

# NOTES

## Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2013

In 2013 further university and college infrastructure projects led to a number of significant archaeological excavations in central Oxford. These, along with a selection of other sites from the suburban areas of the city, are summarised below. It is worth noting that a number of the college projects mentioned were subject to extensive pre-application discussions which resulted in amended schemes designed to secure improved outcomes for significant heritage assets and their settings.

The year saw the online publication of the Oxford Archaeological Action Plan 2013–2018 and the conclusion of negotiations between the City and County Councils for the unification of the City Urban Archaeological Database and County Historic Environment Record. The integration of these two databases was planned for March 2014. A further outcome of the action plan was the production of an annual archaeological asset monitoring statement which can be viewed on the City Council's website

### SELECTED PROJECTS

#### *Wadham College, Land adjacent to Staircase IX*

In January Cotswold Archaeology undertook archaeological salvage recording at Wadham College following the exposure of human remains in two small trenches excavated as permitted development to investigate an existing sewer pipe running into Staircase IX. In one trench a partially exposed grave cut contained the remains of at least two well-preserved skeletons both placed in supine positions. A single sherd of pottery of eleventh- to thirteenth-century date was recovered from underneath one skeleton. The second trench revealed a small quantity of re-deposited human bone. The burials are likely to belong to the cemetery of the Austin friary which is known to have occupied the site from the thirteenth century until the Dissolution.

#### *17–41 Mill Street, Osney Lane*

In January JMHS excavated a trial trench at Mill Street, Osney Lane, on the projected route of a trackway recorded on Agas's 1578 map of Oxford. Two linear features were discovered; one was considered to have defined the edge of the track and the other a side ditch. The excavator suggested that the track had been a 'sunken way'.

#### *Harris Manchester College, Land to the rear of No. 24 Holywell Street*

In January building recording was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology prior to the demolition of a nineteenth-century domestic building adjoining the rear of No. 24 Holywell Street. Subsequently in February a trial trench was excavated at the site revealing the remains of a probable medieval oven or kiln and a number of gravel extraction pits. An adjacent stone boundary wall, previously suggested to be of medieval date, was seen to be constructed upon eighteenth-century landscaping deposits. Also cutting the landscaping deposits was a narrow stone-built and brick-vaulted cellar of likely eighteenth-century date.

*Magdalen College, Longwall Quad*

Between January and March OA continued their excavations in Magdalen College's Longwall Quad as part of the phase one enabling works. Investigation recommenced in October as part of the phase two enabling works. Further pits, walls, yard surfaces and floors relating to the medieval and post-medieval tenements were recorded.

*Land adjacent to Littlemore Hospital, Littlemore*

In February an evaluation was undertaken by TVAS on land adjacent to Littlemore Hospital. The trenching confirmed the presence of an Iron-Age banjo-enclosure previously identified by geophysical survey.

*Old Marston, Church Street*

In February an archaeological excavation was undertaken at Church Street, Old Marston by TVAS prior to the construction of new housing. The site revealed a continuation of the twelfth- to early fourteenth-century activity recorded in 2011 at the Bricklayer's Arms site directly to the south. Features included enclosure ditches and rubbish pits containing domestic assemblages.

*Barns Road, former Community Centre Site, Cowley*

In March an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Avon Archaeology at the former Cowley Community Centre site on Barns Road. The investigation recorded a truncated ditch terminal containing a single Roman sherd in the primary fill. A small number of undated cut features were also recorded along with small amounts of residual Roman and medieval pottery and fragments of a glazed medieval ceramic tile.

*St Clement's Car Park*

Between March and April a programme of archaeological work was undertaken at St Clement's car park by Southampton Archaeology. The initial work involved archaeological trenching and a watching brief prior to and during the construction of a new sewer trench. This was followed by a small area excavation. The investigations recorded a small number of late Saxon or Norman features along with a small assemblage of St Neots Ware. An increase in activity in the Norman period was demonstrated by further pits, postholes and a gully located to the west of a north-south ditch, presumably a property boundary. A continuation of activity in the high medieval period was demonstrated by a number of ditches, pits and gullies, mostly located to the east of the re-cut north-south ditch. The bulk of the pottery assemblage from the site dated from the mid/late eleventh to the thirteenth and fourteenth century. The fabric types recovered were domestic in character with no clear evidence for specialist activity. A hiatus of activity was evident from the fourteenth century until the second half of the seventeenth century when the site appears to have been turned into a market garden.

*St Cross College, West Quadrangle*

In April OA carried out an evaluation within the West Quadrangle of St Cross College. A series of inter-cutting ditches on a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment were recorded adjacent to the western boundary wall. The fill of the earliest ditch had been clearly derived from the post-glacial loessic subsoil suggesting a date not later than early medieval. Given its position, the ditch may have demarcated the eastern boundary of the lands of the twelfth-century royal palace of Beaumont and later Carmelite friary. Later recuts of this ditch yielded medieval and post-medieval pottery. Other evidence for post-medieval activity included a stoned-lined well, rubbish pits and the corner of a mid/late nineteenth-century subterranean structure.

*The Radcliffe Infirmary Burial Ground, Walton Street*

In June and August an excavation was undertaken by OA on the site of the former eighteenth- to nineteenth-century Radcliffe Infirmary burial ground. The investigation revealed 345 graves, divided into two distinct groups either side of a central path. A number of amputated limbs and other evidence for medical interventions were noted but significantly only one skeleton showed clear signs of anatomisation. The University of Oxford Research Laboratory for Archaeology and History of Art has been involved in additional sampling work at the site and discussions are taking place regarding a potential research project on the assemblage.

*New College Kitchen*

In August OA undertook recording work at New College prior to the refitting and extension of the college's medieval kitchen. A small excavation on the site of a proposed lift pit, located north of the medieval kitchen, provided an opportunity to investigate a section of the late Saxon *burh* rampart. OSL samples were taken by the Oxford University School of Archaeology with the hope of obtaining scientific dating to this poorly dated defensive feature.

In December further recording commenced within the fourteenth-century kitchen. The removal of the modern concrete floor revealed successive in situ occupation deposits. A thick primary plaster floor extended throughout the kitchen and was heavily scorched and covered in thick charcoal deposits in front of an original fireplace in the north wall. This floor was subsequently patched and resurfaced, presenting a complex sequence of use and reconfiguration of the kitchen space. The remains of a keyhole-shaped brick hearth or oven base survived in one of the two large fireplaces that remain open at the building's eastern end.

Simultaneously Dr Roland Harris undertook detailed recording of the historic fabric exposed during the renovation work. In the kitchen, where later plasterwork and additions have been removed, an original fireplace was uncovered in the north wall. The internal timber-



Fig. 1. The exposed floor of the fourteenth-century kitchen at New College, Oxford, December 2013.  
Photo: Roland Harris.

framed jetty of the buttery over the kitchen was revealed, and in the wall below redundant mortices showed the original configuration of the doorways and hatches between the kitchen and the kitchen lobby.

Work has allowed investigation of Hugh Herland's primary roof, with wall plates and rafter feet recorded along with an intact arch-braced principal truss previously hidden behind the nineteenth-century east wall of the kitchen. In the buttery, surviving fourteenth-century floorboards were also noted below layers of more recent flooring. A programme of dendrochronological sampling provided felling dates of winter 1382/3 for the timbers of the buttery roof, floor and east wall. Floor joists, reused in later repairs to the buttery roof, very probably derive from the hall floor, which was replaced in 1722; these timbers were felled in the winter of 1387/8. The hall door was also shown to date to the late fourteenth century.

#### *Lincoln College Music Room*

In August OA undertook a second phase of archaeological recording at Lincoln College within the footprint of the basement of the new Music Room and within adjacent crane base pits. Further medieval pits and walls were recorded.

#### *Donnington Sports Ground*

The East Oxford Community Archaeology Project undertook a small-scale excavation at Donnington Sports Ground in October in order to establish whether a recent geophysical survey at had correctly identified a previously unknown Neolithic pit circle. The excavation recorded features and flints, also soil samples containing seeds, shell and bone, that were consistent with a Neolithic date.

#### *7 Barton Road, Barton*

In November an assessment of the stone perimeter walls at 7 Barton Road was undertaken by JMHS. The assessment observed that the upper parts of the surviving stone walls have been considerably re-patched, but that at a lower level fabric of likely fourteenth- to fifteenth-century and seventeenth-century date may survive. Part of the back wall of a seventeenth-century cottage also survives within the garden and a demolition layer or cobbled surface was noted just below the current ground surface.

#### *Worcester College Kitchen Yard*

Between December and January 2014 OA undertook a small scale excavation within the Kitchen Yard of Worcester College. A number of medieval pits were sampled and later substantial stone foundations belonging to post-medieval and nineteenth-century buildings were exposed. At the same time Dr Roland Harris undertook building recording during the refitting of a number of historic rooms including the 1844 kitchen and the exposure of parts of the inner face of the Worcester Street precinct wall.

DAVID RADFORD, CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST

# Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire, 2013

The County Archaeological Services, now part of the Environment and Resource Efficiency Team, was consulted on approximately 1,400 planning applications between April 2013 and April 2014. In addition, the service scanned a further 7,300 applications from the weekly planning lists. The service also produced 107 design briefs for archaeological work including 72 for evaluation ahead of the determination of a planning application.

## SELECTED PROJECTS

### *North-West Bicester*

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by OA on the site of the proposed eco development on the north-western edge of Bicester. The evaluation follows a geophysical survey which identified a number of possible archaeological features. The evaluation has recorded a number of features, mainly Roman in date. The site is located on cornbrash, with fairly shallow features, although a possibly Roman stone-lined well has been recorded. Neolithic sherds were recovered from one discrete feature and a possible Bronze-Age burnt mound was identified in one trench.

### *Hagbourne Hill Reservoir*

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Network Archaeology following an earlier evaluation ahead of the construction of a new reservoir. The excavation recorded a number of boundary ditches of a field system dated to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. It is likely that these features relate to a Bronze-Age or Iron-Age cemetery and early Iron-Age settlement recorded to the south. These features were overlain by a second field system, on a slightly different alignment, also dated to the Iron Age. A very large Iron-Age ditch, around six metres in diameter, was also recorded. It possibly forms part of a landscape division such as a tribal boundary.

### *Old Place Yard, Bicester*

Following the excavations at Bicester Priory Church ahead of the redevelopment of Bryan House, an archaeological evaluation has been undertaken by TVAS in and around Old Place Yard in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site. The evaluation recorded further stonework, foundations and demolition layers associated with the priory buildings on the eastern side of the site. Further evaluations will be undertaken after the demolition of the current buildings on site.

### *Hanwell Castle*

Archaeological excavations are currently underway by JMHS on the northern and eastern side of Hanwell Castle, originally built in 1498 for William Cope and partly demolished in the eighteenth century. The excavation follows a geophysical survey and evaluation. The excavations have recorded remnants of the original house although following the demolition only small sections of the foundations survive. A small number of later walls have also been recorded. The excavation is still on-going and a post-excavation assessment will be produced in due course.





*Fig. 1. Section of wall from an outbuilding within the priory precinct, Old Place Yard.*



*Fig. 2. A small section of the footings of Hanwell Castle (c.1498).*

Published in Oxoniensia 2014, (c) Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society

*Langford Park Farm, Bicester*

Excavation revealed an area of Iron-Age and Roman field systems and enclosures. The site consisted of a series of linears and pits. No evidence of structures was found but the amount of pottery, particularly from the north-eastern end of the site, suggests that settlement cannot be very far away. A quantity of Roman plaster was recovered from features during the evaluation stage. Post-excavation work is on-going and a report is expected soon.

*Oxford Road, Bicester*

An excavation by AOC Archaeology recorded a number of later prehistoric round houses and Roman linear features along with a number of pits and postholes. The line of a possible former river channel has been identified across the site and the Roman linear features are aligned with this channel. Alluvial deposits from this channel filled some of the Roman features and it is hoped that this excavation will provide valuable evidence of the sequence of late Iron-Age and Roman overbank flooding identified on Roman sites to the north and north-west.

*Ardley Road, Somerton*

A number of medieval features were revealed during an archaeological excavation by Keevill Heritage. The excavation recorded medieval pits and postholes as well as a possible area of hard standing, all of which probably relate to a medieval building in the vicinity, although no structural evidence was recorded. The site at Ardley Road is in a key location for medieval settlement in Somerton, immediately north-west of the scheduled Somerton Manor House and close to two main through routes.

*St James Road, Somerton*

An archaeological evaluation undertaken by Keevill Heritage recorded remains of a post-medieval building overlying a possible medieval house platform. The post-medieval house appears to be shown on the first edition OS map and the pottery dates it to around the eighteenth century. The walls of this house cut through and overlaid a manmade deposit containing a quantity of medieval pottery. These deposits are very likely to relate to the scheduled shrunken medieval village to the west. Further excavation ahead of any development will provide valuable information regarding the date and nature of settlement on both this site and the adjacent associated scheduled site.

*Aynho Road, Adderbury*

An archaeological evaluation undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology recorded a small number of possible prehistoric ditches probably relating to field systems. No dating evidence was revealed but the ditches recorded were on two separate alignments. No prehistoric deposits have been recorded for the area around Adderbury to date and although these ditches are undated it is possible that one of the alignments could be later prehistoric, based on the form of the features. Further areas of excavation will be undertaken within the site ahead of development and it is hoped that this will provide dating evidence.

*Wykham Park Farm, Banbury*

Evaluation to south of Salt Way by Cotswold Archaeology recorded a continuation of the small Iron-Age and Romano-British farmstead recorded to the west and a possible Neolithic causewayed enclosure first recorded from aerial photographs and geophysical survey. No finds were recovered from the enclosure and it is identified from its form alone, although Neolithic pottery has been found during earlier investigations to the south. The extent of the causewayed enclosure was previously unknown and the aerial photograph only shows the southern section of the feature. This is the first identified causewayed enclosure in Cherwell.

*Cross Keys, Wallingford*

An archaeological excavation, undertaken by Foundations Archaeology, recorded aspects of the outer defensive ditch of Wallingford. Two good sections across ditch were excavated which showed that the ditch as probably reworked during the civil war. The ditch appeared to have slowly filled from the medieval period onwards until the seventeenth century when a large greyish white layer was deposited. This is similar to material found in other civil war sites such as those excavated by the Burh to Borough Research Project at the castle. These two sections form the most comprehensive recent investigation of the defensive works at Wallingford and provide valuable insights into both the Saxon and post-medieval defence of Wallingford.

*Martins Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames*

A single evaluation trench by JMHS within the extramural settlement area of the Roman town revealed only a small amount of archaeological deposits from the Roman period in the form of linears and pits. Roman settlement has been recorded immediately to the west of the site and trackways and pits dated to the Roman period have been recorded to the north. This evaluation has provided evidence of the extent of these previously identified deposits. An archaeological watching brief will be undertaken during development to further record these features.

*9 Wittenham Lane, Dorchester*

An evaluation trench by JMHS within the area of the Roman cemetery south of the town recorded several further Roman inhumations as well as a Roman layer probably associated with the settlement to the north. The burials are aligned with the formal cemetery excavated immediately to the south in 2011 and the Roman deposit is similar to settlement evidence recorded immediately north. The cemetery has the potential to provide important evidence of the ethnic make-up of the population at the end of the Roman period and into the Saxon period. A staged programme of investigation will need to be undertaken ahead of any development.

*Bicester Village Coach Park, Bicester*

OA undertook an archaeological excavation ahead of a new coach park on a site in the southern part of Bicester. The excavation recorded a possible Bronze-Age ditched enclosure, middle Iron-Age pits and a number of post-medieval features. In addition a significant assemblage of late Mesolithic flint tools were recovered from tree-throw holes. Over 4,000 pieces of worked flint were recovered including five core fragments, blades, flakes, microliths and debitage. The assemblage represents secondary deposition although it is thought likely that it derives from occupation in the immediate area.

*Monks Farm, Grove*

An excavation was undertaken by OA following an earlier evaluation. The excavation revealed evidence of prehistoric settlement in the form of a series of enclosures, ditches/linears and pits, along with a large Romano-British linear feature. Pottery recovered from the features has been provisionally dated to the late Bronze Age through to the Iron Age. Post-excavation work is currently underway and a report will be produced in due course.

*Crab Hill, Grove*

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology following an earlier geophysical survey. The evaluation confirmed the presence of a Romano-British farmstead that corresponds with a series of cropmarks recorded in the HER and anomalies identified in the geophysical survey. The geophysical survey also indicated a series of features south of these cropmarks which the evaluation confirmed to be a small later prehistoric settlement.



*Farways, Cassington*

Evaluation and excavation by JMHS has revealed a Bronze-Age barrow. Most of the structure of the barrow has been removed by later ploughing. The fill of the ditch contained several inhumations and cremation burials. Further cremation burials were found outside the barrow ditch. Evidence of possible structures in the form of postholes was also found along with pits and linear features.

*All Saints Church, Faringdon*

An excavation was undertaken by JMHS on a small section of the churchyard ahead of the construction of a new church room. The excavation encountered over 200 post-medieval bodies as well as a quantity of medieval tile. Although the church was damaged during the Civil War no evidence of any siege works or civil war features was recorded. Evidence of a small Romano- British farmstead or small settlement was also recorded.

*Fullamoor Plantation, Culham*

A large evaluation was undertaken by TVAS on the site of a recorded barrow cemetery identified from the National Mapping Programme (NMP) cropmark survey. The evaluation and earlier geophysical survey confirmed the presence of all but one of the barrows as shown on the cropmark survey although only two contained any dating evidence. Two other cremation burials, one urned and one un-urned, were also found in the evaluation. The evaluation also recorded a series of Iron-Age and Roman enclosure complexes to the south of the site. A single Neolithic pit was also recorded.

*Land North-East of Witney*

Geophysical survey and trenched evaluation by Northamptonshire Archaeology has revealed three Bronze-Age barrows. These appear to form part of a more extensive barrow cemetery with further barrows to the south east.

*Land off Highworth Road, Shrivenham*

A geophysical survey of the application area has been undertaken. This revealed a series of circular and regular enclosures, pits and linear along the raised ridge in the north-west part of the application area. Evidence of medieval or post-medieval ploughing (ridge and furrow) was evident across other parts of the site.

Subsequently an archaeological field evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology was undertaken across the site which targeted the various anomalies in the geophysical survey. This revealed a number of circular features to be Bronze-Age barrows amongst a series of enclosures and linear features and pits dating from the later prehistoric period into the Romano-British period. Evidence of a buried chest containing late Roman pewter was also found. These features were all concentrated in the north-west corner of the application area on a pronounced ridge.

*Upwood Park*

Monitoring by TVAS has identified activity across a number of periods with stray finds from the Mesolithic, early Bronze Age and Iron Age. An early to middle Bronze-Age cremation urn has been found along with a number of pits and an undated inhumation burial.

*Tackley*

A geophysical survey and subsequent evaluation by OA has identified series of rectilinear enclosures all dating to the first century AD. The settlement appears to post-date the Roman conquest and its tight chronological span is unusual. The presence of third- and fourth-century pottery from the surface of the field suggests that the focus of the settlement shifted after the first century.

## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

The Historic Environment Record (HER) is the county's archaeological and historical database. Following on from last year's record number of consultations, there was another increase in 2013, with 133 requests for information coming from contractors, solicitors, consultants and internal colleagues for projects ranging from desk-based assessments, heritage plans, local environmental projects to footpath diversions. This increase clearly indicates the level of development within the county. The HER Officer also provided information for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan toolkit, set up by planning colleagues to help communities produce their own plan for development. There were also several data requests from large projects, including the Atlas of Hillforts, a ploughzone archaeology project in conjunction with the Ashmolean Museum and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, as well as a British Museum-University of Leicester project entitled Hoarding in Iron Age and Roman Britain.

The HER has received information from the NMP, covering several counties. Data from the SE Warwickshire and Cotswolds NMP area resulted in almost 500 new sites being added to the HER, mostly along the county's western edge. This year also saw the planning and implementation of the merger of the Oxford City Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) with the County's HER. The project has resulted in a combined resource of more than 45,000 monuments, buildings, finds and sources, and now means that the HER completely covers the county. The combined UAD-HER dataset will shortly be uploaded onto the Heritage Gateway website ([www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway)). These data can be viewed in both text and mapped formats. It is important to note that data on Heritage Gateway are updated every 6 months, whereas that on the County Council's internal database Heritage Search ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/heritagesearch](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/heritagesearch)) was last updated in 2010.

A major project to digitise hard copies of HER reports and data has begun. This project is part of a directorate-wide programme to reduce hard copies of information where possible. The first phase of work focused on the development control reports of archaeological work done in the county; OA was commissioned to organize the digitising project to scan these reports. In total, all of the 3,000+ development control reports will be scanned. A pilot project for digitising supplemental information (called the Detailed Record Files) has also begun. This will enable the most requested data held by the HER to be held in digital form and thereby more easily available to users.

### *Historic Landscape Characterisation Project*

This project, funded by English Heritage, is focused on identifying traces of historic land use surviving within the present landscape. Charlotte Malone, the HLC project officer, has completed Cherwell and South Oxfordshire districts, as well as integrating the HLC data from the Chilterns AONB. The map below (Fig. 3) shows coverage to date of the county, the colours reflecting the various landscape types from enclosures to historic town centres. Charlotte was also able to provide HLC data and advice on select areas in the Vale of White Horse for planning purposes.

As the project is almost at its halfway point, consultation between local government planning officers and environmental specialists has begun to discuss how HLC data can best be used once the county's characterisation is complete.

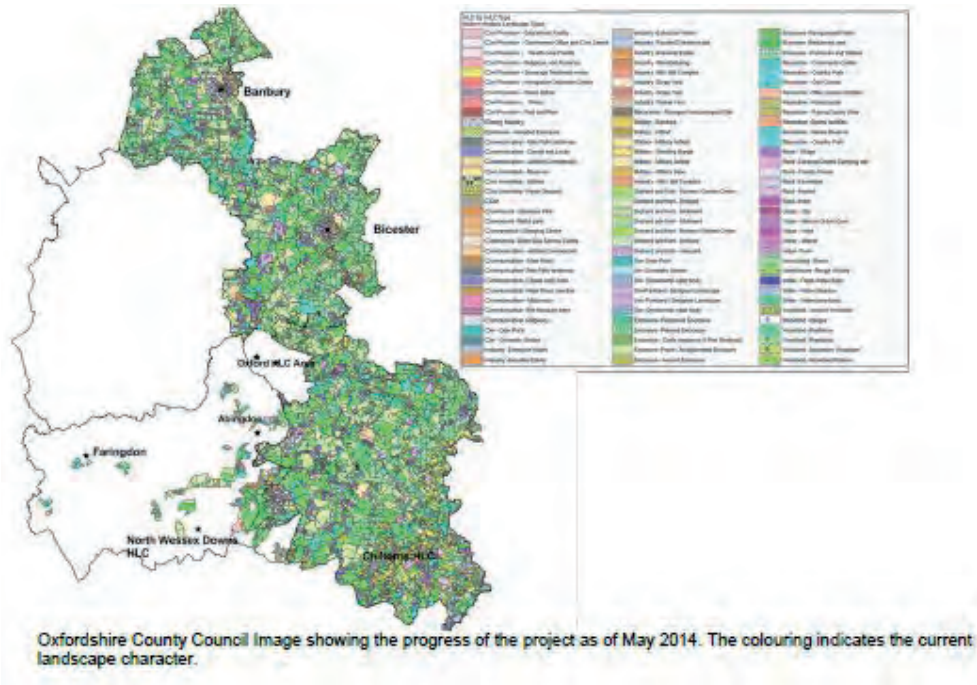


Fig. 3. HLC coverage of Oxfordshire, to date.

HUGH CODDINGTON, RICHARD ORAM and SUSAN LISK,  
 COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Published in Oxoniensia 2014, (c) Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society



# The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire, 2013

In 2013 1,534 records were entered into the database, containing details of 1,952 objects. The reduction in rallies seen in 2012 continued, again mostly due to poor weather and the lack of availability of land, though there were several small events within the county to which no FLO was invited. The reduction in organised group events was not reflected in the local club activities, which continued to take place most weekends during the year.

The Vale of the White Horse was the district with the greatest number of recorded finds (Fig. 1), chiefly thanks to the entry of some 400 finds from the 2012 Letcombe Bassett rally. The Vale is the favoured district for large metal-detecting rallies (of over 100 people), and a rally in September 2013 attracted about 600 people to land near Segsbury Camp. The Segsbury rally produced only 251 objects offered for onsite recording. This low level of finds is most likely due to the land having been frequented by metal-detectorists over several years. As in previous years, the rally finds will be entered into the database in the following calendar year and they therefore do not form part of the totals given here.

Once again Roman finds made up the highest proportion of finds offered for recording across all districts. The number of medieval and post-medieval finds recorded increased compared to last year, comprising 23 per cent and 24.5 per cent of the total respectively.

Finds were recorded by thirty-eight individuals from twenty-three institutions, mostly FLOs and a small number of volunteers. The Oxfordshire FLO dealt with finds from 238

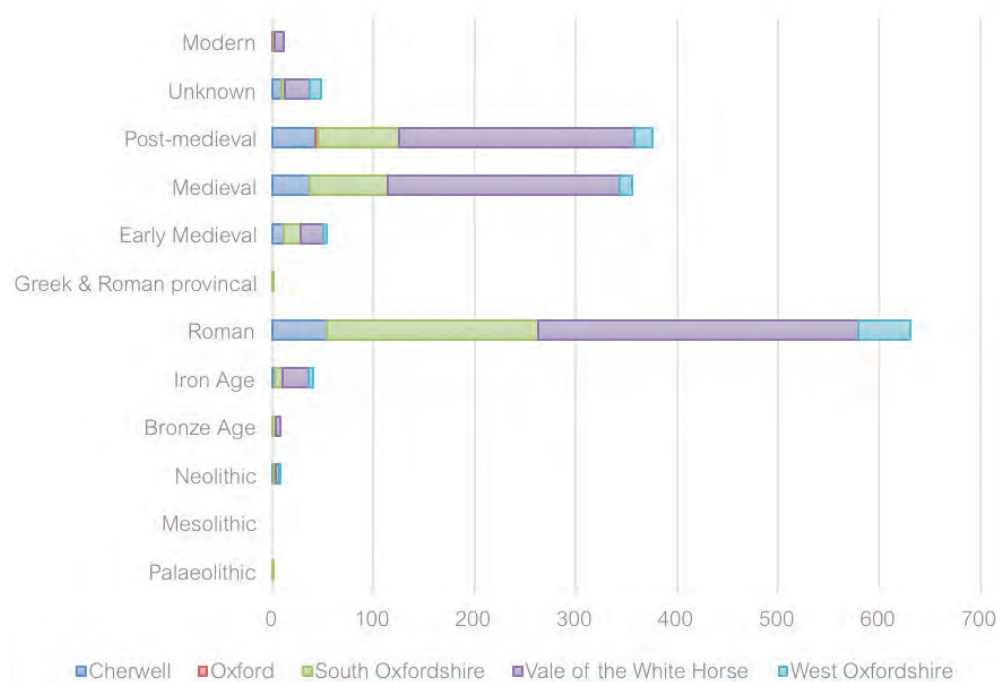


Fig. 1. Oxfordshire finds recorded by the PAS in 2013.

individuals, while across the scheme 381 individuals offered Oxfordshire finds for recording. Since the PAS began in Oxfordshire, 512 individuals have reported artefacts from the county, the majority being metal-detector users, many of them regular reporters, though new finders of various kinds continue to come forward. Some members of local metal-detecting clubs are being trained to record their club finds directly onto the PAS database; it is hoped that this will increase the number of finds recorded by clubs and produce more accurate findspot information that can be passed on and used by researchers.

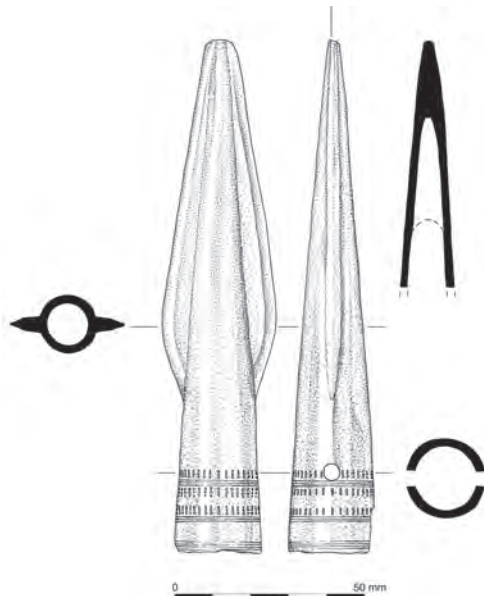
Some of the more interesting or unusual artefacts from across the county include an unusually large Neolithic arrowhead (BERK-2FED97), a Roman penannular brooch of a type found only four times previously in Britain (BERK-481A32), and a complete ninth-century hooked tag (BERK-126B30). Of the hundreds of coins recorded several are noteworthy, including an 'Ides of March' denarius of Brutus (FAPJW-E8D710) and a medieval continental sterling imitation penny from Brussels, probably of Jan III, duke of Brabant (1312–55), only the fourth to be recorded on the PAS database (BERK-BADC65).

The database has a 'Finds of Note' field under which finds of special interest can be highlighted. This category of find is easily searchable in the 'advanced search' of the database and includes finds of all types and all periods. A selection of these from Oxfordshire is presented below. More information on these and other finds can be found by visiting [www.finds.org.uk/](http://www.finds.org.uk/) database. For any queries please contact Anni Byard ([anni.byard@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:anni.byard@oxfordshire.gov.uk)).

*BERK-FCF913: Bronze-Age Spearhead from 'near Wallingford'*

This spearhead was found by thirteen-year-old Ollie-Bob Cross on his first metal-detecting trip with his grandfather.<sup>1</sup> The socketed spearhead has a blue-green patina and the silver-tint to the object shows that the alloy has a high tin content. The edges of the leaf-shaped blade are bevelled and still sharp but the very tip of the blade is missing. There is an area of damage to the socket mouth. The socket itself extends just over half the length of the head, a common feature on spearheads of this date. The decoration consists of three sets of three incised lines around the circumference of the socket; two of these sets have punched decoration of two squares crowned by a triangle above and below the lines. Two peg holes are located within the final band of decoration.

This is a very rare object and dates to the final phase of the Bronze Age or the very early Iron Age, the Carp's Tongue Complex of c.950–800 BC. A small number of similar examples are known, with one similarly decorated object from the Reach Fen hoard,<sup>2</sup> and another held by the British Museum (Accession no. 1852.0626.86). Of examples from the Oxfordshire-Berkshire area,<sup>3</sup> three with similar decoration are known: Ehrenberg's no. 41 from Culham, no. 76 from Maidenhead,



<sup>1</sup> Illustration by Magda Wachnik.

<sup>2</sup> J. Evans, *The Ancient Bronze Implements, Weapons and Ornaments of Great Britain and Ireland* Longmans (1881), p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> M.R. Ehrenberg, *Bronze Age Spearheads from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire*, BAR, 34 (1977).

Berks. (closest to the Wallingford example in decoration) and no. 144 from Windsor, Berks.<sup>4</sup> The latter two were both found in the Thames. The Wallingford example was reportedly found point-down on one of the highest hills in the area. It may be that the Wallingford spearhead was recovered from a primary context and preliminary archaeological investigation of the discovery site may take place towards the end of 2014.

*BERK-E34D72: Iron Age Coin from Letcombe Bassett CP*

An incomplete Iron-Age silver coin (known as a 'unit') of the very rare 'Abingdon Zoo' type, dating to the mid first century BC, was found by a metal-detector user. This coin is a variation of Rudd's no. 1004 (horse right),<sup>5</sup> while the obverse is similar de Jersey's Type A.<sup>6</sup> One other example of this coin was found in Blewbury and is recorded in the Celtic Coin Index (CCI 95.3389). The reverse of the Blewbury coin is clearer and comprises paired animals, including stylized horses or deer with beaded manes and up-curved tails facing each other, with other animals beneath; the Letcombe Bassett coin shows these lower animals to be horses.

Rudd notes the existence of a small tribe, now nameless, between the rivers Ock and Kennet and striking coins c.55–40 BC.<sup>7</sup> The existence of this group was first proposed by de Jersey in 1998,<sup>8</sup> and they may have been centred at or near Dorchester-on-Thames. The coins share similarities to a bronze coin from Belgic Gaul, and suggest a possible link or influence to the Abingdon Zoo type.<sup>9</sup>

*BERK-E8CB82: Iron-Age Pottery Sherds from Swyncombe CP*

Eighteen sherds of prehistoric pottery, probably early Iron Age in date (c.800–401 BC), were found by a member of the public while out walking in the hills of Swyncombe. Most of the sherds are tempered with crushed flint of varying sizes (up to c.6 mm) with the occasional sherd also containing small rounded stones or quartz. All but one of the sherds are body sherds; the exception is probably a base but it is too fragmentary to be certain. The fabrics vary in colour from dark grey to mid brown and orange/red. These sherds were found near an earthwork monument of prehistoric date, recorded in the HER as PRN 13608. The sherds could be significant in helping to date activity in the area.<sup>10</sup>

*BERK-868731: Roman token from Marsh Baldon*



This unusual and large uniface lead alloy token bears a crude or intentionally derogatory depiction of a male's head in profile. Presumably an emperor, the man wears a radiate crown and has a large hooked nose and large lips. Lead tokens with imperial busts of probable Roman date are known (for example LON-8C0467 and SUSS-2F5145) but are uncommon, with this example

being conspicuous by its size. There does appear to be some form of inscription around the edge of this token, but it is no longer legible. The reverse of the token is smooth and plain

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> C. Rudd et al., *Ancient British Coins* (2010).

<sup>6</sup> P. de Jersey, 'Abingdon Zoo: A New Celtic Silver Unit from Berkshire', *Numismatic Circular*, 106 (1998), pp. 150–2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Thanks to Philip de Jersey for his help in identifying this coin.

<sup>10</sup> Thanks to Paul Booth for his help in identifying the pottery.

but slightly rounded, giving the token a slightly dished profile. Because of this it has been suggested that this object is possibly a seal but there are no perforations for a cord to attach. It has been suggested that such objects could have been used as passes into military buildings or baths, so the initial identification of a token seems more plausible. The radiate crown suggests it dates from the first to late third century AD.

*BH-02C1A7: Roman Spoon from Tetsworth CP*

A worn and incomplete copper-alloy handle from a Roman folding spoon in the form of an elongated, crouching feline, with a longitudinal slot on the underside for the folding element, was found by a metal-detector user. At the top, the back extends upwards into the animal's head, which has a pair of moulded, pointed ears at the back, and a central ridge dividing the recessed eyes. The front of the muzzle is vertical, with a single groove beneath representing the mouth. The expanded bottom side represents the start of a pair of forelegs.

These objects, which have been studied by David Sherlock,<sup>11</sup> remain a rare class of artefact. The PAS database includes several parallels for this handle, including DENO-AEBF93, NCL-635E92 and HAMP-BC38B6. The last of these handles (from Broughton, Hants.) appears to be complete, extending to almost twice the length of this example and flaring into a crescentic terminal with hinge below. PAS record SF2196 (Campsey Ash, Suffolk) was found in association with a mandolin-shaped spoon bowl, which, it is suggested, would originally have been attached at the front hinge. For a full discussion of the type, see PAS record HAMP-BC38B6. The suggested date, based on the contexts of the excavated examples, is second to third century AD.<sup>12</sup>

*BERK-39FCC8: Medieval Coin Brooch from Wantage CP*



In October 2013 a gilded silver coin brooch was submitted under the Treasure Act 1996 (case number 2013 T693). The brooch is formed from a penny of Aethelstan (AD 924/25–39), struck in the north-east by Willuf. The obverse is gilded and reads: AETHELSTAN REX. The reverse is not gilded and retains part of a copper alloy mount or clasp, which would have been fastened in place with small silver rivets. As a coin, the reverse can be described as the

'horizontal trefoil (HT1)' type (North Type 668b).<sup>13</sup> The moneyer's name is presented over two lines: VVIL / + + + / LVF M. The coin shows little wear which suggests it was not in circulation long before its use was altered, probably during the tenth century. This is one of the earliest coin brooches reported under the Act.<sup>14</sup> Oxfordshire Museums' Service hopes to acquire it.

*BERK-74AF38: Medieval Brooch from Wantage CP*

A very unusual cast copper alloy circular foil, possibly imitating an Arabic coin, was found during a metal-detecting rally near the Ridgeway. A close parallel to this item can be found in Pestell and Marsden.<sup>15</sup> Within this work it is referred to as Winchester Type 2. BERK-74AF38 also appears



<sup>11</sup> D. Sherlock, 'Roman Folding Spoons', *London & Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions*, 27 (1976), pp. 250–5.

<sup>12</sup> Information from Julian Watters, Hertfordshire FLO.

<sup>13</sup> J.J. North, *English Hammered Coinage. Volume 1: Early Anglo-Saxon to Henry III c.600–1272* (1980), p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication from Dr John Naylor, PAS National Finds Advisor.

<sup>15</sup> T. Pestell and A. Marsden, 'Three Repoussé Foils Imitating Arabic Coins', in M. Biddle et al. (eds.), *The Winchester Mint and Coins and Related Finds from the Excavations of 1961–71* (2012), pp. 653–7.



to be repoussé-stamped on thin copper-alloy and is of the same size. It has the same two concentric circles and seems to have a pseudo-script possibly based on Arabic. The authors propose that these foils are 'components of composite nummular brooches'.<sup>16</sup> The Winchester example was excavated from a context dated from the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

*BH-EEE305: Medieval Vessel Mount from Watlington CP*



A solid cast copper-alloy figurine in the form of a seated dog, probably a handle from the lid of a medieval vessel. The animal is well moulded and of realistic, if slightly stylised, appearance; the head in particular is overly large and has caricatured features. The animal is seated in an upright, somewhat cramped position, its feet resting upon a roughly rectangular base. The rounded

chest and forelegs of the dog extend smoothly into its back; a slightly hooked tail projects backwards from the rump. This tail is likely to have been practical as well as decorative, preventing over-rotation of the opened lid.

A lid bearing a similar canine handle, probably from a salt, was found in a late fourteenth-century level in London and is compared to a complete salt in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>18</sup> Handles in the form of seated animals are also known from ewers of the late medieval period, an example of which is a late fifteenth-century piece illustrated by Lewis.<sup>19</sup> A late-medieval date therefore seems likely for this example.<sup>20</sup>

*BERK-8D66C3: Post-Medieval Seal Matrix from Oxford*



In early January 2013 a gold seal matrix in almost perfect condition was submitted under the Treasure Act 1996 (case number 2013 T74) after being discovered in a garden by a metal-detector user the year before. The matrix is probably mid to late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-

century in date. It has a circular base upon which is engraved the blazon (or arms) *vairy on a chief three lions rampant guardant*. This seal matrix is of the highest quality but it is not perfect; the blazon does not fit precisely into the round border as some of the lower *vairy* is squashed and misaligned into the bottom corner of the shield.

Clive Cheesman, Richmond Herald at the College of Arms, comments on this piece that similar arms were granted in 1572 to a John Younge of Durnford in Wiltshire. The family was recorded at Little Durnford in the 1623 Visitation of Wiltshire.<sup>21</sup> The arms depicted on this

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 655.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks are extended to Paul Cannon for his comments on this object.

<sup>18</sup> G. Egan, *The Medieval Household: Daily Living c.1150-c.1450* (1998), pp. 191–3, nos. 537–8.

<sup>19</sup> J.M. Lewis, *Bronze Aquamaniles and Ewers*, Finds Research Group 700–1700, Datasheet 7 (1987).

<sup>20</sup> Information from Julian Watters, Hertfordshire FLO.

<sup>21</sup> C. Cheesman, *The Coat of Arms*, 3rd series, vol. 8, part 2 (2012). Grateful thanks are extended to Clive Cheesman for his identification of these arms.

seal matrix may therefore be of another John Young (1639–1710), a descendant of the above. Young was educated at The Queen's College in Oxford before travelling to France in 1657, and became MP for Old Sarum in 1679.<sup>22</sup> The findspot is close to Wolvercote Common and Port Meadow, a large expanse of land that was used for horse racing in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. It is possible that Young attended such events while at college, and that the seal matrix was lost during one such visit. However, the condition of the matrix suggests that it may not have had much use, being lost almost as soon as it was made. The Ashmolean Museum hopes to acquire it.

ANNI BYARD, PAS

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/young-john-1639-1710>.