

## **Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum Oxford City Report January-April 2013**

*National Planning Policy Framework field work in Oxford between January-April 2013*

### **William Morris Close, Cowley**

In January a detailed magnetometer survey was undertaken by Stratascan at land off William Morris Close, Cowley. A limited number of potentially archaeological anomalies were identified. Subsequently an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services later in January. Four ditches considered to be post-medieval field boundaries and one post-medieval posthole were recorded. The work was undertaken because the site is located close to an unusual site that produced evidence for Iron Age and medieval quarrying.

### **Wadham College, Land adj Staircase IX**

In late January Cotswold Archaeology undertook archaeological salvage recording at Wadham College following the exposure of human remains in two small trenches excavated to investigate an existing sewer pipe running into Staircase IX (under permitted development rights). In one trench a partially exposed grave cut contained the partial remains of at least two well preserved skeletons both placed in supine positions. One partial skeleton was that of a young adult male (18–25 years) whose teeth displayed considerable enamel hypoplasia, perhaps indicating a period of stress during childhood. The second individual was an adult (> 18 years) of unknown sex. A single sherd of pottery of 11th to 13th-century date was recovered from underneath one skeleton and a small fragment of glazed ridge tile (of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>? century date) and an iron nail were also recovered from the trench. 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 13th century until the Dissolution. The discovery was picked up by the national press because an empty shotgun cartridge also recovered from the site provided an 'Inspector Morse' interest angle:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/call-for-morse-skeleton-found-in-oxford-college-8464019.html>

### **17-41 Mill Street, Osney Lane**

In January John Moore Heritage Services 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 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'.

### **11 Fyfield Road**

In January a watching brief was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services during the construction of an extension. No significant archaeological remains were recovered. The work was required because of the proximity of known prehistoric and Roman remains.

### **Christ Church Cathedral**

In January a small number of geo-technical test pits were excavated to the west of Christ Church Cathedral. The work was subject to a watching brief by Graham Keevill. The report is forthcoming.

### **Old Indian Institute Lift Pit, Broad Street**

Between January and February a watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology during the excavation of a lift pit within the Old Indian Institute on Broad Street. The investigation recorded the upper fill of the in-filled medieval town ditch and recovered quantities of post-medieval clay pipe and pottery. The report is forthcoming.

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

In January a level 3 building record was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology prior to demolition of a 19<sup>th</sup> century building adjoining the rear of No 24 Hollywell Street. Subsequently in February a trial trench was excavated on the footprint of the building and further test pitting was undertaken to examine the foundations of an adjacent boundary wall. The remains of a probable medieval oven or kiln and a number of gravel extraction borrow pits or quarries recorded. The adjacent boundary wall was seen to be constructed upon 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaping deposits. Also cutting the landscaping deposits was a narrow stone built and brick vaulted cellar of probable 18<sup>th</sup> century date.



*The oven or kiln structure to the rear of 24 Hollywell Street (Picture by Wessex Archaeology)*

### **Land adjacent to Littlemore Hospital, Littlemore**

In February an evaluation was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on land adjacent to Littlemore Hospital. The trenching confirmed the presence of an Iron Age banjo-enclosure. The report is forthcoming.

### **Mansfield College East Range Extension**

Between February and March a watching brief and small scale excavation was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology at Mansfield College during knotweed clearance and prior to the extension of the eastern range. A small number of undated features were recorded. The report is forthcoming.

### **Old Marston, Church Street**

In February an archaeological excavation was undertaken at Church Street, Old Marston by Thames Valley Archaeology prior to the construction of new housing. The site revealed a continuation of the 12<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup> century activity previously recorded at the Bricklayer's Arms site directly to the south in 2012. Features included enclosure ditches and rubbish pits containing domestic assemblages. The report is forthcoming.

### **Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way**

In February an archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Elsfield Way by Thames Valley Archaeological Services. No significant archaeological features were recorded. The investigation was required because of the potential for prehistoric and Roman remains in the vicinity.

### **No 1 Elsfield Road, Old Marston**

In February a watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services during the construction of an extension at No 1 Elsfield Road. No significant archaeological remains were recorded. The work was required because of the potential for medieval remains in this location.

### **Magdalen College Longwall Quad**

Between January and March Oxford Archaeology continued their excavations in Magdalen College Longwall Quad. The excavation identified at least one Late Saxon pit, also cess pits, quarry holes and boundaries associated with medieval tenements. In the northern part of the Quad approximately 115 burials belonging to the burial ground of the medieval hospital of St John the Baptist were investigated. A successful open day was organised in March with an estimated 600 attending. A new phase of excavation on the new library site is due to start in the spring of 2013.



*Left: The Open Day at Longwall Quad Right: View from the top of the New Library showing cemetery top left and post-medieval tenements front/centre (Picture by Oxford Archaeology).*

### **St Clement's Car Park**

In March a programme of archaeological investigation was commenced at St Clements 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. A small number of medieval features were recorded. A second phase of work is due to start in April.

### **Barns Road, former Community Centre Site**

In March an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Avon Archaeology at the former Cowley Community Centre site on Barns Road. A number of features were recorded including a truncated ditch terminal containing Roman pottery, two intercut pits and a ditch provisionally dated to the medieval period and two substantial wall foundations that can be related to structures shown in this part of the site on the 1853 enclosure map.

### **Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford Competition Swimming Pool**

In April trial Trenching was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology on the site of the proposed Blackbird Leys Pool. No significant remains were recorded. The report is forthcoming.

*Other projects:*

**The Oxford Archaeological Action Plan**

The Oxford Archaeological Action Plan was presented to the East and West Planning Committee's in March and received a positive response. A limited print run will be produced and a digital copy made available on the City Council website.