

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

These notes include archaeological discoveries reported during 1986 and a few earlier finds not previously noted. Discoveries by the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit (MKAU) are included by courtesy of Mr D. C. Mynard, and fuller accounts of these sites appear in South Midlands Archaeology (CBA 9). The assistance of many informants is gratefully acknowledged; other discoveries are by Museum staff. The compiler would be pleased to learn of any errors or omissions. Findspots are recorded under civil parish.

Some selection of material has been necessary; single struck flakes for instance have not

normally been included, nor field scatters of medieval pottery unless of sufficient quantity to indicate settlement, nor single Roman coin finds. Abbreviated grid references have unfortunately to be given for a number of sites to prevent looting.

Numbers in parentheses are accession numbers of material at the County Museum. The initials BCM indicate that the material is in the Museum, but that no accession number has yet been allotted. The County Museum Archaeological Group is abbreviated CMAG.

Michael Farley

## PREHISTORIC

*Aylesbury* SP 8191814058  
Two trial trenches dug by Mr C. H. Dalwood for BCM at New Street, on the eastern side of the town, failed to produce evidence for the hillfort ditch on the line predicted.

*Dorney* SU 92577943  
A banjo enclosure of Iron Age date recorded on a photograph by the RCHM(E) in 1980 is noted here for the first time. A brief field visit produced only fire-fractured flints. See pp. 163-8 above.

*Dorney* SU 91757900  
A probable interrupted-ditch enclosure consisting of two ditches with the hint of a third internally on a different alignment was recorded as a cropmark by RCHM(E) in 1977 and is noted here for the first time. No other example is known in the County. See pp. 163-8.

*Little Missenden* SU 89949693  
A neolithic flint axe with polished cutting edge,

c.115 mm long was found by Dr E. Larch, and is on loan to the Amersham Museum.

*Newport Pagnell* SP 89404345  
A polished greenstone chisel/axe was found by Miss R. Jarman c.1979 in disturbed soil near bridge piling. (219.1986)

*Shenley Brook End* SP 85053560  
Two Iron Age enclosures additional to those reported in last year's Archaeological Notes were excavated by Mr R. J. Williams for MKAU, some 400 m NE of the main cropmark. One was roughly square, the other D-shaped. Machine trenches were cut prior to further excavations planned for 1987.

*West Wycombe* SU 8193  
A La Tène I copper alloy brooch, 36 mm long with a flat bow with three longitudinal grooves, and spring and pin missing, was found by a member of the South Bucks Metal Detector Club. (286.1985)

## ROMANO-BRITISH

- Amersham* SU 94909775 during road construction by Mr G. Foster and reported to MKAU.  
The 2.5 km length of the Amersham by-pass was monitored during earthmoving. The principal discovery was of an E-W boundary ditch, possibly a roadside ditch, south of which lay an L-shaped flint-built corn drying oven, the whole lying to the SE of the earlier Mantles Green Farm excavation. A substantial back-filled post-war gravel pit is thought to have destroyed some evidence of Roman occupation. Controlled search nearby by members of the South Bucks Metal Detector Club produced a few coins and a small copper-alloy socketed head of Jupiter, a twin to one previously discovered in Amersham. The head will be published in *Britannia*. (BCM)
- Dunton* SP 8224  
A scatter of Romano-British sherds was reported by Mr D. Shelley.
- Fleet Marston* SP 7716  
A scatter of Romano-British sherds was located during fieldwalking by Mrs B. Hurman. (184.1986)
- Little Brickhill* SP 89293339 (approx.)  
A small excavation by Mr D. Neal for the Central Excavation Unit, HBMC, to the west of Galley Lane crossroads in advance of road-works, failed to locate the ditch of the presumed fort, which may lie further west.
- Shenley Brook End* SP 82033588  
Romano-British ditches and pits were noted
- Wolverton (Bancroft)* SP 827403  
A final season of excavation took place at the Bancroft villa, directed by Mr R. J. Zeepvat for MKAU in an area close to the Bradwell Brook and to the east of areas previously examined. Building 10, partially exposed by construction of a pond in 1984, proved to be a small but substantial rectangular stone structure 10.5 × 6 m built in mortared coursed rubble on a pitched rubble footing. Its north wall had been built over the remains of a hearth/corn drier. Building 10 apparently fell into disuse in the late second century. To the south lay a roughly rectangular walled enclosure 18 × 26 m approx. whose interior had been lowered.
- E of building 10 and the enclosure, the course of a former N-S channel was located. This was apparently cut during the first/second century to improve water flow down the valley, but seems to have begun to silt up when building 10 was abandoned. Later E-W ditches cutting the enclosure indicate further attempts to drain what had become a persistently wet area.
- Waterlogging accounted for preservation of a number of wood and leather objects, and a programme of environmental sampling was carried out. The whole site falls within one of the city parks and information boards describing the site are now being prepared.

## SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

- Amersham* SU 9565597365  
Excavation by Mr J. Sharpe for the County Museum and the Amersham Society, in advance of conversion of a medieval hall-house into a local museum, exposed a central pitched tile hearth set in a rammed chalk floor. The hearth is presumed to be fifteenth-century. Excavation externally adjacent to the cross wing exposed earlier flint footings.
- Aylesbury* SP 82521334  
An excavation by the Aylesbury Past Project directed by Mr C. H. Dalwood fronting Walton Road, Walton, exposed shallow pits and gullies of twelfth/thirteenth-century date cut into Portland limestone. Post-medieval levelling may have removed other evidence.

*Aylesbury* SP 823154  
During systematic fieldwalking by the Aylesbury Past Project a small concentration of medieval sherds was found near Dunsham Farm. (BCM)

*Bierton with Broughton* SP 828156 (area)  
Systematic fieldwalking by the Aylesbury Past Project defined more closely a scatter of early Saxon sherds previously noted in this area. (BCM)

*Dinton with Ford* SP 766109 (approx.)  
Mr D. Cooksey discovered a lead ampulla with an arrow symbol on one side and a flask on the other. Mr B. W. Spencer suggests that the source of the ampulla was Walsingham.

*Great Missenden* SP 89750100  
During clearance and reconstruction of the fire-damaged Missenden Abbey, watching briefs were carried out by Messrs P. Yeoman, P. Heathman and J. Sharpe for short periods. It became clear that there had been substantial rebuilding in the Tudor period, the form of the medieval cloister dictating to a great extent the plan of the resultant house. A substantial part of the western wall of the eastern cloister range survived, as did the northern wall of the southern range. A well-preserved doorway through the latter at its western end, with red paint over a beige wash was noted. This is thought to date to c.1600. Adjacent to this a well-preserved plain tiled floor of similar date had previously been noted. Parallel to the eastern range, running through the cloister, a late medieval/Tudor drain was noted and in the southern range a shallow undercroft of similar date.

Digging of service trenches externally brought to light a number of pieces of decorated stone, mostly in clunch. Hints of the church wall were noted externally to the north of the existing building. Outside the south face of the existing building a surface of plain tiles sealed other floor surfaces, presumably relating to buildings attached to the south range of the cloister. Drainage trenches at the south-east wing of the existing building cut through a pavement of medieval decorated tiles, but

these had possibly been re-used in the Tudor period.

*High Wycombe* SU 85749328  
In August 1986 human bone was uncovered during road improvements at the junction of Desborough Road and Desborough Avenue. With the assistance of CMAG, parts of approx. 11 bodies oriented E-W were uncovered, shallowly laid in the alluvial flint gravel.

Human remains had been discovered in the area in the late nineteenth century. Reference to a map of 1596 shows the site to lie where 'St Margarets' is located. St Margarets was a leper hospital in existence in 1233 when its chapel needed repair. The recent discoveries are undoubtedly part of the attached cemetery. (BCM)

*High Wycombe* SU 8294  
Part of a copper alloy sword/dagger chape with heart and trefoil openwork decoration, and a shield-shaped heraldic fitting with a floral design in low relief, both late medieval, were found by members of the South Bucks Metal Detector Club. (290-291.1985)

*Shenley Brook End* SP 83803566  
Twelfth/thirteenth-century pottery, noted by members of the West Bletchley Metal Detector Club during road construction and reported to MKAU, proved to have come from a small house platform.

*Shenley Brook End* SP 83153575  
An excavation under the direction of Mr M. Petchey for MKAU funded by MSC, on part of the medieval village, was concluded. The excavation of a second house platform was completed, giving evidence of several medieval buildings, but a trial trench across a third platform (Area 3) produced no evidence of structures.

*Shenley Church End* SP 83333672  
Roadworks revealed at least one further medieval house site in this area, recorded by Mr R. J. Williams for MKAU in addition to that noted earlier (*Recs. Bucks* 24, 175). Eleventh/twelfth-century pottery and a large decorated

bone spindle whorl or gaming piece were discovered.

*Stony Stratford* SP 78924041  
A watching brief by Mr R. J. Williams for MKAU, intended to elucidate aspects of this medieval planned town, recorded a 2-3 m deep deposit containing seventeenth/eighteenth-century pottery at the extreme rear of the tenements, suggesting that evidence for medieval occupation may have been disturbed by sand and gravel quarrying. Part of the plot

had once lain within the graveyard of the adjacent Nonconformist chapel and a number of skeletons were disturbed.

*Tattenhoe* SP 82843395  
A gridded field and contour survey by Mr R. J. Williams for MKAU was carried out at Tattenhoe west of the church and moat. This demonstrated the existence of buildings of thirteenth- to seventeenth-century date in this location.

#### POST-MEDIEVAL AND UNDATED

*Emberton* SP 88924982  
A rectangular enclosure was photographed from the air as a cropmark by Mr G. Foard.

*Stewkley* SP 85202585  
A fragment of a black and white wall-painting depicting a foliage and floral design, uncovered at Dove House, was examined by Dr E. C. Rouse who considers it to be from the late sixteenth century.

*Thornborough* SP 73873338  
A slight rise noted in a pasture field may represent the mutilated remains of a mill site shown in approximately this position on a Magdalen College map of 1613.

*Tingewick* SP 65723284  
Observation by Mr A. Houghton-Brown of large pieces of brickwork in association with bricks with slaggy adhesions may indicate the existence of a brick kiln in the vicinity.