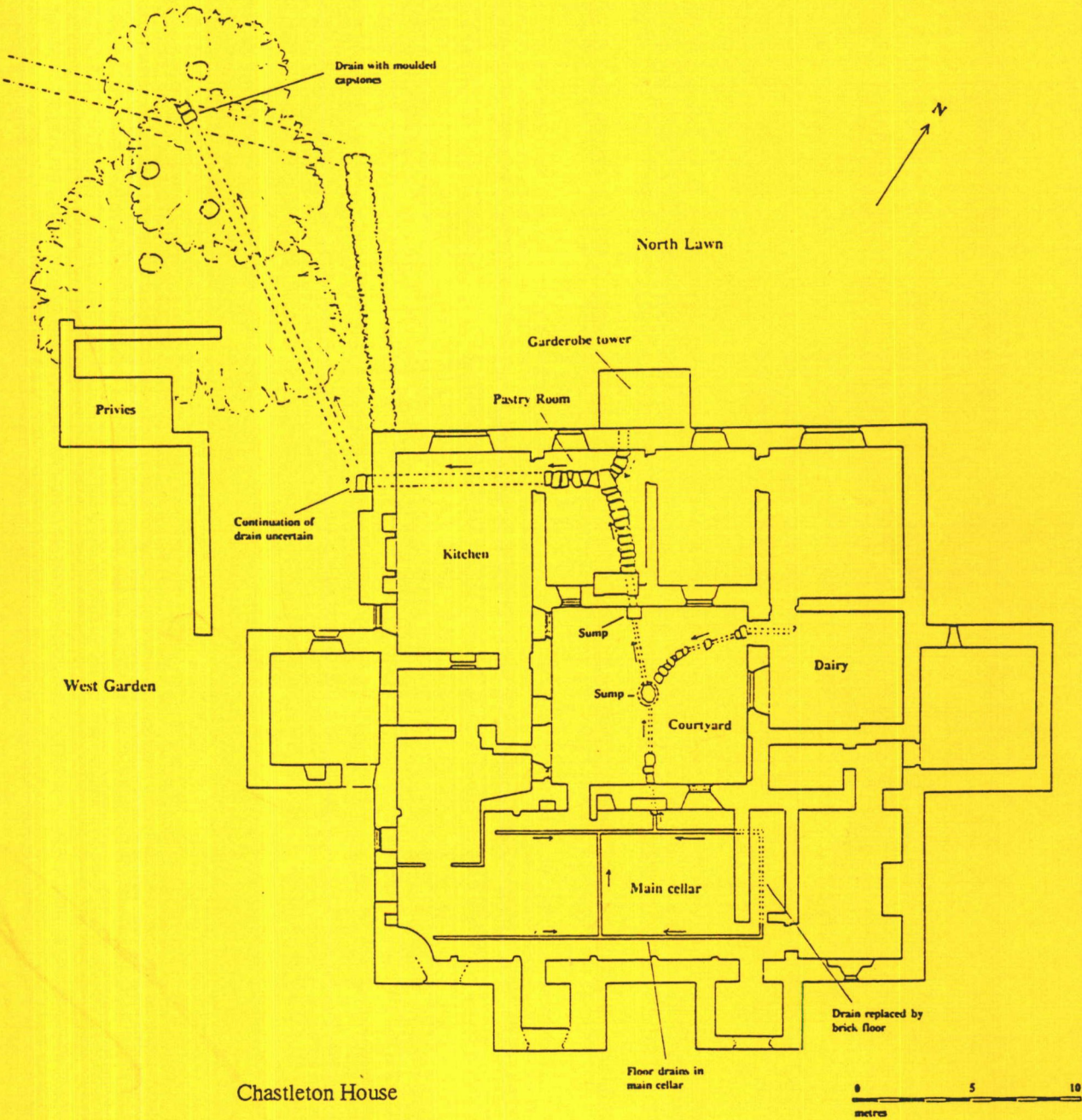




SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

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

NUMBER 26, 1996

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Editorial and Conference

Editorial

A few more organisations have submitted material for this issue, to them and the regular contributors I say thank you.

If the contents of this issue are to be believed, Oxfordshire is the busiest county for archaeology followed by Northamptonshire, then Buckinghamshire and finally Bedfordshire bringing up the rear.

You will notice that I have included Reviews, Publications and Notes for Contributors; I thought this was an innovation until I looked at some issues of SMA from the 1970s and found that they included these. Nothing new under the Sun. I hope to extend Reviews and Publications so please send me copies for review.

My aim is to publish as complete a record as possible of the archaeology that is being undertaken in our four counties so please let me have a note, however brief, about what you are doing

Once again thank you.

The copy date for SMA 27 is 31st March 1997; please refer to the Notes for Contributors.

Barry Horne AIFA.

Report on Spring Conference held at Banbury Museum on Saturday 20th April 1996.

Summary by Brenda D Easterbrook - Hon Sec CBA South Midlands

The 1996 conference entitled 'Air Photography and Archaeology', proved to be a very popular attraction for both professional and amateur archaeologists.

The Air Photography Unit of RCHME provided two speakers: **Roger Featherstone** who showed many of the new sites in north Oxfordshire discovered from the air during 1995, and **Vikki Fenner**, who explained the computerised systems used to plot these surveys on to maps and how the descriptions of each site are recorded. A database, which has been commissioned to record morphological information, is a primary record index. The tables produced include multiple choice descriptions which need to be standardised for comparisons of sites; new ones to be checked against those previously recorded. In the last 9 years there had been a major increase in every type of site found.

The speakers referred to the National Mapping Programme being undertaken by RCHME, which aims to identify, interpret, survey and record sites, and classify the information contained on air photographs to provide a consistent national record. There would be an uneven coverage because of areas like Heathrow.

Further air reconnaissance may produce extra information to known sites and geophysical surveys may reveal details not visible from the air.

Mike Farley, Bucks County Archaeologist, detailed the historic background to the collections of air photos in the County archives. These came from many sources, including Ken Field, present, who in the 1970s, published the

distribution pattern of ring ditches in the Ouse and Ousel valleys.

Air photography is just one tool for archaeological use and needs to be supplemented by geophysical survey and, in some instances, by excavations. The clay in the Vale of Aylesbury is unresponsive to air photography. At Dorney in the Thames valley, although previous surveys showed cropmarks, it was excavation (by the Oxford Archaeology Unit) which revealed the early-to-mid Bronze Age field systems, the piles of a prehistoric bridge and extensive flint-knapping areas, beneath a deep alluvial deposit.

The surveys are now perceived as showing complete landscapes rather than individual sites. and there is great historic value in non-archaeological photos.

Chris Cox, Air Photo Services, who usually flies in the Cambs/Hunts/Beds area, recently made a survey of the Great Ouse valley from Huntingdon (Cambs) to Sandy (Beds), a project funded by RCHME. The air reconnaissance was in advance of a new road, (A14), new building, and gravel and sand extraction. There was value in looking at different aspects of the same sites in varying crops and weather conditions, and at close-ups which show more features and are a challenge to interpret. Chris used a computer for interpretation and the sites were then mapped. The landscape of the Ouse valley was constantly changing and needs a budget for targeted research.

Philip Markham, Northamptonshire Heritage, which is part of the County Council, has a large archive of air photographs. They are involved with RCHME as part of the National mapping programme and maps of cropmark information are now able to be made to any scale. Some new sites were discovered in 1995, not all readily identifiable. The air surveys included non-archaeological subjects such as towns (Brackley. estates (Stowe), and also excavations

near Towcester which showed a windmill mound and a mortuary enclosure.

A henge site, rare in this area, had been discovered at Kings Sutton East of the M40, and many other types of sites were found.

Roy Friendship-Taylor, Upper Nene Archaeological Society, had maintained a watching brief on a new water main skirting the Villa site at Piddington but nothing was found.

He explained the villa site as a series of phases which by the 4th century was occupied by squatters. There was a possible early Roman military ditch. By the 4th century, a family unit was living over the cold bath. A tile kiln was built in the end of the bath-house and the area converted to a builders yard with stacks of building materials. Some tiles had prints of cloven hoof animals. The tile kiln was 3-4th century: there was also a 2nd century kiln.

Remains of buttresses were found: a 1st century ditch was beneath one wall. There were Saxon burials, pottery and a grub hut.

The well, 2 m diameter, with a platform, possibly the base for a tank, had a road leading to it. Shoring, by Anglian Water, was erected before excavations started. The finds include horse bones, and much very well preserved ironwork and coins. The environmental conditions were good. Unfortunately water-logged wood and its tank had been stolen.

Barry Horne, Manshead Archaeological Society of

Editorial and Conference

Dunstable, the South Midlands Archaeology Hon Editor, thanked contributors for sending in their material early this year. The Society did small excavations around Dunstable. In 1994 their headquarters were opened by Andrew Selkirk. Last year 676 children visited to hear talks about pottery and other archaeological subjects. There were models for them to buy and a series of booklets 'Exploring Past Times' on Prehistory, Roman and Medieval themes. There were also activity booklets, pens and pencils, and so far they have seen about 1000 children through their doors. No charge is made, but donations are given by the schools.

After the material from the excavations has been analysed, it is passed on, but much remains in storage in the cellar, which is quite large, the building being a former pub! Last year the running costs were £936.

Cynthia Graham-Kerr, South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG), said the group provided 'something for everyone'. They were involved with the National Trust surveys and monitoring at Basildon, Geys Court, and Pangbourne Meadow. They had attended other meetings and visited other archaeological sites. Castrol had involved the group and Paul Smith with the inspection of an unknown ditch at a known 'camp' which was a good example of cooperation between a local firm and the local Society.

They had a Roman dig at Goring and the site produced flints, chalk, Roman tile, painted plaster, a ring and coins. There was a drain across the site with tiles laid on end. There had been two pot-washing sessions.

They had a monthly news-letter, and a Summer party, a new venture.

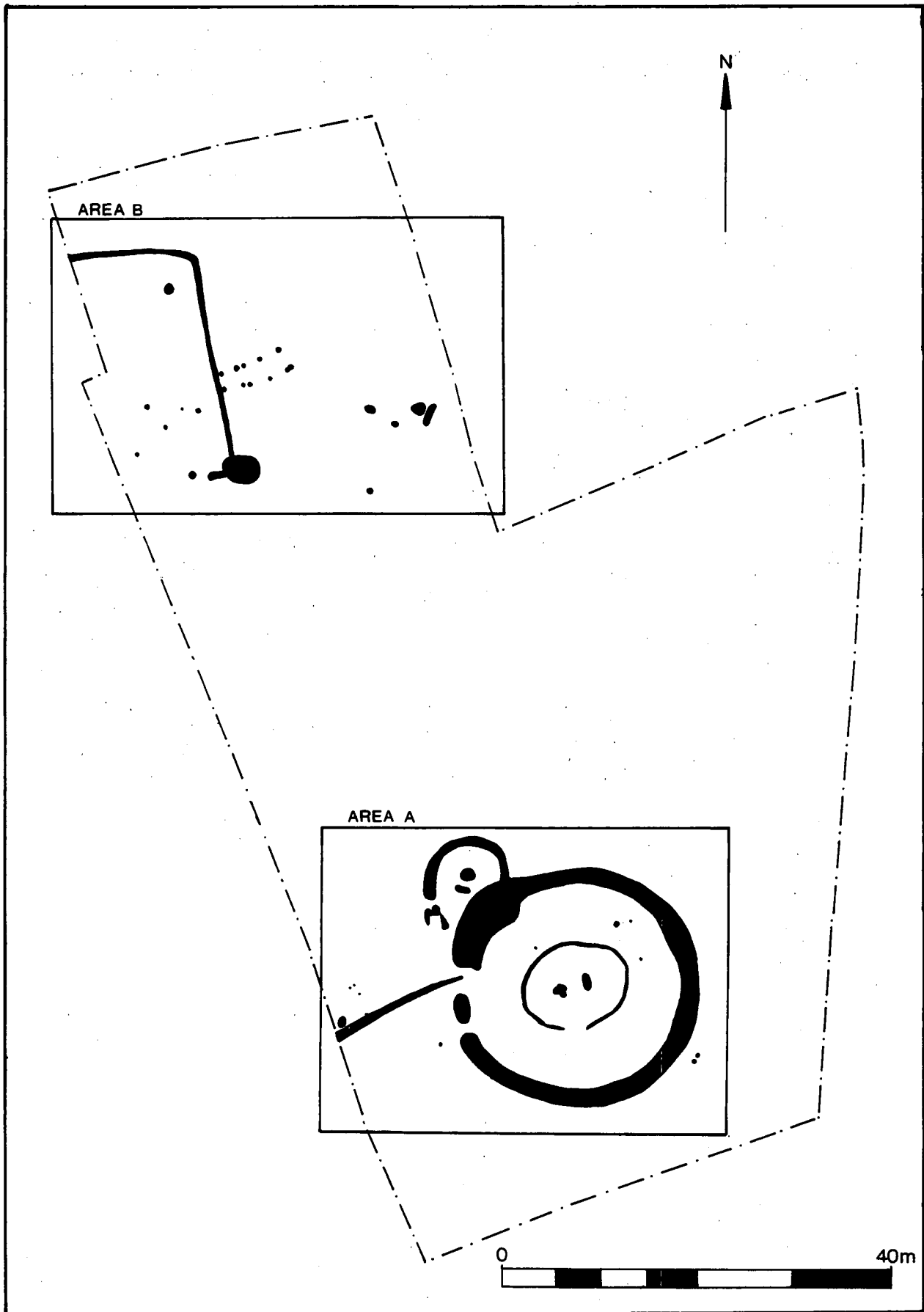


Fig 1. Land adjacent to Bunyan Centre, Bedford, all features

BEDFORDSHIRE

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S HERITAGE GROUP

Major Fieldwork Projects

Bedford, 29 - 41 High Street (TL 053498)
Sean Steadman

Archaeological investigation was carried out during redevelopment to the rear of 29 - 41, High Street, Bedford between May and September 1995. The site is located within the historic core of Bedford occupying a part of the 10th century Saxon burgh which was subsequently incorporated into the outer bailey of Bedford castle in the late 11th or early 12th century. Archaeological evaluation identified surviving deposits dating from the 10th to the 16th centuries and consequently a programme of archaeological recording was incorporated into the proposed development. Evidence of Late Saxon/Early Medieval industrial activity and occupation prior to the construction of the outer bailey ditch and rampart of Bedford castle was uncovered on the site. The listed timber-framed buildings fronting on to the High Street in the west of the site have been retained within the present development. A brief summary of the Buildings Survey carried out on their upper storeys is included in this report.

Several episodes of pre-castle activity were discovered in the east of the site. Quarry pits and post-hole structures were succeeded by a ditch and clay-lined gullies which were renewed at least once. Several pits containing charcoal and slag were discovered together with evidence of associated structures which may have been destroyed by fire. A number of cess or rubbish pits and a possible boundary ditch denoting yards to the rear of properties along the High Street were discovered in the west of the site. The line of the outer bailey ditch was established during piling for foundations and the lower levels of the outer bailey rampart were deposited on top of the early structures. Little or no evidence of post-castle activity had survived to the rear of the High Street.

Bedford, 29 - 31, High Street (TL 053498)
Jackie Crick

Two timber frame buildings, with rear ranges, Nos. 29 - 31, front the High Street on a North-South axis dividing a burgage plot in two. The Royal Commission, with the assistance of Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service, conducted a rapid survey of their timber frames prior to refurbishment as retail premises.

The earliest surviving evidence comprised the west end of a late 16th century hall, to the rear of No 31. A floor had been inserted into this hall during the 17th century and, at a similar time jettied front ranges were erected, probably

replacing earlier ones. No 29 was subsequently extended to the rear, before the early 18th century when both buildings were raised in height and the jetties underbuilt. Stacks were inserted in the front ranges and the buildings refaced in the early 19th century. In the 20th century these housed shops at the ground floor level.

An Historic Building Report, No 93669, has been prepared by A. Calladine of RCHM(E).

Bedford, Land adjacent to the Bunyan Centre
(TL 06344773) (Fig 1)
Sean Steadman and Mark Phillips

Archaeological recording of a crop mark ring ditch and enclosure on the outskirts of Bedford uncovered a ritual complex of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date and evidence of Early/Middle Iron Age domestic and ritual activity. Excavation was carried out in advance of housing development on land adjacent to the Bunyan Centre, Bedford, during November and December 1995.

Area A.

The ring ditch complex situated in the south of the excavated area comprised an incomplete ring ditch, which appeared to have been partially cut away by a larger ring ditch with a concentric internal gully situated immediately to the south-east.

The earlier ditch was c 9 m in diameter with a wide entrance, at least 4 m across, to the south or south west. A shallow elongated pit partially infilled the gap between the surviving terminal and the larger ring ditch and might suggest that the entrance was causewayed. Alternatively, the ditch may have been penannular or possibly horse-shoe shaped. A crouched inhumation was discovered in the base of a roughly circular pit, c 1 m diameter and 0.4 m deep, situated at the geometric centre of the enclosure. A number of flint flakes were recovered from the backfill of the pit but there were no grave goods in direct association with the burial. A shallow elongated pit located immediately to the south of the burial pit contained no evidence of an inhumation.

The larger ring ditch was c 27 m in diameter with an entrance to the west. An elongated pit located between the two terminals raises the possibility that this entrance was also causewayed. The inner gully formed an oval enclosure, c 12 m long and 10 m wide, with its longest axis aligned on the entranceway to the outer ditch.

Two graves were discovered within the internal enclosure. They were located equidistant from the geometric centre of the gully and orientated north-south in a roughly symmetrical arrangement. The western inhumation was less than 0.1 m deep and had been truncated by later ploughing. The skeleton, which was little more than a stain, was accompanied by an almost complete beaker with all over decoration. Fragments of a second pot were found at the south end of the grave close to the head. The eastern grave

Bedfordshire

contained a well preserved skeleton with its head to the south and its lower legs drawn up behind. There were no accompanying grave goods.

Evidence for internal mounds or barrows within either ring remains equivocal although the angular configuration of the internal gully might suggest that this is the remains of a palisade or revetment for an internal mound

A number of discrete postholes discovered in the vicinity of the ring ditches may or may not have been associated with them. The presence of a shallow gully following a roughly west-south-west to east-north-east alignment towards the entrance of the large ring, (or possibly the earlier one) may have been coincidental.

Evidence of Late Neolithic domestic activity, consisting of grooved ware pottery and worked flints, was recovered from an unstratified context to the south of the rings.

Area B.

Evidence of Iron Age settlement in the north of the site comprised three sides of a sub-rectangular enclosure which contained a scatter of postholes and pits. A post built structure, c 8 m long and 3 m wide, was located immediately to the east. The enclosure ditch cut through the upper fills of a watering-hole or pond. A carinated pottery vessel of Early Iron Age date, possibly a votive offering, was recovered from this feature along with a small quantity of iron slag.

Biggleswade, Stratton (TL 205438, HER 518) (Fig 2) Drew Shotliff

A further 1.8 ha of the Saxon and Medieval settlement of Stratton were excavated on behalf of Mid-Bedfordshire District Council in advance of the construction of a swimming pool complex. The area of excavation lay immediately to the north of the 6 ha excavated during 1991-92 (see *SMA* 23, 4 for a summary report). It was evaluated by trial trenching during 1994 (*SMA* 25, 16-17, Zone 2). The excavation revealed several major phases of activity, ranging in date from the early-middle Saxon to the late Medieval periods.

The western edge of the site was occupied by an early-middle Saxon industrial zone. A curving boundary ditch with two entrance causeways enclosed an area of c 3200 m². Six sunken featured buildings (SFB) of various size and form lay within the enclosure, together with a number of pits, rich in ferrous slag. A further four SFBs and a number of granary structures were recorded outside the enclosure. A rich assemblage of artefacts, animal bone and charred plant remains was recovered from these features.

The south central part of the site contained a cluster of Saxo-Norman buildings, constructed with a mixture of earthfast posts and timber sill beams set into foundation slots. A latrine in a small ditched enclosure was located

immediately to the west of the buildings. A ditched trackway leading southwards linked this area to the rest of the Saxo-Norman settlement, excavated in 1991-92.

By the Medieval period settlement had again shifted further eastwards. A high density of pits, cobbled surfaces and remains of building foundations were recorded in the south-east corner of the site. A circular, earth-built, late Medieval dovecote, partially investigated in 1994, was excavated in the north-east corner of the site. A similar, though less well preserved, structure was found 500 m to the south during the initial phase of archaeological work on the development area. The late Medieval structures fronted onto a substantial cobbled trackway, preserved in a linear wood immediately to the east of the excavated area. The earlier Saxon and Saxo-Norman settlement remains were overlain by Medieval field boundary ditches.

Flitwick, Land off Hinksley Road (TL 0335) (Fig 3) Michael Luke

Excavation of an area of 3500 m² took place during October and November 1995 on behalf of Mid-Bedfordshire District Council, in advance of a housing development on land off Hinksley Road, Flitwick. Evaluation of the site in 1993 had identified a well preserved Iron Age farmstead, enclosed by a sub-circular ditch (*SMA* 24, 12). The layout of the housing development was altered to ensure the latter's preservation. Excavation was centred on a concentration of archaeological features to the south-west of the farmstead.

Several episodes of Iron Age activity have been provisionally identified. The earliest phase comprised an unenclosed settlement, datable to the early - middle Iron Age period on ceramic and stratigraphic evidence. The remains included a circular drip gully, 11 m in diameter, with no surviving structural elements or surfaces and a number of isolated pits and postholes, some of which contained "pot boiler" stones.

The second phase of Iron Age activity was dominated by a D-shaped enclosure. It covered an area of 700 m² and was entered via a 4 m wide causeway in its south-east side. There were no contemporary, internal features; it has, therefore, been provisionally interpreted as a stock enclosure. Two smaller enclosures appeared to have been added on to the south-east side of the D-shaped enclosure. All these features are likely to be contemporary with the enclosed farmstead. A number of ditches immediately to the south-east of the farmstead appeared to be associated with its entranceway. The fills of these features produced the greatest concentration of middle Iron Age pottery from the site.

A third phase of activity, dating to the late Iron Age/early Romano-British period, was represented by several isolated pits and postholes, concentrated in the south-west of the excavation area. In addition, a number of ditches were respected by a large quarry pit dug into the underlying clay.

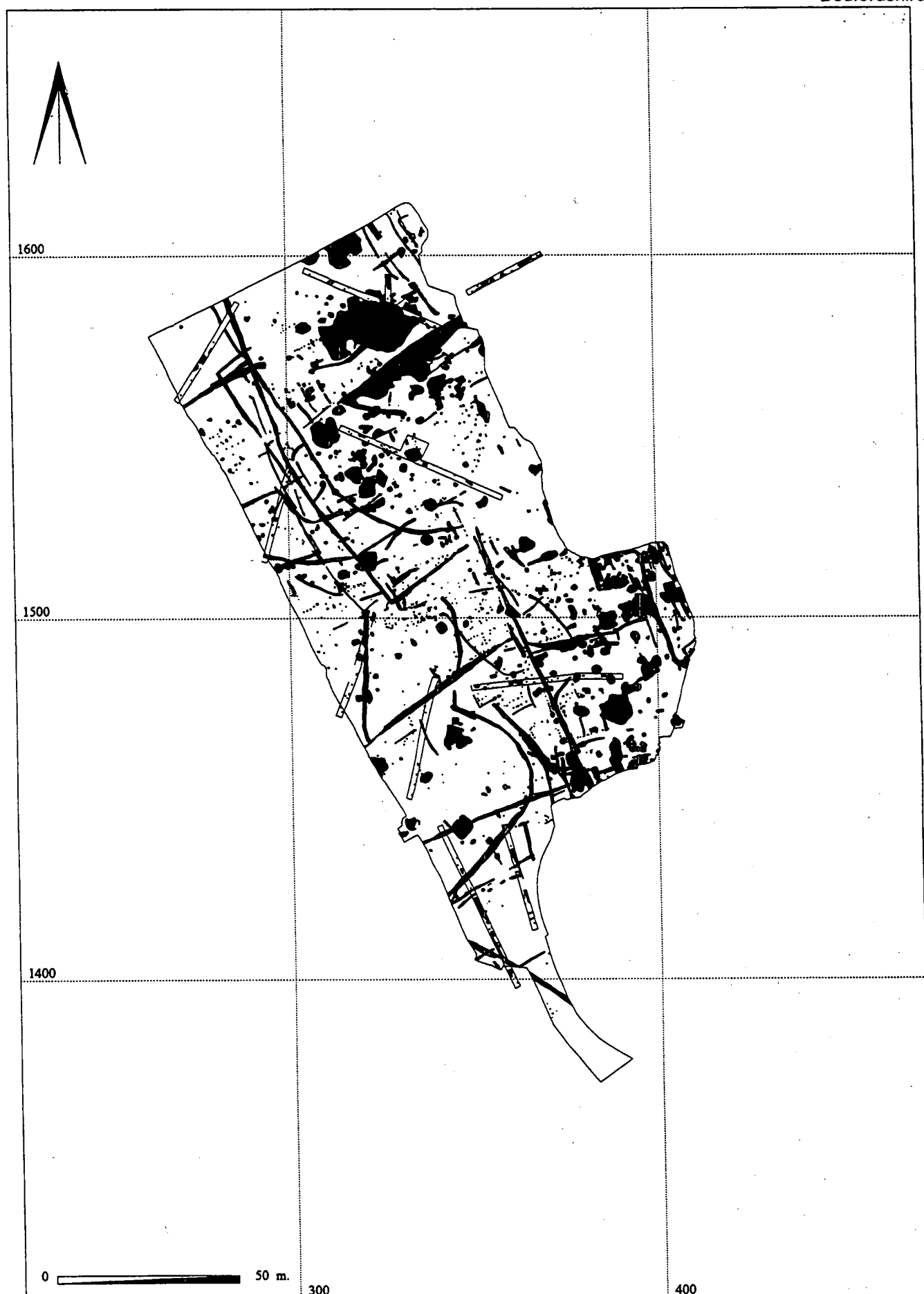


Fig 2. Stratton swimming pool, all features

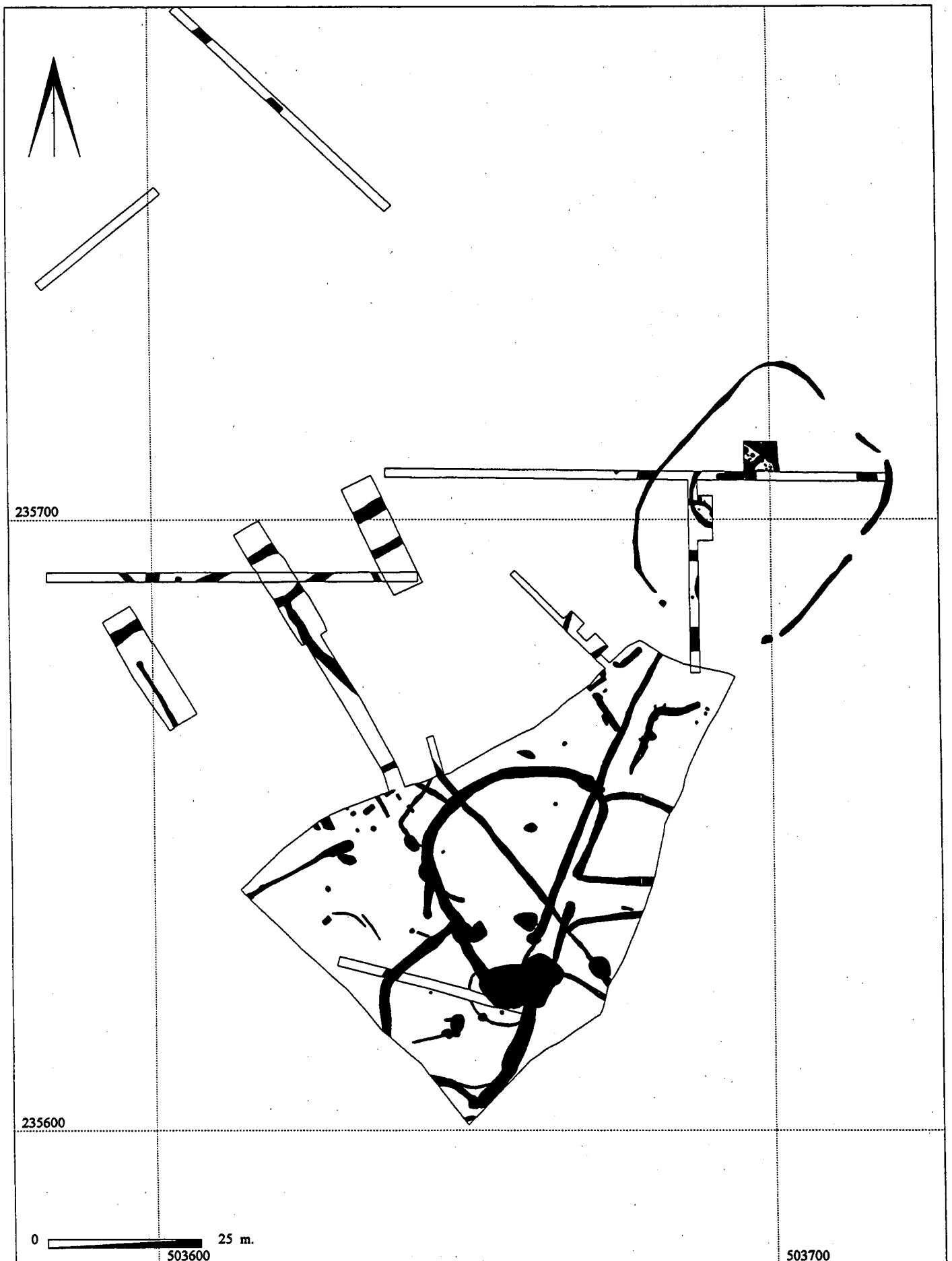


Fig 3. Land off Hinksley Road, Flitwick, all features

These features appear to be on the periphery of a settlement located beyond the limits of the development area.

A later Roman phase, consisting of a ditched trackway and field system, was also recorded. The limited quantities of artefacts within these features suggest the associated settlement was not in the immediate vicinity.

Saxon activity was indicated by the presence of two possible water pits and the recovery of two loomweights. The fragmentary remains of a wooden ladder, clearly not in situ, were found in the fill of one of the pits.

Willington, Dog Farm (TL 102495)

Drew Shotliff

A watching brief during topsoil stripping in advance of gravel quarrying was carried out on behalf of Redlands Aggregates Ltd. An area of c 9 ha was observed.

Approximately 35 archaeological features were excavated and recorded. The majority were small to medium sized pits but also included occasional isolated postholes and a possible urned cremation burial. Finds recovered from these features comprised animal bone, flintwork and c 30 sherds of Late Neolithic impressed ware in the Peterborough-type tradition. The latter included bowl forms and a possible collared urn. Decoration comprised all over fingernail impressions in a rough herringbone pattern or short twisted cord impressions known as 'maggots'. Bulk soil samples taken from excavated archaeological features, contained quantities of charcoal (mostly from oakwood) and charred hazelnut shells. Around 2 kg of struck flint, dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age, was recovered from topsoil. Tool types included a leaf-shaped arrowhead, scrapers and knives.

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

Parties of school children from 5 local schools continue to enjoy the facilities on offer at the **Les Matthews Archaeology Centre** with 676 children visiting in 1995.

The following are summaries of work carried out in 1994 and reported in *Manshead Journal* 35 by David Warren (excavation) and Renny Hudspeth (fieldwalking).

A further season of excavations at **Priory Middle School**

has been undertaken with the kind permission of Roger Pepworth the headteacher. The first cut, one metre west of last year's (Warren, 1994), produced 18th and 19th century material as well as a general scatter of material of the Roman and Medieval periods. Of particular interest is a personal lead seal die of the early 13th century which may be associated with the Carter family of that period (Fig 4).

There was also a small amount of pot, some of it from a patch of rotted chalk within the solid which might be much earlier, perhaps to be associated with a possible structure.

A second cut was taken immediately east of the school in the garden of the caretaker's house. The purpose here was to seek the drainage ditch mentioned by Worthington Smith (Smith, 1904). In this we proved successful despite the presence of modern rubbish pits.

Fieldwalking

During 1994/5 the Society walked the following areas:

An area of c 4 km² was walked at **Streatley, Barton and Sundon** parishes. The Survey area consists of an undulating landscape of glacially deposited clay overlying chalk with an exposed chalk scarp (Sundon Hills, height 155 m OD) between Upper Sundon & Streatley villages, both hilltop locations. A broad shallow valley (along which the A6 runs) lies between Streatley and Barton parish.

The survey area and distribution is shown in Fig 5. A note on the finds, by period, is given below.

Individual finds of cores and blades, as well as scatters of debitage, possibly of Mesolithic origin, suggest limited Mesolithic activity throughout the area.

A generally low level of flint finds (mainly debitage) constitute evidence for Neolithic and early Bronze Age activity in the area.

Finds included a few identifiable scrapers, retouched flakes and blades. Concentrations of worked flints, some of which may be Mesolithic, were noted in field at TL065279 (Fig 5, Site No 5). Flaked axe fragments and a large scraper were found at TL 084286, other axe fragments were found at TL 080285 and TL 073290. (near the Lilley road). Sherds of prehistoric pottery from fields TL 083288 and TL 047273 may be late Bronze Age in date. Some flint finds are illustrated in Fig 6.



Fig 4. Seal die (right) and impression (left). Scale 1:1.

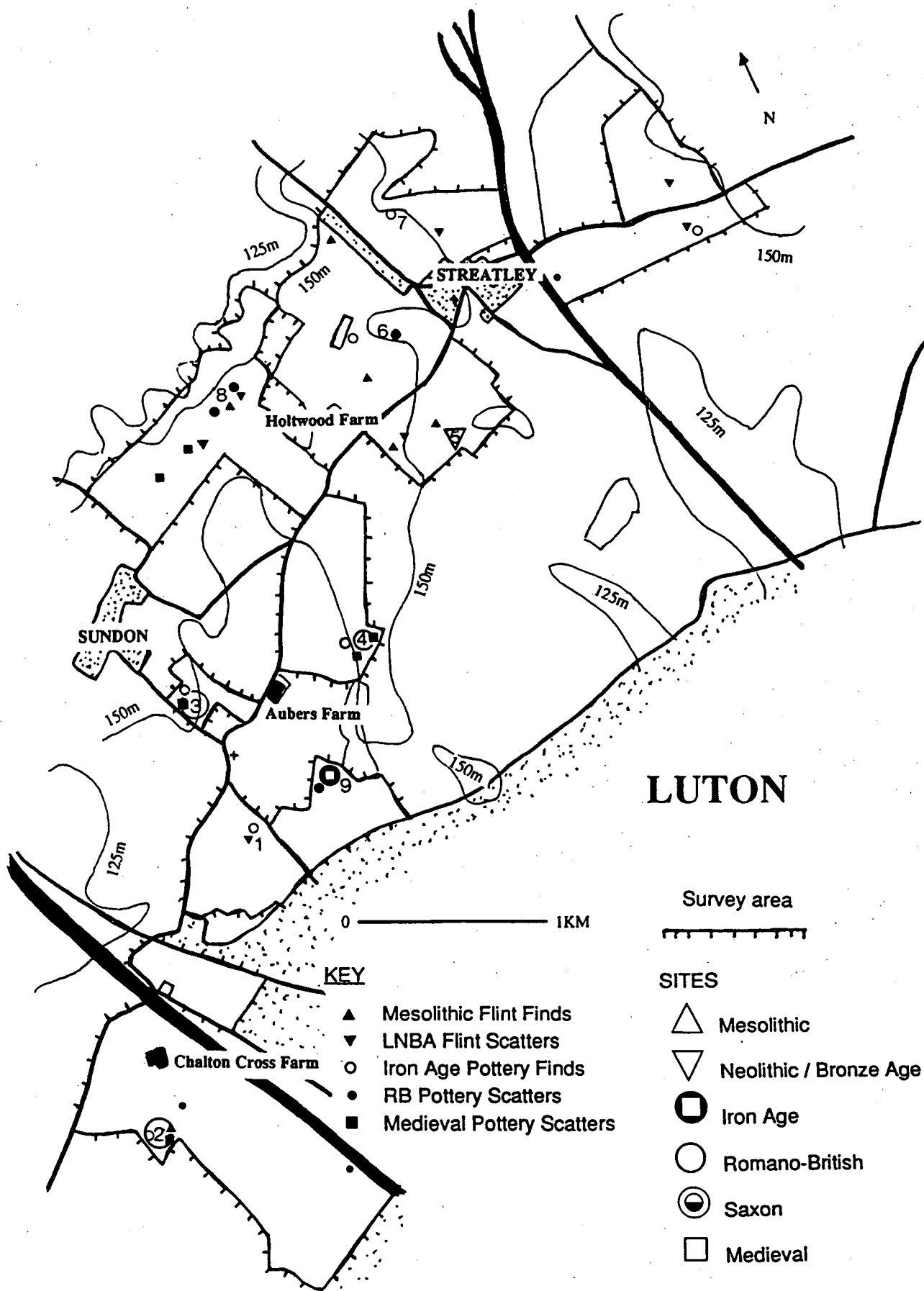


Fig 5. Streatley and Sundon distribution map.

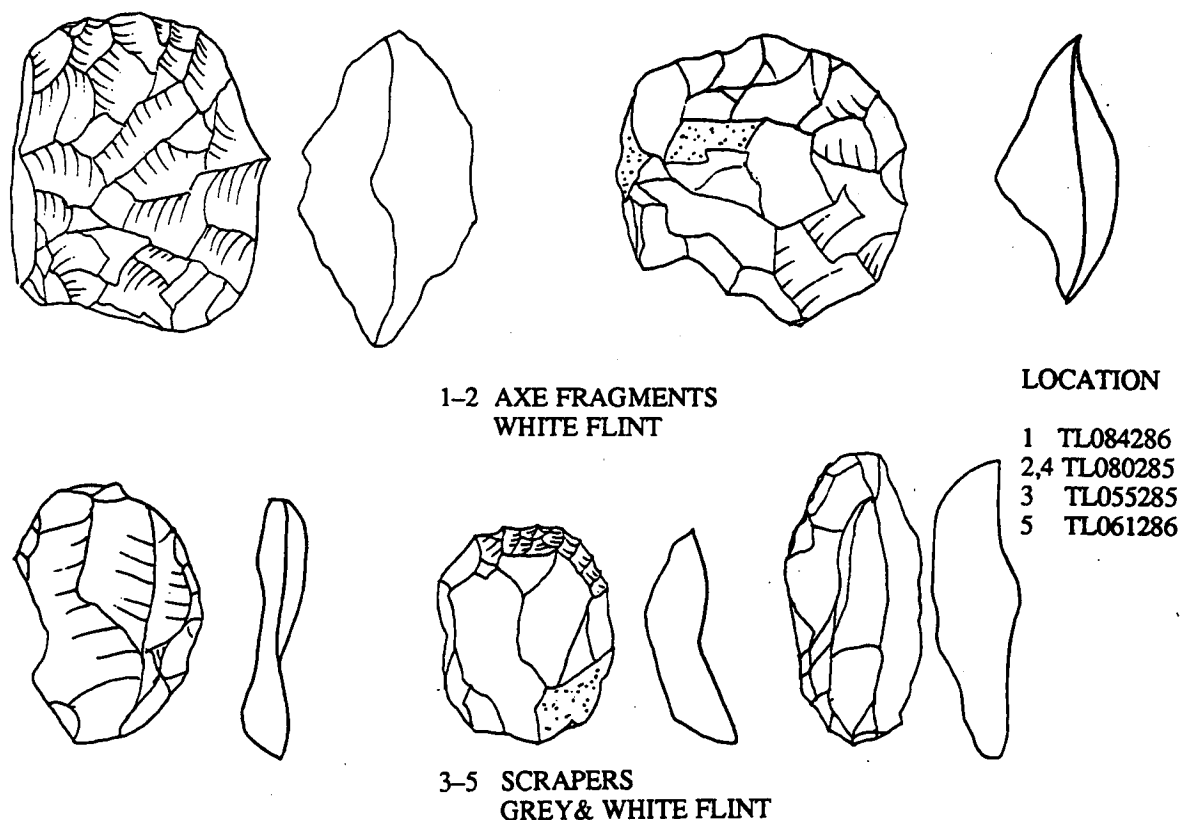


Fig 6. Streatley and Sundon flints. Scale 2:3.

A few sherds of prehistoric pottery, possibly Iron Age in date, were found at TL 084285, TL047266 (Fig 5, No 1, Hall's SU 1 site) TL 055285 & TL068294 (Fig 5, No 7, an area of cropmarks). A sherd of Late Pre Roman Iron Age pottery was found at TL 064286 (Fig 5, No 6, the other side of a wood, Rangleys Spinney, from a known Iron Age findsite: Hall's SU 9 site). A scatter of similar late Iron Age pottery, including a decorated sherd, was found at another known findsite near Sundon Wood (TL 054266, Fig 5, No 9) and 'Belgic' pottery was also found at the known sites at TL 047273 (Fig 5, No 3, Hall's SU 3 site) and at TL 056271 (Fig 5, No 4, Hall's SU 4 site).

No new large scatters of Romano-British material were found during the survey. Small scatters were noted at TL 058287 (Fig 5, No 8, Hall's SU 8 site) alongside a hedgeline and at TL 065287 (Fig 5, No 6, near Streatley) as well as the known findsite near Sundon Wood (TL 054266, Fig 5, No 9). Isolated sherd finds, probably representing manuring scatters, came from TL 077284 & TL 052284. The known site at TL 047273 (Fig 5, No 3) was rewalked and many Romano-British sherds found (mixed with Medieval and prehistoric potsherds) amongst large stone scatters; fragments of tegula and brick tile were also recovered. At TL 056271 (Fig 5, No 4) Romano-British sherds, tile fragments, glass fragments and a conglomerate quernstone were found, again mixed with prehistoric and Medieval sherds amongst stone scatters.

Finds of Medieval sherds came from TL 052284 and TL 047286 probably representing manuring scatters, or in the case of the former, 'tipping' alongside a trackway. The larger scatters at TL 047273 and TL 056271 (amongst stone scatters) may represent deposition near dwellings. Medieval sherds and two late Medieval horseshoes were also found, again amongst stone scatters at TL056271. Ridge and furrow is still (faintly) recognisable in the fields around Streatley and Sundon. The Medieval field patterns around Sundon have been identified by D Hall (Hall, 1991).

Fields at **Chalton Cross Farm** near Houghton Regis (Toddington Parish) were walked during the Winter months of 1992-93 and in the Spring and Summer of 1994 (Fig 5, No 2 & Fig 7). The original survey identified two Romano-British sites at TL 036252 and TL 037245 (Hudspith, 1991). Since then evaluation excavation by the Beds Archaeology Unit in advance of widening work on the M1 Motorway has identified another site (Iron Age and Romano-British) to the east of the M1 at TL 040260 (Dawson, 1993).

The field, trial trenched by the Beds Archaeology Unit, when fieldwalked yielded a few sherds of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery, several Neolithic-Bronze Age worked flints and Mesolithic blade fragments.

A few fragments of Romano-British pottery were found close to the M1 at TL 043247 and in field at TL 037252. The

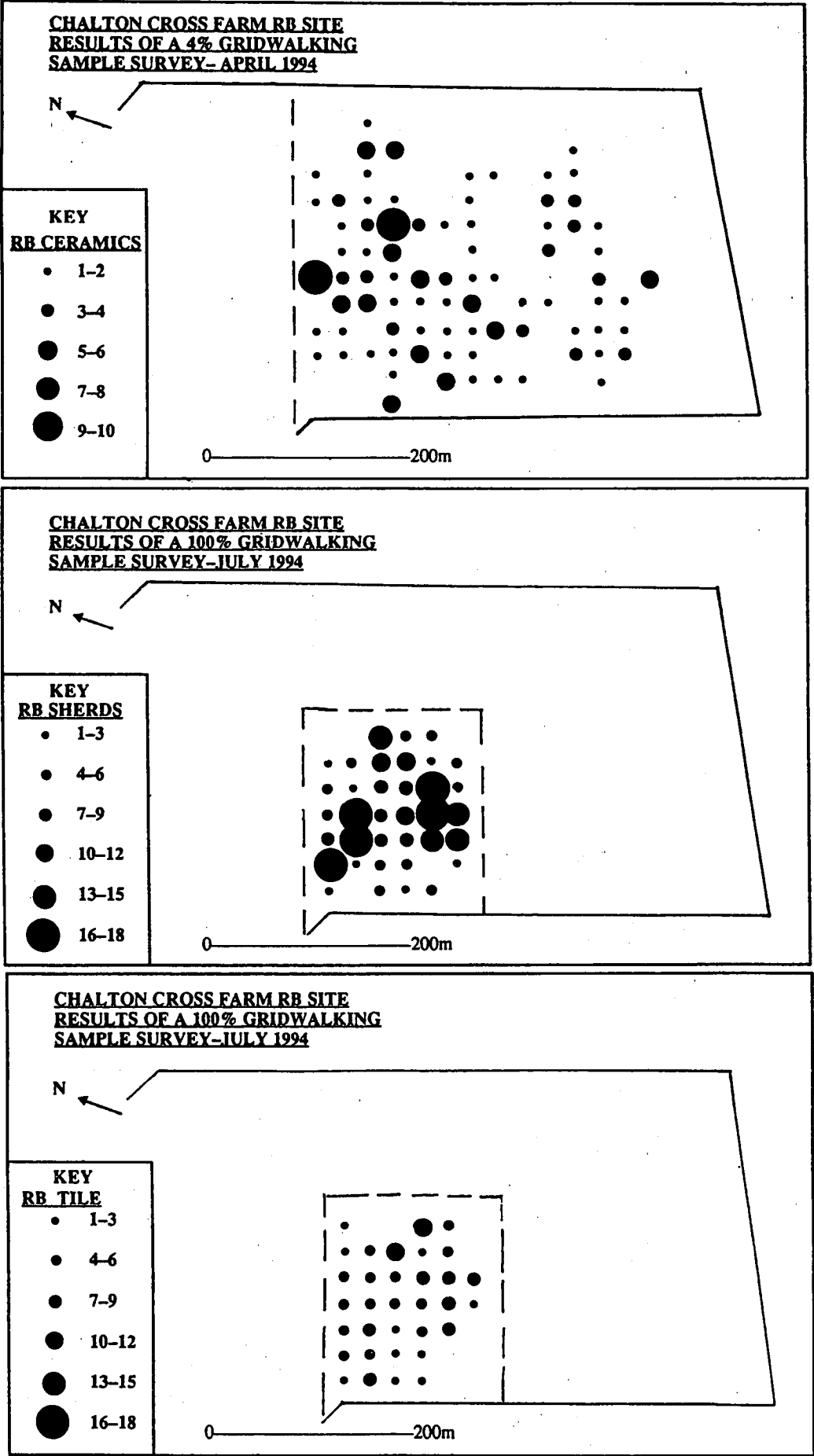


Fig 7. Chalton Cross Farm. Grid walking results.

known Romano-British site at TL 037245, although surveyed when the field was set aside and densely stubble covered still produced a wide variety of potsherds from Iron Age to late Roman period in date, as well as scatters of tegula, brick and flue tile and quernstone fragments. Some of the tile fragments were oddly shaped and may represent kiln or furnace furniture.

The results of the gridwalking surveys are shown in Fig 7. The table of Romano-British sherd finds (below) gives the comparative results of three surface collection surveys at TL 0324. The distribution and density of surface material varied considerably with each ploughing. The 100% gridwalking survey (Fig 7) produced far fewer sherds than was expected from the 4% survey of the same area, a total of 110 sherds for the 4% survey and 293 for the 100% survey.

Coins dating from the 1st and 4th Centuries have been found by a metal detectorist on the site. A bronze coin of Constantine 1 (324-337 AD) was found during the 100% survey.

Romano-British potsherds and tile fragments were seen to continue up to the field hedgeline and suggest the continuation of the 'site' into the adjacent playing fields. Worked flints, including a Mesolithic blade, Medieval and Post-Medieval sherds, pegtile and iron slag were also found in the field.

Patches of chalk, similar to those noted at the Bidwell Roman site(s) and perhaps indicative of structural remains were observed at three places in the field following

ploughing in the summer of 1994.

A linear earthwork was seen to be crossed by a hedgeline at TL 033259 and by the road at TL 035257 to terminate close to a hedge near Chalton Cross Farm.

An area of c 2 km² was walked at **Tilsworth** during 1994-5. The survey area comprised a block of land bounded to the north by the Tilsworth road, Watling Street to the east and the Leighton Buzzard road (A505)/River Ouzel in the valley bottom to the south. Several watercourses drain south into the River Ouzel from around Tilsworth. The soil type in the survey area was predominantly alluvially deposited silty loams and gault clay with occasional patches of gravel; height c 95 m OD.

A further block of land, along the ridge overlooking Tilsworth and sloping down to the line of the Edeway to the north, was also walked (Fig 8).

Previous survey work in the area has been carried out by the Society, along the line of the Leighton Buzzard road (Jones, 1992) and by J Schneider (Simco, 1984). The finds are discussed below.

A few Mesolithic flint blade fragments and cores were found near the River Ouzel, suggesting hunting activity in a marshy area.

Only a few Neolithic/Bronze-Age flints were found in the survey area suggesting a general low level of activity during these periods.

Some Iron Age sherds were found on the opposite side of

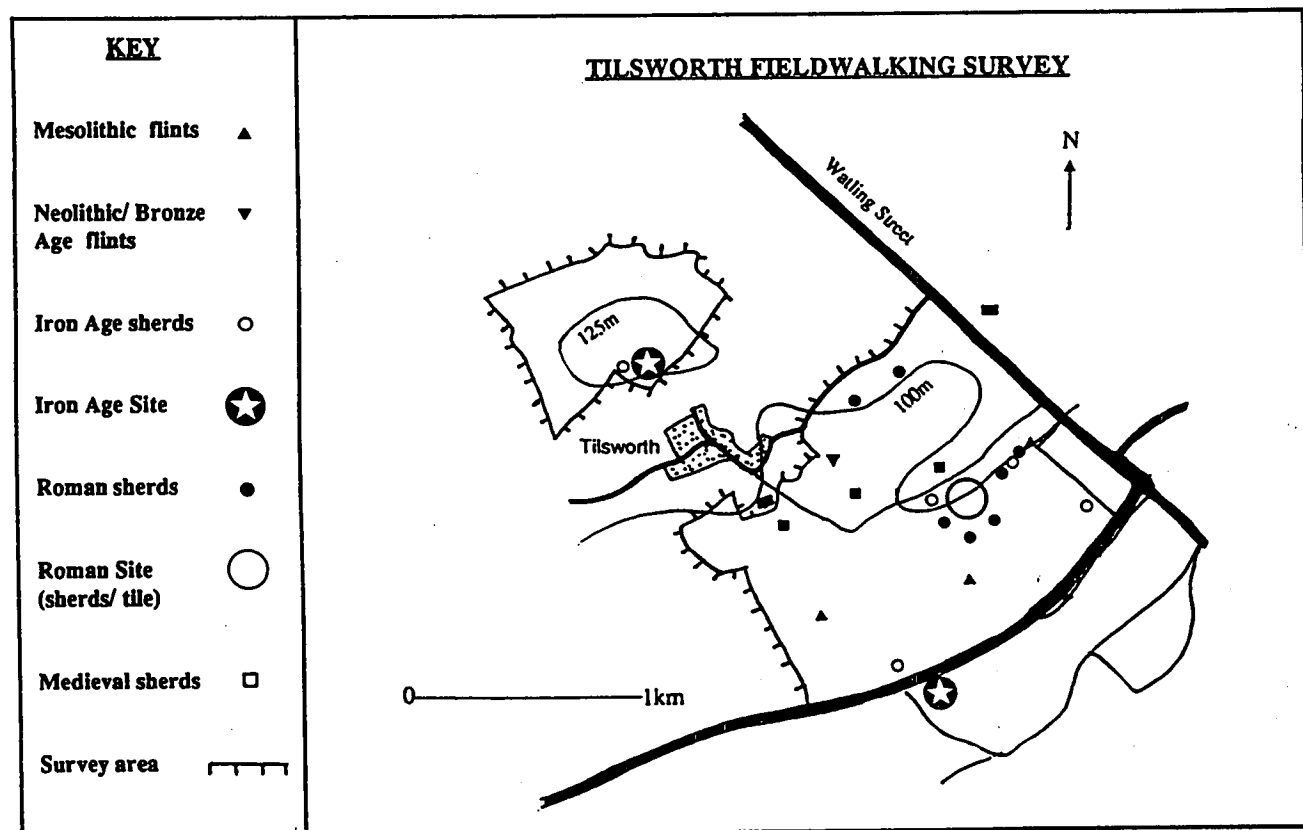


Fig 8. Tilsworth distribution map.

Buckinghamshire

the Leighton-Linslade bypass from an identified Iron Age findsite (Jones, 1992) at SP 992237. Another Iron Age site is suggested by the finding of both Early and Late Iron Age sherds mixed with Romano-British material at SP 992242. On the ridge at Black Hill (SP 997249) further scatters of Iron Age potsherds were found.

A large linear scatter of Romano-British sherds and tile fragments was found at SP 9924, near an old trackway running off westwards from the Watling Street. Sherd finds included samian fragments, shell gritted wares, local sandy coarsewares and colour coated wares with a suggested date range of 1st-4th Century.

Possible explanations for the extent of the scatter (several hundred metres long) may be: a ploughed up rubbish filled ditch, the location of a linear settlement, or perhaps the result of coprolite digging.

Only a few sherds of Romano-British pottery were found at a previously reported findspot on Black Hill (Simco, 1984) together with two quernstone fragments found downslope. A dispersed scatter of Medieval sherds was found, noticeably close to Bury Farm, indicating manuring scatters. Ridge and furrow is still visible in the areas of pasture around Tilsworth.

An observation of re-cut ditches in the survey area indicated, in places, a soil build up of c 1 m in depth. A squared wooden post was noted in a ditch section at 1.4 m below the present land surface. This suggests that some of the area's archaeology (along the valley) may be relatively undisturbed.

Thanks to Mr P Brandham of Chalton Cross Farm, Mr S Chandler of Gravenhurst, Mr C Parrish of Aubers Farm, Mr J Orme of Holtwood Farm, Sundon, Mr Maxey, Tilsworth and Mr Price, Tilsworth for permission to fieldwalk their land.

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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

Biddenham Loop (TL 02004900)

Andrew Crockett

In response to a planning application submitted to

Bedfordshire County Council, Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to conduct an archaeological evaluation on a parcel of land proposed for development. The evaluation revealed numerous archaeological features, predominantly ditches, pits, and post-holes, with dating evidence indicating intensive Late Iron Age and early Romano-British activity. Many of the features were already recorded as cropmarks, complemented by fieldwalking and geophysical surveys. Although the evaluation recorded features across the entire area, these were generally concentrated within the western part of the site, along the brow of a gentle west facing slope overlooking the River Great Ouse. In addition, concentrations of undated features towards the southern and eastern limits of the evaluation area, coupled with numerous examples of diagnostic Mesolithic and Early Neolithic flintwork in residual contexts, may suggest an earlier prehistoric element to the landscape.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Fieldwork In 1995

Jonathan Parkhouse

Details of the year's fieldwork are given below. One excavation was undertaken, at Shenley; the remainder of the Service's fieldwork consisted of assessments (both intrusive and non-intrusive), watching briefs and small-scale salvage work. Good progress was made on several post-excavation projects during 1995. The assistance of the County Museum Archaeological Group has been invaluable throughout the year.

Bletchley, Newton Leys (Centred on SP 869315)

Fieldwalking of an 89 ha site in the area of the former Newton Longville Brickworks was undertaken during the autumn in advance of a planning application. No sites had previously been recorded within the proposed development area.

A large flint assemblage was recovered. Two concentrations were identified; a main scatter towards the south of the area and a lesser one towards the north-east. Both scatters were largely Bronze Age in date, although an earlier (Mesolithic and late Neolithic) date for some of the material is suggested.

Buckingham, Mount Pleasant (SP 692332)

A desktop evaluation was carried out on an area of land just

south of the Prebend End bridge, Buckingham. This provided an opportunity to review the evidence for the double-burh founded, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, by Edward the Elder in 914. The precise location of the burh on the opposite side of the river to Buckingham is not known, although it does not appear to lie within the proposed development area. A field name recorded within the study area, Bone Hill, may be suggestive of a former cemetery site, but no human remains appear to have been recorded during the 19th century when a brickworks and its associated clay pits were situated on the site.

Drayton Parslow (SP 837284)

A watching brief was maintained during the early stages of building on a site directly opposite the Church. The total absence of archaeological features and material was slightly surprising given the site's location. The presence of periglacial features indicated that there has been no previous earthmoving on the site.

Hambleton (Centred on (SU 790853)

Monitoring of a sewage pipeline which passed close to the Yewden and Mill End villas was undertaken for Thames Water Utilities Ltd; no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Linslade Bypass (SP 82)

An evaluation was undertaken along the line of the proposed bypass, for Pell Frischmann Milton Keynes. Geophysical Survey was carried out by the Bartlett-Clark consultancy, together with a limited amount of fieldwalking on available arable land by County Museum Staff. The project was co-ordinated by Dr Rebecca Roseff. Two areas of potential interest were identified:

- a concentration of struck flints (this area is situated in Bedfordshire)
- a series of minor magnetic anomalies which may possibly be diagnostic of a ring ditch.

In addition, the proposed route crosses, at two separate locations, what is probably the boundary of the estate described in the Linslade charter of AD 966.

MI Widening

Proposed modifications to the side roads near junction 14 led to the assessment of an area near Moulsoe Buildings Farm. Geophysical Survey undertaken on the Museum's behalf by the Bartlett-Clark Consultancy demonstrated the presence of ditches (including possible elements of enclosures) and pits. The strength and distribution of the anomalies was strongly reminiscent of those at the nearby

site F, which were shown by trial excavation to be late Iron Age and Romano-British. Fieldwalking did not produce any material which could be shown to be associated with the site, and the suggested date is unproven.

Further magnetometry was also undertaken at site F (west of Mill Farm, Gayhurst: SP 8445), where further evidence was recovered for archaeological features associated with those previously described (SMA 24, 1994).

Milton Keynes, Bradwell Abbey (SP 827395)

A desktop evaluation of the site of the Benedictine Abbey was undertaken in advance of proposed refurbishment work. The study reviewed the results of previous fieldwork and identified areas of sensitivity which were likely to be affected by the proposals.

Milton Keynes, Brinklow (SP 8937)

A complex of late Iron Age features, apparently of limited extent, was recorded during the initial stages of development.

Milton Keynes, Egerton Gate, Shenley Brook End (SP 836358)

An excavation was undertaken for Westbury Homes, in advance of a housing development. This work, directed by Dawn Enright, followed on from the evaluation undertaken in 1994. The area in question is situated to the south-east of a Medieval moated site (Fig 1). The semi-dispersed deserted Medieval settlement of Westbury, excavated by Dr Richard Ivens in the late 1980s, is a short distance to the west.

Three areas, selected on the basis of the results of the evaluation, were investigated.

Area P (Fig 2) produced evidence for a rectilinear Romano-British enclosure measuring approximately 18 x 15 m, together with a series of gullies, pits and postholes. No actual internal structures could be identified. The main enclosure ditch was possibly for livestock; the function of the other features is unknown.

Area Q (Fig 3) contained a Medieval boundary ditch and numerous other features, mainly situated to the west of the ditch which seems to have functioned as a major boundary feature. A series of substantial postholes formed part of a large building, probably of more than one phase. Preliminary work on the finds suggests a date in the 11th or 12th century.

Area R (Fig 4) contained a series of ditches, gullies, pits and postholes, all apparently dating to the Romano-British period. The remains of two possible timber buildings were identified, although in both instances the structures

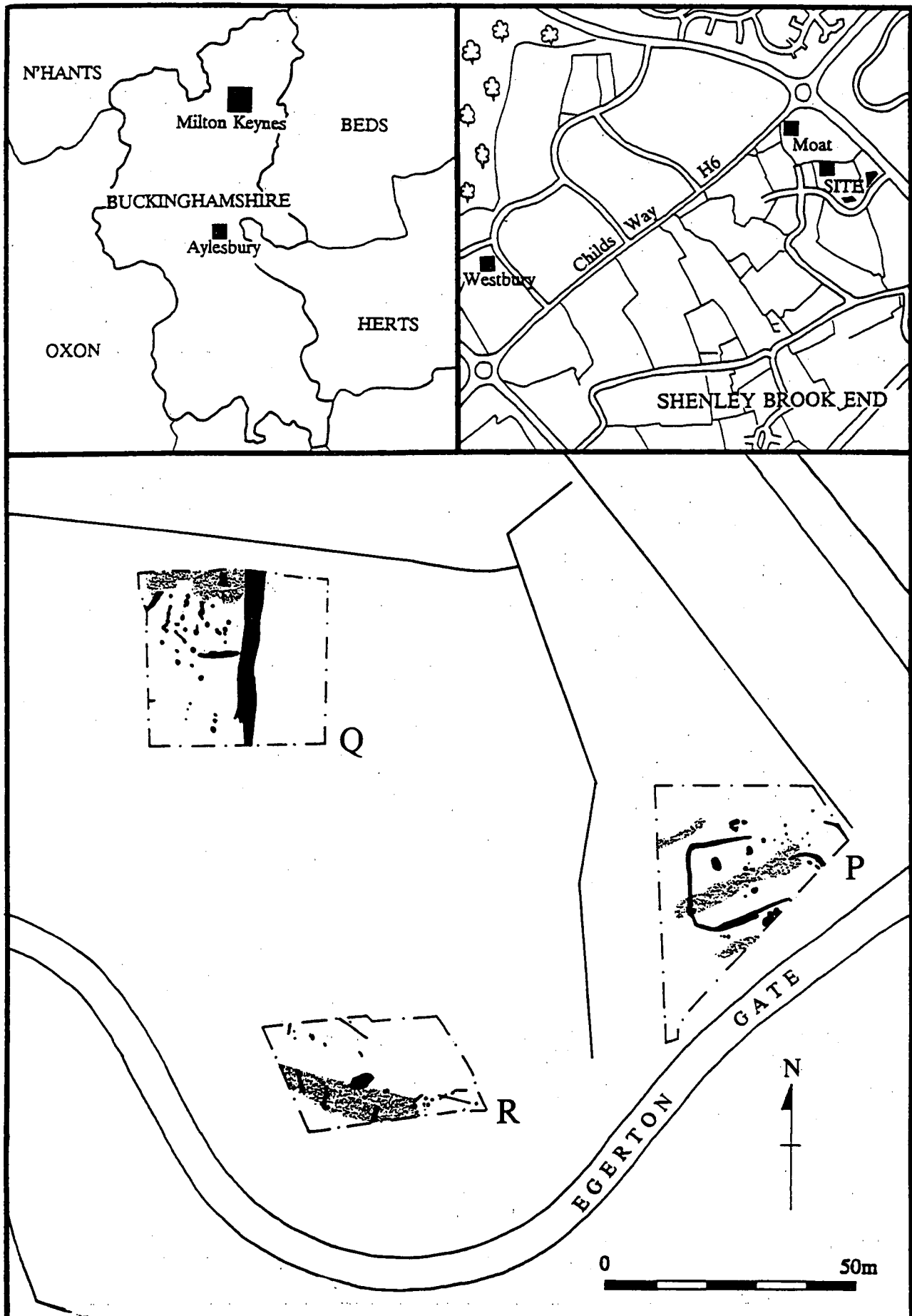


Fig 1. Shenley Brook End: general location plan.

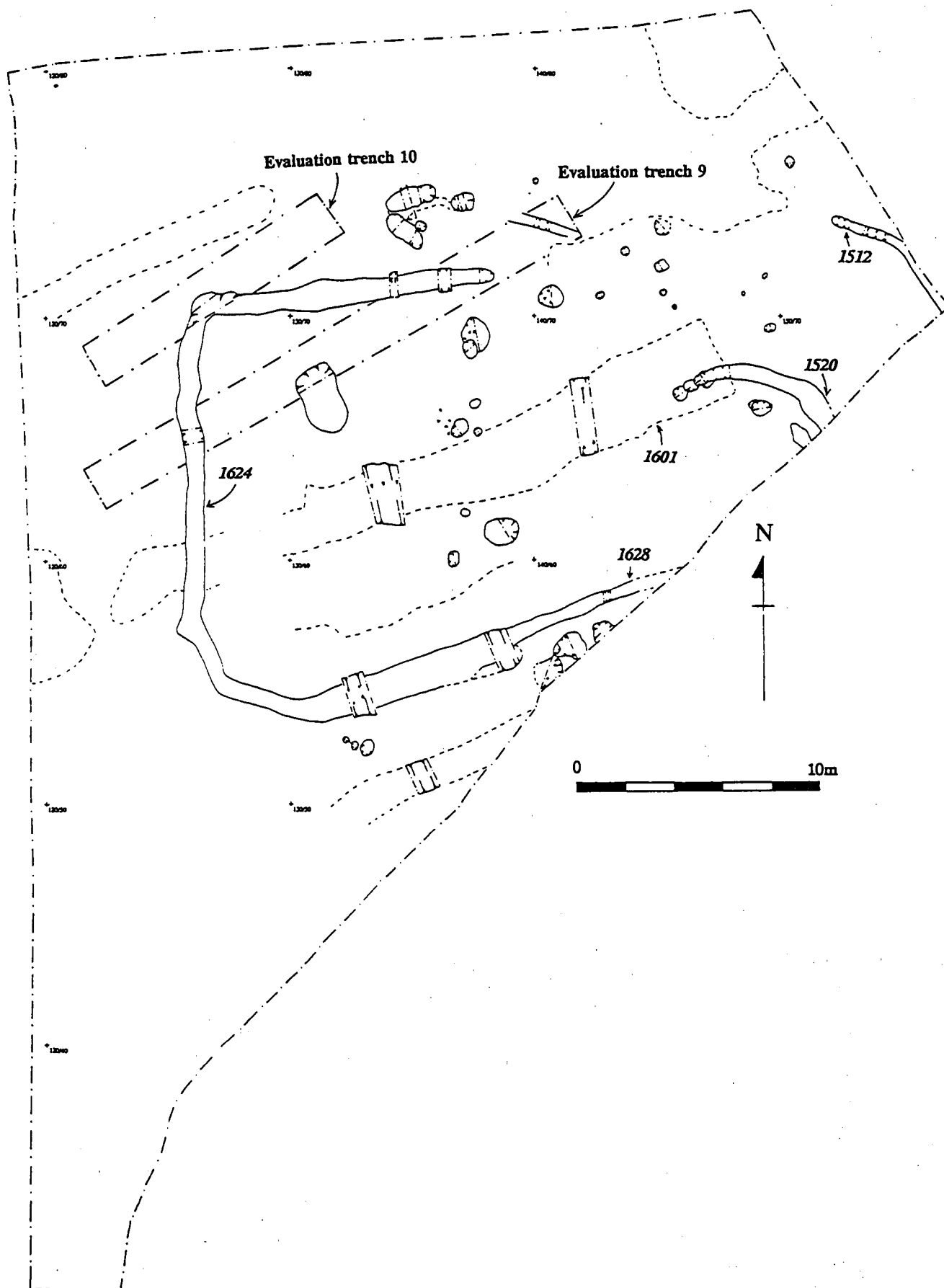


Fig 2. Shenley Brook End: Area P.

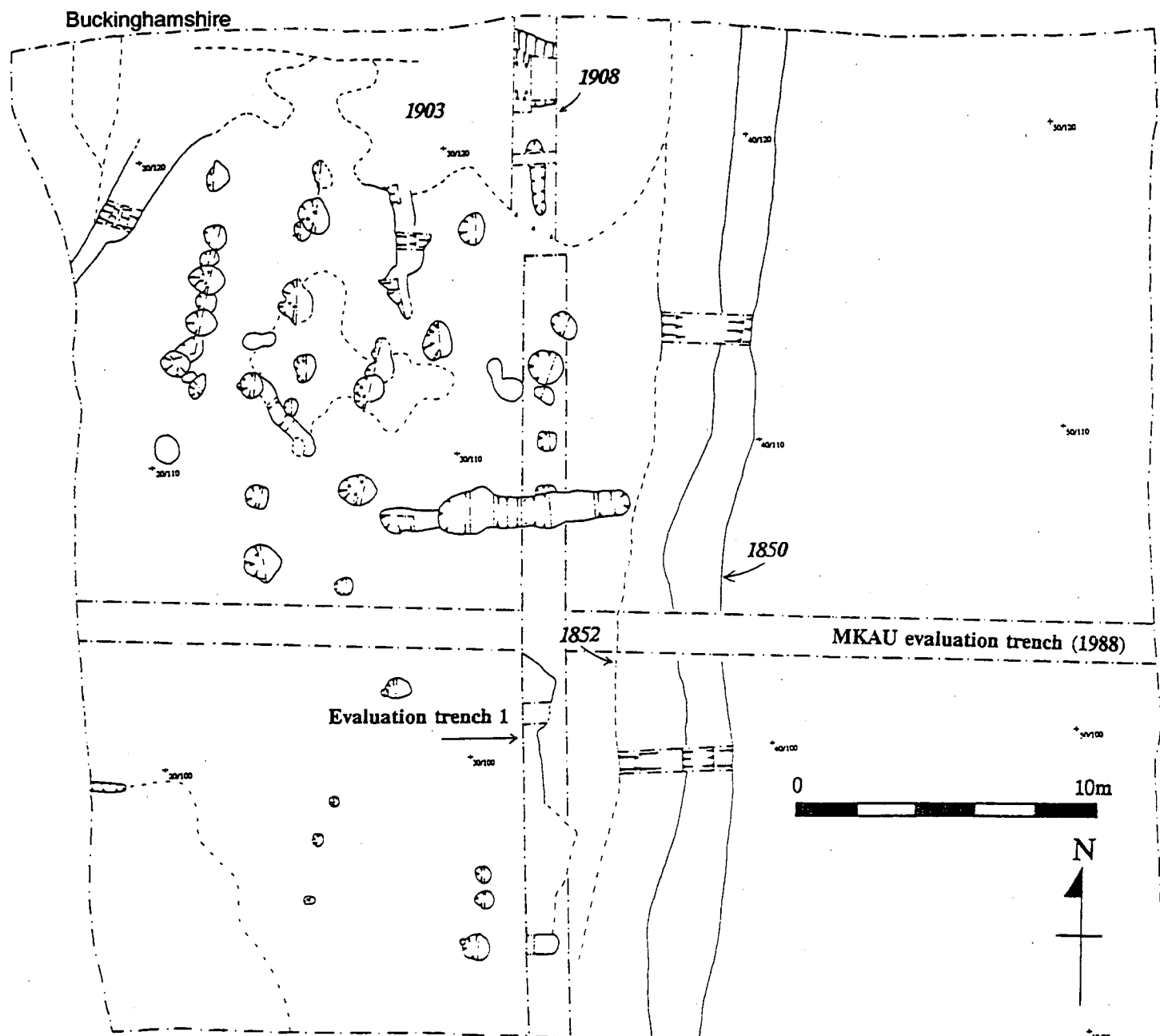


Fig 3. Shenley Brook End: Area Q.

appeared to lie partially beyond the excavated area. It seems likely that the Romano-British features on P and R represent a farmstead, apparently of more than one ceramic phase. The Medieval features on Q are harder to interpret, but may represent the focus of one of the two landholdings at Shenley Brook End referred to in Domesday.

Milton Keynes, Emerson Valley, Shenley Brook End (SP 83733470)

A small area of badly damaged Iron Age features, previously unknown, was recorded during landscaping works. The remains included lengths of gully associated with at least one roundhouse, together with other ditches.

Milton Keynes, Little Woolstone Community Centre, Woolstone-cum-Willen (SP 87583929)

Archaeological investigations were undertaken around the outside of the chancel of Little Woolstone Church, the interior of which was investigated by the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit prior to the building's conversion into a community centre. The work was necessitated by underpinning of the chancel. A number of burials were recorded, as well as possible traces of an earlier phase of chancel, probably that which preceded the rebuilding of the chancel during the 19th century.

Newport Pagnell Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Monitoring of trial pits dug by the National Rivers Authority

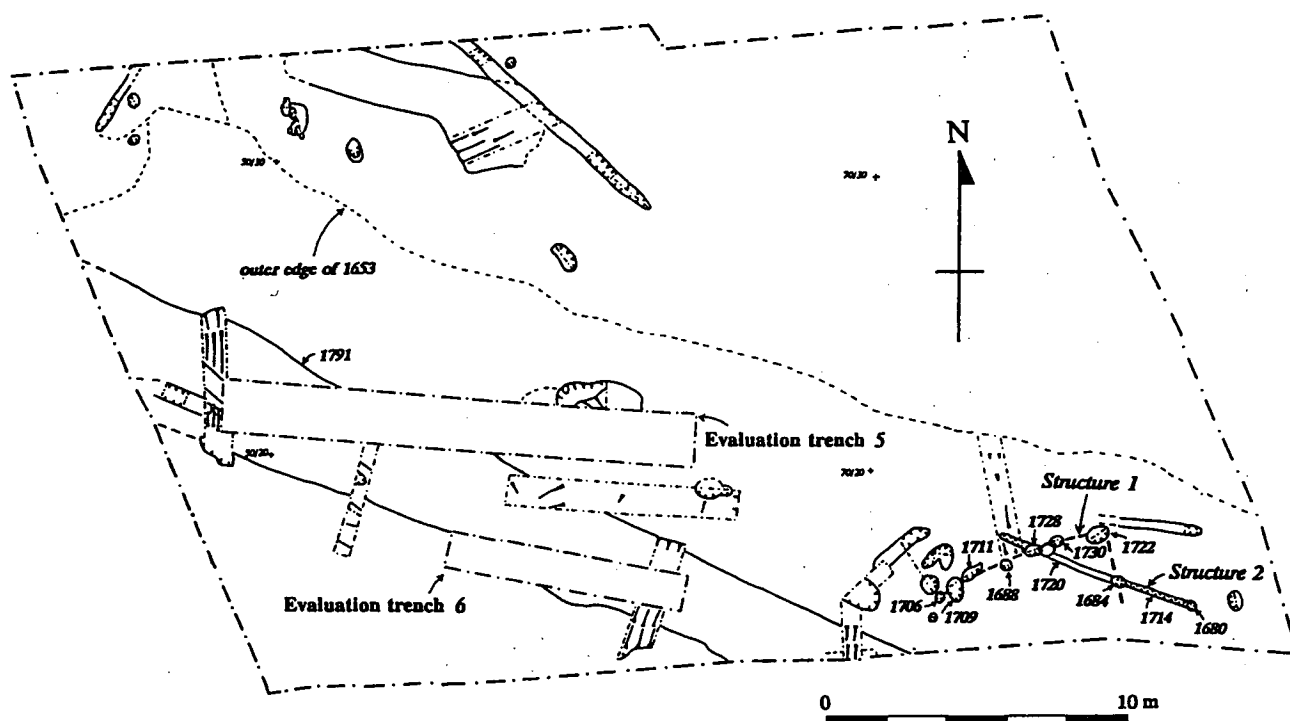


Fig 4. Shenley Brook End: Area R.

was carried out by D Bonner and R Roseff. Whilst no archaeological data was recovered, the work recovered evidence for the development of the valley-bottom landscape and demonstrated the potential for the survival of palaeoenvironmental evidence.

Olney Bypass

Following an earlier assessment of four route options, consisting of a desktop study and a rapid field reconnaissance, more detailed studies were undertaken along the two routes which are currently the subject of detailed consideration. Geophysical survey undertaken by the Bartlett-Clark Consultancy on the Museum's behalf has revealed the presence of five previously unknown areas of archaeological potential:

- a rectilinear enclosure, linear features and pits, to the south of Emberton
- distinct anomalies suggestive of silted pits, to the west of Emberton
- linear and pit-like anomalies, some of which may represent an old boundary feature, to the south-west of Emberton
- a ditch-like anomaly, perhaps a former boundary, together with some possible pit-like features, to the east of Olney - linear features including distinct ditches and probably pit clusters, to the north-east of Olney.

Further information on existing sites, including the major Romano-British site north of Olney, was also recovered.

Geophysical work was also undertaken on four possible

flood compensation areas associated with the proposed routes. Archaeological information was recovered in respect of three of the areas:

Area 3 (centred on SP 8750)

CAS 6151 Irregularly-shaped ditched enclosures containing anomalies indicative of pits and other settlement remains. The date of the site is not known.

CAS 6152 Water pumping station, constructed 1936

CAS 6153 Complex pattern of ditches, pits and other features. The date and function of the site are not known.

Area 4 (centred on SP 8649)

There are no known sites within Area 4. However, there are two areas of possible potential (a large linear anomaly, and an area of possible small pits) revealed by geophysical survey in Field 107. In addition, there are two late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ring ditches immediately adjacent to the site (field 10).

Area 5 (centred on SP 9052)

CAS 6122/1949 A complex of archaeomagnetic anomalies, including linear features, pits and enclosures, was recorded. Amongst the features is a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ring ditch (CAS 1949) previously known from aerial photography. The date of the other features is not known.

Tingewick Bypass (SP 63)

Evaluation by means of trial-trenching was undertaken on five sites of potential interest identified on the basis of a

Buckinghamshire

geophysical survey commissioned as part of an assessment carried out for the County Council in 1992. No features were found which were earlier than the 18th century.

Wycombe, Castle St(SU 867 931)

Two stages of evaluation were undertaken under Dr Rebecca Roseff's direction for Dunthorne Parker Architects and Designers, in advance of redevelopment. The site is situated close to the former edge of the churchyard. Two Medieval pits were investigated close to the street frontage, but the greater part of the site has been subjected to considerable landscaping during the Post-Medieval period. It seems likely that the ground originally began to slope steeply upwards a short distance from the frontage.

We regret that it is not possible to give precise details of the location of the following two sites, for the reasons stated.

Pewter Hoard from Mid-Buckinghamshire

A hoard of late Roman pewter, the first to be found in the County, was discovered by a metal detectorist, and promptly reported to the Museum. Two vessels still in the ground were lifted by Museum staff, and a small area was excavated in order to record the hoard's immediate context. The hoard was recovered from a known Romano-British settlement site and situated close to a major Roman road. It consisted of two plates and at least four cups, all severely damaged. No two vessels were the same, as is usually the case with hoards of this type. An iron chisel appears to have been associated with the pewter vessels. It is possible that the hoard was a votive deposit.

At the request of the finder and the landowner (who have donated the material to the Museum) details of the findspot are not given here, in order to avoid the attentions of unauthorised trespassers on the site.

Anglo-Saxon cemetery, Mid-Buckinghamshire

A cemetery of unknown extent was revealed during earth-moving operations. Some seven burials were noted, associated with two iron knives, bone comb fragments and early Saxon pottery. There is no archaeological planning condition attached to the site and there was no indication of any feature being present. Regrettably it has not yet been possible to make arrangements with the landowner and tenant to excavate those burials which are presently exposed; pending this excavation it is unfortunately necessary to withhold details of the location in order to deter illegal treasure-hunters.

NATIONAL TRUST - THAMES AND CHILTERN REGION

Gary Marshall

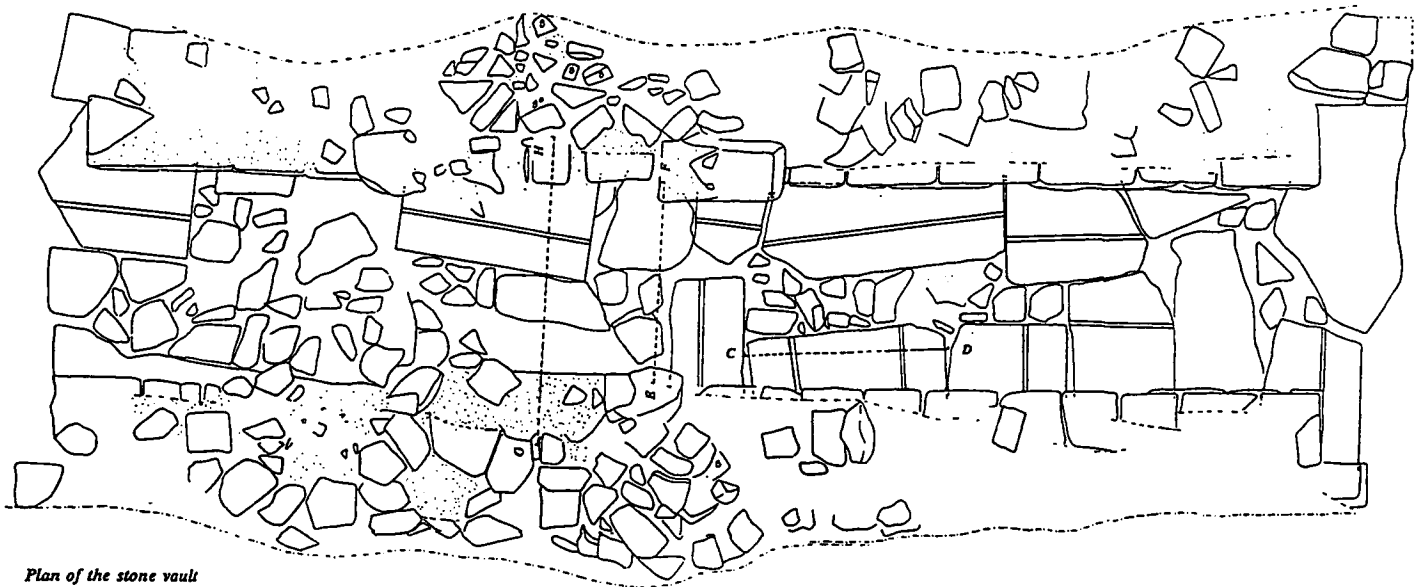
Stowe Landscape Gardens, Bucks. (centred on SP 377675)

The task of restoring the gardens has continued throughout the year, resulting in a number of interesting discoveries. On the east side of the Elysian Fields the original 18th century gravel paths have been 'rediscovered' using a JCB to cut trial trenches across the assumed location of paths (based on the examination of 19th century map evidence). This has proved highly successful and as a consequence these paths have now been recreated. One of the trial trenches skimmed over the top of a collapsed stone arch 4.3 m in length (Fig 5) on the east bank of the Alder River and just below the Seasons Fountain. This was thought to be part of the Temple of Contemplation which was demolished in the 1770s. However, the 18th century maps have been scaled-up and the arch lies much too far down the valley. Its close proximity to the River and the presence of silts around the structure suggest that this might have been an arch incorporated into the pier of a bridge. Its discovery adds weight to the belief that the 18th century maps cannot always be relied upon as a source for every feature missing from the gardens.

One of the major achievements has been the restoration of the Temple of Venus, together with the restoration of the landscape around this building. The ha ha wall forming the bastion on which this Temple sits had been largely demolished and backfilled but using a JCB it was possible to locate the footings. Along the east side of the bastion about half of the original wall remained and this carried evidence of several interesting joints confirming that the wall had been realigned in the 1750s. During the course of this excavation several pieces of moulded plaster from the ceiling of the Temple were found (the ceiling had completely disappeared before the restoration commenced) and the remnants of the colour scheme of this plaster were used to create the colour scheme on the restored ceiling.

Much of the archaeological work at Stowe is undertaken in response to specific queries posed by the architects and the project team. We were asked to investigate the landscape around the artificial ruins at the head of the Eleven Acre Lake, and in particular around an urn on the south side of the lake where an embankment behind the urn was considered an unsightly recent addition. Again the JCB came into action and this was used to cut a trench through the embankment, revealing in the section a gravel path on the top of the bank and halfway down the section the base of an early 18th century wine bottle. Together with several pieces of pottery this confirmed the 18th century construction of the embankment, evidently to confine the southern margin of the lake. The base of this trench encountered thick dark grey silts relating to a pair of stew ponds predating the formation of the lake in the 1720s.

A ————— B



Plan of the stone vault

Z ←

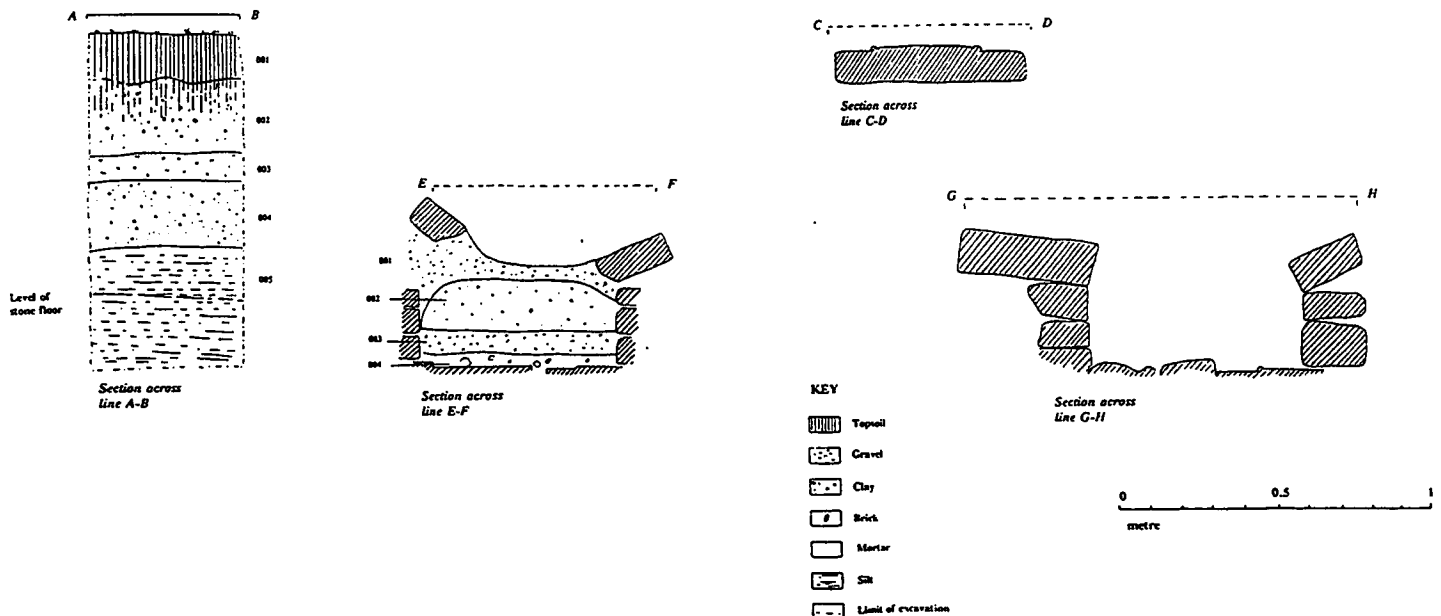


Fig 5. Stowe Landscape gardens, plan and sections across the stone vault excavated in the Elysian Fields.

Within the boundaries of the gardens the intensive landscaping of the 18th century has largely removed or concealed evidence of the earlier landscape, though some ridge and furrow ploughing does survive. Outside of the boundaries the picture is somewhat different. There are large areas of ridge and furrow surviving within the park forming part of the Home Farm estate which the Trust has recently

acquired. There is also a background 'noise' of Romano-British evidence. The remains of a second pottery kiln, together with a bucketful of pottery, were discovered on the north-east margin of the gardens when a series of artificial sports pitches were being developed. At the opposite end of the gardens two large ditches with a backfill containing a large amount of Romano-British pottery were

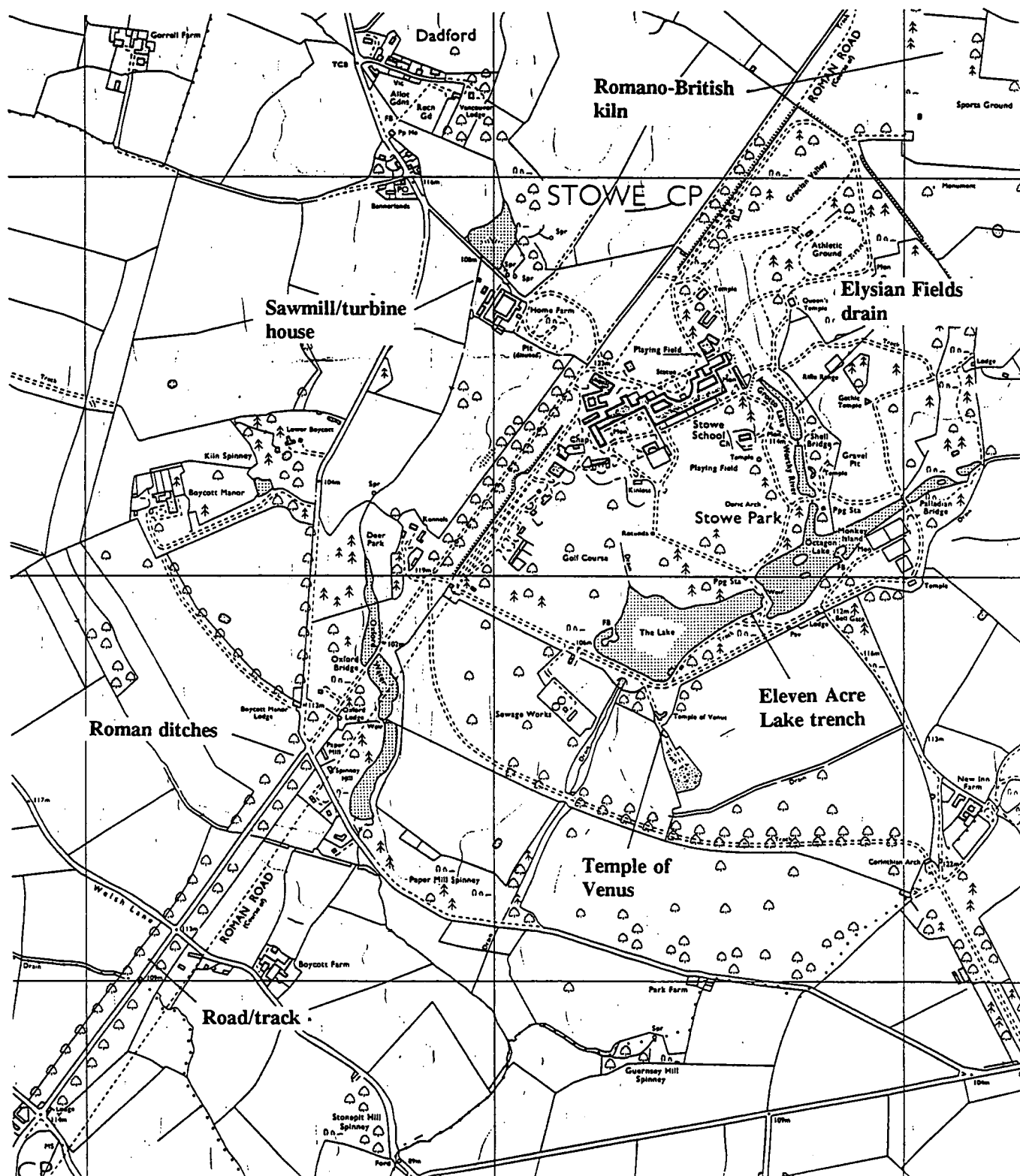


Fig 6. Stowe Landscape gardens, illustrating areas of recent archaeological investigation.

discovered on the Oxford Avenue whilst the excavation of a water pipe trench was being monitored. Evidence for the Roman road from Alchester to Towcester which is shown passing through the north-west corner of the gardens on the OS maps has eluded us, but the excavation of the pipe trench cut across the course of a well-made road comprising large stone blocks at the base, an intermediate bed of smaller

stones and finally a dressing of gravel (Fig 7). It is difficult to confirm that this structure is Roman but in the absence of further evidence it might be considered as a contender.

And by way of contrast, leaping to the 20th century, the acquisition of Home Farm has also brought with it a water powered turbine and a sawmill which was used for

supplying cut timber on the estate. The turbine not only drove the sawbench but also supplied electricity to the farm. The buildings clearly predate the installation of the turbine since it is set within an earlier pit for a waterwheel (Fig 8). They are to be the subject of an archaeological survey in 1996 and it is hoped that the machinery can be restored to working order. There is some way to go yet before hydro-electric power returns to Stowe!

The White House, Bradenham, Bucks.(SU 826971)

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by freelance archaeologist Andrew Hunn whilst the plumbing and wiring within the building were updated. The White House has a late 18th century brick frontage in Gothic style but this is thought to encompass an earlier 16th century building. During the watching brief part of the original wattle and daub panel infill was observed and recorded at first floor level.

No 24 West Wycombe, Bucks.(SU 830946)

Andrew Hunn recorded the west front of the building after the removal of the brick facade as a consequence of structural instability. The facade has been placed against the timber-framed core of a 16th century building and there was a need to record this timber frame before the re-erection of the brick facade. The horizontal wallplate between ground floor and first floor was noted to carry an intricate carved moulding.

The Old Vicarage, West Wycombe, Bucks.(SU 830946)

Situated on Church Lane in the centre of West Wycombe Village, the Old Vicarage is a timber-framed building based around the core of a 15th century open hall which still retains the screens passage and a cross wing on the west end of the building. Originally it would have had a corresponding cross wing on the east end of the building but this was removed when it was extended in the 17th century. The building has been much altered, both externally and internally. On the exterior the original wattle and daub panels have been replaced by brick infill. Internally, the insertion of partitions, floors and fireplaces dating from the 17th and 18th centuries has concealed the open hall plan, yet the building does retain some of the original internal wattle and daub partitions and the roof still retains the original smoke-blackened rafters.

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the first few months of 1996 whilst essential repairs were carried out and the services updated. Part of the brick infill from the front elevation had to be removed whilst repairs to the timber frame were carried out. Examination of the timber frame led to the discovery of a series of mortices on the undersides of the main horizontal timbers, and on the topside of the timber numbered 1 (Fig 9) a shallow groove. These two elements would have held the main vertical spars forming the frame

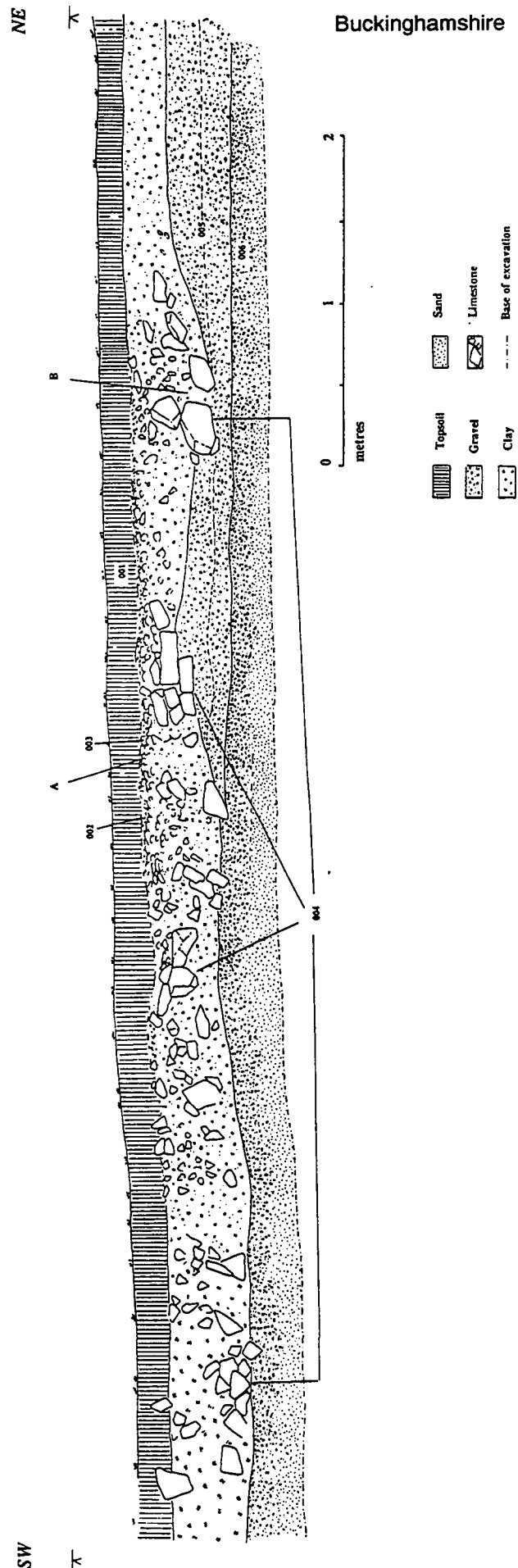


Fig 7. Section across the possible Roman road on the Oxford Avenue, Stowe Landscape Gardens.

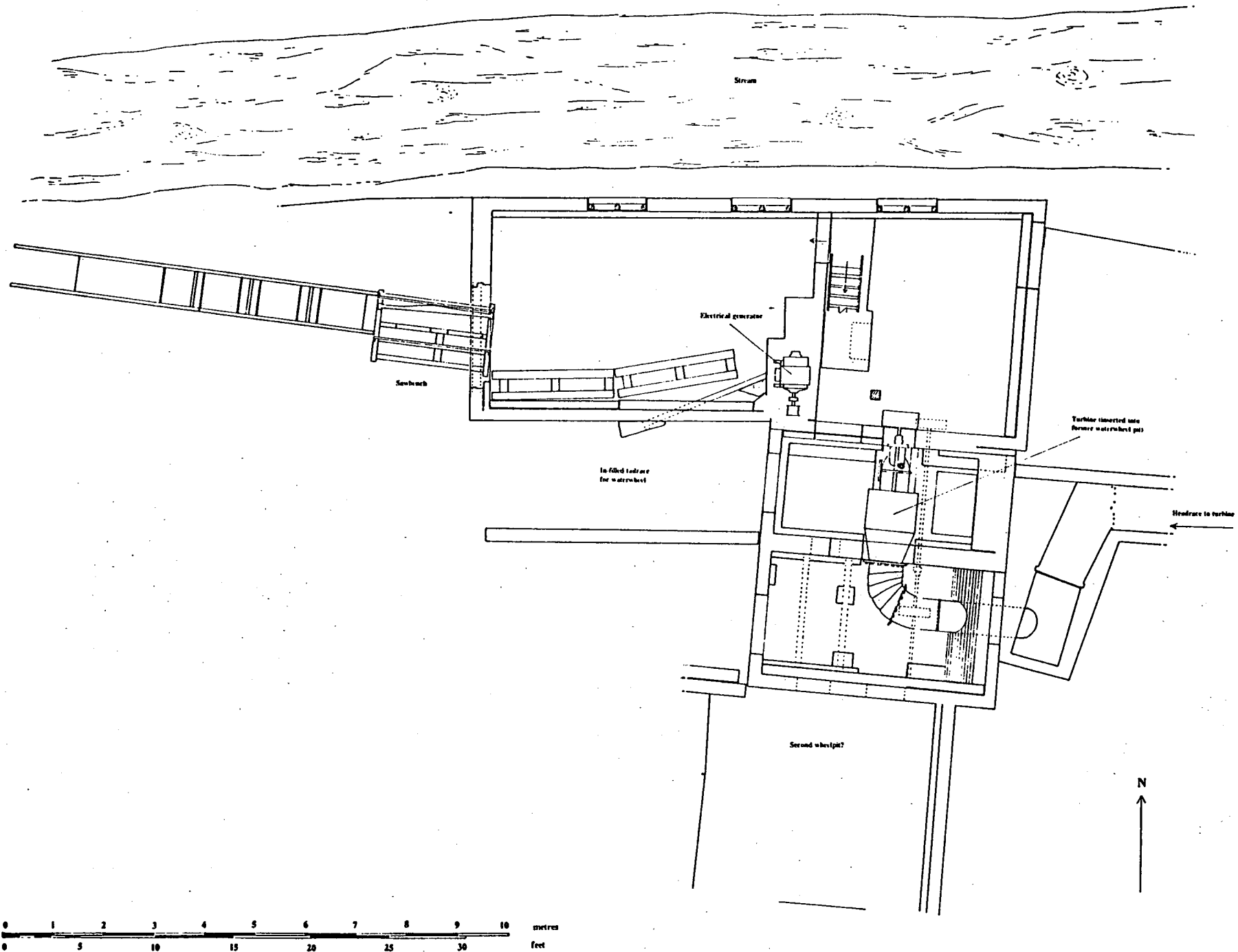


Fig 8. Ground floor plan of the sawmill and turbine house on the Home Farm, Stowe.

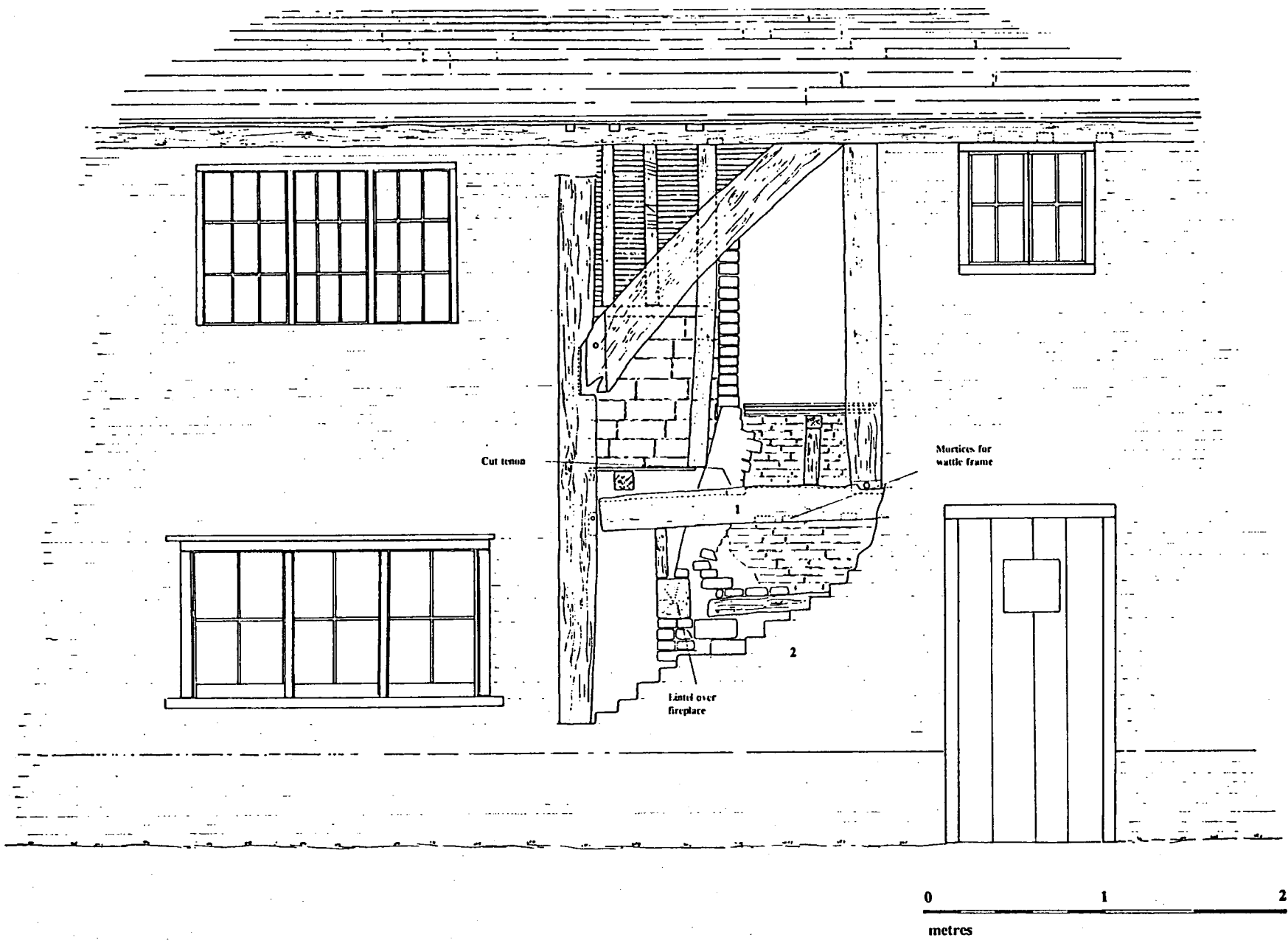


Fig 9. Part of the west-facing elevation of the Old Vicarage, West Wycombe, after partial removal of the brick infill.

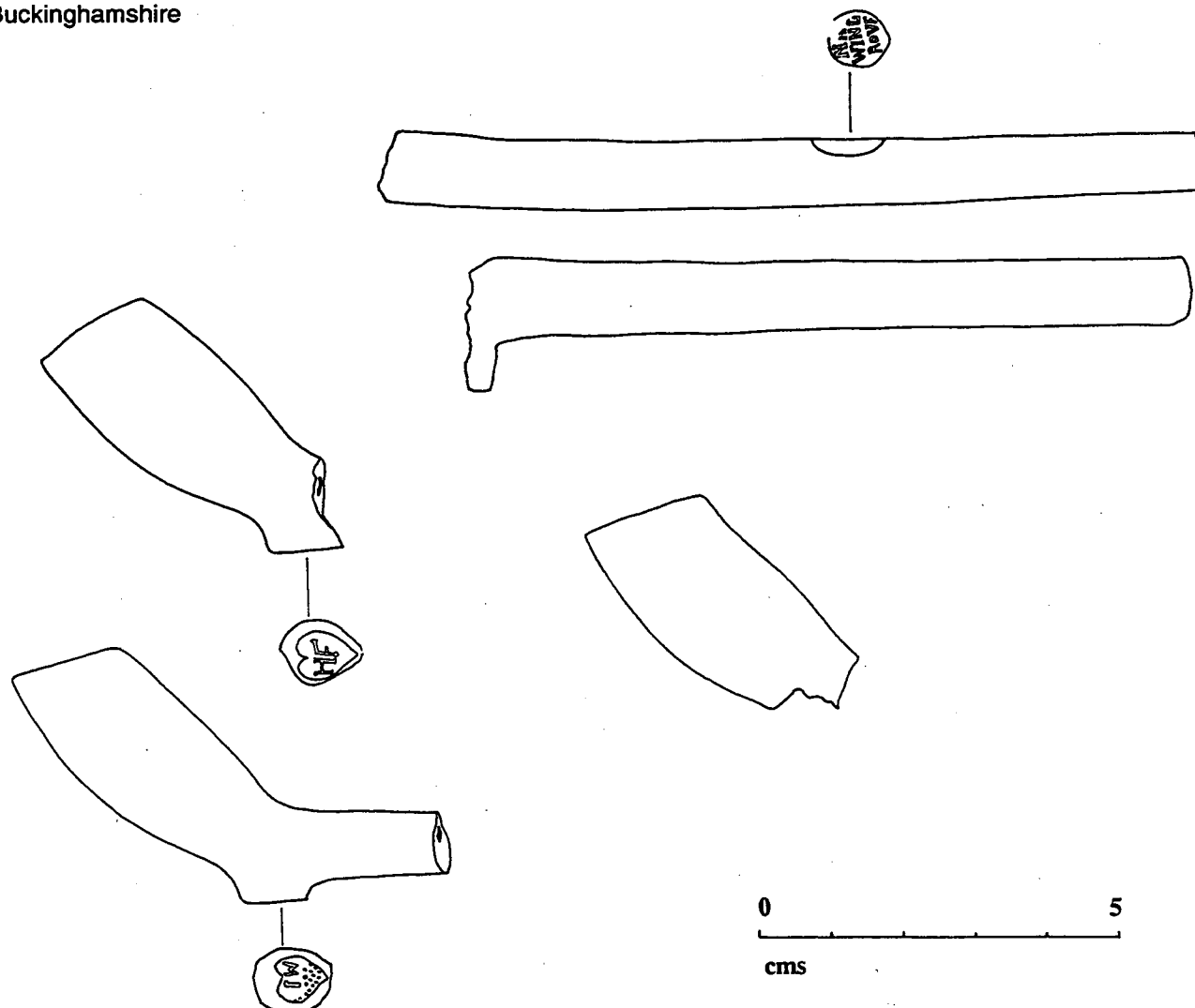


Fig 10. Clay pipes recovered from within the blocked fireplace of the Old Vicarage, West Wycombe.

for the wattle panel. A cut-off tenon was also found on the topside of the timber numbered 1, suggesting that a larger vertical spar had been removed when the brick infill was inserted.

Particular importance was attached to the recording of these empty mortices and grooves since they provide negative evidence for the positions of the original windows in the elevations of the building. This aspect of the original detail of the building is poorly understood.

As part of the 17th century adaptations a floor was inserted into the open hall and a fireplace added onto the back of the screens passage. The temporary removal of the brick infill formed an entry into the side of the fireplace, revealing that it originally had a small side niche with a timber lintel (No 2, Fig 9), perhaps providing a small seat within the opening. The width of the fireplace was subsequently reduced in the 18th century and the gap between the two openings infilled with a large volume of building rubbish, including broken bottles, crockery and several clay pipes (Fig 10). Subsequently, the 18th century opening was also reduced in width - in the 1960s - before it was finally completely blocked as part of the present phase of work.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Bletchley, St Mary's Church (SP 8630 3378)
Christopher Bell

A watching brief was undertaken by Bob Williams of Oxford Archaeological Unit during renovation work at St Mary's Church, Bletchley. The work entailed cutting a number of holes into the walls of the chapel for the insertion of padstones and service pipes, and the excavation of service trenches through the graveyard to the south and east of the church for a new water main and foul-weather sewer. During the course of the work the remnants of an earlier splayed window were revealed in the north wall of the chapel and the remains of early painted plaster was visible in the gap between the straight joint which represented the remains of the window. An apparent blocked doorway was also partially exposed in the area beneath the window. One of the stones forming part of the blocking was re-used as it was inscribed with graffiti which were upside down, and this inscription was dated 1859, signifying that the blocking must have occurred after this date. The only notable deposit discovered during the external work was the foundation of a brick wall some 30 m to the east of the church, which

represented the remains of an earlier boundary wall, of probable 19th century date.

Eton Rowing Lake, Dorney, Buckinghamshire
(SU 919787 to SU 937774)
Tim Allen and Ken Welsh.

Construction of a rowing lake of international standard for Eton College has just begun at Boveney Court, Dorney, Eton (Fig 11). The site, which lies on the north bank of the river Thames, covers approximately 150 ha, and consists of gravel terrace deposits crossed by former palaeochannels incised in the late Devensian, some of which remained active into the historic period.

Archaeological Background

A total of 200 evaluation trenches, varying from 10-120 m in length, were dug between 1987 and 1995, representing a 1.2% sample of the threatened area of the site (Fig 11). Cropmarks on the site include two areas of co-axial middle-late Bronze Age field system, an early Bronze Age barrow cemetery and a Roman enclosed farmstead, all dated by evaluation trenching. Just outside the site on the north-west are the cropmarks of a probable Neolithic causewayed enclosure (Fig 12).

From the field evaluation the following outline of the topography and archaeology of the site has been established.

The site is divided into three zones: fluvial (indicating former channels active in the prehistoric and Roman period), alluvial (indicating areas that were either backswamp or floodplain during these periods) and dry land (gravel terrace areas) (see Fig 12). The nature of the evidence in each zone is different.

On the gravel terraces deposits overlying the gravel (for instance prehistoric ground surfaces) have generally been obliterated by ploughing. The areas where prehistoric soils survive generally correspond to the line of a Late Pleistocene channel which formerly crossed from Site G to Inlet Z. Within one of these areas a disturbed flint knapping cluster with early Neolithic pottery has been found.

Later Mesolithic flintworking covers an area of at least 1250 m² on Site I, and middle Bronze Age crouched flat burials and associated features lie east of Site G, while further Bronze Age features lie beneath the Roman enclosure, and others on Site X to the west.

On the alluvial floodplain, by contrast, in situ deposits of several periods have been identified. The lowest part of the alluvial sequence comprises waterlogged peat deposits and clays. The clays were fluvial in origin, but the peats formed in reedswamp and fen in the early Mesolithic. On the edge of Basin R a lakeside settlement has been found, dense early Mesolithic flintworking together with fragments of animal bone covering an area of more than 2000 m². A similar settlement lies just opposite on the south bank of the modern

river Thames (Fig 12). Above the waterlogged deposits was a sequence of alluvially deposited silts and clays, within which several superimposed horizons of human activity have been preserved. These horizons include in situ flint knapping clusters, hearths and scatters of pottery and/or animal bone of late Mesolithic, early Neolithic, early Bronze Age and middle-late Bronze Age date.

The active channels containing fluvial deposits are three. The former Thames channel is a major channel of at least two phases, the first active in the late Mesolithic and Neolithic, the second probably in the Bronze Age and Iron Age. Evaluation showed that the second phase contained at least three waterlogged timber structures, one adjacent to the EX1 1995 excavation, the others in the area of the Area 3 1995 excavation. One of these has been excavated (see below). The other structure in this area was associated with late Bronze Age pottery and charred plant remains.

Channel P is also a wide deep channel, but appears to have become a backwater early in the post-Glacial period, since a considerable depth of peat formed within it. Along the east side however the Cress Brook continued to flow until the early part of this century (see Fig 11). Channel N is shallower, and the character of the deposits within it suggests that it carried a low flow and has poorly preserved waterlogged material.

The outline of the Rowing Lake and other affected areas is shown on Fig 11. The early Mesolithic deposits on the north edge of Basin R were excluded from the construction programme, and the adjacent gravel terrace site will now be protected by dumped material. A significant part of Basin W has similarly been excluded.

The 1995 excavations

Two areas were excavated, one covering 1.25 ha in Basin R and Site X, the other covering approximately 0.75 ha in Channel V and including the edge of the gravel terrace to the north-east. The following summary is an interim statement only, as post-excavation has not yet begun in earnest.

Area EX1 (Fig 13) - The gravel terrace

On the gravel terrace topsoil and early ploughsoils came down directly onto gravel. The surface of the gravel was uneven with patches of subsoil filling shallow hollows, and the soilmarks of treeholes were common. Much of the soil was reddened by burning, indicating extensive clearance at some stage. Around 25% of the soil patches were investigated, most producing a few struck flints, including two Mesolithic picks or axes, an early Neolithic laurel-leaf point, a leaf-shaped arrowhead and an assortment of other retouched tools. Some treeholes contained large assemblages of blade-like flakes of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date, and one hollow containing a possible hearth was found associated with Neolithic pottery. Amongst the irregular soilmarks were small circular or oval pits filled with fire-cracked flint in a matrix of charcoal-blackened soil. These may have been Bronze Age, but did not contain

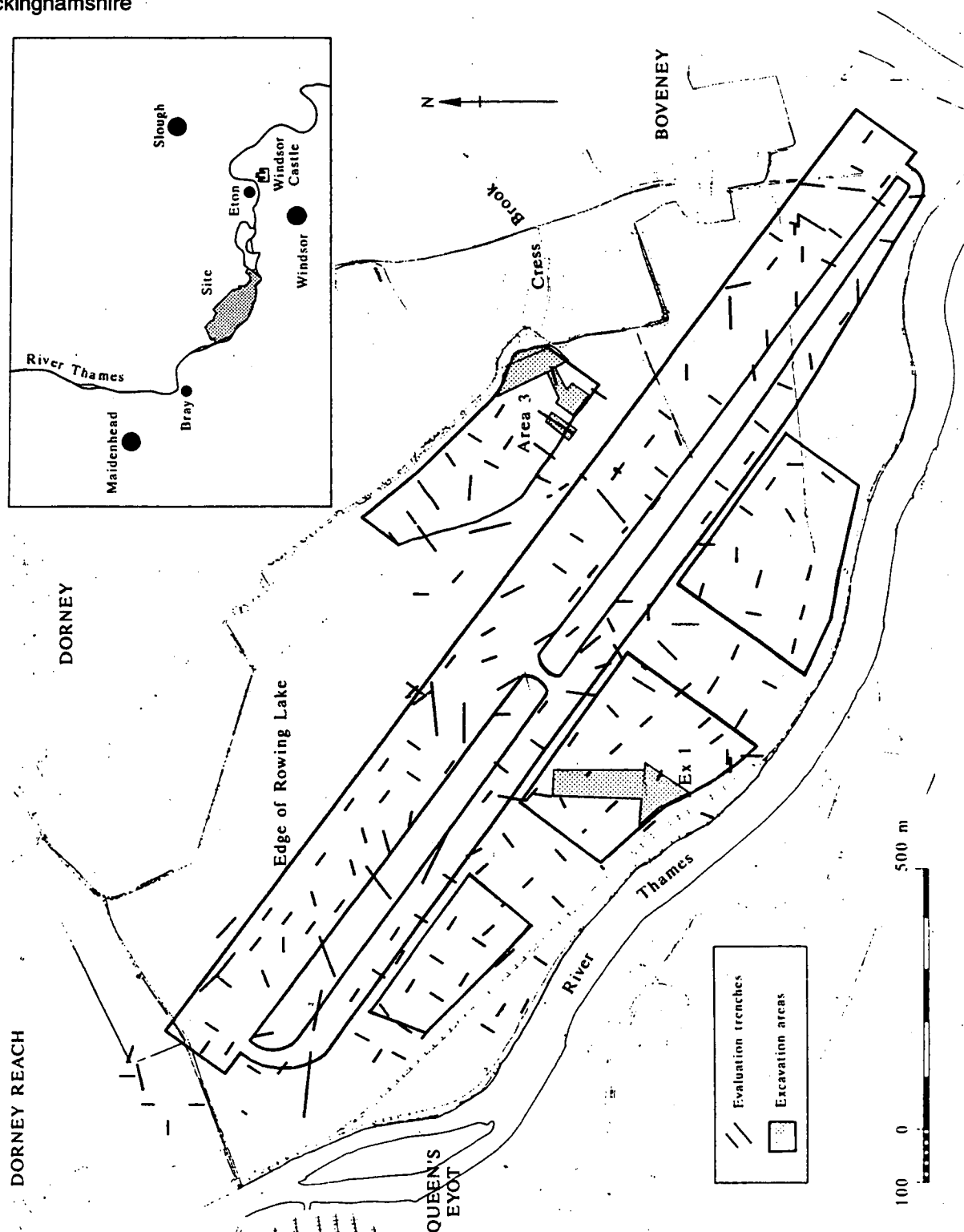


Fig 11. Eton Rowing Lake, showing evaluation trenches and excavated areas.

any dateable artefacts. No definite postholes were found, and no structures were recognised.

The alluvial floodplain

The gravel terrace shelved gently down to the north, and as it did so alluvial silty clays were preserved below plough levels along the edge of the gravel terrace. The channel sequence was revealed by bucket-width trenches running south-north along the west and east edges of the excavation,

which were excavated to c 1.5 m deep to act as a control on the stratigraphy. An occupation horizon was identified within the alluvial sequence some 0.5 m below ground level, and the entire area was stripped to this level. Once the distribution of activity at this level had been plotted, the densest areas of activity were selected for excavation by hand, and a strip between 10 m and 20 m wide was machined to the top of peat, which lay below alluvial clays and silts at a depth of c 1.5 m.

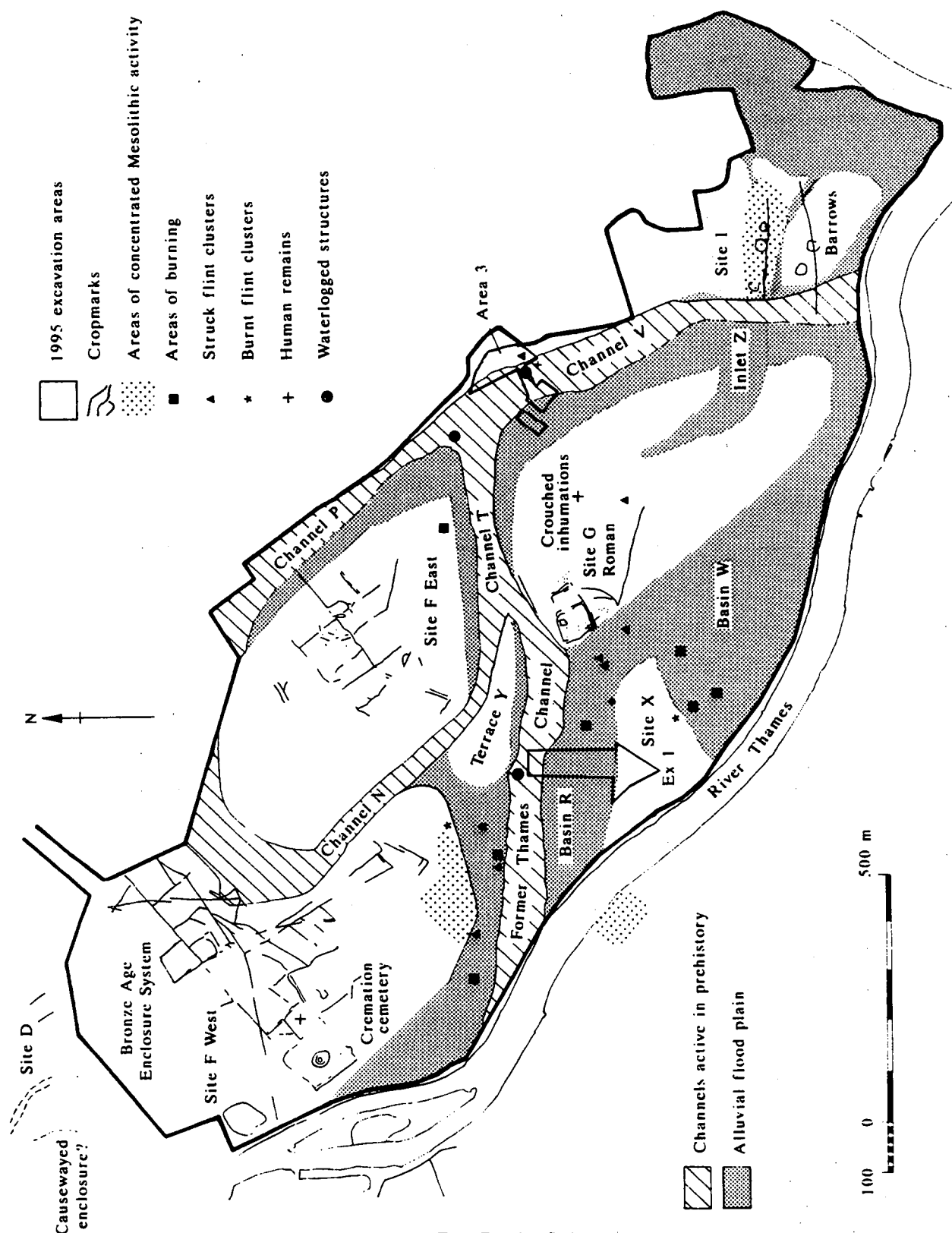


Fig 12. Eton Rowing Lake.

The sequence of deposits was as follows: a gleyed clay immediately over the gravel was overlain by layers of peat and organic silty clay. As the basin shallowed to the south the peat changed to a dark clay and the organic material was replaced by manganese. No artefacts were recovered from these layers, but a small quantity of animal bone was found on the surface of the peat, and a single flint cluster of

blade-like flakes was found within the first silts covering the organic layer close to the edge of the gravel terrace. Above this was a sequence of silts gradually giving way to clays, and it was within the upper, clay, layers that the main occupation horizon was found. This occupation horizon was marked by a darker soil colour (though this was intermittent), by patches of burning and occasional

Buckinghamshire

burnt-out treeholes, by a scatter of struck flint and sometimes by a slight change of texture in the soil.

The former Thames channel: phase 1

At approximately the same level at the north end of the trench this sequence was cut by the Thames Phase 1 channel running west to east 11 m south of the end of the trench. This channel had a gradual slope down to the end of the excavation trench, where it was 2.2 m deep. It was filled with a succession of organic silty clays, which along the south edge at the bottom included a large quantity of driftwood and the skeleton of a beaver, which had clearly gnawed some of the wood. The sharp contact zone of the channel edge and the absence of peat proper suggests a relatively fast-flowing channel. On the levee which formed along the edge of the channel numerous lumps of burnt sandstone were found, and more of these, together with struck flints and pottery, occurred between the driftwood at the edge of the bottom of the channel. The pottery is not diagnostic, but is either of Neolithic or early Bronze Age date. Above the organic deposits were sterile clay silts.

The former Thames channel: phase 2

Seven metres north of this the channel fills were cut by a second phase channel, very steep-sided, which was not bottomed within the excavation area. This is Thames phase 2. It was filled with organic clay (within which were a few pieces of timber) overlain by coarse sandy silts, and above this by silty clays. The evidence suggests a fast-flowing channel. No artefacts were recovered from the fills of Thames phase 2, nor from the top of the Thames phase 1 channel alongside, perhaps indicating a significant change in the location of activity from the earlier phase. However two uprights belonging to a waterlogged structure were found in evaluation just north of the excavation

The main occupation horizon

The occupation horizon covered the alluvial basin between the former Thames channels and the gravel terrace Site X. Within this area flint clusters of limited extent (ie less than 1.5 m across) occurred predominantly in two zones, one within 60 m of the channel edge, the other close to the edge of the gravel terrace.

The bankside zone: early Neolithic

In the riverside zone eight small clusters were found, together with a major activity area 20 m by 30 m consisting of spreads of struck flint, burnt flint and burnt soil. A roughly circular area of soil had been burnt red and was flecked with charcoal. To the north this was overlain by an arc of struck flint, animal bone and crumbs of pottery, while a mixture of burnt flint and struck flint clusters ran along the south. The northern arc consisted mainly of flint debitage, but included at least 12 leaf-shaped arrowheads, some apparently in an unfinished or broken state, 2 fragments of polished axe and a variety of other retouched tools, indicating an early Neolithic date. Another broken leaf-shaped arrowhead was found to the south, but here a concentration of burnt flint lay in a shallow pit surrounded by flint debitage. The central area between these two groups of finds also contained struck

flint, but in lower density. Surrounding the area were a number of satellite flint clusters less than 1 m across. The state of the material clearly shows that it was found in situ as deposited. Ten metres south-east of the main occupation area was a small area of cremated bone.

The eight peripheral clusters are not diagnostic of date, though some were of blade-like character. One or two of these clusters, along with a spread of burnt sandstone, were found at a slightly higher level than the main concentration, and may be later in date.

The terrace edge: early Bronze Age

Along the terrace edge a horizon of intermittent but extensive burning was found, accompanied by a scatter of struck flint and occasional sherds of pottery. No dug features were found and no intact hearths or obvious foci of occupation, although several small flint clusters less than 0.5 m across were excavated in this zone. In the absence of obvious foci this area was dug in alternate 2 m squares, the remaining squares being excavated where finds were most common. This horizon produced mainly Beaker and early Bronze Age Bucket urn sherds together with several barbed-and-tanged arrowheads.

The occupation horizon was overlain by further alluvial silts containing very few struck flints, and these were truncated by a ploughsoil below modern topsoil.

Conclusions

The EX1 excavations have established that gravel terrace Site X was occupied during the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods, in addition to the middle-late Bronze Age activity known from previous evaluation. In situ occupation of early Neolithic date has been established on the alluvial floodplain, on a horizon which appears to have been in use from the early Neolithic into the early Bronze Age, and the discovery of the former Thames channels has provided a focus for that occupation. The domestic Beaker and Early Bronze Age activity close to the terrace edge is also of considerable significance because of the rarity of domestic occupation of this date.

Area 3 (Fig 14)

Approximately 0.75 of a hectare was stripped across Channel V in extraction area 3. Of this, approximately 0.32 ha. lay on the gravel terrace to the north-east of the channel. The rest lay within Channel V, which was of several phases. The earliest deposits lay on the west side and were overlain by an occupation horizon, two areas of which totalling around 0.32 ha. were opened up. The early deposits were cut on the east side by the former channel of the Thames (see Fig 12), which was investigated by a trench 0.1 ha. in area.

The gravel terrace

The Pleistocene gravel of the terrace on the east was overlain by a sterile silty clay, which was heavily truncated by ploughing at the north end of the excavated area and so very thin, but was better-preserved further south. Here several

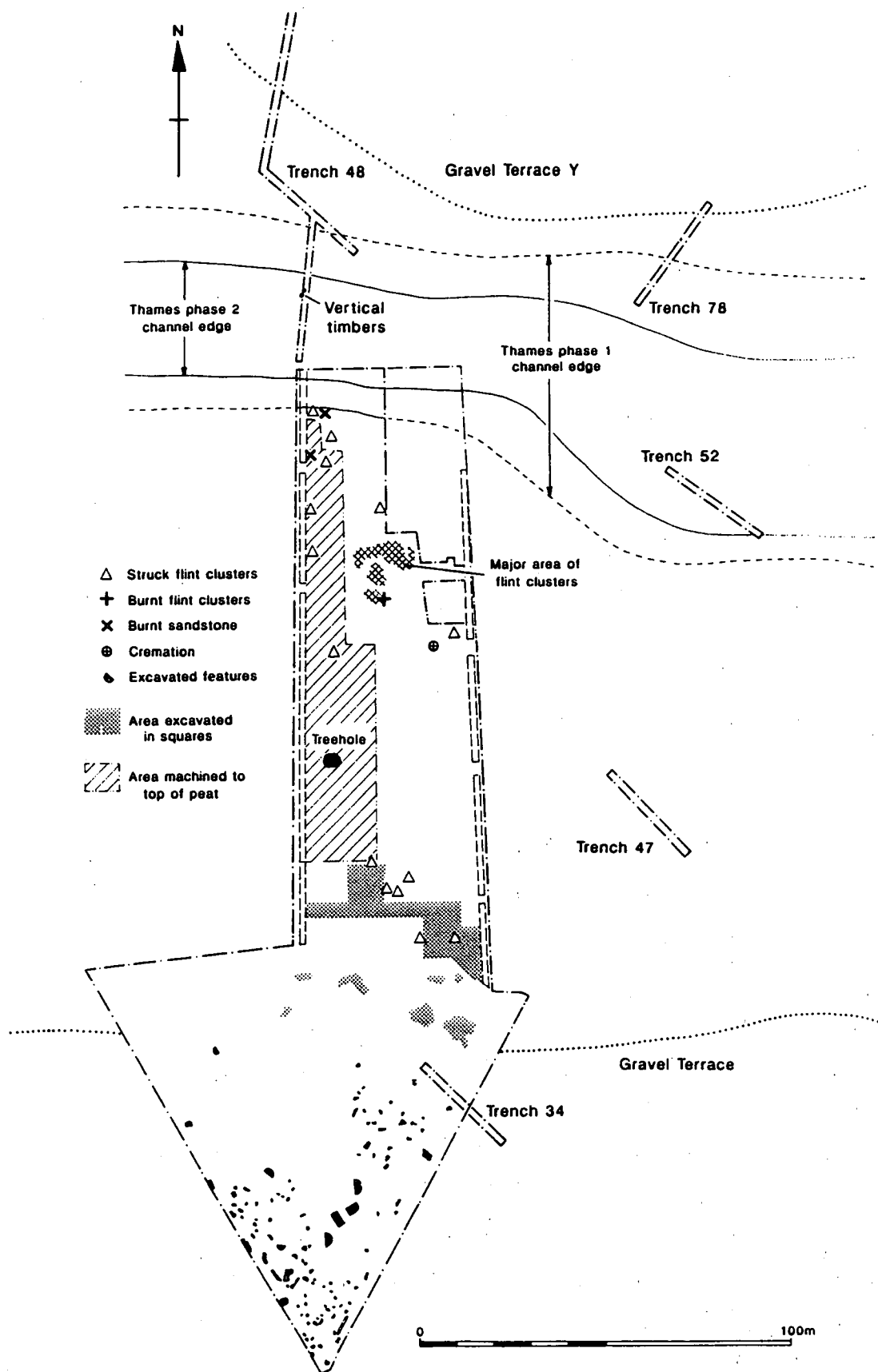


Fig 13. Eton Rowing Lake. Area EX1.

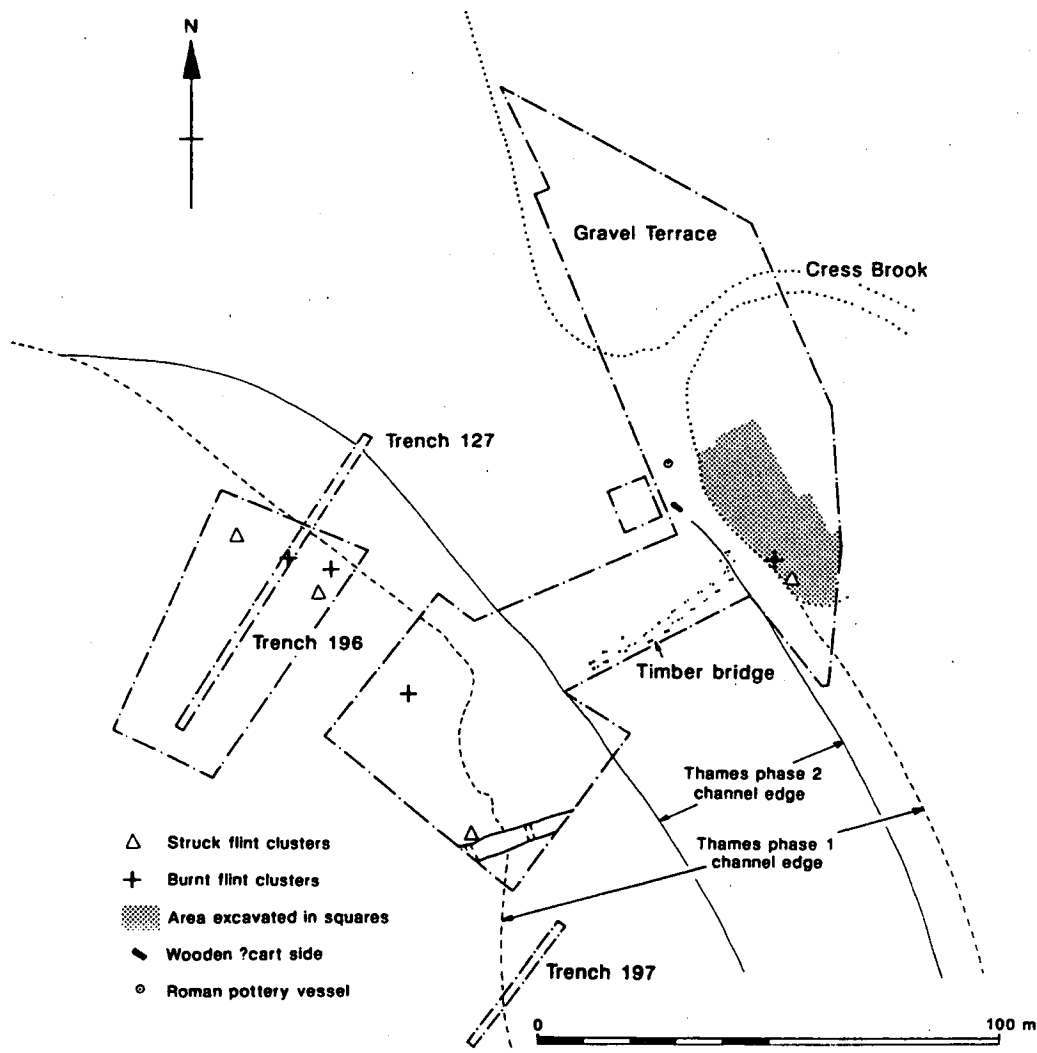


Fig 14. Eton Rowing Lake. Area 3.

such deposits were evident along the edge of the terrace, sloping down into Channel V. A cluster of struck flint (as yet undated) and several clusters of burnt flint were found in situ on surfaces within the clays. These horizons were not excavated in their entirety, but by a series of 2 m wide slots positioned at right-angles to the channel edge.

The overlying ploughsoil in this area contained large quantities of struck flint and burnt flint, and was excavated in alternate 2 m squares. Visible finds in the remaining squares were collected before the remainder of this deposit was machined off. Within this ploughsoil a leaf-shaped arrowhead and a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead were found, but no pottery of either date. The presence of material of both early Neolithic and early Bronze Age date probably indicates that more than one phase of prehistoric activity is present.

Channel V: alluvial floodplain and occupation horizon

Within Channel V the earliest deposits lay on the west side. On the west edge of the excavation the channel was only 1 m deep, but dipped gradually towards the north and east, and was 2.5 m deep when cut by the former Thames phase

1 channel. The channel fills consisted of a series of gleyed clays overlain by sterile silts. As in EX1, the alluvial deposits became more clayey towards the top, and within the upper part of the sequence an intermittent occupation horizon was found, characterised by occasional burnt patches, clusters of burnt flint and three struck flint clusters. The date of this activity is not certain, though one of the flint clusters contained a blade-like element and so may date to the earlier Neolithic.

The former Thames channel: phase 1

At approximately the level of the occupation horizon the early alluvial sequence was cut by the former Thames channel. The first phase of this is correlated with phase 1 in the EX1 excavation area. The western channel edge was steeply sloping, the east edge, which ran along the edge of the gravel terrace, less so. This phase of the channel was characterised by a deep sequence of organic silt, within which driftwood was found along the edge of the channel. Overlying the organic silts was a layer of coarser silt, perhaps indicative of a period of fast, high energy flow. Struck flint was found on the occupation horizon along the

channel edge, but no finds were recovered from the channel fills.

The former Thames channel: phase 2

The second phase of the former channel of the Thames lay within the earlier phase. Its western edge did not change course like the earlier phase, and its eastern edge lay 5 m inside the edge of the phase 1 channel (see Fig 14).

The phase 2 channel was excavated to a maximum depth of about 2.2 m but could not be excavated to its full depth, due to the high water table and the liquid nature of the deposits. The lowest deposits recorded were unconsolidated, silty sands, overlain by interleaved waterlogged clay silts and sandy silts, continuing up to about 1.2 m below the present ground surface.

The timber 'bridge'

Within these lower deposits two lines of vertical timbers were recorded, orientated at right-angles to the channel and running across most of its width. Two distinct types of timber were observed. At either side of the channel, there were two rows of relatively large timbers (up to 0.5 m in diameter), approximately in line with one another. Two rows of relatively slight, paired timbers (generally 0.12-15 m in diameter) ran parallel to one another across the major part of the channel, offset by about 3 m from those at either end. The pairs of timbers were spaced c 3 m apart along each row, and the rows were c 2 m apart. All of the timbers were roundwood, mostly fast-grown oak, whose bases had been trimmed to a point.

The timbers appeared to have been driven from a thin layer of coarse sand within the lower deposits, which had been dragged down the side of the posts during insertion. Lying slightly above this layer between the lines of posts was a horizontal wattle panel. A human femur and skull fragment were also recovered from the lower silts immediately downstream of the structure. To the east, the channel edge may have been cut away prior to the construction of the structure, resulting in a shallow vertical edge. Several sherds of pottery of indeterminate prehistoric date were recovered from deposits abutting this edge. The uppermost of these deposits was a layer of coarse sand, perhaps equivalent to the layer from which the 'posts' were driven. The western edge of the structure may correspond to a third phase of the channel, but this remains to be confirmed by further excavation. Several sherds of prehistoric pottery, probably Bronze Age in date, were recovered from deposits abutting the timbers on this side.

Samples from the two largest timbers were submitted for tree-ring dating, but since only 55 rings were present no match was obtained. Radiocarbon dating is being carried out upon four of the timbers by the British Museum, and counting for one of these has just finished. This timber, one of the large uprights from the channel edge, has given a date of 3090 ± 50 BP, or 1520-1220 cal.BC (at 95% confidence level). This structure is thus clearly the earliest bridge yet found on the Thames. The date is at least 250 years earlier

than those obtained from a Bronze Age structure at Wallingford, Oxfordshire, which had paired timbers like those of the slighter rows of the Eton bridge (Lambrick 1987, 99-100). We await the dates of the timbers from these rows with interest, as it is possible that the Eton bridge is of two phases.

No evidence of features leading to this structure was found on the gravel terrace to the east or in the top of the Thames phase 1 deposits on the western side. No finds of any sort were found on the exposed surface of the Thames phase 1 channel alongside Thames phase 2.

The possible 'cart-side'

Overlying the lower fluvial deposits, and sealing the timber structure, were a series of alluvial silty clays up to 1.2 m thick, the lowest of which produced sherds of Roman pottery, indicating that Thames phase 2 could have continued to be active into the Roman period or even later. On the east edge of the channel a plank-built structure was found preserved just above the gravel within these alluvial clays. It consisted of two planks about 3 m long, fastened edge to edge to three cross-pieces by iron nails. Rectangular notches were cut adjacent to each of the cross-pieces along one edge of the structure, possibly indicating that this formed the side of a box-like structure. Its stratigraphic position suggests that it probably dates to the Roman period or later.

Post-Roman ponding

The alluvial clays were overlain by a thick layer of peat containing frequent large animal bones. No equivalent layer was recorded elsewhere within Channel V, and this probably represents a period of localised ponding at the junction of Channels P, T and V after the Thames channel had ceased to be active. A hollow is still visible in this area today. The peat was overlain by a layer of brown clay which also filled a shallow hollow running east across the gravel terrace. This may represent the outflow from an active stream into the Cress Brook to the east, or from the area of ponding during periods of high rainfall. A complete Roman pottery vessel was found on the gravel at the edge of this hollow, overlain by the brown clay. Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery was retrieved from the clay.

Excavation in 1996

In the summer we hope to excavate the Bronze Age barrow cemetery and Later Mesolithic flintworking area, the middle Bronze Age flat graves and associated features, two more waterlogged timber structures and a further area of the alluvial floodplain adjacent to the former Thames channel.

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Northamptonshire

Oxford Archaeological Unit 1996 *The Eton College Rowing Lake, Dorney, South Buckinghamshire: Archaeological Evaluations 1995.*

Olney, St Peter and St Paul's Church (SP 889 509)

Christopher Bell

A watching brief was undertaken by Bob Williams of Oxford Archaeological Unit during rebuilding work in the west tower of St Peter and St Paul's church, Olney, and also during the excavation of new service trenches through the graveyard immediately to the north and east of the church. The building work inside the tower exposed part of the original Medieval graveyard soil on which the tower was built and a small number of Medieval pottery sherds were recovered from this deposit. Two features cut into the buried soil appeared to be grave cuts predating the construction of the 14th century tower. Numerous layers of compacted mortar and clay which overlay the buried soil represented the remains of earlier floor surfaces in the tower, dating from the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. A number of small Post-Medieval pits were cut through the various floor levels, and one of these appeared to have been used for casting lead for the construction or repair of the leaded windows. The upper edges of a much larger, vertically sided feature was cut from the higher levels of the buried floor layers and this appeared to be an internal Post-Medieval grave in the north-east corner of the tower, though the actual burial was not exposed at this level. The only deposit observed beneath the present tarmac and gravel in the external service trenches was the buried graveyard soil, containing numerous fragments of human bone.

Stewkley, St Michael's Church (SP 852261)

Robert J Williams

A watching brief was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during renovation work at St Michael's Church, Stewkley. The building work involved the replacement of a 19th-century stone and concrete gully with a new 'French' drain, around the external walls of the church, the excavation of service trenches to the north and west of the church and the replacement of the wooden floor within the nave. Apart from the brick bases of two buttresses, constructed in 1844 and demolished in 1862, no significant earlier structural evidence was revealed. The excavation of deeper trenches and soakaways in the graveyard disturbed a 19th century burial in a wooden coffin and revealed an 18th century brick-lined grave which was not disturbed. The base of a Post-Medieval gravestone with traces of floral carving was also located. The only significant feature exposed during the work inside the nave was a barrel-vaulted brick vault, which was also left undisturbed.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Report For 1995

Compiled and edited by Brian Dix

The work carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 1995 followed the by now familiar pattern of desk-based assessments and field evaluation mixed with larger scale recording of sites in advance of redevelopment. Specialist services and technical expertise continued to be given to the County Council in support of SMR-enhancement and strategic survey projects such as the Northampton Urban Study, and through the definition of policies for Saxon and Medieval Pottery and Church Archaeology. Research was undertaken in connection with exhibitions and other interpretation projects at several national monuments, and related reports were completed for publication. Building recording and other fieldwork, together with consultancy, were carried out in neighbouring counties as well as further afield, ranging across country from East Anglia to Wales and from the Peak District to the South Downs. Clients included the Central London Royal Parks, Historic Royal Palaces Agency and English Heritage in addition to other government bodies, local authorities, private companies and various individuals.

Alderton (SP 74044695)

I Soden

A watching brief was carried out in May 1995 during the excavation of foundation trenches for a two-storey extension to The Coppice, Church Lane, Alderton. The building lies just outside the scheduled ancient monument of a Medieval ringwork fortification known as 'The Mounts'. No contemporary or earlier features were present, however.

Badby, St Mary's Church (SP 55965873)

J Prentice and T Baker

Trial excavation in August 1995 beside a blocked doorway in the north wall of St Mary's Church revealed the stone foundations of a former porch. No associated floor levels survived but two skeletons predated the construction.

Barby

I Soden

Severn Trent Water Ltd commissioned preliminary survey and a subsequent watching brief along the route of a new water main between Draycote Water in Warwickshire and Barby in Northamptonshire. The Northamptonshire section of the pipeline was approximately 4 km long. Its course did not disturb any known archaeological sites, nor uncover any new ones. Finds recovered by metal detector and surface

observation date from the Bronze Age until the present and indicate that Roman remains may lie in the vicinity of Barby Hill.

Barnwell (TL 04748507)
M Holmes and I Meadows

Desktop study, supplemented by detailed geophysical survey and the observation of trial pits, has shown that a proposed development site of 0.4 ha off Well Lane, Barnwell St Andrew is unlikely to contain significant archaeological deposits. The work was carried out for English Villages Housing Association.

Brigstock
P Blinkhorn and I Meadows

A watching brief was carried out in winter 1994-95 during the installation of a new water main across the market-place and adjoining streets in Brigstock. The work was undertaken for Anglian Water Services Limited. No significant archaeological deposits were present in the area of the former Medieval market-place, where the modern road make-up directly overlay natural limestone. Towards Mill Lane, however, the pipeline-trench cut through a group of small pits, some of which contained Iron Age pottery, including a single curvilinear decorated sherd.

Brixworth, All Saints' Church (SP 748712)
M Audouy with I Soden

No significant archaeological deposits were disturbed during excavations in October 1995 in advance of drainage-improvements in and around the tower of All Saints' Church. Fragments of early building materials, including Roman or Saxon tile, were residual in grave-earth outside the tower.

Crick, Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (centred SP 568728))
A Chapman

The excavation of two Iron Age settlements and a Romano-British farmstead was reported in *SMA* 25 (1995), 37-9. Further excavations at the Long Dole Iron Age enclosure focused on areas subject to flooding in the previous year. They revealed further details of the enclosure system and some of the roundhouses and internal enclosures were re-examined. The remainder of this site will be preserved but otherwise there will be a watching brief during the initial phases of development.

Crick, Watling Street (SP 57657173)
S Lawrence

Limited investigation of a section of Watling Street Roman

road recorded the truncated remains of two superimposed, but undated, gravel track-surfaces upon a make-up of naturally derived gravels and sand. The excavation was carried out for East Midlands Electricity plc in March 1995, prior to the installation of underground electrical mains.

Crick (and Kilsby) (SP 576716 and SP 577721)
I Soden

Desk-based assessment and walk-over reconnaissance of land astride the parish boundary between Crick and Kilsby identified evidence of previous ridge-and-furrow cultivation in two fields. The parish boundary is formed by an undisturbed length of Watling Street Roman road and Iron Age, Roman and later sites lie nearby.

Daventry, Sheaf Street (SP 57276233)
I Soden

Trial excavation was carried out in March 1995 in connection with the proposed redevelopment of a former car park at the corner of Sheaf Street and New Street. Documentary research suggested that Medieval plots might survive along the Sheaf Street frontage, where they could have supplanted larger plots at right-angles, fronting High Street. In the event, any previous frontage along Sheaf Street had been removed by the combination of Medieval ironstone-quarrying and recent development. Additionally, no trace of north-south aligned plots was present, with the earliest dateable structural remains being 16th century or later.

Daventry, St John's Square (SP 574627)
I Soden

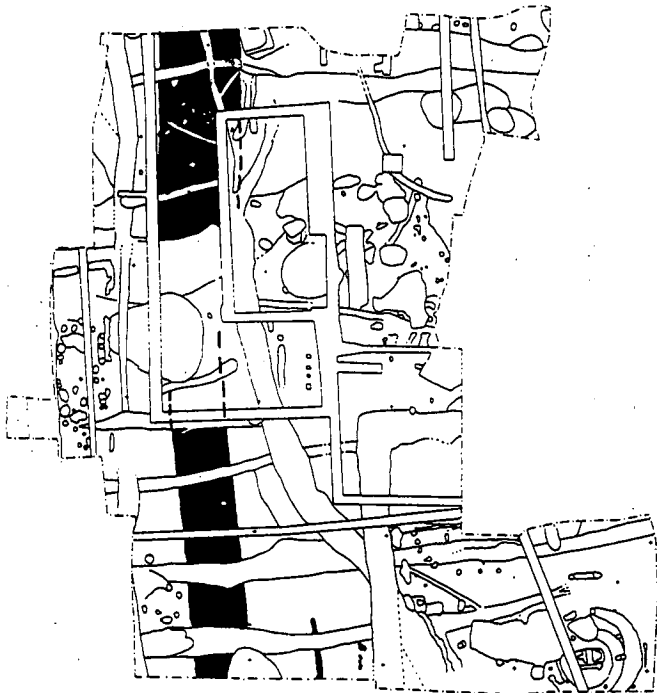
Following earlier evaluation, pre-emptive excavation was undertaken on the north side of St John's Square in advance of the redevelopment of a wider area in Daventry town-centre. The work was carried out for Daventry District Council between November 1994 and February 1995.

Late Saxon and Medieval settlement remains were buried at an average depth of 1 m, with a discrete band of early Saxon occupation sealed beneath hillwash along the northern edge of the site. Six phases of occupation, dating from the 6th century AD onwards, can be identified (cf Fig 1).

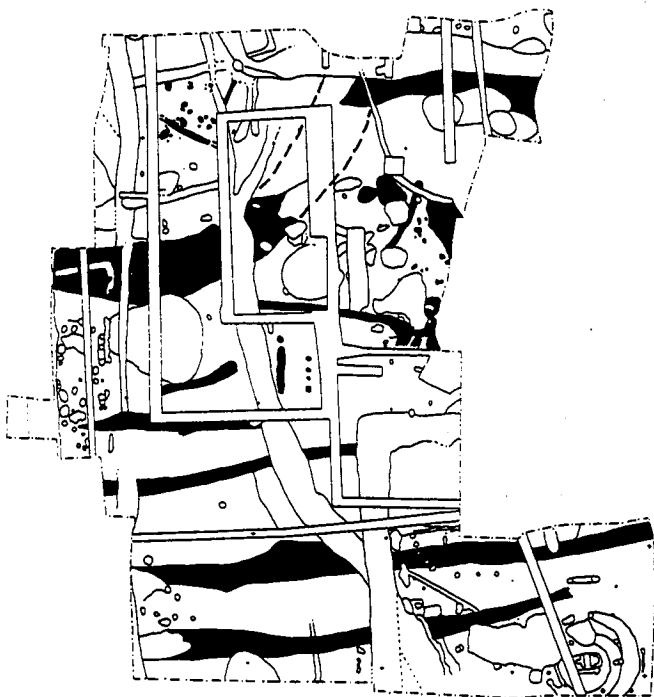
Early Saxon remains comprised the pottery-laden fills of a wide, straight ditch which ran east-west across the site. The pottery is of 5th to 6th century date, with some residual Romano-British material. Of approximately 900 sherds, 45 are stamped or otherwise decorated, but none of the stamps matches the pattern of an antler stamp-die which was also found. No certainly contemporary structural remains have been identified.

Late Saxon occupation is attested from c AD 900 onwards but any continuity from the early Saxon period is unlikely.

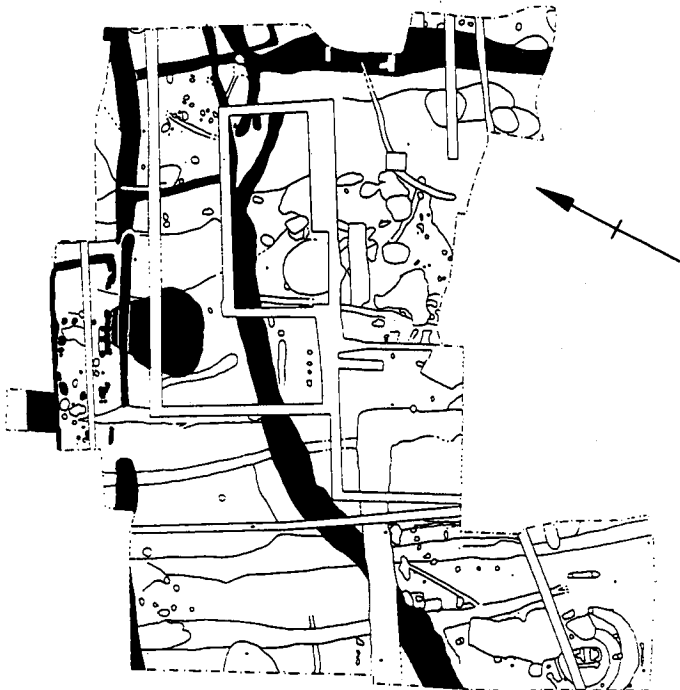
5th - 7th centuries



1000 - 1150



1150 - 1250



1250 - 1300

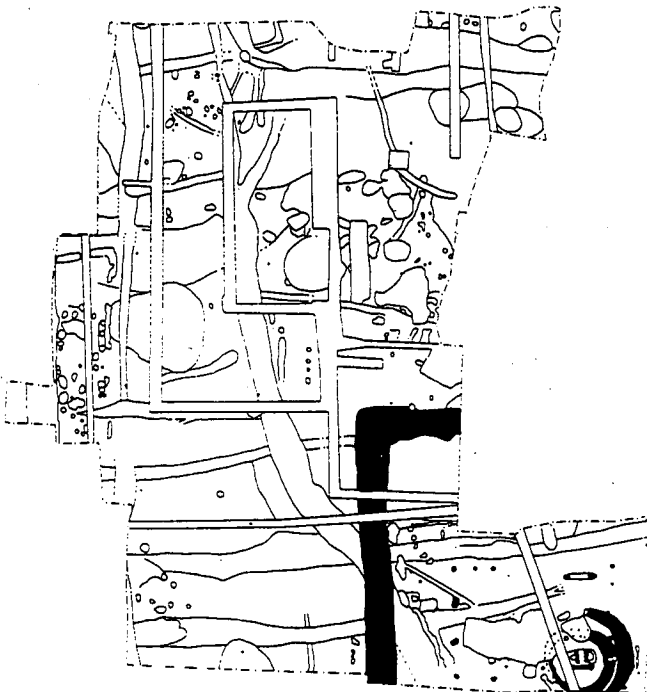


Fig 1. St John's Square, Daventry: main phases.

A sequence of ditches, aligned north-south running up the hillslope, may represent shifting boundaries. The remains of two timber buildings were located at opposite ends of the slope, with that on the downslope enclosed by a sequence of substantial curving ditches in which the latest recut was backfilled c AD 1100/1150.

In the 12th to 13th centuries a ditch system ran across the slope at right-angles to the preceding boundaries. A 3-bay stone and timber building was built at the foot of the slope sometime after 1087.

Later Medieval occupation in the 13th and 14th centuries continued only at the top of the slope, where a 4.5 m wide circular structure was enclosed by a substantial ditch with a causeway at the east. It may have gone out of use in the 14th century. A large timber building was subsequently constructed on the site and continued in use for some time before a large pit was dug into it in the 16th century.

Early Post-Medieval remains were mostly denoted by scattered rubbish pits containing materials of the 17th and 18th centuries. Thereafter the ground was cultivated, resulting in the substantial build-up of the surface.

Modern remains comprised the concrete foundations and related services of the former Daventry District Council offices, which were built in the 1960s and demolished following a major fire in the mid-1980s.

Greens Norton

I Soden

A watching brief was carried out for Anglian Water Services Limited during new pipe-laying in the vicinities of Caswell and Potcote deserted Medieval settlements. By the end of 1995 the groundworks had not revealed any archaeological remains, but work continues.

Irchester (centre SP 910669)

I Meadows

Excavations were carried out on behalf of ARC Central in advance of gravel extraction from land to the north-west of the walled area of Irchester Roman town. A series of Roman boundary ditches represents the continuation onto the floodplain of the River Nene of fields previously identified by geophysical survey. In places a buried ploughsoil was identified below alluvium but it could not be positively demonstrated to be Roman.

The ditches lay to the south of a shallow channel which was probably part of a former river course. A side-channel ran slightly to the north and at the interfluvium between the two there was a ring ditch. Excavation produced beaker pottery and cremated bone, suggesting that it was a former barrow, but the remains were so severely truncated by earthmoving that a central burial could not be recognised. The

barrow-ditch had been recut three times, attesting to the longevity of use of the monument, and in at least one phase it was separated from the burial mound by a berm.

Irthlingborough (SP 95757110)

M Webster and M Holmes with S Parry

Following initial survey and assessment, trial excavation was carried out for R Griggs Group Ltd on land to the south of Marsh Lane, Irthlingborough. The only significant discoveries were two ditches, one Roman and the other possibly Iron Age, and a single cremation with an associated radiocarbon date of 1615 - 930 cal BC. A subsequent watching brief during the enlargement of the car park at the Rushden Diamonds Football Club has ensured that any further archaeological remains are preserved beneath the development.

Kettering (SP 86607843)

I Soden and C Jones

Trial excavation took place in November 1995 on land between George Street and Hazelwood Lane in advance of redevelopment by Orbit Housing Association. All vestiges of pre-modern building frontages were shown to have been removed by recent development, with few remains of either 18th century or earlier date surviving anywhere.

Northampton, Campbell Square (SP 75506103)

M Holmes, I Soden and M Webster

Minster General Housing Association commissioned the evaluation of land adjacent to Campbell Square, Northampton in order to determine if remains connected with the Medieval or Civil War defences of the town survived. The work was undertaken between February - March 1995 and comprised a desk-based study, ground-probing radar survey and trial excavation. A substantial but short-lived ditch was located along the suspected line of the defences. It had been heavily truncated by later quarrying and can be assigned only a broad 12th to 17th century date. A short length of wall may belong to the period of Civil War but again had been largely removed by subsequent quarrying.

Northampton, Cattle Market Road (SP 756599)

A Chapman

A watching brief was funded by William Davis Limited in connection with the residential development of part of the former cattle market, off Cattle Market Road. Historic maps of the period 1610-1847 indicate that the area previously comprised a low-lying meadow outside the town. It was not possible to confirm the anticipated course of a minor river channel but 19th century dumping had raised the local ground-level by up to 1.1 m.

Northamptonshire

Northampton, Church of the Holy Sepulchre (SP 75406093) I Soden

An evaluation was undertaken in May - June 1995 in connection with proposed access arrangements for the disabled. The scope of the work involved clearing and recording the ground surface after contractor's removal of an existing tarmac path beside the south aisle, together with the archaeological excavation and recording of a new feeder drain trench and a builder's test pit. Apart from the foundations of the south aisle, no features earlier than the 19th century were positively identified.

Northampton, Green Street (SP 748603) A Chapman

Following desktop assessment, three trenches were excavated in December 1995 for Home Housing Association Limited on land to the west of Green Street, across the presumed line of the former town defences. Related features include a clay bank or possible rampart, apparently of Medieval or earlier date, which at one point was surmounted by a stone wall, 1.85 m wide. The upper levels of a ditch or ditches lying to the west contained Medieval pottery. Two seemingly contemporary ditches were cut at a later date and were probably filled no earlier than the 17th century, suggesting that they could date to the Civil War.

Northampton, St Andrew's Street (SP 75206085) I Soden

A desk-based assessment was carried out for the PDSA in connection with the possible redevelopment of a site between the former Medieval roads denoted by St Andrew's Street and Broad Street. There is little evidence currently available for either Medieval or earlier occupation of the area and modern cellars may have destroyed the remains of any previous frontages.

Northampton, St George's Street (SP 752611) I Soden

Evaluation of land lying between St George's Street and Grafton Street showed the area to have been heavily quarried for ironstone from Medieval times onwards. The work was undertaken for Galliard Homes Limited.

Northampton, St John's Car Park (SP 755602) I Soden

A desktop assessment of the western part of St John's Car Park showed that the area lay formerly within the precinct of the Medieval hospital of Saints John, and that the so-called master's house, or more properly the hospital

refectory, had once stood there. It was demolished in 1871 to make way for the St John's Railway Station which remained in use until July 1939, being finally demolished in 1960. Archaeological observation during the digging of geological test pits suggests that any remains which might survive could be buried beneath up to 3 m of modern fill. Studies were carried out for Home Housing Association Limited.

Northampton, Woolmonger Street (SP 75266033) I Soden and S Parry

Previous evaluation identified two areas to the north of Woolmonger Street which were largely unaffected by widespread Victorian and more recent development of the district (cf SMA 25 (1995), 41). Excavation in summer 1995 on behalf of Wimpey Property Holdings Ltd identified a sequence of buildings extending from the late Saxon period to the 15th or 16th centuries (Fig 2).

The earliest phase of timber buildings contained substantial cellars 5 m long and at least 1.1 m deep which may date to the 10th century AD. Perhaps of wider significance is that their alignment diverges from the present line of Woolmonger Street. A second phase of timber buildings ran parallel to the later frontage, implying some replanning in the late Saxon or early Medieval period when Woolmonger Street was established. Work in adjacent areas will continue in 1996.

The timber buildings were replaced in stone during the 14th century. A substantial town house, comprising a hall and chamber along the frontage with a kitchen wing to the rear, was constructed on one plot while a more modest rectangular building was erected on the other. Both buildings may have lasted only for 100 to 200 years after which the area appears to have been derelict until the construction of houses in Georgian times. Excavation and subsequent development observation in the area behind the buildings located numerous rubbish pits dating from the late Saxon period to the 19th century.

Outer Northampton, Brackmills (SP 785591) M Holmes

A desk-based assessment, followed by geophysical reconnaissance and detailed magnetometer surveys, was carried out in November 1995 on 5.25 ha of land at Weddell Way, Brackmills. There was no clear indication of significant archaeological remains. The investigation was undertaken for Northampton Livestock Sales Ltd.

Outer Northampton, Duston Mills Reservoir (SP 735598) A Chapman

A review of the potential for Palaeolithic archaeology in

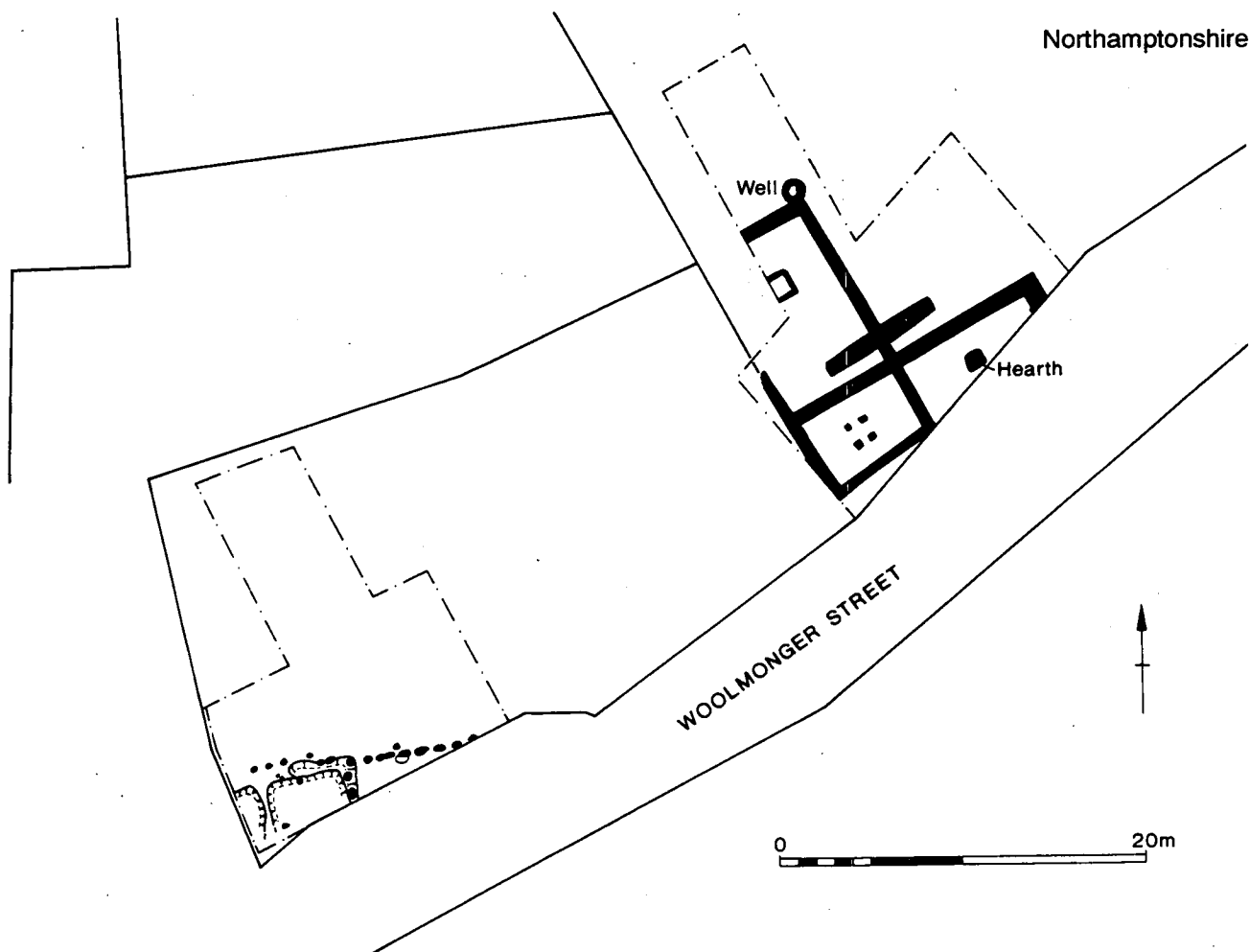


Fig 2. Woolmonger Street, Northampton: excavations in 1995.

Northamptonshire identified the glacial lake deposits sealed by the gravel terraces along the River Nene to the south and east of Northampton as probably having the highest potential within the county for containing important remains.

The extraction of minerals prior to the creation of a lake on a 24 ha site at Duston Mills, Northampton provides an opportunity to assess the potential of these deposits. A watching brief will be maintained throughout the extraction process in order to locate any residual or in-situ artefacts and any lake deposits possessing environmental potential related to human activity. The initial phase of extraction has revealed homogeneous laminated lake silts but no indications of human activity.

Pipewell (SP 83888540)
J Prentice and T Baker

Evaluation of proposed development land off Oakley Road, Pipewell to the south of the site of the Cistercian abbey of St Mary de Divisis and adjacent to the former Saxon and Medieval village showed that it was unlikely to contain significant archaeological deposits.

Pitsford (SP 758670)
M Holmes and S Morris

The first stage of an archaeological evaluation comprising desk-based study, geophysical reconnaissance and prospection, and metal detecting survey was undertaken between February and May 1995 on land to the south of Pitsford village. The work was carried out in order to enable archaeological consideration of a proposal for mineral extraction by Peter Bennie Limited. The geophysical survey revealed extensive archaeological features, some of which may date to the Prehistoric or Roman periods.

Potterspury (SP 76024312)
P Blinkhorn

A watching brief was carried out in January 1995 during the excavation of house-foundation trenches at 73A High Street, Potterspury. It was thought that the area might contain remains relating to the Medieval pottery industry known from the village but only modern dumps of material and recent features were present.

Northamptonshire

Radstone, St Lawrence's Church (SP 58794052)

I Soden and M Audouy

A watching brief during the laying of new drains, together with a programme of archaeological buildings recording, investigated both the fabric of the tower and the immediate surroundings of St Lawrence's Church. A building sequence was recorded in the tower fabric, beginning probably in the 11th century, while the watching brief recorded the position of the former north aisle.

Raunds, London Road (SP 989734)

M Holmes and S Morris

The projected course of a hypothetical alignment of prehistoric monuments passes through proposed development-land to the west of London Road, Raunds. Archaeological evaluation comprising geophysical reconnaissance and detailed geophysical survey shows, however, that the area is unlikely to contain any prehistoric ceremonial or other ritual monuments close to or along the alignment. The work was carried out in July 1995 for Kier Ventures Limited.

Raunds, Thorpe End (SP 997723)

S Parry

A desktop assessment was carried out in connection with the proposed development of land adjacent to the RPC Containers Ltd warehouse. The site forms part of the scheduled ancient monument of Thorpe End Iron Age, Saxon and Medieval Settlement (National Monument No. NN 11508). It is likely that it contains associated remains.

Raunds (Higham Ferrers to Stanwick road improvement) (SP 96857100)

S Parry with M Webster, I Soden and I Meadows

A programme of archaeological excavation, related geophysical survey and subsequent development observation was undertaken in connection with modern carriageway-widening of the A45 road as it passes between the parishes of Higham Ferrers and Raunds. The work was carried out on behalf of the Northamptonshire County Council Planning and Transportation Department between October 1994 and August 1995.

Isolated features were identified along the route but a Roman settlement in Middle Sands Field forms the only significant archaeological remains (Fig 3). Three rectangular stone buildings set within walled yards, together with other boundaries, were revealed during the development but have been preserved beneath the new carriageway without detailed excavation. With another four structures found by previous work outside the road corridor, they denote occupation dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD.

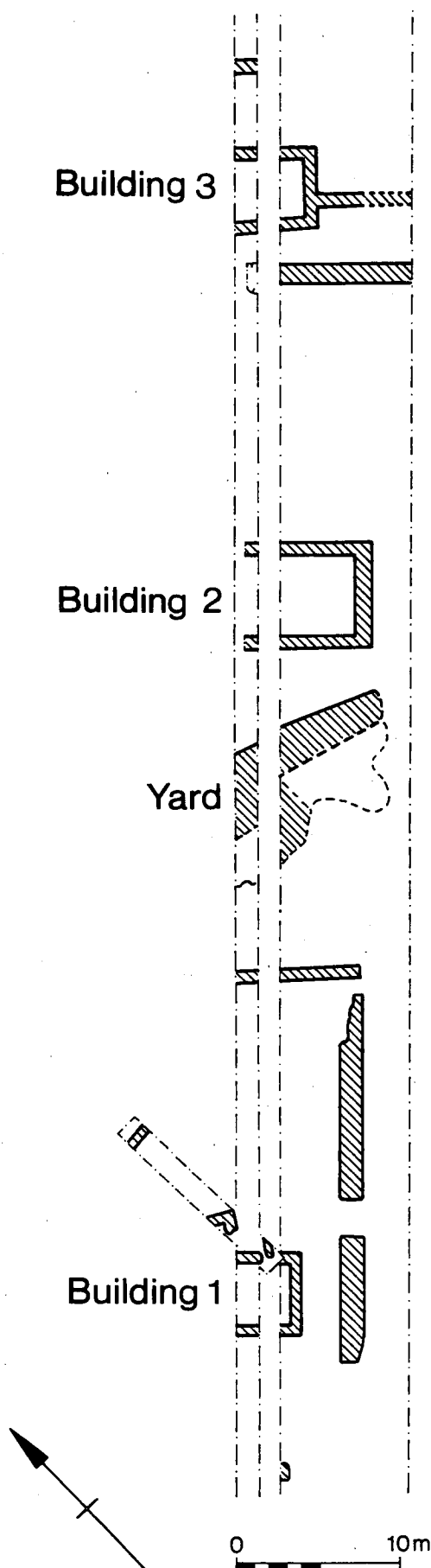


Fig 3. Higham Ferrers to Stanwick road improvement: Roman settlement remains in Middle Sands Field.

Rothersthorpe (SP 72055798)

M Holmes

A watching brief conducted during the construction of the Swan Valley Business Park located a number of ditches yielding Romano-British pottery. The ditches probably represent part of a field system and lie to the west of two previously excavated Iron Age settlements (*SMA* 25 (1995), 41-3).

Stanford-on-Avon (SP 588789)

M Shaw

An evaluation was commissioned by J S Bloor (Services) Ltd to investigate two areas of proposed residential development within the area of the deserted Medieval settlement which is largely scheduled as an ancient monument (National Monument No. NN 145). At the presumed site of the former manor house, now a disused kitchen garden, the only feature was part of a backfilled watercourse. Elsewhere, to the south of Home Farm, Medieval ditches were presumably associated with the adjacent settlement.

Stanford-on-Avon, St Nicholas' Church (SP 58857885)

I Soden with J Prentice

A programme of archaeological buildings recording accompanied the extensive repair of the north aisle roof of St Nicholas' Church in October 1995. The works revealed that the design of c 1500, created as part of a programme to totally re-roof the church, had subsequently been massively altered to offset the serious degeneration of many of the timbers. Similarly, an early decorative scheme had been overpainted, possibly in the late 17th century. Further alterations and repairs throughout the roof have been carried out up to the latest works.

Stanion (centre SP 906868)

M Holmes

A desk-based study with rapid field reconnaissance was undertaken in connection with the proposed residential development of c 92 ha of land to the west of Stanion. Part of the area has been extensively quarried for ironstone, but in one place the line of the Leicester-Godmanchester Roman road can still be traced and elsewhere evidence of early/middle Saxon activity has been previously recorded.

Sulby (SP 65737996)

I Soden

A watching brief was carried out in September 1995 during groundwork affecting part of the surviving fishponds of the former Premonstratensian house of Sulby Abbey, now Sulby Abbey Farm. The work arose from excavations by

British Waterways Southern Region to replace a brick culvert which had originally been laid through a substantial earth bank thought to have been a dam serving the Medieval fishponds. The new culvert was laid entirely within the existing disturbed ground and the profile of the bank was fully reinstated.

Tansor (TL 057901)

A Chapman

Two out of a group of three circular mounds on a spur of high ground overlooking the Nene valley were partially excavated prior to a road improvement scheme at Tansor Crossroads (Fig 4). The evaluation of the site was reported in *SMA* 22 (1992), 39 and *SMA* 23 (1993), 51.

Detailed excavation showed that Mound 1 is a Neolithic mortuary or funerary enclosure. An east-west line of pits with multiple recutting, possibly successive post-pits, defined the southern side of a probable rectangular enclosure, while its eastern end was marked by a continuous trench, probably with a central opening. One of several pits within the central area produced a Mortlake Ware assemblage and charcoal radiocarbon-dated to 3635-3365 cal BC. A further central pit has given a radiocarbon date of 2030-1885 cal BC, suggesting that the encircling ditch, c 35 m in diameter, and a central mound, lost through ploughing, date to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. Radiocarbon dates from charcoal deposits in the upper ditch fills indicate a continuation of activity well into the late Bronze Age. Two early Saxon burials lay immediately within the ditch.

Mound 3, lying partly beneath the present road, was shown to be a Medieval windmill mound. It is dated by a primary pottery assemblage to c 1225-1250, and was apparently in use for no more than a few decades. The 6.3 m long cross-tree slots, which would have held the basal timbers for a post mill, lay at the centre of a clay mound encircled by a broad ditch. The absence of any in-situ timbers suggests that the windmill had been systematically dismantled.

Tansor, Lutton Road

I Meadows and P Thompson

A watching brief was carried out for Anglian Water Services Ltd between October - November 1995 during pipe-laying in the vicinity of Tansor village. No archaeological remains were observed.

Towcester, Nelson's Yard (SP 69084887)

M Audouy with T Baker and J Prentice

Nelson's Yard, Towcester, lies just within the circuit of the defences of the Roman town of Lactodurum. A proposed redevelopment of the site partly overlies the earthwork remains of the former rampart and ditch; the ditch is a scheduled ancient monument (County No. Northants 112).

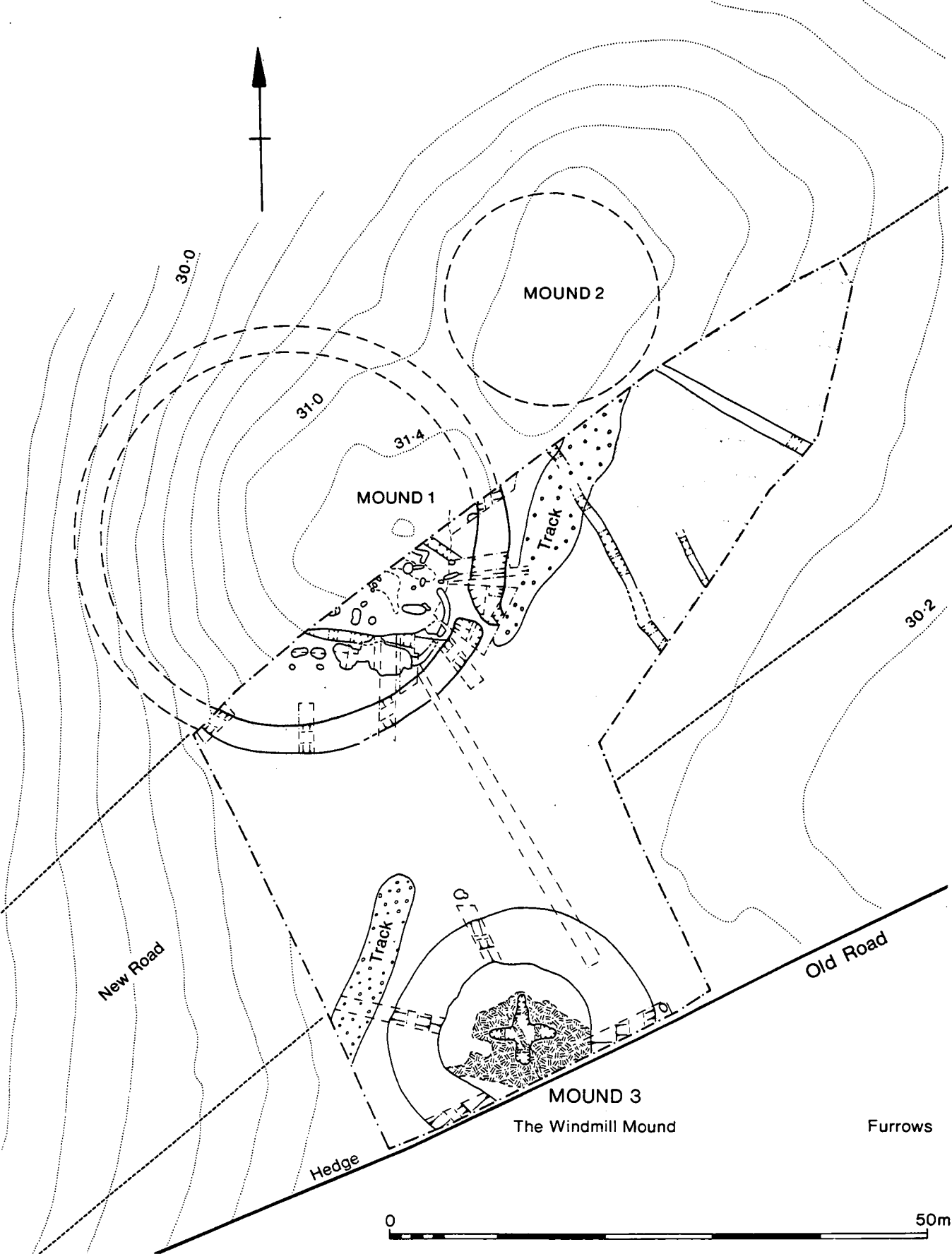


Fig 4. Excavations at Tansor Crossroads.

Previous research has shown that defences of Roman, late Saxon and 17th century date survive in the area, together with the remains of domestic occupation from throughout the Roman period. Since the rear of Nelson's Yard has remained largely untouched by development it is likely that similar remains might occur. Archaeological trial excavation in September 1995 indicated that the site had been built up to the east, where modern soil deposits covered any ancient remains to a depth of up to 1 m. The depth of overburden lessened gradually westward to 0.3 m at the highest point of the earthwork bank.

Towcester, Park Street (SP 69224869)
M Webster and R Atkins

An evaluation was carried out in April 1995 for Mr C Folwell on land adjacent to 15A Park Street, Towcester. Desktop study showed that the former Roman road to Alchester was likely to pass through the site, and this was subsequently confirmed by trial excavation which identified substantial metallurgy and roadside ditches. A single posthole and earthen layers of Roman date were also found but the excavation was too small to identify structures along the street frontage.

Warmington (TL 0791)
S Parry

Excavation was undertaken ahead of construction of the A605 Warmington Bypass at four locations in order to examine a small Roman settlement and the northern part of the Medieval village now known as Eaglethorpe, as identified by previous survey work (*SMA* 22 (1992), 39-41; 23 (1993), 51-2). The work was carried out between September and December 1995 for the County Planning and Transportation Department.

An unexpected discovery was an early Bronze Age burial located on top of a gravel ridge parallel to the River Nene (TL 07369158). The body was on its left side facing north, with the limbs flexed so that the hands were placed by the breast bone and the knees were drawn up to the lower chest. Associated finds include a pottery beaker vessel, two jet buttons and a range of flints including a knife/dagger (broken), two cutting blades and a fabricator. Two arrowheads and another cutting blade were found in a Medieval pit which cut the grave. No other contemporary features were identified, but a small pit in an isolated position contained a large fragment possibly of a late Bronze Age pottery vessel. Five rectangular pits, probably forming part of a larger land division, were excavated on the eastern side of the ridge (TL 07469159).

Excavation at TL 07159120 within the pottery concentration found during previous fieldwalking located Roman enclosures defined by ditches and containing associated pits. No buildings were identified and it seems likely that

the focus of the settlement lies to the north of the road corridor.

Other excavation at TL 07499162, adjacent to the dovecot at Eaglethorpe, revealed a Medieval building and malt-house within rectangular plots bounded by ditches. On the opposite side of the lane Medieval rubbish pits were found cutting the former pit alignment. A substantial 17th century building partly overlying a Medieval ditch system was found adjacent to the beaker burial. Nearby fragments of other stone structures and yard surfaces may represent part of the Burystead shown in the village survey plan of 1621 (cf *SMA* 22 (1992), fig 7). The remains appear to be Post-Medieval, however, indicating that placename evidence on its own is no sure indicator of the location of the manor mentioned by Domesday Book.

Weldon (SP 92788970)
J Prentice and P Thompson

Evaluation was carried out in December 1995 on part of the scheduled ancient monument of Little Weldon Roman Villa (County No. Northants 105) in order to provide information for proposed change of use. No archaeological features were present relating to the villa which lies 300 m to the north-east.

Wollaston (centre SP 898645)
I Meadows

Work on behalf of Pioneer Aggregates (UK) Ltd continued at the northern end of the company's gravel quarry (cf *SMA* 25 (1995), 44). No new occupation sites were found in this area of the workings but ground-clearance provided the opportunity to investigate further the extensive system of parallel trenches which had been identified by previous evaluation. The features covered an area of at least 5.5 ha but their original function remained uncertain, although 'lazybeds' were suggested (Fig 5). The complete system was recorded in plan and at several points an element was excavated in order to recover the sequence of formation (Fig 6). The 1 m wide trenches were first dug with flat bottoms and almost vertical sides extending about 0.3 m into the natural silty gravel. Along both sides of each trench some of the upcast material was replaced and in the centre at the bottom a small amount of what may be manure was added. A number of postholes were recognised in the redeposited soil, ranging in size up to 0.15 m across. Above the 'manure' the old topsoil appears to have been replaced in the trench.

Careful examination of the fills enabled the identification of root balls which suggest that plants were spaced c 1.5 m apart within the trench.

The certain identification of a function for the trench system was provided by the presence of vine pollen in soil samples, suggesting that it was cultivated by the method of *pastinatio*, as described by the Roman writer Columella. The pollen

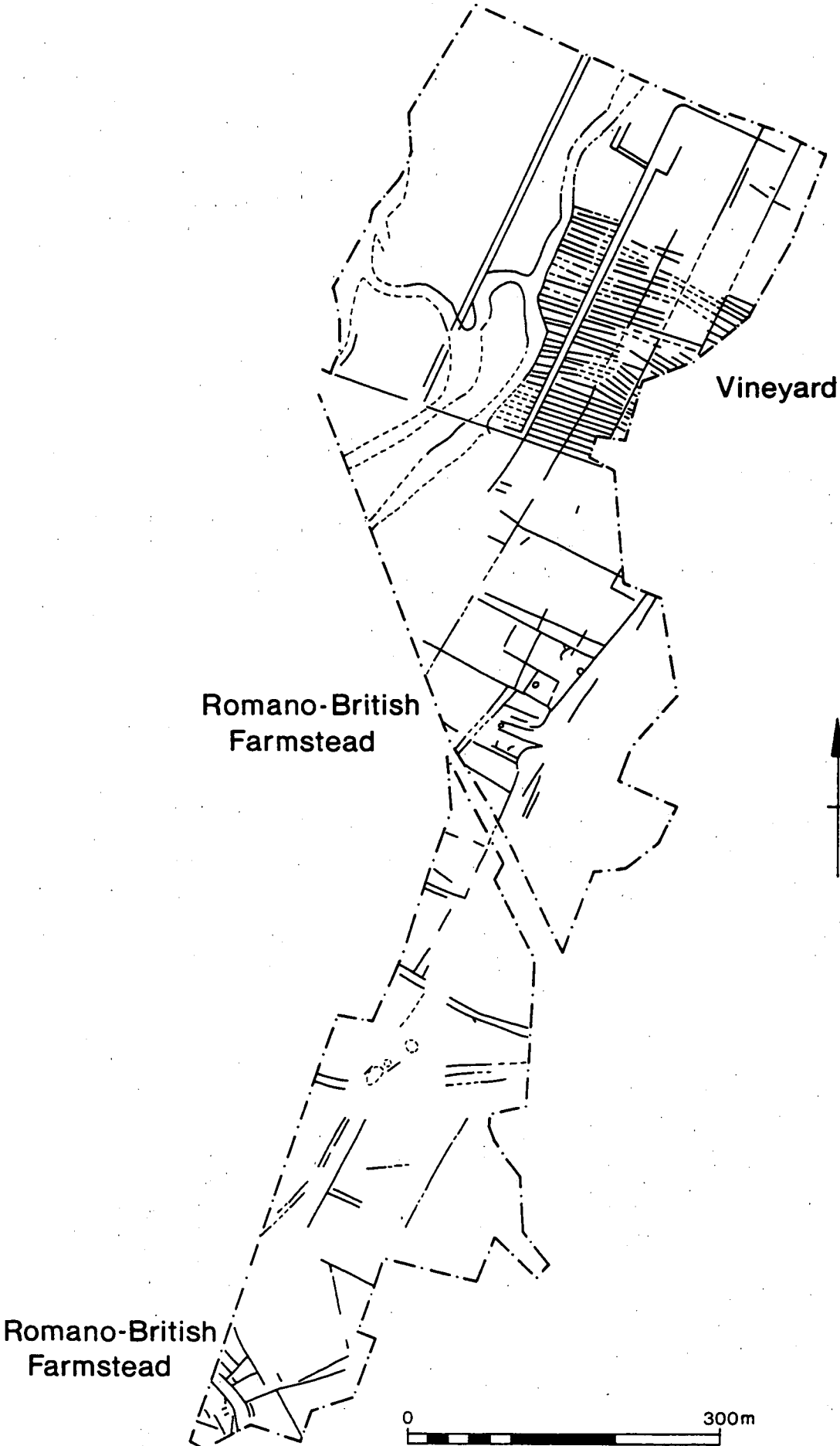


Fig 5. Roman landscape features at Wollaston Quarry.

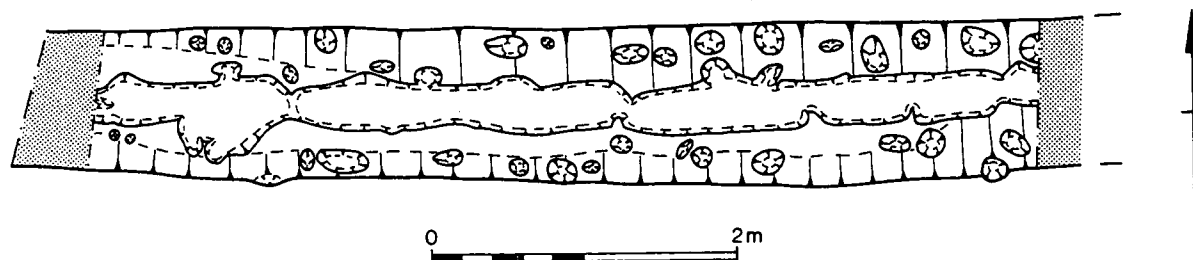


Fig 6. Wollaston Quarry: detail of *pastinatio* trench.

spectra indicate that there was no other crop intercultivated with the vines, despite the wide spacing of the rows; instead, the ground was probably kept bare. The 5 m spacing between rows is greater than that normally used in modern viticulture.

Calculations of the scale of the vineyard indicate that there were c 6.5 km of trenches planted with an estimated 4200 individual vines, producing the equivalent of about 15,000 bottles of wine each year.

Wollaston (SP 885628)

I Meadows with M Holmes and S Morris

Detailed geophysical prospection and selective trial excavation were carried out for Pioneer Aggregates (UK) Ltd in July and August 1995 on land to the south of Hardwater Road, Wollaston. A previous assessment had shown the area to contain the remains of Iron Age and Roman settlement with associated field-systems (cf SMA 25 (1995), 44). The second stage of fieldwork aimed at enhancing the existing cropmark evidence and verifying the depth and state of preservation of associated archaeological deposits.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HERITAGE

1995 Summary

Graham Cadman

Initiatives for the conservation management of archaeological monuments and historic landscapes continued to provide the main focus for the Field Officer during 1995. In addition to the direct management of the County Council's own Properties in Care the emphasis has been on the encouragement of good management and long term conservation of monuments and historic buildings and landscapes through liaison and the provision of advice, to local authorities, statutory bodies and other agencies and to those owning and managing land. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, in its final Countryside Commission run year before transferring to MAFF, continues to provide some opportunities for enhancing conservation of areas of

historic landscapes though the limitations on funding resulted in only two important historic sites being accepted into the Scheme during 1995. These were part of Rockingham's historic parkland in the Welland valley and an extensive area of historic landscape at Wadenhoe in the Nene valley. Some additional areas of historic landscape were accepted into the Upper Thames Tributaries ESA area in the extreme south west of the county along the Cherwell valley.

Numerous site visits have been undertaken, most often for the purposes of conducting reconnaissance and conditions inspections, but also to identify and help resolve particular management problems. Close working with English Heritage is being pursued at several sites.

Supervision of SMC or related works together with some minor recording was undertaken at Culworth castle, at Harrington manor during wall repairs, at Wakerley manor and at Irchester Roman town.

Advice has been provided to the Forestry Commission in respect of their Forest Design Plans a small amount of woodland survey and recording also having been undertaken. A geophysics survey was conducted in part of Wakerley wood as a part of an assessment of an earthwork identified during earlier survey work.

Local volunteers have continued to assist with occasional woodland reconnaissance surveys and together with metal detectorists from MARS have provided watching brief cover during pond cleaning and similar works. Moves have also been made in conjunction with the county archaeological society to encourage public participation in recording of 20th century military remains as part of the national 'Defence of Britain' project.

A small but notable achievement during the year was the archiving of what had become a backlog of previous years fieldwork.

1995 Fieldwork Summary

Brampton Ash, Brampton Wood (c SP 79558575)

Reconnaissance survey during July confirmed aerial

Northamptonshire

photographic evidence for the presence of a shallow ditched earthwork enclosure of unknown origin.

Deenethorpe (c SP 95509160)

Earthworks including small terraces with adjoining low banks observed on a site now identified as likely to be that of the Medieval manor.

Harrington (approx centre SP 77158040)

During a conditions inspection in September of the impressive fishpond complex now being managed within the Countryside Stewardship scheme, the presence of coursed stone revetting along the inner faces of the lower two dams and along the east side of the middle dam was observed. The presence of a sluice or outfall is also suspected within the breached central section of the massive lower dam.

Rockingham (approx centre SP 86409140)

A series of features relating to the historic parkland were observed in May during a conditions inspection of part of the parkland close to Rockingham castle. These included a silted up former pond, a possible 17th century park pale ditch and bank and a 19th century parkland boundary wall. A small quantity of Medieval pottery was recovered from the eroded face of an ornamental pond dam.

Wakerley, Manor (c SP 9562499455)

Two minor cut features encountered during laying of replacement sewerage system in October. A 12th century date may be indicated by the small quantity of pottery recovered from one of the features.

Wakerley, Wakerley Great Wood (c SP 96449843)

A geophysical survey was conducted by P Masters in December following clearance of vegetation by members of the Northants Field Group of a small barrow-like earthwork discovered during previous woodland survey. Magnetometry revealed the presence of what appears to be a ditch enclosing most of the mound. Further survey is proposed.

Thatch: The Silent Witness

The use of thatch as a roofing material has been recorded from before the birth of Christ with evidence found in archaeological sites both in this country and abroad. This fragmentary evidence has tended to confirm the impression that thatch is a transitory and rather short term material used

either for its low cost or in the absence of more durable materials.

In the last few years, the realisation that thatch may have played a significant part in the establishment of local and regional styles of vernacular architecture has led to a greater appreciation of the value of surviving examples. However, with even the most durable form of thatch, water reed, lasting between 40 to 60 years, and straw thatch lasting between 20 to 40 years, one could ask how much information from the past could a thatched roof contain?

With water reed roofs, which are invariably applied directly onto the roof structure of the building at the outset and then completely stripped and rethatched when the material has worn, the answer may be relatively little. In contrast, with straw roofs, stripping is usually confined only to the perished surface material. The base is then made level and sound and a new coat is sparred or tied on top.

This process can be continued almost indefinitely until the roof structure itself can no longer be repaired and, in this way, layers of history can be contained in a single thatched roof. Dating these layers can be achieved in a number of ways, for example, allowing twenty-five years or so for each repair, although, some repaired layers could themselves have been removed from time to time thus giving a false impression as to the actual age of the roof.

In Northamptonshire, this form of archaeology applied to buildings took on new dimensions when a building thought to have been constructed in the 18th or 19th century, was found to be Medieval. The evidence came in the form of the remains of a Medieval roof structure covered with a layer of smoke blackened thatch.

The importance of the smoke blackened thatch is that, into the sixteenth century, the commonest form of building was the open hall. These single storeyed halls were open to the roof and were heated by a central hearth. Smoke from the hearth would thus rise into the roof space and either be vented through louvres in the gables or on the ridgeline of the roof itself.

Thatched roofs would consequently have their base coats covered in a layer of thick black soot which was not attractive to insects or vermin and probably helped to preserve it intact. Developments in building layout enabled by the construction of smoke bays and smoke hoods, in other words early chimneys, allowed owners to upgrade their properties and insert upper floors without affecting the original roof structure or covering. In this way, many Medieval structures survived the Great Rebuilding, a period of great building activity in the late 16th and early 17th century, and remain for us to see today.

One such building is at Great Doddington where the early roof structure and thatch is smoke blackened and is thought by the RCHM to probably date from the 15th century. Interestingly, the thatch was on a fleeking, or woven mat, of

water reed although the thatch itself was of straw laid with a mix of heads and butts in the manner of present day long straw.

This, and similar examples at Bulwick, Barnwell and Easton Maudit, indicate that although water reed was available, the choice of material for thatching in Northamptonshire was straw. Water reed was also used in the county as a backing to plaster walls and as a permanent support for lime ash floors, an early form of concrete and may have been reserved for these uses in Northamptonshire.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Higham Ferrers, Land near Kings Meadow Lane
(SP 95806930)
Klara Spandl

This two month excavation concentrated on excavating an Iron Age Enclosure and Saxon settlement known about from air photographs of the area. It was the culmination of work by both the Oxford Archaeological Unit and the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit, which comprised two evaluations, a surface collection survey and a magnetometer survey. The excavation was jointly funded by the Duchy of Lancaster as land owners and by English Heritage. It was undertaken in advance of a massive development by Tarmac Homes covering over 100 acres. The site was considerable in extent and of importance in both national and regional terms.

When over 3500 m² of the Iron Age site was stripped a multi-phased rectangular ditched enclosure was revealed. It is of a type common to middle Iron Age settlements in central England. A large number of pits and at least two circular structures were found. One of the buildings was trench built and surrounded by its own circular enclosure ditch. The latter part was of much larger proportions than the usual penannular drainage ditch. Structures of this type are relatively rare and preliminary assessment suggests that it may have pre-dated the main enclosure.

The Saxon site is unusual for a rural site in that its occupation spans the entire Saxon period. It contained a large open-ended oval ditched enclosure which measured over 100 m in diameter, which was investigated by a series of 17 trenches measuring 25 m in length and 3 m in width. The enclosure ditch had an average depth of 1.3 m and its construction would have required a substantial input of labour. It appeared to be of early to middle Saxon date. Few contemporary features were located in the interior, and it is likely that it was a stock enclosure. This replaces an earlier suggestion that the ditch originally enclosed a high status building. If this supposition is correct, it is unclear why other enclosures of this type are not more commonplace. The problem posed by the apparent wide open end has been partly resolved by the discovery of a straight ditch closing

off the 'entrance' although this appears to have been added at a later phase.

In addition to the 17 trenches, three open areas totalling about 5000 m² were also investigated (the third of these is described in the report on land off Station Road/North end below). One area (Area A), to the north-west of the oval enclosure, revealed four sunken featured buildings, of probable early Saxon date, a range of pits and possible post-built structures. Recognition of the latter was severely hampered by the extremely difficult ironstone geology, which made the distinction of small features very difficult.

Numerous postholes of probable middle to late Saxon date were revealed in Area B which overlapped the southern end of the oval enclosure. Archaeological investigation was concentrated on one group of postholes and two probable large overlapping timber halls were identified. These were of both posthole and trench-built construction. Overlying the timber halls was a sequence of shallow gullies forming a rectilinear pattern and these are thought to be the remains of the rear tenement boundaries of late Saxon and Medieval houses. The houses may have faced onto a triangular green. To the west of this area there appeared to be what has been initially interpreted as a series of early boundaries, which possibly pre-date the oval enclosure ditch.

Higham Ferrers, Land off Station Road/North End
(SP 95976928)
Klara Spandl

In December 1995 an evaluation was carried out (Area C) on land, situated in the south-east corner of the field to the east of Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers. This field had already been partially investigated as part of an archaeological project jointly funded by The Duchy of Lancaster and English Heritage, to the east of Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers. The evaluation was centred on an area already stripped as part of the previous excavation and included the excavation of three evaluation trenches and selective excavation of late features in order to gain some understanding of the extent and character of the deposits within this stripped area. A probable Medieval building, possibly a squatter dwelling on part of the common wasteland, was investigated along with associated drains, a stone-lined pit and an oven. The scarcity of evidence to the east of the site near to the A6 (Station Road/North End) suggests a lack of further Medieval or Post-Medieval houses fronting the road. The line of the original Kings Manor Lane was discovered to the south of the site. The Medieval features were cut into a series of deposits comprising pits, ditches, a possible sunken featured building and amorphous layers. The presence of St Neots-type Ware within these features suggests that they date from the late Saxon or early Medieval period. The earliest feature on the site is the Anglo-Saxon enclosure ditch, the line of which appears to have been used as an open field boundary, during the Medieval period, until the fields were enclosed in 1839.

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Manor Farm, Drayton (SU 4771894379)
Roger Ainslie

A metre wide trench was cut into a bank on the eastern side of the Abingdon Road to investigate its age and purpose (Fig 1).

The sequence found was that a prehistoric/Iron Age occupation had ended and the area became grassland (10) which contained a single sherd of Roman pottery. This was cut by a ditch (7) which contained small sherds of pottery, either Medieval cooking pot or of Iron Age date. No upcast was located from this ditch. This was succeeded in the 18th century by a cut (9) further west and this in turn was overlaid by a road surface (6) which may be that shown in the 1811 tithe map. The later layers with 19th century pottery then accumulated until the area became grassland as at present. Some tree root damage confused the stratigraphy.

The prehistoric settlement is evidenced by two small pits and several flints of which two were utilised blades. Residual Medieval pottery, consisting mainly of ABB and OXAQ wares indicates an 11th/12th century settlement in the area.

Mr De Haan, the farmer, is keeping the finds and archive, A copy of the archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Services.

FINDS (Sherds/No.)

Contexts	19C	18C	Med	Rom	IA	Flints
1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 12	151	68	6			
9 & 13		21	1			5
7			4			
10				1	1	4
8					5	6
14						7

Acknowledgements

Mr De Haan gave consent for the excavation of this site and Jeff Wallis directed the excavation. The digging team were principally Roger and Sally Ainslie, John Carter, Janet Cooper, John Cooper, Alison Gledhill, Stuart Hughes, Edwin Landles, Michael Loughlin, Simon Owen, Mary-Nell Pilgrim, Jackie Smith, Terry Stopps and Nigel Watkins.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Camoy's Court, Chiselhampton (SU 59229858)
Nick Turner

A watching brief monitored foundation trenches excavated on the northern and eastern sides of the building, and a new doorway cut through an early Medieval wall. The watching brief did not reveal any evidence of early structural remains or hidden architectural features.

Monastery Building, Sarsden House (SP 28952297)
Nick Turner

Sarsden House is a Grade II* listed building dating from 1695 replacing an earlier house burnt down in 1689. The house is noted for later alterations designed by Repton. The Monastery building lies on the south-eastern side of the Sarsden House, and has mullioned windows and an arched doorway in the west wall that appear stylistically to be of the 16th century. Internally, several interesting features have been noted. The central passageway from the main door contains a fine wooden hand-rail to the staircase. Above this are the remains of a doorway and wooden decking from the period when the building had two floors. Cotswold Archaeological Trust was commissioned to undertake a photographic survey of the building and a watching brief during structural alterations. The conclusions drawn from the survey were that the Monastery was probably constructed from materials reclaimed after the fire of 1689, and may be the last remains of the Medieval house destroyed by the fire.

41 High Street, Sutton Courtenay (SU 50159345)
Brona Langton

Evaluation found 5 flints and some medieval pits, post holes, linear ditches and a possible surface. These features lay some distance behind the High Street frontage and appear to relate to agricultural activity rather than occupation. No Medieval remains were located close to the High Street frontage implying that the Medieval settlement did not extend into this area.

Tubney Woods, Tubney (SU 44859975)
Clifford Bateman

An evaluation close to an area of Mesolithic and Neolithic

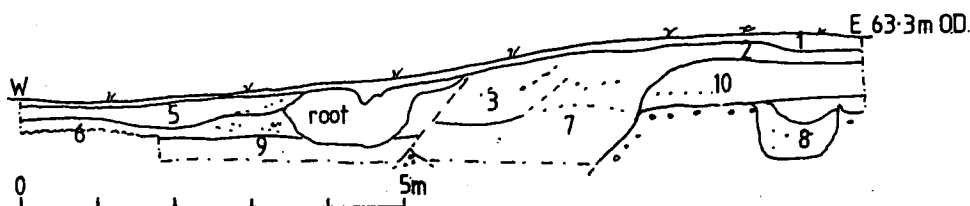


Fig 1. Drayton Manor Farm; section.

activity revealed that the area had undergone severe disturbance during the first half of the 20th century and as a consequence no archaeological deposits survived.

Mill Street, Wantage (SU 39558795)

Alan Thomas

An evaluation identified six linear ditches, a possible fence and the stone foundations of a small structure. Two of the ditches produced 2nd-3rd century pottery and a Roman date for all the features is probable. The evaluation indicates that Roman activity continues to the south of the site excavated on the opposite side of Mill Street in 1994.

NATIONAL TRUST - THAMES AND CHILTERN REGION

Gary Marshall

THE PROBLEMS OF DRAINING CHASTLETON HOUSE (SP 249271)

The archaeological watching brief at Chastleton House, Oxfordshire (reported in *SMA* 25) has helped to solve a problem which has troubled the architects responsible for the conservation work which is underway on the House. This has been the subject of a two year programme of repairs which has set out to reverse much of the decay affecting the building over the past 15 or 20 years.

One of the major causes of deterioration has been the pervading dampness, both in and around the building. This would not have posed a problem all the while that the downpipes and drains worked efficiently and the house was occupied with a steady source of heat and a steady through flow of air. However, in recent years much of the building has remained unoccupied and the ingress of moisture has gone unchecked. The problem was partly due to the exterior downpipes from the roof which were spilling their contents straight into the ground at the base of the building. On the inside of the building, within the courtyard, a concrete surface had been laid to carry the water from the downpipes to a central sump but this was also trapping moisture beneath the concrete which was then penetrating into the walls of the building.

On the exterior of the building the solution was simple enough. Concrete soakaway chambers were inserted into the lawns, well away from the building, and the water in the downpipes led to these chambers via clay pipes. Within the courtyard the solution was not quite so simple. The pipe

leading away from the central sump had collapsed or become blocked and to replace it would have required lifting a large area of the flagstone floor of the main cellar. An alternative route was therefore required and this raised the question as to the means by which the water from the courtyard downpipes would have originally exited from the building?

The Pastry Room drains

The answer to this question became apparent after an archaeological 'sweep' (i.e. light trowelling and brushing) of the floors of the rooms in the basement. In the former Pastry Room (Fig 2) on the north side of the house the flagstone floor had already been removed prior to the Trust's acquisition and what remained to be trowelled was a packed earth surface which had formed the original bed beneath the flagstones. The tops of one or two angular stones were poking up through this surface and between these stones there was a small hole suggesting a collapsed drain. Some of the earth was trowelled away and one of the stones lifted to reveal a stone drain completely choked with silt. The angular blocks formed a series of capstones over the top of the drain and after further trowelling the full course of the drain was revealed, starting from beneath the threshold of the hearth in the south wall of the room and sweeping round in an arc to pass beneath the west wall and below the flagstone floor of the adjoining kitchen (Fig 3).

The construction of the drain is shown on Fig 3. It is 0.37 m in width and 0.4 m in depth (measured internally) and has a paved limestone floor and sides of coursed rough-dressed limestone masonry. Because of the irregular shape of the capstones there were many small gaps in the roof of the drain and these therefore had to be filled with tightly wedged pieces of stone, including pieces of stone roofing tile.

A second drain emerging from the north-east corner of the room was found to enter into the first drain. This was also choked with silt, but of a slightly different character, much darker grey in colour and less gritty than the former, which contained numerous small flecks of stone and lime mortar. There was some excitement at this point since the drain with the darker silt was pointing towards the base of what has always assumed to be the former Garderobe tower. The archaeologists were therefore faced with the prospect of handling what might be some genuine Jacobean sewage! When the base of the tower was finally cleared it was possible to confirm that this second drain did indeed pass through the north wall of the Pastry Room to reach the floor of the tower. However, the analysis of the deposit by the Oxford University Museum suggested that there was insufficient flecks of calcium to confirm the suspicion of the silt being a sewage deposit.

There seemed to be little reason to doubt that these two drains were contemporary with the construction of the house since the capstones were properly keyed into the coursed masonry of the north and west walls of the Pastry Room. Levels were taken on the flagstone floors and these confirmed a very gentle gradient in both of the drains

Editor. The mixture of Imperial and Metric measures in this article has been deliberately left as there are times when Imperial is more appropriate.

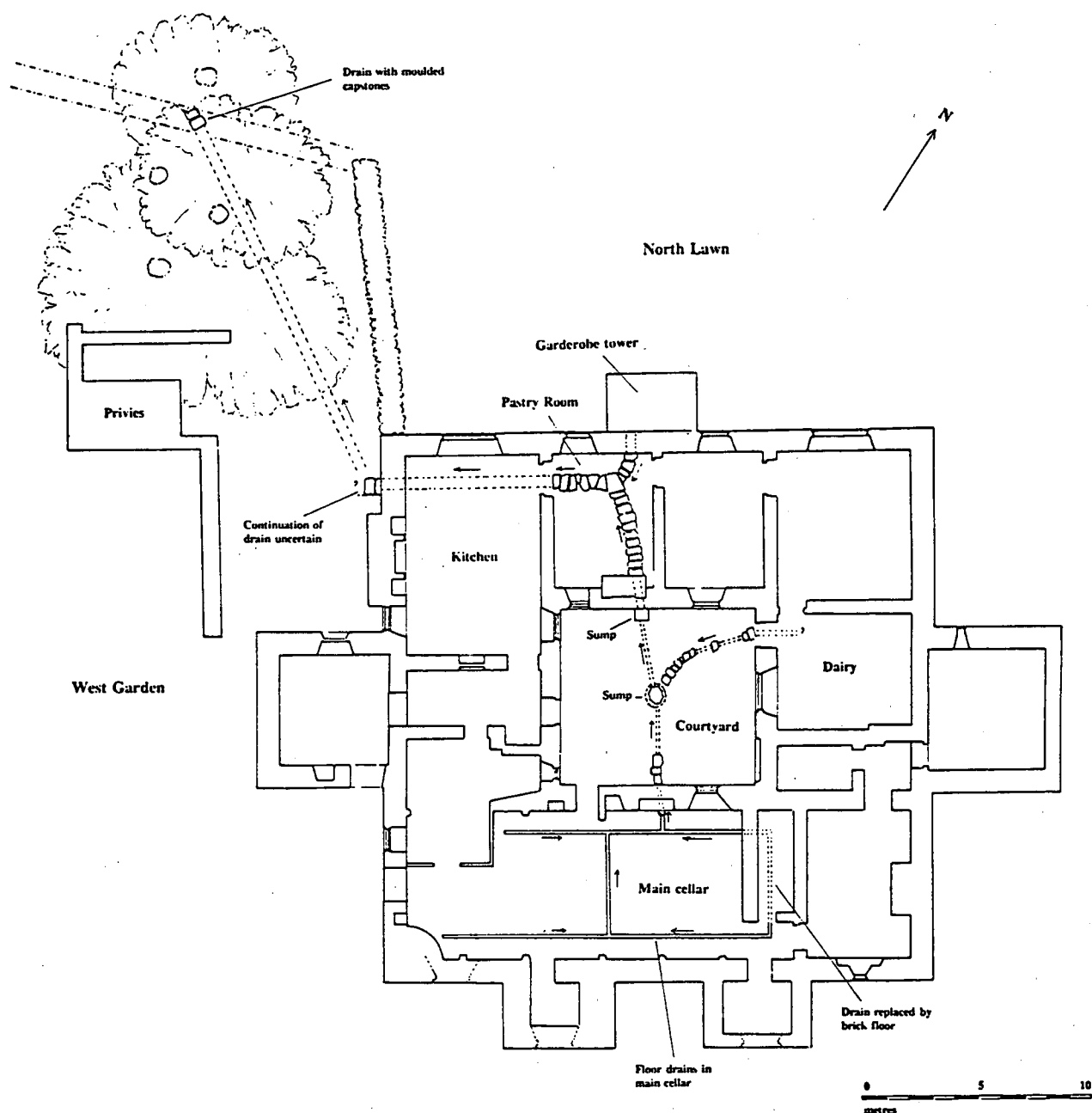


Fig 2. Plan of the basement of Chastleton House showing the configuration of drains.

towards the adjoining kitchen. If the south end of the drain continued into the courtyard there was a very real possibility of using it to carry the downpipe water through and away from the building. It was also necessary to confirm that the drain continued right across the kitchen to emerge on the west side of the gardens. Rather than lift the flagstones of the kitchen an ingenious solution was found which involved welding a handle 18 feet in length (!) onto the end of a shovel and using the mother of all shovels to dig and draw out the silt. This material was sieved for artifacts but contained only one or two small pieces of glass and pottery, numerous rodent bones, and a single clay marble.

The Courtyard drains

A small excavation against the north wall of the courtyard soon confirmed that the drain did indeed continue beneath the wall and into the courtyard. The excavation revealed a small square stone sump built against the south face of the wall. This was effectively the end of this drain but feeding into it over its top edge was a second smaller stone drain, 0.2 m in width, built in a similar manner with a flagstone floor and sides of coursed masonry. There were no capstones over this second drain, possibly because they were removed when the concrete surface was laid in the early 1980s.

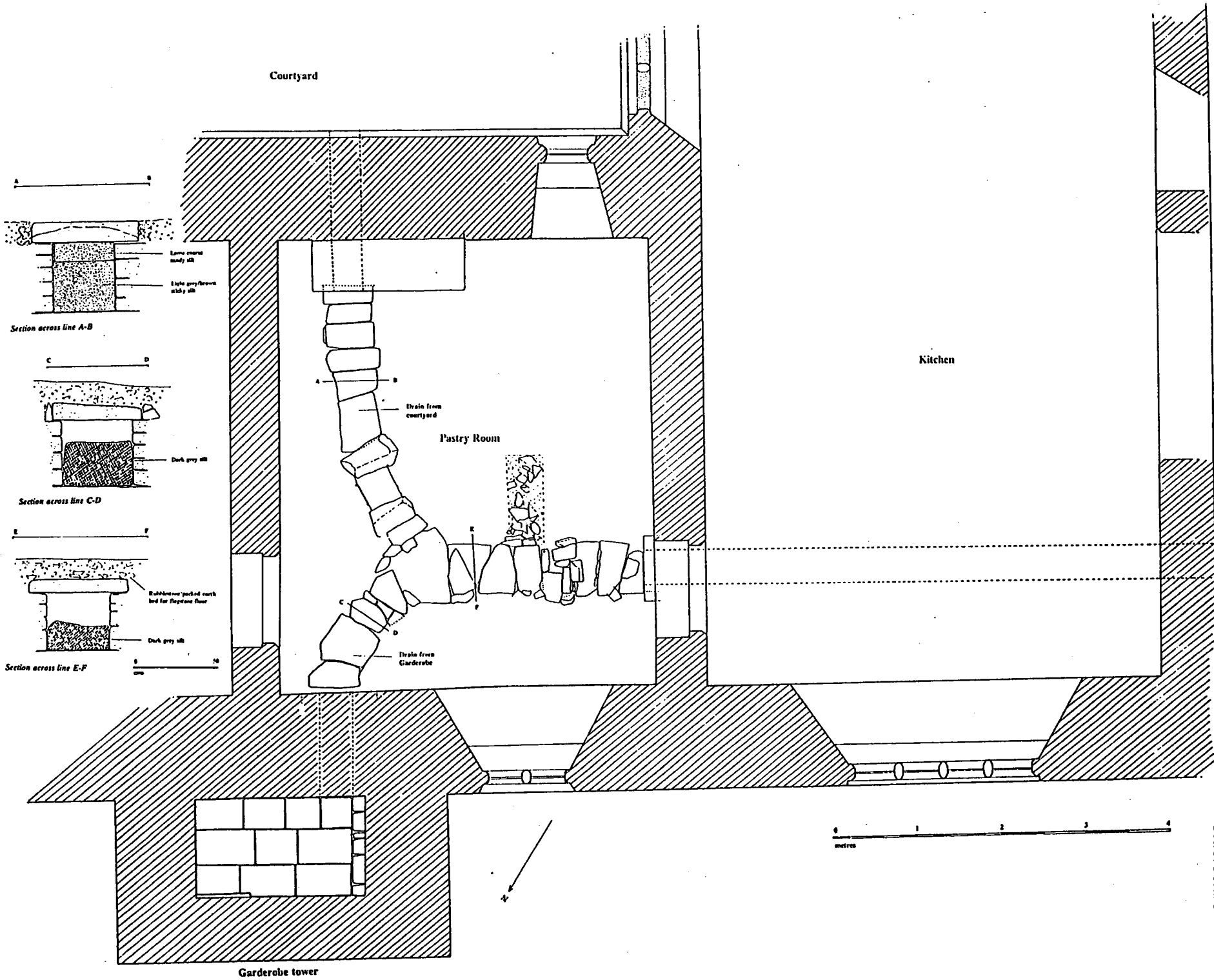


Fig 3. Detailed plan and sections illustrating the construction of the drains below the floor of the pastry Room at Chastleton House.

Oxfordshire

Most of the length of this smaller drain had subsided and collapsed but its course towards the centre of the courtyard could be traced. Its south end was leading towards the modern saltglazed sump in the centre of the courtyard. The sump had to be removed and at this point it was discovered that the sump had occupied a narrow oval-shaped pit lined with coursed dry masonry. The base of the pit had been infilled with mortared stone to support the base of the sump and the decision was taken to remove this infill. The infill was suspected to be only a few courses in depth but panic and a degree of consternation set in when it continued to a depth of over 5 feet! The possibility of a well sprung to mind. Perhaps not surprisingly the expression on the face of the workman clearing out the infill became more anxious and at this point he was anchored with a rope to a stout plank!

At a depth of about 5 feet 6 inches solid bedrock was reached at the base of the pit after several inches of dark grey silt had been removed. As it increased in depth the sides of the pit flared out so that what remained after the infill had been taken out was a bottle-shaped structure 1.2 m in width. The problem that now remained was working out how the various elements fitted together.

Draining the courtyard

It would seem that the architect responsible for building the house at the start of the 17th century (the architect is unknown but it could be Robert Smythson) was faced with the same problem as the project architects today, that is how to remove the water descending into the courtyard. The problem must have been carefully considered since the capstones of the drains passing through the Pastry Room were incorporated into the thickness of the walls of the building. These drains - and their continuation through the kitchen - are therefore almost certainly contemporary with the construction of the house.

There is less certainty about the date of the elements forming the continuation into the courtyard but they were no doubt integral to the whole system. Rainwater falling onto the internal faces of the roof would first gather in the lead gutters behind the parapet and then descend via the four lead downpipes occupying the four angles formed by the courtyard walls. It would then run across the surface of the courtyard to the central stone sump or pit, probably via stone channels orientated towards the centre. When the modern concrete surface of the courtyard was removed in 1995 a single stone block was found beneath the concrete with a U-shaped channel cut into its upper surface. This was the only surviving remnant. The rest of the blocks forming the channels were probably removed when the courtyard surface - suspected to be pitched stone - was stripped out.

The central sump probably served as a silt trap. It may have served as a trap for soft water for cleaning purposes but two 'ullage' drains from the floors of the cellars emptied their contents into it so this seems an unlikely possibility (several wine bottle corks, pottery and clay pipe stems were recovered from the silts at the base of the sump). Once the sump had filled with water the excess would spill over into

the stone drain heading north towards the Pastry Room. Most of the drain had subsided but on the rim of the sump a second stone block was found with a channel cut into its upper surface. This probably directed the water in the sump into the adjacent drain.

From this drain the water would enter into the second sump below the north wall of the courtyard and then continue through the Pastry Room. It would then pass beneath the floor of the kitchen and emerge through an opening incorporated into the base of the west wall of the Kitchen. Below the exterior face of the wall the flagstone floor of the drain was located at a depth of about six feet below ground level. However, the exit had been blocked up with masonry and the sides of the drain removed, leaving only a short stub of the side wall keyed into the kitchen wall. Because of the depth of made-up ground on this side of the house it was not possible to follow the continuation of the flagstone floor but it appeared to be pointing in a westerly direction, suggesting that the water was originally channelled to a large soakaway somewhere on the west side of the gardens.

The reason for blocking up the exit in the west wall of the kitchen remains something of a mystery. The roof water entering into the courtyard would have to be carried away and with this exit blocked it must have been diverted to the route which runs in a south-westerly direction under the floor of the main cellar. During the excavation against the west wall of the kitchen a second stone drain was found, this time with large blocks carrying a channel in their upper surface and set within side walls of coursed masonry. However, the invert level (floor level) of this drain was some two feet above that of the first drain and there appeared to be no connection between the two. The latter is thought to be an 18th or 19th century kitchen drain. It was found once again in a second trench some distance from the house and at this point the capstones were found to be pieces of discarded coping with a profile identical with the present copings on the house, suggesting that the construction of the drain coincided with a period of major repair on the house - possibly the late 18th century when the two stair towers were raised.

The ullage drains

This was not the end of the story since a total of three drains were found within the courtyard. One of these - carrying the water away from the sump - has already been described. The other two drains carried their contents towards the sump, making it highly unlikely that the water within the sump was used for either washing or cleaning. The first drain to be found emerged from beneath the threshold of the door in the north-east corner of the courtyard leading into the former dairy. From this point it curved gradually in an arc towards the sump but rather than empty its contents into the sump this drain had been curtailed by the construction of the rim of the sump. This would suggest that the sump postdated the construction and use of the dairy drain, in which case it must have replaced an earlier structure. It would also imply that with the construction of the existing sump the dairy drain had gone out of use.

This was certainly not the case with the drain emerging from the main cellar on the south side of the courtyard. The end of drain was keyed into the rim of the sump and there can be little doubt that this was the source of the corks found in the silts at the base of the sump. Unlike the dairy drain its continuation can be traced on the flagstone floor of the main cellar where a series of U-shaped stone culverts combine to exit centrally through the north wall of the cellar. This cellar was used for the storage of beer brewed in the brewhouse nearby and any spilt beer would collect in the culverts and drain through into the courtyard. The south side of the cellar is flanked by two wine bins so it is perhaps not surprising that the odd stray cork ultimately managed to find its way into the sump!

Conclusion

As a consequence of exploring this system of drains the architects were able to utilise a previously unknown means of exit to remove the surplus water from the inner faces of the roof and from the courtyard surface. By using this means it was possible to avoid disturbing much of the flagstone floor of the main cellar. Neither route, however, was ever going to be particularly easy and the consequence of using the Pastry Room and kitchen drains was that large quantities of rather nauseous silts had to be removed. Ingenious innovations in shovel technology had to be applied! It was fortunate that the kitchen drain ran in a straight line, otherwise the flagstone floor of this room would have been lifted. As it was, the contractors had to lift several flagstone in order to remove the blocking at the west end of the drain.

As well as proving beneficial to the architects the results of the investigation also provided food for thought for the archaeological watching brief. The house is known for its elaborate plaster ceilings and panelling but the architect responsible for its construction had to get his house in order and sort out the fundamental problems of drainage before the fancy bits could be considered. Plans of the building just do not exist (the earliest available was made after the visit of the Birmingham and Midland Institute in the 1880s) so the archaeology of these drains is telling us something about the original concepts involved in the construction of the building. It was clear from the relationship between the various drains that more than one phase of construction was involved, yet the original design can be identified as a central sump in the courtyard which was collecting water from the roof, from the courtyard surface and from the floors of the cellars, and then passing this water to the exterior of the building via the underfloor drains of the Pastry Room and the kitchen.

The drain from the base of the Garderobe tower should also be included in this scheme. The flagstone floor is rather cleverly tilted towards the south-west corner of the tower so that whatever was falling onto the floor would be channelled towards the drain which passes through the thickness of the south wall and into the Pastry Room. Whoever designed these drains intended that they should have a shallow gradient to assist the gradual flow of solids, otherwise the

liquid material would run away too quickly. It seems almost certain that some of the roof water was piped down into the Garderobe and served to wash out the drains but no surviving evidence for such a pipe was found. It may have been removed when a more salubrious WC was installed in the tower in the 1830s.

These drains can be added to a rather crude typology of drainage which has become apparent at Chastleton. These early structures, consisting of a flagstone floor, coursed masonry side walls and capstones are really quite sophisticated structures and were evidently intended to last, although problems of silting finally seem to have defeated their purpose. On the exterior of the building some of the downpipes discarded their contents into stone troughs with capstones which ran to quite some distance from the building. Again, they seem to be quite elaborate structures, but at some stage those on the north side of the building were replaced with upturned V-shaped coping stones placed on a bed of clay. It is hard to see how they could have functioned efficiently. More than likely they didn't. Subsequently, during the early part of this century, saltglazed pipes were used as an alternative which proved effective all the while that they were maintained.

And finally, in the 1990s, Chastleton House is now drained by a complex system of clay pipes running through the courtyard, under the building and out to a series of chunky concrete soakaway chambers installed under the lawns of the gardens. Until recently visitors took away two particular memories of their visit to Chastleton, on the one hand the quality of the architectural detail, and on the other hand the overwhelming feeling of dampness. Perhaps now they will remember only the architectural achievements.

Recent Discoveries At Chastleton

The archaeological watching brief has continued throughout the year whilst conservation work on the house has progressed. A number of important discoveries have been made, mostly within the gardens as a consequence of the completion of the drainage system around the building. The archaeological excavation of the central courtyard following the removal of the concrete surface has revealed that on three sides the internal walls of the building rest on bedrock, and only on the west side was it necessary for the original builders to construct deep footings to underpin the wall. In the north-east corner of the courtyard the excavation encountered some deep silty soils containing Medieval pottery filling a cut in the bedrock. The deposition of these soils predates the present house and they are thought to relate to the footings found in the Best Garden in 1994.

Several interesting drains and a soft water sump serving the present house were also discovered. These are described in an extended article elsewhere in this publication.

Several members of Oxford Archaeological Unit were taken on to assist with this excavation. They also assisted with the excavation of a trench for a sewer pipe running north from

Oxfordshire

the north wall of the brewhouse. This excavation encountered the remains of a 17th century pitched stone path flanking the north wall of the building, and beyond this a rough stone surface covered with bits of bone and pottery, almost certainly the surface of a contemporary midden yard. Preserved below this was an oblong shaped tank or cistern with battered stone sides and a clay lining on the interior face of the masonry. At some stage the curved end of this vessel was blocked with coursed masonry. The full depth of this vessel was not determined since it continued beyond the west section of the trench. There was some evidence of burning on the interior. It is unlikely to be a well but could be a cistern for soft water, or perhaps a fish rearing tank. The answer has eluded us so far but we hope to extend the excavation in 1996.

Pitched stone paving was also encountered in a drainage trench outside the main cellar door on the west side of the building. These are almost certainly the earliest surfaces associated with the 17th century house and in each case they provided 'critical paths' between the points of access into the house, the brewhouse, the stableyard and the church. At a later stage - in the late 19th or early 20th century - they were either repaired or replaced with dark red sandstone cobbles.

Two previously unknown garden walls have been uncovered by the excavations for the various services. On the west side of the west garden a coursed masonry wall 0.7 m in width was found below a thin spread of ash. It survives to a depth of 0.8 m and is partially built over a projecting plinth, otherwise directly over bedrock. Its north end has been truncated by a late 18th/early 19th century garden building, whilst to the south it continues beyond the margins of the trench, possibly up to the north-west corner of the brewhouse. The configuration of the garden walls is quite well documented from maps after the 1843 Tithe map and since it does not appear on this it must predate the Tithe map. If so its discovery suggests that the west margin of the gardens has been pushed out to accommodate the construction of the aforementioned building and as a consequence the configuration of the garden walls was altered.

The footings of the second garden wall were found on the top of a gentle slope dividing the terraced croquet lawns from the Wilderness Garden to the north. The slope itself is of interest since it continues into the park to the east beyond the margins of the gardens, suggesting that it is a pre-Jacobean feature. The full east-west extent of the wall has not been traced but its absence from the maps suggests it was removed by the 1840s and it is therefore likely to be a 17th century wall. Again, with the demolition of the wall the gardens appear to have been extended, this time in a northerly direction.

Each of these trenches opens a small 'window' on the archaeology surrounding Chastleton House. The problem still remains, however, that without large area excavation each of these discoveries remains unconnected without any

stratigraphic relationship. This point is well illustrated by the discovery of substantial wall footings beneath the west privies in the west garden. Two parallel clay-bonded walls were found, each 0.6 m in width. Between them there was a slightly narrower cross wall. On either side of the cross wall angular pieces of limestone had been wedged together to form a crude cobbled surface. The gap between the two main walls would suggest a narrow passage only 1.9 m (6 feet) in width and in either direction these walls had been cut into when the walls of the privy were built, possibly in the late 18th century. Further excavation is not possible since immediately to the north there is a badger set(!), whilst to the south excavation is curtailed by the privy buildings. So we are left with the evidence of footings of uncertain date (probably pre-17th century) and unknown dimensions. The archaeological watching brief has its rewards but it can also prove frustrating!

A discovery that was completely unexpected turned up when a pipe trench was excavated across the grass terrace in the Best Garden below the Great Parlour. This encountered the footings of a canted projecting bay keyed into the east wall of the building below the east window of the Parlour. They could be the footings for steps providing access into the Best Garden but the descent from the Parlour would then be remarkably steep unless the steps actually continued into this room. Alternatively, these could be the footings for a canted bay window but the projection of such a feature would then alter a vertical facade which does not include such projections. The possibility of these being the footings for steps seems more likely, especially since there is a reference to removing a doorway in the late 1780s.

A pipe trench was also cut across the opposing embankment in the Best Garden below the White Parlour and this encountered a low retaining wall at the base of the embankment. Running over the top of this wall there was a short stone drain which prevented moisture from accumulating behind the wall. Both structures seem to be 19th century since there was Westmoreland slate in the stratigraphy behind the wall (this material was used to cover the roof of the house in 1805).

The watching brief has also continued to focus attention on the house itself. Discoveries have been less prolific since much of the 'opening-up' ie lifting of floorboards, panelling etc. was completed in 1994. There has been a steady trickle of clay marbles and small wooden animals with their legs missing(!) from beneath the floorboards and one or two coins have been recovered, including a 17th century Nuremburg trade token.

The brewhouse has received close attention since this is soon to be the subject of a programme of work which will convert the upper two floors to a holiday cottage. Recent analysis of this building suggests that it has been quite radically altered from its original layout which was probably based on three separate units under the same roof. Doors have been moved or inserted and the floors both raised and lowered and the building has clearly undergone several fundamental

changes of use, possibly beginning as a wool store and a malthouse, changing to a brewhouse in the 18th century, and then a teasshop in the 1950s. The adaptation to a holiday cottage represents a continuation of this process of change.

Greys Court, Oxfordshire (SU 725834)

Greys Court is a house dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, built on the site of an earlier Medieval fortified Manor House. Part of the curtain wall belonging to the Medieval fortified complex still survives, and there are several important Tudor service buildings, including a well house with a donkey wheel.

A watching brief was undertaken whilst a trench for a telephone cable was cut just below the bottom of the lawn facing the house. The trench was possibly going to encounter buried footings since strong parch marks show up each summer on this lawn. Little of note was found since the ground was found to be made up of deep dumps of soil and building rubble dating from the 19th century. However, the trench cut across the remains of a brick and flint wall aligned east-west between the Dower House and the west wall of the gardens and this is thought to relate to a 16th century building which was formerly an extension of the building known as the Cromwellian Stables.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Abingdon, land at Sutton Wick (SU 940955)

John Hiller

The first of three phases of topsoil stripping in advance of gravel extraction was monitored by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during the summer of 1995. Evidence of possible prehistoric land clearance in the form of tree-throw pits was observed, together with a Post-Medieval field boundary. Much of the eastern part of the site was blanketed with alluvial clay of uncertain date. The absence of more intensive land use on the site may be explained by its proximity to the river Thames.

Abingdon Vineyard Area 6. (SU 4985/9733)

Tim Allen

Introduction

This site fronts onto the Vineyard road on the north, and Rocque's map of Berkshire of 1761 show that the frontage was built up from the mid-18th century. Amyce's survey of Abingdon also indicates tenements in this area in the mid-16th century. The boundaries of the parish of St. Nicholas, which adjoined the abbey precinct on the north, indicate that the abbey precinct ran up to the southern boundary of the site (Preston 1971 Figure 1). Area 6 was believed by Preston to include part of the Medieval vineyard of Abingdon Abbey. Excavation by the Abingdon Archaeological Society north of the Vineyard showed that Roman features and burials extend into this area (Wilson 1984).

Excavations in the adjacent Vineyard Area 1 in 1988 (Fig 1) showed that there had been Medieval tenements on that site from the later 12th century, with zones of intercutting Medieval and Post-Medieval pits at the rear of the properties. There were also indications of industrial activity predating the tenements. Iron Age and Roman ditches and pits were also discovered, but were largely truncated by later features (Allen 1989, 45).

The 1990/1991 evaluation

In 1990 and 1991 the Oxford Archaeological Unit excavated four trenches for the Vale of the White Horse District Council in advance of redevelopment (Fig 4).

Trench 1, which was 4 m wide, was positioned running south from the site boundary to establish whether Medieval tenements existed along the north frontage, and if so, at what date they were established. At the very north end of the trench the south-east corner of a Post-Medieval stone building was found robbed almost to the bottom. A Post-Medieval well lay just east of the corner of the building.

Cut into the natural gravel below the building and extending back for the full length of the trench were dense intercutting pits (see Fig 5). These, which were variously circular, rectangular or linear, ranged in date from the later 12th century to the 16th-17th century. The pits and the rear wall of the Post-Medieval building show that the Medieval and later frontage extended under the pavement beyond the north limits of the site.

Towards the south end of the trench a small area of subsoil was found undisturbed by Medieval and later pits. This contained Roman finds and a small patch of Roman cobbling.

Trench 2 lay south-west of Trench 1, and overlapped slightly with it at the north end. This trench was 30 m long and generally 5.5 m wide.

The northern end of the trench contained dense intercutting Medieval and Post-Medieval pits, presumably a continuation of the pit zone seen throughout Trench 1 (Fig 5). The south limit of the pits may have been marked by a shallow east-west ditch, whose line was also followed by a Post-Medieval wall, perhaps showing a long-lived boundary representing the back of the Medieval tenements.

South of this line Medieval and Post-Medieval features were few, and the preservation of vertical stratigraphy was much better. There were extensive garden soils, and this was presumably part of the abbey vineyard for much of the Medieval period. Within this part of the trench however was a limestone oval oven surviving 0.67 m high fed from the north. This probably dates to the 13th century, and may represent encroachment from the adjacent tenement.

Sealed beneath Medieval cultivation soils were a series of 2nd - 4th century Roman ditches and gullies running

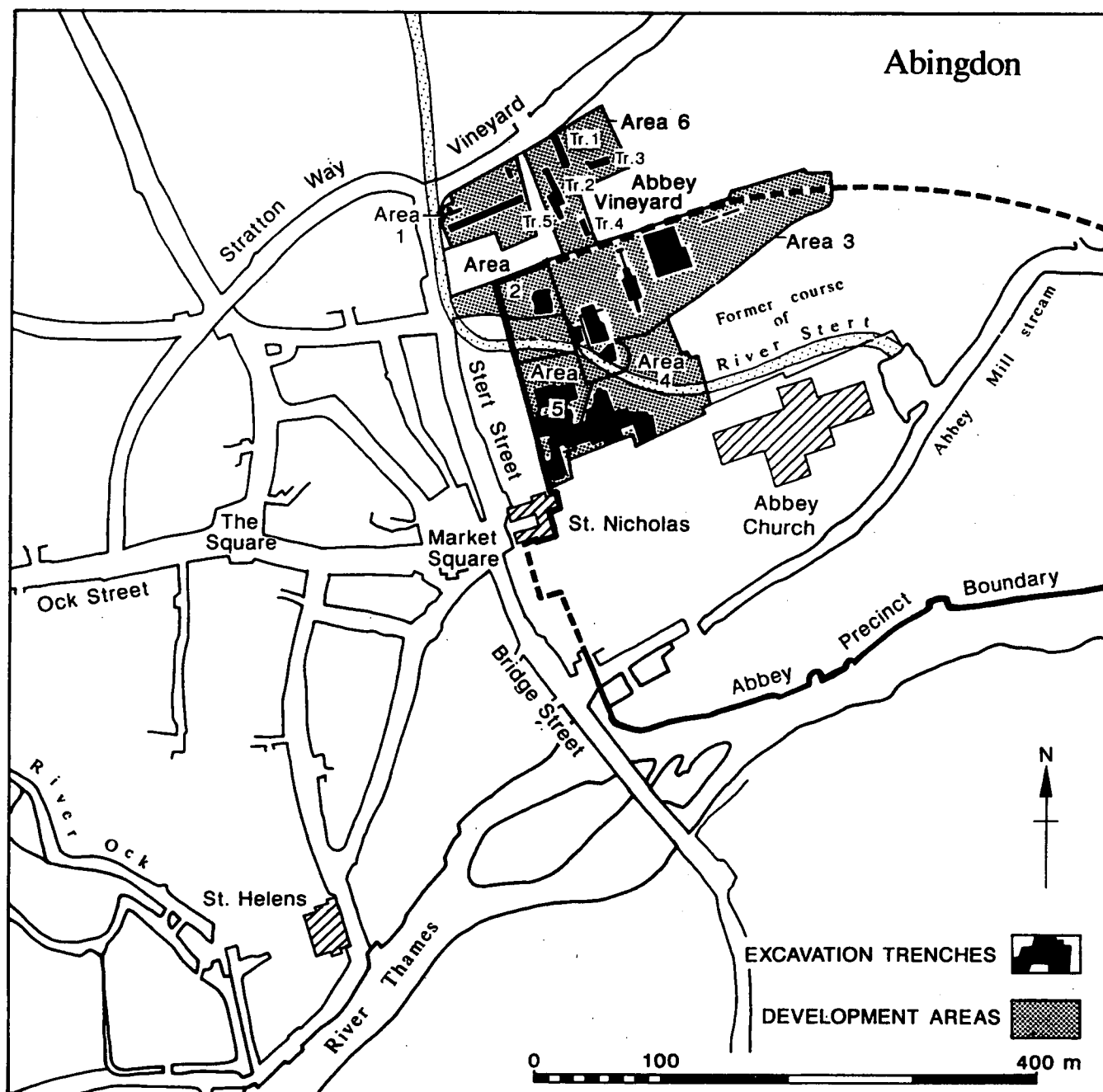


Fig 4. Abingdon.

approximately east-west (Fig 2). Two of the ditches were cut by Late Roman pits, and the southernmost ditch was cut into a layer of cobbling which had slumped into an earlier, Iron Age ditch. Patches of cobbling were also evident between and north of the Roman ditches; although there were no clear relationships with the ditches the cobbling was presumably earlier.

At the south end of the trench was an Iron Age ditch over 3 m wide and cut 1 m deep into gravel, which contained a few small sherds possibly of Middle Iron Age date.

Trench 3 (Fig 4) contained a succession of Post-Medieval rubble and garden soils interstratified with intercutting pits and other features. Gravel was found at a general depth of

1.2 m. Unlike Trench 1 the pits were shallow, and mostly Post-Medieval in date. One north-south stone-lined and stone-capped drain was found on the west side of the trench.

A series of shallow hollows were found in the gravel, some of which were filled with soil similar to that containing Roman finds in the other trenches. There were however very few Roman finds in this trench, and the subsoil appears to have been truncated in the Medieval period.

Trench 4 was begun in the south-east corner of the site, but this encountered a brick-filled Post-Medieval cellar at least 1.5 m deep, and machining was abandoned (Fig 4 Trench 4).

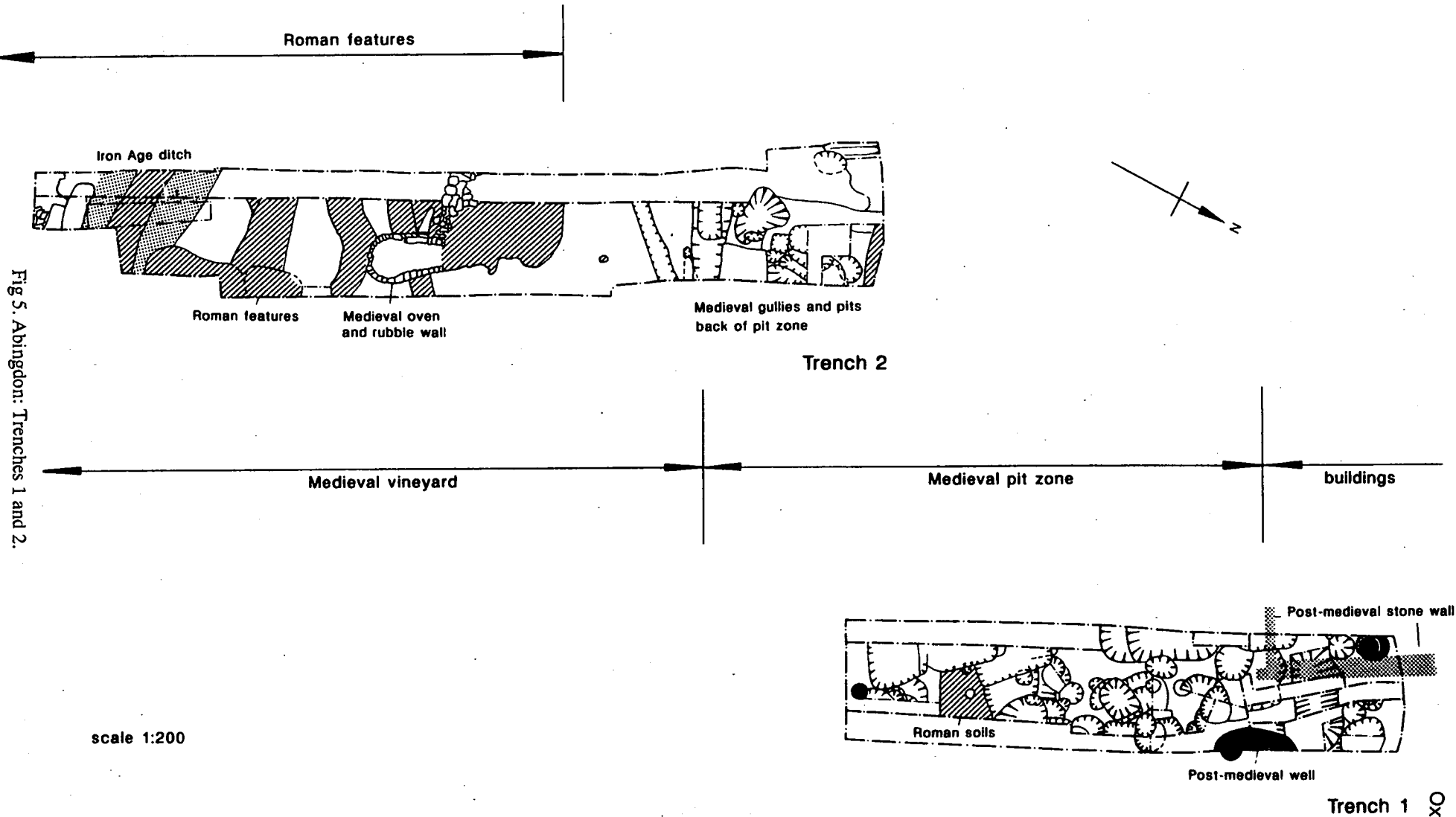


Fig 5. Abingdon: Trenches 1 and 2.

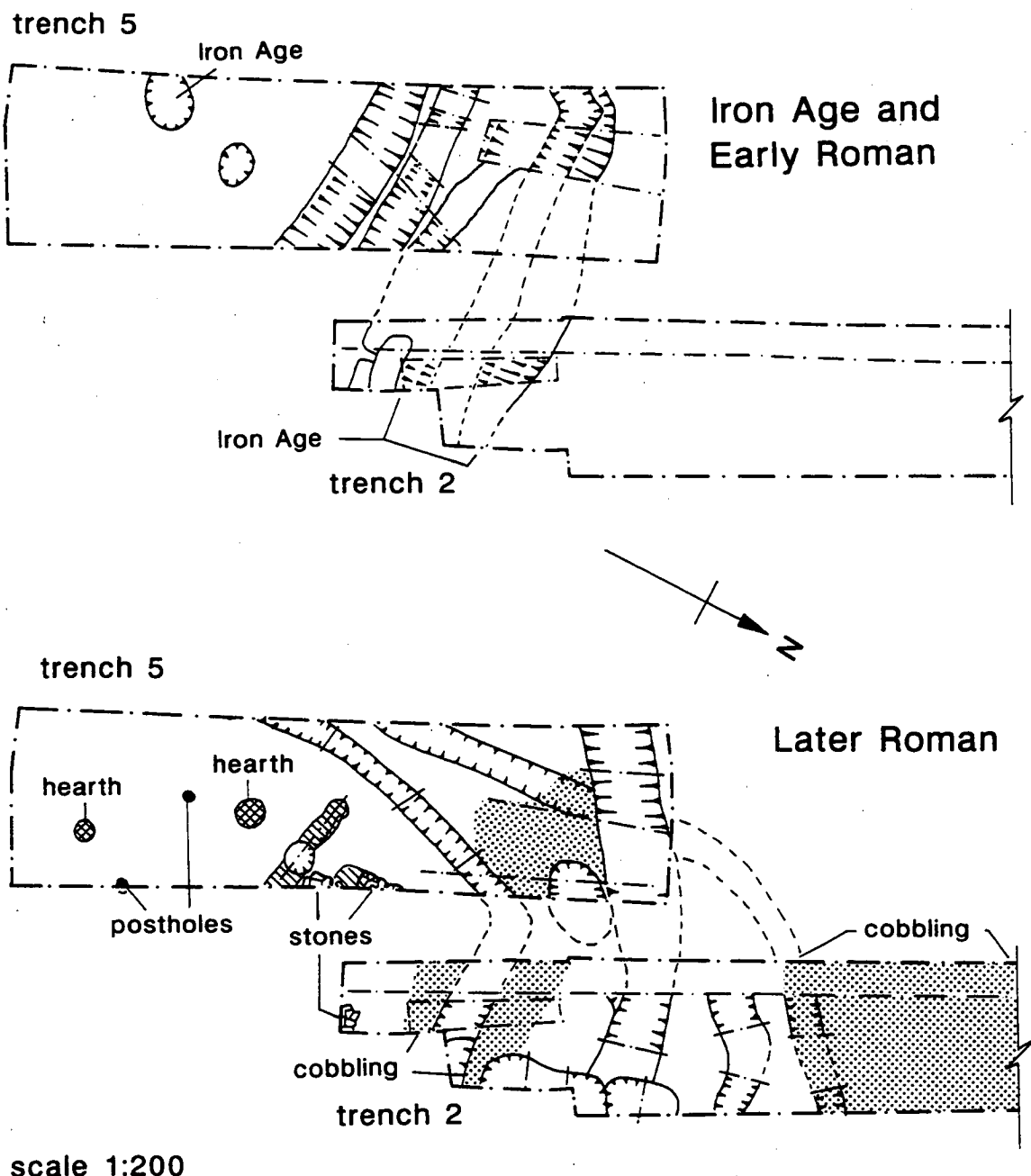


Fig 6. Abingdon: Vineyard Area 6.

Conclusions

The excavations have demonstrated that pits, and thus presumably tenements, existed on the site from the later 12th century, a pattern similar to that on Vineyard Area 1 adjacent.

The 1996 excavation

The proposed development was delayed, allowing a further phase of investigation in January 1996. This consisted of a further trench (Trench 5) alongside Trench 2 beneath the Medieval vineyard, dug to investigate the Roman and Iron Age deposits (Fig 6). Towards the south end of the trench was a single Middle Iron Age storage pit containing animal bones, a few sherds of pottery and a few charred plant

remains. A small shallow pit, probably Early Roman, lay north-east of this. At the north end the deep ditch located in 1991 continued north-westwards and then turned south-west. This contained a few sherds of Iron Age pottery at the bottom, but was overlain by an early 2nd century Roman ditch running north-west to south-east into Trench 2. Just south of the deep ditch there were several parallel ditches without dating evidence. The soilmarks of two of these ditches were observed at the very south end of Trench 2 adjacent, but were not investigated. These ditches follow a similar alignment to the defensive ditches in Areas 2 and 3 (Allen 1993, 64-6), possibly indicating a Late Iron Age/Early Roman date.

On the west side of the trench these boundaries were cut

through by a ditch or gully on a north north-east alignment. The top of the gully was filled with small limestone rubble, probably as part of the same operation as the laying of a pebble cobbled surface, which overlay the earlier Iron Age ditch and the northernmost of the parallel ditches adjacent. This is the same cobbling seen over much of Trench 2, and the gully may curve eastwards to join a ditch seen crossing that trench (Fig 6). Both this ditch and the cobbling which overlay it were cut by an east-west Roman ditch at the very north end of the trench containing much domestic debris including a whetstone, a decorated nail-cleaner and a coin dated AD330-5. This ditch continued across Trench 2. Just south of the ditch and cut by it was a pit containing an iron adze. Running on a north-easterly alignment towards the east-west ditch, but probably turning south-east just before it and continuing across Trench 2, was a steep-sided gully which also cut the cobbling. This contained a coin dated AD341-6.

South and east of these boundaries was an area of Late Roman occupation including an oven, a hearth possibly associated with leadworking, several shallow pits and the base of a stone structure which overlay the southernmost of the parallel Early Roman ditches. The stonework, which consisted of a single layer of unbonded limestones and overlay further burning, was probably a continuation of the stones at the south end of Trench 2. Its cornerstones had been robbed, and these may have been the two large limestone slabs found in the backfill of the adjacent oven. South of this structure were two stone-packed postpads, possibly indicating a structure over the oven and hearth. The southernmost part of the trench did not contain any features, but a worn coin dated AD364-78 was found in the soil layer overlying the Iron Age pit.

The features were sealed by a layer of garden soil which was cut by several Medieval pits, one of which contained a fragment of lava quern. These pits were sealed by further garden soil, possibly the vineyard soil, and this was cut at the north and west edges of the trench by Post-Medieval pits and the foundations for a Post-Medieval building.

Conclusions

The 1996 excavation has demonstrated a more complicated sequence of Iron Age and Roman activity than hitherto suspected. Further excavation and watching brief is planned when the development begins.

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Appleton, St Lawrence's Church (SP 44400155)

Richard Brown

A watching brief was carried out during excavations for a cesspool and associated drains to the north-west of the church. This revealed a soil cut by a ditch aligned north-east to south-west aligned ditch (possibly the original boundary of the Medieval churchyard), and a stone drain, probably of Post-Medieval date, which serves the western end of the church.

Banbury, Southam Road (SP 45454105)

John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit began a watching brief in 1995 during groundworks for a new housing development. The low-lying site was and located some 200 m to the north of the northern defences of Banbury Castle and to date has produced no evidence for archaeological features or finds.

Banbury, Tudor Hall School, Wykham Park

(SP 439379)

John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief in June 1995 during the groundwork for a building extension at this school. Although the school is located near to the site of a known Roman building discovered in 1851 and the remains of a Medieval village, no archaeological features or finds were recovered.

Bicester, Bicester Library (SU 584 222)

Alan Hardy

A watching brief was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during the excavation of footing trenches for an extension to the southern side of Bicester Library. The burial of an adult individual was revealed in one of the trenches. The skeleton was orientated west-east and was lying in a supine position. Although no definitive dating evidence was recovered, the burial is likely to be related to Bicester Priory as the library is located within the site of its precinct. The skeleton was recorded and left in situ as it lay below the base of the proposed foundations and would therefore not have been disturbed.

As in situ structural remains were not revealed it is likely that the eastern end of the library is located above what was probably a small cemetery outside the western end of the Priory Church.

Buckland, Church Cottages (SU 34309810)

Paul Booth

A small scale evaluation carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of housing construction was

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followed by a watching brief. The site sequence appeared to consist of a possible early Medieval phase, represented by two features and hinted at by sherds of residual late Saxon pottery, perhaps followed by an episode of ploughing. This was succeeded by a phase of pit and ditch digging, broadly assignable to the 14th-15th century. Thereafter there was sporadic Post-Medieval and modern activity. The density and distribution of Medieval features suggest that the site was relatively peripheral to the main focus of activity in the village which may have lain further south and east. The location of the church, north of the present site, may have had more to do with its relationship to a sequence of manor houses than to the village.

Ducklington, Gill Mill (SP 380070)

George Lambrick

Evaluation and open area excavation on behalf of Smith and Sons of Bletchington in advance of the next phase of gravel extraction at Gill Mill has revealed further evidence of fields or paddocks and burials associated with the nearby Roman settlement (see *SMA* 1989, 49-50; 1991, 95-6). The archaeological interest of the Gill Mill area centres on a most unusual and exceptionally well preserved Roman settlement strung out over about 0.5 km along a minor Roman road crossing the Windrush floodplain. Trial trenching in 1988 had revealed the roadside ditches and metalling of the road, and more unusually timber piles to support a raised footway alongside it. Beside the road were well preserved traces of buildings with occupation layers still intact, preserved beneath the alluvium, which yielded a wide variety of artifacts. These included not only ordinary pottery, animal bones and everyday metalwork objects such as coins, but also pieces of window glass, rolled up lead strips and wooden objects. The obvious value and richness of the site was such that it deserved to be preserved in situ, and this has been done, incorporating special safeguards to prevent its being dried out by dewatering.

In the meantime gravel extraction, preceded by archaeological trial trenching has been progressing in the rest of the extraction area in advance of each phase of gravel extraction. This has now enabled the rectangular network of paddocks and fields associated with the settlement to be sampled, providing a valuable picture of the local landscape context of the main core of the settlement.

It has also been possible to gain some insight into the burial practices of the settlement. In 1990 several cremations and three inhumations had been discovered in the paddocks at the back of the main settlement. Most recently, with the next phase of extraction again coming closer to the area of Roman activity, a further group of five cremations and also this time seven inhumations have been found, again lying amongst the small fields close to the settlement. As with those found in 1990, some lay within a small enclosure possibly acting as a defined cemetery. These discoveries were made in the latest phase of trial trenching, followed by two area

excavations to expose the extent of the burials.

The burials were extraordinarily shallow, resting on the interface between alluvial subsoil and natural gravel, only about 30 cm below the present ground surface. They were not particularly well preserved but there were traces of coffin nails and one skeleton was accompanied by an attractive colour-coated pottery beaker which had been placed by the shoulder of the corpse.

East Challow, Church of St Nicholas (SU 3808 8825)

Graham D. Keever

Renovation work being carried out at the parish church of St Nicholas, East Challow, near Wantage involved the excavation of new drainage trenches to the north and south of the church. These were necessary to remove rainwater from the church roofs via downspouts. The project architects, Jewell & Co, asked the Oxford Archaeological Unit to monitor the groundworks. The watching brief was undertaken in late May and June 1995. A buttress foundation was located and recorded in the trench on the north side of the church during the watching brief. The foundation appeared to be a primary structural feature of the Medieval church. It had been removed above ground level when a new window was inserted into the nave north wall during the 16th century. The foundation was left intact by the current works.

Faringdon, All Saints Church (SU 298 957)

Paul Booth

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a watching brief in the course of building and drainage work. Small holes revealed traces of the Medieval south transept beneath the present 19th century transept. Between the transept and the churchyard boundary to the south, Medieval deposits had been truncated by the present pathway to the church.

Fritwell, St Olave's Church (SP 5255 2941)

John Hillier

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief during work at this small church in June 1995. A new drainage system was installed around the church, exposing offset footings in several places. The footings are likely to relate to the 12th century construction of the church. However, an offset beneath the east wall of the north aisle was observed to be of a markedly different alignment to the wall above. There is, then, the possibility of an earlier building beneath the present structure.

The dedication of this church is unusual. St. Olaf was a Norwegian king who attained cult status following his death in 1030. English cities with mercantile connections such as Exeter, Chichester and Norwich, commonly had churches dedicated to him. It is unclear just how a small church in an Oxfordshire village came to have such a dedication.

Hanwell, Spring Farm, Main Street (SP 4358 4386)

Andy Mudd

An evaluation comprising three trenches took place on 0.35 ha of land ahead of a proposal for residential development. A large ditch, running at right-angles to Main Street, and containing small quantities of St Neots-type ware, was found and interpreted as a late Saxon boundary ditch. Two gullies of uncertain purpose were found in the same trench and also contained St Neots-type ware. The rest of the site was much disturbed by modern earthmoving and dumping, and while the other two trenches yielded no features or finds it is unclear whether late Saxon occupation originally extended further up the hill.

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

Paul Booth

An area of c 1000 m² was excavated by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of housing development in early 1995. The principal feature was an irregular oval penannular enclosure which measured c 10 m x 12 m internally and was defined by a ditch which measured c 0.80-1.80 m in width and up to 0.90 m in depth. An outer ditch terminated in line with the south-east terminal of the penannular enclosure and ran concentrically round its east side before diverging to the north. Its profile and fills were very similar to those of the enclosure ditch.

On the south and east sides of the enclosure were two further pairs of ditches. Two ditches approached from the east and terminated on the line of the enclosure ditch, which they evidently respected, though they were probably later in date. On the south side two more gullies or small ditches ran from beneath the southern baulk of the excavated area and terminated against the outer concentric ditch, again cutting the fills of this feature but not extending beyond its line. The relationships of further cut features to the concentric ditches were uncertain. Within the enclosure a layer of brown silty clay may have been the remains of an earth mound.

Dating material consisted of very small quantities of pottery, mostly of middle and late Iron Age date, though one possible fragment of Peterborough ware was also noted. The pottery was recovered from most of the linear features, usually from the upper fills. Otherwise the site produced a considerable number of flint fragments, mostly flakes, with diagnostic implements being rare. The latter included a late mesolithic axe from a deposit in the terminal of the concentric ditch, and a leaf shaped arrowhead from the top of the subsoil. The majority of the flint was of Mesolithic/Neolithic character but some Bronze Age pieces were also present. The dating of the principal features remains uncertain at present.

Minster Lovell, access route at Minster Lovell Hall (SP 32341138)

Mark Roberts

The Oxford Archaeological Unit excavated two evaluation

trenches prior to the provision of an access route running through ground adjacent to St. Kenelm's church towards Minster Lovell Hall. Five postholes of uncertain date (though clearly cut by, and therefore earlier than, the graves) were found in the south end of trench 1. A minimum of eight graves in trench 1 and at least one grave in trench 2 were of uncertain date (?Medieval or later). Traces of a Post-Medieval structure comprising a cobbled surface and a partially destroyed wall were located in trench 2. These were overlain by a large dump of modern rubbish.

Northmoor, Littlebrook Nurseries (SP 41540283)

Andy Parkinson

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief during construction work in an area of known extensive prehistoric and Roman settlement. A shallow sequence of undated alluvial clay deposits was recorded and a probable tree-throw hole was observed. There were no finds.

Northmoor, Moreton Lane (SP 41720245)

John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief during groundwork at this site in advance of construction of a new farm building. The site lies in an area of extensive cropmarks of various dates (Scheduled Ancient Monument Oxon 141 [b]) and preliminary fieldwalking had recovered a small quantity of Roman pottery from the development area.

Possible prehistoric features, and Roman ditches of 2nd and 3rd-4th century date were recorded. A quantity of Roman pottery was recovered from the fills of these ditches. A possible Medieval phase of activity was identified, together with several undated but probably Roman features. Recent ploughing was observed to have cut into the top of the natural gravel horizon, and had therefore truncated any potential Roman or Medieval ground levels.

Nuneham Courtenay, Lower Farm (SP 538005)

Graham D. Keevill

The study of a major Romano-British ceramic production site continued in 1995 when the Oxford Archaeological Unit fieldwalked an extensive area of arable on behalf of English Heritage. The fieldwalking covered slightly less than 30 ha across three fields, including the area surveyed by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory in late 1994 (SMA 25, 53 and Fig 1).

Finds were collected in 20 m units along transects 20 m apart. Approximately 4000 sherds of Roman pottery were collected, with later pottery and tile also being well represented. The Roman pottery was sparsely scattered over the north and south-west parts of the collection area, but was very densely concentrated throughout the central and

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south-east part. Many 20 m collection units yielded between 20 and 50 sherds, and some contained as many as 100. Admittedly much of the pottery comprised small and abraded pieces, but larger and fresher fragments were also present and the sheer density of the concentrations is remarkable. Some of the largest individual 20 m groups correspond very closely indeed with kiln anomalies on the 1994 magnetometer survey, but the most notable facet of the fieldwalking distribution is the strong continuation of the high density eastward as far as the modern main road (A4074). This suggests that the site is both more extensive than previously suspected, and that the kiln activity (and associated settlement?) is intensive throughout its extent. Indeed it seems likely that the concentration will spread to the other side of the main road, and the trackway identified in the magnetometer survey is likely to continue as far as the main Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester-on-Thames.

Paul Booth reports that the range of fabrics represented in the fieldwalking collection is generally characteristic of the industry as a whole, and certainly comparable in its broad aspects to what is known about production at Lower Farm from the limited excavations of 1991 (Booth et al 1993). Most of the range of Oxford products were therefore present, with parchment ware the most notable absentee (as in the excavated assemblage). The most remarkable sherd was from the body of a hemispherical bowl in a fairly fine reduced fabric. This had an elaborate decorative scheme, apparently moulded, below a horizontal bead row. The whole is extremely reminiscent of samian ware, though individual motifs could not be matched on superficial inspection. There are no parallels within the Oxford industry. Part of a probable mould is known from the Littlemore area, but the decoration within it is more crudely executed than the Lower Farm piece. The vessel presumably imitated Drag 37 and must be of 2nd century date. It adds yet another dimension to the range of more or less experimental techniques attempted by the Lower Farm potters at this time.

It is expected that further work will take place at Lower Farm in the future. The Ancient Monuments Laboratory intends to undertake further survey work to extend their coverage of the site, while OAU hopes that English Heritage will commission a programme of trial trenching to determine the condition and confirm the extent of the site (at least to the north and south). Furthermore the results of the 1995 fieldwalking suggest that work should be extended to the east side of the main road.

References

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Nuneham Courtenay, Nuneham Book Repository
(SU 54289818)

John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a watching

brief during topsoil stripping in advance of construction of a book store for the Bodleian Library. A Medieval ditched enclosure and associated pits were observed. A number of undated features were also seen, including a gully which may also have been of medieval date. Dating material included St Neots-type pottery. The features presumably belong to the early phases of the Medieval village removed from the site in the 1760s at the time of the building of Nuneham Hall.

Oxford, Blackbird Leys Peripheral Road and Housing Area C2 SP 555020

In August 1995 19 evaluation trenches were dug along the proposed line of the peripheral road and housing area C2, and this was followed by a watching brief on groundworks associated with the construction of the new road. An area of prehistoric settlement activity was identified, which appears from the finds assemblages to have been domestic in nature. The form of the settlement is not at present clearly understood, but the pottery suggests a date in the middle Iron Age, with earlier components from the middle Bronze Age onwards suggesting the presence of small-scale activity of this date in the vicinity. Concentrations of Roman pottery and kiln debris were also recovered, deriving from the major Oxford Roman pottery industry. The assemblage is broadly of 3rd century date and consists mostly of waste from production, which suggests the presence of a Roman pottery kiln in the immediate vicinity. The fieldwork also located a number of later features: a fishpond, which probably belonged to the adjacent nunnery at Minchery Farm; an old stream course and a Post-Medieval stone-surfaced trackway. The work was undertaken by Oxford Archaeological Unit, on behalf of Oxford City Council.

Oxford, Cowley, Rover car works (SP 560040) Graham D. Keevill and Mick Parsons

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook evaluations, an excavation and a watching brief on behalf of the Rover Group during redevelopment covering approximately 3.5 ha of the Cowley works in 1995. The site is bisected by Roman Way, part of the major Roman route between the towns of Alchester and Dorchester-on-Thames, and various discoveries of Roman burials etc have been made in the vicinity during this century. The development therefore appeared likely to affect archaeology, and Oxford City Council (on the recommendation of the Oxford Archaeological Advisory Service) asked for various levels of archaeological work before and during the construction programme. The site was evaluated during October and November 1995, and an excavation took place in November and December 1995. A watching brief on the groundworks began in December 1995 and continued into 1996.

Sixteen evaluation trenches were excavated to the east of Roman Way, with a further four trenches to the west; the

trenches varied from 10 m to 30 m in length, representing a 2% sample of the development area. Most of the trenches toward the east end of the site showed that there had already been truncation of the natural limestone geology prior to the construction of a car park here, probably during the 1970s. The trenches closer to the course of the Roman road also revealed some modern disturbance due to the construction of several buildings (now demolished) and the insertion of mains services. A probable Roman ploughsoil was found to the west of Roman Way, and Medieval and/or Post-Medieval ploughsoils were found in trenches over the middle and western end of the site. Only one feature of archaeological significance was located: a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age linear feature in Trench 9. An excavation area was opened up to examine this in greater detail, and it proved to be an L-shaped ditch of irregular plan and section. Finds included pottery, animal bone (including two complete antlers) and a few pieces of flint. Three further ditches or gullies were of late Post-Medieval date; more of these were noted during the watching brief. The prehistoric ditch, however, remains in splendid isolation, as no other features of this date were seen during the groundworks. It is presumed that any associated features must lie beyond the southern limit of the site.

Oxford, Ebor House, Blue Boar Street (SP 51420612)
John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a watching brief in advance of redevelopment. A sequence of intercutting pits of Medieval date, some probably for the extraction of gravel and some for rubbish, was observed. These were cut by three Post-Medieval stone soakaways, overlaid by soil horizons in turn sealed by the construction of large cellared buildings in the Victorian period. The cellar of one building severely truncated the stratigraphic sequence.

Oxford, 53 George Street, Yates Wine Lodge
(SP 5103 0634)
Christopher Bell

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook an evaluation on the site of 53 George Street, Oxford, at the beginning of March 1995. The evaluation was carried out in connection with a proposal to build a Wine Lodge and was undertaken as part of the conditions for planning for this development. It was established that much of the site had been affected by deep Post-Medieval disturbance.

Wall foundations and a backfilled cellar were uncovered at the front of a plot that belonged to a 19th century building which once fronted on to George Street. An area of cobbles exposed immediately to the west of the building represented the remains of the alleyway known as Queens Court which existed between numbers 53 and 55 George Street.

Deep disturbance, backfilled in the 17th and 18th centuries, occurred throughout much of the remaining area of the plot

and this was almost certainly the result of Post-Medieval gravel quarrying. However, one small 'island' of soil containing Medieval pottery survived in the central area of the plot and this appeared to be the remains of a backfilled feature, possibly a truncated pit. Fourteen sherds of pottery, including a tripod pitcher handle and part of a decorated jug, were recovered from this deposit and these dated from the early to mid-13th century.

Oxford, Littlemore Hospital, Yamanouchi Institute Development
(SP 5306 0205)
John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an evaluation at this site in advance of redevelopment. The evaluation comprised the excavation of trenches and a geophysical survey, carried out by the Bartlett-Clark consultancy. A possible palaeochannel was revealed at the south-east corner of the site. The boundary wall of the Victorian hospital was located, along with a number of Post-Medieval/Victorian soil horizons and features. There was no evidence for activity related to the Roman pottery industry although the site may have been in agricultural use in the Medieval period. It is possible that archaeological features were in part truncated or removed at the time of the construction of the hospital in the 1840s.

Oxford: Magdalen College, Longwall Quad
(SU 51990635)

An evaluation, excavation and watching brief were carried out by Oxford Archaeological Unit on behalf of Magdalen College in advance of the construction of student accommodation and an auditorium on the site of the former Fellows' car park and squash court. The evaluation was carried out in 1991 and identified the presence of Medieval finds in untruncated material at the south of the site. The subsequent excavation and watching brief took place in 1995. The excavation located a series of nine shallow pits and a large feature which may be a tree-throw pit. A large robber trench probably represents the line of the rear wall of Magdalen College that was originally built in 1467. A shallow feature to the north of the robber trench may be a furrow from Medieval strip fields. With the exception of the robber trench, the fills of all these features date from the Medieval period. The watching brief located a large ditch, roughly parallel to Longwall, which had three gravel floors overlying its upper fill. The floors probably derive from a building. Post-excavation analysis leading to the publication of a final report is currently in progress.

Oxford, Sir William Dunn School of Pathology
(SP 5169 0707)
Paul Booth

A small scale evaluation and watching brief were carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of building

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construction in 1995. The site lies close to that of known prehistoric and Roman features in the University Parks. No significant features were seen, however, and only a single sherd of Middle Iron Age pottery was recovered.

Oxford, University Parks, Parks Road (SP 518 076) Mark Roberts and Mark Robinson

An evaluation was carried out in advance of the enlargement and regrading of a pond. Extensive archaeological activity is known immediately to the west of the site and includes prehistoric ring ditches, Iron Age and possible Roman features. A single trench measuring 40 m in length and 1.55 m in width and representing 7.5% of the application area was excavated. Two paleochannels were present. The first was 3.2 m deep and an environmental sample was taken from its lowest fill. It contained remains of 29 species of plant and invertebrates. Freshwater snails and the seeds of true bullrush and water droplet indicate a reed-swamp type environment although the sandy nature of the deposit suggests briskly flowing water. The channel flowed through a open landscape which is indicated by seeds from weeds normally associated with disturbed ground and beetle normally found in grassland. There are also dung beetles which could derive from either domesticated or non-domesticated animals.

The second channel was 1.2 m deep and the organic material within suggested a reed-swamp type environment. The earlier channel may be Bronze Age or later while the date of the second is uncertain. The surviving Medieval ridge and furrow was cut by two ditches aligned north to south.

Oxford, Whitehouse Road Phase 2 (SP 514053) Andy Mudd and Mark Robinson

The second phase of archaeological investigation took place at the Pegasus development site, Whitehouse Road (Grandpont) in January 1995. This followed on from the first phase of excavations reported elsewhere (Mudd, 1993). The investigation took the form of two trenches in the area of the former Nursery School close to the line of the well-known Norman causeway (Abingdon Road), (Trenches 20 & 21, Fig. 7).

The evidence

Trench 21 showed exclusively 19th century infill, but Trench 20 was excavated across a possible stream channel running approximately north-south. Two or three phases of infilling were represented, showing a progressive narrowing of the channel from its original width of 11 m (summarised in Fig 8). The earlier channel (726) was filled with a series of gravelly, clayey silts with the unsorted character of dumped deposits. Unfortunately, they contained no datable finds. Two wooden stakes found driven into a possible recut did not form part of a revetment but do suggest a more or less stable channel edge and therefore two phases of infilling. A single charred grain of free-threshing wheat from (717) suggests a Saxon or more recent date for this activity. Samples containing waterlogged plant remains

showed a strong presence of willow (*Salix* sp.) with many buds, capsules and leaf fragments. Buds of poplar (*Populus* sp.) were also present. A mixed range of seeds showed a preponderance of bankside plants such as water chickweed (*Myosoton aquaticum*) and water pepper (*Polygonum hydropiper*). The few mollusca present were all aquatic species, including *Bithynia tentaculata* which is characteristic of flowing water.

In the latest phase, a dump of 19th century rubble represents the final infilling of the narrowed channel and the raising and levelling off of the land. This happened before the first large scale OS survey of the area in 1876. Molluscan evidence from the lower silts (706) indicate a slow flowing channel at that time.

Conclusions

No conclusive evidence was obtained regarding the channel's origin or whether it was natural or man-made, but there is some suggestion that it was flowing and therefore connected to the river rather than being a gravel quarry. The deliberate infilling and narrowing of the channel could be related to river management and land reclamation, while its direction, approximately parallel to the Grandpont rather than to the river, and possibly across the natural slope of the gravel terrace (see Fig 8), would tend to suggest that it was intentionally dug. If so, it seems likely that it was intended to distribute water through the flood-arches of the causeway. A rectilinear ditch, apparently in this location, is depicted on the early 16th century Brasenose map (*Brasenose Quartercentenary Monograph* 1909), and it may well be one of the "several Streames of the River, which runn under the forenamed Arches" observed in Hutten's Survey of 1625 (Hurst 1899). Its date of excavation and later modification remain unresolved but a medieval context for these activities would seem entirely likely.

The investigation uncovered no evidence of activity connected with the early Thames crossing here nor any suggestion that the Middle Iron Age settlement extended this far east. Indeed, the presence of alluvium in both trenches directly overlying natural gravel suggests that the area would have been too low-lying for settlement. The top of the gravel, which is between 54.7 m OD and 54.4 m OD in these trenches, is 0.7 - 1.0 m lower than it is in the area of the Iron Age settlement.

References

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Rycote, Chapel of St Michael (SP 667047) John Hiller

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief during work at Rycote Chapel in March 1995. The chapel

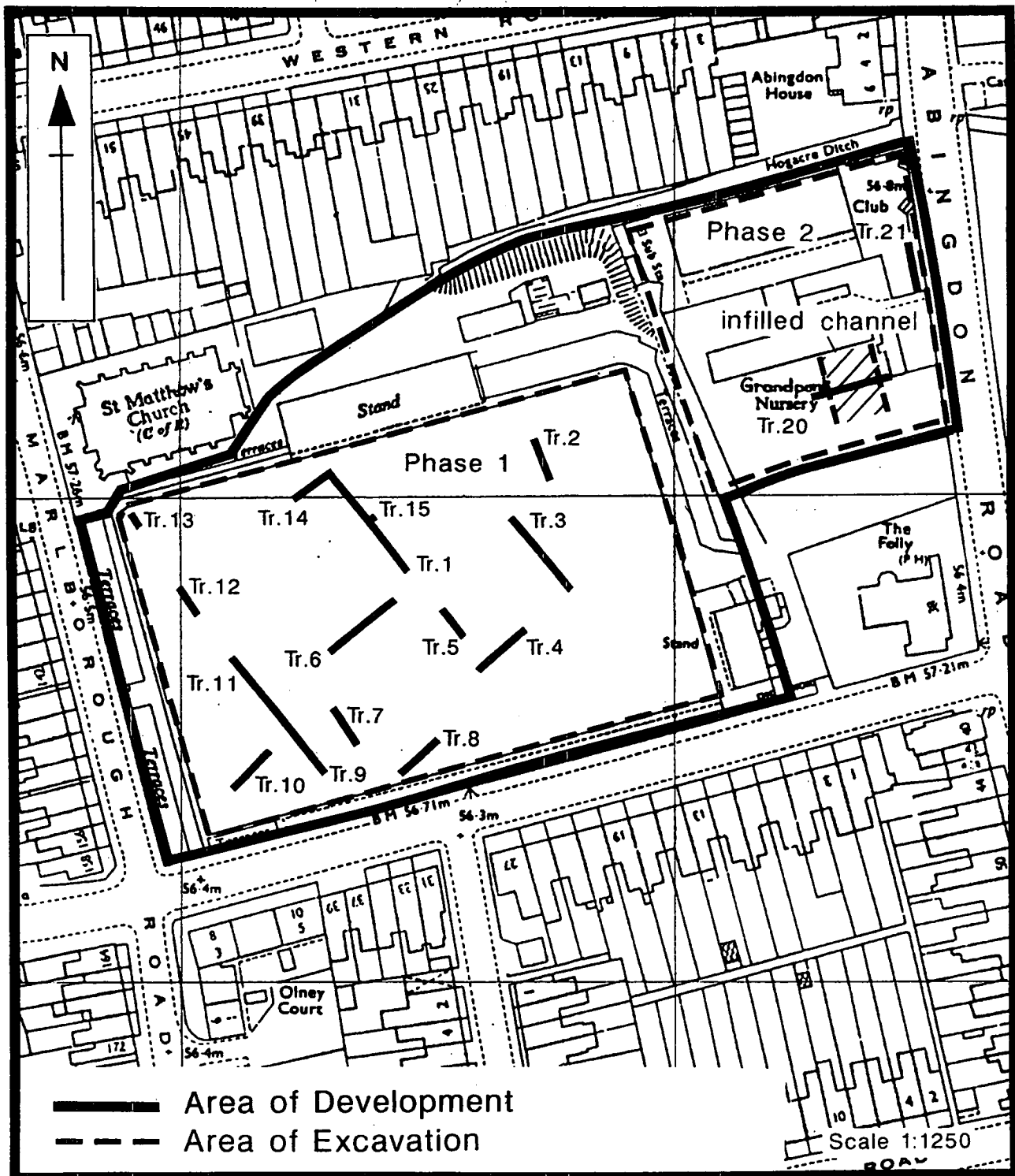


Fig 7. Whitehouse Road, Oxford: trench location plan.

walls have been badly affected by damp. A new drainage trench was excavated by contractors to the north of the chapel. The trench was 0.30 m deep and yielded several original limestone roofing slates, together with some modern red roofing tile, probably discarded when the chapel was re-roofed in the 1960s. No human remains were observed.

Stonesfield, land adjacent to Jennets' House
(SP 39281755)
John Hillier

Topsoil stripping and trench excavation were monitored by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during construction of a new dwelling. No archaeological features were observed in the limestone natural, and only modern finds retrieved from the spoil heaps.

Oxfordshire

section through channel 722/726

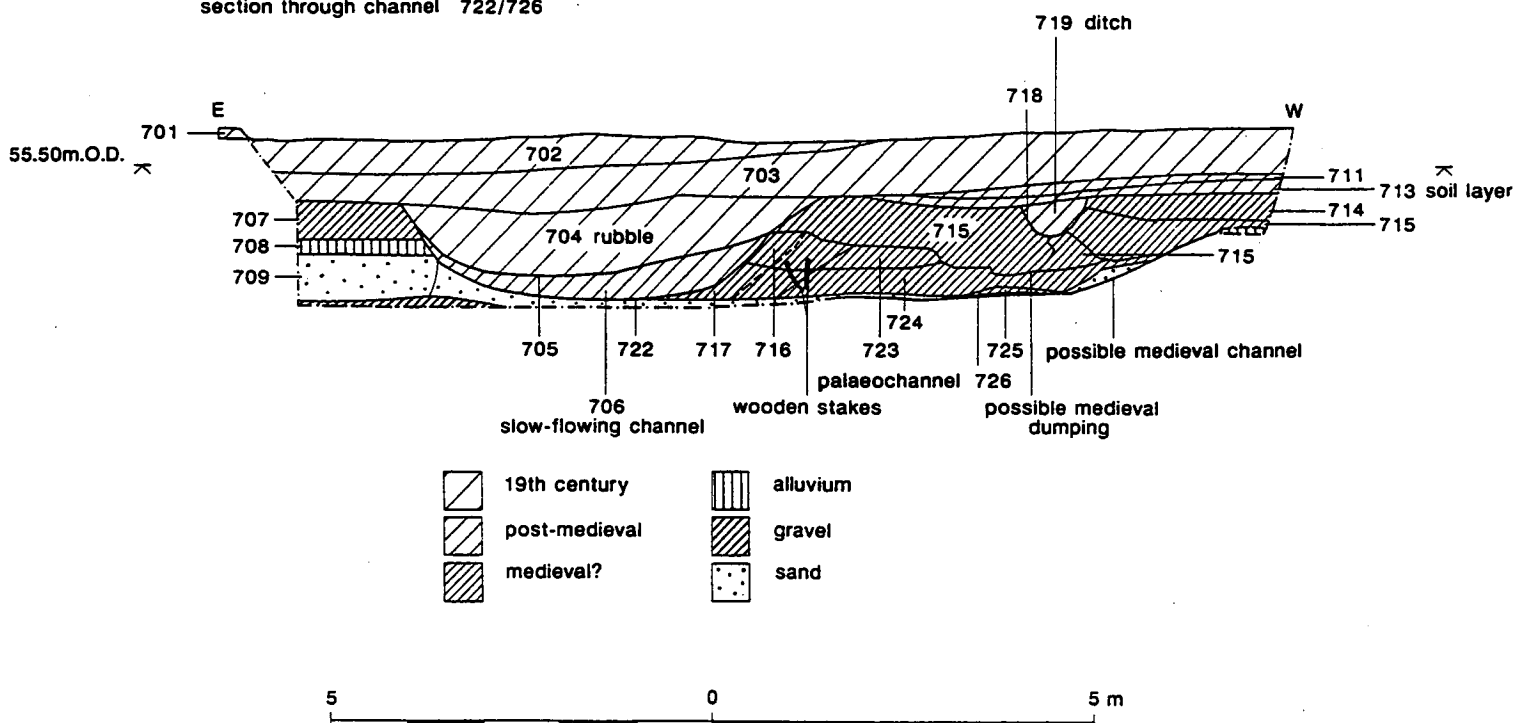


Fig 8. Whitehouse Road, Oxford: Section through channel.

Wallingford, St Mary the More (SU 60718933)

Graham D. Keevill and Richard Brown

Renovation work being carried out at the parish church of St Mary the More, Wallingford involved the replacement of existing floors in the north and south aisles and chemical treatment of the floor timberwork in the nave. The project architects, J Alan Bristow and Partner, contacted the Oxford Archaeological Unit and requested that a monitoring visit be made so that any necessary recording could be undertaken. Examination and recording was carried out during the week starting 20 February 1995.

Removal of the floorboards at the west end of the south aisle revealed the lower portion of the west wall. This was offset from the flint masonry above and was of a completely different build, incorporating chalk and limestone as well as flint, with two courses of internal facing stones visible (context 6). The masonry was bonded with the lower portions of the circular stair turret attached to the south side of the tower.

Wantage, land adjacent to Mably Way (SU 3964 8905)

The Oxford Archaeological Unit evaluated the site of a proposed housing development on land adjacent to Mably Way, Wantage. Five evaluation trenches were excavated and ditches, gullies and postholes were identified. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from a gully and a further four ditches contained small quantities of Medieval and later pottery. The date of the features is therefore uncertain.

Watlington, All Saints Church, Shirburn (SU 6965 9592)

John Hillier

A small scale investigation at this church was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in advance of renovation works. The church is of Norman date and is situated to the south of Shirburn Castle, the stately home of the Earl of Macclesfield. A single trial pit revealed the foundation of the tower and north aisle walls, but no human remains.

A wall (A) lay at right-angles to and was bonded with the original west foundation wall (B). Cleaning revealed the east extension of the wall (A) as far as the font (a distance of approximately 5 m). The wall (A) measured 1.05 m in width and was constructed of rough-hewn chalk and limestone of varying size with some sub-angular flint, bonded with light grey-brown sandy mortar. Limited excavation to the east of the font revealed the continuation of the wall (A).

The facing stones at the south end (ie corner) of wall B had been removed, probably during the insertion of the brick foundation (C) of the Victorian rebuild which comprised hard-fired red bricks in alternating header and stretcher courses. The foundation was much less substantial than wall A.

Structures A and B represented the external south and west walls/foundations respectively of the Medieval church. Wall B was bonded with the base of the circular stair turret on the south side of the tower, establishing that the turret is also of Medieval origin (though extensively rebuilt). The south aisle was enlarged to its current width in the middle of the 19th century. It was notable that large cracks in the Victorian flint masonry and the interior plaster rendering

focused on the junction between the Medieval wall/foundation (A/B) and the Victorian foundation (C). The latter was inferior in build and scale, and structural stress has obviously resulted from the imbalance.

Yarnton (SP 4711) Gill Hey

English Heritage funded fieldwork continued at Yarnton, Oxfordshire in 1995, with excavations on both second gravel terrace and the Thames floodplain. This work is being undertaken in advance of gravel extraction by ARC.

Yarnton Cresswell Field by Christopher Bell and Gill Hey

Over a period of ten weeks in March to May 1995, part of a late Bronze Age to middle Iron Age settlement was excavated on second gravel terrace at Cresswell Field, the aim being to investigate the earliest substantial settlement site known in the locality. An area of approximately one hectare was investigated.

A dense scatter of features was discovered throughout the area of investigation, predominantly representing occupation activity from the late Bronze Age through to the middle Iron Age, but domestic and burial evidence of Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age date and Saxon occupation evidence was also found to be present. In addition to the main area of excavation, two sections were cut through a dry river bed which borders the site to the west and a small number of burnt mound features were found on either side of this channel.

Neolithic and Bronze Age

A U-shaped enclosure, made up of discontinuous linear features was located. Its form suggested a Neolithic date but only a few, undiagnostic finds were recovered, and these came from the upper fill. A deep grave discovered in the open end of the enclosure contained an adult inhumation which appeared to have been placed within a wooden coffin. A single, decorated Beaker sherd was recovered from the middle fills. An infant burial lay in a pit adjacent to it and an adult inhumation was found 8 m south of the enclosure. Several small pits of earlier Bronze Age date were excavated, notably a Beaker pit with a rich assemblage of finds, including carbonized plant remains.

Late Bronze Age and Iron Age

Late Bronze Age domestic features were present on the site but the early Iron Age was the main period represented, with smaller amounts of middle Iron Age material. Features were mostly domestic in character and consisted of pits, small posthole structures, house gullies and a few small enclosures. There were, however, a small number of features and deposits of a possibly ritual nature. These consisted of deliberately-placed deposits within some of the pits, including a human skull, whole and partial animal burials

and a deposit of smashed, highly decorated pots. The lowest fills of the adjacent channel are probably contemporary with the Iron Age settlement. The well-preserved artefacts from the site included a complete iron adze head and part of a jet earring.

No late Iron Age activity was located and the only Romano-British features on the site were a ditched enclosure and two field ditches. This confirmed that the Cresswell Field site formed the earliest part of an Iron Age and Roman settlement which gradually shifted eastward along the gravel terrace, the middle Iron Age to Roman settlement having been excavated on the Yarnton Worton Rectory Farm site in 1990/1 (Hey 1991).

Saxon

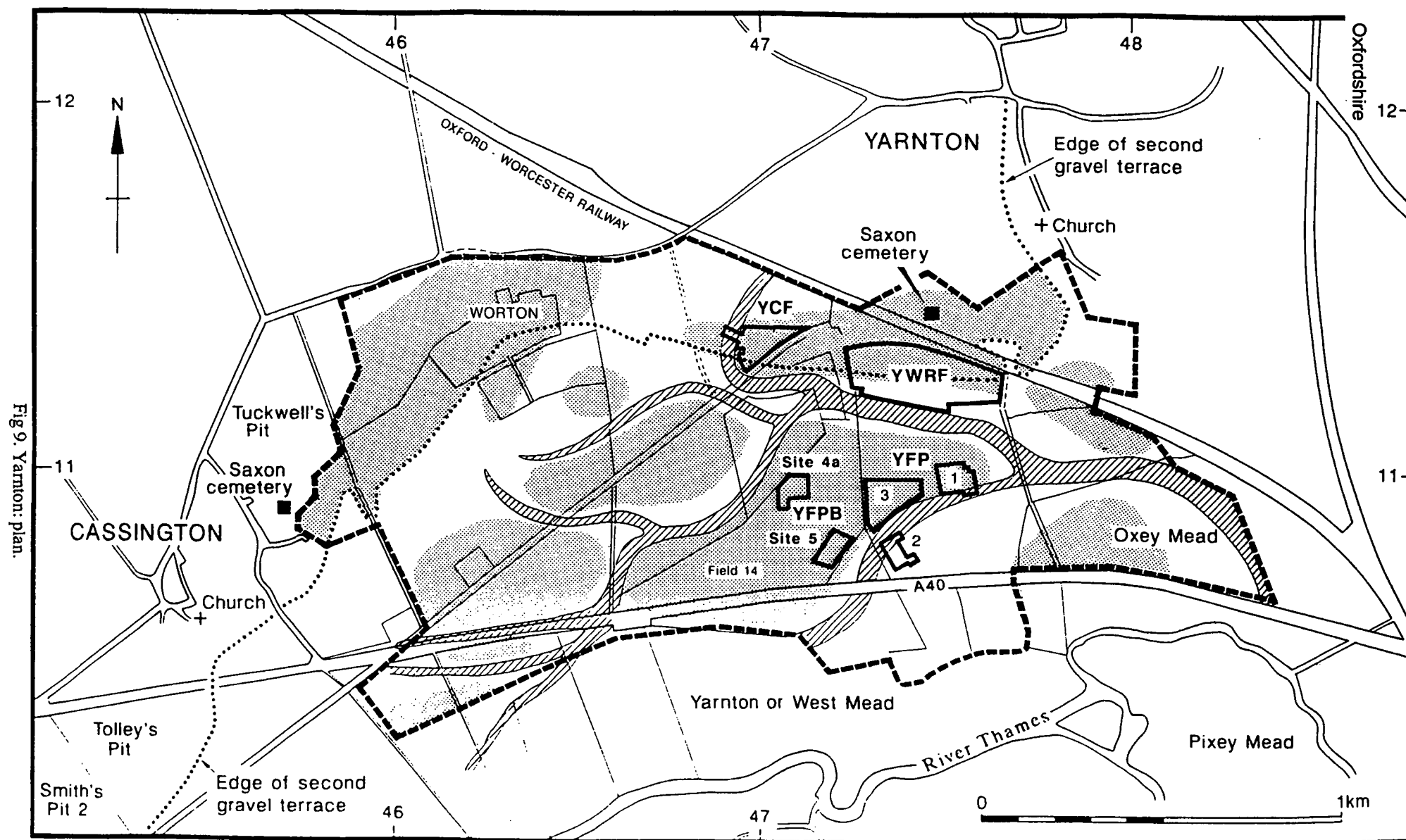
The Saxon features found on the site were also of a domestic nature and included a timber hall, associated fence lines and at least three sunken-featured buildings. Two large, ditched enclosures, located in the west part of the site, were also probably Saxon. Finds included weaving equipment, but only one sherd of Saxon pottery was recognised.

Yarnton Floodplain by Gill Hey

Two excavation areas (Sites 4a and 5), each 0.5 hectares in size, were examined on the floodplain in June and July 1995. In addition, around three hectares were observed during ARC topsoil stripping (Site 4b). The excavations provided an opportunity to examine funerary sites in juxtaposition to domestic activity and the wider landscape setting.

Neolithic and Bronze Age domestic sites were examined in the 1992 excavation season (Hey 1993) and further evidence of domestic activity in the form of clusters of pits and postholes was recovered in 1995. This was largely found in the observation work, but limited domestic activity was evidenced on Site 4a and late Bronze Age/early Iron Age house sites were exposed on Site 5. The 1995 work contributes to the growing body of evidence on the character of Neolithic and Bronze Age domestic settlement in a major river valley and its development through time.

A Neolithic rectangular enclosure, probably a long mortuary enclosure, and a Beaker burial lying 20 m to the north, had been located in the 1993 Yarnton-Cassington evaluation (Hey 1994). These appeared to lie adjacent to, but separate from, the areas of domestic activity. Long enclosures are increasingly being recognised in river valleys, areas where long barrows are rare, but they have not often been excavated. The enclosure at Yarnton was probably around 65 m x 25 m internally, although it was only possible to examine 45 m x 25 m, as its eastern end had already been quarried away. It appeared to have been excavated as a single operation and was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west, with an entrance in the centre of the southern side. The presence of an internal bank can be suggested. Recutting of the ditch, and the positioning of



- | | |
|---|---|
|  Excavated areas |  Palaeochannel |
|  Evaluated area |  Gravel |



Fig 10. Yarnon Cresswell Field.

Oxfordshire

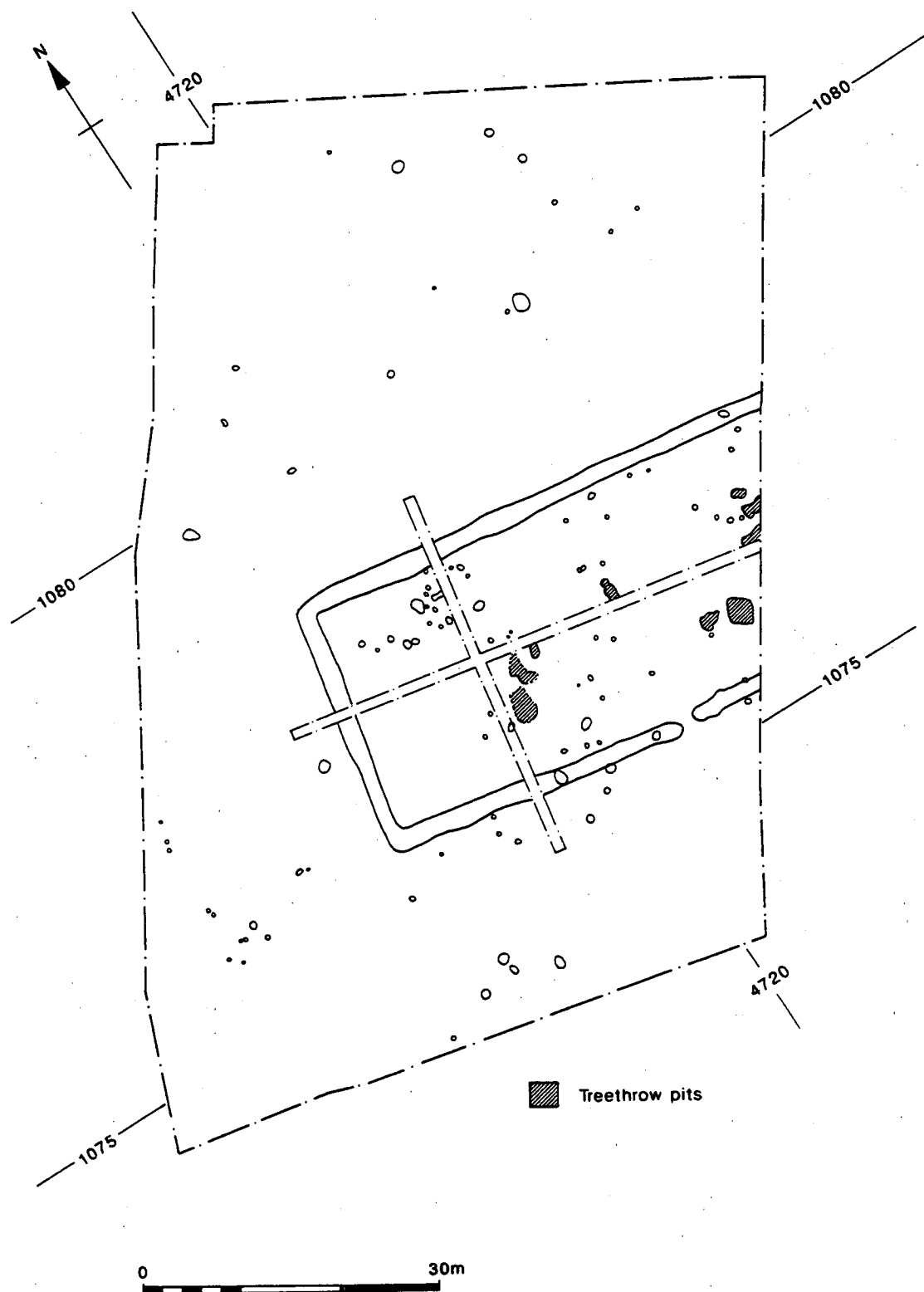


Fig 12. Yarnton flood plain.

posts within it, took place in the later Neolithic (probably associated with adjacent pit deposits of Peterborough Ware pottery in the Fengate substyle). The date of the construction of the enclosure is problematic, but it is hoped that this can be resolved by radiocarbon dating. The function of the enclosure was not immediately evident, but analysis of the results of magnetic susceptibility and phosphate surveys undertaken over the interior may shed some light on this

issue, as will examination of the ditch backfill and finds recovered from it, and the characterisation of the features associated with it. Preliminary results support its identification as a funerary site.

Although few features were found in the vicinity of the monument, these were either burials or 'special' deposits, suggesting that the site had special significance from the

Neolithic until the middle Bronze Age. The Beaker burial, accompanied by a very fine grave assemblage (Hey 1994, Fig. J), lay apart from other contemporary features, but two other inhumations were found, one lying just within the entrance of the enclosure and the other in the top fill of the enclosure ditch. Eight cremations were also excavated, in addition to pits containing structured deposits which often included cremated bone. In the late Bronze Age, however, the site seems to have lost its special status and two small settlement sites were located here.

Important evidence was obtained of the immediate landscape around the enclosure from molluscs recovered from its ditch. The area was cleared of woodland before the enclosure was constructed but regeneration of tree cover occurred, probably by the late Neolithic, before the area was more permanently cleared by the early to middle Bronze Age.

Investigation of the floodplain at Yarnton is amassing valuable evidence on Roman land use and agricultural strategies evolved in response to changing environmental conditions. A Roman trackway was located leading from the gravel terrace towards the Thames and presumably to areas of pasture. It led through arable fields in the early Roman period but increased flooding, leading to alluvial deposition over the fields, was apparent and this may have necessitated a shift from arable to pasture in these areas.

Another objective of the 1995 fieldwork was concerned with methodological issues. Excavations on Site 4a sought to assess the success of the 2% machine-trenched sampling strategy used in the evaluation. Half a hectare was examined in an area where no archaeological features had been observed in the 1993 evaluation exercise. The observation of ARC topsoil stripping over an area of three hectares where occasional features had been found, and the Site 5 excavation results contributed to this study. Preliminary results suggest that the absence or paucity of archaeological features in a 2% sample does not reflect absence or low levels of past activity. In tandem with other types of evidence, however, the evaluation seems to have been successful. Achieving an understanding of the complex relationship between landscape, land use and changing environmental conditions was particularly important in this respect, as was the use of an appropriate archaeological model. Results so far suggest that it has been possible to target important groups of features within a background scatter of activity and interpret the character of the archaeological remains.

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Building Recording

The Old Stables, Priory Lane, Bicester (SP 58432209) Julian Munby

Prior to their conversion to housing, the Old Stables in Priory Lane, Bicester were investigated in May 1995, as a condition of listed building consent under the terms of PPG15/16. There is no reason to suppose that the building is of more than one period, and most of the fittings and features would point to a date of construction in the first half of the 19th century. As such it is a good example of a working stable, with accommodation (perhaps for a family) at one end and a single room (probably for another servant) at the other, and space for carts or domestic carriage. The use of the free tenon with slotted purlins in the roof is of interest, and is possibly a regional characteristic, having previously been noted in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds (eg at Chastleton House stables). No significant discoveries were made in disturbance below the ground floor.

Horton-cum-Studley, Black Barn, Warren Farm (SP 60551245) Julian Munby and Klara Spandl

A photographic record was made of the Grade II listed barn at Warren Farm as a condition of planning consent prior to its refurbishment. The barn is one of a number in the region with a particular type of roof construction consisting of 'curved inner principals' which support the roof while leaving clear space in the centre of the roof. They typically belong to the 18th and 19th century having a distinct and possibly quite localised distribution in a sector to the south and east of Oxford. While the barn is fairly unremarkable for its type and construction, it is nevertheless important to record these buildings as they come increasingly under threat.

Milcombe, Dovecote at Milcombe Hall Farm (SP 4129 3474) Ric Tyler

As a condition of Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent, a measured archaeological survey and comprehensive photographic record of the 18th century, Grade II listed dovecote at Milcombe Hall Farm were undertaken during August 1995 in advance of repairs and renovation works. Evidence for a former potence (central egg collecting mechanism) and cupola trapdoor was recorded.

Oxford, New College Bell Tower (SP 51700 06475) Julian Munby and Ric Tyler

A programme of building recording within the Bell Tower at New College, Oxford undertaken in October 1995, as a condition of Listed Building Consent in advance of the conversion of the space for use as a rare book store by the

Oxfordshire

college library, recorded evidence for putlog holes and probable building lifts within the fabric of the walling. Examination of the internal walls of the tower is instructive when compared with the exterior. The construction of the walls on the outside is in ashlar, laid in courses of varying thickness, and with putlog holes clearly apparent, representing the lifts of scaffolding used in building the tower. The interior faces are of a more random mixture of stone, ashlar and squared rubble, but the putlog holes, whilst visible, are not so apparent as on the outside. Moreover, comparison of the internal and external putlog spacing suggests that the holes are not identical, which would mean that the holes do not pass through the wall. This would imply that the internal and external scaffolds were to some extent independent. The height of the lifts (about 6 ft) would seem to be fairly consistent however. Masons marks were recorded and probably have more to do with the preparation of materials than with the building process itself, but it is interesting to note the coincidence of marks in the tower and cloister. The structure of the first stage timber floor was also recorded.

Shirburn, All Saint's Church (SU 6965 9592)

Julian Munby and Ric Tyler

Stripping of external rendering to the west tower walls of the Grade II listed All Saints Church, Shirburn, Oxfordshire revealed a previously unreported arcaded upper storey. Archaeological analysis of the exposed masonry, undertaken on behalf of the Redundant Churches Fund, recorded details of this arcading along with the locations of a well defined series of putlog holes, ashlar stonework, and an inscribed dial stone at the bottom-west corner of the south face. The survey would appear to indicate that the tower up to the arcaded upper storey is of a single build, probably early to mid 14th century in date, utilising architectural fragments (semi-circular headed openings, tympanum, fragment in putlog construction) from the earlier Norman church. No evidence could be found that any of the Norman features were set within patches of distinct masonry which would indicate that they were added, or had survived in situ from an earlier tower. The nature of stonework in the arcaded 'lantern' stage, utilising as it does substantial quantities of ashlar with quoins of notably smaller size, and employing tile in its primary build marks it as distinct from the lower parts of the tower. This would suggest that the upper storey is a separate addition to the lower stages of the tower. From the exposed evidence, an early date (later 14th/15th century) for the construction of the lantern stage appears likely.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Michael Richards

The Oxford University Archaeological Society has been conducting small scale excavations at a Medieval moated

site at Kidlington Pocket Park, next to St. Mary's Church in Kidlington, Oxfordshire (SP 497149). The moated site has never really been explored archaeologically, and there is some question as to its purpose. In the late 1970s some Medieval pottery and roofing tiles were found, as a new graveyard was added to the church. Unfortunately, the location of this material was never recorded. After discussions with the county archaeologist, Paul Smith, and the Parish Council, we were given permission to carry out some small scale, exploratory excavations.

There are a number of questions about the site that we hope to address with these excavations. There is a paved causeway in the north part of the moat that may be part of a road that joins up with a Medieval road in Old Kidlington to the south, and a small Medieval village to the north. Our first step was to try and find this road. In later work we hope to look for structures within the moat itself, to help explain its existence (could there be a manor house in it?). Also, we eventually want to try and determine the age of the moat itself.

Before any excavations were carried out, we conducted a geophysical survey of part of the site, with the help of the Kidlington Historical Society, but the results were inconclusive. We then started excavations, in 1995, to try and find this possible road. We eventually uncovered a paved (with limestone) road or path near to the northern causeway. We were only able to expose the top of the road in 1995, but we hope to further excavate it in our continuing work in 1996.

QUEENPOST BUILDING HISTORIES

Stable Block, Cornbury Park, Charlbury, Oxon

Josephine Cormier

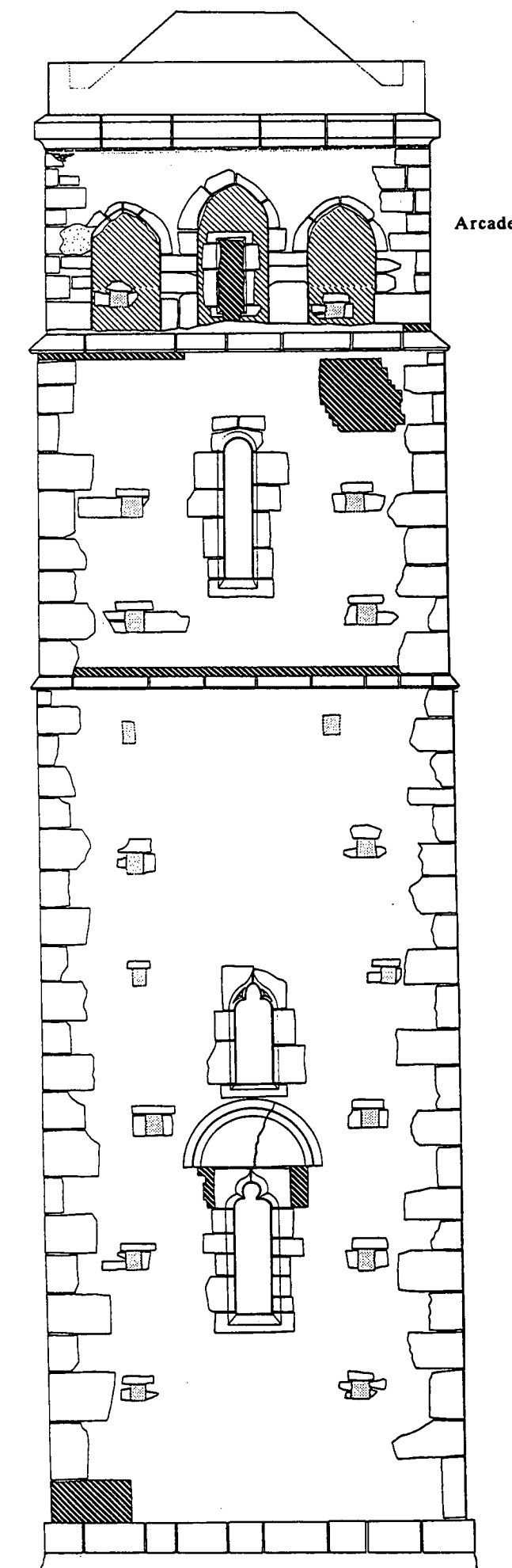
A Note on Watching Brief During Works

From June to October 1995 work of stripping out was carried on as the result of the granting of Listed Building Consent to convert the Stable Block at Cornbury Park, a grade II* Listed Building, into offices.

The Stable Block, which dates from 1663 was designed by Hugh May, a leading architect of that period. It is one of the few buildings of his which survive and an early example of a separate stable block of classical architectural design.

The overall design is one of a main, central block with flanking, projecting pavilions, and a central entrance on the North elevation breaking forward beneath a pediment. The building has suffered alteration in the intervening centuries, the most drastic being the removal of the first floor and attics of the central block, the staircases and the rebuilding of the roofs of the pavilions to a double pitch and lower height.

The design of the early building is recorded in the diaries of



Arcade stage

Key	
	Ashlar
	Brick
	Tile
	Render
	Putlog

0 1 3 m

Fig 12. All Saints, Shirburn: west tower, west elevation.

John Evelyn¹ who visited in May 1664 and made dimensioned sketches, which are accurate to the remaining building and consequently to be believed as evidence for what has been removed. During the works evidence for the earlier design has been found in the large doorways which would have led to the upper floor of the central block from the pavilions and the finished quoins of the ashlar facing to the south wall of the central block, which line up with the extent of the early stair blocks. This latter also links with Evelyn's drawing of the south face of the pavilions as being wider than the north face and centred about ground floor doorways.

The roof structures and floors throughout the stables at June 1995 were constructed mainly of re-used timbers, some of which were early floor beams cut down their length, others were rafters, wall plates tie beams etc. from earlier forms of construction and could well have been re-used from the first build of the stables themselves. The only re-used timbers which obviously dated from the 17th century for their first use, were a purlin in the roof of the East Pavilion with a deep cavetto mould on one arris and a piece of possible architrave with a large ogee mould, the length of a ground floor window, used to level up flooring in the East Pavilion.

The construction of the roof of the central block and roof, partitions and upper floor of the pavilions is of a type used throughout the 18th century and possibly the end of the seventeenth century with iron bolts and straps to strengthen the main joints. This, with the re-use of earlier timber makes it difficult to date the alteration accurately. There is little documentary evidence available for the stable block, particularly for the 18th century, but an illustration of the house dated 1826² shows the East pavilion of the stables in the background with the roof much as it is today. Thus the alteration must pre-date 1826.

The first floor in the central block is of later construction, probably of the early 20th century. This is borne out in the method of construction, the brickwork used for the chimneys and the cast iron fireplaces. The floor is, however, constructed to take into account and use the hopper lights of the tall ground floor windows, suggesting that they may be of the same or slightly earlier date. These windows are made of steel sections which could date from the late 19th century

Oxfordshire

to mid-20th century. They certainly pre-date the Country Life photographs of 1949³.

The staircase blocks with their adjoining rooms are built up against the earlier outer ashlar facing of the south wall of the central block. The stairs themselves along with the panelled finish to the ground floor room of the east block are of late 19th century to early 20th century design. This, along with the garage block, could link through with the works carried out 1903-10⁴. However, the drainage plan dated 1897⁵ shows a similar plan outline to the present which may link to an earlier date for the outer walls of this part of the building.

What survives today of the 17th century building lies only in the walls of the central block and pavilions, and these are truncated. The main alteration of the 18th century, together with the several twentieth century alterations have conspired to remove all other early details.

Notes:

1. Christchurch Oxford, Evelyn MS 44 p206
2. Cornbury Park & the Forest of Wychwood, V. J. Watney p199
3. N.M.R./Country Life September 22, 1950
4. Cornbury Park & the Forest of Wychwood, V. J. Watney
5. Drainage Plan, Cornbury Park, dated 1897

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Cynthia Graham-Kerr

Granaries of South Oxfordshire

Since prehistoric times grain has formed a staple food, and the conservation of it a matter of great importance, and various methods and buildings were tried out to find the best way of preserving the grain from the weather and animals, such as rats.

Many farms had their granary on the upper floor of a cowshed; (R W Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p 209) - but he does not describe or illustrate the free standing square granary - his only mention of them is in the glossary of terms - part of paragraph 11, p 209 - "a building raised on staddle-stones" ⁽¹⁾.

These attractive little buildings were usually of wood and, as he said, raised on staddle-stones.

These mushroom shaped little pillars, around 60 cm high, were necessary to keep the rats out, who could not climb round the top, and were a most serious problem.

This granary (Fig 13) is the first of a series of granaries of South Oxfordshire which I hope to discover and record this year. It originally belonged to the Grange complex which is now much divided, built-up and converted to various uses - the cowsheds are now desirable apartments. It is situated in Goring and belongs to a nearby house, whose owner kindly let me sketch and photograph it. It is a 'later' one, perhaps 18th century, and it has cast iron staddles; folded carpet is stuffed between the staddles and the wood.

There are some interesting details; an elegant louvred ventilator, with a little wooden top-knot which caps the red-tiled roof, which has a row of semi-circular ones off-centre. The roof tiles may well be local, from Reading, as many of the local houses have tiles of the same semi-circular design.

The door hinges are nicely designed and hand-forged; it has had a latch at one time, but is now secured by a wooden peg. There is a good

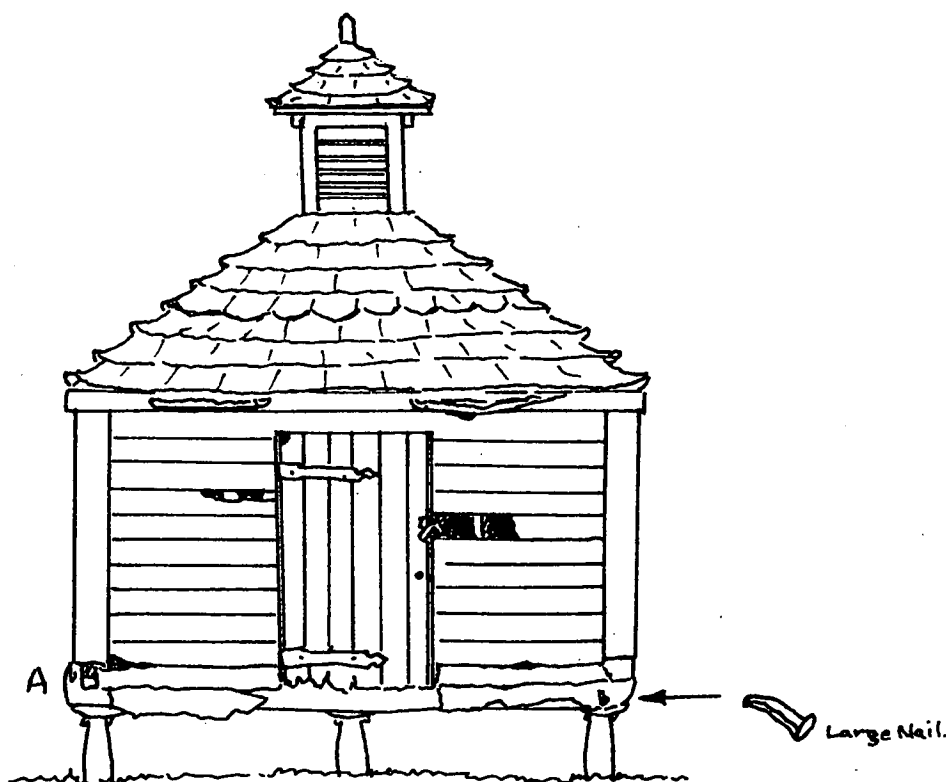


Fig 13. Granary at Goring.

deal of rotten boarding, and the owner hopes to restore it soon.

At the left corner (see Fig 13A) the wood has fallen away and the construction of the corner can be seen, with a mortised joint and the floorboard inside, just visible (Fig 15). A board on the right-hand corner has a huge nail of about 10-15 cm sticking out (Fig 13). At the side, the foot of one of the staddles is visible (Fig 14), the others are buried. There is a wooden framed window with six panes.

The guttering has collapsed; there are two portions hanging precariously in the front, several tiles have slipped, but it is not beyond repair.

It is encouraging that its owners wish to preserve the granary, as these pretty little storehouses are so often neglected and allowed to disintegrate.



Foot of staddle.

Fig 14.

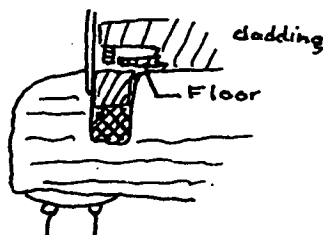


Fig 15.

Notes

1. So far this is the only reference I have found and would be glad to know of others.
2. The drawing may not be strictly accurate as it was taken from a sketch, made in the rain, resting on the bonnet of a car.

THE WALLINGFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Excavations At Cold Harbour Farm, Crowmarsh Colin M Clarke

Introduction

On 13 November 1993 Mr Jack Edwards of Cold Harbour Farm - Crowmarsh informed Wallingford Museum staff that a "lead coffin with human bones" had been found west of Cold Harbour House in the field (c SU462189) by a metal detectorist. The site is c 1 km from Wallingford, Ewelme and Benson and 0.5 km from Crowmarsh. The Oxfordshire County Archaeologist and The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) were informed and the coffin identified as Roman following a site meeting with Paul Smith, County Archaeologist and Paul Booth the OAU Roman specialist. On 16th November with the full permission and co-operation of the farmer, Mr Jack Edwards, his son Chris and the original finder Mr M Absolom a small group from The Wallingford Archaeological and Historical Society

(TWHAS) excavated the grave site and recovered those pieces of the coffin left in situ.

No attempt was made to excavate the grave site once the coffin had been recovered and the site recorded. The ground at the time was very soft after a particularly wet summer and autumn to the extent that the Chalk Marl subsoil normally quite hard to the trowel was not unlike cottage cheese. The farmer also had a crop of barley planted and so the site was back-filled after much of the spoil had been removed to the OAU for sieving under controlled conditions.

In 1996 one of the metal detectorists provided information on the location of finds from Cold Harbour Farm, and an interesting group of Roman finds has been recovered from the field immediately south of the cemetery field. A limited field walk, identified a small concentration of grey ware and red colour coated ware. This may help to locate the settlement site, and further work including a Geophysical survey and detailed field walking may provide the detail which would enable the settlement to be located.

Geology

The site lies on the Upper Cretaceous Lower Chalk formation of Chalk and Chalk Marl with no flints, which is just outside the limits of the gravel terraces of the River Thames. The field has a slope from east to west and drainage of the site is quite good. There are however 4 or 5 small areas where the drainage is not as good and, according to the farmer the ground remains wet after the rest of the field has dried out. The site lies in one of these 'wet' areas.

The Site

Cold Harbour Farm lies within an area containing numerous archaeological sites ranging from the Neolithic to the Medieval Period. There are known Roman sites at Benson and Ewelme as well as 3 or 4 at Crowmarsh. There is a major high status late Bronze Age riverside site some 2 km south-west of the site and Grimms Dyke, a prehistoric earthwork, is about 1.5 km from the site. The name of the farm "Cold Harbour" has no known connection with the Roman occupation and settlement but more likely relates to the later re-use of a Roman road. This road itself follows the ancient trackway - the Icknield Way which lies some 1.3 km to the east of the site on rising ground.

Prior to the discovery of the lead coffin there had not been any examination of the field other than by metal detector. Three users found Roman coins, generally well scattered and worn and collected Roman pottery from an area to the west of the field. A quantity of 17 century Civil War metalwork has been found along with a light scatter of Medieval metalwork. However there is as yet no sight of tile or building stone to indicate the Roman occupation site. Following the recovery of the coffin, metal detecting has recovered more Roman coins and field walking has located a pottery scatter around SU 46241896.

The Excavations

There have been 2 seasons of excavations so far, starting in

Oxfordshire

462300

462400

462500

462600

462700

The Cottage

CLACK'S LINE

5931

Fig 16. Crowmarsh. Plan showing geophysical survey grid. Lead coffin was found at the centre of the grid.

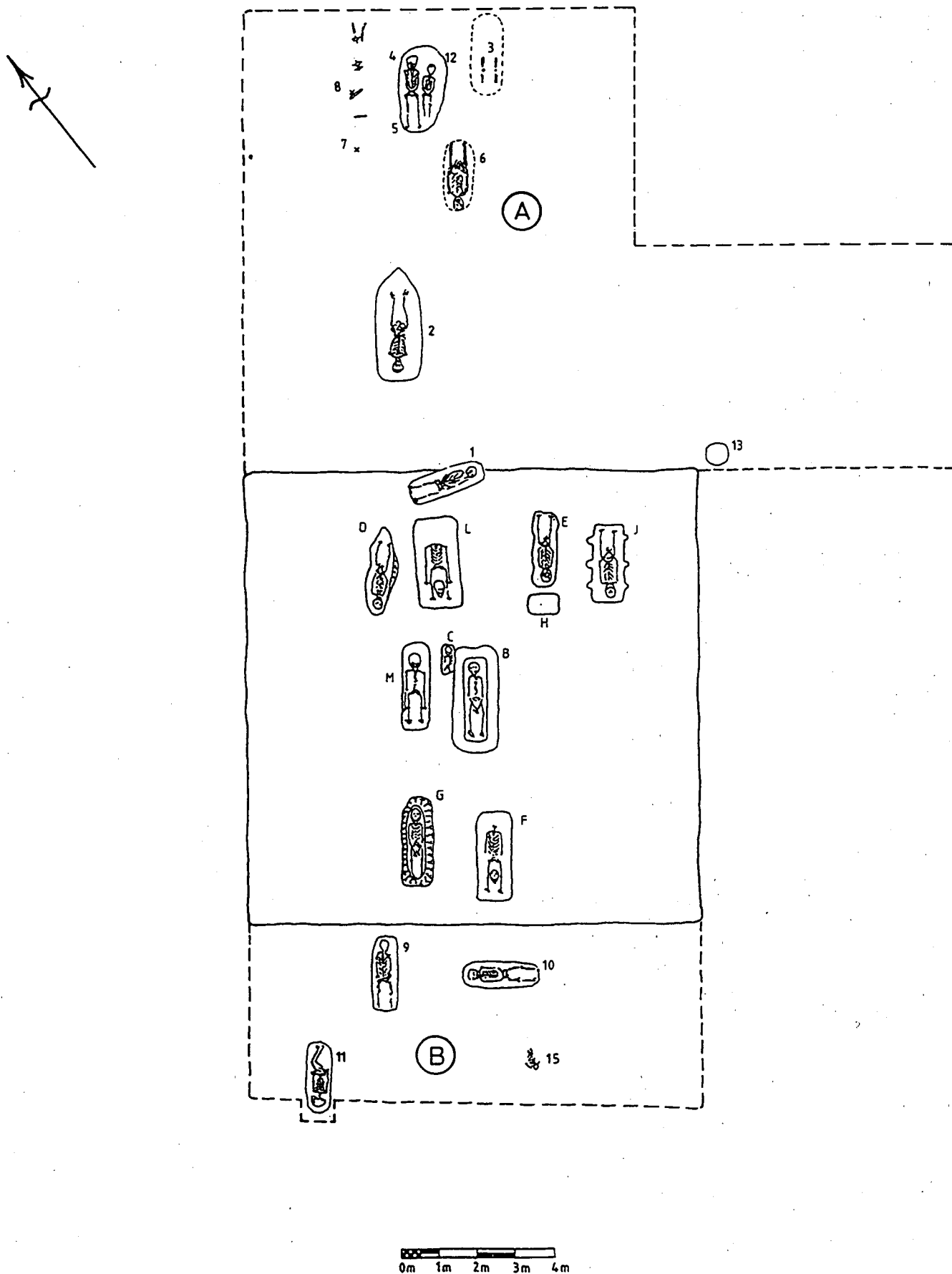


Fig 17. Crowmarsh. Plan of cemetery.

Oxfordshire

September 1994, and preceded by a geophysical survey of an area 120 m x 85 m centred on the lead coffin. This was carried out for The OCC Archaeological Service by the Bartlett-Clark Consultancy. The results were strikingly vague with very few anomalies to investigate and consequently offering little guidance for the excavations. The relocation of the lead coffin pit formed by its removal and then the full extent of the original grave cut was the first priority. Once this had been established an area 12 m x 12 m was opened up by machine to sub-soil level centred on the lead coffin.

The modern ploughsoil, approximately 0.2 m deep covered a chalky clay mix (6-10 cm deep) of the chalk marl subsoil and the modern ploughsoil over the whole of the excavated area. It was not possible to identify the original soil level.

Although the main feature was the lead coffin grave identified by the letter 'B' it was assumed that there were more burials adjacent to the original one. Grave pit 'B' measured 2.61 m long and 1.1 m wide at the north end and 1.08 m at the south end. There was distinct evidence for a wooden outer coffin in the form of black organic/fibrous material with numerous fragments of the lead coffin on the base of the pit. A small indentation cut into the west side of the pit was found to contain what appeared to be pieces of skull. The first piece, merely a yellow stain on the chalk marl, was approximately 3.5 cm above a second piece of skull. Initial diagnosis was for animal skull, but this was later revised as being part of the skull of the infant burial 'C'. This was first found as a deposit of a colour coated pedestal beaker with 2 unidentifiable pieces of iron. The burial 'C' was placed south of these deposits by 8.5 cm and in a very shallow scoop with very poorly defined edges. This burial was very fortunate to remain intact as it lay no more than 3.5 cm below the base of the ploughsoil.

The removal of the ploughsoil also revealed the first additional burial 'D'. The soil conditions were such that the exposed chalk dried out very quickly and the grave pit sides were effectively lost, although a photograph was taken which subsequently proved very useful in locating the general dimensions of the grave. There being no other graves visible despite a thorough cleaning of the top of the marl, further machining was undertaken. This immediately produced four more burials whose extents were marked immediately. Further machining found three more burials and evidence for two more, probably ploughed out, leaving in one case a few fragments of bone and two sherds of colour coated ware. The other ploughed out burial was probably that of an infant as the dimensions of the grave/pit? were only 0.82 m x 0.58 m, the feature being only 1 cm deep. There were no finds from this feature!

The graves were apparently grouped about the 'central' burial 'B' with 4 burials to the north, 2 south and 2 west. The burials were oriented roughly north-south with D, E and J having their heads to the south and B, C, F, G, L, M having their heads to the north. This pattern is complicated by F and L being decapitations with the skulls placed between the

legs. The infant burial 'C' may be a part decapitation with the top of the skull placed in the grave pit 'B'.

Other burial practices include a possible canopy over 'J', this grave outline showing three clear 'handles' on each side of the pit which may be post holes of the canopy supports. An interesting feature of 'G' was the placing of a piece of flint between the front teeth - this was quite clearly deliberately placed and was not the result of soil action. It is thought that this practice is the first to be recorded in the Roman Empire! The infant burial 'C' also had a piece of flint associated with the lower jaw although some 3.5 cm from it. The burial 'C' has been identified as being approximately 2 years old, while 'G' is the burial of a young woman aged 15-20 years, with poor dental health. Burial No 2 from the 1995 season, a young male aged 16-23 had flint pieces placed around the inside of his coffin. Is age perhaps significant for the placement of the flint?

Grave goods were included in C, F, G and L in the form of a complete pot in 'C' and sherds in the others. Grave 'F' had a quite fine double sided bone comb as well as a pot base while 'M' had 2 nails 11.4 cm and 11.2 cm long.

6 Coins were found variously in graves B, F and L and have been identified although in poor condition, as belonging to the houses of Valentinian and Valens (AD 364-378).

Excavations in August 1995 revealed a further 12 burials including that of an infant, possibly still born or having died in child birth as there were fragments of large bone scattered around the child.

The burials could be divided into two distinct groups of grave types - deep, well cut and prepared graves with generally straight sides and a flat base often with evidence for a coffin, set around the central burial in the lead coffin, and those on the periphery of the central group in shallow scooped graves with indistinct sides and generally a sloping bottom. These burials appeared to be less well ordered, possibly even hurried interments following death from an epidemic? These shallow graves had generally been disturbed by ploughing and also were in two groups, north and south of the central group, possibly two separate families or differing sides of the same family. The additional graves found in 1995 have given the cemetery a distinctly linear layout. The position of grave No 11 in the south baulk may indicate further graves to the south while the animal burial No 8 may extend beyond the north baulk. If this is the case, then the cemetery may contain further burials to the north.

There was 1 west-east, 1 east-west burial, 6 north-south, 2 south-north and 2 impossible to orientate. Burial 2 has been provisionally identified as that of a male aged 18-23 with a height of approximately 2 m. This shows a considerable increase on the previous burials and an increase on the average of 1.70 m of 0.3 m. All the burials were supine extended, with the exception of No 11 which had been placed on its back with the legs then twisted into the flexed

position. The generally contorted appearance of the burial gave rise to speculation as to whether Rigor Mortis was still present at the time of burial.

There were few finds with the 1995 burials, except as follows: Grave 1, supine extended and oriented east-west, had 1 copper alloy coin, a small iron rod and 3 iron nails. Grave No 2 supine extended and oriented north-south, initially appeared as a boat shaped stain in the chalk, 2.8 m long x 1.15 m wide oriented north-south. Excavation revealed a single burial with wood staining indicating the presence of a coffin. Over the feet there was a rectangular outline stain as of a small box placed over the lower legs and feet. There were no finds to indicate that the box had any contents when buried, and the outline remains an enigma. Burial 4 was placed in the same shallow scooped grave as 12 which was a smaller burial possibly a child or young adolescent. These two burials both, supine extended and oriented north-south, overlapped, indicating interment at the same time. Grave 6, supine extended and oriented south-north, had an iron loop/clip placed across and at right angles to the lower legs, this may have been a pair of tweezers. Burial 7 consisted of only part of a femur(?) and cannot reliably be considered as a burial in its own right. The very shallow nature of the graves has caused several burials to have been ploughed away leaving only odd fragments scattered around. Burial 8 is clearly animal, type unidentified as yet, and the full extent yet to be determined. Burial 9, was supine extended, and oriented north-south. The grave contained an animal tooth, 2 iron nails and a sherd of red colour coated ware. Burial 10, supine extended and oriented west-east was found with a single sherd and an animal (bovine) tooth. Burial 11 gave rise to speculation regarding the presence of Rigor Mortis but was otherwise unremarkable. The last burial was found predictably on the final day, and was that of a very small infant/baby, possibly still born or died in child birth. Fragments of large bone found in the immediate vicinity of the child may have been from the mother.

The 1994 Burials as examined February 1996

Burial 'B'. Height 1.71 m. This burial, supine extended, in a lead coffin, was most probably that of a male aged between 30 and 50 years with a height of approximately 1.71 m. This burial was quite severely damaged and most of the bone was in a fragmentary state. A healed rib fracture and mild osteophytes was present as was a degree of dental calculus. A bronze coin of Valentinian date, AD 364-378 was recovered from the coffin fill.

Burial 'C'. The burial of a child aged 2, supine extended with the left arm positioned above the head. A colour coated pedestal foot beaker and 2 pieces of iron, possibly originally connected, perhaps hinged were found with the burial which was contained in a shallow scooped grave.

Burial 'D'. Height 1.73 m. This near complete, though fragmentary burial, supine extended, was of an adult male aged 40-50 years, buried with an animal metapodial. There

was a healed fracture of the right clavicle and vertebral osteophytes was present, as was a very high degree of dental wear.

Burial 'E'. A supine extended, incomplete burial, due to plough damage, of a male aged 33-45 years and showing the incisor crowding also found in L and M. An iron nail was found in the grave.

Burial 'F'. Height 1.63 m. This burial was that of a quite severely anaemic adult male aged approx. 30-40 years. He was buried, decapitated, the skull placed between the lower legs, with a double-sided bone comb, a bronze coin of Valentinian and a pot base. There is a cut mark on the 3rd cervical vertebra indicating that the decapitation was performed from the front. Cribra Orbitalia was present.

Burial 'G'. This supine extended burial, near complete though very fragmentary, was that of a female aged 15 to 20 years. She also was quite anaemic, apparently not unusual for the time and had mild Cribra Orbitalia. The young woman also, and unusually, suffered from numerous dental cavities and must have had very severe toothache quite frequently!

Burial 'J'. Height 1.68 m. A supine extended burial of a 40+ year old female buried with an animal tooth. Two iron nails were recovered from the grave.

Burial 'L'. Height 1.56 m. This near complete, though fragmentary, supine extended burial, of a female aged 25-35 years was decapitated and the skull placed between the knees. The upper vertebrae were attached to the head at the time of burial, the 5th cervical vertebra having a cut mark on the body showing that decapitation was carried out from the front. Dental crowding and rotation were present as with burials E and M. Traces of wood, 4 iron nails and 3 teeth were recovered from the bottom of the grave and 4 copper alloy coins and some unidentifiable bone fragments from the top of the grave fill. This grave almost certainly contained a burial above the one recovered but it had been ploughed away leaving only fragments to indicate the over/under burial.

Burial 'M'. Height 1.61 m. A supine extended burial of a female aged 25-35 years with dental crowding and rotation as with burials E and L. There was also evidence of a dental abscess. The grave contained a pottery sherd, 5 iron nails, wood fragments and some unidentified organic material from the area of the sternum.

The Coinage

The site has been regularly examined by Mr M Absolom, the metal detectorist who found the lead coffin, over a number of years. To date he has recovered some 70 to 75 bronze 4th century coins from the field. Other metal detectorists have recovered a few more bronze coins bringing the total to between 80 and 85 with 3 silver coins.

Coins were found in three burials 'B', 'L' and 'F' (1994).

Publications

There was 1 surface find and 1 coin from burial 1 (1995) and they are identified as follows.

All are bronzes from the period 364-378 in the reigns of Valentinian and Valens: there are 2 Securitas Republicae of Valens, 3 Gloria Romanorum and 1 Securitas Republicae of Valentinian. The coins are all in a very poor condition and for 3, identification has a small area of doubt. The full listing can be found in the excavation archive held at Wallingford Museum.

The Pottery

The pottery found consisted of one complete pot, one pot broken in half in antiquity, one pot base, 7 sherds and 3 pieces of tile. The complete pot, found in grave 'C', is an early 4th century flask of Oxfordshire Colour Coated Ware with a pedestal foot. The maximum height is 108 mm and diameter 42 mm. Although the flask is complete it consists of 5 pieces. The broken pot found in grave 'G' is 95% complete and was broken around the girth in antiquity. It is a medium sandy grey ware beaker having a height of 95 mm and a diameter of approximately 80 mm. It is of a type found to date from the 1st century up to the 4th century, possibly burnished. It has a circumferential groove and a possible cross under the base. Several graves contained fragments of red colour coated ware and it must remain conjectural as to whether these sherds are residual or all that remains after plough damage.

Conclusion

The grouping of 20 of the burials about the higher status burial would seem to indicate that this could well be a family group from a nearby villa or high status farm house. The lead coffin clearly indicates a fairly wealthy 'family' and the percentage of graves with grave goods at 38% is a little above the general level for late 4th century cemeteries. The burial practices are also very interesting with 2 decapitations, 8 burials apparently not in wooden coffins while the rest quite clearly were, with wood residues and coffin nails recovered. The wood residue has been examined and tentatively identified as Oak in the main with one coffin possibly of Beech. These are reasonably high status burials of the late 4th century, from the coin evidence, from a local villa site and not a town cemetery as with other lead coffin burials at Dorchester and Abingdon.

PUBLICATIONS

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

Exploring Past Times - a series of booklets based on the archaeology of the Dunstable area and written for children; profusely illustrated

Part 1 - The Prehistoric Period (50p)

Part 2 - Dunstable in the Roman Period (50p)

Part 3 - The Middle Ages (70p)

Manshead Journal No 35 - Reports of excavations and fieldwalking in and around Dunstable (£2)

The above may be obtained from the Editor of South Midlands Archaeology.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Lithics and landscapes: archaeological discoveries on the Thames Water pipeline at Gatehampton Farm, Goring, Oxfordshire 1985-92, Allen, T G with Barton, N and Brown, A 1995, *Thames Valley Landscapes* Monograph No 7, OUCA for OAU, Oxford

Excavations at the Devil's Quoits, Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire 1972-3 and 1988, Barclay, A, Gray, M Lambrick, G 1995, *Thames Valley Landscapes*, the Windrush Valley, No 3, OUCA for OAU, Oxford

Two Oxfordshire Anglo-Saxon cemeteries: Berinsfield and Didcot, Boyle, A Dodd, A, Miles, D and Mudd, A 1995, *Thames Valley Landscapes* Monograph No. 8

In God's House and in Harvey's house: excavations at Eynsham Abbey 1991-3, G D Keevill, 1995, *Thames Valley Landscapes* Monograph No 6, OAU, Oxford

Evaluation at St Peters Church, Brackley, G D Keevill, A Hardy, C Underwood-Keevill and A Boyle, 1993-4, *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 25 (1995), 180-1

THE WOLVERTON AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Nineteen Hundreds by Frank Markham

A recent history of our locality, including the boatyard and tram, by a much celebrated historian and past President of our Society. Reprint 1992. £12.

Wolverton, New Bradwell in old photographs

76 views. £4.50

Stony Stratford, the Town and the Road by Dr O F Brown
The road, and transport, inns, social provision, the Fire and Postal services, banks, law and order. £4.50

A Roman site at Stanton Low by Charmain Woodfield with Casper Johnson. £6.00

Victorian and Edwardian Milton Keynes; edited by Bob Croft.
About 80 old views of the area. £4.95

80 Years of Tathall End; farmer Harry Geary's recollections. £3.00

Available from Mrs Audrey Lambert, Hon Sec, 82, Clarence Road, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes. MK11 1JD

REVIEWS

A LATE ROMAN CEMETERY AT BLETSOE

Michael Dawson, *Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph Series 1* (1994) Available from Peter Wood, 14 Glebe Avenue, Flitwick, Bedford. MK45 1HS, price £12 incl p+p.

That this report, the first in a new series, has been published at all is good news. The site has a long history of interventions of which no detailed account was previously available and the present report has been compiled from less than adequate records. It is a useful addition to the literature on Late Roman cemeteries to set beside, for instance, the Manshead Society's report on the cemetery at Dunstable, *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* No 15 (1981). Fifty-four graves, most of which were orientated roughly north-south, were excavated at Bletsoe between 1966 and 1970. Apart from coffin nails, hob nails, a knife, finger ring and bracelet, there were few finds which could be directly associated with the burials and close dating of the cemetery is not possible, the best guess being late fourth-century. A number of such regularly orientated cemeteries certainly last well into the fifth.

So far so good. Only a rash or stupid person ventures criticism of colleague's work (inevitably inviting reciprocal detailed scrutiny in the future - people in glass houses etc.), however, it has to be said that there are some problems with this report.

Firstly, there is no plan of the village to which the excavated areas can be related; a small point but not very helpful for those without an intimate knowledge of Bletsoe. Secondly, it seems to be taken for granted (page 2) that there is a villa near the cemetery but the evidence for this is nowhere clearly presented. The inference is apparently based on a lost column base, on finds of tile (although little is recorded in the report) and three fairly ephemeral structures. One of these (Structure 2) is a stone-lined drain running beneath the modern road. This is initially interpreted (page 4) as being possibly of recent date, but in the conclusion (page 33) it is cited amongst the evidence for a villa. Structure 3 is apparently a corn-drying oven which doesn't help the proposal much either way. However, interestingly enough, there is listed amongst the iron finds, but not otherwise

Reviews

commented upon, a piece of an iron pipe-collar indicative of the presence of a wooden water pipe supply which may be good evidence for a high-status structure. Thirdly, Figure 2 has no north point and the features shown in this trench cannot be clearly related to what is presumably the same trench shown in Fig 1; nor can the context numbers in the description be easily related to those shown on the figure. Fourthly, the cemetery is said to have been dug into a 'field system' (page 7) referring to Fig 5 which incidentally is actually of small finds. One is left to deduce that the evidence for the 'field system' consists of one, roughly NW-SE, ditch (Fig 11) and perhaps a second ditch at right angles to it cut by burials S2-4. Neither ditch is numbered on the plan. Finally, the plan of the cemetery on Figure 1 does not correspond well with that on Figure 11. It would be uncharitable, although quite possible, to go on!

It is widely acknowledged that most archaeological reports make very boring reading, even to other archaeologists. We 'hired hands' owe it to a wider public to attempt to be clear, concise and accurate in our presentations. Only six out of ten to Bedfordshire for this one. Perhaps the next monograph may be a little more reader-friendly. I look forward to seeing it. Anyrate, congratulations on the trilingual summary!

Michael Farley

CHILTERN ARCHAEOLOGY : RECENT WORK. A HANDBOOK FOR THE NEXT DECADE.

Edited by Robin Holgate. 297mm. Pp.vi + 182, 70 ills. Dunstable: The Book Castle, 1995. ISBN 1-871199-52-2. £16.99.

In September 1990 a one-day conference on the archaeology of the Chilterns took place in Luton. Papers given then, together with some that were commissioned later, form the substance of this book. It reviews the current state of knowledge, partly from the viewpoint of individual projects, and professes to set an agenda for future work.

Among the two dozen papers by almost as many authors, the surveys by Holgate, Wingfield and Hunn on respectively the early prehistoric period, Anglo-Saxon settlement and the medieval landscape are particularly useful. But other studies prove disappointing. As Branigan remarks in his introduction, variety is the key-word both to this volume and its subject. Hence we see unevenness in approach and literary style, in content and topicality, and in the quality of supporting illustrations together with their reproduction.

We are taken from the period-overviews already mentioned to local areas of interest, where individual sites predominate to the detriment of understanding the wider setting. The volume ends with two disconnected papers on ceramics followed by several weak essays concerning the county archaeological services. It becomes a mixed bag.

Sadly, an important point is lost. Detailed local studies of the kind and potential quality shown here should be a

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strength to build upon. They are the means to characterise the value and potential use of the archaeology of different areas and thus to begin to husband resources effectively to create a better understanding of the past. Much relevant evidence for the Chilterns is contained in this book but frustratingly has not been used to develop strategies for

future investigation that will expand real knowledge. Most local effort seems to be concerned with collecting data rather than with analysing information. It is time to change.

Brian Dix

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