

OXONIENSIA

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Intending contributors to *Oxoniensia* are asked to submit an electronic copy of their work to the editor, Dr Stephen Miles, no later than 1 December each year (editor@oahs.org.uk). The editor will be pleased to advise on preliminary drafts. 'Notes for Contributors' are available on the website.

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The Society, formed in 1972 by the amalgamation of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (founded in 1839) and the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society (founded in 1852), exists to further the study of the archaeology, topography, architecture, and history of Oxford and Oxfordshire. In addition to publishing *Oxoniensia*, it provides a programme of winter lectures in Oxford and organizes excursions to places of architectural, historical, and archaeological interest. Through its Listed Buildings Committee and associated Victorian Group, the Society makes representations to public bodies, both on its own behalf and for the Council for British Archaeology, to safeguard historical buildings and monuments. The Society also convenes the Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum, which fosters liaison to discuss and advise on issues concerning archaeology and museums, monitor cases and on occasion make representations on matters of concern.

The Society's website can be found at www.oahs.org.uk. In 2010 OAHs launched two new initiatives to promote digital access to studying Oxfordshire's past: past volumes of *Oxoniensia* are now available online (the last five years only to members) at <http://oxoniensia.org> and the OAHs online guide to resources and societies for studying Oxfordshire's past is to be found at <http://oxfordshirehistory.modhist.ox.ac.uk>.

Subscriptions (£12 individual, £17 family membership) should be sent to the Membership Secretary, 15 Harding Way, Marcham, Abingdon, OX13 6FJ, who will be pleased to supply further information about the Society.

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Founded in 1884, the Society publishes editions of historical records relating to the City, University, and Colleges of Oxford. To date over 140 volumes have been issued, of which almost 100 are still in print (available to non-subscribers from Boydell & Brewer Ltd: <http://www.boydellandbrewer.com>). Works published by the Society include Cordeaux and Merry's bibliographies of the City of Oxford (1976), Oxfordshire (1950), and a supplementary volume on Oxfordshire (1981). The Society's latest publication is *Early Records of University College*, edited by R.H. Darwall-Smith. Enquiries about subscription to the Society's publications should be addressed to: Dr E.M.P. Wells, 24 Tree Lane, Iffley, Oxford, OX4 4EY (elizabeth.wells@bodleian.ox.ac.uk). Subscribers may purchase previous publications at reduced prices.

OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Association was founded in 1980 to further the study of local history in the County, and in particular to promote links between amateur local historians and academic and professional bodies involved in local history. The Association organizes twice-yearly study days and publishes a regular newsletter and a journal, *Oxfordshire Local History*. Further details at: www.olha.org.uk

Enquiries about the Association should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Liz Woolley, 138 Marlborough Road, Oxford, OX1 4LS (membership@olha.org.uk).

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Recent volumes, available from Banbury Museum, include:

An Alphabetical Digest of Rusher's 'Banbury Trades and Occupations Directory', 1832-1906, ed. J. Gibson;
Victorian Squaron: The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, of Deddington, 1, 1835-1848, 2, 1849-1869, ed. G. Smedley-Stevenson; *Banbury Past through Artists' Eyes*, S. Townsend and J. Gibson

In preparation:

Life (and Death) in Georgian Banbury.

The Society's magazine, *Cake and Cockhorse*, is issued to members three times a year. Those from 1959 to 2003 are available to buy on a CD-ROM or free online at www.banburyhistory.org.

Subscriptions (£13) are payable to the Hon. Secretary, c/o Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury, OX16 2PQ.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviated titles are used in each article after the first full citation. In addition, the following are used throughout the volume or in particular articles:

BAR	British Archaeological Reports (Oxford, 1974–)
BAR BS	British Archaeological Reports, British Series
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BCA	Balliol College Archive
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BRO	Berkshire Record Office
CBM	ceramic building material
ECA	Exeter College Archive
EPNS	English Place-Name Society
EVE	estimated vessel equivalent
Fig./Figs.	figure/figures
f./ff.	folio/folios
FLO	Finds Liaison Officer
HER	Historic Environment Record
IoAO	Institute of Archaeology, Oxford
JMHS	John Moore Heritage Services
KC(A)	Keble College (Archive)
MCA	Merton College Archive
MCR	Merton College Register
<i>MedArch</i>	<i>Medieval Archaeology</i> (London, 1958–)
MOLA	Museum of London Archaeology
MS	manuscript
n.	note
NCA	New College Archive
n.d.	no date
ns	new series
OA	Oxford Archaeology
OBR	Oxfordshire Buildings Record
OD	Ordnance Datum
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 2004)
OHC	Oxfordshire History Centre
OHS	Oxford Historical Society
ORS	Oxfordshire Record Society
OS	Ordnance Survey
os	old/original series
OU DCE	Oxford University Department for Continuing Education
OUSA	Oxford Union Society Archive
OXCMS	Oxfordshire County Museum Service
PHA	Pusey House Archive
QCA	Queen's College Archive
r.	recto
<i>SMidA</i>	<i>South Midlands Archaeology</i> (Oxford, 1983–) [formerly CBA Group 9 Newsletter]
TNA: PRO	The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew

TS	typescript
TVAS	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
v.	verso
VCH	<i>Victoria History of the Counties of England</i> (London, 1900–) [<i>Victoria County History</i>]
vol.	volume

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The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire, 2015

In 2015 the PAS recorded 82,671 individual artefacts in 63,404 records across England and Wales. The number of Treasure cases continues to increase year-on-year, with 1,040 cases reported (1,001 from England, 37 from Wales and 2 from Northern Ireland). Oxfordshire saw a 40 per cent increase in Treasure cases on 2014 (44 cases), with the ninth-century 'Watlington hoard' of Viking silver and Anglo-Saxon coins being the one of the most high profile and important archaeological discoveries of the year (more details below). In 2015 2,194 finds were recorded in the county, with Roman finds the most common. The Watlington Hoard and the Bix Bronze-Age hoard increased the number of individual artefacts from South Oxfordshire by c.230 (Fig. 1).

As well as the two hoards there were many other notable finds from the county, many of which deserve more research and fuller publication in their own right. Several are highlighted here. Further details can be located by entering the find's unique reference number (for example, BH-33103E) into the PAS database or by ticking the 'find of note' box on the advanced search page (which will return more results than the few mentioned here). The PAS strongly encourages research using its data, with higher level access available to researchers. If you are interested in using our data for research and require higher level access please contact the FLO in the first instance.

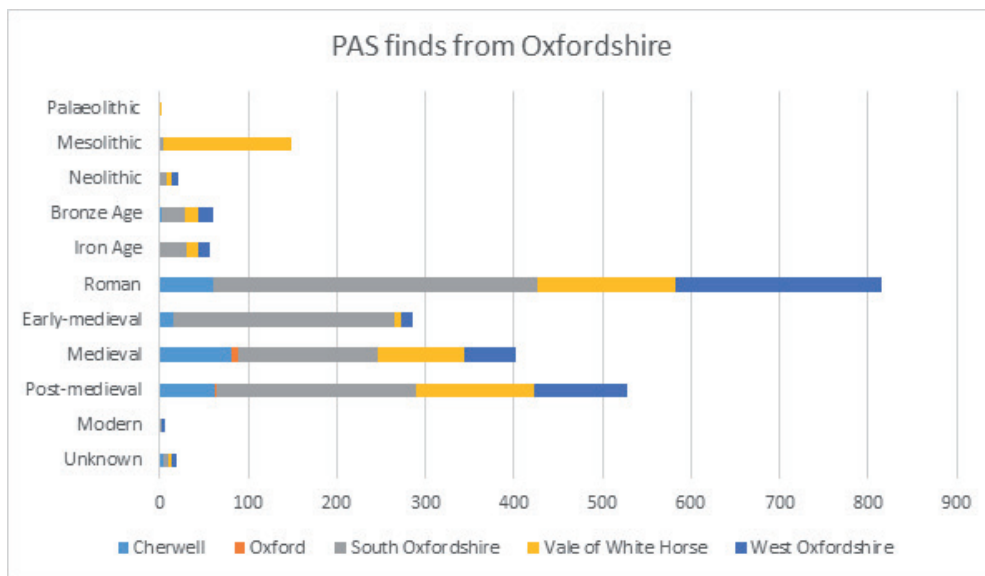


Fig. 1. PAS finds from Oxfordshire in 2015.

BRONZE-AGE FINDS

The Bix Hoard (BERK-456EE1) (Fig. 2)

In October 2015 the FLO was alerted to the discovery of several Bronze-Age artefacts from a concentrated area in the parish of Bix and Assendon (near Henley). The finder, detectorist



Fig. 2. *The Bix hoard.*

Jonathan Long of Reading, thought he might have uncovered some artefacts in situ after finding several small fragments of bronze and one complete decorated 'Liss'-style bracelet in the plough soil. Excavation revealed the heavily truncated remains of a bucket urn, laid on its side possibly in a small pit. More than half of the vessel was missing but one side was complete from base to rim; two suspension holes were noted near the rim of the vessel. Scattered, fragmentary artefacts were recovered from within the remains of the vessel and the area around it. At the base of the vessel were two razors, one of which was decorated. The razors were probably interred in their damaged condition as they had not been disturbed by the plough. Also lying within the vessel were the remains of a rapier or dirk and of a pin(s) and a spiral torc. The decorated bracelet and several rapier and quoit pin, pin and torc fragments came from the surrounding plough soil. In all, c.19 individual objects are represented within the c.85 fragments recovered. This assemblage appears to be the first Middle Bronze Age 'Ornament Horizon' (c.1400-1200 BC) hoard discovered in Oxfordshire.

Before the discovery of the Bix hoard it was already a 'Bronze-Age year' for the PAS in Oxfordshire. Forty-nine objects were reported and recorded in 2015, compared to the usual ten or so. Thirty percent of these finds come from an area to the north of the Thames between the parishes of Grafton and Northmoor and



Fig. 3. *Bronze-Age 'moustache-like' object.*

especially from an area between Clanfield and Bampton along Black Bourton Brook. Many of the artefacts are in very good condition, including whole or ritually broken objects such as rapiers,¹ axe heads, spearheads,² knives and razors, a very unusual Picardy-type pin,³ and a wonderful example of the enigmatic ‘moustache-like’ object (Fig. 3).⁴ These objects seem to be single deposits and not scattered hoards. Apart from the preliminary assumption that a previous course of the ‘Thames’ tributary may have attracted the purposeful deposition of artefacts, further investigation in to their deposition is required.

Two other Bronze-Age ‘finds of note’ came from Kingston Bagpuize. A complete socketed axe of Needham’s Class B, Southern English ribbed axe (Ewart Park phase c.950–750 BC) is the first of its type recorded by the PAS from Oxfordshire.⁵ A very unusual early flat axe or double-ended chisel (Fig. 4)⁶ of early to middle Bronze-Age date (c.2300–1200 BC) has not yet been paralleled, although an object illustrated in Evans described as a chisel and from Plymstock in Devon, is similar to and the same length as the Kingston Bagpuize example (figure 4).⁷



Fig. 4. Early Bronze-Age chisel or flat axe.

EARLY MEDIEVAL FINDS

Although finds of the period AD 409–1066 are not particularly uncommon, it is objects dating to the latter part of the period that are most commonly reported. However, in 2015 there have been several discoveries of some importance that represent the earlier phases.

Early Medieval Brooch Foil from Dorchester (BERK-B4ED99)

A fragile decorative foil from an Anglo-Saxon applied disc brooch was submitted for recording at the Discovering Dorchester excavations in July 2015. The foil was found in a back garden not far from the Dyke Hills and Roman town centre. A repoussé pattern of a central circular ring surrounded by six open heart-like designs with inward-scrolled terminals (termed the floriate cross design) decorates the foil.⁸ Due to the fragility of applied brooches, it is usual that the more solid disc brooch base survives, sometimes with elements of the foil still attached but often missing altogether. There are 40 or so examples in the Ashmolean Museum and illustrated in MacGregor and Bolick,⁹ including an example from

¹ GLO-036A39.

² WILT-1F3709.

³ The finder, Dennis Swift, donated this object (SUR-1EFCC6) and a middle Bronze-Age razor (SUR-D8D06E) to the Oxfordshire Museum Service.

⁴ HAMP-6F4C45.

⁵ BERK-0AAC5D. See S. Needham, *The Petters Late Bronze Age Metalwork: An Analytical Study of Thames Valley Metalworking in its Settlement Context*, British Museum Occasional Paper, 70 (1990), p. 32.

⁶ BERK-1C2022.

⁷ J. Evans, *The Ancient Bronze Implements, Weapons and Ornaments of Great Britain and Ireland* Longmans (1881), p. 166, fig. 190.

⁸ Helena Hamerow, University of Oxford, personal communication.

⁹ A. MacGregor and E. Bolick, *A Summary Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Collections (Non-Ferrous Metals)* (1993), pp. 32–41.

Minchin Recreation Ground,¹⁰ a kilometre or so from this example. Applied disc brooches developed in the late fourth century in northern Germany, where they are found between the Rivers Elbe and Weser,¹¹ the traditional homelands of the Saxons. The Dorchester examples are thought to be the earliest in England, dating to the beginning of the fifth century.¹² No. 1.18 from an inhumation at Harwell displays the same heart-shaped motifs but is combined with other decorative elements;¹³ an example from an inhumation at Long Wittenham, across the Thames from Dorchester, has a cruciform design with paired scrolled terminals similar to the heart-shaped motif on the new Dorchester example.¹⁴

A very interesting and unusual collection of artefacts was found by first-time detector users near Stadhampton.¹⁵ Two sixth- to seventh-century Anglo-Saxon saucer brooches were found face-to-face, with a flat annular brooch and amber bead within. A bronze pin was found in the same hole. The brooches are large examples, measuring c.76 mm in diameter. Although decoration is obscured by the annular brooch on one example, both saucer brooches appear to have the same decoration of an equal-armed cross with a large ring-and-dot in each of the arms. The outer field bears geometric 'basketwork' decoration. No direct comparison for the design of the brooch could be found but there are several other brooches that incorporate the same theme; Tania Dickinson has kindly provided some parallels for the brooches, with a pair from the Maison Dieu collection from Faversham (Kent) being the closest to the cross design. Further comment by Dickinson can be found in the PAS record.

The visible surface of the annular brooch appears plain but the opposing (hidden) face may be decorated, a feature often seen on brooches of this type and period. The annular brooch has an external diameter of 51 mm with the inner hole 22 mm in diameter. It is missing its pin. The presence of possible textile above the annular brooch means that the artefacts have not been cleaned nor the annular brooch removed. The amber bead, which looks burnt in its current condition, was found within the void of the two saucer brooches above the central hole of the annular brooch. It is broadly circular in plan and measures 29.5 mm in diameter and is 20.5 mm tall.

The selection of these artefacts, all usually associated with females, their precise and purposeful relationship to one another and their concealment as a group points to a purposeful deposit. It is not known if there are other remains associated with it; the collection came from pasture land and it is likely that they have come from a primary context; no other remains were noted as the detector users stopped digging in case any other remains were disturbed. No other reference to such a deposit can be found, and this may be the first group of objects deposited in this fashion discovered. The suspected presence of textile remains is of great interest. It is possible that the collection was bound together in a textile bag and fastened with the pin. Oxfordshire Museum Service is hoping to acquire the collection and it is currently being valued.

Over Easter 2015 a metal-detector user discovered a long-handled pan close to the King's Stone at the Rollrights. He also found several other artefacts including two box hinges, a silver and stone mount and several silver strips. Luckily the metal-detector user recognized that he may have found something important, and notified local FLOs. Although the site is actually 100 metres over the Warwickshire boundary, excavation was led by the Oxfordshire FLO. This revealed a well-preserved supine inhumation of an adult female c.25–30 years of age and 162 cm (5' 3") tall (Fig. 5).¹⁶ The long-handled pan (Fig. 6) was located to the left of the head, placed in a wooden box with a decorative lock plate. The hinges and copper alloy strips adorned the box, which may have had a pitched or curved lid, similar to an example

¹⁰ Ibid. no. 1.5

¹¹ MacGregor and Bolick, *A Summary Catalogue*, p. 32.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ V.I. Evison, *Early Anglo-Saxon Applied Disc Brooches in England* (1978), LVIII Part II, Pl. LVa.

¹⁵ BERK-2A13A9.

¹⁶ Osteological assessment by Ceri Boston, September 2015.



Fig. 5. The 'Rollright burial'.



Fig. 6. Long-handled pan from Rollright.

from Finglesham.¹⁷ Other grave goods included a single amber bead, located to the left of the ribs, a large multi-faceted rock crystal spindle whorl suspended on an iron chain by the left hip, and a large perforated bone disc which was found beneath the lower spine. A short link of chain and two pins were found near the neck. The long-handled pan, only the fifth known from Britain, may have been associated with water-pouring (baptismal?) ceremonies,¹⁸ while the single bead, rock crystal and bone disc are items associated with having amuletic properties. The location of the grave, so close to earlier monuments, may also be of significance; the local and national media suggested the woman was a witch; the modern connotation of the word belies the potential regard, status and potentially special knowledge this woman may have held.

After excavation the grave goods were taken to the British Museum where they have undergone research in relation to the Treasure Act. An inquest is due to be held in 2016 and it is hoped that the archive will be deposited with the Ashmolean Museum. Professor Helena Hamerow of the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford will be leading the research once the acquisition is complete, and the results will be published in due course.

Strap-ends are probably the most commonly reported of all early medieval artefacts, with the vast majority being of copper alloy. A complete silver example from Lew merits mention for its intricate design (Fig. 7).¹⁹ A variant of the Class A Type 1 Trehiddle-style strap-end of ninth century date,²⁰ this example differs from most strap-ends by not having a separate dominating panel above the zoomorphic terminal; rather the entire face of the strap-end is one integrated design. The pointed terminal shows a short snouted beast with two eyes and two large tear-drop ears lying flat on the back of the head. These two ears also form the base of the second zoomorphic design which dominates the majority of the strap-end. A feline-type creature, it has large, frowning eyes and snarling mouth with a double tongue that blend into the terminal end design by forming the smaller creature's ears. Three similar strap-ends in copper alloy have been recorded on the PAS database.²¹ Because of its precious metal content and age this object is going through the treasure process; it will hopefully be acquired by Oxfordshire Museum Service.



Fig. 7. Early medieval strap-end from Lew.

OTHER FINDS

Handaxe from Abingdon (FAJN-66BBE9) (Fig. 8)

This large Lower Palaeolithic Acheulean flint handaxe is the first to be recorded from Oxfordshire by the PAS. It dates to either 340,000–300,000 BC or 245,000–190,000 BC (depending upon which Thames valley gravel terrace it was derived from).²² The axe is ovate in

¹⁷ G. Speake, *A Saxon Bed Burial on Swallowcliff Down*, English Heritage Archaeological Report, 10 (1989), fig. 26.

¹⁸ Leslie Webster, British Museum (retired), personal communication.

¹⁹ BERK-475ED2.

²⁰ G. Thomas, *Late Anglo-Saxon and Viking Strap Ends 750-1100, Part 1*, Finds Research Group Datasheet, 32 (2003).

²¹ IOW-392328, BH-EB9324 and WILT-DB8D60.

²² Alison Roberts, Ashmolean Museum, personal communication.



Fig. 8. Abingdon handaxe.

plan with a pointed oval cross section. Such handaxes were in widespread use from c.600,000 to 245,000 years ago in Britain, although most finds date from 500,000 to 300,000 years ago, corresponding to a period of warmer climate. They were produced by the hominid species *Homo heidelbergensis*. It has been suggested ovate handaxes were used more for cutting like a knife rather than as an axe.

Middle Iron-Age Brooch from Southmoor (BERK-09448A) (Fig. 9)

This cast copper alloy brooch is formed of four hollow bulbous domes arranged in a square creating an open lozenge-shaped centre. The domes are linked together by a short plano-convex neck decorated with simple vertical lines across the width of the moulding. On the reverse the robust catch-plate and double pin lug are retained and a fragment of the iron pin can be seen.



Fig. 9. The domed Iron-Age brooch from Southmoor.

This is another example of a rare type of middle Iron-Age brooch (Adams Type 2Bb2, Hull and Hawkes Type 2B), dating to c.300–150 BC.²³ The brooches are characterized by their

²³ S. Adams, 'The First Brooches in Britain: From Manufacture to Deposition in the Early and Middle Iron Age', University of Leicester PhD thesis (2013); R. Hull and C.F.C Hawkes, *Corpus of Ancient Brooches in Britain: Pre-Roman Bow Brooches*, BAR BS, 168 (1987).

bulbous mouldings and appear in a variety of shapes including square, lozengiform, cross-shaped (quatrefoil around a central dome or variant, the most common) and circular. The type has its main concentration in the West Berkshire and Vale of White Horse areas, from where seven examples are known. Three others are known from further afield; two from Wiltshire and one from the Cotswolds. Further research is continuing. If readers know of any other examples the author would be interested to hear of them.

Gold Seal Matrix from Epwell (BERK-2A91CA) (Fig. 10)

This wonderful gold medieval seal matrix was one of the last finds reported in 2015. Of thirteenth-century date, it is in exceptional condition. The gold mount holds a dark green jasper intaglio, intricately engraved to depict a female in profile. The female wears a long veil about her head with either hair or possibly pearls of a head-dress visible. The intaglio is a contemporary product carved in either Paris or London, not a reused Roman gem.²⁴ The style is probably imitating Hellenistic depictions of Ptolemaic queens, similar to an example from Hereford.²⁵ The matrix has a

personal legend in Latin that reads ‘*SIGILVM : SECRETI : hEN :’, translated as the ‘Secret seal of Hen.’ Although the identity of the owner of the matrix is uncertain, ‘Hen’ is usually assumed to be an abbreviation of the name Henry; in this case, however, and in light of the subject matter of the intaglio, it may actually refer to a female.²⁶ The matrix is of the highest quality and is likely to have belonged to someone of considerable wealth. This object is currently going through the treasure process and Oxfordshire Museum Service hopes to acquire it; once acquisition is complete further research will be possible.



Fig. 10. Medieval seal matrix from Epwell, north Oxfordshire.

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²⁴ Martin Henig, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford, personal communication.

²⁵ M. Henig, ‘The Re-Use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios Set in Medieval Personal Seals’, in N. Adams et al., *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, British Museum Research Publication, 168 (2008), pp. 25-34.

²⁶ John Cherry, Curator Emeritus British Museum, personal communication.