



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No. 11 - November 1979

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OXFORDSHIRE

Abingdon, Nuffield Way Allotments

The Vale of White Horse District Council is currently laying the services to the latest extension of the surrounding industrial estate. The Abingdon Society is keeping a watch over the trenches and topsoil strip. This work should not interfere with the Romano-British cemetery on the northern edge of the site but this will come under threat from the development of industrial buildings next year.

Abingdon, Peachcroft Housing Estate

Several fragments of bronze metalwork including an enameled bronze brooch have been found during building operations on the Peachcroft housing estate on the northern side of Abingdon. The brooch has been examined by Dr Martin Henig of the Oxford University Institute of Archaeology who reports that it probably belongs to the 2nd century AD.

Abingdon, 60-64 West St Helen's Street

Richard Chambers reports that two sections were cleaned and examined on this site to obtain general information on the nature and extent of the pre-Medieval occupation levels. As with other sites in the vicinity no Anglo-Saxon period occupation was recognised. Apart from some residual Early Romano-British and some Medieval pottery sherds the majority of the material was Post-Medieval. The first section revealed a 20th century sewer-pipe but the second section showed that there had been much disturbance of the top metre of soil during the Post-Medieval period. Both sections were obtained by removing cellar walls and cleaning the resulting vertical soil face.

Bicester, Lower Home Close

Richard Chambers has continued the watching brief on this housing development which has continued to reveal extensive Medieval occupation debris. A watch will be kept on this site until the development has finished.

Bicester, Kings End Farm

Richard Chambers reports that little further material is coming from the site at present although the building work continues to be watched.

Checkendon, The Devil's Churchyard

Richard Chambers reports that the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group are continuing to excavate a third section across the outer earth-work to the north-east of the ditched enclosure.

Brize Norton, Norton Ditch

R A Chambers reports that re-cutting the stream called Norton Ditch which forms the parish boundary between Brize Norton and Lew has revealed a stone-bottomed ford about one-third of a mile south of Abingdon Lane. The site of this ford lay forgotten beneath two feet of black silt. Some earthworks from the ford remain in part on the south-eastern side.

Brize Norton

R A Chambers reports that Romano-British pottery has been collected by the farmer from the site of the deserted medieval village of Astrop. This is the first time Roman period pottery has come from this site.

The farmer has also reported that a field to the south of Astrop farm displayed circular crop-marks last summer.

Chalgrove, Harding's Field

Excavations at the moated site at Chalgrove are continuing at fever pitch to try and answer all the outstanding questions about the site before it is closed down and buried in order to preserve it. However, one new discovery is being investigated. This is the presence, in section, of part of a substantial stone wall, which suggests that there is another chamber attached to the north-east corner of the manor.

It is with great pleasure that I can report that we have at last got some good aerial photographs of the site, taken from the kite. These together with the kite will be on display at the Open Day on November 18.

Chinnor

Richard Chambers reports that work has begun on the finds from field-walking the Wain Hill Romano-British settlement and villa site which

lies on the border of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Recently part of the site has been planted with trees which will prevent any further field-work. An examination of aerial photographs has shown that the Romano-British settlement and possibly the pre-Roman settlement were more extensive than had been previously thought. Some mid-medieval pottery has also been recovered during the field-walking. As yet nothing else is known about the medieval settlement.

Islip and Woodeaton

At the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit a review of the finds from field-walking in Islip and Woodeaton revealed that new Early Iron Age and Roman period sites had been discovered. The fieldwork undertaken by Janice Cole and Sue Crisp in Islip, and Jeff Wallis in Woodeaton has shown yet again the value of intensive fieldwalking. These results along with other field-work will be written up for future publication.

Oxford, Iffley Rectory

When the rectory was last restored in 1962, one of the sixteenth century fireplaces in the north block was shown to have been built into a broad blocked arch, suggested as twelfth century work (J. Ashdown, 'Iffley Church and Rectory', Programme of R.A.I. Summer Meeting 1978, p 64). The present restoration included removal of six inches of ground to increase the below-floor space, and the opportunity was taken to do some digging. The result was a surprise, in that there was a presumably external stone lined drain and floors of a previous building with a robbed wall, all within the south room. What this means is that the so-called twelfth century opening makes very little sense in terms of demonstrable medieval buildings beside it, and is best regarded, as many have suggested, as a relieving arch for the large fireplace. However, there is clearly a medieval building there, perhaps an earlier north wing related to the thirteenth century features of the south block, and it is hoped to see more of it in further excavations by the constructor. Incidentally, the rubbish beneath the floorboards produced two Nuremberg jettons, some dolls house tableware, a wooden lace bobbin and a wooden sundial face of 26 mm in diameter. (B.G.D)

Radley

Members of the Abingdon Society have excavated a Bronze Age burial in Tuckwell's gravel pit in advance of gravel extraction. The upper levels of the ring-ditch surrounding the burial had already been destroyed by centuries of ploughing although a complete pottery vessel was recovered from a centrally dug shallow burial pit. The pot, broken and in a friable condition, was consolidated and lifted by conservators from the County Museum, Woodstock.

Wallingford, Old Brewery Site, Goldsmith's Lane

R A Chambers reports that the Wallingford Society have undertaken a watching brief of alterations and development to this site which lies at the junction between the High Street and Goldsmith's Lane. Very little earth-moving is required for the redevelopment of this site and thus the potential for exposing new archaeological material is limited.

PARISH SURVEY NEWS

Notes on the Population of Emmington 1086-1914 (with particular reference to the period 1841-71). C.H. & A.S., Occasional Paper no. 4., (1979).

The Chinnor Historical and Archaeological Society has just produced its fourth occasional paper which is a detailed and well written examination of the village population throughout the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. Seven appendices provide a detailed and interesting statistical breakdown of the Parish Baptismal Registers and of the views of Frank Pledge from 1712-1720. The 19th century Census Returns and Enumerator's Lists are examined in detail with a section giving comparative statistics. For instance the large number of wives and daughters engaged in lace-making in their cottages prior to the marketing of cheaper, often more highly patterned, machine-made lace is clearly indicated. The next two appendices deal with the land holdings shown on the 1841 Tithe Award and the degrees of literacy found in the local population from 1801 to the outbreak of the First World War. The whole is concluded with a section on the voters' lists from 1903-12 which provides a limited economic and social summary of the village in the decade prior to the First World War and the wind of change which so rapidly affected country life from that time.

STAFF NEWS

The Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit would like to announce the arrival of their new Finds Assistant. Gwynne Oakley left the Northampton Development Corporation and joined the Unit at the beginning of October. She is now busy putting finds in order for handing over to the Museum.

CALENDAR

- 7th November: Janet Wilson: The Uses of Parody in Skelton's Early Verse (Graduate Seminar in Medieval Studies, 5 pm at History Faculty Library).
- 9th November: Textiles Meeting. (TWHAS, 2.30 pm Woodstock County Museum).
- 9-11 November: 4th Anglo-Saxon Symposium - Burial in the Saxon Period (Details from Course Secretary, OUDES, Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford).
- 12 November: Dr David Wilson: "The archaeology of the Vikings in the British Isles" (OUAS, 8.15 pm at Ashmolean Museum).
- 14 November: Simon Ellis: Archaeology and Urbanism in the Western Mediterranean (Graduate Seminar in Medieval Studies, 5 pm at History Faculty Library).
- 17 November: Dr Russell: Population and Disease in History and Prehistory (Berks Archaeological Society, 2.45 pm in Lecture Theatre No. 3, London Road, Reading Univ.).

- 19 November: Brian Davison: The origins of the Castle in England (OUAS, 8.15 pm at Ashmolean Museum).
- 21 November: Stuart Airlie: The Carolingian Secular Aristocracy (Graduate Seminar in Medieval Studies, 5 pm at the History Faculty Library).
- 26 November: Prof John Evans: Archaeology in Malta: the last 25 years (OUAS, 8.15 pm in Ashmolean Museum).
- 28 November: Hilary Davies: Images and Truth - Some Medieval Attitudes (Graduate Seminar in Medieval Studies, 5 pm at the History Faculty Library).
- *see below
- 30 November - The Making of the Buckinghamshire Landscape (to be held
2 December at Missenden Abbey, details from Course Secretary, OUDES, Rowley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford).
- 3 December: Harold Mytum (President OUAS): Ring-pins and Ring-forts: the Irish Iron Age (OUAS, 8.15 pm at Ashmolean Museum).
- 5 December: Julia Smith: Celts and Franks in 9th Century Brittany (Graduate Seminar in Medieval Studies, 5 pm at the History Faculty Library).
- 8 December: Local History in Berkshire (to be held at Bulmershe College, Reading, details from the Course Secretary, OUDES, Rowley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford).
- 15 December: Leslie Cram: China and Europe - Past and Present (Berks Archaeological Society, 2.45 pm at Lecture Theatre No. 3, London Road, Reading University).
- * 28 November: Dr Micaael Fulford, BA, FSA, Dept of Archaeology, University of Reading - "Recent Excavations at Silchester" (OA & HS, 5.30 pm in the Ashmolean Museum).

FARMOOR REPORT - SPECIAL OFFER

George Lambrick and Mark Robinson's report, "Iron Age and Roman riverside settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire" has now been published as the second in the Unit's monograph series of major excavation reports. It provides the first thorough archaeological and biological analysis of the Iron Age and Roman riverside landscape and farming pattern. An early Iron Age settlement on dry ground was succeeded around 120 BC by short-lived seasonal farmsteads on the floodplain practising specialized pastoral agriculture. In the Roman period a more permanent field system and small farmyard were established in which pastoral agriculture was still the principle concern.

152 pp; 41 Figs; 14 Pls.

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