

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER
INCLUDING OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No. 9 - September 1976

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send copy to 46 Hythe Briske Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP (Tel. 43888) before the last Tuesday of each month.

When the Oxfordshire Parish Survey began it was intended that there would be a series of occasional newsletters for those field workers participating. The series was so occasional that only one progress report was ever actually produced. It is still felt however that the Parish Survey needs a vehicle in which to circulate the news and activities of its participating bodies which often appear to work rather in isolation. It is therefore intended to print a section entitled 'Oxfordshire Parish Survey News' as part of the Unit's monthly newsletter. The subscription to the Newsletter is £1 per annum to cover the cost of postage only and for this subscription more than one copy may be obtained if required.

ABINGDON - Ashville Trading Estate

The Ashville site reports are largely complete except for some publication drawings and the bone report.

Bob Wilson has been pondering over the sexing of the cattle bones. An apparent absence of female horns implies the presence of polled animals since the pelves and the metapodials indicate that many of the herd were cows. Castrates in oxen or steers seem relatively common but probably were less so at Farmoor, perhaps suggesting that more arable farming occurred at Ashville.

ABINGDON - Stert Street

Mike Parrington reports that this excavation will be completed in a week's time. One ditch of possible Roman date is the earliest feature identified so far.

ABINGDON - Barton Court Farm

Work has begun on processing the pottery from this site.

BENSON - Mill Lane

More pottery and part of a pair of Roman tweezers have been recovered on this site and an Iron Age ditch has been identified. The Iron Age coin found there previously is of the British King Addedomaros, c late first century B.C.

FARMOOR

Mark Robinson reports that the insect and seed samples from this site have now all been counted and had their identifications checked. An experiment has been carried out on the analysis of modern grains of barley for pollen, showing that pollen grains are enclosed in the husks. This enables the result of pollen analysis on the content of a Roman pit at

Farmoor to be interpreted and may provide a method of detecting grain storage pits. A visit to the Environmental Archaeology Laboratory at the University of York proved most useful.

KIDLINGTON - Moat Cottage

Trial trenching has just begun on the moated site at Kidlington under the direction of Richard Chambers with the assistance of Gosford Hill School and the Kidlington and District Historical Society. So far only post-medieval structures have been discovered but over the next few weeks it is hoped to demonstrate whether or not the site was occupied during the medieval period. The work relies completely on volunteers and any assistance will be gratefully accepted. Anyone who is interested should 'phone Mr. Chambers in the evening at Oxford 511216.

OXFORD - The Hamel

Maureen Mellor has processed some 3,000 sherds to date from the Hamel excavations. This pottery was recovered from the 1975 trial hole and the extension to the main excavation. The pottery ranges from a late twelfth-early thirteenth century date to a late fifteenth-early sixteenth century date. Work will now begin on the pottery from the main excavation. Work has continued with drawings of finds from this site.

Pottery recovered from 13-18 Queen Street, 33-34 St. Giles and Peckwater Quad, Christchurch has also been processed.

OXFORD - St. Aldates

The recognition of a spool of fine bronze wire from a Phase 10 floor at St. Aldates reinforces the view that musical instruments were being made here. A fragment of silver from a twelfth century context has been shown to have a motif characteristic of an extremely rare irregular coin of Stephen, and it is possible that this may be confirmed.

OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

Since the last Parish Survey Newsletter the Survey's liaison officer, Clive Hart, has left the county for a full time archaeological post in North Derbyshire. On behalf of the Survey we would like to thank him for all the spare time he has given to the project. Richard A. Chambers of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit has since taken over from Clive Hart and he is now available to give assistance to field workers. He can be contacted during the daytime at Oxford 43888 and during the evening at Oxford 511216. The Field Section of the Oxfordshire County Council Department of Museum Services may also answer daytime queries, Monday to Thursday, Tel. Woodstock 811456.

To allow both Richard Chambers and group representatives to assess the progress of the Survey, a meeting was held at the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, on 12th September last. The meeting provided an opportunity to introduce John Steane who has recently been appointed to the position of Keeper of the Field Section of the Oxfordshire County Council Department of Museum Services, the position vacated by Don Benson when he accepted the Directorship of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust. With the arrival of John Steane the Museum will once again be able to play an active role in the Parish Survey.

Several important developments have stemmed from the meeting.

1) That active Parish Survey groups should each arrange for one person within their group to consult with their respective Parish Clerks fortnightly for any planning applications that may have arisen and to check where this may have historical or archaeological implications, e.g. house building on a field of permanent pasture containing earthworks from a shrunken village. Tom Hassall at the Unit or John Steane at the Museum should be informed. It is important to show the greatest respect to property and landowners if and when site inspections are deemed necessary, and to obtain permission for access.

2) It is proposed to hold three Survey Progress meetings each year in September, January and April at which progress can be monitored, and common problems discussed. Two people will be asked to speak in detail on their own particular aspects of parish studies and their findings.

3) Two day-schools, one on Hedgerows, Ancient Pastures and Woodland, and a second on the recording of Oral Traditions are to be arranged.

4) Revised check lists, new book lists and field guides are in preparation.

We hope that each survey group in turn will produce a summary of its activities and discoveries for the Newsletter to be submitted to Mr. R. A. Chambers, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, by the third week of each month. It is thought best to commence by inviting contributions from groups in alphabetical order if possible.

We feel that this Newsletter will facilitate the inter-communication of current programmes, results and ideas, often of use to others working on the same subjects elsewhere in the county.

RADLEY - Barrow Hills

Mike Parrington is supervising the recently commenced excavations on this site. So far one of the ditches of Barrow 2, and the 1945 excavation trench have been located.

SOUTHERN FEEDER GAS PIPELINE

Richard Chambers has continued a watching brief over the Southern Feeder Gas Pipe trench and several new sites have been recorded including yet another late Iron Age/Romano-British settlement on the pipe trench north of Chalgrove.

A second moated site at Chalgrove has been surveyed in cooperation with John Steane and James Bond of the Oxfordshire County Council Department of Museum Services following its discovery during an aerial photography mission in the summer.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE - Towcester

George Lambrick reports that work is now complete at Towcester. A well metalled Roman road and the fragmentary remains of stone walled Roman buildings survived the depredations

of several large medieval and later Roman pits. The road may be that running between Alchester and Towcester. It had ditches on each side and several distinct surfaces, one a well-preserved layer of hard packed, fine cobbling with the ruts made by carts still clearly visible. One building probably existed while the ditches were open, but it is doubtful whether the site was part of the town at this stage. This road runs at an angle to Watling Street and it is possible that they may converge at the gate of an earlier settlement or fort at the north end of the present town. Traces have also been found of a large timber structure, fronting onto the street at a later date, but except for a row of large post settings along the edge of the street, too little survived to tell what this was. Traces of other buildings appear not to respect the street at all and with one of these was associated a large square well built of stone blocks dated by the large group of almost complete Samian and coarse ware pottery to the later second century.

OTHER NEWS ITEMS

The Countryside Commission has recently launched its Demonstration Farm project and Kingston Hill Farm, Kingston Bagpuize has been chosen as the pilot scheme. The purpose of the project is to study the total environment of a working farm and attempt to illustrate the comparability of economical modern farming and environmental factors.

Botanists, zoologists, landscape architects, archaeologists, planners and agricultural experts are co-operating on the working party to draft a management scheme for the farm. The Unit and County Museum Field Department are in the process of carrying out an archaeological and historical study of the farm and its landscape. Kingston Hill Farm is particularly interesting as it includes a number of Romano-British sites and is well covered by Saxon Charters. There is a lot of fieldwalking needed over the winter and anyone wishing to help should contact David Miles at the Unit.

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CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

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| 12 October | OUDES - Lecture by R. J. Bradley. 'Introduction: Sites and site territories', 8.15 p.m. Helwys Hall, Regents Park College. |
| 16 October | Dr. John G. Evans. An illustrated lecture on Environments in Prehistoric Art. The County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury, 3.00 p.m. |
| 18 October | OUAS - Dr. C. B. McBurney. 'Recent Paleolithic Developments in the USSR. Ashmolean Museum, 8.15. |
| 19 October | OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'Artefacts and Activities', 8.15 p.m. Helwys Hall, Regents Park College. |
| 25 October | OUAS - T. G. Hassall. 'From the Vikings to the Wehrmacht: Oxford's Defences through the Ages', Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m. |

- 26 October OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'The Stability of Settlement', 8.15 p.m., Helwys Hall, Regents Park College.
- 26 October Unit staff meeting
- 27 October CBA with OUDES - Professor Charles Thomas, "After Rescue - what next?", 8.15 p.m., Regents Park College.
- 1 November OUAS - P. J. Fasham. 'Recent Work on the M3'. Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 2 November OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'Colonisation and Clearance', 8.15 p.m., Helwys Hall, Regents Park College.
- 8 November OUAS - Dr. D. J. Keene. 'Archaeology and Documents in Early Medieval Winchester'. Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 9 November OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'Arable and Pasture', 8.15 p.m., Helwys Hall, Regents Park College.
- 13 November OUDES Local History Committee of the Rural Community Council and the Oxford Archaeological and Historical Society. A day meeting on the Local History of Oxfordshire, University Museum, Parks Road, 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
- 15 November OUAS - S. McGrail. 'Prehistoric and Early Medieval British Boats', Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 16 November OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'Hunting, Gathering and Fishing', 8.15 p.m., Helwys Hall, Regents Park College.
- 22 November OUAS - Dr. Anne Ross. 'Some Ancient Myths of Celtic Britain.' Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 23 November OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'Transhumance.' 8.15 p.m. Helwys Hall, Regents Park College.
- 29 November OUAS - Presidential Address and elections. 8.15 p.m. Ashmolean Museum.
- 30 November OUDES - R. J. Bradley. 'Some Patterns and Some Problems.' 8.15 p.m. Helwys Hall, Regents Park College.
- 30 November Staff meeting