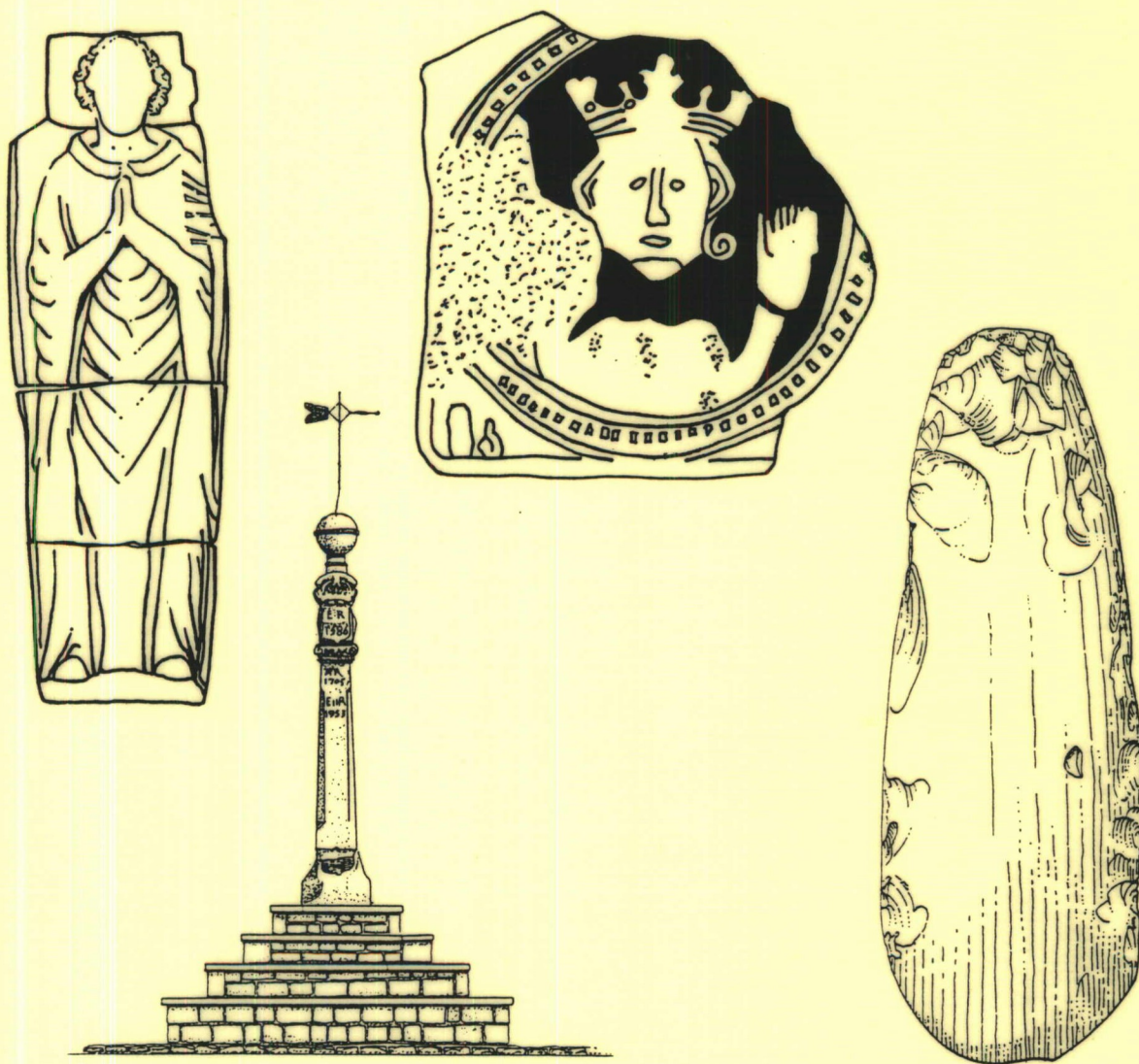




SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

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

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SPRING CONFERENCE 1993

CBA South Midland Groups Conference was held this year at Leighton Buzzard on the theme of professional and amateur archaeologists. A summary of the various papers is given below.

Peter Jarvis, Bletchley Park Trust: Recent Developments at Bletchley Park

Peter Jarvis' illustrated talk covered both the history of Bletchley Park's role in World War II and the efforts of the Trust to preserve and interpret as much of the site as possible. The buildings which grew up around Leon's Mansion became, in Winston Churchill's words, 'His little goose that laid the golden eggs'. Here the first electric computers (Colossus) were built. The captured Enigma machine helped to decode secret German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese messages. One building housed an extensive card index about enemy military personnel. Operation Overlord was planned at Bletchley Park and, latterly, the CAA ran a school for training air traffic controllers.

Bletchley Park Trust are now making determined efforts to preserve and use the remaining structures of this unique site and have proposed museums of Radar, Telecommunications and Air Traffic Control.

Tom Hassall, Secretary, RCHM (England): Archaeology, amateur and professional

At the 1943 meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, a call was made for the organisation of post-war archaeology and for making aerial photographs available for study. The CBA was established in 1944.

The CBA Group 9 Region rescue and research excavations were organised by Oxford University Archaeology Society, the Ashmolean and County and local societies. Amateur labour was an integral part of this activity.

Urban reconstruction in the 1960s and 1970s meant that there was a desperate need for wide ranging archaeological information. In 1965 the Sites and Monuments Record was established at Oxford City and County Museum, followed by Bucks County Museum, Bedford County Council and Northants. Archaeology became an integral part of the planning process.

Continuing amateur involvement was encouraged by Oxford University Extra-Mural Department, the Middleton Stoney training excavation, investigation along the line of the M40 and by evening classes. The 1970s saw a growth of local societies in Oxfordshire, some becoming members of CBA. The Oxford Archaeological Unit, established in 1974, relied increasingly on paid labour and the funding of the Manpower Services Commission.

There is still scope for lone amateurs, providing they feed information into professional records. An ethos of

preservation is now developing and Tom Hassall sees the CBA as the 'glue' for all the archaeological amateurs, in the true sense of the word, and as a body to heighten public awareness of current planning issues by education and publicity.

He outlined CBA's activities:

Education (Schools Committee and Young Archaeologists Club).

Influences funding of aerial photography.

Archaeological Science Committee.

Churches Committee.

Countryside Committee.

Historic Buildings Committee.

Implement Petrology Committee.

Industrial Archaeology Committee.

Nautical Archaeology.

Urban Archaeology; its seminal work being 'The Erosion of History'.

David Miles, Director, Oxford Archaeological Unit: Archaeology: The loss of Innocence

It is important that archaeology does not become a matter of purely professional concern. A virtue of British archaeology is its tradition of amateurism, although this can tend to encourage parochialism. The OAU takes a 'missionary' approach and gives advice to local bodies and undertakes educational work. With the advent of project funding and the appearance of commercial bodies after the American model, it is felt that the same standard of service will not be provided to local amateurs.

Developers are now free to go to any archaeological contractor and therefore links with local groups will be undermined. In some places the use of local amateurs has been expressly forbidden on contract evaluations. Also, the Institute of Field Archaeologists tends to preclude diggers if they are not members.

The OAU hopes that local amateurs will liaise through their relevant County Archaeologists, because of the tight time limits imposed by contracts.

The CBA does not want these trends in professional archaeology to lead to aggravation and deterioration of relations between professionals and amateurs.

Andrew Pike, Buckinghamshire County Museum

Although Sites and Monuments Records really began with Don Benson's work at Oxford in the 1960s, their origins can be traced at least as far back as the 1920s when O.G.S. Crawford was appointed Archaeology Officer with the Ordnance Survey. He devised a system of "County Correspondents" whereby local museum curators, local societies and individuals were asked to mark new

archaeological discoveries onto six-inch maps. These marked-up maps were returned to the Ordnance Survey in Southampton and other sets sent back. Thus the basis of the National Archaeological record was born.

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 first implanted the concept of protection of the historic environment and in due course the idea of a locally held register or inventory of sites and finds evolved. In 1965, Don Benson established the first Sites and Monuments Record at the Oxford City and County Museum, Woodstock. Other Counties were soon to follow Oxfordshire's example. In the 1970s the Department of the Environment funded several posts in England with the express purpose of establishing and developing Sites and Monuments Records. By the early 1980s practically every county in England and Wales and most regions in Scotland had an SMR, looked after by a full-time SMR Officer.

The 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act provided more protection for archaeological sites, especially scheduled ones. Certainly from the early 1980s archaeology has been gradually featuring more prominently in the planning process, culminating in the DoE's Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning PPG 16), November 1990.

Whilst SMRs remain primarily a planning tool, they also offer an important service to the researcher, the members of local societies and to the amateur archaeologist carrying out fieldwork in his area. They do not pretend to represent the last word on the archaeology of a county or district but they do provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive picture for the area they cover.

David Warren, Manshead Archaeological Society

Two sites in Dunstable were excavated, using mostly labour from a local school. The Priory church site revealed a series of ditches, banks and tracks from the Iron Age to medieval periods.

At 2, Priory Road, limited trenching in advance of building a private garage revealed a series of inhumations, including a twelfth century "ear muff" burial of a child. There were also hints of a neighbouring Bronze Age burial. The question of the safety of the diggers was raised from the floor.

Peter MacRae, Upper Nene Archaeological Society: Excavations at Piddington Villa

Fifteen years of amateur digging have uncovered a sequence from a late Iron Age circular hut and ditches to an early postconquest earthwork and a 'cottage' to a winged-corridor type of villa, which developed throughout the Roman period. The richness of finds was illustrated and the question posed: would such a long term professional excavation be possible today?

Stan Cauvain, Chess Valley Archaeological & Historical Society: Recent Work of the CVAHS

The Latimer Villa excavation was the impetus for founding the CVAHS. The activity of such a society is beneficial both to local people and to wider archaeological knowledge.

Much field work has greatly improved knowledge of sites in the Chess Valley. Since the 1980s, however, there has been less opportunity for independent archaeologists to be involved with archaeological projects. Mr. Cauvain suggested that amateurs should be used in project orientated work such as CVAHS's study of the Tylers Green-Penn area, which has pin-pointed kiln sites and taken the start of the industry back to the thirteenth century.

Isobel Lisboa, North Bucks Archaeological Society: North Bucks Survey

The NBS's field walking strategy for finding sites was described. An area north of Milton Keynes has been divided into 0.5 x 0.2 kilometre grids and sampled under different conditions. The same sites have produced different places on successive sampling. This availability of long-term labour for field-walking parallels that of long-term excavation.

Linda Babb
Buckinghamshire County Museum

BEDFORDSHIRE

COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE WORK OF THE CONSERVATION & ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION 1992

Introduction - David Baker

The recession has affected some of the Section's volumes of work. Demand on the specialist advisory service to District Planning Officers on applications concerning listed buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeological sites was down slightly, with 860 applications seen in 1992-93 compared with 1034 in the previous year, and 9 appeals as against 23. But consultations of the HER (SMR) were at a new record of 176, and the tempo of fieldwork projects has continued as high as ever.

During the year, Angela Simco was replaced as planning archaeologist by Martin Oake from Hampshire, and Sue Hedley as Archaeological Assistant by Chris Colley from North Hertfordshire. Royston Clark (Senior Field Officer) and Terry Jackman (Assistant Field Officer) have also left. A slight reorganisation has taken place within the Section, to separate the (renamed) Historic Environment Record from the archaeological planning function, and refocus it as a central source of information for all aspects of the Section's work, including listed buildings which it has held from the outset. Stephen Coleman is now in charge of it.

93 talks and lectures were given by various members of the Section during 1992-93.

Two Conservation advisory leaflets were published, on Doors and Windows and on Satellite Dishes and Aerials. Town Schemes have continued in Bedford and Shefford.

A Buildings at Risk survey has continued with funding from English Heritage and some local authorities. Preliminary results suggest Bedfordshire's problems are at a level similar to the national percentage of about 5%.

Historic Environment Record Stephen Coleman

During the latter part of the year the Sites, Monuments and Buildings Record was renamed the Historic Environment Record (HER) to better reflect its broad content and wide ranging use as a resource for countryside management, land use planning, education, research and for general interest.

Earlier in the year the transfer of computerised information to a dBase IV database was completed. It is hoped to attract RCHME support for the continuing development of the computerised Record.

One major block of new information which the Record has begun to accession relates to war memorials throughout the county. This is a result of the nationwide Imperial War Museum/RCHME project for recording war memorials which is being conducted in Bedfordshire by volunteers.

Inquiries to the Record have again increased: some 173 during 1992. About a third came from the general public but the numbers from consultants and from students, schools and colleges have shown a particular increase. There is also a growing demand from the latter for contributions to courses and resource packages integrating the historic environment with the natural environment and land management. The provision of talks, walks and interpretative information remains popular, including contributions to the programme of events provided by the Leisure Services Department each year.

One of the most extensive uses of the Record was by researchers working on a University of Birmingham research project concerning "English Settlements and Landscapes in the Middle Ages". Supported by the Leverhulme Trust it is focussing on Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire: besides detailed analysis and interpretation of the settlement in these counties the intention is to propose further research projects based on the results

Countryside enhancement schemes supported by the County Council and other bodies continue to incorporate an archaeological and historical dimension with information from the HER. A significant contribution was made to a Hedgerows Project coordinated by the Trees and Woodland Section: the information pack produced included details of the historical development and significance of hedgerows as well as information on the management and wildlife interest of surviving hedgerows and the creation of new ones (pack still available - £1-50). The Countryside Commission have since launched their own Hedgerow Incentive Scheme. There has also been involvement with the Countryside Commission in selecting key areas for inclusion in their Countryside Stewardship scheme, now extended to include Historic Landscapes.

Historic landscape analyses continue to be provided for farm plans and a significant contribution was made to the strategy document for the Luton and Dunstable Countryside Project. Considerable assistance has also been given to the Marston Vale Community Forest Project, both in providing advice and information to Project staff and the Woodland Trust on historic landscape assessment and archaeological constraints, and in providing various consultants with access to the Historic Environment Record and assistance with associated historic landscape material when drawing up strategy documents for different sections of the Vale. Contributions to a farm walk for farmers in the Vale also proved popular.

Earthwork surveys were conducted on a portion of the shrunken medieval settlement at Millow, near Dunton, threatened by ploughing and at Church End, Biddenham.

As a result of the introduction of PPG 16 there has been an increasing demand on the Record to produce information contributing to Briefs, either for archaeological evaluation work prior to the determination of planning applications or for further work required as a condition of any permission.

Archaeological requirements and policies have also featured strongly in the preparation and drafting of a new Minerals and Waste Disposal Local Plan for the county which is now at the published consultation stage.

Proposed road schemes maintain a high profile in Bedfordshire. Those for which the Record has been an especially useful source, either to consultants or as a basis for in-house desk-top assessments include the Dunstable Bypass (A5), the Great Barford Bypass (A428), the Luton North Bypass and the proposals for widening the M1.

Archaeological Planning & Preservation

David Baker

1992 was a difficult year because the senior post undertaking this work was frozen between May and October. PPG16 also continued to make its impact felt with a steadily increasing number of applications requiring the preparation of briefs and/or specifications for field evaluation work.

The Historic Bridges Recording programme is continuing in parallel with the work of the County Engineer. During the year particular attention has been paid to the scheduled bridges at Harrold, Turvey, Tempsford and the Lockgate bridge at Broom. Angela Simco has continued with this work on a consultancy basis: preparation of papers on both the methodology and the results of the overall programme, now nearing its conclusion, are well advanced.

Archaeological Fieldwork - St Mary's Church Archaeology Centre

Stratton Deserted Medieval Village (TL 205 438, HER 518)

Drew Shotliff

September 1992 saw the completion of the fieldwork phase of an investigation of the deserted medieval settlement of Stratton. The background to this large scale rescue excavation and the initial results have been described in the two previous issues of *SMA*. The work is being jointly funded by English Heritage and Bedfordshire County Council.

A further 1.6 hectares of the site have been examined in detail, bringing the total excavated area to approximately 6 hectares. A watching brief was also maintained during topsoil stripping of a further 2.2 hectares. Subsequent phases of the development are still expected to release up to 5 more hectares of the medieval settlement for excavation.

The most recent excavation work has tended to confirm the 10th- 14th century date range. However, the middle Saxon component of the settlement has been highlighted by the discovery of a small but complete "final phase" cemetery. Eleven inhumations were recovered. This represents the second cemetery found within the area of settlement.

The western side of the settlement, where boundaries were fenced, can now be contrasted to the eastern side, where ditched enclosures were more common. This may be the result of functional or temporal variation between the different parts of the settlement. The less substantial nature of the post-built structures and the absence of extensive groups of pits may be an indication of non-domestic activity. The western limit of the settlement also appears to be defined by a series of regularly spaced wells.

Approximately half of the more northerly, ploughed out moated site was examined. No structural remains survived on the platform. The moat itself had been re-dug several times but finds from the original, basal fills suggested it was first in use during the 14th century.

A MAP2 assessment of the results of the excavation is now being prepared for English Heritage. This includes the digitisation, using Auto Cad, of the 1:20 site plans. It is intended to use the latter in conjunction with the finds and structural databases as a means of interpreting and presenting the site.

Further work within the immediate locality is also underway. The Society of Antiquaries have provided funding for a geophysical and fieldwalking survey along the eastern edge of the excavated area, where the limit of the settlement is not yet clearly defined. The fieldwalking is being undertaken with the assistance of members of the Biggleswade History Society, whom it is hoped will be able to undertake similar work on a broader scale in the future.

The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England have also offered to carry out a survey of the scheduled moated site and related earthworks, which still survive to the south of the excavated area.

Bedford

14 St Cuthberts Street

C Moore

Redevelopment of 14 St Cuthbert's St, Bedford for new offices allowed an opportunity for a watching brief on a street frontage site in a street on the eastern edge of the town's historic core north of the river. Considerable 19th century makeup was revealed and the remains of a disturbed and reinterred inhumation of probable medieval date.

10-12 St Cuthberts Street

A Thomas

The site, situated on the western side of St. Cuthberts Street and set back approximately 15 m from the street frontage, is currently in use as a car park and has a tarmac surface. Two trenches were opened by JCB in order to assess the nature and preservation of any underlying archaeological deposits, prior to the redevelopment of the site for offices. The trenches, situated at the edges of the site, in order to examine the footprint of the building foundation, were excavated over three days in November and December 1992 (Fig 1 & 2).

Trench 1 was north-south aligned, 5.70 m x 1.50 m, and in the south-west corner of the site. A layer of modern brick and tile rubble, 0.25 m - 0.40 m in depth, sealed a layer of dark brown, humus rich soil, 0.25 m - 0.50 m in depth. Both were removed by machine to reveal the base of wall, framing a probable doorway. The course of stones, on an east - west alignment, was approximately 1.20 m in width (0.40 m across the probable threshold), and 0.20 m in depth, with only two courses of stones surviving. The wall was constructed from angular blocks of limestone, ranging in size about 10 cm to 40 cm, with lime mortar bonding. No foundation cut was visible, with the base of the structure resting directly upon a mixed, unexcavated layer of yellow and grey brown silty and sandy clays. There was no floor surface associated with the structure, presumably having been destroyed during demolition. No return to the wall was found elsewhere in the trench; it is interpreted as the remnants of a north facing doorway for a post medieval building.

Trench 2, aligned east-west, was 7.10 m x 1.50 m, and situated in the north-west corner of the site. The same rubble, and humus rich soil layers as in trench 1 were found and removed by machine, varying in depth from 0.30 m to 0.40 m and 0.25 m to 0.45 m respectively, although the clarity of the horizon between the two was less distinct than in trench 1. The trench was machined to a depth of approximately 0.20m beneath these layers in order to clarify the underlying archaeological features, which consisted of a series of interrelated pits and layers. The latest of these was a steep to vertically sided pit, feature 7, of uncertain depth (not fully excavated), filled by a dark grey silt. This truncated a large pit, feature 9, of irregular profile and filled by a mid grey silt. This pit cut a layer of mid grey brown silt, approximately 0.20 m in depth sealing a stone surface, feature 20, consisting of irregularly placed, angular pieces of limestone varying in size from 2 cm to 10 cm, set into a dark grey brown silt matrix. This may have been the remnants of a floor or courtyard, or possibly the rubble foundation of a wall. This feature post-dated a pit of uncertain dimensions, feature 16, filled by a grey brown silt, above a secondary fill of dark grey silt containing frequent flecks of charcoal and some burnt bone. This sealed a basal fill of yellow brown sandy silt. This pit truncated feature 11, a probable pit of uncertain dimensions, filled by a dirty yellow clay above a grey brown silt, sealing a basal fill of

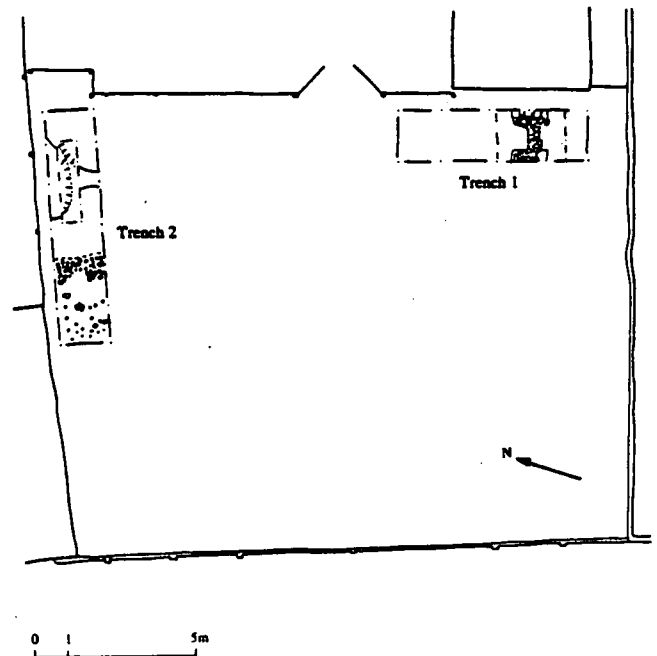
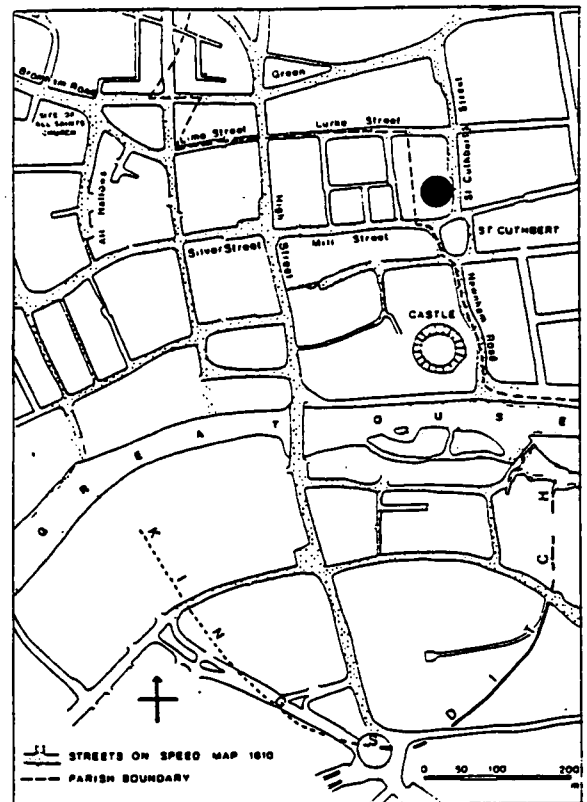
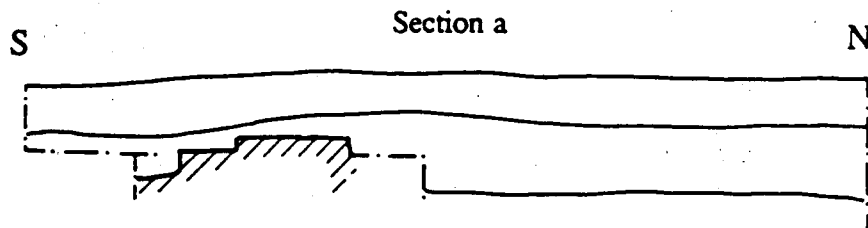
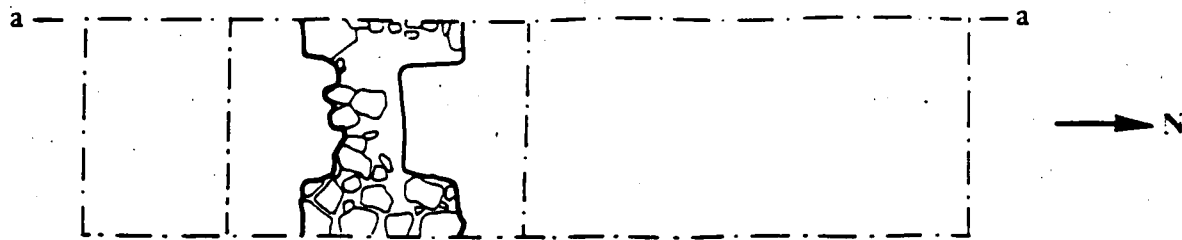


Fig 1. Location of excavations in St Cuthberts Street.

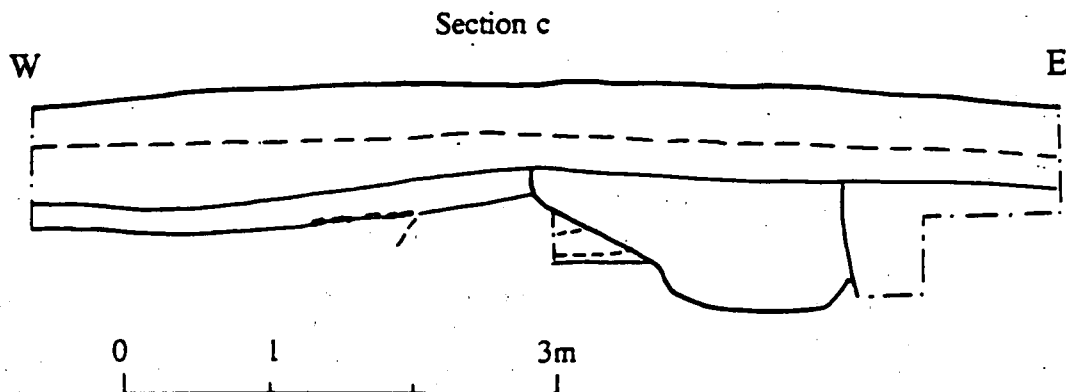
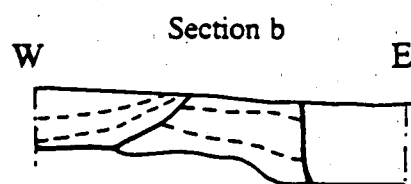
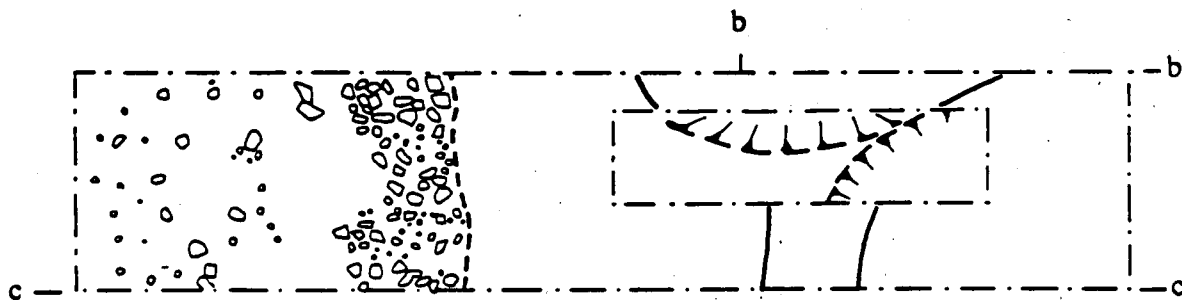
yellow brown sandy silt. This feature was cut into the natural Bedford brick earth.

Very little pottery was recovered from trench 1. The sealing layer 2 contained sherds of 14th - 15th century date and one fragment of post-medieval roof tile. However, the same layer seals an 18th century pit in trench 2, giving it a probable date of late 18th or 19th Century. A greater number of sherds was recovered from trench 2. These dated

Trench 1



Trench 2



0 1 3m

Fig 2. Trench plans of assessments at St Cuthberts Street.

the latest feature, 7, to the 18th Century. Directly below this stratigraphically, feature 9 has been dated to the 11th Century. The earliest feature on site, 16, contained 10th to 11th Century sherds in the middle, undisturbed fill, and a range of sherds in the upper fill including a large rim sherd of an 8th to 9th Century date, and two sherds of 10th to 11th Century in date. A small piece of 13th Century pottery was also recovered from this fill, but as a 10th to 11th Century date would be compatible with the features above, it seems likely that the presence of this sherd is due to contamination of the feature.

Conclusions.

Trench 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80 m, with archaeological features surviving at a depth of 0.45 m beneath the present ground surface. Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.55 m, with natural Bedford brick earth being encountered at a depth of 1.25 m. Archaeological features survived 0.60 m beneath the present ground surface.

The earliest datable features would appear to be of 10th - 11th century date with a possible stone structure and another pit of 11th century date. There was evidence for 18th century activity disturbing these deposits, with stone building foundations and a large pit surviving. The area appears to have been sealed by a thick layer of humified soil probably during the late 18th century or 19th century, possibly for use as a garden. This layer appears to be undisturbed and is sealed by a modern layer of rubble capped with tarmac. There is, therefore, strong evidence of relatively undisturbed medieval and post-medieval archaeological features in this area.

Arlesey Stotfold Bypass

M Dawson

Topographical survey, fieldwalking and geophysical survey along the route of the Arlesey Stotfold Bypass have clarified the extent of survival of one Roman site thought to have been entirely destroyed by housing in the 1960s. The site at **Stotfold** (TL 220361) was assessed by field walking and geophysical survey and is probably a Romano-British farmstead. (Fig 3)

In addition two further areas of possible archaeology were found, one at Etonbury School where the road line runs close to the location of a series of indeterminate cropmarks, the second at Etonbury earthwork where the remains of a medieval site lay close to the proposed route. During fieldwalking a polished stone axe was found on land adjacent to Waterloo Farm (fig 4).

Bedford Southern Bypass

M Dawson

The second phase of assessment of the route of the Bedford Southern Bypass has been completed for DTp (Fig 5).

Eastcotts (HER 1623) A widespread complex of drove ways and field boundaries as well as a single ring ditch have been recorded located across the landscape from the Elstow Brook to Cambridge Road. The linear triple ditch was observed to continue beyond the Cambridge Road Industrial Estate as far as the river Ouse and clearly appears to form a boundary line between the Elstow Brook and the river Ouse. The line of the bypass cuts the triple ditch at a point where the cropmarks are beginning to fade. Two ring ditches may form part of this cropmark complex but both are located north of the route.

The complex appeared to focus on the Octagon Farm area but it is clear from the evaluation of the Eastcotts site that the landscape unit extends at least as far as the gravel island under investigation. In particular the linear ditches appear to mark the boundary of an area which may be the ritual landscape identified by Clark. The recovery of three flint flakes in the ditches suggests there is some conflict regarding the date of these features particularly as a Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date is contrary to the present understanding of such boundaries in the area. Elements of Dray's Ditches seem to date to the late second millennium and other ditch systems in the Chilterns probably relate to territories associated with Iron Age hillforts on the Chiltern Ridge.

A second element entirely unexpected from the assessment was the discovery of the flexed or crouched inhumation. The time scale for the evaluation project is too short to include the results of the C14 date (British Museum), but examination of the accompanying flint suggests a late Neolithic date. Five flint objects were found as grave goods: a leaf shaped arrowhead; two bladelets; a cutting blade and a soft hammer flake. All these objects point to the Late Neolithic (*Holgate pers comm*). Nearby a pit was found containing a large quantity of flint: three scrapers possibly from the same nodule; a fragment of sickle or arrow head and many fragments of debitage including fire- fractured flakes; and crested flakes core rejuvenation material. Many were soft hammer flakes and probably came from four or five nodules. The cohesiveness of this assemblage suggests that the pit may be associated with the burial.

Harrowden (HER 3920) The earthwork remains of the deserted medieval village of Harrowden have been surveyed by the Bedfordshire County Council (fig 6 after Wood 1985 Bedfordshire Parish Surveys 3: *Cardington and Eastcotts*) and although damaged by road and railway building a large area remains intact. The recognition of an overall pattern of landscape development in the parish, derived from documentary research has served to raise questions regarding the origin of the settlement at Harrowden which was evidently an early focus of human activity. In the Domesday book it appears as 'Herghetone' or 'Hergentone', from the Anglo-Saxon 'hearg-dun'. The first element means a place of heathen worship with some form of sacred grove or shrine, while the second part refers to the slight rise in the ground here.' (Wood 1985 12)

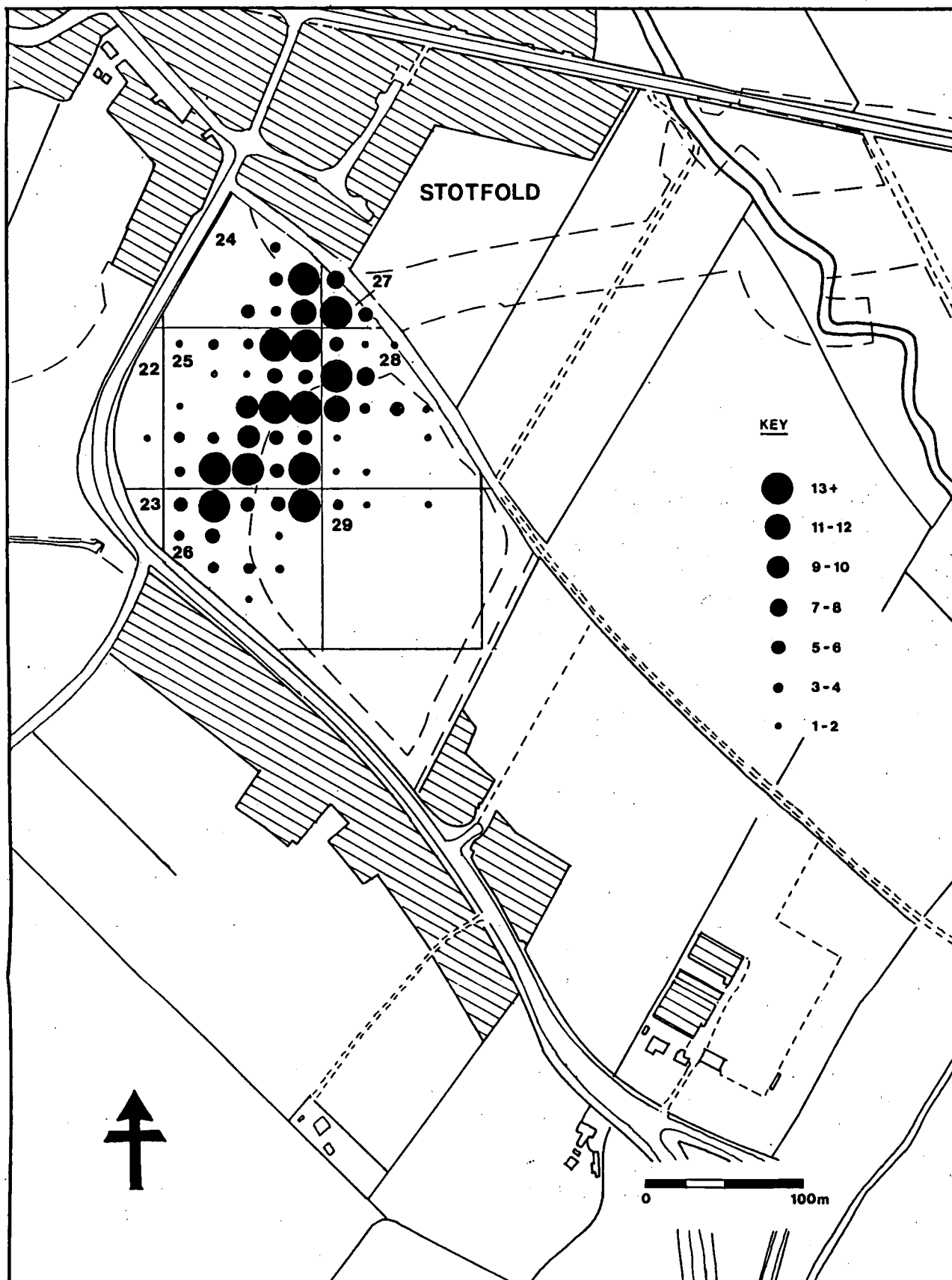


Fig 3. Fieldwalking at Stotfold.

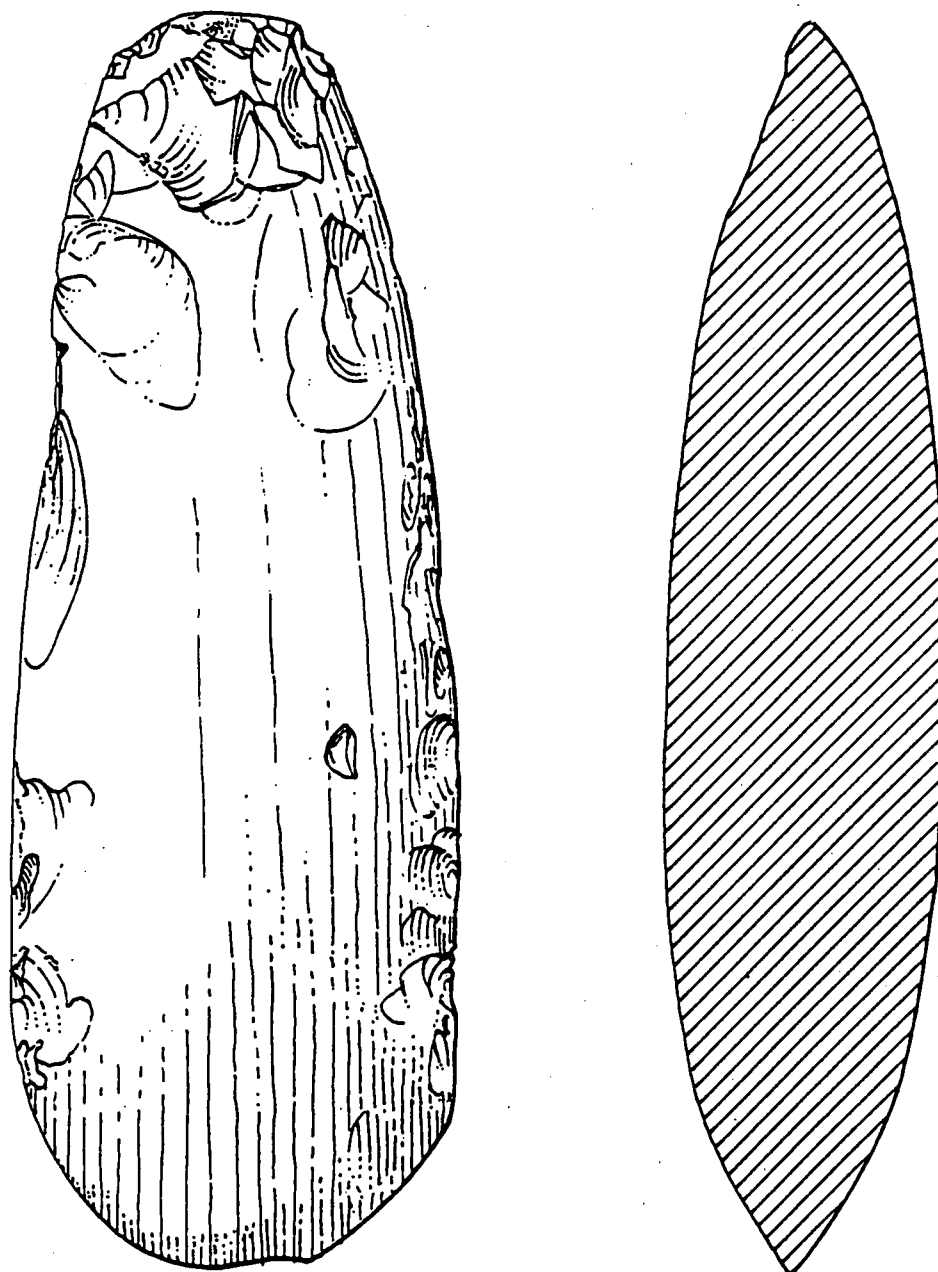


Fig 4. Polished axe from route of Arlesley - Stotfold bypass

Trial trenching in this area confirmed the identification of the site of the deserted medieval village and demonstrated the level of survival was good in areas where road and railway had not encroached. The absence of major plough erosion due to ridge and furrow or more recent ploughing suggests this site has been pasture for a considerable period.

Manor Farm. Cropmarks of rectilinear enclosures have been recorded close to the south bank of the Elstow Brook in an area reputedly close to Roman kilns. The cropmarks were not otherwise associated in the Historic Environment

Record with any artefact assemblages and are close to a single ring ditch. The cropmarks identified from aerial photographs suggest a series of enclosures which may focus on a small enclosure close to the Elstow Brook.

Fieldwalking in the area of the cropmarks produced a small amount of pottery from the surface. This comprised three groups, Romano-British, Saxon and medieval.

The medieval sherds came from three different vessels and are slightly abraded. They are unglazed, sandy wares which

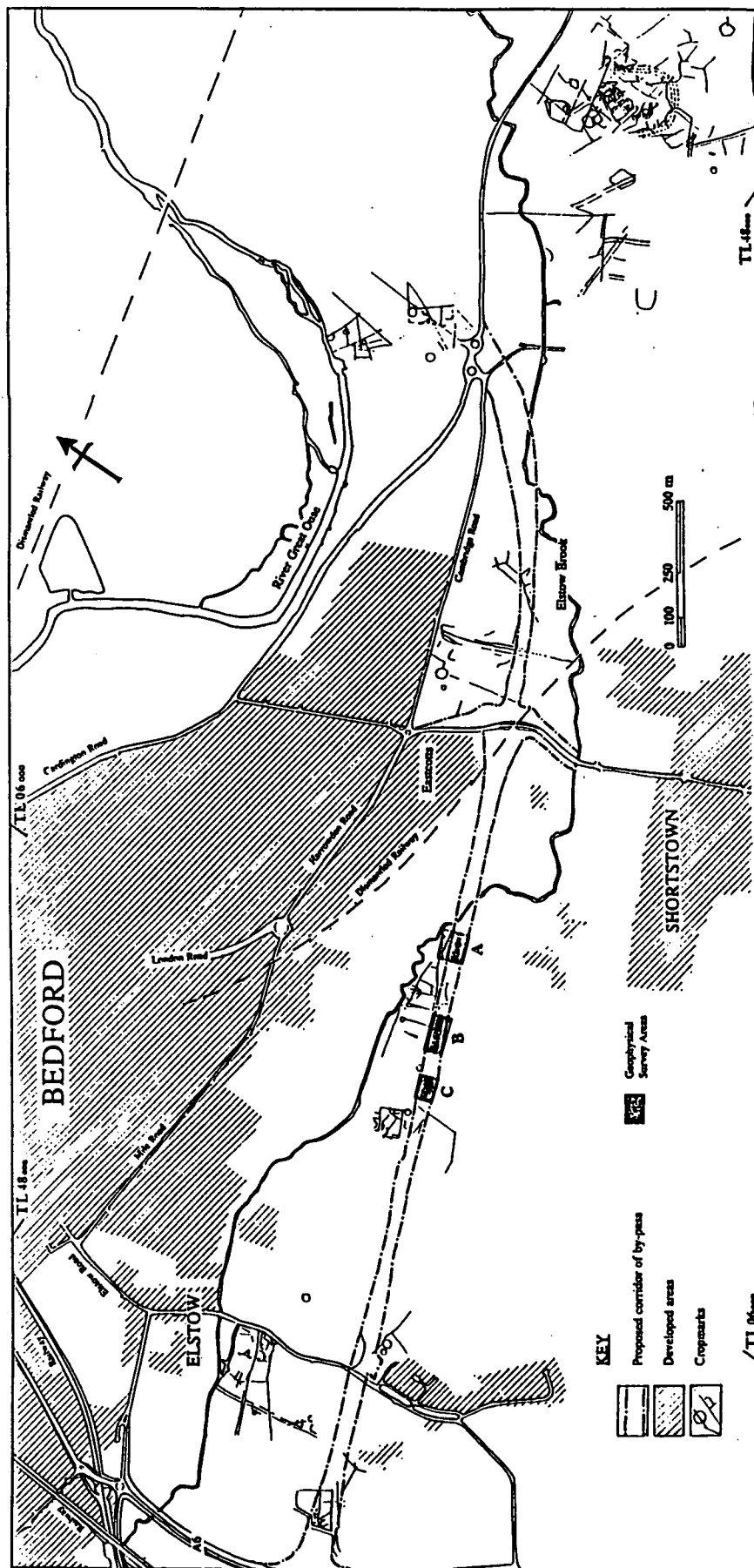


Fig 5. Bedford Southern Bypass showing cropmark sites.

probably date to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Further sherds of grey brown sandy wares could be Romano-British but are largely indistinguishable from 14th century fabrics.

The Anglo-Saxon group consists of one very abraded body sherd, a rim sherd and two unabraded sherds belonging to the same vessel. The fabric of all the vessels is dark grey throughout, hard fired with a fine sand temper. The form of the only recognisable vessel is a small hand made jar with an uneven, slightly everted rim. There is slight burnishing on the exterior and just within the interior. This jar has clean unabraded breaks and appears to have been recently disturbed from its archaeological context. The body sherd is from an upright rimmed vessel. The sherds are characteristic of the type A2 found in excavations in Bedford and dated to the early middle Saxon period (Excavations in Bedford 1967-1977, Baker & Hassall 1979 152). There are remnants of sooting on the exterior and a sooty deposit on the interior of the everted rimmed jar, a common feature on Anglo-Saxon pottery found on habitation sites.

The Romano-British pottery comprised a small assemblage including: a base sherd in a light-coloured grey ware, body sherds and a tile fragment in a shell-tempered fabric as well as a bead rim from an orange sandy jar; a rim from a wide mouthed jar in black sandy ware. The shelly tile and body sherds are probably of fourth century manufacture and may have been produced at Harrold.

The fieldwalking material was concentrated in the area north of the route of the bypass; fieldwalking on the route itself produced no finds. The evidence recovered during fieldwalking and the form of the cropmarks suggests a Romano-British settlement which may have continued in occupation into the Saxon period. However no evidence of kilns had been noted on the ground, nor from the aerial photographs. Three trenches and an area of geophysical survey were designed to test the spatial extent of survival of the remains so far identified by aerial photography and enhanced by fieldwalking evidence.

Peartree Farm (HER 1625) Aerial photographs indicate the presence of an enclosure complex which includes a droveway and a large enclosure subdivided

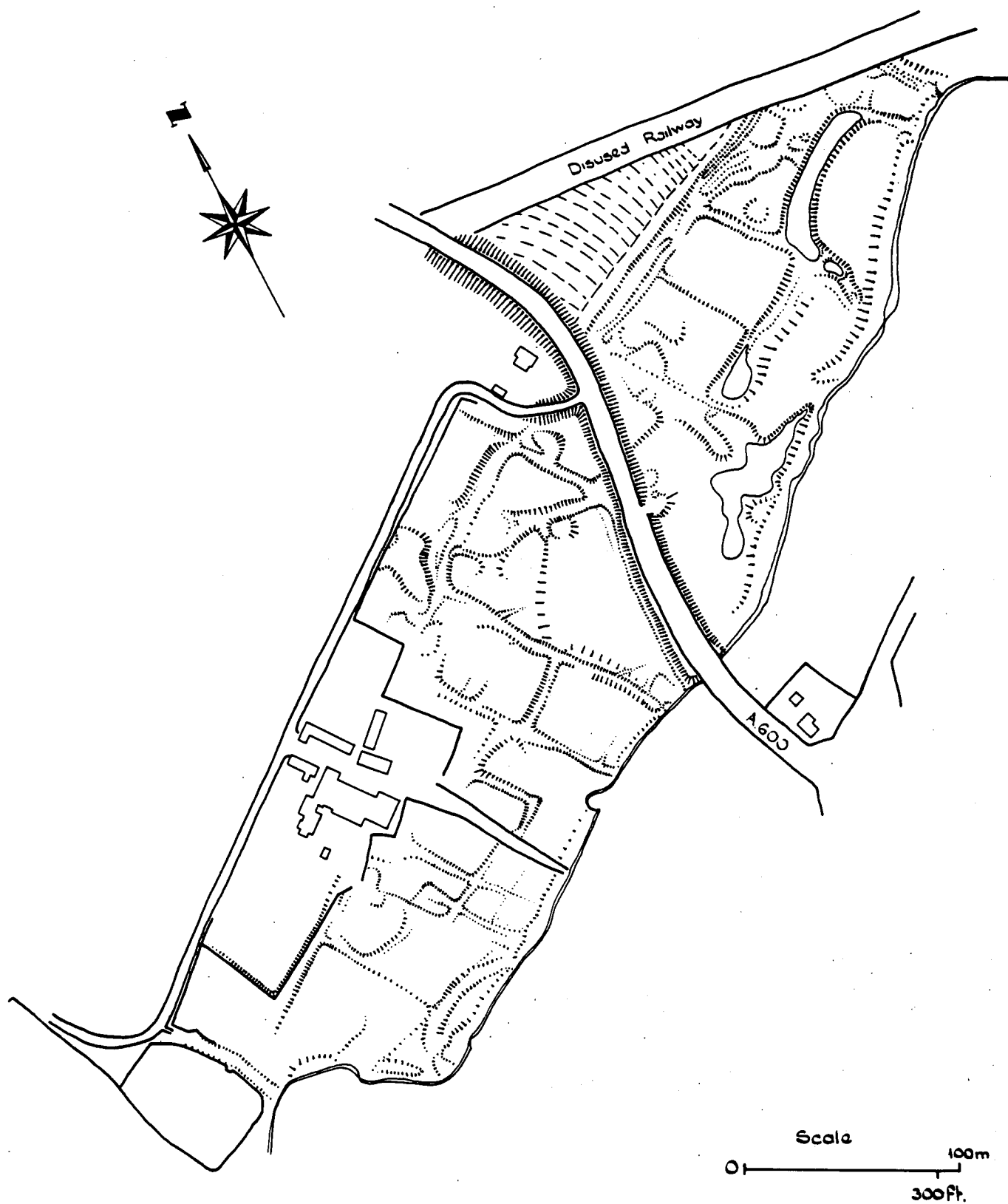


Fig 6. The earthwork survey of Harrowden DMV.

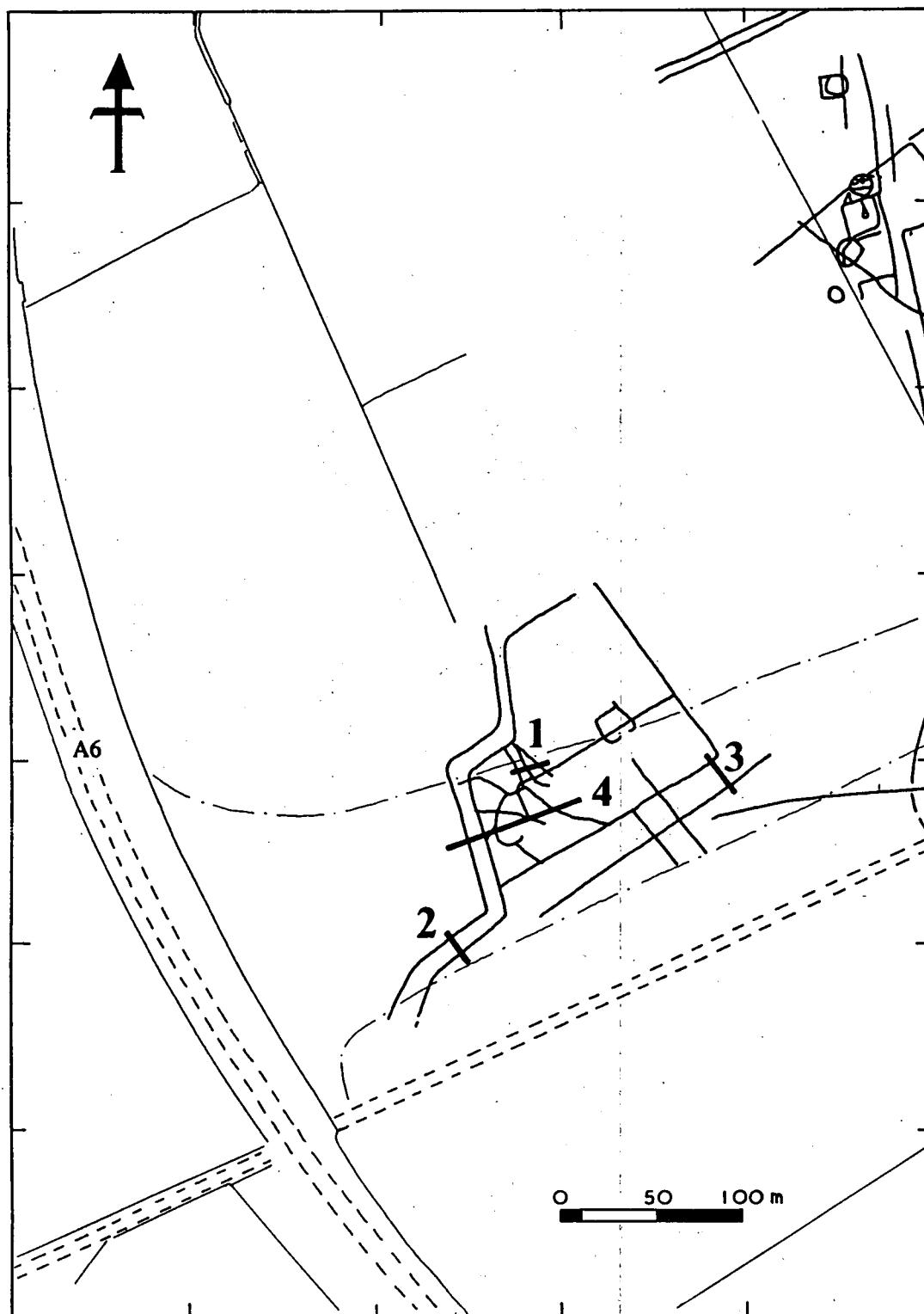


Fig 7. Assessment of R/B settlement at Peartree Farm.

internally. Observation on the ground suggests that a headland running approximately north south protected an area of the site on its northern margins. Sample trial trenching was designed to assess the survival of the site. The sample trial trenching of Peartree Farm has shown that this site is a rural settlement of Late Iron Age and Roman date (fig 7).

M1 Widening **M Dawson**

Fieldwalking and geophysical survey in advance of M1 widening has revealed the presence of three new Roman settlement sites at **Chalton** (TL 260 040), **Tingrith** (TL 012328) and **Sundon** (TL 033278). These sites remain to be characterised in detail, but that at Sundon appears to include

a large area of ditched enclosures reminiscent of rural settlements in the Ouse Valley.

Kempston Church End (TL 012478) M Dawson

Archaeological assessment work in 1990 along the route of the Bedford Southern Orbital Sewer revealed the remains of a substantial stone Roman building, possibly a villa, beneath ridge and furrow, west of the village of Kempston Church End. A single grave dated to the 5th century, by the form of a composite bone comb found with the body, had been cut through the collapsed debris of the structure. On the west side of the Kempston village further structural remains, this time of timber framed buildings, were recovered, along with a well, child burials and a single adult inhumation in a coffin. Excavations in advance of the pipeline in 1991 examined the upper horizons of the stone building and many of the ancillary structures. In addition to two corn drying ovens of possible Saxon date was a cemetery which may have had burials from the mid 4th to the 7th century. In the case of the latter a single, female, inhumation was accompanied by a necklace comprising silver rings and semi-precious stones including an amethyst. A further stage of excavations in 1992 followed assessment of landscape features west of Kempston Church End.

In the latest season in 1992 an inhumation cemetery comprising 88 burials was totally excavated. Burial forms included decapitation, burial within pennanular enclosure ditches, and prone burial. The cemetery was located on the margins of the settlement enclosed on three sides by fields. Away from the cemetery focus were five isolated

cremations one in an urn, others in simple hollows. The site was badly affected by metal detector activity.

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

Augustinian Priory, Dunstable John Hitchcock

Several archaeological investigations have been carried out in the vicinity of the Augustinian Priory in Dunstable, both by the Society and by others. The locations are shown in Fig 9.

In 1948, an excavation was made in the area of the crossing of the original church, to the east of the present building, in order to confirm the conjectural plan of W G Smith (1904). The Society has in its possession a drawing of this excavation, see Fig 8. Note the position shown in Fig 9 is only approximate North-South.

The base of one of the four columns of the central tower was discovered 4.6 m (15 feet) from the present east wall. The skeleton of a dog was found in this area.

Then a second cut was taken further east which revealed more masonry, but it is not clear what this represented. The Borough Council refused permission for further excavation in Priory Meadow.

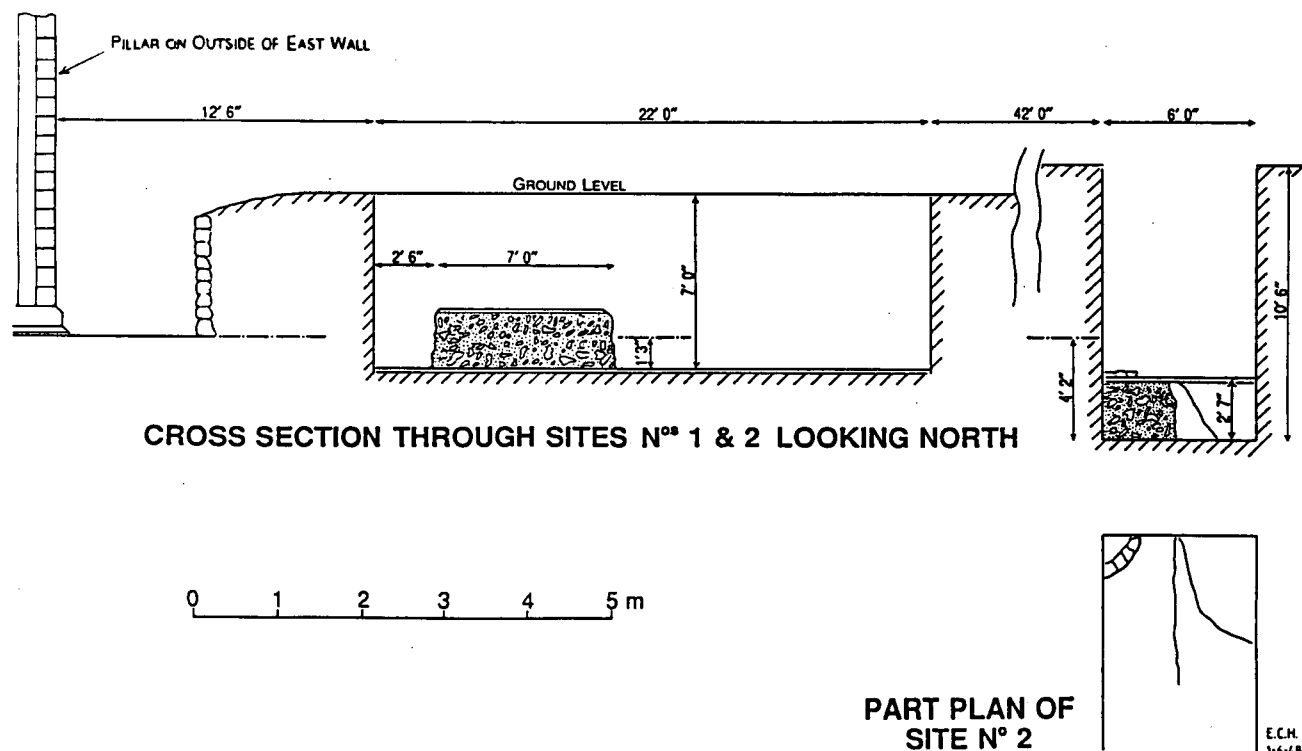


Fig 8. Excavations of 1948 at Dunstable Priory.

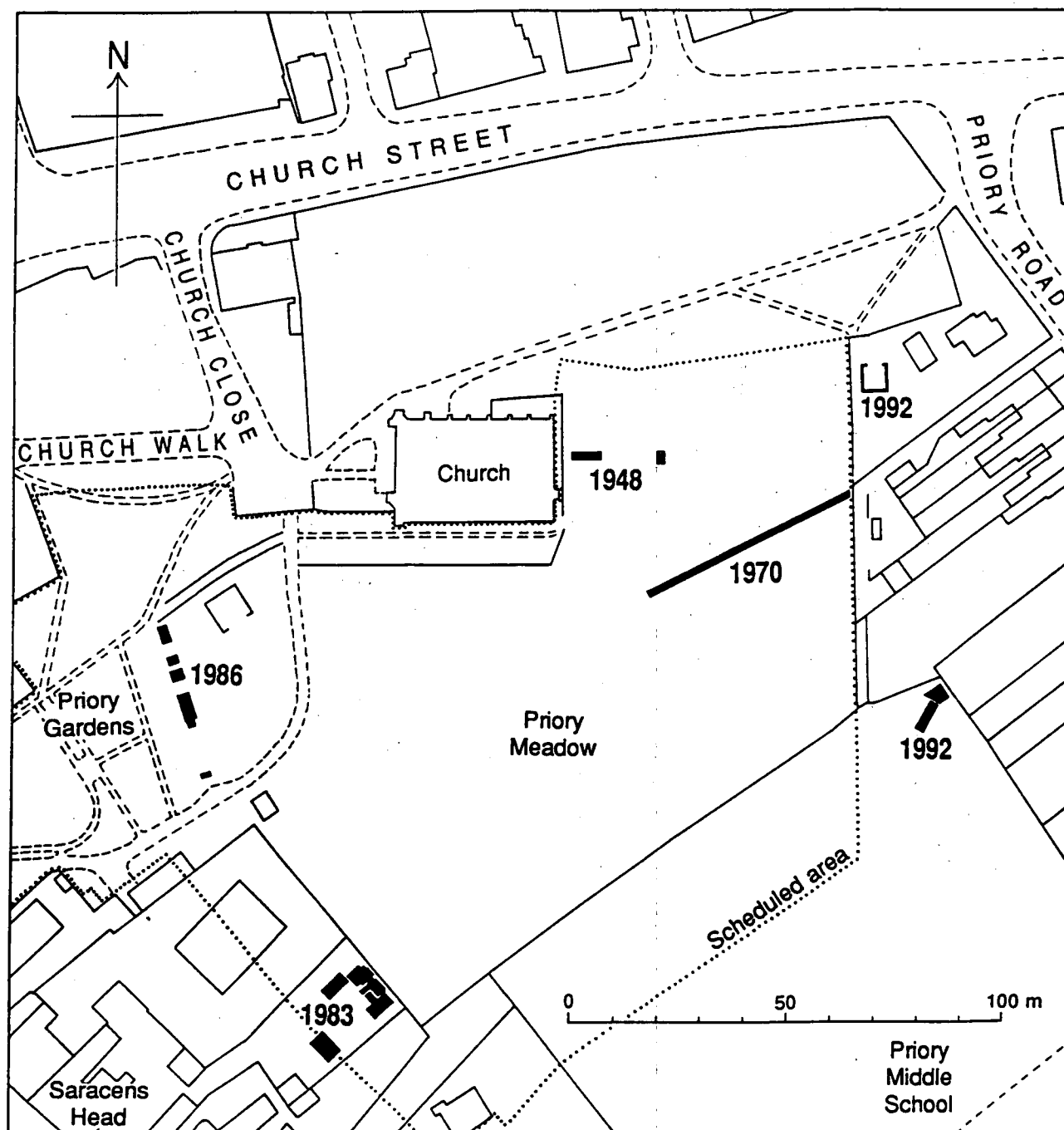


Fig 9. Investigations carried out around Dunstable Priory.

In 1970, an electricity cable was relaid across part of the Priory Meadow and an archaeological record was made by Hagen (1972).

The Society excavated in the garden of the Saracens Head in 1983, where there are the remains of cellars and ovens (Matthews, 1984). In 1986 the line of a hedge across Priory gardens was investigated (Warren, 1987).

Last year, the Society carried out excavations at 2 Priory Road and in the grounds of Priory Middle School: these excavations are reported in this issue (Warren and Hudspith, 1993; Warren 1993).

Acknowledgements

Information on the 1948 excavations was provided by Mr E C Hawes.

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Priory Middle School, Britain Street, Dunstable

D Warren and R Hudspith

Introduction

Excavation has taken place at the school at the kind invitation of the Headteacher Roger Pepworth. The purpose was to provide an interesting extra mural activity for the pupils. Such was the interest that attendance had to be rationed. Some indeed have become members and have taken part in processing finds at our HQ.

The area chosen for excavation was dictated by the need to avoid the scheduled area while at the same time maximising the likelihood of finding something by getting as close as was practical. For safety and practical reasons the playing areas and a margin around them obviously had to be avoided. The first of two cuts was therefore taken between redundant cricket practice areas in the north (T) corner of the playing field: the second was just beyond.

Note: where it has been thought necessary directions, eg north, south etc are followed by (T) true, or (S) site, as site north is 325 degrees mag, ie at right angles to the boundary with Priory Gardens while true N-S runs diagonally across the field. The base point is right in the north (T) corner.

Summary

Work commenced with a resistivity survey which involves placing metal probes at intervals and measuring electrical resistance in the ground. English Heritage were good enough to permit the survey to include the scheduled area. The readings have been converted to shade density values and while the 'picture' produced shows apparent features, (see fig 1) they have so far proved less than useful. For the reason see the discussion at the end.

The dig however, produced more tangible results. Two ditches, one of which may be Roman or even earlier. Over this and under the bank of the other, a rutted Medieval trackway. Alongside the earlier ditch a tantalising glimpse of a possible building perhaps medieval. None of these features appear contemporary yet they share a common direction. This persistence of line indicates a continuity which has been noted elsewhere.

If the discussion tries to tease more out of the facts than they will properly bear, the intention is to prompt questions that with luck future excavations will answer.

The Excavations

These lay in the north (T) corner of the school playing field. This position is a few metres outside the scheduled area of the Priory and is SE (T) of the church. The nearest edge of the scheduled area corresponds with the line of an old

footpath which once ran between the north end of Priory Road and the south end of Wellington Terrace but which is considerably older than both. The northern end of this path formed the western edge of our excavation at 2 Priory Road. Two cuts were made, (A & B). Cut A was rectangular and between two rows of concrete slabs the long axis running N-S (actually 030-210 degrees mag). Cut B had two right angles and three sides respecting the site grid, the fourth side was parallel to the north end of cut A. Fig 10.

The surface of the chalk in the area of excavations is rather 'vermiculated' with numerous small holes possibly of glacial origin filled with a light pinky buff material, (Coombe Rock). See the odd shaped features in the southern (T) end of cut A.

Ditch 1

This ditch is the later of the two and with its bank is the latest feature recognised. It runs about SW-NE (T), is V sectioned with a flat bottom and is cut c 70cm into natural chalk the top of which is 70-80cm below the modern surface. The chalk from the initial cutting of the ditch had been formed into a very neat bank nearly 2m wide. This is parallel to and close on the NW side and, as surviving, flat topped and about 15cm thick. Evidence from sections indicate that the bank's NW side had once been contained by a straight edge such as a plank or halved tree trunk. The section within the ditch shows some, probably natural, refilling by the excavated chalk but the general section gives the impression that the bank was ever flat. This may have been purely 'cosmetic' but a path of sorts is possible.

Material from the ditch, eg pottery and pegtile, suggest a late Medieval date is likely. The ditch section also shows that at least one recut had taken place. The upcast from this was not evident but a feature parallel to the SE side eventually gave the answer. It was a narrow band (context 9) of water washed chalk lumps and pebbles which was very thin and not understood. Later however, when cutting a section through the original bank, the feature was accidentally replicated and recognised as being the weathered edge of heaped soil, in other words a second bank this time to the SE. At sometime the bulk of it had been removed probably during post-Dissolution landscaping.

Ditch 2

This ditch ran approximately parallel to the other but is not associated with it. Smaller, it is dug some 40cm into solid chalk and about 70cm wide. Stratigraphically it is the earliest feature.

Within the short length excavated, only two items gave any direct clue as to possible date. One was a sherd of late pre-Roman or RB pottery and a fragment of soft underfired tile or clay lump. Further evidence of a relatively early date lies in the trackway which overlay it.

The ditch had apparently filled naturally before the metalling, consisting of quite large flints, was put down. These had been driven down into the ditch by a deep cart

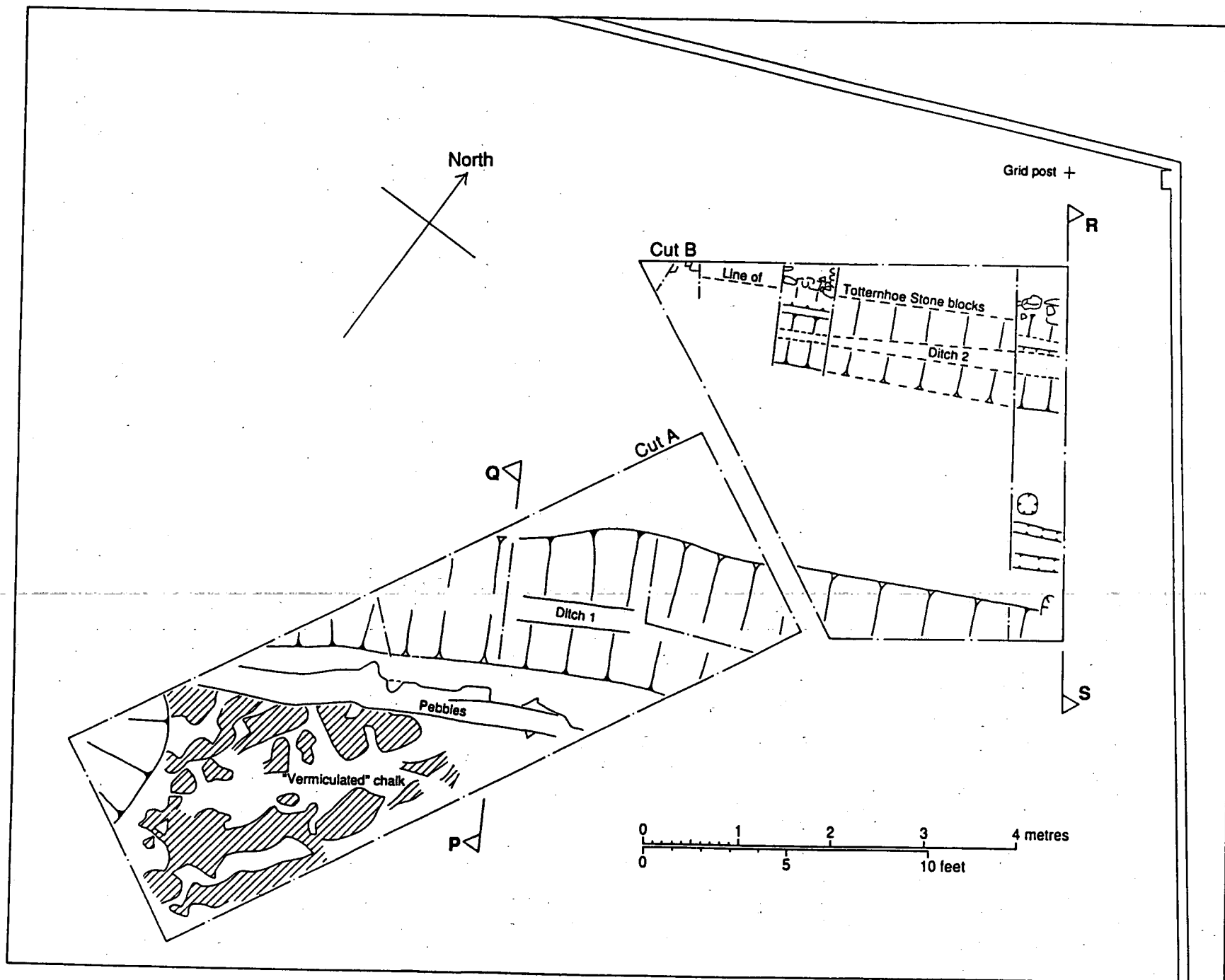


Fig 10. Priory Middle School excavation plans.

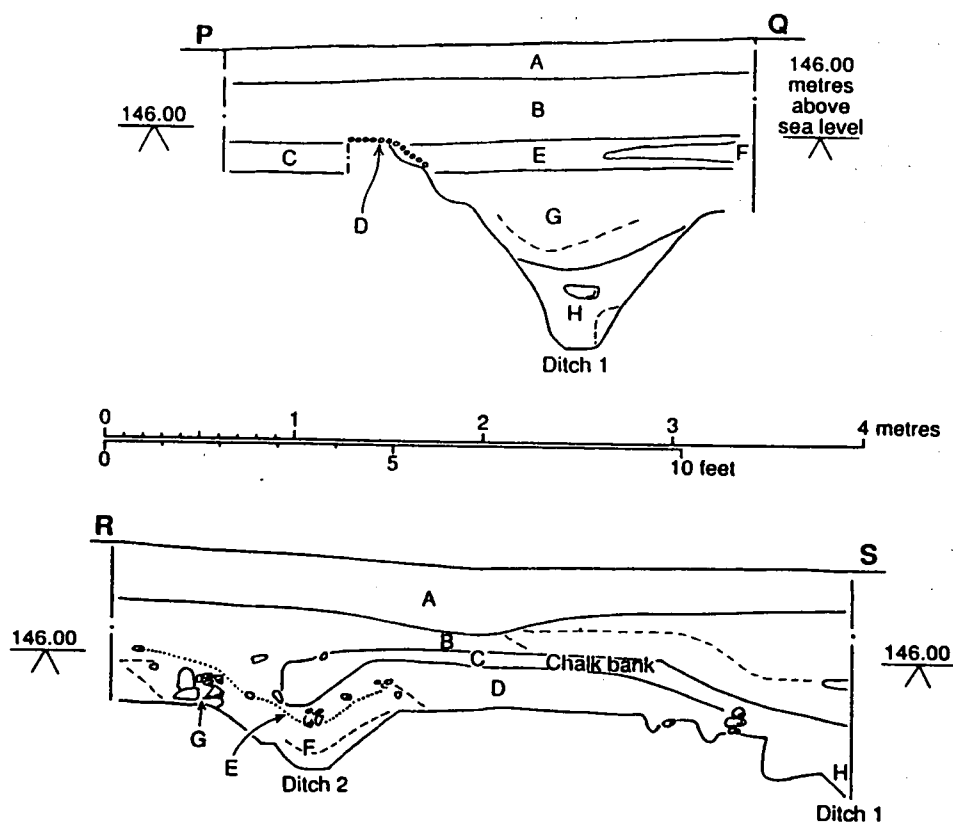


Fig 11. Sections P-Q & RS.

Section P-Q

- A - Topsoil (context 1)
- B - Loam with tile and chalk fragments (context 2)
- C - Loam with chalk (context 10 & 15)
- D - Flint, pebbles and tile (context 9)
- E - Pegtile, Totternhoe stone, bone and loam (context 6 & 7)
- F - Tile, chalk and stone (context 14)
- G - Loam and chalk (context 11 & 17)
- H - Chalk, loam and some tile (context 20)

Section R-S

- A - Topsoil (context 51)
- B - Loam with tile and chalk (context 52, 54 & 55)
- C - Loam with chalk (context 53)
- D - Grey silty loam (context 57)
- E - Flint metalling (context 56)
- F - Loam with chalk, flint, gravel and clay (context 64)
- G - Totternhoe stone and flint (context 60)
- H - Loam with tile and stone (context 59)

rut. A ledge along the northern (S) side of the ditch indicated a rut earlier than the metalling.

The Trackway

For the short length exposed it runs 240-060 degrees mag more or less at right angles to the nearest point of the Priory boundary some 12m away. With no sign of curvature it cannot avoid entering the grounds. Clearly later than ditch 2 and earlier than ditch 1, for the reasons stated above, it certainly existed in the medieval period. The flints of the metalling are of course undatable in themselves and tended very much to thin out towards the south side. They were probably a specific repair occasioned by the underlying ditch. However, at several spots where ruts had also bitten into chalk, pegtile had been employed to alleviate the problem. A few sherds of medieval pottery were found between the ruts overlain by the bank of ditch 1.

The ruts went right up to the northern edge of this ditch and it is probable some were removed by it although none existed to the south.

The 'Building'

The feature tentatively identified as a building lay parallel to the northern (S) baulk of cut B. It ran the full length of the baulk and beyond but intruded only about 30cm into the cut.

The outer southern edge consisted of a line c 15cm wide of flints and Totternhoe Stone lumps. This line lay immediately north (S) of the edge of ditch 2, so close, in fact, that some lumps appear to just overlies the very edge of the ditch as cut in the chalk. It is certainly unlikely that they would not have eroded into the ditch if that were later.

North of the line, set directly on top of natural chalk and disappearing under the baulk lay a surface of split flint.

Although only a single layer thick it had apparently been rammed to a very flat surface with the flat faces of the rather small flints uppermost.

The building is definitely earlier than the metalling of the trackway as the flints had continued northwards over it. Nor can it have been contemporary with the earlier rut seen in the northern side of Ditch 2 as it was far to close. Unfortunately it could not be discerned which, rut or building, overlay the other as their lines did not quite converge within the excavation.

There was no direct dating evidence such as embedded pegtile fragments but use of Totternhoe Stone suggests medieval rather than Roman although their use of this material is not unknown. As the trackway appears medieval and earlier than Ditch 1, if this feature is medieval, then an early rather than middle or late date is indicated for this feature. Further exploration of this feature may be possible in a later season.

A further feature which should be mentioned lies in the very SW corner of cut A. It is apparently a circular inverted cone shaped hole in the chalk filled with loam. We have only a segment which may not reach the middle. If the suggested shape is correct it could prove to be the eroded top of a well. In Dunstable tops of wells so worn away have so far all proved to be Roman.

Discussion

It is known from excavation that the boundary wall on the west side of the Priory precinct was of good solid Totternhoe Stone construction. There is no reason to believe it did not so continue around the entire circuit. The scheduled area of the ancient monument would seem accurately to encompass the Priory grounds. This being so the wall line crosses the school playing field parallel to, and about 30m, from the fence dividing it from Priory Gardens until it meets the line of the now defunct footpath and follows it northwards. However, this would be to put the cart before the horse, the wall surely determined the line of the path not the other way round.

Our excavations some 12m to the east show all the linear features, ditches, banks and trackway aiming straight at it. The question therefore arises, 'What happens where the lines intersect?'

The trackway is a feature which, by its nature is going places and must have crossed the 'wall line'. If as seems likely wall and track are contemporary a gateway is clearly called for, and, if a through route to the High St another to let it 'out' again. It could join up quite easily with the still extant Wood St although a gateway that side would have to be just south of the cellars found on the inside of the precinct wall by the society in 1983 (Matthews, 1984).

Did the track originally predate the Priory? Quite possibly; at least one rut was seen to be earlier than others. Ditch 2 which follows the same line and which may be Roman or

earlier could be the remnant of a very old route. Such a persistence of line is not without precedent.

The Roman cemetery (Matthews, 1981) was markedly different either side of the Division between Friary and Flory Field. Another pointer to the possible antiquity of Ditch 2 is the medieval 'building'. The latter appears to be the later of the two while earlier in turn than at least the metalling of the track, if not the track itself. A faint linear crease in the ground or on the other hand the presence of an old track may well have 'suggested' the building orientation. If continuity there was, something must have been visible to maintain it. Maintenance of an ancient right of way may explain why a road should pass through or into the Priory at all. It ought to have been a simple matter to pass round the southern end.

Another possibility is that the track served only the Priory, perhaps for access to its lands, to timber and tile from Skimpot or Zouches way.

Exclusive use by the monastery could explain why the track went out of use, perhaps in the 13th century if building materials were a main *raison d'être*, after construction was complete.

Ditch 1 is a problem. Worthington G Smith (1904) shows a drain or ditch in the area going through the Priory to Church Street but it is not known on what evidence and nothing is now visible. A ditch down the NE (T) side of the tree line which borders that edge of the field is possible but this would largely miss the Priory grounds unless it changed direction. There seems no sensible reason why such a ditch, if drainage was its purpose, should turn into the precinct, rather the reverse.

If a ditch beyond the trees did visibly exist in Smith's time our ditch must have met the line of it. However, it would not have been visible to him. The evidence suggests it had filled up at least partly naturally by the Dissolution although material from a recut may have been pushed back in about that time. Dumps of tile fragments were found over the top of the fill. These may have come from either the original destruction or later 18th century robbing. The tile was covered in turn by a deliberate soil build up of up to 50cm (of which more below).

However, while in a position to have brought a drainage channel into the Priory, the primary fill which apparently derived from its original bank showed no evidence of water flow in either direction. It seems unlikely to have been to drain the grounds as the need if ever it existed in this area would surely have been recognised much earlier and answered with a roadside ditch. Furthermore, a drainage ditch is unlikely to have been allowed to refill to the extent this was, and the recutting was apparently a rather halfhearted effort probably merely to redefine it at some stage. Therefore a dry ditch is suggested with a neat bank probably topped with a hedge and perhaps serving as a boundary or land division up to but not through the Priory wall.

Soil build up. Prior to excavation it had been anticipated that soil had been removed to level the playing field as it was lower than much of Priory Gardens. As a result the resistivity survey was carried out with probes at half metre intervals which gives an effective depth of reading of 75 cm below surface (half as much again as the spacing). This was expected to be below the top of natural chalk. Instead it proved to be several centimetres above. The reason was the half metre or so of introduced soil. It contained post-medieval back to Roman which suggests its origin was nearer the centre of town. Evidence from 2 Priory Road shows a similar level of build up probably at or about the same time although it contained no Roman but instead rather more Priory derived material. Excavations in Priory Gardens between the church and Priory House (fig 9) have shown the filling in of an area by nearly two metres of soil (Warren, 1987) burying in the process the top of a large and probably medieval well.

Together they indicate wholesale landscaping over quite an area both where it was moved to, south, east and west of the Church, and the areas from whence the material came. A close date for this operation is not possible but an 18th century one is proposed.

They may be unconnected but the society has excavated the tops of two post-medieval wells. One lay in Albion St, the other on the site of Ellis' shop now The Motorists Centre in West Street. Both contained Staffordshire Scribble ware of 1680-1720 period which argues they went out of use about the same time - in the first half of the 18th century.

The question is therefore posed. 'Was there an upturn in the towns prosperity at that time reflected in an outburst of civic pride and evidenced in a general smartening up of the place?'

Finally back to the beginning, what of the Romans and their predecessors? Apart from the Roman and Romano-British material imported with the soil to the site, a modest amount of Roman and native wares, some of it in fact late Iron Age looking, was found on or just above natural. The amount of material is about what one might expect at the very fringes of an area of occupation.

Nobody is known to have actually lived around the present crossroads but they may have been little more than a stone's throw away.

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- Warren D A; 1987 'Priory Gardens 1986', *Manshead Journal* 27, 1-12.

PPG 16 Excavation at 2 Priory Road, Dunstable D Warren

Introduction

This exercise came about because Mr Denis Wesley the owner desired a garage in his back garden.

However, because of its close proximity to the Priory and the Church it is in an archaeologically sensitive area, (see fig 9). Our involvement came about through the recommendation of Richard Walden the Town Clerk.

The original brief called for the foundations to go down 1m in trenches only 45 cm wide; our job would finish at natural chalk. Such narrow trenches were always going to be difficult and so it proved. In plan very little of a feature or context could be seen; in section it was impossible to back away far enough to appreciate the larger picture.

Summary

The layers above the Totternhoe Stone spread held little significance in themselves except for the volume of material. The lower of these contexts such as 16 may be evidence of paths. Higher, the soil appears to have been imported to raise the ground level (the possible implications of which are discussed in the Priory Middle School report) with a disturbed Victorian to modern topsoil.

In the west face of the west trench could be seen two sets of postholes which suggest a gateway which can be no earlier than the 1890s and which had been replaced twice.

The Totternhoe Stone layer is seen as the first post-Dissolution level. It survived best where it filled hollows, again possibly tracks or footpaths. The flatish upper surface had rotted, probably through exposure. This layer was near the bottom of the initial excavation, below lay chalk lumps and loam. Being at the limit of our brief this last could only be assumed to be disturbed natural.

The building inspector, not satisfied with this, now insisted on six inches (15 cm) into solid chalk. The builder had no sooner begun removing a few more centimetres when the first human remains were found.

In part two of the excavation nearly twenty skeletons or parts thereof were discovered although only two could be completely recovered. 'Ear-muff burials (which were apparently superseded by 'niche' burials) and a high proportion (3 out of 7 sets of lower limbs) exhibited healed injuries suggestive of having handled heavy objects, eg stone blocks. This may indicate a 12th to early 13th century date ie during the construction phase of the Priory.

These bodies apparently lay outside the Priory precinct in an area not subsequently used for much later burials. One lay in a grave dug in a ditch and was separated from the rest of the burials by a palisade trench associated with the ditch.

The ditch cut an older feature possibly also a ditch, perhaps connected with a heap (now buried) of rotten chalk which

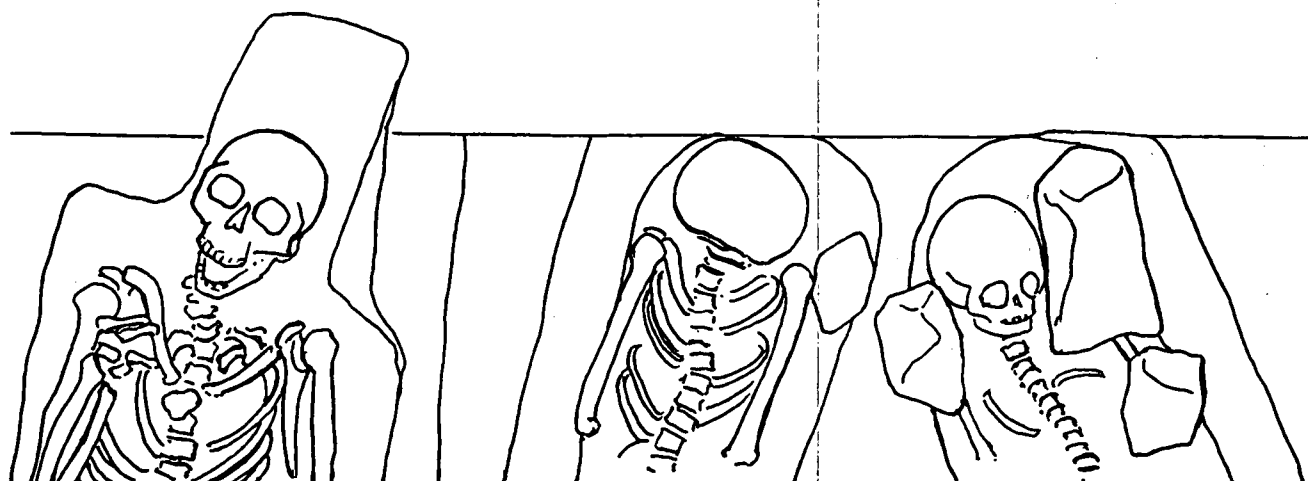


Fig 12. Detail of skeletons 40, 41 and 42.

might prove to be a Bronze Age burial mound, as a sherd of 'Food Vessel' ware was found in it.

The Burials (see figs 12, 13 & 14)

Observations on burial practices, sequence and possible groupings etc.

Of the eighteen certain, and several probable but destroyed burials, complete exhumation of the skeleton was possible in only two cases. This was due to the alignment of the trenches, two of which ran exactly N-S, ie the 'west' and the 'east', thus cutting across the normal Christian orientation of W-E shown here by all the burials which were all supine with the head to the west. The 'south' trench joined the southern ends of the other two and ran precisely W-E and produced six graves; only the two mentioned above were totally recovered, one lying directly over the other.

The exact alignment of the trenches with the main cardinal points made more apparent a detail which might otherwise have been missed, namely that the majority of burials may be clustered into three groups. NB The burials are identified by their context number which is not an indication of the number of burials.

The earliest group is represented by 42, 43 and possibly 47. Graves 42 and 43 are slewed towards WSW-ENE and each is apparently an 'Ear-muff' burial. 42 had three blocks of Totternhoe Stone, two placed one either side of the head to hold it in position. Grave 43 had two lumps of chalk similarly situated either side of the skull apparently for the same purpose.

This practice of employing stone 'ear-muffs' is dated variously from mid/late Saxon to about mid 12th century (Rodwell, 1981; Durham, 1987; Allen, 1990). As these burials are obviously associated with the Priory which according to Smith (Smith, 1904) was founded c AD1132 a mid to late 12th century date is suggested making these people some of the earliest Dunstablians. A 12th century date is supported, albeit rather tenuously, by the fact that

none of 43s Totternhoe Stone blocks is dressed in any way; such blocks are more likely to have been available in the eighty odd years of construction of the Priory than later when the site was tidied up and fully functional. Grave 43 is indicated in section as the later of the two and the chalk lumps although effective are perhaps only a token gesture.

Burial 47 is clearly the earliest in a definite sequence of three, ie 47-48-36. The slight evidence as to orientation indicates it conforms with 42-43. No specifically placed blocks of chalk were noted but since the grave fill was largely chalk, lumps as such could easily have been missed.

The graves of the second group, 34-40-41-52-54-48-(53?), are aligned more or less WNW-ESE. Of these 40, 52 are certain, and 54 possibly, 'niche' burials, that is to say a slot was cut in the end of the grave to fix the head in a face up position in the same manner as, and evidently a development of, the 'ear muff' fashion. In the case of 52 it did not work too well; the head barely entered the niche and had rotated to its right. This grave also appears to have cut out an earlier one on the same alignment and further indicated by the distal end of a human femur lying across the left elbow. Grave 40 seems to have been cut over size and only as it neared the desired depth was it reduced to a form fitting profile. A later feature has destroyed the boundary between 40 and 41; the only evidence that might indicate the latter to be the later of the two is the apparent lack of a niche, perhaps because the practice of fixing the head had lapsed. (The limited evidence of this excavation indicates that head niches are followed by no special provision at all.) However, in plan there is a slight suggestion of the possible beginning of a niche. If so, the position of the head may be due to simple incompetence or carelessness. It looks as though the body of the grave is too short or else was dug only to contain the body of the deceased with the slot to take the head being forgotten until it was too late or else dug only long enough to take the butt of a marker. As can be seen in the plan the head was forced forward and rotated so that the chin was pressed into the left shoulder. That 41 is later than 42 is certain. A slice of Totternhoe Stone from the block to the right of 42's head

had flaked off and lay over the top of 41's left humerus probably having been dislodged in backfilling 41.

Grave 53, lying under 34 is less easy to orientate. It is nevertheless at an angle to the trench. Burial 34 indeed looks like a deliberate re-excavation of a still obvious grave with care being taken not to disturb the existing burial. Burial 53 is also shown to be earlier than 46 as the latter's skull lay over 53's toes.

Context 48 in the east trench appeared to be a grave. However, within the trench any body would have been removed by the third group grave number 36. The head of 'grave' 48 lay over that of 47 and since bits of another body were found in 47 as well as 36 it might be thought 47 cut 48. Not so however, since it was seen during excavation that part of the 'floor' of 48's grave, which consisted of lump chalk trodden or rammed flat, still survived around the edges, particularly the south. This floor remnant partly overlay, and had an effect on, the loam content of the fill about 47's head. Loam protected by it was brown, whereas that not so covered had leached to a grey, an effect presumably caused by the greater percolation of water which removed more of the humic content.

Grave 48 also appears to have been the only coffined burial. The grave was square ended with its apparently very flat bottom a little lower than 36's. Around the few centimetres of the straight sides which survived ran a band of loam 5-6cm wide parallel to them.

The third suggested group lie due W-E, ie nos 33-35-36-37-46 and in the west trench 45 and possibly 39. On the evidence of 36 disturbing 48, 37/46 overlying 54 and 46 over 53 this series of burials is the latest. Those along the east trench including 37 and 46 are neatly arranged in a row. Graves 33-36-46 were among the shallowest, the bottoms of all apparently less than 60cm below what looks to have been the contemporary ground surface. Burial 37 was even shallower but this may simply be due to a desire not to disturb 46.

Grave 35 is an oddity; it lines up with those either side and is neatly spaced between them. It is also the same depth below the modern surface as 33. However, the west face of the east trench indicates that it was dug from a higher level. (It has been pointed out that context/grave 33 as drawn in section goes up to the level of 35 and has later features cutting it. If 33 was only one fill it must have been a large and rather peculiar shaped hole to dig for a grave. The author feels it is more likely that one or more context boundaries went unnoticed because they were undistinguishable in themselves or because of the difficulties of observation in the narrow trench.) The build-up of ground of about 30cm is a mixture of chalk and loam in varying proportions, the presence of chalk indicating introduced material rather than a slow accumulation. The coincidence of depth may be due to a reluctance to hack further into solid chalk than was necessary to get the face and chest below natural chalk.

The fact that 35 is in register, as it were, with those alongside suggests that grave markers for 33 and 36 were extant as these graves must otherwise have been invisible.

While on the subject of grave markers, the niches of graves 40 and 52 in the second group are both longer than needed to take the head. The suggestion is made that the extra length was perhaps meant to take the butt of a wooden marker post.

Burial 45 is included in this group because it has the same orientation and because it is half a body out of line with the rest of the bodies (ie pelvis level with the heads) in the west trench. Burial 39, the original incumbent, is also included as there was no indication of a differently orientated grave and a few finger bones of the left hand were apparently still in situ, showing its position had been the same as that of 45.

The time interval between the groups is largely speculative, however, there are a few clues. Burials 40-41 and 42-43 are clearly in register W-E with a decent spacing between the individuals in each pair whereas 41 and 42 just touch. This suggests that the interval between individuals of a group was relatively short, while the preceding grave was still well defined but that between group one and two such that the mound over 42 had weathered enough to disguise its exact position.

Between groups two and three the period was probably longer since group three is completely out of register with two which does bear some relation to group one.

Where one interment has apparently deliberately utilised an earlier grave it appears to have been one of the same group. In the case of 37-46 the care taken not to disturb the lower perhaps shows a family relationship with the earlier corpse (46) possibly still having flesh on it. On the other hand with 45/39 and possibly 52, the object seems to have been easy digging with no regard for the niceties whatsoever. With 48-47 either possibility exists. Whether the earlier grave was apparent or not it would soon have become obvious it was there and the lower burial was untouched. These last are the only two where different groups are involved.

The groupings suggested follow what sequencing is possible but it is not continuous round the three trenches. Later features such as that between 40-41 break the link and the faces of the south trench were not ideally placed to demonstrate the relationship between graves along that trench, in particular between 34 and 52.

A possible explanation for these groupings, especially orientation, may be nothing more than different grave diggers each of whom chose a different 'personal' sighting point. That is to say each habitually picked, for instance, a particular tree but not the same as another. A change of grave digger may also have been the occasion for the change from 'ear-muff' to 'niche' burials.

One other burial (49) not included in the above is described below. Cutting across the west trench north of grave 43 is

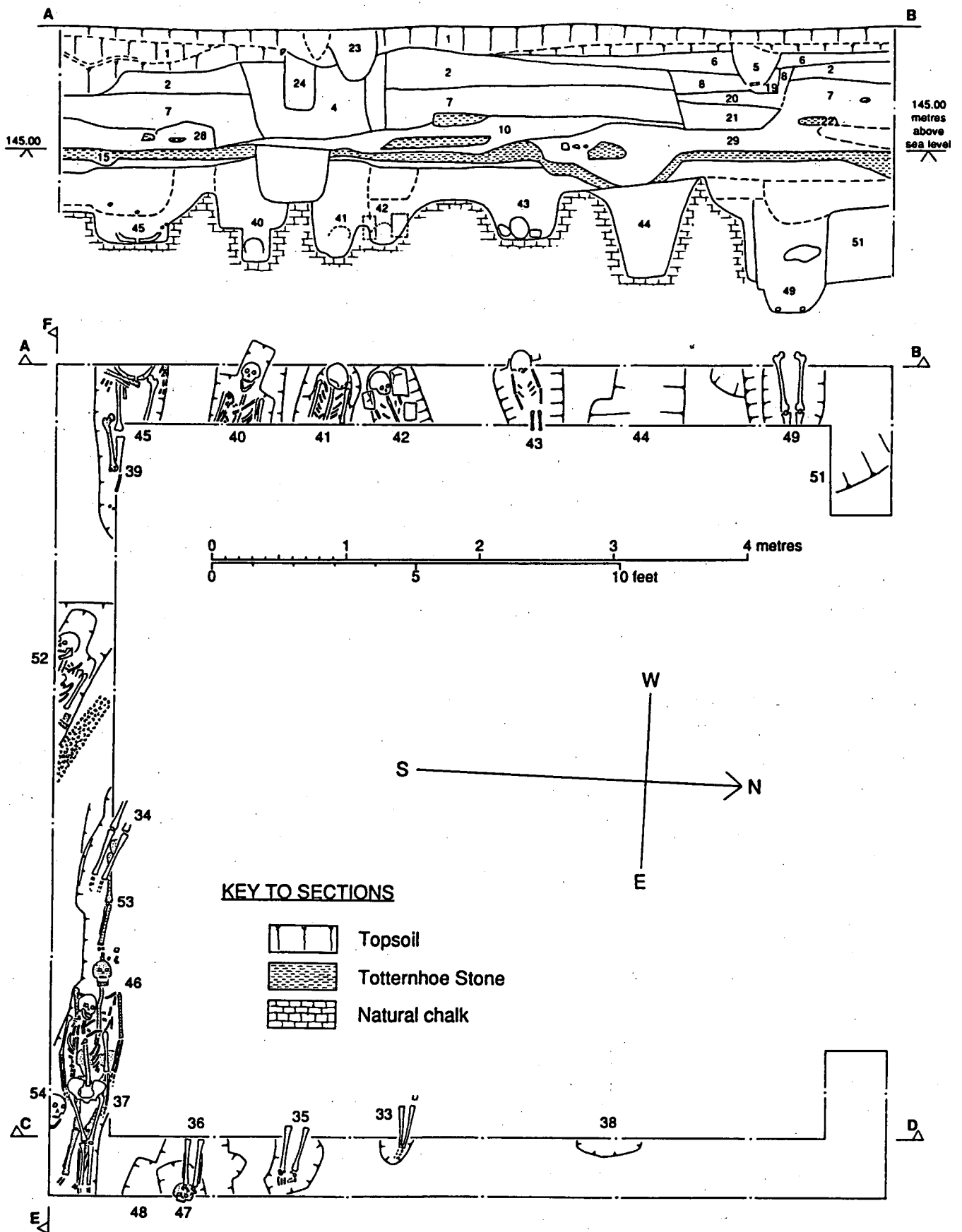


Fig 13. Plan and section A-B.

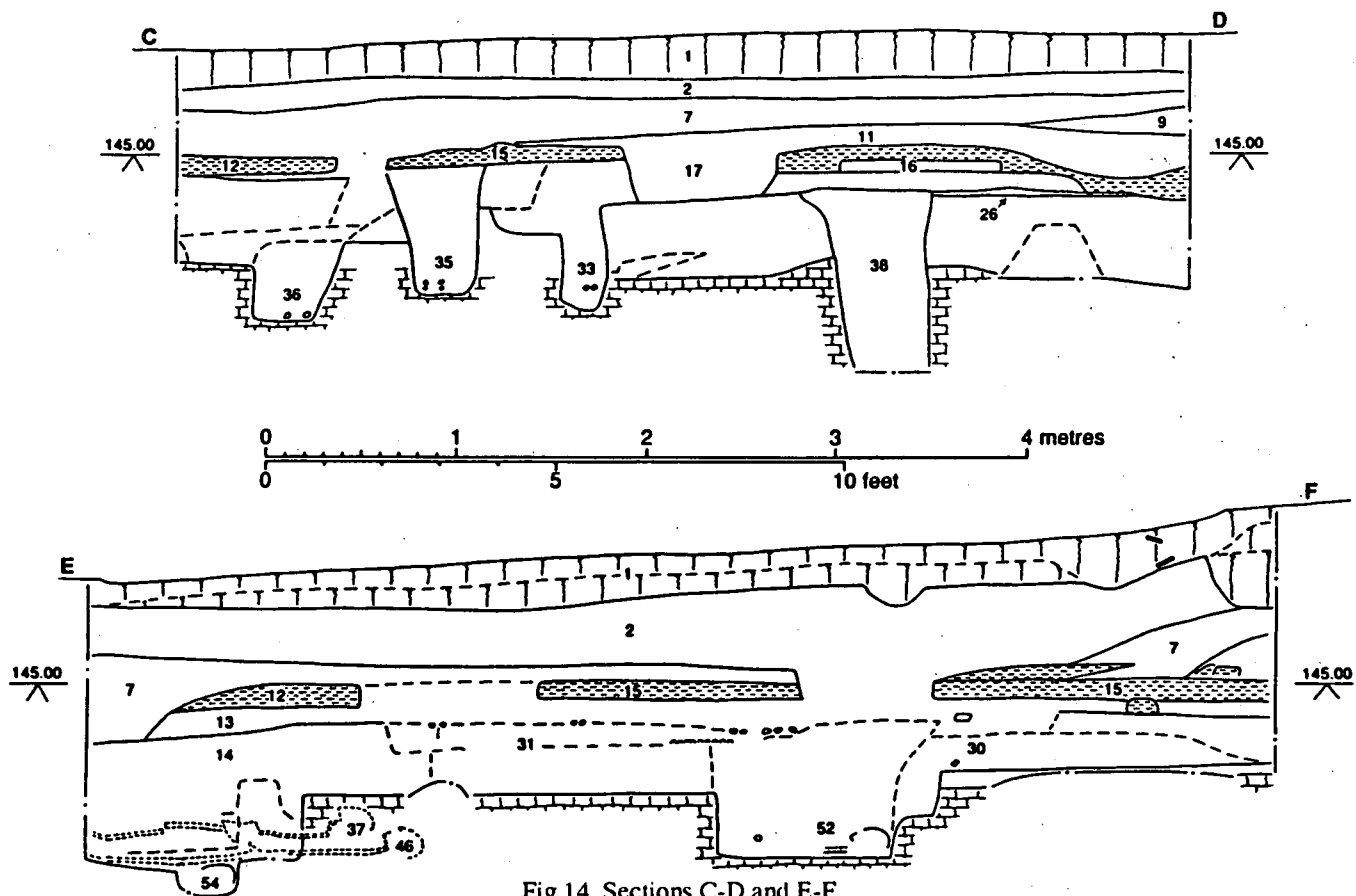


Fig 14. Sections C-D and E-F.

Context list

(not all are shown on plans and sections)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 - Dark loam (cultivated topsoil). | 25 - Loam. |
| 2 - Orange/brown loam. | 26 - Packed flint. |
| 3 - Stone & tile fragments including piece of multi-strand wire. Modern posthole north side of South trench. | 27 - Totternhoe Stone. |
| 4 - Chalky rubble feature in West Trench. Posthole packing. | 28 - Totternhoe Stone lumps, flint and tile. |
| 5 - Black soil. Posthole fill in West trench. | 29 - Loam, contains tile and some Totternhoe Stone fragments. |
| 6 - Brick, tile, flint and modern pot sherds. Hardcore of footpath. | 30 - Loam. |
| 7 - Loam with Totternhoe Stone fragments throughout. probably same as 2 but with material including floor & roof tile concentrated by worm action. | 31 - Loam with line of gravel (sleeper beam slot?). |
| 8 - Chalk rubble feature (identical to, but north of 4) | 32 - Loam. |
| 9 - Rotten Totternhoe Stone in East trench. | 33 - Grave in East trench. |
| 10 - Totternhoe stone Rubble between & lower than 4 & 8. | 34 - Grave in South trench (over 53). |
| 11 - Loam and chalk layer with tile fragments (possible path). | 35 - Grave in East trench. |
| 12 - Rotten Totternhoe Stone. | 36 - Grave in East trench (removed head end of body in 48). |
| 13 - Loam. | 37 - Grave in South trench (over 46). |
| 14 - Chalky layer (grave upcast.) | 38 - Loam feature in East trench. Probably end of 44. |
| 15 - Totternhoe Stone rubble. | 39 - Grave in West trench (disturbed by 45). |
| 16 - Thin mortar layer with Totternhoe Stone rubble. | 40 - Grave in West trench. |
| 17 - Loam. Possibly undisturbed Medieval topsoil. | 41 - Grave in West trench. |
| 18 - Loam (as 17) | 42 - Grave in West trench. |
| 19 - Darkish brown loam (posthole fill). | 43 - Grave in West trench. |
| 20 - Orangey loam. | 44 - Loam feature in West trench (see also 38). |
| 21 - Chalk rubble. Probably part of 8. | 45 - Grave in West trench (has disturbed 39). |
| 22 - Totternhoe Stone rubble. | 46 - Grave in South trench (under 37). |
| 23 - Dark loam (posthole fill). | 47 - Grave in East trench (under 48). |
| 24 - Chalky fill with lacing of loam (posthole fill). | 48 - Grave in East trench (over 47 but body removed by 36). |
| | 49 - Grave in West trench (cut into ditch {51}). |
| | 50 - Solid natural chalk. |
| | 51 - Chalk and loam (ditch fill containing 49). |
| | 52 - Grave in South trench. |
| | 53 - Grave in South trench (under 34). |
| | 54 - Grave in South trench south of 46. |

feature 44, (see section fig 14). Looking initially like another burial it proved to be a steep sided, flat bottomed slot, deeper than any grave except 49. Where it would have cut across the east trench is feature 38 which just enters from the west. Deep, round ended and apparently bodyless it appears to be the end of 44. During the excavation of 44 a faint circular feature within the fill was discerned by the excavator. This lends a little more weight to the interpretation that 44/38 is a trench for a strong palisade.

Immediately north of 44 lay what appears to have been a parallel ditch but which, unlike 44, was not evident at all in the corresponding position in the east trench. Instead there was a thin flinty layer which seemed to be a path or yard surface which ran south as far as 38.

The general interpretation for these features is a boundary to the cemetery consisting of a stout fence with a ditch to the outside (north) and the west side of an entrance with a path leading up to it.

In the ditch as it crossed the west trench and ran along the south side of the west nib, grave 49 dug into the bottom of it. Head to the west it was about in register (W-E) with 45/39 at the far end of the west trench. However, if 44/38 was a fence this can be no more than coincidence but a fence would put it outside the cemetery as it then presumably existed. If so this would indicate that 49 was an excommunicate, maybe a suicide or perhaps a criminal buried by friends or family as near to consecrated ground as possible.

In attempting to find good solid chalk in the corner by 49 and in the west nib, the trench was taken down over two metres without reaching sound bottom. Work in this corner stopped when the inner corner partly collapsed due to the loose fill of 49's grave. Down to the limit of excavation on the north side of the nib was rotten, probably redeposited chalk. In the northern end of the west face of the west trench was a suggestion of a wide ditch earlier than the cemetery ditch.

Within the rotten chalk at a depth of 1.85m a thick sherd of 'Food Vessel' ware (fig 15) with a horizontal band of chevrons on the exterior was found. Because of the limits of excavation and the unsafe nature of the conditions in this corner further and closer examination of the area was not possible. However, on admittedly slight evidence, the suggestion is made that we may have clipped the edge of an Early Bronze Age burial mound.

If it was indeed a prehistoric monument lying just outside a medieval cemetery, when did it disappear and when was the shape of the cemetery altered?

All the burials discovered could easily be encompassed within a hundred year span and if the earliest are dated anything like correctly, interments within the area of 2 Priory Road might have ended by the mid 13th century. From about AD1260 after the arrival of the Dominicans and competition in the burial business, followed by the Black Death, mass burials in a relatively small area was reputedly



Fig 15. Sherd of 'Food vessel'. Scale 1:1.

common. There would seem to have been no pressure for further use of this area in the later medieval period. Indeed, the raised level of the ground under the present west boundary of No 2, ie west of the former footpath to Britain St and the very obvious wall line leading west from the NW corner of No 2, suggest a reduced cemetery bounded by a wall which excluded the present garden.

A further observation arising from the pathological examination of the human bones by Dr E V Jones has a possible bearing on the dating of their burial.

Of the seven adults whose recovered remains include lower limbs and feet, three: 36, 46 and 53 show evidence of lower leg and or foot injuries. 36 had two pairs of fused toe bones and 53 one pair. The former also had had a possible leg fracture as did 46.

All such injuries were well healed indicating a degree of skill in treating purely 'mechanical' damage. Three out of a small sample of seven is a high figure. It is suggested that this is likely to be the consequence of handling large blocks of building stone with only soft medieval footwear for protection. The damaged toes are particularly indicative of crush injuries. If the hypothesis is correct, then a 12th to early 13th century date, ie during the construction of the Priory, is again the likeliest.

Subsequent to the Dissolution when the dressed stone had largely been removed the dross, mostly wall core, was spread over the ground. The purpose seems to have been to 'lose' it and at the same time smooth out a rather lumpy area. The wooden palisade had evidently gone by then as the spread of material goes over the line of it. In the west trench the evidence suggests that the layer had slumped into the holes left by the final rotting of the post stumps.

The mound if such it was, was perhaps pushed over into its own ditch prior to the spreading of the rubble. After this a considerable amount of soil containing 18th century material and numerous tile fragments (mostly roof but some floor) was used to raise the level of the ground a good half metre or more. The floor tile particularly, and odd bits of Totternhoe Stone indicate the soil was obtained from fairly close by. Excavations in the corner of the Priory Middle School playing field about a hundred metres away on the

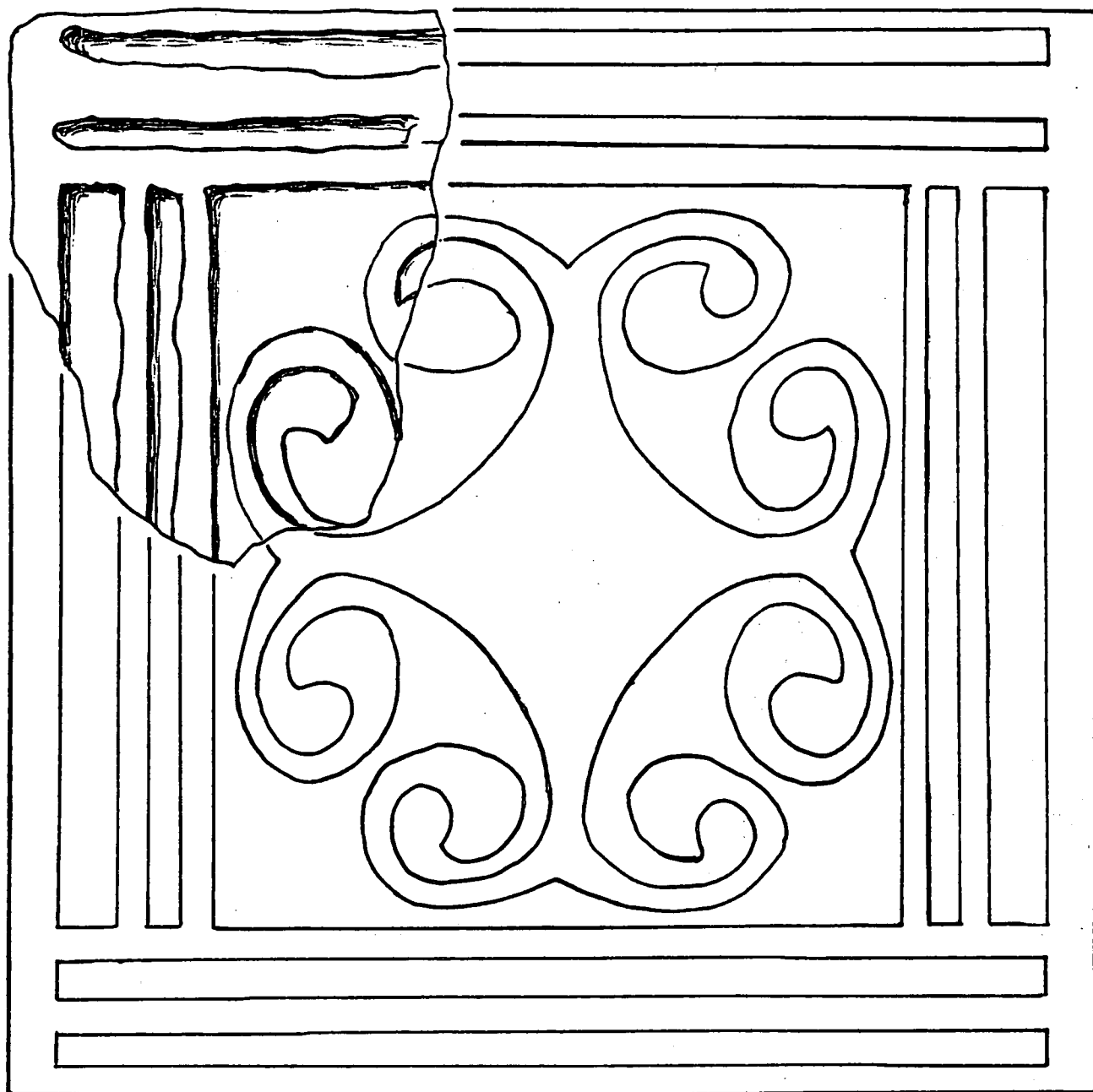


Fig 16. Tile. Scale 1:1.

Extrapolated pattern of a fragment of tile with raised design found in context 11.

25 mm thick and fired orange on a grey core with 'orangey brown' (actually clear) glaze surviving in sunken areas.

Drawn with bi-lateral symmetry, however, 'left' butts against 'right' at each corner is also possible. The centre is entirely conjectural.

same side of the footpath mentioned above show a similar raising of the ground level.

A reference in *A History of Bedfordshire* (anon) p183, while vague, can be read as saying in effect that by 1700-10 it was necessary to dig down to foundation level as coffins were disturbed in order to obtain stone on the 'site' of the east end of the church. It is suggested that some at least of the soil build up on our excavation is due to landscaping following this early 18th century stone robbing. Certainly by the time the Bedford Estates map was drawn up in 1762 the cemetery about the church had assumed more or less its modern outline. The exception is the spur to the NE which runs down to Priory Road past the north side of No 2 and which

surviving headstones indicate was in use early in the 19th century.

Although there were signs of numerous activities affecting the site post-Dissolution to modern, little definite can be said about most of them on the evidence from trenches only 45cm wide. The spread of Totternhoe Stone covering the area was fairly flat topped. It survived best where slightly thicker, ie where it filled hollows in the layers below such as context 15 which might have been a worn pathway filled by the stone. The mortar layer (16) may also have been a path. Most features cutting into the build-up layer are probably subsequent to the construction of the house, such as clothes post holes and cultivation.

In the west side of the west trench were two groups of paired postholes: group 4-24-23 pair in order, with group 8-19-5. Of these 4-8 are the earliest and most substantial followed by 24-19 then 23-5. This face of the trench is exactly on the line of the footpath mentioned earlier to Britain Street and these pairs of posts clearly represent a gateway which apparently got flimsier at each replacement. Half of a Fletton brick at the bottom of 8 shows the whole sequence can date no earlier than the last decade of the 19th century.

All in all a worthwhile little exercise which has shed a bit more light on a surprisingly less than well understood portion of Dunstable.

A full report on the human skeletal remains is published in *Manshead Journal* 33.

Acknowledgements.

Our thanks are due to Richard Walden (Town Clerk) for recommending the society. In particular to Denis and Cathrine Wesley for the invitation to dig, the many cups of coffee etc and a most generous donation to our coffers. Mr Wesley has been of great help subsequently with the legal aspects of our purchase of the Headquarters.

Thanks also to the Rector David Self for his help in finding a new home for our ancestors.

As site director I would like to thank everyone who participated including pupils from Priory Middle School for their efforts in physically difficult circumstances and Dr E V Jones for his report on the skeletal remains.

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Fieldwalking at Streatley, Lilley and North Luton 1991-92

R Hudspith

Introduction

During the winter months of 1991-92, the writer, with the assistance of W Dillon and D Warren, for the latter part of the survey, fieldwalked an area of approximately 10km² in the parishes of Streatley and Luton, Beds and Lilley, Herts. The survey area comprises the arable land of New Farm and Whitehill Farm, Streatley and Pond Farm Lilley, as well as uncultivated land at Bushmead, Luton (Fig 1). Most of the area was walked in 50m lines covering 2% of the area being

surveyed, with small areas rewalked to obtain a larger sample of material.

The Icknield Way runs south west-north east through the survey area, following the line of the Chiltern Hills. Its course is interrupted by the linear earthworks known as Dray's Ditches, which are of late Bronze -early Iron Age date, to the west of Galley Hill. The extant barrows and many ring ditches that are found in this area indicate that it was cleared by the late neolithic- early Bronze Age, with the various monuments sited in open country which could be observed from the Icknield Way (Coleman, 1986).

Background

Several prehistoric sites in the area have been excavated by J.Dyer. These include the Galley Hill barrow cemetery (1964, 1974), Galley Hill intersecting lines of pits (1964), Dray's Ditches (1961), Maulden Firs enclosure and Barton Hill Farm ring ditches (1962, 1964).

More recently, excavation has taken place on a ring ditch near Galley Hill (Thorpe, 1984) and at Bartonhill Cutting (Clark, 1991). Fieldwalking has been carried out by P Martin and D Hall near Barton Hill Farm, formerly Barton Parish (Hall, 1991) and by R Holgate and the writer (Holgate, 1991) near Dray's Ditches and Galley Hill. The course of a water pipeline was also walked by R Holgate at Whitehill Farm (Holgate, 1991).

A note and discussion of the fieldwalking finds (excluding post medieval) from the present survey is given below.

Mesolithic period

Finds of identifiable mesolithic flintwork consisted of a few blade fragments, unretouched flakes and cores found close to the Icknield Way and on the clay with flints covered plateau at Whitehill Farm (Fig 16).

Neolithic and Bronze Age

The distribution of flint finds from the survey is shown in Fig 17. Large flintworking scatters were found (Fig 16, 1-4) at Pond Farm and Whitehill Farm (TL1025, 1127), both on clay with flints covered ridges. The finds mainly consisted of unretouched flakes and rough cores (debitage) with a few finds of identifiable tools, notably scrapers, piercers, knives, cutting and retouched flakes. The re-use of earlier flintworking debris was shown by finds of retouched patinated flints (including mesolithic) and suggests areas of clearance along the ridge giving rise to easily recoverable surface flints.

Smaller flint scatters were found near the A6 (TL077279) on the site of a ring ditch at New Farm (TL086275) and close to the barrows at Galley Hill (TL095269). Two sherds of cord-impressed beaker pottery were found: one near Maulden Firs (TL093276) in association with a flint scatter and cropmark site; the second at TL100263 in gently sloping open country, well situated for either occupation or a barrow site.

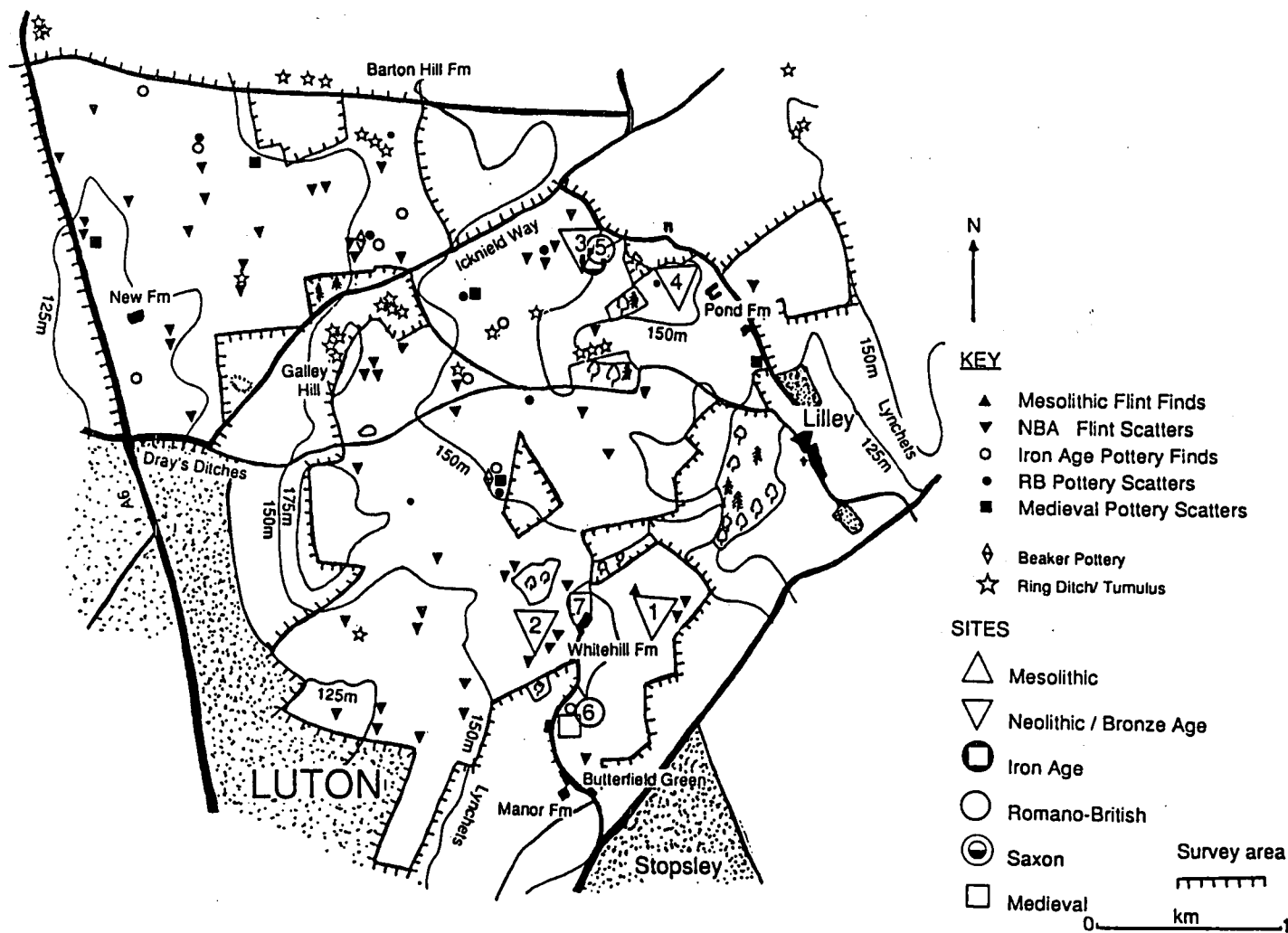


Fig 16.

Fig 16 Gazetteer of Sites

- 1 & 2. (TL1025) Large flintworking scatters (Mesolithic-Neolithic/Bronze Age) across the ridgetop around Whitehill Farm.
- 3 & 4. (TL1127) Large flintworking scatters (Neolithic/Bronze Age) along the ridgetop near Pond Farm, Lilley.
5. (TL108276) Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and early Romano-British sherds (including samian), stone scatters and tile fragments.
6. (TL106250/105249) Roman sherds, tile, quernstone fragments, Belgic sherds, medieval sherds, tile, large scatters of fire fractured flints. (Whitehill Farm).
7. (TL106256) Medieval earthworks at Whitehill Farm.

Large scatters of fire-fractured flints (potboilers) found near Whitehill Farm may denote Bronze Age or Iron Age occupation sites.

Iron Age

Several areas produced small scatters of Iron Age pottery, mid-late Iron Age in date (Fig 16: TL084281, 107276, 105249, 102272, 094275, 096277) and at three of the sites perhaps indicating continuity through into the

Romano-British period. Two scatters were found close to cropmark sites (enclosures?) near Maulden Firs (TL094275; TL096277), another with fire fractured flints near a cropmark (ringditch?) close to Wardswood Lane (TL102272).

A scatter of late pre-Roman Iron Age sherds was found with Romano-British material on the ridge at Lilley (TL107276) and near Whitehill Farm (TL105249), the latter including large scatters of fire-fractured flints.

Some of these small potsherd scatters may indicate temporary settlements, perhaps connected with pastoralism, as indicated by the enclosure site excavated at Maulden Firs by J Dyer (1962).

Romano-British period

Finds of potsherds, tile and a quernstone fragment near Whitehill Farm (Fig 16, 6 TL106250) probably indicates a Romano-British occupation site, perhaps now mainly under pasture.

A scatter of potsherds, including samian, stone and tile fragments found along the ridge near Pond Farm suggests the site of a possible 1st-2nd century Romano-British settlement.

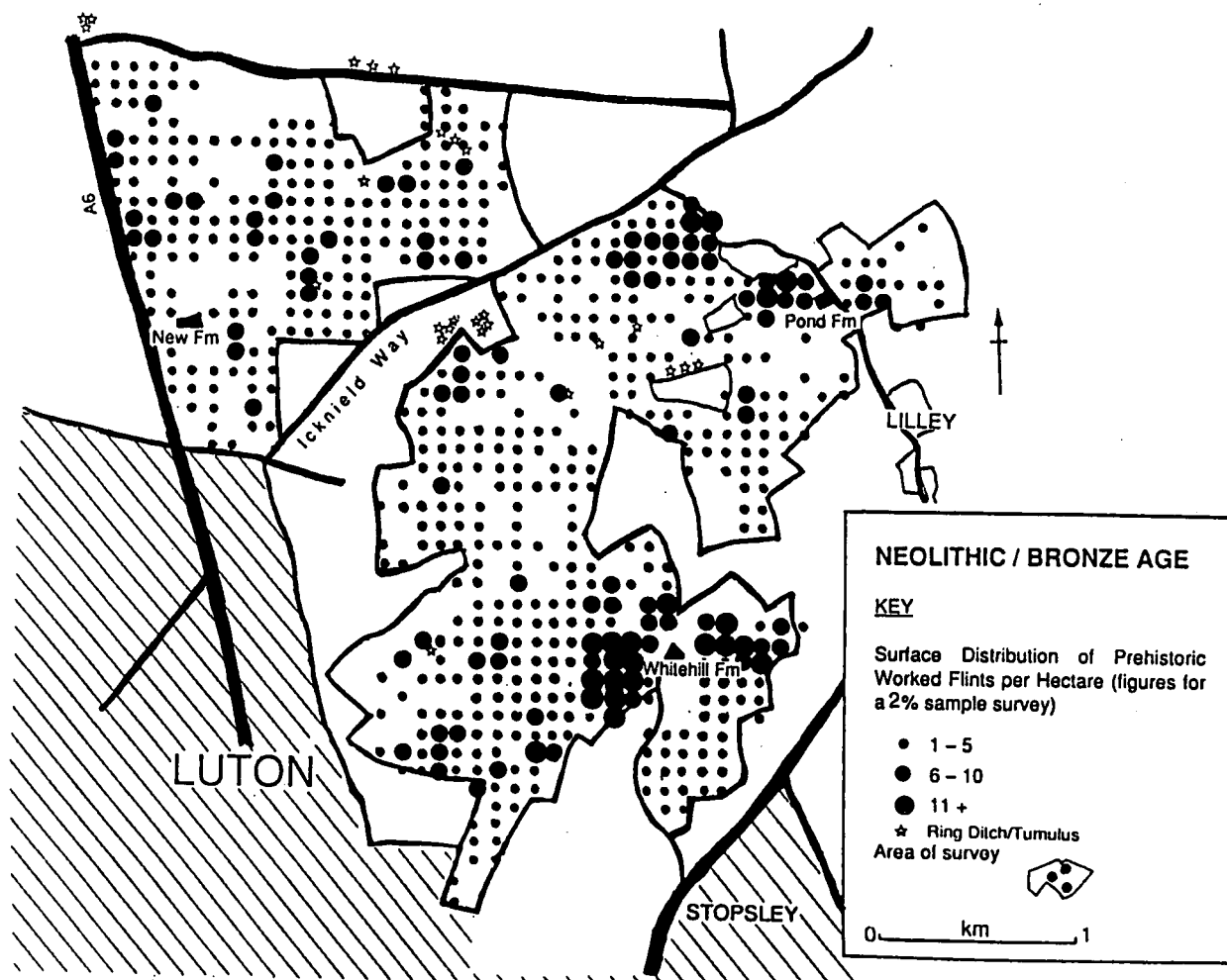


Fig 17. Distribution of Neolithic/ Bronze Age worked flints in the survey area.

Other finds of abraded Romano-British sherds found near Maulden Firs (TL095275: cropmark), at TL100274, TL100265 and at Barton Hill Farm (TL095283: cropmark) may indicate areas of Romano-British cultivation.

The general lack of Romano-British material is somewhat surprising given the evidence of Romano-British settlement elsewhere in South Bedfordshire (Hudspith, 1991) and this area's close proximity to the Icknield Way.

Medieval period

Much of the medieval agricultural landscape is still visible in the form of ridge and furrow at Whitehill Farm and New Farm, Streatley and there are lynchets along the scarp at Stopsley Common. Many of the hollow-ways and trackways that cross the area are probably of medieval origin.

A small scatter of medieval potsherds of shelly St Neot's type ware were found near the A6 (TL088277); a linear earthwork parallel to the modern road was also noted in this area. Scatters of potsherds, tile and stone near Whitehill Farm (TL105250), along with the various earthworks around the modern farmstead (TL106256), probably indicate settlement drift associated with Butterfield Green.

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Fieldwalking at Houghton Regis and Totternhoe 1991-92

R Hudspith

Introduction

The Society fieldwalked an area of c 5 km² within the parishes of Houghton Regis and Totternhoe during the winter of 1991-92. The survey area included fields around Dunstable and Totternhoe (Fig 18) as well as a small area

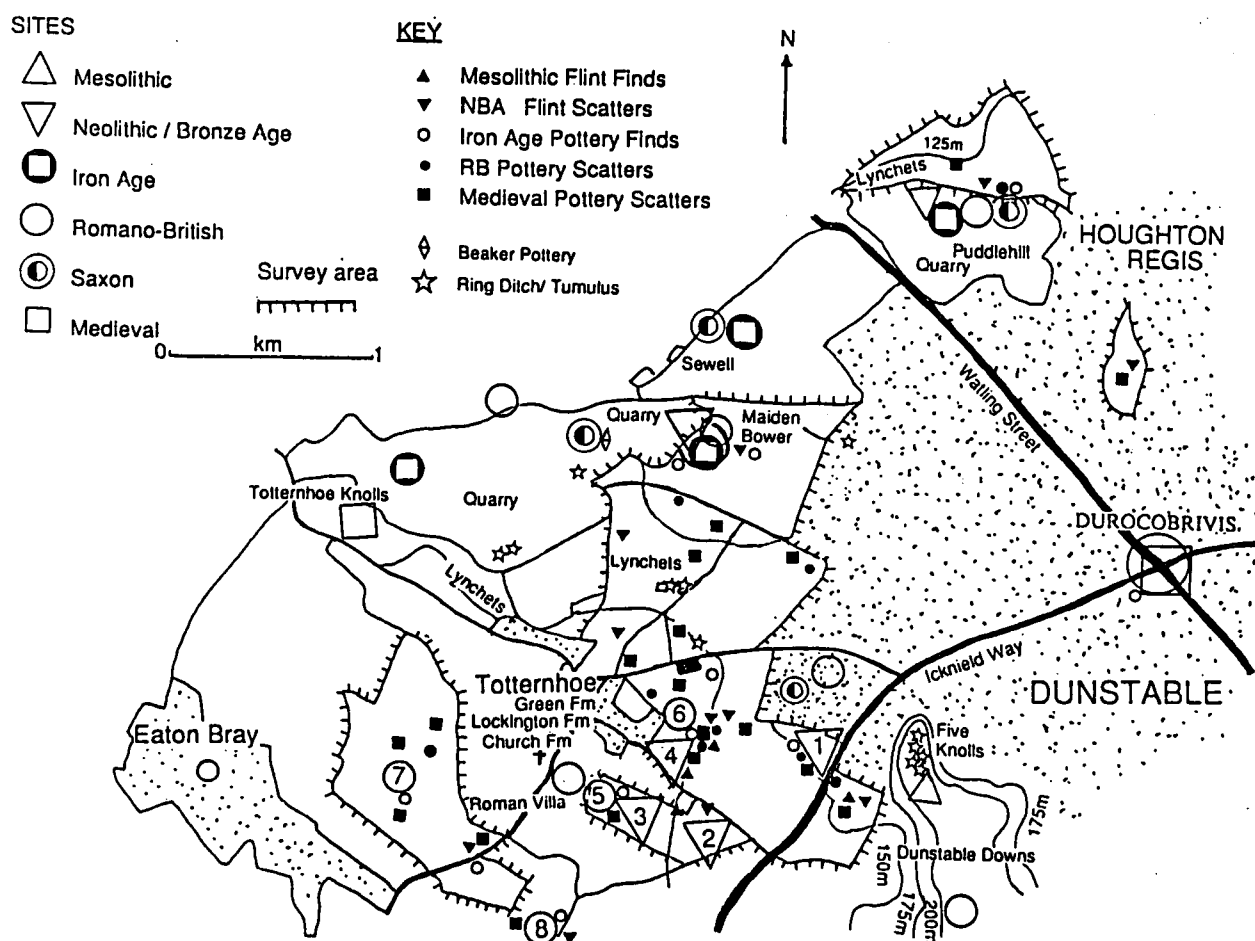


Fig 18.

Fig 18. Gazetteer of Sites

1. (TL001210) The Arrow, Large flintworking scatters (Neolithic/ Bronze Age), burnt flints, Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval sherds.
- 2, 3, 4. (SP9921) Large flintworking scatters (Neolithic/Bronze Age), large scatters of burnt flints on lower slopes, mesolithic flints, flint gritted prehistoric sherds, Romano-British and medieval sherds.
5. (SP991207) Large scatter of Romano-British building material, flint and stone, tiles (including shellgritted types) and sherds. 100m SE of villa.
6. (SP993213) Scatter of Romano-British sherds and tile fragments, medieval sherds.
7. (SP981208) Scatter of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British sherds, tile fragments.
8. (SP989200) Scatter of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age sherds, Romano-British potsherds and tile, medieval sherds and worked flints Neolithic/Bronze Age.

around the quarry at Puddlehill. The main features of this part of the Chiltern Hills are the chalk ridge running from Totternhoe to Puddlehill (ht 150m OD) and the steep scarp slopes of Dunstable Downs (ht 225mOD) descending to the Vale of Aylesbury.

Evidence of prehistoric activity consist of the remains of the Iron Age ramparts at Maiden Bower and a neolithic ditch section which is part of a causewayed enclosure exposed in the quarry face below the hillfort. The Five Knolls, a prominently positioned barrow cemetery on the chalk spur of Dunstable Downs, is probably of early Bronze Age date (Dyer, 1992).

The Icknield Way runs along the foot of the chalk scarp of the Dunstable Downs, crossing the Roman Watling Street at Dunstable. The area's archaeological sites, and the role of the Manshead Society in their discovery, excavation and interpretation, are summarised elsewhere (Matthews and Schneider, 1989; Matthews, 1976). Earlier fieldwork was carried out by W G Smith (1904) and F G Gurney (various notebooks and maps at Luton Museum dating between c 1913-22). More recently survey work has been carried out at Maiden Bower by J Pollard (Hamilton & Pollard, 1992).

A brief note and discussion of the survey finds (excluding post medieval) is given below.

Mesolithic period

Several areas yielded finds of soft hammer-struck flints, mainly blades and cores, suggesting mesolithic or early neolithic flintworking activities (Fig 18). The finds from Wellhead and the slope down to Totternhoe, included

several small scatters of blade fragments and a flaked axe fragment.

Neolithic and Bronze Age

Concentrations of worked flints were found along the ridge at Puddlehill (TL098239), Maiden Bower (SP996225), The Arrow (TL001210) and Wellhead (SP994210), and probably indicate occupation or activity sites. The first two sites are known neolithic sites (Matthews, 1976, 1-18) whilst the last two (Fig 18, 1 and 2) are sited close to the Icknield Way, which in prehistoric times was probably a broad band of passage. The re-use of earlier flint waste has been noted elsewhere (Hudspith, 1991). Particularly noticeable were finds of arrowheads (mainly barbed and tanged types). Apart from debitage, other finds included scrapers (5% of finds at "The Arrow"), cutting flakes, piercers, blades and hammerstones. The similarity of finds from Wellhead, The Arrow and Maiden Bower suggests a common industry and period for their use, probably dating to the late neolithic or early Bronze Age. The sites at Wellhead and The Arrow are particularly well situated to observe the Five Knolls barrows on Dunstable Downs (Fig 18), which are visible on the skyline.

On the slope from Wellhead down to the stream at Totternhoe, more worked flints were found in association with fire-fractured flint scatters. These suggest a later flintworking industry, perhaps of Bronze Age date, possibly indicating domestic sites. A few flint-gritted sherds were found in association with these fire-fractured flint scatters. The finds are similar in character, though perhaps not so numerous as those associated with the so called "burnt mounds" found elsewhere in the Chilterns (Smithson, 1984, 113).

Iron Age

Abraded fragments of Iron Age pottery were found at several locations on the ridge: at Puddlehill and Maiden Bower (both known Iron Age sites), on the slopes at Lancot Hill and between Totternhoe and Eaton Bray. Identifiable late pre-Roman Iron Age (Belgic) sherds were found in two areas to the north of Totternhoe Church (Fig 18, 7) and may indicate some continuity of settlement into the Romano-British period.

Romano British period

Three previously unrecorded sites were identified, each indicated by scatters of potsherds and tile fragments (including shelly types) and all probably related to the Totternhoe Villa (Matthews, Schneider and Horne 1992) (Fig 18, Sites 5, 6 and 7).

A recently discovered scatter of Romano-British sherds and tile along the course of a water pipeline at Doolittle Lane (Fig 1, 8: 1km to the south; D Warren, *pers comm*) may indicate another occupation or activity site connected with the villa.

Abraded potsherds were found at Maiden Bower and Puddlehill, both known Romano-British sites, at the Arrow and along the foot of the Downs indicating probable areas

of Romano-British cultivation as well as suggesting that the Icknield Way was a defined track by the Romano-British period.

Medieval period

There were finds of abraded medieval potsherds throughout the survey area. These probably indicate areas of medieval cultivation, an observation supported by the extant remains of ridge and furrow visible within the large fields at Totternhoe which are particularly noticeable in the winter months.

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BRICKS AS A BUILDING MATERIAL IN BEDFORDSHIRE CHURCHES

by David H. Kennett

It might be thought that brick is one of the principal building materials used in Bedfordshire churches. The evidence, however, is to the contrary. Only one Bedfordshire church, All Saints' Caddington, seems to have any work of pre-Reformation date which was done in brick, and even here brick is combined with flint and stone without regular patterning in fifteenth-century and later work on the west tower and its higher stair turret.

In work, both internal and external, of the period 1540-1840 brick is used in only eight churches, half the number where stone is used.

Only in Victorian and twentieth-century work is brick seemingly the principal material used. At least fourteen Anglican churches were built of brick in the century and a half since 1840. No attempt has been made to count the number of brick nonconformist chapels of either pre-1840 or the Victorian period in the county. Similarly Roman Catholic churches have not been assessed. This is because the research of which this note forms part is being undertaken within a national project of the British Brick Society, and being published in detail within the pages of their newsletter, *British Brick Society Information*, to catalogue the known use of brick in churches prior to 1840.

It is possible that when the project is more advanced, it will be extended to the Victorian years and will cover denominations other than the Established Church.

Partly through the residence of those who have contributed to the project to date, and partly arising from their earlier work, the listings which have appeared in print have covered counties within or adjacent to the south midlands. The project is organised according to the traditional counties of England and listings have so far been published for Berkshire and Hertfordshire. Listings have been prepared for Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Staffordshire, and it is anticipated that the first-named will be appearing in one of the three issues of *British Brick Society Information* to be published in 1994. Publication will therefore post-date this note and will contain full references.

South Midlands Archaeology also covers Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. Brick is rare in these counties. A check of the obvious sources reveals no major use of brick before 1840 in Northamptonshire and only Ewelme in Oxfordshire. The new church of All Saints' at Dunsden and Eye, Oxon., built in 1842 to designs of J. Turner is brick.

The listings, and their accompanying discussions, are not intended as definitive accounts of brick churches. They have been compiled by checking the appropriate volume of Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's series *The Buildings of England* and where available the topographical volumes of *The Victoria County History of England*. Work on Bedfordshire gave five churches using brick as a building material working from Pevsner's volume. To these were added four further examples using *The Victoria County History of Bedfordshire* volumes two and three.

These nine are discussed herein; comparison is made with the same usages in churches in Buckinghamshire and the old county of Berkshire. As noted, excepting Caddington, all churches in Bedfordshire using brick date to after the Reformation.

Bedfordshire has three complete churches of brick. The earliest is St Mary Magdalene, Whipsnade, where the west tower is brick of sixteenth-century date and the nave was rebuilt in chequered brickwork in the eighteenth century. The brick apsidal chancel dates to 1866, but as yet no documentary evidence has been traced which allows other than stylistic dating for the tower and nave. The only stone used at Whipsnade is the west doorway and the angles to the south side of the nave. It is possible that the west tower represents the first building on the site, either as a tower built with a new church or, more probably, as a west tower added to an existing medieval church. Whipsnade is a new settlement of the middle ages: the parish is absent from Domesday Book. In 1086, it was subsumed within Eaton Bray. The eighteenth-century nave clearly is a rebuilding, presumably of the same dimensions of the existing nave, given the reuse of the angles on the south side and the west doorway. The chancel could be *de novo* or a replacement: eighteenth-century liturgical practice in the Church of England did not demand a chancel. The nave rebuilding

could be provision after a long period of neglect: the local landed family, the Vaux, were recusant. Whipsnade became part of the Brownlow estate based at Ashridge, Bucks., in the nineteenth century.

Also part of the Vaux estate was Heath and Reach. Here St Leonard's is described dismissively by Pevsner:

"A poor specimen. 1829 with pointed windows except for a short C16 W tower, and an apse of 1866, yellow brick with red bands, polygonal. The S porch is similar and of 1876. Inside not more of interest".

The tower is stone; the nave cemented brick.

The third complete church of brick is an estate church. All Saints' Southill, was built in 1814-16 incorporating much of the medieval church. The arcades repeat the Decorated style of their predecessors; windows in the chancel and the north aisle are original as is the medieval tower. This is another cemented church: Southill Manor is also cemented. What is not clear is whether Henry Holland, who was engaged by Samuel Whitbread II to remodel the house also worked on the church. Southill is a church which would repay further work: given the long chancel (34ft 3 in in length; 10.47 m), it can be surmised that here is a case where once there had been a centre tower which the surviving medieval west tower replaced. The brick building is merely the last phase of a complex story.

There are quite a number of complete brick churches in Buckinghamshire. The earliest is St James', Fulmer, built in 1610 for Marmaduke Dayrell, treasurer to James I and Charles I; the best-known is Robert Hooke's church on the hill at Willen dedicated to St Mary Magdalene which was built in 1679-80. Eighteenth-century examples are St Martin, Fenny Stratford, of 1724-30, by Browne Willis; St Peter's, Chalfont St Peter, of 1726; St Margaret's, Biddlesden, of 1731, which is two bays of a stable block; All Saints', Bow Brickhill, partly rebuilt in brick in 1756/7; and St Peter's, Loudwater, of 1788. Three were built in the nineteenth century: All Saints', Marlow, in 1832-35 to designs of C.F. Inwood; the church at Latimer in the 1830s to designs of Edmund Blore; and St Michael's, Steeple Claydon, partly rebuilt in brick in 1842. The churches at Biddlesden, Fulmer, and Steeple Claydon, are certainly estate churches, with a high level of squirearchy patronage.

Whipsnade church had a sixteenth-century brick tower. Repair work including the use of brick at All Saints', Caddington, has been mentioned as the single attested pre-Reformation use of brick in a Bedfordshire church. Two towers have eighteenth-century brickwork. At Shillington, the large fourteenth-century church of All Saints, which is built of ironstone, gained a new top to the west tower in 1750. Brick was used; presumably ironstone was unavailable. The old church at Segenhoe was partly refurbished in the eighteenth century. Brick was used for a new west tower.

Towers are frequent in Buckinghamshire brickwork. Apart from the complete churches mentioned, brick towers are known on several. That at St James', Dorney, is pre-Reformation: the literature describes it as "early Tudor". On the other hand the "Tudor brick tower" at St Mary's, Hitcham, could belong to any quarter of the late fifteenth or the sixteenth century. The top storey of the tower and the higher stair turret were added in brick to St Michael's, Horton, c.1600; the parish is now in Berkshire. Also transferred south is St Mary's, Langley Marish, where the north-west tower was built in brick in 1609. The old church at Stoke Mandeville, St Mary's, was refurbished with a new tower and stair turret in the late seventeenth century. A tower of red brick and flint was built at the west end of the nave of St Mary's, Hambleden, in 1721, after the fall of the Norman central tower in 1703.

Twenty-four Berkshire churches have a brick tower. These range in date from sixteenth-century examples at St Andrew, Bradfield, and St Mary, Wargrave, through seventeenth- and eighteenth-century examples, to those of St Frideswide, Frilsham, of ?1834, and St John, Stokecross, of 1839, which is a complete rebuilding of a church using blue bricks.

Part of the work at Frilsham was the provision of a brick south porch. The remaining two Bedfordshire churches, where brick was used as a building material, both have brick south porches. At All Saints', Tilsworth, the latest work is the brick porch. The elaborate bargeboard suggests that it may have replaced an earlier timber-framed porch. At All Saints', Ravensden, the surviving vertical timbers make it clear that the brick porch encases an earlier timber-framed porch. Elsewhere in this church, the south wall of the chancel was rebuilt in brick; Pevsner suggests "probably late C17" but the present brickwork suggests a later date; this may be merely refurbishment of existing work.

Buckinghamshire churches with brick porches include two of the seventeenth century: St James', Dorney, of 1661, and St Mary, Langley Marish, of 1613; The latter is now in Berkshire. Now in Oxfordshire, All Saints', Sutton Courtenay, has a two-storey brick porch of fifteenth-century date.

Missing from Bedfordshire churches are brick-built chapels. Buckinghamshire has one of c.1560 at St Giles', Stoke Poges, for the Hastings family; the Garrard chapel of the early seventeenth century at St James', Dorney; and the Kederminster chapel of 1613, with the Kederminster Library of 1631, at St Mary's, Langley Marish. Apart from Langley Marish, neither old nor new Berkshire has any churches with brick-built chapels. There are several in Hertfordshire.

The lack of brick chapels, particularly when viewed against the building of these on to churches in neighbouring counties, does sum up the use of brick as a building material for churches in post-Reformation Bedfordshire. It was of minor significance.

The lack of brick chapels can partly be explained in other ways. A brick chapel is an expensive luxury, even for a family with a large number of acres. Even in 1540, existing provision was high. Taking the largest houses in Bedfordshire and their occupants, the count of existing chapels and mausolea is high: the Russells at Woburn used Chenies Bucks.; the Napiers at Luton Hoo took over the south-east chapel at St Mary the Virgin, Luton, a chapel which was part of the Hoo estate; the Greys at Wrest Park at the mausoleum at Flitton; the St Johns at Bletsoe Castle and Melchbourne had the north transept of St Mary's, Bletsoe; the owner of Eaton Bray manor could avail himself of space in the transepts of St Mary's, Eaton Bray. Only the Bruces, the Earls of Ailesbury at Houghton House needed to make provision: their stone-built mausoleum was added to St Mary's, Maulden, and rebuilt with the chancel in 1859.

The builders of brick houses chose not to build chapels in the material. John, Lord Wenlock built his house, Someries Castle, of brick between 1448 and the late 1450s; his chapel, completed before 1461, was of stone. Sir John Gostwick built Willington Manor of brick, albeit with outbuildings, all that survive, of re-used monastic stone, but the north chapel of St Lawrence's church is stone. The next parish church, All Saints' at Cople, has two sixteenth-century chapels added to a fifteenth-century rebuilding of the main structure. The parish has two large houses; the house of the Lukes at Wood End has some brick in the fabric. The chapels in the church are stone. At Cardington, the next parish to the west, Sir William Gascoigne began to build a large brick manor house in the south of the parish in the 1520s/1530s. It is uncertain whether he ever completed all that was intended. The north chapel is now stone; the rebuilding of St Mary the Virgin in 1898-1902 by George Highton presumably followed the building materials of the sixteenth century.

It is a question requiring further work, and thought, as to why, in Bedfordshire and elsewhere, brick was used for house-building by wealthy men, but when these same men came to build a chapel as their resting place within the structure of the local parish church they chose to build in stone. The most obvious example within the south midlands is at Ewelme, Oxon. Here the de la Pole house, refurbished by King Henry VIII, was of brick. The grammar school was of brick; and the almshouses were of brick. But the parish church was of stone, albeit using brick as a stone to be inserted in the battlements. The latter suggests available materials being used up so as not to make new orders upon the quarry. The same may well account for the timber-framed porch.

In the Victorian years and even more in the twentieth century, Bedfordshire changed from being a rural county to being an urban one. Two large towns came to dominate the population statistics: Luton in the south with a third of the county's population and the smaller Bedford in the north.

Luton has brick churches ranging from the exciting - All Saints' and St Andrews', by Caroe and Sir Giles Gilbert Scott respectively in 1922-3 and 1931-2 - to the banal. Here one takes one's pick from the former Christ Church of

1856-60, the disused St Saviour's of 1897-1905, and the surviving St Paul's of 1890. Whether Anglican or nonconformist, most of the twentieth-century structures are basically a box, of no great architectural distinction: St Anne's, Crawley Green, of 1939 and Beech Hill Methodist, with adjacent schoolroom, and hence two boxes, can serve

as examples. But like the other churches they are built of exposed brick. It is a question not yet considered as to why brick suddenly became respectable for church building in Victorian Luton whereas elsewhere in the county the material had been eschewed for the previous eight hundred years.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Report for 1992

Michael Farley

During the year the section undertook a range of fieldwork including excavations, watching briefs and evaluations. It has been particularly pleasing that road proposals are now able to receive the greater attention they deserve. In the past, data held within Sites and Monuments Records has been considered by engineers to be a sufficient base from which to work when considering road proposals. The Planning Policy Guidance Note Archaeology and Planning has now led the Department of Transport and its consultants to agree to assess more fully the potential archaeological component of road schemes at an early stage. On a less positive note, the curtailing of central government funding for fieldwork in the new city of Milton Keynes, leaves an uncertain vacuum for which no clear funding provision has been made.

The notes below, by Jonathan Parkhouse, record some of the more significant pieces of work carried out by the section in the course of the year.

A Mid Saxon site at Wolverton Mill (SP 803407)

An excavation was undertaken at the Post Office Training College at Wolverton Mill, Milton Keynes. The work was financed by the Royal Mail and directed by Phil Carstairs. Archaeological features at Wolverton Mill were first discovered by aerial survey, and excavation of part of the site was undertaken during the early 1970s by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit prior to construction of the college buildings.

Following proposals to develop the site further, an evaluation undertaken in 1991 demonstrated the site's extent. The work undertaken in 1992 exposed a complex of ditches defining a section of the perimeter of a large enclosure, approximately 150 x 160 m in extent. The principal feature is a ditch approximately 2.5 m wide, with smaller parallel "satellite" ditches on either side. Three other ditches, aligned approximately at right angles to the

enclosure ditches, were also investigated. Two of these subsidiary ditches were on the inside of the main enclosure, whilst the third was an external feature, cutting and post-dating the outer "satellite" ditch.

The supposed mid-Saxon date is confirmed by the artefacts within the features: sand-tempered Ipswich type wares and shell-tempered Maxey type fabrics, fragments of quernstones imported from the Eifel, iron knife blades and a bone comb.

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Bottledump Corner, Tattenhoe, Milton Keynes. (SP 82 32)

A salvage excavation of a small Saxon inhumation cemetery was directed by Andrew Hunn. The site was discovered by Gordon Heritage and George Foster during the re-alignment of the A421 near Tattenhoe. Five individuals were found in association with grave goods of seventh century date. The condition of the skeletal remains was extremely poor, and location of the burials was greatly assisted by the metal detectorists. One of the burial assemblages, comprising a necklace of silver wire loops and a silver pendant, glass and amethyst beads, and a bronze pin, has striking affinities to one of the inhumations at Chamberlains Barn, Leighton Buzzard, Beds (Hyslop, *Arch. J.* 120 (1963)), which is only seven miles distant from Bottledump Corner. In addition, a copper alloy buckle from one of the other Bottledump Corner graves appears to have been manufactured in the same workshop as a virtually identical item from Chamberlains Barn. Iron spears and knives from the other inhumations bore mineralised traces of the organic components (straw and textiles) of the surfaces upon which the inhumations had originally lain.

The size of the cemetery is small, although further burials may have been removed entirely by ploughing, and it is possible that the site may have extended further to the south. Another small late cemetery in the area had recently been examined during excavation of the medieval earthworks at Westbury by Shenley in 1990.

A Saxon cemetery at Milton Keynes Village (SP 88 39)

During extension of the car park next to the cricket ground at Milton Keynes Village a large number of inhumations were revealed. The site is adjacent to an area where

inhumations, believed to be of mid to late Saxon date, were recorded by Dennis Mynard at the edge of an area of gravel extraction in 1967.

Over sixty articulated individuals were recorded under the direction of Jo Lawson, together with significant quantities of disarticulated bone. The cemetery had clearly been in use for a considerable period of time. There were no grave goods, but scraps of pottery recovered from the cemetery soil indicate that burials took place from the mid to late Saxon period until perhaps the twelfth century.

Investigations in advance of road improvements near Thornborough (SP 726 332)

Re-alignment of the A421 west of Thornborough Bridge provided an opportunity for small scale investigation of a Romano-British site at Bourton Grounds, under the direction of Phil Carstairs. Non-systematic fieldwalking and metal detector finds point to the existence of a linear settlement extending westwards for nearly 1km from the ford over The Twins; to the east of the ford are the Thornborough burial mounds excavated during the last century.

A 2 m wide trench adjacent to the present road revealed traces of at least two stone buildings together with a series of (?enclosure) ditches. The features range in date from the late pre-Roman Iron Age to the fourth century.

St John's Hospital, Stone (SP 779 120)

An evaluation excavation was by undertaken by Phil Carstairs for the Regional Health Authority at Stone Hospital, in an area where Romano-British and Saxon material was recovered during the last century. No trace was found of any features or material dating to either of these periods.

Within one of the trial trenches, however, was a pit which contained pottery and struck flint. Some 47 sherds of pottery were recovered in two different fabrics, one flint-gritted and the other sandy oxidised. Rims from two different vessels in the former fabric were identified; one of these vessels appears to belong to an earlier Neolithic plain bowl tradition. Analysis of the breadth:length ratio of the 55 struck flints was also consistent with an early Neolithic date. Such discoveries are rare in the locality.

An evaluation at Bletchley Park (SP 8654 3425)

Trial trenching was undertaken on an area of proposed development by Phil Carstairs on behalf of Lawson-Price. Previous archaeological investigations in the area by MKAU had produced evidence of Romano-British settlement, with a focus apparently just to the north of the

area assessed. The trial trenches revealed traces of several ditches, few of which contained large quantities of Romano-British material, suggesting that these features were on the periphery of the main settlement. A "corn drier" flue was also located.

In addition to the Romano-British features a large ditch backfilled in the post-medieval period could have been part of an earlier enclosure. The foundations of some of the buildings of the former Government Code and Cypher School were also revealed.

Proposed road improvements:

Tingewick by-pass evaluation. Evaluation of the route, consisting of documentary and cartographic studies, field reconnaissance and fieldwalking, and geophysical survey (undertaken by Oxford Archaeotechnics), was carried out for the County Council. Earthworks, perhaps house platforms, were discovered on the northern edge of the village. Some minor geophysical anomalies may also be of archaeological interest.

M1 widening stages 1 and 2. A desktop study and initial field reconnaissance was undertaken for Acer Consultants and the Department of Transport. The assessment methodology was devised in conjunction with colleagues from the Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire County units, since the proposals affected all three counties. Two new sites were located in Buckinghamshire. A scatter of rubble and dressed stone about 30 m across was located at SP 8445, in association with unabraded sherds of Romano-British pottery; the site is probably a small building. A series of earthworks was noted at Tathall End (SP 8246). Some of these may be related to gravel digging in the bottom of a minor valley, but others are more likely to be archaeological, although the complex as a whole is difficult to interpret.

M25 widening Stages 1 and 2. Assessment, consisting of desktop study and initial field reconnaissance, was undertaken for Sir William Halcrow and Partners and the Department of Transport. One new possible site, consisting of indistinct earthworks, was discovered at Palmer's Moor, on the periphery of the study area.

Other fieldwork by the section

Oldbrook, Milton Keynes (SP 8537). A small scatter of Romano-British material was revealed during preparation of a site for a housing development and a watching brief was maintained during the early stages of construction. Some of the finds were derived from ditches and pits visible in foundation trenches. The extent of the site could not be defined but did not appear to be large, and no building material was discovered.

Several other watching briefs were carried out.

Other work of the County Archaeological Service

The remains of St John's Hospital at High Wycombe, one of the town's two medieval hospitals, were the subject of a documentary study prior to upgrading the presentation of the monument. The Sites and Monuments Record continues to be an important resource both for development control and research. It is of course of great importance to the county that it continues to be maintained as a dynamic resource through constant updating.

Some of the work of the service appeared in print in *Records of Bucks* 31, published during the year. This included a report on Ravenstone priory, on a watching brief at Newport Pagnell, and the results of a survey by Julia Wise (an in-service student), on a multi-period group of earthworks on Whiteleaf Hill.

As usual the service was delighted to have the continuing assistance of the County Museum Archaeological Group who helped in a number of ways including fieldwalking, finds processing and on site as the occasion arose. The assistance of Val Kempster has enabled a dormant field names project to be brought to life, again with very useful results.

CHESS VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Pann Watermill, High Wycombe Stanley Cauvain

The river Wye which runs through High Wycombe provided power for many watermills in the last 1000 years. Pann Mill was situated at the eastern end of the town next to the A40 and close by the remains of the medieval hospital of St. John.

The last mill house and mill buildings on the site were demolished by the local Council in 1970. A wheel, supported by a section of brick wall, survived demolition and has since been integrated into a museum building by the Wycombe Society.

An earlier resistivity survey of the vacant areas had shown that some of the mill features survived underneath the 1970 levelling of the site. A limited excavation was undertaken on behalf of the Wycombe Society and with the permission of Wycombe District Council, to determine the extent and nature of the remaining features.

The excavations concentrated on an area suspected as being the junction of the mill house and the mill itself because it was possible that a wheel had once occupied this area. The excavations revealed concrete floors and remains of walls from both house and mill. At the junction of the two buildings was a brick-lined culvert, back-filled with rubble from the 1970 demolition. At least two different phases of culvert construction could be discerned. Most of the finds were domestic pottery from the last 200 years.

A preliminary investigation of the mill leat revealed at least 1.8 m of stratified material. At the bottom of a trial pit the pottery sequence dated back to the 14th century. (The 14th century pottery may be explained by the following reference on Pann Mill from the Victoria County History for Bucks "...and in 1344 Adam de Mantham granted 'two water-mills under one roof called la Pennell in Wycombe' to Sir Hugh de Neweton")

An unusual Penn tile

Pauline and Stanley Cauvain

The production of decorated floortiles at Penn (Bucks) in the 14th century is well known and has been discussed by Eames (1980) and others (Hohler 1941, 1942). New material and sites continue to be found.

A recently studied collection of 152 fragments of decorated floortiles included an unusual design with a representation of a "king's" head, see Fig 1. This new tile is larger than the standard Penn king's head which displays the head in the diamond format. The new tile is 33 mm thick and measures 150 mm across, in contrast with standard Penn tiles which average 24 mm thick and 110 mm across.

The pattern on the new tile is impressed into the surface, to a depth approaching 2 mm, much deeper than with standard Penn tiles on which the pattern hardly penetrates the surface. A white slip filled the pattern on the new tile and in places spread onto the surrounding tile surface. There was evidence of a pale yellow, almost clear glaze on the upper surface of the tile and the lower surface was covered with a layer of sand during manufacture. There was no evidence for stabbing holes or key scoops.

A possible explanation for this unusual design and form of tile is that it represent a prototype for the Eames form 1357 (Hohler P18) and, as such, dates from the earliest phases of tile production at Penn, the first quarter of the 14th century.

References

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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook one watching brief in Buckinghamshire in 1992. The results are summarized below. A fuller report has been lodged with the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record.



Fig 1. Comparison of new Penn tile with Hohler type P18 (Scale 1:4).

Hanslope, Church of St James the Great
(SP 480247) - Alan Hardy

A watching brief was conducted in April 1992, during the digging of a pipe trench alongside the churchyard path and around the E end of the church. Apart from the tops of two brick vaults no archaeological features were evident. It is known that the present 14th century church replaced a Saxon church on a different site. It would appear that the present church was built on a previously unoccupied site.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Simpson, Bletchley, Bucks; Simpson Manor House and Moated Site
(SP884360) - Peter Masters

Resistivity survey was carried out at the sites of Simpson Manor House and moated site by Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit (Contracts Section) for Milton Keynes Development Corporation. The Manor House was demolished in 1802 and the survey here was undertaken in order to provide information as to its ground plan. Areas of high resistance appear to indicate the walls of the former building and the plan recovered compares well with a

painting of 1782 which shows the south-west side. Survey within the moated site revealed possible walls but a coherent plan could not be distinguished. (Figs 2, 3 and 4).

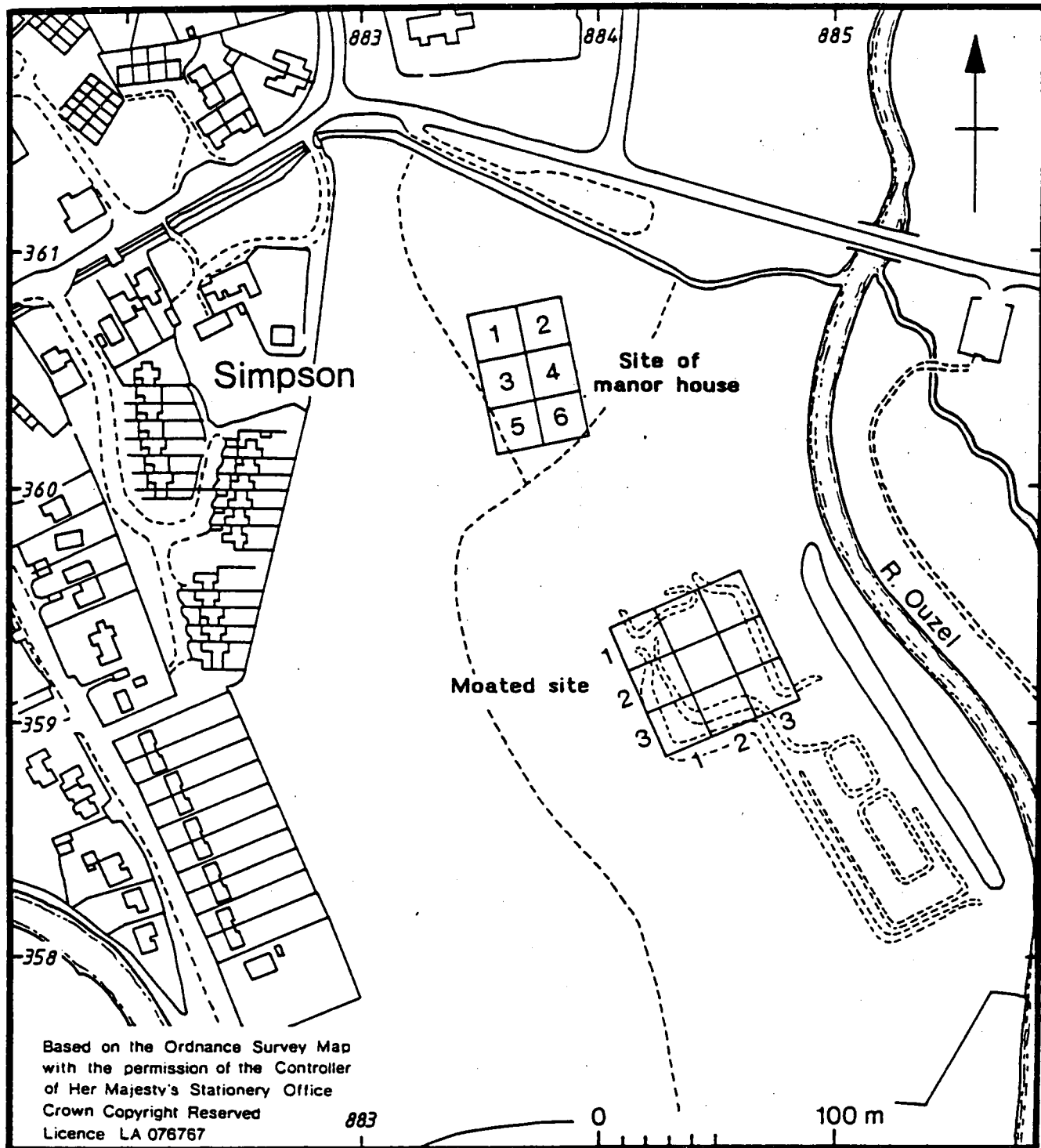
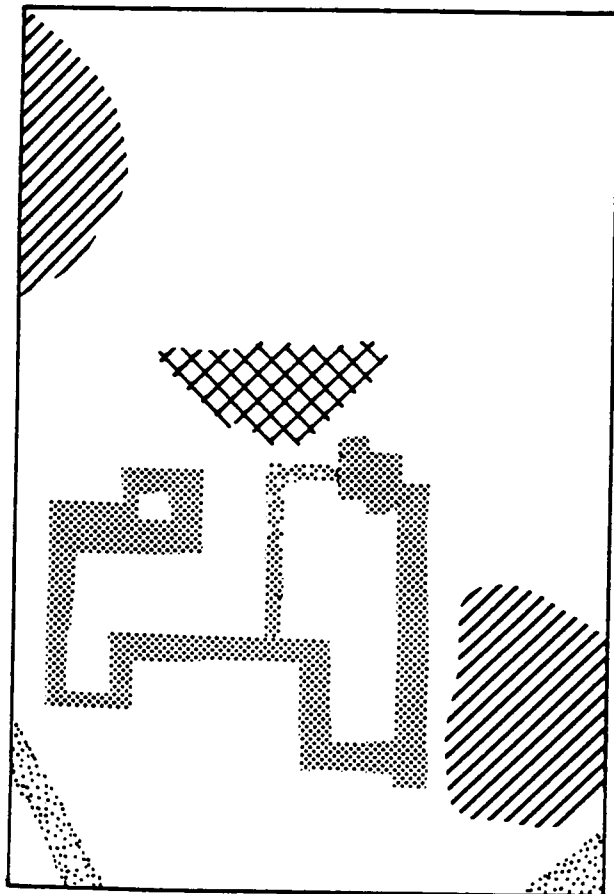


Fig 2. 1:2500 location plan of grids surveyed.



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Walls |  Rubble spreads/
cellar infill |
|  Footpaths |  Geological traces |

Fig 3. Resistivity plot of the Simpson Manor House and interpretation.

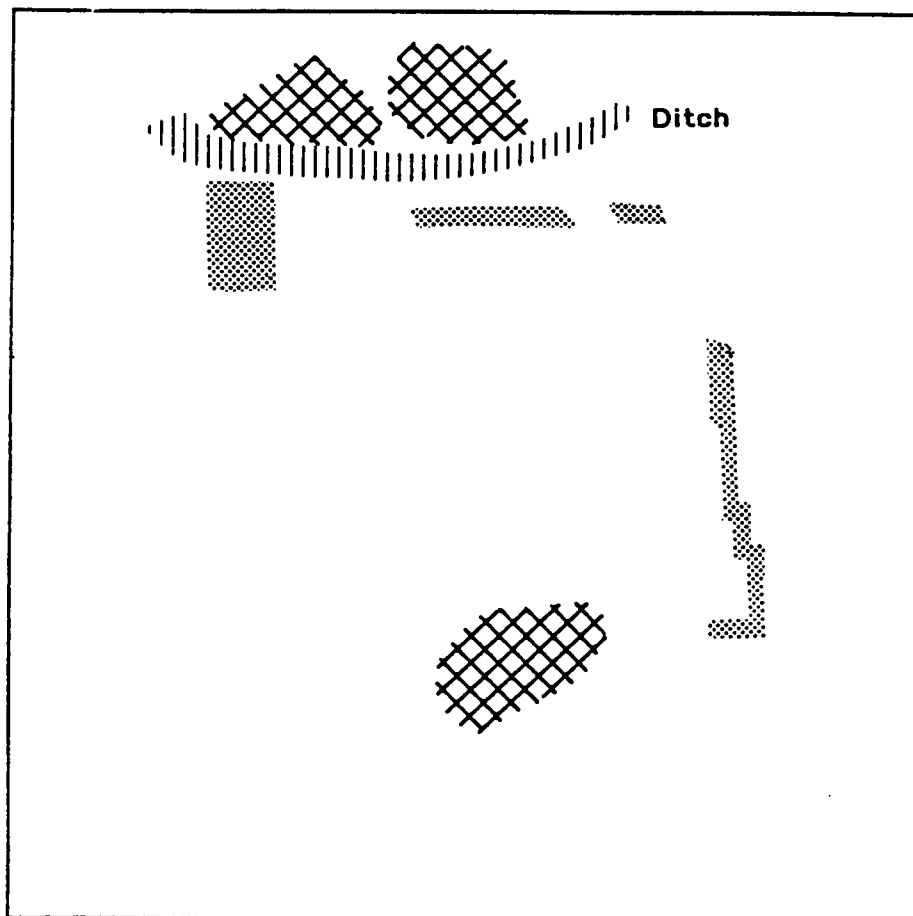
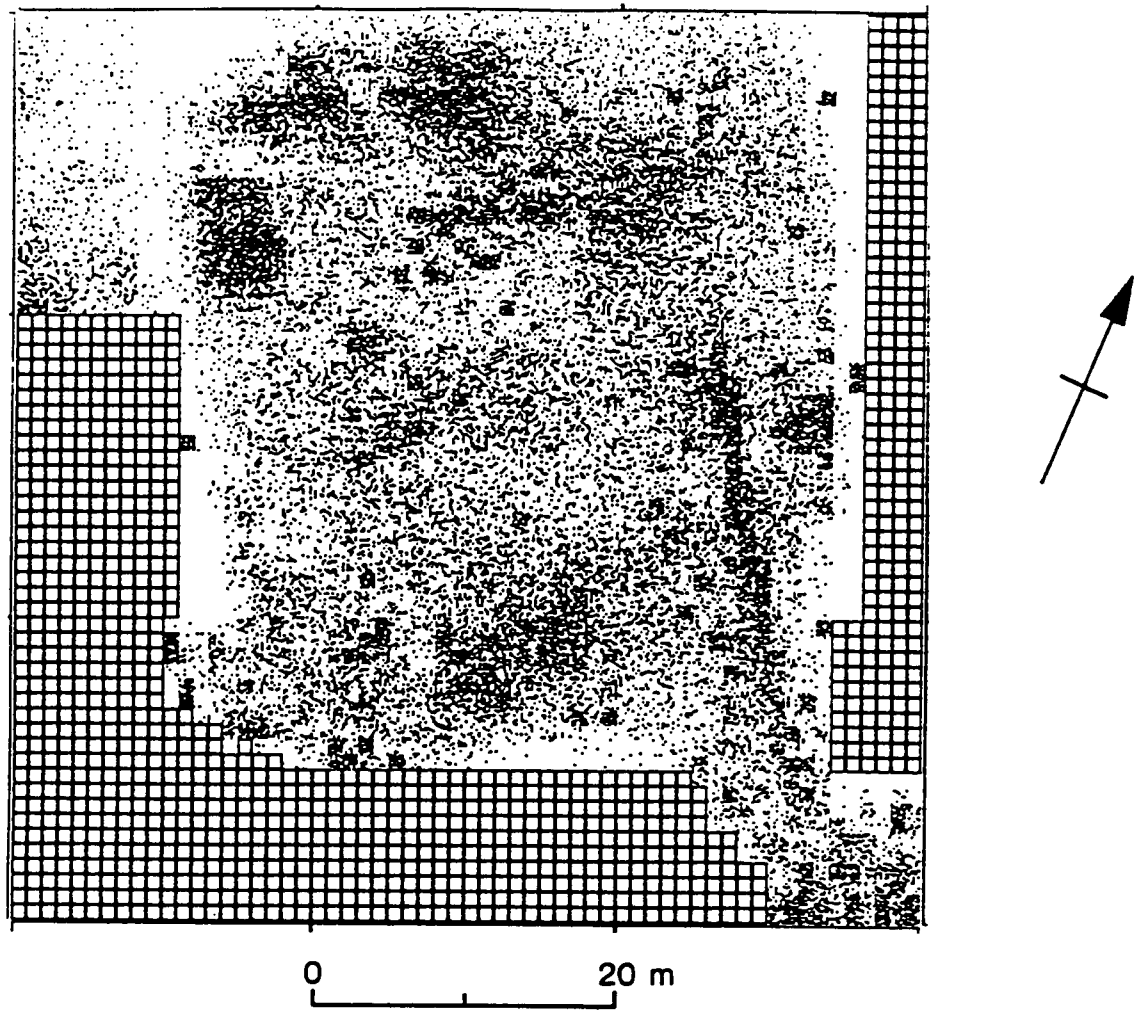


Fig 4. 1:500 resistivity plot of the moated site and interpretation

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

Report for 1992

Compiled and edited by Mike Shaw

INTRODUCTION

The most significant event of the year was the decision to move the two sections of the Unit into separate divisions of the County Council Planning and Transportation Department (P and T). The Archaeology Unit at present forms a branch within the Development Division of P and T. It is split into Curatorial and Contracts Sections with section heads who answer to Alan Hannan, the County Archaeologist. The reorganisation has come about as part of a decision to divide P and T as a whole into policy, client management and services divisions. From the middle of 1993 the Curatorial Section will join with the Conservation Group to form Northamptonshire Heritage, a branch within the Policy Division, with Alan Hannan at its head; while the Contracts Section will be re-named Northamptonshire Archaeology and will constitute a branch within the Services Division, with Brian Dix as Chief Archaeologist. This separation represents the current concerns and working practices of the two sections more closely and should reassure those clients who have previously worried about the independence of one section from the other. Contact, however, will still need to be maintained between archaeologists in the two sections, as it is with other archaeologists working in the area, in order to ensure that expertise of benefit to the archaeology of the county is not lost.

CURATORIAL SECTION

Sites and Monuments Record

Christine Addison

There is currently a total of 5,993 sites in the record, 272 of which were added during 1992. Most of these were identified by interpretation of aerial photographs, but other new sites were discovered by professional and amateur archaeologists, metal detectorists and other interested members of the public.

Significant new sites added include a possible Romano-British temple and/or barrow cemetery site in Oundle parish (Site 5685) and a prehistoric settlement and/or barrow cemetery in Thorpe Mandeville parish (Site 5711).

Throughout the year, 132 requests for information were received from consultants, researchers and members of the public. Additionally, the SMR dealt with enquiries from schools, through the services of the Education Officer. A paper copy of the SMR database is located within the Unit

library and continued in full use, particularly for in-house consultation. Initial moves were made towards replacing this with a computer terminal directly linked to the SMR, which would have the advantage of supplying enquirers with the most up-to-date information.

The Northamptonshire SMR continues to be represented on the Council for British Archaeology East Midlands Industrial Archaeology panel. Significantly this forum has in 1992, jointly with the Association of Industrial Archaeology, prepared the basis of a National Industrial Archaeology SMR. Several pilot studies, including one in Northamptonshire, are to be conducted during 1993 in liaison with local experts.

The matter of enhancement of the SMR's record in areas not substantially covered, like Industrial Archaeology, was discussed again with RCHME, but proposals for enhancement were shelved, following embarkation on a major national review of SMRs by RCHME. Results of this survey, still awaited, will determine future action for record enhancement. The need for information exchange with other county-based SMRs, and a desire for greater integration and standardisation, has resulted in the participation of Northamptonshire SMR within the East Midlands SMR Working Party.

To meet the need for greater efficiency and user-friendliness, the ORACLE database, complete with upgraded computers, is now programmed for installation in 1993.

Throughout the year promotional talks featuring the work of the SMR were given to The Countryside Liaison Group, South Northants District Council officers, Northamptonshire Gardens Trust and students on the Leicester museums course. Further guidance on the function of the SMR was issued in a County Council Helpline leaflet.

A programme to complete the computer plotting of cropmark sites identified by aerial photography was initiated in 1992. More than 250 new sites had been identified during the 1990 flying season and plotting of these began in earnest, initially by commissioning work from external consultants. In September 1992 this programme was carried forward, with RCHME funding, by the appointment of a project supervisor to continue the programme in-house, as part of the RCHME's evolving National Mapping Programme. The objective was to complete the mapping of new sites from 1990 and to undertake the backlog of un-mapped sites from years prior to 1990. This task will increase the number of sites already mapped by about 200 per cent.

A second project funded by, and jointly operated with, RCHME was also begun, with the temporary employment of a Primary Recording Assistant in October. The programme centres on the computerisation of the backlog of bibliographic reference index cards held by RCHME as part of the National Archaeological Record, thus adding new information to known sites and also identifying new

sites for their record. Cross reference to the Northamptonshire SMR has, in the first 3 months, identified 35 sites not previously entered into the SMR.

The Unit supported the work of the newly-launched Northamptonshire Gardens Trust. The work with the Trust involved the identification of the first gardens and parkland to be surveyed, including those associated with the halls at Great Harrowden, Rushton and Upton. Survey work was begun in earnest at Great Harrowden with documentary research and site visits.

The gardens exhibition, produced by the Archaeology Unit for the Trust, continued to tour venues in the county, most notably including Local Authority Planning Departments at Towcester (South Northants) and Thrapston (East Northants). It was also displayed at the East of England Show in July. An enlarged version of the exhibition opened at the Northamptonshire Record Office, where it will remain for a long season.

Interpretation

Kim Lanning

Marion Blockley left the Unit in August to take up a post as Lecturer in Heritage Management for the University of Birmingham, based at the Ironbridge Institute. She was replaced by in September by Kim Lanning from the Civic Trust.

The highlight of the year was the opening of the exhibition, "Hidden Castles of Northamptonshire", at Rockingham Castle in April. The exhibition, which follows the development of castles from their origins to the present day, was officially launched by the Duke of Gloucester. The opening ceremony was attended by members of the White Company, a living history group who specialise in the period of the Wars of the Roses. The exhibition remained at Rockingham Castle throughout the summer season and is due to return in 1993.

The White Company returned to Rockingham Castle in September when, despite poor weather, several hundred people enjoyed a demonstration of siege warfare, complete with guns firing and an assault on the castle, in addition to re-enactments of the more peaceful side of life.

Towards the end of the year planning commenced for an exhibition of the Raunds Area Project, which will open in Raunds in summer 1993 and then tour the county. A series of visits was made to all the Properties in Care to enable a comprehensive interpretive programme to be written. This will ensure that a minimum level of interpretation is available for each site within 3 years. A leaflet giving information about each site is in preparation.

Education

Rachel Shaw

The year has been one of change and adaptation for the project. Our three years of funding from English Heritage came to an end in March. This coincided with the devolution of Education budget control to school level and the consequent cessation of central Local Education Authority funding for the post. We were faced with the necessity of charging schools directly for the services we had been providing free for several years. Much of the Spring Term, therefore, was taken up with producing and publicising a prospectus for the service, and setting up the necessary administrative framework.

Since April, we have received more than 70 subscriptions, mainly from Primary and Middle schools, and have worked on a pay-as-you-use basis with other schools, the large majority from within the county. The publication of an Education Prospectus for archaeology generated wider interest in the project. Lectures on Archaeology and Education were given to students at Leicester and York Universities, and the Education Officer was invited to serve on the new CBA Education Committee.

Take-up of the project has been encouraging, although, inevitably, we have lost some schools, unable or unwilling to pay the new charges. Valuable close links have been maintained between the Education Project and NIAS (Northamptonshire Inspectorate and Advisory Service) despite these changes. It is clear from this first year that the Education Service we provide cannot be wholly self-funding. We want the Education Project to continue providing its current wide range of services, developing new materials and ideas and, most importantly, continuing to fulfil the County Council's commitment to Environmental Education. If this is all to be achieved, some degree of public funding is necessary.

The second challenge to the Education Project was the closing down of the major excavations at Stanwick Roman Villa, which had formed the core of our summer fieldwork programme with schools. Kirby Hall, where a successful pilot had already taken place, seemed the obvious alternative location for the programme. During the year, we developed and promoted on-site activities for school groups at Kirby Hall. This has taken place with the support and co-operation of English Heritage, which cares for the site, and advice from Brian Dix who directed the recent excavations there.

Educational fieldwork has also been organised at the village of Upton, near Northampton. Here pupils have taken part in a graveyard survey at the redundant church of St Michael and carried out an investigation of the medieval, and later, earthwork remains at Upton.

A pilot scheme to develop schools fieldwork at Canons Ashby has continued throughout 1992. In this work we have focused on the life and times of the 19th century Northamptonshire antiquarian, Sir Henry Dryden, who

owned Canons Ashby, and on the search for evidence of medieval Canons Ashby, in particular the priory which has now all but disappeared.

Requests for talks on the work of an archaeologist, and for the loan of artefact handling kits, have continued throughout the year. Here the support of the Education Assistant has been of special value. Sales of teaching packs have continued steadily. The "Ashton" teachers' resource pack has been rewritten to bring it in line with National Curriculum requirements. It also has the useful addition of a data handling package, based on statistics from the Roman cemetery and other burials excavated at Ashton. This was prepared by Andy Byers of the Computer Education Centre.

We have expanded our programme of courses for teachers, repeating popular courses on Local Studies and the Medieval Landscape, and adding new courses. During 1992, teachers had the chance to learn how to set up a graveyard survey at St Michael's Church, Upton, and attended practical on-site training days at Kirby Hall. Courses giving a general introduction to Roman and Saxon Northamptonshire were oversubscribed, clearly meeting a need.

Planning **Sandy Kidd**

In 1992 the District Councils have been consulting the Unit regarding the formulation of Local Plan policies for the identification and conservation of archaeological sites and their settings within the planning process. The new local policies will reflect national policy as enshrined in the Department of Environment's Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning. There is now a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of monuments of national importance, whether or not these are scheduled ancient monuments. There is an obligation placed upon developers to provide detailed information on the archaeology of development sites likely to contain important archaeological remains before their planning application is determined. They must also make provision for the excavation, recording and publication of archaeological sites unavoidably threatened by development. Since large modern excavations are very expensive there has been a growing, and welcome, interest in methods for preserving remains within development schemes.

Techniques include modifying the development layout, re-routing a road or pipeline, using minimally destructive building foundations or burying the remains underneath a road embankment. The new procedures have added considerably to the Curatorial Section's workload. Accordingly Sandy Kidd was appointed to the newly created post of Planning Officer in April 1992.

Fieldwork **Graham Cadman**

Watching Briefs and Salvage

Curatorial fieldwork continued in 1992 but at a decreasing level of intensity, reflecting the growth in developer-funded contract archaeology. However, unexpected discoveries still occur on development sites, especially as there remains a considerable number of development consents which pre-date PPG16 and on which no archaeological evaluation was conducted. Increasingly, Curatorial fieldwork is being commissioned from the Unit's Contracts Section.

M1-A1: A metal detecting survey in the Naseby area was carried out for the Archaeology Unit, prior to construction of the M1-A1 road link, by the Midland Archaeological Research Society. It confirmed the absence of any Civil War remains on the road line. Subsequently responsibility for all M1-A1 archaeological fieldwork was passed to the Unit's Contracts Section.

Churches: Recording of the fabric of the tower at Earls Barton church, and of parts of the church of St Bartholomew's, Furtho, was initiated by the Field Officer and then, as financial aid became available, was also taken forward by the Contracts Section. At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Northampton (SP754609), salvage recording was conducted in the south aisle, following the discovery of extensive dry rot which necessitated the removal of all wooden flooring. A series of brick and stone vaults and some stratigraphy pre-dating the south wall was encountered.

Cemeteries: An Anglo-Saxon cemetery came to light on a housing site in Towcester (SP62905740) after a local metal detectorist found human bone and 6th century metalwork (Fig 1). Subsequent trenching, conducted with the developers' full co-operation, then revealed traces of 2 cremations and 2 further inhumations, one of the latter overlying a small iron blade.

Human skeletal remains were also recorded in Northampton during repairs to a partially-collapsed Victorian culvert in Temple Bar (SP75406118), a lane outside the line of the town's medieval defences. The burials appear to represent a previously unidentified burial ground.

Metal detecting Liaison with metal detectorists has continued and has led to the recording by the Archaeology Unit of some outstanding finds, including the Anglo-Saxon metalwork from Towcester referred to earlier, a large Bronze Age basal looped spearhead found near Stanwick villa and a smaller spearhead, amongst other items, from the Brackley area (SP59393661). In addition, some metal detector surveys have been carried out, most notably on a Civil War siege site in Grafton Regis by the Midland Archaeological Research Society.

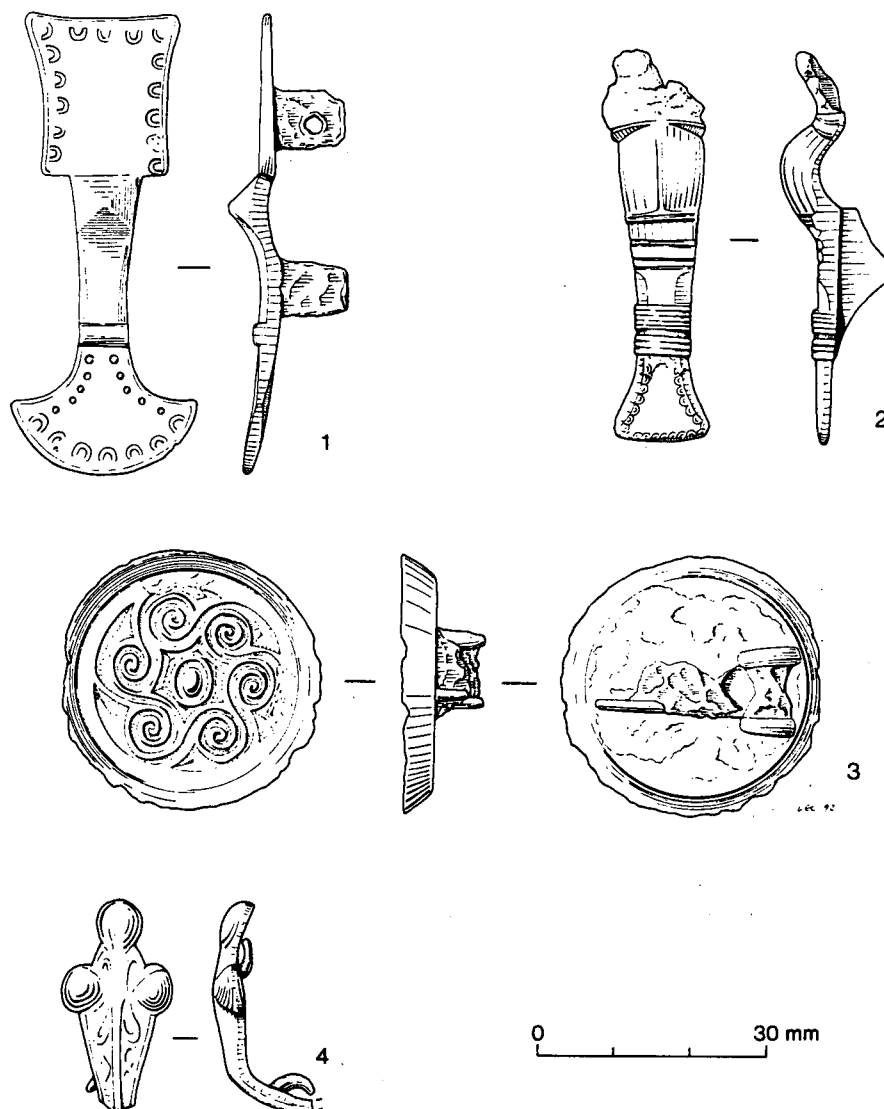


Fig 1. Anglo-Saxon metalwork found by a metal detectorist on the outskirts of Towcester and recorded by the Unit with the assistance of Martin Howe of Peterborough Museums. (1) Copper alloy small long type Anglian brooch of developed square-headed form, first half of 6th century; (2) fragment of copper alloy small long brooch with poorly-preserved headplate, 6th century;

Aerial Survey

1992 was another poor year in Northamptonshire for cropmark development. A promising start saw the appearance of a handful of new sites, probably Iron Age and/or Roman settlements but then rain early in July caused almost all cropmarks to disappear and no further reconnaissance was attempted.

A survey of ridge and furrow survival was conducted during July. It provided urgently required, up-to-date information for the completion of a report by David Hall on the survival and need for preservation of ridge and furrow, referred to later in this report. Though the survey provided an important record for management purposes, the quality of the earthwork photographs was poor because they had to be taken without the advantage of low sunlight conditions.

Conservation

Properties in Care

Management of the County Council's Properties in Care has continued. The 25 sites range from dovecotes and village stocks to Civil War memorials, a medieval castle and moated manor earthworks (Figs 2, 3). Conservation works, undertaken with the assistance of the Countryside Commission, were completed at the Walgrave moated manor and fishpond site and involved the clearance of scrub and debris and the erection of fencing on the site. A comprehensive conditions audit has been completed at each of the Properties in Care, with a view to preparing detailed future maintenance, repair and interpretational programmes. Assessment of potential sites for acquisition continues.

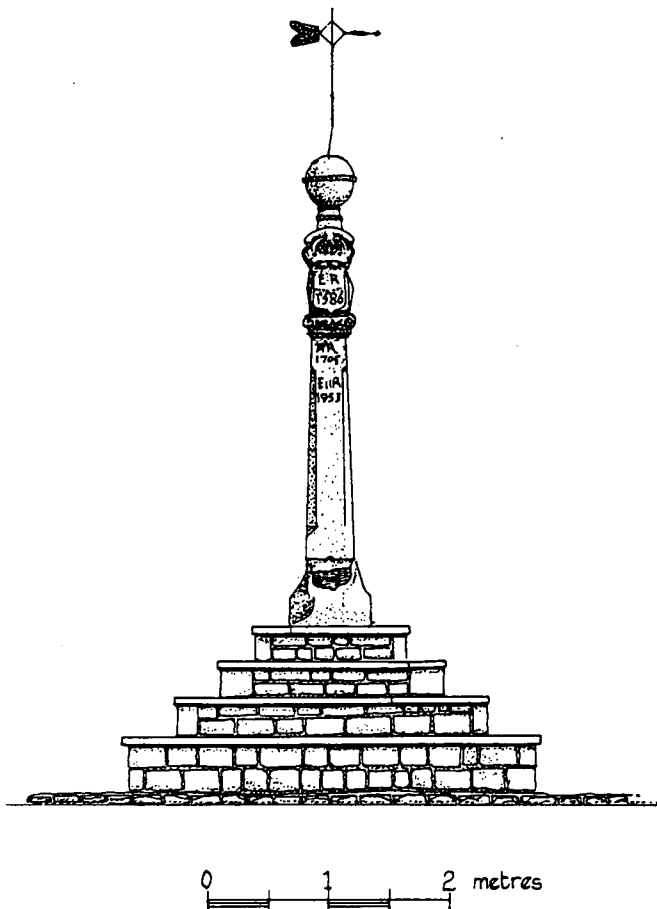


Fig 2. Brigstock Market Cross of 1586. One of the County Council's Properties in Care. Drawn by Brian Giggins.

Stewardship

The Countryside Stewardship scheme is administered by the Countryside Commission. Considerable energy has been devoted to the scheme, in particular the provision of responses and other advice in the first year of operation of the scheme's Historic Landscapes category.

The scheme can provide opportunities to initiate positive conservation measures on some archaeological sites whilst, at the same time, providing for interpretive and educational initiatives and enhanced access.

Applications are being considered by the Countryside Commission for earthwork sites and areas of ridge and furrow, including the post-medieval garden and medieval fishpond earthworks at Harrington, a deserted medieval village at Mallows Cotton, and an earthwork castle, settlement and fishpond site at Braybrooke. The Countryside Stewardship scheme may be destined to assume an increasingly vital role in securing the conservation of archaeological and historic sites and landscapes in Northamptonshire.

Field Systems: The Case for Preservation

The ridge and furrow earthworks in north west Northamptonshire, north east Warwickshire and

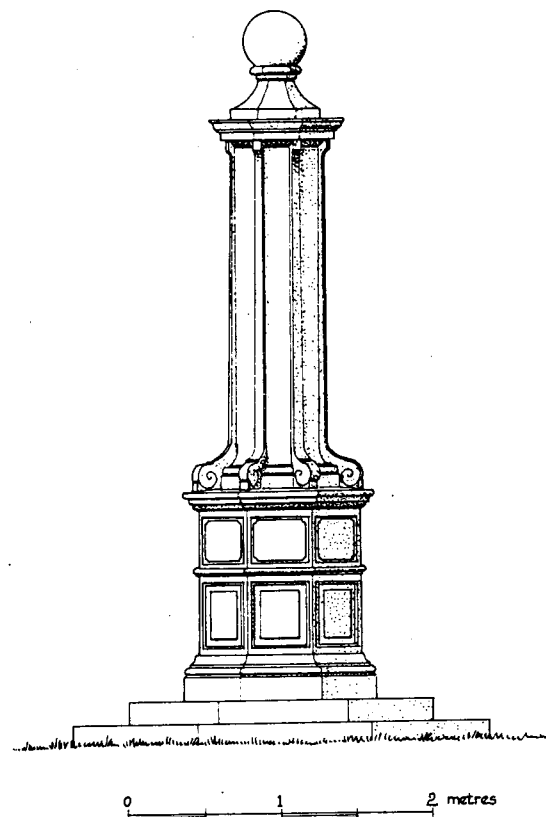


Fig 3. Naseby Monument which was erected in 1936 to commemorate the Battle of Naseby. Another of the County Council's Properties in Care. Drawn by Brian Giggins.

Leicestershire are recognised as the best medieval field system remains in England. Detailed study of these remains by David Hall, over the last 30 years, has demonstrated that Northamptonshire has the best combination of archaeological and documentary records.

The earthwork remains of the fields are currently afforded no protection by the Ancient Monuments Act and are in danger of being almost completely destroyed as we move into the 21st century. These remains are the single most important aspect of the historic environment of Northamptonshire because of their unique potential and the extent and quality of their survival. A study was therefore commissioned by the Archaeology Unit in 1992 from David Hall. The report has identified a range of areas of ridge and furrow which should be conserved. It has shown that only 10 parishes have substantial areas of ridge and furrow left and that, at present loss rates, none of these will survive into the next century, except in fragmentary form.

Because of earthwork survival, it is possible in parts of Northamptonshire to walk along a disused medieval road between interlocking furlongs of ridge and furrow, picking out the individual strips once owned by each peasant farmer in the nearby village. It is also possible to find an undisturbed riverside meadow or a small piece of pasture beside a small

stream course. In fact, the whole character of the medieval landscape is fossilised in pasture fields.

If the recommendations of David Hall's report are not implemented, future generations will never be able to view this ancient landscape, parts of which are up to 1200 years old; it will be transformed by modern cultivation into a massive sea of cereals.

Monuments Protection Programme

The appointment of a new MPP fieldworker by English Heritage resulted in a review of previously assessed archaeological monuments. Assessment of new monument types continued, slowly but surely, with the evaluation of medieval fishponds, pit circles and Romano-Celtic temples. Previous work began to reap rewards with the notification of 49 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 15 of which were newly-protected sites.

CONTRACTS SECTION

The year was a busy one for the Contracts Section despite the recession. A total of 44 projects was undertaken, representing an almost four-fold increase over the previous year. There was, however, a noticeable decline in the size of the projects undertaken. Almost all were evaluation projects with only four small excavations taking place during the year. Much of the work undertaken, eleven projects, was associated with road schemes - apparently the only recession-proof form of development. All but three of the projects were based within the County. An analysis of the types of fieldwork undertaken reveals that ten involved desk-top survey; eight fieldwalking; sixteen geophysical survey; eighteen excavation, principally trial trenching; six earthwork survey; four metal detecting survey; six watching brief; two graveyard surveys and one building recording. Many of the projects undertaken involved more than one type of fieldwork.

Meanwhile post-excavation work continued on those parts of the Raunds Area Project undertaken by the Unit. Michel Audouy completed his draft text on the North Raunds sites which has now been circulated for comment prior to finalisation. Steve Parry's report on the Field Survey is on target for its completion date of March 1993, while Andy Chapman continues work on the report on West Cotton which is timetabled for completion in March 1994. The reports will be published in the English Heritage Monograph series.

Fieldwork

Ashton; Oundle Station Yard

(TL04698905) - Michael Webster and Steve Parry

A total of 22 trenches was excavated as part of an evaluation of the area which lies within the Roman small town of Ashton. These demonstrated that the Roman remains had been largely destroyed. Surviving pockets of undisturbed ground contained a metal road with side ditches and part

of an adjacent timber structure. A single pottery kiln of early 2nd century date survived on a pinnacle of gravel cut on all sides by deep post-medieval quarrying.

Brigstock; Old Camp

(around SP939871) - Peter Masters

A magnetometer reconnaissance survey was undertaken on behalf of the Forestry Commission on land to the rear of the Old Camp. Four fields were examined with the aim of locating areas of iron-smelting. Significant anomalies were detected in two locations (SP9381086978 and SP9392187210) both of which were associated with surface scatters of tap-slag of unknown date. In each case a simple spade cut into the topsoil revealed no underlying archaeological features.

Canons Ashby; Canons Ashby House

(SP57685058 - SP57725052) - Peter Masters

A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of an electricity supply trench stretching from the Slaughter House to the southern garden wall of Canons Ashby House. A faced wall, surviving up to five courses high and constructed of dressed ironstone blocks was noted running east-west within the trench. Two patches of charcoal and brick observed in section elsewhere along the trench were the only other archaeological features visible. Unstratified finds of a medieval and post-medieval date were collected.

Canons Ashby; St Mary's Priory Church

(SP57845053) - Brian Dix, Peter Masters and Sean Steadman

A series of archaeological studies was undertaken at St Mary's Priory Church (Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM): NN154) on behalf of the National Trust. The studies comprised topographical and geophysical surveys in addition to the recording of grave-memorials in the churchyard. Possible evidence was noted of antiquarian excavation of the former priory church and a wall was re-exposed which had probably been built by Sir Henry Dryden as part of his restoration in the 19th century.

Castle Ashby; Walled Kitchen Garden

(SP88355885) - Brian Dix, Michael Webster and Michel Audouy

An archaeological evaluation was carried out within the 19th century walled kitchen garden of Castle Ashby House in advance of the proposed resiting of the Ford Pavilion. Two trenches were excavated. No evidence of activity earlier than that of the 19th and 20th centuries was present, with all vertical stratification having been created by horticultural processes, including spade-dug bed cultivation.

Clay Coton; St Andrews Church
(SP594097896) - Sean Steadman

A recording action at Clay Coton was occasioned by renovation work on the deconsecrated church of St Andrews (SAM: NN194). The archaeological investigation of a single trench around the south-east corner of the church uncovered the original foundations of the buttress below the level of the 19th century repairs. By demonstrating its sound construction, the buttress was shown to be a suitable base for rebuilding without the previously anticipated need of introducing piles. A complete record of the 56 individual memorials in the churchyard was also compiled.

Cosgrove; Cosgrove Lodge Park
(SP78654180 - 79604240) - Brian Dix, Tim Sharman and Peter Masters

The first stage of an evaluation along the proposed route of a new access road serving Cosgrove Lodge, comprised geophysical survey and fieldwalking reconnaissance. The proposed road-line crosses the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Cosgrove Roman Villa (SAM: NN119). In addition to Roman material, quantities of early/middle Saxon and prehistoric flint and pottery were recovered from the scheduled site. Geophysical survey was successful in indicating the existence of buildings beyond those previously excavated, together with an aqueduct or similar leat. The fieldwalking finds from outside the scheduled area bore no archaeological significance.

Culworth; Berry Hill Close
(SP544470) - Michel Audouy

Archaeological excavation was carried out ahead of an extension to the graveyard of St Mary's Church, Culworth, in an area previously evaluated by the Oxfordshire Archaeology Unit (see SMA 22 (1992), 42). The work was undertaken for the Culworth Parish Council with funding provided by English Heritage.

Investigation revealed the north-east corner of an Iron Age enclosure which was defined by a substantial 'V' shaped ditch, up to 5 m wide at the top and over 4 m deep. The enclosure ditch had been re-cut several times. Along its inner edge, a narrow zone of ground, up to 6 m wide, was largely devoid of earth-cut features, suggesting the former existence of a bank. Close to the corner of the enclosure, a series of postholes within the corridor may denote some form of associated structure. Otherwise, there was no evidence of the original form of any raised defences which may be assumed to have been substantial, given the quantity of up-cast from the digging of the ditch. It is clear that any early bank was totally levelled, presumably thereby also infilling the ditch where only a shallow depression had remained to be backfilled by later cultivation.

Within that part of the interior of the enclosure which was examined by excavation, the arc of a curving gully formed

the remains of a roundhouse or hut-circle. An adjacent scatter of postholes implies the existence of other structures though insufficient area was available for investigation to determine their original number and form. Outside the enclosure, a metalled track occupied a holloway running at an angle beside the main ditch.

Dating evidence is provided by associated assemblages of pottery found principally within the main ditch in-filling, which appear to be of Middle Iron Age type.

Following the demise of the Iron Age enclosure, domestic activity appears to have ceased as denoted by a layer of sterile silt which had accumulated over the ancient trackway and also survived within part of the subsidence hollow of the enclosure ditch. A small quantity of Roman pottery indicates some form of activity at the time but the few sherds are generally small and abraded suggesting that the site was in a marginal location relative to nearby settlement.

The next identifiable phase of activity comprised the laying out of a series of ditched enclosures, although the precise nature of the land division of which they formed part remains unknown. This phase is stratigraphically later than the Iron Age enclosure ditch and its dating is provided by a small assemblage of pottery sherds of early/middle Saxon type, retrieved from the infillings of some of the ditches. Residual Iron Age and Romano-British material was also present.

With the exception of less than a score of unstratified contemporary fragments of pottery, no evidence was forthcoming of late Saxon - early medieval activity as might have been anticipated in view of the proximity of the area to a surviving ringwork. Medieval and later evidence was almost exclusively associated with agricultural practices but included a shallow pit which had been dug to extract the underlying ironstone.

Daventry; Borough Hill
(SP58806205) - Michel Audouy

A programme of archaeological works comprising watching briefs and a small recording action accompanied the decommissioning of the BBC station. The former, which included the felling of radio-masts, showed no impact on the archaeology, the latter recorded a series of Iron Age pits, postholes and two possible cremation pits.

Earls Barton; All Saints Church
(SP85186381) - Michel Audouy

The removal of large parts of the render of the church tower during renovation work offered a rare opportunity to examine and record large areas of the original fabric, much of which proved to survive intact (Fig 4). Barnack-type limestone had been used for the architectural features, while the remainder of the fabric had been infilled with limestone rubble similar to the local Upper Estuarine Limestone.

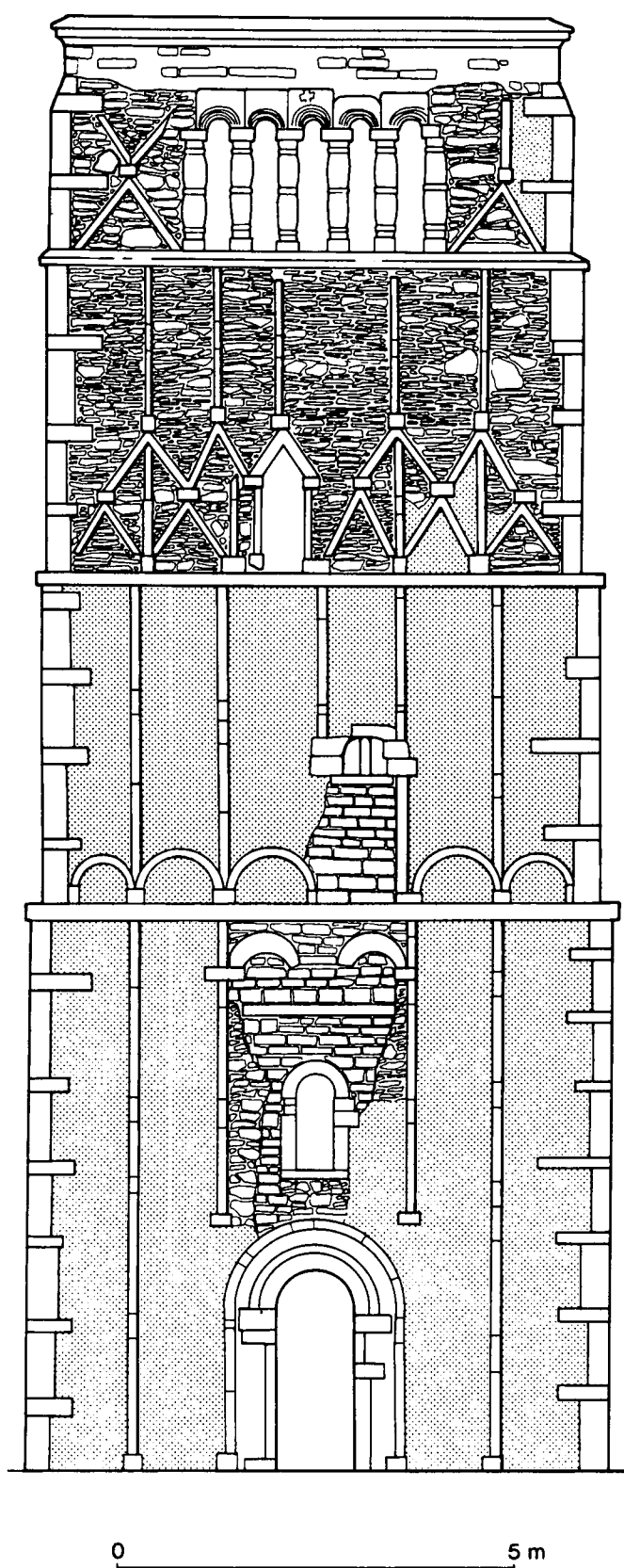


Fig 4. Earls Barton Church: west face of tower, showing stonework revealed by removal of rendering. Drawn by Lesley Collett.

Ecton; Anglian Water Pipeline (centred on SP82456470) - Ian Meadows

Excavations for Anglian Water revealed parts of rectangular and circular enclosures (Fig 5), previously known from cropmark evidence. None of the rectangular enclosures contained structural evidence although the presence of pits within them might suggest settlement activity. Some of the circular enclosures probably acted as drainage channels around buildings, while others, rather larger in size, may have been for stock management. Unequivocal remains of only one timber building was recovered. It was composed of postholes enclosed by one of the circular ditches. A total of around 50 pits was examined; they were located both within and outside the enclosures. The pottery recovered from the site ranged from the late Bronze Age to the middle/late Iron Age in date. One find of note was a bronze penannular brooch of late Iron Age date.

Fineshade; Fineshade Abbey (SP973978) - Michel Audouy, Peter Masters and Tim Sharman

Geophysical survey and trial trenching were carried out at Fineshade in order to assess the impact of a proposed house-construction on part of the scheduled ancient monument of Fineshade Abbey (SAM: NN124). The evaluation indicated that the area had been subjected to stone quarrying and subsequent landscaping and therefore little, if any, medieval stratification could be expected to survive. The vestiges of three, probably post-medieval, garden walls were the only structural elements recovered. The resistivity survey confirmed this general picture and also managed to locate the cellars of the former 18th century mansion.

Furtho; St Bartholomew's Church (SP77344309) - Tim Sharman

Restoration of the church comprised the dismantling of parts of the fabric, the underpinning and reflooring of the chancel foundation and the creation of new drainage within the churchyard. No evidence was exposed of previous structures but owing to the limited excavation of the interior, it was not possible to record any early foundations which may survive beneath the floor.

Irchester; area west of Roman town (SP91186680) - Peter Masters

Further geophysical survey by magnetometer delineated the full extent of the area of extra-mural settlement identified previously (SMA 22 (1992), 38, Fig 6).

Maidwell; Scotland Wood Farm (SP737761) - Sean Steadman

An archaeological evaluation was commissioned in connection with an application to extract sand and gravel



Fig 5. Ecton: pre-excitation plan of features revealed ahead of laying of Anglian Water pipeline.

from an area immediately to the west of Maidwell. Artefact scatters of Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon date had been recovered by previous fieldwalking in the area but a series of fifteen trial trenches excavated for the evaluation located no archaeological layers or features and no artefacts earlier than the post-medieval period.

Northampton; Northampton High School for Girls, Derngate
(SP75806025) - Michael Shaw and Sean Steadman

Following a desk-based survey a series of trial trenches and trial pits were excavated. The site lies in the south-east corner of the medieval walled town between Derngate (formerly Swinewell Street) to the north, Albion Place, a

19th century creation, to the west and Victoria Promenade, which runs on the line of the former town defences to the south and east.

Trenches on the Derngate frontage confirmed the presence of medieval occupation here. More surprisingly, as no medieval streets are known in its area, a trench at the south end of the site, also located traces of medieval occupation, comprising a probable posthole building and rubbish pits. Romano-British features were discovered at the east end of the site. Activity of this period would, however, appear to be on a small scale. Deposits which may relate to the tail end of a bank of the town defences were found at both the south and east ends of the site but the bulk of the town defences would appear to lie outside the area under the present Victoria Promenade.

It was anticipated that evidence for a large medieval urban property known as The Grange, which included a building called "The Towre" - shown on Speed's Map of Northampton of 1610, might be uncovered in the central area. In the event only sparse evidence of medieval occupation was located and none of it could be definitely related to The Grange. Evidence of medieval-period quarrying was located at the west end of the site. Quarries of this date are a not uncommon find in Northampton and some at least may be related to the need for stone in constructing the town wall.

Northampton; Mill Lane
(SP74996131) - Sean Steadman

A single trench was excavated to the north of Mill Lane in an area where the northern side of the medieval town defences were thought to lie. The northern end of the site had been disturbed by recent features but at the southern end the natural subsoil was located less than 0.1 m below the modern ground surface. There was no evidence of the defences which presumably lie along or to the south of Mill Lane and no artefacts pre-dating the 19th century were recovered.

Outer Northampton; Penvale Park
(SP75135778) - Peter Masters

A magnetometer survey was undertaken immediately to the west of the Northamptonshire Record Office prior to the commencement of housing development. Iron Age features had previously been observed during the construction of the new Record Office. No archaeologically significant anomalies were detected by the magnetometer, however; perhaps because of the disposal of rubbish both within and outside the survey area.

Potterspury; 28 High Street
(SP75684328) - Peter Masters

An evaluation of land between the High Street and Sanders Lane, Potterspury was carried out in advance of a planning

application, in order to attempt to identify former pottery kilns and related features. Geophysical and earthwork surveys were undertaken but failed to locate any archaeological features. The earthworks appeared to be of recent origin and included dumps of builders waste. No significant anomalies were detected by the magnetometer survey which was adversely affected by the modern disturbances.

Raunds; 14 Rotton Row

(SP99837321) - Michel Audouy, Peter Masters and Michael Webster

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at the rear of 14 Rotton Row, on land forming part of Scheduled Monument 11507. Geophysical survey and trial trenching revealed extensive settlement evidence predominantly comprising postholes and ditches, potentially of Saxon and medieval date. Over the western area of the site the features were sealed by an old soil layer, possibly of medieval origin. Some of the ditches discovered may be associated with similar boundary features found immediately north of the site during previous large-scale excavations at Langham Road.

Stanion; Brigstock Road

(SP91598697) - Peter Masters, Sean Steadman and Michael Webster

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land adjacent to Brigstock Road in response to a proposal to erect houses. Geophysical and earthwork surveys were followed by the excavation of a single trial trench. The extant earthworks on the site were shown to be entirely the result of modern disturbance and no traces of medieval pottery production were recovered.

Stoke Albany

(SP795885) - Mark Holmes

Fieldwalking reconnaissance was carried out on a field c 1 km north-west of Stoke Albany as part of an evaluation of an area known to contain cropmarks. Although worked flint and pottery of Iron Age/Roman, early/middle Saxon and medieval date was recovered the nature and extent of the activity remains unknown.

Towcester; Sponne School

(SP69074875) - Michel Audouy and Michael Webster

Three evaluation trenches were excavated within the grounds of the school to assess the survival of Romano-British features. A trench across the west side of the town defences close to the area investigated by Dr John Alexander in 1954 confirmed that the defensive ditch still survived but elsewhere archaeological deposits had been removed by construction works during the building of the school.

Towcester; Belle Baulk Farm

(area of SP685488) - Steve Parry and Tim Sharman

Fieldwalking, metal detecting and trial trenching were carried out as part of an evaluation of a large field to the west of the Roman town. A Saxon cemetery had previously been found some 250 m to the south of the area. A small amount of Roman and Saxon material was found by the fieldwalking and metal detecting but no archaeological features were uncovered during the subsequent trial trenching.

Towcester; Old Tiffield Road and Greens Norton Road

(SP691495 & SP686494) - Michael Webster

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on two areas within the assumed suburbs of the walled Roman town of Lactodorum. Although previous archaeological work in the vicinity had discovered evidence of Roman activity, the present fieldwalking reconnaissance revealed no significant Roman remains. Finds of worked flint and medieval and post-medieval pottery similarly bore little archaeological significance. Sketch plotting of extant earthworks (principally ridge-and-furrow cultivation) was undertaken.

Walgrave; Walgrave Moated Site

(SP80207233) - Peter Masters

A geophysical survey was undertaken at Walgrave Moated Site (SAM: NN156) in order to aid interpretation and management of the site. Both resistivity and magnetometer techniques were employed although the former was the most successful, producing a plot which identified elements of the groundplan of the former building.

Weekley; Boughton Estate

(around SP88588120) - Brian Dix and Peter Masters

An archaeological survey was carried out at the western fringe of Boughton Park prior to the construction of a roundabout and bund for the Kettering Northern By-Pass. Earthworks representing ridge-and-furrow cultivation, landscape terracing and elements of a former 18th/19th century brickmaking industry were surveyed and drawn. A magnetometer survey demonstrated the survival of kilns and stackyards. A track constructed of wasters from the kilns was observed during earthmoving operations.

Yardley Gobion; Moor End Castle

(SP75404465) - Sean Steadman

Pre-emptive excavation and a subsequent watching brief were undertaken where groundwork for the Salcey to Deanshanger water mains duplication crossed Moor End Castle (SAM: NN148). The pipeline crossed the north-west corner of the scheduled area. No evidence of any surviving archaeological levels was discovered and it therefore seems likely that medieval occupation was confined to the area of

the existing settlement to the south-east of the moat. Modern dumping was seen to infill a possible pond that is probably of medieval origin.

Road Schemes

Deanshanger; A422 Deanshanger Bypass (SP76653900 - SP77503995) - Sean Steadman

A watching brief was maintained during the construction of the bypass as it passes within 200 m of the site of the Deanshanger Roman villa. No archaeological features were observed despite the presence of a previously excavated Roman villa complex in the area. Liaison with metal detectorists led to the recovery of a group of small finds of Saxon, late medieval and post-medieval date, including a lead ampulla or pilgrim flask (Fig 6).

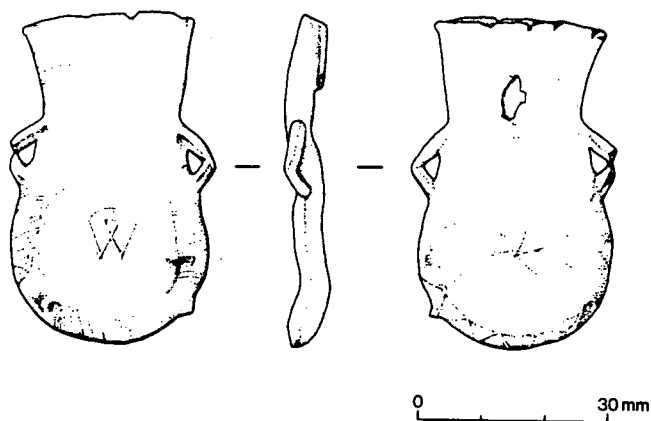


Fig 6 Deanshanger Bypass. Lead ampulla (pilgrim flask) found by metal detectorist. One side bears a centrally placed letter W, thought to refer to the shrine at Walsingham. Drawn by Melanie Connell.

Farthinghoe; A422 Farthinghoe Bypass Mark Holmes

The first stage of an archaeological survey of the proposed route of the bypass comprised fieldwalking, magnetometer, earthwork and metal detector surveys. Four sites were known in the area, two denoted by cropmarks and two by earthworks. Fieldwork showed that only two of the sites were directly affected and the road line was moved to avoid them.

Isham and Great Harrowden Bypasses (centred on SP880740) - Michael Shaw and Sean Steadman

A desk-top survey of the proposed bypass routes revealed a total of 33 sites, 1 of which was known from aerial photography.

M1-A1 Link

Michel Audouy and Tim Sharman

Salvage excavation was undertaken during the construction of the road at four locations. At Kelmarsh (SP71347931) a Bronze Age cremation cemetery comprising up to 30 burials was uncovered. They were generally in a poor condition but in one case the lower half of a cremation urn was preserved. At Harrington Quarry a large number of Iron Age and Romano-British features were located, comprising chiefly pits, postholes and enclosure ditches, spread over an area of around 0.6 ha. The Iron Age features included a roundhouse, 5 m in diameter; while the Romano-British features included a drying oven and part of a stone building. At Weekley (SP71347931) a total of 32 inhumations was excavated after their initial discovery by Burl Bellamy. The burials are undated but are overlain by ridge and furrow. At Clipston (SP71017931) a probable sunken-featured building containing early/middle Saxon pottery was uncovered.

M1 Widening - South Northamptonshire

Michael Shaw and Sean Steadman

A desk-based survey and preliminary field reconnaissance was carried out as the first stage of an archaeological evaluation of the proposed M1 Widening from the county border with Buckinghamshire northwards to Junction 15. Seven possible archaeological sites were identified but none is likely to be affected by the widening. Fieldwork evaluation is to be carried out in 1993.

M1 Widening - North Northamptonshire

Mark Holmes

A desk-based survey of a corridor extending 500 m each side of the existing motorway from Junction 15 northwards to the county border was undertaken. The survey examined documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence. Sixty-five archaeological sites were noted, nineteen of which were represented by cropmarks.

Outer Northampton; Northampton North-West Bypass

Michel Audouy, Mark Holmes, Peter Masters, Sean Steadman

A two-stage archaeological evaluation of the proposed routes of the Northampton North-West Bypass was completed in 1992. The first stage comprised a desk-based study, systematic fieldwalking and ground reconnaissance. The desk-based study revealed 32 sites along the bypass route, including 19 represented by cropmarks. The fieldwalking was undertaken on 19 fields, of which three produced results considered to be of substantive archaeological interest. Geophysical survey and trial trenching formed the second stage of the evaluation. At Dallington Heath (SP72546345) the presence of important prehistoric remains, including a causewayed enclosure, was confirmed and their position accurately plotted. At Chapel

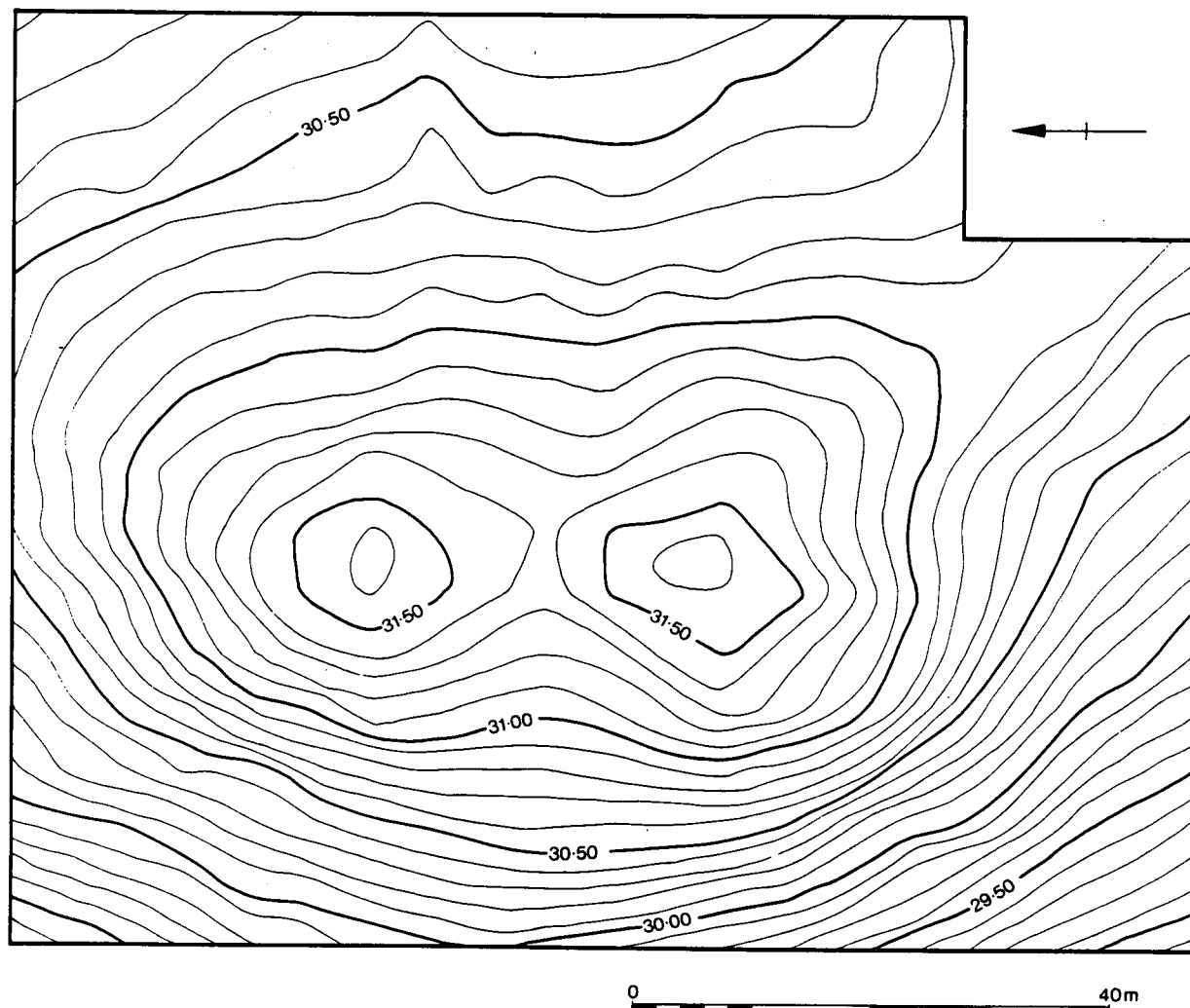


Fig 7. Warmington: contour survey of Barrows 1 (right) and 2 (left).

Brampton (SP73326490), investigation demonstrated that a group of rectilinear cropmarks represented former hedgerows rather than ancient ditches and that a neighbouring ring ditch was not affected by the road scheme.

Warmington Bypass and Tansor Improvement Michael Shaw

Archaeological evaluation continued on the line of the Warmington Bypass and the related Tansor Improvement (the previous work was reported in *SMA* 22 (1992), 39-41).

Tansor crossroads

Two low mounds (Barrows 1 and 2) are visible at TL05729020. A contour survey of these was carried out (Fig 7) and demonstrated that they lie at the northern end of a low spur of land and survive to a height of c 0.5 m above the surrounding land. Aerial photographs suggest that they are surrounded by ring ditches and suggest a further ring ditch (Barrow 3) c 25 m to the south, part of which lies under the

present road. A trial trench excavated across Barrows 1 and 3 demonstrated that mound material and ditches survive.

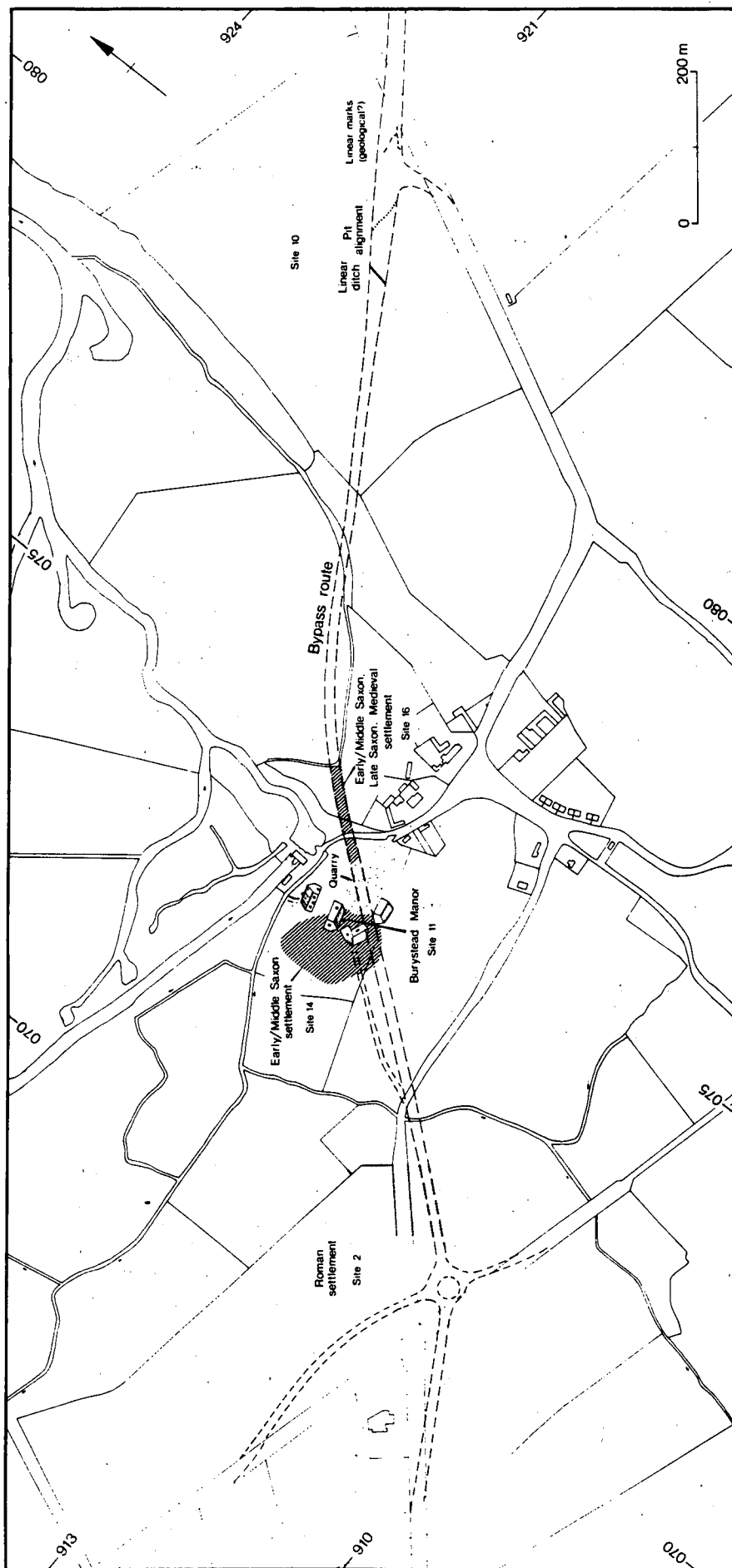
Warmington

Fieldwalking

Further fieldwalking revealed concentrations of early/middle Saxon pottery at TL07169092 and TL07389126. A total of four concentrations, each sufficient to suggest a site, has been discovered within an area of 40 ha. This stands in contrast to the dearth of late Saxon material uncovered. A single concentration of medieval pottery was located at TL07479132. The concentration lies immediately west of the present village of Warmington along the Oundle Road and may suggest former settlement.

Trial trenching

Further trial trenching has confirmed the existence of Saxon and medieval settlement remains at Eaglethorpe (TL074915). The present Eaglethorpe lies immediately north-west of Warmington village. It was formerly called Mill End, medieval Eaglethorpe being located elsewhere in the parish.



Bypass route

The route will affect a Roman settlement known from fieldwalking at its south-west end, Saxon and medieval settlement, including the probable site of the Burystead Manor within Eaglethorpe and boundary features, possibly of Iron Age date, at its north-west end (Fig 8).

Fig 8. Warmington: summary plan of sites along the bypass route.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) continued to work in Ditchford gravel pit, excavating a causeway discovered the previous year. The results are summarized below. A fuller report has been lodged with the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Wellingborough, Ditchford Gravel Pit (SP 91956718) - G D Keevill

A previously unknown causeway was discovered during a watching brief on sand and gravel extraction at Ditchford in 1992. The feature appears to be associated with the known causeway which crosses the floodplain heading towards Irchester Roman town (*SMA* 22, 44). A stretch of c 45 m of metallised limestone was revealed, running roughly at right-angles to the known feature, and turning through approximately 90 to the SE to cross a palaeochannel representing an early channel of the river Nene. English Heritage agreed to fund excavation of the structure.

The palaeochannel fill had been penetrated by root growth, but seeds from a sample of the deposit suggest that infilling occurred in the late Devensian/earliest Holocene. The causeway approached the channel along a low ridge of gravel, gradually descending as it approached the palaeochannel. Its structure consisted of an ironstone, sand/crushed ironstone and limestone bed, overlaid by a carefully constructed limestone paved surface. A later sand/crushed ironstone surface survived above this at the SE end of the causeway, but had been eroded away at the W end. Numerous horseshoes and several fragments of tile were found within the causeway make-up and on its surface. Two of the horseshoes (one unstratified and one lying on the causeway surface) appear to be medieval. The tile is Roman, and the remaining horseshoes could be Roman. Two samples of wood were collected from the structure for radiocarbon dating.

The SE end of the causeway was overlain by a lens of organic/humic clay. Plant and beetle remains from a sample of this deposit are characteristic of a medieval alluvial hay meadow. The remainder of the sequence consisted of alluvium. Two areas of limestone 'metalling' at the same level high up in the alluvial sequence may be the remains of a late (post-medieval?) causeway.

UPPER NENE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Piddington Iron Age Settlement and Romano-British Villa

R M & D E Friendship-Taylor

Excavation has continued at the site on a regular basis (begun 1979). For a resume of work up to 1989, Please see Friendship-Taylor (1989a): (1989b). P.290, fig 18: (1990). P.332 - 3.

A considerable number of prehistoric flints have come from the area of the late Iron Age and Roman period occupation, besides having been collected during fieldwalking in the surrounding area: Mesolithic microliths, Neolithic leaf shaped arrowheads and Bronze Age tanged and barbed arrow heads, blades, scrapers, cores and flakes. They cannot be associated with any prehistoric structures or features and no significant pattern can be ascribed to the scatter.

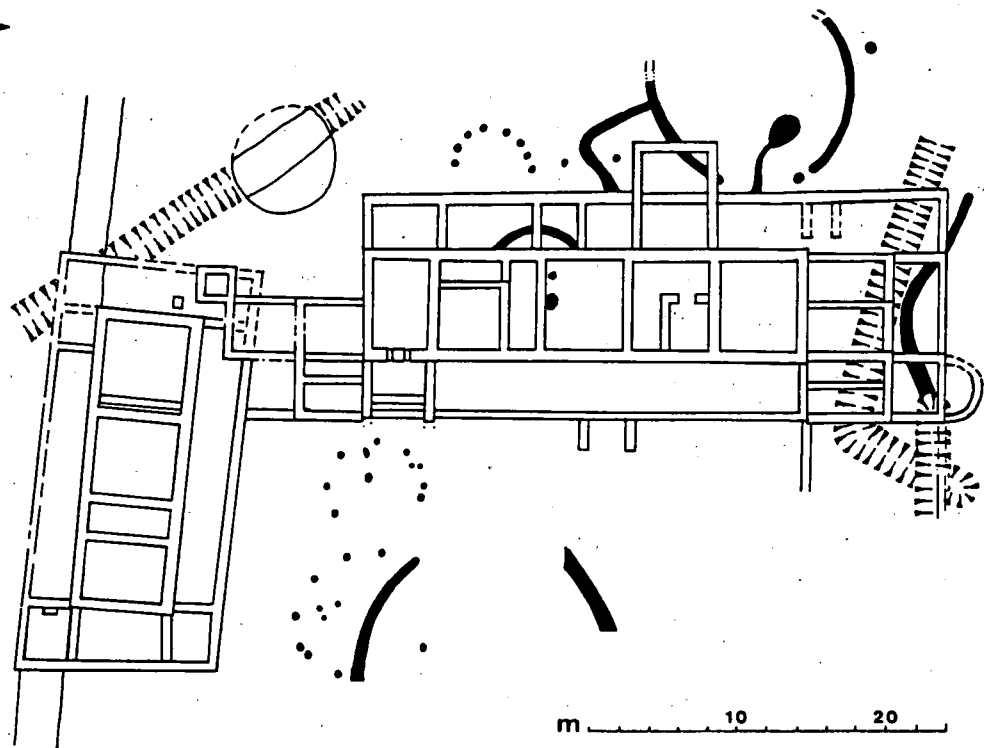
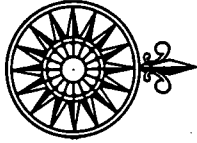
The first late Iron Age phase (phase 1) is represented by the post-holes of a circular building, approximately 8m. in diameter; a small amount of pottery of the mid first century BC was found within two of the post holes. A second adjacent smaller circular building, approximately 6m. in diameter, may be contemporary (in the area of the later courtyard). The four circular buildings were occupied from c 50 BC until c AD 80.

The first stone building (phase 2) was complemented by a smaller, detached east-west building, at a slightly obtuse angle, added during the first half of the second century AD (phase 3). The two buildings retained their separate identities when a corridor was added to the east side of the main range, with room divisions and an apse at each end, giving an external impression of symmetry (phase 4). A second room was probably added to the cellar beneath the south end of the north - south range, lit by two splayed windows, just below its ceiling level internally and just above ground level externally. The windows have internal tile sills and, externally, slots in the stonework indicate the insertion of wooden sills. Holes in the internal sills provided for shutter bolts.

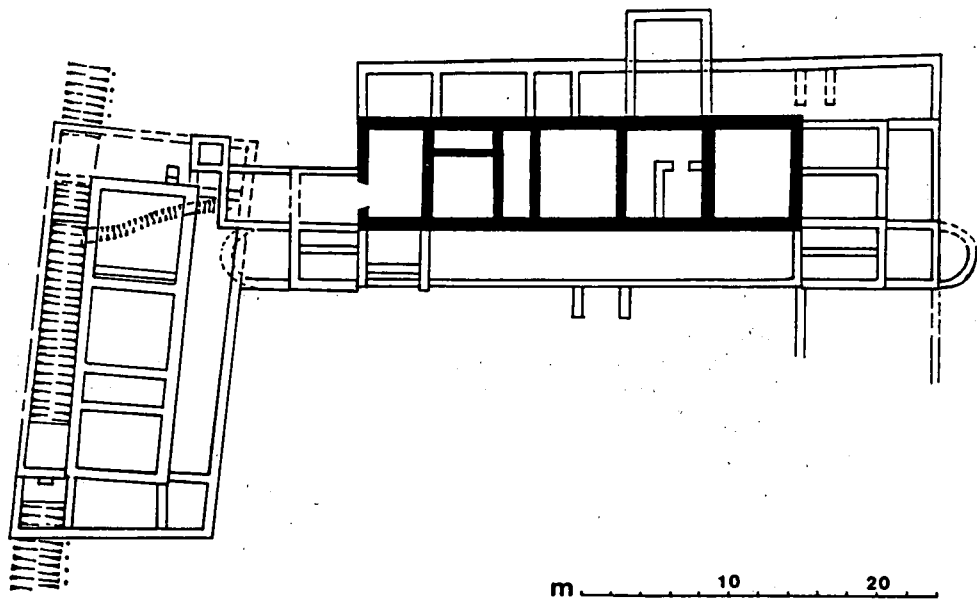
The end of the second century saw the linking of the two buildings and the development of the whole into a true winged corridor villa (phase 5). The simple east-west structure became the core of a wing with front and rear corridors. By now, the south apse had disappeared and additions to the north end of the main wing both increased the accommodation and made the one remaining apse a less conspicuous feature. A rubble-filled soak-away pit was cut outside the east cellar wall windows, with a stone-filled drain curving away downhill to the east, avoiding the earlier fence defining the 'garden' area in the central courtyard.

Phase 5 was brought to an end by a serious fire, in the late second century. This may have started in the bath-house between the two ranges and destroyed much of the villa, as evidenced by the fire damaged external plaster along the walls fronting the courtyard and similar indications on the south side of the east-west wing, with burnt plaster, timber and nails.

Following the fire, a major rebuilding took place, not only to refurbish the main range, but to add a back range of rooms (phase 6). The bath-house was completely reconstructed, extending over what had been the north-west corner of the east-west wing and its drainage ditch cut through the former west end of this wing. The east-west range was now reduced back to the core building, corridor fronting the courtyard and two rooms at its east end.

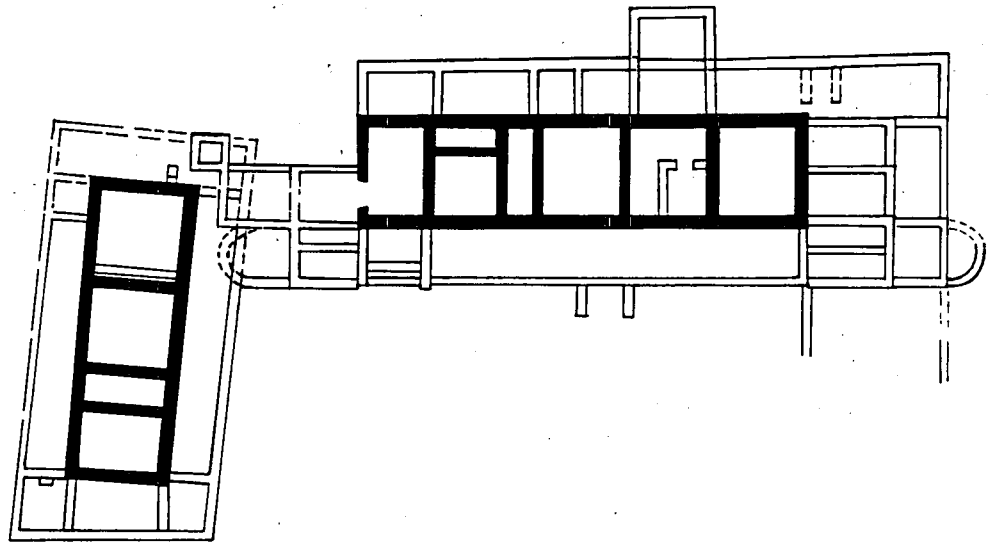
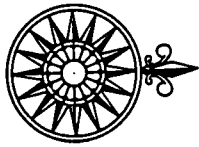


Phase 1 c AD 10–80



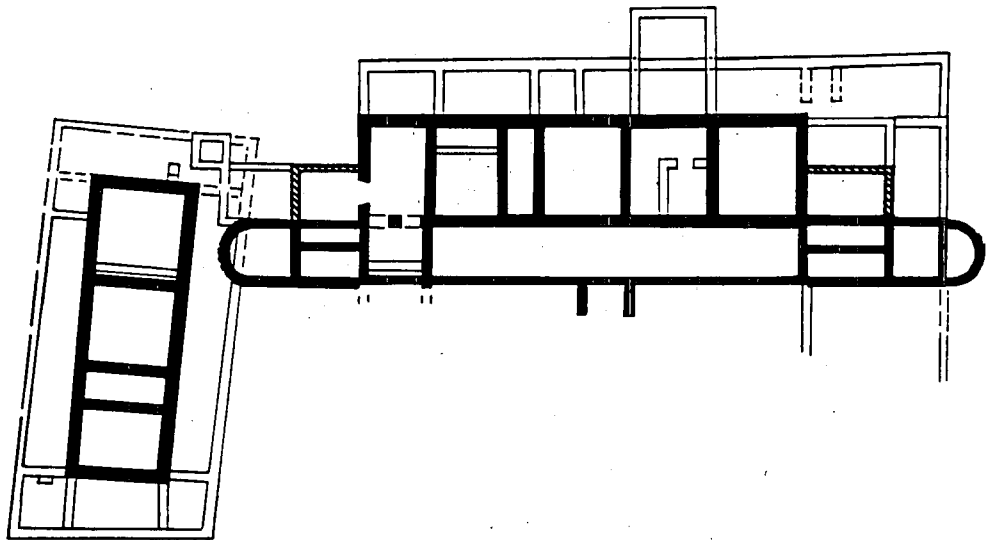
Phase 2 c AD 80–100

Fig 9. Piddington.



m 10 20

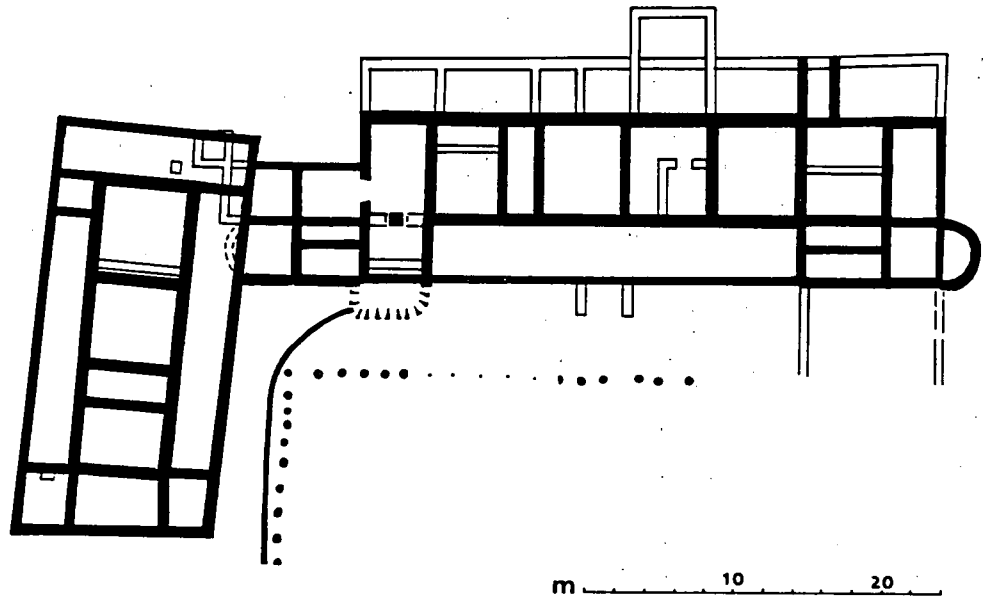
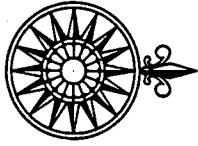
Phase 3 c AD 100–150



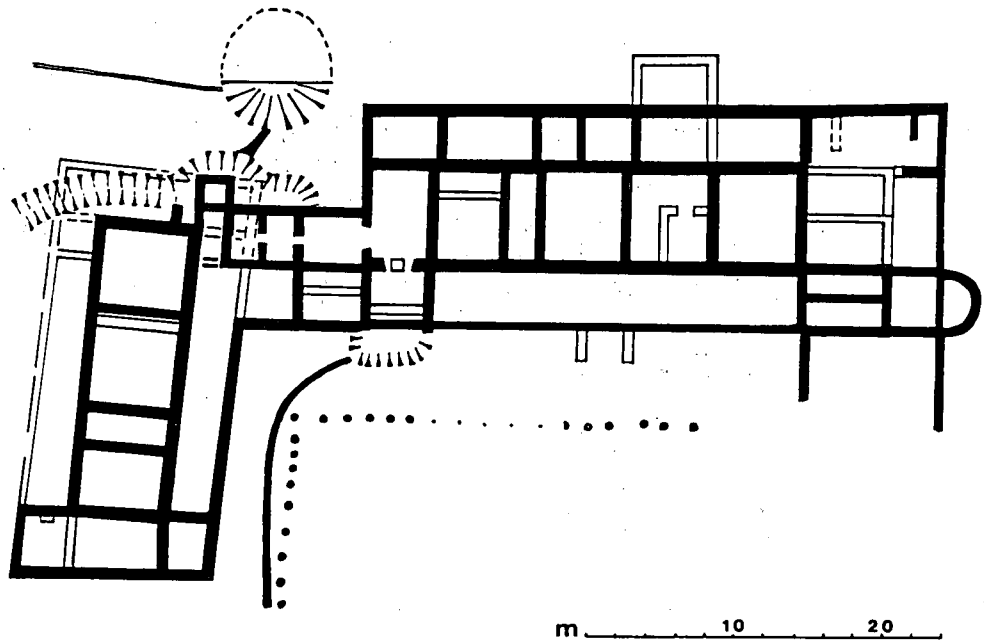
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Phase 4 c AD 150–180

Fig 10. Piddington.

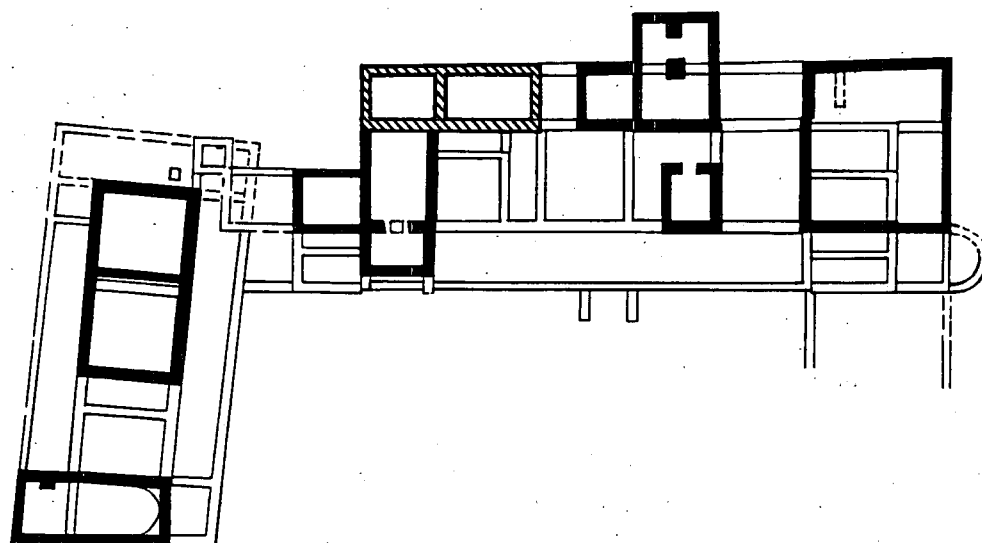
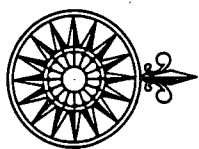


Phase 5 c AD 180-200



Phase 6 c AD 200-280

Fig 11. Piddington.



m 10 20

Phase 7 c AD 310 – 380 +

Fig 12. Piddington.

Changes also took place within the cellar: the opening between the two rooms, which originally consisted of a square pillar on a stone and tile stylobate (from phase 4), set centrally within the opening, was converted to a single doorway, with the addition of stub walls on each side, with recesses for door posts and then splayed inwards to illuminate the inner cellar room, by means of the windows in the east wall of the front cellar.

To the west of the bath-house a large pit was dug, 8m. in diameter by 3.5m. deep, perhaps initially cut to obtain clay for tile-making, but later employed as a water storage tank, receiving its supply via a timber pipeline, joined by iron collars, approaching from the south-west. The tank would have been ideally placed to provide water for the bath-house. An overflow channel had been cut to release excess water into the bathhouse drain.

In the last quarter of the third century, evidence indicates that a major refurbishment was underway. Two large heaps of unused limestone and brick tesserae, one of which measured 14 by 4 metres by 25-30cm. deep (but denuded by later agricultural disturbance) and quantities of unpainted wallplaster in the bath-house, are some of the evidence that villa life came to an abrupt end. There is no evidence that any activity took place on the site for approximately thirty years. A gully in the courtyard was levelled with rubbish, which included two mint coins of Constantine I as Caesar (AD 306-7) from the London mint. This is interpreted as the clearing of the site at reoccupation. Parts of the former villa building were dismantled to just above the footings and had been worn smooth, while other parts were extended, to form at least six separate buildings, which produced evidence of intensive occupation.

In one room, which boasted a large central hearth and two ovens, 50cm. of accumulated ash and vast quantities of oyster shells and other domestic detritus, good groups of late pottery and many coins within this build-up gave the date range for this activity of c AD 330-380. The romanised trappings of life were still in evidence, such as Oxford, Much Hadham and Nene valley fine wares, but the living and working accommodation had every appearance of utter squalor!

The easternmost room of the east-west wing was retained and traces of an internal, possibly timber, apse constructed, within the rectangular external stone built walls at its north end. The fine mortar floor showed traces of horizontal grooving, caused by tamping the wet mortar with a board. Also associated were tegulae, in a fabric not found elsewhere on the site at any period. Fourteen of these tile bore a unique stamp, (PRO). In the south-west corner of the room was a stone step, which led out into the former corridor of this range (which may perhaps have been constructed in timber at this time).

Perhaps the most significant development has been the discovery of second century tiles, known to have been made on site, stamped "TCV" and "TIB CL. SEVERI"

respectively. "SE" appears to have been added to the latter stamp. If this is interpreted as meaning "of the estate tileries of Tiberius Claudius Severus", succeeding an earlier reference to that of Tiberius Claudius Verus, it is not inconceivable that Piddington has produced a unique record of the name of two successive owners of the villa, with a strong indication that Roman citizenship was granted to a conquest period predecessor who, perhaps, smoothed the path of the conquest in the area.

The impressive pre-conquest connections of the site, together with a study of the native and imported pottery in the Nene and Welland valleys and associated artefacts (M. Phil. thesis) strongly suggest that the Iron Age occupation in the area of the Nene and the Ouse represents the focus of a small, but definable, minor Iron Age tribe.

References

- Friendship-Taylor R M & D E, 1989a. Iron Age & Roman Piddington: An Interim Report on the Excavation of a Late Iron Age Settlement & Romano-British Villa In Northamptonshire, published by the Upper Nene Arch. Soc.
Frere, S.S., 1989b. Piddington Villa. *Britannia* XX. pp.290.
Frere, S.S., 1990. Piddington Villa. *Britannia* XXI, pp.332-3.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Towcester

SP 694489 - Graeme Walker

A detailed assessment was carried out of land within the north-eastern defences of the Roman town of Lactodurum and adjoining meadow land between the defences and the River Tove on behalf of Morbaine Ltd. On the basis of the assessment results and geophysical survey an evaluation strategy was devised to investigate known and suspected archaeological features in the meadow land. Subsequent evaluation trenching revealed a long sequence of activity over the site.

Light scatters of Mesolithic and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age flintwork were detected but were unaccompanied by structural remains.

Middle to Late Iron Age occupation was suggested by pottery, some of which may be as early as the third century BC in date, and several small pits and gullies scattered across the south-east corner of the site. Adjoining the possible occupation areas a ditched cemetery containing several incomplete inhumations appears to have its origins in the transitional late Iron Age/early Roman period, although the presence of a later Roman inhumation and fragments of a lead curse tablet (defixio) attest continued use into the second or third century.

A post-second century Roman field bank and ditch was noted in close proximity to the cemetery.

The cemetery and settlement areas were partly overlain by a medieval/post-medieval fishpond complex comprising extensive surviving earthworks. The principal pond and leat were shown to be of more than one phase and the pond contained well-preserved environmental deposits and a quantity of cobblers waste, including parts of seventeenth-century leather shoes. The main leat was partly re-cut in the nineteenth century.

An area of seventeenth and eighteenth century gravel quarrying was identified adjacent to the outfall basin of Towcester Mill.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Oundle, Northamptonshire - St. Osyth's Lane
(TL 04280 88050) - Steve Ford

An evaluation, on behalf of Claymount Properties Ltd., was carried out on a development site fronting St. Osyth's Lane, an area which would appear to lie within the Medieval core of the town. The evaluation consisted of three machine-dug trenches, all of which contained evidence of Medieval activity in the form of pits, ditches and gullies. The pottery from these features has been tentatively dated to the later 11th-13th centuries (Late Saxon/Early Medieval). Faunal remains appear well preserved. Linear features likely to be property or field boundaries were found, but these lay at an angle to the current St. Osyth's Lane, suggesting that the present course of the lane was a subsequent development.

OXFORDSHIRE

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook evaluations, environmental assessments and full-scale excavations on numerous sites in Oxfordshire in 1992. The results of these projects are summarized below, starting with linear investigations on the routes roads or pipe-lines spanning more than one parish and continuing with reports on individual sites arranged in alphabetical order of parish name. Fuller reports have been lodged with the Oxfordshire County Sites and Monuments Record.

Buscot To Faringdon Pipeline
(SU 2296498032 and 2889596220) - Andrew Parkinson

A watching brief was undertaken along the Buscot to Faringdon pipeline by the OAU for Thames Water Utilities Ltd while work was in progress from September to November 1992.

Buscot (SU 2296498032)
At Buscot weir a hand dug trench located the W wall of a waterwheel pump house, constructed c 1863 to supply water to the Buscot Park estate reservoir and to the village. The estate is now owned by the National Trust but between 1863 and c 1876 Robert Campbell built Buscot Park estate into one of the most industrialised farms in 19th-century England. At Buscot Lock the industrial complex included a distillery to distil spirit alcohol from sugar beet, an oil cake mill, gas works, vitriol works, and artificial fertiliser works (Gray 1971). The demolition layer of the pump house contained a fragment of slab marble, architectural fragments

and ceramic wall tiles made by 'Minton Hollins & Co' of Stoke-on-Trent.

Faringdon (SU 2889596220)

A spread of limestone, interpreted as a trackway, was revealed, orientated N-S across the easement. It was 2.80 m wide and exposed for a length of 13 m. A tripod pitcher base, strap handle sherd and a glazed fragment represent the only diagnostic sherds present and date it to the 12th-13th century.

Reference

Gray, J R, 1971. An Industrial Farm Estate in Berkshire, *Industrial Archaeology* 8(2), 175-85

Wallingford Bypass
(SU 590910 - 620880) - Mark Roberts and Peter Wardle

The last phase of work in advance of the construction of the Wallingford Bypass took place in 1992-3.

Mongewell, Grim's Ditch (SU 611881)

Evaluation trenches were excavated across the line of the bypass to the S of Grim's Ditch at SU 61028813 (trench 1) and 61068814 (trench 2). In both there were two successive ploughsoils between topsoil and natural, echoing a build-up of ploughsoils found in trenches to the W in 1988, but with a shallower overall depth. An undated post-hole was recorded beneath these at the S end of trench 1.

Excavation of a length of Grim's Ditch centred at SU 611881 defined the following sequence:

i Pre-bank clearance? Numerous tree-throw pits may provide evidence for land clearance, although it is impossible to be certain that they resulted from human activity.

ii Prehistoric settlement/domestic activity. The earliest clear phase of activity was represented by 76 postholes sealed by later cultivation soils. None of the postholes contained any datable finds, although some of the deeper ones contained charcoal which could provide samples for radiocarbon dating. The post-holes formed one six-post structure, two small circular structures and a possible rectangular structure.

iii Cultivation Soils. The postholes were sealed beneath two distinct, non-contemporary cultivation soils. The bank of Grim's Ditch sealed the earlier soil which had ard marks beneath it to the W and a series of shallow N-S aligned ridges in its surface where this could be identified. The earlier cultivation soil sealed the six post and rectangular structures. Pottery from these soils is small and abraded. On superficial inspection it seems to range from Bronze Age to late Iron Age/early Roman in date.

iv The Earthwork. The bank was not well preserved but two distinct types of bank material were evident. A chalk matrix overlay areas of the ridged cultivation, making them easily observable. Elsewhere they were also overlain by loamy bank material. The latest of the small quantity of sherds from the early phases of bank construction seem to be late Iron Age/early Roman.

The ditch was filled with a mixed, slightly chalky loam. Fresh water mollusca identified in the lower fills of the ditch indicate that fast flowing water ran through it at this point. Roman pottery was recovered from the lower fills of the ditch.

v Post-bank Ploughing. The later cultivation soils were divided into two slightly different phases. The cultivation soil next to the bank was a very clean soil with ard marks in it which cut the N side of the underlying cultivation ridges. These were clearly visible only where the adjacent bank matrix was of chalk. The chalk was probably introduced by ploughing the initial slippage of the bank.

Another cultivation soil further to the N cut into the N side of the Bank but also continued over it. It may represent an attempt to plough out the bank. This ploughsoil was overlain by later ploughsoil which is presumably medieval or later in date.

vi Medieval Features. These comprised a series of pits which were not fully excavated, two phases of property boundaries and a circular structure with an associated pit which was interpreted as a brewhouse.

vii Later Ploughing. The bank of Grim's Ditch had been ploughed from both N and S and ditches had been cut into the top of the bank as field boundaries.

viii Landscaping. An avenue of beech trees was planted on the site and a chalk path was laid roughly on the line of Grim's Ditch.

Cholsey, Bradford's Brook (centre SU 595885)

Further late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British features were recorded in an area where fieldwalking by the Wallingford Society and evaluation by OAU had already indicated the presence of settlement of all these periods.

The Remainder of the Route

In the course of the subsequent watching brief, fieldwalking after topsoil stripping located a flint and pottery scatter between SU 6113 8815 and SU 6150 8840 on Ice House Hill, Mongewell, to the north of the line of Grim's Ditch. Artefacts were also recovered and features recorded along the rest of the line of the route.

Witney-Eynsham-Cassington A40 Dualling (SP 387100 - SP 470105) - Gill Hey

Introduction

In 1991 and 1992 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an evaluation of the proposed route of the A40 Witney-Cassington dualling. This work was funded by English Heritage. The route lies on the Oxford to Cheltenham stretch of the A40, approximately seven miles NW of Oxford.

The new route, 9.5 km long, will follow and widen the existing road line for much of its length but diverges from it north of Eynsham. Part of the diversion will lie within a wide cutting. To the east a road intersection is planned with a new spur road running north to Cassington village from a slip road and roundabout junction.

The solid geology of the area is Oxford Clay with deposits of unbedded drift on higher ground to the west of the route (at approximately 85 m OD) and extensive areas of river gravels, mostly of the 2nd and 2nd/3rd gravel terraces, to the east. There is a covering of alluvium over much of the Thames and Evenlode floodplains which masks gravel islands and the courses of earlier channels. The gravel terrace north of Eynsham lies at 61-62 m OD and the Cassington spur road roundabout on the Thames floodplain is at c 60 m OD. Land use along the route was mostly pasture, though some fields were under arable cultivation and some were set aside.

It was not possible to gain access to all areas affected by the scheme and the archaeological implications of the new road have therefore not been fully assessed. Where permission to undertake archaeological work was granted by landowners a strategy of machine trenching was employed: 2% in areas with archaeological potential and 1% otherwise.

Archaeological Background

The route of the A40 crosses two areas of national archaeological importance. Adjacent to the present A40 Cassington junction lies an area of concentrated occupation and burial with rich finds from the Neolithic to the Saxon period, including a Beaker cemetery excavated by E.T.

Leeds in 1933 and the late Iron Age Cassington Big Enclosure (Benson and Miles 1974). Archaeological information from this area was retrieved in rescue conditions during gravel extraction and road building from the 1930s to the 1950s. In the area around New Wintles Farm, where the new road will swing north of Eynsham, an important Anglo-Saxon settlement site was excavated in 1968 (Gray 1974) in advance of gravel extraction. Bronze Age activity was also represented on this site and other Anglo Saxon settlements and cemetery sites lie nearby.

At the eastern end of the route the OAU/English Heritage Yarnon Cassington Project, initiated as a result of gravel extraction by ARC north of the A40, had indicated a possible late Bronze Age site on the floodplain and prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity at Worton on the second gravel terrace above.

Little was known of early activity on the western edge of the route, though some unstratified finds were retrieved during observation of the Witney-Cassington gas pipe line in 1988.

The results are described from west to east along the route (Fig 1)

The West End of the Route

Four ditches and two shallow pits were located south of the A40 at the west end of the route (SP 390101), sealed by modern ploughsoil or colluvium. One of the ditches contained two probable Iron Age sherds. Otherwise there was no dating evidence from any of these features and their significance is uncertain.

The site of 19th century brick kilns at Ambury Close Farm (SP 407103) was confirmed by the presence of a spread of post-medieval pottery, clay pipes, brick and animal bone.

Chil Brook

At SP 416102, north of Chil Brook, the site of a possible moated medieval farmstead was discovered (Fig 2). This site was previously unknown. Three sides of a rectangle were suggested in the east of the field by a linear pond running east-west and a kink in the adjacent field boundary. West of the pond and at right-angles to it ran a wide deep ditch, on the inside of which lay a trackway or cobbled surface and an occupation layer which slightly overlay the cobbles. These features contained quantities of medieval pottery, ranging from the late 11th to early 13th century, although the ditch contained a later 14th- to 15th-century baluster base and a clay pipe stem, suggesting that it was filled at a later date. The pottery assemblage so far recovered from this site appears to have stronger links with the west country (Gloucester and Bristol) than with Oxford (identification by Cathy Underwood-Keevill). Other ditches were located in this field, one of which contained a broken, possibly early Neolithic blade. (Flint identification by Pippa Bradley).

The fields in this area belonged to Tilgarsley, a medieval hamlet depopulated during the Black Death and abandoned by 1349. The exact location of the village is unknown.

New Wintles Farm Area

Two east-west ditches were located in two fields south of New Wintles Farm (SP 433103), one of which contained a small very abraded Roman sherd. Two parallel shallow gullies aligned north-south in the same fields yielded no dating evidence. Unfortunately it was not possible to evaluate the field to the west where cropmarks of a ring ditch and other ditches have been observed.

Cassington Mill Area

Access difficulties resulted in few trenches being excavated in this area. However, it was clear that quarrying had been very extensive, running up to the modern road boundaries in all sections examined. Archaeological features may survive beneath the very wide roadside verges which exist in this area.

South of Cassington

A scatter of small features were observed in the trenches excavated south of Cassington and south of the A40 road. Their significance is uncertain. One shallow east-west ditch contained a broken blade-like flake probably early Neolithic in date and two ditches and a pit yielded no finds. One ditch and a pit contained medieval pottery and four ditches and a gully cut medieval ploughsoil.

Cassington Spur Road Junction

There was evidence for extensive prehistoric occupation in this area where old channels cut west-east across the floodplain gravels creating islands (SP 461105; Fig. 3). A fieldwalking survey had been undertaken within the Yarnon Cassington Project over the field north of the A40 where a late Bronze Age pottery scatter had been located associated with burnt flint, as well as Roman and medieval manuring scatters. Cropmarks were also known from the area to the south (Oxon PRN 12197).

In the area north of the channels (Site 1) ditches, gullies, pits and postholes were discovered beneath a Roman ploughsoil. Domestic occupation was clearly present and the spatial distribution of some postholes was indicative of house plans. A sherd of late Neolithic Grooved Ware was recovered from one of the ditches and a scatter of late Bronze/early Iron Age pottery was retrieved from postholes and pits over the area (Prehistoric pottery identifications by Alistair Barclay.)

Two Iron Age sites (Sites 2 & 3) were located south of this site, each lying on different gravel islands between the channels. Cropmarks of circular enclosures were associated with the southernmost site (Site 3). Ditches and deep gullies, possibly house gullies, were present as well as several postholes. At least some of these postholes indicated structures and a spread of clay silt with daub, burnt limestone and charcoal on Site 3 was interpreted as destruction debris from a house. Middle Iron Age pottery in fairly substantial quantities was retrieved from the features. A small proportion of early Iron Age pottery may also have been present.

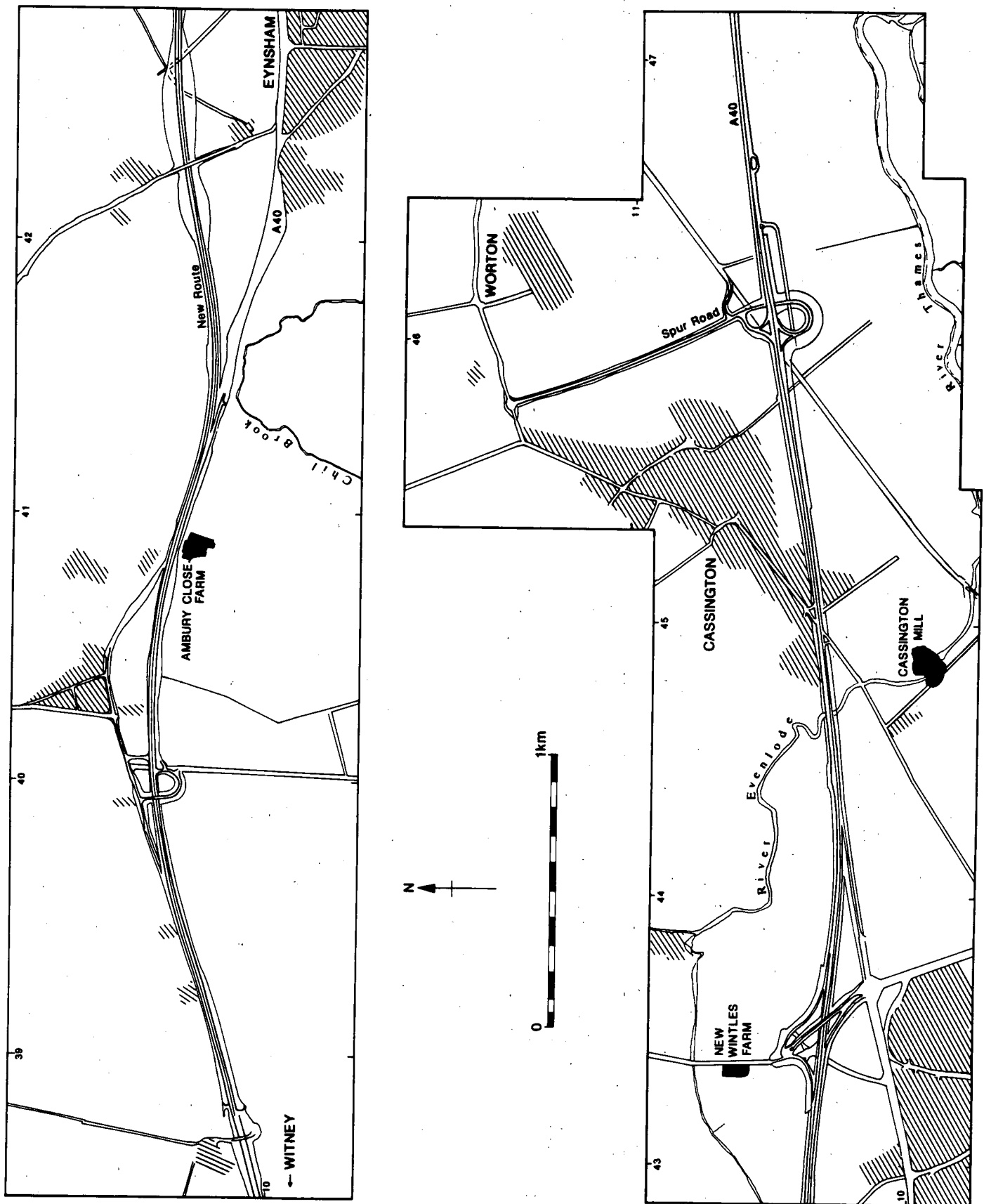


Fig 1. A40. Map of route showing main locations mentioned in text and national grid.

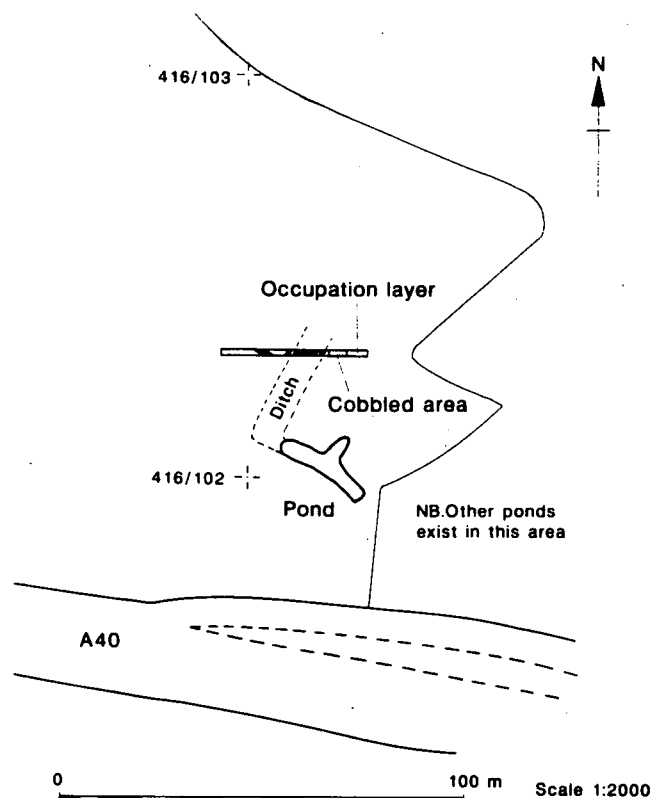


Fig 2. A40. Plan of moated medieval site at Chil Brook.

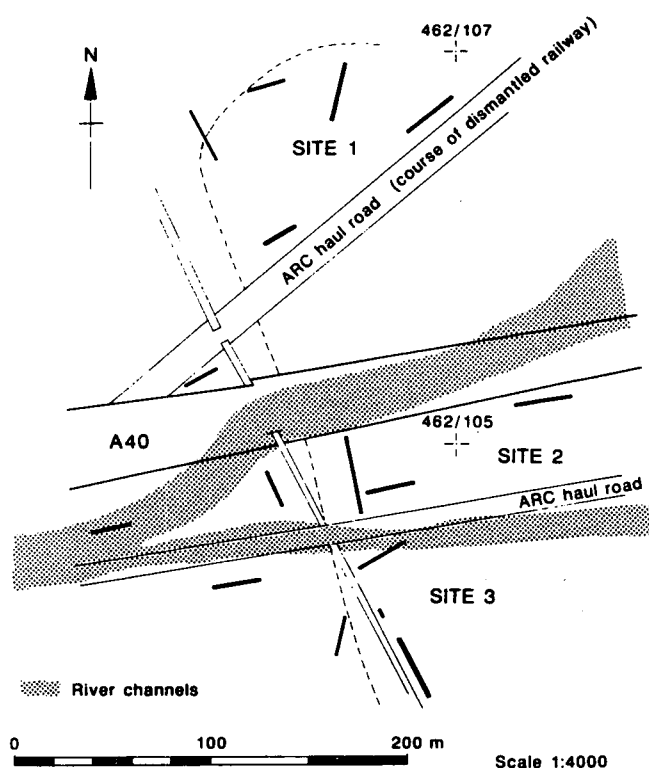


Fig 3. A40. Simplified plan of sites at Cassington Spur Road junction, showing river channels.

These sites most closely resemble small Iron Age farmsteads such as at Farmoor and on Port Meadow, Oxford which are known to exist on the Thames floodplain in this area.

Worton Rectory Farm

Ditches and pits were identified on the gravel terrace adjacent to the shrunken medieval village of Worton (SP 459110). A few sherds of late Iron Age and Roman pottery came from the ditches and these features were part of the known Roman and Iron Age site identified from air photographs and fieldwalking.

Below the scarp of the terrace a shallow ditch was located running northeast-southwest. The top fill of the ditch was packed with burnt stone and flint and a reduced core which may be earlier Neolithic in date was retrieved from this deposit.

Eastern End of the Route

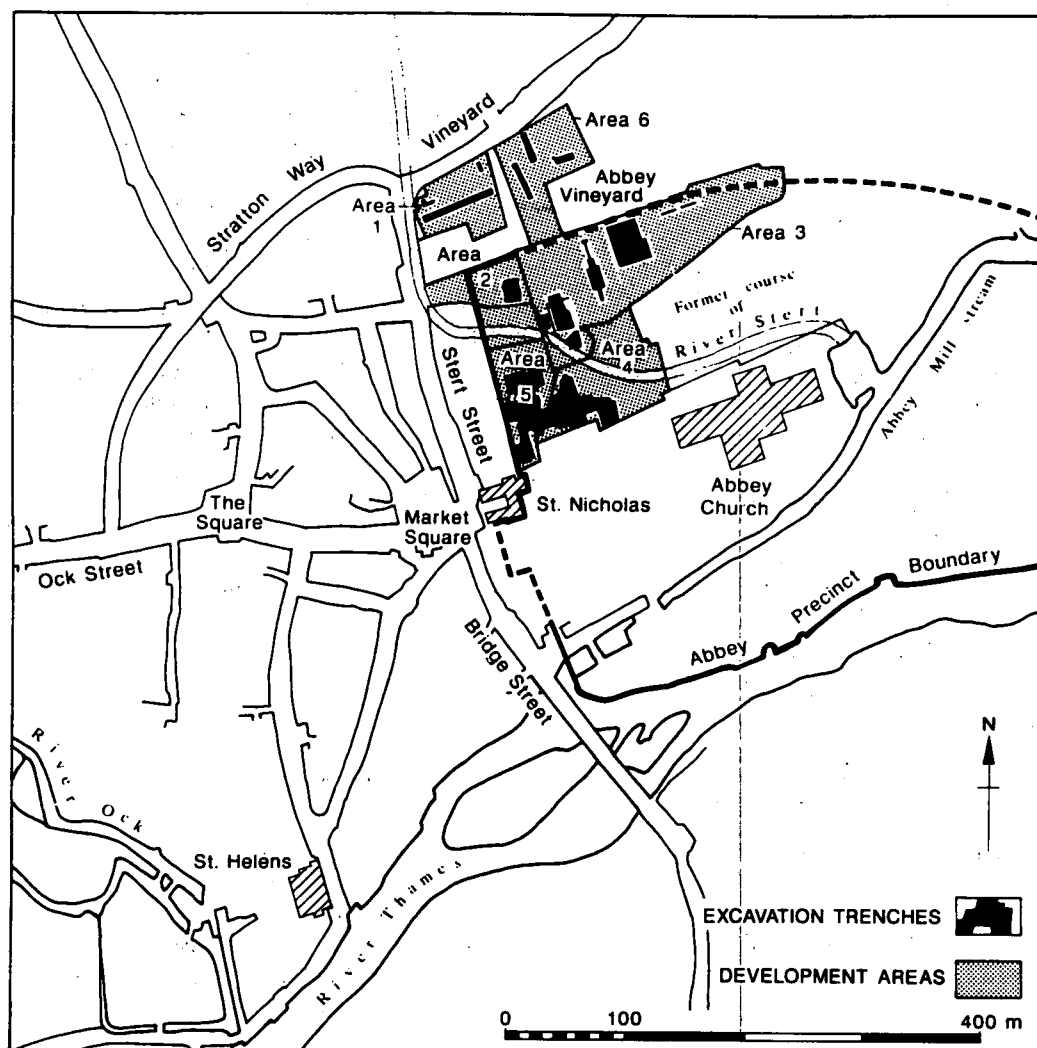
East of the lay-by on the south side of the A40 (SP 469106) a gravel island is situated, possibly the same as that occupied by the southernmost settlement of the Cassington spur road sites. This island seems to be continuous with that north of the A40 where a dense flint scatter of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date was recovered during fieldwalking in the Yarnton Cassington Project. Shallow gullies, pits and postholes were observed south of the A40 in this area, though only one gully yielded any datable finds; one sherd of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pottery.

Landscape and Land Use

Linear road schemes offer an excellent opportunity to retrieve more general information on landscape and land use across different topographies. For example tree clearance with associated evidence of burning and some dating evidence in the form of flintwork, was evidenced on the Evenlode floodplain. Roman ploughsoil was observed in situ south of Worton and evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation was present over much of the route, especially in the area south of Cassington. Ditches of several periods representing boundaries of fields and probably land ownership were located in many places (for example south of New Wintles Farm and south of Cassington). Waterlogged deposits were also present in the palaeochannels and in some of the deeper ditches on the east of the route indicating that well-preserved environmental information survives in these areas.

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AREA 1 ROSEHAUGH ESTATES
 AREA 2 SERVITE HOUSES LTD
 AREA 3 KIMBERLEY SECURITIES

AREA 5 & 6 VALE OF WHITE HORSE
 DISTRICT COUNCIL

Fig 4. Abingdon Vineyard. Development areas and excavation trenches.

Abingdon, Abingdon Vineyard 1992: Areas 2 and 3, the Early Defences (SU 499 973) - Tim Allen

During August and September a three week excavation funded by Servite Houses was carried out in Area 2 (Station Yard) in advance of development as sheltered housing for the elderly. A 15 m x 12 m area laid was opened up to investigate the oppidum ditch previously observed in salvage (Fig 4; SMA 21, 97-99).

The excavation was stepped in at 1.2 m intervals to the bottom of the ditch, which was found 4.5 m down. The depth to contemporary ground level was c 2.7 m. The ditch had a wide, cupped base and the S side sloped at an angle of approximately 40 degrees. On the N side was a flat shelf 1 m above the bottom which continued beyond the N limits of the trench (Fig 5). Overall the ditch must have been at least 12.5 m wide. The ditch appeared to have been recut, since the fills of the shelf were discontinuous with the sloping fills

of the deepest part of the ditch, which overlay them. The recut appears to have been 10 m wide.

The bottom 0.5 m of the ditch fill was waterlogged, and the second 0.5 m consisted of waterlain silts containing aquatic snails, showing that the ditch would have been permanently wet, and have contained up to 1 m of water in winter. Dr Mark Robinson, who examined the waterlogged and molluscan samples, believes that the water was mostly stagnant, but flowed at some periods, though whether this implies that the ditch was linked to the rivers Stort or Thames, or was simply flood water, is unclear. The absence of tall aquatic reeds suggests that this phase of silting may have been short-lived.

Above this silting continued, predominantly on the S or inner side of the ditch. It was these fills which contained the Flavian pottery previously recovered in salvage. Above this the ditch had been backfilled with gravel and redeposited topsoil, probably derived from the upcast bank. Pottery from

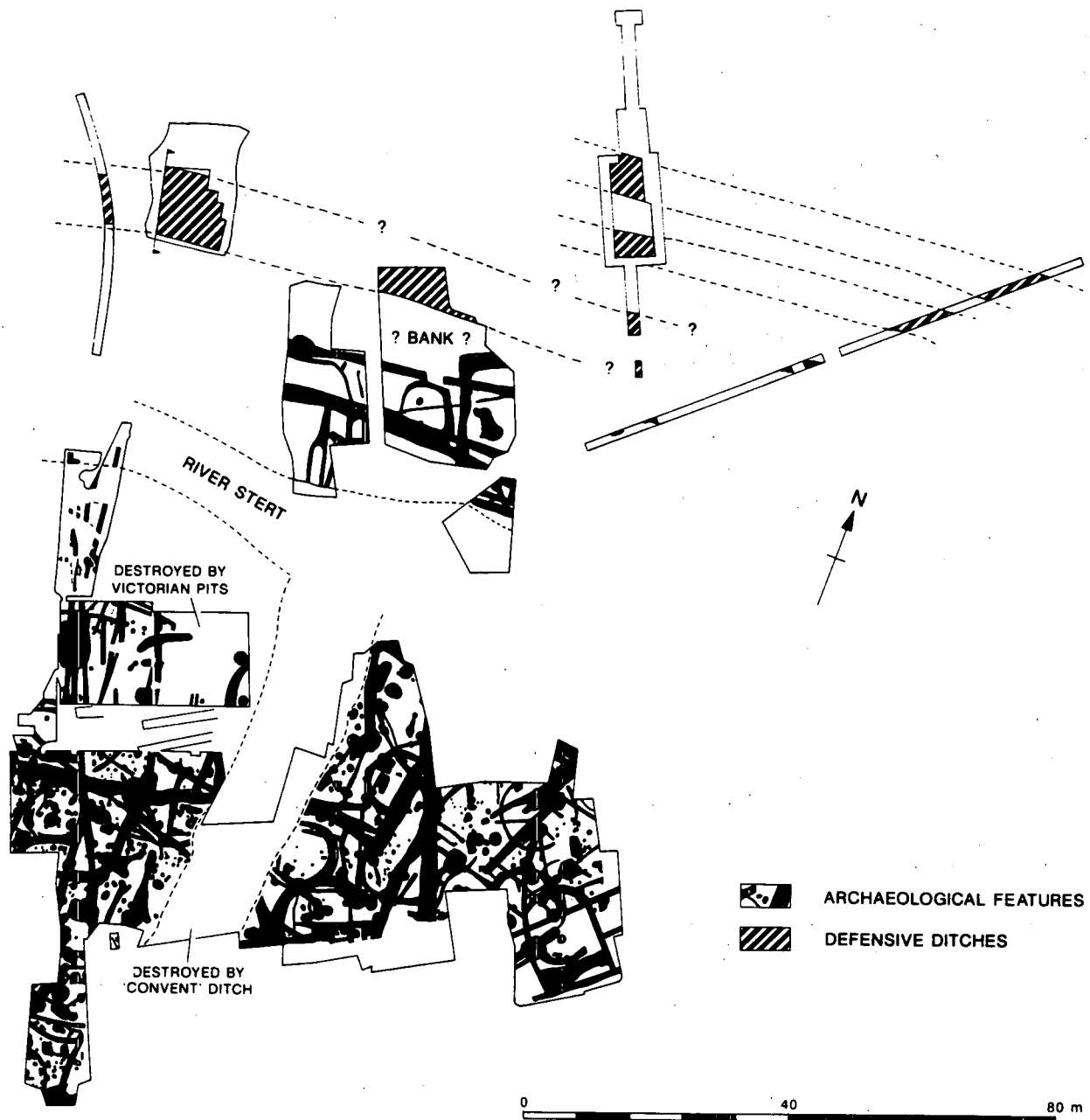


Fig 5. Abingdon Vinyard. Plan of the excavated areas showing the observed course of the defensive ditches.

the backfilling is dated to the late first-early second century AD.

The backfill layers were cut into by Roman features of the late 2nd to 4th centuries AD, showing that occupation soon spread from inside the settlement over the infilled ditch. In December 1992 and April 1993 excavations were carried out in area 3 E of Area 2, funded by Kimberley Securities PLC in advance of a Waitrose Store development. A N-S trench across the W part of the proposed store uncovered two further large ditches N of the first (see Fig 6). The outermost proved to be 6.8 m wide and c 2.3 m deep, with cupped base and sides sloping at around 45 degrees, the middle ditch, of which very little was seen, was c 6.5 m wide and at least 1.9 m deep. This ditch was not bottomed. The outermost ditch was separated from the middle ditch by a

berm 2.5 m wide, the middle ditch was 6-7 m from the innermost ditch.

The outermost ditch was also waterlogged at the bottom; just above the waterlogging Middle Iron Age sherds were found, and the upper part of the ditch was filled with a homogeneous gravelly soil, possibly a ploughsoil perhaps suggesting that cultivation extended right up to the defences.

The date at which the defences were first constructed will depend upon radiocarbon dating which is still being carried out. The line of the defences is however mirrored in the gullies which divide up the interior of the 1st century settlement from AD 50 onwards, and the site is likely to have acquired its defences in the Late Iron Age. What is most

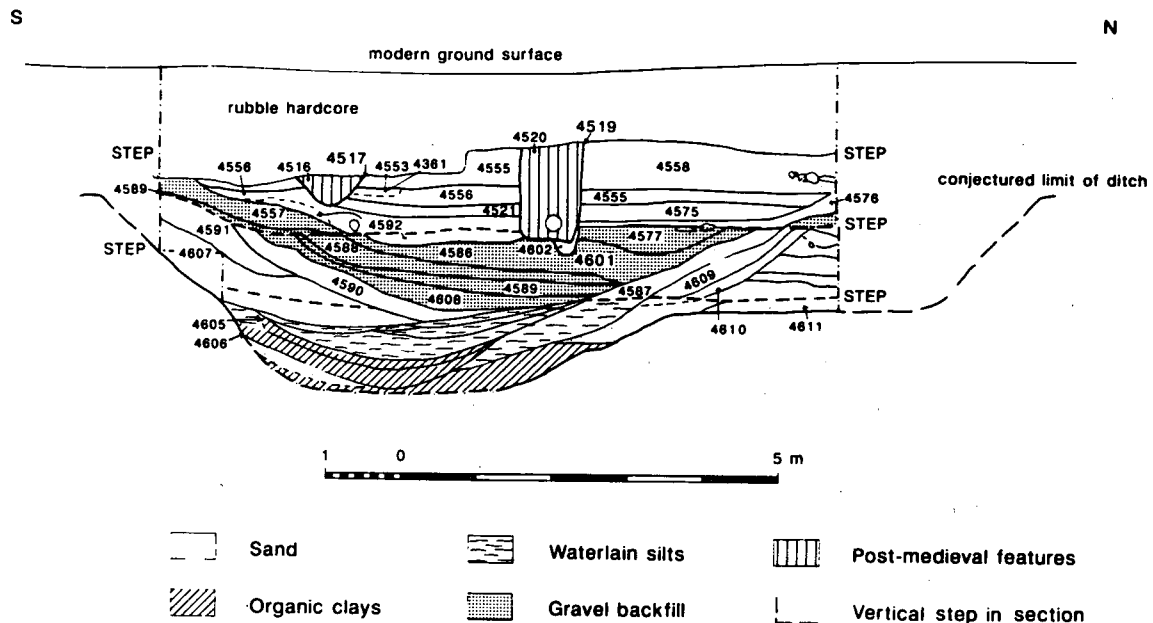


Fig 6. Abingdon Vinyard. Section across the inner defensive ditch, showing deliberate backfilling in the 1st/early 2nd century AD.

significant however is that this thriving native town was allowed to keep its defences throughout the 1st century AD.

Excavation across the line of the ditch showed that it was more than 12.5 m wide and c 2.7 m deep from contemporary ground level. The ditch had a wide, cupped base and the S side sloped at approximately 40 degrees; the N side had a shelf halfway up, which continued beyond the limits of the excavation. The ditch appeared to have been recut on the S side, the recut being 10 m wide.

Abingdon, Kibswell Development, Radley Road (SU 508979) Tim Allen

A watching brief funded by OCC was carried out upon the foundations and service trenches of a small housing development on the S side of the Radley Road, situated just 100 m NW of the Roman villa enclosure excavated by David Miles at Barton Court Farm (Miles 1986).

Topsoil stripping for the access road reached gravel at the S end, exposing a late Roman pit and other soilmarks which were investigated by the author with the help of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society. Subsequent recording of foundation trenches revealed a large ditch and several shallow gullies on an E-W alignment, together with one or two pits or postholes, but none of these could be dated. The alignment of the ditches is however similar to that of the N side of the villa enclosure, and the large ditch may well be an associated field boundary.

A full picture of the density of features within this development could not be obtained. Over much of the site topsoil stripping bottomed within the post-medieval

ploughsoil, and the timetable of construction work did not allow observation of all of the foundation trenches.

Abingdon, St Nicholas Church (SU 49839708) G D Keevill and M Roberts

St Nicholas was built in the late 12th century for the lay brethren of Abingdon Abbey. A public house, the Two Brewers occupied the tenement immediately N of the church from 1599 or earlier until around 1881. The river Stert flows under the pavement on the E side of Stert Street. It was culverted in 1791 when the streets of Abingdon were paved. The section of culvert running across the site may predate this as an engraving of 1782 shows that The Two Brewers had been built over the line of the Stert. The N wall of St Nicholas Church has a relieving arch for the Stert which is visible at ground level.

A hand-dug assessment trench was excavated to the N of and parallel with the church in October 1992. The trench was 11 m long and 1.2 m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.9 m.

At least seven post-medieval/Victorian graves occupied the E half of the trench. Three had brick-lined vaults. All the articulated skeletal remains were left in situ. The cemetery, which went out of use in 1881, was bounded to the W by a limestone wall. 20th century features were also present.

The W end of the trench contained the limestone vaulted culvert of the Stert. The ceramics from the construction and infill of the culvert were of Saxo-Norman and medieval date. No sherds were later than the 15th century. The stream would therefore seem to have been culverted here in the 15th

century, and the Two Brewers was built over the culvert either then or in the 16th century. The earlier material is probably residual, but is nevertheless significant as an indicator of activity in the area during the Saxo-Norman period.

Ascott-under-Wychwood, Manor Farm
(SP 430219) Alan Hardy

A watching brief in October 1992, during the construction of a lake close to a suspected medieval castle motte, revealed one post medieval field boundary ditch, but no other archaeological features. This suggests that the motte is either a natural feature or possibly a platform for a modest building.

Ashbury, Tower Hill
David Miles and Greg Campbell

A collection of late Bronze Age metalwork was discovered in ploughsoil by a local walker. The landowner subsequently contacted the OAU. On a visit to the findspot a further nine copper alloy axes and three rings were found, making a total of 22 socketed axes, a variety of rings and scrap metal. Some of the axes are unfinished and others are unused. The hoard appears to be that of a metalworker.

English Heritage have funded survey, geophysical survey and small-scale investigation to establish the context of the hoard. An arc of postholes immediately adjacent to the hoard site may indicate a hut circle of 7 m diameter. This has not been dated but is similar in character to late Bronze Age structures, such as those of the Reading Business Park site.

The hoard site had been severely scored by ploughing as a result of the new agricultural policy of straw incorporation. It is hoped to return to the site after the 1993 harvest in order to establish the extent and character of settlement and provide information for a future management policy.

Asthall
(SP 28871116 and 28991112) Paul Booth

The major Roman settlement at Asthall in north-west Oxfordshire lies astride Akeman Street just W of the point where the Roman road crosses the River Windrush. Excavation in the SW part of the settlement was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in November and December 1992 in advance of the construction of a pipeline from Worsham to Burford by Thames Water, who funded the work. The pipeline approached Akeman Street from the NW alongside the existing road from Swinbrook, and it was only at the point at which it crossed Akeman Street that it began to cut through open fields, and hence previously undisturbed archaeological deposits, in an easement typically some 16 m wide.

Although long known as a major Roman site, background information about the settlement was only of a general nature. This was supplemented by a geophysical survey before excavation commenced but the survey lacked definition, particularly towards the central part of the settlement, so that detailed interpretation of it at this point was impossible. The quality and complexity of deposits eventually encountered was in fact considerably higher than had been anticipated. This very complexity had caused the confused anomalies located by the geophysical survey.

After topsoil stripping by the pipeline contractors two areas were cleaned and partly excavated. Area A (centred c SP 28871116) was c 60 m long and between 6-9 m wide and extended from the line of Akeman Street in an ESE direction. Area B (centred c SP 28991112) was c 50 m long and 8-9 m wide. The space between these areas appeared after the initial stripping to be devoid of features (an impression largely confirmed during observation of the subsequent machine excavation of the pipe trench itself). Effort was therefore concentrated where it seemed most likely to be productive, examining contrasting parts of the settlement, Area A in the focal area and Area B towards the margins.

In Area A the uppermost features were cleaned and recorded. After limited work to resolve outstanding problems, and the partial excavation of two small slots intended to establish the depth of deposit, work concentrated on the hand excavation of the pipe trench. Total examination of the stripped area was not possible because of the complexity of the deposits, which were up to 0.75 m deep.

At the W extremity of Area A at least seven successive surfaces of Akeman Street spanned the entire Roman period. The first of these was probably one of earliest features on the site. A date around the middle of the 1st century AD can be suggested, but there is no direct evidence from this site to support it. Fragments of a number of buildings with their short axes fronting onto the successive roads were found, all except the latest ones being located only in the pipe trench. A probable beam slot S of and roughly parallel to the road edge may have belonged to a primary building phase (Building J). This was succeeded by the robbed out NE corner of a stone building (Building H) which fronted right up to the Roman road. This building may have been constructed in the 2nd century and probably continued in use for some time. To the NE was a probable timber structure (Building G), one part of which consisted of a room with a good quality stone floor replaced several times. This room was defined by beam slots, most clearly seen on its SW side, immediately SW of which was a series of ovens with associated burnt deposits. It is unclear if these were internal, or external features located between the timber building and Building H to the SW. NE of the timber building were indeterminate, fragmentary floor surfaces and the SW corner of another stone building (Building F), parts of the SW and SE (rear) walls of which survived two courses high. This building had been constructed over a backfilled well and presumably also postdated a NW-SE aligned beam slot (?Building I), though the relationship was not observed.

Building F is likely to have been constructed in the 2nd century. Further E were traces of a small timber building (Building E) of slot and posthole construction. This was only 3 m wide (SW-NE), and in view of its location SE of Building F is likely to have been an outbuilding away from the Akeman Street frontage.

The 2nd century structures were succeeded by later stone buildings characterised by an absence of foundation trenches (in contrast with the earlier stone Buildings H and F). On top of Building H, but with its NE wall c 3 m further E, was Building A. As with its predecessor, only the NE corner was located (in neither building was this an exact right angle). The frontage of Building A was probably at least 7 m wide and its minimum length was c 5m, though the combined evidence of this and the buildings further E strongly suggests that the principal structures, at least, had a fairly uniform length of some 16-18 m.

NE of Building A the area occupied by Building G was probably now an open space, and a roughly paved area immediately next to Building A may have been a side road running from Akeman Street. Further NE another building (Building B) was constructed with its SW wall superimposed on the NE wall line of Building G. This wall, however, seems to have collapsed during or fairly shortly after its construction, since there are no floor surfaces associated with it. Substantial piles of collapse/demolition debris occurred consistently against the inside of the walls of the SE room of the building (the overall width of which was 8.7 m) and were overlaid by occupation surfaces which suggest that the building was reused or modified, probably with a timber superstructure. Substantial stone floors to the E of Building B were associated with a beam slot on a slightly more N-S alignment than the other recorded structural features. This may have belonged to a separate structure (Building D) or have been associated with Building B. Further E again were fragmentary spreads of stone which may have represented yard surfaces or further possible structures. A well some 6 m SE of the SE corner of Building B may have been contemporary with it.

The latest Roman structures were of timber. They included the possible Building D (above) to the E of Building B, and at the W end of the site a posthole structure (Building C) which post-dated Building A on a slightly different alignment to it. This building was almost certainly associated with the latest surface of Akeman Street and may have been quite small. Some features such as the well adjacent to Building B (above) could have been of this phase. A crouched adult inhumation within or above Building D also seems to have been of late Roman date, but it was not necessarily the latest feature in the late Roman sequence in this part of the site.

The character of the deposits in Site B was very different. Here there was relatively little stratigraphy and the majority of features were cut into the subsoil. Most of the excavated features lay within a probable ditched enclosure aligned E-W and N-S. This was c 25 m N-S and at least 40 m E-W. Parts of the E, S and N sides were located in the geophysical

survey. The E side and part of the N side were found in excavation. The ditches were roughly V-shaped, up to 2.5 m wide and 1 m deep, and were probably cut in the 2nd century. The N side was later recut. Towards the W end of the excavated area was a group of pits which were not examined in detail. E of these was evidence for iron working on a considerable scale. This consisted of hearths, probable paved working areas and other features, most if not all contained within a building (of which only very ephemeral traces survived) aligned on the axis of the enclosure. These features and the recut N enclosure ditch all produced moderate quantities of iron slag indicating smithing. The iron working area was cut on its SE side by a number of pits. Immediately E of the building and probably associated with it was a further pit which was most probably the upper part of a well shaft. An E-W aligned channel some 6 m long extended westwards into the building from the N edge of the well pit. It is unclear if this channel was contemporary with the use of the iron working building or later than it.

The E part of the enclosure was occupied principally by burials, though a few shallow hollows, a ditch and another probable well also occurred there. There were four adult and seven child inhumations and three cremations, one of which was contained within a greyware jar. The inhumations were mainly extended and the majority (including all the adults) were aligned roughly E-W. There was some intercutting of E-W and N-S graves, with the latter probably earlier. All the adults and two of the children were buried in wooden coffins. One adult had a copper alloy anklet; an iron pin and an iron brooch were also possibly associated with this burial rather than accidentally incorporated in the fill. The pin could have been for a shroud. A further adult inhumation was found during machine excavation of the pipe trench at the W end of Area B just N of the N enclosure ditch. It had almost certainly been in a coffin, but the precise location of the grave could not be identified.

With the exception of this last burial, the significance of which is unclear, it seems that the burials formed part of a relatively orderly late-Roman cemetery lying within the enclosure, but not precisely aligned on its axis. The full extent of the cemetery is unclear, but it may not have been very large. There were reasonably large spaces between some of the graves, and the intercutting of differently orientated graves probably resulted from a slight difference in date rather than shortage of space within the cemetery. The burials were presumably mostly of 4th century date, though direct evidence is lacking. Finds from the adjacent metal working area suggest, however, that this may still have been in use in the late Roman period. Metal working and burial of the dead may therefore have been contemporary activities.

Despite the relatively limited nature of the excavation the artefacts from the two sites were reasonable in both quantity and quality. There was very little ceramic building material; the structures were presumably roofed with stone, particularly in the later period, and thatch may have been employed for some of the early timber structures. The range of small finds contained few surprises, except for an intaglio

from the iron working area. The iron objects did include important material, however, particularly in view of the smithing activity. They included tools, most of which were probably being made or repaired rather than being in use by the smiths. Brooches, pins and coins were all found, the latter including a number of well stratified examples which will be of importance for dating. Pottery occurred in some quantity and will be useful in characterising the potential market function of the site. The human and animal bone was well preserved. Samples taken for carbonised plant remains and other environmental data have yet to be examined.

Banbury, Echo Park: Land adjoining Overthorpe Road Industrial Estate, Causeway

(SP 471407) - Mick Parsons and Rachel Morse

An archaeological evaluation was carried out. Ridge and furrow cultivation (still visible), a probable field boundary, modern deposits, ditches and a pit were also detected. Much of the subsoil had been disturbed by the laying of land drains.

Banbury, Echo Park II: Land adjoining Overthorpe Road Industrial Estate, Causeway

(SP 471408) - John Dalton and Rachel Morse

An archaeological evaluation was carried out. Modern deposits, a gully and a pit were also detected. Much of the subsoil had been disturbed by the laying of land drains and water pipes.

Banbury, Tudor Hall School, Wykham Park

(SP 4401 3789) - J Hunn

A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of new squash courts. It was found that the DMV and known Romano-British site in the near vicinity did not extend into the development area.

Beckley, the Walled Garden, High Street

(SP 56331124) - Andrew Parkinson

In June 1992 the OAU carried out a small-scale investigation at the Walled Garden, High Street, Beckley.

The walled garden is situated W of 'Beckley Palace', the site of the Capital Message of Richard of Cornwall, (PRN 5290). The moated house was begun in 1227 and destroyed as a reprisal by Richard Siward in 1233. (VCH Oxfordshire vol V, 57).

A 6 m long trench was dug at the bottom of the slope to investigate the possible existence of a moat. The trench revealed a cluster of intercutting pits, but no moat. A watching brief was carried out when the foundation trenches of the house were dug with a JCB. They showed a continuation of the pit clusters running NW-SE across the site.

The pottery ranges in date from the Saxo-Norman period, 11th-12th century, to the post-medieval period. The majority appears to be highly decorated Brill/Boarstall jug types dated to the 13th-early 14th-century. Two 12th-13th-century sherds were of interest, possibly imported from Northern France.

The pottery recovered suggests a high status site, some of which may correspond to the brief six years of 'Beckley Palace'. Due to the limited area examined and the occurrence of redeposited pottery in later pits it is difficult to ascribe any of the features firmly to the 'Beckley Palace' period.

Charlbury, Church of St Mary the Virgin

(SP 436219) - Alan Hardy

In May 1992 a watching brief was undertaken during building work in the N aisle. The present floor at the E end of the aisle was removed to a depth of 0.30m, revealing that most of the area had been disturbed early in this century by the construction of a boiler vault. Evidently a number of graves had been disturbed by this action, as fragments of human bone were retrieved from the modern floor make up. Slightly to the W of the vault the trench was deepened to accommodate a manhole, revealing four intercutting graves. From the fragments of coffin fittings found, none was earlier than the 17th century.

Cholesey, the Vicarage

(SU 458186) - Brian Durham and Alan Hardy

In advance of building work, OAU and members of the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society excavated trenches across the projected line of the Roman road from Silchester to Alchester as it passes through Cholesey to cross a brook. Interest arose from a report that a previous vicar had found a road surface. A peat deposit was found at a deep level, but the associated fauna was typical of a cold periglacial climate and likely to predate any Roman presence. It seems that if the Roman road had been on this alignment it must have diverted W along the present 'Causeway' to cross the brook near the church. Evidence from later levels suggested a ditched water supply to feed the medieval vicarage, which is in an unusual position well away from the church and rectory. The vicar's 'road' may have been a cobbled yard below the topsoil.

Deddington, Deddington Transfer Main

(SP 468300 to 470350) A Tim Allen

During 1992 a water main was laid from the A4260 1.5 km S of Deddington to the S side of Adderbury (Fig 6). The work was carried out by Cherwell District Council for Thames Water PLC. The line of the main passed between the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Deddington Castle and its fishponds to the SE, and also crossed 3 areas of potential Roman settlement, one (PRN 12502) just N of the stream, and two N of the River Swere (PRN 1737 and 3380).

A single unaccompanied cremation was found after topsoil stripping W of PRN 12502. There were no other finds, showing that the Roman settlement found 200 m further E did not extend this far.

The route of the pipeline from the fishponds to Deddington Castle was evaluated by a line of trenches 15 m long and 1 m wide, spaced at 15 m intervals. Apart from the furrows of medieval cultivation no features or finds were recovered.

A further line of similar trenches was dug NE of Grounds Farm for a distance of 300 m, between PRN 1737 and PRN 3380. Apart from a small scatter of undiagnostic flint flakes no archaeological features or finds were recovered, although the edge of a former ironstone quarry was located. Given the complete absence of Roman finds from this evaluation it appears likely that these PRN entries are incorrectly located, and perhaps relate to early reports of a villa at Hazelthorpe Farm approximately 1 km to the SE.

Dorchester, Fleur-De-Lys Inn
(SU 5782594166) - Greg Campbell

Two test pits of 1 x 1.2 m were dug to a depth of 0.6 m in the yard S of the Inn in advance of the building being extended. Post-medieval structural remains were encountered in the rear test pit. In the test pit nearer the road outside the S door of the building 0.34 m of post-medieval deposits covered layers containing Roman pottery of the late first to late second century AD. A hearth and possible beam footing aligned ESE-WNW were revealed at 0.34 m below grade, but no trace was recovered of the tessellated floor or other substantial Roman structural remains previously seen immediately to the S.

Dorchester, 1 Samian Way
(SU 57799395) - Greg Campbell

The W (rear) half of this private house is sited on Oxon. Scheduled Monument 116, at a point where the monument boundary extends S to protect the ditch and bank remains of the defences of the SW corner of the Roman town. Previous excavations elsewhere on the defensive circuit showed fortification of the town beginning in the late second century AD with the ditch greatly widened in the fourth century. The property lies outside the bank, with the broad E-W ditch in the N half of the property. Two 1 x 1.2 m test pits were dug to a depth of 1 m to assess the impact on the scheduled deposits in advance of the house being extended.

In the test pit to the W of the house (in the hollow of the ditch) 0.42 m of post-medieval accumulation covered two superimposed thick silt layers containing small medieval potsherds; all of these layers contained residual Roman pottery, mostly from the first and second centuries AD. In the test pit SW of the house (on the level ground outside the defences) a complex succession of layers cut by gullies on various orientations from the late first to middle second centuries AD was found under 0.54 m of post-medieval

accumulation. There was virtually no pottery dating from later in the Roman period (even residual in later contexts). It can be concluded that the S edge of the Roman defensive line lies somewhere between the two test pits. The complex and well-stratified deposits S of this line show that early Roman activity in this part of the town was considerable and that later Roman activity outside the S defences was less widespread.

Eynsham, The Shrubby
(SP 43459021) - G D Keevill

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in June 1992 at The Shrubby, High Street, Eynsham. The site lies within the precinct of Eynsham Abbey. A watching brief at the same site in 1975 had revealed evidence for early Saxon activity (Chambers 1976).

A subsoil of prehistoric date was cut by several early-mid Saxon gullies. These are analogous to 7th-8th century features found on the abbey excavation during 1990-2 (SMA 22, 46-7). Late Iron Age and Roman pottery was also recovered, hinting at activity in the area during these periods. Two gullies in Trench 3 could be of Roman or early Saxon date. A thick medieval ploughsoil covered all earlier features and layers. This would suggest that the site was used for agriculture within the precinct during the medieval period. The ploughsoil was cut by a late or post-medieval ditch and a Victorian pit.

Reference

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Faringdon, 36 Fernham Road
(SU 28419425) - Mick Parsons and Rachel Morse

An evaluation was carried out during April 1992. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were located during the evaluation.

Finmere, Town Farm
(SP 63453297) - G Laws

This site is situated on the periphery of the historic core of the village. Trial trenching indicated that the area had never been cultivated or used for any activity other than grazing.

Fringford, Crosslands
(SP 60482895) - John Moore and Andrew Parkinson

In June 1992, an evaluation was undertaken by the OAU, as part of a consideration of a planning application for new housing. A core of Romano-British activity was identified in the west half of the site approximately 50 m by 50 m. Linear and curving ditches/gullies indicate domestic occupation with associated small paddocks nearby. The area

of activity was defined by a probable enclosure ditch, containing large pottery sherds and limestone in its upper fill. Sporadic pits and gullies were also located outside the postulated enclosure ditch. Two parallel ditches lead into the settlement area from the east, possibly indicating a route to an associated field system.

The pottery ranged from the 1st- to 4th-century. Fine-wares were scarce, confined to Oxfordshire and Nene Valley wares, suggesting a middle to low status settlement.

In the medieval period N-S ditches were dug, probably marking out property boundaries running back from Main Street. The lack of medieval boundaries in the western half of the site suggests this area may have once been part of The Green. Of particular note was one ditch which produced 10th-11th-century St Neots-type ware.

Garsington, Church of St Mary (SP 458203) - Alan Hardy

A watching brief was conducted in October/November 1992 during the replacement of the early 19th century wooden floors in parts of the nave and N and S aisles.

The tower of the present church is mid 12th century, the nave and chancel date to the mid 13th century.

Six modern graves were revealed, relating to a pre-19th century floor surface which had been completely removed. Fragments of medieval inlaid tile in the modern make-up suggest that at least some of this earlier floor was tiled.

Excavation was limited to a depth of 0.3m, which just revealed the tops of backfilled robber trenches in the nave and N aisle. Where the present nave arcade piers now stand, the earlier wall foundations had been retained to provide bases for the piers. The layout of the robber trenches suggest at least two possible phases of a pre-13th-century church:

Phase 1: A late Saxon/early Norman nave, possibly with a W tower.

Phase 2: A mid 12th century extension of the nave to its present size, and the consequent rebuilding of the tower as it stands today; the construction of an arcade on the line of the old N wall of the nave, opening to a narrow N aisle; and the construction of a porch on the S side of the nave.

Goring, Gatehampton Farm: Cable-Laying (SU 604796) - Tim Allen

During 1992 new cables were laid by Thames Water in the field W of the Oxford-Reading railway connecting their boreholes to the pumping station on this site. This work was drawn to the attention of the OAU by David Percival, a local resident, and funding for a limited watching brief was obtained from Thames Water.

The cable-laying extended over a period of 3 weeks, and the successful monitoring of this operation was due to the effective co-operation of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group, who monitored and recorded most of the trenches, with the OAU, whose professional input was targeted upon the archaeologically complex or sensitive areas.

An extended account of the discoveries (Fig 7) has already been published in *SMA* 22, 73-76. The author would however like to thank David Percival for bringing the work to his attention, Mike Hall of Thames Water for his prompt response in providing funding for recording, and the members of the SOAG, and in particular Cynthia Graham-Kerr, for their assistance both in recording the cable trenches and with the contour survey of a barrow.

Hampton Poyle, Church of St Mary the Virgin (SP 498155) - Alan Hardy

In April 1992, a watching brief was conducted during the excavation of a drainage trench against the S side of the church. Documentary sources suggest the existence of a porch and a chapel, both built against the S aisle, and surviving until the mid 18th century. Two sets of wall footings revealed in the trench confirmed the existence of both structures, and showed that, whereas the chapel was built at the same time as the S aisle, in the 14th century, the porch was a later addition. The chapel was demolished in the mid 18th century to provide materials for the repair of the rest of the church, and it is reasonable to suppose that the porch was demolished at the same time.

Horspath, St Giles' Church (SP 571048) - J Dalton

A watching brief was carried out during refurbishment of existing drains and the digging of a new drainage channel. These were all parallel and in close proximity to the north wall. The only deposits disturbed were associated with the rebuilding of the north wall in the 19th century.

Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Bypass (A420) (SU 380975-417986) - J Hunn and J Moore

An archaeological evaluation of the route was undertaken by the OAU in January and February 1992 shortly before the commencement of construction work. Some 99% of the route was examined by a combination of surface collection survey and random sampling by trial trenching.

The results of the surface collection survey indicated a discard pattern that was consistent with random loss and the movement of refuse/manure from occupation areas onto the surrounding land. At SU 398985 several ditches containing 3rd to late 4th century AD pottery were examined. These were interpreted as belonging to a field system in close

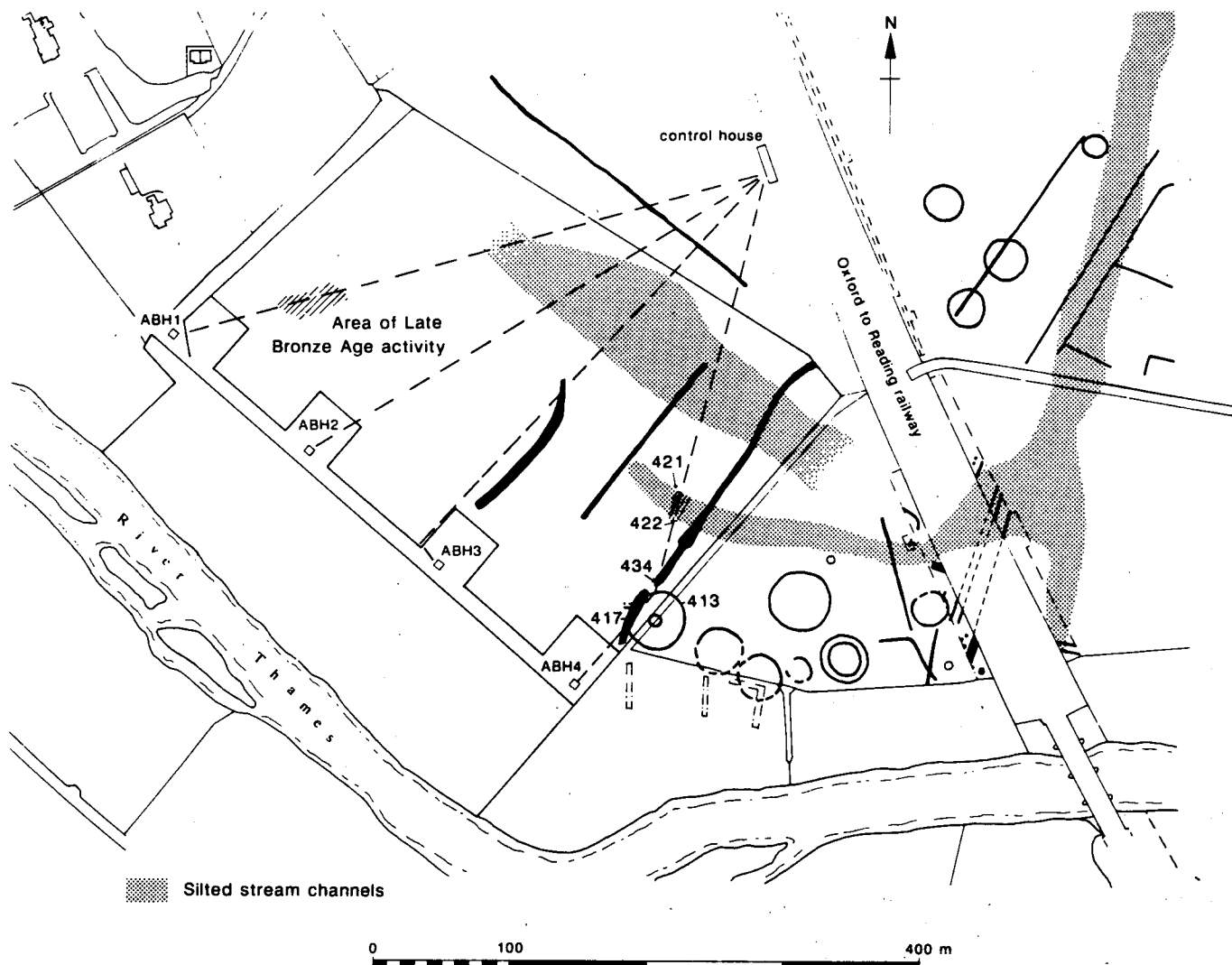


Fig 7. Gatehampton Farm, Goring. Plan of cable trenches observed in 1992, showing Bronze Age occupation area and Saxon midden.

proximity to a Romano-British settlement lying off the line of the route.

Nettlebed, St Bartholomew's Church (SU 471187) - Alan Hardy

During September and October 1992 a watching brief was conducted while parts of the church floor were being rebuilt. The present church was built in 1845, superseding a smaller Norman church, of which only the lower part of the tower remains.

The removal of the tower floor revealed the lower brick courses of the present tower overlying 0.3 m of the flintwork predecessor. A disturbed area of herringbone brick and tile floor was uncovered, probably 17th century in date, although the tiles may have been re-used from an earlier floor.

The excavated part of the S aisle revealed two brick vaults and a brick-lined cist.

A pipe trench dug alongside the W edge of the churchyard was also monitored, revealing that the ground surface in this area had been substantially raised, probably when the new church was constructed. Both pre- and post-1845 grave cuts were recorded in the trench section, but all were concentrated well to the N of the church.

Nuneham Courtenay, Lower Farm (SP 538005) - G D Keevill and M Cole

The Ancient Monuments Laboratory surveyed a Roman kiln site at Nuneham Courtenay which had been discovered during archaeological work on a Thames Water Pipeline (SMA 22, 49). The survey took place on 27 April - 1 May and 5 - 6 August 1992. A magnetometer survey was used to delimit the site within the ridge-and-furrow field, and to locate any kilns present (Fig. 8). A survey grid of 30 m squares was established within the present field boundary. Each square was surveyed using a Geoscan FM36 fluxgate gradiometer. Measurements were taken at 0.25 m intervals along N-S traverses 1m apart within each 30 m square.

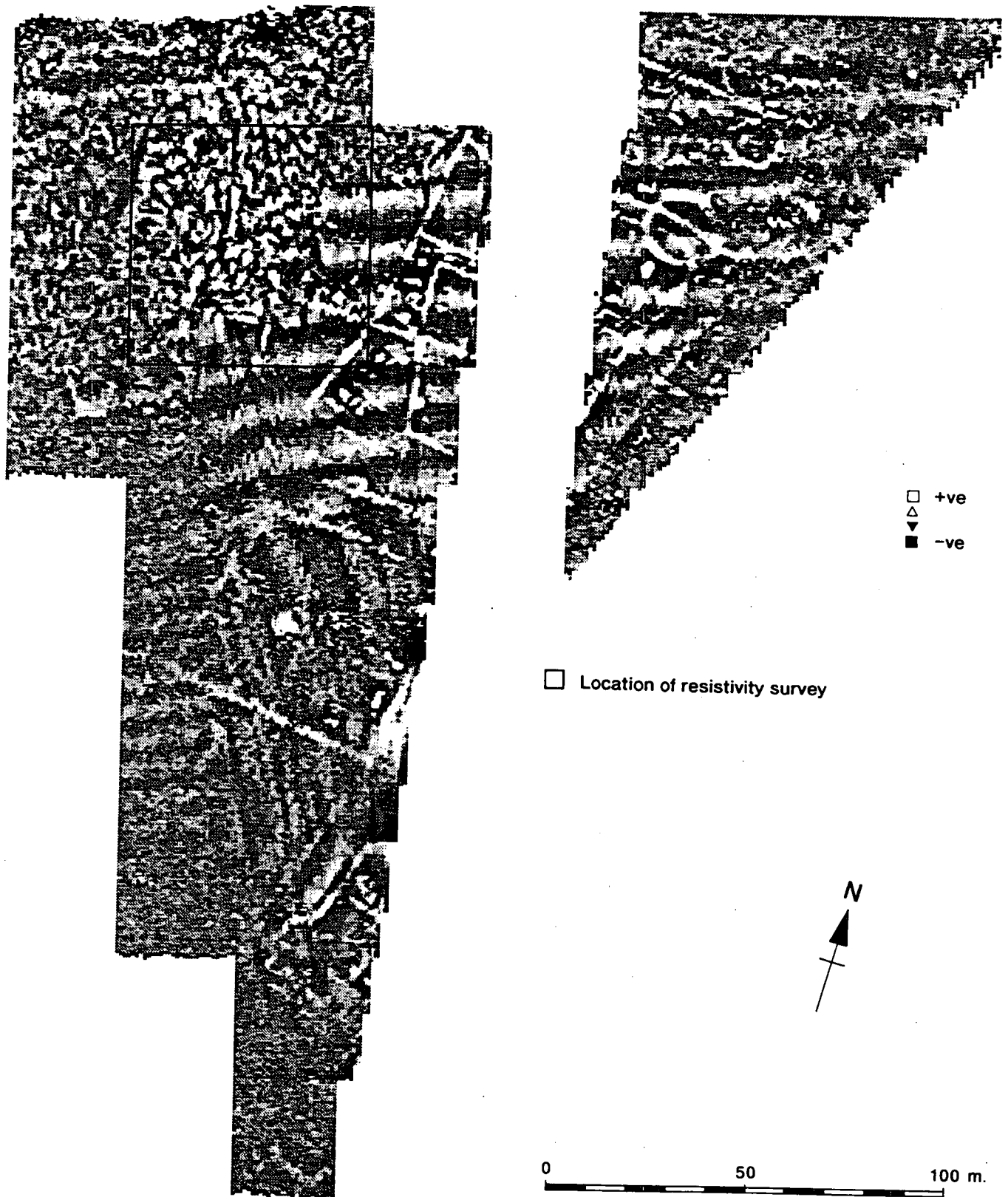


Fig 8. Nuneham Courtney magnetometer survey.

As expected, the area proved well suited to magnetometry. A linear pattern of rectangular enclosures is shown very clearly, with an adjacent road or trackway along its western edge. That the site includes industrial activity is confirmed by the presence of a number of very strong anomalies indicative of kilns (plotted as sub-circular white zones with dense black surrounds). Other archaeologically significant anomalies associated with the enclosures are likely to be pits containing industrial or domestic waste.

A number of ring ditches were detected in the NE corner of the survey area. Two can be seen clearly, but the third is indistinct. These appear to underlie the ditch system although this cannot be confirmed on geophysical evidence alone. Also very evident on the plots, as well as on the ground itself, is the ridge and furrow system. The magnetic response to this has been accentuated by the enhancement of the soil derived from the underlying industrial activity. The magnetically enhanced soil is concentrated in the surviving ridges and has led to these being defined by strong positive magnetic anomalies (represented as white on the plots), separated by weaker anomalies over shallower soil. The differential depth of burial of the ditch system beneath the ridge and furrow is also indicated by the light and dark banding of the ditches' anomalies, especially those running N-S. Different orientations of ridge and furrow separated by headlands are also apparent.

The full report of the survey can be obtained from the Ancient Monuments Laboratory.

Oxford, All Souls College: medieval cloister
(SP 516063) - Brian Durham and Chris Bell

Small scale trenching was carried out in 1991 prior to repaving work in the Front and Great Quadrangles, as part of a survey of the archaeological potential of All Souls commissioned by the college. Beneath the Front Quad were a variety of late medieval deposits including pits and a robber trench. The pottery included fragments of chafing dishes, a cup and a variety of jugs, very late medieval and Tudor types, but presumably all relating to activity immediately predating the building of this quadrangle in 1438-42.

In the Great Quad a second trench identified the outer wall of the late 15th-century cloister. It proved to have been cut into the fill of a very large void, presumably a cellar, although no edges or bottom were seen. The pottery was very similar to what Joep had found under the early wash off Oxford's castle mound, late 11th-12th century. This is therefore one of the earliest substantial features which can definitely be attributed to the E extension of the early town. Finally a third trench was N of the existing 18th-century college hall, which found a wall of the medieval college hall and an adjoining building, perhaps the buttery, with a number of internal floor layers.

Alistair Bartlett carried out a resistivity survey which identified the broad outline of the cloister and hall beneath

the lawn of the quadrangle. This was followed by an experimental survey with ground penetrating radar by Chris Meetes of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology, which confirmed the general results of resistivity. Both geophysical techniques showed discrepancies with the evidence of architecture and contemporary illustrations of the cloister. These have yet to be resolved, but it looks as if the cloister was asymmetrical.

Oxford, Ashmolean Museum Forecourt
(SP 451206) - Alan Hardy

In advance of the proposed construction of a cafe under the forecourt of the museum, two geo-technical test pits were dug through the floors of old storage/coal cellars which at present occupy part of the forecourt area. In August 1992 these pits were investigated by the Oxford Archaeological Unit. The pit close to the Museum building did not extend below the make-up layer for the cellar floor. The pit close to Beaumont Street revealed the bottom of a medieval rubbish pit, suggesting that the construction of the cellars has destroyed all but the deepest archaeological features. The level of the forecourt is considerably higher than the road surface of Beaumont Street, so that the area not occupied by the cellars may well contain evidence of medieval activity relating to the burgage plots extending back from St Giles.

Oxford, Former Department of Rural Economy, Parks Road
(SP 514067) - Brian Durham and Chris Bell

The site of the former 'President's Close' at St Johns College, on one of the ancient north roads out of Oxford, was investigated by OAU in advance of major ground disturbance during the construction of a new student residence for the college. In contrast to the intensive Roman and prehistoric occupation known to the W of Parks Road here, the present site had 17th-century and later deposits to a depth of 2 m. This appears to be the result of a phase of gravel quarrying which is not evident from the surviving early plans of the city. The dating would not preclude this being the source of building materials for the construction of the college's Canterbury Quad in the 1630s, perhaps incidentally linked into the system of Civil War defences in the 1640s, and levelled up by the time of Loggan's map in 1675. Nowhere did the trenching go deep enough to prove conclusively whether one of the defensive lines of the Civil War had extended across the site.

Oxford, Holywell Manor: Former Cock Pit
(SP 520068) - Brian Durham and Andrew Parkinson

OAU investigated the site for Balliol College in advance of the extension of a kitchen, and located a circular, stone-lined trough c 5 m in diameter. This proved to be the lowered area around the fighting stage of the cock pit known from 18th-century illustrations, similar to that engraved by

Hogarth in 1759. It would have been central within the purpose-built octagonal cock pit building illustrated by Malchair in 1774. The building appears to have overlaid the infilled ditch of the N side of the manor house, which was held by the church of St Peter in the E at Domesday, and later by Merton College.

Oxford, Land East of Warneford Hospital
(SP 54050628) - J Moore

During land clearance for a substantial housing development a watching brief was undertaken. The only archaeological remains present were post-medieval boundary ditches and recent pits associated with dumping of construction waste.

Oxford, Mansfield College, Civil War Defences
(SP 51690674) - Chris Bell

Groundwork carried out by engineers prior to the building of a student accommodation block provided the OAU with an opportunity for a small excavation across the supposed line of Oxford's Civil War defences.

The visible surviving part of the defences consists of an earth bank running E-W and standing to a height of 2.40 m which now forms part of the S boundary of Mansfield College. It is assumed that there would also have been an associated ditch, running parallel and immediately to the N of the bank, though there is no evidence for this on the ground.

There is considerable uncertainty about the date of the bank and excavations at Keble College in 1981 through the same defences further to the E failed to locate any trace of a ditch. This was surprising because the fronting ditch was normally the source of material to construct the bank and was an integral part of the defences.

In the excavation at Mansfield College the existence of a very large ditch soon became apparent. It was indeed running parallel and immediately to the N of the bank, at least 7 m wide and over 2 m in depth.

The only finds recovered from the lower fills of the ditch were a few small sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery and one sherd of Roman pottery, which are obviously residual. Excavation into the bank produced just one clay pipe bowl, mid to late 17th century in date, but which came only from a slippage layer on the side of the bank.

Despite the lack of dating evidence this very large earthwork would clearly appear to be part of Oxford's original Civil War defences. It makes the absence of any ditch further to the E all the more surprising.

Oxford, Old Headington: Ethelred Court, Dunstan Road
(SP 54150771) - David Miles

A field evaluation was carried out in October 1992 in advance of a planning application for a new house.

The site, at present an orchard, lies close to a late Roman pottery production area and the Anglo-Saxon palace and royal manor of Headington, built by Offa and occupied by King Ethelred (hence the name Ethelred Court). The precise layout and position of the palace is not known but it is conventionally located about 65 m north of the present site.

A single trench 5 x 1.2 m was hand dug. Medieval features (a stone spread, a stone filled gully and a post hole) were located at a depth of 0.76 m. Pottery indicated that the remains were predominantly 13th-14th century.

Oxford, Oriel College: Real Tennis Court
(SP 515061) - Brian Durham and Ric Tyler

A continuing watching brief on the conversion of the court to college accommodation provided dendrochronological samples of oak which confirmed the general chronology of the building. Earliest was the N gable end which was surveyed by Ric Tyler when it was briefly exposed. The NE corner showed that it was part of a primary phase of stone court with smaller windows than those existing recently. A wall plate was of timber felled in the summer or autumn of AD 1637, implying that the court was newly built when Charles I and Prince Rupert played there during the siege of Oxford in the following decade. Two other samples came from a window structure of the later phase of the stone court, and although the sapwood was incomplete they suggested a felling date in the range 1776-1786. This confirms that these oak posts were new at the time when the court was reroofed with a Scandinavian pine roof, an unusual combination of materials which presumably arose because of the stiffness required of these freestanding oak posts.

Oxford, St Cross College
(SP 451206) - Alan Hardy and Julian Munby

Remains of a third Quaker Meeting House in St Giles's have been excavated. The commonly accepted history of the Friends' Meeting in Oxford is that an original Meeting House in New Inn Hall Street was moved in 1688 to a new Meeting House at 63/4 St Giles's, which was sold in 1867. Following a revival in the 1880s a number of different Meeting Houses were used until the premises at 43 St Giles's were purchased in 1939. The existence of a 'Friends' Meeting House' as shown on the 1875 Ordnance 1:500 plan behind 60 St Giles's was therefore somewhat puzzling, and was for a while assumed to be connected with that behind Nos. 63/4 if not identical with it, until the opportunity arose to excavate the site.

In October 1992 a watching brief was conducted during the excavation of three trenches for a drainage system alongside

the new dining hall wing of St Cross College. This would disturb part of the Quaker Meeting House identified in the evaluation carried out in June 1991 (St Cross College, Oxford. Archaeological Investigations in Advance of Redevelopment. Oxford Archaeological Unit 1991):

Trench 1 revealed a stone-lined cess pit, sited just to the E of the Meeting House, and set within a light stone structure which is indicated on the O.S. Map of 1878. This cess pit presumably served the requirements of the congregation.

Trench 2 uncovered the SE corner of the Meeting House, and demonstrated that its S wall was built over the partly robbed foundations of a WE property boundary wall. Beneath the layers associated with the Meeting House were two medieval rubbish pits, contemporary with the boundary, and relating to properties existing before the building of St Cross College.

Trench 3 revealed a light stone foundation oriented W-E, which may have supported what appears to be, on the 1878 map, a platform or dais within the E end of the Meeting House.

Subsequent documentary research for St Cross College by David Sturdy has shown that this Meeting House at 60 St Giles was built in 1854, being shown on a hitherto unknown plan of the proposed building in Oxfordshire Archives. The Meeting House of 1688 stood behind Nos. 63/4 St Giles until the building of the Oriental Institute in Pusey Lane in 1959. After demolition of the stone building, shown on old photographs, observations by Sturdy (hitherto unreported) recovered skeletons from the burial ground (now in Ashmolean Museum).

Oxford, Whitehouse Road, Grandpont (SP 513053) - Andy Mudd

Excavations took place at the former Oxford City Football Ground in Whitehouse Road during August and September 1992. They were conducted on behalf of Pegasus Retirement Homes plc in association with Brasenose College in advance of housing development. They took place as a condition put upon planning permission by Oxford City Council under PPG16, and represented the first instance of the application of this policy within the city.

The excavations examined part of a Middle Iron Age settlement which had been suspected from an aerial photograph of 1975 taken by CUCAP, and confirmed by trial trench evaluation in September 1991. The site lies about 200 m south of the present course of the Thames on what was, at that time, a relatively dry gravel island. An area of about 1300 sq m was stripped, revealing a large penannular enclosure, with subsidiary structures and enclosures, drainage/land division ditches, and pits. The ditches formed part of a rectilinear pattern of land division with axes orientated NE-SW and SE-NW. The pits tended to cluster in a band towards the southern edge of the site. The settlement must have extended further to the W under

Marlborough Road, and S under Whitehouse Road, and its overall size and layout are not known. The area examined by excavation suggested that the settlement was tightly organised and that, while several phases of recutting were found, the overall design of the site remained quite stable. Ceramic evidence indicates that the date of the site lies squarely within the middle Iron Age, with occupation starting around 300 BC and abandonment occurring around or before the mid-1st century BC. It therefore conforms to a pattern of settlement typical of the upper Thames region in the Iron Age.

The causes of the site's abandonment are not clear, but it was not reoccupied until around the 11th century. Pits, ditches and postholes of the early medieval period indicate an occupation which was probably stimulated by the construction of the Grandpont causeway around 1092. In the Medieval period and subsequently, the area was known as Swinsell. Swinsell Farm is shown on a map of 1776 on the site which was later occupied by the Old White House public house, close to what became the Abingdon Road. Medieval occupation of the excavated area seems to have come to an end around the 14th century. Aquatic molluscs in some of the features suggest that this was due to flooding. In the late mediaeval period the site appears to have been ploughed down to the surface of the gravel. It then remained open ground used as meadow or pasture. The construction of the football ground in the early part of this century spared this area of the site from destruction while the southern suburbs of Oxford spread over surrounding lands. The excavation therefore provided a fortunate opportunity to examine quite a rare survival of early settlement within the modern city.

Radley, Goose Acre Farm (SU 525980) - Andy Mudd

Excavations were carried out in April 1992 at Tuckwell's gravel pit, Radley in advance of gravel extraction. The site lay on the first gravel terrace in the field to the south of the Scheduled Romano-British settlement at Goose Acre Farm.

The terrace as a whole has yielded settlement evidence from the Neolithic to the Roman periods. However, no detailed work had been conducted by the OAU, and what is known of the archaeology here has come from small-scale rescue operations by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (eg. Jones, Thomas and Wallis, *CBA Group 9 Newsletter* 1980, No. 10, 180-3). The excavation represented an opportunity to examine one of the last surviving areas of first terrace between Abingdon and Radley.

Trial trench evaluation in September 1990 had indicated an extensive Romano-British field arrangement in the northern half of the field, and features suggesting prehistoric occupation in the southern part. An area of about 7200 sq m in the southern area of the field was therefore stripped and examined by excavation. The prehistoric occupation consisted of the following; a diffuse pattern of shallow rectilinear ditches (including a posthole alignment running

for more than 30 m.) mainly orientated NE-SW and NW-SE, which was slightly at variance with the Romano-British alignment (which extended into the northern part of the site); an area of pits and burnt stones in the NW part of the site (a cooking area?); a possible penannular gully in the SE area of the site; and an associated pair of water-holes. There were few finds from any part of the site, but the limited amount of pottery was predominantly early Iron Age. The waterholes yielded important waterlogged environmental evidence and one of them contained part of a notched log ladder.

The site is unusual for the Upper Thames region and comparable sites are few. The pottery and the environmental evidence suggest a date range spanning the LBA/EIA transition. Radiocarbon dates are awaited. The fugitive nature of most of the features and the paucity of finds resulted in a degree of site 'invisibility', and this might suggest that such sites are actually more common than has been thought.

South Hinksey, Hinksey Hill Farm (centre SP 496040) - Tim Allen

A preliminary field evaluation of an area of c 59 hectares was carried out in June 1991 for Kemp and Kemp in aid of an application to construct a golf course. 40 trenches (1.6 m wide and usually 30 m long) constituting a sample of c 0.5 % were excavated (Fig. 9).

Most of the area comprises land above 100 m OD overlooking the Thames on the E side of the Boars Hill-Harcourt Hill ridge of Corallian sand, limestone and Oxford Clay. The evaluation area lay between Hinksey Hill on the S and North Hinksey on the N.

No archaeological finds or features were known within the application area itself, but flint scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic date were known to the NW and W (Holgate 1986, Figs 2- 5), and Roman pottery scatters and a villa to the W and SW (Donald and Crawford 1986, 189-192).

The evaluation revealed three areas of archaeological activity:

- a) On the slope at the S edge of the site there are deep hillwash deposits derived from the limestone plateau to the N. Within these there are scraps of pottery and Mesolithic flints, and soilmarks indicate features sealed within the build-up. On the plateau to the N silt-filled features have been found cut into the limestone.
- b) The NW part of the site is a limestone plateau with a thin covering of modern ploughsoil. Most of the trenches in this area contained pits or possible postholes cut into the limestone, some of which contained scraps of Roman or prehistoric pottery.
- c) On the slope running down towards Hinksey Hill Farm on the E edge of the site Iron Age and Roman pits and ditches

were cut into the clay. The density of features in this area is high, probably indicating domestic settlement. From the finds recovered, the Iron Age occupation seems to date from the Middle Iron Age (after 300 BC) and the Roman occupation predominantly to the Early Roman period (1st and 2nd centuries AD).

The Mesolithic flintwork provides further evidence of the exploitation of this upland area to complement that gathered by Holgate. Much of this area is not under cultivation at present, and more sites are likely to exist awaiting discovery.

The discovery of an Iron Age settlement overlooking the Thames is significant. The gravel terraces fringing the Thames have long been known to contain a string of Iron Age settlements, from Farmoor on the W (Lambrick and Robinson 1979) to those on Port Meadow N of Oxford (Lambrick and Robinson 1984), and recent excavations at Whitehouse Road in South Oxford have revealed another Middle Iron Age settlement (see A. Mudd this volume). The relationship of these settlements to the adjacent higher ground has not however been clear.

Evidence for the use of the Oxford Heights S of the river has been gradually accumulating, with a Late Iron Age coin from Hinksey Hill (Myres 1930), a pit at Lincombe Lane, Boars Hill (Case and Kirk 1954, 119), the discovery of Middle Iron Age pottery on Cumnor Hearst (Wallis 1983, 124; Ainslie unpublished) and the publication of an Early Iron Age settlement, possibly enclosed, on the S slopes of Wytham Hill (Mytum 1986). Harold Mytum postulated a link between this site and the gravel terrace settlement at Farmoor (Mytum 1986, 24).

A further Iron Age site was revealed just 500 m S of this during field walking by the OUAS. This is located just W of Tilbury Farm at SP 479066. Like the pottery from the enclosed site to the N, the sherds from this site were mostly shell-tempered, though including some harder-fired quartz-tempered sherds. Few rimsherds or diagnostic bodysherds were present. The date of this settlement is probably Early Iron Age, though Middle Iron Age activity may also be present.

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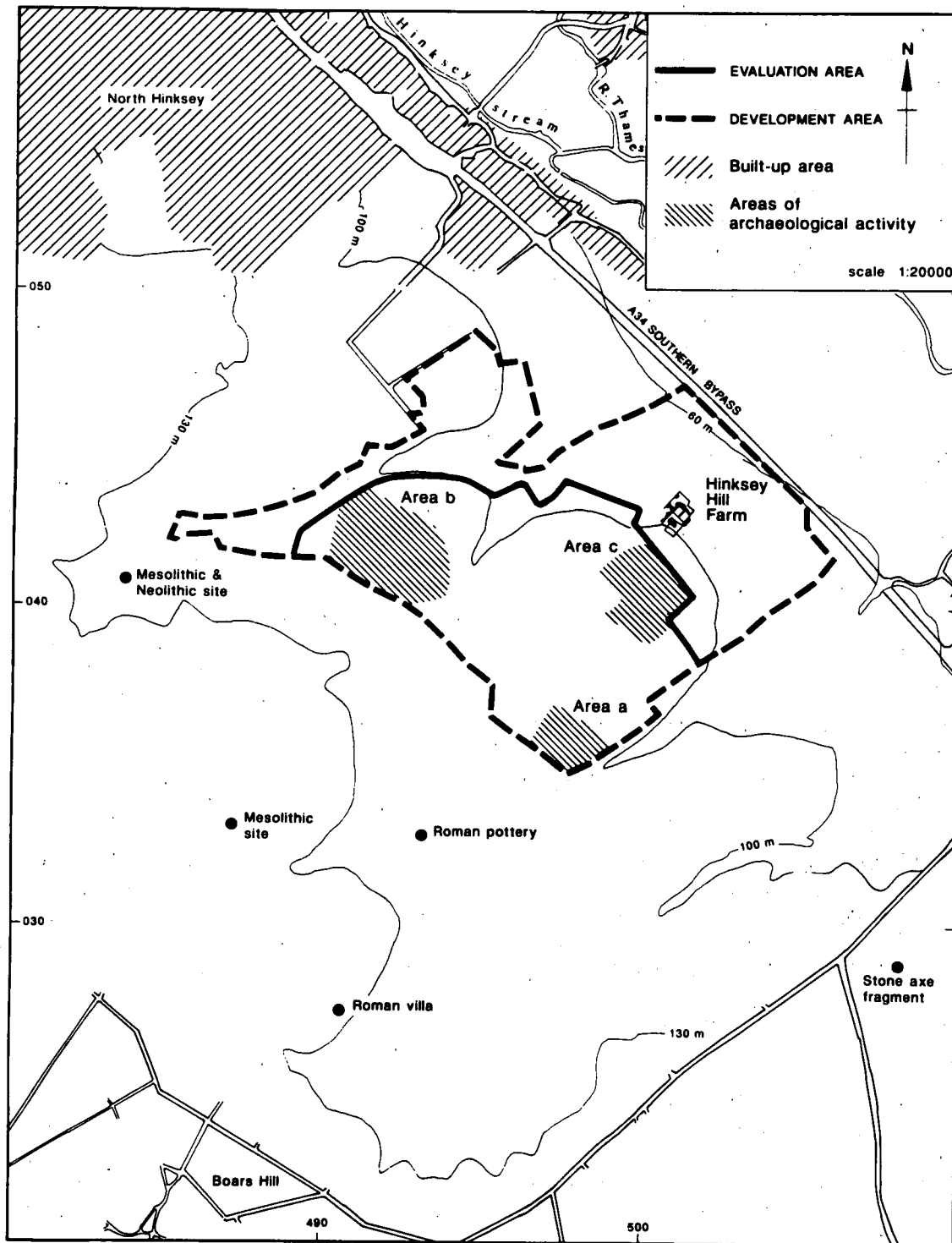


Fig 9. South Hinksley, Hinksley Hall Farm. Location of evaluation showing areas of archaeological interest.

Mytum, H. An Early Iron Age site at Wytham Hill, near Cumnor, Oxford, *Oxoniensia* 51, 15-24.

Wallis, J. 1983. Cumnor: Hurst Hill, *SMA* 13, 124

Sparsholt, Church of the Holy Rood

(SU 438188) - Alan Hardy

In March 1992 an excavation was undertaken prior to the installation of French drains around the church. The church is of Norman foundation, enlarged in the 13th century, with 14th century transepts. The N transept was demolished in 1785, and the excavation was sited across the area of this transept. A trench was dug against the present nave wall, and extended N to reveal the foundations of the E and N walls of the transept.

The partly robbed remains of the latest flagstone floor of the transept were revealed, although fragments of medieval inlaid floor tile found in the overlying material suggest that some of the transept may have been tiled.

Set within the floor was a worked stone grave slab, dated by a brass plate to 1605. Also incorporated into the floor was a sandstone tomb effigy (Fig. 10). The figure is that of a priest and has been dated to the late 13th century. It is probable that it once covered a stone tomb situated in the Nave. Later the contents of the tomb were reburied in the transept and the tomb lid set on top, at floor level. There was some evidence of a light stone structure on the N side of the effigy,

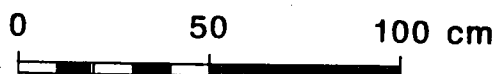


Fig 10. Sparsholt, church of the Holy Rood. Late 13th century sandstone effigy of priest from floor of N transept.

which may have supported a wooden canopy or surround. The effigy was recorded in situ and removed for eventual display in the church. The identity of the figure is, as yet, unknown.

Standlake

(SP 3915 0290) - Chris Bell

A small archaeological investigation prior to the building of two new houses on the Abingdon road in Standlake was carried out by the OAU in the summer of 1992. This also included a watching brief during the digging of foundation trenches for the first of the houses to be built.

Aerial photographs show extensive crop marks to the NE and SW of the site which have been dated to the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano British periods.

A number of ditches and pits were located in the excavation. All contained only early medieval pottery and apparently relate to the medieval settlement of Standlake.

A watching brief during the digging of the foundation trenches for the second house, proposed for 1993, should provide further opportunity to understand the character and extent of these medieval deposits.

Stanford-in-the-Vale, Bowling Green Farm

(SU 312953) - Andy Mudd

Excavations took place at the Hills sand quarry site, Bowling Green Farm, during two weeks in February 1992. In 1987 and 1988 excavations had taken place on the eastern part of this site (about 60 m away from the current site, and now destroyed by quarrying) and had indicated a dense Iron Age/Romano-British occupation, with the remains of stone buildings, ovens, kilns and wells. Of particular importance was the preservation of intact Roman floor surfaces. That this settlement extended onto the current site was later confirmed by evaluation trenches, and an area of about 0.84 ha was made available by Hills for salvage excavation. Unfortunately the lack of resources meant that this important site could not be accorded the attention which it merited.

The excavation uncovered an extensive spread of rubble and cobbled surfaces along the brow of the hill. On the eastern part of the site a cobbled surface extended intermittently for more than 20 m in an E-W direction, and for about 10 m N-S. The northern edge of this surface was bounded by a discontinuous wall of roughly squared uncemented limestone. This survived to just one course and was without a foundation trench, so it was probably a low sill for a wooden superstructure. Fragments of similar walls running north suggested that buildings would have lain on the northern side of the cobbled area, which probably served as a yard, and perhaps also an E-W road. Sealed by the walls were deep (0.6 - 1.0 m.) intercutting ditches whose E-W and N-S alignments were very precisely maintained by the later walls.

Other cleaned areas to the north and south revealed dense occupation in the form of ovens/hearths and linear features which could not be explored in the time available. It can be surmised that most of the 120 x 70 m. site would contain evidence of Romano-British activity, and earlier settlement cannot be ruled out.

The site was prolific in terms of the quantity of pottery which it yielded, all of which was Roman. Among the other finds were fragments of glass vessels, pins, brooch fragments and fragments of other bronze objects, coins, a profusion of nails and several other iron objects.

This brief excavation confirmed the extent and degree of preservation of this site, which remains remarkably little disturbed by later agricultural activity. The findings, such as they are, are consistent with the conclusions of the 1987-88 excavations, which suggested that the site was a large Romano-British village with trading and market functions. Little can be added to this interpretation except that, if the pattern of N-S and E-W rectilinear ditches were proven to be a general characteristic of the site, it is possible that the settlement was organised more formally than the earlier interpretation had allowed.

Stoke Lyne, St Peter's Church (SP 566283) - J Hunn and J Moore

A small-scale evaluation was undertaken prior to the possible extension of the church. This revealed a robbed-out wall belonging to a former external north aisle which had apparently been added in the early 13th century.

Thame, 17A Buttermarket Alan Hardy

In July and August 1992, a watching brief was conducted during the digging of foundation trenches for a storeroom adjacent to no. 17. A continuation of a cobbled path which still runs through the centre of the Buttermarket was revealed, associated finds suggesting that it went out of use in the 18th century with the enlarging of the building at no.17. Late medieval rubbish pits were revealed, associated with the properties on the W of the Buttermarket, but no evidence for earlier buildings was discovered. This corresponds with the findings of the watching brief in June 1990. Neither watching brief found any evidence for a metallised surface pre-dating the 14th century infilling of the market leading to the establishment of the Buttermarket.

Wallingford, The Keep, 50 High Street (SU 60458951) - J Dalton

No archaeological remains were found during the construction of an extension to this property. The location of the tail end of the town's Saxon rampart and possibly also an intra-mural street were expected.

Witney, The Weavers (SU 357091) - Mark Roberts

In June 1992 a field evaluation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) at the development site of The Weavers development, Witney, on behalf of Tarmac Provincial Properties Ltd.

The site lies on the S side of Witney where the ground level drops approximately 4 metres from the vicinity of the church to the S end of the site. A stream flows to the E of the site and its former course flowed through the SE part of the site before it was rechannelled when the existing development was constructed (Trench 14, at this point was over 2 m deep, but contained no apparent waterlogged deposits).

The site is approximately 3 ha in area and its elevation is between 81 and 79 m O D. The natural subsoil across the site is Forest Marble which was overlain by a silty clay subsoil. The site had been used as an industrial area for a blanket factory from the turn of the 19th century until recently. The field evaluation strategy was based on a less than two percent sample of the area. The sample consisted of six 30 m long and three short 1.6 m wide trenches. There were also two further hand dug trenches. The trenches in the area of the old railway station which is presently used as a coal yard, were reduced to test pits as the soil profile they revealed did not indicate preservation of archaeological deposits and additional trenches were placed in the areas of most potential to define and quantify the archaeological features located and to determine the slope into the old stream course.

The site was immediately to the S of the site of a palace built by Henry of Blois, brother to King Henry II, Bishop of Winchester which is now in the grounds of Mount House, Witney, excavated in 1984. An evaluation was also carried out to determine whether the palace extended to the S and E. The phase 2 field evaluation at the site, in 1990, produced evidence for medieval settlement along the N side of The Weavers to the S of Farm Mill Lane. Evaluation trenches, both in 1984 and 1990, showed the line of the moat of the Bishop's Palace lying on the site close to the edge of the terracing around the palace. The 1990 evaluation found evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity next to Farm Mill Lane in the area of medieval structures to the N and in Trench 1 to the S of the palace, although there were no features positively identified as Anglo-Saxon nor was the position of the late Anglo-Saxon royal palace, which presumably was the centre of the Witney estate from AD 969 to 1044, located.

The archaeological deposits were restricted to the higher ground to the S of the Palace. They consisted of ditches interpreted as field ditches, as were the ditches in the 1990 field evaluation. The four sherds of 11th- to 12th-century pottery recovered from the upper fill of the southern ditch in trench 4 implies that it was deposited in an open feature which does not adequately date this ditch although a parallel ditch to the N, containing two sherds of later medieval pottery, may be contemporary. The presence of struck flints

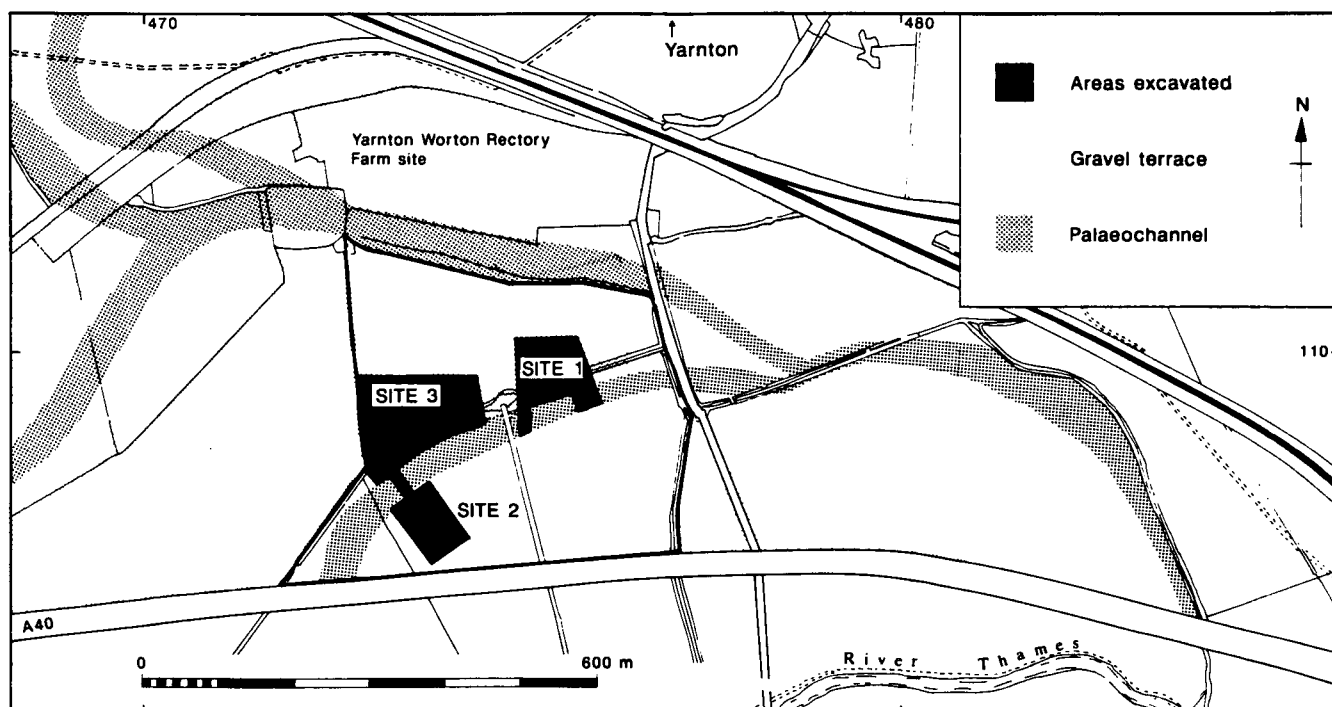


Fig 11. Yarnton floodplain. Plan of areas with channels and gravel islands, showing excavated areas.

in the ditch in trench 3 indicates prehistoric activity in the area although the few flints recovered are undiagnostic as a sample.

The former railway station has destroyed the archaeological potential on the W of the site and the wet nature of the ground to the SE probably meant that it was used exclusively for agriculture.

Reference

Campbell, G, and Durham, B, 1990. Witney: The Weavers 1990 Archaeological Assessment Report, Oxford Archaeological Unit

Woodstock Bypass

(SP 438181 - 458157) - Mark Roberts

An archaeological evaluation and a desktop assessment combined with a surface collection survey and geophysical survey was undertaken on behalf of the County Engineer's Department, on the route of a proposed bypass to the east of Woodstock. The geophysical study was carried out by A Bartlett.

Most of the route lies over limestone. The valley of the River Glyme has alluvial deposits 4 m deep while the W side of the valley has a hill of silty clay before.

The fieldwalking survey was based on a corridor approximately 30 m wide, i.e. 15 m either side of the centre line of the road, with provision for any areas of extra landtake required for landscaping or junctions (50 m corridor).

The geophysical survey was carried out over a corridor 20 m wide along the centre line of the route on those parts of the route unavailable for surface collection survey.

The preferred route of the bypass crosses an area of general archaeological interest evidenced by pre-existing records, air photography and the result of the non-intrusive survey reported here. The occurrence of Romano-British sites on or near to Akeman Street as it crosses rivers is well attested and the crossing of the Glyme is now known to be no exception. The evidence for Roman settlement elsewhere, on or near the line of the Roman road, is well documented.

Three small, diffuse scatters of prehistoric struck flints were located by fieldwalking. Fieldwalking and geophysical survey also located three Roman sites. The most important new site is likely to be a large scatter of Roman pottery and building material towards the northern end of the route on the W side of the Glyme, centred at SP 4344 1808. A small Roman site at SP 4472 1746 needs further clarification. There were more geophysical anomalies, which may be ditches N and E of the known Blenheim Villa, than are known from aerial photographs.

Wootton nr. Woodstock, St Mary's Church

(SP 445220) - Alan Hardy

In October 1992 a watching brief was conducted during the digging of a pipe trench along the W side of the churchyard. Apart from a modern pipe trench, oriented NE-SW, no archaeological features were evident.

Yarnton Floodplain

(SP 475110) - Gill Hey with Chris Bell and Mick Parsons

The Oxford Archaeological Unit are currently excavating three sites on the Thames floodplain at Yarnton within the ARC Cassington gravel extraction pit (Fig 11). These sites were located by fieldwalking and machine trenching, as reported in *SMA* 22, 53-42. This work is being funded by English Heritage.

Topography

The alluvial covering of this floodplain area, at c 59 m OD, seals the more varied topography which existed during the prehistoric period when river channels flowed across the floodplain. The water table appears to have been lower at the time and conditions were sufficiently dry for ground surfaces to form on early channel silts. Gravel islands between the channels and even the lower lying ground surfaces were attractive to early settlers in the region.

Two of the current excavation sites lie on the east end of a large gravel island. One of the sites extends into the adjacent river channel where a wooden structure preserved in the waterlogged silts and other channel-related activity were located during the evaluation. The third site provides evidence for activity on the south of the channel on an old ground surface. As work is in progress, identifications of finds in this report are provisional and the results of extensive sampling for environmental material, both from contexts on site and the adjacent channel, are not yet available.

The Earliest Use of the Site

There is some evidence of Mesolithic activity in the area, provided by a background scatter of contemporary struck flint, including microliths and blade cores. (Flint identifications by Pippa Bradley). However, no features of Mesolithic date have been found.

A very few features so far located are earlier Neolithic in date, including a pit and a treethrow hole both containing Abingdon Ware. There is also an assemblage of early Neolithic flintwork and pottery from the old ground surface on the south of the channel.

Neolithic to Early Bronze Age Activity on the South of the Channel (Fig 12)

On the low-lying site south of the channel an area of 0.7 ha has exposed unusual archaeological features which appear to be largely ceremonial in character but which are not yet fully understood. A thick deposit of alluvium has sealed this site and served to protect shallow features and a finds distribution on the old ground surface which would have disappeared completely had the site been ploughed.

Two parallel linear ditches 53 m apart run northwest to southeast across the site towards the stream channel. The westerly ditch, 43 m long, contained middle Neolithic material (pottery identification by Alistair Barclay); the easterly ditch is longer at c 85 m. To the south soil conditions make feature recognition difficult and it is not yet certain

whether the full extent of these features has been exposed or whether they could be longer, discontinuous linear features. They may be the ditches of a *cursus*. Adjacent to the westerly ditch, near the channel edge, are two parallel rows of postholes 8 m long and 3 m apart, running down to the channel and giving way to a series of linear slots. The slots lie parallel to the channel (and at right angles to the ditch) and stop at the channel edge next to a trampled area where a finds scatter was recovered. Further groups of linear slots have been found both east and west of the westerly ditch (and are of uncertain relationship to it) and also in the southeast of the site next to the easterly ditch. They were all filled with alluvium. The function of these features has not yet been resolved. Their explanation as ridged cultivation slots seems unlikely because of the narrowness of the ridges and greater width of the slots. They are perhaps more convincing as timber slots of platforms constructed of halved trunks sunk into the ground, though the lack of organic material surviving within them is worrying. They may not have a practical function. A concentration of finds, in particular bone, has been located in this area.

South of these features, on slightly higher ground, are several pits and postholes and areas of burning which appear to be domestic in character. They are associated with a finds scatter which includes early to late Neolithic flintwork (including leaf shaped arrowheads, serrated blades, transverse arrowheads and many scrapers).

In the east of the site and adjacent to the east ditch, parallel posthole alignments have been uncovered. The longest of these lines is 40 m long within the excavated area and comprises c 50 postholes spaced approximately 0.35 m apart. The postholes, very similar in character to those in the west, were only 0.2 - 0.3 m deep and could not have contained tall, unsupported uprights. No datable finds have been recovered from them so far. These rows of postholes appear to be aligned upon a penannular ditch on the bank of the channel, within which (though not certainly contemporary) sit burnt mounds, and a ring ditch on the far bank. The centre of the ring ditch was unfortunately disturbed but some cremated bone has been recovered. Late Neolithic material has been retrieved from the area of the penannular ditch.

The site seems to have been abandoned in the early Bronze Age. Its low-lying situation would have been affected more rapidly by a rising water table and may explain the apparently early onset of alluviation here.

Cutting across the south site, and of later date, is a sand and gravel causeway running down to the channel. It is flanked by shallow gullies into which appear to drain a series of dendritic gullies. It is likely that this causeway was constructed at a time when the water level was high enough to make crossing the floodplain difficult.

Neolithic Activity on the Gravel Island

Activity on the gravel island, by contrast, appears to be largely domestic in character and more scattered and non-intensive in nature. This may indicate low density, possibly

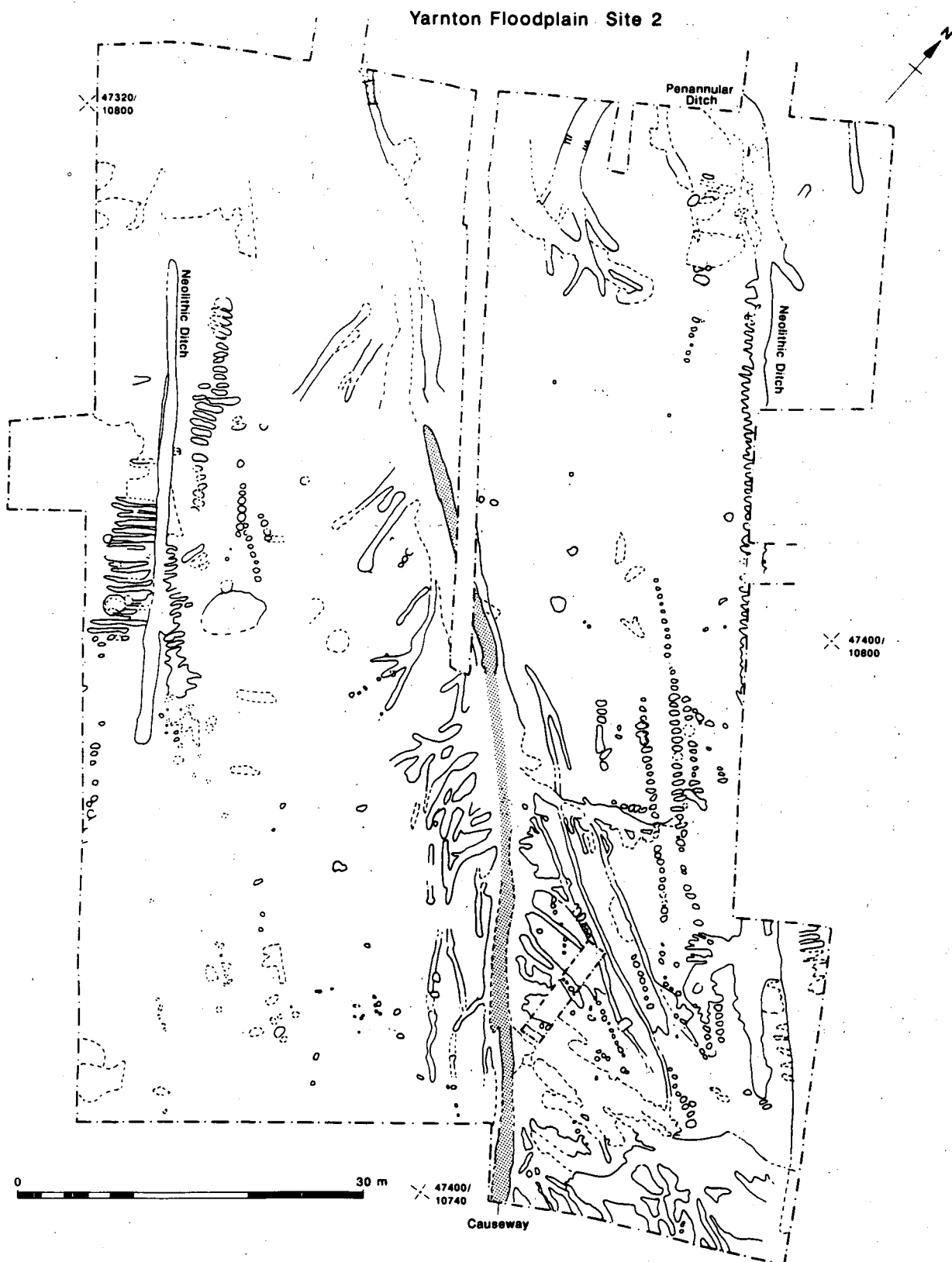


Fig 12. Yarnton Floodplain.



Fig 13. Yarnton floodplain. Early Bronze Age knife.

seasonal, activity on the floodplain gravels by small and mobile groups in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. An area of 2.5 hectares is being examined here. The earliest concentrated activity is represented by two pit groups and a cluster of postholes, possibly a building, which have yielded Grooved Ware pottery and a group of three pits to the east filled with burnt stone, one of which contained Peterborough Ware.

Bronze Age Activity on the Gravel Island

Evidence of occupation from the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age transition through to the later Bronze Age is more apparent. A group of postholes in the west of the area has produced Beaker pottery as have four pits in the east. The assemblage of Beaker pottery from these pits is probably the largest group of non-funerary Beaker material found so far in the Upper Thames Valley, though its context strongly suggests it was a deliberate deposit. Several other early Bronze Age pits contained deliberately placed deposits including a pit containing sherds of Biconical Urns, a Deverel-Rimbury globular urn/jar and a miniature accessory vessel and a pit with 225 pieces of flintwork including a fine bifacially flaked knife (Fig 13).

Several groups of postholes representing structures have been examined. These are mostly circular in shape, though some semi-circular plans, possibly representing shelters or less substantial structures, have been recovered, and one possible rectangular building. Dating material from the postholes is scarce but material from associated pits is middle and late Bronze Age in date.

On the adjacent channel bank several pits and hollows containing burnt stone and charcoal have been located. The dating material from these contexts suggests they are early Bronze Age in date. They are associated with fairly extensive trampled spreads of burnt stone which run down into the channel and have collected in the stream bed with the earliest waterlogged silts. These waterlogged silts seemed to have accumulated within the channel throughout the Bronze Age and, in the east of the site, they contain a concentration of wood debris, including worked wood, coppiced wood and wood and bark chips which suggest wood processing nearby (identifications by Maisie Taylor). Rows of upright stakes running along the edge of the channel and some sections of collapsed wattling suggest that the channel was revetted, possibly to stabilize the banks in areas of more intense use (Fig 14).

Into these waterlogged silts the uprights of a timber structure, probably a small bridge, were driven. This structure was first located in the evaluation and a radiocarbon date of 2585 ± 75 BP (OxA-3644, 820-765 cal BC to one sigma) was obtained from one of the posts, indicating that it was contemporary with the final phase of occupation. The survival of other large uprights further west in the channel, north of Site 2, suggest that another crossing existed here.

The earliest land demarcations are late Bronze Age in date when a linear ditch was dug NNW to SSE across the east of the site towards the channel. The layout of later Iron Age and Roman ditch systems seem to have been influenced by the alignment of this ditch. A line of postholes running north-south 60 m to the west is of uncertain date.

Occupation on this part of the floodplain seems to have ceased at the end of the late Bronze Age. Interestingly this coincides with the establishment of the Yarnton Worton Rectory Farm settlement site on the 2nd gravel terrace to the north.

Later Land Use of the Floodplain

There is, however, evidence of continuing land use on the floodplain. This information will be enhanced by the results of extensive sampling within the channels for pollen, snails, macrobotanical and insect remains.

Four gravel causeways cross the channel in addition to the causeway located on the southern site. The very slight dating evidence from them suggests they are Iron Age in date, though they may not all be contemporary.

Roman field boundaries transect the area, aligned upon the channel. The fieldwalking data suggested Roman manuring scatters on the gravel island and an extensive area of ploughsoil survives in situ sealing and truncating the prehistoric features in this area.

The ring ditch had not completely filled when the latest Roman boundary ditch was cut across it. N of the Roman ditch the ring ditch subsequently filled with ploughsoil, whereas to the south and next to the channel it was covered



Fig 14. Yarnton floodplain. Late Bronze Age wooden structure in old stream channel.

by alluvium, indicating that this area was either pasture or a droveway adjacent to the channel in the Roman period.

Increased alluviation in the first centuries AD resulted in the channels becoming clogged and ceasing to flow. By the Saxon period the channel was probably a series of ponds. Evidence from Oxey Mead, to the east, suggests that some of these ponds were used for flax retting. Within the excavation area the contemporary waterlogged soils have been heavily trampled by animals and a fenceline adjacent to the channel may also be Saxon in date.

Overbank alluviation in the medieval period sealed all these deposits.

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tuckwells Pit, Thrupp Lane, Radley, Oxon
(SU 523978) - Roger Ainslie

Following our excavation of Iron Age enclosures in this area (SMA 22), work has continued under the direction of Jeff Wallis.

Three ditches have been found running North-south and one, with a parallel small gully at its side, running east-west. Whilst these ditches had few finds, those there were indicated a Roman date. However a small segment of the main north-south ditch contained a deposit of some 860

sherds weighing a total of approximately 14 1/2 Kg. These can be subdivided into the following categories:-

Type	Sherds	Weight(g)
oxidised wares	141	1833
local grey	155	1955
fine grey	73	1036
sand tempered grey	367	6390
sand temper (black)	276	3180
stamped Samian	1	85

Other finds included roof tile (3 pieces); bronze slag (1 piece); fired lumps of clay with limestone temper (87 pieces); bones; snails and oyster shells.

Paul Booth of the Oxford Archaeological Unit has looked at this pottery and considers it to be a group which is most likely to have been deposited in the first half of the 2nd century AD. The only exception to this is the cup (11) which should be dated to nearer 70 AD. The main point of interest is the flagon (6) which Young(1) has indicated to be 3rd century in date but which must now be reconsidered. The ceramic disc (12) is similar to those found at Farmoor(2) and may be the lid for a storage vessel.

Robert Eeles has inspected the bones and shells. The identifiable assemblage of 5 horse bones, 14 of cattle, 10 of sheep and 1 of dog is too small from which to draw conclusions. There were 3 snails of *Helix aspersa*, 55 of *Cepaea nemoralis* and 2 of *hortensis* indicating that the ditch was mainly dry and overgrown.

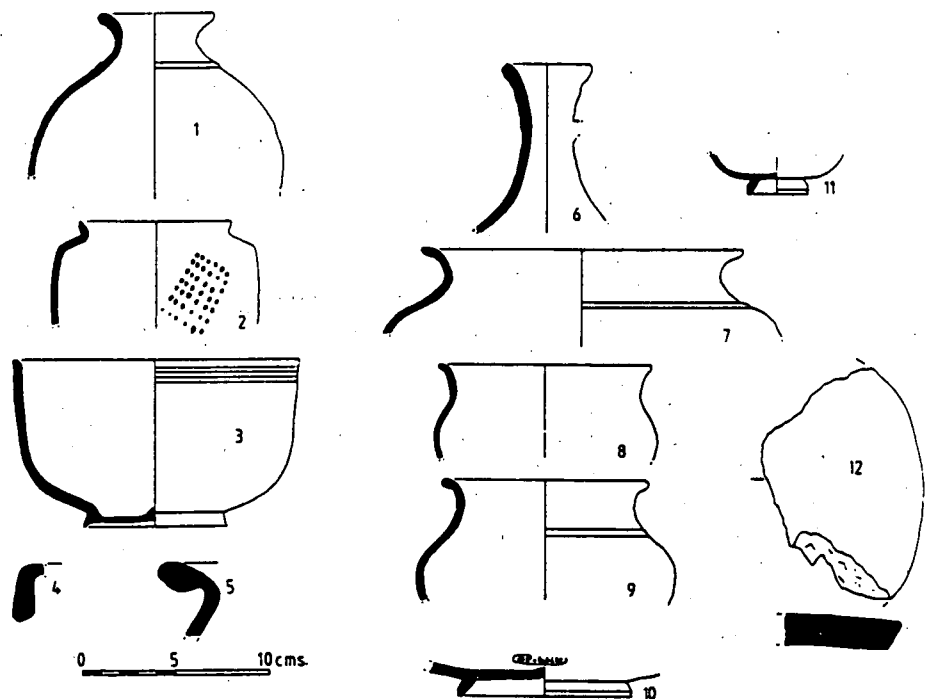
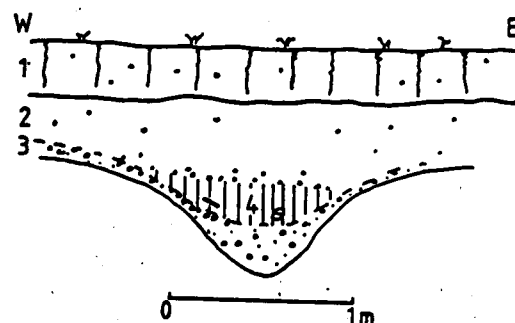


Fig 15. Abingdon. Illustrated pottery.

Illustrated finds - all from group in main ditch

1. Grey jar sandy fabric
2. Grey jar with barbotine dot panels and square shoulder
3. Pink imitation of Samian form Dr 37
4. Part of rim of Oxfordshire white ware mortarium
5. Rim of storage jar, pink/grey, grog and sand temper. Diameter 29 cm
6. Pink neck of Oxfordshire flagon, handle missing
7. Grey/pink jar, sandy fabric. Sand may be derived from local greensand deposits
8. Jar fine grey ware
9. Jar, grey core, exterior reduced black fine sandy fabric
10. Base of South Gaulish Samian ware bowl with incomplete stamp
11. Base of South Gaulish Samian ware cup Dr 27 with groove on footring. No maker's stamp
12. Part of circular flat disc with organic and shell temper



- | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| Layer 1 | dark brown loam |
| 2 | yellow brown gravelly silt |
| 3 | yellow silty sand with gravel |
| 4 | dark grey brown clay/silt |

Fig 16. Abingdon. Section through main ditch.

References

1. Young, C J. The Roman Pottery industry of the Oxford Region; 1977 p 121
2. Lambrick, G and Robinson, M; Iron Age and Roman riverside settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire; 1979 p 53

Acknowledgements

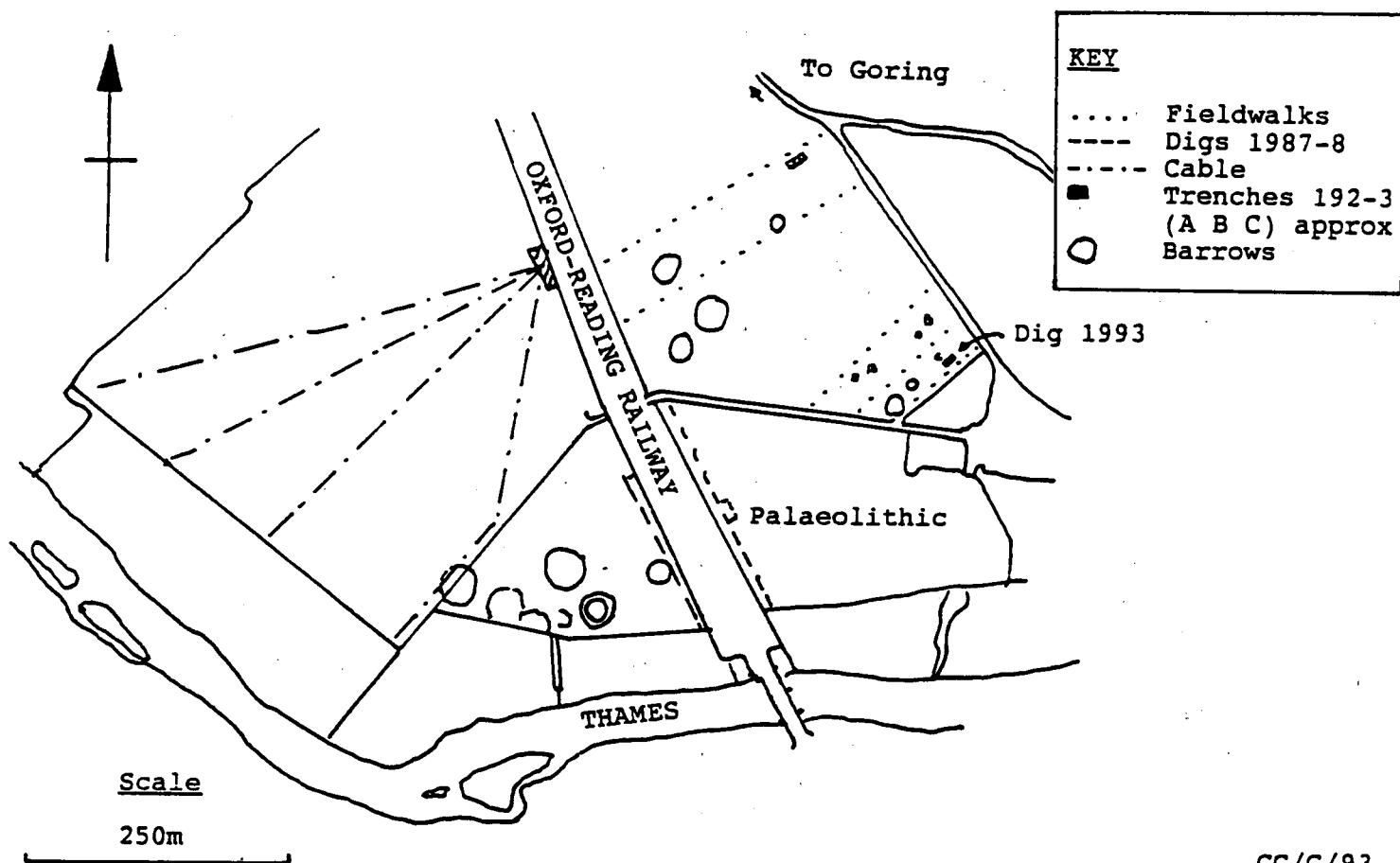
The digging team consisted of many people but the following were on site most often:

Jeff and Sandy Wallis, Robert Eeles, Olly Bickley and the University Archaeological Society, John Carter, Jackie Smith, Terry Stopps, Ron Brookes, Alison Gledhill, John Cooper, Roger and Sally Ainslie.

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

SOAG Site at Gatehampton
Cynthia A Graham-Kerr

Our interest in this area started with a fieldwalk, many years ago, in Barrow field, which lies to the east of the Oxford/Reading Railway, south of Goring station. Our next involvement with this was when Thames Water put in new pipes each side of the Railway, when we joined in with the OAU in two major excavations.



GG/G/93

Fig 17. SOAG site at Gatehampton.

Next, we had the opportunity to fieldwalk two large areas in Gravel field, and later, to examine the new cable trenches in Barrow field (Fig 17). We were struck by the amount of Roman tile and pottery in Gravel field, and Derek Vaughen, a geophysist and member of SOAG, and Jeop Obbons, of RAAP, University of Amsterdam, working with us, together arranged a magnetometer survey of a selected area. The results showed a feature crossing the part we had walked and another near the north end of it. As it was in an area of a heavy scatter of Roman tile and pottery, we were interested to see if this was indeed a Roman feature, and if so, what?

Fieldwork

With the survey report and our previous knowledge of the field we located the spot, and opened a small trial trench 2 x 4 m (Tr.A). At a depth of approximately 1 m in very gravelly soil, we noticed a dark loamy area, and further trowelling revealed a Roman boundary ditch. This was filled with the dark loam and contained Roman pottery and roof and floor tiles, and coincided exactly with the feature on the survey plan.

Meanwhile, we had the farmer's permission to walk an adjoining strip. This was accomplished when it was too wet to dig, laying it out in 10 m squares. Again we noticed heavy

scatters of tile and pottery. A second trench (Tr.B) was also opened to examine the anomaly on the survey plan to the north in the field and this proved to be a deep feature, possibly a pit but more likely a section of a ditch. There were few finds in it, but we did have a decorated sherd of corded Beaker Ware at the base.

The landowner said he would leave us a strip about 5 m wide at the edge of the strawberry field as it was here that his plough kept 'hitting things'.

In March this year we laid out a trench of 5 x 1 m in this area (Tr.C). We are now in the process of digging this and have come across a layer of rotten chalk and debris of Roman pot and tile, nails, bone, etc. and some large flints, possibly tumble, at one end. We have extended one side and the southern end, but are limited for space widthways; there is, however, room to expand further lengthways, and we hope to find what the plough is 'hitting' this year.

Documentary

The area has also been investigated by our historians who have produced information from the Domesday Survey and from the Saxon charters of Streatley etc, which indicate that there was a medieval village of at least 12 dwellings and

perhaps two manors, one of which is still extant. By the end of the medieval period this village had shrunk, only the manor and an adjacent farm remaining. It has been suggested that this DMV was located in a field called Old Town Piece.

There was also a fulling mill near to the Thames, which we investigated during the erection of a new fence, but found very little. The Thames was probably used to transport the cloth to Reading. There is also a lane to the north, from Gatehampton to Goring Heath and so to Reading, which in medieval times was a highway for transport.

Acknowledgements

During this project we have been loaned casual finds and maps by neighbours, and have had offers to walk their fields, and we would like to acknowledge their help and kindness. We would especially like to thank the landowner Robin Cloke and Thames Water for their cooperation when working with them.

Future Work

The whole area is proving so interesting that we have been asked by the County Archaeologist to produce a strategic overview of the fields, manor, and the DMV which is said to exist over the road. Our group is now at work on this expanding project, which promises to be of considerable interest over the next few years.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Witney, Oxfordshire - Cotswold Business Park
(SP 330100) - Leigh J Torrance

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in October 1992 on behalf of Red House Books Ltd. and Lighthome Ltd. This consisted of five machine-assisted trenches. No archaeological deposits or finds were found.

Whitchurch Hill, near Pangbourne, Oxfordshire - Castrol Technology Centre
(SU 637 781) - Leigh J. Torrance

A watching brief, on behalf of Castrol Ltd., led to the discovery of a small pit filled with burnt flint and charcoal (SU 63743 78180). Other finds in the area include a few worked flints and a sherd of pottery of Roman or Medieval date. No other archaeological features were observed.

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NOTE: Figures in *italics* denote illustrations; there may also be textual references on these pages.

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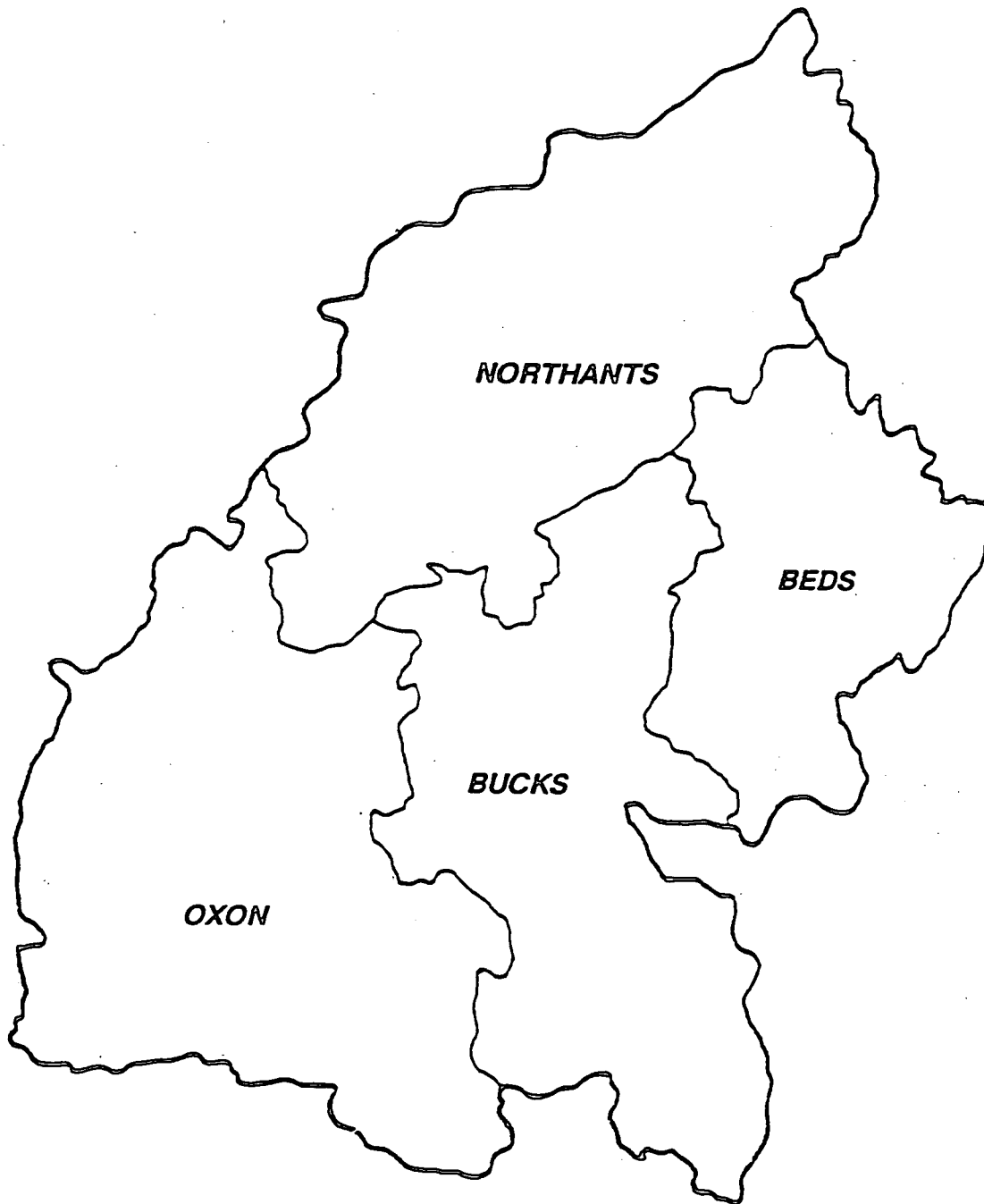
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CBA SOUTH MIDLANDS GROUP AREA



0 10 20 miles
0 16 32 km