
SOCIETY OXFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Bulletin no 20.

January 1973

- President: Mrs. C.A. Graham Farr, The Thatched Cottage, Whitchurch Hill (Bangbourne 2901)
- Chairman: Mr. W.J. Fowler, 25 High St., Watlington, Oxford (Watlington 2734)
- Hon. Sec.: Mrs. C. Percue, Tall Beeches, Hardwick Rd., Whitchurch (Bangbourne 2909)
- Hon. Treasurer: Mr. E. L. French, Mulberry Cottage, Manor Rd., Goring (Goring 2277)
- Field Director: Mr. C.R. Hart, 2 Goddard Close, Sainfield, Reading (Reading 882484)

A Happy New Year to all members. We can look back to 1972 as a year of modest achievement: we have helped with the M40 and other rescue work, field work has continued steadily and it has been said that we are about the only active amateur group in the county. We have formed happy relationships with the Goring Historical Society and with the boys of the Oratory Preparatory School, and the Fishbourne excursion and the first Dinner were notable occasions.

But with regard to ordinary meetings your President and committee find themselves in a situation not unfamiliar in other societies. Do we obtain more outside speakers in order to attract more of you, or do we wait until we can be reasonably sure of a good attendance before we invite them? We have begun to have outside speakers for alternate months, but it is small compliment to someone who has come from the other end of Oxfordshire to face him with 16 people. We all have other commitments, and you may not be particularly interested in mulling over excavation results or even in fieldwork, but please make a special note of Friday, 23 February so that we shall be encouraged to arrange a fuller programme next season.

W.J.F.

CALENDAR

- Sat. 13 Jan. M40 day school at Rewley House, Oxford. (Booking nec.)
- * Fri. 19 Jan. Group meeting at Langtree Sch., Woodcote. 7.30 pm.
Examination and discussion of the finds, plans etc from Lilley Farm.
- * Sun. 28 Jan. Fieldwork: Meet in Lilley Farm lane (SU678770) 11 am.
- Sat/Sun. 17/18 Feb. SEAG Report Conference at Rewley House, Oxford. (Booking nec.)
- ** Fri. 23 Feb. Richard Bradley, Lecturer in Archaeology, Reading University.
** "Maumbury Rings, Dorset: a henge, an amphitheatre and a fort"
** 7.30 pm. at the Langtree School, Woodcote.
- * Sun. 25 Feb. Fieldwork: Meet at Harpsden Church (SU763809) 11 am.
- Sat. 3 Mar. RESCUE AGM London
- * Fri. 16 Mar. Group meeting at Langtree Sch. 7.30 pm.
- * Sun. 25 Mar. Fieldwork: Meet at Checkendon Church (SU663331) 11 am.

Lilley Farm moated site. It may be possible to resume work here in ^{late} Feb/ Mar. Due notice will be given on 23 Feb.

M40 Archaeology Exhibition Oxford, Information Centre, St. Aldates 8-27 Jan.
Watlington, Town Hall 15-17 Feb.
Thame Town Hall 20-24 Feb.

Reports

Much has happened since September and space forbids full accounts. The following notes are based on the President's Logbook, which is available at meetings.

Meetings

29 Sept. R.A. Chambers, M40 Director, described the Lashmore, Beacon Hill and Sadler's Wood excavations on the M40 line. At Beacon Hill there were 35 RE burials, while the most striking feature of the latter medieval farmstead was the fine flintwork of the last building and the rainwater drainage channels. We are grateful to the Oratory Prep. Sch. for the use of the hall and were pleased to welcome members of the Goring Historical Society.

20 Oct. This was the first meeting at the Langtree Sch. (Further Educ. Centre) which is now our regular meeting place. Clive Hart gave a fascinating talk, with slides, on his visit to Italy.

3 Nov. By invitation of the Goring Hist. Soc. members heard Trevor Rowley (Ox. Univ. Dept. for Ext. Studies) speak on the excavation of sites on the Thames gravels, mostly located by aerial photography and rapidly disappearing through gravel extraction.

8 Dec. Mick Aston, Asst. Field Officer, Woodstock Museum, illustrated with slides the value of fieldwork and the various kinds of evidence - "humps & bumps", maps, aerial photos and documents. The talk was not only first class but it was of especial importance to us: and the attendance was disappointing. However, Mick has written an article on "Sketch Surveys" for the forthcoming CBA9 Newsletter (below) - and other reports, and we hope that these will be read.

Dinner What we hope will be the first annual dinner was an enjoyable occasion at the 17 Nov. Chiltern Chase Hotel, Woodcote, and was attended by 33 members and guests. The President was in the chair and the guest speaker was David Hinton, Asst. Keeper at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. He spoke wittily of his archaeological experiences and proposed the toast of S.O.A.G. The President replied, thanking David, and informal conversation continued to c. 1045 pm. Our thanks are due to the Hon. Sec. and the Proprietors for the excellent arrangements.

Fieldwork 15 Oct. Whitchurch Hill.

5 Nov. Ipsden.

10 Dec. Mapledurham.

A report on 1972 fieldwork will appear in the CBA9 Newsletter and Clive Hart will speak about the overall results at a future meeting.

The pits described in the fieldwork report in Bulletin 19 have now, on the basis of local information, almost certainly been confirmed as sawyers' pits.

Lilley Farm Work has been possible on five occasions and the ground plan of the two structures has been almost uncovered. The wall foundations at the SE corner unexpectedly continue under a spoil heap and some large bushes! Finds have continued to be scarce but have included a 17/18C key and an 18/early 19C candleholder. A report will appear in the CBA9 Newsletter, and the whole results to date will be discussed fully at the meeting on 19 Jan.

Day Schools Members have attended the following:

11 Nov. Wantage. RB & Medieval Pottery. This was very instructive as there were opportunities to examine and handle considerable samples of the sherds discussed.

2 Dec. Local History and Archaeology, at Woodstock. Clive Hart was the first speaker here on "Fieldwalking in South Oxfordshire." We congratulate him on producing such a good talk and slides"

New members We welcome Diana Boyd, Sara Pantelias, Max and Pam Dixon and Philip Vaughan

Publications.

edit. Rowley & Davies, Archaeology and the WAO An interim report

25p Available at exhibition and SOAG meetings.

edit. Rowley & Fowler, CPA Newsletter 3 (forthcoming Feb.)

35p. articles, reports on over 50 sites in 5 counties, activities etc. including one on SOAG, fieldwork and Lilley Farm.

From "Arch. & WAO" p. 5 "The membership of the Group... numbers between 40 and 50 active members stoutly reinforced on excavations by members of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group"

James Dyer, Southern England An archaeological guide. Faber £1.95

Barry Cunliffe, Cradle of England. BBC Publications. 80p

John Coles, Field Archaeology in Britain. Methuen. £1.75

a comprehensive guide.

Archaeology in Britain, CPA Report for 1971-2.

A selection of CPA publications will be on sale at the 17/18 Feb. Oxford meeting and at the SOAG meeting on 23 Feb.

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Members are still invited to let the Editor have notes of any books which they have found interesting and useful, for inclusion in this section.

More generally it is once again said that this Bulletin is intended to be one for all the members of SOAG and that the Editor will welcome contributions from members on topics of local archaeological and historical interest - and not only on local matters. For example an impression of the Tutankhamun exhibition would have been of interest to many members.

What is this Archaeology?

For many people still archaeology=excavation and the question usually asked is "What have you found?" Behind this is the notion of the treasure hunt or at best the find in a museum case.

Archaeology is one of the ways in which we seek to build up a picture of the lives of our predecessors, by discovering and examining the material evidence. For the greater part of the time that Man has been on this planet this is the only evidence, and remains important down to the present, although for the latest few millenia we have the written and printed word, the art, and what has survived of oral tradition, in such material for instance as placenames. In our day there are also of course other media of record.

All good archaeologists of necessity become historians and none would dream of investigating a site without reference to other evidence. What we seek to do is to build up as complete a picture as possible of occupation, in which the "find" contributes in its context and not for its intrinsic value.

The "crisis" in archaeology in this country at the moment is that much of the evidence is being destroyed by contemporary developments - gravel extraction, motorways, housing, deep ploughing etc - too often without record. We do not ask that the majority of sites be preserved, but that there be sufficient resources for investigation and record before destruction.

The great need is for information before development, so that it is known what archaeological implications there are to proposed works. Rescue operations have shown that there are many more sites than we... and what is needed now is more fieldwork and survey. Quite the most important part that local societies can play is in this field - or in those fields! W.J.P.

ENVOI If you have read this far, please turn back and read para. 2 on p. 1 again.