

OAU NEWS

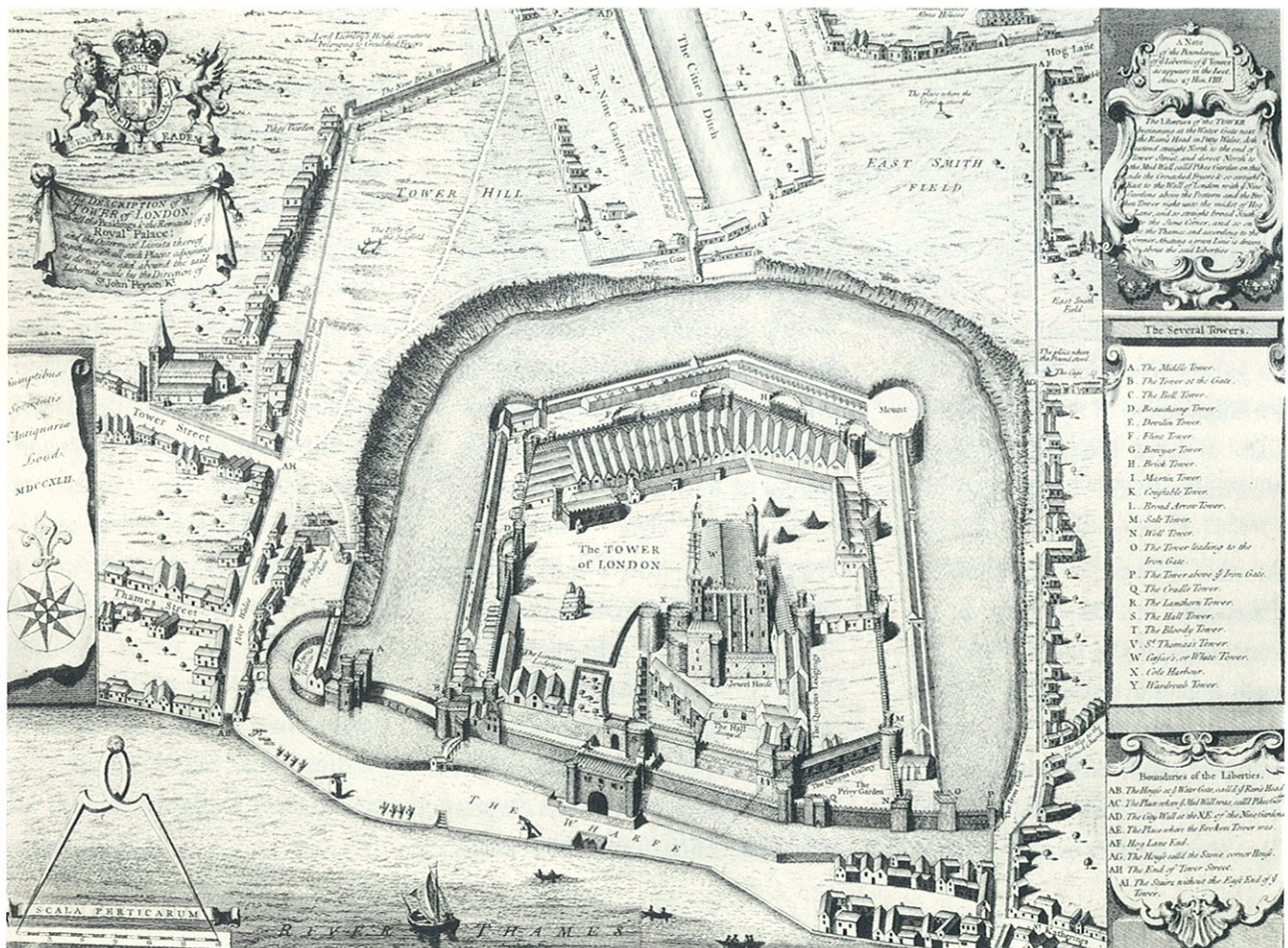
September 1993

ARCHAEOLOGISTS SENT TO THE TOWER...

Modern archaeology is usually far removed from the romantic Indiana Jones image so beloved of the popular media. If we are "boffins" in anything, it must be planning law and Management-speak. Occasionally, though, a project comes along which catches the

imagination and fires the enthusiasm of everyone involved. One such project, providing archaeological services to the Historic Royal Palaces Agency (HRPA), has recently been awarded to the OAU. The HRPA manages five sites in London, including

Hampton Court and Kensington Palaces and the Tower of London. The latter is one of only ten World Heritage Site in England; its long history makes it one of the prime archaeological monuments in the country.



16th century survey of the Tower by Haiward & Gascoyne, with permission of HRPA.



Roman masonry found at the Tower

The Unit has already been active at the Tower of London and Kensington Palace, while projects are also being planned for Hampton Court. At Kensington, Julian Munby and Ric Tyler have been recording important details of wall and picture hangings in the late 17th century King's Gallery. They have discovered a cartoon which probably forms part of William Kent's original design scheme for the gallery. The work has also traced the subdivision of the gallery into a suite of three rooms for Princess Victoria in 1835.

At the Tower of London, an excavation has taken place at the north edge of the Inner Ward. The most impressive discovery came at the Bowyer Tower, where an extremely well preserved fragment of the Roman town wall was found. Two stone courses overlay an offset

string course, three tiles thick. The Roman masonry had been integrated into the 13th century construction of the Inner Curtain wall and the Bowyer Tower, but had lain hidden since then.

The excavation also found parts of several late medieval buildings, post-dating the construction of the Inner Curtain wall. The masonry, mostly consisting of chalk blocks, probably belonged to buildings in the extensive range of storehouses shown on Haiward and Gascoyne's survey of 1597.

The Bowyer Tower was partly rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1841. The conflagration consumed much of the curtain wall in this area but the most serious effect of the fire, however, was the total destruction of the Grand Storehouse, an elegant building dating from 1688 which

had replaced the late medieval storehouses. The subsequent construction of the Waterloo Barracks covered the remains of the Grand Storehouse so that it, like the Roman wall, disappeared from view.

The excavations found parts of the north wall and staircase of the Grand Storehouse. The brick-built walls had been all but obliterated by Victorian and modern service trenches in several places, but enough survived for us to interpret the overall plan. This evidence should allow us to reconstruct its plan, using documentary sources and contemporary surveys to fill in the gaps.

Further work will be taking place in the near future at the Tower and Hampton Court Palace.

Graham Keevill

THE WHITE HORSE HILL PROJECT: YEAR 3

The third phase of the White Horse Project took place in June this year thanks to financial support from W.H. Smith Ltd. In previous seasons we have examined the Horse itself and the hillfort of Uffington Castle. This year the emphasis was on cemeteries close to the Horse. In 1856 and 1857, Martin Atkins dug on White Horse Hill and found burials of various periods. Unfortunately he did not record where he dug and a detailed report was never published.

After the sketchy descriptions had been studied and the ground examined by geophysical survey, two areas were chosen for examination.

The first was a ring-ditch 16 m in diameter located on the hilltop immediately above the Horse. This proved to be a much disturbed barrow, Early Bronze Age pottery was found in the ditch together with later material. Grave cuts and fragments of human bone were found within the area of the ring-ditch. It seems likely that this is the site excavated by Atkins where he found Anglo-Saxon and Roman burials. The objects from the 1857 excavation have now been tracked down to the British Museum. The most unusual find, from the latest excavations, was a book by Sir Walter Scott published in 1831 and entitled *Demonology and Witchcraft*.



The Uffington White Horse and the long mound below it

The second site was on the slope of the hill NW of the Horse. A distinct long mound by the footpath is usually referred to in the records as a 'pillow mound' implying a medieval date. In fact it proved to be the prehistoric barrow in which Atkins located a stone cist and an 'Ancient British Urn'. The mound was also used for late Romano-British burials. Nine graves were found; one with a decapitated inhumation. Some of the graves had

been excavated by Atkins; who it seems lifted the skeletons, kept the skulls and replaced the rest of the bones in the grave: an interesting glimpse of 19th century research aims and excavation technique.

David Miles

A GLUT OF BRONZES ON THE DOWNS

Earlier this year a woman walking her dog on the Downs, above Waylands Smithy, spotted several shiny objects in the ploughsoil. They proved to be twelve Late Bronze Age axes and rings. She reported her discovery to Wantage Museum and the local landowner. As a result David Miles, OAU's director, visited the site one Sunday morning with the landowner, the discoverer, and a metal detector. Within a few minutes more bronzes were found in the ploughsoil. Within a few days English Heritage had agreed to fund an excavation.

This showed that the hoard, now totalling over 90 objects, was that of a bronze worker and had been buried next to a wooden structure, probably a Late Bronze Age round house. The hoard had been recently dragged to the surface as a result of deeper ploughing for straw incorporation. With English Heritage's support the OAU will return to the site in September and October to clarify the character and extent of the prehistoric settlement. This is a rare opportunity to establish the context of an English Bronze Age hoard.

David Miles

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CRICKET

The OAU cricket team enjoyed a moderately successful season under Paul Booth's captaincy, winning two matches, losing two and with one draw. The highlight of the year was a trip southwards to play a team of Wessex archaeologists, when the OAU made a record total of 211. Wessex just hung on for a draw and were 79 for 7 when time ran out.

David Wilkinson



IN-SERVICE SCHEME DEAD: LONG LIVE THE DIPLOMA

For the past 18 years the Oxford In-Service Training Scheme, run by the OAU with English Heritage and the Oxford Department for Continuing Education, has provided one of the most successful professional courses for British archaeologists. Now the In-Service Scheme has come to an end. But all is not over, it is replaced by a revamped course: the Oxford University Diploma in Field Archaeology. Further details can be obtained from :

Dr Hazel Dodge, OUDES
1 Wellington Square
Oxford OX1 2JA.

C.B.A. SOUTH MIDLANDS REGIONAL GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Michael Heyworth (C.B.A. Information Officer) will be giving a lecture entitled 'C.B.A. Past, Present and Future' on Saturday 9th October 1993 at Castle Priory, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Further details can be obtained from :

C.B.A. South Midlands Regional Group
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Tel (0908) 312475

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