

BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP BULLETIN

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BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Officers and Committee for 1964/5

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MEMBERSHIP:

The Annual Subscription (due 1st March) is ten shillings for those aged 18 and over, and five shillings for those under 18. There is no entrance fee. Those wishing to apply for membership should communicate with the Hon. Secretary.

EDITORIAL

Since the end of the 1939/45 War, there has been an immense advance in the study of the English late Anglo-Saxon and Norman coinage. The importance of this for the modern archaeologist is thus summarized by Michael Dolley on page 25 of his recent booklet on Anglo-Saxon Pennies (British Museum, 1964, price 5/-):

'In theory there is no late Anglo-Saxon coin which cannot be dated within at most six years, and there is also a presumption, of incalculable value for the archaeologist, that a coin found in the ground was lost as well as struck within a very narrow date-bracket.'

The importance of this to local archaeology has recently been underlined by our Hon. Excavations Adviser's discoveries of Anglo-Saxon coins in his excavations at Choddar and St. Mary-le-Port, Bristol.

A programme of the forthcoming National Numismatic Congress, to be held in Bristol City Museum from 8th to 10th May, is enclosed with this issue of the Bulletin. Attention may also be drawn to a short course of six lectures on the Bristol Mint, to be given in the City Museum on Tuesdays from 14th April, from 7.30 until 9.00 p.m. Research in local numismatics, especially of Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods, may be confidently recommended as one of the many forms of non-excavational archaeology which still provide a great deal of scope.

THE ANNUAL MEETING, 7th MARCH 1964.

The Group's Second Annual Meeting was held in the Lecture Theatre of Bristol City Museum on Saturday 7th March, 1964, from 2.30 p.m. onwards, and was attended by more than fifty members, despite the clash in time with the University Rag procession. The business meeting ran smoothly and was followed by tea in the Museum Cafe. After tea the Guest Speaker, Professor R. J. C. Atkinson, M.A., F.S.A., gave a brilliant address entitled Question and Answer in Field Archaeology, which stimulated an animated discussion. The vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Philip Rahtz, was carried with acclamation.

The Group's Survey and Policy, Part I, was made generally available on this occasion for the first time.

Other Archaeological Research Groups:

VI. THE CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

By Charles Thomas, M.A., F.S.A.

Although the traditions of field-work, excavations, and interest in visible antiquities in Cornwall extend back to the 18th century, the premier county body (the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro) is not, and never has been, primarily an archaeological one. The formation of the Cornwall Excavations Committee in 1931, at the instigation of the R.I.C. and other bodies, represented a desire to proceed on modern lines. From 1931 to 1939, the Magor villa, Porthmeor, Trevelgue and Castle Dore were examined by the Committee; Porthmeor (1933), where the late Lt./Col. F.C. Hirst directed, was from the first chosen as a training-site, and in 1935 Hirst and several associates decided that a permanent active body was required, particularly to undertake field-work, as a logical complement to the ad hoc activities of the Committee; the latter, largely as sponsors, continued to raise funds and invite directors, but was in no sense a society.

Until 1939, the West Cornwall Field Club was largely concerned with west Penwith (the Land's End peninsula), working at Porthmeor, Trewoy-Foago, Kerrow, and Maen Castle, but with only a small membership. Inevitably, the war years caused disruption. In 1948, work re-started at Maen Castle, under the presidency of Rev. C.B. Crofts, and the record since then has been one of almost explosive growth.

In 1961, a group of Committee members stressed that the title 'West Cornwall Field Club' had become a misnomer. The Club was not, and never had been, a Field Club in the accepted sense: its activities were wholly archaeological. Since 1950, members had been working all over Cornwall, and the Club's publications reflected this wider interest. Accordingly, at a well-attended public meeting at Truro in 1961, the Club enlarged itself into the Cornwall Archaeological Society. The apparent need for a body of this kind has been demonstrated in the rise in membership, which now stands at about 370, and is still rising. The Society is extremely active in all aspects of the Cornish past, and as the foregoing account shows, really stems continuously from the early days at Porthmeor. The present President is Dr. C.A. Raleigh Radford, who has been associated with both Field Club and Society from the beginning.

The Society has a long record of publication. In the pre-war era, small combined Summer Programmes and Site Guides were issued annually from 1936-39, and a Proceedings, Vol. 1, pts. i and ii, appeared. In 1953, when finances permitted, a revived Proceedings came out, and between then and 1961, ran to two volumes (I, 4 parts and Appendix; II, 5 parts). As the average membership

was only 50, the subscription low, and outside subvention entirely lacking, the way in which this journal was financed caused outside speculation - II.5, for instance, is 94 pp. of close print. From 1948, various Field Guides have been issued. These, with printed covers and duplicated interiors, constitute guides to sites under excavation (6d or 1/-), or guides to the principal antiquities of parts of Cornwall (2/-). The sale of these, particularly in the summer months, has always been enormous. Field Guide 2, The Principal Antiquities of the Land's End District, is now in its 9th edition, each one carefully revised and with differing illustrations. The cumulative profit on these Guides has for years been used to subvent the more permanent record of the Proceedings. The side-effects have been, of course, a very much wider diffusion of informed interest in Cornish archaeology, and the recruitment of many new members.

Since 1962, the Society has launched a new quarto annual, Cornish Archaeology - by any County standards this is a sizeable journal, and, produced wholly in Cornwall, it represents a major local step. Each issue bears a different cover design, commissioned alternatively from traditional and modern artists.

Features of local publication include, as a matter of policy, a Cumulative Index of everything relating to all periods of the past in Cornwall, divided by subjects, which dates from 1953, is published annually, and now has over 500 entries. Since 1961, an annual Digest of relevant matter in all other Cornish periodicals has also been given. The value of these aids to independent research, particularly to students living outside the County, need not be stressed. A further work of consolidation has been the publication, since 1956, of Parochial Check-Lists. These, on an ecclesiastical parish basis, are exhaustive lists of all visible and known antiquities, catalogued with full grid references and notes, and the available material is being increased two-and three-fold. Lists from only two of the nine ancient Hundreds have so far appeared, but work is now proceeding in a further three. This is a long-term, but increasingly urgent, task.

In the field, the Society operates on three levels. The 1933 tradition of the annual summer excavation, usually with a camp, has been maintained, and until recent years large sites requiring up to 4 or 5 seasons have been the rule. Maen was followed by Bodrifty, Sperris Croft and Goldherring, all primarily villages of the Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, or Romano-British period. With the expansion into an all-county group in 1961, this summer dig has taken place in mid-Cornwall (henge at Castilly, 1962) and east Cornwall (The Rumps cliff castle, 1963), in order to train the large number of new, younger members in these areas, and to stimulate local interest. In 1964, a mediæval site in west Cornwall will be tackled, and it is hoped to return to The Rumps in 1965.

Apart from these official excavations, the Society has sponsored others, largely directed and staffed by members, in Easter seasons as well as in the summer. These include the prolonged series of excavations at Gwithian, possibly the most ambitious long-term project ever attempted in the south-west, which have thrown new light on all periods of the past, in a much wider sphere than Cornwall.

Finally, individual members have undertaken combined field-work and excavation on a variety of sites all over the county; this includes 'instant' rescue digging as well as Ministry-sponsored activity, week-end work by informal groups of members, and more than one occasion when members have, tactfully, moved in on excavations of an optimistic but scarcely scientific character.

The Society's affairs are governed by a committee of the officers, and elected members who are chosen to represent all parts of the county. This committee meets three or four times a year, and a separate committee administers all the publications. It is perhaps not appreciated outside the county that internal communications in Cornwall, nearly 80 miles long, are poor, that no one town is 'central' for everyone, and that until now, even occasional winter meetings for illustrated lectures have been deemed impracticable. It is very much hoped that a future programme of meetings will prove possible. On the credit side, one can report the virtual cessation of irresponsible digging in the County; a very adequate coverage of new finds, discoveries and sites; the closest co-operation with the R.I.C. and the County Museum; excellent publicity in the local press; and, perhaps least tangible but most important, an increasingly favourable climate of public interest and public opinion.

Cornwall possesses many societies concerned with its past, some perhaps more social than antiquarian, others of a specialist nature with their own journals. Close attention is paid at all times to work in fields even vaguely related to the Society's. A popular system of block subscriptions enables other societies, libraries, schools and journals (though not individuals) to obtain all the Society's publications annually, at a rate which, though slightly above the membership subscription, is only two-thirds of the public prices of the same items. Block subscriptions are open to anybody outside Cornwall as well, and an increasing number of universities and libraries, overseas as well as in Britain, are taking advantage of this.

The Secretary is Mrs. Nankivell, Bossea, Stooplo Lane, St. Ives. Membership is £1.0.0. a year (due January 1st), with a 10/- rate for students and those under 21. The Society has many younger members, and would welcome more (those between 14 and 16 are admitted at the Committee's discretion).

YOUNGER MEMBERS' SECTION

(1) The Conference of Young Archaeologists, 1963

By David E. Johnston, B.A....

December 1963 saw the Institute of Archaeology once more packed with dedicated Young Archaeologists, pens eagerly busy, and as neat a crop of beards as one might see anywhere south of Hadrian's Wall. This second three-day conference was generally agreed to be a good successor to the first, in 1962. Of course, the word "young" was interpreted as generously as ever (nobody over 30 should have been there) and there was nothing formal about the mingling of professional and amateur, teacher and student.

The organisers were quite unworried by the task of making a programme to suit all tastes, of finding a "level" on which to address the most expert, and the least. Bones, for instance, are a study of which many experienced excavators are surprisingly ignorant; so, too, is photography - a straightforward skill that needlessly frightens both amateur and professional. Both subjects were thoroughly explained and demonstrated, the first by Mr. Raymond Chaplin, the second by Mr. David Baker and Mr. Tony Pacitto. Then the publication of plans, sections and pots was skilfully explained by other members of the conference.

Characteristic of the comprehensive approach was that of Dr. Michael Jarrett, who neatly profaced his talk on "Some Unsolved Problems of Hadrian's Wall" with a very professional ten-minute summary of the wall-system, followed by a searching analysis of the gaps and contradictions shown up by recent excavations. Should we, for instance, revise our ideas of the "extensive" destructions about A.D. 296 and 367? At Haltonchesters, the strictly military discipline of the fort was maintained towards the end of the fourth century, whereas at Housesteads the fragmentation of the billoting arrangements at the end of the third century was followed, after 367, by the chaotic picture of civilian refugees from the vicus crowded into whatever space the soldiers could spare within the fort. There are gaps, too, in our knowledge of the Turf Wall and its rebuilding; and what of the milecastles and turrets that were unsuitably sited according to the rigid blueprint and may have gone out of use early? And so on.

That the south of the Province has its military problems, too, was firmly pointed out by Brian Philp, summarising the extensive excavations now in progress at Roculver. Interim reports from a villa at Eccles, Kent, a Belgic enclosure at Owslebury, Hampshire, and a wealth of new sites in the Welland Valley were a sample of the work that members of the Conference, amateur and professional, have been engaged on; and this picture was wisely completed by a duplicated summary of members' researches, which range from mediaeval sculpture in the south-east Midlands to Byzantine pottery.

An entertaining scoop for the Conference was the appearance of Mr. Vincent Megaw, straight from his pioneer fieldwork for Sydney University, in New South Wales. Here, microliths that can be easily paralleled in Europe are stratified with such extraneous objects as Imperial Chinese pottery, and even a coin of Ptolemy III (246-221 BC) found four feet deep.

Much of the last morning of the Conference was taken up with discussion of a proposed new quarterly periodical, The Archaeologist. As outlined by its future editor, it will be for sixth-formers, non-specialist undergraduates and amateur archaeologists who have no access to expensive books and journals. This will cover all periods up to industrial archaeology, with the main emphasis on Britain. It will include summaries of current work, synopses of classic excavations, book reviews, correspondence and news. Based entirely on subscriptions, it will cost between 3/6 and 5/- per issue. Further details can be obtained from the Editor, The Archaeologist, Raynes Park County Grammar School, Bushey Road, London, S.W.20.

(2) Y.H.A. Field Archaeology Tours during 1964

- 18/25 July 1964: Sites in Dorset. OT/35.
- 15/22 Aug., 1964: Offa's Dyke and surroundings. OT/36.
- 22/29 Aug., 1964: The Welsh Marches. OT/37.

Details of these excellent tours are obtainable from the Y.H.A. Home Tours, St. Albans, Herts.

Normally they include evening lectures as well as walks and visits to antiquities.

NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

During the last few weeks, recent publications have been so numerous that it has been decided, at anyrate for the present number of this Bulletin, to give them short notices rather than full-length reviews. The flood of books on archaeological techniques and methods of study continues, and these are considered first.

Biek, L. Archaeology and the Microscope. 1963. Lutterworth Press. 45/-.

The author has been Head of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of the Ministry of Public Building and Works for the last thirteen years. The headings of the 8 chapters are : 1, What it is all about - background; 2, What it is all for - purposes; 3, What can be done - possibilities; 4, Exploring the limits - reconnaissance; 5, Finding connections - liaison; 6, Polyphenols ubiquitous - cohesion; 7, Co-ordination - advance; and 8, Scientific research for archaeology - consolidation. The book opens with a Foreword by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, and concludes with a comprehensive bibliography and an index.

Fyddoke, E. (Editor). The Scientist and Archaeology. 1963. Phoenix House. 30/-.

This book is more modest in scope and price than Science in Archaeology, noticed on p. 82 of the last Bulletin. It contains nine chapters, - on resistivity surveying; soil science in archaeology; pollen analysis; petrological examination (by Dr. F.S. Wallis, late Director of Bristol City Museum); examination of ceramic materials in thin section; fluorine, uranium, and nitrogen dating of bone; applications of radioactivity in archaeology; analysis and microscopic study of metals; and physical methods of chemical analysis. All these chapters are by recognized experts in their subjects. The book is completed by bibliography and references and an adequate index.

Semenov, S.A. Prehistoric Technology. 1964. Cory Adams and Mackay. 63/-.
Translated from the Russian by Dr. M.W. Thompson.

This is a book of great importance, especially for the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic periods. The sub-title is : 'an Experimental Study of the oldest Tools and Artefacts from traces of Manufacture and Wear'. It is the result of twenty years' study and places this approach to the subject on a scientific basis for the first time. The kernel of the book is stated as follows by the translator in his preface (p.x): 'As described in the Introduction the study of function can be envisaged as a sort of trident; the central and main prong is analysis of traces, the two auxiliary prongs are practical experiment and ethnographical parallels.' There are many bibliographical footnotes, but at least one reader would like to have seen a bibliography at the end.

FORTHCOMING EXCAVATIONS

Prehistoric

- 1-20 Aug. Picken's Hole, Mendip (Upper Pleistocene). Directed for the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society by Dr. E.K. Tratman, O.B.E., F.S.A., Penrose Cottage, Burrington, near Bristol.
- 27 July - Croft Ambry, Herefordshire (Iron Age hill-fort). Directed
22 August for the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club by Mr. S.C. Stanford, B.A., F.S.A., Ashfield Cottage, Luston, Leominster, Herefordshire.

Romano-British

- 6-20 June Waddon Hill, Stoke Abbot, near Beaminster, Dorset (Roman fort). Directed by Dr. Graham Webster, F.S.A., 30 Portland Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.
- 13/20 June Charterhouse-on-Mendip. Directed by Mr. C. Barrett for University of Bristol Spelaeological Society. Mr. C. Barrett is c/o Dept. of Classics, The University, Bristol, 8.
- 11-25 July Barnsley, near Cirencester (Roman villa). Directed by Dr. Graham Webster, F.S.A., 30 Portland Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. For advanced students only.
- 13 July - Cirencester (Roman town). Directed by J.S. Wachter, M.A.,
22 August F.S.A., Department of History, The University, Leicester.
- 25 July Fishbourne, Chichester (Roman military base and palatial
5 Sept. building). Directed by Mr. Barry Cunliffe, B.A., F.S.A., Dept. of Classics, The University, Bristol, 8.
- 15 June - Bath. Excavations on Roman & Medieval sites. Directed by
10 July Mr. Barry Cunliffe, B.A., F.S.A., Dept. of Classics, the University, Bristol, 8.

Post-Roman

- 25 May - Chepstow, Mon. (St. Kynemark's Priory). Directed for
11 June the Ministry of Public Building and Works by Dr. L.A.S. Butler, R.C.A.M. (Wales), 17 Queen's Road, Aberystwyth, Cards.
- August Henley Wood (Yatton), north of Cadbury Camp, Congresbury.
Cemetery (sub-Roman?). Directed for the Ministry of Public Building and Works by Mr. E. Greenfield, Fern Cottage, St. Mawgan, Mawgan Porth, Cornwall.

Uncertain

Details of excavations in Bristol have not yet been decided. Members will be circularised when information is available.

SURVEY AND POLICY : PROGRESS REPORT

Elsewhere in this part will be found a prospectus of Part I of the B.A.R.G. Survey and Policy, which was, as promised, completed in time for the Second Annual Meeting of the Group on 7th March. Part I covers the periods from the beginning until the Norman Conquest, and Part II — will cover the period from the Norman Conquest to date.

The contents of Part II have as yet been only roughly sketched out, but chapters either done or in preparation are as follows:

- VIII. Norman and Medieval Periods, by Alan Warhurst.
- IX. Ecclesiastical Architecture, by H.G.M. Leighton.
- X. Vernacular Architecture, by Leslie Gore.
- XI. Industrial Archaeology, by Kenneth Hudson.
- XII. Communications from 1066. Author not yet decided.
- XIII. Scientific Aids for the periods from 1066, by Michael G. Smith.

Bibliography and References.

The present intention of the Committee of Contributors to Part II is to study these texts when they have all been completed, and then consider whether there are any gaps which ought to be filled. In this regard, suggestions will be welcomed by the editors of Part II (Mr. Philip Rahtz and L.V. Grinsell).

Part II will also include a revised text for the Early Iron Age, and any other necessary revisions on Part I.