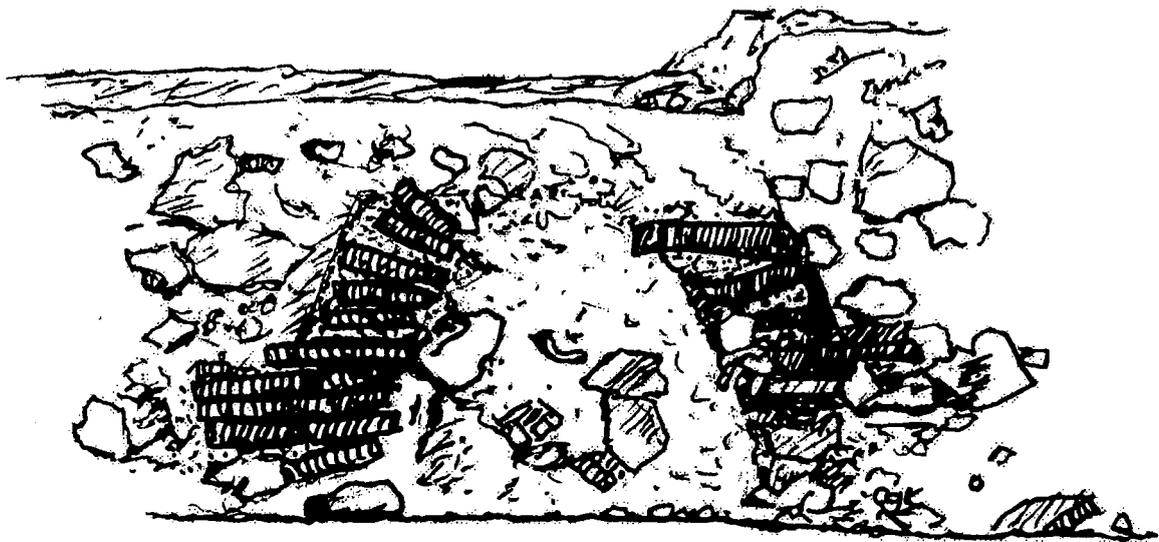


SOAG BULLETIN



South Oxfordshire Archæological Group

No. 56

2001



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Cover Illustration: Roman furnace arch found at South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group's dig

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Acknowledgements as stated in the articles in SOAG Bulletin.

Articles, book reviews and news items are invited for publication in the 2002 issue of SOAG Bulletin. Preference will be given to items relevant to South Oxfordshire, although others may be considered. Contributions, preferably in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format (RTF), should be submitted to the Editor at the earliest opportunity by email or on disk or, alternatively, cleanly typed or, as a very minimum, clearly handwritten.

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EDITOR'S NOTE
Cynthia Graham-Kerr

I have always encouraged SOAG to keep up-to-date and be into all the latest things. Now my Soags are coming home to roost with a vengeance 'You must type things; you must have a computer' and now email is creeping, or rather rushing, into the group.

A computer was produced, so I have had to set to and learn to use it. Unpractised fingers (I've never learned to type) and, worst still, a dwindling memory and a slowing up of learning ability (oh dear, I've lost the cursor again) have not made it easy, but with time and entirely thanks to my kind and patient teachers I am getting there. I have about five main computing tutors and several accessories after the fact so I am making this Bulletin an excuse to offer them my most sincere thanks for all the time and patience they have given their pupil: it is slowly falling into place, but I wish I was 20 years younger.

The President's Report was a nightmare with many fingers not only in the pie, but crossed and pointing, with Big Brothers (and Sisters, no discrimination) looking over my shoulder

They have also improved my business sense (I hadn't any): I can now afford to unload some of my previous jobs knowing that they will be done and so keep SOAG afloat. Don't think that I am about to retire; like my Adam, who was 88, I shall still dig and keep my beady eye on my SOAG family who have given me so much support and the pleasure of friends. I am deeply conscious that without their help SOAG would not exist, and I would not only be lonely but the poorer in spirit as well.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2000-2001
Cynthia Graham-Kerr

To ease the work of those involved the Committee resolved to move the end of SOAG's reporting year from March to the previous December, put into effect by the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 18th April 2001. Therefore, in the future, the President's Report will cover a complete calendar year from January to December, which has not previously been possible. As an interim measure, the current report is in two sections and covers the period from April 2000 to the end of 2001. Next year's report will cover the year 2002, thus bringing the reports more up-to-date.

Report for the period from April 2000 to March 2001

This year the dig has been the main feature, and we had an amazing total of 59 working days and half-days during the period. Attendances ranged from 2 to a dozen Soags at any one time. We were all delighted to get back to Trench VII as we had been holding off until we had finished Trench III and were able to start backfilling it. With a new grid system to cover the whole area we worked hard with a regular team. Our grateful thanks to them and their longsuffering families, and our especial thanks go to Hazel Williams (Site Supervisor) who coped with all the site drawings and planning. I am also pleased to report that we have welcomed a total of 17 new Soags this year - including diggers among them.

Intermingled with Dig Days, we held our Monthly Meetings. On 10th May Roger Goodburn encouraged us with further information on the Romans, and to start the autumn we had Steve Capel-Davies on locks and weirs. 28th October saw Alan Rosevear with us for Turnpike Roads and 15th November was an exciting evening when Simon Jones, ex-SOAG, (who joined us as a boy of 8) gave us an Antiques Evening, to which we brought things to show him. After a lot of rainy weather, Pat Preece finished the year with a talk on the 19th century Water Famine. On 17th January Tim Allen started the new year 2001 with a report on the Taplow dig, and the Members' Meeting in February produced several good speakers. To finish off the year we had the AGM on 18th March with Mike Fulton in the Chair, and Prof. John Hunt to speak on Forensic Archaeology, Ian Clarke giving the vote of thanks: there were 42 Soags present.

Besides the general meetings, we attended various outings and conferences and met other local archaeologists. On 15th April 2000 we were at the CBA Meeting at Woodstock, and we presented a report of our work to the Oxpast Conference held at Witney. 1st July brought the SOAG Party, held again at Joy Whitehead's home, a perfect setting and much enjoyed.

Our summer outing was an original one: a journey by horse and cart with two beautiful Suffolk Punches pulling us through the local woods. 20th July 2000 brought an extra day's digging where one or two of us helped at the cemetery dig at Abingdon. The expedition on 20th August took us to Wantage Museum, when 20 Soags were shown round the now flourishing town museum. On 3rd September the National Trust Monitoring group saw 13 of us at Stowe complete with a guided tour by their archaeologist, Gary Marshall, and we monitored on the ground at Basildon Park on 1st November.

Report for the period from April 2001 to December 2001

The year started badly with foot & mouth disease preventing us from digging and it was not until the middle of May that Robin Cloke was able to let us back onto the site. Nevertheless we managed 42 working days and half-days with half a dozen or so stalwart diggers. Forty members worked at the site, even if only once: the interest is there, but so are their other commitments. We made excellent progress in Trench VII: all the planning is up-to-date, and our winter work has resulted in the marking of finds being completed.

At the dig a piece of Samian mortarium was an encouraging start, followed by two rim-sherds of a large pot. As summer advanced we had some days which were so hot that we resorted to large umbrellas and work slowed somewhat. Walls kept appearing in the dig as the building took shape. A blue glass bead was found and box-tiles appeared in situ, there being a large quantity of broken ones carrying opus signinum and fragments of painted plaster. Our final triumph was uncovering the arch for the furnace, made of tiles set on edge, and pillae nearby.

Surveying was carried out by dousing (ancient) and gradiometer (modern), new walls being uncovered where the surveys suggested. On 11th November 2001 we finally covered everything with plastic sheeting and tidied our equipment away. Both Paul Smith (County Archaeologist) and Tim Allen (Senior Project Officer, OAU) visited the site, and commented favourably on the way the work was being carried out. Do offer your help, we can soon train you - it's not hard work and it is most enjoyable to actually handle things from the second to third century AD.

Turning to meetings, our Sundays in winter are devoted to finds-processing: sorting different materials such as bone, pot, metal, flint, etc. As mentioned, a brief Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 18th April 2001, followed by Luke Over, MBE, speaking on 'The Eagle has landed'; this was about Rome, not the USA. Ian Scott discussed Roman metalwork on 16th May. Our Party was at Joy Whitehead's home on 16th June, and our outing on 15th July saw 20 of us being hauled by steam on the Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway, which was great fun. The visit to Henley Brewery was postponed to the following year due to rebuilding. Returning to the Hall at Goring on 19th September we were regaled by Josephine Cormier with 'From Jakes to Jericho' and a most interesting local history talk from Dr Gerald Howat on 17th October took us round Nuneham Courtenay. 21st November provided another riveting journey by Nigel Hammond on the drove roads and we finished the year on 5th December with Ben Viljeon who gave us a most cheery and amusing, sketch of how he had grown into archaeology from boyhood and was still at it. He showed us some most interesting finds and told us how he came by them over the years. Other activities besides our outings took five Soags to monitor in Basildon Park on 6th June and ten to Greys Court on 16th September. Three of us went to the CBA at Toddington on 7th April, and for Oxpast, on 12th May, 10 of us travelled to Benson where two of us gave talks on our work.

Turing to publications: the Messenger has had a bumpy ride during part of the period with various problems, Pat Preece saving the situation by offering to get the photocopying done. Quite a number of us now have computers so we are able to spread the keying load a bit and I would like to say thank you to all those who deliver it. The Bulletin has received a good number of articles for publication so far, so encouraging to the editors. Notes and ideas for the publications are welcome from any member. Planning of the programme was undertaken by Edward Golton and it should be ready for distribution after the forthcoming AGM in March 2002. The Committee would like to thank Edward and all contributors to both the programme and the Bulletin. Keep a sharp look-out for people who look like Soags, as one put it, and rope them in: a few are always lost, like Ann and Bob who moved north, and we need to fill the gaps to be able to keep up our strength to 120 or so.

Thank you all for your interest & turning out in bad weather for Ordinary Meetings and Committee Meetings, some of you having long journeys, inspiring the rest of us to keep it all going.

OBITUARY: J ALAN WILSON

Cynthia Graham-Kerr

We were very sad to lose Alan Wilson, one of our founder members, and he must have been one of the oldest as well. I can give no details apart from what I know from conversation: Alan was very retiring, but he was well versed in archaeology and was keenly interested in outdoor things - plants and birds. He had been, I believe, a local bank manager, but his other SOAG friends are all dead, and although he is thought to have left an aged sister, there was no one local left to ask.

He joined in most of our activities with much relish, especially when he was younger, and had been a loyal member for over thirty years. He was also our Treasurer for a good many years in the early days.

We shall miss his quiet chuckle, or acerbic remarks about our accounts, after he had passed his Treasurership on to someone else, and the reliability with which he always turned up at meetings. A SOAG member of character, we salute you.

GATEHAMPTON FARM EXCAVATION INTERIM REPORT 2001
Hazel Williams

The 2001 season was an interesting and exciting one despite a late start due to foot and mouth disease restrictions. By the middle of May the landowner, Robin Cloke, was able to give us clearance to dig. We now have a regular team of some half-dozen dedicated archaeologists who turn up wet or fine, frequently augmented by others – we had forty diggers in total last year. We soon made up the lost time, removing the plastic that covered the site during the winter, clearing weeds and reestablishing the grid on which we base our recording.

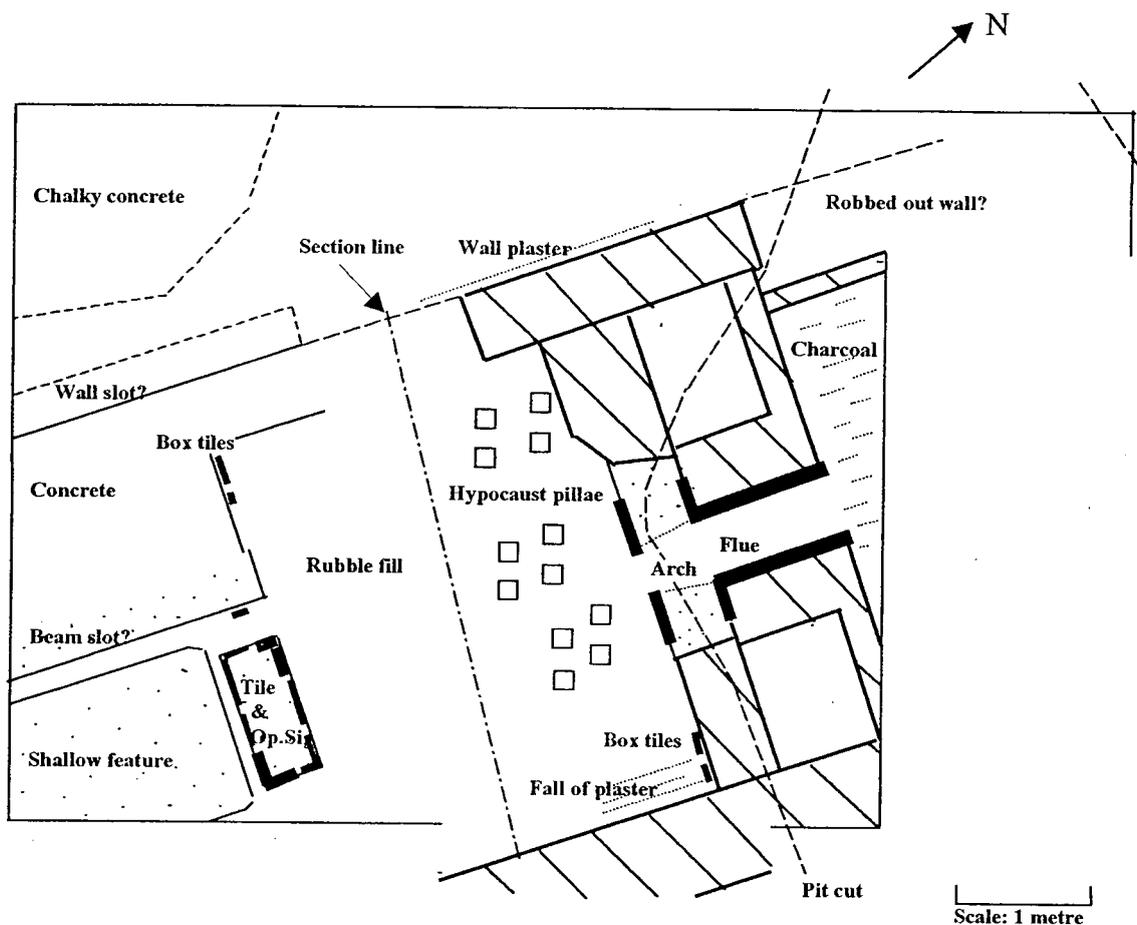


Figure 1 Plan of Trench VII

In the summer of 2000, we had enlarged Trench VII from a small trial trench to an area of 20 m² (Fig. 1). The topsoil and loose rubble had been removed and surfaces cleaned so we were ready to start detailed investigation in 2001. Trench VII had always looked promising because the surface rubble included fragments of hypocaust box tiles (tubuli) and a pinkish mortar made with crushed tile (opus signinum) which could be used on both walls and floors. There were also large lumps of what appeared to be tufa, a soft calciferous limestone that may have been deposited in the heated tanks and pipes of a bathhouse, a problem we still have today.

The main feature at this stage was a stretch of flint and chalk wall, approx. 2 m long running north to south (with the wall line probably extending southwards) dividing the trench diagonally into two areas. The western side appeared to be mainly subsoil. The eastern side, however, looked more interesting as there were three box tiles still in place along the wall. Adjacent to these was an area of rubble full of box tile fragments and pieces of opus signinum. A gravely concrete surface covered most of the rest of the area. Cutting through all these features along the north side of the trench was a large pit.

The pit was excavated first, as it appeared to postdate the building. It was over a metre deep at its lowest point and covered an area of over 6 m², quite a lot of digging for a small group. We also had to take the baulk down half a metre on that side to make it safe from collapse. However the hard work was worthwhile, the pit fill consisted of several layers of deposited subsoil, some with good quantities of finds such as green window glass, assorted pottery, a fragment of Samian mortarium, a metal hinge and two fragments of a quern. As this material all appears to be Roman, it is probable that the pit was dug shortly after the building went out of use. When the trench was extended further on the north side to trace the wall line, the remains of the mortar wall foundations were found at the bottom of the pit. This suggests that the pit was a robber trench; the wall was built of large flints and chalk blocks and it is common to find these robbed out for building material.

Removal of the concrete south of the pit revealed two more walls. The first was a substantial flint wall running parallel to the original north-south wall. The second was a chalk wall connecting the two, with a break in the centre. Between these walls and the pit was an area of rubble, over 50 cm deep in places, consisting of flints, tile and sandy mortar, most probably the remains of collapsed walls. Some of the flints were up to 30 cm in length and dressed, indicating some care was taken in the original building. Beneath this rubble were large quantities of tile fragments, mostly roof tiles, and at the base of this layer, evidence of burnt tiles and lots of charcoal. This was the first indication of the hypocaust arch and flue.

The arch was built with terracotta tiles and opus signinum, the opening is about 50 cm wide but the topmost section is missing. To the right of the arch we discovered a metal cramp protruding from the wall, these were used to strengthen walls. The flue tunnel itself had collapsed into the flue, or had been deliberately filled, leaving only parallel lines of tiles in place at the base of the flue. Outside the flue entrance were thick deposits of charcoal where the ashes from the furnace were raked out. Another very narrow flint wall marked the edge of this area.

We knew from surface features that the area south of the arch was likely to be a small heated room; there were box tiles still in place at opposite corners and the rubble fill consisted mostly of these box tile fragments and crushed and fragmented opus signinum used to plaster the walls. Half the area was excavated, the rubble was over 50 cm deep in places and may have been the result of deliberate infilling to even up the surface during a late phase when the heated room was no longer in use. The south side of the arch was revealed (see illustration on front cover) and eventually the remains of pillae, the tile stacks which support the floor of a heated room. A large brown pottery rim fragment was found in the sooty deposit around the pillae, near to the arch (see Fig. 2).

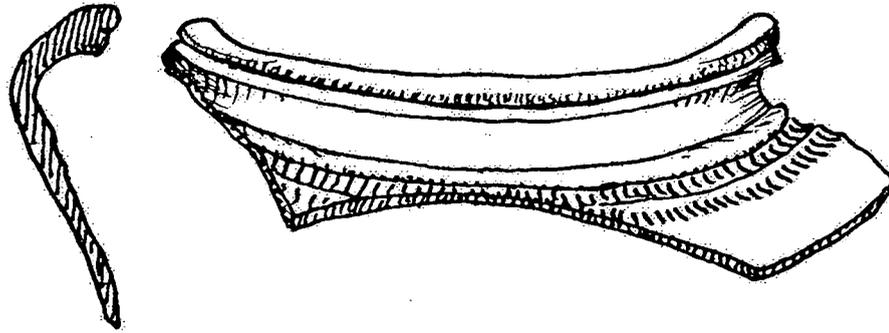


Figure 2

The pillae have not yet been fully investigated as we reached this level right at the end of the season, but there was no sign of any floor surface in place above them. Perhaps, like the top of the arch, it was destroyed by later activity. Immediately above the pillae was a thick layer of very large fragments of box tiles. These are made of terracotta in the shape of a rectangular box 'tube' up to 40 cm long, the inside blackened with soot. They are scored with diagonal or swirling lines on one long side so that they adhere to the wall rendering and would have formed columns rising up the wall, channelling the hot air from the hypocaust below the floor. This was heavy and dirty work and several wheelbarrow loads of these tiles were piled up beside the trench.

There were pieces of painted wall plaster amongst the box tiles but immediately above them was a spectacular fall of three or four layers of painted plaster in large fragments. It appeared to have fallen (or been discarded) in sections which, although cracked, still showed some of the original design and patterning. The background colour is white with parallel bands approx. 3 cm wide of bright yellow, dark red and orange red, then thinner lines in green and black with dots, curls and leaf motifs. We may be able to reconstruct the pattern once this huge jigsaw has been pieced together.

We also have evidence of the way in which the walls were prepared prior to painting. It was usual in the Roman period for wall plaster to be applied in three layers; an initial layer of rendering to cover the masonry, a finer supporting layer and lastly the fine layer of plaster which was painted while still damp. This method appears to have been used at Gatehampton where we have many fragments of layered plaster, some of which also shows the imprint of the box tiles which would have carried the hot air from floor to ceiling behind the plaster.

On the opposite side of the heated room to the arch is a group of associated features which may indicate that a narrow corridor ran southwards. Running north-south is a line of terracotta tiles; these are tegulae, thick roof tiles with one raised edge. Here they were roughly cemented onto the concrete in pairs forming what may have been a beam slot. A single box tile still in position at one end may mark the entrance. Alongside is a rectangular group of six floor tiles, largely covered in opus signinum cement that could have had more tiles on top. Abutting this is a rectangular area of concrete with raised and rounded edges perhaps forming a shallow pan; it is quite roughly made but does have a smooth glassy finish in places. These features were immediately below the subsoil: they may be contemporary with the heated room when it was in use or be part of a later phase. We hope to follow this up next year by extending the trench further south.

The area on the western side of the trench also has some interesting features that we hope to investigate more fully next season. There is a section of painted plaster still in place on that side of the wall and many fragments of plaster deposited alongside it. In the south-west corner there is a chalky concrete surface and a rubble-filled slot along the wall line which may be where a late, probably substandard, wall was built after the original wall was demolished and concreted over.

The substantial flint wall appearing on the eastern edge of the trench raises some questions. It might have supported several storeys and it seems to have been built in more than one phase. The walls in Trench VII are on the same alignment as those 20 m to the east in Trench III and may be part of the same building, but we have been unable to establish this conclusively. We hope that a survey of the area next season will produce some answers. So there is plenty of work for us to do and we shall welcome all the new diggers that SOAG can provide.

We would like to thank Robin Cloke for his continued patience in allowing us to dig on his land. His knowledge of the local area and the soils has helped us on many occasions and we enjoy his continued interest. We are also fortunate to have had advice and help from Tim Allen, of the OAU, and Paul Smith, County Archaeologist, both willing to give up their time to answer our queries.

JOURNEY ON CHINNOR AND PRINCES RISBOROUGH RAILWAY

Peter and Jean Lee

On a fine afternoon on 15th July 2001, 22 Soags assembled at the preserved Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway. The railway line runs along the foot of the Chiltern Hills for 11 km, passing through two Halts, Wainhill and Bledlow Bridge; it has been restored and is manned by volunteers, after having been axed by Dr Beeching in the late 60s.

We were hauled by 0-6-0 tank locomotive no. 5459, which arrived on time in a cloud of steam. We found the carriage allotted to us, and settled down to wait for the whistle to signal that we were on our way. We were intrigued by the gentleman with the very large green flag, giving us the all-clear at these points.

The countryside is very attractive as it offers views across the Vale of the Whiteleaf. Near some poplar trees we passed a small pond where a Roman villa once stood. The line continues past the Cricket Club where a game was in progress. In the carriage, with its GWR-type fittings, the older Soags slipped back to childhood days - the jingle of cutlery reminding one of 3/6d (17.5 p) lunches before arrival at the seaside, whilst on looking out we saw our own lovely views of the Vale of the Whiteleaf flashing by. During the journey we all enjoyed a delicious and ample cream tea.

We were not hurried away on our return to Chinnor, but had time for photos, whilst two Soags climbed onto the footplate where the driver opened the firebox door for them to see the flames, a finishing touch to a delightful days' outing.

NATIONAL TRUST ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING GROUP

Colin Hogbin

The Annual Meeting of The Thames & Chilterns Region Archaeological Monitoring Group was held at Greys Court on 16th September 2001 and was, as is usual on these occasions, attended by a party of SOAG members.

Alistair Roach of the Monitoring Group (National Trust Regional Office) reported that the foot and mouth crisis had caused problems during the year with restrictions on access to National Trust properties. However, various works and surveys had been going ahead and indeed a three-year survey was being undertaken by English Heritage at Greys Court. This would attempt to determine the history surrounding the buildings and the remnants of the curtain walls and other features, particularly in the central part of the estate, which for some period in time prior to the present 16th century house contained a 13th century fortified manor.

The procedure for collecting monitoring reports using a new computer database, introduced last year, was working satisfactorily, but some gaps in the monitoring cover had become apparent; one of these was the Watlington area. The hope was expressed that this gap could be filled. It was learned that the database uses the same software as County SMRs, and other archaeological groups could probably obtain access to reports from this source, but the National Trust does not at present give access to monitoring reports on its own website.

The National Trust is currently in the throes of a reorganisation which would reduce the country's fifteen regions to eleven. Thames & Chilterns would be losing Bedfordshire and gaining the whole of London, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Although many aspects were not clear at this stage a new Conservation Directorate was to be formed, which would take responsibility for, amongst other matters, archaeology and historic buildings. It was intended that the volunteer monitoring group should be retained.

Garry Marshall (Regional Archaeologist) reported that Roman pottery had been found around the Conduit House at Stowe (visited by SOAG last year), which suggested that it might have been the site of a Roman temple. The Conduit House originally collected spring water in its underground vaulted chambers for supply to Stowe House.

Repairs to the column, which until 1957 bore Lord Cobham's statue, had been completed with a newly-sculptured statue being placed on its 31.6 m high perch. The original statue was almost completely destroyed by lightning leaving only the head and a hand. One of two 1748 coins, which had been under the earlier sculpture, was placed under the feet of the new one, together with a brand-new 2001 coin.

Various studies had been undertaken in the Elysian Fields area of the garden, one in particular on an island in the lake, was attempting to discover evidence for a replacement of a missing monument on one of the lake islands commemorating Captain Cook's achievements.

Amongst work undertaken elsewhere were investigations into the problem of rainwater running off the roof of Great Coxwell Barn and seeping into the walls, which lead to an interesting study of the foundations. There had also been some small-scale recording work on bricked-up bread ovens and other features in historic farms on the Coleshill Estate; plus studies at the Elizabethan Eastbury Manor in East London, where it is intended the 16th century gardens should be restored and inside wallpaintings conserved.

An independent study of the Ridgeway by English Heritage had produced useful earthworks surveys of Ivinghoe Beacon and Pulpit Hill, identifying late Bronze Age and earlier features. The Iron Age sword, which had been illicitly removed from Ivinghoe (see last year's report), had now been properly conserved; a replica, which can be handled and studied by visitors, will be exhibited at Ashridge.

On National Trust land in Berkshire a find of forty-nine Roman coins dating from mid-3rd century into the 4th century had been discovered. No other features had been identified to explain how the coins got there in the first place; conjecture has it to be the act of a careless Roman accidentally dropping his purse. The coins are presently in Reading Museum but are expected to be given to the Trust.

The SOAG Group subsequently took a guided walkabout in the company of Garry Marshall and Alistair Roach, who discussed a number of the features which are the subject of the current archaeological survey at Greys Court, mentioned above.

OXFORDSHIRE PAST 2001

Janet Sharpe

On 12th May 2001 the annual Oxfordshire Past conference was hosted by the Bensington Society, and was held in the roomy Parish Hall at Benson on one of the first days in the year with sunny weather. Notwithstanding the weather, a large number of people elected to stay indoors and participate in one of the most successful Oxpast conferences so far – no fewer than nine papers were presented, covering pre-Roman to Medieval and later periods, and the whole of Oxfordshire from Alchester in the north to Gatehampton (Goring) in the south, and Oxford City somewhere in between.

As usual, Paul Smith (County Archaeologist) opened the proceedings with a review of recent archaeology in the county. He talked about some of the highlights of the last 10 years so as to present a small window onto the range of sites that has been discovered. For example, a planning application to extend the existing covered reservoir at Windmill Hill, Nettlebed, led to the discovery of a major Mesolithic seasonal campsite: standing trees precluded the digging of trenches but over 30 hand-dug test pits yielded some 6000 pieces of worked flint dated to around 6000-4500 BC.

Moving on through time, a new housing development at Bicester revealed a major two-phase Iron Age settlement, the wealth of which was reflected by larger-than-usual cattle and a wide trading network, including salt (indicated by briquetage) from Droitwich. More and more Roman sites have come to light, including a possible 1st century military establishment at Benson (on pottery evidence), a Roman villa and two other sites west of Didcot (discovered in advance of proposed redevelopment) and the first recorded Roman buildings in Henley and Wantage (both previously thought to be of Saxon origin).

The Saxons were represented by a very early 5th-6th century settlement at Benson, and more early Saxons and a mid-7th century cemetery beneath the cooling towers at Didcot. Paul emphasised the need for all this information to be pulled together to enable whole landscape areas to be reconstructed for different periods in Oxfordshire: this was a target for the next 10 years.

The next four papers looked at methodology and documentation, rather than at specific sites. Peter Barker (Stratascan) explained the mysteries of ground probing radar, and how the technique had been put to good use inside Dorchester Abbey. A presentation on the updating of the *Victoria County History* (VCH) was given next by Matt Cook (Project Manager VCH) and Simon Townley (Editor of the VCH Oxon volumes). Set up on a county basis in 1899, this ambitious nationwide local history project aims to produce a detailed history of every place in the country. So far, 13 volumes have been produced on Oxfordshire – and now the VCH is going online. The website was still being built at the time of the conference, but it was envisaged that each county will have its own site and that new volumes will be published electronically as well as in book form. In addition, the websites will include image libraries, newsletters, book reviews, news and events, and links to other sites. The VCH also intends to publish cheaper paperback volumes covering smaller areas, which will be very useful for local history groups. Chris Hall (Editor Designate) then described the projected *Oxfordshire Local History Atlas*, which will cover the whole of the Neolithic to Postwar era in 60-80 double-page spreads, one page of text and one page of maps, with a scheduled publication date in autumn 2002. This session was continued after lunch with a talk by Susan Lisk (SMR Officer, Oxfordshire) on the long-awaited computerisation of the county Sites and Monuments Record.

The remaining four papers described specific site projects. Eberhard Sauer (University of Leicester) gave a welcome update on his work at Roman Alchester, the highlight of which was the discovery of the preserved stumps of two wooden gateposts which both gave the early dendrochronology date of autumn AD 44. We know that the Roman invasion of Britain took place in spring AD 43; the dendrochronology date shows us that the fort at Alchester was founded just 18 months later. The latest season of excavation had revealed details of the ditches and ramparts and part of the gate. Cynthia Graham-Kerr (SOAG) gave an update on the Roman villa excavation at Gatehampton, Goring (see site report elsewhere in this *Bulletin*), and Pat Preece (SOAG) described her documentary and field research on Tudding Way, an ancient trackway running from Crowmarsh to Caversham along the Thames (see report elsewhere in this *Bulletin*). Finally, Brian Durham (Oxford City Council) rounded off the conference with a review of recent archaeology in Oxford itself. His talk ranged from Neolithic ditches and Bronze Age barrows in the University Parks, through the Roman pottery industry in Oxford and a probable villa to the north of Merton College, a Saxon cemetery near Christchurch and the Greyfriars Priory at Westgate, to Oxford's Civil War defences.

A major theme running through the conference, and introduced by Paul Smith, was the need to pull all this information together. New developments in the VCH and the projected *Oxfordshire Local History Atlas* will go a long way towards fulfilling that goal, and Brian Durham ended his talk with reference to the major role that will be played by the new digital Sites and Monuments Record for Oxfordshire.

SOAG SUMMER PARTY

David Cox

For this year's Party, on 9th June 2001, we were again fortunate to enjoy the hospitality of Joy Whitehead and her husband at their home at the top of Whitchurch Hill. Unlike last year however, the weather was not so kind to us, as it rained throughout much of the evening.

This inclement weather, which has not been unusual this year, did not however deter the alpacas, who were peering over the fence inspecting me if not everybody else when I came along the drive, nor stop members from missing a party, which this year was attended by 24 Soags.

After paying my tithe to Gordon Preece I made a beeline for the kitchen, not only to deposit my cream cake and quiche, which were soon devoured, but to see which other goodies I could happily munch away at. The kitchen was, as is usual at good parties, fairly packed with people. The food included salads, quiches, cakes and sandwiches, not to mention a good supply of drink.

One of the main topics of conversation centred on the TV programme 'Dinosaur Island' which had been on BBC2 that week, with people discussing the various levels of success attained by the would-be palaeontologists. Does this mean that some of our archaeologists have been led astray by prehuman interests? As time ticked on, we were slowly but surely persuaded by Cynthia Graham-Kerr to join the others in the dining room to participate in the quiz. This year it centred on peoples' visual memory of famous and not-so-famous architectural landmarks. Pictures included Henley Bridge, Windsor Castle; the triumph of modern architecture, Guildford Cathedral; and a very ruined castle once owned by a young woman, Maiden Castle. Thanks should go to the local members of the Nikolaus Pevsner appreciation society who organised this stimulating quiz. Whilst one of my main interests is architecture, unfortunately this interest was not good enough as I didn't have sufficient correct answers to win anything. I'll have to do better next year.

As conversations progressed in the dining room, the raffle, which was again run by Rachel Sharpe, was about to be drawn. The contributors to this years' prizes certainly did us proud: prizes included a jigsaw puzzle, a pair of cufflinks and a couple of books on fossils, more palaeontology. Proceeds from the raffle went to SOAG. With the evening drawing to a close and with everything finished off in the kitchen we all slowly began to leave. This, however, was unexpectedly interrupted by John Westwood who proceeded to march up and down the hall doing his Russell Crowe impression whilst holding aloft a SOAG banner. This made a change to last year's aeronautical antics by Ken Whitehead.

We send our thanks to Ken and Joy Whitehead for their hospitality, to Gordon Preece for his financial work, to Rachel Sharpe for organising the raffle, and to Cynthia Graham-Kerr for running the party with her usual efficiency.

ANN HITCHMAN MOVES HOUSE

Extract from a letter from Ann Hitchman to Cynthia Graham-Kerr

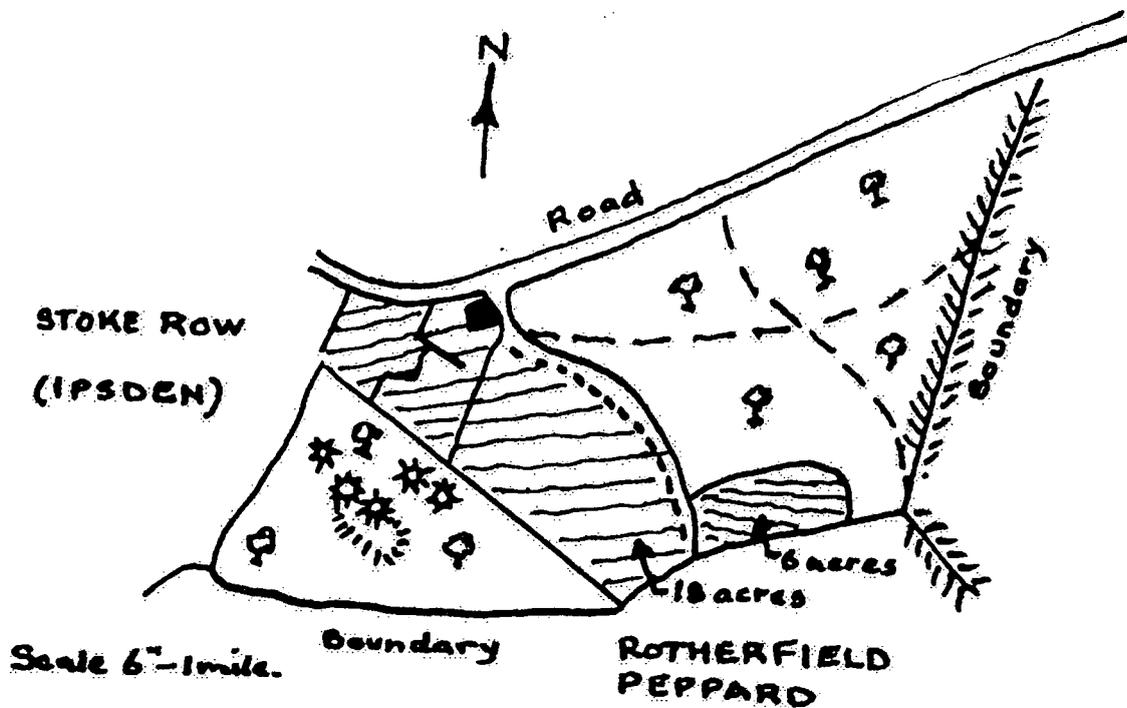
We have settled very well here in Harborough, an ancient market town, with no end of history and interest. The River Welland runs at the bottom of our garden and which is practically the dividing line between Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, so at the crossroads-bridge in the town there has been a market since the 14th century. The town is full of interest with a beautiful church, also 14th century, of which we are now Friends, and Bob has climbed the steeple to the bell-tower, which was very precarious.

Alongside the church there is also a very old school which is used for teas and market stalls for local charities. The general indoor market is held Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays with excellent Lincolnshire vegetables which keep the soup-pot going. We can see the church spire from our bedroom windows and we can walk to the town centre in about 3 minutes: the back of the house looks across the river to lovely trees in a very nicely-kept park.

As you can see, we are in another world from Whitchurch Hill.

THREE LAND BOARD WOOD Pat Preece

In the 18th Century there was some assarting in the Stoke Row area. At that period, possibly due to the advent of modern agriculture, quite a few woods were being grubbed or cleared. A collection of deeds was examined which showed the progress of the assarting in a wood called Three Land Board Wood (see Figure 1) (OS 1:10 000 Map SU 68).



Key to Symbols

Woodland	
Pits	
Grassland	
Boundaries (hedge or otherwise)	
Old track (now largely vanished)	
House site	
Boundary banks	

Figure 1: Three Land Board Wood

This wood, on the edge of Stoke, has had that name because it borders on three parishes – Stoke Row (which was in the old parish of North Stoke), Rotherfield Peppard and Rotherfield Greys. The wood was originally much larger than is shown on the modern OS 1:10 000 map. Incidentally it is no good looking for the name of this wood on the modern OS 1:25 000 map, although it can be found on the old 2½" map.

A series of leases gives us a partial history of this piece of land. In 1697 a Richard Blackall sold 14 acres (5.7 ha) of woodground in the Great Coppice called Three Lotten Bord at Stoke Row to an Edward Ward. Unfortunately the Great Coppice does not appear on any of our maps, but it is possibly included in the area to the east of Three Land Board. In the same year Richard Blackall sold 4 acres (1.6 ha) of the Great Coppice to John Lavall, a wheelwright in Stoke Row and Robert Ward sold Richard Blackall 6 acres (2.4 ha) in the same area. Although the wording of the deeds is not clear, there is no doubt that these three pieces of land were next to one another.

In 1700 the aforementioned 6 acres (2.4 ha) were referred to as arable land 'adjoining the coppice to the north', so that had been grubbed within three years. In 1718 the 4 acres (1.6 ha) were 'arable formerly woodland', and in 1726 this area was stated in another deed as 'adjoining Three Lotten Bord'. The 14 acres (5.7 ha) seem to have been the last to be cleared, as in 1728 a deed states '14 acres (5.7 ha) of woodland formerly wood lately grubbed upon which the messuage or tenement is built in the tenure of John Evins husbandman'. So it may have been turned into a smallholding. There is an area at the edge of this supposed 14 acres (5.7 ha) which shows signs of habitation, i.e. nettles and hedge banks, although there were only a few wooden sheds there when we looked some time ago. The 4 acres (1.6 ha) and 14 acres (5.7 ha) have now been joined in one field that is now grassland.

In 1708, twenty years before the 14 acres (5.7 ha) were cleared, they were leased to William Butler, a bricklayer of Nettlebed, so the coppice, as it was then, may have supplied the kilns of Nettlebed. There were also tile and brick kilns in Stoke Row, which would probably have been supplied by the beech coppices. Nowadays the beech coppices have become beech timber, but in the past they would have supplied faggots and billet (1.1 m logs) for firewood.

What other information about the present woodland can we gain? On the older maps a pattern of tracks is shown; these are quite typical of coppices and formed routes for the horsedrawn wood carts when the coppices were drawn (cut). In the land to the east, which was probably part of the Great Coppice, there are various claypits which supplied the kilns at Stoke Row. In the remaining part of the wood there are several sawpits which are a survival of the days of the chair-leg turners, or bodgers and tent peg makers, who plied their trade in the woods.

The parish boundaries on the old maps are marked as having posts; these have disappeared but there is still an appreciable bank along the boundary between North Stoke and Rotherfield Greys.

References: All from the Berkshire Record Office, D/EH T82

THE (NORMAN) HISTORY OF BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN

Edited and presented by Ian Clarke

The History of Brightwell Baldwin is a collection of writings and papers researched and collated by the late A C (Tony) Fraser, who retired to Brightwell Baldwin and carried out extensive research into the history of the parish. 'The (Early) History of Brightwell Baldwin' was presented in SOAG Bulletin No. 55; this extract continues the history, covering the manorial holdings from the Domesday survey through to the end of the 14th Century. It is reproduced here by kind permission of his widow, Ena Fraser, and of Peter Kent, the custodian of the papers.

Notes to the text

1 *acre* (0.4 ha) = 40 x 4 *rods* or *land-yards* (Latin *virga*), the basic unit for land measurement

1 *virgate* (typical family holding in Midland villages) = approx. 30 *acres* (12 ha)

1 *hide* and *carucate* = approx. 100 *acres* (40 ha) (or 3 *virgates*)

(There were significant regional variations in actual areas, depending on soil conditions.)

1 Norman pound = 20s (shillings) = 240d (pence)

1 Mark = $\frac{2}{3}$ pound = 13s 4d (or 13/4d, 67 p)

In heraldry: azure = blue; or = gold; argent = silver; sable = black

The Domesday Survey

In the Domesday Survey, undertaken in 1086, the entries regarding the parish are:

'Hervey holds two hides in Britewelle – there is land for six ploughs – now in demesne two ploughs. Five villeins with five bordars have two ploughs. There is a mill rendering 20d and there are 6 acres (2.4 ha) of meadow and 20 acres (8 ha) of woodland. It was worth 50s – now 70s. Hervey holds the land free from the Bishop of Bayeux.'

'Roger holds of the King two hides in Britewelle – there is land for six ploughs – now in demesne two ploughs. Two serfs and eight villeins with two bordars have three ploughs. There are 6 acres (2.4 ha) of meadow and 20 acres (8 ha) of woodland. It was worth 50s – now 100s.'

'Brun the priest holds three virgates of land in Cadwelle from the King – land for one plough. He also held it before 1066. It is there in lordship. It was worth 20s – now 30s – also Edward holds half a hide from the King – land for one plough. It was worth 20s – now 6s.'

Villeins and serfs were obliged to perform a variety of services in addition to paying rent to their lords. A bordar was a cottager of lower rank and had to carry out menial work. With a total of thirteen villeins, seven bordars and two serfs, in addition to the holders of the lands, there must have been a minimum of twenty-six households in the parish.

Hervey, who also held other land in the neighbourhood, has been identified as Hervey de Saio. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, was William the Conqueror's brother-in-law, and the greatest landowner in Oxfordshire. Roger, one of the King's officers, was granted large areas of land in Oxfordshire. Nothing appears to have been recorded of Brun the priest or Edward, the Cadwell tenants.

Hervey de Saio, among his other holdings of land, had Skelbrook in Yorkshire from Ilbert de Lacy. Ilbert held many estates both in this country and in Normandy, where the Bishop of Bayeux was his landlord. From his Oxfordshire manors he gave tithes to the Church of Saint Clements which he founded in his castle at Pontefract. During the 12th and 13th Centuries a manor in Brightwell, and also manors in Warpsgrove and Haseley, were included in the Honor of Pontefract. An honor was a group of lordships or manors under the administration of a lord and his honorial court. The grouping normally occurred round a castle, but sometimes, as in this case, was widely scattered. The honor passed to William de Scallebroc (or Skelbroke), a Yorkshire baron, who was probably a descendent of Ilbert de Lacy.

The de Scallebroc family did not live in Brightwell but probably at Haseley. It is recorded that in 1347, Michala, widow of John de Scallebroc, complained that various people broke into her property at Little Haseley and drove away six horses, sixteen oxen, four cows and twenty swine, worth twenty pounds, and stole other goods.

The de Scallebrocs let their Brightwell manor to the Parke family and it became known as Parkes Manor or Parc Brightwell. The earliest record of the Parkes occurs towards the end of the 12th Century when it is noted that Thomas de Parco holds a manor at Brightwell from William de Scallebroc for a third of a knight's fee. The manor held the advowson (the right of presentation to the benefice) of the church.

There can be no doubt that the present church must have been built by the Parkes. In the south-west chancel window there is a restored shield, 'azure, three stags, faces or', surrounded by a ribbon with the inscription 'Insignia Johis Kirby Arm: Patroni istius ecclia'. E A Greening in 'The Armorial Glass of the Oxford Diocese' writes, 'This inscription is a misreading of a copying made by Wood in 1658, the arms are those of Parkes.'

Some Early Tenants

The Parkes sublet a great deal of the land which they held from the de Scallebrocs, and among their tenants was the Abbot of Dorchester. A legal dispute in 1244 illustrates the complicated set-up of landlord, tenant and subtenant. The dispute was between Richard, Abbot of Dorchester, represented by his canon William de Prestecote, and William de Scallebroc, the overlord. The Abbot asked that William de Scallebroc release him from 'the customs and services' which the Parkes demanded from him for the tenement he held in 'Parc Brightwell'. The outcome of the case was that the Abbot should pay three shillings rent and carry out 'the royal service'. The Abbot also agreed that on the death of each abbot the abbey should pay due relief. This was a fee paid on the death of a tenant by his successor, from which abbeys and similar institutions normally claimed exemption.

The de Langele family held a great deal of land in Brightwell and elsewhere. In 1236 there was an agreement between them and John de Brightwell concerning three and a half virgates of land, 13 acres (5.3 ha) of meadow and nine messuages (cottages and outbuildings) in Brightwell, and also other land in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. The Langeles held the land by payment of a pair of spurs, a pound of cumin and a pair of gloves. When the agreement was drawn up they gave John a sore sparrow-hawk. A sore sparrow-hawk was a bird which had not yet had its first moult.

Geoffrey and Matilda de Langele held half a virgate of the Abbot of Dorchester's land and in 1248 were in dispute with him over the rent of nine shillings. In the end the abbot gave up his claim for the money and the Langeles agreed that they would give annually to him and his successors one pound of cumin or 1½d at Easter.

Following their agreement in 1248, the Abbot of Dorchester granted the Langeles several acres of land in 'Parc Brightwell' in order that they might create a mill and fishponds, fed by the stream which comes from the spring, referred to in the agreement as 'la Holiwelle'. The boundaries of the land are laid down in great detail. There is a reference to a field called 'la Hide', which is now known as The Hyde. Features that now cannot be identified are a meadow called Horscroft, the Puthebesput and 'the forera of the middle forlang'. It was agreed that the Langeles might enclose their property and that 'the abbot and his successors would claim no entry'. Geoffrey would do homage to the abbot for the land and paid him six marks. The ponds in the park are still to be seen but there is no trace of a mill.

It is not recorded when Dorchester Abbey ceased to hold land in Brightwell but in 1306 the abbot was the highest ratepayer in the parish, paying six shillings and fourpence.

Two other cases that shed light on other tenants are on record. The first was heard at the Assize of Mort d'Ancestor in 1219. This court was set up to hear cases in which the plaintiff claimed that he or she had been dispossessed of land that belonged to them by inheritance. In this case Maria, daughter of Richard de Brightwell, was summoned by Robert de Brightwell concerning half a virgate of land. At the conclusion of the case Maria acknowledged Robert's right to hold it for a rent of nine shillings. In return, Robert granted Maria pasture on the land for four oxen and two carthorses.

The second case, in 1235, was between Adam and Juliana Hervey and Peter Oliveri concerning two messuages, half a virgate and ten shillings rent in Brightwell. The Herveys gave up their claim and Peter gave them eighteen marks. Juliana's mother, Gunnora, was in court and quit-claimed (released by deed) to Peter all her rights in the property.

The Hundred Rolls

Edward I was away in the Holy Land when his father died and did not return to England until the latter part of the second year of his reign. He found that abuses had occurred in the collection of rents and therefore set up a commission to record exactly what rents and duties were due from every landowner and tenant. The commissioners for Oxfordshire were William de Brayboef, Guy de Taunton and William Gerberd. The results of their enquiries appeared in 1274 in what are called the Hundred Rolls. From these it is possible to list the principal landowners and tenants of the four estates in Brightwell.

Parkes Manor - Thomas de Parco held this from William de Scalebroc.

'Lord Thomas de Parco is the chief lord of Brightwell holding there one carucate of land with its appurtenances and the advowson of the church from William de Scalebroc for one third of a knight's fee and owes the same William homage, suit of court and as much scutage as is due.' The manor totalled about eleven virgates in extent. There were twelve dwelling houses and nine cottages. It is reasonable to assume that Parkes Manor centred on Brightwell Park and the main village.

Huscarles Manor - Thomas Huscarle held this from the Earl of Cornwall.

'Lord Thomas Huscarle holds in the town of Brightwell from the Earl of Cornwall a carucate of land with its appurtenances which is in the Honor of Wallingford for homage and half a knight's fee, as much land as belongs to Johanna, who was the wife of Lord William Huscarle, as her dower.' The Huscarles were Knights of Wallingford and the first to be recorded locally is Gilbert, who was the tenant in 1166.

Thirty years later Richard Huscarle held the land, and Thomas in 1212. In 1216 Thomas was deprived of the estate for opposing the King and it was granted to Richard de Parke to add to his manor. A year later, however, the land was restored to Thomas by Henry III. The estate continued in the possession of the Huscarle family until it passed briefly into the hands of the de Carrens when Lucy, widow of a later Thomas Huscarle, married Nicholas de Carren. In 1373 John James of Wallingford, a relation of the de Carrens who had acquired the manor, exchanged it with Sir Baldwin de Bereford for La Resshé (Rush Court near Wallingford). In area Huscarles Manor was about the same as the Parkes estate and it contained seven dwelling houses and two cottages. It was possibly centred on the present Upperton.

Barentine-Bracy Manor - Reginald de Bracy held this from William de Barentine.

‘Reginald de Bracy holds in the town of Brightwell from William de Barentine five and a half virgates and 6 acres (2.4 ha) with a messuage for his homage, suit of his court and for sergeanty services, namely when the aforesaid Lord William shall perform military service by the Lord King’s command the aforesaid Reginald ought to follow with horse and arms pertaining to himself within the four seas of England for forty days at the expense of Lord William and if Lord William wishes to have the same Reginald with him further he shall give the same wages per day as the other tenants of his status receive. And the aforesaid holding is in the Honor of Wallingford and Lord William de Barentine is the mesne tenant between Reginald and the Earl of Cornwall.’

The Barentines of Chalgrove were closely connected with the Bereford family, Sir William Barentine and Sir William Bereford having married sisters, daughters of Hugh de Plessis. The Barentine arms can be seen in the chapel window in the church, ‘sable, three eagles, beaks argent and legs or’. By a series of judicious marriages the Barentines became wealthy landowners. Drew Barentine became Warden of the Goldsmiths’ Company in 1380 and Mayor of London in 1398. He was also Sheriff of Oxfordshire. Early in the 16th Century a later Sir William Barentine enclosed part of Clare, near Easington, which resulted in ‘the utter decay and desolation of the said town’. To one who opposed him he threatened ‘whoreson boy and false crafty knave, I will sit upon your skirts’ and with ‘many detestable oaths’ promised to cut off his ears. The Barentine-Bracy estate was less than half the size of the previous two and contained eight dwellings. Possibly it was centred on the area where Whitehouse Farm now stands.

Cadwell Manor - John Salvein held this from Ellis de Wytefeud.

‘John Salvein holds by inheritance half a hide of land with its appurtenances in the hamlet of Cadwell for socage from Lord Ellis de Wytefeud in chief, paying to the same Ellis annually 40s for everything and owes suit of court at the Ewelme Hundred.’ This manor was half the size of the Barentine-Bracy estate, having three dwellings. It lies in the north of the parish, not far from Chalgrove. Its manor house, said to have been moated, disappeared long ago. All one can see now is a pond to the north of the present buildings. The de Wytefeud family had held it since the end of the 12th Century.

The de Bereford Family

The de Bereford family held Parkes Manor during the 14th Century. Sir William de Bereford held it from Richard de Parco by service of one tenth of a knight’s fee. He certainly held it by 1300, during which year there is a record of a prosecution of persons who plundered his manor house at Brightwell. In 1306 he paid 3/4½d in rates, the third highest payment in the parish.

Sir William was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas by Edward II in 1309, a position which he held until his death nineteen years later. A regular member of the King's Council, he was appointed to many legal and political commissions, and was among the twenty-one commissioners appointed in 1305 to negotiate a settlement with Scotland when that country was subdued. He was said to be an honest man meting out justice to all who came before him, kindly and well-disposed to all that gave him no reason to be otherwise. He was firm with ecclesiastics; 'The men of the Holy Church have a wonderful way. If they get a foot onto a man's land they will have their whole body there'.

The King granted him 'free warren on all his land at Brightwell,' that is the right to kill game, and the Earl of Cornwall granted to 'his beloved knight and friend, dom William de Bereford and Lady Margaret' free fishing on the Thames locally, a privilege worth half a mark. Lady Margaret, his wife, was a daughter of Hugh de Plessis, a wealthy landowner. Sir William thus fulfilled both conditions for becoming wealthy by holding a legal position and by marrying an heiress. He held Chalgrove and Rofford jointly with Drew Barentine, his wife's brother-in-law. When Sir William died he left estates spread over eight counties.

His Oxfordshire estates passed to his son, Sir Edmund, whose charter of 'free warren' was signed by Edward III while the court was at 'Berewick-on-Tweed'. In the south-west chancel window in the church are to be seen the Bereford arms; 'crusilly fitchy argent and three fleur-de-lys sable', surrounded by an inscription; 'Insignis Edmundi de Bereford militis domini istius manerii'.

When Sir Edmund died he left his local estate to his illegitimate son John who died soon after in Gascony, a childless widower. Brightwell then passed to John's brother Baldwin, also illegitimate. Baldwin had been Body Servant to the Black Prince during his campaigns, and was a favourite of Richard II who knighted him. He was granted the manor and park at Watlington, but these were reclaimed nine years later by the Duke of Cornwall, later Henry V. Sir Baldwin married a widow, Elizabeth de Grey and in 1397 a Papal letter read: 'to Baldwin Bereford, knight, nobleman and Elizabeth his wife, noble woman, of the diocese of Lincoln. Induce to them, their heirs and successors to have mass and other divine offices celebrated solemnly and 'alta voce' by any fit priest, in the chapel which has been founded in their manor of Bryghtweel and to have the sacrament administered to them and their household'.

As mentioned earlier, in 1373 Sir Baldwin added another manor in Brightwell to his estate. He obtained Huscarles Manor from John James of Wallingford, a wealthy landowner, in exchange for the manor of La Resshe (Rush Court) and a payment of forty shillings rent. When Sir Baldwin died early in the 15th Century he left no heirs, his only son having predeceased him, and the Bereford name disappears from the parish records. He had, however, created the largest manor in Brightwell, which was from then on known as Baldwin Brightwell.

LOCAL WATERMILLS

Mary Kift

Among well over 5000 watermills which are documented in the Domesday Survey of 1086, one was at Caversham and another at Mapledurham. The Caversham mill was held before the Norman Conquest by Suain who was probably a local Saxon lord. He held it freely of King Edward the Confessor who died the winter before the Duke of Normandy invaded England. Mapledurham mill was also there in Edward's time and was worth twenty shillings in 1086 so it, too, had Saxon origins. Many of the mills compiled in Domesday and built by Saxons had their construction based on those which the Romans had earlier introduced into the country.

Mills on the Thames were mostly built at the downstream end of narrow channels formed between islands and the river bank, though sometimes new cuts had to be excavated. As the river forced its way along the millstream a head of water built up and this pressure set the millwheel turning. In many instances mill owners also built fish traps or eel bucks into their sluices and dams, and an attractive old Victorian painting of the old mill at Caversham around 1845 clearly shows the massive timber frames of the eel bucks there.

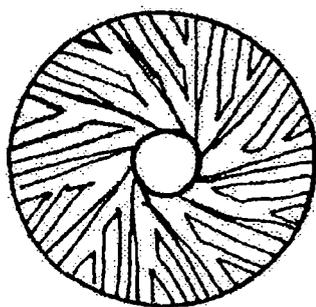
Many early watermills were built entirely of wood down to the cogs and gears that worked the hoists and turned the millstones. It was not until the coming of the Industrial Revolution that cast-iron waterwheels were used. By then the number of watermills in the country was well over eighteen thousand with more and more coming into being as the change gathered momentum.

The present mill at Mapledurham contains evidence of some construction dating back to the 1400s. Over the centuries both the mills at Caversham and Mapledurham were altered and enlarged, and indeed until around 1900 the latter had two undershot millwheels. Both mills continued grinding into the beginning of the 1900s, but the amounts of grain brought to be ground became less and less, just two or three sacks a day arriving for Mr Soundy to grind at his Caversham mill around 1910. Sadly, this old mill is now demolished.

The story of the Mapledurham mill is much happier for it has been restored and is now the last working corn and grist (cattle meal) mill on the Thames. It has always produced whole wheat flour and today it is possible to see it working and buy the old-type stoneground whole wheat flour.

The Lord of the Manor always received a certain amount of corn from each person, taking it to the mill on his estate, and this was known as multure and was around a sixteenth part of that to be ground. The miller also took a small amount too, but it was easy for him to cheat over what he kept for himself. William and John Tayler were both millers at Mapledurham in the 15th century. Both men were taken before the local court on charges of retaining too much of the corn they were grinding for customers. William was caught offending twice, once in 1444 and again a year later. Small wonder that millers were not always the most popular members of society. In fact a Medieval riddle poses the question 'What is the boldest thing in the world?' The answer, 'A miller's shirt for it clasps a thief by the throat every day' makes it plain just how many people viewed millers. Indeed they were in some cases forbidden to keep pigs or geese on their property and only allowed a maximum of three hens and a cock lest they fed them on ill-gotten corn.

It was always most important for a miller never to let his millstones run empty. In a few seconds the edges of the grooves on the stones would become blunted if the corn ceased to flow. Sparks could fly, and a fire occur. So the miller had a warning bell to tell him when the corn hopper was running low. Many millers dressed or regrooved their own millstones but the work was very skilled and those who did not could draw on the services of the local millwright.



A millstone

On some stones the furrows or grooves that were cut formed a pattern which was known as the harp, the shape of the cuts resembling the strings of that instrument. The longest string was called the master, then, slightly shorter came the journey-man, even shorter came the apprentice and finally the smallest cut of all was called the butterfly. Another pattern sometimes used was called the sickle.

With so much of their corn taken by the lord and the miller, some folk tried to grind their own corn using a hand-mill or quern. This was illegal, but some risked doing so hoping they would not be found out and punished. At the foot of the stairs in an old cottage at Mapledurham one such quern was discovered buried beneath the hearth.

Caversham also boasted two fulling mills at one time, but there is no mention of a paper mill in the Thames valley region, though one is mentioned in the Title Award for Shiplake in 1841 and another was working on a small stream at West Hagbourne. It seems that one day the West Hagbourne mill was not working properly and produced the first blotting paper by accident, so that is where and how blotting paper originated, according to an interesting theory in a booklet produced in the village.

Sources of information:

- The Farm & the Village, G E Ewart Evans.
- The Early History of Mapledurham, Rev A H Cooke.
- Mapledurham Mill, a pamphlet by G Williams.
- Life on the English Manor, H S Bennet.
- Domesday Records in Oxfordshire.

THE DRINCAN

Marian Fallowfield and Pat Preece

The search for the course of the Drincan began when we saw a stream appearing across the fields where we had never seen one before. We could see it from the A4074 appearing to flow in the direction of Little Stoke; evidently having been brought to the surface by the heavy rainfall in the autumn of 2000 and the early months of 2001. Pat suggested that it might be the River Drincan so we decided to try to find out if the stream was really the Drincan, and where it reached the Thames, first by field walking and then by studying any references to it we could find in documents.

The most likely source of the Drincan was the spring and stream marked, on OS 2½" maps, flowing along Brokendon Bottom at 627855 near Icknield Way. We could see the stream from the minor road that passes Ipsden Church. It was flowing fast through a ditch and under the road, then along the Trunk Ditch to a large pond near Larkstoke Stud. At this point it is culverted under the A4074 and disappears underground. A dip in the ground, Brokendon Bottom near the Icknield Way, had filled to form a pond that was being used by swans, ducks and lapwings.

Footpath closures due to foot and mouth disease hampered our fieldwalking, so we had to make our observations from the nearest road. From the minor road near Little Stoke Manor we had a good view of the surrounding fields where there were a number of drainage ditches, one of which appeared to be going in the direction of the Thames. We asked a man with a tractor in one of the fields near the road whether he had ever heard of the Drincan and if he knew where it reached the Thames. To our surprise he knew about the stream and said that it reached the river in a ditch near the railway viaduct. We had seen this ditch whilst walking by the Thames a year or so earlier and had understood that it was the Mere ditch. Mere means a boundary, probably the parish boundary with South Stoke.

According to the documents Little Stoke once had a much larger population than it has now, the Domesday survey shows that it had land for four ploughs. There were two slaves and six villagers with two smallholders who had two ploughs. There was also a mill worth twenty shillings.

This mill continued in use throughout the Middle Ages: it is referred to in 1332 as a watermill with a pool and a weir in South Marmion (Little Stoke)¹. In 1445 Edmund Rede granted to Reading Abbey 'the mill called Little Stoke mill and the water called Little Stoke Water with a fishery, weir, pool, and all appurtenances, but not the southern part of the way called Mill Way. Edmund Rede and his Checkendon tenants to have access to the water by the mill for washing sheep'².

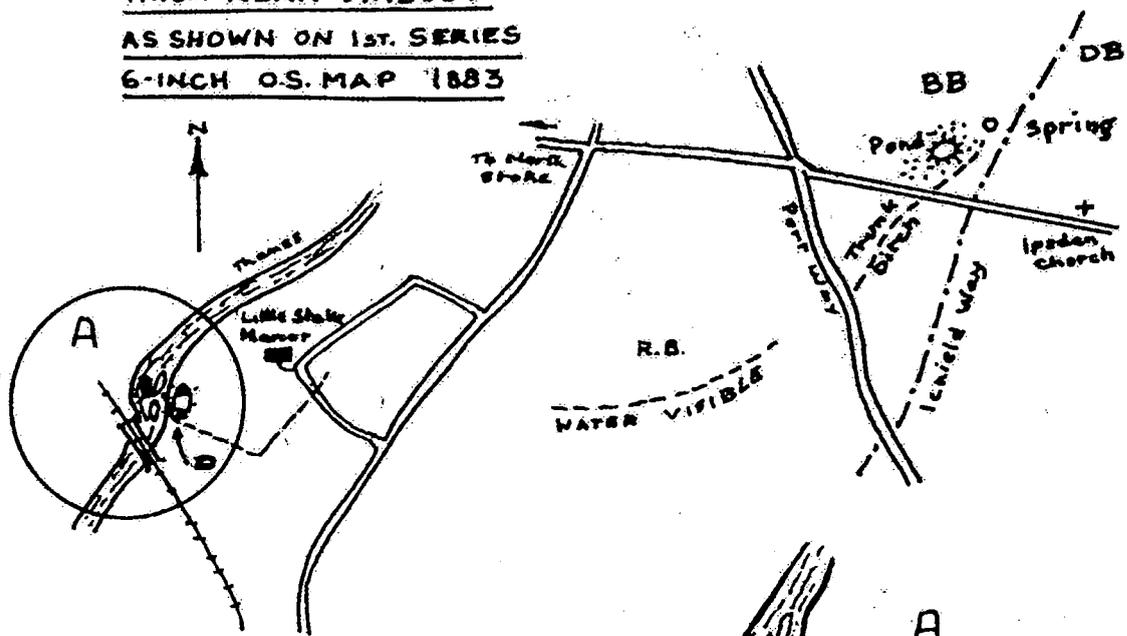
The wide exit of the Drincan ditch to the river shown on the OS First Series map of 1883 could well be 'the water by the mill for washing sheep'. The ditch and the mill appear again in 1685 as 'a tithes for Ipsden Church of three farthings yearly for meadow of 1 acre (0.4 ha) next to the river Thames and another acre (0.4 ha) bounded east by the ditch, and for the mill'³.

¹ Boarstall Cartulary p.26

² Boarstall Cartulary p.28

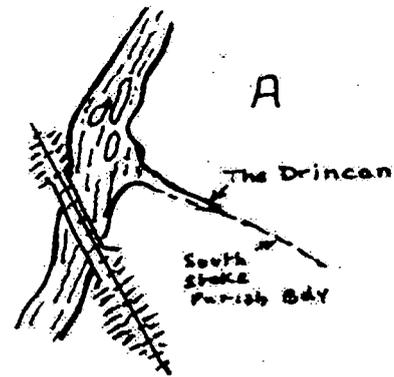
³ North Stoke Terrier – Oxford Record Office

AREA NEAR VIADUCT
AS SHOWN ON 1ST. SERIES
6-INCH O.S. MAP 1883



KEY

- RB Red Barn.
- BB Brockendon Bottom.
- DB Drunken Bottom.
- D The Drincan.
- Possible site of Mill.
- ⋯ Area of Clay.



Not to Scale.

Little Stoke has long disappeared, so we can only assume from the references that it must have been either on the bank near the ditch or on or near one of the islands. Mills on the Thames such as Mapledurham Mill and the mill at Sonning (now a theatre) are also on or near islands. The references to a pool and a weir indicate that the mill used water from the Thames. The ditch where the Drincan reaches the river was called Mereditch End in 1213 and 1220⁴; later in 1629 it was called Drunken End⁵ and in 1744 it was referred to as Drinken End⁶. The last reference to the name of the ditch is in the long article written between 1860 and 1864 by Edward Anderdon Reid in which he says 'Ipsden had an interest in the mill at Little Stoke, which stood on the Drincan, called the Drinking ditch'⁷.

⁴ Eyensham Cartulary
⁵ Court Book of South Stoke – Christchurch College Archives
⁶ Court Book of South Stoke
⁷ North Stoke Ipsden and Newnham, Edward Anderdon Reid (original article is now in the library of St John's College, Cambridge)

In his book *The Ipsden Country*, J H Baker mentions seeing the Trunk Ditch flowing in 1959. He describes the course of the stream disappearing under the Woodcote-Crowmarsh road and reappearing in the fields flowing towards Little Stoke fields. He also mentions that some twenty years earlier the stream crossed the Goring-Crowmarsh road (B4009) and flowed into the fields towards the Thames. These fields have always been wet. To quote Baker again 'the river meadows abound in springs and my friend 'Tom' who has worked for over thirty years on this land spends much of his time controlling them. With a trenching plough he cuts channels to irrigate this land, or to conduct the water to the river'⁸.

The stream J H Baker saw must be the same one seen by us and is one of the intermittent streams that can only be seen on the surface after prolonged rainfall. Probably in the past the Drinkan appeared more often, particularly at times such as the period before the Black Death when the climate was colder and wetter than it is now. Judging by the documentary evidence the path of the stream where it approaches the Thames ran in a ditch and local springs could well have added to the water.

OS Explorer Map 171, Chiltern Hills West, shows the many ditches that now drain the land near Little Stoke Manor. Similar ditches also appear on the OS First Series Map of 1883. Some of these must have been in existence earlier, certainly the one which runs into the river and which is most likely to be the place where the Drinkan meets the Thames.

KING ARTHUR AND THE BATTLE OF THE GLEIN

John Westwood

Foolish amateurs go where expert archaeologists tread warily. In that spirit, having nothing to lose, I suggest that King Arthur's first battle, some fifteen hundred years ago, was fought in Leicestershire, not in Northumberland or Lincolnshire, as hesitantly proposed by Professor Leslie Alcock on page 63 of 'Arthur's Britain' (Penguin Books 1978).

Alcock carefully examines the various vague, incomplete and possibly fake items of evidence regarding Arthur's actual existence, including that given in the 9th century '*Historia Brittonum*,' which lists twelve battles in which Arthur was victor. We concern ourselves here with only one. Where did the Battle of the Glein, if historically true, take place? (see Figure 1).

'*Historia Brittonum*' says that the battle site was at the estuary, mouth or confluence (all three are possible interpretations) of the river 'quod dicitur Glein'. This Celtic British word means 'pure' or 'clear'; even today, there is a river Glen in Northumberland and another in Lincolnshire. Alcock admits that others may have changed their names under the impact of the later English settlers.

He seems to have overlooked the village name of Great Glen or Glen Magna, close to the Roman road running southeast from Leicester. This name has intrigued me in the past, since it is linguistically odd in an area where Thurnby, Gaulby and Skeffington are more typical. It is near a brook making a confluence with the river Sence.

⁸ The Ipsden Country by J H Baker p.128 & 129

In Eilert Ekwall's *'Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names'* (OUP 1991) we read that Glen (Magna), recorded from 849 onwards, is probably the earlier name of the River Sence; it 'may be identical with Glen in Lincolnshire and Northumberland'. In the next paragraph Ekwall gives recorded variants glene, glano-, glan, etc.; not to be confused with glenno-, glyn, or (Scottish) glen, meaning 'valley'. And so we now have another 6th century river with the right name as the site for the battle: one which is much nearer to the traditional legendary Arthurian Wessex than Northumberland or Lincolnshire. And, significantly, it too is close to a Roman road where Arthur or his compatriots might well have intercepted the English invaders.

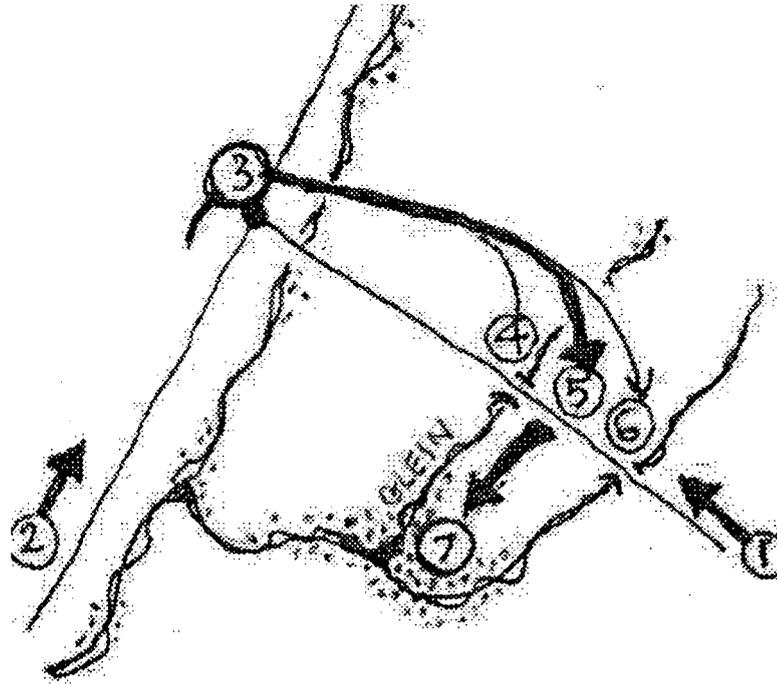


Figure 1

The 7 in the figure indicates the position of the modern village of Great Glen (Glen Magna). This unusual survival of a Celtic name might be a vestigial memory of the historic event, the battle. The river took on the new name of Sence: Arthur is now forgotten.

PS. A hypothetical view: how Arthur could have won the battle of the Glein, if in Leicestershire.

- 1: The English invaders are coming up the Roman road from Essex, intending to take the town of Ratae (now Leicester) (indicated by 3 in figure 1).
- 2: Arthur and his men move swiftly up the Fosse Way from Wessex.
- 3: Advance information of the enemy's approach is received at Ratae. Strategy is decided.
- 4: Arthur's force moves to attack. A small group is detached to destroy the Roman bridge over the Glein (now the Sence).
- 5: Arthur's main force attacks (surprises) the English from the side of the road.
- 6: Another small group destroys the bridge behind the English.
- 7: The English, being unable to move forward or back, turn south, intending to take Ratae from that side. Arthur's force knows that they will be trapped in the mud at the confluence of the Glein with another brook. They deal with the English without too much difficulty. Arthur's reputation is made.

THE ROMAN ROAD FROM SILCHESTER TO DORCHESTER ON THAMES

Edward Golton

There is a puzzle about the route taken by this road, for although its course is quite well defined at each end, it seems that no physical evidence has been found for the course of the middle section, nor where it crossed the rivers Kennet and Pang. The two sites are about 34 km apart, and the new Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 Explorer maps 159 and 170 cover the overall route most conveniently. In this note, I have tried to summarise what is known from early writings in books and journals. Some authorities argued that Roman Calleva should be identified with Wallingford, others with Speen, but nowadays Silchester is accepted as the site of Calleva Atreбата, an earlier site of the Atrebates tribe. The Victoria County History of Berkshire gives a useful summary of finds in many villages, and mentions milestones near Streatley, but more of that later. It also mentions the road north out of Silchester, but not in useful detail.

Margery (1973) gives a good description of the route, starting from Dorchester. It must have crossed the Thames near to the present bridge and gone south-east to follow the Thames until a safe crossing point was reached. Both he and Williams (1925) consider this could well be the 'tha Ealdan Stret Ford' or old road ford, mentioned in a Survey attached to Charter 810 in Birch's *Cartularium Saxonicum* (see translations by Grundy 1923, 1918). Across the Thames a hedgerow line runs south-west up to the top of the Sinodun ridge over a low Agger about 4.5 m wide. This alignment would position the river crossing at GR 587932. From the top, the direction changes southward and following a sunken lane, now a bridleway, runs down to Brightwell cum Sotwell, across the bypass and along a footpath, the boundary between these two parishes. The route is now close to a map line drawn between Dorchester and Silchester and runs out along Mackney lane for 0.8 km to the hamlet of that name. Beyond all trace seems to have disappeared across the 3 km to the outskirts of Cholsey. However Margery reports that in about 1940 Rev Hyde, a Vicar of Cholsey, was shown aerial photos by OS surveyors which clearly showed the line of the road.

At Cholsey the main street of this ancient parish, Honey Lane, is on course. Margery refers to an old timbered house in Church Road, close to the line, called Causeway House. Williams, surveying in the opposite direction, here refers to Causeway Farm, and a hump in the road in front of the Vicarage gate. But neither could find any remaining evidence of a causeway. Beyond the southern end of the village, crossing Papist Way, the course continues as a track across fields. The 1790 map of Pride and Luckombe clearly shows this, and it would have been an important road because the modern road into Wallingford was not there at that time. The line of that track continued directly onto that of the modern road into Moulsoford, joining roughly where the lane from the downs joins, passing behind the Jet garage.

Williams refers to the huge cutting where a layer of gravel was observed where our track must have crossed the railway by the brick farm bridge one can see from the A329 road bridge. He also observed a hump in the lane leading down to the Beetle and Wedge, and speculated that the church and manor house were on course. Beyond Moulsoford, a line drawn to Silchester crosses farmland and passes through or to the rear of Streatley Farm, and on towards the middle of Streatley High Street. Williams comments that he failed to find any traces in the grounds of Streatley House. Through the narrow Goring Gap the chalk rises quite steeply from the river and, being wooded, the ground would have been dry so there would have been no need for the Romans to construct a highway. And from this point onwards no evidence has so far been found of the route further south until south of the Kennet, so let us follow the evidence north from Silchester.

The United Service Journal of 1837 reported that officers studying in the senior department of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst were to include discovering traces of Roman Roads in the area in their survey work. It then goes on to describe several of the roads found leading from Silchester. The account is repeated in the Gentleman's Magazine of 1838. A line from the north gate of Silchester to Dorchester lies slightly west of due north and passes close to Ufton Nervet, and their searches started with being shown traces of a track in a fir plantation by a local landowner. It was near where that line intersects the road from 'Round Oak', where there is a public house, running eastward to 'Four Houses' and Burghfield Common. This would be at GR635654 on map 159 and agrees with markings on it. The account reads:

'After clearing the ground as much as possible, he had the satisfaction to find that the road was still distinguishable, by the trench on each side, to the extent of about 750 m, beyond which it was lost in marsh; and by trigonometrical operations the direction southwards was found to be in a line passing through what is called the North gate of Silchester. In the opposite direction (north), no further indications could be found between the spot before mentioned and Ufton Church. In front of the church a track, about 450 m in length, was observed, similar to the former, but more faintly marked, and almost wholly covered with underwood. Its direction, moreover, did not exactly coincide with that of the part first discovered; but the angle formed by the directions of the produced lines being only about 10 degrees, it can scarcely be doubted that both were portions of the same road.'

Studying the map, it seems likely the 750 m section was running south, through 'Hundred Acre Piece', to where a gully is indicated on the map. Going north, a gully would be reached after a much shorter distance. At Ufton we are uncertain as to whether the 10 degrees was to left or right. Cockrane, 1969, considers this was to the left, going northwards.

Of the later accounts, Margery (1973), going southwards, and referring to the Gentleman's Magazine of 1838, for the 500 yds (450 m) at Ufton, says 'It seems likely that this refers to a strip bounded by slight ditches 38 ft (11.6 m) apart which can still be seen bordering the west side of a forestry nursery plot in the south-west angle of a cross-roads about 0.4 km from the church. Then for 0.8 km there is no trace through the fir plantations until, a little to the north of the Round Oak - Burghfield Common road, a raised strip between ditches is traceable, and after crossing this road it becomes a distinct Agger, 24 ft (7.3) wide, which is for a time accompanied by small ditches spaced 62 ft (18.9 m) apart. On descending into a steep little valley these ditches cease, but the Agger becomes plainer and is traceable right on to the next crossing road (from Mortimer West End), becoming then the approach road to West End Farm. There is no trace of it across the last fields up to the north gate of Silchester'. The cross-roads he first refers to must be the only one, at GR635672, but I cannot now trace what he describes there. But his further description does seem to agree with the 800 yd (730 m) Sandhurst section further south through 'Hundred Acre Piece'.

However Williams (1925), says 'On the Hundred Acre Piece all traces are gone'. He does not refer to the Sandhurst work. Going northward from Silchester he agreed with the OS map line, noting it passed by a hedge at Lovegrove's Farm before following the track to West End Farm. 'At this point indications become scanty on the light soil: there is a fence along Child's Piece down to the stream at Pottinger's Furze, continuing up the slope on the North side, causing another deep trail, or gully, from the scour of rain on the hillside.' As these places are not shown on map 159, we are not sure if he has crossed the Mortimer road: he does not refer to that. But his third brief paragraph provides interesting further information at Ufton.

'On the Hundred Acre Piece all traces are gone. After crossing the road, which is the county boundary, (the Round oak to Burghfield road) there is a hump in the bank of the ditch on Pond Slade. Park Piece, Pennsylvania Wood and Church Plantation give no traces; but across the tillage beyond there is a straight strip of bare ground from the Lane as far as Church Path; and Mr Goddard, of Ufton Green Farm, told me that year after year crops fail on this strip. It is reasonable to believe that this is the Ridge.'

Thus we have another discrepancy with Margery who found the course in the wood (Church Plantation) to the southwest of the cross-roads at Ufton. It is possible that Margery was misled by the various tracks and drainage channels all over this plateau of pine woods, dug as part of forestry operations. Church Path is presumably the track, now a public footpath, leading from Ufton Court in the southwest to Ufton Church, and the Lane is presumably Church Lane, which runs northwest downhill to Ufton Green. It is worth pointing out that this course, just west of Ufton, would pass near to the medieval fishponds shown on map 159. No author mentions them, but the springs were probably there in Roman times and would have been a valuable place to aim at on their long journey.

We are now left to speculate on the route taken between Ufton and Streatley. Cockrane (1969) at Ufton, noting that the road takes a slight inclination to the left, speculates 'so that instead of aiming for Pangbourne it crosses the Kennet at 'Jack Boot Tyle Mill'. This would lead to a crossing of the Pang between Bradfield and Stanford Dingley and so to the old Hundred boundary which turns north over the hill to link up with the known clues outside Streatley. Jack Boot is presumably the 'Jack Booth' shown on the Pride and Luckombe 1790 map, where Mulligans now is, at the junction of the Sulhampstead road with the A4 road near Tyle Mill, at GR 623696.

Here are my own thoughts on the puzzle. One has to remember that the terrain would probably been wetter and marshy in the valleys and more wooded in Roman times. A route north to Pangbourne seems most unlikely: the name Tidmarsh suggests a place to be avoided. The Kennet valley has been particularly wet this winter and it would surely have been very difficult to cross the considerable width in those times. The Romans would have had to build up some sort of causeway, and in view of such a major achievement I suggest that anyone else in later centuries would only have added to it, rather than build something else from scratch.

Thus the existing roads to crossings at Tyle Mill and at Ufton bridge, 0.6 km to the west, are candidates given that no other crossing points have come to light. The terrain ahead is quite hilly so a straight route is out of the question: the Romans would have surely gone round about, and may well have had more than one route. They may have followed woodland trails of which all trace has gone, or some of the present tracks and hollow lanes which might have existed then in some form.

There are several possible routes leading generally northwest towards Streatley. One could have taken them to Bradfield, across the Pang, over the dry stony hill and along the dry chalk valley towards Ashampstead, or up the hollow lane to Buckhold, to Basildon, then down towards the Thames and along to Streatley on dry chalk well above the Thames. Another might have gone NW from the Ufton bridge following the rather twisty hollow Admore Lane that leads to Bradfield Southend, across to Mariners Lane, across the Pang by Rushall Farm, up Scratchface Lane, across Yattendon Lane, along the track to Ashampstead Church, to Aldworth, and then to Streatley.

The VCH records that two Roman milestones were found between Streatley and Aldworth, 'fixed a great many yards in the ground', one 1.6 km from Streatley near Kiddington where an old track once ran; however, they may relate primarily to a suggested road from Newbury.

References:

The United Service Journal 1837 part 3 p15-20

Gentleman's Magazine v9, Feb 1838 p192-195 'Survey of the Roman Imperial Way'

Victoria County History Berkshire Vol 1 p201-203, p214

The Lost Roads of Wessex 1969 C Cockrane p95-97 (David & Charles)

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Roman Roads of Berkshire P Williams in BBO Arch. Journal, v29, 1925 p228-237

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THE TUDDINGWAY

Pat Preece

In the course of landscape studies in the old South Oxfordshire we repeatedly came across the name of this ancient road, particularly in the mediaeval period. We have tried to establish the possible route of this way as far as we were able. The name is difficult to interpret but there are two possibilities. The first is a Saxon name such as Tuda or Toda⁹ combined with inga, meaning a tribe, so we get 'Tuda's people's way'. The other possibility is 'tod' meaning a weight of wool, so it might mean a road where packhorses carried wool.

The road seems to have gone from Crowmarsh to Caversham, although it may have been an extension of a road from Dorchester and Oxford. In an Inquisition of 1479 there is what appears to be a description of the road 'Ipsa via ducit a ponte de Walyngford per venellam vocatam Baconeslane et sic subter Mungewell Courte, Northestoke, Southestoke et per Gatehampton, Whitechurch, Mapulderham et sic usque Causham Brygge et Reding¹⁰.

The start of the route seems to be opposite the church of Crowmarsh Gifford, as there is a description in 1219-22 of 10 acres (4 ha) being below 'Tudingeweya' next to the Crofts nearest to the hospital of Crowmarsh¹¹. In our research, the crofts mentioned in mediaeval times in Newnham Murren were still marked on the Tithe Award map of 1847. These were several rectangular small fields south of the houses in Crowmarsh.

The lane mentioned as 'Baconeslane' must have gone past the most westerly of the crofts called 'Bacons Close' which was probably next to the mediaeval leper hospital of Crowmarsh. There is an earlier reference to the lane when a jury at the time of Richard II, 1382-99, said that 'Bacouneslane by Walyngford' is ruinous and flooded¹². In 1221-30 a Walter Bacon was mentioned who may have given his name to the lane and the close¹³. Bacons lane is now called Watery lane.

⁹ M. Gelling and Ann Cole, *The Landscape of Placenames*, Shaun Tyas, Stamford 2000, p. 169

¹⁰ A. Cooke, *The Early History of Mapledurham*, Oxford University Press, 1925, p. 56

¹¹ B. R. Kemp ed., *Reading Abbey Cartulary*, Camden 4th series Vol. I p. 382-90

¹² *Ibidem*

¹³ *Ibidem*

It seems probable that the road continued at the end of the lane by what is now a footpath. In 1688 and 1731 the inhabitants of Newnham were charged for not repairing Bacon lane⁶ and the name 'Watery lane' started to be used after the late 18th century.

After the footpath the way crossed Grims Ditch and in a document of 1219 the 'Tuddingweie' is mentioned in conjunction with the 'Grimesdich'⁷. The road was sometimes called the 'Cromersh' or Crowmarsh way and in 1556 John Stamp bequeathed 3s 4d (17 p) towards the upkeep of Crowmarsh highway⁸. The road is now the B4009, as can be traced by various references to pieces of land adjoining the way in mediaeval times. Later in the 17th and 18th centuries there is mention of the road as it passes through the parish of South Stoke, which belonged to Christchurch College, Oxford, and is shown on a map of 1818 as also belonging to the college⁹.

Some hedges still survive on the B4009 on the west side of the road in Mongewell, these have an average count of 6 species, including spindle and crab apple. On reaching Cleeve, near Goring, there are three lengths of hedge with an average count of seven. The shrubs present are rather ordinary, the only indicators being buckthorn and maple, one representative count having ash, wild rose, privet, hawthorn, blackthorn, maple and hazel.

The way continued on past Goring station on the road to Gatehampton, whence it forked right on a bridle way past Gatehampton Manor towards Hartslock woods. In 1366 in a grant of land the 'Todyngway' is mentioned as being near Gatehampton¹⁰. The way continues along the riverside as a reasonably level bridle path well above flood level.

On leaving the wood the Tuddingway descends into a steep combe as a track with hedges on either side. On the south side of the track there is an average count of seven species including buckthorn, maple, and dogwood. The north side has an average of similar species with spindle present. It seems likely that the packhorses would have zigzagged up the very steep further side, until they reached the track/road which passes Coombe Park and extends to the B471 into Whitchurch. A small road leaves the latter on the left, heading towards Hardwick past Bozedown Farm. This road has hedges on either side with an average count of seven species, including many indicative shrubs such as spindle, dogwood, maple and crabapple. One species we found was wild plum which were enjoyed, their being ripe on our visit.

The gate of Hardwick lies ahead and our route lies along the estate drive past the house. In the aforementioned Inquisition of 1479, it was said that there was no public road here for wheeled vehicles driven by tenants of 'Whytechurch'. It said, however, that there was a lawful road for horses ridden or driven with packs (cum pakkis), in other words it was used as a packhorse road. Leaving Hardwick the road proceeded along the continuation of the track, passing the field called 'Westfelde' in Mapledurham¹¹, now commemorated on the modern Ordnance Survey map as Westfordhill Copse.

⁶ Oxford Record Office, Quarter Sessions

⁷ B R Kemp, *Ibidem*

⁸ B and D Pedgley, *Crowmarsh*, Crowmarsh History Group, 1990, p. 63

⁹ *Estate Books of Christchurch College and Map*

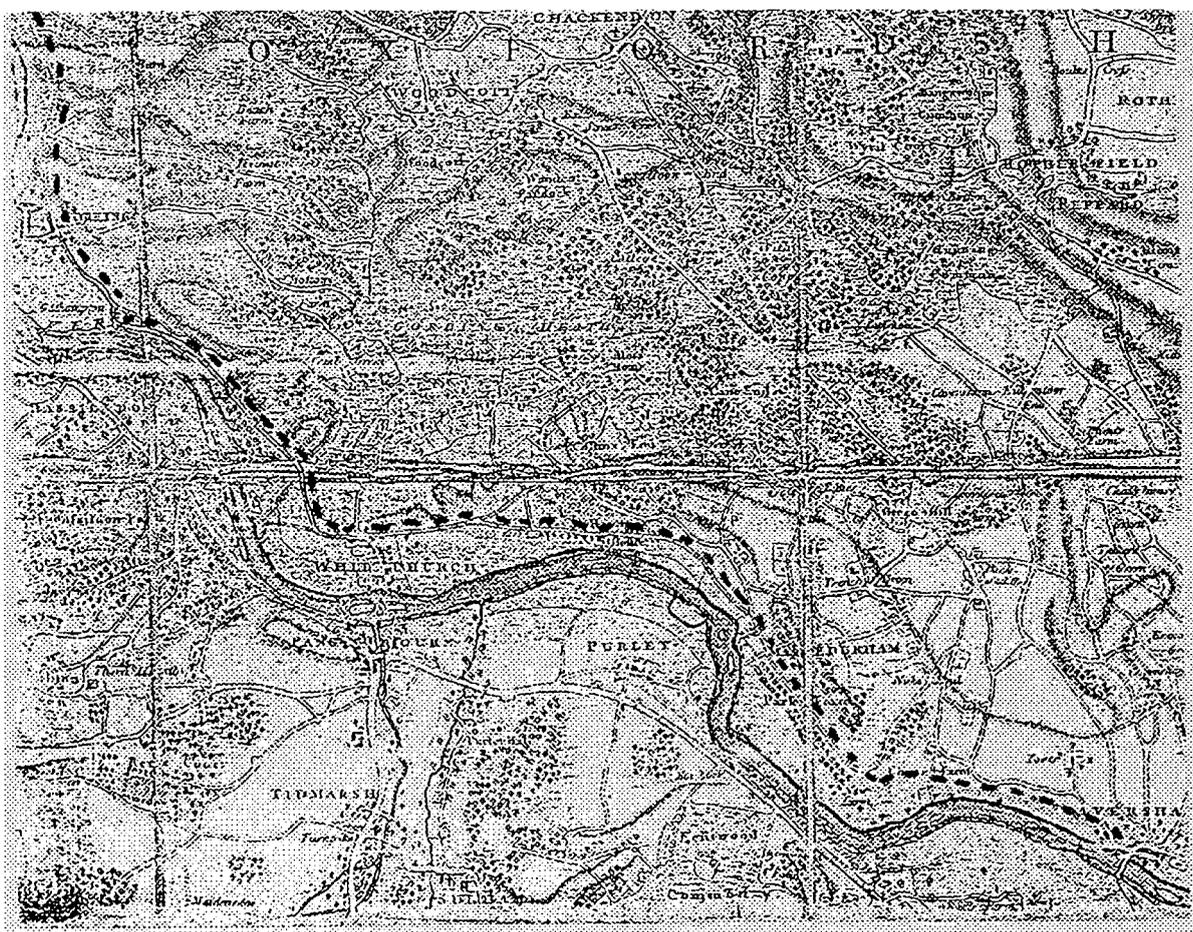
¹⁰ T R Gambier-Parry, *Goring Charters*, Vol. II, Oxfordshire Record Society, 1932, p. 186

¹¹ A Cooke, p. 55

The way then passes a house called the White House which, until the mid 19th, century was a public house known as the Kings Arms; this is mentioned in 1844 as being an ancient hostelry¹². This inn was probably a stop for the packhorse drivers. Mary Kift reports that in the 1960s many clay pipes were found in the garden during alterations and there was a game larder below the floor and racks for hanging bacon.

The course of the way reaches the road to Mapledurham village known in past times as 'Sheepcote lane'. Having turned to the right on this road, a lane then leaves to the left past the house that used to be the village post office. This lane then continues past the erstwhile osier beds and Park Farm to the lane leading to Chazey Court Farm. The latter was the manor house of the de Chauseys, who were Norman Knights. Eventually this bridleway becomes The Warren in Caversham. A count of several surviving stretches of hedge along The Warren gives an average count of 6 species including spindle, hazel and maple. So eventually we reach St Peters Church and the bridge at Caversham.

It is interesting that the various hedge-counts done along the way were mostly of seven species which, if Hooper's theory is correct, takes us back to the 13th century, a time when the Tuddingway may have been being consolidated. This road existed in the 18th century, as can be seen from the Pride map of 1761 and the Rocque map of 1790, and was still called the 'Tidging' way in 1818, as observed on the Christchurch map. Now it has lost its status as a road in many parts and also its name.



Map by Thomas Pride showing the Tuddingway (indicated by the dotted line)

¹² W Fletcher, *A Tour Round Reading*, John Snare, Reading, 1844, p. 10

Variation in the name of the Tuddingway over the centuries:

1213 Tuddingweie	1399 Touchinwey
1219-22 Tudingeweya	(A gap due to lack of documentation)
1250 Tudingway	1657 Tidgingway
1285 Todingewey and Tudgenway	1685 Tidgenway
1298 Totingway	1705 Tigeon Way
1307 Tutdyngweye	1744 Stichen way
1321 Tudingwaye	1796 Tyding way
1357 Todyngwey	1818 Tidging way
1366 Togyntwey and Togynteweye	1848 Tidgeon way

BRIDGE COTTAGE, A POSTSCRIPT

John White

In the 2000 edition of the SOAG Bulletin I described the visit that my mother and I made to the house where my grandmother was born. Bridge Cottage had been thought to be one of the oldest domestic buildings in the country but studies of the structure made during restoration work suggested it was somewhat younger, dating from between 1450 and 1475. With a building of such an age the actual date of construction is of considerable interest and, as the structure is mainly of large timbers with infill, dendrochronology is an obvious technique for determining this date. In this procedure a sample is taken by drilling through a timber, using a hollow drill, and is then prepared to show the tree-rings. The width of a tree-ring reflects the growing conditions for that year thus, by matching the pattern of ring widths with reference samples, the dates during which the tree was growing can be determined. By using a sample commencing from the outside of a tree the date that the tree was felled can be determined and, as in those days timber was used green, a conclusion can be reached as to the date of the building.

The technique depends for its success on the growth of trees over a wide area (whole countries or even continents) being similarly affected by a given year's climate. Local events, especially man-made ones such as drainage or woodland management, can alter growth-rates so not all samples can be matched with the references. Because of this at least five samples are required to date a building. This can involve a total cost of up to £1000 and even then it is not certain that a result will be obtained. This cost was too great for the Uckfield and District Preservation Society, restoration of the building being the main aim, so the only method of dating was by comparative studies of structural features.

These structural features have created a demand for Bridge Cottage in university archaeological and architectural courses, in return for which this year a dendrochronological study has been carried out by Dr Martin Bridge of the Institute of Archaeology. Three samples, from two rafters and the crown post, were dated exactly to 1436, and several others which could not be dated exactly were consistent with this date. The belief now is that the trees used for Bridge Cottage were felled from late 1435 to the summer of 1436, when the building was completed. The tree-rings also gave other information. Even the large timbers came from young trees (around 75 years old) and some showed sudden changes in growth rate reflecting environmental changes. One possible explanation is that timber production in the Ashdown Forest was being actively managed even at this date.

(Further information on the Uckfield and District Preservation Society can be obtained from the headquarters at Bridge Cottage, High Street, Uckfield, East Sussex).

THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE, MARCHAM

David White

Over the past few summers Dr Gary Lock of the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education has been in charge of the Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project. In preceding seasons archaeological digs have been undertaken at Uffington Castle (by the White Horse), Segsbury Castle (above the Letcombes) and Alfred's Castle (near Ashdown House). These digs have produced much information and from the pottery record they now have a good idea of the activities and culture that survived on the Ridgeway in the Iron and Bronze Age periods.

This season's four-week dig took place at the site of a suspected Roman amphitheatre in the Vale of the White Horse at Marcham. This was in order to compare the pottery sequence of the Vale with that of the Ridgeway, especially with reference to the All Cannings Cross-type pottery. The question they are trying to answer is whether the culture on the Ridgeway was echoed or duplicated in the Vale? The Ridgeway is a natural boundary but the intention is to discover how much of a cultural boundary it also formed.

The site for the dig was located adjacent to what until recently was the Noah's Ark Inn. There has been an inn on the site since the 13th or 14th century, situated at the crossing of the River Ock by the old Wantage-Besselsleigh Turnpike, now the A338. There has been a history of excavation on the site since a large Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon cemetery was found during quarrying to the west of the road. The initial dig, carried out in 1864-5, excavated 34 graves with a further 38 graves, six of which were Anglo-Saxon, being uncovered in 1920. In 1937-8 the first excavation to the east of the road and behind the Noah's Ark Inn took place. Along with an Iron Age settlement a Roman Temple dating from the 2nd or 3rd century AD was unearthed and is now a scheduled monument. In the 1970s aerial photographs of the area revealed a large round structure in the adjacent field and when a small trench was opened during the 1980s, this was confirmed as the site of an amphitheatre.

At the start of this year's dig a magnetometry survey was undertaken revealing not only the amphitheatre and an enclosure ditch but also a 30 m building close to the amphitheatre and the line of a Roman road. Trenches were opened up over each of the anomalies and on 25th July 2001 a Friends of the Ridgeway walk, organised by the National Trails Office, offered the opportunity to visit the site just before it was back filled until next year.

Enclosure Ditch

This ditch has been found to have had several phases of activity. The first ditch was originally dug during the Bronze Age, in approximately 1500 BC. Over the centuries this silted up during periods when the Ock flooded (hence the name of the Inn: Noah's Ark) but was later redug in the late 1st or early 2nd centuries AD by the Romans on exactly the same alignment; whether this was for a temporary fort is as yet unknown. Within the trench overlying the ditch and part of the interior of the enclosure, a Bronze Age burial urn and an Anglo-Saxon urn cut into a Bronze Age cremation urn were discovered. Two timber structures from the 6th century BC have also been discovered in concentric rings approximately 6 m in diameter. A circular arrangement of pits full of sheep, pig and cow bones was also excavated. These pits had been cut by a later ditch in which was found bone needles and rings, but no evidence of late Iron Age activity has as yet been found.

In one corner of the trench the burial of a child aged 5-10 had been found in the topsoil. It is suspected to be that of a Romano-British child but there is very little evidence to support this due to the high level of plough disturbance. A probable furnace has also been found full of Roman pottery and nails in various states of manufacture. Close to the furnace a floor surface has been found overlaying the ditch fill. Samian ware and large numbers of oyster shells were found at this level along with some postholes indicating a structure of some description although as yet there is no evidence for any domestic structures of any kind. In fact there is no evidence for domestic activity in the area at all. This is puzzling the archaeologists. There are only 11 or 12 other known amphitheatres in the country, all of which are associated with a town or a fort at the very least. As yet they do not understand why there is no evidence for such activity but they do understand that the site is probably a very important Romano-British religious complex.

The Building

This building is situated in the middle of the field between the enclosure ditch and the amphitheatre. It is aligned roughly east-west and is over 30 m long. A small trench had been opened over the south wall and extending into the body of the building. The south wall had been extensively robbed out and plough damaged, apart from two large blocks of mortar probably from buttressing around a portal. Mortar render has been found on the interior walls. Although the building may have an apsidal end it is not thought to be a church as had been initially suspected. The lack of domestic pottery has ruled the building out as being a residence and it is now thought to be a public building such as a granary, a barn or a mansio. There are no internal postholes and little evidence of roofing materials leading to the conclusion that it is probably based on a courtyard of some description. They have discovered burnt oak and the local natural bedrock of limestone has been turned pink indicating that the building could well have burnt down.

The floor has effectively disappeared because of the ploughing over the centuries but Iron Age pits have been discovered under the ghost of the floor. One of these pits at the corner of the building was backfilled by the Romans in order to build a wall, and this consolidation material was clearly visible in the trench. The whole site is at a very shallow depth within the field but since the discovery of the amphitheatre, via the aerial photographs of the 1970s, the owner has made sure that the ground is ploughed to a much shallower level than would be normal, in order to protect the site from further damage.

A large square of rubble consisting of tile and limestone has been discovered overlying a wall giving evidence of secondary occupation in the sub-Roman period, with over 100 bronze Roman coins from the rest of the trench, dated the building to 370-380 AD.

The Amphitheatre

After the geophysical survey the boundaries and entrances of the amphitheatre were marked out with little red flags. The amphitheatre was constructed in an existing hollow, the arena being excavated by another 1.5 m or so to construct the banks around it. This was revetted with stone and then clad in clay. A core sample shows that the floor of the arena is once again under roughly 1.5 m of soil. The material they used to build the banks was alluvium; an unstable material and therefore the banks could not be constructed to the same height as those at Silchester. The amphitheatre is approximately the same size as that at Silchester and would probably have held over 3000 people. No postholes for a seating structure have been found, leading to the idea that the audience would have stood on terraces. This is echoed in the construction of Silchester where no seating structure has yet been found.

The substantial arena wall was constructed of dressed stone, the top of which has been robbed out. A square room by the west entrance of the arena may have been a small temple with a shrine inside but it has also been suggested that it may have been a royal box or a holding pen for animals. It is believed that the stone building replaced an earlier timber one, but this is yet to be determined by future excavation.

At the east entrance a large negative anomaly in the geophysical survey has yet to be fully excavated but may well be the collapsed revetting of the surrounding banks or a paved entrance sloping steeply down into the arena. Some evidence of the original turf just outside the amphitheatre has also come to light by the main eastern entrance.

The Road

A road has been known of in the area for some time running north out of Wantage towards Oxford. The road excavated at the Marcham dig came in from Abingdon to meet the Wantage road just at the point where it crossed the River Ock. Some searching for the site of the Roman crossing of the river was undertaken but nothing conclusive has been discovered as yet. The road itself at the point where it passes closest to the amphitheatre, although badly plough-damaged, shows signs of having been patched throughout its life. It is also 11 m across compared to the usual 3 m or so, suggesting that this must be a very important religious site for all the surrounding Romano-British communities with high volumes of traffic expected to flow along it.

With several more years of excavation planned at the same site it is hoped that more questions will be answered in the future. I for one look forward to being able to go back next year to see what progress has been made in the understanding of this unique and, so far, enigmatic complex.

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR
10 MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2001 FOR
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP**

Eddie Hooper

PAYMENTS			RECEIPTS		
<u>28/2/01</u>		<u>31/12/01</u>	<u>28/2/01</u>		<u>31/12/01</u>
86.63	Hall Hire	72.00	817.00	Subscriptions	650.00
48.75	Insurance	48.75	26.50	Sale of Bulletins	3.00
251.00	Printing	265.00	1.93	Donations	6.00
63.00	Speaker Expenses	186.00	22.02	Bank Interest	14.92
59.67	SOAG Party	27.00	92.00	SOAG Party	108.00
38.00	Standing Orders	18.50	-----	Refreshments	1.90
64.68	Postage	-----	-----	Sundry Cash	-----
18.80	Telephone	-----	7.50	Visitors Fees	2.50
9.60	Petrol	-----	<u>£966.95</u>		<u>£786.32</u>
7.50	Book Purchase	-----			
5.75	Paper – Messenger	-----			
-----	Dig Expenses	15.19			
-----	Receipt Book	2.59			
-----	Film	9.99			
<u>£653.38</u>		<u>£645.02</u>			
	Surplus for				
£313.57	10-month period	£141.30			
<u>£966.95</u>		<u>£786.32</u>			

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2001 (10-month period)

Accumulated Funds B/F	£1672.85	Bank balances: Deposit A/c	£1458.38
Surplus for year	£141.30	Current A/c	£373.77
Accumulated Funds at 28/2/01	<u>£1814.15</u>	Cash in Hand	£7.00
			<u>£1839.15</u>
		Less unrepresented cheque	£25.00
			<u>£1814.15</u>

This Account was Examined by G. Preece from documentation provided by the Hon. Treasurer E. W. Hooper and, subject to any tax liability, provides a true and accurate representation of the finances of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group.

Signed: (G. Preece, Examiner) on 23rd January 2002

**SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
GENERAL INFORMATION 2001/2002**

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|---|--|
| Individual | £8.00 |
| (NB: as at date of
publication: liable
to amendment from
time to time) | Family (2 persons living at the same address) £10.00 |
| | Junior (under 18) £1.00 |
| | Organisations or Bodies Corporate £10.00 |
- Publications:** Members receive the *SOAG Bulletin* annually and the *SOAG Messenger* every month
- Meetings:** Held monthly, September to May, on Wednesday evenings at the Free Church Hall, Goring, at 1930 for 2000 hours (see membership card for meeting details).
Excursions are arranged in the summer
- Affiliated to:** Council for British Archaeology, South Midlands
Council for Independent Archaeology

