

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXIX

1979

IMRAY LAURIE NORIE AND WILSON

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FIELD OFFICERS' REPORTS, 1978-9

Work in the Roman town of *Godmanchester* continued under H. J. M. Green, and in the Roman area of *Cambridge* a small training excavation was carried out by Dr J. Alexander for further examination of the defences. At *Elton* near Peterborough, Alison Taylor cut a trial trench through the site of a probable Neolithic henge which had been revealed on aerial photographs, and at *Dry Drayton* Michael Sekulla examined some earthworks in the village centre and found the stone footings of the manor house and evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation.

Emergency explorations were carried out by Alison Taylor when extensive finds of Roman material were reported from a quarry near *Godmanchester* (TL 259721). The site had almost disappeared but it was possible to plot the position of a pottery kiln, a shallow well containing leather and wood and fragments of 2 rectangular buildings.

At *Horningsea* (TL 496645) the field adjacent to the Roman pottery kilns excavated early this century was ploughed for the first time last autumn, revealing a large number of human bones and Roman pottery in the plough soil. The skeletons were very disturbed and no grave-goods were noted but the extent of the cemetery, which was probably contemporary with the kilns, was plotted.

One most important object found this year was a Roman bronze statuette from gravel pits at Earith. Unfortunately the find was illegally taken from the site and has not yet been seen by any archaeologist, but to judge from photographs it is about 20 cms high, of fine craftsmanship and represents a youthful curly haired male in a long tunic. A rather similar bronze statuette of Mars was found a mile away in 1826 and is now in the British Museum. We hope to be able to report more fully next year on this object and its future.

Last autumn the Manpower Services Commission paid for the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Committee to employ 6 young graduates under the Special Temporary Employment Programme for one year. This team has sketch-surveyed and described the earthworks in a number of Huntingdonshire villages and inspected the villages for further sites. Villages surveyed so far are: Alconbury, Alconbury Weston, Abbotsley, Brampton, Broughton, Buckden, Denton, Easton, Ellington, Ellington Thorpe, Fenstanton, Folksworth, Grafham, Great Gransden, Great Staughton, Hardwick, Hemingford Grey, Hemingford Abbot, Hail Weston, Hamerton, Kings Rippon, Leighton Bromswold, Little Paxton, and Spaldwick. The surveys are kept in the sites-and-monuments record held by the Planning Office, Shire Hall, Cambridge. Many scheduled ancient monuments have been visited and their condition checked, and detailed field-walking took place on the Mesolithic and Neolithic settlement at Peacock's Farm, Littleport. In addition the S.T.E.P. employees have made a disused property, 78 Castle Street, Cambridge, into an

archaeological centre and work-place and have helped with a great deal of artwork, finds-processing and excavation.

Meanwhile 2 historians have worked on archival sources for Cambridgeshire. Their aim was to examine published and manuscript sources and historical maps for topographical information, field-names and other useful references and to help with detailed historical work for fenland parishes. This information is stored in parish files and the sites-and-monuments record.

David Hall, the Fenland Field Officer, has field-walked another 25,000 acres of fen in order to establish early settlement patterns and fen landscapes and is preparing further village surveys of the kind published for Elm in last year's *Proceedings*.

In June this year Francis Pryor joined the Committee staff in order to take care of the great number of archaeological sites, known and unknown, that are threatened by gravel excavation in the Welland Valley. He is at present organising a team to excavate prehistoric settlements and religious monuments at Maxey and to field-walk areas of the Welland Valley using statistical methods.

The archaeology workshop continues to be held in the City Library on the first Saturday morning of each month, to which people are invited to bring archaeological objects for identification and recording, and to talk about archaeological matters. We are holding similar events annually in Huntingdon Library and the Haddenham Farm-life museum. We have also held exhibitions of archaeological work at the Cambridge Leisure Fair and in the Corn Exchange, Wisbech Museum and the East of England Show.

Alison Taylor
August 1979

Fenland Survey

This survey was initiated by the Committee to assess the archaeological potential of the fenland with its important range of pre-medieval sites, preserved either in the form of earthworks or buried by fen deposits.

During the three winter seasons of 1976-79 about 75,000 acres of the Cambridgeshire fenland have been studied in detail. This is about one third of the total area, so giving a large sample enabling a meaningful assessment of the whole to be made. It is now possible to identify the fen edge at differing archaeological periods and so place settlements in their contemporary landscape.

The most exciting results of the 1978-9 season were the identification of a previously unknown Bronze Age settlement and barrow-field at Ramsey, and an extensive Mesolithic complex on sand dunes at Littleport (of which the well-known Peacock's Farm site is part).

The results are available in the form of parish studies (such as Elm published in this Journal), and also in the form of county period-maps which summarise the essential information.

David Hall

Welland Valley

Much of the summer was spent planning the first season of work at Maxey (TF 128 077) where some twelve acres of cropmarks in a gravel quarry are shortly to be stripped and excavated. The project will begin with a very detailed surface survey of the site which will plot the distributions of finds and soil phosphate concentrations against archaeological features revealed in the subsoil. Stripped features will then be planned, sampled and excavated in the usual way. The excavation will be set in its landscape context by means of a valley-wide surface survey, carried out by volunteers, and based on random transects across the width of the valley, placed at approximate kilometre intervals. Special attention will be paid to the distribution of finds between known and newly-found sites.

Francis Pryor

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