



Contents:

- OBR news - OBR on Facebook
 - Call for excursions organiser
- Haseley Court and Haseley Manor
- Trullo buildings in Southern Italy
- Where is it? Help needed to identify a country house
- Forthcoming events

Copy date for the next issue is 1 December 2015. Please send any contributions or comments to newsletter@obr.org.uk

OBR News:

OBR Facebook Page Goes Live!

You can now find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oxfordshirebuildingsrecord>.

We have set up the Facebook page to act as a platform to create interest in Oxfordshire buildings and vernacular architecture in general, and to encourage discussion.

We will be featuring photographic themes such as building materials (timber, brick, thatch) and building styles (e.g. blindbacks, gables, door treatments).

We will also be looking at specific regional vernacular, and promoting events such as the Open Doors and the Historic Farm Buildings Group annual conference.

Visitors to the page should be able to post images and text to the left hand side of the page. Please don't hesitate to add any item of interest that fits the criteria (or expands it!). We hope this new venture will create many opportunities to stimulate interest in our subject and spread the word.

Call for an excursions organiser

Occasional excursions are valued by members. The Committee needs a natural organiser to help arrange them. You would become the Excursions Secretary and co-opted onto the Committee (which meets every two months) until formal appointment at the next AGM. If you are good at pulling things together, we need you, and if you have a little energy to spare which needs harnessing, you need us! Contact Chairman Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk) or Secretary David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk) to discuss further.

Haseley Court and Haseley Manor

In August David Clark (OBR Secretary) and two members of the Victoria County History team visited two former manor houses in Great Haseley parish, in connection with the VCH's forthcoming Ewelme Hundred volume. Haseley Manor, near the church in Great Haseley village, is essentially an H-shaped 17th-century house remodelled in the 18th century, while Haseley Court (in Little Haseley) comprises a grand 7-bay entrance front of c.1710 (extended to 11 bays in 1754), with the probable remains of a high-status medieval range to the rear. Both buildings are listed and are discussed by Pevsner, and our aim was to test the received wisdom and to see whether any early remains could be identified, particularly in Haseley Court's back range.



Haseley Manor: the main south-west front (S. Townley)



Haseley Court: the main south front (S. Townley)



Haseley Court: the part-medieval north-east range (S. Townley)

Haseley Court certainly occupies a medieval site. In 1391 the manor was bought by the wealthy London goldsmith Drew Barentin, and his relatives the Chalgrove Barentins subsequently moved to Little Haseley, where they lived in some style. The house's back range contains a number of apparently medieval features, in particular a two-centred arched doorway to the ground floor, and above it a three-light Decorated ogee-tracery window with delicate cusping under a flat head. The walls are thick (at least 33 inches and possibly more), supporting the suggestion that they are of medieval origin. As can be seen from the range's gable end, however, the original steep roof-pitch has been heightened, meaning that the crenellations, quatrefoil roundels, and pediment set higher up in the range's side wall are all secondary features, created probably as part of an 18th-century Gothick makeover (see below). Another anomaly is a curious brick structure above the gable end's 14th-century-style window, its lower part constructed of thin bricks laid largely in stretcher bond, but with some larger bricks near the apex. The roof structure unfortunately proved inaccessible, despite David's heroic efforts at crawling through some dark and tiny attic spaces!

Despite the anomalies we agreed that the range could well be of medieval origin, with a few features possibly in situ. A now external wall forming a continuation of the range may have also formed a part, as it contains traces of window openings. Possibly the two formed part of a courtyard house, the back range's long upper room perhaps originating as an upper hall (as suggested by Pevsner).

The house's later development proved no less interesting. The date of c.1710 for the main classical block comes from documentary evidence, suggesting that it was begun by the new owner Edmund Boulter shortly before his death in 1709, and completed by his nephew. The 1754 date for its extension was confirmed by a datestone set low in the rear wall, and surviving fixtures (especially fireplaces) seem consistent with the date. The 1710 house may, however, have had a grand staircase opening to the entrance hall, since the hall's current back wall appears to be an insertion, probably as part of a more general reorganization in the 1750s. The Gothicisation of the back range and of the (new?) north-west range may have been contemporary, or may have followed soon after. Finally, the house was thoroughly restored in the 1950s–60s by Nancy Lancaster, who employed John Fowler (of Colefax and Fowler) to decorate the back range's long upper room with *trompe l'oeil*. The result was so successful that on first seeing it Nancy is alleged to have cried, 'Damn, John, its stucco and not *trompe l'oeil*'.

Haseley Manor was, on the whole, a less complex building to interpret, though not without its puzzles. The site was occupied by a medieval manor house, whose spectacular 14th- and 15th-century barn stands a little way to the east near the church (which we visited during last year's Presentation Day). The house seems to have been entirely rebuilt in the late 17th century, however, probably by one of the Lenthall family as tenants under the dean and canons of Windsor, and appears in its

original form on an estate map of 1729. The accessible roofs (chiselled assembly marks and absence of sophisticated carpentry) are consistent with the date, although an unusual strapwork staircase may be a few decades earlier. Possibly that reflects an earlier rebuild, although the stair has been rebuilt and may not be in situ.



Haseley Manor assembly mark (D. Clark)



Haseley Court strap work staircase (D. Clark)

The west cross wing was remodelled in a more austere style in the 18th century, probably by the lessee Thomas Blackall (died 1786) – Blackall was one of a local landholding family, and lord of nearby Latchford. The intention was probably to remodel the whole house, but plans may have changed, and the various internal changes to stairs and fireplaces seem not all to be of one date. Evidence for a lost late 19th-century block on the west was confirmed by an old postcard in the owner's possession. Probably it provided services of some kind, but the block was demolished in the mid 20th century.

Thanks are due to the respective owners (Desmond and Fiona Heyward and Julian Metcalfe) for allowing access. Fuller accounts will be given in OBR Reports 261–2, and the VCH Ewelme Hundred volume will be published next spring.

Simon Townley

A brief study of a Trullo building in Ostuni, Southern Italy

I recently visited a friend who has bought a plot of land near Ostuni in Apulia, Southern Italy, about 25mins from Brindisi. The plot included two trullo houses. These are the local stone built buildings with conical or dome shaped roofs typical of this region.



Fig 1. A settlement of trulli near Ostuni. (D. Thynne)

The main house had a large trullo¹, which included a large central domed house and added extensions for sleeping, and a kitchen and store, (fig 2). This house had been expanded and modernised in 2006, with the addition of a bathroom, kitchen and two bedrooms and a large underground car park/store. Because these houses are protected the new build was built in the trullo tradition so the new extensions had conical roofs (fig 3).



Fig 2. The settlement I visited with the original trullo to the left with its oven to the front and the new extensions to the right. (D. Thynne)



Fig 3. Conical roofs on the 2006 extension. (D. Thynne)

¹ 'Trullo' means a building with one roof, 'trulli' with many.

Also on the property was a smaller trullo, completely unmodernised and I couldn't resist making a brief survey of it. The building was built on a north south axis, the only door facing due north (fig. 4). It is a roughly-circular building, of two tiers, made of undressed limestone blocks, not coursed but recently pointed with lime mortar. The rear wall forms part of the curtilage wall of the plot and here it is dry stone with no mortar (fig 6).



Fig 4. The smaller trullo, north side. (D. Thynne)

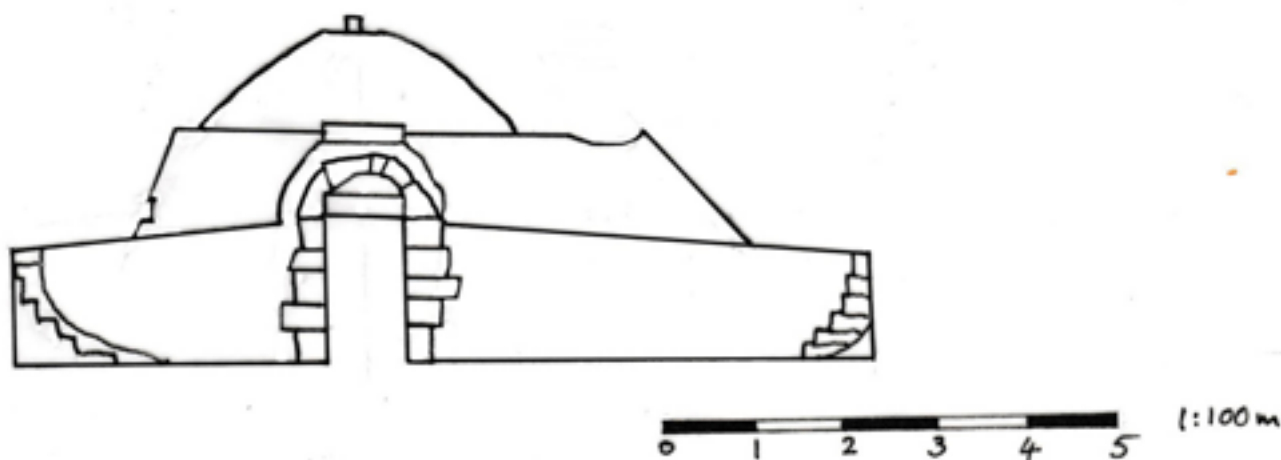


Fig 5. Sketch north elevation of the smaller trullo, showing domed roof and steps on the east and west sides. (D. Thynne)



Fig 6. Small trullo; south side (D. Thynne)

Stone steps on the west and east sides go to a slightly spiralling platform circling the building. This wall is lower on the south (back) elevation. The dome shape is a traditional style of the Ostuni region called 'Torre Ostuni' and the dome has been recently rendered with limestone mortar.

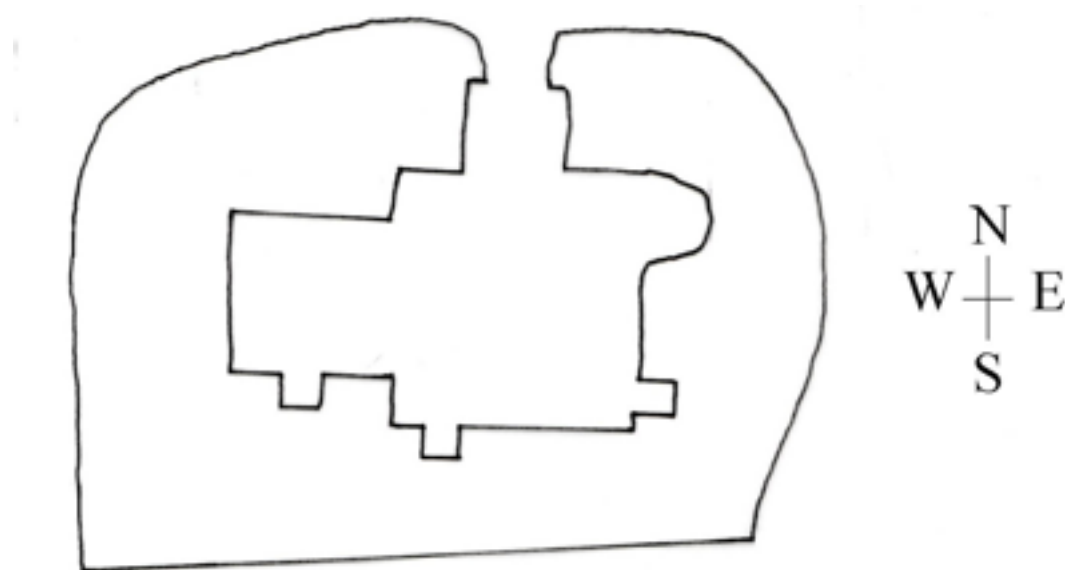


Fig 7. Plan of the smaller trullo, showing the small cupboard on the east and 'sleeping area' on the west side. Note the built-in niches on the east and south walls, and especially the enormously thick walls in some areas over 2ms thick. Scale 1:100m. (D. Thynne)

The interior of the building comprises one main room with a sleeping area to the east. Niches are built into the walls (see fig 7 - plan) and there is a small cupboard to the west of the door which has a small domed roof with small quoins and an arched header. Stone shelves have been built into the north wall above the entrance to the sleeping area. The sleeping area is entered through the arch and forms the east side of the main room. Two plinths line the north and south walls, probably for a sleeping platform (fig 8). Calling this space a 'sleeping area' may be a misnomer as this area also has tethering hooks and chains set into the far wall so it was probably multi-functional. There are no windows (very common with these buildings) save a very small opening on the west elevation, probably for ventilation.

**Fig 8. the
'sleeping area'
showing the
plinths for a
sleeping
platform. (D.
Thynne)**



The internal walls were originally plastered and limewashed, most of which has fallen away revealing squared and hewn rocks of coursed limestone of various sizes (fig 9), there is no evidence of mortar. The domed ceiling is made of smaller dressed stones placed in courses, gently coming together to form a dome ending in a circular flat stone (fig 10). Again there is no mortar, some small stones fill any gaps. The external roofing materials were not visible but traditionally the roofs had different internal and external layers. The floor has recently been concreted, but would have been beaten earth as seen in another trullo nearby.



Fig 9. Coarsed limestone blocks forming the walls. (D. Thynne)



Fig 10. The domed roof from the inside showing the coarsed drystone blocks, any gaps filled with small stones. (D. Thynne)

My friend's plot was set in an olive grove as was common in the area. Ostuni and Apulia are renowned for their olive oil production and olive trees are seen everywhere. I was surprised at how little top soil there was, limestone bedrock outcrops were very prominent in amongst the trees and all the curtilage walls were drystone made of large irregular blocks. So limestone would be the obvious first choice of building material. Very little wood was used in the construction of the smaller trullo, the only wood being for the door lintel, the door and a few wooden pegs set into the wall internally. Larger trullo did have wooden platforms used for storage².

As we know limestone regions (ie Chilterns) have little surface water and rely on water storage cisterns for a continual water supply. I was told that cisterns are dug beneath the trullo, the spoil being used as the building material, and that the slope of the spiralling roofs feed the water into the cistern. The larger trullo on my friend's plot had a large cistern in the courtyard, but also an incredibly deep artesian well of some 85m (stone lined).

I was lucky to have access to some maps contained in the deeds of the plot. One showed long and narrow strips attached to individual trullo. There were some 12 trullo houses of different sizes within an approximate two square mile area. The deeds also listed all the individual trees on the property: olive, figs and almonds, which added greatly to its value (olive trees qualify for an EEC subsidy, and produce a very valuable crop). The narrow plots were reminiscent of an English medieval field plan, as here too the owners of large manor houses, known as Masserie, controlled much of the land.

The curiosity of the many trullo in this small area is what the buildings were used for. It is hard to imagine that all of them were used as dwellings. The small trullo had no fireplace, and although the summer temperatures are very warm, 40°C/104° F in August, winter temperatures plummet and it is known to snow in February, so some heating would be necessary. It could be that it was used for accommodation during busy periods such as harvesting, or for animal housing. Then there is the curiosity of the exterior steps, and what they are for. Some think that the flat stone sealing the roof was removed and materials loaded via the hole for storage in the trullo, (although this may have been easily managed taking these materials in through the door. Interestingly the building had been used to store firewood.) Some questions still need to be answered.

Dating is tricky, the town of Alberobello (UNESCO WHS) has many trullo and trulli dwellings, of which many are documented, and the earliest date from the 17th century. Other documentation is scarce, and there appears to be no record of trullo buildings any earlier than this date. The 17th century buildings were made from

² As seen in the Alberobello Museum

undressed stones and have a much rougher appearance. These could be a mix of field stones and spoil from digging the cisterns. It is thought that the more 'finished' houses began in the last quarter of the 18th century. Taking this sketchy evidence into account, it is safest to say that the building date of the smaller trullo is as yet unknown.

What struck me most during my visit was the skill of dry stone building techniques. The conical roofs made with diminishing stones, and topped with sandstone pinnacles, are simple and effective. Some say that they were built in this style to evade building tax, as they could be quickly dismantled, but this does appear to be somewhat far-fetched. It is more likely to be a continuation of a traditional building method of dry masonry derived from the Greeks who had close connections with this region, the word 'trulli' deriving from a Greek word for a domed-roofed tomb.

Donna Thynne

Where is it?

Alice Baker is seeking to identify the country house in the following painting:



Alice offers the following information: *“I believe the property is located in South Oxfordshire, possibly quite close to the border of either Berkshire or Buckinghamshire. It appears to be Georgian/Neo-Georgian red -brick architecture, although it may have some more recent alterations. The house has three floors/two storeys, i.e. a ground floor, first floor and a second floor - with (maybe) four windows in the top floor. The property contains around nine bedrooms, and is set in its own grounds, surrounded by fields. I am fairly sure it is a private Country House, and so not open to the public. I have very little other important information regarding the house.*

If you recognise it, or think of any possibilities, do please contact Alice directly at alicebaker241@outlook.com She has been searching for a year with no result yet.

Richard Farrant

OBR Lecture 2015

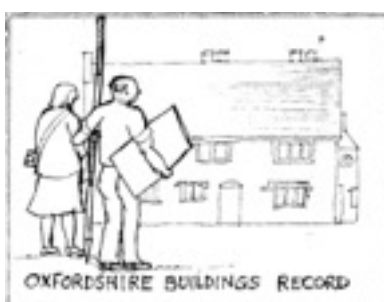
This year's lecture will be given at Rewley House by Peter Brears on Tuesday 27 October at 5.30pm. Titled “Backyard to dining room: service rooms in the country house”, Peter has provided the following synopsis:

The Georgian and Victorian periods fostered an ever-increasing complexity in the preparation and service of food. Matched by growing investment in staff, structures and plant, highly regulated departmental arrangements were introduced into the service areas of country houses. This lecture looks at each domestic office in turn to explain its function, then explores how architects combined them into a plan, and how their combined contributions came together in the magnificence of the dining room.

Peter is eminently well qualified to speak on this. He formerly directed the city museum services in York and Leeds, and has spent the last 20 years as an independent scholar and consultant for the National Trust, English Heritage, Cadw and private households. He has worked on the service rooms of over 100 properties and his books *Cooking and Dining in Medieval England* and *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Stuart England* are the standard works on these subjects. He also has practical experience of historic kitchens, being the first person to operate those at Hampton Court Palace since 1737.

OBR Presentation Day

The annual Presentation Day, when OBR members briefly describe recent research, will be in Oxford on Saturday or Sunday 21 or 22 November. Details will be circulated when finalised.



Forthcoming Events

Council for British Archaeology: South Midlands

Saturday 17 October 2015. The Later Prehistory of the South Midlands. From 10am to 4.30 pm at the Council chamber, Town Hall, St. Mary's Way, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1DS. (See separate application form below.)

O.A.H.S. / OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD Lecture 2015

Tuesday 27 October, 5.30pm, at Rewley House, Oxford. Peter Brears on "Backyard to dining room: service rooms in the Country House" (See above for more detail.)

OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD Presentation Day 2015

Saturday or Sunday 21 or 22 November, in Oxford. Details will be circulated when finalised.

O.A.H.S. WINTER LECTURE SERIES

Monthly, November to March 2016. See oahs.org.uk for details

Oxon Recorder is the newsletter of Oxfordshire Buildings Record and is published four times a year. OBR aims to advance education and promote research on the buildings of Oxfordshire by encouraging the recording of buildings and to create and manage a publicly accessible repository of records relating to such buildings. The Oxon Recorder is also available on our website: www.obr.org.uk

Contact details

Newsletter entries should be sent to Richard Farrant (newsletter@obr.org.uk)

Copy dates are 1 March, 1 June, 1 September and 1 December.

Membership – Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk)

General – David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk)

Webmaster – Barbara Creed (admin@obr.org.uk)

Website: www.obr.org.uk

Council for British Archaeology: South Midlands

The Later Prehistory of the South Midlands

Saturday 17th October 2015

Council Chamber, Town Hall, St Mary's Way, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1DS

- 10:00am** Tea, coffee and biscuits
- 10:30am** Welcome
- 10:35am** **Mike Farley:** former Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist
Aylesbury: town within a hillfort
- 11:20am** **Julie Cassidy:** Northamptonshire Finds Liaison Officer
Iron Age and Bronze Age finds from the Portable Antiquities Scheme
- 11:50am** **Mike Luke:** Project Manager, Albion Archaeology
Brockley, Northants: preliminary results from the excavation of two large Iron Age settlements
- 12:20pm** Lunch – a cold buffet will be provided (vegetarian and gluten-free options available)
- 1:30pm** **Gary Lock:** Emeritus Professor of Archaeology, Oxford University Institute of Archaeology
Mapping hillforts: problems and progress
- 2:15pm** **Dr Ian Brown:** Oxford University Institute of Archaeology
Ravensburgh Castle hillfort: new surveys, new interpretations
- 3:00pm** Tea, coffee and biscuits
- 3:30pm** **CBA South Midlands AGM**
- 3:45pm** **Tim Allen:** Senior Project Manager, Oxford Archaeology
Later prehistory at Castle Hill, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire: hilltop enclosure, midden, hillfort and settlement
- 4:30pm** Close

Tickets: £16 for members of CBA South Midlands and its affiliated organisations (see www.archaeologyuk.org/cbasml for a list); £20 for non-members. A buffet lunch is included. **Booking is essential.** Pay & Display parking is available nearby: see overleaf for a map. This flyer can be downloaded at www.archaeologyuk.org/cbasml/cba-sm%20events.htm

Send this slip and payment by **12th October 2015** to: David Ingham, 1a Stamford Lane, Warmington, Northants NN8 6TW. Please note that acknowledgment of your booking can only be supplied via e-mail or SAE.

Please reserve _____ place(s) at the CBA South Midlands 2015 autumn conference, including _____ vegetarian lunch(es)

Enclosed is a cheque for £ _____ payable to **CBA South Midlands** _____ gluten-free lunch(es)

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Name of affiliated organisation (if applicable): _____

Enquiries should be addressed to David Ingham at the address above, or on 07717 866767 / dp.ingham@albion-arch.com