

ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES FROM READING MUSEUM

During the period of January–November, 1962, the following objects or sites were brought to the notice of Reading Museum. The objects, unless otherwise stated, have been added to the Museum Collections and the accession number is given in brackets after each entry.

PALAEOLITHIC

Ruscombe. Mrs. R. K. Harrison of "Amyntas", London Road, Ruscombe, found a slightly rolled, ochreous flake of Levalloisian type in her garden, which is situated just beyond the spread of Lynch Hill terrace gravel in which the late Llewellyn Treacher discovered many palaeoliths. (55:62).

Goring, Oxon. An ochreous, slightly rolled flake was found by Miss J. Simpson of "Ynedd", Springhill Road, Goring, in her garden. It is possible that this flake was imported with gravel used for a path. It remains in her possession.

Reading. A flake with a prominent bulb of percussion was found in gravel thrown up from drainage trenches on the building site on the west corner of Liebenrood Road and Bath Road by J. J. Wymer. (137:62)

Woodley. Further observations by members of the Berkshire Field Research Group, particularly Mr. H. Copley and Mr. R. J. Clarke, (See Berks A. J. 59, p. 56) have resulted in the collection of numerous palaeoliths from the Lynch Hill terrace gravel at Butt's Hill, Woodley. These include flakes, pointed hand-axes (mainly very rolled and with ancient or recent damage), a quartzite unifacial chopping tool and, of great importance, six struck cores of Levalloisian type. (76:62/1–11, 94:62 and 138:62/1–35)

Brightwell. The butt-end of a hand-axe, rolled and deeply stained, was found on the surface of a ploughed field near the Kibble Ditch on Mackney Court Farm (SU 571894) by Mr. J. Rickard. This was at a point on the edge of a spread of gravel of the Summertown terrace, and the broken implement was presumably derived from this deposit. (87:62).

Remenham. A test section cut in the old gravel pit above Remenham church (SU 774841) proved to be of great interest. The pit is in the large area of Lynch Hill terrace gravel remaining on the right bank of the Thames within the bend of the valley past Henley. The chalk bench underlying the gravel is very uneven with numerous collapsed solution hollows; two of these were exposed in the 15ft. wide section and in the gravel, loam and sand filling of these were found over three hundred and fifty flint artifacts, all patinated white and many with incipient frost cracks. The flints must have been derived from an ancient land surface, part of which fell into the solution hollows, the remainder being swept away some time during the Pleistocene period. The industry is extremely crude and, apart from the

butt of a small, broken hand-axe, comprises clumsily-struck flakes and rough cores. No parallel is known for this industry in the Middle Thames Valley, but a Levalloisian influence is suspected.

The industry is clearly more recent than that found in the bedded gravel, which produced five small, worn flakes. A pointed hand-axe in the Smith Collection at Reading Museum comes from this pit, is in the same condition as the flakes and presumably came from the same bedded gravel. There are two rolled flakes from this pit in the Treacher Collection at the University Museum, Oxford. (91:62/1-373).

Rotherfield Peppard, Oxon. A large quartzite chopper-core was found at the Highlands Farm pit by Mr. R. J. Clarke of Wokingham and a struck Levalloisian 'tortoise core' by Mr. R. Sheridan of Newbury. Neither was found in situ. No artifact of the Levalloisian industry has hitherto been recorded from this gravel, part of the ancient channel of the Thames between Caversham and Henley. (93:62 and 187:62).

Kintbury. When digging a drainage trench across the front garden of his new house, Mr. Carter found a cordate hand-axe of superb workmanship in mint condition in clayey gravel at a depth of 2ft. from the surface. The house is situated on plateau gravel on Lower Bagshot clay at a height of about 500ft. O.D. (SU 379650). Mr. Carter kindly allowed an examination of this area, but a cutting 9 ft. square failed to reveal any more artifacts. The section, and that in the side of a nearby well, showed that the gravel was only 6 in.—2 ft. thick and lay on or in the disturbed, uneven clay of the Lower Bagshot series. The implement has been given to Newbury Museum.

MESOLITHIC

Welford. Mr. F. R. Froom conducted trial excavations at two Mesolithic sites on the north bank of the River Kennet, at SU 400680 and SU 404679. The former proved to be very rich with a Mesolithic industry containing minute, geometric forms of microliths. The latter, sealed beneath a thin layer of black peat, included a hearth constructed in the form of a circular platform, made entirely of small sarsen stones and about 3 ft. in diameter. Further investigation of these sites is proposed.

Tilehurst. Mr. Cyril Leek of Heathway, Chapel Hill, Tilehurst found a blade-like flake in his garden, 2½ in. long. (140:62).

Bray. Mr. P. Bailey of the Hoveringham Gravel Co. reported several objects found during quarrying, apparently from the silt of an old bed of the Thames (at c SU 915783). These included a perforated quartzite pebble (hour-glass section) and three flint flakes, one of which was blade-like. Other objects included Iron Age and Roman pottery (see below). (181:62/39 40-42).

NEOLITHIC

Nettlebed, Oxon. Master W. Gniadek of Crowmarsh presented a rough flint pick found by his grandfather about 1954 beside drainage trenches alongside the Reading road (near SU 703867). (168:62).

Beenham. Mr. H. T. Symonds of Theale placed on loan to the Museum a ground axe of greenstone (5½" long) found about 1944 at Aldermaston Cross Roads during the excavation of trenches for cables (SU 603676). This axe has been submitted for petrological analysis but cannot be placed in any known group. (170:62).

Henley on Thames, Oxon. A barbed and tanged flint arrowhead was reported by Master P. Wright of Henley. It was found in the grounds of Trinity School near the new annexe and remains in his possession.

Brightwell. Mr. J. Rickard of Mackney Court Farm presented a flint end-scraper made on a long blade-like flake (4½" long), a triangular shallow-flaked knife and a flint flake found close to each other on the surface of a ploughed field near the Kibble Ditch (SU 571893). A search of the same area in the Autumn of 1962 produced nothing more than a few waste flakes. The three artifacts are fresh with a matt ochreous staining. (86:62/1-3).

Sonning. Dr. C. F. Slade concluded his excavation of the rectilinear enclosure in Straightanger Field (Berks. A. J. 58, p. 63). A sherd of Peterborough pottery and flint artifacts in the primary silt of the V-shaped ditched suggest a Late Neolithic date for this enclosure. It is cut through by a ditch containing Romano-British pottery sherds. A full report will be forthcoming in a future volume of this Journal.

BRONZE AGE

Woodley. A palstave in fair condition save for pitting of the surface was purchased for the Museum Collections. It was alleged to have been found on the site of the new primary school off Fosters Lane, Woodley. (58:62).

Rotherfield Peppard, Oxon. A palstave with double side loops in good condition was purchased for the Museum Collections. It was discovered during ploughing near Peppard Hospital, at SU 697817. (59:62).

IRON AGE

Moulsford. Mr. P. Crampton with members of the Berkshire Field Research Group cut a further section through the flat-bottomed ditch discovered close to the find-spot of the gold torc and examined in October 1960 (Berks. A. J. 59, p. 37). Sherds found of a small, haematite-covered carinated bowl indicated Early Iron Age date for this ditch. A magnetometer survey by Dr. M. Aitken suggested the existence of another ditch nearby and further excavation work is planned.

Upper Basildon. Two sherds of Iron Age A pottery were found by Mr. H. Lucking on the dump beside the towpath from Thames Conservancy dredgings. (133:62/1-2).

Bray. Thirty two sherds of Iron Age A pottery were presented by Mr. Bailey of the Hoveringham Gravel Company. They were found in material apparently filling an old bed of the Thames, at approximately SU 915783. The ware is similar to the coarse pottery from the nearby site at Water Oakley (Berks. A. J. 58, p. 58). (181:62/1-32).

Ufton Nervet. (SU 617690) Mr. W. H. Manning contributes the following notes on the 1962 season of excavations. "Work commenced on Saturday, August 25th and

continued until Thursday, September 20th. The purpose of the excavation was to examine as completely as was possible the interior of a ditched enclosure which a trial section cut in 1961 had suggested was Belgic in date. The original intention had been to remove the topsoil over the area (about an acre) by means of paid labour but it was soon discovered that the original estimate of the depth of topsoil was too low and the men were replaced by machinery. This removed most of the overburden and the volunteer labour then completed the clearance down to the surface of the gravel. In this way it was possible to create a combination of trenches which ensured that no feature more than three or four feet in diameter could have been missed. In over half the site there was in fact total clearance. Four sections of the ditch bounding the enclosures were also cut.

"The Belgic date assigned to the ditch filling by the previous year's work was confirmed and a provisional estimate of the date of refill of this ditch is from 25-50 A.D. The ditch itself was about ten feet wide and five feet deep. In the interior were a number of shallow pits, five or six feet in diameter and twelve to eighteen inches in depth, which produced Belgic pottery, and a large number of post holes. While there was a general scatter of them all over the site there was a concentration along the north eastern side and here two roughly parallel lines of post holes were found. They form no recognisable structure and are probably to be connected with the drying and storage of corn in racks and raised granaries.

"The most interesting feature of the interior was a small hut roughly oval in shape and about ten feet long and surrounded by small stake holes. This was cleared and revealed to have been scooped from the gravel to a depth of ten inches. The pottery from the filling of this hut floor is pagan Saxon, a fact which complicates the original interpretation of the site.

"A full interpretation will not be possible until the adjoining site has been excavated."

ROMAN

Tilehurst. Mr. Elliot of Tilehurst reported a worn sestertius, probably Galba, from the grounds of Tilehurst Library. It remains in his possession.

Ashbury. Bulldozing near Fognam Clump, around SU 285808, revealed a quantity of Romano-British pottery, broken tiles and other indications of a substantial building. Human skeletal remains were also found nearby at SU 289807 and reported to the museum by Mr. P. Crampton and Mr. A. Cromarty. On the site of the probable Romano-British building, Mr. Peter Taylor of Caius College, Cambridge, found part of an iron padlock, and Mr. E. A. Cooper of Arborfield a coin of Constantius in fine condition. (145:62 and 146:62).

Cholsey. Mr. E. Abery found a corroded coin (4th century illegible) on the river bank at SU 607880. (176:62).

Brightwell. The neck of a 2nd-3rd century jug was found at Mackney Lane pumping station about 1960. It remains in the possession of Mrs. Gee of Didcot.

Woodley. Mrs. O'Donnell reported a coin of Maximianus found in Woodley, but the exact provenance was unknown. It remains in her possession.

Tilehurst. A coin of Crispus was found in the garden of Mr. A. Rake, 5, Beverley Road, Tilehurst. It remains in his possession.

Reading. Mr. D. Serth found an as (?) of Trajan on the site of the new telephone exchange at Basingstoke Road. It remains in his possession.

Aldermaston. Mr. C. Chapman reported a coin of Maximinus in fine condition from his garden at the Old Malthouse, Aldermaston. It remains in his possession.

Henley-on-Thames, Oxon. An illegible sestertius was found by Mr. E. T. Collier in the garden of 15, Queens Street, Henley-on-Thames. It remains in his possession.

Wargrave. Mr. C. Woodburn reported a denarius of Trajan (?) from the garden of Gilstrode Farm Cottages, Crazies Hill. (174:62).

Eye and Dunsden, Oxon. A worn sestertius of Vespasian (?) was found by Mrs. Reeves in her garden at 7, Copse Avenue, Mickland Estate. It remains in her possession.

Tilehurst. A coin of Tetricus was found on the surface besides Scours Lane, Tilehurst, by Mr. B. Albrown. (173:62).

Longworth. Mr. C. Shakespeare reported a sestertius of Trajan from Cox's Farm, Longworth. It remains in his possession.

Sutton Wick. Sherds of 1st–2nd century A.D. pottery were collected by members of the museum from the ploughed surface of a mound at SU 473952. (61:62/1–11).

Wallingford. Mr. E. Abery presented a minimissimus and a lead steelyard weight, probably Roman, found on his allotment in Station Road, Wallingford (SU 601896). (71:62 and 177:62).

Sonning Eye, Oxon. Master John Cornish reported a coin of Constantine, minted at Trier, from his garden at Hawthorn Cottage, Sonning Eye. (144:62).

Bray. Four Roman grey ware sherds were presented by Mr. Bailey of the Hoveringham Gravel Company, found in material apparently filling an old bed of the Thames, (see above for Mesolithic and Iron Age finds from the same place.) Part of a perforated jet bracelet and a small bronze ring were also found and may belong to this period. (181:62/33–38).

Hampstead Marshall. Mr. D. B. Connah and boys of the St. Bartholomew's Archaeological Society continued their investigations of the group of Roman pottery and tile kilns at SU 416663. Samples of baked clay for magnetic dating were taken by the Research Laboratory for Archaeology at Oxford.

Sutton Courtenay. Dr. J. Fletcher reported the discovery of two tessellated floors, broken tiles, pottery and other remains to suggest the existence of a substantial building of the Romano-British period at SU 494938. These were uncovered by the plough on Holgrove Farm, by Mr. Fidler, who has in his possession Roman pottery and glass found nearby when a drainage trench was dug a few years ago.

MEDIEVAL

Waltham St. Lawrence. Mrs. M. Alwyn Cotton presented a 15th century spoon with an acorn derivative knob which was found in her garden at Borlases, Waltham St. Lawrence. (60:62).

Brightwell. Mr. C. Gunning and Mr. J. Rickard reported the finding of a human skeleton when a rubbish pit was being dug in the garden of a cottage at Mackney Farm. The site was investigated by Mrs. Gladys Pike for the Berkshire Field Research Group with the help of members. Nine Christian burials were discovered sealed by an 18th century layer of cobbling. Nearby was a well, the filling of which produced many 13th–14th century sherds, two iron buckles and the remains of a wooden platter. A full report will be forthcoming. (105:62).

Stanford in the Vale. Mr. and Mrs. H. Howse reported the finding of a bronze skilnet in their garden at the Manor House, Stanford in the Vale, in June 1961. This vessel has been placed on loan to Reading Museum and a full report on it appears elsewhere in this Journal. (183:62).

THAMES CONSERVANCY LOAN COLLECTION

The following objects have been dredged from the River Thames since May 1962 by the Thames Conservancy and added to their loan collection in Reading Museum.

Roman pottery. The neck of a handled jug, a rim sherd, a broken cooking vessel and the base of a pot were found above Benson Lock by Mr. K. West and Mr. R. Lock. (TCB 238–241, 126–129:62)

Perforated stone weight of oolitic limestone, possibly Medieval, was found above Benson Lock by Mr. K. West. (TCB 242, 130:62).

Small socketed iron spearhead of Medieval type was found in the Old Windsor Backwater by Mr. A. Whitman. (TCB 245, 189:62).

Bronze sword. Found in the Old Windsor Backwater by Mr. W. East. The weapon is in a fine state of preservation, although the tip of the blade is missing. (TCB 246, 190:62).

Scramasax. A small, corroded single-edged iron blade was found above Benson Lock by Mr. R. Lock. (TCB 250, 194:62).

Iron spearhead. Dredged from the river below Magna Charta Island, Runnymede, this weapon is so corroded that little of the blade remains except the mid-rib. It is probably a Late Saxon-Viking weapon. (TCB 251, 195:62)

Other objects added to the collection during 1962 are two broken Medieval pots, three human skulls and a 19th century cast-iron mechanical bell.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND CROP MARKS

A flight sponsored by Reading Museum on the 19th July, 1962, enabled further aerial photographs to be taken of the features in the Englefield to Ufton Nervet area (Berks. A.J. 59, p. 60). A survey was also made of the Moulsoford to Wallingford area and along the Ridgeway as far as Wayland's Smithy. Photographs were obtained of several well-known features (Segsbury hillfort, Fox barrow, Uffington Castle, etc.) and the following unknown ones:

Englefield: four conjoining rings, one apparently containing a circle of large pits, at SU 624702.

Moulsford Down: the trivallate earthwork at SU 582828 was found to continue north east at least as far as the Wantage Road.

Ashbury, Wayland's Smithy. Well-defined crop-marks of long, mainly straight linear features were seen immediately to the north of Wayland's Smithy, covering an area of about a quarter of a square mile. An old track of the Ridgeway was disclosed to the north of the present one and a ring ditch close to it, east of Wayland's Smithy at SU 283854.

Thurle Down, Streatley. A group of at least six ring ditches were seen on Thurle Down (SU 581816), immediately east of Thurle Grange.