



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No 4 - April 1979

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send details to the above address before the last Tuesday of each month.

OXFORDSHIRE

FARINGDON

The Faringdon and District Archaeological and Historical Society was formed in October 1978 with seven members and this number has now increased to fourteen. The Society is a working one and has continued the work started on the graveyard survey by the Local History Group. Three members living in Great Coxwell have started their own graveyard survey. The Society has also completed its first survey of a house but have yet to draw up the plans.

We would like to thank the various people who have encouraged us and given us advice during the last few months.

OXFORD, The Hamel

At last at the speculative stage on bones! Results are almost predictable: red and roe deer present in 12-14th century deposits; fallow deer in most samples and possibly of increasing representation; rabbit bones starting and increasing from the 13th century while hare bones are present in early but not in later samples. Can you spot any useful references to local warrens or wild rabbits in medieval - post medieval literature? Goat remains proved elusive apart from one horn core and one other bone. Sheep outnumbered goats at least twenty to one in the medieval period and more so in the post-medieval period. Horse and dog remains decline as if from a rural setting but there is also evidence of the well known 18-19th century increase in the use of horses. Oyster shells as an indicator of trade/transport or dietary preferences are present in most deposits but there appear to be significant increases in numbers in 13th and in 14th century deposits.

WALLINGFORD

Par Granados for the Wallingford Society, has reported gas pipes being laid in the centre of the town. At the time of writing the contractors are still working down St Martin's Street but will soon move into St Mary's. So far the pipe-trenches 2-3 ft deep have shown little except disturbed ground and several post-medieval periods of street metaling. Richard Chambers reports that so far the pipe trenches have not been deep enough to provide useful sections. A watch will be kept on the remainder of this work.

X40 (Oxford to Birmingham new road)

Richard Chambers reports that last of the four trial-pit and bore-hole contracts aimed at providing geological information on the route for the road-planners has now commenced. However, at the time of writing no trial pits have been dug.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

LECHLADE

At the request of the Committee for Rescue Archaeology for Gloucester, Avon and Somerset and DOE the OAU will be conducting trial excavations directed by David Miles at the gravel pit by Warren's Cross Farm on A417 between Lechlade and Fairford. The aim of the excavations is to assess the potential of this large multi-period crop-mark site. The excavations will take place between 23 April and 11 March. Volunteers are welcome. They should contact David Miles after 9 April at Oxford 43888, or after 23 April at Woodstock 811772 in the evenings.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

TOWCESTER

George Lambrick has been completing his report on the excavations at Park Street, Towcester in 1976, with the investigation of documentary records. The site was owned by the Sponne charity which has very good documentation. The most interesting information was that a Joseph Kingston lived there till 1684 and there are records elsewhere that there was a claypipe maker of that name in Towcester at the same period. The discovery of claypipe wasters of the right date on the site strongly suggests that he was making them there. Another useful piece of information gained from the documents is an indication that there was agricultural land close to the centre of the town until the late middle ages and that Park Street, the main road to Brackley, was not developed till the end of the 18th century.

Various items of interest have emerged from the specialist reports now coming in. In particular some early Roman brooches of mid 1st century date have been identified, and most interestingly a scabbard chape of German type dated to the 1st half of the 1st century, a most unusual if not unique find in Britain. There now seem more concrete reasons to suggest that Towcester began as an early military settlement.

WARWICKSHIRE

WASPERTON

At the request of Warwick Museum and DOE the Unit is carrying out a limited excavation at this presumably Iron Age settlement site south of Warwick. The excavation is directed by Simon Palmer and is aimed at assessing the potential of the site with a view to making recommendations as to further work.

CALENDAR

7 April - Local History Day School - Documents II - to be held at Easthampstead Park, Wokingham (Contact the Course Secretary at Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford)

- 10 April - OAU Staff Meeting at 2.15 pm at the Unit
- 18 April - Miss J Price - Glass and glassmaking in Roman Britain
(Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society:
lecture theatre of John Mason School, Wooton Road,
Abingdon at 7.30 pm)
- 19 April - FILMS from the Open University and Shell (Dept. of
Geology, Parks Road, Oxford at 8.30 pm)
- 21 April - Field trip to Calvert Brickpit, Bucks. Leave from
Dept. Geology at 12 noon. 'Hard hats' must be worn.
- 22 April - Trip to Uley Bury Hillfort, Romano-British temple;
Hetty Peglers Tump and other Cotswold Highlights.
Probably a few spare seats on coach - price c.£1.30.
If interested contact David Miles on Oxford 43888.
- 21-22 April - Roman Archaeology - Weekend School (Contact Course
Secretary, Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford)
- 2 May - Armour - Mr Tony Ptolomey (Didcot and District Archaeological
and Historical Society: at All Saints Parish Hall, Foxhall
Road, Didcot at 8 pm)
- 4-6 May - Temples, Churches and Religion in Roman Britain (Contact
Course Secretary, Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square,
Oxford).