

WEST MIDLANDS ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL

NEWS SHEET No. 7, 1964



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WEST MIDLANDS ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS SHEET

No. 7, 1964

Edited by J. Gould

Produced by

the Council for British Archaeology (Group 8)

and

the University of Birmingham, Department of Extra-Mural Studies.



Dates for 1965

Weekend Course\* on Post Medieval Ceramics,  
at Attingham Park, directed by K. J. Barton.

Jan. 22nd - Jan. 24th.

Study Tour of Roman Provence

Easter

led by Dr. G. Webster. Details from  
H. Ross, Department of Extra-Mural Studies,  
University of Bristol.

Annual Conference for Local Research  
Groups and Societies.\*

Probably May 8th - May 9th

Wroxeter:\* Excavation Techniques

Elementary I directed by Charles Daniels  
Elementary II directed by Graham Webster  
Intermediate directed by Graham Webster

July 24th - Aug. 7th  
Aug. 7th - Aug. 21st.  
Aug. 21st - Sept. 4th

Training Excavations:

Barnsley Roman Villa:\*  
directed by Graham Webster.

July 10th - July 31st

Upton Deserted Medieval Village:\*  
directed by Philip Rahtz.

Late June/July

Waddon Hill Roman Fort:  
directed by Graham Webster.  
Details from Dr. Webster,  
30 Portland St., Leamington Spa.

June 5th - June 19th

Croft Ambrey Hill Fort:  
directed by S. C. Stanford.  
Details from S. C. Stanford,  
Ashfield Cottage, Luston,  
Leominster, Herefordshire.

July - August

\* Details from Department of Extra-Mural Studies, The University, Birmingham 15.



## INTRODUCTION

The 1964 digging season is now over and a new one lies ahead although it could be said, now that so many excavations seem to continue right through the winter, that a season never ends. As usual, a vast amount of work has been done in the West Midlands; local societies and research groups have been frantically busy, sorting out the problems of their own parishes, and in many cases assisting on digs of their choice in more remote places.

You will now all have heard of the Avon-Severn Valleys Research project, whose first season of excavation, reported in this issue, promises well for the future.

Sterling work has been done on one of the research sites at Barford, Warwickshire, by the Warwick School Archaeological Society under the direction of Mr. Ken Wardle. Work here has been mainly concentrated on one small ditched enclosure quite isolated from the remainder of the crop-marks on this very large site. The object was part of a scheme to examine some of the more simple and characteristic crop marks, in the hope that the experience gained could be applied when some of the more complex sites were excavated. This site at Barford is now threatened with destruction by gravel working and construction of part of the new Warwick by-pass road. The Ministry of Public Buildings and Works has been approached with a view to financing a complete excavation which will probably take about two years.

The main excavation has been at Beckford, near Evesham. This is a very large site and the air photographs of the section of the site investigated indicated it to be comparatively straight-forward. Excavation however, has proved otherwise. (See below). Paid labour has been a major item in the cost of this excavation, and will be again next year, but the assistance of skilled volunteers will also be urgently required. This will apply to all major excavations.

The Avon-Severn Project is so vast, that the only hope of really getting to grips with the many problems and resolving them, is to give this work priority. In the introduction to this news-sheet last year, it was suggested that when the Project really got under way, it might be necessary for local societies and groups to offer their skill and resources to the organisers, even if it meant putting off their own cherished plans. Thus, the challenge of our two aerial surveyors may be brought to the conclusion of excavation and the publication of the results. Hundreds of occupation sites have been revealed by their painstaking enthusiasm. We must not and cannot let them down.

The resources of the Avon-Severn Project are very limited. Subscriptions in the first year have amounted to about £500; the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works has granted £1,000 for work on threatened sites and it is expected that such excavations will continue to be financed in this way. When one considers how many of these threatened sites there are, £1,000 is hardly adequate even for this purpose, for one month of excavation at Beckford has cost about £500.

If the Research Project is to achieve its objects, it must have three essentials:-

- 1) the money to carry out excavations and to publish results;
- 2) the complete and wholehearted support of every society and group in the West Midlands;
- 3) the personal help of all professional archaeologists in area to direct the excavations.

In this first year only one site, Beckford, has been investigated; a further season will be necessary but even then only a small part of this site will have been touched. There are about 200 crop-mark sites in the Avon valley alone. Even if ten of these sites could be excavated each year, which is not as impossible as it sounds given the support that we know is available, it will take up to twenty years to complete the present programme. Furthermore, that no more sites are discovered is unlikely! There still remains the valley of the river Severn, where aerial survey is still far from complete. The Committee of the Project therefore appeals to all of you: we need



your assistance even at the expense of your own local work; we need your goodwill and co-operation and above all we need a little of your money, for without money we cannot dig. If we do not get all of these, the history of these areas may never be revealed. Offers of assistance with excavation should be sent to the Secretary of the Avon-Severn Valleys Research Project, Wychbury, 5 Greenside Rd., Erdington, Birmingham 24; and financial contributions, annually if possible, to the Treasurer, H. V. Hughes, 4 Turville Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham 20.

This year the Regional Group has appointed a Research Committee for the purpose of carrying out major excavations at Alcester during the redevelopment of the town. Miss Christine Mahany has been appointed by the committee to direct the excavations which will extend over a period of nine months. Work is being carried out in close co-operation with Messrs. Wimpey, the main contractors, and the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works has agreed to finance the work.

Mrs. Julie Sanders, Chairman )  
Geoffrey S. Taylor, Hon. Secretary ) C.B.A. Regional Group No. 8.  
5 Greenside Rd., Erdington,  
Birmingham 24.

#### AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE

The 1964 season was disappointing due mainly to poor crop conditions brought about by the wet weather.

A number of new rural sites have been discovered in the Avon valley, the Leintwardine area and along the gravels of the upper Severn in the vicinity of Wroxeter. The site of Viroconium at Wroxeter has also revealed important new features relating to the problems involved in the interpretation of the town defences.

A limited survey in the upper Thames valley has shown new and interesting features adding to our knowledge of complex rural settlement.

Arnold Baker, 63 St. Francis Rd., Pauls Dene, Salisbury.

The upper Avon was surveyed a number of times during the summer for crop-marks, but the cereal growth was mainly too strong and even, to show the variations that indicate sub-soil scars. A few isolated sites were recorded on the gravel terraces and a larger group was added to the Church Lawford sites. Surveys in other areas of the West Midlands produced a barrow or ring ditch group near Redditch and a multi-vallate enclosure near Droitwich. The east bank of the Severn, south of Worcester, showed extensive indications of Romano-British type (?) settlements and evidence of many settlement sites was recorded along the Thame and Trent to Burton-on-Trent.

The dry late summer affected sugar beet growth and produced so many indications of sites that it was necessary to concentrate on a limited area to try and obtain a complete record of it rather than a poor record of a larger area. About 700 photographs were necessary to record sites on the Trent between Long Eaton and Newark.

The lesson to be learnt from this year's surveys is that the weather and crop conditions that produce crop-marks vary considerably from district to district in any one year. Anyone making a survey of the Avon this year for the first time would have reported it as unproductive of crop-marks by comparison with the Trent. Yet two years ago when cereal crop-marks showed on the Avon, there were few crop-marks in sugar beet on the Trent. The high incidence of Trent sites now recorded that are not on the gravel terraces must pose the question of the extent to which this occurs on Avon sites, which have not so far produced crop-marks.

Jim Pickering, The Outwoods, Hinckley.



ALCESTER EXCAVATION COMMITTEE

Alcester (42/087571) Large scale excavations are now being carried out on the 14 acre site south of Birch Abbey, where there is to be housing development.

Extensive trial trenching has shown that the Roman town extends over a far wider area than was formerly thought. No defences have been discovered, but a large ditch which runs across the site following the contours may have served a dual purpose as a drainage and a boundary ditch. It is interrupted at one point by a small road, and elsewhere was used for the burial of numerous skeletons of late or post-Roman date. An atypical burial not associated with the rest was also discovered: the skeleton had been decapitated and placed, wearing hobnailed boots, in a wooden coffin.

An area which is being examined more fully shows a complex of timber buildings succeeded by a stone building with an apsidal end, of uncertain date. Elsewhere a large group of pottery of Antonine date, including some black samian, has been found in a pit.

Miss C. M. Mahany, G.P.O. Alcester, Warwickshire.

Alcester (42/087571) Excavations in Birch Abbey Field examined the occupation to the north of the Roman road, sectioned by Mr. Hughes in 1956 and encountered in Mr. Tomlinson's present excavations (see below). Trenches cut alongside the road revealed a drainage ditch, parallel to the road and becoming deeper and wider to the east. To the north were no less than seven superimposed gravel surfaces with intervening occupation layers. Cutting through the second from the top of these is a long narrow building, represented by two rows of post-holes arranged in bays, approximately 8 ft. square. The post construction pits, but not the post-holes, are sealed by the uppermost gravel surface where this is present. Three bays have been identified but there appear to be at least a further two bays to the east. Pottery from the construction pits suggests a 4th century date. No structures associated with the third, fourth and fifth surfaces have yet been identified. Associated with the two lower is a cambered gravel surface parallel to and associated with the road drainage ditch, consisting of very thin layers of gravel. To the north is a curved structure, possibly part of a circular ritual enclosure, some 43 ft. in diameter, if indeed circular. In its earliest form this consists of a gravel platform surrounded by a shallow ditch. In the second phase, a second gravel floor was laid over an intervening occupation layer and cutting into this is another ditch concentric with, but some 2 ft. inside the first ditch. The filling of this second ditch contained two rows of small stake-holes a foot to 18 ins. apart suggesting some sort of fenced enclosure. Two substantial post-holes abut this feature on the inside and may be related to a rectangular building represented by beamslots. The rectangular structure is eccentric to the surrounding ditch and may represent a still later phase of construction. These structures are provisionally dated to about the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries.

It is hoped to continue the investigation of these features next season.

Ullin Place (In the absence abroad of Mr. Place, volunteers for next year should contact Mr. Bob Thompson, 2 Brinklow Rd., Binley, Nr. Coventry)

ARCHENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP (South Herefordshire)

Huntsham (50/565175) Another house has been discovered with a complete ground plan of 60 ft. x 30 ft. This consists of a building divided into five rooms, having stone floor bases, flanked by a long corridor which was added later. Outside the building were drainage channels and a large rubbish pit, both containing large quantities of Romano-British pottery and some samian. There were also coins showing that the house was in use until the mid-4th century.

An interesting additional feature is the discovery of a large stone precinct wall (including a gateway) surrounding both the house and the villa.

N. P. Bridgewater, Tre-Evan, Llangarron, Ross-on-Wye, Herefords.



AVON-SEVERN VALLEYS RESEARCH PROJECT

Barford (42/282620) Preliminary excavation by the Warwick School Archaeological Society, at Alderham Farm (site 83 in the Avon Valley series) where two small enclosures had been revealed by aerial photography, produced Iron Age pottery with a few Romano-British sherds from a ditch complex. No traces of any structures were found.

K. Wardle, 274 Myton Rd., Warwick.

Beckford (32/980361) Site 14 in the Avon Valley series. The site excavated is threatened by the gravel workings of Huntsmans Quarries Ltd. Here was a rectangular ditched enclosure with some interior irregular crop-marks, and what appeared to be a slight annexe on the north. Available for excavation was a strip 50 ft. wide along the west side of the enclosure extending northwards across the whole field. The soil was removed mechanically to the surface of the gravel, where distinctions of soil differences was difficult except in certain light. Eventually four sets of continuous and roughly parallel gullies were planned. Careful work disclosed that these had held vertical posts, and it seems probable that they represent palisade trenches for stock. With the exception of the most westerly, they conform to the plan of the outer ditch, and hence form part of the complex of the enclosure. The exception is cut by the northerly arm of the ditch and presumably antedates it. This palisade faced west whereas the others faced the interior of the enclosure. This deduction is based on the fact that one face of these trenches was almost vertical, implying that the posts were placed against it and were probably supported from behind. The interior palisades turned east to form an internal enclosure. It was possible to establish a sequence of building, but not of date in the absence of finds.

Outside the main ditch to the north, were three further palisades, not in conformity with the ditch and clearly part of a different system. Pottery suggests these were out of use in perhaps the middle of the 1st century. In this area were hearths and apparently two superimposed huts, with attached privies both cut by the main ditch. This main ditch was 15 ft. wide at the original ground level, and 8 ft. deep. It had been recut three times and was deliberately levelled with an alien clay infill, apparently in the latter half of the 1st century. There was some evidence for a revetted bank behind it.

In the interior, the clearest feature, an irregular ditched circle, was excavated by hand, so that floor levels and stratigraphy might be observed. Three concentric ditches formed the east side. The innermost was 5 ft. deep with a steep vertical side on the interior; the others were shallower. Sequence has not yet been established. These ditches were deliberately filled with heavy ash layers, iron slag, daub, animal bones and pottery. The filling appeared to carry rammed earth floors of timber structures of 3rd and 4th century date on coin evidence. Pottery indicates that this circular feature was levelled in the latter half of the 1st century, which levelling may equate with the filling in of the outer ditch.

Adrian H. Oswald, 20 School Lane, Solihull.

BIRMINGHAM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Young Members Field Group)

Metchley (42/043838) The work begun last year on the site of the Roman forts was continued though the evidence secured was of a negative character. No trace of buildings within the forts was secured and the implications may be that here were tents rather than barrack-blocks.

Editor.



BIRMINGHAM RESEARCH GROUP

Alcester (42/088571) Work has now been concluded on the winged corridor building. The main building was exposed almost completely, with wall foundations up to 30 ins. wide, with buttressed corners and footings remaining in places. The restangle was 23 ft. wide internally, and the length was estimated at 80 ft. with 74 ft. already determined. The remainder is under a public footpath. Two cross-walls of lighter construction, one showing reconstruction on a slightly different alignment, had footings still in place: they probably carried timber partitions. Between the cross-walls the roof had been supported on eight posts. Five substantial stone-lined post-holes approximately 10 ins. square were located and robber pits with fragmentary remains marked two others. The floors were of good quality cement on stone pitchings. No sign of a hypocaust was observed. At foundation level, this building did not make contact with the wings and corridor already described, so they may have been a later addition but there is no dating evidence for this. Each of the cross-walls overlay a pit containing 1st century material.

Site A yielded a further well very close to the demolished almshouses. The structure was similar to other Romano-British wells found in the vicinity, but had been cleaned out and fitted with a pump, presumably to supply the almshouses.

Further demolition to the east of site F yielded a cremation burial in a jar similar to others found in the vicinity and dated to the 3rd or 4th century.

H. V. Hughes, 4 Turville Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham 20.

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY (Dept. of Ancient History and Archaeology)

Alcester (42/087571) This years work at Birch Abbey has been devoted to clearing buildings to the south of the Hadrianic road from Stratford, to the east of the houses excavated in 1963. The walls of another stone house were uncovered, overlying fragments of earlier floors. The house was probably occupied during the second half of the 3rd century - a pit cut across one of the walls contained a coin of Carausius. The house was decorated with painted plaster, fragments of which were found in rubbish pits. Work is continuing on this house, and on another structure immediately to the east of it.

R. A. Tomlinson, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

The Berth, near Baschurch (33/430237) Traces have recently been found of two distinct timber buildings in an area about fifty yards north-west of the main entrance. The floors of both were on much the same level, but so far it has proved possible to assign all the post-holes to one building or the other. The earlier one appears to have been of an Iron Age date, while the latter one which is represented by large post-holes, set in line 15 to 16 ft. apart, probably belongs to the 4th century A.D.

The Iron Age pottery from the site now includes a second sherd of 'duck'-stamped ware.

P. S. Gelling, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY (School of History)

Upton, Gloucestershire (42/152344) Site A. The excavation of buildings AA-AC is now completed; the walls of AC, the earliest of the three, contained pottery not likely to be earlier than c.1250. It is clear that AA-AC represents a peasant house complex of the later 13th-14th centuries. Further work will be necessary in later years to the north, east and west to find out if there were any exterior features or boundaries associated with these buildings. The main work this year was the stripping of the turf and topsoil south of



AA-AC. This is further down the slope and extends as far as the marshy area in the valley bottom. The rubble representing more buildings was cleared over the new area; in its surface could be traced the edge of a platform and a path representing the south exterior limits of building AC.

Several phases of buildings can be seen at this stage; in the lower part, the outlines can be seen of what appears to be a long narrow building with opposite doorways, about a third of the buildings length from its lower end. Presumably this is a typical "long house", with animal space in the lower third, and living accommodation in the upper two thirds. It is probably of 13th century date, and may prove to overlie still earlier buildings.

Site B. The boundary bank, as shown in 1963, proved to be a stone wall with a platform of stone on the croft side of it. Excavation showed that there was no building here as postulated in 1963, and the roof slates found then may well have capped the wall itself. In levels here below the medieval one, two areas of worn stones were found. The lower one, just above the natural, was associated with a few sherds of pottery which are of Dobunnic/early Roman style. On the upper one were a few late Roman sherds. On the arable side of the wall, there were no worn levels - they died away under the wall. The soil was deep here and mixed up as if by cultivation, and here too the lower levels yielded exclusively Roman sherds. This suggests but does not prove that the boundary between the "occupation" area and that of the arable, was the same in Roman as in medieval times.

P. A. Rahtz, School of History, University of Birmingham.

#### COVENTRY AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Baginton (42/344748) Work has continued in the unoccupied garden behind the School House, Baginton. Further scraping has revealed innumerable stake-holes, which carefully plotted, suggest the presence of circular enclosures about 10 ft. across, and a complex of other features. Some features possibly subsequent to the stake-holes have also been revealed. The earliest pottery still seems to be of early-Roman date.

Miss G. G. Wilkins, School House, Baginton.

#### KIDDERMINSTER AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Caldwall Hall, Castle Road, Kidderminster (32/813762) Work has continued on the medieval to modern site. Part of an aisled hall, with an 8 ft. diameter clay and stone hearth, has been found below the post 17th century levels at the west end of the site. Here also the corner of a cross-wing shows that the site continues under the 20th century house west of our site. All the available site has now been dug.

Walltown (32/798692) A cutting across the supposed fortifications of a large earlier fort north of the known fort has revealed a road and other features suggesting that the hillside was terraced and lined with buildings. The road is on the line, Greensforge to Leintwardine, round the south of the Clee Hills.

C. I. Walker, 5 Caldwell Crescent, Kidderminster.

#### LICHFIELD & SOUTH STAFFS. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Wall (43/107062) Excavation in advance of road construction on the peat bog between Shenstone and Wall, revealed a succession of three timber buildings of 1st and 2nd century date, one of which had been destroyed by fire. There was also evidence of iron smelting in the 3rd or 4th century.

North of Wall church (43/099067) excavation revealed a large rock-cut ditch, with a flat bottom, 6 ft. wide. This contained late 1st-early 2nd century pottery with coins of Vespasian and Domitian. Late medieval features (15th century) had removed all trace of any rampart which may have been associated with the ditch. Magnetic and resistivity surveys show that the flat-bottomed ditch turns sharply as if enclosing the hill-top.



Bourne Pool (42/073999) and Little Aston (43/092091) Excavation located a bloomery at the east end of Bourne Pool. This was active for a short period c.A.D. 1550. The works were on a small scale and were strung out along the top of the dam. Non-phosphoric ore was roasted on the site as well as smelted. The top of the dam has been ploughed, levelled and a covering of soil added, since excavation.

Samples of slag etc. were taken from the site of the forge at Little Aston. The forge was in use from the late 16th century until the end of the 18th century. Metallurgical analyses (by G. R. Morton) together with historical research and field-work have provided a very full picture of this forge.

Jim Gould, 307 Erdington Rd., Aldridge.

The Charcoal Iron Industry The lines of the 16th century charcoal blast-furnaces which worked on Cannock Chase (43/009139 and 33/947144) have been established, and the construction materials of the hearth and side-walls considered.

An examination into the conversion of "tough" and "cold-short" pig irons into malleable bar and later developments is continuing. Finds of both pig irons and other materials resulting from the processes, have been analysed and will be reported on.

G. R. Morton, 38 Buchanan Rd., Walsall.

Roads on aerial photographs In 1961, Arnold Baker took two photographs which showed possible roads. These have been examined at different times during 1964:

Water Eaton (33/908108) A line showed on the north side of the Watling Street, opposite Eaton House Farm, about 600 yards east of the Roman settlement, Pennocrucium, and about the same distance south of the Roman fort at Kinvaston. If the line of the field-mark is extended north-westwards it crosses the River Penk at the point where a few years ago there was a footbridge, and towards Rowley Hill where Roman implements have been found. The area between Watling Street and Rowley Hill was examined but except for a change of growth in the hedge on the Watling Street, at the point where it met one end of the field-mark, no evidence of the line of the road was visible on the ground, nor was there any evidence of a road extending on the south side of the Watling Street. The line of the field-mark does not fit in with any known Roman road system in the area.

Ackbury Heath, Chillington (33/877069) Three possible roads showed in the photograph, and were roughly parallel. An extension north-eastwards of the line of one of the field-marks, runs along the line of a partially grubbed-up hedge near Ackbury Heath Farm. No evidence could be found on the ground to account for any of the field-marks. If there was a Roman road from Pennocrucium to Walltown, it would be roughly in line with the three field-marks in the photograph.

J. Whiston, 58 Wednesbury Rd., Walsall.

#### MALVERN RESEARCH GROUP

Malvern Link (32/789497) Surface finds at Great Buckmans Farm suggested a pottery field, and a limited area was available for excavation. A preliminary magnetic survey suggested two possible positions for kilns. One turned out to be a rubbish pit filled with baked clay and ashes, the other proved completely blank. A second magnetic survey was planned but had to be abandoned through various mishaps. Autumn ploughing on another area of the site turned up further pottery. The types resemble many of the Roman vessels from Sutton Walls in Herefordshire. It is hoped that further excavation may be possible next year.

Paul L. Waters, 2 Westward Rd., Malvern Link.



MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY (Dept. of History)

Lydham (32/336909) A Roman fort has been discovered immediately south of the junction of the A489 and the A488, one and a half miles north-east of Bishop's Castle in Shropshire. The area of the fort is now partly obscured by farm buildings, but standing on the site one realises that it has been cleverly located on the highest point of the watershed between the Camlad and Onny valleys. It therefore commands extensive views north-east to the Forden Gaer and south-east towards the break in the Long Mynd that leads to Craven Arms and the Church Stretton gap.

The fort occupies a hill that slopes upwards at its northern end and the remains visible today fall into at least two phases. The original fort occupied an area of 5.2 acres and is slightly rhomboidal in shape (like Bryn-y-Gefeiliau, Cae Gaer, Castell Collen II, the Brecon Gaer and Gelligaer) due to the contours of the site. The size of the fort is close to that of Castell Collen I, Coelbren (both 5.3 acres) and Penydarren (5.1 acres) and, like them, the original fort at Lydham would probably have accommodated an ala quingenaria of cavalry or a cohors miliaria of infantry. The absence of any platform effect built up by prolonged occupation of the interior suggests that the first occupation of the fort was not of long duration.

This does not apply to the second stage of occupation represented by a small fortlet at the northern end of the original fort. It is by far the most conspicuous part of the site today. The western rampart and the south-western corner are well preserved in the field west of the A489 and stand to a height of 5 or 6 ft. in places. The reduced fort is laid out on the basic alignments of the larger fort; it measures 165 ft. by 315 ft. (1.2 acres).

Lydham lies south of the lead mining area of Linley Hills. At the same time the fort was strategically placed in the Bishop's Castle corridor between Craven Arms and the Forden Gaer and the reduction in its size suggests that it played a brief and changing role in the Roman penetration of Central Wales through the Upper Severn valley.

Dr. G. D. B. Jones, Dept. of History, University of Birmingham.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Mancetter (42/328969) Excavations were carried out in June at the Roman settlement near Mancetter, on the Watling Street.

A section cut through the eastern defences, on the south side of the Watling Street, confirmed Mr. Oswald's earlier section, in showing that the rampart and ditch were contemporaneous and of 3rd or 4th century date, overlying late Antonine timber buildings. An earlier ditch found by him underneath the rampart, did not appear in this year's section. Outside the wall, beyond a wide berm, were two defensive ditches.

A trench north of the modern Watling Street and behind the eastern defences shows that the Roman street lies north of the present line at this point.

A trench on the south side of the Watling Street, opposite the Bull Hotel showed a Roman north-south street, cut by timber slots, probably of medieval date.

Miss C. M. Mahany.

Mancetter (42/327966) During the autumn, Mrs. K. Hartley excavated several Romano-British pottery kilns in the fields that lie immediately south of the defended civil settlement. A surprise find towards the end of the excavation was that of a glass-making furnace though time did not allow for its excavation. It is hoped that Mrs. Hartley will be able to return to the site in the not too distant future.

Editor.



Wall (In advance of road construction) (43/103063 centre) Test holes in field 76 revealed a fringe of occupation on the south side of the Watling Street and partial excavation was carried out. Pebbled areas were found representing the rear exterior of timber-framed structures, and perhaps buildings of other types alongside the Watling Street. The levels were penetrated by gullies, ditches and shallow pits. Dating evidence suggests occupation from 2nd to 4th centuries. A shallow well, 6 ft. 9 ins. deep, with five courses of stone steyning above a timber plank lined base, produced pottery of the 4th century A.D.

Test holes in field 77 failed to reveal any trace of settled occupation, though they produced grey ware sherds and a coin of the 2nd century.

Excavation in field 64 revealed three phases of occupation:

- 1) the sides and ends of four rectangular timber structures occupied from c.A.D. 70-200.
- 2) the laying down of a pebbled roadway from the fringe of the Watling Street south-westwards with a north-south wall of redstone blocks on a cobbled foundation. This building, probably destroyed by fire, is dated to the early 3rd century.
- 3) a large timber structure, 75 ft. by 25 ft. represented by post-holes and of a late 3rd or 4th century date.

Small finds included a complete iron window grille with associated glass.

E. Greenfield, Fern Cottage, St. Mawgan.

#### THE OFFA ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, OSWESTRY

Ysgwennant, Denbighshire (33/189305) Excavation has continued on this Bronze Age burial site but no finds have been made. In the News Sheet for 1962 mention is made of jet buttons and rings found around a circle of hardpan, in which was embedded a flint knife. Miss Chitty suggested that this represented the remains of a leather bag which had held the flint and iron pyrites and for which the jet objects were fastening devices. The hardpan has now been examined by Professor Shotton who found that it did indeed contain remnants of iron pyrites. Work is to continue in 1965.

W. Day, 9 Green End, Oswestry.

#### RUGBY (PERCIVAL GUILDHOUSE) ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Tripontium (42/536795) Excavation was started on the west side of the Watling Street where gravel digging has not yet begun. A section 30 ft. long and 12 ft. wide, showed that the defensive ditch remained open into the 4th century. The skeleton of an eighteen year old girl was found, 2 ft. below the turf just south of the ditch. The neck was broken and this was almost certainly the cause of death. The body had been dismembered and one arm was missing. A knife lay on the pelvic bones. A complete 4th century pot was in close association.

The first stone building to be found on the site showed a corridor 35 ft. long and still continuing approximately north and south. To the east are three rooms and to the west one large room 12 ft. wide. The robbed outside walls were 3 ft. thick and the floors were of opus signinum. Large amounts of painted wall plaster and many roof tiles (some with graffiti) have been found. Two coins of the mid-4th century were found on the floor of the large room.

H. Cameron, 1 Vernon Avenue, Rugby.



SHREWSBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Hen Domen (32/214981) Excavation has continued of the 11th century motte and bailey castle. The seasons work has shown that there was a small wooden apsidal chapel of the 12th century in the bailey close to the motte ditch, and that the structures of the last period in all cases seem to have been flimsier than those of the penultimate period, which fits in with the hypothesis, suggested by the dating, by pottery, of the last period, that in 1223 when the new stone castle was built at Montgomery, the timber castle was remodelled for a new use, probably that of an early warning station and outpost overlooking the Severn, which cannot be seen from the later castle.

Pontesbury Castle (33/401058) Excavations have revealed the massive footings of a square tower or keep on the eastern side of the site. These footings were 13 ft. 6 ins. wide, and made of mortared rubble. The wall above them had been severely robbed, only the core being left to a height of some 4 ft. The wall was unlikely to have been less than 6 to 7 ft. thick, and it seems probable that the tower was at least 50 ft. high. A layer of charcoal and burnt wattle and daub inside the tower and a thick layer of charcoal outside it, suggest that the castle and its outbuildings had been burnt down. Since none of the pottery found is likely to have been later than the late 13th century, it appears that the castle came to an end then.

Previous excavation (1961) on another part of the site had shown that the rest of the apparent mound consisted of a rampart and ditch with three periods of occupation in timber buildings, within the enclosure. There is some evidence to suggest that the castle began as a ringwork with timber buildings only, and that later, probably some time close to 1200, the tower was erected near the rampart on the eastern side. Leland, the 16th century antiquary, saw in Pontesbury "great Tokens and Stones fallen down of a great Manor Place or Castelle; and thereby yet remaineth the name of Castelle Paviment", and it seems certain now that he saw the ruins of the recently discovered tower. The rampart had been demolished and used to fill the ditch at some time in the 19th century, and at the same time the tower had been finally robbed of its useful stone, and the site levelled. About 1900 a gin-ring, a horse-driven power unit, used for driving a chaff-cutter and for root pulping, had been installed where the tower had been. This interesting machine has been preserved for Shrewsbury Museum.

P. A. Barker, Church House, Annscroft, Shrewsbury.

Caughley (33/690003) Rescue excavations have taken place on the site of the Caughley Porcelain Works near Broseley. The Factory was demolished in 1821, but three waster heaps were found which yielded important series of vessels and showed what a great quantity and variety of articles were produced.

Wroxeter (33/561082) Work has continued on the site of the Roman bridge at Wroxeter. A soil mark in the fields west of the River Severn has shown the final stages of the road from Caer Sws and Newtown making for the bridgehead. The alteration in the course of the river has been studied and the manner in which the way from the actual river crossing ascended the steep slope up to the town is under investigation.

A. W. J. Houghton, Oak Wood, Pulverbatch, Nr. Shrewsbury.

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (County Planning & Development Dept.)

Tamworth One of the more important of the archaeological activities in which the Department has been engaged is the excavation of the town defences at Tamworth. Although popularly ascribed to Offa, these were probably erected by Ethel Flaed, "Lady of the Mercians" in 1913.

In April, two trenches each 100 ft. long, mainly ten ft. wide and fifteen ft. apart, were cut at right-angles to Marmion Street and therefore at right-angles to the conjectural line of the Saxon defences on the east side. The main feature discovered was a truncated bank, of which the outline was clearly visible in the sections of both cuttings. As found it was about 20 ft. broad and seemed to have been revetted with stones on the external face. Unfortunately, no dating evidence for this bank was discovered, but from its size, its location and its orientation it is likely that it represents the rampart of Ethel Flaed's defences.



Recording in the County The Departemnt's fieldwork has continued during the year, and a further 461 photographs have been taken. A detailed record was made of the Mond Gas Works at Tipton just before demolition, and other features that have received attention are the pumping stations at Hopwas and Springfields, Brockmoor Brickworks, heraldry in architecture, and the fine Queen Anne house at Hales Hall, Cheadle, which is now the subject of a provisional Building Preservation Order made by Staffordshire County Council.

J. H. Barratt, County Planning & Development Dept., Stafford.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Hampton Lucy (Grove Field Farm) (42/263595) This site, no. 74 in the Avon valley series, appears on air photographs as a right-angled double ditch, showing quite strongly in permanent pasture. Two cuttings were made: one sectioned the inner ditch, the other inconclusively explored a further section of it in an attempt to recover additional dating evidence. The section revealed a ditch 12 ft. wide and 4 ft. 9 ins. deep, dug as a somewhat irregular shallow U through natural strata of sand and gravel. Finds consisted of fragments of burnt Romano-British tile, a few pieces of horse teeth and some pottery. With such a thin scatter of finds it was not possible to arrive at any definite conclusions as to the date of the ditch. There were a few sherds of a recognisable Romano-British type, but most of the pottery was of a fragmentary and indeterminate type, which, though it might be pre-Roman, is consistent with a native Romano-British context.

C. C. Dyer, Orchard Side, Welford-on-Avon.

Surface investigation of local sites A series of field walks were carried out in the early months of 1964 as the first stage in the investigation of local sites discovered by air photography. Agricultural considerations and the weather limited the number of sites visited to fifteen, but surface finds of pottery were made on all of them, and in two cases, Luddington (42/178534) and Milcote (42/175525), the amount of material found was sufficient to indicate Romano-British occupation of the former site, and 17th century occupation of the latter. These two sites are numbered 54 and 56-a of the Avon valley series.

A. P. Baker, 23 Shipston Rd., Stratford-upon-Avon.

TYSOE

The Red Horse of Tysoe (42/43532442 & 42/43542448) Although the exact situation of the hill figure is not known, the antiquaries, 18th century cartographers and interested local residents agree within half a mile. It might be anywhere along the slope from Spring Hill to Old Lodge Hill. The discovery in March 1964 of a large scale map giving the exact position of the Horse was a great step forward, especially when it was established that the map had been drawn by the most scholarly and reliable inhabitant of Tysoe, Professor Arthur Ashby.

In September 1964, trenches were dug on the slope which had once been breast-ploughed but more recently furrowed and afforested. It is now covered with thick undergrowth. It seemed reasonable to hope that the sides of a trench, 3 ft. deep, would show some sign of the original outline. Four trenches were dug, 12 ft. long, 2 ft. wide and of varying depths between 1 ft. and 3 ft.

The slope is covered with "head" (omnibus deposits of local materials caused by slips from higher levels), and it was impossible to determine whether the soil had been disturbed or not. We struck the marlstone cap of Old Lodge Hill, and reached bed clay, but the sides of the trenches showed no sign of the Horse outline. Our only positive finds were four fragments of pottery, identified as Roman, 3rd or 4th century, and some remarkable shell fossils. Either

- a) the ditches outlining the horse have completely vanished,
- or b) this is the wrong site.



It seems incredible that ditches which had been scoured annually for at least 200 years (1600-1800), and possibly for a thousand or more years before that, should vanish without trace; however some work on the Tysoe enclosure awards, reveals that Red Horse Hill is not Old Lodge Hill, but the slope directly above Old Lodge Farm (42/43542448). A photograph has now shown, and inspection on the ground confirms, a vegetation pattern of the head and body of a horse, about 120 ft. long directly above Old Lodge Farm. Next Spring we intend to take aerial photographs and then to excavate to confirm that this is the true outline.

W. G. Miller, Shanunah, Tysoe.

K. A. Carrdus, St. John's House, Banbury.

#### WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

Croft Ambrey hill-fort (32/443667) The excavation of the south-west gateway is almost complete, indicating at least ten phases of construction. The evidence for the permanent occupation of the hill-fort thus obtained at the gate, has been matched by the constantly repaired hut sites found in the interior. One post pit here was demonstrably of no less than seven phases, and there is stratigraphical evidence to indicate that comparable rectangular buildings were in use from the earliest period of the hill-fort. The present evidence implied strongly that some, at least, of these buildings (up to 11 ft. by 10 ft.) were dwelling huts.

Leintwardine Roman fort (32/403742) Rescue excavations on a site within the defences suggested the plan of a timber headquarters building of the early village fort and provided abundant evidence from later latrine pits of 3rd and 4th century occupation. Beside Mill Lane a cutting in the rampart showed the Antonine defences to extend this far south and so enclose about 12 acres. South of Mill Lane the forts bath-house site was excavated showing three main phases of construction following the demolition of a 1st century vicus.

S. C. Stanford, Ashfield Cottage, Lūston, Leominster.

#### WREKIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP (Wellington)

Kinnersley (33/681178) Work at Wall Farm is almost completed for the present. This year's excavations have still produced no evidence of date; they have however proved that the main back is of dump construction without any internal bracing, and lies upon the natural at the point sectioned. Its base is a turf line.

It is also almost certain that it was thrown up from an interior scoop ditch, since a trial section through the main ditch has shown that it was probably about 15 ft. wide and had an overall depth of about 4 ft. from the top of the counterscarp. Further stake-holes have also appeared at the western end.

J. A. Pagett, 48 Park Rd., Donnington, Wellington.

#### SUMMER SCHOOLS

Wroxeter (33/566086) It was possible to make an arrangement this year with the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works for the use of two dozen prisoners from Staffordshire to begin the serious clearance of the site and assist in the work of the training school. It has been possible to clear the whole of the interior of the caldarium but unfortunately medieval or later robbing and 19th century excavations had left very little. Only two pieces of the floor were found, and these not in their original position. They had however preserved for us some interesting details which show alterations to the building. A small problem in Wright's account (Uriconium, 1872, p.122) was also elucidated. He illustrated on his plan what was described as a sunken floor made of flat tiles which he thought to be



the base of a cold-water tank. This would of course have been impossible in the middle of a caldarium. It is now clear that indeed a strip of flat tiles was laid on the sub-basement floor, in line with the stoke-hole, presumably to protect the floor from the heat which here would be at its maximum intensity. There is evidence of the replacement of some of the tile pilae by red sandstone showing that in some late stage in the history of the Bath-house, tiles were becoming scarce. Perhaps the most interesting revelation was in the grey stone retaining wall round the caldarium. This was discovered to finish at a distance of 10 ft. from both corners of the caldarium on the south side. It could thus never have been a retaining wall and must be considered in the nature of an encasement to protect the main wall of the building from subsiding into the soft sandy subsoil. It is possible that in fact it was never higher than its surviving point since the cement over the uppermost course of stones bears no impression of a further course of tile or stone. This would also account for its astonishing survival as it would have remained completely buried and unnoticed by stone-robbers.

Further work on the east side of the main buildings has produced more evidence that the Bath-house was not in commission until the late 2nd century and we have added further to the maze of water mains criss-crossing the area.

Graham Webster, 30 Portland St., Leamington Spa.

#### NOTES AND NEWS

We have to record with great sorrow the death after a short illness of Donald Macnair, the Extra-Mural Resident Tutor for North Worcestershire. Donald had been instrumental in the foundation of the Severn Valley Group, had been to Wroxeter and Barnsley Park, and his cheerful presence at our excavations and meetings will be sadly missed.

Graham Webster.

Two important leaflets have recently been issued by the C.B.A. One concerns safety precautions recommended to be taken on excavations, and the other, disposal of finds from excavations. If you have not received either, copies can be obtained from Miss de Cardi (C.B.A., 10 Bolton Gardens, London S.W.5) at a penny each, plus postage.



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| Various reports gathered under the report of the summer meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute at Keele but especially: |                               |
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