Notes

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

In all references[1] known to the writers, the hill fort at Uffington (SU 299864) 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.[2] 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[3] 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.

<div align="right">

BRENDAN O'CONNOR and BILL STARTIN

</div>

A SIGNET-RING FROM ROMAN ALCHESTER

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.[1]

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 some-what corroded. Rings of this simple type are datable to the third century A.D.[2]

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 jewellers call ' nicolo ' (Dimensions : $7 \times 5 \cdot 5$ mm. The gem rises c. $1 \cdot 5$ 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

[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*, LI (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.

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

[2] R. Steiger, ' Gemmen und Kameen im Römermuseum Augst ', *Antike Kunst*, IX (1966), 33, No. 8, Pl. viii ; Martin Henig, ' A Corpus of Roman Engraved Gemstones from British Sites ', *BAR*, 8 (ii), 1974, 75 and Pl. xli, No. 529 (from Cirencester, footnote 3 *infra*). A preliminary note on the Alchester ring appears in the same corpus (117, No. App. 88).

Bonn.[3]   Other, more carefully executed, intagli reveal the object on its stand as a ' wing ' in which case the seated figure must be the great artificer, Daedalus.[4]   However, it is not likely that the relatively humble person who must have owned our ring was versed in Graeco-Roman mythology, although smiths (and smith-deities) would have had an important place in his world.[5]   It is not possible at this stage to say where such low-quality pastes were made, but it is evident that there was a good market for them throughout the north-western provinces of the Empire.

Despite the fact that this ring does not have the high intrinsic value and beauty of the one found near Oxford and published in *Oxoniensia*, xxxix (1974), 97–8, it is the first recorded from Alchester.   The circumstances of its discovery cannot but give rise to grave concern that other interesting, and potentially informative, finds from sites within the county are being dispersed without record.

MARTIN HENIG

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

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.[1]   Ecclesiastical and religious dignitaries probably appointed the same type of man[2] as did the chapters of the large Benedictine houses and cathedrals.[3]   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.[4]

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 *maior 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 '.[5]   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.[6]   His warrant was requisite for the sale of a heifer, presumably a sound one, to acquit the cost of reaping.[7]   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,[8] but occasionally

[3] *Ibid.*, 75 and Pl. xvii, Nos. 529–531 ; F. Henkel, *Die Römischen Fingerringe der Rheinlande (1913)* 111, No. 1215 (Pl. lxxviii, 352 f.).

[4] P. Gercke, ' Die Gemmensammlung im Archäeologischen Institut der Universität Göttingen ', *Antike Gemmen in Deutschen Sammlungen*, III (1970), 114 and Pl. lii, No. 270 ; G. M. A. Richter, *Engraved Gems of the Romans* (1971), 70, No. 332 ; Henig, ' Corpus . . . ', *op. cit.* note 2, 109 and Pl. xxiv, No. App. 2.

[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.

[1] N. Denholm-Young, *Seignorial Administration in England* (1937), 69–71.

[2] E.g. the stewards of the Abbot of Westminster, B. F. Harvey (ed.), *Documents Illustrating the Rule of Walter de Wenlok, Abbot of Westminster, 1283–1307* (Camden Society, series 4, 2, 1965), 25.

[3] E.g. the list of Peterborough stewards, C. N. L. Brooke and M. M. Postan (eds.), *Carte Nativorum* (Northants. Record Society, xx, 1960), Appx. II, 226–7.

[4] M. Morgan, *English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (repr. 1968), 56–7.

[5] 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.

[6] Bodl. Libr. MS. Christ Church Oseney Roll 34.

[7] Bodl. Libr. MS. Roll Oxon. Oseney 95.

[8] This will be discussed in my doctoral thesis : Leicester University.

it was swollen by incidental receipts from the sale of grain or from an entry fine.[9]   At the second visit, at or about Michaelmas, the steward audited the accounts of the local officials.[10]   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.[11]

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.[12]   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.[13]   It was the steward, William de Pencrich, who journeyed *via* Watlington to receive land at Iver back into the lord's hands.[14] 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.[15]

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.[16] 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.[17]

Abbreviations	APPENDIX
O.R.	MS. Roll Oxon. Oseney (Bodleian Library).[18]
Ch. Ch. O.R.	MSS. Christ Church Oseney Roll (Bodleian Library, in boxes MSS. d. d. Ch. Ch. 26 ff.).[18]
C.O.	*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H. E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, 6 vols., LXXXIX–XCI, XCVII–XCVIII, CI (1928–9, 1933–4, 1936).
Ann. Mon.	*Annales Monastici*, IV, ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series, 1869.

[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 liveries 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 0s 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 senescalli ' paragraph includes the cost of the steward's clerk making the account.
[11] Ch. Ch. O.R. 52 : ' ven' ibidem circa festum sancti martini et commorant per ii. dies pro compoto anni precedentis faciendo '.
[12] Ch. Ch. O.R. 49–56.
[13] H. E. Salter (ed.), *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, IV, O.H.S., XCVII, (1934) (hereafter *C.O.*), 322.
[14] O.R. 107.
[15] *C.O.* V (O.H.S., XCVIII, (1935)), 19 ; Marlborough, 1267, cc. 2, 9.
[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., XCII (1929), 13 ff.

Name of canon	Outside dates of office of steward	Reference/other information
William de Sutton	1263–7	Proctor to Abbot Richard de Apeltre, 1254–67, and probably his protégé. Became Abbot from 1267–84. Responsible for the cartulary of rural property of c. 1280–4. An enrolled account of c. 1280 is extant (C.O. VI, 184 ff. ; Ch. Ch. O.R., 74). Perfected the ' custodia ' organization of the estates and the office of bursar when prelate, His administrative ability eulogized by the Oseney Annalist. *Ann. Mon.* IV, 107, 112, 126–7, 129–30, 208–11, 302–3 ; C.O. IV, 113, 169, 383, V. 105.
William de Pencrich	1276–1306	Ch. Ch. O.R., 20 ; O.R., 95, 97. Reputed to be 60 in 1324, but this may be a gross underestimate : C.O. V, 383–4. He may have come to the Abbey through its property in Shenston, *co* Staffs.
William de Bruselingham	1281–2 (part year)	O.R., 95. Still a canon in 1314 : C.O. II, 237.
John Poygnaunt	1284–5 (part year)	O.R., 97 ; he was canon-warden at Stone, 1316–21, and at Kiltenan, 1330–1 ; Ch. Ch. O.R., 32–5 ; O.R. 16.
William de Tettuswrthe	*t.* Edw. II and 1330–1	O.R., 41 ; Ch. Ch. O.R., 47 ; he was canon-warden at Kiltenan and proctor in 1324 : C.O. V, 138, 383–4.
Thomas de Mamesfeld	1325–6 and 1333–4	Ch. Ch. O.R., 35, 48 ; he was canon-warden at Bibury in 1348 and one of the ' maior et sanior pars ' in 1360 : C.O. V, 9, 140.
John de Sutton	1288–1326	Ch. Ch. O.R., 24–5, 34–5, 43 ; O.R., 43 ; aged at least 66 by repute in 1324 : C.O. V, 383–4.
William de Abyngdone	1337–8	Ch. Ch. O.R., 52 ; C.O. IV, 322–3.
John de Wardingtone	1336–7, 1340	O.R. 108 ; Ch. Ch. O.R., 51, 63

ODDINGTON CHURCH

A review of the evidence

In a printed leaflet (MS. O.D.P. c. 1921)[1] 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

[1] 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
    D. Benson and D. Miles, ' *The Upper Thames Valley* ' (reviewed *Oxoniensia*, XXXIX (1974), 104).
    C. Simpson, ' *Wallingford : The Archaeological Implications of Development* ' (reviewed, *Ibid.*).
        (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
    M. Parrington, D. Miles, *et al.*, ' Excavations in Abingdon, 1972–4 ', *Oxoniensia*, XL (1975), this volume.
    J. Hinchliffe, ' Excavations at Grim's Ditch, Mongewell, 1974 ', *Ibid.*
    C. J. Young, ' Excavations at Alchester, 1974 ', *Ibid.*
    R. A. Chambers, ' A Romano-British Settlement Site and 7th-Century Burial, Ducklington, 1974 ', *Ibid.*
    R. A. Chambers, ' Excavation at No. 12 Market Place, Chipping Norton, 1974 ', *Ibid.*
    R. A. Chambers, ' Three Fishponds at Thame, 1973 ', *Ibid.*
    R. A. Chambers, ' Excavations at Hanwell, near Banbury, 1974 ', *Ibid.*

        (b) In preparation (* indicates Interim Report in CBA Group IX *Newsletter*, 5 (1974), 33–44).
    Oxford : 79–80 St. Aldate's ; Church Street ; All Saints* ; Hertford College ; Blackfriars, Wadham College (all medieval).
    Abingdon : Iron Age settlement at Ashville Trading Estate* ; Roman villa at Barton Court Farm*.
    Farmoor : Iron Age and Roman complex (with Oxford University Archaeological Society)*.
    Berinsfield : 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 Boar Street ; 4–5 High Street ; New Inn Hall Street (all medieval) ; Canning 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

PLATE XII

A. Uffington Castle, Berkshire. Facing north-west. *Reproduced by courtesy of Professor J. K. St. Joseph, Cambridge University Collection (copyright reserved).*

B. Signet-ring from Alchester. Scale ×4.

Ph.: R. Wilkins
NOTES