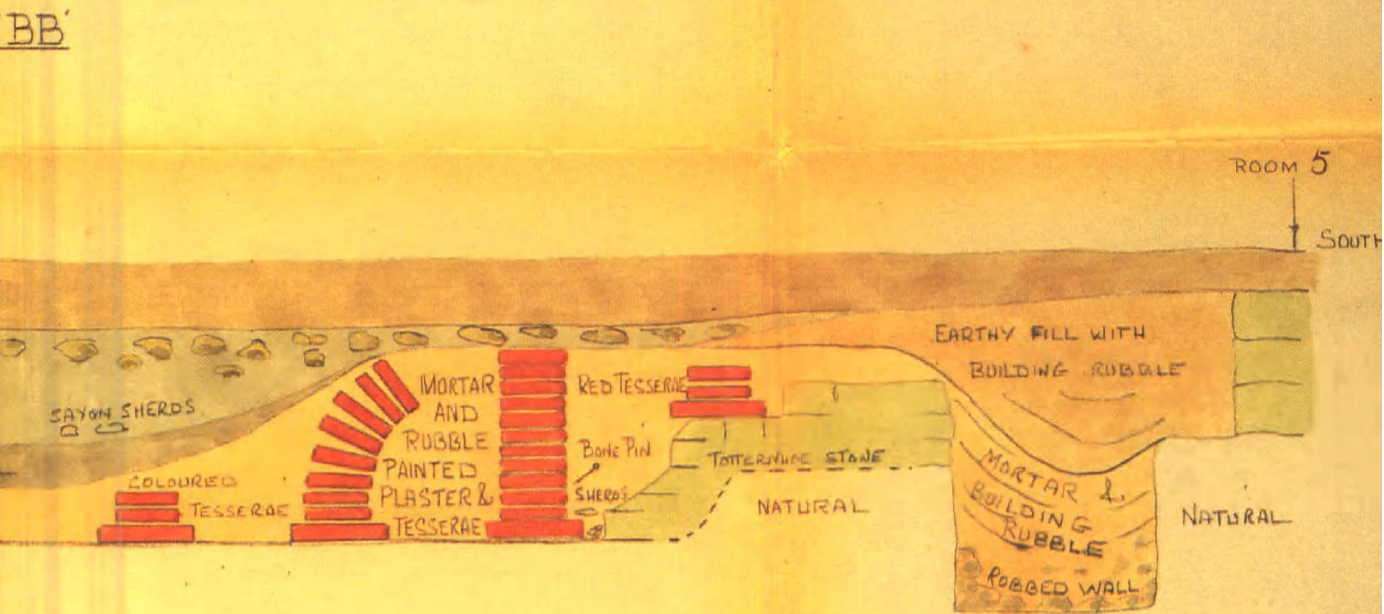
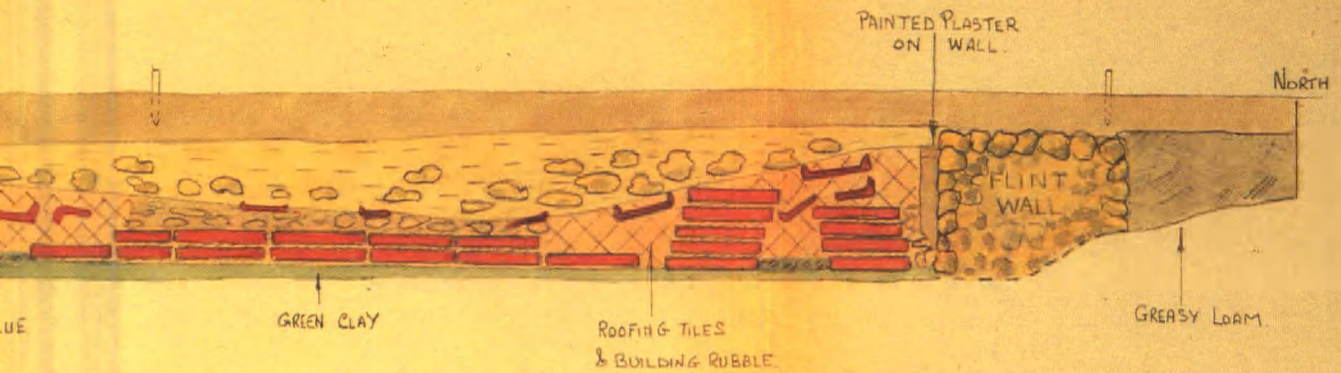


# BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGY

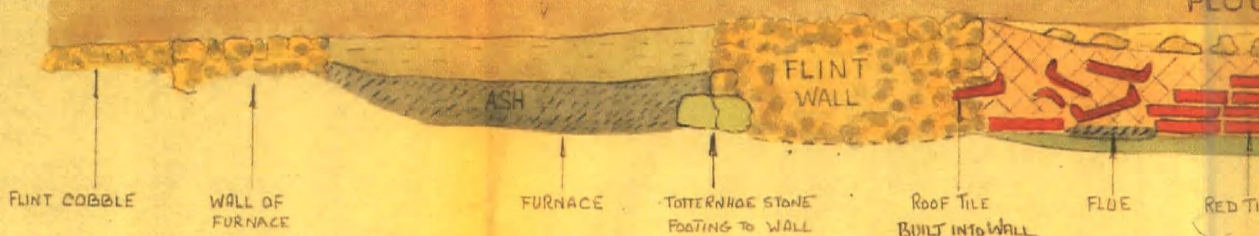




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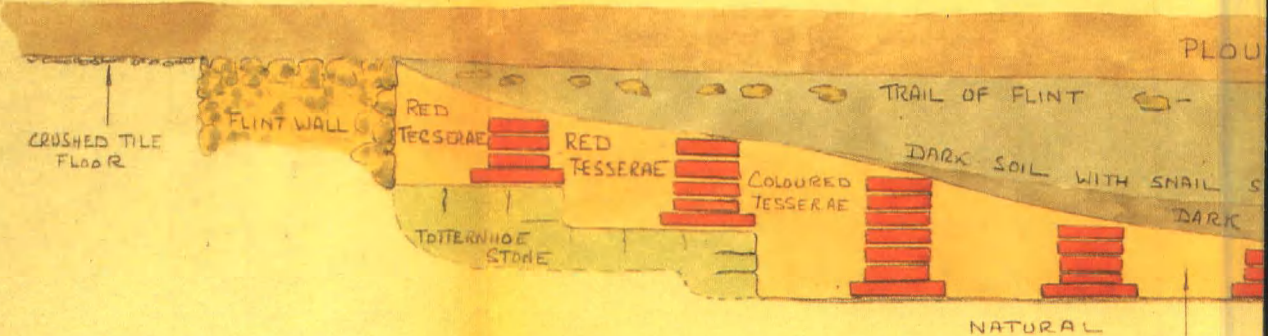


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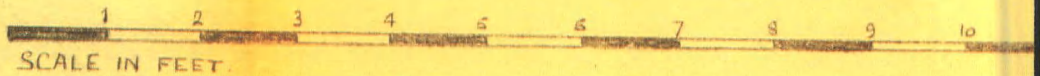
ROOM

ROOM 7

NORTH



FLUES FILL WITH BUILT RUBBLE



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Bedford Archaeological Society

Bedford Museum, North Bedfordshire Borough Council

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BEDFORDSHIRE

# ARCHAEOLOGY

VOLUME 20 1992

BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL

This volume is a memorial to Les Matthews FSA and a celebration of 40 years of the Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable.

edited by Evelyn Baker and Carolyn Wingfield  
with the assistance of the Editorial Committee

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*Cover:* Sections through Hypocausts 1 and 3 of the Totternhoe Roman Villa, drawn and coloured by Les Matthews, 1954

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LES MATTHEWS, FSA See page 1

JOAN SCHNEIDER, MA, AIFA, after reading Languages at Cambridge University and rearing 3 children, joined the Manshead Archaeological Society in 1963. She has been involved in most activities of the Society, especially in the drawing of finds. She was assistant site director to Les Matthews for several years and herself directed excavations in Dunstable in 1976. She revised and expanded Les's book *Ancient Dunstable* (1989) and became Chairman of the Society in 1992. She has also researched the history of Tilsforth and written a study of its field-names (unpublished).

DIANE WALKER, BA graduated from the University College of North Wales, Bangor in 1985 with a joint Honours degree in History and Archaeology. From 1985-88 she received a scholarship to research for a PhD in "The Nature of the Early Medieval Church on Anglesey 400-1100 AD" which she is currently writing up. On leaving university she worked for the Central Excavation Unit of English Heritage as an Archaeological Illustrator and has had work included in various English Heritage publications. She is presently the Education Officer for Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust.

DAVE WARREN was born in Luton. He served for six years with the 15th/19th Kings Royal Hussars before joining the GPO, and is now with British Telecom, employed at the Dunstable Telephone Exchange. He became interested in archaeology through attending evening classes and excavations and joined the Manshead Archaeological Society in 1977. He was a leading member of the team which constructed the "Iron Age House" at the Chiltern Open Air Museum. He served as Treasurer of the Society for a while before taking over as Site Director in 1985.



## Editorial

### Love, Forty

EVELYN BAKER

This twentieth volume of *Bedfordshire Archaeology/Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* is a special edition serving two purposes: it is The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable's fitting tribute to the memory of Les Matthews; it is also a celebration of the major contribution a leading archaeological society has made during four decades, to our greater understanding of the history and pre-history of the County.

Publication is timed for 24 October 1992, the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Society, and of their work in the Dunstable area. The celebration takes two forms: one is a major conference held in Dunstable which will bring together large numbers of exponents of the art, not just from Bedfordshire, but many parts of Britain; the other is this volume.

Forty years is a long time in the history of scientific archaeology, still a relatively new discipline. Some of the more mature members of the Manshead have the privilege of knowing 'they were there' at the early, tentative, but exciting beginning of the Society's investigations. Others can take pride in being part of a long tradition of archaeological work, carrying the flag, we hope, well into the next century.

Many of the Manshead's skills in the early days were self taught, building upon commonsense, on what they could read, and on what they could glean from contacts in universities and museums, including such luminaries as Sir Mortimer Wheeler. The picture was much the same all over Britain, with many small groups beavering away at weekends or doing seasonal (usually strictly spring/summer season) work. Even the larger, government sponsored 'digs' were reliant upon people who were willing to come along, give of their free time and learn on the job.

I am one of the generation of modern professional archaeological managers who worked alongside, and was part of, such armies of voluntary workers, and who has to confess in these days of increasing commercialism in archaeology that in many ways I miss the unalloyed enthusiasm which comes of doing archaeology purely for private pleasure. Working in a professional archaeological

environment with gant charts, cost estimates and work programmes, I miss the amateurism - the "doing it for love", which was what it was all about.

The seasonal, unpaid "dig" generated an *esprit de corps* rarely found today. Perhaps the secret was in the short time scale of most of the fieldwork, when enormous effort could be safely and generously expended for a few weeks in the certain knowledge that it would come to a natural end, and life return to whatever 'normality' was. Long summer days certainly helped; most developers nowadays expect archaeological clearance to take place during the seasons when they prefer not to be working. Team spirit is certainly stronger when there is an enjoyable social element built into the proceedings, and this seems to have been a major factor in the considerable success of the Society, especially in its early days. It was fortunate enough to have a dedicated and talented core of members, led for many years by the charismatic Les Matthews. A big man, with enormous presence, he was very much the right man in the right place at the right time.

A sense of 'ownership' of the local heritage also played its part. There was little enough archaeological cover anywhere forty years ago. Most discoveries were made principally by local people putting in effort to save the local heritage, salvaging what they could in the teeth of development. It is difficult to appreciate in the time of PPG16, County Archaeologists and Historic Environment Records, how much this rescue work was dependent upon knowledgeable and energetic locals. With few of the archaeological planning controls in place that we have today, there was little idea of what might be at risk through development, and no-one was responsible for monitoring it. Local knowledge was all important.

The Manshead still has a large and active membership, still does archaeology on a shoe string, and still for the love of the subject. And they continue to sacrifice evenings, weekends, and holidays, so that they can undertake archaeological projects at times when people earning their bread and butter at other things can join in and 'do their bit' for their local heritage. And there is still much for such an enthusiastic body to do. The scene has,

of course, changed beyond recognition, and the Manshead has changed its emphasis to match the times. Everybody recognises, for instance, the crucial importance of field survey on the one hand, and the moral dilemma of digging unthreatened sites in the light of rapid technical and scientific advances on the other. Rapid publication of results is also paramount, and the Manshead are a good example to us all with their record of prompt reporting.

Most large scale archaeological projects are these days conducted by 'the professionals', usually graduates who have full time paid jobs in archaeology. If they are exceptionally talented or lucky, archaeology is their career - not usually very well paid compared with other professions, but nevertheless paid. The huge "plus" in this was of course the imposition of professional standards and discipline, increased use of the benefits of scientific research, and the recognition through the planning system that archaeology has an important role to play in the cultural life of this country. It stands to reason that if a subject can be worked on full time, with continuity of research and better resources, advances can and will be made for everyone to share. The legislative framework has largely caught up with this situation, and there is more archaeological work than ever before, despite the recession. Planning archaeologists, archaeological units and archaeological consultants abound, though they greatly vary in philosophy and form. Archaeology has come of age. Public interest is growing; societies, units and universities are all retrieving more and more archaeological data. This in turn is beginning to have a major effect on our museums, but that is another story.

Because there has been stability in Bedfordshire, strides have been made not just in conducting individual fieldwork projects which produce finds and/or fieldwalking results, but to begin to

understand how these separate pieces fit into local, regional and national frameworks. Deeper and wider understanding comes from long study of an area. Because both "professional" and "amateur" bodies are committed to the archaeology of the county, their activities have a strong public service element. We all do it for the greater understanding of the archaeology of Bedfordshire, and to be able to share and communicate this to the people of Bedfordshire whose archaeology it is.

But further changes are on the way. It saddens me that archaeology is now an activity to make commercial profit from, with developers largely choosing how archaeology is done and who should do it in order to discharge responsibilities to planning legislation. Recording our local archaeology could go to the lowest bidder, and not necessarily to the best designed archaeological scheme. After all, a quality scheme which uses native cumulative knowledge might cost more because it gives back more in the way of contributing to the developing picture of Bedfordshire archaeology.

Proper contribution to the cultural and educational life of this county must be provided by *all* who have the privilege of working with its archaeology; this must be safeguarded by those to whom its history and archaeology are important.

So, a changing world. What will the Manshead Society of Dunstable be doing in another forty years? Another Les Matthews will be difficult. But I am confident that, given its track record over the past four decades, the Manshead will continue to move with the times, and continue to produce quality archaeological results. It will continue to strive, with other complementary organisations that make up the Bedfordshire Archaeological Council, to keep this county the subject of wistful envy by our neighbours.





Charles Leslie Randolph Matthews FSA  
With Saxon jewellery found on Puddlehill in 1960, now in Luton Museum.