

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send copy to 3 Luther Terrace, Oxford (Tel. 43888) before the last Tuesday in each month.

TOWNS SURVEY

Historic Towns in Oxfordshire: a survey of the new county, edited by Kirsty Rodwell, was launched in conjunction with the presentation of local authority EAHY awards on Wednesday 1 October. Copies of the volume can be obtained directly from the Unit at £4.00 plus 65p postage, or at bookshops for £5.00. Prices of individual offprints are shown on the order form accompanying this newsletter.

EXCAVATION

Abingdon, Stert Street. This excavation is being carried out by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society. The walls of an 18th century building with a cellar aligned at right-angles was preceded by two earlier stone phases, both of medieval date. A medieval hearth, which contained a fragment of a coin, may be associated with the two early phases. The hearth was cut by a pit which contained much building debris, probably associated with the demolition of one of the medieval buildings. Post-medieval features include two stone-lined cess-pits, one of which was sealed by a layer of bricks. The cellar fill dates mostly from the demolition of the Abbey Cafe in the 1960s. A few earlier finds have been recovered however. These include a length of railway track, a rat trap, two tin baths, a metal sign with the inscription, 'Hathaway's Tea Rooms' and about one dozen large earthenware jars. It is thought that the cellar may have served some 'ritual' function.

Oxford, The Hamel. The Unit/OUAS excavation at The Hamel was closed down at the end of September. Christ Church have kindly allowed the Unit to return to the site at any time during the next five years. As volunteers left to return to school and colleges, full-time members of the Unit turned out to help on the site. Notable finds include a group of 12th century leatherwork and three sherds of prehistoric pottery exposed in features which will be excavated in a future season. Mark Robinson's work on waterlogged material from the site should provide an insight into the environment of the area during the 12th century.

Thrupp. David Miles excavated a number of Roman Ditches threatened by gravel extraction.

OBSERVATION and RECORDING

Ascott-under-Wychwood-Chilson Sewerage Scheme. The main pipeline installation is now almost complete, but observation by Geoff Williams is continuing on the trenches for the feeder pipes, one of which should cut into the bailey of the castle at Ascott Earl.

Cassington-Witney pipeline. After 18 months observation by Geoff Williams, the installation of a 500 mm water main from Burleigh Lodge (Cassington) to Witney has now been completed. Most of its route was on either heavy clay or alongside previously disturbed road edges and no new sites were discovered; however it was noted that in at least two instances, field boundaries coincided exactly with the change in geological formation, offering perhaps a subject for further study.

Cunnor Hill By-pass. Preliminary work on the By-pass has not uncovered anything of archaeological significance.

Ducklington. Richard Chambers recorded Iron Age occupation at Ducklington and a Roman site at Finstock.

Wilcot. Richard Chambers, with George Lambrick, surveyed part of the deserted village of Wilcot. The earthworks were threatened by ploughing, but the threat has since been averted.

PUBLICATION

Hardwick By-pass. This site has now been drawn and written up by Geoff Williams with Richard Chambers, who is arranging for a study of the pottery and other artefacts.

Preparation of reports continues on the following sites:

Farmoor Reservoir and Abingdon, Ashville Trading Estate. The Iron Age pottery from these two sites is being examined.

Abingdon, Barton Court Farm and Berinsfield, Wally Corner. Mary Harman has come to the Unit to examine the skeletons from these two sites.

Oxford. Maureen Mellor, Trish Roberts and Rachel Askew are working on Oxford finds.

The environmental specialists will be reporting on the carbonised grain, animal bones and waterlogged material recovered from sites excavated during the past 18 months.

Plans and finds from various sites are being drawn by Eleanor Beard, Wendy Lee and Robin Spey.

FUTURE EXCAVATION

Warborough. Subsoiling by a local farmer uncovered a lead coffin in the area of a known cemetery. A small excavation in the early part of October will set out to date the feature and discover the effect that subsoiling and subsequent ploughing has had on the site. The excavation will be directed by George Lambrick, who has recently completed a guide to agricultural techniques for archaeologists.

Berinsfield, Wally Corner. David Miles will be returning to this site later in October to undertake trial trenching and observation of stripping prior to gravel extraction. It is hoped that more will be learnt about the settlement attached to the pagan Saxon cemetery uncovered there last year.

A34 Extension, Hagbourne Hill. A geophysical survey will be conducted by the Research Lab for Archaeology and Mike Parrington on this site with the help of a number of trainees attending the first year of the OUDES/Unit In-Service Training Scheme.

OTHER NEWS ITEMS

Abingdon Herald. Mike Parrington has been asked to submit copy fortnightly to the archaeology column of the Abingdon Herald. Anybody wishing to contribute up to 250 words on any aspect of public education in archaeology should contact Mike Parrington, who will edit the copy and forward it to the 'Herald'.

Development Control Maps. Richard Chambers has been working on the Development Control Maps for West Oxfordshire, which are now drawn up.

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

10 - 12 October	Weekend conference on 'Oppida and Urban Origins' OUDES, Rewley House.
Tuesday 14 October	The Organization of Archaeology in Eastern Europe, OUDES, 7.30 p.m. Rewley House (30p)
Wednesday 15 October	Open Freshmans Meeting: an introduction the the Oxford Univeristy Archaeological Society and its activities, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum.
Thursday 17 October	Crispin Pain, Keeper of the City Branch of the Oxford City and County Museum, 'A New Museum for Oxford', OAHs, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum.
Monday 20 October	Professor Colin Renfrew, 'Excavations at Quanterness in Orkney and the problem of the megaliths', OUAS, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum
25 - 26 October	Planning: an Introduction for Archaeologists, OUDES, Rewley House.
Monday 27 October	Neil Cosson, 'The Ironbridge project', OUAS, 8.15 p.m. Ashmolean Museum.
Tuesday 28 October	Unit Staff Meeting
Monday 3 November	Lord William Taylour, 'Excavations at Ayios Stephanos, Laconia', OUAS, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum.
Monday 10 November	Peter Reynolds, 'The Theory of Experimental Archaeology', OUAS, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum.
Monday 17 November	M.U. Jones and W.T. Jones, 'The Mucking, Essex: Crop-mark sites, including two Saxon cemeteries' OUAS, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum.
Monday 24 November	Miss Janet Davidson, 'Hill-forts and Hunter-gathers in New Zealand Pre-history', OUAS, 8.15 p.m. Ashmolean Museum.
Tuesday 25 November	Unit Staff Meeting
Thursday 27 November	Michael Aston, Somerset County Archaeologist, 'The Stonesfield Slate Roofing Industry of Oxfordshire', OAHs, 8.15 p.m., Ashmolean Museum.