



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

Vol VII, No. 6 - November 1980

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send details to the above address before Friday, 2nd January 1981.

OXFORDSHIRE

Begbroke, pipe line

Richard Chambers reports that trenching to lay a new pipe line to the south of Yarnton Lane will cut across several cropmarks of which some circular marks suggest ploughed-out Bronze Age barrows. There is cropmark evidence from the Weed Research Organisation land on the north side of Yarnton Lane which suggests late Iron Age and/or Romano-British settlement. A watching-brief will be maintained.

Blewbury, Churn

Steve Ford a graduate of Reading University has dug two trenches across the Grim's Ditch. Both produced sherds of pottery of Early Iron Age date well stratified in primary ditch silts.

Blewbury, Woodway Farm

Gareth Thomas of S.O.A.G. has recorded several archaeological features during the construction of a horse training track on the Downs. Construction of the 3m wide track which runs alongside existing gallops required the ground to be dug to a depth of 0.3-0.45m with the exception of where the track crossed Grim's Ditch where the ditch fill was lowered 0.6m to provide a firm foundation. One small sherd of probably pre-Roman period pottery came from the upper ditch fill. Of the other features revealed by the track construction none contained any dateable material although one, south of Grim's Ditch, contained much burnt clay and charcoal.

Clanfield, Burroway - see the Upper Thames Valley Survey.

Checkendon, The Devil's Churchyard

Richard Chambers reports that work on this Iron Age enclosure by the S.O.A.G. has continued with a section across the outer earthwork in order to provide dating evidence. This section will be the last in the current investigation.

Didcot, A4130 Didcot Link Road

Richard Chambers reports that field work to detect deserted settlement sites which may be affected by the construction of this new road will be undertaken by the Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society this winter.

Didcot, The Rectory

Richard Chambers reports that trial excavations by the D&DH&AS have continued in the grounds of the Old Rectory under the supervision of Alan Briggs. It is now known that the Roman period settlement known to lie some 150m to the east does not extend over the land immediately surrounding the Victorian Rectory. The latest trial trenches in the orchard between the rectory and the parish churchyard have revealed stratified pottery from the medieval village. Work continues.

Eynsham, Merton Close

Geoff Williams reports that there was no archaeological evidence for settlement on this site at any period. Geoff has maintained a watch over construction work on this site which lies partly on a gravel terrace and partly on lower, marshy ground.

Faringdon

The Faringdon and District Historical and Archaeological Society have completed the survey of All Saints Parish Churchyard and have put a plan of the graveyard and a card index in the church for visitors to refer to. The graveyard had around seven hundred visible gravestones and the earliest readable one dated from the middle of the seventeenth century. A newer burial ground remains to be done.

The Society has also surveyed a part of the Free Church's graveyard which is due to be levelled in the near future, and the rest of the graveyard will be completed as that comes under threat.

For their latest project the Society is undertaking the transcription and indexing of the Parish Registers and has already completed three.

Frilford, the Noah's Ark Survey

Richard Hingley's work is continuing this autumn on a detailed field by field survey of a 7km² area around the Noah's Ark Iron Age/Roman temple, Frilford. 1km² has been walked in addition to the c4km² already walked, but fewer sites have been discovered than in the previous two years.

Hatford - see the Upper Thames Valley Survey

Kidlington, Moat Cottage

Richard Chambers reports that the third season of excavation on this medieval manor site has now ended. This season trial trenches exposed the remains of several phases of

substantial medieval stone-built structures and a large quantity of medieval pottery was recovered. It appears that the site was not occupied before the late thirteenth century. Several fragments of clay roof and decorated floor tile have been found.

The Unit is extremely grateful to Ian Meadows who spent a second season supervising the excavation and also to all the volunteers without whose help the excavation would never have taken place.

Little Wittenham, Sinodun Hill - see the Upper Thames Valley Survey

Radley, Peripheral Road

G. Jones and J. Wallis of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society report that a 60m trench has been dug along the route of the road through Ford's Field over a series of rectangular enclosures and trackways seen on St. Joseph's photo AM17. As suspected some of the ditches proved to be of Roman date. Altogether five ditches should have been seen in section but only two were positively identified as Roman. These were both similar in size 1.2m wide by 38cms deep and containing grey ware and some Oxford colour coat ware. Feature 1 produced 1 coin of Gratian 375-378 AD. The ditches are cut into a clayey loam subsoil and bottoming into 2nd terrace gravel. The other three ditches are shown to be badly damaged by later medieval ridge and furrow. Several furrows were identified as shallow broad clayey loam features producing medieval potsherds mixed with Roman sherds. A Roman bronze knee brooch probably of mid 2nd century date was found within one of the furrows. The complex here is most certainly linked with the Barton Court villa lying 450m west, although exactly what the relationship is cannot be interpreted as yet. Fieldwalking the route along the base of Barton Court field revealed at least two other Roman ditches and a scatter of late Neolithic flint flakes and scrapers in a distinctive red/brown flint and one possible palaeolith.

Stanton Harcourt, Dix Pit

Richard Chambers reports that as a result of further topsoil stripping and observation it is now clear that cropmarks in the south-west corner of the former airfield represent late Iron Age to Early Roman period farmsteads spaced out on either side of a road. A watch will be maintained over this gravel pit until all extraction has come to an end.

The various people involved in excavations on this site over the last year are now writing up their portions of the future excavation report.

Thames Floodplain Survey

George Lambrick's survey covering the Thames valley from Goring to above Cricklade is now underway. A gazetteer of all known cropmarks, find spots and other sites has been compiled and these are now being visited to obtain further information on the state of preservation, land use and dating. A general study of land use of the floodplain, drawing on information supplied by the Nature Conservancy Council is also being undertaken in the hope of establishing the rate at which the floodplain is being ploughed up. After the initial checking the more interesting sites will be surveyed in more detail, and it is hoped to collect environmental samples from some to build up a more detailed picture of them. An assessment of the factors controlling the discovery of sites will be made, though this cannot be as detailed as Geoff Williams' study of the Clanfield area.

Thrupp

G. Jones and J. Wallis of the A.A.A.&H.S. report that the interior area of Feature 28 enclosure has now been totally cleared. Two more pits have been located and emptied. One of these is twice the capacity of other pits on site and shows indications of re-cutting its diameter being 1.7m and 75cms deep. Both pits produced the usual Iron Age bead rim sherds, cobbles and cattle bones. Also located within the interior are two large post holes 2.4m apart and 41cms deep - function unknown.

Investigation of Feature 5 hut gully has produced some interesting dating evidence. Clearing one of the gully terminals produced 1 cwt of cobbles, probably representing a post packing, and a large portion of an Iron Age globular bowl with swag impressed ornament. This is almost identical in character to a bowl from Frilford (Harding pl. 67E). Since excavating the gully more 'Frilford ware' has been discovered in the entrance to hut 3.

At last one Neolithic feature has been recognised. A circular pit 1.2m diameter and 39cms deep. This was situated in the middle of the entrance to hut 3. The filling of the top 20cms was a fine red/brown loam containing a few decorated sherds burnt quartz cobbles and the business end of a ground stone axe probably of Cornish origins. The base of this feature consisted of a dirty gravelly loam containing large fragments of Grooved ware pottery, a horn core, a fragment of antler, thirteen flint flakes most with secondary working and a petit tranchet derivative arrow.

The Upper Thames Valley Survey

Richard Hingley has walked several sites as part of this survey. A new Early Iron Age site has been located at Wood Eaton - this with the areas of occupation located by Jeff Wallis seem to indicate an extensive Early Iron Age settlement on this site.

A few sherds have been collected on the Iron Age valley camp site at Burroway and additional features have been excavated at the Hatford Iron Age site (see previous Newsletters). Several sherds, including a decorated sherd of globular bowl, have been found on the ramparts of Sinodun Hill Camp, Little Wittenham.

Wallingford, 9 St. Martins Street, Regal Forecourt

Brian Durham reports that in its final stages this TWHAS/Unit project transformed itself from 'valuable experience' into one of the most useful urban Saxon sites in the county. The 'square' pit mentioned in the last Newsletter turned into a nine foot deep well, probably originally lined with wicker. Behind the wicker had been poured a slurry of puddled topsoil, which had set so firmly that the top part had survived the collapse of the lower shaft, and must have been a very effective well-head.

Beside the well and possibly contemporary was an eleventh century sunken-floored building with its wall planking surviving. The cleanliness of its clay floors suggests that it was used for a specialised purpose, perhaps weaving. Its west end seems to have been abandoned and backfilled subsequently, and just the east end refloored with planks. Later a second floor seems to have been laid on joists, because horizontal timber voids were found, one of the apparently notched into a main wall post.

The combination of these two structures means that we must consider St. Martins Street as pre-Conquest, and possibly even as an original part of the burghal street plan.

Woodeaton - see the Upper Thames Valley Survey

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Lechlade, Claydon Pike

David Miles and Simon Palmer report that excavations on this extensive and important site are restarting, again under the auspices of the M.S.C., at the beginning of November. Work will concentrate on exposing a complete building platform in the heart of the Roman settlement.

The third 'island' of Iron Age settlement to the east will also be subjected to investigation in the course of the following months.

Volunteers - if any exist in mid-winter - will be particularly welcome although no transport facilities are available. Please contact David Miles (Woodstock 811772) in the evening or leave a message for Simon Palmer during the day at the Unit (Oxford 43888).

UNIT NEWS

Cards appropriate to Christmas, but suitable for all occasions, are available from 46 Hythe Bridge Street. One design, which is red on cream, is based on a small figure of a horse and rider found at Dorchester. The other design, deep lilac on grey, is based on a saintly pilgrim's badge found at Chalgrove. The cards (including envelopes) cost 10p each or 90p for a pack of ten cards. Mixed packs are also available. If you would like to purchase some cards, please write to :

The Secretary, Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EP. Please state clearly which design you would like and enclose a large stamped addressed envelope. Cheques should be made payable to the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit.

'981 Newsletter subscriptions. There will be no increase in the Newsletter subscription this year. Please send £1.50 to the Secretary, Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EP. Please would anyone wishing to cancel their subscription inform the Secretary of the Unit as soon as possible.

CALENDAR

LUNCHTIME TALKS 1.15-1.45 on Wednesdays at Museum of Oxford, St. Aldates.
"A WANDER DOWN THE HIGH" A series of talks about Oxford's High Street. Doors open at 1.00 p.m. Space is limited so we advise that you arrive in good time to guarantee a seat. Coffee is available.

5th November NARROW FRONTAGE ON THE HIGH: The Architectural development of All Souls College - J.S.G. Simmons, Fellow and Librarian, All Souls College

12th November MARKETS AND MERCHANDISE - Malcolm Graham, Local History Librarian

- 19th November SHOPS AND SHOPPING - David Vaisey, Keeper of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library
- 26th November THE BUILDINGS OF HIGH STREET - John Ashdown, City Conservation Officer

MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES, Oxford Town Hall, Tuesdays, 7.30p.m.

- 17th February SAXON OXFORD - Tom Hassall
- 24th February LIFE AND SUDDEN DEATH IN MEDIEVAL OXFORD - Julian Munby
- 3rd March CITY GOVERNMENT IN TUDOR AND STUART OXFORD - Alan Crossley
- 10th March LEWIS CARROLL'S OXFORD - Mavis Batey
- 17th March RIOT AND CELEBRATION IN VICTORIAN OXFORD - David Vaisey

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Lecture Programme 1980-1981

- 20th November Dr. D. Keene - Reconstructing Medieval Cities
- 5th December Christmas Social
- 8th January Mr. J. Pickering - Aerial Archaeology in the Midlands
- 12th February Professor S.S. Frere - Roman Dorchester
- 12th March Mr. David Miles - The Lechlade Project
- 9th April Mr. James Bond - Abingdon Abbey Estates
- 14th May Mr. George Speake - Anglo-Saxon Jewellery
- 11th June Open Evening

CHINNOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Programme for the 1980/81 Session
(Meetings are usually held on the first Friday of each month at the Adult Education Room, Chinnor Library Block, Station Road, Chinnor at 8.0 p.m.)

- 7th November Eric Harmsworth - Chinnor in the Past
- 5th December Reports from the Work Parties and General Society Business
- 9th January Malcolm Graham - The Local History Department of the County Library
- 6th February John Bell - Symon Howlett, Yeoman of Emmington
- 6th March ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by Reports from the Work Parties and the film "24 Square Miles"
- 3rd April John Blair - Some Recent Work on Medieval Buildings in Oxfordshire

1st May John Davis - The Australian Connection
 5th June Reports from the Work Parties and General Society Business
 3rd July Open Air Meeting, details to be confirmed later

For details of Membership, please contact the Hon. Secretary : John Bell,
 71 Oakley Road, Chinnor (Tel. K. Blount 52459)

WEEKEND AND DAY SCHOOLS, Organised by Oxford University Department for External
 Studies, Rewley House, Wellington Square

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| 1st-2nd November | Local History Certificate, Weekend I |
| 8th November | Church and Chapel Records for Local Historians - first of 4 linked day schools |
| 14th-16th November | Medieval Forests, Parks and Woodlands |
| 21st-23rd November | History, Custom and Folklore |
| 29th November | Small Finds and the Archaeologist - day school to be held at the Department of Nuclear Physics |
| 5th-7th December | Buckinghamshire 1600-1900 - to be held at Missenden Abbey |
| 6th December | Local History Linked Day School II |
| 12th-14th December | Historic Rural Landscape Management - to be held at New College in association with Historic Landscapes Steering Group |
| 9th-11th January | Rural Settlement in Roman Britain - to be held at New College in association with the CBA |
| 10th January | Church and Society in the Middle Ages - day school to be held at Bulmershe College |
| 10th-11th January | The Study of Placenames |
| 17th-18th January | Archaeology Certificate Weekend I |
| 23rd-25th January | Archaeology of Brittany |
| 31st January | Local History Linked Day School III |
| 7th February | Publishing Local Studies - day school |
| 14th-15th February | Archaeology Certificate Weekend II |
| 14th-15th February | Ancient Gemstones |
| 28th Feb-1st March | Local History Certificate Weekend II |
| 13th-15th March | Archaeology of Mycenae |

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| 21st March | CBA Group 9 Annual Report Meeting - day school |
| 28th March | Local History Linked Day School IV |
| 3rd-5th April | Medieval Water Management |
| 24th-26th April | Industrial Archaeology |
| 27th-30th April | Planning and the Historic Environment |
| 15th-17th May | Urban Archaeology - in association with Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit |

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

FINALLY ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT WOULD LIKE TO WISH
ALL THE READERS OF THE NEWSLETTER A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR