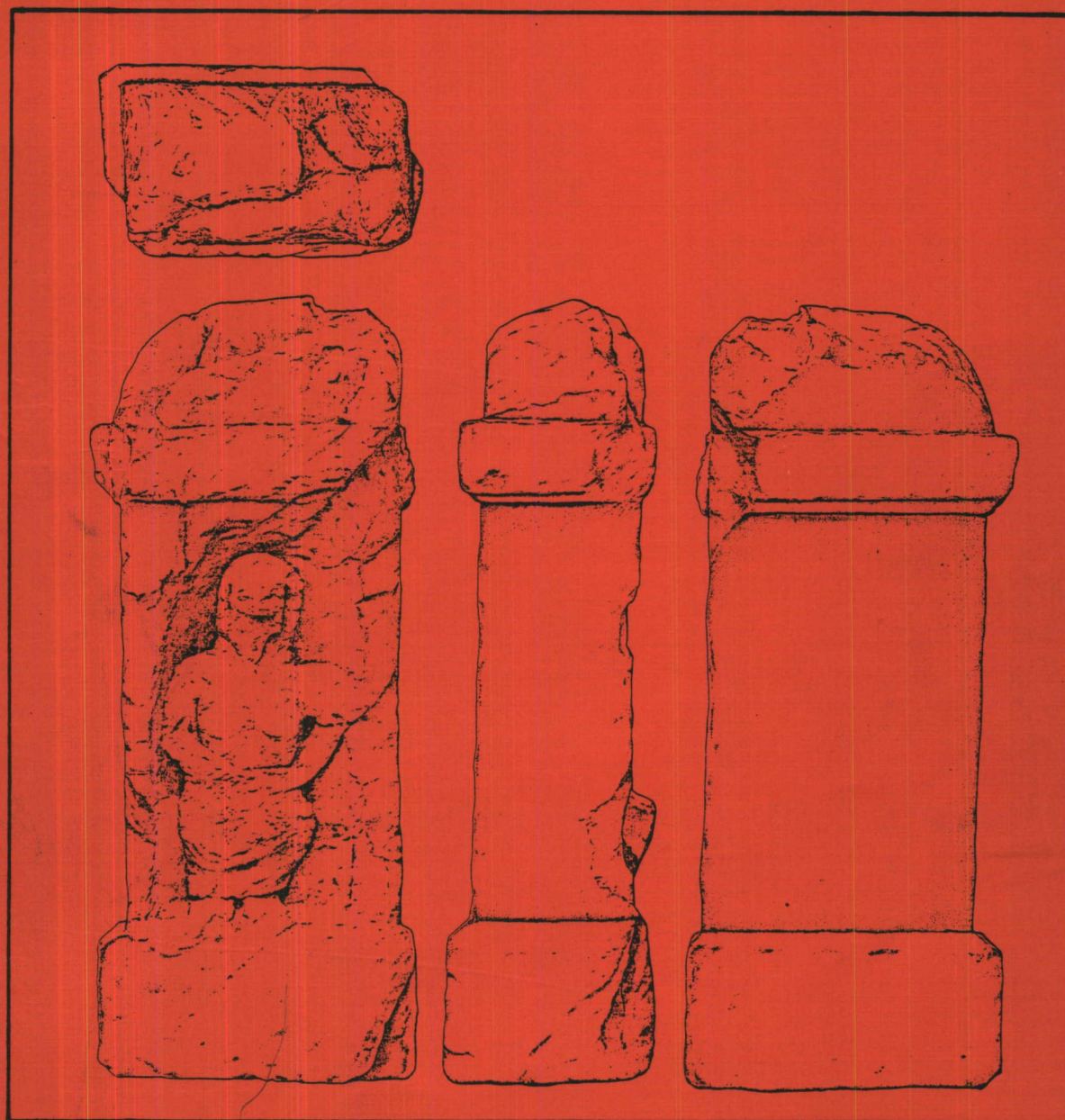


SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

**19
1989**



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SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Council for British Archaeology Regional Group 9 (Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire)

NUMBER 19, 1989

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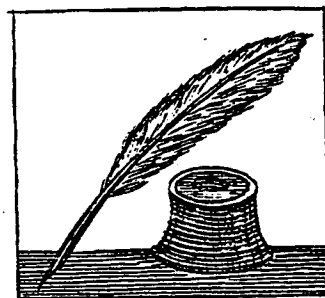
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EDITORIAL



The Committee decided, earlier in the year, to experiment with typesetting the Journal by computer. This has, inevitably, meant a few delays but should speed up production in the future.

We are very grateful to committee member Barry Horne for much hard work and patient work in deciphering the various computer disks sent to him and for his advice on the general layout of the Journal.

We hope that it gives a more 'professional' appearance to the Journal and makes it easier to read.

As always - and especially this year - your suggestions and criticisms would be welcome.

I repeat my pleas of previous years to publicise the Journal as widely as possible. We must increase circulation. Ask for it in your local library.

Two successful events were held by the Group: the AGM in the autumn at Great Kingshill, Bucks and the spring conference in April of this year at Bedford. Our thanks to the organisers.

Finally, your contributions for our twentieth issue please (preferably on 5 1/4" disk, IBM ascii) by 1 February 1989.

Andrew Pike
July 1989

BEDFORDSHIRE

The Work of the Bedfordshire County Council Planning Department Conservation and Archaeology Section in 1988

GENERAL INTRODUCTION David Baker

During 1988 pressures requiring work of various kinds have continued to grow, matched by public interest and concern. The imbalance of resources for various activities is becoming more marked. Many of the more damaging proposals affecting listed buildings and Conservation Areas come from those whose pockets are deeper than their insight into the needs of the heritage. On the other hand, developers are showing signs of a greater willingness to fund archaeological clearance in advance of construction or mineral extraction. Yet again, resources for vital service-based activities, such as SMR development and input to environmental education, continue to be limited by general restrictions on local government expenditure, thereby restricting major opportunities to tell people about all these fascinating things.

Several people have left or arrived. Bob Mustoe has made a career change, moving out of archaeology into residential social work, and has been replaced as a Field Officer by Royston Clark, a prehistorian from the University of Southampton, who was immediately given a medieval site to dig on his arrival. Terry Jackman went on maternity leave during the second half of the year. Liz Marten has moved to be Conservation Officer for North Hertfordshire District Council, and has been replaced by David Bevan, formerly a projects manager with the noted conservation building firm of Rattee and Kett. Melanie Morris, Assistant Conservation Officer, has gone to Derbyshire County Council, to be succeeded here by Nicholas Doggett, formerly a listed buildings resurvey Inspector with English Heritage, and even more distantly an Oxford/DOE Archaeology In-Service student who spent a session with us on the parish survey programme.

The excavation/post-excavation part of the service has reached a crisis point over accommodation. The space generously made available for more than 15 years by John Turner and North Bedfordshire Borough Council's Museum is no longer adequate for an organisation which over the last five years has achieved a proper structure and a higher demand for work. Several possibilities have been examined within the centre of Bedford, and at present attempts are being made to secure the redundant church of St Mary, 400 yards from County Hall, as an Archaeological Centre.

PRESERVATION, SMR AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPE Angela Simco

Bridge Recording

The archaeological recording of major repair programmes by Peter McKeague continued at Barford, Bromham and

Harrold bridges during 1988. At Bromham, drainage improvements on the deck revealed further traces of the medieval river bridge, encased in later work. Relics of the bridge's more recent history were revealed immediately below the tarmac road surface. A series of six rows of brick lined sockets set in concrete, found at the east end of the bridge, were the last traces of vehicle obstacles placed on the bridge during the Second World War.

Several more historic bridges were located during the course of the year. These ranged from single arches at Brickgate to the east of Blunham bridge, and at Girtford side arch, to more complete structures at Arlesey and Chicksands. At Arlesey two pointed sandstone arches of a previously unknown medieval bridge were identified within the abandoned 19th century structure. At Chicksands an 18th century three-arched sandstone bridge very similar to the old bridge at Clophill was inspected.

Further articles were published in Bedfordshire Magazine. Sites so far covered are: Barford, Sutton, Bromham, Harrold, Tynsill (Stagsden) and Arlesey, and Blunham bridges. The final report on Sutton Packhorse bridge has been published in Bedfordshire Archaeology 18. The County Surveyor's repair work on the bridge received a commendation in the Civic Trust Awards scheme for 1988.

Emergency repairs were carried out by Northamptonshire County Council following the partial collapse of the northern approach to Ditchford Bridge, Northamptonshire. Archaeological recording by Bedfordshire County Council revealed a complicated structural sequence beginning in the 13th to 14th century. A short report on the results has been submitted to Northamptonshire Archaeology.

Monuments Protection Programme

A national programme by English Heritage to enhance the schedule of ancient monuments is now under way. A very wide range of monuments is being considered through an evaluation procedure based on a scoring system. This will assist the selection of examples which merit consideration for scheduling from each monument type. Bedfordshire is one of five counties (the others being Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) participating in an evaluation pilot scheme. With financial assistance from English Heritage, work began late in the year on the evaluation of a variety of prehistoric ritual and burial monuments, medieval fortifications, fishponds and warrens. It is hoped that work on scheduling, which will be carried out by English Heritage field-workers, will begin in 1989.

Sites Monuments and Buildings Record

The collection of aerial photographs has been completely updated from the collections held by the National Monuments Record and Cambridge University, and from others supplied recently by Northamptonshire County Council. A project partly supported by the Royal

Commission on Historical Monuments (England) enabled the input of photographic information into the SMBR, including 150 sketch plots at a scale of 1:10000. As a result, many new 'sites' have been identified and considerable additional information provided for others, predominantly on the boulder clays of north Bedfordshire.

Historic Landscape

Within the county there is an increasing emphasis on developing a more integrated approach to managing the countryside heritage. This is reflected in the growing workload for the section in providing historic landscape and archaeological input to farm and woodland plans, management schemes and publications being prepared by other Sections in the Planning Department. Similar contributions are being made also to literature prepared by the Leisure Services Department, notably the leaflets which accompany the developing network of circular walks.

Field Survey

As noted above, many new cropmark sites are being recorded on the boulder clays of north Bedfordshire. One reason for this may be the increasing removal by ploughing of any overburden protecting them. The majority occur along ridge tops where degradation seems to have been the greatest; in several cases areas which lie further down the slopes are still protected by overburden.

One of these sites lies immediately west of Tythe Farm, Colmworth (TL 097 587). A small group of enclosure cropmarks was first recorded here in 1984. During October 1988 an opportunity arose to look more closely at the site when a sewage pipe was laid through it. Machine stripping of a 20m width of topsoil and the cutting of the pipe trench revealed only very shallow traces of ditches and possible pits and postholes. These features, ranging in depth from 250mm to 450mm, contained fragmentary remains of bone, charcoal and sherds of Iron Age pottery, some decorated. This clearly was an extremely denuded site at the top of a low ridge with very bad plough damage, and indicates a serious problem of survival.

A medieval fishery complex in Home Wood, Northill was surveyed in February in preparation for a Forestry Commission management plan. The earthworks lie on the east slope of a south-north valley, with a fall in ground level from east to west of about 2.5m (from A to B on the plan). A roughly rectangular enclosure is divided into two parts by a north-south ditch. The outer moat is very broad on the west, and usually waterfilled. On the east there is an equally broad but much deeper ditch which, because it is cut into an uphill slope, can never have held much water. The fishery comprises three islands, each with a number of breeding stews. These do not connect directly with the outer moat, but with a series of smaller interconnected channels.

The eastern half of the site shows no internal features, except for a substantial north-south bank, up to 3m high, formed from material from the outer ditch. This may have served as a rabbit warren.

The water levels shown on the plan are those pertaining in winter. A farm reservoir adjoins the site to the north, and this causes a serious drop in water levels during the summer. It is not known whether this has led to the destruction of any buried organic features such as sluice gates.

The fishery is of a complex type unknown elsewhere in the county, and rare nationally. It is not scheduled, but is undoubtedly of schedulable standard. The Forestry Commission hope to manage it as an area of conservation interest.

HOME WOOD FISHERY, Northill, Bedfordshire TL 144 463

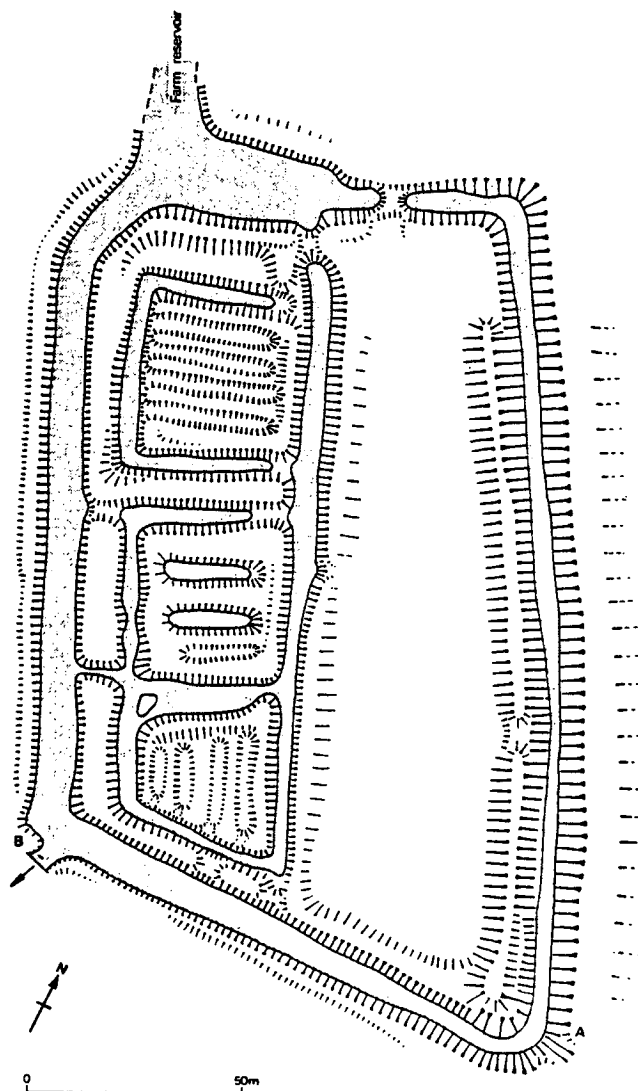


Fig. 1

Publication

The Glossary of Terms - Historic Landscape and Archaeology has been slightly revised, and reprinted in a smaller, typeset format. It now costs £1.95 plus 25p postage.

EXCAVATION AND POST-EXCAVATION

Evelyn Baker

The pace of work in Bedfordshire is steadily increasing. Numerous small watching briefs were undertaken, but the main field projects were a burial enclosure at Willington, work on the restoration of the gardens at Wrest Park, excavation of the north aisle of the Dominican Friary at Dunstable, and evaluation work at Roman Sandy.

The main post-excavation project continues to be Grove Priory, where steady progress runs alongside experimental post-excavation techniques to control such a large and complex project. A number of sites were completed to publication and accession stage, and these figure in Volume 18 of Bedfordshire Archaeology.

Willington Plantation Terry Jackman

During May 1988 a square enclosure with central burial pit at TL 101154 was the subject of rescue excavation funded by Redlands Aggregates Ltd, with the Archaeology Service assisted by an MSC Community Programme group. The site had been first discovered during the 1950s from aerial photography which showed a large area of cropmarks east of Bedford, including several within the limits of this gravel quarry, some of which have already been excavated.

The enclosure consisted of a ditch 50-90cm deep and 2m wide with sides 25-27m long. The circular feature towards its centre contained the remains of a buried inhumation lying in a crouched position, face down, up against the NE side. An antler from an adult red deer (*Cervus Elaphus Scoticus*) had been placed over the top of the pit.

The inhumation is the skeletal remains of a young adult female aged between 17-25 years. The stature has been calculated to approximately 1.53m. A plaque-like deposit on the inside of the body of the ribs could be consistent with an infection of the pleura. There is pitting on the surface of the orbital roofs and this is generally held to be indicative of iron-deficiency anaemia. A sample of bone will be sent for radio-carbon dating.

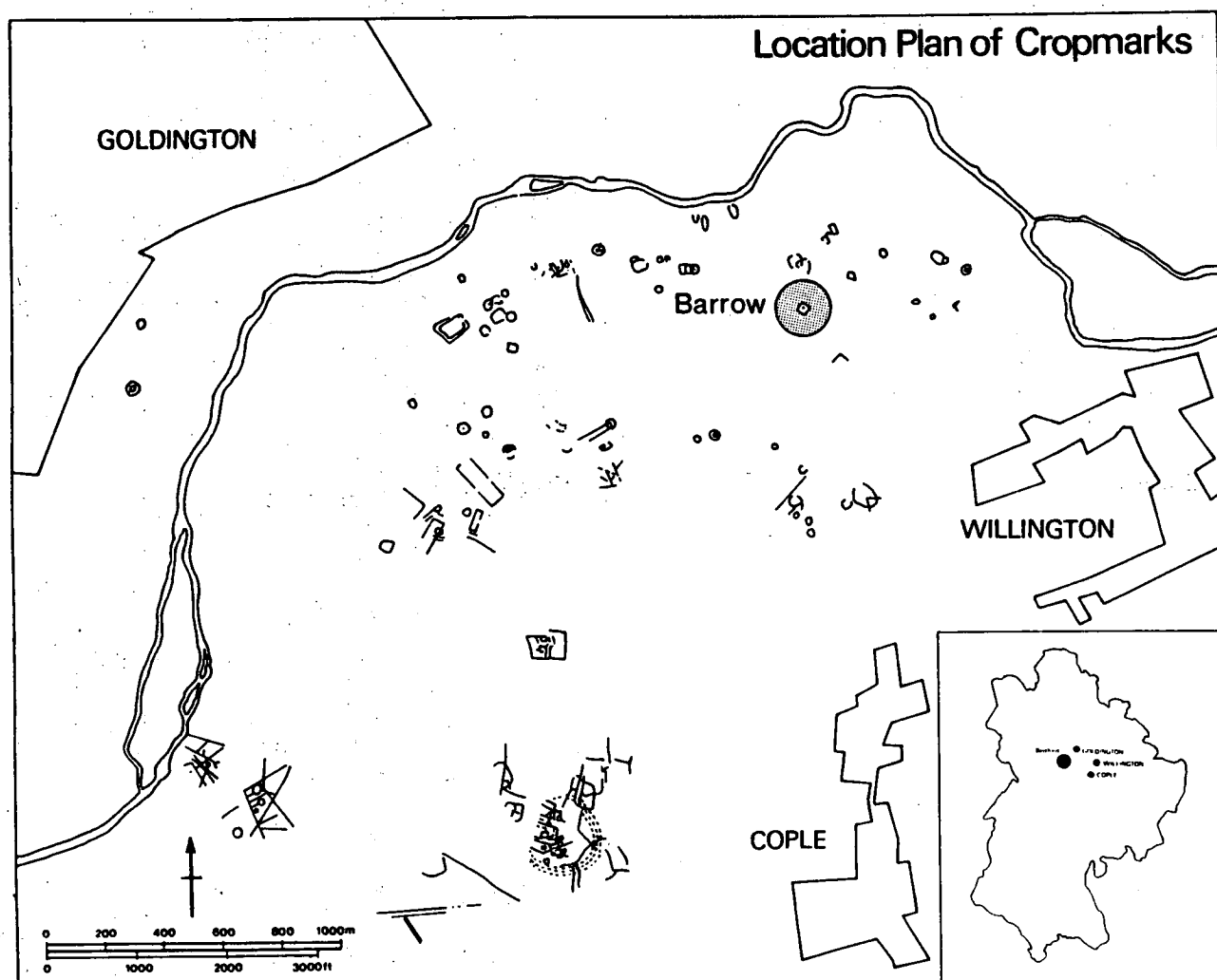


Fig. 2 Location plan of cropmarks east of Bedford

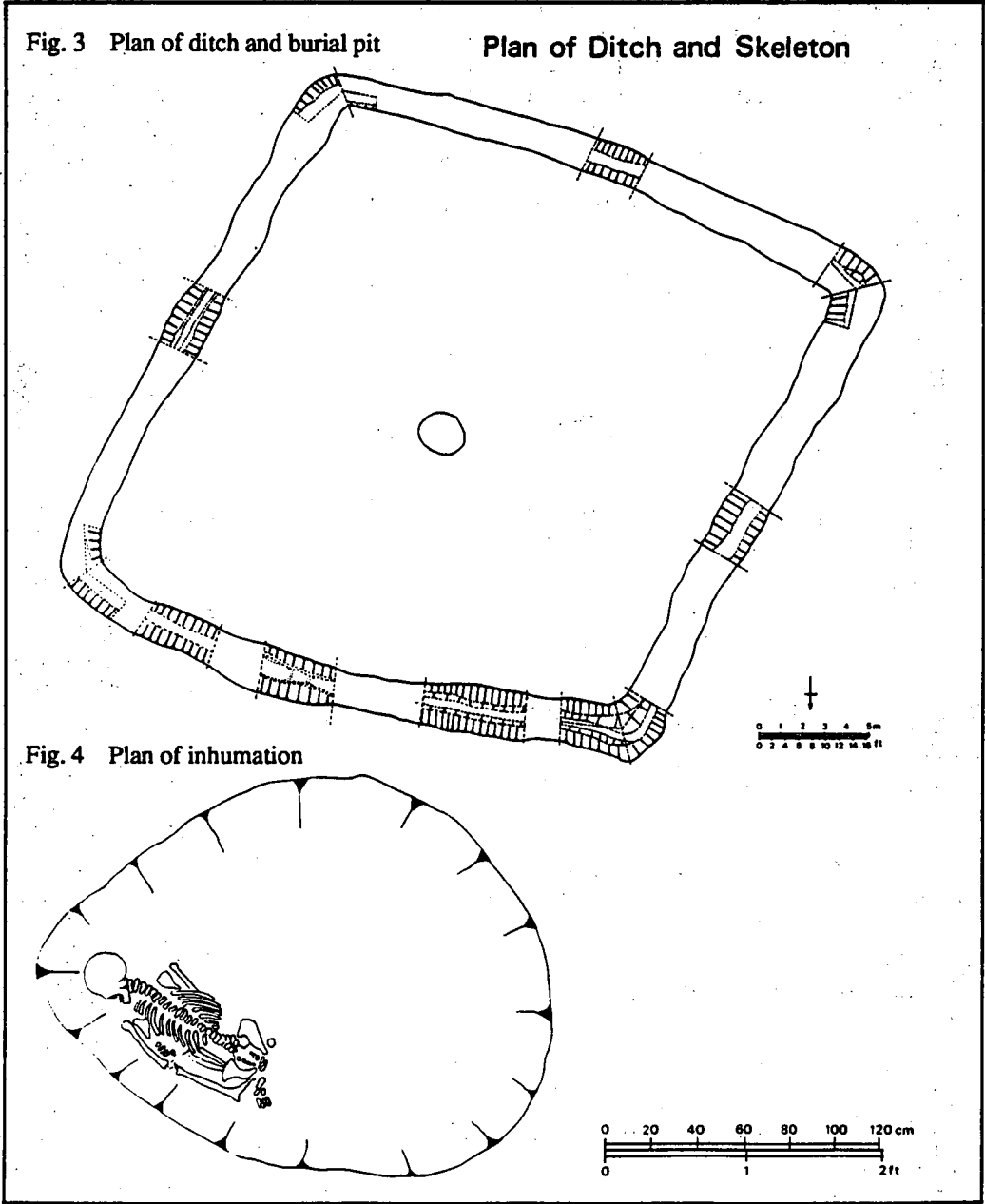
St Mary's Church, Stevington Joe Prentice

The parish lies in the northern part of the county approximately four miles west of Bedford. It is on a spur of land overlooking the river Ouse. A natural spring rises from the base of the stone retaining wall below the east end of the church; this holy well was believed to have healing properties and attracted sufficient numbers of pilgrims to justify a *hospitium* for lodgings run from the priory at nearby Harrold.

Besides the connection with an ancient, possibly pagan 'holy water' site, the main interest of the church (at SP 991556) lies in its Saxon west tower. The church is quite complex, consisting of a nave with north and south aisles which have corresponding porches, and a chancel with ruined chapels to north and south.

French drains were to be excavated around the entire circumference of the church excluding the outer walls of the chapels. The work done by an MSC / NACRO team was monitored and recorded with the aid of grant from English Heritage. The stone foundations were recorded fully by photography and scale drawings, to see whether any new structural evidence could supplement the documented history of construction.

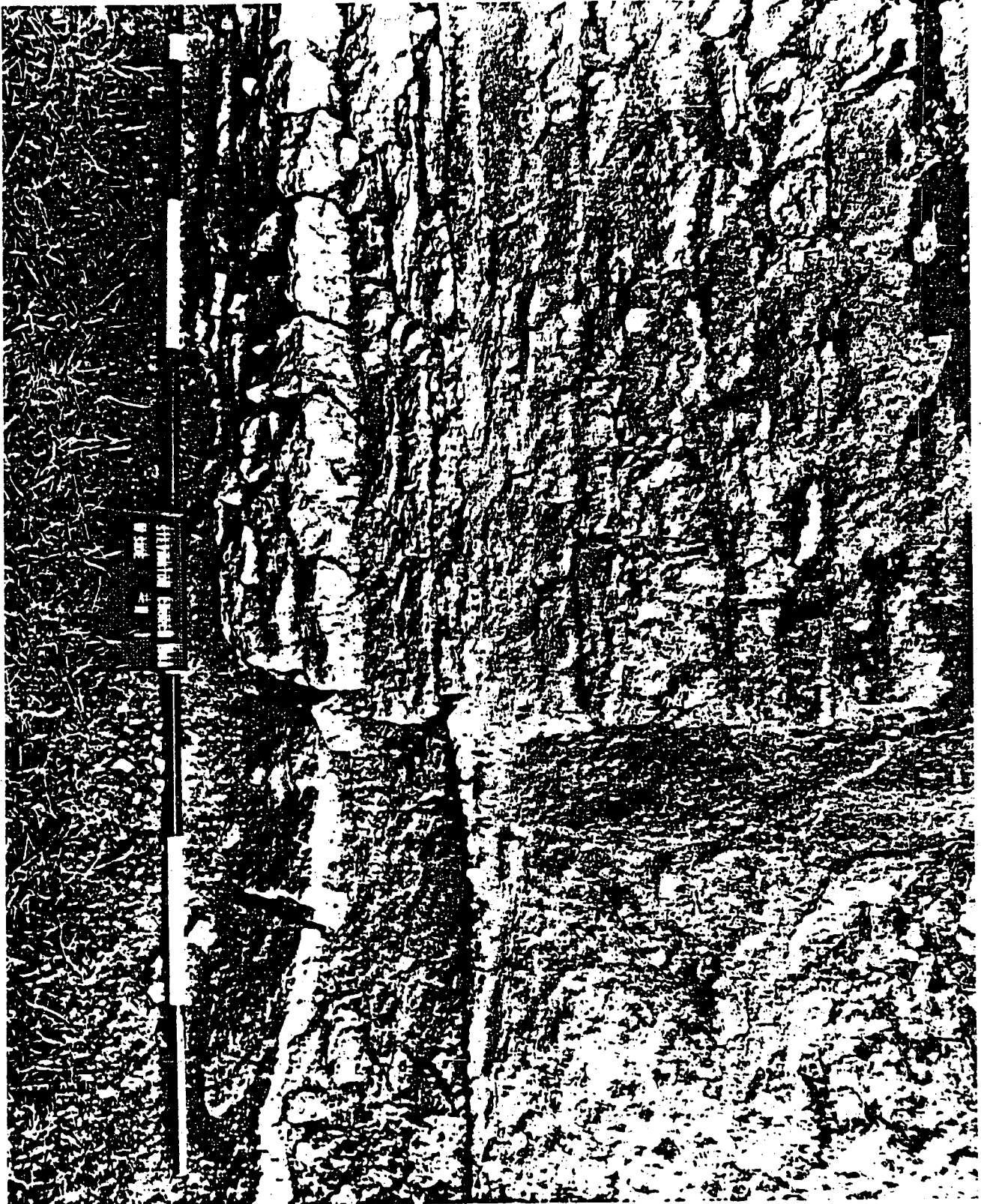
Examination of the western end of the structure proved the tower to be the earliest event as expected. No less than three phases of extension were seen going south, with the south porch being a later addition rather than an integral structure. The porch has single phase footings but a more complex superstructure. Going northwards from the tower there were only two phases of building, and these were visible above ground also. The north porch has two distinct sets of footing, visible only below ground.



The only notable feature further east was connected with the two ruined chapels. In both cases the arches that connected them to the chancel and north and south aisles showed signs of blocking at footings level. No floor levels remained in either chapel.

Dunstable Friary Royston Clark and Anthony Maull

An excavation programme from July to November 1988 opened up an area of 704 sq m within the church precinct of the Dominican Friary in Dunstable (TL 0195 2169). The excavation was probably the last opportunity to investigate



Pl. 1 The west end of the tower of St Mary's Church and attached south aisle at footings level

a substantial area of this extensive site. Grants were generously provided by the developers of sheltered housing on the site, Furlong Brothers (Chingford) Ltd, and by English Heritage. Assistance on site with excavation and finds processing was provided by the Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable.

Dunstable was one of 56 English houses of Blackfriars. The friars were invited to Dunstable in 1259 by Henry III and construction of the church and other buildings occurred soon after.

"A certain mansion was given to the Friars Preachers in 1259. They began to build very sumptuous houses, and built a church with all speed" (J Nicholls: *Bib Top Brit* 2, 1794, 228).

Completion of the first church is likely to have been in 1264, a particularly early date for a friary church. The final church would have been taken out of use and then demolished sometime after the Dissolution of the friaries in 1538/9.

This note summarises the preliminary results of the 1988 excavations, with some reference to other work on the church in the early 1970s by the Department of the Environment. Extensive work was undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s by the Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable and by the Department of the Environment (Dr Ian Stead and Adrian Havercroft) on parts of the precinct to the west, including the kitchens and a herb garden or orchard. It is hoped to prepare a full final report which includes all this work.

Roman Features

Pre-friary features consisted of two Roman wells (not fully excavated), one of which contained a partially articulated horse skeleton and sherds of Samian ware. In general, very little residual Roman material was found across the site. This may be due to landscaping in the medieval period.

Dunstable Friary – Masonry Phases

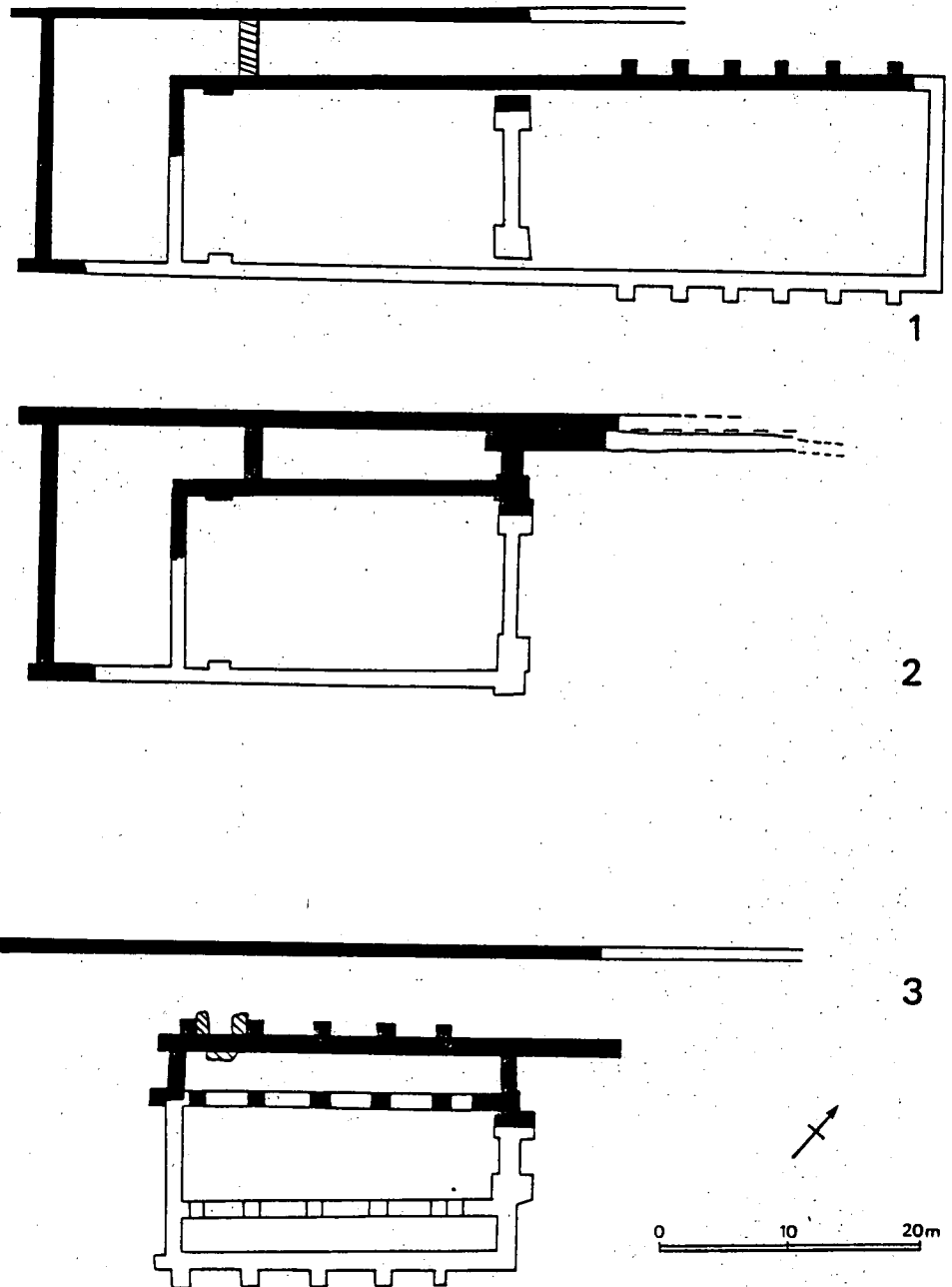


Fig. 5 Plan of masonry phases including previous excavation evidence

The Dominican Friary

Two Christian graves clearly predated the first masonry phase of the church. Also, several post pits were found by the excavations of the 1970s and 1988. Until further analysis can test provisional associations and phasing, two possible interpretations can be considered. Firstly these may have been scaffolding poles cut into the chalk during construction of the first church; secondly, at least some of them may represent an early timber church. The latter might explain

the early burials since no pre-friary ecclesiastical building is known on this site (Prof L Butler, pers comm).

Three main constructional phases were recorded, although the 13th and early 14th century church showed evidence of limited secondary building. The quality of surviving masonry was often extremely good, especially considering that walling was often preserved only a few centimetres below the modern ground surface. This sloped down to the east, so that the western parts of the church, particularly the nave, were carved out of the natural chalk, in an almost cellar-like configuration. In many areas there was evidence for systematic post dissolution robbing of stone and other materials. Finds were limited mainly to roof and floor tile and architectural fragments, including window tracery and mouldings. Also found were large quantities of window glass, including both stained and painted fragments. Very little pottery was recovered. A total of 22 human burials were excavated, but they cannot be confidently ascribed to particular constructional phases of the church without further post-excavation analysis.

Thirteenth Century stone built church

Excavations revealed part of the north wall of the nave and chancel. The nave wall was constructed from chalk blocks and contained a stepped doorway, while the chancel was built from carstone (sandstone with a high iron content) and was buttressed at 2.5 metre intervals. The full dimensions of the church cannot be calculated because the southern and eastern limits have not been seen in excavation, but the nave measured c.25 metres in length and the chancel was at least 30 metres. A large block of masonry between the nave and the chancel could indicate the presence of a substantial structure such as a central tower, above the crossing between the nave and the chancel. Unfortunately, later quarrying had destroyed any further evidence for this structure. Associated with the church, was a precinct wall made of Totternhoe stone, flint and tile fragments. It enclosed a space roughly 4.5 to 5 metres in width around the north side of the church.

During this first phase, a blocking wall was inserted between the north wall of the nave and the precinct wall. This had the effect of restricting access around the building, the eastern area possibly becoming a graveyard.

Early fourteenth century church

A major planned but only partially implemented rebuild of the church coincided with the chancel going out of use and the area becoming a graveyard. A large masonry block was inserted between the walls of the nave and the disused chancel. This block also butted against the possible tower foundation footings. A construction trench was dug immediately north of the disused chancel wall, and a wall (never completed) was partially built at the western end of this trench. Perpendicular to it, a blocking wall was constructed, butting against the precinct wall and the masonry block. The reason why this rebuild was only partially completed remains unclear. Perhaps the most

plausible explanation would be that the Friary ran out of money or there was a change in plan for the church.

Mid fourteenth century church

In the mid 14th century, as part of this phase, the north wall of the 13th century nave appears to have been dismantled to floor level and a series of pier bases were inserted along its length at 3.5 m intervals. An associated north wall was constructed to make a northern aisle with a series of buttresses opposite each pier base. The building material was high quality Totternhoe ashlar blocks. Demolition debris suggests this structure supported a vaulted ceiling. The excavations in the 1970s suggested a west wall, thus giving the north aisle an internal measurement of c.24 m in length and 3.5 m in width. A new precinct wall was also built north of the aisle, 6.4 m from the church, thus pushing outwards and extending the limit of the precinct. This wall was built largely from flint. No evidence for a later chancel was found, though it may rest underneath a modern factory building to the south; if so it would be unusually, if not impossibly, narrow.

Later Insertion

The final construction episode was the insertion of a porch into the north wall of the aisle. The entrance way had a series of steps which were located during the excavations in the 1970s. Associated with this phase is a ditch and road surface with a series of cart ruts running approximately parallel to the side of the church. The ruts had been deliberately backfilled with building material.

Wrest Park Michael Dawson

Current restoration work at Wrest Park (TL 095365) is part of a 15 year programme designed to enhance the grounds of the estate in the care of English Heritage. The design and contracting out of the work is being handled by Land Use Consultants on behalf of English Heritage. The main house, built in 1827 replacing an earlier structure, is let to the National Institute of Agricultural Engineers, but the gardens are open to the public from Easter to October.

The history of the gardens at Wrest Park is reasonably straightforward and is the subject of a lengthy discussion paper prepared by LUC. Essentially in 1658 Wrest Park was a moated Tudor house with a 'new' formal garden to the south. During the last years of the 17th century, both the gardens and the house were extensively modified. The new gardens were drawn by Kip in 1705 and again by Roque in 1735 and 1737, and sketched probably by Tillemans before 1734. In the 1830s the old house was rebuilt further north by the then owner, Earl de Grey. A sketch of 1842 and the Earl de Grey sketchbook of the 1830s, as well as topographical paintings in the Lucas collection, record the changes made to the gardens after 1760. These did not much affect the outline of the layout, but rather reflected differing tastes through the planting of new species.

In 1987-88 restoration of the gardens at Wrest concentrated upon the ornamental lakes (canals), dredging and revetting the eroded banks of the Leg O'Mutton and Ladies lakes and dredging the Long Canal. In each case the intention was to return the lakes to their early 18th century dimensions. However, none of the visual sources described above were drawn to scale and archaeological methodology seemed the most appropriate way to elucidate details of the original structure, not only of the lakes but the amphitheatre as well. A series of trenches was designed to examine the banks of the canals and the slope of the amphitheatre.

The results enabled the original size of the Leg O' Mutton lake to be defined as having been substantially smaller than the present eroded shape. Examination of a series of culverts and land drains helped clarify the earlier, lower, water level of the lake. Additionally, remnants of the garden predating the digging of the Leg O' Mutton lake were revealed and the beginnings of a brick 'library' for the site set up.

The Long Canal was similarly examined, but on a reduced scale; work was concentrated upon the edges and a series of drains and culverts. Through these sections the earliest water conduits on the site could be identified, carrying water between the canals in the early 18th century. A small exploration in the centre of the lake revealed a statue base, possibly for a Poseidon figure hitherto unrecorded.

A second season of work is proposed for the autumn of 1989, when the south-west panel of trees will be the subject of restoration. This includes paths and vistas reflecting the designs of the early 18th century.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS David Baker

Most of the work in this field was routine casework, providing specialist advice to District Planning Officers on applications affecting listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Increasing pressures from this work, together with the lack of staffing resources, has meant that little continues to be done with regard to threatened buildings, Conservation Area review and conservation publicity: the situation was exacerbated in 1988 by the gaps left during the staffing changes.

The most obvious trend, which is not new, but merely intensified, is the pressure on buildings and land generated by recent rises in land and house values. Small rural thatched two-up two-down 17th century cottages are regularly purchased in the expectation that they can be lovingly converted into four or five bedroom executive dwellings complete with double garages. Redundant agricultural buildings, several of them listed barns, and others individual or grouped buildings which make a contribution to the appearance of village or countryside, are undergoing conversions to residential use which usually seriously affect their character and appearance: commercial considerations usually prompt owners to start with proposals for residential uses, the most profitable but the least suitable in conservation

terms for their impact upon internal spaces, historic structure and external appearance. Similar pressures are being applied to the fine late Victorian villas of the major towns, notably Bedford, where their contribution to the quality of the Conservation Area is reduced or removed by massive extensions associated with flat conversion schemes, or even total demolition.

The standard of design for extensions to historic buildings or for new buildings in Conservation Areas remains depressingly low. Architects are involved in only a minority of cases, and only a few of them could be called conservation specialists with particular experience for this kind of work. The contribution of the late 20th century to what survives of the rich rural and urban tradition of historical architecture is going to do our generations little credit.

LUTON MUSEUM SERVICE

Robin Holgate

Survey work and watching briefs on six sites in the Luton district have taken place during the last year.

Bramingham, Luton c.TL077259

Construction work on the Bramingham Park estate is nearing completion. The Icknield Way runs in a south-west to north-east direction across the southern part of the site and the Romano-British settlement centred on Runfold Avenue (Simco, A: Survey of Bedfordshire: the Roman Period (1984) p109), judging from the distribution of metal detector finds of 3rd-4th century coins, extended as far as this routeway. A survey of stripped areas on the estate in Autumn 1987 to the north of the Icknield Way did not produce any Romano-British material; only flint debitage and three scrapers of later neolithic-Bronze Age date were recovered.

The field immediately south-east of Great Bramingham Farm was walked in 20m spaced transects in November 1987, producing a dense surface scatter of 13th-16th century pottery (centred on TL075263). This material is probably associated with the manor house of 'Bramblehanger, alias Bramhanger' known from documentary evidence to have existed here in the late medieval period. Apart from an Iron Age sherd, a mesolithic core and truncated blade, and later neolithic-Bronze Age debitage and 8 retouched pieces, no other archaeological material was retrieved.

Bushmead, Luton TL095252105

A survey of the stripped areas on the southern part of the estate during 1988 only produced two hard hammer struck flint flakes in the area at the foot of the strip lynchets on Bradgers Hill.

Crown Courts site, Luton TL09252105

A watching brief undertaken between July 1988 and January 1989 revealed three 19th century brick-lined soakaways, a medieval flint-lined well, three 19th - early 20th century birch-lined wells and two possible 19th century wells without any surviving traces of steining. Cellars associated with post-17th century buildings along Castle Street and 19th century outbuildings have truncated any previously surviving traces of medieval activity. Some of the wells could relate to the malting sheds recorded on 1842 and 1895 maps of the area.

East Circular Bypass TL079269 to TL096242

Surface collection survey walking 20m spaced transects with the help of the Luton and District Archaeological Society in Autumn 1987 on the line of the proposed Bypass to the west of Galley Hill and immediately north of Dray's Ditches (c.TL081268) produced hard hammer struck debitage and two scrapers of later neolithic-Bronze Age date. A later medieval sherd was also found close to the A6. Two other fields on the Bypass route to the south of Warden Hill, the one south-west of White Hill Farm (c.TL102250) and the other immediately west of the strip lynchets on Bradgers Hill (c.TL097246), produced two medieval sherds and a thin scatter of hard hammer struck flint flakes in the vicinity of Upshot Wood. Two mesolithic blades, later neolithic-Bronze Age flint debitage and eleven retouched pieces, and two medieval sherds, came from the field west of Bradgers Hill.

Galley Hill, Luton

An oval enclosure was recorded as a cropmark by James Dyer in the 1970's near the foot of the south-east facing slope of Galley Hill. A surface collection survey covering this area in January 1989 produced three Iron Age and two Romano-British sherds, along with 14 later neolithic-Bronze Age flints. A thin layer of colluvium is likely to overlie the site, protecting it from further plough damage.

Zouches Farm, Caddington c.TL041213

Mr MO Wilmot has amassed a large collection of flintwork and Romano-British material from the surface of cultivated land in the vicinity of Zouches Farm since the early 1970's. In addition, he has carried out a preliminary survey of the medieval earthworks immediately adjacent to the present farm buildings. The flints, consisting of mesolithic/neolithic debitage and a range of implements including scrapers, cutting tools, piercers and an oblique arrowhead, came from an area c600m by 300m to the west of the farm. A possible dew pond lies in the northern part of this area. The Romano-British material, comprising samian ware, coarse GpOEGLandy and Widow Gales, two houses of three hearths occupievessel fragment and a coin of Hadrian, was retrieved after subsoiling from an area north of the farm

where a possible cropmark feature is visible on aerial photographs taken in the late 1960's. The site is now covered by a considerable depth of hillwash/ploughsoil.

DAVID H KENNETT

Bolnhurst: A Thousand Years of Landscape

INTRODUCTION

Bolnhurst is a small north Bedfordshire parish, now combined with its northern neighbour, Keysoe, for civil purposes. (1) The other adjacent parishes are Little Staughton to the north-east, Colmworth to the east, Wilden to the south-east, Ravensden to the south, Thurleigh to the west. The area of Bolnhurst in 1901 was 2,160 acres (964 hectares). A grid reference for St. Dunstan's church is TL081587.

The parish is 2 1/2 miles from north to south and just over 1 mile wide. Yet this small place had five different land-holdings recorded in Domesday Book in 1086. This paper seeks to suggest that these may be traced to the modern farms.

BOLNHURST IN DOMESDAY BOOK

The five entries in Domesday Book for land at Bolnhurst record the following holdings: (2)

- a) The Abbot of Thorney, 2.1/4 hides [entry 10.1]
- b) The Bishop of Coutances, 3 virgates (i.e 3/4 hide) [entry 3.8]
- c) Countess Judith, 1/2 hide [entry 53.6]
- d) Bishop of Bayeaux, 1/2 hide, held by two men [entry 2.5]
- e) Bishop of Bayeaux, 1/2 hide, held by Tovi the Priest [entry 2.4]

- a) The Abbot of Thorney [entry 10.1]

The 2.1/4 hides of the Abbot of Thorney were given to the Cambridgeshire abbey by Aelfelda sometime before 1066. (3) The property was among the lands surrendered by the last Abbot of Thorney in 1536. In 1541, they were purchased by Sir John St. John of Bletsoe as a wedding present for his son, Oliver, who in 1559 became the first Baron St. John.

The estate was part of the St. John lands in the 1620s when surveyed by Evans Mouse. It was sold by the family after the Civil War.

These lands became Bolnhurst Manor during the sixteenth century. They are the eastern part of the parish, along the Bedford to Kimbolton road (the modern B660). They were open field until the enclosure of Bolnhurst in 1777.

These lands supported nine villeins and five bordars in 1086. In 1671, there were fourteen houses in this part of the parish; the non-payers of hearth tax are excluded from this calculation. Apart from the occasional modern bungalow, the main street of Bolnhurst has only that number of houses in 1986.

The houses in 1671 were two houses of four hearths, occupied by Richard Landy and Widow Gales, two houses of three hearths occupied by John Bourne and Thomas Ball. There were five houses of two hearths, including that of Edmund Peacock, the village constable in 1671, and five persons paid hearth tax on a single fireplace. There were eight exempt and four paupers.

The land of the Abbot of Thorney had pannage for 106 swine. Bolnhurst Manor has five pieces of woodland, none of great extent, but in total comprising the acreage likely to support that number of pigs.

b) The Bishop of Coutances [entry 3.8]

The holding of the Bishop of Coutances was three virgates (i.e. 3/4 hide). This has long been recognized by what is now Greenbury or Greensbury Farm. The name derives from a family who had held the lands in the fourteenth century. The Grym family are recorded at various dates between the nineteenth-century house at Greenbury Farm.

In 1499, the trustees of Edmund, Earl of Wiltshire, gave the lands to the chaplain of the Perpetual Chantry of Pleshey, Essex, for masses to be said for the soul of Edmund and his kin. The chantry at Pleshey still held the lands in 1547.

Subsequently these lands became part of the north Bedfordshire investment of a rising lawyer, Edmund Anderson. He also owned Backnoe End, Thurleigh. In 1579, he arranged for the Greenbury lands to be sold to his tenant, Thomas Julyan alias Taylor. The Taylors the farm until 1634.

There was a villein and four bordars on the bishop's land. The Grym family had transformed the villein's house into a moated site. Thus they projected their increasing status and make themselves manorial lords. Their house was not insubstantial: Gilbert Tompkins lived in a house of seven hearths.

The four bordars were succeeded six centuries later by two men in houses of one hearth, William Lewis and Luke Mason. Their twentieth century successors live in the farm cottages near the entrance of Greenbury Farm.

The Bishop of Coutances had pannage for twenty pigs. Bolnhurst Wood, at grid ref. TL 073586, is of a size to support this number of pigs. More importantly it is the wood after which the parish is named. I recall Dr John Dony Hon. F.L.S. telling me many years ago "a botanist knows when a wood is old": he was referring to Bolnhurst Wood.

c) Countess Judith [entry 53.6]

The half hide of Countess Judith is the one which has been identified by a process of elimination.

This has been identified as Brook End Farm, grid ref. TL 083578.

In 1086, countess Judith's tenant, Hugh, had two sub-tenants, both bordars. There was meadow for four oxen, and woodland for twenty pigs. The woodland there now is a small strip in the centre of the holding, which might have been a division of the land into two portions for the two bordars, and a much larger copse on the parish boundary.

The later history of this farm is known only from 1703: documents do not survive before that date. In 1703, the land was owned by Thomas Bromsall of Roxton, but his nephew sold it on the uncle's death. In 1852, the farm was bought by John Francklin from Henry George, Earl of Caernarvon, including 66 acres once part of the common fields of eastern Bolnhurst. The total land purchased was 155 acres 3 roods 17 perches; the eighteenth century farm was about ninety acres. In 1671, it had one house, of five hearths occupied by William Lavender. External examination suggests a seventeenth century timber-framed house; but the pebble-dashed structure could hide an earlier building. (4)

d) The Bishop of Bayeaux, held by two men [entry 2.5]

The Bishop of Bayeaux had two holdings in Bolnhurst. One was noted as held by two freemen as sub-tenants; these two men (not named) held the lands before 1066. They were then free to sell but Domesday Book does not record whether this right hand to be exercised in concert.

This record implies two farms and whatever was the legal right, it is unlikely that it could be exercised individually. By the early sixteenth century, this land was owned by the Chantry at Pleshey and around 1570 by William Whytchurche: he is described as "late in occupation" after his death in 1572.

All this is recorded on the deed of purchase whereby John Francklin bought the capital messuage known as Mavourn, two gardens with two orchards, one hundred acres of land (meaning arable), twenty acres of meadow, ten acres of hearth, ten acres of woodland, ten acres of moor and one hundred acres of pasture. On 18 May 1573, the yeoman turned gentleman purchased two hundred and fifty acres in two farms - the implication of the two gardens and the two orchards. In a rental of 1821, Thomas Kilpin held Mavourn Farm with 117 acres 2 roods 34 perches (47.64 ha.) and Thomas Jefferies was the tenant of Blacklands Farm with 120 acres 2 roods 34 perches (48.85 ha.). At just over 238 acres, this is a more accurate statement than the sixteenth century approximation.

BOLNHURST IN 1575

BUILDINGS AND LANDOWNERSHIP

- PARISH CHURCH OF ST DUNSTAN
- MOATED SITE
- LATE MEDIEVAL HOUSE
- ▲ SITE OF MILL
- WOOD
- MODERN PARISH BOUNDARY

-  **BOLNHURST MANOR**
ST JOHN 1541-1640
-  **GREENSBURY FARM**
JULYAN alias TAYLOR 1579
-  **BACKHOE END**
ownership not traced
-  **BROOK END FARM**
ownership unknown before 1703
FRANCKLIN 1857
-  **MAVOURN AND BLACKLANDS**
FRANCKLIN 1573
(leased from 1539)
-  **CHURCH FIELD**
FRANCKLIN 1583
-  **SPENCERS CLOSE AND SPENCERS WOOD**
FRANCKLIN 1583
-  **BRAVES FARM**
(Building now The Old Plough)
FRANCKLIN 1583-1640
Open Field Land shown by
Post-Enclosure Allotment
FRANCKLIN 1852
-  **TILWICK FARM** RAVENSDEN
FRANCKLIN 1589
(leased from 1529)
-  **MOORES FARM**
RICHARD MOORE 1541-1547
ROBERT MOORE 1557-1584
(in occupation from 1548)
Land includes Highams Closes
leased by Robert Moore 1578
FRANCKLIN 1592/1597

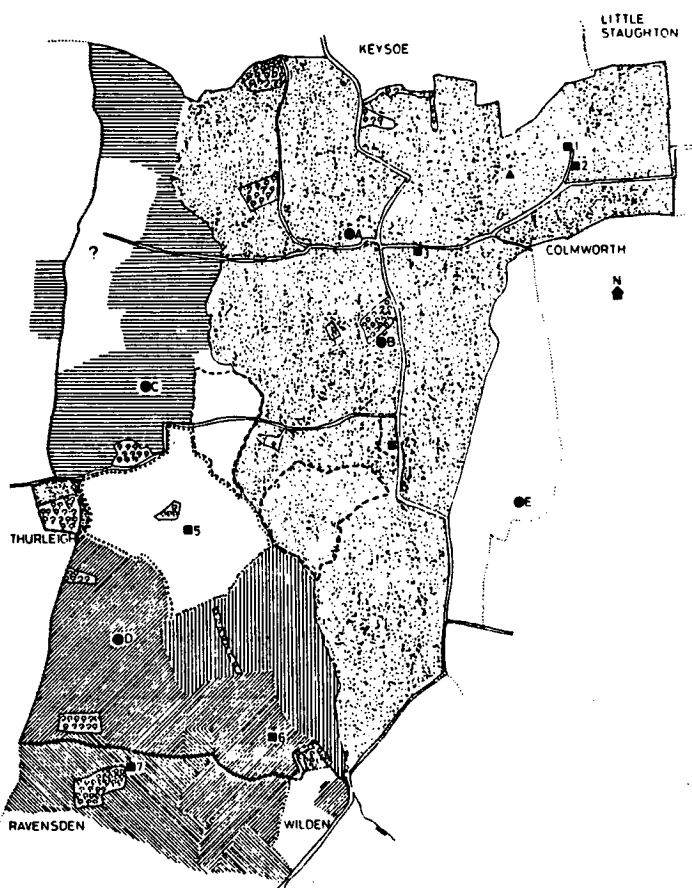
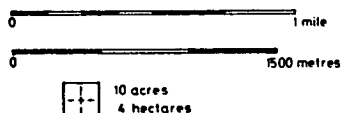


Fig 1 Bolnhurst in Domesday Book

Bolnhurst Manor St. John, 1541-1640	Abbot of Thorney 2 1/4 hides
Greensbury Farm Juryan alias Taylor, 1579	Bishop of Coutances 3/4 hide
Brook End Farm Francklin, 1703	Countess Judith 1/2 hide
Mavourn and Blacklands Francklin, 1573 Church Field Francklin, 1583	Bishop of Bayeaux 1/2 hide held by two men
Spencer's Close Francklin, 1583	Bishop of Bayeaux 1/2 hide, land of Tovi the priest
Moore's Farm (now Crowhill farm) Francklin, 1592/1597	

But to return to the Domesday Book entry. The two men had between them arable for one plough, no meadow and pannage for four swine. Woodland could be evaluated at 6 acres: 1 1/2 acres per pig. Significantly there is very little woodland on these farms. Their lands are away from Bolnhurst Brook, the stream which divides the parish. Hence meadow is unlikely to be present.

These two farms have substantial but not over large farmhouses. At Mavourn, there is a late seventeenth century timber-framed house, put up for a tenant after a fire had destroyed the small manor house of the Francklin family. At Blacklands, there is a late medieval house, not yet studied in depth and much refurbished. Its tenants are well-known from documents in the Francklin muniments. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Alexander Newham occupied a house of four hearths in 1671. In the eighteenth century, the tenancies are uncertain until 1783 when a Thomas Jefferies is found. He, or probably his son of the same name, is there until 1850 and is then succeeded by a son-in-law, Joseph Daniels until 1885. The succeeding tenants were members of the Shepherd family from 1914 to 1940.

Blacklands was a tenanted farm in the seventeenth century and before. But from 1539 until 1640, the Francklin lived at

Mavourn. Their house was more grand than any other in the parish: on a moated site and in 1671 recorded as having eleven hearths. It has twenty-six rooms in an inventory of 1633. The origin of such a house might lie in late medieval arrangements whereby the Chantry of Pleshey decided that their accumulated holdings in north-east Bedfordshire justified a substantial tenant who could act as bailiff. (5)

e) The Bishop of Bayeux, the land of Tovi the Priest [entry 2.4]

The half hide which was held by Tovi the Priest of the Bishop Bayeaux supported one villein and one bordar. There was land for one full plough team, meadow for four oxen and woodland for thirty pigs.

The meadow assumes propinquity with Bolnhurst Brook. Tovi the Priest was presumably the Rector of St. Dunstan's church and nearness to the church seems not unlikely.

South of the road from Thurleigh to Bolnhurst is a group of lands which in the mid sixteenth century were Spencer's Wood, Spencer's Farm, Highoms Closes, Moore's Farm and Church Field.

Church Field, on the opposite side of Bolnhurst Brook, was mapped at 33 acres 0 roods 24 perches in 1858, certainly sufficient to provide lush pasture for four draught animals. Spencer's Wood is a large piece of coppice, part of which had been turned into an L-shaped close by 1945; some of this was garden for Spencer's Farm. There is also the small Moore's Wood, in the centre of Moore's Farm (now Crowhill Farm). This was variously thought to be 6 acres in 1541 and 2 acres in 1592. Spencer's Wood and Moore's Wood, together, would have supported thirty pigs. They

were half as big again as Bolnhurst Wood. These lands have a complex history of division in the Middle Ages. The sixteenth century position is clear. Spencer's Farm and Church Field were part of one tenancy, Crowhill Farm was a second and Highoms Closes a third.

In 1583, John Francklin bought two separate parcels of land in Bolnhurst. One was Brays Farm in the common fields of the parish: the farmhouse is now the Old Plough Inn. The other parcel was Spencer's Farm, with Spencer's Wood, on the extreme western edge of Bolnhurst, the small farmhouse, some closes taken out of the wood and Church Field. This farm supported a dam, now demolished farmhouse. In 1671, Robert Luffe lived in a house of one hearth. The farmhouse area when examined in 1971 suggested no more than two rooms and an outshot.

Crowhill Farm is a discrete land holding. In 1541, it was sold by Robert Chernock of Hulcote to Richard Moore of Colmworth. The farm was known by the Moore's name until the census of 1841. There was a dwelling house, one hundred acres of arable, ten acres of meadow, forty acres of pasture, and six acres of woodland. In 1592, Crowhill Farm was purchased by George Francklin.

It was inhabited by tenants until 1944. In 1821, William Kilpin farmed 178 acres 1 rood 26 perches. In 1678, William Cobb had been deemed to be farming 170 acres.

These included the lands known as Highoms Closes, an area of forty acres, purchased by George Francklin in 1580. No farmhouse is known for these.

The building at Crowhill Farm dates to the end of the fifteenth century and has various sixteenth century improvements including the fine chimneys in the centre and to the wing. These look to have been the work of Robert Moore, owner 1557-1584.

This farm had a long period of stable tenancy. John Maxey was there from 1701 to 1723 and was followed by his son, Samuel Maxey, to 1764. From possibly then-children of his are baptised at Bolnhurst and certainly from 1783, Richard Kilpin was there until his death in 1805 at the age of 81. He would have been forty when he moved to Bolnhurst at the age of 81. He would have been forty when he moved to Bolnhurst from adjacent Thurleigh. He was followed by his son, William Kilpin, for nearly twenty years, until 1822. John Green, the tenant in 1823, was followed by his wife,

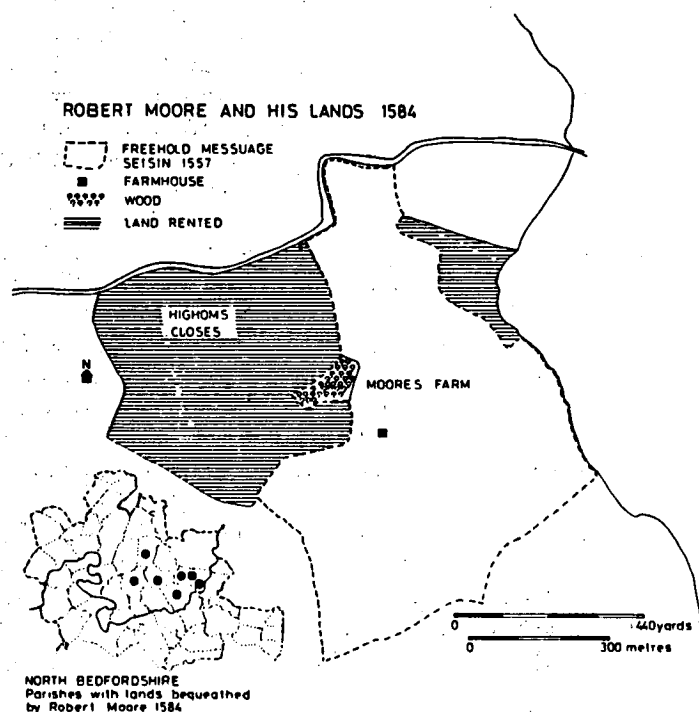


Fig 2 Moore's Farm and Highoms Closes

Note the portion of Highom's Closes on the right of the map was originally part of Church Field.

Ann Green, recorded in the 1841 census, and by his son, Samuel Green in the directories of 1847 to 1885. However, within this period, there seems to have been no farmer's wife from the death of Elizabeth Kilpin, prior to her burial on 30 December 1782. William Kilpin has not been traced as married, either from a marriage or the baptism of children. The lack of a farmer's wife for forty years might account for decay leading to the nineteenth century rebuilding of the western part of the building.

The fine house at Crowhill was recorded as three hearths when William Cobb lived there. Actually the enumerators counted chimneys and did not include the first-floor fireplace in the wing which shares a flue with one on the ground-floor.

This house is the successor to a villein's house. It can be argued that the villein's holding in 1086 was the lands subsequently made into Crowhill Farm. The bordar thus had Spencer's Wood, Spencer's Farm, Highoms Closes and Church Field. At a later date, Highoms Closes became detached from these lands to become a separate piece of property. (6)

BOLNHURST SINCE DOMESDAY BOOK

These notes have argued continuity in the landscape of Bolnhurst. Farms in the western half of the parish have been traced back to 1086 and in some cases earlier. How much earlier is a matter of conjecture. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that these farms were created as agricultural units in the seventh or eighth century and have remained virtually unchanged to the present day.

In the eastern part of the parish, Thorney Abbey held sway from before 1066 to 1536, virtually five centuries. They provided a mill for their tenants maximising their profits. The mill survived, intermittently through to the nineteenth century.

Where the farmers of western Bolnhurst ground their corn is unknown. Perhaps they used Thorney Abbey's mill; perhaps they went to Thurleigh. There was no watermill in the parish, either in 1086 or later. The known tenancies of farms on the Francklin estate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emphasise continuity. Examples have been given of each farm having a long-standing tenant, followed by his widow or his son.

The eastern part of the parish is more difficult to document. There are fewer surviving papers. The parish register suggests continuity here too. The farmers continued from earlier decades before the enclosure act was made into an award. Except that in the southern part of the parish Southfields Farm was created. Older houses sufficed for the other farms.

BOLNHURST AND BEDFORDSHIRE: A WIDER STAGE

Bolnhurst is one parish. The county is a wider stage. Bolnhurst has farms which can be suggested as extant in 1086. How far is this true of other parishes?

This is a difficult question to answer. Each parish is individual. All a concluding section can do is offer some brief examples. At Great Bedford, there are four holdings in 1086. There were four manors. Two, Veseys and Netherbury, were open field and subject to an enclosure act. Two, Creakers and Birchfields, were compact holdings in the northern part of the parish which may represent entries in Domesday Book.

Eyeworth was two entries in Domesday Book. Two manors existed until the purchase of both by Sir Edmund Anderson in 1594 and 1595 respectively. There is no enclosure act for this parish.

Essentially delineating the landscape of the eleventh century from later evidence is an area for future research. As work on Bolnhurst shows, the meanings can be made clear but it has to be done on a parish-by-parish basis.

NOTES

1 This paper represents with the map, the written version of a lecture prepared for CBAIX conference March 1987. It was written in November 1986.

2 V Sankaran and D Sherlock (eds), *Bedfordshire*, being number 20 of J Morris (ed), *Domesday Book*, 1977, is the most accessible of translations. Entry numbers are taken from there.

3 VCH *Bedfordshire*, III, 1912, 124-8; and L M Marshall (ed), *The Rural Population of Bedfordshire, 1671-1921*, being Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 16, 1934, esp, 134, provide background for statements not otherwise specifically referenced, particularly for the lands of the Abbot of Thorney and the Bishop of Coutances.

4 Bedfordshire County Record Office, documents FN, *passim*.

5 D H Kennett, A H Simco, and T P Smith, 'The Moated Site and Timber-Framed Building at Mavourn Farm, Bolnhurst', *Beds. Archaeol.*, 17, 1986, 77-85. See also D H Kennett, 'the Francklins and Bolnhurst: the tenurial history of a Bedfordshire estate', typescript 1975, available in Bedfordshire County Record Office.

6 D H Kennett and T P Smith, 'Crowhill Farm, Bolnhurst, Bedfordshire: a timber-framed building and its history', *Beds. Arch. J.*, 12, 1977, 57-84, correcting and supplementing Kennett, 'Francklins'.

Figures reproduced from *Beds. Arch. J.*, 12

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM 1988

Michael Farley

An event of some significance to the Archaeological section during the year has been the closure of a number of the Museum's galleries and the proposed move of staff and stores to temporary premises at Halton. This has become necessary due to the need for substantial repairs to the Museum premises, which are held on lease from the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society. The additional space gained by the move will be welcomed, but some working time will inevitably be lost in the process.

During the year Grace Scrimgeour, our HBMC funded Sites & Monuments Record Assistant, left for another post as did Simon Smithson, who has assisted in several capacities over the past year, in particular with post-excavation work. We welcomed Claire Brown as our replacement SMR Assistant. The section was pleased to have the help of Oxford In-Service students for various periods.

The only planned excavation took place at Olney. Here Mark Collard, with funding by Trencherwood New Homes Ltd carried out an evaluation at Dartmouth Road Farm, adjacent to a known but undated cemetery. No human remains or other structures were encountered so the date of the cemetery remains an enigma. At Missenden Abbey, work by the County Architects Department involved lowering a substantial area by the front entrance to a depth of 0.5 metres. A rapid excavation by Mark Collard with the assistance of ten members of the County Museum Archaeological Group, who responded to an urgent phone call, revealed a late fifteenth century oblong stone building with a fireplace at its north end. This overlay and incorporated other walls belonging to claustral buildings.

Watching briefs took place at Colnbrook on a cropmark site prior to gravel extraction, and at Bourne End prior to re-development. At Newport Pagnell, a new water main traversed the margins of a Middle Iron Age site previously discovered during construction of the Newport Pagnell by-pass. A watching brief was also carried out for HBMC during field draining of part of Snelshall Priory at Whaddon. The majority of the drains, which were laid by continuous trenching, were placed in holloways. Overall there was 0.3m of ploughsoil directly onto undisturbed clay. Only at five points in one short length of trench was there the slightest hint of structure, in the form of a narrow unmortared limestone features, possibly footings. Only one piece of roof tile was recorded and no ceramic.

Regular liaison with the South Bucks Metal Detector Club led to the reporting of a number of discoveries in the High Wycombe area.

The main work of the section has been with post-excavation and in particular with work on the Prebendal, Aylesbury and Missenden Abbey. Several completed reports are now awaiting publication, namely Desborough Castle, Dartmouth Road, Olney, Brill 1983 kiln, St. Margarets

Hospital cemetery, and the 1982-3 Denham pottery kilns. During the course of the year reports were published on the 1975/1979 excavations of a Belgic-Roman site at Berton, Iron Age sites on the Newport Pagnell by-pass, the cropmark complex at Dorney, excavations at the Weston Turville motte, and a gazetteer of Buckinghamshire fishponds (with (MKAU).

The Museum continued to be active in planning matters; computerisation of the SMR under the overall guidance of Andrew Pike continues apace.

The County Museum Archaeological Group provided considerable assistance in many ways both within the Museum and without. A successful programme of fieldwalking carried out during the autumn was organised by Group members, although as usual poor weather caused some cancelled walks. Closure of much of the Museum will undoubtedly cause a hiccup in the Group's activities.

Finally it is distressing to report that there have again been no additions to the list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the county.

MILTON KEYNES ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT 1988

Introduction

Following the Unit's move to new premises in 1987, and the subsequent disruption caused by external improvements to the building, things have settled down sufficiently now for all staff members to return to the task in hand, the archaeology of Milton Keynes.

The season of 1988 was the first instance since the establishment of the Unit that no major excavation was undertaken in Milton Keynes. The only projects planned for the year were detailed evaluations of two medieval village sites on the west flank of the city, Westbury-by-Shenley and Tattenhoe. As is often the case, chance discoveries made during the year led to further work; the evaluation of an Iron Age/Roman site at Wavendon Gate, and a watching brief on the small villa site at Wymbush, partly excavated by the Unit in 1979.

Post-excavation work on various past projects undertaken by the Unit continues apace. At the time of writing (February 1989) the volume on Roman pottery (companion to Roman Milton Keynes) has passed through its final editing stages and will shortly be on its way to the printers. Both the Medieval Landscape and Great Linford volumes are also well under way, and work is also in progress on the Prehistoric, Pennyland and Bancroft publications.

The Unit has continued over the past year to maintain its positive approach to metal detectorists working within the city, a policy that continues to prove most beneficial to all concerned. The number of finds brought in to the Unit continues to increase, and detectorists have assisted at Westbury, Tattenhoe and Wymbush. More significantly, the Wavendon Gate site was discovered by a detectorist. We

have found in practice that much of the fieldwork carried out in past years by Unit staff is, with limitations, being done now by detectorists.

Over the past few years it has become apparent to the Unit that the policy originally formulated for dealing with detectorists, and approved by MKDC, was no longer effective, and many finds were still being lost to the archaeological record. After some consideration, new proposals were made to and accepted by MKDC for dealing with detectorists. The main point of this is that the Development Corporation, as landowners, no longer lay claim to all objects found, but insist that all finds are reported to the Unit as a condition of access to sites. Evening meetings are also being arranged on a quarterly basis for detectorists at the Unit; attendance figures of 60-80 have been reached.

Following the purchase in 1985 of an Epson PC/HD computer by the Unit to assist with data handling and storage, as well as some administration functions, two Amstrad PCW8512 word processors have been acquired, and are proving most useful in speeding up the process of post-excavation work.

D.M.V'S AT SHENLEY BROOK END AND TATTENHOE:

R. J. Ivens

The life of Milton Keynes Development Corporation is now entering its final stages and over the next few years there will be a considerable increase in the rate of development. The Western Flank, the area west of Watling Street, will be especially affected by this expansion. This is an area particularly rich in medieval earthworks and includes a probable motte and bailey castle, three moated sites, two deserted villages as well as fishponds and some very fine areas of ridge and furrow. The majority of these earthworks will be preserved. However, both deserted villages will be seriously damaged. In particular the very fine earthworks at Westbury (in Shenley) will be entirely destroyed, as they lie directly on the line of the westward extension of the H6 grid road. The village of Tattenhoe will be less extensively damaged as the major surviving earthworks fall within a park area. Even so, it is expected that rather more than half of the area will be destroyed.

Given this level of development and destruction, the Unit will need to carry out large scale excavations of these two sites over the next two or three years. As a first stage both sites were trenched during the summer of 1988, in order to assess the extent and quality of the archaeological remains so that an excavation programme could be designed for 1989 and 1990.

WESTBURY

Today, the surface remains consist of: 1) the moated site at Westbury Farmhouse: 2) a series of trackways, enclosures and house platforms between Westbury and Dovecote Farmhouses: 3) the ploughed-out remains of enclosures and house platforms immediately N. of the surviving house platforms (clearly visible on air-photographs): 4) extensive areas of extant and recently ploughed-out medieval ridge and furrow.

Excavations carried out between 1985 and 1987 by M.R. Petchey (*South Midlands Archaeology* 15 (1985), 45-50: 16 (1986), 54-58: 17 (1987), 47 clearly demonstrated that the main group of surviving house platforms were medieval, well preserved and worthy of full scale excavation. It was therefore decided not to risk damaging these by trial trenching. For similar reasons the moated site at Westbury Farmhouse was excluded from the trial programme.

The trial excavations were designed to investigate:

- 1) The areas of recently ploughed-out earthworks, to test the extent and quality of any surviving remains.
- 2) The areas of medieval ridge and furrow, to test for any earlier occupation or settlement.
- 3) The field known as "Baker's Close" (E. of the Shenley road) in view of the evidence for a possible Roman site in the vicinity. A Roman mosaic pavement was reported during building work at Dovecote Farm (Haverfield 1901, 342) and several Roman coins, potsherds and other artefacts have been recovered from the gardens of houses in Dovecote Lane.
- 4) The rather vague earthworks to the SE. of Westbury Farmhouse.
- 5) Two outlying enclosures, to the S. and E. of the main group of surviving house platforms.

Summary Results of the Trial Excavations

The area to the N. of the main NE.-SW. axis of Westbury village has been extensively ploughed in recent years and this has destroyed the surface evidence of a number of house platforms, extensive ridge and furrow and the routeway running N. towards Shenley Church End. The line of this road was located in Trench 4 and was found to consist of a simple cobbled surface with boundary ditches on either side. Clear evidence demonstrating medieval occupation was found in the form of cobbled surfaces, ditches, pits and postholes in Trenches 1-3 and at the S. end of Trench 8. In the central part of Trench 8 are a series of ditches and pits containing pottery of the Iron Age and Roman period, and these clearly demonstrate a substantial settlement of late Iron Age - early Roman date. No archaeological remains were found in Trenches 6, 7 and 9-11.

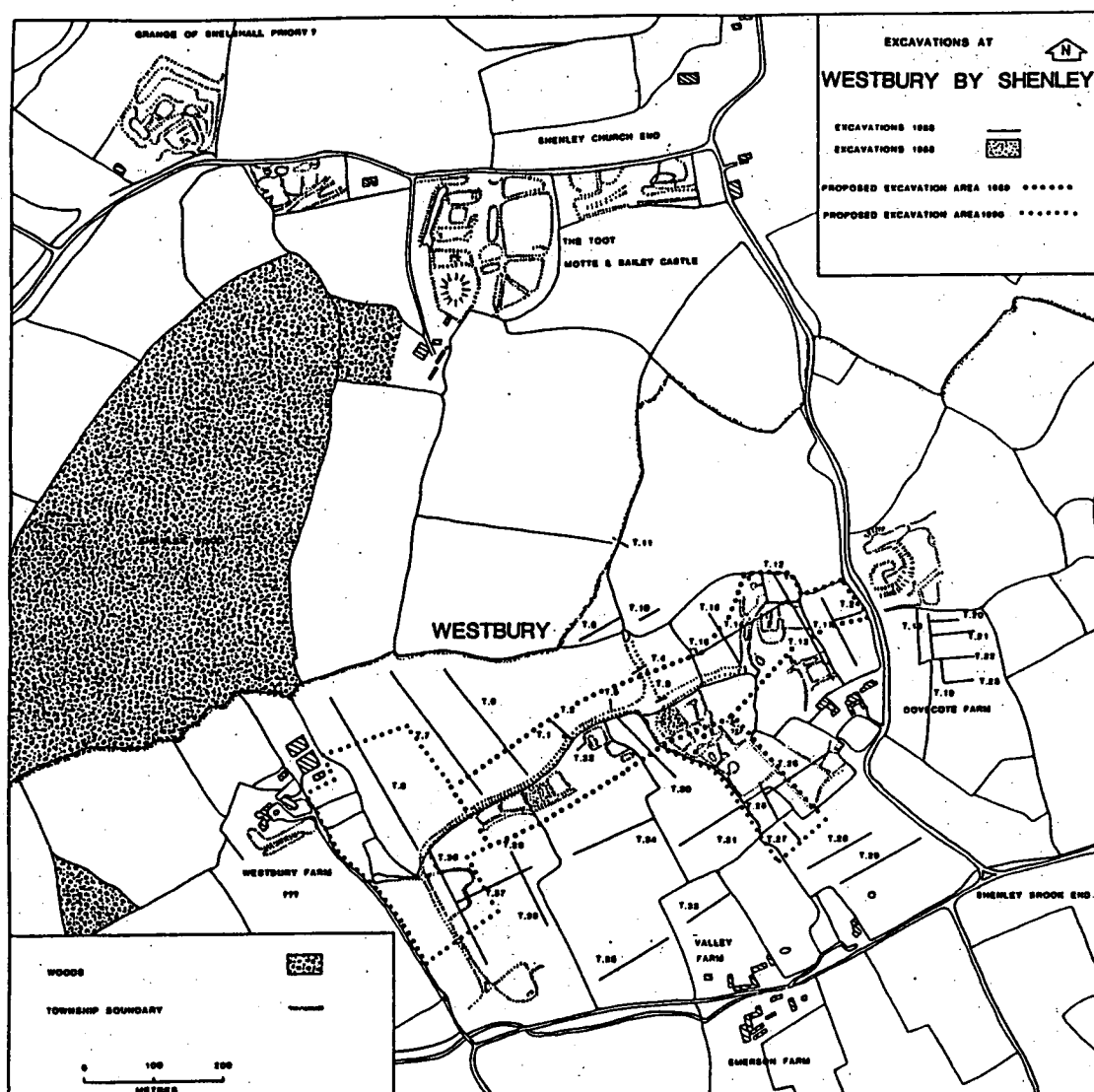


Fig. 1

To the S. of the surviving village earthworks is an extensive area of medieval ridge and furrow (some ploughed-out in recent years). A series of trenches were cut across this area (Trenches 28-39) and no archaeological remains were discovered. There is one exception to this. At the N. end of Trench 39 a probable furnace of the Early Roman period was located.

Baker's Close was similarly unrewarding. A few ephemeral features were recorded and a little Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered (mainly unstratified). However, it is quite clear that much of the field has been occupied by natural water courses and intermittent ponds. Indeed the lower parts of the field still flood for considerable periods in the winter months. It seems unlikely that there has ever been any substantial occupation of the area.

Trench 36 was cut across the enclosure and vague earthworks to the SE. of Westbury Farm. A series of cut features (ditches and pits) containing medieval pottery were revealed and these suggest that the village earthworks continued as far W. as the southward turn of the main village street.

The two outlying platforms and their immediate vicinity were sampled by Trenches 12-17 and 24-26. In both cases evidence indicating occupation from the medieval period through to at least the nineteenth century was recovered.

TATTENHOE

As recently as 1963 Tattenhoe was described as one of the best examples of a Deserted Medieval Village in Buckinghamshire. Farming activities over the past quarter of a century have seriously denuded, levelled and obscured many of the earthworks. However, several major features are still well preserved:

- 1) The church, which is still regularly used, is essentially the structure that was rebuilt in 1540 probably on the site of the thirteenth century chapel (Sheahan 1862, 760)
- 2) The moated site
- 3) A series of fishponds

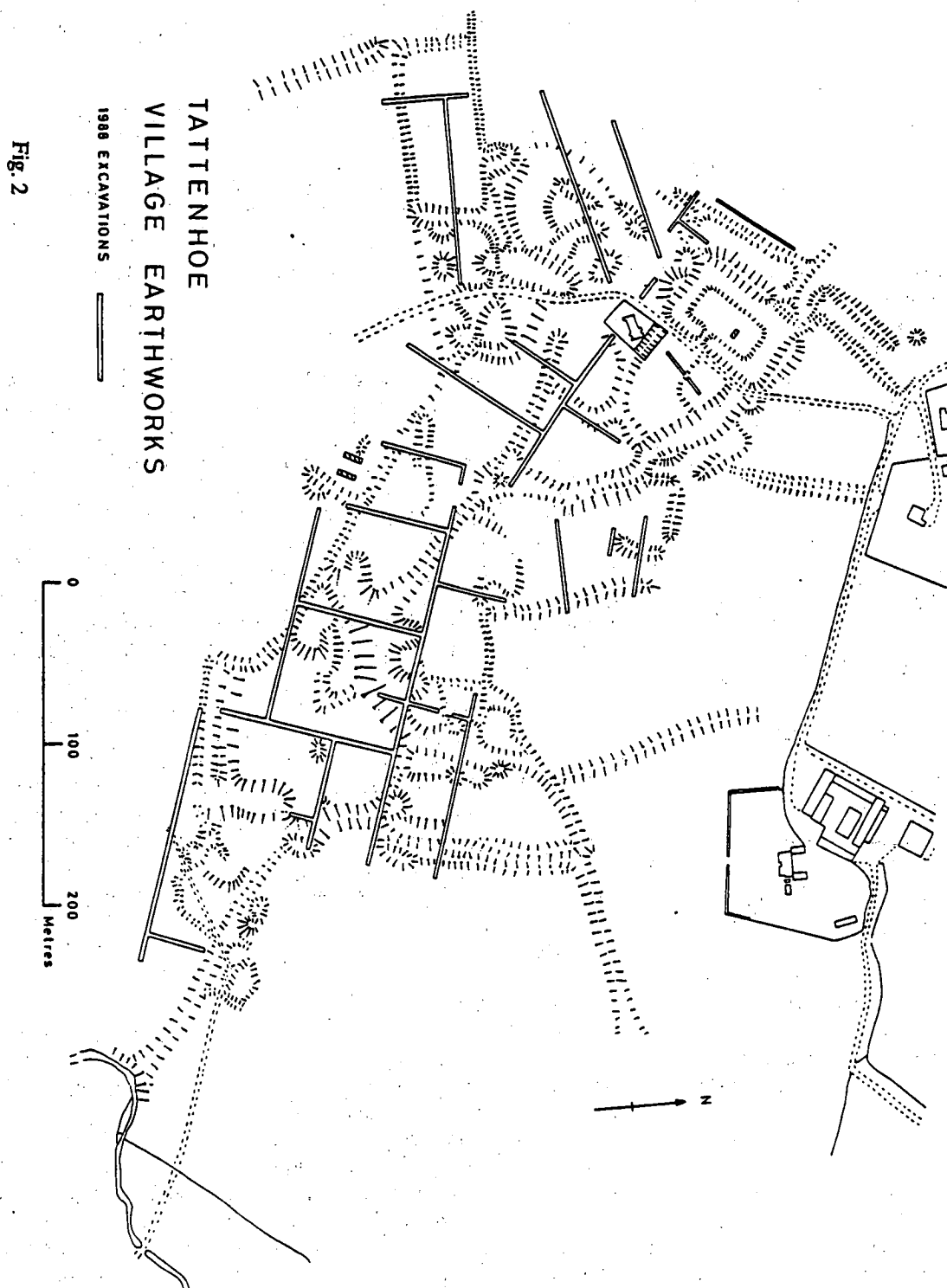
To the SE. of this complex a marked hollow-way runs down slope towards Loughton Brook and a second pond. On either side of the hollow-was a series of rather vague earthworks may still be seen.

In order to assess the quality of the remains a network of trenches was mechanically stripped of topsoil and the exposed archaeological features investigated. The pattern of trenches was laid out to sample as large an area of the settlement as possible and to sample a wide range of the surface features, i.e. platforms, trackways etc.

The church, moated site and water-filled ponds were not excavated at this stage as it was felt that these should either be preserved or fully investigated.

Summary Results of the Trial Excavation

Modern farming practices have destroyed almost all traces of the ridge and furrow and field banks which formerly surrounded the village. The village earthworks themselves have also suffered to a considerable degree, to that few clear



platforms and enclosures survive. Some of the fishponds have even been filled in.

The excavation may be divided into three basic zones.

First, Area 1, consisting of Trenches 1-8, to the W. of the moat/pond complex.

Second, Area 2, consisting of Trenches 9-17, to the E. of the moat/pond complex.

Third, Area 3, consisting of Trenches 18-35, on either side of the surviving hollow-way.

Area 1

Almost all surface features have been obliterated by ploughing and few archaeological features were located. In the main these consisted of boundary/drainage ditches and narrow roughly paved tracks. No trace was found of the sixteenth century manor house thought to have been located in this area. However, a number of ceramic floor tiles were found incorporated into the trackways and these are probably the source of the tile found during field walking, which originally suggested the presence of an important building.

Area 2

Immediately E. of the church a substantial flagstone floor and cobbled surfaces were found, Trench 13. Similarly, substantial yards, floors and wall footings were found immediately SE of the church, Trenches 9 and 11. It is possible that these are remnants of the sixteenth century manor house. Trench 12 yielded evidence indicating that the moat/pond at the E. end of the church formerly extended much further to the S. Slight evidence of 12th century occupation was found in Trenches 14-17. Over the remainder Area 2 little survived except for rough stone trackways and drainage/boundary ditches.

Area 3

Sufficient traces were found in this area to indicate that there had been a substantial settlement during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Archaeological remains were preserved patchily. In places nothing survived, while in other parts a variety of tracks, pits, gullies and other features were well preserved. This is especially true in the SW. Trenches 27 and 28. The surviving hollow-way was exposed in several places and found to have an irregular cobbled surface, much disturbed by later field ditches and drainage pipes. The heavily robbed remains of a stone building were located at the E. end of Trench 26.

It would appear that much of the area surrounding the moated site, ponds and church had been landscaped in the post-medieval period; perhaps as grounds to the manor house which is known to have been standing in the later seventeenth century and in ruins by the middle of the eighteenth century. Almost all trace of medieval occupation has been removed by this and later agricultural activities.

The moated site could contain the remains of medieval structures, though it too could have been subject to post-medieval landscaping. Indeed it is possible that the moated site and the fishponds are themselves post-medieval landscape features.

The SE. part of the village was undoubtedly occupied during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and does seem to have survived until recent years. Modern ploughing, however, has severely damaged both the surface appearance of the site and the underlying archaeological remains.

Sheahan, J. J. (1862), History and Topography of Buckinghamshire (London, 1862)

Haverfield (1901)

WAVENDON GATE - IRON AGE, ROMAN AND SAXON SETTLEMENT

INTERIM REPORT by R. J. Williams

Discovery

Pressure of work has, over the last few years severely curtailed the amount of investigative fieldwork carried out by the Archaeology Unit. Greater reliance has inevitably been placed on other modes of site discovery and prospection techniques and in particular, on the establishment of closer liaison with developers, planners and local metal detector users. This latter cooperation was strikingly illustrated last March when local metal detector user, Gordon Heritage arrived at the Unit's Headquarters late one afternoon with a bag of Roman glass, pottery and bronze items. A rapid visual examination of the bag's contents led the writer to conclude that, far from the objects being the usual sherds and finds from a small Roman site, they may have originated from a Roman Cremation burial.

With the light failing, the writer and finder returned to the discovery spot along the line of topsoil stripping for a new road at Wavendon Gate, in the South-east corner of the City. Within minutes of clearing around the original discovery site, fragments of burnt bone were found within a large glass beaker and traces of two other possible cremations were located.

Watching Brief

Over the following few days, with the aid of one of the Unit's finds assistants Caroline Skinner, the finder Gordon Heritage and the contractors - Midland Oak, an area approximately 25 metres across along the line of the road construction was cleared of the rutted overburden and a total of at least 13 Roman Cremation Burials were located, recorded and lifted. In addition, what at first appeared to be a large black amorphous soily area along the rutted road surface was identified as the top of a substantial ditch. A series of carefully positioned machine dug trenches defined the ditch as being at least 130 metres long Northeast-

Southwest and indicated that it was the northern side of a substantial ditched enclosure of early Roman date. It was also realised that the upper tertiary fill of the ditch was the remains of an early Saxon soil containing quantities of bone and pottery. A square pit was also located in the cleared area and was found to contain large fragments of grass tempered early Saxon pottery.

From this initial and rapidly organised watching brief, it was quite apparent that the 30 metre wide swathe of road construction represented only a small part of a much larger and previously unknown site.

Evaluation

Since the areas either side of the road were in an advanced stage of planning, Milton Keynes Development Corporation provided extra funding for a three month evaluation of the site. With the assistance of Caoimhe O'Brien, this was carried out between June and August 1988.

A series of machine trenches were dug across the fields to either side of the new road spaced at 20 metre intervals and aligned at an approximate 45 angle to the projected line of the Roman enclosure ditch. In the intervening months between the initial discovery and the evaluation work, Gordon Heritage discovered possible evidence of the site's extension to the south of the existing Wavendon to Walton road. This was mainly in the form of small metalwork items including a silver denarius of Vespasian and a shallow pit containing small quantities of burnt bone. Although a fieldwalking of the ploughed field failed to reveal any definite traces of settlement, a further series of trial trenches were dug to the south of the old road.

During the course of the evaluation, over two thousand metres of 1.5 metre wide trenches were dug using a JCB 3CX. In the event so many features were located in the trenches to the north of the old road, that it was only possible in the allotted time and with the resources available to plan all the visible features and remove, wherever possible, finds from tops of the fills of the features. Only a small proportion of the pits, ditches and post holes could be excavated and fully recorded with priority being given to the burials and structural features. A metal detector survey of the trenches and spoilheaps provided useful additional dating evidence mainly in the form of Roman bronze coinage.

Results

Late Iron Age Settlement

The most unexpected discovery of the evaluation was that of a substantial Late Iron Age settlement to the North of the new road covering an area approximately 150 x 80 metres across. Apart from a single decorated sherd, no evidence of Iron Age occupation had been found during the initial watching brief, and it seems likely that most of the Iron Age occupation is confined to the north of the new road. At the South-western end of this area, a large ditch over four metres wide has been interpreted as part of a large polygonal enclosure of similar form to those previously excavated at

Pennyland, Bancroft and Furzton. Numerous smaller drainage and boundary ditches were found to the North-east of the enclosure but even with a spacing of only 20 metres between trenches it was impossible to interpret any meaningful patterns or alignments. Of considerable interest was the discovery of at least two pennanular shaped drainage ditches in Trench 1, indicating the existence of circular timber buildings. In addition a significant number of post holes were located in the trenches and several pits contained high proportions of partially fired clay representing the traces of wattle and daub walls. A single human cremation burial was also found at the extreme south end of Trench 6. Since no associated finds were located it was impossible to decide whether it was contemporary with the Late Iron Age Settlement or represented an outlier to the Roman Cemetery to the South East.

Early Roman Enclosure

The watching brief in March exposed the northern side of a large Early Roman ditched enclosure. The trial trenches to the south of the new road revealed the enclosure to be rectangular in form 140 metres long Northeast-Southwest and circa 100 metres wide Northwest-Southeast. A substantial ditch aligned Northwest-Southeast further sub-divided the enclosure in to a larger South-western area and a smaller North-eastern end. No further sections were dug across the ditch, but the pottery from the upper fills was of second century date, whereas sections dug during the watching brief produced first century material lower down in the ditch fill. Consequently the actual date of digging and useage is still unclear and must await further work. Within the enclosure a series of smaller ditches, pits and post holes containing quantities of refuse represented the remains of domestic and agricultural activity. In particular a series of narrow timber slots and curving gullies in the South-eastern corner may indicate the site of timber buildings. Within the enclosure a significant number of features were found to contain earlier style "Belgic" pottery. Without further work it is impossible to ascertain the significance of this material but it seems very likely that if the dates of the two main enclosure groups are confirmed then there was an intervening period of Belgic activity somewhere in the vicinity.

2nd Century Cremation Cemetery

Thirteen cremations were located during the watching brief of the road construction in March covering an area approximately 10 x 5 metres across within the North-western corner of the Eastern Division of the Roman enclosure. The cremations ranged from a single pottery vessel containing the remains of an individual cremation to a rich cremation contained within a hexagonal green glass bottle accompanied by a repaired Samian platter. One further very badly disturbed cremation contained two Samian platters, a small glass unguent phial, a small spherical glass vessel and the remains of a polished tinned bronze mirror. A preliminary analysis of the cremation vessels suggests an early to mid 2nd Century date for the group. Unfortunately,

under the poor conditions in March it is difficult to be certain that no cremations were missed.

As part of the evaluation an area 25 metres across was stripped to the Southeast of the cremations. No further cremations were located but a single grave aligned Northeast-Southwest was found

containing a small pottery vessel of second century date adjacent to the head and this increases the likelihood that further burials await discovery.

Later Roman Inhumation Cemetery

A series of random trenches were dug to the south of the Wavendon to Walton road to investigate the southward extent of the settlement. Few features were noted apart from a small group to the immediate south of the house gardens. Of much greater significance was the discovery of two skeletons and a skull. Both burials had been contained within wooden coffins as remains of the iron coffin nails had survived. Of considerable surprise was the relatively shallow depth of the skeletons, buried only 300mm below topsoil level. Although no independent dating evidence could be found, apart from several residual sherds, the absence of grave goods and the style of burial indicates a late Roman date for the burials. If these burials are part of a larger inhumation cemetery then it is separated by a distance of at least 200 metres from the cremation cemetery to the Northwest.

Saxon Evidence

During the earlier watching brief a significant quantity of early Saxon pottery and bone was removed from the extreme upper fill of the large early-Roman ditch. A small two metre square pit was partially excavated ten metres to the south west of the cremations and was found to contain large fragments of grass tempered pottery. At the adjacent intersection of the northern side of the Roman enclosure with its Northwest-Southeast division

A darker fill contained both quantities of Saxon pottery and part of an annular clay loomweight. Conditions at the time prevented further work on this area but it is believed that this may have represented a sunken featured Saxon building constructed in and utilising the partially silted up Roman enclosure ditch.

Surprisingly the trial trenches only revealed a very small group of Saxon features and certainly no evidence of structures was found. This was, however likely to be expected due to the extremely ephemeral nature of Saxon structures as illustrated elsewhere within the City. The quantity and type of refuse found during the watching brief and the subsequent evaluation clearly indicates the presence of a small habitation site.

Significance

From the initial conception of the new city of Milton Keynes the favoured archaeological policy has been one of extensive and exhaustive fieldwork establishing an accurate pattern of the density of sites per period within the city's boundary. Although at times in conflict with current trends, this procedure has been followed up by limited excavation of all known sites and total excavation of the better preserved examples, rather than any form of sampling strategy.

With the eventual publication of the Unit's work, Milton Keynes will become a model for both Iron Age and Roman settlement studies of lowland, midland Britain. The total excavation of the Iron Age and Roman elements of the Wavendon Gate site forms a logical extension of this preferred unit policy and will undoubtedly add considerably to our understanding of this type of settlement study within the landscape. In particular the Roman evidence will add a more diverse facet to the study of settlement and building typology. To date, most of the well-excavated significant sites have been within the stone building areas of the City such as at Wymbush, Stantonbury and Bancroft. At Wavendon Gate in the southern half of the City the building tradition has always been one of timber and clay, producing more ephemeral building traces often mistakenly interpreted as reflecting less substantial evidence of occupation.

More significantly still is the recognition of two discreet cemeteries whose limits have yet to be defined.

The extent of the early Saxon occupation is also still unclear but the volume and type of domestic refuse certainly indicates the proximity of buildings. Sites of this period are still sufficiently rare for the discovery to be high on the list of priorities and considerable effort to be extended to defining the nature and extent of the Saxon settlement.

At a more general level, Wavendon Gate seems, with the exception of the later Roman period, to represent continuity of settlement location from the Iron Age to the Early Saxon Periods. Elsewhere in the City only the Bancroft Villa and Mausoleum sites have illustrated this aspect of settlement continuity. The information gained from a full excavation at Wavendon Gate will both compliment and contrast with the vast body of accumulated data gathered from the Bancroft excavations.

Future Excavations

Milton Keynes Development Corporation have generously granted sufficient funds for the total excavation of the site in 1989. The excavation will take place between April and September inclusive and it is hoped will cover the entire area of occupation located in the trial trenches both to the north and the south of the old Wavendon to Walton road. To achieve this aim over 30,000m of topsoil will have to be removed. This will require a massive injection of resources and it is anticipated that a full time staff of 25 topped up by seasonal casual staff will be taken on to achieve this end. Because of the advanced stage of development planning,

what would normally have been spread over two or even three years has had to be squeezed into a single season. This will inevitably put considerable pressure on both staff and resources, but, the level of funding will enable the work to be carried out as expeditiously as possible and should cause little or no delay to the proposed adjacent developments.

WYMBUSH (MK211)

R.J. Zeepvat

This site which was first discovered in 1973, was the subject of a small-scale excavation by the writer in 1979, and has since been published in *Roman Milton Keynes* (Mynard, D.(ed), 1987, Bucks Archaeol. Soc. Monograph Series 1). The site as excavated consisted of a stone built farmhouse of the cottage type, measuring 22 x 11m overall, and an open-fronted barn. Both these structures were dated to the late second century AD, occupation continuing to the late

third century, with only slight traces of human activity on the site in the fourth century. Although it became evident that these buildings formed only part of a small farm complex, the pressure of work on more urgent projects in recent years has prevented further work at Wymbush.

However, when in early 1988 the Unit was approached by John Laing, the prospective developers of the site, the opportunity was taken to arrange for a watching brief to be carried out during construction on the areas to the north and north-west of the earlier excavations. Unit staff were aided in this by local detectorists Gordon Heritage, and Carol and Geoff Cobbett. Unfortunately, a bout of sickness among Unit staff involved in the watching brief coincided with the stripping of much of the area to the north of the 1979 excavations, where the contractors reported finding stone structures and other associated features, so much of the evidence for this area was lost. However, an area of about 2400 sq.m., 70m north of the farmhouse, was examined in

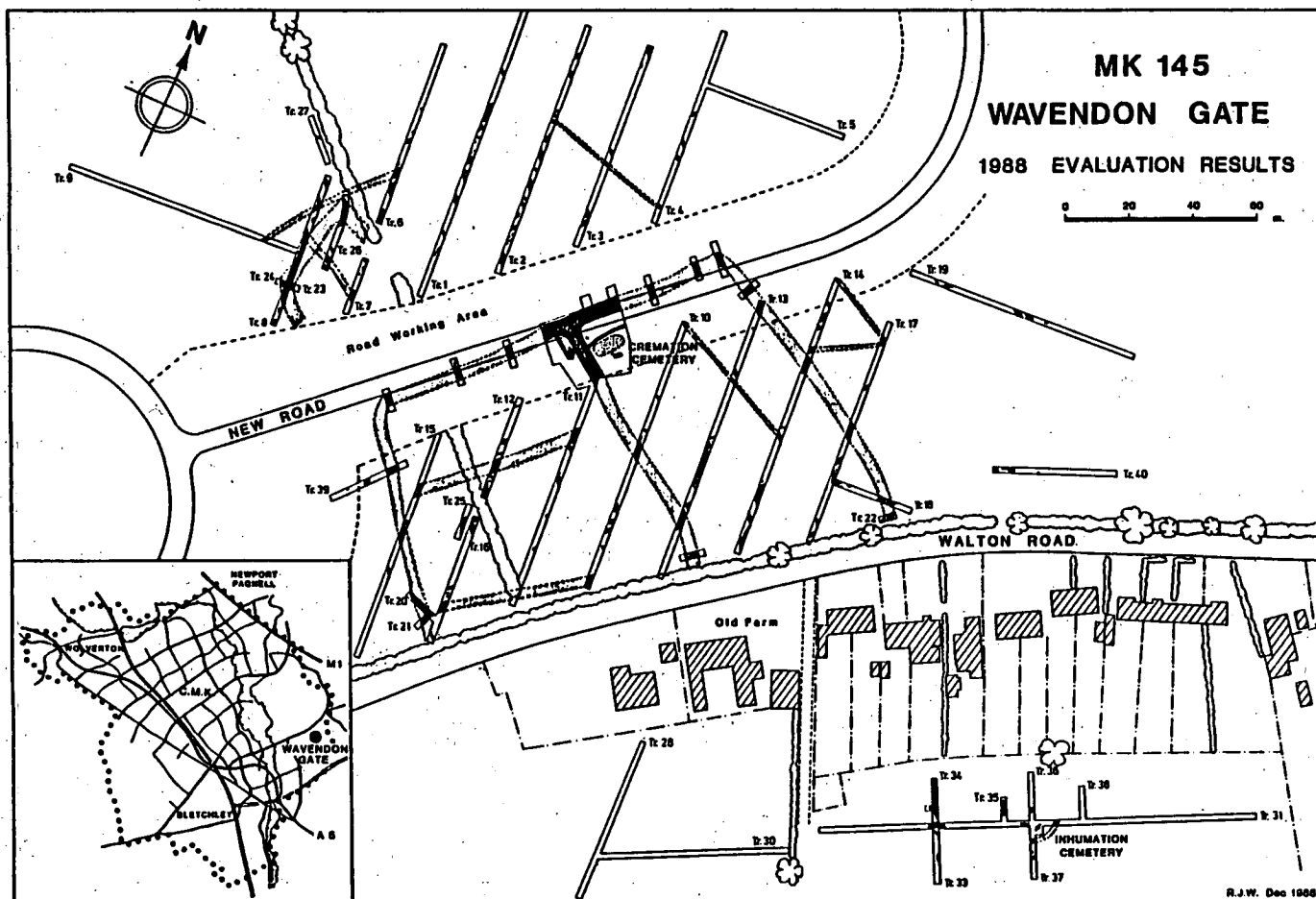


Fig. 3

some detail, and found to contain evidence of two buildings and other associated features.

The first of these structures, Building 3, measured 20.5 x 10m, surviving as pitched limestone footings 850-900 mm in width. There was no trace of any internal floor or associated features, so the building, which was contemporary with the stone structures excavated previously, was interpreted as a barn or similar agricultural building.

To the north-west and north-east of Building 3, and aligned with it, was a broad "V" section ditch, two metres wide and

750mm deep. This feature, which was contemporary with Building 3, appeared to mark the northern limit of occupation on the site, and probably formed part of a ditched enclosure surrounding the site, covering an area about 100m square.

Beneath the south corner of Building 3 was found a line of postholes and associated gully, aligned east-west, probably forming part of a timber aisled structure at least 17m in length. This was dated to the early second century - a period of occupation not previously noted at Wymbush - adding a further chapter to our knowledge of the site.

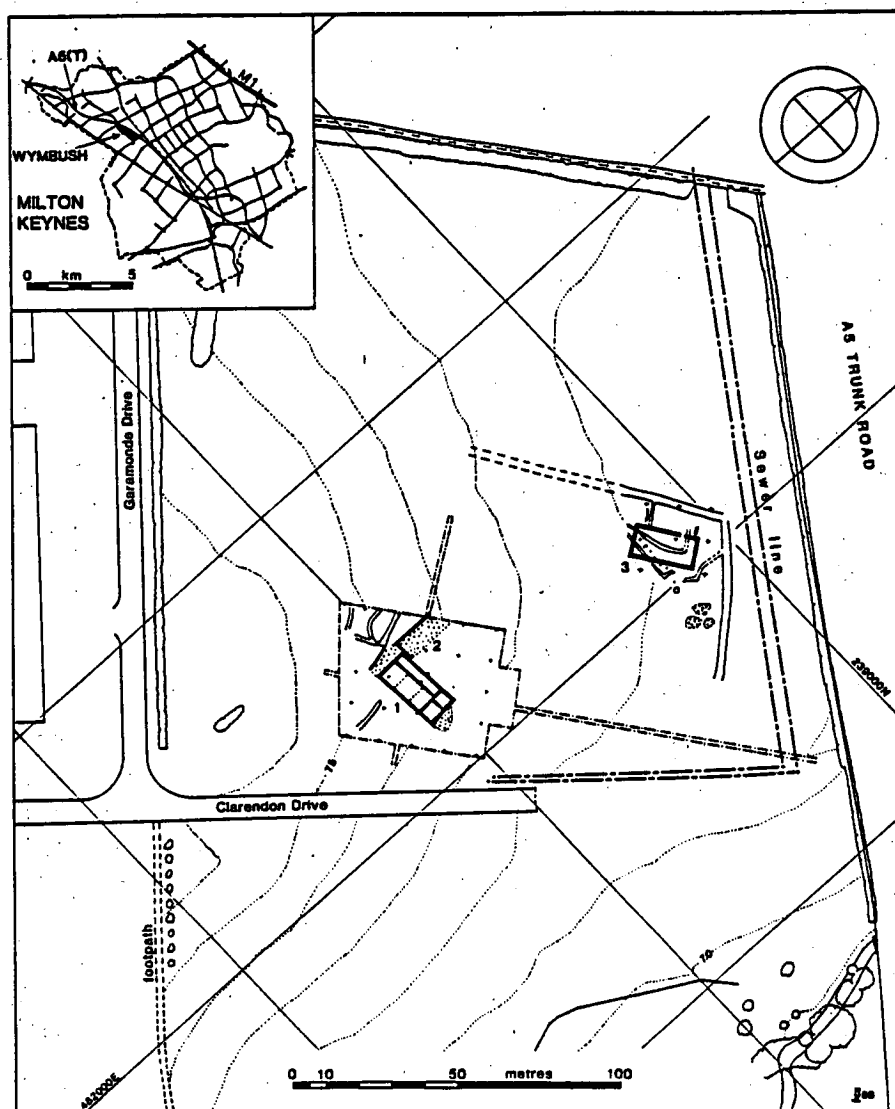


Fig. 4 Overall plan of Wymbush Roman site, showing relationship of 1979 and 1988 discoveries.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT : REPORT FOR 1988

Compiled and edited by Brian Dix

INTRODUCTION

Changing attitudes to funding in archaeology and the requirements for stringent policies to protect the archaeological resource have intensified the Unit's need to provide a strategic foundation for the 1990s. While management of ancient sites, by agreement or in some cases through acquisition, is seen as one of the main methods of ensuring the protection and interpretation of such monuments, it remains important to initiate an appropriate response on individual planning matters which have significant archaeological implications. This may require prior evaluations of land in areas of unknown archaeological importance but of high potential, in addition to other assessments and subsequent fieldwork. The corollary for the approach to be efficacious is to identify a series of priorities for research by geographical or other region, chronological period, and through thematic treatment. The Monuments Protection Programme, aimed at identifying sites and groups of sites of national importance and also of regional and local value, is only partly adequate.

The Unit's ability to meet future requirements of monitoring and implementing the effects of developer-funded contract archaeology was strengthened during 1988 by the establishment of the new post of Field Officer, to which Graham Cadman was appointed in July. Since then several

evaluations have been completed for individual developers as well as other work undertaken throughout the county. A separate post of Heritage Interpretation Officer has also been created and is funded jointly by the County Council and the Countryside Commission. In conjunction with the continuing programme of work in schools' education, the duties undertaken by Melanie Whewell since December are intended to increase public awareness and understanding of the county's rich archaeological resource. In 1989 two senior appointments will be made to manage respectively the contracting and curatorial services operating within the Unit.

Throughout this period of reorganisation the Unit has maintained an active programme of archaeology in the county. While negotiations over planning consents have engendered much small scale fieldwork, with increasing dependence on developer-funding, long term projects continue at Kirby Hall and in the Raunds area, and new work has been undertaken at Hunsbury hillfort..

FIELDWORK PROJECTS AND RELATED OBSERVATIONS

Barby (SP 544707) - G Cadman

The Unit was commissioned by the landowner to conduct an evaluation of an area of earthworks beside the scheduled ancient monument of Barby Castle, which is presumed to be medieval. The primary objective was to ascertain if the earthworks were contemporary with the adjacent castle

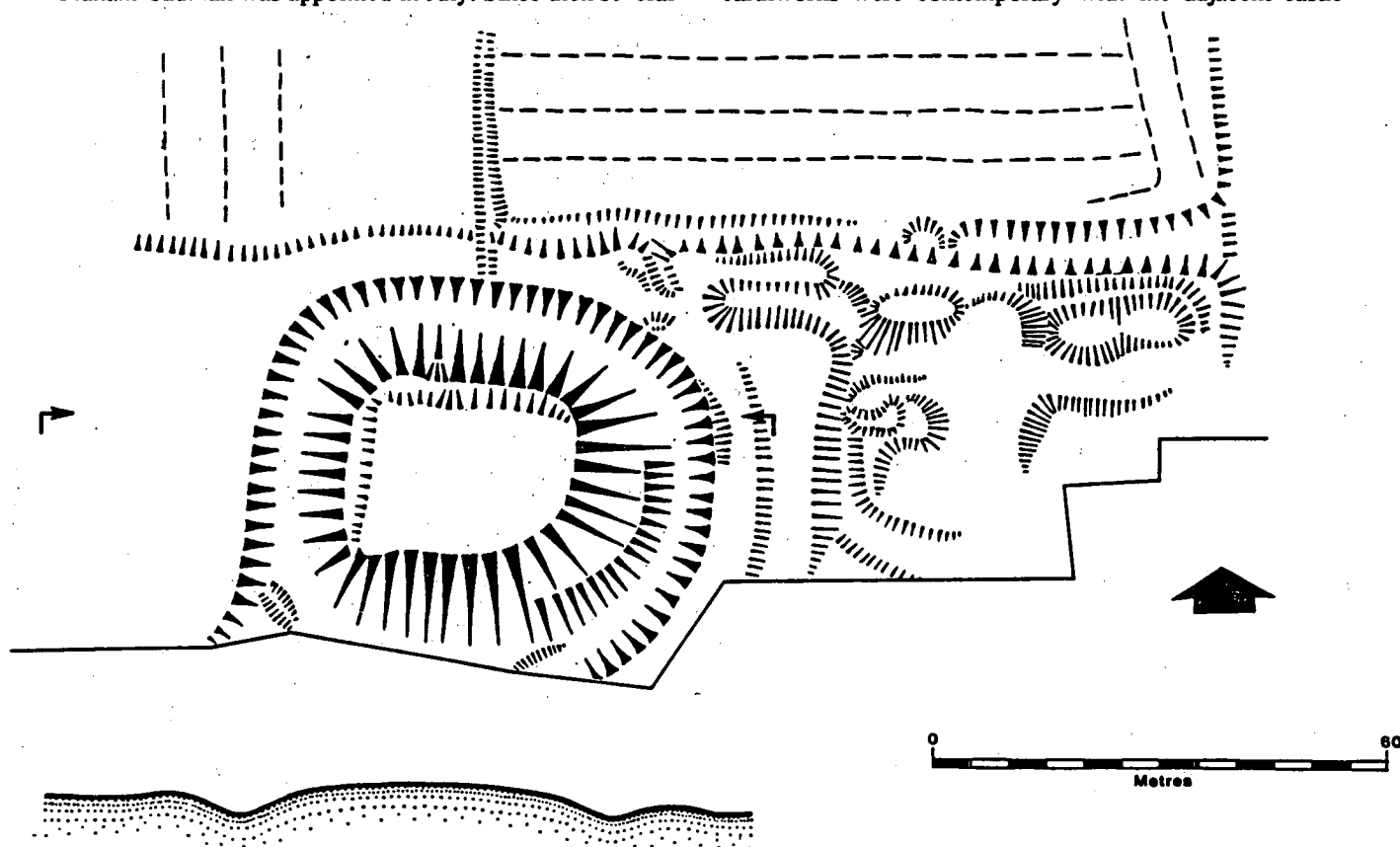


Fig. 1 Barby Castle. Plan of earthworks surveyed and drawn by G Foard and A Williams

mound and, by determining their function, to assess whether they merited preservation or recording prior to any development.

Apart from some minor remains which were clearly recent and the discovery of a single sherd of medieval pottery, no dating evidence was forthcoming to demonstrate the origins of the earthworks, although their form suggests that most are probably medieval or post-medieval. They include a prominent bank and ditch which extend across the site from east to west. The paucity of demonstrable medieval features indicates that, except for potential boundaries and some possible pits to the east of the castle-mound, the area was largely devoid of buildings and intensive domestic occupation. There is thus no evidence for the existence of a castle-bailey to the immediate north, east, or west of the surviving mound, but rather the easternmost earthworks could represent the little-used back-ends of village tenements or other small enclosures which were separated from the contemporary open-fields at the north by the main bank and ditch.

An extensive series of features sealed by the earthworks included ditches, layers, pits, and postholes. Several contained pottery of the first or second centuries AD, but it is unclear whether its occurrence was residual or contemporary. At least one minor earthwork appears to respect the alignment of these ditches, and might therefore be of an ancient origin. Further work would be required to confirm this possibility and also to determine the extent and nature of any associated occupation.

Bozeat by-pass - D Jackson

No significant archaeological features were revealed during observation of the road-construction.

Braybrooke Castle (SP 76798459) - G Cadman

Scheduled monument consent was granted to Anglian Water for small scale remedial channel-protection works in a small gorge or leat immediately north of an embanked medieval fishpond. Conducted in July 1988, the works exposed horizons on the south side of the leat including what appeared to be the base of the fishpond bank. No dating was obtained..

Church Brampton - D Jackson

Geophysical survey and related trial-trenching were carried out on an extensive cropmark-complex between Church Brampton and Chapel Brampton (cf RCHME, Archaeological sites in North-West Northamptonshire (1981), fig 25) in anticipation of the proposed use of the area for a golf-course. Deep ploughing and the erosion of the light, sandy soil suggests that only features cut into the bedrock may survive. There is one partially surviving barrow-mound, however, and features of the Iron Age and

Anglo- Saxon periods appear widespread. The only evidence for Roman activity comprised a pottery kiln of the late first or second century AD.

Culworth (SP 547468) - G Cadman

Three sherds of early Saxon pottery and five sherds dating from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries were recovered in June 1988 during housing development in Queens Street, 250m south-east of St Mary's church. There are unconfirmed reports of a Roman coin and a silver sceatta also being found. A limestone-lined pond in the south-east corner of the site remains undated despite extensive cleaning and refurbishment.

Dallington (SP 7263) - T Sharman

Fieldwalking took place during November and December 1988 within the large field to the south of Dallington Lodge Farm, Northampton, where air photographs showed what appears to be a large Neolithic causewayed enclosure, pit alignments, and other cropmarks including ring ditches. (RCHME, Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northampton (1985), fig 2 and microfiche pp 240- 1). The entire area is potentially threatened by future housing development and the construction of the Northampton North-West Bypass road.

A large quantity of prehistoric worked flints and other flakes was found in the westernmost 500m of the field and included a concentration above the site of the causewayed enclosure. In the centre of the field a vast medieval manuring scatter, denoted by pottery sherds, corresponded with a heavy clay soil. By contrast, the prehistoric flints occurred chiefly in areas of lighter ironstone-geology. Also found was a small concentration of Iron Age pottery sherds, which appeared to be in the same location as a small ring ditch visible in air photographs.



Fig. 2

'Whose idea was this, anyway?'

Fineshade Abbey (SP 973977) - B Dix

Trial-excavation took place in July 1988 on part of the scheduled ancient monument at Fineshade in order to assess the effect of a proposed house construction; the costs were met by the owner. Five machine-dug trenches were located on the site of a mid-eighteenth century house which had been demolished in 1956 using high explosives (cf RCHME, *Inventory of Architectural Monuments in North Northamptonshire* (1984), pp 61-2). The principal interest in the site lay in its potential for the recovery of information relating to a previous Augustinian priory. In the event, the evaluation indicated that little, if any, medieval or earlier stratification could be expected to survive in the house-area, where the depth and extent of modern disturbance was a vivid testimony to the totality of the recent destruction. Consequently, scheduled monument consent was given for the building works to proceed.

In the meantime the owner changed his plans in favour of the residential conversion of an adjacent stables located within the remains of the original defences of Castle Hymel, which had been demolished in the reign of King John to make way for the priory. Previous evaluation has shown that any former archaeological levels in the development area were largely destroyed in the nineteenth century (S *Midlands Archaeol*, 18 (1988), pp 60-1). While monitoring the recent building works, the opportunity arose in December 1988 to observe earthmoving undertaken for the construction of a lake beside the scheduled site. The new lake extends southwards from a modern causeway and curves around the base of a natural river-cliff which supports the castle- earthworks. It occupies part of an earlier lake-bed which was apparently created during landscaping in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when its construction obliterated most existing features. The series of silts and clays which had filled it proved to be entirely modern and contained bricks and other building materials, such as Welsh roofing slates, in addition to broken flower pots, other recent pottery, and parts of mineral-water bottles. There were no indications of medieval levels and no medieval finds were recovered.

The removal of recent accumulations to a depth of 1.50m in places showed that by cutting the natural geology the excavation of the original lake had largely destroyed any ancient deposits. In two places, however, the vestiges of possible Roman features were observed. In one findspot the base of a former pit was denoted by an area of brown clay, c 1.80m (E-W) by 2.50m and between 0.10-0.12m deep, which contained pieces of *tegulae* and fragments of animal bones among a considerable quantity of limestone. Elsewhere, a linear spread of brown loam was all that had survived of a NE-SW running ditch which was at least 1.20m wide. It was traced over a distance of c 11m where less than 0.10m of its infilling was preserved. Roman roofing materials were again present, but the predominant finds were pieces of tap- and other iron-smelting slags of a quality redolent of the material found during road improvement nearby on the A43 at Laxton Lodge (cf *Britannia*, 19 (1988), pp 275-98).

In the absence of pottery the features within the lake cannot be dated precisely, though it is assumed that they relate to the Roman site denoted by previous discoveries close to the stable-block. The developments in that area will continue to be monitored.

Flore (SP 64555975) - G Cadman

Watching brief on a British Gas pipeline revealed only a large nineteenth-century (and possibly eighteenth-century) rubbish dump.

Fotheringhay (TL 05719327) - G Cadman

Six unstratified sherds of twelfth-century pottery and two sherds of thirteenth-century Lyveden/Stanton cooking pots were recovered from house- and pipe-trench spoil at a site in Main Street. Though the site had probably formed part of a medieval tenement, no features were observed to confirm this.

Gayton (SP 74054693) - G Cadman

Part of a poorly constructed and collapsed limestone wall was revealed in September 1988 during building-works in the garden at 3 Deans Row. Pottery from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries was found above the stonework which contained two sherds dateable to the fourteenth to fifteenth century.

Grafton Regis, New Cottage, Alderton (SP 74054693) - G Cadman

In August 1988 drive-widening to a cottage adjacent to the churchyard exposed human skeletal remains within a bank set against the outside of the churchyard wall. The exposed remains were removed by the police and passed to the Archaeology Unit. An inspection of the site suggested that the burial may have run back under the churchyard wall, possibly as a result of churchyard shrinkage when the cottages were built. The only dating evidence was provided by nineteenth- and early twentieth- century pottery located in layers sealing the burial which could be considerably older.

Gretton, Kirby Hall (SP 925927) - B Dix

Current plans for garden-restoration by English Heritage at Kirby Hall provide the opportunity to increase an understanding of the site by combining the consolidation of its physical remains with a detailed archaeological examination. The results from the first stage of investigation, completed in November 1988, contribute important evidence for the development of the series of formal gardens towards an apogee in the late seventeenth century, when they

enjoyed the reputation of being among the finest gardens in England.

Excavation has been concentrated in the Great Garden with an examination of the adjacent part of the West Terrace. Together with a similar bank at the north and partially reconstructed walls along the south and east sides of the garden, the terrace encloses a flat rectangular area, c 120m x c 88m, beside the western facade of the house. The present layout of pathways, borders, and individual plots was established in the 1930s, although the overall arrangement

of parterres can be shown to reflect a stage in the seventeenth-century garden design.

The original creation of the Great Garden and its associated terrace-works caused a major transformation of scene. Preparatory clearance and other earthmoving involved the demolition of part of the old village of Kirby, depicted in Elizabethan surveys as a group of cottages and church outside the existing garden and orchard to the west of the house (NRO, FH 272). Some of the remains, including a fragmentary wall of one of the cottages, became incorporated in the new West Terrace which elsewhere sealed a culvert that had carried a stream beneath the corner of the previous garden. The feature comprised a long roomy passage, 0.90m wide and c 1.32m high, which had been built up in limestone to a carefully contrived barrel-vault. Its course was interrupted and blocked by the foundations of the terrace- revetments.

Where examined, the bank of the West Terrace was composed of freshly quarried sand and limestone which had been laid down in a series of roughly horizontal layers with other deposits of earth and rubble. It rose to a height of at least 2m above the level of the adjacent garden and was c 14.60m wide. The outer or west side was retained by a limestone and mortar wall, c 0.60m thick, but around the inside of the garden there ran a brick wall, probably with a stone balustrade. A series of 'weep-holes' above the base of the brickwork facilitated drainage into an adjacent soil border, where several stone-built drains connected into a network beneath the neighbouring paths.

The brick wall of the West Terrace was divided into two lengths by a central opening which lay on the principal east-west axis of the garden, directly opposite a doorway in the house. At the mid-point of each section stonework had been added in front of the wall to support statues or other ornament, and similar stone bases existed in the corners. In contrast, the massive foundation which was built at the centre is likely to have supported something more monumental. At either side the brick wall was carefully faced in order to provide a straight butt-joint with what was probably a masonry structure, since mortar-impressions on the surface of the solidly built foundation are consistent with the bedding of ashlar blocks. In fact, the size of the gap left by the later removal of the superstructure - 5.10m x 1.10m - so closely matches the dimensions of the two Nicholas Stone archways at Kirby that it may be supposed that one such formerly occupied the spot. Such architecture would be most appropriate in this focal position, where the opening in the terrace could have contained steps leading to the top. The erection of an arch of this kind in the first stages of development of the Great Garden betokens a date for its creation of c 1620-40.

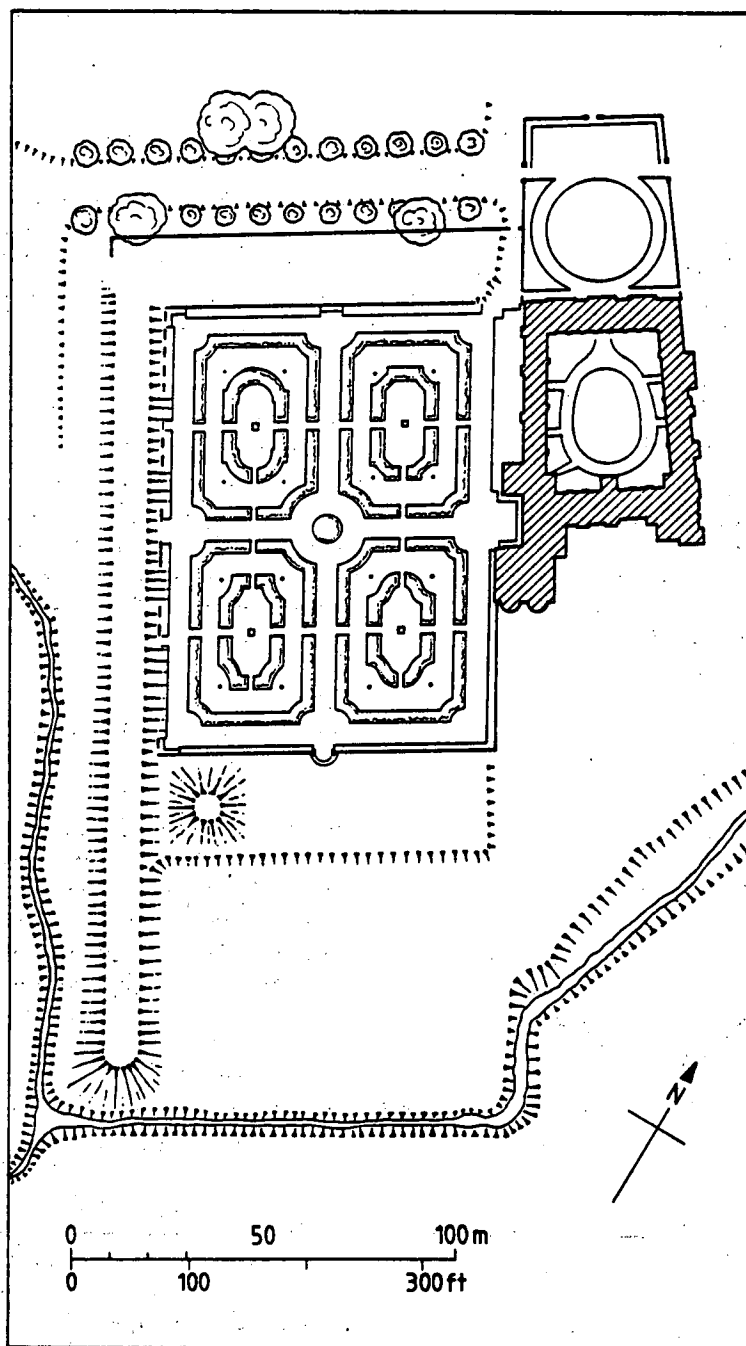


Fig. 3 Kirby Hall. The Great Garden as restored by HM Office of Works, but partly following an early arrangement of parterres and walks. Drawn by Cecily Marshall.

The garden-enclosure at that time appears to have been divided into the arrangement of *plats* and broad walks that was discovered and reconstructed in the 1930s. Investigation of the modern plot in the south-west corner shows that its outline follows the main features of an early *parterre*. The original boundary, however, is likely to have been a hedge rather than a stone kerb, such as that which has been used to replace it. The form of the *plat* was that of a typical *parterre l'Angloise*, in which a plate-bande, or wide earthen border, enclosed a clear expanse of grass containing a statue at the centre.

Within about a half century the garden was remodelled. Some of the surrounding walls were pulled down and the height of the retaining wall of the West Terrace was reduced to that of only a few courses which were afterwards buried beneath the slope of a turf *glacis*. The slant can be reconstructed as rising at an average angle of c 25° above horizontal to form a gradient of approximately 1 in 2. While the width across the top of the bank was decreased, its base covered a much greater area, so that within the garden the new slope extended over the earlier border and encroached onto the existing path. The surrounding surface level appears to have been raised by the introduction of new materials which also formed a more complicated *broderie*, possibly with the principal elements picked out in cutwork. An indication of the date when these alterations were carried out is provided by associated finds of late seventeenth-century clay tobacco-pipes, pottery, and a prunt from a glass wine-bottle which, in depicting the arms of Viscount Hatton, gives a *terminus post quem* of 1683 when Christopher Hatton IV received that title. A range of contemporary documents corroborates the impression that there was an increase in gardening activity towards the end of the century.

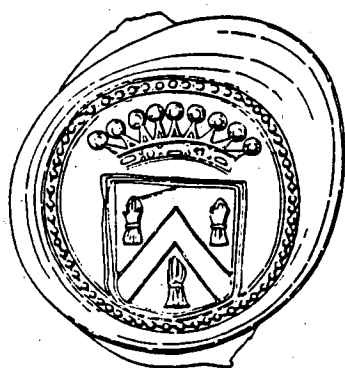


Fig. 4

*Glass prunt, Kirby Hall.
Actual size. Drawn by
Cecily Marshall.*

Harlestone (SP 6964) - G Cadman

Apart from some sherds of post-medieval pottery found in the ploughsoil, no other finds were recovered during construction of a new golf-course.

Hunsbury Hillfort (SP738584) - D Jackson

The well known Iron Age hillfort at Hunsbury, on the southern outskirts of Northampton, is one of only a few such monuments in the county and is now protected as a scheduled ancient monument and preserved within a public park. In the last century, however, most of the interior of the camp and its surrounding area was quarried for ironstone, providing one of the most important collections of Iron Age finds in Britain. Over 500 items from the site are retained in Northampton Museum and with other pieces in the British Museum include weapons and industrial materials in addition to domestic articles (cf *Archaeol J*, 93 (1936), pp 57-100). Their preservation is mainly due to Sir Henry Dryden who visited the workings but, apart from a few general observations which he noted, the material lacks detailed provenance and is therefore without association.

The only modern archaeological excavation which might be expected to provide details for the history of the hillfort was the investigation of two cuttings made into part of the north-eastern defences by R. J. C. Atkinson in 1952, but its results have not been fully reported. By late 1987 part of the rampart around the north-western side of the hillfort was eroding so badly at the point where it was perched above the partly infilled ironstone-quarry, that it became urgent to ascertain the nature of the surviving earthwork with the view to securing its continued protection. Accordingly, a new section, 7m wide, was cut through this part of the bank between January and March 1988. Through the willing co-operation of Professor Atkinson, the results will be prepared for publication with the information he had obtained previously further to the east.

In the area of latest investigation the rampart survives to a height of 1.75m. The excavation has confirmed the existing observation that the early rampart was built as a box-structure, but in places this was eventually burnt. Results from radiocarbon dating are currently awaited, but the small amount of associated pottery suggests that it may have been in use at some time from the fifth to the third centuries BC. Following its burning, the rampart was reconstructed, possibly in a *glacis*-style, though too much had been lost in quarrying and by other erosion to determine its precise form.

Irthlingborough, Crow Hill hillfort (SP958715) - S Parry

Work has been carried out at this newly identified hillfort (Northamptonshire *Archaeol*, 21 (1986-7), p 13) in order to determine the nature of its preservation. Survey of part of the interior by fluxgate gradiometer revealed a series of circular gullies, presumably denoting buildings. A trench of 42m² was also opened within the fort, proving stratigraphy to a depth of 0.30m-although cut by medieval furrows. Further excavation was not undertaken in order to preserve the integrity of the site, but Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from above.

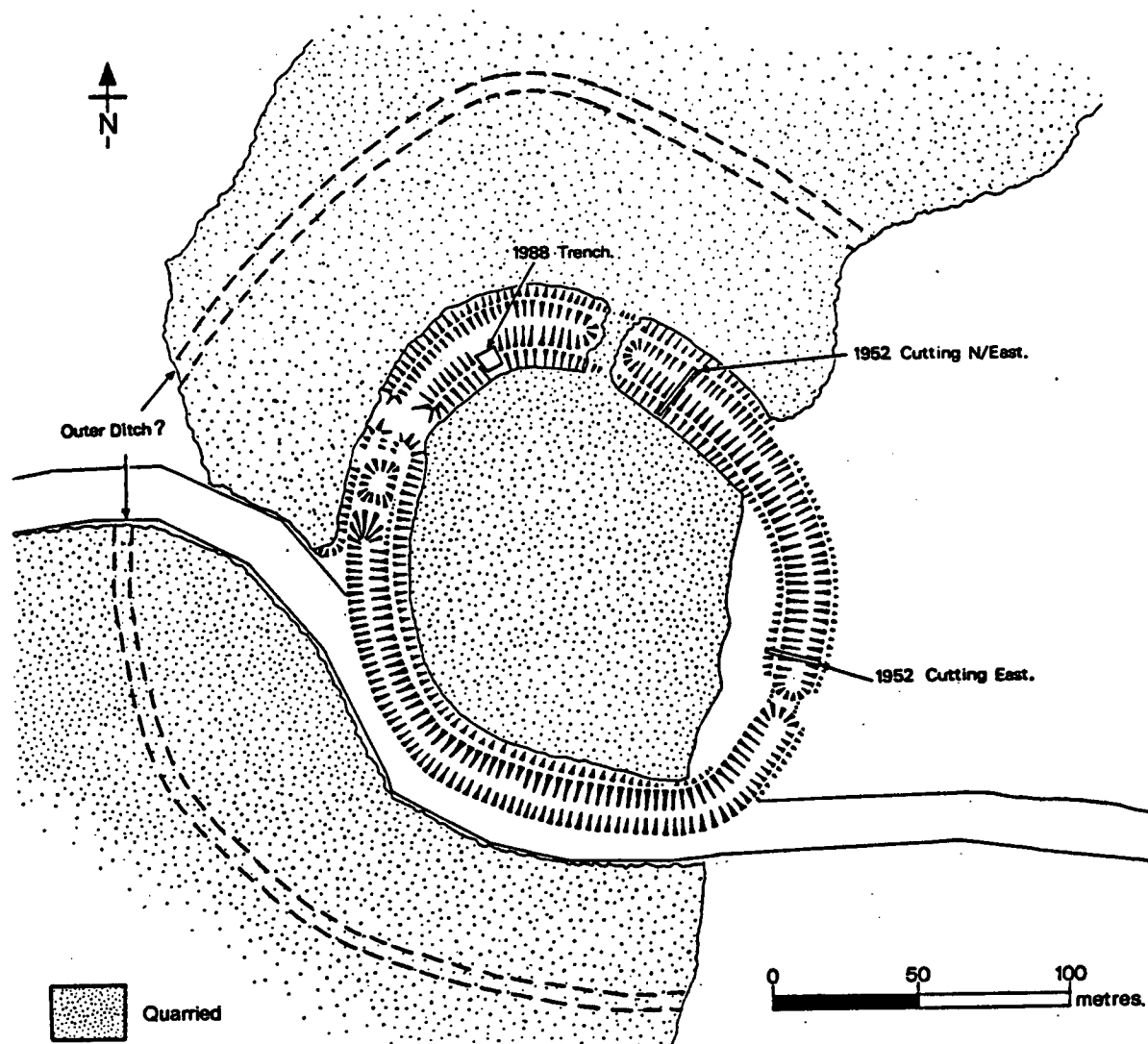


Fig. 5 Hunsbury hillfort. Drawn by A Williams.

A concentration of Iron Age and Roman pottery was identified during fieldwalking immediately east of the fort. The fluxgate gradiometer defined a circular anomaly which was partly excavated to reveal two concentric gullies circumscribing an area c 8-10m in diameter. Both gullies had been singly re-cut and each contained small quantities of later Roman pottery. The function of the structure is uncertain but may have been domestic. Two thin metalised surfaces of limestone chippings and pebbles sealed the feature; they contained late Roman pottery.

Gradiometer-survey outside the entrance into the hillfort identified parts of two sub-rectangular enclosures which formerly existed at either side of a possible dry valley. Excavation confirmed the presence of a ditch, probably Roman, and showed that the intervening area was filled with a layer of colluvium up to 0.50m thick. The excavation-trench was extended to the south-west in order to investigate a concentration of early Anglo-Saxon pottery which had been found during fieldwalking. Five substantial postholes and a slot associated with three further postholes

cut the layer of colluvium. The series of postholes lacked pottery, but the slot contained several large sherds of early Saxon pottery which had been placed vertically to provide packing around timbers. Owing to the limited nature of excavation, the remains are difficult to interpret, but three of the postholes may have been set at right-angles to the slot and could indicate contemporaneity. If so, a substantial early Saxon structure can be inferred.

M 40 Motorway - D Jackson

The following features and sites were recorded in 1988 during construction of the M40 motorway-extension where its route passed just inside the county's south-western boundary.

Aynho (SP 502332)

An early Neolithic pit and several undated postholes were revealed on a ridge of marlstone bedrock.

Aynho (SP 505318)

The new carriageway skirted a Roman site on low lying ground by a stream against the county's border with Oxfordshire. Related ditches were exposed and included one example containing a quantity of early Anglo-Saxon pottery in its upper infilling. With similar pottery from a nearby deposit, the sherds represent at least fourteen separate vessels which can be attributed to a short phase during the period from the mid-fifth to early sixth centuries.

Kings Sutton (SP 499345)

Seven sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery were found with other occupation-debris in a feature on the east side of the roadway. The sherds derive from four vessels, comprising a cauldron and probably a small bowl and two jars. The pottery is typical of the 'Anglian' traditions of the region and can be attributed to the sixth to early seventh century.

Northampton - M Shaw and A Williams

Although no major archaeological excavations were carried out in the town in 1988, a range of observations and other recording undertaken in the course of monitoring building development yielded important evidence for reconstructing the topography of medieval Northampton. A minor excavation at Abington Square uncovered settlement remains of twelfth to fourteenth-century date outside the town's East Gate in the suburb of St Edmunds End. Elsewhere, a series of watching briefs revealed evidence for a possible short-lived outer defence around the East Gate, located the Inner Bailey ditch of Northampton Castle (with late Saxon deposits occurring nearby), and suggested a possible location for the south-east corner of the late Saxon defences. A group of eighteenth-century clay tobacco-pipes, pottery, and glassware found at the Angel Hotel in Bridge Street attests the site's long association with a public house.

Reflecting the greater concern for the preservation of the national archaeological resource the site of the former medieval, and possible middle Saxon, church of St Gregory's was scheduled and a large area of the middle Saxon palace complex around St Peter's Church has also been recommended for scheduling. In addition a number of development schemes have been modified in order to minimise the damage to archaeological levels.

Abington Square (SP 76076086)

An excavation was carried out over a period of 5-weeks in June and July 1988 in advance of the construction of Jaguar Car Showrooms. The work was financed by Monarch Cars. The site lay outside the East Gate of the medieval town in the suburb of St Edmunds End. At the front, beside Kettering Road, traces of timber buildings of the twelfth to early thirteenth centuries were discovered. Towards the rear two parallel rectangular cuts into the ground probably represent either small, individual, timber buildings or cellars within a larger structure. They were replaced in the mid-thirteenth century by a stone building aligned along Kettering Road, which underwent modification before abandonment at the end of the fourteenth century. Subsequently, the area appears to have remained largely derelict until the nineteenth century.

The evidence confirms the early date for the growth of suburbs outside the medieval town as suggested by the foundation-dates of the suburban churches. The expansion along the major routes outside the walled town is particularly interesting, and reflects Northampton's importance in the twelfth century when it was the third largest walled town in the country after London and Norwich.

Castle Station (SP 74856064)

A watching brief was maintained between February and April 1988 during the groundworks for the construction of a car park in the area of the former railway goods-shed to the north-east of Castle Station. The western side of the Inner Bailey of Northampton Castle lay previously hereabout, but was quarried away in 1879 when the railway station was extended. The assumption that all traces of the castle had been destroyed in the area proved incorrect.

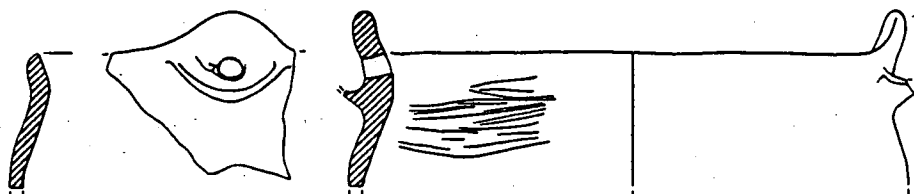


Fig. 6 Cauldron from Kings Sutton, scale 1:4. Drawn by Elizabeth Ward.

The construction of an exit-road from the new car park on to St Andrews Road at the north involved cutting approximately 1m off the edge of a bank of earth which ran parallel with the main road and was c 2m high. It was assumed to be a recent dump, but at its southern end the bailey ditch of the castle survived to a width of 16m. As exposed, the upper filling was entirely of nineteenth-century material which had been dumped from the construction of the railway-extension, but otherwise the ditch was observed to survive below the level of the car park which effectively seals the earlier deposits. A series of late Saxon deposits was present in the bank-section to the north of the bailey ditch. They comprised a separate ditch, 4m wide and 1m deep, which was filled with grey-brown clay, in addition to overlying layers. A hearth overlay the north side of the ditch

and a shallow ? trench occurred at the south. The late Saxon levels did not survive at the level of the car park to the west, but a 10-20m wide bank of earth between the exit-road and St Andrews Road can be expected to contain contemporary deposits.

Frances' Jetty (SP 75376030)

An evaluation trench was excavated ahead of development immediately south of Frances' Jetty during one day in March 1988. Frances' Jetty is a narrow footpath between Bridge Street and Kingswell Street. The intention was to seek evidence for the eastern side of the late Saxon defences of Northampton which are thought to run between the two

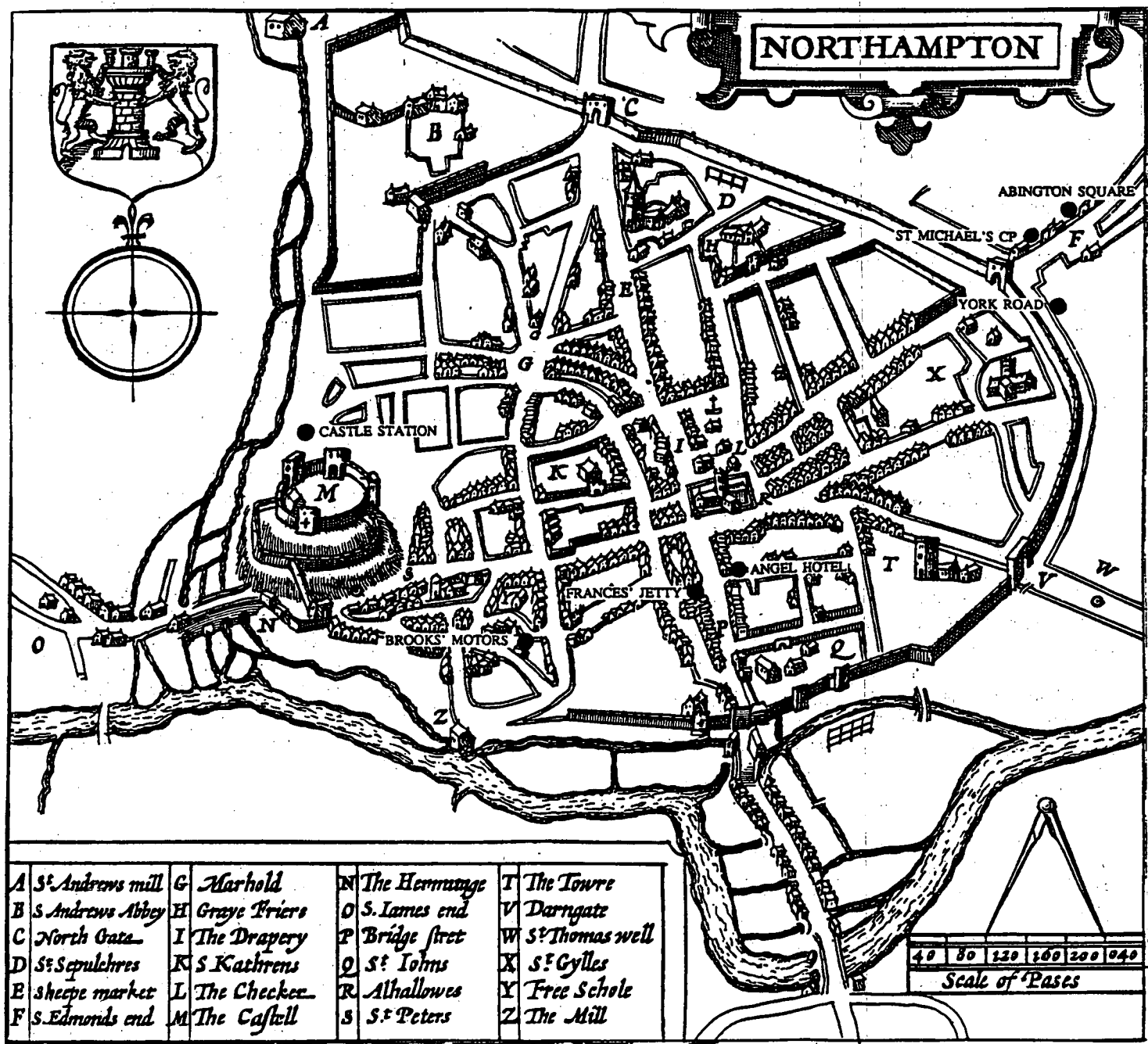


Fig. 7 Northampton : sites examined in 1988.

streets. A single L-shaped trench, 20m long x 1m wide east-west and 5m long x 1m wide north-south, was excavated westwards from Bridge Street, but it was not possible to continue closer into the supposed intramural area because of a standing building on Kingswell Street. The easternmost 10m of the trench proved to be cellared and the fill was removed only to a depth of 1m. Beyond this what appeared to be natural ironstone was encountered at a depth of 2.10m. Overlying it were 1) a possible trench filled with greyish brown soil from which thirteenth-to-fifteenth-century pottery was recovered; 2) a pit containing thirteenth-to-fourteenth-century pottery; 3) a layer of orange soil above a layer of grey silty clay with ironstone fragments - which were both cut by 1 and 2; 4) a layer of burnt material including much slag, which may represent the remains of a forging hearth overlying 3; 5) a possible ditch running east-west along the trench and cutting 3 but itself cut by 1; and a series of post- and stakeholes which cut layers 2 and 3. There was no indication of a trench running north-south and therefore parallel with the streets at either side, although safety considerations precluded the removal of sufficient of the supposed ironstone natural to determine whether it was actually such or re-deposited. Hence the presence or absence of the defences in this area is uncertain. One possibility is that the east-west ditch (5) may represent the defences turning to the west, for there is a kink in the line of Kingswell Street at this point and a scarp running east-west beyond it which might also suggest a change in alignment.

St Michael's car park (SP 75956082)

A watching brief was maintained in April 1988 during groundworks for the construction of a multi-storey car park on the north side of Abington Square, to the east of the ABC cinema. At the southern end of the site a ditch c 6m wide and c 1.30m deep was observed in section. It was overlain by a layer containing nineteenth-century material but the ditch fills themselves contained thirteenth-to-fourteenth-century pottery. The ditch could be followed for a distance of 7m, running north-west; beyond this point the ground, which formerly sloped upwards to the north towards St Michael's Road, had been terraced, probably in the nineteenth century, and all trace of the ditch had disappeared. The ditch was found to run approximately parallel to the Lower Mounts at a distance of 55m to its north-east. The Lower Mounts runs along the line of Northampton's medieval defences and it is possible that the newly identified ditch represents the line of a short-lived outer defence around the town's East Gate.

The only other feature discovered was a pit (or pits) c 10m to the south-west of the ditch. No dating evidence was recovered.

Brooks' Motors (SP 75116031)

A watching brief was maintained in June 1988 during the groundworks for an extension to Tony Brooks Motors. A single L-shaped trench, 1m wide and 10m east-west x 6m north-south, had been excavated to a depth of 1.20m below ground level. The sides were examined, revealing an

ironstone subsoil at 0.80m beneath the surface (2m below the level of the car park to the north) and a yellow clay subsoil at a further depth of 0.40m. Dark loam above the ironstone may represent former garden-soil, but beneath it and cutting into the ironstone there were four pits, and possibly others might have been identified by more careful cleaning. Pit 1 contained (?) twelfth-century pottery; pit 2 a possible tenth-century potsherd; and pit 4, thirteenth to fourteenth-century pottery. The results, albeit limited, tend to confirm the spread of settlement into the area at an early stage in the late Saxon period.

York Road (SP 75976073)

A watching brief was maintained during construction of an extension to the Prontaprint premises at 30 York Road, since the town's medieval defences were thought to run through the area. In May 1988 two trial-holes, each 0.60m square, were excavated by the contractors in order to assess the ground-conditions. They were dug to depths of 1.95m and 2.35m respectively. In both cases a layer of light yellowish brown loam with ironstone fragments was encountered at a depth of 1.80m. The material above consisted of topsoil, bands of ironstone, and layers of grey soil with charcoal; pottery of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and clay pipe fragments were recovered from these. The subsoil was not encountered and, since elsewhere on the north-east side of the town subsoil has generally been found at depths of 0.5-1m, it was clear that the site lay within an area of man-made disturbance, the top of which had been backfilled relatively recently.

Accordingly the site was visited regularly when the foundations for the extension were excavated in October 1988. In general the trenches were taken down to the top of the layer of loam which had been encountered previously (ie. to a depth of 1.80m). Towards the existing building, however, the trenches became deeper and the yellowish brown loam was removed up to a depth of 0.50m. Material of eighteenth-to-nineteenth-century date was recovered from the upper layers, but the small amount of pottery recovered from the bottom layer was entirely medieval. Although other explanations could be offered for the depth of archaeological material on this site (eg. the presence of a quarry pit), the most likely reason would be that it lies within the ditch of the medieval defences.

Angel Hotel, Bridge Street (SP 75436032)

An ironstone-lined well was revealed beneath the south wall of the Angel Hotel during its underpinning in April 1988. An interesting collection of eighteenth-century pottery, glass, and clay tobacco-pipes was recovered from the fill of the well by both the workmen and the Archaeology Unit. Among the pipes are 21 bowls dating from the period c 1730-1800, and one is marked with the name of a London maker. Of the 26 pottery vessels, 19 are drinking mugs; similarly, out of the 47 fragments of glass, 37 derive from wine-bottles and 6 from decorated wine-glasses. The

collection reflects the long history of the use of the site as a hotel or public house (the Angel Inn is shown on this site on a map of 1747). A silver threepenny piece of James II discovered by one of the workmen was made available for identification but was subsequently returned to the finder.

Northampton Grange Wood (SP 741575) - D Jackson

A large, shallow pit dating to the early Bronze Age (2000-1500 BC) was revealed during housing development. The pit was between 2.5-3m in diameter and up to 0.35m deep in the bedrock, and contained abundant charcoal in addition to a small amount of pottery.

Oundle, St Peter's churchyard (TL 04218818) - G Cadman

The insertion of a 100mm drain provided the opportunity for limited archaeological recording between May and August 1988. The drain-trench covered a distance of over 70m along existing pathways from an origin between the north chancel chapel and the vestry of St Peter's church. It thus ran around the north-east corner of the church before turning south to pass the end of the chancel and cross the graveyard to join an existing sewer adjacent to the churchyard entrance in North Street. With the exception of its northern reach and four inspection chambers, the hand-dug trench did not generally exceed 0.50m in width and its maximum depth of 1.10m was attained towards the southern end. In only a very few instances were small areas of limestone and clay marl 'natural' exposed. The co-operation of the Rev. Atwell and the contractors, J G Wright, in providing access to the trench is gratefully acknowledged. Mrs A G Johnston observed and recorded the initial works as well as assisting with H Johnston in the recording of the trench across the graveyard. T Pearson reported on the finds which with the Church's permission, will be placed in the Northamptonshire Archaeological Archive along with all records.

A block of masonry exposed below the existing north-east buttress of the north chancel chapel may be part of an earlier, larger buttress. It consisted of pieces of rubble-limestone within a yellow clay matrix which was further associated with the coursed and mortared limestone foundations of the chapel's east wall. This wall appeared to be continuous with the early buttress and showed signs of localised burning above and below the modern ground surface. A sherd of medieval pottery was recovered nearby. To the north of the vestry, the drain-trench passed through an area of recent ground-disturbance containing a fragment of green-glazed medieval tile, three sherds of thirteenth to fourteenth-century pottery, one Roman sherd, and a fragment from a sixth-century Anglo-Saxon jar. All were evidently residual. Having turned south the trench cut across the graveyard where a generally unconsolidated, grey, silty clay 'grave-earth', at least 0.80m deep in parts, formed the predominant archaeological horizon beneath the pathway and its bedding layers. Numerous burials and much disturbed human bone were present within it but, except in

a few instances, the homogeneous nature of the material and the narrowness of the trench precluded the identification of the individual grave cuts and the sequence of the burials. Several fragments of coffin-furniture, as well as medieval and post-medieval sherds (the latest from the seventeenth to eighteenth-centuries) were recovered from the grave-earth and trench-spoil together with three further early Anglo-Saxon sherds including one from a decorated urn. The latter, together with the medieval pottery, must be residual within the much turned-over graveyard. At one point a brick-lined burial vault was partially exposed beneath its original limestone-capping. It contained the remains of a single burial together with wooden coffin-fragments which included one piece with the initial letter 'W' picked out in brass studs. The vault is provisionally dated to the eighteenth century or later, and the other burials confirm that the current layout of the graveyard-paths is of fairly recent origin.

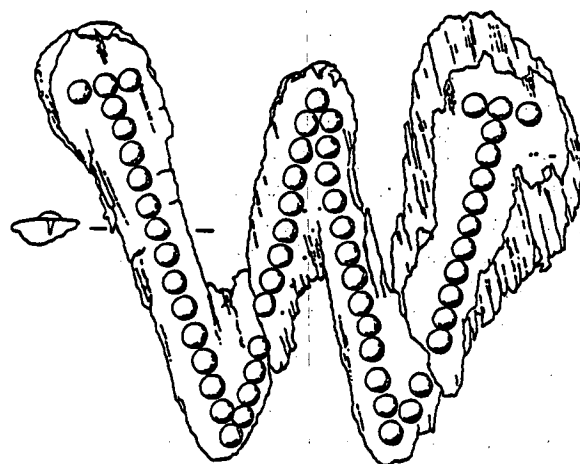


Fig. 8

In addition to the grave-earth and vault several other features of interest were examined within the graveyard area. In the trench-bottom opposite the east wall of the chancel a layer, or buried surface of silt-clay, occupied an area 3.40m wide between two features tentatively interpreted as robbed-out, narrow (0.35m), stone walls aligned east to west. The layer contained two sherds of Lyveden/Stanion pottery and appeared to overlie burials. There was little else to indicate the date of these features though they clearly pre-dated at least one phase of the graveyard burials. The narrowness of the putative walls might perhaps argue that they formed part of a demolished vault or other graveyard structure rather than being part of the church itself.

Towards the south end of the trench, where it passed close to the east wall of the former Laxton Grammar School, two substantial limestone-lined and-capped drains were revealed. The southernmost, running almost parallel with the school wall and extending below the modern steps into North Street, contained modern debris atop its largely silted fill. The overlying horizons reaching to the street-frontage

comprised heavily disturbed and unconsolidated ground cut by modern pipes. As the drain-trench was quite shallow at this point it was not possible to ascertain whether any ditched or other boundary existed beneath these levels. The second drain lay to the north-east of the school and was aligned approximately south-west by north-east. Cutting through the grave-earth, it was built of mortared, rough-cut and coursed limestone-blocks capped by large limestone slabs. Its sandy silt fill contained debris of the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and further such finds occurred in its construction-trench along with residual medieval wares. An area of silty clay between the two drains contained pottery and tile of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, but hardly any human bones. To the south, a series of seventeenth-to eighteenth-century layers or dumps had apparently been deposited after the partial removal of an underlying limestone and cream mortar wall, up to 0.80m wide. Surviving at least three courses deep and aligned approximately south-west by north-east, the wall was abutted by the silty clay layer to the north and thus might be construed as being of medieval origin. Its function was not determined.

Apart from the limited features described, no other medieval or earlier occupation was encountered. The discovery of four sixth-century sherds does, however, attest the nearby presence of significant Anglo-Saxon activity prior to the time when Oundle is known to have been a provincial capital of the Mercian kingdom.

Raunds Area Project

This detailed study of the landscape within part of the Nene Valley centred upon Raunds is managed jointly by the Unit and English Heritage, with support from M.S.C. and the Amey Roadstone Corporation (see further, *S Midland Archaeol*, 18 (1988), pp 48- 9). In 1988 the Central Excavation Unit of English Heritage continued the excavation of prehistoric and Roman sites ahead of gravel extraction in the valley-floor, while the county archaeology unit was responsible for other fieldwork. Several evaluations and minor salvage-excavations were undertaken in addition to the continuing programmes of excavation at West Cotton and fieldwalking of the project-area.

Field Survey - S Parry

1988 saw the completion of a third season of fieldwalking and the commencement of another. By the end of the year, 2,100 ha or c 70% of the available area had been covered using traverses at 15m spacing (cf *S Midlands Archaeol*, 18 (1988), pp 49-50). Several broad trends emerge from the data, permitting a chronological summary which can be compared with the natural environment (cf *Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 20 (1985), pp 3-4).

Early Prehistoric

Various Neolithic and Bronze Age flint-scatters are located on the lighter permeable soils along the side of the Nene Valley. The preference for light soils is particularly evident north of Hargrave where the lithic assemblage occurs on a gravel-island in an area which is otherwise clay (TL 03827190). On the clayland plateau the quantity of flints is considerably less, although occasional arrowheads and fragments of axes suggest activity even on the more intractable soils. No pre-Iron Age pottery has been recovered, presumably owing to its poor rate of survival in intensively cultivated land.

Iron Age

The distribution of surface scatters of early Iron Age material appears broadly similar to that of the preceding flintwork, with the sites so far identified being confined to the valley-sides. Pottery from the hillfort at Crow Hill, Irthlingborough suggests that occupation began in the early Iron Age. During the remainder of the period settlement encroached onto the clays beyond. In Hargrave-parish, further expansion onto Boulder Clay is suggested by the presence of evenly spaced surface scatters, but it is possible that the heaviest soils continued to be avoided since similar scatters are absent from the north-eastern area of survey.

Roman

Settlement intensified in the Roman period and the development of villas and other large settlements within the valley represents an increase in the size of individual sites from those which preceded. Evenly spaced scatters, probably denoting occupation, occur across the Boulder Clay and include locations in areas which were apparently avoided in the Iron Age. Examination of the pottery from many of these sites suggests a continuity of location, though not necessarily in function, throughout the Roman period.

Early Saxon

Apart from at three locations, the distribution of surface scatters of early Saxon material is separate from the Roman. The scatters appear to form pairs of sites across small tributary valleys, but it is unclear whether each is contemporary or represents a change of location. The Boulder Clay appears to have been avoided and even where the Oxford Clay was settled; as to the east of Raunds, the close availability of water may have been the determining factor in location.

Middle Saxon

The dispersed nature of the early Saxon surface scatters seems to end in the later seventh century. Only two locations have so far produced middle Saxon pottery, and then it is

associated with both earlier and later Saxon material. However, the decline in pottery-production during the period (cf *Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 20 (1985), p 13) provides a difficulty to identifying contemporary sites, and clearly further intensive surface collection is required to test the validity of the apparent reduction in settlement density.

Late Saxon and Medieval

Subsequent settlement appears to have been confined largely to the existing villages and now-deserted hamlets close to the River Nene. Survey around the edges of these settlements continues to provide evidence for their previous extent.

Raunds village - S Parry

A series of watching briefs and other excavation has been undertaken at several development-sites throughout Raunds in order to provide information for village-evolution and to test the validity of previous models concerning its development. Four broad chronological stages of development have been proposed for north Raunds and may usefully be extended to cover the entire village (cf *Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 21 (1986-7), pp 18-25).

The origin of the settlement appears to be 'bi-focal', with early Saxon occupation located in north Raunds and at Thorpe End. Excavation in central Raunds over a distance of 700m, from the rear of Gells Garage to the park at the north of the Council Offices (between SP 99997310 and SP 99767253), has failed to provide evidence for contemporary use.

The contraction of settlement to Furnells and Burystead in the mid-Saxon period appears to be supported by the dearth of associated material from all the other Raunds sites. Small quantities of middle Saxon pottery have been recovered, however, during fieldwalking at Thorpe End (SP 99827230), possibly suggesting some degree of continuity within the southern settlement.

By contrast, re-planning in the late Saxon period appears to have been widespread. Tenth-century activity has been recognised along a distance of 1km at all sites on the eastern flank of the Raunds Brook. Ditches at the rear of Gells Garage (SP 99997310), possibly with others to the east of Market Square (SP 99867284), could represent the boundaries of plots aligned upon a predecessor of the present High Street. Owing to the limited nature of excavation, it is uncertain if the individual plots contained buildings, though

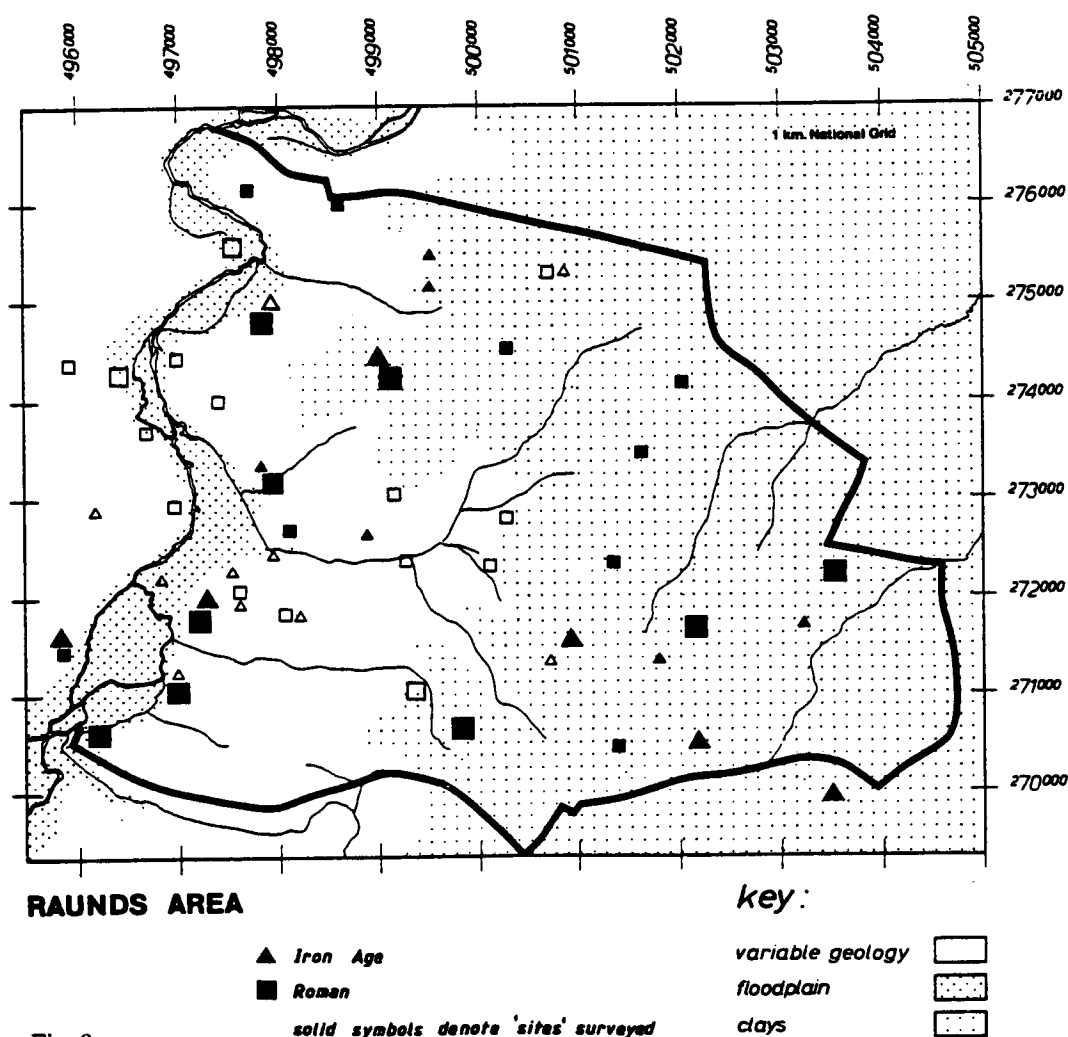


Fig. 9

postholes might indicate such. In the grounds of the Council Offices (SP 99767253) two vertical-sided, flat-bottomed, trenches may indicate a tenth-century structure c 5.60m wide. Generally the pottery from these sites indicates a short period of activity, possibly between c 900-925, and only close to Market Square (SP 99867284) is there evidence for continuation into the eleventh century. Limited work in the valley-bottom adjacent to 43 Rotton Row (SP 99957321) and on the western side of the valley near Spinney Street (SP 99707274) failed to produce comparable evidence of Saxon activity.

Despite excavation close to the presumed street-frontages, few features and only limited quantities of pottery have been recovered to suggest medieval occupation, indicating that settlement again may have been largely confined around the original twin centres. However, the previous identification of earthworks along Shelton Road, partly confirmed by fieldwalking and excavation at TL 00137195, and surface scatters of pottery observed at either side of Brooks Road indicate some expansion away from the central areas. Yet, limited excavation in Grove Street (SP 99497233) shows that at least part of Higham End remained unoccupied until modern times.

A605 road construction - S Parry

The construction of the London Road, Raunds-Denford parish-boundary section of the A605-road afforded the opportunity to examine a transect through Boulder Clay away from the Nene Valley. Limited excavation ahead of road-building concentrated upon the Raunds-Ringstead parish-boundary and a number of furlong-boundaries. However, no delimiting features were found prior to the series of enclosure-hedges of the late eighteenth century.

An Iron Age site was identified at SP 99637440 where eight sherds of Iron Age pottery had occurred previously in an area of 3ha. At the time of their discovery, the sherds were thought to have derived from a site known 400 m to the west (cf RCHME, *Archaeological Sites in North-East Northamptonshire* (1975), p 84: Ringstead (7)). However, several pits and ditches were found nearby at either side of the road-cutting where the curving gully of a possible building was also revealed.

West Cotton (SP 976725) - D Windell

Excavation at West Cotton continued during 1988 in the area of proposed gravel-extraction (cf S Midlands Archaeol, 18

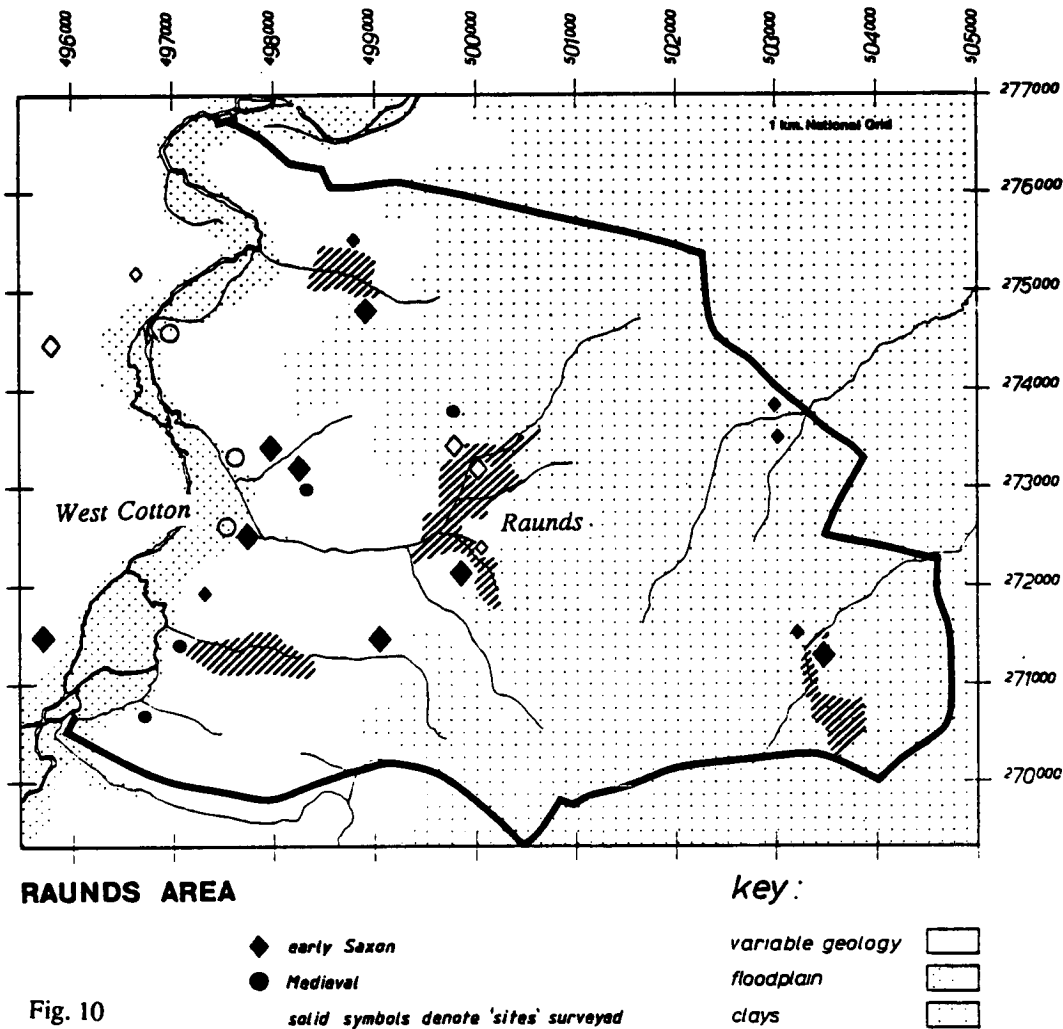


Fig. 10

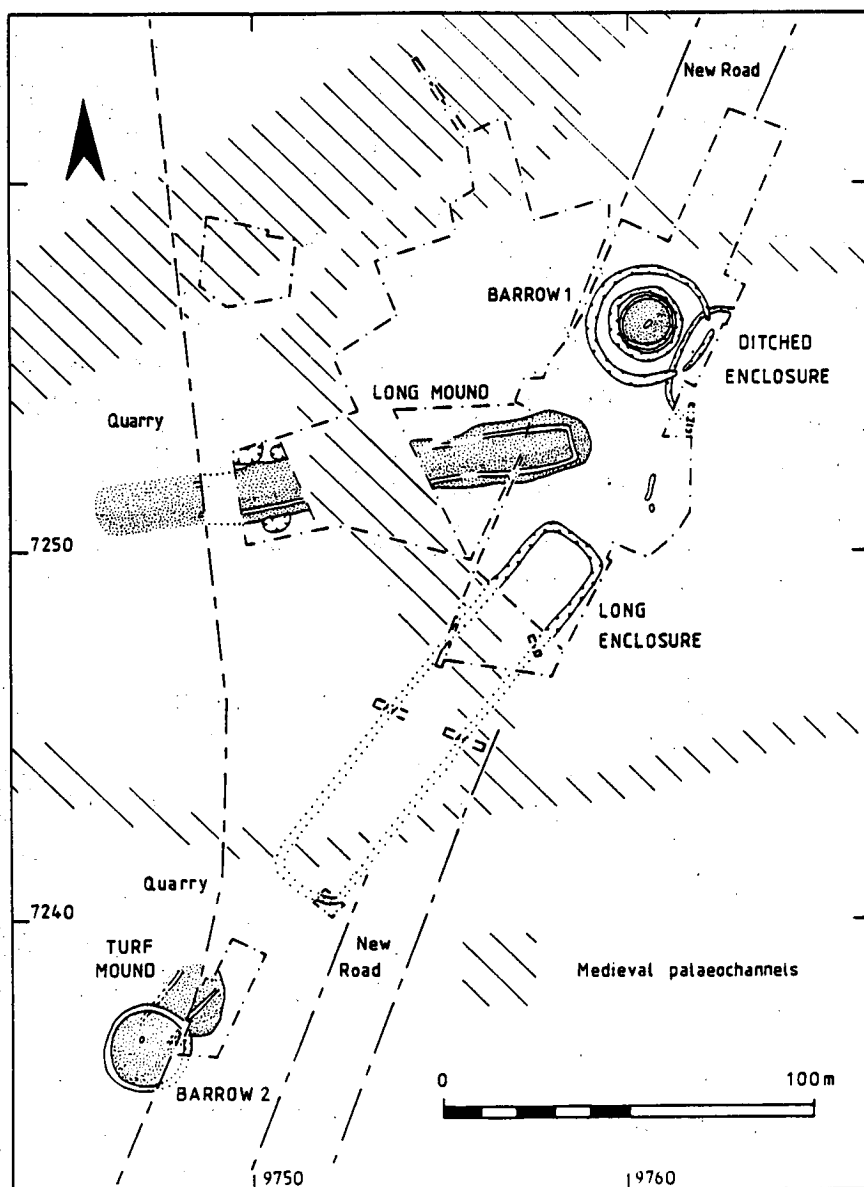


Fig. 11

West Cotton : prehistoric monuments.

(1988), pp 51-60). Proposed work in 1989 will complete the excavation of a total area of c 1.2ha.

Prehistoric

The excavation of the Long Mound was completed during the year (*ibid*, pp 55-6). Built of turf and topsoil and aligned approximately east-west, it was 135m long and an average 18m wide. In two areas beneath the mound short lines of 4 or 5 upright stakes defined transverse 'bays' between the edge of the monument and its spine. The length of the individual bays ranged from 5-10m, but the spine was marked only by a few stakes or otherwise by breaks in the transverse lines.

In the western area of detailed excavation a group of shallow, oval to sub-rectangular depressions, or 'working hollows', each at least 5m long, occurred at both sides of the mound.

Their location and the absence of similar features beneath the mound suggest that they post-date the construction of the monument and were probably related to its use or refurbishment. Their lower fills contained Mildenhall-type pottery in addition to struck flints and some burnt debris.

While Roman pottery and building materials have been recovered from later features, no direct evidence of contemporary occupation has been located. It is possible, however, that heavy timberwork revealed by trial-trenching in the adjacent palaeochannel of the River Nene may be associated with Roman activity.

Early Saxon

Limited areas of trenching have revealed a group of shallow, probably linear, features and an extensive scatter of potsherds in a later plough-horizon. It is intended to reveal more of this occupation in 1989.

Late Saxon and Saxo-Norman

The 'planned' plots of regular 4-rod width excavated in 1985-6 produced evidence for only agricultural activities (S Midlands Archaeol, 18 (1988), pp 56-7). By contrast, the remains of substantial timber buildings were located in 1988, though only partially excavated. The structures seem to have been set within a large enclosure which was defined by a ditch c 2.3m wide and c 0.85m deep. Where excavated, several superimposed phases of construction are evident. Each is characterised by continuous timber-slots c 0.80m wide and 0.60m deep; the earliest structure also had large post-pits at the corners. It is unclear whether the remains represent free-standing rectangular buildings of individual sizes up to 8m x 5m or 'rooms' within larger buildings. Further excavation in 1989 should resolve this problem.

It now appears that a system of leats existed around the site in the late Saxon to early Medieval period (cf *ibid*, p 60). They fed the Willow Brook around the settlement to a watermill which stood beside the palaeochannel of the River Nene at the north. The leat-system can be traced over a course of at least 350m and its relationship with the late Saxon plots suggests that both may be part of a single planned layout.

Near to the mill, three successive phases of leat construction have been identified, each 3.50-4m wide and c 0.80m deep. The individual leats were separated from the adjacent river-channel by a deposit of gravel which had the effect of forming an island. The earliest leat was revetted with timber, denoted by the occurrence of stakeholes at intervals of 0.40m along both sides, but the latest was revetted at the mill with clay and limestone-rubble which included fragments of millstones.

The mills powered by the two earliest leats are thought to lie just outside the boundary of excavation, but only the sluice-gate and wheel-house of the latest watermill have been completely excavated. The sluice-gate comprised two large post-pits which had been set towards the sides of the leat at a point where the channel deepened abruptly by some 0.30m. At 3m downstream the wheelhouse was defined by an oak sillbeam which had been pegged across the base of the leat. The timber was 2.40m long and pierced by rectangular mortices 1.40m apart. At a further distance of 1m, two large post-pits were set at either side of the leat, with that at the south lying immediately behind a large limestone slab, 1.90m long and 0.80m high, which formed part of the revetment. No direct evidence was obtained for either the location or the form of the wheel, but other features suggest it was probably of a horizontal type. Two small postholes set 0.60m apart at the centre of the leat between the sluice-gate post-pits may have supported one end of the water-chute, with its other end carried on a breastwork above the sillbeam. The wheel would be housed beyond and in front of the large revetment-slab which would thus serve to protect the side of the leat from turbulence at this point. The large post-pits at either side presumably indicate the location of a substantial cross-beam from which the wheel was suspended, with the millstones above. The mill-house itself would appear to have been fairly insubstantial as no other major structural remains were located. In form, however, it may be likened to the Saxon watermill at Tamworth (cf *Trans S Staffordshire Archaeol Hist Soc*, 13 (1972), pp 9-16). The partly water-deposited and partly dumped rubble fills of the leat in the wheelhouse contained 40 pieces of millstone and 150 smaller fragments from at least two types of stone.

Though the leat system probably originated in the ninth or tenth centuries, the final mill is dated tentatively to the

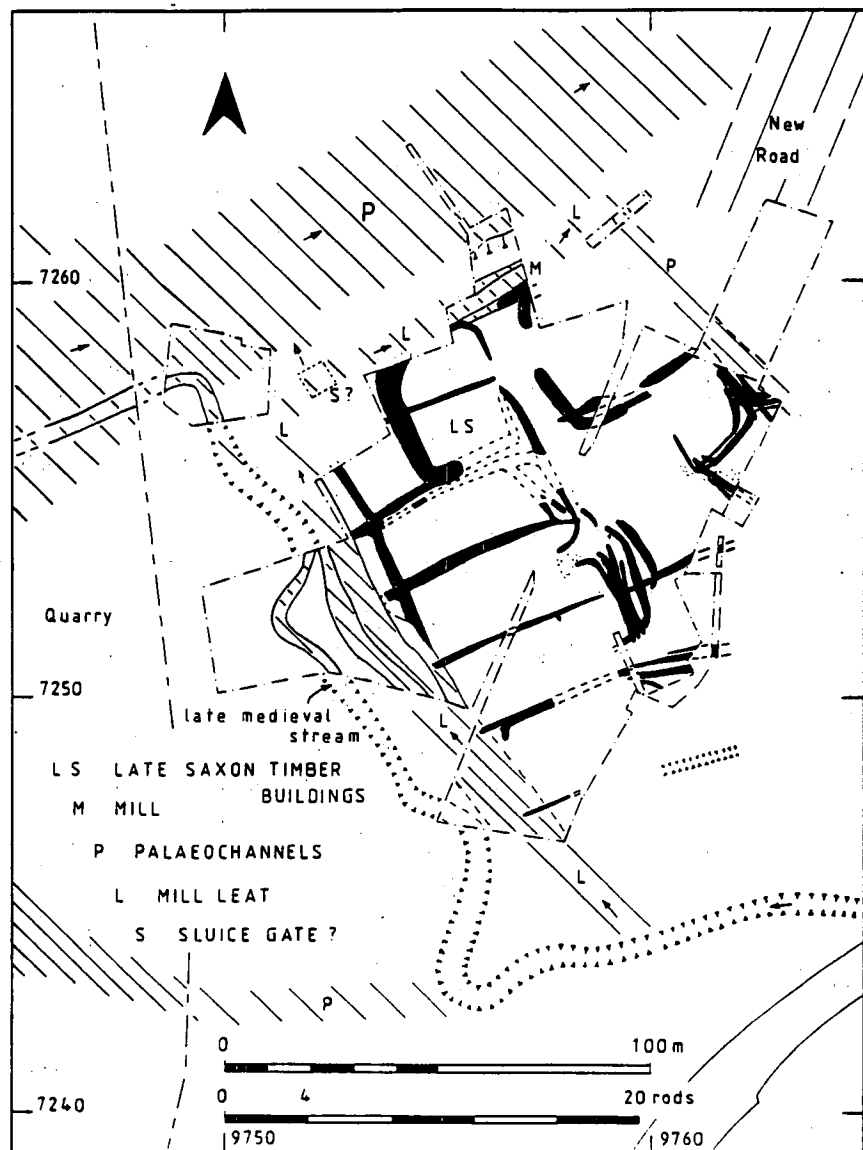


Fig. 12

West Cotton : late Saxon layout

eleventh and the twelfth centuries and thus may have been contemporary with the stone built 'manorial' range.

Early Medieval

A previously unknown phase of occupation was recognised in 1988. The series of later Saxon timber buildings was replaced, probably in the twelfth century, by ranges of stone buildings. The main group of these was arranged around a courtyard facing north, with a roadway giving access to the east and south. The southern range of the courtyard had an initial stone phase of c 8.50m x 4.50m which was rebuilt in a longer form (17m x 3.50m) and divided into two rooms, one with a flagstone-floor and the other with a malt-kiln at its western end. To the north-east a separate structure, 8.20m x 3.50m, had a clay floor and a hearth beside its eastern wall; opposed doorways allowed access through the building from the roadway into the courtyard. A building of 8.20m x 4.40m

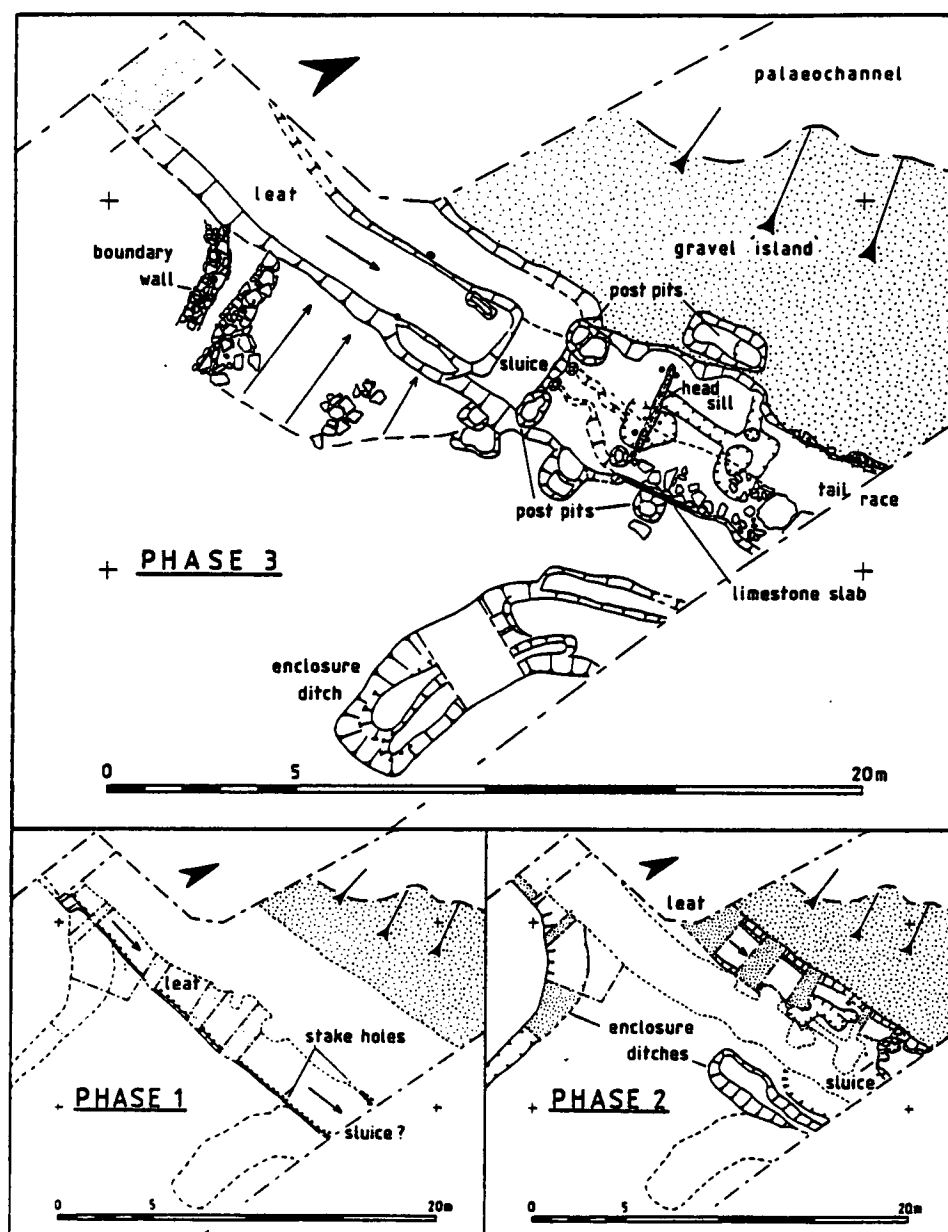


Fig. 13

on the west side of the courtyard contained a large oven in the southwest corner and is therefore interpreted as a 'bakehouse'. Partially within the angle between it and the southern range, a shallow foundation-slot, c 1m wide but only 0.10m deep, formed a circular structure c 5m in diameter which may represent a dovecote. To the north of the bakehouse a deep garderobe-pit, 2.20m x 1m, had a stone hard-standing or ramp at its western side.

To the south-west of the courtyard-ranges, the poorly preserved remnants of a timber-and-stone structure were denoted by two walls, several associated postholes, and a narrow drain-like feature. The form of the structure is difficult to interpret and the function remains unknown, though it was perhaps agricultural rather than domestic.

The earliest stone buildings within the later 'Tenement A' alongside the trackway to the south-east (cf *S Midlands Archaeol*, 18 (1988) p 57) are now thought likely to have

been contemporary with the courtyard-range and may have pertained to it. A structure, 20m x 4m, contained two rooms, both with earthen floors and with several phases of stone-lined pits represented in the southern part. A non-domestic function seems likely.

A timber building, 6m square, stood at the northern end of the roadway. Its final construction employed exceptionally deep, almost continuous trenches which contained vertical posts c 0.30m in diameter and set up to 0.80m deep. The form seems to betoken substantial height, and the building may be identified tentatively as a granary or similarly raised structure. Though probably contemporary with the twelfth-century stone buildings and the final watermill, earlier phases of the structure could have been related to the late Saxon timber buildings since it was located between the trackway and entrances into the enclosures to both the east and the west.

The plan-form of these twelfth-century buildings and an initial review of some of the finds from them suggest a 'manorial' status.

Later Medieval

In the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries the 'manorial' buildings were demolished, leaving widespread areas of rubble and mortar. A series of tenements was established directly above the demolition levels, but with respect for the earlier boundaries. The tenements were maintained with stone buildings until the site was deserted in the fifteenth century (cf *S Midlands Archaeol*, 18 (1988), pp 57-60). During the later medieval phases the mill-leat seems to have been deliberately filled and was overlaid by an embankment which perhaps provided a flood-defence. To the north, west, and south of the site up to 2m of alluvium was deposited and the river palaeochannel itself became first choked and then sealed by alluvium. This flooding may have been a major factor in the desertion of the site.

West Cotton (SP 97807244) - S Parry

A well preserved stone building and associated tenement boundary walls were revealed by trial-trenching ahead of the proposed ploughing of a small pasture-field to the south-east of the main site at West Cotton. The building lay to the east of Cotton Lane at a point where the lane forms a double-bend before passing the surviving earthworks. The walls of the building survived to at least five courses above the level of a surrounding metalled yard. Dividing walls and 'bench-fittings' were present in the interior. Against the outer edge of the boundary wall a bank of carefully pitched stone could represent an attempt at water-management in a low-lying area adjacent to the medieval course of Hogs Dyke. The site was backfilled without investigation of the features since such would damage the integrity of the surviving archaeology. Finds from surface-cleaning, however,

indicate a date-range from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.

Rothwell (SP 81408125) - G Cadman

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in September 1988 for the owner of 'The Old Nunnery', Desborough Road; in order to determine if the site was that of the small Augustinian nunnery which is known to have been founded in this part of Rothwell during the thirteenth century and was dissolved in 1536-8. Of four trenches opened by machine, three were located within a courtyard which included the listed building known as 'The Nunnery' at nos 3 & 3A

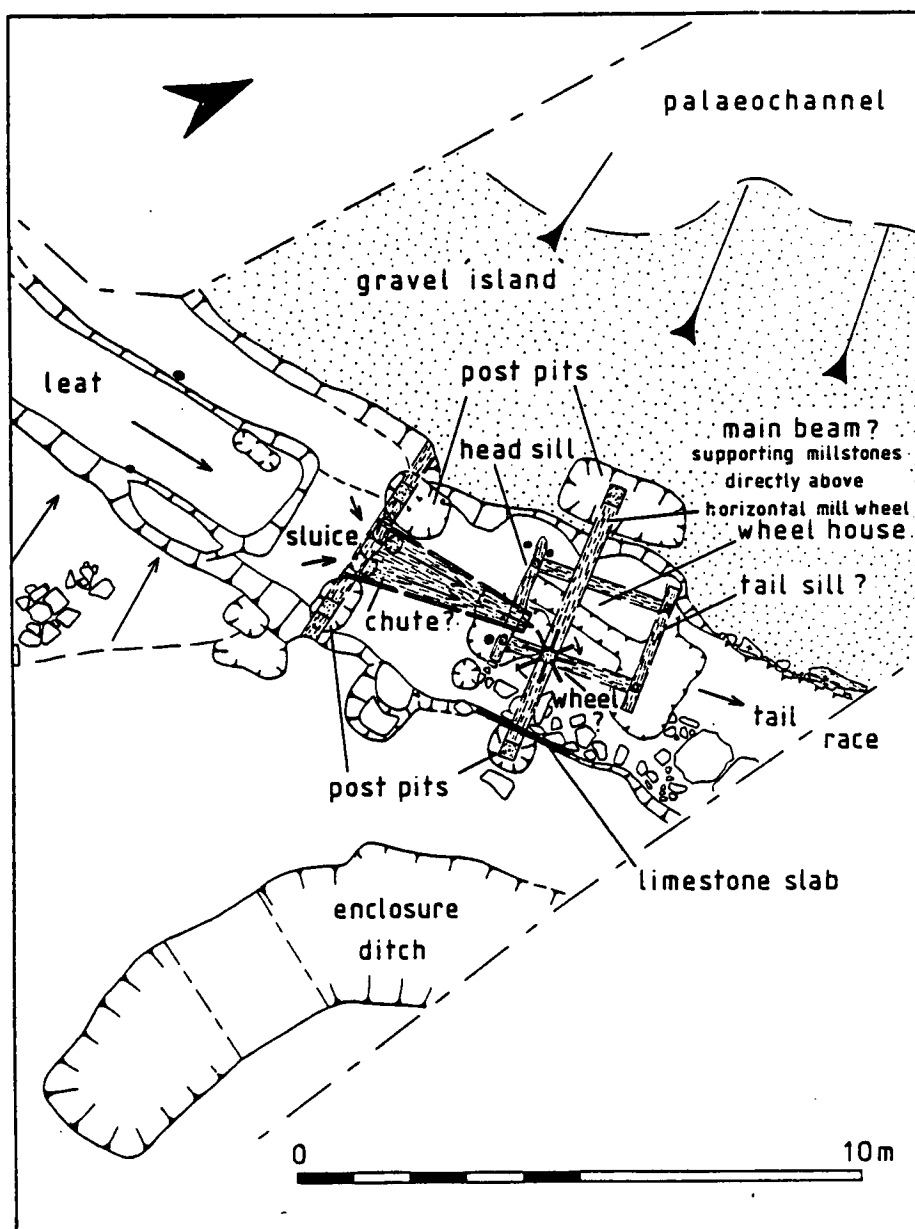


Fig.14

West Cotton : interpretation and plan-reconstruction of the final watermill.

Desborough Road; the other trench was sited in waste ground immediately north of the building complex.

All of the trenches were taken down to ironstone-bedrock. That outside the courtyard contained a single undated posthole, a dump of burnt debris, an ironstone-lined well, and two amorphous shallow features: none was earlier than the seventeenth century and all could be considerably later. The trenches in the courtyard revealed a shallow series of dumps, levelling deposits, and yard-surfaces together with some robbed-out walls. The oldest of them was of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century date, although a small rock-cut ditch and gully at the south-west could be earlier. A single sherd of medieval pottery was unstratified nearby.

An architectural survey by B. Giggins concluded that the listed building fronting Desborough Road was probably sixteenth-century in origin. The absence of contemporary horizons and artefacts at the rear presumably results from a

subsequent, thorough, clearance of the site down to the bedrock. Since it is unlikely that this would have removed all traces of preceding monastic activity, it is concluded that the medieval nunnery was located elsewhere and probably lies beneath 'Nunnery House' at a short distance to the north.

Titchmarsh (TL 009798) - G Cadman

At short notice the Unit was commissioned by Wrekin Construction Ltd to conduct an archaeological evaluation in a pasture field adjacent to the Roman small town at Titchmarsh and adjoining the A605. Investigation was carried out in July 1988 and followed by a watching brief in August when the entire site was stripped of topsoil by the contractor. The objective was to assess and advise upon the archaeological implications of a proposed infilling of the site which included a series of Victorian quarries.

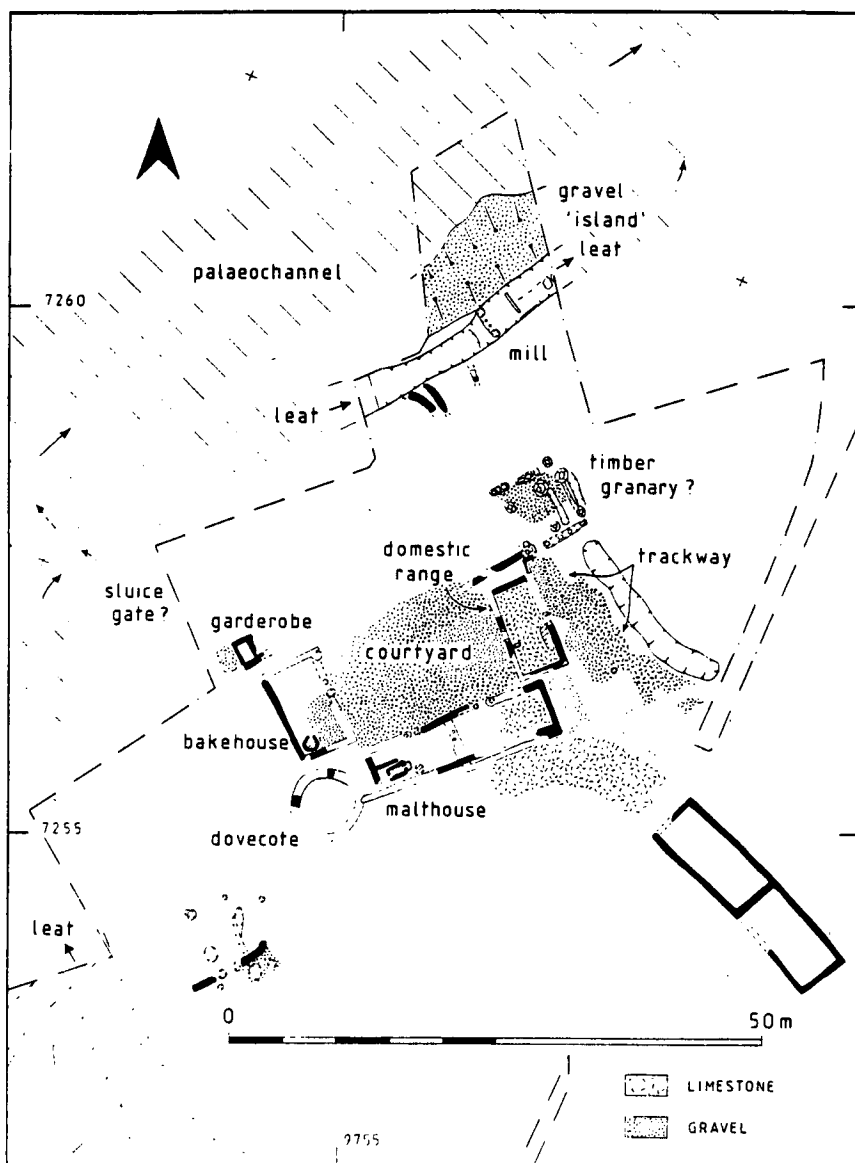


Fig. 15

West Cotton : twelfth-century 'manorial' ranges.

Six evaluation trenches, totalling over 300m in length, were opened by machine and showed that Roman domestic occupation, including possible structures, was confined to the southern part of the area. To the north lay some Roman ditches and gullies together with a single and almost certainly isolated burial which contained a ligula. A short length of stone wall and some further ditches were revealed during the subsequent watching brief. In general, the evidence suggested that the area of domestic occupation probably marked the northern limit of the Roman small town and that had there been any significant Roman activity in the field beyond, it would most likely have been destroyed by the Victorian quarrying.

Apart from traces of a poorly preserved post-medieval structure, possibly a small brick works, no activity of other dates was recorded. Of over 200 sherds of pottery recovered, the majority was Roman, with an emphasis on early wares and quantities of diagnostically later vessels. A possible brooch fragment and an unidentified coin were also salvaged.

As a result of the evaluation the developer was able to avoid damaging the area of domestic

occupation identified in the southern part of the site.

Towcester (SP 68714940) - G Cadman

A watching brief on a commercial development by TBS adjacent to the new A43 bypass and over 50m west of the line of the A5 (Watling Street) recorded the presence of a ditch, two gullies, and a short length of a narrow stone-lined drain. The features were undated, though a small quantity of unstratified Roman pottery was recovered from the site. The paucity of archaeological material suggests that the area lay outside or was peripheral to any Roman activity fronting Watling Street.

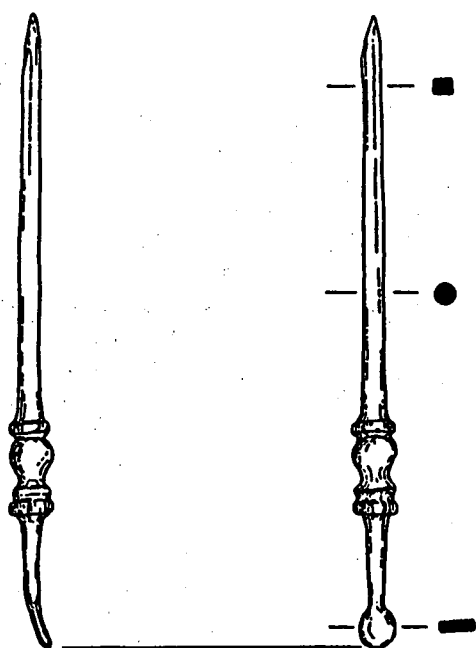


Fig. 16 *Titchmarsh. Copper alloy ligula, actual size.*
Drawn by J Baxter.

Towcester (SP 68794941) - M Shaw and A Williams

A series of evaluation trenches was excavated by machine in May 1988 on a site to the south of the Towcester bypass where planning consent had been granted for the construction of a petrol-filling station. The site lies immediately south-west of Watling Street and is some 500 north-west of the walls of the Roman town; evidence for Roman suburban development has been found in the area previously.

A trench 73m long was opened along the length of the Watling Street frontage and three additional trenches were extended from it to the south-west into areas of potential archaeological importance. Dense Roman occupation was observed along the entire Watling Street frontage; but limitations of time and funding permitted no more than the recovery of a basic plan and sectioning of the most important features. These included a series of boundary ditches, c 1-2m wide, of which some were arranged either roughly parallel or at right-angles to the modern line of Watling Street.

Pottery recovered from them was chiefly of the second century AD, although one ditch which was not aligned with Watling Street contained an assemblage dating from the late second to the fourth centuries. It cut an earlier stone building with pitched foundations, 7m wide, which was also irregularly located in respect of the present line of Watling Street. Additional areas of complex stratigraphy, 0.15 - 0.20m deep, were not investigated, but several phases of activity were probably represented; at the north-west end of the site, for instance, a layer of red, burnt stones overlay a separate area of cobbles and a crushed ironstone surface in addition to other deposits.

Towcester, St. Lawrence's church (SP 69364869) - G Cadman

A record was made of a stone coffin reputed to have been dug up in Victorian times and until recently kept in the church porch. The coffin, hewn from a single block of limestone but now in four fragments and missing part of one side and its end, is 2.21m long and contains a head-niche. Its form suggests a medieval origin.

Wollaston, Earls Barton Quarry (SP 89206434) - G Cadman

A watching brief arranged during gravel-extraction by Pioneer Aggregates (UK) Ltd examined a limestone and glacial pebble layer which was exposed temporarily at the edge of overburden-stripping. The stone was interleaved between layers of alluvium up to 0.90m deep and was itself up to 0.40m deep and covered an area up to 19m long, though petering out towards each end. It overlay a possible buried surface and two narrow pits or ditches c 10m apart. These underlying features contained burnt flecks and ash but are undated. It is possible, however, that it may have been associated - possibly as a localised consolidation-infill-with an approximately east-west trackway which crossed the valley-floor prior to the last major phase of alluviation. To the east, a group of features occupied what appears to have been a low sand and gravel bar, or island, at SP 89406438. They cut into the natural gravel below a layer of alluvium and included a north-south ditch, 2m wide and 1m deep. Three sherds of possible Iron Age pottery were found in the ditch.

Wootton Fields (SP 766561) - G Cadman

In order to provide additional information about a site to the east of Wootton village the Unit was commissioned to carry out an evaluation in September 1988. Six machine-cut trenches were opened in a pasture field in order to verify the origin and significance of Roman pottery and building materials which had been recorded by D. Jackson in 1966 while monitoring the construction of a gas pipeline-trench (Bull Northamptonshire Fed Archaeol Soc, 1 (1966), p 14). In particular, it was desirable to discover whether the finds denoted a villa or a farmstead.

Sampling of an area of 0.6 ha revealed several ditches and other minor features associated with Iron Age and Roman pottery and tile of a similar nature to that found previously. Although no buildings were located, the recovery of *tegulae*, *imbrices*, and possible box flue-tiles may be consistent with the proximity of a substantial Roman building. The pottery assemblage can be interpreted tentatively as suggesting that occupation continued throughout the Roman period, with some earlier settlement in the Iron Age.

The exact source of the Roman material remains unlocated, though it is thought to originate from an area of ironstone-bedrock lying to the north of the area of largely clay subsoil which was investigated. Unfortunately it was not possible to test this during the evaluation.

POST-EXCAVATION AND PUBLICATION

The writing up and publication of previous fieldwork involves commitments from a number of major excavation-projects and still consumes a large part of the Unit's efforts. Finds' reports completed during the year include that for the large assemblage of pottery from Ashton Roman Town and the contribution of digest-reports on pottery and small finds to the forthcoming volume on the late Saxon church and cemetery at Raunds, Furnells which is intended for publication by English Heritage in 1989. The



Fig. 17 'Publish and be damned?'

preparation of a subsequent report, dealing with the remainder of the evidence excavated at that site (cf *S Midlands Archaeol*, 18 (1988), p 51) recommenced after a break in late 1988 and should be substantially completed during 1989. Other reports nearing completion include those for several sites in and around Northampton, as well as for previous excavations at Brackley, Grendon, and Towcester.

The following reports were published during the year:

Brian Dix, 'The Roman settlement at Kettering, Northants: excavations at Kipling Road, 1968 and 1971', in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 21 (1986-7), pp 95-108.

Abstract: The unwall Roman settlement at Kettering may originally have covered 22-25ha but is now almost entirely destroyed by redevelopment. Comparison of the evidence of early discoveries with evidence from related local settlements suggests that most buildings were confined to a main road, possibly with others along lesser streets. Quarry-pits were common, exemplified by those excavated in 1968 and 1971 at Kipling Road where the Northampton Sand Ironstone was used for smelting. Other features include a possible threshing-floor and adjacent timber building. The record of their discovery provides the opportunity to review other finds from the area.

Brian Dix, ed., 'The Raunds Area Project: second interim report', in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 21 (1986-7), pp 3-29.

Abstract: Account of results obtained to December 1986 from investigation into the development of the Raunds Area landscape. Prehistoric sites examined include a Bronze Age barrow at Irthlingborough and Neolithic monuments at West Cotton which formed a focus for later burials. A newly identified Iron Age hillfort of c 3ha at Crow Hill, Irthlingborough overlooks the Roman villa and planned settlement at Stanwick. A separate Roman site has also been investigated at Mallows Cotton. Later landscape-developments are being studied through excavations at Raunds and at the dependent hamlet of West Cotton. Such settlements only assumed village form in the later ninth century.

Copies of this report are available as a separate offprint from the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit, price 1.75 inclusive of postage.

Brian Dix and Steven Taylor, 'Excavations at Bannaventa (Whilton Lodge, Northants.), 1970-71', in *Britannia*, 19 (1988), pp 299-339.

Abstract: 'Backlog' report of rescue excavations undertaken in advance of gravel-extraction within the north-eastern quarter of the Roman defended town. Occupation of the site is attested from the middle to late first century AD when the construction of a series of enclosures formed the basis for subsequent development. A later fortified core excluded parts of the existing site, where activity nevertheless continued; most buildings were of timber. An earthwork defence erected in the later second century was refurbished around the turn of the third and fourth centuries by the construction of a curtain-wall and the excavation of new ditches.

Dennis Jackson and Brian Dix, 'Late Iron Age and Roman settlement at Weekley, Northants', in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 21 (1986-7), pp 41-93 with 145 pages of microfiche.

Abstract: Rescue excavations between 1970-8 revealed a series of ditched enclosures extending over at least 2.5ha. The local importance of a strongly defended enclosure, apparently constructed when Belgic influences were

spreading northwards, may be reflected by the development of an adjacent Roman villa. Pottery production in the mid-first century AD, denoted by up-draught kilns and preceding bonfire-clamps, possibly continued an existing tradition. La Tene pottery may have been made nearby and with its distinctive curvilinear ornament probably had a tribal distribution. Imported vessels, including Glastonbury ware, attest distant trade and indicate the site's relative importance from an early date.

D.A. Jackson and R.F. Tylecote, 'Two new Romano-British iron-working sites in Northamptonshire - a new type of furnace?', in *Britannia*, 19 (1988), pp 275-98.

Abstract: A hitherto unknown type of iron-smelting furnace was recorded during observations of separate road-improvements at Laxton Lodge and Byfield. In addition to settlement evidence and a cemetery of at least 87 graves, the site at Laxton revealed two phases of iron-working activity in which conventional small shaft-furnaces replaced a series of large furnaces consistent with a massive scale of production, perhaps for military purposes. A similar type of large furnace also existed at Byfield where the local Northampton Sand Ironstone deposits appear to have been exploited. Such structures are

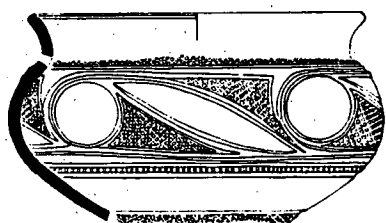


Fig. 18

Glastonbury ware from Weekley, scale 1:4.

unique for Roman Britain but have similarities with furnaces recently excavated in the Austrian Burgenland. Their method of working, however, is largely a matter for conjecture.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PUBLIC

Education - R Shaw

During 1988 over 2,000 Northamptonshire-schoolchildren, of all ages and abilities, visited excavations and took part in on-site workshops as part of the Unit's continuing education-programme. As well as experiencing an excavation, most pupils also took part in preparatory classroom-sessions run by the Education Officer. An increasing number of secondary schools are participating in these activities, which they see as a useful part of their integrated humanities programme. Some sixth-form groups, too, are finding archaeology relevant to their history studies, and this is an area of contact we hope to build upon.

In 1989 site-visits and activities will again be available, both at the Stanwick Roman villa and at the deserted medieval site at West Cotton. Teacher-training sessions are being planned and resource material, based on the Raunds Area Project, is being prepared. Teachers and archaeologists are also collaborating in the educational use of Kirby Hall, where the guardianship property is well suited as a 'site' for GCSE Schools Council History project-work. The Elizabethan Renaissance house, completed for Sir Christopher Hatton, and the gardens, together with the deserted remains of the old village of Kirby offer a wide range of archaeological and historical source material and many opportunities for fieldwork. A GCSE-group from Wrenn School, Wellingborough will be using the site in 1989, to be followed by other local schools in future years.

Heritage Interpretation - M Whewell

A joint project has been established between the Archaeology Unit and the Countryside Commission to promote appreciation of the county's historic landscape and thereby 'make an attractive countryside truly accessible and its benefits available to the whole public' (Countryside Commission, *Enjoying the countryside. A consultation paper on future policies* (1987), p 7). The eventual aim is to promote public access and some level of interpretation for a reasonable sample of archaeological sites in the county. In addition to the way-marking of selected sites, promotion will involve a wide range of interpretative media, including small local exhibitions, explanatory panels, self-guided trails, and site-specific leaflets. The work necessitates negotiations with landowners, parish councils, and other interested parties, and full consideration will be given to the effects of increased visitor-pressure and other factors.

An initial scheme concerns Long Buckby Castle where a Norman ringwork is surrounded by modern housing and forms the last 'greenspace' in the centre of the village. The County Council hopes to acquire the land from the present owner in order that it can be preserved and interpreted to the public. A management agreement is presently being arranged with English Heritage and it is hoped that an informal warden-scheme will be organised with the parish council. Other sites to which future attention will be given comprise the church, castle, and surrounding landscape at Fotheringhay and possibly also Naseby village and battlefield.

Other activities include the collaboration with individual excavators to establish new ways in which the experience of visiting excavations might be made both more informative and enjoyable for the public (and the digging team!). In seeking to increase the public profile of its work, the Unit is mindful of the requirement for an easily identifiable symbol or logogram to be used in literature and display-materials as well as for letterhead and related business materials. The search for a simple yet meaningful device which is suitable for such wide-ranging use is not straightforward, despite the firm intention that it will not be used on beach-bags and tea-towels!

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Abingdon: Vineyard Development - Tim Allen (Centred SU 499 972)

Excavation is taking place in advance of a major redevelopment by the Vale of the White Horse District Council of the northern part of the grounds of Abingdon Abbey (Fig 1).

An assessment has established that the site, which encompasses outcrops of gravel terrace either side of the former course of the river Stert, contains areas of dense Middle Iron Age settlement, and includes a large part of the Late Iron Age and Roman 'small town' of Abingdon. The buildings of Hean's 7th century monasterium are thought,

like those of the 10th century refoundation and later Medieval abbey, to lie south of the development area, but the use of this area by the abbey as gardens and orchards means that the Iron Age and Roman Pottery were protected from disturbance by medieval and later pit-digging, which has been so destructive in tenements in the town itself. Area 4 of the redevelopment also contains much of the lay cemetery of the the medieval Abbey, where almost all of the townspeople were buried. In the post-medieval period, most of the site remained open until the development of the railway. This interim note describes the results of work so far carried out in Areas 1 and 5 (Fig 1).

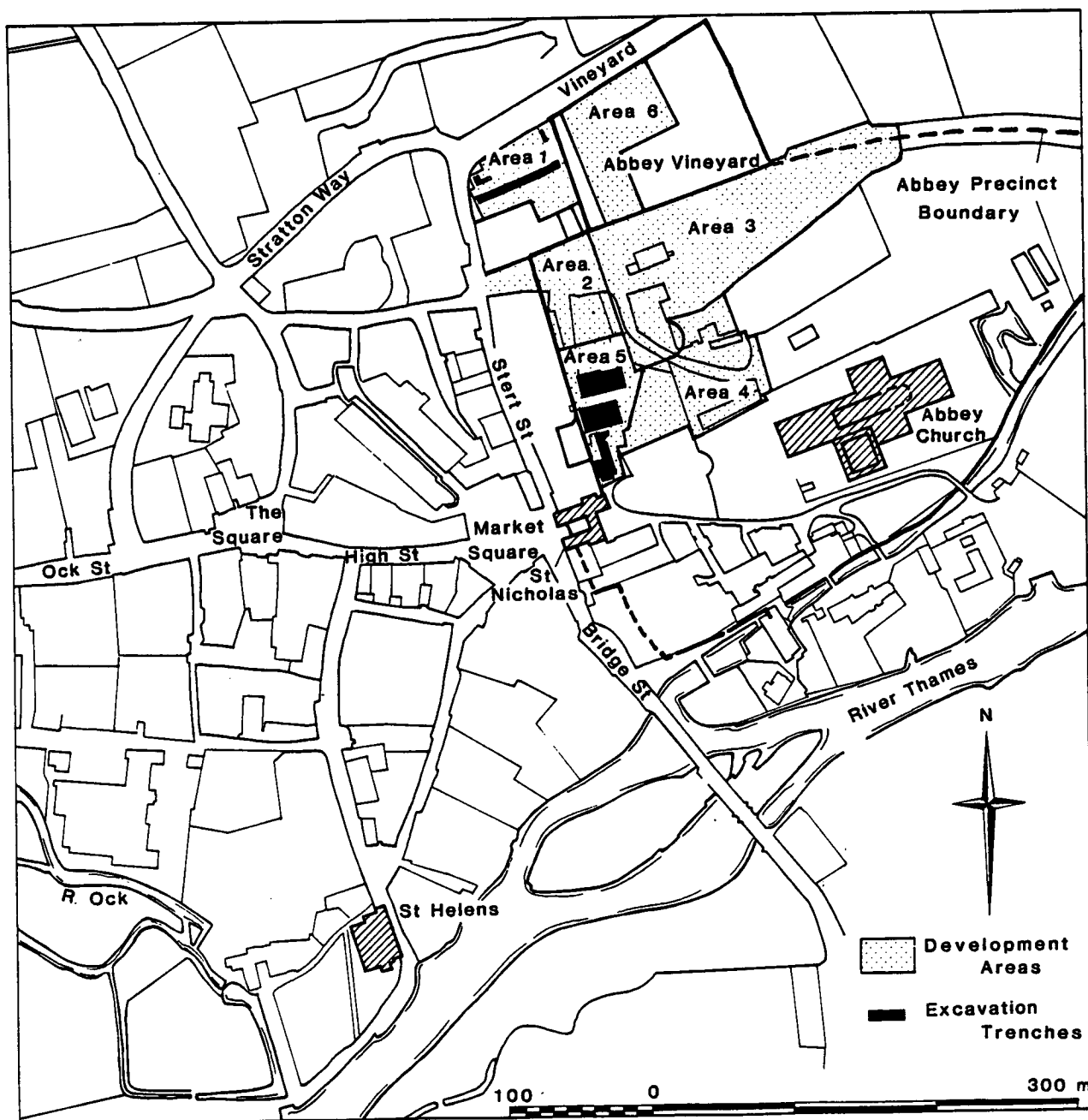


Fig. 1 Abingdon Vineyard: overall location

Area 1

The principal aims of excavation in Area 1 were to establish the date at which tenements appeared along the Stert Street and Vineyard frontages, and to locate the abbey precinct boundary. Because of recent road-widening and the wide pavements, only the rear of the tenements lay within the threatened area, and these had been almost entirely destroyed by post-medieval activity. The main E-W trench however contained a dense cluster of medieval pits, such as are usually found in tenement back-yards. These pits do not occur in the 6 m of trench closest to the frontage, where there were postholes and a trampled surface. It is suggested that the pits were respecting medieval buildings, of which only these few postholes survive. Preliminary examination of the pottery suggests that the earliest pits, and thus the tenements themselves, date to the 13th century.

There was no sign of the abbey precinct boundary, which must have turned eastward south of this area, and it now appears that Area 1 lay outside the abbey vineyard, as indeed Amyce's Survey, carried out shortly after the Dissolution, suggests (R Thomas pers comm). At the east end of the Trench was a charcoal-filled pit 2.5m wide and 7m long, probably of 13th century date. Its function is unclear, but it hints at semi-industrial use of this area. Slumped into its top were the successive floors and occupation layers of a 13th century building. Outside the pit the building had been totally destroyed. A selection of domestic finds from the floors suggest that this building was also part of the 13th century growth of tenements. Beneath the medieval deposits were a scatter of Roman ditches containing domestic debris of the 2nd-4th centuries AD. The finds bear out the hypothesis that early Roman occupation was concentrated close to the river (see Area 5 below), only spreading this far north in the 2nd century.

One further unusual discovery was of a patch of ard marks in the Trench closest to the junction of the Vineyard and Stert Street. These cut into the Roman ditches and were sealed by a thick dumped layer of the 12th/13th century. This must be from cultivation prior to the establishment of the tenements, but cannot be more precisely dated.

Area 5

Excavations on the site of Abingdon Cattle Market have uncovered a completely forgotten cemetery of the 17th century (Fig 2). Nearly 200 skeletons have been recovered, most of them with evidence of coffins, some wrapped in shrouds secured with copper pins. All the graves are oriented north-south, and in almost every case the head of the skeleton is at the north end. The graves cover all of trenches 1 and 2 but are cut away by post-Medieval pits on the east side. The graves are regularly and closely spaced in discernable rows (see Fig 2); there is no intercutting, which suggests that they were marked above ground. The bones are well preserved, and include individuals of every age from small children to the elderly. There is a number of multiple burials in single graves, sometimes a mother and child, sometimes two or more young adolescents. In most instances all the bodies

seem to have been buried at once, but in one case it appears that a grave was reopened for a second burial on top of the first.

The north-south alignment at first suggested that these were pre-Christian burials, perhaps Roman, but finds from the graves have now dated the cemetery to the mid 17th century: one grave contained a silver penny of Charles 1st, dated 1629, another had an ornamental coffin-plate dating between 1650 and 1675.

This was the time of low-church Nonconformism and reaction against church ritual, during the civil wars and under Cromwell's Parliamentary rule. Burials no longer had to be east-west, and cemeteries could be opened by private individuals without needing a bishop's licence, which explains why there is no mention of it in the parish records.

Abingdon's involvement in the Civil Wars is vividly shown by one mass grave containing the skeletons of nine young men, one of them killed by a musket ball which was found in his chest.

Several other skeletons were covered in lime, suggesting that these were the victims of plague, outbreaks of which are documented at Abingdon in 1609 and 1625. Sporadic outbreaks continued until after the Great Plague of London in 1665.

The south limits of the cemetery has been established by excavation; no bodies have been found in Trench 3. The west limit must be the line of the abbey boundary, up against which the tenements along Stert Street were established, and which largely still survives as the limit of their back gardens. On the east, assessment trenches have revealed a large ditch, which was the boundary of the medieval lay cemetery of Abingdon Abbey, and which was still open in 1600 AD. Pottery from its backfilling dates to the 18th century, so this was probably still functioning when the non-conformist cemetery was in use. The northern limits of the cemetery have yet to be found.

The cemetery lies only 50m from St Nicholas church, Abingdon, which had been established since 1382 AD. There is however no record of a burial ground belonging to this church until the end of the 18th century, St Nicholas parishioners being buried in the churchyard of St Helens in the town. In fact during the civil wars and the Commonwealth, St Nicholas remained staunchly Anglican, so that it is extremely unlikely that it was associated with a cemetery of north-south burials. Further documentary evidence has however provided the probable context and date for the establishment of the cemetery. On the dissolution of Abingdon Abbey the abbey lands came into the possession of the Blacknall family, who held them until John Blacknall died of the plague in 1625 AD. Part of the area occupied by the cemetery was the vicarage gardens and orchard, and we know from records of a dispute that these still survived in 1600 (A Preston, St Nicholas - Abingdon, and other papers, 1935, 75-115 and 208-210). There is no record of John Blacknall selling them off before his death.

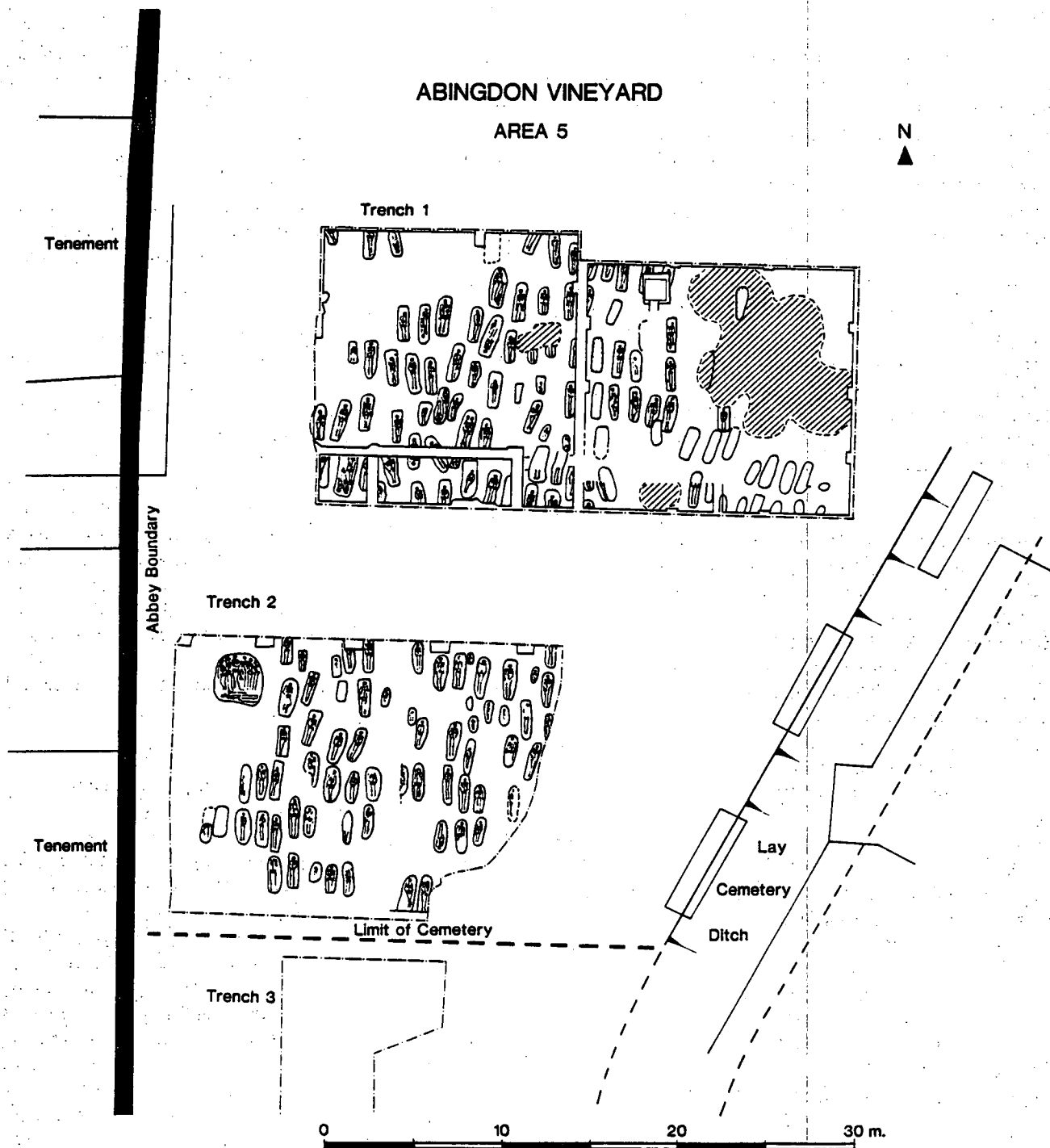


Fig. 2 Abingdon Vineyard: area 5 plan of non-conformist cemetery

After 1625 the abbey grounds passed to the Verney family. Sir Edmund Verney was Charles I's standard-bearer, and his heir, Sir Ralph Verney, though initially a man of Parliamentary leanings, was forced into exile in 1643 as a Royalist and had his property sequestered by Parliament (J Broad, *The Verneys and the Sequestrators in the Civil Wars 1642- 56*, Records of Buckinghamshire, 1985, 1-9). This provides the obvious context for the use of this land as a cemetery in a town which had had only one small burial-ground since the abbey's lay cemetery was closed at the Dissolution.

The recovery of the Verney's lands was effected in 1648, but land had to be sold off to pay debts, and all of the Abbey grounds were disposed of between 1648 and 1653.

Ambrosden: Wretchwick - R A Chambers
(Centred SP 597 214)

A watch was being kept over the construction of the perimeter road around the south-eastern Bicester development area. This road cut across the back of the deserted village of Wretchwick. Although previous fieldwork had revealed a scatter of medieval pottery,

suggesting that the village may once have extended into the field immediately to the west of the present farm, road construction confirmed that this was not the case. A brief excavation of an earthwork platform and surrounding ditch which lay at the edge of the village earthworks and on the line of the new road provided only post-medieval material. It may have been an enclosure for standing ricks in an area of poor drainage.

Aston, Bampton and Shifford: Old Shifford Farm - Tim Allen (Centred SP 382 023)

During May the Unit carried out an assessment of a cropmark site just north of the Thames and c. 2km west of the river Windrush. The assessment was funded by the landowner Mrs Carter, who is negotiating to sell the land to Standlake Sands and Gravels for gravel extraction. We are very grateful to the tenant farmer Mr Luckett for allowing us to proceed in a field with a standing crop.

The cropmarks form part of a series of sites north of the Thames linked by trackways as far east as Standlake and west to Cote (Fig 3). The area under threat contains a very clear group of enclosures and fields in the northern part, and more scattered and much less distinct ditches to the south.

In order to date the visible features and investigate the blank areas ten trenches were cleared by JCB and partially excavated.

Apart from a few flints and handmade sherds, all of which appeared to be residual, all the finds and features were Roman. There proved to be two discrete periods of occupation, the southern cropmarks belonging to 1st and early 2nd century settlement, the northern group being late Roman. Features in the southern group, which were mostly ditches, were often as deep as the present water-table, but were not waterlogged. Only on the very east edge were waterlogged features and alluvial deposits found. These suggest an open landscape without scrub or hedges. Finds from the ditches indicate domestic activity close to the trenches.

The late Roman features were characterised by darker fills and a wider range both of features and finds. Features included postholes, small pits, gullies and an oven, and in one part of Trench D an area of flat stone slabs had protected the Roman ground surface, which had elsewhere been ploughed down to gravel. Quernstones indicate milling, slag ironsmithing and partially articulated carcasses butchery.

By agreement with the developer excavation will proceed in advance of extraction in 1989.

OLD SHIFFORD FARM, STANDLAKE
ASSESSMENT BY OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT MAY 1988

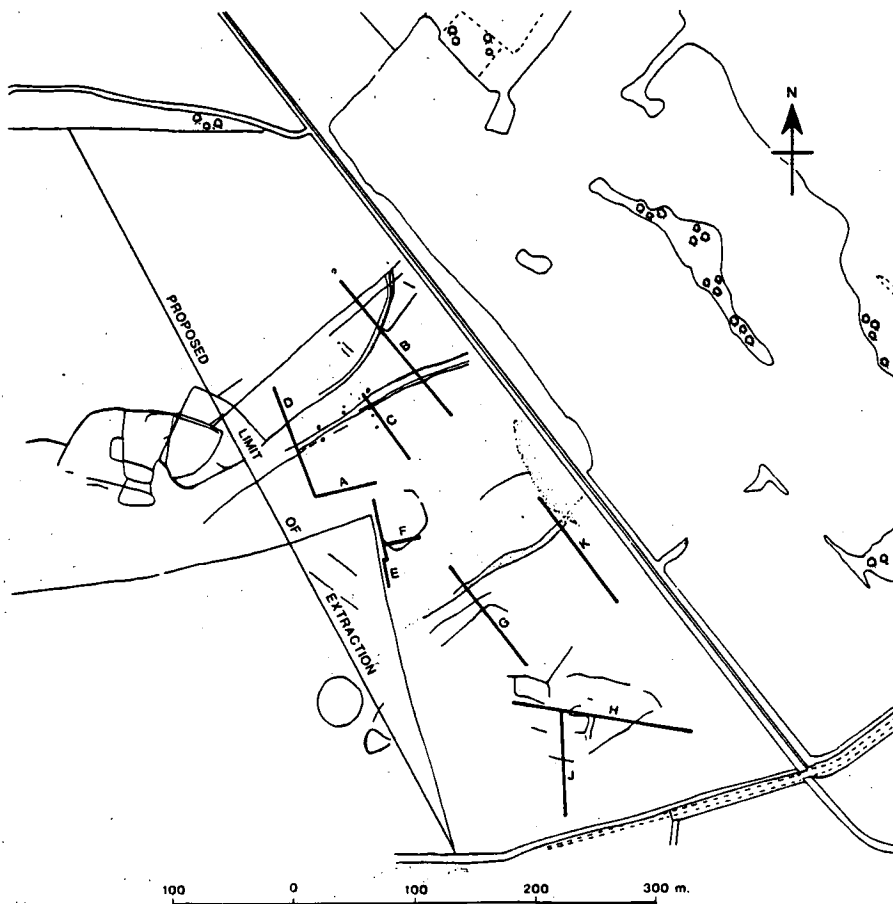


Fig 3 Old Shifford Farm: plan of cropmarks and assessment trenches

Bampton: Knaps Farm - R A Chambers

During August the field in which a Roman altar had recently been found (Fig 4) was subjected to fieldwalking and geophysical survey. Although the field lies over terrace gravel however only one cropmark is known, a rectangular enclosure some 100m south of the altar find spot. Fieldwalking over some 2 ha revealed a thin scatter of Romano-British pottery suggesting heavily manured fields surrounding one or more farmsteads, indicated by two concentrations of pottery, tile and limestone. A magnetometer survey provided an exceptionally clear picture of intercutting rectangular ditched enclosures, a pit cluster and two circular features suggesting Iron Age settlement reverting to arable farmland in the Roman period.

The area was also scanned for metal objects. Five Roman coins were recovered towards the western edge of the field and over

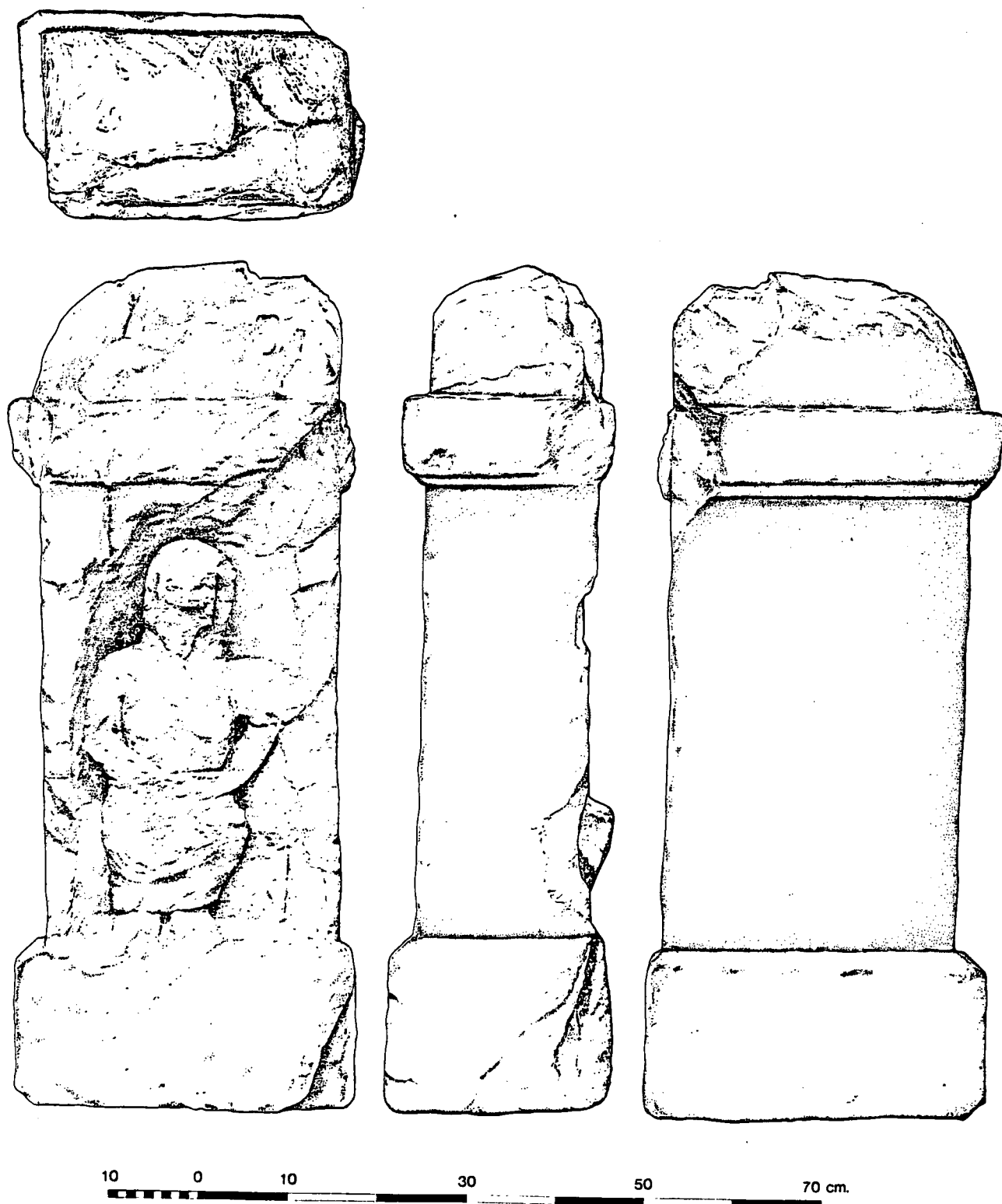


Fig 4 Bampton Knaps Farm: the Bampton Altar

the site of the rectangular cropmark where a scatter of building stone and domestic debris suggested one or more buildings. However the general lack of low denomination coinage suggests the occupiers may have been more than peasant farmers. The lack of coinage or metalwork from the altar findspot suggests that this was not the site of a temple. However the permanent pasture field 20m to the west may well hold the key to the source of the altar.

The fieldwalking, by kind permission of the farmer, Mr G Read, was organised by John Blair and Kate Tiller as part of the 'Bampton Project' assisted by David Miles and R A Chambers of the OAU. Arnold Aspinall undertook the geophysical survey and Mark Maillard the metal detection. The field walking would not have been possible without the help of 16 local volunteers to whom the 'Bampton Project' is very grateful.

M40: Extension - R A Chambers

Fieldwalking the easement on Contracts 3 and 2 between Banbury and Ardley has revealed a series of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval occupation sites not previously detected. The rate at which road building is now undertaken including construction without topsoil stripping has limited the fieldwork potential in comparison with the previous stretch of the M40 built in 1972. With the exception of stone foundations, cobbled areas and ditches from a probable Roman villa by Lower Aynho Ground Farm, no sites containing major structural elements have been discovered. However the frequency of artefact scatters particularly from the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods suggests that past land use was as intensive in the Cherwell valley as in the Thames valley.

Banbury: Sainsbury Redevelopment, Calthorpe Street - R A Chambers (Centred SP 456 400)

Following an archaeological assessment in July last year a watch was kept over the redevelopment of this site. Little further medieval material has been recovered, the majority of

the archaeology having been disturbed by earlier post-medieval redevelopment along Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road.

Bicester: South Farm Development - R A Chambers (Centred SP 585 237)

The outlines of six buildings and a raised metal track in association with Romano-British pottery was observed after topsoil stripping in advance of house building in an area between 100m - 200m south of South Farm to the north of Bicester. Surface finds included fragments of amphorae and several pieces of high-class jewellery in bronze, inlaid with coloured enamels and an intaglio ring. These manifestations of high-class wealth linked with local descriptions of the

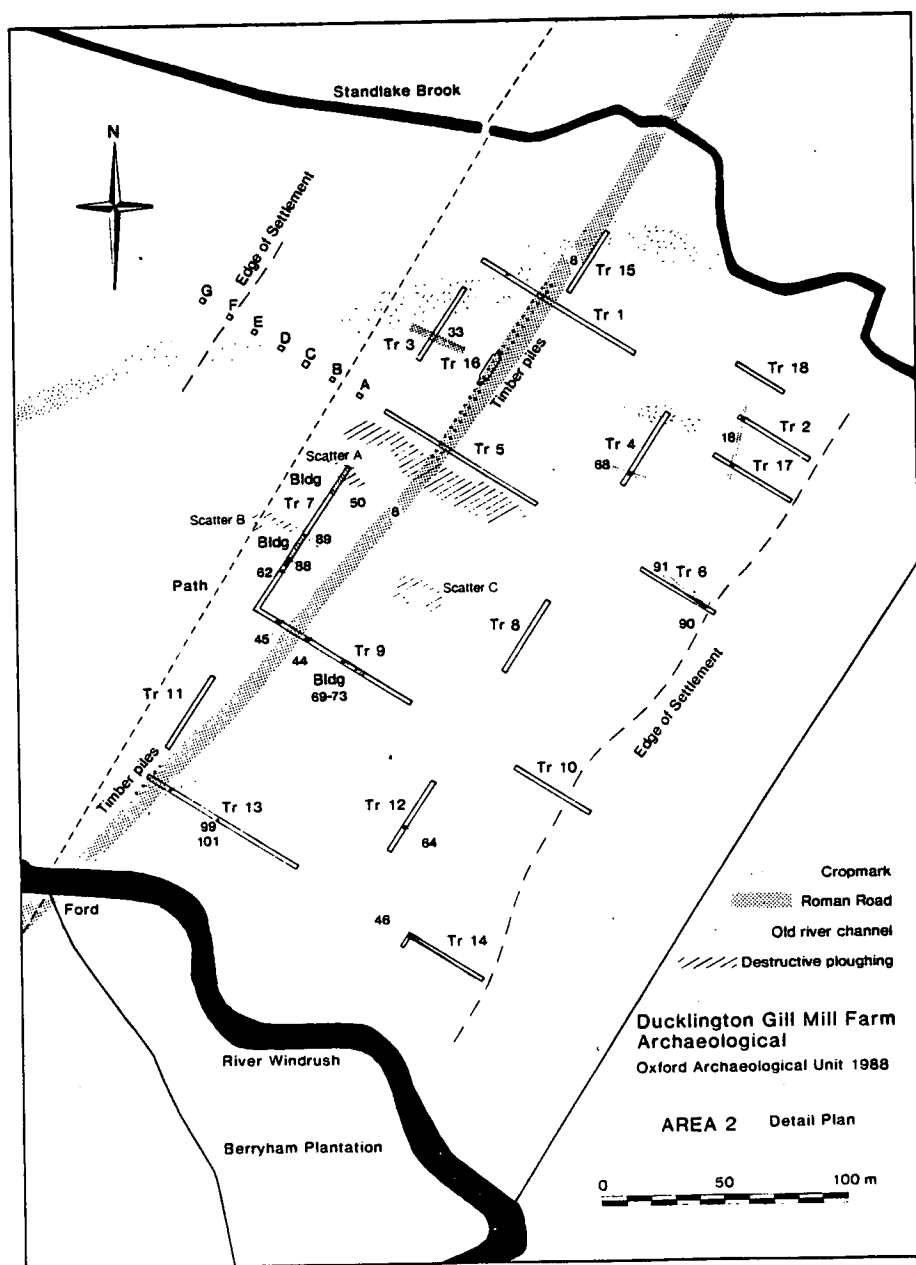


Fig 5 Ducklington Gill Mill: overall plan and details of 1988

remains uncovered in December 1988 suggest the site of a Roman villa. The area has now been built over.

Pottery suggests that occupation of this site may have begun in the late Iron Age or early Roman period and the brooches, rings and coins span the 1st-2nd to 4th centuries AD. Of particular interest is a collection of spear heads of varying styles found as part of what is presumed to have been a blacksmith's store of scrap iron. A probable late 4th century Germanic belt buckle also comes from the site.

Recent examination of aerial photographs held by the Oxfordshire County Museum has revealed a series of enclosures outlined as cropmarks.

This site was discovered by Mr Michael Holloway who helped with the recording in conjunction with the Bicester based fieldwork group.

Chalgrove: The Manor

- R A Chambers and Richard Hilton
(Centred SU 630 970)

This timber-framed manor house was built to replace an earlier building built partly on the same site. The core of the present building comprises a hall and two cross-wings built in three separate stages during the 15th century. During February this year an archaeological trench through the ground floor in the north wing confirmed that the northern two bays of the central hall had been demolished when the north wing was added. The north wall of the hall was marked by a c. 0.5m wide shallow chalk rubble foundation bonded with a yellow sandy lime mortar. Only the lowest course survived. A 16th century inglenook fireplace built onto the north side of this wing had given rise to a spread of ash and charcoal over the beaten earth floor. The floor was subsequently tiled, possibly not until the 17th century. The tiles were later lifted and relaid in mortar on a 0.2m deep bed of gravel. Nothing remained of the hearth within the 16th century fireplace.

Dorchester: Old Malthouse, Watling Lane

- R A Chambers
(Centred SU 577 941)

The foundation trench for a replacement boundary wall exposed the inner berm of the late Roman town ditch. The trench was only 1m deep and did not cross the line of the town wall which showed as a sharply defined break of slope across the adjacent lawn.

Ducklington: Gill Mill Farm

- Jeff Wallis and George Lambrick
(Centred SP 380 070)

The first phase of a major assessment of this extensive new gravel extraction scheme at Gill Mill on the Windrush floodplain south of Witney has been completed for the gravel

company, J Smith and Sons of Bletchington. Alluvium is up to 1m thick; air photographs indicate possible recent ditch lines.

Trenching located a previously unknown Middle Iron Age settlement consisting of a ditch and internal bank, aligned north west, some 45m long by 14m wide. Four sections cut indicated partly waterlogged silting with no recutting of a steep U shaped 70cm deep ditch. A horn core and shell tempered sherds were the only finds.

Some Neolithic occupation was indicated by struck flints from burnt tree pits, clusters of possible post holes, and a pit. Finds included a possible Peterborough ware sherd and shale fragment.

The most impressive results came from examining an area on and around the line of a previously identified Roman road (Fig 5). The road seen near Cokethorpe Park Church crosses the Windrush Valley at Gill Mill. A series of rubble patches, gravel surfaces and possible 'property' boundary ditches identified in trenches cut parallel with the road are the remnants of a ribbon settlement abutting both sides of the road. Long narrow plots with buildings on the road frontage and a peripheral boundary ditch appear to define the site.

A Roman horizon within clay alluvium was seen over a wide area within the settlement area and was prolific in finds. Two hundred coins, lead architectural fragments, glass vessel sherds, bracelet fragments, structural nails, quern fragments and a considerable weight of 3rd to 4th century 'Oxford' kilns pottery, were found.

The road itself has remains of metalling and side ditches in the drier areas, but for much of its length seems to have been almost a continuous ford, with a wooden walkway supported on timber piles beside it. Other timberwork with carpentry marks was found preserved in the old channel silts.

Eye and Dunsden: Dean's Farm - John Moore (Centred SU 728 741)

In the course of gravel extraction two wells were disturbed. Redland Aggregates notified Reading Museum who in turn asked OAU to investigate. It was found that the drag-line had completely removed the bottom of one late Roman well which had been lined with some substantial timbers c 1.5 m long. These had formed a square brace at the bottom with upright timbers resting on them. Objects from the well included a stave-built bucket, a spear with part of the wooden shaft still attached, an iron dagger and a very sharp scythe. The most interesting find was a circular lead tank, minus the bottom. Relief decoration on the tank was in the form of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines in a herring bone design. The importance of the find was established when we eventually found a Chi-Rho monogram. This is the first such tank to be found in the Thames Valley and only the sixth, with a Chi-Rho monogram, in Britain. It's most likely use was as a baptismal font.

Goring: Gatehampton Farm - Tim Allen
(Centred SU 606 797)

Following the unexpected discoveries of the trench dug in advance of pipe laying just west of the railway line in 1987, Thames Water generously funded another season of excavation along the east side of the railway in advance of destruction. Over the 200m closest to the river a trench up to 10m wide was cleared by machine; north of this the line was followed with a 1.5m assessment trench, again dug by machine (Fig 6).

Within the main trench occupation was concentrated in two areas, both in silt-filled channels of a late glacial stream. One ran obliquely across the trench towards the river, Area 2, and the other cut along the junction of the flint gravel terrace and the lane south of it, Area 1. Although the area north of this is known from cropmarks to contain round barrows, hardly any man-made features were encountered within the trench.

Area 1

The hollow, some 40m across, was bounded north and south by ditches 130 and 126 respectively, both on a NE-SW alignment. The ground surface between them had been cobbled over, but this cobbling stopped c. 2m north of ditch 126, as if respecting an upcast bank alongside it. The

cobbling also stopped just short of the west trench edge here, perhaps suggesting that the return of 126 lay only just outside the trench; there was certainly no sign of it in the trench west of the railway line. There were no traces of structures upon the cobbling, which can be dated to the 3rd century by a brooch and a coin of Tetricus in good condition found upon it. After some 0.1m of soil had accumulated a second layer of larger cobbles just over 2m wide was laid on a NE-SW alignment down the middle of the enclosure. This had patches of chalk within it, and was edged with squared flint blocks on the north side; it was probably a road. Finds from the cobbling and from the enclosing ditches included an iron sickle and adze, as well as pottery, vessel glass and animal bones.

Beneath the cobbling was a fairly clean silt. This overlay patches of silt interspersed with outcrops of the underlying flint gravel, which appeared to have been heavily disturbed, perhaps due to tree-holes. Flints and prehistoric pottery, probably of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date, came from the silt, patches of which were reddened or blackened by burning. One or two features in the flint gravel to the north also produced pottery and flints. On the south edge of the hollow, south of ditch 126, the earliest silts produced a collection of flint flakes and tools distinctive for their large size. During watching of the Thames Water pipe-laying the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group uncovered another cluster of similar flint knapping debris. This lay in

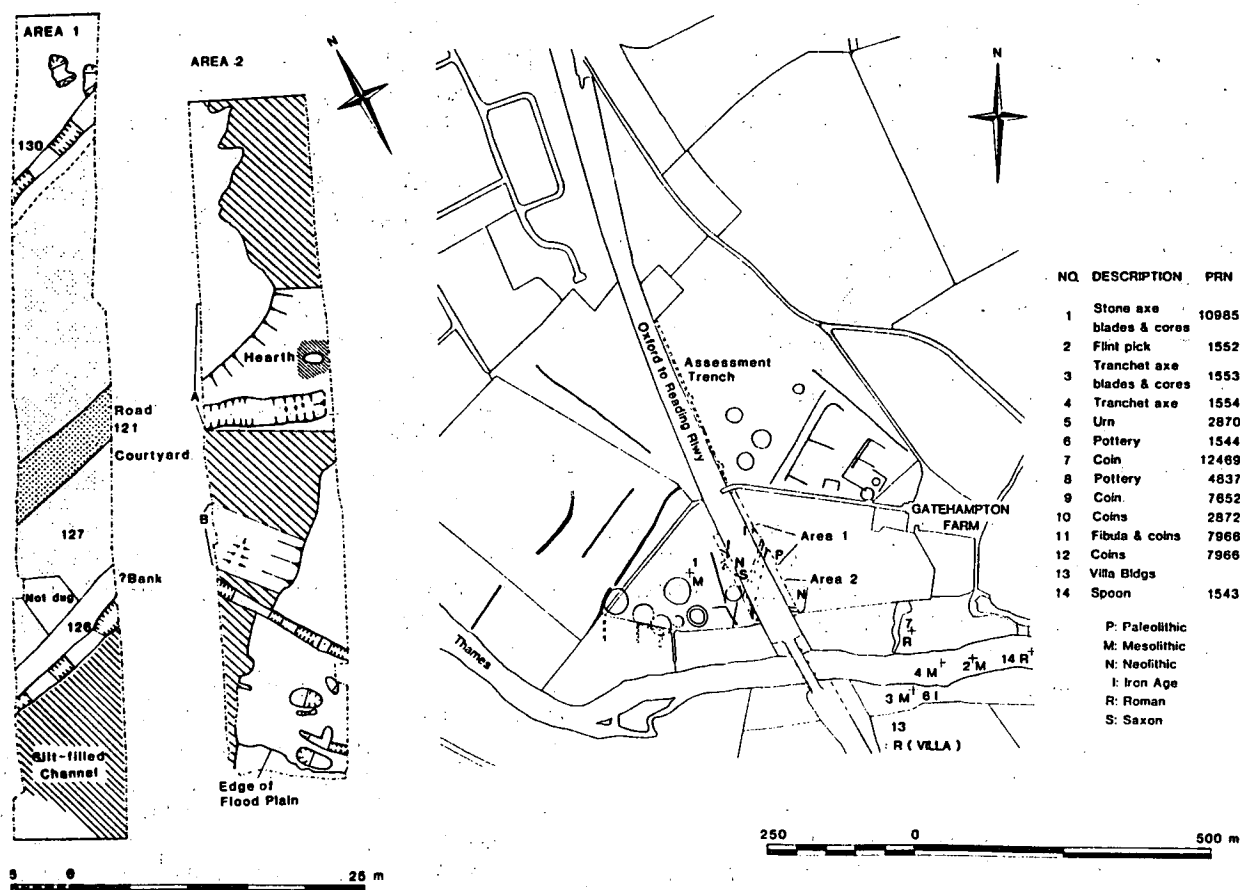


Fig 6 Gatchampton Farm

the top of a silt-filled channel, a continuation of that excavated in 1987. Two successive layers of flints were recovered, each comprising over 150 long blades and double-platform cores, the blades being up to 20 cms long. These are late Upper Palaeolithic; among the blades are several examples with heavy scarring on the dorsal face, which are known as 'bruised blades' and are characteristic of butchery sites of the period.

Area 2

South of Area 1 the sand was virtually sterile. Running south-west across the southern 60m of the trench however was another silt-filled channel, feature 146, whose top contained worked flints, bones and pottery. Two trenches A and B were laid out across this. B contained dark occupation rich silts in two channels along the bottom, both of which were covered by a layer of silt containing a horizon of struck flints. This was cut by postholes, and was overlaid by a sterile silt layer. However the top fill of the hollow contained more flint debris.

Trench A contained a long sequence of silts, most of which had abundant flints in them. Below the top fills was a reddened sub-circular hearth, surrounded by dark occupation soil, and the flints were concentrated in the area of the hearth. Below the hearth was a thick deposit of silt within which soil distinctions were very slight; distinct horizons of flints however indicate a number of successive working surfaces. One or two postholes were also associated with these horizons. In some areas distinct clusters of flint chips occurred, suggesting that these were primary debris from knapping. In general the flints clustered in the area later occupied by the hearth, perhaps indicating a long-lived focus of activity. Below these occupation layers there were two V-profiled ditches cut into the bottom of the channel.

Cores, flakes and other debitage were very common; the flintwork also included parts of two leaf-shaped arrowheads and a roughout for an axe, probably indicating an Earlier Neolithic date. Pottery was scarce and very fragmentary, and cannot be closely dated, but samples have been taken from the hearth for magnetic dating. The top fill included sherds of Late Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery, and associated flints including thumbnail scrapers.

South of this hollow were shallow pits similar to the Neolithic pits found on the terrace edge in the 1987 excavation. The pits and the hollow were cut by Roman ditches on a NW-SE alignment; which contained domestic rubbish.

Henley: St Anne's Bridge - Brian Durham (SU 764 826)

Colin Fox and the Oxford Sub-aqua Club have continued their underwater survey for the Unit and English Heritage and now have the benefit of two acoustic surveys on the line of the 12th century bridge. They also have photographs of a large midstream masonry block, showing the diagonal

tooling noted by Mark Redknap of Marine Archaeological Surveys. The masonry is interpreted as part of an ashlar faced cut-water which had keeled over as the bridge collapsed. The tooling matches that of the arches on both banks: this is seen as evidence that the stone arches of the Romanesque bridge were continuous across the whole river, rather than being confined to flood arches on each bank (South Midlands Archaeology, 16, 1985, 101). Further survey is aimed at giving a complete profile of the river bed, to reconstruct one of the few recognizable 12th century stone bridges in England.

Marcham: Hitch Copse - Mark Roberts (Centred SU 459 995)

An assessment was carried out over three days for ARC. Thirty one trenches were dug to locate previously reported flint scatters. A general scatter of flint was found in the south and eastern parts of the field with one located cluster of 19 flints. There was an early element in some flints and a late element in others suggesting a long term prehistoric site but no features were found to properly date the site. The general scatter of Roman, some Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery indicates long-term agricultural manuring or a lot of ploughman's lunches.

Merton: Roman Road - R A Chambers (Centred SU 5722 1718)

A pipe trench running parallel to the modern Islip-Merton road sectioned the line of the Dorchester-Alchester Roman road (Margary 160b). The projected line of the Roman road crosses an outlier of brashy limestone which lies immediately below the top soil at this point. As with three archaeological trial pits excavated between the Islip-Merton road and the river Ray in advance of the M40 enquiry, no sign of the road was seen. It seems highly likely that the road utilised the natural brashy limestone surface and no further metalling was necessary. No roadside ditches were seen in the pipe trench. It is possible that the road only required shallow marking out trenches which need not have affected the subsoil. The Unit is obliged to members of the Bicester-based fieldwork group for observing the pipe trench.

Mongewell: Wallingford by-pass - George Lambrick (Centred SU 609 880)

In the latest phase of assessment of the Wallingford by-pass two very rapid trenches were dug on the east bank of the river, opposite the late Bronze Age settlement excavated in 1986. One of the trenches, on the top of a slight scarp at the edge of the gravel terrace, revealed about 1m of ploughwash overlying a layer with possible late-Bronze Age pottery and flints. Two flint blades and a leaf shaped arrowhead suggest an earlier Neolithic presence.

The trench also revealed the end of a fairly large ditch, possibly contemporary with the occupation layer. The full extent of the site is as yet uncertain.

Oxford: 7 Dunstan Road, "Ethelreds Palace"

- Brian Durham

(Centred SP 541 077)

The Ordnance Survey shows this as the site of the Saxon Palace in Headington. The house adjoins Manor Farm, which is the obvious early focus. However, it is by no means at the top of the high ground here, which is occupied by the John Radcliffe Hospital to the rear. Incidentally this is the highest ground anywhere in the area, and an obvious site for a seigniorial centre.

A small trench by Roger Ainslie and the Abingdon Archaeological Society exposed a stone scatter which turned out to be localised and with no clear focus. The date is 13th-14th century. It could be a building at the rear of a Dunstan Road plot, but there was no evidence of internal floors. Nearby there was a mortar layer with some cobbling which had the appearance of a poorly metalled trackway.

Ethelred's Palace is therefore clearly not where it is supposed to be. The alternative is that it is on the slightly higher ground of the "Court Close" orchard to the rear, and the neighbours are busily collecting pottery!

Oxford: Magdalen College, The Old Kitchen

- Brian Durham

(Centred SP 571 063)

Salvage work and a watching brief have been commissioned by the College, and have for the first time enabled them to display some of their medieval hospital heritage for the world to see.

The Old Kitchen was always thought to be part of St. John's Hospital because of its skew alignment, but there was not much to prove it. The roof need only be 15th-16th century, and many of the 'medieval' features like the southern blocked lancets were conspicuously Victorian. So the conversion to a Junior Common Room offered the chance to investigate the building overall, and solve these questions. It has now been shown to be a lofty medieval hall with a superbly ornate doorway just peeping above modern ground level.

The medieval hospital walls are bonded in distinctive red-brown loam, which could be recognised in many places. Inside elevation drawings were made of both side walls by Leigh Turner and Danyon Rey, and amongst the patching, both old and new, were found the shapes of ashlar window jambs. Only in one place did the full profile of the rere-arch survive, but it was clearly an original feature and two-centred as would be expected of the 13th century. One of the east windows was cut through by a new doorway, and showed that the 13th century light had been replaced, probably at the

foundation of the college in 1458. Knowledge of the hospital floor level from our previous excavation was confirmed by the newly found medieval doorway, with capitals only 0.5m above modern ground level. This shows that the windows of the medieval building were not only very tall, 2.5m, but were set about 2m above floor level. This makes a building of unusual grandeur, certainly not a kitchen, and arguably therefore a hall for an important personage, perhaps for the warden of the hospital or the King's Almoner.

The bay-spacing of the medieval openings is quite different from that of the existing roof trusses. Indeed a scarf joint in one of the purlins suggests that the roof originally fitted a larger building, and the obvious explanation is that the hospital hall was longer. Careful comparison of the bay widths may indeed suggest an original south gable against the recently found infirmary building, which would enable us to reconstruct fully this corner of the hospital.

The investigations, including a watching brief on the contractor's excavations, showed a bewildering series of alterations and partitioning within the range during the life of the college. It may be that the semblance of a medieval kitchen is no older than the 18th century, although most of the building's usage was no doubt related to servicing the hall. David Sturdy has pointed out some further contradictions in that a small courtyard appears here on the early Oxford maps. It is therefore very lucky that the medieval work shows up so well, and that the college will have a clear story to tell of the first in-situ hospital buildings that they have had a chance to show off.

Oxford: Nuffield College, The Saxon West Defences

- Brian Durham

(Centred SP 510 063)

An invitation from the Bursar of Nuffield College provided Brian Durham with a chance to confirm a long running story. The car park east of the college has a high terrace to the rear, on which runs the narrow walled passage of Bulwarks Lane, always believed to be the edge of the castle moat. The college has been building staff accommodation here, and one would have expected it to be sitting on good gravel, terraced away at the edge of the moat. But not so, the contractor had found 2.9m of horrible black silt within 3m of the base of the terrace. If this was castle moat, it would mean that Bulwarks Lane was perched 6m above an almost sheer drop.

What seems more likely is that this is a continuation of the Saxon town ditch found in the Social Sciences library to the north (Oxoniensia 48, 1983, 19-20, Fig. 3a).

The trenches were filled with concrete within hours of the Unit being notified, so all we have is the observation of the deposits in relation to Bulwarks Lane to prove that this was indeed the Saxon ditch..

Oxford: 33-35 Queen Street - Brian Durham
(Centred SP 513 062)

Following our policy of looking at the basement of every new development in Queen Street, the Unit has excavated within the old Temperance Hotel.

The site is to be rebuilt with new shops by Bride Hall Developments, who pay for the excavation. The basements here go down below the original ground surface, so we were looking at discrete pits cut into gravel. An alarming number of the pits were comparatively modern, suggesting that there has been a lot of recent disturbance, but one of the most interesting was an enormous 18th century well-construction pit. The pit was about 4m square, taking up much of the cellar floor, but surprisingly there was no stone shaft surviving. Perhaps it had collapsed in on itself?

The earlier pits and wells were excavated down to the structural limits of the cellar, and produced useful early medieval and late Saxon finds.

Oxford: The Shire Lake (56-60 St Aldates and the Police Station) - Brian Durham
(Centred SP 513 056)

The Unit has excavated two new sites on the line of the principal Thames crossing south of the city. The parish of St Aldates includes a low-lying area between the south of gate and Folly Bridge, and which seems to have included the Saxon channel of the Thames.

Plotting the shape of relict channels is fraught with difficulties, because the dating evidence is seldom enough to avoid the need for 'inspired' interpretation. The difficulties are compounded when the work is done piecemeal over several years and on sites selected by developers rather than by archaeologists. Nevertheless an early medieval waterfront was found in the police station on roughly the predicted line of the north bank. It was backing round to the north east however, suggesting that it was intended to isolate some sort of structure at the bridge-head.

This section of waterfront was constructed of a series of strong wattle uprights, reinforced with bigger posts at the crown of the curve. At one point a series of planks appeared to be closing off the outflow of a small gully, as if it had been a sluice. The timberwork appeared to be 12th century from ceramic dating. This would mean that the Norman stone bridge was already in place about 55 m upstream, with the first group of its 30-odd arches spanning the first channel, the Shire Lake, which has the boundary between Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The Norman Grand Pont was celebrated in its day (c 1080's - 90's) and was 80 years ahead of its time in vision, if not in engineering. A critical question for the project was to define the width of the Shire Lake at this time, because there is no doubt that the bridge had the effect of slow strangulation of the channel as soon as it was in place.

Excavations at 56 to 60 St Aldates were therefore aimed at locating the Berkshire bank. Two 13th century houses appeared, separated by a narrow flood channel. Beneath was the usual reclamation platform, and beneath this the alluvial accumulations against the side of the bridge. There were signs of a long revetment which might correspond to the Grand Pont period, but it was clear that there had already been some infilling by this stage.

Behind the log revetment were a series of earlier hurdle waterfronts, with pottery and shoes typical of the 10th century. The earliest seemed to be revetting a small island of alluvium which is conjectured as the Saxon river bank, isolated by an artificial flood channel. Regrettably however the structures south of this point began to disappear underneath widenings of the modern road, leaving plenty of scope for 'inspiration'!

A423: Peartree Hill to Wendlebury Improvement
- R A Chambers
(Centred SP 540 178)

Fieldwork by the Bicester-based fieldwork group has now revealed a second Romano-British settlement, with spreads of domestic debris, pits and ditches immediately south of the lane leading to Oddington Grange.

Radcot: Fishponds - R A Chambers

A series of rectangular fishponds have been discovered at the northern end of the site of the deserted village at Radcot. The ponds appear to have extended to the west beyond the present field boundary. The small close containing the earthworks will be retained as permanent pasture by the owner Mr John Willmer. The earthworks have been surveyed by the Faringdon History Society who hope to confirm the arrangement of sluice channels during the coming winter.

Stanford-in-the-Vale: Bowling Green Farm
- R A Chambers
(Centred SU 314 952)

During 1988 further excavation was undertaken at the western end of this extensive and exceptionally well preserved Romano-British settlement. As much of the site had only experienced light cultivation, extensive areas of the settlement exhibited a rare degree of preservation with intact floor, road and exterior yard surfaces. The site exhibited an abundance of kilns, ovens and hearths with circular kilns or ovens particularly in association with each of two rubble founded rectangular buildings. Structural remnants of everyday activity survived at the contemporary ground level displaying an exceptional degree of preservation not normally encountered in this region where modern ploughing or the deeply destructive ridge and furrow cultivation of the medieval period.

By October 1989 quarrying had claimed the excavated part of the settlement. The removal of the 'archaeological overburden' above the sand deposits during the autumn revealed that the 4th century settlement layout reflected the plan of an earlier villa within its ditched enclosure and other associated boundaries. The enclosure ditch provided 2nd century pottery, deposits of burnt grain and a dump of polychrome wall plaster from the villa building. As this plaster deposit was not accompanied by building rubble the plaster probably represents interior refurbishment and not the final destruction of the villa. By the 4th century the villa had disappeared and the site was covered by low quality buildings, the majority of which left little trace even though the 4th century ground surface survived virtually intact.

On the crest of the hill to the south of the villa enclosure a well was excavated 8.5m into the soft sand. Probably lined with wattling the lining appears to have decayed rapidly leading to the sides collapsing soon after the well was constructed. As a result there was little opportunity for rubbish to accumulate in the well and no environmental material was recovered from waterlogged levels.

A rather unusual aspect of this settlement is the narrow date band (348 - 368 AD) into which all but a few of the three hundred low denomination coins fall. There are a substantial

number of forgeries in coins from other areas of the settlement systematically collected over past years will be submitted for identification in the near future.

To mark the public consultation phase of the revised County Minerals policy, the sand quarry at Bowling Green Farm was opened to the public on Saturday 21st May, from 10-12 am. A major part of the display was the excavation recently undertaken by the Unit. The Unit is grateful to Hills Aggregates Ltd for funding all of the work to date.

Stanton Harcourt: Devils Quoits, A Henge Revived

- George Lambrick

(Centred SP 411 046)

During June and July 1988 the excavation of the interior of the major stone circle henge monument was completed. The excavation is the first stage of a scheme to preserve and reconstruct a monument which was a dominant ceremonial centre in the Thames Valley 4,500 years ago. Devils Quoits is one of only about a dozen large stone circle henges in Britain, of which Stonehenge and Avebury are the best known.

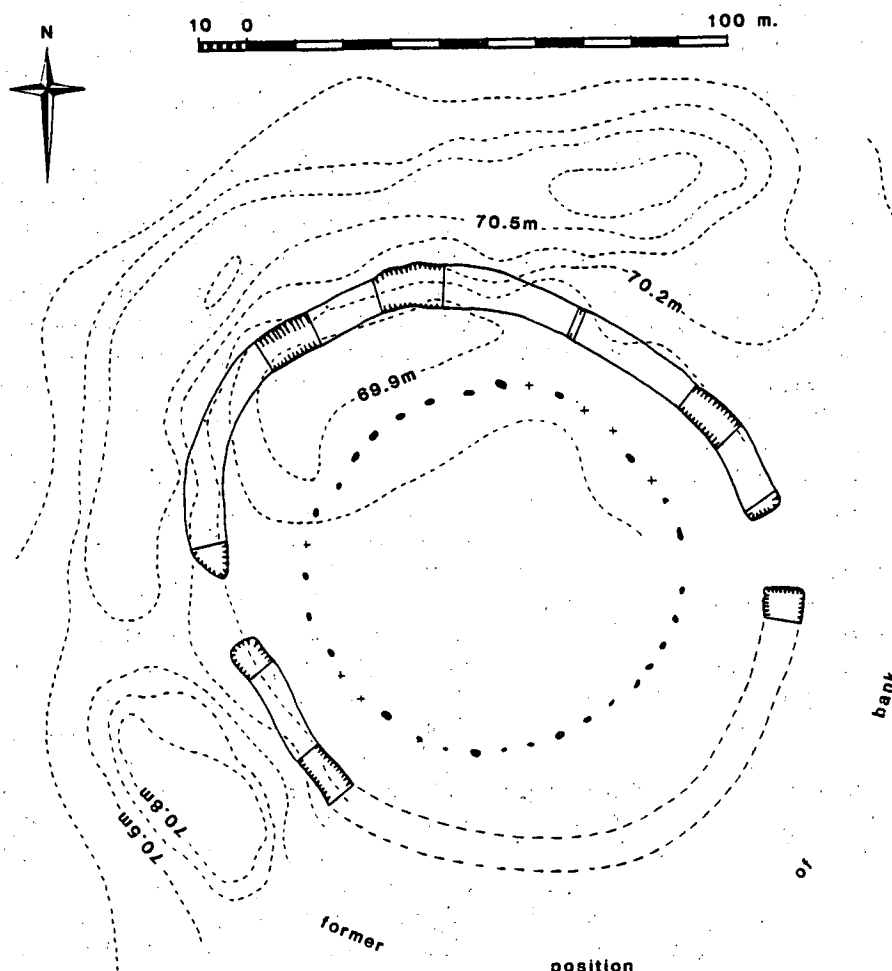


Fig 7: Stanton Harcourt Devils Quoits: overall plan combining results of excavations in 1940, 1972 and 1988.

As a result of the recent excavation and the earlier work of Professor Grimes in 1940, and Margaret Gray in 1972, we now know that the monument consisted of a 2m deep ditch forming an elliptical enclosure about 140m across. Originally the site was enclosed by an outer bank. Inside this enclosure was a circle, 75m in diameter, of about 36 standing stones (Fig 7). The new excavation has located the remainder of the complete ring of stones and samples of bone from the packing for radio-carbon dating.

The earthwork and all but one of the standing stones was flattened by medieval farmers. The one surviving stone was buried to make way for the wartime aerodrome.

Now, thanks to the co-operation of the gravel company ARC, English Heritage, Oxfordshire County Council and the ultimate owners of the site, All Souls College, Oxford, an imaginative restoration scheme has been agreed.

Following the excavation the interior of the henge has been extracted for gravel. It will be refilled with inert builders waste, and in about a year's time the surviving megaliths will be placed in their original positions. ARC will provide modern replicas to complete the remainder of the circle.

The ditch, which contains more complex deposits of hearths, bones and flint artefacts is to be preserved. Some of the upper plough-soil will be removed to create a slight hollow and the bank will be reconstituted.

The 'new' henge will stand on a promontory, surrounded by the largest lake in Oxfordshire, but protected from erosion by a clay bund.

The project is unique in combining the only complete excavation of the interior of a major henge with the preservation of its undisturbed neolithic deposits and the restoration of the monument as a visible reminder of the importance of the area 4,500 years ago.

Steeple Barton - R A Chambers and Richard Hilton (Centred SP 449 249)

Members of the Bartons History Group assisted by the Oxford Archaeological Unit have continued to record the complex of stone foundations centred some 100m north-east of St. Mary's church. The foundations were revealed during the reinstatement of a low-lying field from its previous use as a temporary reservoir.

Richard Hilton who was an In-Service trainee with the OAU, completed a survey of the earthworks to the north and east of the churchyard of which the recently discovered foundations are a part. The earthworks suggest boundary walls and building platforms with one or two possible buildings outlined to the north of the churchyard.

The earthworks terraced into the hillside to the east of the churchyard appear to represent the remains of a medieval tithe barn and other later outbuildings shown ranged round

a farmyard on the 1849 Tithe Map. The area to the north of the churchyard was open ground by 1849 but occasional sherds of medieval pottery appear to confirm that this was formerly part of the medieval village.

Thomley Hall Farm - R A Chambers (Centred SP 631 099)

The only outbuilding of any significant interest was an 18th century red brick barn with some geometric patterning from vitrified headers with four sets of workmans' initials each scratched into a separate brick and dated 1770. Probably originally built for whole crop storage the structure was later heavily rebuilt and extended, re-raftered in sawn pine and tiled, with a second floor supporting corn bins inserted into each bay either side of the central porch which was also extended. The floor between the two central opposing doors had been dug away and replaced by flagstones on lime concrete over a bed of stone and brick rubble, the whole more than 1 ft (0.3m) deep. This reflooring probably dates to the rebuilding of the barn at the end of the last century or early this century, presumably thought necessary for the storage or operation of new, heavier agricultural machinery perhaps for processing grain. If the barn had originally been constructed with a central threshing floor no trace remained.

Tubney: New Plantation - R A Chambers (Centred SP 449 006)

In May an archaeological assessment was undertaken of some 10.9 ha of woodland on the north side of the A420 at Tubney. The land was open heath until enclosure for forestry in the late 19th century. Although the site was potentially interesting because of the proximity of the deserted medieval village and because of Romano-British finds now in the British Museum, very little activity from either period was uncovered within the trial trenches.

The west end of the wood contains the possible site of a prehistoric burial mound marked on the OS map and a second tumulus recorded in the 19th century was levelled in the 1870s. This wood has been put forward for the site of a new sand quarry. The topsoil is only a few centimetres thick over 10m of clean sand. Many of the trial trenches yielded worked flint, a stone not natural to the area. In particular there was a concentration of implements and waste flakes to the south of the site of the barrow, and flints were recovered from depths of up to 30cm into the apparently clean, undisturbed natural sand indicating the difficulty of recognising disturbed subsoil on this site. Although subjected to extensive trenching, the barrow failed to reveal itself. Placed by the OS map at the end of a tongue of land it is possible that this barrow may have been a misidentification of a natural topographical feature. However given the difficulty of recognising man-made features in this subsoil a barrow ditch may have rendered itself unrecognisable within the confines of the trial trenches. Some medieval pottery was recovered from the presumed site of the barrow.

Wallingford: 23 St Martins Street - R A Chambers
(Centred SU 606 892)

In September, foundation trenches for an extension to the rear of the premises revealed that much of the later archaeological stratification had been lost to previous building development. The top 1.2m had been lost to post-medieval building foundations, or services. There was also a cellar 2m deep. Some undisturbed archaeological levels, probably Anglo-Saxon, remained from a depth of 1.2m down to the natural gravel at about 2m.

Whitchurch: Butlers Farm - George Lambrick
(Centred Su 643 782)

Following heavy rain in late January and early February, Mr Knights of Butlers Farm, Whitchurch reported a large hole having opened up in one of his fields in the interior of Bozedown Camp. Geologically the area consists of a 2m thick layer of sand with a stony topsoil overlying chalk. On inspection it was clear that the roof of a cavity in the chalk had collapsed, probably because of the extra weight of moisture in the sand above. The resulting hole was about 8 x 5m across, and the cavern in the chalk extended laterally a further 2-3m. The void was about 2m in height. The remains of a vertical shaft containing slumped topsoil was visible in the side of the hole formed by the collapse. The walls of the chamber had been cut out with metal picks which left long narrow scored marks such as would be made by a modern pick axe.

This appears to have been a Dene hole, a mine dug to obtain chalk for liming or marling the acidic sandy soil above to make it more fertile. Access was through the vertical shaft, and typically such mines have 2 to 6 large chambers opening off, of the kind collapsed here.

They differ from prehistoric flint mines in having large chambers rather than galleries which follow bands of flint, and having metal rather than antler pick marks. They are fairly common in Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey in this typical geological situation where a fairly thin stratum of acidic sand overlies the chalk. Many are known from the hollows left by collapses. They are very difficult to date: they were described by Pliny writing about Britain in 70 AD and were used up until the beginning of this century.

Another very small hole nearby might have resulted from settlement of the soil plug in the shaft of another Dene hole.

Witney: Cassington Gas Main - Mark Alexander

This major gas main has provided an opportunity, albeit limited, to view the archaeology that may be disturbed during the widening of the A40. In consultation with the Department of Transport, the gas main has been built along the southern edge of the proposed road line.

The western section of the route has been walked, from the Cox's Barn Farm lay-by to the Witney turn-off. Only the topsoil strip was inspected. Several late Neolithic flints were collected from the western end whilst some medieval pottery was recovered from the eastern end.

This implies that archaeological work on the proposed A40 dualling should be concentrated on the known areas of interest around Cassington and Eynsham.

Manorial Sites at Witney (Cogges, Mount House, Park Farm) - Brian Durham
(Centred SP 361 096, SP 356 093, SP 339 098)

As negotiation proceeded on whether or not to provide a permanent display of parts of the 12th century episcopal manor house, Witney continues to be a focus of medieval interest in Oxfordshire.

Cogges Manor Farm is the remains of the manorial estate which originally faced Witney from the east bank of the Windrush, but which has now been absorbed within the town. Mark Roberts and teams from OAU and a university summer school uncovered part of a medieval south extension to the 13th century solar block, and showed a remarkable linear division through farmyard, house and kitchen garden which suggest that the property had been arbitrarily divided at some stage. Like the previous seasons of excavations there was more grass-tempered pottery, which confirmed that there is an extensive early Saxon settlement over much of the ground area.

At the nearby 'Bishop's Palace' in Witney itself, Sinclair Turrell and Brian Durham carried out a watching brief as the property was being converted to offices for the Thames and Chilterns Tourist Board. The car park area exposed sufficient of the north curtain wall to enable it to be completed on plan, with small changes of direction. It seemed to be skirting around a small tower like building which may have been an outshot from the north end of the north range. This could have been a defensive feature, but without our being able to dig out its internal fill we cannot exclude the possibility that it was an attached garderobe.

Alterations at Mount House also required new foundations east of the Norman east range. Walls and robber trenches here showed the density of medieval structure beneath the ground, this time a building alongside the Norman chapel.

Park Farm overlooks Witney from the high ground on the old Burford road to the west. It had been one of two reputed locations of the Bishop's manor house, a myth which was only properly scotched by the excavation at Mount House in 1984. The 'park' itself is now being encroached on by a large housing estate, and in advance of this Sinclair Turrell dug sections across the assumed line of the park pale south of the Mowing Park. The park here is skirted by a bridle-way which restricted the trenching, but on the Mowing Park side there was not a hint of either bank or ditch. In an effort to explain this, the Unit did more fieldwork in the area, and a fuller

account with a plan of the park is published in our newsletter *Archaeological News* XVI 3 (September 1988).

Abingdon: J Curtis and Son's Pit, Abingdon Sewage Works - Jeff Wallis
(Centred SU 4979 52)

Since May 1988 the Abingdon and Area Archaeological and Historical Society have continuously observed gravel quarrying at this pit which lies near a known Bronze Age settlement site and a recently examined Neolithic long enclosure.

Topsoil removed by the gravel company has revealed alluvium filled linear boundary ditches and a trackway. The contracted remains of a human burial was also located. On removal of a yellow brown clay and gravelly silt the almost intact skeletal remains of a young male ? were revealed. The burial was tightly contracted in a shallow sub rectangular pit, 0.14m deep. There was no indication of surrounding ditch or other associated features. The crouched burial was orientated with the head to the NE resting on the left side with the skull pressed tight down into the upper ribs. The grave could be described as typically Beaker with the left arm and hand up against the skull and the right arm down against the hip with the hand bent upward. Only a few toe bones survived. Two flints, a denticulated blade above the left knee and a tertiary flake resting by the right foot were the only grave goods apart from two possibly residual flints.

The grave pit filling was similar to the Neolithic soil horizon seen in section 12.5m to the east. There were numerous tree holes associated with this surface and one typical sausage shaped pit contained thirty struck flints in fresh condition, one with utilised edges. Several similar pits contained burnt stone and charcoal.

The Bampton Project - Sarah Baker

The latest instalment of the 'Bampton Project' is now underway: the OUAS has opened three trenches in the churchyard, in an area designated for cremation. This is promisingly placed on the axis which forms the focus of early settlement. It is hoped that if any structure originally linked the 11th century phases of the church nave to the east and the deanery to the west, this excavation will stand a fair chance of uncovering it. The ground is, predictably, much disturbed, but the finds are just beginning to appear interesting, with in situ skeletons emerging at a metre below ground level. A mixture of pottery including some late Saxon (with one sherd stamped with a rosette) was unearthed during the most recent session of digging.

Faringdon District History and Archaeological Society

Faringdon: Field-walking

Early in 1982 we completed a field map of Faringdon Parish, collecting field names from the Tithe Map and from local

farmers. This stimulated us to start fieldwalking later that year. Some farmers were quite interested in the historical and archaeological aspects of their farms. Work was concentrated mainly on Sunday afternoons from March-May and September-December. It seemed like a drop in the ocean and that it would take at least 20 years! In six years we have not covered anything like a quarter of the parish, but have found a number of early occupation sites with many hundreds of pottery sherds and flints. From the beginning we kept a record of the fields walked, what was found etc. and found it useful to make a note of weather conditions. We have currently stopped fieldwalking whilst the many bags of pottery sherds are identified and catalogued.

Two Roman sites were found, very different in character from each other. The first site was on Highden Farm, near Faringdon, revealed by pottery in the car park of a cross country event. After an initial rapid field walk the majority of the site was gridded in 10m squares and fieldwalking finds systematically logged. Unfortunately we were unable to finish 'gridding' the whole area before it was ploughed. When this happened all the pottery disappeared, so when it comes up again we hope to have another go.

The second Roman site was discovered on Camden Farm just on the south edge of the floodplain of the river Thames, quite close to Radcot Bridge. We had walked the field a couple of years before as a grass field and noted platforms of possible buildings, but it was the recovery of Roman pottery by the farmer during the insertion of land drains that confirmed the Roman occupation. However one platform was excavated and shown to be post-medieval (OAU Newsletter Vol. XIV, no. 3). Medieval occupation has been discovered closer to the river.

Future work in Faringdon Parish is hoped to include a survey of the ridge and furrow which is still quite noticeable in many fields. This will hopefully show the extent of Faringdon's North and West fields.

Several isolated features have already been recorded including a pillow mound (artificial rabbit warren) and a medieval or early post-medieval fish pond system both of which were surveyed before their destruction.

Sutton Courtenay: A Neolithic Long Enclosure
- Alison Gledhill and Jeff Wallis
(Centred SU 492 947)

With permission from a very helpful farmer, Mr Bob Allen of Sutton Courtenay, the Abingdon and Area Archaeological and Historical Society were allowed to place trenches across a Neolithic long enclosure. The enclosure ditches are about 20m apart and the enclosure runs parallel to the Drayton cursus. A large ovoid possibly contemporary enclosure lies some 15m to the south. 'Excavations on the Cursus at Drayton,' Oxon, R Ainslie, J Wallis, *Oxoniensia* LII (1987), fig 2).

The east of the linear Neolithic enclosure was sectioned by a hand dug trench which ran from the centre of the feature eastwards to the edge of the field. Originally with almost vertical sides and a flattish base, the ditch sides had eroded and collapsed forming a thick layer of primary silt and gravel. Turf clods then fell in, followed by a period of stabilisation. Later silt layers incorporated struck flint including a microlith. The ditch was two thirds full of silt by the early Bronze Age, as a sherd of pottery located in one of a series of smaller trenches across the ditch suggests.

The monument appears to have been carefully placed along the top of the gently sloping edge of the first gravel terrace. If it had an internal bank (no evidence in section) it would have appeared as an impressive long mound. Roman and Medieval alluviation later buried the monument beneath a new flat ground surface.

No internal features were located during the excavation although modern ploughing has removed any trace of early land surfaces. The function of this monument is still unknown as is its relationship to the cursus. Further excavation is planned to discover how the monument relates to the large oval enclosure to the south and to examine the square terminals and trackway.

MARY KIFT, MARION FALLOWFIELD AND PATRICIA PREECE

In Search of Applehanger

While working on a parish survey of South Stoke for the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group the name 'Applehanger' appeared time and again in the medieval period. The name seemed to be that of a manor in the Woodcote-Goring region but just where was not clear. Determined to attempt to discover its possible position many hours were spent studying relevant passages in the Goring and Eynsham cartularies and other documents besides walking the area and looking at appropriate maps.

Applehanger was a small manor, partly in South Stoke and partly in Goring. Although an area of it was in South Stoke its affinities appear to be with Elvendon which is in Goring. It was in the jurisdiction of Elvendon manor court and some of the clues came from the Elvendon court rolls.

A brief description of the ownership of the manor may be helpful. Applehanger originally appeared in 1181 when the Priory of Goring was given land from the King by a gift of Thomas de Druival "--- and five acres near to Appelhangre". (1) Thomas de Druival must have owned Applehangre because in 1205 he granted it to Hugh de Bixa. (2) After this the picture becomes confused; Matilda, the widow of Hugh, claimed the manor as a dower in 1224, however there seems to have been some problem. The Abbot of Oseney was involved and was said to have recognised that it was the inheritance of Emma Brande, wife of Robert Brande, who

was the warrant of the dower. Matilda paid 100 marks to the Abbot of Oseney and obtained the manor. (3)

Emma Brande had the manor on the death of Matilda and it seems possible that Emma and Matilda were related - even mother and daughter? This seems probable because after Emma's death, Applehanger was held in 1300 by her daughter Matilda Brande (4) who might have been named after her grandmother.

In 1347 William Loveday held the manor (5) - though no reference could be found as to how he acquired it. His brother John held the adjacent manor of Elvendon and Applehanger was represented at the manor court there. On William's death the manor was divided between his two daughters, Eleanor and Joan. Eleanor married John Soundy and when he died she married John atte Beche and had a son William; Joan married John Tyrel. Their rights in the estate were laid out in a document dated 1358-9. (6) About the same time, Joan leased her share to the manor to Thomas Brounz and shortly afterwards William atte Beche (after the death of his mother?) did the same. It seems that it is possible that it remained in the Beche family for one or two generations after this but there is no documentary proof.

The division of the manor provides the clue to the extent of the manor. The division was as follows:-

Eleanor atte Beche	Joan Soundy
Dovecote	Longfelde
Hayfield	Woodscrofte
Applehanger Park	Bykkefeld
Parkfeld	Stokkyng
Philippeslith	Wellegrove
Ruggecroft	
Barrecroft	
Ruycroft (also called Raycroft)	

Some of these places cannot be found on any available map but those that can, or can be traced in any other way, give a clue to establishing the content of Applehanger manor. There will be references to 'shaws': these in Oxfordshire are strips of woodland left after clearance of woodland that act as field boundaries. The names that can be traced are as follows:-

- 1 *Hayfeld* - can be assumed to be enclosed by Hayfield shaws as marked on the 6 inch OS map.
- 2 *Applehanger Park* - can be equated with Elmorepark Wood, for in 1358 it belonged to Eleanor Beche and was 'Eleanors park' because in the 1409 Elvendon court roll the name is written as 'Elynore Parke' (8); in 1672 it is found as

'Elnar Park' (9) this must have altered over the centuries to Elmorepark. The size was 76 acres - deer parks in the Chilterns tended to be small, mostly below 200 acres. On the northern edge of the wood there is a substantial bank which is approximately 1 1/2 metres high and 3-4 metres wide; this must have been part of the park pale. There are other banks, as marked on the map, but they are not so large.

3 *Parkfeld* - in the area west of Elmorepark wood the tithe award map of Goring (10) shows 'Elmore Park shaws', these surround an arable field which might have been 'Parkfeld'.

4 On the east of Elmorepark wood is found Ruscroft Wood. There are banks surrounding an area which was probably shaws around a field; the erstwhile field has now become woodland but was probably *Ruycroft* - assarted at an early date.

5 *Barrecroft* - must have been on the Bar Way¹¹ which is now the South Stoke road. William de la Barre was granted land in South Stoke circa 1264-68. (12) Could Broad Street farm have once been Barrecroft?

6 From a charter of 1285 it seems possible that part of High Wood was called *Phelippesgrof* (13) and therefore

Philippeslith was in that vicinity. As High Wood has no wood bank on the eastern side it is probable that Philippeslith lay to the east of the wood and that the wood was considerably smaller at that time, as were so many of the woods due to the land hunger of the late 13th and early 14th centuries.

7 *Woodscrofte* is now Woodcroft Wood.

8 *Wellegrove* must have been a wood as its name implies and Wellground Shaw on the OS map would seem to be in the right area.

9 *Longfelde* - is probably the field called Longclose on the Tithe Award map of South Stoke. (14)

Somewhere within the manor there must have been the manor house (with its dovecote) and Beech farm seems to be the most likely site. The transition from Beche to Beech is obvious. The present farmhouse apparently, has a very old part and there was a tradition in Woodcote that Beech farm was Applehanger.

PROBABLE EXTENT OF APPLEHANGER MANOR

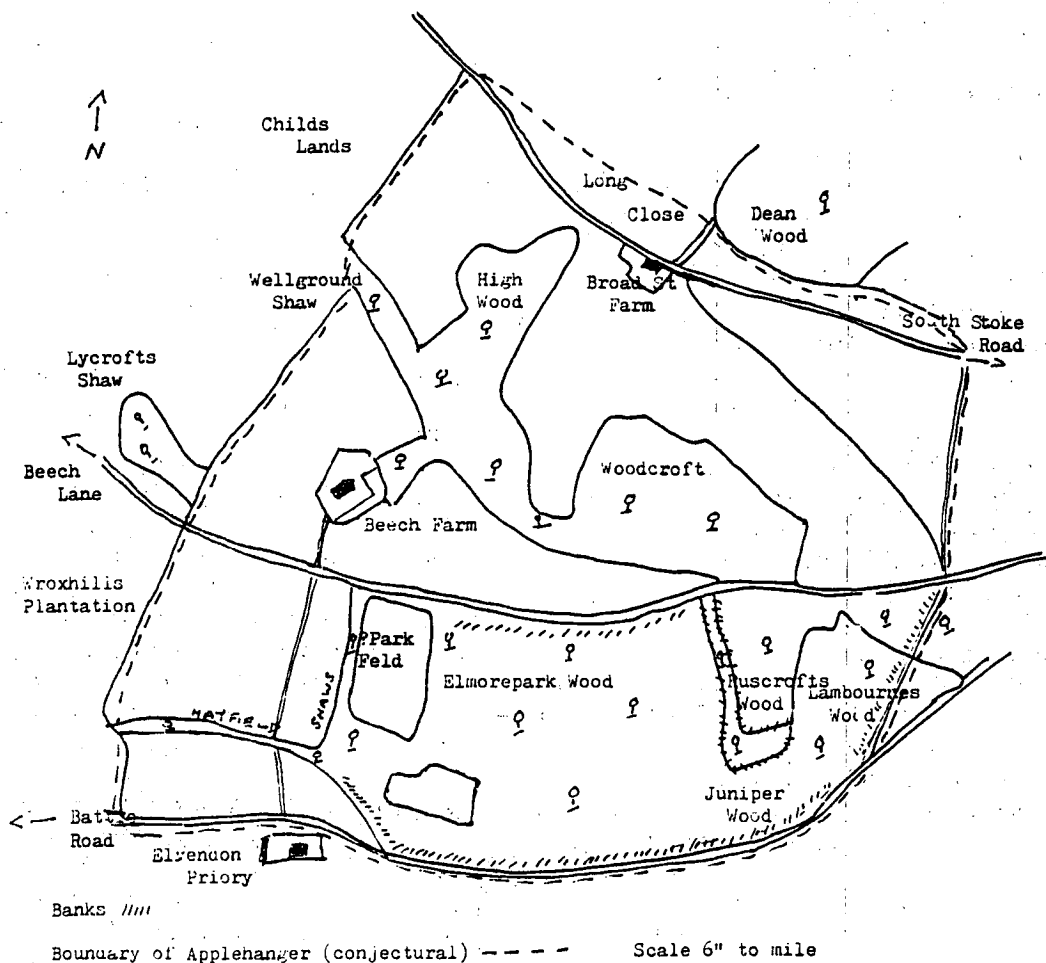


Fig. 1

Finally to establish the extent of the manor it was necessary to look for surrounding areas that could be excluded and therefore the possible borders were followed round.

On the west Wroxhills Wood and Plantation was part of land probably held by the Wroxhale family from an early period (15) and therefore can be excluded from Applehanger. Travelling clockwise from Wroxhills on the map, Lycroft shaw is reached which can be equated with Leycroft which was held by the de Purve family (16) in the 14th century. Lycroft shaw therefore cannot be part of Applehanger. Next is Childs Lands which are found on the Tithe Award map for Goring (17) and belonged from early medieval times to Eynsham Abbey. The land was leased by the Abbey to a family called Passelewe from the 13th century onwards. (18) This sets it apart from Applehanger.

The eastern boundary of Applehanger is conjectural but it may be that the double banks bounding the track though Lambournes Wood may have formed part of it. There is a path from this towards Beech Lane which may be a continuation of the edge of the manor. The remainder of the eastern boundary cannot be established. The southern edge is clearly delineated by the Battle road which forms the northern boundary of Elvendon manor. There is a bank running parallel with the road which as well as forming the park pale may also have been a boundary bank of Applehanger. An interesting survival is the track which must have been the connection between the two manors, running southwards from Beech farm to what is now called Elvendon Priory although it was only a grange of Goring Priory. Elvendon Court was held there and Applehanger's affairs were handled at it so a road connection must have been essential.

It is believed that after the atte Beches the manor passed to the Lovedays of Elvendon, who held it from the Priory, and lost its identity. The last reference found is in 1526 in the Elvendon Court rolls where the 'Beche lands' are described as 'alias Appulhanger'. (19)

References

- 1 T.R. Gambier Parry ed Goring Charters Oxford Record Society 1931 p:1.
- 2 Ibid p: LVI.
- 3 H.E. Salter ed The Feet of Fines for Oxfordshire, O.R.S. 1930 p:70.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Goring Charters p:173
- 6 Ibid p:122
- 7 Ibid p:123

8 Elvendon Court Rolls PL XIX a6 Oxford Record Office.

9 Ibid PL 14.

10 Tithe Award map of Goring 1853 Oxford Record Office.

11 Pre enclosure map of South Stoke 1818 Oxford Record Office.

12 H.E. Salter ed Eynsham Cartulary Oxford Historical Society 1908 Vol:I p:232.

13 Goring Charters p:149

14 Tithe Award map South Stoke.

15 Goring Charters p:149

16 Ibid p:77

17 Tithe Award Goring.

18 Rotuli Hundredorum South Stoke (Stoke Abbas) 1279 Record Commissioners 1812 p:750

19 Elvendon Court Rolls Ibid a18.

F J MALPES

A Roman Road - East Hanney to Brightwell

In the central part of southern Oxfordshire two Roman roads run roughly parallel to each other, from Frilford to Wantage (Margary's 164) and from Dorchester to Silchester (Margary's 160). Both run approximately N-S; a W-E road connecting them seems reasonable.

The search for the line of this Roman road must start from the Mere Dike, a straight ditch forming the parish boundary between Drayton and Steventon for 2.3km from SU45709325 to SU48009275. This is an unmistakably Roman feature, first mentioned in 958. Maps of Berkshire by Rocque (1761) and Cary (1891) show a road still running along its northern side.

From its western end the Roman road alignment swings about 15° to the south and heads for East Hanney, on the road north of Wantage. For the last 1.8km into East Hanney the alignment is preserved by the modern road, which (like the road north from Wantage) is raised 30-60cm above the neighbouring fields. This height is evidence for the Roman origin of this stretch of the modern road, for it is not present east of the bend at SU43809315, where the modern road leaves the Roman line. There was a Roman building 22m north of this road bend; pottery and other material have also been found. The road is aligned from East Hanney via the west end of the Mere Dike on to Dorchester.

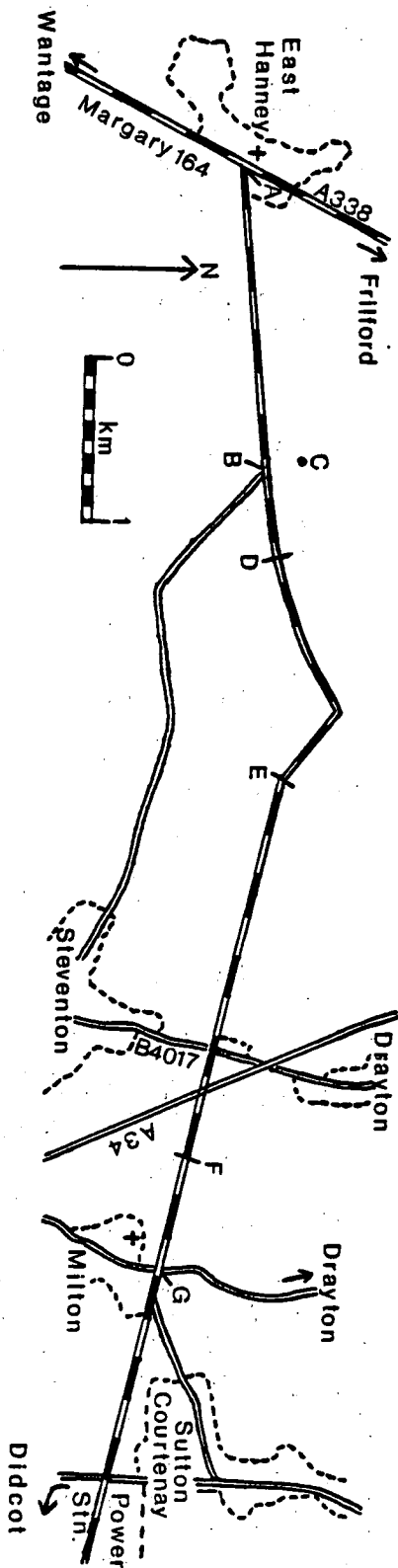


Fig 1 East Hanney to Didcot
A-B: Modern road on Roman line
C: Roman building
D-E: Parish boundary
E-F: Mere Dike
F-G: Field boundaries

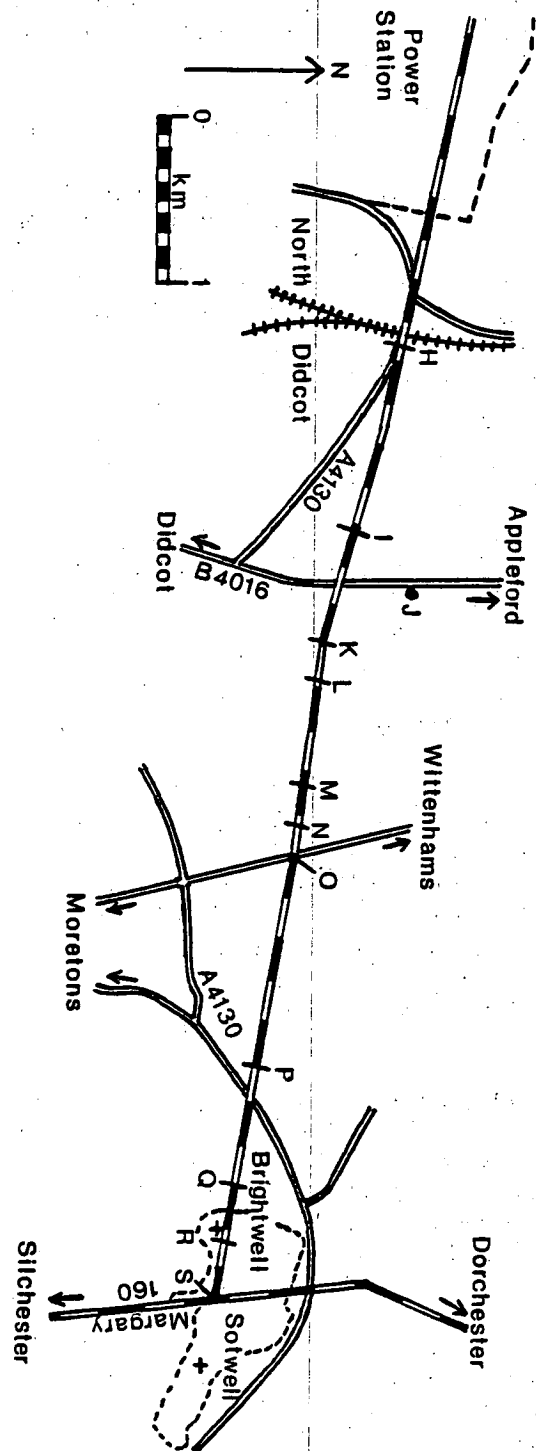


Fig 2 Didcot to Brightwell
H-K: Parish boundary
I: Ladygrove Farm
J: Possible villa
L: Swelling across N-S track
M, N: Barns
O: Swelling across road
P-Q: Hedge, modern road, former hedge
R-S: Village street

From the west end of the Mere Dike the straight parish boundary and the Roman road line swing north west for 600m, then south west to head across open country towards the bend in the modern road. This diversion from the straight alignment can be explained by the area of Kimmeridge Clay across the direct line, still damp today. The modern road, similarly, goes to the south of this damp area.

The Mere Dike is aligned eastwards directly at the junction at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell of the road the dike represents with the Roman road running southwards from Dorchester. This alignment is maintained in typical fashion by straight stretches of road line changing direction occasionally by a few degrees.

The first 700m from the east end of the Mere Dike are shown by field boundaries north of Milton Manor, there by 1771. The field boundaries swing up to 50m north from the straight line; this could be in response to a patch of wet ground represented now by a small pond at SU48329270, or it could be a result of medieval ploughing, still showing as ridge-and-furrow, pushing the boundaries gradually out.

Nothing can be seen in the freshly ploughed fields to the east, where a footpath crosses the Roman line at SU49379245, though there is a kink in the path at this point, and a Roman cemetery has been found 300m south of the road line, and just outside the power station there are enclosures and fieldways 400m north of the line.

The road line is preserved next by 1.8km of straight boundary between long Wittenham and Didcot parishes, from SU543914; Ladygrove Farm stands also on this line, for old buildings often take advantage of the firm foundation offered by Roman road metalling. There is a possible villa 450m north of this stretch, at SU540919. At SU55539118 there is a swelling across the North Moreton - Long Wittenham road where the Roman road crosses it.

The Roman line is shown next by 100m of hedge to the west of the A4130 at SU569909, then by the modern road past Island Farm, west of Brightwell (now a cul-de-sac, but the main road before the by-pass was built). The line continues towards the churchyard, with the swelling of the first 250m of agger or former field boundary clearly visible in November under winter corn; south of here (at SU576906?) a hoard of coins was found in 1759. From the churchyard the line is preserved by the main street of Brightwell to its junction with Mackney Lane (and the Roman N-S road) at SU58209075. There have been many finds of Roman material in this area.

Eastwards from Brightwell there are indications of a possible continuation of the road to cross the Thames at Wallingford and to climb past Coldharbour Farm to the Icknield Way. Westwards from East Hanney the road could follow the Vale of the White Horse, cross the Ock at Sandford, and meet Ermin Street (the Silchester - Cirencester road) at Wanborough (Durocornovium), where the road from Mildenhall (Cunetio) also comes in. No fieldwork has been done, however, on this possible westward continuation.