

## Miscellanea and Reviews.

### Notes on The White Horse Hill Region. By L. V. Grinsell.

Since the publication of my little work entitled *White Horse Hill and Surrounding Country*, communications from correspondents and further research of my own have resulted in the following additional information coming into my hands.

#### A. *Scourings of the White Horse.*

(i). Mr. W. H. Hallam of Swindon has kindly sent me the following cutting from the *Reading Mercury* (on or about 25.3.39) which in its turn was extracted from the *Reading Mercury* of 9.3.1789:—

“A correspondent informs us that the White Horse, on the side of the downs, in White Horse Vale, has been lately re-cut, so that at the distance of three or four miles, it is perhaps one of the most lively representations of an elegant shaped Horse, except that the Horse's back, he thinks, is rather too long, otherwise it is now one of the best delineations of that animal he ever beheld.”

(ii). Mr. Hallam has also drawn my attention to the following reference in E. F. Hill's *Record of the Parish of Shrivenham*, p. 49 (quoted from the parish register of 1782)—

“That ancient piece of antiquity (in this neighbourhood), the White Horse, was cleaned for many years by William, Lord Barrington, but the ground on which the horse is cut being allotted by the Commissioners of the Uffington Inclosure, 1775, to William, Lord Craven, his lordship has since that time cleansed it annually at his expense, and has twice celebrated the Scouring of the Horse with every country diversion, at both which sports there were computed to be 30,000 spectators.”

(iii). A scouring of 1892, apparently without any accompanying festivities, was described by R. T. Gunther in his *The Oxford Country*, 1912, from extracts from the *Times*, 26th and 30th Aug., 1892. The scouring was done by a dozen men in three days. The following details of the same scouring were also given in the *Reading Mercury*, 31.12.1892:—“The work has been carried out under the direction of Mr. Andrew Dudgeon, of Stockholm Farm, Uffington, and by order of Lady Craven, at a cost of about £10. It is nearly nine years since the last scouring took place.”

#### B. *The Hill-Forts.*

A short account of Mr. and Mrs. Piggott's preliminary excavation at Ram's Hill camp was published in *Trans. Newbury*

*District Field Club*, VIII, 1939, pp. 116-7, and a further account will appear in the same journal for 1940, and in *The Antiquaries Journal*.

### C. *Dragon Hill*.

The following reference is from Rev. P. J. Goodrich, *Great Faringdon, Past and Present*, 1928, p. 82 :

"In 1757 Bishop Pococke, writing from Highworth, tells how the peasants took him to the Dragon's Hill, and showed him the bare place at the top where grass would never grow, because of the dragon's blood shed in the famous fight. They also say, by the way, that the White Horse cut out of the chalk on the hillside, was the saint's white steed."

The latter part of this reference is not without interest in view of the fact that St. George is usually depicted on a white horse.

### D. *Wayland's Smithy*.

(i). *The Metal Bars*. The alleged currency-bars found here in 1919 have now been identified by the British Museum authorities as pieces of metal of recent date, probably 18th century A.D. Both of them appear to have been made from the same piece of metal. For this information I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. C. F. C. Hawkes, F.S.A.

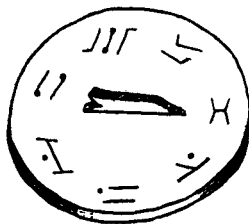


FIG. 1. *Detail of supposed Witches' Moon Dial found near Wayland's Smithy.*

(ii). *Possible Witch-relic*. At a meeting of the Folk-lore Society held in London on 15th March 1939, at which I was present, Mr. G. B. Gardner exhibited and described a number of supposed witch-relics, among which was a bone object labelled, "Witches Moon-dial, used by them at Moonlight. It is made of human bone, with only seven sections, the Seven Hours of Dread. Found near Weyland Smith's Cave, on the border of Berkshire and Wiltshire." The handwriting on the label is probably early or middle 19th century. The relic is figured and described in *Folk-lore*, Vol. 50, 1939, Plate VII and p. 190. I am indebted to Mr. Gardner for sending me a drawing of the detail on the dial, which is here reproduced (Fig. 1).

(iii). *A Human Skull*. Mr. R. M. Holland-Martin has recently bought in a curiosity shop a human skull marked *Wayland's Smithy*, and with it a paper saying that it was at one time in the possession of one 'Mary Chalmers, a woman of skill in the curing of cows and sheep, who died on June 4th, 1810, and lived at Little Moreton', east of Didcot. I am indebted to Mr. H. J. E. Peake for passing this information on to me.

*E. Sarsens.*

In my *White Horse Hill*, p. 35, I gave the usual sheep-stealing legend connected with hangmanstones, but stated that so far as I knew it had not been recorded of the Berkshire stones. In *The Berkshire Book* (Federation of Womens' Institutes, 1939), p. 102, this legend is now recorded of the Lambourn hangmanstone, and I am now informed by Mr. H. J. E. Peake that the legend is also related of the hangmanstone two miles north of Boxford. See Mrs. C. M. A. Peake's *Pagan Corner*, 1923, Chapter IV.

*F. Archaeological Finds in the White Horse Hill Area.*

(Additions to list, *White Horse Hill*, p. 47).

(i). *White Horse Hill* (near). Celtic bronze stud enamelled in red, from downs S.E. of White Horse Hill, in Ashmolean Museum. (See *Antiquity*, II (1928), 218).

(ii). *Woolstone*. I am indebted to Mr. F. M. Underhill for telling me of the accompanying photograph (Plate I) of one of the two Roman pavements that formerly existed near this village. It is reproduced by permission of the Librarian, Reading Public Library. For bibliography of the Woolstone pavements, see Peake, *Arch. Berks*, 1931, pp. 249-250.

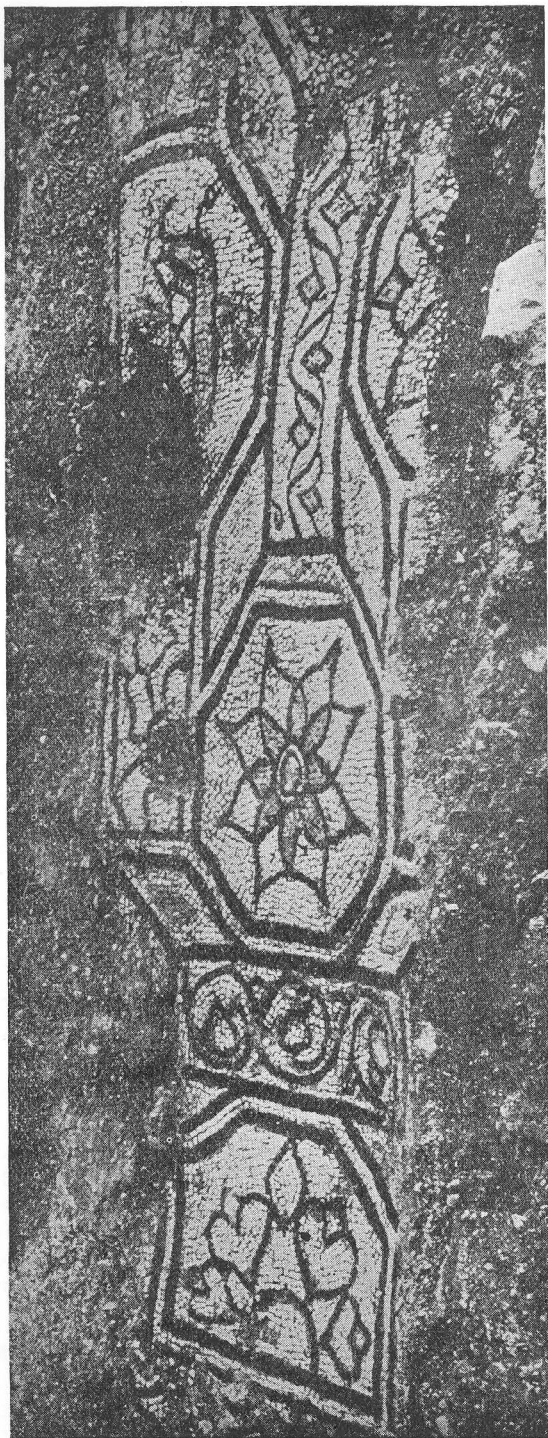
(iii). *Accessions to Newbury Museum*. The writer has recently given to the Newbury Museum one or two unimportant items including a well-worked flint scraper from the surface of the Lambourn long barrow, and some (? Early Iron Age) pottery from Alfred's Castle and its immediate vicinity.

*G. Fowler.*

This place-name is derived from Anglo-Saxon *Faga flora*. = variegated floor, and almost certainly refers to a Roman tessellated pavement that must have formerly existed hereabouts, although its exact site remains to be determined.<sup>1</sup> Attention has been drawn in *The Berkshire Book*, 1939, p. 94, to finds of Roman coins in the neighbourhood of Kingston Lisle near-by. Would someone resident in the locality and able to keep a record of finds of Roman

<sup>1</sup> *Intro. Vol. English Place-Name Soc.*, 143, ; *Antiquity* I (1927), 348, 478.

## PLATE I.



*Woolstone Roman Pavement.*

*By courtesy of the Reading Museum.*

"TESSELATED PAVEMENT of Mortuary Chamber, situated South and outside of the Roman Villa at Woolstone, discovered by R. Walker, May 1884." "Dimensions 10ft. by 6ft. The design shows at the east and floral ornaments. The 2nd compartment a festoon of enchain'd hearts. The 3rd flowers in convolutes. The 4th a Sunflower. The side compartment contains other enchain'd hearts, with flowers. The west end had been unfortunately broken up and the design uncertain but of the same character—all denoting the care bestowed on the remains of the dead previous to cremations."

*Extract from Joseph Stevens Manuscript "Tools and Weapons of Rude Races."*

remains be willing to mark their positions on a large scale map (6 inches to the mile)? Such a record would not only be valuable in itself, but might show a concentration of Roman material in one small area, and this might be the site of the Roman villa.

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### The Adulterine Castle at Faringdon.

In 1935, while digging the foundations for the tower erected by Lord Berners on the hill known as Faringdon Clump, to the south-east of the town, remains of a fortified site were discovered, and were subsequently excavated by Mr. E. T. Leeds (*Ant. Journ.* XVI, 165; XVII, 294). On documentary evidence, Mr. Leeds identified the site as that of the adulterine Castle built by Robert of Gloucester in 1144, and destroyed in the next year, and this identification was clearly of supreme importance in dating the abundant medieval pottery from the site within a single year, a circumstance practically unique.

In the discussion following the reading of Mr. Leeds' paper to the Society of Antiquaries in December 1935, Mr. Hugh Braun queried the identification of the site, on the grounds that the account in the *Gesta Stephani* did not satisfactorily agree with the position on Faringdon Clump, but there matters rested until this year. In the current volume of *Oxoniensia* (IV, 89-146) however, Mr. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford presents the results of his examination of the large series of the medieval pottery found in sealed groups in filled-in wells during the digging out of the foundations of the new Bodleian Extension in 1937, and not the least interesting feature of this most important paper is the discussion of the dating of the Faringdon pottery in the light of the new knowledge from the Bodleian series. For the detailed evidence one must refer the reader to Mr. Bruce-Mitford's original paper, but the nett result is to overthrow Mr. Leeds' identification of the site on the grounds of the pottery itself, for it is clear that typologically the Faringdon pottery cannot date from c. 1145, but must be attributed to the late XIII century. It is tentatively suggested therefore that the Faringdon Clump site may rather be associated with the civil wars culminating in the battle of Evesham in 1265, and that Robert of Gloucester's castle is yet to be found. S.P.

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### The Excavations at Frilford.

The excavations recently carried out at Frilford by the Oxford University Archaeological Society has been fully reported in *Oxoniensia* for 1939 by Messrs. J. S. P. Bradford and R. G. Goodchild, and in view of the exceptional importance of the site a brief

critical summary of the main finds and conclusions may usefully be given here for the benefit of those interested in Berkshire prehistory who are unable to obtain the original report.

The site of the excavations was to the east of the Noah's Ark Inn, which stands beside the Oxford-Wantage road, the subsoil being oolite. Three sites, A, B and C were excavated, the first including a Romano-Celtic temple with secondary annexes and an Iron Age hut underlying part of it; Site B, roughly in the centre of an Iron Age village, produced a hut and storage pits, as well as two isolated finds of a Roman coin-hoard and an Anglo-Saxon burial; Site C produced two most interesting ritual structures of Iron Age and Roman date respectively.

*Site A.* The Iron Age hut lay under the Romano-Celtic temple and was found to have been destroyed by fire very shortly before the Roman structure was built. A large number of post-holes were discovered, probably representing the complete plan of a polygonal hut, roughly 14ft. across each of its two main axes. The entrance suggested by the wider spacing of two postholes may have been to the south, but in other respects it would be rash to conjecture the function of various postholes inside the hut. Iron Age A1 and A2 pottery forms, with some haematite ware, were found in the pre-hut humus, and later types included a high proportion of burnished and soapy wares, with four bowls with swag decoration.

Clearly the pottery was of a higher standard than the remainder from the site, and because of this the authors have been tempted to suggest of this hut that "clearly its occupant was a person of social distinction," but since we may now infer from the Woodbury Excavations (carried out during the last two years by the Prehistoric Society) that a normal Iron Age 'A' farmer's house was a relatively imposing structure of regular plan, one cannot help doubting the high social status imputed to this small asymmetrical hut at Frilford.

The whole plan of the Romano-Celtic building was recovered, with the exception of its west end, which was however located in one or two places. The original building consisted of a square *cella*, 25ft. externally on each side, and surrounded by a portico 55ft. externally, both the form and dimensions being readily paralleled in other Romano-Celtic temples. Harder to find parallels for, is an outside pathway 11ft. wide, surrounding the outside of the portico. This building had been badly robbed, and the doorway was not recovered, though it was possible to discover its position on the east. On the west of the temple the north and south walls continued westwards for 33ft. to form a large annexe (I), divided into three rooms. For structural reasons this was considered a secondary feature. At the north-east corner of the Temple was annexe II, a small room of unknown use, also a later addition.

On the east was found an entrance pathway of gravel and stone, the make-up of which was found to contain three distinct layers. Of these, the lowest was contemporary with the earliest building; the middle contained pottery dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries; the uppermost was considerably later, and probably belonged to the 4th century. Above this latest layer was a thin deposit of dark earth, containing 78 coins, all of which, with the exception of 5 radiates, were of 4th-5th century date, and reflected considerable activity on the site at that time. That these should be the outcome of a ritual performance rather than their being a hoard, is stressed by the writers.

The date of the Temple, following immediately on the destruction of the hut, must be dated very soon after the Roman occupation, in about 80-90 A.D. 'A gradual abandonment and decay' sometime in the 5th century seems to have been the end of this Temple.

*Site B.* Here were found storage pits of usual Iron Age type, with later post-holes of a structure whose occupation lasted as far as the Roman period. Eight holes remain of this structure, but again we feel that writers have been a little too anxious to explain every feature with certainty as to their meaning. One may instance the statement, "The axis of the hut's roof was indicated by Post-hole 4 which was double and Post-hole 7, larger than the others." There seems nothing but presumptive evidence for this, and the actual practical problems implied by such a roof are ignored. This hut had evidently ceased being used for some time before Flavian times.

In trenching Site B, an Anglo-Saxon extended burial with a scramasax and knife (7th or 8th century) was found to have been inserted into the filling of one of the Iron Age pits. This had previously itself been disturbed in the late 4th century when a hoard of Roman coins had been deposited in a gully of the same date, cutting across the pit. This hoard was scattered at the time of the Anglo-Saxon burial, when the coins must have been a pleasant surprise to the grave-diggers.

*Site C.* A large circular Romano-Celtic building with an exterior diameter of 36ft., was here found superimposed on an Iron Age horse-shoe shaped ditch, which at one point on the north-east and again opposite on the south-west divided to form small islands. At the east end of the enclosure formed by the ditch were two rows of post-holes, three in each row, and all double. Three post-holes were provided with extra small satellite sockets. Before the erection of this timber building, an iron ploughshare had been deposited, presumably for a ritual purpose.

Close to the entrance causeway on the north-west was a square-cut pit of Roman date, in the filling of which was a bronze votive sword and shield, a fragmentary iron spearhead, a corn muller,

and a little A2 pottery which had been common on the site just before Roman times.

These objects are of native not Roman origin, and their types are discussed in some detail. The ditch appears to be a later addition to the timber structure, the whole apparently dismantled at the same time as the hut in Site A, and explicable only as a ritual structure in the 'henge' tradition. This was replaced by a Roman Rotunda 36ft. across outside, and represented by foundations of stone. This building dated at the earliest Romanisation of the site (about 80-90 A.D.) must have been contemporaneous with the Temple. The Rotunda was evidently burnt down, but at what date is uncertain.

*Summary.* It can be seen from the above precis of the report which accounts for some 70 pages of the current number of *Oxoniensia* that this site is of considerable importance. It has been dealt with most competently, although we have been forced to question the writers' interpretation of one or two features connected with the Iron Age huts, and in this context one would like to question the exact meaning of footnote 5 on page 9 ("hut plans of the rectangular or squarish type in the Iron Age A tradition.") The little that is known of prehistoric house types in Britain strongly supports the idea that the circular house plan, proper to the west and south-west of Europe, remained dominant in this country from at least the Early Bronze Age into Roman times, the Germanic rectangular house plan of Iron Age and earlier times not being imposed with the other features of the immigrant cultures from that region (though there seem to have been rectangular houses at All Cannings Cross). The survival of the circular Bronze Age 'henge' idea in sacred structures into the Early Iron Age at Frilford itself emphasises the strength of the native architectural tradition in this respect.

We should like to congratulate the writers on a very excellent piece of work. C.M.P.

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### **Scheme for Recording the Folklore of Prehistoric Remains.**

It has been decided, by the council of the Folklore Society and with the support of the Prehistoric Society, to prepare and publish as complete a collection as possible of items relating to the folklore of prehistoric monuments and implements in England. The co-operation of members of the Berkshire Archaeological Society is invited to help to make this collection as exhaustive as possible.

The enquiry includes the folklore of megaliths, and of barrows, hill-forts, and other earthworks, and also includes the folklore of Celtic fields and strip-lynchets. It also covers stone axes, arrow-heads, holed stones, and other implements and ornaments.

Most of the Berkshire items known to me are recorded in Part I of my *Berkshire Barrows* (*Berks. Arch. Jour.*, XXXIX, No. 2). If any readers can let me know of other items, I shall be very grateful.

A more detailed outline of the scheme with provisional classification and questionnaire and bibliography, will appear in *Folk-lore*, December 1939.

I shall be happy to supply intending helpers with a copy of the memorandum published in *Folk-lore*.

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## REVIEWS.

OXONIENSIA, Vol. IV. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1939.

The current number of *Oxoniensia* contains several important contributions relating to the archaeology of Berkshire. Of these, the report on the excavations at Frilford are of outstanding interest, and have been discussed in a separate note in this number of this *Journal*, while the implications of the new dating evidence for medieval pottery in the Oxford region published by Mr. Bruce-Mitford have been commented on in the note on the Adulterine Castle at Faringdon on page 139.

Among Berkshire finds recorded over the past year, further Anglo-Saxon burials from the cemetery at Wallingford published in this *Journal* last year (XLII, 93 ff.) may be noted, and the Iron Age settlement at Hatford is recorded for the first time. Mr. W. J. Arkell has written a most interesting note on the site of Cherbury Camp, demonstrating the archaeologist's debt to workers in other scientific fields, for a study of snail shells collected from the ploughed fields around the camp show an enormous preponderance of swamp-loving species, implying the former existence of marsh land in which the camp occupied a small peninsula of dry ground, thus making the choice of its position understandable.

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE NEWBURY DISTRICT FIELD CLUB. Vol. VIII, No. 2, Newbury Museum. 1939.

The main articles of archaeological interest consist of a report of the discovery of pre-Conquest 'long and short work' on the angle of the Chancel of Boxford Church during repair work, and the excavation report on a half destroyed barrow on Charlton Down, where the central grave-pit was found to contain a cremated

interment with a bronze dagger and a bronze awl, surrounded by four wooden planks. Other notes include an interim report on the Rams Hill excavations, and the record of an early Claudian sherd from Thatcham Newtown. Mr. Grinsell advances some attractive speculations on the influence of the Wayland legend on certain Saxon place-names near the famous Smithy.

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THE BERKSHIRE BOOK. (Compiled by the Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes, Watlington House, Reading; pp. 190; price 1/-; post free 1/3).

The volumes on Hampshire and Dorset, already published by the county federations of Women's Institutes, have set a good standard, and the Federations of Women's Institutes are doing great service in encouraging their members to take more interest in their surroundings, and in giving them an opportunity to place on record such parts of their local knowledge as have not already appeared in print. These volumes contain also a résumé of the more important historical and topographical details of the county in question, on to which the original information is grafted.

*The Berkshire Book* is divided into two parts, which are, I think unwisely, mixed together. One part consists of accounts of Ancient Berkshire, Berkshire Flowers, Berkshire Birds, Berkshire in Music and Song, Berkshire Sports, interesting people who have lived in the county, and miscellaneous matters. The other part consists of accounts of villages, arranged in alphabetical order. The table of contents has no page-references, and there is no index.

The opening section, on Ancient Berkshire, is perhaps the least satisfactory in the book. Into the four pages of this section have been crammed too many errors to be dealt with separately. On p. 2, we are told that "prehistoric dates are put at not less than 8000 years ago," and that the implements of cave man are found in the river drift. We are then given (p. 3) a dramatic and fairly accurate account of the exploits of Weyland (incorrectly described as the son of Wey), and this is followed by an account of the legend of the White Horse Cave (!). "A coin of Philip of Macedon, 496 B.C., was found on White Horse Hill." (p. 4). There appears to be no record of any such find having been made on White Horse Hill, confusion apparently arising from a misunderstood memory of the derivation of the Iron Age coinage with its horse motif from the gold stater struck by Philip II of Macedon between 359 and 336 B.C. and current in the Roman Empire after c. 188 B.C. as a result of tribute paid after the Macedonian and Syrian campaigns.

In the *Editor's Note* at the beginning of the book, we are told however that "accuracy is of little value compared to the atmosphere of the delightful tales which have been handed down . . ."

After this introductory section, the book strikes a much better note, and some of the sections on villages are very good. The following comments may be helpful :—

pp. 87-91. *Inkpen*. Apart from an inaccurate description of Wansdyke this is a good section, wherein are recorded the very little-known earthen rings S.W. of Walbury Camp, and the recent finds of early Bronze Age pottery. There is also a good account of the history of Combe Gibbet.

pp. 93-95. *Kingstone Lisle*. This contains some valuable information, and is a model of how such a section should be compiled. On p. 94 is recorded the finding of Roman coins in the gardens and ploughed fields of the neighbourhood. This may be important because the place-name Fawler hard by is derived from the Saxon word *fagaflora*—a variegated floor, and almost certainly indicates the former existence of a Roman villa, (see above p. 137). If these chance finds of Roman material were plotted on large scale maps (say 6 inches to the mile) a big concentration in one area might indicate the site of this villa. Then follows a reliable description of the Blowing Stone, more accurate than that given in the section on Ancient Berkshire. The spring known as Black Jack is described, the water from which was used for its supposed curative properties. Among the list of field names given is Catsbrain, which exists in other parts of southern England and has given rise to some discussion.

pp. 98-9 and 155-7. *Knighton and Compton Beauchamp*, and *Uffington*. These sections are also good.

p. 102. *Lambourn*. The Hangmanstone legend is here recorded, I think for the first time as regards this particular site.

p. 133. *Speen*. The site of the Roman *Spinae* is now claimed by some good authorities to be at Thatcham Newtown (*Trans. N.D.F.C.*, VII, 219-255).

pp. 162-5. *Wash Common*. A good description of the common, the barrows, and the first Battle of Newbury.

We look forward, when conditions are more favourable, to another edition, with the first section (Ancient Berkshire) rewritten and the whole work thoroughly revised. Several of the best villages, at present omitted, should be included in the next edition, e.g. Ashbury, Woolstone, and Steventon. L.V.G.