

Notes and News

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES: 1967-68

Abingdon, Masefield Crescent, Tith Barn Estate. During the late summer of 1968, the Abingdon and District Archaeological Society carried out an excavation on two building plots on the west side of Masefield Crescent (plot nos. 324 and 325) and approximately a quarter of a mile west of the site of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

On the first plot part of a ditch was excavated; it ran north-south, and contained a considerable quantity of Roman building materials, three coins and pottery of the 3rd-4th centuries, traces of copper working and a bronze ligula. On the neighbouring plot to the north west, a stone-built rectangular structure, approximately 12 ft. by 6 ft. internally, and with its western part set in a low gravel bank, was uncovered. The eastern ends of the two east-west walls had been destroyed by a recent drainage trench, but there were indications that the fourth (eastern) wall had never been constructed, and that the building had been open to the east. Against the inside centre of the west wall was a well-built brick pier, *c.* one foot square, with a bevelled plaster surface. A few inches in front of this a thin plaster setting (?for a second pier) lay immediately on top of the sand subsoil. The interior of the structure contained a fairly heavy fall of building materials including coarsely made, shaped plaster and a small segment of a column base, 3rd-4th century pottery and several simple bone hairpins. (SU485963.)

Appleford, Berks. A large hoard of Romano-British pewter and ironwork was discovered during gravel extraction at Amey's pit, in Appleford field.

The hoard comprises 24 pieces of pewter, plates and bowls ranging in size from 5 in. to 19 in. in diameter, a small jug with ribbed handle, and an octagonal flanged bowl on a pedestal; one piece has a punched geometric pattern in the centre; two pieces are inscribed with their owner's name—PACATA, and one has an added dedication by LOVERNIANUS. The ironwork includes a chisel, a scythe blade, a padlock, a steel-yard, and a decorative cauldron chain similar to the chain, in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Cambridge, from Great Chesterford, Essex. The hoard seems to have been deposited in a well; there is a scatter of Roman pottery on the site, but there have been no traces of buildings, nor of stone or tile building debris.

Air photographs show the site to be patterned with the ditches of enclosures and droveways; many of these have produced Early Iron Age pottery, and a hoard of about a dozen currency bars has been found. (SU 522935.)

Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxon. Coldwell Bridge, Long Barrow I. Excavations on this site were continued by Mr. D. Benson during the summer. The whole of the horned, false entrance at the east end, and the western end of the barrow have now been excavated. A line of rectangular stone cists containing skeletons has been found running north-south across the middle of the barrow; excavation of these cists has begun, and will be completed in a final season. (SP299175.)

Bicester, Oxon. During excavations in September, by Mr. D. A. Hinton, on the site of the Priory church, a part of the north wall of the north transept and the associated layers were uncovered. (SP584222.)

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Bruern, Oxon. A partially polished flint chisel was reported by Mrs. D. Wilson, found in April 1966 during ploughing south of, and near to, the road junction south-west of Bruern Abbey. (SP259199.)

Eynsham, Oxon. Rescue excavations by Mrs. S. C. Hawkes and Mrs. Kenward took place during the summer on a site south of City Farm, prior to gravel extraction.

Ditches of a Neolithic henge monument and six Anglo-Saxon *grübenhäuser* were excavated; they produced pottery of both periods, and Anglo-Saxon loom weights. Further excavations are planned to take place under the direction of Mrs. I. M. Gray, for the Upper Thames Archaeological Committee. (SP428109.) This site is on New Wintles Farm.

Garsington, Oxon. A winged iron spearhead, probably late Medieval, was found by Mr. A. Dawson, and deposited by him in the Ashmolean Museum. (SP0258.)

Hinton Waldrist, Berks. A polished axe of igneous rock (possibly Group VI) was reported by Mr. E. Spreadbury, found in a field between the village and the River Thames. (About SU374995.)

King's Sutton, Northants. A polished flint axe was found in 1966 in field O.S. no. 3. *Oxford, 8 Bardwell Road.* A flint scraper of Beaker-culture type was found by Mr. H. J. Case in the south garden. Cf. *Oxoniensia* XXIX/XXX (1964/5), 57, fig. 21, nos. 9, 21; 61, fig. 22, nos. 13, 14. (SP512078.)

Oxford, St. Ebbe's. The work of the Oxford Excavations Committee, under the direction of Mr. T. Hassall, has concentrated on the excavation of two tenements in Church Street where documentary record has been traced back to the 13th century. The site has proved to be a honeycomb of Medieval and post-Medieval pits and wells dating from the early 12th century; few structural remains have been met so far.

A trial trench in Circus Yard, to the south, uncovered an unrobbed wall of the Greyfriars. (SP510060.)

Shakenoak Farm, North Leigh, Oxon. The excavation of this site by Dr. A. R. Hands and Messrs. C. Brodribb and D. R. Walker, has continued during the year, the work being concentrated on the Roman building north of the stream, building B, and on the nearby ditch which has produced quantities of early Anglo-Saxon material. (SP 374138.)

A fully illustrated report on the south building, building A, has been prepared, printed and published by the excavators; their report on building B is in preparation. Copies of the first report, 'Excavations at Shakenoak, I' may be obtained from Dr. A. R. Hands, Exeter College, Oxford, price £1 post free.

Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxon. A Lower Palaeolithic hand-axe was found by Mrs. J. R. Plant, gardening at Dowland, Ascott Road. (SP279177.)

Standlake, Oxon. A Lower Palaeolithic flint hand-axe was found by Mr. M. R. Anderson in a dump of stones from washing gravel in a pit between the village and Shifford. (SP386025.)

P. D. C. BROWN.

A DOBUNNIC COIN FROM SHAKENOAK

The excavations at Shakenoak Farm, North Leigh, Oxon., produced in 1967 a Saxon sceat which is published in Vol. xxxi of this journal. The same site has now revealed another coin of interest, a small silver coin of the Dobunni (FIG. 27).

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FIG. 27
Scale 2:1.

Obverse: Face to right, with degenerate dolphins in front; star on chin; no pupil to eye.

Reverse: Horse galloping to left; degenerate cock's head below.

D. Allen, 'A Study of the Dobunnic coinage' in E. M. Clifford, *Bagendon*, Class B. Wt. 0.77 gm. ↑ ← The coin is now in the Ashmolean Museum.

The Class B Dobunnic coins are dated by Allen to the last years of the last century B.C. since, though they are not uncommon generally, there were none at Bagendon, which seems to have been first occupied at the beginning of the 1st century A.D. It is therefore fairly certain that in the Dobunnic heartlands Class B had gone out of use by this date, and as Shakenoak is only 30 miles from Bagendon it is unlikely that this coin reached there long after this date. Some caution is, however, necessary, since in outlying areas Class B coins have been found in Roman contexts, as at Wroxeter.

The Shakenoak coin came from the mid-2nd century fill of a cellar in building B, which contained a considerable amount of 1st century material. No certain evidence for pre-Roman occupation has yet been found, and only a very small number of pre-Roman objects. It is therefore possible that the Dobunnic coin is a remarkably long-lived stray.

The interest of the coin lies in the fact that although the provenances of some 25 Class B coins are known, this is the first from Oxfordshire, and indeed it would seem to be the earliest recorded Dobunnic coin from the county.¹ Later Dobunnic coins are not uncommon up to the line of the Cherwell, the nearest to Shakenoak being that from the great villa at North Leigh. While speculation based on one coin would be foolish, it is possible that if more Class B coins are found in the area, in more satisfactory contexts, it might suggest that the Oxfordshire Belgae owed some sort of allegiance to the Dobunni at an earlier date than is now thought.²

D. R. WALKER.

¹ Allen gives the provenance of one Class B coin as 'Oxford probably', but since all that is known of it is that it was bought in an Oxford antique shop, this is hardly satisfactory, and the coin is best discounted.

² The problem of who the Oxfordshire Belgae were is discussed by Professor C. F. C. Hawkes in *Bagendon*, particularly pp. 52-57.