| Document Control Grid | |
|---|---|
| **HE Reference Number**<br><br>**Project Name** | 7716<br><br>'Excavations at Old Windsor between 1953 and 1958 – Dr Hope-Taylor Archive. An Archive Assessment.' |
| **Author and contact details** | Roland J C Smith<br>Berkshire Archaeology<br>9 Coley Avenue<br>Reading<br>RG1 6AF<br>roland.smith@reading.gov.uk<br>0118 937 4996 |
| **Origination Date** | January 2019 |
| **Reviser** | |
| **Date of last revision** | |
| **Version** | One |
| **Summary of changes** | |

Excavations at Old Windsor in progress in ID/Y in 1958(?), looking south. "Licensed Copyright content from www.historicenvironment.scot. Used with Permission. "

# Excavations at Old Windsor between 1953 and 1958 – Dr Hope-Taylor Archive

# An Archive Assessment

## Contents

**Appendices**



**Figures**

# Excavations at Old Windsor between 1953 and 1958 – Dr Hope-Taylor Archive

## An Archive Assessment

## Summary

Between 1953 and 1958 the late Dr Brian Hope-Taylor undertook a series of excavations at Old Windsor, Berkshire. The excavations revealed a remarkable sequence of Saxon and Early Norman remains from the 7th- to 11th–centuries, including a mid-Saxon settlement, a 9th-century mill leat and watermill, and a series of high quality buildings and finds indicative of a late Saxon and early Norman royal complex. The results of Hope-Taylor's excavations led to the designation of the site as a Scheduled Monument (No. 1006995). Unfortunately Hope-Taylor's excavations have never been analysed or published beyond very short summaries.

On Hope-Taylor's death in 2001, the site archive of his excavations was recovered from his home and deposited with Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The finds had previously been deposited with Reading Museum (RM), gifted by the landowner in 1971, while other paperwork and documentation was deposited with the Museum in the 1980s and 1990s following a programme of post-excavation work. In broad terms HES holds the primary excavation records and Reading Museum largely the material archive and the post-fieldwork records. There are some notable exceptions to this division of the archive.

This project sought to undertake a rapid assessment and quantification of the archive so as to establish the division of the archive between the two institutions and its condition, completeness and coherence. The principal conclusions of the archive assessment are:

- The precise location of all Hope-Taylor's trenches cannot now be located although it should be possible to establish with reasonable precision the location of the majority. Published plans have significantly underestimated the number and extent of his trenches
- There are demonstrably some records, and possibly some finds, that are missing from the archive, although the precise extent of the incompleteness of the archive is now hard to judge. Unfortunately the records appear most incomplete for the '*Palace area*'
- There is remarkably little narrative text surviving throughout the fieldwork and post-fieldwork archive. Anecdotal evidence that Hope-Taylor's notebooks comprised intermingled entries from a multitude of different sites across the UK is largely inaccurate
- Despite a programme of post-excavation work undertaken in the 1980s, there are few details of preliminary phasing or descriptions of trenches, areas and important structures. A 'context index' at Reading Museum and some 'context overlay' plans at HES are crucially important documents that reconcile the original fieldwork records in HES with the material archive in Reading Museum
- For the first time we have an authoritative quantification of the material archive, the completion of which has been a significant piece of work in its own right. For example the pottery assemblage comprises 38,651 sherds, weighing 622.61 kilogrammes. The assemblage is largely of Saxon and early medieval date, includes imported wares and

possible production waste, and comprises the most significant unpublished assemblage of this period in England and is of national importance

- Analytical work has been achieved on some other finds categories and a number of finds reports exist but constitute largely assessment rather than publication reports. A number of pen and ink finds drawings were prepared for publication

Overall, the archive constitutes a typical backlog excavation project. Future research will be able to unravel the principal story of the 1950s excavation from the archive as it currently exists but the more subtle and nuanced plot lines will have been lost and unfortunately went with Hope-Taylor to his grave. There remains a significant gap between the primary archive data and Hope-Taylor's summary interpretations, which have entered the archaeological literature as 'fact', whereas the analytical evidence to support his interpretations remains lacking. The future analysis and publication of the results will therefore continue to be sought by researchers and specialists and Hope-Taylor's excavations remain one of the key unpublished sites of the early medieval period in southern England.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations with the aiming of furthering the conservation of the archive, advancing understanding of the archive, improving accessibility, encouraging research and advancing understanding of the Scheduled Monument.

# Excavations at Old Windsor between 1953 and 1958 – Dr Hope-Taylor Archive

# An Archive Assessment

## Abbreviations and References

For ease, the following abbreviations and references have been used throughout the text of this report.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BHT | - | Dr Brian Hope-Taylor |
| HES | - | Historic Environment Scotland, Edinburgh |
| HHL | - | Heather Hamilton Lytle with reference to her 2007 unpublished report *'Old Windsor: A Guide to the Site Archive'* (in HES) |
| OW | - | Old Windsor |
| RM | - | Reading Museum |
| HER | - | Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record |

DC49005, DC49010 etc. – drawing reference numbers in Hope-Taylor's OW Archive at HES

## Introduction

Dr Brian Hope-Taylor (BHT) undertook five seasons of excavation at Old Windsor (OW) in 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957 and 1958. The excavations revealed a remarkable sequence of Saxon and Early Norman remains from the 7th- to 11th–centuries, including a mid-Saxon settlement, a 9th-century mill leat and watermill, and a series of high quality buildings and finds indicative of a late Saxon and early Norman royal complex. The results of Hope-Taylor's excavations led to the designation of the site as a Scheduled Monument (No. 1006995 - https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1006995).

Unfortunately Hope-Taylor's excavations have never been analysed or published beyond very short summaries. The archive of these excavations is held primarily by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Reading Museum (RM), but other useful documentation about the excavation and its aftermath is held in Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic England's AML files for 'Site 1284'. It should be noted at the outset that the archive includes records and documents relating to other archaeological investigations at Old Windsor before and after BHT's excavations in the 1950s, by him and by others, and these have been treated as integral parts of the archive, whether or not they have any direct relevance to his 1950s excavations.

The contents of the archive held at HES and RM are listed in Appendix 1. For the purposes of this exercise, each item listed has been given a unique identifier (prefixed by HES or RM) to enable the reader to identify the document(s) referred to in the text of this report. The quantification and description of the archive at HES elaborates on the invaluable work undertaken by Heather Hamilton Lytle (HHL) in 2007. Please note that her appendices 3, 4, and 6 and figures 1 and 2 were not made available to Berkshire Archaeology during the course of this project as HES were unable to locate them at the time of our research.

It should be noted that this was intended as and was enacted as a rapid assessment of the documentary archive. It is therefore possible that some important documents or drawings might

have been overlooked or the significance of others was not fully appreciated at the time of the assessment. It is hoped that further work on the archive will elucidate the fine detail of the archive.

## The Old Windsor Recording System

BHT adopted a particular system for recording his excavation trenches, features and deposits in the 1950s. It will be helpful to the reader at the outset to summarise the system as it will enable a better understanding of the archive at HES and RM. The following is copied verbatim from a summary prepared by BHT, primarily to aid assessment of the animal bone, and dated March 1986. It can be read in conjunction with BHT's 'Area Coding' plan (Figure 1), dated August 1981, which shows most (but not all) of the principal excavation areas. **It is particularly important to note that a context numbering system was imposed, largely on the finds archive, in the early 1980s.**

OLD WINDSOR
KEY TO MAIN 'PHASING', AREAS & FEATURES
(see also the diagrammatic plan herewith)

Prefix
A1 – A5 inc.
I – V inc. = Grid Squares (Sq.) 1954

A+1 = Area N of original grid-squares (subject to later extensions both to N and E) which gives its name to the E/W Ditch later codified as the A+1 Ditch. The A+1 Ditch is an extremely important feature, prolific and various in its finds and elegantly secure in its stratification: Origin 7th/8th C, continuity up to 9th/10th C: Top, levelling layer 11th/12th C, with some well-defined coeval pits.

GD = Great Ditch : thus the successive areas in which the Great Ditch was examined are codified as GD I, GD II, and GD III. GD III is known, from the pattern of its dissection, as the Butterfly Cutting and its two component squares are distinguished respectively as Butterfly A and Butterfly B.

Basal deposits of the Great Ditch, late 600s (dendro-dating, etc).
Uppermost sealing-layer (layer 1) circa 1100.
"Re-cut" = relatively very small mill-leat cut through previous filling at W side of GD, circa 1000.

ID = 'Inside Ditch' : thus Areas ID/X and ID/Y ('Palace Area'). Focus of early settlement with stratified sequence of major, trench-built halls: series beginning 7th/8th C (the timber halls themselves given sequence by appropriate internal coding on all labels).

OD = 'Outside Ditch' : thus Areas OD 1, OD 2, etc. Overall, both a focal and a fringe area of 9th/11th C settlement, here outside the boundary previously set by the Great Ditch (by this stage reduced to a mere hollow by silting and successive layers of occupation-rubbish infilling).

PC = Priory Cottage (garden of) : thus Areas PC I – III, conjoint. Overall the PC area is, geographically, roughly equivalent to Area ID/X – in that it lies closest to the original centre of the site (Romano-British masonry buildings partly overbuilt by the medieval parish church)…part of the greater 'Palace area'. Principal feature a major ditch/trench of 7th/8th C: at first encounter regarded as a ditch, its later dissection showed it to be a substantial

foundation-trench. The uppermost levels of the PC area intermittently disturbed by 11th/12th C features, and more widely by recent gardening.

PMF = Priory Middle Field. South of the 'Priory North Field' (PNF) that contains all the essential and focal evidence, PMF proved to hold only exiguous, scattered and minor fringe-features. The so=called 'Grange' within PMF is a late-medieval and quite separate feature that certainly should be reserved for later consideration.

OLD WINDSOR
Secondary abbreviations and notes

Throughout:
Compass points, approx., given as N, S, E, W (SW, NE, etc)

Ex or Extn = Extensions (of area); contracted to X, as in GD1/NX (Great Ditch Area 1, North Extension)

L = Layer
P.H. or p.h. = Post-hole
Tr = Trench
Tr-Tr = Trial Trench

Pits of major dimensions and significance are given geographical nomenclature or nicknames for easy reference: these same names (e.g., NW Pit Complex, Central Pit, Horace's Pit) correspond with the more precise locations given on the mass of precisely measured plans and sections, and are convenient for our general use at this belated beginning of preliminary attack on the bone-material.

Group-numbers, such as GD/MS/16, or GDI/10 or OW55/16, represent special registrations in the field of which animal-bones are simply one component part.

It cannot be too strongly reiterated that the so-called 'Context Numbers' are additional, convenient reference-numbers recently given to all the archive-material stored at Reading: that they are arbitrary insofar as they carry no sequential or 'phasing' implications. In short, every bag of faunal remains still sitting at Reading carries its full coded provenance: the arbitrary 'context-number' is an extra refinement that will suit the computer and save our time (even after deduction of 5 Southampton 'Phasing' years).

Boxing, bagging and labelling already inspected by Mr Maltby and discussed with you.

## What does the written, drawn and photographic archive consist of?

### Introduction

In broad terms HES holds the fieldwork records created at the time of the excavations in the 1950s and RM holds the post-fieldwork records, created after the excavations on site were completed. These post-fieldwork records were largely compiled in the 1980s. This division is not entirely maintained and the tables below summarises the presence, absence and quantities of fieldwork and post-fieldwork records between HES and Reading.

**Table 1**

| | | HES | RM | HER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Fieldwork records** | written records | √ | | |
| | drawn records | √ | √ | |
| | photographic records | √ | √ | |
| **Correspondence 1951 – 1990s** | | √ | √ | √ |
| **Finds materials** | | | √ | |
| **Environmental materials** | | | √ | |
| **Post-fieldwork records** | written records | √ | √ | |
| | drawn records | √ | √ | |
| | photographic records | √ | √ | |
| **Reports and summaries** | | √ | √ | √ |

**Table 2**

| | | HES | RM |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Fieldwork Records** | **Written** | • X5 notebooks | • X1 notebook |
| | **Drawn** | • c. 190 drawings (plans and sections) as individual drawings or in notebooks | • X2 plans |
| | **Photographic** | • 808 B&W prints<br>• 56 colour prints<br>• 22 colour negatives<br>• 26 colour slides | • 70 reels of B&W negative film |
| **Post-fieldwork Records** | **Written** | • X1 notebook | • Context index<br>• 1,092 finds by context records<br>• X1 notebook<br>• Various finds lists<br>• Photocopied AML record cards<br>• NAR microfilm orders<br>• Cards and labels of uncertain value |
| | **Drawn** | • c. 150 drawings, including context 'overlay' plans, geophysical survey plans, historic mapping and finds drawings | • Various finds drawings |
| | **Photographic** | • X2 metalwork X-rays | • X45 metalwork X-rays |

## The Fieldwork Written Record

The written record comprises five notebooks (HES1, HES2, HES3, HES4 and HES5). **There are no pro forma context records.** There are two principal notebooks titled ***'Old Windsor 1955, 1957-8'*** (HES1; also referred to by HHL as 'NB 1955, 1957-58') and ***'OW 1953, 1954'*** (HES5 and HHL – 'NB (1953-4)').

In addition to the two principal notebooks, Notebook (HES3) is titled *'Kingsbury Old Windsor Aug Sept. 53. Trenches Plans Sections Finds'*, but only has two pages completed: primarily descriptive locations of Trenches A, A ext, B and C. Notebook (HES4) is untitled and has just one completed page, titled *'Old Windsor 1958/Area ID/3 (pre-Conquest Palace)'* which only comprises a list of measurements in feet and inches. Notebook (HES2) is also untitled and contains only 10 pages of notes, including *'Electricity Board cable-trench Church Road, Old Windsor: February 19, 1987' and 'White Hermitage 8/2/88'*. The notebook includes some notes, sketch sections and sketch plans. It includes one page on *'Bamburgh show-case for museum'*.

As their titles indicate, Notebooks ***'Old Windsor 1955, 1957-8'*** and ***'OW 1953, 1954'*** represent the principal, surviving, written record of the five seasons of excavation. However both notebooks largely contain section drawings rather than descriptive text. (The drawings contained in these notebooks will be discussed further in this report on page 11 under 'The Fieldwork Drawn Record'. Notebook ***'OW 1953, 1954'*** includes a note on *'Medieval skeletons lawn of White Hermitage, Old Windsor'*. This notes *'8 or 9 individuals represented by skeletal remains, all at – 3' 6" and all buried east-west'.*

**The written record amounts to no more than c. 50 pages of hand-written text, all apparently in BHT's hand.** Twelve pages of notebook ***'OW 1953, 1954'*** refer to *'Mote of URR. July/Aug 1953'.* It can therefore be noted that the anecdotal reports that BHT's OW notebooks contained intermingled and interleaved accounts from several different excavation projects is largely inaccurate.

Examples of some of the descriptive text are show in Figures 2 and 3. As an example, an extract from Notebook ***'Old Windsor 1955, 1957-8'*** reads as follows:

*'Area ABI: Layer (b) (under topsoil) removed by Shoreditch*[?] *Tech. Training College volunteers. 11th/12C. shelly rim sherd midway in thickness of layer in W. half of area.*

*Layer below – (c) – slightly disturbed, but still valid as an occupation layer, insofar as no modern objects were found to be intrusive; such disturbance as there was is ascribable to the levelling of the site after its abandonment.*

*At north end of area (a) becomes gravelly and merges into (b); (b) again appears to be mixed into (c) – probably due to double-digging in the old kitchen-garden (of which this part of the area formed the southern boundary).*

*The north side of the E/W ditch (a longitudinal section of which was dug in 1954) was flanked by a bank, the surface (at least) of which was covered with daub wash-out. Fragments of this daub have been bagged together with other finds from this layer. First impression is that a hut wall may have run along N side of ditch, thus accounting for localised distribution of dauby layer, and prolific filling of ditch. The dauby bank tails out to the north, and apparently rests on the natural. It becomes less easy to distinguish as it runs eastward.'*

These written records are of importance given how little descriptive text exists for the 1950s excavations. They do provide at least some contextual, stratigraphic and interpretative information above and beyond that notated on section drawings and plans or on photographs, which will otherwise be the main source of data on excavated deposits and features.

It is striking how little narrative text there is, not just in these notebooks, but in the post-fieldwork records and the archive as a whole. Beyond these notebooks, the very short summary reports prepared by BHT for publication in the BAJ and Medieval Archaeology and his 1983 synopsis (see bibliography), there is no narrative text of any description contained anywhere in the archive. It is possible that other notebooks, written records and text have not survived, although it is no longer possible to establish this with authority. The only other possible source of information could be some snippets contained within BHT's voluminous correspondence (Fig. 20 and see page 16) and in this respect there would therefore be some value in reviewing it.

**The Fieldwork Drawn Record**

The drawn record at HES includes both fieldwork and post-fieldwork drawings. The latter are described further below (page 14).

The fieldwork drawings comprise c. 190 individual plans or section drawings on drafting film or paper. A large number of section drawings with some sketch plans are included in Notebooks ***'Old Windsor 1955, 1957-8'*** and ***'OW 1953, 1954'***. Other drawings include those relating to geophysical survey and historic mapping, which will not be discussed further here.

Hamilton Lytle's 'Appendix 1' and 'Old Windsor: Plans and Sections' list the individual drawings and those contained in the notebooks, although the fieldwork and post-fieldwork drawings are not differentiated.

A number of typical fieldwork plans and sections are reproduced in Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 22 and the following can be noted.

**Plans**

- Trench/area identifiers (e.g. ID/Y or ODI) are included on most plans, although the compass orientation is not always clear
- Features and deposits are largely not labelled or notated. Numbering on some features appears to record feature depth (e.g. -2, -4, -12) in inches(?).
- Excavated sections across features are shown on some, but not all, plans.
- Plans generally have very little additional annotation or notes
- There are no interpretative elements to the plans e.g. identifying the post holes that collectively comprise a building

**Sections**

- Trench/area identifiers are included on most sections, as well as feature references e.g. *'Pit XIII'* , *'Pit XIV'* and *'Horace's Pit'.*

- Some stratigraphic relationships can be inferred from section drawings e.g. Pit XIII cuts Pit XIV (Fig. 6).
- Location of some sections can be inferred from plans but the location of most sections is not clearly indicated on plans (Fig. 4 and Fig. 14).
- Layering within sections is frequently unreferenced (Fig. 7 and 8). In some cases, layers on sections are referenced by Roman numerals e.g. I, II, III, IV (Fig. 22)
- Some contextual information is annotated on to sections (Fig. 22) e.g. *'brownish yellow sandy "fudge"'* as well as finds information e.g. *'straw marked pottery'*
- Interpretative information can also be included e.g. *''Pagan' Saxon occupation layers'*
- Other information is notated on some sections e.g. *'soil samples for snails (bagged)'*
- There are at least three separate section drawings across the *'Great* Ditch' (Fig. 8), which clearly has a complex infill history. In the absence of any numbering of layers, it appears that the sequence is now hard to decipher and to correlate deposits across the various sections of the monument.

One notated fieldwork drawing is held by RM (RM2) and is titled *'The Manor House, Old Windsor 25 Oct 1968. Sketch plan of water pipe'* by F. Maitland Underhill. In the same box there is a second plan and notebook, containing only measurements, and referenced only as *'Trench C'*. The author and date are unknown.

**The Fieldwork Photographic Record**

The photographic archive at HES comprises:

- c. 800 B&W prints (HES9)
- 8 B&W contact prints (HES10)
- 56 colour prints (HES11)
- 25 colour negatives (HES12)
- 26 colour slides (HES12)

Bar 45 prints and negatives of various, un-annotated finds, the remaining images are of the 1950s excavations, including two different sets of aerial photographs of the excavation in progress. Four colour prints are of a site that is definitely **not** OW.

The prints are largely mounted on to cardboard and largely unannotated, except for numerical references e.g. 60/1, 60/2, 60/3 etc. which presumably refer to Reel Number and Negative number (Figs 9, 10 and 21). Occasionally, mounted prints include brief descriptions in BHT's hand e.g. *'1954. 1. General view of quads'* or *'IDY Looking SW from NE'* or *'OD/I/57/X*'. **There is no accompanying photographic index**.

It seems that the corresponding negatives for the B&W prints are held by RM (RM1) in a box titled (in BHT's hand) *'Old Windsor Negatives. Of the Utmost Importance'.* A random cross-check of some prints in HES against negatives in RM indicated that this is the case, although it was not possible in the time to check every print against every negative. The box contains 70 reels, comprising 793 individual B&W negatives (Fig. 11). Each reel of negatives is wrapped in paper notating the Reel

Number (e.g. 60), the year (e.g. OW58) and the trench/area of the images (e.g. ODI, ID/Y). Some include an indication of content (e.g. *'Hall under dissection'* or *'grange and hall'*).

In the absence of a photographic register, there is therefore some information on prints and reels to establish the trench/area and feature/deposit of some images, in other cases it will be clear anyway (e.g. images of the 'Great Ditch'), but inevitably the subject of some prints/negatives will be no longer possible to ascertain with certainty.

The box of negatives in RM includes a typed letter from BHT, dated 15 May 1981, to an unknown recipient, the last paragraph of which states:

*'These negatives constitute the only photographic record of a unique archaeological site of national importance, and are quite irreplaceable. I will be most sincerely grateful for all your skill in their printing, and for all your care in their preservation.'*

This box of negatives, a crucial part of the primary fieldwork archive, is an anomalous element of the otherwise largely post-fieldwork archive held at RM. It was presumably forwarded to Reading for printing but, for whatever reason, was never returned to BHT to re-join the rest of the primary fieldwork archive.

## The Post-fieldwork Records

**Post-fieldwork Written Records**

The most significant and important written record held by RM (RM4) is a 55-page document titled *'Old Windsor. List of contexts. 100-2815'* (Fig. 12 and 24). This document is undated and un-authored but it is assumed to date from the early 1980s in light of BHT's note on the context recording system (page 7). Most importantly the title page states clearly ***'2nd copy'*** but there is no surviving first copy (or any other copy bar a photocopy (RM14) anywhere else within the archive at HES and RM).

The hand writing on the cover suggests the document is the work of BHT. It comprises a typed list of context numbers listing context, year, area, feature, layer and notes (Fig. 12 and 24). Blocks of numbers appear to have been allocated to specific trenches/areas but these do not seem to have been strictly adhered to. BHT's comment on his recording system indicate that these context numbers were allocated in the early 1980s *'to all the archive-material stored at Reading'*, namely all the deposits/layers from which finds were recovered. The majority (but not all) the finds materials held in RM are therefore bagged and boxed by this later context number (as well as the original labelling derived from the time of the fieldwork). The allocation of context numbers in the 1980s was presumably undertaken to facilitate finds assessment at that time.

**This *'Lists of contexts'* is a crucially important document as it provides a co-ordinated list, compiled by BHT, of excavated contexts from the 1950s excavation and correlates them with the majority of the finds archive in Reading Museum. However the inference is that features/deposits from which finds were not recovered were not allocated a context number but this needs to be corroborated. In this respect, it should be noted that the fieldwork archive at HES is almost entirely devoid of**

**these context numbers, the exception being the crucially important post-fieldwork overlay drawings (HHL Appendix 1: DC48988 to DC48993 – see Post-fieldwork Drawn Records below).**

At the rear of the context index, a hand-written continuation sheet notes *'contexts with finds from War Coppice WC'*, War Coppice being BHT's former home at Caterham, Surrey.

Alongside the *'List of contexts'* are 1,092 finds by context records (RM6). These forms record presence/absence of finds by trench/area, feature (rarely completed) and layer (generally completed). Number and weight of finds are not recorded. The bottom of the record sheet is a box *'for additional notes see over (tick)*'. This is rarely ticked but in some instances there are sketch sections drawn on to the back of the record (Fig. 13). These sketches appear to be in BHT's hand and were presumably drafted as an *aide memoire* over 20 years after the 1950s excavations were completed.

Other written records include:

- a notebook (RM5) listing spindlewhorls, hones and quern lava fragments by context (not number and weight) and a context by trench/area summary
- a notebook (HES6) titled *'Old Windsor Finds'* listing *'material to the Windsor Guildhall Collection 17/3/81'* and *'Ironwork for Conservation*' but otherwise largely empty
- various other finds lists (RM8)
- photocopies of AML record cards for metalwork finds (RM12)
- copies of NAR microfilm orders (RM10)
- documentation cards, display labels and mislaid labels of uncertain value (RM3, RM7 and RM9)

**Post-fieldwork Drawn Records**

There are c. 150 post-fieldwork drawings held by HES. These include plans from various geophysical surveys and copies of historic mapping, which will not be discussed further here.

The most significant and important post-fieldwork drawings are a series of plans held by HES (HHL – Appendix 1 – Drawings DC48988 – DC48993 and Drawings DC49005 – DC49010). These appear to have been prepared by BHT as part of the post-fieldwork activities that took place in the 1980s.

Drawings DC49005 – DC49010 are a series of trench location plans. DC49009 (Fig. 1) represents the most complete trench location plan for the 1950s excavations held in the HES archive, although BHT notes on the drawing that *'minor scattered features to the south (PMF and 'grange') not included here: they are essentially of later Medieval origin and constitute a separate and secondary issue'.*

BHT makes clear that the plan is not entirely accurate but photographic images corroborate trench/area locations and other sources, such as aerial photographs of the excavations, could be used to establish their location with reasonable accuracy (within a few metres?). A geophysicist may also be able to advise whether survey would now be able to relocate the backfilled trenches (and features within them?) with any degree of accuracy. It can be noted that later published accounts of the excavations, e.g. Astill 1978 fig. 21, significantly under-represent the scale of the 1950s excavations.

Drawing DC49009 (Fig. 1) includes *'Supplementary annotations*' by BHT in 1986 which comprise brief summaries of the archaeological content of each trench/area e.g. *'ID/X 57-8 Successive Major Halls 7th – 11th C ["Palace Area"].*

The location of trenches to the south of those recorded on Drawing DC49009 is poorly documented and information on their precise location has not been found within the archive. Further information on these areas can be found in HHL's *'Guide'* pages 5 and 6.

Drawings DC48988 – DC48993 comprise a series of transparent film overlays for the original feature plans for trench/areas OD/1, OD/2, OD/3, Great Ditch, Grid Squares and ID/X and ID/Y. Small paper adhesive labels have been stuck on to the overlays on which are typed context numbers (Figs. 14, 15 and 16). Feature references have also been written in places in permanent ink on the film. This is presumably the work of BHT in the 1980s and they act as a crucial link between the newly assigned 'context' numbers for the finds assemblage at Reading with the original 1950s site drawings.

For example section drawings of Pits XVII, XIII and XIV are included in Notebook ***'Old Windsor 1955, 1957-8'*** but with no spatial information, layer numbers or context numbers. The overlay plans (Fig. 15) identify the location of these pits, while the context index confirms layers within the pit with finds e.g. for Pit XIII – context 2004 = Lii, 2006 = Lii/iii, 2008 = Liii/iv and 2010 = Liv.

**These overlay plans are, therefore, an extremely important part of the archive along with the 'Context Index' held at RM. It was noted that a number of the adhesive labels had come unstuck and their original position on the overlay is lost (but potentially recoverable). While it is not impossible that feature/context locations could be re-established from the records, the further deterioration of these overlay plans would be a serious impediment to future analysis of the archive.**

It should be noted, however, that as the context index includes only those deposits/features with finds, there appear to be many features that have no identifier at all. The labels on the overlay plans are also incomplete, while inevitably there are occasional errors of transposition of numbers and labelling across records. The '*Great Ditch*' was the feature with the most complex infill history, recorded across at least three sections. The context index indicates finds from many layers within this feature but there is not an overlay plan, drawing or text that reconciles the context numbers with the deposit sequence recorded in each section of this feature.

The only evidence for detailed phasing of features and deposits on a drawing occurs on a section of the '*Great Ditch'* (Drawing DC48991) where BHT has *'colour coded'* the infill sequence with his interpretation of the principal periods represented (Fig. 17). This is (apart from some broad brush statements in BHT's published and unpublished summaries) the only demonstrable phasing of deposits by BHT in the archive. HHL notes *'Evidence for work on site phasing, description of features, and interpretation is much more ephemeral… While it is evident that much work had been carried out in phasing of the site, only a few rough notes (much of which is incomplete) have been identified within the documentary material. Within these notes, most of the surviving information pertains to the Great Ditch. A synopsis produced by Dr. Hope-Taylor in 1983 provides tantalizing hints of work on analysis of structures, but very little of this is evidenced within the archive*' (VI Post-Excavation Work: 1981-1991).

The absence of post-fieldwork drawings is most evident in area ID/X, the *'Palace Area'* where BHT notes *'successive major halls'* and the content index refers to *'Building A', 'Building B'* etc. in this area (Fig. 12). However unfortunately no plans, either original site plans or post-fieldwork drawings, of these buildings appear to exist in the archive.

The remaining drawn record comprises post-excavation drawings of finds, either as part of object records (RM16, RM17 and RM18) or pen and ink drawings, presumably ultimately intended for publication (RM22 and RM23). The object records (not counted) comprise photocopies and not original drawings of a wide range of object types (see RM16, RM17 and RM18 for details). The drawings refer to trench/area and occasionally context numbers.

The pen and ink drawings (124 in total with multiple finds on single drawings) are by Judith Dobie (Fig. 18) and comprise illustrations of iron objects (RM22), special metalwork, stone and bone objects (RM23), bronze pins, iron objects, loom weights, lead objects and bone objects (HES14 and HHL, Appendix 1, DC49146 – DC49214). It is not clear why Dobie's object drawings have ended up being split between HES and RM.

**Post-fieldwork Photographic Records**

The post-fieldwork photographic record comprises entirely X-rays of metalwork. HES holds just two X-ray plates (HES13), the majority (45 plates) are held by RM (RM11 and RM13). Individual plates include multiple images of metalwork finds with the cover sleeve notating 6-digit AML numbers but not trench/area identifier, feature, deposit or context number.

## Correspondence

HES, RM and the HER hold a substantial volume of original and photocopied correspondence and financial documentation relating to the 1950s excavations and subsequent work (HES15, RM19, RM20, RM21 and RM26). This includes much correspondence from BHT to a wide range of individuals and organisations (Fig. 19). The letters range in date from 1952 to 2012 and collectively number in excess of 500, although there was insufficient time to do a precise count. The correspondence includes letters to and from some of the leading figures in archaeology from the 1950s onwards and include John Hurst, J K St Joseph, Geoffrey Dimbleby, Leo Rivet, Mortimer Wheeler, R J C Atkinson, David Wilson, Beatrice De Cardi and Richard Hodges amongst others.

HHL had commenced a listing of the correspondence held by HES (HHL – Index to Correspondence: 1952-1977) although there is later correspondence that has yet to be listed. This volume of material is of interest in its own right as a social record of the project, but the collection also includes notes, comments and interpretations by BHT on the archaeology of Old Windsor that potentially have value in future interpretations of the site (Fig. 20).

## What is the completeness and condition of the written, drawn and photographic archive?

As the fieldwork and post-fieldwork archive do not follow modern standards, it is not immediately clear if any records are missing or if they were not compiled in the first place. However, although we do not have a precise record of what the original written, drawn and photographic archive consisted of, it is apparent that at least some records are missing. The context index (RM4) is clearly marked as '*2nd Copy'* but no 1st copy survives within the archive (bar a photocopy of the 2nd copy). It was also noted that there was no plan of Trench ID/Y held at HES, even though there is a transparent film overlay plan (DC48993) but this may have been incorrectly boxed.

BHT also summaries Trench ID/X as the *'Palace Area'* with *'successive major halls'* (Fig. 1) but there is only one plan of this Trench and an absence of any plans or sections of these buildings. The context index in RM also notes contexts belonging to different buildings (e.g. A, B, C etc. - Fig. 12) suggesting that at least the interpretative plans of some buildings were developed. On this basis, it seems likely that at least a modest number (potentially a significant number) of records were lost before the archive was deposited with HES. There are other gaps in the record, such as no register of photographic images, but it is possible that no such register was ever compiled.

Perhaps most striking is how little narrative text there is throughout the fieldwork and post-fieldwork archive. Descriptive text of the excavations is limited to a modest number of pages in two site notebooks, short summary reports prepared by BHT for publication in the BAJ and Medieval Archaeology, his 1983 synopsis (see bibliography) and comments appended to correspondence. Given the programme of post-excavation work undertaken in the 1980s, one might have expected details of preliminary phasing, phase plans, or descriptions of trenches and areas or important structures to exist. It can be noted that the finds reports do not contain any 'phasing' information and mostly comprise catalogues and listings of material. It is possible that other notebooks and written records and text have been lost, although it is no longer possible to establish this with authority.

The written, drawn and photographic records are in fair condition. The exceptions are the transparent film overlays held at HES (see page 15 above). These are in need of urgent conservation work to ensure the retention of BHT's context labelling. The important photographic archive (RM1), comprising reels of black and white negatives, is stable and shows no obvious signs of deterioration, despite being over 60 years old.

## What does the material archive consist of?

**The Finds Materials**

As far as Berkshire Archaeology is aware, all of the finds from the 1950s excavations are held by Reading Museum. One small box of finds previously held by HES has since been deposited with the Museum. The finds are those recovered from the excavations undertaken between 1953 and 1958. Finds from investigations prior to this (i.e. the sewer trench that identified the site) or later than this, (e.g. the skeletal material or other finds from White Hermitage, just east of the Church of St Peter

and St Andrew – see page 10 above) are not included in the finds archive and their present location (if retained) remains unknown.

There are summary reports on the following finds categories: imported and non-local Saxon and medieval pottery (Coutts and Hodges, 1987), Roman pottery (Lyne, undated), ceramic building material (Green, 1986 and undated), slag (McDonnell, 1993) and stone (Williams, 1990). There is also a short report on three skeletons (Carter, 1987). These three partial skeletons are held in Reading Museum and are noted as being from '*The Manor'* and refer to F Maitland Underhill and so their relationship to Hope-Taylor's excavations is unclear. There is also a note on a *'sculptured stone fragment´* (Lyne, undated) which he interprets as a fragment from a possible sarcophagus lid. It has not been possible to confirm if this object is in the collection at RM.

Only the report on the slag (McDonnell, 1993) lists material by weight and by context and, although some other reports refer to context numbers (along with their 1950s identifiers), most do not list material by count and weight.

The current project therefore undertook the **first complete quantification** of the Old Windsor finds archive in its entirety. This was a very significant and important piece of work, largely undertaken by volunteers from the Berkshire Archaeological Society (the original funders of Hope-Taylor's excavations), Berkshire Archaeological Research Group, University of the Third Age and members of the Old Windsor community.

All material types were quantified by category, by number and by weight (grammes) in accordance with modern recording procedures. The list below therefore provides the first precise quantification of finds from the 1950s excavations. It should be noted that this excludes the metalwork, which has been catalogued in detail (including context number and 1950s identifiers) on Reading Museum's MODES database.

The data was recorded on an Excel spreadsheet (Appendix 1). This format was used for compatibility with existing Museum databases and for ease of access and use. The spreadsheet recorded finds categories by the original 1950s identifiers comprising year of excavation (e.g. OW55, OW54 etc.), trench (e.g. GDI, OD1, ID/X etc.), feature where identifiable (e.g. Pit XVIII, 'Horace's Pit' etc.) and layer where recorded (e.g. Li, Lii, Liii etc.) and also by subsequent context number (e.g. 1001, 1002 etc.). The spreadsheet also recorded the accessioned box number so that each bag of finds can be located (e.g. Box 1997.39.B20 etc.). In addition all other references included on labelling on and within bags of finds were added to the spreadsheet, whether their meaning and significance were understood or not.

It was hoped that some basic spatial data (e.g. volume of pottery by trench) might be extractable from the spreadsheet. However the complexity of BHT's trench referencing system and the inevitable inconsistencies that have been transposed between and across records when the context numbering system was superimposed on the finds, makes this difficult to achieve with accuracy at present. It is anticipated that greater understanding of the detail of the 'area' coding and further 'cleaning' of the records in the spreadsheet will enable this to be achieved in the future.

However the spreadsheet will still also enable researchers to search at a number of different levels. In particular it will enable researchers on the primary archive at HES to identify features and deposits

**Table 3**

| Category | Number | Weight (gms) | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pottery** | 38,197 | 538,239 | Including imported wares and possible production waste |
| **Stone** | 757 | 47,801 | |
| **Querns** | 267 | 23,938 | |
| **Flint** | 359 | 3,855 | |
| **Slag/metalworking debris** | - | 115,502 | |
| **Ceramic building material** | 2,030 | 122,615 | Including mortar & plaster |
| **Loom weights** | 75 | 4,701 | |
| **Fired clay/Daub/plaster** | 2,368 | 54,384 | |
| **Clay pipe** | 15 | 83 | |
| **Animal bone** | 40,449 | 357,579 | There are indications that the assemblage is incomplete. See below. |
| **Oysters** | 801 | 11,423 | |
| **Charcoal** | 161 bags | - | |
| **Wood** | 29 | 1,852 | Also some large, unboxed pieces, presumably part of the watermills |
| **Soil samples** | 20 | - | |
| **Other environmental** | 12 | - | 2 seeds; 10 coprolites |
| **Snails** | - | - | 2 boxes of hand collected snails (not recorded) |
| **Human remains** | - | - | 3 boxes containing three(?) partial skeletons (mostly skull and long bones) |
| **Glass** | - | - | 3 boxes (not recorded) |
| **Metalwork** | - | - | Recorded in detail on Reading Museum's MODES records |

from which finds were recovered and to locate them by box in Reading Museum if they so wished. This spreadsheet represents a very significant addition to the record of the 1950s Old Windsor excavations.

There are indications that some of the animal assemblage has probably been lost altogether or some of its contextual information lost. Documentation in Historic England's AML File for OW (Site 1284) contains a letter from BHT to the AML, dated 27 October 1988, which states *'It is terrible to hear that so enormous a bulk of animal-bones from the Great Ditch was destroyed/lost during governmental storage of the material. A great bulk it was, indeed'.* A letter from the AML to BHT, dated 31 October 1988 states *'It is, as you say, a great pity that there isn't more bone from the Great Ditch – but, whatever was lost or now sits among the 'de-stratified' material, there doesn't seem to be much we can now do about it'.* A further note, dated 12 November 1988, in relation to the animal bone states *'…flooding of Lancaster House basement, boxes lifted, & paper bags dropped out'.* A further letter, dated 17 November 1988 from AML to BHT notes *'Great Ditch: As far as the loss of the material is concerned, all I can say is that we have to deal with what we have – not what we might have had'.* There is otherwise no detail on how much of the animal bone might have been lost.

**The Environmental Materials**

In addition to the animal bone, there are boxes of hand-collected oyster shells, *'snails'* and wood/charcoal in the collection at RM. There are summary reports on the oyster shell (Winder 1987a and 1987b) and charcoal (Gale, 1991).

In Historic England's files there are three notes on the animal bone by Jenny Coy of the Faunal Remains Unit (FRU), University of Southampton, dated 1 May 1986, 3 February 1987, and 6 July 1988 but these are primarily internal updates on progress (or the lack of it) on the assessment and analysis of the material and they are therefore not included in this report's bibliography. However the 1987 note includes a short list of species and bone type from selected contexts and there is an undated computer paper print-out, listing weight of animal bone by context, area/trench, year, feature and layer. It is not clear how comprehensive this list is. There is otherwise no indication that any report of any substance was produced by the FRU on the animal bone.

The *'wood'* consists of pieces of dried wood, none of which, from a cursory examination, seems to be obviously worked. The packaging is largely devoid of context numbers or other identifiers, although RM's database notes much of the wood was *'from the Saxon mill'* or '*possibly from Saxon mill'*. It can be noted that wood samples were submitted for dendrochronological dating (Schove , 1959 and 1974) and radio-carbon dating (Jordan *et al*, 1994). There is also a report on the *'imprints of plant remains on pottery sherds'* (De Moulins, 1995).

RM also holds four boxes of *'soil samples'* which consist of four standard-sized boxes containing bags and bottles/jars (Kilner) of soil, none of which are identified by context number although it may be possible to establish their provenance from the 1950s identifiers. The volumes of soil per sample are small (less than 10 litres) and the soil is 'bone' dry. There is no supporting documentation in the archive to establish why these samples were taken. These are a remarkably rare survival from an excavation over 60 years ago. If the provenance of these samples can be established, they may still

retain some archaeological value for the recovery of charred plant remains, snails, small finds, hammer scale etc. As the samples are stable, they should be retained until an authoritative decision on them can be made (Jane Corcoran *pers. comm.*).

It can be noted that the report on the '*Charcoal'* (Gale 1991) which describes material from *'samples'* (Samples 1 – 119) although it is not clear what is meant by 'sample'. It seems more likely that '*sample'* means an example of charcoal from a larger deposit identified during excavation rather than the residue from a processed sample.

There are no flots or soil sample residues contained in the archive at RM and no records or documents to demonstrate that soil samples were processed for the recovery of environmental materials. However there are some records that indicate that samples were taken during the course of the excavation e.g. one section drawing notates the location of *'soil samples for snails (bagged)'*. The location of those samples and whether they were ever processed and then analysed is unknown.

## What is the completeness and condition of the material archive?

There are no obvious gaps in the finds archive. Most expected categories of material are represented in the collection. There are indications that some of the animal bone from the Great Ditch was lost or 'de-stratified' in the 1980s but details are sketchy. It can be noted that no burials were recorded in the main 1950s excavations, although Notebook ***'OW 1953, 1954'*** noted *'medieval skeletons'* found at White Hermitage (see page 10 above), while Carter (1987) reports on *'three burials from Old Windsor'*. Three partial skeletons are included in the finds archive, presumably those reported on by Carter, but they are recorded in RM as being from *'The Manor'* and recovered by F Maitland Underhill. The *'medieval skeletons'* from White Hermitage may not have been recovered or were reburied on site.

It is apparent that selected pottery sherds/vessels have been removed from the archive at various times; proxy cards have been used, or the bags annotated to indicate this. Sixty-three bags were found to be empty. Some of these extractions may have been re-boxed towards the end of the box sequence, where examples of different vessel forms, decorative techniques and surface treatments have been collected, but samples of imported wares have not been located. A *'master series'* is referred to but at this stage there is no indication as to where this is or what form it took (this activity probably dates to the period of the reporting by Coutts and Hodges (1987). Some pottery was apparently '*sent to Fortress House'* in 1983.

It remains possible that material unknown to Reading Museum was lost or mislaid on the death of BHT or material still resides with specialists or other organisations. For completeness sake, it may be appropriate to contact, where possible, those specialists that have previously worked on the OW material to check that they no longer hold any material. It would also be useful to find out if they still hold any documentation provided by BHT to assist them in their assessments as this may shed some light on phasing or interpretative information that is currently not in the archive.

The finds and environmental materials are generally in good condition and stable. Bulk finds have been washed to a fair standard although often 'dusty' (the oyster shell is an exception, and this is largely unwashed or only partially washed) but are largely unmarked. The pottery has been largely bagged, labelled and boxed to modern standards, as have most of the objects of metalwork, bone, glass and fired clay. The animal bone is less well bagged (in paper) and boxed but not to its detriment; a few boxes contain un-bagged bones loose in the box, but these appear to be confined to un-stratified material. There were just a few instances of boxes, especially of daub and charcoal, that appear not to have had any attention since the end of the fieldwork and contain un-bagged, mixed material. Where circumstances allowed, these materials were sorted and bagged.

Rarely, items have been included under the wrong category e.g. the odd sherd of pottery was found amongst the bags of animal bone, but on such a small scale as not to be a significant detriment to the archive.

The presence of a small number of soil samples is a rare survival from an excavation project undertaken over 60 years ago. These samples are stable and will be retained until an authoritative decision on them can be made.

## Reports

The bibliography on Page 32 lists all publications relating specifically to the 1950s excavations, plus all reports that are contained within the archive, whether they are relevant to the 1950s excavations or not. It does not therefore include reference to recent developer-funded projects at Old Windsor, the reports of which are available elsewhere.

It can be noted that there are a number of reports on some finds categories (i.e. Carter 1987, Coutts and Hodges 1987, De Moulins 1995, Green 1986, Lyne 1987 and Winder 1987a and b) that are not cited as AML reports. It is unclear under whose auspices these reports were undertaken. It should also be noted that all the finds reports comprise at best assessment reports, catalogues and listings, and none contain detailed analysis and interpretation and therefore cannot be considered as publication reports.

## How coherent is the archive?

**Can the excavation trenches be located?**

A series of post-fieldwork plans prepared by BHT in the early 1980s locate the majority of the principal areas of excavation in the 1950s, plus the 1951 sewer trench (Fig. 1). BHT notes on these plans that they are *'not to be used for measurement and not for publication'* but they provide the only meaningful and accurate trench location plans within the whole archive.

BHT surveyed trenches from manhole covers and some of his measurements survive in the record at HES (e.g. HES4). The photographic record indicates that these trench location plans are generally accurate. Transcription of aerial photographs of the excavations (either those held in the archive or

at CUCAP https://www.cambridgeairphotos.com/areas/windsor+and+maidenhead/page3.html ) would probably enable a reasonably accurate location plan of the excavations in relation to the OS National Grid to be re-constructed.

However data on the location of trenches to the south of the main excavation areas, especially the trenches in Priory Middle Field (PMF) and the Grange, are sparse and their precise locations remain unknown (see HHL, pages 5 and 6). These areas are not included on BHT's main trench location plan but he notes that they contained only *'scattered minor features…: they are essentially of later-Medieval origin and constitute a separate and secondary issue'* (Fig. 1).

**Can individual features and deposits within each trench/area be located?**

Partially. There are feature plans for all trenches but largely un-annotated (Figs. 4 and 5). A very few features are annotated, such as '*Horace's Pit'* and *'Bone-worker's Pit'.* The post-fieldwork overlay drawings (see page 15 above) however provide confirmation of the location of some, but not all, features and contexts.

It can be noted that in most trenches, except ID/X, GDI, GDII and Butterfly A and B, the deposits largely comprise gravel cut features with no complex stratigraphy bar intercutting features (Figs. 9 and 21). Therefore where features/contexts are not included on the overlay plans, the locational information in the context index, where provided, should enable individual features/contexts to be located. For example the context index (RM4) records post hole 2055 in OD3 as *'Post hole, E side area, near S end approx. 13' N of S end'.* Post hole 2055 is not included on the overlay plan but its location can be identified on the original feature plan from this context description.

The following is another example of how the various drawings and lists enable some features and deposits to be located.

Drawing DC49045 (Fig. 22) records a section across *'So-called Pit I'* in Square AII with seven fills, notated I – VII. Drawing DC48955 shows an un-annotated plan of Square A2 (Fig. 23) but indicates the unannotated location of Pit I. The context index (Fig. 24) indicates that finds were recovered from seven layers in Pit I (L a – h) in Sq II. Overlay drawing (Fig. 16) confirms the location of Pit I in and the contexts within it. There is no stated correlation between layers I – VII on the section drawing and L a – h in the context record but it can be reasonably assumed that layer I = L a, etc. (Note the confused references to Square AII, A2 and II).

Trench ID/X comprises the *'Palace Area'* with *'successive major halls 7$^{th}$ – 11$^{th}$ C'* and site photographs clearly indicate deep stratigraphy in this part of the site (Fig. 10). As BHT notes in his synopsis (1983), this area comprised *'Houses/halls in deep foundation-trenches, mainly of massive palisade construction…The 'Palace-area and its long succession of major buildings and re-buildings'*. However there are no plans, sections or descriptions that locate and identify the sequence of buildings in this area bar a preliminary site plan (Fig. 5).

GDI, GDII and Butterfly A and B primarily investigate the Great Ditch, the location of which appears adequately recorded on plans and sections.

**What contextual information exists?**

Very little. There are no context records and minimal descriptive text, either made during or after the fieldwork. Feature and deposit descriptions (e.g. *'So called Pit "I" (probably separate pit)'* and *'brownish yellow, sandy "fudge"*) are notated on plans and sections but not comprehensively so. There appears to be minimal information on smaller features or those that were considered less significant or those that contained no finds. The context index provides the most comprehensive list of features and fills, with some description (Fig. 12 and 24).

**Can the stratigraphy of the site be determined and can a Harris Matrix be constructed?**

There is no Harris Matrix for the site, or other relational information or any descriptive text within the archive that details the stratigraphy of the site. The site plans, sections and photographic record will enable some of the stratigraphy of the site to be reconstructed but not comprehensively so. This will especially be the case for ID/X where there do not seem to be adequate records to establish, reconstruct or interpret an apparently complex sequence of deposits in what BHT has termed the '*Palace Area'.*

Similarly in other trenches where BHT has interpreted the presence of buildings, there are no plans or details of them, although it is likely to be possible to infer and reconstruct them from site plans and photographs.

The *'Great Ditch'* was investigated in areas GDI, GDII and Butterfly A and B and this is clearly a complex feature with a complicated infill history. There are detailed plans and sections of this feature but no drawing or text that correlates deposits across the various sections of this feature or correlates the layers/fills recorded on the section drawings to those listed in the context index. However the detail of the section drawings, aided by BHT's provisional '*phasing*' of the fills of this feature (Fig. 17), should enable the stratigraphic sequence of this important feature to be reconstructed but that is likely to be a challenging task.

**What 'phasing' exists? Can the site be 'phased'?**

As noted above, the *'Great Ditch'* is one of the few features that has a drawing indicating BHT's 'phasing' of this feature (Fig. 17). There are otherwise virtually no plans, lists or text that provide any indication of the phasing of contexts and features within or across excavation areas.

As HHL notes of the HES archive (2007, page 9) *'while it is evident that much work had been carried out in phasing of the site, only a few rough notes (much of which is incomplete) have been identified within the documentary material. Within these notes, most of the surviving information pertains to the Great Ditch. A synopsis produced by Dr Hope-Taylor in 1983 provides tantalising hints of work on analysis of structures, but very little of this is evidenced in the archive'.*

It can also be noted that none of the finds reports include any reference to 'phasing', the material being described or listed by context and trench/area. Correspondence in the archive suggests that the lack of phasing information was a source of considerable friction between BHT and the Faunal Remains Unit at Southampton University.

By virtue of the lack of complex stratigraphy in most of the excavated areas and the more comprehensive records for the Great Ditch, it is considered that a phased sequence could be constructed for most of the excavation areas. Unfortunately this may be very difficult and potentially impossible, based on the surviving records, for the most significant element of the 1950s excavations, namely the complex building sequence in ID/X and the north of ID/Y i.e. the so-called '*Palace Area'*.

**Can a site narrative be constructed?**

No, not on the basis of the current records within the archive. Some basic information would first be required to enable a narrative to be constructed. This information would include:

- constructing accurate trench/feature plans
- correlating contexts to features
- identifying stratigraphic relationships where possible
- spot-dating the pottery
- constructing feature groupings e.g. buildings and other structures
- establishing preliminary phasing

## Overview

**The Written, Drawn and Photographic Archive**

The archive of Dr Brian Hope-Taylor's Old Windsor excavations is held by Historic Environment Scotland and Reading Museum. In broad terms, HES holds the primary excavation records, while RM largely holds all the material archive and the post-fieldwork records. There are some notable exceptions, with Reading Museum holding the complete, original, monochrome negative collection of the 1950s excavations, while HES holds some object X-rays and finds illustrations that are otherwise largely held at Reading. These anomalies appear to be the result of circumstance rather than design.

There are demonstrably some records, and possibly some finds, that are missing from the archive. The extent of the incompleteness of the archive is now hard to judge and may be limited to no more than a modest number of records and documents. Unfortunately the most incomplete site records appear to correspond with the most significant area excavated, namely the *'Palace Area'* in trench ID/X. Most striking is how little narrative text there is throughout the fieldwork and post-fieldwork archive, which is limited to a few pages written in site notebooks and short summary reports

prepared by BHT. Anecdotal reports that BHT's notebooks comprised intermingled entries from a multitude of different sites across the UK are therefore largely inaccurate.

Also, given the programme of post-excavation work undertaken in the 1980s, one might have expected more details of preliminary phasing and descriptions of trenches, areas and important structures to exist but these are almost entirely absent from the archive. For example the context index refers to Buildings A, B, G, and F in Trench ID/X but no drawings depicting the features that make up these structures or their relationship to each other were identified in the archive. However it is not possible to establish authoritatively if such records existed and have since been lost or were never compiled in the first place. It remains possible that other records and finds are held elsewhere, for example by specialists or in stores where their identification and significance is currently unknown.

The primary fieldwork record therefore largely comprises site plans, sections drawings and photographs. There is no accurate, surveyed, plan of the location of BHT's excavation areas, although a reasonably accurate plan could now be constructed from available sources. The precise location of excavation areas to the south of BHT's main trenches north of Priory Avenue cannot now be accurately identified. It can be noted that plans of BHT's excavation areas published by others (e.g. Astill 1975 and TVAS Monograph 7, 2005, fig. 8.1) significantly under-represent the scale of his excavations.

BHT's original recording system was idiosyncratic by today's standards. A context numbering system was superimposed primarily on to the finds record in the 1980s to aid finds analysis. The finds archive is therefore largely bagged and boxed by context but the primary excavation records have not been correlated with the context numbering system. A content index held at Reading Museum and some trench 'overlay' plans held at HES provide correlation between the original site recording system and the context numbering system. This index and these overlay plans, apparently constructed by BHT himself, are the most crucial documents for the future understanding of the archive and the excavations. The 'overlay' plans are in poor condition, the labelling coming unstuck, and they are in need of urgent conservation.

Currently there is a significant disconnect between the largely fieldwork records in HES and the material archive and post-fieldwork records in Reading Museum. There is currently no meaningful way for researchers at HES to know if and what finds were recovered from a given deposit/feature while researchers at Reading Museum have no access to contextual information for finds and objects, except by visiting the archive at HES in Edinburgh. The finds spreadsheet prepared for this project, quantifying the finds by context, year of excavation, area/trench and feature and layer (where recorded), will remove that disconnect and will provide a very significant tool for future researchers to the archives in HES and RM.

As noted above, there is an almost complete absence of any plans, documents, lists or text relating to post-excavation analysis. Phase plans, features by phase, spot-dating lists, Harris matrices, site narratives by phase are entirely absent, bar some overarching phasing of the 'Great Ditch' illustrated on some section drawings. The 'Great Ditch' in particular is one of the most complex and important feature of the excavations, with a complicated infill history but there is no supporting information setting out the stratification of this monument.

There is, therefore, a significant gulf between the raw primary archive data and Hope-Taylor's interpretations set out in his synopsis (1983) and elsewhere e.g. *'The superficial soil-layers removed, the un-disturbed gravel surface underneath revealed its previously hidden pattern of ancient structures. Not one simple pattern but a succession of structural 'town-plans' superimposed one on the other – earlier structures demolished, from time to time, to make room for new. Huts, houses, minor and major halls, all emerged…'* (BHT, 1983, page 7). There are no individual, interpretative plans of structures/buildings surviving in the archive.

**The Finds and Environmental Archive**

The finds archive comprises a significant body of material, disproportionate to the relatively modest size of the fieldwork records. While this assessment very usefully quantified the material archive and did not include any assessment of the material categories, it was clear that the pottery assemblage in particular is highly significant.

More analytical work has been achieved on the finds archive with lists and catalogues of some finds categories and metalwork X-rayed than has apparently been undertaken on the site archive. It is also clear that there has been considerable sorting and review of the pottery but not matched by any commensurate texts or reports. A number of finds reports exist but these set out the results of largely assessment work rather than detailed analysis. None could be considered as 'publication' reports. However a number of pen and ink finds drawings, prepared for publication, were undertaken.

**Conclusions**

**Overall, the archive constitutes a typical backlog excavation project. Future research will be able to unravel the principal story of the 1950s excavation from the archive as it currently exists but the more subtle and nuanced plot lines will have been lost and unfortunately went with Hope-Taylor to his grave. There remains a significant gap between the primary archive data and Hope-Taylor's summary interpretations, which have entered the archaeological literature as 'fact', whereas the analytical evidence to support his interpretations remains lacking. The future analysis and publication of the results will therefore continue to be sought by researchers and specialists and Hope-Taylor's excavations remain one of the key unpublished sites of the Early Medieval period in southern England.**

## Recommendations

In light of the results of this rapid archive assessment, a number of recommendations can be made in order to:

- improve our understanding of the archive
- make it more accessible and coherent
- enhance our understanding of this nationally important monument at Old Windsor.

It is understood that the archive rests with Historic Environment Scotland and Reading Museum and that any future work resulting from these recommendations can only be achieved with the

agreement, support and co-operation of these two institutions. These recommendations are made in good faith with the desire of achieving the best outcomes for this important archive.

Should some or all of these recommendations be taken up, it is recommended that a stakeholder group is established to oversee the direction, resourcing and outcomes of future work on the Old Windsor archive in order to achieve a focused, co-ordinated and coherent approach. The following organisations and groups may form part of such a stakeholder group:

- Historic England
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Reading Museum
- Berkshire Archaeology
- Old Windsor Parish Council
- Berkshire Archaeological Society
- Berkshire Archaeological Research Group

In addition such a stakeholder group would benefit from input from appropriate period expertise from an academic institution.

## Conserving the archive

**Recommendation 1:** The 'context overlay' plans held at HES (DC48988 – DC48993) are in need of urgent conservation as the adhesive labels on the transparent film are coming unstuck. These crucial plans, the work of BHT in the 1980s, provide the locational link between the context numbering system imposed on the finds archive in Reading and the original site records held in HES. The condition of these plans was brought to the attention of HES during this project and they have been included in their programme of conservation work. It should be noted that these plans will not be publicly accessible until this conservation work has been completed.

**Recommendation 2:** The black and white negative photographic archive at Reading Museum is, as BHT noted, of the utmost importance and a vital part of the excavation record. While the negatives are currently stable and prints are available at HES, the high quality digitisation of these images should be undertaken, thereby making the photographic record more accessible.

## Advancing understanding of the archive

**Recommendation 3:** A copy of Heather Hamilton-Lytle's *'Guide'* (2007) should be lodged with the archive as part of Reading Museum's extension files so that researchers can have a better and clearer understanding of the archive held at HES.

**Recommendation 4:** A copy of this report and all its appendices should be lodged with both HES and RM to compliment and elaborate on HHL's *'Guide'* thereby enabling researchers to have an overview of the contents, condition and division of the archive between HES and RM.

**Recommendation 5:** Wessex Archaeology's spreadsheet quantifying the finds archive by context should be lodged with both Reading Museum and HES so that both institutions can enable researchers to identify contexts, features and layers from which finds were recovered and to identify the location of those finds to individual boxes within the Museum.

**Recommendation 6:** A digital copy of the *'Context Index'* should be lodged with the HES to compliment Wessex Archaeology's spreadsheet and to enable researchers to identify contexts from which finds were recovered and to bridge the gap between the primary site records in HES and the finds archive at Reading Museum.

**Recommendation 7:** All known specialists that have worked on finds or environmental categories from OW should be contacted to confirm that they no longer hold any material and also to establish if they hold any documentation provided to them at the time of their analysis to see if this sheds any light on phasing or interpretative information provided by BHT. If such documentation exists, it could be considered for integration into the existing archive at RM. Every effort should be made to establish the location of the 'missing' sherds extracted from the pottery boxes, in particular the samples of imported wares.

### Advancing accessibility and encouraging research

**Recommendation 8:** The primary site records held by HES should be fully digitised and make accessible on line as a matter of priority. The current separation of these records from the finds records in RM is a significant barrier to research on the site and finds materials, which currently can only be achieved by physical attendance at each institution, which are geographically distant. Digitisation should also include the context index at RM, which is a crucial document linking the two archives. This document should also be digitised and made accessible on line as a matter of priority. The Old Windsor archive at HES and RM are clearly frequently visited and researched and this provides a strong argument to prioritise its digitisation and accessibility.

**Recommendation 9:** The black and white negative photographic archive at Reading Museum is entirely divorced from the other original, primary, site records and therefore effectively unusable to researchers. Its deposition here is the result of circumstance and not design. It is therefore recommended that this element of the archive is transferred from Reading Museum to HES so as to unify the primary site records at HES. The long-term conservation of the photographic archive would also benefit from its long term curation in more appropriate packaging and environmental conditions.

**Recommendation 10:** The metalwork X-rays and pen and ink finds drawings by Judith Dobie at HES are similarly divorced from the majority of the post-fieldwork finds records at RM and therefore largely unintelligible to researchers at HES. It is recommended that these items are transferred to RM so as to unify the X-ray archive and Dobie's finds drawings, where they will be accessible alongside the objects themselves.

**Recommendation 11:** The finds reports undertaken by the AM Laboratory on some categories of material (http://research.historicengland.org.uk/Results.aspx?p=1&n=10&t=Old%20Windsor&ns=1)

from Old Windsor are currently accessible on-line. Subject to their copyright status, the other unpublished finds reports (Carter 1987, Coutts and Hodges 1987, De Moulins 1995, Green 1986, Lyne 1987 and Winder 1987a and b) should also be digitised and made accessible online, possibly through the ADS. This could also include other unpublished reports including this one, Hamilton-Lytle 2007 and Hope-Taylor 1983.

### Advancing understanding of the Scheduled Monument

**Recommendation 12:** An accurate plan, surveyed in to the OS National Grid, locating the major trenches of BHT's excavations, should be established from a combination of geophysical survey (if advised as likely to be effective), aerial photographic transcription and the original photographic record. Geophysical survey may also be helpful in identifying back-filled features within BHT's trenches, which would aid corroboration and understanding of the site records, and also identify the continuation of features and other related features beyond the excavated areas, providing a wider context for the excavations. This would be subject to the provision of access by the current landowner. While it may be beyond the scope of this project, further geophysical survey beyond BHT's trenches may enable the full extent of this important sub-urban settlement to be identified, given that it clearly lay beyond the limits of his excavation trenches.

**Recommendation 13:** If an accurate trench plan can be established, the results should be published, along with a summary of this project, in an appropriate journal (the Berkshire Archaeological Journal or Medieval Archaeology) so as to correct the current, inaccurate, published plans of the excavation areas and to raise awareness of the archive, this project and its outcomes.

**Recommendation 14:** Geophysical survey beyond the excavation areas, specifically searching for the extent of the mill leat to the north and south of BHT's excavations and also to try to locate the excavation trench containing the '*Grange'*, would also provide a wider understanding of the landscape setting of the excavations. Such a project could be undertaken as a 'community' project, using volunteers from the Berkshire Archaeological Society, Berkshire Archaeological Research Group and members of the local community, who have become engaged with the project through the finds quantification exercise and are keen to be involved in further research on the monument.

**Recommendation 15:** A pilot study should be undertaken to establish how detailed a site narrative can be constructed from the existing site and finds records. This pilot could examine two of the less complex of BHT's trenches, e.g. OD2 (a less dense area of largely gravel cut features) and GDIII (Butterfly A and B) (the smallest trench across the Great Ditch only). The pilot study could comprise:

- constructing an accurate trench/feature plan
- correlating contexts to features
- identifying stratigraphic relationships where possible and constructing a Harris matrix
- spot-dating the pottery
- constructing feature groupings e.g. buildings and other structures, based where possible on BHT's interpretations
- establishing preliminary phasing

- writing a narrative for each trench, describing and interpreting the sequence, with accompanying figures.

The pilot would establish authoritatively the legibility of the archive, any issues arising and a realistic indication of the timescale, resources and cost of future assessment and analysis, should there be a desire to pursue that route.

**Recommendation 16:** Less a recommendation and more an action point, a summary of the results of this project and some of the key findings will be submitted as an entry to Enrich The List (https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/) for the Kingsbury, Old Windsor, Scheduled Monument (1006995).

## Bibliography

| Author | Date | Title | Location | Box No. | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Astill, G | 1975 | Trial excavations within the Scheduled area at the Friary, Old Windsor, December 1975 | HES | Box BHT13 | Two page report for the Berkshire Archaeological Unit |
| Astill, G | 1978 | 'Old Windsor' in Historic towns in Berkshire: an archaeological appraisal. Berkshire Archaeological Committee Publication No. 2, 69 - 73 | | | |
| Atkinson, R J C | 1963 | Resistivity surveying in archaeology' in The scientist and archaeology, Pyddocke, E, (ed), 1-30. | | | Pages 27-29 refer to the results of a resistivity survey at Old Windsor in 1955. Data from the survey (DC49103) is included in the archive at HES. |
| Bartlett, A | 1983 | Interim Report on Geophysical Survey of the Great Mill Ditch, Old Windsor | RM | Box A8 | AML Report 4283. Survey Nos G 16/75 and G10/82. Dates of fieldwork 1956, 1975 and 1982 |
| Beik, L | 1957 | Geophysical Survey Electrical Resistance Method - Old Windsor | HES | Box BHT13 | AML Report No. 10303, dated 20th June 1957. Report cites 'Report No. 9514' on 'the survey of the first section of this site'. |
| Carter, H | 1987 | Old Windsor Burials | HES | Box BHT13 | Dated February 1987. Single page 'report' on three burials from Old Windsor'. Location of these burials is recorded as '*The Manor'* on three partial skeletons held by RM. |
| Coutts, C, and Hodges, R | 1987 | The Imported and Non-local Pottery from Old Windsor, Berkshire | RM | Box A8 | Pottery listed by Trench/Area but generally not context number although some context numbers are referred to in text (13 page report) |
| De Moulins, D | 1995 | Assessment of the imprints of plant remains on pottery sherds from Old Windsor | RM | Box A8 | Listed by context and trench/area |
| Drewett, P | 1971-2 | Note on a human skeleton from Old Windsor' in Berkshire Archaeological Journal Vol 66 (1971-2), 61-3 | | | |
| English Heritage and RCAHMS | 2002 | The Brian Hope-Taylor Archaeological and Personal Papers Collection. Phase 3: Detailed listing and prioritisation | RM | Box A3 | Report for Period 1 July 2002 - 31 December 2002. Refers to all of BHT's archive, including numerous sites, amongst which is OW. |
| Gale, R | 1991 | Old Windsor: Charcoal Identification | RM | Box A8 | AML Report 11/91. Listed by 'Sample' number, year and Trench/Area but not context number. |
| Green, T K | Undated | Report on the results of examinations of the tile-finds from excavations at Old | RM | Box A8 | Document undated but assumed to be same date as |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Windsor, directed by Dr Brian Hope-Taylor, in 1953-58, now held in the Reading Museum store' | | | Green 1986 |
| Green, T K | 1986 | Catalogue of Roman tile fragments | RM | Box A8 | Catalogue lists 'Roman' tile by context number, number but not weight, and by tile type (tegula, imbrex, tubulum, subfloor, pila, others and indeterminate |
| Hamilton-Lytle, H | 2007 | The Brian Hope-Taylor Archaeological and Personal papers Collection. Old Windsor: A Guide to the Site Archive | HES | | Document not dated but HES confirmed 2007 |
| Hope-Taylor, B | 1954-5 | 'Excavations at Kingsbury, Old Windsor, September, 1953' in Berkshire Archaeological Journal, Vol 54 (1954-5), 147 | | | |
| Hope-Taylor, B | 1956-7 | The Excavations at Kingsbury, Old Windsor, 1954' in Berkshire Archaeological Journal, Vol 55 (1956-7), 86 | | | |
| Hope-Taylor, B | 1983 | The Beginnings of Windsor. Synopsis 1983 | RM | Box A8 | Plates and figures are noted in the margins but presumably those proposed for final publication rather than illustrating this synopsis |
| Jordan, D, Haddon-Reece, D, and Bayliss, A | 1994 | Radio Carbon dates from samples funded by English Heritage and dated before 1981 | RM | Box A8 | Photocopy only of section relating to Old Windsor - 'Old Windsor: Mill, Berkshire' (sic). P. 130 - HAR-1648, HAR1649 and HAR-1650 |
| Keene, D | 2015 | Old Windsor' in Lewis, D, The British Historic Towns Atlas Volume IV Windsor and Eton, 5-17 | | | Contains some images of BHT's excavations |
| Lyne, M | Undated | The 'Roman' Pottery from Old Windsor: A Catalogue | RM | Box A8 | Two page document |
| Lyne, M | Undated | A Sculptured Stone Fragment from the White Hermitage Site | RM | Box A8 | One page document. Document refers to OW55 so presumably part of BHT excavations. Lyne interprets stone as 'possibly from a sarcophagus lid'. |
| McDonnell, G | 1993 | Old Windsor, Berkshire: Slag Listing | RM | Box A8 | AML Report 3/93. Lists slag by year, context number and Trench/Area |
| Miles, D, and Mudd, A | 1987 | The Paddock, off Church Road, Old Windsor. Archaeological Assessment | HES | Box BHT13 | Five page evaluation report dated 24 August 1987 |
| Schove, D J | 1959 | Cross-dating of Anglo-Saxon timbers at Old Windsor and Southampton' in Medieval Archaeology Vol. 3 (1959), 288-90 | | | |
| Schove, D J | 1974 | Dendrochronological dating of oak from Old Windsor, Berkshire, c. AD 650-906' in Medieval Archaeology 18 (1974), 165-72 | | | |
| Williams, D F | 1990 | Stone from Old Windsor, Berkshire | RM | Box A8 | AML Report 63/90. Comprises primarily a |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | catalogue by object type, e.g. honestones, quernstones etc., by year, Trench/Area and context number |
| Wilson, D, and Hurst, J G | 1958 | Berkshire: Old Windsor' in 'Medieval Britain in 1957' in Medieval Archaeology Vol 2 (1958), 183-5 | | | |
| Winder, J | 1987a | The potential of oyster shells in the interpretation of archaeological sites with reference to the excavations at Old Windsor | RM | Box A8 | 19 page report |
| Winder, J | 1987b | Register of Data concerning the oyster shells from Old Windsor | RM | Box A8 | Listed by number and context number, but not weight, with comments |