

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

These notes include archaeological discoveries reported during 1990 and a few earlier finds not previously noted. Discoveries by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit (MKAU) are included courtesy of Mr. D. C. Mynard, and a fuller account of these sites appears in *South Midlands Archaeology*. 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. Other commitments have meant that the notes are not as comprehensive this year as would be wished. Some 1990 discoveries will be listed next year.

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

MEF

PREHISTORIC

Aston Clinton SP 8690 1229
During construction of a pond Mrs J. A. Smith noticed plentiful pottery. A brief investigation by A. Hunn for BCM showed the presence of a black clayey soil with burnt limestone, containing 'Belgic' pottery. One base had an incised hexagon design. The particular interest of the find is that it provides some background to the presumed amphora burial found near Vatches Farm in the last century, but which has previously lacked any kind of associated archaeological context.

(23. 1990)

Aylesbury SP 805 136
An evaluation excavation excavation at Coldharbour Farm which revealed a Mid-Iron Age site is published in this issue of *Records*

(1991. 47)

Buckland
(See Romano-British)

Buckingham SP 6932
The discovery of various metal objects inc-

luding two nearly complete basal looped Bronze Age spearheads, found together, and a lead medieval seal matrix, found by Mr. T. Smith, were reported by Mr. R. J. Williams of MKAU.

Ellesborough SP 855 061
A rectangular enclosure defined by a shallow ditch was identified by Mr W. L. Mathews, National Trust. Traces of an eroded bank were noted on the inner edge. Date ? later prehistoric/RB.

Ellesborough SP 84750642-84890645
A cross dyke with ditch c. 8. 5m wide and eroded bank on north was identified by Mr. W. L. Mathews, National Trust. ?Prehistoric.

Ellesborough SP 84660688-84790688
Another bank and ditch with eroded bank on north side and ditch c. 8. 5m wide, was noted by Mr W. L. Mathews, who suggests it may be of prehistoric date.

Halton
(See Saxon and Medieval)

High Wycombe SU 8254 9544
The upper stone of an ?Iron Age rotary quern with traces of an iron spigot and hole for side handle was found by Mr G. Powis
(temp. BCM)

Medmenham SP 817 844 (area)
Graham Keevill for the Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook an evaluation excavation at Danesfield Iron Age hillfort both within and outside the Scheduled area, prior to building works. Iron Age occupation features, some including pottery, were revealed.

Olney
(See Saxon and Medieval)

Steeple Claydon SP 6787 2654
A polished stone axe made of a fine grained green stone, slightly broken at the butt end, length 92mm, was found by Mr. T. C. Ridgway on a roadside verge.
(19. 1990)

West Wycombe SU 803 949
Mr. J. Shepherd located the undamaged cutting edge of a Late Bronze Age socketed axe.
(16. 1990)

ROMANO-BRITISH

Buckland SP 8212
During systematic fieldwalking by CMAG some 300 sherds of Romano-British pottery, also 26 fragments of RB tile were recovered, clearly indicating settlement. Also present were flint-gritted sherds probably of Iron Age date.

Little Brickhill SP 8962 3324
A brief survey of the archaeological implications of the proposed route of the Little Brickhill by-pass was undertaken by Andrew Hunn for BCM and DoT. Fieldwalk evidence and a magnetometer survey by A. Bartlett showed that occupation, associated with the town of Magiovinium, extended a little further to the south-east than had previously been demonstrated.

Little Brickhill SP 3930 3335 (area)
During construction of the Fenny Stratford by-pass, at its northern (Galley Lane) end, MKAU kindly provided staff to record discoveries reported by metal detector users, including an apparent Roman coin forger's

hoard. The hoard consisted of bronze coin blanks and bronze pellets contained in three coarseware pots. Beneath the pots were a pair of iron coin dies. Twenty-five metres to the south nine inhumation burials were discovered. A few sherds of late Roman pottery came from the fill of one of these graves. Another find of particular significance was of a small bronze ram, probably part of a larger statuette of Mercury.

Walton SP 888 367
An evaluation was carried out by Bob Zeepvat, of MKAU, of three fields at Walton Hall, in order to determine the nature, extent, and preservation of a Roman site which had been located during an excavation in 1972 on the line of H9 Groveway. The main area of occupation was found to cover about half a hectare immediately to the north of the 1972 discovery with outlying boundary ditches etc extending over some three hectares. The site was 'native' in character, pottery finds indicating a mid third to fourth-century occupation.

SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

Aylesbury SP 81760 13788
Parts of two human skeletons were uncovered during building operations at 2-4, Castle Street. They are likely to be from Aylesbury's minster cemetery. Recovered from the same site was a handmade sherd of Iron Age pot-

tery, and a quantity of seventeenth-century clay pipes. The building, which contained iron bars above an internal partition, is said to have once been Aylesbury's police station.
(1991. 51.1-28)

Bow Brickhill

SP 894 354

An excavation by John Rhodes of MKAU took place on part of the earthworks of the deserted medieval village of Caldecotte. Part of the site is to be preserved as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Previous work by Martin Petchey in 1978–80, to the west, had revealed extensive early Roman occupation and industrial activity as well as a medieval moat and post-medieval watermill. This season four areas were targeted. Of these Area 1 will merit most attention in the season. Here a holloway led to a complex of post-medieval stone-footed buildings adjacent to two or three medieval crofts, a circular stone-footed dovecot, a pond and numerous features of thirteenth to fourteenth-century date.

Brill

SP 6560 1408

Trial trenching by Andrew Hunn for BCM adjacent to the former Magistrates Court at Brill in advance of development by Aylesbury Vale District Council, brought to light part of a medieval tile kiln and an opposed-flue pottery kiln, both of fourteenth-century date. A sand pit of similar date was also sampled. No funding was available for a full investigation. The work showed once again the density of the industry within the village. In this case the only above ground trace had been a handful of medieval sherds collected from an allotment.

An unexpected discovery at the site was of an eighteenth century 'ha-ha' ditch with brick revetment wall of which some 35m was recorded. The ha-ha belonged to Brill House built in 1771 by Thomas Saunders. A 'riotous assembly' broke down the gates and destroyed the shrubberies of the house in the late eighteenth century following the alteration of a road into the village. As the ha-ha lies on the opposite side of the main village street to Saunders house it may be that construction of this was a cause of the diversion referred to.

Brill

SP 65626 14164

Whilst digging in his garden Mr. A. Paterson discovered a complete sagger and a jug of late medieval date, with other pottery. The garden lies adjacent to a possible kiln noted last year (SP 65644 14170).

(1991.53.1:191.54.1)

Great Missenden

SP 9003 0128

Following tree clearance an earthwork, known since the nineteenth century, can now be interpreted as part of a medieval ringwork with an adjoining holloway. Medieval pottery was collected from disturbed areas.

(BCM)

Halton

SP 8710

During systematic fieldwalking Mrs J. Chaffey recovered a quantity of struck flints of Neolithic-Early Bronze Age date, 93 prehistoric sherds, many being flint-gritted and probably Iron Age, a few Roman sherds, and 40 Saxon sherds including grass-tempered wares and a possible Ipswich sherd. Over a thousand medieval sherds were also present.

(BCM)

Maids Moreton

SP 710 343

Mr R. J. Williams of MKAU reports the discovery by Mr. J. Tomkins of various metal objects including a Late Saxon bronze strap end with probable zoomorphic decoration.

Olney

SP 8909 5114

Messrs G. Heritage, T. Smith and A. Smith reported to MKAU discovery of a range of metal objects including a Celtic bronze ¼ stater, Roman coins, a cut silver penny of Cnut, and a small plain Late Saxon garment hook in ?silver, all located on a housing development.

Shenley Brook End

SP 829 356 (area)

The final year of excavation at Westbury by Shenley, was directed by P. Busby for R. Ivens of MKAU. During the year a small seventh-century Saxon inhumation cemetery was discovered. One burial was accompanied by a gold circular disc-pendant with central garnet, iron shears and a knife. Two wells of similar date were also uncovered, both containing the remains of wooden ladders. One well had later been reused for flax retting. The Iron Age and late Roman field system recorded previously was further explored and extensive areas of the medieval village.

Stoke Mandeville

SP 8381 0942

The old church site was surveyed by I. Stewart for BCM at the request of Stoke Mandeville

Parish Council, preparatory to improving visitor access to the site.

Tattenhoe SP 830 338 (area)
The deserted settlement at Tattenhoe, once consisting of well-preserved earthworks, has over the last twenty years or so been substantially damaged by ploughing. The scheduled area of earthworks around the church will be preserved; however other parts will be destroyed. Trial work by R. J. Ivens for MKAU in 1988 pointed the way to three areas which required further investigation. These areas were investigated by N. Shepherd. In area A scattered remains of eleventh to

twelfth-century activity were recovered in the form of pits, post-holes, short lengths of ditch and at least one simple post-built structure. Area B straddled a holloway which was found to be cobble surfaced. Three crofts were identified each consisting of a complex of buildings. Provisional dating suggests occupation spanning the twelfth through to the fifteenth centuries, to be followed by clay quarrying in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Area C revealed at least one post-built building and a group of closes adjacent to an open yard. Within this was a probable bread oven and a kiln, perhaps a drying kiln or malting oven.

POST-MEDIEVAL AND UNDATED

Amersham SU 9428 9952
A vertical shaft which appeared in a field on Wedonhill Farm was investigated with Mr. B. Tilbury. Some 4m. deep there was a collapse cone at the base which extended sideways into a small cavity. The whole penetrated sandy yellow clay-with-flints. No evidence was recovered as to whether it was a natural collapse or a former 'chalk well' of a kind now well known from the Chilterns.

Brill
(See Saxon and Medieval)

Quainton SP 7838 2067
Attention was drawn by the Rev. M. Eyden to

the 'King of the Gypsies' stone still visible in Carters Lane, and locally thought to mark a burial of c. 1851.

Ravenstone SP 8560 4925
The discovery of an adult human skeleton during building work was reported to Mr. K. Field by Mr. Goss. Undated.

High Wycombe SU 8675 9322
In the front garden of Castle House a substantial cavity in the chalk was broken into during improvement to services through the grounds. A brief investigation to determine whether the cavity was natural or man-made proved inconclusive.