

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

These notes include archaeological discoveries reported during 1985 and a few earlier finds not previously noted. Discoveries by the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit (MKAU) are included by courtesy of D. C. Mynard, and fuller accounts of these sites appear in *South Midlands Archaeology* (CBA 9). The assistance of many informants is gratefully acknowledged; other discoveries are by Museum staff. The compiler would be pleased to learn of any errors or omissions. Findspots are recorded under civil parish.

Some selection of material has been necessary; single struck flakes for instance have not

normally been included, nor field scatters of medieval pottery unless of sufficient quantity to indicate settlement, nor single Roman coin finds. Abbreviated grid references have unfortunately to be given for a number of sites to prevent looting.

Numbers in parentheses are accession numbers of material at the County Museum. The initials BCM indicate that the material is in the Museum, but that no accession number has yet been allotted. The County Museum Archaeological Group is abbreviated CMAG.

Michael Farley

## PREHISTORIC

### *Aylesbury*

SP 81651395

Observation by Mr P. Yeoman of a substantial ditch in a developer's trial trench in the grounds of the Prebendal was followed by an excavation directed by M. E. Farley for BCM with financial support from Estates & General Investments Plc and English Heritage. The 2.25 m deep ditch proved to be of an Iron Age hillfort within which the later town was sited. On the base of the ditch a severed head had been laid. Within the fort were two storage pits and a depression filled with animal bone, several of which had been articulated carcasses. On the edge of the depression were four human burials. The whole is of Early Iron Age or possibly Late Bronze Age date and is interpreted as a ritual deposit. In the Middle Saxon period the line of the ditch was followed by a boundary ditch containing a *sceat*. This ditch may be associated either with the minster church or the early formation of the town.

Many pits and wells were dug in the medieval and later period. A substantial ditch crossing the site and turning through a right angle down

hill is provisionally interpreted as of Civil War date. During the eighteenth century two cellared houses on the north of the site were demolished and a number of garden landscape features could belong to the period when the Prebendal was tenanted by John Wilkes.

*Aylesbury* see Medieval

### *Bledlow-cum-Saunderton*

SU 791985

The blade of a Late Bronze Age (Ewart Park phase) socketed chisel was found by Mr F. Brooks in 1984. Blade width 18.5mm. (12.1985)

### *Bledlow-cum-Saunderton/Bradenham*

SU 81619832

A V-shaped ditch, 1.8 m deep, was observed in a pipe-trench section by Mr P. Carstairs. A struck flake was recovered from the fill.

### *Broughton*

SP 903393

A possible cropmark ring was noted on an aerial photograph by Hunting Surveys, by Messrs R. J. Williams and R. A. Croft.

*Cold Brayfield* SP 934521 (area)  
Aerial photographs taken by Mr G. Foard during 1984 showed a pit alignment to extend from an adjacent field to the south into the more northerly field. An enclosure is also present.

*High Wycombe* No NGR  
Further finds were made by South Bucks Metal Detector Club members on a site previously recorded, including two bow brooches and Celtic and Roman coins. An iron spearhead of Saxon type was also recovered.

*High Wycombe* SU 8395  
Members of the South Bucks Metal Detector Club located a Late Bronze Age tanged chisel, the tip of a socketed axe and some Romano-British material. (part 243-4.1986)

*High Wycombe* SU 8395  
Members of the South Bucks Metal Detector Club located a ?Middle Bronze Age chisel, similar to one from Sparkford Hill, Somerset, and some Romano-British material. This find is separate from that noted above.

*Little Marlow* SU 86859081  
A ring ditch showing as a cropmark was noted on a photograph taken for the Thames Valley Police.

*Shenley Brook End* SP 84763522  
A cropmark site at North Furzton noted by Mr A. R. Pike on an aerial photograph was trial-trenched by Mr R. J. Williams for MKAU. The principal feature was a rectangular enclosure 43 x 35 m with a ditch at least 2 m deep. The interior appeared to be almost totally devoid of features. Other ditches and a probable sub-rectangular enclosure were also investigated.

Pottery recovered from the trial trenches has been provisionally dated to the Middle Iron Age and the whole appears to be a relatively large settlement. Its location on heavy clay soil differentiates it from other such sites investigated in the area.

*Taplow/Maidenhead (Berks)* SU 90378212  
Iron Age pottery (some flint-gritted) and animal bone was recovered by Mr R. M. Palin when a cesspool was being dug at Glen Island during 1983. (415.1983)

*Wolverton (Bancroft)* SP 825405  
A final season of work on the Roman mausoleum site was directed by Mr R. J. Williams for MKAU, adjacent to the Late Bronze Age circular building previously examined. Five further penannular drainage ditches associated with small yards were uncovered, giving a minimum of fifteen circular Iron Age buildings on site, although they were certainly not all contemporary. A small Iron Age rectangular well cut one of the drainage ditches.

Running NW-SE across the northern group of buildings was a substantial boundary ditch of 'Belgic' date with a second shallower ditch roughly parallel. From the larger came quantities of pottery, some of which formed almost complete vessels. Two large irregular pits cutting into good quality yellow clay are interpreted as Belgic clay pits. The main enclosure ditch was again sectioned and could be seen to have silted naturally before being infilled to carry a causeway connecting the circular stone shrine and mausoleum.

The discovery of a Saxon sunken-featured building, the first located at Bancroft, containing probable fifth-century pottery, may indicate continuity of site use.

#### ROMANO-BRITISH

*Clifton Reynes* SP 9150  
An enamelled plate brooch of second/third-century date, found by Mr R. Adams, was reported by Mrs A. Bond.

*High Wycombe* SU 8792  
A hoard of 190 Roman coins, reported by Mr

G. Oxlade, is thought by Dr C. King to be an uncharacteristic assemblage for Britain and although found here bears comparison with hoards from N. Africa. ?Modern reburial here.

*High Wycombe* see Prehistoric

*Ivinghoe/Pitstone* SP 9713 (area)  
Field Survey by Mr A. Wainwright on the National Trust's Ashridge Estate located three earthwork enclosures, field boundaries and lynchets. A section dug across the ditch of one enclosure produced first-century AD pottery.

*Little Horwood* SP 7929  
Romano-British pottery and second- to fourth-century coins discovered in 1984 were reported by Mr D. G. Shelley.

*Little Horwood* SP 7830  
Romano-British pottery and second- to fourth-century coins associated with 'building rubble' discovered in 1984 were reported by Mr D. G. Shelley.

*Mursley* SP 8229  
Romano-British pottery and three third-century radiates were reported by Mr D. G. Shelley.

*Stoke Mandeville* SP 8311  
During fieldwalking CMAG located a widely dispersed scatter of thirty-six Romano-British sherds of second- to third-century date. (115.1985)

*West Wycombe* SU 8094  
Members of the South Bucks Metal Detector Club located Romano-British material.

*Wolverton (Bancroft)* SP 827403  
Excavation directed by Mr R. J. Zeepvat for

MKAU continued at the Bancroft villa to the east and north of the 1984 excavation. A metalled trackway running along the east side of building 9 and first identified in 1984 was traced for 150 m, heading in the general direction of the Stanton Low villa complex on the Ouse. A maze of ditches lay east of the trackway, also a narrow dry-stone wall parallel with it and forming the west side of a sunken rectangular area, possibly a pond. This and the trackway were covered in the late third/early fourth century by a layer of black soil containing quantities of domestic debris and building rubble. North of building 9 was an extensive area of limestone cobbling, and north again lay gullies and a hearth indicating a circular building possibly associated with industrial activity. Circular stone buildings, 11 and 12, were uncovered at the northern end of the site and a further extensive area of fourth-century black soil deposits. Building 11 had a clay floor with central hearth and is probably of second-century date. Between it and building 12 were a number of ditches and gullies, the earliest being a broad east-west ditch from the bottom of which a complete Belgic jar was recovered. Building 12, trial-trenched in 1984, was found to be buttressed by a well-built 3 m<sup>2</sup> structure with a drain leading from its north-east corner. This building sealed a destruction layer containing a coin of Trajan, that in turn related to a complex of underlying earlier structures including a semi-circular plunge bath.

#### SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

*Aylesbury* SP 82371324  
An excavation directed by Mr C. H. Dalwood for BCM, funded by MSC, commenced at Walton, near the Saxon/Medieval site examined in 1973-4. The base of a medieval stone oven has been uncovered and a few sherds of Middle Saxon pottery including Ipswich ware. Bronze Age pottery and an awl have also been found. (BCM)

*Aylesbury* SP 81781374  
Substantial undated pits (?medieval) were noted during redevelopment fronting Rickfords Hill.

*Aylesbury* see Prehistoric

*Bledlow-cum-Saunderton* SP 7900  
A copper gilt disk-brooch decorated with a double-quatrefoil flower design in *cloisonné* enamel was found by Mr R. J. Sears. The piece is circular with seven projecting lobes and is late tenth/eleventh-century. (84.1985)

*Burnham* SU 930804  
Mr and Mrs D. Miller, observing building work at the Abbey, recorded the foundations of the main abbey range and a passageway to the infirmary. Four burials were also exposed to

the south of the church. See pp. 94–100 above.

*Great Missenden*

SP 897070

On 11–12 July 1985 Missenden Abbey was gutted by fire. Prior to this, during continuing alteration work to the Abbey, Mr P. Yeoman recorded further structural details including three large medieval windows looking down onto the cloister garth from the dormer. A pipe-trench, dug diagonally across the area of the chancel and east wall of the church, cut through 1 m of stratified medieval deposits, the earliest of which was a wall footing sealed by later floor levels, possibly the east end of the first church on the site. The latest floor surface sealing this wall was covered in smashed window glass which in turn had collapsed voussoirs from a rib vault resting upon it, the deposit presumably being datable to the Dissolution.

The July fire destroyed the fine medieval roof and the remaining shell of the Abbey was filled with rubble, in places 3–4 m deep. In conjunction with the County Council's architects and contractors, much medieval and Tudor stonework was recovered from the debris. A photogrammetric survey of the interior was arranged by RCHM through HBMC. Some demolition on grounds of safety followed. Subsequently a steel framework was inserted into the building necessitating substantial below ground disturbance which was monitored by Mr P. Heathman for BCM. Prior to this a substantial tile pavement was uncovered, composed of plain mottled green and yellow glazed tiles, laid alternately. A token of 1580–1610 was found in the mortar bedding. Rescue recording is continuing during 1986. (BCM)

*Hartwell*

SP 79991284

A flat-topped mound apparently overlying ridge and furrow may be the site of 'Abbynts Mill' recorded in the Osney Charters. The field is named Upper Abbots Hill. Its siting would also accord with a mill shown in paintings of the grounds of Hartwell House by B. Nebot of c.1738.

*High Wycombe* see Prehistoric

*Shenley Brook End*

SP 82963564

Work continued on the deserted settlement of Westbury, directed by Mr P. Sewter and Mr M. R. Petchey for MKDC, the work being funded by MSC. Site 1, reported last year, was completed and work begun on site 2 to the east, where occupation appears to have begun before that on site 1. In period 1 at site 2 a small enclosure was succeeded by the construction of a platform c.15 × 18 m, on which a building 9 × 4.5 m was erected, with substantial earth-fast posts between sill beams. In period 2 two structures were put up on site 1, the principal being a four-bay house with at least two rooms. Site 1 was abandoned by the early fifteenth century.

*Tattenhoe*

SP 833334

Earthworks around Water Spinney first noted in 1981 are now thought to be the remains of a medieval fishpond.

*Wolverton* see Roman.

*Weston Turville*

SP 85871043

An excavation in advance of construction of a swimming pool was carried out on the motte ditch by Mr P. Yeoman for HBMC and BCM. Two gullies predated construction of the motte. The ditch itself was cut to a depth of almost 2 m and was waterlogged at the bottom. From the basal fill came two blocks of dressed masonry presumably from an adjacent building. After a period of natural silting, dumped infill occurred, possibly to be associated with the slighting of the castle recorded in AD 1173/4.

*Woughton-on-the-Green*

SP 8738

A detailed reassessment of the earthworks of the medieval village by Mr R. A. Croft and Mr D. C. Mynard confirmed that the village was not originally a 'green village' but a linear village with the probable manor at the west end. The earthworks on the Green are thought to represent the position of tofts and crofts deserted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

POST-MEDIEVAL AND UNDATED

*Aylesbury* see Prehistoric.

*Hartwell* see Medieval.

*Bow Brickhill* SP 90473528  
A soil or cropmark, possibly indicating an enclosure, was noted by Mr. R. A. Croft and Mr R. J. Williams on an aerial photograph by Hunting Surveys.

*High Wycombe* SU 86819297  
Footings dug for a church extension exposed pits containing cattle bones and seventeenth to eighteenth-century pottery.

*Clifton Reynes* SP 906521 (area)  
Cropmarks photographed from the air by Mr G. Foard added further detail, including a possible rectangular enclosure, to a previously known site.

*Lathbury* SP 87684585  
Two adjacent enclosures, one square, the other trapezoidal, were photographed as cropmarks by Mr G. Foard during 1984.

*Woughton* see Medieval.