

WEST MIDLANDS ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL

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Group 8

WEST MIDLAND ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS SHEET

Number 11, 1968.

edited by Philip Rahtz, M.A., F.S.A.

Produced and distributed by The Department of
Extramural Studies, The University of Birmingham.

DATES FOR 1969

Annual Conference of Archaeological Research Groups and Societies,
8th to 9th March, at the Regent Hotel, Leamington Spa.

Extramural Summer Schools

Wroxeter Excavation Techniques:

Course A 26th July to 9th August.

Course B 9th to 23rd August.

Introduction to Field Archaeology organised by the Field Study
Council 16th to 23rd August.

Field Techniques in Archaeology 23rd to 30th August.

Railways and Canals in Wales and the Midlands ... 2nd to 9th August.

Barnsley Park Roman Villa 12th July to 2nd August.

Training Excavations

Roman Fort at Waddon Hill, Beaminster, Dorset ... 24th May to 14th June.
Details from Dr. Graham Webster, 30 Portland Street,
Leamington Spa.

Hen Domen, Montgomery Dates to be arranged.
Details from Mr. P. Barker, 4 St. George's Square,
Worcester.

Research Excavations

Midsummer Hill (The Malverns) Herefordshire ... 11th August to
6th September.
Details from Mr. S. C. Stanford, Ashfield Cottage,
Luston, Leominster, Herefordshire.

Study Tour to Roman North-East Italy 2nd to 13th April.

This will be a tour of the Northern Adriatic, visiting Ravenna,
Venice, Aquileia, Trieste, etc.

Bordesley Abbey, Excavation July 1969

For details see page 27.

INTRODUCTION

The first of this series of News Sheets was produced in 1958. This, the eleventh, is two or three times as large as No. 1, and its circulation has increased enormously - 2,000 are now necessary to satisfy demand. This reflects not only the growth of interest and activity in West Midlands archaeology, but also the value which is found in this record of current work. This is very gratifying but also brings problems of production and cost. It may be that No. 12 will have to have a new, possibly printed, format, and that a charge will have to be made for it. The question of the future of the News Sheet is to be jointly discussed by the University and the Council for British Archaeology.

This number is to be produced and distributed by the Extramural Department of the University and we are very grateful to them for this and for having done this for the whole series so far. Special thanks are due at this time to Mr. Jim Gould who has edited the News Sheet for some years. He asked to be relieved of the task after the last number. We are, therefore, very grateful to Mr. Philip Rahtz who has taken over the editorship. The usual thanks are also due to all contributors. While the News Sheet can in no way take the place of full publication, it is both useful and interesting to have these brief accounts not from the field.

We welcome the appearance of the first number of The Journal of West Midlands Regional Studies, devoted to industrial archaeology, published by the Wolverhampton College of Technology, and edited by Dr. J. McDonald.

It may be appropriate here to report that C.B.A. Group 8 has recently undergone something of a transformation. It is hoped that this will result in it being in closer touch with working archaeologists in the West Midlands and in projecting the archaeology of the area to the general public. The effects of the change are:

- 1) That the routine organisation and business will now be carried out by an executive, meeting as and when necessary.
- 2) That the quarterly meetings will be held on Saturdays so that more people can attend them. The first of these was a highly successful meeting, held in Birmingham on November 2nd. Other similar meetings, but on a smaller scale, are being planned at different centres to allow all local field-workers and members of the general public to participate.
- 3) Membership of the C.B.A. Group 8 is now open to individuals as well as to representatives of groups such as societies, museums, etc. An annual subscription of ten shillings ensures that members will receive the Annual News Sheet and notices of all meetings and other activities, (applications to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. A. A. Round, 95 Darnick Road, Sutton Coldfield).

PERSONAL-NOTES

We are sorry to see Cynthia Holme leave the Department of Extramural Studies to take up a post at Gloucester with the Young Farmers, and wish her well in her new venture. She has been replaced by Miss Sally Cronne who is a graduate of Manchester but who also has local connections, her father being the Professor of Medieval History at Birmingham University. She will be coming to most of our meetings and getting to know everyone. All archaeological correspondence concerning the Department should be addressed to her.

We welcome Paul and Charmian Woodfield back to England after their sojourn in Sarawak, where archaeology will never be quite the same again. They have settled in Radnorshire so we will be seeing them around.

David Peacock, having completed his three years as Senior Research Fellow, has now left us to take up an appointment in the University of Southampton. The next holder of this position, which is specially designed to bridge the gap between the sciences and the arts, will be Miss Barbara Noddle, who is already well known to many for her work on animal bones. She will be taking up her appointment in January and it is good to know that we will have someone who will be able to handle this much neglected aspect of our work.

We welcome to the area Geoffrey Toms who has become Deputy Warden at Attingham Park. He has been doing a fair amount of archaeological work in the south-west and will be a useful addition to our strength, especially in central Shropshire where he is already making his mark.

A face that will be greatly missed at our meetings will be that of Miss Valerie Singer, for many years Secretary of the Coventry Archaeological Society. She has now taken up a new post in Essex, and carries our best wishes with her.

Another who will be missed is Bob Thomson who has done so much work in Coventry and Nuneaton area in recent years. He is taking up an appointment as Field Archaeologist in the Southampton City Museum, and we wish him well in his new post.

GRAHAM WEBSTER

BURSARIES

Those living in the West Midlands are reminded that Foyle Bursaries are available for people attending the training schools at Wroxeter and the training excavations at Barnsley Park and Hen Domen. The only conditions are that applicants should be attached to active research groups or societies. They can be of any age but the bursaries are NOT, as people seem to imagine, available only for college students. Applications should be made to the Department of Extramural Studies, Birmingham University.

AERIAL AND SCIENTIFIC RECONNAISSANCE

This last season conditions were most promising, and it was unfortunate that once again an excess of rain spoiled what appeared to be excellent prospects. The effect of freak weather from the south was widespread, leaving a trail of devastated crops; in the Thames valley acres of cereal were inundated.

However, the disappointments of recent years serve to sharpen one's perception, and new sites are still to be found although the contribution is necessarily limited, and not so positive as in conditions of drought. From this survey a section of parallel ditches to the SW. of Leintwardine suggest a possible Roman road alignment; at Clungunford South of Craven Arms, and also on the north bank of the Severn near Cressage, short lengths of ditch were observed, indicative of temporary camps. On the present evidence this is perhaps speculative, but merits continued observation and investigation.

ARNOLD BAKER

K. Carrdus, of Banbury has provided aerial coverage of the following sites in Tysoe and district using Kodachrome Infra-red film. It is hoped to keep these sites under review.

- (i) Forsaken Ham.(D.M. site) (SP 334456)
First known documentation. 1651. Forsaken Hamme. Small amount medieval pottery on surface.
- (ii) Nolands - Oxhill parish. (SP 312466)
Crouched burial and stone drainage system uncovered in May 1967 during land drainage operations. Moderate scatter of Roman pottery on surface.
- (iii) Windsway. (SP 333444)
Circular crop-marks on pasture. Circles of varying size are visible on ground. Marked thistle growth within circles but not outside, is visible soon after removal of hay crop. Detailed survey planned for 1969.
- (iv) Rollright (Oxon.) (SP 294309)
Two circular crop-marks recorded on film, found to coincide with site of windmill mapped in 18th century. These features lie on Warwickshire side of roadway, west of the "King's Men" Stone-circle.

GRAHAM MILLER, Tysoe Local History Group.

The negatives of the aerial photographs of the West Midlands taken by Mr. Arnold Baker and Mr. James Pickering are in the process of being put into the care of the National Monuments Record which is now housed with the Royal Commission for England, at Fielden House, 10 Great College Street, Westminster, London S.W.1. A master set of prints will eventually be housed in the Library of the Extramural Department, and lists of prints published from time to time, so that further copies can be ordered direct from the N.M.R.

GRAHAM WEBSTER

The Red Horse, Tysoe (SP 35448)

Subsequent to the inconclusive tests on the "Hangings" (See News Sheet No. 8, 1965) a series of tests has been carried out by Dr. J.S. Stanley of J.A. Radley Laboratories Ltd. (Reading), using the Radley Semi-automatic Resistivity Bridge which he has developed. High readings on the head, neck and chest have coincided to a remarkable degree with the crop-mark obtained on the 1965 aerial photographs. Excavation to establish the physical cause of high-resistance suggests that the cutting of the hill-figure penetrated well into the liassic-clay subsoil, and it is hoped to confirm part of this outline by further excavation on the head in 1969.

GRAHAM MILLER Tysoe Local History Group

PREHISTORIC EXCAVATIONS

It will have been noticed that during the past few years work on prehistoric sites has become less rare in the region. Even so the number of such projects in 1968 did not reach double figures, little enough for a period that involves three thousand years of settled communities in a region that exhibits a great variety of terrain. Most of these excavations have been rescue operations in advance of quarrying and building and the incidence of evidence tends therefore to be scattered and uneven. Under such conditions it is not possible to select specific topics for research, and it is unlikely that in these early stages many worthwhile correlations will be made between different sites. The West Midlands prehistorian is not only a minority amidst the Romanist legions and Dark Age hordes, he tends to find that his site is peculiar to itself.

In these circumstances, and with every caution, we may nevertheless search for some achievements and perhaps discern one or two trends. Much of the work results in adding a dot or two to the distribution map for certain periods, objects and structures. This in itself is important for a region so sparsely provided with earlier finds or standing monuments. We have entered a period of discussion about the legend of the "empty Midlands' forests", and may, rightly, be enthusiastic that aerial photographs and excavation are increasing the evidence for prehistoric activity; but our successes carry their own dangers. We are far from the stage when we will be entitled to make generalizations, and meanwhile we should notice that most of our evidence comes from the margins of the Midlands proper; from the valleys of the Avon and Severn, and the

Welsh Border. The negative area of the Midlands is smaller than it was, but large areas remain virtually blank, and we have little evidence of permanent and longstanding settlements over most of the West Midlands. Alongside our scanning for new sites must go the preparedness to recognise and exploit any that show promise of providing evidence for such permanent settlement, or are so well preserved as to guarantee reliable evidence to the contrary.

So far, along the margins, there has been great progress in establishing continuity of population on a few sites. Remarkable among these was the Bronze Age cemetery at Bromfield, Shropshire, for which Professor Shotton's department has provided Carbon 14 dates which combined with the burial evidence show continued use of the same cemetery between at least 1400 B.C. and c. 700 B.C. On the far side of the area a comparable sequence, extending into the Iron Age, is emerging at Ryton in Warwickshire, while Weeping Cross and Sharpstones Mill near Shrewsbury offer pointers to continuity over long periods. In this kind of work the Midlands can offer its contribution to the national discussions about the "Invasion Hypothesis", and has already provided its own evidence to fill the blank of the Late Bronze Age that was created when all the "Deverel-Rimbury" pottery was shunted back to the early Middle Bronze Age. As Neolithic finds increase from Dorstone Hill in S.W. Herefordshire, Fisherwick in Staffordshire and Warwick we can look forward to seeing a greater Midlands contribution to the problems of early farming settlements.

Work on the hill-forts reached a new level in 1968 with the firm demonstration of a close correlation of gateway structures between Midsummer Camp and Croft Ambrey, thirty miles apart, and further development of long-range correlation of hill-fort structures. While the vertical axis of Iron Age hill-fort framework is firm back to about 300 B.C. and extends perhaps towards 600 B.C. the horizontal bars touch now upon phases at Maiden Castle in Dorset, Rainsborough in Northamptonshire and Dinorben in Denbighshire. By geographical definition the Midlands should be in a position to link the evidence from the areas around. As work on prehistory proceeds we may see them fulfilling this role in place of the old barrier erected for want of information and extensive, patient excavation.

STAN STANFORD

NEOLITHIC

Brook Street, Warwick (SP 281648)

More than 30 shallow pits containing early Neolithic flints and pottery were found, together with a number of small post-holes which may represent a rectangular building. Evidence is thus gradually accumulating for the existence of a settlement of some size and importance on the Warwick hilltop in early Neolithic times. There was also a fine 'Beaker-type' arrowhead.

STEVEN TAYLOR AND MICHAEL FARR,
for School of History, University of Birmingham,
financed by M.O.P.B.W.

Dorstone Hill, Herefordshire (NR 326423)

A Neolithic habitation site here may extend over 18 acres. Trenches have located at least two hut floors, a ditch, a palisade and pit 2 ft. 7 ins. deep. Structural elements include stakeholes, postholes and a sandstone wall. Finds include over a hundred flint blades and tools, among which are a crude battered back blade, and three leaf arrowheads; a turnip-shaped arrowhead made from a fragment of polished flint axe; fragments of two other polished axes; charcoal; and sherds of Western Neolithic pottery.

W.R. PYE

Fisherwick, Elford, Staffs. (SK 184103)

A small pit was found with Secondary Neolithic sherds, on the Roman Farmstead site.

HENRIETTA MILES for M.O.P.B.W.

BRONZE AGE

Ysgwennant, near Llansilin, Denbighshire (SJ 189305)

The large oak tree mentioned in the 1967 report was cut down. It was so hollow that it was possible to excavate inside the tree, but the excavation proved negative. This completes the excavation of this Bronze Age burial mound, and a report is being prepared. A quantity of charcoal was associated with the first 'A' Beaker found in 1961. A radio-carbon examination of this charcoal by Professor F.W. Shotton gave a determination 1,473 B.C. \pm 82. Dr. Savory points out that this is low compared with the dating (c. 1,800 B.C.) of similar Beakers.

W. DAY

for Offa Antiquarian Society, Oswestry.

Baginton Ring Ditch, Coventry (SP 341755)

The area excavated is No. 93 in the report on sites on the Warwickshire Avon and was discovered by James Pickering in an aerial survey. The excavations confirmed the existence of a 70 ft. diameter ring ditch, dug into a sub-surface of sand and gravel. The ditch had a rounded profile and was 5 ft. wide at the top and approximately 2 ft. deep. The ditch was totally excavated but for a northern arc northwest to northeast. No artifacts were found within the ditch. Within the circle there were many postholes confirming documentary evidence for a 17th century barn being on the site. Prior to the barn's construction, there had been an extensive tree clearance, with the root

hollows being filled with sand. It was, therefore, impossible to say whether or not there had been any central burials.

BRIAN HOBLEY, for Coventry Museum.

Webster, G., and Hobley, B.,

(1) 'Aerial Reconnaissance over the Warwickshire Avon'

Arch.J. CXXI (1965) 1 - 22.

BRONZE AGE/IRON AGE

Ryton, Warwicks. (SP 371725) (Avon Aerial Site 97B)

In this third season, the use of machinery has enabled rapid progress to be made, much of the large enclosure ditch being defined. The most important discovery was a Middle-Late Bronze Age cemetery of which six burials have been excavated. One consisted of three pots; a Deverel-Rimbury-type urn 13½ ins. high by 13¼ ins. diam., ¾ in. thick, part of a small bowl 5 ins. high by 7 ins. diam, and a crude urn c. 11 ins. high by 14 ins. diam. Another urn burial contained bone and charcoal. The rest were patches of bone and blackened soil. The D - enclosure ditch consists of two V ditches only definable at natural level, enclosing an area 38 x 56 ft. Few sherds have been found in primary levels, but Bronze Age and Iron Age sherds have come from the upper fill. Within the enclosure was an oven and a pit 6 ft. 10 ins. long and 18 ins. wide, associated with 1st century A.D. sherds and the base of a rotary urn. The small rectilinear palisade trench 12 ins. wide and 12 ins. deep, has yielded Iron Age Sherds; the alignment of this has been traced for 25 ft. in both directions from a right angle; within the area enclosed were further Iron Age sherds and the base of a rotary urn.

J. BATEMAN AND A.B.G. HOWARD

for Coventry & District Archaeological Society.

Sharpstones Hill, Shrewsbury (SJ 5010)

At Site A, a trench 190 x 6 ft. was cut to find continuity of gullies; that leading eastwards from the main enclosure and ending with a semi-circular group of pits or postholes (Newsletter 9) must now be regarded as a pre-enclosure link between the clusters of LBA/IA "A" huts. A truncated hollow way leading from the main enclosure passed the huts to continue to Site G.

At Site D (SJ 503104) more of the linear ditch was excavated (see Newsletter 10) the prehistoric recut had been immediately refilled with potboilers and other broken stones. The recut was not defensive - it was probably for drainage associated with the Roman causeway. The rampart had a revetment trench at the front leaving a sloping berm 2 ft. 6 ins. wide. The ditch ended at the causeway but another extended obliquely

west, possibly forming one side of a narrowing entrance. Continuation was destroyed by the Shrewsbury by-pass, but beyond this the line of ditch was traced by magnetometer survey for a further stretch, making a total length of 140 yds.

W.E. JENKS.
for Shropshire Archaeological Society.

IRON AGE

Midsummer Camp, Herefordshire (SO 760375)

The southern gate proves to have eighteen phases of construction associated with the inturned entrance. What was probably a temporary closure of the corridor during the construction of the defences was followed by two phases with timber guard-rooms inside a double gate. Following two further phases without guard-rooms the corridor was narrowed and a single gateway employed for the last thirteen phases. The earliest inturned rampart was revetted at the front only with timber and probably stone but was later faced with stone alone. On the terraces within the camp further evidence of small timber buildings was obtained.

S.C. STANFORD
for Malvern Hills Archaeological Committee.

(See also: Rykniel Street, Worcs., for
flints in features under Roman Road.)

Brook Street, Warwick (SP 281648)

A few Iron Age sherds were found on this site.

STEVEN TAYLOR

ROMAN EXCAVATIONS

The most important work on the Roman period has been that on the military sites. Although useful progress is being maintained at Greensforge, Wall, Mancetter and Wroxeter, the major advances have been at Metchley and Baginton. Large-scale stripping at these two sites has revealed further problems. It is now clear that the great revolt of A.D. 60 brought the Army back into the Midlands for a longer stay than was once thought possible. We must now begin to adjust our thinking to the evidence that the next major advance in 71 and later under Agricola, may not have stripped our area entirely of troops. There are also details at Metchley and Baginton in the buildings and fort planning which create further problems.

Elsewhere, work on the tile factories of north Warwickshire clearly show how widespread they were in this area and how many more must remain to be discovered. These pose interesting problems of marketing and transport.

GRAHAM WEBSTER

Wroxeter, Shropshire: The Bath House

The working of the training schools was concentrated on the bath-house. Further details of the legionary timber buildings were recovered, and some of these now appear to identify themselves as barrack blocks. The structures now resolve themselves into three main periods. The first is slight and mainly in the form of drainage gulleys and possibly associated with hiberna. The other phases have substantial timber buildings, each with alterations. The piscina is now completely stripped and has been handed over to the M.O.P.B.W. for consolidation. Further work in the main praefurnium has produced a sequence of dated deposits which indicate the span of life of the bath-house from the second half of the 2nd century to the early 4th. The main flue was subjected to continuous rebuilding and relining.

GRAHAM WEBSTER, for Dept. of Extramural Studies.

Wroxeter, Shropshire: Site 68

The bow-sided post and wattle building, discovered in 1966 between the street and the baths precinct wall, was removed together with the latest layers over the whole area. This stripping, which was only a few inches deep, revealed a very complex situation, with evidence of two earlier bow-sided buildings (one containing a maze of stake-holes) and many other, less coherent, features such as pits, gullies, clay floors and rows of post-holes, which must represent structures of many periods distinct from the three recognised buildings. The latest, timber, phases of the site are therefore not only complicated but probably span a considerable period. A notable feature of the penultimate structures was the extensive burning associated with them. The latest layers were given a firm terminus post quem by fourth century coins and pottery sealed in them though there was a far greater quantity of residual second and third century pottery, presumably derived from deep pits which had been cut into the underlying buildings.

PHILIP BARKER, for Dept. of Extramural Studies.

Wroxeter, Shropshire: The Palaestra

In 1967 an area approximately 100 by 20 feet had been stripped down to the mortar foundation of the palaestra floor. Cleaning the mortar surface this season has shown that either one large rectangular building 80 feet, plus, long or two smaller buildings end to end, of post and wattle construction, have been built into the mortar raft after the floor was removed. The building(s), like those on Site 68, though large, are

of slight construction, with an edge of sandstone blocks more or less parallel to the robbed aisle wall of the palaestra, a mass of small post-holes marking the eastern end, and one large post-hole in the southern side. There are indications of two entrances, roughly paved with spreads of mortar rubble, though there were no door-jamb post-holes. Areas of pebble flooring had been laid both within and without the buildings, and at the eastern end there were two periods of pebble flooring separated by a layer of wood ash. There appears to be evidence that the robbing of the palaestra walls took place later but the complete absence of roof and wall debris on the floor must indicate that this large building had been thoroughly stripped before this late occupation took place. A mass of late fourth century pottery was recovered from the layers of rubble above the floor, but there was little pottery positively associated with the buildings.

PHILIP BARKER, for Dept. of Extramural Studies.

Metchley, Birmingham (SP 043836)

The investigation of the Metchley Roman forts started in 1934 when F.W. Shotton and J.K. St. Joseph located the main outlines of the defences. Since then further work on the site has led to the assumption that the outer fort was associated with a policy of consolidation in the Midlands, possibly related to the Bouddican revolt of 60. In 1967 a rescue excavation in the S.E. corner of the inner fort uncovered three distinct phases of timber buildings. This suggested that the Roman military occupation of the site was more intensive and longer than had been originally thought.

A large scale excavation was undertaken in 1968 in the field to the S.W. of the Medical School. This was the largest remaining untouched area of the forts and is due to be developed as part of a Medical School extension scheme. Some 15,000 square feet was stripped and this showed considerable evidence of timber buildings. A hitherto undetected line of defences was also found running across the width of the large fort immediately to the north of the inner fort.

Phase 1. This was associated with the large fort which appears to have been constructed about A.D. 48. Large regular wooden buildings were represented by timber slots, post pits and ovens. These appear to have been storage houses and barrack blocks. These structures were not found in 1964 in an area beyond the 'new' defences. This suggests that these defences formed the northern limit of the original fort, and that the fortified area to the north, which now includes the reconstructed corner, was an annexe for tented troops only. Alternatively the first fort could have been a tented enclosure, later reduced to house a permanent garrison. The defences of this fort consisted of a double ditch and rampart. The exterior ditch was about 5 ft. deep and the interior ditch about 9 ft. deep. On the shoulder between the two ditches there was evidence of a thorn hedge or fence, which may have camouflaged the severity of the inner ditch and deceived an attacker.

The rampart was based on a foundation of stakes. This phase seems to have been deliberately destroyed by the Romans before they left the site.

Phase 2. The next phase was preserved mainly below the turf rampart of the inner fort, and consisted of flimsy stake and post-hole structures. These lay on the same alignment as the Phase 1 structures, but were irregular and belonged to ephemeral timber buildings. It is probable that these buildings belong to a 'caretaker' occupation re-using the defences of the first fort.

Phase 3. The final building phase belonged to a new smaller fort inside the earlier one. This phase may mark a strengthening of the Midland defences following British resistance in the west or possibly the establishment of a store depot on the site. The buildings were smaller than those of the first fort, but were quite regular. Those uncovered appear to form barrack blocks with small rooms, normally with an associated hearth. The inner fort defences were less formidable than the earlier ones, consisting of a modest single ditch and turf rampart. On the northern side of the fort the ditch was shallow and narrow and the line of the 'new' defences had been utilized. This fort appears to have been abandoned in the first half of the 2nd century. The interior buildings again seem to have been deliberately burnt by the Romans before they left.

Conclusion The structures of the first two phases belong to an evolutionary period of Roman military buildings, prior to the more standardized plans of the Flavian period.

TREVOR ROWLEY

for Field Group of Birmingham Archaeological Society financed by
M.O.P.B.W.

'The Lunt' Roman Fort, Baginton, Coventry (SP 344752)

The 1968 season was concentrated on three main parts: (1) total stripping of the eastern gateway; (2) extending the area within the fort to uncover additional buildings; (3) the location of defences on the eastern side associated with the phase I buildings outside the phase II defences.

(1) Examination of the eastern gateway proved very rewarding, both in structural details and finds. The gateway was 20 ft. wide and 10 ft. deep, and was twin portalled. The post-holes of six main vertical timbers were uncovered, which would have carried a tower above that of the rampart walk. To help support the rampart inside the gate, a timber revetment had been dug and it surprisingly extended 12 ft. back beyond the rampart. Further work may show this feature to be associated with a guard chamber or ascensus. Just beyond the gate's southern side a massive cobbled foundation was uncovered which has been interpreted as an ascensus foundation. The rampart on the gate's northern

side produced turf in situ at the back and front and a central filling of sand and gravel. The ditch here had been lined with clay to consolidate the sand and gravel surface. The southern ditch end beyond the gate's causeway showed convincing evidence both in plan and section of three inward re-cuts towards the rampart. Many pre-phase II gateway slots were recovered of the phase I buildings.

(2) Within the fort's interior, another 20,000 sq. ft. was stripped, and produced further evidence for two periods of occupation. West of the period II (30 x 70 ft.) granary, an earlier (period I) granary of the same size was revealed. It had been replaced in period II by a longer east-west orientated corridor building. The barrack block discovered in 1967 can now be seen to be one of a pair, with their orientation exactly that of the western defences. Other buildings of unknown use discovered in 1968 are similarly orientated. Over 50 rubbish pits and water storage tanks have now been emptied, and the finds confirm the dating of mainly Neronian and Early Flavian (AD. 60 - 79) occupation.

(3) Extensive trenching of the eastern slope failed to locate the phase I defences. On present evidence there appear to be four main zones on the eastern slope; (A) near the plateau top a number of distinct military buildings; (B) eastward, beyond the buildings, an area of pits and occupied surfact; (C) a zone where the bedrock sandstone appears immediately below the turf line; and (D) on the lower slope, an area completely negative of building features and 'finds'. Obviously, further work is required in this area, but the possibility of underfended buildings or uncompleted defences has to be considered.

Our thanks are due to the Coventry & District Archaeological Society for their valuable help in this work.

BRIAN HOBLEY, for Coventry Museum.

Bromfield, Shropshire (SO 483775)

A short excavation in advance of quarrying fixed the south-western side of the marching camp, showing its dimensions to be 1060 by 845 ft. (323 x 258 m.) an area of $20\frac{1}{2}$ acres (8.32 hectares).

(T.S.A.S. LVII (1964), 187, and J.R.S. XLVIII (1958), 95)

S.C. STANFORD, for M.O.P.B.W.

Mancetter, Warwks. (SP 322967)

A section was cut at the almshouses parallel to and near that dug by Adrian Oswald in 1955. The banks visible on the surface were shown to be associated with a 17th or 18th century hedge line, but by a coincidence they lay out the inner member of a three-ditch military system. The outer member was steep-sided, of typical profile; the inner one was shallow and possibly contained a thorn barrier. The only dateable material is a fragment of a form 29 of MEDDILLUS (c. A.D. 60-80), from the inner ditch, but associated coarse wares would fit this late Neronian - early Flavian context.

KEITH SCOTT, for Atherstone Archaeological Society.

Greensforge, Staffs. (SO 863883)

Cuttings have been made across the southern defences at two points and a partially successful effort made to establish the position of the eastern defences which are thought to impinge on the field the other side of the road. An area of about 40 x 70 ft. was stripped towards the south-east corner of the fort. There were four or five disconnected beam slots together with the outline of part of one small building about 10 ft. 6 ins. across. Some 14 Claudian coins (imitation issues) were found together with gaming counters, melon beads, small bronze objects, a bar of lead and a Nor-Nour type broach.

J.C. HOCKIN

for Kidderminster Arch. and Nat. Hist. Society.

Wall (Letocetum), Staffs (SK 101066)

The area excavation within the third phase fort, referred to in the last News Letter, has continued. The stone foundation found at the end of 1967 proved to be a single layer of pitched sandstone, 10 by 12 ft., approximately rectangular, and aligned on the rampart of the fort. Further excavation has revealed at least three earlier phases of rectangular timber buildings, all similarly aligned, suggesting that the defences of all three forts are parallel. No dating material later than the early second century has been found. At least one phase of the buildings was destroyed by fire, as shown by the large amount of burnt daub and some burnt timbers found. Iron-working in the vicinity is again shown by considerable quantities of slag, as well as iron objects including knives and a pilum head. Spindle whorls of lead and pottery suggest domestic occupation, and a few roof tiles, bricks, and a flue tile found at the west end of the excavation indicate the possible presence of a more substantial building in the vicinity.

Interesting finds include sherds of two face urns, one having green glass eyes, a bronze cooking pot and a bronze belt fitting with human head as well as other military bronzes.

A.A. ROUND
for South Staffordshire Archaeological Society.

Malvern Link, Worcs. (SO 789497)

A series of ditches and postholes were filled with kiln debris, burnt soil, and much pottery. This includes tankards, narrow and wide-mouthed bowls, and flagons. They form a group of middle to late 2nd century date representing more than 500 vessels. Some types were made in several different sizes. The kilns themselves have not yet been located.

P.L. WATERS,
for Malvern Research Group.

Blunt's Green, Warwks. (SP 138688)

Work at Blunt's Green Roman Road has continued throughout the summer, with enthusiastic support in spite of wet conditions. The only additional feature found was a pit 6 ft. square, 8 ft. 6 ins. deep from the modern surface, with vertically cut sides, a flattish bottom and a well cut chamfered rim. Black fibrous material on the walls was thought to be a wood lining. A rim of mid-2nd. century coarse pottery was found in the primary silt, and the sealing layer contained sherds of similar date. The function of this pit is obscure being too well built for a rubbish pit and perhaps hardly deep enough for a well. The real significance of the discovery is that it considerably adds to the probability of a settlement site nearby.

The course of the Roman road has been confirmed by aerial photographs as running from Blunt's Green to a point just south of Harborough Banks, near Lapworth. It is then thought to pass just south of Kenilworth Castle and out of Kenilworth on the line of Dale House Lane. From there it passes just to the south of the Lunt Roman Fort and thence to Tripontium. Several impressive stretches of agger have been observed on this alignment but more fieldwork and possibly excavation is required for confirmation. Westward it is believed to follow a three mile straight stretch of field boundaries passing a 100 yards or so south of Green Lane, Studley, and then on to Feckenham on the Salt Way.

BRIAN HUTTY

Sharpstones Mill, Shrewsbury (SJ 5010)

At Site D (SJ 503104) the "cobbled floor" (Newletter 10) was shown to be a trackway. 32ft of this was exposed, and yielded a Roman lynch-pin of crescentic form with a terminal knob, and Roman sherds. At SJ 503104, close to the by-pass, the prehistoric ditch had been filled with clean gravel to make a causeway. This is on the alignment of the Wroxeter-Caersus road from Bruckton to Neall Brace and this may continue the road on between the Iron Age/RB enclosures towards Emstrey.

Another possible Roman road Agger was found at Site F (SJ 513105); investigation of a crop-mark photographed by James Pickering showed ridge-and-furrow rising over a crest of packed gravel.

W.E. JENKS,
for Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Ryknield Street, Worcs. (c. SP 0766)

A section 4 ft. wide and 60 ft. long was cut across the road. It was found to be 30 ft. wide, but had been badly eroded. The western half of the road was in a better state of preservation, and was made up of large stones laid on a shallow gravel foundation. The road had a ditch on either side. The eastern ditch (with Roman sherds) was shallow and broad, and was cut on the inner bank by two small stone lined gulleys. The latest feature on the site was a pit above the western ditch. Under the road traces of earlier occupation were found in the form of sealed post-holes and a shallow pit, containing a flint scraper and waste flakes.

P.J. FASHAM
for Worcs. New Towns Archaeological Committee.

Broad Street, Worcester (SO 850548)

Observation was maintained in the Broad Street Development area and a number of pits with associated groups of pottery, coins and small finds were emptied, and the course of the Roman Street discovered in 1967 was plotted.

P.A. BARKER
for Worcester Archaeological Research Group.

Old Lodge Hill, Tysoe, Warwickshire (SP 352441)

Roman sherds were found in the 'Red Horse' excavations in 1964 (see Newsletter 7, 1964). An interrupted trench long cut on a 1 in 5 gradient around the 600 ft. contour. It yielded some thirty more Roman sherds in two rubble layers, separated by clean hill-wash, and possibly associated with stone walls. The rubble died out towards the lower end of the trench, where bed-rock came to within 6 ins. of the surface.

GRAHAM MILLER
Tysoe Local History Group.

Caves Inn, Shawell, Warwickshire (Tripontium) (SP 535795)

Areas investigated on the west side of A5 revealed timber-slots, drain-trenches, floor surfaces, stone sills and rubbish pits. There were also burials; one skeleton still had the knife which presumably killed him embedded in his vertebrae. Occupation extends over most of Roman period, starting as early as A.D. 50.

J. LUCAS,
for Rugby Archaeological Society.

Fisherwick, Elford, Staffs. (SK 184103)

A droveway and a series of small enclosures covering about three acres were laid out around the end of the first century A.D. The droveway was traced for about 200 yds. and ran towards the old ford over the R. Tame at Elford. Its ditches appear to have silted up in the mid second century A.D. The enclosures had been constructed by setting palisades in substantial trenches. The trench for the main enclosure was dug at the same time as the droveway ditches. The palisades appeared to have been renewed many times entailing slight changes in plan and the site to have been occupied until the early third century. Traces of four flimsy circular huts represent the only habitations found, and at least one of these was earlier than the enclosures. Stockrearing was probably the main activity on this Roman farmstead site.

HENRIETTA MILES, for M.O.P.B.W.

Wickhamford, Nr. Evesham, Worcs. (c. SP 0742)

A complex of walls was of at least three periods, the last probably 4th century. The only identifiable structure was a grain-drier. Finds include a bridle-piece, and two Constantinian coins.

P.J. REYNOLDS,
for Vale of Evesham Historical Society.

Holditch, Newcastle, Staffs (SJ 835481)

Further features of the Roman industrial settlement include a series of small domestic ovens and a smelting over, associated with 2nd century pottery (for earlier finds here see report of 1957-9 excavations in N. Staffs Journal of Field Studies 1 and 2 (1961 - 2).

N.B. SOUTHCOMBE,
for Keele and Newcastle Archaeological Society.

Lapworth, Warwickshire (SP 189698)

A Roman Tile Kiln has been presumed on this site since the 1930's when wasters and broken tiles were brought to the surface by the plough. After ploughing in 1967, sandstone was also found among the tile debris which appeared in quantity in two areas about 50 yards apart. Excavation revealed a small Roman tile kiln with a 6 ft. square firing chamber containing four cross walls, the slots, 3 ins. wide, being unusually narrow. The outer wall of the kiln is in undressed coursed sandstone with brick and clay facing to the interior. The flue arch appears to have been demolished when the kiln was finally taken out of use, but the flue walls stand to 4 ft. 6 ins. up to the spring of the arch. The flue length is 5 ft. floored in sandstone, and the walls throughout are stone up to 2 ft. approximately, then tile. These tiles appear to have been laid in an unfired state. The front of the kiln facing the Stoke-hole pit as originally built was of dressed sandstone nearly laid in regular courses, and there is evidence of a rather cruder rebuilding following the collapse of one side. The kiln produced a complete range of roofing, box-flue, floor and sub-floor tiles, and over twenty have been recovered bearing a distinctive finger-mark which may perhaps be a trade mark. No satisfactory dating evidence has been obtained.

C.J. BADDELEY

Griff Hill Farm, Bedworth, Warwks. (SP 362883)

This Roman tile kiln was found by a digger working on a gas main yielding tile wasters. A combined effort of contractors' diggers and "bulldozing" with trowels exposed in a week a compact partly destroyed tile kiln. The stokehole and main flue walls made of stone up to a height of 1 ft. 6 ins. from which level the flue arch was corbelled over; in the firing chamber (7 ft. 6 ins. x 5 ft. 6 ins.) the 5 cross flues (sloping) and the 4 cross walls were constructed in tile. The products of the kiln included tegulae, imbrices, and box flue tiles in various sizes, all of which were expertly moulded and finished. No dating evidence was found. This kiln is approximately 2,300 yards southeast from the one reported in News sheet No. 10 (1967).

KEITH SCOTT, for Nuneaton Group.

Roman tile measurement

A pilot exercise has been carried out on Romano-British tile measurements, one of the objectives being to relate the sites of manufacture and usage. I am particularly anxious to learn of new sites where quantities of tiles or fragments (preferably 100 or more pieces) are found. Tile kilns are of particular interest.

Apologies are made for the incorrect map reference for Cherry Orchard, Kenilworth in News Sheet Numbers 8 and 9. That given was for the Market Street site, Warwick and the correct reference is SP 296722.

H.L.G. SUNLEY,
for Kenilworth Historical Society.

Other Roman finds include a few sherds from the Brook Street, Warwick excavation; and fragments of two Roman altars and other stones from Hereford.

DARK AGE AND SAXON EXCAVATIONS

The Dark Ages in the West Midlands is still rather a non-subject, but there are rays of hope, if not of light. Imported sherds of Mediterranean pottery have now been found in Gloucester; where will one be found further north? Phil Barker's amulet from Hen Domen has emphasised not only that we have a long non-ceramic phase in the West Midlands, but that even the common or garden Roman sherd could acquire magical significance. Dark Age Hereford may be supported by

C14 determinations now being done, while very late or sub-Roman Wroxeter, in site 68 and the Palaestra is developing well. In the meanwhile, Kate Pretty (nee Kate Hughes) is doing her Ph.D. thesis at Cambridge on the Dark Ages in the West Midlands, and we hope that she will give us some kind of framework which will inspire us to further work and ideas.

For the same period the Stretton site is a welcome addition to the handful of sites in England where there is evidence of settlement as well as burials; if the money is available, Stretton may provide us with the first complete plan of a Saxon settlement in the West Midlands, as well as a cemetery excavated under modern conditions. Stretton made up for the disappointment of failing to re-locate the rich Longbridge cemetery - if only earlier excavators had been able to give Nat. Grid References!

Progress has been dramatic in the Mercian towns. Phil Barker and Steven Taylor still find Saxon Worcester and Warwick elusive, but Tamworth and Hereford have both produced Saxon defences. These have not only given us our first idea of what Mercian defences were like at this time, but are some of the finest examples that have come to light anywhere in England.

We can also see some progress in ceramics. It seems likely that there is little or no pottery in our area between the pagan Saxon period and the tenth century; then Chester ware arrives (from an unknown source) at Tamworth, Shrewsbury and Hereford, contemporary with a French ceramic at Hereford and Stamford ware at Hereford, Tamworth, Warwick, Worcester and Hen Domen. This is followed by a wide range of shelly and sandy wares in the 11th century, with occasional importations from Winchester and Nottingham at Hereford.

It now looks as though Hereford was the largest town in our area in the 10th and 11th centuries, a fact possibly related to its rich agricultural background and its position as a frontier town with our Welsh neighbours.

Late Saxon rural settlement is still elusive. One promising site in this connection is Bordesley, where there is the possibility of the Saxon village having been depopulated by the Cistercians in the 12th century; it may be found among the earthworks of Bordesley Abbey.

Finally, the West Midlands area now provides the earliest evidence (11th century) for ridge-and-furrow cultivation in lowland England in the rather unexpected context of the motte-and-bailey castle at Hen Domen.

Stretton-on-the-Fosse, Warks (SP 218383)

A Saxon cemetery and settlement has been found in sand-digging. 22 graves have so far been excavated, with male, female and child skeletons, one being face-down. Finds include small square-headed brooches, disc brooches, amber and glass beads, shield-bosses and spears. Some burials are secondary to sunken features, possibly hut-sites; bone and Roman and Saxon pottery finds show that there is a settlement site here which may be earlier than the cemetery.

W. FORD.

for Avon-Severn Gravels Research Committee financed by M.O.P.B.W.

Longbridge, Warwick (c. SP 275632)

The supposed site of the Saxon cemetery partly excavated in the last century was searched, as the area was threatened with redevelopment; nothing was found, and the exact position of the cemetery remains uncertain.

STEVEN TAYLOR.

for School of History, University of Birmingham, financed by M.O.P.B.W.

Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffs. (SK 20540405)

Following demolition of 19th century houses and shops, excavation was undertaken of a narrow strip against the pavement of Lichfield Street near a kink in the present road. The base of the Saxon rampart (sectioned in 1967, 80 feet to the south of the present excavations) was found immediately below the floors of the demolished properties. Post-holes gave the plan of the southern side of the western entrance to the Saxon borough. Below was an earlier ditch pitted with many stakeholes especially on the inner lip and side. The later town ditch was cut by a modern cellar and was not emptied because of water troubles which threatened to undermine the modern pavement.

JIM GOULD,

for Lichfield & S. Staffs. Archaeological & Historical Society and M.O.P.B.W.

Brewery Site, Tamworth (SK 210043)

Excavation of a large car-park on this east side of the town located the medieval ditch and rampart with complex stratification, and much medieval pottery. The line of the Saxon defences on this side was located by trial trenching in a property adjoining the car-park on its west side, but could not be thoroughly explored because of a high water-table, running sand and inadequate time and resources. Enough was seen, however, to suggest that a ditch found was the same as that of the primary Saxon phase located by Gould on the west side of the town. Here however it was waterlogged, and contained preserved timber, Roman building material and Roman painted plaster. This very promising area is threatened with long term development, and large scale excavation is planned for subsequent seasons.

CHARLES YOUNG

for School of History, University of Birmingham financed by M.O.P.B.W.

Victoria Street, Hereford (SO 508404)

HWCM 391

The western Saxon defences of Hereford were discovered and sectioned by Frank Noble and Ron Shoesmith in 1967. An area where the rampart survived to a height of 10 ft. was excavated in June 1968.

- (1) The earliest features were postholes and flints, probably prehistoric;
- (2) above these were two L-shaped corn-drying ovens, probably of Dark Age date; they were made of reused Roman material, including fragments of two altars and some large reused dressed stone, robbed either from the city area or nearby Kenchester;
- (3) the first definition of the western defences was a small bank and ditch, possibly merely a boundary (8th century);
- (4) the first rampart was of gravel and clay with a ditch, possibly 9th century;
- (5) the main rampart was of turf, sods and clay, interlaced with heavy branches, and with timbering to front and rear; on the crest was a low unmortared stone wall. This is assigned to the 10th century; the first pottery in the sequence, of Chester and other 10-11th century types was found on its degraded tail.

(6) The final rampart of 11th or 12th century date, was of gravel, with a big ditch into which a stone wall was inserted in the 13th century. The defences of 3 - 5 were seen to turn east just north of the area dug; though extramural occupation of pre-conquest date extended to the north (see Brewery site). The rampart and wall of period 6 continued north, to sweep across the earlier extramural settlement. Finds include two bone combs, a sword-pommel of iron, and a new ceramic possibly a French import.

PHILIP RAHTZ

for Hereford City Excavations Committee in association with School of History, University of Birmingham, financed by M.O.P.B.W.

Brewery Site, Hereford (SO 508404)

UWCM
H04

A site behind the City Wall in its northwest sector was dug. The gravel rampart which pre-dated the City Wall was mechanically removed, enabling five periods to be established. After a pre-ceramic period which includes two ditches, there were features containing exclusively Stamford and Chester wares, (an early furnace being the most important) followed by a period when there was also other Saxo-Norman pottery in quantity; in this third period there were many large intersecting pits, a burnt timber building and several later furnaces, indicating that metal working was continuing in this area. This metal working also continued into the post-Conquest periods. It is possible therefore to say that settlement at Hereford had extended to this area by the 10th century and that the roughly rectilinear plan of this was disregarded by the later rampart; this rampart has alternative 'historical' datings of either 1055 or 1189; current ideas on pottery dating would favour the latter date, though the earlier one remains a possibility.

MARGARET GRAY.

for Hereford City Excavation Committee, School of History,
University of Birmingham, and M.O.P.B.W.

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL

The direction taken by medieval archaeology in the West Midlands is almost entirely dictated by the enormous programme of urban rebuilding and expansion now going on. Research confined to a single subject or period and carried out at the deliberate pace necessary for long-term planning and considered judgement is a rare luxury. Instead we have to move with the developers or, with luck, a little in front of them. This situation, though harassing, has its benefits. It has forced us more and more to think in terms of the total archaeology, as far as that is possible, of a town or area. In Warwick, Coventry, Hereford, Tamworth, Kidderminster and Worcester rescue excavations go hand in hand with the recording of standing buildings and the study of documentary evidence of all periods to build up a jigsaw, though still one with many holes in it, of the urban development of the region. At Redditch, where the very large new town will eventually cover hundreds of acres of open country, a co-ordinated programme of work in advance of development, involving both professionals and amateurs, is studying the area from every aspect - a report on work in progress will shortly be issued. Redditch has a comparatively short history, but includes within its borders the almost untouched earthworks of Bordesley Abbey, a large Cistercian foundation, which may be sited on a depopulated Saxon village. The Redditch Urban District Council has had the foresight to initiate the excavation and preservation of the abbey ruins for the benefit of the residents of the future town - a project comparable with that at the Lunt at Baginton - and is supporting a long-term plan for the study of the whole abbey complex which includes a large water-powered industrial area - there are more things about abbeys than cloisters and reredorters. This is an ambitious scheme which has not been attempted before in Britain, but which typifies the tendency in present-day archaeology toward bigger and bigger projects.

Sometimes these big projects are thrust on us. The vast potters' complex at Nuneaton, a rescue dig which ~~escalated~~ astonishingly, promises results of major importance for the understanding of the medieval pottery of the Midlands.

Industrial archaeology continues to widen its scope, and towns such as Bewdley, Stourport, Kidderminster, as well, of course, as Dawley, are beginning to be adequately recorded. What though, is happening in Birmingham?

A project not dictated by emergency is the work of the Worcestershire Medieval **Village** Research Group, which is investigating more than a hundred suspected shrunken or deserted sites in the country - where only half-a-dozen were known a couple of years ago. Similar work in Warwickshire and Herefordshire is making the same revolutionary discoveries.

The continuing excavations at Hen Domen, Montgomery, are an example of the unhurried research impossible on a threatened site. One hesitates to guess what sort of results would have been obtained here under emergency conditions, with a fortnight, twelve volunteers and a J.C.B.....

Facts about the medieval and post-medieval West Midlands are accumulating rapidly if haphazardly. At some point we shall have to pause and attempt a synthesis. If the next ten years are as productive as they promise to be, and if there is a lull in the building programme, we shall be able to understand much more fully the implications of the work we are doing now.

P.A. BARKER.

Brook Street, Warwick (SP 281648)

A site was dug in 1968 which included at least three early medieval house plots. Four domestic ovens were found, set well back from the street frontage. A series of cess and rubbish pits yielded large amounts of pottery, (including Stamford ware) dating from the 11th century onwards. A large bell-shaped shaft some 24 ft. deep was emptied, containing 12th century pottery and the remains of several cats and chickens. It may perhaps have been an early town well abandoned owing to a change in the water-table. The buildings associated with these features are represented by traces of timber structures under the 17th century almshouses which formerly stood on the area. Much support has been given by the Warwick School Archaeological Society.

STEVEN TAYLOR AND MICHAEL FARR.

for School of History, University of Birmingham financed by M.O.P.B.

58/59 Spon Street, Coventry, Warks (SP 326790)

Excavations are being carried out on the site of a timber-framed house of $2\frac{1}{2}$ bays. The house was demolished in March 1968 in order to make way for development: Victorian workshops at the rear were also demolished. The site is on level ground on the north side of the street and about 200 yds. from the river Sherbourne. Although the site is situated over 400 yds. outside the medieval town wall it is already evident from finds that the area was populated before the medieval house was built and before the building of the wall. Single stone sill walls of the house have been uncovered. The site is producing many pottery sherds, most of which can be dated to the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries; however three sherds of early cooking pot (11th or

12th C) from lower levels indicate the domestic use of the site prior to the later medieval house. Work under the demolished 'Top Shops' to the rear of the house is producing stone walling just below Victorian brick floors. Work on the site will continue through the winter.

J. BATEMAN AND D. WATSON.
for Coventry & District Archaeological Society.

Kidderminster, Worcs.

A quick survey of pre-1914 buildings was undertaken to locate and recommend suitable subjects for preservation. Kidderminster is now seen to be a post-Industrial Revolution development despite its Saxon origins. A clear pattern of building materials and styles has emerged, used for all kinds of buildings from cottages to factories.

C.I. WALKER,
for Kidderminster Archaeological Society.

Harveys vault, Kidderminster

Following the excavation of the supposed Saxon Chapel in a wine merchant's cellars in the redevelopment area from Blackwell Street to Swan Street, a watch has been kept as demolition and excavations for foundations proceeded. As the Georgian to Edwardian cellars were dug away fragmentary foundations of earlier buildings were exposed, mostly in the sandstone characteristic of pre-18th century Kidderminster. Parts of the cellars of the Black Star were stolen, possibly part of an earlier building. A few sherds of 15th - 16th century pottery and tobacco pipes with tiny bowls came from the lowest corner of the site where Daddle Brook was being reculverted. Demolition of the Swan Street, High Street block, known to be on the site of very early buildings, has revealed cellars partly under High Street. A post salvaged from Richard Baxter's house in this group is thought to confirm the shop and undercroft development already suggested by earlier work here.

C.I. WALKER AND J.C. HOCKIN,
for Kidderminster Archaeological Society.

Caldwall Hall, Kidderminster, Worcs.

The Society's efforts to save the tower have been successful and the Local Authority has now accepted a tender for a conservation scheme based on advice given by the Society. The cost is little over half that of a wrongly conceived reconstruction scheme, rejected some time ago, which would have destroyed the character of the building. The building will be used for meetings and archives.

C.I. WALKER,
for Kidderminster Archaeological Society.

Redditch New Town, Worcs.

An attempt is being made by Birmingham Archaeological Society Field Group together with local schools and colleges to record, survey, and excavate where possible, all sites of historical interest within the proposed New Town area. In addition to the excavations at Bordesley Abbey a comprehensive ground survey has revealed the probable chronology of the Abbey's spread down the Arrow valley. There has also been field work at Ipsley and Beoley. A full progress report of all this work will be published in the near future.

TREVOR ROWLEY
for B.A.S. Field Group.

Bordesley Abbey, Redditch, Worcs. (SP 685045)

Site A. The Abbey Church. A section 130 x 12 ft. was cut across the east end of the church. Structures of 12th to 15th century date were revealed, comprising the internal west wall of the north transept, the line of the north and south aisles, the external west wall of the south transept, and a small library or sacristy. Carved masonry includes the rounded column bases of the quire and north stairs. There were seven north stairs, each 6 ft. wide, originally leading to a dorter to the south of the church. A small room to the south of the church contained some interesting bench-like features, possibly seats or library shelves. The masonry is in poor condition, but restoration is projected. Broken floor tiles were numerous, but none were found in position.

Site B. The industrial site (SP 686050)

The nucleus of this was a circular structure made up of rounded stones (about 5 ft. in diameter) based on iron slag; this may be a bloomery hearth. Other hearths, cobbled areas, and foundations were also located. There were large quantities of slag, charcoal and coal with much pottery of 15th - 16th century date.

As a result of the two seasons work at Bordesley the Redditch Urban District Council has decided to sponsor a five year programme of excavation and preservation on the Abbey Church; it is hoped to incorporate the Church foundations in a landscaping scheme for the Redditch New Town.

Bordesley Abbey Excavations 1969

These will take place from June 30th to July 26th; this year the excavation will be under the joint auspices of the University of Birmingham and the Field Group of the Birmingham Archaeological Society; it will be jointly directed by Trevor Rowley and Philip Rahtz. Further work will be done on the church and industrial site. Volunteers are welcome, they can come every day or camp and stay in the area. Contributions will be made towards travelling and/or subsistence depending on circumstances and experience. Please apply to Trevor Rowley, C/o. The Dept. of Extramural Studies.

TREVOR ROWLEY
for Redditch Urban District Council.

Charterhouse, Coventry (SP 345783)

The principal objective of the 1968 trial excavations was to establish where the monastic buildings lay on this open 9 acre site. The site is delimited by a stone boundary wall (monastic precinct wall?) and this is divided into two main courtyards. The northern courtyard produced no substantial evidence for stone buildings except in the area immediately east of an upstanding monastic building, known as the Abbot's lodging. Here, the structural remains strongly suggest a church. The building was 80 ft. long x 37 ft. wide, and was square ended at the east end during the first period of building. A northern transept 30 x 30 ft. had an altar foundation (?) attached to the eastern wall. Excavations failed to produce a southern transept.

To support the evidence for a church, the building contained a phase II burial beneath the altar position, (founder's grave?) a piscina in situ inserted into the southern wall and glazed decorated floor tiles beneath. The southern courtyard produced evidence for a cloister walk along its western edge. Here the southern boundary wall was shown in part to be monastic; just beyond the inner face a small stone lined cellar or tank was found.

BRIAN HOBLEY,
for Coventry Museum

Spital Chapel, Tamworth, Staffs. (SK 209050)

Excavation on three sides of the chapel produced no evidence of earlier buildings but showed that the present structure which stands on an 8 in. plinth on pitched stone footings has changed little in size or plan since the 12th century. Despite some peculiarities no evidence was found of a pre-conquest phase. On the north side of the chapel was a shallow medieval grave, 18 ins. deep where a woman of about 50 had been buried without ring, coffin or shroud; directly on her skeleton rested the skulls of two children.

JIM GOULD
for Lichfield & S. Staffs. Archaeological & Histological Society,
with Perrycroft School, Tamworth.

Hen Domen, Montgomery (SO 214981)

The ninth season examined the earlier layers of the bailey rampart. Complex post-holes and slots represent structures removed by later building and a rectangular building 18 x 12 ft. was represented by a burnt area. 35 buildings have so far been found in the bailey; the later ones may have had plank floors. The rampart crest was searched for palisades and fighting platforms; features found in a section cut show that the rampart will have to be stripped very carefully.

Under the rampart a buried soil was found in the top of which was a remarkable object, an amulet, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high, roughly carved out of a sherd of coarse red Roman pottery into a quadrilateral with a 'head'. An attempt seems to have been made to drill a hole in the top of the sherd. When this failed, and the top broke off, a 'neck' was cut round the head, presumably so that it could be hung round the neck of the owner. On the back, i.e. the concave inside of the sherd, were three scratches in a triangle, or perhaps an A. The amulet was dropped on the turf before the castle was begun and can hardly be anything but

a sherd picked up by someone living in an aceramic period (which hereabouts seems to have lasted from 400+ to 1100+) to whom a piece of orange-red pot was a wonder, to be carved into a charm and hung round the neck for good luck, or for magic purposes.

A thin turf line under the western tail of the rampart sealed a fine pebble floor of amorphous outline which lay on the much thicker buried soil beneath. A gulley and a row of small postholes which ran close to its northern edge may prove, with further work, to be associated with it. All must be pre-castle and therefore probably pre-Conquest. In the undisturbed subsoil under the main body of the rampart were distinct traces of ploughing up and down the slope, and the buried soil above these plough-marks strongly suggests ridge and furrow running parallel to them. This reinforces the suggestion that ridge and furrow, running in the same direction, is cut by the outer ditch. Since we know from Domesday Book that the castle was built in an area of 22 vills with 52 hides which had reverted to waste, and had been used, before the Conquest, by three Saxon thegns as a hunting ground, it is very probable that we have here evidence of Saxon open fields abandoned to the chase under the pressure of the Welsh 'terrorist' attacks. Holes which had been dug through the buried soil and into the subsoil beneath, and then immediately filled with the rampart material suggest the grubbing-up of bushes to clear the area before building began.

A lot more work will be needed on these earliest levels before these suggestions can be confirmed, but the site promises to shed unexpected light on the Dark Ages in this darkest of regions. The ridge-and-furrow, if proved to be so, will be the earliest example known in England and Wales outside Cornwall.

1. for earlier work, see Current Archaeology 5 (Nov. 1967), 133-136.

P.A. BARKER,
for Extramural Department.

Ratley, Warks. (SP 318473)

Excavation on the small motte-and-bailey shows that the ironstone bedrock lies only some 9 ins. below the turf in the west bailey. Part of the bailey has been much disturbed by later quarrying. The fact that the ditches would have had to be rock-cut suggests that the defences and structures of the site would have been at least partly of stone. This has been confirmed by finding a dry stone wall within the bailey bank, and a tumble of stone, some roughly faced, in the motte ditch. Apart from this no structures have so far been discovered.

Pottery finds include some 12th and 13th century sherds, and three or four Roman sherds. Work will continue next year.

REV. FABIAN RADCLIFFE, O.P.
for Bishop Bright Grammar School Archaeological Club, Leamington Spa.

Washford, Worcs. (SP 070652)

The site consisted of extensive earthworks to the north-west of Washford Mill, which proved to be fish-ponds, probably constructed at the time the Mill was owned by the Knights' Templars in the 13th century, but continuing in use for industrial purposes until at least the end of the 15th century and possibly later. The fishponds and those of the rectangular platforms which were threatened by immediate destruction were sectioned mechanically, but a small area containing a building which had daub walls and an associated fish-breeding tank was excavated by hand. The tank contained 13th and 14th century pottery and much organic material, including a wooden skep with a woven rush base in remarkably good condition. Only those parts of the site on the direct line of a new road were investigated; if there are buildings they may lie further north where the machine trench cut two ditches containing a quantity of 13th and 14th century pottery. This area is away from the road construction but is to be covered with a dump of soil. A survey of the whole site was made and a photographic record taken.

MARGARET GRAY,
for Worcs. New Towns Archaeological Committee.

Sharpstones Hill, Shrewsbury (SJ 5010)

At Site D (SJ 503104) two further large clay-lined ovens and a sunken hearth were excavated; this brings the total number of ovens to 11, all lying to the east (downwind) of the former village of SUDTONE, presumably to reduce the fire hazard. The hearth was saucer-shaped and lay in the centre of a shallow rectangular ramped depression 15 ft. x 2 ft. 6 ins. deep; a V-shaped gully led up from the hearth into one corner.

W.E. JENKS,
for Shropshire Archaeological Society.

Lawn Cottage Site, Nuneaton, Warks (SP 343897)

This site was found by ploughing which revealed in a normally reddish soil a very black area (approximately 200 sq. ft.) containing many large pieces of medieval pottery. Excavation of the site continued all summer and produced over 6 cwts. of pottery, mainly from a semi-circular area, the straight side of which was a "U" shaped ditch also filled with pottery. At first it was thought to be a kiln site but it was realised that the sherds were occupation pottery. A wide range of pots is represented including cooking pots, pipkins, jugs, bowls applied with strip on both white and red fabrics, with liberal use of green glaze. Other finds include decorated bronze, lead, lead weight, roof slates (local slate), Roman and medieval tile and nails. One piece of slate had an incised pattern, possibly a prototype for a design for decorated floor tile.

An oven and building foundations have also been exposed, which will be explored next year. The sherds suggest a date in the late 13th century.

KEITH SCOTT
for Nuneaton Group.

Harfield Lane, Nuneaton, Warks. (SP 342897)

In the field next to Lawn Cottage Site ploughing exposed typical kiln wasters. During a 5 weekend period of excavating approximately 6 cwts. of pottery has been found including two almost complete jugs one with stamps. Two kilns, one partly overlapping the other, give two clear cut phases in the potting on this site. Briefly the upper kiln was 9 ft. 6 ins. diameter with 5 flues; the lower one was 8 ft. 6 ins. diameter with 5 flues of a larger size than the later kiln. Five different stamps from this site perhaps suggest different potters using the same kiln. In some examples clay strip and clay have been applied before the stamping and then over glazed. Much of the glazing is brownish with a small quantity of green from the earlier kiln, turning to reddish purples in the later kiln. A number of lids varying in size from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. up to 9 ins., part of a costrel, lobed cups, ceramic mortars and encaustic tile have added great interest to this site. There now appears to be a stone building of the same period as the kilns. The pottery is dated provisionally to the late 14th century.

KEITH SCOTT
for Nuneaton Group.

POST-MEDIEVAL AND INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Glass House Farm, Staffs. (SJ 722337)

Following a report from the farmer, Mr. D. Thompson, of evidence of glass and crucible scatter in the field, similar to that found by T. Pape on the Glass House Furnace Site and also large stones, found whilst ploughing, permission was given to excavate the area. It has been conclusively established that a glass furnace never existed on the site. The excavation disclosed the fabric of a culvert, in situ, which had been built over an open field drain. It has not been possible as yet to date this structure, but it is earlier than an adjacent culvert of the mid 19th century, disclosed to the south at a regulation distance of thirty feet away and running parallel to the earlier structure. A considerable amount of glass and glasshouse pot fragments related to the first quarter of the 17th century has been located, and it has been established that these fragments were laid down to form a hard core for laying a rough track or cattle crossing over a peat-bog area of the field. The glass and crucible fragments are of considerable importance and interest, and are being closely examined and studied. They were most probably brought down from the glass furnace site situated some 240 yards to the north, and where the farmhouse now stands.

IVOR NEWCOMB

for Keele and Newcastle Archaeological Society.

1. T. Pape, 'Medieval Glass-makers in North Staffordshire',
Trans. North Staffs. Field Club LXVIII (1933-34)

Birlingham, Worcs. (c. SO 9343)

During the summer a Cider Mill has been dismantled by volunteers from the County Museum Society and moved to the County Museum at Hartlebury where re-erection is now in progress. Dismantling has afforded an opportunity to study the superstructure as well as foundations which are all that usually remain for the archaeologist. Building and machinery had undergone several repairs.

C.I. WALKER,

for Kidderminster Archaeological Society.

Wormstry House Site, Worcester

This excavation, on the site of the original porcelain factory, with the probability of Medieval and Roman levels. A number of sealed levels, a large man-made sandbank to keep out the flood, and a retaining wall have been found, together with two successive silting levels left by floods.

Wasters from the kilns have appeared in great quantities and include some shapes and many patterns and factory marks never previously associated with Worcester. The importance of these is attested by the fact that all previous books on early Worcester porcelain are now proved largely incorrect and Herbert Jenkins, the publishers, have invited Henry Sandon to write a new handbook on the subject, incorporating the discoveries.

P.A. BARKER,

for Worcester Archaeological Research Group.

Worcester - Industrial Archaeology

The Industrial Archaeology Group has been recording the dredging operations in the Severn to clear the accumulated silt at the North Quay. When the dredging started in April, a very substantial obstacle in the river broke the main chain, and a diver had to be employed to ascertain the extent of the obstruction. It was found that a very considerable wharfing platform lay beneath the silt, stretching some 300 ft. long and 80 ft. wide. The platform was edged with granite blocks about 4 ft. long and about 18 ins. square. These formed an edging wall, which contained at least two large iron mooring rings. The platform was paved with flat-topped granite sets about 7 ins. square on a foundation of Georgian bricks. The same type of sets were used to pave the river bed from the wall towards the centre of the river. Among the rubble and bricks brought up following the blowing up of the platform was a considerable amount of iron slag. It is interesting to speculate whether the slag was brought to make a foundation for the bricks and sets, or whether it was there before the wharfing was so elaborately constructed. The coach park on the east bank was once known as Little Pitchcroft, and perhaps was 'Cinder Point', where traditionally Yarranton and others in the 17th and 18th centuries removed thousands of barge loads of Roman slag from Pitchcroft to their furnaces on Severnside north of Worcester.

The Group also investigated a site at Ombersley where a brick-built wharf was discovered on the banks of the Severn, with remains of iron clippings and slag and charcoal. An excavation was made at nearby spoil heaps, but so far, only sandstone quarry workings have been found. A second site at Severn Grange, Northwick, Worcester was also visited, and here an interesting early 18th century brick-yard had been 'landscaped' in the 19th century.

H.W. GWILLIAM.

Worcester - Documentary Research

Several members have already produced tangible results of their work - indexes to a tithe plan, early 19th century directories of tradesmen, etc., while others are in the middle of compiling much more complicated pieces of work involving the history of a particular area of the City, the changes in street names, the administration of the Poor Law in various parishes, the history of the militia, an analysis of the population over a long period in one small area, and so on.

M. HENDERSON.

PAPERS ON SUBJECTS OF WEST MIDLANDS INTEREST

Medieval Archaeology, 11 for 1967 (1968)

- Late Medieval Jugs with lettering.....G.C. Dunning
A Decorated Axe-head of Viking type from Coventry....D.C. Devenish
and W.M. Wlliott
Medieval Britain in 1966, includes:
 St. Mary's Priory, Coventry
 Whitefriars, Coventry
 Sudeley Castle, Griff, Warwickshire
 Abdon, Shropshire, village site

Trans. of the Worcestershire Arch. Soc. 1, 3rd ser., for 1965-67(1968)

- Two Middle Bronze Age Weapons from Worcestershire....Nicholas Thomas
Excavations at Grimley, Worcestershire.....E.J. Peltenburg
Romano-British Pottery Production in the Malvern District of
 Worcestershire.....D.P.S. Peacock
The Medieval Pottery of the City of Worcester....K.J. Barton (with
 appendices by G.C. Dunning)
The Deserted Medieval Village of Woollashill.....C.J. Dyer
Survey of Bordesley Abbey Earthworks.....R. T. Rowley
Excavations in the Town Centre of Oldbury, Worcs...G. Barnsby-

Trans. of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club, 38 Pt. III for 1966(1967)

- Medieval Hereford and its Place in the Twentieth
 Century.....H.J. Powell
Aerial Reconnaissance over the Romano-British Town of Magna
 (Kenchester).....Arnold Baker
Excavations in Bath Street, Hereford, 1966.....S.C. Stanford
A Human Relic from Craswall Priory, Herefordshire....I.W. Cornwall
Herefordshire's Prehistoric Standing Stones.....John G. Williams

Lichfield and South Staffs. Arch & Hist. Soc. Trans.,* 8 for 1966-67
 (1968)

- Excavations at Wall, Staff., 1964-66, on the site of the Roman
 forts.....J. Gould
Observation on the construction of the by-pass road at Wall,
 Staffs.....Adrian Oswald

Croxall, Staffs., - an Air Photograph of a Deserted Medieval
Village.....J.M. Whiston

Amington, Warwickshire - a Deserted Medieval Village site
.....James Pickering

Deserted Medieval Villages of Staffordshire and adjacent areas
(based on the records of the Deserted Medieval Village
Research Group by J.W. Whiston)

North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies 7 (1967)

A Roman road in North Staffordshire.....J.M.T. Charlton
and F.H. Goodyear

Industrial Archaeology in the Parish of Penkridge
.....S.R. Broadbridge

Current Archaeology Vol I March 1967 - November 1968

No. 1. Mortarium and Pistillum.....Graham Webster

No. 4. Baginton (The Lint).....Brian Hopley

No. 5. Fladbury.....David Peacock

No. 5. Hen Domen.....Philip Barker

No. 9. Hereford.....Philip Rahtz

No. 9. Wroxeter (5th century tombstone).....

* N.B.: Offprints of these papers are still available from
J.W. Whiston, 58 Wednesbury Road, Walsall, Staffs.
Vol IX for 1968 should be available soon, and Mr.
Whiston tells us that offprints will be available.
The volume includes important papers on the
Shenstone Hoard and Burial and the 1967 Tamworth
excavation.

OTHER LOCAL PUBLICATIONS

We have been pleased to receive the following publications during the year from regions, if there are any other similar ones being published, the Editor would be pleased to know about them.

Avon Severn Valleys Research Project Report

Secretary: Mr. G.S. Taylor, Wychbury, 5 Greenside Road
Erdington, Birmingham 24.

Bulletin of the University of Birmingham Archaeological Society

Secretary: Miss A. South, Department of Archaeology,
Birmingham University.

Cake and Cockhorse, published by the Banbury Historical Society
(price 2/6d)

Editor: B.S. Trinder, 90 Bretch Hill, Banbury.

Coventry and District Archaeological Society Bulletin

Editor: Mr. Martin Elliott, 25 Brade Drive, Walsgrave, Coventry.

Newsletter of the Keele Archaeology Group, published by Keele University

Chronicle of the Kidderminster Archaeological & History Society
(price 1/-d)

Secretary: Mr. J.G. Roberts, 42, Woodlands Road, Cookley, Worcs.

Rugby Archaeological Society Newsletter

Editor: Mr. J. Foster, 10 Macaulay Road, Rugby.

Shropshire Newsletter published by the Shropshire Archaeological
Society.

Editor: Mr. Barrie Trinder, Flat 2, 52 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury

Journal of West Midlands Regional Studies, published by the Wolverhampton
College of Technology.

Editor: Mr. J.E. McDonald, Wolverhampton College of Technology.

Worcestershire Archaeology Newsletter, published by the Worcester City
Museum, the Worcestershire Archaeological Society and the Worcester
Archaeological Research Group.

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