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INTRODUCTION

This is the first number of a new venture. The idea behind it is that of bringing together, in a small compass, the results of field work and excavations each year. It has been done as a result of a suggestion made at the 1958 Conference and I am very grateful to those who have sent in the reports. It is very difficult to make an excavation report short and intelligible without illustrations, though it is not impossible to have drawings duplicated by using a stencil, and the possibilities in this direction will be explored before the next issue. At present we must be content to develop gradually and I hope that there will be time at the Droitwich Conference to hear comments on this number and discuss ways in which it can be improved and developed. We welcome the formation of a new working group at Worcester, which goes by the name of the Severn Valley Study Group, and the signs of life stirring vigorously at Stratford and Wellington. I wish everyone a fruitful digging year in 1959.

Graham Webster

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 1959

Annual Conference, at Droitwich

March 14th to 15th

Wroxeter Summer Courses

Elementary	July 25th - Aug. 8th
Intermediate	Aug. 15th - Aug. 29th
Advanced	Sept. 5th - Sept. 19th
Mediaeval Archaeology and Excavation, directed by Mr. Brian Hope-Taylor	July 11th - July 18th
Study Tour of Roman Sites in the Marches, directed by Prof. D.R. Dudley	Aug. 8th - Aug. 15th
Field Archaeology, directed by Mr. A.L.F. Rivet	Aug. 29th - Sept. 5th

Week-end Schools

Mediaeval Pottery, directed by Mr. J.G. Hurst	May 29th - May 31st
Scientific Aids to Prospecting	June 19th - June 21st

AERIAL SURVEY

It has been a very bad year for crop-marks, but Mr. Arnold Baker reports some new discoveries, including two new Roman Marching Camps in the Craven Arms area and new details of older discoveries.

BIRMINGHAM RESEARCH GROUP

Roman Alcester. The main work this season has been on the road system. The section of the road in the Bleachfield Street Allotments, begun in 1957, was completed and gave a total width of 15 ft., while indications were noted of a stone building on the north side.

Another section, on the north side of the Stratford Road immediately east of Oversley Bridge, gave signs of a road which aligned with the Bleachfield Street road, with the Roman road to Stratford and with an aerial photograph by Mr. Baker in 1957. A prominent bank, in Field 275, once thought to be either part of the town defences or the agger of the Rykniel Street, was found to be a field bank of black earth. This overlay a probable late third century road, built up on a clay agger, which in turn overlay a pebble road - probably of Antonine date. This road also was bounded by buildings, probably of timber. The alignments of these roads agrees with the generally accepted line of the Rykniel Street and fits in very well with the aerial photographs.

COVENTRY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Mediaeval Coventry. Trial trenches have been dug, in advance of new building operations, inside the mediaeval city and this work is still proceeding.

Mancetter Kiln. At the end of the year a small-scale excavation was started on a Romano-British pottery kiln in a field to the south of the R.B. town. A large quantity of pottery was recovered including examples of stamped mortaria.

Wappenbury. The object of this excavation was to determine whether this rectangular earthwork had any connections with the third century kilns in the adjacent fields. On excavation the rampart was found to be of "dump" construction of clay and gravel, with no signs of any wall or timbering - instead there was a revetment of clay on the edge of the ditch. The ditch, originally about 50 ft. wide, was cut to a depth of 15 ft. and in the primary silting was found pre-Roman, wheel-made pottery, showing considerable Belgic influence. The rampart, which must have been over 20 ft. high in its original condition, was constructed over the remains of an Iron Age "B" hut which contained quantities of hand-made pottery with a slashed decoration. Also found in this occupation layer were a perforated stone axe which originated in Scotland, a spindle whorl, a bone weaving spear and a bone gaming dice. The dating of this material has proved difficult but the pre-rampart hut was probably occupied in the first century B.C., while the defences were constructed by Belgic people, possibly during the period of expansion prior to the Claudian invasion. The site seems to have been abandoned after this until the third century when kilns were set up nearby and the ditch was used as a dumping ground for rubbish. The final overthrow of the rampart appears to have taken place in the thirteenth century when the ditch was filled in with rampart material. The excavation report has been completed and accepted by the Birmingham Archaeological Society for their Journal.

VALE OF EVESHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Evesham Abbey. The object of these excavations was to find out whether any of the foundation walls of Evesham Abbey were sound enough to be permanently exposed. The site was reputed to be that of a small crypt, which was probably constructed in the fourteenth century of stones robbed from some earlier buildings. This crypt was built on the site of an earlier burial ground, for four human skeletons were found close to and under the foundations. One of these had a damaged skull and the suggestion has been put forward that they may be casualties from the Battle of Evesham. The general condition of the walls, which have been extensively robbed, does not justify the trouble of preservation, though sufficient remains for further excavations to reveal more of the plan of the Abbey. Work was also started on another mediaeval site at Bengeworth and will recommence in the spring.

HEREFORD RESEARCH GROUP

Roman Kenchester. Work on the town defences continued during the season, when the north-west bastion, fully uncovered in 1957, was more closely examined. A section through the middle of it revealed more closely its make-up and its relationship to the town wall and second century ditch, over which it was built. No stratified finds were recovered from the structure. An early pebble floor, lying under the rampart, had been broken through when the wall foundations were placed in position but it was not possible to explore its extent and purpose. A trench was opened up 20 ft. south of the bastion foundation, at right angles to the line of the wall, to study the whole of the ditch system. The lips of the second century ditch were located and, 10 ft. beyond, a wide shallow outer ditch, approximately 10 ft. wide and 9 ft. deep. Pottery from the wide ditch suggests a post-second century date, but there was no definite evidence to link this with the bastion. Beyond this outer ditch was a pebble layer, of earlier date, which extended for more than 26 ft. westwards, and which was cut through by a pit containing second and early third century pottery. Finally, the road surface on the town side of the west gateway was examined. The width was 19 ft. 6 ins. - the northern 9 ft. of which terminated at the wall of the gatehouse - this suggests that the width of the gateway must have been about 10 ft., but this has not been proved by excavation. This work marks the end of the current series of excavations on the western side of the town and a final report of the 1956-8 excavations is to be published in the next volume of the Woolhope Club Transactions.

KEMERTON

Members of the archaeology class have been helping Mr. Nicholas Thomas on his Danes' Camp excavation and have been carrying out field work in the area.

KIDDERMINSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Larford. Excavations have continued on the Romano-British rural site at Larford and on two further sites close by. At Larford, evidence had already been recorded of Roman occupation over part of the site, but few traces of buildings had been found. To seek further information, part of the remaining area was stripped. A short section of one of the earlier ditches was sectioned and emptied in an attempt to link it with others, found previously. A further rescue dig was begun in nearby fields, in advance of gravel digging, where a vast complex of ditches and pits has been shown by excavation and aerial photographs. Some pottery and tiles have been found but, otherwise, very little evidence. Another crop mark was tested in the neighbourhood when ditches and pits were found but no pottery.

LEINTWARDINE W.E.A.

Roman Camp. A trial trench across the northern defences of Bravonium (Leintwardine, G.R. 1" sheet 129/404742) shows the site to be that of a permanent, auxiliary fort. An early ditch below the existing rampart appears to be part of the Flavian defences which were levelled when the defences were reconstructed after c. A.D. 150. These Antonine works consisted of a 20 ft. timber-laced rampart, a 16 ft. berm, and 2 or 3 "V" ditches 11 ft. wide and 4 ft. deep. The rampart lacing was of six layers of 5 in. logs separated by 9 in. layers of clay and was carried up to an original height of at least 5 ft., above which brushwood and clay was used. The defences were subsequently neglected and then recommissioned probably c. A.D. 200-210. A final repair of the defences involved the replacement of the earlier ditch system by a single ditch 15 ft. wide and 6 ft. deep. These repairs are not dated from the section but the comparability of the site with Forden Gaer suggests that the last military occupation of Bravonium was probably in the late fourth century. Bravonium's change in status from "civil settlement" (O.S. Map of R.B.) to "fort" invites a new appraisal of the character of the Roman occupation of the West Midlands, by breaking the continuity of civil development along the Welsh Border and suggesting that the civil zone of Roman Britain was more restricted than we had hitherto thought. There can be little doubt that the military zone of the Central Marches extends east to the Severn, and there is a strong case for reconsidering the status of several similar "civil" sites further to the east. Stretton Bridge, Wall and Mancetter if interpreted as "forts" would create a backbone upon which to build a military zone of the Midlands linking Wales and the North and carrying the Civil Zone frontier back to former Belgic areas south and east of the Jurassic escarpment. The report of the excavation is to be published in the Woolhope Club Transactions.

LICHFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Lichfield. The measuring and recording of the timber framework of Nos. 71 and 73 Stowe Street have been completed and further investigation waits on the destruction of these condemned houses. The main feature of the timber framing is the use of "cruck" trusses. In this early method, two long pieces of timber were erected to form an inverted "V" and additional timbers were inserted to carry the rafters and wall members. The cottages contain three trusses, forming a two bay building. Originally these were erected on a rectangular foundation of oak beams, called a sill, which rested on sandstone footings. On the north side only the wall plate remains, the frame having rotted as has most of the sill and the feet of the crucks. The two outer crucks were originally filled with wattle and daub down to the sill, while the middle one was open under the tie beam. The rafters of No. 73 were covered with soot which shows that this was the hall containing the open fire. There was no chimney. The other bay (No. 71) contained an upper room and there was at least one window on the south side. The position of the original entrance cannot now be fixed due to later reconstructions.

Sections have also been cut on the reputed site of Lichfield Castle but with no definite results.

Roman Wall. The main work of the season has been the sectioning of the road in Castle Croft. This was of graded gravel, had a kerb of sandstone blocks and was dated to the early second century. The end of this trench just found the edge of a ditch, the opposite edge of which had been found in a previous trench. Unfortunately, this section could not be completed due to unstable soil and a further section was cut. This cut through the road, underneath which was a clay foundation, and through a black clay layer which proved to be the filling of the ditch. All the pottery from this filling was consistent with a first century date and the ditch has been provisionally assigned to the military occupation. Another ditch, found in previous excavations, has now been recognised as an outer ditch of the same system. A further section of the main ditch has now been started and will continue next season.

MALVERN RESEARCH GROUP

Roman Road, Dymock. A section has been cut across the line of a Roman road, east of Dymock, discovered by Mr. A. Baker. The history of this road and its side ditches has been very difficult to sort out and has been made more complicated by occupation both alongside and below the road. This may, in its early stages, be associated with nearby Iron Age occupation revealed by crop marks. First century pottery has been recovered along with a British coin. Work is to continue.

ROWLEY REGIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Upton Warren. The site consists of a roughly rectangular mound measuring about 160 x 150 ft. protected on three sides by a moat, at present about 46 ft. wide and 7 ft. deep. The remaining side is protected by a pond. North of the earthwork is an extensive system of ponds, with an elaborate scheme for water level control consisting of flumes and underground culverts. Excavation so far has shown at least three periods of occupation. Period 1, on the original ground surface prior to the construction of the present earthwork, was probably a small stockaded enclosure. Period 2, an extension and improvement of Period 1, with the addition of a well cut "V" shaped ditch and a low rampart inside. Period 3, the present mound and wide "U" shaped ditch and water system. The above conclusions and also the dating are by no means conclusive as the study of the pottery is not yet complete, but provisionally, Periods 1 and 2 probably cover a period from mid-twelfth to fourteenth century, and Period 3, sixteenth to eighteenth century.

SHREWSBURY

Moat House, Longnor. This site is a moated, polygonal enclosure and two partial sections were cut across the moat. The section on the northern side showed a stone built bank while the one near the present entrance gave fragments of adze-cut wood, but no pottery in the primary silting. Thirteenth to fourteenth century pottery was found above this silting, so presumably the moat was dug prior to this date. Trial sections in the interior did not find any buildings.

Town Defences, Shrewsbury. This excavation on the thirteenth century defences of the town took place on the site of two demolished houses. The wall itself is of faced sandstone, with a core of rubble, and was stepped to conform with the slope of the hill. It had been built against the vertical face of a clay bank, which certainly preceded the wall but the exact date of this bank is not yet known. In front of the wall and below the level of the footings, a pebble surface had been laid on the natural clay, possibly to aid the movement of building materials. Still further out from the wall, the clay had been sloped at a shallow angle - probably to allow the adjacent marsh to flood up to the defences. The footings of the wall were very heavy at the southern end of the exposed stretch, and may well have supported the tower or gate which is believed to lie further to the south.

Roman Roads. Dr. Houghton has continued the survey of roads and is now collecting evidence for a new link between Watling Street, at a point north of Craven Arms, running S.S.W. through or near Ludlow to join another road which has so far been traced to a point a mile east of Leominster.

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Smethcott. The site is a late twelfth to early thirteenth century motte surrounded by a ditch. The motte was surmounted by a wooden tower, the plan of which is now partially known from its post holes. In addition, a large stone foundation, possibly of a guard house, has been found just outside the eastern ditch. Work is continuing on the site.

WATER NEWTON, PETERBOROUGH

A number of West Midland students took part in the large-scale emergency excavation, made necessary by a diversion of the A.1, and which led to the discovery of pottery kilns producing Castor types.

WOOLHOPE CLUB

Roman Road, Abbeydore. A section has been cut through the road which passes through Abbeydore Station and its course has been proved for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles along the west side of the Golden Valley. It is constructed with a foundation of blocks of local limestone measuring up to 20 ins. across, and has a surface of smaller blocks which are rutted with a gauge of 4 ft. 8 ins. It seems likely that this road runs from Clyro to Monmouth as there are signs further along the Golden Valley towards Dorestone.

SEVERN VALLEY STUDY GROUP, WORCESTER

Bevere Island. An aerial photograph by Mr. A. Baker of the west bank of the Severn, north of Bevere Island showed a complex of marks, including one with a rectangular shape. A section cut through this showed a ditch, in the lower filling of which was some Roman pottery, while mediaeval material came out of the upper layers. Additional crop marks proved to be field boundaries overlying the Roman enclosure, while a further circular mark remains unexamined.

WROXETER SUMMER SCHOOLS

The Excavation Schools in 1958 had the benefit of the new Foyle Centre opened by Sir Mortimer Wheeler on June 7th, with the help of an enthusiastic crowd and Miss Foyle's umbrella. For the first time, the Director began to feel happier about the training programme although there are still many improvements to be made. The advanced course distinguished itself with a masterly analysis of the basic stratigraphy which now begins to make sense. The whole School was elated with the unexpected discovery of a new structure which looks like a large swimming bath, so that this year there will be more than enough new and interesting work for all.

The other Schools included an assault, under Dr. F. Wainwright, on a suspected Anglo-Saxon burgh at Chirbury, and after a fortnight's battering it remains a possibility, strengthened by negative evidence.

USEFUL ADDRESSES:

C.B.A., 10 Bolton Gardens, London, S.W.5. (Individual subscription 25/- p. a. brings the Annual Bibliography, Current Offprints, News of Excavations and Lectures etc.)

Royal Archaeological Institute, c/o The London Museum, South Kensington Palace. (Brings Archaeological Journal and permission to use the library of the Society of Antiquaries.)

West Midland County Societies:

Birmingham Archaeological Society (for Warwickshire and South Staffordshire)

(Hon. Sec. Mrs. M.G. Sanders, 9 Victoria Road, Harborne, Birmingham, 17.)

Shropshire Archaeological Society

(Hon. Sec. H. Beaumont, Esq., Silverdale, Severn Bank, Shrewsbury.)

Woolhope Club (for Herefordshire)

(Hon. Sec. c/o City Museum, Hereford.)

Worcestershire Archaeological Society

Hon. Sec. Clifford Baylis, Esq., Tintagel, Thorneloe, Worcester.)