

NOTES

Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2018

A number of small excavations took place in the city over the year related to college developments along with a substantial excavation in the medieval suburb of St Thomas at the former Cooper Callas site on Paradise Street opposite the Castle Mill Stream and St George's Tower. The latter site represents the first of a number of hotel developments that are forthcoming and reflect a market adjustment to address the shortage of hotel capacity in the city. Another notable development was the identification of an area of previously unrecorded Iron-Age and Roman settlement activity east of the River Cherwell in Marston.

SELECTED PROJECTS

The Masters Field, Balliol College

In January a phased strip and record excavation and watching brief was undertaken at Balliol College Masters Field by OA, recording medieval and post-medieval waste and quarry pits associated with the suburb of Holywell and a large ditch that formed part of the Royalist Civil War defences.

The Former Cooper Callas Site, Paradise Street

Between March and May an archaeological excavation was undertaken by OA at the former Cooper Callas site (Fig. 1). This recorded the remains of part of the eighteenth- to nineteenth-century Swan Brewery including walls, yard surfaces and brick edging that defined a former cartway. Below the brewery remains were a sequence of medieval structures, including a large kiln or oven and a cobbled yard or street surface. Notable finds included part a redeposited Norman stone window arch. The medieval structures had been established on top of twelfth- to thirteenth-century reclamation deposits. An archaeological borehole survey was undertaken in order to establish whether there was any earlier evidence for reclamation and potentially the redirection of the channel in order to create the Castle Mill Stream, perhaps in the late Anglo-Saxon period. The scientific dates from this work are still forthcoming however the initial borehole results suggest that a Holocene channel in this location was subject to dumping and land reclamation in the post-Conquest period.

Catherine Hughes Building, Somerville College

Between April and May a watching brief was undertaken by OA during the concluding ground works for the Catherine Hughes Building at Somerville College. The works recorded post-medieval and early-modern pits relating to settlement along Walton Street and Little Clarendon Street.

The Wilderness, Trinity College

Between July and September a staged evaluation was undertaken by OA to investigate the proposed footprint of a new building within 'the Wilderness', a wooded area within Trinity College gardens. The trenching recorded residual medieval pottery and a boundary ditch indicating limited activity from the late twelfth to the fourteenth century. The site had been extensively quarried from the fifteenth century onwards. This activity appears to have come to



Fig. 1. The Cooper Callas excavation, looking east towards St George's Tower. Copyright OA.

an end when the area was given over to formalised gardens, with decorative pathways, trees and borders, in the early eighteenth century. A number of gravel paths and a possible 'tree planting pit' were identified of likely eighteenth-century date.

The Harlow Centre, Raymund Road, New Marston

Following the identification of likely parch marks from Google Earth images reported in a desk based assessment by RPS Consultants in 2017 evaluation trenching was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology at the Harlow Centre site in New Marston in August. The trenching identified evidence for previously unrecorded Iron-Age and Roman rural settlement. A series of likely enclosure and droveway ditches and associated pits containing middle Iron-Age, late Iron-Age and second- to fourth-century Roman pottery and bone indicate the presence of long-term rural settlement activity of perhaps intermittent character in this area.

Oxford Story Museum, Pembroke Street

In August a series of trial pits were excavated by OA in the yard of the Oxford Story Museum in advance of the construction of new service trenches and a lift pit. The evaluation identified a small amount of residual eleventh- to twelfth-century material and an undated layer of soil was cut by section of wall that may be from a semi-basement or stone lined pit. Other recorded features included thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pits and a fourteenth- to sixteenth-century drain and associated surface. Significant quantities of glazed roofing and flooring tiles suggest the presence of a relatively high status building on the site during the thirteenth to fourteenth century.

New Graduate Centre, Wadham College

In October targeted excavation and a watching brief was undertaken at Wadham College prior to the construction of a new graduate centre. Isolated walls, pits and a burial likely associated with the medieval Austin friary were recorded.

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