

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXVIII

1978

IMRAY LAURIE NORIE AND WILSON

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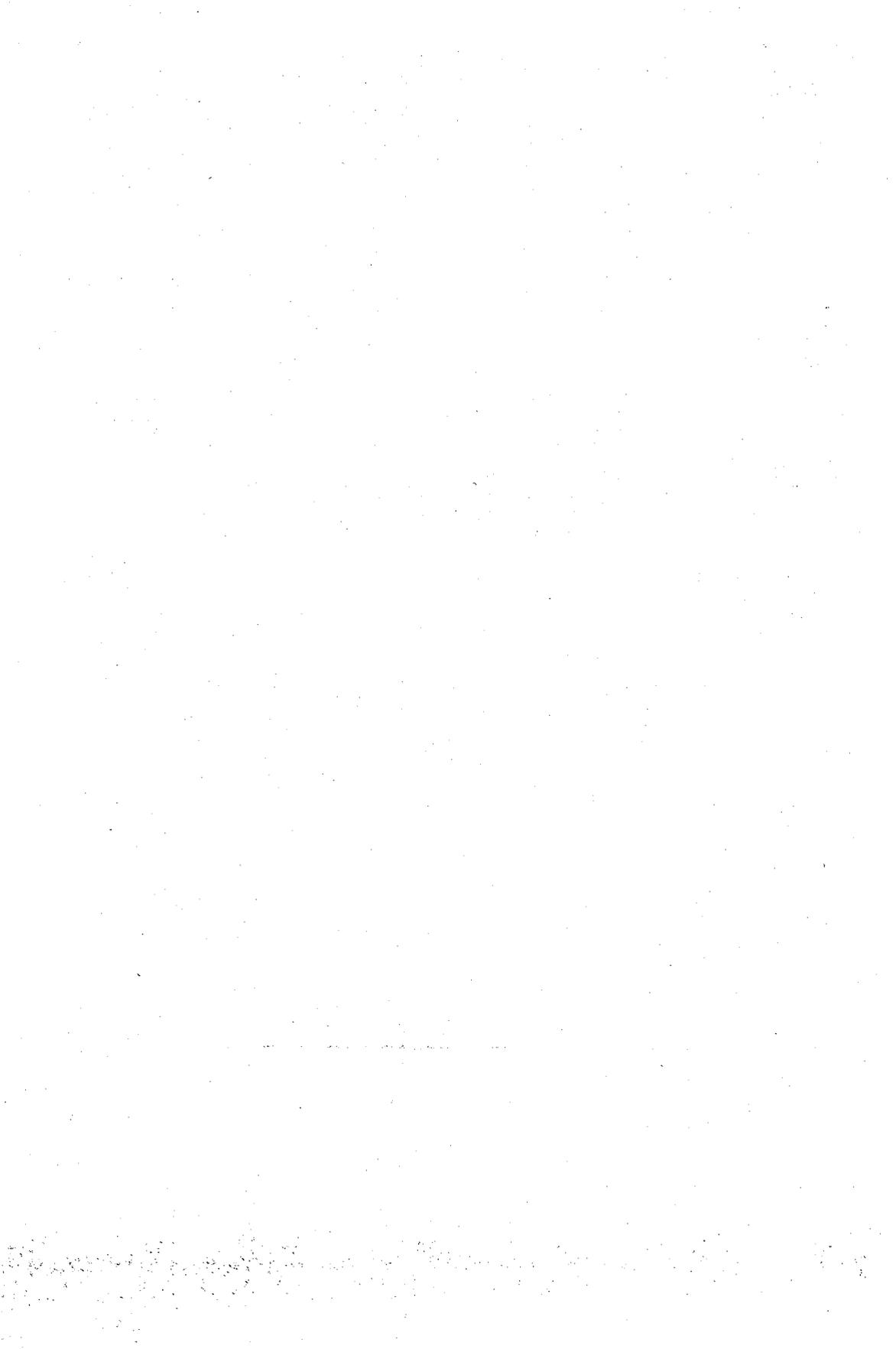
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## FIELD OFFICER'S REPORT, 1977-8

### *Excavations*

A third season's work completed the excavations of an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement on the banks of the Cam at *Shelford*, TL445526, by Dr. J. Alexander, A. Legge & D. Trump. H.J.M. Green continued his long-term work in Roman *Godmanchester* and H. C. Mytum followed S. Alexander's work on the crop-marks at Colne Fen Farm, Colne near *Somersham*, TL384775. Whereas the excavation in 1976 produced an Iron Age Settlement, that in 1977, which was in the next field but one, was on an entirely Roman farmstead.

Joyce Pullinger has been watching the construction of the Cambridge Western bypass and noted a Roman kiln near *Harston*, TL446508 from which she retrieved Oxford type pottery which is unique in this area. Road works to improve the A604, Cambridge to Huntingdon, road also produced a valuable find near *Dry Drayton*, TL395630 when a JCB driver noticed a pagan Saxon glass beaker in his bucket. The site was immediately excavated, but the skeletons that were found all apparently belonged to a medieval gibbet and no other artifacts were discovered. All the above sites will appear in full in later Proceedings.

### *Site Recording*

A. The sites and monuments record which was described in the last volume of CAS (LXVII) has continued to expand and David Hall has spent another winter carrying out field work in the Fens, thus discovering many new sites and broadening our understanding of the unusual settlement of this neglected but fascinating region. An initial paper on one small area around Elm is included in these Proceedings. Meanwhile, L. J. Bradford has organized amateur enthusiasts to walk ploughed fields in the south of Cambridgeshire and some of their results are also described here. She is arranging lectures, training sessions and other activities in connection with local field-work, and anyone interested should contact her at 4, Cavendish Avenue, Cambridge.

B. A different kind of site recording is necessary when parochial church councils are given permission to remove gravestones for easier maintenance of the churchyards. Efforts are made to persuade the church authorities to keep as much of the character of the churchyards as possible, but some clearance is often inevitable, and then it is important to record details of the gravestones. *Waresley* churchyard was recorded by Young Rescue in 1976-7, and the University Field Club led by A. Davison has started work on around 1200 stones at St. Andrews, *Chesterton*, which will preserve valuable historical evidence of the population and memorials of this part of Cambridge.

A somewhat similar problem was posed by a lead roof at All Saints church, *Conington*, near Peterborough, which was covered in graffiti dating from 1633 to 1978.

A few sections of the roof will be retained, but most had to be melted down and recast as part of the restoration works on the church and we therefore photographed the decipherable inscriptions and sketches. Initials with dates were the most common graffiti, with some surnames and occasionally the home village (eg. "T. Hough, Sawtry 1776"), but no longer messages. A few of these names were also to be found on gravestones in the churchyard. The great majority dated to the eighteenth and nineteenth century, with a steady increase throughout this period, no doubt due to the general growth in literacy. Changes in styles of handwriting were very apparent as most of the lettering was quite carefully executed up till the twentieth century when the typical hasty scratchings were fortunately very scarce. Some of the lettering had been cut with a sharp blade and some pecked out, probably by men working on repairs to the roof. A few inscriptions had a decorative border but the most common illustrations were hands and boots presumably drawn around the originals by their owners. A few boot shapes were small, but most must have belonged to adult men, and a variety of styles are discernible.

The preserved section of the roof will be kept inside the church, which is redundant but open to the public, and the photographs, which were taken by Robert Boyle of the Nene Valley Research Committee and Dean Cullum of the Cambridgeshire County Council, will be kept in the Cambridgeshire sites and monuments record.

### *Meetings*

Apart from the regular lectures and outings of the CAS, a training weekend for the study of local archaeology, archives and architecture was held at Graffham Water by Huntingdon Local History Society, (Chairman, D. Cozens) and in Ely a day-meeting under the auspices of the Fenland Research Committee, (Chairman, Dr. J. Coles, Secretary, D. N. Hall), covered recent work on the early history of the Fens. Papers were given by Prof. H. C. Darby ("Past and future work"); D. R. Wilson ("Archaeological evidence of aerial photography"), R. Evans ("some results of the soil survey"), B. Simmons ("Recent fieldwork in Lincs."), D. N. Hall, ("Recent fieldwork in Cambs."), D. Owen ("Documentary sources for the southern fenland in the middle ages) and J. Ravensdale ("Swavesey: the discovery of a planned fortified medieval port.") Results of excavations were summarised by F. Pryor (Fengate), P. Chowne (Billingborough), A. Taylor (Newton) and E. Martin (West Row). The chairman was J. Coles and approximately 200 people attended.

During the past year an archaeology workshop has been held in the City Library, Lion Yard, on the first Saturday in each month, 9.30 — 12.00 am. People are invited to bring in archaeological objects for identification or to discuss any aspects of local archaeology in which they are interested. It is thus possible to record many new discoveries and members of the CAS are requested to encourage people to come along, and to attend themselves.

Alison Taylor  
May 1978

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