

Following the monthly staff meeting on the 29th January and the meeting of all the volunteers on the 4th February it has been decided to attempt to produce an Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit Newsletter. The aim of the Newsletter will be to attempt to provide a channel of communication between all those working for the Unit since members of the Unit are likely to be widely separated geographically. For instance at the present work is going on in Abingdon, Banbury, Oxford and Mongewell (Grim's Ditch). The Newsletter will tend to be factual but if anyone wishes to use it as a vehicle for discussion they are welcome to do so. A Calendar of forthcoming events will be a feature of the Newsletter.

Current Excavations

Oxford: Work at both Blackfriars and All Saints is continuing. At All Saints further recording of a crypt has been carried out. The Blackfriars excavation proper supervised by Humphrey Woods recommenced in January. The Church is now known to be one bay longer than it has been thought. The western range of the cloisters and a further building are currently being uncovered. An outstanding find has been a pewter communion cup and plate. A.T.V. filmed the site, but did not use the film. Some skeletons have also been salvaged from the Carmelite graveyard adjacent to the Playhouse.

Banbury: The excavation under Kirsty Rodwell has continued for a month longer than expected. The major discovery has been of an early medieval stone building standing to a height of over 1 metre. This building was sealed beneath the outer bailey bank. The western side of the gateway has also been exposed. Excavation has been limited in this area by the existence of an unrecorded gas main. Finds from the site have been fairly few but have included some relics of the Civil War including a cannon ball and burials.

Grim's Ditch, Mongewell: John Hinchliffe has begun the excavation. The top of the bank is heavily eroded and contains later burials. The top of the ditch on the south side has been uncovered. There also seems to be a ditch on the north side, but this may only be a roadside quarry.

Watching Briefs: Charlie Chambers is continuing to observe the sites at Somerton, the Farmoor - Woodstock water pipeline and the gravel workings in the area.

Future Excavations

Negotiations are in progress for the Chequer Walk and Barton Lane, (outline planning consent) sites in Abingdon, a site in Chipping Norton. Negotiations are also continuing for sites in Wallingford, Hanwell and Shipton-under-Wychwood. A meeting is shortly to be arranged with Mr. Lawless, land agent of A.R.C. for a major gravel site.

Publication Programme

Oxford: Brian Durham is continuing writing-up 79-81 St. Aldates, Regina Haldon is completing the pottery report and the bone report by Professor Marples is in draft form. Amanda Hebbert working at Oxford City and County Museum on a temporary basis is continuing to work on conservation of iron from the site. Hilary Turner is completing a documentary survey of the site.

Abingdon: Michael Parrington is working on the central area sites and drawings and specialist reports are in progress. David Hiles will be working on the Barton Court Farm report now that the gravel survey has been completed.

Appleford: John Hinchliffe has drafted his report on the excavation. The pottery is being drawn and Mark Robinson is working on the environmental material from the two wells. He reports that this material is the richest he has yet excavated.

Small towns report: Kirsty Rodwell will be starting this report when the Banbury excavations have been written up. The Director of the Oxford City and County Museum has offered to cooperate with this survey and he hopes to contribute a section on buildings.

Monthly Staff Meetings

In future at the monthly meetings in addition to Field Officers a volunteer will represent each site or work place e.g. the drawing office. In addition the Newsletter will contain reports of matters discussed at these meetings. There will also be meetings at irregular intervals for volunteers similar to the meeting on the 4th February. At these meetings all volunteers will be able to express their views on matters such as the rates of subsistence.

Salaries and Subsistence

Salaries and subsistence have been a major topic of recent discussion. The main points to emerge are that there is a general feeling that both salaries and subsistence are too low. This point is accepted by the Committee who have proposed the following action:

- 1) Salaries. All staff salaries will be re-examined, probably on the 5th March by a review body consisting of the O.A.U. Management Committee. This committee has been empowered to raise salaries if the funds are available. One positive step in making money available is that an extra staff appointment (a second field officer for the gravels) will not now be made in the next financial year. Details of the mechanism of the review will probably be available at the next staff meeting.
- 2) Subsistence. The Treasurer is at the time of writing working out the financial implications of an immediate rise. Since this is the end of the Financial Year the Unit has very little cash in hand. It is not possible at the present time to give a definite figure for a rise.

For the coming financial year the committee is anxious that subsistence rates should be realistic. At the same time it intends that some permanent diggers should be taken on on a wage basis. Preference will inevitably be given to those people with either particular skills or those who wish to remain with the Unit for more than a year.

Recording

It is hoped that a unified recording system for sites and finds processing will soon emerge. A specimen feature card is attached to this newsletter for use as a target for criticism. A finds card will also be produced. Any further comments in addition to those already made will be gratefully received.

Safety

The question of safety was brought up at the recent staff meeting. In view of the fears expressed henceforward each excavation site will have a 'safety officer' who will be responsible to Tom Hassall for safety. In the meanwhile a copy of 'Responsibility and Safeguards in Archaeological Excavations' ed. P.J. Fowler and a copy of 'Unshored Excavations are Killers' by J.A. Hayward can be read at Luther Terrace or will be taken out to any site which would like to see them. If you have any worries about safety please do not keep them to yourself.

Calendar for February and March

21st February	O.U.A.S. Richard Reece 'Excavations on Iona'.
23rd, 24th February	Open day at Banbury 2.30 - 5.30 p.m.
27th February	Staff Meeting
"	O.P.S. E.C. Harris 'The Development of the New Stratigraphic Method in the Evaluation of the Brooks site, Winchester' 5 p.m. Institute of Archaeology. All field officers will be expected to attend and anyone else interested in site recording.
2nd March	Rescue A.G.M. L.S.E. 2.00 p.m.
4th March	O.U.A.S. Michael Dolley 'Viking-Age Coins'.
5th March	Unit Salaries Review
6th March	O.A.H.S. Tom Hassall 'Excavations in Oxford 1973'
9th March	Meeting of active local field workers 2.30 p.m. O.C.C.M.
11th March	O.U.A.S. Mark Blackburn 'Anglo-Saxon Coinage'.
26th March	Staff Meeting
26th March	O.P.S. P.A. Rahtz 'Techniques of Pottery Processing'. Attendance expected by field officers and pottery assistants.
30th-31st March	Conference on Local Archaeology