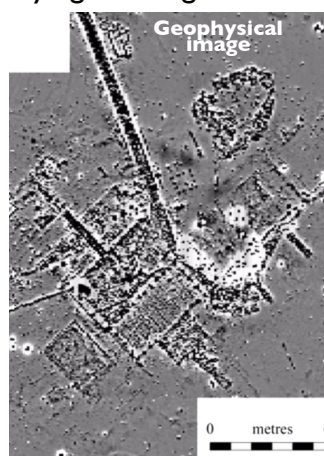


Wishing everyone in Wolvercote a very happy masked, socially-distanced and Covid-free Christmas

What a year we've had. But life has gone on and we must be thankful to all those key staff who have continued working – the Council staff, the bus drivers, the carers, and of course, the many health services workers who carried on, often putting themselves at great risk. But in Wolvercote there's one person in particular who we must thank – Carl in the Post Box. He has worked tirelessly seven-days-a-week throughout the lockdowns, always with a smile (of course he was smiling under the mask!).

A new look at the Wolvercote aerodrome

Most of us are probably aware that there was an airfield on Port Meadow during the First World War but how much is really known? Recently an extensive survey of the area was undertaken using the non-invasive geophysical technology (*something you may have seen being used in the Tony Robinson archaeology television programmes*). The survey was the final element of the Wolvercote WWI Memorial Project. At its peak the aerodrome had over 800 personnel. The mid-1918 oblique aerial photo shows such features as the access road (*built by the Council*), the hangars, a large corrugated iron-clad Flight Shed (*used for repairs*), vehicle park/yard, instruction and administration huts, but the geophysical technology revealed this and much more. It was unexpected to find evidence of the hangars, in effect just large canvas tents. Nothing remains above ground now, except the faint line of the road and a small concrete hut (*the Target Hut*) some distance away, used as a refuge for ground crew laying out targets in nearby Shiplake Ditch. Nearer the Thames, the survey located a firing range, used to adjust aeroplane machine guns before becoming a shooting range, and where there was a concrete circle nearby, used to calibrate aeroplane compasses. They were built, unknowingly, right in amongst pre-historic Late Iron Age structures and ditches. Most but not all the Iron Age features were known about from parch marks and past surface study by archaeologists, but more detail is now revealed. It is hoped that more of the Meadow, and possibly even some of the Common and Hook Meadow, might be surveyed in the future if funds could be



raised. The two pre-WWI civil aerodromes were understood to have been built on the triangular Hook Meadow field, by the railway line. It is tantalising to wonder what other aspects of our local history are waiting to be 'discovered' underground! Further information on the community project can be found on Facebook: www.facebook.com/wolvercoteww1memorial/. A short book - Oxford's Lost Aerodrome – available at the Post Box, provides more information about the aerodrome, the fatal accidents, some of the people and training activity undertaken there. All proceeds to the RAF Benevolent Fund. The book's Facebook page - www.facebook.com/lostaerodrome/ - has a number of podcasts covering various aspects of the aviation story

Work Mornings have been suspended until further notice



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