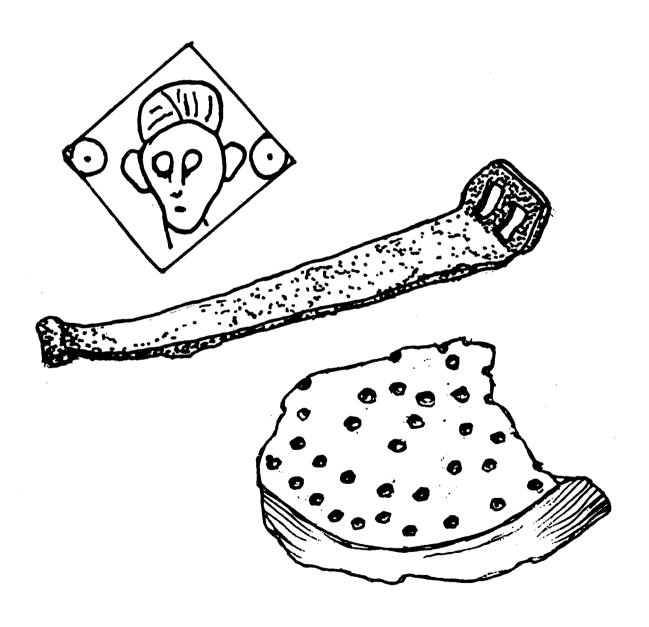
# SOAG BULLETIN



South Oxfordshire Archæological Group

No. 55 2000



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Cover Illustration: Recent finds from Gatehampton

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Grateful acknowledgement to ex-member Bernard Malerbi for computer scanning and subsequent optical character recognition of a good number of articles.

Articles, book reviews and news items are invited for publication in the 2001 issue of the SOAG Bulletin. Preference will be given to items relevant to South Oxfordshire, although others may be considered. Contributions, preferably in Microsoft Word format, should be submitted to the Editor at the earliest opportunity by email or on disk or, alternatively, typed or, as a very minimum, clearly handwritten.

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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT, 1999 - 2000 Cynthia Graham-Kerr

This year has shown a widening interest in the group, as we have had no less than 40 new members - a record surely, helped on its way by the website, mentions in the press and local magazines, together with a good information sheet to hand to people, and by word of mouth at public meetings and parties. Local notices of meetings, as put up by our Publicity Officer, also help, and we hope our new members will enjoy their Soagging in whichever direction they may be inclined to travel.

### The Dig

Our main job is, of course, the Dig. Altogether we have had 60 days and half-days working at it. This means almost every Sunday, all day, and many half-days - sometimes just a few of us doing the essentials like plan drawing, sections and general organisation. (Quite a lot of archaeology is hard slog) All details of this year's work are in the Interim Report.

We still have about 40 people who come and dig, some always, some when they can ... (or when it's nice and sunny). Everyone is welcome and we always have an enjoyable day with both fun and excitement. We are often lucky enough to miss the storms as they go over the hills each side - and if they don't there is always a greenhouse to dive into for shelter.

We are now the proud owners of our own Dumpy level, so no excuse not to 'do the levels'. I would like to thank my loyal regulars who turn up, wet or fine, as well as the back-up SOAGs who escape to us whenever commitments allow, and especially our landowner and honorary SOAG Robin Cloke who continues to take such an interest in our machinations.

### Meetings

For those not into digging the monthly meetings prove an interesting attraction and we usually have a good attendance at these, with coffee and a chat to round off the evening.

The AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1999 was held at the Free Church Hall, Goring with Mike Fulton in the chair. After the business and elections we had tea, then Paul Smith, the County Archaeologist, gave us a brilliant talk on the archaeology of the Orkneys with superb slides showing the wonderful colours and landscapes there, which left us breathless.

We next met on 14<sup>th</sup> April at the Hall for a talk by Alison Caldwell on aerial imagery and 12<sup>th</sup> May brought our old friend Dr. Sim to explain how he discovered the construction of Roman chainmail and other weaponry. The party on 13<sup>th</sup> June at Joy Whitehead's was proceeded by work on the dig in the morning, then a delightful evening at Joy's with our 30th birthday cake made and specially iced by Joy Gooch with the Roman ladle depicted on it and XXX (in Roman figures). The Raffle made £19.30 this year.

Quite a crowd of us met at the Rowing Museum, Henley on 17<sup>th</sup> July (good parking). One point of interest was their possessing a number of the paleolithic flints we collected from the Gatehampton site; we wondered how they had arrived at the museum. On 28<sup>th</sup> August we had a delightful day with SOAG Dr. Steve Head, who led 27 of us round Wittenham Clumps, and pointed out many things of interest.

15<sup>th</sup> September saw SOAG Angela Spencer-Harper from Stoke Row to give us an insight into its history. She brought her latest book 'Looking into Wells', and some of us bought copies. On 13<sup>th</sup> October we had a talk on Pompeii, Italy, with Dr. Mark Robinson explaining the latest digs there.

17<sup>th</sup> November saw SOAG Derek Vaughan who explained geophysics, of particular interest as he has worked on our site with his equipment at different times.

Our 'new' Dumpy level was shown to the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December and Ian Clarke very kindly offered to have it overhauled. This offer was accepted with alacrity and it now not only works properly, but has a beautiful new case. SOAG Janet Sharpe then gave us an intriguing talk on the Minoans' palaces, with some super slides.

The New Year brought Alistair Graham-Kerr on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2000 with a variety of slides and a lively discourse on windmills, WWII pillboxes, wherries and other boats, and a new slant on archaeology in the Broads countryside.

The members' evening on 9<sup>th</sup> February was unusually interesting with 3 speakers from amongst the SOAGs - Pat Preece on Tanning and preparing the bark for it, Patrick Baylis took us to Greece and the site of Elusis, followed by Ian Clarke on Chesiphon, an amazing brick arch near Baghdad and an extraordinary engineering feat. A varied and interesting evening covering some of the many different facets of our subject - we have a wide choice.

### Other activities

Besides the Time Team involvement on 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> March, when we were filmed (written up in the Bulletin) we worked at monitoring for the National Trust in Pangbourne Meadows, and 11 SOAGs attended the National Trust AGM at Claydon House on 24<sup>th</sup> October. We also held potwashing and marking days at my house on 8 afternoons.

### **Publications**

Again, we would like to thank Di Nicholls for her help in keying-in and printing the Messenger and even delivering some of the Caversham ones herself. This is much appreciated.

The Bulletin also is not forgotten, here we have quite a number of people keying-in and proofreading, so the work is spread as much as possible. Nor do we forget all those - especially the new ones - who have contributed such interesting articles for our records and reading.

We were sorry not to have more offers to help with the programme, please offer - it has to be done every year - or no SOAG meetings.

### The Committee

We are most grateful to our lively committee who drive in all weathers to keep SOAG organised and up to date, besides a big thankyou to all members, for attending, often in foul weather, to support SOAG and keeping the group flourishing.

### DR. CECIL. F. SLADE, FRHIST, FSA

The following note was sent to the Editor of the Berkshire Field Research Group's *Newsletter* on seeing their report of the death of Dr. Cecil F. Slade on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2001:

'It was very sad for us to hear of the death of Dr. Cecil Slade, as SOAG used to be so closely associated with him. He was, indeed, a founder member of SOAG and the cause, one might say, of its being founded. This came about because my husband, Adam, and I attended a lecture given by him on Bozedown Camp, which lies near our house. This gave me the idea of forming a local Society and this duly came about. Dr. Slade was delighted to join as a member and guided our first steps. He stayed with us for many years until pressure of work and the distance proved impractical: he saw that we were now firmly established and doing all the right things.

After 32 years we are still growing and very active. Our only regret is that in recent years we gradually lost touch with him but we are still grateful for the help and guidance of our first professional member.'

**CGK** 

### A DAY OUT AT WANTAGE MUSEUM Denis Warren

Our trip started with a pleasant drive over the Berkshire Downs. Looking out across the fields of corn, with their clumps of trees, it was difficult to imagine that, out there, a young Saxon Prince had bravely stood and fought whilst the surrounding hills had resounded to the clash of violent conflict. Somehow it seemed fitting that we should now be on our way to visit his birthplace.

Approaching Wantage we passed by the grave of a more recent soldier. In the churchyard at Ardington lies the mortal remains of Lt. Col. Robert Loyd Linsay V.C., one of the first holders of the Victoria Cross. In recognition of his military exploits he was created Baron Wantage of Lockinge by Queen Victoria; although he was known locally as Lord Wantage.

We parked in the Market Square beside the statue of King Alfred which Lord Wantage had donated to the Town and then went in search of the SOAG party. We found them assembled outside the Vale and Downland Museum studying the chequered brickwork. Later, we were to find out that the building itself was as much a museum piece in its own right, and just as interesting as the actual contents on display. The object of attention, the shiny blue glazed wall bricks, had been created (so we learned later) by varying the temperature of the kiln. We also learned that the decorative wall was only a façade; a cover for the outside of a fine timber-framed building which dated back to the dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538.

Introduction to the Museum was via a small theatre where two short films were shown. In addition, SOAG Mrs Patsy Jones explained that the museum was started by Lord Wantage when he bought 45 oil paintings from the artist Chevalier Desagnes and with them set up the Victoria Cross Gallery. At that time the museum collection was rather small.



When the premises, now occupied by the Museum, were vacated by the local Council, a lottery grant of £300 000 was obtained which was matched by a similar sum raised in the town. This money was used to refurbish the building and establish the Museum.

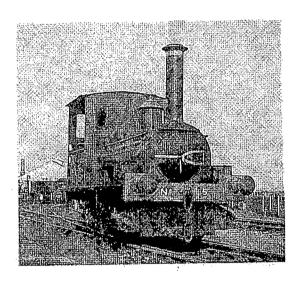
The introductory films showed that, because of an adequate water supply in the area, Wantage started as a Roman outpost. Apparently, apart from Alfred the Great, the town had little of historical interest before the Norman Conquest. Following the Norman occupation, sheep-rearing was introduced on the downland pastures. By 1177 Wantage had become a borough and a market place was mentioned in 1284. Early in the 15<sup>th</sup> century cloth was being produced in the town and a period of relative prosperity ensued.

By 1780 the town's wool trade was already under threat by the mechanisation of production in the North. But this was the year that Lawrence Hazell altered the original building in which the Museum is housed by extending both upwards and outwards. It was at this time that the outside walls were constructed and tied to the original timbers with metal rods.

Understandably, there were not very many exhibits on display that were of any real archaeological significance. Nevertheless, there were two exhibits which do merit a special mention in this narrative.

Having been narrowly bypassed by the Wilts. and Berks. Canal, although a branch into the town brought coal and other materials, Wantage was again bypassed by the Great Western Railway. Because of the expense, a move to build a branch line failed. However, the Tramways Act of 1870 raised the possibility of laying a tramway track alongside an existing (Roman) road.

Presided over by Lord Wantage, a public meeting held in Wantage Town Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1873, agreed to set up and register the Wantage Tramway Company. The service started on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1875 running between the town and the Great Western Railway's main-line station at Wantage Road, a distance of some 4 kilometres; it brought immediate benefits. For example, the price of coal was reduced from 2/6d (12½p) to 1/- (5p) per ton.



The museum exhibit consisted of a replica tramcar with wooden slatted seats upon which visitors could sit and watch a video of the Tramway's history. It was the first steam tramway in England and was operated with a motley of powered units. Initially by a horsedrawn carriage; then a steam carriage was used, followed by a couple of French compressed-air locomotives, all of which were interspersed with more conventional small tank locomotives. One of these, the *Shannon* (see picture above), built in 1857 and bought from the London North Western Railway in 1878 for £350, lasted right through to the closure of the line in 1948. Known as no. 5, this locomotive is now preserved at the Didcot Railway Centre and is celebrated nationally as the oldest railway engine still in working order.

The other exhibit revolved around the story of Rev. William John Butler who was appointed vicar of Wantage in 1847. The Industrial Revolution arrived at a time of extreme poverty in the countryside. By 1800 drunkenness and violence were commonplace on Wantage's unpaved and unlit streets. This was the period known as 'Black Wantage'. There are many theories why crime was considered worse in Wantage than elsewhere. The most bizarre being that when the slums were cleared around Westminster Abbey, the rogues and vagabonds who had taken refuge there, fled to Wantage.

The Museum showed how, after the Wantage Town Improvement Act of 1828, things began to change for the better. The arrival of Rev. Butler speeded up this process. His pioneering fervour resulted in the founding of a Convent together with a Sisterhood of Nuns. He built a school and two rest-houses. He employed a young architect, George Edmund Street, to restore and enlarge his parish church. By the time he left to become Dean of Lincoln, the Market Place had been cleared of its shambolic stalls and the surrounding wooden-framed buildings had been faced with brick.

The spacious cafeteria area thoughtfully provided by the Museum, gave us a chance to reassemble, rest our legs and share opinions of the various exhibits on display. Generally, everyone agreed that the Museum was very interesting and the visit had been well worthwhile.

On the way back to the cars we tried, but failed, to gain entry to the parish church of St. Peter & St. Paul. There are many items of interest inside, for example, the brass of Ivo Fitzwarren, as he was at the time of Agincourt, when his daughter married Dick Whittington, and the workmanship of George Street who also went to London to make his fortune. Nearly every day, on television newscasts, one can see the elegant façade of one of Street's more famous buildings - the Royal Courts of Justice - in the Strand, London.

On the way home we looked for the model village of Lockinge, a mid-Victorian creation by Lady Wantage that was intended to provide accommodation and employment for local craftsmen during the Depression around 1879. Unfortunately, not all of us found the village nor the old wheat barns which predate this Depression. A pity because we understand that the barns have now been fully restored to their former glory; thatched roofs and all.

The visit took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2000 and was supported by 20 SOAG members and friends.

### SOAG GOES TO THE HORSES Ann and Bob Hitchman

At 10.45 am on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2000, fifteen SOAG Members had found their way to Park Corner, Nettlebed, and at Darkwood Farm we were welcomed by Mr. Ian Victor-Scott the farmer. He introduced us to Jake, Duchess, Boxer and Punch and the baby of the family, George, his grand Suffolk Punch horses. We chatted and watched Jake's and Duchess's harness being put on in the stable before they were taken out to the cart which would transport us for a ride through the picturesque countryside around Nettlebed.

We set off at 11 am, first on the main Watlington-Nettlebed road, then down bumpy unpaved country lanes as far as Huntercombe. The horses really enjoyed themselves, galloping fast downhill and at a walking pace uphill. The ride lasted about an hour and is known as 'The Bushy's Lane Ride', one of many to choose from at Country Ways. Rain had been forecast, so we were all kitted-out for bad weather. Some looked as if they were going on a sleigh ride, but we were lucky and afterwards sat in beautiful sunshine for our picnic in the farm's pretty garden, ending a very enjoyable morning.

Some SOAGs made their way to Swyncombe Church where they walked all round the outside first, looking at features such as a bricked-up door, buttresses and additions to the original building. The Church is full of all sorts of fascinating things such as wallpaintings, medieval tiles, interesting stained glass and the famous bird window at the West end. The church itself is secreted at the bottom of a steep hill and quite hidden from the road, so it is not easy to find.

We two drove on to Wallingford for the Siege, when English Civil War Armies reinvaded Wallingford, a sight we thoroughly enjoyed from the castle ramparts.

If enough people (15) would enjoy another cart ride around the lanes and woods an attempt will be made to arrange it.

# NATIONAL TRUST ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING GROUP Colin Hogbin

A party of SOAG members attended Home Farm, Stowe, with other National Trust Volunteers for the AGM of the Thames & Chilterns Region Archaeological Monitoring Group on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2000. Unlike last year the weather was crisp and sunny, and this time we did not have to fight the drenching rain to complete the outside activities.

The first item on the agenda was the Annual Update and Open Forum conducted by Alistair Roach, during which he mentioned the revised procedure for receiving survey reports. These now go direct to Gary Marshall (Regional Archaeologist) and into a new computer database. This allows checks to be made more easily on the dates visits are undertaken and comparisons to be made with previous surveys; most of the initial surveys are now eight to ten years old and it is hoped to institute an updating programme. Any action required following Monitoring Group surveys would normally have to be passed to Property Managers or Main Agents.

In presenting the Regional Archaeological Review 1999/2000, Garry Marshall discussed the problem faced of keeping to a programme of innovative studies when so much of the archaeological work during the year had been dictated by the need to keep a watching brief over maintenance or other civil engineering projects. More thought was, however, being given to the matter of how quickly evidence of interesting features disappeared, which was in turn changing views on what should be preserved. An example of this came to light during a survey at Osterley Park. Through fieldwalking and documentary sources 16C features had been identified in the fields surrounding the House, yet very little evidence remained of a World War II Italian Prisoner of War camp or of the fact that Home Guard training had been undertaken there.

Another aspect of this occurred at Medmenham when land, which had been farmed by two spinster sisters for some years with little change, came into National Trust hands. The farmhouse is thought to have been originally a 16/17C hunting lodge. A dendrochronology study by SOAG Dan Miles showed timbers in some farm buildings dating from the 1560s, whilst others, possibly where later improvements had been made, registered in the 1720s. A question arose, however, as to how much of the archaeology should be preserved in relation to providing reasonably-modern living conditions for a new tenant, or determining the future use to which the property could be put.

A survey at Bradenham Manor during retiling work had confirmed its 16C origins and brought to notice the jigsaw of Flemish bond and English bond brickwork with 18C paintwork on the mortar between the bricks. A search had been made for 12C foundations, but without success. Photogrammetry studies had been undertaken on medieval structures at Greys Court. Measured Survey Drawings had been made of the Coleshill wartime auxiliary unit's hideout during work to improve the ventilation in this fragile underground structure, and of a 19C bridge in the Golden Valley at Ashridge, which actually collapsed as they were finishing the work. At Ashdown House an analysis of the South Lodge, which had been damaged by fire a few years previously, found evidence of a bread oven, brewhouse, and a kitchen. Consideration is being given to using it to house finds from Alfred's Castle, where fresh studies this year had brought to light the whole line of a further Roman building and, outside the main area, a barrow cemetery.

Metal-detecting at Ivinghoe Beacon had caused problems, firstly in retrieving an Iron Age sword that had been dug up and removed illicitly from the site and, secondly, in surveying the over twenty small pits dug by, it was assumed, the same culprits. Whereas metal-detecting, when used sensibly, could be a help in some archaeological studies, and some clubs and individuals obeyed the rules, there appeared to be a distressingly large number that did not.

Moving outside, the Group members viewed the partly-intact remains of the Home Farm. These consisted of a range of buildings surrounding a large rectangular courtyard. Documentary evidence showed footings being dug in 1792. They were largely functional buildings for a livestock farm with a dairy and abattoir for Stowe House, also stables on one side for working horses and another for the carriages and their teams. And there was a forge and other ancillary buildings, besides the farmhouse itself. The farm was acquired by the National Trust in 1995 and, apart from the courtyard buildings, still operates as a farm. The buildings are currently being retiled, using the original slates as far as possible, with the aid of a Heritage Lottery grant prior to a decision being made as to their future use.

Finally, Group members went on a walk round several of the monuments outside the immediate periphery of the Stowe Landscape Gardens in the company of Oliver Jessop (Project Archaeologist for Stowe). These included the Conduit House (1792), which has a vaulted water chamber below, and the Wolfe Obelisk (1720), which was dismantled and placed in the park in its present position in 1780; it is in the throes of being rebuilt as a result of its top beginning to lean. When work started the column was found to be hollow and this feature will be retained. In the park itself English Heritage is researching the whole of the area as part of an Heritage Lottery project. This is intended to detail all of the historical features that now remain, to decide what is worth keeping, and to agree how best to go about it. A recent interesting find in the park has been pink grog ware and a subsequent study by the Oxford Archaeological Unit has identified associated Roman kilns along the old Roman road.

### OXFORDSHIRE PAST 2000 Janet Sharpe

This year's annual conference for local archaeological and historical groups in Oxfordshire was hosted by the Witney Historical and Archaeological Society on 29<sup>th</sup> April.

Paul Smith (County Archaeologist) began the proceedings with a review of recent archaeology in the county. Over 70 archaeological interventions had taken place during 1999 and there was a strong emphasis on Saxon sites. Although Saxon cemeteries have been known in Oxfordshire for a long while, until recently their associated settlements were largely unknown. Excavations at the Rivers nightclub site at Benson prior to redevelopment revealed several early Saxon 'sunken huts' or 'Grubenhausen', which we were told should now be referred to as SFTBs (Saxon-featured timber buildings) and considered as sheds or outhouses associated with much grander Saxon halls – this new concept has undoubtedly raised the status of the Saxons in British archaeology. Although no hall has yet been found at Benson, this early settlement, with its mixture of both Saxon and late Roman pottery of the 5<sup>th</sup> to early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, may represent the home of Saxon colonists who mingled with, rather than replaced, the local Romano-British population. This concept of integration rather than conquest was reinforced by the finding of a bone comb at another early Saxon site by the new Wallingford bypass bridge, which showed a unique mixture of Saxon and Roman features.

Steve Head (Northmoor Trust) then gave us a lively talk outlining plans for the Wallingford Castle Meadows site which has recently been brought back into the public domain. The Castle was first built by William the Conqueror in 1071 in the northeast corner of the Saxon burgh and the line of the Saxon ramparts was incorporated into the Castle defences. Although most of the standing masonry is now lost, the absence of subsequent building means that, theoretically at least, the whole site is available for archaeological investigation. The new management plan combines aspects of archaeology, landscape, biology and conservation.

Eberhard Sauer (Oxford University Archaeological Society) described his work at the Roman marching camp and fort at Alchester, which lie just to the west of the Roman town. Coin evidence suggests that the fort was established very early in the mid-40s AD and that it was abandoned sometime during the 60s or 70s. Military equipment indicates that the troops at Alchester had previously been stationed in Germany. After the fort went out of use, a large Roman bath-house, some 60 m long, was built on part of the site.

After lunch, Beryl Hunt (Chiltern Society) described the history of the Ewelme watercress beds, which cover some 2.5 ha. The beds were dug out by hand in the 1890s, although there is evidence that watercress was cut from the site and sold commercially long before this; production finally ceased in 1988. The beds have been extensively restored by the Chiltern Society, which hopes eventually to be able to purchase the site.

Edward Shawyer (North Oxfordshire Field Archaeology Group) then talked about his excavations at the Swalcliffe Lea Roman villa site. A substantial part of the villa plan has now been recovered, with evidence for industrial use during the last period of occupation during the late 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. At least two well-constructed forges have been found in adjacent rooms, together with a large quantity of iron slag. The remains of a mosaic floor with an outer swastika/Greek key design surrounding an inner guilloche border, dated to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, were found beneath one of the forges.

Finally, Brian Durham (Oxford Archaeological Advisory Service) rounded off the proceedings with an account of his work in the City of Oxford. Scatters of Neolithic to Iron Age features have been found all over the city, and a large Roman pottery manufacturing site has been discovered on the site of the new Oxford United football stadium. The kilns were clustered and it is thought that the site also included areas of coppiced woodland to provide fuel for the kilns. A substantial Saxon settlement with at least two groups of SFTBs and late 6<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century pottery was found beneath the Oxford Science Park. Another SFTB with a deep cellar was found during excavation at Liberty's site in High Street. Other sites investigated included St Aldate's Church, where Saxo-Norman burials were revealed during reconstruction work, and Lincoln College, where the Medieval kitchen has been uncovered.

### MILLENNIUM EXHIBITION Cynthia Graham-Kerr

A Millennium Exhibition was held in Goring Village hall from 28<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2000, run by the Goring Historical Society. Margaret Westwood became involved and borrowed some objects (mostly medieval) from Cynthia to make a little display for it. This snowballed when John Westwood joined Margaret with boards and a glass cover for the display and Pat Preece sent some photocopies of documents in Old English to pin up in the background. Some SOAG information leaflets completed it. SOAG would like to thank the Westwoods for arranging it all and making labels, etc, for the items – they did the bulk of the work on their own. Our thanks also to ex-SOAG Sid Wybrow who took home some large articles too big to squeeze into Cyn's Mini.

We have now been asked to repeat this for a similar exhibition in Streatley over the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup> August 2000. We have added one or two things to improve it further and the items were already in the care of the Westwoods prior to the exhibition, who are in charge of the display for us. We would like to thank them for the trouble they have taken over this for us.

# GARDEN PARTY David Cox

Having recently joined SOAG, I have found the work on the dig very interesting, only to be matched by the sociability of the archaeologists. So when I was asked by Cynthia, our President, on one of these hot sunny days down on the dig, if I would like to come to the Party, the answer was a resounding yes.

On the evening of the occasion I duly drove over the bridge at Pangbourne, stopping hesitantly at the toll, but nothing to pay. As I meandered up the hill with this good luck, my fortune continued to hold as I found Joy Whitehead's residence with no trouble at all. A tithe, however, which was extracted from my good person (expected and duly paid) was money for SOAG. This was taken swiftly by our Treasurer Eddy Hooper and Cynthia at the front door.

The welcome I received from the other guests outshone the fine weather we had on the occasion. As I ventured into the kitchen I saw sandwiches, savoury dishes, cake and desserts to whet the appetite, not to mention the drinks. The evening however was not all designed for pleasure, no: a quiz (some of it thankfully being multiple-choice), on the history of Berkshire. These questions, many stuck on the house's doors (who does the painting?), while not easy, were very interesting and proved to be a good topic of conversation. Questions ranged from: When was the grotto-like bridge between Wargrave and Henley built?; What is unusual about the churchyard of St Fridewide in Frilsham? One drawback with this was that it slowed the consumption of all the delightful food and drink we brought.

As the evening continued we all took advantage of the good weather. A number of the guests, particularly the ladies, suddenly pointed to a biplane flying in the distance, which I, with my newcomer's ignorance, thought how strange, why point at a biplane in the sky? As the biplane, none other than a Moth, descended, it came to me that the pilot and owner of the plane was the hostess's husband, Ken Whitehead.

After he had demonstrated his aeronautical antics (almost hovering in mid-air and landing under the telegraph wires) he parked his Tiger Moth in the barn, whereafter a small herd of alpacas visited us humans. They sadly however soon left, after looking at us with almost complete disdain.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, we gradually made our way into the dining room where the answers to the quiz were given. This part of the evening was particularly worthwhile, not only was it enjoyable, but everyone went away knowing more than they had previously.

At this point the raffle, run by Rachel Sharpe who came round with the tickets; this was worthwhile not only for the prizes, but also as the proceeds were given to SOAG.

Our thanks for the memorable evening go to Joy and Ken Whitehead for their hospitality, to Denis Warren for devising the questions for the quiz, to Rachel Sharpe for running the raffle, to Eddie Hooper for his treasury work and to Cynthia, without who, the party would not have got off the ground.

### GATEHAMPTON FARM - INTERIM REPORT 1999-2000 Cynthia Graham-Kerr

In March 2000 the Steering Committee planned to reopen Trench VII as soon as we had cleared up some queries in Trench III, but the wet weather delayed our start (and also we had to stop earlier than usual this year) and much weeding and cleaning was necessary.

### Trench III

We aimed to finish squares 34-43Y/Z so they could be backfilled. A new square at 33X (see Figure 1) was opened to clarify that corner and see if the pit with oyster shells went through and under a heap of chalk and tile slabs, which it did. (The iron ladle was found nearby.) Rough concrete partially covered the pit.

An extra  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre was removed in 43Y/Z and confirmed that the chalk wall abutted the flint one. The remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre in 31E was also removed, to follow another possible wall, but the evidence lies under the spoil heap.

Lastly a new corner was opened at 32A, which was crumbling, as it has a large hearth extending into it under the rubble. This was removed, revealing more wall and the fireplace close up to it. More work is needed here.

We now had a stove-like structure (the so-called Aga) together with 6 furnaces/hearths in 32V, 29V-30V, 31Y + 37/38Z. The 2 furnaces in 37/38Z consisted of one superimposed on a larger one and needed 5 sections and a lot of application. The Aga itself was sectioned and a flue found, together with loose red tesserae. Next to it in 32V is a large bottle-shaped furnace lined with tiles, and the two hearths in 31Y and 32A need more attention.

On 5<sup>th</sup> May we started the backfilling with some tiles (all recorded) in 34Y/Z. Pegs were driven in to mark the positions of all the walls to help align them, once the trench has been backfilled, with other walls on the site.

A section of the whole length of the N. side of Trench III was cleaned and drawn. In 36-37/Z there is an interesting area where the chalk floors appear to have been heaved up. This is associated with a layer of dark silt which suggests that flooding had occurred pushing up the floors. A nearby pit, which contained dark soil and some flint pebbles, may also have been caused by flooding. Another pit near the two furnaces was full of black soil and charcoal and contained only 1 or 2 finds.

The corner at 32X was cleaned, with the chalk floor showing plainly round the corner of the section. The pit also extended round and under the section and may continue under the tiles and slabs of chalk in the section. It was full of black soil and oyster and mussel shells.

### Finds

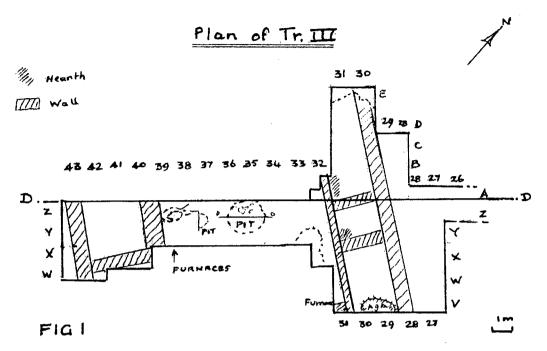
There was plenty of pottery in general, including some Samian and colour-coated ware, mortaria and a selection of black-burnished and grey wares, some very coarse heavy pot (probably a large storage jar) and Nene Valley ware. The large quantity of bones (some in heaps) was mostly from domestic animals, together with oysters and mussels, many in pits. Other finds included nails, shoe-studs, an iron knife, 2 blue glass beads and a few coins.

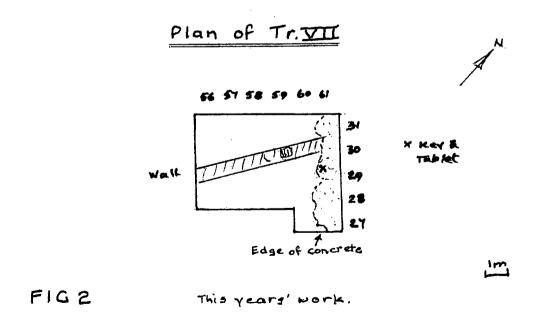
### Trench VII

Trench VII was now reopened and a large area of 24 m<sup>2</sup> was exposed - we aimed to extend the area of the original trench, using geophysics and dowsing for a survey. We also needed to tie Trench VII in with the grid of Trench III. To achieve this, we devised a new all-figure scale grid which was extended to cover the whole of our area.

About 20 cm down we came to all the debris of a villa, including a wall, with a large tile and a limestone slab in it, forming, perhaps, a threshold and running right across the trench (see Figure 2) and flooring of concrete, opus signium and some chalk, together with box-tiles in situ. Have we a bathhouse? There is a scatter of box-tile fragments and also a number of pieces of tufa, of which one was quite large. This may indicate the presence of a hot-water system - furred pipes were as bad then as now.

# GATEHAMPTON FARM GORING





The east side of the dig, at 6127, was different as the concrete stopped roughly a metre from the section edge, and there was, instead, black earth. This seemed to represent 2 large pits which have yielded some very interesting finds. We extended to the south in this area as the gradiometer indicated a wall in 60/6127, which may have been robbed out. Further dowsing and gradiometer surveys (which coincided nicely) led to alignments with the walls in Trenches III and VII. These surveys seem to suggest a typical corridor villa, extending for about 60 m. with a central entrance.

### **Finds**

We found an unusual piece of flat bone, 3 cm square and ½ cm deep, neatly worked, with a face and 2 circles engraved on it (Figure 3). This was found in 6129 near several strips of bone with lines engraved vertically and 2 holes at one end. The bone tablet was shown to Dr. M. Henig who thought it might be an inlay for a work- or jewel-box. The strips could have come from the sides of the box, or some furniture.

A fine Roman key (Figure 4) was found in good condition beneath a flint. Other finds included a sandal-stud and a coin, both in 5629. 6129 yielded a mystery object; a crescent or horseshoe (but it isn't - ideas welcome, see Figure 5). These finds, apart from the two in 5629, all came from the ditch-like, double pit area, together with bones and assorted pot.

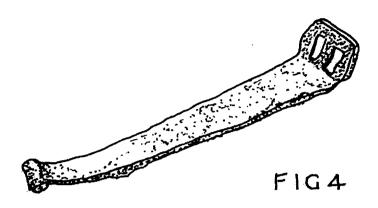
Besides large amounts of black-burnished ware, part of a red mortarium and half a strainer were found (Figure 6).

In conclusion it was decided to place a Millennium Time Capsule in the double furnace in Trench III. We wrote a massage on a SOAG Information Sheet, which Cynthia signed as Director, and Hazel as Site Supervisor, added a 1 p and 2 p coins and inserted them in a screwtop coffee jar and on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2000 we laid it in the funnel of the double furnace, which was lined with white plastic, and backfilled it with plough-soil.

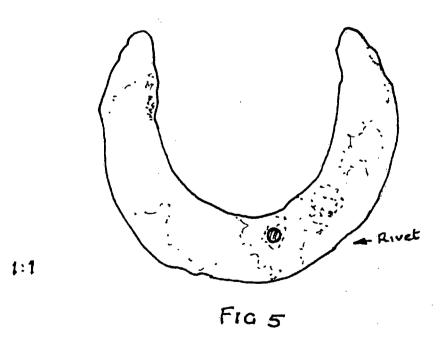
We had 40 different SOAGs digging, (not all at once) for 25 whole days and 27 for extra half-days between 30<sup>th</sup> March and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2000. The Committee would like to thank everyone for their hard work, and the interest taken in the Dig.



FIG3



1: 1



Metalwork from Trench VII

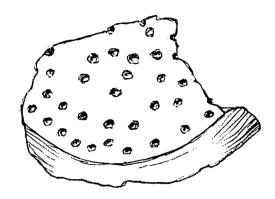


FIG 6

1:1

Strainer from Trench VII of the Dig

## BARK AND BARKING Pat Preece

Nowadays we see oak trees with corrugated bark and our interest is probably in what lives in those fissures, but in days gone by that bark had a more important use. Whereas leather is now cured by chemical means in the past, bark was one of the important ingredients of the process.

The process of getting the bark was called barking and it was obtained in two ways. The first was from oak coppice poles. The oak coppices were worked on a rotation of 25-30 years for the production of bark. Most of the tannin lies in the inner layers and it is that that is needed for the tanning process. The coarse outer layer contains little, therefore saplings or coppice poles have more tannin in their bark. In the accounts of the Goring Charity there is reference to bark from 'pooles' (Oxfordshire dialect). At Woolley near Chaddleworth the wood accounts refer to long rods for bark. Another interesting reference is in the wood accounts of Bucklebury where there is an entry 'Shroud sharf bark' - shroud is the outer covering but sharf had me puzzled. I tried all my books on woodland and its terms but had no luck. Then I tried an Anglo-Saxon dictionary and came across 'scheaf' meaning a pole or rod shaff in present-day English. So here we have it meaning the bark covering of a coppice pole. The only coppice locally which I feel could have been used for bark production is at Burnt Platt, Kingwood Common. I spoke to the late John Cottrell about this and he agreed that it could be dated about 1700-1800 AD and that it might have been used for bark production. The bark would have been stripped off with a barking tool and I have been told that it was cut off by people sitting on the ground, but another source said that it was often stripped off the standing rods, so probably there were two methods.

The second source of bark was the large oak trees after felling. The fallen trunks were scored round with a sharp billhook every 90 cm and then cut downwards and the strips of bark levered off with a barking tool. This process, apparently, made a very loud noise, according to an old woodman who gave me most of my information. There were several sizes of barking tool. The bark was removed from poles and branches with a short-handled tool. The bark from large trunks was removed by one with a long handle.

The system of dealing with the bark was as follows:

- 1) The tree or coppice was cut down in March as it was thought that with the sap rising, the tannin content was at its height (this however is now thought to be incorrect). The bark was then stripped off.
- The bark was then set up to dry in the woods by standing it against stakes. This was sometimes done by women. In the Bucklebury accounts of 1815 there is reference to this:

'Paid a woman for setting up bark for 3 days 3s'

- The next operation was to take the bark to a barn and this was known as hatching or housing and this is mentioned in the accounts.
- When the bark had dried out thoroughly, it would be shaved with a small chopper according to the woodmen, these would be smaller than a butcher's chopper. This shaving removed the coarse outer layer or crit and this was a very dusty job. In the Bucklebury accounts of 1812 there was a note:

'Paid James Jerrom for shaving 2 loads of bark £1. 12. 6d'

'Paid James Jerrom for beer 3s'

In 1845 1 gallon of beer was supplied for the same task for 1s 4d, so possibly James might have had 2 gallons!

After the shaving was done the remaining bark was chopped into small pieces and then placed in sacks and sent to the tannery.

Bark seems to have fetched most money from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1730, 12 loads were sold to Fludger the tanner of Wallingford for £1. 12. 6d a load. A load of bark was probably about a ton. The Fludgers were then a well-known family in Wallingford producing several mayors. By 1792 a load had risen to £3. 3s; in the Goring Charity accounts for 1801 a load of bark was fetching £28. 7s. How can this be? The answer I feel must be because of the Napoleonic wars. The equipping of soldiers at that period required various items of leather equipment such as belts, bandoliers, shoes and jerkins, etc. At the same time coaching was in its heyday and there was all the saddlery and upholstery wanted for that.

The local tanneries that the woods supplied have long gone and, one might add, the smells that went with them, and today even the oak timber is seldom used.

### TIME TEAM



# CHRONOLOGICA CLADIUM - A RECORD OF DISASTERS Peter Gooch

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was originally compiled on the orders of King Alfred the Great, around AD 890, and subsequently maintained and added to by generations of anonymous scribes until the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The following list is taken from the period 900 to 1137 AD, and suggests why the population grew so slowly.

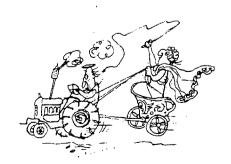
900-920	Danes harry Mid and West England
921	Edward King of all England - Peace
945	Edmund Ironside campaigns in Scotland
969	Edward allows Thanet to be harried
976	Great Famine, civil unrest, monasteries destroyed

980-982	Pirates ravage South Coast
986	First great cattle plague in England
990	Danish raids - Danegeld first paid
995-997	West and South devastated, continuous Viking raids
1005	Very severe famine - even the Danes left
1007	Wessex ravaged - heavy Danegeld paid
1011	Vikings and Danes overrun whole of South East England
1014	Great tidal floods
1017	King Canute - Peace
1042	Crop failure, cattle pest
1054	Cattle pest
1064	Northamptonshire ravaged in civil war
1066	Norman invasion and conquest
1068	Harrying of North by William
1070	Great famine - William plunders all monasteries
1077	'Wild Fire' in many areas
1082	Great famine
1082	Very severe tax
1085	Coast wasted for fear of invasion. Crop & livestock pestilence
1086	Plague, famine. 'Who can fail to be moved to compassion by days such as these'
1089	Severe earthquake, crop failure
1094	Great shooting star displays
1096	Famine. Heavy tax for Welsh wars
1098	Extensive floods
1099	Tidal floods
1103	Crop and fruit pests
1105	Crop failure
1111	Bad weather, crop & cattle pestilence
1112	Plague
1115	Severe winter, cattle plague
1116	Heavy rains, crop failure
1117	Heavy rain, crop failure
1118	Earthquakes
1121	Earthquakes
1124	Severe grain shortage, coinage debased
1125	Floods
1129	Earthquakes
1131	Cattle, swine and fowl pest
1137	King Stephen 'one may go a day's journey without finding a village inhabited or a field cultivated'

### **EMETT'S CARTOON**



"And they do say that somewhere on the farm is the site of a Roman amphitheatre."



# THE WALLINGFORD CLOCK Mary Kift

During last summer I had a day at St Albans, spending a lot of time in the cathedral, and there I discovered a unique timepiece, the Wallingford clock. Having at one time lived in Wallingford and been much interested in this historic town, I was intrigued to know about this fascinating piece of mechanism and who had made it. According to a pamphlet I obtained, written by David Kelsall and to whom I am indebted for this information, I read 'the famous Wallingford clock designed and completed soon after 1336 is acknowledged as the most technologically-advanced clock of its time'. It was constructed by Richard Abbot of St Albans from 1327 till he died in 1336.

Apparently, the original clock vanished at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The present replica is the work of a group of enthusiastic folk from St Albans, some from the cathedral congregation and some from the St Alban's Engineering Society. They were able to construct this ancient timepiece because Abbot Richard's rough notes 'giving details of his mathematics and gear ratios together with some sketches' were discovered some years ago at the Bodleian Library. These notes were translated by a Dr. J. D. North.

This is the story of Abbot Richard and his clock. In 1292 there lived in Wallingford a blacksmith of William by name and his wife Isabella. They had a son Richard and when the lad was ten years old his father died. The boy was noticed by William de Kirkeby, Prior of Wallingford, for the young fellow was highly-intelligent and most likeable. The Prior adopted him, sending him to Oxford where he studied philosophy and grammar and graduated in Arts.

When he was 23 Richard became a monk and joined the monastery of St Albans. Here the Abbot, Hugh of Eversden, noticed the young monk's academic qualities and after three years at the monastery he sent Richard to Oxford once again to study theology and yet more philosophy. Whilst there Richard became interested in mathematics and astronomy. Soon he was writing treatises for an astronomical clock. Nine years later he became senior lecturer at Oxford.

On his appointment he returned to St Albans to celebrate with Abbot Hugh and his fellow monks. Sadly whilst he was there the Abbot died suddenly and the Prior applied to Edward III for permission to elect a new Abbot, Richard was duly elected to this position on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1327.

While Abbot Richard spent much time designing and making his clock he caught leprosy, dying in 1336 before his clock was finally completed. No one knows when it was finished or by whom, but it was certainly working well before the end of that century. What happened to it after that is not known, but records show it was in the monastery at the time of the Dissolution.

According to the Abbey records (Gestra Abbatium Monasterii Sancti Albani, Bodleian Library, Cotton Claudius E IV f 361) Richard's work on the clock caused great expense and some of the monks felt it to be wasteful as the monastic buildings were badly in need of repair. Indeed Edward III 'gently chided Abbot Richard' saying he had neglected the fabric of the church whilst pouring vast sums of money into the construction of the clock.

Although finally finished after Richard's death, years later, thanks to the discovery of his notes and diagrams and to the dedication and enthusiasm of a group of St Albans people, there is now a Wallingford clock once again in the Abbey, albeit a replica. The blacksmith's son would be pleased.

### NORTH LEIGH ROMAN VILLA Ted and Barbara East



West range (looking west), November 2000. Photo by Barbara East.

On one of the rare sunny days in November, Ted planned us a route to North Leigh via Woodstock, Long Hanborough and East End, to the site of this villa which lies on the banks of the river Evenlode. We found a convenient lay-by at the top of the hill, with a pointer to the villa and an English Heritage noticeboard with details and picture of the mosaic floor. We had a steepish walk down to the site along an ancient hedged, stone track, and after only a short way, we found an open field gateway giving a bird's-eye view of the site.

We saw a covered building protecting the mosaic and glimpses of the excavated walls with, at the far end, a little cottage which in the open season serves as a ticket office and shop, then to one side the great green area of the court.

Continuing on down, getting muddier as we went through an unlocked timber gate, we explored the remains of the villa, beautifully clean and gravelled. The walls were all built of durable Cotswold stone, comprising a bath-house, hypocausts with blackened stones, reception area, recreational rooms and a service area, laid out in three ranges around the courtyard. Rough grass covers the unexcavated north block and the eastern edge, which formed a colonnade containing the main entrance, through which the residents would have departed for the nearby Akeman Street, but having first to ford the little river Evenlode.

Not knowing what to expect at North Leigh, we were both surprised and delighted to have visited the site.

(Editor's Note: This report was accompanied by a folder of 16 excellent mounted photos which Barbara and Ted East took when visiting the villa and which will be displayed at an appropriate SOAG meeting)

### MAGNETOMETRY Geoffrey Deakin

Iron constitutes about 6 percent of the Earth's crust but little of it is readily apparent. Most of it is dispersed through soils, clays and rocks as chemical compounds which are weakly magnetic. Man's activities in the past have redistributed some of these compounds and changed others into more magnetic forms, creating telltale patterns of anomalies in the Earth's magnetic field, invisible to a compass but detectable to sensitive magnetometers.

Magnetometry is a passive method of exploration in that the geophysicist is measuring a potential field that is totally-independent of the operator or his equipment. Specifically, one is measuring the variations in the Earth's magnetic field across a survey area. The need for a method to identify archaeological industrial areas such as metal and glass kilns or baking areas has become apparent, as extensive excavations become an expensive luxury of the past. Archaeologists are fortunate in that the clays which are used to make kilns and ovens contain iron oxide compounds produced in the firing process. These oxides are demagnetised during the firing process and on cooling are remagnetised by the Earth's magnetic field at the time of firing This process is referred to as thermoremnance. Ditches also exhibit enhanced magnetic fields due to the gradual accumulation of small particles containing iron within the mud. These particles tend to align themselves with the prevailing magnetic field, thus producing an exaggerated and measurable field.

In general, the Earth's magnetic field induces a field within these iron-rich bodies. These fields are small - about a thousand times smaller than the Earth's magnetic field. The Earth's magnetic field is largely due to geological effects deep within the Earth's core. The core, consisting of molten iron and nickel, acts as a dynamo producing the dipolar magnetic field with which we are all familiar. In addition, effects from the Sun and Moon also contribute to the field in the form of low-amplitude diurnal variations. Unhappily these are very similar to the size of archaeological anomalies. In order to identify and exclude them, and to differentiate from antiquities, special precautions have to be taken with the design of equipment and manner of conducting the survey.

Magnetometers consist of sensors which measure an electric pulse. At present there are three types. Firstly, proton sensors where the precession of protons generates the small electric charge, they measure total field without any direction sensitivity and require no setting-up procedure. In spite of their undoubted virtues they have been largely displaced because their mode of operation makes them slower than new instruments now available and less well-adapted to the rapid gathering of data now demanded of archaeological procedure. Secondly, alkali vapour optically-pumped caesium or rubidium sensors, which have the advantage of being extremely sensitive but are expensive and prone to breakdown because of their complexity. Thirdly, fluxgate gradiometers (as now used on site); here two sensors are connected together and moved across the surface of the Earth. The equipment records the difference between the two sensors. As the Earth's field is the same at each sensor, the only difference will be due to local effects, such as buried antiquities.

At one time it was assumed that all archaeological prospecting would use the preceding two methods. The fluxgate gradiometer with its closely-spaced direction-responsive detectors was regarded as a fast but relatively-insensitive device, prone to heading problems and drift. Continued development and appropriate methods of use have solved these problems and it has become the standard tool in most archaeological investigations. Although the function of the fluxgate involves a cycle of operations, as does the proton sensor, these take place in one thousandth of a second rather than five seconds, the output then being effectively continuous. Another difference is that the proton device is omnidirectional, measuring total field, whilst the fluxgate is highly-directional measuring only the component of the field parallel to its axis - along its length. The Geoscan instrument in use on site has a noise level of about 0.1 nanotesla (0.1 gamma) so that subnanotesla surveys in areas of weak magnetic contrasts are now readily achievable. The practical sensitivity of fluxgate instruments is close to that of the best proton instruments and to the general limits of optically-pumped instruments, with the advantages of compactness, relative simplicity and cheapness, combined with suitability for high-resolution automatic recording.

# FALL OF THE HOUSE OF MORIN Mary Kift and Marian Fallowfield

This is an account of the fortunes of the Morin family who held the Manor of Newnham Murren near Wallingford from at least 1170. In that year Gaufrid son of Morin (of unknown forename), Knight of the Honour of Wallingford, was pardoned (excused) a part of the aid (a sum of money) for marrying the King's daughter. The marriage in question was probably that of Henry II's daughter Maud to Henry, King of the Romans, when Henry II demanded an aid from all who held land from the King by military service.

Gaufrid was probably one of a number of knights granted land sufficient to support him with arms, horses and equipment. He would have had to do castle guard for two or three months every year at Wallingford Castle as part of the garrison, to act as part of an armed escort if he was needed, and to fight for the King who held the Honour of Wallingford.

As Lord of the Manor and a knight Gaufrid's social position was good, but the fact that he was excused part of the aid for the marriage to the King's daughter suggests that he was not very rich. His armour, helm, shield and weapons would have been expensive but would not have cost the exorbitant sums paid by later, and much richer, knights for plate armour, heavy helms and large warhorses. Gaufrid would have worn a loose mail hauberk over a gambeson (which was a padded garment) and a plain helmet. He would have looked very much like the knights we see on the Bayeux Tapestry. The Morins continued to hold Newnham though they are not referred to as knights. In 1188 Richard Morin, probably Gaufrid's son, held Newnham for one knight's fee, and continued to hold the Manor until he entered Reading Abbey in 1221.

Between 1219 and 1221 Richard took out a corrody with Reading Abbey. This was an arrangement by which, in return for land or money or both, the donor could be housed and cared for until he died. This corrody entitled him to live at Reading Abbey, to be nursed in the Infirmary if he fell sick and to be buried in the Abbey graveyard. To gain these privileges he had to give a great deal of his estate. The land in question included 24 hectares of his demesne land, 15 hectares near Grim's Ditch, and the land near the leper hospital at Crowmarsh. The abbey could have pasture in his meadow and access to the land for any purpose.

Richard also gave up his claim to half the river between his lands near Mongewell and Wallingford Bridge (hitherto in dispute) to the Abbey for them to use freely, and also gave free access to the Abbey fishermen to cross his meadow with their nets. In return for all this Richard would expect the best of care should he fall sick.

The Infirmarian of a large abbey such as Reading would have servants to gather herbs from the abbey herb garden to prepare medicines for common ailments. He could send the servants to fetch apothecary prescriptions from the town, and call in physicians when necessary. He would be expected to be gentle, good-tempered, and compassionate to the sick, and to cheer and console them with hope in God.

The elderly and infirm monks who lived permanently in the Infirmary would benefit from the good food and warmth. They could also sit and walk in the cemetery garden where there were fruit trees and plants such as lilies and roses, and yew and bay which were used in religious festivals.

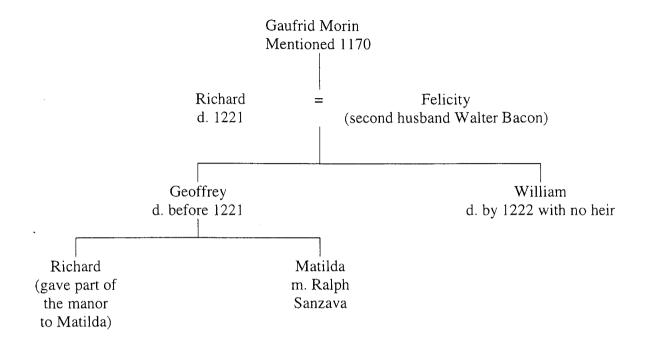
At the time when the corrody was made it was possible that Richard was already sick, as he died in 1221, very soon after entering the Abbey, so the monks at Reading did very well out of the agreement. William Norm, Richard's younger son and his heir, was willing for his father to arrange the corrody with Reading Abbey though this entailed losing a large part of his inheritance. He, too, gave land to the Abbey in exchange for the money he needed for a journey he intended to make to the Holy Land.

He gave 25 hectares of arable land in his demesne, for which, to quote Reading Abbey cartularies, 'the Abbot and monks have given him as their brother in his great need ten and a half marks of silver for his journey to the Holy Land'. This evidently was not enough as William also sold the corn crop from the land near the crofts close to the leper hospital at Crowmarsh; for this and other items sold he raised sixty shillings sterling.

The crofts in question are shown on the Tithe Award Map for Newnham Murren in 1847 and some can still be seen now as allotments. It is not clear from the cartularies whether William was going to the Holy Land on crusade or as a pilgrim, but the latter is more likely as the main crusading years were over by this time. In any case he would have needed a great deal of money to pay for such a long journey. He would have joined one of the organised bands of pilgrims travelling together for companionship and safety, lodging at the pilgrim inns and hostels in Europe where there was a tradition of hospitality towards pilgrims and guides were available. Upon reaching Venice he would have booked a passage on one of the official galleys which left twice a year for the Holy Land. These were strictly controlled by the Senate of Venice and were not only inspected for seaworthiness, but forbidden to load more than 60 cm above a cross marked on their sides.

Each pilgrim was allowed a space marked on the cabin floor for himself and his luggage. He was allowed three barrels of wine and water and one chest for his possessions. He could hire a mattress, blankets and pillows and would have to buy a good supply of food. There is no further reference to William in the Abbey cartularies so we do not know whether he ever left on his journey to the Holy Land. There were many different reasons why pilgrimages were undertaken; possibly William wished to fulfil a vow or even to regain good health, but before June 1222 he was dead.

William apparently had no children so upon his death his nephew Richard inherited what was left of the Morin land. The family tree produced by Dr B Kemp, who edited the Reading Abbey cartularies, shows that William had an elder brother, Geoffrey, who must have died before 1221, leaving a son named Richard and a daughter named Matilda. Part of the Morin family tree is shown below.

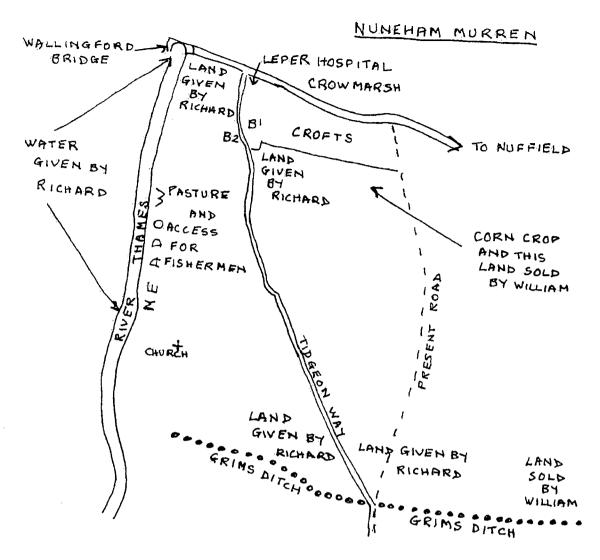


Richard, Matilda's brother, gave part of the manor of Nuneham to Matilda and her husband Ralph Sansaver, who was an attorney. Their gift was confirmed in court in 1231. Felicity, widow of the elder Richard, married Walter Bacon, whose family gave their name to Bacon Lane and Bacon Close, mentioned in the Title Award document of 1847. Richard and William were evidently family names as they appear as witnesses to agreements in court at various different dates.

In 1279, according to the Hundred Rolls, a Richard and a William Norm were listed as free tenants, presumably on their late manor, now held by the Huntercombes. A year later two members of this medieval family appear in the Reading Abbey cartularies when in January 1260 Edward I ordered 'the bailiffs of the Abbot of Reading to deliver to the Sheriff of Berkshire to be taken where the King orders, Albert Norm, Guy Norm his Brother and Adam of Cremona lately arrested for the Death of Leonard of Cremona, lately killed there'.

No more is mentioned regarding the fate of Albert or Guy. The Morins, who began as holders of the manor of Nuneham Murren over a hundred years earlier, ended as tenants of William of Huntercombe with two of their relatives wanted for murder.

The House of Morin had indeed fallen.



MAP SHOWING THE POSSIBLE

B2 BACON LANE

POSITION OF LAND GIVEN TO READING

NOW WATERY LANE

ABBET BY RICHARD AND WILLIAM MORIN

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# MANAGEMENT OF MAPLEDURHAM WOODS Pat Preece

The main woods of the Mapledurham estate are Chazey Wood, Park Wood, Greendean Wood and Nuney Wood. There were various other small woods, some of which were grubbed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Chazey, Park and Green Dean Woods were the oldest, Nuney Wood apparently was arable at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Greendean Wood was the main wood of Mapledurham Gurney and is first mentioned in 1375, when in the dower of Dame Isabel Bardolf, she was to have 'all fewell wode to her necessarye to be taken in a wode calltdde Grenedene wode'. The Park or Park Wood was first mentioned in 1233 when 'P' de Ryvall was to give Hugo de Gurney (the lord of the manor of Mapledurham Gurney) 2 fallow buck deer and 10 does from Windsor forest for his park at Mapledurham. SOAG excavated what was thought to be a forester's hut surrounded by a ditch several years ago, on the outskirts of the park. The first possible reference to Chazey Wood, which was the wood attached to Mapledurham manor, is in an Inquisition dated 1312/13 'and there are 2 villans of woodland who render 36s' - these villans must be woodmen.<sup>3</sup>

In 1658 at a Court Baron at Mapledurham there was a statement by the jury that the tenants were to have 'sufficient timber upon their lande for building and repairing of their houses and for plough boote, cart boote and harese (harness) boote by assignment'. A boote or bote is a right to timber to make certain articles. They also decreed that 'Causies (Chazey) wood and Dudsome coppice ought to lie common with the fieldes seaven yeares after it is ffeld'. In other words the coppices should be fenced for seven years and then would be open for the grazing of cattle.

A Description in a terrier of the woodland in 1722 by Jos (Joseph) Collier a Surveyor:

Park wood 60a 1 rood 28 perches Chaze wood 59 a 2r 28p Freemans copp. 12a 1 r 5 p (to be grubbed) Toveys copp. 5a 0 r 35 p (my father grubbed) Beechwood Grove to be grubbed 9a 3 r 20 p Upper Lands wood to be grubbed 4a 2r 28p Pack Saddle Furz copp. underwood 7 a 3 r 23 p Currscopp. To be grubbed 4a 2r 28p. Green Dean wood 24 a 2 r 10 p Wood adjoining 22a 1r l2p Cocksetters wood half grubbed 11 a 3 r 20 p Huntley wood 10 a 0 r 30 p Lower Browns shaw Middle Browns shaw Upper Browns shaw Blackwell copp. to be grubbed The shaw adjoining Shipways Round wood to be grubbed Colts Kennel copp. to be grubbed Simmons shaw.

As can be seen it was a period when woodland was being reduced as it was when 'modern agriculture' was being introduced. It is difficult to know where some of these woods were situated. It seems that Chazey Wood used to be mainly coppice, possibly mainly beech with some hazel and ash. It is likely that there were oak standards among the coppice. In 1707<sup>5</sup> they were selling underwood:

Fagotts (sic) 22 doz
Withs 6660 (strips of hazel used for tying bundles and faggots)
Rods 8000
Stakes 4800
Ash poles (no quantity given)

They paid £1 1. 18s altogether for cutting underwood - 'bilett, ffagutts and bitch bavins'. Beech usually supplied billet which were lengths of coppice poles 91 cm long by 45.5 cm circumference and the faggots and bavins (a large faggot) would have been made from the twiggy tops. The 'bitch' faggots from 'Chawes' wood were sold to Jos Percy of Reading, a timber merchant, for 18s 6d per 1000, 1 load of billet was to be taken by barge to Reading from Mapledurham wharf. Delivered to the same wharf were ash and 'bitch pooles' (poles) at 14s, the bitch and ash at 19s the load. Some grubbing was obviously taking place as 51 stacks of roots were taken from a shaw near Blagraves farm by somebody called Goodman Nickolls. There is no reference to these being sold but they may have been used as firewood on the estate. As they were slow burning they were prized for firewood but were not easily transported.

There is an account for 1708 for 65 loads of billet and various quantities of green billet, this was carried by barge and the barge master was paid £6. 10s. The next year a Mr Williams of Cawsam (Caversham) bought 1000 faggots for 19s 9d. A milliner, Mr Curtis, bought 20 loads of billet, presumably for the fire to heat the water for steaming the felt for hats. A Reading glazier Edwin Paine bought 23 loads of billet at 14s the load. Glaziers in those days made glass, so this was to heat it.

Oak was being felled as Mr John Wilder of 'Pangbum' bought all the 'hewd oakeon timber' at 40s each for 5 loads to be delivered to Mapledurham wharf. So the years went by with similar sales each year - an unusual entry was in 1737 when 4 stacks of roots were delivered to the gaol (jail) keeper at Reading so perhaps some prisoners were kept warm. In this year 147 trees were felled in Park Wood for tenants' use and 41 loads for the Blounts' use, this is interesting because Dan Miles carried out a dendrochronology study on the beams in the barn at Park Farm (just below Park Wood) and came up with a date of 1737.

During the rest of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, wood of various types was removed from the woods and used for many purposes. In 1875 stacks of brewing wood were sold possibly to the Simmonds brewery in Reading, but there is no record of which of the many local breweries it might have been. It would have been used as firewood for heating the vats. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century little firewood was sold and the sales were mostly of timber, particularly beech, possibly to the chairleg makers and tent-peg makers.

The last reference found to the Mapledurham woods is a couple of articles by Leslie Wood<sup>6</sup> who was manager of the estate at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both these articles are debating whether the selection system or the compartmental system for the felling of the woods was the right one. The selection system has been (and still is) practised in Oxfordshire Chiltern woods and certainly seems to have been effective in the woods of the Goring Charity in the past.

This is where trees are selected every year for felling so as to thin the woods. The compartmental system is where a relatively small area is clear-felled and is replanted or seedlings allowed to grow. Reading the articles it seems that he really was not sure which was best at Mapledurham.

So now Chazey Wood is left for the use of the paint-ball warriors, some timber has been taken from some of the woods, including some oaks for Dan Miles' use from Nuney Wood so that he could make the spire for Northleigh church in Devon. Sadly however the woods are mostly neglected now and what is their future?

### REFERENCES

- 1) Leslie S Wood, <u>The Mapledurham Statistics</u>, Quarterly Journal Forestry 1920, p. 52
- 2) A. Cooke, <u>The Early History of Mapledurham</u>. Oxford University Press 1925, p. 29
- 3) Ibidem, p. 73.
- 4) Mapledurham Estate book.
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- 6) Leslie S. Wood, 1913 and 1920.

### ST ANNE'S WELL Molly Casey

At the junction of St Anne's Road and Priest Hill in Caversham there is an ancient well bearing a marble tablet which states 'The Holy Well of St Anne, the healing waters of which brought many pilgrims to Caversham in the Middle Ages'. Not long ago it was in the news because vandals had sprayed it with red paint which proved impossible to remove, so necessitating an extensive replacement. It has recently been in the news again, because far from damaging it, someone has decorated it with fresh flowers not unlike, though less ornate than, the well-dressing in Derbyshire. As the flowers droop they have been replaced with fresh ones, a very pleasant change after the recent outbreak of vandalism in the area.

As with other shrines and places of pilgrimage, after the reformation it was considered idolatrous and Catholic-inclined and if not positively damaged, was neglected until its superstructure disappeared and it was forgotten.

It is difficult to judge how effective the water was in cases of illness. Certainly there was a Chalybeate well in Caversham at Springfield St Luke and in days when medicine was as much a superstition as fact, any water from a well that did not actually make people ill would get the reputation of being curative. An unpleasant taste confirmed that if a medicine tasted nasty it must be good for you. There was an attempt in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to turn Caversham into a spa. What august company it could then have enjoyed.

The well remained lost until the early years of the last century when workmen starting to prepare the land for housing in the area came upon its remains. Its discovery aroused much interest amongst local historians, prominently Dr Hurry of Castle Street. The well was restored and on a bright, chilly day in April 1908 the great and the good of the town gathered, doubtless watched by the humbler denizens of Caversham, to witness the rededication of the well, which Talbot's (the local firm which had done the work) found went down to a depth of 24 metres.

Today there are a number of high quality doctors' surgeries in the area, though it is not very likely that anyone is going to lower a receptacle to draw up this once highly-regarded water. However, it is pleasing to see someone is decorating the well. Perhaps this could become the start of a tradition. Thanks are due to whoever is doing it.

#### Addendum

The identity of the decorator of St Anne's well has, as we go to print, been revealed. He is a young man called Drew who said he was doing it as an act of religious belief. I must say I had rather assumed it was a woman. Young males, even though it is only a few of them, are too often associated with vandalism, so it is pleasing that it should be a young man who is doing this. Many thanks to him. His action is much appreciated by passers-by and local residents.

### SOAGs LOOKING AT OLD CHURCHES John and Margaret Westwood

On recent travels we have found much early architecture of interest. The peninsula of Sirmione, jutting out into Lake Garda in northern Italy, has fascinating remains of a Roman palace as well as elaborate medieval fortifications. At Maderno, on the west side of the lake, the church has a crypt under the sanctuary dating from Ottoman days. This was a shrine with a bishop's tomb of special significance. The low octagonal vaulting reminded us of Ravenna's Dark Age buildings with Byzantine influence. Did this influence extend contemporaneously to Wing in Buckinghamshire? This has a similar very early crypt under the sanctuary. Nothing much seems to have been recorded.

Other churches, which for us retain their precious early medieval atmosphere, also include Studland and St. Martins at Wareham, both in Dorset. We have not yet seen the recently-saved church of Dode, neglected since the Black Death, between Luddesdown and Holly Hill, near Meopham in Kent.

Less atmospheric, but still unique, is the church of Greensted near Chipping Ongar in Essex, with its Saxon walls of vertical split timbers, looking almost Viking in style. To get there we alighted at a station on the underground line, now closed (so that's also history now) and walked over the fields.

# GRANDMA'S COTTAGE John White



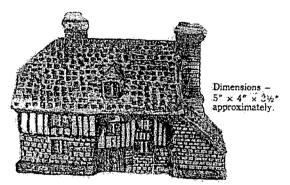
When I opened my newspaper as I travelled up to London near the start of this autumn's bad weather there was an aerial photograph of the floods in Uckfield and, with the waters swirling around it, what I think of as my grandmother's cottage. It had just survived a storm the first time I saw it, the great storm of 1987, but this time there would obviously be damage to the contents.

A drive through a forest to visit one's grandmother's cottage may sound like a fairy tale, but the circumstances of my first visit were just as strange. I did remember my mother mentioning that her mother had taken her to Uckfield in Sussex on visits to other members of the family, but the only point of note appeared to be the length of the train journey from where they lived in west London. Those visits had however been 60 or 70 years earlier when my mother was still a child.

In the 1980s my mother lived in the village of Ramsbury in Wiltshire. One day (or should it be once upon a time) she had gone to the village shop for some groceries when an acquaintance came into the shop behind her. This acquaintance said she had just returned from visiting her sister in Uckfield and, for conversation, asked if my mother knew the town (which was unlikely as it was about 400 kilometres away). My mother said that actually she did, although she had not been there for many years, because her mother used to take her there to visit relatives. The lady said she had had a very interesting time because her sister was an active member of the Uckfield and District Preservation Society which had been founded in 1968 to restore and look after two local buildings, the windmill at Nutley and Bridge Cottage in Uckfield. The lady asked my mother if she knew Bridge Cottage and was surprised to hear that she did, and even more surprised to learn that that was where her mother had been born. My mother was then told that there had been a meeting of the Society a few months earlier to which relatives of the former inhabitants of Bridge Cottage were invited, so our part of the family was obviously not known to them.

As a result of this chance meeting my mother wrote to the Uckfield and District Preservation Society and received back not only details of the Society but also an invitation to attend a meeting of the Society and to be shown round the work they were doing on Bridge Cottage. A car driver was needed, and that is how I became acquainted with this interesting part of my family's history.

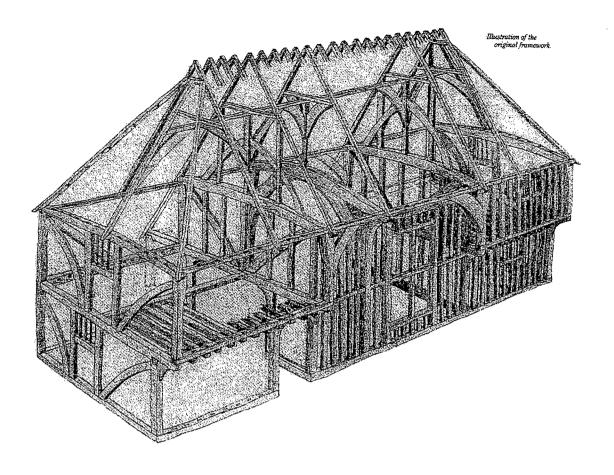
The journey was rather long for my mother, and the sight of all the storm damage in Ashdown Forest made us wonder whether the building had been damaged. However when we made a detour to Nutley we found that the wooden post-mill had escaped damage. Then, after a break for refreshment, we arrived at Bridge Cottage where we were shown round. Internally it had been stripped back to expose the many timbers, and on-going excavations were the cause of large holes in the floor. Upstairs the noticeable features were the almost complete lack of windows, the steepness of the upper stairs (which were more like ladders), and real wattle and daub. We had a most interesting visit and bought a souvenir to take home from John Putnam's 'Heritage House' range of ceramic models, a china miniature of grandma's cottage.



Bridge Cottage is the subject of one of John Putnam's Heritage House ceramic models.

Bridge Cottage was thought to be one of the oldest domestic buildings in the country but as a result of recent studies it is now considered to be somewhat younger, with the date of building put at between 1450 and 1475. It is however still a history lesson in itself, with the structure showing how domestic buildings developed over the centuries.

Originally the house was built to a relatively high architectural standard, probably for a wealthy local person, and consisted of three main sections, the service wing, the central hall and the solar wing. The location so close to road and river seems strange for a residence of this quality, but it may be connected with the original owner's source of wealth, for example the collection of bridge tolls or, as miller, the control of the flow of the River Uck.



The house was built on a platform of clay brought to the site to provide a solid base because the land by the river was marshy. A low wall of sandstone blocks was laid on the clay platform, and then the oak framework held together by pegged joints was erected on the wall. The spaces between the timbers were filled with panels of wattle and daub, and the building was roofed with thatch or maybe tiles.

The service wing contained the pantry and buttery which were separated from the main hall by a narrow passage connecting the front and back doors. The kitchen was probably in a separate structure away from the main house because of the risk of fire. The main living room of the house was the central hall which was decorated with many moulded timbers (to impress visitors). It was completely open from the rafters down to the clay floor on which was the central open hearth. The solar wing was similar in appearance to the service wing except it did not have external doors. The rooms were probably the private chambers of the owner and therefore more lavishly decorated than the service wing rooms. Both wings had first floor accommodation which was jettied to project out beyond the front walls of the ground floor.

The first major change came in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century when open halls were becoming unfashionable. The solar wing was demolished and many of the timbers were reused to put a first floor in the main part of the hall, leaving a small smoke bay so that smoke from the open fire could leave through the roof. Shortly afterwards, at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the two chimneys were built and the remaining section of the first floor was added.

Brick lean-tos were added to the rear and to the north end of the house in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is probable that the second floor was added at the same time to create more rooms in the roof, the southern end of which was enlarged so that a window could be fitted. This stage probably marked the downgrading of the house from gentleman's residence to labourer's cottage as the house was then split into two cottages with many of the rooms subdivided. By this time the floor, as a result of several additions, had now risen to its present level of approximately 60 cm above the original medieval floor, probably to prevent damp and flooding, but not sufficiently for the recent deluge.

There is a lot I still want to find out about my family history, for example which half of Bridge Cottage they lived in, and how the building became derelict in the 1960s before the Preservation Society rented it for £1 per year from the local council. Also my grandmother, whose maiden name was Wren, used to say that Sir Christopher was her great ....... great uncle – but that is another story.

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

(The illustrations have been taken with permission from the Preservation Society's literature)

#### THE [EARLY] HISTORY OF BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN 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, a dental practitioner from Windsor, who retired to Brightwell and carried out extensive research into the history of the Parish. The following extract is taken verbatim from Part 1 of 'The History' and is reproduced here by kind permission of his widow, Ena Fraser and of Peter Kent the custodian of the papers. Peter is currently publishing selected extracts from 'The History' in the Parish newsletter, 'The Brightwell Bugle' and continues to add to the papers by recording current events in the parish.

Lying in the Vale of Oxford two miles [2 km] from the Chiltern escarpment, Brightwell Baldwin is an upper greensand village on the spring line, the soil being gravel, chalk, and by the stream, alluvium. From north to south it is two and a half miles [4 km], and one and a half [2.5 km] from east to west. From two hundred and fifty feet high [76 m] by the stream in the north, it rises to four hundred and seventy-seven [145 m] in the south. It is a backwater around which have taken place many events which have influenced Britain's history. From the village an ancient track leads south through Britwell Salome to the Icknield Way, one of Britain's earliest roads. Three miles [5 km] to the south-west runs the Thames, which was at one time the principal route between Oxford and London, along which corn, malt, wood, and dairy produce were transported to the capital. On its bank stands the town of Wallingford, of great importance in early history. William the Conqueror spent the night here on his advance on London, his troops camping on the east side of the river before advancing next day along the Icknield Way. Later William built a castle in the town, of which only the ramparts remain. In 1154, Henry II held a parliament in the town.

I. D. Margary in 'Roman Roads of Britain' considers that the Lower Icknield Way which passes through the Vale of Aylesbury, below the Chiltern escarpment, went through Brightwell, coming from Shirburn Park and Cuxham and on to Warborough and a Thames crossing near Dorchester. Two fields in Chalgrove adjoining the parish boundary with Brightwell are named Stratford Meadow and Stratford Furrowlong. A tenant at Cadwell, which adjoins the Chalgrove boundary, Walter de Stretford, is named in the Hundred Rolls. This theory is discussed in Oxoniensa, Vol XXXIII.

Benson, on the near side of the river, was a 'villa royale', one of the seven major estates in Oxfordshire, stretching as far as Henley and well out into the Oxfordshire plain. It contained four and a half hundreds, Ewelme being the half hundred of which Brightwell is part. About five miles [8 km] away at the confluence of the Thames and the Thame, stands Dorchester, the site of an iron-age village later occupied by the Romans. Nearby Britwell was prominent in Stephen's time. When Henry (later King Henry II) was seeking to relieve Wallingford in 1153 the occupants of Britwell Castle, now only remaining as Castle Hill, stood in his way. Ewelme, which played its part in history in the time of the Plantagenets, borders Brightwell on the south, while to the east lies Chalgrove which made its brief appearance in the history books during the Civil War of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

A 'closed parish' all part of one estate, all its inhabitants worked on farms of which there were five. When the estate was finally broken up in the 1940s no development took place owing to the war. The only threat to the peace of the parish was the prospect of a railway line connecting Wallingford and Watlington which would have run between Brightwell Baldwin and Upperton. Before it could be built the promoting company went bankrupt.

The first evidence we have of human activity in the parish is to be found in Robert Plot's 'The Natural History of Oxfordshire' which was published in 1705. He describes and illustrates twelve corded urns, apparently of the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, surrounding a square glass jug, found at Bushey Leas which is on the south bank of the stream which forms the north boundary of the parish, a quarter of a mile [400 m] north-east of Cadwell farm. Plot writes of them; 'that the earthern pot is a Roman urn I take to be plain ... but whether this glass contained a map, were a Lachrymatoris or a vessel containing water, or some aromatic liquor, is the great question next to be determined'. Although the presence of ashes was not recorded, this may have been a burial site. Plot records that the objects were 'kindly bestowed on me by that worthy person, John Stone of Brightwell, on whose possessions they were found.' What happened to them is not recorded and apparently they did not go to the Ashmolean Museum of which Robert Plot was the first keeper.

The next evidence is recorded in Jackson's Oxford Journal in June 1759: 'They write from Watlington that as a farmer was ploughing about three weeks ago in the common field at Brightwell he found an urn containing 1500 Roman coins. About 1200 of them have already been examined, among which were found coins belonging to twenty emperors and empresses, some of which had very curious reverse.' The common field lies close to Bushey Leas where the glass jug and urns were found. No further details of the coins or what happened to them have survived.

The name Brightwell comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'be(o)rht w(i)elle' for 'clear or bright stream'. (The 'o' and 'i' occur in the West Saxon form of Old English but not in the Anglian.) The spring from which the name was derived still feeds the pond which can be seen from the village street, north of the old rectory. This unfailing water supply was no doubt the reason that a settlement was first made here.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> Century the area was fought over by the Mercians and West Saxons, but during the following century the latter withdrew to the other side of the Thames, leaving the Oxfordshire plain to the Mercians. In 880, Ethelred, leader of the Mercians, granted land in Brightwell to the Bishopric of Worcester. The charter, in the usual manner of these documents, follows the invocation with pious observations on the transitory nature of earthly possessions and refers to the donor in majestic terms.

'Our Lord Jesus Christ, ruling for ever in his reign, the prosperity of this century as it nears completion is seen to be carefully confused and disturbed in adverse event. All world encumbrances of pageantry, both visible and desirable, pass by, fleeing each day from those who pursue them. Therefore you who are wise and happy with these fugitives all eternal happiness of the heavenly land, which shall remain bound, must earnestly be sought.

Therefore I, Ethelred, offer copious thanks to the Lord, leader and aristocrat of the Mercian tribe, by the permission and charge of King Alfred, with the testament and agreement of the elders of this tribe, for the redemption of our souls and for the safety and stability of the Mercian Kingdom.

The gift is made by Ethelred, Dux et Patricius of the Mercians, of six mansions at Brightwell and eight at Watlington with the woodland and fields and appurtenances which lie outside the bounds, to the church at Readnora to hold in one possession, that is the see of Worcester. And let it be known unto them that they will render their account at the day of judgement, together with Anna and Zaphira, unless they have preferred to make amends first with appropriate recompense.'

(Readnora is now identified as Pyrton. The six 'mansions' in Brightwell would probably have six hides of land. A hide was the amount of land which would support a family and could be managed with one plough. It varied in area according to the district and the type of soil and could contain anything between 24 and 48 hectares. On the heavy local soil it would probably be nearer the smaller size.)

The charter goes on to define the boundaries of the land, and Dr. B. Grundy in 'Saxon Oxfordshire' has translated the Anglo-Saxon and added notes to identify the points mentioned on Brightwell's boundaries.

1. Aet Byrhtan Wellan from Teolulfes Treowe ondlong Longon Hylles on Fildena Weg.

At Brightwell from Teolulf's Tree along Long Hill to the Switchback Way. The tree is thought to have stood about five furlongs SWS of Brightwell Grove. The Long Hill was the rising ground on the west boundary and Fildena Weg is Rumbold's Lane.

2. Thonan on Holandene up on Cadandune to Aethelheges Gemaere.

Then to Hollow Dean up on Cada's Hill to Aethelheg's boundary.

Holandene is the valley south of Whitehouse farm, now called Hollandtide Bottom.

Cada's name survives in Cadwell covert and Cadwell Farm. Aethelheg's boundary was the present north west boundary of the parish.

3. Thonan to Ecgfrithes Gemaere.

Then to Ecgfrith's boundary.

This is the western end of the northern boundary. Ecgfrith possibly held land in Chalgrove.

4. Thonne a big Ecgfrithes Gemaere to Cuceshaema Gemaere.

Then always by Ecgfrith's boundary to the boundary of Cuxham.

This brings the survey to the Cuxham boundary about a quarter of a mile [400 m] west by south of Cutt Mill.

5. Th' to Incghaema Gemaere suth thurh East Leh.

Then to the boundary of Ingham south through Ash Lea.

This is where the southern end of the east boundary of the parish passes along the north part of the western boundary of the detached portion of the parish of Britwell Salome. This detached part may have originally been Ingham. East Leh survives in Ashley's wood.

6. Th' to Gisel's Paec.

Then to Gisel's (Hostage's) Ridge.

Ridge about 150 yards [140 m] south west of Britwell House.

7. Th' ondlong Gisel's Paec.

Then along Gisel's Ridge.

This is along the south boundary of the parish.

8. Th' eft to Ceolwulfes Treown.

Then back to Ceolwulf's tree.

At the end of the survey is added:

And th' Mead Lond be betweenum Egsaforda and Straetforda be northan Broce and thone Wudu thaerto the Scylfhrych is haten.

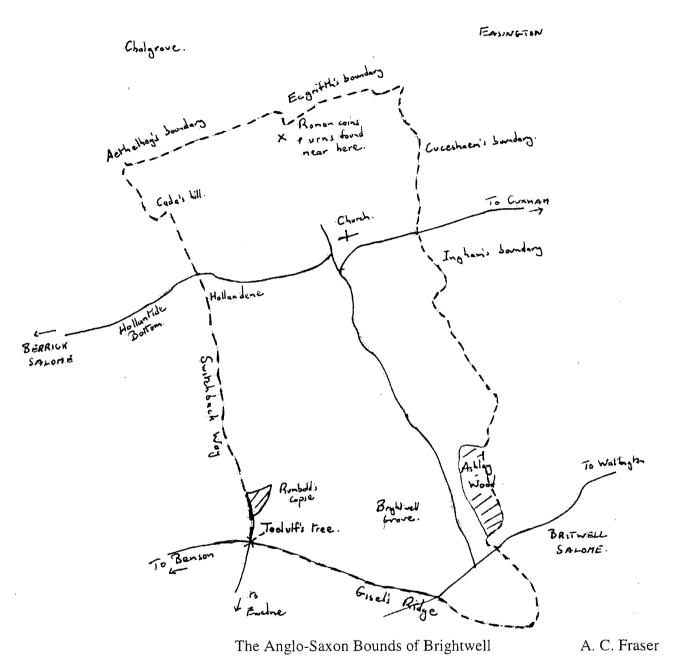
And the Mead Land between Egsa's Ford and Street Ford to the north of the Brook and furthermore the Wood which is called Shelfridge.

Egsa is the name of the man who gave Easington its name. Egsa's ford (also mentioned in a Cuxham charter) is where the road running north from Cuxham crosses the stream. Steatforda implies a ford where a Roman road crosses a stream but its position cannot be defined. Shelfridge was probably either on Watlington Hill or Swyncombe Down. (from Saxon Oxfordshire. Ox. Rec. Soc.)

Dr. Grundy worked mainly from maps and some of his conclusions are suspect. M. Gelling, in her notes on local charters published in 1978, considers that there is no justification for 'east leh' to be identified as Ashley's wood. The boundary outlined by Dr. Grundy roughly fits the present parish boundary. Unlike some Anglo-Saxon charters which have proved to be forgeries, the Brightwell charter is considered to be authentic.

That the Bishop of Worcester continued to have an interest in the parish is shown by the record of a lease, made in 973, of five 'mensae' at Brightwell to Byrhtric for the period of two lives, by Archbishop Oswald of York. At the conclusion of the lease, the land was to revert to the church at Worcester.





## EXCAVATIONS AT TAPLOW COURT, 1999 and 2000 Tim Allen

For many years Taplow Court has been famous for the huge Saxon burial mound and princely burial excavated in 1883, and for the historic house and gardens, which together grace the hilltop and dominate the surrounding landscape. Now new excavations, funded by SGI UK in advance of the construction of a Buddhist chanting hall, have revealed a hitherto undiscovered Bronze and Iron Age hillfort. The Oxford Archaeological Unit's semicircular excavation (directed by SOAG member Tim Allen) exposed a stretch of the successive defences, including part of an entrance, and a little of the interior of the fort.

The site has been an important location for many millennia. Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and the Neolithic farmers who came after them both used the site, leaving spreads of flint on the land surface, later to be preserved under the rampart of the hillfort. Early Bronze Age people also left pottery and flints on the hilltop. The origins of the hillfort seem to have been around 1000 BC, with the construction of a palisaded enclosure, the course of which was followed by the first phase of hillfort ditch - a 6m wide and 2 m deep V-shaped ditch, with a rampart inside backed by a large timber palisade set in a trench. The presence of a hillfort may explain the concentration of metalwork dredged from the adjacent River Thames; it is believed that defended settlements like these controlled river traffic and were the residences of the rulers of the period.

During the Early Iron Age, after the first phase of ditch had almost entirely silted up, a second ditch was dug immediately in front of the earlier one, and the spoil used to build a new rampart on top of the earlier ditch. This ditch was much larger, 9m wide and 3.5m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base. The new rampart was built upon a layer of timbers and contained an intricate timber framework, some of which was preserved as charcoal upon the destruction of the fort by fire. The entrance of the hillfort during the Iron Age phase was spectacular; the terminus of the ditch was vertical and square, and from its inside corner the timber revetment of the rampart curved inwards to a huge gate post, the posthole for which was over 1m wide and survived over 1 m deep.

There is little evidence from the OAU excavations for occupation later in the Iron Age, but excavations by the Taplow Historical Society at the south end of the hilltop have found Late Iron Age pottery, and OAU found a third massive ditch outside the other two in the Watching Brief, which may indicate yet another (and larger) phase of hillfort.

Some Roman pottery was also recovered from the excavations, but little else of this date. It is probable that the focus of Roman settlement lay near to the cricket ground several hundred metres to the east, where a possible villa has been known for some years.

The excavations also showed that the Saxon prince was not alone on the hilltop. Saxon pottery, querns, animal bones and a fine copper pin were found in the upper fills of the hillfort ditch, and part of a timber building was discovered in the hillfort entrance. The burial of a Saxon man with a knife was also found nearby. The occupation suggests that there was a significant settlement at Taplow in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, perhaps including the home of the prince himself.

#### **BOOK REVIEW: Roman Oxfordshire**

Henig, Martin & Booth, Paul, 2000 Roman Oxfordshire Sutton Publishing, Stroud, Gloucestershire. Price: £25.00.

Martin Henig and Paul Booth, with the help of an introductory chapter by Tim Allen and a preface by Peter Salway, have collaborated to give us a much-needed update on Roman Oxfordshire. For anyone involved in the Gatehampton Farm Roman villa dig, or just interested in this period in our history, this book is essential reading.

Tim Allen provides a scholarly introduction by describing the Iron Age background to Roman Britain, and this is followed by chapters on Oxfordshire in the Roman Empire; the pattern of major settlements; rural settlement and environment; the people of Roman Oxfordshire; the economy (agriculture, industry and trade); the end of Roman Oxfordshire; and the recovery of Oxfordshire's Roman past. Martin Henig tackles the more historical and art history aspects, whereas Paul Booth writes on the economic and environmental aspects; both authors have combined forces to present a state-of-the-art comment on the Roman-Saxon transition.

The process of Romanisation had already begun during the late Iron Age, which saw the introduction of coinage, wheel-turned pottery and 'enclosed oppida' that had many of the features of the Roman towns that were to follow. At the time of the Conquest, the region that was to become Oxfordshire lay across the boundaries of three major tribal groups: the Catuvellauni (with their capital at Verulamium/St. Albans) in the north-east, the Dobunni (with their capital at Corinium/Cirencester) in the north-west, separated by the Cherwell, and the Atrebates (with their capital at Calleva/Silchester) south of the Thames.

By embracing the Roman side, most of Oxfordshire saved itself from a heavy military presence. Akeman Street, running between Corinium and Verulamium, was constructed in the reign of Claudius, perhaps as early as AD 47; it may have formed the northern frontier of a Roman 'protectorate'. The most important military base in Oxfordshire was at Alchester, where the line of this road bulges upwards to its most northerly point. Another major Roman road, which linked Watling Street in Northamptonshire with Silchester, ran south from Alchester to Dorchester. These two walled towns were the largest Roman settlements in the county; however, compared with the tribal capitals, they were merely small market towns and emphasise the largely rural character of Oxfordshire in Roman times.

The villas, of which 62 have been recorded in the county, were essentially farms. Most were set within well-defined ditched enclosures (as at Gatehampton) and were relatively modest in size (North Leigh is the only certain example of a courtyard villa). This does not imply that the Oxfordshire area was poor or did not produce a surplus: all the farms investigated so far have yielded rich finds including glass and fine-quality pottery vessels. All rural settlements were probably linked to surrounding field systems; where these have been revealed by fieldwork and/or aerial photography, they have been shown to consist of a number of rectilinear fields or enclosures linked by ditched trackways.

Environmental evidence from the Thames Valley suggests an open landscape during the Roman period comprising pasture and arable fields (identified by a thin scatter of worn Roman potsherds from domestic refuse used as manure). Woodland resources would have been important for building purposes and for fuel, both domestic and industrial. Although it is usually assumed that these resources were carefully managed by coppicing, the charcoal from pottery kilns in the Oxford area indicates that a range of species was used; this does not point to systematic woodland management, and pollen evidence suggests that the main species (oak, alder and hazel) declined to very low levels during the Roman period.

There is also evidence for an increase in the deposition of alluvial soils and hence flooding, and for a rising water table which resulted in intensive drainage systems. This does not necessarily indicate a significant increase in rainfall; it could have resulted from a greater emphasis on autumn ploughing, resulting in an increased run-off of soil during the winter months.

The intensification of agriculture, which may have been a response to Roman tax demands, population growth and reduced yields due to over-exploitation, is also indicated by an increase in cereal pollen, the introduction of iron plough shares and coulters, and pollen evidence for weeds of marginal land. A new emphasis on the development of hay meadows now meant that stock could be overwintered. Cattle became increasingly important at the expense of sheep, and there is evidence that a larger breed of cattle was introduced during the Roman period.

There seems to have been little or no iron smelting activity in the county and most of the numerous metalworking hearths appear to have been used for smithing. The major Roman industry associated with Oxfordshire was pottery production, especially white ware mortaria and colour-coated wares. Numerous kilns have been identified in the Oxford area itself, mostly between the Thames and the Dorchester-Alchester road. This area seems to have formed a semi-industrial landscape, with groups of kilns and workshops inside ditched enclosures. The relative proportion of fine to coarse ware pottery increased with the socio-economic status of the site during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries; later this correlation disappears and fine ware occurs at almost every site. This may be related to the increasing monetarisation of the economy and coins are found far more frequently from the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Hardly any coinage entered Britain after around AD 402 and the cessation of the monetary economy probably brought about the collapse of the pottery industry. Rural life appeared to continue with minimal disruption up to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, albeit in somewhat straitened circumstances. A number of late Roman burials then began to contain grave goods of Germanic origin. Some well-known 5<sup>th</sup> century burials from Dorchester, which contained a mixture of late Roman Continental belt fittings and Germanic brooch types mixed with local Roman items, were taken to indicate the presence of Saxon mercenaries. However, this is now disputed. Some Saxon burials in the Abingdon area have an early 5<sup>th</sup> century date and these are now seen as the consequence of a deliberate Roman policy which resulted in the settlement of small communities of people of Germanic origin in this region. Rather than a mass invasion of Saxons, the process seems to have been one of gradual assimilation; there is no evidence that the Romano-British settlements in Oxfordshire came to a violent end. Indeed, Saxon pottery recovered from the Roman corn dryer at Gatehampton Farm suggests continuity of use.

As with any book there are a few minor editorial slips, and it may have been premature to describe the villa at Gatehampton as 'one of the clearest examples of an aisled building'. However, the main quibble is the small typeface which makes this book a very difficult read. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to persevere: it is a veritable mine of information and there are over 400 references in the Bibliography.

Janet Sharpe

# RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2000 FOR SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP Eddie Hooper

#### **PAYMENTS**

#### **RECEIPTS**

<u>1999</u>		<u>2000</u>	:	<u>1999</u>		<u>2000</u>
93.25	Hall Hire	64.00	:	717.00	Subscriptions	823.00
75.37	Oxpast			247.28	Oxpast	
156.00	Insurance	260.00		10.00	Sale of Bulletins	12.00
254.00	Printing	240.00		47.00	Donations	13.00
68.00	Speaker Expenses	40.00		32.93	Bank Interest	14.89
47.54	SOAG Party	21.10		125.90	SOAG Party:	100.00
45.00	Wreath				Refreshments	6.32
8.93	Projector Repair				Sundry cash	7.50
38.00	Standing Orders	35.50		£1180.11		£976.71
154.43	Postage	62.03				
27.00	Telephone	36.00				
5.60	Petrol	15.20				
41.81	Sundries					
10.25	Dig Expenses					
	Refreshments	4.38				
£1025.18		£778.21				
£154.93	Surplus for year	£198.50				
£1180.11		£976.71				•

### Balance Sheet @ 29th February 2000

Accumulated Funds B/F		Bank balances:	Deposit A/c	£1024.22
	£1160.78			
Surplus for year	£198.50		Current A/c	£346.94
Accumulated Funds at 29/2/99			Cash in Hand	£3.12
	£1359.28			
				£1374.28
		Less	unpresented cheque	£15.00
				£1359.28

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)

## SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Patron: Dr Malcolm Airs

**President:** 

Mrs Cynthia Graham-Kerr

The Thatched Cottage, Whitchurch Hill, Oxon, RG8 7NY

0118 984 2901

Chairman:

Mrs Pat Preece

99 Woodcote Way, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7 HL

0118 947 7440

**Secretary:** 

Mrs Hilda Jackson

Gatehampton House, Gatehampton, Goring, Oxon, RG8 9LY

01491 875758

Treasurer:

Mr Edward Hooper

6 Tower Close, Peppard Road, Emmer Green, Reading,

RG4 8UU 0118 947 2470

Librarian:

Mr Simon Turner

27 North Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JA

**Annual Subscriptions:** 

Individual

£8.00

Joint (2 persons)

£10.00

Junior (under 18)

£1.00

Institutional

£10.00

**Publications:** 

Members receive the SOAG Bulletin annually and the SOAG

Messenger every month

Editor: Cynthia Graham-Kerr

**Meetings:** 

Held monthly, September to May, on Wednesday evenings at

the Free Church Hall, Goring, at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm (see

membership card for details)

Excursions are arranged in the summer

Affiliated to:

Council for British Archaeology, South Midlands

Council for Independent Archaeology