

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM READING MUSEUM

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During 1971 the following objects and sites were brought to the notice of Reading Museum. Objects that have been acquired by the Museum are followed by an accession number. Newsletter No. 3 of the Berkshire Joint Committee for Archaeology and Newsletter No. 2 of CBA Group Nine contain interim reports on excavation and fieldwork in this period. In order to avoid duplication these topics are not discussed in detail in the notes.

RADIOCARBON DATES

Attention is drawn to the CBA's new publication *Archaeological Site Index to Radiocarbon Dates for Great Britain and Ireland*, available with lists of addenda from CBA, 8 St. Andrews Place, London NW1. This includes a number of dates for Berkshire sites, some of which have not been published locally.

THE COLE COLLECTION

A collection of local antiquities belonging to the late L. G. Cole was presented to the Museum by his widow, Mrs R. F. Cole in February. This consists largely of flint implements from local sites, some of which have already been noted elsewhere. Many come from other collections. The items are described below under the appropriate sections.

PALAEOLITHIC

Cookham The Cole Collection includes five handaxes (15:71/1-5) from New Danefield Pit, marked 1907 and 1908. One has Maidenhead Museum marked on it as well and this is probably the origin of all five. The name is presumably an alternative for Wymer's Dane-field Pit (1968, 214). There is also an unprovenanced broken handaxe from Maidenhead Museum (20:71) and two crude handaxes from Ham Field (Wymer, 1968, 215) formerly in the collection of James Rutland (35:71/1-2).

Reading A series of flint implements from Denton's Pit (Cole Collection 14:71/1-32)

includes the two Levallois flakes described, and in one case figured, by Wymer (1968, 151, fig. 55 and 152). The Cole Collection also includes the handaxe from Prospect Park described by Wymer (1968, 152), a flake from Grovelands (Wymer, 1968, 152-8) and two handaxes from Caversham (16:71, 17:71 and 19:71/1-2).

Ruscombe A handaxe marked Ruscombe 1896 (Cole Collection 18:71) must, despite the vague provenance, come from the Lynch Hill terrace (Wymer, 1968, 186).

Woodley and Sandford An excellent example of the ficron type of handaxe was picked up by Jimmy Smith and Clint Pearce by the the conveyor belt at Woodley aerodrome gravel pit (87:71).

MESOLITHIC

Bray A prolific site at Moor Farm, Holyport (SU 892790) on the line of a feeder road for the M4, was discovered by Ray Weng and Jim McGovern. A trial excavation at Easter was directed by one of us (RAR) and more extensive work has subsequently been carried out by the Maidenhead and District Archaeological and Historical Society. Report forthcoming.

Hurley A tranchet axe found at Knowl Hill about 1925 (Cole Collection 21:71) had been previously published as Neolithic (Underhill, 1937, 36).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

Maidenhead Two transept axes from the Thames at Maidenhead (Cole Collection 22:71).

Reading A long blade, considered by Wymer (1968, 158) to be 'almost certainly post-palaeolithic', found by L. G. Cole in his garden in Cranbury Road in 1933 (23:71).

Welford Mr F. R. Froom continued his programme of research into the Kennet Valley mesolithic with an investigation of his site Wawcott XXIII (SU 410674).

NEOLITHIC

Bisham The Cole Collection included six flint scrapers from Town Farm (31:71/1-6). These are again probably from Peake's 'flint workshop' (Rutland and Greenaway, 1970, 54).

East Challow A small thumb scraper with a natural perforation in the middle was found on the surface of a field on the site of the Cornhill Roman villa (SU 375879). Although of pre-Roman date it would lend itself to use as an amulet and this is a possible explanation for its being found there.

Compton A broken ground stone axe, picked up on the site of the Roman kilns (SU 537784), has been petrologically examined and identified as porphyritic rhyolite. It is retained by the finder, R. Dickinson.

West Hanney The ground stone axe, mentioned in an earlier note (Rutland and Thomas, 1968, 68), has been petrologically examined and assigned to Group VI (Great Langdale). Its accession number is 195:66, not 196:66 as previously published.

Reading The Cole Collection includes a number of flint and stone implements from the Reading area. Those previously published are a ground axe from 37 Lyndhurst Road, Tilehurst (Underhill, 1946, 58), a broken ground axe from 50 Kenilworth Avenue, published as

flint (Underhill, 1938, 26) but shown by analysis to be siltstone, and a flint 'borer' from Oxford Road (Underhill, 1938, 26) which is not as specialized as the term suggests (26:71, 34:71/1 and 24:71). There are also several other scrapers, etc. from Circuit Lane (approximately SU 691721) and 50 Kenilworth Avenue (SU 698722. 33:71/1-5 and 34:71/2,5).

BRONZE AGE

Bray A haft-flanged axe 'taken from the River Thames at the Old Ford, Bray upon 23rd January, 1929' (Cole Collection, 127:70) is in excellent condition and has not previously been recorded. Haft-flanged axes have been discussed by M. A. Smith (1959, 174) and more recently by Britton (Allen, Britton and Coghlan, 1970, 140-1), who assigns them to an early stage of the Middle Bronze Age.

Charney Basset Two barbed and tanged arrowheads from Cherbury Camp (SU 374693) are included in the Cole Collection (29:71/1-2). These have been previously noted by Underhill (1938, 22) and there are other examples in Reading Museum as well as the Ashmolean.

IRON AGE

Henley (Oxon) An iron sword in a decorated bronze scabbard was found in the Thames at Henley by F. R. Clark, a member of the Reading Branch of the British Sub-Aqua Club (245:71). A preliminary note will appear in *Ant. J.* 52 (ii) 1972, and it is hoped that Professor Jope will publish a full discussion.

Mortimer West End (Hants) A flint nodule, with several flakes removed, from the Cole Collection (36:71), is of more interest for its provenance, marked as 'The Camp, Mortimer, Easter 1933'. This is probably the camp formerly marked in Pickling Yard Plantation (SU 641646), mentioned by Williams-Freeman (1915, 326) and Wood (1959, 82). This camp was probably also the find-spot of an urn in Reading Museum mentioned by Peake (1931, 230), of which a surviving rim fragment has

recently been identified by Dennis Harding as of Iron Age B Type. An alternative site for these finds is the Frith, recently discussed by Boon (1969, 22-23).

ROMAN

Ardington A bronze coin of Constantine I (R.I.C. vol. VII, p. 135 no. 214 or 222) was found a few years ago in the foundations of the Boar's Head, Ardington.

West Challow Mr A. V. Grover picked up various objects on the surface of the field in which the known Roman villa at SU 375879 lies (Rutland and Greenaway, 1970, 57, Davey, 1876, 382-392). They included a blue glass bead, 9 mm in diameter; a piece of reddish brown wall plaster; a heavy iron knife similar to Silchester 07020: length $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; length of blade $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.; width of blade $1\frac{3}{4}$ in.; the tip of the blade was broken and the socket was slightly open.

Harwell Mr C. Radjohns of Devon, Didcot Road, Harwell found a bronze coin of Valentinian I (R.I.C. vol. IX, p. 66, no. 17a) in his garden. He retains it.

Kingston Lisle A quantity of Roman, Norman, Medieval and Modern pottery was picked up on the surface of a field at Fawler at SU 326886 belonging to Mr Nash of Kingston Lisle Farm by S. G. G. Wilkinson. Most of the pottery was Roman and much of this was 2nd-3rd century in date. There was no building debris indicating a building and no kiln debris or wasters indicating a kiln. This field had been ploughed for many years and most of the sherds were very abraded. Medieval ridge and furrow ran south-east to north-west across both this field and the grassed field to the south, but it ran north-east to south-west in the field to the east. In June the ploughed field which produced pottery and the field to the east were drained with a system of field drains 60 ft apart. No features were visible in any of the trenches and no tile,

mortar or other building materials were uncovered.

West Ilsley A bronze coin of Trajan (cf. R.I.C. vol. II, p. 280 no. 507) was found in a field at West Ilsley.

Reading Edward Lucas and Raymond Goddard donated a quantity of 1st century pottery from a pit or ditch in the old clay pit south of the Meadway shopping precinct (SU 683727). For previous pottery from this site see Rutland and Greenaway, 1970, 57-58 (114:71, 485:72).

Silchester (Hants) Samian stamps of ARENTINUSF (Rutland and Thomas, 1968, 71) and MALI LIACI. F (Rutland and Greenaway, 1969, 38) have now been donated to the Silchester Collection (4:71, 5:71).

During the year various objects found on the surface of the site have been brought to the attention of the Museum. The most interesting are as follows:

A black glass gem 26 mm diameter was picked up on the surface by Duncan Russell at SU 641625 in September. It depicts the head of Arethusa, the patron goddess of Syracuse, wearing a hair band of reed, an ear-ring with pendants and originally a necklace lost on the gem. It imitates Syracusan coins of 5th century B.C. A full account will be published. (484:72).

A piece of pinky-brown brick 151 mm × 85 mm × 43 mm thick bearing a graffito in five lines in cursive script was found by Stuart Patton. The graffito reads QQI[]/CNL[]/IM[]/ITVC[]/V[]. R. P. Wright, 1972 357, suggests that this is practice writing. (483:72). Part of a rim of an Oxford ware mortarium bearing a stamp was picked up on the surface of Insula VI by Mark Corney. Mrs K. Hartley has kindly provided the following note. "The potter has used two dies to stamp this mortarium—a pseudo name die and another giving a herringbone or chevron device, impressed on each side of the "name" stamp to provide decorative borders. He has not quite succeeded in getting the upper

"border" flush with the name. The "name" stamp is an illiterate attempt at making a normal stamp and no sense can be wrung from it. The practice of stamping with two separate dies in this fashion is only known with potters working in the vicinity of Oxford, and perhaps at only one workshop, since the two or three "name" stamps used in this way are closely similar. As one of the best examples is from the kiln at Littlemore (unpublished) it is possible that they originated there. The fabric and grit of all the mortaria stamped in this fashion agree with manufacture in the Oxford region and the rims suggest a date in the first half of the second century' (473:72).

A circular bronze cloisonnée disc 20 mm in diameter with red enamel and green glass inlay was found by Richard Massey in Insula V. It is identical to that illustrated in British Museum 1922, fig. 73d. The British Museum example is described as a brooch but there is no sign of a catch plate on this example and it may be a decorative disc. (480:72).

A rotary bronze key 20 mm long with a hollow shaft was found by Richard Massey in Insula IV in December 1969. It would have originally had a loop handle or been on a ring. The general type is illustrated in Richborough III p. XIII and Richborough V. pl. XLV. (481:72).

The following samian stamps have been added to the collection.

VXXOPILLI (Lezoux, mid Antonine 478:72/1), SINONAIH, (478:72/2), ®MOBON.F (La Graufesenque, Neronian, 67:71), ATILIANIM (482:72), CANTOMALLIM (Lezoux, mid-late Antonine 69:71).

Sonning/Woodley and Sandford The Cole Collection includes a cone shaped lead weight, 26 mm in diameter at the base, c.38 mm high and weighing 95 grammes. It is marked Sonning Cutting, Reading 1936 (39:71).

Stanford in the Vale The Cole Collection includes 96 Roman coins, chiefly bronze 4th century coins, and one 17th century token from Chinham Hill, Stanford in the Vale. Roman

material has been found here in the past (Peake 1931, 113, 229). The coins were acquired by the late Mr L. G. Cole from a shepherd, Mr Pill who lived in the vicinity of Chinham Hill. The Roman coins were not a hoard, but were found in ones and twos over a long period of years and Mr Pill disposed of them to other collectors besides Mr Cole. Underhill 1937, 38 mentions some of these coins (37:71/1 1-96, 38:71).

Swallowfield The Cole Collection includes a rim sherd of a large flint gritted storage jar. This type of heavily gritted coarse jar occurs on a number of Roman sites in Berkshire and does not seem to be closely dateable. It is marked Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, March 1921. This was previously recorded by Underhill 1938, 27 as a portion of a rim of a large Roman amphora, and the find spot marked on Reading Museum maps at SU 713660 (40:71).

Woodley and Sandford Mr R. Murphy found a sherd of a large coarse gritted storage jar near the Loddon at SU 76557096.

SAXON

Abingdon Features showing on air photographs taken by Major Allen in 1933 and by the National Monuments Records in 1970 of Corporation Farm, Wilsham Road (SU 494957 and SU 497957) were excavated by Mr R. Henderson for the Abingdon and District Archaeological Society. They range in date from Neolithic to Anglo-Saxon and include remains of two Anglo-Saxon grubenhausen.

Stratfield Saye A sword, 3 ft long, with silver wire decoration on the hilt was found during piling of the River Loddon at SU 691608 by Mr T. Sherwood of Thames Conservancy. It is an English late L type and dates from the 10th century. It has been placed on loan in Reading Museum by the Duke of Wellington. Miss V. Evison will publish a full account (224:71).

Kingston Lisle Ridge and furrow. See under Roman.

Purley Dr B. Levy contributes the following note. 'While soil surveying a small field at SU 653770 to the West of Westbury Farm a "hard bottom" was detected at 9 in. over most of the field. A trial trench (14×1 m) dug across the area in February 1971 exposed at one end a good flint floor butting on to a brick floor, both being covered by a layer of chalk rubble; the scant finds suggest a comparatively recent date. The other end of the trench cut through a well stratified pit, 2.8 m across and more than 75 cm deep, producing finds ranging from 19th century to early medieval. The excavation was abandoned unfinished in December 1971 to allow ploughing. There are records of a deserted village—Purley Parva—in the immediate vicinity (Beresford and Hurst, 1962, 97)'.

Wallingford In September and November the GPO laid some cables across the Kine Croft, Wallingford. The trenches produced a scatter of medieval and modern sherds, but only two features were observed in the interior. One was a pit at SU 60458936 which was filled with dark soil and covered by between 2 and 3 ft of brown soil. Its greatest depth from the top of the trench was 5 ft. Its diameter could not be measured because only part of it was visible. A few undiagnostic medieval sherds and one piece of modern glazed pottery were found in the soil on the side of the trench, but it was not possible to judge if these had come from the pit. The second feature was a pit at SU 60478942. It was 23½ in. in diameter, filled with very dark brown soil and covered by 3 ft of brown soil. Its greatest depth from the top of the trench was 5 ft. The medieval sherds, including some of the 12th century date, found in the dark soil on the side of the trench must have come from this pit. (13:72). The section revealed when one of the cable trenches cut through the defences was recorded by Tom Hassall and Trevor Rowley (Brian Durham, etc., 1972 forthcoming).

POST MEDIEVAL

Burghfield A milestone inscribed '43 miles from Hyde Park Corner, 4 miles from Reading 1742' was found during earthmoving by Costain Civil Engineering Limited near SU 675697 where it is marked on the Ordnance Survey 2½ in. sheet 41/66, 1947 edition. (246:71).

Reading Mr D. B. Kemp presented a 17th century pottery handled cup and an 18th century clay pipe with the initials PP. They were found during building work in the Butts at SU 71327342. (211:71/1-2).

THAMES CONSERVANCY LOAN COLLECTION

The following are some of the objects dredged from the Thames, unless otherwise stated, in 1971 by the Thames Conservancy and added to their loan collection in Reading Museum. The numbers in brackets after each entry are the Thames Conservancy catalogue number and museum accession number respectively.

BRONZE AGE

Dirk A bronze dirk from Boulter's Reach (SU 907835), is similar to an implement from Ashbury (Roskill, 1938, 14 and fig. 8 no. 6) assigned by Trump (1962, 81 and 95) to her class I of the earlier Middle Bronze Age (TCB 395; 229:71). Both dirks have two rivet holes and two rivet notches (cf. Evans, 1881, 247 fig. 311), a type recognised by Trump although she does not assign the Ashbury example to it. The Ashbury example has also been classified as an ogival dagger of the Wessex Culture (ApSimon, 1954, 57) and there are similarities of detail between the Boulter's Reach dirk and the Bourne End dagger or Arretton Down type (ApSimon, 1955).

This implement, whatever its exact classification, can therefore, probably be assigned to the Early rather than the Middle Bronze Age. It is, thus a useful addition to the small range of early bronzes found in Berkshire (cf. Rutland and Coghlan n.d.).

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ROMAN

Pottery Three sherds forming two thirds of a grey angular bowl of late first or early second century date were found on Thames Conservancy spoil tip near Culham Bridge (TCB 397, 231:72/1-3).

Pottery Eight sherds of pottery including two rims of 1st-2nd century date were found by D. Pudwell one mile downstream of Abingdon Bridge (TCB 398, 232:71/1-8).

SAXON

Spearhead An early Saxon spearhead of 5th-6th century type was found in Boulter's Reach at SU 9078583755 by R. Phelan (TCB 406, 240:71).

MEDIEVAL AND LATER

Pottery Fourteen sherds of medieval pottery were found by D. Pudwell one mile downstream of Abingdon Bridge. These include sherds of 13th century jugs, the handle of a 15th century pipkin and the rim of a cheese press (TCB 399, 233:71/1-14).

Pottery A bellarmine jug decorated with a bearded face mask and an armorial medallion was found downstream of Abingdon Bridge by A. Wiltshire (TCB 403, 237:71).

Pottery A small 16th-17th century ointment pot of reddish ware with a cream slip was found by H. Coombs at Teddington Lock (TCB 407, 241:71).

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