

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT NEWSLETTER  
INCLUDING OXFORDSHIRE PARISH SURVEY NEWS

No. 4 - April 1977

Anyone wishing to send contributions to the Newsletter should send to 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP (Tel. 43888) before the last Tuesday of each month.

ABINGDON - East St. Helen Street

An unpaid day of Roger Thomas' Easter break was spent by digging a contractor's pit for him at 57 East St. Helen Street. By sheer luck, the small-sized 'trench' sectioned a relatively undisturbed soil build-up since Roman times. Additional column sampling and sieving showed that the limited section was unlikely to be part of a medieval pit. An early Roman deposit lay above the natural and a ? large posthole was cut into the gravel too. Subsequent deposition appeared to be a disturbed (? ploughed) Roman dark soil profile which graded into c. twelfth century and later medieval deposition to c. fifteenth century date without noticeable change in soil colour. A layer of brick and mortar debris covered the medieval deposit and a probable seventeenth century pit. Above this was eighteenth to nineteenth century accumulation. It is possible that the rubble layer is construction rather than destruction debris since the house, or at least its facade, was built in 1732. This keyhole trench has provided useful information including a record of the presence of seventeenth century longhorned cattle breeds locally for their origins are scarcely documented.

ABINGDON - St. Helen's Church Centre

Bob Wilson reports that work by the Abingdon Society under the supervision of Michael Parrington has begun on the old carpet factory site adjacent to St. Helen's churchyard and the almshouses. Underneath concrete and brick wall foundations, presumably of the factory, were three other stone wall foundations, two enclosing a cobbled area and the approximately contemporary third dating from 1806 (coppercain). The eighteenth to nineteenth century fill and the walls have been removed exposing an earlier tile drain and other cobbled surfaces. Unstratified Roman pottery has also been found there.

Progress is good but less than two months remain to dig, so any volunteers with pickaxes, shovels and trowels to extend the trench, on Sunday mornings, would be appreciated.

BERINSFIELD - Mount Farm

Stripping by A.R.C. is continuing on this site but so far few archaeological features have been located.

FINSTOCK

Work on recording the remains of Topples deserted medieval village is now well under way and an earthworks plan produced by Richard Chambers in conjunction with the Finstock Local History Society is almost complete. Clear felling of the existing woodland has caused some damage to the existing earthworks and tumbled stone walls of a

medieval farmstead but clearance has revealed several new earthworks to the east of the known site. The site is to be replanted with mixed woodland.

#### HARDWICK

Investigation of cropmarks near Hardwick by Mark Robinson, with the assistance of Phil Page and students from Culham College, have shown a large double enclosure to be of Bronze Age or Iron Age date and waterlogged material is preserved in its ditches. Trenches through some possible ring ditches nearby failed to find them and suggest that they may have been 'fairy rings'.

#### TFTSWORTH - Attington D.M.V.

Richard Chambers has just completed a survey of the earth-works belonging to the deserted medieval village of Attington. A part of the village has recently been disturbed by the excavation of several modern fishponds. This has brought to light much pottery and building evidence in an area of the field that had previously been recorded as void of surface remains. Mrs. Thomas of Dormer Leys Farm has spent much time collecting, washing and recording archaeological material from the spoil heaps.

#### WALLINGFORD - 5-8 Market Place

Mike Parrington reports that inspection of test pits on this site has shown that at least 2m. of made-up ground exists on the site. A few sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the test pits.

#### WALLINGFORD - Wood Street

This site was investigated by Mike Parrington after a report by the Wallingford Society of a 'domed structure' being found there. This turned out to be a large stone-lined circular feature covered by an arch of brick and is probably an eighteenth/nineteenth century cess pit which had been sealed up.

#### NORTHAMPTON - Towcester

A public exhibition and lecture organised by the South Northamptonshire Archaeological Society was held at Towcester School on 23rd April. George Lambrick and Robin Symonds provided material on the Park Street excavation as one of the many exhibits illustrating the archaeology and history of the town. George Lambrick gave the lecture of the afternoon on the Park Street site. Both the exhibition and the lecture were well attended with about 200 people present for the lecture. As with the Farmoor exhibition and lecture the degree of positive local interest was impressive and most gratifying.

Meanwhile, work continues on the preparation of the final report which it is hoped will be near completion by mid-summer.

## PARISH SURVEY INFORMATION

The new graveyard recording forms have now been duplicated and are available from the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit or the Oxfordshire County Museum Field Department, Woodstock.

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### CALENDAR FOR MAY AND JUNE

- 2 May           OUAS. Dr. Roger Moorey. 'Excavations at Tell Mardikh in Syria - Why all the fuss?' - Ashmolean Museum 8.15 p.m.
- 2-5 May        Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester. Weekend Conference - 'Local History in a Rural Setting'.
- 6-8 May        OUDES. Weekend Conference. 'Coins and Archaeology'.
- 13-15 May     Weekend Conference on 'First Aid and Treatment for Archaeological Finds' - Knuston Hall.
- 9 May          OUAS. Anthony Legge, Esq. 'Bronze Age Agriculture at Grimes Graves, Norfolk' - Ashmolean Museum 8.15 p.m.
- 14-15 May     OUDES. Weekend Conference on New Approaches to the Archaeology of Cemeteries. Rewley House.
- 16 May         OUAS. Dr. J. Chadwick. 'The Mycenaean Kingdom of Pylos' - Ashmolean Museum 8.15 p.m.
- 18 May         Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society. Mr. D. G. Vaisey. 'Shops in Victorian Oxford'. John Mason School, Abingdon - 7.30 p.m.
- 19 May         Oxford Geology Group. Dr. F. B. Atkins. Short talk on minerals followed by demonstrations in the Museum. Department of Geology, Parks Road, Oxford. - 6.30 p.m.
- 21 May         OUDES with Parish Survey. Dr. Margaret Gelling. 'Place Names and Charter Boundaries' - Rewley House, 10.00 a.m.
- 23 May         OUAS. Dr. G. Barker. 'Rural Archaeology in Molise, Southern Italy' - Ashmolean Museum 8.15 p.m.
- 24 May         OAU Staff meeting - 2.15 p.m. 46 Hythe Bridge Street.
- 30 May         OUAS. Dr. M. Aitken. 'Summer Luminescence and other Archaeometry' - Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 8 June         OUAS. Philip Dixon, Esq. 'Hall Houses and Tower Houses in Medieval Border Scotland' - Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 13 June        OUAS. The President (Michael Parker). 'Early Renaissance Art and Architecture' - Ashmolean Museum, 8.15 p.m.
- 15 June        Abingdon Archaeological and Historical Society. Members evening. John Mason School, Abingdon, 7.30 p.m.