Notes

A POSSIBLE BLOCKED ENTRANCE AT THE IRON AGE HILL FORT OF UFFINGTON CASTLE

In all references known to the writers, the hill fort at Uffington (SU 29864) is quoted as being univallate and possessing a single entrance at the western end. This entrance (PL. xii, A) is of simple form with the rampart out-turned to meet the counterscarp bank which has been specifically heightened for some distance either side of the entrance. There is, however, a position for a possible second entrance, now blocked, at the eastern end of the fort where there is a distinct inward curve of the defences for which there is no natural explanation. Such a curve is also a feature of the blocked south-western entrance at Danebury Ring, Hampshire. Also visible at the eastern end of the Uffington fort is a heightening of the counterscarp bank similar to that apparent at the western entrance. The topography of the heightened bank viewed from the ground suggests that two phases are present, the second representing the supposed blocking of the entrance passage. While the western entrance is the better naturally defended, the eastern entrance, which faces the nearby Bronze Age and Early Iron Age enclosures at Ram's Hill, would have provided access to the plateau area on top of the hill to the east and north-east of the fort. The existence of this second entrance can only be proven by excavation.

BRENDAN O'CONNOR and BILL STARTIN

A SIGNET-RING FROM ROMAN ACLHERST

The ring shown on PLATE xii, B was purchased in Oxford recently, by the writer.* Its find spot was given as near Bicester, which almost certainly means Alchester. A trumpet-brooch of developed type with the same provenance was examined at the time.

Although the lower portion of the hoop was missing, enough of the ring survives to show that it had an external diameter of c. 18 mm. and a width ranging from 10 mm. at the bezel to 5 mm. at the point where the break occurs. It is made of copper alloy, now somewhat corroded. Rings of this simple type are datable to the third century A.D. Set in the bezel is an intaglio of glass paste with a blue surface on the dark ground, in imitation of that variety of onyx which jewelers call 'nicolo' (Dimensions: 7 x 5.5 mm. The gem rises c. 1.5 mm. above the surface of the ring). It bears the device of a male figure, seated in profile and working on an object, placed on a stand in front of him. Similar figures are shown on pastes from Castle Hill, Whiton, Suffolk; Cirencester, Gloucestershire; Rockbourne, Hampshire; Harlow, Essex; Augst in Switzerland and I.

1 The most recent reference is in D. W. Harding, The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin (1971), 48. Earlier references are quoted there, including those which comment on the unpublished mid nineteenth-century excavations at the fort.

2 B. W. Cunliffe, 'Danebury, Hampshire : First Interim Report', Antiquaries Journal, x (1971), 240-252, Fig. 2.

3 Recently excavated by R. Bradley and A. Ellison; see forthcoming report in B.A.R.

* I am grateful to Mr. Edward Besly for drawing my attention to the ring and to Mr. Robert Wilkins for the photograph.

R. G. Collingwood and Ian Richmond, The Archaeology of Roman Britain (second edition 1969), 297 and Fig. 104, No. 52 (type R (ii)).

stewards were consistently appointed from among the canons of the convent. The estate was a steward who was a knight, although at least one of these was not primarily a careerist.

The estate steward of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is an important and familiar figure. On secular estates the steward was usually a layman, often a knight holding his own lands, and a 'careerist' administrator. Ecclesiastical and religious dignitaries probably appointed the same type of man as did the chapters of the large Benedictine houses and cathedrals. Even the English estates of the Abbot of Bec were supervised by a steward who was a knight, although at least one of these was not primarily a careerist.

Management of the estates of Oseney Abbey differed from the usual pattern, for estate stewards were consistently appointed from among the canons of the convent. The estate steward was thus usually one of the mayor et sanior pars of the convent, one of the twelve senior canons. One evident difficulty of appointing canon-stewards was the canonical rule that religious ought not to travel outside the convent without an accompanying canon. The estate steward, consequently, always itinerated with a 'concanonicus'. This had, nevertheless, the compensation that it introduced canons to the stewardship, since the duties of the office were only to be learnt by experience.

These duties did not differ from those expected from stewards of other lay and religious estates. The steward was responsible for the supervision of husbandry, particularly extraordinary sales of produce. He was responsible, for example, for the sale of a stack of beans from Stone to a butcher of Abingdon for £7 6s 8d. His warrant was requisite for the sale of a heifer, presumably a sound one, to acquit the cost or reaping. His principal duty, however, was to visit each property at least twice each year to remove cash in hand from the local official. This livery to the steward normally comprised the rents of assize and perquisites of court, which were delivered to the bursary of the Abbey, but occasionally

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NOTES

3 Ibid., 75 and Pl. xvii, Nos. 529-531; F. Henkel, Die Römischen Fingerringe der Rheinlände (1919) 111, No. 1215 (Pl. lxxviii, 322 f.).


5 A. Ross, Pagan Celtic Britain (1967), 379 f.; M. Henig, 'The Origin of some Ancient British Coin Types', Britannia, iii (1972), 212, Pl. xi, C and D.


9 M. Morgan, English Lands of the Abbey of Bec (repr. 1968), 56-7.

10 This rule was reiterated by Wykeham in his injunctions to Selborne Priory: W. D. Macray (ed.), Charters of Selborne Priory (Hants. Record Society, 1891), 99.

11 Bodl. Libr. MS. Christ Church Oseney Roll 34.


13 This will be discussed in my doctoral thesis: Leicester University.

THE ESTATE STEWARDS OF OSENEY ABBEY, c. 1245–1340

The estate steward is important and familiar figure. On secular estates the steward was usually a layman, often a knight holding his own lands, and a 'careerist' administrator. Ecclesiastical and religious dignitaries probably appointed the same type of man as did the chapters of the large Benedictine houses and cathedrals. Even the English estates of the Abbot of Bec were supervised by a steward who was a knight, although at least one of these was not primarily a careerist. Management of the estates of Oseney Abbey differed from the usual pattern, for estate stewards were consistently appointed from among the canons of the convent. The estate steward was thus usually one of the mayor et sanior pars of the convent, one of the twelve senior canons. One evident difficulty of appointing canon-stewards was the canonical rule that religious ought not to travel outside the convent without an accompanying canon. The estate steward, consequently, always itinerated with a 'concanonicus'. This had, nevertheless, the compensation that it introduced canons to the stewardship, since the duties of the office were only to be learnt by experience.

These duties did not differ from those expected from stewards of other lay and religious estates. The steward was responsible for the supervision of husbandry, particularly extraordinary sales of produce. He was responsible, for example, for the sale of a stack of beans from Stone to a butcher of Abingdon for £7 6s 8d. His warrant was requisite for the sale of a heifer, presumably a sound one, to acquit the cost or reaping. His principal duty, however, was to visit each property at least twice each year to remove cash in hand from the local official. This livery to the steward normally comprised the rents of assize and perquisites of court, which were delivered to the bursary of the Abbey, but occasionally
it was swollen by incidental receipts from the sale of grain or from an entry fine. At the second visit, at or about Michaelmas, the steward audited the accounts of the local officials. Auditing was a local rather than a centralized affair, presumably because the Abbey’s property was concentrated in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and not widely dispersed. Nevertheless, the steward’s clerk occasionally failed to engross the accounts until Martinmas.

The organization of the estates was equally the steward’s responsibility. Successive bailiffs of Waterperry were removed (‘amoti’) by the steward, whose clerk compiled an inventory of stock on their dismissal. When it was decided, in 1337, not to retain the demesne of Sibford in hand any longer, it was the steward, William de Abyngdone, who arranged the farming out. In the event, the demesne was divided into five standard virgate holdings and each was granted out in villeinage. It was the steward, William de Pencrich, who journeyed via Watlington to receive land at I ver back into the lord’s hands. In this latter case, Pencrich was acting perhaps as the legal representative of the Abbot, and it was necessary for the stewards to be familiar with common and statute law. Legal representation was generally the business of the proctor of the house, but the steward had to invoke the Statute of Marlborough in 1383 to illustrate why the Abbot did not owe suit to the view of frankpledge of Fairford.

The distinguishing feature of the stewards of Oseney Abbey thus lay not in their duties, but in their appointment from amongst the canons of the house. Their selection seems to have comprised one part of a policy of self-sufficiency in the administration of the estates, shown also by the use of canon-wardens (‘custodes’) to supervise groups of properties. The offices of steward and canon-warden were complementary until the latter was allowed to lapse in the mid fourteenth century, for each provided experience of estate administration. It was customary, therefore, for stewards to have served as canon-wardens. The problem of this method was the demand that it made on a convent which in the fourteenth century diminished to about 25 canons, but it had no doubt been an effort to guarantee loyalty amongst administrators.

Abbreviations

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<td>Ch. O.R.</td>
<td>MSS. Christ Church Oseney Roll (Bodleian Library, in boxes MSS. d. Ch. Ch. 26 ff.).</td>
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9 The livery of Bodl. Libr. MS. Christ Church Oseney Roll (hereafter Ch. Ch. O.R.) 34 included the £7 6s 8d from the sale of hay and £3 9s 8d from an entry fine; other swollen livers are Ch. Ch. O.R. 38 (£7 8s 5d); Ch. Ch. O.R. 43 (£7 6s 8d) and Bodl. Libr. MS. Roll Oxon. Oseney (hereafter O.R.) 97 (£11 or 2d). The reason for removing cash from the hands of a manorial official is explained by Walter of Henley; D. Oschinsky (ed.), Walter of Henley and other treatises on Estate Management and Accounting (1971), 340.

10 Ch. Ch. O.R. 50–2: the ‘expense senecalli’ paragraph includes the cost of the steward’s clerk making the account.

11 Ch. Ch. O.R. 52: ‘veni ibidem circa festum sancti martini et commorant per ii. dies pro compoto anni precedentis faciendo’.

12 Ch. Ch. O.R. 49–56.


14 O.R. 107.


16 This will be treated in my doctoral thesis. For the similar type of administration by monk-wardens, cf. R. A. L. Smith, Canterbury Cathedral Priory (1943), 100–10; E. King, Peterborough Abbey (1972), 129 ff.

17 Oschinsky (ed.), op. cit. note 9, 264.

18 Listed by N. Denholm-Young, Medieval Archives of Christ Church O.H.S., xcvi (1929), 13 ff.
Name of canon | Outside dates of office of steward | Reference/other information
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I would like to express thanks to David Vaisey, Professor Geoffrey Martin, and Dr. J. F. A. Mason, the Librarian of Christ Church, for their very kind assistance.

David Postles

ODDINGTON CHURCH

A review of the evidence

In a printed leaflet (MS. O.D.P. c. 1921) signed and dated Feb. 1884, the Revd. W. Laxton, Rector 1867–1893, says that Oddington Church originally had a high-pitched roof to the nave, and a stone arcade between nave and aisle. He adds that in the 15th

References are to Bodleian Western MSS., and to J. Dunkin, Oxfordshire, II (1823), 99–102.
century this arcading was removed, the north wall raised, and a roof put right across the church. This roof is shown in Henry Hinton’s drawings (the better is MS. Don. c. 90 No. 302) as a leaded roof out of centre. Hinton says ‘The roof of the Church has a beam ceiling resting on corbels of stone, the trusses carved’ (MS. Don. d. 140) which suggests that the Rector’s dating may be right. The surviving Churchwarden’s Accounts 1609–1728 (of which a transcript is in preparation) show that in 1637–8 during Gilbert Sheldon’s incumbency a major releading took place involving over 27½ cwt. of lead and that a new Communion Table was bought (now in the Lady Chapel, repaired). This roof is shown by the Churchwardens’ two presentments of 1810 to have been replaced by what Mr. Laxton calls ‘a mean roof with king posts and a flat ceiling’ which caused the north wall to lean out. It is shown, out of centre, in Dunkin, in a drawing by E. Williams in the Harcourt Collection (G. A. Oxon: a 117 37 (4)) and in 1859 by Joseph Wilkins (Dep. b. 188: 79, 80, 81).

In 1884 the church was completely reroofed. It was decided to use the original pitch as shown by a surviving roof-line, and to insert new arcading. The report of a lecture by the architect F. G. Bruton in Nov. 1884, summarized in the Transactions of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society and in the Bicester Advertiser, upon the completion of the work in October, explains that on lowering the north wall they found the stones (painted with a medieval scroll design similar to that at Charlton) which now form the western arch of the arcade, supported on a respond and column found either side of the chancel arch when a lath-and-plaster arch was removed. Of the aisle, therefore, the north, west and east walls (the last containing an arch reopened in 1921 mentioned as blocked in the Oxon. directory of 1883) are original. To say, with V.C.H. Oxon., VI, 284, that a north aisle was added in 1884 is to mis-state the position. V.C.H. has been misled by Dunkin into thinking that the porch was then added. The accounts show repairs to the porch (then with a leaded roof) in the period 1610–1728, notably in 1626. Evidently it was reroofed when the lead roof of the church was renewed in 1810 and it seems that the west wall and the apex were rebuilt. Hence the date seen by Dunkin. Hinton’s drawing of 1806 shows the ‘pre-Dunkin’ porch with a finial like that on the 1810 roof.

In 1884 the chancel arch was rebuilt: it had, in any case, been carrying an out-of-centre nave roof. In Nov. 1821 the churchwardens said they were going to pull the chancel down and rebuild it. It is quite certain that they did not. The appearance of the building, the small aumbry-aperture in the north wall, the still-functioning piscina in the south wall—both noted by Hinton and Dunkin—the fact that in 1884 a Perpendicular window was found embedded in the north wall and re-used in the south, and the manner in which the renewed east window is tied into the older wall, make this irrefutable. The roughcast on the south wall is perhaps of 1822.

The only new structure of 1884 is the Lady Chapel (built as a vestry on the foundations of a former chapel, noted by Parker), with an arch opening into the chancel; the chancel arch and the arcading—using some old work—are new. So also are the windows and doors in the north and south walls. The crack in the tower repaired in 1951 is doubtless that repaired in 1901 and 1630. The tower and the walls of nave and aisle are 13th-century; the chancel (like Charlton) appears to have been rebuilt in the 14th.

The above is an abridged version of a description of the church under preparation, of which a copy will be placed in the Bodleian Library.

It may perhaps be added that Mr. J. M. Surman, Diocesan Surveyor for Oxfordshire, entirely concurs in the conclusions stated above.

E. H. W. Crusha, Rector

THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE IN 1974

1974 was the first full year of operation for the Oxfordshire Archaeological Committee. The Committee is composed of representatives of all the excavation committees and groups which previously operated in the area now covered by the new county of Oxfordshire and
were in receipt of Department of the Environment or local authority funds. The genesis of the Committee has recently been described in an article in Antiquity, xlviii (1974), 93–98. A full description of the Committee’s Unit’s work in 1974 can be found in CBA Group IX Newsletter, 5 (1975), 33–44. Below is listed the survey and excavation work undertaken and published. The Committee produces a Newsletter which appears approximately monthly, subscription £1 p.a., obtainable from its headquarters at 3 Luther Terrace, Oxford, OX1 1RJ.

1 Surveys (a) Published

(b) In preparation
Mrs. K. Rodwell, ‘Historic Towns in Oxfordshire: a survey of the new county’.

2 Field Surveys Undertaken
Cumnor By-pass
M40 Northern Extension: proposed routes.
Alchester

3 Field Survey in Progress
Oxfordshire Parish Survey (with Oxford City and County Museum and Oxford University Department of External Studies).

4 Excavations (a) Published

Oxford: 79–80 St. Aldate’s; Church Street; All Saints*; Hertford College; Blackfriars, Wadham College (all medieval).
Abingdon: Iron Age settlement at Asheville Trading Estate*; Roman villa at Barton Court Farm*.
Farmoor: Iron Age and Roman complex (with Oxford University Archaeological Society)*.
Berkinsfield: Pagan Saxon cemetery*.
Banbury: Castle Site*.
Hardwick: Roman site (with Witney Archaeological Group).

(c) Observations or trial excavations: detailed information will be deposited in the Department of Museum Services Sites and Monuments Record.
Oxford: Blue Boat Street; 4–5 High Street; New Inn Hall Street (all medieval); Cannings Crescent (Roman).
Abingdon: Ock Street (medieval); Barton Lane (Roman); Queen Street (prehistoric).
Dunsden: suspected causewayed camp.
Ditchley: Grim's Ditch.
Drayton: barrow.
Stanton Harcourt: prehistoric.
Chilson: Roman site.
Didcot: Roman settlement.
Kidlington: St. Mary's Church.
Wallingford: St. Peter's Church; site of St. Michael's Church (with Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society).

A BRONZE CLASP NOT FROM WATER EATON

The late Saxon bronze clasp noted in the last volume (Oxoniensia, xxxix (1974), 98) was found at Hampton Gay, not Water Eaton. The Grid Reference quoted, SP 485616, is correct.

DAVID A. HINTON


OXONIENSIA, XL (1975)