

## REVIEWS

*It should be understood that all statements and opinions in reviews are those of the respective authors, not of the Society or the Editor.*

Hyeon Woo Lee, *A Study of Lower Palaeolithic Artefacts from Selected Sites in the Upper and Middle Thames Valley, with particular reference to the R.J. MacRae Collection*. British Archaeological Reports, British Series 319, Archaeopress, Oxford, 2001. Pp. 223. £32.00

The volume reviewed here constitutes the publication of Dr. Lee's doctoral research at Oxford University's Donald Baden-Powell Quaternary Research Centre into the phenomenon of Lower Palaeolithic archaeology in the Upper and Middle Thames Valley. One particular aspect of Lower Palaeolithic archaeology in this area is that good quality nodular chalk flint, which was used to make stone tools, is not (nor seems ever to have been) available in the immediate vicinity. Dr. Lee convincingly demonstrates how, in the absence of local good quality flint resources, early humans devised economic strategies that enabled them to occupy this territory.

The Lower Palaeolithic is a most mysterious period to study. With the total haul of human skeletal material from all the Lower Palaeolithic sites in Britain barely sufficient to fill a moderately sized paper bag, we hardly know what species of human made the stone artefacts that we discuss. So often it is only the stone artefacts that remain at a site, and assemblages were frequently not recovered from modern scientific excavations but informally collected from the surface or from reject heaps in gravel pits. Thus, with little more than chipped stone artefacts from only very generally known contexts, it has been all too easy to dismiss the evidence of the early Palaeolithic as little more than the first faltering attempts of a stone age people to survive in a world over which they exerted no control.

Dr. Lee has studied five assemblages from sites in the region. These are Highlands Farm, Berinsfield, Iffley, Stanton Harcourt and Wolvercote. The artefacts from the gravel extraction sites of Highlands Farm, Berinsfield and the Gravelly Guy site at Stanton Harcourt were collected by the esteemed amateur archaeologist R.J. MacRae, who has rescued several thousand artefacts from such gravel pits (many in Oxfordshire) over the last 50 years. Though the artefacts are undoubtedly genuine relics of our ancient relatives' material culture, it is by no means an easy task to make sense of such assemblages since one can never be sure of the sample size, whether essential elements are represented or not, or whether artefacts relate to a single afternoon of intensive early human activity or several millennia of occasional occupation.

To some degree Dr. Lee circumvents these difficulties by focusing on the trends in the use of raw materials for stone tool manufacture. What emerges from the analysis of the stone artefact assemblages from the Upper Thames valley (Iffley, Wolvercote, Stanton Harcourt and Berinsfield) is a consistent pattern of economic use of good quality flint (evidenced by re-sharpening of tools and greater care in shaping the edges of artefacts) which was imported from an unspecified provenance, probably the Chilterns, in some cases over 30 km. distant. However, the Lower Palaeolithic people in this area also used locally available quartzites and poor quality flint pebbles for making tools, which suggests that they were aware of all the resources available to them across the region they inhabited. They appear to have planned in advance to take with them good quality materials for making stone tools, since the Upper Thames valley would not provide these resources. However, when presented with the local raw material, they were perfectly able to make workable stone tools of their own design.

Dr. Lee also addresses the problem of the apparent representation of dual cultures in the Lower Palaeolithic archaeology of northwest and central Europe. Some of the Lower Palaeolithic people seem to have consistently made bifacially prepared tools (often called handaxes) and only a few smaller tools on the waste flakes produced during the shaping of the handaxes. The assemblages which yield handaxes are known as 'Acheulian'. Other sites yield only flake tools or tools made out of cores from which flakes were struck, with no evidence of the bifacial tool-making or use. These assemblages are labelled 'Clactonian'. Recently it has been suggested that there are no culturally distinct groups of Acheulians and Clactonians and that a single population produced the different kinds of tool-kit. Dr. Lee favours the idea that the Acheulian and the Clactonian are not separate entities or cultural traditions, because the assemblages from Berinsfield and Highlands Farm contain tools of both Clactonian and Acheulian type and he considers these to be contemporary in age. His interpretation relies heavily upon the degree to which artefacts have been affected by weathering: artefacts with similar degrees of weathering are considered to be of the same age. One might have expected a rather fuller discussion here of the implications of using the degree of weathering on artefacts as a criterion for interpreting contemporaneity.

The artefacts studied are represented in digital photographs rendered in black and white. It seems likely that as our own technology increases in complexity, the way in which we illustrate early stone technologies will follow suit, though I am not sure that images such as these really show the details of the flake scar patterns in such clarity as black and white line drawings do. However, photography does give a good overall impression of the texture and condition of a piece.

One criticism would be that Dr. Lee employs the terms Early, Middle and Late Acheulian throughout this work. These terms are becoming obsolete in British archaeology, since refined stone-working really cannot be used to refer only to the latest occurrences of the Acheulian technology in Britain. Rather, we need to stretch the boundaries of what was previously thought of as Late Acheulian technology back to around the time of the earliest occupation of Britain and other locations in northern Europe: a time when people had certainly gained some control over their world and were able to plan the use of the resources they found around them.

These few criticisms do not outweigh the value of Dr. Lee's thought-provoking and original contribution to our understanding of how early humans operated in this particular region of Britain. The author should be commended on his courage for finding answers amongst material evidence so abstruse that it might leave students of the Roman Empire quaking in their lace-up sandals.

VICTORIA WINTON

S.E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, parts 1 and 2 (vols. VII and VIII in the Anglo-Saxon Charter series). OUP/British Academy, 2001. £55.00 each.

Abingdon Abbey was founded around 950 on the site of a royal vill and an ancient, decayed minster church. One hundred and forty-nine pre-Conquest (or purportedly pre-Conquest) documents survive from its medieval archive, and these, edited by Dr. Susan Kelly, constitute the largest single collection to be published in the Anglo-Saxon Charter series produced jointly by the Royal Historical Society and the British Academy.

Everyone who has ever tried to walk the bounds of an Anglo-Saxon charter might wish it had been analysed in a work like this, but these two volumes are infinitely more than a collection of land grants and royal diplomas. The abbreviations list provides a wide-ranging bibliography of relevant material; the indexes, which cover nearly 60 pages, are arranged

not only by personal name and place name, but include a Latin glossary, a diplomatic index, and an excellent dictionary of words and names used in the boundary clauses. The charters themselves have scrupulously detailed notes dealing with translation problems, place name queries, authenticity, archival history, witness lists, chronological details, opportunities for cross-referencing from later documents, estate histories, and histories (if any) of individuals referred to, as well as the interpretation of land boundaries and topography.

Linking and making sense of all these separate parts is an invaluable 200-page introduction, covering the history of the abbey and its archive, discussing the manuscripts and the authenticity of the charters, the shadowy pre-Aethelwoldian minster and its four charter grants from the time of King Ine, the abbey's three *Orthodoxorum* charters, the landed endowment (including the 'alien' diplomas), important local patrons and landowners, the abbots of Abingdon, and the history of the settlement of Abingdon. Comparative material is discussed from the abbeys at Winchester, Worcester, Westminster and Ely, to name but four.

While many will want to consult this book in connection with individual estates or charters, several more general themes can find excellent material here. One might be the nature of late Anglo-Saxon government. As well as grants made and retrieved as royal interest in monasteries changed (Edgar was extravagantly generous) and personal royal relationships fluctuated (129 shows Aethelred compensating Abingdon from land he thought Edward had held on to unfairly), the question of whether royal diplomas and decrees came from a centralised chancery, or from localised ecclesiastical offices is considered carefully. Churches and churchmen were both consumers and producers of most of the documents. Many of the charters show recognisable Abingdon formulations, which could provide useful comparisons with other writing centres – if not, perhaps, the colourful sanction threatening the malefactor with being weighed down with heavy chains around his neck among flame-belching throngs of hideous demons, which appears in ten of these documents.

A second theme is the controversial problem of how and whether forgery was put to the service of monasteries. Most of Abingdon's documents survived in the form of 12th- and 13th-century chronicle-cartularies, which naturally began with evidence claimed for the monastery's foundation and subsequent endowment. A large number of these old documents are probably spurious, but to understand any cartulary we are reminded how essential it is to consider the forces which influenced its compilation. In the case of chronicle-cartularies, which have narrative, propaganda and fiction built in, this is especially critical. What are the criteria on which documents were included or excluded? And what was the relationship of 'land' to 'hoc'? Was a charter boundary diploma a title-deed which could be handed down unchanged whatever may have been altering on the ground, or was it a real symbol of land ownership? Was it assumed that oral evidence could back it up, or explain anomalies? What was its legal status? Why were copies made? If an adjustment in a detail such as hidage or a boundary line was made, did that make it a forgery? Did you have to have both the land and the charter, or could you have one without the other? If not, what are 31 'alien' charters doing in the Abingdon archive? These deal with land which seems never to have belonged to the monastery. One explanation is that these documents were deposited there for safe-keeping – but this is not yet proven. All these questions, frequently occurring in local history studies, are fruitfully considered here, and Dr. Kelly comes to the conclusion that the abbey archive does indeed contain a high proportion of pre-Conquest charters which seem to satisfy all reasonable diplomatic tests of authenticity.

Another theme on which the charters throw light is the character of English monastic communities. Three of six existing *Orthodoxorum* charters belong to Abingdon. These long and elaborate diplomas all purport to date from the second half of the 10th century, and record the confirmation of estates and privileges to a religious house – for instance, the right

of free election of its own abbot. Of Abingdon's three, Dr. Kelly concludes '...the privileges of both Eadwig and Edgar, 83 and 84, can be accepted as wholly authentic ... and the much later privilege in Aethelred's name, 124, was essentially based on 84.' The authentication of these charters is highly important in the context of the 10th-century Benedictine revival, and the implications of many other land grants flow from understanding them. At the same time, however, we note that there was not a flood of 10th-century lay benefactions to the abbey as might have been predicted.

Possibly the most interesting of all for Oxfordshire historians are the ways in which these charters illuminate local history. In the earliest days the disputes between Wessex and Mercia may have dictated certain of the endowments. Well into the medieval period, Abingdon charters were being brought forward as legal evidence - 10 and 83 in the 1486 trial of Humphrey Stafford, for instance - and the chronicle-cartularies have been widely used by local historians such as Anthony Wood. However, it is simplistic to assume that even basic correlations can be made between the charters and the shape of medieval estates. The gaps in evidence, perhaps once filled by the kind of lay documents, like wills and leasing agreements, which seem to have been of little interest to 12th- and 13th-century ecclesiastical archivists, are too great. Nor is it easy to match the Abingdon pre-Conquest archive with its endowment in Domesday Book. Land both came to the abbey and left it, in donations, land-exchanges, purchases, forfeits, solicited bequests and royal grants. When the charters seem to show a pattern at all, it is of the abbey gradually rationalising its early and far-flung acquisitions - such as the vast endowments from King Edgar - into more compact and manageable estates centred in Oxfordshire and Berkshire. An example is made of the abbey's 'home-hundred' of Hormer: abbey land stretching all the way from Abingdon to Wytham.

Finally, two convincing studies of local 'aristocratic' connections are made. The charters reveal a surprisingly large number of estates which subsequently belonged to the abbey, which had once been in the possession of either the thegn Wulfic Cufing, or the elderman Aelfhere of Mercia. While landowners as big as these can be traced in the documents, giving land, losing it and retrieving it, lesser patrons can not. Even this lucid, detailed book can only dimly reveal what Dr. Kelly calls '...the dance of gift and counter-gift, deferred bequest and mutual exchange, which left an opaque documentary deposit at Abingdon.'

Given that one is unlikely to be using one volume without the other, it is mildly confusing to have identical pages v - xxxiv in both (foreword to abbreviations), and misprints are so rare it is a pity to have one in the first paragraph of the foreword. But these are the most minor of complaints about a great work of scholarship, to refer to and to read.

CHRISTINE HOLMES

Ross Wordie (ed.), *Enclosure in Berkshire, 1485-1885*. Berkshire Record Society, vol. 5, 2000. Pp. xxxvi + 250.

The effects of the various enclosure movements on the English countryside are well-known and evident. Much of the landscape of the Midlands in particular is the result of late 18th- and early 19th-century farm reorganisation. However, substantial quantities of open-field arable land, common, and waste were enclosed much earlier, from the 14th to the 18th centuries, before the age of parliamentary regulation. Berkshire has, so far, received comparatively little attention in studies of enclosure. Ross Wordie remedies this neglect in a volume which examines the enclosure of Berkshire parish by parish between 1485 and 1885.

Thomas Wolsey's enclosure commission of 1517 took 1485 as the starting point for its investigation into enclosure and depopulation, and this can be seen as the date from which records of enclosure become more common. In 1885 the last Enclosure Act was passed for

Berkshire. During those 400 years, Wordie has calculated, approximately 78% of the land in historic (as opposed to post-1974) Berkshire was converted from open to enclosed.

The introduction discusses the problems and limitations of the original source material. The differing interpretations and analyses of these documents by historians such as I.S. Leadam (*The Domesday of Enclosures, 1517-1518* (1897)) and Ian Mortimer (*Berkshire Glebe Terriers, 1634* (1995), also published by the Berkshire Record Society) have resulted in discrepancies, particularly in the determination of the extent of enclosure. To overcome this, Wordie has adopted a highly systematic treatment. Each parish is looked at in turn – the volume is arranged alphabetically – and the documents available in the Berkshire Record Office (supplemented with some from the Public Record Office) are examined for evidence of enclosure, including medieval emparking and village desertion, at all periods. Each entry is sub-divided into eight sections: a) site of medieval park or deserted village, b) evidence of enclosure 1485-1600, c) 1634 glebe terrier, d) other early material to 1650, e) surviving records of non-parliamentary enclosure, f) other relevant material available post-1650, g) parliamentary enclosure, and h) conclusion. The volume's comprehensive coverage and its simple and clear arrangement make it a model county study.

Wordie's attention to pre-parliamentary enclosure, especially to the evidence of the 17th century, is particularly refreshing; so often this period of enclosure, brought about as landowners sought to survive and recover from the economic problems of the Civil War, is neglected in favour of the better documented parliamentary enclosure or the more emotive 'man-eating sheep' enclosures of the 15th century. Wordie's evidence shows, for example, that the enclosure of Great Coxwell took place in 1658 in connection with a Chancery Court suit for the recovery of debt.

The first of two useful and interesting appendices includes transcriptions of some significant documents which demonstrate that, although uncovering the extent of pre-parliamentary enclosure may be more laborious than studying enclosure by Act, the rewards can be great for place-name students, family historians, and geographers. The second appendix contains three maps; the first shows the county in 1634. In this year a series of glebe terriers, which survive in unparalleled numbers for Berkshire, were drawn up for Archbishop Laud's visitation of the county. This resource is well-used throughout the book. The entry for Frilsham, for example, not only discusses the vicar's holdings in both the open and enclosed fields but tithe rights in the commons of both Frilsham and neighbouring Yattendon. The other two maps depict the extremes of enclosure in Berkshire in 1600: 'Very open Berkshire' and 'Highly enclosed Berkshire'. The results are intriguing as the two conditions seem to be concentrated in the same area of the county: the very open areas are situated across the Ridgeway and in the Vale of the White Horse particularly around Didcot; while those which were 100% enclosed in 1600, although far fewer in number, are also distributed throughout the Vale. Wordie does not explore these concentrations – which would make an interesting study in their own right – but his primary aim, to examine and present the surviving evidence for enclosure in Berkshire, is achieved handsomely.

JUDITH CURTHOYS

Christopher Ridgway and Robert Williams (eds.), *Sir John Vanbrugh and Landscape Architecture in Baroque England, 1690-1730*. Sutton Publishing in association with the National Trust, 2000. Pp. x + 242, 159 plates, £25.00.

This wide-ranging collection of interdisciplinary essays began as a conference held at Castle Howard in July 1999 to celebrate the tercentenary of the building of Vanbrugh's first great architectural masterpiece. It is commonplace to describe Vanbrugh as a man of many talents.



His successive careers as soldier, successful playwright, and architect are well enough known but, as a result of the research contained in this book, we now have to add to these a brief spell as factor in the East India Company based at Surat to the north of Bombay as well as landscape designer and amateur antiquary. Inevitably his extraordinary presence looms large both in the title and throughout the contents of the volume but for many of the contributors this is simply a catalyst for a wider perspective on the culture and management of landed society in the period. Landscape architecture is interpreted very broadly and this is far from the narrow study of baroque gardening that at first sight it might appear. In seeking the wider canvas it embraces the creative tension between production and aesthetics in the economic context of estate management. It offers many fresh insights on such diverse subjects as imperialism, the theatre and antiquarianism, cemeteries and burials in India and England, and the technology of water mechanics as well as the more predictable essays on gardens, planting and botanical knowledge.

Vanbrugh's Blenheim Palace was an even more magnificent achievement than Castle Howard and, inevitably, all the contributors have something original to add to our understanding of Oxfordshire's greatest house. In particular, Christopher Ridgway's thoughtful essay on 'Rethinking the Picturesque' offers a comprehensive account of the abortive campaign to save the old royal palace of Woodstock Manor, and helpfully reprints in full the memorandum sent by Vanbrugh in 1709 to the duchess of Marlborough containing his 'Reasons offer'd for preserving some part of the old manor', seen by many later historians as a key document in the genesis of the conservation movement. The contribution by Robert Williams places the martial symbolism of the gardens at Blenheim into the broader context of fortified gardens in England and Europe with great clarity. Because of its overwhelming scale, Blenheim is not an easy house to love and in the concluding chapter Derek Linstrum takes us on an entertaining journey on the changing critical response to Vanbrugh's architecture. Within ten years of his death in 1726, that trenchant critic Horace Walpole had condemned Blenheim as 'execrable within, without, & almost all round' and it was only in the last decade of the century that its reputation began to be rehabilitated, albeit with a degree of reluctance. The judgement of Sir Uvedale Price in his *Essays on the Picturesque*, first published in 1794-8, that 'It appears to me that at Blenheim, Vanbrugh conceived and executed a very bold and difficult design; that ... in spite of the many faults with which he is justly reproached, he has formed, in a style truly his own a well combined whole...', is probably just about right. Over the last 50 years Vanbrugh's creative genius has been given more wholehearted recognition, due in no small measure to the scholarship of Kerry Downes who contributes the opening essay in the volume. His towering achievements are fully celebrated in this rich collection which can be highly recommended.

MALCOLM AIRS

David Buckle (with Jan Greenough), *Hostilities Only: An Autobiography*. Robert Dugdale, 1999. £8.95.

It is difficult to believe that from such unpromising beginnings – his childhood left him with 'bad memories, a nervous disposition, a poor education and a bad stammer' – David Buckle could emerge so apparently unscathed, and with enough resolve to fight back. The title of his autobiography, *Hostilities Only* (a Royal Marines motto), was clearly chosen to encompass both his personal and professional experiences of hostility; the first as a profoundly unhappy child, the second as a trade union leader in Oxford's car industry.

Almost certainly illegitimate, David Buckle was just three years old when he was left in a private orphanage. He never heard from his parents again, and apart from a chance remark made by his guardian that his real name had been Clarke 'with an e', he does not know who they were. His earliest memories therefore are anchored to the figure of his guardian, Miss Butler, and her deplorable regime during the course of which he became accustomed to regular beatings, hard physical labour, constant hunger, and a stunted emotional life. By the time he left school, he could neither read nor write, and was afflicted by a stammer. He had been admitted to hospital on at least two occasions from the severity of his guardian's beatings. Remarkably he has chosen to include a photograph of her in the book.

The Second World War changed the direction of his life. In 1943 he joined the Royal Marines – his orphanage experience having prepared him for another dose of institutional treatment – and became the youngest sergeant in the service. During his life as a Marine he became acutely aware of the effects of class inequality and snobbery. After the War, he married happily and acquired his own family at last. (Sadly, his wife Beryl, who provided the launch-pad for his subsequent achievements, remains in the background of his story.)

From this point Buckle's story concentrates on his public life, and chronicles episodes during his years as a professional trade unionist, parliamentary candidate for the Labour Party, local magistrate, and member of many public bodies. Without doubt, his account of his working life – he joined Pressed Steel in 1950 as a spot-welder – and the poor working conditions endured by many of the company's workers is one of the high points of his book. After 14 years as a welder, he was appointed Oxford District General Secretary of the TGWU in 1963, and assumed responsibility for manual and white-collar workers in many different local industries. His account of the ructions in the motor industry at Cowley in the 1960s and 1970s – spats between 'militants' and union officials, and his own encounter with Sir Michael Edwardes – are clearly chronicled and interesting, if short on analysis of national issues and politics.

In 1961, Buckle became a local magistrate and, to his surprise, was accused by friends and colleagues of having sold out to the Establishment, a view he strongly contests. Over the following 20 years, Buckle accrued a number of public appointments: he was appointed as a local conciliator by the Race Relations Board, he became a member of the Arts Council for a short time, he was invited to join the Industrial Society, and in 1986 he accepted an MBE. One of the last achievements chronicled in the book was his election in 1996 as Chair of Oxfordshire County Council.

It is a highly unusual story and well worth reading, but ultimately too short to permit more than tantalising glimpses of the many layers of experience that made him so robust and tenacious.

KATE FIELD