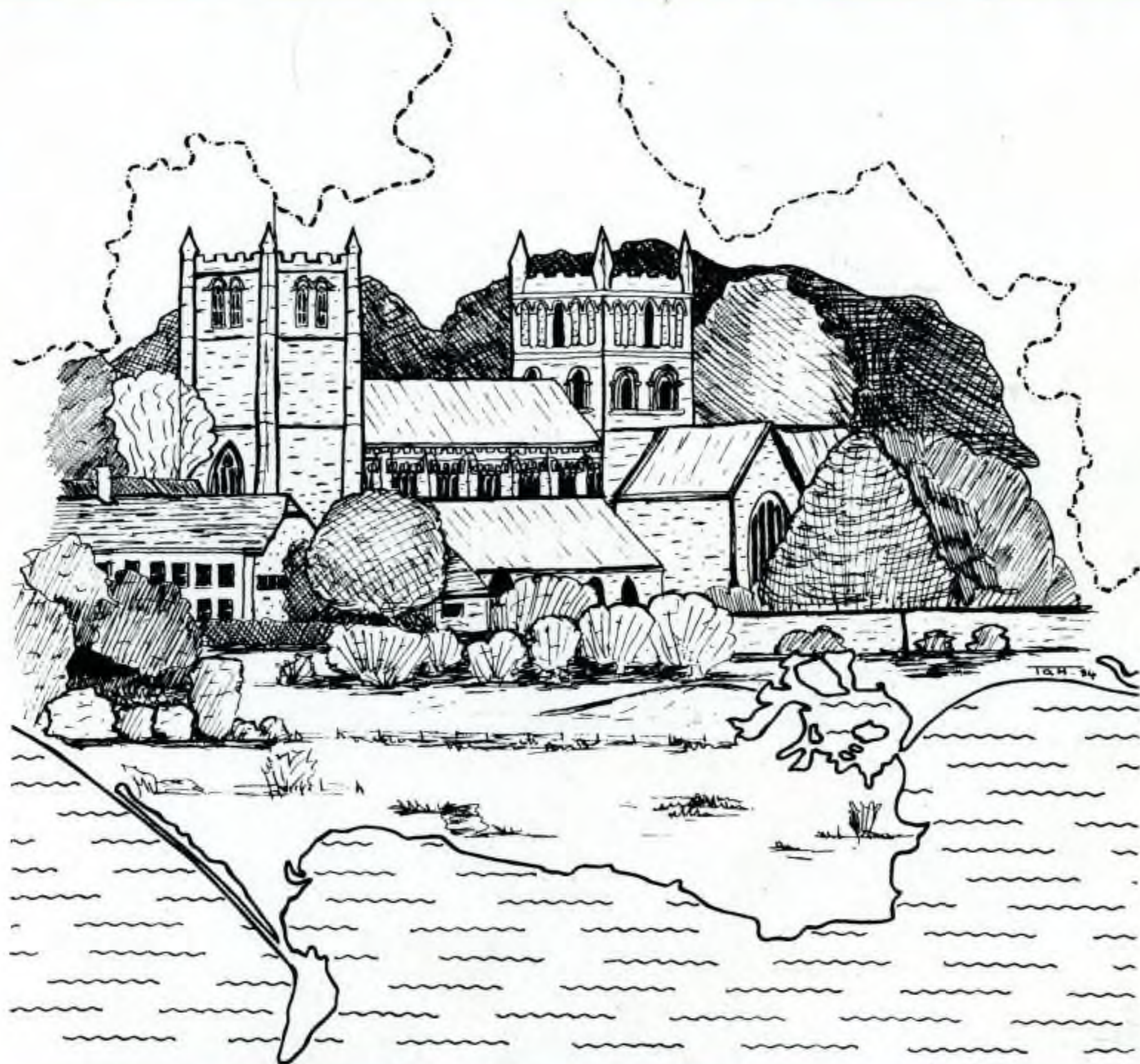
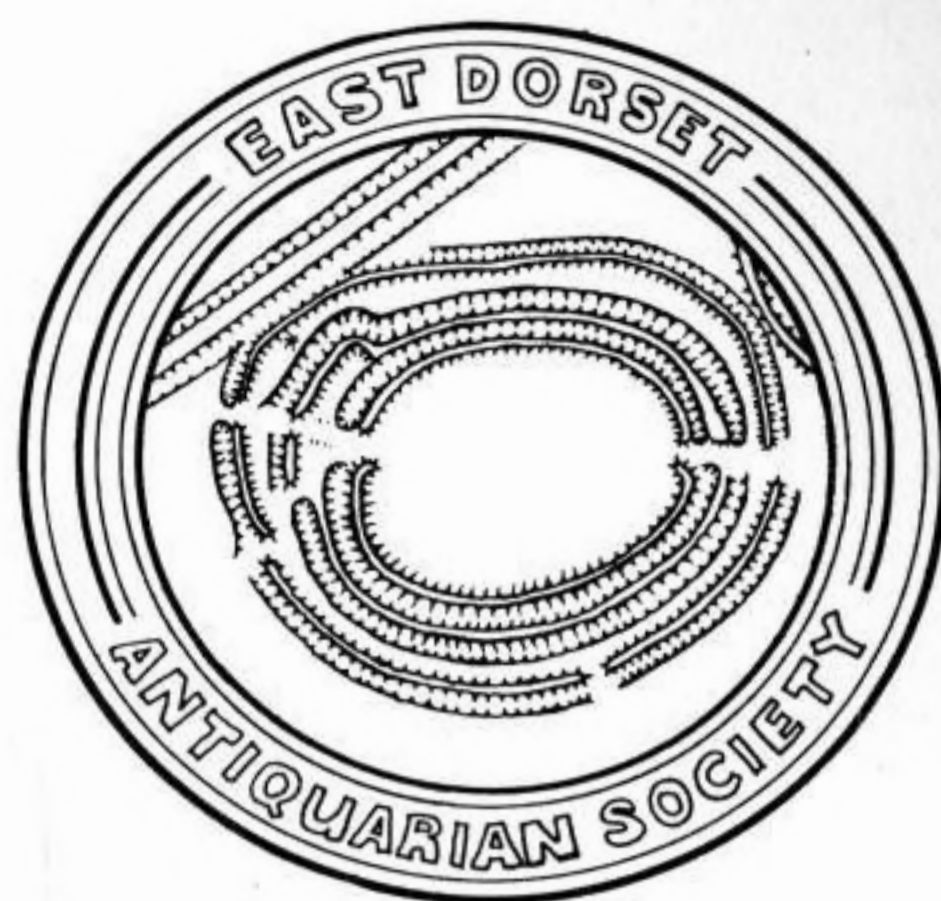


EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY



JOURNAL VOL. 2



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Membership Secretary:	Della Day	Special Adviser:	Martin Green
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We thank Len Norris and Brian Tiller for their work in the past year.

FOREWORD

We have pleasure in presenting our second Journal, which we hope you will read and enjoy. The first year of E.D.A.S. has been one full of interest and varied activity, and two excavations have been particularly exciting. The discovery of a Henge Monument at Wyke Down, Gussage St. Michael was most unexpected and is the first in Wessex. Martin Green now wonders how many of the ring ditch crop and soil marks which he has photographed and not ploughed-out barrows, as hitherto assumed, but more henges. On the Blandford Bypass we excavated part of a Bronze Age village, which made us realise just how much more there is to find. The post-holes of the huts and their porches were clearly visible, despite the passage of earth-moving machinery.

Alan Graham has been on the trail of the elusive Saxons of Wimborne and you can find out how he gets on in his report on the recent excavations. David Johnston's article on Roman Roads is a timely reminder that we must not make easy assumptions. The dig in the New Forest, while not conclusive in dating or defining a feature formerly believed to be a Roman Road, throws sufficient doubts as to its origins to make one wonder how many other unconscious errors there are on reputable maps.

While archaeology has been our central theme in the first year, during our second we are extending into the field of local history, and we hope to do in-depth surveys of the Allen Valley Parishes. Our first project will focus on Hinton Martell and Hinton Parva. It has been difficult to find out which parishes have been recently surveyed by others or are being currently studied, and we therefore welcome Lawrence Keen's proposal to initiate a working party to study the feasibility of forming a local history association.

In offering our Journal we would extend our sincere thanks to all our contributors and to Teresa for her line drawings and cover design. We are also very much indebted to Mrs Anne Brown for all the typing. We are already planning the third Journal and look forward to a continuing flow of articles.

Editorial Group

Sylvia Church; John Day;
Irene Hewitt; Ann Sims

Illustrations: Teresa Hall

Photographs: John Day

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BRIEFLY

by
D DAY

The last lecture for 1983/84 is by Felicity Woodhead on 11th June, entitled 'Archaeology and Botany'. The first for the 1984/85 session is by K Davey on 'Ancient Forests' (26th September). The summer months excavations are not yet formulated, but by the winter the Parish Research Programme should be well under way. Summer frolics include a Barbecue.

Perhaps 1985 will see us going to Carnac with Aubrey Burl. Next winter lectures include: 'Shale Working', C Draper; 'Roman Army in Britain', R Bridgeland; 'Church Craftmanship', J Day.

On 25 March 1984 membership stood at 69.

RESCUE EXCAVATION BLANDFORD BY-PASS 1983

Grid Ref: ST. 884083

by

HAYDN EVERALL & WENDIE McFARLANE

During the summer of 1983 members of the Society observing work on the Blandford By-Pass noticed a 'V' sectioned ditch about to be destroyed by chalk removal.

The site is located west of Kites Farm overlooking the river Stour, on a plateau of grassy downland, an ideal position for settlement, incorporating the advantages of nearby water and defence, synonymous with other similar settlement sites on Cranborne Chase.

It was decided to mount a rescue excavation in advance of large scale chalk removal, which was taking place at the rate of 400 tons a day.

The 'V' section ditch (Fig. (1)) first discovered, produced worked flint, charcoal, pottery and more interestingly, in the primary fill, a fully articulated skeleton of a dog in excellent condition, and also a remarkable carved chalk cup. The associated pottery was of the Deverel-Rimbury type, suggesting a Later Bronze Age date.

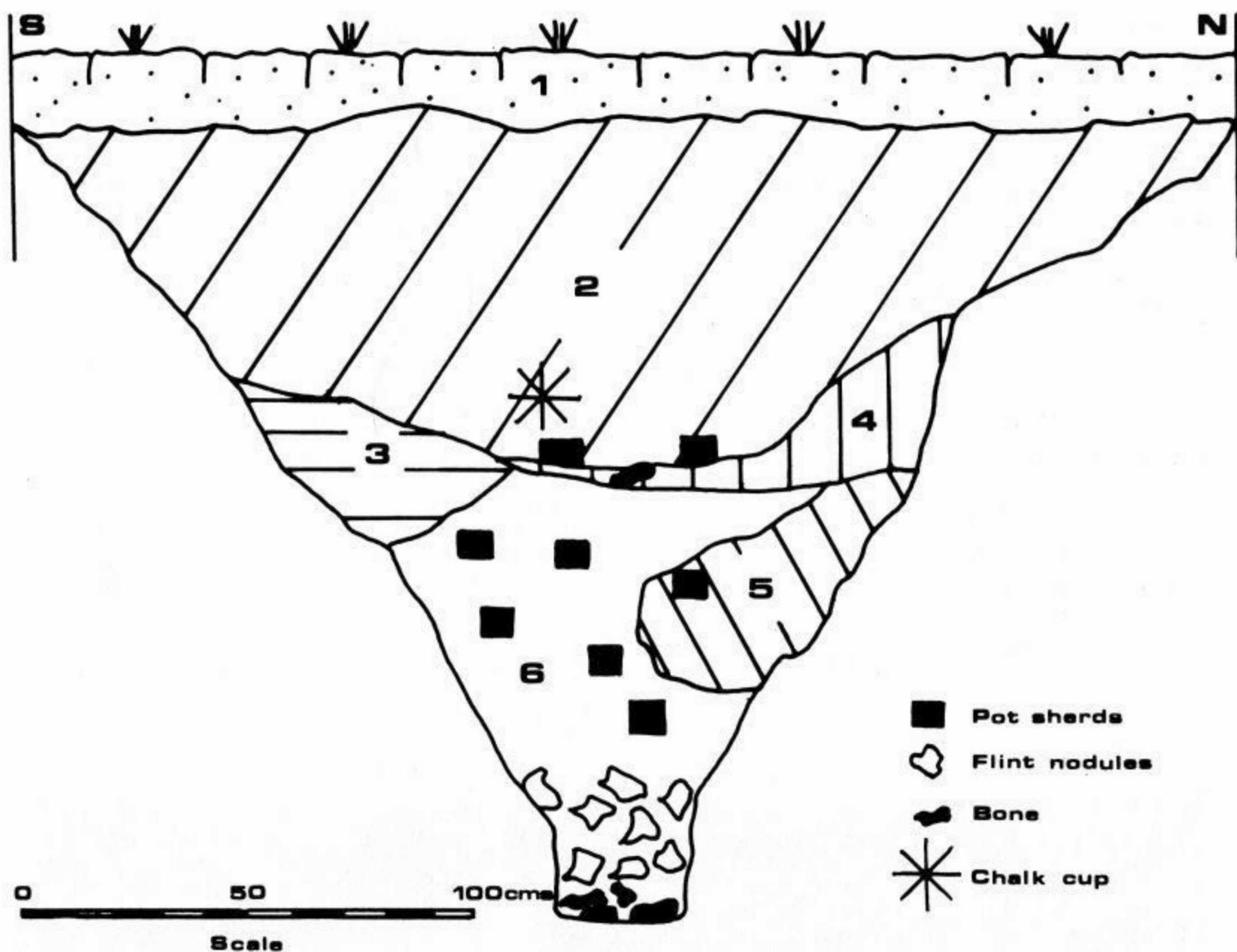


Figure 1.

1. Plough soil
2. Chalk with flints (some struck or burnt). Chalk lumps and brown soil tightly packed. Small amounts of charcoal and some pottery at base of layer.
3. Brown soil with very small chalk granules plus a few 2cm chalk lumps.
4. Slightly darker brown soil, with a few chalk lumps (5cm), containing some burnt and struck flint and charcoal.
5. Very small tightly packed chalk granules with light powdery soil. Some burnt flint.
6. Loose chalk rubble, with boulders from 160cm depth to almost the bottom of the pit. Some struck nodules, 10cm to 15cm diameter.

As the construction work continued, further observations of the ditch were made, revealing similar pottery, bones of ox, sheep and pig. This domestic evidence suggests that the ditch was associated with a nearby settlement, and possibly enclosed it.

A large area of projected roadway had been stripped of top soil revealing another large feature, probably a ditch, containing charcoal and large sherds of Deverel-Rimbury pottery. Many post holes and pits were apparent; from these several hut circles were distinguished. Two of the hut circles were excavated (see photo) again providing Later Bronze Age artifacts.

Unfortunately the entire site had been severely eroded by weathering and ploughing in the past, resulting in very shallow features which were almost obliterated by the heavy plant crossing the site. Sufficient evidence was found to suggest that the plateau cut by the by-pass was a vast complex of Bronze Age activity. As the settlement area extends into adjoining farmland it was felt that it would be worth investigating in the future, either by further field walking or by a resistivity survey.



HENGE MONUMENTS

by

DENNIS BICHENO

Perhaps the most interesting and exciting activity this year for many of us in E.D.A.S. was the excavation work on the ring ditch on Down Farm. Our more experienced members pronounced wisely that it was a relatively rare site - a henge monument.

Not wishing to appear too much of an ignoramus I hastily referred to various archaeological works to attempt to discover what comprised a henge monument. In the unlikely event of some of our members being as ill-informed as myself I am summarising the information which I gleaned for their interest.

Henge monuments are usually attributable to the late Neolithic Age and can be fairly reliably placed by carbon dating of organic materials from the sites together with pottery finds of the Rinyo-Clacton ware type.

Henges existed in a considerable variety of forms and sizes but were generally characterised by a circular area enclosed by a bank and ditch, the bank normally being outside of the ditch, although some henges have ditches both inside and outside the bank. Smaller henges usually have a single entrance, whilst the larger ones may have two or more.

Henges may also have a circle of pits, or settings of timber posts or stones. The diameter of a henge may be as little as 10.6 metres, as at Fargo Plantation, or as large as 305 metres as at Avebury. Henges are usually located in a low-lying position, often close to water, and usually in a potentially indefensible position.

Nearly a hundred well-defined henges have been identified in Britain with a particular concentration in Wessex, including the large sites of Avebury, Stonehenge, Durrington Walls, Marden and Mount Pleasant, which must have utilised considerable architectural and engineering skills in their construction. Many hundreds of other smaller "ring-ditches" may be seen from the air (though often little signs remain on the ground).

Henges are usually described as being ritual or ceremonial centres, but it has also been argued that the smaller "ring ditches" are simply burial places surrounded by a ditch.

Since the henges are usually characterised (with the exception of Durrington Walls) by the absence of occupational debris and often associated with burial pits or barrows, they would appear to have a non-functional role, although Humphrey Case believes that the primary use of henges was as domestic settlements.

No parallel sites to our henge monuments have been found outside the British Isles and they remain as enigmatic as do the causewayed camps from which some archaeologists believe them to have evolved. It certainly does seem likely that the henges took over some of the functions which the causewayed camps undertook before them.

Dorset has three remarkable henge sites: Mount Pleasant, Maumbury Rings at Dorchester, and the triple henge at Knowlton Rings. The latter must have been both an important and imposing site in its heyday which must have come close to rivalling the better known Avebury and Stonehenge in importance.

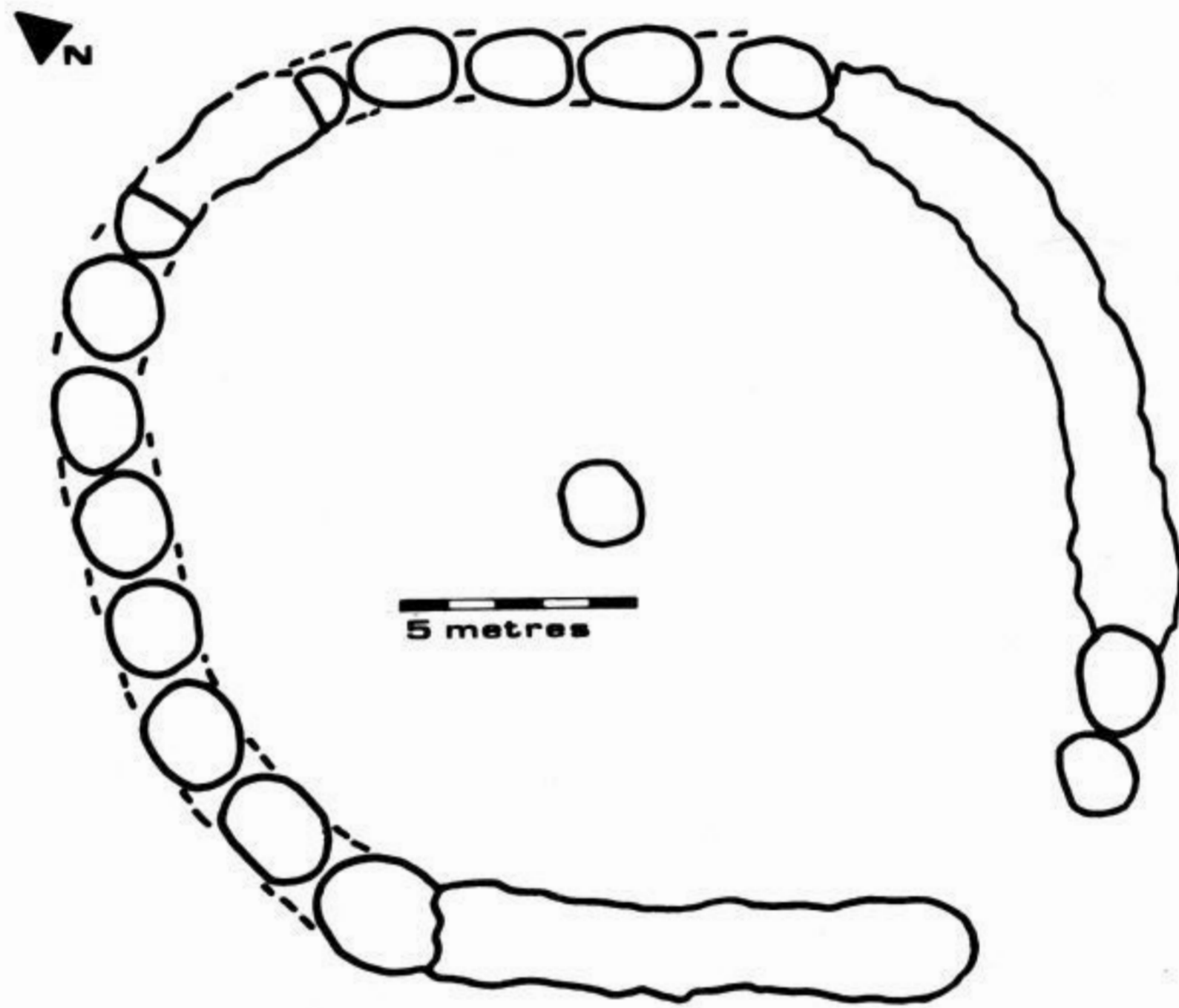
EXCAVATION OF RING DITCH AT WYKE DOWN,
GUSSAGE ST. MICHAEL - (Interim Report)

by
Martin T Green

This ring ditch is visible on NMR photograph SU 0015/4/217 at SU 00661529 and was brought to my attention by M Newman-Wren. It appeared to be an outlier to the Wyke Down Bronze Age cemetery⁽¹⁾, although had apparently never been recorded.

Excavation began with volunteers from the East Dorset Antiquarian Society in May. As no vestige of a mound survived, the topsoil was partly removed mechanically, allowing for over 5 metres outside the ring ditch to be examined; in all over 900 sq.metres. Later, a further 40 sq.metres were stripped on the S.E. side.

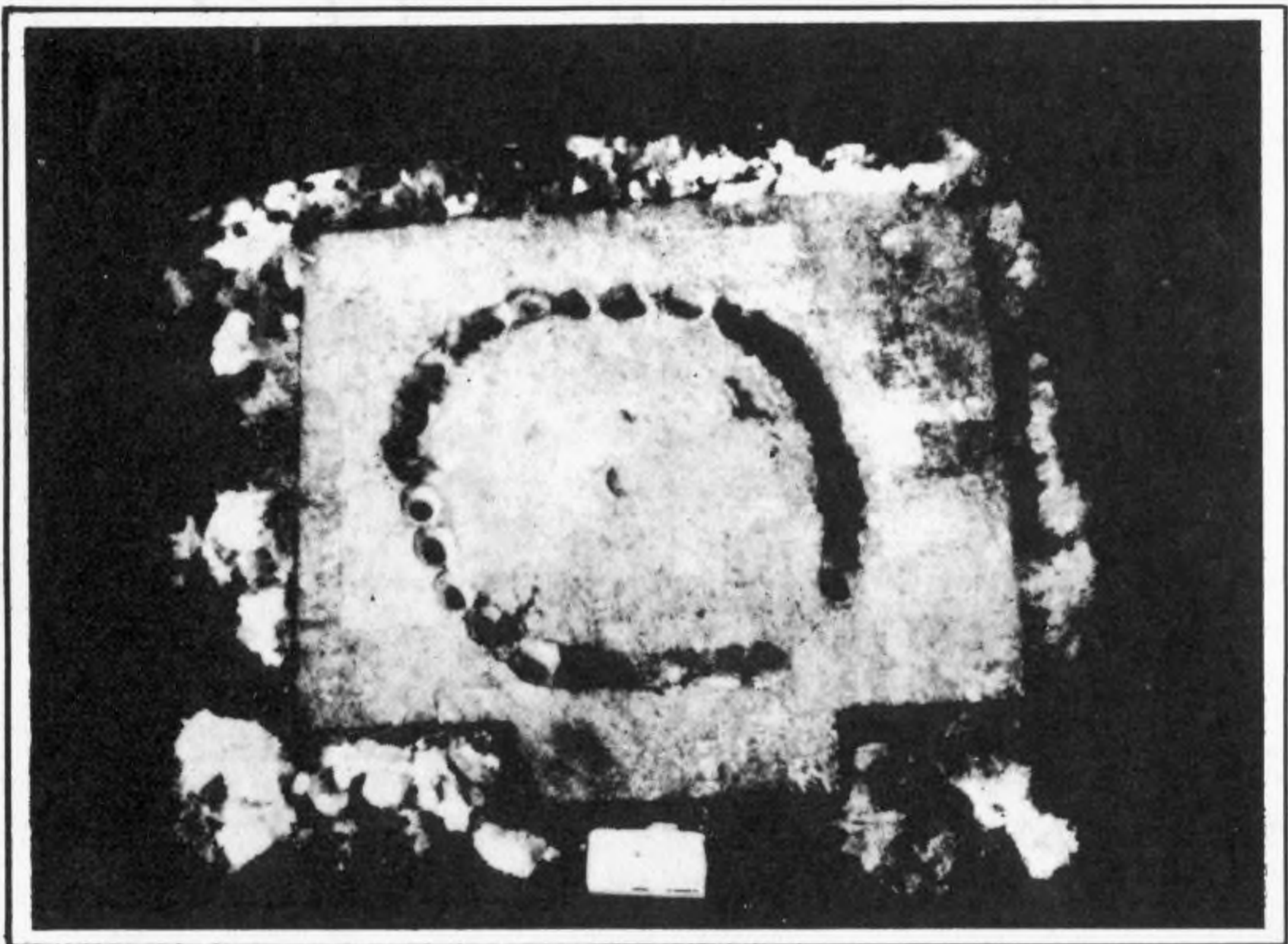
When exposed, the ring ditch was seen to be 20 metres in diameter from the outside edges of the ditch and was broken by a 3 metre wide causeway to the south. A pit 1.3 metre wide was located near the centre. No other features were located, either inside or in the areas stripped outside the ring ditch. Excavation of the ditch showed that it was not in fact continuous but a circle of deep pits separated by narrow causeways. The pits so far examined are roughly oval and measure about 2 m x 2.5m and vary in depth between 1.30 m to 1.80 m. Although excavation is incomplete, it is estimated the circle consists of 27 pits; of these 16 have so far been examined, 10 of which have been completely excavated.



INACCURATE SKETCH PLOT OF THE WYKE DOWN HENGE

The initial filling appears to have been very rapid and includes thin lenses of material which may represent annual periods of weathering, suggesting the pits could have filled naturally to within 40 cms of the surface within perhaps a decade or two⁽²⁾. Near the bottom of one pit was found a broken antler pick and rake with a reasonable amount of charcoal and near the base of another was a petit-tranchet derivative arrowhead. After these phases of weathering, many of the pits showed clear evidence of token recutting consisting of small pits about 50 cms in diameter cutting into the filling to depths around 30 cms. Some of these recuts contained deposits of animal bone and one contained a substantial part of an elaborately decorated grooved ware vessel. There was no evidence to suggest the pits had held posts during their original construction or during the recut phase. They then filled naturally with fine material derived from an eroded clay with flints deposit. Within this layer were substantial amounts of struck flintwork together with a fragmentary mid/late Beaker and a sherd of collared urn. The central pit proved to be 55 cms in depth and contained a little struck flint, an animal bone and a leaf arrowhead in its secondary fills.

Aerial Photograph of the Henge Monument



The site as shown by its date and construction is in the hengi-form category. The closest parallels being sites IV-VI excavated at Dorchester-on-Thames⁽³⁾ which were also located close to a cursus monument. As the site had been completely levelled through centuries of ploughing, it will be difficult to prove its original form; whether embanked internally or externally or whether a mound existed in the centre. The symmetrical filling of the pits gives no indication of the position of the earthwork.

During 1984 the remaining partly excavated pits are to be completed together with a further six unexamined pits, leaving five unexcavated.

- (1) See plan in L V Grinsell Dorset Barrows page 111
- (2) Personal Communication - P Fisher
- (3) R J C Atkinson et al - Excavations at Dorchester, Oxon 1951

BOOK REVIEWS

THE HIGH KINGS by Joy Chant. Illustrated by George Sharp

A delightful collection of Celtic legends, as told by the bards in the days of King Arthur, with notes on Celtic customs and religion.

Each story has beautiful full-page illustrations by George Sharp, who sought out Celtic artifacts and had costumes woven to Celtic patterns for his models.

Cherry Trent

The Book of Blandford Form - B Cox (£10.95, Barracuda Books Ltd)

Written by the curator of Blandford Museum, who is also a member of E.D.A.S.

We can do not better than quote the preface by Peter Reynolds: 'A scholarly treatise and highly readable storehouse of information'.

John Day

REMPSTONE - A STUDY IN NEGLECT

by
IAN HEWITT

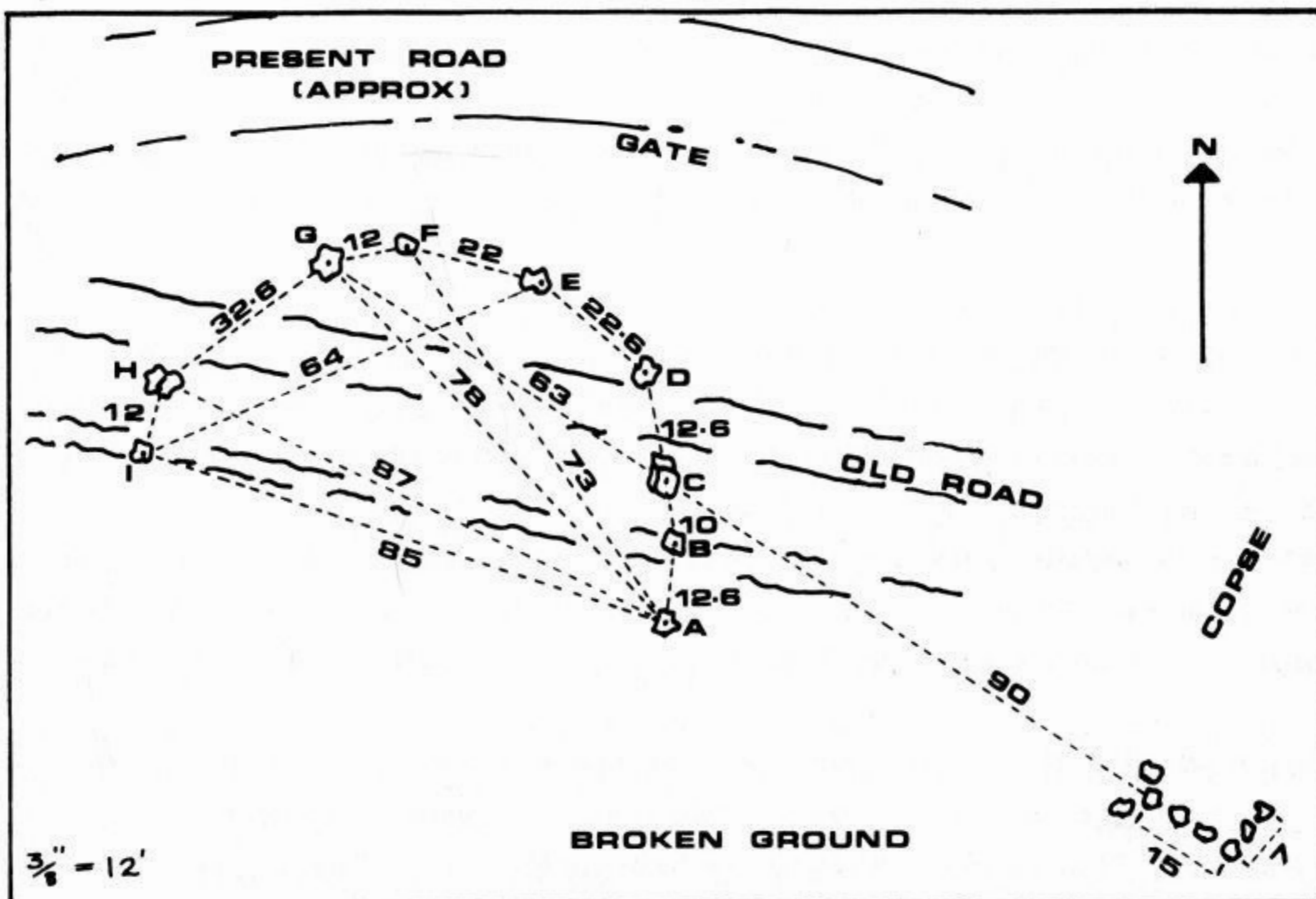
Whenever I hear of an archaeological dig I'm naturally interested in its progress and final outcome. Yet although it can be interesting to speculate as to what lies beneath our feet, I often wonder just how much we really know about things that stand already revealed or partially concealed. Digging worried me for two reasons. First, it is a practice which can destroy valuable evidence before it can be put to good use. Secondly, a mania for excavation often diverts attention from the important work of field survey and documentary research.

An outstanding example of neglect and uncertainty surrounds the standing stones at Rempstone, Isle of Purbeck (1:50000, 994 822). Lurking within the confines of a small wood, these stones remain obscure to travellers on the nearby road. Indeed their exact position is not readily apparent even to those who prepare a visit by careful reference to maps and directions⁽¹⁾. A keen eye is required to penetrate the gloom of the thicket. The nearest stone is but a metre distant from the barbed wire fence which separates the woodland from the grass roadside verge, but at this range sighting the stones is not easy during the summer months.

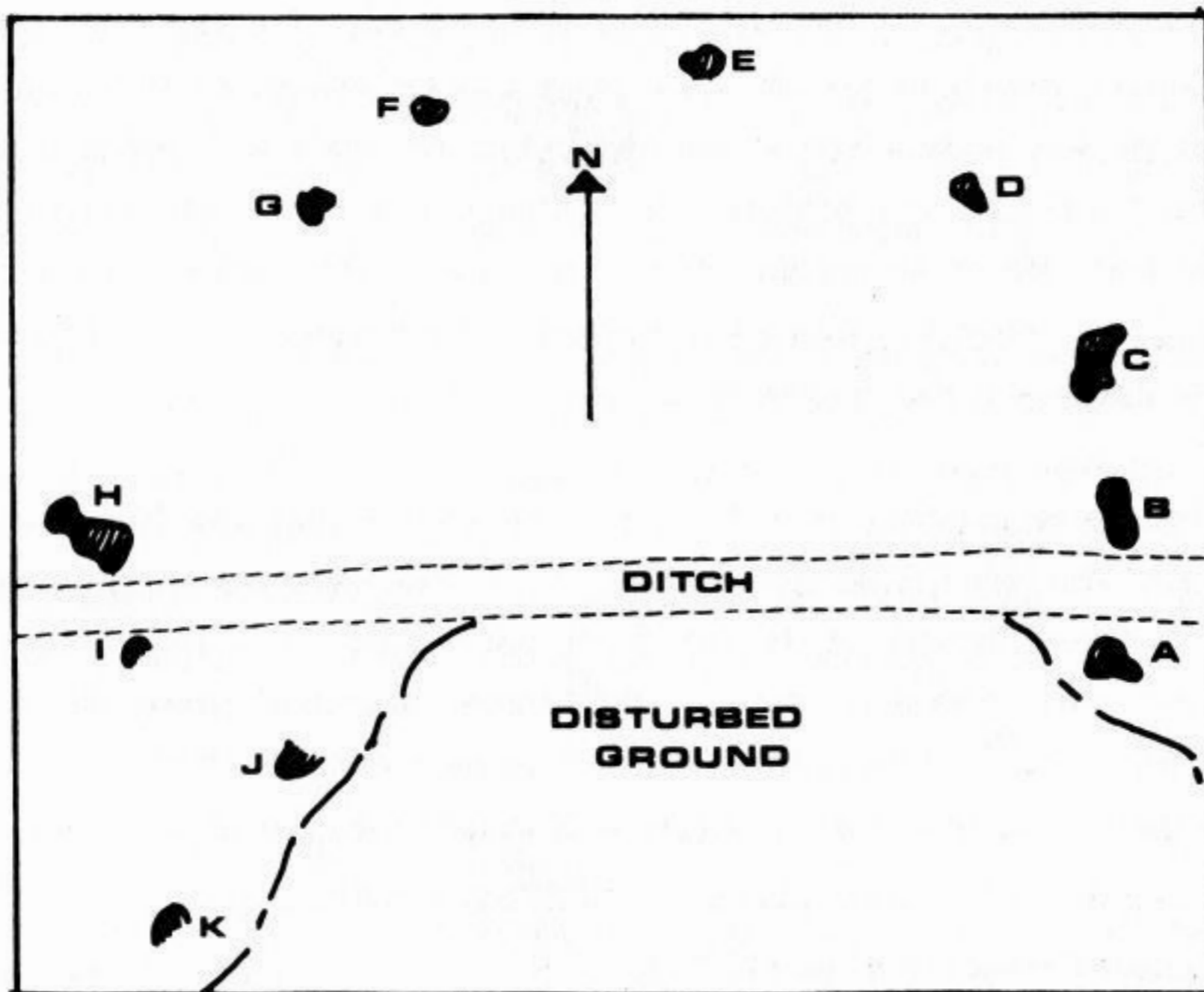
A first visit to the stones can therefore be a bizarre affair. There is no gate or stile and an element of athleticism is required to negotiate successfully the fence and undergrowth. Once achieved, one then experiences difficulty in observing the stones as a series or set. It is, anyway, a disorderly collection. A northerly group comprise an arc whilst elsewhere others lie in various states of disarray. The impression given is that here can be seen the remains of a prehistoric stone circle or ellipse rendered incomplete by fallen and displaced stones. The atmosphere is one of great confusion and secrecy.

Doubtless by reason of their location, it would seem that the Rempstone 'circle' remained undetected by antiquarians until 1900 when it was chanced upon by the wife of Rev. C V Goddard. He reported the find to Dorchester Museum.

¹ For useful guidance see Osborn, G. Exploring Ancient Dorset.
Dorset Publishing Company (1976).



The Rempstone 'circle' plan as it appeared in the Proceedings of the D.N.H.A.F.C. (1909).



S. and C.M. Piggott's plan of the Rempstone 'circle' as shown in 'Antiquity' (1939).

An account of this discovery did not appear in the Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club until 1908, and even then only in the preamble⁽¹⁾. Nevertheless it makes interesting reading. Rev Goddard was apparently aware of a local tradition which suggested that an ancient stone monument had existed at Rempstone and he believed that this is what had been found. He was alert also to the rarity of stone circles in Dorset.

Since that time, the antiquity of the stones has occasionally been questioned. Some casual observers have argued a historical date suggesting that the sheltered valley location is not typical of prehistoric stone circles. A further reason sometimes offered is the absence of the stones from early Ordnance Survey maps. Of course, such maps do not include every details by the argument cannot be lightly dismissed. Approximately half a mile to the west can be found a much larger stone circle of 1970's construction (987 824). Naturally, this too is absent from Ordnance Survey maps, including those of recent issue.

I am in no doubt that a case could be made against Rempstone as a genuine relic of prehistory. I am equally convinced that there is much evidence for authenticity, but more of that later. First I want to deal with the local tradition which Rev. Goddard mentioned in his original report of the find.

The source for this would appear to be C Warne⁽²⁾. However, it is my belief that Warne has been misinterpreted. He writes not of a stone circle but of a monolith "believed to have been standing formerly at Rempstone". No words are needed to elaborate upon the distinction. Warne was quite clear in his own mind; he deals with stone circles in a separate chapter⁽³⁾. One must therefore assume that unless Warne was in error, there is no case for the tradition of an ancient stone circle in the Rempstone area prior to the 1870's. Furthermore, implicit in Warne's statement is the suggestion that whatever it was that stood at Rempstone, it had, by this time, been destroyed.

So much for the votes against. How far can it be argued that the Rempstone stones comprise the relic of a rare Dorset stone circle? Some have used the place name itself as evidence. In fairness though, it is far from convincing. A D Mills suggests that Rempstone could mean 'boundary stone'⁽⁴⁾ but Anton Fagersten makes the case for a transferred family name⁽⁵⁾. One is therefore left to choose as to whether the local land magnates took their name from their property or if in fact the reverse was true.

1 Vol. xxix, page liii.

2 Warne, C. Ancient Dorset (1872) pp 111-112.

3 Ibid. p 113.

4 Mills, A.D. Place Names of Dorset Vol 1. (1977). English Place Names Society

5 Fagersten, A. (1933) The Place Names of Dorset. Uppsala.

In order to prove authenticity, much more information is required but is sadly hard to find. The 1909 Proceedings of the D.N.H.A.F.C. includes a plan of the site but there is no text, merely a few remarks made by the surveyor and attached to his work. Probably it was thought to be self explanatory and in truth, the plan does provide some useful information in addition to detailed measurements.

From it, one might deduce that the undergrowth extended to a point nearer to the road than it does today. A gate is marked close to what is called the 'present road'. This could explain why the circle had not been noted earlier, the largest of those stones still standing being approximately one metre high. Also of interest is the course of the 'old road', still clearly visible today. In fact, it is a section of ancient trackway which, as the plan illustrates, runs through the northern segment of the circle.⁽¹⁾

The significance of this ancient track is twofold. First, the Rempstone 'circle' lies on a route of considerable antiquity and therefore if truly ancient itself, would have been a well known landmark. Secondly, the fact that particular stretch of track fell into disuse would account for the circle becoming 'lost'. It would not be surprising for its existence to be preserved in local tradition although, as we have seen, this was not necessarily the case. My hunch would be that the modern road arcs to the north in a deliberate by-pass of the 'circle' possibly at a time when the 'old road' ceased to be little more than a footpath but became a routeway for larger horse drawn vehicles. Such might account for the displacement of stone C and the possible removal of one between G and H before the making of the detour. An examination of the 1805/6 two inch survey suggests that the detour existed then and was possible already old itself. This would tend to suggest a prehistoric date for the 'circle' although it is by no means conclusive.

The 1909 plan omits two apparently displaced stones to the south and south east of stone I. These are shown on a more recent plan drawn by S and C M Piggott.⁽²⁾ I have lettered the stones on this plan in the same way as that of the 1909 plan in order to make this clear. The Piggotts however, chose to exclude the collection of eight displaced stones south east of the circle segment. In two recent visits to Rempstone I have not been aware of the stone marked J on this plan. Perhaps it will be revealed in due course.

1 Good, R. (1966) *The Old Roads of Dorset*. H G Commin Ltd. pp 119-120.

2 Piggott, S and C M (Antiquity 1939) *Stone and Earth Circles in Dorset*. pp 138 and 148-9.

From the time of the Piggotts' contribution, interest in the Rempstone site appears to have declined. Then, in August 1957, a further discovery was made which, with more luck, might have told us a great deal more about the circle. It was at this time that J B Calkin was informed of an interesting series of stones uncovered by ploughing in a field approximately half a mile to the west.⁽¹⁾

Upon examination, Calkin found these stones to be of the same iron impregnated sandstone (Bagshot beds) as those of the Rempstone arrangement. His interpretation of this discovery is interesting. There were some 23 stones (or groups of fragments) in all, with an average size 2'6" x 1'6" (his measurements). Some of the groups could have represented broken larger stones. Their arrangement was such that the eastern end suggested two parallel lines 3 yards apart with stones set up at 5 yard intervals (see diagram).

These measurements seem very approximate but no doubt ploughing had caused some displacement. Calkin notes that stones E, W, C, B were more or less in alignment with A, M, L, K "over a distance of not more than 90 yards". Intriguingly, stones X, Y, Z were found in trial holes made in an attempt to establish the existence of a regular pattern of distribution. According to Calkin, this 'stone avenue' was aligned 12 degrees north of the circle and if continued would have passed just in front of Rempstone Hall. However, it is my view that if this was indeed a prehistoric processional way, it could have been serpentine in nature and therefore its course conjectural.

Whatever the case, Calkin's avenue can now be regarded as lost evidence. Having drawn his plan, he realised upon checking his measurements at home that he had made a mistake and on returning to the site found that field clearance had taken place and the stones dumped behind Brenscombe Farm.

Calkin was unable to seek further traces of his 'avenue' in the fields to the east and west as these were still "under grass". However, in August 1983, I found a not dissimilar type of stone, possibly shaped, in the field to the east and close to the access gate from the bridleway (987 823). The possibility of these being the remains of a boundary wall cannot be dismissed but there is no indication of such on the 1844 tithe map or the 1805/6 2 inch survey. If this feature was prehistoric, and if it did connect with the Rempstone 'circle', then it was certainly of impressive length. It would, in my view, have been a separate entity in the physical sense but with a ritual link. But that is to speculate.

¹ Calkin, J.B. Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. Vol 81 (1959) p 114.

One other interesting feature ought to be noted. Some four hundred metres east of the Rempstone 'circle' is a footpath that leads up on to Nine Barrow Down. Fifty metres along this path and a further eight to the left amongst the trees lies another rock of iron gritstone type. It is speculative to link this with the circle but the temptation is hard to resist. The stone is situated close to the parish boundary line (996 819) and could be a marker for this, but ancient standing stones and earthworks have often served such a purpose.

It is a great pity that the Rempstone 'circle' has been so overlooked. Those who doubt its authenticity could well be right. However, situated as it is, close to a cluster of barrows on the ridge above, and in a similar location to the Nine Stones at Winterbourne Abbas, it would be unwise to completely dismiss it. What is certain is that neglect will not help to solve the puzzles at Rempstone. Its present state is a disgrace. If research does prove it to be a comparatively recent counterfeit, then greater minds than mine will be judged wrong. In a county where stone circles are so few, it would be shameful to risk the loss of not exactly a jewelled crown, but possibly half of one.

BOOK REVIEW

STONEHENGE COMPLETE by Christopher Chippindale

Astonishingly this is the first full account of Stonehenge to be written. Hundreds of books have looked at a single aspect of argued some new theory, but never before has the whole compass been set down. It begins with Stonehenge in the medieval romances of King Arthur. We see how Tudor historians groped for its real origins, and how Inigo Jones, the genius of the English Renaissance, made of Stonehenge a masterpiece of Roman architecture. It looks at the antiquarians and archaeologists who have dug over the last 400 years and attributed Stonehenge to the Phoenicians, linked with the Mycenaeans and adopted by the Druids as a heritage from their ancestors. It explains why we now know when and how Stonehenge was built, and what we know of its astronomy from Lockyer to Hawkins, Hayle and Thorn. It illustrates the views greater and lesser artists have taken over 800 years, including Constable and Turner. A great many of these pictures have not been published before.

It finds Stonehenge in literature and the arts, in folklore, advertising and in the history of tourism from King Charles I to the present Prince of Wales. It tells how this unique monument has been threatened by the hammers of souvenir hunters, railway lines, speculative builders, showmen, the military and even being shipped wholesale to America; how it was saved for the nation and how public interest now threatens its existence once more.

Cherry Trent

EXTRACTS FROM EXPERIMENTAL SHALE WORKING PROJECTS

by
DENNIS SLOPER

reported in "Bulletins of Experimental Archaeology"

Dorset provides the Kimmeridge shale that was worked into bangles (armlets) in the Iron Age period by hand, and later, with the introduction of the lathe, armlets, bowls and spindle whorls were turned, using flint tool tips.

Objects made from Kimmeridge shale could have had ritualistic or therapeutic connections. The sulphur and bituminous content mingling would react in an unexpected manner; this could have been the selling point that led to the wide distribution of these fragile, decorative adornments.

Most of the information referring to armlet production results from the study of waste cores left when the turned armlets were cut free on a lathe. Excavation and research was done by Mr Bernard Calkin, M.A., F.S.A., 1947-53 whose reports can be found in Volume 75, Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society for 1953. His classification of cores is still used today: 'A' and 'B' having a square hole in the centre, 'C' and 'D' types having two or more drilled holes on one face and a small, centre hole on the opposite side for the lathe centre to locate.

Since 1979 experimental work has been carried out producing armlets, bowls and spindle whorls from Kimmeridge shale to ascertain the methods used and time taken. Full size pole lathes were made using only materials available in Roman times.

The triangular flint tools were hafted for turning the shale. The method of production of these tools was discovered by Mr Martin Green, after much previous research by others. He was able to demonstrate, using a tourniquet-operated wood vice, how to strike sections from a flint blade with an iron chisel, producing identical strike marks as on tools found around the Kimmeridge sites.

An experienced workman could, in a nine hour day, have produced five armlets on one lathe, this including a 20% scrap allowance. It would have taken 12.5-16 hours to turn one bowl, depending on size.

It has been stated (and still is in some museums) that 'C' and 'D' cores with two or more holes were adapted to fit the end of the lathe spindle by using wooden pegs set in a fixed position. This would have required the drilled holes to be a correct distance apart, or the making of individual spindles. Observations and recordings of over 900 cores shows that the holes are at variable distances apart. A simple and practical method to adapt or chuck these was found to be by frapping the spindle with cord or hide strip, to obtain the correct diameter, then placing wooden pegs in position and continuing to bind tightly. This method proved satisfactory and held the pegs in position during the turning operation.

The production of bowls on the lathe gave the answers to other questions; the bowl being made from a larger section needed a different method of fixing. A square hole was cut in the centre of the section of shale and the end of the lathe spindle was squared and inserted into this.

A vessel core is the centre around the spindle that remains in situ until the bowl is completed. Very few complete vessel cores have been found. Those examined show chisel marks around the periphery, only the top and bottom ends having evidence of turning. The reason for this was found; to turn out the mass of material from inside the bowl would be very time consuming but the removal of this material by chisel would be four times faster and produce a core with marking identical to those found.

A plausible explanation for the existence of the 'A' and 'B' armlet cores was found from the bowl turning experiment. The 'A' core has a square, shallow hole and 'B' a square hole completely through. It was thought that the 'A' and 'B' method was superseded by the 'C' and 'D' drilled-hole type, but as all types have been found together it would point to their having been contemporary. Close examination of 'A' and 'B' cores disclosed a link with vessel cores. The bowl or vessel core when removed was useful material which, when split into sections, could be mounted on the square spindle and used for turning armlets, leaving 'A' and 'B' cores. This was done experimentally using controlled methods and the time saving in the preparation of a shale disc was found to be more than one hour.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ON THE SITE OF THE
QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
WIMBORNE MINSTER

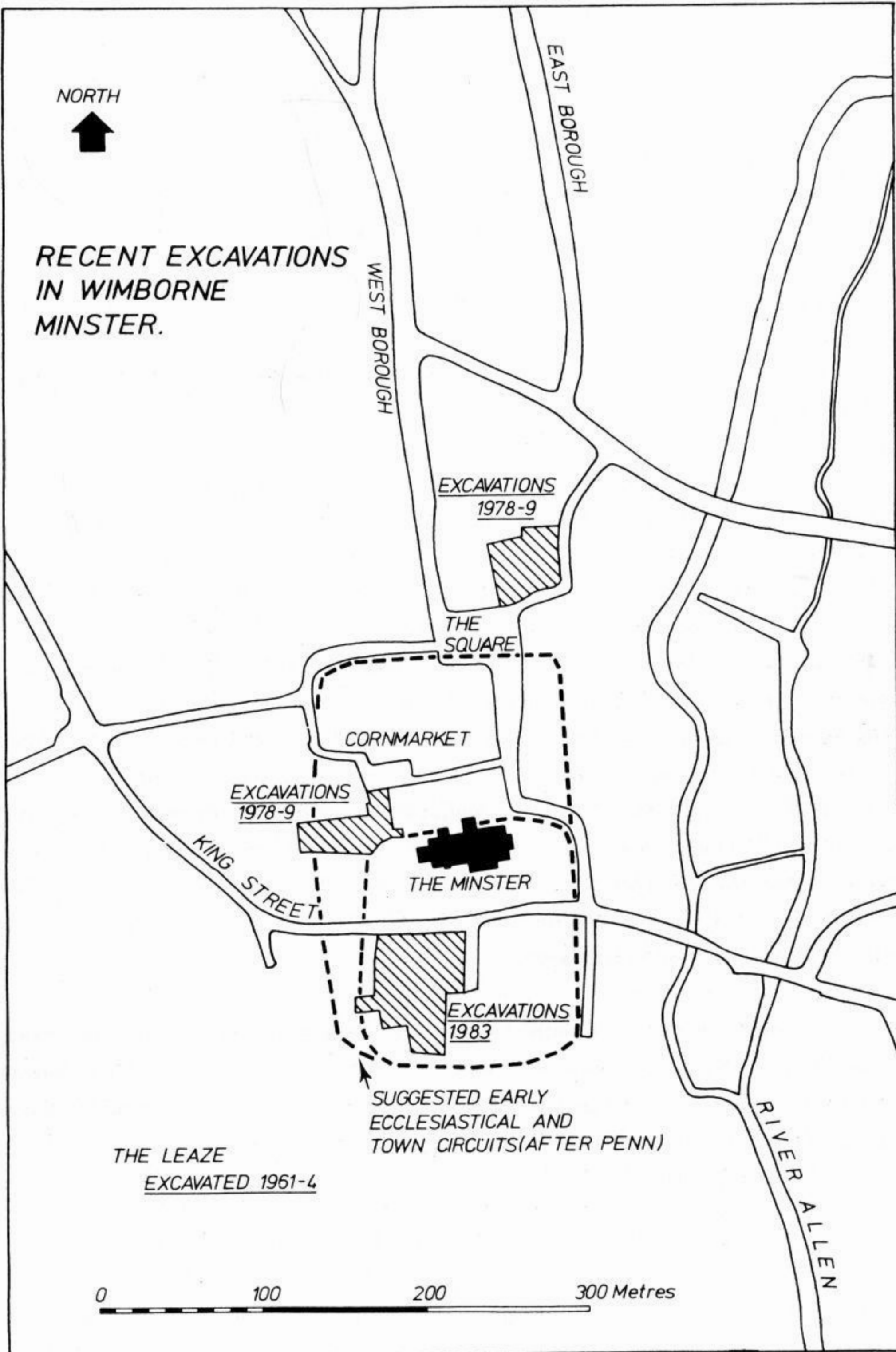
by
ALAN H GRAHAM

For three weeks in October 1983 archaeological excavations took place on a site in King Street. This was one of a number of redevelopment sites in the town on which archaeological work has been done since 1978.

Archaeological evidence of the origins and early development of Wimborne Minster has proved elusive. In 1857 part of a pavement of Roman tesserae, 'bases of columns at regular intervals' and 'a large stone pediment' were found beneath the nave of the Minster. The pavement was again exposed in 1961, when it was suggested that it could be part of a Romano-British building. A search of the churchyard however, and subsequent excavations in the town in 1978-9, including work done close to the north-west side of the churchyard wall, failed to produce any further Romano-British material, and the structure beneath the Minster remains enigmatic.

Traces of Saxon Wimborne are similarly elusive. Entries in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle show that a monastery housing both monks and nuns, and surrounded with 'high and stout walls' had been established at Wimborne in c.A.D. 705, and later entries suggest that a royal residence may have existed here in the ninth and tenth centuries. Though the site of neither monastery nor residence is known, it is likely that the present Minster occupies the site of the monastery. The limits of an early ecclesiastical precinct have been postulated using the evidence of the later medieval street plan, but no archaeological traces of it have ever been found. K J Penn, in his book, "Historic Towns in Dorset", draws together much of the information about the Saxon and medieval town, and its possible early defensive circuits. Whatever remained of the Saxon foundation by the middle of the eleventh century was rebuilt by Edward the Confessor, and the earliest fabric of the Minster is of this date.

These primary periods of activity were found in trench A and comprised gravel quarrying, and a timber structure. The deepest of the quarry pits went down into a seam of flint nodules within the gravel, and discarded into the base of it were four ox shoulder blades.



This pit, which was some distance from the other more shallow pits, may be pre-historic. The other pits were not however earlier than the Romano-British period, as in the backfilling of one was a large fragment of a Roman roof tile. This is the first Romano-British material found in excavations in Wimborne, apart from the remains beneath the Minster. Although, several fragments of Roman tile and several tesserae cut from Roman tiles were found scattered through the medieval and post-medieval layers at the North end of the site. All the material is building debris, and probably came from the structure beneath the Minster, which could be Romano-British. The complete absence however, of any fragments of Roman pottery from the site, or from any excavation in the vicinity of the Minster, seems to suggest that the building beneath the Minster is not Roman, but a later structure, built with stone and tile plundered from a Romano-British site. It could be part of the Saxon monastery.

The timber structure built over the filled-in gravel quarries was represented by a deep slot which ran parallel to King Street and would have held the ground beam for a timber-framed wall. It was later replaced by a line of three post holes, suggesting a rebuild of either the wall, or the whole structure. Apart from being earlier than the thirteenth century, a definite date cannot be given to this building, but it could be late Saxon, contemporary with the monastery known from documentary sources, and the excavations did produce the first evidence of the Saxon period to be found in Wimborne. This comprised a small group of late Saxon pottery (ninth or tenth century), which was found in the layer of dark earth which was often the only strata above the natural gravel, and in the fill of medieval pits. Though residual, and always found with medieval pottery, the material seems to indicate a late Saxon presence in this part of the town, and supports the hypothesis that any Saxon precinct or settlement lay to the South of the Minster. The presence of the pottery also strengthens the possibility that the early timber building found close to King Street was late Saxon.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century the archaeological remains are more conclusive. Though the areas excavated were limited, the distribution of the medieval remains on the site showed a concentration of pits and rubbish scatters behind buildings along King Street, with few features in the southern part of the site, where a uniform dark earth was frequently the only layer found.

In trench A two phases of activity were found in the medieval period; the earlier, dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, comprised large stone-packed post holes and a number of small pits. The post-holes could be part of a fairly substantial timber building, but its overall plan could not be exposed. The site of the building was later covered over with spreads of earth and gravel, probably upcast material from the numerous pits dug in the later phase. Seven pits were found, which contained pottery dateable to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were concentrated in the southern part of trench A, and had probably been dug in an open area behind the buildings fronting onto King Street. The base of a large square oven, made of tiles and clay was also found; this went out of use in the sixteenth century (see photo p.22).

Trenches at the southern and western limits of the site were excavated in the hope of finding some evidence for a medieval town ditch, or earlier enclosure, as it was thought that the modern boundaries of the site may have reflected the lines of much older property boundaries. No evidence of any ditch or bank was found however, though close to the southern site boundary, a medieval well was uncovered. The dating of the well is based on the pottery which was found in the fill of the funnel-shaped pit in which the circular stone lining had been built. Norman Field has made the important suggestion that this construction pit could alternatively be the butt-end of a large ditch, and it is hoped in the near future to carry out a magnetometer survey of the land adjacent to the site, to try and trace any such ditch.

Remains of the post-medieval period were confined to trench A. Along the frontage the clay sleeper walls for a seventeenth or eighteenth century timber building were found, south of which was a stone-lined well (sealed off with stone slabs in the nineteenth century), and a rubbish pit containing a large group of late seventeenth century pottery. A small pit nearby contained the refuse from the manufacture of bone objects. Finally, the nineteenth century gravel yard and the brick footings of the buildings shown on the Ordnance Survey map of King Street in 1887, were found sealing or cut into the earlier strata in trench A.

The excavations were financed by the Dorset Archaeological Committee, and carried out with the help of Christopher Sparey-Green, Kevin Collins and Ian Groves. Members of E.D.A.S. provided valuable help both on the site and subsequently in dealing with the finds, and thanks are due to John Day, Teresa Hall, Norman Field, Phil Coles, Len Norris, Mike Roberts, Kay Holland, Ann Sims, Cherry Trent and Bob Vincent. Much material aid was provided by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology and special thanks are due to Peter Woodward.

The site developers, Stanborough Developments Ltd., agreed to the excavations taking place, and thanks are due to Mr Roger Talley for his co-operation and assistance during the work.

Trench A, looking south, showing base of oven

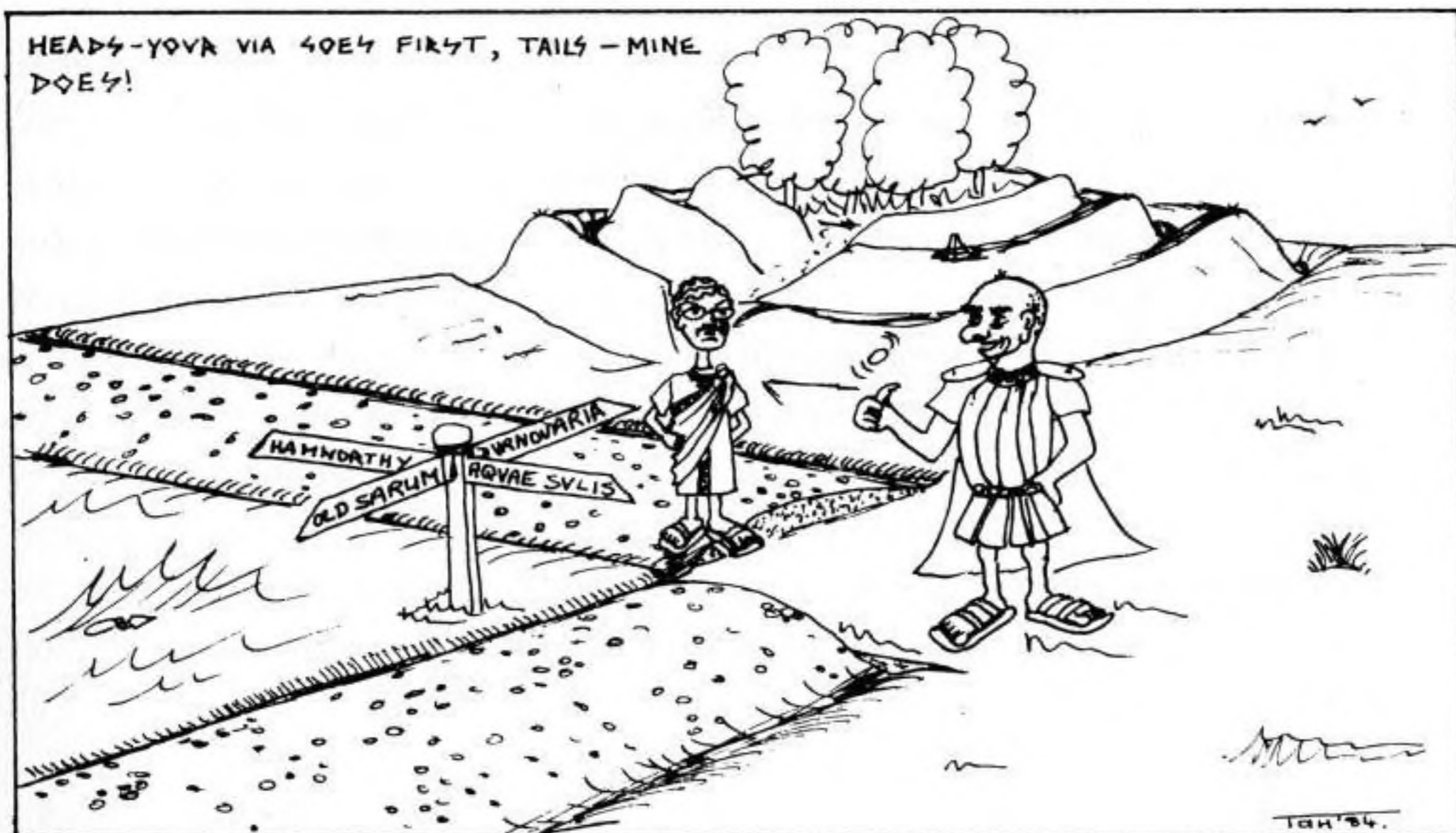


ROAD FEVER

by
DAVID E JOHNSTON

At eye-level, the scene must have looked incomprehensible to a visitor - several dumps of soil, groups of stooping figures half-drowned in a sea of long, windswept grass and a solitary figure endlessly looking for a lost trowel. Even from the air the pattern of trenches must have mystified the many pilots who flew over: for who could guess that this was the first ever excavation in Britain of a Roman crossroads?

The field lay to the north of Badbury Rings, and is known locally as Batts Bed. Here the great Roman highway, the Ackling Dyke, crossed the lesser road from Bath to Poole Harbour. Both had side-ditches in the Roman manner, and although the field has been ploughed for generations they show as dark marks on old air photographs. Interestingly, the ditches of the greater seem to be continuous while the others stop short at the junction; in other words, the continuous ditches of Ackling Dyke seem to have cut across an earlier road and put it out of use. This we set ourselves to test by excavation.



First, we located the two pairs of ditches by trenches laid across them - a procedure that enabled us to predict accurately where the crossroads would be. We then examined the intersections, and found to our dismay that the sequence seemed to be the other way around. The mystery was solved by the excavation of the ditches that seemed to run across the junction; and these proved to have been filled in deliberately with flints and chalk. We then realised that we had misinterpreted the air photographs. Ackling Dyke had been the earlier road, and when the other had come to join it, the ditches had been filled in to allow both roads to be used simultaneously - a genuine crossroads. So they appeared on the air photographs just the same, and only excavation could give us the true sequence.

The importance of this excavation is more than purely local. For one of the problems in the study of Roman roads in Britain seems at first to be no problem at all: we can, with some confidence, draw a map of nearly all the roads in the province - an intricate but rational pattern of communications that corresponds closely, in places, to any map of today's roads. But such a network - like Rome itself - was not built in a day. The main lines must have been designed, and built, in the early years of the Roman occupation as an act of central government planning. Thereafter, purely local needs must have caused the network to be extended and modified with new roads, some no doubt replacing the earlier ones. For example, the fine main road excavated some years ago near Hardy's cottage in Thorncombe Wood proved to have had little use and no maintenance. What alternative route did the traffic take? The problem, then, for the student of Roman roads is that of tracing the evolution of the system. And this is where an excavation that puts the roads in sequence is so important. Precise dates are even more useful - but the paucity of dateable artifacts left behind by the road-builder means that this is hardly ever achieved.

I said 'nearly all the roads'. Fieldwork and excavation are constantly finding new ones, and checking the old. There are still some alleged 'Roman roads' that may not be either Roman, or even roads at all. Such a case was, and still is, the enigmatic earthwork in the New Forest that ran for several miles northwards from the A34 at Stoney Cross towards Fritham village. It was identified long ago as Roman by O G S Crawford, whose authority one is reluctant to challenge. He saw it before a wartime airfield obliterated most of it, but short, mutilated stretches of it still remain and the investigation of these was one of the first research projects that members of E.D.A.S. took part in. Meticulous excavation in 1983 suggested a long history: a straight earthen bank had been constructed, with no side-ditches but topped for part at least of its length with a cambered gravel surface.

Whether this was a road or something else was not clear; later, perhaps in the Middle Ages, it had been a route, since one side of it was eroded by a hollow way. When this in turn deteriorated it seems to have been repaired with patches of gravel from a series of ragged pits along its line. As a landscape feature it was adopted, if not actually constructed, as a boundary between the bailiwick of Fritham and that of the North. It appears as such on Driver's Map of the New Forest in 1789. As so often, excavation raised more problems than it solved. And the initial questions - is it a road, and is it Roman? - remain unanswered. It may conceivably be both; but we have to admit that it does not make much sense in the overall pattern of the road network as we understand it.

Tracing the Roman roads is an absorbing pursuit, as many members of E.D.A.S. can confirm. It is still very much a concern of the amateur, since professional archaeologists have little time or enthusiasm for real fieldwork and have more substantial excavation and post-excitation projects. I once belonged to a group of enthusiasts known as 'The Viatores' in my home county of Bedfordshire and adjoining counties. So detailed a knowledge of the local landscape (and its landowners) is needed that the study tends to be a strictly regional one. Local groups, throughout the country, are surely needed now to concentrate on these detailed studies. With this in mind we are convening a large Conference at Southampton in 1985 to which anyone interested in recording and studying the roads is invited. One day will be devoted to lectures on the wider aspects of the Roman road network, its evolution and archaeology. On the second we shall separate into smaller, regional groups, to exchange information at the detailed level. At present the complete revision of I D Margary's classic Roman Roads in Britain is beyond the powers of one scholar; but if divided between groups of local enthusiasts the task may yet be possible. E.D.A.S. members are, of course, warmly invited, and some information about the Conference should be available from the Adult Education Department of Southampton University by the end of the year.

ANIMAL SAFARI

by

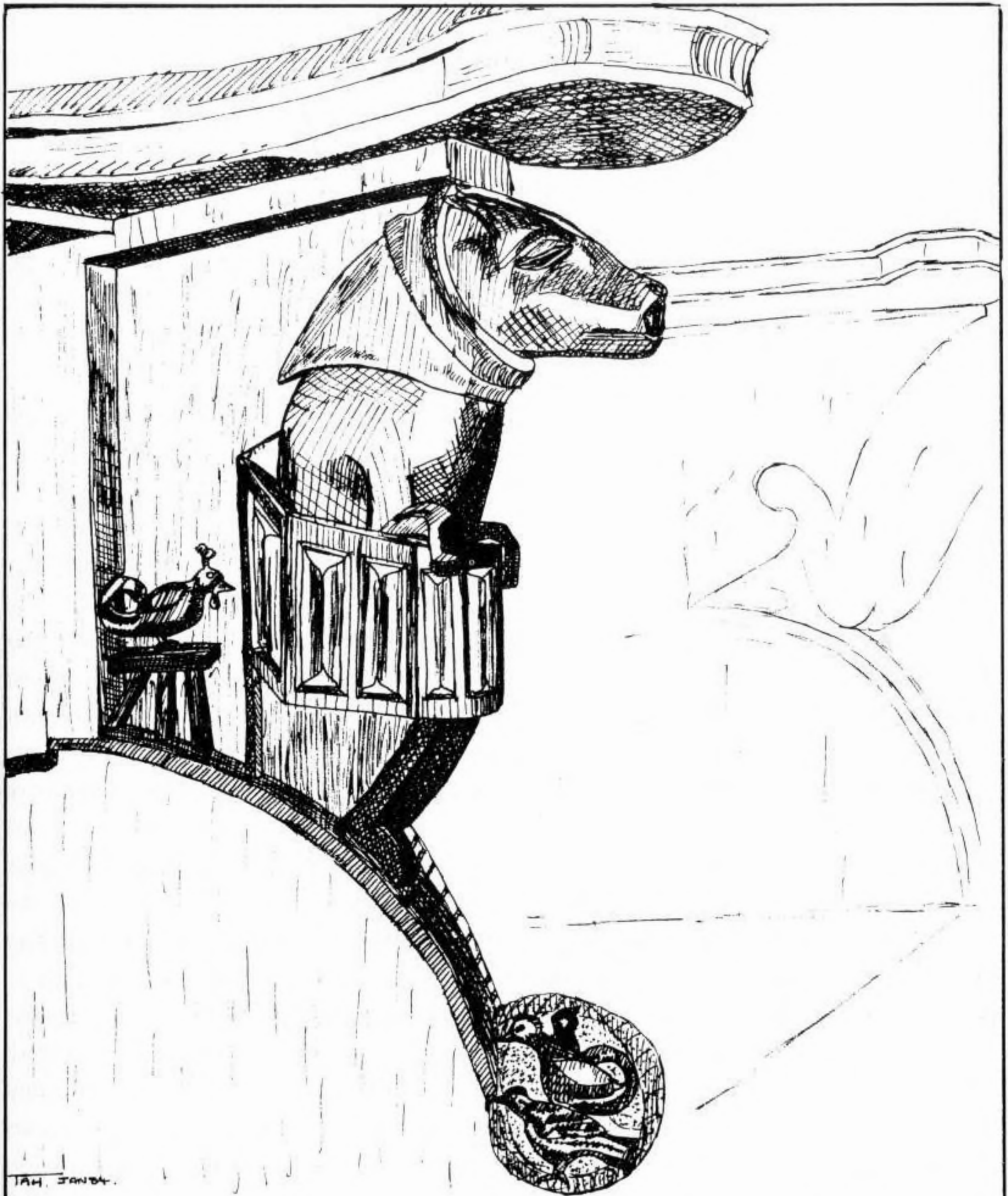
YOUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Man's use of animal imagery is very ancient and can be traced back to prehistory. Culturally, it is present in all ethnic groups in many different forms. Remnants of earlier usage can be seen in carvings and also remain alive in children's stories and metaphors.

The origins of nursery rhymes, mythological, folk and fairy tales, when analysed, fall into different categories; some tales are local and originate in actual occurrences, the story being handed down through the generations. Some, such as the nursery rhyme, 'Goosey, Goosey, Gander' can be understood, in psycho-analytical terms, as having sexual connotations. The story of Adam and Eve can also be interpreted in this way. Others such as 'Alice in Wonderland' were written as political satires but continue in interest for other reasons.

Animals appear in many guises and forms, some easily recognisable, others less so. The same animals are often seen representing both good and evil in a range of cultures over periods of time. The owl is a good example of this; nowadays it represents wisdom, whereas in the past it has represented blindness and stupidity. Study reveals common nomenclature; Bruno, the Bear; Isengrin, the Wolf; Tibert, the Cat; Chantecler, the Cock; Noble, the Lion; and Roonel, the Dog. Perhaps the best known, however, is Reynard the Fox. He first appears in a Flemish poem called 'Ysengrimus' composed in Latin in 1150.

Stories about Reynard are often illustrated by carvings, particularly on misericords. He represents the devil, deceit and hypocrisy. Reynard is depicted committing a series of crimes which culminate in his trial and hanging. He is frequently seen dressed as a friar, who, after lulling his congregation of ducks and geese into a sense of false security, pounces on them whilst they sleep. (A warning against dozing during the sermon perhaps!)



Brother Reynard is seen here preaching to his congregation. Note how the cord that is tying his robe has entangled two or three of his unwary listeners. (Christchurch Priory)

TARRANT ABBEY

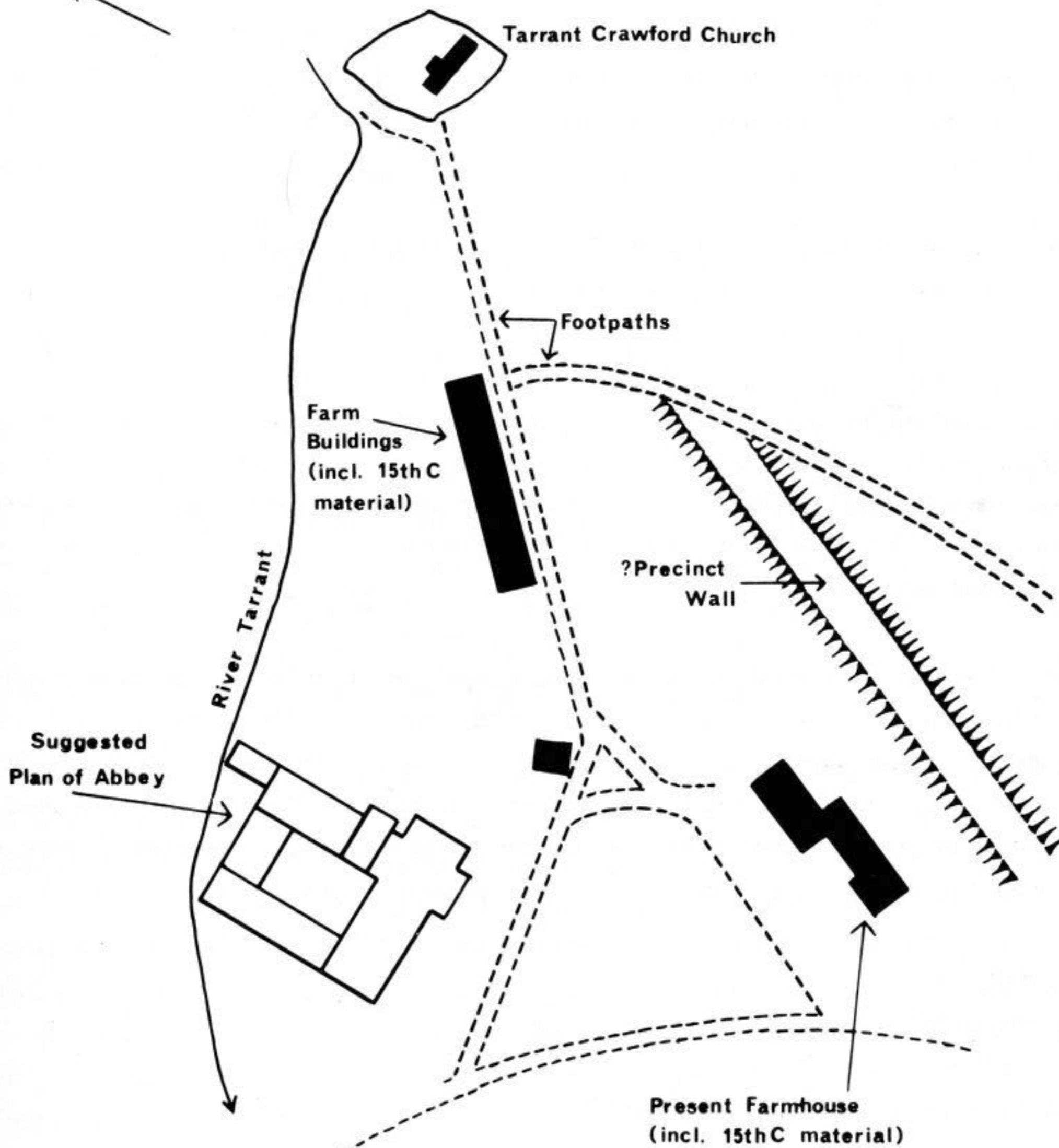
by
ANN SIMS

In a sheltered position in the Tarrant Valley, slightly off the beaten track for most of us, lay by far the wealthiest Cistercian nunnery in the country during the later Middle Ages. Of the abbey of St Mary and All Saints at Tarrant Crawford, few records remain and little can be seen on the site today, apart from one or two farm buildings containing 15th century material, and a number of intriguing earthen banks and ditches in a loop of the river, about a quarter of a mile from the Shapwick to Blandford road.

Before the end of the 12th century it seems likely that two or three anchoresses lived in buildings attached to the parish church of Tarrant Crawford, which lies to the north east of the abbey site and is well worth a visit for the splendid medieval wall paintings. The abbey itself was founded by Ralph de Kahaynes about 1186, and was accepted into the Cistercian Order in the early 13th century, probably under the influence of Bishop Richard Poore of Salisbury, another important patron. Tarrant gradually became well endowed with lands and rights, and acquired substantial flocks of sheep, reflecting the general Cistercian interest in wool. Here was a success story which surely owed not a little to royal patronage, in particular of Henry III and also of his sister, Joan, queen of Alexander II of Scotland, who was buried here in the abbey. By 1291 there were at least 40 nuns, probably the maximum number in the history of the house, but this seems to have overstretched the financial resources, and six years later we find the abbess selling 40 oaks to pay her debts. Tarrant must have shared in the plague, famine and shortages of the 14th century, and 1374 seems to have been a watershed, when 'certain evil doers' caused uproar in the abbey, damaged property and dispersed livestock. Clearly the later abbesses were careful estate managers, taking to court those who trespassed on abbey lands or rights, and in 1535 even claiming exemption from the Maundy bread distribution to the poor. When Abbess Margaret Russell and her 18 nuns surrendered the house to Henry VIII's commissioners on 13 March 1539, the annual income was a substantial £214.7.9.

Equally, we can only make general comments about the physical appearance of Tarrant Abbey. Following the normal Cistercian plan the conventual buildings would be grouped about the three sides of a rectangular cloister, with the abbey church on the fourth side,

SKETCH MAP TO SHOW SITE OF
TARRANT ABBEY (OS: 921034)



but here it seems possible that the cloister was sited to the north of the church, instead of the more usual sheltered side, in order to make full use of the river for drainage purposes. The church would be a simple cruciform structure, square ended and with plain white glass windows, and early in the 16th century a steeple was constructed. Inside there were the tombs of the founders and the gilded marble sarcophagus of Queen Joan, adorned with wax lights. From the 14th century there were also a number of chantry chapels. Nearby, but strictly separated from the nuns' enclosure, there must have been accommodation for the chaplains, who probably came from the priories at Christchurch or Breamore. The present farmhouse seems to have been originally the abbey guesthouse, and the whole area, some 7.5 acres, was surrounded by a precinct wall, traces of which can still be seen.

The economic and social impact of the abbey can also only be guessed in broad outline. In common with the majority of English medieval monasteries, it would have been primarily an aristocratic institution, and the abbess was an important county landowner. The ordinary country folk must have regarded it as an opportunity for employment, as servants, estate farmers and bailiffs. At certain periods the abbey cannot have been very popular locally; there is, for instance, every possibility that the early village of Tarrant Crawford was moved by the mid 13th century from around the parish church to its present location about a mile to the south-east, to allow for the Cistercian ideal of seclusion from the nearest settlement.

Tarrant Abbey, then, must have been a significant factor in the life of later medieval Dorset. No stories remain of any serious scandal, such as occurred at nearby Bindon, but at the Suppression there seems to have been little delay in complete demolition of most of the buildings. Very few abbeys in Southern England have ever been excavated or examined in depth. During the 19th century there was an unrecorded excavation here, and perhaps Tarrant may be a candidate for further attention in the future.

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THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TOKEN COINAGE OF EAST DORSET

by
BENJAMIN G COX

From earliest times the official small coinage of England was of silver, but there were periods when, due to shortages of official coinage, unofficial coins were struck by traders, individuals and local authorities for local circulation only so that trade could be carried on, it not being always possible to trade by means of barter. These unofficial pieces were called various names over the years including jetons, crockards, dotkins, staldings and leadens. By the 17th century they were generally called tokens.

The regal silver coinage was struck as low in value as the penny, three farthings, halfpenny and farthing. In the time of the first Elizabeth, however, the smallest piece was the halfpenny, weighing only four grains. These were very inconvenient and easily lost. In 1613 James I decided to take the step of issuing token farthings in copper and authorised John Baron Harrington, by letters patent, to strike these farthings and this privilege was sadly abused. Traders all over the country found themselves burdened with huge stocks of these tokens which the patentee refused to exchange for regal coinage and they were eventually suppressed by Parliament in 1644. An authorised official minor currency was then intended but, owing to the Civil War, it was not brought into effect.

As the shortage of official coinage still existed in 1649, towns, tradesmen and private individuals began to strike their own halfpennies and farthings without authority but, as stated on many of them 'for necessary change' or 'for the use of the poor'. As the need was so great, and there was no official alternative available, the issuers were not penalised in any way, provided they were prepared to exchange them for official coinage when required to do so. The shop keepers and inn keepers, who were the principal issuers, kept boxes with several divisions into which the tokens of the various issuers were sorted and when a sufficient number had accumulated they could be returned to the issuer in exchange for silver.

The tokens were usually inscribed with the name of the issuer and sometimes his address and a trade symbol to indicate his calling. The arms of The Grocer's Company, for example, is frequently seen. The issuer would often include on the reverse side the initials of himself and his wife. The token of William Baten of Wimborne, for example has the initials "W.M.B." - possibly William and Mary Bates.

A FEW EAST DORSET SPECIMENS



Edward Tizard of Poole.
Note man making candles.



Peter Cox of Wimborne.
A hatter.



William Baten of Wimborne.
The Grocer's arms.



Henry Harbin of Wareham.
Merchant.

Most of the boroughs and small towns in the country issued their own tokens which were meant to give more security to the users following large numbers of bogus pieces coming into circulation but this did not stop the local traders issuing their own. The spelling on many of them are eccentric and varied due to the general unsettled state of English orthography of that period.

The tokens remained in use until 1672 when the farthings of Charles II came into use. By Royal Proclamation tokens at one became unlawful and valueless, giving rise to the expression 'not worth a brass farthing'. The Proclamation ended with the following words:

We shall hold all such offenders utterly inexcusable and shall cause their contempt of our laws and governments to be chastised with exemplary severity.

The finest collection of Dorset 17th century tokens outside the principal museums was formed by the late Sir John Hanham, Bt. but they left the county as a collection on being sold by public auction in March 1982. The principal issuers in East Dorset were:

BERE REGIS

Speare, Thomas (undated)

BLANDFORD FORUM

Corporation 1669

Bridle, Thomas 1659

Eabris, Richard 1666

Munck, William 1657

Paige, John 1656

Ridout, Walter 1662

Shepherd, Daniel (undated)

Gould, John (undated)

Gould, Thomas 1664

Gouldsburch, Nicholas 1663

Speed, Edward (undated)

Strayner, William (undated)

Ware, William 1668

Wolfereyes, William, (undated)

CORFE CASTLE

Harvey, Edward 1657

Keynell, Edward 1666

Painter, Richard 1666

CRANBORNE

Alner, Robert 1669

Barnes, Nicholas 1659

MILTON ABBAS

Cleeve, George 1669

Harvyn, Zanchy 1651

POOLE

The Corporation 1667

Ollive, George 1665

Beaumont, Constantine 1667

Oliver, Richard 1650

Bramble, Samuel 1666

Phillips, John 1653

Cleeves, Robert (undated)

Rogers, John 1668

Durell, Moses 1666

Smith, Dennis 1663

Milledge, Elizabeth 1666

Smith, Richard (undated)

Minty, William 1657

Streete, Stephen 1657

Oke, Michael 1668

Tizard, Edward 1671

STOWBOROUGH

Northover, Nicholas 1657

WAREHAM

Cleeves, William 1655

Trew, Anthony (undated)

Harbin, Henry 1657

WIMBORNE

The Borough

Deane, David 1657

Anstey, John (undated)

Easton, William (undated)

Baten, William (undated)

Ekins, Robert 1670

Budden, Jeffery 1666

Farre, John (undated)

Catten, William 1666

Flory, Thomas 1670

Cox, Peter 1667

King, John 1669

PURBECK (precise location uncertain)

Abbott, Edward 1667

WOOL

Webster, William (undated)

Note: There are numerous varieties of strikings of some of the above, and a variety of spellings. Wimborne for instance is spelt Wimborn, Wimborne, Winborn, Wimburne, Wimburn.

I cannot trace that any were issued at Swanage.

THE RED HOUSE MUSEUM

by

SYLVIA CHURCH & PHIL COLES

The Red House Museum is situated in Quay Road in the centre of Christchurch and is close to the Priory Church, a major landmark in the town. The main part of the building of Red House is more than 200 years old and was built in 1763 as a parish workhouse. In 1886, the building was sold to a clergyman who named it 'The Red House'. He demolished the women's wards and in 1887 replaced them with stables, coach house and harness room, which now form the art gallery.

In 1909, the property was sold to Mrs M J Druitt, who in 1916 gave it to her son, Herbert, whose collections and library form the basis of the Red House Museum. The Museum, Art Gallery and Gardens were opened to the public in 1951 when a professional Curator was appointed. At this time the Museum was administered by a trust. In 1971 it became part of the Hampshire County Museum Service. The present Curator is Mr Simon Davey who is also the Specialist in Natural History for the Hampshire museums. He informed us that the displays of exhibits are in the process of being reorganised to make them more relevant to the Christchurch area. The top floor, which deals with Natural History is complete. The middle floor is in the process of being reorganised by the Keeper of Archaeology, Andover Museum, Mr David Allen, who will focus his exhibition on the immediate area, particularly Hengistbury Head. As the Priory has its own museum it does not feature in the Red House. The ground floor, which has recently been renovated and redecorated is devoted to the domestic life of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. An addition to this section will be a new Costume Room.

Nine Stones, Winterborne Abbas.

