



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER INCLUDING
OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

Vol VII, No. 3 - May 1980

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send details to the above address before Friday, 13th June 1980, for inclusion in the next issue.

OXFORDSHIRE

Abingdon, Checker Walk

Excavations are currently taking place on a site within the precincts of Abingdon Abbey, in advance of re-development. Post-medieval features uncovered include pits, two walls, and two large cess-pits, one brick-lined and the other stone-lined. In an area of the trench which is largely undisturbed by post-medieval intrusions, two superimposed cobbled surfaces, apparently medieval, have been found. This ties in well with documentary evidence suggesting that the area was part of the 'Base Court' of the Abbey. A large medieval pit is sealed by these surfaces. Roman pottery has been abundant in the medieval layers, but so far no Roman features have been identified. Excavation is continuing, and volunteers are welcome. Contact Godfrey Jones on Abingdon 20688 for details.

Godfrey Jones, Roger Thomas, Jeff Wallis - Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society.

Bicester, The Causeway

A small excavation was staged by R. White, an In-Service Trainee, with some of the MSC STEP labour during March, on a development plot fronting The Causeway. This road connects the Market Square and St. Edburg's Church and crosses branches of the River Bure to the east and west of the site. Construction work on a housing development at Lower Home Close, immediately north of the site had revealed extensive stratified medieval occupation (reported by R.A. Chambers in the October 1979 Newsletter). The 1752 map of Bicester (CRO ref UDC xv/1) shows buildings fronting both sides of The Causeway and it was hoped that excavation would reveal evidence concerning the relationship of the settlement nuclei of Bicester and produce a stratified medieval pottery sequence for the town.

A 17.5m long trial trench was dug by hand. The northern end of the trench was crossed by a number of stone lined drains set into post-medieval deposits while excavation nearer the road revealed a series of well preserved post-medieval

cobbled surfaces overlying a thick deposit of dark grey silt. A succession of tipped deposits at the south edge of the trench related to the construction of The Causeway contained pottery provisionally dated to the fourteenth century.

This suggested that The Causeway was constructed across what was, in the medieval period, a flood plain of the River Bure, and that the flood plain was only reclaimed for development in the early post-medieval period.

Drayton, Sutton Wick

A linear cropmark, which may be a northerly part of the Drayton cursus, has recently been exposed in a gravel pit near Sutton Wick. Two sections have been cut, showing the feature to be a V-shaped ditch. No finds have been recovered. It is not yet clear whether this feature is part of the cursus, but it is hoped that work in an adjacent field may elucidate this question.

Godfrey Jones, Roger Thomas, Jeff Wallis - Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society.

Hardwick

An area excavation has been carried out by Tim Allen at Smiths Field, Hardwick adjacent to the Mingies Ditch Iron Age site. A late Iron Age circular drip gully with a rectangular trench built structure inside, and a fenced annexe to the north was superseded in the late first century AD by a penannular ditched enclosure with external gravel bank. The rectangular building has a 'ritual' animal burial at the south-east corner. A second area has uncovered parts of several late Iron Age large and small enclosures. Work continues.

Oxford, Bulwarks Lane

Having abandoned hope of finding the western boundary of the burh here, at the last moment a post-in-trench feature appeared. It was cut into natural gravel on a north-south alignment and yielded pottery of Oxford Fabric B, typical of the tenth century. In this situation there is just a chance that it relates to some sort of lacing of a defensive structure, but if so it is still unclear where the rampart itself should be expected. The contractors' trenches may cast further light on this next year.

Oxford, 11-12 Queen Street

The existing cellars have been back-filled and new shops are to be constructed on piles with no basements. There was, therefore, virtually no archaeological threat, but an exploratory trench was dug to see what sort of deposits survive. There was at least 0.25m of late Saxon layers and pits. In the limited area these could not easily be interpreted, but a good column of road surfaces was seen and there is a real chance that in places the Saxon frontage may survive within the site.

Radley, Thrupp Farm

Post-excavation work on the finds from this Neolithic flint scatter and Iron Age

settlement site is continuing. Excavation will be resuming at the site shortly.

Godfrey Jones, Roger Thomas, Jeff Wallis - Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society.

Stanton Harcourt, Dix Pit

Topsoil stripping for further gravel extraction in Amey Roadstone's Dix gravel pit at Stanton Harcourt has revealed boundary ditches and early Romano-British rubbish pits. The Oxford University Archaeological Society and Geoffery Williams from Witney have completed a preliminary survey of the features. A more complete picture of the occupation which covers several acres will be obtained during the next few months.

Wallingford, Brewery Site, Goldsmiths Lane

Richard Chambers reports that another deep construction trench on this site has produced only Post-Medieval rubbish pits. Again no Medieval pottery was found. The Unit is grateful to members of the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society for maintaining a watch over the building operations on this site which lies within the defences of the late Saxon town.

CALENDAR

2nd-4th May Archaeology of Berkshire - to be held at Bulmershe College, Reading.

19th-22nd May Rural Land Management - in association with Oxford Polytechnic.

(For further details of the above courses, please contact the Course Secretary, Department for External Studies, Rewley House, 3-7 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA).

31st May Archaeology in Oxfordshire, 1980 - please see separate sheet.

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

ARCHAEOLOGY IN OXFORDSHIRE, 1980

31st May 1980 - 2.15 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.

A meeting of local archaeologists will be held at the St. Cross Building, (Law and English Library), St. Cross Road on 31st May 1980 at which local part-time and professional archaeologists will describe current archaeological projects in the Oxford region.

Anyone with an interest in the County's buried past is invited to attend. Tickets and details of the final programme will be available in the week preceding the meeting and will be obtainable from the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford.

Admission 50p.