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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING  
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

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Contributions to the next Newsletter should be sent to the above address not later than Monday, 13th February 1984.

Gloucestershire

FAIRFORD/LECHLADE: CLAYDON PIKE - Simon Palmer and David Miles

Excavations continued into the autumn at Claydon Pike with further fruitful results. Much of the main settlement area reported in the last Newsletter has now gone but during the commercial earth moving a miniature votive axe was recovered from the late Roman circular shrine.

Work is now completed on the smaller subsidiary platform to the west. Here traces of at least two rectangular (c. 7m x 4m) timber buildings have been recognised. Occupation and activity here appears limited to the Early Roman phase.

The platform itself is divided by successive boundary ditches into three main areas: the south-east area opposite the rectangular shrine was enclosed but only disturbed intermittently by pit digging. North of here lay the buildings with many associated pits and gullies which contained large quantities of slag and coal in addition to normal domestic refuse.

The third area lay on the west side and contained a series of small (3m-5m diameter) gullies and three wells. Steps leading down into one well produced a re-used column base.

Trial trenching in the paddocks on the north-west side of the settlement located a small cemetery. This was based around a rectangular enclosure (7m x 5m) which contained a single east-west inhumation. Attached to the west lay a later enclosure with an east-west inhumation cut by a north-south one. A further seven graves and possibly fragments of two more lay around these enclosures. Although no grave goods were present the cemetery seems likely to be contemporary with the later Roman 'villa' phase of the site.

Excavations have drawn to a halt now and only a small portion of the site remains to be investigated: an area just west of the rectangular shrine which was occupied in the early Roman phase. Work may start here in the early spring.

Fieldwalking had indicated a Roman settlement with possible stone buildings at the south-east end of the field and the gravel company had agreed to begin their programme of extraction at the north-west end in order to allow maximum time for excavation. Apart from the evidence of Roman occupation the site is of interest because it was probably linked by road to the adjacent settlement at Claydon Pike, and may well be at a crossing point on the River Colne. It also seems likely that preservation of organic material would be good due to the low lying nature of the site, which probably also accounts for the lack of cropmarks in this field.

Following topsoil stripping, at the north-west end a number of linear features were unexpectedly revealed. These were plotted and appeared to form an arterial drainage system running from south-west to north-east which fed into a single ditch, which in turn emptied into a natural peat deposit. Cutting across the drainage system was a pair of parallel ditches, believed to be a trackway. Pottery from the drainage ditches suggested a late Iron Age, early Roman date for their use.

Oxfordshire

ABINGDON: TWELVE ACRE DRIVE - R A Chambers

Parts of two human skeletons were uncovered by workmen digging a gas pipe trench in Twelve Acre Drive north of the junction with Radley Road (Grid reference SU 516 985). There was no dating evidence associated with the skeletons. Given the known archaeology of the area both burials probably belong to the Roman period.

BICESTER: LAND NORTH OF BICESTER HOUSE - R A Chambers

During September the undergrowth covering this 2 ha (5 acre) site was mown. This enabled the earthwork survey to be completed. The survey showed that the earthwork remains were more extensive than previously realised. A series of platforms and low mounds indicated former buildings. On several platforms surface spreads of limestone suggested building rubble. Two trial trenches excavated in early summer (Jume, Newsletter, p.2-3) showed that many of these mounds and platforms may have been created by building rubble overlying floors and foundations. However the outlines of two single-cell buildings were clearly visible as earthworks and not obscured by rubble. These two buildings may only have possessed stone cill walls, the superstructures being built in timber.

Traces of ridge and furrow ran down to the river which bounds the site to the north-east. These building remains clearly represent an expansion of medieval settlement over existing arable land.

CHALGROVE: MANOR FARM - Phillip Page

Further renovation work has continued on the late 15th century manor house at Mill Lane. Recently the hall has been opened up to its original ground plan by the removal of a Victorian corridor on its west side. The remains of the original timber screen, separating the hall from the screen's passage, have been revealed, and this indicates that there was one doorway into the hall at the western end of the screen's passage.

With the removal of the timber floor in the hall it was hoped that some remains of the original central hearth might have been discovered. Unfortunately in order to lay the timber floor up to 25cms of the underlying stratigraphy had been removed. The stratigraphy had remained intact within the confines of the corridor in the hall, and a trench here revealed a sequence similar to that which was found in the buttery, to the north. It provided further evidence for a late 15th century date for the construction of the house. Within the debris in the hall one piece of decorated floor tile has been found. This rather tantalising fragment could be of comparable date with the initial construction, it certainly was not earlier, and was nothing like the decorated medieval floor tiles from the excavated site at Hardings Field, Chalgrove.

CLANFIELD, BURROWAY: George Lambrick

As part of the Floodplain survey, in August, two small sample trenches were excavated on the site of the Iron Age fort at Burroway Brook. The first survives as a low broad bank standing to a maximum of c. 1m with a possible hornwork entrance on its North East side. Auguring along a transect across the bank and ditch and a little way into the interior revealed some of the stratigraphy and showed the ditch to be over 1.5m deep. Waterlogged material was not encountered in auguring, but this may be because the deepest part of the ditch was not examined.

One trench on the crest of the bank showed it to consist largely of burnt clay and gravelly soil, in places with signs of burnt clay in situ, though no definite traces of an internal timber framework were found. A pit had been cut into the bank at the point excavated. At the base of the bank resting on the old ground surface was a series of planks or logs laid across the line of the bank which had been charred. As the old ground surface was not burnt the charring of the planks must have been caused by the burning of the material above, probably again implying a rampart consisting of a timber framework infilled with soil.

The trench in the interior located an occupation layer about 10 to 15cm thick sealing a post-hole which produced Iron Age pottery. Over these was a further 15 to 20 cm of clay alluvium effectively acting as a buffer between these well preserved deposits and the modern ploughsoil above. Both beneath the occupation layer and beneath the bank the old ground surface was a non-calcareous silty clay whereas the alluvium above contained a few aquatic mollusc shells. This is consistent with evidence elsewhere that the pre-Iron Age floodplain was drier, with much of the alluviation occurring only from the later part of the Iron Age onwards.

This well preserved and obviously important site is not scheduled as an ancient monument and is under arable. As it happened it was about to be subsoiled for the first time. This was predicted by the Unit two and a half years ago when it was suggested that the site should be scheduled to protect it from such damage. Fortunately the excavation was done just in time to stir the DOE into action and there is now a good chance thanks to the owner's cooperation that the site will not suffer the worst effects of modern cultivation.

HENLEY: HENLEY RECTORY - Brian Durham

The Rectory occupies two-thirds of an acre of riverside ground next to Henley Bridge, with a frontage on Hart Street opposite the church. The Oxford Diocesan Parsonages Board are to build a new house for the rector in the garden of the existing 15th century building. The Unit has joined with Anne Cottingham and the Henley Archaeological and Historical Group to investigate this focus of the medieval town. A full account will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter on completion of the excavation.

NEWINGTON: NEWINGTON HOUSE - R A Chambers

Christopher Maltin has reported finding medieval pottery whilst digging a well and "civil war" earthworks for the Sealed Knott Society on his land south of Newington House. Field work has now revealed the earthwork remains of several medieval buildings. The South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group will clean and record the archaeology revealed by the "civil war" ditches.

Field walking ploughed land near to the house has revealed a rich legacy of medieval occupation. One area in particular appears to be of manorial status with stone founded buildings and decorated late medieval floor tiles, of which one pattern of floor tile also survives in the parish church. Ploughing has revealed spreads of red clay roof tile from collapsed buildings. Several pieces of glazed ridge tile have been recovered.

NORTHMOOR: WATKINS FARM - T G Allen

A second phase of excavation took place in September and part of October. Part of the interior of the main Middle Iron Age enclosure was stripped by JCB, including the area just behind the east entrance. This has produced both Iron Age and Roman ditches, gullies and pits, and a spread of postholes, though no building has been identified as yet. It seems that a barrier just inside the main enclosure ditch, either a bank or a hedge, must have survived into the early Roman period, as a concentric discontinuous ditch circuit was dug c.3m inside the enclosure ditch in the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. However, later Roman ditches cut across the enclosure ditches.

Salvage was also carried out on a purely Roman series of enclosures, wells and boundary ditches 250m to the North East. From a preliminary glance at the pottery, occupation seems to have been late 1st and 2nd century AD. This area produced a number of waterlogged finds, including a pair of leather shoes and part of a wooden bowl. It is hoped to continue work next spring when the next area is stripped.

OXFORD: BLACKFRIARS (LUTHER TERRACE) - George Lambrick

Early in the summer further excavations were carried out on the site of the Oxford Blackfriars Priory. Salvage recording of the area of the Nave was completed, the main result of which was the observation of a complex mass of masonry attached to the North Aisle which had been intended to show up the building which from this and previous observations was clearly suffering severe subsidence round the west end and north side of the Nave. As in the preceding trial excavation no sign of a "North Nave" (or transept) was seen. Other walls of the Nave, South Aisle and cloister were recorded. No more detail of the path across the cloister garth or its entrance to the cloister walk was seen but a possible buttress just east of this was noted.

In addition to this work a trial trench was dug south of the priory buildings on the site of the Unit's former offices in Luther Terrace. Evidence of the site's final use before the Victorian houses were demolished consisted of two old fire buckets and, more significantly, two discarded soil samples from the 1973 Grim's Ditch excavation! The excavation was intended to locate the Blackfriars waterfront to see whether there was evidence for a jetty or landing stage or other waterfront structure. The area of interest was delimited by a possible waterfront building known from earlier excavations to the north and the 19th century river channel at the bottom of the Luther Terrace garden c. 40 metres to the south. The trench located an additional channel which had been silting up in the medieval period and two ditches parallel to the channel, closer to the priory. All these features were not finally filled in until after the Dissolution, but there was no evidence of any waterfront construction. Redeposited soil and clay over the natural alluvial ground surface where it was not cut away by ditches or channels contained late medieval pottery and this was covered by what appears to be a bank between the two ditches. A small area of ground between the two river channels to the south of this may have been the tip of a small eyot. A series of broad shallow slots in the top of this overlying built up levels of gravel and clay, may have been the remains of some sort of staging, but they contained post medieval finds and stratigraphically clearly have no connection with the friary.

Work is now in progress on examining the pottery and tile from all the post-1976 Blackfriars excavations as part of the preparation of a complete report early in the New Year.

OXFORD: BROAD STREET, THE CLARENDON BUILDING - Maureen Mellor

The floor of the south east basement of Hawksmoor's building has been dug out to a depth of 1m to remedy recent subsidence, and Newcombe Beard's gang have collected a group of mid-late 17th century finds.

The group includes many near complete vessels, some of which cannot be paralleled from local excavations, Oxford clay pipes, types A and B and a marked pipe stem 'John Taylor' known to have been working in Oxford c. 1660-1700 AD. A stoneware spindle whorl was also recovered. This assemblage is very similar to pottery recently recovered from a ditch in Magdalen Deer Park (see below) and material recovered from the Bodleian Tunnel in 1939. Comparatively few pit assemblages, dating to this period, are known from excavations in Oxford. Were the town defences being used for rubbish disposal during the second half of the 17th century, so eliminating the need

for rubbish pits in the citizens gardens?

OXFORD: EXETER COLLEGE, CITY DITCH - Brian Durham

The college's architect reported the discovery of 'the city wall' during trial excavations. Strangely it was running north-south (!) and on the wrong line, but the visit was not wasted. The wall turned out to be revetting the lowered 'areas' around the Old Ashmolean Building of c. 1670. By this time the city ditch would only have been partially filled, and it looks as if this stone wall was dug down to the bottom of the ditch and backed with a brown clay to act as a 'coffer dam' during the construction of the new building.

OXFORD: MAGDALEN COLLEGE - Brian Durham

A new gas supply through the Beer Park from Longwall Street to the New Buildings exposed large post-medieval features which might be ditches. The smaller one was with domestic rubbish of the second half of the 17th century, and they could both be outliers of the town defences of the Civil War.

New stanchion trenches in the college's medieval kitchen exposed floor layers and possibly fragments of an oven.

OXFORD: OSENEY ABBEY PICKFORD DEPOSITORY - Brian Durham

The Unit has been watching excavations for the new extension to Research Machines on the riverside areas of the abbey. A timber and stone revetment may be a continuation of the 12th - 13th century waterfront found in 1982. Massive north-south walls run up close to this oblique waterfront and there are areas of tile pavement closely related. The intermittent distribution of the builder's trenches makes it difficult to reconstruct a building but it seems to conform with the pattern worked out last year, ie that the abbey expanded south-westwards in the 13th century onto a small island, and the intervening channel was later infilled and built over.

OXFORD: PORT MEADOW - George Lambrick

As part of the Floodplain Survey four more small sample trenches were excavated through two Bronze Age and two Iron Age ditches. As expected from auguring there was much more evidence of waterlogging in the bottoms of the Iron Age ditches than at comparable levels in the Bronze Age ones, providing support for the suggestion made on the basis of evidence from other sites that there was an increase in the level of the permanent water table in the Iron Age, probably accompanied by flooding, which may be attributable to greater clearance of woodland in the catchment area at or after the end of the Bronze Age.

No artifacts were recovered, but part of the skeleton of a young person was found in one of the Bronze Age ring ditches on the northernmost edge of the Meadow.

OXFORD: ST CLEMENTS, CIVIL WAR DITCH - Brian Durham

The site of the former British Restaurant is being redeveloped as Flats for the elderly, and half the site proves to be on the line of a massive ditch. No dating was recovered, but it can be none other than the defensive line which protected St Clements and Magdalen Bridge in the Royalist defence of Oxford in 1645. Loggan shows a double bastion to the south surviving in 1675, which was presumably the area excavated by Peter Fowler and David Sturdy at Magdalen College School in the 1950's. The second bastion would logically be across the line of the modern London Road, and the 17m wide, 3.5m deep ditch exposed in October gives a measure of the imposing works which would have faced the Parliamentary forces approaching from Headington.

OXFORD: WELLINGTON SQUARE, REMLEY HOUSE - Brian Durham

Contractor's excavations for the new library have filled in the background to a familiar building. The natural gravel had been dug away uniformly to below basement level, and infilled with rubbish of the 1st quarter of the 18th century. The area is shown as ploughland on Loggan's map (1675) but by 1750 it is very disturbed (Taylor's map). The implication is that it became a gravel quarry after 1675, was partially infilled by 1750, but may not have been properly levelled until after it had become part of the grounds of the workhouse at Rats and Mice Hill (Wellington Square) in 1772.

RAOLEY: BARROW HILLS

1. The Neolithic Features - Richard Bradley

A group of up to 25 students drawn mainly from Reading University investigated three elements of the Barrow Hills complex between 7 September and 5 October.

The first of these was a causewayed ring ditch of the type made familiar by the post-war excavations at Dorchester-on-Thames and normally interpreted as early henge monuments. This example was probably a round barrow rather than an enclosure. Only one convincing burial was discovered - an unaccompanied cremation outside the widest causeway. The lower layers of the ditch contained enough charcoal for radiocarbon dating, whilst the entire ditch filling was sealed by a group of flints of late third/early second millennium bc date and a few infant bones. The plough soil over the enclosure contained a transverse arrowhead.

The second feature to be excavated was a double ditched rectangular enclosure. This proved to be of four phases of construction - a rectangular fenced enclosure succeeded by a low long barrow which had gone through three phases of building and rebuilding. The original mound was roughly oval and surrounded by a ditch on three sides. The open end was defined by two very large post holes aligned on a single grave beneath the end of the barrow. In later phases the open 'forecourt' to this barrow was closed off and the mound was extended, before the entire construction was enlarged by the digging of a second, outer, ditch. The lengths of both ditches closest to the grave contained a series of deliberate deposits: Abington ware and flint implements on one side of the barrow, and used and unused antler on the other side. The



grave contained two crouched burials, both adult males, one with a fine polished flint blade and the other with a jet belt slider, only the third to be found in an excavation in southern England. One end of the grave had been disturbed by a Saxon grubenhaus which contained part of a large leaf-shaped arrowhead - perhaps another element of the original grave assemblage. Taken together, the pottery and other artefacts from the site suggest that this long barrow was contemporary with the later use of the Abingdon causewayed enclosure nearby.

The last feature to be excavated was a multiple circle of pits originally discovered from the air and interpreted as a Neolithic 'Woodhenge'. Sadly, this turned out to be the remains of a short-lived tree plantation dating from about 1890, a date confirmed by the pottery from our excavation. Ironically, at one point these tree holes came within 20cm of a Neolithic pit containing Abingdon Ware, a flint axe, a scraper and part of an antler pick. But that only made it worse!

## 2. The Bronze Age Features - Claire Halpin

Continuing excavations at weekends the Abingdon Archaeological Society has completed the excavation of barrow 1 and the small adjacent ring-ditch.

Barrow 1 did not produce more burials in addition to the central cremation and possible secondary Saxon cremation reported in the September Newsletter. This is in spite of investigation of archaeological features within the barrow and extensive ditch digging. The evidence for pre-barrow tree clearance is confirmed.

An 'apparent' secondary burial within the small ring-ditch, and excavation, produced ceramic material pre-dating the central burial. An all-over-corded beaker was found in association with a fragmentary burial. The latter consisted of a couple of leg bones and a vertebrae.

The ring ditch and central burial post-date the fragmentary burial by c. 200 years. The ditch, which had a short causeway, produced no securely stratified finds. The central burial proved exceptionally fine. It consisted of a male skeleton, c. 20-25 years old, lying on his left side and in the crouched position. The head lay to the north. Close by the head was a long beaked beaker. Against the right pelvis lay a flint scraper, a bone leather working tool and an antler spatula. These items were probably held in a pouch which hung from the waist. Also against the waist was a lump of iron pyrites, probably used as a strike-a-light. Against the right foot were five, finely flaked, barbed and tanged arrowheads. These represent the remains of a quiver of arrows deposited along the right side. Beyond the lower leg bones were a scatter of c. 10 flint flakes and a bronze awl. On lifting the burial a barbed and tanged arrowhead was found lying against the spine. This example was distinct from those described above, being short, squat and broken in three places. It fits the case well for being the cause of death or injury, though no damage to the bones was visible.

The dig is now centred on barrows 12 and 13, and the creation of archaeological sections through these monuments has progressed well. Two secondary burials have been found. A collared urn and cremation were found in the ditch of barrow 12, and south of the central burial of this barrow an infant inhumation, without grave goods, has been excavated.

Work will continue at weekends until early December and resume about mid January. As usual volunteers are welcome and should contact the Unit for details.

## 3. The Roman Cemetery and Anglo-Saxon Settlement - R A Chambers

The excavation of the Roman period cemetery and Anglo-Saxon settlement which began in July stopped temporarily at the beginning of September. This stoppage is to allow the labour financed by the Manpower Services Commission to be used elsewhere until Christmas.

The 70m x 40m area cleared of topsoil by machine in July was extended in August to reveal further prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon features. Several of the potential prehistoric features had not been detected previously either by geophysical survey or as cropmarks. Similarly several previously unsuspected graves belonging to the Roman period cemetery were also revealed. The new area will be excavated in the New Year.

Since the last OAU Newsletter report was written (in August) several cremations have been discovered each accompanied by an Oxford product colour coat pottery beaker. The presence of the beakers suggest a 4th or early 5th century re-emergence of cremation as a burial rite within the inhumation cemetery.

The majority of the sunken featured Saxon buildings exposed in July had been excavated by September and several post built structures had been recognised. New strategies for the examination and recording of the thousands of post and stake holes associated with the Saxon settlement were worked out at the end of August for use after Christmas.

## ROLLRIGHT: LITTLE ROLLRIGHT CHURCH - George Lambrick

During renovations occasioned by serious damp part of the earlier floors and the base of the walls of the church were exposed. Beneath an earlier phase of stone flagged floor apparently following the same outline as at present (not extending under the pews) there was an undisturbed earth/clay floor which in a tiny sondage was seen to overlie earlier earth floors. In the loose rubble etc. under the modern pews a coin of George IV was found, and a few pins were found on the surface of the clay floor. No definite medieval levels were exposed, but they almost certainly remain undisturbed beneath these later deposits.

The removal of plaster from the bottom of the walls revealed various stages of rebuilding, some of which are partly evident in the structure anyway. The south side of the Nave was largely rebuilt for the insertion of the present 16th or 17th century window, and it is clear that the nave is older than this in origin (not surprisingly). The perpendicular windows of the chancel are also clearly insertions in an almost total rebuild of the upper walls evident from the wider base of the south wall. The tower which is dated externally 1617 may also be a rebuild as the internal area between it and the Nave seems to be of earlier origins with its mouldings partially recut to form hollow rather than straight chamfers. The renovation work has thus revealed some evidence of much earlier alterations without itself disturbing these traces.

ROLLRIGHT: ROLLRIGHT STONES - George Lambrick

This year's excavations continued the assessment of the Rollright complex of monuments commissioned by the DOE. Three areas were examined, the barrow with megalithic remains known from antiquarian sources to have stood in the field west of the King Stone; the Whispering Knights; and the stone cairn discovered last year immediately next to the King Stone.

The barrow with large stones west of the King Stone field was well illustrated at the end of the 18th century, and a plan of it in relationship to the Stones themselves which is preserved in the Bodleian is clearly very accurate as it gives the correct dimensions between the three main monuments. The excavation could thus be accurately sited and it demonstrated that no trace of a barrow or of a buried ground surface survives. There was no trace of a burial at the centre of the mound as shown on the plan, but since it is unclear whether it was a long barrow or a round one, and there is no need for burials to be cut into bedrock, this is not significant. No sign of quarries was found, but again without evidence for the shape of the mound their position was not predictable. The barrow may well have been removed soon after it was illustrated (perhaps in the process of quarrying for enclosure walls and road metalling) as it was described then as "a fallen stone on a mound undermined".

Trenches round the Whispering Knights designed to locate traces of a mound and/or quarries associated with a possible long barrow also showed that no substantial features remain. Immediately next to the railings of the Whispering Knights beyond the extent of ploughing the undisturbed soil beneath the monument was covered by a thin layer of small rubble. Larger stones over this may be stones placed round the railings to prevent the path getting too muddy. Except on the east side no trace of the original soil survived: steam ploughing earlier this century had cut into the top of bedrock well below the modern level of ploughing. On the east side the undisturbed soil contained Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman sherds. The occurrence of the latter very close to the Whispering Knights suggests that if there ever was much of a mound it may have been removed by the end of the prehistoric period. The west side of the trackway leading to the Iron Age settlement on the other side of the road to the north, which was examined last year, was found again.

The small scale trial work on the site of the cairn found last year by the King Stone, was intended simply to define its shape, examine the central area for signs of a chamber and further assess its preservation. Only the topsoil and other disturbances were excavated. The cairn is circular and has what appears to be an intact chamber or cist though its form was unclear without further removal of superficial cairn material. Some disturbance had occurred on the east side as a result of the construction of the Royal Observer Corps bunker, but this does not seem to be too serious.

Examination of carbonised material from last year's work has just begun. One of the cremations by the cairn includes tubers of onion couch, familiar from Bronze Age cremations at Ashville and Mount Farm. The Iron Age samples include spelt wheat and a variety of weed seeds.

SOMERTON: CASTLE YARD - R A Chambers

Remains of human skeletons have again been found in the garden adjacent to School House, the former elementary school. School House lies in an area known as Castle Yard. It has been suggested that the site acquired its name through the presence in the late 11th century of a small Norman motte and bailey castle. By the end of the 13th century the site had developed into a large manorial establishment detailed in an extent of 1295. The chapel created on this site in 1530 by Thomas Fermor may as well have been a rededication of the castle chapel as that of a new building. The section of chapel wall retained in the school house may be all the remains standing of the medieval castle.

Burials were first recorded in Castle Yard in the 19th century when several graves and a richer cross (now lost) were found beneath. In 1953 and 1969 more graves were discovered, some with a slab of limestone covering the skull. In 1973 many more inhumations were observed. Many of the plain and coffin burials can be related to the 16th century Roman Catholic chapel. The inhumations with slab-covered skulls represent an Anglo-Saxon to early medieval practice which is but imperfectly understood at present. The stibbed burials may be evidence of the medieval castle chapel mentioned in 1295 or they may be pre-castle and their occurrence by the former school is either a coincidence or indicative of an even earlier church.

STANTON HARCOURT: GRAVELLY GUY - George Lambrick

Excavations on this extensive Iron Age and Roman site are now well underway. The layout of the Iron Age settlement is particularly clear cut. A dense linear spread of pits is delimited by notably straight rectilinear edges on one side and it clearly respects two areas enclosed by roughly penannular gullies or ditches on the other. The pits range from early to mid Iron Age, though most have rather little domestic refuse, and the latest ones encroach on the penannular gullies, though not on the areas they surround. One of these areas contains numerous post-holes, possibly though not clearly representing a house. Two other houses, evident from circles of post holes lie adjacent to the main pit cluster and seem to have been encroached upon by the pits after demolition. Three 4 post structures (?granaries) form a row adjacent to a gap, or path through the pit cluster. One of these structures is clearly cut by the pits, another is in the same position as one of the post built houses, though it is unclear which is earlier. The pits vary in size, some large classic storage pits, others much smaller. The density of the pits and the degree of intercutting, particularly between the large storage pits, suggests that they were dug fairly systematically. Some were left open long enough for their sides to start slumping in, others were backfilled before this could occur.

The Iron Age settlement is bounded by a heavily recut ditch, the latest parts of which seem to be early Roman. The boundary marks a remarkably clear-cut division between the SE side of the site where only Iron Age material has been found and the NW side which is almost exclusively Roman. The main features here are some probable gravel pits, one very deep one surrounded by heavily recut ditches which respect the main boundary; one very shallow one;

and a third large one which cuts through a concentric complex of recut ditches whose outline seems to be hexagonal. This feature remains a mystery at present. A large rectangular enclosure laid out from the line of the main boundary across the site is also Roman, but its NW side may also have originated as an Iron Age boundary.

A few earlier prehistoric features are suspected but not excavated as yet, though one possible tree clearance pit has produced beaker pottery. There is a general scatter of worked flint on the site.

SWINBROOK - David Miles

During the digging of a septic tank pit behind The Old Post Office wall foundations were observed. The base of the limestone walls was about 2m below the present ground surface and stood about 1m high. The foundations were aligned approximately NE-SW and turned to the NW. The corner was constructed of well cut limestone quoins c. 0.6m square. A large sherd of glazed pottery, probably 18th century in date, and part of the skull cap and antlers of a roe deer lay against the base of the wall. Above the walls was about a metre of loosely consolidated demolition rubble.

These walls lie about 30m SE of the village green and 80m south of the St Mary's Church. The mansion of the Fettiplace family stood close to this site (PRN 3405). It was built in the late 15th or early 16th century and demolition in the early years of the 19th when the family died out. The walls behind the Old Post Office may belong to the mansion of the Fettiplaces or its associated buildings. They lie adjacent and south of the alley-walk under the south wall of the churchyard which was probably the approach to the house.

No record remains of the layout of this mansion although the Fettiplaces were major landowners hence the rhyme.

The Traceys, the Laceys and the Fettiplaces  
Own all the manors, the parks and the chases.

WALLINGFORD: CROFT ROAD, 'TOWN DITCH' - Brian Durham

'One day we will find a good site in Wallingford'. The plaintive words seem to come up at the end of every TWHAS dig. In this case the initial trench to investigate the medieval town ditch just happened to coincide (with amazing precision) with a line of tan pits of the late 19th - early 20th century tannery. The medieval deposits were confined to baulks between the pits and a 20cm thick undisturbed layer at the base. The enormity of the situation was brought home by a rubber bicycle tyre from the earliest of the pits, by which time so much energy and ingenuity had been expended that it seemed best to close the site rather than look for undisturbed levels towards the centre of the ditch. Roger Bettess and Pat Granados supervised for the Wallingford Society.

WATCHFIELD: HIGH STREET - George Lambrick

Shortly after the completion of work on the Saxon Cemetery on the Shrivensham by-pass, a find of human remains was reported from a building site only a couple of hundred metres away in Watchfield. In fact this proved to be a single disarticulated skull resting in medieval soil deposits. Although it might possibly be from a burial in the cemetery, the absence of any other human remains from the rest of the construction trenches for the house being built would suggest that the cemetery did not extend that far.

Miscellaneous Places

WHARRAM PERCY, NORTH YORKSHIRE - Sarah Green

For the past three years work has been continuing on the creation of a Roman form and fabric series for the Wharram Percy Project, N. Yorkshire. This aspect of the project has now been transplanted to Oxford - perhaps the Unit's most northerly attempt at colonisation to date.

The potential of this work on the ceramic sequence at Wharram has been greatly enhanced this summer by the excavation of an Iron Age settlement under the medieval manor on the northern boundary of Wharram Percy parish. Here for the first time sealed stratified groups of pre Roman pottery were excavated. This sequence should help in the isolation of Roman, Saxon and prehistoric forms and fabrics which in this region are often superficially very similar, following a local handmade tradition of at least a millennium.

ULPIA TRAIANA SARMISIGETUSA, RUMANIA - Tim Allen and Liz MacRobert

This August the exchange between the Unit and the Museum and University of Cluj, Rumania, again took place. The second season continued work on the cemetery east of the Roman Colonia, where last year capstones of two tile-built tanks were uncovered between parallel boundary walls.

This year a third wall was found, showing that the tombs lay within a burial enclosure. Built into one of the enclosure walls was a massive rubble platform, probably the base of a stone sarcophagus. Two more tombs were found and all four excavated. Three were large enough for adults and had capstones, the fourth was a child's tomb with a tile covering. The adults had been cremated on pyres built on top of the tile walls, but the child was an inhumation, probably in a coffin. All the tombs had been robbed, but finds suggest a late 2nd century date for the group. The results of these two seasons are now being prepared for an interim report.

Future Evening Lectures

The following lectures will be held at the Methodist Hall at 8.00pm in Didcot:

- 7 Dec - History of the Margate Lifeboats by Dr A R Lane
- 4 Jan - 'On Writing Books!' by Gerald Howat
- 1 Feb - The Etruscan Ship excavation at Giglio by Mensor Bound
- 7 Mar - The Roman People of Silchester by Sue Read

4 April - The History of Gardens by Bernard Tattersfield  
2 May - The Rollright Stones by George Lambrick

The following will be held at the Chantry House at 7.45 pm in Henley-on-Thames:

6 Dec - "Archaeology of the Nuffield Gas Pipe Line" by P D Catherall  
3 Jan - "A Journey in Search of the History of Iraq" by Col. Steward  
7 Feb - "Deserted Medieval Villages" by James Bond

#### Other Items of News

#### Smithsonian Seminar

The Unit once again took part in the Oxford/Smithsonian Seminar. The theme of this year's course was Britain and the Legions. Once again the Unit received a substantial sum for this work from the Oxford University Department of External Studies.

#### Thame Show

The local branch of the NFU again invited the Unit to mount a display at the Thame Show. The display was organised by Nicky Harris and Gerald Southern from Thame helped us on the stall once more.

#### Radley Open Day

A joint Oxford Archaeological Unit and Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society excavation Open Day was held at the Barrow Hills, Radley excavation. Approximately 2000 people visited the site and exhibitions. Nicky Harris organised the Unit display; John Carter and members of the Society provided its own display and helped with the tours. Reading University students also helped with the tours. Several hundred school children subsequently visited the sites. Maggie Cunliffe helped with the schools' visits.

#### Ashville and Farmoor Reports

The Unit is able to offer copies of the two reports at the remaindered price of 2.00 per copy plus postage and packing. Orders should be sent to the Unit including a remittance as soon as possible.



