



BASINGSTOKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Number 33

April 1976

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CALENDAR

Thursday 29th April: 'The Origin and Early Development of the
Castle in England and Wales' Lecture by
John Kenyon, University of Southampton.
Church Cottage, 7.30 p.m.

Saturday 1st May: Hampshire Field Club One-Day Conference,
Avington Park, Winchester. 9.30 a.m. on and
AGM 3.45 p.m.

The Origin and Early Development of the Castle in England and Wales.

Our final lecture of the current season is another likely to have wide and popular appeal. The subject of castles can be guaranteed to awaken in most of us a variety of emotions from a mild interest to positive excitement. Passionate involvement with castles is usually a childhood thing but even as adults an earlier enthusiasm can be revitalised at the mention of battlement, drawbridge, seige and conquest.

John Kenyon, our April speaker, is a mature student at the University of Southampton who has never lost his boyhood fascination. He recently gave up his post as Assistant Librarian to the Society of Antiquaries in London to study archaeology with the ultimate aim of researching into medieval archaeology. He will trace the development of castles and fortifications from the early motte and bailey type of the Normans through the solid, self sufficient, defensive bastions to the end of the Middle Ages.

Thursday 29th April, Church Cottage, 7.30 p.m.

The Small Towns of Hampshire: The Archaeological and Historical Implications of Development.

Mike Hughes' survey of the twenty-three small towns enjoying urban status in the mainland county of Hampshire before the seventeenth century is his, and the Hampshire Archaeological Committee's, first major publication. It has already been the subject of a front page (!) review in the Basingstoke Gazette and is well worth further mention here.

From our local point of view the small towns covered in the North East of the county are Alton, Andover, Basingstoke, Kingsclere, Newtown, Odiham, Overton and Whitchurch. Information on each settlement is arranged systematically (in alphabetical order) and accompanied by two maps. Archaeological potential is based "on an assessment of the likely survival ... of archaeological deposits which may provide evidence for the origins and development of the town which would be wholly or partly unobtainable from other sources". Such problems as present themselves are discussed with reference to past and future development programmes. Recommendations for archaeological investigation are made where appropriate and relevant.

As for Basingstoke itself, the report states: "It is too late to formulate a worth-while archaeological policy for what remains of the medieval town". (50% destroyed over the last ten years!) "Future building development in the town should be watched by the Basingstoke Archaeological Society, but public finance and trained resources should not be committed towards excavation in Basingstoke without good and particular reasons".

Much useful information is available in this report, not least the valuable bibliographies of published literature on each town, but also the archaeological, historical and place name evidence. Copies are available at £1.00 each from Joy Needham, or from Hammick's Bookshop in London Street, and are excellent value for money.

Recovery of a Cremation Burial and Associated Material
from Clappers Farm, Silchester. February 1975

After discussing the problem of Cemetary Sites with Mr. Gwatkin of Reading Museum, it was decided to explore the extra-mural region to the South and South-East of Calleva (Silchester). On following the line of the Roman Road to Venta Belgarum (Winchester), as it crosses the fields to the East of Church Lane (O.S. Land Parcel No. OC68), several sherds of grit-tempered pottery combined with calcified bone were found turned over on the freshly ploughed surface. (Map ref. SU 63926174).

This cremation scatter was situated upon a small gravel knoll, that is aligned with the Dyke to the South-West of Church Lane, in Church Lane Copse.

It was decided, after consultation with Reading Museum staff, that speedy recovery of the material was essential, as the threat of immediate agricultural activity would have irrevocably dispersed the material.

On Sunday 9th February 1975 the position of the cremation was plotted and the material recovered; a soil sample was also collected for analysis and photographs were taken. The extent of the area was laid out as a ten metre square centred upon the cremation. The cremation scatter measured 30 cm. North/South by 20 cm. East/West in light sandy clay/gravel mix. To the East of the cremation lay a flange fragment from a Samian vessel (form Ritterling 12). This form with a curved flange is dated to the Flavian period (AD 69 - 96) (see Archaeological Journal Vol.125, p.167 for discussion of similar example from Pen Llystyn). The fabric of this vessel is suggestive of South Gaulish ware. The proximity of this sherd, and one other Samian sherd, which shows evidence of exposure to fire, would seem to suggest association with the cremation deposit. It would, therefore, be tempting to suggest a date within the last quarter of the first century AD for this cremation deposit.

It is hoped that the recovery of this cremation material will provide a basis for a more thorough examination, with a view to determining the extent of burials in this area. As the material recovered, at this stage, does not represent the complete burial deposit, and until more detailed work can be undertaken, any implications of date can only be tentative.

DUNCAN RUSSELLAND MARK CORNEY

Recovery of further Romano-British Material from
Clappers Farm, Silchester. February 1975

After the recovery of cremation material from the field to the West of Church Lane Copse, field walking revealed an extensive spread of Romano-British pot sherds running parallel to the northern hedge boundary that marks the course of the Outer Earthwork. Recent ploughing on the site revealed dark bands of occupation material showing in the clay and gravel subsoil. The regular appearance of these dark bands and the considerable amounts of pot sherds suggested a possible structure that warranted recording. With only a short time available it was decided to concentrate upon the immediate vicinity of the dark spread of material. This necessitated

leaving out a considerable area of pottery spread to the North-Northwest and East. Therefore it should be remembered that the site being discussed does not represent the full extent of possible settlement.

The main spread of dark material centred upon a deeply ploughed gully running on a North/South axis. At 29.93m South of the Outer Earthwork a 20 metre square was laid out from this centre point to recover the plan of the dark spread and to record the positions of the various pot sherds.

The concentration of pot sherds was running roughly Northwest to Southeast following the alignment of the two parallel bands of dark (burnt) occupation material. Of these two bands the Eastern band contained the most prolific quantities of pot sherds. Most of these sherds conform to a 1st Century date while the grit tempered fragments suggest a date not later than the mid-Flavian period. In the main the pottery falls into five main groups:

- (a) Grit tempered - local Silchester ware (1st Century).
- (b) Sandy fabric sherds (1st to early 2nd Century).
- (c) Terra Sigillata (mainly 1st Century - one Antonine sherd).
- (d) Fine creamy buff fabric (No. XXI - Flavian Period).
- (e) Grey fabric (1st to 2nd Century) and one sherd of Alice Holt Ware).

Groups (c) and (d) are the most closely dateable. Three of the four sherds of Samian Ware are closely dated by form to the mid to late 1st Century, while one 18/31 (No. XXX) extends into the Antonine period. This particular sherd (No. XXX) occurs at the Northern limit of the Western band of dark material and could be a later intrusion from a position further up the slope. The overwhelming evidence from the main cluster of pottery types suggests a 1st Century date for the occupation material. This conclusion is further reinforced by the eight sherds recovered from the Southeast quadrant, all of which conform to well known 1st or early 2nd Century types.

The Southwest quadrant contains an elongated area that extends beyond the grid square. Approximately 7 x 4 metres it contained grit tempered sherds plus one grey fabric rim sherd of 1st Century type. Another scatter of very soft grit tempered sherds is suggestive of an open fired vessel: the soft nature of the fabric has not enabled us to examine it closely for vessel type. The dark soil contained considerable amounts of charcoal and burnt clay which made up most of the area. Soil samples have been taken from this and other dark occupation areas.

The structure or use of the features recovered are more than usually problematical in that excavation of features was not possible at this stage, and conclusions would be hard to justify without firmly stratified sections. However, it would be within the realms of probability that the burnt area in the Southwest quadrant conforms to a possible occupation floor of a hut for which the recovered material suggests a date within the middle of the 1st Century.

The main spread of sherds from the parallel bands of occupation material suggests a date or continuity of settlement between the early Neronian to late Flavian/Trajanic period and perhaps beyond. Although the nature of the feature is not understood it is evident that a settlement existed abutting the ditch of the Outer Earthwork (dated by Mrs. Cotton to c. 61-65 AD). This settlement offers the possibility of a pre-earthwork date, it was certainly occupied shortly after its construction. Continuity of settlement into the 2nd Century and perhaps beyond is suggested by the presence of Antonine Samian and a late sherd of Alice Holt ware. Further investigation, and perhaps excavation, would reveal the true nature of this settlement area, and its relationship to the Outer Earthwork would become clearer.

DUNCAN RUSSELL AND MARK CORNEY

Parish Boundaries

The Parish Boundaries meeting at Southampton on the 13th March was for the most part exploratory in that the organisers, Mike Hughes and Collin Bowen, had called it partly to gauge the extent of interest throughout the County and also to attempt to motivate participants into conducting boundary surveys over selected but concentrated adjacent parishes in a variety of different localities.

Short talks were given by Collin Bowen, Fred Aldsworth (West Sussex County Museum Service) and Mike Hughes. Collin Bowen set the scene by reminding us again of the significance of boundaries for defining units of human settlement, whose continuity could often be traced back to the Bronze Age and earlier, particularly on the chalklands of Wessex. Fred Aldsworth spoke about his research into Anglo Saxon settlement patterns in Hampshire emphasising the value of land charters, tithe maps and place names as sources of documentary evidence. He endorsed the idea that ancient boundaries often incorporated features of very great antiquity. Also he introduced people to the little known fact that the Ordnance Survey office at Southampton has a boundaries 'Division' which keeps records of parish boundaries. Originally set up during the mid 19th Century it houses the records, incorporated into the earliest ordnance maps, taken from the returns submitted by each parish who appointed a 'meresman' for the purpose of defining their boundaries. Mike Hughes gave a brief description of his boundary survey around Silchester.

The meeting was thrown open to discussion and an attempt was made to define specific areas for examination.

It was clear that a consistent methodology was called for which would involve systematic study of boundaries as much from the ground as from the documentary evidence in archive and record collections. Collin Bowen introduced a draft tally card which had been designed specifically for the purpose, covering all potential sources, both documentary and topographical, which could be tried out by interested groups as a working document.

As an experiment this Society will endeavour to research the parishes between Silchester and Newnham, centred on Basing. Anyone interested in either the documentary research and/or the physical examination in the field is invited to contact Richard Searle who will co-ordinate the project.

Hampshire Field Club One-Day Conference

Avington Park, described as 'one of the most notable Country Houses in Hampshire', is this year's venue for the Hampshire Field Club One-Day Conference and AGM on the 1st May. It is situated at Itchen Abbas, about three miles north-east of Winchester.

There is to be a very varied programme ranging from Butser Hill Ancient Farm Project, the Sarsen Stone Survey, the Lapwing in the New Forest (this year's natural history contribution), paleolithic archaeology at Fareham and, for the industrial archaeologist, a short film of the steam pumping station at Garnier Road, Winchester. Prior to the AGM, the main event of the day is a lecture by Mrs. Barbara Peacock called 'The Country Houses of Hampshire'.

Tickets for the conference which include coffee and tea are £2.75 (members) and £3.25 (non-members). Members of this Society may be interested in obtaining the one ticket at the membership rate through our affiliated membership of the Hampshire Field Club.

Further details and application forms from the Conference Secretary, c/o The City Museum, The Square, Winchester. (Tel. No. Winchester 68166 Ext. 269).