

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM READING MUSEUM

During the period of January–December, 1961, 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

Caversham, Reading. A pointed flint hand-axe ($5\frac{1}{2}$ in. long) was found by Mr. E. G. Theobald of 32 Conisboro Avenue, Caversham, when digging in his garden for gravel. It is in sharp condition but frost-cracked, with slight ochrous staining over a white patina. (38:61).

Sonning. A well-made ovate hand-axe ($3\frac{3}{4}$ in. along the major axis) was found by Mr. Norman Cheyney in his garden at "Fecimus," Sonning Halt. The implement is frost-cracked and has a heavy white patina, one side smooth and the other rough. (16:62).

Earley. Master Ian M. Skaife found a small ($3\frac{5}{8}$ in. long) very ochrous pointed hand-axe near the edge of the lake at Maiden Erleigh (SU 751710) where there had been recent road excavations. (227:61).

Woodley. Mr. L. W. Charlton, for the Ham River Gravel Co., reported two rolled pointed hand-axes and two waste flakes from gravel being worked at Butts Hill (SU 767742). They remain in his possession. This gravel is 12 ft. thick, well-bedded and sandy, and overlies London Clay. It is part of a wide spread of Lynch Hill Terrace deposits with a surface level of about 175 ft. O.D. Gravel from this pit has been taken to the lower pit in the Taplow terrace at Norris's Green for screening (at SU 775742) and flakes have also been found on the dumps there of screened material. By permission of the gravel company, some members of the Berkshire Field Research Group are watching both pits.

Beenham. A mammoth tooth from the Marley Tile pit, Beenham (SU 601676) was given to the museum by Mrs. C. Meredith. (193:61).

MESOLITHIC

Water Oakley, Bray. Mr. Tom Walls reported a transverse arrowhead, a broken microlith, three two-platformed cores, two core-rejuvenating flakes, seven blades and ten waste flakes from the disturbed top-soil of gravel workings (SU 917781). They are all stained and/or patinated and remain in his possession.

Mortimer. Master F. Turnbull presented a flint medium tranchet axe found on the surface of Mortimer Fair Ground (SU 656647) by Master Roy Hood of Mortimer. (267:61).

Thatcham. The fourth and final season of excavations at this Mesolithic site was conducted in May and June, 1961, by the Berkshire Field Research Group on behalf

of the Reading and Newbury Museums. A generous grant from the Prehistoric Society and the collaboration of the Cambridge University Department of Quaternary Research enabled a steel coffer-dam to be sunk into the swamp so that a dry section could be obtained of the lake marls. These marls proved to be 3-4 ft. thick and contained considerable quantities of floral material: driftwood, pine cones, birch and pine bark, hazel nuts. Pollen was obtained by Dr. D. Churchill of Cambridge University by scraping the surface of driftwood found at various levels and analysis of the tree pollen shows a transition from zone IV (pre-boreal) at the base to zone VI (boreal) at the top. Wood samples from the top, middle and bottom of the marl are being submitted to radioactive carbon dating. It is significant that although very few flint artifacts were found in the marl, and none of bone or antler, they came from various levels from the top of the marl to six inches within the base. These flints, including an unfinished tranchet axe and one microlith, were presumably thrown or dropped into the lake while the marl was accumulating by the people living on the nearby land surface, so the site must have been occupied (if intermittently) for a long period. Several bone fragments and a pair of roe deer antlers were also found in the marl, all in a superb state of preservation.

The area excavation of the buried Mesolithic land surface, close to the site of the coffer dam excavation, was completed. It was particularly rich in flint artifacts and hearth remains. The dominant fauna remained red deer, roe deer, pig and beaver. Gratitude is expressed again to all the many people who have worked on this site, and especially to the untiring efforts of Messrs. Ray and Derek Sheridan.

NEOLITHIC

Reading. Master Tony Edwards reported a flint scraper and a patinated flake from the sand pit at the western end of Coley Park (SU 700720). They remain in his possession.

Henley-on-Thames. A very finely made chipped flint axe head was found by Mr. P. A. Rixon in Greys Road at a depth of two feet when he was digging a post hole near the entrance to Makower's Works. It is in mint condition, of grey flint, 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. long. (175:61).

Sonning. Over two hundred flint artifacts, mainly flakes, were found by Mr. H. Copsey on the surface of Straightthanger Field close to the excavations in progress by Dr. Slade of the rectilinear enclosure (see *B.A.J.* 58, p. 63). They include a discoidal core and some serrated flakes, usually associated with a Late Neolithic flint industry.

BRONZE AGE

Assenden, Oxford. A bronze palstave, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, in good condition with a dark green uniform patina was found on ploughed ground at Round Hill Farm and purchased for the museum. (121:61).

IRON AGE—ROMAN

Upton Nervet. Trial excavations were conducted in September 1961 in the fields south of the Bath Road (between SU 614690 and SU 620694) by Mr. W. H. Manning

on behalf of Reading Museum. Since 1959 crop marks had been observed each summer, disclosing a complexity of buried features (see *B.A.J.* 57, p. 64) including three pairs of parallel lines and two enclosures. Permission for excavation was kindly granted by the Englefield Estate Office.

The larger of the enclosures is sub-rectangular and a quantity of Belgic pottery was found in the ditch fillings. One part of the ditch contained material from what may have been a burnt timber building. The smaller, rectangular enclosure with shallow, double ditches is probably of Roman date, as pottery of that period was found in the ditch fillings. No trace of any substantial building was found in the northern corner of the western field, in spite of vague markings on an aerial photograph. A resistivity survey was conducted on this part of the site by the Aldermaston Archaeological Society. A section cut across a pair of straight parallel lines in the adjacent field, visible as crop marks or slight depressions for a distance of almost half a mile, exposed shallow V-shaped ditches 64 ft. apart. The Roman road from the North Gate of Silchester has, at Padworth, its ditches 62 ft. apart and it is most likely that this feature at Ufton Nervet is its continuation. Further work is planned and a full report will be forthcoming.

ROMAN

Harwell. Mr. W. G. Bosley and Mr. Brown reported two coins found during 1960 in the garden, 30-40 yards west of Middle Farm: an illegible sesterius and a follis of Constantius Chlorus (293-306 A.D.). They remain in their possession.

Kidmore End. Mrs. B. Appleton reported a sesterius of Lucilla from the garden of "Ourden." It remains in her possession.

Tilehurst. Mr. F. Herbert reported an illegible sesterius from his garden at 23, Ash Road. It remains in his possession.

Hermitage. Miss Carol Woolf reported a sesterius of Severus Alexander from the garden of Fox and Hounds Cottage, Wellhouse. It remains in her possession.

Easthampstead. Mr. Hepplewhite reported a sesterius of Maximinus from the Forestry Reserve near "Caesar's Camp." It remains in his possession.

Shellingford. Mr. J. Titcombe found an illegible 3rd-4th century coin in the garden of Shellingford House. (276:61).

Wallingford. Mr. E. Abery found five coins on his allotment in Station Road: Valens, Magnentius and three 4th century illegible. (127:61, 272:61 and 274:61/1-3).

Blewbury. A coin of Constantius (?) was found by Capt. M. F. Turner-Bridger in the garden of The Turnpike House. (226:61).

West Ilsley. The Rev. D. A. Pearce found a coin of Constantine I in the garden of the New Vicarage. (35:61).

Crowmarsh, Oxon. Mr. E. Abery reported a quantity of sherds and other material from a deep-ploughed field beside the River Thames at Newnham Murren (SU 611892), including samian ware, roofing tile fragments, bone and antler, iron slag and a 'Hod Hill' type brooch. (247:61).

SAXON

Reading. Mrs. Margaret McLean Park found in her garden at Jubilee Road a silver sceatta (Obverse: bird in vine; reverse: wolf and twins. Brooke, plate II, 5). This coin was purchased for the museum. (123:61).

MEDIEVAL

Winnersh. A gold noble of Edward III was found in the garden of Mr. A Bayliss, "Merstham," King St. Lane and purchased for the museum. (85:61).

Maidenhead. Mrs. C. B. Heath reported an iron arrowhead and part of a bronze purse-fitting from her garden at East Boynings, Altwood Road. They remain in her possession.

Reading. Master John Deacon found an iron arrowhead (c. 15th century) in material dredged from the Holybrook near Southcote Manor. (279:61).

THAMES CONSERVANCY LOAN COLLECTION

The following objects have been dredged from the River Thames since October 1960 by the Thames Conservancy and added to the loan collection in Reading Museum.

Dredging in the area below *Day's Lock, Little Wittenham*, produced an exceptional number of interesting objects and those immediately following are all from that provenance:

Two Iron Age swords. Two iron sword blades were found by L. Trendall and T. Butcher, both in fair condition. A fine, ornamental bronze chape was corroded to the tip of one of the swords. This has been removed from the iron blade and cleaned in the museum laboratory and makes a splendid addition to the Conservators' collection. A full report on this object will be forthcoming but it will be seen from the photograph (Plate I) that traces of a wooden scabbard were found on *one* side of the blade inside the chape. Apart from one small split it is in a very good state of preservation. It had received two small repairs with thin bronze plate and rivets in antiquity. (T.C.B. 207-101:61 and T.C.B. 208-103:61 a-b).

Iron Age spearhead. An iron spearhead of this period in good condition was found by Mr. A. Lewendon. (T.C.B. 217-11:61).

Pedestal urn. A Belgic pedestal urn in perfect condition was found by Mr. L. Trendall. (T.C.B. 210-105:61).

Roman pottery. Broken Roman vessels of coarse ware were found by Mr. O. Fenney (T.C.B. 215-6-110:61/1-2) and Mr. K. West (T.C.B. 224-233:61).

Two scramasaxes. A scramasax in good condition was found by Mr. A. Lewendon (T.C.B. 205-99:61) and he also found another bent one with the tip broken off. The latter has intricate metal inlay on each side of the blade. (T.C.B. 223-232:61).

Iron spearhead. The remains of a much-corroded iron spearhead were found by Mr. A. Lewendon. It is probably a Saxon-Viking weapon. (T.C.B. 214-109:61).

Two Medieval iron swords. An iron sword blade was found by Mr. L. Trendall. (T.C.B. 200-160:60) and another in two pieces by Mr. A. Lewendon. (T.C.B. 211-106:61).

Iron knife-dagger. Found by Mr. A. Lewendon. (T.C.B. 201-161:60).

Perforated stone weight of oolitic limestone, possibly Medieval, found by Mr. O. Fenney. (T.C.B. 209-104:61).

The objects below were found elsewhere:

Three pewter spoons. Three 15th century spoons were found at Clifton Hampden by Mr. A. Lewendon. (T.C.B. 202-4-162:60/1-3).

Pedestal urn. A Belgic pedestal urn was found at Cookham Dean by Mr. T. Sadler. (T.C.B. 225-234:61).

Saxon spearhead. An iron spearhead with open socket was found at Old Windsor backwater by Mr. A. Whitman. (T.C.B. 231-278:61).

Other objects added to the collection during 1961 are broken pottery vessels of Medieval to 18th century date, two human skulls and the hilt of an 18th century dress sword.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Two flights were made in June and July 1961, sponsored by the Silchester Excavation Committee and Reading Museum, in order to study crop marks. It was hoped that some indications of the S.E. sector of the Inner Earthwork at *Silchester* might have been visible, but nothing could be seen. It would seem that the dry spell in early June had produced little effect on the water table of the Silchester plateau, for even the crop marks of the street plan were not very clear. On the low terrace gravels of the River Kennet, however, the dry spell produced a spate of crop marks. Attention was concentrated on the *Upton Nervet* complex (see *B.A.J.* 58, p. 64) where several new details were noticed, including two more ring ditches and an irregular enclosure north of the Bath Road.

Traces of crop marks of parallel lines west of the village of *Theale* were seen in early June from the ground. Examination of this area from the air disclosed a new complex of marks, mainly to the north of the Bath Road. A gravel pit known as the "Ballast Hole" truncates some of these marks and this pit is well-known for having yielded in the late 19th century sherds of Iron Age A, Belgic, Roman and Saxon periods (material in Reading Museum, see Piggott, 1936, *Trans. Newbury District Field Club*, VII, pp. 146-9 and *ibid.* 1938, VIII, pp. 52-62). A pair of parallel lines from this pit lead to two and a possible third rectilinear enclosures, at SU 627708. There are other stretches of parallel lines, one apparently associated with a grid that may represent the Medieval field system, for this grid terminated at the parish boundary (*Theale-Englefield*). There are two rings at SU 624706 with another possible enclosure to the S.E. of them, all in the parish of *Englefield*. Another small ring is cut through by a pair of parallel lines.

The site of the ring ditches at *Burghfield* (*B.A.ŷ.* 58, p. 64) was re-examined. The known ring ditches were under grass and invisible, but two more rings, one very large, were discovered on the opposite side of the road at SU 675702, associated with some vague linear features.

Also in the parish of Burghfield, at *Pingewood*, was discovered the rectilinear feature (at SU 688694) discussed by Mrs. M. A. Cotton in this volume, page 32.