



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No 5 May 1979

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

OXFORDSHIRE

Aston Tirrold

Three trial pits have been dug to gain geological information for the Highways Department prior to designing a road improvement scheme on the A417 at Aston Tirrold. No archaeological material was encountered in the pits except for modern back-filling in the quarry on the brow of the hill.

Checkendon

The earthworks survey of the undated earthwork enclosure known as the Devil's Churchyard undertaken by two inservice trainees, Carlos Urrejola and Heather Bird has now been completed. It is hoped that SOAG will section the earthwork during the next few months with a view to establishing a date for the site.

Dorchester

Richard Chambers reports that fragments from 2 human skeletons have been recovered from a pipe trench beneath the probably 18th century outer wall of the White Hart Hotel. A watch is being kept on further building work there.

Portions of several human skeletons have also been found whilst digging a woad-away at the rear of 8 Bridge End, Dorchester. This is probably a part of the cemetery known from discoveries of human bone at the rear of no 16 Rotten Row, about 50 yards to the north.

Goring Heath Parish, Whitchurch Hill

Cynthia Graham-Kerr reports that a soil change, noted after a field had been ploughed where the old Hatchgate Pub and Forge Cottage used to stand was combed, and a motley collection of pottery, ironmongery, tile, "tudor" bricks (2½) and many pipestems (but only half a bowl) were recorded. Amongst the ironware was a curious 3-pronged fork with prongs about 6 inches long and a tang for a wooden handle. The cottages have disappeared entirely within living memory but 2 oil paintings are in the possession of the family.

Little Faringdon

The oil pipeline site: The bones include two Romano-British cattle bones larger than any found at Barton Court Farm Villa. One gives a shoulder height estimate of 1.4 m (4' 6") about 12 cm taller than the average castrate at the Villa and 44 cm (1' 5") larger than the smallest cow there. Bone pathology indicates that this large beast was a draught ox.

In general the incidence of pathology appeared high. Oyster and deer remains were virtually absent. This settlement may have been of lower socioeconomic status.

Little Stoke

Cynthia Graham-Kerr reports that South Oxon Archaeological Group have recovered more Medieval 12-14th century coarse ware pottery from the deserted Medieval village at Little Stoke. They also found a fragment of glazed roof tile.

North Stoke

The South Oxon Archaeological Group have also recovered several medieval pottery sherds from a position just south-west of the parish church at North Stoke.

South Stoke

Cynthia Graham-Kerr reports that the parish survey in South Stoke and Crowmarsh parishes is continuing although weather held up actual fieldwork. Some progress has been made in these parishes by research into their history, and from that, queries and investigations planned ready for action. Some quick action was taken where trenches were noticed for a new house and medieval remains found and recorded of a previous cottage on the site. A new cottage is now built, but the land is still open and a quick survey of part of the watermeadows beyond it was made, and a hedge-dating taken (one hedge say 500 years old). A member of SOAG living in the village is contacting the inhabitant of a listed building with a view to visiting.

Stanton Harcourt

Harold Mytum of the OUAS reports that a large area of several tens of thousands of square metres of gravel had been stripped by Amey Roadstone Co. and part of this area was thought to include a field system discovered by aerial photography. However, excavation of the features visible on the ground indicated that these were cut into the gravel at the time of the construction of the wartime airport in 1940. Gullies either side of the runways were trenched before their date was realised, but the discovery of poor quality concrete in the bottom of these confirmed their modern date. Clearly, all earlier features, including the field system noted on pre-war photographs, was destroyed in the construction of the runways.

Harold Mytum thanks Amey Roadstone Co. for permission to excavate, and R A Chambers for his help and advice.

Thame by-pass

This project will begin in May. Max Davies has reported finding Roman pottery near Meod Farm on land that will be affected by the construction of the by-pass.

Thomley

Two of the in-service trainees, Heather Bird and John Moore, have completed a survey of the remaining earthworks on the site of the deserted medieval village of Thomley.

Wallingford

Pipe-laying in the Market Place and St Martin's Street has not yet produced any archaeological material. Until now the pipe-trenches have been shallow but a deeper sewer trench that is to be laid in St Mary's Street will be watched.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Fairford/Lechlade: Claydon Pike (SU 1899, 1999)

Excavation has begun on the 100 hectare cropmark complex at Claydon Pike 2.5 km west of Lechlade (The Upper Thames Valley in Gloucs and Wilts, R Leech 1977, 14). The purpose of this three week long exercise is to further assess the potential of the site for future large scale work. Adjacent to the present pit workings on the eastern edge of the cropmarks a rectangular enclosure has been uncovered by machine after random top soil sampling. The enclosure has a broad ditch (c 2 m wide) and an eastern entrance but so far has not been excavated. 60 m north-west of the rectangular enclosure is an oval one, across which a section has been placed. This has produced some coarse shelly pottery which may be Early Iron Age or Bronze Age.

A third trench has been cut north-eastwards at right angles to the present Fairford/Lechlade parish boundary across an old water-course, visible as a cropmark and as a slight hollow in the present field. The watercourse seems to be bounded by a series of Romano-

British ditches and the water table is only some 0.60 m below the surface. The prospects therefore look good for the survival of waterlogged material.

A further trial trench has been placed in the nucleus of the eastern settlement. Here a hollow way runs east-west across the field with platforms on either side covered with stone, tile, much Samian and late Romano-British pottery. These building platforms are separated from one another by further hollow-ways branching off from the main one. The trial trench has located the northern boundary ditch of the main trackway of the settlement, which contains large quantities of Romano-British pottery and on one of the platforms a spread of stone, though no building has yet been defined.

CALENDAR

- Monday 7th May: Prof B Jones - 'The Rio-Tinto Mines: Roman Gold-Mining in Spain'. Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 pm.
- Tuesday 8th May: Dr M G Fulford - 'Roman Towns as Markets - a review'. Institute of Archaeology, 36 Beaumont Street, Oxford at 6.00 pm.
- Monday 14th May: Malcolm Todd - 'Rome and the Northern Barbarians'. Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 pm.
- Wednesday 16th May: Dr Rupert Bruce-Mitford - 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial in the History of Art'. At the Gulbenkian Lecture Theatre, St Cross Building, Manor Road, Oxford at 8.15 pm. Tickets at 75 p may be purchased in advance from Oxford University Department of External Studies, Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford or obtained at the door on the night.
- Wednesday 16th May: Dr D Briggs - 'The Ice Ages and Oxfordshire'. At the lecture theatre of the John Mason School, Wootton Road, Abingdon at 7.30 pm.
- 14 - 18th May: Planning and Interpretation Part I Rural; Part II Urban in association with Oxford Polytechnic. Further details from the Course Secretary, Oxford University Department for External Studies, Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford.
- 19th May: Visit to History Section of Oxford Central Library by Thame Historical Society at 2.30 pm. Contact Mr G R Southern, 5 Oxford Road, Thame for details.
- 19th May: SOAG visit to Woodstock Museum and the Rollright Stones. Meeting 11 am at Museum. Bring lunch. Visitors welcome.
- General meeting centre - Langtree School, Woodcote. New members always welcome. Ring Pangbourne 2901 for details.
- Sunday 20th May: Full day excursion to see Carboniferous Limestone, lead minerals, Blue John etc. Details from Mr S Moss, 35 Spenser Avenue, Yarnton, Oxford - Business Secretary for the Oxford Geology Group.
- Monday 21st May: Dr Desmond Collins - 'Are we fair to Neanderthal Man?'. Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 pm.
- Tuesday 29th May: OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT STAFF MEETING - 2.15 pm at the Unit. (provisional date)
- Monday 28th May: David Hinton - 'Alfred's burhs: Wareham and other sites'. Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 pm.
- Monday 4th June: Prof C F C Hawkes - 'Julius Caesar's Belgic Britons'. Ashmolean Museum at 8.15 pm.