

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

These notes include archaeological discoveries reported during 1991 and a few earlier finds. The results of some fieldwalking not yet processed will be included in next year's notes. 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 recorded, nor field scatters of medieval pottery unless of sufficient quantity to indicate settlement, nor single Roman coin finds. Bracketed numbers indicate that the material is with the County Museum (BCM). The

County Museum Archaeological Group is abbreviated as CMAG. Abbreviated grid references have unfortunately to be given for a number of sites to prevent looting. The use of the list as a guide for metal detecting inhibits future publication of information, an inhibition that is in nobody's long term interest.

During the year a substantial number of new discoveries were made in Taplow and Dorney on the line of the proposed Maidenhead to Windsor Flood Relief Scheme. Fieldwalking was carried out by the museum, and trial trenching by Thames Valley Archaeological Services.

Michael Farley

PREHISTORIC

Aylesbury SP 8179 1166
A socketed side-looped bronze spearhead, found in digging house trenches in the Humber Drive area of Walton Court in 1981 and not previously recorded, was given to the Museum by Mr. J. Sallis.

(1991.85.1)

Buckland see Romano-British

Denham TQ 0452 8712
Material from a fieldwalk, carried out by Mr. M. Tingle in 1984, was passed to BCM. It includes Neolithic struck flakes, a leaf arrowhead and a transverse arrowhead. Fieldwalk records are at BCM.

(1991.63)

Dorney SU 9210 7997
Trial trenching located one of two ring ditches noted on air photos and during geophysical survey a little north of the M4. The ditch proved difficult to locate having been back-

filled with gravel; however it was 2m in width and 1.3m deep with a V-profile. Seven sherds from an ?Early Bronze Age globular vessel came from primary silts. A further, undated ditch lay nearby.

Dorney SU 9262 7947 area
Trial trenching following fieldwalking, which had produced a fairly dispersed scatter of prehistoric, Roman and medieval sherds, located a series of cut features, but not a 'banjo' enclosure tentatively identified on air photos. Significant features included a single mid Bronze Age cremation in an inverted Deverel-Rimbury urn, possibly indicating a larger cemetery; pits, ditches and gullies possibly Iron Age; pits and postholes possibly of Saxon date; and a group of features of medieval/late medieval date.

Dorney SU 930 770 area
Trial trenching was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in connection with a plan-

ning application for a rowing course in a field containing extensive cropmarks. A report appears in *South Midlands Archaeology* 22, 26. Extensive field systems of mid to Late Bronze Age date were investigated and an urnfield cemetery located. Although gravel islands within the alluvium appear to have been favoured, the presence of Bronze Age horizons off the islands show the whole to form part of a continuous landscape.

Halton see Saxon and Medieval

Latimer SP 9865 0185
A palaeolithic ovate hand axe was discovered by Mr R. Cato at Dunton brickworks. The axe was found during processing of clay at the works. The find is one of a rare group of axes from the Chilterns discovered in unrolled condition in localised clay pockets (e.g. one discovered at Cholesbury sometime prior to 1957).

(1991.40)

Lillingstone Dayrell SP 7039
Mr D. Shelley reported the discovery of an Iron Age strap-union, identified as of Taylor and Brailsford's Type 1.

Little Missenden SU 9198
A gold quarter stater was found by Mr Mark Parry.

Little Missenden/Penn SU 9080 9660
CVAS 5776

During systematic fieldwalking, Mr and Mrs Cauvain with CMAG recovered 150 struck flints of Neolithic to Bronze Age date including two scrapers, also a polished flint adze, and a sparse scatter of RB sherds. Concentrations of burnt flint were also noted.

(1991.62)

Pitstone SP 9344 1552
Mr and Mrs B. Hickman drew attention to finds made over a period of some years in an allotment including 29 struck flakes of Neolithic-Bronze Age date, part of a polished Neolithic axe, a transverse arrowhead, a uni-facially flaked ovate, a fine bi-facially flaked piece possibly from a sickle or part of an arrowhead, and a single blade/flake core.

Princes Risborough see Post-Medieval

Stokenchurch SU 767 936

An evaluation adjacent to a cropmark of uncertain character at Chequers Manor Farm was carried out by the Museum under the direction of Andrew Hunn for Mr K. Freeman, in advance of proposals for golf course construction near Cadmore End. The site lay on the Chilterns plateau at approx. 660ft (190m) above sea level on a level promontory of pebbly gravel and clay-with-flint. The evaluation revealed several small cut features including ditches, containing small quantities of struck flint. The majority of this material could be dated to late Mesolithic-late Neolithic. Some buried soil horizons were also present containing similar material which was also reflected in surface collection. Overall, six scrapers and fourteen cores were recovered. Fire-cracked flint was also present in archaeological contexts. Although small scale the evaluation is interesting in that it reinforces the impression, gained from fieldwalking, of widespread use and presumably extensive clearance, of the Chiltern plateau during the earlier prehistoric period.

Taplow SU 9056 8168 area

Trial trenching exposed a shallow feature with LBA/EIA pottery, a pit with over 50 struck flints including a barb and tang arrowhead, and a single pit containing burnt flint probably of prehistoric date. Some 2m of colluvium of Roman or later date occurred at the northern end of the site, covering some ephemeral features including charcoal patches.

Taplow SU 9070 8105 area

Trial trenching exposed a probable midden 10cm thick, containing burnt and struck flint, together with quantities of possible Bronze Age pottery.

Taplow SU 9093 8078 area

Trial trenching exposed an infilled hollow at the base of which was much burnt flint with occasional prehistoric sherds and struck flints. A second hollow with similar characteristics lay nearby. Other smaller burnt-flint-filled features occurred in the vicinity.

Taplow SU 9122 8068 area
Trial trenching exposed three features containing burnt flint, presumably prehistoric in date.

Taplow SU 9132 8045 area
Trial trenching exposed a series of individual features or layers containing small quantities of struck flints, also pottery of probable Late Bronze Age date.

Taplow SU 9157 8023 area
Fieldwalking in advance of trial trenching recovered over 140 struck flakes including ten scrapers of Neolithic-Bronze Age date, and a number of retouched pieces. These finds did

not obviously correlate with the results of trial trenching which produced only three undated ditches and a pit. However see following entry which lies in the southern part of the field.

Taplow SU 9180 7997
Trial trenching near the M4 intercepted an old river channel containing at least a metre of peat. A site located on the margins of the peat contained a charcoal patch, a pit full of burnt flint and a possible midden containing struck flints and Middle Bronze Age (Deverel-Rimbury) pottery with carbonised residues). Finds appeared to occur only on the top of the peat.

ROMANO-BRITISH

Bow Brickhill/Little Brickhill SP 896 332
An excavation, directed by Andrew Hunn for the County Museum and funded by English Heritage, was carried out in advance of construction of the Little Brickhill by-pass and following a geophysical survey by English Heritage. The work abutted an area of Magiovinium previously examined by David Neal in 1978-80.

Further evidence was uncovered for a series of ditched enclosures, apparently regularly planned, to the east of the defended area of the town. Most of these property divisions appear to have been maintained with little repositioning throughout the period of occupation which lasted from the first through to the later fourth century. Trial trenching further east of the main investigation area may have located surfaces of Watling Street. A single contracted inhumation burial was found within one of the enclosures during topsoil stripping for a contractor's compound.

Bradenham SU 8397 area
Mr A. Wainwright, for the National Trust, reported the discovery of three patches of iron smelting slag. First-century AD pottery was found in the same area.

(1991.127.1-70)

Bradenham SU 831 964
Mr A. Wainwright for the National Trust re-

ported the discovery of an extensive area of slag, including smelting slag visible on a large lynchet.

Buckland SP 8912
During systematic fieldwalking, CMAG recorded the presence of Roman pottery and tile, indicating a small Roman settlement. Flint-gritted Iron Age pottery was also present.

(BC)

Dorney See *Prehistoric; also Saxon and Medieval*

Great Brickhill SP 8928
A report was received that during excavation of a small gravel pit a number of Roman coins had been discovered and ditches apparently of Roman date were present. As it was intended that further extraction might take place an evaluation was requested. The result of this work appears in this issue of Records.

Stantonbury SP 8410 4200
Trial trenching was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of a proposed housing development. Several NW-SE ditches, presumably field ditches, were located of which one proved to be Roman in date. An undated cobbled track was overlaid and cut by ridge and furrow; it could indicate the course

of a route represented further north by a holloway.

Stowe SP 6807 3843
In excavating a rubbish pit for Stowe School a Roman pottery kiln was cut through. The surviving portion in the side of the pit measured 1m x 0.8m only, with flat floor and sloping sides. Three pieces of kiln bar were recovered. The small amount of associated pottery was soft-fired in a grogged fabric, with simple everted rims, probably first century AD. Adjacent was a pit containing some Roman tile fragments. The discovery was investigated by Mr. A. Wainwright.

West Wycombe SU 8394
Following dredging of the lake in West Wycombe Park, members of the South Bucks

Metal Detector Club were invited to search the area. A substantial number of corroded Roman coins were recovered from the silt dump and the area generally, also part of four bow brooches and a plate brooch. Work by Mr Angus Wainwright for the National Trust recorded various features and pottery including third-fourth century Oxfordshire wares.

Weston Turville SP 854 104
During development of an area for housing Mr. B. Lane recovered part of a Colchester type Roman brooch, a bronze seal c.1300 inscribed "ALAS JE SUIS PRIZ" (Alas I am caught) depicting an eagle taking a hare (published in this issue of Records), and medieval pottery of eleventh to fourteenth century date.

SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

Aylesbury SP 8186 1394
A corbel in the form of a woman's head of late fourteenth to early fifteenth century date, carved in clunch, was found in a foundation trench at the rear of a shop. The piece may have originated from St Mary's church.
(1991.55)

Brill SP 65626 14164
Mr A. Patterson brought to the museum's attention the discovery of a complete saggar and other pottery of fifteenth to sixteenth century date discovered in his garden. The garden adjoins the site of a possible kiln noted during building work in 1989.
(1991.53-54)

Brill SP 6701 1514
A rectangular feature photographed from the air may be an infilled moat.

Chesham SP 9763 0337
On a surface stripped prior to laying a water main, Mrs M. Wells recovered some 30 sherds of late twelfth to early thirteenth century sand-tempered pottery.

Dinton SP 765 115
Following an application to develop farm land

at Dinton as a golf course, the developer agreed to fund an evaluation of the area in conjunction with detailed examination of land adjoining a known Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The work took place in January-March 1991 under the direction of Andrew Hunn.

Twenty inhumation graves were located. In general the preservation of the bone was poor and there had been much post-mortem disturbance. The graves were orientated roughly in two groups at right angles to each other: heads SW with feet NE, and heads NW with feet SE. The soil conditions were difficult and grave cuts undetectable, the fill apparently being backfilled subsoil which was in this case sandy silt. Extensive assistance was provided to the excavators by one group of metal detector users; on the other hand night-time security had to be provided to deter others less well intentioned.

The cemetery was first discovered in 1769 when a cone beaker, now in the County Museum, was recovered. The majority of the inhumations recovered during the recent work were accompanied by grave goods of one kind or another. Saucer, disc and applied brooches were equally represented. There was one great

square-headed and a single small long brooch. Textile traces are present on several together with impressions of human skin. A number of graves contained bead strings of amber and glass. Knives were the commonest find apart from beads. There was one drinking bucket whose staves survived virtually intact.

In several instances whole blocks of soil were lifted for laboratory examination. Conservation of the objects at the County Museum and through the Area Museums Service is continuing to bring to light new information.

A large ditch to the east of the site may have defined the cemetery's limit, although it may have been an earlier field boundary. The cemetery is provisionally dated to the mid sixth century.

Dorney SU 9225 7965 area
Trial trenching following fieldwalking south of the M4, in an area of diffuse cropmarks, revealed several foci of activity. Fieldwalking had produced much medieval and a small amount of Roman pottery together with fire-cracked flint and a sparse scatter of struck flakes. The trial trenching identified many pits, postholes, ditches, gullies and pits, the majority of datable features being of medieval date. A second focus related to a spread of burnt flint, struck flint and Late Bronze Age Early Iron Age pottery. A third focus relating to other cut features was associated with vegetable tempered sherds, possibly of Saxon date.

Dorney SU 9293 7958
Trial trenching revealed pits, postholes and ditches of medieval and post-medieval date. See also Dorney, Prehistoric.

Dorton SP 6767 1362
Mrs E.Graves reported the discovery of seven medieval sherds including a Brill rim, found whilst digging a pond.
(1991.49)

Great Missenden SP 8992 0114
A small investigation by Andrew Hunn at Abbey Farm, Great Missenden, revealed

traces of structures adjacent to the recently identified gatehouse to the abbey.

Great Missenden SP 9003 0128
Following tree clearance it became apparent that a previously enigmatic earthwork was a damaged ringwork. Medieval pottery was recovered from the site.
(1991.48)

Halton SP 876104-878105
During systematic fieldwalking Mrs J.Chaffey, with members of the Chess Valley Archaeological Society, recovered a Mesolithic tranchet axe, 40" struck flints of Neolithic-Bronze Age date, flint-gritted sherds (?Iron Age), a few Roman sherds, 40 Saxon sherds including a possible Ipswich sherd, and a substantial quantity of medieval pottery.
(BCM)

Medmenham SU 8066 8384
A watching brief on a domestic pipeline trench through the yard of Abbey House, the site of Medmenham Abbey, noted only a spread of undated compacted small chalk rubble.

Newport Pagnell SP 8758 4407
A watching brief kindly funded by McCarthy and Stone (Developments Ltd), was carried out by Hugh Beamish for the Museum. Although few archaeological features were recorded on the housing development itself, a trench dug from the site into Union Street cut a deep feature containing a rim sherd of St Neot's type in its primary fill, providing the first concrete indication of Late Saxon occupation in the town. A note on this work will be found elsewhere in this issue of Records.
(1991.128)

Stowe SP 6769 3718
Medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered by Mr Angus Wainwright from tree roots at the south end of the former village of Stowe.
(1992.93.1)

Weston Turville see *Romano-British*

Wolverton

SP 803 407

An evaluation of two pieces of land was carried out on behalf of the Post Office by Andrew Hunn, at the Wolverton Mill Training and Conference Centre. The larger land parcel, a playing field, lay adjacent to a ring ditch excavated by H.S. Green for the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit in 1972. The 1972 excavation had revealed part of an enclosure visible on air photographs, whose ditch contained Saxon pottery. The 1991 work evaluated a larger area confirming the course of the enclosure ditch on the south side, the northern part having been previously dest-

royed. Although finds were not plentiful, a small amount of mid-Saxon pottery was recovered together with part of the handle of a handled comb, and a biconical headed copper alloy pin.

A second smaller piece of land which was evaluated to the north of the college, and was later surveyed electronically, produced part of a sunken featured building. It is hoped that full excavation will follow the evaluation in 1992. It may be that the settlement was the tun which gave Wolverton its name.

POST-MEDIEVAL AND UNDATED

Buckingham

SP 695 337 approx

Mrs S.Lewis reports the discovery of part of a human skeleton (possibly disarticulated), in an electricity trench outside Churchview Cottage, Well Street.

Princes Risborough

SP 822 038

A survey by Julia Wise for BCM, published in this issue of Records, noted a prehistoric cross-ridge dyke, First World War practice trenches and other, previously recorded features.

Stantonbury see Romano-British

West Wycombe

SU 831 944

After drying up of the lake in West Wycombe park and subsequent cleaning, Mr A. Wainwright for the National Trust recorded and partially excavated a series of brick sluices and channels with associated timber, the remains of a boundary wall, and a bridge abutment, around and in the lake bed. The whole, dating about AD 1700, appears to be the remains of formal water garden adjacent to the early house or perhaps associated with the first phase of the present house. The features were much damaged by subsequent eighteenth century landscaping.