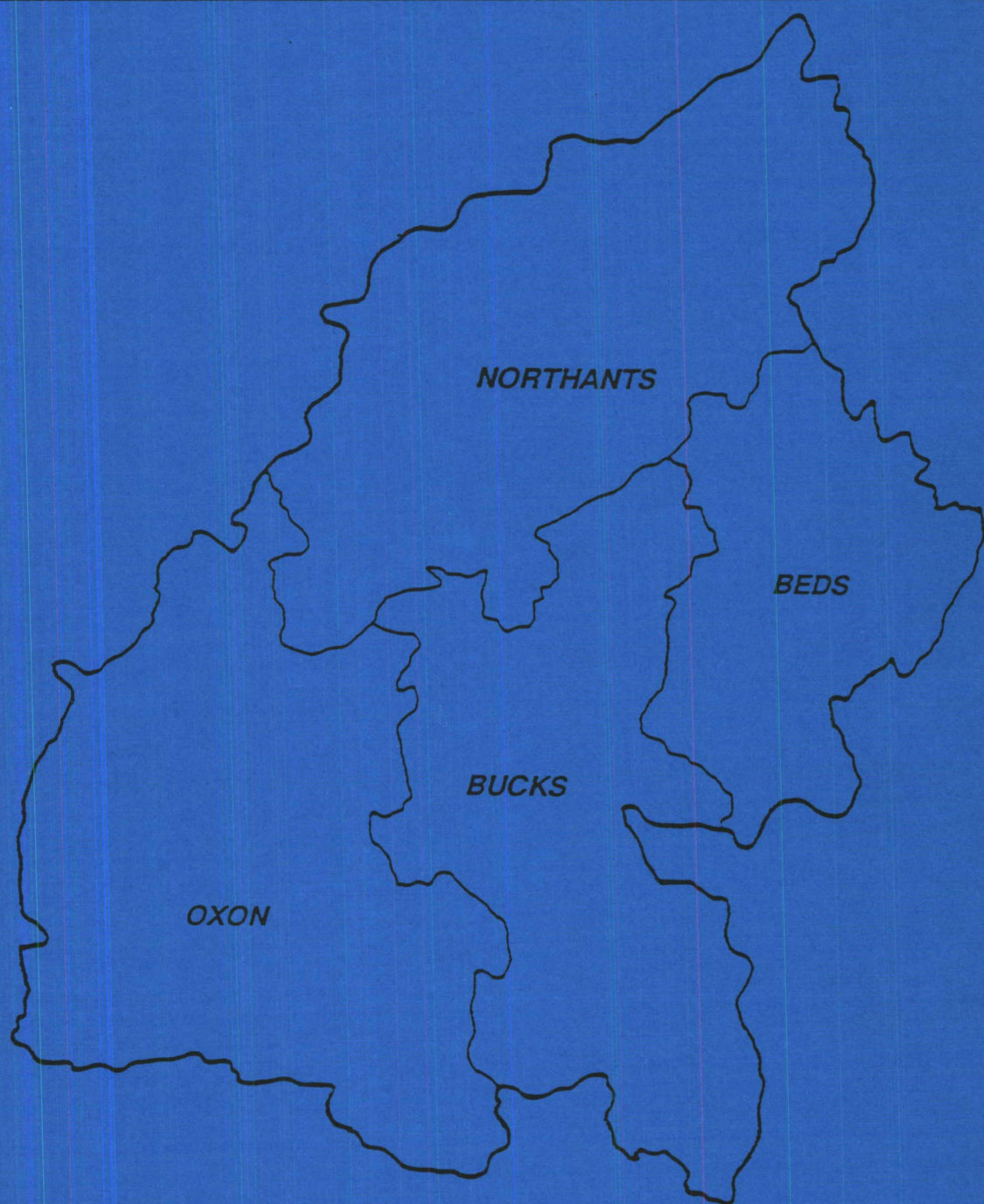


**SOUTH
MIDLANDS
ARCHAEOLOGY**

**25
1995**



**CBA
SOUTH MIDLANDS GROUP**

SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

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

NUMBER 25, 1995

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Editorial

This is my first edition as Editor although I have typeset SMA for some years. While I was putting this, the 25th, edition together I was struck by what a useful document it is: the vast majority of archaeological activity which goes on in the four counties being recorded here. Some active groups still do not contribute and we must all do our best to encourage them to submit something.

For some years the group has been able to finance the cost of publication from the members' subscriptions, profit on the Annual Conference and sales of SMA. Until recently sales were a significant income but over the past year or so they have fallen dramatically, presumably as a result of the continuing recession.

Over the past two years the CBA has had individual members who can elect to be a member of a regional group, for that, the respective group receives £4; this is £1 less than our group membership. I should add that the group receives £7 for each institutional member which is £1 more than our group membership. This means that our membership is larger but, unfortunately, not large enough to give us economies of scale with regard to the printing of SMA. Distribution costs also increase with increasing membership as more copies must be posted.

As we receive no grant towards the cost of SMA it is essential that we sell as many copies as possible. Please encourage all your friends to join as members or to purchase copies. An index to the first 20 volumes is available as well as some back numbers.

Finally I would like to thank all the contributors.

Barry Horne AIFA

Report on Spring Conference held at Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton on Saturday 22 April 1995

Brenda Easterbrook

BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Nick Shepherd

He spoke about work carried out on the 8.5 km route of the Bedford Southern Bypass, in the River Ouse valley. All the sites had been plough-damaged and some had only limited access for excavations (a full account is in this volume).

The sites were: **Peartree Farm, Village Farm, Bunyan's Manor Farms, Bumpy Lane, Harrowden, Eastcote and Octagon Farm**. He pointed out that it was not possible to do a proper assessment with the small trenches along the roadside edges. At Bunyan's Manor Farms the archaeology had been covered to preserve it but it was pointed out that this is a technique with unknown consequences as we do not know what the long term effect will be on the deposits.

NORTHAMPTON ARCHAEOLOGY

Andy Chapman

Spoke about the Daventry International Rail freight terminal. This is a 73 hectare site bounded by Watling Street and with no previously known archaeology. The evaluation was made by environmental consultants whose general scan located 3 probable areas. The whole of the hilly area for siting the rail sidings is to be moved and the developers will cover and preserve the south end. Excavations were limited by budget, time, and floods on the low-lying site. Magnetic susceptibility and magnetometer surveys revealed a small Romano-British farm and adjacent Iron Age farmstead.

Two Iron Age sites were identified, with very dense ring ditches, round houses and good groups of related structures, from mid-late Iron Age with a small amount of 2nd-3rd century Romano-British but no indication of continuity.

More work may be done with limited sampling and topsoil stripping. The south group had 3 ring ditches, post pits were set back from the terminals and there were door posts but no evidence for walls. The ridge and furrow had cut down into the Iron Age deposits. There was an outer enclosure and other ancillary ring ditches round a central house.

In the north part the site was mid-late Iron Age, possibly earlier than the south site but there was some contemporary dating. A rectangular enclosure with a northwest entrance was later extensively redeveloped, its inner enclosure reduced in size and concealed with its southeast entrance, and probably a focus of daily ritual. Postholes represent a small timber building with a central clay-filled pit containing a quernstone. Ring ditches were within and abutting the enclosure. Each of the main structure groups had four and six-post structures attached. Finds included a mid Neolithic scored ware bowl, other sherds and a small number of bones. There was a scatter of early Saxon wares including a pottery lamp and loom weight and one large early-mid Saxon vessel. A series of ditches along the boundary had been recut.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

Dave Bonner

Walton, Aylesbury has been a focus of attention for 20 years. The clay loams are good for settlement. These latest excavations were in advance of development by Barratts for houses in surviving orchard and wasteland, and beneath a

car park and building foundations. The remnants of a Bronze Age roundhouse were found with three complex rings and postholes with mid-late Bronze Age pottery, gritted, with stab decoration. There was a hearth but no central posthole and much of the interior was truncated by ploughing. Possibly there were other Bronze Age roundhouses from previous excavations. The bones from the burials are being studied. There appears to be a complex series of sites with concentrations of cremated bone, and pots over the top of a scraped-up heap of burnt clay and bone.

There were nine extended inhumations outside the boundaries without grave goods, but one belt buckle was found, and some Romano-British sherds. A well was excavated to 2 m depth. Earlier excavations had discovered then sunken featured buildings and three post hole structures and there was evidence for both these types. There was an extreme variety of size and shape, four being placed over Roman ditches. The finds included loom weights and Samian gaming counters. A late Saxon gully was on the same line as a Roman ditch. One building had burnt soil inside and charred wood, possibly being the rafters running the length of the building. There were two post-built structures, one other with timber uprights and a row of postholes with an entrance.

The Thames Valley Archaeological Services also excavated at Walton, in early 1995. They found large numbers of structures including a beam-slotted building and this is possibly the nucleus of the Saxon settlement. Late Saxon gullies with St Neots ware overlay the Roman ditch, and the settlement was possibly based on the Roman boundary system. There were about 20 pits in one huge amorphous concentration but no evidence for their use, and one horse burial.

The Bronze Age settlement was followed by an Iron Age farmstead and fields, and over the whole area there may have been 100 Saxon house sites.

NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM

Mark Curteis

This talk was compiled from English Heritage and CBA research document 'Metal detecting and Archaeology in England', the first on the subject. The survey sets out to quantify damage to monuments, sites and excavations, the scale of all unauthorised detecting, the volume of finds, and the number of detectorists. Three thousand detectors are sold annually. A survey of museums and societies, the report is divided into PROS and CONS.

PROS.

- Some groups do their own scientific and historical research, plotting finds e.g. in Norfolk where a previously unknown Roman fort was discovered.
- Archaeologists might say 'finds only from the top soil'
- IA and Roman coins from Everley near Brackley

produced evidence for a new site.

- Roman votive-type objects provide proof of ritual and temple
- Coins from top soil - history of site from surface finds
- New types of artefacts being found
- 95% are found by detectorists. Spoil heaps produce otherwise lost finds.
- Northants has good record of working with detectorists e.g. MARS.

CONS.

- Much is unrecorded - nicer coins brought in and rest remain unseen
- Information is not always passed on to museums although clubs are legally organised.
- Illegal detectorists - finds unknown or false provenances given
- in Scotland everything recovered belongs to Crown - it would make museum work more difficult if it was the law here, and more staff would be needed
- in Norfolk everything is drawn and photographed.
- in Northants a quick note is taken - about 150 a year.
- not everything found is brought in - it would be positive bonus if it could be recorded
- museums complain detectorists don't report to them and Northants has no provision for the information to be passed into the SMR

General discussion followed: on use of metal detectors and recording into SMRs; limiting development areas; no systematic preservation of sites as new techniques and theories develop; plans for large projects change and the 'grey' areas where for example enclosures for machinery cause damage.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Neil Holbrook

Wantage was important historically, King Alfred being born there in 849 AD. In 1006 it was burnt in a Danish raid and a minster and mill were recorded at Domesday. Not much significant archaeological work had been carried out although there had been chance Roman finds. A Roman road, traceable to Fulford where there is a rural Roman amphitheatre, possible heads via Oxford ultimately to Towcester. Land east of Letcombe Brook was proposed for development and it was hoped excavations would locate the site of King Alfred's palace. A few sherds of mid-late Iron Age together with three ditches and a palisade fence dated to the end of the first century AD, and some terra nigra were found. By the 2nd century AD there were ditches, enclosures, a well and a timber building, large irregular padstones and slots for timber walls, on a terraced hillside. A 12 m by 9 m structure had a central aisle. There were carbonised remains of wattle and daub walls with red and white painted plaster. A possible granary with split tree trunks as a means of raising the floor was thought to be Roman although loom weights were found. Ditches defined

Editorial and Conference

paddocks, there was nothing at the bottom of the half-sectioned well, and together with the timber building and granary, indicate a rural site. The 1 m deep footings of a 10 m by 10 m stone building suggest it was several storeys high. Before the end of the 4th century the site was re-organised, the tower was demolished and there was a new pattern of land holding.

Midden-like material dumped across the site contained Roman and grass-tempered early Saxon sherds. Coins found by detectorists dated 360-380 AD. The ditches might be Saxon as a loom weight was found at the top of the ditch fill, and an evaluation trench found three loom weights together. There was also pottery dating from 5th - 8th century, a possible Saxon pin, a saucer brooch, box-lid and coins.

This was probably a small settlement by a Roman road, bordered by the stream and developed for the needs of the travelling public.

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

Barry Horne

Spoke about recent work in Dunstable. He explained that the Roman town of Durocobrivis disappeared in the 5th century AD. A town was re-established in the 12th century which eventually had two monastic foundations, the Augustinians and Dominicans. The present church, now an Ancient Monument, was part of the Augustinian Priory. Excavations were carried out nearby because the footings for a garage might extend into the cemetery. In the footings, the excavators found foot bones along one side, heads along the other side. These were at a depth of 1 m. Further investigation found shaped graves, cut to fit a body, and 'ear muff' burials with either stone or chalk blocks either side of the head. There were three or four layers of burials which produced 21 incomplete and two complete skeletons.

A small excavation was also carried out in the grounds of Priory Middle School, just outside the priory complex.

The Society headquarters, the former 'Sportsman's Arms', now to be known as the 'Les Matthews Archaeology Centre' were opened on 1st October 1994. There have been many visitors including children who are able to have 'hands on' pottery sessions.

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Roger Ainslie

Coins found by Myres have been plotted on to a map of Abingdon. A ditch possibly dating from Iron Age to early Roman with early Iron Age pottery had been found. An excavation in Bath St. found pits of Roman and Medieval date. The bottom of the ditch possibly had a palisade slot. There was burnt bone, a brooch and pottery of a probable early 2nd century date, associated with cremation burials.

There were sparse Saxon pottery fragments in the back fill, and it seems this could be a chance find of a cremation cemetery. The Society continues to dig small holes round the town which help to add to the archaeological knowledge of Abingdon. The Rye Meadow shows crop marks from the air which usually means there is not much remaining in the ground.

UPPER NENE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Roy Friendship-taylor

The north wing of the Piddington Roman villa had an open hall, and a 2nd bath house. An extensive late IA settlement lay beneath. There was a possible timber structure but this was mostly destroyed by the later stone building. A late Antonine fire damaged much of the villa which was then rebuilt, a water sump and pipeline being added. The organic soil has been analysed but it is not known what was grown there. There was much pottery and a gravel walkway existed round the edge. By the late 4th century there were seven family units living in the ruins in 'detached' residences, including the bottom of the cellar. There were gaps for windows which splayed inwards and holes for shutter bolts. The drainage gully kept the cellars very dry. A yard surface had a drain into a field boundary, and a small figurine was found here.

The bottom of the 2nd bath house was filled with dumped charcoal, and there was a tessellated pavement with plough damage. At the east end the buildings of different phases were turned into a tile kiln and the diamond-shaped tiles were stacked in a 'builders' yard.' Wall plaster and ceiling fragments were found within the bath house. In 1994 a Saxon burial with an iron knife was discovered, making a total of four burials, one having been found with a spear by 18th century stone quarriers.

The Society headquarters is a former Wesleyan chapel, and a trust for the Society's own museum has been set up, as Northants has no County Museum service.

CLOSING ADDRESS

Mike Heyworth - CBA Deputy Director

There has been a variety of evidence for archaeology and archaeological landscapes, and dealing with whole historic landscapes. There is much destruction going on and there is a need for improved public awareness and education. Professionals are working under constraints, and the work is not to the best advantage for obtaining maximum information. Metal detectors can be used in a positive way and can be regarded as an archaeological tool. A huge amount of work is done by local societies, and there is a great interest. Professionals should be working with local people. Archaeology should be about reconstructing the past and with particular regard to people. Young people need to be involved (there were two young lads present), and everyone needs to pull together. The committee were thanked for all their hard work.

BEDFORDSHIRE

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S HERITAGE GROUP

Archaeology And Planning Commentary Martin Oake

During 1994-5 consultations on planning applications continued at a slightly reduced rate, but the proportion that were archaeologically sensitive increased. These ranged from large scale developments such as mineral extraction and a swimming pool to single houses.

At **Stratton near Biggleswade** the County Council undertook further field evaluation in advance of land disposal. This helped to define the extent of the Saxon and medieval settlement, part of which had already been excavated, and in particular revealed the existence of a previously unsuspected early-mid Saxon settlement. The evaluation usefully defined areas of archaeological sensitivity requiring further detailed excavation before development can take place; it also identified land containing no archaeology and thus capable of being developed without constraint.

The construction of the **Bedford Southern Bypass** had a knock-on effect on archaeology through the requirement for borrow pits to provide construction material and voids for the disposal of spoil. Because the road was built through a highly sensitive archaeological landscape and necessitated the excavation of a number of sites, it was expected that borrow pits would also have a similar impact. The County Council had produced a planning brief for the borrow pits highlighting archaeology as a constraint. This encouraged land owners to commission field evaluations of likely sites to specifications provided by the Heritage Group well in advance of the submission of any planning applications. This process helped to define the potential impact of the borrow pits and allowed appropriate mitigation strategies, mainly excavation, to be arranged.

At **Keeley Farm Wootton** there is good cartographic evidence for the existence of a medieval moated site. So, when a planning application for residential development was submitted, the owners were requested to undertake a field evaluation to define the extent of the survival of the archaeological deposits. It was somewhat of a surprise when the evaluation demonstrated that no archaeological features had survived, not even the moat ditch.

Even the smallest sites can produce useful information. An archaeological condition was attached to planning permission for the refurbishment of **Clipstone Cottage** at **Eggington**, a late medieval timber framed cruck building, a very rare type in Bedfordshire. The works involved relaying the floor inside the cottage. A watching brief carried out during this work recorded a number of features contemporary with the early use of the building.

Apart from planning applications, input was made to various plans and policy documents. Comments were made on both the Bedford Borough and Mid Bedfordshire Local Plans. Work continued on the archaeology and historic landscape sections of the Chiltern AONB Management Plan; policies and priorities were developed for the Greensand Project in south east Bedfordshire.

Historic Environment Record Stephen Coleman

Record Development/Input

A detailed data audit covering all aspects of the current Record, its collections, resources, operations and problems was carried out and a report passed to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. This formed part of a feasibility study to assess the requirements for the possible transfer of our present computerised index to the new MONARCH database software available from the Commission. They have provided training in the use of MONARCH and on-site testing of the new software using sample Bedfordshire data is expected to begin during early summer 1995. Any decision to take it up fully will follow this.

We have begun a World War II Defence Sites Survey in order to enhance the Record's holdings and to provide information to the Defence of Britain Project, which is seeking to create a national database of 20th century military sites and structures. Volunteer assistance headed by Trevor Ball of the Potton History Society is recording and photographing sites in the field, including pillboxes, anti-tank obstacles, gun or mortar emplacements, rifle ranges and entrenchments. Unfortunately very few documentary records or maps survive to indicate the locations of such features and the survey is heavily reliant upon local knowledge. If you have any information on such sites, whether surviving or destroyed, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Enquiries and Other Output

Non-development control enquiries and visits to the Record remain high and have increased by 5% to 264 over the year - see summary list. The general public and education-related enquiries remain the major customers but the range of users continues to broaden overall.

One significant task was the provision of information for the English Heritage funded Monuments at Risk Survey (MARS). This is a national survey of England's archaeological resource which is looking at a 5% sample of the land area in order to assess the present survival and condition of the country's recorded archaeology, to examine the ways in which the recorded resource has changed over the last 50 years and to analyse the development of and changes in the way sites have been recorded archaeologically. Of the 1300 1 km x 5 km sample units selected across the country 20 fall within Bedfordshire: these contain 551 known sites and features for which

Bedfordshire

information had to be supplied, and will need to be visited by MARS staff.

Another national survey we have assisted is English Nature's parkland inventory, a detailed listing of all surviving parks and landscaped grounds from which it is intended to identify potential havens for certain species of flora and fauna. The HER includes comprehensive coverage of such areas across the county.

Those bodies or groups involved in countryside management and enhancing the natural environment are still a major group of customers. Interpretative assistance together with the provision of historic landscape development and archaeological information continues to aid the Department's Greenspace Group in their work on various projects, management plans and publications. Particular assistance has been provided to the Greensand Project in the south west of the county and a detailed listing of the considerable archaeological resource in the Ivel Valley together with a study of its historic landscape development have been provided for the new management plan being prepared by the Ivel Valley Countryside Project. We continue to have inputs into the various projects managed by the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust, including contributing to the displays depicting the 12th and 13th century Marston Vale at the new Education Centre established at Randall's Farm, and also into the Marston Vale Community Forest and the Luton and Dunstable Countryside Project.

Earthwork surveys were conducted on Medieval woodbanks and related features at Charle Wood and Little Brickhill Copse near Woburn in advance of golf course construction and on formal garden features adjoining the house at Haynes Park. Documentary research and analysis relating to the latter was also required to provide some background on the historical development of the gardens and park.

Some Facts and Figures

The total of sites, buildings or other historic features recorded on the HER increased from 15628 to 15783. External users of the record increased by 5% to a total of 264.

6 new ancient monuments were scheduled, bringing the total to 140 (1 motte, 1 warren, 3 moats and 1 group of fishponds).

Fieldwork And Post-excavation Work

Evelyn Baker

Over 50 main archaeological projects have been undertaken throughout the county, with, at one time, over 50 archaeologists working from the St Marys Church Archaeology Centre. These have included work on a string of important sites along the route of the A428 Bedford Southern Bypass, publication of early 1970s work by DOE and the former North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society

on the Roman villa at Bletsoe, excavation of Iron Age, Roman and late Saxon remains at Haynes Park and the uncovering of further large tracts of the medieval village of Stratton at Biggleswade, evaluation of the routes of the Dunstable and Luton bypasses, and continued post-excavation analysis on the royal manor of Leighton (also Grove Priory) in the south. The evaluation of the M1 widening was a complex project also involving Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, and the more important because no archaeological work had been undertaken when the motorway was originally constructed.

33 technical reports were published by the Service last year, together with a further five in Bedfordshire Archaeology and elsewhere. The Bletsoe Roman Villa was published in partnership with the Bedfordshire Archaeological Council as the first occasional monograph in the county Journal series. Further progress was made with the development of the Bedfordshire Artefacts Database.

Archaeologists from all over the eastern region attended a highly successful conference Archaeology and the Ouse Valley, organised by Michael Dawson, Drew Shottliff and Martin Oake. A seminar on the archaeological aspects of road schemes organised for the Highways Agency stimulated a useful dialogue.

On the educational front, 750 children were given much appreciated hands-on experience of archaeology, and another 100 given site tours. More site visits would have been possible were not the Bedfordshire area plagued by illicit metal detecting. Eleven students and volunteers worked with us throughout the year. Twenty four talks were given to local groups and societies, reaching 1000 people, not counting the visitors to the Shuttleworth Festival, a major two day event in the county. Four displays were sent out to seven different venues, and groups totalling 70 people had special tours of St Marys. The media showed consistent interest with a number of radio, television and press interviews. The Bedfordshire police are finding our archaeological forensic skills useful in helping them in their work.

Major Fieldwork Projects

Bedford Southern Bypass (TL0446 - 0950)

Nick Shepherd

During January - July 1994, excavations continued in advance of the construction of the Bedford Southern Bypass, funded by the Highways Agency of the Department of Transport. Eight separate sites, spanning the early prehistoric through to the medieval periods, were investigated along the 8.5 km road corridor. Evaluation work between 1990 and 1993 was reported in *SMA* 23 (1993), 7-12. The first phase of excavation at Peartree Farm, a small Romano-British farmstead, was reported in *SMA* 24 (1994).

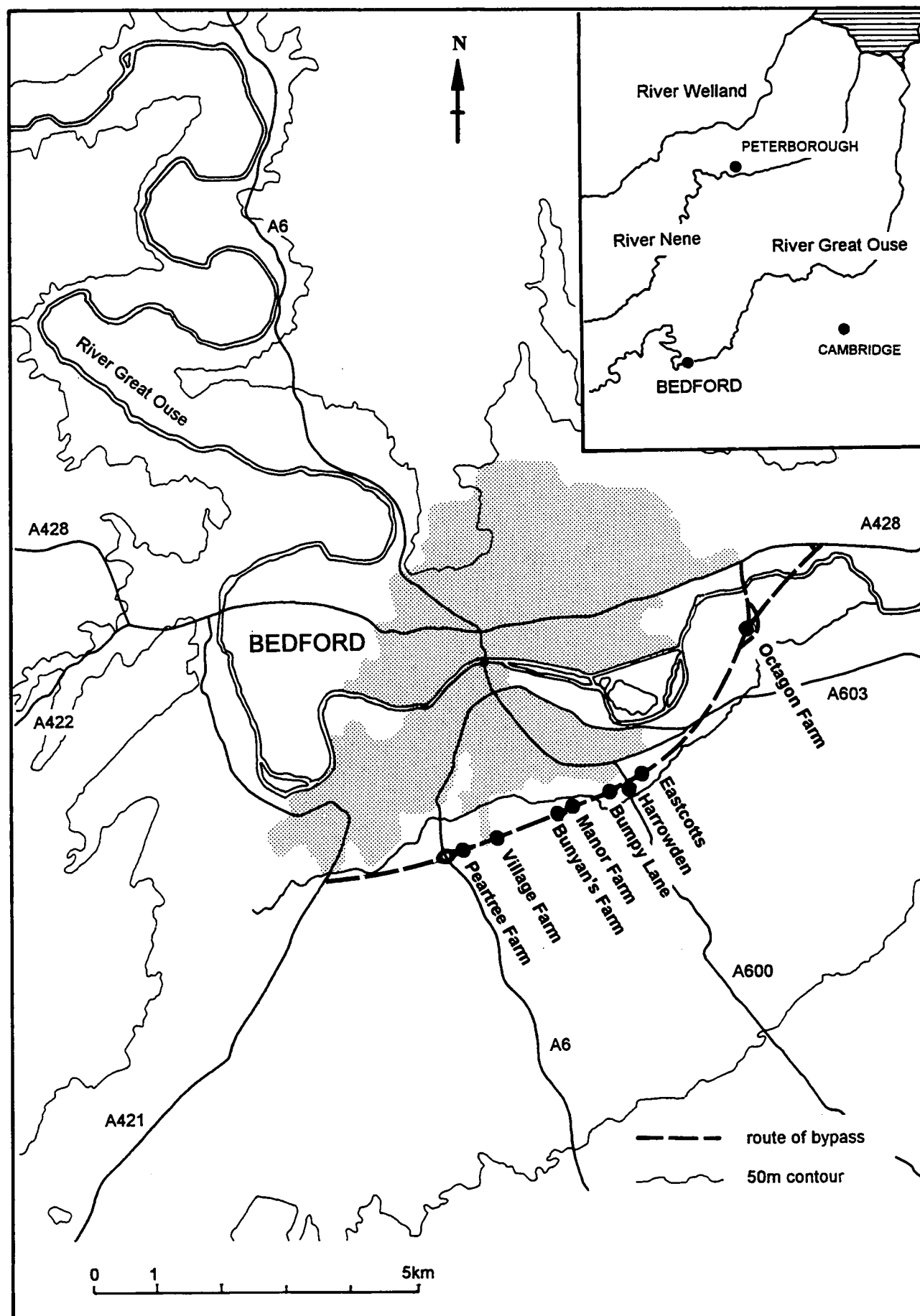


Fig 1. Plan locating archaeological excavations along the line of the Bedford Southern Bypass.

Bedfordshire

Peartree Farm

Approximately 2.7 ha were stripped within the road corridor over a complex crop mark thought to represent the site of a single Romano-British farmstead. Similar sites, forming the focus for droveways and field systems, are visible throughout the Ouse valley, but this was the first opportunity for a major investigation. This, like many of the bypass sites, produced evidence for deforestation from Neolithic times onwards, with Iron Age field boundaries and scattered settlement indicating a landscape largely cleared by at least the mid first millennium BC.

The main focus for settlement during this period lay elsewhere (Woodward, 1977 and Village Farm below). There was no demonstrable continuity of boundaries or settlement evidence from the Iron Age into the early 2nd century AD when the Romano-British farmstead was established. The layout of this later farmstead was completely at variance with the earlier system. It lay to the east of a ditched droveway or trackway and took the form of two large and apparently separate enclosures sub-divided internally. Three phases of development were indicated, largely by the changing form of internal divisions and smaller enclosures on the western part of the site. Although the focus of domestic activity could not be identified with specific structures, it is likely that it lay within this western part of the site, or perhaps just to the north beyond the limits of excavation. Further analysis of the contextual relationships of environmental and other finds may be able to clarify zoning of uses across the site through patterns of refuse disposal.

The framework of enclosures established in the 2nd century and maintained into the 3rd appears to have broken down during the 4th, with smaller less regular enclosures cutting across the earlier system (although certain alignments were still respected and the droveway may have still been in use). At the same time isolated inhumations were made and large quarry-like pits were dug across the silted up ditches of the early enclosures. These activities still appear to date to the Roman period, only small amounts of abraded Saxon pottery having been recovered from upper fills. The farmstead seems to have been abandoned in the late 4th century with no re-occupation of the site. During the Medieval period the site lay fully within the area of the Elstow common fields.

Provisional analysis of the artefacts and ecofacts indicates a low status settlement operating a mixed economy; spelt wheat was common in carbonised deposits, with the usual range of large mammals present in the bone assemblage. Little imported material other than samian was recovered, local grey and shelly wares predominating with a range of regional Nene valley, Oxford type wares. Coins were absent before 3rd century types, and the range and variety of metal objects was limited.

Village Farm

Some 500 m to the east of Peartree Farm, Village Farm fills the gaps in that site's chronological sequence. Two ring ditches were excavated, but primary or satellite burials were

not identified due to truncation of features and limited access. Little direct dating evidence was recovered, but a late Neolithic or early Bronze Age date is probable, placing them within a well documented group focused on the major mortuary/ritual complex at Octagon Farm (see below).

The upper fills of the ditches contained Iron Age material originating from an adjacent settlement whose major elements were post hole structures and a substantial pit alignment. There was no evidence for Romano-British activity other than a few isolated sherds, and presumably settlement had shifted westwards to the Peartree Farm site. Re-occupation occurred during the early Saxon period, as shown by two sunken floored buildings with scattered associated pits. There was a further hiatus until the Saxo-Norman period when, just to the east of the early Saxon focus, a small compound was established containing at least one post-built hall and subsidiary structures. Evidence for iron working was also recovered for this period. Settlement during the later medieval period shifted back westwards, with the site of a farmstead probably indicated by enclosures, pits and a timber-lined well.

Bunyans and Manor Farms

Along much of the route the bypass construction has been embanked over existing topsoil, minimising the amount of ground disturbance. In these areas archaeological excavation has been carried out only along the 5 m wide strip of the roadside drainage ditches. Bunyans Farm and Manor Farm are two adjacent sites, both dealt with in this fashion. While such small scale interventions produced limited results in comparison with the open area sites, they were nonetheless useful for identifying areas of activity and for contributing information about the implications of future development in the area. Both sites produced features and material of Iron Age date, probably associated with the extensive crop marks just to the north of the road corridor. In addition, a group of large quarry-like pits of middle Saxon date were excavated at Manor Farm, related to an important previously undetected settlement site.

Bumpy Lane

Two areas were opened up at Bumpy Lane: the eastern, closest to the A600, produced evidence for Neolithic occupation in the form of scattered pits, similar to the types of evidence recently uncovered at Cassington, Oxon. A scatter of Iron Age features including hearths testified to later settlement; Iron Age field boundaries were re-cut during the Roman period to form the major axis along which medieval ridge and furrow was later aligned. Within the smaller area to the west a limited amount of Bronze Age material was recovered, with the majority dating to the Iron Age; settlement features and three phases of enclosures were visible. Clearly these early phases of activity, perhaps ephemeral in nature, had been subject to substantial disturbance from agricultural activity; no structures survived but enough evidence was recovered to indicate substantial episodic occupation over time.

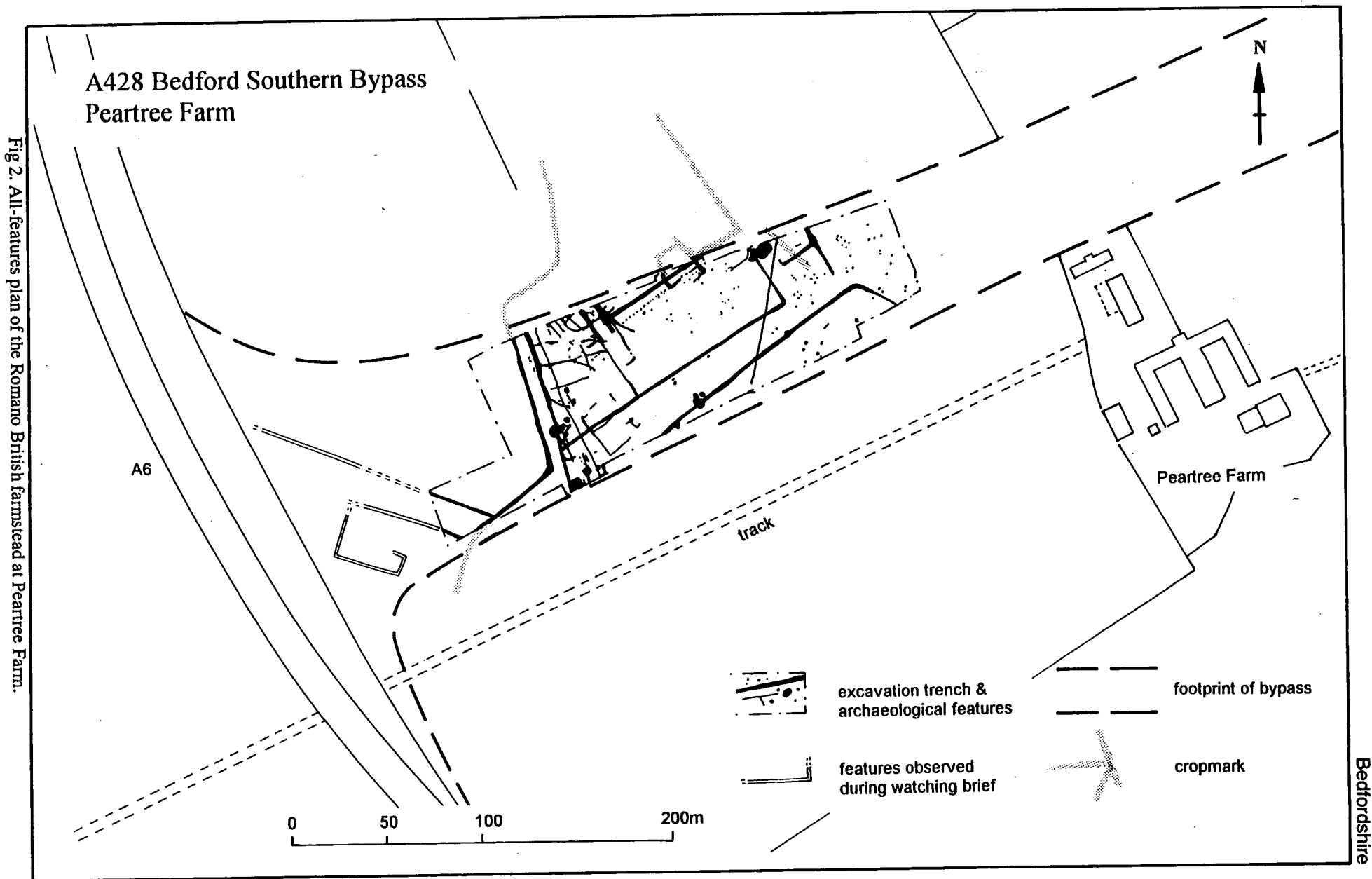


Fig 2. All-features plan of the Romano British farmstead at Pear tree Farm.

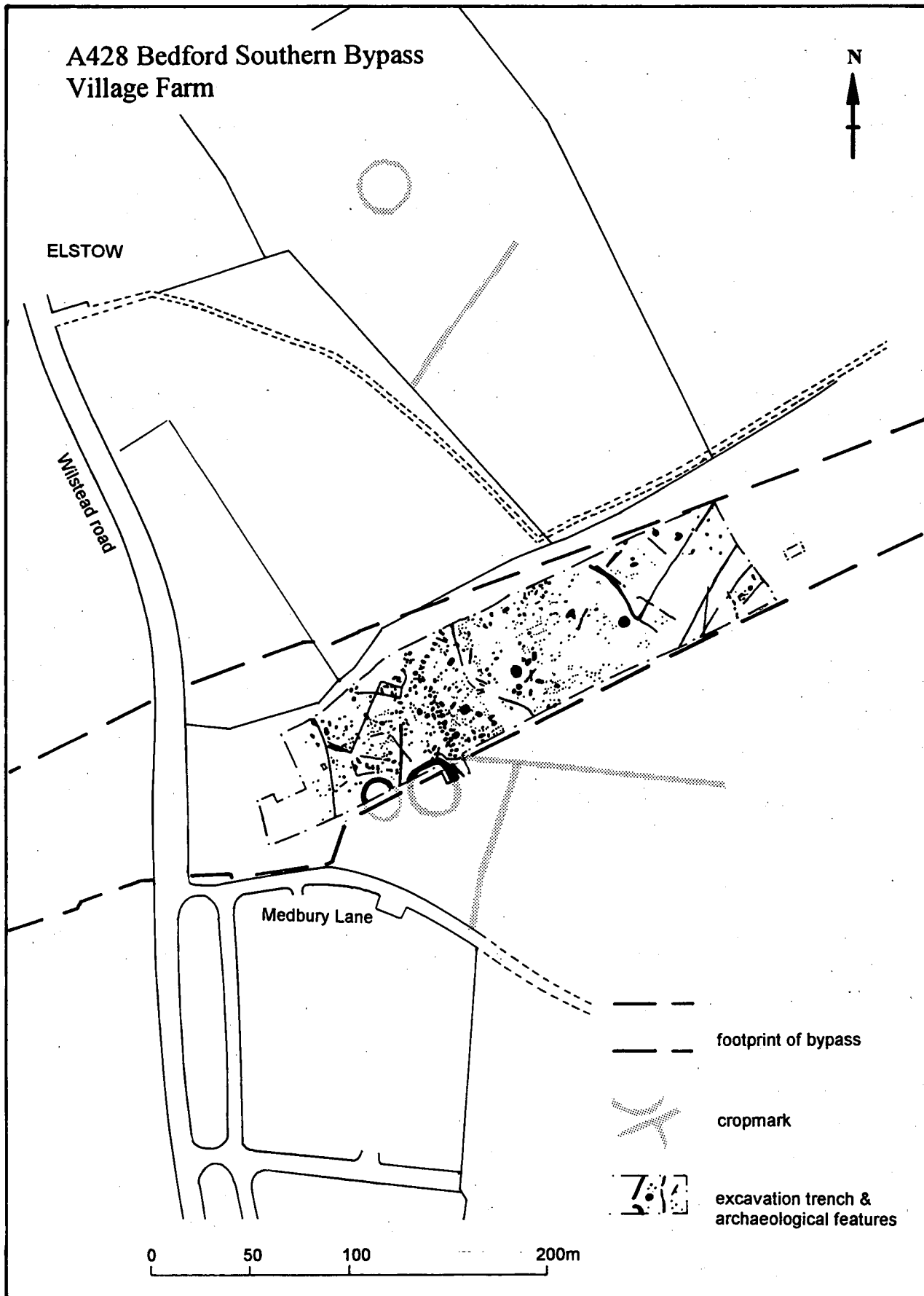


Fig 3. All-features plan of the multi-period site at Village Farm.

Harrowden

Excavated in response to the threat to the well preserved earthworks of the shrunken medieval village, Harrowden in fact produced material mainly of Roman date. The earliest remains on site, a boundary ditch and some residual pottery, were of Iron Age date. These were succeeded by a network of linear ditches, pits and post-holes indicating a dense and complex arrangement of enclosures and settlement similar to that just to the north at Eastcotts (see below). While the width of the trenches (again investigations were limited to the drainage ditches) hindered definition of the overall pattern or form of the settlement, it was nonetheless clear that a Romano-British settlement of some complexity lay beneath the later medieval village. Little structural evidence was recovered, probably because the major enclosures investigated may have related to stock or infield cultivation. The present shrunken state of the village set within the earthworks clearly indicates a process of settlement shift, illustrated by a sequence in one trench where 12th/13th century settlement features were sealed by agricultural soil and a cobbled trackway of 14th/15th century date.

Eastcotts

One of the largest bypass sites, an excavation of 2.8 ha, Eastcotts lay some 500 m to the north-west of Harrowden. The earliest notable group of material comprised lithics of Mesolithic date; the mix of tools and debitage, while being residual, strongly indicated settlement. A single inhumation and nearby pit, both containing lithics, marked a site of ritual activity during the Neolithic. These place Eastcotts within the Neolithic/early Bronze Age ritual landscape extending at least between Village Farm and Octagon Farm. Linear ditches, poorly dated but probably prehistoric, may indicate the enclosure of that landscape and its transformation during the Bronze Age into one characterised by settlement. Two diffuse but definite concentrations of stratified and residual Iron Age material indicate marginal or temporary settlement.

The most significant period of occupation at Eastcotts, in terms of the level and complexity of material remains, was during the 1st - 4th centuries. The Romano-British settlement was clearly more extensive, running beyond the limits of excavation to the north and south, and no definitive statement on its form and development can be made, although the overall size of the Eastcotts settlement suggests a hamlet or loose conglomeration of individual farmsteads. Provisional analysis indicates the establishment in the 1st century of large sub-divided enclosures towards the eastern end of the site, with a steady drift westwards of occupation during the 2nd - 4th centuries. The shift of focus may have been due to rising water levels associated with the nearby Elstow Brook, and visible within the Ouse Valley as a more general phenomenon during the later Roman period (for instance at Warren Villas, *SMA* 21 (1991) 19, and also Robinson, 1992). Eventually most of the site became sealed beneath alluvium and this flooding may have caused its abandonment. During occupation a range of activities were represented including pottery manufacture, smithing and crop-processing. The few surviving structures were largely

post-built or apparently constructed on dwarf walls or pads.

Cardington Cross

Just to the east of Eastcotts work was undertaken prior to the main contract along the line of the Elstow Brook diversion. Tree clearance was well represented together with fragmentary evidence for late Iron Age/Romano-British activity. A Romano-British ditched boundary ran through the site from a nearby settlement; that it had been filled with alluvium in the later Roman period provided further evidence for the hydrological changes seen at Eastcotts.

Octagon Farm

This was the only site to be investigated along the eastern run of the bypass, most of which is to be embanked. The 30 scheduled sites at Octagon Farm ranging in date from the middle Neolithic to the Romano-British period were the primary stimulus to the overall project. Work concentrated upon evaluating and seeking to protect the Neolithic and Bronze Age enclosures and barrows which marked the focus of a ritual landscape extending along the Ouse Valley to east and west. Evaluation had highlighted the importance of the group (*SMA* 21 1991, 8-11) and mitigation measures were put in place to minimise disturbance during construction.

15 of the monuments were investigated by evaluation trenching, including mortuary and other enclosures, small cursuses and barrows; this data adds greatly to our understanding of their form and development. Investigations also made clear that the siting of the monuments was closely determined by the palaeotopography, most having been placed on islands between palaeochannels. Tree clearance may have been piecemeal at this stage, enough to accommodate the monuments, and in some cases trees might have been directly associated with the enclosures themselves (a similar association has been recorded at Irthlingborough, Northants - pers comm, J Humble). Later activity took the form of a rectilinear field system of possibly Early Iron Age date; it may be significant that this respected the barrows but not the earlier rectilinear enclosures.

Discussion

Linear development-led projects have many disadvantages for the investigation of landscapes. The transect is not archaeologically targeted, nor is it random, its route often having been chosen to avoid known sites. Within the road scheme, levels of intervention were dictated more by engineering concerns (such as the placing of embankments) than by research or conservation strategies which also had their impact. Nevertheless the result of the Bedford Southern Bypass project is much more than a catalogue of discrete sites. The range and variety of material that has been recovered from the area, from within a single environment, provides the basis of landscape study that will explore and analyse the development of the river valley in the Bedford area. Sites of all periods will contribute towards integrated regional studies which can both inform and be placed within a wider framework of national significance.

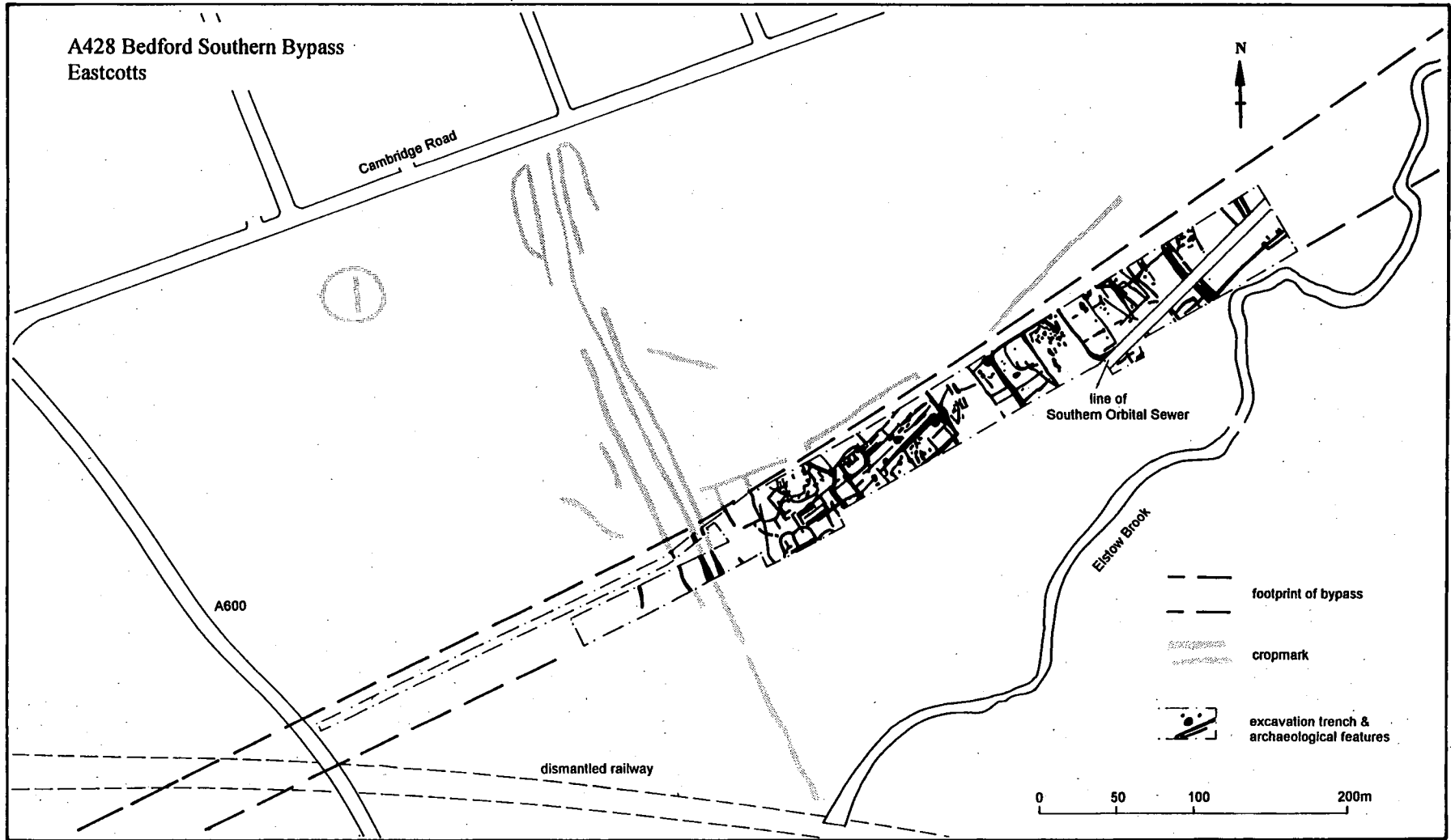


Fig 4. All-features plan of the Romano-British settlement at Eastcotts.

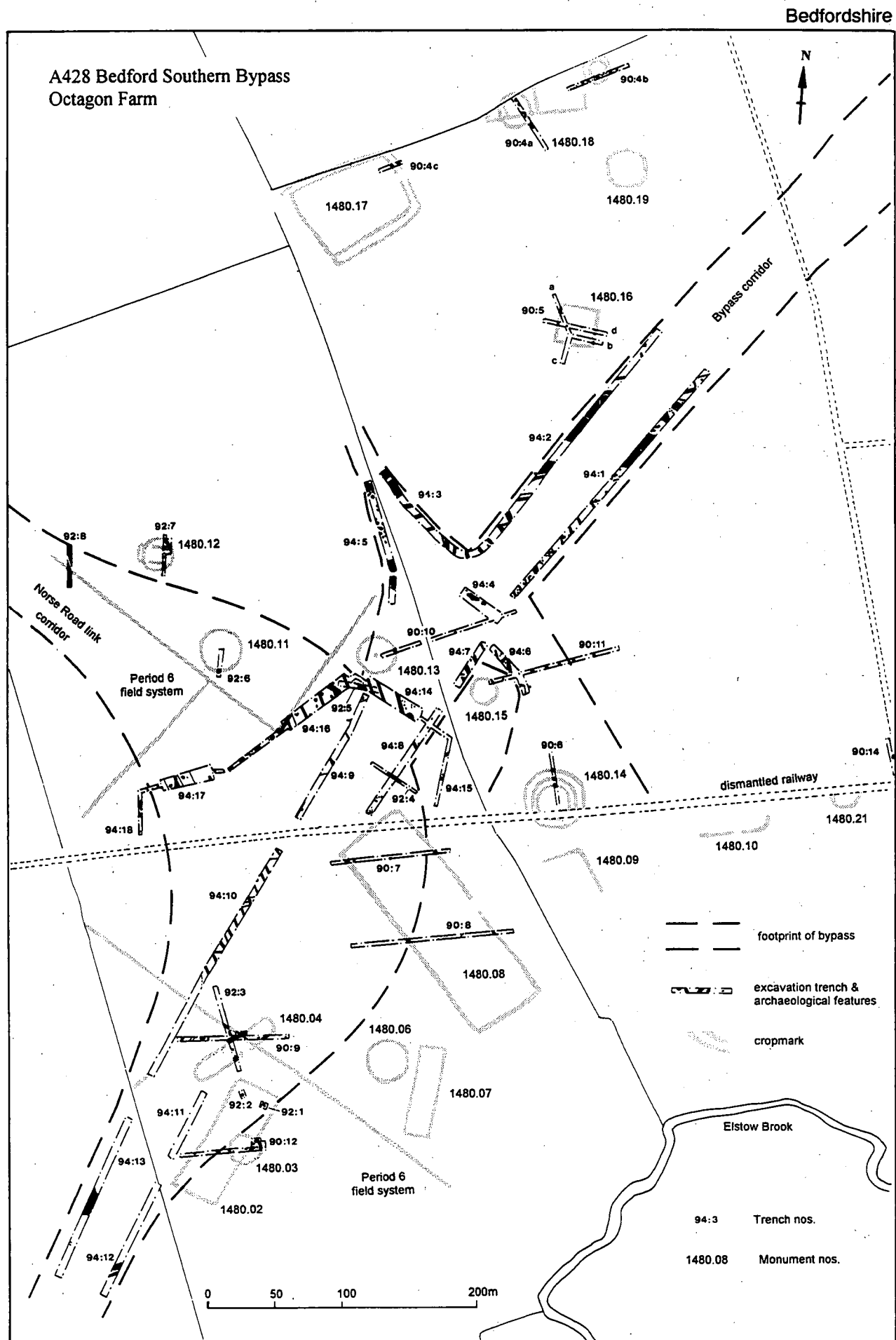


Fig 5. Plan locating the investigations at the monument complex of Octagon Farm.

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The sites described above will all contribute to period and thematic studies. The Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual remains at Village Farm, Eastcotts and more especially Octagon Farm belong to an important and well defined group of similar sites in the valleys of the Great Ouse (Godmanchester) the Nene (Irthlingborough and West Cotton), and the Upper Thames (Dorchester). Other work carried out within the Ouse valley over recent years, such as at Goldington (Mustoe, 1989) and Willington Quarry (SMA 21 1991, 11), and along the Bedford Southern Bypass, enhances the opportunity to place the Bypass sites in a landscape context.

The Iron Age material, most notable at Village Farm and Bumpy Lane, but ubiquitous across all the sites, provides important data for the scope and nature of settlement in the valley bottom during this period. The evidence from Village Farm and Manor Farm has enhanced understanding of the transition from Iron Age to Roman Britain in this key area for long-term continuity of settlement.

Two major Romano-British sites were investigated at Peartree Farm and Eastcotts with important material also emerging from Harrowden and Cardington Cross. Both Peartree and Eastcotts give contrasting views of rural settlements in relation to current regional and national models.

The later medieval pattern is represented at Village Farm where significant Saxo-Norman and later remains came to light. These have recently been further enhanced by work undertaken during the Bypass watching brief and on land immediately adjacent to the road corridor. At Harrowden the shrunken medieval village was further characterised. Both these sites will provide significant new data for developing regional research already significantly advanced by major medieval projects in Milton Keynes (Great Linford, Westbury and Tattenhoe) and Stratton near Biggleswade.

This investigation of a transect through the landscape has made possible the study of key themes concerning the interaction of man and the environment, including investigation of the early palaeotopography and the level and progress of forest clearance. Valuable comparisons can be made with recent work in the Upper Thames (Cassington and Yarnton), exploring differences in prehistoric occupation and land-use, especially between the flood plain, gravel terraces, and valley sides. The transition of the flood plain and lower lying areas from a landscape characterised by monuments to one characterised by linear boundaries, enclosures and settlement can be demonstrated at sites such as Peartree Farm, Village Farm, Eastcotts and Octagon Farm. Preliminary assessment suggests, however, that these developments were taking place here later in the Iron Age, whereas they have often been considered a Bronze Age phenomenon elsewhere.

Perceptions of the nature of the Iron Age landscape are changing with the increase in the quantity of data from excavation in the region. Much of the evidence from the

Bypass seems to have been peripheral to individual settlements: the scattered evidence recovered indicates the density of settlement within the flood plain areas may have been greater than that suggested by aerial photographs which tend to focus attention primarily on enclosed sites.

The transition from native Iron Age settlement patterns to more Romanised forms can be seen initially both in the greater number and greater diversity of types. Exploring the nature of this change will be one of the key issues during full analysis of the excavation results, as will be the scale and degree of penetration of Romanisation. Even within the settled south-east, major towns and core tribal areas may have had less economic and social influence over areas some distance from them. There are indications that this part of the Ouse valley may be an important area for studying the local effects of an Iron Age tribal boundary which was later adopted as the limit of the territorium focused on Verulamium.

The later Roman period provides another opportunity to investigate the changing relationship between land use and the environment. Elsewhere in the county, changes in the hydrology seem to reflect changes in settlement and land-use. Characterised by rising water levels, the evidence suggests the abandonment of the lower lying areas. There is scope for studying whether less intensive land-use during the later Roman period was the stimulus for these changes in the environment.

Themes concerned with individual sites within the landscape cover the development of Saxon and medieval settlement patterns. Important to this area of study is the way such patterns relate to earlier systems. In the Elstow area, excavations at Peartree Farm and Village Farm extend and complement an existing corpus of work largely focused on the medieval site of Elstow Abbey (Baker, 1971), but also including data from the prehistoric and Roman periods (Woodward, 1977). It is in this area especially that major shifts in settlement patterns can be explored. Studies along the Bypass will concentrate on the issues of continued or episodic occupation through exploring the factors controlling the choice of settlement site and the types of land use.

Current progress on assessment work for the Bypass project suggests that analysis (subject to a programme agreed with the Highways Agency) should be completed before the end of 1996 with publication as part of the Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph Series.

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Haynes Park Estate (TL 0741)

D Shotliff

Haynes Park Estate lies on the Greensand ridge, approximately five miles south-east of Bedford and immediately to the north of Haynes Church End. The construction of a new access road required the examination of a strip of land about 750 m in length and 50 m wide (Fig 6). A series of archaeological deposits were investigated, ranging in date from the late Iron Age to the Post-Medieval period (Fig 7). The work was funded by RSSB British Isles.

Several ditches and pits at the southern end of the study area produced a large assemblage of late Iron Age/early Romano-British ceramics, together with quantities of burnt stone and daub. No structural elements were identified, but an area of associated settlement presumably survives beyond the site limits. Similar evidence was recorded several years ago 450 m to the north-west during the construction of the Southern Feeder Gas Pipeline.

An apparently isolated late Romano-British corn drying oven was excavated. It appeared to have been deliberately demolished, following an accident that had resulted in its destruction by fire. Significant quantities of burnt daub and grain had been left within the oven and dumped into an adjacent pit. The charred grain was almost entirely spelt wheat, which requires parching prior to dehusking and further processing. The glumes removed from the grain had also been used to help fuel the drying oven. Glume-rich, charred material, accumulating down-slope of the structure, was clearly rake-out from the flue of the oven.

A dump of domestic debris in the disused oven contained a sizeable ceramic assemblage. Many of the individual sherds were large, from a limited number of vessels and in good condition, suggesting that the pottery had been discarded directly from a nearby settlement and not been subjected to redeposition and wider dispersal. It appears likely that a farmstead site exists in the immediate vicinity but its precise location remains unknown.

Colluvial build-up preserved part of the late Roman ground surface, which is currently the subject of soil micromorphological study and pollen analysis.

An area of lower-lying ground in the vicinity of a spring line preserved a series of waterlogged deposits, including timber hurdles, leather artefacts and a timber tank or cistern measuring 2 m x 2 m x 1 m. The latter was constructed of hewn timbers with half-lap joints at the corners. Despite marked differences in the quality of the carpentry between its upper and lower sections, preliminary tree ring dating indicates the entire structure was built in A.D. 1081.

Remains of four posthole buildings, two with central hearths indicating domestic occupation, may be contemporary with the timber tank. It is hoped that radiocarbon dating of charcoal samples and archaeomagnetic dating of one of the hearths will provide confirmation. The remains of a field system, in the form of a series of plough furrows running parallel to known boundary ditches, may also be associated with the medieval settlement of Haynes Church End.

A variety of Post-Medieval garden features was recorded to the south of Haynes Park House. By correlating these with a series of estate maps, dating from 1676 onwards, it will be possible to reconstruct the development of the garden landscape.

Kempston Manor (TL 0247)

Jackie Crick

An archaeological excavation was carried out on a site adjacent to Kempston Manor, in advance of the planned construction of new offices for the Institute of Legal Executives. An initial evaluation of the site in January 1994 led to the discovery of medieval remains including structural evidence suggesting the presence of a Saxo-Norman manor. In the following October, full excavation along the footings of the proposed construction identified six periods of activity ranging in date from the Mesolithic to Post-Medieval periods.

The site lies on the western side of Kempston, 150 m south of the river Great Ouse at 30 m OD. The underlying geology comprises gravels overlain by loamy drift, on which argillaceous brown earths had formed.

Before the Norman Conquest the manor of Kempston, together with that of Potton, was a noted estate centre of the earldom of Tostig. By 1086 it had passed to William the Conqueror's niece, Countess Judith. Whilst Potton was known as Judith's *proprio* or main manor, Domesday records Kempston as a valuable holding. The exact location of Countess Judith's manor house is uncertain but documentary sources suggest it may have been on or near the site of the present manor house. In 1237 the lord of the manor, John Le Scot, died childless. To solve the problem of succession the manor was divided into three; the site of the present manor (known as Kempston Daubeney) was given to the elder sister of John Le Scot. The seniority of Kempston Daubeney suggests this was formerly the site of Countess Judith's manor house (Wood, 1984). Its medieval buildings were demolished in 1815 and replaced by the present house, to the west of which was a 17th/18th century walled garden containing the area examined.

The earliest evidence of human occupation identified by the excavation comprised an irregular pit, sealed beneath a layer of alluvium. The fill of this contained Mesolithic worked flint, including debitage and tools. Further concentrations of worked flint were recovered from the natural brick-earth and its interface with the alluvium. Similar assemblages are

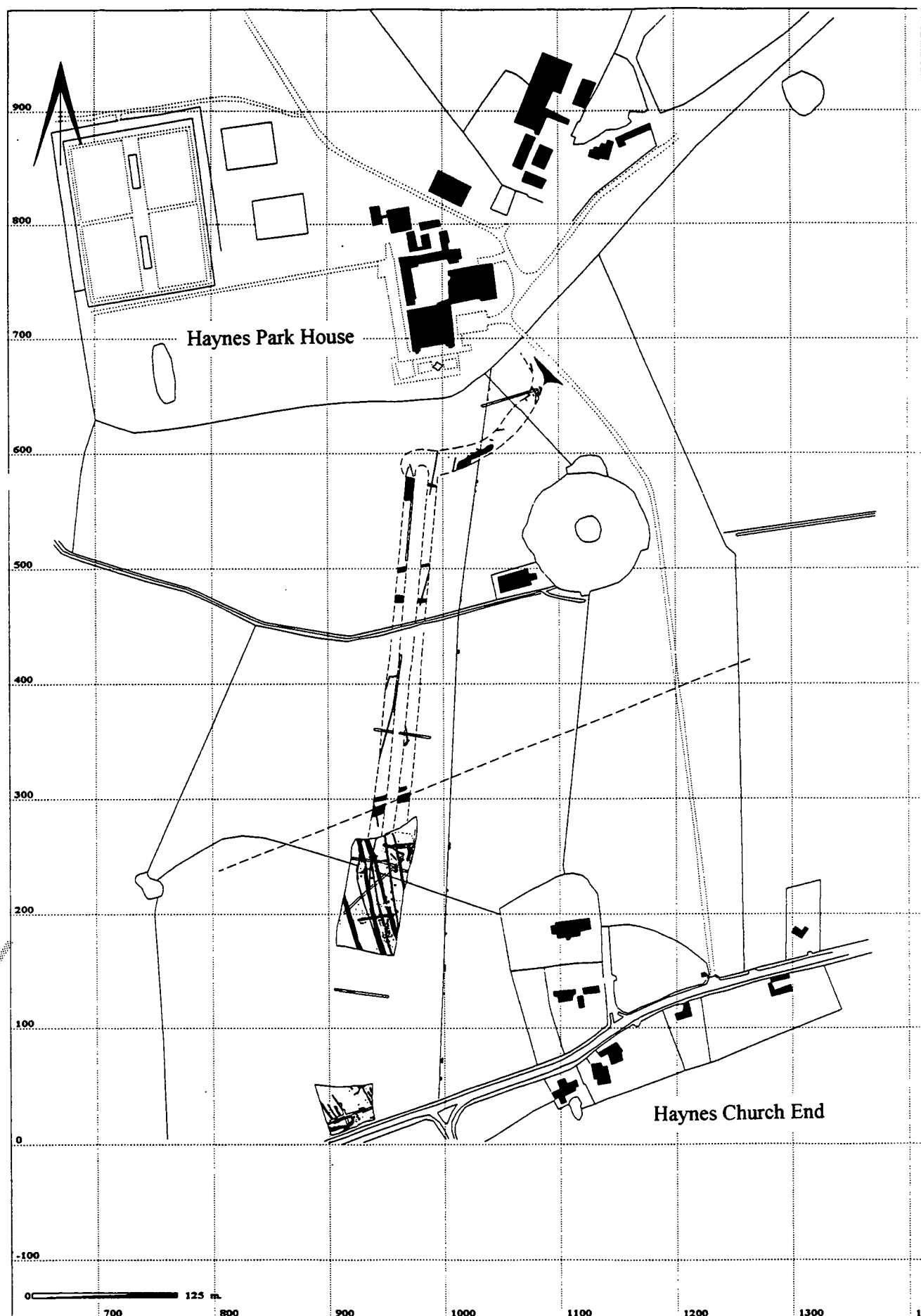


Fig 6. Plan of features excavated along the line of the access road.

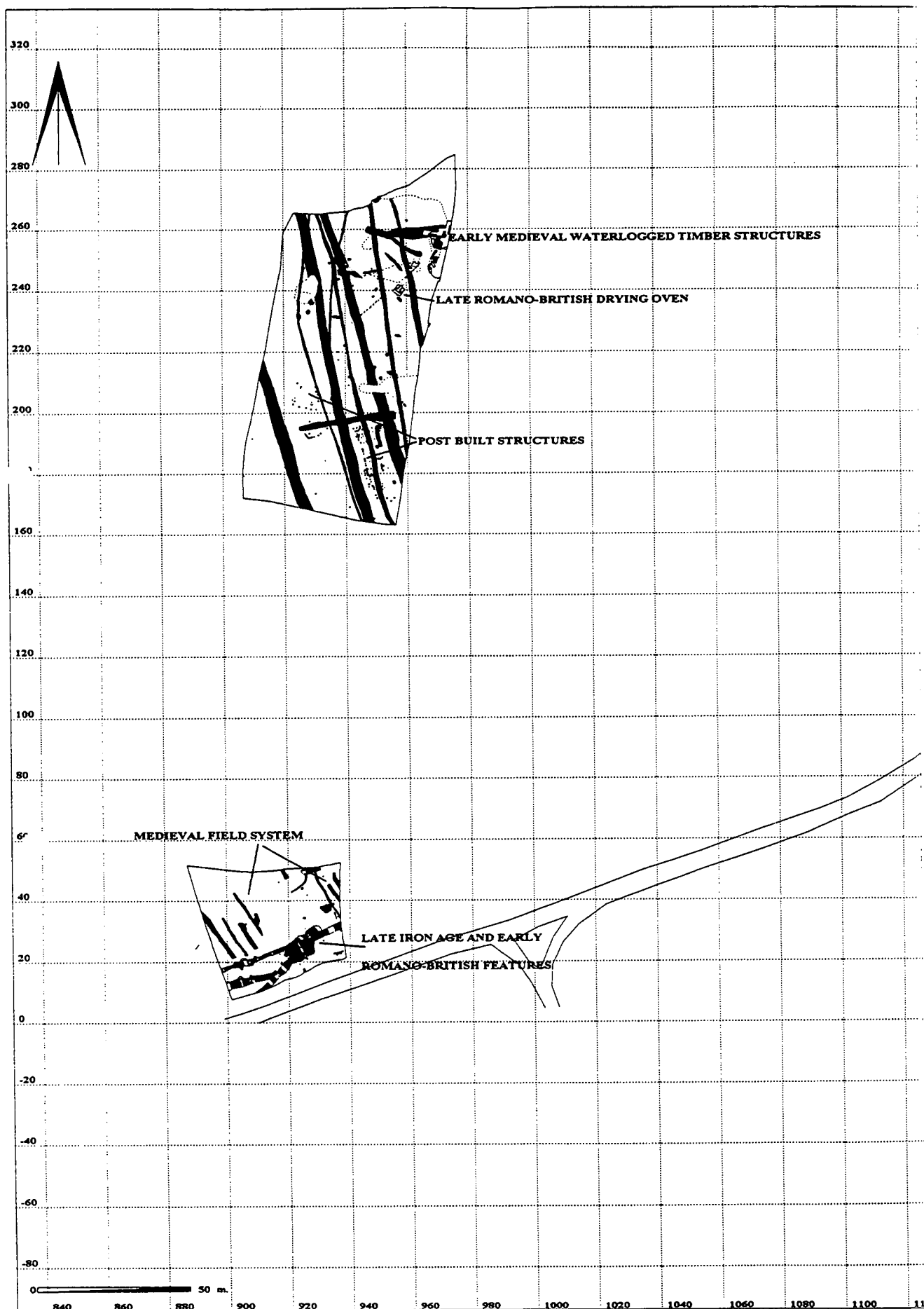


Fig 7. The main areas of investigation at the southern end of the road.

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commonly known from the gravels around Bedford.

Later prehistoric activity was evident from a curving boundary ditch on the west of the site. An episode of alluvial deposition during this period necessitated the recutting of the ditch on a straighter alignment.

There was a hiatus of human activity between the later prehistoric and the early Saxon periods. The remains of two shallow gullies and residual domestic pottery assemblages suggests the presence of local settlement activity during the early - mid Saxon period.

The main period of occupation began in the Saxo-Norman period with the erection of three timber structures and the cutting of several boundary ditches. The ditches are predominantly orientated north-south and east-west and are of several phases of construction.

The majority of pottery comprises a domestic assemblage. However, a large proportion of a Stamford ware pitcher, together with a piece of roofing from a ditch in the west of the site, suggest the presence of a high status site close by. The remains of three timber buildings were excavated. The largest lay in the south of the site and comprised the partial remains of two walls, measuring east-west 10.1 m and north-south 7.2 m. It was at least two bays in length with an aisle along the east wall. The construction technique using post holes, sill beams and slots was based on the Anglo-Saxon unit of measure, the 5.03 m rod. A second timber building of similar construction and plan-form lay in the north-west corner of site, aligned north-west/south-east. The third structure, much of which lay beyond the western limit of the excavation area, comprised part of a lean-to structure on the north-east end of a larger building. The lack of associated finds, such as nails, tiles and stone, suggests these were wholly timber structures, subsidiary buildings within the manor complex.

The area of Saxo-Norman activity was abandoned during the 12th - 14th centuries when the settlement focus shifted, perhaps towards the site of the present manor. A subsequent build-up of brown earth associated with spade cultivation suggests this area was subsequently used for agricultural purposes.

Clustered close to the present house in the north of the site were the remains of several limestone wall foundations, corresponding to the position of the south-west wing of the Medieval house as shown on a map of 1804. This part of the manor grounds was later laid out as gardens with several gravel pathways traversing the site. Earlier this century it was acquired for use as a council depot and the whole area sealed beneath a thick layer of rubble prior to the construction of several buildings.

A full report of these excavations is to be published in a forthcoming volume of *Bedfordshire Archaeology*.

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A Late Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement at Norton Road, Stotfold (TL 2236)

Sean Steadman

Investigation of an Iron Age and Romano-British farmstead at Norton Road, Stotfold began in November 1994 and was completed at the end of March 1995. Area excavation revealed a complex sequence of enclosure ditches, field boundaries, and other features relating to settlement, ritual and industrial activity.

Evidence of late Iron Age activity was mainly confined to the west of the site, close to the present day Norton Road. A penannular drainage gully with a north-facing entrance, located within a sub-square enclosure, was tentatively identified as a former occupation area in the south of the site. A smaller ring gully, a square four-post structure and several truncated post-holes were also discovered in this area. At least two partially articulated animal skeletons, probably cows or oxen, were discovered within an internal boundary ditch together with a number of near-complete wheel-made pots which may represent some form of ritual activity.

An area of possible industrial activity represented by a series of straight-sided pits was discovered to the north of the occupation area. The pits may have been lined although no evidence of any lining survived. Few finds were recovered from these pits and environmental analysis is currently being undertaken in an attempt to identify their function.

Towards the northern end of the site, a cremation burial was discovered within a circular pit which appeared to occupy the centre of a sub-square enclosure defined by a shallow gully. This high status burial comprised a quantity of cremated human bone accompanied by a pedestal urn and three other late Iron Age wheel-made vessels. An iron disc, a perforated whetstone and the skeleton of a pig were also discovered within the pit. Secondary inhumations aligned roughly north-south were cut through the three surviving sides of the enclosure and a crouched inhumation was discovered in the base of a pit where the eastern arm of this enclosure would probably have been placed. A second crouched inhumation with a coiled bronze ring adorning its right thumb was discovered within a penannular ditch located to the south-west of the sub-square enclosure. Later activity on the site had cut away most of this ditch and almost completely destroyed its interior.

This burial complex was partially destroyed by the construction of a ditched enclosure dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Only the western arm of this enclosure was discovered within the excavated area, the northern and southern limits of the enclosure having been destroyed by modern development. A funnel-shaped entrance-way with in-turned ditch terminals was identified in the north of the site. An L-shaped ditch immediately outside the entrance may have defined a driveway leading into the enclosure from the south-west. This entranceway was subsequently closed off by a single ditch and may have been replaced by an entrance further to the south. A number of irregular

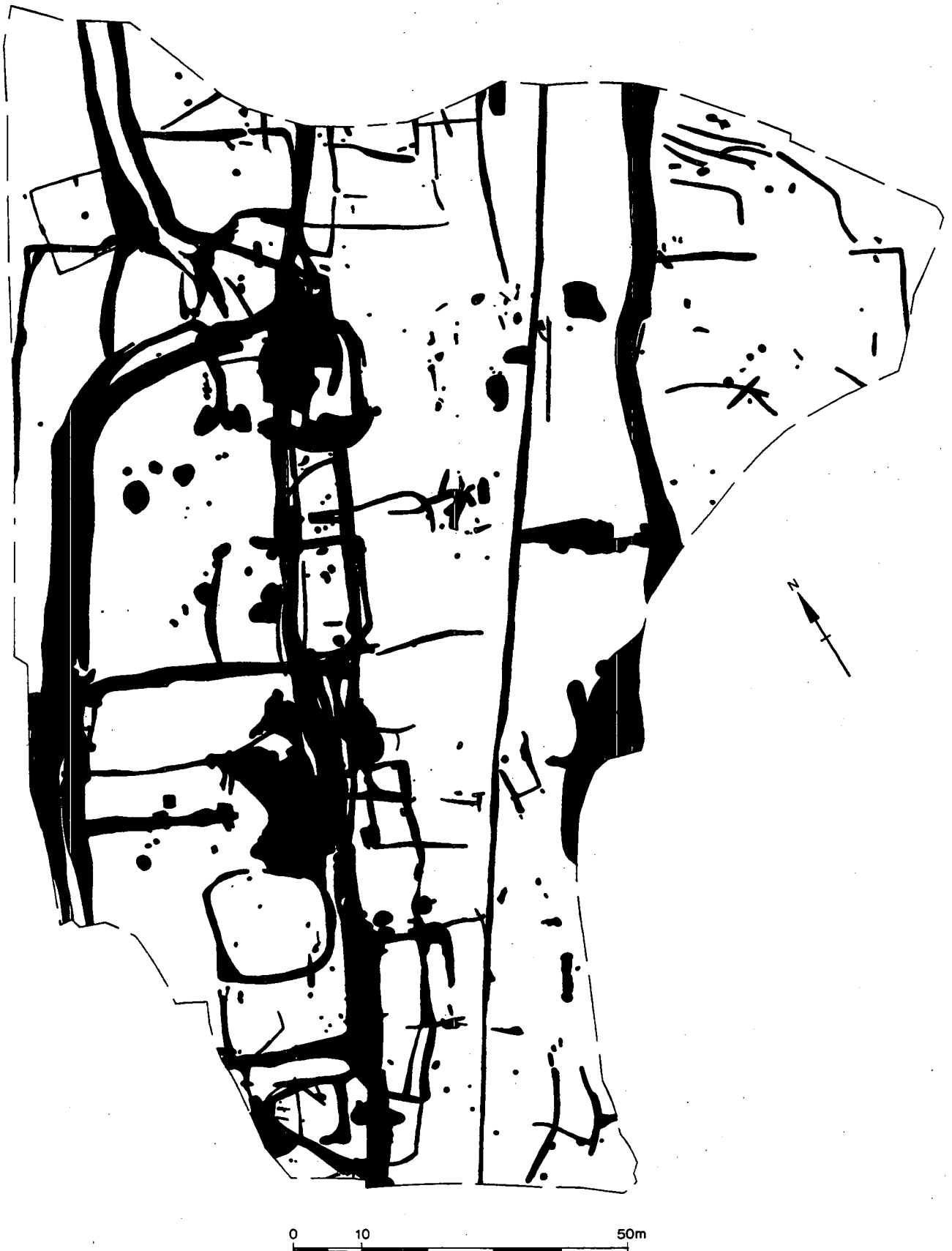


Fig 8. A Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Norton Road, Stotfold.

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sub-square enclosures located within the main enclosure were probably associated with stock control. A number of inter-cut pits, which may have been the result of quarrying in the Roman period, extended over an area of approximately 250 m² in the centre of the site. Few finds were recovered from these pits which appeared to share a common infilling suggesting that they were open at the same time.

The site appears to have been remodelled and extended eastward at some stage with a series of regular sub-square enclosures aligned on a narrow boundary ditch which runs the entire length of the site. Little if any structural evidence was identified within these enclosures, but a number of stone surfaces overlying worn areas in the natural subsoil were discovered in the east of the site. Several bronze coins and brooches and part of an iron snaffle bit were recovered from the silty layers overlying these surfaces.

Further to the south, a small hearth was discovered within the remains of a possible sill-beam structure; a series of intercut pits, which had been backfilled with domestic refuse, may have functioned as latrines. A bronze nail cleaner and a number of near complete Roman pots were recovered from the infilling of these pits. The remains of a possible clay oven were discovered within a thick ashy deposit infilling the top of the silted-up Iron Age enclosure ditches in the south of the site.

Two further inhumation burials discovered in the north-east of the site suggest that occupation in the area had extended beyond the end of the Roman period. One of the burials was accompanied by an iron blade and a bronze buckle of probable 6th/7th century date, while the other was accompanied by an iron spike and a perforated tooth. They were both aligned roughly east-west with the head at the eastern end.

Stratton, Biggleswade (TL 2044)

D Shotliff

Trial trench evaluation work on Phase 2 of the Stratton Residential Development Area has added to our knowledge of this extensive deserted rural settlement. Of particular importance is the identification of an area of early Saxon occupation. In total, a further 9.5 ha of archaeologically sensitive land have been located (Fig 9).

Two isolated early Iron Age cremations were recovered. As with the earlier Phase 1A area excavation (SMA 21-23) no other extensive, pre-Saxon, deposits were identified, despite dense early prehistoric and Roman settlement elsewhere in the Ivel valley.

Zone 1 of the study area contained extensive early Saxon settlement remains, with a variety of building types and structures, including two sunken floored buildings. This area of the settlement appears well preserved and has not been badly disturbed by later occupation.

During the Saxo-Norman and medieval periods settlement shifted eastwards into Zones 2 and 3. The landscape appears to have been laid out in respect of a north-south running trackway. A rectilinear series of ditched boundaries enclosed individual farmsteads on both sides of the trackway. Part of the settlements field system overlaid the abandoned Saxon settlement to the west. Again, a variety of buildings and structures are represented, including a circular dovecote. The latter may be indicative of a manorial establishment, possibly based in the moated site at the south-eastern extremity of the study area. The Saxo-Norman and medieval remains are a direct continuation of the settlement investigated during the Phase 1A area excavation.

During the late medieval period settlement shifted further eastwards and was principally located in Zone 3. The system of ditched farmstead enclosures remained in use, but the post-in-ground buildings were replaced by timber framed structures with gravelled floor surfaces. Again, a similar pattern of development in the late medieval period was recorded during the Phase 1A area excavation.

Sandy, Warren Villas Quarry (TL 1847)

A Maul

Further excavations at Warren Villas Quarry continued in 1994. An area of approximately 0.75 ha was cleared of topsoil to reveal a series of linear and curvilinear ditches, many pits and structural elements including rectangular post built buildings, fence-lines, possible hearths and beam slots. Sampling of the archaeological deposits identified allowed definition of a sequence focusing on the Iron Age and medieval periods. The absence of recognisable Roman evidence suggests the area was agricultural land at that time.

Of particular interest were a series of curvilinear ditches, probably demarcating the western side of a large Iron Age enclosure. Successive recutting suggests a boundary shifting marginally to the west. Within the enclosure, and partially truncating the first two phases of boundary ditch, were a group of pits probably utilised as domestic rubbish pits, though their original function may have been for storage.

Outside the enclosure a small rectangular timber structure was uncovered which may date to the same period as the enclosure, subject to the results of further work on the ceramics currently in progress.

The Saxon and Saxo-Norman periods were characterised by the cutting and replacement of possible enclosure ditches. Settlement activity was represented by three rectangular post-built structures: two of them which had suffered later truncation may represent animal stockades or short lengths of fencing. Other occupational activity took the form of rubbish pits, isolated postholes and possible hearths. Uncovered at the base of one of the rubbish pits was the bottom part of a wooden bladed shovel or spade (Morris, 1980, 1981).

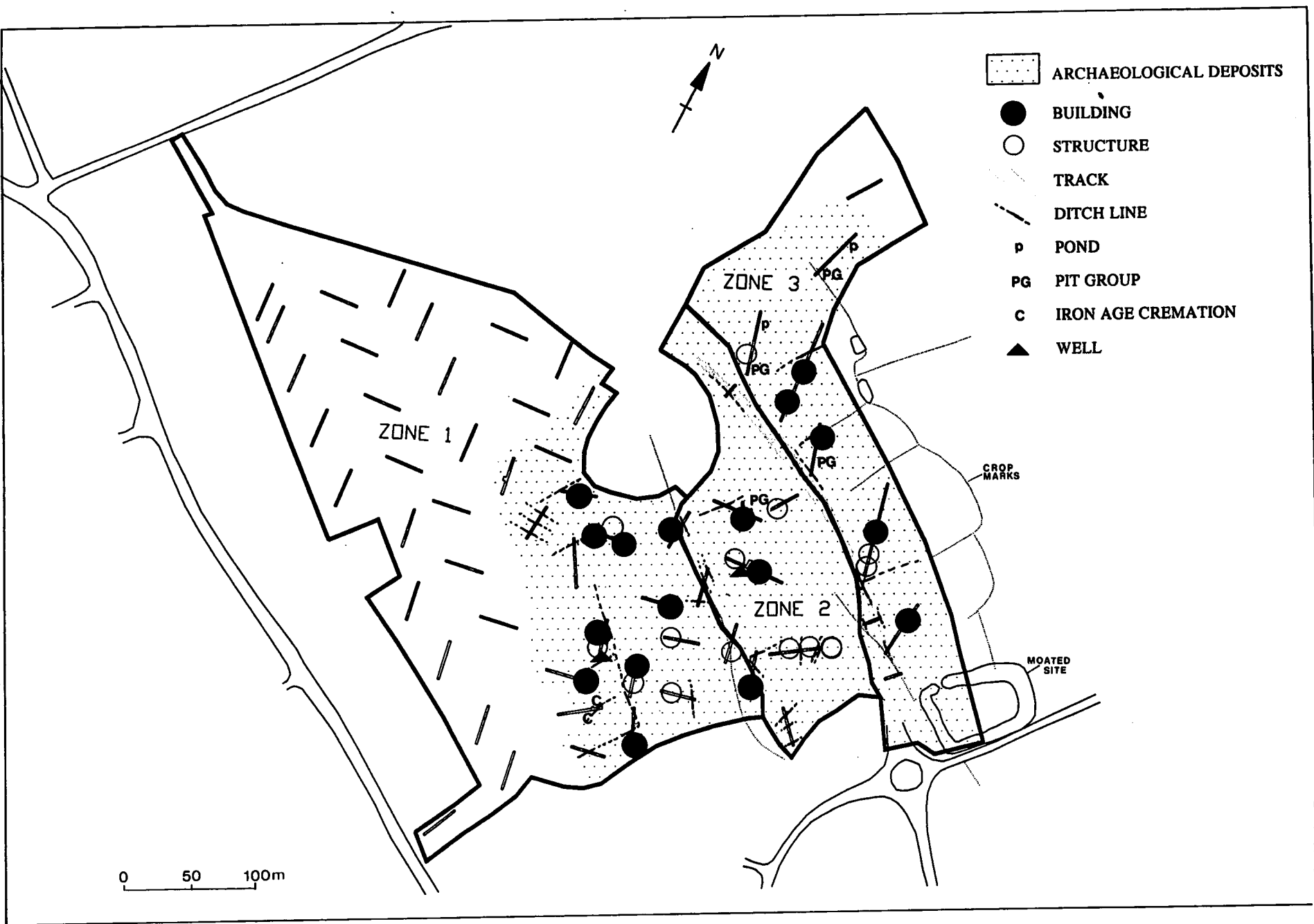


Fig 9. Plan locating trial trenches with archaeological interpretation.

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These excavations identified a focus of settlement for the evidence of flax retting and fishing recovered in previous work on the banks of the Ivel (SMA 24 1994 6).

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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

Summary compiled by Melanie Gauden from reports written by Wessex Archaeology staff

Thurleigh Airfield (TL 055 605).

A desk-based assessment was carried out in September 1994 of land at Thurleigh Airfield, Bedfordshire.

No Scheduled Ancient Monuments lie within the area of the airfield, but within the area, at least two settlements probably dating from Medieval times are likely to have been obscured or removed by the construction of the airfield. As a range of archaeological sites of different periods have been found in the surrounding area, it is probable that the airfield site has potential for archaeological remains.

Further evaluation of the site would be needed to determine the depth of below ground disturbance caused during the construction of the Airfield and to assess the extent and preservation of any medieval settlement sites within and adjacent to the airfield. In addition it is suggested consideration should be given to provision for emergency recording of finds of archaeological material from other periods.

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

In 1994 the Society opened the Les Matthews Archaeology Centre at its headquarters at 5 Winfield Street, Dunstable. Since then some 600 local school children have had an opportunity to experience 'hands-on' archaeology.

The following are summaries of the reports in *Manshead Journal* 34.

Priory Middle School, Dunstable

During 1993 the Society once again carried out a small excavation in the grounds of the School, adjacent to the Augustinian Priory Ancient Monument. This resulted in the

finding of a Post-Medieval lane along the back of the properties on the east of High Street South. In common with other excavations in the area extensive small hollows were found in the natural chalk surface: also in common with other neighbouring areas there was considerable soil build up.

Priory Church interpretation boards

The Society was asked to excavate three holes on behalf of Dunstable Town Council for the placement of 'Interpretation' boards about the Priory Church. Each board depicts and gives a brief history and interpretation of the Priory as it would have been seen from the view point of each board in the Middle Ages. This operation took place over the weekend 29-30th January 1994. The boards were installed the following day.

The holes were each one metre square by one deep. Stone rubble from the Priory destruction was found but no structures. In common with all excavations so far carried out in this quarter of town a ground level build-up was evident; in two of the holes this was shown to have taken place wholly, or in part, in the nineteenth century.

Fieldwalking

During 1993/4 the Society walked the following areas.

An area of c 1 km² was fieldwalked at **Turnpike Farm**, on land between the A5 (Watling Street) and Dunstable Road, Caddington, Fig 10 A-F. The line of the proposed Dunstable bypass runs along the foot of the scarp slope at Turnpike Farm (which has prompted the present survey in conjunction with surveys undertaken by the Bedfordshire Archaeological Field Unit).

A few worked flints of probable Mesolithic date (Fig 10 A) were found along the top of the scarp, suggesting activity along the ridge top, perhaps connected with the known Mesolithic site at Zouches Farm (Coleman, 1985). Concentrations of worked flint were noticeable along the ridge top, consistent with previous findings, as well as smaller scatters downslope and along the valley floor. Some examples are illustrated in Fig 11. Scatters of fire-fractured flints (Fig 10 F) may denote the location of prehistoric domestic sites.

Late Iron Age potsherds were found along the ridge with fire-fractured flint scatters and in association with finds of Roman material (Fig 10 C).

A previously identified Roman site (Fig 10 D) yielded further finds of potsherds, quernstone and fragments of tegula and imbrex.

A few Medieval sherds (Fig 10 E) were found around The Gatehouse and along the hillslope (an area of ploughed out lynchets) mainly of a thin gritty fabric and probably late Medieval period in date.

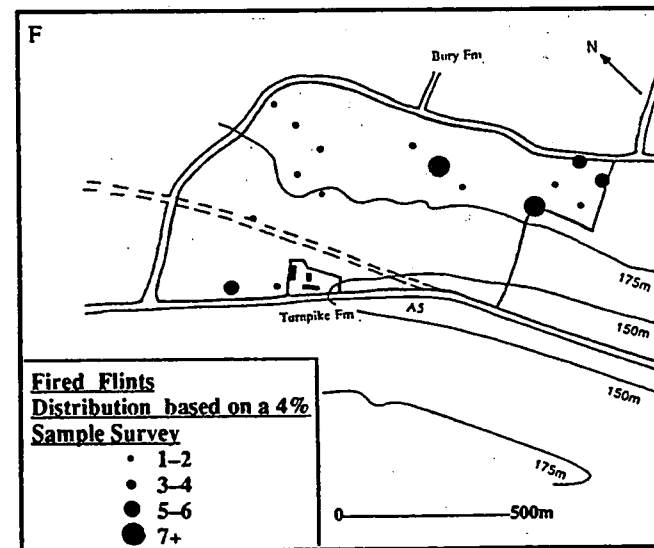
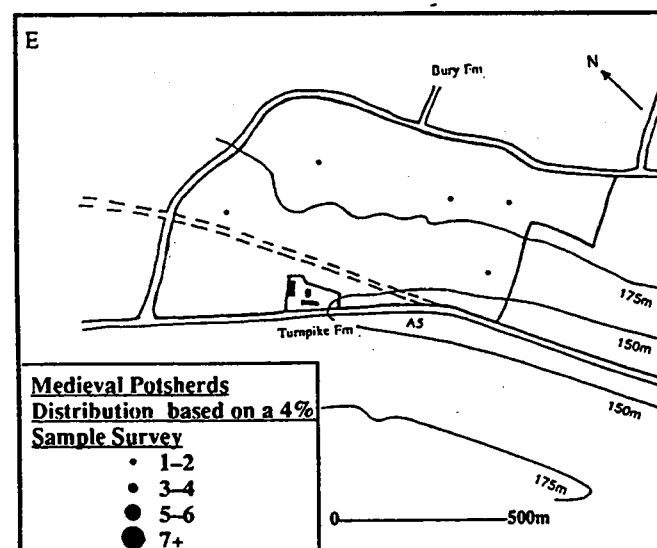
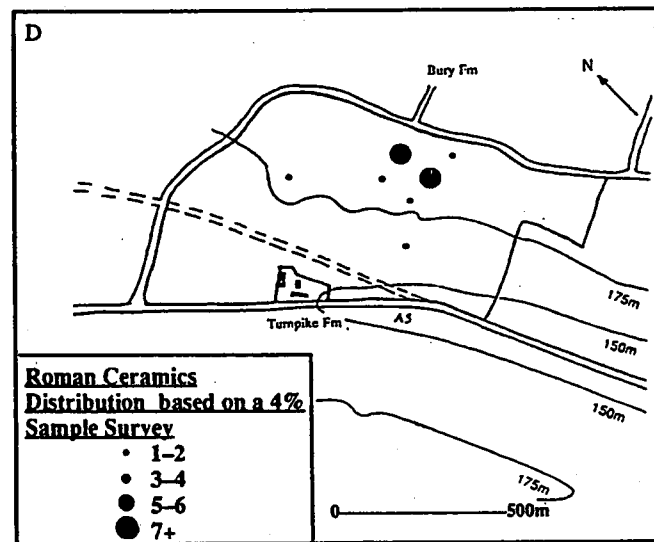
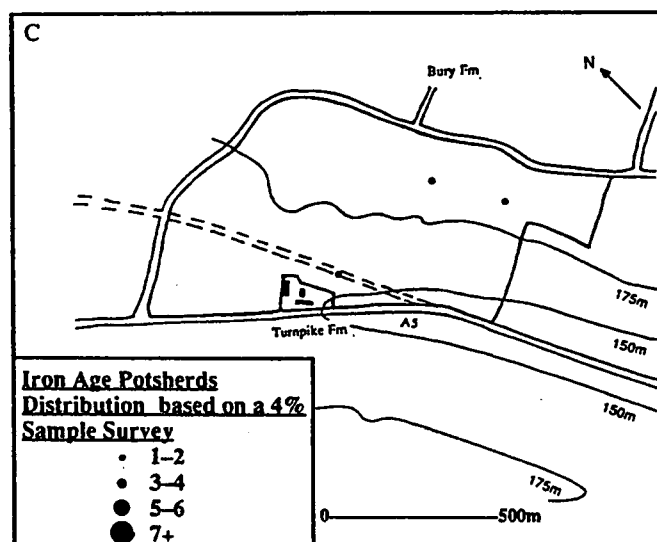
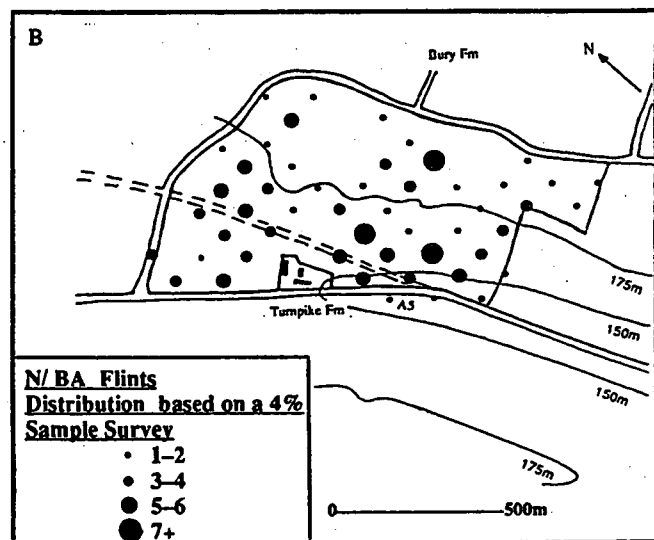
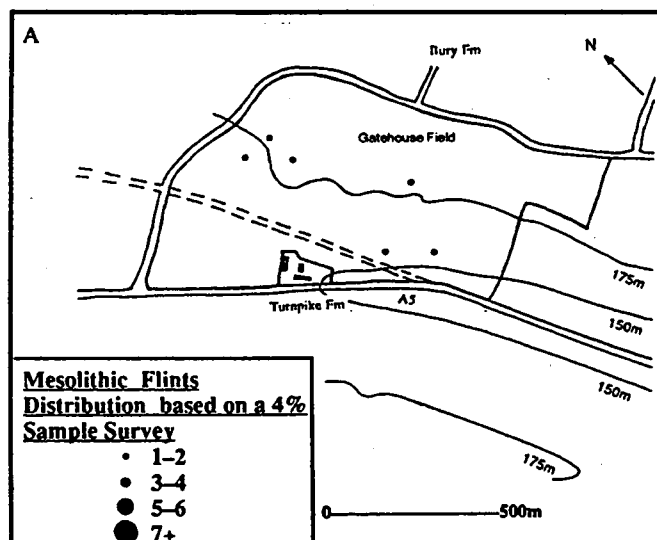
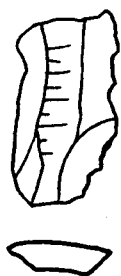
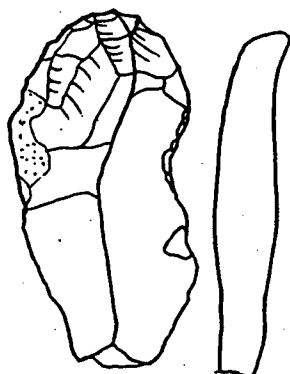


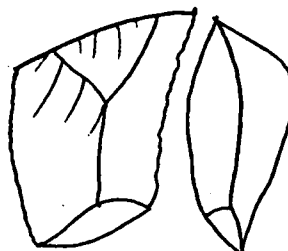
Fig 10. Turnpike Farm 1993, finds distribution maps.



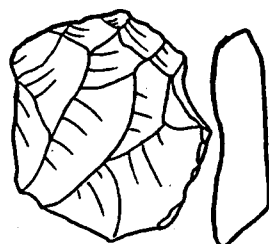
1 MESOLITHIC BLADE
PATINATED BLUE FLINT



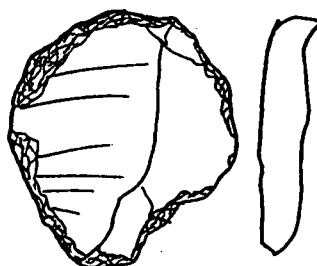
2 END SCRAPER
BLACK FLINT



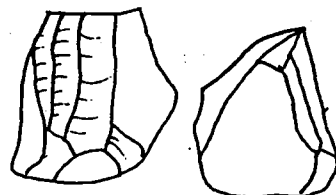
3 RETOUCED FLAKE
GREY FLINT



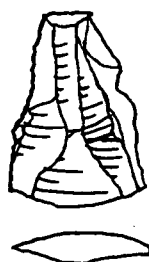
4 SCRAPER
PATINATED BLUE FLINT



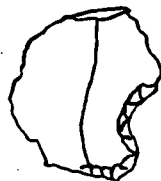
5 SCRAPER
BLACK FLINT
FIRE FRACTURED



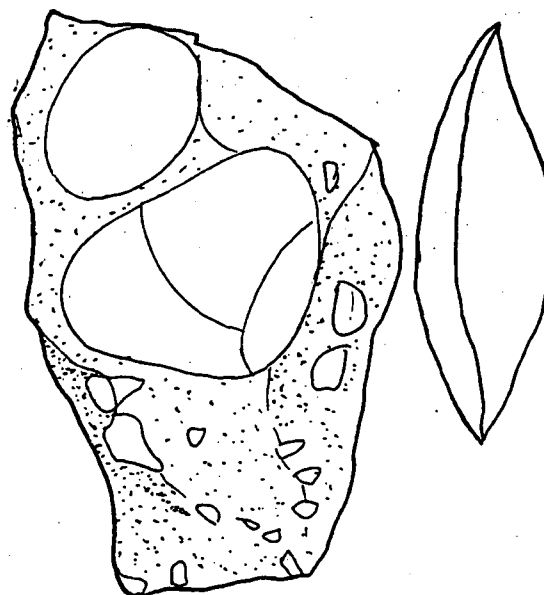
6 MESOLITHIC CORE
PATINATED BLUE FLINT



7 ARROWHEAD?
BLACK FLINT



8 NOTCHED FLAKE
BLACK FLINT



9 CONGLOMERATE FLAKE

Fig 11. Flints from Gatehouse Field, Caddington. Scale 2:3.

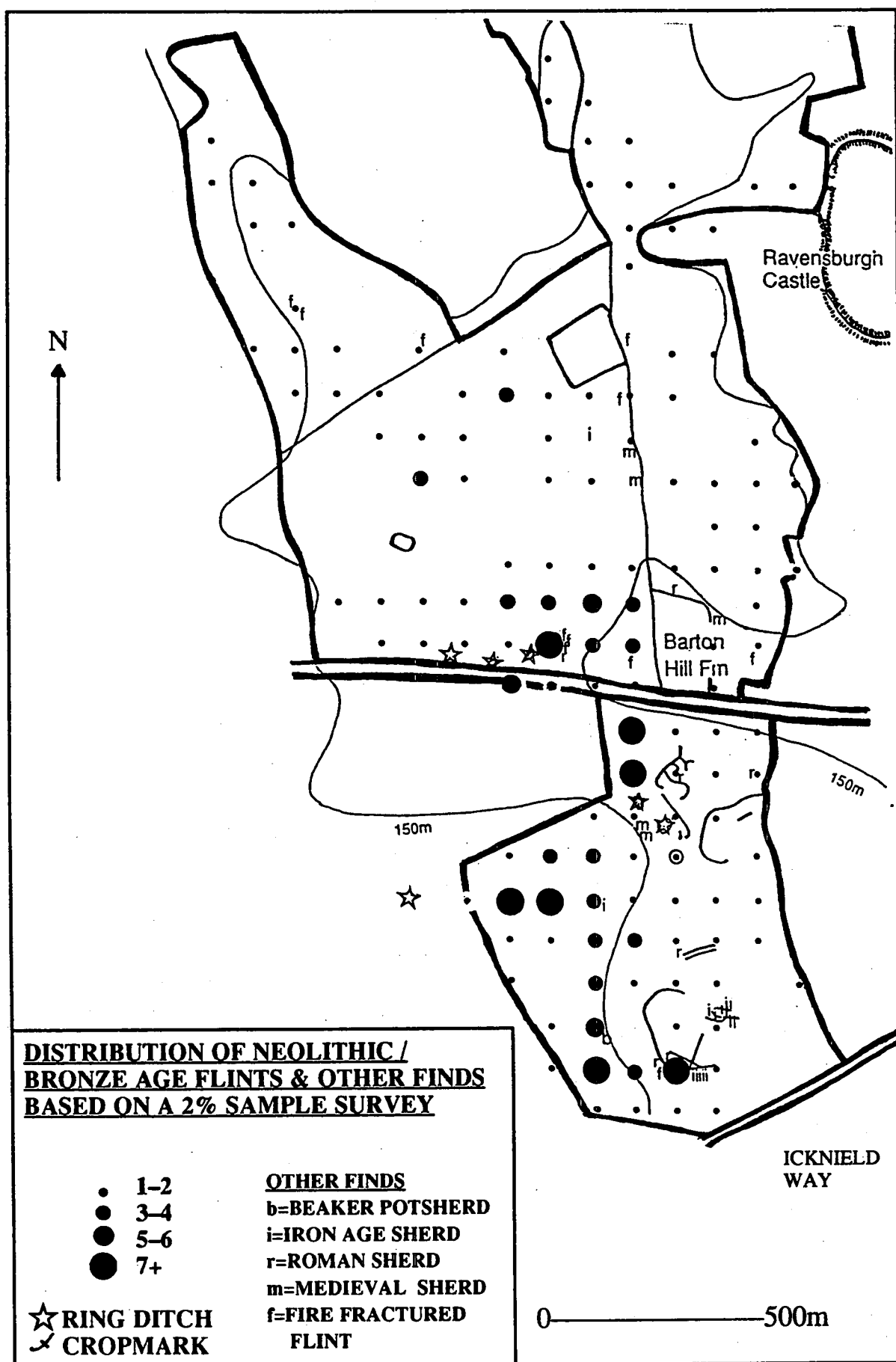


Fig 12. Barton Hill Farm 1993, finds distribution map.

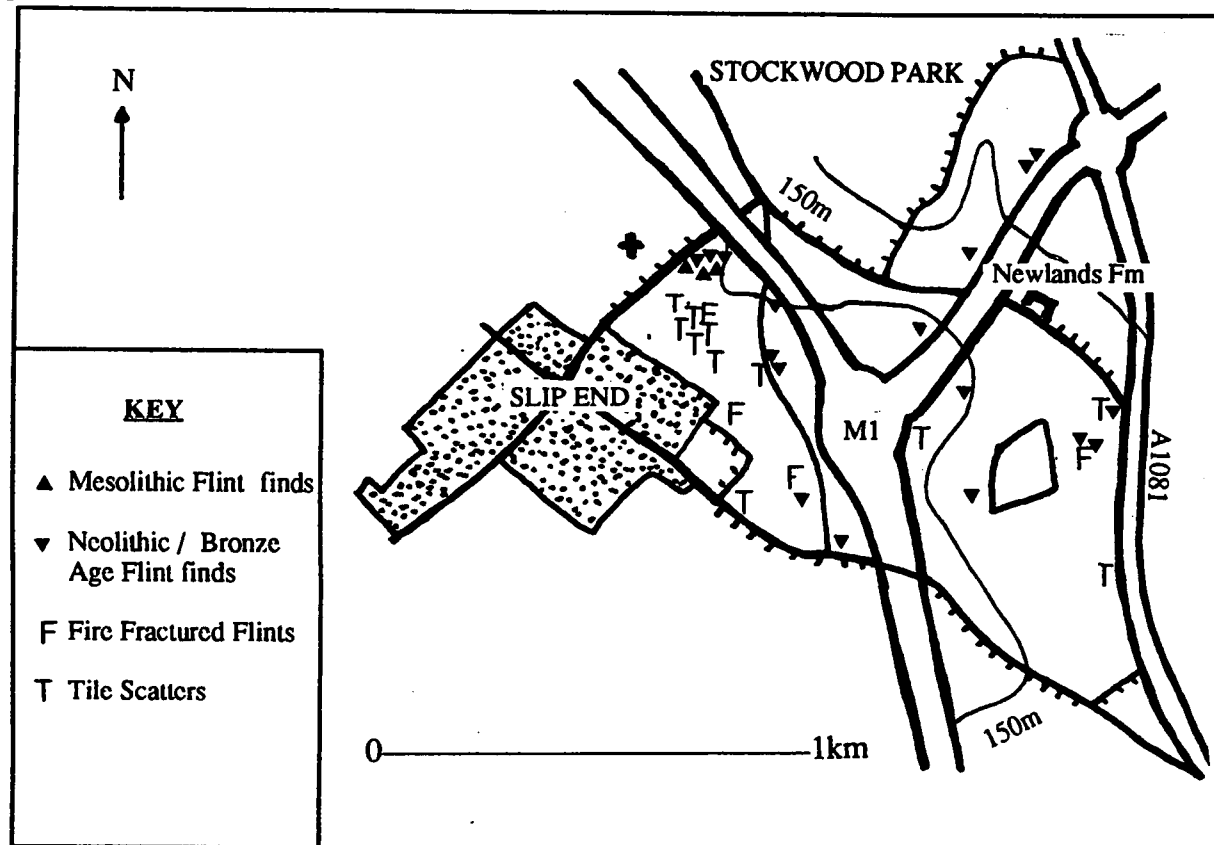


Fig 13. Location map of Newlands Farm, Slip End, Luton.

The survey has not indicated any sites of significance along the course of the proposed Dunstable bypass (eastern end); although the effects of colluviation could be obscuring potential valley floor sites.

We thank: Mr W Clarke for granting permission to fieldwalk at Turnpike Farm; Mr D Shotliff of the Beds County Archaeology Unit for additional information.

An area of some 2 km² was fieldwalked at **Barton Hill Farm**, by the writer, during March 1993. The method of survey was to linewalk at 50 m intervals (giving a 2% Sample). The results are shown in Fig 12, which also includes an area to the south of the Lilley Road to allow comparison with Hall's Survey of Barton Parish 1978 (Hall, 1991). The most significant finds were a number of worked flints found near Barton Hill Farm comparable with the denser flint concentrations identified by Hall and Martin (Martin, 1981; Hall, 1991). These flint scatters, including a few fire fractured flints, may indicate a domestic or activity site related to the various monuments (Dyer, 1962, 1974) of the later Neolithic-early Bronze Age period that are situated nearby (Fig 12). The dearth of Iron Age evidence supports the findings of Hall, and suggests a lack of settlement close to the Iron Age hillfort of Ravensburgh Castle.

Thanks to Mr B. Shaw of Barton Hill Farm and Mr H. Sheppard of Pond Farm Lilley for permission to fieldwalk their farmland.

Comparative gridwalking surveys were undertaken at **Bidwell** (Houghton Regis) and **Winch Hill Farm** (Luton). Both of these sites have been fieldwalked by the Society (Hudspeth, 1991) and the site at Bidwell has been the subject of limited excavation (Matthews, 1986). The large dense scatters at Bidwell are mainly around the excavation site with smaller clusters of tile and stone to the north and east of the site. How much this is due to the movement of material during subsequent cultivation is open to conjecture. The site is subject to the observed effect of good and bad seasons in terms of the quantity of Roman material on the surface. When gridwalked the find quantities were low, while a subsequent visit later in the year yielded many sherds of pottery and an increased quantity of tile fragments and stone scatters over a larger area.

The hill top site at Winch Hill Farm, Luton produced denser scatters of tile including fragments of tegula, imbrex, hypocaust and flue tile. This suggests the remains of a substantial building or, like Bidwell, a building constructed from re-used material. Quernstone fragments, flue tile and pot sherds have been found along the hedge line, c 100 m east of the main focus of finds, suggesting an extended settlement area.

In December 1992, prior to road widening work on the M1, land alongside the Motorway at **Newlands Farm**, Slip End, was walked. The area comprised some 1 km² of arable land (Fig 13), on very stony clay with flints soil. The limited survey time and difficult conditions encountered meant that only a few flint finds were recovered. Among these flint

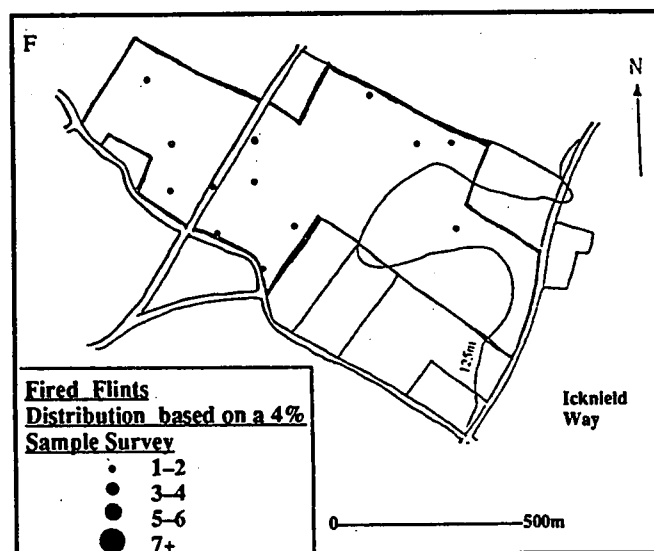
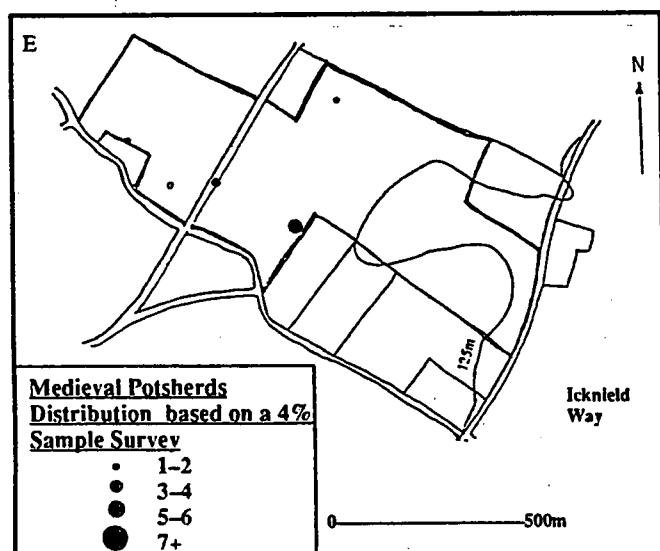
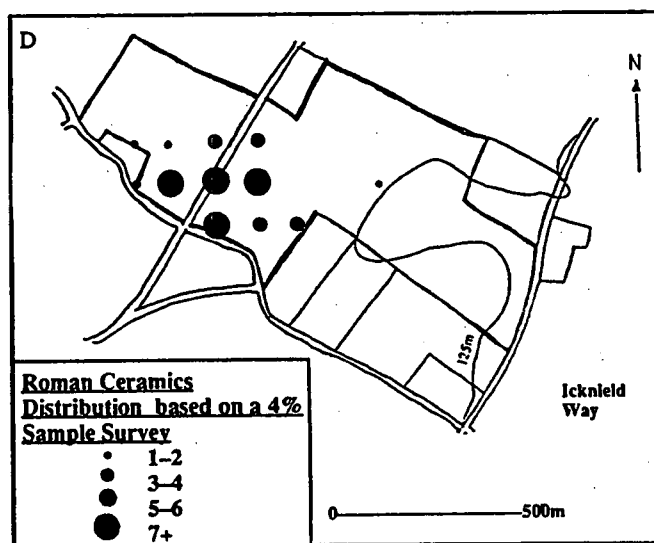
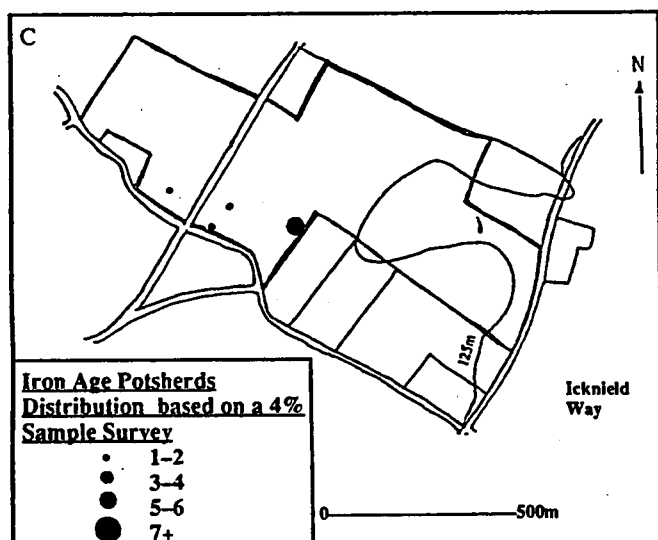
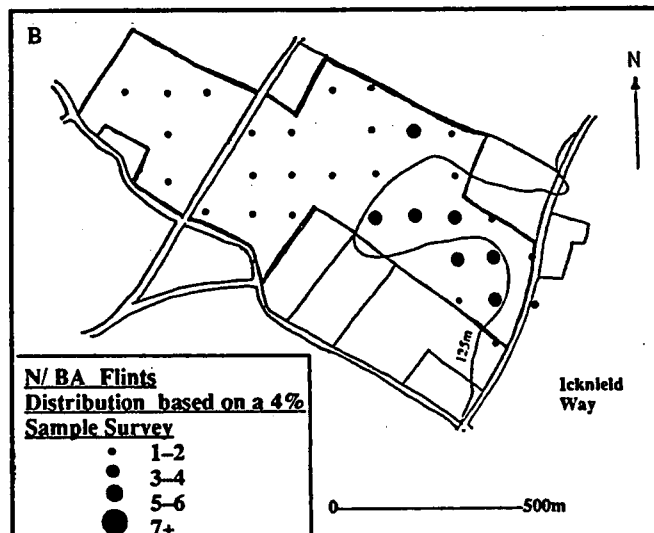
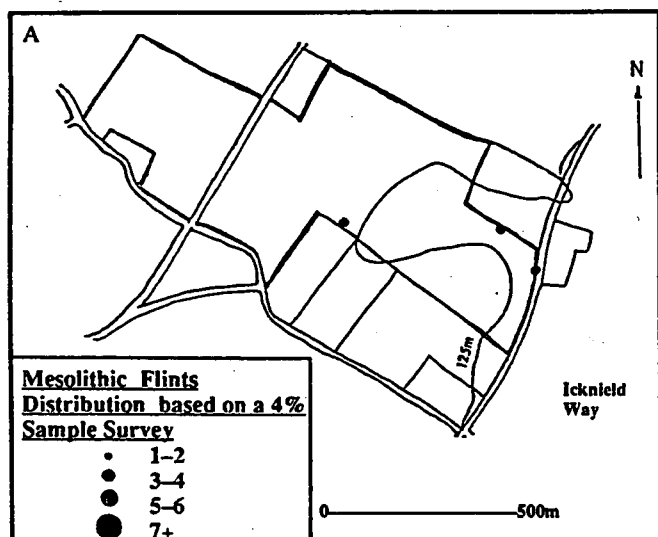


Fig 14. Doolittle Lane, finds distribution maps.

Buckinghamshire

finds were a fine Bronze Age scraper and several Mesolithic cores and flakes found in a thin scatter between Slip End and the M1. A small scatter of fire fractured flints and flint flakes was found at the end of a low ridge above the A6. Fragments of possible Romano-British tile and conglomerate (quernstone?) came from the same area. The whole survey area yielded a great deal of peg tile and floor tile fragments, probably post-Medieval in date, suggesting tile manufacture around Slip End. The tile fragments show evidence of "dusting" with either ground down flint or shell fragments before they were fired. Large quantities of Post-Medieval and modern material indicate manuring scatters and areas of landfill around Slip End.

Permission to fieldwalk was kindly granted by Mr J Spiers of Newlands Farm.

A Romano-British site at **Doolittle Lane**, Eaton Bray, identified in 1991 (along the course of a pipeline), yielded scatters of mainly coarseware sherds and a few tile fragments; this was seen to extend on both sides of the modern road (Fig 14 D). The surrounding fields were walked between 1992 and 1993 when a fuller assessment was made of the extent of the site. The results of the survey are shown in Fig 14 A-D. Other finds consisted of a few flint blade fragments, found mainly on the higher ground to the east of the field. The worked flint finds included scrapers and retouched flakes and are noticeably (though not densely) concentrated on the higher part of the field close to the Icknield Way. A small scatter of flint gritted sherds was found close to the hedgeline where the field slopes down towards Doolittle Lane. Fragments of late pre-Roman Iron Age pottery were also found mixed with Romano-British sherds perhaps indicating some continuity of land use.

As noted above the scatters of Roman sherds and tile fragments occur on both sides of Doolittle Lane, with the densest scatters coinciding with the water pipeline's course and a modern drain running alongside the road (possibly derived from disturbed/destroyed archaeological deposits). The Site lies approximately 1 km to the south of the Totternhoe Villa.

Permission to fieldwalk was kindly granted by Mr L Linney of Lockington Farm.

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Fieldwork In 1994.

Jonathan Parkhouse

Details of the year's fieldwork are given below. Two substantial pieces of fieldwork were undertaken, both at Walton, Aylesbury, on virtually adjacent sites. Various evaluations were also undertaken, including several on linear developments (pipelines and roads). The assistance of the County Museum Archaeological Group has been invaluable throughout the year.

Entries are arranged alphabetically by parish, with the exception of the sites investigated as part of the M1 evaluation

Jansel Square, Bedgrove, Aylesbury (SP 8412).

An evaluation by means of trial trenching was undertaken by Rebecca Roseff in advance of development of a small parcel of land. The site concerned lay adjacent to the site of excavations undertaken in 1965-66 (Gowing and Macdonald, 1988) which revealed evidence for the medieval hamlet of Bedgrove, in the form of flint cobbling, the limestone and mortar foundations of two houses, and a barn. Bgrave is mentioned in Domesday. The evidence recovered from the most recent work consisted of four more ditches (presumably boundary and/or drainage features) associated with the Medieval settlement, as well as two small ditches which were apparently of Romano-British date. The earlier work had yielded a small assemblage of Romano-British material but no structural evidence. In addition a small amount of Saxon pottery was found, indicating a pre-conquest origin for the Bedgrove settlement.

Reference

C Gowing and A Macdonald 1989 'Excavations at the Medieval hamlet in Bedgrove, Aylesbury', *Records of Bucks* 31, 120-137.

Kings Head, Aylesbury (SP 8113).

A programme of work for the National Trust commenced during the year as part of the refurbishment of the building, which dates in part to the late fifteenth century. The main investigations were concerned with replacement of the existing drains and the insertion of new ones; a limited amount of recording of the standing fabric was also undertaken.

The limited extents of the areas excavated along the drain runs made interpretation of the results difficult. Several pits and wells of medieval and later date were located, typical of the archaeological deposits in central Aylesbury. In

addition, traces of a building were found beneath the northeast part of the courtyard. The courtyard itself was recorded stone by stone; the cobbling contained evidence for a number of different phases and the investigations also showed the existence of an earlier courtyard surface at a slightly lower level than the present one.

Walton, Aylesbury (SP 8213).

Two excavations were undertaken at Walton by County Museum staff under the direction of Dave Bonner during 1994: at Walton Road Stores on the site of the former Teachers' Centre, and at Walton Lodge Lane. Thames Valley Archaeological Services also commenced excavations on a third and adjacent site, Walton Orchard, and their report appears elsewhere in this volume.

Walton is situated on a slight ridge of Portland limestone, orientated northeast-southwest, which forms a small 'island' protruding from the clay of the Vale of Aylesbury. The free draining ridge seems to have acted as a focus for settlement from the Bronze Age onwards. Chance finds from the earlier part of the century point to the presence of a Saxon cemetery near the eastern end of the ridge, in the area of the present-day cemetery.

Earlier work by Buckinghamshire County Museum at Walton (Farley, 1976; Dalwood *et al*, 1989) has produced evidence for occupation during the Bronze Age, early Saxon, late Saxon and Medieval periods; the finds also point to Neolithic, late Iron Age and Romano-British activity.

The early Saxon activity was hitherto the most extensively represented, with several sunken-featured buildings and post-fast 'halls' dated to the fifth to seventh centuries AD. There appears to have been something of a hiatus during the mid-Saxon period, although small finds of eighth/ninth century date were recovered. By the tenth to twelfth centuries boundary features developed which are reflected in the present day topography of Walton.

The County Museum's 1994 excavations were funded by Buckinghamshire County Council (Walton Road Stores) and the William Hardings Charity (Walton Lodge lane). Thanks are also due to Barrett North London Ltd and James Cox Associates for their co-operation. Volunteers, including members of the South Bucks Metal Detecting Club, provided welcome and useful assistance on site.

At Walton Road Stores a total of approximately 2400 m² was examined in two separate areas. The Walton Lodge Lane investigations were less extensive, with some 525 m² being examined.

As with most of the other Walton sites, bioturbation and other post-depositional processes had compromised the integrity of the stratigraphy above the natural substrate on both sites: accordingly these layers were removed for the most part by machine. There were numerous Post-Medieval intrusions on both sites. At Walton Road Stores part of the

foundation of an eighteenth century structure was noted: this was part of an orphanage which had been run by a charity associated with John Wilkes. In the case of Walton Lodge Lane the footings of a large early twentieth century building (which by co-incidence had also been a childrens' home) had caused a significant degree of disturbance, although away from the foundation trenches the archaeological deposits had survived.

The work undertaken in 1994 has extended the range and date of features known to be present at Walton. The principal discoveries were as follows:

Bronze Age

Evidence for Bronze Age activity was found at both sites. Part of a round house was excavated at Walton Road Stores, along with a number of pits, whilst at Walton Lodge Lane there was a series of pits, numerous postholes (although no definite geometrical configuration was recognised), a 'dark soil' deposit, and a small cremation cemetery, together with a large assemblage of flint and pottery. This activity appears to have been mainly of middle to late Bronze Age date, and was concentrated at the southwestern end of the Walton Road Stores site and over much of the Walton Lodge Lane site, not far from the roundhouse investigated in 1985-6 at Walton Lodge.

Romano-British

The main concentration of features of this phase was situated in the northeastern part of the Walton Road Stores site. During the previous work at Walton, only the Croft Road site had produced any Romano-British features; taken together the evidence from Croft Road and the Walton Road Stores site suggests that only the northeastern end of the Walton ridge was occupied at this time.

This phase was characterised by a series of ditches, which are thought to have defined a field system, and which were almost entirely aligned either parallel with Walton Road or at right angles to it. A small inhumation cemetery, represented by a minimum of nine individuals, is thought to belong to this phase. Part of a circular timber building of this date lay within the excavated area; this contained an oven-like structure of uncertain function. There was evidence for recutting and relocation of the boundary features; the contexts belonging to the early part of this phase contained copious quantities of pottery and 'belgic' brick. There was little material from the site that could be definitely assigned to the later Romano-British period, other than a few low-denomination coins from the overburden and a small quantity of building material which appeared to be residual in later features.

Previous work at Walton had suggested that the orientation of streets and property boundaries started to become established during the late Saxon period. The boundary features discovered at Walton Road Stores, however, appear to indicate that elements of the present-day topography of Walton originated in the first century AD.

Buckinghamshire

Saxon

Saxon activity was restricted to the Walton Road Stores site. Here six sunken-featured buildings were investigated, along with two post-fast 'halls'. One of the sunken floored buildings was of unusually small size (only 2 m long); another had evidently been destroyed in a fire and contained evidence of burnt timbers, although it was difficult to adduce the nature of the superstructure from this. Amongst the finds associated with the sunken-featured buildings were loomweights, bone comb fragments and gaming counters. The regular layout of the buildings of the adjacent Orchard site (where the buildings were orientated in the same direction as the Romano-British ditches described above, some distance to the northeast) was not evident here. There was little evidence, other than a couple of unstratified series N sceattas, for activity during the middle Saxon period, but further evidence was recovered for late Saxon property boundaries. The buildings associated with these boundaries were more likely to have been along the Walton Street frontage, a little way away from the excavated areas (although the small area of Walton Road frontage examined in 1986 did not produce any evidence for activity prior to 12th/13th century).

Medieval

There were few Medieval finds or features from Walton Road Stores, as most activity of this date is likely to have been concentrated along the Walton Road frontage, away from the excavated areas. On Walton Lodge Lane, however, there were four large pit clusters and a few postholes.

Discussion

The importance of the Walton site has been reinforced by the most recent work.

Relatively little in the way of Bronze Age settlement has been investigated in Bucks, and the proximity of the Walton roundhouses to the cremation cemetery is clearly of interest. The discovery of Romano-British features, consisting of a building and related field system, as well as a small cemetery which is also likely to be of similar date, effectively has exposed a completely new phase of archaeological activity at Walton, although a Romano-British presence had been suspected for some time.

The evidence for continuity of settlement is more extensive here than at virtually any other site in the County, and these investigations have enhanced our understanding of the settlement's morphological development. Of particular interest is the apparent continuity of orientation of the main plan elements of the settlement which has persisted for nearly two millennia. There is, however, no single area of Walton where this can be demonstrated: at Walton Road Stores the rectilinear Romano-British field system was replaced by an apparently random and dispersed scatter of early Saxon buildings. Although the early Saxon buildings on the Orchard site, which appear to have been the focus of the settlement at this period, share the orientation of the Romano-British field system, the two sets of features are

some distance apart. This suggests that there was a major feature acting as a template, and the most likely candidate is Walton Road. Only the core of the early Saxon settlement showed evidence of regular layout, however, and away from the Orchard area the buildings were dispersed and irregularly orientated.

Reference

Dalwood H, Dillon J, Evans J and Hawkins A, 1989 'Excavations in Walton, Aylesbury, 1985-1986'. *Records of Bucks* 31, 137-225
Farley, M, 1976 'Saxon and medieval Walton, Aylesbury: excavations 1973-4' *Records of Bucks* 20 163-290

Bletchley, Milton Keynes (SP 8534)

An evaluation was undertaken on the site of the former Denbigh Secondary School. Evidence for Romano-British activity had been recovered during residential housing development on an adjacent site on Shenley Road during the mid-1960s, and also during construction of the adjacent Roman Fields School in 1971 (R J Williams in Mynard 1987, 32-34). The most recent work recovered no further evidence for archaeological activity of any period, and the features discovered previously appear to have been on the periphery of the area of settlement.

Reference

D Mynard (ed) 1987 *Roman Milton Keynes: Excavations and Fieldwork* 19 71- 82 .

Loughton, Milton Keynes (SP 8337)

During the initial stages of construction of an extension to All Saints Church, over a hundred burials were recorded by Dave Bonner in a small area of the churchyard. Amongst the finds were a small assemblage of flint, pottery ranging in date from the Saxon to Post-Medieval periods, fragments of lava quern, and an intact 17th/18th century steeple bottle containing a liquid (not yet analysed, but on the basis of the contents of other 'Witch Bottles' believed to be urine) and several copper pins. The cork also had a number of pins protruding. Such prophylactic devices are not particularly uncommon (see, for example, Merrifield, 1987) but are more often discovered in association with thresholds or chimneys, positions which may be considered, like churchyards, to be liminal zones where protection against evil spirits was especially necessary.

Reference

R Merrifield 1987 *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (Batsford)

M1 Widening

A further stage of evaluation of the motorway widening proposals was undertaken for Acer Consultants and the Highways Agency. The work was directed by Dawn Enright. Trial trenches and/or test pits were excavated at ten sites. Owing to difficulties in gaining access to some areas,

one site was only partially evaluated and three others still await investigation. Amongst those sites which yielded positive evidence were the following:

Hartigan's Pit, Newport Pagnell (SP 8544: Site E). Aerial photographs of the area where the motorway crosses the River Great Ouse show the presence of at least six ring-ditches close to the southern bank, as well as traces of three rectilinear enclosures and other linear features, and a relict palaeochannel. Geophysical survey confirmed the aerial photographic evidence and also recorded weak pit-like anomalies. One of the ring ditches, and one of the enclosures, are affected by the proposals. Trial trenching was undertaken to assess the state of preservation of the ring ditch and enclosure ditch, but little in the way of artefactual evidence was recovered. A cremation was recorded within the area defined by the ring ditch: this was not centrally placed within the monument and may possibly be a secondary feature.

West of Mill Farm, Gayhurst (SP 8445: Site F). An area overlooking the north bank of the River Ouse produced finds of prehistoric, Romano-British, Saxon and Medieval date; within the area of these finds were two spatially distinct concentrations of features revealed by magnetometry (undertaken by Alister Bartlett). In one area, a curving gully contained late Iron Age and Romano-British material and was found to be part of one of the annular features revealed on the geophysical survey; the gully is probably therefore part of a circular building. Intercutting pits and ditches in the vicinity ranged in date from the late Iron Age to the Saxon periods, with the Iron Age material predominating. The other concentration of features included ditches forming several phases of the corner of an enclosure, and other minor features. Most of these features date to the first century AD.

West of Gayhurst Park, Gayhurst (SP 8346: Site I). Trial trenching revealed a number of ditches of Iron Age and Romano-British date. The quantities of pottery recovered suggested the proximity of a settlement site, although the ditches themselves seem to be field boundaries, probably of more than one phase. The geophysical survey data suggested the probability of additional features outside the area which was available for evaluation: further work is required here.

Tathall End, Hanslope (SP 8246: Site K). Enigmatic earthworks recorded during earlier phases of assessment were trial trenched. They appear to be, for the most part, the results of stone quarrying. An adjacent area revealed the existence of a small cemetery. Five graves were identified; three were excavated and contained extended adult inhumations orientated east-west. No datable artefacts were recovered, other than a single sherd of Romano-British pottery from one of the grave fills, which may possibly be intrusive.

Shenley Brook End (SP 8335). An evaluation was undertaken by Dawn Enright for Westbury Homes, in advance of development of housing. The area in question is

situated to the southeast of a Medieval moated site. The semi-dispersed deserted medieval settlement of Westbury, excavated by Dr Richard Ivens for MKAU in the late 1980s (Ivens et al forthcoming) is a short distance to the west: the -bury placename element may imply a manorial connexion and it is possible that there was originally an 'eastbury'.

Several concentrations of archaeological activity were identified during the course of the evaluation. There were two areas which produced Romano-British ditches, gullies, and spreads of associated occupation material. A third area produced postholes and other features, probably of late Saxon date. Elsewhere, evidence was recovered for Medieval activity, which was mainly insubstantial in character.

The evaluation resulted in the detailed excavation of three areas, which will be reported more thoroughly in the next *South Midlands Archaeology*.

Reference

R J Ivens, P Busby and N J Sheppard forthcoming (1995) *Westbury and Tattenhoe*.

Stoke Hammond Bypass (SP 8829)

Evaluation (fieldwalking and geophysics) of two possible bypass routes was undertaken for Bucks County Council and Pell Frischmann Milton Keynes. Two sites were discovered to the east of the village, towards the bottom of the Ousel valley.

One of these consisted of a sparse scatter of Romano-British pottery from an area where subsequent magnetometer survey (undertaken by Alister Bartlett) showed the presence of ditches, enclosures, pits and a possible kiln. Another site is known to exist some 250 m to the southeast, on the Ousel floodplain, but the recent discoveries appear to indicate a discrete site.

The other site consisted of a scatter of flint: a blade, a core, and 35 pieces of debitage. Although there did not appear to be any particular concentration of this material, the quantity recovered appeared to represent more than 'background noise'. Increased magnetic susceptibility, and patches of noise magnetometer "noise" were also recorded. Further magnetometer survey was undertaken over a small area in order to try and define the possible cause of the responses. This showed the anomalies to be rather too narrow and irregular to represent pits, and it is suggested that they were caused by magnetic stones within the underlying gravel substrate.

St Swithun's Church, Swanbourne (SP 8027)

A fragment of (?Saxon) lava quern was recovered, along with a small quantity of Medieval pottery, in the course of a watching brief undertaken during drainage works on the northern side of the church.

Buckinghamshire

St Michael's, Thornton (SP 7536)

During restoration work at the redundant church of St Michael, the floorboards in the north aisle were lifted to reveal a medieval stone effigy, virtually intact. This is likely to be the effigy of either Elias de Tingwick, rector from 1315 to 1347, or his successor John de Chastillon, rector 1347-77, who founded a chantry at Thornton. Browne Willis wrote a detailed description of the church c 1755 and identified an effigy which was then in the chancel as that of John de Chastillon, and another in the south aisle as that of Elias de Tingwick. Other fragments of decorated masonry were also found beneath the floorboards, and the floor joists themselves were observed in some instances to have been made from re-used moulded timbers, perhaps salvaged from an earlier roof. It is likely that the effigy was placed beneath the floor when the chancel was demolished in the late eighteenth century. The elaborate Ingylton tomb was also removed from the church at that time and inserted into a nearby grotto, whence it was recovered earlier this century. It is interesting to note that some of the crevices in the Tingwick/Chastillon effigy contained quantities of dirt overlain with a limewash or weak mortar; this and the generally 'worn' appearance of the stone may indicate that the effigy had lain outside for some time, either at the time of the chancel demolition or earlier, perhaps prior to the refounding of the chantry in the fifteenth century.

Reference

Browne Willis 1755 *History and Antiquities of the Town, Hundred and Deanery of Buckingham*

Weedon, near Aylesbury (SP 8115)

Monitoring by Bob Zeepvat of a sewage scheme produced entirely negative results. No trace was found of the burials at Holman's Bridge reported in 1819 (reputedly victims of the 1642 skirmish known as the 'Battle of Aylesbury'), or of the Watermead Romano-British enclosure which was partially excavated in 1987 (Hawkins and Dalwood, 1988).

Reference

A Hawkins and H Dalwood 1988 'Salvage Excavation of a Roman Enclosure at the Watermead Roundabout, near Aylesbury', *Records of Bucks* 30, 161-164

Weston Underwood Sewerage Scheme (SP 8650)

Dawn Enright and Andrew Hunn undertook monitoring of a sewage scheme around the eastern edge of the village, for Anglian Water. Recording along the trenches and easements produced evidence of a palimpsest of features, mainly ranging in date from the Romano-British to Medieval periods. Interpretation of narrow trenches is inevitably difficult, but the results of the work are nevertheless of interest.

There was a general paucity of prehistoric material. A cremation, although not securely dated, seems to indicate a tradition of funerary rites other than those associated with barrows/ring ditches and which feature so prominently in

the archaeology of the Ouse Valley (Field, 1974).

The Roman period was relatively sparsely represented, and no settlement focus was identified, but the overall impression, when taken with other casual finds of material from the area, is that either there was a single extensive site not far from the study area, and/or that the landscape was densely settled. One of the areas of Romano-British activity identified at Weston Underwood was in the part of the study area closest to the floodplain, which perhaps suggests an interest in lower-lying areas of land, paralleled a few kilometres upstream at the Stanton Low villa (Woodfield and Johnson, 1989).

Saxon settlement evidence also lacked a specific focal point. The evidence was neither extensive nor readily interpretable, but sufficient evidence (in the form of pottery) was recorded along the sewer easements to show the presence of some form of occupation here during both the early and late Saxon periods. (Identification of mid-Saxon occupation is problematical, owing to the general absence in this region of pottery which can be shown to be diagnostic of the period). There were also traces of what appeared to be a post-built rectilinear structure, similar to the typical Saxon 'hall' plan, but no useful dating evidence was recovered from the features in question. Overall the evidence seems to imply continuity of settlement rather than a hiatus; rarely has such continuity been firmly demonstrated in Buckinghamshire, except at Walton.

Evidence for Medieval activity was widespread. Recovery of late Saxon material from an area between the church and the moated site which lies to the east of the village (thought to have been the messuage of the Pevers family) may hint at a church/manor complex forming the focus of the settlement being in existence prior to the Norman conquest. Traces of possible building platforms, immediately adjacent to the eastern side of the village, point to some degree of settlement shift or small scale shrinkage before the village reached its present morphology during or before the seventeenth century.

Reference

K Field 1974 'Ring ditches of the Upper and Middle Great Ouse Valley', *Archaeol J* 131, 58-74

C Woodfield and C Johnson 1989 'A Roman site at Stanton Low, on the Great Ouse, Buckinghamshire', *Archaeol J* 146 135-278

Weston Underwood

A newly discovered site near Weston Underwood produced a small quantity of Romano-British building tile and pottery, together with an iron tumbler-lock slide-key with an unusual bronze handle in the form of a lion. Whilst several lion-headed keys have been recorded from Roman Britain (eg Verulamium, Caerleon, Baldock), the square-sectioned shaft of the Weston Underwood key handle does not appear to have any insular parallels, although there are similarities

with the handle of a knife, now in the British Museum, said to have been found near Dinan, Brittany.

Wycombe Abbey School, High Wycombe (SU 8692)

An evaluation was undertaken by Dawn Enright at a location in the bottom of the Wye Valley where data relating to past activity might have been expected to survive but, apart from a couple of flint flakes, nothing was recovered which was earlier than the 18th century landscaping.

Railway Place, Easton Street, High Wycombe (SU 8792)

An evaluation was undertaken under the direction of Phil Carstairs on a site immediately adjacent to the medieval hospital of St John but no traces of the hospital structure or any associated burials were found and the only Medieval features were two pits and a ditch (presumably a property boundary) at a right angle to Easton Street.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Biddlesden, Abbey House Farm (SP 639 396)

Bob Williams

The OAU undertook a watching brief during the topsoil stripping operation and the excavation of twenty-two large stanchion pits, as a condition of planning consent for the construction of a large agricultural barn at Abbey House Farm, Biddlesden. The new barn was sited only c 6 m to the north of another farm building and yards, constructed in 1978, which exposed at least four Roman pottery kilns and several ditches, one of which contained a human burial and another of which produced a fitting from a late Iron Age tankard (Wood *et al*, 1981). No more kilns were located, although quantities of topsoil remained over much of the site and the existence of more kilns in the area cannot be entirely discounted. Apart from a small localised area of fire reddened clay, c 6 m long and no more than 1 m wide, the only significant discovery was a single ditch, aligned approximately north-north-west to south-south-east. This had a V-shaped cross section and was 0.56 m deep and up to 1.50 m wide, and contained pottery probably produced in the nearby kilns. A deeper deposit of brown silty clay, up to 0.40 m thick along the west end and south side of the site is probably of Roman date, but its exact nature and extent could not be determined.

Reference

Woods, P., Turland R. and Hastings, R. 1981 'A Romano-British Pottery at Biddlesden, Buckinghamshire' in, Anderson, A.S and Anderson, A.C. (eds) *Roman Pottery Research in Britain and North-West Europe*, (BAR 123, Oxford), 369-395.

Dorney, Eton College Rowing Lake: 1994 Evaluation (centred SU 928 780)

Tim Allen

The site comprises c 160 ha of gravel terrace crossed by palaeochannels on the north bank of the river Thames at Dorney, South Buckinghamshire. Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a rowing lake and return lane. Permission has also been granted for the extraction of gravel from much of the immediately surrounding area and for landscaping of the remainder.

Archaeological interest was drawn to the site by cropmarks showing on aerial photographs on the higher areas of gravel (Sites D, F west, F east, Site X, Site G and Site I), which were evaluated by a limited number of trenches in 1987 and 1990. Site D is probably a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, but this was not located by the evaluation trenches within the development area. Site I is a small barrow cemetery of the Early Bronze Age, Sites F west and F east are parts of a co-axial Middle and Late Bronze Age enclosure system, and further occupation of this date was found on Site X. The Site G enclosure proved to be Early Roman. Further Bronze Age features were found around Site G, some Roman ditches crossed Site F west, and Mesolithic flints were recovered from Site I.

The 1994 evaluation

A more detailed evaluation was begun in autumn 1994, and has so far covered the north-west half of the site in detail and has also investigated the north-east corner (Fig 1). The palaeochannels can be divided into several parts: some of the channels are former courses of the Thames itself, others were created by a stream running in from the northwest, which was known as the Cress Brook.

The trenches across the gravel terrace areas at the north-west end of the site (Site F west) have generally borne out the impression given by the earlier evaluation work. Features are truncated by ploughing, and consist of a fairly sparse scatter of pits, burnt areas and occasional ditches or gullies of Bronze Age date. A little Neolithic flintwork was also recovered from a single trench.

Channel N contained degraded peat of Neolithic or later date, but all the Bronze Age finds came from silts overlying the peat, and burnt patches connected with tree-holes of similar date were found in the silts, probably indicating that the channel had ceased to be active by the time that the cropmark enclosure system was laid out.

Along the northwest edge of channel R concentrations of Early Mesolithic struck flint have been found. On the higher gravel terrace the flints have been disturbed and have been redeposited in later ploughsoils and features. Where the gravel shelves into the palaeochannel, however, in situ deposits appear to exist, covering an area of approximately 50 m x 50 m.

Palaeochannel R has a sequence of deposits up to 2.7 m

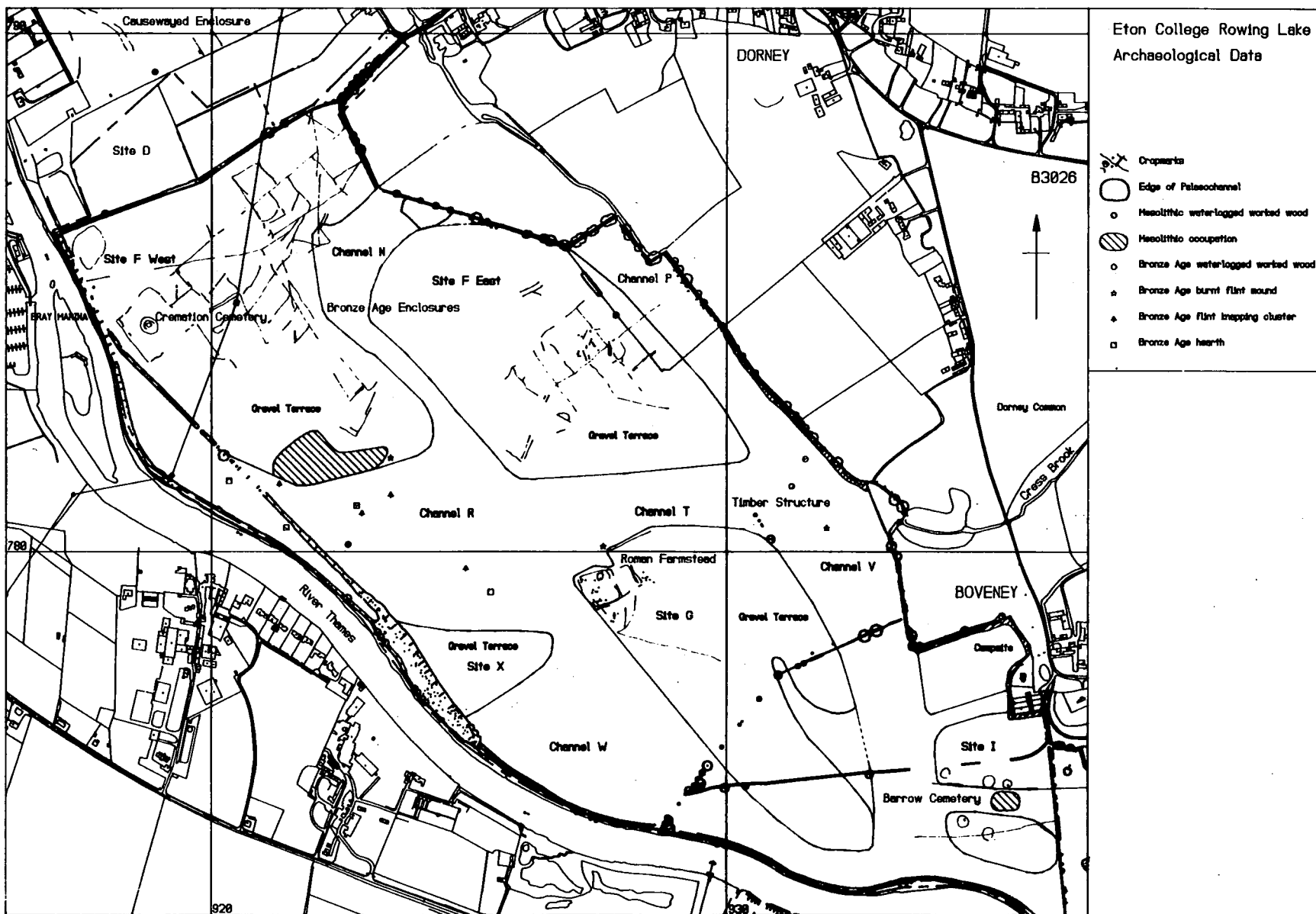


Fig 1. Dorney, Eton College Rowing Lake: Archaeological data.

Great Linford (Milton Keynes), The Old Rectory

(SP 8513 4211)

Bob Williams

deep. The lowest part of the sequence consists of more than 0.7 m of waterlogged peat. Dr Mark Robinson believes that the peat mostly formed in the Mesolithic period, and is therefore contemporary with the buried horizon on the palaeochannel edge adjacent. Mesolithic activity can be interpreted as lakeside settlement at the edges of a reed swamp. In two trenches the preserved wood may include worked timbers, but the limited sampling of these deposits has not produced any other associated artefactual material.

The peat is overlain by coarse silts of alluvial origin, some of which contain charcoal suggesting localised clearance on the adjacent gravel terrace. Some of the alluvial silts contain sufficient terrestrial molluscs to suggest the formation of vegetation. Above these levels alluvial silting continues, mostly comprising finer clay sediments, but the layers contain mostly terrestrial snails, suggesting that the ground was dry for most of the year.

Throughout these layers are horizons of Late Neolithic and Bronze Age date marked either by charcoal (including two hearths), burnt spreads, pottery, animal bone or struck flints. Four flint knapping clusters have been uncovered within the 1% sample of this palaeochannel. The more significant of these horizons are associated with clay silts and bands of manganese staining, which Dr Richard MacPhail believes indicate replacement of organic material at buried land surfaces.

At the edge of the palaeochannel adjacent to the Mesolithic flint scatters a mass of burnt flints and charcoal, known as a 'burnt mound' deposit, was found on a steep incline. These deposits are commonly associated with water, and may indicate localised recutting of the channel at this date.

In the northeast corner of the site two phases of palaeochannel were found. The deposits in the earlier channel V are similar to those in channel R, and may therefore also date back to the Mesolithic. Within the later channel (Trenches 128-130) worked timbers of Late Bronze date were found. The worked wood included both vertical and horizontal timbers, indicating a structure of some sort. On the edge of the later channel was another 'burnt mound' deposit. This channel is probably a continuation of channel T, which the previous evaluation work just west of Site G established was active during the Bronze Age.

The trenches through channel P revealed up to 1 m of peat, but no associated artefacts. The sequence appears to have begun in the Early Mesolithic and continued until at least the Bronze Age. On the south edge of this channel features were found containing struck flint and pottery of probable Late Neolithic date.

The evaluation will be completed during 1995, and the main excavations will commence in the same year. Volunteers are welcome; for further details contact Louize Waltham on 01865 243888.

A field evaluation and earthwork survey on a parcel of land to the south of The Old Rectory, Great Linford was undertaken by the OAU as a requirement of planning permission to develop the land for four residential properties. The development site lies in the north-west corner of Great Linford, a Medieval village which has been the subject of intensive archaeological study (Mynard and Zeepvat, 1992). It lies in the grounds of The Old Rectory, a 17th century building, possibly incorporating part of an earlier structure (Woodfield, 1986, 55). The building is clearly shown on the 1641 Great Linford estate map (BAS 623/43) marked as 'The Parsonage'. An excavation in 1980 confirmed that the Medieval manor house lay only a short distance to the north of the rectory, in the area behind the two eighteenth-century pavilions.

Four machine trenches were excavated on the sites of three of the proposed houses and through a low platform between an extant pond and a derelict dovecote. A large filled linear pond, at least 27 m long, over 8 m wide and 2 m deep, was located to the west of the existing pond. The filled pond was not dated but its proportions and the deposits sealing it suggest that it may have been a fishpond of late Medieval date. Although highly speculative, it is possible that both the infilled pond and the extant pond were contemporary and that when the grounds were landscaped in the 18th century only one pond was retained. Whether the stone lining in the existing pond dates to this period of activity or is a survival of a much earlier phase remains uncertain.

A large square pit of late 17th or early 18th century date, measuring 3 m across and at least 2.40 m deep, had been dug through the north end of the pond, only a short distance to the west of the 17th century stone dovecote. Both the pond and pit had been covered by a substantial layer of redeposited building materials in the middle of the 18th century. This infilling may have occurred when the grounds of the Post-Medieval manor were landscaped and when the stone pavilions were built over the former site of the Medieval manor house. While the origin of the building rubble is uncertain, the demolition of the entire medieval manor house complex in the late 17th century, the rebuilding of the chancel and other major renovations to the church in the early 18th century and the construction of the new manor house, pavilions, almshouses, and otterhound kennels, would undoubtedly have generated an enormous quantity of unwanted rubble. Consequently it is not improbable that some of this rubble was used during the 18th century in the grounds of The Old Rectory to fill in unwanted and probably unsightly hollows.

A stone-built 'oven' was located to the west of The Old Rectory. Traces of mortar around it suggest that it may originally have been contained within a small stone structure. The circular chamber, c 1.30 m in diameter, had been lined with small stones and floored with larger flags

Buckinghamshire

which retained evidence of considerable burning. The flue, which was an integral component of the structure, was 0.25 m wide and at least 1.7 m long although its northeast end extended into the east side of the trench. The stone sides of the flue showed little evidence of having been burnt. Although the 'oven' remains undated it is likely to be of later medieval date by analogy with other circular examples found during previous excavations in Great Linford (Mynard and Zeepvat, 1992). Circular oven bases are a comparatively common feature on medieval sites where the buildings are built of stone; as for example at Lyveden, Northants. (Steane and Bryant, 1975) where they ranged from c 1 to 1.6 m in diameter. The example at the Old Rectory, however, differs from most known examples in that it has an exceptionally long narrow flue. It has been previously demonstrated that such ovens are frequently associated with circular copper bases and malting kilns. However, preliminary analysis of the contents of the structure indicate that the 'oven' may have had an industrial use as it contains fragments of an as yet unidentified slag.

References

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Steane, J M and Bryant, G F 'Excavations at the deserted Medieval settlement at Lyveden: fourth report', *Journal of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery* 12, 2-160.

Woodfield, P 1986 A guide to the historic buildings of Milton Keynes.

High Wycombe, All Saints Church (SU 486 193)

Alan Hardy

In February 1993 a watching brief investigated three brick vaults, which had been uncovered during the relaying of the chancel floor. The earliest vault, containing fifteen coffins, lay under the altar. It belonged to the Welles family, and was dated by the earliest coffin plates to the end of the 17th century. A small vault located at the west end of the chancel contained the coffins of Samuel and Sarah Rotton who died in 1796 and 1827 respectively. Between these two was a third, elaborately built, vault belonging to the Smith family. This contained only seven coffins, although there was room for at least fifteen. From the dates visible on some of the coffin plates the vault had only been in use for a relatively short period after its construction in the 1830s.

Princes Risborough, Longwick Road, Buckingham Arms Site (SP 639 396)

Bob Williams

The OAU was commissioned to attend on-site during the excavation of geotechnical test pits on land at and adjoining the Buckingham Arms, Longwick Road. This work was undertaken in conjunction with a desk-top appraisal. The site lies to the east of a moated site known as the 'Mount', which is thought to have contained the palace and stud farm of Edward the Black Prince. Observation of seven

geotechnical pits, each 2.0 m long and 3.5 m deep, indicated that the general level of archaeological activity on the site is low. A series of silted up linear ditch cuts, or areas of more irregular pitting/ground disturbance of possible Medieval origin was noted in one pit. A shallow buried soil, consisting of a thin horizon of dark brown highly mineralised semi-peat, dating to the late glacial period was also found sealed beneath a layer of soliflucted chalk.

Taplow, Cliveden House. (SU 9105 8515)

Ric Tyler

A series of watching briefs was undertaken on behalf of the National Trust during refurbishment work at Cliveden House, Taplow. Little remains of the original house at Cliveden which was built to designs by William Winde in c 1665-80. The present house was built by Sir Charles Barry in 1850-52 in the Cinquecento style and it maintains to a large extent the approximate dimensions and layout of the original building. During enabling work related to the major repair programme to the clock tower, a vaulted brickwork tunnel was exposed running east-west below the driveway to the north front of the house at a distance of some 31 m south of the present (1869) gateposts. At each end of the tunnel, doorways provided access to rectangular brick built chambers on the north side, again with vaulted ceilings running parallel to the main tunnel. A brief investigation of a tunnel connecting the two wings of the main house revealed a structure of slightly larger dimensions but essentially of similar build. The similarity of build suggests that the structures are contemporary, and it is tempting to assign their date of construction to the time of the building of the original brick wings under the ownership of George Hamilton, Lord Orkney, in 1706.

An exploratory trench was excavated in advance of consolidation work across the south terrace, which is the only surviving element of the original Winde buildings at Cliveden. This provided an opportunity for the nature of the make up layers of the extant terrace to be recorded.

WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

These summaries were compiled by Melanie Gauden from reports written by Wessex Archaeology staff.

Lower Road, Aylesbury (evaluation)

In August 1994 an archaeological evaluation was conducted of a site at Lower Road, Aylesbury (centred on SU 83207 11452). This evaluation consisted of the machine excavation of 204 trenches, which varied between 20 and 30 m in length, across an area of c 28 hectares. The evaluation identified the remains of two Roman ditched settlements, centred on raised terraces either side of a small valley. The features were mainly shallow and irregular and appeared to have been heavily truncated by ploughing. Both Roman sites were dated to the late first to early second

centuries AD. In addition, isolated features datable to the Middle and Late Bronze Age were recorded in the north-western and south-western corners of the evaluated area. The ploughed out remains of Post-Medieval ridge and furrow were also found across the whole of the site, with up-standing ridge and furrow noted in two small fields on the western edge.

Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes (evaluation)

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in three discrete areas within Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes (centred on SP 865 340). The site lies to the south and west of a known Romano-British settlement. Thirty-three trenches were excavated by machine across all three areas. Only one feature of archaeological interest was revealed. This was a large, undated ditch, running northeast to south-west, and may be a boundary ditch associated with the Romano-British settlement to the northwest.

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

The following is a summary of a report in *Manshead Journal* 34.

Fieldwalking

During 1993/4 the Society walked a large field at Edlesborough, c 1.2 km² in area. The survey results are shown in Fig 2 A-F (excluding Post-Medieval material).

Fire-fractured flint distribution is shown in Fig 2 F; to some extent their distribution matches that of the worked flint finds.

Sherds of Late Iron Age pottery were found, some in association with Romano-British material, suggesting a possible continuity of land use or occupation sites. Ditches containing Iron Age and Romano-British pottery have been found along the course of a pipeline to the southwest of the church.

The Romano-British finds were mainly concentrated near the brook on a previously identified site (*Manshead Newsletter*, Spring 1986). Very little Romano-British material was found there when the site was walked in 1992 and 1993; this variable find rate has been noted at other sites, e.g. Sundon and Houghton Park.

The Medieval finds scatter of mainly grey or brown sandy wares (including jug handles) with a few sherds of shelly St. Neot's type wares suggests manuring.

There was a large amount of Post-Medieval material (peg tile, china, glass fragments) scattered throughout the field.

We are grateful to Mr B Wood for granting permission to

fieldwalk his land; Mr A Pike of Bucks County Museum for additional information.

NATIONAL TRUST - THAMES AND CHILTERN REGION

Gary Marshall

Stowe Landscape Gardens, Buckinghamshire

Stowe landscape gardens (centred on SP 675370) were acquired by the National Trust in 1989 and have since been the subject of a major restoration programme which aims to bring the gardens back as close as possible to the state of maturity which they had attained by the late 18th century. The gardens - covering an area of about 400 acres - are famed as a pre-eminent example of the English landscape movement, changing throughout the 18th century from an initial formal design through to the naturalised landscape that Capability Brown made so popular.

Throughout their history the gardens have always been a mecca for curious visitors and as a consequence the development of the gardens during the 18th century is well documented. The availability of a succession of plans from the contemporary guidebooks illustrates the increasing size and complexity of the gardens, whilst much of the detail comes from the surviving accounts which were sold to the Huntingdon library in California in 1922. Yet despite the availability of documentary evidence there are many gaps in the record which fail to illustrate or explain certain aspects of the development of the gardens. In the absence of this record the surviving archaeological evidence becomes of paramount importance. When placed alongside the documentary evidence this has helped to plug some of the gaps which would otherwise remain unanswered.

The alignments of many of the original paths depicted on the 18th and early 19th century maps have now been lost, yet careful scraping with a mechanical excavator under the eye of the archaeologist has revealed that the original yellow gravel surface survives in-situ beneath the topsoil. The paths in the Grecian Valley on the northeast corner of the gardens have therefore been accurately recreated using similar local gravel and the surrounding tree cover has accordingly been thinned and replanted where necessary.

In a similar manner the original positions of the statues flanking the paths have been determined from surviving archaeological evidence. Usually only the brick and rubble base survives, and perhaps part of the lowest course of the plinth, but this evidence is sufficient to allow for the repositioning of the statues. Many of these were sold off in the sale of 1922 and casts will therefore be taken from the originals, where they can be located. In this respect the archaeological evidence goes hand-in-hand with the documentary sources since the sale catalogue names the individual statues in succession as they were encountered along the Grecian Valley.

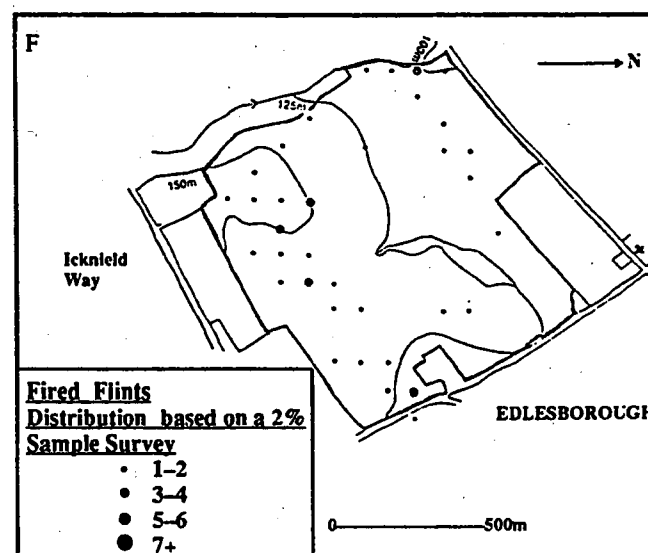
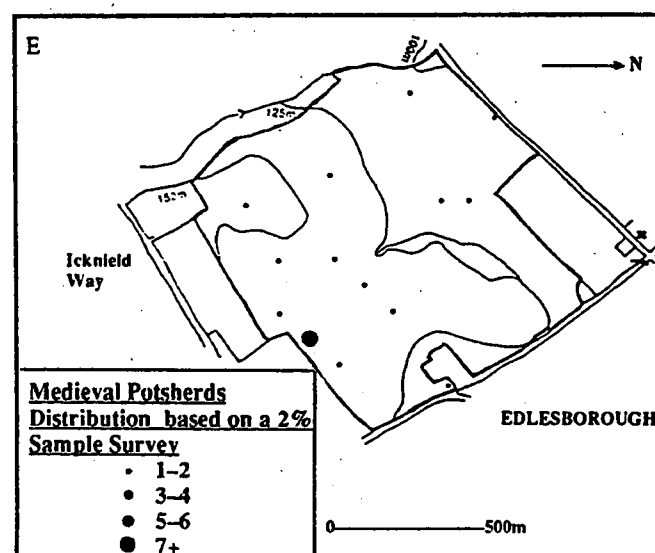
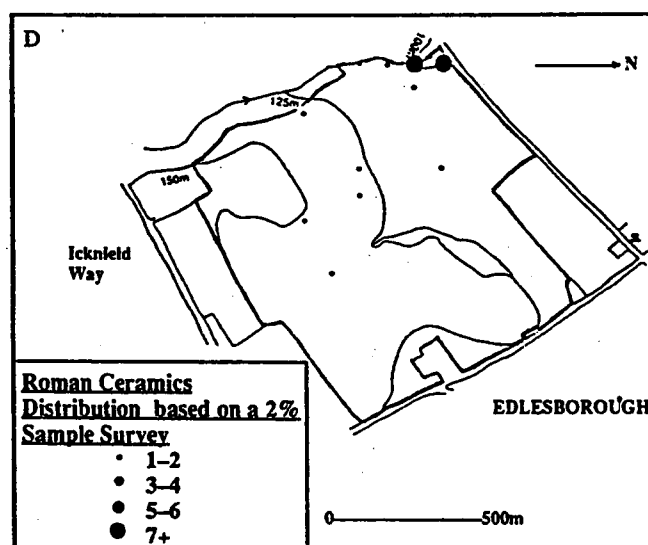
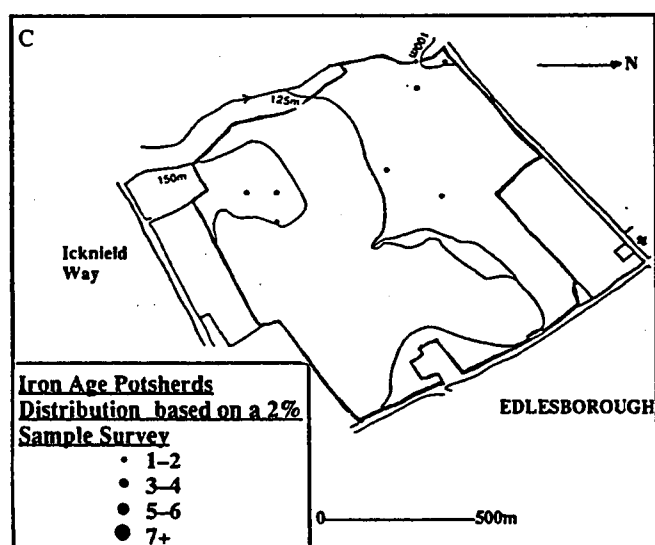
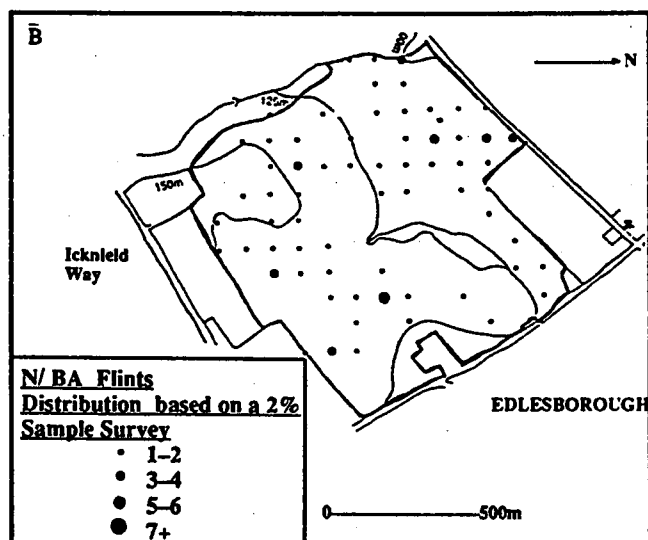
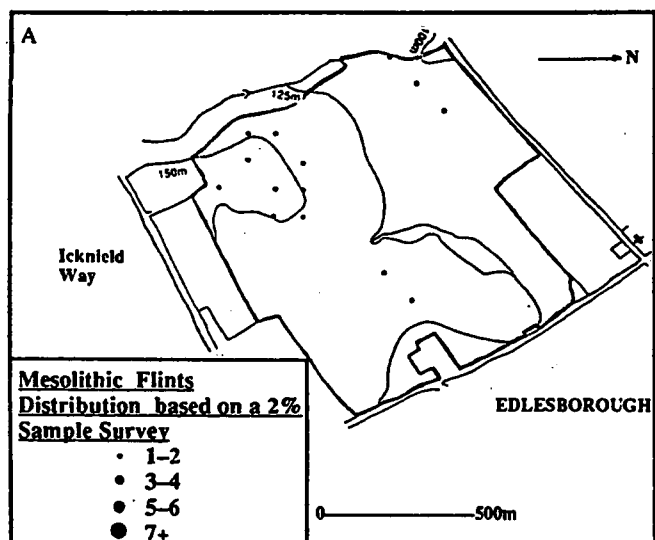
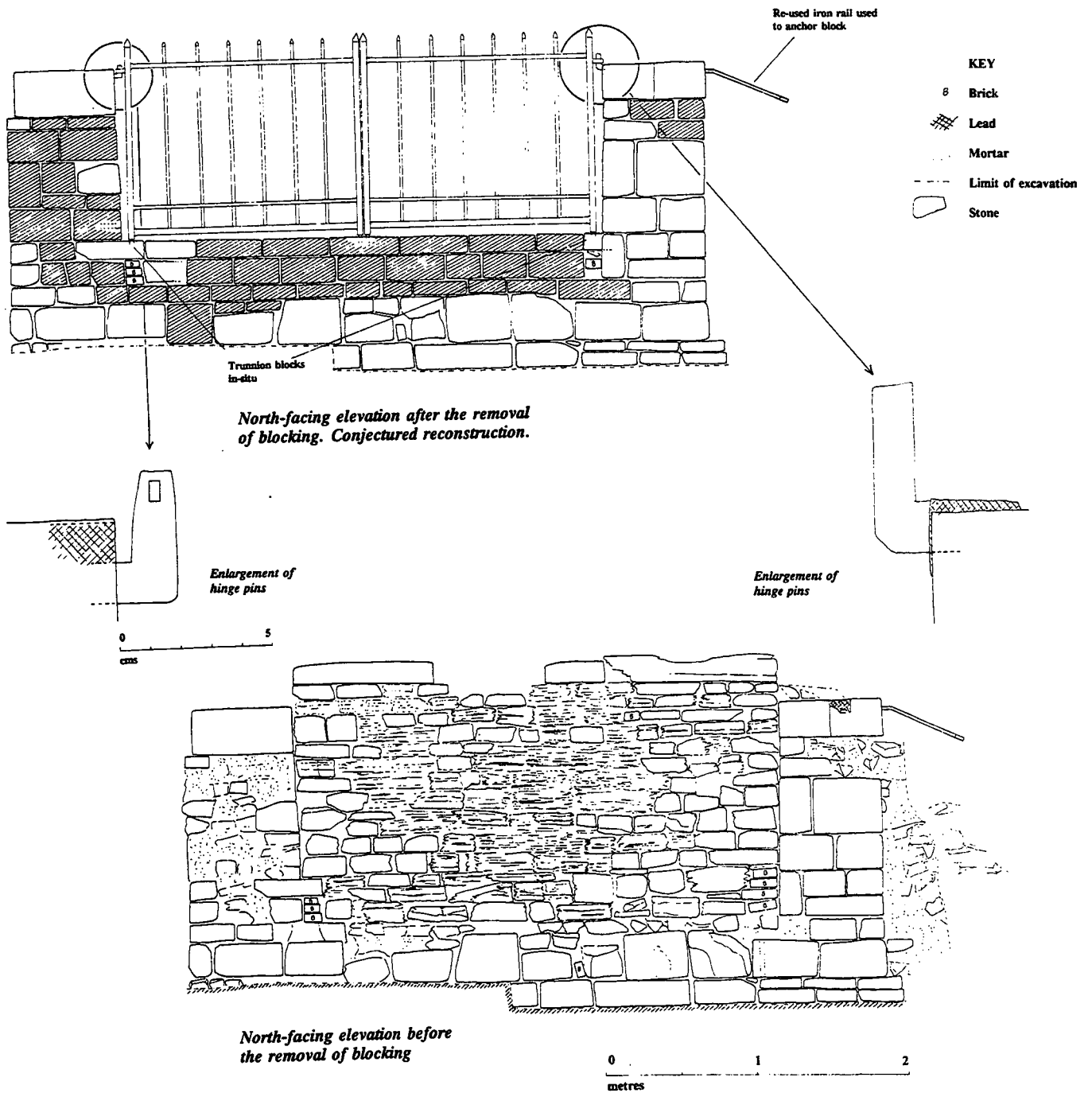


Fig 2. Edlesborough 1993, finds distribution maps.



STOWE LANDSCAPE GARDENS

Fig 3. Nelson's Walk gateway.

Buckinghamshire

The archaeological investigation at Stowe is as much concerned with standing buildings and structures as it is with the overall landscape. This is perhaps not surprising when one considers that the gardens contain more than 30 grade one listed buildings. In terms of scale one of the most exciting projects has to be the rebuilding of the several miles of the ha ha wall enclosing the gardens. Much of this dates from the 1720s and 1730s and it is therefore an early example of the use of such a structure. During the reconstruction of the earliest part of the wall flanking the main entrance drive numerous pieces of discarded architectural masonry were found built into the core of the wall, such as balusters and stone mullions. From the style of moulding some of these pieces can only belong to the latter part of the 18th century and their presence in the core of the wall suggests that substantial lengths of the wall have been rebuilt.

Within this length of wall flanking the entrance drive an original gateway was recently discovered during the course of the rebuilding (Fig 3). Two flanking piers had been incorporated into the original construction but the gateway was not self-evident because the opening between the piers had been in-filled with stone during the late 19th century. The removal of this stone during the course of the rebuilding led to the discovery of two wrought iron hinge pivots incorporated into the top course of the interior face of each pier, and below this two wrought iron bearing blocks to carry the trunnions at the bottom of each gate. The gateway was approached from the gardens via an inclined ramp made up of blocks of ironstone covered over with a deep bed of yellow gravel. The gate was probably approached from outside of the gardens via a raised bridge or turf bank passing across the width of the ditch in front of the wall, although no evidence for such a structure has been found.

The surviving evidence relating to this structure has been recorded and will form the basis for the reinstatement of the gates, using the original hinge pins and trunnion blocks. The gateway is an important feature, partly because of the early date for the construction of the wall, but also because it can be seen from map evidence to link with one of the main walks leading across the north front of Stowe House.

Another major project currently underway is the restoration of the Temple of Concord and Victory and on this building the Trust has employed the services of a freelance archaeologist, Andy Hun. Detailed archaeological investigation has provided evidence of a number of architectural features previously associated with the original construction of the building during the 1740s and 1750s, but which were subsequently removed during the 1840s. These include the aedicule placed against the interior west wall of the cella and a number of smaller details such as ventilation flues and the original entrance hatch into the roof. The aim of the restoration is to bring the building back to its original form and in this respect the architects have been able to use the results of the archaeological investigation to recreate some of this missing detail.

Claydon House, Buckinghamshire

Claydon House (SP 719 253) has recently been the subject of several phases of work to bring the services (plumbing, electrical supply etc.) within the building up to modern standards and an archaeological watching brief was maintained whilst this work was undertaken. The most recent phase was to upgrade the services in the main part of the building occupied by the Verney family and this is a part of the building with considerable archaeological potential since it is thought to encompass at least part of a Jacobean building which is known only from two sketchy elevations.

The archaeological watching brief found very little evidence for this earlier building and it would appear that the earliest evidence - in the form of exposed timber stud walls with brick infill - seems to be confined to the ground floor and the basement of the building, although having said this a stack of three ceilings, the earliest possibly 17th century, was found between the ground floor and the first floor.

The conclusion that the 17th century building was reduced to ground floor level seems to have been confirmed by the results of tree-ring dating undertaken by the dendrochronology laboratory attached to the University of Sheffield, work which was supported by English Heritage. These confirm that the main beams between the two floors date from the mid 18th century (one of them cut in 1757). This is a date which ties in well with documentary evidence since much of the main part of the house was known to have been rebuilt and refaced at this time. It would seem from this evidence that little of the earlier 17th century building was retained.

The watching brief did uncover evidence for alterations undertaken by Sir Gilbert Scott c1860. The south front of the house was projected forward by Scott with the addition of two symmetrical bays and the temporary removal of floorboards at ground floor level revealed the footings for the earlier 18th century walls within these bays. The succession of building construction at Claydon House is by no means fully understood but recent observations as a consequence of the watching brief, combined with the results of the tree-ring dating, have highlighted areas of the building where the greatest archaeological potential remains.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Fieldwork in 1994

Compiled and edited by Brian Dix

Ashton (SP 764500)
P Blinkhorn

Pottery from a trench excavated in October 1994 in advance of services installation at the scheduled ancient monument of Ashton Manor moated site (monument no. 13615) provides a terminus post quem of the mid-eighteenth century for the construction of the present causeway to the house; a possible medieval horizon was identified in the inner area.

Canons Ashby (SP 57655048)
M Webster with R Atkins

Archaeological evaluation was carried out in June 1994 for the National Trust on land sought for extending the visitors' car park at Canons Ashby House. The scarcity of Medieval and earlier finds suggests that the site was marginal to the focus of former settlement and was probably given over to agriculture, as indicated by the extant earthworks of ridge-and-furrow cultivation.

Crick (SP 568728) (centre)
A Chapman

Between August and December 1994 three areas of remains were excavated ahead of development in the 73 ha site of the proposed Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT). The work was undertaken for RPS Clouston acting for clients.

The Lodge, Romano-British settlement

A complex system of linear ditches centred at SP 570724 defined a major land boundary with adjacent sub-rectangular enclosures or plots. No evidence for contemporary buildings was located and the paucity of finds suggests that any related settlement lay elsewhere. Preliminary assessment of the pottery indicates that the occupation was centred on the second century AD, and did not continue into the late Roman period. Some Iron Age curvilinear ditches were located beneath the western end of the later settlement. A single sunken-featured building and a nearby pit confirmed the presence of early-middle Saxon occupation as indicated by previous evaluation.

The Lodge, Iron Age settlement

An unenclosed settlement of over 20 ring ditches was sampled at SP 570725 (Fig 1). The almost exactly circular ditches probably enclosed roundhouses, although there was little structural evidence for the buildings themselves. Some

sub-circular ditch systems appear to form small annexes adjacent to or abutting the main roundhouses. The spatial distribution and the sequence of intercutting of the ring ditches defines an early group (group 1; 7 9 and 10) and a further three discrete building groups (groups 2 to 4), each comprising a combination of large and small roundhouses with one or more annexes. The central building group (group 3; 11, 13, 14, 17 and 18) was enclosed in its later use; the steep-sided, shallow curvilinear ditch may have held a palisade or fence and differs from the sub-rectangular ditch (and bank) more commonly associated with later Iron Age enclosures. Small quantities of Romano-British pottery recovered from the final ditch fills indicate that this enclosure and roundhouse group was in use into the first century AD.

The Long Dole, Iron Age settlement

A separate Iron Age settlement was investigated at SP 567735. From previous magnetometer survey the northern half appears to comprise a rectangular enclosure of typical Iron Age form with ring ditches both within and immediately around its perimeter (Fig 2). The southern half appears to contain unenclosed ring ditches although some linear or curvilinear ditch systems can also be discerned.

No evidence has so far been obtained for settlement prior to the formation of the main enclosure at the northern end of the site (enclosure 1). The original sub-rectangular enclosure measures c 80 m north-south by c 50 m east-west, with an entrance at the southeast corner. An inner enclosure, c 30 m square (enclosure 2), was defined by a ditch with terminals abutting the southern arm of the main enclosure ditch. The entire southern end of the enclosure was subsequently remodelled. The southern enclosure ditch was relocated further to the north and a new inner enclosure, c 20 m square, was formed, but now fully detached from the main enclosure. Ditches running southward from either end of the main enclosure most probably denote an abutting secondary enclosure or annexe (enclosure 5), added either at the same time or slightly later.

At some stage a linear trackway was introduced at the northern end of the site, where remnants of gravel road-metalling survived. It ran east-west and respected the north side of the main enclosure but cut across a smaller detached enclosure (3) lying beyond the northwest corner. Later shallow flanking ditches suggest that the trackway persisted beyond the lifetime of the main enclosure and it may eventually have joined the Watling Street Roman road, which lies immediately east of the settlement area. No features directly related to the Roman road were found.

More than 20 ring ditches were sampled. The majority would have enclosed roundhouses but two continuous ring ditches of less than 10 m diameter were found to enclose respectively a square 4-post structure (8) and a rectangular 6-post structure (20). In addition, other 4-post structures have been identified, including one with parallel slots containing terminal posts. The ring ditch (6) within the inner enclosure is of particular interest. It has a western entrance,

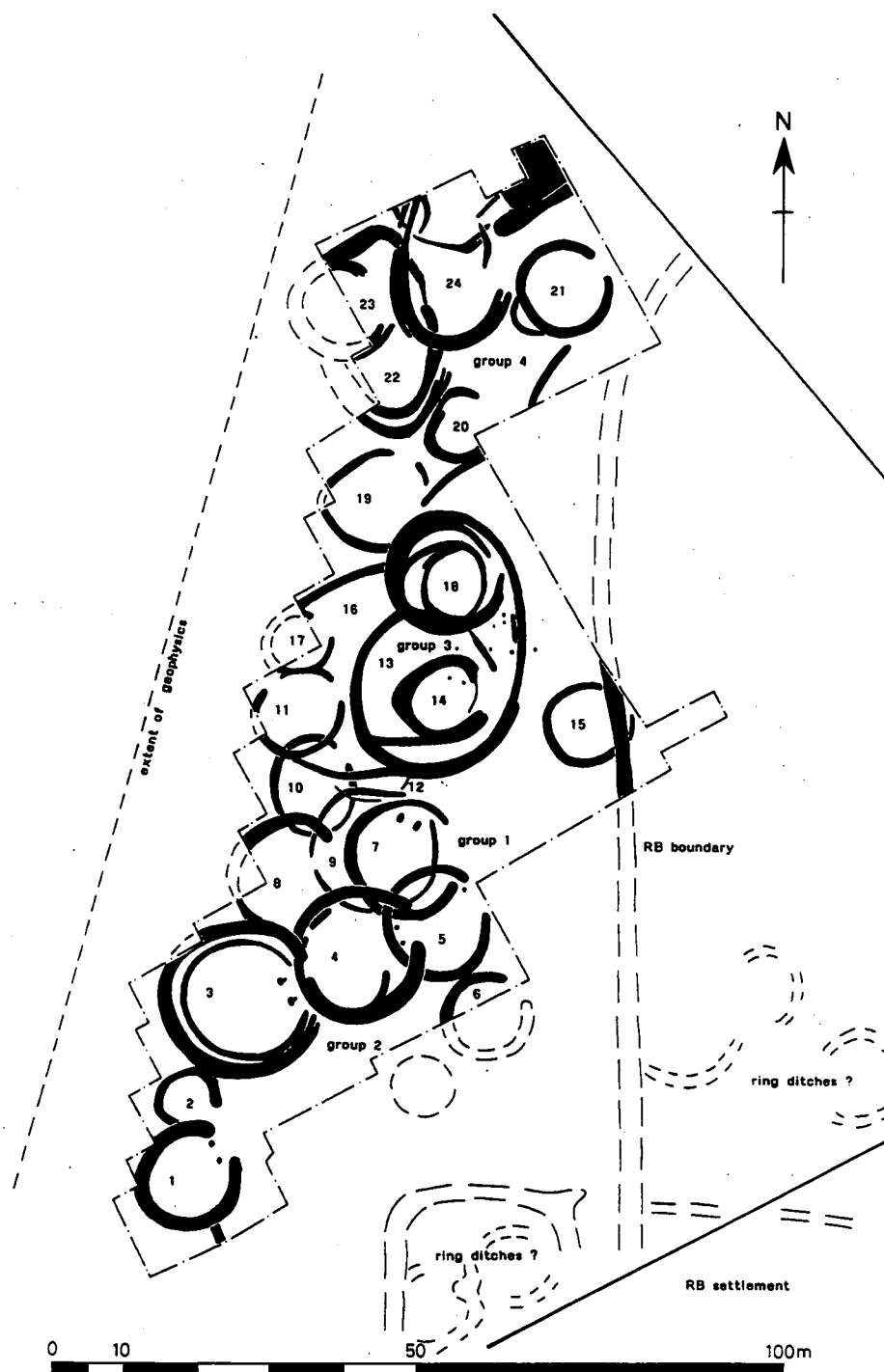


Fig 1. Crick, The Lodge Iron Age settlement.

diametrically opposed to the eastern entrances of the other excavated ring ditches, and encloses a small timber structure defined by a ring of postholes only 3.5m in diameter.

The significance of the quantity of roundhouse and rectilinear structures lies not in their individual forms but in the presence of several definable groups of structures. Two lie within the main enclosure (groups 1 and 2), two beyond the western perimeter (groups 3 and 4), one enclosed by a semi-circular ditch system, and two outside the southern perimeter (groups 5 and 6). Each has a unique arrangement but in general all are characterised by the presence of two or

three roundhouses, sometimes with one of larger diameter and apparently forming the primary house, together with a single rectilinear structure, either enclosed or unenclosed. The southern roundhouse groups show the most complex sequence of ditch recutting, and may be related to the remodelling of the southern end of the enclosure.

New entrances to the main enclosure were provided on the western and southern sides and at the southwest corner (E3). They were all defined by gravel causeways which had been laid over backfilled lengths of the enclosure ditch. New entrances were also provided to the inner enclosure.

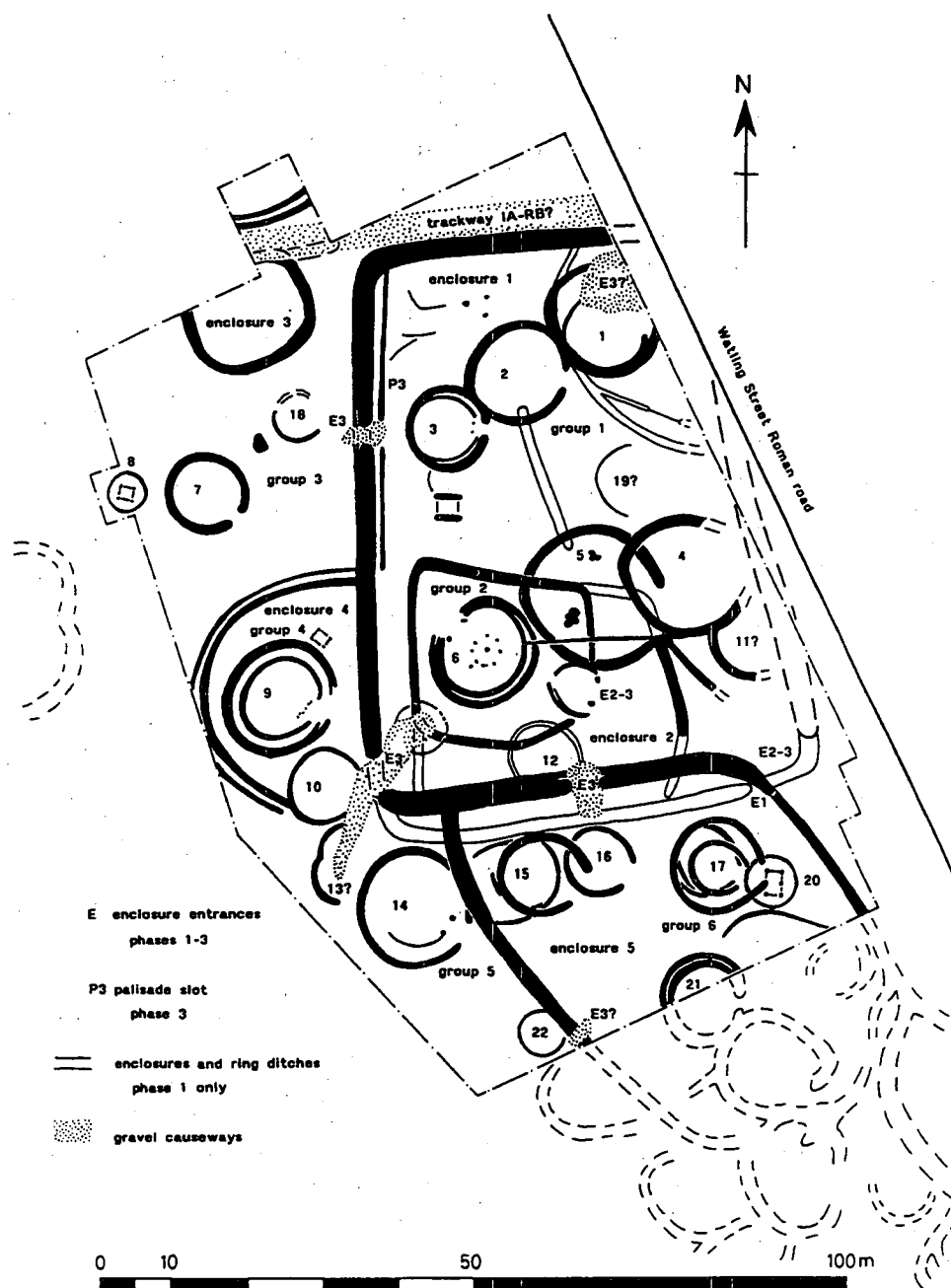


Fig 2. Crick, The Long Dole Iron Age settlement.

When analysed, the evidence for the development of both the enclosure system and the pertaining roundhouse groups will provide a comprehensive account of the form and development of an Iron Age settlement that is unusual in both its complex sequence of development and the overall density of occupation demonstrated by the numerous individual structures. There is also the potential for comparative analysis with the unenclosed settlement at the Lodge.

Gretton, Kirby Hall (SP 925927)

J Prentice

Former drainage arrangements along the western side of the

Hall were exposed prior to refurbishment by English Heritage.

Hargrave (TL 03747075)

M Holmes

Evaluation comprising earthworks survey and trial excavation was carried out in January-March 1994 for Charles Wells Breweries Ltd at the rear of the Nags Head public house, Hargrave. The ditches of a series of former boundaries attest to the late Saxon origin of settlement and its extent in the tenth to twelfth centuries. The lack of Medieval features and contemporary pottery indicates that the site probably became marginal to later settlement.

Northampton, Woolmonger Street (SP 75266033)
S Parry, M Webster and S Steadman

Large-scale evaluation was undertaken around Woolmonger Street (Fig 3) which lies in the southwest corner of the historic core of Northampton, within the area of the late Saxon town. To the south of the street a trench (Trench 3) 110 m long and up to 2.15 m deep was excavated in order to ascertain whether the defences of the late Saxon town were located there. No evidence of the defences was discovered but pits, postholes and ditches attest to late Saxon occupation. In the Medieval period the area was largely given over to rubbish disposal, and deposits of horn cores suggest that tanning took place nearby. Three trenches (Trenches 1, 10 and 11) were excavated to the north of Woolmonger Street where late Saxon timber buildings and Medieval stone-founded buildings had fronted onto the street. Elsewhere, however, Saxon and Medieval rubbish pits were found along the frontage and it would appear that the street was never fully built up. Further work is due to take place in 1995 ahead of the development of the area.

Raunds (TL 00117311)
S Parry and M Holmes

Trial trenches were excavated at Berrister Cottage, Raunds in August 1994 in order to determine if Saxon and Medieval remains survived, particularly from the Burystead manor. In the event, no archaeological deposits were found.

Rothersthorpe (SP 725575)
M Holmes

Excavation was carried out for Swan Hill Developments in connection with the construction of a Business Park on land adjoining the M1 Motorway near Rothersthorpe Service Station. The area contained the cropmarks of Iron Age enclosure complexes c 200 m apart. Detailed geophysical survey and sample excavation were undertaken at both sites, revealing the remains of roundhouses and associated settlement activity. Work on the two sites was undertaken in spring and winter 1994 respectively.

The southern site comprised an enclosure approximately 100 m long x 40 m wide, truncated to the south by the M1 Motorway slip road. The geophysical survey indicated the presence of at least five circular features within the enclosure and sample excavation showed that two were hut circles up to 9 m and 10 m in diameter respectively (Fig 4). Another feature proved to be the ring gullies of an associated enclosure with related activity marked by a series of pits.

The northern site consisted of a series of enclosure ditches. Only one showed evidence of settlement remains, comprising an enclosure of c 80 m x 50 m with four ring gullies and a larger, semi-ovoid sub-enclosure. Sample excavation was undertaken of all of the features (Fig 5). One of the ring gullies is best interpreted as a hut circle, with a

maximum diameter of c 13 m. The interpretation of the other ring gullies is more equivocal but at least one appears to have been a simple enclosure rather than a building. As at the southern site, no floor or associated occupation levels survived, probably as the result of later ploughing. The semi-oval enclosure was formed by a ditch c 1.2 m deep with a narrow entrance at its western apex; it enclosed an area c 20 m x 20 m.

Vestigial, curvilinear ditches at each site could denote earlier structures but in neither area was there any evidence of defensive elements. Both sites are therefore best interpreted as small farms. They appear to have been broadly contemporary within the middle/late Iron Age. The small quantity of finds and other domestic evidence may suggest intermittent, possibly seasonal occupation.

Stanion (SP 91428703)
P Blinkhorn

Trial trenches were excavated in October 1994 at 3 Little Lane, Stanion in order to ascertain the survival of Medieval remains, especially those associated with the pottery industry. No archaeological deposits were present, however.

Stanwick (SP 979712)
M Webster with S Morris

Trial excavation within the grounds of Hill House in May 1994 revealed a lack of previous activity along the western part of Grange Road, thus corroborating the impression that central Stanwick was never extensively occupied between the original foci of settlement at the east and west sides.

Towcester (SP 69254875)
M Webster and T Baker

Excavation was carried out in September 1994 at the rear of the Nationwide Anglia Building Society office at 203 Watling Street, Towcester. The aim was to establish if Roman and/or Medieval deposits were present within the footprint of a proposed extension. The natural geology was exposed at a depth of 0.35 m and the overlying stratification had been largely created by recent activity.

Weedon (SP 63205930)
P Blinkhorn

Evaluation of land at the rear of 46 Church Street, Weedon in November 1994 provided evidence of Roman, Saxon and Medieval activity, including late Saxon/Medieval plot boundaries and two undated, possible post-built structures.

Wollaston (SP 895642 and SP 882627) (centres)
I Meadows

Extensive excavations and allied watching brief were

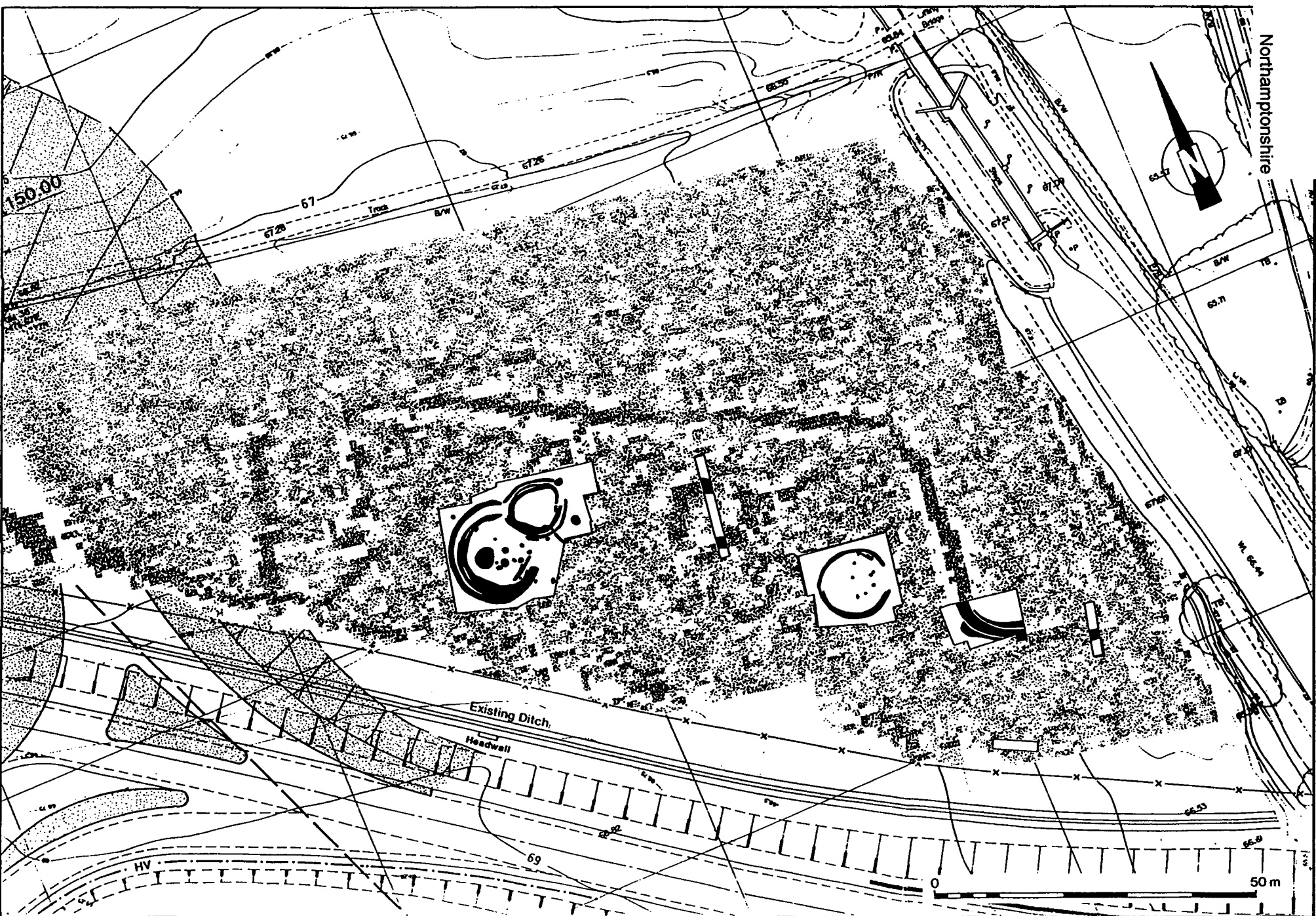


Fig 4. Rotherham, Iron Age settlement adjacent to motorway slip-road.

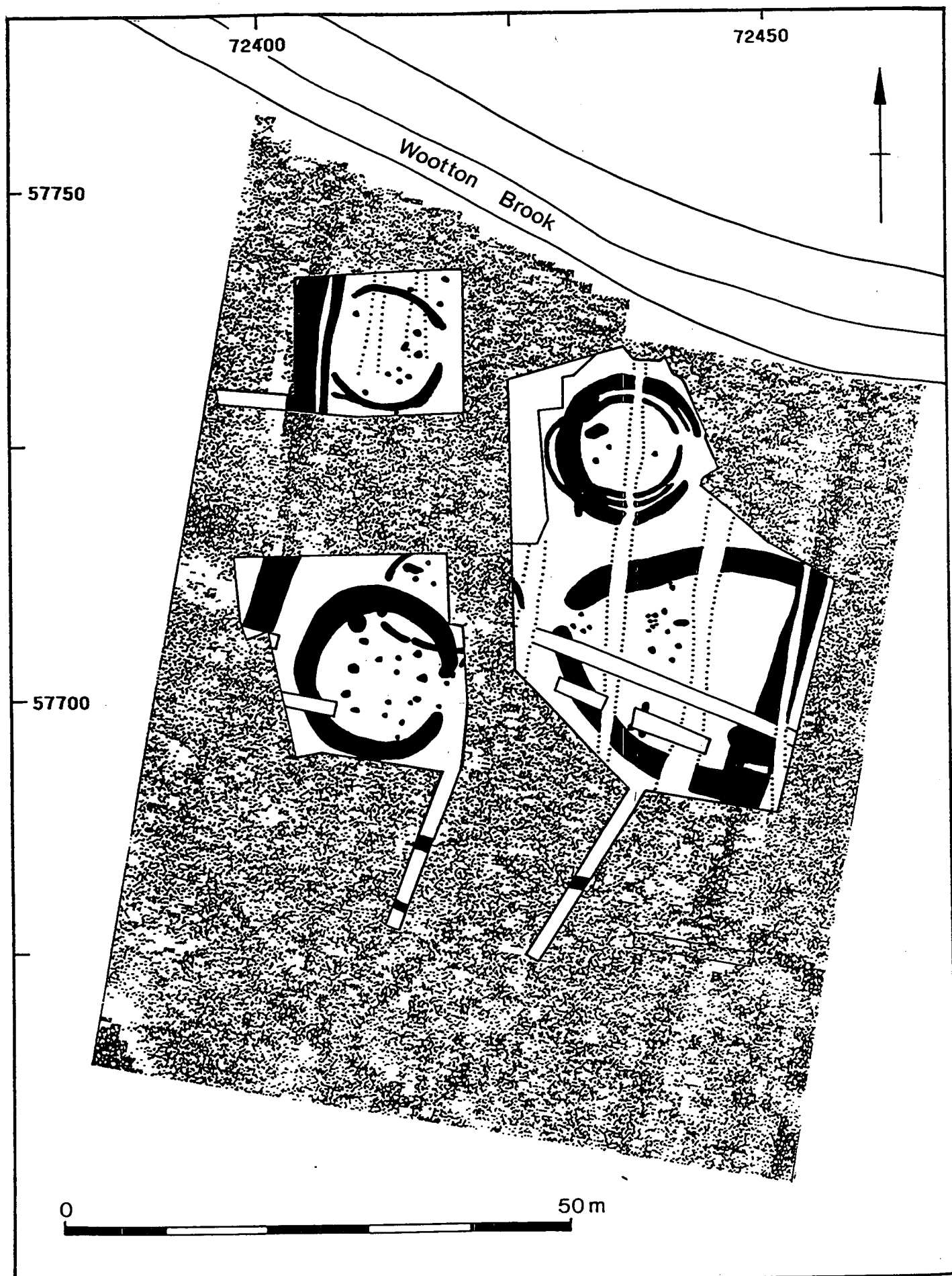


Fig 5. Rothersthorpe, Iron Age settlement beside Wootton Brook.

Northamptonshire

undertaken for Pioneer Aggregates (UK) Ltd in the Company's gravel pit to the north of Hardwater Road, Wollaston. In addition, evaluation was undertaken on land to the south of the road as part of a future quarrying proposal. Multi-period remains have been detected over a distance of 3 km in this part of the Nene valley (Fig 6).

Neolithic finds are mostly limited to isolated pits. Preliminary environmental results indicate that the wooded valley bottom was eventually cleared during the Bronze Age. The area was subsequently maintained as open grassland which was divided up into blocks of land in the early Iron Age. The land parcels were marked by pit alignments, both single and double. The pit alignments run across Site 1 and can be traced from air photographs into Site 2; one alignment can be traced over 2 km.

Where excavated, the individual pits were of sub-rectangular shape, 1.5 m x 2 m and up to 1 m deep. A single sherd of early Iron Age pottery is the only dating evidence so far recovered; even when the fills were sieved, evidence for occupation, such as charcoal, was conspicuous by its absence. Pollen from some of the fills indicates that the features existed in grass landscape.

In Site 1 the initial blocks of land continued to be used throughout the Iron Age, with their boundaries becoming marked by ditches later in the period. Enclosed farms (60 m x 60 m) were present in the corner of three of the land units where they were spaced less than 300 m apart. Each farm comprised three roundhouses between 10-14 m in diameter, a small animal pen (16 m x 12 m) and associated features. Preliminary environmental analysis shows the settlements to have been engaged in mixed arable and pastoral farming. This pattern of Iron Age occupation seems to extend into Site 2 where similar enclosed farms appear to lie at the intersections of boundaries.

The series of farms probably continued to the Roman Conquest when new farms were constructed outside two of the Iron Age enclosures in Site 1. The land parcels continued along the main axes of the earlier period. The Romano-British farms were poorly preserved; while they comprised stone-founded buildings, the walls only survived where they had settled into earlier ditches.

Saxon activity is represented by two small surface scatters of pottery, one at the northern end of Site 1 and the other central in Site 2. Excavation of the Site 1 scatter failed to produce tangible remains. Subsequent land use of the valley bottom included ridge-and-furrow cultivation, which was sealed beneath a deposit of alluvial clay up to 1m deep.

WATCHING BRIEFS

Brackley (SP 368584)
I Soden and P Masters

An archaeological watching brief was carried out in summer

1994 during the installation of a new water main within the carriageway of High Street and across the market-place at Brackley. The work was undertaken for Anglian Water Services Ltd. The laying of the water pipes disturbed no significant remains apart from the backfilled cellar of an 18th to 19th century building in the market-place.

Courteenhall (SP 765540)
P Blinkhorn and J Prentice

The excavation of a series of geological test-pits was observed in December 1994. The pits were dug on the eastern side of the M1 motorway north of Quinton Bridge where previous survey had located a few worked flints and magnetic anomalies suggested there might be an archaeological site. No archaeological features or any finds were uncovered however.

Silverstone
P Masters

An archaeological watching brief was carried out for British Gas Plc from December 1993 to March 1994 during the laying of a gas feeder main between Wood Burcote and Pury End, near Silverstone. The groundworks caused no discernible damage to any archaeological levels and no new sites were identified.

Walgrave-Moulton
P Masters, I Soden and M Webster

Archaeological evaluation and watching brief along the pipeline-corridor of a new rising main and sewer being constructed by Anglian Water Services Ltd to the north of Northampton showed that none of the known sites in its vicinity were affected and the topsoil-stripping revealed no new sites.

Wellingborough (SP 897659) (centre)
I Meadows

An archaeological watching brief was maintained for ARC Central during gravel extraction in 38.5ha of land to the south of Turnells' Mill Lane, Wellingborough, on the west bank of the River Nene. The mineral workings revealed a complex of former river channels. Although no direct evidence of ancient human activity was recovered, the study of plant remains from the silts of one palaeochannel suggests that the area was subject to deforestation in prehistoric times.

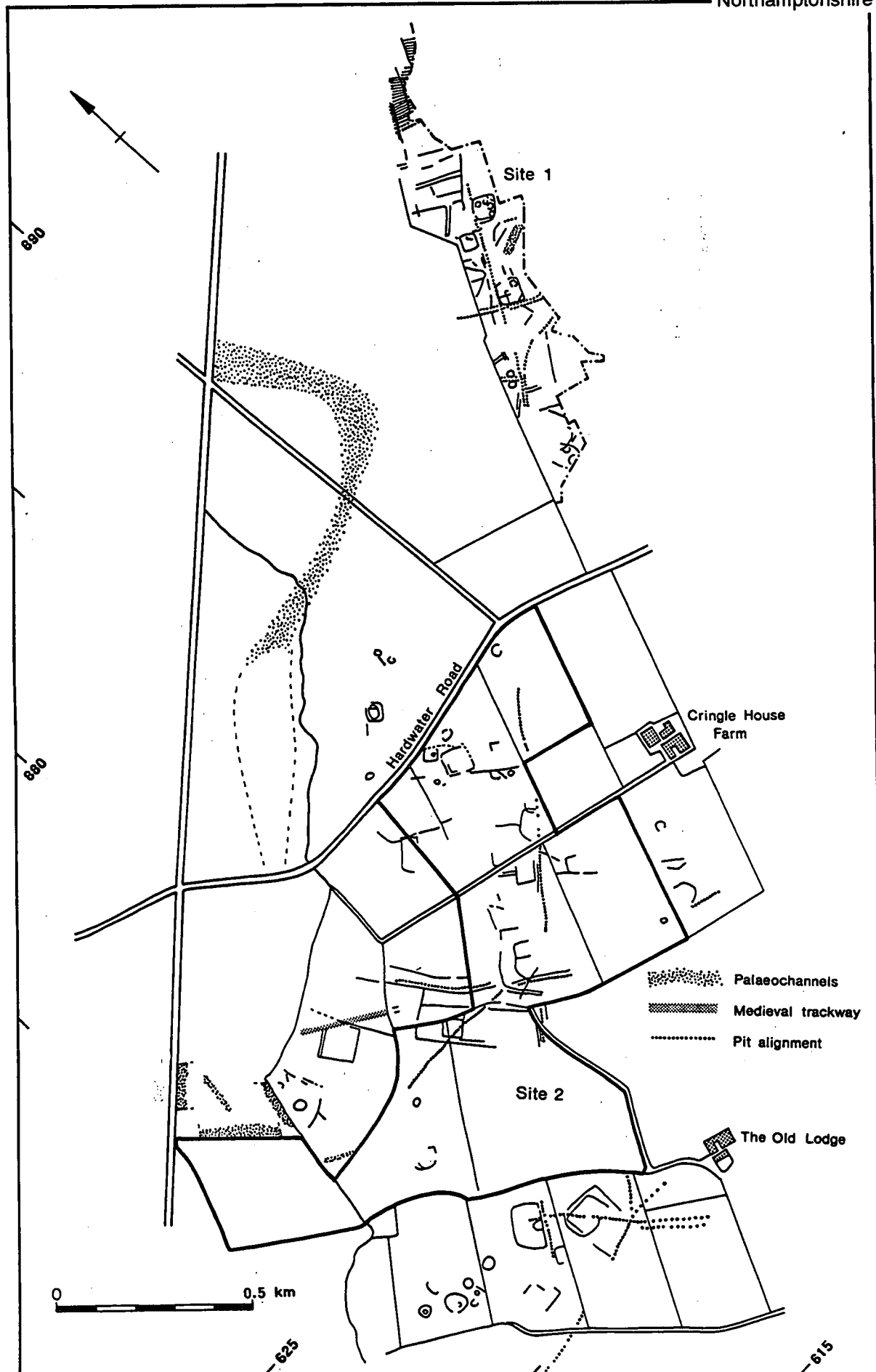


Fig 6. Wollaston, archaeological sites.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Brackley, Oxford Road, land next to Brackley Castle, Tesco's development (SP 583 364)
M R Roberts

The OAU carried out a watching brief next to Brackley Castle, Oxford Road, Brackley on behalf of Tesco Stores Ltd. Medieval walls and pits were seen on the north-west and east of the site. Iron Age features were recorded in the north and centre of the site.

An archaeological excavation on the north part of the site (to be covered by the store buildings) was carried out in 1981-2 by NAU and recovered two phases of a terrace of seven Medieval houses. The terrace of houses at Brackley had stone-lined cellars to the rear and fronted onto a metalled road presumably leading to a gate of the castle. The short lifespan of the site (around 100 years, information from I Meadows NAU) suggests a settlement dependent on the castle which also had a short life. Iron Age activity was observed across the site but was not excavated because this period was not a research priority at the time.

Brackley, land between 13 and 13a Magpie Lane (SP 584 366)
M R Roberts and Alan Hardy

A watching brief was undertaken on terracing for building and carparking on behalf of P & M Construction Ltd. This followed a field evaluation (by Alan Hardy OAU) which produced only limited evidence of medieval activity: sherds of 14th and 15th century pottery were found. There was no evidence of post-medieval building activity which suggests that the area of the evaluation had been given over to orchards or gardens. The site lay north of Magpie Lane and south of the Market Place. Documentary records indicate that this part of the town was developed in the 13th century, but was largely deserted by the 14th century.

During the watching brief a Medieval feature identified in the evaluation was clarified in plan and section as a shallow scoop filled with Medieval material. It was overlain by a Post-Medieval stone garden path which was seen in two places on the site. A modern garden wall had been pushed over onto this path. Prior to development the site had been used for carparking and in preparation for this imported material had been dumped. A concrete drive ran up the west of the site.

Daventry, proposed Tesco site, London Road (SP 5835 6125)
M R Roberts

The OAU carried out a field evaluation at London Road, Daventry on behalf of Tesco Stores Ltd. The site was adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Burnt Walls (a possible Norman earthwork). The evaluation

revealed a 19th-century stone track laid on an old ploughsoil. The trackway and the old ploughsoil had been buried during terracing when the recent industrial estate was built to the north of the site. Some areas of the site had also been truncated perhaps as a result of the terracing.

Higham Ferrers, Kings Meadow (SP 958 693)
Olivia Pierpoint

The OAU undertook a watching brief on 10th October 1994 at the Kings Meadow Development site, Higham Ferrers on behalf of Maynard and Partners. The watching brief was carried out on trial pit excavations, which were part of a geotechnical ground investigation. A total of 8 pits were excavated and all were monitored. Only one pit (Trial pit 6) showed any archaeological features or deposits. It contained a shallow ditch and a pit or possible ditch terminus. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill of the shallow ditch and are thought to be either of Middle Iron Age or mid to late Saxon date.

Irthlingborough, Stanwick gravel pit - watching brief (SP 961 712)
Bob Williams

At Stanwick Pit gravel extraction of an area known as Corney Land, to the north of the Redlands Farm Roman villa, has continued. A prehistoric occupation site was carefully marked out to be excluded from extraction. An ongoing watching brief has failed to reveal any archaeological features to date. This is perhaps not surprising as an evaluation of much of the area had also failed to reveal any significant archaeological remains apart from the prehistoric area which is being preserved. A number of irregular 'pits', containing a peaty deposit, were noted in one part of the gravel pit at the interface of the gravel and the underlying clay. No archaeological artefacts could be found and the pits have been interpreted as the remains of small marshy pools, created by frost effect during a cold period in the Pleistocene.

Naseby, Brookfield, Nutcote (SP 6875 7775)
Andy Mudd

An archaeological evaluation and small-scale excavation were carried out by the OAU on behalf of Haddon Developments. The work was carried out to a brief set by Northamptonshire Heritage and involved a staged programme of evaluation, excavation and post-excavation analysis. The site lay within the modern village of Naseby and contained earthworks recorded by the RCHME as part of the Medieval settlement. The village is thought to have been a polyfocal development, with Nutcote and Naseby forming distinct settlement foci, and the development site was considered to have some potential for addressing this question.

The main features of interest in the evaluation were a series of ditches in the western part of the site containing a small quantity of St Neots-type pottery (10th to 11th century). As a result of this discovery a small 10 x 20 m area in this part of the site was examined by excavation. The excavation revealed a fairly complex sequence of ditches and gullies. The major ditches ran approximately east-west and terminated within the trench. They were up to 2 m wide and 0.8 m deep and appeared to form the northern arm of a possibly rectangular enclosure of three phases. There was no clear evidence of a bank, but possibly traces of a much reduced internal one. There were also smaller ditches and gullies on north-east/south-west and north-south alignments, most of them earlier than the main ditches. The pottery consisted mainly of St Neots-type ware but was in poor condition, and insufficiently plentiful or diagnostic to refine the dating of the ditch sequences. A 10th to early 12th century date was indicated but the excavation was unable to elucidate the nature of the 'enclosure' or the pattern of other activity.

Wellingborough, Ditchford Pit - Excavation of a Roman road (SP 9165 6748)
Bob Williams

Following an evaluation in 1989, in 1994 the OAU excavated a 60 m length of Roman road c 500 m to the north of the Roman town of Irchester. The road lay within ARC's Ditchford Pit and was excavated in advance of gravel extraction as a condition of planning consent. The remainder of the causeway and part of the associated palaeochannels, to the south of the Wellingborough to Bedford railway line, have been preserved within a 60 m wide corridor. An area c 42 x 28 m, centred on the southern end of the visible upstanding earthwork to the north of the railway line, and extending over the projected position of a possible palaeochannel recorded in 1989, was stripped of topsoil and alluvium. A 34 m long 3 m wide trench was excavated southwards along the centre line of the causeway, and a 50 m long 3 m wide trench was further excavated at right angles to this trench at its southern end revealing the full width of the road and its side ditches. A narrower, 18 m long trench was also excavated in an easterly direction to establish the line of the eastern side ditch and to determine whether any of the flanking quarry ditches extended south beyond the surviving part of the agger.

The northern part of the road, which had been surfaced with gravel obtained from quarry pits and ditches to the side, had been built on a 12 m wide 0.6 m high earth agger. To the south the agger sloped down to the contemporary Roman ground level, where it continued as an 11 m wide limestone and ironstone metalled surface. A sequence of drainage ditches, c 15 to 20 m apart, to either side of the road, ran the entire length of the excavated area. Although no physical reason could be ascertained as to why the agger was interrupted, it is suggested that a continuous agger across the Nene Valley would have acted as a dam during periods of inundation. Consequently the road at the lower level would

have both allowed water to pass through and acted as a fording point. Differences in the sedimentation processes to either side of the road indicate that during the Roman period it had formed a major land division, with arable land to the east and predominantly pasture to the west. Very few artefacts were found either in association with the road or within the fills of the side ditches. However, from the limited dating evidence and its resemblance to other dated examples it has been possible to establish with certainty that the road is of Roman date, although it is difficult to determine its actual date of construction.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit is grateful to ARC Eastern for providing the entire funding for the excavation and post-excavation phases of the project. A full report will appear in a future issue of Northamptonshire Archaeology.

Wellingborough, Ditchford gravel pit - watching brief (SP 915 672)
Bob Williams

At the Ditchford Pit a watching brief during the extraction of the area to the north of the Wellingborough to Bedford railway line and east of the excavated part of the Roman road (see above) failed to reveal any archaeological remains. The only features noted were numerous tree-throw holes, some of which contained evidence of burning. A major phase of extraction between the main railway line and the River Nene commenced in the latter part of 1994 and is the subject of an ongoing watching brief. No archaeological features have yet been located, although extraction is progressing eastwards towards the line of the Roman road.

OXFORDSHIRE

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Abingdon, Abbey grounds, children's playground (SU 5010 9715)
M R Roberts

An evaluation was commissioned by the Directorate of Development and Leisure of the Vale of the White Horse District Council in advance of the installation of new playground equipment within the confines of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Abingdon Abbey (Oxon SAM 218). Six hand dug test pits were excavated to the southeast of the Abbey Church. Topsoils from the current use of the site overlay a possible articulated burial, two walls, a stone surface and possible graveyard soils. These deposits probably relate to the infirmary cloister of the Abbey and the earlier settlements of Abingdon. Both Medieval and Roman pottery was recovered; the latter predominated.

Oxfordshire

Abingdon, Abbey Gateway gas pipeline (SU 5085 9707) Alan Hardy

A watching brief in December 1994, during the excavation of a gas pipeline trench across the gateway of the Abbey, located an earlier, though undated, cobbled road surface and wall foundations under the present forecourt of the Guildhall. Documentary sources suggest that these foundations are part of two cottages, built in 1865 for the Police Superintendent and Sergeant at Mace, and demolished in the early 1960s.

Abingdon, Abingdon Business Park, Plot A (former MG works) (SU 4860 9710) M R Roberts

The OAU carried out a field evaluation on the former site of the MG works both within the building where the cars were built and outside; the car park where cars were stored was evaluated by Halpin in 1981-5. There were no significant archaeological deposits. The Larkhill stream, which runs north-south through the site, had been culverted and the shallow valley through which the stream had run had been levelled prior to the construction of the Pavlova Leather works (subsequently the MG works).

Abingdon, Abingdon Business Park, Wyndyke Furlong (SU 4825 9772) M R Roberts

The OAU carried out excavations over a 5.3 ha site at Wyndyke Furlong, Abingdon Business Park. The excavations were c 12800 M² in area. To the southwest a continuation of the immediately adjacent site at Ashville Trading Estate was located. The excavations provide the north and perhaps the northwest limit of the settlement seen at Ashville and the MG Works.

Bronze Age, Early and Middle Iron Age houses and other structures were investigated. Middle Bronze Age postholes, some of which also contained human remains, were found. An Early Iron Age waterhole with waterlogged deposits was found. The Iron Age settlement seemed to have been bounded by a ditch in the northwest of the trench. A Roman ditch, on similar alignment to those found at Ashville and to the south at the MG works, ran across the site. A north-south Roman trackway which was aligned off an Iron Age enclosure was discovered in the northeast of the site. The trackway was not observed in either the trench to the southwest or at Ashville but may have been seen in the MG works in 1981-2. It appeared to be aligned on the cemetery to the south of the MG works. The trackway helps define the structure of this settlement. Ditches which may represent enclosures associated with these settlements were also located to the northwest of the site.

Within the enclosures formed by the Roman ditches were possible Anglo-Saxon halls. At the springline on the edge

of the gravel capping to the terrace an Anglo-Saxon waterhole was found enclosed by a ditch. Post-excavation analysis continues.

Abingdon, Caldecott Recreation Ground, Saxton Rovers Football Club (SU 4948 9658) Jonathan Hiller

The excavations for the foundation trenches of a new clubhouse were monitored for archaeological features and deposits by the OAU. A thick layer of alluvial clay, derived from the local rivers the Ock and the Thames, overlay the natural clay. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Abingdon, 83 Ock Street (SU 4926 9701) M R Roberts

The OAU carried out an excavation on a property which fronted onto the north side of Ock Street. It lay between two listed buildings The Crown and Mr Warrick's Arms. The site had been evaluated by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust. Immediately next to the road at the south end of the site the preservation of archaeological deposits was good with up to 0.5 m of floors and hearths surviving, but only 3 to 4m from the frontage the archaeological sequence was truncated by 15th and 19th century activity.

A north-south ditch formed a 12th century property boundary. The substantial wall of a slightly later house had been built into the ditch. This was one of two adjoining houses. There were remnants of subsequent early Post-Medieval structures which were probably similar to the standing listed buildings to either side. Like both of these, they had their long axes fronting the street. Post-excavation analysis continues.

Abingdon, Summerfield Children's Home, Wootton Road (SU 4935 9766) Duncan Wood

The OAU carried out a watching brief on behalf of Walkplace Ltd, in respect of construction of a Children's Respite Centre. The site had suffered substantial modern disturbance during the construction of the adjacent college building and there were no significant archaeological deposits.

Abingdon, Tilsley Park Development, Dunmore Road (SU 4945 9930) Jonathan Hiller

The OAU is maintaining a watching brief during the construction of a new sports and leisure complex on the outskirts of Abingdon. The total area under development is 16.2 ha, and the site is located between Dunmore Road and

the A34. The project was started in January 1995, and is due to continue into 1996. Several phases of work will be monitored by the OAU during 1995-6. Initial topsoil stripping for a car park area and access roads revealed no archaeological features or finds.

Abingdon, The Vineyard: Area 2 watching brief
(SU 499 9730)
Tim Allen

Following the excavation of a large defensive ditch on this site in 1992, and the discovery of two further defensive ditches in the adjacent Waitrose development in 1993 (SMA 23, 64-6), the opportunity was taken to re-examine this site during construction of a sheltered housing scheme by Oxfordshire County Council.

With the kind permission of the developer a north-south trench c 2 m wide was excavated across the presumed line of the defences between the 1992 and 1993 excavations and revealed no less than four substantial ditches, all on an east-west alignment. Three of these ditches were filled with the same orange-brown silt characteristic of the late Iron Age defensive ditches. The fourth ditch, which cut through the Middle of the Late Iron Age ditches, had a darker fill and is a continuation of a late- or Post-Medieval ditch found crossing Area 3 (see SMA 24, 33 and 35 Figure C). It was not possible to excavate any of the revealed ditches to any great depth, but the observations have confirmed that the defences are at least 34 m across from the lip of the outer ditch to the inside edge of the bank thrown up alongside the innermost ditch.

Bicester, 'Happy Eater', Forte Development
(SP 573 2197)
Jonathan Hiller

The development was situated near the junction of the A421 Oxford Road and the Bicester bypass and, involved the construction of a Happy Eater restaurant, car park, and petrol station. The proposal area lay close to the line of the Alchester-Towcester Roman road, and about 1 km north of the extra-mural suburbs of the walled town of Alchester. The development was monitored by the OAU during March 1994. No archaeological features were observed on the ground or in the trenches cut for building footings. A single sherd of Roman colour-coated ware from an unknown [non-Oxfordshire] source was recovered from the spoilheaps. This was probably of 3rd to 4th century date. Finds recovered from the site by a metal detectorist were submitted to Paul Booth of the OAU for examination. They comprised 21 sherds of pottery (6 possibly Roman - 1 reduced and 5 oxidised coarse ware sherds; 2 Medieval and 13 Post-Medieval), 18 pieces of brick and tile (all Post-Medieval) and 43 metal items. These last included a single Roman coin (GLORIA EXERCITVS (2 standards) dated c AD 330-335) and a very worn and pierced hammered coin, possibly of Elizabeth I. The remainder of

the metal finds consisted of 3 tokens and various copper alloy and lead objects of Post-Medieval date. The finds reflect the presence of Roman occupation nearby rather than on the development site.

Blackthorn, land adjacent to the Royal Oak
(SU 6228 1934)
Alan Hardy

A site adjacent to the Royal Oak public house was evaluated in December 1994 in advance of building work. The site presently contains a derelict cottage and outbuildings. A 3% sample of the area was investigated by trenching. The results indicate low level Medieval activity on the site, but no occupation until the Post-Medieval period, at which point there appears to have been a major effort to alleviate the problems of the high water table by extensive land fill and consolidation. Wall footings revealed in three of the trenches appear to belong to 17th to 18th century buildings which could have been either outbuildings to the present cottage, or an earlier cottage.

Bloxham, The Old School and Manor Hotel
(SP 42960 35520)
Andrew Parkinson

In August 1994 a watching brief was carried out by the OAU at the site of the Old School and Manor Hotel. The mixed National School (PRN. 1054) in Church Street, which was built in 1864, forms part of the development site. The remaining area of the site once formed part of mid 17th century Manor Farm (PRN. 11,780). The site is located within the core of the Medieval village south of the Church. No archaeological features were seen during groundwork disturbance and no residual finds were recovered from any of the later layers.

Reference
Bond, J 'Bloxham, Oxfordshire: Village Survey', *CBA Group 9 Newsletter* 10 (1980) 103-123.

Charlbury, Church of St Mary the Virgin (SP 436 219)
Jonathan Hiller

The OAU maintained a watching brief during renovation work and improvements at the Church of St Mary the Virgin in January and February 1995. Four pits for new radiators were excavated by unit staff. Two pits were located in the north arcade and two in the south arcade. The principal find was a wall of limestone located beneath the present south arcade. The wall had a blocked doorway which is in line with the present south porch. It is known that the present south arcade and the south porch date to the 13th century, and therefore it is likely that the wall found during these excavations formed the south wall of the original Norman church. In the north arcade, enigmatic structural traces, perhaps robbed walls, were found. The north arcade is of

Oxfordshire

Norman date, but may have been added to or constructed upon the wall of a smaller, early Norman church. Several graves were located and partially excavated in the course of the work. The skeletons were not exposed and the grave fills produced no dating evidence.

Churchill, Orchard Close, Sidings Road (SP 2802 2438) M R Roberts

The OAU carried out a watching brief on foundation work for an extension at Orchard Close, Sidings Road, Churchill on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. The site is located 50 m from the east edge of the surviving upstanding earthworks of the shrunken Medieval village of Churchill (SAM 160 PRN 4182) and a Medieval cistern and Medieval artefacts had been found 80 m to the south of the site (PRN 2280). Two possible features were seen in the side of the foundation trench, but they were ill-defined.

Cropredy, Poplars Farm (SP 4675 4695) Andrew Parkinson

In March and April 1993 the OAU undertook a small scale excavation and watching brief in advance of a housing development. The site was situated within the historic core of the village of Cropredy, east of Claydon Road. A sequence of intercutting east-west ditches and at least 38 postholes were located, probably enclosed by the ditches. No obvious outline of a building emerged, but the pattern of postholes suggested a small rectangular building approximately 8 m x 4 m in size.

A total of 16 sherds of pottery were recovered, the majority of these were small, abraded and fragmented, within the date range of 10th to 11th century. The quantity of pottery was not sufficient to provide secure dating although three of the sherds were from postholes. Environmental samples from the ditches contained charred cereals which were indicative of food processing. Two circular pits contained significant quantities of slag.

Deddington, Church of St Peter and St Paul (SP 469 318) Alan Hardy

A watching brief was conducted in January 1994, during the excavation of a drainage/service trench along the south side of the church tower. The evidence suggested that the ground around the tower had been greatly disturbed, either by burials or the construction of the tower itself. Documentary sources indicate that the tower was built in the 17th century, following a major structural collapse of the west end of the Church. The leg bones of a west-east adult inhumation, apparently truncated by the foundation of the south-west tower buttress, were partly revealed in the trench. Although no dating evidence was recovered from the burial, its presence suggests that prior to the 17th century the church did not extend as far to the west as it does today.

Didcot, Ladygrove Estate (SU 5285 9135) Bob Williams

Land to the west of the Ladygrove Estate, Didcot was evaluated in advance of approval for a planning application to construct over two hundred residential properties. A limited desktop study was followed by the excavation of thirty-three machine-dug trenches over an area of approximately 9 ha. It was found that the entire area had been subjected to considerable inundation from the later prehistoric period onwards. This had resulted in places in the accumulation of almost 0.80 m of alluvial deposits. Underlying the alluvium was a buried prehistoric ground surface which contained numerous tree-throw pits. These were generally circular in plan and between 2.0 and 3.5 m across. Some showed evidence of burning. This may have been the result of Neolithic or Bronze Age land clearance, although no dating evidence was obtained.

During the later prehistoric period a topsoil formed over the Gault clay. In the very late Iron Age, or more probably in the Roman period, a simple approximately rectilinear arrangement of small drainage, or boundary, ditches was cut through the topsoil into the underlying clay. All of the ditches were sealed by a thick alluvial deposit. The main episodes of alluviation in the upper Thames floodplain were during the Late Iron Age/Roman and late Saxon/Medieval periods. While none of the ditches contained any artefacts they are believed, on the basis of environmental observations, to be of Roman date and are likely to have been either field ditches or channels dug in an attempt to drain the area.

Dorchester-on Thames, 14 Watling Lane (SU 5763 9434) Ric Tyler

A watching brief during the excavation of foundation trenches and related service trenches for a new domestic building revealed a number of east-west orientated inhumation burials representing a maximum of six individuals. A small assemblage of Roman pottery was recovered from spoil in the area immediately around the exposed burials. The sherds were all of a reduced coarseware fabric. One sherd was of particular interest. It was flagon neck in a reduced ware, and was a copy of a well known colour-coated ware form (Young, 1977, type C8) which can be dated to the range 240 - 400 AD. The location of the burials immediately outside the limits of the Roman town, combined with the finds of 3rd-4th century pottery in the vicinity leads to the conclusion that the remains are of Roman date. The extent of the cemetery was not defined within the area of the excavated trenches.

Drayton, land adjacent to the Highways Depot (SU 4892 9397) A Barclay and C Bell

In October 1994 a small excavation was undertaken by OAU

for W S Atkins on behalf of Oxford County Council. The excavation was just outside the area of prehistoric ring ditches, pits, burials and Saxon settlement excavated by E T Leeds and was situated only 55 m east of the Sutton Courtenay cursus (Drayton A).

The evaluation by OAU, in the preceding August, had located a Neolithic pit and part of a linear ditch of probable Roman date. These features were fully examined during excavation and a second late Neolithic pit was revealed. Both pits contained pottery (including Fengate Ware), worked flint, animal bones and carbonized plant remains. The excavated ditch produced both Roman and Saxon pottery and animal bone. This feature could be a continuation of a north-south ditch which was cut by a Saxon sunken-featured building excavated by E T Leeds (1947).

Reference

Leeds ET, 1947, 'A Saxon Village at Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire', *Archaeologia* XCII

Ducklington, St Bartholomew's Church (SP 358 076) -
Brian Durham

A watching brief in May 1994 recorded drainage trenching around the entire church except for the tower (west end). Sherwood and Pevsner describe St Bartholomew's as a 'Transitional Period' nave and chancel to which first the south then the north aisle, and finally a tower were added. Details of the junction of the south aisle and chancel were recorded but it was not possible to determine the sequence of development at this point. The most significant contribution was the discovery that the north aisle, including its diagonal buttresses, is of integral build at footing level with the chancel; the north porch had been added, although this was not evident at footing level.

It is significant that the masonry generally suggests that the ground level has risen only comparatively little since the 12th century. This may mean that much of the raising of the churchyard above the surrounding roads had happened before that date. If that were so, the likely explanation is that St Bartholomew's was a busy burial ground before the 12th century, and therefore there maybe a Saxon church underneath the present structure.

Eynsham, 39 High Street (SP 4343 0929)

Bob Williams

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the OAU during the redevelopment of the site of a former garage. The general area is known to be rich in archaeological remains, and previous work within the grounds of The Shrubby (Chambers 1976), on the opposite side of the High Street, has revealed Roman features and Anglo-Saxon buildings. The results of the watching brief suggest that little activity, other than the digging of pits had ever taken place on the development site. One certain, and

one possible, Medieval pit, seven Post-Medieval pits and one ditch of possible Medieval date were located, sealed beneath a substantial build-up of garden soil. The function of these pits is difficult to establish. All had steep sides and several were probably very large and over 2 m deep. None contained a sufficient volume of artefacts to suggest that they were primarily for the disposal of refuse. It is possible that some may have been small quarries for gravel and sand for use in the immediate vicinity. Relatively few unstratified sherds of Medieval date were found either in the topsoil or redeposited in any of the later pits, suggesting that there was no Medieval occupation on the site. No features or artefacts pre-dating the Medieval period, with the exception of a single Romano-British sherd, were found. Perhaps surprisingly no evidence for either a Medieval or Post-Medieval building was noted along the High Street frontage. The overall impression gained from the watching brief was that the site had been a garden throughout the Post-Medieval and perhaps even Medieval periods.

Reference

Chambers, R A, 1976, 'Eynsham, Oxon. 1975', *Oxoniensia* 41, 355-6.

Faringdon, Bowling Green Farm, Stanford Road

(SU 3105 9485)

Mick Parsons

The OAU carried out an archaeological evaluation of 11 ha of land at Bowling Green Farm in advance of a proposed extension to mineral workings at the request of Hills Aggregates Ltd. While no archaeological sites had been identified within the proposed extraction area, a substantial Romano-British settlement was excavated by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in 1987 and 1989 c 200 m to the north. This area contained dense Iron Age and Romano-British occupation including stone buildings, kilns, ovens and wells. Prehistoric trackways and field systems, to the east of the area, have been recorded from aerial photographs. 22 trenches, representing a 1% sample of the area, were excavated. These revealed considerable evidence of plough disturbance of the underlying geological strata, and this was particularly marked on the limestone on the higher ground to the south. Several linear features of Roman date were located on the west side of the area, all sealed beneath a thick layer of hillwash. It is most likely that these represent outlying boundaries of the Roman settlement to the north. The very sparse quantity of Roman pottery or other artefacts also supports the interpretation of these features as field boundaries and further emphasises the distance of these ditches from any habitation areas. The only other feature seen was a modern boundary in the far north of the field.

Fringford, Fringford Lodge (SP 5960 2585)

Paul Booth

A small scale evaluation was carried out at Fringford Lodge, some 3.5 km north of the centre of Bicester, in advance of

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the construction of a new driveway, turning area and garage for the existing house. The site lies some 100 m from the Alchester-Towcester Roman road. A 19th century account described the discovery of a Roman site here, including a building with a mosaic pavement and large quantities of coins from an adjacent area, but the precise location of these finds appeared to be uncertain (*VCH* 1939, 320). Geophysical survey was hampered by modern features and poor soil conditions. It was inconclusive but generalised anomalies suggested a rectilinear arrangement on the same north-south alignment as foundations subsequently seen in excavation. The excavation of a number of small holes along the proposed driveway route demonstrated the widespread presence of Roman deposits, or features, including stone structural elements aligned approximately north-south at two points and rubble over a possible mortar floor elsewhere.

The principal finds were Roman pottery and tile and a single late 3rd century coin. The majority of the material appears to be of late Roman date. The character of the site remains uncertain, but it is most likely to have been a villa.

Fritwell, East Street (SP 5281 2948)

Rachel Morse

A watching brief was undertaken by the OAU in November 1994 during development of a small area of land next to the Primary School. It was thought that the frontage of the development might contain a continuation of Aves Ditch, an ancient linear ditch (SMR No. 8925). Reduction of the site and excavation of construction service trenches were monitored, but no evidence of Aves Ditch or any other archaeological features or deposits were located.

Garsington, St Mary's Church (SP 458 203)

Alan Hardy

A watching brief in December 1994, during the excavation of drainage trenches and soakaways, revealed one 19th century burial west of the tower, and evidence of extensive earlier burial activity in the immediate area, although there are no grave markers west of the tower today. There is nearly 1.5 m of overburden above the natural subsoil west of the tower. Although this is almost certainly due to the burial activity, the possibility that there has been considerable levelling up of the east-west slope to form the terraced west end of the churchyard cannot be entirely ruled out.

Glympton, Glympton Park Estate (SP 423 230)

Alan Hardy.

A major building and landscaping programme within the Park, which encompasses the site of the original village of Glympton, necessitated the excavation of an area west of the surviving church in January 1994. This area was likely to include at least part of the Medieval village. Evidence of

Post-Medieval estate buildings was found, sealing Medieval plot boundary walls, suggesting that the centre of the village possibly lay to the west, under what is now the walled garden. A small group of pits and post-holes, containing Iron Age pottery and daub with wattle marks, were also revealed in the west half of the site. These may indicate an Iron Age settlement, possibly up the slope to the west. As the site lies on a steep scarp above the River Glyme, and is secure and sheltered, the likelihood for potential for evidence of occupation in the Iron Age is high.

Goring, St Thomas of Canterbury Church (SU 601 501)

Alan Hardy

A watching brief in November 1994 during the excavation of drainage trenches along the exterior of the south wall of the nave and the west porch revealed no significant archaeological deposits, other than a scatter of demolition material in the topsoil. This demolition material could either derive from the post-dissolution demolition of the Priory, or the backfilling of the archaeological excavations carried out in 1892-3 by Mr Percy Stone.

Great Rollright, St Andrews Church (SP 3268 3148) -

Jonathan Hiller

In March 1994 the OAU undertook a rapid field evaluation in advance of the proposed extension of the graveyard of St. Andrews Church to the south into a paddock. Six test pits were excavated in the paddock, and natural cornbrash limestone was identified in each pit c 0.50-0.60 m below the present ground surface. One sherd of Medieval pottery and several Post-Medieval sherds were recovered from a test pit cut through a former flower bed. No archaeological features were identified in any of the test pits.

Harwell, Holywell Cottage (SU 492 889)

Graham D. Keevill

A watching brief was undertaken at the request of Oxfordshire County Council's Archaeology Service, who had been informed of the discovery of metal objects during groundworks for the construction of a garden shed. The objects were all Victorian or modern and largely consisted of major structural fittings such as iron window frames along with buckets and other objects. Medieval and Post-Medieval finds were conspicuously absent. It is likely that the dumping occurred during a previous renovation of the cottage.

Kidlington, land south of Lock Crescent (SP 493 126) -

Mike Parsons

An evaluation carried out in August 1994 by the OAU revealed scant amounts of prehistoric activity, consisting of a possible pit and several linear features, in the east end of

the proposed development area. Other linear ditches, which have been interpreted as ?Medieval and Post-Medieval field boundaries, were seen across the development areas.

A small scale excavation is at present going ahead in advance of the development at the eastern end of the site. So far this has revealed a small penannular feature 8 m across with a possible entrance on the western side. This is surrounded by a much larger enclosure. Although at present little direct dating evidence has been recovered, the features appear to be early prehistoric rather than later. This dating is based on the recovery of a flint scatter consisting of some 250 struck flints surrounding the enclosure

Milton, Milton Cottage (SU 4870 9225)

Graham D. Keevill

A watching brief was undertaken at the request of Oxfordshire County Council's Archaeology Service, who had been informed that a quantity of animal bone had been found, apparently in a pit, during groundworks for the construction of a house extension. The initial stage of groundwork had involved removal of existing topsoil, exposing (and probably truncating) the natural gravel surface. The pit was found at the junction of two foundation trenches on the north side of the extension area. Perhaps half of the sub-circular pit had been exposed, and this was rapidly cleaned and recorded. The pit would have had a diameter of approximately 0.5 m, and a depth of perhaps 0.4 m. It was filled with a light medium-brown silty sand, which was sealed by a 0.02 m thick lens of lime mortar. No dating evidence was recovered.

The groundworks had also involved the excavation of more than 1 m of soil from the south side of the foundation area. Examination of the exposed face here revealed two V-profiled, silty sand-filled features cutting the gravel and sealed by the topsoil. No finds were recovered. If these were linear features, they might extend southwards into the adjacent playing field.

Nuneham Courtenay, Lower Farm (SP 538005)

Graham D. Keevill and Mark Cole

The Ancient Monuments Laboratory continued the survey of a Roman kiln site at Nuneham Courtenay which had been discovered during archaeological work on a Thames Water Pipeline (SMA 22, 49). The first phase of magnetometer survey took place in a pasture field and was noted in SMA (23, 72-4 and Fig. 8). The second phase of geophysical survey was undertaken in arable fields to the north and east of the area surveyed in 1992 and again involved magnetometry (Fig 1).

The suspected eastward continuation of the kiln site has been emphatically proved. The trackway discovered in 1992 turns to the east, presumably running towards the main Roman road between the Roman towns of Alchester and Dorchester on Thames. More enclosures can be seen and

many more ring ditches are also apparent. Again there are hints of multiple phases of enclosure. The ridge and furrow is also visible, as is a modern service trench. Undoubtedly the most remarkable result of the new work is the evidence for the proliferation and distinctive grouping of kilns.

The geophysical response appears to be fading on all sides of the survey areas. It is by no means clear, however, that this represents the actual edges of the site (or sites, as the complex appears to be multi-period). The fall-off may simply reflect diminishing magnetic enhancement from kiln debris. Fieldwalking is due to take place in the summer of 1995, and this should complement the geophysical results obtained so far. It is possible that further geophysical work will be undertaken. Trial excavations may still be necessary, both to determine the condition of features in the arable field, and to confirm the limits of the site(s).

Oxford, Barton, 102 Bayswater Road (SP 58880 08025) - M R Roberts

The OAU carried out a watching brief at 102 Bayswater Road, Barton on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. The occupant, Mr Saunders, had discovered two bones while excavating his drive and had alerted the police. The bones were a human tibia and fibula and were thought by the police to be more than 300 years old. Fragments of two further human leg bones were recovered with more modern material from an old ploughsoil; there were no archaeological features. Further excavation recovered more bone (animal) and Roman pottery. The Roman road from Bicester to Dorchester-on-Thames runs through the garden of the house some 3 m from the new drive.

Oxford, 18 Broad Street ('Flaggs') (SP 5138 0640)

C. Bell

The OAU undertook a small archaeological evaluation at the back of Flaggs clothes shop, 18, Broad Street, Oxford, in July 1994. The work was carried out on behalf of Berman Gueds Architectural partnership, as part of the conditions of planning permission to extend the ground floor of the shop back to the line of the Medieval city wall.

The 13th century town wall forms the south boundary of the property, and the west side of a bastion lies within the southeast corner of the development area. Loggan's map of Oxford in 1675 and Taylor's map of 1750 appear to show that there was also an outer city wall at this point, similar to that at New College and this would run though the area of the proposed development.

Two small connecting trenches were excavated by hand, in an area some 5 m to the north of the city wall. Excavation was limited to a maximum depth of 1.2 m. Two phases of a stone built structure, projecting back to the city wall, were located only 0.20 m below the present ground surface. The walls were surrounded by intercutting rubbish pits,

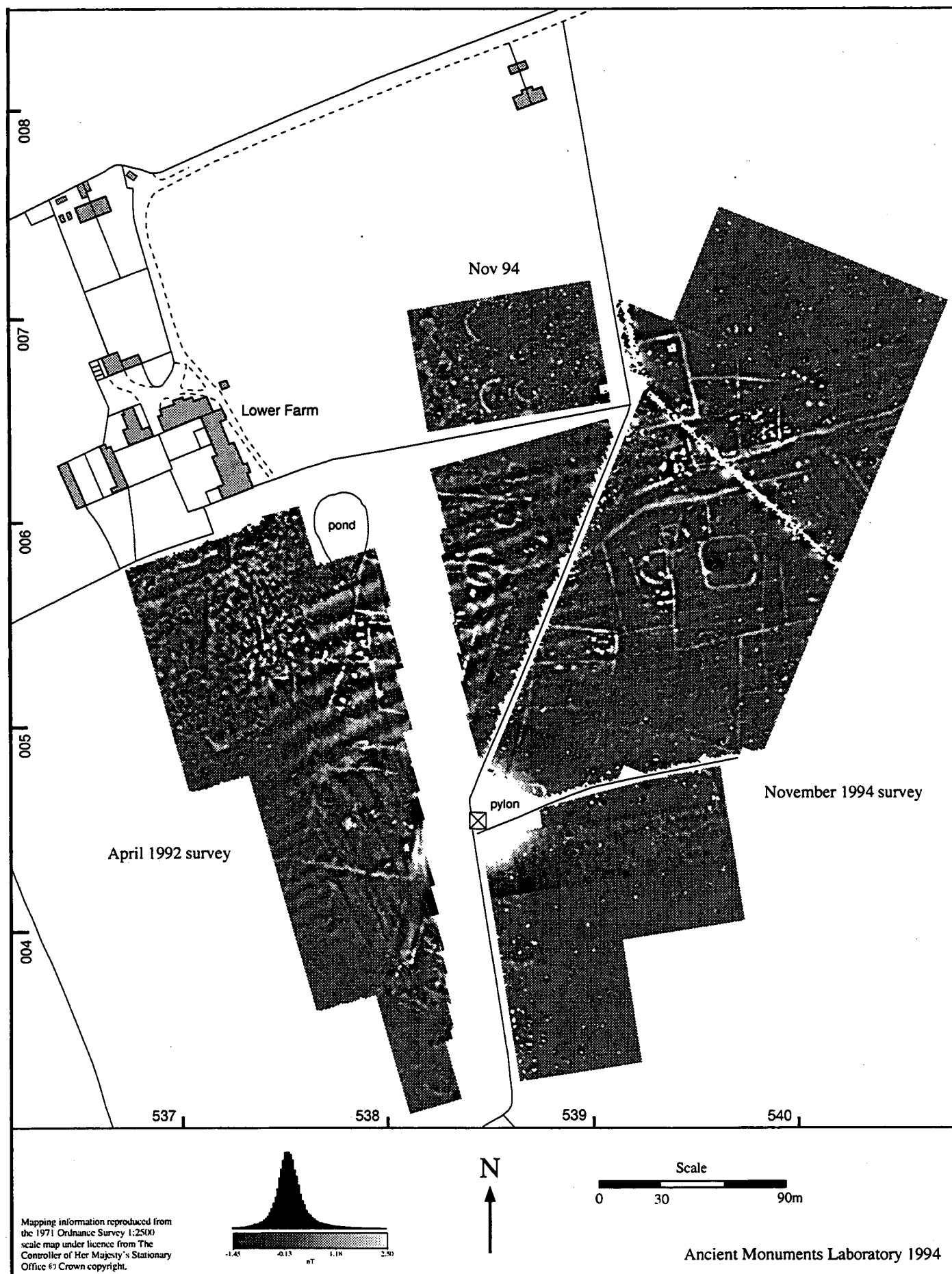


Fig 1. Nuneham Courtenay: plot of the 1992-4 magnetometer surveys (Ancient Monuments Laboratory 1994)

containing large quantities of 17th and 18th century clay pipes and pottery. Part of one of the walls had also been robbed during this period, indicating that the walls were no later than 17th century in date, although their exact date could not be established due to the limited depth of excavation.

It has been suggested that during the 16th and 17th centuries some of the owners of plots in Ship Street, which projected back to the city wall, broke through the wall to extend their properties further to the north. The main evidence that this practice took place is derived from the observation that some property boundaries in Ship Street appear to project though to the north of the city wall. If this practice did occur it is possible that the walls found in the evaluation represent the remains of boundary walls which defined the northern limit of these extended plots. However, it is also possible that the walls were simply the foundations of lean-to structures, built up against the north face of the city wall.

No evidence for the existence of an outer city wall was found in the trenches excavated, though it is still possible that it survives at a lower level.

Oxford, Churchill Hospital (SP 5453 0567)

Paul Booth

A watching brief was carried out in February 1994 during earthmoving for the construction of a new Headquarters building for the Ambulance Service. The site lies no more than about 50 m south of the nearest known kiln at the south end of the complex Roman pottery production site examined at various times in the 1950s and 1960s and excavated in the 1970s and 1980s in advance of other development within the hospital. No Roman features were observed, however, and only three pottery sherds were recovered.

Oxford, Cowley, Garsington Road, J Block, former Cowley Car Works (SP 5530 0355)

Andrew Parkinson

From January to May 1994 a watching brief was undertaken by the OAU during the construction of three separate developments situated west of the Garsington Road and south of the Eastern Bypass on part of the site of J Block of the former Cowley Car Works. Previously Romano-British finds have been recovered from the line of the Eastern Bypass. The Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester on Thames passes the site c 750 m to the east and the southern and eastern area around Oxford represents an important site for Roman pottery kilns (Young, 1977).

The main development consisted of a new Tesco superstore. The watching brief located no archaeological features. Over most of the site there was some disturbance and levelling associated with the former Cowley Works and earlier ploughing was observed along the eastern area of the site adjacent to Garsington Road. Total finds from these sites

amounted to 11 small sherds of pottery all from an earlier ploughsoil. Three sherds were of Medieval date, the rest Romano-British, with two or three of these perhaps of Late Iron Age or early Roman date. The Roman pottery, was very abraded and probably indicates a manuring pattern rather than being related to any features.

Reference

Young, C J (1977) The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region. *BAR* 43

Oxford, Cowley, Garsington Road, J Block, former Cowley Car Works (centred SP 554 037)

Paul Booth

A low level watching brief was maintained between March and May 1994 during multiple redevelopment of the site of J Block of the former Cowley Car Works. Much of the site had been disturbed and levelled during the construction of the works. There was localised evidence for possible ploughsoils of Roman and Medieval date, but no ancient features were observed. A few small pottery sherds were recovered.

Oxford, Headington Bypass (A40)

(from SP 533 088 to SP 584 080)

Tim Allen

An evaluation was carried out on behalf of the Department of Transport between June and November 1993 along the line of the proposed A40 Headington Bypass, part of the North of Oxford improvement. The evaluation involved three stages: fieldwalking, geophysical survey (magnetometer supplemented by magnetic susceptibility readings) and trial trenching. Three main areas of activity were found, plus a number of areas of lesser significance. (Fig 2).

Roman features were common either side of the Bayswater Road (SP 5595 0828), which closely follows the line of the Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester on Thames. West of the modern road a group of boundary ditches ran obliquely back from the road line, and within the enclosures so formed was a stratigraphic build up of Roman material including dry stone footings and hearths. Four copper alloy coins of late 3rd and 4th century date were found in the ditches west of the road. A short stretch of the Roman road is still visible as a hollow way immediately east of the modern road, and to the east a late Roman well and further pits and ditches were found 150 m from the road. A natural valley proved to contain a Roman pond, which contained waterlogged plant remains indicative of cereal cultivation.

The occupation appears to have begun in the late 1st or early 2nd century, and was originally predominantly on the west side of the Roman road. Later Roman activity was more widespread, and the bulk of the pottery is of this date. A very high proportion of the Roman pottery was mortaria sherds,

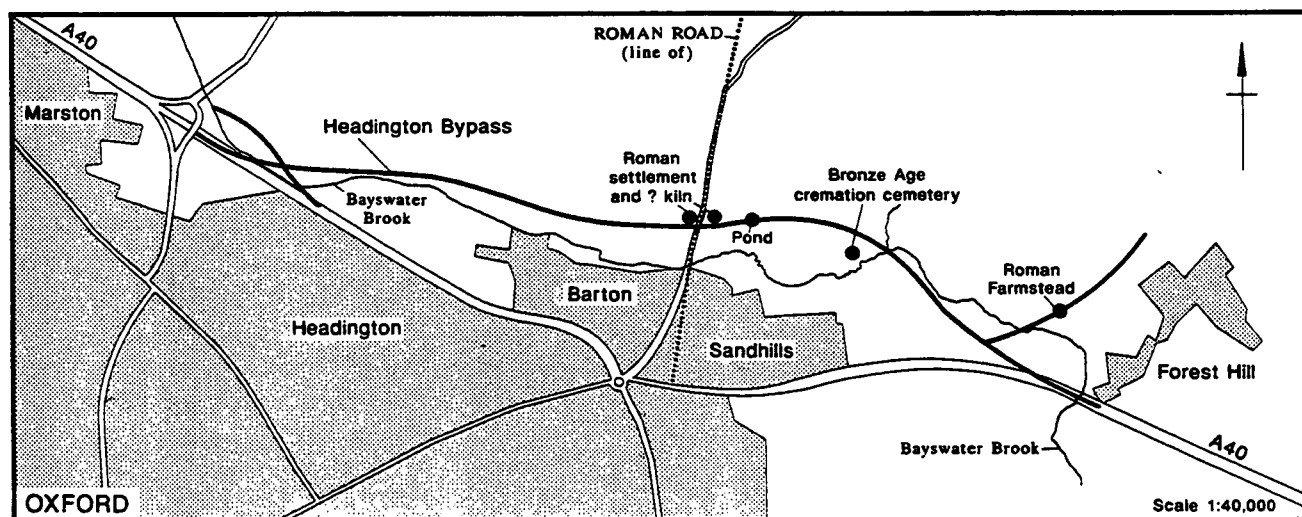


Fig 2. Oxford, Headington Bypass: Map of proposed route of the A40 showing identified archaeological sites.

and the finds also included kiln debris, suggesting a production site in the immediate vicinity.

On a spur of limestone overlooking the Bayswater Brook (SP 5675 0815) a group of small pits and postholes was found. A selection of the features was excavated, and proved to include three unurned cremations, two of which were identifiable as adult and juvenile respectively. The features were severely truncated by ploughing. A total of 54 sherds of shell and quartz-tempered pottery was recovered, suggesting a Late Bronze Age date.

A second Roman settlement was found on a south-facing slope overlooking the Bayswater Brook some 1.6 km to the east at SP 5780 0780, just west of Forest Hill. The excavated features consisted of several ditches, pits and postholes, a layer of stone cobbling with Roman pottery upon it, and a circular well hit by the geotechnical survey team, from which finds were salvaged. The small pottery assemblage included material dating from the late 1st to the 4th century, with three vessels of 2nd-3rd century date and a pair of leather shoes from the well.

For the present the proposed road has been shelved; a copy of the full records has been deposited with the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Oxford, Head of the River (c SP 51470562)

Paul Booth

Three small trenches were excavated at 41-43 St Aldates and the Head of the River car park, Oxford, in June-July 1994 in advance of development of student accommodation for Hertford College. The site lies immediately east of the Medieval and earlier crossing of the Thames at Folly Bridge.

In Trench 3, in the basement of 42 St Aldates, a sequence of river channel fills probably dating from the late Saxon period was overlain by dumping which probably served to raise the site above general river level. Above this were floor

layers dating to the late 12th century at the earliest. A subsequent sequence of fragmentary Medieval deposits was overlain by a substantial stone foundation, perhaps of 17th century date; this was truncated by the excavation of the 19th century cellar.

The presence of a palaeochannel was also demonstrated further east and south, with silting or reclamation gradually extending eastwards towards Trench 1 and southwards towards Trench 2 from the line of Grandpont, defining the confluence of the north-south Trill Mill Stream (at the eastern margin of the site) with what is now a major channel of the Thames.

The channel bed in Trench 2 was at a much higher level than the bottom of channel sediments in Trenches 1 and 3 and it is possible that the channel did not extend over Trench 2 until the later Saxon period. Part of a waterlogged timber structure of 14th century date was found in Trench 1 relatively close to the line of the Trill Mill Stream towards the eastern edge of the site. This may have been a streamside structure. Reclamation or dumping sequences in the area of the former channel in Trench 2 were also of 14th century (and later) date, with temporary bank features partly reinforced by driven stakes.

The only Post-Medieval structure away from the line of St Aldates was an east-west foundation of very large limestone blocks in Trench 1. This is almost certain to have been the foundation for the 19th century Kings Row, located on maps at precisely this point and only demolished in the 1960s.

Oxford, No 105 High Street (SP 5105 0604)

Jonathan Hillier

The basement of 105 High Street, Oxford, was renovated in December 1995. The building has belonged to Oriel College since the 16th century and is a tenement within the original planned Saxon town. The OAU excavated a small trench in

the north-west corner of the basement. The trench measured 1.45 m by 0.72 m, and was dug to a depth of 1.06 m, where natural gravel was located. The top of the natural was encountered 3.23 m below the present street level.

Two features, interpreted as pits, were identified within the confines of the excavated trench. The larger pit contained substantial quantities of burnt daub, and the upper fill of the pit contained a sherd of shell tempered pottery probably dating to the early Medieval period.

The limited nature of the investigation makes overall interpretation difficult. The pit features may have functioned as storage pits before being infilled. As on other central Oxford sites, early rubbish (or cellar) pits near the street frontage often contain burnt daub from late-Saxon timber-framed buildings. These buildings are typically preserved below the floors of later Medieval cellars.

Oxford, Holywell Ford (SP 5211 0652)

Jonathan Hiller

The construction of a new block of squash courts was monitored by the OAU during January and February 1995. The development was sited adjacent to the access road to Holywell Ford. The date of the road to Holywell Ford is uncertain, but may have its origins in the Medieval period. Foundation and service trenches were monitored, but no archaeological finds or features were seen.

Recent excavations by the OAU at Holywell uncovered Medieval deposits associated with Holywell Mill at a level of 56 m OD. The present excavations bottomed at c 56.50 m OD, and cut into exclusively made ground of recent origin. It is possible that Medieval horizons were therefore unseen.

Oxford, Iffley, Church of St. Mary the Virgin

(SP 5206 0304)

Jonathan Hiller

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Iffley was renovated in January and February, 1995. The OAU maintained a watching brief during the course of the works. Within the church several brick built vaults were observed, all probably of Victorian date. Victorian modifications to the floor of the chancel (probably carried out by J C Buckler in 1858) were recorded. Externally, the construction of a new drain around the church enabled a photographic record of the church footings to be made. Several phases of construction activity were observed, including buttresses added to the chancel in the 14th century.

Oxford, Jowett Walk, Balliol College Masters Field

(SP 518 066)

C Bell

At the beginning of November 1994 the OAU undertook a

field evaluation on the site of Balliol College Master's field, Jowett Walk, Oxford, in respect of a condition attached to a planning consent for new student accommodation. The particular concerns of the evaluation were to locate any ditches relating to Oxford's Civil War defence and to observe whether Medieval ridge and furrow and associated field boundaries survived. The evaluation consisted of three trial trenches, 15 m long x 1.55 m wide, which were positioned within the area of the proposed development.

The only archaeological feature to be found was a large northeast-southwest aligned ditch, some 2 m wide and 1.50 m deep. The only finds to be retrieved from this feature were two sherds of 17th century pottery, which came from the top of the ditch. The size, character, and the apparent date of the ditch appeared to suggest that it is related to Oxford's Civil War defence, but the position of the ditch appears to be further to the south than any of those which appear on de Gomme's map of the defence (1644) and the lack of finds from the lower fills and the ditch's stratigraphic relationships to other deposits, both cast doubt about its date and function.

Apart from modern disturbances, the only other deposits to be located were buried ploughsoils, indicating that this had been an area of cultivation. This showed a very marked contrast from the land usage seen on the south side of Jowett Walk, where excavations by the OAU in 1993 located a number of Medieval buildings and pits, dating from the 12th to 14th centuries, along with Post-Medieval pits and a garden wall (see below). Therefore, even though Jowett Walk was not built until the 1870s the character of the deposits to either side of the road appear to be very different. This suggests that the road was built on the line of an existing boundary, though this may simply have been the limit of the plots projecting from Holywell Street.

References

De Gomme's map of Oxford 1644 (*Oxoniensia* 1 1936)

Loggan's map of Oxford 1675

Taylor's map of Oxford 1750

Davis's map of Oxford 1797

Oxford, Jowett Walk (SU 519 065)

M R Roberts

An archaeological evaluation of the site of proposed new student accommodation carried out for Merton College by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in February 1993 located parts of two late 12th to early 13th century buildings and 14th century pits in the area of Block C as well as Medieval ploughsoils and Post-Medieval pits and garden walls (*SMA* 24, 45).

Excavations in May 1993 under the east end of the building footprint of Block C revealed parts of at least seven and perhaps as many as nine 12th to 14th century buildings, including at least three half-cellars, sealed by late Medieval ploughsoil. The site had been divided into two properties

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since the Medieval period, and although the property boundary had moved slightly over the years the recently demolished wall between the two plots was close to the Medieval line. No clear trace of the 17th century cockpit or the bowling green shown in this area on Loggan's Map of 1675 was discovered.

Ditches, a large Medieval stone-lined cesspit and four other extremely large pits were recorded in the course of a watching brief following excavation. Post excavation analysis continues.

Oxford, Littlemore, Gwyneth Road Allotments

(SP 5340 0275)

Olivia Pierpoint

The OAU undertook a watching brief on 22nd December 1994, at the allotments at Gwyneth Road, Littlemore on behalf of Ealing Family Housing Association. The watching brief was carried out on test pit excavations, which were part of a geotechnical ground investigation. The County Site and Monuments Record shows Roman pottery from near the area and Roman kilns have also been excavated in the vicinity. A total of 13 test pits were excavated, and all were successfully monitored, but no evidence of any archaeological features or deposits were observed.

Oxford, Oriel College, St Mary's Quad (SP 525 065)

Alan Hardy

In July 1994, part of the south range of St Mary's Quad was underpinned. It was thought that the range lay across the line of an earlier east defence, dating from before the extension of the Saxon town eastwards in the 11th century. During the underpinning, a watching brief identified a series of Medieval pits, dating to the 11th-13th centuries. No evidence of an earlier defensive ditch was found, suggesting that it must lie either to the west or east of the present site. Given the lack of material pre-dating the 11th century, it would be reasonable to suggest that the Saxon defensive ditch lay to the west of the site, closer to the line of present day Oriel Street.

Oxford, Oseney Abbey (SP 5043 0586)

Paul Booth

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief were carried out at the site of the former Cadena Bakery in Mill Street in advance of and during redevelopment of the site by Laing Homes. The site lies within the western part of the precinct of Oseney Abbey, founded as an Augustinian priory in 1129. This foundation, the church and cloister of which lie to the northeast of the present site, grew to be the largest and most powerful monastic establishment in Oxford. Parts of the present site were examined on a small scale in the 1970s and early 1980s (Sharpe, 1985). Much of the site lies on what at the time of the priory foundation was still an island with a channel running to the east. This seems to have been filled and the abbey precinct extended to the west at

some time in the 13th century. The area thereafter comprised an outer west court of the abbey precinct, occupied by a range of buildings running roughly north-south parallel to the line of the Medieval and modern mill stream. A small upstanding fragment of this range survives (and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Further buildings of uncertain plan and function lay to the east of this range.

Three small trenches were partly excavated to define the level and quality of surviving archaeological deposits. The earliest structural traces located were probably of 13th century date. At the south end of the site were two buildings perhaps with an industrial or kitchen function; they were separated by a narrow paved area. Further north a north-south wall line which can be related to the extant late medieval fragment of the west range of the abbey (and which was not removed until the 18th century) superseded two earlier structures, the earliest again of 13th century date. Outside these structures to the west was an area used for pit digging.

Parts of some of the structures had been extensively robbed and the site levelled in the Post-Medieval period, but preservation was generally good. A 19th century orchard soil lay above the medieval features. The redevelopment consists of structures on piled foundations set above the surviving archaeological deposits. Limited disturbance of these deposits by service trenches will be monitored and the trenches excavated archaeologically where appropriate.

Reference

Sharpe, J, 1985, 'Oseney Abbey, Oxford: archaeological investigations, 1975-1983', *Oxoniensia* 50, 95-130

Oxford, Paradise Square (SP 5100 0597)

Alan Hardy

An evaluation of the southeast corner of Paradise Square, undertaken in July 1994, revealed evidence of the extramural activity in the area, beginning in the late Saxon period with a possible leat, taking water from the Trill Mill Stream to the south. This was sealed by a regular alignment of shallow gullies, which could relate to the period in the 12th and 13th centuries when the area was leased from the Greyfriars by the Friars of the Sack. Little late Medieval material was found, suggesting that the area remained as a secluded part of the Greyfriars 'Paradise' until the Dissolution. In the 17th and 18th centuries the site became first a pleasure garden, and later a market garden of considerable renown. Loggan's Map of 1675 shows a formal arrangement of box hedges and retreats. Evidence of the post Medieval gardens was indicated by a deep cultivation layer, but no details of the garden's layout were identified.

Oxford, Rewley Abbey (SP 5067 0645)

David Wilkinson

Evaluation by the OAU took place on the eastern part of the site of Rewley Abbey in November 1993 (for Oxford City

Council) and on the western part in March 1994 (for Stanhope Properties PLC). The Cistercian house of Rewley was founded in 1280 by Edmund Earl of Cornwall, in memory of his father Richard, as a *studium*, i.e. a place for monks to live while they studied at the university; the institution also took on (at the insistence of the Cistercian order) the status of an Abbey proper. The site lies on the western outskirts of the Medieval city, close to the modern railway station.

Previous work by the OAU had located an aisled building on the south of the site containing burials. Further investigation of the heavily robbed stone walls showed this building, which must be the Abbey Church, to have been at least 45 m long and 15 m wide. No evidence for any transepts was found. To the north of the church, parts of the west and north ranges were also investigated; a trench across the moat (which surrounded the site) outside the north range also revealed the foundations of a reredorter block which spanned the moat. Outside the moat, to the west of the site, the fairly flimsy stone walls of a barn or other agricultural structure were discovered.

Trenching against the riverside wall to the east showed that this is probably a 15th century feature, and is associated with reclamation of a wet area, suggesting that the Abbey was expanding. Post-excavation analysis is ongoing.

Oxford, St Anthony's College, Woodstock Road
(SP 5102 0739)
Mick Parsons

The OAU carried out an evaluation at the request of the city planning authority. The evaluation consisted of three machine dug trenches. All the trenches revealed that the proposed development area had been quarried for gravel at some time in the 19th century. In addition to Post-Medieval finds, large quantities of Roman pottery dating from the late 3rd to 4th centuries, two coins of similar date and four 1st century coins were recovered from infilling deposits. The large quantities of late Romano-British material were not associated with any structural evidence, which would have been destroyed by the quarrying.

Oxford, St Christopher's School (SP 545 045)
Alan Hardy

A watching brief in November 1994, during building works in the grounds of the school, identified one 12th century ditch, possibly associated with the manor of the Knights Templar to the southeast, and the foundations of a 19th century boundary wall. It seems likely that the development area has served as pasture until this century.

Oxford, St Cross Road (SP 520 066)
Alan Hardy

In May 1994, the evaluation of a site between St Cross

Churchyard and the lane leading to Holywell Ford revealed evidence of extensive quarrying in the Medieval period, destroying any evidence of earlier occupation, which was suggested by residual sherds of later Saxon pottery.

Initially the quarrying appeared to have respected building plots alongside St Cross Road. Although no structures were revealed, 13th century features, characteristic of domestic rubbish pits were found. By the 16th century, as indicated by Agas' Map, the whole area up to the road had been cleared. Large Post-Medieval quarry pits were revealed extending close to the road side.

It is evident that until the 19th century, the quarried area, although backfilled, remained approximately 1 m below present ground level. Evidence was found that the lane leading to Holywell Ford was made up to its present level at the same time as the area was infilled. This operation presumably related to the construction of the 19th century Vicarage on the site.

Oxford, St Giles Church (SP 512 071)
Alan Hardy

During the renewal of the floor of the south chapel of St Giles Church, in February 1994, two brick-built barrel vaults were uncovered. One of the vaults had been partly demolished and infilled, possibly during the installation of heating pipes earlier this century. No dating evidence was evident for either vault, but their shape and the characteristics of the bricks suggest an early 19th century date for their construction.

Oxford, 54-5 St Thomas Street (SP 507 061)
Tim Allen

During March 1994 an excavation supervised by A Hardy was carried out in advance of redevelopment. Two trenches were excavated, the west trench measuring 9 m by 5 m, the east trench 6.5 m by 5 m, with an extension 3 m by 1.5 m to the north. Both trenches lay 2 m behind the present frontage of the site.

The site lies on gravel terrace deposits overlain by yellow alluvial silt. The earliest feature found in each trench was a ditch dating to the 13th century. The ditch in the west trench was shallow and flat-bottomed, that in the east trench deep and V-profiled and contained waterlogged environmental material.

Overlying the infilled ditches were the floors of cob-walled buildings whose back walls survived up to 0.2 m high. These dated to the late 13th and 14th centuries. Because of the limited size of the trenches the overall dimensions of the structures is not known, though a small extension to the south in the west trench showed that the building in this trench was at least 4m deep and at least 5 m wide.

The cob building in the west trench was abutted by a second

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structure running north-south, which was built upon large limestone post-bases with narrow slot-trenches in between; the latter were presumably for panel walling. The north and east limits of this building lay outside the trench. West of this second building was an open yard containing one or two small pits.

In the east trench immediately behind the cob building were deep pits. The earliest of these may have been dug before the building was constructed, possibly to provide material for the walls. Pits continued to be dug in this area throughout the Medieval and Post-Medieval occupation of the site.

Overlying the cob wall in the east trench was the robber-trench of a stone building. Further late Medieval and Post-Medieval stone buildings, the walls of which survived two or three courses high, were constructed just behind this. There appears to have been an uninterrupted sequence of buildings in this trench from the late 13th century until the present.

In the west trench the cob building was overlain by a cultivation soil, which dates to the late Medieval and early Post-Medieval period. This soil presumably corresponds to the evidence of a map of 1595, which shows this part of St Thomas Street as an orchard. By 1675, according to Loggan, the whole of the street frontage was again taken up by buildings. In the top of the cultivation soil was a short length of stone wall, and overlying this was a narrow wall-slot with a stone chimney base protruding behind. The floor levels of these buildings had been truncated by modern levelling.

The west and east parts of the site reveal a different history, which may indicate that a property boundary existed between the two archaeological trenches. This suggestion is also supported by the different character of the 13th century ditches. Very few cob buildings have been excavated in Oxford, and the two on this site appear to have been larger than those found previously, also in St Thomas Street (Durham and Roberts forthcoming). There would appear to be a local preference for building in this material in the 13th and 14th centuries. The date of both sets of buildings is similar, possibly indicating a wholesale development along St Thomas Street at this time.

Oxford, South Parks Road, Rex Richards Building, Magnet Room (SP 51600 07045)

Andrew Parkinson

In January 1993 an area of approximately 112 m² was stripped by the contractors within the footprint of the proposed building for the Oxford University Underground Magnet House. Situated on the north side of the Rex Richards Building and just south of the Observatory Building.

Two concentric ring ditches, previously identified in 1982 and 1989 as Bronze Age barrow ditches, were located. In 1982 a cremation within a pit had been recovered from a

near central location. The 1993 exposure allowed further excavation of the two ditches providing a continuous section from inner to outer ditch.

Both barrow ditches had a broad U-shape profile and a flat bottom. The inner ditch measured 3.10 m in width and 1.10 m in depth. A clearly defined sequence of fills suggest a gradual infill followed by a stable period and then final backfilling. The outer ditch dimensions were 2.90 m in width and a depth of 1.02 m.

Two later features were also located, a pit contained a late Iron Age/early Roman vessel which was truncated by an existing sewer pipe trench and another feature possibly a pit of a similar date cut into the top of the outer barrow ditch. There was no clear indication of a bank or mound associated with the barrow. The later feature cut into the outer ditch suggests the barrow did not survive as a prominent feature in the late Iron Age. Later features cut into the outer ditch were also recorded by the Oxford University Archaeological Society in the 1989 work. The results are now being compiled for a report in *Oxoniensia*.

Oxford, Tidmarsh Lane (SP 5093 0615)

Paul Booth

A small scale archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation were undertaken by the OAU in 1994 in advance of the redevelopment of the site of Boreham's Yard, Tidmarsh Lane, for student accommodation for St. Peter's College. The site lies immediately outside the west gate of Oxford Castle the approximate location of which is indicated on a number of early maps. It is bounded on the west by the present Castle Mill Stream and on the south by the late 18th century wall of Oxford Prison, to the south of which lies the 11th century St George's Tower, which possibly predates the foundation of Oxford Castle in 1071.

The excavations revealed no trace of late Saxon activity in the area. The principal Medieval features were a succession of three major cobbled surfaces. The earliest of these lay beneath deposits containing pottery unlikely to date before the later 12th century. The surfaces appeared to slope down towards the contemporary river bank, and were interleaved with silty layers perhaps representing disturbed river edge deposits. In the northwest part of the site fragmentary traces of stone and timber structures were seen, but their interpretation is uncertain. They were broadly contemporary with the second and third cobbled surfaces, of 13th to 14th century date. In the extreme southeast corner of the site earthmoving by the contractors after the end of the formal excavation revealed a fragment of a north-south wall. Subsequent work in March 1995 showed that the wall was c 2.4 m thick and that a simple opening, the south side of which was located, was probably the west gateway of the Castle to which the external surfaces were clearly related.

The position of the river edge was variable before its present definition (of late 17th or early 18th century date). The

Medieval channel was probably wider than the modern one, with its east bank usually further east than the present line. At the north end of the site there is limited evidence for an east-northeast/west-southwest channel, perhaps flowing into the main north-northwest/south-southeast stream, but the fill of this feature was almost indistinguishable from that of a 17th century cut aligned north-south, which truncated Medieval deposits on its east side. This channel was probably relatively short-lived. Few other significant Post-Medieval features were seen, and traces of the much-illustrated 18th century house which stood on the river edge here were very slight.

Somerton, Manor Farm (SP 4970 2822)
Andrew Parkinson

A watching brief, on an area stripped for the construction of a bungalow, identified four ditches all orientated east-west. The ditches were filled with a reddish brown silty sand and lumps of redeposited natural limestone. The largest ditch measured 1.48 m in width and 0.56 m in depth, and produced a large fragile sherd of Middle Iron Age pottery (with shell and sand inclusions).

All the ditches appeared to terminate in the east within the exposed area, but this was far from clear. None of the remaining ditches produced finds but two Middle Iron Age pottery sherds recovered during surface cleaning could probably be attributed to one of these. A total of eight pottery sherds was recovered. The evidence would suggest some form of Middle Iron Age settlement exists nearby. Previous archaeological investigations at Somerton have been connected with the shrunken Medieval village to the north (Chambers, 1977).

Reference

Chambers R. A. 'Observations at Somerton, Oxon., 1973' *Oxoniensia* XLII (1977) 216-225

Standlake, Sansom's Ford (SP 388 018)
C Bell

In September 1994 the OAU undertook a field evaluation on the land adjacent to Sansom's Ford, Standlake, Oxfordshire. The work was carried out for Drinkwater Sabey Ltd on behalf of Sands and Gravels (Standlake) Ltd, in connection with a proposal for gravel extraction. The application area is located on the north bank of the River Thames c 1 km south of the village of Standlake, and comprises approximately 25 ha of land immediately north of Sansom's Ford. It is bounded to the east by Langley's Lane. The site lies entirely within an area of river floodplain and the underlying geology is sands and gravels covered by alluvial clay. There is evidence for extensive prehistoric and Romano-British remains on the gravel terraces within the immediate vicinity of the site, and although no crop marks were visible on aerial photographs of the application area, it was possible that remains existed, but were masked by alluvium.

Forty-four trial trenches, representing a 1% sample of the area in question, were positioned and excavated according to specifications agreed with Oxfordshire Archaeological Services and the field work took place over a period of 8 days in September 1994.

Only a small number of archaeological features were found within the application area. These consisted mostly of ditches, and were almost certainly related to field boundaries or drainage. The north edge of a large palaeochannel was located in the south-west corner of the site. A small number of flints flakes, possibly dating from the Mesolithic period, were found in an old ground surface on the north side of the channel, but no features were located in this area.

Alluvium of varying depths was found in virtually all of the trenches and in many of the trenches there were also layers of brownish sandy clays, mottled by iron panning, and containing snail shells and charcoal flecks. These layers were often sandwiched between the deposits of alluvium and were almost certainly buried ploughsoils, indicating periodic agricultural activity.

The most likely explanation for the lack of occupational remains in this area is that it has always been prone to flooding and the only human activity that occurred was related to periodic agricultural usage.

Tetsworth, Site at the Swan Inn (SP 688 018)
Chris Bell

The OAU undertook an archaeological evaluation on the land immediately to the north of the Swan Inn, Tetsworth in January 1994. This was carried out as part of the requirements of planning permission for a housing development. Tetsworth lies 18 km to the east of Oxford and the site is located on the north-east edge of the village, east of the High Street (A40) and south of the green.

The Swan Inn contains a late Medieval core (survey by RCHM) and previous archaeological investigations in Tetsworth have produced evidence dating from the 3rd to 14th centuries. Later prehistoric as well as Romano-British remains have also been recorded in the wider vicinity around the settlement.

The evaluation consisted of 14 trenches each 30 m long x 1.85 m wide, comprising a 2% sample of the area in question. The only significant archaeological deposits located were a curving gully containing fragments of Medieval/Post-Medieval tile, and a possible buried ground surface containing two small sherds of Iron Age pottery. This was discovered in a trench positioned on high ground at the east edge of the site, and may be related to a settlement or activity on top the hill, to the east of the development area..

Alluvium was seen in all of the trenches in the lower lying parts of the site, indicating that this area had been prone to

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flooding. This is also suggested by the fact that the area to the northwest of the Green is called 'Marsh End'. This may explain the lack of evidence for occupation on the site. It therefore appears that the Swan Inn has always stood alone on this side of the High Street, and was perhaps originally built on a slightly raised area which is no longer visible.

Uffington White Horse Hill (SU 302 866)

David Miles and Simon Palmer

Investigations of the White Horse Hill monuments came to their successful conclusion in 1994. The year's work comprised further trenching on the Horse to clarify geophysical anomalies detected in 1990 and limited area excavation inside Uffington Castle.

The White Horse

Two trenches were cut adjacent to the Horse. The first below the belly towards its rear legs was intended to clarify what appeared on the geophysical survey to be the 'shadow' of a former leg outline. This trench also gave an opportunity to investigate again the accumulation of silts eroding from the Horse. No indication of the shadowy leg was revealed but the stratigraphic sequence of earlier Horse edges proved to be enlightening.

Trenching in 1990 had indicated that the Horse was originally a little fatter than today, although it certainly never possessed the physique of a modern thoroughbred. This again was confirmed in the 1994 trench with the recovery of a series of Horse edges abutted by turfines progressively working up the hillside. However, the Horse was never more than 1.5 m wider than its present width.

The depositional process was clear - colluvium or hillwash eroding from the Horse and hillside continually sealed the lower edge of the Horse, and this over time created a series of fossilised outlines which were not reclaimed during the scouring episodes. Samples from the earliest stratified silt deposits associated and sandwiched between early edges were taken for Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating (OSL) and these produced some surprises. Three dates were obtained: 3230±430, 2890±340 and 3020±360 before the present. There is every indication therefore that the Horse dates from c 1400-600 BC, and is not of Late Iron Age or even Anglo-Saxon date which has been the accepted thinking.

The second trench in 1994 was positioned over the junction of the Horse's tail and body. Again the geophysical survey indicated anomalies in this area in the form of a linear feature (?ditch) running perpendicular to the Horse. Trenching revealed this anomaly to be of periglacial origin but a slight lynchet was also revealed running up to the Horse; this unfortunately was undated.

The Horse's date was initially a surprise but it fits well in archaeological terms with the surrounding landscape. In 1993 we confirmed the long tradition of burial on the hilltop

adjacent to the hill figure from earlier prehistoric periods through to Anglo-Saxon times. In addition this area of downland sees a peak of activity in the late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age with the hillforts of Uffington Castle, Rams Hill, Liddington Castle, activity at Wayland's Smithy and the recently discovered settlement at nearby Tower Hill.

The Hillfort

As part of the White Horse project, trenching was undertaken inside the hillfort by the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education Summer School led by Gary Lock. The main aim was to validate earlier geophysical surveys and to attempt to define the character of occupation within the enclosure. An area of potential occupation was trenched within the northwest segment but no convincing archaeological features were located and all that was revealed was a change in natural subsoil. However, well over a dozen late Roman coins were recovered from the overlying topsoil. Two further trenches were opened one centrally within the fort and the other in the lee of the rampart in the southwest corner.

The centrally placed trench told a similar story of late Roman activity but with little convincing sign of Iron Age occupation. The trench against the rampart revealed the only definite Iron Age feature, a large circular posthole. Whether this belonged to a structure was unclear. Further deposits of Roman material overlay the back of the rampart.

Although the hillfort was constructed in the later Bronze Age/early Iron Age, the most active period as revealed by archaeological evidence appears to have been in the Roman period. Excavations in 1989/90 also revealed that the north and south entrances to the fort were created at this time. The Roman cemetery lies just outside the ramparts on the northern side and this was confirmed in 1993. Whether we have a domestic site or a religious complex associated with the White Horse remains unanswered.

Wallingford, Town Hall (SU 6072 8936)

Graham D. Keevill

A deep foundation pit excavated below the Town Hall by building contractors was recorded. The pit was approximately 1.3 m square, and had been dug to a depth of 2.55 m. Unfortunately OAU did not have the opportunity to monitor the excavation itself, but some finds retained by the workmen were examined. The pit contained a sequence of deposits dating back to the medieval, or perhaps the late Saxon, period. Unfortunately no finds were recovered from the earliest deposits (9 and 10), and a ?linear feature (11) cutting layer 9 can only be dated fairly broadly to the 12th century at the earliest. The depth of the deposits below the current surface might suggest a 10th or 11th century date for layers 9 and 10, but this cannot be proved. It is notable, however, that a possible sherd of 11th century Michelmersh-type ware was recovered from the fill of feature 11. Layer 9 at least might represent a surface, perhaps a road or courtyard, and layer 10 might have been

similar, but the very limited exposure makes any firm conclusion impossible.

The layer sealing feature 11 did not extend fully across the pit and also appeared to be linear, running north-south. This layer is interpreted as a surface; its purpose cannot be determined. The next deposit (6) occupied the central 1 m of the section and can be interpreted either as a pit fill, or as a substantial and deliberate build-up of soil. Pottery from the fill indicates a late Medieval or early Post-Medieval date. A layer of roof tiles, mortar and rubble (5) above this clearly represented a dump, probably of material from a demolished building. The tiles were not strongly diagnostic and could have been later Medieval or Post-Medieval in date. It seems likely that layer 5 reflects the demolition of an existing building prior to the construction of the new Town Hall in 1670. The top layer was very similar in character to layer 6 and was cut by a concrete base.

Wheatley, M 40 Service Area, MSA Geotechnical Test Pits (approx SP 62 04)

Jonathan Hiller

The OAU maintained a watching brief during the excavation of 15 test pits on a raised area of land adjacent to the M 40 near Wheatley. The land was raised during the construction of the M40 in 1990. At its highest point the overburden was between 6-8 m above the original ground level. The pits were excavated in advance of a proposal to develop the site as a service station and hotel complex. Natural subsoil and natural gravel were identified in a number of pits excavated on the low lying points of the site. No archaeological features or finds were located in any of the test pits.

Witney, Cogges Manor Farm (SP 3621 0963)

Ric Tyler

A programme of architectural recording, archaeological observation and limited excavation within Cogges Manor Farmhouse, Witney during building consolidation and refurbishment work (February-December 1994) was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council.

To facilitate the installation of a new timber floor in the ground floor parlour it was necessary to reduce the ground level over the full extent of the room. The top layers of loose under floor material were removed and sieved for artefacts by the contractors. At this stage, OAU were alerted and further reduction of the ground level progressed under archaeological conditions. These excavations revealed features of considerable significance to the history of the Manor house and to the area as a whole.

A number of beam slots were exposed relating to a former timber floor/room division, predating the insertion of the extant panelled partition walls. A series of superimposed compacted mortar and gravel floor levels (possibly of 13th century date) were exposed to the east of the room only,

apparently related to one of the beam slots. The floor layers were more substantially made up in the central area of the room suggesting the presence of ground disturbance below. On removal of the floor layers a thick layer of buried soil containing substantial quantities of 6th to 7th century Saxon pottery was encountered. Cut from the lower levels of the Saxon soil layer was a sunken-featured building (SFB), with associated post holes and small pits, which yielded more pottery of similar date along with fragments of loom weights, spindle whorl, bone comb and other finds diagnostic of small scale weaving activity. The SFB was fully excavated to alleviate further problems of under-floor damp.

The results of this small scale excavation would appear to confirm that the focus of Saxon activity at Cogges, previously indicated by OUDCE training excavations, does indeed lie beneath the standing manor house buildings.

The monitoring of the excavation of a number of external service trenches and lightning conductor earthing pits revealed further remains of a northern gatehouse range (previously exposed during OUDCE excavations) and evidence for the southern continuation of the east (solar) range.

Witney, land adjacent to Kingsfield Crescent

(SP 3645 1014)

Bob Williams

An evaluation was undertaken by the OAU on the site of the former allotments, adjacent to the recreation ground, in advance of the construction of twelve residential dwellings. Four machine-dug trenches were excavated where the greatest ground disturbance was anticipated. Prior to the evaluation the development area was thought to be on the site of the Medieval 'New Town', founded by Robert Arsic in 1212-13 AD. The town is known to have had a very short period of occupation. However, with the exception of one possible prehistoric feature no other archaeological features were located, indicating that the Medieval 'New Town' did not extend as far as this part of Witney. The single feature was a 1.20 m wide 0.30 m deep flat-bottomed ditch containing a reddish-brown fill and a single burnt flint. Although it is possible that the feature is of Neolithic or Bronze Age date, it is equally possible that the feature is of periglacial natural origin.

Witney, West Witney Community Site (SP 3392 0995)

Andrew Parkinson

In July 1994 the OAU undertook an evaluation on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council in a 0.6 ha area proposed for the construction of community facilities. The site is situated within the Bishop of Winchester's Medieval deer park at the junction between Valence Crescent and Edington Road. In 1991 and 1992 The Cotswold Archaeological Trust undertook an evaluation and excavation of a Middle Iron

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Age settlement on the north side of Valence Crescent, between Deer Park Road and Edington Road; just north-west of the proposed West Witney Community site (Walker, 1991).

The only feature located in 1994 was an undated east-west ditch, 0.36 m deep and 0.70 m wide. The ditch did not appear to be a recent field boundary so it could be tentatively identified as a peripheral element of the Middle Iron Age settlement.

References

Walker, Graeme, Deer Park Road, Witney, Oxon, Archaeological Evaluation. Cotswold Archaeological Trust 1991

John Steane, 'Witney Park Farm' *CBA 9 Newsletter* No. 15, 1985

Woodstock, Park Street, Fletchers House (SP 4440 1675) Andrew Parkinson

In February 1994 a watching brief was carried out at Fletchers House, Park Street in Woodstock. The building currently houses the County Museum. The work involved digging pipe trenches and a soakaway to the east of Fletchers House.

The town of Woodstock had a planned foundation of the late 12th century and the Medieval plan is still preserved within the layout of the present town. In the Medieval period the north side of Park Street comprised long plots or burgages stretching down to Harrison's Lane, which forms a typical back lane. Some time before 1609 Alderman Thomas Browne bought a house on the site and later in 1614 the two adjacent properties to build a 'great house' called Fletcher's. The remains of the new house of c 1614 occupy the centre and west end of the existing building. The house was re-fronted and the east block built under a contract of 1795 (*VCH Oxon* 1990).

The archaeological features identified east of Fletchers House consisted of two walls: a north-south wall at right angles to Park Street, constructed of rough rubble limestone and located 0.50 m below the present ground surface, probably represented one of the main structural walls, and an east-west wall of slightly less substantial construction probably formed an internal wall of the same building. The level at which the east-west wall survives (1.30 m below the present ground surface) and lack of any floor layers indicates the likely survival of cellars within a building. No direct dating evidence for the walls was recovered but the nature of their construction means a Medieval date is possible.

Three pottery sherds, probably residual, were recovered from a deposit directly above the east-west wall. One dates from the late 11th to mid 13th century, the other two sherds were of 13th to 15th century date. These three sherds were the only Medieval finds from the site.

It is probable that the walls belonged to the earlier house purchased by Browne before 1609, which was recorded on the site in 1526 and which survived at least up until the mid 17th century. The building was probably demolished in order to construct the 18th century east extension.

Reference

VCH Oxford Vol XII (1990) pp 335, 342 & 350.

RECENT WORK ON OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS

Julian Munby

The Oxford Archaeological Unit has been undertaking a considerable amount of building investigation and recording in the last few years, most of it unrecorded in *South Midlands Archaeology*. In bringing together the results of this work, it seemed a suitable occasion to review the changing nature and status of building investigation in the city and county, especially with regard to the implications of the new government policy under Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15.

In the decade following the unfortunate demolition of No 89 St Aldate's Street, Oxford there have been many changes in the practice of building archaeology. On that occasion a listed building was condemned to demolition without full consideration being given to the history and condition of its fabric. However, it was the first building in Oxford for which English Heritage made a grant (albeit nominal) for recording during demolition. This was followed by a more substantial contribution to the recording of Zacharias' (now Laura Ashley) in Cornmarket.

Building recording has a long history in Oxford from Anthony Wood, who in the 17th century drew the buildings of University College before demolition, to the activities of numerous 18th and 19th century topographical artists, most notably J B Malchair and J C Buckler. When the camera replaced the pencil the stream of images increased with the work of Taunt, Minn and Spokes. As long ago as 1937 Pantin called for systematic archaeological investigation of buildings, in the wake of the Broad Street demolitions for the New Bodleian Library. Several important studies followed, mostly as a result of demolition or alteration of historic buildings in Oxford, and similar work has been continued by others after Pantin, including OAU.

There was a growing appreciation in the 1970s that the investigation of buildings was indeed archaeology (somewhat ironic in that Professor Willis was practising 'archaeology' on cathedrals in the 1840s before Prehistory had even received its name). The improvement in recording standards went hand in hand with the increased awareness of the potential of details such as historic carpentry, though curiously there was initially little official support from either English Heritage or the RCHM Commission for these developments. As the toll of historic buildings continued

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there was finally the realisation that post-hoc recording was an insufficient response, and that there was a need for more detailed knowledge even in advance of decisions being taken. The recently issued Planning Policy Guidance: *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG 15, September 1994) amplifies the Planning Act in several respects, and for the first time makes explicit the potential for building archaeology. It has already been established that PPG 16 can be used to promote building archaeology, but PPG 15 strengthens and widens the applications.

A fundamental point that is now made clear is the need for adequate information in making decisions. The question of archaeological interest in standing buildings is raised, and it is noted that *'there should be appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of development proposals before applications are determined'*, and this would apply to the 'archaeological' deposits in the standing fabric and not just below-ground features (PPG 15, 2.15). Applicants must *'provide the local planning authority with full information, to enable them to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and on its setting.'* (§3.4) This is later amplified:

In judging the effect of any alteration or extension it is essential to have assessed the elements that make up the special interest of the building in question. They may comprise not only obvious visual features such as a decorative facade or, internally, staircases or decorated plaster ceilings, but the spaces and layout of the building and the archaeological or technological interest of the surviving structure and surfaces. These elements are often just as important in simple vernacular and functional buildings as in grander architecture. (§3.12)

Arrangements for recording are considered in relation to archaeological potential (§2.15), and in a separate section the recording of buildings is discussed (§3.22-24). This is envisaged as a matter for a post-hoc condition on a consent and in relation to discoveries made during works, but also for prior investigations:

If there is any likelihood that hidden features will be revealed, the local planning authority should attach an appropriate condition to the listed building consent to ensure their retention or proper recording, or should require exploratory opening up, with listed building consent as necessary, before considering consent for the main works. (§3.24)

The new PPG is already having effect in Oxfordshire, and briefs for investigation and recording under PPG15/PPG16 conditions are already appearing. In Oxfordshire these are prepared by Carol Rosier, the Deputy County Archaeologist in consultation with the relevant District Conservation Officer, and sent out by developers to attract competitive tenders. The City has its own advisory system. Some of the recent OAU work reported below has been commissioned under these conditions.

Abingdon, 26 East St Helen's (1993-4) (Fig 3)

This well-known medieval house, recently bequeathed to the Oxford Preservation Trust, has been re-examined by OAU to evaluate its architectural importance. Suspicion that the central entranceway was the site of an open hall was confirmed by the discovery of a smoke-blackened louvre in the roof, while the timber joists visible on the ground floor suggest that the hall had internal jetties on both sides. The front part of the building consists of a hall and two side wings, and back has one original wing and a gallery linking with another wing. The rear wing has fine stone fireplaces, panelled ceilings on the ground floor, and 16th century wall-paintings on the first floor; the gallery is lit by an timber window with excellent gothic tracery. This building is certainly one of the most remarkable Medieval town-houses in the region, and its date of construction, now determined as 1428/9 by dendrochronology (Dan Miles), is of interest in providing the earliest dated use of the diminished haunch flooring joint in the locality. [OAU and OCC brief; for Oxford Preservation Trust]

Chastleton House (1991-3)

Following acquisition of the house by the National Trust, the OAU advised on the initial archaeological survey. A survey of the brewhouse and stables was carried out by the OAU, prior to repair and conversion to temporary storage. As with the main house, investigation has revealed the extent of rebuilding and alteration to the brewhouse range. In addition to survey of the above-ground aspects, small exploratory excavations in the areas surrounding the brewhouse range examined the nature of former paving and yard surfaces in the former kitchen and stable yards. [For The National Trust]

Cholsey, Lollington House (1990, 1992)

The Medieval moated site which belonged to the Bishop of Winchester for many centuries has few Medieval remains above ground except in the east cross wing and some re-used timbers in the main roof. The removal of a modern partition in the east wing to allow the space to be opened to the roof was recorded by OAU as a condition of consent. The only significant finding was the tie-beam of a Medieval roof truss with indications that it formerly carried a crown-post. When the house was extended westwards in the 19th century, a passage to a new front door was made in the existing room. OAU was asked to investigate the age and character of the passage when it was proposed to open up a front hall. The passage wall was found to be secondary to the 19th-century front wall. [SODC brief; for the owners.]

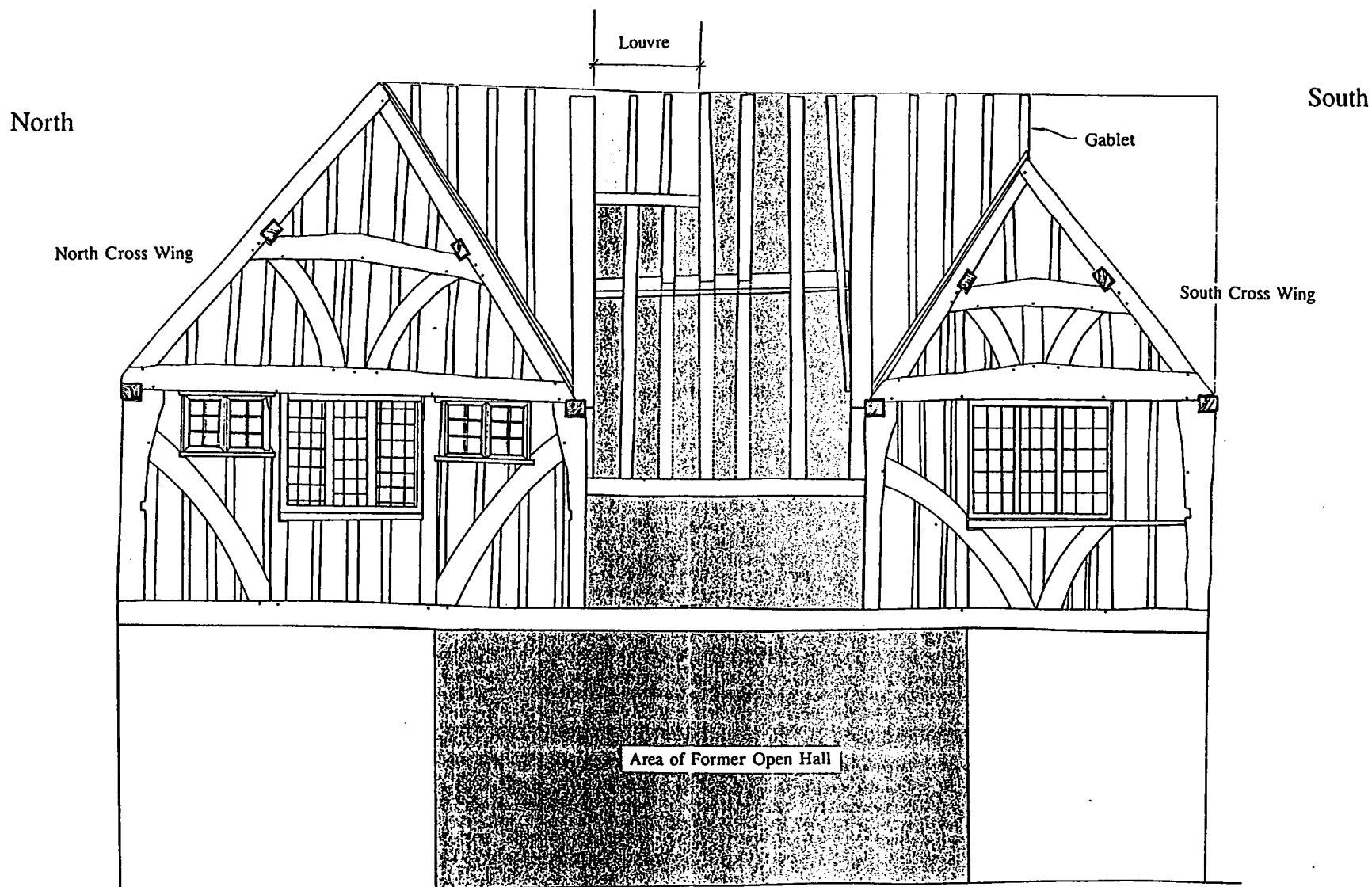
Henley-on-Thames, Regal Cinema (1993)

As a part of the archaeological work by the OAU at Bell Street, a building survey was undertaken of the structure and layout of the Regal Cinema in advance of demolition. Measured survey drawings were produced by the OAU; a

26/26A EAST ST. HELENS, ABINGDON, OXON.

Street Elevation (including details of exposed timber framing)

Oxfordshire



full photographic survey of the building and fittings along with documentary research into the building history was undertaken by Ruth Gibson for the Vernacular Buildings Research Section of the Henley-on-Thames Archaeological and Historical Group. [*OCC brief; for Waitrose.*]

Oxford, All Souls College (1994)

An archaeological survey of the Medieval buildings of the college has been previously reported (*SMA* 22 (1992), 50 and 23 (1993), 74), and has now been continued with a survey of the standing remains in the front quadrangle. Apart from the Medieval roofs, some flooring, and individual items, surprisingly little remains of the original fabric. [*For All Souls College.*]

Oxford, Castle (1993-4)

The fifty-year old saga of the impending closure of Oxford Prison nearly ended and Oxford County Council commissioned a study of the site. The history and correct sequence of the prison buildings was determined for the first time from a study of the records, and a survey (since amplified by the RCHME) was begun but curtailed by the re-opening of the Prison. [*For Oxfordshire County Council.*]

Oxford, Merton College (1994)

Staircase 5 to the Senior Common Room in the Fellows' Quadrangle was examined to determine its original form in the light of proposals to rebuild it. The quad was built in 1610 by the Halifax craftsmen brought in by Warden Savile. They also worked on the Bodleian Library and Wadham College. It was expected that the posts and rails might prove to be parts of an open staircase with balusters; however these were shown to be superficially applied mouldings perhaps of 18th or 19th century date. The original structure was found to consist of one frame rising in the centre of the stair, of posts and joists, filled with plain studding. The only decorative item is the chamfered corners of the storey posts. The remainder of the frame must have been covered with lath-and-plaster. This is similar to the contemporary work at Wadham College by the same team of builders. [*At request of Rodney Melville; for Merton College.*]

Oxford, Oriel College Tennis Court

The project of recording and investigation around the tennis court was completed by a survey of the exposed timber framing of the north wall of the court, and dating of associated timbers. Previously reported in *SMA* 20 (1990), 84; 21 (1991), 93-4 and 23 (1992), 50. [*Oxford City Council brief; for Oriel College.*]

Oxford, Radcliffe Camera (1990)

The Radcliffe Camera is one of Oxford's best-known 18th century buildings, but few have seen Gibbs' fine timber roof above the plaster ceiling of the dome. The quinquennial timber survey in 1990 allowed access for a study of this

remarkable example of structural carpentry. It is in some respects different from Gibbs' drawings (see *SMA* 16 (1986), 130). An unexpected discovery was the remains of the coffered stone dome, already begun when the decision was taken to abandon stonework and continue the dome in timber. [*By permission of the University Surveyor.*]

Oxford, Trinity College (1993)

A watching brief was undertaken during rearrangement of the access to the Senior Common Room. A blocked window and other details were recorded, but no Medieval remains of Durham College were found. [*Oxford City Council brief; for Trinity College*]

Oxford, 90 High Street (1991)

At 90 High Street, Oxford, a plain Regency exterior covers the remains of a highly decorated timber frame of the early 17th century. This was briefly uncovered and recorded when the rendering was renewed on the front wall (illustrated in *OAU Newsletter* Sept 1991). The house was already well known for its fine interior joinery, and was one of a number of apothecaries' houses used as nursing homes for sick undergraduates and others. [*Oxford City Council brief; for University College.*]

Oxford, 114-19 High Street: Lincoln College (1993-5)

Archaeological monitoring of the alterations carried out in Nos 114-19 High Street in the course of conversion and refurbishment for Lincoln College was carried out under a legal agreement between the College and the City Council. Actual demolition has been limited, but extensive refitting has taken place to modernise the office and shop accommodation. Archaeological work below ground has been undertaken by Cotswold Archaeological Trust.

115 High Street (Liberty's): The front part is a high-quality timber frame of 18th century date, built against a new stone wall in the centre of the property. There is a triple gable roof behind a parapet. Where examined on the second floor, the floor framing is of double construction with one set of common joists to carry the floors, and another set to carry the ceilings below. The rear part was found to contain a 17th century timber frame, for a roof parallel to the street; four trusses for the roof were buried in the later softwood attic floor.

116 High Street: Most of the framing on the lower storeys is of 19th century date, but in the attic are 17th century roof trusses for a gable facing the street. This was later truncated by the parapet.

117 High Street: Little of interest appeared to remain in this house except some reused oak floor joists in the ceiling of the rear room. On examination these proved to be the remains of a partially-floored open hall with a smoke bay. The principal joist is smoke-blackened and has common joists (with diminished haunches) tenoned into it. When the

Oxfordshire

smoke bay was covered over it was floored with chamfered oak joists, probably of 16th-century date. These timbers have been removed and will be replaced in the new shop.

118 High Street: The first floor back room has the well-known painted room (see *Oxoniensia* XXXVII, 1972, 201-2) with panelled walls and a recent floor. Some minor domestic items were recovered from below the floorboards. Clearance of the second floor revealed trusses for an east-west pitched roof replaced by a later and higher north-south roof of two gables.

119 High Street: Removal of shop fittings revealed elements of 17th or 18th century framing. A remarkable archival find was made in No 119 when a printed passport, issued by General Fairfax at the end of the siege of Oxford in 1645, fell out of a hole in the ceiling. [*Oxford City Council brief: for Lincoln College.*]

Oxford, former L.M.S. Station

The Grade II* listed terminus is prominently situated on the corner of the Station Yard. County Council roadworks for new development will necessitate its removal. Investigation of the records of the Buckinghamshire Railway has revealed the connection between the station and the Crystal Palace, which was long known but not fully explained before. It is expected that a detailed survey of the structure will be made.

The Buckinghamshire Railway constructed the line from Bletchley to Oxford as a route to London and Birmingham to rival that of the Great Western, and its opening in May 1851 was due to coincide with the opening of the Great Exhibition in the Hyde Park Crystal Palace. Although a conventional station was planned by the Board in December 1850, they also asked Messrs Fox and Henderson, the Engineers of the Crystal Palace, to tender for the Oxford terminus 'on the plan of the exhibition building, in all respects'. Their tender was the lowest received in January 1851, and as acknowledged by the Jackson's Oxford Journal at the opening on 26 May 1851, the station was 'constructed in a similar manner to the Crystal Palace'.

The building consists of four bays, 24 ft by 48 ft, a half-bay porch at the front, and side wings. The elements present from the Crystal Palace design and identifiable in the contemporary published drawings are as follows:

- Cast-iron columns (hollow, circular section with square fillets) 16 ft 6 in and c 3 ft long
- 24 ft cast-iron girders
- 48 ft wrought-iron trusses
- decorative curved bracing
- intermediate timber columns in side wings
- timber ventilation panels on cast-iron girders

A unique element, not found in the published drawings of the Crystal Palace, is the curved cast-iron base at the foot of the columns. A secondary feature is the intrusion of intermediate roof trusses supported on narrow A-frames

formed from re-used rails, and the realignment of the original 'ridge and furrow' roofing. There is no reason to suppose that the side wings are additional: the cast columns with intermediate timber columns and boarded wall filling have details very close to the published drawings of the ground-floor walls of the Crystal Palace. [*For Stanhope Properties and Railtrack*]

Oxford, Rewley Road, LMS Swing-Bridge

The scheduled Swing-bridge across the Sheepwash Channel is no longer used, and blocks the link between the Thames and the Oxford Canal when closed. As part of the process of deciding the bridge's future, investigations have been undertaken by the OAU. These have uncovered an unexpected history. While the original bridge of 1850 was certainly a swing-bridge, the 1876 OS plan shows that it was somewhat different from the present one. A drawing dated December 1906 held in the Railtrack record section at Swindon appears to be a detailed design for a new bridge, and indeed the existing chairs for the rails are marked 'L & NWR 1906'. A note on the drawing refers to locomotive weights, and it is possible that replacement became necessary with the use of increasingly heavy locomotives in the late 19th century. [*For Stanhope Properties and Railtrack*]

Sandford, Templars Court (1994)

Following a fire, and in advance of refurbishment, a survey has been made of the damaged roof timbers which are mostly of Medieval date, to follow up the post-fire survey by the RCHME. Further investigation during internal building works should reveal more of the fabric. [*OCC brief; for Magdalen College.*]

Stadhampton, Camoys Court (1993)

Plaster stripping and investigations to assess the walls of a Medieval range at Camoys Court was undertaken in advance of an application for new proposed openings (see SMA 24 (1994), 48). [*OCC brief; for owner.*]

Stonor, Stonor Park (1994)

A watching brief during construction work within the area of the former 13th century hall of Stonor Park revealed a substantial timber ceiling of mid to late 15th century date with an unusual contemporary roof structure. The ceiling was marked with offsets as if for panelling, though these were curiously angled at one end. The roof has queen posts with truncated ties immediately above the level of the attic floor, which was evidently intended for accommodation (see Fig 4). Interventions in the north aisle wall revealed a former window opening and details of the construction of the original Medieval wall. A north-south oriented wall of no great age adjoining the north wall of the aisle was partially exposed during external ground level reduction. [*OCC brief; for Lord Camoys.*]

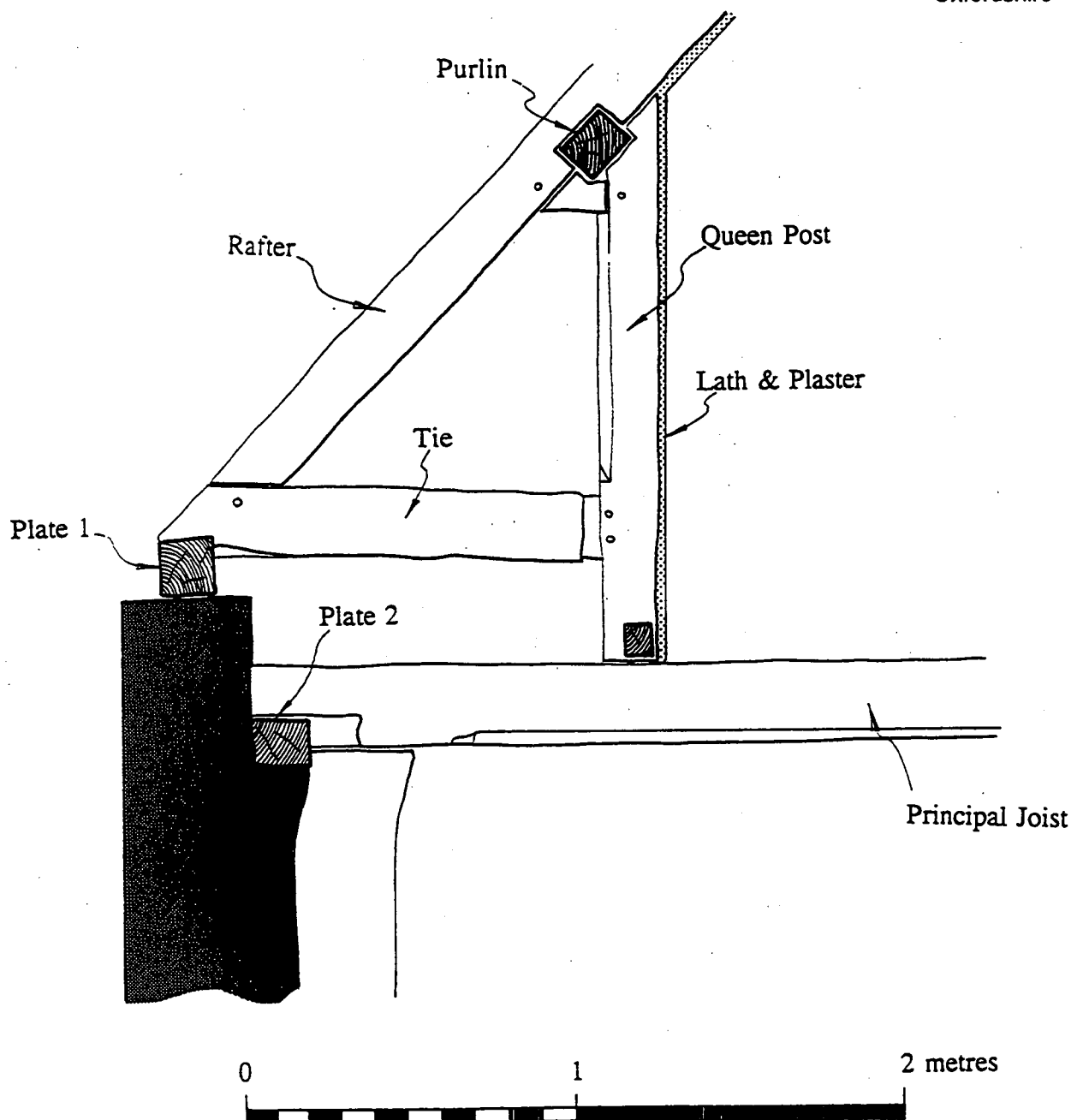


Fig 4. Stonor Park: Detail of roof construction.

Swalcliffe, College Barn (1991)

The great stone barn built by New College shortly after 1400 is now a store for the County Museum, having been fully restored by the Oxfordshire Historic Buildings Trust. Previous work has included building survey by John Steane and excavation by the OAU as reported in *SMA*. At the final stage the carpentry details of roof were recorded by in advance of re-roofing. Full publication of all the work is forthcoming in *Oxoniensia*. [At the request of *English Heritage*.]

Witney, Cogges Manor Farm (1994)

A watching brief during refurbishment included an investigation of the inserted floor in Medieval hall range, and a record of the roof timbers in the attic. The

archaeological part of this work is reported elsewhere in this issue. [OCC brief; for *County Museum*]

Buscot (Berks), Manor Farm (1993-4)

A watching brief was undertaken to record the nature and extent of floor surfaces exposed during internal building work necessitated by problems of upward groundwater seepage into the hallway of the building. A series of cobbled floor surfaces in the hallway and southwest room appeared to predate the 17th century house and were probably external yard surfaces. Other features included possible blocked doors and fireplaces observed in the exposed footings. [For *National Trust (Thames and Chilterns Region)*]

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

75 High St, Witney (SP 356100)

Alistair Barber

Evaluation trenching within the rear part of burgage plots fronting onto High Street revealed only limited archaeological remains, predominantly dating to the Post-Medieval period. The earliest definable activity was a Medieval stone-filled pit or soakaway containing pottery dating to the 13-14th century. The paucity of Medieval domestic occupation suggests that the site lay outside of the urban core of Medieval Witney.

83-88 Ock Street, Abingdon (SU 492970)

Roy King

Evaluation revealed the remains of a 13th-14th century building on the Medieval street frontage, along with a number of associated occupation features including several pits, a hearth, and a boundary wall. Subsequent area excavation of the site was conducted by the Oxford Archaeological Unit.

113-119 High Street, Oxford (SP 062515)

Roy King & Graeme Walker

The excavations at 113-119 High Street, Oxford (on-going since October 1993) were completed during March 1995. The site was excavated as four non-contiguous trenches; A, B, C and D, and a watching-brief was undertaken during groundworks across the rest of the study area. On the basis of a preliminary analysis of the records and artefacts the site has been provisionally phased. The limited area available for excavation inhibited the characterisation of the urban sequence, but nonetheless a general picture could be assembled from the results.

Although traces of prehistoric and Roman settlement are known from Oxford, the town is generally considered to have its origins in Saxon settlement, probably during the 8th century. In 911 when Wessex subsumed Mercia, Oxford was incorporated into the scheme of burhs and it is likely that the street grid was laid out at the same time. On the basis of excavated evidence Hassall (1986) suggests that the street frontages in the High Street and Queen Street were built up from the later 10th century, and that the backland was under development from the 11th century onwards. Throughout the Medieval period and into the present day the High Street frontage has predominantly comprised private housing most of which was fronted by shops with cellars.

Medieval pitting was endemic throughout the study area and had removed over 90% of the original ground surface; traces of the original reddish-brown topsoil being recorded in only three places during the excavations and watching brief. The largest of these patches fell within the uncalled area of

Trench D and yielded the earliest archaeological evidence for settlement on the site in the form of five shallow postholes.

A number of late-Saxon occupation features were identified, including at least three (and possibly four) cellar pits, a surface laid building, and an observation of the earliest High Street road surfaces (Fig 5). Two (three) cellar pits were located in the backland, although only one of these could give more than an indication of size. This cellar was very substantial, with dimensions of 9 m north-south by c 7 m east-west and at least 2 m deep, comparable with some of the larger cellars known from Saxo-Norman London (Horsman, *et al* 1988), and is the largest yet known from Oxford by some considerable degree. It remained in use for some time, with evidence of major rebuilding in which the original earthfast posts were replaced with a timber sleeper beam. The other cellars would appear to have been of more conventional size, although clear edges were identifiable only for the cellar located in Trench D. This feature (c 3 m north-south by c 2 m east-west) could only be excavated to the developers formation level, although augering suggested a total depth of c 2 m. Traces of the decayed double plank lining remained visible within the cellar. This cellar yielded the only evidence for an associated above-ground structure, in the form of a beam trench and three postholes.

A broadly contemporary surface building may have existed nearer to the street frontage towards the end of this period. Beam trenches were found dividing a series of compacted clay and gravel floor surfaces interleaved with hearth residue in the form of ash and burnt clay from a series of dirty gravel and loam 'yard' surfaces. A series of compacted gravel surfaces observed within a service trench in the pavement outside Nos 117/118 would seem to represent the earliest road surfaces, and indicated that the original line of the High Street migrated north during the Medieval period.

The cellars were infilled during the 11th-12th century and the backland was turned over to pitting. A number of pits were clearly utilised as cess or rubbish pits, but the fills of the majority suggested that they may originally have been excavated for other purposes (ie storage, industrial, or small-scale gravel extraction) and subsequently infilled with whatever material lay conveniently to hand. The distribution of these pits suggests that the backland remained open and undivided during this time, with pits straddling the later Medieval boundaries between Nos 115/116 and 116/117. Two wells were constructed during the period, one in the backland, although the other cut through the line of the sleeper beam in Trench D, suggesting that the building on the frontage had also been demolished.

During the 13th-14th century the backland was at least partly divided out, with a stone property boundary between Nos 116 and 117. A stone-lined cess-pit was constructed against this boundary at the rear of the property block behind No 116. Access to this feature was via a walled alley floored with a compacted gravel and clay surface. The feature remained in use throughout the period, later being shared

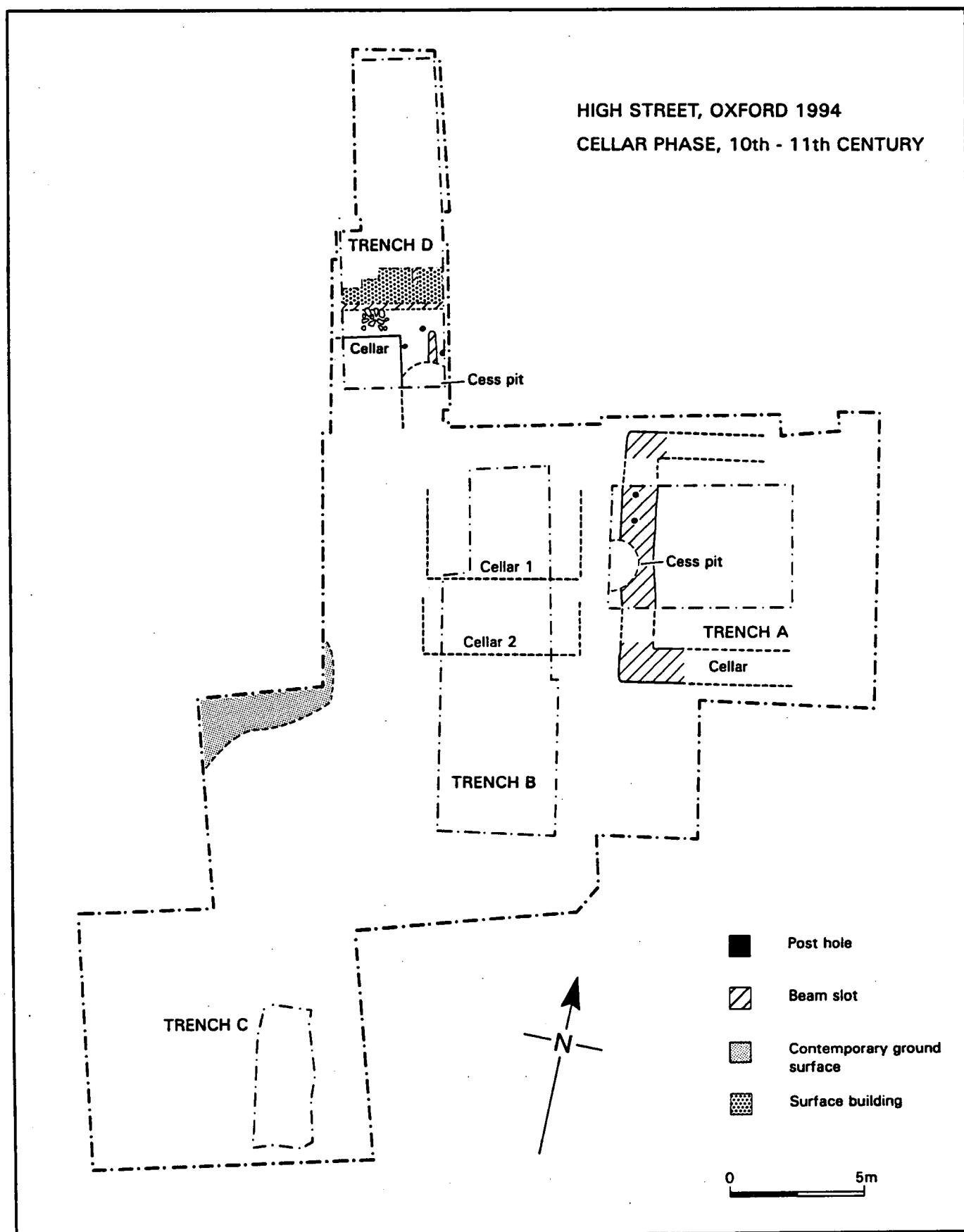


Fig 5. 113-119 High Street, Oxford.

Oxfordshire

with No 115. A section of very substantial walling between Nos 115 and 116 probably represented the rear of a large but short-lived non-domestic building, but may also partly have fulfilled the role of a boundary.

In the 14th-15th century the cellars to Nos 116 and 118 were built, with an arched access from 118 into the uncellared area of 117, probably via steps. Archaeological evidence for a later Medieval building on the site of No 117 appeared shortly thereafter, complimenting documentary evidence indicating that the plot was in use by AD 1328. Post-Medieval activity saw the repair of the stone-lined cesspit, the establishment of a second stone cesspit in Trench C and the construction of the present day street frontage; evidence for ephemeral outbuildings was revealed in the eastern part of Trench A and during the watching brief.

The excavations have added useful data to our understanding of the development of properties within the High Street, particularly the comparatively late date of the division of the backland into discrete plots, which appeared to happen here only in the 13th-14th century. The results of the excavation will now go forward to publication in a regional journal.

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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

This summary was compiled by Melanie Gauden from a report written by Wessex Archaeology staff.

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Excavations by Wessex Archaeology in the forecourt of the Ashmolean Museum, prior to the construction of new visitor facilities, have revealed new information about the development of this part of Oxford. The two week excavation at the beginning of October uncovered the remains of structures and pits dating to the 13th century onwards.

The site lies to the north of the Medieval defences and would have originally consisted of yards (perhaps farmyards) behind buildings fronting St Giles Street which was fully built-up by the late 13th century. Several of the pits used for rubbish and cess disposal were probably dug at this time. During the 14th century, some development within the long narrow backyards took place. The southernmost of the two properties revealed part of an unusual, Medieval sunken-floored timber building. This was subsequently

rebuilt in stone, probably forming part of a range of tenements extending back from the St Giles Street frontage. In the northern property, two substantial ovens, one replacing the other, were exposed which backed onto the stone building to the south. The flues and chambers of these ovens were heavily burnt, but their purpose is not yet known. About 50 rubbish and cesspits dating from the 14th century onwards have been recorded and investigated. Two were stone-lined and several were 2 m plus in depth; various alignments marked the division between the two properties. The finds include considerable quantities of Medieval and late pottery which will help in dating the sequence of occupation on the site and establish the status of the occupants of the buildings.

The buildings on the site were subsequently demolished when the University acquired the properties in or before 1839 for the construction of the Taylorian Institution and University Galleries.

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

R. Ainslie

Abingdon - 64 Bath Street (SU 49515 97278)

Excavations were undertaken in 1993 and 1994 to ascertain whether archaeological remains would be destroyed by proposed building work in this area. The Society's previous work was reported in *SMA* 1991 and that at the adjoining property by the Wessex Unit was reported in *SMA* in 1994.

Two trenches were hand dug in a T-shaped layout. They were both 1.4 m wide. The longest one ran north-south, and was 9.5 m long and the other piece which ran east-west was 4.8 m long. The average depth was 0.6 m.

The features found fell into 8 principal phases starting with the oldest:-

- 1) Old ground surface with a tree throwhole. The 9 flints which included a Mesolithic core and blade were all found in later contexts. The pottery from this phase is from the later 1st century AD.
- 2) A single shallow ditch 0.15 m deep ran in a northeast-southwest direction. The pottery indicates a later 1st century date although a single sherd of black burnished ware could be after 120 AD.
- 3) A single shallow ditch 0.2 m deep ran in a northwest-southeast direction. This was associated 2 cremation burials and traces of 2 others. Again this is later 1st to early 2nd century in date although it includes white ware butt beakers and Samian forms such as 24/25 of a pre-Flavian date. The Medieval sherd and fragment of Oxfordshire colour coat from this phase are probably intrusive.
- 4) A pair of palisade trenches was cut which ran at right

angles to each other. These had a north-south and east-west orientation. A small gully ran alongside part of the north-south trench and may be associated with it. This was dated by pottery to late 3rd-4th century although the small average sherd size indicates considerable disturbance and re-deposition.

5) A pair of ditches, the northern probably being later than the other, were cut running in an east-west direction. These are late Saxon in date. Whilst most of the pottery from this phase was late Roman there were a few sherds of possible Saxon date. Again the Post-Medieval sherds are probably intrusive.

6) Layers accumulated over the features and ploughing took

place.

7) The area was bulldozed in the late 1980s removing the top layers which must have contained much Medieval material.

8) The area was gardened.

The main feature of interest is the cremation cemetery. Dr Peter Hacking has kindly looked at these remains. His report is in the archive but the condition of the bone was so crushed that it was not possible to define the sex or age of the individuals. It is of interest however that some of the burnt bones were those of animals. This may be an early example of a cremation rite which included meat offerings.

Similar animal inclusions have been reported in Anglo-Saxon cremations; see *Antiquity* 68 (1994) 132-4. However, the presence of the cemetery in this location shows that if these cremations are early Roman as is indicated by their stratigraphy, then this cemetery must have been outside early Roman Abingdon. The Society's earlier work to the east was very limited so the cemetery could possibly extend in that direction. The Wessex Unit's work to the north utilised machine trenching and was therefore unlikely to find such cremations.

Unfortunately the excavation was not big enough to make much sense of most of the 1st century ditches which were succeeded in the 3rd century by palisade type trenches which indicate a building here.

In phase 5 there is shell tempered pottery indicative of a 10th to 11th century date. As relatively little material of this date has been found in Abingdon, this may therefore fill a gap in giving Abingdon continuous occupation since the Iron Age.

This work produced some 74 sherds of Roman pottery per cubic metre of excavated soil. The Wessex Unit's work to the north used the more usual machine trenching and, although it found a hearth, ditches and walls, only 1.6 sherds of Roman pottery were found per cubic metre. The fact that they did not find cremations may not show that there were none there - just the limitations of the machine trenching technique.

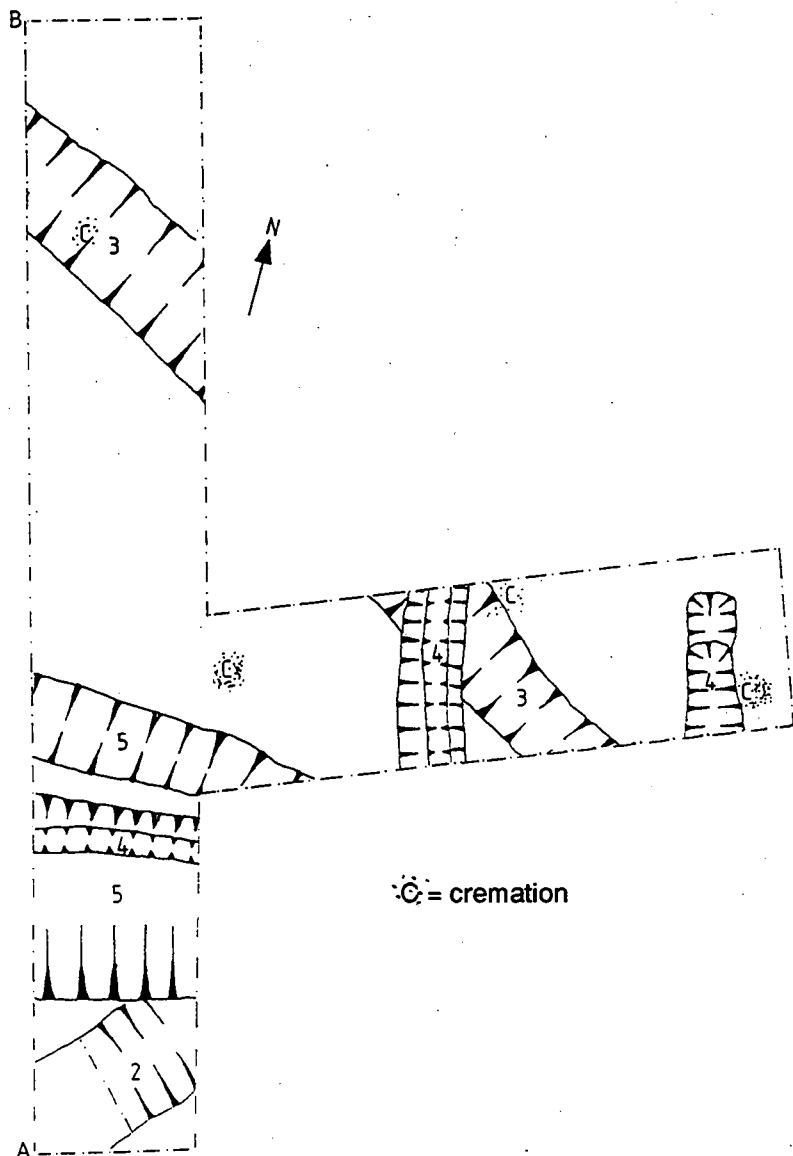


Fig 6. 64 Bath Street, Abingdon. Plan and section.

Oxfordshire

Archive The finds of archive material will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service.

Phase	Number of sherds			Weight(gm)
	Roman	Medieval	Post-Med	
1	6			45
2	28			350
2	89	1		1420
4	111	2		690
5	230	22	2	2310
6	197	13	2	2000
8	299	189	5	4620
Total	960	227	9	10435

Acknowledgements

Tim Allen and Paul Booth looked at the pottery. Dr Peter Hacking studied the cremated bones. The digging team was Sally and Roger Ainslie, Ron Brookes, Bob Eeles, Pam Jordan, John Carter, Jacqueline Smith, Jeff Wallis, Terry Stopps, Alison Gledhill, John Cooper. Mr and Mrs Some 7 Kgs of bone were also recovered. Mrs Rushbridge kindly allowed us to carry out the work and provided refreshments.

'Helensbourne' 36 East St Helens Street, Abingdon (SU 49771 96842)

Excavations, under the direction of Jeff Wallis, were undertaken in 1994 to ascertain whether archaeological remains would be destroyed by proposed garden landscaping.

In the past, excavations have been carried out in the garden of 30 East St Helens Street under the direction of D Keen, J Wallis and N Trippett. These have principally found early Roman rubbish pits disturbed by later Medieval pits. The excavations to the rear of 35 East St Helens Street (SMA 24, 1994) showed that the soils had been disturbed to a depth of at least 1.5 m in Medieval times.

The trench was situated approximately in the centre of the rear garden some 20 m from the river boundary. It was 4 m north-south by 3 m east-west. The maximum depth was 2.2 m. The natural under the site was gravel layer at a depth of 1.5 m from the surface.

The remains can be divided into the following phases:-

- 1) Contexts 18 and 18A. This was the fill of a shallow pit and contained quern fragments, some slag and a flint knife.
- 2) Context 10. This overlay 18 and could have been the upper parts of its fill. It contained 7 sherds of possible Saxon pottery, one of which was grass tempered. It is thus possible that both phases 1 and 2 are Saxon with a large amount of residual Roman material. Alternatively if the grass tempered pot is Iron Age then this phase would be 2nd-4th century in date. One residual sherd was of haematite coated pottery of early Iron Age date.
- 3) Contexts 7, 8, 9a, 9b, 12, 13, 13a, 15, 17, 19. These were a series of pits and the layers which they contained. They

are dated by their mid-17th century material, although they also contained earlier residual material, such as, a single tessera, lava quern fragments and a bone thread beater. Feature 13 was the latest in this phase and contained early to mid-17th century farthings.

4) Contexts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. This was a build up of soils above the previous pits. They contained 18th and 19th century pottery including some 2 Kg of clinker indicating some type of smithing activity in the area.

Table of Finds (Pottery Sherds)

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Prehistoric	-	2	5	-
Roman	157	73	420	42
Saxon	-	7	-	-
Medieval	-	-	140	31
Post-Medieval	-	-	187	28
Later	-	-	-	105

Discussion

The main feature of interest here is the build up of some 1.5 m of soil on top of the natural gravel. Almost all of this appears to have taken place since the Roman period. The late Roman date for this site contrasts with the excavations at 30 East St Helen Street where 1st century material tended to predominate. Its nature would indicate that it is largely dumps and rubbish pits. The contents of these, apart from the normal domestic refuse, show that during the Roman period there were buildings in the proximity.

The prehistoric pottery was mainly of Bronze Age type, although some Iron Age material was found. Some 18.25 Kg of bone and 16 struck flints were found in addition to pieces of glass, bronze and iron.

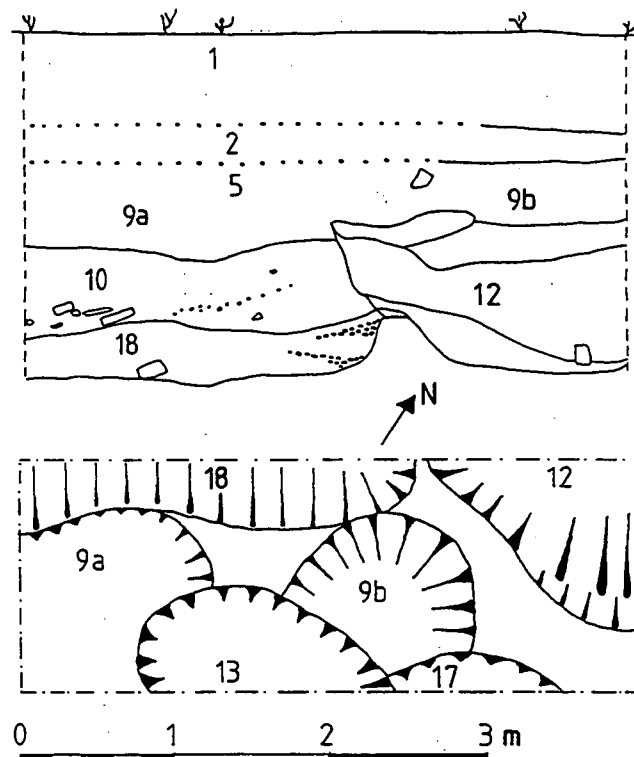


Fig 7. 36 East St Helens St. Section and plan.

Archive

The finds and archive material are being retained by David Carpenter, the owner of the property.

Acknowledgements

The digging team mainly consisted of: John Cooper, Alison Gledhill, Rachel Everett, Bob Eeles, Pam Jordan, Mary Nell Pilgrim, Shirley Kay, Stuart Hughes, Terry Stopps and Davina Chapman. Tim Allen kindly advised on some of the finds.

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Cynthia Graham-Kerr

25th Anniversary

This year (1994) SOAG celebrated its Silver Jubilee on May 21st with a visit to Silchester when the II Augustin Legion put on a show of drill, and a display of Roman life. Unfortunately, and typically of archaeological do's, it poured with rain, but the Legion bravely drilled and we learned a lot from the displays, in tents, of Roman carpentry, cooking, metalwork etc.

Our AGM much enjoyed Paul Smith, County Archaeologist, who spoke on Conservation in South Oxfordshire including the 13th century window discovered and dated by one of our members.

We introduced our new members to our dig at Gatehampton where we have found a Roman ring and an unusual spout of an unknown type around here (see main article).

We are started our new year with a new site to monitor for the National Trust.

An intriguing find at Gatehampton

Work by SOAG is continuing at Gatehampton and the contents and surrounding area of a large ditch are being investigated.

The ditch has been backfilled with Roman rubbish including many broken tegulae, imbrex, pottery of all sorts, nails and bones of animals; the lenses formed by different loads of debris showing well. In the south side, about 1 m down, we found an unusual spout from a flagon. It weighs exactly 220 g; the fabric is a coarse rather sandy material with occasional voids and fine inclusions, possibly flint: both inside and outside are rough to the touch. The colour gently varies between ochre and whitish, the inner 'sandwich' is grey. The neck is 4 cm thick with the spout and handle considerably thicker. It is interesting to see the potter's fingerprints round the spout where he has modelled it; which brings us to its shape. This we could not match up in the textbooks. The spout has been made flat and drawn up into a pouring spout by the two ends being stuck together and smoothed off (Fig x). The hole measures 1 cm across - it pours beautifully! The handle has a faint line down the sides of the top otherwise the spout is plain.

We can say with confidence that while it is broadly parallel to the New Forest ware, it is not a product of the Oxford region.

Any information as to the origins of this 'foreigner' would be welcome.

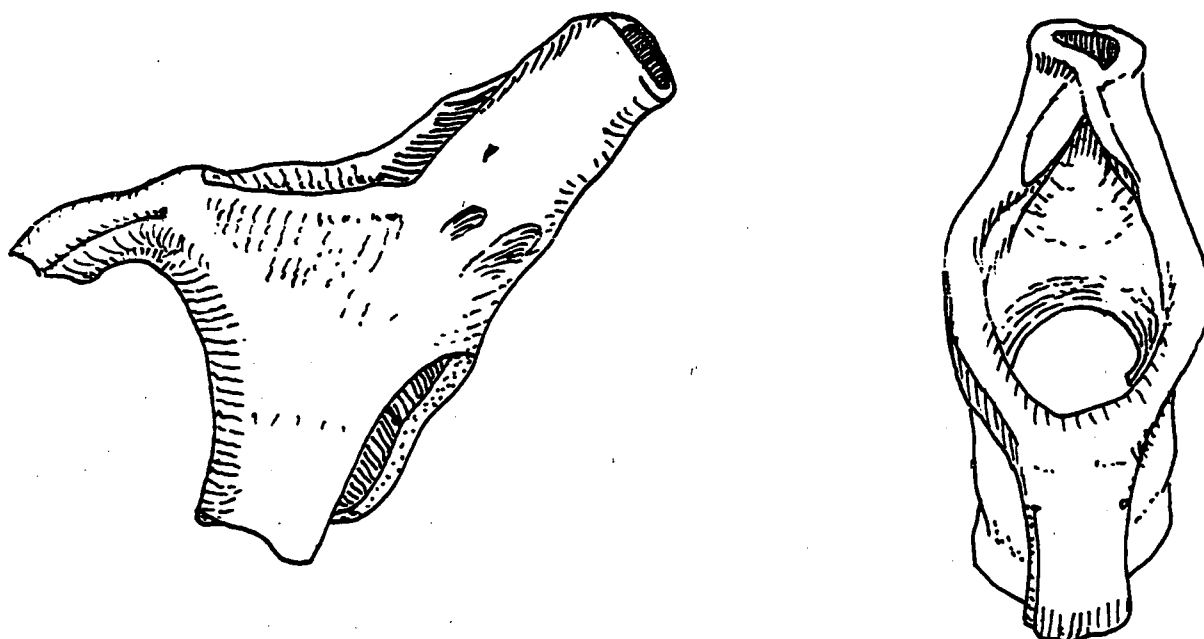


Fig 8. Spout from Gatehampton. Scale 1:1.

Chastleton House And The Role Of Archaeological Recording

Gary Marshall

Introduction

Since its acquisition by the National Trust in 1991 Chastleton House in Oxfordshire (SP 248291) has received close scrutiny from the architects, archaeologists and conservators concerned with the conservation and interpretation of what is virtually an unaltered Jacobean House dating from the first decade of the 17th century. Chastleton is a small gentry house built by Walter Jones, a cloth merchant and MP in the adjoining county of Worcester. Throughout its history the house has remained in the hands of the Jones family and their descendants and has remained virtually unaltered since none of the descendants of Walter Jones had the capital to rebuild or enlarge the house. Subtle changes of room design were carried out at the end of the 17th century, whilst in the 19th century John Whitmore Jones undertook repairs and alterations of an antiquarian character but the basic layout of the rooms, and the detail of plaster ceilings, friezes and panelling remains true to the 17th century. The significance of this unaltered interior is enhanced by the fact that some of the earliest furniture - described in an inventory of 1633 - is still within the house.

Before implementing the conservation programme the National Trust has commissioned Oxford Archaeological Unit to investigate aspects of the construction of the brewhouse and stables at Chastleton, and has also employed John Steane to investigate the archaeological evidence in the basement of the house. The Trust has subsequently employed its own archaeologist to continue the investigation of the gardens and surroundings and to undertake a watching brief whilst the conservation work is underway. Continuing archaeological investigation has made an important contribution towards the interpretation and understanding of both the house and its surrounding landscape. Much of the repair and installation work - for example the removal of floorboards, panelling, wallpapers and roof coverings - requires intervention to the fabric of the building and whilst the work is in progress the National Trust is maintaining the watching brief to record and interpret alterations and concealed detail which has come to light. Advance communication between the archaeologist and the contractor has proved essential and this has been formalised by placing certain constraints and clauses into the brief supplied to the contractor, requiring advance notification in advance of trenching and opening-up, and liaison over the position of trenches. In practice successful communication is made on a day- to-day basis but it is often of mutual benefit, so that the easiest routes for drains and cables can be established.

The gardens and landscape setting

On its north and west margins the house is flanked by

Chastleton village, to the south and east by grazed open pasture which forms the landscape setting to the house. This contains important evidence of earlier land use, including several extensive blocks of well-preserved ridge and furrow ploughing with associated headlands. These features, together with stumps and extant trees arising from the later park planting of the 19th century, have been the subject of an EDM survey and a report highlighting changes of land use which have taken place since the 12th century. Collaboration with the Trust's Parks and Gardens Survey has ensured that the significance of the evidence relating to the later park landscape has been highlighted.

The gardens have also been the subject of an EDM survey. The resulting 1:200 scale plan has formed the basis of the descriptive section of two volumes forming the Garden Report. The gardens - comprising discrete walled gardens on each side of the house (Fig 9) - have not been properly managed since the 1950s and as new discoveries arise as a consequence of scrub clearance these are being added to the plan. Examples of recent discoveries include gravel and cinder paths through the wild garden on the north side of the house, together with steps and flanking saddle stones placed as focal points on the paths.

The archaeological potential beneath the gardens has been investigated by trial trenching, supported by a resistivity survey on the lawns immediately adjacent to the house. The excavations were undertaken in advance of installing soakaway chambers and connecting pipes around all four sides of the house. On the west side of the house the recovery of a mid 3rd century Roman coin and a substantial quantity of Medieval pottery pointed to early and possibly continuous settlement on the site. The trenches for the soakaways subsequently unearthed a late 9th century coin on the north lawn and encountered glazed clay roof tile overlying substantial stone footings beneath the turf of the Best (east) Garden. Pottery associated with these footings suggests they might belong to the 13th or 14th century and form part of the earlier house predating the existing building of Walter Jones. With the discovery of these footings we can approximately identify the focus of Medieval activity on the site and can therefore begin to consider its influence on the Jacobean phase of building and garden development.

Evidence of later landscape development contemporary with the construction of the house was found within the Forecourt on the south front of the house. Three separate attempts were made to sink a soakaway chamber, each encountering footings for a Jacobean terrace extending across the front of the house which would have served as a formal inner court separate from the main length of the Forecourt. The outline of the first attempt was enlarged to reveal not only the terrace (Fig 10) but also footings for steps providing the ascent onto the terrace, as well as a series of finely laid pitched stone paths edged with cobbled kerbs, leading in one direction towards the churchyard, and in another direction towards the stableyard. With the partial destruction of the terrace sometime before 1827 to create a less formal approach to the front of the house the paths were

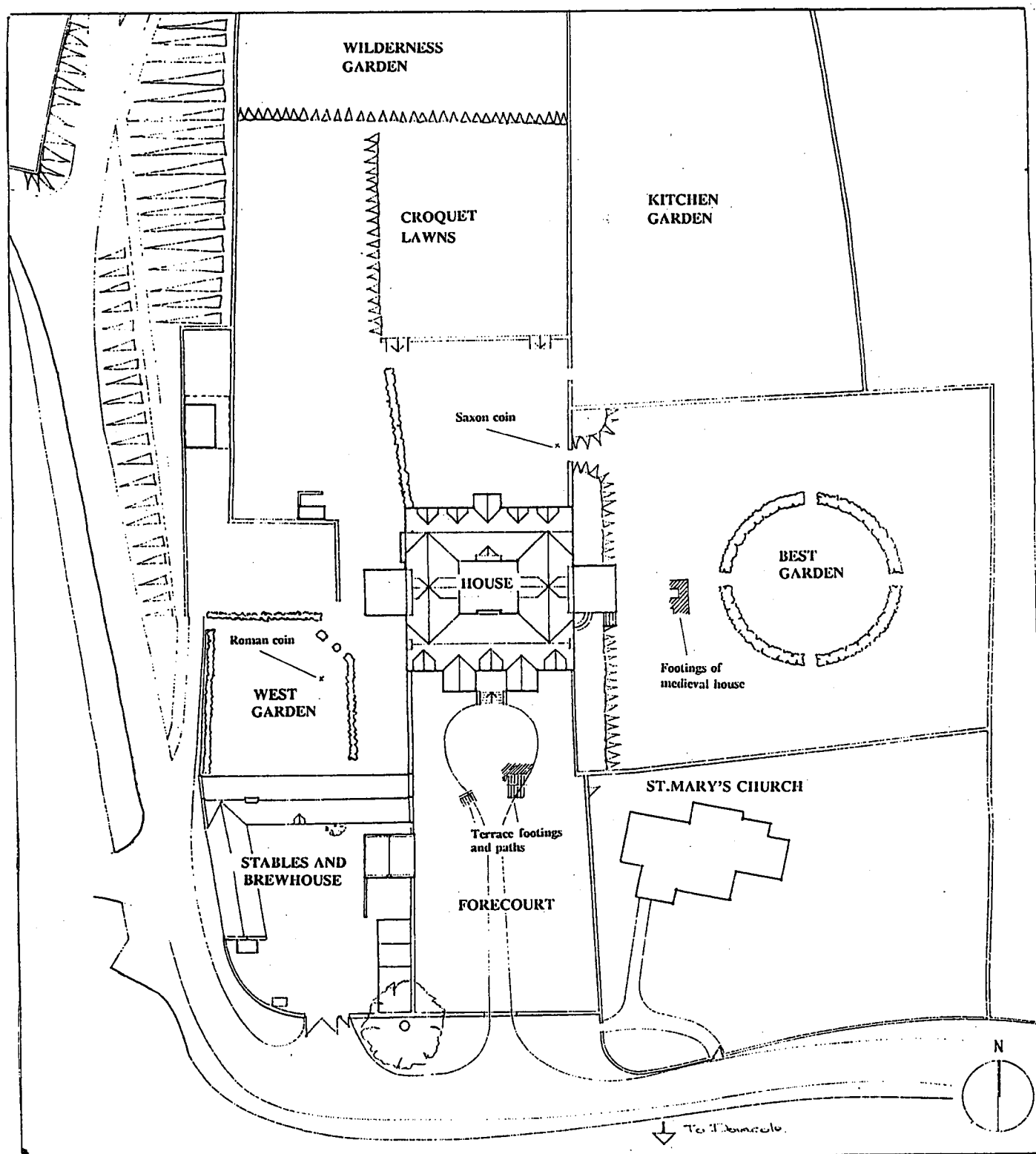


Fig 9. Chastleton House, Oxfordshire. Plan of the gardens around the house.

left intact and were subsequently concealed beneath a series of gravel layers. There is therefore a good chance that almost the entire Jacobean Forecourt arrangement lies buried beneath this gravel and beneath the flanking turf.

The House

Within the house a number of important discoveries have been made, arising from detailed investigation and also as a

consequence of the recent intrusive work of the contractors. An archaeological 'sweep' of the basement floors provided an opportunity to examine in detail the 17th century flagstone floor of the main cellar, thus revealing patterns of wear and tear associated with its use as a store for beer brewed in the nearby brewhouse. Perhaps not surprisingly these domestic rooms have received most attention from the graffitists. Some of it is 20th century, but other items, such

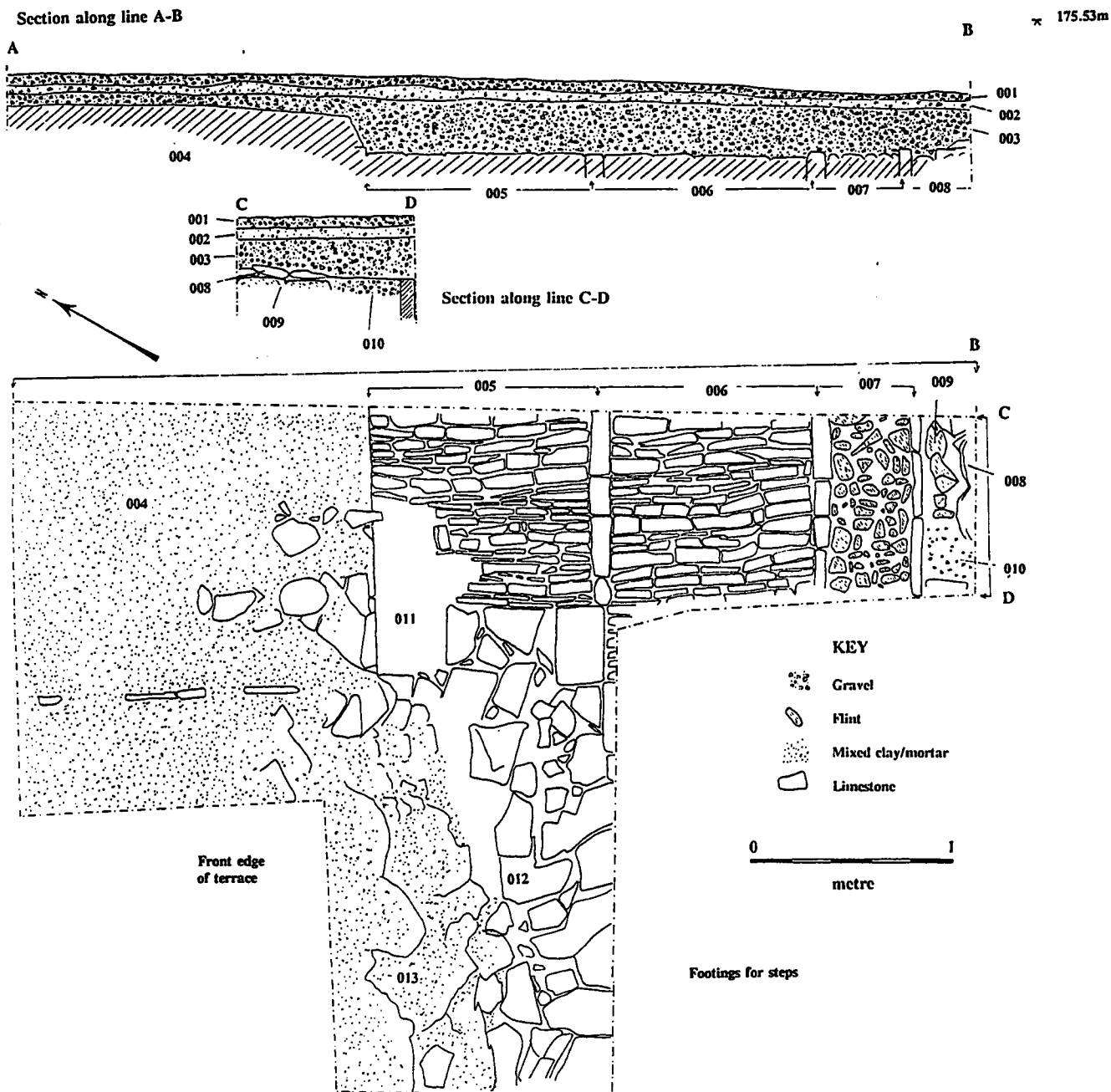


Fig 10. Chastleton House, Oxfordshire. Plan and sections illustrating the remains of the Jacobean terrace in the Forecourt.

as various initials and floral marks on the central columns supporting the floor of the Hall above, may well be 17th century. Such evidence of scratching and scribbling has been recorded in order to recover dateable initials and mason's marks. This has perhaps proved more successful with the marks on structural carpentry such as on the roof where a number of the timbers carry an individual carpenter's mark - a scratched cross between two vertical lines.

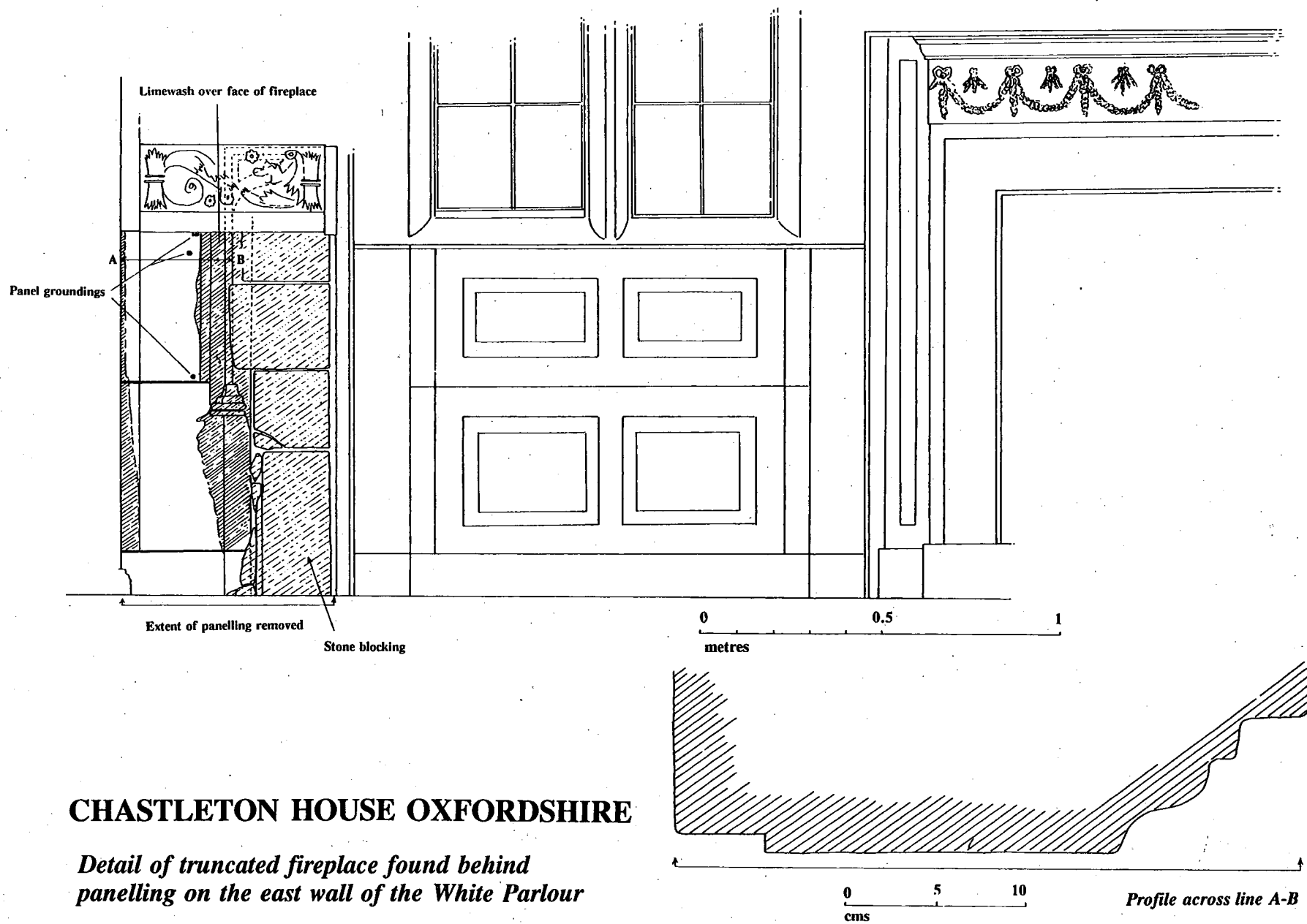
Cleaning of the brick floor of the wine bins in the basement has revealed traces of mortar for earlier walls, suggesting an alteration in the configuration of the walls forming the bins. The northeast corner of the main cellar has been truncated by the insertion of an early 19th century vaulted cellar and

careful examination of the brick walls of this cellar revealed faint chalked dates from May 1810 to October 1812, suggesting the date for the insertion of certain vintages.

The function of the adjoining room on the southeast corner of the basement remains uncertain but close scrutiny of the walls reveals a series of circular impressions formed as a consequence of small casks being rammed up against the plaster on the walls. There are short stubs up of upstanding walls arising from the floor which would have supported horizontal timber rails for the casks. The discovery of this evidence therefore seems to imply that the room was used for the storage of liquids, perhaps for ale arising from the brewhouse.

The most significant find as a consequence of floor cleaning

Fig 11. Chastleton House, Oxfordshire.



CHASTLETON HOUSE OXFORDSHIRE

*Detail of truncated fireplace found behind
panelling on the east wall of the White Parlour*

Oxfordshire

has been in the basement room under the east stairs where a central square hole was found between the columns supporting the stairs. Removal of the infill of this hole led to the recovery of a number of 17th century glass bottles, stoneware Bellarmine jars, pottery and clay pipes, which though broken when recovered, had evidently been thrown down in a complete state. The glass bottles are particularly early since they carry glass seals impressed with the initials HI, probably for Henry Jones the son of Walter Jones, who died in 1656.

The crowning glory of the floor cleaning must be the descent into the Garderobe tower on the north side of the house to remove accumulated debris - masonry, sand, mortar and timber - from the base of the tower. This led to the discovery of a flagstone floor laid with gradients towards the southwest corner of the tower where it then connected with a 17th century culvert exiting through the northwest corner of the basement. Several rows of voids were found in the lower walls of the tower, evidently housing timber floors which aided the periodic removal of silts from the base of the tower when it served as a 'necessary'.

Most of the 'opening-up' by the contractors has been above basement level i.e. on the ground floor, and on the first and second floors. The removal of floorboards for the installation of electric cables has brought to light a number of interesting artifacts, including clay pipe bowls, coins and a vast number of dress pins. The collection from beneath the Long Gallery floor highlights the activities of the occupants on wet days since it includes shuttlecocks, clay marbles, rubber balls a ping pong ball and several early playing cards. From below the boards of the room used as the Nursery since 1633 has come a number items indicative of room use, including painted wooden blocks and small wooden animals, probably from a Noah's Ark which was brought out on each Sabbath.

The temporary removal of panelling has led to perhaps the most significant discoveries. Behind the panelling in the White Parlour on the ground floor, and the Fettiplace Chamber on the first floor, two truncated fireplaces survive in-situ with their north jambs intact (Fig 11). The fireplace openings were subsequently moved to the centre of each room, possibly at the end of the 17th century, but we know that the earlier openings were used because a smoke-blackened flue from the White Parlour fireplace was found behind panelling on the first floor. In the Hall the removal of panelling has revealed incised lines in the fabric of the walls which seem to have been cut to indicate the required height for the panelling. The original timber floor had by 1815 been replaced with a flagged floor and the incised line therefore indicates that despite this alteration the panelling is still in its original position.

The removal of wallpapers has also led to several interesting discoveries, including the emergence of several early 19th century papers which were placed face down and used as lining papers. In the ground floor Great Parlour a mid 19th century lead-based paint remains on the walls beneath a

succession of 20th century papers and this still carries the ghosted impressions of large paintings which were subsequently hung again in the same position after the walls were papered. The mid 19th century paint - an olive yellow colour - is likely to be reinstated as the surface finish for the room before the house is opened to the public in 1997.

The opening-up of the roof, involving the temporary removal of the Westmoreland slates, has led to the discovery of the date '1802' painted in large figures onto the base of the repairs to the principal trusses on the north side of the house. The dates give an accurate indication of when the roof was repaired and recovered with Westmoreland slate, thus replacing the original stone tile covering. The discovery of these dates is also of interest because they indicate that John Jones, responsible for the repairs, was particularly concerned to ensure that any replacement of the original timber structure should be highlighted.

Conclusion

Chastleton House is due to open to the public in 1997 but in the meantime is undergoing a major programme of repair to ensure its long term preservation. Much new evidence has come to light as a result of this work. In fact the number of artifacts recovered, and the substantial nature of the footings in the Best Garden, raise some suspicion as to why the occurrence of such evidence remains unrecorded in any of the Chastleton papers. The possibility of earlier evidence is also not suggested by the survival of recovered 'antiquities' amongst the contents of the house. This is rather surprising since Chastleton has always been a studied house. A concise history of the house and the family was published in 1938 and before this paintings recording the antiquarian character of the house were produced during the early 19th century. The archaeological investigation has enhanced our understanding about particular aspects of the house and its surroundings. The excavations within the gardens have highlighted the buried archaeological potential of the immediate surroundings and these discoveries suggest continuous occupation, possibly since the Roman period. They certainly suggest significant occupation during the late Medieval period. The full potential can only be realised by excavation but the discoveries to date have highlighted the sensitivity of the surroundings and should ensure that any intrusive work in the future is properly located and monitored.

Within the house recent discoveries have highlighted that whilst it remains basically an unaltered Jacobean House, small scale changes have taken place within the existing fabric and layout of the building. Owing to their subtlety they are often difficult to detect and indeed alterations such as those of John Whitmore Jones to doorcases and panelling are often masked by their antiquarian character. It is often only by detailed scrutiny that such changes and alterations can be brought to light and by extrapolation it is sometimes possible to highlight potentially sensitive areas of the house where intrusion may remove such evidence. The discovery of the truncated fireplaces in the southeast corner rooms

implies that such changes were also carried out on the west side of the house and the future removal of panelling may well prove this to be the case.

In addition to recording and highlighting the sensitive fabric of the house the archaeological investigation has also proved beneficial to the architects and contractors involved with the conservation of the house. To give just one example, the discovery of a system of stone culverts commencing in the courtyard and passing through the northwest corner of the basement has furnished a route for removing the water from the internal faces of the roof, thus avoiding the need to remove part of the main cellar floor to achieve the same objective

The outcome of the close investigation by the various conservation disciplines has been a series of volumes forming the Conservation Plan for the house which, on a room by room basis, provide a framework for describing and highlighting the historical significance of individual components. The report is completed by two further volumes covering the gardens. Recent archaeological discoveries and the conclusions thus arising have enhanced the level of information contained within these volumes. Ultimately they enhance the accuracy and authenticity of conservation work carried out to the house and its surroundings since the Conservation Report serves as a series of guidelines for the programme of repairs and alterations.

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