

BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP BULLETIN

Volume 2. No. 2.

Autumn, 1965

This Bulletin is issued in Spring, Autumn and December.

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BRISTOL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Officers and Committee for 1965/6

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Alan Warhurst, B.A., F.S.A., The City Museum, Bristol, 8.

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

Readers will remember that almost immediately the Group was formed on 7th March, 1962, steps were taken to arrange some lectures on "The Preparation of Archaeological Reports", which were held in Bristol City Museum between Easter and Whitsun that year, under the auspices of the Extra-Mural department of Bristol University. We were determined not to expose ourselves to the accusation of digging or doing other archaeological work without publishing the results.

After the lectures had been given by Messrs. Alan Warhurst, Philip Rahtz, and the Hon. Editor, they were revised and issued as a duplicated brochure in Autumn 1962, 250 copies being produced. These were sold within three months, and a second edition of 350 copies was issued in Spring 1963, incorporating improvements suggested at the Council for British Archaeology's Conference of Editors in November 1962, and recommendations from readers. About 50 copies of this edition remain in stock (3/6d each, or 4/- including postage).

In April this year an approach was made to John Baker (Publishers) Ltd. to ask whether they might be interested in publishing a revised version of The Preparation of Archaeological Reports, printed and bound as a normal book. The answer was yes. The work has now been thoroughly revised and some illustrations drawn, and it is now in the hands of the publishers. If all goes well, it should be on sale in Spring 1966. The selling price will be in the region of half-a-guinea, and the book will be cloth-bound.

As these words are being written, an important archaeological excavation is in progress at the Roman fortified settlement of ABONAE (Sea Mills). It is being directed by Max Hebditch on behalf of the Bristol City Museum, Ministry of Public Building and Works, and (of course) B.A.R.G., and many of our members are taking part. It is hoped that the December number of this Bulletin will include an article by Mr. Hebditch on the main results of this excavation, and that some of the more significant finds will soon be on exhibition in the City Museum.

THE ARCHENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP OF SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE

By Norman Bridgewater

The origin of this Group can really be traced to the interesting series of tutorial lectures held in Hereford about ten years ago, when Dr. Graham Webster was laying the foundations for the formation of archaeological research groups in the West Midlands.

The inspiration derived from such activities during these early days, later supplemented by formal training at Wroxeter, enabled the writer to launch out with his own excavations, at first with limited help and resources. It was at this time that he also toured the district thoroughly and compiled a long list of features suitable for archaeological investigation. During this period also, the writer attended the evening courses in geology given in Hereford by an exceptionally lucid and knowledgeable teacher - Rev. B.B. Clarke. During several years' attendance at university lectures and other courses, the writer has never derived so much enjoyment and instruction as from these fascinating geological talks and field trips.

These beginnings, however, would never have matured into worthwhile accomplishment had it not been for the efforts of our present secretary Mr. Jack Herd. The growth, success, and achievements of such a group or society depend almost entirely upon personalities, and technical ability can easily be handicapped by the lack of a few members endowed with the gift of attracting and holding the right sort of support.

It was in 1961 that our Group was formally constituted, and soon afterwards a book of rules was issued. This book also contains the Aims and Objects of the Group, and states that it was formed to undertake the systematic study of certain periods in the development of the ancient district of Archenfield (the Welsh Ergyng) of south Herefordshire. The accent would be on active research, although other supporting members would be admitted. The general aims are:

1. Archaeological Work:

- (a) The investigation of particular sites by excavation;
- (b) Field work - the exploration of features leading to the construction of distribution maps showing known sites and finds.

2. Local History - The study of documentary sources, such as local records and maps, for information to assist the archaeological work.

3. Reporting of finds to the Group - coins, pottery, building features.
4. Co-operation with professional archaeologists, and colleagues in Herefordshire and adjacent counties.
5. The publication of results in accepted journals.
6. Meetings and talks by members of the Group and by speakers invited from outside.
7. Training of certain members in techniques of excavation, field work and documentary study.

Leaders of such groups or societies, especially in country districts, know that the implementation of such ideals usually falls on the shoulders of a very few loyal and able workers, and if a cultural group of this type is to flourish it is essential to have a strong nucleus of members consistently applying themselves towards these ends. It must also be remembered that, to such people, such an activity is only a hobby, and that most of their time and energy are spent in earning their living. Again, not everyone is in a position to undertake original work by study and field activities, and such supporting members must be catered for by regular summer trips and winter talks. We have six summer trips to places of archaeological, geological or historical interest, undertaken in private transport. These trips have been well supported as have the six winter talks, half of which are given by professional archaeologists from other areas.

Our main allegiances lie with the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club of Herefordshire, to which body we are affiliated, and the Extra-Mural Department of Birmingham University. We have also received some interesting talks on geology from the secretary of the Woolhope Club, supplemented by field trips, twice in association with the local W.E.A.

To date, three papers reporting our archaeological work have appeared in the Transactions of the Woolhope Club, and others are being prepared.

The training in excavation techniques has been taken seriously, and we now have 8 - 9 regular excavators of reasonable ability. This training was supplemented by issuing our own notes on excavation. One member has become sufficiently proficient to be appointed as Deputy Leader of excavation. We were also given a Carnegie United Kingdom Trust grant towards such training, with satisfactory results.

On the educational side, we were fortunate in having Mr. S.C. Stanford to hold a three year tutorial class on archaeology.

The total membership of the Group fluctuates between 30 and 40. Our major effort is directed to excavation, and, owing to the nature of the sites, we try to excavate during most months excepting January & February. We have been mainly concerned with the Roman and Medieval periods, and our long-term excavation is at the Roman villa of Huntsham, which covers about 20 acres. One season was spent in examining Romano-British iron-working near Ariconium, where remains of furnaces and hearths were found.

Before the Group was formed, the writer carried out a series of 15 excavations on ancient buried roads along the line of the 13th Iter between Ariconium and Monmouth, but not all of these stretches were Roman.

Much work has been carried out on the medieval period, and five seasons were devoted to the fortified settlement at Wallingstones. We are now working on a similar site, known to have been a Manor, at Tretire.

Outside these periods, one season was spent on excavating a 16th-17th century glass-making site - Glasshouse Farm.

A major occupation of the Group is to study the development of iron-working, which is known to have taken place in this area, around the fringe of the Forest of Dean, and many potential sites of several periods are listed. In this connection we were able to help Dr. Tylecote in excavating Coedithal (although this was just outside our area), where half the shell of a 17th century blast furnace still stands.

The Group is also lucky to have its own well-stocked museum, showing the finds from the various digs, with drawings, maps, and photographs. It is our policy, however, to pass on the finds to the Hereford museum, after they have been fully recorded and the relevant papers are published. We also receive helpful attention from the local press, and all our excavations are reported.

The district of Archenfield is practically identical with the Hundred of Wormelow, and represents the ancient province of Ergyng. It is particularly interesting historically because it retained its autonomous Welsh political and economic status both during the Saxon and Norman periods, and the Celtic place-names and Welsh family names were retained until quite recent times. The area is bounded by the Wye and Monnow rivers to the east, south and west, and by the Worm brook to the north, and its unique character is thus determined by its geographical isolation.

Enough has been said to illustrate the satisfaction and achievement to be derived from studying such an area by a small Group, well organised in aims but informal in association.

CHEDDAR 1965:

Interim Report.

by Philip Rahtz

The excavation in the vicarage garden at Cheddar took place from 27th March to 12th April; it was done in advance of building operations for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Public Building and Works, through a direct grant to the Bristol Archaeological Research Group. Voluntary labour was used and contributed 197 man-days, of which 66 were worked by 11 B.A.R.G. members.

The site lies close to the river Yeo and to the parish church of St. Andrew. On the vicarage lawn the 25" O.S. map shows a Roman Villa, and many Roman objects have turned up in the area around the church.

The excavation of the Saxon and Medieval palaces in 1960-2 on slightly higher ground some 300 yds. to the north did not locate any buildings which could be identified as a minster church, mentioned in documents of the 10th and 11th centuries. The minster, presumably consisting of a church and monastic buildings, was thought to lie in the area of, and to have been succeeded by, the present parish church.

It was thought possible that there might be some connection between the Roman site and the post-Roman monastery on the same site. The present excavation was done to test these hypotheses. Trenches were dug from east to west and north to south in the walled garden north of the church, in the wood west of the vicarage lawn, across a slight hollow way leading to the river, and in the lawn itself.

None of these cuttings located any definite Roman "villa-type" buildings. Though there was ample evidence of Roman occupation in coins and pottery of the 2nd to 4th centuries, there was very little building-material such as mortar, brick or tile. The cutting across the hollow way showed that it might have been a slightly sunken road, but without any ruts. The cutting on the lawn revealed a north-to-south, 2nd century ditch, and a parallel one of the 4th century, full of black sooty soil; this might well be a main drain for the "villa", with soot from a hypocaust system.

The cuttings in the walled garden were most informative. A 2nd century east-west ditch was found with some burnt daub suggesting timber structures or ovens, a 2nd or 3rd century ditch filled with iron-working debris, and a 4th century or later double grave. This consisted of the skeletons of a mature male and female oriented head to north, both with sandal nails. The female appears to have been in a coffin bound with heavy iron clamps. The male burial was slightly

later, apparently cutting away one side of the coffin. Some nails suggest a much simpler coffin or stretcher. Much of the male burial was destroyed by a modern horse burial.

In both trenches were areas of cobbling of uncertain date. On one area were some very rough footings of water-worn limestone, forming the end of a small building with annexe. These looked post-Roman in character, but the only associated finds were a few Roman sherds and a coin of Valens. They could be part of the post-Roman monastic complex.

On another area of cobbling was a spread of light rubble containing 11th-12th century pottery. Running from north to south was a ditch containing 9th-10th century pottery in its lower filling, and 11th-12th century sherds in the upper part. The pottery is of Types C, E, and G, defined in the palace site. Here it seems we have definite evidence of pre-conquest building in the vicarage area, and demonstrates that occupation was contemporary with that of the palace site.

I should like to thank all those who took part in the excavation, and particularly the Rev. R. Denman and Mrs. Denman, who gave us every facility to work in their garden.

APPOINTMENT OF STAFF TUTOR IN ARCHAEOLOGY & PREHISTORY AT
BRISTOL UNIVERSITY

Mr. Peter J. Fowler, M.A., F.S.A., lately of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), Salisbury, began his duties as Bristol University's first Staff Tutor in Archaeology and Prehistory on 1st September. He has already joined B.A.R.G., and many of our members will remember him as Guest Speaker and Field Guide on our Weekend Course on Recording in Field Archaeology, held on 16/18 October last year. He is author of various papers in Oxoniensia, the Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine, the Proceedings of the Dorset Archaeological & Natural History Society, and other periodicals. We wish him every success in his efforts to stimulate archaeological interests throughout the area covered by the Extra-Mural department of the University.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

by the Hon. Editor

The Royal Archaeological Institute held their Summer Meeting at Cheltenham from 12th to 17th July, and issued for the occasion a Programme of 68 quarto pages, which is near to being a fair summary of the present state of archaeology in Gloucestershire. It includes "The Prehistory of Gloucestershire" by Mrs. E.M. Clifford (pp. 6-8), "Roman Gloucestershire" by Prof. Sir Ian Richmond (pp. 8-12), and "Industrial Archaeology of Gloucestershire" by Lionel Walrond (pp. 17-18). Apart from a delightful account of Cheltenham, the remainder is a description of sites visited on the excursions, which did not extend south of Badminton. The essence of this Programme (issued only to those who attended the Meeting), revised where necessary, will be included in the next volume of the Archaeological Journal.

A comprehensive review of "Somerset Archaeology 1931-65", by the writer, is now in proof and will be published in the next volume of Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. It will include ten distribution maps, and a section on Industrial Archaeology by Neil Cossons, Curator of Technology in Bristol City Museum.

All who are interested in Romano-British archaeology will be grateful to Mr. Wilfred Bonser for his A Romano-British Bibliography (55 B.C. - A.D. 449), published at the end of 1964 by Basil Blackwell of Oxford at eight guineas the two volumes. The first volume contains 9,370 entries which are extremely well classified and arranged, partly by subjects and partly by regions. It is therefore easy for anyone studying almost any branch of Romano-British archaeology to pick out the papers dealing with his special study. For example it is easy to find all the papers dealing with Gloucestershire and Somerset and Sea Mills. The second volume comprises indices which render the work of the greatest utility. Mr. Bonser's earlier work, An Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Bibliography was issued by the same publishers in 1958. We understand that the final member of this wonderful trio, a Bibliography of Prehistoric Britain is now in hand.

Art in Britain under the Romans, by Prof. J.M.C. Toynbee (1965), is a masterly review of the subject, and all or almost all the noteworthy Roman objects from the Bristol region are described and illustrated, from the Gorgon's Head in Bath to the smallest museum objects possessing artistic quality.

It is hoped that the Industrial Archaeology of Southern England, by Kenneth Hudson, will be reviewed in the December issue of this Bulletin.

EXCAVATIONS AT THE PORTWALL, ST. MARY REDCLIFF

by Max Hebditch

During March and April this year, an archaeological excavation was carried out on land adjoining the Portwall, Redcliff Way, opposite St. Mary Redcliff church. The Portwall comprised a bastioned wall with outer moat, and was constructed in the thirteenth century as Bristol's medieval defences along the south side of the city.

The dig, which was directed by Max Hebditch, was successful in locating the moat in front of the wall, and it was found to be fifty feet wide. Expensive shoring was necessary on the site and the cost of this prevented the ditch being completely cleared. Probing indicated a depth of at least twenty feet. The wall itself was not discovered, and is now thought to lie under Portwall Lane where it is for the moment inaccessible.

During the centuries since it was cut, the moat silted up until by 1820 it was no more than a shallow depression in the back gardens of houses in Pile Street. At that time the area was redeveloped and the remaining depression filled in. A row of houses was erected over the site in 1840.

Quantities of broken pottery were found in the upper silt of the ditch; these had been thrown in from the mid-seventeenth century onwards when the first houses appeared outside the walls on this site. A selection of the more significant finds is on display in the City Museum.

FORTHCOMING COURSES

Bristol. Archaeology at Home and Abroad. Tutor: L. V. Grinsell. Sessional course of 20 meetings on Tuesdays 7.00 to 9.00 p.m., starting 5th October. In the City Museum Schools Room. Fee, 25/-.

Industrial Archaeology. Tutors: R. A. Buchanan, N. Cossons, and others. Sessional class of 20 meetings on Tuesdays 7.00 to 9.00 p.m., beginning 5th October. At the Folk House. Fee, 25/-.

Cheddar. The Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Period. Tutor: Max Hebditch. Course of 12 meetings on Thursdays 7.30 to 9.00 p.m., beginning 30th September. At the Kings of Wessex C.E. Secondary School; Station Road, Cheddar. Fee, 15/-.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Charles Browne

In a characteristically provocative review of the 1960 Jubilee Volume of The Journal of Roman Studies (Antiquity, vol. 35, 1961, pp. 157-9), Sir Mortimer Wheeler reminded us that Haverfield laid down the broad outlines of our picture of Roman Britain as long ago as 1906. The assiduous work of countless skilled excavators since then has done little more than fill in the detail. "Haverfield's work" he wrote, "was not merely a monument, it was a tombstone".

Nevertheless, in excavations this summer at Gatcombe and Bath, Barry Cunliffe has shown that there is exciting detail still to be revealed. Gatcombe has long been a tantalisingly unknown site. The fifteen feet thick surrounding wall (originally excavated by C. M. Sykes and the Clevedon & District Archaeological Society) suggests a substantial Roman settlement which should be one of the most important Roman sites in the Bristol region. It is gratifying that we are now to learn a little more about it, and we hope that more work will be done there in the years to come. This is a site that justifies the "Wroxeter treatment" of planned excavation over a long series of seasons.

About Gatcombe we know as yet very little: about Bath we know a great deal. But the mass of detailed knowledge of Roman Bath has not coalesced into a satisfying comprehensive picture. Even such a fundamental matter as the line of the Roman town walls is disputed. In fact the site of the town is not certain. It may have lain north of the medieval walled area, away from the bathing establishment. The work of Barry Cunliffe for the Bath Excavation Committee can be expected to advance considerably the account presented by Haverfield in volume I of the Victoria County History of Somerset.

A new local society

We welcome the recent formation of the Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society, which is setting out to study all aspects of the history of the parish. It is an admirable venture, in these times of rapid development and change, to try to record the evidence of local history before it is swept away. One popular group is studying the district's Inns and Alehouses. Archaeologists have until now been slow to venture into this field of research.

Fieldwork for the amateur

Do B.A.R.G. members fully appreciate the opportunities for making new discoveries that lie, literally, at their feet? Mr. & Mrs. R.J. Hild, who attended my class in archaeology at Downend last year,

have been doing excellent fieldwork in the region of Chipping Sodbury. They have made some interesting finds, including a possible site of the long-lost Roman villa in the parish of Dodington. Over the centuries many Roman antiquities have been reported from this parish, such as "pottes . . . diggid out of the growndes in the feldes of Dodington, also a yerthen pot with Romayne coins". I hope that Mr. & Mrs. Hild will be able to locate some of these find spots, and that others will follow their example of getting out into the fields and looking for the evidence, and submitting the finds to the City Museum.

B.A.R.G. Symposium

On the 27th November there will be a meeting at which reports will be given of work done by the Group and by individual members during the past year. There is a great deal and a great variety of archaeological investigation being done by members which is not widely known. This Symposium will provide an opportunity for some of these active members to give brief accounts of their work, including work in progress.

MEETINGS AND LECTURES

In general, only those with a bearing on B.A.R.G. Activities are included.

Bath & Bristol Numismatic Society.

In Bristol City Museum (Schools Room), at 7.15 p.m.

Thursday 28 Oct. Members' Evening: various short talks with exhibits.

Thursday 18 Nov. The Things that are Caesar's. R. Du Cane.

Bath & Camerton Archaeological Society.

At the Assembly Hall, Bath Technical College, Bath. 7.15 p.m.

Tuesday 6 Oct. Bath and the Pre-Conquest Church in the South-West.
Dr. C.A. Raleigh Radford.

Tuesday 2 Nov. Windmill Hill and Avebury. Dr. Isobel F. Smith.

Tuesday 7 Dec. An Archaeological Tour in Tuscany. W.J. Wedlake.

Bristol Archaeological Research Group.

In Bristol City Museum, at 2.15 p.m.

Saturday 27 Nov. Meeting to hear reports from members on recent work done.

Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

In Bristol City Museum Schools Room, at ⁵4.45 p.m.

Monday 8 Nov. The Cirencester Excavations. J.S. Wachter.

Monday 6 Dec. Gloucestershire Churches. R.W. Paterson.

Bristol City Museum. Public lecture, in Lecture Theatre, 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 17 Nov. Prehistoric Music. Dr. J.M. Coles.

Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society.

In Wells Museum lecture room, at 5.30 p.m.

Saturday 30 Oct. Museums and Archaeology. Alan Warhurst.

Saturday 27 Nov. Upton (Glos.) Deserted Medieval Village. Philip Rahtz.

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The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been
 appointed to the various positions in the Department of the Interior
 for the year 1910.

Secretary of the Interior: William H. Taft

Assistant Secretary of the Interior: Charles D. Smith

Commissioner of the General Land Office: George B. Hoadly

Director of the Geological Survey: Charles D. Walcott

Director of the Biological Survey: William T. Horn

Director of the Fish and Game Service: Gifford Pinchot

Director of the Bureau of Reclamation: Elwood M. Quinn

Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs: Charles F. Smith

Director of the Bureau of Land Management: George B. Hoadly

Director of the Bureau of Mines: Thomas S. Lee

Director of the Bureau of Prisons: John Edgar Hoover

Director of the Bureau of Census: Charles D. Walcott

Director of the Bureau of Education: Charles D. Walcott

Director of the Bureau of Statistics: Charles D. Walcott

Director of the Bureau of the Census: Charles D. Walcott

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