

BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP BULLETIN

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BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Officers and Committee for 1963/4

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J.E. Hancock.

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Norman V. Quinnell, Archaeology Division, Ordnance Survey.

A. Selway.

Michael G. Smith, M.Sc., Department of Physics, The University, Bristol.

Dr. H. Taylor.

Dr. E.K. Tratman, O.B.E., F.S.A.

Membership:

Membership of B.A.R.G. is for the present by invitation only. The annual subscription (due 1st March) is ten shillings for those aged 18 or over, and five shillings for those under 18. There is no entrance fee. Those wishing to be invited may apply to the Hon. Secretary.

Editorial

It is the custom of the Editor of a certain archaeological periodical of high standing (which shall be nameless) to write his editorials while abroad attending archaeological conferences or on Mediterranean archaeological cruises, visiting important excavations in foreign parts, or sampling the wines of megalithic areas in France or Spain or elsewhere. Perhaps this is a good idea if only because British archaeological societies often suffer from insularity. This is the Editor's reason for writing these lines while attending the Summer Meeting of the Prehistoric Society in Denmark.

While in Copenhagen he spent an hour in the Coin Department of the National Museum, which possesses more than fifty Saxon and Norman coins of the Bristol Mint, mostly Saxon examples which reached Denmark in the form of Danegeld and Heregeld payments. Their collection includes several types of which almost the only known specimens are in the Scandinavian museums. Among these are a silver penny of Aethelred II coined by Aelfwerd; five silver pennies of Harthacnut; and a magnificent specimen of the Henry of Anjou (later Henry II) silver penny minted in Bristol by Arefin (the finest of three known examples). Thanks to the amazing kindness and efficiency of the Copenhagen Coin Department, plaster casts of these rarities are being supplied to Bristol City Museum, in addition to photographs of all their Bristol Mint coins. On the last day of the Meeting, the Editor met in Aalborg the Curator of Danish Churches, who has recently found a Bristol Mint coin of Cnut in the foundation deposit of a Saxon church in Denmark. It is hoped to give details of this in the next issue of this Bulletin.

The Danish Meeting was attended by five members of B.A.R.G., - Messrs. P.J. Greening, Michael Owen, E.K. Tratman, W.J. Wedlake, and the Editor. Sites visited included various monuments of the prehistoric periods; but to many the highlights were those of the Viking Age, - Trelleborg and Fyrkat fortified camps from which the Viking attacks on England were probably made; the Ladby ship-burial; the great barrows and runo-stones at Jelling; and (on the last day) the magnificent settlement and cemetery at Lindholm Høje near Aalborg.

P.S. The plaster casts of Bristol Mint coins from Copenhagen Museum were awaiting the Editor on his return to Bristol.

OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUPS:

IV. The Chiltern Earthworks Research Committee

by

James F. Dyer.

For some time a small group of archaeologists have been working individually on various aspects of early Chiltern history. Early in 1959, in meeting together, they found that they were frequently duplicating each others' work, particularly in the arduous task of searching journals for reference material. It was agreed that, knowing the requirements of their fellow workers, a liaison would be invaluable for the regular interchange of information. The archaeologists formed themselves into the C.E.R.C. under the Presidency of Mrs. Aylwin Cotton. It was decided that the Committee should work on the loosest possible lines, there being no desire to restrict or curtail the activities of its members in any way. Membership was, and still is, by invitation. The Committee has no funds, rules or news bulletin; yet its members are in constant touch with one another, and there is a network of their observers from Letchworth to Reading.

It was felt by all members that the Chilterns could best be served by archaeologists treating the hills as a distinct geographical unit, rather than by examining only the areas falling within the individual counties of the field-workers. This has caused some alarm and cries of "poaching", from the more insular and inactive archaeologists, particularly and surprisingly in Buckinghamshire, where, with the exception of the excellent work of J.F. Hoad, little fieldwork has been done for half a century.

The writer's paper on 'Barrows of the Chilterns' was produced before the inception of the C.E.R.C., but it was agreed that this should form a model for similar studies of other types of earthwork in the Chilterns. In 1959 excavations were carried out for the Committee on the linear earthwork known as Dray's Ditches near Luton in Bedfordshire. The results have been published in the Antiquaries Journal (1961: 32). Suffice to say here that the work led to the tracing of a number of similar triple-dykes lying across the Icknield Way in the eastern Chilterns by members of the Research Committee. This work is still continuing, two further dykes having been traced in 1963.

Considerable lengths of the Chiltern Grim's Ditch were discovered in 1960-1 enabling it to be redated to the Early Iron Age. In so doing a whole series of new earthworks, including flint-mines, were found on the Herts-Bucks border near Ivinghoe.

A detailed network of Roman roads in the Chilterns has been traced by R.W. Bagshawe and the late R.H. Reid; these are to be published in book form by Gollancz early next year. (Roman Roads in the south-east Midlands). At Letchworth

some earthworks from Neolithic to Saxon times have been under examination for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Letchworth Museum by John Moss. These, together with some barrows, henge-monuments and a suspected causeway camp at Barton-in-the-Clay are throwing new light on the part played by the Icknield Way and the Chilterns during prehistoric times.

During 1961-2 two barrows were excavated for the Committee, which revealed an unusual sequence of events. One of the barrows (in Streatley parish, Bedfordshire), covering a pair of mutilated neolithic burials, was rebuilt in the Roman period to take two dozen slaughter victims. In the 17th century the barrow had been used as the site of a gallows, and eight execution burials were added at the time. At the foot of the gallows a pit was discovered containing a horse skull and dice. These, according to Dr. M.A. Murray, probably represent a witchcraft deposit connected with the hanging of a witch.

As has already been said, the Research Committee publishes no local news bulletin. The Editor and two members of the Editorial Committee of the Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal are members of the C.E.R.C. This Journal covers material from Bedfordshire and its adjoining counties, so that it is available to publish any material relating to the Chilterns as a whole. The Journal of the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society is also available for more specialised Buckinghamshire reports.

As in the Berkshire Field Research Group informality and a minimum of administration without the fuss of winter lectures and summer coach trips is paying dividends, and members of the Committee are beginning to feel that the Chilterns are no longer a blank on the archaeological map between Wessex and East Anglia.

B.A.R.G. Course on Air Photography and the Past

This weekend course was held from 3rd to 5th of May 1963, in the Geography Department of the University and in the City Museum. Lectures and demonstrations were given by Mr. L.F. Curtis (University Department of Geography), Mr. J.E. Hancock, Mr. Michael G. Smith (University Department of Physics), Mr. Alan Warhurst, and Mr. L.V. Grinsell. The course was attended by about 24 members, most of whom took part, on the Sunday, in a resistivity survey of Pinbury Iron Age hill-fort between Sapperton and Cirencester, under the direction of Mr. Michael G. Smith, when indications on air-photographs were strikingly confirmed.

THIS NUMBER'S UNSOLVED PROBLEM:

Where are the Neolithic and Bronze Age Settlement Sites?

By the Editor.

One of the tantalizing characteristics of European archaeology is that tombs were usually built to last, while habitation sites were not. That is why the pyramids of the Egyptian pharaohs remain but we know little or nothing of their palaces; and the situation is similar for the prehistory of most of the peoples of Europe and the Mediterranean, particularly in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.

On the Cotswold Hills there are about 60 known Neolithic long barrows, yet we know little or nothing of the homes of those who built them. On the Mendip Hills there are several hundred Bronze Age round barrows, but very little trace has been found of living sites of the period, other than those in caves where preservation has occurred for exceptional reasons. The same is true for the chalk downs of Wessex with their immense numbers of long and round barrows and yet with scarcely any known indications of habitation in the Neolithic or Bronze Ages.

In order to account for this disparity in the archaeological record, it has been suggested that the Neolithic and Bronze Age inhabitants of southern England (and many other regions) were semi-nomadic, - pursuing an economy based on shifting agriculture and pasture; moving to 'fresh fields and pastures new' as soon as the old ones had become impoverished.

A possible hint of where to search for Neolithic living sites on the Cotswold Hills is provided by the direction of the entrances to the long barrows - nearly all facing east, north-east, or south-east. It is just possible that these entrances were within sight of the habitations; but unfortunately we do not even know whether the people of the Neolithic period are likely to have buried their dead within sight of their homes. For ourselves, it is the last thing that most of us would wish to do!

On Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor the stone footings of Bronze Age huts are well preserved on the slopes of the moors, while the round barrows are nearly always on the tops of the hills. This suggests that the slopes of the Mendip Hills may have been occupied by living sites in the Bronze Age.

The real difficulty in identifying Neolithic and Bronze Age habitations in southern England is that, apart from those on Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor, they have seldom left any traces above ground. It is however likely that it will be possible to locate some of them by the use of geophysical appliances such as magnetometers and resistivity surveying instruments specially designed for archaeological purposes.

YOUNGER MEMBERS' SECTION

By Mrs. J.L. Edwards, B.A.

i. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme - Archaeology.

The Curator of Archaeology and the Schools Department of the City Museum have already helped a number of young people who have embarked on this archaeological experience. The choice of subject is a wide one, and any junior member considering taking part in the Scheme should have little difficulty in finding a subject to suit him. The scheme of work is the same for Girls' and Boys' Award, and is divided into two levels.

Candidates are required to start at the first level, whether they are competing for the Bronze, Silver, or Gold awards. The assessors are more interested in the candidate's application and improvement over a period of six months than in the attainment of any fixed standard.

First level. A candidate must either

- (i) read and visit museums over a period of six months and make sketches of at least five different types of exhibit (flints, pottery, bronze implements, etc.).
- or (ii) take part in archaeological fieldwork or excavations over six months and produce a certificate from a responsible person that he or she has done so. (On no account may he indulge in archaeological digging alone without proper supervision),
- or (iii) form a collection of specimens and make notes on them.

Advanced level. A candidate must either

- (i) trace the development of his or her own town or village back as far as possible and collect as many specimens as possible to illustrate it,
- or (ii) take part in archaeological fieldwork or digging over a period of six months and produce a certificate from a responsible person to prove that he or she has done so,
- or (iii) write a short illustrated description of any one particular period of history in the district, which will have entailed the requisite sustained effort.

N.B. The sentence enclosed by brackets under First Level (ii) is an editorial interpolation.

(ii). The Second Conference of Young Archaeologists will be held on 18th - 20th December at the Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. Accommodation will be available at Campbell Hall around the corner. The cost is not expected to exceed £5. The age limit is 32, but those who attended last year's Conference are eligible to attend even if now over 32. Further details are obtainable from Mr. Richard Reece, B.Sc., St. John's School, Leatherhead, Surrey.

(iii) A book on The Archaeology of the Severn Basin, by our member Mr. Kenneth Painter, has recently been completed and is now in the press. It has been written for the young reader and forms one of a series of regional archaeology volumes for younger people, to be published in the near future by Cory, Adams and Mackay Ltd.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

Archaeology in Wales, 1962. Newsletter of Group 2 (Wales and Monmouthshire) of the Council for British Archaeology, No. 2, 1962. Edited by Leslie Alcock. 23 pages, 4to duplicated.

This is the second number of a publication which will be of interest to many outside the Principality. Archaeologists in south-west England, in particular, will benefit from knowing of the work being done on the other side of the Severn.

Archaeology in Wales, 1962 is an account of the year's harvest of excavations, field work, chance finds and research projects. Items are arranged by period and then by county, and are serially numbered for easy reference. They range from prehistory to industrial archaeology, from microliths to 19th century workers' dwellings. Notes are included on work carried out by the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Public Building and Works, the National Museum of Wales, and the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire.

The B.A.R.G. "outlier" in these foreign parts, committee-member Mr. G.C. Boon of the National Museum of Wales, contributes accounts of his excavations at Caerleon, and of the Cefn Garw hoard of medieval gold coins.

An "Information Wanted" section draws attention to a far-reaching research project initiated by Dr. C.B. Crampton and Mr. D. Webley to study soil formations over archaeological sites in South Wales.

A bibliography of "Periodical Literature outside Wales" lists reports on Welsh excavations and works of synthesis relevant to Wales, which have been published outside Wales. Looking ahead, there is a list of "Forthcoming Excavations".

The work involved in gathering and editing these notes must be formidable. We look enviously at this publication and wish for one under the auspices of C.B.A., Group XIII, but quail at the thought of the labour it would impose on some poor editor.

Archaeology in Wales, 1962 is issued free to members of Group 2. Individual membership is open to anyone at a subscription of only 5/- which should be sent to the Group's secretary, Leslie Alcock, 32, Cyncoed Road, Cardiff. A few copies of the first number, Archaeology in Wales, 1961, may still be available at 2/- each.

Charles Browne.

A Brief Numismatic History of Bristol, by L.V. Grinsell, 28 pages, 4 plates and other illustrations. Bristol City Museum, 1962, price 2/6d (3/- including postage).

This well produced booklet should be of considerable interest and use, as it gives in convenient and readily accessible form much useful information to be found only in many different places. Most numismatics tend to get into a groove, and deal only with one or two series, but this publication covers the whole field of numismatics in respect of Bristol from the opening of the mint there in the early 11th century. There is an interesting section dealing with the 16th and 17th century farthing tokens issued by Bristol, and the special position which they held, whilst the cover carries an enlargement of the obverse and reverse of the little-known modal struck to mark the fall of the City to the Royalists in 1643. There is an excellent bibliography which seems to cover most of the principal sources and which will be useful to those wishing to do further research. Should a second edition be called for, it might however be wise to give the scale of enlargement of the penny on plate I, whilst a better specimen of the Bristol halferrown of 1697 might be reproduced on plate III. Also some indication as to whether or not the specimens described are in the Museum collections or not, would be of use to students.

Owen F. Parsons.

A Lost Roman Road, by B. Borry. 1963, Allen and Unwin. 18/6d.

Science in Archaeology. Edited by D.R. Brothwell and E.S. Higgs, 1963. 90/-.

It is intended to include reviews of these books in the next issue of this Bulletin.

FORTHCOMING COURSES, EXCAVATIONS, EXHIBITIONS, AND LECTURES

Courses.

- Mondays. 7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. at the Technical College, Lower Borough Walls, Bath, beginning on 7th October: Iron Age Britain, by Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A. A course of 24 meetings, fee £1.
- Tuesdays. 7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. in the City Museum, Bristol, 8, beginning on 8th October: Methods of Studying the Past, by L.V. Grinsell, F.S.A. A course of 20 meetings, fee £1.
- Thursdays. 7.30 p.m. at the Community Centre, Sunhill, Clevedon, fortnightly, beginning on 10th October: Principles of Archaeological Excavation, by Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A. A course of 12 meetings, fee 12/6d.
- Fridays. 7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. at the Folk House, College Green, Bristol, 1, beginning on 4th October: The Meaning of Archaeology, by Edmund J. Mason. A course of 20 meetings, fee 30/-.

Weekend Courses, Conferences, and Meetings.

- Sat.-Sun. 19/20 October, at the Youth Hostel, Stow-on-the-Wold, Glos. Cotswold Field Archaeology, by R.D. Abbott and L.V. Grinsell. Participants must be Y.H.A. members.
- Saturday 2nd November, at the City Museum, Bristol, 8. Autumn Meeting of the Council for British Archaeology, Group XIII (South-West): Late Anglo-Saxon Archaeology in the South-West. Tickets 5/- from L.V. Grinsell, The City Museum, Bristol, 8.
- Sat.-Sun. 16/17 November, in the City Museum, Bristol, 8. Inaugural Meeting of the Post Medieval Ceramic Research Group (jointly with B.A.R.G.).

Excavations.

Excavations in the Bristol City area are being concentrated this autumn around St. Peter's Church and Mary-le-Port Street. They are being directed by P.A. Rahtz and R. Lampert for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and the City Museum. Those who wish to assist are asked to contact Mr. Rahtz or Mr. Lampert on the site.

Working hours: Weekdays 7.30 a.m. to dusk; Sundays, 10 a.m. to dusk.

Exhibition.

- November. In the City Museum, Bristol. Late Anglo-Saxon Archaeology in the South-West (Feature of the Month). This has been arranged to coincide with the C.B.A. Meeting on 2nd November.

Lectures

Bath and Bristol Numismatic Society (all at 7.15 p.m.)

Thursday 17th October: to be arranged. In the City Museum.

Thursday, 21st November: Irish Coinage in the Middle Ages, by D.W. Dykes, M.A., F.R.N.S. In the University.

Thursday, 12th December: How to arrange a Coin Collection (a symposium by various speakers). In the City Museum.

Bristol City Museum

Wednesday, 11th December, at 7.30 p.m.: Recent Developments in Underwater Archaeology, by Miss J. du Plat Taylor, F.S.A.

Canerton Excavation Club (all at 7.15 p.m., Bath Technical College)

Tuesday, 1st October: Roman Excavations in the Yeovil Area, by L.C. Hayward, F.S.A.

Tuesday, 5th November: An Archaeological Tour in Denmark, by W.J. Wedlake, F.S.A.

Tuesday, 3rd December: Nonsuch Palace, by Martin Biddle, F.S.A.

University of Bristol Speleological Society (at 8.15 p.m., in the Geography Lecture Theatre).

Monday, 14th October: Recent Excavations of Sub-Roman and Saxon Sites in Somerset, by P.A. Rahtz.

Monday, 11th November: An archaeological subject not yet decided.