SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

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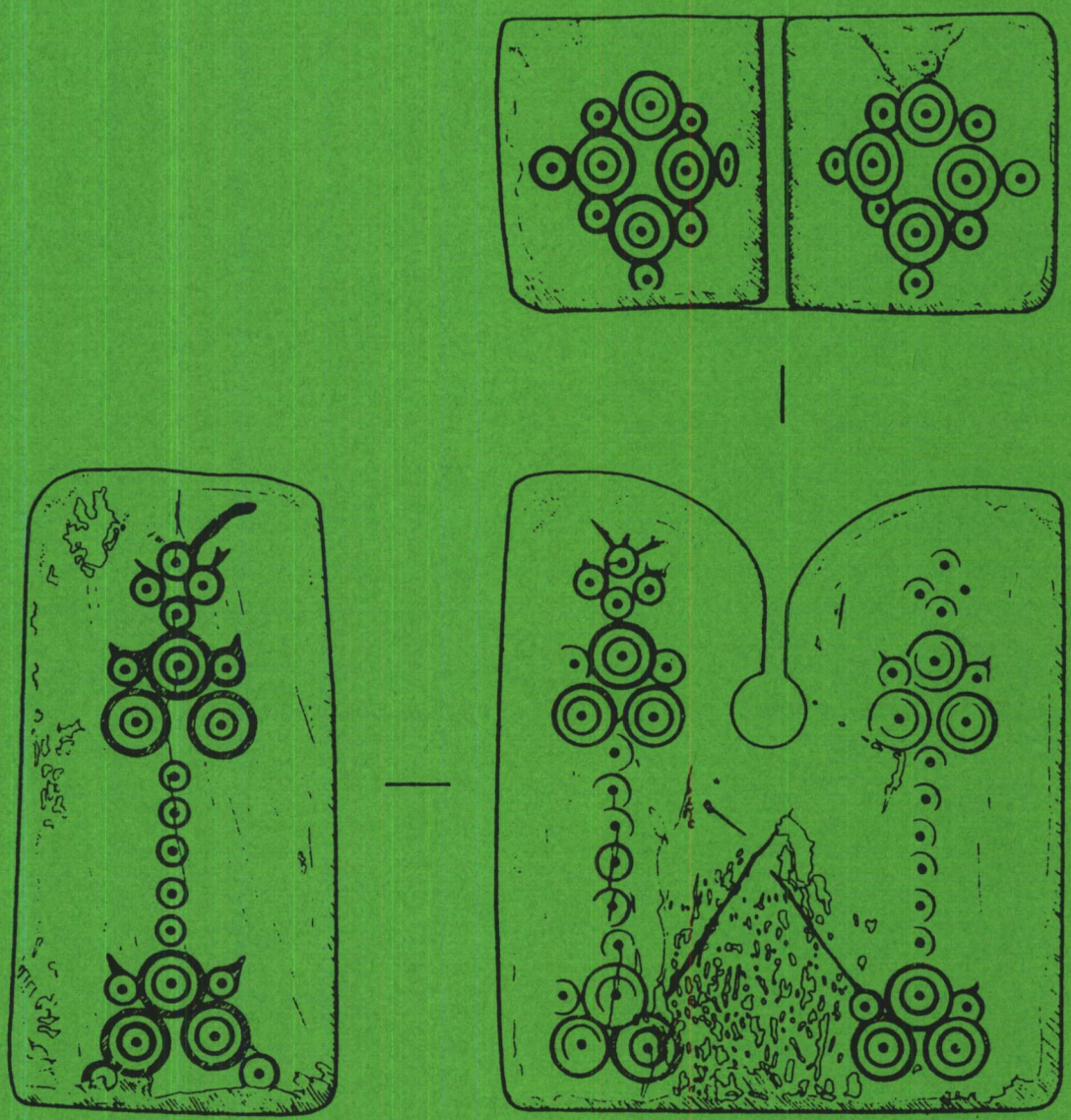

CBA SOUTH MIDLANDS GROUP

SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

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

NUMBER 30, 2000

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ISSN 0960-7552

EDITORIAL

This volume, number 30, the last one of the century and of the millennium, has even more contributors than any previous volume as the publication continues to chronicles the work carried out in our region.

When we reached volume 20 a cumulative index was produced, since then each volume has had its own index. Now we have reached the milestone of number 30 we are going to produce another cumulative index of all volumes to date. We printed off hundreds of copies of the previous index and still have a good many left so this time we are going to take full advantage of the technology available and put it up on the World Wide Web. For those who do not use the web, but have a computer, we will make a floppy disk copy available if people send a disk and a stamped addressed envelope. For those who wish to have a paper copy we will make them available at cost.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those who sent in reports and ask that they, and anyone else, send in articles for *SMA* 31. Please send a note, however short, of any work carried out in the four counties.

Copy date for *SMA* 31 is **31st March 2001**; please refer to Notes for Contributors.

Barry Horne AIFA

The CBA Spring Conference was held on 15th April 2000 at the Community Hall, Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

The subject of this year's spring conference was "Death and Burial in the South Midlands". An introduction from Ted Legg, the new chairperson, followed opening cups of coffee, tea and biscuits. Five speakers gave short, but excellent talks accompanied by slides and overheads. Barry Horne told the audience about "Skeletons I have known"; Andy Chapman spoke about "The Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery at Gayhurst, Buckinghamshire"; Mark Holmes talked about the "Excavations adjacent to Wing Churchyard ". This was followed by lunch. Angela Boyle then started the afternoon talks with "What can we learn from Human Remains"; Colin Clarke spoke on the subject of "Death and Burial in Roman Wallingford"; followed by Andy Chapman again, this time telling us about "Two Burial Sites in Northamptonshire". Each speaker answered questions from the audience after their individual talks. The afternoon finished with closing remarks from Ted Legg, followed by tea, coffee and biscuits for anyone who wished to stay.

The conference was attended by approximately 70 people, including 10 members of the committee.

Chris Edbury

BEDFORDSHIRE

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Bedford, Cutler Hammer Sportsground (TL 0203 4737)
Mike Luke and Gary Edmondson

Archaeological evaluation comprised geophysical survey (undertaken by West Yorkshire Archaeology Service) and trial excavation over a 2.2 ha study area.

The earliest human activity within the study area is indicated by three Bronze Age ring ditches. The ditches of two of these were examined by trial excavation and found to be *c* 1.6 m wide and 0.5 m deep. They varied in diameter from 19 m to 22 m. Although a small number of internal features were identified none contained human remains.

Residual pottery within later features suggests early-middle Iron Age unspecific activity took place within the study area. A number of pits and ditches contained late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, which also occurred as residual finds within later features. Although no clear focus was discernible it is likely a farmstead of this period was situated within the study area.

A system of ditched boundaries was established within the study area during the Roman period. These form rectangular enclosures and trackways. Although no clear focus was identified, the presence of pits, isolated postholes and a hearth suggest these were associated with settlement. It is likely that this is the continuation of the Roman settlement originally believed to be centred on Kempston Church End.

Biddenham, 43-45 Main Road (TL 0226 4989)
Martin Wilson and Matt Edgeworth

An archaeological evaluation carried out in November 1998 at a proposed residential development at Biddenham, west of Bedford, revealed a range of archaeological features and an artefact assemblage, indicative of occupation during the Saxo-Norman period. The site was situated within the northern perimeter of a large oval enclosure of unknown antiquity (HER 15271).

Further investigations were undertaken between February and May 1999, carried out in stages, comprising excavation and watching briefs.

Excavation on the new building footprint revealed a large area of disturbance, understood to be an extraction pit, of unknown date, but infilled in recent years. Two east-west aligned parallel ditches, *c* 6.5 m apart, were investigated, each containing 12th-13th century ceramics, which could possibly have been the footings of a timber-framed structure. An area of limestone paving laid over one of these ditches and a later cobbled surface demonstrated the re-use of this site in the later medieval period.

The watching brief uncovered a further extent of stratified features and deposits that dated from the Saxo-Norman period to the late medieval. Many features of post-medieval date were also recorded during construction of the site access, some of which may seal earlier deposits.

Biggleswade, Stratton Local Centre (TL 2027 4420)
Mike Luke, Matt Edgeworth and Rob Edwards

A trial trench evaluation followed by an open area excavation was undertaken over a Study Area 0.8 ha in extent. This was located to the north of previously excavated areas which had revealed extensive Saxon and medieval settlements.

The earliest evidence for human activity comprised a presumed Bronze Age ring ditch, 15 m in diameter. No diagnostic artefacts were recovered from the ditch fills although the ditch was truncated by a small pit containing Iron Age pottery.

Dispersed Saxon settlement features were identified over the western half of the excavation. These comprised a large water pit, possible hearth and isolated pits and postholes. The small pottery assemblage contemporary with this activity was dominated by shell tempered Maxey-type wares with a single sherd of sand tempered Ipswich ware. Trial excavation to the north suggest this is the most northern extent of the Saxon settlement.

The majority of the features dated to the medieval period. These comprised ditched enclosures which contained both pit clusters, probable water pits and isolated features. Although no buildings were located the quantity of pottery and animal bone in the fills of these, suggests they were occupied rather than simply animal compounds. The majority of the pottery can be dated to the 12th-14th centuries. Locally manufactured sand tempered fabrics predominate with small quantities of regional imports from Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Essex. A limited quantity of tile and brick of late medieval/post medieval date was recovered. These were not present in sufficient quantities to suggest a tiled building.

In summary the open area excavation has identified the northern limit of the Saxon and medieval settlements which areknown to have extended over 10 ha.

Dunstable, Grove House Gardens (TL 180 224)
Mike Luke and Mark Phillips

A watching brief was undertaken during construction of sewer manholes and compound. A single pit was observed contained post-medieval artefacts.

Eggington, Land Off Leighton Road (SP 9631 2587)
Matt Edgeworth and Martin Wilson

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in June 1999 in advance of the creation of two new lakes, on land to the north-east of Eggington, South Bedfordshire. The development lay within an area of pasture, containing earthwork remains of part of the township's medieval field system. The surviving ridge and furrow was surveyed. Eight trial trenches were then machine excavated. No archaeological features were located. The finds from the topsoil comprised isolated pottery sherds and a horseshoe nail, all of 13th-14th century date.

Flitton, Church Of St John The Baptist (TL 059 359)
Nick Shepherd, Tony Walsh and Mark Phillips

Two separate episodes of archaeological recording were undertaken at the Church of St John the Baptist.

The replacement of sections of timber flooring in the nave required the removal of sub-floor fill. Relatively compacted layers beneath the fill may derive from earlier phases of use of the church or possibly even pre-date the existing structure. The pier bases of the current 15th century building cut through some of these layers. Disarticulated human remains were recovered from the fill and from a charnel pit cut into it. The exact date of this grave clearance could not be established but the find of a coffin fitting suggests a 16th-17th century date for at least some of the graves.

A watching brief was also carried out during drainage works within the churchyard to the north and south of the church. Deposits of both demolition and construction debris were observed. Where visible, the foundations for buttresses appeared to be unusually wide. Furthermore, trenching next to the church did not expose undisturbed geological levels. However, it was not possible to determine whether or not the wall foundations themselves had been built on "made-up" ground.

Potton, Myers Road (TL 224 498)
Martin Wilson and Mark Phillips

An eight week excavation in advance of housing development was undertaken between July and September 1999. The main trench was centred over the greatest concentration of features located by earlier geophysical survey and trial trenching. Three other smaller trenches were located to cover areas between the trial trenches and to examine a possible palaeochannel identified from aerial photographs.

The earliest features on the site consisted of a number of pits, dated to the Saxo-Norman period. The largest group was found in the south-eastern part of the main trench. Here the pits were closely intercut, first appearing in plan as an irregular area of dark soil. When excavated the irregular patches proved to be a number of intercut pits, usually rounded or oval in plan with a shallow profile. The fills were dark, containing a large proportion of charcoal, moderate amounts of daub or burnt clay, and small quantities of pottery.

The medieval period was characterised by a series of renewed boundary ditches. Certain smaller elements of these formed enclosures in the south-eastern part of the site. A number of pits also dated to this period. Finds evidence suggests that the enclosure ditches had gone out of use by the end of the medieval period.

Field name evidence indicates that the development area was formerly known as The Myres, indicating the presence of marshy ground. The excavated evidence suggests that during the Saxo-Norman and medieval periods it represented an intermittently used area of marginal land on the periphery of the township.

Leighton Buzzard, All Saints' Church (SP 9183 2486)
Martin Wilson

An archaeological evaluation and subsequent watching brief were carried out during the construction of new soakaways within the churchyard to the west of the church itself. Layers of rubble recorded during the investigations are likely to relate to the demolition of the Prebend House of Leighton Buzzard in *c* 1810. Digitised and super-imposed map evidence revealed the deposits to be located within the site of the mansion, whilst pictorial representations and written sources provided corroborative evidence for its structural characteristics. Following the evaluation the soakaways were successfully located away from the inferred positions of significant structural elements, such as walls and floors.

Pulloxhill, St James' Church (TL 062 338)
Tony Walsh

Archaeological investigation and recording was undertaken during the construction of a French drain. In particular, it was hoped that evidence relating to the structure of the church, prior to the rebuilding by J T Wing in 1845, would be revealed.

The medieval foundations of the chancel were exposed and evidence for two blocked doors was revealed on the south wall. The extension and remodelling of the chancel *c* 1740 was indicated by the exposed base of a corner buttress, which once stood at the west end of the building, and by variation in the foundations and walling. The remains of windows constructed at this time, but subsequently infilled or partially blocked, were visible on both sides of the building. Buttresses were added at the mid-point of the lengthened wall.

The foundations of the 1845-6 nave were exposed. Evidence for the construction of the nave and shortening of the chancel to its present length was clearly visible.

Ravensden, All Saints' Church (TL 0777 5431)
Gary Edmondson and Martin Wilson

A scheme of intermittent archaeological inspection and recording was undertaken between February and June 1999 during a programme of construction. The building works principally comprised a modification and extension to the early 20th century vestry and improvement of car parking facilities fronting the churchyard.

Nothing of archaeological significance was present in the car parking area. In the area of the vestry extension the remains of at least 24 inhumations were encountered in a much disturbed area. Bones were retrieved for re-interment in the churchyard. Excavation of wall foundation trenches revealed the cobbled raft foundations of the north wall of the medieval church. Subsequent drainage works to the south-east of the church produced medieval pottery and ceramic roofing tile fragments. The architectural characteristics of the features of a doorway in the north aisle were also recorded in detail during its unblocking and restoration.

Sandy, Land Adjacent To 6 Stratford Road (TL 182 478)
Martin Wilson

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during a barn conversion on land adjacent to 6 Stratford Road, Sandy. The site lay to the south of the known Romano-British settlement and close to the purported course of a Roman road. During the groundwork, human skeletal remains were exposed. Subsequent investigations, largely confined to construction trenches, revealed the development area to be situated within an inhumation cemetery that probably dates to the early Romano-British period. Thirteen individual graves were located. Where identifiable, orientation was generally northeast-southwest. A small assemblage (25 sherds) of pottery was recovered, ranging in date from the early-middle Iron Age to the post-medieval period. The size of the cemetery could not be fully ascertained, but it is believed to extend beyond the development area.

The results of the fieldwork have made a useful contribution to knowledge of the southern hinterland of Romano-British Sandy. They have confirmed the presence of a probable early Romano-British cemetery, first recorded *c* 1900 (Johnston 1974), between the small town and the site of the ford over an un-named minor tributary of the River Ivel.

Reference

Johnston D 1974; "The Roman Settlement at Sandy, Bedfordshire", *BAJ*, 9, 41

Shefford, Ampthill Road (TL 1383 3885)
Mike Luke

Archaeological evaluation comprising three trial trenches was undertaken in advance of a planning application for residential development. An area of 19th century quarrying was located extending over at least one quarter of the application area. Two archaeological features, both believed to be Roman in origin were identified; a ditch and a posthole. Roman pottery but no other artefacts was recovered. The evaluation is adjacent to a known area of Roman remains discovered during 19th century quarrying and believed to include a cemetery and possible temple. The results suggest the site is on the periphery of this settlement.

Stevington, The Old Vicarage (SP 9904 5360)
Matt Edgeworth

A watching brief was carried out during building work to the rear of the Old Vicarage in Stevington, situated in an archaeologically sensitive area, south of St Mary's churchyard. The work involved the demolition of an existing conservatory and the construction of an extension, together with enlargement of the patio area. As the garden sloped down towards the house, a considerable volume of soil had to be excavated. Three pits of post-medieval date and other features and layers thought to be of recent origin were recorded. Residual sherds of pottery dated to the 12th-13th centuries were found but any early features had been destroyed during the post-medieval period.

Yielden, St Mary's Church (TL 011 671)
Sean Steadman, Tony Walsh and Jerry Stone

Archaeological investigation and recording were undertaken during the construction of a French drain around the perimeter of the church.

The medieval foundations were exposed revealing evidence of the nature of the relationships between the different structural elements of the church. Most of the surviving buttresses appear to be integral to the wall construction. In addition, it is suggested that a former buttress, once central to the east wall of the chancel, may have been demolished. Two buttresses have been added to counteract the bowing out of the upper storey of the north wall of the nave. At least two phases of construction were recognised in the footings of the south aisle which might support the suggestion that the south aisle was widened at some point. Footings for an earlier structure, possibly also a tomb vault, were exposed beneath the tomb vault on the south aisle. It is suggested that the present external extent of the tomb vault is smaller than it originally was. The exposed footings of the tower provide little or no evidence to support the suggestion that it is a later addition. However, the buttresses, which are probably integral to the construction of the tower, appear to abut the west wall of the nave.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Bromham (SP997 507)
M Wilson and N Shepherd

A desktop study of an area to the south-west of Bromham Grange and the site of a water mill. Features contemporary with these may extend into the subject area. Maps indicate the area has been under cultivation since the medieval period. No prehistoric or Roman evidence has been recovered from the site but a Roman road may run to the eastern edge and cropmarks and pottery to the north suggest Iron Age and Roman settlement in the general area.

Felmersham (SP 9919 5786)
J Roberts

Archaeological evaluation of 450 sq m of land to the eastern end of the churchyard of the parish church in the centre of the village. Trenches revealed features including post-medieval foundations cut into a large ditch which contained Anglo-Saxon and later medieval pottery.

Woburn Road, Marston Moretaine (SP 992 412)
P Bright and N Shepherd

The desktop study of 6.6 ha of agricultural land was carried out to map archaeological information from documentary study before development of the land. Medieval features, including settlement earthworks, are well known in the vicinity. The land is currently under the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow agriculture. Archaeological investigations to the north of the area suggest the ridge and furrow may mask earlier remains. Parts of an Iron Age settlement may be expected to survive in the northern part of the study area with late Saxon to early medieval remains adjacent to the moat and settlement earthworks. The site has been pasture since the medieval period with some very recent cultivation. Geophysical survey located several areas of anomalies which may correspond with subsoil archaeological features.

Wooton Village (TL 010 450)
M Wilson and N Shepherd

A desktop assessment examined three tracts of land in the immediate vicinity of Wooton village. There are few known archaeological sites within the sites studied. A medieval moat probably survives beneath the more recent building at Keeley Farm in the north, this may represent the site of Culy Manor. Aerial photographs in the south show cropmarks that may mark the site of a rectangular enclosure, apparently subdivided internally. Its form suggests a settlement or stock enclosure of late Iron Age or Roman date. Cropmarks also indicate extensive medieval cultivation across the whole of the study area and map evidence confirms that the major part of the study lies within the medieval common fields.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Biddenham, Bromham Road (TL 0250 5050)
Laurent Coleman

A fieldwalking survey was conducted on land to the north of Bromham Road. The majority of the material recovered dated to the post-medieval period and the distribution of this material appeared to represent variations in agricultural practice. In addition a small assemblage of struck flint was recovered, but no significant concentrations were identified.

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Dunstable, Land Off French's Avenue (TL 0073 2291)
Tom McDonald

Following a geophysical survey, the Trust carried out an archaeological evaluation of the site. Six trial trenches were excavated on the site. The natural chalk strata were revealed in all the trenches. No archaeological features or finds were revealed, despite the site's proximity to the A5 road (the line of Roman Watling Street) in an area which has produced extensive evidence for occupation. Modern features relating to use of the site as a sportsfield were located, and account for anomalies recorded during the previous geophysical survey.

Hockliffe, Woburn Road (SP 974 268)
David Fell

Seven trial trenches were excavated on the site, which had previously been used as a car breaker's yard. Some oil contamination was present in the central part of the site. A number of undated pits and ditches were present in the southern part of the site, though almost certainly modern in origin. The northern part of the site had received little disturbance. Layers of modern building debris occupied the southern part of the site, up to a depth of 1 m. Mixed natural sands and gravels were present in the base of the trenches.

LUTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Luton, Park Street (TL 098 205)
R Hudspith

In March 1999, observations on a spoil heap from a soakaway drain, dug in the garden of a property on the corner of Park Street and Seymour Road, Luton revealed native Belgic and Romano-British sherds of probable 1st century date.

Further evaluation of the site, with the permission of the owner, showed that the 1 m deep soakaway had cut through

the edge of an archaeological feature, possibly a Romano-British rubbish pit or shallow ditch (at 0.7 m depth below surface) containing potsherds, pot boiler stones, charcoal and dark organic material. Other material from the site included fragments of tiles, imbrex and flue tile, iron nails and a possible corroded barrel lock as well as animal bone fragments. The finds suggest material from a Romano-British domestic occupation site close by, with the possibility of a reasonably substantial building with a tiled roof somewhere in the Park Street (Brache Farm) area in the Roman period.

Roman pottery was found at Brache Farm in 1858 (Simco 1984) and the former site of the Brache farmhouse was located immediately south of the current findsite. About 100 sherds were recovered, mainly from the spoil heap, with 12 sherds found in context, including several conjoining fragments of 2 cordoned jars. The sherds represent 17 different vessels including fragments of a thin walled decorated beaker (possibly imported) and Samian ware from Gaul. The assemblage may represent domestic material discarded in a pit or ditch over time or a mixture of material from the late Pre- Roman Iron Age and Roman periods deposited following site clearance. The style of the pottery may suggest evidence for the continuation of native pottery of Belgic type well into the Roman period.

References

Simco A 1984; *Survey of Bedfordshire: The Roman Period*, 111.

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF DUNSTABLE

The Dunstable Millennium Clock (TL 0190 2175)
Dave Warren

The brief was to observe and record any features and finds that might be revealed during the removal of a raised flowerbed and the excavation of foundations for the 'Millennium Clock' on the old Market Square in High Street South.

No Roman Remains or features were found. There were no walls, postholes, pits or ditches within the areas excavated. However, in both the hole for the clock base and nearby soakaway a succession of surfaces and deliberate build-ups of level were seen. The lower two surfaces and intervening chalk layer are probably medieval. Later levels are perhaps post-medieval to certainly Modern. Thanks are due to Dunstable Town Council and Project Design Company for their encouragement and assistance.

Field Survey
R Hudspith

Studham
Modern Studham contains several areas of piecemeal development, around the original 'village' location. Arable crops include wheat, barley and oil seed rape and there is probably as much, if not more, woodland now than in 1905. Bridleways and footpaths now follow many of the principal post-medieval trackways and boundaries (Fig 1).

Observations alongside footpaths around Studham (TL0116/7) revealed evidence of small scatters of Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints and fire fractured flints indicating prehistoric activity (at various times) across this part of the clay-with-flints-covered Chiltern Hills (Fig 1).

This area, on the truncated plateau, to the east of the chalk scarp slope could have been densely wooded (with some areas of clearance) into the later prehistoric period and the occasional artefact finds may well represent woodland craft and hunting activities (Horne 1996).

Several of the observed hedgerows were wide (in effect strips of woodland) a feature noted to the north of Kensworth (Hudspith 1996).

A footpath alongside the Whipsnade Zoo fence, formerly the line of a trackway (shown on the 1st OS map of 1834) has a wide hedge containing mature coppiced trees including ash, holly & hazel with three pollarded oaks of 5 m, 5 m and 3.8 m girth (*c* 1.6 m and 1.2 m diameter). The large coppiced and pollarded trees indicate intensive woodland management in the past (Rackham 1986) along hedges of probable pre-enclosure date.

The trackway, or holloway, shows as a 5 m wide ditch with attendant hedgerow bank between Longspoons Wood and Mason's Plantation. The footpath, on the north side of Mason's Plantation (woodland planted in the 20th Century) follows the course of another former trackway or holloway, flanked by a line of old coppiced trees (including ash, holly and hornbeam) set on a hedgerow bank.

Other hedgerows which included coppiced oak, beech and hazel were noted alongside the Zoo fence and around Whipsnade Golf Course.

At several places, steeply sloping (southerly facing) hedgerow banks were noted and appear to represent a feature of cultivation in this area.

Chalton Cross (Houghton Regis and Toddington Parishes)
Some limited fieldwalking was carried out at Chalton Cross Farm (TL0325) during the wet winter of late 1998. The known Romano-British site, subject of intensive fieldwork surveys in 1995 (Hudspith 1995) again yielded several kg of pottery as well as evidence for ironworking. Several localised scatters of material were noted, perhaps indicating a range of buidings and/or different activity sites.

Other finds included a large amphora sherd, at least 30 fragments of Roman tile: *tegulae*, brick tile and *imbrex* (including shell grit types) and a fragment of tile, possibly shaped into a *tessera* cube.

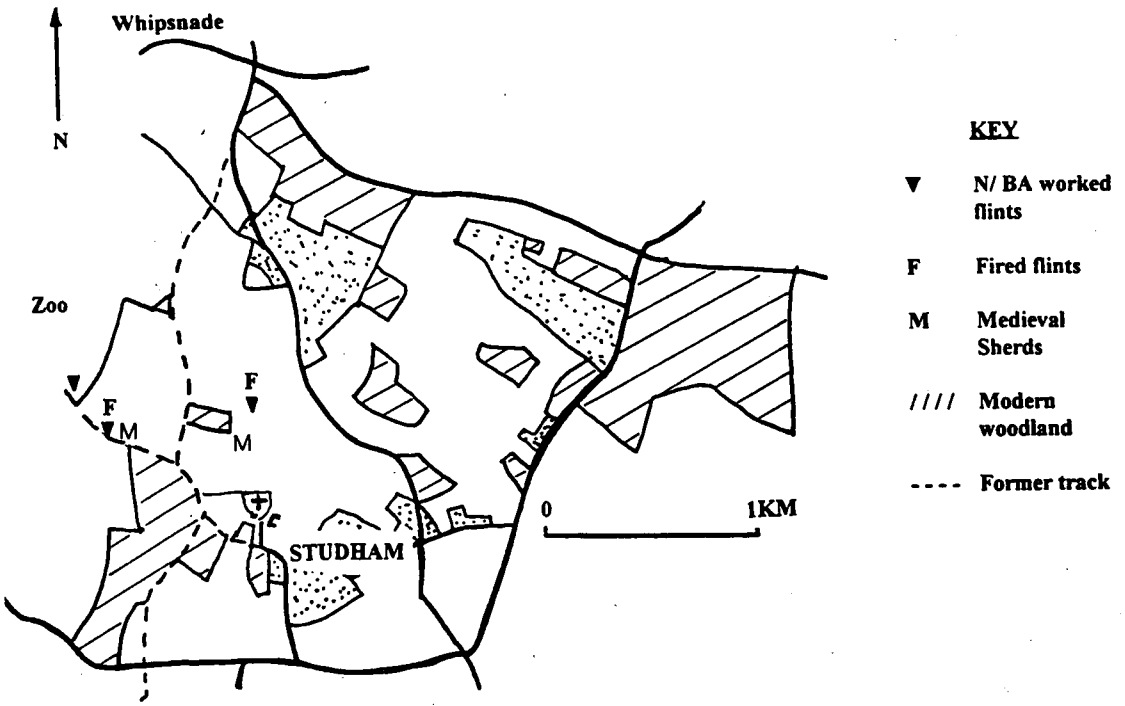

Fig 1. Studham. Artefact scatter.

Finds elsewhere included a few Mesolithic flint blades, Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints and towards the M1 (east of the modern farmhouse) a few Romano-British/medieval sherds, perhaps indicating manuring scatters.

Billington (SP9322)
A scatter of potsherds was seen to extend down the hillslope, alongside the footpath to Slaptonbury Mill (Fig 7 in Hudspith 1998). The sherds were mainly of late Iron Age/Romano-British and Medieval date.

The late Iron Age/Romano-British sherd scatter may well represent evidence for domestic occupation or, more speculatively, the site of a cremation cemetery.

The hilltop burials recently found on the excavation site at Billington and the recorded finds of skeletons from 'Aldbury' field (Gurney 1915) possibly indicates some continuity of burial practice on the hilltop.

In Saxon times this may have been because of the still visible prehistoric and Roman features in this area (Williams 1997). A few worked flints, including a Mesolithic blade and bladelet core were also noted.

Caddington (Blows Downs: TL0321)
A few sherds of Roman and prehistoric pottery were noted on the eroded edge of the chalk quarry at Blows Downs (Fig 2).

Worthington Smith (1904) reported that eight 'British huts' were destroyed by chalk quarrying at Blows Downs in 1888. Cropmarks, perhaps indicating enclosures and other features are visible in fields along the scarp slope at Blows Downs on an aerial photograph taken in 1969.

Caddington (Dunstable Road Allotments: TL0619)
A small scatter of Medieval potsherds was identified on allotment land and a proposed development site, at Caddington (in an area once known as Green Close off Dunstable Road/Folly Lane - Fig 2: Coleman, 1985). Neolithic/Bronze Age flints and post Medieval sherds have also been found across the allotments.

Houghton Regis (Mill Road: TL013238)
Observations on house foundation trenches alongside the footpath at Mill Road (final phase development) revealed no identifiable archaeological features.

Streatley (New Roundabout drainage works: TL073287)
Observations along the course of drainage channels provided for the recently altered road junction on the A1081 at Streatley revealed at least two (undated) ditches in section and a small scatter of (*c* 3rd Century) Roman sherds as well as Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints.

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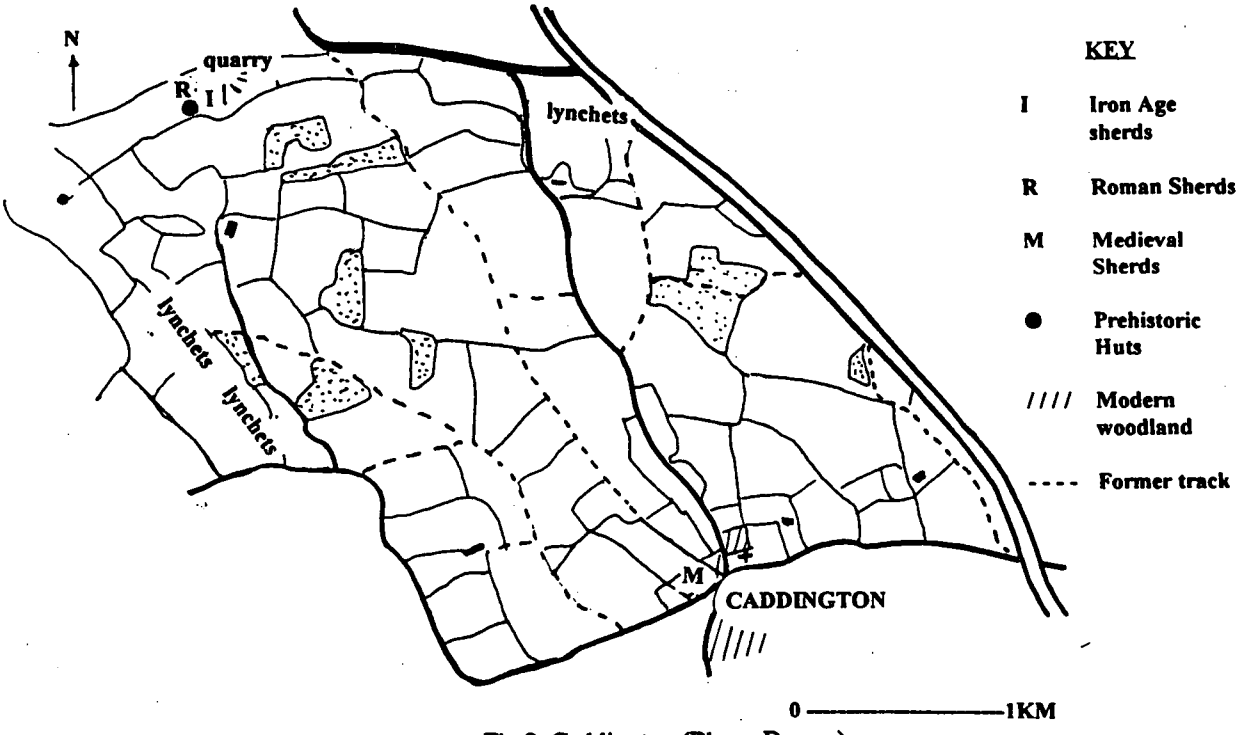


Fig 2. Caddington (Blows Downs).

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Report for 1999 compiled by Andy Chapman and Pat Chapman, illustrations by Steve Morris and Mark Roughley

Tempsford (TL 1630 2537)
Anthony Maull, with Steve Morris and Rob Atkins

An area of 0.9 ha, taking in approximately half of a medieval moated enclosure and adjacent land to the north and south was excavated in advance of a new highway at Tempsford Park, adjacent to the A1. The site lies immediately to the east of the confluence of the rivers Great Ouse and Ivel, and had been identified following evaluation in 1993 (*SMA* 24, (1994)).

Evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity comprised an assemblage of worked flint and a single sherd of Neolithic pottery, all residual in later features. The Roman and early to middle Saxon period was defined by shallow, linear and curvilinear ditches, but in both instances the main focus of occupation lay outside the excavated area. In the late Saxon period there was a major reorganisation of the landscape, with the creation of a series of rectangular plots defined by linear boundary ditches. Any associated buildings again lay beyond the excavated area, but recutting and realignment of the boundaries continued through the 12th and into the early 13th century.

In the early 13th century a moated enclosure was constructed over, but with respect to, the existing plot system. The wall slot, post-pads, clay floor and mortar and tile hearths of a timber-framed manor house comprising a hall, parlour, cross-passage and service wing lay fully within the excavated area (Fig 3). It is likely to be the documented Manor of Brayes. A gravelled yard lay to the west of the manor, and the other ancillary buildings are presumed to lie within the unexcavated eastern half of the enclosure. The manor house had been abandoned and demolished by the later 15th century.

The moat itself was broad and U-profiled, and up to 2.3 m deep, but any medieval deposits had been removed by later recutting. This probably occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries after it had been en-parked within the ground of Tempsford Hall by Sir Gillies Payne.

A stylised chess piece from the moated enclosure at Tempsford (TL 1630 2537)
Andy Chapman

A bone chess piece, the first from the county, was recovered from a soil horizon in an external yard contemporary with the 13th to 15th century manor house (see above). As chess was a game played only by the educated, this piece helps to confirm the manorial status of the site.

The piece is fashioned from a single rectangular block of bone, standing 42 mm high, and the characteristic V-notched top identifies it as a rook (Fig 4). The bone has not been identified but it must come from a large animal, and could possibly be whalebone. All four faces are decorated with the same pattern; comprising a combination of single and double ring-and-dot motifs, some with horn-like projections. The corners are well rounded and the smoothing and polishing of the surfaces by frequent handling has partially worn away the decoration. The curving upper surfaces of the notch are also decorated with a combination of double and single ring-and-dot motifs.

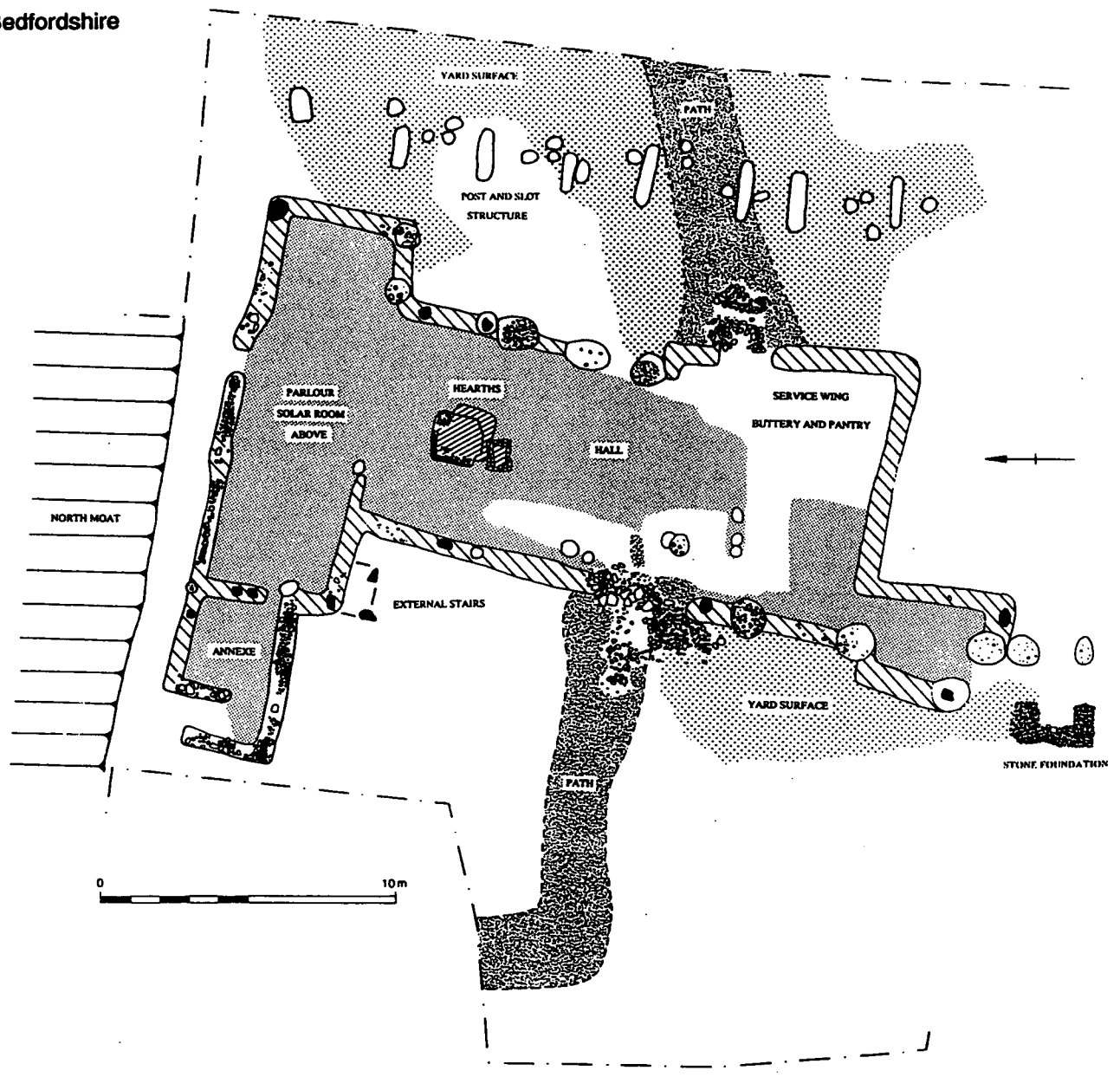


Fig 3. Tempsford, the 13-15th century Manor House.

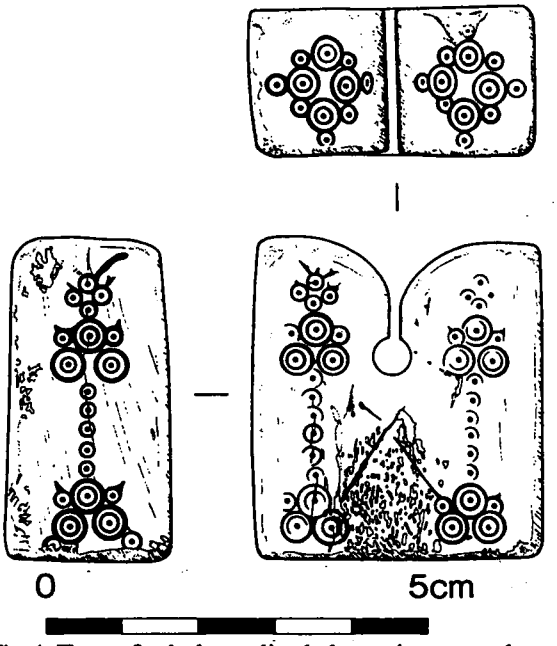


Fig 4. Tempsford, the stylised chess piece, a rook.

There are only a few similar pieces in bone from England. The closest comparison in terms of form, size and decorative complexity is provided by a rook fashioned in antler from London (Egan 1998, 292 & Fig 222, piece 960). There are a further two rooks from London (MacGregor 1985, 138 & Fig 73b) and another from Woodperry, Oxon, all fashioned from oval-sectioned lengths of long bone and with relatively simple patterns of ring-and-dot motifs. There are also rooks in jet from Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire; Grimes Graves, Norfolk and York.

References

Egan 1998; *The Medieval Household, Daily Living c 1150 - c 1450; Medieval Finds from Excavations in London*

MacGregor 1985; *Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn; The Technology of Skeletal Material since the Roman Period*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES AND CONSULTANCY LTD

Report compiled by David Fell, Project Officer.

Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) was established in 1995 in order to promote archaeology in the region and to provide a high quality archaeological service to developers and others who require the services of archaeologists. Since establishing a base in Milton Keynes in 1998 ASC has undertaken a varied range of archaeological projects across the region, and its staff comprise established local archaeologists, who are members of both the CBA and the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and who have wide interests throughout the area and beyond.

Castlethorpe, 6 The Chestnuts (SP 797 444)
Bob Zeepvat

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken adjacent to the motte and bailey castle at Castlethorpe prior to the construction of a bungalow, in order to ascertain whether the outer earthworks of the castle extended across the site. No archaeological features or finds were recovered.

Castlethorpe, Maltings Field (SP 799 442)
Bob Zeepvat and Justin Neal

An earthwork survey and archaeological evaluation were undertaken on the north side of the railway line and *c* 300m south-east of Castlethorpe motte and bailey castle. The principal feature on the site was a hollow way (Fig 1). This originally extended from the medieval village and was probably the main route from Castlethorpe to the village of Cosgrove, prior to the construction of the railway in the 19th century. A headland, with well-defined ridge and furrow lay to the east of the hollow way. Seven trial trenches were cut across the hollow way and headland. The base of the hollow way was *c* 750mm below the surrounding ground level and was *c* 12m wide. Traces of rough cobbling were found in Trench 1, but no other archaeological features were recorded.

Fenny Stratford, Fenny Marina (SP 884 340)
Bob Zeepvat

An evaluation was undertaken on the east bank of the Grand Union Canal, to the west of the Roman town of Magiovinium, south of Watling Street. A number of skeletons, associated with Roman coins had been found in the area. A substantial linear feature was partially located at the south end of the trench. It aligned north-east to south-west, and its northern edge was formed by a line of wooden stakes. The feature was filled with an homogenous deposit of greyish-brown loamy clay, and is interpreted as part of a former canal basin.

Great Brickhill-Stoke Hammond Pipeline
(SP 881 296 - SP 905 302)
Bob Zeepvat

ASC undertook a desk-based assessment of the route of a water pipeline between Stoke Hammond and Great Brickhill. The east and west ends of the route pass through the medieval villages of Great Brickhill and Stoke Hammond respectively. The route crosses the valley of the River Ouzel where there is potential for archaeological discoveries, although little archaeological work has been carried out and no archaeological sites are known.

Monkston, Chetwode Avenue (SP 894 384)
Bob Zeepvat

A watching brief was maintained during construction of a new house, 700 m south of Milton Keynes village. No archaeological features were present.

Newport Pagnell, Bury Street (SP 874 437)
Bob Zeepvat

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the south side of Newport Pagnell, prior to construction of a new classroom building. A single trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed building: with the exception of the footings of a 19th century school toilet block, the only feature of archaeological interest was a single post-medieval pit.

Newport Pagnell, James' Yard (SP 874 439)
Bob Zeepvat

A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a car park extension, on the north side of the medieval town. No archaeological remains were encountered.

Newport Pagnell, Riverside House (SP 877 438)
Bob Zeepvat

A watching brief was undertaken during construction at Riverside House, on the west side of Newport Pagnell town centre, adjacent to Tickford Bridge. No significant archaeological features or finds were present.

North Crawley, Gumbrills Farm (SP 929 454)
Bob Zeepvat

A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a house, but no features or finds of archaeological significance were noted.

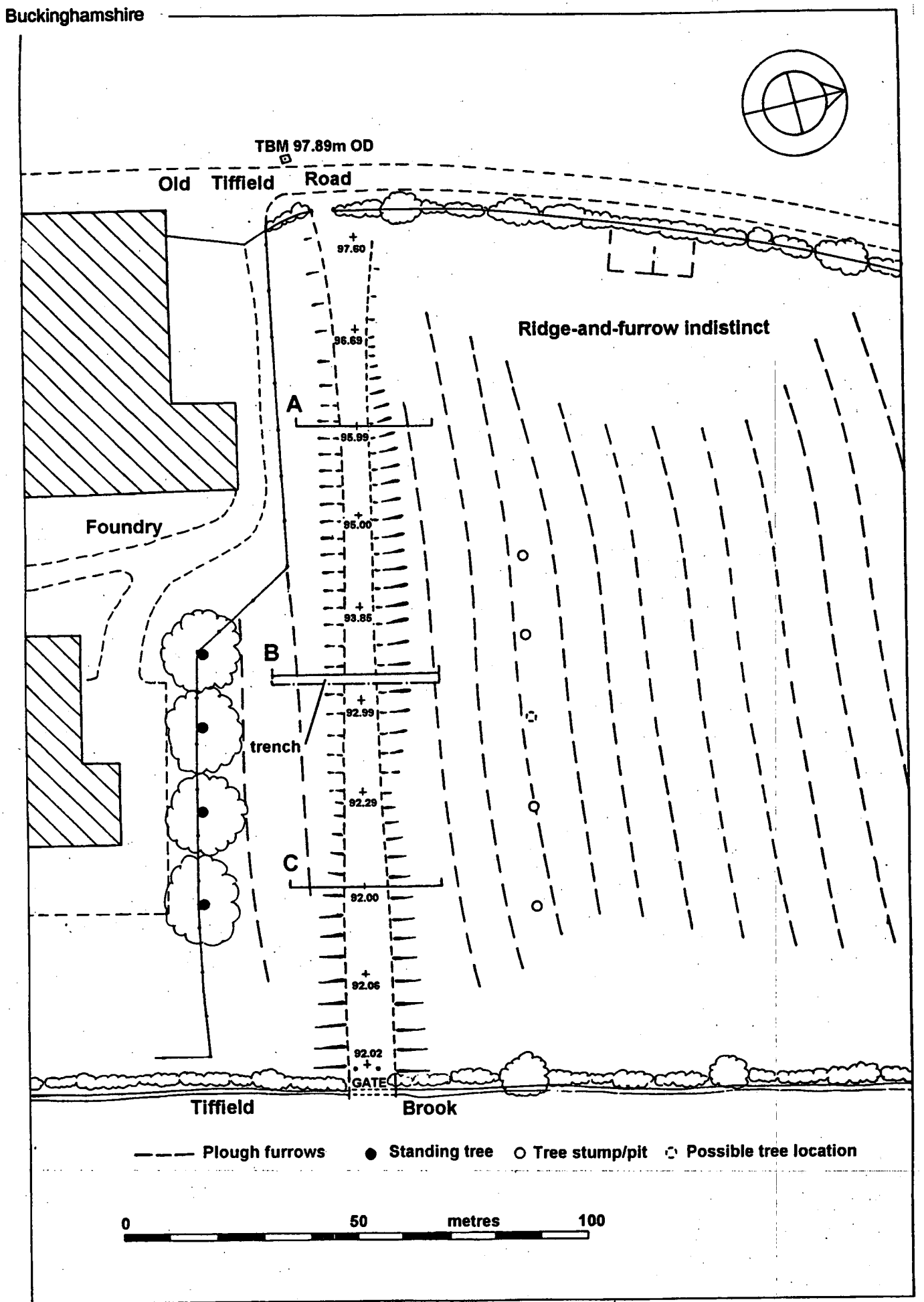


Fig 1. Castlethorpe, Matlings Field.

Shenley Church End, Oakhill Road (SP 8310 3652)
Bob Zeepvat

Sherds of medieval pottery were found on a watching brief during the construction of a new house.

Shenley Lodge, Trevithick Lane (SP 838 363)
Bob Zeepvat

Eleven evaluation trenches were excavated adjacent to Trevithick Lane and Paxton Crescent, prior to the construction of a new housing development. A single feature was identified, containing an assemblage of post-medieval pottery.

Stone, 77 Bishopstone (SP 806 102)
David Fell

A watching brief took place adjacent to the Wesleyan chapel on the main street in Bishopstone, prior to the construction of a detached house. No archaeological remains were present.

Tattenhoe, Rosemullion Avenue (SP 829 335)
David Fell and Bob Zeepvat

A watching brief was maintained during construction of a new road south of the medieval village of Tattenhoe, but no archaeological features were present.

Winslow Zone Main Trunk Renewal Pipeline
(Mursley - Wing)
(SP 816 292 - SP 875 216)
David Fell and Bob Zeepvat

A desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and archaeological watching brief were undertaken in advance of and during the construction of this pipeline. The desk-based assessment revealed that the route would pass close to a cropmark of Iron Age or Roman date to the west of Wing and that it would traverse a landscape of well preserved ridge and furrow cultivation at Stewkley and Mursley.

The geophysical survey, carried out by Oxford Archaeotechnics, revealed a number of linear anomalies south-west of Mursley at NGR SP 824 283. An excavation was carried out at this location and two late Iron Age ditches were revealed. Work on this project is continuing, and further details will be provided in the next edition of *SMA*.

Wolverton, McConnell Drive (SP 820 412)
Bob Zeepvat

An evaluation was carried out on the site of the Electrolux warehouse which spectacularly burnt down in early Summer 1999. Six trenches were excavated: two to examine the site of the second Wolverton Station, constructed in 1841, and four to ascertain the presence or absence of suspected Roman occupation. All trace of the station appeared to have been removed by a series of inspection pits beneath the running lines in the former carriage shed (later the Electrolux warehouse). No trace of Roman occupation was found.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Waddesdon, Waddesdon Estate (NGR withheld)
Michael Farley

Members of the former County Museum Archaeological Group (many also being members of BAS), together with members who had responded to an earlier note in the Society's Newsletter, took part in the Society's first 'official' fieldwalk, at Waddesdon on 17th October 1999. Fine weather and good soil conditions resulted in the firm identification of a small Roman-period settlement, probably a farmstead, of second-third century AD date, lying a short distance from the course of Akeman Street.

FOUNDATIONS ARCHAEOLOGY

Chorleywood (TQ 020 971)
Iain Williamson

A geophysical survey and watching brief took place over an area of 53 ha prior to development as a golf course. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Berryfields (SP 8000 1620)
Mike Napthan and Iain Williamson

A programme of fieldwalking recovered finds of prehistoric through to post-medieval date, although few concentrations of artefactual material were identified.

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Compiler - Jon Murray

Stone, Former Nurses Home, Oxford Road (SP 778 123)
T McDonald

During August and September 1999, a Phase II archaeological excavation of land was carried out at the former Nurses Home, on the north side of Oxford Road, Stone, Buckinghamshire. Phase I revealed a Late Bronze

Age hut gully, a cremation and two lengths of field boundary. A re-cut Roman ditch was also found.

Phase II recorded Late Bronze Age and Iron Age features. The majority of the Late Bronze Age features were located within the northern half of the excavated area. They were generally dispersed and comprised pits and post holes. One pit was remarkable because it contained the remains of two Late Bronze Age pottery vessels re-used as cremation urns. The Iron Age features were generally not coincident with the Late Bbronze Age features, being located within the western half of the excavated area. The principal feature was a large ditch, with a second gully continuing southwards. Other Iron Age features comprised three pits and a gully. Finds were sparse.

Milton Keynes, Reserve Site 5, Downs Barn
(SP 8617 4004)
Andrew Weale

Following an archaeological evaluation at the site, on the western edge of the valley of the river Ouzel, a second phase of works was undertaken. This comprised the excavation of an additional four trenches along the projected courses of Iron Age ditches recorded during the evaluation, and a small area excavation.

The investigation revealed a system of linear and curvilinear enclosure or boundary ditches, one in particular containing substantial quantities of Late Iron Age pottery. It is likely that the site lay close to an area of settlement. A substantial number of intercutting features were also recorded in association with the ditches. Post-dating some of the ditches was a surface of carefully laid limestone slabs, which lay in the vicinity of two areas of burning and a deposit of burnt animal bone. These features may be evidence of ritual activity associated with the limestone surface. In the 'Belgic' phase at Bancroft, 3.5 km to the west, a small area of limestone cobbling lay on the same alignment as a cremation cemetery, while animal remains occurred in some of the graves.

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

Thornton, St Michael & All Angels Church (SP 751 363)
Emma Sanderson

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavation for new drainage within the churchyard. Nothing of significance was located.

MICHAEL FARLEY ARCHAEOLOGY

Aylesbury, Town centre (SP 818 138 area)

A watching brief was carried out for Bucks County Council, Environmental Services, during excavations for rising bollards within Aylesbury town centre which were being installed as part of a new traffic management scheme for the town. The holes were of limited extent, relatively shallow, and all within existing carriageways. However, several were sited in archaeologically sensitive areas. In the event, no significant archaeological deposits were recorded, apart from a possible pit of medieval or later date, but it was evident that much of the ground had been subject to very recent disturbance. Through negative evidence, however, the watching brief has, indirectly, assisted in defining more precisely the course of the Iron Age hillfort ditch, within whose circuit the old part of the town now lies.

Cholesbury, Cholesbury hillfort (SP 9290 0728)

A watching brief carried out during erection of a footpath stile external to the northern defences of the Iron Age hillfort at Cholesbury, for Environmental Services, Buckinghamshire County Council, recorded no significant features apart from recent disturbance probably related to a former adjacent quarry. Two struck flints recovered during the work may have been products of the stile construction.

Great Missenden, Prestwood Hoard (NGR withheld)

At the request of the County Museum, a field visit was made to check the findspot and circumstances surrounding the discovery of two Roman coin hoards by the Weekend Wanderers Detecting Club in July 1999 at Prestwood. This 'club' operates on a weekly gate-fee basis over much of southern England. The location of the findspots was kindly pointed out by the club secretary and plotted, and the general circumstances of discovery established. The two finds were made in adjacent fields. Over 100 people were present in the fields at the time of the initial discovery. Today the findspots lack any obvious geographical features which might indicate why they were deposited in these positions. There is no evidence that the fields were utilised for occupation during the Roman period. In this respect they are similar to the 1989 Chalfont St Peter hoards published in *Records of Bucks* 37 (1995).

At a subsequent Inquest both hoards were declared Treasure. The contents of the hoards were described by staff of the British Museum. Prestwood A consisted of 110 denarii: date range 31 BC-AD 220; and Prestwood B of 736 silvered bronze AD 307-317.

Medmenham, Medmenham Abbey (SU 8068 8380)

The picturesque 'remains' of Medmenham Abbey which now front the Thames across grassy lawns, were largely a creation of Sir Francis Dashwood in the 1750s. Although the general location of the original Abbey of Medmenham, a Cistercian House, is not in doubt, its precise location and layout have depended largely on, a) interpretation of the existing house, 'Medmenham Abbey' with an adjacent

single standing column, b) observations made in the 1920s by the Reverend Plaisted, an amazingly energetic and talented local vicar and, c) recording carried out by the former Buckinghamshire County Museum Archaeological Service in March 1993 when a heating-pipe trench dug along the main driveway, encountered several skeletons (interim report only available).

A watching brief condition was recently attached to an extensive programme of modernisation being carried out at the Abbey. After some initial delay a watching brief was commissioned when further human remains were discovered. Ultimately, seven east-west burials, or parts of them (some intercutting), were recovered during construction of a short length of internal strengthening wall within the modern south wing of the Abbey. Artefactual material recovered was minimal, likewise any associated structural information. Six burials could be sexed. Four were females and two males. Mr T Anderson who kindly examined the bones, has noted a 'surprisingly high incidence of pathology'.

According to the Reverend Plaisted's reconstruction, the abbey cloister lay on the west side of the existing abbey building and the church lay south of the cloister, fronting the river. Given this reconstruction the burials would have fallen within the southern cloister walk. The character of the burials and absence of clear structural evidence however, has led to slight doubt being cast on cast on this interpretation.

Subsequent to the initial watching brief a shallow electric-cable trench was dug along the main driveway, and then a deeper sewer-trench was dug along the south and east fronts of the Abbey building which then returned along the driveway to a main sewer pipe connection in Ferry Lane. These works, which extended into March 2000 and encountered further burials as well as structural remains, will be described in next year's *SMA*.

MUSEUM OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE (MOLAS)

Marlow, Wethered's Brewery, High Street (SU 8497 8638)
Stewart Hoad and Elizabeth Howe

Summary
This document reports upon the results of an archaeological excavation at the former Wethered's Brewery, High Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire. The archaeological work was carried out during June 1999 by the Museum of London Archaeological Service on behalf of Mr R Hawley. The purpose of this work was to evaluate the potential for surviving buried archaeological deposits on the site, and to excavate and record these deposits as necessary.

Previous work in the area of the site covered areas to the north and west. This work was undertaken in December 1996 and in January 1999. An excavation was carried out in 1996 by the Buckinghamshire County Museum Archaeological Service on a site 30 m to the south of the present site.

The excavation revealed evidence of 17th and 18th century horticulture in the form of a cultivated soil horizon from which numerous fragments of pottery dating from the medieval period onwards were recovered. Features recorded on the site truncating this cultivation layer comprised three capped wells, two of which were chalk lined, and a possible construction cut for a fourth well, two foundation walls containing re-used chalk and flint blocks, and part of a 19th century brick drain. These probably all related to the early Wethered brewery.

NATIONAL TRUST

Gary Marshall

Boastall, Boarstall Tower (SP 62421425)

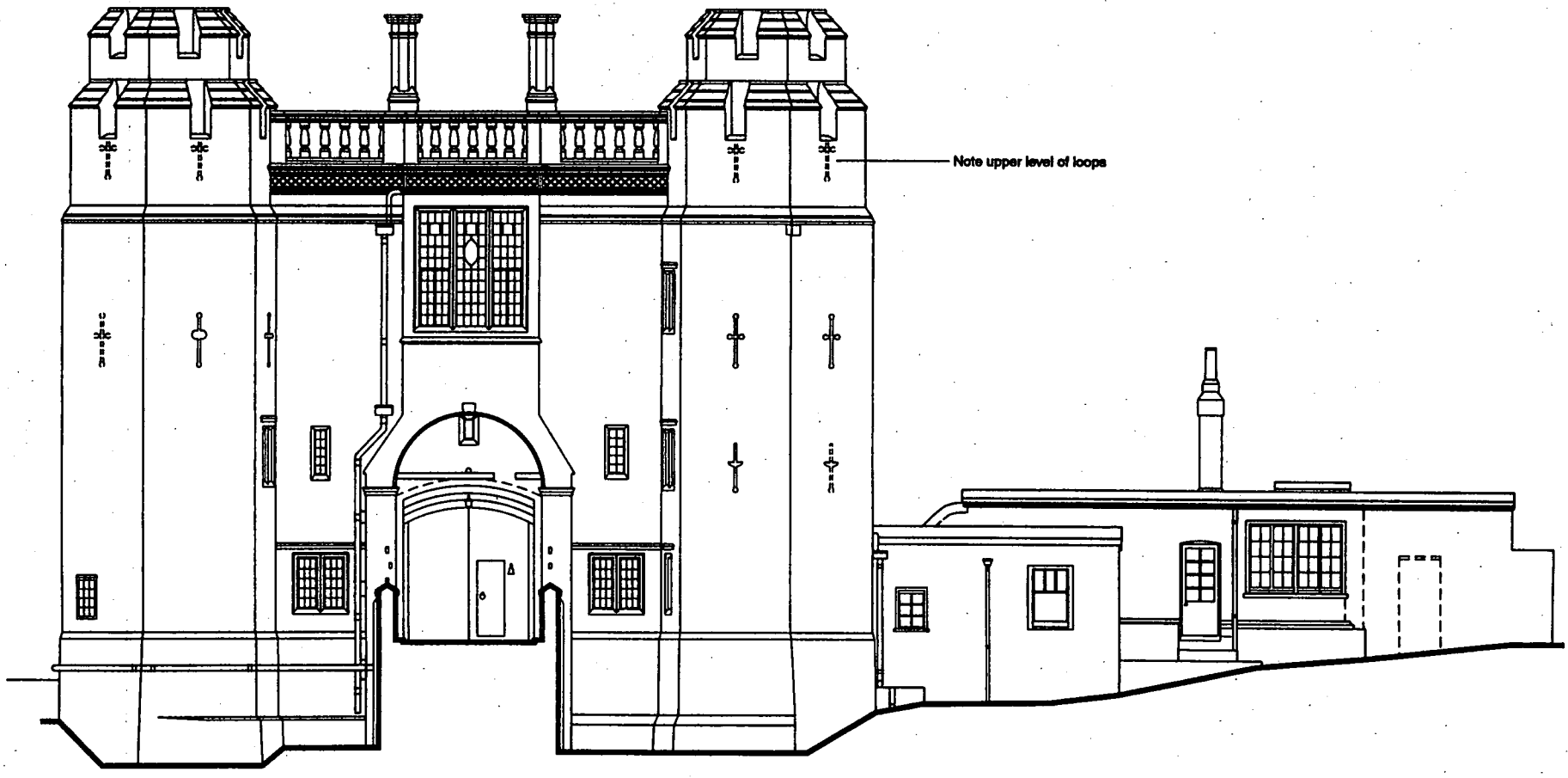
The tower at Boarstall is all that remains of a moated manor, the house itself having been pulled down by Sir John Aubrey in 1777 after the accidental death of his six year old son. Fortunately, a bird's eye engraving of 1695 depicts the house in superb detail, together with the tower and surrounding formal gardens. The site of the house has recently been defined by a resistivity survey and many of the features on the engraving can be identified on the plot, suggesting the foundations of the building lie preserved beneath the existing lawn.

The tower has recently been the subject of a detailed survey by Oxford Archaeological Unit [1]. Dendro dating by Dan Miles has established a date of 1312 for the felling of the joists of the ground floor ceiling, corresponding precisely with the date of a licence issued to John de Handlo to fortify his manor. Samples taken from the roof joists gave a date of 1614. The new roof was just one element in a substantial programme of repairs and alterations carried out at this time which included the introduction of mullion and transom windows, the addition of a bay window and entrance arch, and the introduction of a balustrade at roof level. 17th century wall paintings have also been found in one of the first floor chambers. The evidence suggests that the appearance of the tower was radically altered and its function changed to that of a fashionable banqueting house and viewing point over the immaculately manicured formal gardens.

An archaeological watching brief was also carried out by Oxford Archaeological Unit over a trench cut for the purpose of bringing an electric cable from the main road to the tower [2]. The trench ran along the south edge of the main entrance drive and then turned through a dog leg to run along the top of the south slope overlooking the moat. No evidence was found for either a medieval or Civil War period

SE

NW



North-east elevation

0 5 10 m

THE NATIONAL TRUST, BOARSTALL TOWER

Elevations showing former positions of arrow loops (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

Fig 2. Boarstall Tower.

NW

SE

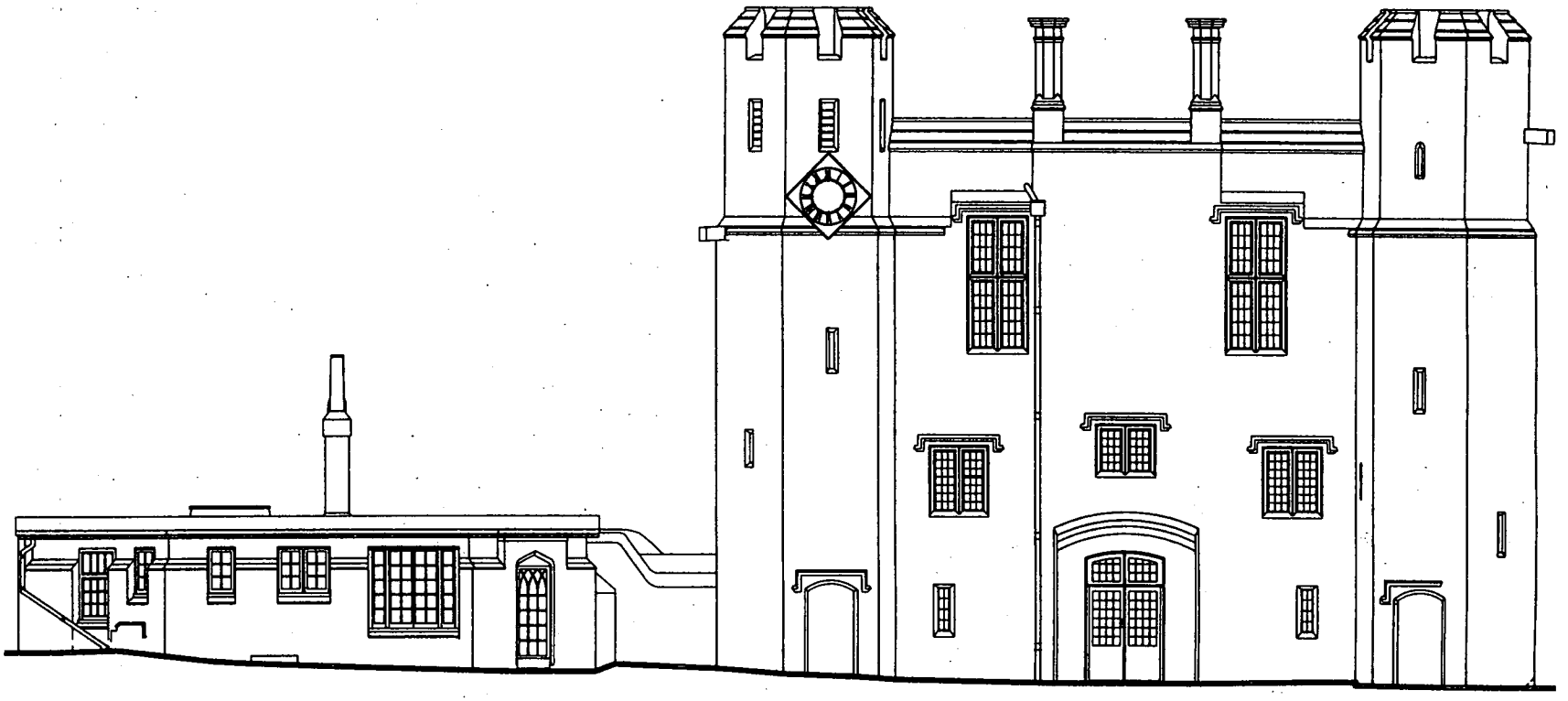


Fig 3. Boarstall Tower.

THE NATIONAL TRUST, BOARSTALL TOWER

Elevations showing former positions of arrow loops (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

South-west elevation

0 5 10 m

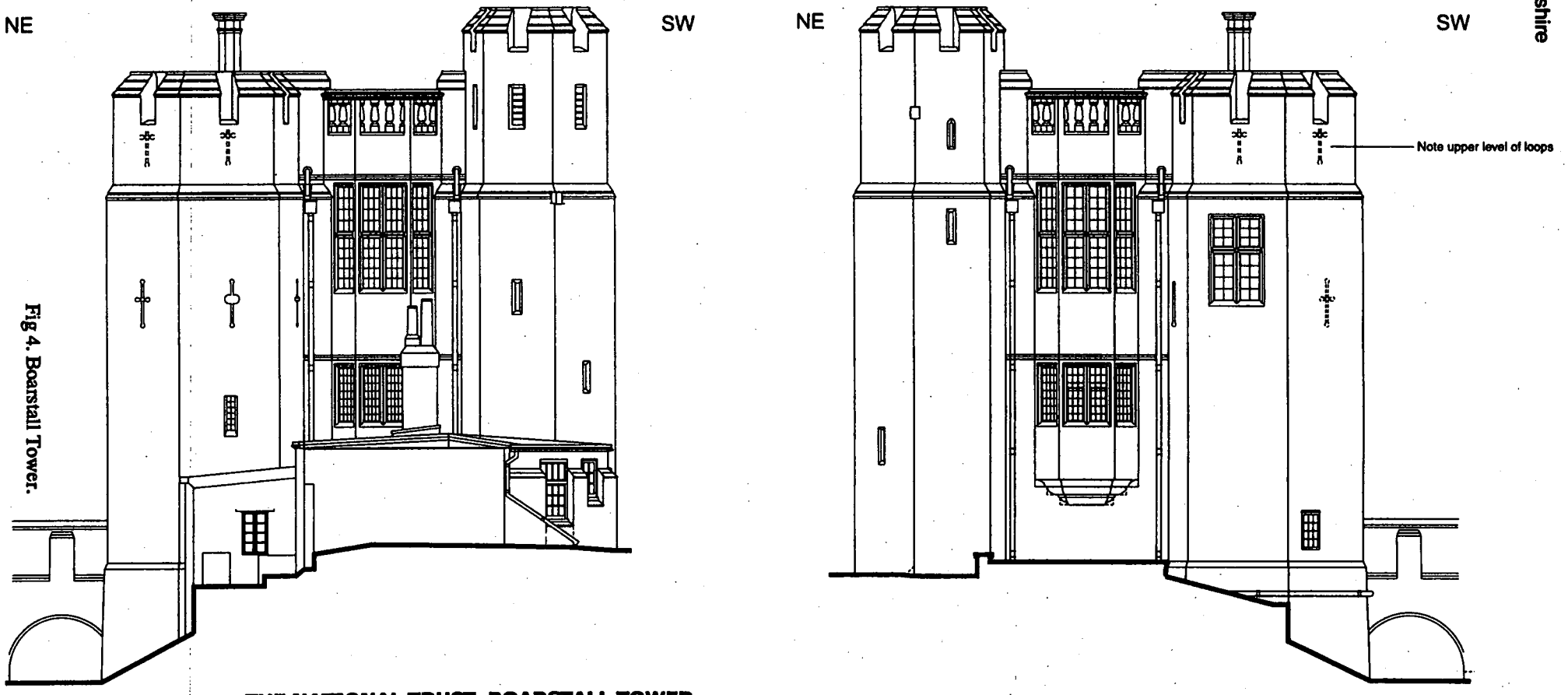


Fig 4. Boarstall Tower.

THE NATIONAL TRUST, BOARSTALL TOWER

Elevations showing former positions of arrow loops (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

North-west elevation : South-east elevation

0 5 10 m

pallisade on the top of the slope. However, the excavation did reveal a brick-lined well close to the south-east angle tower. It also revealed the footings of two brick walls on the top of the slope overlooking the east end of the moat. One of these could be the base of a brick wall depicted on the 17th century engraving which contained a gate leading into the north-east corner of the gardens.

References

[1] Boarstall Tower, Boarstall, Buckinghamshire, Archaeological Monitoring During Building Work, R. Tyler, Oxford Archaeological Unit, February 2000.
[2] Boarstall Tower, Boarstall, Buckinghamshire, Archaeological Monitoring During Building Work, K Brown, P Blinkhorn and J Dalton, Oxford Archaeological Unit, January 2000.

Bradenham Manor (SU 82879707)

A week-long excavation was undertaken in July with the assistance of a National Trust working holiday group to identify features revealed by a geophysics survey undertaken in 1998 and to try and date the construction of the garden terraces. Four of the five trenches revealed wall footings, including a substantial brick footing found close to the south west corner of the house which would suggest that the south front is considerably reduced from its original length.

This south front appears to contain elements of a 16th century building. It was retained and incorporated into the present house dating from the 1650s. Evidence for the earlier 16th century building was found in one of the trenches on the main lawn which revealed a brick footing with a silver coin from the reign of Henry VIII in the destruction debris. The evidence from the excavations and the geophysics tentatively suggests that this 16th century building may have been arranged around a central courtyard, with ranges on its north, south and west flanks [1]. Further geophysics and trial trenches, together with a detailed investigation of the house, will therefore be carried out in 2000 to clarify the situation.

Dating of the garden terraces proved to be difficult due to the absence of dateable artefacts, although an earlier soil level was found in a trench cut to section the terrace between the main and lower lawns. It would appear that the terrace was re-cut in the late 18th or early 18th centuries, in which case there is some justification for disputing the present assumption that the garden is the relict of a Jacobean garden.

Reference

[1] The National Trust, Bradenham Manor, Buckinghamshire, report on the archaeological excavations and geophysics survey conducted in 1999, G Marshall, March 2000, report no. Brad/3.

Claydon House (SP 71922533)

Disturbing signs of cracking at Claydon House have been noticed at Claydon over the past few years and the stability of these cracks is therefore being monitored. Evidence from excavations carried out at the end of 1999 for laying sewer pipes might suggest the cause of this cracking. Deep silts were observed in these trenches running across the north front and out across the park. In two of these trenches the walls of the former Ball Room which was demolished in 1792 were found to rest directly on these silts. Clear evidence of bulging in the width of one of these walls was also detected and it would therefore appear that the walls had subsided on these silts.

Pottery from these silts ranges from the 10th to 13th centuries, suggesting that they have a medieval origin and were formed over a considerable period of time. They would appear to indicate the presence of previously undetected stew ponds, perhaps even a moat surrounding the medieval house?

Unfortunately, very little is known of Claydon from this period, although the earliest fabric of the Church dates from the 14th century. During the excavations several walls of limestone construction resting on brick footings were found beneath the north lawn. These probably date from the late 16th or early 17th centuries and relate to buildings arranged around a courtyard which appear on a plan of 1654. One of these walls was found to lie directly over a substantial rubble-stone wall and this could therefore be the first evidence to be found of a medieval building at Claydon if one excludes the Church.

Stowe Landscape Gardens (SP 67503730)

Archaeological excavations, geophysics and building recording have been carried out on four major restoration projects during 1999 - the Fane of Pastoral Poetry, Lord Cobham's Monument, The Gothic Umbrello and Wolfe's Obelisk. Trial excavations around the Gothic Umbrello in the Fallow Deer Park have produced Roman pottery thought to originate from a kiln discovered by excavations in the Bourbon Fields in 1990 [1]. The pottery has been analysed by Paul Booth of Oxford Archaeological Unit and appears to have a fabric type known as 'pink grog ware'. This has been found over a large area of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire, but the site of its production has not previously been identified. Reconciling its production to Stowe therefore represents an important development and a report is therefore forthcoming on the discovery of the kiln and the various forms of pottery which it produced.

Reference

[1] The National Trust, Stowe Landscape Gardens, Excavation of a Roman pottery kiln north of Stowe School sports ground A Wainwright, October 1990, report no. Stowe/45.

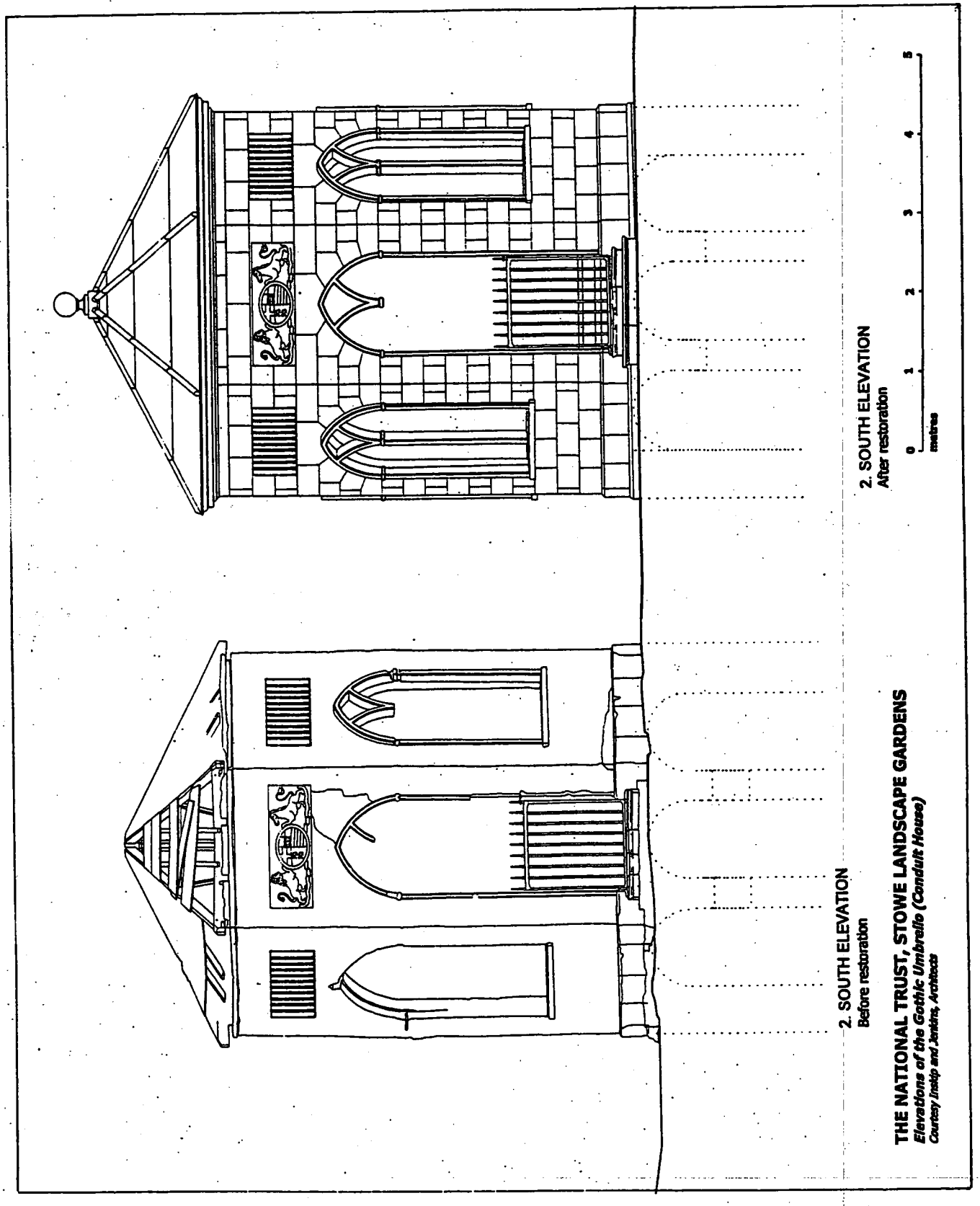


Fig 5. Gothic Umbrello (Conduit House).

West Wycombe Park (SU 828947)

Located just outside High Wycombe, West Wycombe Park is a well preserved rococo landscape garden created in the 1730s and 40s by Sir Francis Dashwood. The 2nd Baronet was a founder of the Dilettanti Society and the Hellfire Club. The house was rebuilt in the 1750s around an existing Queen Anne House. Until recently an understanding of the relationship between the two buildings was based upon conjecture but evidence arising from a watching brief carried out in 1999 has helped resolve this issue.

The evidence came to light after 1960s plywood panelling was removed from two of the first floor bedrooms, revealing two complete schemes of early 18th century panelling covering the walls. In one of the rooms the panels have clearly been re- arranged but nevertheless, it is clear that the panels were designed for these two rooms. They represent a significant discovery, firstly, because they confirm these two rooms as forming part of the Queen Anne building and secondly, because they define the decorative scheme of these two rooms.

Detailed recording of the construction of the panels has revealed a wealth of evidence. They were originally covered with a light yellow paint. This was subsequently concealed by a green paint and eventually, probably in the 1750s, by hessian and hanging papers. Blank areas where the paint is missing indicate the former position of dado rails and mouldings around the frieze panels. Other areas of blank wood indicate that the original early 18th century doorcases were much taller until they were partially in-filled and replaced by smaller doors, probably in the 1750s. There are a number of pencilled arrows on the panels and these correspond with lines of glue where battens were secured to hold the papers flat. Even the graffiti on these panels reveal valuable evidence. Several workmen have pencilled their names and trades on the panels and the date of 1852. Robert Allen was the joiner and the 1852 date can be taken as fairly certainly dating the re-arrangement of the panels in this particular room. Also to be found on these panels are the names of the members of the Estate Cricket Team and Football Team in 1963. Perhaps valuable evidence for the Social Historian of the future?

West Wycombe Village (SU 829947)

Watching briefs were carried out at 41 Church Street and 25 High Street. whilst repairs were undertaken on these two buildings.

Dendro sampling at 25 High Street has provided a felling date of 1532 for the timbers [1]. The building forms a single tenancy but actually consists of two timber framed buildings with the timbers of the 1532 building butted up against the frame of an earlier building. Unfortunately, dendro sampling failed to date this earlier building but it seems reasonable to assume a 15th century date for its construction. It would appear to be the surviving wing of a cross wing house, the main body of the house presumably having been removed when the 1532 building was erected. A previous survey [2] had suggested a 16th century date for the entire construction but this evidence puts the date for the earliest construction back a century. During the watching brief a rolled moulding was discovered on the original 15th century. wall plate which now forms a lintel over a ground floor window facing onto the street.

41 Church St was originally a timber framed building dating from the 17th century [3], the panels within the frame in-filled with brick. During the 18th century the building was re-fronted in brick and the front elevation raised. The roof retains an interesting cruck truss which does not extend to ground level. During the watching brief plastered recesses were observed in the most southerly truss framing the south end of the building, whilst between the recesses brick piers were observed supporting the undersides of the roof purlins [4].

References

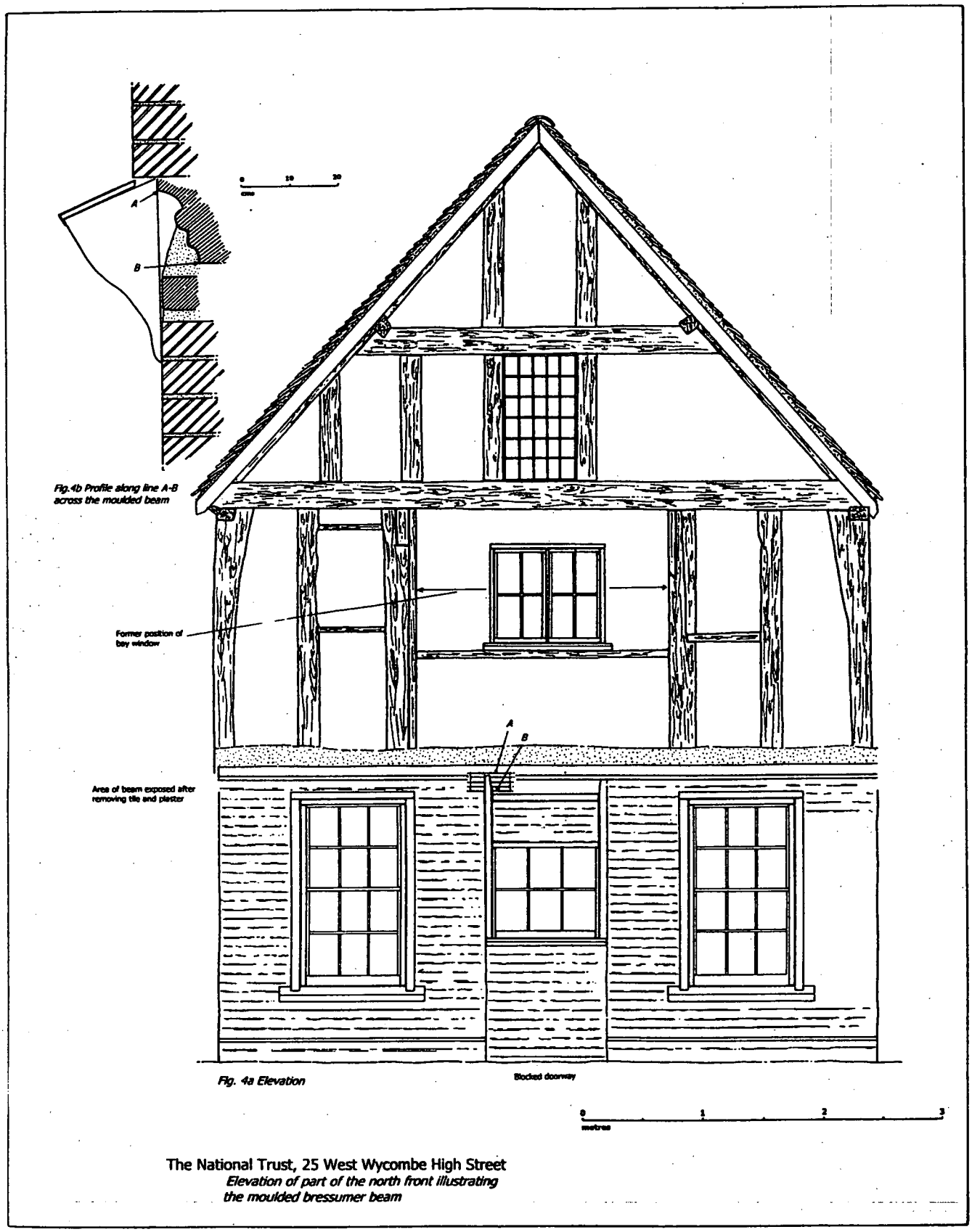
[1] The National Trust, No 25 High Street, West Wycombe, Archaeological watching brief covering repairs carried out during May and July of 1999, G Marshall (forthcoming), report No 25 West Wycombe/2.
[2] The National Trust, Vernacular Buildings Survey, Nos. 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 High Street, West Wycombe, and 35 Crown Court, Garside, Izzard and Waters, 1994.
[3] The National Trust, Vernacular Buildings Survey, 41 Church Street, West Wycombe, Garside, Izzard and Waters, 1993.
[4] The National Trust. No 41 Church Lane, West Wycombe, Archaeological watching brief covering repairs carried out during May of 1999, G Marshall (forthcoming), report No 41 Church Lane West Wycombe/2.

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD.

Newport Pagnell, 30 - 32 High Street (SP 8871 4396)
David Hillelson

In response to a planning condition placed on building works at Nos 30-32 High Street, Newport Pagnell, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to undertake archaeological observation and recording of the groundworks for the provision of an emergency exit at the rear of the building.

The excavations were undertaken by hand by the building contractors and revealed extensive disturbance associated with the 19th century construction of No 30 High Street, and subsequent alterations. Below the modern disturbance, one feature of earlier date was exposed. This contained a deposit of high organic content, and the pottery associated with it suggests that it represents the remains of an 11th century cess pit.



The National Trust, 25 West Wycombe High Street
Elevation of part of the north front illustrating the moulded bressumer beam

Fig 6. 25 High Street, West Wycombe.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Broughton Barn (SP 9076 4056)
Tora Hylton and Andy Chapman

A programme of archaeological monitoring is being undertaken prior to mineral extraction following a detailed site evaluation by trial trenching.

Two early Bronze Age cremations were located at the north-eastern end of the quarry. Two shallow pits lay 2 m apart. The northern pit contained a plain, undecorated urn inverted over a deposit of cremated human bone, with a small collared urn as an accessory vessel. The second pit contained a deposit of pyre debris and a mass of cremated bone.

Linear ditches of Roman date have been located in the north-western part of the quarry, but extraction has not yet reached the main area of known Roman activity.

Gayhurst, Gayhurst Quarry (SP 853 446)
Andy Chapman

An intensive watching brief was carried out during soil stripping on the areas between the Bronze Age round barrows, Iron Age enclosure and pit alignments excavated in 1998 prior to gravel extraction (*SMA* 29 (1999), 17-20).

This work located a further two pits containing un-urned cremation deposits. They lay 2 m apart and 20 m from one of the previously excavated barrows. In addition, a 130 m length of a previously unknown pit alignment was identified. Later recutting as a continuous ditch had obscured the nature of its origin as a pit alignment. The final stage of observation and recording will be undertaken in 2000.

Wing, Victorian School (SP 8807 2254)
Mark Holmes

An open area excavation was undertaken prior to the construction of new housing at the site of the former Victorian School, following the location of burials in evaluation (*SMA* 18 (1998), 23). The development site lies immediately to the south of the parish church of All Saints, a former Saxon Minster church.

The earliest evidence comprised a small quantity of early/middle and middle Saxon pottery, although this material appears to be residual in later contexts.

The excavation recovered a total of 77 inhumation burials, indicating that the church cemetery had previously occupied the land to the south of its current boundary. The burials were in rows and probably represent an expansion of the cemetery in the early 11th century AD. A wide boundary ditch encircled the graveyard. It had been infilled in the 12th century and this part of the cemetery probably went out of use at the same time.

Subsequent secular use can be dated to the 13th-14th centuries. It comprised a small structure containing a pitched-tile hearth or oven. There were associated ditches, pits and a well, but the focus of activity probably lay further east, towards the street frontage.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Dorney, Eton Rowing Lake (SU 919/787 to SU 939/774)
Tim Allen

Fourth Interim Report
In advance of the grading of the sides of the Rowing Lake a strip *c* 8 m wide and 10 m long was stripped and recorded north of the Iron Age and Roman enclosure reported in *SMA* 1998, 77. It was hoped that this would cross a large cropmark ditch believed to represent the northern limit of the extended Roman enclosure.

In the event the trench lay beyond this. A line of large shallow pits containing burnt flint and occasional flint flakes, probably of Bronze Age date, was found on a southeast-northwest alignment. This was crossed by another alignment of similar pits, and a scatter of further pits, only a few of which were excavated, lay to the south-east. At the south-east end of the trench a shallow ditch of probable Iron Age date was found again on a southeast-northwest alignment.

At the north-west end of the trench the edge of the former Thames channel was found. The first phase of this contained a large flint nodule, burnt flint and pottery of Middle Bronze Age character. When silted up this phase of the channel was cut through by a Roman waterhole containing 2nd century pottery, in whose bottom a wooden withy-tie was found.

The Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme
Phil Catherall (EA) and Stuart Foreman (OAU)

Project background
The route of the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme cuts a broad transect through the Middle Thames floodplain. Following an evaluation in 1991, a series of excavations were conducted on behalf of the Environment Agency in South Buckinghamshire and north-west Berkshire in 1996 and 1997 in advance of the scheme, involving archaeological excavation of some 15 ha. The results of the work to date have been reported in recent newsletters (see Foreman, *SMA* 1998, 26-31). During 1999/2000 a watching brief was carried out along sections of the route of the scheme as well as excavation at Agars Plough.

Watching Brief on the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme

The watching brief revealed the extent of Bronze Age activity on the outer edge of the floodplain. A number of pits and/or ditches near Chalvey Ditch confirmed earlier work that had revealed sporadic features in the evaluation. However, the features were covered by alluvial deposits and were not visible after the topsoil strip and were only recorded (SU 955 792) where sections had been cut in the overburden in order to construct a haul road.

Late Bronze Age pits containing pottery and burnt flint were excavated at Widbrook Common, Cookham (SU 895 838).

A flint scatter was revealed close to the excavations at Roundmoor Ditch but did not appear to be associated with any features.

Another two unaccompanied cremation deposits, both plough-damaged, were discovered immediately to the north of excavations at Marsh Lane (SU 916 803), and could be part of a much larger dispersed cemetery.

On the west of Marsh Lane (SU 914 805) a number of flints, including an early Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead and part of a middle Neolithic discoidal polished flint knife, were found after topsoil stripping, lying on top of an alluvial layer. Inspection of the site during the channel excavation revealed the remains of a buried ground surface, at least a metre below the stripped surface. However, inspection found this to be in poor condition and consequently it was not sampled. It appeared to be similar to the Mesolithic buried ground surfaces discovered at the nearby Eton Rowing Lake and from the depth of alluvium between the buried ground surface and the surface producing flintwork this seems probable.

Agars Plough excavation (SU 975 785)

Background

The presence of a mid-late Iron Age settlement on the Agars Plough playing fields was clearly demonstrated at the evaluation stage of the archaeological project (work undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services). A geophysical survey carried out subsequently by the Environment Agency Project Archaeologist (P Catherall), indicated the presence of a series of linear boundaries forming a 'ladder' settlement on a broadly east-west alignment, coinciding with the concentration of features and finds discovered by the evaluation trenching. The results indicated a concentration of activity on the Agars Plough playing field site with some continuation of linear features suggested to the east and west. The route of the channel was moved in order to avoid the densest concentration of archaeological features, and the 1999/2000 excavation was carried out to mitigate the impact of the realigned route on the eastern fringes of the occupation area.

Results

A number of boundary ditches were exposed, running across the excavated areas, forming part of a series of rectilinear enclosures. Comparison with the geophysical survey of Agars Plough indicates that most of the linear features continue from the ladder settlement centred on the Agars Plough playing fields. Mid-late Iron Age pottery was recovered and, in contrast to the evaluation, there was evidence for occupation extending into the early Roman period.

The distribution of finds and features tends to confirm that the excavated site lies on the eastern edge of the settlement identified on the playing field. Features were present in all the excavated areas, but the majority of the artefacts and discrete features, such as pits and postholes, were found on the west side of the site, closest to Agars Plough. Excavation towards the east end of the site uncovered mainly linear features containing few artefacts, and revealed the eastern terminal of one 55 m wide enclosure. Two parallel ditches crossing the southern part of the site appear to represent the continuation of a track or droveway indicated by the geophysical survey as following, and possibly defining, the southern edge of the occupation area.

The depth of overburden varied considerably. Features at the southern end of the site were found immediately below the topsoil while those to the north were sealed by *c* 0.30 m of alluvium.

Pottery was recovered from 39 contexts, the majority of which are of late Iron Age date with some earlier prehistoric (Bronze Age and possibly middle Iron Age) and some early Roman material also present. Given the limited scale of excavation the pottery assemblage is comparatively large and suggests that any future excavation on the Agars Plough site would produce a sizeable assemblage. In addition to the pottery, worked flint was recovered (presumed to be residual in later contexts), as well as a few fragments of Roman tile and ironwork. Notable bone deposits include an animal burial, and a single human cremation was found at the southern end of the site.

The Rediscovery of Taplow Hillfort (SU 907 823)
T G Allen and H Lamdin-Whymark

Introduction and Background

Taplow Court sits upon a projecting spur of the Burnham Plateau on the east bank of the Thames, overlooking the river and its valley floor on the west and south (Fig 9). The visibility of the site was one of the reasons why a Saxon king chose to be buried here in around AD 650 under Taplow Mound (National Monument No. 19050). The top of the spur (at 65 m O.D.) is a flat plateau, although the ground slopes down gently to the east. To the north the plateau is interrupted by a natural gully, defining an area approximately 6 ha in extent. The underlying geology is Black Park terrace gravel over Upper Chalk (British

Geological Survey, 1: 50,000 Solid and Drift series, Sheet 255).

SGI, the charitable Buddhist organisation which owns Taplow Court, applied for planning permission to build a semi-circular Chanting Hall and adjacent accommodation block. In order to determine the application an archaeological evaluation was requested by Buckinghamshire County Council, which was carried out by Wessex Archaeology. The evaluation located redeposited Mesolithic flintwork, a Late Bronze Age feature, an undated curving gully and three large ditches, none of which was dated, but all of which were presumed to belong to the gardens of Taplow Court in the medieval and early post-medieval period. Planning permission was granted, and the Unit was commissioned to carry out the excavation on the site of the proposed Chanting Hall (Fig 7).

The excavation and Watching Brief (bar one short length of service trench) have now been completed, and a plan of the revealed archaeology is shown in Fig 8. The only post-excavation analysis that has been carried out is a series of OSL determinations carried out by E Rhodes at the Oxford Archaeological Research Laboratory, and the summary offered below is therefore only an interim statement.

Summary of the archaeological evidence

Early prehistoric evidence was widespread across the site. Struck flint blades, including a notched example of Mesolithic type, were redeposited in a layer towards the south end of the area. Neolithic flintwork, including two flaked axes and parts of two others, was also recovered from treeholes. Fragments of Early Bronze Age pottery were found in a series of intercutting scoops, along with concentrations of struck flint of similar date. A small length of ditch was also found at the south end of the site, possibly of similar date.

Bronze Age enclosure and occupation

The first phase of enclosure is marked by a line of postholes at 1 m intervals running north-south. At the very south end of the stripped area the line turns westwards. This fence line was overlain by a series of scoops just to the east, and by the layer containing redeposited Mesolithic flint at the south end of the site. The fence line was undated, but was succeeded by a palisade trench immediately to the west, which followed the same line. Traces of post-impressions were found in places within the trench. Just west of the palisade was another line of postholes spaced at *c* 2.5 m intervals. This may have been associated with the palisade, perhaps supporting a raised wall-walk, or yet another phase of timber enclosure.

The first defensive ditch

Over most of the stripped area, any stratigraphy over the gravel had been truncated by the construction of the previous 1950s buildings on the site, but at the south-west end preservation was better. Here the soil containing Mesolithic flint, through which the palisade trench was dug, was overlain east of the palisade by a layer of gravel which sealed the palisade trench and abutted the post-pipes. This gravel is interpreted as material upcast from a V-profiled parallel ditch some 4 m to the east, which survived nearly 6 m wide and up to 2.6 m deep. This ditch followed the line of the palisade, but terminated at the north end of the site. Wessex evaluation trench 3 (less than 12 m to the north) contained a continuation of this ditch, and the gap was presumably for an entrance (Fig 9).

The timbers of the palisade trench do not appear to have been pulled out, so their bases presumably rotted in situ. The upper fills of the trench were backfilled with gravelly soil containing Late Bronze Age plain wares. The lower half of the V-profiled ditch was filled by a succession of gravelly silts, probably accumulating as a result of erosion of the sides and perhaps some slipping of adjacent upcast. A few sherds of Late Bronze Age character were recovered from these fills, including part of a decorated bipartite bowl from the uppermost layer.

Interior occupation

A few metres west of the palisade the soil changed colour to black. This layer contained a Bronze Age cylindrical loomweight, a saddle quern, much charcoal and much Late Bronze Age pottery, and is interpreted as an occupation deposit. One area, which was bounded by an incomplete circle of postholes, was particularly black, and from this was retrieved a bronze bracelet of Ewart Park type, provisionally dated by P Northover to the 10th century BC. This may mark the site of a house. The features in the interior of the hillfort are not well-dated, but appear to belong to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age.

A second defensive palisade?

East of the V-profiled ditch a double line of postholes was found. The two lines were not parallel to one another, and probably represent more than one phase of fence or palisade. Hardly any finds were retrieved from these postholes, but some were sealed by a distinct silt horizon which formed two-thirds of the way up the ditch and ran all the way along it. At the south end of the site, where stratigraphic preservation was better, this silt layer continued slightly beyond the edges of the ditch to east and west, and here it sealed two of the postholes to the east. The posthole lines may therefore represent a phase of palisade preceding the V-profiled ditch, or possibly one contemporary with it. It is also possible that some of the postholes were later still, and belong with the U-profiled Iron Age ditch to the east.

A phase of abandonment?

The silt layer is interpreted as representing a stabilisation phase, possibly lasting for a considerable length of time. It has been sampled in three places for OSL dating. At the south end of the excavation the silt was divided into two bands, and here only the lower was sampled, whereas the samples from the centre and the north end of the ditch were from the upper part. The dates from the upper part are 2905 ± 300 BP (present = AD 2000) and 2690 ± 210 BP, which overlap in the range 2900 to 2605, or 900-605 BC (at 95% confidence). This date range is entirely consistent with the

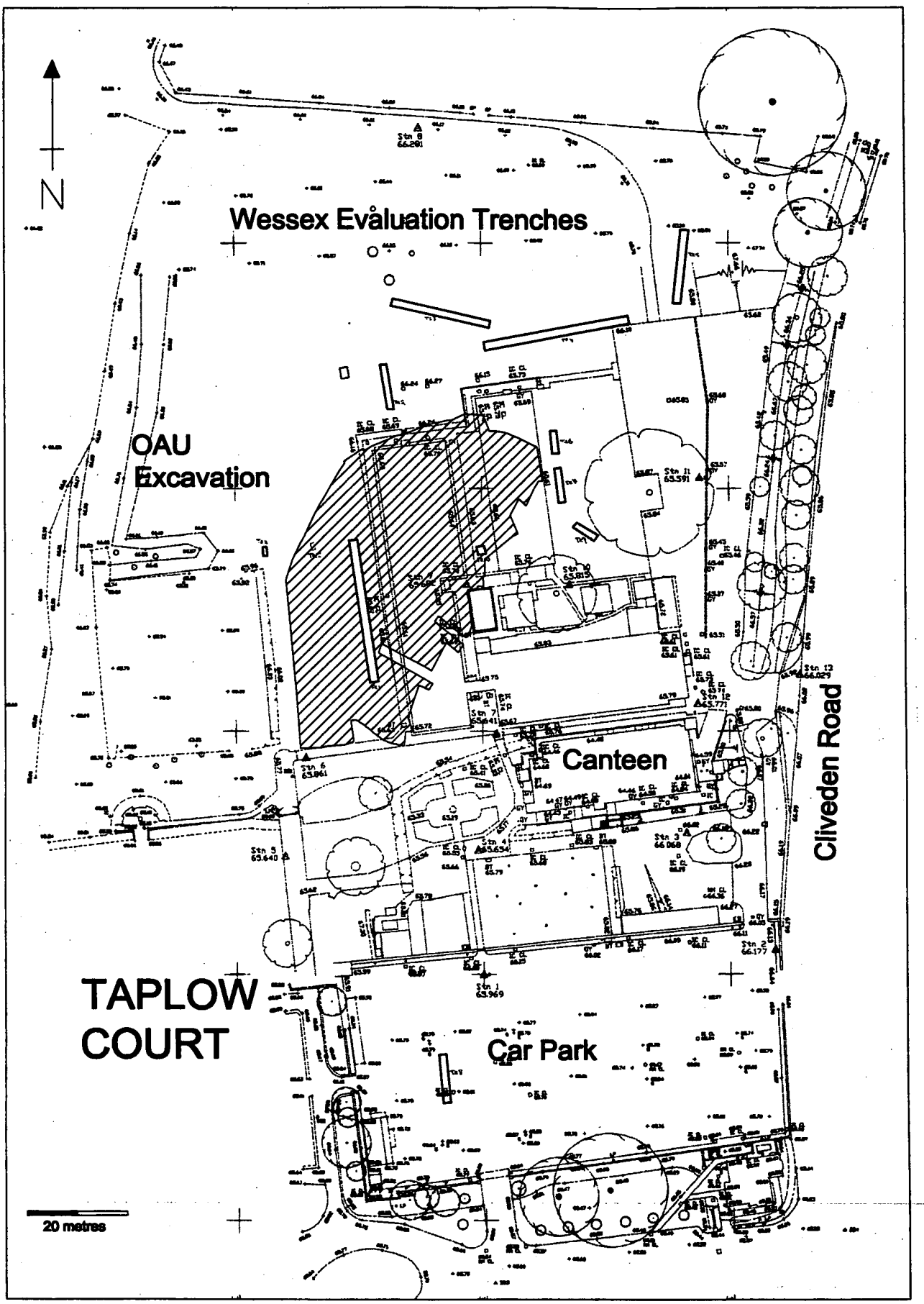


Fig 7. Taplow Court.

artefactual evidence, and indicates either a Late Bronze Age or earliest Iron Age date for the V-profiled ditch.

The later defensive ditch and rampart

Overlying the silt layer the top 1 m of the ditch was filled with redeposited gravel and sands, which are believed to have derived from the excavation of a second defensive ditch immediately to the east (Fig 8). This ditch was U-profiled with near-vertical sides and a flat base, and survived 8-9 m wide and 2.8 m deep. Like the V-profiled ditch, it terminated just before the north end of the site. Running east from the terminal of the U-profiled ditch was a smaller ditch, which turned at right-angles after only 7-8 m and ran north-eastwards across the line of the entrance. This ditch was more than 3 m wide, and is interpreted as a hornwork added to the defences during the Iron Age.

The gravel upcast from the U-profiled ditch formed a rampart that extended up to and slightly beyond the line of the former palisade trench, a width of *c* 12 m. Where the stratigraphy was not truncated by the buildings, this rampart survived *c* 0.25 m above the level of natural gravel. A small assemblage of pottery of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age character was retrieved from the gravel.

The timber-lacing

Along the length of the rampart was a series of reddened areas where the gravel was burnt, in some cases to the full surviving depth of the rampart. In all of these areas lines of charcoal, or in some cases preserved charred timbers, were found, and it appears that these are the remains of a corduroy of halved roundwood timbers laid across the silted ditch, with a line of timbers parallel to the U-profiled ditch, forming timber lacing. Three postholes for upright timbers were also found cut into the silt layer along the middle of the V-profiled ditch, one of which contained the remains of an upright charred timber. All along the inner (west) edge of the U-profiled ditch were slumped layers of burnt gravel and charcoal, and it seems clear that the timber-laced rampart was fired at some point, and collapsed in part into the ditch in front.

The Entrance

At the north end of the site a massive posthole was cut into the end of the fills of the V-profiled ditch, and a slot led east from this towards the end of the U-profiled ditch. This posthole contained much charcoal, and is interpreted as part of an entrance structure that was burnt along with the gravel rampart adjacent. A row of closely-spaced postholes was found curving between this posthole and the end of the U-profiled ditch, which probably marked the limit of the rampart at one phase. Several other burnt features, all of which were partly destroyed by the modern buildings, may have been other entrance postholes.

Sitting upon the silt layer adjacent to the U-profiled ditch at the south end of the site was a band of chalk slabs, which ran parallel to the ditch for a distance of 13 m. The chalk was 0.6 m wide, with larger slabs on the east edge, but was less than 0.1 m deep. This must have formed part of the facing to the rampart of the U-profiled ditch at some stage, but its relationship to the timber-lacing is at present still uncertain. At the entrance fragments of chalk were found in the tops of the curving line of closely-spaced postholes, perhaps indicating that it was a secondary facing.

Roman, Saxon and medieval activity

The U-profiled ditch silted up naturally, and a silt layer representing a stabilisation horizon developed halfway up, which contained a sherd of Roman pottery at the top. A sample taken for OSL dating has yielded a provisional determination of 2190 ± 220 BP, but the corrected range is likely to be two centuries later.

Above this layer a dark soil containing sherds of Saxon pottery and a double-spiral headed pin was found, dating this deposit to the mid-late 7th century. In the entrance way a truncated extended inhumation burial accompanied by an iron knife was found, and this too is probably of Saxon date. Just outside the entrance, but within the hornwork, part of a trench-built post structure was found. This was of sub-rectangular shape, some 3.5 m wide and at least 5 m long. This is undated, but is tentatively interpreted as a Saxon building.

Following the Saxon horizon the top 1 m of the U-profiled ditch was filled with an homogeneous gravelly loam, possibly a deliberate backfilling. This material is undated. East of the site the Wessex evaluation uncovered a third major ditch, which was at least 1.2 m deep. During the Watching Brief east of the excavations a probable continuation of this feature, aligned north-south, was found. This was at least 7 m wide and was observed to a depth of 1.2 m, but was not bottomed. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the top of the fill.

Conclusions and Interpretation

The excavations have demonstrated the presence of a defensive fortification of several phases on the hilltop, almost certainly beginning in the Later Bronze Age, and strengthened in the Early Iron Age. The Bronze Age hillfort may provide a context for the large quantities of Late Bronze Age metalwork recovered from the river Thames adjacent. The southern limit of this fort has been established by the excavations, and the northern limit may be indicated by surviving changes in ground level to the north.

The excavations did not establish the limits of the Early Iron Age defences. These may have continued south as far as the church which used to stand north-east of Taplow Mound, as a large ditch was found when the church was demolished in the mid-19th century. A highly tentative reconstruction of the limits of the defences is given in Fig 9.

A third phase of probable defensive enclosure, enclosing an even larger area, has also been found but is at present undated. The fortifications remained significant earthwork features until at least the Saxon period, and may have influenced the positioning of the Taplow burial mound. Further evidence of Saxon activity approximately

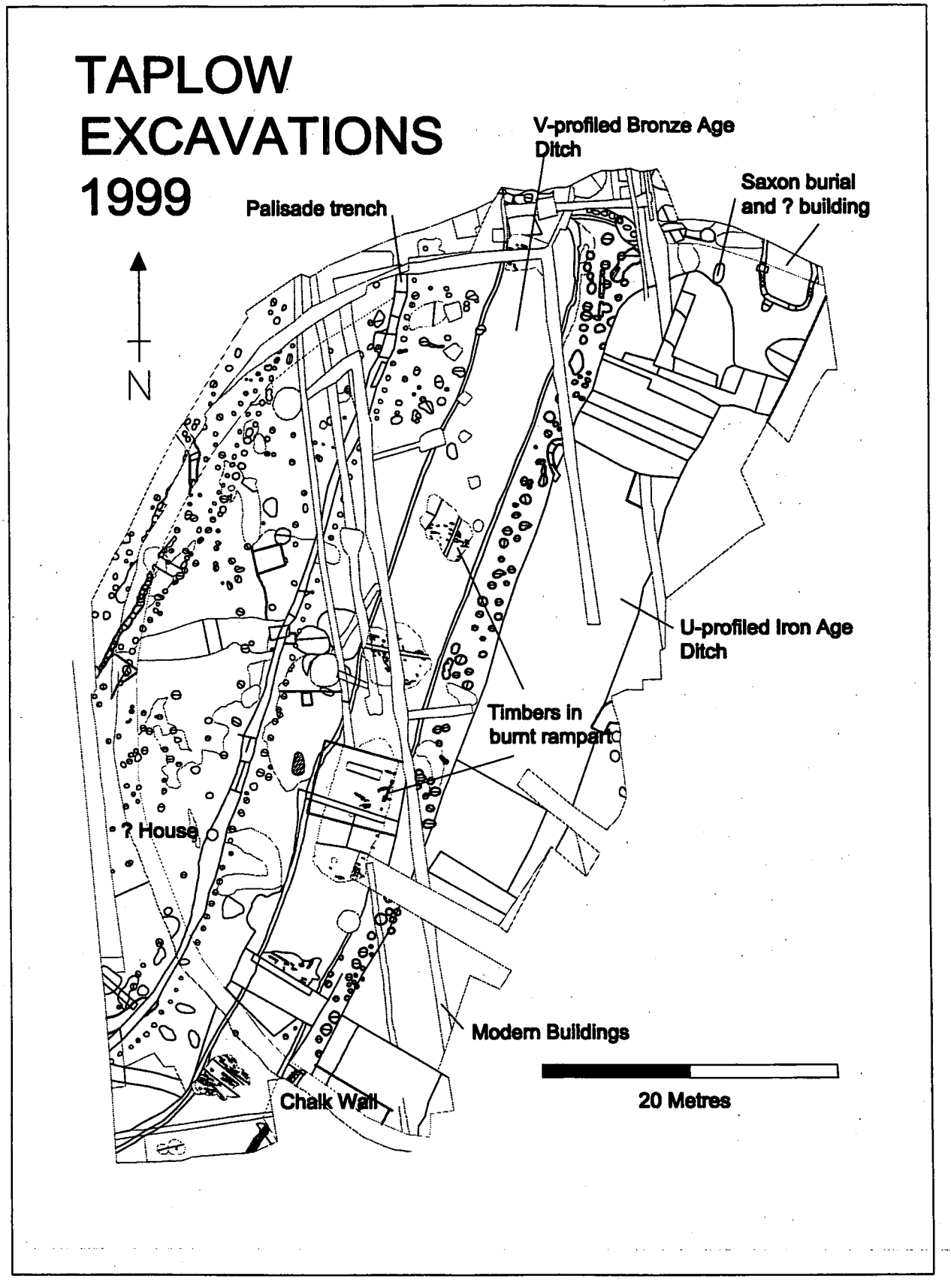


Fig 8. Taplow Court excavations 1999.

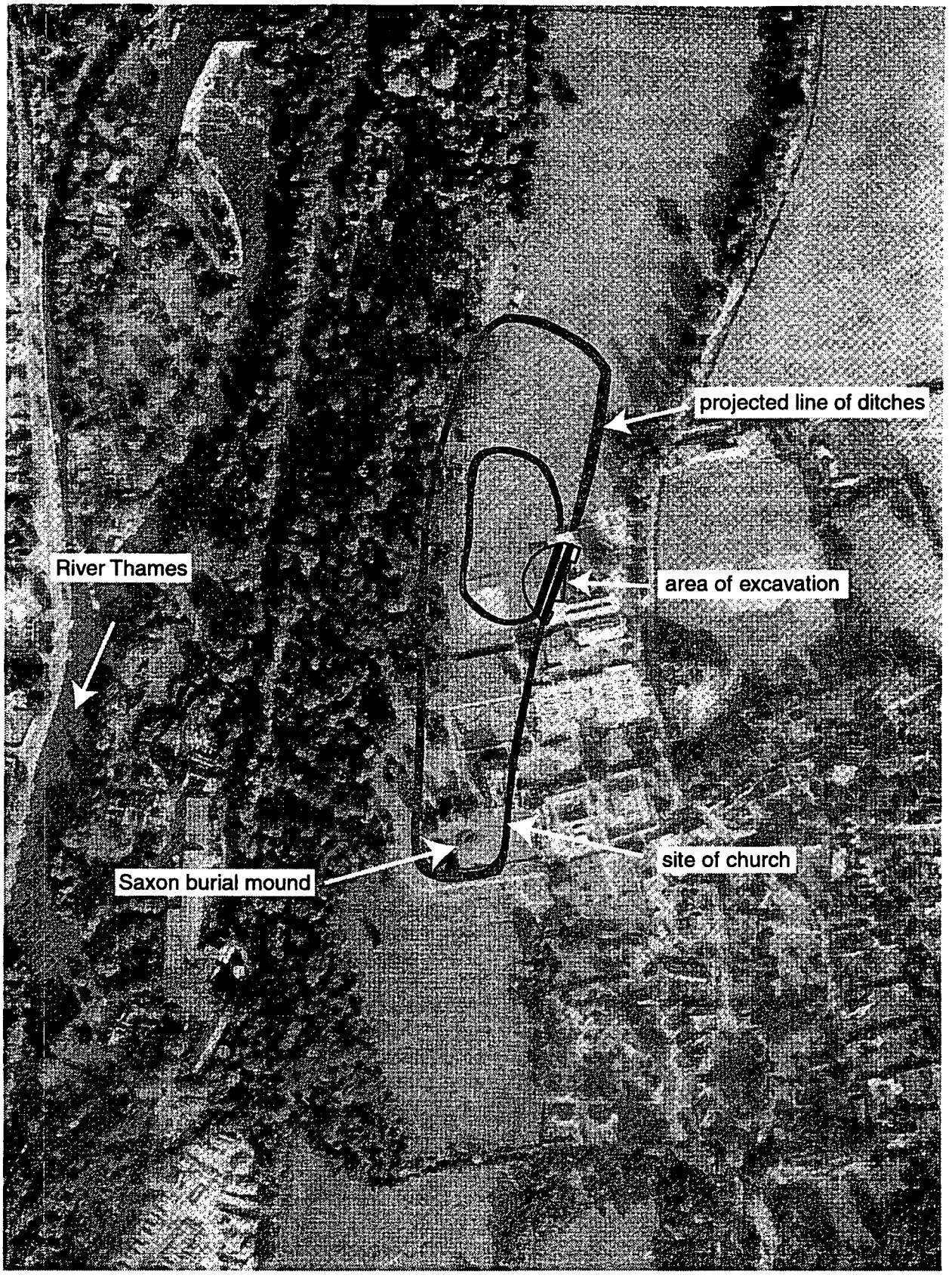


Fig 9. Taplow Hillfort.

contemporary with the mound has also been recovered from the excavations, suggesting that scattered Saxon settlement may have covered a wide area of the hilltop.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Aylesbury-Chalgrove gas pipeline (Buckinghamshire section -see also entry under Oxfordshire)
(SP7165 1835 - SP 6605 0560)
Kate Taylor

Following various phases of preliminary desktop, non-invasive and invasive work carried out by Network Archaeology, the watching brief on this 16.5 km section of the pipeline revealed three sites in addition to isolated features and finds from elsewhere along the easement. The four sites were stripped of topsoil and subsoil under archaeological supervision and a plan made of the deposits. Excavation was largely confined to deposits on or close to the centre line of the pipe trench.

Site 20 (SP 6755 1250)
The main feature on this site comprised a sub-rectangular enclosure ditch of Late Bronze Age/Iron Age date with further gullies, postholes and shallow pits. A small quantity of late Neolithic pottery and a few struck flints were recovered from the enclosure ditch.

Site 21 (SP 6755 1235)
This site lay approximately 50 m to the south of site 20. Several phases were represented. A ring gully, recut on at least two occasions was (provisionally) of Bronze Age/Iron Age date. Further ditches, pits and postholes of early/middle Iron Age date were also found and one ditch was of late Iron Age/early Roman date. An undated feature contained cremation burial/pyre debris.

Site 25 (SP 6725 0870)
Only a small number of features were present on this site. The main feature was a 4th century Roman ditch with other shallow pits being undated or of Roman date. One cremation burial/pyre deposit was of Roman date and a second intercutting burial was undated but probably of Roman date. A third cremation burial/pyre deposit located approximately 100 m away from the main focus of activity contained a sherd of Iron Age pottery and is tentatively assigned to that period.

Site 11 (SP 6888 1424)
A series of five ditches of Roman date were examined/uncovered in the preliminary works on the pipeline route. The watching brief during the pipeline cutting was able to re-examine these features, and one of the ditches produced better dating evidence to show it was of 4th century date.

Chalfont St. Peter, St. Peters Church (TQ 0005 9089)
Joanna Pine

Two evaluation trenches were dug adjacent to the church tower in advance of a proposal to build an extension with a basement. The present day church was rebuilt in the 18th century after the earlier (Medieval) church fell down. Investigation of the deeper levels on the site was hampered due to the presence of many post- Medieval inhumations, but a probable robber trench for the earlier church was located along with an earlier burial. A few sherds of Medieval pottery were recovered as residual finds.

Fenny Stratford, Fenny Lock (SP 884 347)
Steve Ford and Kate Taylor

A large evaluation was carried out on farmland on the west bank of the river Ouzel located to the north east side of Fenny Stratford. Trial trenching by the Milton Keynes Unit to search for a Roman road, and fieldwalking by the Bletchley Archaeological Society in 1975/6 had indicated the presence of Roman deposits. The evaluation comprised 132 trenches and this revealed extensive areas of archaeological interest. Two principal foci were identified, mainly of Roman date but with several other periods represented (Fig 10). Subsequent excavation in 1996 concentrated on these two areas. Trench A/B comprised an area strip of *c* 1.8 ha which revealed an extensive multi-period site. The earliest activity comprised stray flint finds of Mesolithic date, a pit containing (earlier) Neolithic pottery and flintwork, and a pit of early Bronze Age date containing most of a small Collared Urn but without any cremated bone.

More substantial deposits dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age where pits and post-built structures were revealed were located towards the south west of the trench. The structures comprised two, possibly three, round houses. The site developed and expanded in the Middle Iron Age and another post-built roundhouse was built with four ring gully enclosures as were four, possibly five, rectangular structures ('four posters'). Three hearths, one of which was constructed using river cobbles, and a group of intercutting pits also belong to this occupation site. Also at this time, a pit alignment was constructed at the eastern end of the trench and approximately followed the terrace edge on which most of the archaeology was found.

There appears to be a hiatus in the development of the site at this juncture as very little Late Iron Age pottery and no features of this period were identified. Activity resumes in the early Roman period located towards the eastern end of the trench with the digging of a large rectilinear enclosure ditch, possibly accessed from the south by a very wide trackway. These ditches appear to respect the boundary defined by the pit alignment. Early Roman activity is concentrated within the enclosure and comprises many ditches and gullies, but postholes and pits are few and no habited structures were identified. The enclosure continues

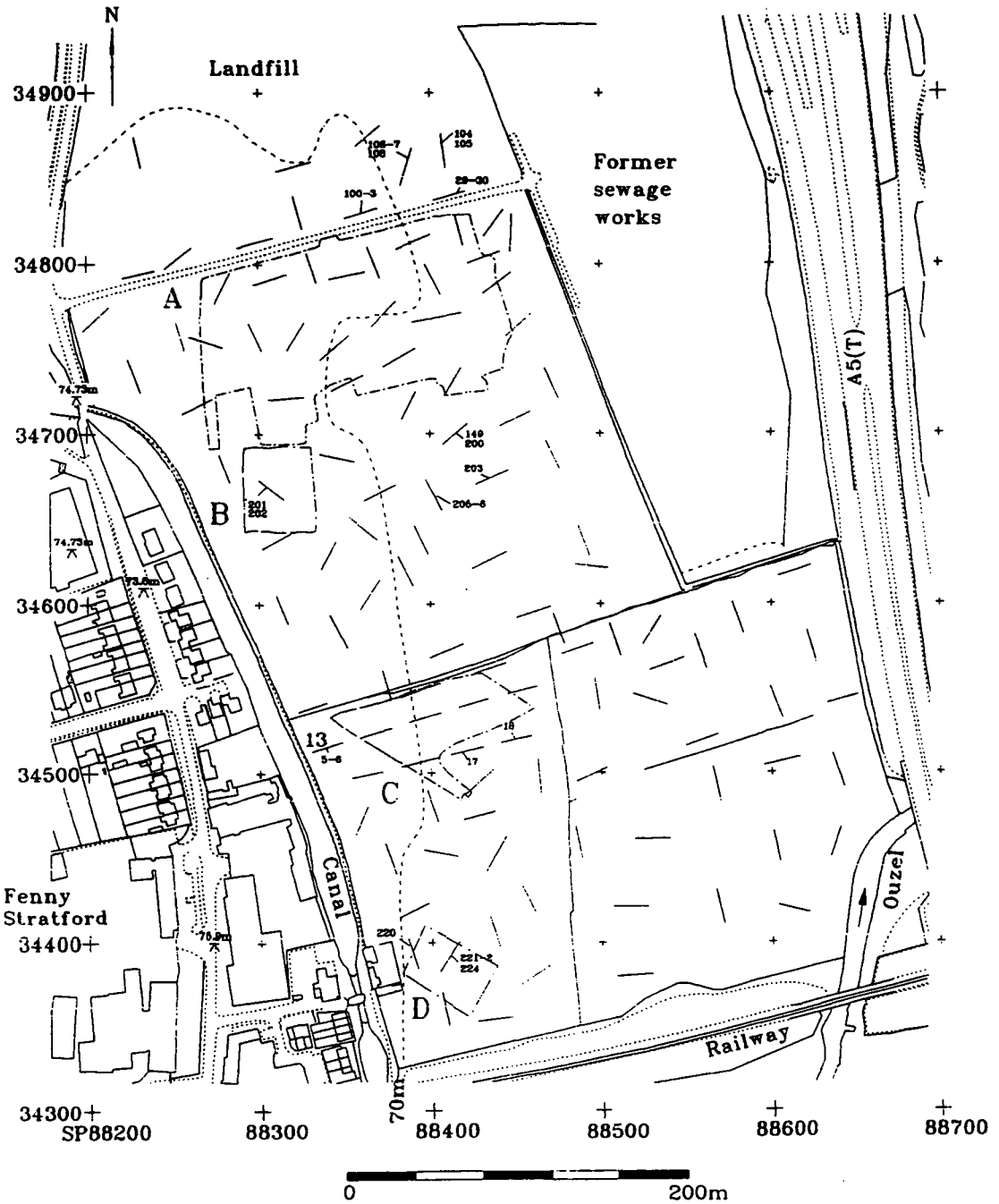


Fig 10. Fenny Lock; showing excavation & evaluation trenches

to be used with further ditch digging into later Roman times and it is only relatively late in the sequence that further paddocks/enclosures are made which lie outside of the enclosure. The only structural evidence found belongs to this later period and comprises a stone-footed roundhouse. Early/middle Saxon activity is represented by one, possibly two, sunken featured buildings. One of these is located adjacent to the site of the Roman stone building but it is not known if this represents continuity across the Roman Saxon divide or is merely the fortuitous siting of a Saxon farm adjacent to a distinctive feature (eg the ruins of a stone footed hut) in an otherwise abandoned landscape.

The other trench (C) of 0.36 ha was located some 200 m to the south. It revealed deposits mostly of early Roman date. These comprised ring gullies and a field system.

Ludgershall, Clovellys (SP6640 7780)
John Saunders

Three evaluation trenches failed to locate any archaeological features but a large quantity of late 15th century pottery and tile was recovered. This collection includes waster material and suggests the presence of kiln sites in the vicinity. The pottery is of Brill/Boarstall type and Ludgershall lies 5 km to the north east of the main production centres recorded so far. This site would appear to extend the geographical and chronological range of this important pottery production centre.

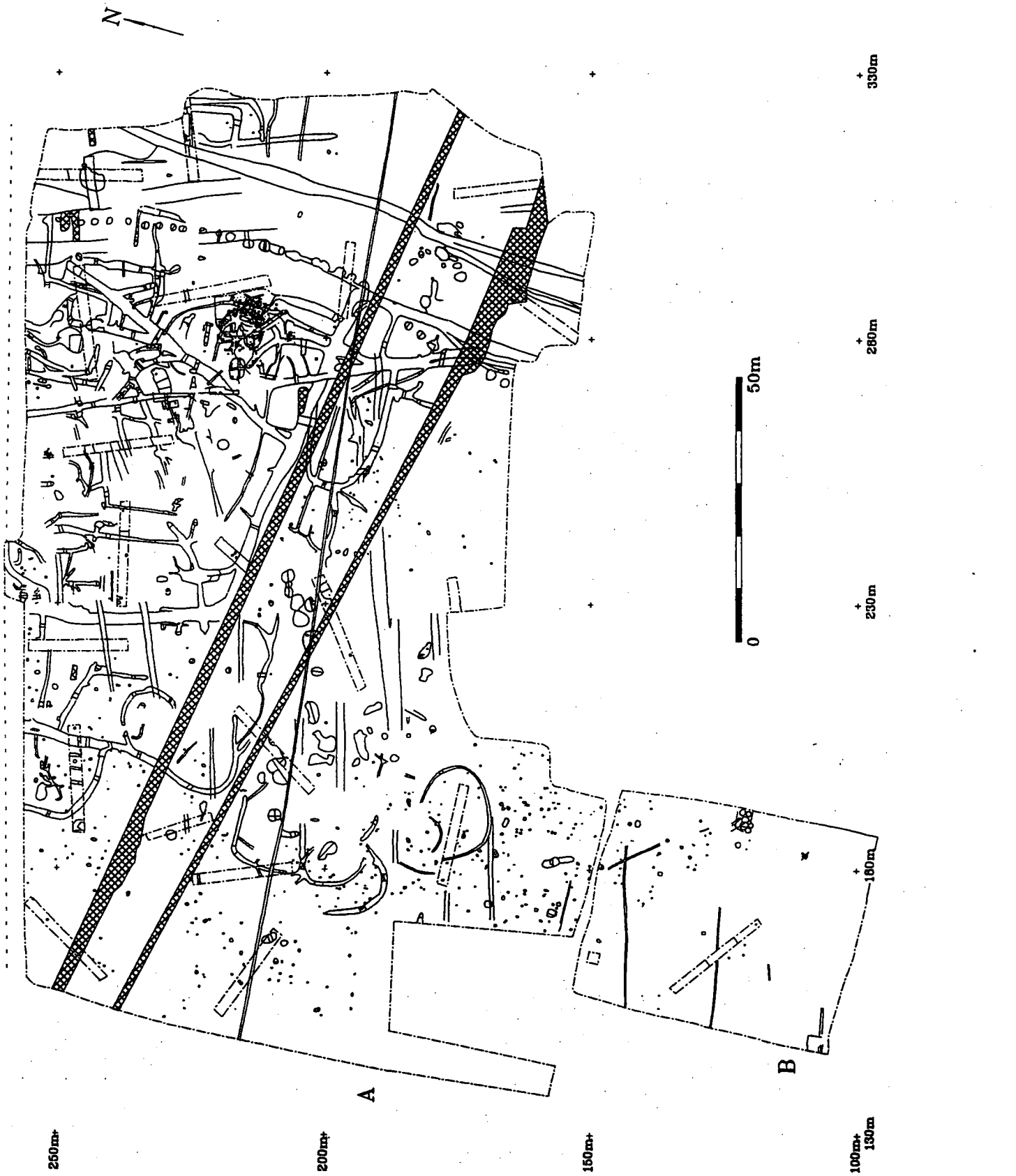


Fig 11. Fenny Lock. Trenches A and B showing all archaeological features including evaluation trenches, plough furrows and modern disturbances

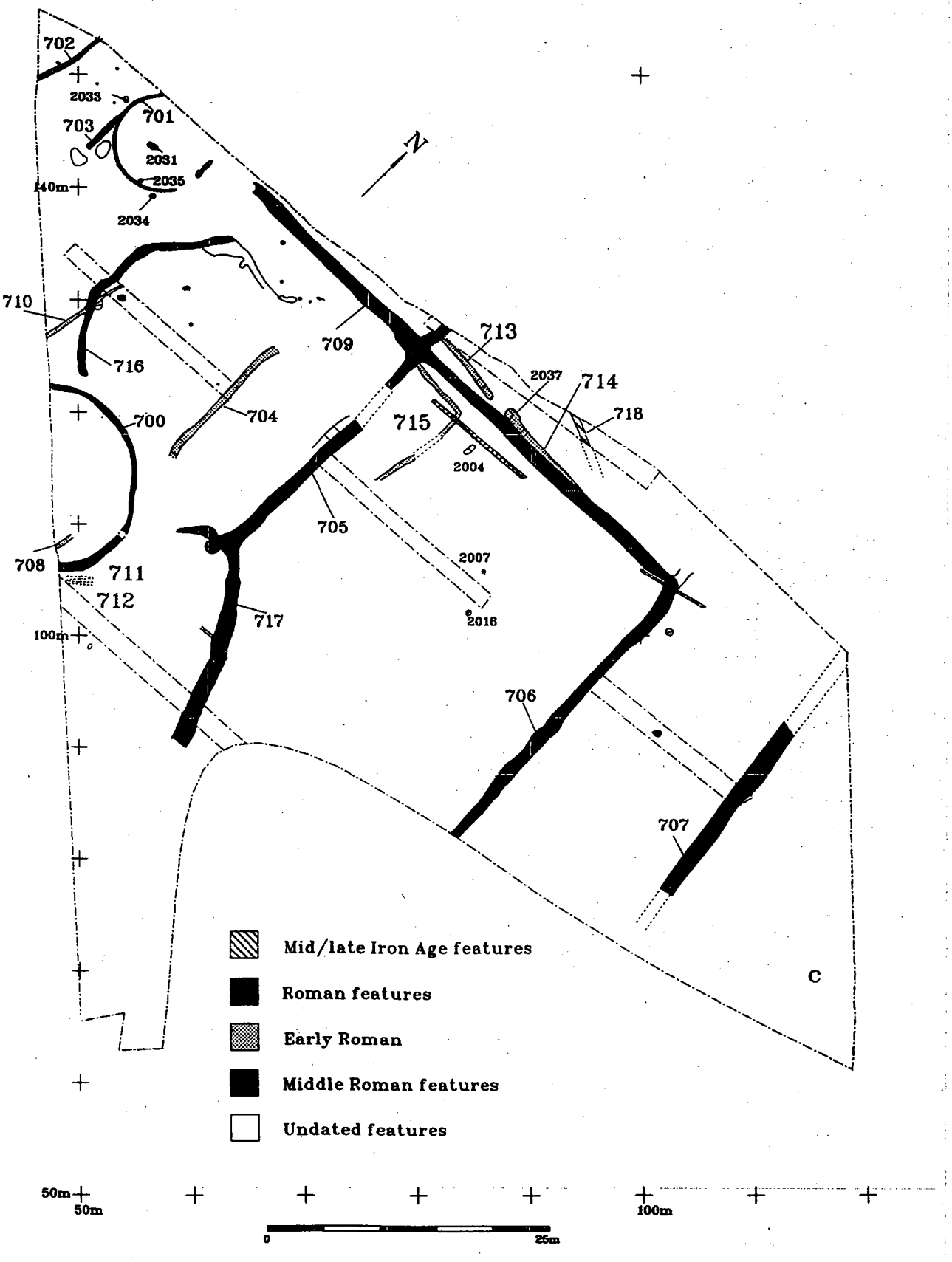


Fig 12. Fenny Lock. Plan of Trench C.

Buckinghamshire

Milton Keynes, Loughton (SP 839 379)
Joanna Pine

An earthwork survey and evaluation comprising 32 trenches located extensive deposits of Medieval date positioned on the north eastern margin of (Great) Loughton. A subsequent excavation in 1997 consisted of nine trenches located in five areas and totaling 0.63 ha.

The earliest deposits encountered comprised a Middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery comprising five burials/deposits of pyre material in four features with a further six undated burials probably of this period also (Trench E). The other deposits all belong to the Medieval period (11th-15th century) and several of the trenches revealed a complex stratigraphic sequence. Immediately to the north of the village at least two rectangular stone-footed buildings were revealed with metalled yard surfaces nearby (Trenches A and E). A ditch, recut on various occasions,lay to the north and demarked the boundary of the village with ridge and furrow fields beyond. One of the buildings had been dismantled and isolated dumps of stone were found at several locations. This area of the site was partly over-ploughed in late Medieval times.

Within another two trenches (B and 2), the majority of a self-contained croft appears to have been examined. The croft was defined by ditches and contained extensive areas of

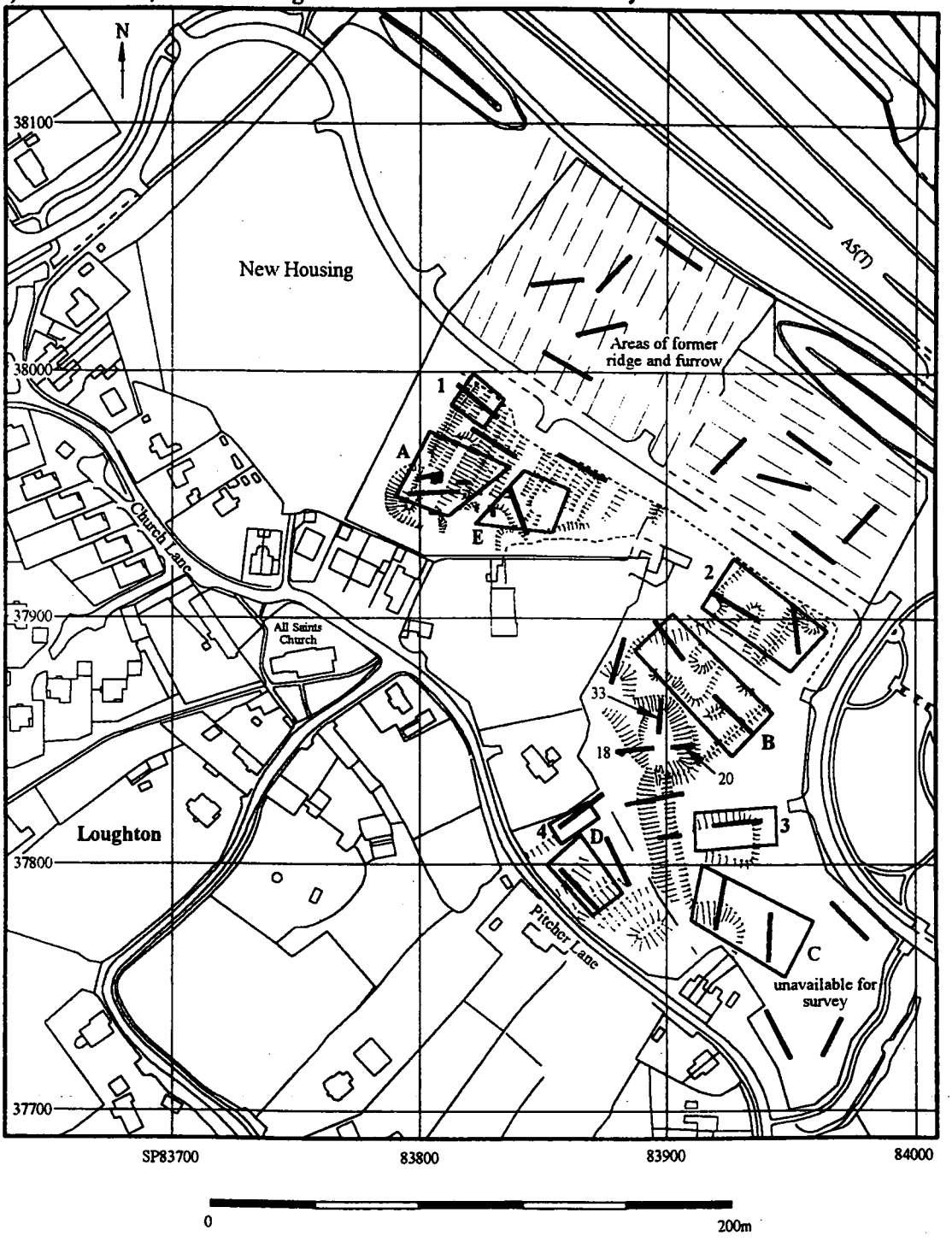


Fig 13. Loughton. Location of site showing earthworks, evaluation and excavation trenches.

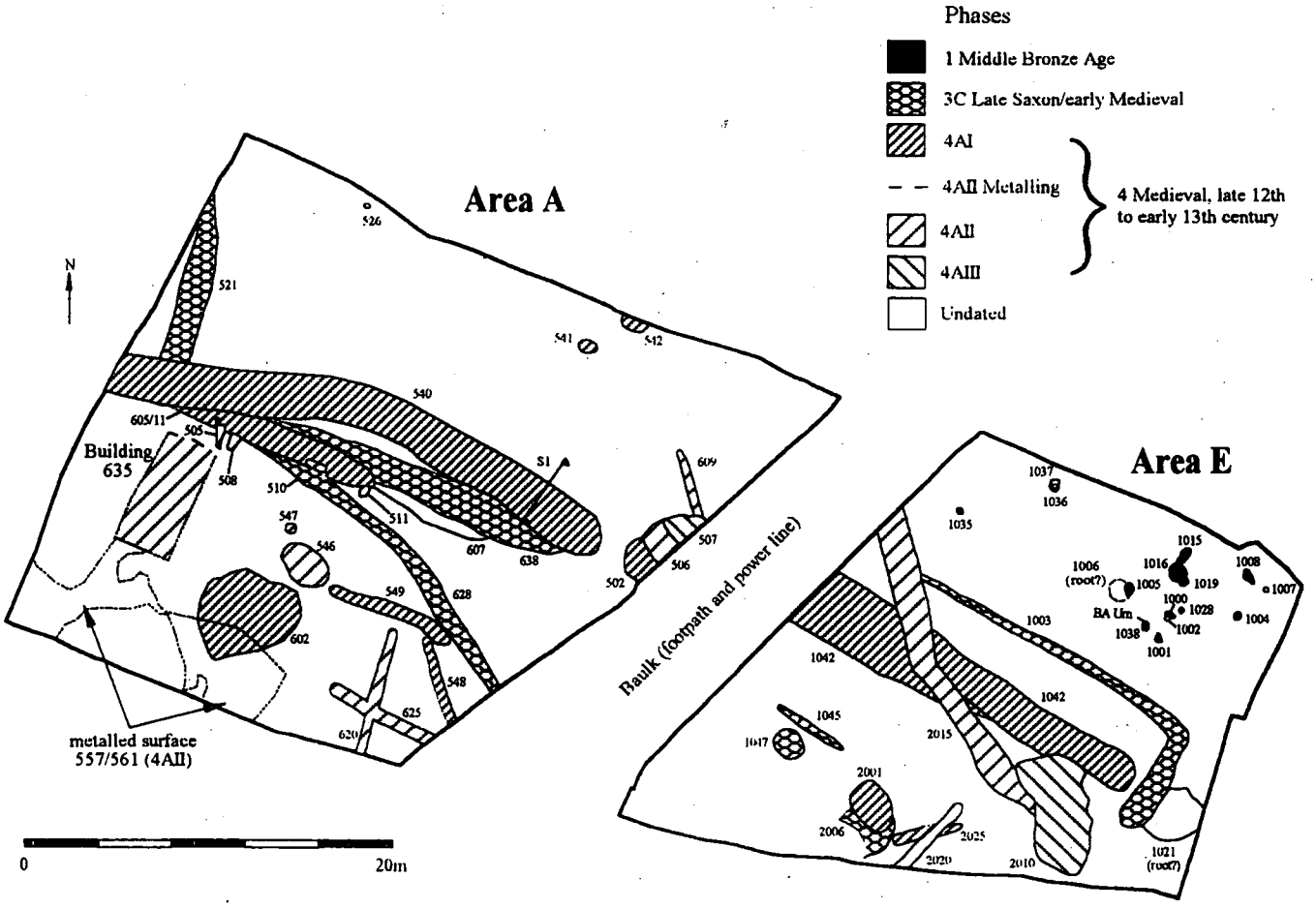


Fig 14. Loughton. Phase plan of Bronze Age and early medieval features.

metalled yard surface. A hollow-way led towards a stone-built structure comprising several rectangular rooms. This part of the site had also gone out of use in late Medieval times.

Elsewhere (trench C) a circular stone-built structure was found that was probably a dovecote although a function as an animal pen such as a pig sty cannot be ruled out. Other features nearby comprise many ditches and gullies, a fence and a small ditch with a U-shaped plan. These features may represent structures used for handling stock.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

AOC ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP
Site Summaries

Northampton, Yates' Wine Lodge at the Ridings
(SP 7572 6053)
Les Capon

An area of 17 m x 17 m was excavated during an archaeological evaluation in the footprint of the proposed development. A sequence of medieval dumped deposits was recorded, particularly featuring pits filled with demolition material, in addition to two major foundations.

The port-medieval deposits were characterised by stone drains, made ground and a boundary ditch showing evidence of the 1675 burning of Northampton. The Victorian period involved the construction of tenements along the Ridings frontage. A watching brief is continuing on the site.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES AND CONSULTANCY LTD

Towcester, Tove Valley Industrial Estate (SP 6509 4951)
Bob Zeepvat

An earthwork survey, excavation and watching brief were undertaken to the north of the Roman town, across the line of 'The Avenue' leading from Easton Neston to Watling Street (A5). The survey recorded prominent ridge and furrow, and the conspicuous profile of the avenue. A trench dug across 'The Avenue' showed it to be generally 6-8 m wide and flanked by two ditches. Two small gullies were also located on a different alignment to the avenue: neither contained any dating evidence, but they appeared to predate the earthwork and ridge and furrow.

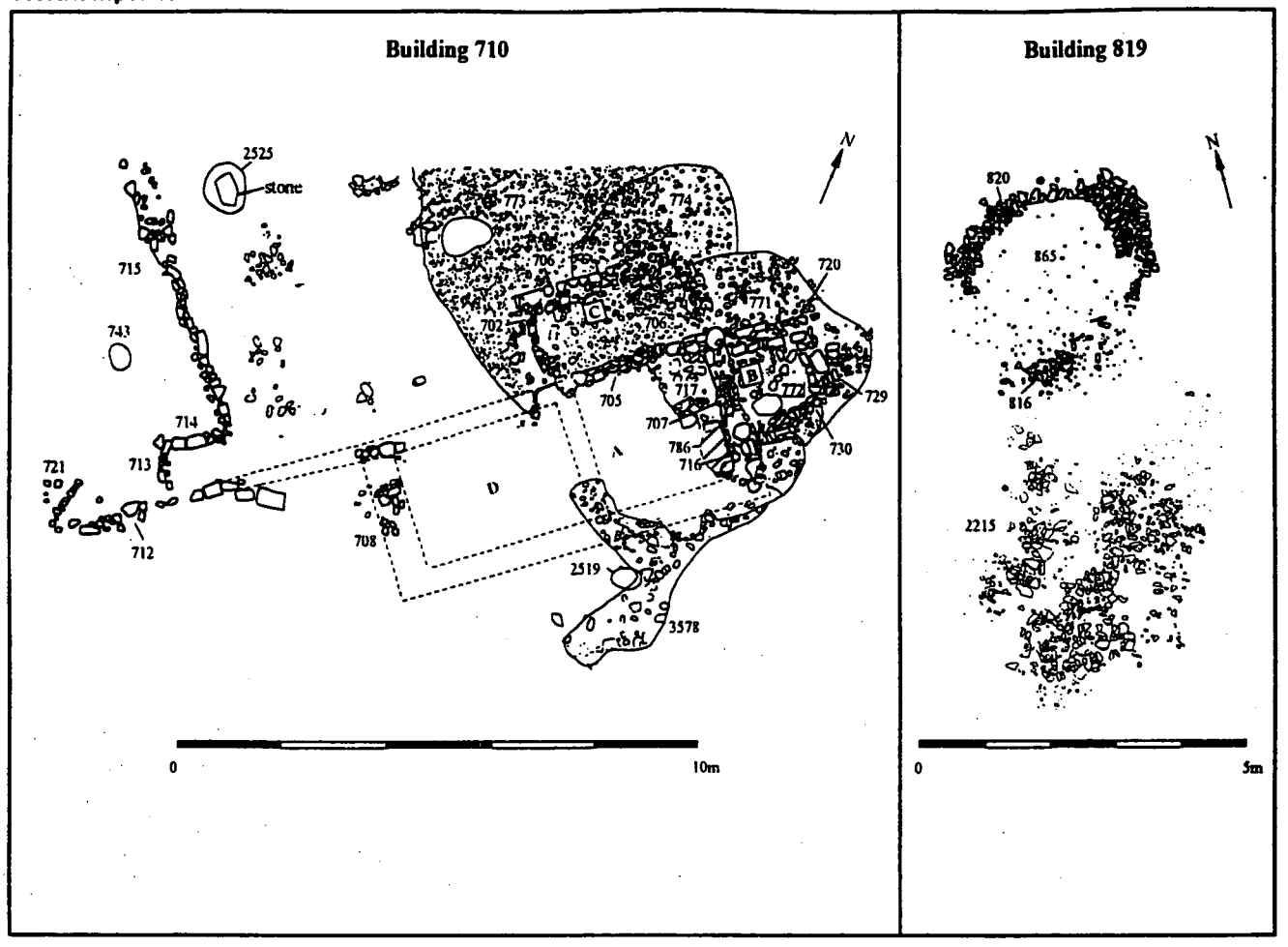


Fig 15. Laughton. Plan of Trench B showing Building 710; plan of Trench C showing Building 819, dovecote or pigsty.

BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Daventry, New Street (SP 5746 6240)
Sean Steadman and Rob Edwards

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site of the White & Co. Shoe Factory. The proposed development area is located within the medieval town of Daventry, close to the Parish Church, and coincides with a postulated medieval enclosure which is considered to be associated with Over Manor. The Stead and Simpson Boot and Shoe Factory, now White & Co. Shoe Factory, was built on the site in 1854 and subsequently extended and altered.

The evaluation was undertaken in two stages. In the first stage, four trial trenches were excavated outside the factory and a single test pit was excavated within the factory itself to test the underlying deposits. Following demolition of the factory a further four trenches were excavated within the footprint of the demolished factory. Excavation of engineering test pits was also observed and recorded.

No surviving archaeological deposits of medieval or earlier date were discovered in any of the interventions. Evidence for extensive ground disturbance relating to post-medieval quarrying was encountered in the north of the proposed development area. Elsewhere the natural subsoil was encountered directly beneath the factory floor slab. Brick walls and drainage runs relating to the development of the factory buildings were also uncovered. In areas of previous quarrying disturbance the ground appears to have been consolidated with brick rubble prior to the insertion of a new concrete slab to support the wooden factory floor. This was probably part of a programme of alterations undertaken in the 1940s.

Kettering, Dryland Street (SP 8668 7868)
Sean Steadman and Matt Edgeworth

An archaeological field evaluation, comprising a desk-top study and trial trenching was undertaken in advance of redevelopment on the site of the former Evening Telegraph printworks.

The desk top study identified a sequence of occupation on the site dating from the late medieval period. Factory buildings and a workhouse had been built on the site by the 18th century and the printworks were constructed in the early 20th century. Geotechnical test pitting revealed a sequence of demolition rubble and modern surfaces, at least 500 mm deep, above the natural geology. Evidence of post-medieval cellarage was also encountered

Trial trenching revealed a similar sequence of deposition across the site. No trace of the medieval tenements survived although walls relating to 18th/19th century buildings, possibly one of the southernmost buildings of the workhouse (built 1717), are shown on a map of 1824. These and later developments on the site probably involved widespread truncation and levelling, destroying any pre-existing archaeological remains.

Little Houghton, Church Of St Mary The Virgin
(SP 8033 5963)
Mark Phillips

A watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the provision of new kitchen and toilet facilities at the Church of St Mary the Virgin.

A number of *in situ* burials were identified, some of these superimposed. Variations in the orientation of burials were observed. A large quantity of human bone was recovered throughout the trenches and the widespread re-deposition of bone indicated the intensive use of the graveyard over an extended period, as might be expected.

In addition to the burials, two archaeological features were located. In a sewer trench, parallel lines of brickwork surrounding an area of loose soil appeared to indicate the remains of a brick-lined vault or grave. A foundation trench partly revealed a possible pit containing bands of mortar debris. Its interpretation is uncertain, but the bands of mortar suggest the pit was probably related to construction work. No dating evidence was recovered but the presence of a series of burials above the pit indicated that it was not modern. It seems likely that it also predates the 19th century rebuilding of the church. A small number of sherds of medieval and late medieval pottery were found in the soil from the trenches.

Rockingham, Land Off The Cottons (SP 8665 9187)
Martin Wilson and Matt Edgeworth

During April and May 1999 an archaeological desk-based study and field evaluation was undertaken in advance of proposed residential development. The development area comprised two quite distinct plots of land: an enclosed paddock to the east, containing the low, upstanding remains of a medieval field system and an area of derelict land fronting onto Main Street.

The surviving remnant of medieval ridge and furrow was surveyed. Trenching in this area revealed a surprising depth of up to 1.1 m from the top of the ridges at ground level to the base of the furrows. Several sherds of heavily abraded medieval pottery were recovered, ranging in date from the 12th-14th centuries. Immediately to the west of the paddock a possible north-south running boundary ditch was located; this also produced 12th-14th century pottery.

Beneath the derelict land two pits were discovered, one of which produced domestic waste deposits dating, again, to the 12th-14th centuries. The other pit yielded four flint artefacts and an undated animal burial in its primary fill. The vestigial remains of an undated wall foundation running perpendicular to the road were found beneath a late post-medieval cobbled yard. However, 19th century activity had considerably affected the survival of archaeological evidence on this part of the development area.

Towcester, Bury Mount (SP 693 488)
Sean Steadman

Bury Mount is an earthwork motte castle situated on the north- east side of Towcester. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument Number 13623) in private ownership. An Archaeological Management Survey, comprising a Desk-top Study and Archaeological Survey was undertaken by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service, in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit in April/May 1999.

The motte probably dates to the early years of William I, but by the time it is first recorded in 1391-2, it had almost certainly been out of use for over a century and appears to have been treated as waste land in the late Middle Ages. By the 16th century Bury Mount had become a private garden and by 1610 was planted with cherry trees. During the English Civil War the motte was used as a gun emplacement by the royalist garrison in 1643/4 and it is possible that the motte was steepened as a part of the overall defences. Undoubtedly the profile of the motte has been altered over the past few centuries. In the 19th century Scots Pines were planted on the summit of the motte and two cottages were built into its southern face.

The Archaeological Survey concluded that Bury Mount is in a very poor condition. The biggest threat to its long term survival is erosion. The motte is not in a stable state of preservation and requires pro-active management to ensure that even a minimal level of preservation is attained.

A Monument Management Strategy has been proposed which could be employed to:
- Prevent further erosion of the earthwork.
- Improve the general appearance of the site.
- Manage the site for wildlife and nature conservation needs.
- Develop the monument within its setting and consider the site in relation to its surroundings.
- Improve access and increase the numbers of bona fide visitors.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Boughton, Buckton Fields (SP 743 650)
Aileen Connor

A desktop assessment was carried out as part of an archaeological evaluation of 48 ha in advance of housing development, using non-invasive techniques. Physical access to the site was limited to 50%. Potential archaeological sites were revealed. Features were noted in the north-west of the area, but dating by geophysical survey and fieldworking was inconclusive.Finds recovered during fieldwalking suggest prehistoric and Roman activity. World War II features were identified in the north-east of the area, together with ring ditches, pits and enclosures of an earlier date. Quarrying and modern disturbance were also noted. The desktop study suggested target areas for the intrusive stage of evaluation.

Towcester, Bury Mount (SP 6856 4915)
Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service

Bury Mount (within the Towcester Conservation Area) was the focus for a Conservation Area Partnership grant scheme jointly funded by English Heritage, South Northamptonshire District Council and Northamptonshire County Council Heritage Branch. The motte probably dates to the early post-conquest years but had fallen out of use by 1391. It was used as a gun emplacement in 1643/4 and may have been steepened as part of the defences. In the nineteenth century it was planted with trees, and cottages were built into the southern face. The monument is currently in a poor condition and under continuing erosion and degradation. Initially a desktop study was carried out and this was followed by an archaeological survey and an archaeological conditions survey, together with wildlife and nature conservation studies. A Monument Management strategy with recommended options was devised for the stabilisation and protection of the motte.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Long Buckby, Ryehill Farm (SP 6050 6650)
Laurent Coleman

A geophysical survey and subsequent evaluation was undertaken of a 42 ha site adjacent to Watling Street. Late Iron Age and Romano-British ditches were found, predominantly in the central part of the site, but no evidence of the postulated minor road running northwards from Bannaventa, *c* 1 km to the south.

FOUNDATIONS ARCHAEOLOGY

Burton Latimer (SP 8950 7560)
Mike Napthan

Excavation took place on a site 2800 sq m in area. Three phases of activity were identified, but there was little dating evidence.

Phase 1: Mesolithic tree clearance. Radiocarbon date of late 5th millenium BC.

Phase 2: Ditch and gully, probable boundary possibly to an enclosure. Late Neolithic date from radiocarbon. Also one worked flint.

Phase 3: Medieval ridge and furrow.

Crick (SP 573 730)

In 1998 Foundations Archaeology was commissioned by Premier Hotels plc and the Cuckfield Property Company (Crick) Ltd to excavate an area of land in advance of development at the Crick, Northamptonshire. The archaeological excavation followed a programme of field evaluation undertaken by RPS Clouston and a geophysical survey undertaken by Stratascan. These earlier stages of fieldwork revealed significant archaeological deposits and an archaeological excavation was subsequently undertaken.

The excavation revealed a complex of enclosures and linear boundaries of Iron Age date representing an element of the larger wide spread settlement excavated by BUFAU at Covert Farm. A very small quantity of Romano-British pottery was also recovered, predominantly from the southern boundary ditch. The entire site had been truncated by medieval ploughing.

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Brackley, Former Cantor & Silver Site, Manor Road (SP 5856 3719)
Tom McDonald

During October 1999, an excavation and watching brief at the former Cantor & Silver factory, Brackley was carried out. The site is thought to lie within the historic core of the medieval new town of Brackley, with former medieval tenement boundaries projecting into the eastern part of the site. A preceding evaluation and the subsequent excavation revealed elements of 19th century and earlier boundaries, and also a small number of medieval features (including ditches and post holes). The original ground surface was

heavily disturbed, and residual mediaeval pottery was found in many later features.

The truncated base of a ditch contained 13th-14th century pottery and adhered to the line of a rear boundary which appears on the 1760 plan of Brackley. To the west of the ditch, the evaluation revealed anextensive cobbled yard surface, sealed by post-medieval demolition/levelling layers.

ISE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

The Rushton Bath House (SP 849 831)
James Looker

Further excavations of the bath house will continue throughout the 2000 season. The evidence, thus far, would suggest a multi - phased structure, with an occupational date of mid third century to mid fourth century.

Over the Easter Bank holiday, (2 - 4 April) 1999, the society undertook a survey of the field situated to the north of the bath house, (SP 849 832), with the purpose of trying to establish an occupational area for which the bath house was constructed. The survey area covered 40 m x 30 m and by and large was a success, deposits of building debris being recorded and quantities of pottery sherds recovered. The pottery fragments range from the late Iron Age through to the post medieval period. The results are to be quantified at a later date by enlarging the survey area and obtaining permission from the land owner for the provision of several evaluation trenches to be placed.

In September 1999, whilst excavating a ditch closely associated with the bath house, an early 4th century Christian font/tank was recovered. The font/tank is highly decorative and displays a 'Chi Rho' motif, dated to *c* 339 AD (Thomas 1981, 86). The font/tank is currently being conserved at Leicester University and will be eventually displayed at the Kettering museum.

Reference

Thomas C, 1981; *Christianity in Roman Britain To AD 500*, London

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Report compiled by Andy Chapman and Pat Chapman, illustrations by Mark Roughley and Alex Thorne

Brackley, The Elms (SP 5878 3747)
Rob Atkins

A medieval building located in evaluation was excavated prior to development for housing on land at The Elms, lying on the High Street to the north of the present town centre. The building was preceded by groups of pits, dated 1150-1250, which probably lay within a plot to the rear of domestic buildings fronting onto the High Street. In the mid to late 13th century a stone built "L"- shaped building, a detached bakehouse and kitchen, was constructed on the rear of the plot (Fig 1). A metalled track ran from the building towards the street. Later a square malt oven was inserted into one room. A nearby stone-lined well was located in a watching brief during the early stages of development.

The malthouse/bakehouse was demolished in the second half of the 14th century and its walls were partly robbed. The northern part of the building was largely lost within an extensive stone quarry. Subsequently the area became a garden for the early 17th century almshouses fronting onto the High Street.

This sequence of activity has been confirmed by the watching brief. This has located further pits and two circular ovens, dating to around the 13th century, and six large quarry pits containing pottery as late as the 16th century in date, and probably relating to the expansion of Brackley in the 16th/17th centuries.

Braybrooke, Firs Farm (SP 7652 8427)
Joe Prentice

A desk-based survey and trial excavation suggested that a potential development site was outside the area thought to be West Hall, as known from an historic document. A small group of features comprising a ditch, two gullies and two post-holes were found. The ditch and one of the gullies produced single sherds of medieval pottery, perhaps suggesting limited activity during that period.

Brigstock Camp, Pill box (SP 935 863)
Peter Masters, Michael Webster and Chris Burgess

Prior to the development of this camp, formerly for the unemployed in the 1920s and later for the army, one of the three surviving pillboxes was surveyed in detail.

Daventry, Borough Hill (SP 5875 6210)
Mark Holmes

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for the installation of two new telecommunication dishes at Daventry Transmitting Station, Borough Hill, the site of an Iron Age hillfort, part of which is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 40). The development site, situated within the compound of the Transmitting Station and located towards the southern defences of the hillfort, is not scheduled.

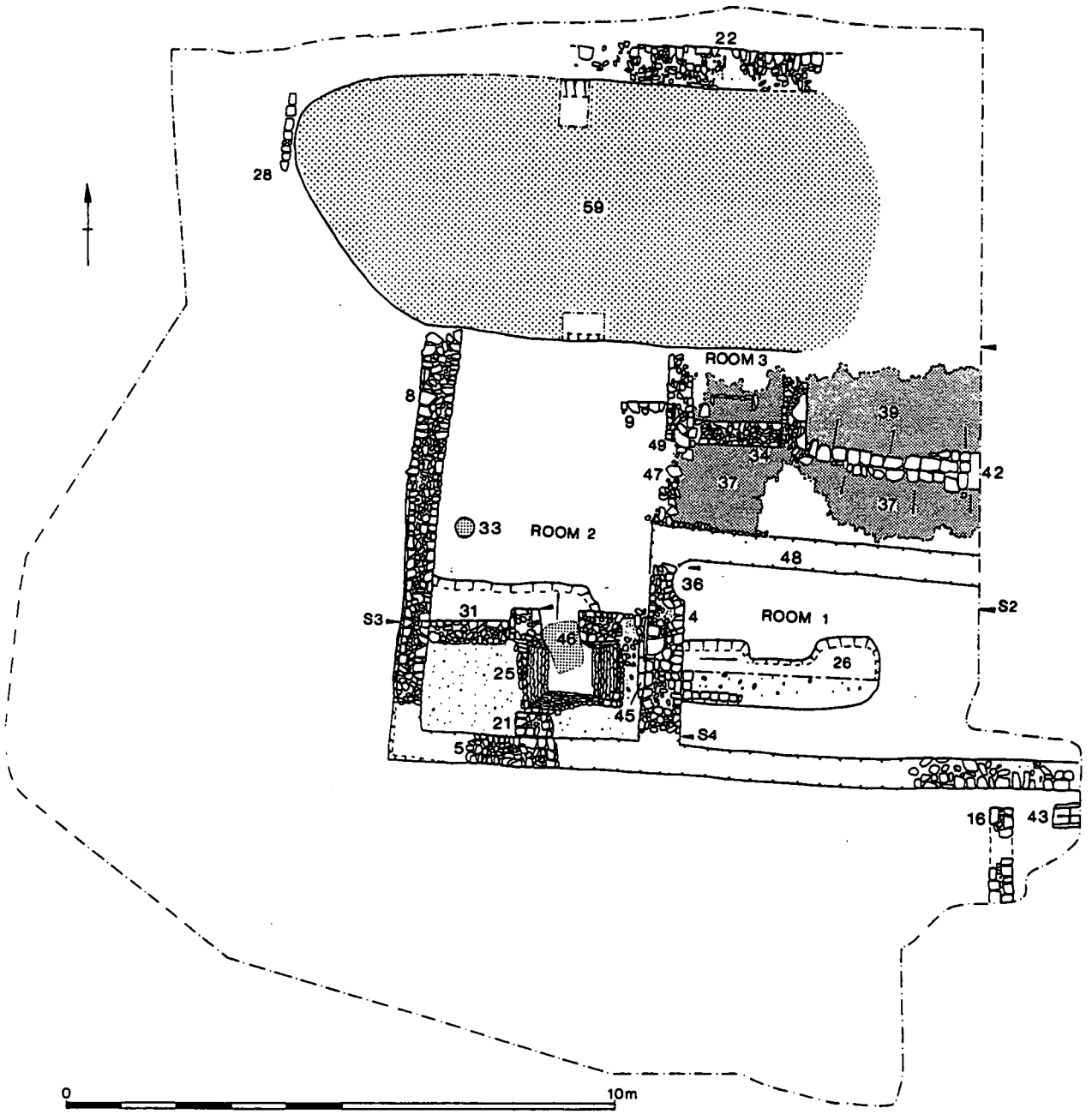


Fig 1. Brackley, The Elms, the medieval malthouse/bakehouse.

Previous archaeological fieldwork during the laying of the compound fencing in 1992 revealed no archaeological features (*SMA* 23(1993), 46) and none were found this time.

Daventry, Golding Close (SP 5738 6273)
Rob Atkins

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during proposed development for shops, housing and a car park. A single medieval ditch, dated to the 13th-14th centuries, may be a further length of an enclosure ditch excavated 30m to the east in 1995. The watching brief seems to confirm the results of evaluation trenches excavated in 1994, in finding that occupation in this area was sparse, perhaps due to the steeply sloping ground.

Daventry, 2 Sheaf Street (SP 571 625)
Joe Prentice

A building survey was carried out in the yard of this Grade II listed building to record the ground plan of the 19th century conservatory, of which only half survives, together with the underground chamber, and the "grotto" wall. A fabric survey was later conducted to provide information concerning blocked and covered features within the building.

Daventry, Moot Hall (SP 5740 6264)
Joe Prentice

Trial excavation to the north of the Moot Hall located a large 17th century pit and the footings of an 18th century wall. No medieval or Saxon levels were found.

Daventry, Middlemore Farm (SP 565 648)
Rob Atkins and Erlend Hindmarch

An archaeological evaluation was carried out before a proposed housing development. A fieldwalking survey recovered no concentrations of archaeological material; only three flint flakes, a very thin spread of abraded Roman pottery, a couple of medieval sherds and a little post-medieval pottery were recovered. A magnetometer survey found no archaeological anomaly other than the surviving ridge and furrow earthworks.

Fawsley, St Mary's Church (SP561 566)
Joe Prentice

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a cable trench between Fawsley Hall and St Mary's Church to see if any remains of occupation associated with the deserted village would be encountered. None was found and it is likely that the area around the edge of the former village was used for cultivation, but has more recently been under pasture.

Holdenby House (SP 69166780)
Joe Prentice

An archaeological evaluation in the kitchen garden revealed nineteenth century planting pits along with an undated feature, but no features relating to the gardens of the Elizabethan mansion were located.

Laxton (SP 976 994)
Dennis Jackson

An archaeological watching brief was carried out whilst a new water main was being laid along the verge of the A43 trunk road in the Laxton area. The trenching revealed that the known iron working and Roman settlement area was more extensive than previously recorded. The line of the water main was altered at one location in order to avoid damage to a large Roman iron smelting furnace, where a separate excavation subsequently took place.

Reference

Jackson D A and Tylcote R F 1988; Two new Romano-British iron working sites in Northamptonshire, *Britannia*, XIX, 275-98.

Northampton, Brackmills Link Road (SP 772 573)
Rob Atkins

An archaeological evaluation comprising trial trenching and geophysical survey was carried out on the line of a proposed new road. It confirmed the existence of a sub-circular ring ditch, previously known from cropmarks. It enclosed an area 22 m in diameter and the V-shaped ditch was 2.8 m wide by 0.8 m deep. No finds were recovered, but a sample of oak charcoal from the ditch has given a radiocarbon date centred on 1620 cal BC (1745-1485 at 2 sigma, Beta 132789); confirming that this was a ring ditch surrounding a ploughed out round barrow.

Northampton, Church of the Holy Sepulchre
(SP 7540 6093)
Alex Thorne

An archaeological recording action on groundworks at the junction of the round church and the north aisle recorded structural remains which appeared to predate the mid 12th century phase of building. A thick layer of mortar and rubble, which was exposed in the majority of the trench, may have derived from the demolition of the gallery and clerestory of the round church, possibly in the 14th century. In addition, two drains were recorded, both post-dating the demolition layer.

Northampton, St Peter's Church (SP 7498 6038)
Rob Atkins

An archaeological watching brief undertaken at St. Peter's church during the excavation of drainage trenches uncovered mostly grave earth of unknown date. The foundations of a limestone wall were found 0.45 m from the south wall of the church, but a modern drain obscured their relationship. A probable medieval layer or feature was found to the north of the church. To the north-east two pits or graves were seen cutting the natural subsoil.

Northampton, St James End, Travis Perkins
(SP 7445 6034)
Mark Holmes

A watching brief was carried out during redevelopment of this site, following earlier trial excavations in 1996 (*SMA* 27 (1997), 38). However, as the ground was raised no archaeological deposits were exposed or affected.

Northampton, Southbridge (SP 755 596)
Alex Thorne and Joe Prentice

An archaeological evaluation on proposed redevelopment land at Southbridge revealed considerable destruction by 19th century foundations and drains but no medieval layers. Any medieval archaeology that may survive must be at a depth which will be unaffected by the proposed development. Three buildings were recorded prior to their re-development or demolition; The Granary, a Grade II listed structure, the Transhipment Sheds and the Railway Office building.

Northamptonshire

Northampton, Wootton Fields Roman Villa (SP 766 563)
Andy Chapman

A previously unknown Roman villa was located during monitoring of groundworks on a new housing development. The exposed building remains were cleaned and planned before they were backfilled for long-term preservation. The initial cleaning was undertaken over a weekend by a large team of volunteer help, and subsequent recording was sponsored by English Heritage. An adjacent area containing cut features of both Iron Age and Roman date was excavated prior to road construction (Fig 2).

A roundhouse ring gully and a scatter of pits are dated from the mid-1st century BC to the mid-1st century AD. They suggest that there may have been continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age.

The main villa building was probably a simple strip building with front and rear corridors. A room at the northern end contained a channelled hypocaust and had been decorated with painted wall plaster. At the opposite end a pillared hypocaust had supported the opus signinum floor of a hot room, but the remainder of this small bath suite was not exposed. The pottery and coins spanned the later 1st to 4th centuries AD, but 2nd and 3rd century material predominated. The size of the building and the paucity of domestic and personal items suggests that the villa was not of exceptionally high status.

Geophysical survey and limited excavation demonstrated that the main building stood within a 70 m square ditched enclosure with a number of phases of recutting; the earliest including a timber palisade. A series of hearths and ovens/furnaces to the immediate north of the villa represent a final phase of industrial usage following the abandonment of at least parts of the main building.

Orlingbury, Dovecote (SP 8615 7232)
Joe Prentice

A watching brief during work to lay a gravel path around the dovecote revealed a brick floor associated with the 19th century toilets. No other archaeological remains were encountered.

Oundle, Glapthorn Road (TL 033 890)
Anthony Maull and Peter Masters

The excavation of a small Roman farmstead was carried out in advance of housing development, about 1.2 km north-west of the Saxon core of Oundle and 1.4 km west of Ashton Roman town. Fieldwalking had produced evidence of a concentration of Roman pottery (*SMA* 27 (1997), 39) and a later evaluation comprising geophysics, metal detecting and trial trenching indicated the presence of a Roman farmstead.

Excavation exposed much of the plan of the farmstead, including a sequence of overlapping square enclosures with associated late Iron Age round houses, two Roman aisled buildings, a stone-lined well, water pits and hearths (Fig 3). Part of the main complex of Roman buildings lay to the west of the excavated area.

Part of an early Saxon cemetery was revealed along the north side of the site, and it possibly extended under the houses and gardens of an earlier development. Nine inhumation burials, aligned north-south and east-west were excavated; and the range of grave goods include bone combs, glass beads (notably a large polychrome melon bead), several iron knives, and a fine oval bone plaque with a central hole and ring-and-dot decoration, which may have been an amulet.

Potterspury, 19 Woods Lane (SP 7603 4320)
Erlend Hindmarch

A watching brief noted the presence of a large medieval ditch or pit, dated to the 13th to 15th centuries, in the trench for the footings for an extension to the property. The remains of a much later stone wall, probably related to a ruined barn, were recorded in a service trench for drains.

Stanford on Avon (SP 589 788)
Chris Jones

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the installation of two lines of underground cabling within both the village and the adjacent Deserted Medieval Village of Stanford on Avon (Scheduled Ancient Monument No 145). No archaeological features were found.

Towcester, Meeting Lane (SP 6931 4858)
Rob Atkins and Charmian Woodfield

An archaeological watching brief was carried out along the length of Meeting Lane, where extensive early Roman features were found and a few sherds of 3rd and 4th century pottery.

An early Roman road, branching off the Alchester Road was found. This had gone out of use when it was cut by a wall. The surviving foundations were 2.8 m wide and 0.35 m high, and the wall would have formed part of the south-west corner of Towcester's later 2nd century defensive circuit, which may have run parallel to Richmond Road. An industrial stone-built feature post-dated the road but pre-dated the bank.

A thick layer of dark earth, of the 3rd and 4th centuries, overlay the tail of the bank, and increased in depth northwards along Meeting Lane as the natural ground surface fell away. Several Roman pits were sealed below the dark earth and cut the natural subsoil, which may imply that they were no later than late 2nd century in date.

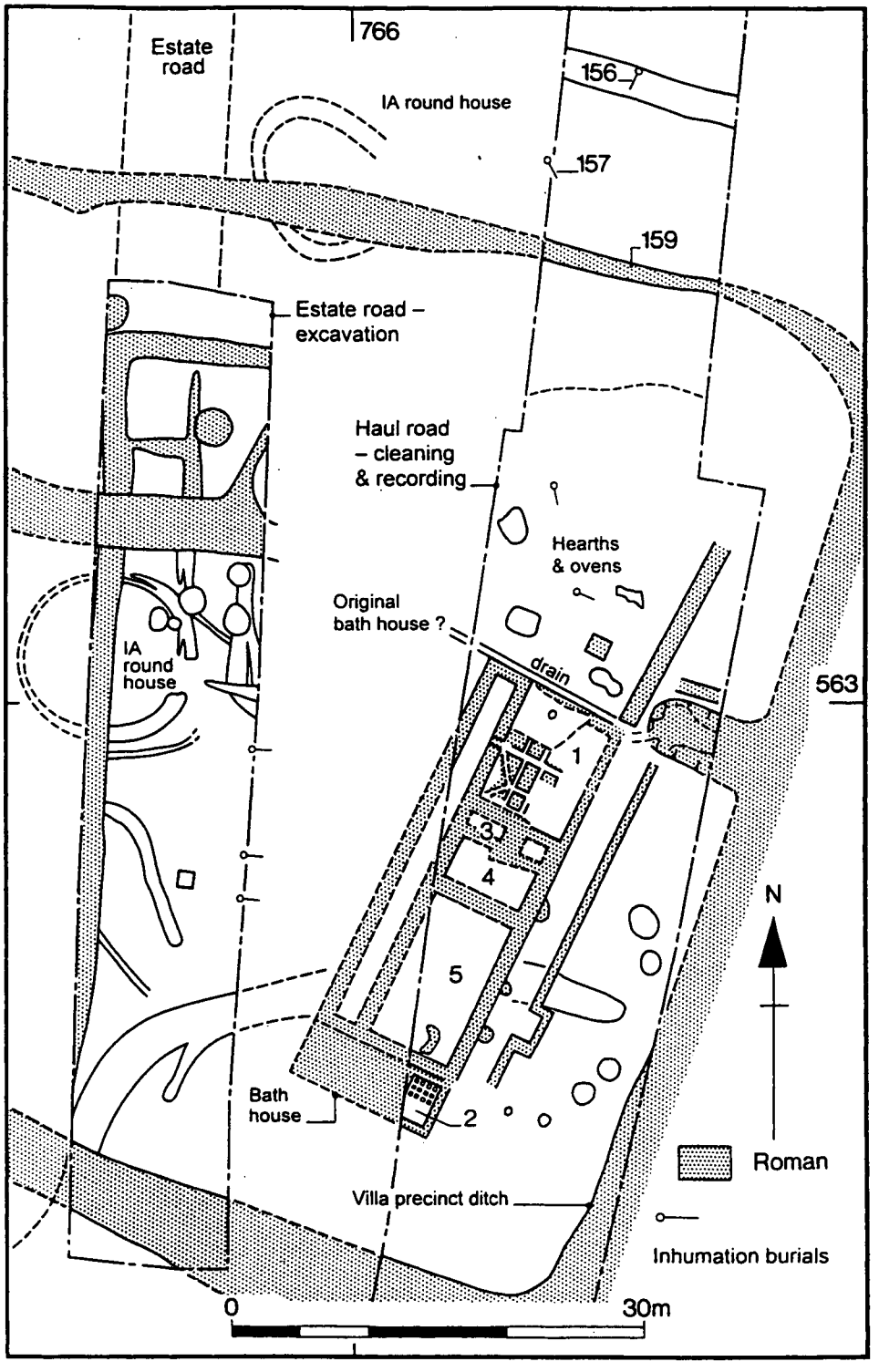


Fig 2. Northampton, Wootton Fields, Iron Age settlement and Roman villa

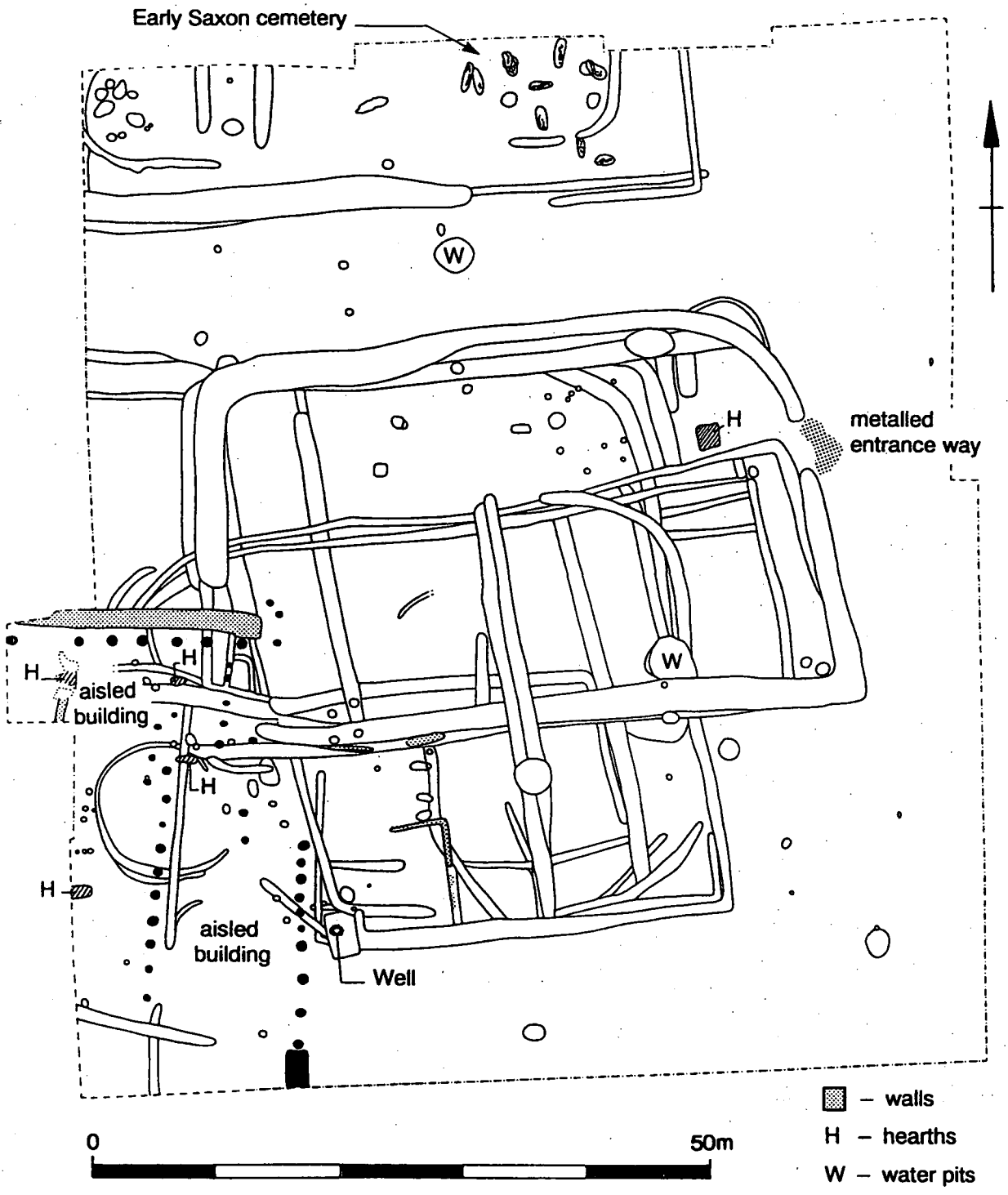


Fig 3. Oundle, Glapthorn Road, The Iron Age and Roman settlement

Weldon, 17 Chapel Road (SP 9241 8971)
Steve Morris

The site, fronting Chapel Road, lay within the medieval village of Little Weldon. Excavation produced a series of archaeological layers and features, including a hearth, which date to the 13th to 15th centuries; but a single pit contained late Saxon pottery. The site appears to have been levelled at some stage, altering the medieval topography and truncating the archaeological remains.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Aynho, College Farm (SP 5115 3331)
Ian Scott

The Unit carried out a field evaluation at College Farm, Aynho, Northamptonshire, for Berry Morris Chartered Surveyors on behalf of Mr and Mrs Oakley, the landowners. The evaluation comprised 7 trenches, 4 sited in the main farmyard and the remainder located to the south and west of the farmyard. The archaeological evidence from within the

farmyard was limited, and comprised a small number of features on the south side of the yard. Prominent among these were two rectangular settings of stone slabs. The absence of datable finds, particularly of medieval material, is worthy of note and suggests that the present farm buildings were the first structures built on the site.

The remaining trenches investigated the walled orchard to the south-west of the farmyard and confirmed that the wall around the present garden is almost certainly the original wall of the orchard shown on early maps. Part of a water channel, which is probably the artificial watercourse shown on early maps, was uncovered. Within the garden a robber trench was located which may mark the line of the original west wall of the orchard.

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD.

Wollaston (SP 90 62)
David Hillelson

As part of a planning application for the development of land to the south of the town, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation, in order to assess the level of archaeological risk faced by the development.

Desk-based research indicated that archaeological finds or features, dating from the Neolithic to the Medieval periods, could be present on the site. Two phases of field evaluation were undertaken to clarify this risk. The first phase, across the northern half of the site, revealed the presence of Saxon remains. Features included pits and post-holes and, notably, a sunken featured building or grubenhaus. Pottery found in association with these features suggested a date range for occupation between the 5th and 11th centuries.

A second phase of evaluation work was required on the southern half of the development site to clarify the extent of the Saxon settlement. Three linked trenches were aligned with the proposed access road for the development. They revealed fifteen archaeological features which are all considered to be modern and associated with the previous use of the site.

The fieldwork is ongoing and will be more fully reported at a later date.

OXFORDSHIRE

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sutton Courtenay, 18 The Green (SU 50340 93954)
John Walford

A small trench measuring 1 x 2.3 m was opened in the south west corner of the back garden of this house. The upper fills were associated with an existing compost enclosure under which, in the west end of the trench lay a mortar surface (3) of fairly recent date. Lower down and in the east end of the trench was a rough surface of cobble, brick and stone (5), believed to be of 19th century date. The extent of this surface was not discovered.

Adjacent to and beneath these cobbles lay a thick, fairly homogeneous layer of dark ploughsoil-like deposits (4,7,10 and 11) containing medieval pottery throughout but with post-medieval pottery restricted to the upper half. The natural consisted of a chalky clayey gravel at a depth of 1.8 m below the surface.

In general the main findings of this site were that there was a large accumulation of ploughsoil in this vicinity and that the pottery, although it has not been fully analysed, would appear to have more earlier medieval pottery than late medieval.

layer	finds (pottery sherds)			
	Prehistoric	medieval	post-medieval	later
1				
2			4	5
3				1
8			1	
4		13	33	10
5			7	3
6		1	2	
9			1	
7		2	3	
10	1	1	2	
11	1	2		

No Roman pottery was found.

Mr J. Carter and Mrs J. Smith have looked at the deeds of this property and have found that there have been buildings on this site since at least the middle of the eighteenth century.

The finds will be deposited with the house owners and a copy of the site archive with the Oxfordshire County Council Museums Department at Standlake.

The Society would like to thank the owners, Mr and Mrs G M Davies for facilitating this excavation and the members who carried out the work.

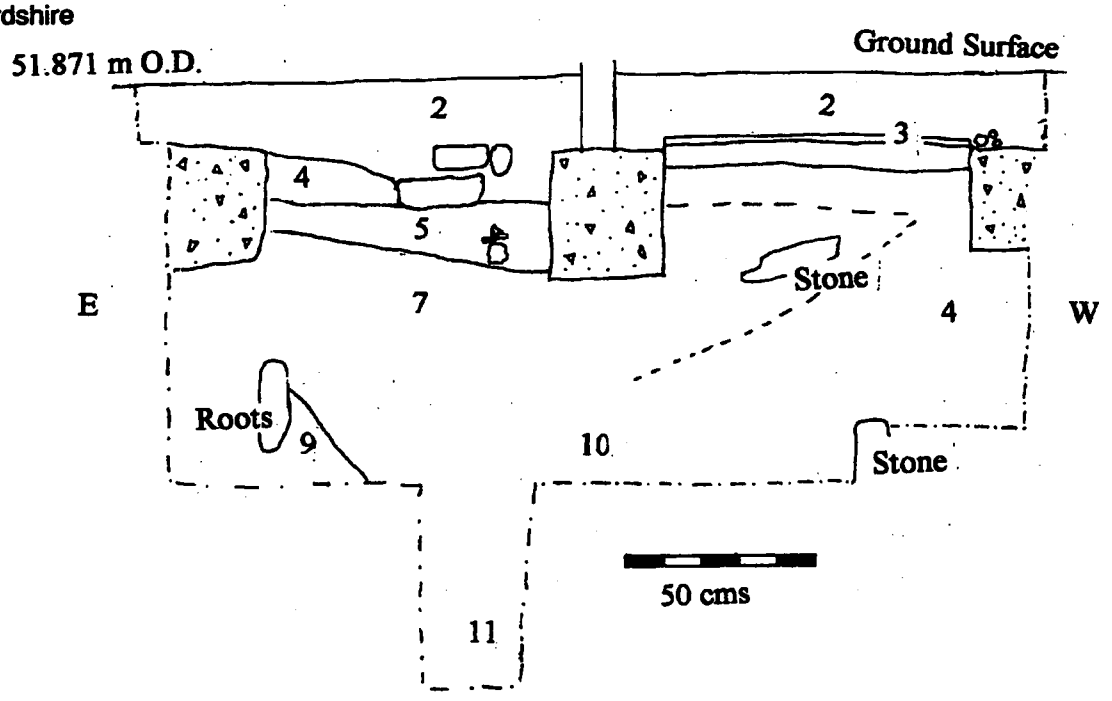


Fig 1. Sutton Courtenay, 18 The Green. Section.

AOC ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Abingdon, Caldecott County Primary School, Blacknall Road (SU 4890 9645)
Imogen Grundon and Darryl Palmer

Ten trenches were excavated during an archaeological evaluation in advance of an extension to the existing school building. Only one feature with secure dating evidence was encountered, a ditch with a single sherd of Romano-British pottery. The trenches were littered with pits and post holes, none of which provided any dating material. It may be that these are associated with the Roman ditch, but may also relate to later use of the site as an allotment area.

Benson, St Helen's Church (SU 6151 9164)
Imogen Grundon

An archaeological watching brief was conducted during the groundworks for an extension to the existing church, a Grade II* listed building with 12th century and later features. The ground works revealed the remains of the earlier foundation wall for the western church tower, which was rebuilt in the 18th century. It is possible that the remains of an earlier, perhaps medieval, foundation wall were observed, but there was no associated dating evidence to substantiate this conclusion. Although numerous inhumation burials were encountered during the course of the works, these were all of a post 18th century date, and were reburied without further analysis.

Kingham, Smithy's Yard, West Street (SP 2595 2420)
Diccon Hart

A three trench archaeological evaluation was undertaken to the north of the medieval village of Kingham, adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of a medieval three sided moat (SAM 255). All of the trenches revealed archaeological features, although a lack of dating evidence precluded any detailed conclusions about the site. It would appear, however, that ditches encountered in two of the trenches may represent a series of boundaries delineating individual properties of the original village. One of the trenches, in the southwest corner of the development area, revealed a stone wall running parallel to West Street, that may represent a boundary wall or a building feature. This wall was cut into a stone surface which may represent a large foundation pad, as it appears to be structural in nature. Tile recovered from this surface was dated to between the 13th and 16th centuries.

Oxford, Site of the Old LMS Station (SP 5063 0630)
Imogen Grundon

A watching brief was carried out on the site during ground reduction for a new road scheme. During the course of the works a 12 m wide ditch and associated banking material were observed, which have been identified as part of Oxford's Civil War defences. Although there was no dating evidence from within the bank itself, the overlying deposit was firmly dated to the 17th century on the basis of pottery and clay pipe evidence, and the site corresponds with contemporary map evidence (de Gromme and Loggan) which makes this determination almost certain. Whilst the Civil War defences have been excavated more fully elsewhere in Oxford, this is the first instance where the bank for the ditch, surviving to approximately 0.5 m high and 8 m

in width, has been observed, in this instance at the extreme southern end of the site. Also noted was the barmkin, the flat platform between the base of the bank and the eastern edge of the ditch.

Remains of the station's drainage system was also seen, including several cast-iron stanchions.

Tackley, Sturdy's Castle Public House (SP 4620 1930)
Les Capon

A five trench archaeological evaluation was conducted on the above site, in advance of proposed development. No features of archaeological interest were encountered during the works.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES AND CONSULTANCY LTD

Merton, Manor House Nursing Home (SP 578 179)
Bob Zeepvat and Justin Neal

An archaeological evaluation comprising three trial trenches was carried out, prior to the construction of an extension to the nursing home. Two limestone walls, on a north-east to south-west alignment, and a solidly constructed surface of pitched limestone and limestone slabs were revealed, north of the existing buildings (Fig 2). No dating evidence was forthcoming, but the features are thought to be former garden features in front of the manor house. A third trench, across the car park to the north of the present buildings, contained no archaeological features or finds.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Burford, The Old Ropery (SP 2510 1210)
Mark Brett

A watching brief was carried out during development of tenement plots to the rear (and west) of High Street, Burford and recorded a number of rubbish pits and postholes. Pottery recovered from some of the pits suggests domestic occupation dating from the 12th or 13th century when it is thought that Burford assumed its current planned form. Significant amounts of building rubble and roof tiles occurring in other pits suggest building work or structural alterations were taking place nearby in the 15th and 18th centuries.

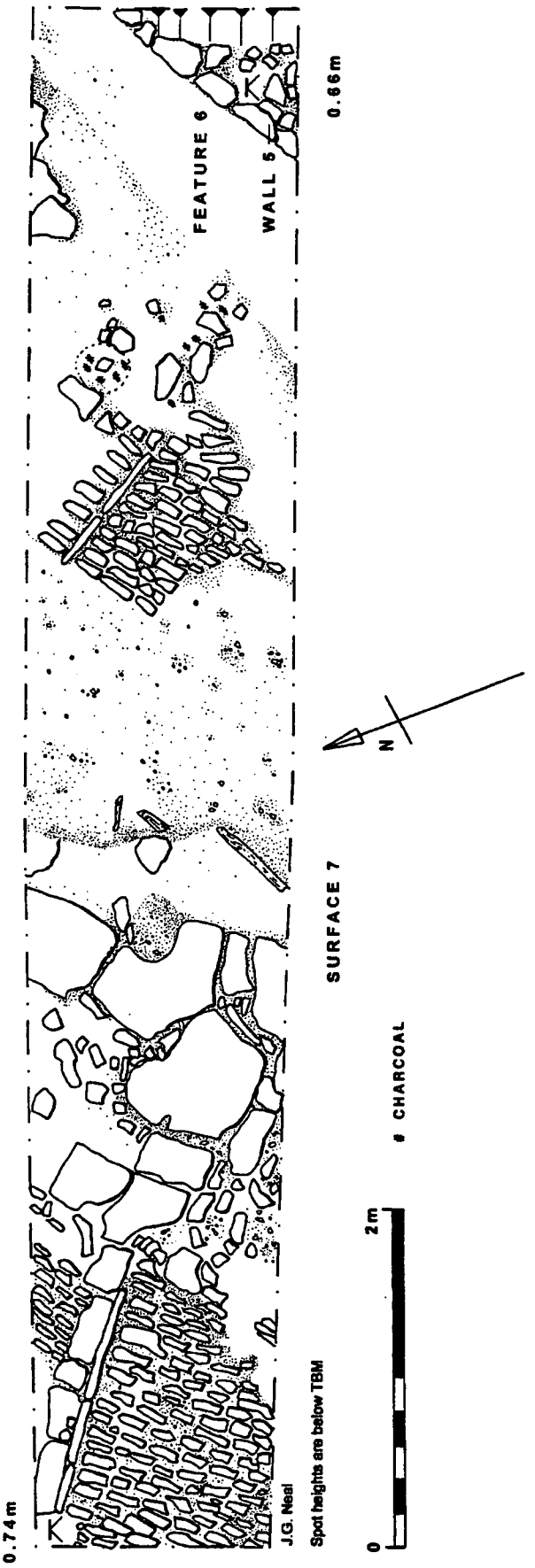


Fig 2. Merton. Manor House Nursing Home. Trench 2, detail plan.

Little Faringdon (SP 230 005)
David Kenyon

Evaluation of land to the south-west of the village was undertaken as part of a planning application for gravel extraction. Dated archaeological features were identified in only one trench, on the line of the proposed access road at the extreme north-west of the site. A medieval pit and ditch were uncovered, as well as a series of undated postholes which may be contemporary with these medieval features, or possibly earlier in date. Over the remainder of the site a series of palaeochannels were identified, marking former courses of the river Leach, as well as numerous smaller irregular features which were interpreted as natural hollows.

Over Norton, Reservoir Outlets (SP 345 285)
Franco Vartuca

A watching brief carried out during topsoil stripping for the insertion of a water pipeline revealed a small number of unstratified pieces of worked flint, including a serrated knife blade.

FOUNDATIONS ARCHAEOLOGY

Begbroke, Begbroke Rising Main (SP 474 018 - 476 141)

A watching brief was undertaken during the laying of sewer pipes. No archaeological features were encountered.

Bicester, Bicester Sewage Treatment Works
(SP 580 210)

A programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Bicester Sewage Treatment Works for Mike Lang Hall on behalf of Thames Water. The evaluation consisted of four cruciform and two 'T'-shaped trenches in order to test the presence/absence of archaeologically sensitive deposits.

All six evaluation trenches proved to be sterile of archaeological features, with the exception of faint furrow marks in trenches C and D. Three sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from atop the natural substrate in Trench E. The results of the excavation suggest that Romano-British activity associated with the town of Alchester did not extend into the study area. The furrow marks indicate that during the medieval period the site was under arable cultivation. Remnants of ridge and furrow are present in nearby fields.

Ledwell (SP 4340 2840)
Kevin Beachus

A watching brief was carried out on behalf of Thames Water. No archaeology was identified, although evidence was found for small scale post-medieval quarrying.

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

Abingdon, Abbey Car Park
(SU 49995 97072 - SU50104 97093)
John Moore

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the laying of new services in Abbey Close Car Park which is within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Abingdon Abbey. The pipeline followed the footpath along the south side of Abbey Close from the south-east corner of the car park, by the bridge leading to the swimming pool and recreation area south of the Abbey Stream to the drive to The Coseners House from where it was excavated through the carriageway to a box at opposite the drive to 14 Abbey Close. Mostly the work was confined to deposits recently disturbed by laying of services or 19th and later century roads. Residual finds of Romano-British date were found which indicate that occupation of a relatively high status was present in this area of Abingdon. One sherd of St Neots Ware (10th-11th century) was recovered from a deep deposit adjacent to the river.

Remains and indications of walls found suggest that evidence of Abbey buildings lie *c* 0.5 m below present ground level within the Abbey Close Car park and under Abbey Close.

Banbury, 21 Horsefair (SP 4535 4050)
Imogen Grundon

An historic building investigation and impact assessment was undertaken on 21 Horsefair in advance of proposals to refurbish the building.

21 Horse Fair, Banbury, was built as a yeoman's private house in the 17th century. In 1716 it was bought by the Presbyterians as a house for their Minister. The Presbyterian Meeting House was situated to the west of the house, where the Baptist Church now stands. In 1797, the incumbent Minister founded a school that later became the Banbury Academy, and from then on 21 Horse Fair housed the Headmaster, his family, staff and boarders. It remained as a school until 1908, expanding in 1856 with the addition of the main northern extension, and other buildings now gone.

Bicester, 17 Causeway (SP58395 22315)
Imogen Grundon

Planning permission has been granted to redevelop the site of No 17 Causeway by demolition of the existing structures prior to the construction of twenty-four flats for the elderly with associated communal facilities. Due to the listed status (Grade II) of No 17, Causeway, a condition was attached to the Permission requiring that a photographic record be made of the building prior to demolition.

The site lies between two areas of Saxon settlement which later became the medieval centres of King's End and Market End. Causeway links these two centres and is thought to date back at least to the 14th century.

No 17 Causeway was found to be largely built of brick and timber. Its gable ends consist of the walls of the neighbouring buildings, No 19 Causeway to the west and No 15 to the east. The latter was demolished some time ago, but its west wall had to be left for No 17 to remain standing.

The south part of the cottage is dated to 1886, ten years after a building of similar size and proportions is illustrated on the OS 1st Edition map. However, there is a strong likelihood that the cottage was a single build, so the date stone may commemorate the completion of a whole series of improvements on this site. These improvements may have included the partial rebuilding of Vine Cottages to the south, additional scullery/privy units to serve these, following the demolition of earlier privies, No 17's back yard, and the building of a glass lean-to at the rear of No 17.

There is little evidence to suggest who was responsible for building No 17 or the Vine Cottages, but a strong candidate is the owner of No 19, whose property was re-faced in brick at about the same time.

Bicester, Vine Cottages, Causeway (SP 5841 2226)
John Moore

The 0.3 ha site includes 17 Causeway, land to the rear stretching southwards to Priory Lane and incorporates Vine Cottages and other derelict structures. It is the intention to develop the site by the demolition of existing structures and the construction of twenty four flats for the elderly with associated communal facilities. For this reason an evaluation of the site was undertaken.

The site lies between two areas of Saxon settlement which later became the medieval centres of King's End and Market End. The Causeway linking the two areas is thought to be at least 14th century in date.

The evaluation proved that this area of land to the west of the present stream was low-lying until the post-medieval period when the land was raised by the import of considerable amounts of material. A trench suggests that the stream flowed further to the west than at present, or was considerably wider.

The findings suggest that the northern part of the site was reclaimed earlier. The early post-medieval material was found at a higher level than further south. It is probable that development along the Causeway at an earlier date necessitated the need for raising of the land for both buildings and associated gardens.

The evaluation has proved the presence of a low-lying area between the medieval and earlier settlements of Kings End and Market End. This area was marsh-like and prone to flooding. This also explains the name Causeway which was obviously constructed to span this wet area and to link the two areas of settlement.

Bicester, Chapel Street (SP5845 2230)
John Moore

An evaluation was undertaken on a plot of land to the rear of 1 Causeway which fronts onto Chapel Street. The site of proposed development is located on the west side of Chapel Street, Bicester just south of where the Town Brook forms a dog-leg to the west. The evaluation proved that c 86% of the application area has been truncated by the course of the stream that had been much wider and by a half cellar of a cottage that stood on the southern part of the site.

An Anglo-Saxon ditch orientated north-south was found in the north-eastern part of the site underlying possible horticultural deposits of medieval date.

Chinnor, 2 Station Road (SP 7523 0117)
Emma Sanderson

An investigation was carried out on the site oftwo proposed bungalows. The proposal area is located on the junction of Mill Lane and Station Road, Chinnor. The work that was carried out was within the garden of the existing dwelling.

The site lies adjacent to, or possibly over, a probable Anglo-Saxon cemetery. Some years before 1933 human burials were found in the grounds of a bungalow at a place where the lower Icknield Way peters out and the modern road turns sharply southeast. This location clearly describes the junction of Mill Lane and Station Road. In 1933 more bones were found, including the skulls of a man and women. Later another burial was found 50 m away.

Topsoil was stripped off the area proposed for new building. No graves were present showing that the cemetery does not extend into this site.

Oxford, Oxford Science Park, Grenoble Road
(Phase 2 area SP 5390 0210 centred, Phase 2a area SP 5415 0240 centred)
John Moore

Following an evaluation by the AOC Archaeology Group in June 1999 an excavation and watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services on behalf of the AOC Archaeology Group.

Remains of an Anglo-Saxon village were found. This included 6 sunken featured buildings and pits lying on Corallian Formation Beckley Sand just below the crest of a rise on the south side of the Littlemore Stream valley. A deep early (?medieval) ploughsoil had removed the remains of

shallower features including post holes of suspected timber framed structures and fence lines. Peat deposits found on the slope of the valley side seem to indicate that the stream had been clogged by vegetation during the Anglo-Saxon period forming a wide marshy area.

Analysis of the pottery shows that the occupation was of the 6th century, not carrying on much beyond the early 7th century. There are similarities with the material from Radley Barrow Hills and Eynsham Abbey. This is the largest Anglo-Saxon assemblage from within the City of Oxford.

Roman pottery was found across the site with almost a third deriving from the sunken featured buildings. The great majority of the pottery was locally made and much of it probably derived from the nearby production site at Fry's Hill, part of the Sandford/Blackbird Leys production complex. Two small fragments represent 1st century activity, but the remainder of the material dates at least from the 2nd century, and most of the diagnostic fabrics and forms are assignable to the late third and fourth centuries. The abnormally high representation of Oxford fine and specialist wares may reflect the proximity of production sites, some of which were specialising in these wares, but the different breakdown of type and size of material from sunken featured buildings and from other contexts suggests that a selection process was carried out by the inhabitants of early Saxon settlements.

Pits of the middle Iron Age were also present, some containing residual material of the Neolithic, early Bronze Age and mid-late Bronze Age. While the assemblage of prehistoric pottery is small it is nevertheless important as it confirms prehistoric activity of a wide date range (mid-Neolithic to middle Iron Age) on this site and in an area were contemporary sites are rare.

The evaluation found a concentration of medieval pottery (13th-14th century) and apparent features. Area excavation established that late 19th century quarrying of the shallow limestone capping over the sand on the crest had taken place. The quarrying had followed the better seams of limestone, backfilling as the quarry face(s) progressed. The medieval finds were therefore contained within the backfill. It is apparent that medieval occupation possibly in the second half of the 12th century but more certainly in the 13th and possibly 14th century, probably a small farmstead had been present in the southern part of the site but all structural features have been obliterated. All the pottery could have been bought from Oxford market; there is very little evidence of the sandy ceramic tradition popular in Abingdon, some 6.5 km to the south-west of the site. The coarse wares found derive from the vicinity of the Savernake Forest while the fine wares were brought to market from the production centre focused on the parishes of Brill-Boarstall in central Buckinghamshire.

Within peat deposits in the Phase 2a area north of Littlemore Stream pottery of the 2nd century AD has been retrieved.

The watching brief continues during 2000 in both Phase 2 and 2a areas.

Oxford, Former Slade Hospital Site, Horspath Driftway
(SP5552 0512)
Imogen Grundon & John Moore

A watching brief was conducted on this site, although development began before the archaeological works were initiated. While no features were found a quantity of material was collected. Significant quantities of Romano-British pottery were present including at least one waster. In addition kiln furniture and large pieces of slag were recovered. The material would appear to indicate that both pottery manufacture and metal working (perhaps copper smithing) was being undertaken on this site.

Oxford, Site bounded by St Thomas Street, Holybush Row, Osney Lane, and Becket Street
(SP 5060 0615)
John Moore

The site is being developed for flats and the impact on the known archaeological remains has been limited by careful design of the foundations although it was not possible to avoid impact on medieval structures over a small area on the St Thomas Street frontage. An area of approximately 22 m x 6 m was the subject of an area excavation down to the base of medieval structures.

The site was once bisected by Church Street, formed when the suburb of St Thomas was laid out in the 12th century. In order to build a series of tenements and buildings to the east of Church Street and fronting onto St Thomas High Street on the wet alluvial meadows of Osney Island, the land was drained and reclaimed by large scale dumping along the line of Church Street and to the east of it. The earliest evidence for occupation on the site was found during the evaluation when a series of undated stakeholes were found below the reclamation level.

The earliest cottages, provisionally of the earlier twelfth century were at a slight angle to the present line of St Thomas Street and successive buildings. These early buildings had a mixture of stone footed walls and cob walls. Evidence from the rear wall suggests that the cottages were of a single build. One room or cottage had a mortared floor. The later cottages were definitely of one build with a continuous back wall parallel to the present line of St Thomas Street. The front wall was further out into the street than previously. During the 13th century (to be confirmed by more detailed study of the pottery), two rooms showed different uses; whether they were separate cottages or a two roomed building is unknown as the dividing wall had been destroyed by later building. One room was of domestic nature with successive floors being covered in animal bone and broken pottery, while the other was of industrial/shop use. The latter had two pots set into the floors; one was

sealed with a clay surround just below rim level. Later within this room a clay lined trough was set against the rear wall. These buildings may be those shown on the map of Ralph Agas of 1578.

Later redevelopment of the buildings were extensions to the rear with the front remaining largely untouched.

Documentary sources show that the first buildings on Church Street appeared by 1768 (Jeffreys' Map of Oxford). The only buildings along Church Street investigated during the evaluation were of 18th and 19th century date. To the east of Church Street the area stayed residential until the 19th century when the land was acquired piecemeal by the Sisterhood of St Thomas the Martyr for their convent, parts of which were located during the evaluation. The houses that had by then developed along both sides of church Street were all eventually absorbed by the convent, until Church Street became part of the convent and was first closed off and eventually built over.

Thame, 58 North Street (SP 7076 0591)
Emma Sanderson

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation for footings for an extension to the rear of the property. Two pits were revealed which were dated to the first half of the 17th century. The earliest fragmentary sherds were from the nearby well-known Brill/Boarstall production centre (Mellor 1994). Otherwise, the majority of the vessels were jars of red earthenware; a single dripping pan was glazed internally with a thick even glaze. A similar range of vessels was recovered from within the Bodleian Quadrangle in Oxford, where the excavator concluded they had been deposited before 1613-1624 AD (Sturdy 1959). Very finely potted proto-stoneware (OXAP) was present and may represent a closed vessel with a thickening resulting from luting of a missing handle. However, the source of the vessel is unclear but may be an early German stoneware.

References

Mellor M 1994; A Synthesis of Middle and Late Saxon, Medieval and Early Post-medieval Pottery in the Oxford Region, *Oxoniensia* LIX, 17-217

Sturdy D 1959; Thirteenth Century and Later Pottery from the Clarendon Hotel and other sites in Oxford. *Oxoniensia* XXIV, 22-36. 32

Upper Heyford, Land West of Two Trees Farm
(SP4970 2600)
John Moore

A watching brief was undertaken during the course of excavation for services and foundations for a new single two-storey dwelling. The only archaeology found was wall and ditch thought to form a north boundary to the more level part of the site that exists over the southern two-thirds of the site. This boundary was parallel to High Street and is thought to be a post-medieval feature dated by a sherd of North Midland Redware in a red slip of the 17-18th century.

NATIONAL TRUST

Gary Marshall

Ashdown, South Lodge (SU 28218202)

Dendro samples from the roof of Ashdown House have given a felling date of 1661. The house has an interesting history since it was built by the 1st Earl of Craven for Charles I's sister Elizabeth, nicknamed the "Winter Queen" after marrying the Elector Palatine and reigning for one year as Queen of Bohemia.

There are two Lodges in front of the house, originally flanking a set of entrance gates on the main drive. The North Lodge is inhabited but the South Lodge is empty and was recently affected by a fire. The Trust is therefore preparing a Conservation Plan for its restoration which has been supported by a detailed archaeological survey of the building [1]. Dendro sampling suggests a date of 1766 for the main structural timbers but this is hard to reconcile with the depiction of the Lodge on a 1716 engraving by Kipp. The timbers are possibly a later introduction but it seems more likely that the Lodge was rebuilt in the 1760s. It is a substantial building with three floor levels. Its function was not previously understood but evidence from the archaeological survey now suggests that the southern half incorporating a large segmental arched fireplace served as the kitchen. The discovery of the remains of a large bread oven at the opposite end, together with a large bricked up fireplace suggests that this served as a combined bake house and brew house. A large central staircase provided access to the upper floors which appear to have been used as domestic accommodation for a steward or senior member of the domestic staff.

With the restoration of the building completed it is intended that this will be used as both a waiting room and exhibition area for displays on the history of the house and estate. It is also hoped that artefacts from the excavation of the nearby Iron Age hill fort at Alfred's Castle can be put on display. These excavations under the direction of Oxford University Department for Continuing Education continued in 1999, revealing evidence of Iron Age grain pits and storage pits beneath the Romano-Britsh building discovered in the centre of the hill fort in 1998 (see article in this issue).

Reference

[1] The National Trust, Ashdown House, South Lodge, A detailed archaeological analysis, O Jessop, Feb 2000, report No Ashdown/3.

Oxfordshire

Faringdon, Coleshill Walled Garden (SU 23869378)

A watching brief was maintained over the excavation of a trench for laying a water pipe across the gardens to the Gardener's Cottage. The walled gardens were erected in the 1850s to provide fruit and vegetables and flowers to Coleshill House. Sadly the house was destroyed by fire in the 1950s. The trench revealed little of interest, although it did follow the course of a line of brick footings which originally carried a partition wall across the width of the gardens.

The National Trust are currently carrying out a programme of research and excavation with a view to restoring the gardens. This will involve re-instating the glasshouses using evidence from maps, aerial photographs and evidence recovered from the excavation of the brick footings and floor surfaces. The proposals also include restoring the original piped water supply which fed a series of taps and 'dipping points' where water could be collected.

South Leigh, Little Bartletts Cottages (SU 386091)

The National Trust owns two tenanted cottages at South Leigh Village, approximately two miles from Witney. The lower cottage is an important building, firstly because of its vernacular construction, and secondly because it retains much of the original smoke-blackened thatch roof covering. This original thatch cover was first identified in 1991 when the National Trust carried out a vernacular buildings survey of the property [1].

Unfortunately part of the thatch cover was destroyed by a fire in 1999 after the flue serving the wood stove in the living room became overheated. Quick action on the part of the fire brigade meant that only the central section of the thatch was lost, leaving most of it intact. An archaeological watching brief was maintained over the building whilst repairs were carried out and as a consequence a number of important observations were made [2]. Survey work carried out in 1994 [2] had suggested a possible 14th century date for the earliest part of the building. This now seems to be too early and a 16th century date seems more likely. Unfortunately sampling for dendro dating carried out in 1999 proved inconclusive because all the main structural timbers and the timbers of the roof construction are elm. The original building was of timber frame construction but during the 17th century the lower part of the frame ie below the eaves plate was entirely removed and replaced by masonry. A chimney of masonry construction was also inserted at this time, replacing an earlier smoke hood. Evidence for this hood was found during the 1999 survey, consisting of redundant dovetail mortices cut into the top of the wall plate and areas where the undersides of the original rafters had not been blackened by smoke.

Samples of the materials forming the original smoke-blackened thatch were taken for analysis by John Letts of Reading University. These are thought to contain Rivet wheats which are no longer commercially grown. They were also found to contain layers of clay daub which were laid between the various layers of thatch, acting as a form of glue between the layers. Similar clay daub had also been placed over the layers forming the ridge and at eaves level over the wall plate. Other examples of vernacular materials used in the construction of the building included hazel or willow rods used to form wattle partitions and crude battens beneath the thatch covering. Clay daub has been applied over the wattle partitions and this material has also been used to form the lath and plaster ceilings.

References

[1] The National Trust, Vernacular Buildings Survey, Little Bartletts Cottages, South Leigh, Jones, Garside and Izzard, 1991.
[2] Lower Wayside Cottage, South Leigh, Oxfordshire, Report on a vernacular building watching and recording brief, A K D Waters, 1994.
[3] The National Trust, Little Bartletts Cottages, South Leigh, Archaeological observations on the lower cottage after a fire to the roof thatch, G Marshall (forthcoming), report No South Leigh/3)

NORTH OXON FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Report for 1998-9
Edward Shawyer

Activities this year were greatly scaled down, for a variety of reasons and the group's efforts were again mainly centred around Swalcliffe. A lot of follow-up work and research still needs to be done in the wake of the large amount of fieldwork carried out over the last four years. Despite the good response from part-time helpers our experienced and qualified members are few and their time is limited; therefore a considerable delay is expected before the final report and full results of the group's endeavours emerges. A third season of excavation was carried out on the villa building in the Roman village and more of the surrounding fields were fieldwalked with the result that yet another outlying habitation or activity area was located. Another fieldwalk conducted on a Roman site in Steeple Aston found in the 17th century has created a mystery because of its findings.

Excavations

Swalcliffe Lea villa site (SP 3913 3838)
The main 3rd-4th century complex discussed in last year's *SMA* has now been recognised as a corridor type villa dating to soon after 270 AD. Extensions to both trenches 1 and 2 revealed more features which altered the assumed orientation of the building. The original idea that room 4 was part of a central corridor and the villa fronted the road to the northeast was overturned by a number of factors, one being

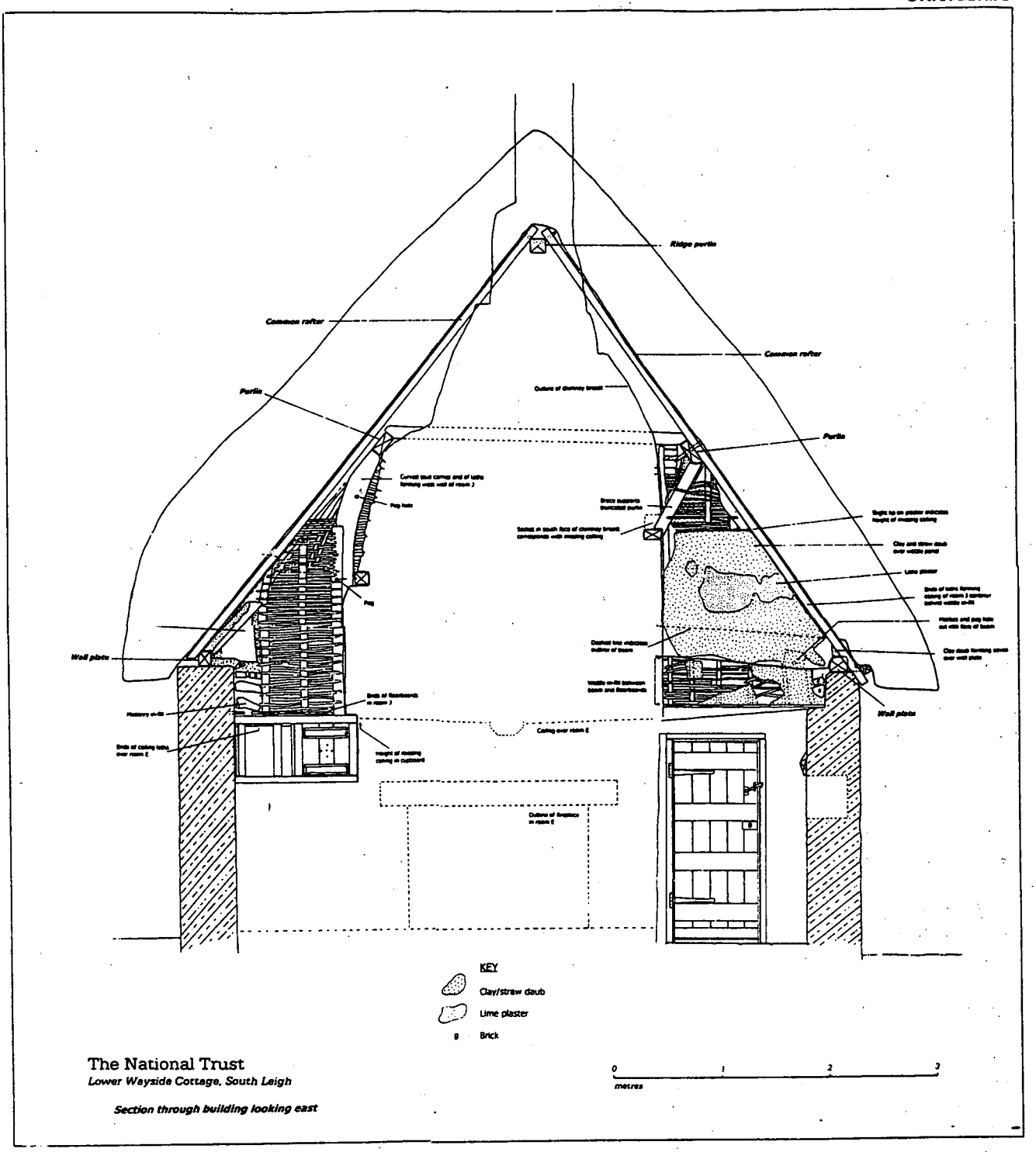


Fig 3. Lower Wayside Cottage, South Leigh.

the discovery of a portico and entrance facing southeast. Most villas face south or east to face the sun and to shelter from the cold and the worst weather. Here the villa overlooked a scenic view south east along a valley, which is another consideration in villa locations. More rooms were found in all directions and in trench 1 a wall parallel to the original was discovered 3 m to the north east, which because of its length hinted that it might have been a corridor. From the alignment of these walls it became clear that the two buildings were joined and the emerging shape was that of a central building with two wings enclosing a courtyard. Further excavation carried out this year in the area where the east wing should meet the central building has now reduced the gap to just 5 m. The developmental sequence of the main late Roman villa building described last year is still correct, with only a few minor details to add; however the phases of the early buildings beneath have needed more radical alteration.

Phase 3a

The original villa seems to have comprised the central building, the east wing and possibly a west wing as well. So far only a northern extension seems to have been added in phase 3b, but recent excavation is now hinting at another

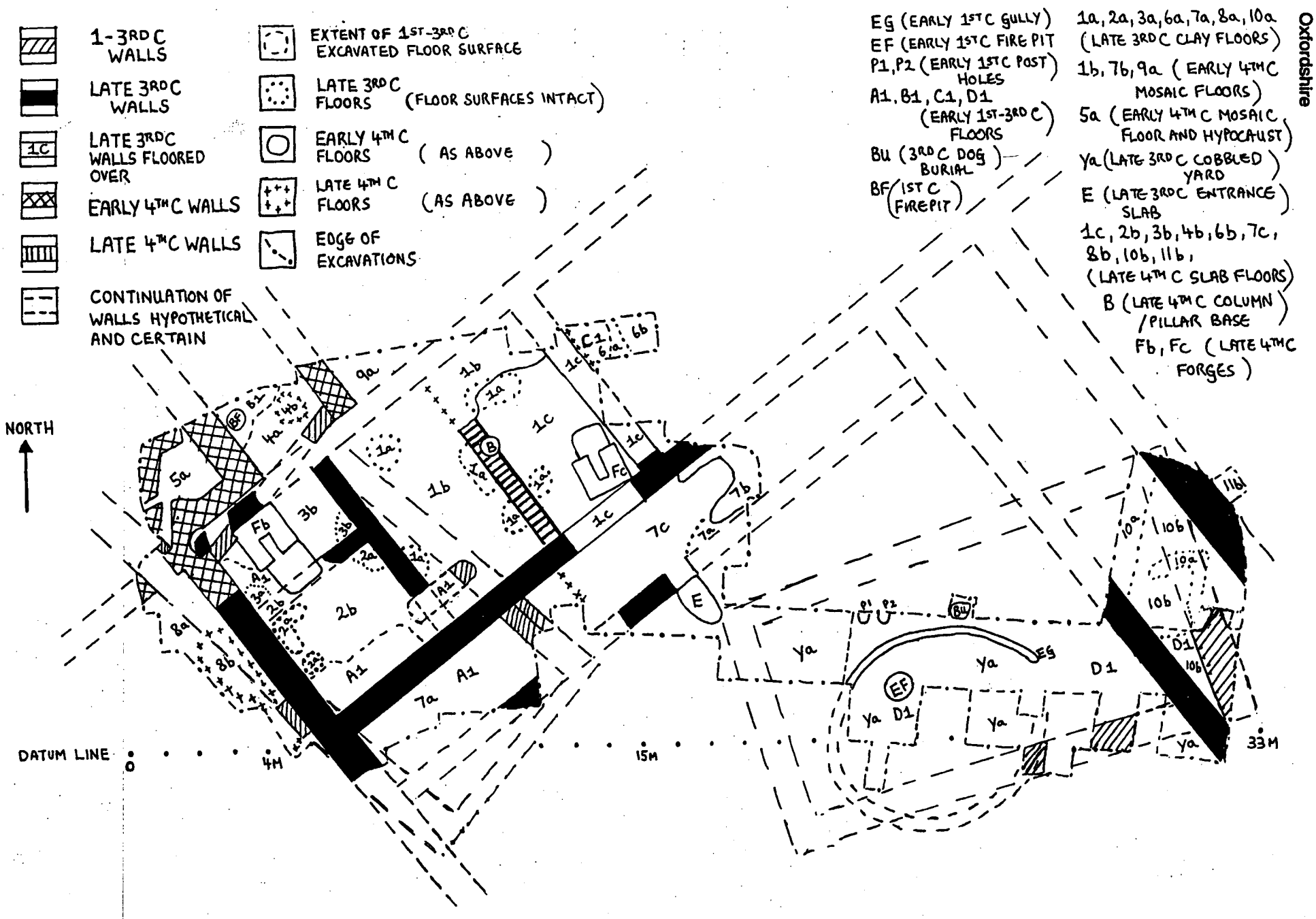


Fig 4. Swalcliffe, Lower Lea villa. General Site plan.

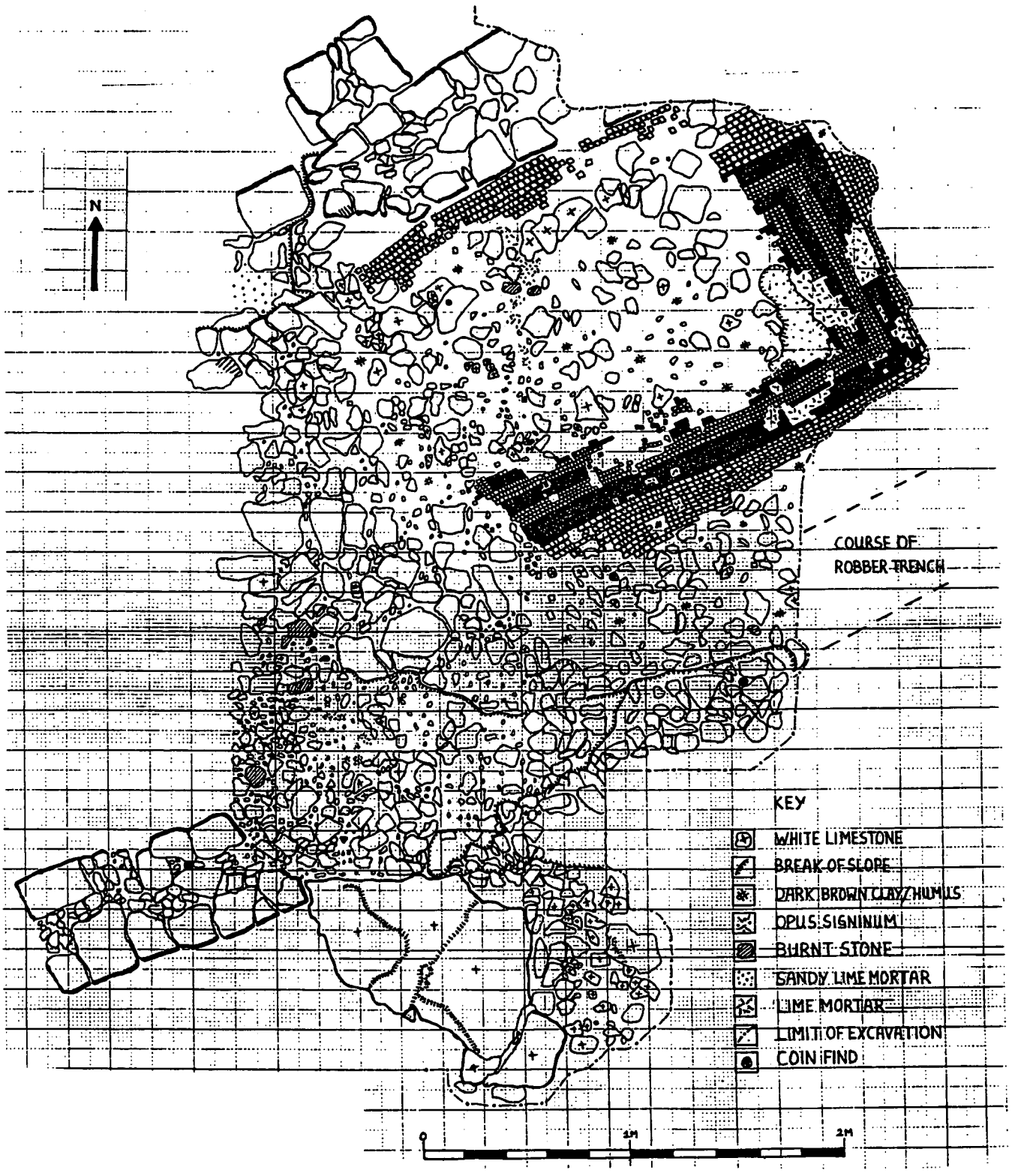


Fig 5. Swalcliffe, Lower Lea villa. South-east extension of Trench 2 showing portico and main entrance; excavated in 1999.

phase of building linking the central section to the east wing, which would seem to date between phase 3a and 3b. The first floor of room 1 was a layer of clay laid down upon a layer of packed stones held together by a weak lime mortar. This was confirmed by David Neal and Steve Cosh of ASPROM. The clay floor had patches of burning and charcoal fragments deeply embedded in it, which in the absence of a hearth points to the use of a brazier and occasional renewal of the floor with fresh clay. The floors of rooms 2 and 3 were the same but seem to have had little mortar binding the stones. A new room (room 6) discovered in the extensions had a floor identical to that of room 1. Another new room (room 8) was found to the west of rooms 2 and 3 and like the portico (room 7), had a floor of packed stone bound by a weak lime mortar. The walls of the building were constructed of large ironstone blocks well cemented

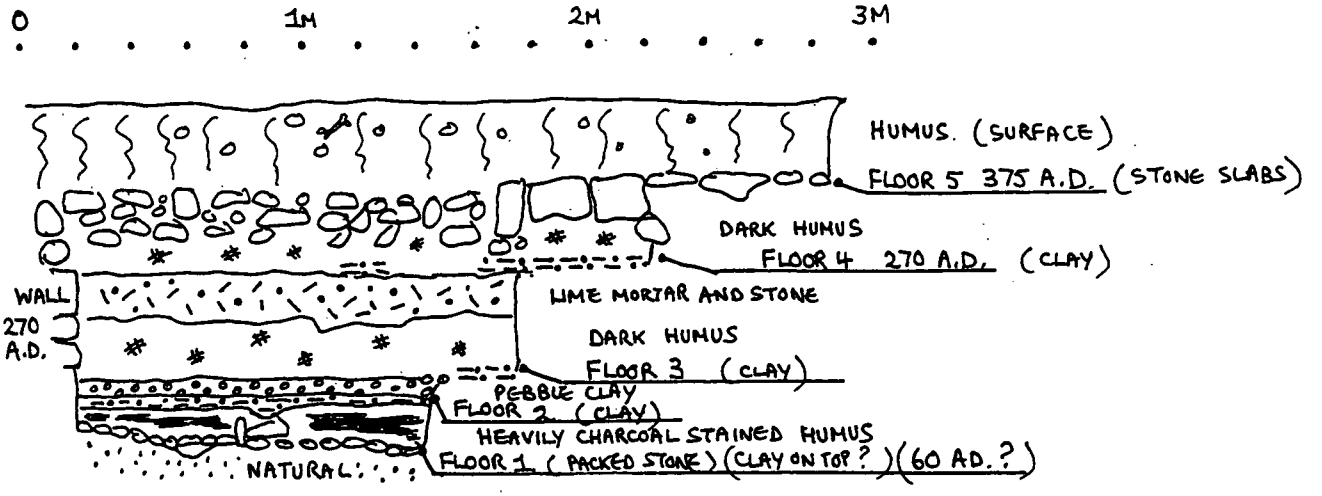


Fig 6. Swalcliffe, Lower Lea villa. Section through Room 6, facing north.

by the same weak lime mortar with foundations about 2 courses (30 cm or so) deep. Room 4, which at first was thought to be part of the original building, must now be regarded as belonging to phase 3b. Part of the northern wall of room 1 had been rebuilt and though only the robber trench remained, the foundations were much deeper and were dug to the same depth as the eastern wall of room 4. Indeed, now that the western wall of room 4 can be seen to be contemporary with the eastern wall, it is clear that all the foundations of these walls are dug much deeper than those of the original building, which suggests that they may have supported a loftier annexe. At the doorway to the portico, which was just 1.9 m wide, was an enormous slab of white limestone which served as a decorative doorstep. The entire building was constructed out of the local yellowish-hued ironstone, while the roof was covered with white limestone slates and the windows lined with whitish tufa voussoirs. The nearest white limestone deposits are in Mid-Oxfordshire, so their use must be viewed as a sign of some prosperity. Red and white wall plaster was found in room 1, but there is no way of knowing whether it belongs to phase 3a or 3b. This phase can now be positively dated to soon after 270 AD, since a minim of Claudius II (268-270 AD) in good condition was found within the fabric of the portico wall right next to the entrance. The positioning of the coin suggests that it may have been put there as a superstitious custom regarding thresholds. Another coin, of Victorinus (268-270 AD), was found in the packed stone footings of room 10 (the corridor). As mentioned in last year's *SMA* the next phase has good dating evidence to place it in the early-mid 4th century AD.

Phase 3b

In room 1 a mosaic was laid down upon the clay floor, the tesserae being bedded into a thin layer of lime mortar with opus signinum used between them. In the western half of the room a thin layer of offcut tesserae, small stone and bits of broken slate were used to level the slightly sloping clay floor before the mortar base was laid. David Neal and Steve Cosh dated the mosaic to the early-mid 4th century AD, either late in or soon after the reign of Constantine the Great (307-337). The mosaic comprised a white border surrounding a blue and white meander pattern, which in turn enclosed what looked like a guilloche pattern in red, white, yellow and blue, which also surrounded a missing central design. The original drawing by R G Collingwood of the mosaic found in 1926 was finally obtained for examination and careful inspection has revealed it to be the mosaic found in 1997. The 1926 mosaic was found during agricultural work and once drawn up was covered with a tarpaulin and buried. The excavated section was in the western edge of the room and when re-excavated no trace of either the tarpaulin or the mosaic remained. Plough marks in the surviving fragment of mosaic matched exactly the drawn edge of the 1926 excavation and the conclusion was that the tractor must have dug into the loose soil and gouged out the mosaic. In 1960 a fieldwalk by Bloxham Historical Society found a scatter of tesserae on this spot. A northern extension was added around the same time as the mosaic was laid in room 1, which consisted of rooms 4, and 9. Room 5, described last year, had a channelled hypocaust and fine painted plaster walls and was also dated by coins to around the time of Constantine. Room 4 had packed stone footings and Room 9 had a mosaic laid down upon a bed of lime mortar which rested upon packed stone footings as well. The small fragment of mosaic excavated had a white border enclosing a possible guilloche pattern in red, white and blue. Another improvement at this time was the addition of a mosaic floor in room 7 (the *porticus*). This also was directly laid upon the former floor and was a narrow, rectangular panel surrounded by a white border. The panel, which was possibly 6-7 m long was another swastika meander pattern in blue and white. Here again another coin of Constantine was found in one of the areas where the mosaic had been destroyed.

Phase 3c

The conversion of the villa into blacksmith's workshops as mentioned last year, was dated to the last quarter of the 4th century. In room 1 a slab floor covered the eastern half of the room and the suspicion that the western edge of the stones was part of a wall was confirmed by the observations of David Neal. The large round stone partially inserted into this wall can now be considered a pillar support for either a timber roof or a doorframe. The former now seems more likely since another large pillar base has been found against the southern wall of room 6 in this year's excavations. The

eastern wall of room 1 was demolished and the slab floor was laid across it and over the floor in room 6 as well. Intact sections of the slab floor are very well worn and the forges were solidly built and had two phases of use. These facts point to a long period of occupancy well over twenty years in duration. The destruction debris over the forge in room 3 had a worn coin of Honorius in it which was issued in 401 AD. A breach was made in the southern wall of room 1 and part of the portico leading to the main entrance was slabbed over. A large numberof limestone slates were re-utilised in the crude floors of this period, as were the tufa voussoirs from the windows. The fact that walls were demolished and new ones inserted with pilar supports indicates to us that the building must have been derelict before it was converted to practical use. Rooms 2 and 3 were merged into one and a forge was built there of the same design as the one installed in room 1. A slab floor was also laid down in room 8 and the old hypocaust stokehole was possibly used for some metalworking as well since some traces of slag were found there. The only part of the northern extension slabbed over was room 4 and why, it is not yet clear. In room 10 (the corridor of the east wing) a cobbled surface was laid down upon a layer of dirt that had a high concentration of charcoal in it, which indicates that the east wing had been burnt down or damaged by fire sometime during the late 4th century. The suspected 'gravel surface' in the western half of room 1 was in fact the layer of offcut tesserae and debris used to level the surface beneath the mosaic in this part of the room. As we now know there was still a mosaic here in 1926, so it appears that this part of the room may have remained unused. It was also observed that parts of the courtyard had been crudely repaired with debris from the villa and some metalworking may have taken place here, or else iron slag was used to fill the holes

The Early Phases

Further excavation and examination have now solved some of the questions raised by last year's dig, but have revealed greater complexity and created fresh puzzles. As a result phase 1 has now been subdivided into four periods and phase 2 reduced to a minor transition phase.

Phase 1a

In trench 1 the riddle of the clay and 'cobbled' surfaces was solved. In the eastern half of the trench two clay floor surfaces were detected, which were laid down upon footings of packed stone and dirt. The natural surface sloped gently 13 cm deeper over a distance of 11 m westwards, thus the footings of the earlier clay floor were deeper in the western half of the trench. The 14 cm deep gulley that was found at first in the western half of the trench seemed at first to belong to the floors above, which since they were damaged in this section gave the impression of being a single floor. The second floor had an amount of iron slag upon it and a collection of burnt stones, which appeared to be a hearth, lay at the head of the gulley. However once the two floors were identified, the gulley was found to extend under the 'hearth' and run a few metres further east. When fully exposed the gulley was revealed to be semi-circular in shape and was clearly continuing beyond the excavated section. The gulley ran for 5 m and was not stone lined, as first thought, but stone filled; many of these stones being fire reddened and thin charcoal deposits were found at the bottom of the gulley, beneath the stones. Upon analysis it seems that the gulley was probably a soakaway for drainage, but its location beneath a clay floor and its semi-circular shape were most unusual. The large hole excavated in the western end of trench 1 was fully exposed and turned out to be a stone lined cooking pit and it was clearly capped by the first clay floor, which meant that it pre-dated it. The cooking pit was only a few metres away from the gully and it was observed that the vast majority of burnt stones in the gully were very close to the cooking pit; thus it seemed likely that the two features were contemporary. The pottery in the wall trench associated with the first clay floor was late 1st century, which would make the cooking pit and gully early 1st century at the latest. A worked flint and cruder pottery was found associated with these features, plus residual Iron Age pottery which had been found in the late 1st century wall trench and a Dobunnic coin found in the floor make up, which all hint at earlier occupation.

Since Iron Age huts are rarely found beneath Roman houses the most likely explanation is that this was an early 1st century round house of the Roman period which preceded the more Romanized building. Several post holes had been found close to the gully last year. This phase cccurred only in trench 1.

Phase 1 b

In trench 1 another wall trench was found in a southern extension to match the wall trench found originally in the eastern edge of trench 1. They appear to be part of the same buildingalthough their exact alignment isn't totally clear from the small sections excavated. This building is dated by the pottery to the late 1st century AD. Above the patch of oxidized clay floor, burnt black and mistakenly identified as a possible hearth, was a layer of dirt heavily stained with charcoal, which hinted at destruction by fire and this layer was found elsewhere. In the western half of trench 2, under rooms 2 and 3 two identical wall trenches were found running northwest-southeast, 6 m apart which both yielded late 1st century pottery in their stone packing. The flooring was the same as found in trench 1, white clay laid down upon a layer of packed stone and dirt. There was also evidence of a north-westem wall, which had been partially truncated by the 4th century hypocaust. This wall trench had a lot of oxidized clay and burning associated with it and the clay floors nearby were oxidized as well. In a small section of the robber trench of the northern wall of room 1, a heavily burnt clay floor was found at the bottom, which was the same depth as another similar floor found in a small section dug in room 6. Above the latter floor, which like the other floors of this phase lay directly upon the natural surface, was a 10 cm layer of soil with a heavy concentration of charcoal in it. From the close proximity of floors in trench 2 it is clear that the various features discovered were part of the same complex and may even join up with the remains in trench 1, which are only 4 or 5 m away at the most. The evidence so far seems to suggest that the first building was destroyed by

fire, perhaps in the 2nd century AD since the pottery from the higher layers was predominantly 2nd-3rd century in date.

Phase 1 c

The northwest and eastern wall trenches of the room in the western side of trench 2 both show evidence of having been recut and were narrower. A clay floor and a stone lined fire pit was found in room 4 and this was partially laid down upon the old wall trench. A second floor of the same construction was laid down in room 6 and also in the robber trench section of room 1, but no traces were found in rooms 2 and 3. A second floor was also laid down in trench 1 and it is now apparent that a layer of pitched stone found by the original eastern wall, which lay on top of a layer of burning over the wall, was the rebuilt wall of the second building. The 2nd floor in trench 1 had both 2nd and early 3rd century pottery associated with it.

Phase 1 d

There is evidence for yet another phase of construction in the form of a third floor surface that was laid down in room 6 and possibly in the robber-trench section in room 1. Yet again this was a clay floor laid down upon packed stone footings, but here there was a visible difference in the materials used, for this time the builders employed a pebble/yellow clay mixture found locally in natural outcrops. This same pebble/clay mixture covered most of rooms 3 and 4, including the northwest wall of the 1st century and its 2nd century recut. Unfortunately no walls were found here in the excavated sections and they may have been destroyed by the construction of the later villa building. No dateable material from this last phase of the early buildings has yet been identified, but the date will lie sometime in the late 2nd-early 3rd centuries AD.

Phase 2

More careful examination revealed that the believed 30 cm of humus on the site was incorrect and the depth was no more than 10 cm or so and this was only laid down to level the site, since on the edge of the early buildings the late villa above was only 5 cm or so above the natural surface. The dog burial still appears to belong to this phase, however the length of phase 2 must now be held to be little more than it took to construct the new villa complex.

Discussion

Now that a clear picture of the development of the villa building is emerging it is interesting to relate this to the results of past excavations and our own fieldwalking of the settlement. Of the early Roman phases only 1st century and possible Iron age ditches were found before, but now we have clear evidence of buildings dating from early in the Roman occupation straight through to the times of the Late Empire. A point of interest is how the phases of building in the settlement closely correspond. The earliest building found in the 1959 dig on the 'flat' field was dated to the late 3rd century, while the house excavated in the 1965-9 dig was dated by a coin to after 268 AD; this was also situated in the 'flat' field. Now also the villa in Blakelands field can be dated to soon after 270 AD (phase 3a). The house found in 1959 was demolished and enlarged in the early 4th century and the building found in the 1960s also had a room added on, while the villa complex was enlarged as well (phase 3b); all of this taking place in a time generally considered a prosperous one in Roman Britain. Finally there is a correspondence in the final phase, both the villa and the house found in the 1960s were converted into blacksmithies in the final quarter of the 4th century and there was a lot of slag found in the 1950s house as well, though no signs of metalworking were noted. As mentioned last year three more metalworking activity areas have been detected in the settlement, one being in the possible villa house north of the road. The spread of iron slag is shown in Fig 19 in the 1998 *SMA*, where it is mistakenly reported as a charcoal count. The discovery of a late wall and pillar supports in the former villa in phase 3c reveal that the house found in the 1960s must have had a roof over its working area and not have been open to the sky as envisaged by the archaeologists at the time.

Fieldwalking

Prehistoric sites

Drayton Park Farm (SP 426 406)

The flints found in this field have now been identified as Early Neolithic and some possibly Mesolithic as well.

Rollright Stones Field (SP 300 306)

A single Bronze age tanged and barbed arrowhead was found by the footpath at the bottom of the field towards the valley by a NOFAG member.

Brakelands Farm (SP 386 382)

In the Rowbarrow field a few worked flints were found, one being a tanged and barbed Bronze Age arrowhead. The Rowbarrow was excavated without any positive results in the 19th century and it is unknown whether the round barrow was Bronze Age or later. Worked flints however have been found in nearly all the fields around Madmarston hill dating from the Neolithic onwards.

Roman sites

Steeple Aston (SP 478 253)

A scatter of Roman pottery was found on the reported position of a 17th century mosaic and villa. The scatter extended for 100 m or so on a small terrace and only 150 m northeast of this site the Oxford Archaeological Unit found a Roman ditch and burial. (*SMA* 1998, p89) The site was thoroughly walked and the amount of pottery was no more than 2-3 kg, the same as found on our small, lower class sites, such as those at Mddle Aston and Purston. By comparison our 'middle class' sites averaged 14 kg of pottery and our 'upper class' villa site at Swalcliffe produced 102 kg. The ceramic types were the usual assemblage of grey wares, shell-tempered wares, grog wares and Oxford red wares for the coarse pottery. There was only a small amount of fine wares (samian, Nene Valley and Oxford colour coated), no limestone slates and only one piece of baked tile (either roof tile or hypocaust) and a complete absence of tesserae. The

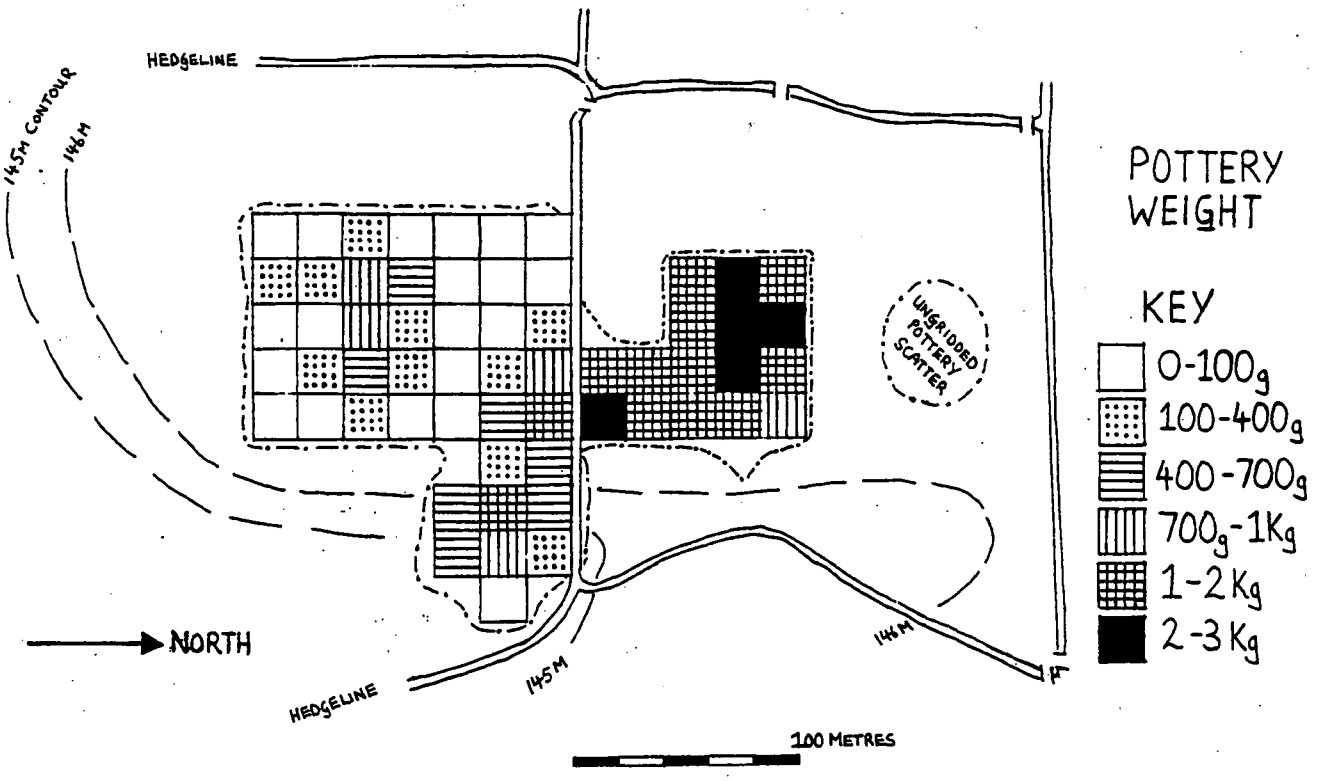


Fig 7. Round Hill Roman settlement.

inescapable conclusion is that it is most unlikely that the villa was here, so the villa's true location will remain a mystery until the area has been thoroughly fieldwalked. Like the OAU we found a few prehistoric finds in the shape of possible worked flints, but nothing dateable.

Breaklands Farm, Swalcliffe Lea, The Rowbarrow Field (SP 387 383)
A scatter of Roman pottery was found on a small terrace, similar in size to that of Steeple Aston and the weight of pottery recovered was about the same. Here the same rarity of pottery was found and surprisingly some limestone slates and blue tesserae of the same kind as found in room 1 of the villa across the valley. The type of pottery found suggests a small farmstead just outside the Roman village, but until examined by the experts the possibility that this might have been a burial plot and the Rowbarrow was in fact Roman and the Victorians failed to notice the Roman pottery, cannot be excluded.

Round Hill (SP 3845 3935) Fig 7.
The new site in the neighbouring field described last year was walked again and many more baked roof tiles and bits of fine wares (decorated samian) were found hinting that this site was reasonably well-to-do. Generally sites in the area range from small, poor sites to quite extensive, potential middle class farms exhibiting degrees of affluence in such things as slated roofs, painted wall plaster and fine pottery, to the full blown villa site which has all these features but in greater abundance and with extra features such as mosaics and hypocausts. This is of course, a simplified picture, but one which works reasonably well in practice. The Round Hill site at present fits the middle category, but overall there are quite a few sites like this in the area, which reveals that the locality was well Romanized and relatively prosperous.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Appleford Sidings (SU 524 926)
Paul Booth

A further phase of an ongoing programme of archaeological recording in advance of gravel extraction was carried out on behalf of Hanson Aggregates. An area of just under a hectare, containing elements of fairly regular Roman field boundary and trackway systems, was examined. An early rectilinear enclosure was succeeded by a north-northeast - south-southwest aligned trackway defined by ditches and linked with further ditches at right angles. At the north end of the site one of these ditches was quite substantial and produced moderate quantities of 2nd century pottery. Ditches of a third phase of enclosures on the same general alignment overlay the trackway and perhaps incorporated a realignment of it. No concentrations of structural or domestic features were seen. The pottery recovered may have derived from settlement lying immediately beyond the excavated area to the east (beneath the present railway line) or perhaps from an early Roman enclosed settlement site evaluated in 1993 which lies some 150 m to the west.

Oxfordshire

Charlbury, Excavations at the Church of St. Mary The Virgin (SP 436 219)

Jonathan Hiller

Summary

A programme of renovation and modernisation work was carried out at this church in January and February of 1995. A new heating system was installed under a scheme devised by J Alan Bristow and Partners, chartered architects of Charlbury.

During the work the Unit carried out a small-scale archaeological investigation. The excavations revealed a wall, a probable doorway and an associated mortar floor beneath the south arcade. These predate the present 12th century church, suggesting that there was indeed an earlier Norman or intriguingly a Saxon church on the site. Traces of the north wall of the 12th century building were revealed beneath the north arcade and part of the demolished east wall of the south transept was found beneath the south wall of the chancel.

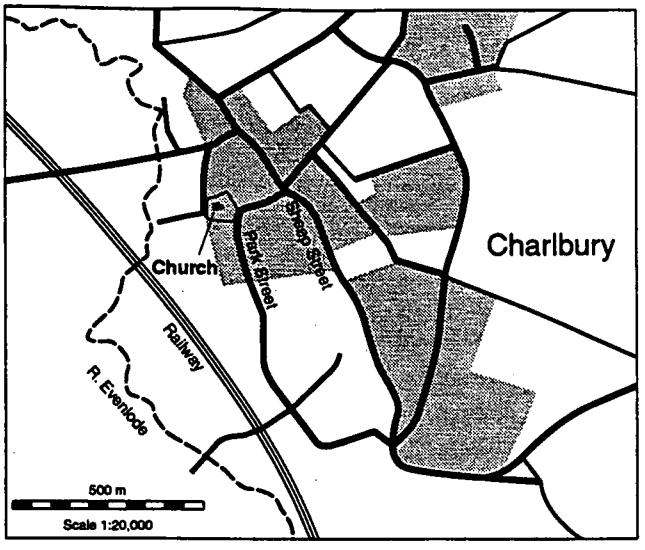


Fig 8. Location of Charlbury.

Historical and Archaeological Background

The church of St. Mary the Virgin at Charlbury, Oxon. (Fig 8) is believed to date to the 12th century, and was enlarged in the 13th century. There is, however, some documentary evidence suggesting that the church has Saxon origins. The early 11th century list of English Saints' resting-places mentions a St. 'Dioma', or 'Dionia' whose relics lay at Ceorlincburh (Charlbury). In the 7th century Bede reports that Dioma was an Irish priest ordained by Bishop Finan as bishop of both the Middle Angles and the Mercians, and that in a short time he brought many people to the Lord. He died among the Middle Angles, in the region called Infeppingum. Dioma's base (wherever it was located) was perhaps an important monastic centre, and is named as *Faerpinga* (glossed in 'Middle Anglia') in the Tribal Hidage, but is otherwise unknown. If indeed Dioma's

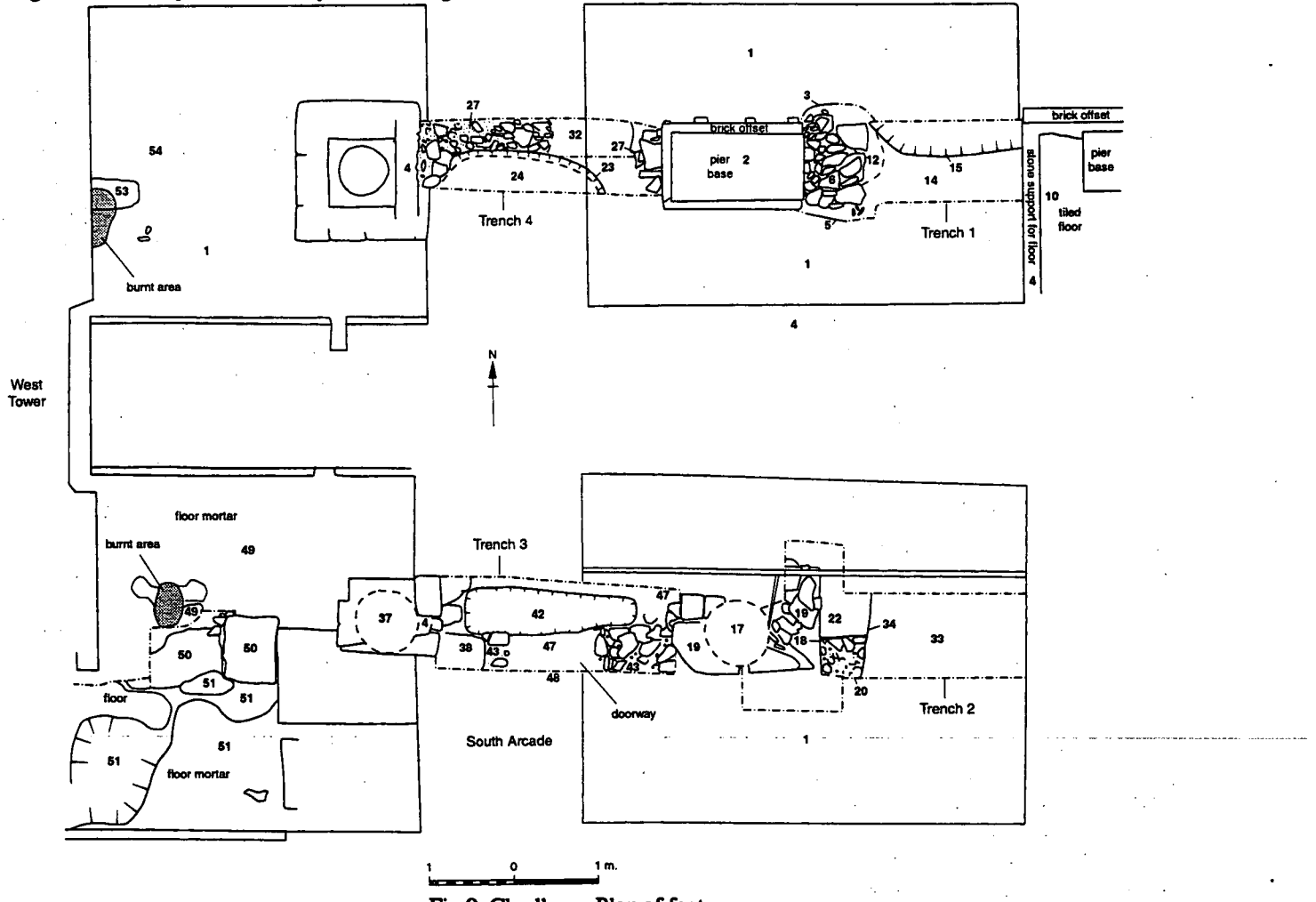


Fig 9. Charlbury. Plan of features.

remains were interred at Charlbury, it may well identify the town as the centre of the *Faerpingas* region. The church is appropriately sited for a 7th century Irish monastery; it rests on a bluff overlooking the Evenlode river, and the town's curvilinear road-pattern may reflect the outline of an early monastic precinct (Blair, 1994, 58-59).

The north arcade of three bays with plain round arches is Norman. The west pier is round with a scalloped capital, and the east pier is rectangular, suggesting that this bay may once have opened into a transept. In the 13th century the west tower, the south door and the porch were added. The south arcade also dates to this period, and has double-chamfered arches, round piers, and moulded capitals. The floor was renovated in the 1850s, and wood and tile walkways were laid upon shallow wall footings. In 1874 Charles Buckeridge restored the aisles and in 1905 the tower was restored (Pevsner and Sherwood, 1974, 527-528).

Results (Fig 9)

Methodology
In the Nave the contractors removed the aisle walkways. Four trenches were hand-excavated between the piers of the Nave arcades to the depth required for the installation of new radiators; these holes were *c* 0.6 m deep and 1 m wide. A watching brief was maintained while the contractors excavated trenches against the internal walls, and installed radiators and a boiler in the War Memorial Chapel.

North Arcade Trenches 1 and 4
Trench 1 was located beneath the east arch of the north arcade. A grave (15) cutting the natural clay subsoil (14) was partly excavated. The grave fill (16) contained two coffin nails and brick fragments, but no other dating material. An undated layer of grey loam (12) sealed the grave fill. The base of the pier (2) was underpinned by ashlar blocks (7) resting on a rough platform of limestone pieces (6) on the soil below.

Trench 4 was excavated beneath the central arch of the north arcade. Two courses of small limestone pieces (27) - perhaps a wall footing - rested upon natural clay subsoil (32). The possible footing was at least 0.8 m wide, extending 1.58 m away from the base of the west pier (35). A layer of burnt reddish- yellow sand (26) sealed the possible footing, in turn overlain by a sandy mortar with limestone (25). Both layers may represent the demolition of ?footing 27. Interpretation of the stonework was complicated by a grave (23 filled by 24, part excavated) which cut through the demolition layers.

South Arcade Trenches 2 and 3
Trench 2 was excavated beneath the east arch of the south arcade. A 0.5 m wide structure (20) of medium-sized limestone pieces formed part of a wall. The north face was exposed though the south wall face lay outside the trench. The north face was abutted by an undated layer of sandy mortar (22), including charcoal flecks; this is interpreted as a floor. The wall and the floor were truncated by a large feature (34), a grave or vault trench, and all three features were sealed by a layer of grey loam (44). This layer was overlain by the limestone block foundation of the east pier base (19).

Trench 3 was excavated beneath the central arch of the S arcade. A wall (43) maintained the alignment of the wall in trench 2 and comprised three courses of roughly hewn, angular limestone blocks resting in the natural subsoil (47). The wall was at least 0.6 m wide, and extended beneath the east and central pier bases. A void (48) in the wall measuring 1 m by 0.4 m was filled by an undated grey-brown loam. The void probably originally housed a door. Layers of sandy loam (44 and 45) sealed the wall, and both were cut by a grave (41, filled by 39=42) which was partly excavated. The pier base (38) was constructed from the level of layer 45. No definite relationship was established between the construction of the pillar and the grave, although the grave is probably the later.

The Watching Brief
Two re-used decorated stones were recovered from the sleeper walls that supported the wooden floor of the nave (see the finds, below). Three limestone slabs (50) on the same alignment as walls 20 and 43, were observed at the south-west end of the Nave.

The slabs were 0.8 m wide and extended for a distance of 1.5 m. The slabs may have been a western extension to wall 43, but the character of the stone is different so it is likely that there were the capping stones of a tomb. Adjacent to the slabs were undated compact mortar spreads (49 and 51) including limestone pieces and patches of burning, which were presumably the remains of floor surfaces. A spread of compact yellow-brown mortar (54) including charcoal and red patches of burning, perhaps a floor, was observed at the north-west end of the Nave. The mortar abutted a single limestone block (53) of uncertain function that lay off centre of the line of the north arcade.

Excavations by the contractors against the north wall of the nave revealed two courses of stone foundations. In the south wall of the War Memorial Chapel (the Chancel) was part of a wall (55) aligned approximately north-south, sealed by a soil layer (58) beneath the flagstone floor. The wall comprised four courses of angular, roughly hewn limestone blocks that was 0.89 m wide, 0.43 m high and projected 0.42 m away from the south wall of the church, though was not precisely at right angles to it due to subsidence.

The Finds
No pottery was recovered from the excavations. The two decorated stones were analysed by Julian Munby of the OAU. One was a fine limestone piece decorated with a cap of flames, possibly datable to the 16th century; the other was a block of ferruginous limestone, depicting a rosette and drape, datable to the 17th century. Both pieces were originally from tombs. The coffin nails and brick fragments require no further comment.

Conclusions

Despite the lack of finds some new information has been gained about the development of this church.

A Saxon church?

The sections of wall beneath the south arcade and the enigmatic traces of stonework beneath the north arcade suggest the presence of a small ?rectangular building furnished with a mortar floor. The void in the south wall housed the door - today the south porch entrance of the present church is on the same alignment as the former doorway, suggesting that historically this has been the main entrance of the church. The absence of finds from the floor within the building or from the infill of the doorway makes absolute dating impossible, though by implication the building predates the 13th century enlarged church. It remains a strong possibility that the earlier building is an Anglo-Saxon church

Medieval Alterations

The section of wall bonded to south wall of the church lies opposite the east wall of the present vestry (formerly the north transept), indicating that the wall section was formerly the east wall of the south transept, prior to the enlargement of the chancel. Externally, a point of note is the 'priests' door built in the southwall of the enlarged chancel, where the adjacent buttress has been built square on to the wall, in contrast to the other buttresses, which are set angle to the chancel.

Late-medieval or post-medieval features

The stone slabs at the west end of the nave and associated mortar floors may be associated with the walls and mortar floors in trenches 2 and 3, but are most likely of later medieval or post- medieval date. Patches of burning might suggest that the church suffered a fire.

Though the graves were not fully excavated, brick fragments from the upper surface of the fill of grave 15 suggest a probable post-medieval date. The other graves may be contemporary. The underpinning of the east of the north aisle pier bases can probably be attributed the restoration of the aisles by Buckeridge in 1874.

Acknowledgements

The OAU extends its thanks to the architects for providing detailed plans of the scheme.

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Dorchester, 'Riverside', 15 Bridge End (SU 5792 9381)
Kate Newell and Julian Munby

The Unit carried out an archaeological building investigation and recording programme of 'Riverside', 15 Bridge End, Dorchester before and during renovation works. Although an unlisted building 'Riverside' is within Dorchester Conservation Area and is of social and historic interest as a probable squatters cottage.

The building was erected on Bridge End Common shortly after 1815 when the bridge crossing the River Thame, sited immediately to the east of the site, was relocated along with the route of the main road. The building was constructed on land belonging to the Earl of Abingdon and is first shown on the tithe map of 1845 with a circular garden enclosure.

This low-status cottage originally had a 'two-up - two-down' plan which, while tiny by modern standards, housed a family of five at the 1841 census. The historic core had been little changed, instead a series of extensions had been added to the east and west to provide additional living space. Originally the ground-floor front room was the only heated room in the building, served by an external stack of a typical Dorchester style with staggered brick work from a wide base to a narrow stack. Later in the 20th century a second stack was added to heat the ground-floor back room.

The primary building was seen to be constructed from a range of materials, poor quality red brick with some rubble stone and a roof covering of red clay tile on small scantling softwood and reused elm timbers. Evidence was seen during the investigation that suggests the south wall and the southern half of the east wall had been rebuilt, possibly following a structural failure, reusing the original materials.

Ducklington, Gill Mill (SP 379 071)
Paul Booth

Observation by the unit of topsoil stripping in an area immediately north-west of Gill Mill House was completed. The work was carried out on behalf of Smiths of Bletchingdon in advance of gravel quarrying and was a continuation of work begun with evaluation in 1997 (Matthews 1999). The total area involved amounted to some 6.6 ha at the north-west margin of the major Roman settlement of Gill Mill and the present summary covers both the 1998 and 1999 work. The level of excavation possible within the constraints of the project was very low, but a complete plan was recovered.

Elements of a rectilinear NNE-SSW and WNW-ESE aligned field system, defined by ditches, lay across much of the site, with evidence for intensive activity, represented by further ditches and, in particular, intensive pit digging, concentrated in the central and south-eastern parts of the site. The alignment of the field boundary ditches is consistent with that of similar field systems suggested by previous evaluations to the west of the present site. The much greater intensity of activity observed in the present site, however, reflects its proximity to the roughly NNE-SSW aligned Roman road which formed the axis of the settlement of Gill Mill. The line of this road probably lay immediately east of the present site, though few of the

features revealed in the watching brief give any indication of its proximity. The principal field system alignment, while close to that of the road, was probably not exactly at right angles to it. A ditched enclosure located in the south-east corner of the site may have extended as far as the road line, and its north-western side may have been aligned quite similarly to the road further east. Regular layouts of ditched plots at right angles to the principal road alignments are a characteristic, but not invariable, feature of roadside settlements in Roman Britain. It is possible that the boundaries located in the south-east corner of the site represent the northern extent of such plots on the west side of the axial road, but this is speculative.

Generally the layout of the Roman features, including a possible trackway heading off into the fields to the west, is consistent with the overall roadside settlement character of Gill Mill. A patchily surviving limestone and pebble surface located towards the middle of the southern edge of the site may represent a south-easterly continuation of the trackway and also the proximity of a possible fording point across a likely stream channel (part of the braided stream pattern of the Windrush) seen at the south-west margin of the site. This channel was also noted within one of the 1997 evaluation trenches.

The location of eight wells in the roadside area, and of seven inhumations adjacent to boundary features towards the 'back' (ie west) of this area are also typical of such settlements, and the latter characteristic was also seen a little further south in 1990, where burials again concentrated just outside a feature interpreted as defining the rear of the roadside zone.

The main focus of activity was concentrated across the middle of the site and towards the south-east. Here dense concentrations of pits, interpreted principally as representing quarrying activity, were evident. The pit concentrations consisted of both discrete and complex groups of intercutting features apparently overlain by extensive spreads of dumped materials. The detailed characteristics of most of the pits remain unknown, however, owing to the limited extent of examination. Apart from an alignment of postholes indicating a possible fence line and two upright stakes within a separate pit, no evidence of structural remains was located.

The finds consisted mostly of pottery, ranging from 2nd-4th century in date. An outstanding small find was a waterlogged fragment of a cart wheel, consisting of most of one felloe and two spokes, recovered from one of the pits in the south-eastern part of the site.

Reference

Matthews, B, 1999, Ducklington Gill Mill, *SMA* 29, 76

Elsfield, Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury
(SP 5407 0998)
Jonathan Hiller

The Unit undertook an archaeological field evaluation at the Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Elsfield, Oxon. in May 1999, on behalf of Carden and Godfrey, architects of Long Acre, London. The building is an aisle-less church with chancel, nave and a modern west bellcote. The church is thought to date to the 12th century, though the first reference to a church in Elsfield itself comes from a charter of Robert d'Oilly in the time of William the Conqueror. Of the earliest identifiable structure, only the late 12th century chancel arch remains.

The evaluation was carried out upon the recommendation of the Diocesan Advisory Committee's archaeological advisor, before the foundation design for the new building in the graveyard is finalised, owing to the risk of disturbing human remains, or other significant archaeological features or deposits. Two Test Pits were excavated to the north of the church. Two articulated skeletons were observed at a depth of 0.7-0.8 m in one test pit, though there was no associated dating evidence. The second test pit contained no human remains. The burials are thought to be pauper graves of post-medieval date.

Fernham, The Garden House, Ringdale Manor
(SU 2903 9272)
Jonathan Hiller

In August 1999 the Unit carried out a watching brief at Ringdale Manor, Fernham, near Faringdon, Oxon during the construction of a new barn. The development site lies due south of an Iron Age hillfort (SAM 207) that survives as an earthwork with a ditch and bank. The foundation pits for the new structure were monitored for the presence of features and finds that may have indicated evidence of any extra-mural settlement. No archaeological features were observed and no finds were recovered from the excavated foundation pits.

Faringdon, Land at Coxwell Road (SU 2812 9464)
Andy Mudd and Jeff Muir

In the summer of 1999 the Unit was commissioned by Bryant Homes to undertake an evaluation and excavation ahead of a proposed housing development on land off Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire. The excavations were based on the results of a previous evaluation on the same site and adjacent excavations undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services in 1998 which had identified the focus of an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement.

The development encompassed an area of 2.7 ha, the western part of which (0.9 ha) was evaluated by trial

trenching only. The central and eastern area (1.8 ha) was the subject of full excavation.

The excavations at Coxwell Road revealed at least three phases of activity dating to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age, middle Iron Age and early Romano-British period. The finds are well preserved and provide evidence for the agricultural regime as well as for domestic and small-scale industrial activity. In addition the excavated results offer a further opportunity to study special animal deposits and ritualised burial of both articulated and disarticulated human skeletal remains.

The results of the excavation are important because excavated sites dated to the late prehistoric period are relatively rare on the Corallian Ridge. Further analysis will complement work that has taken place at the fortified camps of the Berkshire Downs and Ridgeway, as well as the more extensive and continuing research into the prehistory of the Upper Thames Valley.

Hampton Gay Deserted Medieval Village (SP 486 165)
Ianto Wain

In July 1999 the Unit carried out a non-intrusive field survey of the earthwork remains of the Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) at Hampton Gay, Oxon. Both the earthworks and the adjacent manor house are Scheduled Ancient Monuments; the ruins of the manor house are a Grade II Listed Building and appear on the English Heritage Register of Buildings at Risk.

The house and village historically lay within the western edge of the parish of Hampton Gay, bounded to the south by the parish of Hampton Poyle to which it was united in 1932. The house is situated *c* 15 m from the River Cherwell which bounds the site to the north, *c* 200 m north-east of the Hampton Gay parish church of St Giles and *c* 250 m west of Manor Farm. The earthworks lie in the fields to the south, east and west of the house, and are under permanent grassland at around 69 m OD.

Background

Prior to the field survey a programme of detailed background research was carried out, comprising the examination of all relevant bibliographic, documentary and cartographic sources. This indicated that the village (and possibly the house) can demonstrate Domesday roots, although the exact site of the 11th century settlement has not been securely located. The settlement may in fact be considerably earlier in origin. Most commentators suggest that the place name Hampton derives from the Old English Hamtun ('home farm' or 'enclosure within which the home farm stood'). These interpretations suggest that Hampton may have been the primary settlement of a larger estate or area of land during the Saxon period, perhaps playing an important early role in the settlement of the area. Domesday Book records two estates in Hampton, but it is likely that the primary, pre-Conquest settlement was located around the church, which is mentioned in the documentary record as early as 1074.

The two Hampton estates passed to a number of different overlords during the period from the 11th to the 13th century. The distinctive name Gay comes from the de Gay family, who appear as lords of the manor during the 12th century. In 1137 de Gay was tenant of both Hampton estates and by 1219 most of the manor estate had been sold to the family. They made a series of gifts of land to Oseney Abbey, which eventually held the manor of Hampton until the Dissolution. The Oseney Cartulary of 1219 describes their holding as containing a manor house, with gardens and a dovecote, and a paper mill. It is not however certain that these structures lie within the area of the existing ruined manor house, which is of Tudor and later date, and was constructed by John Barry soon after his acquisition of the site in 1544.

The Barry family sold the manor house in 1682 and it had various owners during the succeeding centuries. During the 1880s the house was divided into two tenements and was destroyed by fire in 1887. The site has remained uninhabited since.

Hampton Gay seems never to have been a particularly populous settlement. Domesday records land enough for 3 ploughs (and 3 plough-teams at work), although the village itself is recorded as containing only one permanent household. In 1220 there were 6 free tenants and 2 villeins (VCH, 157), increasing by 1279 to 10 households (suggesting perhaps 30 or 40 inhabitants). The population seems to have remained stable throughout the late 13th and early 14th centuries, with 9 taxpayers recorded in 1306 (although one of these was Oseney Abbey), and 12 in 1316 and 1327 (VCH, 157). Evidence of decline appears from 1344 onwards, by which time Hampton Gay had been combined with Bletchingdon for taxation purposes. A century later, in 1428, it had been exempted from taxation altogether because there were fewer than 10 resident householders.

By 1524 there appear to have been only 7 households, and this continuing decline may be in part attributable to the inclosure of the open fields of the parish and their conversion into areas of pasture or grazing (VCH, 157). The acquisition of the manor in 1544 by John Barry, who made most of his money from wool, probably accelerated this process, and it is likely that the final desertion of the section of the village in the fields around the manor house can be dated to his acquisition of the estate.

The Medieval Village Research Group class Hampton Gay as a 'very shrunk' village, and describe the village remains as 'very good' with clear earthworks of roads, but with the absence of clear remains of houses. A rapid (unpublished) survey of the village conducted by Michael Aston in 1972 is held by the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record. This survey identified the main divisions within the village and plotted the chief topographical features, mainly the

hollow ways, ridge and furrow, and areas of possible house platforms.

The Survey

The field survey was carried out in late July 1999. Weather conditions were favourable, since the recent spell of very hot weather had resulted in a significant parching of much of the grassland that forms the area of the settlement and the manor house, and some features that might not have been visible under different conditions were visible as parchmarks or areas of vigorous growth. However, bright sunlight slightly hampered the identification of less well-defined earthworks. In general the field survey confirmed the location and nature of the settlement earthworks as plotted by Aston's survey, and located a number of new, previously unrecorded features.

The extant DMV remains lie in the fields between the manor house and an area of relatively well preserved ridge and furrow in the field to their south. The boundary between the two areas is fairly clear, marked at the western end of the site by a prominent ditch and a hollow way that continues eastwards, forming the southern edge of the eastern half of the site. The area lacked very clear earthworks of house platforms or house sites although the presence of the possible house sites mapped by Aston in 1972 was confirmed. Features not previously recorded included three possible house platforms, a hollow way and a prominent earthwork boundary, interpreted as a possible earlier boundary of the churchyard.

The site survey strongly suggested that the extant ruins of the manor house and its gardens overlie the edge of the DMV. The western half of the gardens contains clear evidence of medieval settlement, in the form of a length of roughly east-west orientated hollow way and an extant house platform with a clear relationship to the roadway. To the east, outside the gardens of the manor house, lies a further section of hollow way and further possible house platforms.

The survey also examined the gardens and land to the north of the manor house ruins. A number of garden features were noted, including a much ruined ice-house, a summer house and a ha-ha. These structures had previously been identified by Aston in 1972, and appear on the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record. The survey noted some additional features not located by the SMR: these mainly comprised a number of short lengths of grass-grown wall to the north and east of the house and the brick foundations of a fountain to the south of the house. The walls and fountain all correspond to the location of features marked upon the 1876 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map.

Reference

Dodd M D (Ed) 1959; *VCH of Oxford* vi, London

Little Rollright, Rollright Quarry (SP 2307 4280)
Jonathan Hiller and George Lambrick

The Unit undertook a watching brief during topsoil and subsoil stripping at Rollright Quarry during August and September 1999, on behalf of Hanson Aggregates. The quarry here is to be enlarged, and presently comprises 16 hectares located north of Little Rollright, a small village to the north of Chipping Norton on the Oxfordshire-Warwickshire border. The quarry is situated on a high spur of oolitic limestone overlooking the Stour Valley in Warwickshire. A Beaker period pottery vessel was recovered from the site in the 1940s. The watching brief was requested by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services because of known archaeological finds from the site, and its proximity to the early prehistoric megalithic complex and barrow cemetery at the Rollright Stones to the east, together with Iron Age and Roman settlement evidence.

Two naturally formed frost fractures/wedges and a single pit of Iron Age date were observed, together with another possible pit feature. Two large quarry holes of probable Victorian or 20th century date were also observed; the remainder of the deposits were modern. Of the finds, during preliminary site reconnaissance, G Lambrick recovered a single body sherd of Iron Age pottery and a few pieces of burnt limestone from the lower fill of an Iron Age pit. The shelly fabric and thickness of the sherd is comparable to middle Iron Age pottery known from the Iron Age enclosure close to the Rollright Stones to the east (Lambrick 1988, 93-96) and another unstratified sherd of similar character was recovered near to the pit. A further 5 sherds of contemporary pottery were recovered from the upper fill of the pit, which also contained two pieces of unidentifiable animal bone, burnt stones and a single cast iron object which is intrusive in the feature fill and dates to the 18th century or later. The object is pointed and riveted, and probably came from a plough. The only other finds of note comprise a small collection of antler bones from the subsoil.

The presence of two substantial quarries of relatively recent date together with the fact that there has been stone working and terracing of the quarry site has diminished the potential for archaeological remains to survive. The presence of a pit, a further possible pit (seen in section only) and the few sherds of pottery suggest that there may have been some form of settlement on or near the site, probably in the middle Iron Age.

Reference

Lambrick, G., 1988 The Rollright Stones: Megaliths, Monuments and Settlement in the Prehistoric Landscape, *English Heritage Archaeol. Rep.* 6, London

Oxford, The Kitchen Project, Lincoln College
(SP 5150 0630)
Jonathan Hiller with contributions by Julian Munby and Kate Newell

Introduction
The Unit undertook investigations between 1997 and 1999 at Lincoln College, Oxford during the course of building modifications. All the archaeological work was undertaken on behalf of Norman Machin Associates - architects for the project - for Lincoln College Enterprises. The main programme of work comprised the construction of a new wine cellar, together with the remodelling and refurbishment of the medieval kitchen and buttery. Lincoln College is located towards the centre of Oxford and is bounded to the north by Brasenose Lane, to the west by Turl Street and to the east by Brasenose College (Fig 10).

Historical background
Historically the site of Lincoln College lies within the defensive circuit of the original Saxon burh rather than the later eastern suburb of the town to the east of the Bodleian Library. By the late 12th century the eastern part of the original Saxon burh had been divided up into plots of land forming part of Oxford's fledgling academic society. Of the earliest references, the site known as Deep Hall is first documented in *c* 1188 when Henry d'Oilly gave to Laurence Kepeharm the land of Osbert Fader between St. Mildred's Church (sited at the corner of present day Turl Street and Brasenose Lane) and the house of Edmund Sutor (Salter 1960, 63). By the early 15th century, the site of the future college was covered by a patchwork of academic halls, houses, tenements and gardens (Salter 1960, 49-52, 61-3).

In 1427, Bishop Fleming of Lincoln obtained the necessary letters patent from the Crown to found a modest collegiolum to train men in theology so that they might 'overcome those who with their swinish snouts imperil the pearls of true theology'. Fleming died in 1431, though shortly before his death some progress had been made in developing the site. St. Mildred's church had been demolished and its revenues passed on to the college, and some buildings had been erected on the site. In 1437, the Dean of Wells John Forest provided the necessary funds to build a chapel, a library, a dining hall, a kitchen and the college rooms (Green, 1979, 2-17).

Excavation Results in brief
A series of watching briefs on preliminary groundwork were supplemented by excavations undertaken for the new wine cellar within the Quincentenary Room (the New Wine Cellar Excavation). Excavation and watching brief work also took place within the kitchen (the Kitchen Excavation) and the area east of the kitchen where a second, smaller basement was to be constructed (the East Basement Excavation).

The New Wine Cellar Excavation (Fig 11)
The natural gravel was capped by the reddish-brown prehistoric natural subsoil, which was generally 0.25 m thick with its upper surface lying at *c* 62.30 m OD. Wherever this was exposed there were traces of charcoal, sometimes quite extensive, indicating that there had been burning on the site in its earliest phase of use. There was no direct evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity on the site, although an undated gully cutting the natural subsoil at the east of the site could date to either period.

During the late Saxon period at least two successive buildings were constructed on the site. The north side of the earlier building was represented by a line of postholes (902, 909, 884, 886, and 871, 873) forward of which lay a strip of heavily burnt soil, perhaps the remains of a burnt timber. The east side of the building was represented by a line of postholes cut into the natural subsoil (898, 912, 914, 929). The west side of the building was truncated by a large pit feature (930), presumably dug after the structure had gone out of use. Pottery from the fill of pit 930 dates to the early-mid 11th century, thus placing the primary building on the site in the first half of the 11th century or earlier. A second large pit (975) cut the fills of the earlier feature, before being deliberately backfilled with gravel prior to the construction of another apparently larger building.

The north side of this second structure consisted of a line of medium sized and large postholes (855, 875, 857, 859), linked by a slot feature (861), most likely a timber beam slot. The east side of the building consisted of a wattle and daub wall erected around a framework of wooden stakes, represented by stakeholes (not illustrated) that were sunk through occupation deposits associated with the earlier structure, down to the natural. Pottery from the fills of these features was of early to mid 11th-century date, indicating that the site at this time was very active.

The west side of both structures has yet to be clearly understood, and given the number of postholes excavated in this area (for example features 797, 799, 814, 669, 679, 661), it is highly likely that more than the two phases of buildings so far identified were erected on the site.

To the rear of the building and also within its limits were several stratigraphically early pits (939, 836, 834) that are likely to be contemporary with the use of the early buildings; one of these has been tentatively identified as a well. The pottery from the fills of pit 834 is of early to mid 11th century date, while the pottery from pit 836 indicates a mid to late 11th century date for the fill of the feature, so that it may just post-date the use of the building.

The stakeholes and a layer of clay, perhaps an occupation horizon associated with the building, were sealed by a thick layer of red fired clay and burnt daub with wattle impressions, mixed with quantities of charcoal. Pottery from the layer dates to the early to mid 11th century. The layer immediately above the daub was a striking whitish-grey deposit of ash that extended over the building. These deposits strongly suggest that the building suffered a major conflagration - burnt material of a similar nature was excavated from pit 834 within the limit of the building.

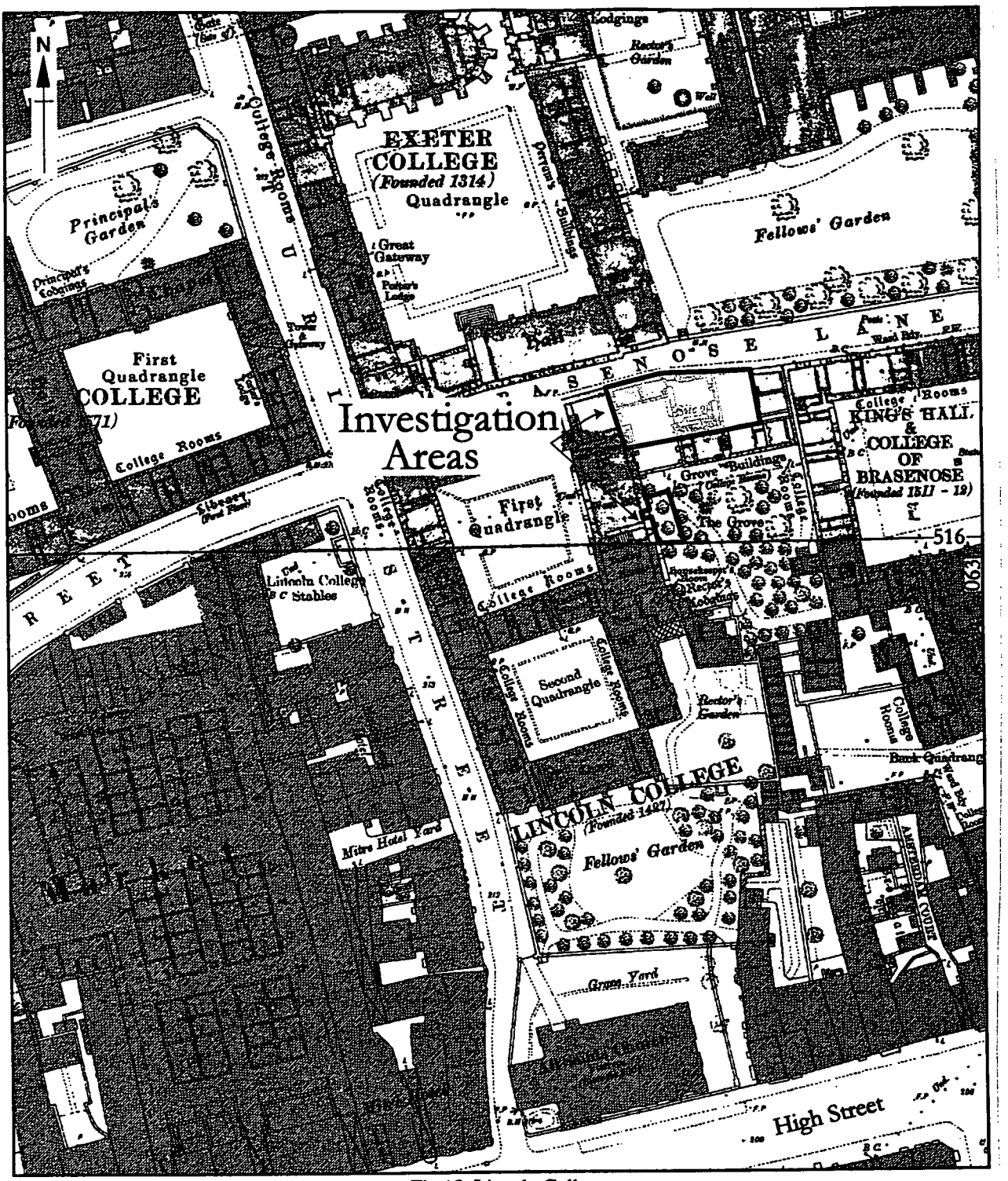

Fig 10. Lincoln College

Layers of superimposed loamy soils that contained large quantities of animal bone and pottery sealed the early building phases and in-filled pits. Pottery from these layers dates to the mid to late 11th century, suggesting that by this period the site had become derelict, perhaps waste ground. A number of pits, probably rubbish disposal pits (Fig 11, 670, 721, 821, 703, 782), were dug through these soil layers, which may well represent the garden soils of the halls and tenements documented in the vicinity of the site. A series of superimposed gravel layers at the north of the excavation area may represent the southern limit of Brasenose Lane. Pottery from these layers has been dated to the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century. Layers of soil continued to accumulate and a soakaway structure was built in the 13th or 14th century, based on the pottery in the fill of the feature. This may relate to one of the early academic buildings documented here. Further rubbish pits were dug, with pottery of 13th to 14th century date present in the feature fills.

The hall of the college had been constructed by 1437, to which were added the buttery and the kitchen. The kitchen foundation was constructed from a level of 63.57 m OD, which shows that by this time there had been a over a metre

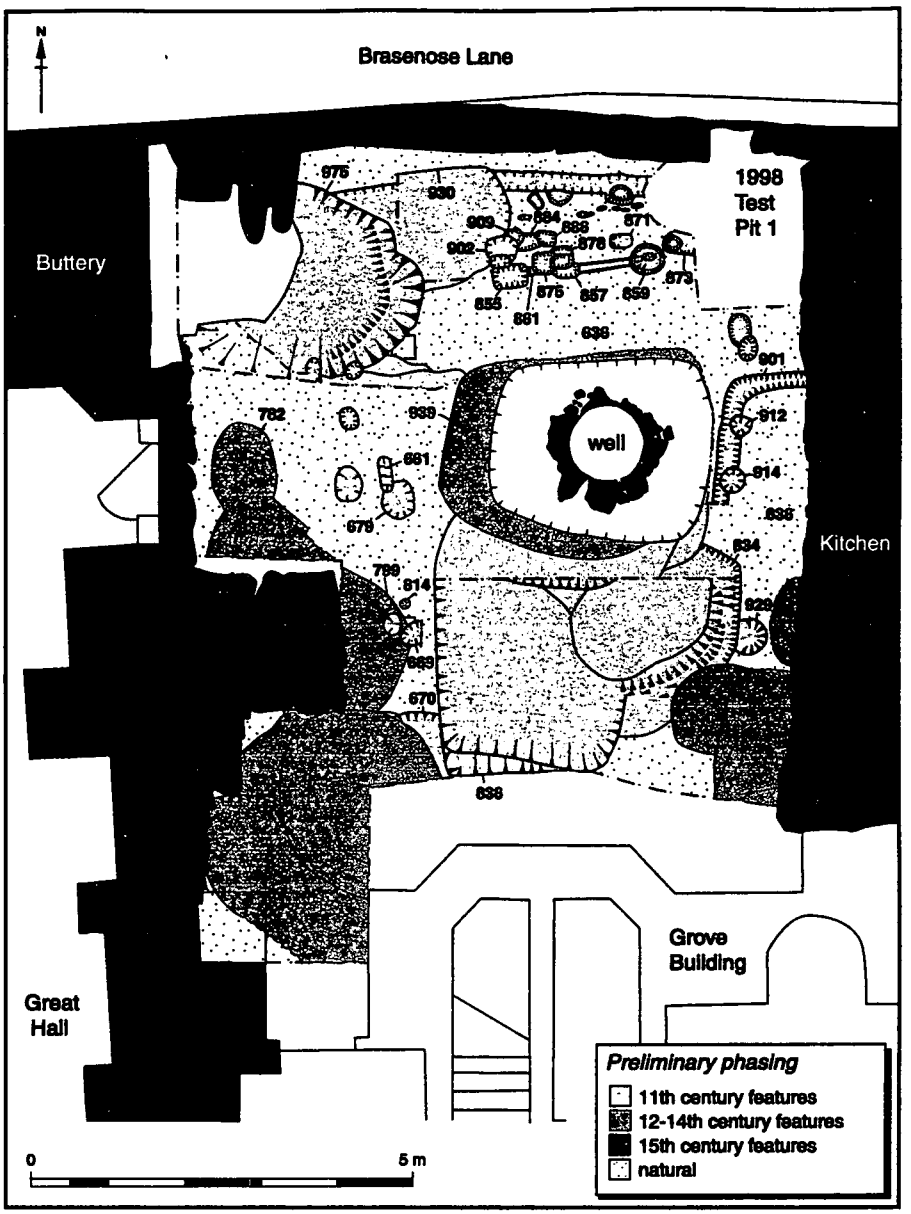

Fig 11. Lincoln College.

build-up of stratified deposits. A narrow linking passage connecting the kitchen to the buttery was erected later. The south foundation wall of the linking passage was fully exposed, recorded and then dismantled in the course of the excavation. The wall incorporated a relieving arch in its construction. Adjacent to the relieving arch was the kitchen well (514), an imposing structure built of dressed and shaped ashlar stones. The well was at least 7 m deep.

The Kitchen Excavation

jacent to the north and south walls. In the centre of the room was a pit containing a large quantity of animal bone and 15th century pottery; this may be a feature dug by the builders to dispose of their food debris during the construction work. Above these features was a 0.3 m thick layer of silty sand containing gravel, stone and 15th century pottery - it is likely that this is part of the beaten earth floor. Contemporary cooking deposits of charcoal and ash were present at the base of the north and south fireplaces.

The East Basement Excavation/Watching brief

Natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of 62.10 m OD overlying the natural gravel.

The earliest deposits included probable occupation levels that were broadly contemporary with the building(s) found in the area of the new wine cellar. The pottery from these early soil layers dates to the mid to late 11th century, broadly contemporary with the early deposits in the wine cellar, though no evidence for structures was found. Late Saxon and early medieval rubbish pits were excavated.

The best-preserved stratigraphy was excavated adjacent to the east wall foundation of the kitchen. Here a series of soil layers had accumulated or been deliberately dumped, and pottery from this sequence of soils dates them from the late 11th century through to the 14th/15th century. A post-medieval room, of which traces of stone paving and masonry were recorded, had been replaced in the 17th/18th

century by a below ground cellar of brick build, equipped with a half barrel vaulted roof.

Building Survey and Recording

As part of the archaeological mitigation required for the Lincoln College Kitchen Project a programme of building recording was undertaken. A dendrochronology date of spring 1436 was obtained from the timbers of the first floor structure of the buttery. This reinforces the documentary evidence for the construction date of the college buildings. A series of roof lines relating to two former phases of the linking wing between the buttery and the detached kitchen could clearly be seen as scars in the kitchen and buttery walls. The connecting range between the buttery and kitchen may well have started as a roofed passage, but perhaps by the 17th or 18th century had a first-floor room reached from the room above the buttery (the door opening was of 18th or 19th century date).

The original kitchen has substantially survived, though the roof has in part been rebuilt. Original features observed in the kitchen included two four-centred headed doors to the north and south, and adjacent to the north fireplace the remains of two bread ovens were revealed. To the west of the fireplace an inserted brick-built oven was recorded, its thin bricks suggesting a 16th or 17th century date; a tile-built oven was partially exposed to the east. A sequence of later doors and alterations was observed.

Interim discussion

The new wine cellar excavation revealed a more or less complete sequence of deposits dating from the late Saxon period through to the early-mid 15th century, the date of the foundation of the college. The earliest strata associated with the first buildings on the site appear to indicate industrial activity, probably metalworking.

The first building on the site fell into disuse and was replaced at least once, with a second timber structure. It is clear that the last Saxon building suffered a major fire, and it is possible that the earlier building(s) suffered a similar fate.

Within the limits of the building were several deep pits, which during the early stages of the excavation of the wine cellar were thought to represent a single 'cellar' pit, such was the depth. However, it seems likely that a succession of pits was dug by the site inhabitants when the building was in use, presumably for the disposal of domestic/industrial refuse. After the last phase of building on the site, it seems likely that the area became waste ground, though the succession of gravel surfaces north of the area of the former buildings suggest that occupation of some kind was being maintained. Pits of the period indicate dumping of domestic refuse, probably from the kitchens of nearby properties. Full analysis of the stratigraphy in conjunction with the massive structures of the college buildings will be undertaken, together with the finds and the environmental evidence, prior to publication of the data. It is anticipated that a full report will be published in *Oxoniensia*.

References

Green V H H, 1979; *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College, 1477-1977*, Oxford

Salter H E 1960; *Survey of Medieval Oxford*, Oxford

Oxford, Mansfield College (SP 516 068)
Paul Booth

An area of some 700 sq m lying immediately north of that examined in 1998 (Booth 1999) was excavated on behalf of Oxford University Surveyor's Department by the unit in advance of construction work. A small isolated pit contained Neolithic flintwork. Otherwise the main features were a continuation of the system of Roman ditches examined in 1998, consisting principally of the south-west corner of a fairly substantial enclosure. There were no significant internal features within this enclosure, but the ditches produced quite large groups of pottery, mainly of 4th century date, probably associated with the structure to the south excavated in 1998. The NNW-SSE aligned Civil War ditch lay beneath the western margin of the site as in the previous year's excavation. Post-excavation analysis is currently under way and a full report will be published in *Oxoniensia*.

Reference

Booth, P, 1999, Oxford, Mansfield College, Proposed Institute for American Studies, *SMA* 29, pp. 79

Oxford, Oxford Castle (SP 5700 0615)
Paul Booth

OAU carried out an evaluation of part of the site of Oxford Castle in June and July 1999. The evaluation was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council in advance of proposed redevelopment. Fifteen trenches of various sizes were dug, supplemented by 6 boreholes drilled into the motte ditch and the main castle moat. The location of the trenches was determined by the requirements of the outline development proposals, informed by exhaustive consideration of the historical and archaeological background to the castle, supplemented by a ground probing radar survey carried out by Stratascan Geophysical and Specialist Survey Services in 1998. The evaluation was confined to areas in the north and south-east parts of the present castle/prison complex. Both areas, but particularly the southern part of the site, had been considerably disturbed by the installation of services for successive phases of the prison.

The natural gravel subsoil was identified in a few limited locations, and probable natural watercourse deposits were located at the southern extremity of the site, predating the sequence of deposits in the main castle ditch at this point. Pre-castle activity represented by probable late-Saxon soil layers was seen in two of the trenches. Evidence for medieval activity was limited, and the only significant medieval structure found was part of a large wall, located

adjacent to the round tower at the south end of the site. This may have been a link wall to the city wall south of the castle rather than being part of the curtain wall of the castle itself. In situ deposits of medieval date appear to have survived in both the main moat and in the motte ditch. The latter seems to have been a very substantial feature, probably at least 15 m across, where it was examined on the south-east side of the motte. East of the motte ditch extensive gravel quarrying, probably of later 18th century date, was encountered. This activity may have resulted in the total destruction of surviving remains of the medieval Shire Hall, which probably lay in or very close to this area. The motte ditch was partly recut by a substantial linear feature, also of post-medieval date.

Construction of the 19th century B Wing of the former prison in the south-east part of the castle complex had not only cut right into deposits in the main castle ditch, as was well-known, but had also caused extensive intrusion into deposits lying west of the main footprint of the building. This may have affected features associated with the east gate of the castle, thought to lie in this general area, but it is possible that such features survive a little further west beneath extant prison buildings and other structures. Some features which can be related to the 19th century plan of the prison were identified.

Oxford, Old Bank, 92-94 High Street (SP 5165 0626)
Kate Newell and Julian Munby

The Unit carried out a programme of archaeological building investigation at the Grade II and II* 'Old Bank', 92-94 High Street and No. 1 Magpie Lane, Oxford during its conversion to the 'Old Bank Hotel'.

The buildings are of especial interest in the history of Oxford being used from an early date as medieval academic halls of residence. The area also has an association with Oxford's many apothecaries and physicians in whose houses patients were treated and it is clear from the rentals in Osney Cartulary that this practice was going on in the properties. The 'Old Bank' is also of importance in the story of Oxford's economic development and history, being Oxford's first bank.

During the investigation evidence of the development of the existing buildings and earlier buildings on the site was observed. The original build of No 94 was seen to consist of timber framing, largely rebuilt in the 20th century, with the south and east walls having lengths of substantial stone walling holding the chimney flues. The eastern stone wall was exposed in No 93 and displayed evidence of the roof pitches of former buildings on the plot. The basic style of No. 94, a four storey building with flat roof with surrounding balustrade, is very similar to that shown on the site on Loggan's view of Oxford of 1675, but is not present on the Agas view of 1577. A closer date for the building may be provided by the inscribed date of '1588' seen on the jetty of No 1 Magpie Lane. This building was seen to be constructed against the pre-existing No 94 and so No 94 may be dated to post-1577 but pre-1588. Internally two original stud and lath partitions were revealed as weretwo further original fireplaces. The stair was also thought to have original fabric including its ovolo-moulded window. Excavation in the basement uncovered a stone lined well and stone trough.

The later '1588' jettied timber framed building of No 1 Magpie Lane was seen to be built against the pre-existing No 94. The four storied building has a stone built cellar. Each floor follows the same plan of a single room with stair along the east wall. An attic room is provided in the roof space through the use of a raised cruck construction. Excavation in the cellar revealed a medieval stone-lined cess pit, with associated 12th-13th century pot sherds.

Evidence of two earlier buildings on the plot of No 93 were seen in the previously external face of No 94's substantial east stone wall. A pitched roof line was observed serving a building at the front of the plot and a line of sockets was seen to the rear of this suggesting a lean-to construction for a rearward building. The current building on the plot dates to the late 18th century and was built after No 92. Despite its face of stone the building is of platform timber-framed construction. Originally the building was of three stories with cellars and possibly attic rooms. The third floor of the building was seen to be a later addition, probably of 19th century date and was accessed solely from No 92 demonstrating that by the time of its addition the two buildings functioned as one.

The bank originally traded from No 92, and is thought to have started trading *c* 1775. Architectural features from its use as a bank, such as safe doors and cash drop, were observed during the investigation. The building is a good example of prosperous architecture using brick walling with ashlar facing. As with No 93 the upper stories (third and attic levels) were seen to be later additions to the original three storey building. Evidence of the original double gabled roof line was seen as scars on the previously external ashlar stacks which had been incorporated into the third floor flues.

Oxford, Sackler Library (SP 1100 6550)
Dan Poore

Between April 1998 and March 1999, the unit carried out archaeological investigations on behalf of the Oxford University Surveyor's Office on the site of the Sackler Library development at the Ashmolean Museum in Beaumont Street. The development lies to the north of Oxford town centre on the second terrace of the River Thames and comprises an area of approximately 0.13 ha.

The work programme was divided into two phases. Prior to construction, a large-scale excavation took place during April and May 1998. This was followed by a much smaller excavation in June 1998. During construction, an ongoing watching brief led to a number of archaeological interventions.

Excavation revealed two probable Bronze Age barrow ditches, one lying largely within the project area and enclosing an area approximately 27 m across. Numerous medieval pits were found aligned in rows and possibly dug as tree planters. They may have formed part of a formal garden, and date from the time of Beaumont Palace. The development area is known to lie within the palace precinct, which dates from the early 12th century. Extensive robbing and some surviving masonry indicated the possible location of the palace precinct wall, as well as the presence of a substantial east-west aligned buttressed stone building, probably part of the Carmelite Friary which occupied the palace site from the early 14th century onwards.

Post-excavation work is currently under way and the full report will be published in *Oxoniensia.*

Oxford, Salter's Boatyard, Folly Bridge, Abingdon Road (SP 5144 0550)
Kate Newell and Julian Munby

The Unit carried out an archaeological investigation prior to and during the development of an area of Salter's Boatyard, Folly Bridge, Oxford.

The site is bounded to the west by the scheduled ancient monument of the Grandpont causeway - a Norman river crossing, and to the other sides by channels of the River Thames. Folly Bridge marks the latest in the forms of river crossing at this point, which date back to at least the Saxon period. From the 16th century the site was open land, and was later developed as a timber wharf and then a boatyard in the 19th century.

A number of historic, unlisted buildings were recorded prior to their demolition. The majority related to the industrial use of the site, with Lock House being the only domestic building. Lock House was an early to mid 19th century timber-framed building built against the pre-existing rubble boundary wall with an internal red brick chimney stack. Its softwood framing was of nailed rather than jointed construction with modern replacement weatherboard cladding. Much of the framing was seen to be original but the building had substantial 20th century repairs and alterations - including an extension to the east and a modern replacement roof structure. The ground floor plan had originally been divided into two rooms, with a single room on the first floor. The building may have originated as a Lock Keeper's Cottage.

The other buildings investigated relate to the working practices of the site as timber yard and boat yard, and include workshops and office buildings. Three main building periods were observed in the structures. Phase I relates to the use of the site as a timber yard, and the surviving buildings from this period were of timber-framed construction. The later two phases of building relate to the site's use as a boat yard with a phase of concrete buildings cast in-situ relating to the building of wooden boats and a later phase using pre-fabricated structures relating to the building or repair of smaller fibreglass river craft.

An archaeological watching brief monitored the ground works of the development. Deposits encountered during the watching brief were made ground dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. No evidence of pre-19th century activity was observed.

Thame, Waitrose Store (SP 7070 0600)
Stuart Foreman

In November 1999, the Unit carried out a field evaluation on land adjacent to the Waitrose store, Thame, Oxfordshire, on behalf of the John Lewis Partnership, in advance of proposed development of the site as additional car-parking and an extension of the existing store.

Two trenches excavated within the grounds of No 12 Bell Lane revealed medieval pits and indistinct shallow ditches or gullies aligned parallel to the present Bell Lane. The evaluation also revealed a group of very large, 16th-19th century rubbish pits located towards the back of former burgage plots fronting onto Thame High Street. A single trench located within the loading area of the Waitrose store revealed that modern disturbance has largely truncated former soil horizons within this area.

Wallingford, The Church of St John the Evangelist (SU 6076 8940)
John Dalton

In February 1999 the Unit undertook a watching brief at the Church of St John the Evangelist, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Two stone and brick-built graves were located at the base of shafts below grave slabs lying at ground level during enabling works; as a consequence the foundations for the new building on the site were redesigned and the grave shafts backfilled after structural recording.

Yarnton (SP 475 110)

Post-excavation analysis of the results of nine seasons of fieldwork at Yarnton is currently underway, and unexpected discoveries continue to occur! Small pieces of burnt bread, found in a pit on the floodplain at Yarnton in 1992 (Hey 1993), have been scientifically dated to the early Neolithic period (around 3500 BC). This is, as far as we know, the earliest discovery of bread in Britain.

The bread was recovered during flotation of soil samples. Burnt fragments from one pit looked like pieces of wood charcoal by eye, but when Dr Mark Robinson of the Oxford University Museum examined them through a binocular microscope he unambiguously identified them as bread; partly-crushed grains of barley within a spongy matrix. Samples were subsequently dated by radiocarbon at the

Oxford University Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit and at Rafter Radiocarbon Laboratory, New Zealand. They came up with results within three years of each other, which combined and calibrated show that the bread dates to between 3620 - 3350 cal BC (OxA-6412; 4675 ± 70, and NZA-8679; 4672 ± 57).

The pit also contained a bifacially-worked flint knife, along with over 200 flint flakes, some of which had been sharpened and serrated. Crumbs of pottery were also present, along with hazelnut shells and apple skin and cores. The presence of high- quality flint objects in good condition along with the food remains probably indicates a deliberate deposit or offering, rather than rubbish.

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Ambrosden, The entrenchments on Graven Hill
(SP 591 204)
Eberhard Sauer

Graven Hill dominates the land east of the Roman town of Alchester and offers commanding views from the edge of the wood over the surrounding landscape. Akeman Street reached its northernmost point in the area of Graven Hill and Alchester. It was tempting to assume that an important Iron Age settlement was located on the hill and that it formed the predecessor to the Roman town of Alchester. Even though it was known that the entrenchment was far more insubstantial (Potts 1907, 343) than those of most Iron Age hillforts, it seemed possible that the defences could hold the clue to the date and nature of the occupation of the hill.

The entrenchment has been observed on the eastern side of the hilltop (Potts 1907, 343; Blomfield 1882, 25). All sections plotted on various editions of OS maps of the area are still visible on the ground; the only section we have not yet inspected was the south end which is currently fenced off. No survey was carried out on the other sides of the hill. Kennett (1695, 35-37) observed an entrenchment on the west side of Graven Hill. He agreed with Plot's hypothesis (1676, 335) that the earthworks were built on the occasion of the battle between the Saxons and the Danes in AD 871. Plot's description, 'Entrenchments in Merton Woods,' might refer to the earthworks in the east or Kennett's earthwork in the west or both. The question whether or not the entrenchments ever surrounded the whole hilltop remains unanswered. Since they come to an end on either side at the edge of the wood, it seems possible that sections were destroyed by ploughing and erosion, especially if one considers how slight the surviving remains in the wood are. However, a systematic survey on the other sides of the hill would be a worthwhile task for a future campaign. The earthworks are best preserved on the south-east side of the hill, the only side where it is clear that there are two parallel banks and ditches, the ditch bottoms being c12.50 m apart in the area of trench 19.

Thanks to the kind permission of Defence Estates (Ministry of Defence) and the support of Major Wilkins this entrenchment has, in August 1999, for the first time been investigated archaeologically. There was no point at which a straight section through both earthworks could have been excavated without felling trees. Therefore we chose to excavate two separate sections at two well preserved points, trench 18 at SP 5904 2036 through the outer bank and ditch and trench 19 through the inner entrenchment at SP 5908 2040. These two sections were 54 m apart, measured along the ditch of the outer earthwork.

The excavations yielded hardly any ancient artefacts. The most diagnostic find was a tiny fragment of pottery, datable to the Iron Age or late Bronze Age (kind information by Paul Booth) from near the bottom of the ditch in trench 18. It is difficult to decide whether the piece might date the occupation of a potential settlement enclosed by the entrenchment or whether it might have been re-deposited later. The colour and composition of the natural and the lower ditch fill differ only in nuances and the boundary is very diffuse. The inner ditch reached a depth of c 0.88 m below a theoretical straight line between the current surface at either end of the trench, the outer ditch was c 1.03 m deep. Archaeomagnetic samples taken by Patrick Erwin contained sediments with different orientations, which did not permit dating of the samples. OSL samples are being examined by Dr Ed Rhodes and might still yield a date.

The age of the Graven Hill entrenchment thus remains enigmatic. The straightness of sections of the entrenchment may suggest a date between the later Iron Age and the Roman period. It might have been a place of refuge, an unfinished military compound or a ritual site. The ditch profiles were very indistinct, and did not form a substantial defence. Given the proximity of the Roman military installations at Alchester it may also be worth remembering that the army at the time of the Claudian invasion still frequently occupied hilltops (Frere 1986; Todd 1985). However, it has to be stressed that there is no positive evidence for such a hypothesis. It seems exceedingly unlikely, however, given the extreme scarcity of artefacts, that there was a densely occupied Iron Age settlement on the top of Graven Hill. Alchester, unlike Dorchester-on-Thames, was a military foundation in an area where there had been no more than rural settlement in the pre-Roman period.

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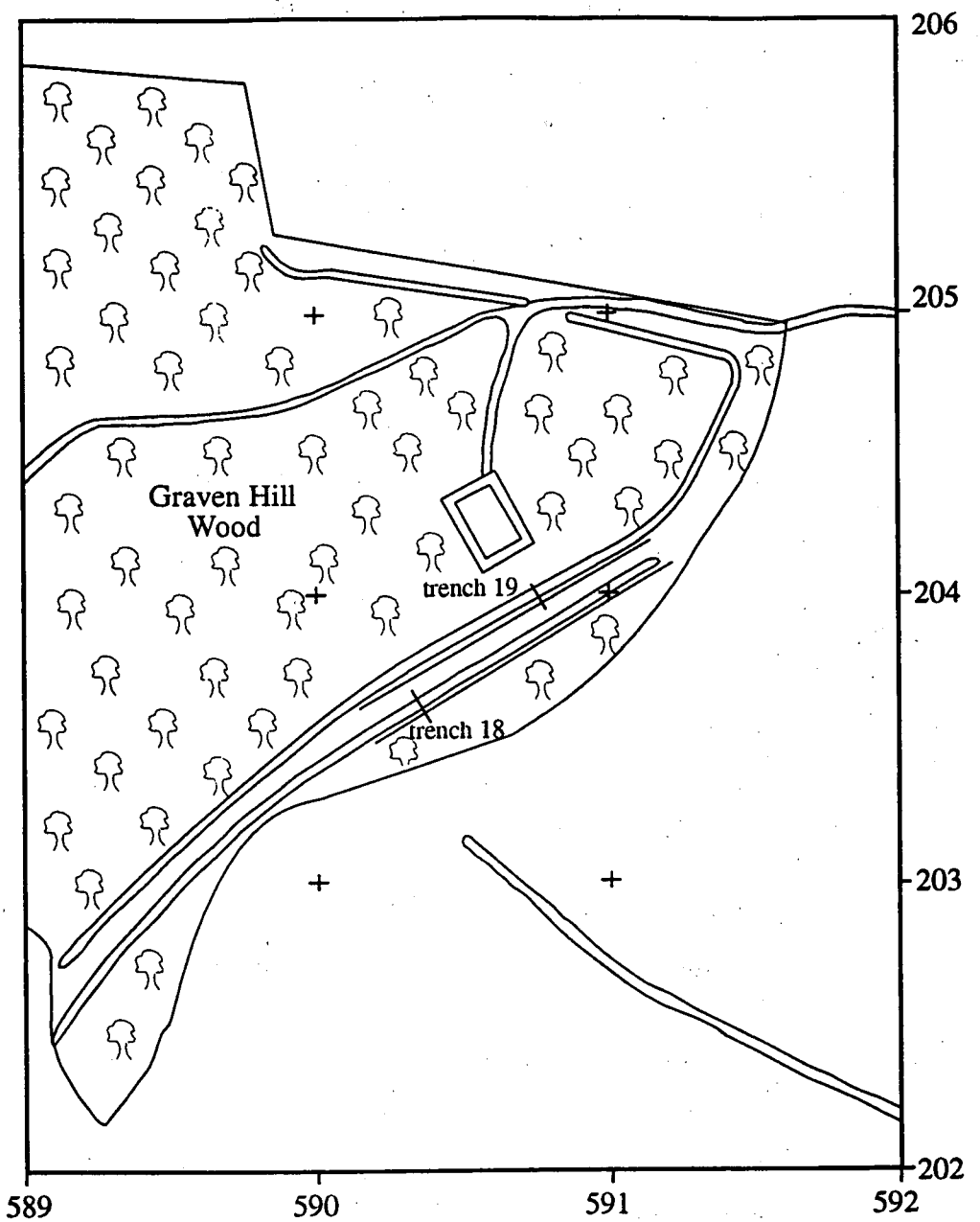

Fig 12. The excavations on Graven Hill: shallow banks and ditches; note that the ditches have only been plotted in the area of our excavation. Reproduced by kind permission of the Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright NC/00/627.

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Acknowledgements: see article on Wendlebury below

Chesterton, Late Roman coins from a rural site
Eberhard Sauer

A number of late Roman coins have been found by Mike Whitford in Chesterton parish. The composition of the coin series and the distribution of the pieces over an area of *c* 50 m by 50 m strongly suggests that they derive from a villa or other smaller rural settlement. The only other known find from the area is a brooch of unknown type. The precise location of the origin of these coins cannot be revealed at present, but has been given in confidence to the SMR for future generations of researchers to inspect once the threat to the site no longer exists. This coin series is nevertheless useful for research into the history of Roman Oxfordshire as they form another piece of evidence for the history of monetary circulation. There are as yet no other finds to show whether the absence of early coins is to be explained by a

late foundation of the site, the possibility that earlier and deeper layers are still undisturbed, or, as seems more likely, by the late spread of the monetary economy into the countryside. This is particularly interesting as the site is in comparative proximity to Alchester, Oxfordshire's largest Roman town. The early fort at Alchester (see next article) yielded a high proportion of early coins. By contrast, circulation at this site as at other rural sites near Alchester (Reece 1991, nos. 61-62), in parallel with many rural sites all over southern Britain, is dominated by late coinage.

Coin list

1. Ant, copy (diam.: 15 mm); AD 260-285.
2. Ant (diam.: 16 mm); Tetricus I.; AD 271-274; mint: ?; RIC 100-103?
3. Ant (diam.: 19 mm); Carausius; AD 286-289 (Casey 1994, 88); Lon; RIC 105
4. Ant (diam.: 23 mm); Allectus; AD 293-295 (Casey 1994, 88); Cam; RIC 97C
5. Fol (diam.: 18 mm); Constantine I; AD 318-319; Tre (S); RIC 209; 213; 221
6. Fol (diam.: 17.5 mm); Constantine I; AD 319; Tre (S); RIC 213; 221
7. Fol (diam.: 18 mm); Constantius II under Constantine I; AD 330-335; mint: ?; Gloria Exercitus, two standards
8. Fol (diam.: 16 mm); late antique, possibly AD 330-335; mint?; Gloria Exercitus, two standards?
9. Fol (diam.: 16 mm); Constantine I; AD 332-333; Tre (P); RIC 537
10. Fol (diam.: 18.5 mm); Urbs Roma under Constantine I; AD 332-333; Tre (P); RIC 542
11. Fol (diam.: 17 mm); Constantinopolis under Constantine I, AD 334-336; Are (S); RIC 386; 401
12. Fol (diam.: 14.5 mm); Constantius II under Constantine I; AD 335-337; Tre (P); RIC 592
13. Fol (diam.: 15.5 mm); Constantine I as Augustus or Constantine II, Constantius II, Constans or Delmatius as Caesar; AD 335-337; Tre (P); Gloria Exerxitus, one standard
14. Fol (diam.: 14.5 mm); Constantine I as Augustus or Constantine II, Constantius II, Constans or Delmatius as Caesares; AD 335-337; Are(?) (S?); Gloria Exerxitus, one standard
15. Fol (diam.: 15 mm); Constantine I; AD 335-337; mint: ?; Gloria Exercitus, one standard
16. Fol (diam.: 14.5 mm); Constantine I as Augustus or Constantine II or Constans as Caesares; AD 335-337; mint?; Gloria Exerxitus, one standard
17. Fol (diam.: 15 mm); Urbs Roma; AD 335-340; mint: Tre?; wolf and twins
18. Fol (diam.: 15 mm); Helena; AD 337-340; Tre (P); RIC 42; 47; 55; 63; 64; 78; 90
19. Fol (diam.: 17.5 mm); Constantinopolis under Constantine II; AD 337-340; Are (S); RIC 9
20. Fol (diam.: 15.5 mm); Constans; AD 347-348; Tre (P?); RIC 206; 210
21. Fol (diam.: 14 mm); Constantius II or Constans; AD 347-348; Tre or Are; RIC Tre 180-182 or RIC Are 78-82
22. AE 3/4; imitation (16.5 mm); barbarous head minted over coin of the Constantinian Dynasty; c. AD 353-364; mint: ?; possibly faint traces of stg. figure holding transverse oblong object
23-25. three very corroded Roman or modern copper alloy coins (16- 17 mm diam.)
26-29 .four modern coins (22-25 mm diam.) (one of them possibly late medieval - postmedieval)

Abbreviations

Denominations: AE 3/4 = small copper alloy coin; Ant = 'Antoninianus;' Fol = 'follis'

Mints: Are = Arelate/ Arles; Cam = Camulodunum/ Colchester; Lon = Londinium/ London; Tre = Augusta Treverorum/ Trier; (P) = prima, first workshop; (S) = secunda, second workshop

(RIC = The Roman Imperial Coinage)

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Wendlebury, The Claudian fort at Alchester

(SP 570 203)

Eberhard Sauer

The excavations of the fort

What had been a theory until recently (Erwin 1999; Sauer 1999a, 63) is now a certainty: there was a large Roman fort immediately west of and partially underneath the later walled town of Alchester. Three trenches were excavated with Scheduled Monument Consent in August and September 1999. We found military structures, most notably the fort ditches, small sections of military style sill beam buildings and gullies associated with an early road. Furthermore, the excavations yielded mid first century military equipment, pottery and coins.

The fort ditches: trench 21

When sectioning the southern fort ditches the deeper inner ditch reached 0.77 m below the late summer water table in 1999 (at 62.10 m above sea-level), the outer 0.73 m. The inner ditch was 3.20 m wide and 1.81 m deep (below the present surface), the outer at least 2.90 m wide (it was cut by a later road ditch). One wonders whether or not the water table at the time of construction was similarly high; if so, this would have necessitated the ditches being constantly scooped out while being dug. The ditch profiles indicate that the army had envisaged digging the usual V-shaped ditches, but that the water table prevented the completion, resulting in a truncated V-shaped profile. The preservation of substantial pieces of wood in the lower ditch fill proves that the water table in antiquity, which will have fluctuated seasonally, cannot have been substantially lower than it is today. No traces of the rampart survived, but the Roman deposits above the fort ditches contained considerably less gravel than those north of the ditches. The gravel content was higher between the inner ditch and the northern end of trench 21, 15.5 m north of the inner side of the ditch. This suggests that not just gravel from the rampart but also from other structures (such as the *via sagularis*?) may have been

mixed with later sediments by horticultural or agricultural activities during the civilian period. One is tempted to assume that much of the rampart had earlier been used as a source of gravel.

The occupation of the interior: trench 20

Trench 20 was intended to give us an insight into the nature of the occupation in the interior. We had hoped to be able to uncover the remains of wooden military buildings. However, we experienced that everywhere between the road which led from Alchester past the 'Castle Mound' westwards (in the northern extension of trench 20) and the southern fort ditches the natural and the preserved Roman military structures were covered with deposits, averaging 0.25 m in depth. These deposits were invariably extremely rich in finds. The objects recovered from them were exclusively Roman, the majority of the more closely datable ones could be attributed to the mid first century. Interestingly the pieces of military equipment and other finds of the invasion period came from the very top as well as from the bottom of the deposits. This was equally true for trench 20, 21 and 22. 0.25 m thick deposits cannot possibly have built up during the occupation of the fort. All careful attempts to detect traces of any structures, such as post-holes and sill beams, by cleaning the surface at various levels and by trying to investigate whether the distribution of stones indicated post- holes failed. The only possible explanation is that horticultural or agricultural activity in the Roman civilian period or in the early Middle Ages has mixed the upper strata of the deposits within the fort with later sediments. Later coins were confined to the vicinity of the road leading past the Castle Mound, probably indicating that much of the area of the earlier fort south of the road was not occupied (possibly converted into gardens?). This also helps to explain the astonishing predominance of military finds of the invasion period. Because of the extraordinary density of finds we had to excavate slowly. As a result of this and of the depth of the deposits, we uncovered a far smaller area within trench 20 than originally intended. Therefore the only possible military feature revealed so far in trench 20 (except the northern extension) was a hearth. There was no time left to excavate the hearth and it is possible that there might be other features next to it immediately below the level which we reached. We decided to cover the hearth and adjacent areas with straw and hope to complete the excavation with the necessary care next year. A similar stratigraphy has been observed at Kingsholm where also many of the early Roman finds were embedded in an up to 0.50 m thick cultivation layer of late Saxon or later date (Hurst 1985, 20-1; Reece 1985, 23).

Remains of a military road and building: the northern extension of trench 20

Protected by a mid to late 4th century road surface and a parallel wall, earlier military structures survived much better in the northern extension of trench 20. Four gullies are likely to be associated with an earlier military road in the same west- east alignment; one of the gullies contained a dupondius of Caligula (RIC, 2nd ed., 56). The position of the road, almost an axis of symmetry for the compound, suggests that it functioned as the via praetoria; if so, the west gate must have been the main gate of the fort for a sortie, the porta praetoria. Recent examination of aerial photographic evidence by Cathy Stoertz of the National Monuments Record Centre, English Heritage (kind information by Simon Crutchley) have proven that this road continued in a straight line westwards. It has been traced until the A 41; if it continued, its destination must have been the ford over the river Cherwell at Tackley. I have argued previously (Sauer 1998b, 74) that Akeman Street, which is less direct, follows in some sections a pre-Roman route. It appears that it became the main route again in the Roman civilian period.

North of the road in the northern extension of trench 20 sill beams of a building parallel to the road could be unearthed. The section exposed so far is unfortunately too small for a certain identification of its function.

A drainage channel: trench 22

The resistivity survey by Patrick Erwin revealed a ditch parallel to the fort ditch, 58 m north of the inner ditch. Excavation proved that it was 1.19 m deep. Its fill contained a considerable number of mid first century artefacts. It is not deep enough for a defensive ditch of a different period or for a ditch between a fort and an annexe. The contemporary fort of Oberstimm in Raetia in a similar environment near a stream (Schoenberger 1976; 1978, 128-135) was provided with fresh water through a channel. However, there is a second ditch of comparable orientation in the northern half of the fort. It is a similar distance (55 m) from the inner (in this case northern) fort ditch and must have served the same purpose. The central west-east road, which, in its earliest phase, seems to go back to military origins, must have led to a gate. Water supply channels normally entered a fort at a gate. Since it is inconceivable that there were three gates on the west side, it is likely that one of the more shallow gullies, observed in the area of the road, supplied the fort with water from the Gagle Brook and that the two deeper ditches served drainage purposes. The drainage ditches appear to continue in a straight line beneath the later town ditches eastwards; this offers further support for the assumption that either a considerable part of the fort is buried beneath the later town or that there was a vexillation fortress beneath the town of Alchester, the compound in the west being its annexe.

The potential for dendrochronological dating of the fort at Alchester

It is highly probable that the fort at Alchester contains pieces of wood which will allow us to establish the precise date of the construction. As mentioned above, the fort ditches reach downto 0.77 m beneath the present water table. The lower fill of the inner fort ditch yielded the most promising samples. Three pieces of oak with up to 20-30 year-rings (kind information by Dr Mark Robinson) were recovered. While normally a minimum of 50 year- rings is required, pieces with 20-30 year-rings have exceptionally been dated. The good preservation of wood and the fact that the bottom of the fort ditches must have silted up rapidly in the wet environment, renders it likely that future campaigns will

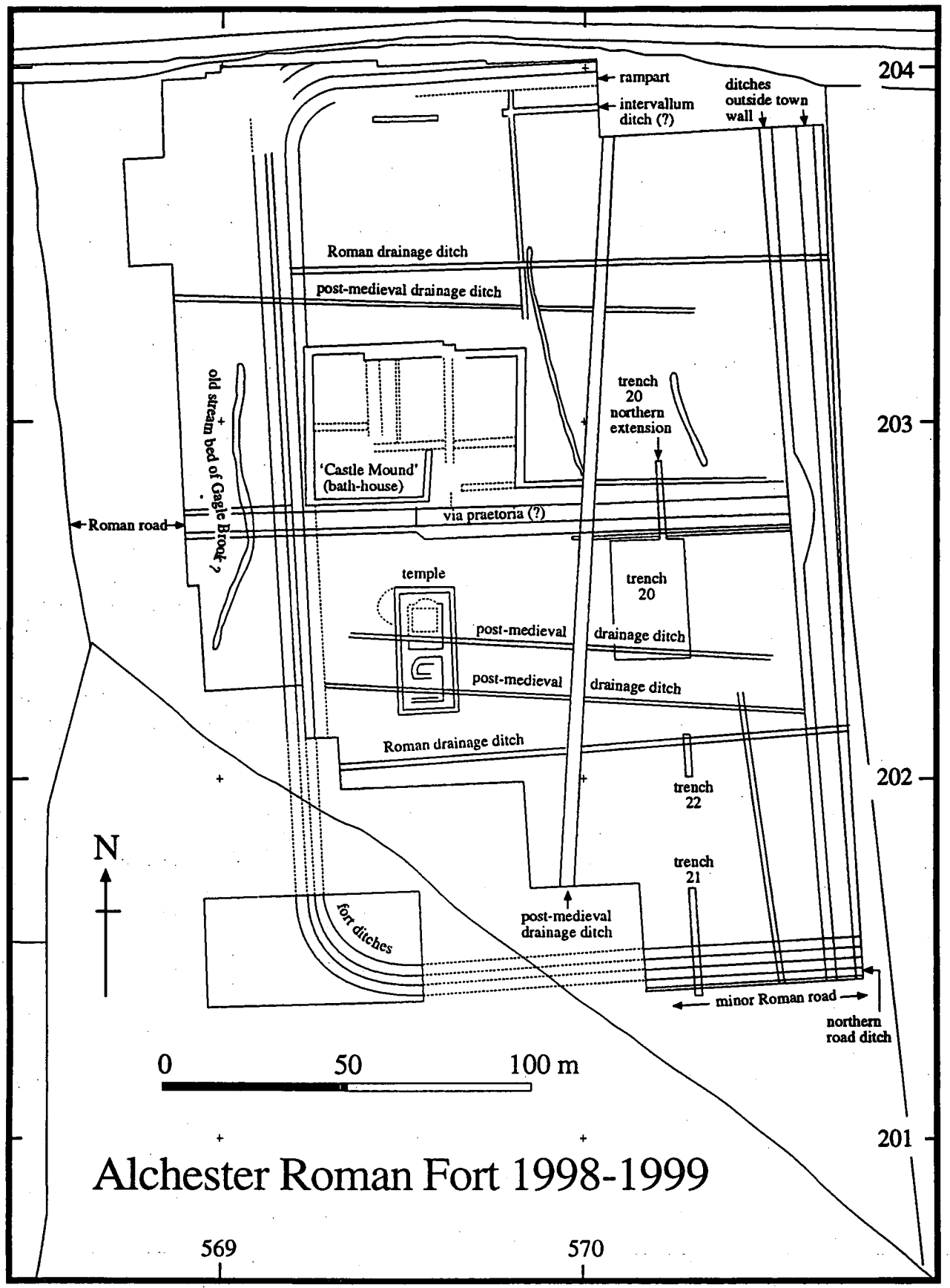

Fig 13. Alchester Roman fort: the results of the resistivity survey and of the excavations with the location of the 1999 trenches.

yield wood suitable for dendro-dating deposited during the occupation or shortly after the abandonment. The Roman water supply channel in trench 22 contained also pieces of wood, which were too small for dendro-dating. It seems possible that the lower part of large timber posts of military gates may reach below the water table. The fact that the water table around Alchester has decreased in recent decades as a result of modern water management, however, raises the prospect that more and more of the suitable wood will disintegrate in the foreseeable future.

The chronology of the site

About 50% of the early imperial copper and brass coins were minted under the reign of Caligula (AD 37-41) and *c* 50% under Claudius (AD 41-54). In total six coins of Caligula could be identified and five (plus two pieces whose identification is not absolutely certain) of Claudius. The high percentage of coins of Caligula strongly suggests that the fort was founded within the AD 40s. By the time forts were established in the AD 50s the proportion of issues of Caligula amongst coins circulating at military sites had decreased to a very small percentage (ratio of Caligula to Claudius issues 7:191 at Usk (Boon 1982) and 0:20 at Kingsholm (Reece 1985). The ratio at Alchester of *c* 1:1 is more like the one at the Roman fort at Hod Hill of *c* 2:1 (Richmond 1968, 92-103). The fort at Hod Hill was established very early. The even higher proportion of coins of Caligula need not necessarily indicate that Hod Hill had been established much earlier than Alchester. It could be explained by an earlier abandonment; Hod Hill is thought to have been abandoned in AD 50 (Webster 1993, 151). It is also conceivable that there might have been some regional variations in military coin supply. One is tempted to assume that the fort at Alchester was established soon after Roman troops had reached the area, perhaps *c* AD 44. However, a foundation in the second half of the AD 40s cannot be ruled out on the basis of the material evidence, though it seems less probable. On the basis of the coin series it is hard to imagine that the foundation post-dates the AD 40s.

Not a single coin of Nero has been discovered and, interestingly, except some late third and fourth century coins from the vicinity of the road to the 'Castle Mound,' not a single coin post-dating the reign of Claudius has been found. Nero minted copper alloy coins only from AD 62 onwards (and from AD 64 at Lyons). Military sites still occupied towards the end of Nero's reign (AD 54-68) normally yield some of his coins. Their absence at Alchester suggests that occupation did not extend beyond the mid AD 60s at the very latest. It is not possible to say at present whether or not the fort was still occupied at the time of Boudicca's rebellion in AD 60.

The chronology of the pottery, which is currently beingexamined by Nick Cooper, and the brooches and military equipment are consistent with the numismatic dating of the period of occupation from the AD 40s to the AD 50s or early or mid AD 60s.

The garrison and the historical implications for the conquest of the Midlands

The military structures unearthed so far do not give any clues to the type of military unit(s) garrisoned at Alchester. However, the abundant pieces of military equipment and their spatial distribution allow us to draw several conclusions about the garrison of the fort. The presence of a spearhead and of the shaft of a probable second spearhead as well as of two javelin heads points to auxiliary rather than to legionary troops. A further indication for the presence auxiliary troops is the wide spatial distribution of cavalry equipment. One would be reluctant to explain the wide scatter with the presence of legionaries with merely some 2% horsemen and the officers' horses. While it seems thus doubtful that the garrison consisted exclusively of legionaries, it is also unlikely that they occupied any specific part of the area, excavated in 1999. The fact that both pieces of scale armour and segmental armour, *lorica segmentata* fittings as well as cavalry equipment and three-winged arrow heads were so evenly spread over the whole area, in trench 20 as well as in trench 22, suggests strongly that those who wore scale armour and those who wore *lorica segmentata* were not confined to separate quarters of the compound. There is a dispute as to whether *lorica segmentata* was only worn by legionaries (Bishop/Coulston 1993, 206-209), in which case we are probably dealing with a mixed contingent of auxiliaries and legionaries, or whether it was worn by auxiliary foot soldiers as well (Ulbert 1976, 419-420) as I am inclined to believe.

The frequency and the wide spatial distribution of equine equipment suggests that there was a strong cavalry component. It is hard to decide whether the horsemen belonged to an alaor a cohors equitata.

The size of the compound has to be considered as well in this context. As the location of the east side of the fort beneath the later town is not known, there are three options:

1) The east side was just beyond the later town walls. The north-south extent is *c* 246 m (between the inner edge of the inner ditches) and according to the resistivity survey the west-east extent is over 147 m. As the resistivity survey does not reveal any traces of rounded corners on the east side, the fort's size must have exceeded 4 ha, suggesting a minimum garrison of *c* 1000 men.

2) The compound had a size of up to 8 or 9 ha if we assume that the west-east extent exceeded the north-south extent in length. In this case we are dealing with a vexillation fortress with a garrison of *c* 2000-3000 men, both horsemen and foot soldiers.

3) The main fort was underneath the later town of Alchester and the compound, explored in 1999 formed an annexe. The remarkably rectangular plan of Alchester and several other criteria, summarised in previous papers (Sauer 1998a, 72; 1999b, 289) make me believe that the town Alchester was built over an earlier fort, whether

this existed contemporaneously with the western compound or whether it was its successor. It is rare that annexes reach the size (and width) of the Alchester compound. Therefore I had previously considered this model to be unlikely. However, some exceptionally large annexes were constructed during the invasion period, such as at Colchester and Wroxeter. Consequently it is possible that the compound explored in 1999 formed an annexe. The presence of a strap end of mid-first century type from a ditch with a rounded corner in the northeast of the town indicates that the this vexillation fortress (whether or not it existed at the same time as the western compound) also included a cavalry component. However, too little is known about the probable vexillation fortress beneath the later town to allow us draw any reliable conclusions about its garrison. It surely must have comprised infantry as well. The frequency of cavalry equipment is nevertheless worth noting. A pendent of horse harness and a mid 1st century strap end of horse harness have also been found by Mike Whitford in the area of the training ground and the marching camp southeast of the town, and a metal- detecting find of a spur at an unrecorded location somewhere south of Alchester, similar to a spur recovered in trench 20, has been brought to my attention.

It is also possible, if option (1) or (2) is correct, that a fort beneath Alchester replaced an earlier compound. In this case the fort beneath Alchester is likely to date to the Neronian and/or Vespasianic period.

If the theory that the west-east road formed the *via praetoria* is correct, then we have to conclude that the known side of 246 m was the small side. As the *porta praetoria* was the main gate for a sortie (Johnson 1983, 41; 91-92), it would also suggest that it was considered to be more likely that enemies approached the fort from the west rather than from the north. However, if we are dealing with an annexe, both interpretations are invalid. Should the hypothesis of a vexillation fortress beneath the later town of Alchester be correct, then its *porta praetoria* is likely to have been in the north (Sauer 1999b, 289). In either case the central course of the west-east road in the western compound is a strong argument against option (1). We are dealing either with (2) a vexillation fortress or (3) with the annexe of a vexillation fortress.

While five three-winged arrow heads may not appear to constitute a great quantity, their number is not unremarkable, if one considers that the Werner Zanier in his compilation (published in 1988: Zanier 1988, 18-23, especially 18-19) of three-winged arrow heads all over the Roman Empire knows of no site in Britain which has yielded more than 21. The five arrow heads are so evenly spread over the less than 1% of the compound, which we excavated, that many hundreds more may still await discovery. The wide distribution also suggests that the archers were not a small specialist force housed together, but that there were archers all over the area. This does not need to indicate that we are dealing with a specialist unit of archers (although it is possible in theory that we do). Zanier (1988, 8-9) has stressed the imbalance between the scarcity of such units in the northwest of the empire and the frequent occurrence of arrow heads in forts. This imbalance, specific case studies and textual sources led him to the conclusion that archery was by no means confined to sagittary units. Vegetius (1,15) recommends that one third or one quarter of all soldiers should be trained in archery.

We may conclude that in the open landscape of the Midlands Rome used extensively cavalry. Horsemen were ideally suited to the task of pursuing bands of mounted warriors. We do not know how long Alchester remained occupied, but the exceptional density of finds supports a longer occupation (unless the fort was abandoned under catastrophic circumstances; however at least no traces of a fire could be detected). The coin evidence renders it unlikely that occupation lasted for much longer than twenty years at most. Under the assumption of an occupation lasting for several years, we must assume that Alchester remained occupied after the frontier had moved westwards. A force with a mobile element at this central road junction would thus have been ideal to deal with any enemies who had penetrated the first line of defence.

Body armour is rare in Iron Age context and we may assume that the majority of Rome's enemies in Britain were fighting without such protection. The three-winged barbed arrows were a particularly effective weapon against un-armoured warriors. The frequency of sagittary units along the middle and lower Danube and in the East (Zanier 1988, 10 fig. 4), the areas most at risk from mounted raids from enemies, demonstrate that bow and arrow were considered to be an effective weapon against horsemen in open country, even against heavily armoured enemies.

Archers, especially mounted archers, posed a deadly risk and were a powerful deterrent against any raids by small groups in the hinterland. They also could have been used to control movements of individuals and to intercept communication between rebellious elements in areas under military control and enemies beyond the frontier. It is interesting to note that cavalry continued to play an important role in the Midlands after the Boudiccan rebellion, as is suggested by cavalry equipment and the gyrusin the Lunt fort.

Of course there was also infantry at Alchester; we are dealing with a mixed garrison, typical for a vexillation fortress of the period of the invasion of Britain.

(RIC = The Roman Imperial Coinage.)

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Acknowledgements
The 1999 campaign was made possible thanks to the generosity of the Roman Research Trust and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies (Hugh Last and Donald Atkinson Funds). I am indebted to Mr and Mrs Miller for their kind permission to excavate on their land and for their interest and support. Mr and Mrs Deeley have equally been very helpful. I would like to thank Major Richard Wilkins and the Ministry of Defence for their kind support of our excavations on Graven Hill. Chris Green has made an absolutely outstanding contribution to the excavations, post-excavation (washing thousands of finds and systematically analysing the contexts). Patrick Erwin's geophysical survey was an extremely important part of the project, and his expertise and commitment were essential to its success. Amongst the 90 other participants I have to mention first Tim Bryars, Dr Andrew Hann and Becky Peacock as well as Jenni Barrett, Steve Boscott, Richard Coe, Jennifer Emmett, Simon Ennever, Isobel Hales, Richard Hewitt, Robin Newson, Jackie Potts, Paul Sorowka and Debbie Williams. I am very grateful to Professor Barry Cunliffe and Professor Sheppard Frere who have been supporting our work ever since 1996. I would like to thank Paul Booth, Esther Cameron, Julie Clements, Nick Cooper, Simon Crutchley, Dr Martin Henig, Dr Annie Grant, Arthur MacGregor, Dr Alison McDonald, Deborah Miles-Williams (computer versions of the maps), Dr Graham Morgan, Vanda Morton, Rob Perrin, Alison Roberts, Dr Mark Robinson, Mr and Mrs Taylor and Mike Whitford for their support of the 1999 campaign.

Wendlebury, The geophysical survey at Alchester (SP 570 203)

Patrick Erwin and Eberhard Sauer

Over 4 ha in total were surveyed in 1998 and 1999 using both resistivity and magnetic gradiometry techniques. In 1999 a magnetic gradiometry survey of the site was attempted, but the results obtained were rather poor. In 1999 better conditions allowed relatively unrestricted surveying. The resistivity survey was carried out using an auto logging Geoscan RM15 Resistivity Meter at a sampling interval of 1 m by 1 m (ie 900 measurements per 30 m grid). A single set of probes with a symmetrical 0.5 m spacing was used; this configuration was used in preference to multiple probes as more area can be covered in a given time. Zigzag traverses were used to maximise speed of survey.

The magnetic gradiometry survey was carried out using an auto logging Geoscan FM18 Magnetic gradiometer at a sampling interval of 1 m by 1 m (ie 900 measurements per 30 m grid). As the magnetic gradients on this site are extremely small, several precautions were taken to minimise magnetic noise.

As a result of the 1999 campaign it now clear that the fort was defended by two ditches not only in the south, but also in the west and almost certainly in the north. A parallel high resistance feature inside the inner ditch has to be identified as the remains of the rampart; whether the lowest layers of the rampart survive structurally intact or whether we are dealing merely with a higher stone content in disturbed deposits can only be tested with the spade. In either case it seems that the core of the rampart consisted of gravel extracted from the ditches presumably with a turf or timber revetment. The northern ditch of the fort, probably the inner of two ditches, is now also clearly visible. A smaller ditch, parallel and c 9 m south is likely to have run along the via sagularis; whether this road has to be sought north or south of this ditch depends on the width of the rampart; the width of ramparts varied between 3 and 9 m (Jones 1975, 18; 69-71). The resistivity survey suggests that we are dealing with a very narrow rampart of 3-4 m width, similar to the contemporary fort on Hod Hill.

A linear low resistance feature between the 'Castle Mound' and the northern fort defences is probably a drainage ditch. Presumably it has the same or a similar function as the ditch in the southern half of the fort, explored in 1999 (trench 22). The new discoveries of the 1999 survey include also a large rectangular stone building (*c* 16m x 36 m) *c* 20 m south of the road leading past the 'Castle Mound.' It belongs undoubtedly to the Roman civilian period. Its groundplan, obscured by two post- medieval drainage ditches, suggests that it is a temple within a small sacred precinct. It is not clear whether it is a long temple of classical type or a porticus in front of a smaller shrine of Romano-Celtic or classical type (see Lewis 1966, 184 figs. 68-69; Brewer 1993, 45). The survey is also beginning to reveal the architecture of the 'Castle Mound:' the actual bath- house appears to fill the northern part of a large enclosure of *c* 60 m

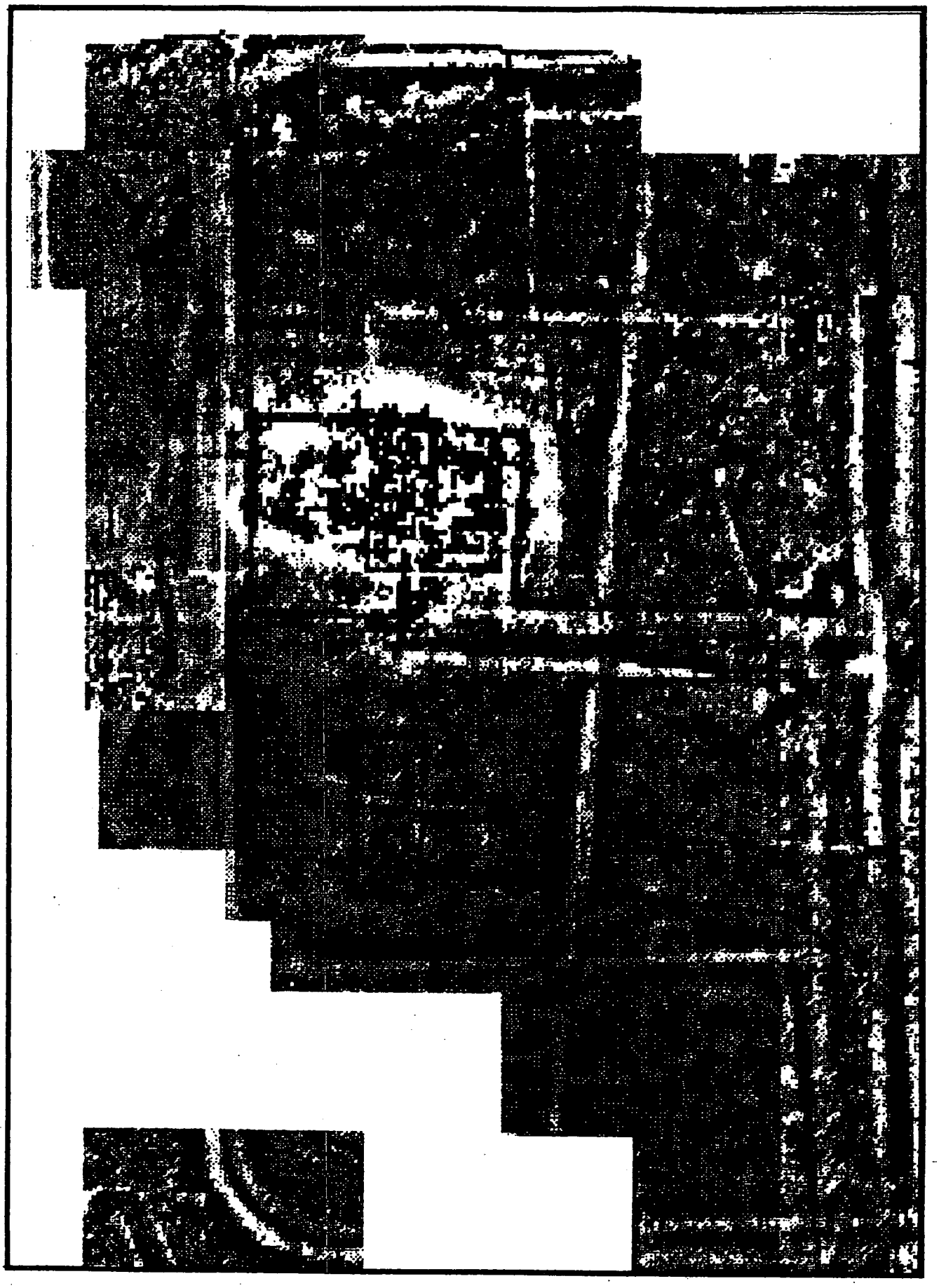

Fig 14. Alchester Roman fort: resistivity survey 1998-1999 by Patrick Erwin..

x 45 m. The lower resistance in the southwest may indicate that the palaestra, a courtyard for physical exercises, was located here. The East Baths at Cimiez in the Maritime Alps may have a similar groundplan (Yeguel 1992, 73 fig. 79).

A ditch with north-south alignment is running in a straight line through the surveyed area. It is a distinctive low resistance feature. Another ditch with west-east alignment is cutting through the temple. It is characterised by high resistance; it may have been filled with stones or gravel. 15 m north and parallel to it another linear feature is visible also running through the temple. Sections of this ditch have been excavated in 1999 (trench 20); the material recovered from the fill point to a post-medieval date of this ditch. The material should allow usto date the feature more closely; we think it is over 100 years old. Both parallel ditches intersect with the above-mentioned north- south ditch at a right angle at two points southeastof the 'Castle Mound.' A third parallel linear feature is visible north of the 'Castle Mound.' Thus almost certainlythe entire drainage ditch system is post-medieval.

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Acknowledgements

We would particularly like to thank Adrian Allsop, Tim Bryars, Helen Hatcher, Mr and Mrs Miller and Chris Taylor.

Resistivity survey at Alchester 1998-1999 by Patrick Erwin.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Abingdon, 75 Ock Street (SU 4934 9704)
Graham Hull

Excavation of three trenches followed previous evaluation which revealed the presence of well preserved Medieval deposits on this street frontage plot. The earliest finds comprised a few residual struck flints of Mesolithic and later prehistoric date and a ditch of Roman date. The main activity on the site commenced in the 11-12th century. The street frontage was occupied by two buildings and the rear areas used for pit digging, etc. Activity continued into the 13th and 14th century and an archaeomagnetic date on a hearth within one of the buildings of AD 1210-1270 (95% confidence level) points to its continued use/reuse. Subsequent activity in the 15th-16th centuries was sporadic. In the 13th-14th centuries, the rear of the plot was occupied by several very large pits and it is considered that this may be the site of a tannery. No scientific studies were able to confirm this theory but the interim report on the faunal remains has highlighted that the assemblage is not typically of domestic origin and probably includes the remains of industrial activity. The excavation has shown that occupation of this part of the Ock Street frontage of Abingdon took place earlier than that suggested by Munby et al (1975, map 2).

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Aylesbury-Chalgrove gas pipeline (Oxfordshire section, see also entry under Buckinghamshire)
(SP 6605 0560-SU 6500 9645)
Kate Taylor

Following various phases of preliminary desktop, non-invasive and invasive work carried out by Network Archaeology, this 9.5 km section of the pipeline revealed four sites in addition to isolated features and finds from elsewhere along the easement. The four sites were stripped of topsoil and subsoil under archaeological supervision and a plan made of the deposits. Excavation was largely confined to deposits on or close to the centre line of the pipe trench.

Site 30 (SP 6645 0465)
This revealed two late Iron Age/Roman gullies and a few Mesolithic flints, but the main features and finds from the site were of mid-Saxon date (provisionally 6th century AD). The latter comprised two sunken floored buildings, four ditches and a few pits and postholes.

Site 32 (SP6635 0050)
The main phase of activity on this site is of Bronze Age/Iron Age date and comprises pits/scoops, a midden(?) and curvilinear gullies. Five later Roman ditches were also found.

Site 34 (SU6545 9770)
Two main phases of activity were represented. The earlier phase comprised linear and curvilinear ditches, gullies, pits and scoops of Middle Iron Age date. Following a long period of abandonment, the site was reused in late Roman times when additional pits and ditches were dug.

Site 35 (SP6650 0125)
This site mostly comprised pits and scoops, with a gully and a few postholes of later Bronze Age date.

Benson, St. Helen's Avenue (SU 6159 9155)
Joanna Pine

Evaluation in two stages comprising 13 trenches revealed deposits of Prehistoric and Saxon date. Subsequent excavation revealed pits and postholes of early Neolithic date, pits and postholes and a possible roundhouse of later

Bronze Age date, a Roman ditch and three sunken floored buildings and a small enclosure of early/middle Saxon date.

Bicester, Proctor's Yard (SP5837 2227)
Graham Hull

Three evaluation trenches revealed pits, postholes and gullies of late Saxon and Medieval date (9th/10th century through to the 13th-15th century). A subsequent excavation, recently completed, revealed additional deposits of a similar period.

Cassington, The Chequers, Church Lane (SP 4539 1066)
Steve Ford

Five evaluation trenches located pits postholes, scoops and a possible quarry pit of Medieval date (12th-15th century).

Didcot, Hagbourne Hill Farm (SU 49700 8705)
Joanna Pine

Five evaluation trenches were dug in advance of a new farm building. Nine subsoil features comprising pits, postholes and a gully were revealed of early Iron Age date.

Drayton, Manor Farm (SP 4772 9420)
Graham Hull

Ten evaluation trenches revealed linear features and postholes of mid-Saxon (6th-8th century) and Medieval date (12th-14th century).

Standlake, The Orchard, Brighthampton
(SP 3845 0355)
Graham Hull

Six evaluation trenches were dug which revealed Medieval deposits of 11th-14th century date. One or more buildings with limestone foundations was present close to the street frontage with pits and gullies to the rear.

Wendlebury, Land adjacent to St. Giles Church, Church Lane (SP 5588 1966)
Joanna Pine

Evaluation comprising six trenches revealed a probable Iron Age pit, and Medieval features of 11th-13th century date consisting of walls/foundations, metalled surfaces and pits and postholes.

Sonning Common, Ashford Avenue (SU 7025 8001)
Joanna Pine

Eight evaluation trenches located in an area close to the finding of a Roman coin hoard revealed no archaeological deposits and only a few prehistoric struck flints. A metal detector survey of part of the site did not recover any material pre-dating late post-Medieval times.

Bloxham, Land to the rear of St Mary's Church
(SP 4319 3566)
Graham Hull

Seven evaluation trenches were dug, one of which was located across a slight linear depression thought to be trackway. The presence of a trackway was not convincingly demonstrated in the evaluation and no other finds or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

Radley, Gooseacre/Badgers Copse (SU 5223 9868)
Graham Hull

Eight evaluation trenches were dug. A single undated pit/posthole containing burnt flint was the only find on the site.

Benson, Watlington Road (SU6205 9230)
John Saunders

Ten evaluation trenches were dug. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

Benson, Little Chef, Oxford Road (SU61159195)
Graham Hull

Five evaluation trenches were dug. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

Burford, Land adjacent to The Vicarage, Church Lane

(SP 2529 1227)
Kate Taylor

A watching brief located pits of late post-Medieval date and an undated limestone wall. Two sherds, one Saxon, one Medieval, were recovered as residual finds.

Childrey, Church Row (SU3616 8770)
Alan Ford

A watching brief was carried out during the groundworks for two new houses. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

Oxford, Fry's Hill Gas Trench, Guelder Road, Blackbird Leys (SP5504 0225)
Steve Ford

A 55 m long trench was dug to prevent the build up of methane. The trench lay in an area of intense Roman activity with settlement and industrial activity including pottery manufacture to the south detailed from excavation results, and further activity including probable pottery kilns to the north known from evaluation results. Deposits in the trench comprised pits, postholes, gullies, a quarry pit and a midden. Despite prolific quantities of pottery, no kiln structures were revealed. Activity commenced in the 2nd century AD and continued into the 3rd and 4th century.

Oxford, Hollybush Lodge, Hollybush Row (SP 5065 0617)
Joanna Pine

Three evaluation trenches were dug in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site. The site lies on the western edge of the Medieval suburb of St Thomas's. An illustration of 1821 shows a substantial timber-framed house of Wealden type on the site probably dating to 1495. Cartographic sources indicate other buildings on the site in the 16th and 17th century. A complex of deposits were revealed commencing in the 13th-14th century comprising the limestone walls/foundations of buildings and rubbish pits.

Oxford, 5-7 Market Street (SP 5135 0628)
Graham Hull

An extension to Boots on Cornmarket Street required the redevelopment of properties on Market Street. Partial excavation of the site took place and revealed various pits, walls, floors and cellars of 17th-18th century date. In order to join the extension to the existing store, a large breach had to be made through a limestone block wall. The wall was not well dated but may be part of Roebuck Hall (an academic institution of Oxford University) and may be of later Medieval date. The wall was recorded prior to the breach and a watching brief was maintain during the breach.

Oxford, Lion Brewery, St. Thomas's Street
(SP 5084 0610)
Graham Hull

Five evaluation trenches were dug on two plots either side of St Thomas's Street. Deeply stratified deposits of Medieval date (11th century onwards) were revealed on the street frontages along with a limestone revetment for a watercourse. A trench located towards the rear (south) of the site located a single ditch backfilled in early post-Medieval times that may represent an eastward extension of Oseney Lane.

Oxford, Former Unipart Radiator Works, Frenchay Road (SP 5020 0840)
Steve Ford and Graham Hull

33 evaluation trenches were dug in two phases on this former factory site located on the west side of the Oxford canal. All of the trenches revealed deep alluvium overlying gravel. No archaeological finds or deposits were found. In a few areas where deeper undulations in the gravel were observed, environmental samples from an organic mud indicated reed swamp conditions. Subsequently, during groundworks adjacent to the drawbridge across the canal, a single ditch was exposed and recorded. No datable finds were recovered but the ditch cut the alluvium and is likely to be of relatively late date (post-Medieval).

Oxford, Turl Street and Oriel Square
(SP 5144 0622 and SP 5158 0611)
Alan Ford and John Saunders

Watching briefs were carried out during the erection of street furniture and traffic barriers. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

Sutton Courtenay, Lady Place (SU 5015 9345)
Kate Taylor

A watching brief, following earlier evaluation, located a gully and pits. Only one pit was dated to the late Saxon/Early Medieval period. Unstratified pottery of Saxon and Medieval date was also recovered.

Wallingford, Land to the rear of Market Place
(SU 60690 89408)
Graham Hull

A watching brief was carried out during the digging of two soakaways, ground reduction for a car park and the rebuilding of a wall. Two, possibly three, pits were observed in one soakaway pit and were probably the source of three sherds of Medieval and early post-Medieval pottery (11th-13th century and 15th-1th century) found in the excavated spoil.

Wallingford, Land to the rear of 4 St. Martin's Street
(SU6070 8943)
Graham Hull

A watching brief was carried out during the digging of a drain run. A buried soil or pit fill produced a single sherd of Medieval pottery.

Oxfordshire

Wallingford, The Masonic Centre, Goldsmiths Lane
(SU6054 8944)
Graham Hull

A watching brief was carried out during the digging of an underpinning trench. The trench was not dug to the natural gravel and the strata revealed were made ground/garden soil containing 18th C or later pottery.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project: excavations at Alfred's Castle 1999.
Gary Lock and Chris Gosden.

Introduction

Alfred's Castle is a small earthwork enclosure of approximately hexagonal shape with an interior area of 1.2 ha (*c* 2.75 acres). It has been a Scheduled Ancient Monument since 1958 (English Heritage SM 28163, originally Berkshire No. 89, now Oxfordshire SAM 203) owned by the National Trust and located on their Ashdown Estate at Ashbury, Oxfordshire (SU 2773 8223). Excavations took place for four weeks in July 1999 (under SMC HSD9/2/3951 and 3951 pt2) and were the sixth season of fieldwork within the Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project. This follows two seasons at White Horse Hill (Lock and Gosden, 1997a; Cromarty *et al*, in press), two at Segsbury Camp (Lock and Gosden, 1997b; 1998) and the first season at Alfred's Castle in 1998 which includes a detailed background to the site (Gosden and Lock, 1999) [1].

As previously, the fieldwork is organised as a compulsory training excavation for students on the Oxford University BA in Archaeology and Anthropology and part-time students on Continuing Education Undergraduate Certificate and Diploma courses. Education remains an important aspect of the project, not just involving the students working on-site but also informing a wider audience. Many site tours are given during the period in the field and numerous talks to local groups throughout the year.

The excavations

Fig 15 shows the trenches for both the 1998 and 1999 seasons which are described in more detail below although it must be noted that analysis of the records and material is still at a very early stage and the final season of fieldwork will take place in summer 2000. Within Alfred's Castle Trench 2 was located a Romano-British building, the excavation of which was started in 1998 and completed in 1999. Trench 5 was started in 1999 and is to be completed in 2000. Trenches 1 and 4 are positioned to investigate the south-western and north-eastern entrances respectively, the former being finished in 1999 and the latter to continue into the third season. Trenches 3, 6 and 8 were all positioned to investigate the ploughed-out large enclosure which partly shows as a crop mark in the field to the north of the small enclosure (Cotton, 1960). Trenches 3a and 3b were completed in 1998 and failed to locate the large enclosure ditch. Trenches 6 and 8 were both completed in 1999 and succeeded in identifying the ditched enclosure. Further to the north, and not shown on Fig 15, Trench 7 investigated a possible linear ditch landscape feature which was evident from aerial photographic interpretation.

Trench 2

One of the major aims of the excavation as a whole was to gain some insight into the nature of the interior occupation at Alfred's Castle. Trench 2 was placed near the centre of the site, measuring 10 m by 10m and sited across one of the most prominent mounds in this part of the site to discover its nature. As soon as the top soil was stripped a major building was revealed, which soon proved to be Roman in date, but it also had underlying prehistoric layers, dating to the late Bronze or Early Iron Ages. The bulk of the 1998 season was spent excavating the Roman layers, although we had just started tackling some of the earlier features by the end (Gosden and Lock 1999). The 1999 season was spent almost exclusively on investigating the nature of the prehistoric features and it is these we report on here. The one Romano-British feature that remained was in room 4 and was the basal layers of a long trench-like feature, with Romano-British finds including roof tile, mortarium and some fine pottery. The purpose of this feature remains a mystery.

The prehistoric features were dug into the chalk and were either found beneath prehistoric layers to the north-west of the building or beneath Romano-British walls and layers in the rest of the site. The lack of prehistoric layers beneath the Romano- British building shows that these had been stripped off prior to its construction, with some Romano-British layers put down to provide a level surface on which the building was placed. The excavation strategy we employed left the Romano-British walls in place, so as to preserve the ground plan of the building intact. There were some fifteen pits or large postholes dating to the early Iron Age and these were found in a band across the site from the north-west corner through the centre of the site (Fig 16). Three prehistoric pits were excavated in the western area outside the building during 1998 and are mentioned for completeness here. One of these was found in the corner between wall 2003 and the baulk and contained the skeleton of a sheep. Two others were deeper and cut well into the bedrock to a depth of roughly a metre. These were slightly bee-hived in shape, being wider at the base than the top, rather different in form to the straight-sided Iron Age pits found at Segsbury (Lock and Gosden 1997, 1998). The lower layers of these pits contained carbonised material, large amounts of well-preserved pottery and metal finds including what may be a swan's neck pin, thus providing the possibility of fine dating and making links between the pottery types and the metal finds. Another twelve pits or postholes were excavated in 1999, together with a curvilinear feature (2206), which is either a section of a roundhouse gully, otherwise destroyed, or a drain connected with the Romano-British building. This is the only possible

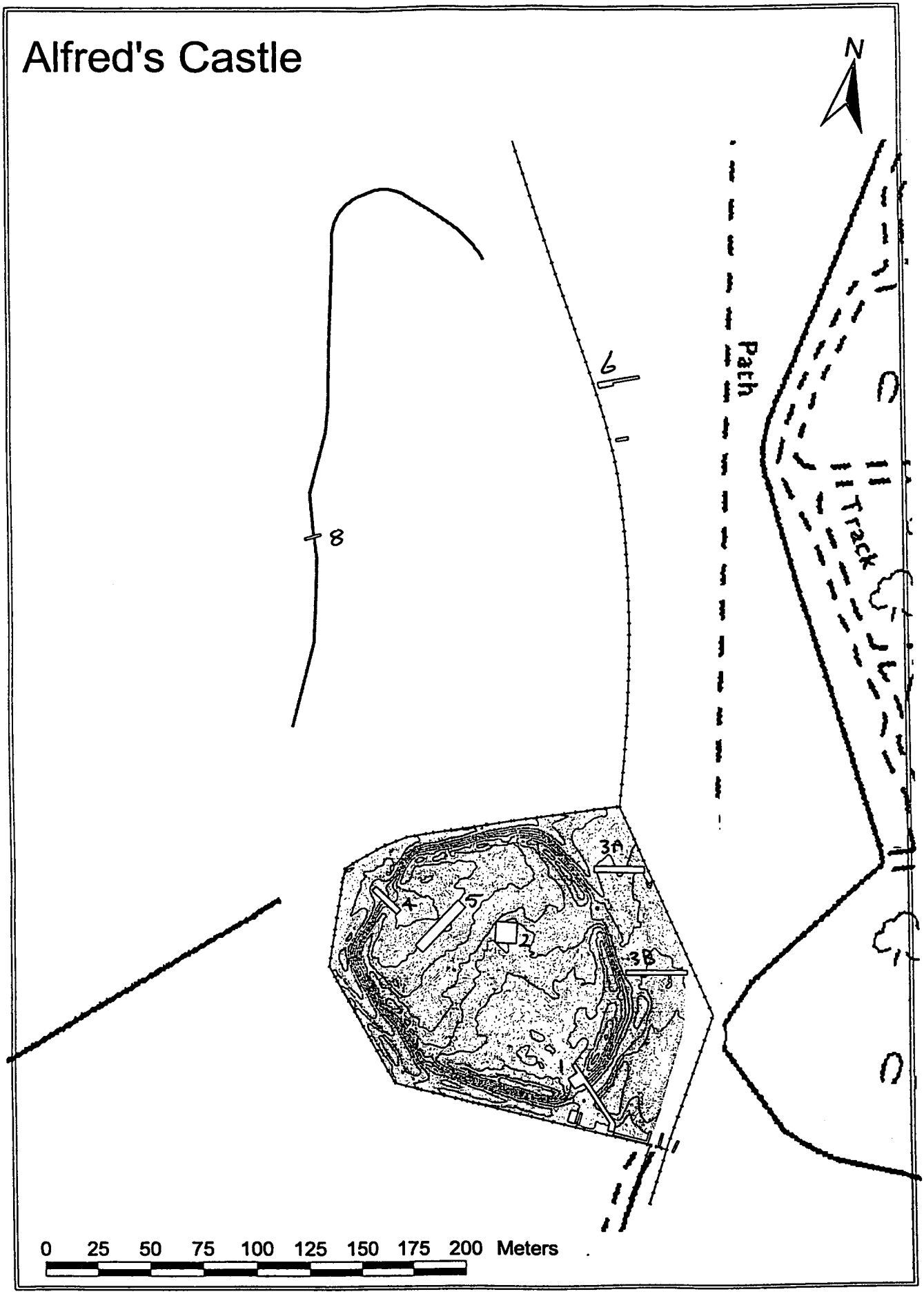

Fig 15. Alfred's Castle and the cropmark showing the extent of the large enclosure to the north. The 1998/99 trenches are indicated, except for Trench 7 which is located further north on a linear landscape feature.

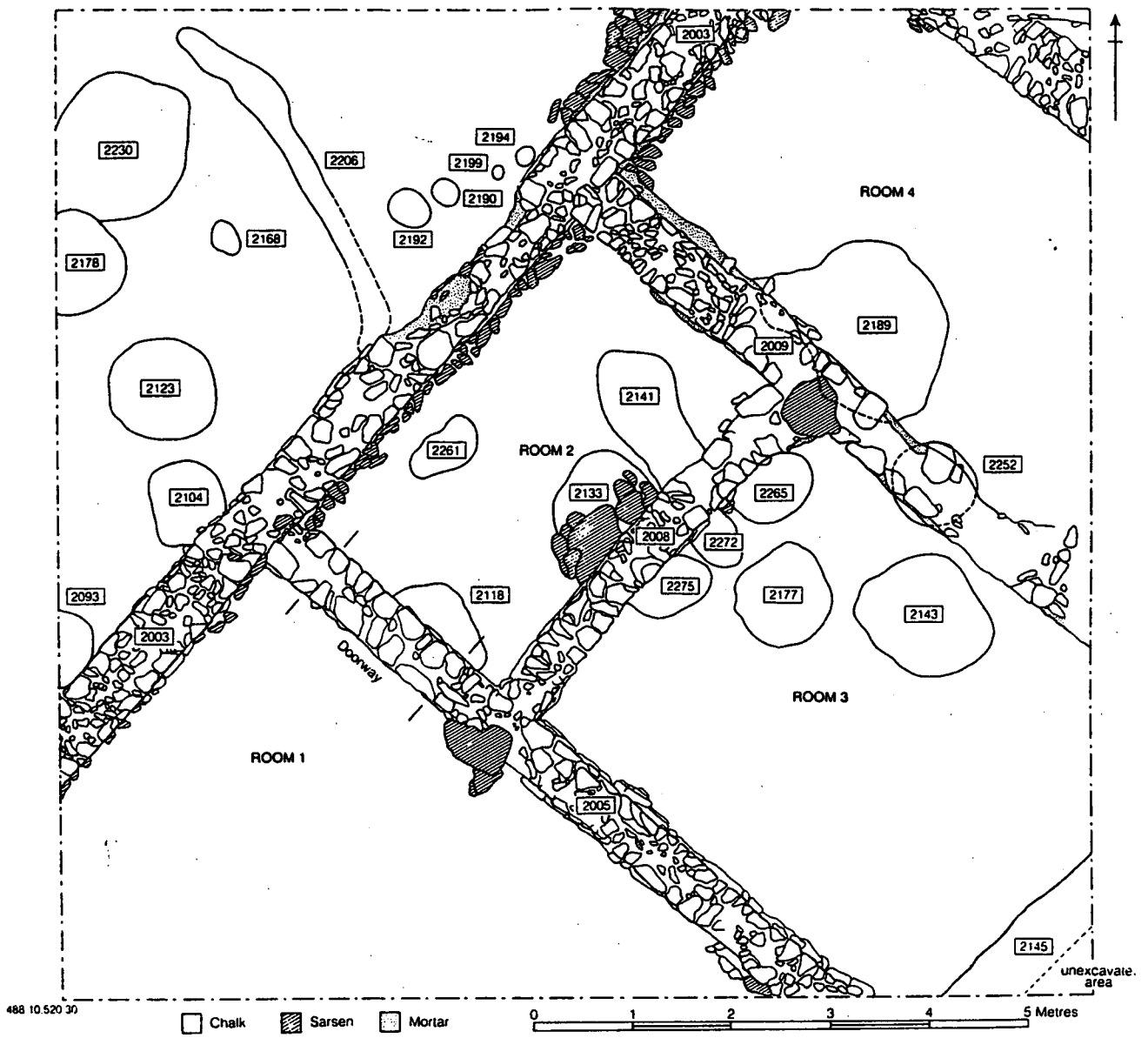

Fig 16. Detailed plan of Trench 2 showing the Romano-British building overlying Iron Age pits.

building structure of Iron Age date in Trench 2. Unfortunately, a lack of finds from this feature makes it impossible to date. In all, the pits and postholes are part of an overall habitation in the interior of the site and it is likely that house structures did originally exist in closely adjacent areas (see Trench 5 below).

Not all the excavated features can be reported on here, given limitations of space and the preliminary stage of analysis, but it should be emphasised that the pit assemblages are exceptionally rich in artefacts and other finds. Working across the site from the north-west to the centre, pit 2178 contained one ofthe richest assemblages. This was a bee-hive shaped pit, roughly 0.84 m deep, oval in plan and containing three main fills, which had a high ash content and which, on preliminary inspection, appear to have large amounts of carbonised seeds. There was a large number of finds made in the pit, including bronze objects, spindle whorls and loom weights of clay, bone tools and a considerable amount of bone, some of which was burnt, a portion of which was human. In association with the burnt human bone were two whole pots (plus a large number of sherds) and this appears to be a placed deposit of some kind in association with a partial human burial. Pit 2178 is one of three pits in this part of the site with rich assemblages from ashy deposits in bee-hive shaped pits; the other two pits (2104, 2123) were excavated in 1998. Pit 2230 was cut by pit 2178 and thus pre-dates it: this pit contained very few finds, was straight-sided and of generally unknown purpose. There were a number of smaller features to the west of wall 2003, but these were of unknown type and it is not certain that all of them were made by people.

Beneath the Romano-British layers of room 2 were two small pits (2118, 2261) which contained relatively small numbers of finds of pottery and bone. Context 2141 was a shallow gully with no finds and it is not certain whether this was artificial or natural. Pit 2133 was a deep pit (*c* 1.35 m) with vertical sides and oval in plan, which did not contain large numbers of finds. This pit was directly beneath wall 2008 and had a packing of sarsens in the top, with a levelling layer put over the top before the construction of the wall.

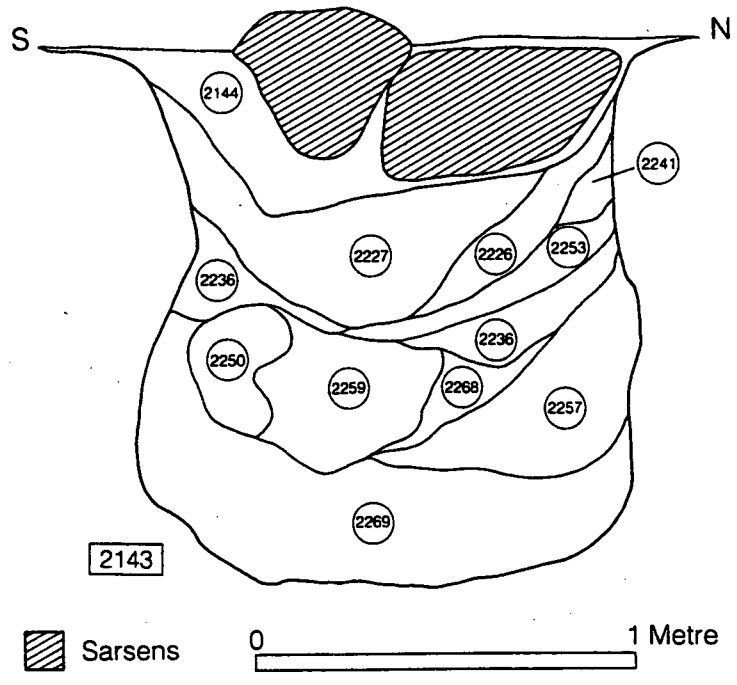

Fig 17. Section of pit 2143 (location shown in Fig 16).

The sarsens show that the Romano-British builders were conscious of the earlier pit and had taken steps to prevent subsidence, which was not entirely successful as there had been some slumping of the wall into the pit. Also beneath the wall, but to the east, were two large post holes or shallow pits with few finds (2265, 2272). Adjacent to these was pit 2275, which again ran under wall 2008 and little of this pit was excavated (the top 0.6 m) as deeper excavation was impossible without removing the wall. To the south-east of this pit 2177 was bee-hived in shape and contained a bronze object, worked bone, loom weights, pottery and animal bone within deposits characterised by large amounts of ash and containing much carbonised grain. There were three niches in the sides of the pit, which appeared to be artificial, but which contained no obvious finds. Adjacent to this was pit 2143, which contained one of the most complex sets of fills (Fig 17), including large sarsens in the top. This pit also produced large numbers of artefacts in ashy deposits, plus also loom weights and worked bone.

Pit 2252 sat directly beneath the remains of wall 2009, only the lowest course of which remained and this was removed to enable the excavation of the underlying pit. It was circular in plan and bee-hive shaped in cross-section and contained one of the most intriguing of all the pit fills. It was filled from top to bottom with large sarsens, plus a weathered chalk deposit. The sides of the pit were unweathered and it looks as though the sarsens were placed in there immediately after the pit went out of use, rather than in the Romano-British period, to prevent the overlying wall subsiding. Many of the sarsens were burnt, although not within the pit, which showed no sign of burning and they may represent some form of placed deposit. The pit contained few artefacts. Context 2189 represents at least three inter-cutting pits, the history of which is difficult to reconstruct as their upper levels were removed through the construction of wall 2009. The largest pit appears to have been clay lined and did not contain many finds and the fill of this pit had been cut by two others, which had then had large sarsens placed on top, possibly to help stabilise the wall. The largest of these had an intact animal skull directly under, as a placed deposit.

Trench 1

Excavations in 1998 established the character of the main enclosure ditch and that the so-called 'entrance outwork' associated with the south-eastern entrance is a natural feature (Gosden and Lock, 1999: 45). In 1999 excavation of the rampart was completed and extended into the entrance area by Trench 1A (Fig 18). The rampart consisted of several rows of sarsen stones towards the front face with compacted chalk rubble between them and to the rear (1002 on Fig 19). The thick deposit of clay-with-flints containing patches of chalk rubble and small sarsen stones, 1107, was resolved as being natural rather than an artificial levelling pre-dating the rampart. The rampart was built directly onto this deposit suggesting that the turf was removed beforehand.

Several pieces of evidence point to the south-eastern entrance not being an original prehistoric entrance but a break through the rampart established during Romano-British times and probably associated with the stone building in the centre of the enclosure. The building does, in fact, seem to be oriented south- east so that this

AC 99
Trench 1
Plan 103 & 110

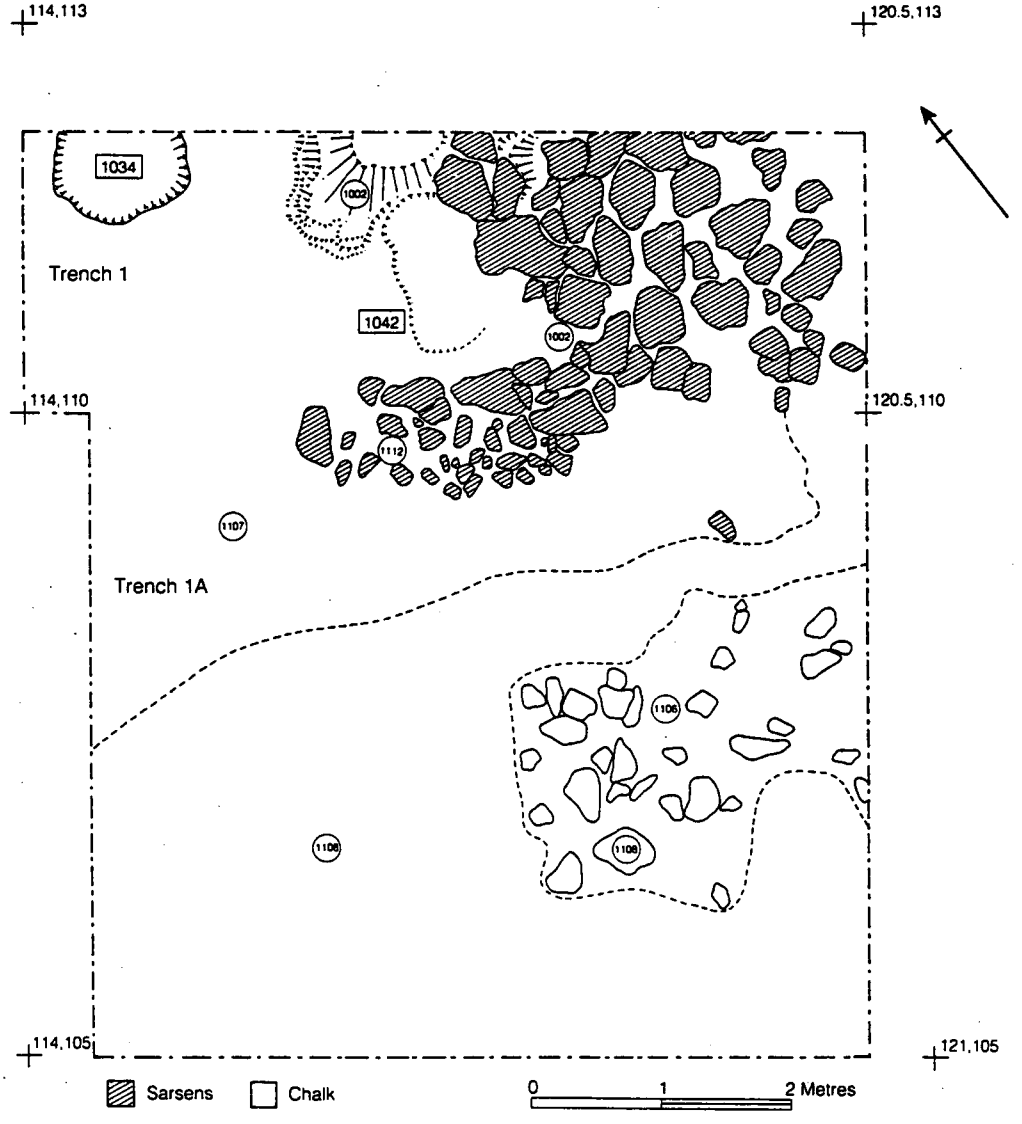

Fig 18. Detailed plan of Trench 1A showing the rampart broken through by the Romano-British entrance in the south-east of the site.

entrance would form the main access to it. Romano-British pottery, hobnails and other artefacts were found in the upper fills of the main ditch in 1998 together with substantial amounts of sarsen stones which appeared to have been pushed into the ditch from the collapsing rampart. Further Romano-British artefacts were found in the fill of features within the southern end of Trench 1A formed after the removal of the rampart material. Turf and topsoil removed from the small test pit (Trench 1B in Fig 20) indicated that the main enclosure ditch was continuous around the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. It also revealed a roughly laid surface of sarsen stones suggesting that when the ditch was filled its surface was consolidated to act as an entrance to the building. Similar Romano-British breaks through the prehistoric rampart at Uffington Castle have been suggested (Cromarty, *et al* in press), and remain a possibility at Segsbury Camp (Lock and Gosden, 1998).

Towards the southern end of Trench 1 in 1998 a flat bottomed ditch was encountered, thought at the time possibly to be a pre-enclosure linear ditch. Trenches 1C through 1G were cut this year to determine its course and relationship to the enclosure ditch, Fig 20. The removal of turf and topsoil from Trench 1D established that the enclosure ditch cut the linear without further excavation being necessary. It also showed that the last 2 mor so of the linear ditch had been 'plugged' with compacted clean freshly dug chalk rubble after some initial silting. This appears to have been an intentional act to create a continuous chalk face to the outer edge of the main ditch and hide its junction with the earlier ditch.

Trench 1E revealed a section and plan of the linear ditchalmost identical to the 1998 excavation although Trench 1F, 5 mto the east, suggests some kind of terminus. This is further complicated by Trench 1G containing no evidence of the ditch at all. This will be explored further in

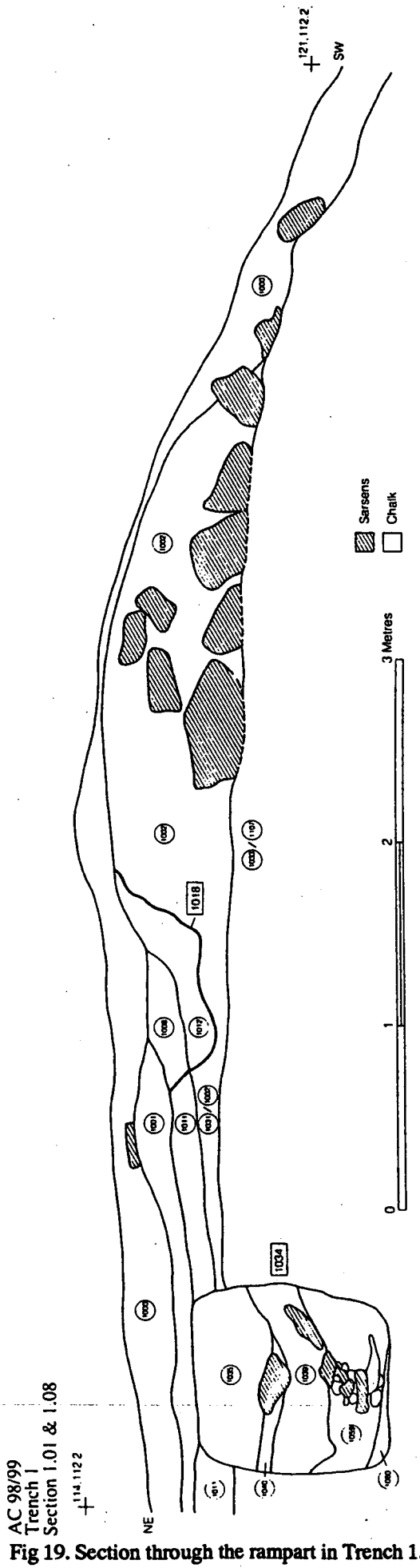

Fig 19. Section through the rampart in Trench 1.

the 2000 season, specifically the possibility of there being a causeway between Trenches 1E and 1F, and the direction of the ditch to the east of the latter trench.

Trench 4

This trench measured 20 m by 2.5 metres and was located to investigate the character of the north-western break through the rampart. Excavation of this trench was not completed and will continue in 2000 so only a brief discussion of its main features will follow here.

It was established that the main enclosure ditch did not continue across the break in the rampart suggesting that this was an original prehistoric entrance, an interpretation supported by the rampart terminating in a rounded end. One curious feature is that the rampart was quite different in structure to that excavated in Trench 1. Here the sarsen rampart, with a clearly defined front and rear face, was on the inside with a compacted chalk bank as a later addition on its outer side. Equi-spaced postholes ran along the rear face of the rampart. At the front of the rampart, towards the terminal end and the entrance, a laid cobble surface had a quantity of animal bone and a human jaw bone lying on it.

Ramparts and their construction and proving to be an area of great interest for the project as a whole. The relatively simple structure found here which incorporates a large number of sarsen stones stands in sharp contrast to the box/dump sequence at Uffington and the complex multi-phase structure at Segsbury. When other excavated examples in the immediate area, Rams Hill and Liddington, are included we have one of the most detailed collections within any small area. The emerging picture is one of difference rather than any regional style or sequence.

Trench 5

This trench measured 30 m by 5 m and was located to investigate the character and preservation of the deposits in an area where the surface topography suggested that the Romano- British building didn't extend into. Excavation of this trench was not completed and will continue in 2000 so only a brief discussion of its main features will follow here.

Across the whole trench was a spread of Iron Age pits similar in morphology and fill to those in Trench 2 described above. Again, a considerable number of clay loom weights and a good collection of early Iron Age pottery together with other artefacts were found within the pits. Three other features of interest are worth mentioning.

At the northern end of the trench an ill-defined area of collapsed sarsen walling suggested one or two rectangular rooms perhaps comprising a building. A considerable amount of animal bone was found within them together with a clay crucible containing copper-alloy material. The area was disturbed and not possible to date although both Iron Age and Romano-British pottery was found there. These could be some form of out-buildings at the rear of the Romano-British building to the east.

AC 99
Trench 1

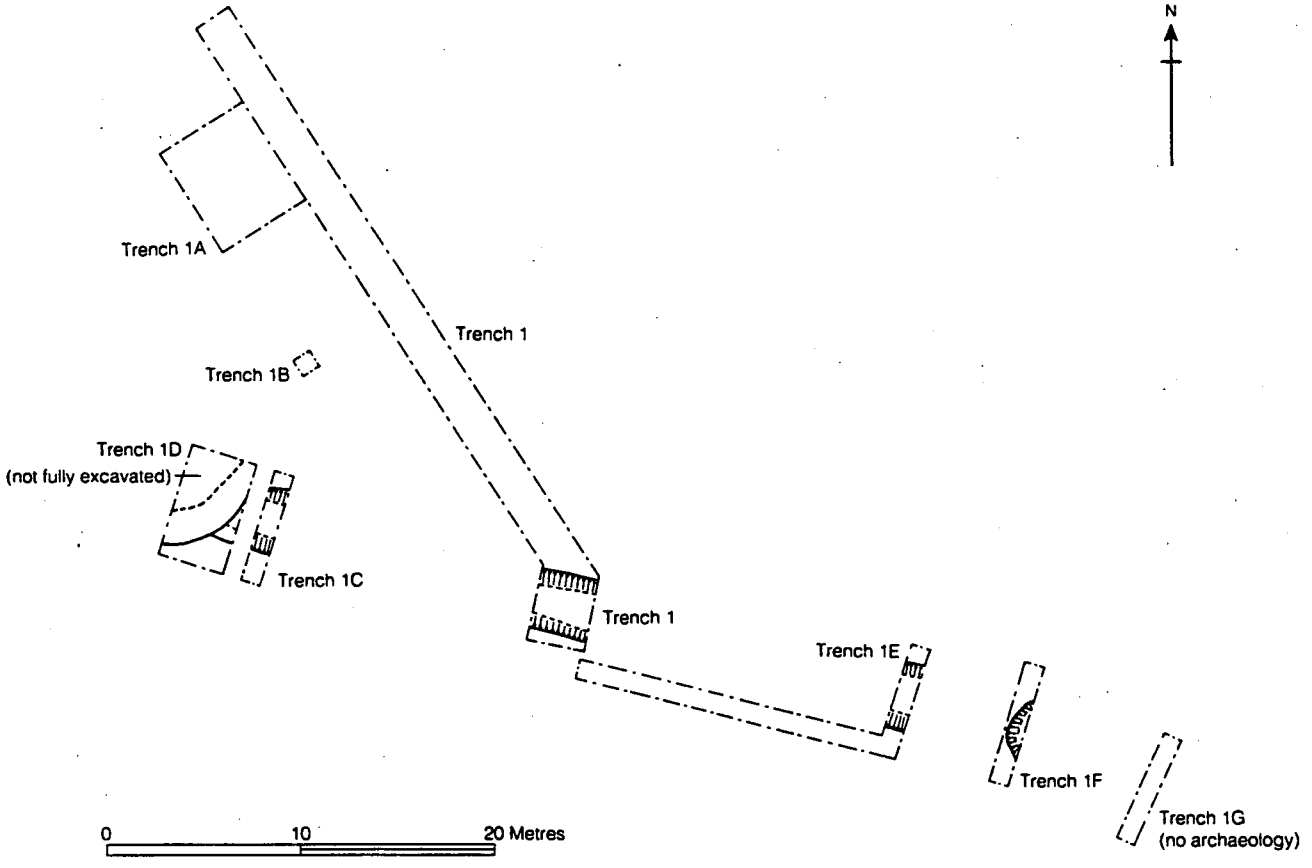

Fig 20. Trenches 1A to 1G showing the flat-bottomed linear ditch.

Towards the south central area of Trench 5, what was originally thought to be a pit was excavated to a depth of c 1.5 m. It displayed an extensive weathering cone at its lip and at about 1 m depth its sides were vertical and its fill showed a horizontal stratigraphy. Due to safety considerations it was decided to continue the excavation of this feature in 2000 when appropriate precautions could be taken. There is a possibility that this could be a deep feature, perhaps a well or shaft as suggested for the very similar feature only partially excavated within nearby Liddington Castle hillfort (Hirst and Rahtz, 1996: Fig 15.). Such deep shafts or wells are unusual in a British Iron Age context although a remarkable example at Belle Tout in Sussex (Bradley, 1974) was shown by a cliff fall to be over 40 m deep.

At the southern end of Trench 5 part of the circuit of a double stake-wall round-house was excavated. It was *c* 10 m in diameter and the wall line was cut by at least one later pit.

All three of these areas will be explored further in 2000.

Trenches 6 and 8

These were positioned to investigate the ditch of the large enclosure, Trench 8, its western extent and the two Trench 6s its eastern edge. Both showed a first phase large flat-bottomed ditch which was filled rapidly, perhaps intentionally, and then re-cut with a smaller V-shaped ditch at a later date (Fig 21 and 22). The smaller dimensions of the eastern ditch may be due to differential erosion on the east-west slope of the land. Dating evidence was sparse from both trenches although 6304 contained possible late Iron Age sherds.

Trench 7

Aerial photographic interpretation and mapping for this area of the Berkshire Downs has just been completed by English Heritage as part of its National Mapping Programme. The results show an extensive system of linear ditches to the north and west of Alfred's Castle dividing the landscape in quite a different way to the extensive co-axial field systems immediately to the east around Weathercock Hill. Trench 7 was located across a linear feature which seemed at odds with the general pattern and confirmed that it was a natural fissure in the chalk bedrock. Other linears which look more convincing within the overall landscape structure will be sectioned in 2000.

Discussion

The overall sequence of the site is becoming clearer. Pre-dating the enclosure is a flat-bottomed linear ditch which will be explored further for dating and direction. Alfred's Castle itself was probably constructed in the early Iron Age, perhaps the late Bronze Age, although there has been no very early transitional Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery of All Cannings Cross type found. This adds to the locational and morphological differences with the Ridgeway hillforts such as Liddington, Uffington and Rams

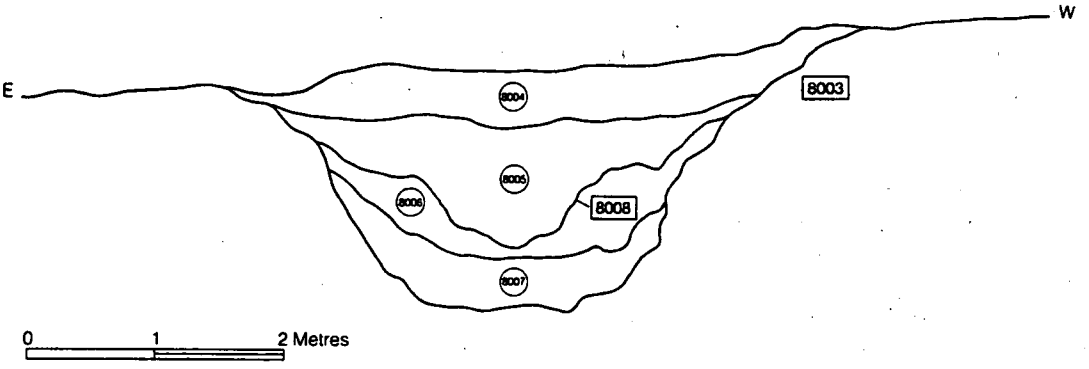

Fig 21. Section through the ditch on the western side of the large enclosure showing re-cut 8008.

Hill. The focus shifted to the north with the building of the large enclosure, possibly in the late Iron Age. The purpose of this enclosure is as yet unknown although it is hoped to carry out exploratory excavation within its interior in 2000. In the late 1st or early 2nd century AD the substantial stone building was erected within the small enclosure facing a newly created entrance through the earlier ramparts to the south-east. This building was destroyed in the late 3rd century and there is no evidence for further occupation or activity at the site.

The early Iron Age features and finds indicate that this was a site of considerable richness in terms of artefacts, many of which entered the pits as placed deposits. We anticipate that the analysis of the pit fills will provide a number of important pieces of information. Firstly, the large number of burnt deposits seem likely to produce large assemblages of carbonised grain and other plant materials, which will give us considerable insights into the local environment and arable economy of the area. This will be complemented by the substantial bone assemblages. The large number of artefacts, including well-preserved pottery assemblages, including whole pots, plus worked bone and metal will provide us with unusual insights into the important, but little known, period of the late Bronze and early Iron Ages. One peculiarity of this site (found in both trenches 2 and 5) is the large number of clay spindle whorls and loom weights. The number of these, plus the absence of any prehistoric field systems in the immediate vicinity of Alfred's Castle and the existence of linears following the contours of the land around the site leads us to wonder whether there might not have been some concentration on sheep herding and wool-processing on the site. This could indicate quite specialised uses of different sites and landscapes across the Berkshire Downs. Such speculations will be investigated further in our final field season, when we will attempt to excavate some of these linears features and establish their date.

The proximity of the site to the late Bronze Age occupation at Weathercock Hill (Bowden, *et al* 1993) and the rich late Bronze Age hoard, pits and house structures on Tower Hill (Cromarty *et al* in press) mean that the site might be part of a cluster of occupation and activity of this date, as well as overlapping in time with Liddington (Hirst and Rahtz 1996) to the west and Uffington to the east. We do not know exact chronological relationships of all these sites at present and this must await further analysis. We have two initial impressions, which again need investigating further, firstly that there could be a degree of chronological overlap between these sites and secondly that the range and richness of the finds from Alfred's Castle distinguishes it from the rest. This is especially true of Weathercock Hill and Tower Hill, where, with the obvious exception of the bronze hoard, there were few finds of any kind. In summary, all the indications are that Alfred's Castle was a site of considerable importance in both the early Iron Age and Romano-British periods and also to us as contemporary archaeologists trying to elucidate the history of the Berkshire Downs.

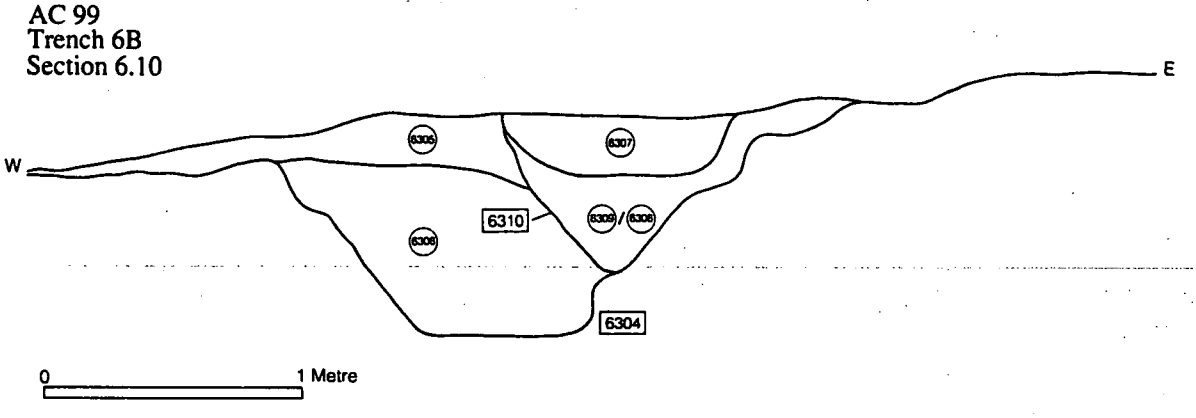

Fig 22. Section through the ditch on the eastern side of the large enclosure showing re-cut 6310.

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to the National Trust and especially Keith Blaxhall for all of the help and support given before, during and after the four weeks of digging. The excavation would not have been possible without the supervisory skills of Sheila Raven, Richard Bailey, Patrick Daly, Tyler Bell, Les Higgins and Tom Evans on site, as well as the many students and volunteers who worked with such enthusiasm and good will. Special thanks are due to Debbie Day for glorious food on a small budget, to Tyler Bell for looking after the computing and to Michael McKeon for the hot showers. The 1999 excavations were funded by the University of Oxford, the Roman Research Trust and the British Academy.

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[1] These interim reports are also available on the Internet at http://units.ox.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/projects/ridgeway/index.htm

PUBLICATIONS

BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL

Bedfordshire Archaeology Volume 23 - see review

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Records of Buckinghamshire Volume 38, 1996 (published 1998)

Records of Buckinghamshire Volume 39, 1997 (published 1999)

Records of Buckinghamshire Volume 40, 1998-2000

MANSHEAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Manshead Journal 38, 1998 - reports of excavations and fieldwalking in and around the Dunstable area; includes a catalogue of the coins found on the Society's excavations

Manshead Journal 39, 1999 - reports of excavations and fieldwalking in and around the Dunstable area; includes a report on the medieval malting kilns found in Dunstable

UPPER NENE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Iron Age & Roman Piddington: The Roman Ceramic & Stone Building Materials 1979-1998 (Fascicule 4) Cynthia Ward BA (Hons) 1999, ISBN 0 9515158 3 7

REVIEWS

Bedfordshire Archaeology, vol 23. Editor Stephen Coleman. 1999, Bedford, pp 168, 73 figs. Available from Peter Woods, 14 Glebe Avenue, Flitwick, Bedford. MK45 1HS.

The new editor has delivered a well produced volume. The one thing a reader unfamiliar with the whole county might want is greater consistency in the presentation of locational maps with all articles, or perhaps the provision of a single location map at the beginning of the volume so all the sites could be placed easily within a countywide topographical context. It is fairly typical of such local journals in providing almost solely a vehicle for the publication of excavation reports on work conducted through the planning process. There are major reports on a Later Neolithic and Bronze Age mortuary complex and Iron Age settlement at Bedford; an Iron Age farmstead with some Roman and limited Early/Middle Saxon activity at Flitwick; and Late Saxon occupation beneath and remains of the castle bailey at Bedford. In addition there are a number of short reports on more minor pieces of fieldwork on sites of Iron Age to medieval date, which though they may not add a great deal to our understanding now, in the long term will be part of an important process of gradual accumulation of knowledge. There is just one substantial article not related to the planning process, a study based on an earthwork and fieldwalking survey of Chellington, examining a semi-dispersed medieval and post medieval settlement landscape in the Ouse valley and suggesting elements originating in the Iron Age. As one might expect from Brown and Taylor, this is a valuable study which poses wider questions of landscape evolution, although the limitations of the plans, some of which also lack scales, make it difficult to use without local knowledge.

The information in the volume is of very limited interest to the wider public, but there must always be a place to make technical information available to a specialist audience. Such journals are above all an important quarry of data for

researchers and, at present, an essential vehicle to ensure that the evidence collected is made available for future use. There is only a single page of notes in this volume recounting minor discoveries, which may reflect a realisation that this information is best handled through the Sites and Monuments Record. However, just as the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England realised that their programme of publication of old style Inventories had been overtaken by events, so too information technology in our new century will surely soon make this sort of journal obsolete. The question is exactly how these types of fieldwork reports are to be made available in the future hopefully in digital form across the internet so that they are far more easily accessible to, and searchable by researchers on a national scale, for that will undoubtedly assist in addressing the following concerns.

The contributors have done a good job with the individual reports. However what is missing from the present volume are papers providing wider synthesis. This should not be blamed either on the editor or the contributors to the journal. Nor is it the result, as some would argue, of developer funded archaeology. If the pre 1990 volumes of Bedfordshire Archaeology are anything like those of some other county journals this has been a long running problem that predates Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Planning & Archaeology (HMSO, 1990). It is a general problem and one which we as a discipline will need to address if the explosion in the quantity of data made possible by PPG 16 is to be turned into a genuinely better understanding of the past. Without such synthesis to justify the resources expended in this data collection, in the long term we may not be able to convince politicians that they should sustain their support for the current policies. Neither are we able, without such analysis, to decide whether the evidence that is being collected is indeed the most appropriate data. After all, every piece of fieldwork is just a sampling exercise, as the reports in the present volume demonstrate, both at the site level and also as regards which sites were and were not chosen for investigation. There is a challenge to meet which has to be addressed by us all. One therefore looks forward with interest to the promised book The Archaeology of the Bedford Region, edited by M Dawson, but in the long run our success should also be reflected in the content of our local journals, however they may be published in the future.

Glenn Foard

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NOTE: References in italics denote illustrations.

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