

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS

The quarterly newsletter of the Oxford

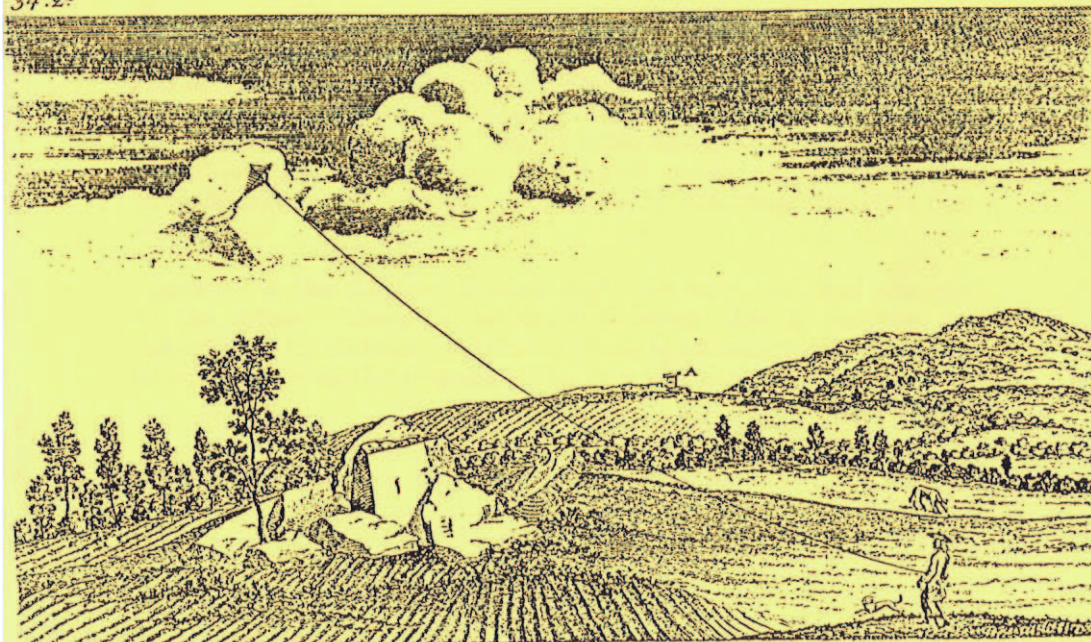


Archaeological Unit



vol. xvii no. 3 September 1989

34.24



*View of the Ruins of the Lower Coty house. A. The Upper Cotyhouse.*

## SPOTLIGHT

For the past few weeks visitors to the Unit's always busy and crowded premises will have noticed a rapidly rising tide of plans and maps. Every day the post brings new bundles. These are the reward of success. Earlier this year the Unit won the British Railways Board contract to assess the Historic and Cultural Impacts of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link through Kent.

No transport corridor has been studied as thoroughly as the proposed railway line from Folkestone to King's Cross. The OAU is one of several teams of consultants co-ordinated by Environmental Research Limited (ERL), examining every aspect of the new railway line. For those of us frustrated by the archaeological neglect of road corridors in recent years it is a model of how such things should be organised.

The OAU's report (written by George Lambrick and Julian Munby) to the British Railways Board identifies the known archaeological sites, historic landscapes, gardens and buildings and considers the effect the railway could have on them.

It also proposes a series of surveys and assessments to provide more detailed information so that, in the jargon of environmental consultancy, the impact of the railway can be mitigated.

The first spade has been put into the ground at the famous megalithic site of Little Kits Coty near Maidstone. This Guardianship monument lies on the proposed railway line. The intention is to move the line; the question is where to? English Heritage and British Rail asked the Unit to sample the land around Little Kits Coty to determine the extent of this ill-understood chambered tomb. In doing so we immediately found a large and previously unknown late Iron Age settlement.

Attitudes to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link vary from one extreme to the other. There is no doubt however that it provides an opportunity for archaeology to come of age in influencing the planning of major engineering projects. This one will run and run.

*David Miles*

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

### **GLOUCESTER: UPPER QUAY STREET**

For the past few months OAU has been acting as consultants to CWS Ltd in Gloucester.

The Co-op's Upper Quay Street site occupies an important waterfront position 150m west of the Roman town defences. As Gloucester City Council and CWS Ltd had not been able to reach agreement about a suitable response to the archaeology of the area a Public Enquiry had been arranged for later this year.

OAU advised that an assessment of the site should be carried out to clarify the archaeological content of the site and the impact of the proposed development. This work was done in June by the Gloucester Excavation Unit working closely with OAU.

The Roman waterfront was located with well-preserved environmental deposits. On the shoreline there were traces of a considerable Roman building with fragments of mosaic. The average depth of archaeological deposits was 4 metres.

The redesigned Co-op proposal for the site is a piled building with no basements. In consultation with the Gloucester Excavation Unit OAU has produced an archaeological specification for CWS Ltd. This is tailored to respond to the impact of the building. It aims to clarify the survival of archaeological deposits still further before excavating all those areas where damage from pile clusters would represent a serious loss.

It is hoped that as a result Gloucester City Council and CWS will reach a legal agreement for the developer to find the appropriate archaeological response and that a public enquiry will prove not to be necessary.

### **LECHLADE: BUTLER'S FIELD**

Remember this Saxon cemetery? Excavated by the OAU in 1985 it produced over two hundred graves dating from the sixth to the mid seventh centuries. The cemetery was remarkable for its range of grave goods illustrating the changing contacts of the Anglo Saxon world: amber from the Baltic in the earlier years followed by a shift to the Mediterranean and beyond with garnets, gold, silver, amethysts and

cowrie shells (ultimately from the Indian Ocean) appearing. Changing religious affiliations also were explicit: the vast majority were pagan but the latest graves produced recognisable Christian artifacts.

The post excavation has been in abeyance for nearly two years due to a funding dispute between English Heritage (the site was a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and Cotswold District Council (the original owners). This has now been resolved and a programme jointly funded by the above is underway. The main work is being undertaken by Claire Bland with the aim of publishing the site in two years.

Copies of the interim report "Invested in Mother Earth" are still available from OAU for £1.50

*Simon Palmer*

## **KENT**

### **DOVER: HERITAGE CENTRE**

The unit continues to act as Archaeological Consultant to Dover District Council during the building of a large and ambitious museum/historium complex. The building, to be known as The White Cliffs Experience, is being constructed over and around the substantial buried ruins of two Roman forts: the headquarters of the Classis Britannica (Roman fleet in Britain) built in AD 130-40 and the later Saxon Shore Fort, built probably around AD 270.

Initial trial trenches were dug in November 1988 and January/February 1989 to confirm the position of some Roman walls and assess their condition. The results of this work were then incorporated into the evolving design of the building, with the preferred option always being to preserve the archaeology rather than carry out rescue excavation. As a result, the final design encroached into unexcavated deposits in only three small areas which were examined in March and June of this year. Excavation of a lift-pit revealed deep medieval rubbish pits and also provided valuable information about the construction techniques used on the third century Saxon Shore Fort. A second small trench showed the complex internal arrangements of the Classis Britannica fort - continual resurfacing of the roads and intricate drainage channels suggest that water run-off from the nearby Western Heights was a major problem.

The earlier trial trenches were examined by the soil surveyors, who indicated that the backfill from extensive 1970's excavations was too unstable for construction on concrete rafts. Instead, the building will stand on 167 piles, all of which were carefully positioned to keep damage to the archaeological remains to an absolute minimum.

The success of this work was aided by the use of a Continuous Flight Auger (essentially a twenty-metre high brace-and-bit) to drill the piles. Trenches dug after the piles were in position show that disturbances is limited to the circumference of each pile, allowing them to be placed very close to Roman walls without risk of damage.

In recent months a watching brief has been carried out as the site was terraced into three platforms for construction, and while the drainage system is being dug. The Heritage Centre is due to open in 1991, and amongst its attractions will be a selected area of the Classis Britannica fort. Visitors will descend into an undercroft to view the flimsy chalk walls which the unit will expose in a future campaign.

In September Dover District Council hosted a reception for the Roman Limes Congress at which David Miles lectured on recent work in Dover and future plans for the archaeology of the town and district.  
*David Wilkinson & Gill Hey*

## NORTHANTS

### STANWICK: REDLANDS FARM

Excavation, funded by ARC in advance of gravel extraction, commenced in July. The assessment carried out earlier this year by ourselves had indicated a prehistoric thought at the time to be finding a small round barrow. How wrong we were! Everything went well on day one of the stripping of the overburden with one quadrant revealed. Day two was a different matter. Instead of finding a rounded barrow flank, a straight edge to the mound appeared flanked by a large ditch. On day three it grew; and we realised we were dealing with a long barrow. Eventually we had a 60m long turf and gravel mound flanked by two quarry ditches c. 1.8m apart.

Towards one end of the mound is a cist constructed from limestone blocks, and several pieces of limestone projecting through the top of

the mound indicate the possibility of a central chamber as well. Cut into the top of the mound are 3 Beaker inhumations, while several cremations have been inserted into the slipped mound material at the NE end.

Not only is this the only long barrow known from Northamptonshire but it also lies on a line with the Neolithic long enclosure and associated monuments at West Cotton 2km to the NE. A barrow is also situated further to the SW on the same line. This exercise has been an object lesson in the difficulties of interpreting assessment trenches.

Work is continuing on the long barrow until December.

*John Moore*

## OXFORDSHIRE

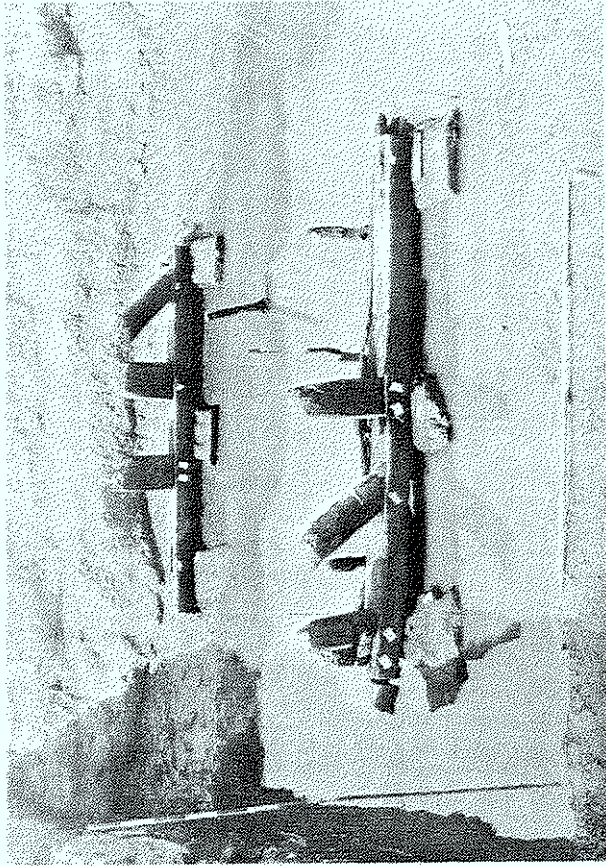
### ABINGDON: THE VINEYARD

The Parks Department buildings have now been demolished and the rest of the excavation stripped, joining up the existing trenches.

Dense Iron Age and Roman settlement continues right across the site. Several roundhouse gullies are now visible, with adjacent clusters of pits. The trench overlying the medieval cemetery has also been extended, and the new area is even more tightly packed with medieval burials. Several very large charnel pits have been excavated, and smaller clustevs of broken bones in circular pits are common.

One other pit has produced quantities of medieval window-glass, probably from the demolition of the Abbey church.

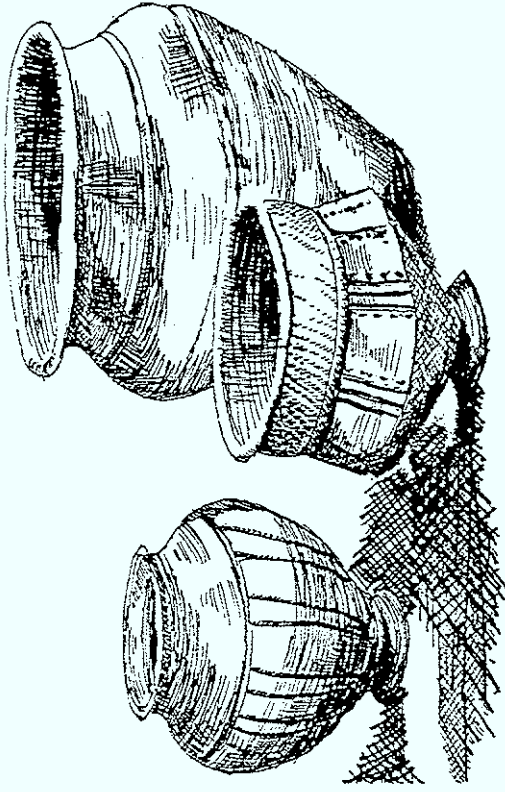
Stripping has exposed the line of the lay cemetery ditch, over 9m wide and 2.5m deep, running from the River Stert down to the east end of St. Nicholas's Church. This was used as a fishpond by the monks in the medieval period, but may have originated as a defensive feature in Saxon times, possibly when the Abbey was restored after the Danish sacking of about 871. The late Saxon abbey was surrounded by the rivers Thames and Stert on the north, the east and the south, and this ditch would have completed the circuit on the west.



*The timber bridge foundation at Abingdon Abbey within the Abbey moat.*

A wide section dug across the moat has uncovered the remains of a wooden bridge, the bottom one metre of which survives. It consisted of two trestles laid along the line of the ditch, one close to the west bank, the other nearly mid-stream. Each trestle was made up of a dressed horizontal sole-plate into which were tenoned and pegged three uprights, two vertical supports and one angled brace. Each trestle rested upon three lengths of dressed elm tree-trunks laid across the ditch, and was secured into them with wooden pegs. It has not been possible to drain the ditch completely, but it appears that the tree-trunks may have been laid upon a bed of limestones on the ditch bottom. Samples from one of the trestles have been taken for tree-ring dating, and Dan Miles from the Ancient Monuments Laboratory has suggested a provisional date of 1510 AD for the construction of the structure.

*Tim Allen*



*Roman pots from Abingdon Vineyard.*

## YAC AT ABINGDON!

Between 14th and 18th August, the excavation team at Abingdon was joined by 15 members of the Young Archaeologists Club (YAC). Ranging in age from 12 - 17 years they came to gain experience of archaeology in the raw. Dividing their time between excavation and finds processing they achieved a remarkable amount in the short time they were with us. I am especially indebted to them for all the finds they washed and marked - it is not often we have such a concentrated effort on the finds on site. Thank you to all those who participated, I hope we can do the same thing again sometime.

If anyone is interested in learning more about YAC - you can contact me the Unit or write to Carol Anderson at the Department of Leisure and Arts, Museum Services, Oxfordshire County Museum, Woodstock, Oxford, OX7 1SN. YAC is open to anyone between the ages of 9 and 18 years.

*Leigh Turner*

## WITNEY: COGGES MANOR FARM

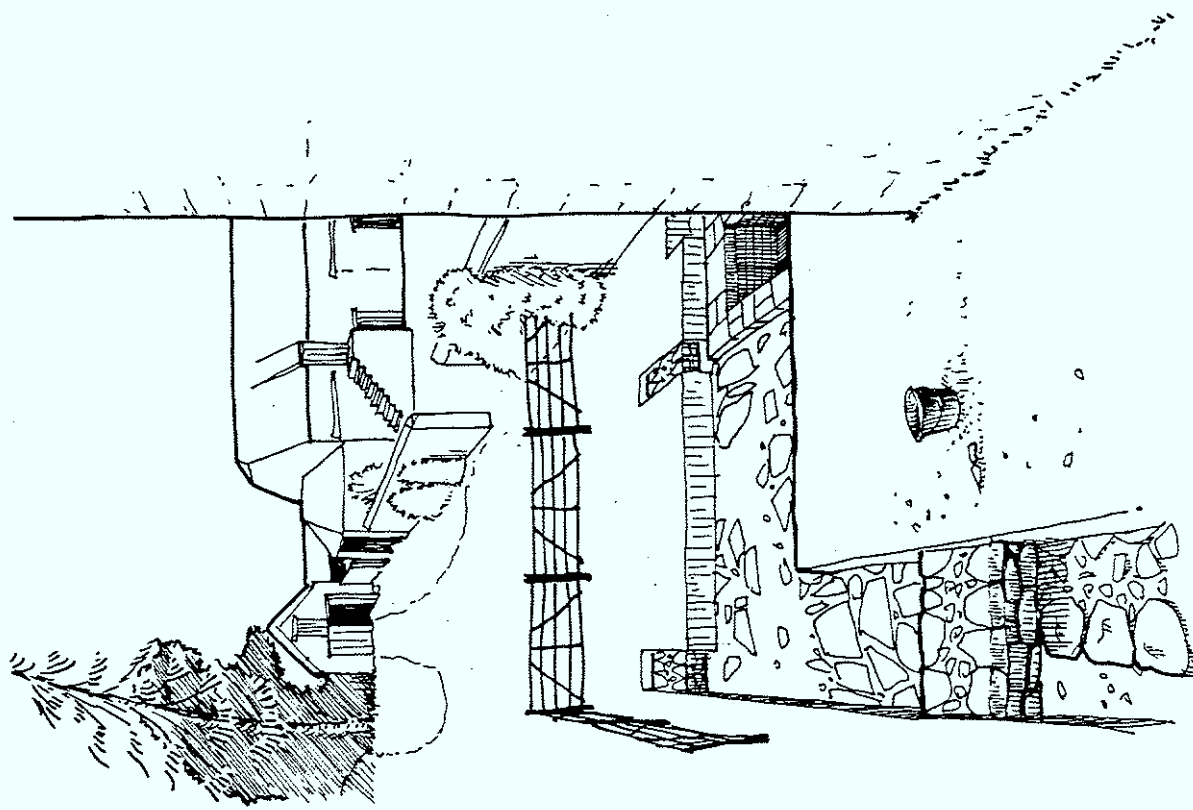
The Unit has run its fourth annual training excavation on this Scheduled Ancient Monument, with the support of Rewley House and the County Museum Service. This year the objective was to study the north side of the main house, where some interesting structures emerged last year.

Cogges Manor Farm house is now L-shaped and essentially 13th century in origin. The new excavation has added a north wing to make it more of a courtyard shape. Most of the associated material is 18th century, but built in such a way that it might well be medieval in origin. Our report last year ascribed the very thin stratigraphy on the site to the rocky subsoil, which would mean that the roads never needed re-metalling and therefore acted as a control on the rise in ground level which occurs on many medieval sites. The new building has a stone paved floor largely of great flat slabs fitted tightly together. There was some patching using stones set in mortar, but most of the big well-fitted slabs were lying on what looked like an old turf level. From this level came medieval and Anglo-Saxon sherds, and it looked in places as if there were the remains of medieval clay floors.

If Cogges was a courtyard house there is now a lot of new evidence to conjure with. It will begin to bear fruit when work starts on the house itself, because it will be the architectural detail which will give the safest dates and will show which part was internal and which external at any stage. More immediate progress comes from the study of alignments. Across the 'tennis court' east of the house was a wall, perhaps 17th-18th century, built on half the width of a small rock-cut ditch. The ditch links the line of the east paddock with the north wall of the existing building. It can also be projected through the south wall of the newly discovered north range, the north wall of the dairy, and across to the springing of the orchard wall on a line excavated in 1987. This is a very impressive alignment across the middle of the site, to add to the north-south line found last year, and suggests that Cogges was laid out geometrically, perhaps in the 1240's when the de Greys acquired it. This is more evidence for the early layout.

Plans for future excavation must now address the question of whether there is a gate-house in the north range, and whether there was a west range to make a complete courtyard.

*Brian Durham*



*View of excavation showing medieval building with floor of stone slabs, and Victorian brick cistern (Right).*

## OXFORD: ORIEL REAL TENNIS COURT

It is perhaps fitting that at the end of Wimbledon fortnight when the Germans swept all before them, that Oxford was rediscovering one of its Real tennis courts in Oriel College.

Originally approximately one hundred feet long, use of the court was discontinued about 1860, shortly after Edward VII when still Prince of Wales played there. It was converted into three billiard rooms and a corridor, and trial trenching took place in the southernmost of these on 10-11 July in advance of the building's redevelopment.

Wooden coverings were stripped off the eastern wall to reveal an ashlar facing, for a good bounce. The stonework painted white with a row of numbers from 1 to 5 in yellow running along the bottom. These are the 'chase' numbers of the court.

The trenches revealed, a layer of mortar which may have been the bedding flagstones of the original playing surface, on top of an accumulation of several feet of powdery brown loam which was a compacted yard surface. This was probably the back garden of one of the houses on Oriel Street, medieval Shidyrd Street. Lying two feet under this surface was a small circular oven lying directly over a Saxon pit containing fragments of a cooking vessel.

Running almost parallel to the south wall of the room was a medieval boundary wall. When it came to the construction of the court this was re-used as a foundation, the pit to the north of it being filled in. The Clerk of Works discovered an almost intact 17th century German drinking vessel adjacent to the wall at an extremely low level.

The date of the court is still unclear. Charles I and Prince Rupert played on it in 1642, and it is shown on Loggan's map with a single truss roof in 1675. The existing softwood roof may be late 18th century, but the oak posts on which it stands are probably original and would provide a felling date for the timber. It is hoped that a programme of structural survey can be built into the College's redevelopment, because of the comparative rarity of this sort of building.

The Unit is also negotiating with the College to do at least part of the digging out for their new basement, which should provide a series of uncontaminated pottery assemblages for a period, the 16th century

form which we have relatively little evidence. It should also show tenement boundaries for the area behind Tackley's Inn which has otherwise been studied intensively. The area could also produce Saxon material beside Oriel Street, which may have been the line of an ancient route passing St. Frideswide's Priory before Oxford existed as we know it.

A Saxon pit, Rhenish drinking vessels and Prince Rupert's tennis court therefore made an appropriate sequel to the 1989 Wimbledon story: Deutschland uber alles.

*John Dalton & Brian Durham*

## OXFORD: WORCESTER COLLEGE

Redevelopment is creeping up on the Unit's offices at Hythe Bridge Street. Worcester College has started its student accommodation on a site which we have reported in recent volumes of Archaeological News. In four days of excavation we were able to confirm the shape of the building seen previously and show that parts of it were very well preserved.

The College's contractors, Milne Contract, allowed the Unit to dig a trench which followed the line of the rear wall of a 13th century tenement. It was another case of medieval development alongside a bridge, which we have seen so often on the south approach to the city. The tenement in this case seems to have belonged to John the Fisher who in 1235-6 granted four houses to his four daughters. There was no obvious sign of partitioning which might indicate this sort of division of the property, but not enough was seen to be sure. Nor was there any evidence of the waterfront that must have existed here to give the name 'Hythe' to the bridge.

The most valuable observation here was to identify the edge of the gravel terrace, where it shelved away into the medieval river. It proved once again that those bridge tenements were being built on platforms of rubbish dumped in the river, confirming that the first half of the 13th century was a period of innovative use of every inch of building space at the edges of the city. The properties in this case disappear from the Osney Abbey rentals in the later 14th century, in a period of contraction.

Our work was supported by Oxford City Council and Worcester College, and is particularly valuable for the light it throws on the

large site on the opposite side of Hythe Bridge Street (see next entry).

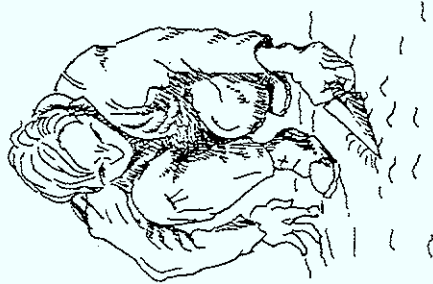
*Brian Durham*

### **OXFORD: WORCESTER STREET CAR PARK**

This site is proposed for a major hotel and office complex at the edge of the medieval city, where the north west corner of the castle is skirted by its mill stream. The site was assessed archaeologically because all deposits are to be dug out for a two-deck underground car park.

About 80% of the site proves to be reclaimed from the river, a remarkable discovery considering that this is a relatively minor branch of the Thames. To the north is Hythe Bridge which must in the 13th century have been at least four times its present length to cross this water. To the south is the site of a barbican, the outer gateway of the castle. The gateway was not located, but the line of its bridge was found, replaced by an 18th century causeway.

The most important discovery was a medieval stone building close to the modern mill stream. Assuming that reclamation of the channel started in the early 13th century working outwards from the tenement at the north-east corner of the car park, it must all have happened very quickly. The stone building was well constructed and had a very strong stone floor. The present assumption is that it was part of a waterfront complex. The place name 'Hythe' means that there was a landing place near the bridge. Since nothing was found on the upstream side of Hythe Bridge in the Worcester College development (see above), it is possible that the medieval waterfront was here on the downstream side. It would mean that river traffic had to pass



beneath the bridge to get to it, and there is a good chance that the site will include the first medieval wharf to be found in Oxford.

Borehole data from the site shows an impressive depth of peat deposit beneath the building. Is this an ancient river channel, or is it evidence of major engineering work to surround the Norman castle with vast expanses of water? The answer is probably a combination of these factors. The underground car park proposed by Nuffield College and Blue Lamp Properties will include total destruction of these deposits so a full excavation would be necessary.

*Brian Durham*

### **SOULDERN: SOULDERN MANOR**

Souldern is quoted as an example of a shrunken village, with the church isolated to the north-east. Souldern Manor is at the opposite end of the village in an area where one would not expect medieval settlement, but it adjoins a Saxon cemetery and some very impressive earth works.

Mr and Mrs Sanders are building a new ornamental pond and have asked the Unit to watch the work. Charlie Chambers reported walls visible in the initial stripping and the present writer followed this up. One wall turned out to be a ha-ha, which pleased the owner and is to be incorporated into the new landscaping. Another was clearly a small medieval building enclosing a stone-lined tank and a drain. From what little could be seen at the edge of the pond it appeared to be an addition to a larger building or defensive structure but this is still to be confirmed. It lay close to two ditches and a small stone quarry, all producing 12th century pottery, and to the rear is higher ground with big earthworks. The impression is a concentration of medieval activity, possibly an early manorial complex exploiting the crest of a hill overlooking the Cherwell valley.

*Brian Durham*

### **SOMERSET**

#### **GLASTONBURY: GLASTONBURY ABBEY**

Over the past two years OAU has organized several small-scale excavations at Glastonbury Abbey in advance of improvement works



to this complex site, which is both major monument and tourist attraction.

In July the cutting for a new wheelchair ramp north-east of St. Patrick's Chapel was recorded by Humphrey Woods. A Medieval stone structure was found only 0.6 m deep. This meant that the ramp could not be constructed without breaching the Scheduled Monument Consent. Other areas were tested with a view to relocating the ramp, but further medieval buildings were found in one and the roots of the Glastonbury Thorn tree in the other.

Eventually the decision was taken to redesign the ramp on the original location in order to keep above the Medieval building.

Because of the hot summer a spectacular pattern of parch marks of previously unknown structures was visible in the turf north of the Abbey church. The opportunity was taken to record these. Work is continuing on the site.

*David Miles*

## PERU

### DEPARTMENT OF CUZCO

In May and June 1988 I returned to the Cusichaca Valley, Department of Cuzco, Peru to complete the excavation of the site we worked on in 1987 (as reported in the December 1987 newsletter)

Beneath the terrace of the circular adobe structure, excavated in the 1987 season (Radio carbon date 240BC plus or minus 50 years) we found a group of 13 burials. We believe these inhumations were reburied mummies; mummies because the position of the bones showed the body had been bound in a crouched position; and reburied because not all bones were present and the ends of the bones had rotted in a soil where similar material, including human bone, has always been well-preserved.

The burials cut through an earlier house platform with structures of a different architectural style. These were rectangular in shape and constructed of tightly packed upright stakes set in shallow slots. Similar huts can be seen lower in the valley today.

The house platform overlay another agricultural terrace system.

Pre-Inca chronological sequences in the area north of Cuzco are very badly understood. Most ceramic groups, which form our best chronological indicators, are known from surface collections and very few excavations have been undertaken. At Cusichaca over the last 11 years, we have amassed a considerable body of information from well stratified sites spanning the period c. 600 BC to the Inca occupation in the 15th century AD. However, not all sites have all phases represented and on those sites with good sequences drastic landscaping by Inca and earlier builders and the presence of quantities of standing Inca masonry has created many stratigraphic discontinuities.

In Cuzco in June and July of this year Dr. Sara Lunt and I phased all the early sites and re-examined the pottery from the best groups. We also received a handful of radio carbon dates.

Occupation seems to have been continuous in the Cusichaca Valley from around 600BC (no earlier sites are known in this area) with the exception of a discontinuity at c. 0 - 300 AD. At this time the centre of occupation moved from the more easily defended promontory to the tableland, a site in the middle of ancient field systems. The monumental architectural style on the new site was in contrast to earlier, more humble buildings and, although some similarities in the coarse-wares can be traced from the earlier assemblage, imported and local fine-wares bear no resemblance. Does this mean an invasion by a new tribe, a gap in time when the valley was abandoned or just that we have not yet discovered the linking settlement site?

*Gill Hey*



## EVENTS

Institute of Field Archaeologists Annual General Meeting: Saturday 16 September 11.00am in the Arts Faculty, University of Birmingham.

### CBA 9 Annual General Meeting

This year the Council for British Archaeology Group 9 (Bucks Northants Oxon) is holding its Annual General Meeting in Abingdon (Saturday 23 September in the Roysse Room Abbey Buildings). At 2.00pm there will be a Lecture on the archaeology of Abingdon followed by a guided tour of the OAU's Vineyard excavation.

### Archaeology and the Universities

Rescue, the British Archaeological Trust has organised a mammoth open-day in University archaeology departments all over Britain. Unfortunately the University of Oxford does not feature - archaeology in Oxford is probably too labyrinthine even for its professors to find their way around. However Reading throws open its doors on Wednesday 25 October at 2.00pm. For details contact Professor Richard Bradley on 0734 318132.

Oxford's Department for External Studies has its usual full programme of history and archaeology courses this autumn.

Computing for Archaeologists: a weekend school for beginners Saturday 25-26 November 1989 at Rewley House Oxford

The Romanisation of Britain: (David Miles & Tim Allen) Abingdon College of Further Education starts Wednesday 20 September

Details of courses from Oxford University Department for External Studies, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford. OX1 2JA

## STAFF MATTERS

Samantha Hatzis, the Unit's secretary, is back after four and a half months' maternity leave. Samantha should be congratulated not only on the birth of her son, Timotheos, but also her timing. She left the Unit the day before he arrived!

While Samantha was away the fort was held by Clare Venables and Georgina Griffiths. Both have now gone up in the world: Clare to run the drawing office at the Hertford Unit and Georgina to play a corpse in a London theatrical production.

A welcome to Linda Feeley who has joined the Unit as a secretarial assistant.

## VOLUNTEERS

We are always looking for volunteers to help wash and mark finds - either on site or here in the Unit. If you have a spare day or even just an afternoon and would like to lend a hand you are most welcome. Please contact Leigh Turner at the Unit (tel Ox 243888.)



## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The OAU Newsletter is issued quarterly. The subscription is £3.00 per annum. Please make cheques payable to The Oxford Archaeological Unit.

Our apologies for the slight delay in the appearance of the September newsletter. This is the first newsletter to be produced on our own new desk-top publishing system and we had to wait for the current font to arrive. In future the new technology should make us more cost effective and versatile (we hope!) If anyone outside the Unit - local societies, archaeological enthusiasts, or other professional groups working in Oxfordshire wish to make use of these information columns they are most welcome.

Please send contributions for the next newsletter to Samantha Hatzis at the Oxford Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP.

*Published by the Oxford Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street,  
Oxford OX1 2EP.*

ISSN 0954-1616