

BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP BULLETIN

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	<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>Page</u>
Officers and Committee. Membership.		102
Editorial		103
Other Archaeological Research Groups:		
VII. The Joint Archaeological Committee (East Hampshire and West Sussex), by Mrs. Margaret Rule		104
Reviews:		
G. Webster. <u>Practical Archaeology</u> (P.A. Rahtz).		106
L. Bick <u>Archaeology & the Microscope</u> (P.A. Rahtz)		107
J.F. Rhodes. <u>Romano-British Sculpture in Gloucester City Museum</u> (Alan Warhurst)		108
Recent and Forthcoming Publications		109
Forthcoming Courses, Exhibitions, and Lectures		110

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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

The English Place-Name Society has just published the first three volumes of The Place-Names of Gloucestershire, by Prof. A. H. Smith who resides within the county. The fourth volume is promised for the autumn. Their price is two guineas per volume averaging 268 pages. The appearance of this work is a major event for Gloucestershire Field Archaeology, largely because much space is devoted, beneath each parish, to field-names and other local names which so often point to the location of previously unknown archaeological sites.

These volumes (called Parts) are arranged as follow:

- Part I: River-names and road-names; the hundreds and parishes of the eastern Cotswolds between Cirencester and Chipping Campden.
- Part II: the hundreds and parishes of the North and West Cotswolds, as far south as Dursley and Berkeley.
- Part III: the Forest of Dean, the Lower Severn valley, and most of the area south of the Stroud valley.
- Part IV: historical introduction, lists of abbreviations, sources, acknowledgements, index, and other supplementary matter.

The volume of most use to members of B.A.R.G. is Part III, the archaeological aspects of which are here briefly noted in chronological order. Field-names which may denote barrows are mentioned on pp. 17-18, 26, 38, 55, and in Cold Ashton parish the names Robinhood's Butts and Strawborough (p.63). Barrow-names have usually to be approached with caution because of the possible alternative derivation from bearu, wooded country. The reference to the Wick burial-chamber as 'druidical stones' (p.71) is rather old-fashioned. Several certain or probable Iron Age hill-forts are erroneously described as Roman (pp.20, 37, 53, 107), but such errors will not deceive the field archaeologist, who will be grateful for the stimulus to search for other possible hill-forts such as Grinsbury and Cadbury in Oldland (p.81), and for lucid observations such as that Henbury (the high or chief fortification) may be the old name for Blaise Castle hill-fort (p.130). Possible Roman sites are indicated by names such as Blacklands (Yate, p.45, where Roman pottery was found yesterday, 1st September!) and Chessels (pp.55, 71). The author's conjecture that Aust may have been called Trajectus Augusti and been the Trajectus of the Roman itineraries is supported by early forms of the name, as well as by recent Roman finds during the Severn Bridge construction (pp.127-8). Industrial workings are evidenced by names such as Iron Acton (p.1) and we are reminded of the references to lead-workings on Clifton/Durdham Downs in a Saxon land charter (p.144).

These are merely a few samples of the archaeological potentialities of these volumes, which should become the constant companions of the Gloucestershire field archaeologist.

Other Archaeological Research Groups:

VII. THE JOINT ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE

comprising

Chichester Civic Society.	Haslemere Educational Museum.
Chichester Museum Society.	Haslemere Natural History Society.
The Curtis Museum, Alton.	Portsmouth Museum Society.
Bognor Regis Natural Science Society.	

By Margaret Rulo

In 1957 the Portsmouth Museum Society, Haslemere Educational Museum, Haslemere Natural History Society and Chichester Civic Society formed the Joint Archaeological Committee consisting of two representatives from each of the sponsoring organisations with unanimous power to co-opt expert assistance whenever necessary.

Their aims in so doing were fourfold: firstly, to keep watch over historical and archaeological sites in the area and undertake emergency action: secondly, to train local volunteers in techniques; thirdly, to act as a 'clearing house' for recording and exchanging relevant information, and finally to raise funds to undertake these projects and to publish the results of such work.

As a first step in obtaining a local body of skilled observers and excavators a training 'dig' was organised on the Iron Age Fort at Little Torberry Hill, near South Harting in West Sussex, under the direction of Mr. Guy Duncan, B.A. This was so successful that a second season followed in August 1958. With the assistance of local experts, notably Mr. G.P. Burstow, F.S.A., a body of young enthusiasts were trained in field techniques, and this meant that emergency excavations could be undertaken. In 1959 the J.A.C. sponsored a major excavation of the Chichester City Defences under the direction of Mr. J. Holmes, F.S.A., and in addition many small demolition sites in the City were excavated and recorded during the Spring and Summer of 1959.

Unlike most local archaeological groups the J.A.C. has no members, since it is itself merely a sponsored organising body, and hence it has no income. However, it soon became painfully obvious that an income was necessary if training, excavations and emergency work were to be financed adequately. In January 1958 the J.A.C. issued its first quarterly bulletin to anyone and everyone who might be interested enough in local archaeology to subscribe 10/-s. a year to be kept informed. In the immortal words of that first bulletin, 'its aim was to find an ally for archaeology in every street in the Committee's area.'

The publication of these bulletins also serves another purpose in keeping the general public aware of the ever increasing dangers of modern growth and development in an area rich in archaeological features. Since that first bulletin

the secretary's telephone has hardly stopped ringing, and although the majority of reported features have inevitably proved to be figments of the imagination, an important hoard of Middle Bronze Age palstaves was discovered on a building site at Hayling Island in just this way, and the discovery of the 1st. Century Palace at Fishbourne, Chichester, was reported to the J.A.C. secretary as 'a spread of tiles' by an observant water board engineer who subscribed to the bulletin.

In order to alert and inform the general public the Committee have arranged lectures on local archaeology and the dangers inherent in modern building and farming techniques, to Young Farmer's Clubs, Townswomen's Guilds and schools. This increased public awareness, has meant more find spots for the card index and more information available for the local historian or research worker.

In order to correlate this mass of information an Honorary Curator of Maps was appointed in 1961 with the task of annotating a complete set of 6" maps covering the area between the River Arun in West Sussex and the River Meon in Hampshire. This work was undertaken with the co-operation of the Ordnance Survey, and it now provides an easily accessible and up-to-date picture of the archaeological finds and monuments in this area. Supplementary information on known sites and evidence of possible new sites has been provided by two members of the committee who have flown on regular sorties over the area during the last six years. The photographs taken are correlated with the 6" map by the map curator and wherever possible the site is examined on the ground.

Until the present time the bulletin has been produced by the Committee members for the cost of paper and postage alone, and with a subscription list of four hundred, a useful sum of money was available each year to finance emergency excavation in West Sussex and East Hants. In October 1962, an approach was made to the Ancient Fields Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science offering a small scholarship to a research student who would undertake a survey of part of the Ancient field systems in the committee's area. As a result of this offer a post graduate from Reading University is at present engaged on a study of the settlement of the Meon Valley in Prehistoric and Historic times, and the J.A.C. hopes that by combining financial and material incentives research workers will be persuaded to undertake projects in West Sussex and East Hants.

In January 1963 the Bognor Regis Natural Science Society and the newly formed Chichester Museum Society joined the J.A.C. and close liaison with all the sponsoring societies is maintained by quarterly meetings of the committee.

Since 1960 the resources of the J.A.C. have been absorbed by the excavations at Fishbourne, Chichester, during the month of August. Nevertheless, a trained body of excavators are ready with the necessary equipment during the remaining eleven months of the year, and the very fact that the calls for their assistance have in no way diminished over the seven years since the J.A.C. was formed proves the need for its continuance.

Webster, Graham. Practical Archaeology. 1963. A. and C. Black. 176 pp., 8 pls., 20 figs., price 21s.

This is a companion volume to Stuart Piggott's Approach to Archaeology, which is more concerned with the philosophy and principles of the subject. In many ways, Dr. Webster's book is the most useful for the amateur that has yet appeared. He writes from a wide and realistic knowledge of the resources of local groups and Sunday diggers. He does not tell the reader what he should do, but what is possible with limited funds and without much specialist help.

An introductory section deals with the organisation of this country's archaeology, with useful details of publications and museums. A chapter on field investigation covers such things as geology, agriculture, earthworks, air-photographs and scientific prospecting. He suggests that excavation is a natural corollary to field work, but the latter can be done without digging, and is not destructive.

Methods of digging receive full and fair treatment, though we might try to be more imaginative in our aims than to find out, "what was done there, when, and by whom", (p. 59) which sounds more like a police investigation in the back streets of Bristol. Mr. Brian Hobley has produced some good diagrams in this section. I will add my fervent support to Dr. Webster's warning of the dangers of indiscriminate trial trenching, though I must disagree with him in approving the use of mechanical excavators to cut preliminary sections through earthworks. This may be justifiable in a rescue dig, but not on a site which is safe for a long time. The reader should be careful how he interprets the following advice on p. 71: once it has been decided that it is difficult to distinguish the layers in the cutting "one has to organise a system of recording which will enable rapid digging to proceed regardless of stratification". We know what Dr. Webster means, but taken literally such a procedure would make it unlikely that structures within the bank, or buried surfaces, would be noticed. It is also dangerous for beginners to be told (as we were also advised at our last A.G.M.) that the art of drawing a section "lies in knowing what ought to be present".

Open excavation is fully described, and recognised as the technique likely to be more used in the future, as it is now on most large continental sites. It is suggested that the method is unsuitable where the layers are well-defined; but how useful it would be, for instance, to see the destruction layer of a Roman villa exposed all at one time; or to see a barrow reduced layer by layer to its shape at successive stages of its construction.

In the chapter on Scientific Aids, Dr. Webster wisely emphasizes that scientists are not eagerly waiting to sample excavated material, unless it can be shown that it will contribute to their own research; nevertheless it is the excavator's duty to try to get as much scientific help as he can, or his results will be incomplete. There is a suggestion on p. 121 that scientific appendices are not worth publishing "unless they can be shown to give evidence for". This attitude would be

regarded as heretical by continental archaeologists, and I add my opinion to theirs that much data at present being published cannot be viewed as immediate evidence, but rather as raw material which may be used at a later date, like the publication by historians of their manuscript sources.

In the final section on Publication the practical aspect of the book is underlined by advice to the amateur not to be over-lavish in text or illustration; this is desirable in view of present high printing costs and hard-up societies, but perhaps not as desirable as the reader is led to believe.

The substitution of printed for drawn lettering will commend itself to the inartistic amateur, who should however avoid a result as unfortunate as fig. 12 (p. 144).

This is a very readable and objective book, which every member of B.A.B.G. should study closely and compare with its predecessors by Wheeler, Kenyon and Atkinson.

P.A. Rahtz

Biek, L. Archaeology and the Microscope, 1964. Lutterworth Press. Pp. 288; 26 plates and 12 text figures, price 45s.

This book may well prove to be a landmark in British archaeology. Mr. Biek, who has been director of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory for the last thirteen years, here expounds his theory of the total scientific approach to archaeology; this involves not only specialist help at every stage of the work from the planning of the excavation to its publication (and possibly after) but the need for a non-specialist to link the archaeologist to the scientist. His jobs are many: to make sure that the archaeologist is aware of the potentialities of all scientific help, to acquaint specialists in each field with the wide variety of material that archaeology provides, to ensure that the right questions are asked of the scientist, to correlate the specialist reports, and to look for connecting links between them, and to edit the material for publication in such a way as to show its relevance to the whole report.

Alas, there is only one such man available to archaeology in this country, and that is Mr. Biek, so his ideals are very largely for future workers. Those such as myself who have been in close contact with him for many years, have been much stimulated by his far-sightedness and enthusiasm, and disciplined by his scientific integrity. The first time he came to one of my digs, I showed him a perfectly obvious posthole in passing, and he said "How do you know it's a post-hole?". Little did I realise that this question presaged many years of discussion on those lines which was to affect my whole conduct in the field and with the finds.

Unlike several recent books on science and archaeology, this one sets the subject in its whole philosophical and historical background - a humanist approach

too rarely in evidence, with quotations from Kierkegaard, Aldous Huxley and even Cole Porter.

Of particular interest to members of our Research Group are the numerous references to the Chew Valley Lake excavations of 1953-5, in which over 70 specialists were involved. The range and quality of the material provided Mr. Biek with a severe challenge with which he coped under difficulties; the full extent of his success will be clear only when this is published by H.M.S.O.

The book is illustrated by excellent photographs, including two very revealing colour plates of objects in different states of preservation, and many diagrams and tables. Some of these are perhaps rather difficult to understand by those not familiar with scientific thinking.

The last chapter includes a private dream of Leo Biek - a description of the perfect excavation of the future, which has a semi-permanent laboratory in the field, three assistant scientific directors, (one of whom has seven specialists in his employment), where almost all the scientific evidence is available to the archaeologist while he is in the field, and the finds are conserved and studied fully by the end of the dig. Such an excavation cannot yet be possible, but few will doubt that until it is, we should be chary of undertaking any research excavation without very good reason; for without such an organisation in the field we are surely destroying evidence for the loss of which future workers will hold us culpable.

P.A. Rahtz

Rhodes, J.F. Romano-British Sculptures in the Gloucester City Museum, Pp. 36. Gloucester City Museum, 1964. Price 2/6d.

This booklet is a catalogue with notes and illustrations of the Romano-British sculptures in the City Museum, Gloucester. It includes an introduction by Professor J.M.C. Toynbee and a geological note by Mr. L. Richardson.

Mr. Rhodes describes accurately and concisely the provenance, text and sculpture of each stone and gives sufficient background information on the army, art, architecture and religion of Roman Britain for the notes to be of interest to the general reader. Full references are given and the illustrations are good. The only slight criticism is that the illustrations could well have been numbered to make cross reference with the text easier.

The presentation is clear and attractive and the cover design is superb. All members of B.A.R.G. with Romano-British interests should buy a copy of this excellent booklet.

Alan Warhurst.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Already issued:

Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, vol. 82 (issued June 1964). . 240 pages.

The latest volume of Transactions of this Society, which changed format from octavo to quarto in 1961, reaches the usual high standard. Articles likely to be of particular interest to our readers include Glyn Daniel's presidential address on "The Long Barrows of the Cotswolds", a note on "The Date of the Three Shire Stones near Bathaston" by A.J.H. Gunstone, a paper on "Anglo-Saxon Architecture and Sculpture in the Cotswold Area" by T.F. Mackay, and a paper by K.J. Barton on "A Medieval Pottery Kiln at Han Green, Bristol".

Painter, K.S. The Severn Basin. Cory Adams & Mackay, "Regional Archaeologies". 1964. Price 15/-.

This book, written by a Bristolian now on the staff of the British Museum (Department of British & Medieval Antiquities), takes for its area the whole of the Severn Basin from Shrewsbury to the Mendips. It is hoped to review it in the December issue of this Bulletin.

Finberg, H.P.R. The Early Charters of Wessex. Leicester University Press. Price 50/-.

This work includes 46 pages on the Somerset charters. The study of early charters with land surveys is important because they sometimes mention antiquities used as boundary points of land-units. These charters cover the period from the 7th century to the Norman conquest. This book should be studied in conjunction with G.B. Grundy's publications on the Saxon Land Charters of the counties involved (Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, and Dorset).

To be published in the autumn:

Smith, A.H. The Place-Names of Gloucestershire. Part IV. The final volume. Price probably 2 guineas.

Fox, Aileen. South-West England. Thames & Hudson, "Ancient Peoples and Places". Price 35/-.

It is understood that this book will cover the archaeology of Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset as far as the Somerset Levels. It will survey the period from the Early Neolithic to the Saxon conquest of the 7th century A.D. It will be reviewed in the December issue of this Bulletin.

FORTHCOMING COURSES, MEETINGS, AND LECTURES

Courses in Bristol

Tuesdays City Museum (Schools Lecture Room). The Archaeology of South Western Britain in its Wider Setting. L. V. Grinsell, F.S.A., F.M.A. Course of 20 meetings, 7 - 9 p.m., starting 6th October. Fee: 25/-.

Folk House. Industrial Archaeology. B. A. Buchanan, H.A., Ph.D., and N. Cossons, B.A. Course of 20 meetings, 7 - 9 p.m., starting 29th September. Fee: 30/-.

Thursdays Folk House. The Fall of the Roman Empire. B. H. Warmington, M.A. Course of 20 meetings, 7 - 9 p.m., starting 1st October. Fee: 30/-.

Fridays Folk House. Discoveries of Archaeology. E. J. Mason. Course of 20 meetings, 7 - 9 p.m., starting 2nd October. Fee: 30/-.

Courses out of Bristol

Bath.

Monday 5 Hot Bath Street (ground floor). Industrial Archaeology. N. Cossons, B.A. Course of 20 meetings, 7.30 - 9/9.30 p.m., starting 28th September. Fee: 25/-.

Clevedon

Thursdays Community Centre. Practical Archaeology. Barry Cunliffe, B.A., F.S.A. Course of 12 meetings, 7.30 p.m., starting 1st October. Fee: 15/-.

Wotton-under-Edge

Tuesdays County Secondary School (Library). Finding Out about Roman Britain. Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A., F.M.A. Course of 20 meetings, 7.15 - 9.0 p.m. approx., starting 29th September. Fee: 25/-.

Weekend Course

Friday/Sunday 16/18 October Bristol City Museum (Schools Lecture Room). B.A.R.G. Weekend Course on the Recording of Field Antiquities. Programme and application form enclosed.

Conference for Young Archaeologists

Tuesday/Wednesday 29/30 December At Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London, W.C. Details from Richard Reece Esq., St. John's School, Leatherhead, Surrey.

Conferences and Meetings

- Saturday** 3rd October. Devizes, in the Town Hall, 2.15 p.m. onwards. Conference of Council for British Archaeology, Group XII (Wessex). Recent finds from Dorset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire, introduced by various speakers. "The Christian Roman Mosaic at Hinton St. Mary, Dorset", by Prof. J.H.C. Toynbee, F.B.A., F.S.A. Fee: 6/- (including tea). Apply (enclosing S.A.E.) to R.A.H. Farrar, F.S.A., 47 King's Road, Richmond, Surrey.
- Saturday** 24th October. Exeter, in the Lecture Theatre, Queen's Building, the University of Exeter, 2.15 p.m. until about 6.15 p.m. Conference of Council for British Archaeology, Group XIII (South-West), on Medieval Archaeology in the South-West. Dr. W.G. Hoskins, "Archaeology and the Historian in the South-West", and short papers by Mrs. E.M. Minter, P.A. Rahtz, W.A. Pantin, and Martin Biddle. Fee: 6/- (including tea). Apply (enclosing S.A.E.) to L.V. Grinsell, The City Museum, Bristol, 8.
- Saturday** 31st October. Wells, at the Star Hotel, 2.30 p.m. Meeting of Branch and Affiliated Societies of the Somerset Archaeological and N.H. Society. L.V. Grinsell, "Somerset Archaeology since 1931 : a Review". Attendance limited to 6 members from each Society, arranged through their secretaries.

Bath & Bristol Numismatic Society (all in Bristol City Museum).

- Thursday** 22nd October, 7.15 p.m. Discussion on Visual Aids in Numismatics. Speakers: J.E. Hancock and others.
- Thursday** 26th November, 7.15 p.m. Mr. P.D. Whitting, Art and History in Byzantine Coinage.
- Saturday** 12th December. Annual Meeting. Presidential Address by Prof. J.M. Cook, F.S.A., "Ancient Sicily and its Coinage".

Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Monday 2nd or 9th November, 5.30 p.m., at the Red Lodge, Park Row. Mr. J.S. Wachter, B.Sc., F.S.A., "Excavations in Cirencester". (Date still to be fixed).

University of Bristol Epelaological Society

- Monday** 19th October, 8.15 p.m. In U.B.S.S. Rooms, University Road. Informal discussion on "Picken's Hole" (a cave with palaeolithic occupation).
- Monday** 23rd November, 8.15 p.m. In Geography Lecture Theatre. Dr. E.K. Tratman, "A Visit to Czechoslovakia" (includes prehistory).
- Mondays** 12th October and 2nd November : to be arranged.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

PUBLICATIONS ON SALE

at the Enquiries Desk of

BRISTOL CITY MUSEUM

	<u>Price</u>	<u>Packing & postage</u>
<u>Preparation of Archaeological Reports</u> (Grinsell, Rahtz, and Warhurst).	3/6d.	6d.
<u>Survey and Policy concerning Archaeology in the Bristol Region, Part I to 1066.</u>	5/-.	6d.
<u>Fourth Report on Petrological Identification of Stone Axes</u> (Evans and others)	7/6d.	9d.
<u>Medieval Pottery Kiln at Han Green, Bristol</u> (K.J. Barton).	3/-.	6d.
<u>Brief Numismatic History of Bristol</u> (Grinsell).	2/6d.	6d.
<u>Guide to Kings-Weston Roman Villa</u> (G.C. Boon).	1/-.	4½d.
