

BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP BULLETIN

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The official address of the Bristol Archaeological Research Group
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BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Officers and Committee for 1963/4

Chairman:

Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A.

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Charles Browne, c/o The City Museum, Bristol, 8.

Hon. Secretary for Junior Affairs:

Mrs. J.L. Edwards, B.A., The City Museum, Bristol, 8.

Hon. Excavations Adviser:

P.A. Rahtz.

Hon. Editor:

L.V. Grinsell, F.S.A.

Committee:

Brian V. Arthur, Conservation Assistant, City Museum, Bristol.

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Dr. J.W. Cowie, B.Sc., Dept. of Geology, The University, Bristol.

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Kenneth Hudson, B.B.C., Whiteladies Road, Bristol.

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

This number completes the second year of three parts of this Bulletin, and it is opportune to take stock of our progress so far, and to consider the future.

B.A.R.G. has now run weekend courses in Field Archaeological Survey, Air-photography and the Past, and the Identification and Study of Flint Implements, and has organised the Inaugural Meeting of the Post-Medieval Ceramic Research Group, in consultation with the officers of that body and the City Museum.

It has provided, in conjunction with the City Museum, training in modern techniques of excavation, so far mainly as applied to archaeological problems in built-up areas.

Its first special publication, The Preparation of Archaeological Reports, still flourishes. The First Edition of 300 copies at 2/6d each (cost price) was exhausted about three months after it was issued. The Second Edition (550 copies), incorporating improvements resulting from suggestions made at the Council for British Archaeology's Conference of Editors, held in London on 17th November 1962, was ready at the end of January 1963, and the price was revised to 3/6 (4/- including postage) which has enabled the book trade to be supplied at the usual discount. About 300 copies of this edition have now been sold.

Its second special publication, a Survey and Policy for archaeological research in the Bristol region, was forecast in the Editorial Foreword to the first issue of this Bulletin. Part I of this Survey and Policy, the work of nine contributors, is now in draft, and it is intended to have this ready for distribution in good time for the Annual Meeting on 7th March 1964. It is believed that this will be the first comprehensive policy statement to be produced by any regional archaeological body in the British Isles.

It has published accounts of the work of five other Archaeological Research Groups, which have demonstrated the diversity of their methods of approach to similar problems, and have shown us that we have a great deal to learn from other Groups. This feature of our Bulletin will be continued, and the Spring issue will contain an article on the Cornwall Archaeological Society, by its Honorary Secretary Mrs. Florence Nankivell.

In view of the impending publication of Part I of our Survey and Policy, which draws attention to many unsolved problems, it is intended to discontinue the Unsolved Problems feature in this Bulletin. It is essential that the features in a Bulletin be changed from time to time in order to provide variety and to avoid getting into a rut.

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE POST-MEDIEVAL CERAMIC RESEARCH GROUP

By arrangement with the Bristol City Museum and the Bristol Archaeological Research Group, a Conference to promote the formation of the P.M.C.R.G. was held in the Museum Lecture Theatre on Saturday and Sunday 16/17 November, and was attended by nearly a hundred delegates, including members of the Museum and Art Gallery profession from London and the provinces, archaeologists, art historians, medieval historians, and practising potters. The arrangements were made by Messrs. K.J. Barton (Worthing Museum), J.G. Hurst (Ministry of Public Building and Works), and Alan Warhurst.

An extensive exhibition of post-medieval pottery from various sites chiefly in the south-west was staged in the Museum Lecture Theatre, and material was lent by many museums and private persons. This material was commented on after tea on Saturday by the lenders and by Mr. Barton and Mr. Hurst.

The proceedings on the Saturday afternoon were opened by a short address of welcome by Mr. Alan Warhurst, after which Mr. K.J. Barton outlined the reasons why it was considered that the Group should be formed, and made suggestions regarding its aims. This was followed by a discussion, during which Mr. R.J. Charleston (Assistant Keeper of Ceramics, Victoria and Albert Museum, London) mentioned the existence of the English Ceramics Circle which includes the study of pottery of this period. Their annual subscription however is beyond the means of the average younger field archaeologist. The sense of the discussion appeared to be that there was a need for a fairly loosely-knit Group to concentrate mainly on the wares produced between A.D. 1500 and 1750, but not to confine itself too rigidly within those limits. The Group was accordingly formed, and its Hon. Secretary is Mr. K.J. Barton, whose address is: the Museum, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire. The subscription was fixed at 10/- per annum, payable on 1st February.

The Sunday was devoted to three papers of considerable interest: The Medieval Background, by Mr. P.A. Rahtz; Exports and Imports in the Bristol Area, by Mr. J.G. Hurst; and Local Products of the Bristol Region, including the Recent Finds from the Excavations at St. Nicholas' Almshouses, by Mr. K.J. Barton. All were illustrated by colour-slides.

An invitation was received from Mr. Philip Mayes (Harrogate) to hold the next meeting in Leeds. This was seconded and carried, and it is hoped that this meeting will be held in the spring of 1964.

RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN THE CITY AREA

By Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A.

Excavations directed by Mr. P.A. Rahtz and Mr. R. Lampert in September and October this year disclosed approximately 50 ft. of medieval street levels, some with well paved surfaces, dating from the 11th to the 13th century.

Sealed between these levels were several large groups of pottery of corresponding dates. Collectively, those groups comprise the largest single find of early medieval pottery discovered in the Bristol area. When the pottery has been sorted into type series, it will provide a useful key to the dating of future sites where pottery within the range is found.

Some notable finds were:

- (i) several earthenware lamps of unusual type;
- (ii) a medieval (?) lead disc, possibly an early trade token;
- (iii) six ceramic spindle-whorls;
- (iv) early medieval decorated wares, including some with stamped and combed motifs.

Further evidence for early industries, possibly as early as the 11th century, included (i) slag, iron ore, and furnace-lining in considerable quantity suggesting iron-working; (ii) a horn handle industry suggested by the presence, in one small area, of several dozen worked pieces of animal horns; (iii) a large mass of semi-decomposed leather, perhaps indicative of tanning or some other form of leather-working.

At the extreme eastern end of Mary-le-Port Street, running parallel to, and partly under Dolphin Street, a ditch approximately 7 ft. wide and 4 ft. deep, with a palisade trench along its western edge, was found. This may well have been the boundary of the Saxon town; a 10th century date is suggested by the pottery found in the ditch silt.

Nearly a hundred volunteers put in over 2,000 working hours during evenings and weekends. The work was financed jointly by the Ministry of Public Building and Works and the Bristol Corporation. A donation of £50 by W.D. and H.O. Wills was put towards the purchase of a Cowley level for the Museum, which will be available for use by members of B.A.R.G. The B.A.R.G. Collection-box at the site produced a total of £3. 12. Od.

YOUNGER MEMBERS' SECTION

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

i. The Trevelyan Scholarships - Archaeology

Young men who intend to apply for admission to Oxford or Cambridge may be interested to hear of these most generous scholarships, valued at £500 per annum for three years, paid irrespective of the income of the candidate or his parents. Selection is made partly on the recommendation of the candidate's headmaster, partly on interviews, and partly on the candidate's account of a project. The account should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length, and must describe a project undertaken with the permission of his school and should provide evidence of:

- a) a genuine and sustained interest in some subject not covered by the normal examination syllabus, whether or not in the main field of specialisation of the candidate;
- b) a standard of performance which indicates real application and intellectual capacity;
- c) originality and enterprise in concept and execution."

The account, to be written on foolscap and on one side of the paper only, may be accompanied where appropriate by suitable photographs, diagrams, and other illustrations, which should be clearly marked with the candidate's name.

Examples of projects undertaken by successful candidates in the past vary from 'a translation in verse of Aeschylus' "Prometheus Bound" to 'an account of a journey in a small boat across the Channel and in the coastal waters of the Netherlands'. Archaeological subjects have included 'A survey of Roman villas in Kent' and 'an independently organised archaeological excavation'.

It need scarcely be added that no account of promiscuous digging would stand a chance; and no excavation should be done without expert guidance.

The normal arrangement is for candidates to submit their applications not later than 30th September if they intend to take up residence at Oxford or Cambridge in October the following year or (for reasons acceptable to the Selectors) the following year but one.

Further details are obtainable from the Secretary, The Trevelyan Scholarships, The Mount, Broomhill, Sheffield, 10.

ii. The Second Conference of Young Archaeologists.

Readers are reminded that this will be held in London on 18/20 Dec., and details can be obtained from Mr. Richard Reece, B.Sc., St. John's School, Leatherhead, Surrey.

OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUPS:

V. The Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society

(formerly known as the Camerton Excavation Club)

by W. J. Wedlake, F.S.A.

In contributing this paper to the Bulletin of B.A.R.G. we offer our congratulations on the successful impact that it has made on archaeological research in the Bristol region. We look forward to a period of co-operation as neighbours and shall follow with interest the development of B.A.R.G. and also that of the proposed new museum at Bristol.

The Camerton Excavation Club was founded in 1948 by less than a dozen volunteers in the saddle-room at Camerton Court after a day's excavation on the Camerton site. Archaeological excavations had been started in 1926 by the late Abbot E. Horne of Downside Abbey when the Camerton Saxon cemetery was discovered. In that year, quarrying operations were resumed in the disused quarry at Camerton crossroads and several human skeletons were removed. On hearing of this discovery the writer interviewed the workmen and obtained some associated artifacts from them, including a fine gilt pendant and some beads. The finds were taken to the late Dr. Arthur Bulloid, and Abbot Horne was also informed. In due course excavations were made in what proved to be the remaining part of a Saxon cemetery in the nearby field (Proc. Soc. Arch. Soc. lxxiv, 61-70 and lxxix, 39-63; Ant. Journ. xiii, 169) and later the adjoining Early Iron Age site was excavated (Proc. Soc. Arch. Soc. lxxxiii, 155-165). The excavations continued until 1939, when through advancing years Abbot Horne ceased to be active in the field and the direction was taken over by the writer. In 1946 an appeal for volunteers was made in the local press, and several helpers mostly from Bath came to assist at Camerton. It soon became evident that in order to maintain a well organised excavation it was necessary to form a society. This was duly formed on 21st November 1948 with Abbot Horne as its first president, a position which he held until his death in November 1952, when he was succeeded by Sir Mortimer Wheeler. Sir Mortimer has since the Society's inception taken an active interest in its work and the Society is proud to have such an international figure in the archaeological world as its president.

The Society continued excavating the Romano-British site at Camerton until 1958. It was then decided to publish in book form the results of the 25 years' excavation. A sustained effort was called for in order to marshal all the evidence into a form suitable for publication. In view of the high cost, it was also necessary to make a nation-wide appeal for funds and this was well supported. It was thought desirable to publish a full description of our discoveries on the site, including all types of pottery, brooches, etc. It was considered that full

publication of the finds from a Romano-British site, largely industrial in character, would be of value to students excavating similar sites. Furthermore, in any subsequent excavation report on the Camerton site, or others, it would be necessary only to refer to the original report for types previously recorded and publish only new types. Excavations at Camerton, Somerset appeared in 1958 and cost approximately £1,200. Copies have been taken by many universities and other institutions and individuals at home and abroad.

In addition to the Society's work at Camerton, excavations have been conducted on other sites in the Bath area including:

1. the City Wall at Bath, 1951;
2. the Romano-British site at Priston, Somerset;
3. the site of the medieval village at Camerton;
4. at Twinhoo, Wellow, Somerset, 1963;
5. the Romano-British site at Nottleton, Wiltshire, 1957-63;
6. examination and record of the St. James's Church site, Bath, 1962-3;
7. examination, in collaboration with the contractors, of the former Grand Pump Room Hotel site, Bath, 1961;
8. examination and record of the St. John's Hospital site at Bath.

Reports on these investigations are in course of preparation and publication. The Society has also arranged periodical observation on housing estates, road-works, etc., and for recording other archaeological material. Several sites not previously recorded have been discovered in this way.

Other activities include the maintenance of a card index reference system for archaeological sites in the Bath area, and the recording of finds for the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey. A series of winter lectures by well-known archaeologists is arranged annually, and also a series of summer excursions, mostly in the west country, but other areas have also been visited, including Verulamium, Hadrian's Wall, and abbeys in Yorkshire. Expansion of the Society's work necessitated the renting, from the Bath City Council, of rooms at No. 2 Gay Street, Bath, as Club Headquarters since 1959. This has proved invaluable and has enabled other activities to be initiated. The Society has its own electrolysis cleaning apparatus. Cleaning, repairing and cataloguing of finds, model making, discussions, and social functions are arranged.

The Society is at present setting up a suitable organisation to survey the industrial buildings of the Bath area. The Society publishes its own magazine Comertonia twice yearly. It has on three occasions organised successful exhibitions of its work at Bath and Radstock. Members are encouraged to develop their own interests. The Society endeavours to co-operate with kindred societies. It is affiliated to the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and close liaison is maintained with the Council for British Archaeology and other national bodies.

In 1953 our late Hon. Secretary, Miss Nancy Smith, bequeathed the sum of £250 to the Society. This together with other material assistance has enabled the Society to flourish financially. Its excavations have been handsomely supported by donations from several of the national societies each year.

For the last fifteen years many volunteers have assisted with the excavations and the Society has the satisfaction of having helped with the initial training of several archaeologists who are now professionally engaged in the subject. We continue each year to give initial training in the essentials of field archaeology to those volunteers who assist with our work. Excavations are arranged generally on Saturdays throughout the year (weather permitting), and a week's excavation is also arranged during the summer, when a number of scholars and students join us. We have always tried to maintain that happy atmosphere on the excavations, which the writer has experienced on excavations sponsored by the Society's present Sir Mortimer Wheeler, who keeps a critical but kindly eye on our endeavours.

The Society, we feel, performs a useful function in Bath and its neighbourhood. It extends a welcome to those in its area who may be interested to join it and especially to participate in its fieldwork. The annual subscription is fifteen shillings (students ten shillings). The membership is well over a hundred.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND LECTURES (1 January - 31 March 1964.)

Bath and Bristol Numismatic Society

Thursday 9 Jan. At Bath Technical College, Lower Borough Walls. 7.30 p.m.
Numismatic Quiz: Bath v. Bristol.

Thursday 16 Jan. At Bristol University, 7.15 p.m. To be arranged.

Thursday 20 Feb. At Bristol City Museum, 7.15 p.m. "Younger Members"
Evening: A.H. Stevens, "19th century inn checks";
B.M. Greenaway, "Coin Weights".

Bristol Archaeological Research Group

Saturday Jan. A Saturday afternoon session on "Romano-British Pottery"
will be arranged for sometime this month.

Saturday 9 Feb. It is hoped to arrange a week-end course on "Recording in
Field Archaeology" sometime this month.

Saturday 7 March. At Bristol City Museum lecture theatre, 2.15 p.m. Annual
Meeting. Prof. R.J.C. Atkinson, M.A., F.S.A., "Question
and Answer in Field Archaeology".

Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Monday 3 Feb. At the Red Lodge, 5.30 p.m. J.S. Wacher, B.Sc., F.S.A.
"Cirencester Roman Excavations".

Monday 9 March. At the Red Lodge, 5.30 p.m. G.R. Elrington, M.A.
"Open Fields and Inclosures in the Cotswolds".

Saturday 14 March. At the Council House, Bristol. Annual Meeting.
Presidential address by the Dean of Bristol (Very Rev.
Douglas Harrison, M.A.).

Bristol City Museum

Wednesday 15 Jan. 7.15 p.m. P.A. Rahtz, "Recent Excavations in Bristol".

Canerton Excavation Club

Tuesday 4 Feb., at Bath Technical College, 7.15 p.m. Barry Cunliffe,
M.A., F.S.A. "The Roman Villa at Fishbourne".

Tuesday 3 March, at Bath Technical College, 7.15 p.m. J.G. Hurst, M.A.,
F.S.A. "Northolt Manor".
(Non-members may attend on payment of 2/- per lecture)

Council for British Archaeology, Group XIII (South-West).

Wednesday 18 March, at Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, 2.15 p.m. The business
meeting will be followed, about 4.0 p.m., by a short
symposium of brief papers with exhibits.

University of Bristol Speleological Society

Monday 27 Jan., in Geography Dept. Lecture Theatre, University Road,
8.15 p.m. J.W. Gardner, M.A., F.S.A. "The Antiquities of
Lansdown, Bath".

Monday 2 March, in Geography Dept. Lecture Theatre, University Road,
8.15 p.m. Annual Meeting and Presidential Address.

NOTICES AND REVIEWS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Berry, Bernard. A Lost Roman Road. 1963. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 18/-.

Mr. Berry set himself the difficult task of searching and closing the 18 mile gap in the Poole-Bath Roman road between Senley (Wiltshire) and Norton St. Philip (Somerset). This book gives a detailed account of his findings. Numerous photographs to which National Grid References are applied and clear maps attest the thoroughness with which he went about the work, although his enthusiasm and keen observation are marred by a somewhat romantic approach to the subject.

Regrettably the result is not convincing. The general route pursued by the author is reasonable, but often doubtful, details are fitted into the course. Floughed down banks of 'Celtic' field systems and later enclosures have been accepted as representing the Roman road as at Upton, Keysley Down, and Orchardleigh. Occasionally the desire to maintain straight alignments has led Mr. Berry into difficult terrain as on Cold Kitchen Hill and at Heaven's Gate near Longleat.

Obviously excavation was impracticable, but to extend a line of theoretical communication is simply to weaken the case unless some links can be proved by excavation or definite evidence. Of those there are as yet none, and while the author has certainly made a contribution by covering the gap, the problem as to whether the road was ever completed remains unsolved.

N.V. Quinnell.

Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society, vol. 10 (no. 1), October, 1963.

This part contains 78 pages of which 15 deal with archaeology. The archaeological papers comprise one on Maes Knoll Camp by P.A. Rahtz, K.J. Barton, and E.K. Tratman; one on Burrington Camp by E.K. Tratman; and a short one on Roman coins from Blaise Castle Hill, by G.C. Boon.

Trial excavations by P.A. Rahtz and K.J. Barton on an artificial platform at the south end of Maes Knoll produced 14 potsherds which might be Iron Age A and one which might be sub-Belgic. Prof. Tratman's study of the relationship between Maes Knoll Camp and the Wansdyke has led him to conclude that much of the northern boundary of the Camp was incorporated into Wansdyke, the western end of which was Maes Knoll Tump. Nothing is said about the question of a possible continuation in the direction of Portbury, suggested by the name Wondesditch Lane near Yanley, mentioned in a deed of Edward II (A.D. 1310) quoted by Colt Hoare (Ancient Wiltshire, ii, 20-1).

Prof. Tratman's useful note on Burrington Camp records study and trial excavations between 1948 and 1956, leading to the conclusion that the site was never permanently occupied and perhaps never finished.

L.V. Grinsoll.

Brothwell, D., and Higgs, E.S. (editors). Science in Archaeology. 1963. Thames and Hudson. Pp. 596; 32 plates and 92 text illustrations. Price 90/-.

This massive work is divided into five sections, - on dating, environment, man, artifacts, and prospecting. These sections are covered by fifty-four chapters by about the same number of contributors. Many of these chapters reveal the immense amount of information now determinable from the scientific examination of the various objects found in the soil, - whether the remains of man, plants, or animals, or the artifacts made by man, - and indeed much information may under proper conditions be obtained from the study of the soil itself.

Some of the chapters on artifacts have a particular bearing on the work of the field archaeologist. 'A Statistical Analysis of Flint Artifacts', by A. Bohmers of Groningen, (pp. 469-481) quotes Cheddar points of the Upper Palaeolithic period, from Gough's Cave, in illustration of his subject. The chapter on 'Petrological Examination' (pp. 482-8) is by Prof. F.W. Shotton. The systematic examination of stone axes and other stone implements began in 1936 at Bristol, and was initiated by the South-Western Group of Museums and Art Galleries, and not by the Council for British Archaeology which did not come into existence until the end of the 1939/45 War. On page 487 the author refers to 'a few axes rich in corundum (emery) which have been matched in Crete'. The reviewer's information is that the Implement Petrology records for England contain reference to only one stone axe of emery, - no. 877 said to be from Calne, and given to Devizes Museum in 1876. The rock-source is probably from the Island of Naxos and not from Crete, although the implement was mentioned by R.W. Hutchinson in his Archaeology of Crete (p. 113). It is uncertain whether the implement was a genuine archaeological find or a stray brought back by an 18th or 19th century tourist. However, these are minor errors in a fundamentally authoritative chapter. It is likely that any reviewer with special knowledge of the subject-matter of any one chapter in this book could subject it to the same sort of criticism.

Among the chapters most likely to assist the present and coming generation of active field archaeologists are those on 'Magnetic Location' by Martin Aitken (pp. 555-568) and 'Resistivity Surveying' by Anthony Clark (pp. 569-581) which comprise the section on Prospecting.

L.V. Grinsell

Biek, L. Archaeology and the Microscope. 1963.

It is hoped to review this work in the next number of this Bulletin.

I.L. Foster and L. Alcock (editors). Culture and Environment. Essays in honour of Sir Cyril Fox. 1963. pp.xx,538; 26 plates and 111 figures. Routledge and Kegan Paul. Price 5 guineas.

It would here be inappropriate to review the whole of this massive book, and attention will be limited to those chapters which bear directly on the archaeology of the Bristol region. These illustrate two of Sir Cyril Fox's main interests: the study of distributions and the study of vernacular architecture.

Chapters II (The Personality of Wales) by Glyn Daniel, and III (The Southern Marches of Wales in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age) by H.N. Savory, may be considered together. Each is accompanied by a new distribution-map of Severn-Cotswold long barrows; yet the two are as different from one another as chalk from cheese. Daniel shows 66 sites, and Savory 125 in almost the same area. The discrepancy is caused mainly by Daniel's omission and Savory's inclusion of long barrows which have no visible evidence of chambering. Both appear to have prepared their maps before the publication of the fresh list of Gloucestershire long barrows in vol. 79 of Trans. Bristol & Glos. Archaeological Society. Dr. Savory also includes a useful distribution-map of boakers in the Bristol Channel area (fig. 9).

Chapter XIII (The Regional Cultures of Medieval Britain) by E.M. Jope, discusses and maps (among other things) the distribution of 12th/early 13th century flat-based dishes resembling 'the truncated top of a cooking-pot' in south-western Britain, Bristol being among the find-spots. Chapter XIX (Some Medieval English Town-houses) by W.A. Pantin, includes illustrated descriptions of Canynge's House (demolished in 1937) and Colston's House (part of which still stands in Small Street).

The whole volume contains an immense amount of material of the greatest value to the student of British regional archaeology of all periods from pre-historic to late medieval.

L.V. Grinsoll

LIST OF MEMBERS

Complete to 30th November 1963

J = Junior Member.

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