

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER

INCLUDING OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No.8 - August 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.

CHALGROVE

Excavation, under Philip Page's direction, of the moated medieval manor at Chalgrove is revealing more details of the plan of the main building. The large rectangular structure on the south-east corner of the main building is now thought to be a chapel. This conclusion is based on a comparison with plans of similar manor complexes and the presence of stained or painted glass in the vicinity. A small porch was added to the south side of the manor, with low walls running off east and west from its outside corners delimiting the northern extent of the courtyard.

Excavation has begun on the north side of the manor building and first impressions suggest that an extension was added to the north east corner. Immediately to the east of this is an area containing at least two ovens. These appear to have been housed in comparatively insubstantial structures.

Beneath the area occupied by the main building a substantial clean building of material has been noted. This is interpreted as upcast from the construction of the moat. This material acts as levelling around an earlier cobwalled structure sealed by the manor. Finds from beneath this layer have been tentatively identified as late 12th - 13th century.

Volunteers wishing to dig on the site should contact Philip Page in the evenings on Abingdon 27856.

EMMINGTON

The Chinnor Historical and Archaeological Society have now followed up their own publication Occasional Paper No 2 "St. Nicholas Church, Emmington, Oxfordshire: An Analysis of Church Registers" with their Occasional Paper No 1 "St. Nicholas Church, Emmington, Oxfordshire: The Churchyard Survey".

It is very pleasing to see that a churchyard survey has at last been completed and I hope that this example will spur other groups to complete their own surveys.

Copies of the Emmington churchyard survey (75 pence + 10 pence p&p) may be obtained by writing to the Hon. Secretary, Mr J M Bell, 71 Oakley Road, Chinnor, Oxon. OX9 4HR.

FARINGDON BYPASS

Mrs Church reports that continued observation of the soil stripping on the line of the Faringdon bypass has not revealed any new archaeological sites. The soil stripping has now been completed but some of the drainage ditches have yet to be excavated.

HARDWICK, MINGIES DITCH

In this second season of excavation, the hedge across the site was removed to enable the remainder of the inner enclosure to be dug, another area between the enclosure ditches was investigated and the extent of the field system traced. This work confirmed that the habitation area of the site was within the inner enclosure.

The work on the field system has shown that the northern 'antenna ditch' observed on the aerial photograph exists. The S.W. end of the ditch which forms the compound to the south of the enclosure had been recut and its line continued by a row of elongated pits towards the old course of Mingies Ditch, which was probably the western boundary of this field. A ditch forming a subdivision to this field was found to continue much further than shown on the aerial photograph.

A surprise discovery not apparent on the aerial photographs was a gap of over 10 m in the outer enclosure ditch on the western side to the north of the hedge. It coincided with the place where an old meander of Mingies Ditch made a loop up to the enclosure and was perhaps to enable animals to drink at the stream. Another unexpected discovery was a compound to the north of the enclosure formed by a ditch running eastwards from Mingies Ditch.

At least two more huts were found inside the inner enclosure under the hedge. One was up against the enclosure ditch on its eastern side and was post-built with a central hearth. It is likely that it was an early feature of the site for a gully which runs part of the way around it has its end filled in with gravel from the bank. Built so that they respected this gully were two more 4-post structures. There was a hut at the end of the gravel roadway but apart from the post holes for the doorway, little survived. A most curious 'boat-shaped' structure possibly formed a third hut. It had an aisle of posts and a stake wall.

HENLEY-ON-THAMES

Further trial excavations have begun on the possible site of the late 17th century Ravenscroft glass works. Mrs Cottingham reports that the work being carried out by the Henley Archaeological and Historical Society for the OAU have not revealed any sign of the glassworks.

NEW ROAD FROM OXFORD TO BIRMINGHAM (X40 EXTENSION)

Contractors have now begun digging trial pits to examine the nature of the ground beneath the line of the proposed X40 motorway extension. Some of these test pits are very close to known archaeological sites and Richard Chambers is maintaining a watching brief of these pits for the OAU. The work is expected to continue until March 1979. So far work has been confined to an area east of Banbury and no archaeological material has been recovered.

SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

The Rev. R. Moody reports that the housing development in Mutton Lane has not produced any further archaeological material.

SOUTH STOKE

Mrs Cynthia Graham-Kerr reports for S.O.A.G. that the demolition of an old cottage opposite the church at South Stoke has revealed two pieces of late medieval sandy ware pottery as well as post medieval.

WANTAGE

A human skeleton unearthed during building work has been rescued by the local society from an area known to have produced several other burials several years ago during the building of a new housing estate. These burials appear to be later Romano-British burials on the edge of a known settlement. No finds were associated with this latest burial although mattered fragments from other disturbed burials and several pieces of Romano-British pottery were found in the topsoil.