



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No 3 - March 1979

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send details to the above address before the last Tuesday of each month.

ABINGDON, Abingdon School

R A Chambers has recorded several Romano-British settlement features on the site of the new school theatre at present being built at the Abingdon School.

COWLEY, Johnson's Timber Yard, Watlington Road

Newly dug foundation trenches for a building at Johnson's Timber Yard were watched for archaeological material but revealed only 20th century rubble above clean, natural sand.

FARINGDON

The Faringdon Local History Group report that they are continuing to record the graveyard memorials in the parish church.

FARINGDON By-pass

Although no archaeological sites were revealed by earthmoving operations during the construction of the Faringdon by-pass, the Faringdon Local History Group are assembling the material which they found whilst field walking the proposed route of the by-pass to form a small exhibition which will hopefully form a window display in one of the offices in the town.

LAUNTON

The Launton Historical Society reports that it is continuing to record the graveyard memorials in the Parish Church - some of which have been removed since recording began last year. The Society also reports that the bad weather has caused the cancellation of much field-walking this winter.

LITTLE FARINGDON (Purton to Brize Norton Oil Pipe Line)

Richard Chambers continues to write up the excavation of the Scheduled crop-mark site. The pottery is now being analysed and the majority of the settlement features appear to belong to the very late Iron Age and Roman periods. One striking feature of the late Iron Age pottery which continued in use into the first part of the Roman period is that the majority of the shell gritted wares continue to be exceptionally coarsely made and the proportion of poorly potted vessels during the 1st and perhaps part of the 2nd century AD appears unusually high as compared to other early Roman period settlements in central and south eastern Oxfordshire.

OXFORD, 65 St Aldates

The main channel described in the last newsletter was excavated as deep as seemed safe, but produced only twelfth century finds. Just prior to backfilling, however, two and a half wooden bowls turned up in what seems to have been a thirteenth century culvert associated with the stonework of the 'bridge'. One of the bowls showed signs of a repair with S-shaped stitches of bronze strip.

The real entertainment started with a second trench, intended to locate the north bank of the channel. Having dug through seven feet of loose modern cellar backfill we encountered a concrete floor slab no less than two feet thick, which not surprisingly needed a compressor to make even a small window in it. Beneath were river silts closely laced with wattle stakes and fences, a real nightmare to excavated in an area 4 feet by 2 feet and 9 feet down. The wattles were presumably consolidating the north bank of the channel. However, the pottery was no earlier than the late eleventh century, so there is still no way of knowing whether the channel was natural or artificial, nor how the Saxon causeway related to it.

THAME, 4/5 High Street

Richard Chambers has inspected the site of the new Boots branch at 4/5 High Street, Thame. The foundation work and site clearance at the rear of the existing premises has revealed only Post-Medieval soil levels. No Medieval material was found within these levels.

WALLINGFORD, Ushers Brewery, Goldsmith's Lane

Richard Chambers reports that several trial holes have been dug prior to the redevelopment of the Laundry works, formerly Usher's Brewery, located within the south-western part of the town enclosed by the line of the late Anglo-Saxon defences. The five trial pits dug for the architects to examine the sub-soil load bearing capacity showed that the ground was either recently made-up or disturbed to a depth of 2 m by Post-Medieval rubbish pits. No Medieval or earlier pottery was seen. The excavation of several more trial pits will be watched later in the year after the still standing buildings have been demolished.

PARISH SURVEY INFORMATION

The Chinnor Historical & Archaeological Society have just produced their Occasional Paper No 3, "Emmington 1697". This paper represents several years spent collecting and collating documentary material which traces the progress of the new almost deserted village of Emmington. The village survived well into the Post-Medieval period and is well illustrated on an estate map of 1697. This paper is a fine example of what can be achieved by a group study of one parish.

The two earlier papers produced by the Society last year were:

Occasional Paper No 1, "St Nicholas Church, Emmington, Oxon - Churchyard Survey".

Occasional Paper No 2, "St Nicholas Church, Emmington, Oxon - An Analysis of Church Registers".

CALENDAR

Oxford University Department for External Studies

16-18 March: The Anglo-Saxon Landscape - in association with
Extra-Mural Department, Manchester

31 March - 1 April: CBA Group 9 Annual Report Conference -
Weekend School

7 April: Local History Day School - Documents II - to be held
at Easthampstead Park, Wokingham

Further details of the above courses are available from the
Course Secretary, Oxford University Department for External
Studies, Rowley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA.

U.C.L. Postgraduate Seminar: Medieval Archaeology 1979

14 March: Andrew Oddy (B.M.): 'Gold-working techniques in the
Dark Ages'.

21 March: H Brinch Madsen (Copenhagen): 'Metal-working at Ribe,
Denmark'.

Both the above seminars will take place at 5.00 pm in Foster
Court Room 21A.

Oxford Geology Group

15 March: Dr H C Jenkyns, "Cretaceous Stagnation and Miocene
Glaciation".

19 April: FILMS from the Open University and Shell.

Lectures are held at 8.30 pm on Thursdays in the Department of
Geology, Parks Road, Oxford. Visitors are welcome at meetings
at a charge of 20 p per lecture.

Didcot & District Archaeological & Historical Society

4 April: Excavations at Mount Farm, Berinsfield - Mr G Lambrick

Meetings held in All Saint's Parish Hall, Foxhall Road, Didcot
at 8 pm on the first Wednesday of each month.

Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society

21 March: Dr M Gelling - Place names and charter boundaries of
Abingdon

18 April: Miss J Price - Glass and glassmaking in Roman Britain.

Lectures held in the lecture theatre of the John Mason school,
Wootton Road, Abingdon at 7.30 pm.