

No.5 - May 1978

Anyone wishing to contribute to the Newsletter should send details to 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EP (Tel: Oxford 43888) before the last Tuesday of each month.

ABINGDON, Barton Court Farm,

Bob Wilson is continuing to work on the analysis of animal bones.

As might be expected cattle; sheep, pigs and horse bones generally increase in size from Iron Age to Saxon times. With some difficulties, the sexing of cattle bones indicates that breeding or husbandry improvements occurred, but bone size differences may be exaggerated by varying farm economies and the associated slaughtering patterns. Bones from castrates and bulls are often larger than those from cows. At the villa castrated animals appear to be a prominent part of the cattle population and the metapodial size distributions resemble one from Kirkstall Abbey (Yorks) rather than those at Carstopitium Camp or Roman Porchester where cow bones appear to predominate. Ryder suggested that draught oxen were represented at Kirkstall and the same may be true of Barton - perhaps indicating an emphasis on arable farming.

Mark Robinson is now working on the last sample from Barton Court Farm, one from the deep well. It may contain the first recorded Roman example of a raddish! (the seed capsule)

BERINSFIELD, Mount Farm

Work has been concentrated on finishing the southern area of the site (mostly recording); completing the excavation of features in the area stripped by the bulldozer; and on starting the last main area of excavation. This part should be fairly straightforward since there are fewer features and little complicated stratigraphy. There is a large number (c.250) postholes, but otherwise only (c.15) gullies and ditches. Several of the postholes have been producing Iron Age pottery, some of it early, but as yet not discernible structures have emerged. One of the most interesting discoveries recently has been a number of plough-marks beneath ploughsoil overlying the main Bronze Age ring-ditch. The ploughsoil itself was stratigraphically sealed by Iron Age features. Re-examination of the profile of the Ring Ditch showed it to be very flat bottomed - this was not at first realised because of very clean gravel slip in the bottom which gave it the appearance of a more rounded profile. It is hoped to finish the excavation in about three weeks time!

BICESTER, Kings End Farm-

R A Chambers reports that development of the next two building phases of this housing estate are now under way. Following the discovery of a Romano-British settlement under Building Phase I last autumn, a magnetometer survey of the adjacent building land was undertaken before Easter this year by Basil Turton, an in-service trainee, and this provided exceptionally good results. The survey indicated a N-S trackway bounded by irregular ditched enclosures on either side, with some enclosures containing pits and occasionally hearths. The soil stripping and foundation trenches now being dug by the building contractor have verified much of the magnetometer survey and much Romano-British material is being recorded by the local group including an unusual glass finger ring.

BICESTER, 8-16 London Road

Following the demolition of nos. 8-16 London Road, mechanical trial trenching has enabled Richard Chambers to examine the archaeological stratigraphy remaining at this end of the Market Place. As with similar sites at Faringdon and Chipping Norton, two towns similarly sited on limestone, there was little accumulation of soils from past periods, and at nos. 8-16 London Road no medieval stratigraphy remained. The garden soils to the rear of nos. 8-16 had been much disturbed by the burial of late post-medieval rubbish. Beneath nos. 8-16 the only stratification was provided by three post-medieval pits, two of which extended beneath the present pavement.

Chinnor, Wainshill

Field walking the south-east part of the known villa site has produced a scatter of Roman pottery and decorated red tile. Field-walking by the now shrunken village at Wainshill has produced post-medieval and medieval pottery.

EMMINGTON

Members of the Chinnor Historical and Archaeological Society have recently field walked the ground to the south of the church, a field known as 'Court Close' in 1697. Much post-medieval, and late medieval pottery was recovered and occasional sherds of 10th-11th century St Neots type, early saxon grass tempered and Roman pottery was also recovered.

HARDWICK

Mark Robinson reports that preparations are going ahead for the forthcoming Hardwick excavation from 26th June to 12th August. Part of this excavation will include a training school, during the week commencing 22nd July to 5th August. There will also be an open day on 6th August 1978.

HENLEY-CN-THAMES, 91 Bell Street

Trial excavation on the proposed site of the late 17th century glass works by the Henley Archaeological and Historical Group directed by R A Chambers for the OAU, did not reveal any trace of the glass works. The out-building at the rear of no. 91 Bell Street, which might have housed the glass furnace was shown by excavation to have been built in the 18th century, too late for the glass works which had closed down before the turn of the 17th century. However, careful scrutiny of the documentary evidence and the limited extent of these trial excavations does not completely rule out the existence of a glass furnace in this area.

In the gardens to the north of this 18th century out-building nine trial holes showed widespread 18th-20th century disturbance of the soil right down to the natural gravel 1m below. However, beneath the 18th century out-building the soil was not so disturbed and traces of an earlier wattle and daub structure of late medieval or early post-medieval date (15th-16th century) were found. Several fragments of medieval pottery were recovered from beneath the compacted earth floor of this earlier building - apparently the first medieval pottery to be found in Henley.

A large number of clay-pipe fragments were retrieved from the excavations, some of which, along with other finds of pottery, stoneware and a glass bottle fragment, were used to date the out-building behind no.91. As far as is known at present there never were any clay tobacco pipe makers in Henley and so it is not surprising that the majority of the clay pipes from this excavation appear to have been brought up river from London.

OXFORD

Some 450 large pit groups have now been recorded from the Church Street site (site A), only 50 remain! Tabulation of the pottery from the structural phases is also in hand. This work is being undertaken by two JCP members of staff, Isobel Perry and Dene Bridges under the supervision of Maureen Mellor, who is also attempting to finalise the pottery report for All Saint's Church.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:

AYLESBURY, St Mary's Church

Brian Durham is carrying out salvage recording on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Museum during internal alterations to this thirteenth century church, possibly on the site of an ecclesia mentioned in Domesday. However, the present reflooring will remove only half the thickness of Victorian concrete screed, and the main archaeological interest will be in new services through the south transept, and mass footings to support the west end of the nave arcade.

Parish Survey Information

The day school "An Introduction to Flint Implements" tutored by Dr Derek Roe and Dr Mark Newcomer, held in Rewley House on Saturday 18th March proved very successful. An informal stage by stage demonstration of the many products which various methods of flint knapping produced by Dr Newcomer, followed by a summary of the typology of flint implements and an exhibition of original material from the University's collections which students were encouraged to handle, made a memorable introduction to the subject for those present.

The next Parish Survey Meeting accompanied by an afternoon on the Recognition of Post Medieval pottery, is on Saturday 27th May in Rewley House and commences at 10.00 a.m. There are still plenty of places available for anyone who may be interested in attending.

Other News

Geoff Williams of the Witney Society has sent in the following:

Ode to the Sunday Times on Their Advert for Metal Detectors

To: The Editor, Sunday Times

I write to you consumed with rage
At last week's advertising page.
Is your credit so overdrawn
From sponsoring Roman Fishbourne
That you advertise a metal detector?
Where's the ancient monuments Inspector?

I never thought I'd hear the sound
of you selling Britain by the £.
'To five feet depth' for investigation
But you've gone deeper in my estimation.
Silver and gold (the results of hoarding)
No mention of archaeological recording
Caleva, Virconium and environs
Without trace of soil horizons
Do you think your circulation will thrive
Offering success at £85.85?
Or will your readers be ripped asunder
By this moronic licence to plunder?
I can't think that you stand to gain
But my Sundays will never be the same
The legions could not have been better deployed
The last Institution has been destroyed.

To: Mr Geof Williams, Witney From: John Whitley, Literary Editor
Sunday Times

Dear Mr Williams, you at Witney
Share the views of me, John Whitley;
How on earth we come to sell
Such gimmickry I cannot tell
But I'll pass your poem across
To the Special Offers boss.
On one point only I insist:
It's nothing to do with journalists!

CALENDAR FOR MAY/JUNE 1978

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 15th May | The Oxford University Archaeological Society
present Prof. J V S Megaw MA FSA "Bone
Barbs and Botany Bay: excavations at the
site of Captain Cook's landing place."
Meetings are held in the Ashmolean Museum
at 8.15 p.m. |
| 17th May 1978 | The Abingdon Area Archaeological and
Historical Society present Mr J Steane
who will be talking on "The Effect of Medieval
Monasteries on the Landscape of Oxfordshire
and Berkshire". |
| 22nd May | The Oxford University Archaeological Society
present Mr M Robinson "Environmental
Archaeology". Meetings are held in the
Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 p.m. |
| 27th May | A Parish Survey progress meeting in the
morning at 10.00 a.m. followed by an after-
noon school on the basic identification of
Post-medieval pottery at Rewley House,
Wellington Square, Oxford. |
| 31st May-2nd June | "Planning and the Developing World"-
Organised in association with Oxford Poly.
Weekend School, details from Rewley House
Tel: Oxford 52901 |

3rd June

Parish Survey Day School on 'Use of Documents for studying Local History' Details from Rewley House, Tel: Oxford 52901

6th June

Oxford University Archaeological Society present Dr R Hedges "Scientific analysis of Artifacts". Meetings Held in Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 p.m.

12th June

Oxford University Archaeological Society's President will be speaking on 'Neolithic Flint Mines'. Details as above.