

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXIX

1979

IMRAY LAURIE NORIE AND WILSON

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THE CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Following a year in which the Group was organised on a relatively casual basis, for which the results have already been reported (*P.C.A.S.* LXVIII 1978 xi-xiii), an open meeting was held at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology on 6 September 1978. The meeting resulted in a formal constitution being adopted, and officers being elected. The main purposes of the Group, as defined in its constitution, are to further interest in and forward the aims of archaeology in the Cambridge area and, in co-operation with other interested organisations or individuals, to record archaeological evidence threatened with damage or destruction and to undertake research or excavation where necessary.

One of the most important aspects of the work of the group is in the training of interested volunteers in correct archaeological techniques. It is obvious that in the current financial climate public funding for archaeological work is likely to be severely limited, professional units cannot cope with the number of threatened sites and the country cannot afford to pay for their survey or excavation. It seems that there will have to be an increasing reliance on properly trained and supervised amateur groups to deal with the threat to archaeological material.

The Group, since its formal constitution, has been affiliated to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society as an associate body so that the work of the two organisations might be better co-ordinated. Grants have been received from the Cambridge City Council Lottery Fund and the Lloyds Bank Fund administered by the Royal Archaeological Institute, which have enabled the purchase of much needed surveying equipment.

The work of the Group has again concentrated in the winter months on field walking in the Granta Valley and adjacent areas south of Cambridge (see below). It was felt that the survival and recovery of artefacts by this means should be correlated with the known and inferable history of land use and the information compared with that provided by crop marks, earthworks and other visible surface features. Documentary, architectural and historico-ecological evidence and other sources should also be studied, to provide a co-ordinated picture of past landscapes.

The parish of Stapleford was selected for detailed study and, in addition to field walking, the Group has started a survey of earthworks including a moated site in the village, hedgerow dating, graveyard recording and a study of available documentary evidence. Here we must thank the farmers and landowners for their help and co-operation, the vicar for allowing us access to field books and other historical documents, and others, too numerous to mention, who have helped in many ways.

Increasing petrol costs, amongst other factors, have meant that many members feel

themselves unable to travel regularly to Stapleford. Any such restrictions on the involvement of members in the work of the Group is undesirable and the activities of the Group must be widened to cater for the many members living in other parts of the county. Some work other than that in the Granta Valley has been undertaken by the Group and preliminary results are given here.

Field walking was carried out along the route of the gas pipeline and road works on the A604 between Bar Hill (TL 377645) and Fen Stanton (TL 311687). Although this produced little material of archaeological interest, the discovery of a previously unknown outcrop (TL 362653) of the Boxworth rock horizon of the Ampthill claybeds resulted from finding a number of fossils, in particular several species of ammonite.

During the construction of a car parking area on Newmarket Road opposite Cambridge Airport (TL 491592) a series of pits and ditches with a dark infill was revealed. These features were surveyed and a plan produced: the very limited excavation possible showed the infill to contain animal bones and several small shards of Iron Age pottery.

A survey of earthworks near River Farm, Haslingfield (around TL 412518) was also carried out, together with field walking, when the main field concerned was brought under cultivation for the first time in many years. The earthworks included hollow-ways and banks which could be correlated with a roadway and the boundaries of small closes on the parish enclosure map. There also appeared to be house platforms and the field walking produced quern stones and heavy scatters of early Medieval pottery, including St Neots ware, suggesting a former settlement site.

A number of members of the Group provided assistance on Mr Michael Sekulla's trial excavation of the manor house site at Dry Drayton during the summer.

In addition to practical work in the field, the Group has also organised visits to West Stow and Grimes Graves and a series of monthly lectures. Speakers have included Mr D. Mackreth on Archaeological work in the Peterborough area, Mr J. Wymer on Paleolithic flints, Mr D. Hall on recent work in the fens, Mr Graham Lawson on early musical instruments and a geological workshop with Dr C. Forbes. It is hoped to arrange a further series of lectures during the coming year.

R. J. Flood

Field walking in the Stapleford area.

Because of the bad weather only a small proportion of the work planned for the winter 1978-79 was completed. Despite this, various interesting finds were made, the significance of which will become more apparent when the full report is published.

The season began with the completion of several fields in the vicinity of Wandlebury, Stapleford, which had been only partially walked the previous year (TL 501537, Mr Bush, and TL 491535, Mr Bradford). These produced very little, despite their proximity to the hill-fort and the Roman road. The opportunity arose for a brief investigation of an adjacent field (TL 505532, Mr Todd), where significant cropmarks of a ?Roman villa had been noted. This produced fragments of Roman

pottery and tile, as well as worked flint flakes which could well be connected with the tumulus overlooking this site.

The fields on the opposite side of the A604 to Wandlebury (TL 489532, Mr Bush), produced another scatter of worked flakes in the vicinity of a ploughed out circular cropmark; this field also produced an interesting series of 17th-century clay pipe stems, although little pottery of any period was found.

In the Clay Farm area (TL 458555, Sir Francis Pemberton), immediately adjacent to the farm, pipe stems, pottery and glass of the 17th century were found, as well as a 17th-century wig curler. Further finds in the same area (TL 455555) included a Mesolithic tranchet axe and a large number of worked flakes.

The season ended with a field in Shelford parish (TL 471532, Mr Webster), where a cluster of worked flints was found, again possibly associated with a ploughed out series of cropmarks in the adjacent field.

Although field walking was very restricted this season, the finds made appeared to be of some significance in the way many were associated with the cropmarks plotted on to maps from aerial photographs.

Further work concentrating on Stapleford parish will continue in the autumn of 1979.

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