

WEST MIDLANDS ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS SHEET

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Edited by Jim Gould

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and

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Dates for 1966

Roman Roads weekend at Stratford

April 30th - May 1st

Annual Archaeological Research Groups' Conference:

May 21st - 22nd at Stratford

Details from The Department of Extra Mural Studies

Extra Mural Summer Schools

Wroxeter : Elementary I	August 3rd - 17th
Wroxeter : Elementary II	August 17th - 31st
Wroxeter : Intermediate	August 31st - September 14th
Barnsley Park Roman Villa	July 9th - 30th
The Romans in Wales	July 27th - August 3rd

Training Excavations

Waddon Hill, Dorset	May 28th - June 11th
Details from Dr. G. Webster, 30 Portland Street, Leamington Spa	
Hen Domen Montgomery.	Date to be arranged
Details from P. Barker, 4 St. Georges Square, Worcester	

Research Excavation

Midsummer Hill Camp, Herefordshire.	August
Details from S. C. Stanford, Ashfield Cottage, Luston, Leominster, Herefordshire.	

INTRODUCTION

This annual News Sheet is a valuable link between the various bodies which are active in archaeology in the West Midlands. It is intended not only to bring all the groups up-to-date with the work which has gone on during the 1965 digging season, but to record it, however briefly, for the benefit of any others who may be interested. It is already quite widely circulated and copies can always be made available for further distribution. It is, perhaps, especially valuable for putting the newcomer to archaeology in the area in the picture. All the bodies under whose aegis excavation is carried out - the University of Birmingham, C.B.A. Group 8, the Museums, the Archaeological Societies - are grateful to the editor and to the contributors, but particularly to the Extra-Mural Department of Birmingham University for undertaking the production and circulation. They hope it will be used to further the co-operation already so usefully established between all those who are interested in archaeology in the West Midlands.

This co-operation is particularly necessary for the successful continuation of the Avon-Severn Valleys Research Project, of which the first season of excavation was reported in the last News Sheet. Further work has been done this year at Beckford and at Barford, both under the direction of Mr. Adrian Oswald, with money provided by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. But a research project cannot concern itself solely with threatened sites although these have priority, and both financial and practical support is still urgently needed.

Another major activity this year has been Miss Mahany's twelve months of excavation at Alcester. This is a tribute to the co-operation between the Alcester Excavation Committee, the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and the contractors on the sites investigated, as well as to the devotion of the excavators.

A third activity in the West Midlands which should be mentioned is the survey of relics of the Industrial Revolution. Much good work has been and is being done, and nearly three hundred cards have now been completed. More volunteers for work in this field would be welcome. Industrial relics are often among the first to be swept away in the redevelopment of towns. Any group which would like to know more of this can be supplied with a speaker on application to the Secretary of C.B.A. Group 8.

In the field of Industrial Archaeology it is pleasing to be able to report that after various vicissitudes, an appeal has been launched for the preservation and use as a museum of Sarehole Mill. This is the last mill to survive within the boundaries of Birmingham. The appeal is still open and it is very much hoped that the initial success will be maintained so that the Mill's retention is assured.

It is also good to be able to report that interest is now growing in the measuring, recording and photographing of buildings of historical and architectural value. Efforts to preserve these where possible is going on all the time, but inevitably many are demolished. The loss is at least diminished if adequate records have been made. Help in this valuable work is always needed.

Julie Sanders, Chairman
Geoffrey S. Taylor, Hon. Sec } C.B.A. Group 8

5 Greenside Road
Erdington, Birmingham 24

AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE

Once again the season's results have been affected by adverse weather conditions during the period May to July. Although crop yields generally were good, a great deal of damage ensued from wind and heavy rain, particularly in barley and oats which are more susceptible to lodging. Wheat however did produce some good patterns in the West Midlands on the more permeable soils.

Under the best conditions, only the general outline of sites was visible, and much of the detail did not develop. Nevertheless results indicated areas of occupation to the south of Cirencester not previously surveyed; also a number of new sites can be added to the general West Midlands distribution; the most notable being a new temporary Roman camp sited between Wistanstow and Craven Arms. Sections of ditches had been observed in this area during previous surveys, but this season a corner was recorded together with two adjacent sides of over 1,000 ft in length. This would indicate a camp of some 30 to 50 acres, adding yet another large fort to the known military complex in that area.

Arnold Baker, Latchmere House, Durrington, Nr. Amesbury, Wilts.

Permutations of crop growth were unfavourable again this year for crop marks and the Avon was virtually devoid of indications of sites. The middle Trent produced a substantial number of sites in cereals, but in contrast to last year, almost none in sugar beet. Random flights were made over different areas and several sites were recorded in isolated places between Worcester and Shrewsbury along both banks of the Severn. Long stretches of this part of the river have extensive tree cover and are unsuitable for finding sites by aerial survey and the question must be posed whether the isolated sites indicate a greater density than can be recorded from the air. Several indications of extensive sites were observed around Shrewsbury, but they were too faint for satisfactory recording. A number of sites were recorded around Northampton, but the excavation of a known site showed no crop mark in spite of both the geology and crop being suitable for crop marks.

Every year produces a number of large ring ditches in isolated places away from the river gravels. They are often in soils that would not normally produce a crop mark. Is it possible that these sites predate a change from a drier climate with less tree cover, and that slow ditch infill from natural silting, turf growth and leaf would produce a soil and drainage difference to create crop marks? Although not as many sites will be found off the permeable sub-soils in the Midlands, as on them from aerial surveys, the isolated sites indicate that settlement patterns were not as closely allied to permeable soils as the present distribution maps indicate.

J. Pickering, The Outwoods, Hinckley.

ALCESTER EXCAVATION COMMITTEE

During 1965, excavations have been continuing with the help of several hundred volunteers, and prisoners from the Winson Green Prison in Birmingham.

Gunnings' Bridge (SPO92576). On the east side of Henley Street, a section has been cut through the defences of the Roman town, the line of which had not been previously known. At this point on the circuit, the town was defended by a clay rampart, dated to the 2nd century or later, in front of which was a 9ft. wide wall, which may or may not be contemporary with the bank. There is no defensive ditch at this point as the land slopes steeply down to the River Arrow.

Rectory Garden (SP092576) Excavation failed to find any trace of the western defences, or of Roman occupation at all. A section was cut across what was thought to be an ox-bow lake of the river which had evidently been open in medieval times.

Gaillaume's Factory (SP 090571) Beside the factory, south of the Stratford Road, some machine cut trenches showed traces of timber buildings in alignment with a north-south V-shaped ditch, the filling of which was dated to the early second century. It is not possible to say whether the ditch, which was only 4 ft deep, was for drainage or defensive purposes. If the latter, it must surely be connected with a fort.

Further to the south, and near to the east-west Roman road previously sectioned by H. V. Hughes, two trenches were cut which showed at least two periods of massive stone building with a hypocaust, and a date range of 3rd-4th century.

Birch Abbey (SP 088570) As before, the bulk of the excavation took place behind Birch Abbey on what is clearly the site of a thriving extra-mural settlement. An area of fourteen acres has now been examined and much of it has been stripped and fully excavated.

Three Roman Roads cross the site:

- a) The east-west road mentioned above. This has a deep ditch on the north side but no southern ditch. It is apparently of 2nd century date.
- b) A road aligned approximately northeast-southwest. This was followed for about 100 yds. but its levels had been destroyed where it might have been expected to form a junction with a). Its alignment is such that it may run from the south gate of the walled town towards the river crossing north of Wixford. No direct dating evidence was found but it must have been in use in the 2nd - 3rd centuries.
- c) A north-south road which apparently crosses a) and is a purely local road serving the industrial settlement at the top of the field and the leather-working factory near the river.

The plans of a great many timber buildings were obtained, of which the most important were:

- i) A leather-working factory. This had a timber floor laid on shallow horizontal joists. The building was divided into at least four bays and was at least 70 ft. in length. The wall and roof were supported on horizontal beams. The probable date was broadly Antonine.
- ii) A structure with a double circular palisade trench, 30 ft. in diameter, probably of Flavian date.
- iii) An enclosure with a double trench, 70 ft. square, with opposed entrances which had been succeeded by a low stone footing of similar size. The latter appeared to be the outer wall of a great building. About one third was taken up with a single large room and the rest was divided into a nave and two aisles. This basic plan had undergone considerable later alterations. The date range for the whole complex was 2nd-4th centuries.
- iv) A building erected on a foundation of large Lias blocks set in a wide trench. These extended round three sides of a rough rectangle about 30ft x 40ft. The fourth, short side, had no massive foundations but only a line of groups of small deep post-holes, each aggregate containing 3 to 5 posts. This building had also had considerable alterations. In one of its phases its walls had been covered with painted wall-plaster with architectural designs. In its latest phase a milestone of Constantine, similar to that found at Tripontium, had been built into a wall. The building must therefore have continued into the late 4th century.

- v) A number of rectangular barn-like buildings represented by massive post-holes.
- vi) A series of buildings similar in plan to the shops at Verulamium built on horizontal sleeper-beams.
- vii) Several small enclosures, about 8ft. square, built of vertical posts set in trenches.

In addition to the buildings, two iron-working furnaces were excavated; two timber-lined wells were examined and also one stone-lined well in which were found two small uninscribed altars. Many rubbish and quarry pits were excavated and in one of the former, a large group of Antonine samian was found. This comprised about 30 complete bowls (37s) and 20 complete plain forms. Their date is 150-160 A.D. About three dozen human skeletons have been excavated.

The only notable medieval finds were two almost complete cooking-pots in association with a medieval oven, the date range being about 1200-1350 A.D.

Miss C. M. Mahany, c/o G.P.O., Alcester.

For other excavations in Alcester see under Birmingham University and Leamington and District Research Group.

ARCHENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP (South Herefordshire)

Huntsham (SO 565175) Work is being continued on the building partly examined in 1962, when three rooms were found, and which is now seen to belong to the main villa. A wing, 100ft., has been excavated containing nine rooms, at least one of which possesses a channelled hypocaust system. Two or three periods are indicated, the latest being mid-fourth century. Portions of stone floor flagging remain.

The stone precinct wall, discovered in 1964, surrounds both the house described in report No. 7 and the villa.

N. P. Bridgewater, Glan-y-arw, Pantygelli, Abergavenny, Mon.

AVON-SEVERN VALLEYS RESEARCH PROJECT

Beckford (SO 980361) (Aerial Reconnaissance Site No. 14). Following last season's exploration of late Iron Age palisaded enclosures, an oval crop mark within the rectangular ditched enclosure was completely stripped. What appeared to be a ditch on the photograph proved to be a series of vertical posts of three periods: first a semicircular enclosure, about 50ft. across with possible staging for seats. This was replaced by an oval enclosure with a wide entrance. In the final stage the entrance was greatly narrowed and the whole surrounded with a double post stockade. Plentiful daub suggests that this structure was roofed with thatch. It was destroyed and swept clean c.70 A.D. Finds of duck-stamped native ware, Colchester white butt beaker and Romanised store jar and carinated beaker suggest a date range of 0 - 70 A.D. Horse bones outnumbered other skeletal remains which included a human jaw; and one horse skeleton had been exposed long enough to become disarticulated before being cast into the ditch formed by the removed posts. The slighting of this structure and the deliberate filling of the ditch of the surrounding enclosure suggest a change in the pattern of life early in the Roman period. General finds included native Roman fibulae, a bronze arrowhead, a shale bracelet, small rotary querns, spindlewhorls and two carved bone-handles. No samian ware or imported Roman amphorae or jugs were found, and no mortars although pottery was plentiful.

Barford (SP 289624) Work has been proceeding here since April under the threat of gravel extraction and the construction of the Warwick by-pass. The aerial photograph shows a pattern of circles, rectangular enclosures,

pits and field boundaries. Eight sites have been explored to date.

a) A triple ditched circle about 120 ft. diameter. This proved to be a Dorchester type henge very similar in plan to site 11 at Dorchester (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars. Excavations at Dorchester, 1951). The inner ring consisted of irregular pits separated by slight causeways with an entrance to the north-east. This was replaced by a continuous ditch with an entrance to the south-east. In its turn, this was supplanted by a continuous ditch with no apparent entrance. All these systems appear to have had an external bank. Finds consisted of a very large saddle quern buried in a pit inside the inner ring and, more mysteriously, a wooden object 3ft x 4ft similarly buried. A little secondary neolithic pottery was recovered from a pit in the centre of the monument. A pit just outside the south-east entrance yielded seven saddle querns on top of the fill. An intrusive pit inside the same entrance produced a Late Bronze Age miniature axe covered with a large fragment of Bronze Age pottery. This appeared to be a reburial, for Iron Age pottery was found a foot below.

b) Seven of 29 small pits were examined. They were circular and oblong with surrounding stakeholes for thatched roofs. The circular ones appeared to have a lining probably of wattle. The fill suggested that the roofing had collapsed into the pit. They were clearly intended for the storage of crops, but no evidence of grain was recovered. There was no positive dating. Similar groups of small pits occur on many aerial photographs.

c) A small rectangular enclosure, slightly lozenge shaped, about 50ft. across. Surprisingly this yielded half a Peterborough ware pot from the rapid silt of the ditch and other fragments from the upper silt together with some flints from the interior. Two sets of post-holes in the interior form a slightly oblong structure. Subsequent post-holes were cut into the fill of the ditch. The ditch itself cut an earlier ditched enclosure and two sets of earlier post-holes. Work is continuing on this very complex area.

d) A circle 60ft. across. The ditch was interrupted on the south-east to form an entrance with an avenue of stakes at the approach. The interior was heavily revetted with posts some of which were subsequent to the ditch. Some had been deliberately withdrawn. The central area disclosed sundry irregular pits which appeared to have been robbed, perhaps when a palisade trench of ancient but uncertain date had been dug across the structure when the central mound must have been reduced. The fill of the enclosing ditch yielded some fragments of early Bronze Age pottery in charcoal patches. The whole structure was presumably a barrow.

e) Sections were cut across two complexes of very large pits. These were about 5ft. deep, irregularly circular, 12ft to 15ft across. The fill was a light brown sand with some pebbles with large patches of clay at the base and sides, which were nearly vertical. One disclosed in the roadwork was completely lined with puddled clay. Their date is at present uncertain but they are certainly artificial and occur on all air photographs.

(All the above sites were excavated by Adrian Oswald with Mrs. M. Gray and Miss K. Hughes as Assistant Supervisors)

f) & g) Two areas were investigated by Warwick School Archaeological Society under K. Wardle and D. Browne. One consisted of two small rectangular enclosures whose ditches yielded Iron Age pottery; the other revealed large field ditches yielding a little Roman pottery.

h) Birmingham University Archaeological Society is working on a further rectangular enclosure and a hairpin shaped enclosure of interrupted pits (Aerial Reconnaissance Site 83).

Charlecote (SP 268578). This is a small cursus type enclosure which was investigated by Mrs. P. M. Christie over a fortnight's work. It proved 234ft long with parallel ditches enclosing an area 46ft wide. There was an outer bank. One entrance was excavated. Traces of an interior structure were revealed by post-holes. Finds consisted of flints including a fragment of an arrowhead and a few pottery sherds of Neolithic-Bronze Age date. Total stripping will be needed for further information.

Adrian Oswald, 20 School Lane, Solihull.

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY (Dept. of Ancient History & Archaeology)

Alcester (SP 087571) Excavations were continued at Birch Abbey. The building uncovered last year was found to extend eastwards and to comprise two wings linked by a corridor. A damaged well in the courtyard appeared to have been cleared out before it collapsed. Work is continuing on the underlying structures.

R. A. Tomlinson, Birmingham University.

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY (School of Medieval & Modern History)

Upton Deserted Medieval Village (SP 152344) This year's work, in the wettest season yet experienced there, was directed to the uncovering down to floor levels of a very fine 13th century longhouse. The upper end is built into the hill-slope and the masonry here is standing to a height of 4ft. This end of the house is the living part with a hearth and an oven, built into the wall. The other downslope end, beyond the opposite entrances already has drains appearing which suggest use for animals. Finds include pottery, and surprisingly, a piece of carved window or door-head and an iron keyhole. The "well" at the head of the valley was shown to be a spring with much modern disturbance.

R. H. Hilton)
P. A. Rahtz) Birmingham University.

Hatton Rock (SP 237577) (Aerial Reconnaissance Site 61)

Resistivity and magnetometer surveys were done on this possible Mercian Palace site with some success. This should enable the plan of the air markings to be plotted accurately. No excavation is at present permitted on this site.

P. A. Rahtz Birmingham University.

COVENTRY & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Combe Abbey (SP 404798) In advance of landscaping activities, trenches were cut on the supposed site of the Abbey church. From the layout of the grounds and the standing cloister remains it seems reasonable to suppose that the church lay to the south of the claustral complex, instead of to the north, as is more normal. Indeed a newspaper report of the 1890's mentions church remains coming to light in this area during earlier landscaping.

No masonry of the monastic period was found, but the whole area is covered by a constant layer of decayed green sandstone containing floor and roof tile and painted glass. It seems certain that the church was levelled by Lord Harington in the late 16th century, during his conversion of the abbey into a dwellinghouse, and was finally destroyed by W. A. Nesfield, the landscape architect, in 1864 when the present moat was dug through the site.

A row of oolitic limestone coffins containing skeletal material were exposed 6 ins. below the turf; lying with their heads to the south, and with 19th century pottery under them, they were probably reburied by Nesfield.

The City Wall, Coventry The line of the City Wall to the northwest of Cook Street gate was investigated for the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. The opportunity was taken to machine cut a section across the ditch and to examine a small area on the inside of the wall. Constructional methods and material recovered agree very closely with those obtained from Mrs. Woodfield's earlier excavations on the wall (Med. Arch. V, p. 325; VI-VII, p. 330; T.B.A.S. forthcoming). The ditch however was practically nonexistent, possible due to the close proximity of the gate, and had been badly damaged by 19th century sewer laying.

The area inside the wall was covered by a "dirty" layer containing pottery, animal bones, pieces of metal and coal, and although 2ft to 3ft had already been removed by bulldozers, was still about a foot thick. This, presumably, is the remains of the inner bank, and the pottery from it included 15th century hard-fired purple ware, as well as much residual 12th, 13th and 14th century material. The wall construction trench cut this layer thus confirming the late date of the wall in this sector.

Ryton on Dunsmore (SP374726) (Aerial Reconnaissance Site 97)

A close watch has been kept on this site during the excavations for sand and gravel. A destroyed Romano-British pottery kiln was found very similar to those excavated by Brian Stanley at Wappenbury (T.B.A.S. 79; p. 93) and traces of others have been noted. Amongst the finds from the area is a coin of Tetricus II (A.D. 270-273). The sand working has now destroyed this site and will soon encroach to the neighbouring site No. 98.

Stivichall Grange, Coventry. (SP 325765) Excavations for new estate roads near this moated site have produced late 13th - early 14th century coarse pottery with thumbled applied strip and combed decoration.

R. G. Thomson, Yew Tree Cottage, 2 Brinklow Road, Binley, Coventry.

Baginton (SP 344748) An adjacent area of the unoccupied garden has been opened. Pottery has been plentiful giving a sequence from medieval times to the 19th century. There have also been early Roman pottery and some flints. A dry wall of red sandstone was apparently joined at right-angles by one, badly robbed, of grey sandstone. These seem to have enclosed an area of daub pierced by stakeholes similar to those of 1964, and by square post-holes. It is hoped to investigate further the occupation layers which are apparent below.

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

COVENTRY CITY MUSEUM

Cathedral Church and Benedictine Priory of St. Mary, Coventry (SP 336792) Five adjacent sites north of the medieval cathedral were excavated due to the redevelopment by Coventry City Council and the Cathedral authorities.

a) Cathedral Refectory extension. This produced three rooms of a possible Farmery Range with walls standing up to 12ft high, five ceiling springers in position and a full standing equilateral arched doorway.

b) Vergers Garden. (Monastic Cemetery) Five undisturbed stone coffins discovered in 1955 now are related to three undisturbed earth graves containing male skeletons.

c) J. F. Kennedy House Student Hostel. On the site of the Chapter House were found:

- i) the southern wall and eastern apsidal end with seating and arcaded column base in position.
- ii) the western wall facing the cloister garth; a centrally placed 6ft wide, recessed doorway, with five engaged octagonal column bases.
- iii) approximately 1500 pieces of stained and coloured glass were found.

d) Cathedral Office Garden. An 80ft square Cloister Garth was located with an 11ft wide robbed tile walk, showing the tile impressions on the mortar bedding.

e) New Buildings, Multi-Storey Car Park. The east-west (Reredorter?) wall was exposed for 40ft and standing 6ft high, 6ft wide, with the west return of the wall to the south extending for 15ft. There was evidence within the wall of a large drain and also an inset octagonal column.

B. Hobley, Coventry Museum.

HEREFORD CITY MUSEUM

Bastion, Hereford City Walls (SO 511402) Excavations were carried on for three weeks at Easter 1965, on a site in Blueschool Street which will be affected by work on the relief road. The bastion shown on 18th century maps was successfully located under the surface of Blueschool Street carpark, but the walls had been robbed of almost all their facing stones to a depth of five feet below the present ground surface, and a confusing array of 18th and 19th century foundations and robber trenches had to be removed before the outline of the bastion and its junction with the wall faces became clear. Excavation was continued to a depth of 13ft below ground level down the slope of the ditch in front of the bastion. A few sherds of medieval pottery were found in the lower layers which were separated from the upper 17th and 18th century deposits by a clay-faced recut, presumably marking the Civil War refurbishing of the defences. The front of the bastion had been built about 6ft down the face of the ditch, it protruded 10ft from the line of the Town Wall and its walls were 6ft thick. The external junctions with the face of the main wall had been robbed down to the foundation, which rested on natural gravel. The inner face, 12ft in diameter, had been less severely robbed and the interior was entirely cleared down to the natural gravel. A foot of grey silty soil above it showed some disturbances, but produced few finds. This layer was also encountered in a trench just to the west of the bastion, which was intended to provide a section behind the walls, but where a series of cesspits had disturbed and removed any overlying material. If it does represent the surface before the walls were built it was remarkably deficient in small finds considering that it must have been inside or in close proximity to the city.

The junction between the core of the city wall and the bastion in this western trench shows they were well bonded and constructed at the same time. The junction of the exterior faces at the eastern end had been entirely robbed to reveal that the wall here had been built over a pit with a rubbish fill. The exposed quarter was excavated on the last day of work, to reach natural gravel at a depth of 5ft below the base of the wall, yielding a very useful collection of potsherds which clearly date from before the construction of the wall. The form of the wall and bastion seem to confirm other evidence for an Edwardian date for this final form of the city defences.

The comparatively meagre medieval finds reinforce suggestions that the line of wall and ditch in this sector marks a final 13th century extension of the city defences. In this case the sections and sherds from the Blueschool Street site may provide the ideal starting point

from which the more complex history of other parts could be traced. Historical records carry Hereford's defences back before the Norman Conquest and it is the only site west of the Severn which offers such a feasible opportunity for the identification of an early medieval and Dark Age sequence.

F. Noble (with Miss S. M. Crompton and W. T. Jones)
6a Wylcwm Road, Knighton, Radnors.

KENILWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Kenilworth Castle (SP 279720) During restoration of the dam by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, a section some 60ft long and 17ft high across the dam was exposed. Although the period during which the section was exposed was too short to plot the layers completely, a partial plot was achieved. The most prominent feature was an 18 ins layer of high gravel content which extended horizontally some 50ft across the dam. The layer lies 12ft below the present top of the dam, and it has been suggested that it indicates an earlier top level. No datable material was found, but charcoal was found at the base of the section. The dam was constructed in the early to mid-12th century to contain the mere. It was breached by Col. Hawkesworth in 1649, the breach having now been filled in by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works.

H. L. G. Sunley, 57 Highland Road, Kenilworth.

Cherry Orchard (SP 279648) Excavations were undertaken in 1964 after surface finds of Romano-British greyware. The site is a small peninsula, bounded by a railway cutting, 18th century gravel workings and a working claypit. A 10ft length of rough dry stone wall was exposed running into the claypit at one end. The wall was capped with pieces of tegulae. In all, about 50 pieces of tegulae were found, all wasters and three stamped with the letter T.C.M. The finds would seem to indicate the proximity of a 3rd - 4th century tile-kiln. Excavations continue.

Warwick, Market Street. (SP 279648) An area lying between Market St. and Bowling Green St. was cleared prior to development and an excavation was mounted with the object of locating the 14th century defences at this point. A trench, 35ft by 4ft was opened at right-angles to Market St. and bedrock was struck at 6ft. The ditch was found cut into the bedrock, with 9ft deep vertical inner face and was 22ft 6in wide. The only evidence of the wall was a robber trench in section, and a level of rubble in the ditch filling. Later the whole site was cleared down to bedrock by the contractor, and the ditch was exposed to a length of 150ft. One sherd of Saxon pottery was discovered in this trench inside the ditch-wall, and this led to another trench being opened against the edge and parallel to Market St. A 3ft layer of dark grey clay, not from the immediate locality, was exposed, and below this in 2 post-holes (?) were found about 40 sherds of rough gritted hand-made pottery which made up into 5 incomplete Saxon pots. It is possible that the grey clay layer is an early bank, (Ethelfleda 914?). It was sealed by metalling, apparently of a roadway, probably of pre-medieval date.

Brian Powell, 51 Highland Road, Kenilworth.

KIDDERMINSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Greensforge (SO 863883) Two cuttings, each 100ft long, have been made across the presumed defences of the second fort disclosed by aerial photography at Greensforge (see T.B.A.S., 80; p. 82.) The first cutting was made at right-angles to the line of the ditch in the west side towards the southwest corner. The second was made parallel and close to the roadside hedge in the north side. In each case a ditch about 6ft deep was found with indications of clay filling. The site generally is

sand and gravel, and this suggests the clay had come from the facing of a rampart, traces of which could be seen behind the ditches. Areas of occupation material and pits were also found.

The work has yet to be evaluated but the pottery and small finds at first glance suggest that the material is of the second half of the first century.

J. C. Hockin, 26 Belbroughton Road, Blakedown, Kidderminster.

Solcumb Farm, Blakeshall, Wolverley. (SO 822809) The lower half of a rotary quern was ploughed up by a subsoiler near the centre of a promontory hill-fort. The fort is not marked on the lin. O.S. Map, nor on the map of Iron Age Britain. It is multivallate with defences 150ft across and enclosing about 4 acres. Quantities of stone, foreign to the area, have been ploughed out of the fronts of the defensive banks. The quern, of brown sandstone, is about 16in in diameter and could be pre-Roman. Half of the site is now occupied by a radar station.

Kidderminster, Ring Road. The first stage crosses the site of the manor house investigated in 1950. A cobbled paving and sandstone cellars have been observed in a cutting for an underpass and must date to pre 1753. During excavation for bridge abutments by the canal basin, earthenware, ashes, saggars and kiln props have been found in layers in cuttings 30yds apart. The pottery has been identified as Wedgwood or imitation cream earthenware 1770-1780 A.D. A soak pit in the layers above the cobbled pavement referred to above contained broken saggars and more of the same pottery. The nature of these deposits suggests pottery working near here at the above dates.

It is hoped to excavate soon a cropmark site at Grimley in advance of gravel working.

C. I. Walker, 18 The Ridgeway, Stourport.

LEAMINGTON & DISTRICT RESEARCH GROUP

Alcester (SP 087571) This small excavation on the Birch Abbey site at Alcester has now taken its place as the small corner of the larger area stripped by the Alcester Excavation Committee under the direction of Miss Mahany. Work has continued at week-ends on one of the trenches left uncompleted from last year. We now have the complete ground plan of a timber building 8ft-9ft wide and approximately 40ft in length provisionally dated to the end of the 3rd or beginning of the 4th century with subsequent repairs and replacement of timbers. The evidence for the building consists of two parallel rows of post-holes arranged in five bays, each approximate 8ft square. It runs along the northern edge of a large drainage ditch which separates it from the Roman street running east-west across the site, continuing the alignment of the Stratford-Alcester road. The earlier layers, in which a curious circular fenced enclosure was discovered in 1964, have not yet been reached in the trench at present being excavated.

It is hoped to continue working at week-ends, weather permitting, until Easter, when the contractors are expected to start building operations on this part of the site.

Ullin Place, "Grey Lodge", Birmingham Road, Henley in Arden.

LICHFIELD & SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Hilton (SK085052) Preliminary excavation of a possible Roman marching camp, three sides of which had been revealed by aerial photography, has confirmed the existence of a ditch and rampart which has been sectioned in two places. So far nothing earlier than medieval pottery has been found apart from one worked flint.

A. A. Round, 95 Darnick Road, Sutton Coldfield.

Wall (Letocetum) (SK 099067) Investigation of the Roman ditches north of the church has continued. The rock-cut, flat-bottomed ditch found in 1964 has been sectioned further to the north and found to have widened to at least 10ft at the bottom. A magnetometer survey had suggested that this ditch turned at right-angles as if enclosing the hilltop. Excavation contradicts this, showing the flat-bottomed ditch ends shortly before meeting a fine, rock-cut, punic ditch which was responsible for the magnetic anomalies and which is almost at right-angles to the flat-bottomed ditch. One end of the punic ditch was found just short of the brow of the hill and lower down the hill a length of the ditch was emptied when an area 20ft by 30ft was stripped. Unfortunately, there was medieval disturbance everywhere with 14th and 15th century pottery, down to the top of the bedrock, though not into the ditch filling. This disturbance may be agricultural and partly due to the ploughing of a steep hillside. The sudden ending of the punic ditch short of the hilltop, and the absence of any associated inner military ditch, suggests unfinished defences, though more work must be done before this can be definitely postulated. A further complication is the presence in quantity of mid 2nd-century pottery in the filling of the punic ditch, which shows no sign of secondary silting to account for the late date of the pottery. Both ditches have yielded military bronzes (some of which are considered to be legionary), early brooches (a Hod-hill type, an "aucissa" and one with Iron Age affinities) and residual pottery.

Jim Gould, 307 Erdington Road, Aldridge.

Deserted Medieval Site, Amington, Warwicks. (SK 232256) In the early summer of 1965, James Pickering observed from the air and photographed an unrecorded deserted medieval village site at Amington near to the Staffordshire border. The site is adjacent to Amington Old Hall and its fish stews.

Although many DMVs are recorded in the south of Warwickshire, they are few in the northern part. This area is not very productive of crop-marks and the photograph must be due to freak conditions. It is probable that other sites await discovery in the area as a number are recorded not far away across the border in Staffordshire at Statfold, Thorpe Constantine, Croxall, Haselour and Fisherwick.

J. Whiston, 58 Wednesbury Road, Walsall.

MALVERN RESEARCH GROUP

Dymock (SO 705311) Excavation was resumed at this site, near the village cricket pitch, where a Roman road and the floor of a building had been discovered in 1960-61. An iron smelting furnace was found between the building and the road. Four separate overlying floor levels associated with a complicated set of post-holes and beam-slots were also found. It is apparent that there were a number of wooden buildings on the site. Fortunately an additional area of ground is available for excavation next season. Preliminary dating suggests occupation during the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

Malvern Link (SO 789497) A further magnetic survey on this supposed pottery kiln site was conducted late in October after a very late harvest, but no anomaly was found large enough to suggest a kiln. A number of smaller anomalies may have been caused by ditches or habitation sites but it was not possible to excavate in the time available. More surveys and excavation will be done next season when the state of the crops permits.

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

MALVERN HILLS ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE (in association with the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club and the Worcestershire Archaeological Society)

Midsummer Hill, Herefordshire. (SO 760375) A fortnight's survey was undertaken at Easter as a preliminary to an excavation campaign planned to start in 1966. In addition to a detailed levelled survey of the whole hill-fort, bleeper and resistivity surveys were made extensively on Hollybush Hill, the eastern of the two hills that are enclosed by the bivallate defences. Small scale test excavations indicate a close cover of timber buildings.

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

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY (Dept. of History)

Whitchurch (Mediolanum) (SJ 541416) Excavations took place during August, 1965, at Newtown, the north-western corner of the modern town which is being redeveloped for a housing scheme. The area examined lay between the modern High Street, which formed the axis of the Roman settlement, and the western edge of the town. The grid of trenches uncovered an area of the Roman town that had a strongly industrial character throughout its life from the first to the fourth centuries. Traces of metal, especially lead, working were found in abundance, together with a variety of furnaces, one of which was probably used to produce salt by boiling brine from nearby springs.

The principal stone buildings uncovered lay in the centre of the site, where two superimposed structures of roughly similar layout were examined. The later building was dated by coin evidence to the end of the 3rd century A.D. much of its plan had been destroyed by medieval and modern disturbance. Underneath it, substantial remains of an earlier building belonging to the middle of the second century A.D. were uncovered.

Beneath this building, and at an equivalent level throughout the site, extensive traces of timber buildings attested intensive occupation of the site in the late Flavian/Trajanic period - an occupation again characterised by much evidence of metal working. This confirms and amplifies the historical picture emerging from neighbouring Roman towns like Middlewich (Salinae) and Northwich (Condate) where a similar heavy occupation in the late first and early second centuries has been supposed. At Whitchurch, the first-century levels are numerous and extend to a depth of 10ft 4in below ground level. Amongst them it has not yet been possible to identify definite evidence of a military occupation, nor to establish the date of the earliest occupation, which might arguably be assigned to the period A.D. 60.

Work on the western side of the site designed to locate the edge of the Roman town, revealed a V-shaped ditch. Further excavation is needed to show whether this belongs to an early military period or to later defences of the civil settlement. It is hoped to answer this and other outstanding problems in a further series of excavations during 1966.

G. D. B. Jones, Dept. of History, Manchester University.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Mancetter (Witherley) (SP327966) The excavations at Broadclose, Mancetter were continued in 1965, but the exigencies of cropping and harvest prevented access to parts of the site and it was decided to concentrate attention on a major feature located in 1964. This proved to be a heated drying shed measuring 19ft by 12ft externally, surrounded

by rough stone walls, which served to retain an unusual and complex system of flues. Associated large post-holes at the corners attest a timber superstructure or at least a roof.

There were two main phases in the structure, the details of the earlier largely obliterated by the later. The second version was fired from a divided central flue so arranged that either half of the structure could be heated separately or the two halves together. A suspended wooden floor on which the material to be dried would be placed, may be postulated and the useful life of the dryer seems to have ended when this caught fire. Six small furnaces had been dug into the debris of the earlier structure, but they had been badly disturbed by ploughing and, their purposes are not self-evident, though one may have been a potter's kiln. A post trench of a timber building cutting the drying plant may be contemporary with some of these features.

The drying shed seems to have been in use in the mid-second century, to judge by the associated pottery. Set in the midst of kilns, it seems clear that it was provided as an adjunct to pottery production. Manufacture of pottery on the scale now attested for the Hartshill-Mancetter kilns and by the distribution of their mortaria would undoubtedly have been a full-time business and the provision of heated drying floors is consonant with winter activity. It is no doubt significant that the other known dryers, although different in details, are in a legionary establishment (Holt) and in one of the major centres of samian production (Lezoux).

That the plant may have been used seasonally for grain-drying too, is suggested by the presence of carbonized cereals in the filling of the flues.

Mrs. K. F. Hartley, c/o Dept. of Latin, The University, Leeds.

NUNEATON

Chilvers Coton (SP 342893) Excavation following a magnetometer survey has revealed a partly destroyed tile-kiln. It is hoped to excavate the stokehole next season when secure dating for the kiln may be possible.

S. C. Clarke, Lindley House, Lindley, Nuneaton.

OFFA ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, OSWESTRY.

Ysgwennant Denbighshire (SJ 189305) Excavation has continued on this Bronze Age burial mound but the only find has been an unstratified flint implement, closely resembling a Gravettian point. Dr. Savory considers that it may be Mesolithic. Work is to continue in 1966.

Llanymynech Hill Montgomeryshire (SJ 266222) In the old mine-workings leading from the Ogof ('Ogof' is Welsh for cave) a party of schoolboys on Nov. 11th 1965 found a hoard of 33 silver denarii. These have been sent to Mr. G. C. Boon, National Museum of Wales, for a report, and they will be the subject of an inquest. They have tentatively been ascribed as follows: Republic (1); Vitellius (1); Vespasian (2); Domitian (2); Nerva (1); Trajan (11); Hadrian (11); Antoninus Pius (2); Marcus Aurelius (1); and Faustina (1)

W. Day, 9 Green End, Oswestry.

RUGBY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Tripontium (SP 535795) Excavation was continued at the top of the hill on the west side of the Watling Street to examine a small ditch of 5ft depth which is cut by the large defensive ditch. Magnetometer and

resistivity surveys were carried out to find the line of the 10ft deep by 14ft wide defensive ditch. The results were not conclusive but may be helpful in selecting areas to section next season.

Work continued on the stone building at the foot of the hill and more rooms have been found. One room has stacked pilae over 2ft high but no covering slabs have yet been found. The magnetometer has given a clear indication of what are probably robbed walls. Coins in the solid floors are all mid-4th century.

H. Cameron, 1 Vernon Avenue, Rugby.

SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Weeping Cross, Shrewsbury, (SJ 508105) Following Mr. P. Barker's discovery of the site from the air, a series of probing excavations and two larger scale excavations have shown it to be occupied as a settlement and/or burial area from the Early Bronze Age to late in the Early Iron Age period. The field excavated can be divided into three subsites:

- i) A Late Bronze Age cremation cemetery with under-lying 'boat grave' features.
- ii) An Early Iron Age farmstead with boundary ditch and Little Woodbury affinities superimposed on an earlier enclosure and at least two Middle Bronze Age barrows.
- iii) An undated area at the edge of a prehistoric pool which pollen analysis suggests ceased to hold water continuously from c.2200 B.C. There were also linear ditches and a pit containing wood ash in this area.

The site will be excavated by the Avon-Severn Valleys Research Committee during the coming year.

W. E. Jenks, 18 Langford Ave., Upper Pulley, Shropshire.

SHREWSBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Weeping Cross (1963) (SJ 508104) The Ministry of Public Buildings and Works excavation uncovered about 10,000 square feet of the interior of the Iron Age enclosure and produced the plan of a circular, trench-built hut, 30ft in diameter, with a wide out-turned entrance and a group of internal posts, presumably for supporting the roof, together with an internal pit, 3ft in diameter and 3ft deep, perhaps for storage. There were other Iron Age structures within the enclosure, some antedating and some postdating the hut. Among these was a late circular structure of post-holes, perhaps another hut, with some evidence of a hearth.

The enclosure with its huts had been built over a Bronze Age cremation burial in an enlarged food vessel. Close to the site of the burial was an oval area of burnt clay, with fragments of calcined bone, and a central post-hole, which almost certainly represents the site of a funeral pyre. A shallow roughly circular ditch, approximately 2ft wide and 96ft in diameter, with the burial and pyre at its centre, must indicate the limits of the barrow, perhaps a disc barrow, which covered the burial. It is extraordinary that the Iron Age settlers should have chosen to build their enclosure and huts over a cemetery, and it seems most likely that the barrows had had only very small mounds which had disappeared by the Iron Age - the barrow ditch had silted naturally to the top and was almost certainly invisible before work on the Iron Age settlement was begun. Finds were not numerous, and were chiefly confined to Iron Age pottery from the backfilled features of the settlement.

Hen Domen (SO 214981) The season's work at Hen Domen produced the plans of more small buildings on the bailey rampart, including that of a round tower at the junction of the rampart and motte ditch. The large pit, which was emptied to a depth of 20ft proved to be a cesspit on deep-litter principles, from the filling of which a number of interesting leather and wooden objects were recovered. A small sherd of developed Stamford ware was the most notable pottery find.

P. A. Barker, 4 St. George's Square, Worcester.

Wroxeter (Viroconium) (SJ 569083) Work was commenced at a point where the ramparts form an angle and where the present road to Ironbridge crosses them. A deserted garden abutting the south side of this road was stripped, and at a depth of 2ft, a Roman road with cobbled surface was found, parallel to and offsetting the present road. Adjoining this surface were fragmentary foundations suggesting the possibility that a stone built gate had existed there.

A. W. J. Houghton, Oakwood, Pulverbatch, Salop.

Roman road from Viroconium to Mediolanum The doubtful line of this road between Shawbury and Morton was confirmed by aerial photography in the area crossing the river Roden, but the siting of Rutunium remains elusive.

Hinstuck Hall (SJ 686269) A rescue excavation was carried out on the surviving 600ft of a semi-circular earthwork, prior to its being bulldozed. A ditch 5ft deep and a rampart with indications of a palisade were revealed, but no dateable material was found. The total area of the enclosure suggested would have been $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

Dr. J. Gask, Newtown Leys, Market Drayton, Salop.

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (County Planning & Development Dept.)

Martin St., Stafford (SJ 923235) In the basement of the former Chief Constable's Office at Martin St., Stafford, a well, 3ft 3in in diameter throughout, was excavated completely and was found to be lined with eleven regular courses of sandstone, shaped internally. The bottom coincided with the present water-level, and was 11ft 3in below the surface of the yard to the west. The contents of the well, largely 16th and 17th century pottery, included the broken parts of a pewter vessel, while material from outside suggested that the well itself may have been of the 13th century. The most notable of such material was a zoomorphic spout and a fragment of stained glass with floral decoration.

Priory of St. Thomas, Stafford (SJ228951) The second discovery was of human skeletal remains at the site of the Augustinian Priory of St. Thomas by Stafford. Three largely intact skeletons lay alongside on another at a regular depth of about 2ft 6in below present ground level, and they corresponded in orientation with a surviving fragment of the conventual church. One skeleton was in a stone coffin, whose lid was missing and another in a stone vault, consisting of side and end walls only. All three belonged to adult males, suffering from various forms of osteoarthritis. In addition there were intrusive skeletal remains, including those of a child, possibly four or five years old. The burials mark the position of what was presumably the cemetery to the east of the conventual church.

County Planning & Development Officer, Martin St., Stafford.

TYSOE

The Red Horse of Tysoe (SP 435245) Professor Geoffrey Dimbleby and Dr. Ian Cornwall, of the University of London, Institute of Archaeology, carried out tests on the Red Horse site in August 1965, to try to determine whether the vegetation pattern did show the outline of this vanished hill-figure. Prof. Dimbleby reports that the position is "that the soil samples taken within and without the horse figure have so far been analysed for acidity and organic matters and the two groups show no significant difference in either. Preliminary tests for phosphate are pointing the same way. Other more time-consuming analyses will be done as soon as possible. The vegetation analysis showed that all the abundant plants on the area showed no preference for the horse figures, but some of the less frequent species did. The fact that they were less frequent means that our data are rather inadequate, so that further quadrat work is necessary before we can be sure. Nothing more can be done until the early summer of 1966 when the critical plants are visible again."

One more piece of historical evidence has been found. The Marquess of Northampton had a terrier made by John Spyers in 1765-71, which definitely identifies Red Horse Farm as the modern Dinsdale Farm in Upper Tysoe. Dugdale in 1656 said that a freeholder held certain lands in return for the service of scouring the hill-figure every year. The deeds of Dinsdale Farm go back no further than 1919, but the Marquess of Northampton hopes to be able to find the deed of Red Horse Farm.

K. A. Carrdus, St. John's House, Banbury.
W. G. Miller, "Shamah", Tysoe.

WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB

Croft Ambrey, Herefordshire (SO 443668) Further evidence of the intensive and continuous occupation of the hill-fort has accrued in the course of 1965. More buildings, again set out in rows, have been planned inside the Plateau Camp West Gate; and on the summit of the hill, above the 1,000 ft. contour still more timber buildings have been found. In the eastern quarry-ditch a hearth site showed repeated renewal over a period of two centuries or more. Work on the entrances has nearly completed the details of the hill-fort's long succession of gateways and has located the Plateau Camp entrance beneath the Main Camp's East Gate structures. A mound in the annexe has been partly excavated and shown to be of Roman, second-century date.

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

WREKIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Wall Farm, Kinnersley (SJ 681178) Sporadic excavation during this season has revealed that the main bank is of at least four periods and that the corresponding alignments do not always coincide. There is evidence of a recut ditch below this bank, 18 ft. in from the outer western face.

J. A. Pagett, 48 Park Road, Donnington, Wellington, Salop.

WROXETER TRAINING SCHOOLS

Wroxeter (SJ 566086) Work at the training schools was this year concentrated on the area around the open swimming pool. The whole of this area is now being stripped down to the military level so that the timber buildings can be examined in greater detail and at the same time the bath itself fully exposed to enable the Ministry to consolidate. This work has enabled a complete section across the site linking the early phases with the bath building, and enabling us also to study the later history of the site. There are still quite a number of problems to be resolved but it now seems certain that the encasement wall of the caldarium was built as an extension of the original scheme and not at a later date as was once

thought possible. The open bath appears to have gone out of use very quickly and was used as a tip for praefurnium rubbish from which a considerable collection of late Antonine pottery has been recovered. Work was also started on the stripping of the main praefurnium area. Much more has survived the 19th century excavation than was thought possible and the exploration of this area, in particular the central flue, should add considerably to our knowledge of the history of the Baths.

Graham Webster, 30 Portland Street, Leamington Spa.

University Department of Extra Mural Studies

Charles and Clara Foyle Bursaries

This year there will be 4 bursaries of £10 each. The bursaries are designed for young adults whose financial commitments prevent their attending one of the training schools (i.e. Wroxeter or Barnsley). The one condition for applicants is that they should be active members of a West Midlands Society or Research Group. If you know of anyone who would be interested in this scheme, please persuade them to apply: the money is there. Application forms are available from Miss Christine Johnson of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies.

It was suggested at the 1965 Research Groups Conference that it would be useful to publish a list of names and addresses (and where possible, 'phone numbers) of local organisers of excavations.

Below is a suggested list. Names in brackets refer to the sites or towns with which the person is particularly associated. I would be grateful for suggestions for additional names and information.

Further copies of this page are available separately from this Department. Christine Johnson, Department of Extra-Mural Studies
The University, Birmingham 15.
(SElly Oak 1301, Ext. 150.)

BIRMINGHAM

phone

- Department of Archaeology, City Museum and Art Gallery CENTral
Congreve St., Birmingham 3. 9944 Ext. 2837
Keeper: N. Thomas, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.,
Assistant Keeper: A. Gunstone, Esq., M.A.,
- University of Birmingham
- Dept. of Archaeology (P. Gelling, Esq., M.A., SELly Oak
R. Tomlinson, Esq., M.A., 1301
- School of History (P. Rahtz, Esq., M.A., M.A., F.S.A.,)
- Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
(Dr. G. Webster M.A., Leamington 26893
S. C. Stanford, Esq., B.A., F.S.A., Yarpole 363
P. A. Barker, Esq., F.S.A., Worcester 26335)
- C.B.A. Group 8
- G. Taylor, Esq., 5 Greenside Rd., Birmingham 24 (Sec) -
- Birmingham Archaeological Society
- Mrs. J. Sanders, 9 Victoria Road, Birmingham 17 (Sec) Harborne 1632
- A. Oswald, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., Solihull 3668
20 School Lane, Solihull, Warwickshire.

HEREFORDSHIRE

- N. P. Bridgewater, Esq., Glan-y-arw, Pantygelli, Abegavenny, -
Mon (For Ross-on-Wye area)
- F. Noble, Esq., B.A., 6 Wylcwm St. Knighton, Rads. Knighton 328
- S. C. Stanford, Esq., B.A., F.S.A., Ashfield Cottage,
Luston, Leominster, (Croft Ambrey, Midsummer Hill) Yarpole 363

SHROPSHIRE

- P. Barker, Esq., F.S.A., 4 St. Georges Sq., Worcester 26335
- Miss L. Chitty, Ingleside, Pontesbury, Nr. Shrewsbury.
- W. Day, Esq., 9 Green End, Oswestry (Offa Antiquarian Soc.)
- Dr. J. Gask, Newton Leys, Market Drayton Market Drayton 2894
- Dr. A. W. J. Houghton, Oak Wood, Pulverbatch. Dorrington 2129
- W. Jenks, Esq., 18 Langford Ave., Upper Pulley Shrewsbury
- Dr. G. D. B. Jones, Dept. of History, University of Manchester
(Whitchurch) Ardwick 3333
- J. Pagett, Esq., 48 Park Rd. Donnington, Wellington -
- Dr. G. Webster, 30 Portland St. Leamington Spa. Leamington
(Wroxeter) 26893

STAFFORDSHIRE

County Planning and Development Officer, Martin St. Stafford. 2113
F. Celoria, Esq., Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, University of
Keele. (Staff Tutor in Archaeology)
J. Gould, Esq., 307 Erdington Rd. Aldridge (Wall) Aldridge 52097
A. Round, Esq., 95 Darnick Rd. Sutton Coldfield SUTTON Coldfield
R. Sherlock, Esq., M.A., County Archaeology Officer, /4950
County Planning and Development Office, Martin St., Stafford.
J. Whiston, Esq., 58 Wednesbury Rd. Walsall Walsall
(Staffs. County Archaeologist) 22653

WARWICKSHIRE

H. Cameron, Esq., 1 Vernon Ave., Rugby.
J. Carrdus, Esq., St. John's House, Banbury.
S. C. Clarke, Esq., Lindley House, Lindley, Nuneaton -
Mrs. K. Hartley, c/o Dept. of Latin, University of Leeds
(R.B. Kilns, Mancetter/Hartshill)
B. Hobley, Esq., Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Jordans Well Coventry
Coventry. 20635
Miss C. Mahany, G.P.O. Alcester.
U. Place, Esq., Grey Lodge, Birmingham Rd. Henley-in- Henley-in-
Arden. (Alcester) Arden 2661
B. Powell, Esq., 51 Highland Rd. Kenilworth Kenilworth
52036.
H. Sunley, Esq., 57 Highland Rd. Kenilworth Kenilworth
53574
R. G. Thomson, Esq., 2 Brinklow Rd. Binley, Coventry Walsgrave-on-
Sowe 4132
Miss G. Wilkins, School House, Baginton, Coventry. Tollbar 3141
(School hours)

WORCESTERSHIRE

P. Barker, Esq., F.S.A., 4 St. George's Sq., Worcester Worcester 26335
K. J. Barton, Esq., A.M.A., F.S.A, Worcs. County Museum Hartlebury 416
Hartlebury Castle, Nr. Kidderminster
J. Hockin, Esq., Arran, Belbroughton Rd. Blakedown, Blakedown 246
Kidderminster, (Greensforge)
C. I. Walker, Esq., 18 The Ridgeway, Stourport
(Kidderminster)
P. L. Waters, Esq., 2 Westward Rd. Malvern Link. Leigh Sinton
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AERIAL SURVEY

Arnold Baker, Esq., Latchmere House, Durrington, Nr. Amesbury
Wilts.
J. Pickering, Esq., The Outwoods, Hinckley, Leics.

February 1966.

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