

**S**OUTH

**O**XFORDSHIRE

**A**RCHÆOLOGICAL

**G**ROUP

**B**ULLETIN

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE \*  
\* ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Bulletin No 31

September 1976

S.O.A.G. DIARY

Thursday 9th September: Lecture at Langtree by  
Bill Fowler on "Some Threatened Sites".

Saturday 11th September: A.G.M. of New Henley Group  
Phone Liz Young

Monday 20th September: Beginning W.E.A. Classes.  
Miss Hane A. Wright. "The Study of Old  
Buildings and Traditional Building  
Materials".

Saturday 25th September: Annual Conference. Local  
History Committee. Wallingford Town Hall  
1.45. Tel. Oxford 43105, for details of  
exhibition, tour and talks.

Wednesday 29th September: New Henley Group. Les  
Cram, Senior Archaeologist at Reading  
Museum on "The Origins of Man". Phone  
Liz Young.

Friday 1st October: Lecture at Langtree, Martin  
Horswell on "Mission to the Chilterns",  
an account of the spread of the Christian  
faith to South Oxon.

(Monthly meetings are held at Langtree  
School at 7.45 p.m.)

2.

Thursday 21st October: New Henley Group. D. Vaisey repeats: "Shopping in a 17th century town."

Friday - Sunday 22nd-24th October: Anglo-Saxon Symposium. Rewley House. Phone Oxford 52901 for details.

Thursday 28th October: David Miles of Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit on "Recent Work on Saxon Sites in the Thames Valley".

Friday - Sunday 19th-21st November: Conference on Roman Art at Rewley House. Phone Oxford 52901 for details.

Thursday 25th November: Chris Stanley, Director of Middle Thames Archaeological Society on "Local Air Photography". Mr. Stanley has made many flights over this area from his Denham base, discovering many new sites not included in the Gates Survey.

Friday - Sunday 3rd-5th December: Conference at Missenden Abbey on Medieval Industry.

Royal Academy Winter Exhibition on Pompei. We hope to organise a minibus trip. Watch for further details.

### Annual General Meeting 1976

The eighth Annual General Meeting was held at Langtree F.E. Centre, Woodcote, on Sunday, March 21st. Mr. Bill Fowler took the chair and thirty-three members attended. The minutes of the last A.G.M. were read by the Secretary.

### President's Report

The W.E.A. classes had been successful, and so

3.

had the arranged outings, especially the visit to the New Museum at Oxford. Members had attended courses at Rewley House and nine people had been at the C.B.A. Group 9 Conference. The record attendance at any function had been the forty members who came to the very successful wine and cheese party. It was disappointing to have to report that so few people came to hear the excellent speakers provided at monthly meetings. She announced with great regret the departure of Clive Hunt for work in Derbyshire and thanked him for all he had done as field officer.

Mr. Bill Fowler presented Clive with a book token on behalf of the Group with thanks for his work for S.O.A.G. Group 9. While congratulating him on making the rare transition from part-time to full-time archaeological work, he said that he was sure that Clive would do a first rate job.

#### Field Director's Report

After thanking everyone, Clive said that members had surveyed lynchets which were about to be ploughed out, had helped on rescue sites and on the preliminary survey for the gas pipeline. Very little had been found in the area covered by S.O.A.G. or those surveyed on the Thame and Wallingford Groups. On the downland two ploughed-out barrows were found. The greatest problem now was destruction of sites, and all members could help by watching out for this.

#### Treasurer's Report

After announcing his resignation and that Peter Anderson would be taking over as Treasurer, Philip Vaughan reported a marginally better balance in hand, in spite of the many subscriptions still overdue. The accounts were closed earlier this year (at 29th February 1976) because of the earlier A.G.M. The affiliation fees to the Langtree Centre had still to be paid. There was some discrepancy between those who had paid their subscriptions, (numbering forty-three), and those who were supposedly members. Membership should be renewed in May 1976.

4.

#### Election of Officers

Nominations were invited for a Chairman, but none were forthcoming. The following members were re-elected: Mr. Peter Anderson, Mrs. Marion Fallowfield, Dr. Bernard Levy, Mrs. Pat Woodford, Mr. Ted France and Mr. Peter Trent. Two new members were proposed and elected, namely, Mrs. Elizabeth Young and Mr. Gareth Thomas, the new bulletin editor.

#### Affiliation to the Langtree Centre

Mr. Peter Trout felt that some explanation of this was required as charges had risen to fifty pence per member per annum. He said that this charge was only paid on the number of members who attended the centre regularly, and covered as many meetings as the group needed; also the costs of duplicating the bulletin could be offset against this. He suggested that the group should meet sometimes on other days of the week than Friday as in his experience this was not a good day for meetings.

The business part of the meetings then closed and after tea a most entertaining lecture was given by Mr. David Vaisey on "Shopping in 17th Century Oxford".

#### Conference Notes

The Effect of Man on the Landscape, the Lowland Zone  
Reading University, 19th-21st December 1975. 19 speakers in 11 hours was bound to disappoint many. Some speakers had not completed their studies, others repeated lectures given elsewhere in earlier years; some papers were more suitable for local societies than a national conference. The last morning, featuring H.C. Bowen, Margaret Gelling and C.C. Taylor, should be repeated at all C.B.A. regional meetings and all universities, as their original research showed what archaeology should be about.

The Archaeology of Monastic Sites. Oxford University  
2nd-4th January 1976.

This conference was opened by Dr. L.A.S. Butler who first suggested it to Trevor, having noticed the variations in quantity and quality of archaeological work on

5.

monastic sites, many of which he has described at C.B.A. weekends. Philip Rahat described his meticulous excavations and the earthworks of Bordesley Abbey in Worcestershire. After an excursion to Oxford Cathedral we heard Laurence Keen on Mount Grace, Yorkshire and Tom Passall on Town Friaries. On Sunday morning we heard J.P. Greene on excavations at Norton Priory, where a 200 acre archaeological park has been created in a new town. James Bond described his fieldwork on the Estates of Evesham Abbey and other West Midland field monuments. He suggested that other individuals or groups could do similar field surveys round other monasteries.

### The New Henley Group

For some years the Henley Lectures Committee has organised a series of winter lectures of different subjects. This nucleus of organisers and audience have formed a new group which aims to be a forum for local residents, to foster their interest and promote activities connected with the historical and architectural heritage of the area. The Chairman is Derek Humphries (Phone Rotherfield Grays 287). Liz Young (Wargrave 2142) has agreed to act as liaison officer.

There must be cooperation between the two groups if they and we are to achieve our aims.

### The Berkshire Local History Association

This new society was established at a meeting in the Quaker Meeting House, Reading, on 22nd January 1976, after 15 months' study by a working committee. They hope to replace the old local history recording scheme which amassed much useful information before its founders, C.B. Willcock and Miss Swadling, died. Aided by the Berkshire County Council, they hope to produce an annual newsletter outlining where source material can be found and what other work is in progress.

Dr. Lansberry of the Extra Mural Department of the University of Kent outlined the work of the Kent Local History Committee and pointed out that Berkshire is one of only two counties lacking any local history organisation. There was debate whether the new association should have individual membership or, like the Kent

6. Committee, consist only of representatives from local societies.

At the meeting eight organisations, including the Goring Local History Society, at a subscription of £5 per year, and 25 individuals at £1 per year, joined the new Association.

Those who want to join or merely more information are invited to contact Miss Jan Harley at the Berkshire Record Office, Shire Hall, Reading.

### An Evening at Ewelme

Seventeen Soags had a most successful evening at Ewelme on 15th July. We met at the Church where the President introduced Mr. George Cannon, Head of Ewelme School, and he very kindly took us round the church; we sat in St. John's Chapel whilst he gave us a short history of the Duchess of Suffolk and Chaucer, her father.

The President gave a few comments about the medieval tiles which she had recorded during the Tile Project two years ago. The Head explained the Font cover was carved in one piece and that the numerous Wenfields in Ewelme stem from the craftsmen from Wingfield, Suffolk.

We then saw the Monument Room in the Almshouses, where a copy of the Charter granted in 1437 permitting the building of the school and almshouses is displayed, and wandered through the courtyard to the school. Here Mr. Cannon showed us the "oldest Grammar School in England" with the worn spiral stairs to the dormitory above, with its lovely beams. We thanked Mr. Cannon and returned to Mr. and Mrs. Chalkin at No. 3 The Almshouses, and she showed us all round their home, with its numerous beams ("I lose count" she said) and many drawings done by her husband. We saw the sitting room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, all nicely modernised and very comfortable; it was quite an art form for 17 people to circulate in this tiny home! We thanked and left the Chalkins and, emerging into the churchyard, we examined the grave of Jerome K. Jerome, and looked at the interesting walls or nearby buildings.

Walking up the Mount we were welcomed by the Thatcher, Mr. Harwood, and his wife, who had made us cakes and shortbread to add to our Soag coffee. We spent till about 10.30 chatting with the Harwoods in their beautifully kept garden, full of interesting plants. After thanking them for their kindness we eventually returned to our cars at the church and so home.

CGK.

7.

### The Temple of Nodens, Lydney

On 23rd May 1976, a small party of members of SOAG who were spending the weekend at Mitchelde in the Forest of Dean, were fortunate in being able to visit the site of the R.B. temple at Lydney. The temple is situated on high ground above the River Severn in Lydney Park, a property owned by Lord Bledisloe. The Park is not normally open to the public but happened to be so at this weekend.

On the way to Lydney from Mitchelde we stopped at Blackpool Bridge, where a short stretch of paved Roman road lies exposed beside the modern road. We were able to trace the line of the road back for some distance under the trees. This road was part of the industrial road system across the Forest, linking Caerwent and Caerleon with Ariconium (modern Weston under Penyard, Herefordshire), a centre of iron smelting in the Roman period.

On arrival at Lydney Park we joined the queue of cars bearing visitors who, for the most part, had come to visit the valley of rhododendrons and azaleas which made a magnificent spectacle at this time. We took the track up the hill to the temple site, where the foundations of the temple building and some of the associated structures still lie exposed as they had been left after the 1928/9 excavations carried out by the then Dr. R.E.M. Wheeler and his wife.

The temple complex is located within an Iron Age promontory hill fort; the two banks and ditches constructed in the first century B.C. are still clearly visible across the north and east of the spur. Occupation of the site continued until the third century A.D. The occupants carried out mining of the iron ore which occurs in veins of ferruginous marl on the site. Two of their mine shafts still remain and one of the entrances on the east side can be entered through a wooden trap door in the ground. The pick marks are still to be seen on the sides of the shaft.

The temple was dedicated to the native British god, Nodens, one of whose attributes was healing. To the north of the temple was found a large guest house and a set of baths to accommodate the temple visitors. The foundations of the guest house have been covered in to preserve them from deterioration, although part of the bath foundations are still visible, together with one corner of a range of



8.

buildings running immediately to the west of the temple and for which the precise function has not been decided. Possibly they were either shops or booths for the sale of souvenirs or votive offerings, or accommodation for the patients with contagious diseases who had come to seek a cure. To the north of these buildings stood a large cistern with a conduit leading to the baths. Its foundations and the remains of the conduit may still be seen.

After leaving the hilltop site we visited the small museum in the house which contains many of the objects found on the site, which included many votive figurines, rings, coins and a metal plate bearing the Lydney Curse which called upon Nodens to deny health to an unknown person who had stolen a ring.

D.F.

### The Twice Promised Land

During World War I the British and French Governments promised the Asian provinces of the Turkish Empire to both the Jewish and Arab peoples, while secretly conspiring to divide the spoils of war between themselves. This breach of faith has resulted in sixty years of war and civil strife in the region.

There have always been big powers based on the Nile, and on the Euphrates Valleys; for millenia they have fought over the narrow strip of land we have learned to call "Holy".

Most of this area is now under Israeli rule or military occupation. In spite of their much vaunted respect for the past and interest in their heritage, Israel has no conservation areas or listed buildings, treasure hunting is rife and many monuments are neglected or smothered in Hebrew graffiti. The archaeologically-minded visitor is frequently bothered by unofficial guides and antiquities sellers, some of whom run huge heritage supermarkets. Some major monuments are maintained as national parks, others by the Franciscans or local municipalities, while the Tombs of the Kings in Jerusalem is owned by the French Government. There are also many museums, some well displayed, others ill-lit and badly labelled. Furthermore, their opening hours are inconvenient for visitors and they lack the good guide books we have come to associate with the D.o.E sites and British museums.

There are many sites along the Jordan Valley from

9.

9232 ft. Mt. Hermon in the snowy north to the sweltering Dead Sea, 1292 ft. below sea level and surrounded by scorched desert. The Dead Sea, with its guarded lidos and wired beaches, forms the frontier; it looks and feels disappointingly like British sea-water. On its shore stands Qumran, one of the few single-phase sites in Israel, occupied by the Essene sect from about 120 BC to 67 AD; they grew their own food in an oasis and made their own pottery, while writing the Dead Sea scrolls later buried in the nearby caves. Further south on the sea shore stands the great ship-like rock of Masada; on top of its 1300 ft. cliff now made accessible by cable car, Herod the Great built a fortress-palace with cisterns and store-houses sufficient to survive a five-year siege, together with the mosaics, bathhouse and swimming pool any Romanised king regarded as essential. A century after Herod, the Zealot rebels tied down thousands of Roman troops for seven years; the Roman camps and siege wall can still be seen, together with the huge ramp the Romans used to storm the mountain, which later became a Byzantine Monastery.

At the north end of the Dead Sea stands Jericho, the world's oldest known city; men have settled round the Elisha's fountain spring for about 10,000 years; a watch-tower added to the city wall about 8,000 BC can still be seen, but the city that Joshua stormed has mostly been washed away by the winter rains.

From Jericho the prime tourist route climbs 4,000 ft. through the wilderness to Jerusalem, passing the restored Good Samaritan Inn with its army checkpoint, and Bethany with its Crusader and Byzantine remains adjoining the tomb of Lazarus.

The road enters Jerusalem from the south-east, giving a marvellous view over the walled old city and the site of Solomon's temple, restored by Herod, destroyed by the Romans and now a Moslem sanctuary. The whole Kidron Valley to the east of the city, surrounding the Garden of Gethesemene is a vast necropolis, containing tombs of all sizes, dates and religions.

10.

The old city, surrounded by a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mile 16th century wall, contains the Via Dolorosa, which links the excavated Pool of Bethesda and Crusader Church of St. Anne with the Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre, via the remains of Pilate's palace. Since 1967 there have been many excavations along the south wall of the city and round the temple near the Wailing Wall, but these are not yet open to the public.

The Jerusalem King David conquered in about 1050 B.C. was a seven-acre village outside the present walls; most of it has recently been built over without archaeological study. Looking south and east from Jerusalem one sees spectacular desert, including the conical peak of Herodium, the Dead Sea and the Mountains of Moab. South of Jerusalem stands Bethlehem where the Church of the Nativity was rebuilt after the Samaritans' rebellion of 525, above a group of caves; one is shown as the Grotto of the Nativity, and in another St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin.

Across the olive-clad hills north of Jerusalem is Samaria; around a windy hill-top can be seen the remains of Ahab's Ivory tower, a temple to Augustus, theatre, stadium and several sets of walls; ruins of a crusader church can also be seen. Further north, overlooking the Plain of Esdraelon, stands the 15-acre Tell of Megiddo, where 25 cities were built between 4,000 and 400 B.C., one on top of the other. These cities guarded a strategic crossroads now guarded by a modern fort. Remains of several phases can be seen, together with a magnificent water system. Victory at Megiddo in September 1918 opened the road to Damascus and made Allenby a Viscount. From Megiddo on a clear day can be seen Mt. Carmel, where some remains of early men and primitive agriculture have been found.

To the north-east is Nazareth with its many Christian shrines. Nearby is Mt. Tabor, where Barak defeated the Canaanites, Josephus was defeated by the Romans and more recently Orde Wingate prevented Arab sabotage of the oil pipeline. Further north the Sea of Galilee is dominated by volcanic hills. Round the sea are many places of archaeological and religious interest, from Tiberius with its Roman baths and 18th century town walls to Capernaum with its fourth century synagogue and Byzantine Church among the oleanders. Between them stands Tabagna, said to be the earliest purpose-built church in the world, with its fourth

11.

century novellas depicting the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and Magdala where the Franciscans search for the home of Mary Magdalene.

On the ridge between Galilee and the now drained Lake Hula stands Hazor, at 200 acres, the largest Tell in Israel. At the Banias, source of the Jordan, niches cut into the red cliff show where the Greeks worshipped Pan. On the mountain above stands one of the few surviving Crusader Castles in Israel; more spectacular Crusader remains can be seen in the old port of Acre.

Much more could be written on Israel; indeed, much, often contradictory, already has. Nothing can replace a personal visit, which costs £150 to £250 each for a week, to £270 - £400 for two weeks, depending on the tour operator and places visited. Anyone interested in making up a S.O.A.G. party about Easter 1977 should contact me.

G.T.

### Archaeological Air Photography

Since the work of Major Allen between the wars, archaeologists have paid lip service to aerial archaeology. However, local and national government funds for aerial photography have been cut. The pioneer survey of Upper Thames crop marks has not been emulated in other areas. Tim Gates' Middle Thames Survey covers probably less than half of the known sites and was almost a year between compilation and distribution.

The National Monuments Records at Fortress House, Saville Row, London, maintains the national air photo-depository, but has neither the funds nor the staff to cover the country adequately. They are supplied by many but not all amateurs and therefore self-financing flyers but can scarcely catalogue, much less interpret the photographs it receives.

Cambridge University has an expanding air photography department, headed by Dr. St. Joseph, who appears to be secretive about his discoveries.

Anyone can take air photographs on a commercial flight or air show pleasure trip. Things do not always look the same from the air; it is difficult to identify places you have not visited on the ground. Any time of the year will do, but May to July is said to be the best time for crop marks. Different sites or features thereof show every

12.

year; often different elements can be seen on different days. The air view can show sites being destroyed by gravel extraction, road works or deep ploughing. Sites with upstanding earthworks show best at dawn or dusk but airfield opening times may make this difficult; also many upstanding sites are obscured by trees.

Even when no new sites are discovered the air view can provide new insights into landscapes, townscapes and buildings.

It is best to use a high wing monoplane with less obstructions to the view; if the windows are clean there is no need to open them. A navigator/photographer/pilot is the best team but most small (cheap to hire) planes can only take one passenger.

The Aeromart Flying Club at Blackbushe will hire a Cessna 150, including pilot for £17 per hour, but remember that Aldermaston, Harwell, Benson and Heathrow Control Zones limit the area you can fly round here. The extensive Chiltern woodlands also reduce the areas that can be usefully flown.

On a recent flight I was able to take good photographs of parts of the Streatly Warren Field System; but Grimsditch and Lowbury plainly visible on the ground could not be seen from the air. Early harvest and winter drought made crop-marks invisible except for some faint circles at Gatehampton.

G.T.

#### New C.B.A. Research Reports

No.14 The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England and Wales, edited by M.W. Barley. 92pp. for £4.50p. This expensive and poorly printed book contains seven papers on urban history, first read at a C.B.A. seminar in November 1974.

No.16 Iron Age Sites in Central Southern England, by B.W. Cunliffe. £3.50 for 53 pages. This is not a general survey of such sites but excavation reports on three small sites near the Hants/Sussex border.

The C.B.A.'s buy-in-advance-at-discount scheme results in many people buying books they would not have bought if they had seen them in advance. No.14 would have been better duplicated for the C.B.A. Urban Research Committee

13.

members, having very little appeal to the general public. No. 16 would have been more useful printed in the local county journals.

### Book Reviews

A New Map of the County of Oxford, from an actual survey on which are delineated the course of the rivers, roads, the parks, gentlemens' seats, heaths, woods forests, commons, etc., by Richard Davis of Lewknor, Topographer to His Majesty 1793/4, reprinted 1975 by Philip Riden. At £3 for 17 sheets 26"/20". Sheet One reduces the whole map to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles to the inch. The other 16 showed the County at  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the inch and the City at twelve chains to the inch. S.O.A.G. land is shown on two sheets, which attempt to show every building, hedge and pond. Hamlets and some farms are named, but fields are not.

Britannia, a Journal of Roman, British and kindred studies. Vol. 6, 1975. Annual subscription £4.50p. The latest and thinnest volume of this journal includes a posthumous paper by D.F. Allen, a paper on the economy of Bignor Villa written in 1950, notes on the Baldon design of face flagon first identified by the South Oxfordshire Hunt. As usual there is a 73 page summary of finds in Roman Britain 1974, still divided by the old counties.

Current Archaeology No. 50. Now on sale in the shops. 45p. This issue includes an 8-page illustrated article on the Saxon cemeteries at Mucking, a column on Warwick Rodwell and his latest church dig. The round up of 1975 includes a page on Wallingford.

No. 51 contains reports on the extensive excavations at Garton Slack, Yorkshire. The Peny Y Wyrloed long cairn and Margaret Jones' criticisms of Reading University. No. 52 includes Dr. Slade's rejoinder.

Historic Towns in Oxfordshire A survey of the New County Edited by Kirsty Rodwell. £5.50 from Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit. Kirsty, helped by nine other writers, has compressed the archaeology, history, topography potential, development of buildings of 20 towns into

14.

202 pages, including 6 pull-out maps. Truepress have done their usual competent printing job, except for a few of the three colour plans.

Ramshill A Bronze Age-defended enclosure and its landscape. By Richard Bradley and Anne Ellison, with 15 contributors, including Reading University Students. B.A.R. 19 at £5.50p. including 62p. postage. 264 pages and 20 photographs. Two seasons of excavation by volunteer labour, including many S.O.A.G.s, were followed by a rapid field survey of the district. The report not only details the features, finds and environmental evidence uncovered, but also sheds much new light on the Berks./Oxc Downs and the Bronze Age generally.

Reading. Our Architectural Heritage £1 for 40 pages, including 55 illustrations and fold-out print. Compiled by a committee of 12, published by Reading Museum with the help of the Southern Arts Association, to coincide with an exhibition during December 1975 and January 1976. A photograph across the spiral-bound cover shown a panoramic view of Reading, including many new buildings and the demolition of the old. Published simultaneously by the Museum was a 5p. Walk Round Guide on a large folded card with three illustrations and a map. More recently a card guide to Reading's churches and three sets of postcards from old photographs have been published.

Oxford, The City and County as it used to be. By Charles Long. 95p., for 66 old photographs from 1873-1914. Few of the photographs were taken in our end of the county; a few are unprovenanced.

#### Walks Around the Downs

Ten country rambles near Reading, Newbury, Andover and Basingstoke, by Roy Chapman, with historical notes by Jillian A. Greenaway. 1976 75p. 64 pages including 13 sketch maps. As reviewed on TV. Jill Greenaway used her position as Secretary of the Berks. Field Research Group to advertise this book after she had resigned the

secretaryship. The walks described include Silchester, Combe Gibbet and Grimsbury Castle.

The Middle Thames Valley, an archaeology survey of the River Gravels By Timothy Gates. £3 for 79 pages, from Reading Museum. This publication intended to continue the work of the Upper Thames Survey from Goring to Windsor, including the Lower Kennet Valley. Unfortunately it lacked the British Academy and Amey grants that made up the Upper Thames Survey easily and rapidly available. The Middle Thames Survey was almost a year between compilation and distribution and was never a complete record of all known discoveries. It fails to mention the many discoveries made during gravel extraction at Sonning Eye. Some excavations have already taken place on the sites described, others are planned which will require local volunteers, who should contact Julian Richards, Secretary of the Berks. Field Research Group (Reading 595751). This book should form the basis for future excavation policy, although Berrinsfield proved that a sites' potential cannot be dismissed on the basis of old photographs.



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit: Oxford 43888  
Berkshire Archaeological Unit: Reading 595751  
Group President, Mrs. Cynthia Graham Kerr: Pangbourne 2901  
Secretary, Mrs. Marion Fallowfield: Reading 471647  
Treasurer, Mr. Peter Anderson: Warborough 8112  
Liaison Officer, Mrs. Pat Woodford: Goring 2107  
Pipeline Liaison, Dr. Bernard Levy: Pangbourne 2677  
Henley Group Liaison, Mrs. Liz Young, Wargrave 2142  
Bulletin Editor, Gareth Thomas: Reading 472864