



SOUTH MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

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

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It should be noted that the reports in this volume refer, in the main, to work carried out in 2008.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to volume 39.

This volume is slightly smaller than recent editions and no doubt reflects the current financial situation in the World. Despite this we have a full colour plan for the first time.

In the *The Archaeologist* (No 72) it is reported that since summer 2007 1 in 6 commercial archaeology posts, or nearly 10% of professional archaeologists, have been lost. Clearly this reflects the downturn in building work which is the life blood of commercial archaeology.

In the *SMA* 38 Editorial I bemoaned the fact that there is no requirement to publish the results of archaeological investigations. Encouragingly this has been highlighted in the latest issue of *The Archaeologist* (No 73).

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* 40. I would like to thank Albion Archaeology for sponsoring the cover.

Copy date for *SMA* 40 is 31st March 2010; please refer to Notes for Contributors.

Barry Horne AIFA
Editor

Front cover –

A hengi-form type monument excavated last year on the Biddenham Loop, west of Bedford.
Sponsored by Albion Archaeology.

CBA South Midlands website: **CBA-SouthMidlands.org.uk**

The cumulative index to volumes 1-38, is available on the website at:

WWW.britarch.ac.uk/smaindex

The index to the CBA Industrial Bulletin Nos 1-16 (1967-71) is available on the website at:

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BEDFORDSHIRE

ALBION ARCHAEOLOGY

Land West of Bedford development area

The year-long investigations within the Land West of Bedford development area (first reported on in *SMA* 2008) were completed in October 2008. The total area subjected to open excavation within the two main land parcels comprised c 60ha on the Biddenham Loop and c 6ha on land west of Kempston. The development has provided an opportunity to study the evolution of a relatively densely occupied multi-period landscape on both river gravels and Bedfordshire clays. Analysis has commenced and it is intended that this project will be published jointly with the results of the adjacent Bedford Western Bypass investigations (*SMA* 2006, 2007 and 2008). The following presents a provisional summary of results of the Land West of Bedford development investigations and is largely based on Interim Report 5 (Albion 2008).

Biddenham Loop (TL 2100 4850)

Mike Luke, Ben Barker, Jo Archer, Alison Bell and Richard Gregson

The Biddenham Loop (local name for the wide meander in the River Great Ouse south of Biddenham village, see Fig 1) has been the scene of human activity from the Palaeolithic through to the present day (Luke 2008). However, the majority of the archaeological evidence, in the form of sub-surface features, spans the period from the late Neolithic to the early-middle Saxon period (Fig 2).

Mesolithic

The earliest evidence for human activity within the development area comprised flint tools. The majority of these were recovered from the ploughsoil during field walking, although some were residual in later features. The location of the flint concentrations suggests that human activity was concentrated along the edge of the river terrace.

Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age

The Biddenham Loop is known to contain at least thirty circular ring ditch monuments, the majority of which have been interpreted as barrows although no mound material survived (Luke 2008, 24). Seven were fully excavated within the development area and all were slightly different. One contained a central inhumation (Fig 3); one a central cremation burial; some contained off-central burials; and others were devoid of any evidence for burials. In the case of the latter it is possible that some burials were placed within an internal mound which has since been removed by ploughing. The ditches defining a number of monuments had been re-cut on a number of occasions, suggesting more than one episode of use. The two largest ring ditches appeared to be the simplest and contained no evidence for burials.

Three ring ditches were sufficiently different in form to the burial monuments to suggest that they perhaps served a non-funerary function and these are referred to as hengi-form monuments. One was situated, presumably deliberately, in the centre of the Loop. Another (Fig 4) featured two entrances one of which was blocked when the ditch was re-dug. The profile of one phase of its ditch suggests that it may have held upright timber panels. At a later date, a barrow was constructed within the monument's interior.

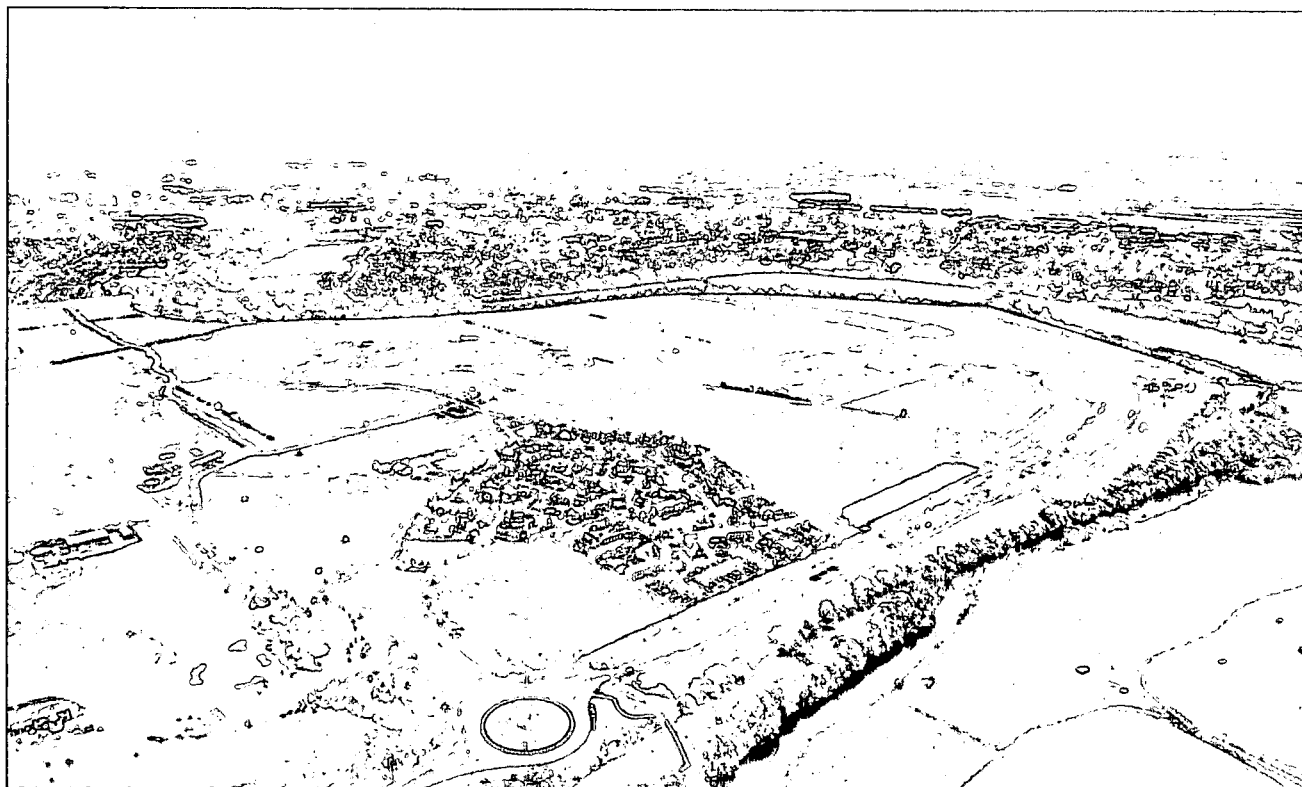
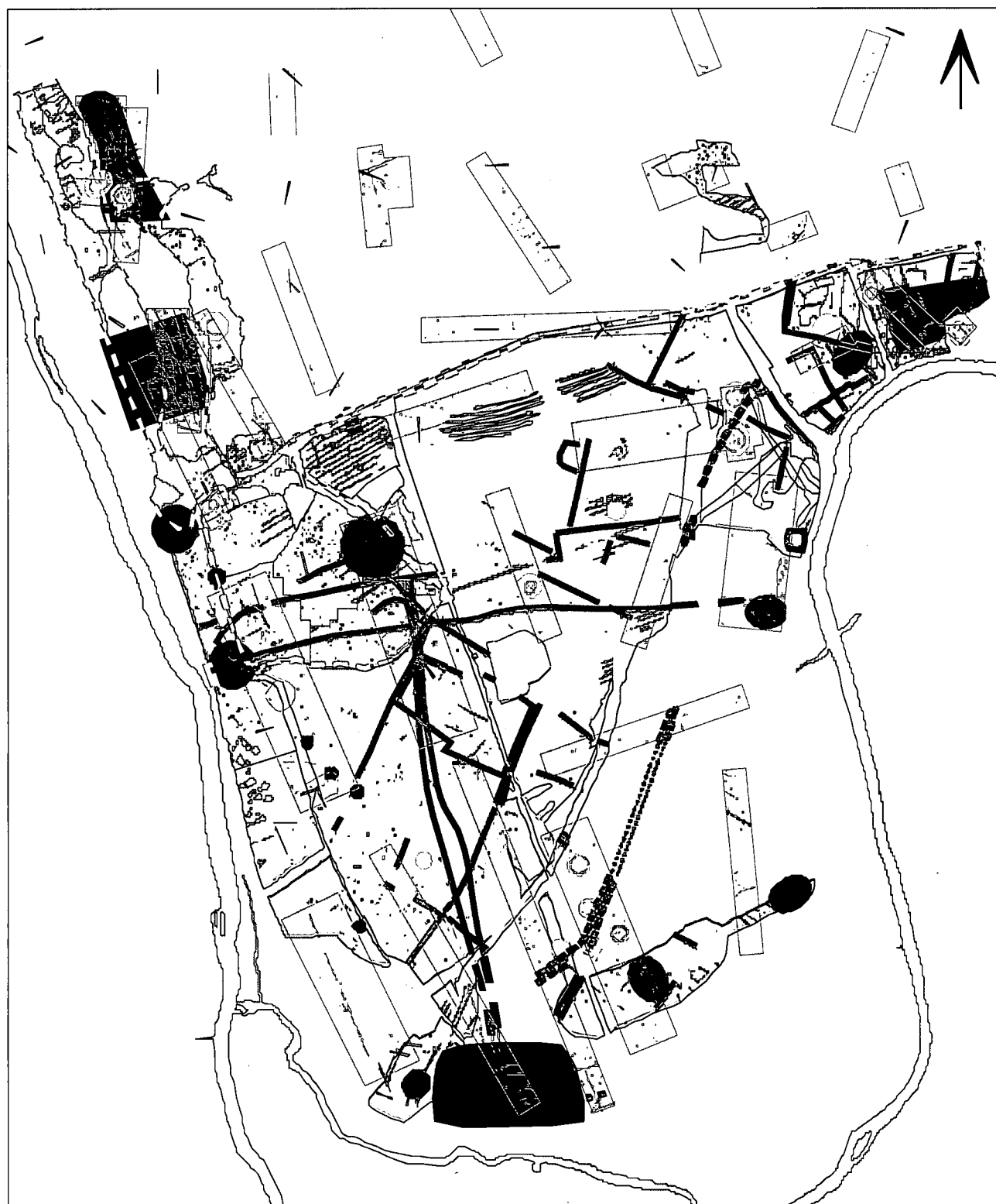


Fig 1. Aerial photograph of the Biddenham Loop.



Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age

Middle Bronze Age

● Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age

● Middle Iron Age

● Late Iron Age/early Romano-British

● Early-middle Saxon

Fig 2. Biddenham Loop: provisional phasing including the adjacent Bedford Western Bypass and Bovis investigations.

Bedfordshire

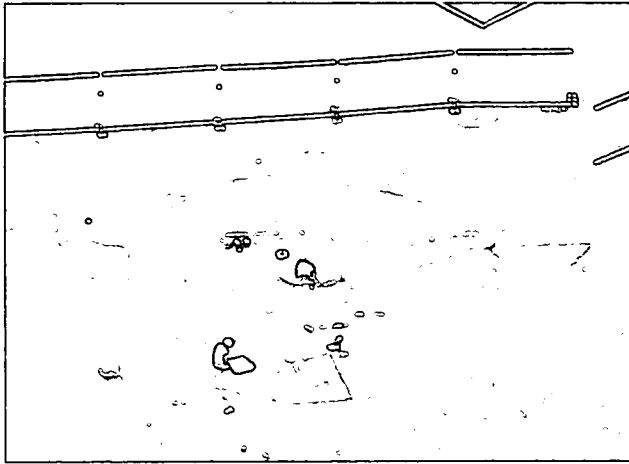


Fig 3. Ring ditch with central grave.

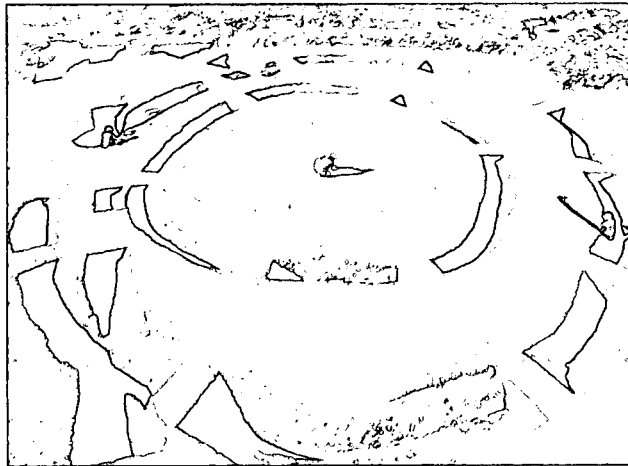


Fig 4. Hengi-form monument with later barrow ditch within its interior.

In addition to burials associated with ring ditches, a number of isolated crouched inhumations were found (Fig 5). These will require radiocarbon dating to determine if they are contemporary with the monuments because they did not contain grave goods.



Fig 5. Isolated crouched inhumation.

A handful of pits had depths and forms which clearly distinguished them from the majority of pits within the Loop; they are comparable to a previously investigated 'shaft', which was truncated by a later ring ditch (Luke 2008, 23). None of the new 'shafts' produced firm dating evidence and will require radiocarbon dating. They were

generally *c* 1.8m deep, dug (almost vertically) through the gravel and into the underlying limestone (Fig 6). A number contained animal bone; one produced red deer and wolf, while another contained an aurochs horn. The nature of these pits and their unusual animal bone content suggest they were dug as part of ritual activities.

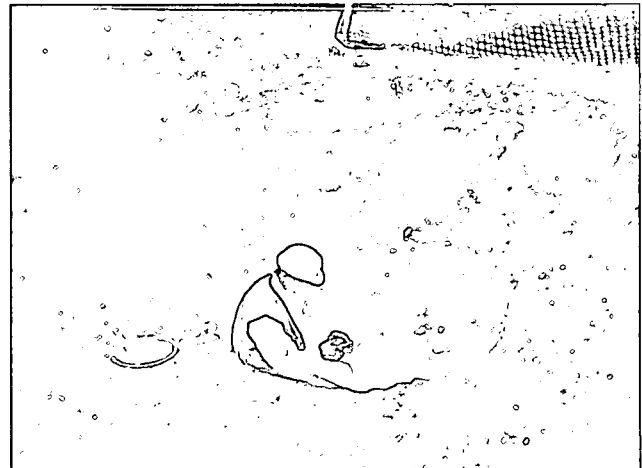


Fig 6. Late Neolithic shaft.

Numerous isolated pits and a few clusters of small pits were identified. A number contained special assemblages, comprising deliberately broken pottery and flint tools, including polished axe fragments. These appear to represent structured deposits rather than casual discard. It is noteworthy that no small pits were found adjacent to contemporary monuments. This may suggest the deliberate zoning of different types of activities within the landscape.

Middle Bronze Age

Prior to the recent investigations no settlement or funerary activity of this period was known within the Loop (Luke 2008, 66). However, an extensive system of fields has now been identified, covering almost the entirety of the southern part of the Loop (Fig 7). The field ditches appeared to respect the earlier monuments, suggesting a degree of continuity in the landscape. The ditches varied enormously in size and a number had been re-dug. It is clear that the fields were not created as part of a single event but developed over time. The ditches contained only small quantities of artefacts, including late Neolithic/early Bronze Age flint and later Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman pottery. However, the best relative dating evidence was that three of the ditches were stratigraphically earlier than a pit alignment dated to the late Bronze Age-early Iron Age. Two of the ditches contained inhumations and another had a sheep burial. Radiocarbon dating of these bones will provide more accurate dating evidence.

Approximately 25 large pits were dispersed within the fields. They were typically oval in plan, *c* 3m long, *c* 2m wide and *c* 1.9m deep (Fig 8). They are comparable to features interpreted as water pits within middle/late Bronze Age fields elsewhere in the country, eg Heathrow Terminal 5 (Lewis *et al.* 2006, 133-151). Unfortunately, the Biddenham examples contained few artefacts and no waterlogged deposits. However, they were all located

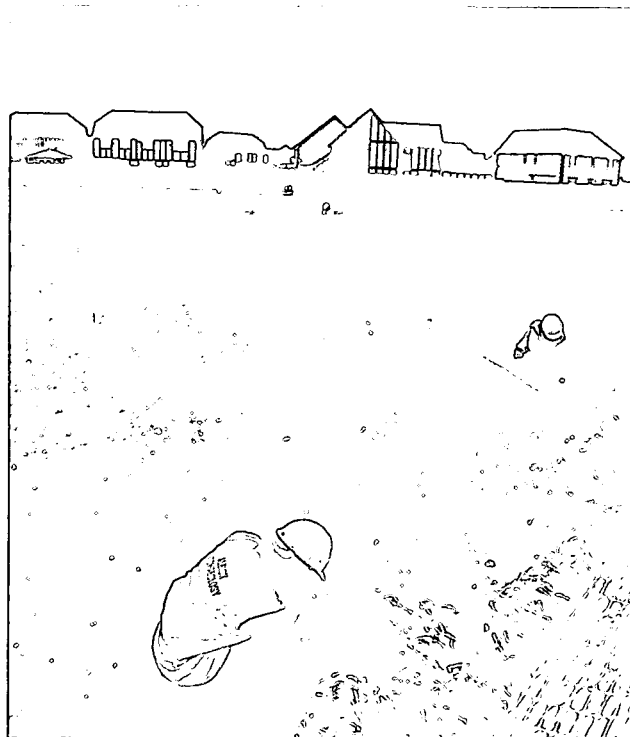


Fig 7. Middle Bronze Age field boundary ditches.

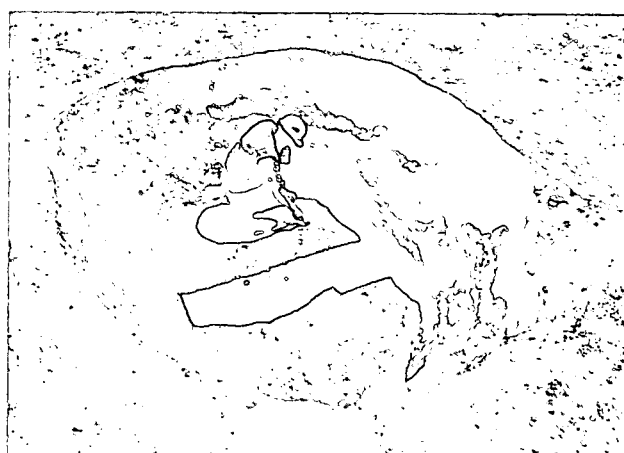


Fig 8. Middle Bronze Age large pit.

towards the edges of the fields, suggesting a clear association.

The largest feature found within the Loop was adjacent to a field ditch and is likely to have been a pond or well that had been re-dug on a number of occasions (Fig 9). It was 10m by 6m and had originally been dug as a c 3.5m deep, circular pit which penetrated the limestone. There was some evidence to suggest a timber structure was inserted during one episode of re-digging. No firmly datable artefacts were recovered but the lower deposits contained interesting animal bone assemblages from wild species, including possible wild boar, red deer, dog/fox and bird. Some deposits were charcoal-rich and similar to ones in the adjacent ditch. Scientific dating will help to resolve the age of this feature

Late Bronze Age-early Iron Age

The investigations located two pit alignments. One had been partially examined during earlier investigations (Luke 2008, 32-3). It extends for 1km and appears to "cut off" the



Fig 9. Pond or well.

southern part of the Loop (Fig 10). As described above, it was stratigraphically later than the middle Bronze Age field system and was on a completely different alignment. A total of 110 pits were investigated. They were c 2.5m in diameter, 1m deep and spaced at regular c 1m intervals. The nature and position of the pits' fills demonstrate that none of them had been re-dug and provide no evidence for an adjacent bank. Small quantities of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery were recovered, along with larger quantities of early-middle Iron Age types, mainly from the upper fills. However, the best dating evidence comes from previous investigations, which demonstrated that the pit alignment was stratigraphically earlier than early-middle Iron Age storage pits (Luke 2008, 33).

A short length of a second, previously unknown pit alignment was also found. It was situated c 10m from the present river and appeared to be orientated parallel to it. At a later date, it was replaced by a ditch.

Early-middle Iron Age

Three farmsteads were identified. Like the others known within the Loop (Luke 2008, 42), they were characterised by the presence of large storage pits (Fig 11). Many of these were infilled with domestic debris and produced quantities of pottery; one pit also contained the tip of an iron spearhead. Two other pits contained an inhumation and dog burial. Only a single roundhouse was positively identified; it had an internal diameter of c 10m. Three small, sub-rectangular ditched enclosures may indicate the location of other buildings.

Bedfordshire

Two trackways extended for 500m across the development area but stopped when they reached a contemporary major east-west boundary ditch which appeared to “cut off” the southern part of the Loop. The trackways comprised parallel ditches but no metalling survived. The trackways and the major boundary were clearly associated with the earlier elements in the landscape because they respected the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age monuments. In addition, the major boundary was parallel to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignment and the trackways appear to be aligned on elements of the middle Bronze Age fields. Prior to the recent investigations it had been thought that the extensive field system, visible as cropmarks and geophysical anomalies, originated in the Romano-British period (Luke 2008, 62). It is now clear that it actually originated in the middle Bronze Age and remained in use throughout the Iron Age and Romano-British period.

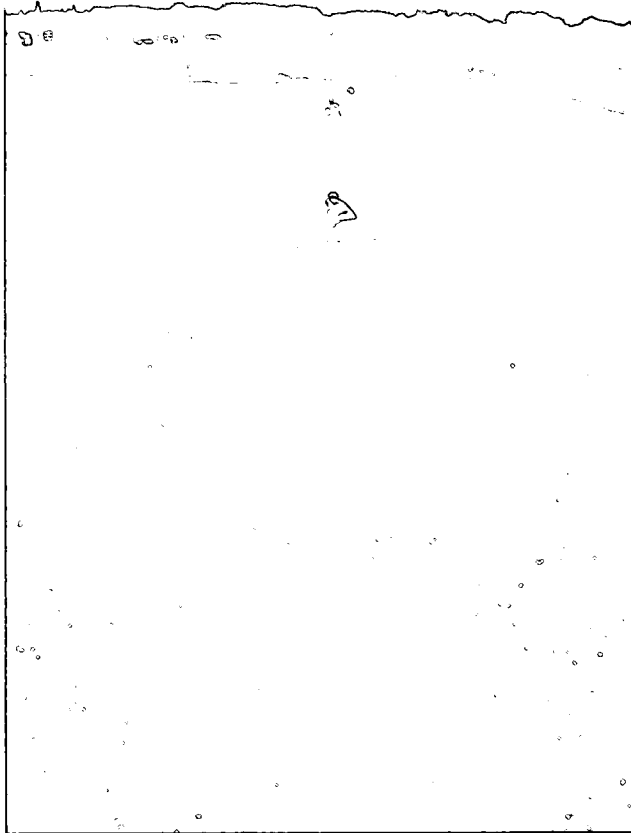


Fig 10. The main pit alignment.



Fig 11. Cluster of early-middle Iron Age storage pits.

Romano-British

A single farmstead was located within the development area. It comprised an extensive rectangular system of ditched enclosures that extended over an area of 4ha adjacent to the River Great Ouse (Fig 12). As such, it was similar to the three others known from previous investigations within the Loop (Luke 2008, 58). Like them, there were no major changes to the layout, although a number of the ditches were re-dug. Similarly, no definite evidence for buildings was identified. The major difference with the other farmsteads within the Loop was the absence of any evidence for origins in the late pre-Roman Iron Age. Although some imported pottery was present, the majority of the assemblage is characterised by locally made coarsewares.

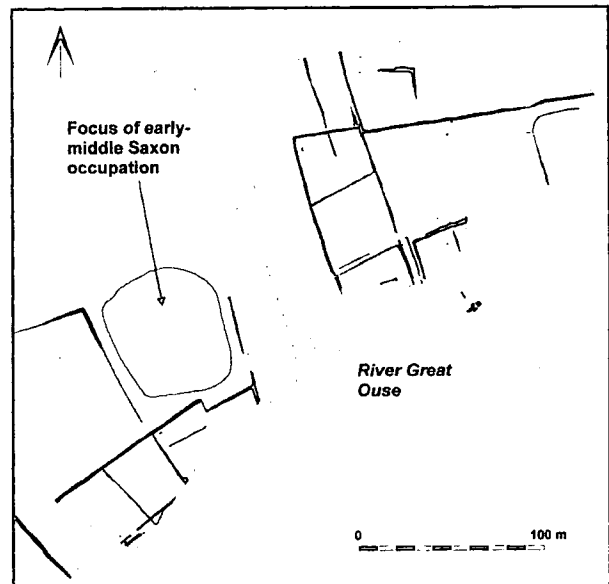


Fig 12. Romano-British farmstead showing location of early-middle Saxon settlement and proximity to River Great Ouse.

In addition to a handful of burials of this period, an isolated bustum burial was also identified on the western side of the Loop (Fig 13). It comprised a rectangular pit with burnt sides; its lower fill contained abundant cremated human bone, charcoal and nearly one hundred nails. Two complete pottery vessels were recovered from the burial - a large,

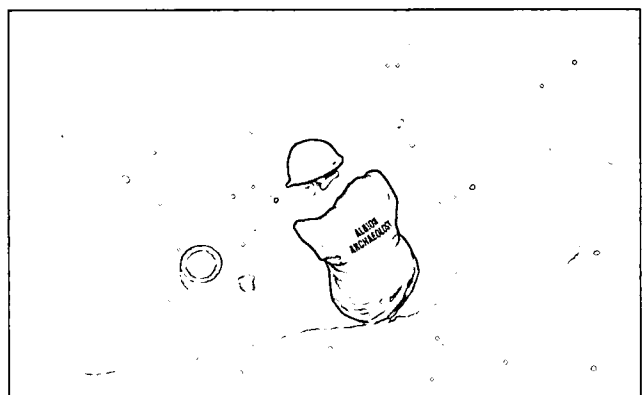


Fig 13. Bustum burial.

Bedfordshire

locally manufactured jar and a smaller Nene Valley beaker dated to the 4th century. Similar burials have been found at The Lea, Denham, Bucks (Coleman *et al.* 2005, 16).

Isolated from contemporary activity, a possible ritual complex was identified towards the centre of the Loop. It comprised two small square enclosures situated within a single larger ditched enclosure (Fig 14). The smaller enclosures may represent buildings. They are comparable to one found within the adjacent investigations and interpreted as a shrine (Luke 2008, 53-5). Small pits were located centrally within each small enclosure but no human bone or unusual/“special” artefacts were found. However, elsewhere similar square enclosures have been associated with cremation burials, eg within religious site at Westhampnett, West Sussex, (Fitzpatrick 1997, 15-8, 40 and fig. 33) and in isolation, eg Roughground Farm, Glos. (Allen *et al.* 1993, 53-3, fig 30). Comparable enclosures also occur within settlements where they have been interpreted as shrines, eg Stansted (Brooks 1989, 323-4) and Heybridge (Atkinson and Preston 1998, 92-3), both in Essex. The nearest comparable local example within a settlement was found c 3.5km to the south at Marsh Leys (Luke and Preece in prep.). The Biddenham Loop complex is comparable to the ditched enclosures associated with burials found in northern France (Haselgrove 2007, fig 3) and, in particular, to one of the enclosures at Acy-Romance (Niblett 1999, 400-1, fig 113).

Early-middle Saxon

A settlement was established within one of the Romano-British farmstead's peripheral enclosures. Sixteen sunken-featured buildings (Fig 15) were identified but no timber ‘halls’ were found. The sunken-featured buildings usually had single central postholes on their short sides, although other variations were present. The sunken areas contained large quantities of pottery, animal bone and other

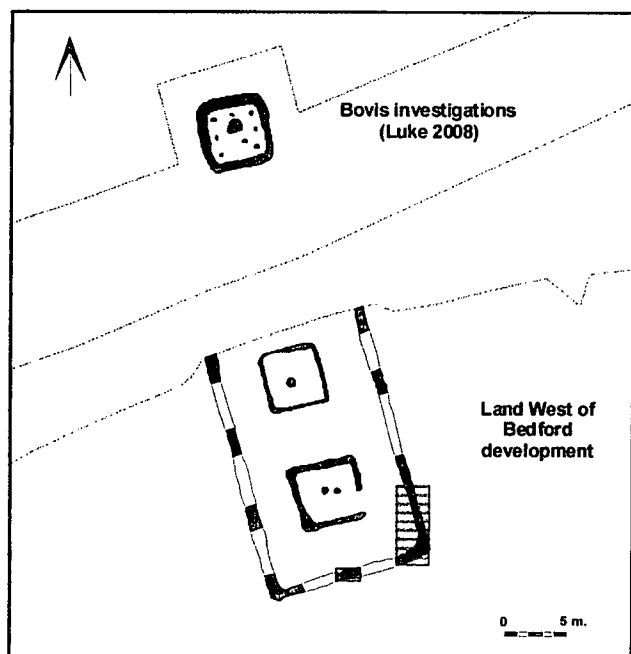


Fig 14. Late Iron Age/early Romano-British ritual complex showing proximity to previously excavated

artefacts. The latter include bone combs, spindle whorls and iron pins.

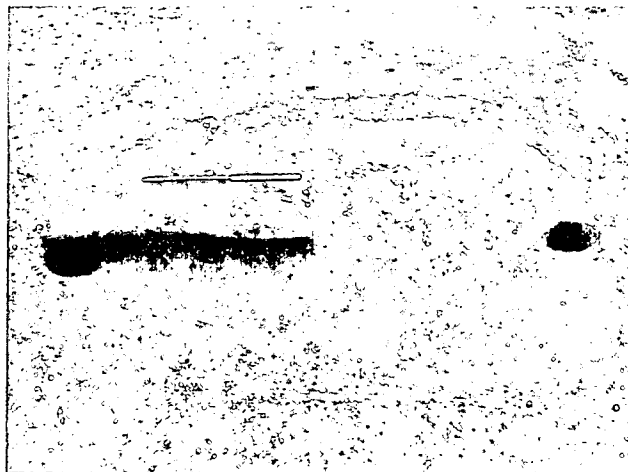


Fig 15. Sunken-feature building.

In addition, four isolated sunken-featured buildings were found 1km away on the west side of the Loop in the vicinity of those found within Bedford Western Bypass Area 1 and 2 (Luke *et al.* 2008). These tended to be larger than those found in the settlement and contained considerably less domestic debris.

Saxo-Norman/Medieval

From this period onwards the Loop was part of an open field system, as indicated by the presence of furrows, associated with the township of Biddenham to the north of the development area.

Post-Medieval

The stone and brick foundations of a building overlay one of the ring ditches. They correspond to the location of Honey Hill farmhouse, which is first shown on a map of 1881. A number of large pits were found in the vicinity suggesting both gravel and limestone quarrying.

Land west of Kempston (TL 1700 4730):

Mike Luke, Ben Barker and Victoria Osborn

Evidence for human activity within the land west of Kempston part of the development area was far more dispersed and less dense than that found on the Biddenham Loop (Fig 16). It did however, include sub-surface features indicating early-middle Saxon, Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval settlement. In the summary below all evidence derived from the open excavation areas adjacent to The Bury unless otherwise stated.

Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age

Two isolated small pits contained pottery and flint artefacts, including a late Neolithic arrowhead.

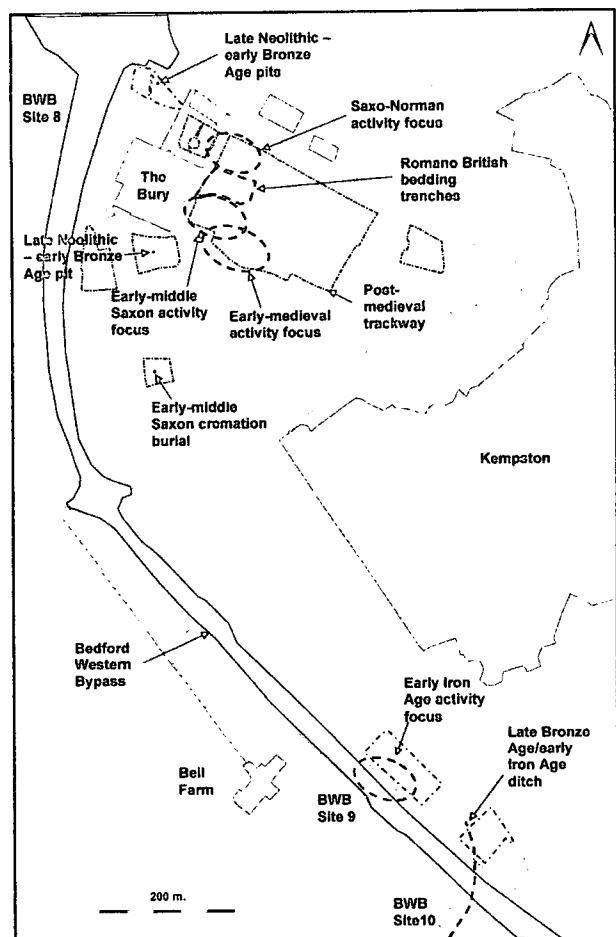


Fig 16. Land West of Kempston areas of investigation.

Early-middle Saxon

A possible settlement was indicated by a cluster of features within a c 50m by 30m area to the south of the Romano-British bedding trenches. They mainly comprised pits, although a small number of postholes were identified. They contained moderate quantities of pottery, a large quantity of animal bone and spindle whorl fragments. Although none of the pits had all the characteristics of sunken-featured buildings, this interpretation remains a possibility in one or two cases, given the absence of any other buildings. An urned burial was found c 250m away on low-lying land adjacent to a small present-day stream.

Saxo-Norman

Another cluster of features was located c 80m to the north of the early-middle Saxon settlement. It comprised a possible timber building, two ?drying ovens (Fig 17), a scatter of pits and potholes and one large quarry pit. It is likely to represent evidence for activity on the periphery of the Saxo-Norman settlement partly exposed outside the development area within Bedford Western Bypass Area 8 (Luke *et al* 2007).

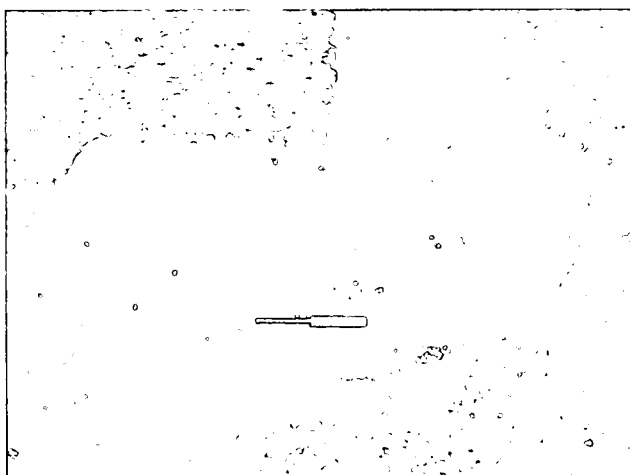


Fig 17. Saxo-Norman drying oven.

Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age

A large ditch in the excavation area near Bell Farm is likely to be the continuation of one located in BWB Site 10 (Luke *et al* 2006).

Early-middle Iron Age

A dispersed cluster of pits was identified. A number had steep sides and flat bases and are likely to have been storage pits. They contained moderate assemblages of pottery and fragments of both triangular and cylindrical loom weights, typical of this period.

Romano-British

A system of parallel bedding trenches was located; they were consistently 4.5m apart, c 0.8m wide, with steep sides and a flat base. They were filled with dark soils which contained moderate quantities of domestic debris. The nearest contemporary settlement is over 300m away, centred on Kempston Church End (Dawson 2004; Luke *et al* 2007). The trenches were similar to ones found on Bedford Western Bypass Sites 10 and 13 (Luke *et al* 2006) where they were thought to be associated with the growing of vines or fruit hedges.

Early medieval

Evidence for early medieval settlement was located c 120m south of the Saxo-Norman activity and to the west of a trackway. Although no clear evidence for buildings could be identified, the number and distribution of postholes suggests that their presence is likely. This again represents evidence for activity on the periphery of a settlement located outside the development area and partly exposed within Bedford Western Bypass Area 8 (Luke *et al* 2007). There is some evidence to suggest this was one of several manorial settlements within Kempston.

Later medieval

During this period much of the land to the west of Kempston was part of the open field system associated with Kempston. This is indicated by the presence of ridge and furrow earthworks adjacent to The Bury and the sub-surface remains of furrows elsewhere.

Bedfordshire

Post-medieval

Trackways, brick structures and other evidence of activity were found adjacent to The Bury. They are probably associated with the substantial house which is known to have been situated just outside the development area from the early 16th century. It was completely rebuilt in brick in 1630 and was associated with a bricked garden wall which still survives outside the development area. A cambered gravel trackway with side ditches was located within the excavation area which was probably the main driveway approaching the house. Although its surface was clearly post-medieval in date, it is possible that the trackway originated in the medieval period.

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Bedford. Church Square, redevelopment (TL 4080/4989)

Adam Lodoen and Jeremy Oetgen

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with streetscape improvements within Church Square, Bedford. Layers of buried soil were observed in the eastern part of the square dating from the

mid 12th to the early 19th century. One of those deposits contained residual Saxo-Norman pottery. The foundations of at least two 19th century houses and a 19th century street or yard surface were also uncovered, preserved beneath modern levelling and make-up layers. Remains of 19th century and later features are likely to survive under the current square, albeit heavily disturbed.

Bedford, St Bede's School (TL 0429/0500)

Richard Gregson

An evaluation was carried out at the site of a proposed residential development at the former St Bede's School site, Bromham Road, Bedford. Several postholes, pits, linear features and structural remains were found in three of the four trial trenches. All were post-medieval or modern in date.

Bedford, Land at 72-74 High Street (TL 0501/4992)

Ian Beswick and Christiane Meckseper

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken at 72-74 High Street, Bedford. Archaeologically significant remains included an area of pitting (probably for refuse disposal) that produced animal bone, tile, and pottery dating from the Saxo-Norman period through to the post-medieval period. A buried soil horizon also contained animal bone, tile and pottery dating from the Saxo-Norman and High Medieval periods. Levelling or make-up layers and wall foundations dating to the post-medieval and modern periods were revealed.

Bedford: Cecil Higgins Art Gallery-Bedford Museum (TL 0525/4978)

Ian Turner, Christiane Meckseper and Jeremy Oetgen

Bedford Borough Council proposed to renovate two early 19th century buildings (the former Bedford Gallery and the adjacent hexagonal militia building, built around 1804). Both buildings are of historical interest and the Bedford Gallery is listed. A programme of small-scale enabling and investigative works was undertaken. These comprised investigations of the foundations and superstructures of the gallery and the militia building in order to provide further information on the structure of the historic buildings and assess the nature of any archaeological remains that might be affected by the renovation.

An initial appraisal of the results has identified four phases of activity, beginning with a large ditch (interpreted as the outer moat of Bedford Castle). The ditch contained large fragments of limestone that were possibly derived from destruction of the castle defences (similar deposits of stone were also identified during the Castle Lane excavations c 150m to the west). The castle was destroyed following the well documented siege of 1224. The medieval phase consisted of four small quarry pits and three large quarry pits to the west of the Bedford Gallery and a further five to the east of the gallery. The pits were sealed by layers of post-medieval made ground.

Carlton, St Mary's Church (SP 9517/5485)

Adam Lodoen

Archaeological observation of improvement works at the church revealed two graves in areas where no graves were previously known. This perhaps indicates a medieval date for the graves, although no datable finds were recovered.

Colmworth Golf Course (TL 0921/5705)

Robert Wardill

A small excavation was carried out in advance of construction of a fishing lake at Colmworth Golf Course, New Road, Colmworth. A number of archaeological features were found. Finds and circumstantial evidence suggest all are likely to date to the early medieval period. The majority of remains are characteristic of boundary features and domestic water management features such as ditches and gullies.

Cople, All Saints' Church (TL 1031/4847)

David Ingham

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of foundation and service trenches for an extension to the church. Part of the medieval cemetery and a large medieval pit were revealed immediately north of the church. The graves were all aligned east-west. It appeared that the ground level within the churchyard had subsequently been raised by up to 0.85m. For this reason, the undisturbed natural gravel was only reached in the foundation trenches; further remains are likely to be preserved *in situ* beneath the service trenches.

Dunstable, Land at Victoria Allotments (TL 0135/2147)

Mark Phillips

Groundworks required as part of a change of use to a cemetery involved the removal of overburden within the footprint of a new access road and footpath. A single adult inhumation burial (probably of Roman date) represents the earliest remains found. The grave cut was aligned east-northeast to west-southwest and cut at least 0.4m into the chalk bedrock. The grave contained no dateable artefacts, although it pre-dated a series of wheel ruts some of which cut into the upper fill of the grave. The wheel ruts form an extensive group of parallel ruts aligned east-northeast to west-southwest; they represent the remains of a wide, un-metalled trackway. The alignment of the ruts is shared by that of present-day West Street and they represent an earlier form of this road. A single sherd of 15th/16th century pottery was recovered from the upper fill of one of the ruts. A slight terrace was noted to the south of the ruts; it might have formed through erosion on the line of the track.

Dunstable Downs, Chilterns Gateway Centre

(TL 0085/1944)

Kathy Pilkinton and Wesley Keir

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the construction of an overflow car park on land to the south of the new Chilterns Gateway visitor centre on Dunstable Downs. No archaeological remains or artefacts were revealed. However, the majority of the groundworks were very shallow; the undisturbed geology beneath the topsoil was only exposed within drainage trenches. Given that previously revealed archaeological features in the vicinity were sealed by the topsoil, there remains a strong possibility that buried features and finds, including the potential remnants of a Napoleonic signal station, may still survive within the development area.

Dunstable Downs Relay Project (TL 5279/2019)

Matt Smith and James Newbould

The tie-in points at either end of a 500m pipeline (laid using horizontal drilling techniques) across the Dunstable Downs, Bedfordshire, were monitored archaeologically. On the top of the Downs, evidence for Romano-British agricultural and quarrying activity was revealed, along with probable wheel ruts of uncertain date. The remains were well preserved and their density suggests more extensive survival in the immediate vicinity. The artefact assemblages suggest domestic activity and the possible presence of structures in the area.

Elstow - The Wixams Elstow Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) No 16 (TL 0549/4492)

Hester Cooper-Read

Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) No 16 at Elstow was one of 16 large national filling (ROF FF) factories built between 1936 and 1942 (a further four were planned but not built). Although many of the buildings were in a poor condition and a number had been previously demolished, the combination of a detailed inspection of the buildings, surviving war-time plans, the near-contemporary description of H E Bates and the memories of oral history interviewees has allowed a surprisingly complete record of the war-time factory, one of the largest and most significant surviving WW2 monuments in Bedfordshire.

Buildings were recorded from each of the main groups present at Elstow: Group 10 administration and workshops, Group 5 Cordite then Shell Re-conditioning, Group 8P Pellet Production, Group 8 Bomb Filling and Group 9 Magazines. A number of interesting features remained on the site, including examples of spark- and flame-proof electrical fixtures and fittings, gas-proof doors, war-time posters, processing equipment, steam-pipe heating and black-out curtains. Vegetation clearance also revealed evidence of the former station platform, the 8P pellet processing area and the raised walkways and traversed buildings in the Group 5 area. Despite fly-tipping and hazardous ground a full record of the site was made. The oral history memories not only added depth and colour to the record but helped clarify aspects of life and work on the site.

Bedfordshire

Eversholt, Church of St John the Baptist

(SP 98295 32505)

Richard Gregson

Archaeological observation of drainage improvement works on the south side of the church identified nine probable graves, all aligned east-west. The majority were undated, although two associated with coffin remains are clearly relatively modern in date. It is also probable that the three shallow burials found close to the church are the oldest and may represent medieval remains.

Flitwick, Ruxox House (TL 0435/3610)

David Ingham

Planning permission was granted for the change of use from a dwelling to a day nursery at Ruxox House, Maulden Road, Flitwick. The ground-works were initially carried out under constant archaeological supervision. However, the shallowness of the ground reduction meant that no significant archaeological features or deposits were exposed.

Harrold-Odell Country Park - skate park

(SP 9564/5683)

David Ingham

Planning permission was granted for the construction of a Skate Park facility at Harrold-Odell Country Park. The groundworks comprised the excavation of a small area. Up to 0.2m of topsoil was removed using a mechanical digger under archaeological supervision. No features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were revealed during the course of the development.

Kempston, The Bury, wall recording (TL 1570/4750)

Mark Phillips

A photographic assessment of an 18th century garden wall was undertaken.

Milton Ernest, Land adjacent to Twinwoods Business Park (TL 0313/5705)

David Ingham and Adam Lodoen

A small excavation revealed the remains of a middle-late Iron Age open settlement; ceramic evidence suggests it had a short lifespan. No further activity was identified until the medieval period when the land was taken under ridge and furrow cultivation and a trackway crossed the site. Evidence of post-medieval enclosure, in the form of the boundary ditch that defined Mock Beggar Close, known from historical maps, was also revealed.

Milton Ernest, Twinwoods Technology Park, Bedford (TL 0341/5967)

Victoria Osborn

No significant archaeological remains were identified by trial trenching at this site. Despite the presence of modern features in two of the trenches, it had not been significantly

truncated by modern activity, suggesting that the absence of evidence is genuine.

Old Warden, Hill House Moats: earthwork survey

(TL 1715/4445)

Angela Simco and Wesley Keir

The scheduled moats east of Hill Hall, Old Warden, have been the subject of a programme of research funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund and Tarmac Ltd. The earthworks within the area of the scheduled monument were surveyed. The results of the survey, considered in the light of previous documentary analysis, enabled the formulation of a possible sequence of development of the moated complex, and highlight the probable medieval origin of the silted fishponds in the wooded compartment.

Old Warden, Hill House Moats: new footpath

(TL 1722/4445)

Wesley Keir

Improvement works to the rights of way network in the vicinity of the scheduled moated site near Hill House, Old Warden included the hand excavation of four holes for waymark posts and of two level indentations either side of the moat inlet channel for housing sleepers to support a bridge. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the course of these groundworks.

Renhold, Land at The Old Vicarage, 65 Church End

(TL 0894/5280)

Ian Turner

A watching brief identified a number of archaeological features within the area of the development. Most represented post-medieval or later features probably associated with the extant building. Amongst these were two probable late medieval post-pits, suggesting the presence of a possible structure which would have been contemporary with All Saints' Church.

Silsoe, Land at Newbury Manor, Ampthill Road

(TL 0762 3615)

Victoria Osborn

The investigation area, was located within the southern moated enclosure, adjacent to Newbury Manor, a Grade 2 listed building. Groundworks within the scheduled area included the demolition of a modern greenhouse, and the machine excavation of fourteen holes for the footings for a garage and topsoil stripping of a driveway immediately to the north-west. These areas were subject to a watching brief. Within the area of the driveway, late medieval/post-medieval make-up layers were revealed. Cut into these layers were seven features dating to the late medieval/post-medieval and post-medieval periods.

Sutton, All Saints' Church (TL 2190/4753)

Robert Wardill

Archaeological observation of improvement works at the church identified a number of features indicative of the development of the building. Inside, the remnants of a rubble wall stretching between the tower archway are likely to be the remains of the west wall of the nave which would have been demolished during construction of the tower in the 15th century. The external works revealed a deposit of brick and tile rubble adjacent to the northern wall footings of the tower.

Turvey, All Saints' Church (SP 9430 5245)

David Ingham

Improvement works at the church comprised the installation of kitchen and toilet facilities within the base of the tower. A watching brief carried out during the removal of the wooden floor in the tower showed the ground beneath to comprise rough stone, with two shallow channels cut through it on an east-west alignment. The floor had been supported on concrete lintels

Excavation of external trenches revealed no features or deposits of archaeological significance. Human bone and a small amount of animal bone were encountered periodically, but no articulated skeletal remains were exposed.

Westoning, Land at Westoning Lower School

(TL 0345/3260)

Robert Wardill

Planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension to the existing school buildings at Westoning Lower School, High Street, Westoning. The site lies within the historic core of Westoning, a settlement of medieval origin. A single trench within the footprint of the extension revealed a relatively large number of medieval archaeological features, including ditches, pits and structural remains. They appear to represent activity carried out within the back plots of dwellings that fronted the High Street.

Willington, Church of St Lawrence (TL 1066 4986)

David Ingham

Improvement works at the church included excavation in the base of the tower, revealing an earlier stone floor surface, 0.3m below the current one. Articulated human remains were revealed at the base of a soak-away trench. At least three individuals appeared to be present. Probable articulated remains were also revealed in a service trench to the east. No direct evidence was found of a predecessor to the present-day church. However, the close proximity of burials to the western end of the church suggests that they are not contemporary. Pottery recovered from the subsoil shows little evidence of re-depositional abrasion and suggests activity on the site from the Saxon period onwards.

Wilshamstead - The Wixams

(TL 0575 4438, TL 0583 4424, TL 0542 4430)

Mark Phillips

Archaeological works within The Wixams residential development included watching brief and c 5.8ha of strip, map and sample on either side of the A6. Evidence for 2nd-4th century Roman occupation included enclosure ditches, small gullies and pits, which had been significantly damaged by later medieval/post-medieval ploughing. The evidence appears to indicate the presence of the heavily truncated remains of part of the periphery of an enclosed farmstead. Ridge and furrow earthworks demonstrated that the land fell within the open fields of Wilshamstead township during the medieval/post-medieval period.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES AND CONSULTANCY LTD

Heath and Reach, Leighton Road (SP 9256 2803)

Jenny Richards

In late 2007 and early 2008 ASC carried out a strip and record excavation at The Dukes Head public house, Heath and Reach, in advance of the construction of an accommodation block. A collapsed pottery kiln was uncovered, including its probable stoke pit. Numerous sherds of pottery of probable medieval date were recovered from the upper deposits of this kiln. The kiln was preserved in situ, and detailed excavation was therefore not possible.

Kensworth, St Mary's Church (TL 0306 1905)

Jenny Richards

An evaluation of land to the west of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, was undertaken in advance of an extension to the churchyard. The foundations of a wall formed of flint nodules were revealed, as was a deposit interpreted as levelling for a floor. These form the remains of the former vicarage. A probable boundary gully, cut by the wall, and an earlier line of postholes, also a probable boundary, were also revealed during the evaluation. Several fragments of tile of probable post-medieval date were recovered from the subsoil. Apart from a single fragment of peg tile recovered from the gully, no other dating evidence was revealed.

Luton, Castle Street (TL 0915 2081)

Jenny Richards

Between March 2007 and February 2008 ASC carried out a watching brief at 63-65 Castle Street during groundworks for the conversion of existing houses into flats, and the construction of new dwellings. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed, and the site appears to have been heavily disturbed during the construction of the houses on Castle Street in the late 19th to early 20th century.

Bedfordshire

Toddington, Station Road (TL 0108 2912)

Jenny Richards

In March an evaluation was carried out on a former garage site at 59 Station Road in advance of residential redevelopment. A stone lined well of probable 18th century date was observed. The well had already been truncated by the construction of the garage to a depth of 1m below the present ground level. No other significant archaeological features were observed and the archaeological impact of this development was therefore considered to be low.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ouzel Valley, Leighton Buzzard

5 Woodland Avenue, Leighton Buzzard

Bernard Jones

Introduction

During 2008 the Society carried out evaluation excavations in the garden of 5 Woodland Avenue. We are very grateful to Arthur and Pam Summerfield for allowing us to dig in their garden.

There was a question mark over the integrity of the site as it was once part of the playing fields used by Foundry Equipment Limited and it was thought that there could have been some earthworks here in the past. Since the house was built around 40 years ago, part of the garden has been laid down to lawn and part has been cultivated as flower beds from where the original assemblage of flints was found. It was therefore decided to open two evaluation trenches measuring 1m square in the flower beds (Trenches 1 and 2) and a further trench measuring 2m square in the permanent lawn area (Trench 3) to compare the stratigraphy and archaeology in these two areas.

Methodology

All trenches were dug by trowel in spits of between 5 and 10 cm. All spoil was sieved using a 5mm mesh sieve. All worked flint found in Trench 3 was treated as a 'small find' and recorded three dimensionally using a temporary bench mark and east/north coordinates.

Trenches 1 and 2

These were 1m square trenches and were dug to a depth of about 60cm where the matrix became yellowish brown silty sand. There was evidence of root disturbance and old burrows of small mammals but the matrix appeared mainly to be the result of erosion of the marine bedded sand by periglacial action.

We were advised that the soil had been dug to a depth of about two spits, say 40cm, with humus dug into it over many years. As a result of this, Contexts 1003 and 2003 were dug to a depth of 50cm below the surface where the

matrix gradually changed with no discernible break, due to the light sandy nature of the soil. There were a few pieces of worked flint in contexts 1001, 1002, 1003, 2001, 2002 and 2003 but there were no finds in context 1004 or 2004 leading to the conclusion that this was natural 'bed rock'.

Probably as a result of many years of digging and collecting flints, only a few worked flints were found in these trenches. These were not recorded three dimensionally as the contexts were known to have been disturbed.

The following is a provisional analysis of the finds of worked flint:

- 9 - complete blades some of which were of poor quality
- 2 - broken blades
- 3 - flakes
- 1 - burnt pieces of flints
- 2 - microliths < 1cm
- 30 - pieces of worked flint

Trench 3

This trench was 2m square and was again dug to a depth of about 60cm where the matrix became yellowish brown silty sand. As in Trenches 1 and 2, the matrix of Context 3005 gradually changed with no discernible break, due to the light sandy nature of the soil, to reach the natural 'bed rock' at about 50cm below the surface.

There were 50 small finds which are yet to be analysed in detail, all of worked flint. Of these 42 flints were found in Context 3001 which was immediately below the turf layer. This context was 25cm thick and extended to 35cm below the surface. There were 5 flints in context 3002, and 1 each in contexts 3003, 3004 and 3005. These included blades, flakes, microliths < 1cm, burnt flint and other pieces of worked flint. In addition there were a number of worked flints found during the process of sieving which are provisionally analysed as follows:

- 4 - broken blades of poor quality
- 1 - flake
- 35 - pieces of worked flint

6 Woodland Avenue, Leighton Buzzard

The occupier of 6 Woodland Avenue gave to the Society a piece of worked flint measuring 3.5cm x 3.0cm which had been found in her garden. It appeared to have been struck from a piece of poor quality flint possibly derived from the river gravels or glacial drift. It is much fractured and was possibly intended to be used as a scraper.

15 Taylors Ride, Leighton Buzzard

During 2008 Mr Charles Taylor of 15 Taylors Ride brought to our attention a considerable quantity of flint which he had recovered from his garden which he recognised as being 'unnatural'. This included blades, flakes, cores, burnt flint and many other pieces of worked flint but of a different character to those found at 5 Woodland Avenue. It appears therefore that these were from a different family group or industry and may be earlier than those found at 5 Woodland Avenue. These are yet to be analysed.

Conclusion

The five sites now located on the sandy terraces above the Ouzel Valley now give a good indication that this area was visited by groups of hunter gatherer Mesolithic peoples in the period following the last ice age from around 12,000 years ago. It is likely that they made seasonal visits to this area and camped for a few weeks at a time whilst they hunted and fished in the valley and the surrounding woodland which might have been sparse on the sandy heath-land but more dense on the clay-topped hills and in the valleys.

No direct evidence has been found of any structures such as primitive huts, hearths, pits or stake holes. Similarly no evidence has been found of burnt wood or bone, or hazel nuts such as those found in abundance at Howick in Northumberland, suggesting that perhaps this area was not inhabited in the autumn. However the area of excavation so far is so small that this evidence may simply have been missed.

References

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- Jones, J B 2007; Ouzel Valley, Leighton Buzzard (SP 9182 2666). *LBDAS Trans* 1, p20
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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Compiled by Pat Chapman

Dunstable, Thorn Farm/Chalton Cross Farm

(TL 0203 2586)

Adrian Burrow

An archaeological trial trench evaluation, on behalf of Scott Wilson for Costain-Carillion Joint Venture (CCJV), was carried out on land proposed for the A5-M1 Dunstable Northern Bypass. There was a single pit of possible Bronze Age date. The focus of activity was on the western end of the route where ditches, gullies and pits indicated the presence of mid-late Iron Age and early Roman enclosures, probably relating to small rural settlements. Accession No 2008/16

Hargrave, Mill View Farm (TL 03512 70205)

Leon Field

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land at Mill View Farm, near Hargrave, immediately to the north of an extensive cropmark complex. One trench 16m long was opened within a flat field. Only two small furrows and three tree holes were present and no artefacts were recovered. No cropmark features were found. Accession No BEDFM.2008.328

Leighton Buzzard, Linslade, Stoke Road (SP 9150 2600)

Anne Foard-Colby

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out on land proposed for housing, between Bossington Lane and Stoke Road, Linslade. The evaluation identified a concentration of pits, ditches and postholes occupying the western slopes of a small hill. The majority of the features are dated to the Roman period, 1st - 3rd centuries AD and represent a small farmstead together with field boundaries. Finds include Roman pottery, roof and floor tile, ironwork including a Roman 'spud' or hoe and half a rotary quern. Two of the pits contained iron smelting debris. Evidence of early to mid Saxon occupation was also present with pottery dated to 5th - 9th centuries and a typical annular loomweight. Quarry pits had been dug, possibly for the extraction of clay. Accession No LUTMN.2008/73

M1 Widening Junctions 10-13 (SP 960 370 - TL 080 190)

Stephen Morris

Further archaeological investigations for the Stage 3 Cultural Heritage assessment of the scheme to widen the M1 between Junctions 10 and 13 were commissioned by Scott Wilson Limited. Fieldwalking was undertaken on three fields. There were 25 struck flints, three sherds of probable prehistoric pottery and three sherds of Roman pottery. There were scatters of medieval pottery. The vast majority of finds were post-medieval brick/tile, with large quantities of post-medieval pottery. The medieval and post-medieval finds can be attributed to manuring of arable fields.

Old Warden, Hill House (TL 172 445)

Adrian Butler

A geophysical survey was conducted on behalf of Andrew Josephs Ltd on a c 0.75ha moated site. Resistance anomalies revealed evidence of a formal parterre garden and possible structural remains. OASIS 55936

Pulloxhill, Fryer Herne (TL 0629 3382)

David Leigh

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a test pit and test trench on land at Fryer Herne in advance of groundworks for the construction of a replacement swimming pool and side extension. Undisturbed soils were encountered within both the test pit and test trench. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present. Accession No LUTMN 2008/72

Sandy, 11 Stratford Road (TL 1827 4783)

Simon Carlyle

Three test pits were excavated within the footprint of a proposed double garage and soakaway to be built in the garden of 11 Stratford Road. In one of the test pits there was a small ditch, possibly of Iron Age or Roman date, sealed beneath a thick layer of colluvium that had accumulated at the base of the slope below Galley Hill. With the exception of a pit containing 19th century earthenware pottery, no

Buckinghamshire

further archaeological remains were encountered.
Accession No BEDFM 2008.224

Sharnbrook, Castle Close (SP 98910 59540)

Carol Simmonds

A geophysical survey, comprising magnetometer and resistance survey, was conducted across 0.3ha of land on a medieval moated site, on behalf of Sharnbrook Parish Council. Anomalies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument, which lies in woodland, were indicative of the earthwork bank and ditch and possible internal features.
Accession No BEDFM 2008.60, OASIS 55501

Tempsford, Station Road, Tempsford Hall (TL 165 535)

David Leigh

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a temporary access road, works compound and a swale pit with a waterpipe trench followed by the construction of new buildings along with associated groundworks, on land at Tempsford Hall. A severely truncated natural substratum was present within the area of the new buildings and no archaeologically significant artefacts were recovered. Within the area of the temporary access road, works compound and swale pit, undisturbed natural was encountered, but no archaeological deposits. A number of unstratified metal artefacts dating to the 17th century were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil layers. Accession No BEDFM 2007.617

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Compiled and edited by Edward Biddulph

RAF Cardington (TL 0790 4720)

Neil Lambert

Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes. The development site covered an area of approximately 46.75ha. The trenching was targeted to examine those areas of the site that had not been evaluated in a previous phase of work, but would be impacted by the first phase of building development. On this basis, three areas were identified for examination.

Seven trenches were excavated in Area C. No archaeological features were observed. The whole area was criss-crossed by service trenches, paths/service roads and the remains of demolished buildings. A total of 15 trenches were excavated in Area E. These revealed high levels of modern disturbance. Archaeology was observed in three Trenches, 62, 63 and 68. The features, all of which were truncated, included pits and ditches of late Iron-Age to medieval date. Four trenches were excavated within Area H. A ditch or gully, truncated and undated, was observed in one trench. Other trenches revealed truncation caused by the construction and demolition of a former sewage works.

The evaluation demonstrated that low-level archaeological activity survives within these areas of the development site. The paucity of artefactual material from the recorded

features - confined to 36 sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman and medieval pottery, 26 animal bone fragments, and eight pieces of ceramic building material - suggests that the features represent peripheral activity, possibly relating to field systems. These may be associated with sites of settlement or cropmark and artefactual evidence which is known to exist immediately outside the development area, to the north, east and south west. The archaeological remains in general are poorly preserved, having been subjected to both truncation through agricultural practices and modern disturbance.

The fieldwork exposed a ditch that ran parallel to the adjacent West End Lane and contained pottery dating to the 16th-18th centuries. The feature may have defined the rear boundary of a plot or enclosure fronting onto the lane. Another ditch contained pottery dating from the 19th century. A pit, which contained four sherds of medieval pottery and part of an 18th-19th century roof tile, is likely to be contemporaneous. A third ditch may also be of post-medieval or modern date, as it appears to be a continuation of the boundary between the development site and an adjacent property, as indicated on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1882). A backfilled pond encountered in an evaluation trench first appears on the 1814 map, but could have earlier origins.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

Luton, Farley Hill, land off Luton Road (TL 0779 1987)

Andy Mundin

Nothing of archaeological interest was observed during a watching brief.

Great Billington, Pratt's quarry extension

(SP 9350 2320) Andy Mundin

Numerous cut features were present, no earlier than late medieval or early post-medieval, where dateable. Struck flints indicate a low level of prehistoric activity.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

ALBION ARCHAEOLOGY

Aylesbury, Police Headquarters (SP 8260/1316)

Adam Lodoen

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the groundworks for a new office building at the headquarters of Thames Valley Police, Wendover Road, Walton, Aylesbury. It revealed a number of probable quarry pits, a ditch and a furrow. None of these features could be dated but they may be associated with the expansion of Aylesbury during the medieval and later periods.

Buckinghamshire

Newport Pagnell, 4-6 Union Street (SP 8767/4400)

David Ingham, Adam Lodoen, Ian Turner and Robert Wardill

An evaluation revealed two large, late medieval/early post-medieval pits, and a sequence of pits and structural remains that dated from the early post-medieval period into the Victorian era. The structural remains are likely to relate to outbuildings at the rear of house plots along the High Street. Subsequent monitoring of construction groundworks identified further archaeological features - ditches and pits of probable medieval date, post-medieval pits, a ditch, a demolition layer and three robbed out foundation trenches.

Wolverton Greenleys - Wolverton Park (SP 8187/4149)

Christiane Meckseper

Wolverton is the world's first planned railway works town and was designated a Conservation Area in 2002. The development site incorporates the Royal Train Shed and the Triangular Building, Reading Room and the Wolverton Park recreation ground and football stand. All of these buildings are of particular importance for the historical and industrial development of the Wolverton Works. They are Grade II listed buildings. In December 2006 a watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of four sondage trenches in the southern part of The Royal Train Shed. This was followed in 2008 by a programme of building recording, covering the Royal Train Shed, Triangular Building and Reading Room. It consisted of a comprehensive photographic survey supported by existing engineers' drawings of plans and elevations of the buildings.

AOC ARCHAEOLOGY

Burtley Wood, Motorway Service Area (SU 952 887)

Chris Pole

Between March and June 2008 a watching brief on behalf of Giffords was carried out at a proposed Motorway Service Area at Burtley Wood. The watching brief was required due to the development's proximity to Bower Wood scheduled medieval moat. The watching brief revealed no archaeological finds or features.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES AND CONSULTANCY LTD

Bradwell, Bradwell Abbey (SP 8268 3947)

Martin Cuthbert

In January a watching brief was carried out on the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Bradwell Abbey during the excavation of three test pits and three trenches, in relation to the laying of a gas main. Two possible walls and

adjacent floor surfaces were revealed in a small area within two of the trenches in the south farmyard, but no other archaeological features were observed within the test pits or elsewhere within the trenches.

Castlethorpe, 5 North Street (SP 7979 4446)

Gareth Shane

An evaluation was undertaken during October at Castle House, 5 North Street, to inform proposals for the construction of a pool house. The proximity of the site to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Castlethorpe Castle indicated that the proposed development had the potential to damage or disturb significant archaeological remains. A single trial trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed development, but no archaeological remains were present.

Castlethorpe, 14 South Street (SP 7991 4434)

Karin Semmelmann

ASC carried out a historic building watching brief at 14 South Street during extensions to the building. The property, which is a stone built, 2-storey structure under a pitched tiled roof, lies at the eastern end of a short terrace of three similar properties.

Building analysis focussing primarily on the roof trusses in the adjoining properties in 1999 led to the hypothesis that the terrace may date from the 15th century and could incorporate a possible 14th century building at the western end. During this watching brief, which was limited to the removal of part of the east wall to create a new door, a small soot filled cavity, another smaller recess containing the remains of a purlin and the cut line for the roof of the former extension were revealed. There was no evidence of earlier roof timbers as only modern rafters were revealed, but the presence of a bonding timber could suggest an 18th century date for this part of the building.

Cheddington, 22 Mentmore Road (SP 9200 1758)

Karin Semmelmann

In November, historic building assessment of 22 Mentmore Road was carried out in order to inform proposals for development on the site. The property comprises the house, a garage/workshop and a forge. An annexe to the north of the house was not included in the assessment, as it will remain unaffected by the development.

The garage/workshop appears to have been built in the 1930s, and replaced a wheelwright's workshop, owned in the 19th century by the Montague family. The core of the house may date from the 17th century, but it appears to have been rebuilt in brick in the 18th or early 19th century. It has since been extended and re-roofed.

The forge, which is of open timber framing with brick infill, appears to be of 18th century date. Some alterations and remedial works have taken place since then, including the rebuilding of the east wall and the hearth. The structure has been largely untouched since it was last used as a forge, and is now in need of attention.

Buckinghamshire

Chesham, Jasons Hill (SP 9883 0224)

Ralph Stewart Brown

An evaluation was carried out at 'Beverley', Jasons Hill, in February, in advance of the construction of a new house. Attention was focused on the site of a post-medieval tile kiln, initially located in the 1960s in a service trench at the northeast corner of the present house. An area was opened to determine the extent and preservation of the kiln, which was found to be in good condition, and to extend beneath the patio of the present house. A second trench to the east of the house revealed a ditch curving from the north to the east, which was probably contemporaneous with the kiln. Cutting this ditch was a north-south gully of post-medieval date, which also cut a possible pit.

Following revised proposals for a much larger house, in June a second phase of evaluation was carried out to the south and east of the present house. No significant remains were uncovered, and the only features of note were an early 20th century pond and a small undated gully.

Haversham, 5 High Street (SP 8290 4299)

Jenny Richards

In April ASC undertook an evaluation at 5 High Street in advance of the construction of an extension to the existing dwelling. A single trench within the footprint of the proposed extension revealed the remains of a former soakaway, along with a deposit of subangular stones, apparently used to raise the level of the garden area. Three sherds of 19th century pottery, two sherds of 13th to 14th century pottery and some fragments of animal bone were recovered.

Little Horwood, Warren Court Farm (SP 7918 3210)

Calli Rouse

In January and February an archaeological watching brief was carried out at Warren Court Farm during groundworks for a new ménage. Aerial photography of the area had highlighted possible enclosures and trackways in the adjacent field. Only the topsoil was removed from the development area, and no finds or features were observed within it.

Long Crendon, 43 Bicester Road (SP 6909 0890)

Karin Semmelmann

A historic building assessment of 'Bakers Close', 43 Bicester Road was carried out in December, in order to inform proposals for development. The building is a two-storey brick and stone structure with attics under a clay tiled roof. It comprises a range parallel to Bicester Road, and a 20th century cross-wing to the southeast. It appears to have been initially constructed in the 17th century as a 3-bay in-line house with associated kitchen and outbuildings. All that remains of the original structures is the range running parallel to the road.

The nature of the trusses in the first floor and attic as well as the dimensions of the bays suggest that the building may have been constructed with a smoke bay at the eastern end

of the hall. The bricks in the chimneystack do not appear to be earlier than 18th century, and it is possible that the smoke bay was in use as such until that time. There is no evidence of smoke blackening on the timbers in the upper floors, but this may have been removed during later building works. The chimneystack has been rebuilt on at least two occasions, and the inglenook fireplace below has been rebuilt in recent times, possibly when the cross wing was added in the 20th century.

Loughton, The Paddock (SP 8354 3763)

Jenny Richards

An evaluation at The Paddock was carried out in January, prior to residential development of the site, which is located close to Loughton Manor and surviving village earthworks. Three evaluation trenches were excavated, and four linear features were observed. From these features were recovered two very small, undiagnostic and abraded pottery sherds of probable medieval date, a fragmented animal bone and an animal tooth. The site was heavily waterlogged at a depth of 1m below ground level. Several modern plastic land drains were noted on a northeast-southwest alignment across the site at a depth of c 20cm below ground level.

Middleton, 12 Walton Road (SP 8894 3896)

Bob Zeepvat

Between March and April a watching brief was undertaken at 12 Walton Road, during residential redevelopment of the site. It was intended for the watching brief to be preceded by historic building recording of the cottage and barn that stood on the site. Unfortunately these were demolished before the recording took place, so a record of the building was compiled from drawings and photographs provided by the architect.

The cottage and barn were constructed in the mid to late 19th century, before 1881. Both buildings were brick-built, under slate roofs. As constructed, the cottage was of 'two up, two down' plan, with kitchen and parlour on the ground floor, and central stairs and landing leading to two bedrooms above. The cottage was extended to the west in the 1950s or 1960s, the single-storey extension housing a bathroom and kitchen.

The watching brief revealed a probable north-south ditch running across the site, cut into the underlying gravel. Adjacent to this was a smaller feature, either a parallel ditch or a pit. These features contained any dateable artefacts, and none were noted in the remaining topsoil, or the excavated material from the footing trenches. Based on the available evidence it seems unlikely that the site was occupied prior to the construction of the 19th century cottage. It is unfortunate that circumstances permitted such a limited examination of the site.

Newport Pagnell, Willen Road (SP 8750 4230)

David Kaye and Martin Cuthbert

Following an evaluation in 2005 (SMA 36, 8), excavations were undertaken in 2006 and 2008 on an extensive prehistoric and Roman site between Willen Road, the M1 and the A422, in advance of gravel extraction (Fig 1).

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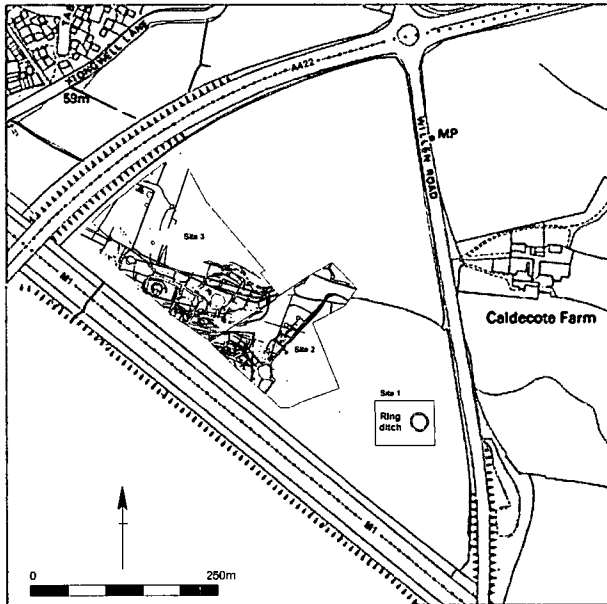


Fig 1. Willen Road.

The south part of the site contained a ring ditch, 20m in diameter. No internal features were identified, and excavation of the ditch produced no dateable artefacts, and a paucity of environmental information. A Bronze Age date was assigned to the feature on the basis of its form.

To the north-west of the ring ditch was part of an extensive Iron Age and Roman settlement, comprising a number of ditched enclosures, a large pond and a cremation cemetery. The settlement, which extended beneath the motorway embankment, originated in the early to middle Iron Age and continued into the late Roman period, in the late 4th century.

At least three circular huts were identified, although no occupation horizons or floor surfaces survived. A number of smaller roughly rectangular stone features were also recorded. Their function has not yet been established, but similar features excavated some years ago at Bancroft, Milton Keynes, were associated with smithing or metalworking. Occasional quernstone fragments and animal bones suggest a mixed agrarian economy, and the range of finds is typical of a native Romano-British settlement.

Following the demise of the settlement, the area reverted to open field cultivation and traces of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation strips have been identified across the site. In the post-medieval period the area was divided into individual fields and the M1 motorway was constructed over the west side of the site in 1957.

Newton Longville, The Manor Barns (SP 8437 3024)

Karin Semmelmann

In 2007 and 2008, historic building recording of the barns at Newton Longville Manor was undertaken to inform proposals for their conversion to residential use. The present house, which is Grade II listed, dates from the mid 15th century.

The buildings were all timber framed, weatherboarded and thatched and consist of a single 2-bay, 2-storey structure adjacent to the house (Building 3), a tall, single bay barn

(Building 2) and a range of three stables under the same roof at the eastern end of the row (Building 1). Although the listed buildings description has Buildings 2 and 3 as being of late 17th or early 18th century date, internal inspection suggests that they were built in the 15th/16th century. Building 3 appears to have been constructed as a 2-storey dwelling, and is likely to have been part of an earlier manor house on the site. The original function of Building 2 remains unclear as many of the architectural features are hidden.

Building 3 has seen considerable alterations and repairs over time, and many of the original features have been obscured. Nonetheless, the architectural evidence suggests that the western two rooms of Building 3 may be late 16th or early 17th century, with the eastern room being a later addition.

All three buildings have been altered and repaired over time and are in very good condition. They have retained a considerable amount of character and, particularly in the case of Building 3, integrity. Further architectural details will undoubtedly be revealed during any conversion project, and it is hoped that these will be recorded to allow a better understanding of the history of these buildings and the manor in which they are located.

North Marston, St Mary's Church (SP 7770 2270)

Ralph Stewart Brown

An evaluation was carried out in the churchyard of St Mary's Church in July, before the construction of an extension to the church. Two trenches were opened against the north side of the church. Four burials were found, two in each trench, beneath deep disturbed deposits characteristic of old churchyards. Although this high concentration of interments is likely to continue right across the area of the new development, their depth was below the formation level of the extension floor. Structural evidence at the northwestern corner of the north aisle indicated that this area had been reinforced in the past.

Oakley, Elmwood Close (SP 6396 1210)

Jenny Richards and Alex Thompson

A watching brief was carried out at Elmwood Close in June, during groundworks for a housing development. The presence of tree throws suggest that the site lies on the edge of the Saxon royal hunting forest of Bernwood. Pottery recovered from some of these features show that it was cleared during the late medieval period, when it was peripheral to the settlement of Oakley. A number of pits, ditches and gullies were also recorded, several of which cut the infilled threethrows. A large pit containing burnt flint, degraded animal bone fragments and pottery of Bronze Age date was also noted.

Olney, Lime Street (SP 8873 5117)

Alex Thompson

In February a watching brief was carried out during groundworks for an extension to The Barn, Lime Street. Vestiges of 19th century cobbling were recorded together with 19th to 20th century rubbish pits. The Barn was

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probably built in the later 19th century. A fragment of a medieval whetstone and two sherds of 17/18th century pottery were recovered from topsoil.

Oving, Bowling Alley (SP 7868 2159)

Karin Semmelmann

In February ASC carried out historic building recording of the Methodist Chapel, Bowling Alley, prior to conversion of the building to a dwelling. The chapel was built in 1869 as a single-cell Primitive Methodist Chapel. A meeting room was added to the south of the church within 30 years of its foundation, forming an L-shaped building. A kitchen, lobby and cloakroom were added in the late 20th century to create a rectangular structure.

The building is brick-built, under a tiled roof. The window and door openings of the church itself are decorated with contrasting white bricks, apart from in the rear elevation. The windows have all been replaced with modern UPVC units. The main entrance, however, retains the original, diagonally panelled double doors with reproduction gothic hinge straps.

The interior of the church had been stripped before this project was undertaken, leaving only the wall benches and staining to the matchboarding to indicate the seating arrangements.

Saunderton, Church Lane (SP 7948 0182)

Martin Cuthbert

In November ASC undertook an evaluation at Church Farm House, Church Lane, in advance of proposed development. Owing to its proximity to a scheduled ancient monument, the area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive. Two trenches were excavated, both revealing modern features containing brick, tile and other waste material. No other archaeological features or artefacts were noted.

Shenley Brook End, 9a Whaddon Road (SP 8348 3541)

Carina Summerfield-Hill

A watching brief was carried out at 9a Whaddon Road, in May and June, during the construction of a garage, and an extension to an existing house. No archaeological remains were observed.

Singleborough, Abbey Cottage (SP 7666 3182)

Jenny Richards and Calli Rouse

In June a site adjacent to Abbey Cottage was evaluated by trial trenching, prior to the construction of a house and garage. Two trenches were excavated, one of which contained a north-south aligned gully from which three sherds of medieval pottery were retrieved. No other archaeological features or artefacts were present.

Steeple Claydon, St Michael's Church (SP 7053 2674)

Jenny Richards

A watching brief was carried out at St Michael's Church between April 2007 and July 2008 during groundworks for

the construction of a new parish room. A large quantity of disarticulated human bone fragments was recovered during ground reduction and the excavation of foundation trenches. Two partial skeletons were uncovered during excavation of a new septic tank. These were of probable 18th or 19th century date, and the only obvious sign of pathology was some tooth decay to one of the skeletons. No other significant finds were revealed during this watching brief, but five 19th century tombstones that had been reused as a footpath outside the vestry were noted, and fragments of 19th and 20th century pottery, glass and ceramic grave markers were also observed.

Stone, 34 Oxford Road (SP 7875 1245)

Calli Rouse

In March ASC undertook a programme of evaluation on land to the rear of 34 Oxford Road, in advance of residential development. Thirteen trenches were excavated, but no significant features were revealed. A programme of sieving of samples from the trenches recovered only modern pottery, a possible medieval body sherd, a piece of flint debitage, and a well worn flint end-scraper.

Stony Stratford, 110 High Street (SP 7853 4065)

Nigel Wilson

During September, a watching brief was undertaken to the rear 110 High Street, during building works. A levelling deposit comprising dark redeposited soil covered the natural orange sand. Limestone footings for several demolished walls were observed in the foundation trenches of the development. Other than a few fragments of red peg tile, no finds to date either the levelling layer or the walls were recovered. It is likely that the walls were associated with the former Horseshoe Inn, demolished during the late 18th or early 19th century. The only other feature observed was part of a large truncated pit predating the walls. A single sherd of late medieval reduced ware pottery and a deer antler were recovered from its fill.

During the 19th century the site fell within the grounds of St Paul's School, and is on the line of a demolished wing extending westwards from the school. Elements of a second wing survive to the north of this wing, appearing stylistically to predate both the school and 110 High Street.

Stony Stratford, Church of St Mary and St Giles

(SP 7869 4047)

Jenny Richards

In April ASC carried out an evaluation at St Mary and St Giles Church, to inform proposals for an extension to the existing building. A brick-lined well and a stone-lined cesspit, containing a substantial assemblage of 19th century artefacts, were revealed. A north-south aligned wall was also observed bounding a compacted sandy floor, overlying a broken, reused gravestone and a deposit of dark soil containing pottery fragments of medieval to 18th century date. These features were interpreted as the remains of a building shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey sheet of 1880. No archaeological features predating the 18th century were observed.

Tylers Green, Gorse View (SU 9029 9384)

Calli Rouse

During February, an evaluation was undertaken at Gorse View in advance of residential development. A modern pit was uncovered at the southern end of the site, but no significant finds or features were observed within the trenches. The garden of Gorse View is dominated by a large hollow, which appears to be an unrecorded clay extraction pit, possibly related to the tile industry in the area.

Waddesdon, Eythrope Park (SP 7703 1415)

Jenny Richards

A watching brief was carried out during alterations to a pond and garden at The Homestead, Eythrope Park, in August and September. The remains of a typical late 19th to early 20th century formal garden were recorded to the north of The Homestead, as well as a sunken garden to the south of the house. The pond embankment had been constructed of redeposited natural clay, and the pond was lined with clay. No finds or features predating the late 19th century were observed.

Wolverton, Holy Trinity Church (SP 8042 4121)

Calli Rouse

In February an evaluation at the Holy Trinity Church, was undertaken in advance of the creation of an additional parking area. The site falls within the boundaries of Old Wolverton Medieval Village, which is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The evaluation uncovered only a post-medieval ditch.

Wolverton, Manor Farm (SP 8072 4176)

Nigel Wilson

During the late summer and autumn a watching brief was carried out at Manor Farm as a condition of scheduled monument consent, during the excavation of a series of service trenches around the farmhouse. The soil profile observed in all the trenches consisted of a modern highly disturbed soil layer overlying the natural limestone. No features or finds of archaeological significance were revealed during the watching brief. Where the trenches met the walls of the house it was found that the footings comprised four of five courses of stone sitting directly on the natural limestone. This is the final stage of archaeological work connected with the refurbishment of this site: previous investigations have included historic building recording (*SMA* 31, 13 & fig 1) and a watching brief and excavation (*SMA* 34, 11).

Wolverton, Radcliffe School (SP 8073 4080)

Alastair Hancock

Following on from initial investigations in 2007 (*SMA* 38, 26), a programme of excavation was undertaken in late 2007 and 2008 on two areas at this site.

In Area 1, on the western edge of the school playing fields, evidence for Roman settlement was revealed, comprising a

number of linear features, interpreted as boundary ditches, a track and several pits. This almost certainly represents a continuation of the extensive multi-period occupation site at Wolverton Mill, beneath the former training college to the west of the school.

Excavations in Area 2, a former allotment at the southern corner of the site, revealed an extensive Saxon cemetery comprising at least eighty-one inhumations. A wide range of burials was found on the site, including adults, juveniles and children. There was at least one possible double burial, and an individual who had been decapitated. Most burials contained a variety of grave goods, including beads, buckles, knives and spearheads. The range of artefacts present indicates a 7th century date for the cemetery, which is one of the largest of this period identified in Buckinghamshire.

The burials form part of a larger Saxon landscape that appears to have centred on an early to middle Saxon enclosure on the training college site. This enclosure was probably the initial focus of Saxon occupation in Wolverton parish, prior to the establishment of the village of Wolverton, its church and castle, a few hundred metres to the north, towards the end of the Saxon period.

Woughton-on-the-Green, Newport Road (SP 8775 3765)

Gareth Shane

In November an evaluation was carried out at Parkside Hotel, Newport Road, prior to the submission of an application for planning permission for extensions to the hotel, formerly Woughton House, a 19th century Grade II listed building that stands on the site of one of the medieval manors of Woughton. The evaluation revealed stone foundations, as well as a pit containing medieval pottery and three ditches that contained no dating evidence.

CHILTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

Dr Jill Eyers

Geophysics and desk based survey of the Hambleden Valley (SU 785 856 [centre point])

The first phase of a multi-phase project saw a large geophysical survey and desk top study undertaken with minor field-walking and metal detecting work throughout the Hambleden Valley. The project is called Romans in the Hambleden Valley and it is an on-going community project. Although the Roman era is the main focus for the initial project aims, the valley has a multi-period archaeological past and all eras will be assessed by the end of the entire project.

The valley was already known to be the location of two Roman villas (Yewden and Mill End), but aerial photographs indicated there is much more archaeology to be investigated in the landscape surrounding these sites.

Resistance surveys covered large areas of the valley and discovered a variety of features including habitation areas, workshops and other outbuildings, potential temples, walls, paths, trackways and field boundaries. The geophysics surveys also allowed a higher resolution of the internal

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structures of the two known villas and their relation to the surrounding archaeology.

Yewden villa was excavated in 1912, but the artefacts have never been researched and much of the collection (such as the pottery) has never been sorted and identified due to the huge quantity of material. The reassessment of this collection started in Phase I and is described in the Phase I report. The work continues into Phase II (2009-2010).

The results so far indicate the valley to have been a very active site during the Roman period. There is clearly a large agricultural base, but with workshop activity which is not yet identified with accuracy (requiring excavation in Phase II) but this is likely to be malting, metal working and perhaps tanning. The large number of styli and the existence of a potential early fort on site indicate a regional administrative role at least for some part of the Roman period. However, the relationship between the two closely associated and seemingly high status villas is not yet unravelled.

Reference

Romans in the Hambleden Valley: Geophysical survey and desk top study. Phase I. *Chiltern Archaeology Report* No. 117, October 2008.

www.chilternarchaeology.com/hambleden.htm

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

Brill, Land at the rear of Brae Hill Road (SP 6528 1405)
Tim Havard

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in April and May 2008. Seven trenches were excavated. Two probable shallow clay extraction pits were recorded with one having been deliberately backfilled. A robbed foundation trench corresponding with a former boundary was identified towards the south-eastern corner of the site. An area of stakeholes identified in Trenches 1 and 7 is also likely to represent an undated boundary. Possible land boundaries identified from aerial photographs were shown to be land drains. No evidence was revealed for the survival of cottages depicted within the site on the 1853 Brill Tithe Map.

High Wycombe, Land off Oxford Road (SU 8626 9330)
Alistair Barber

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between May and June 2007. Three trenches were excavated, as the first phase of a programme of evaluation of the site. Natural alluvial clays and gravels were encountered within all three trenches, overlain in one trench by a thin humic clay representing the early stages of the formation of an undated peat horizon. No archaeological features pre-dating the post-medieval period were encountered. A brick wall, lying immediately east of and parallel with a modern culvert to the west that contains the Hughendon Stream and the remains of a post-medieval or early modern building were noted in one trench.

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

Compiled by David Gilbert

Haddenham, 15 Flint Street (SP7396 0802)
Stephen Hammond and Dave Gilbert

The investigations involved the archaeological inspection of foundation trenches and the digging of an evaluation trench through the location of a proposed swimming pool. No archaeological finds or features were noted in the extension footings whilst machining in the area for the swimming pool down to the level of impact was not deep enough to disturb the majority of the potential deposits. One partially excavated pit containing a single sherd of pottery datable to the 16th-19th centuries was revealed in this area.

Lacey Green, St John CE Combined School (SP 8256 9988)
Gwilym Williams

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at St John's CE Combined School, Lacey Green. The evaluation revealed evidence of a cut feature, which lay at the western end of the evaluation trench and extended beyond the edges of investigation and under the edge of the current school building. It was not possible to conclusively identify the nature of the feature. The cut was in the approximate area of the landscape monument of Grim's Dyke, and was initially believed to be part of the monument. However, pieces of tile and brick were recovered from the fills of the feature that may well be a clay pit rather than an earlier monument.

Penn, Church Street, Penn Ridge (SU 9134 9330)
John Moore

An archaeological watching brief was conducted during removal of foundations for the existing residence. No finds of archaeological importance were observed and it was clear that there was no potential for remains in the area of the proposed new build.

Princes Risborough, St Mary's Church (SU 8059 0350)
Dave Gilbert, Helen Noakes and Clare Roberts

An archaeological investigation was carried out at St Mary's Church in March 2008. This had involved the inspection, excavation and recording of the site strip for the footprint of the new building and the associated service trenches. Twenty inhumations and graves were located at a depth of between 0.7m and 1.39m in the extension footings, associated services and one pile position; later excavation of the service trenches around the completed building located three more inhumations at around 0.7m. The sample represents a typical parish church cemetery population of the post-medieval period.

Shabbington, Franklins Farm House (SP 6659 0687)
Gwilym Williams and Dave Gilbert

An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land to the rear of Mill Road, Shabbington at Franklins Farm. The

evaluation revealed evidence of intensive medieval use of the rear of the plot, comprising some pitting and postholes. This may indicate the presence of structures within the plot boundary. Ditches, at right angles to the street frontage onto Ickford Road, and forming sub-divisions of the current plot may indicate that the current property is formed of at least two plots with internal divisions within each boundary.

Shabbington, Mill Road, The Willows (SP 66552 06843)
Daniel Sausins

A watching brief was carried out during the reduced dig to create a level surface for a ménage. Late Iron Age to early Roman and 2nd to 4th century activity in the form of drainage and boundary ditches with some pits was present. Medieval drainage and boundary ditches were also present dating to 11th to 13th centuries. Environmental remains show evidence of a Roman settlement with a very similar agricultural economy to the farming settlements of the gravel terraces of the Upper Thames Valley.

Stoke Mandeville, Old Moat Farm (SP 8276 1040)
Clare Roberts

A watching brief was conducted during the excavation of patio and extension footings next to the house, and during the excavation of a sewerage trench running from the house. This ran into the centre of the moat area of the medieval moated site. Fills of the moat were recorded. The moat appears to have been kept open until at least the late 19th or early 20th century according to the maps, and finds from within the moat's fill included metal sheeting, which seems to confirm this date.

NATIONAL TRUST
Gary Marshall

Stowe Home Farm mill pond (SP66953782)

Several years ago, with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Trust was able to undertake the dredging and restoration of the mill pond at Stowe Home Farm. Over the years the pond, which fed a 19th century saw mill, had become choked with silt and scrub. Since achieving this task the Trust has unfortunately experienced regular problems with leakages and with sections of the brick-built dam wall collapsing, a problem which recurred in 2008 when a large vertical hole appeared in the dam caused by water seeping behind the dam and finding its way to a redundant brick culvert. Excavations to facilitate the blocking of this leak revealed that the clay core of the dam incorporates a number of oak timbers located at a depth of up to 3m below the surface of the dam. Several of these timbers are jointed with mortise and tenon joints and the reason for their construction appears to be that they formed a substantial frame around which to build the clay core of the dam. A second group of timbers consists of four vertical corner posts holding in place a series of short planks forming a box frame around the mouth of the brick culvert. The purpose of this box remains uncertain but it is possible

that it originally extended through the full height of the dam and formed an overflow channel to carry away excess water during periods of heavy rainfall. If any readers of *SMA* have experienced similar structures in a dam or pond the Trust would be keen to know precisely what these timbers were for. Samples were taken for dendro dating and these suggest a felling date range of 1819-36 ie about 20 years after the construction of the farm. It is almost certain that this gives a date for the construction of the dam, and also for the brick-built saw mill, which is first shown on the Tithe map of the 1840s.

Stowe Gardens, Pegg's Terrace (SP67753690)

As part of their continuing restoration programme the National Trust have gradually been reinstating the network of 18th century paths around the gardens at Stowe. The latest area where this has taken place is on the south side of the Octagon Lake between the Lake Pavilions and the Pebble Alcove. Trial trenching using a JCB has revealed the original course of the gravel paths between these two temples, and as a consequence the new paths follow the exact line of the originals. This is an important consideration in following the original design of the gardens as the network of serpentine paths provided a sequence of continually changing views to the various monuments. The recent restoration work has also included restoring the original alignment of Pegg's Terrace on the south side of the gardens. This was one of several major carriage drives around the gardens named after the head gardeners. Excavations were carried out on the south side of the terrace to allow for the installation of French drains and as a consequence it was discovered that the original width of the gravel terrace which was about 3-4m greater than its condition in 2008, meaning that in its original form it aligned directly with the leading edge of the steps on the two Lake Pavilions. Though the gravel was no more than 5 - 10cm in thickness it underlines the importance within a garden restoration scheme of fragmentary evidence which can assist with the accurate reinstatement of elements not accurately recorded from documentary sources.

Stowe New Inn (SP68173641)

A series of small test pits for taking samples for chemical analysis were excavated around the buildings at New Inn. These were monitored as a watching brief by the National Trust and although little of note was recorded the excavations did reveal a brick path on the south-west corner of the farm, and a cobbled surface within the main courtyard. Major works to restore the buildings at New Inn are due to commence in 2010 and these will be the subject of watching briefs over the buildings and excavations for services and to create a new car park.

Cliveden (SU91038517)

A Conservation Management Plan is currently being prepared for the gardens and buildings at Cliveden and as part of the plan process Wessex Archaeology have completed a survey of earthworks within the wooded areas of the gardens. The survey has recorded a number of slight

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terraces and breaks of slope which can be reconciled with terrace walks and paths shown on Richardson's map of the garden landscape dating from 1749.³ The survey has also recorded a series of chalk quarries and miscellaneous features such as linear banks and ditches relating to the Pheasantry shown on the 1740 map. Further surveys of the remaining areas of the gardens are to be undertaken in 2009.

Boarstall Tower (SP62421425)

As part of National Archaeology Week in July of 2008 the National Trust carried out excavations and survey at Boarstall Tower, located on the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border between Bicester and Aylesbury. The excavations were designed to investigate potential buried evidence for the former Tudor (?) house at the centre of the moated complex. It is thought to have been pulled down by the Aubrey family in 1778 after the death of their young son. The building is shown in superb detail on a bird's eye engraving dating from 1695, and the footprint also appears on several geophysics surveys conducted over the site.

Over the nine days period a determined and enthusiastic band of volunteers carried out the excavation of five trial trenches. Three of these trenches encountered structural evidence, locating what is thought to have been a projecting porch on the north front and the north-east corner of the building. One of the trenches was positioned to locate the southern limit of the complex and this unearthed a complex of three brick-built ovens, the largest of which is thought to have been a bread oven. The evidence from the other two trenches suggests that the site was heavily robbed at the time that the building was demolished. Any salvageable materials, including bricks, roof tiles and floor tiles, all appear to have been removed, leaving only unusable broken fragments, though having said this the excavations did recover fragments of decorated medieval floor tile and glazed roof tile. The pottery evidence from the site suggests that it may have been occupied from the late 11th or early 12th century, thus pre-dating the 1312 date of the surviving tower by several hundred years.

The project was generously funded by a grant from the Bucks Archaeological Society and also from the Bucks Historic Gardens Trust. Post excavation work is now underway and the results of the excavation will eventually be published in Records of Buckinghamshire.

NETWORK ARCHAEOLOGY

Borrow pits: A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypass (SP 90000 23980)

Richard Moore and Stephen Thorpe

A small group of intercutting ditches were excavated in November 2006 in the eastern corner of an area to the north-east of the A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade western bypass, then under construction, close to its junction with the A418 Wing road (SP 90140 23960). One of these ditches produced a moderate amount of Iron Age pottery along with animal bone, suggesting that it was close to a site of domestic settlement. Previous investigations

within the road construction corridor had identified an Iron Age and Roman site considered to be of at least regional significance in the field to the north of these areas. (Moore *et al*, *Recs Bucks* vol.47 2007, 1-62).

Field system ditches further west (SP 89940 23990) may have been associated with this possible domestic settlement, although these produced very few artefacts. Traces of ridge-and-furrow were also recorded in this area, with more extensive remains in on the south-west side of the new road. This area (centred on SP 89900 23850) also produced a scatter of worked flint from the subsoil surface.

Further details are in: A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypass, Borrow Pits: archaeological watching brief and excavation; Network Archaeology Ltd report 554.

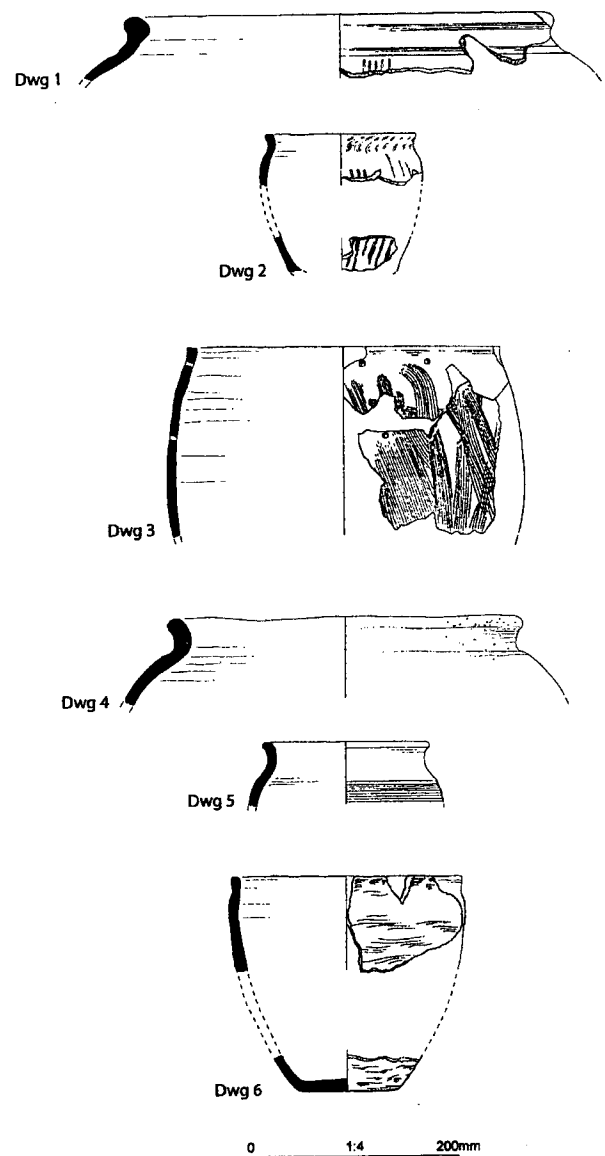


Fig 2. Fabric (Bedfordshire type series)

Sandy (as F35 but lacking mica)

Shelly (F07)

Grog-tempered (F06B)

Shelly (F07)

Grog-tempered (F06B)

Comments

Handmade.

Handmade with vertical scoring.

Handmade; combed decoration; possible repair holes.

Handmade.

Wheelthrown; rilling below neck; heavily sooted.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Compiled and edited by Edward Biddulph

Brill, 16-18 Church Street (SP 6553 1377)

James Mumford

In December 2007 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Stephen Moss Developments. The evaluation revealed a quarry relating to the excavation of material for the manufacture of brick and tile in Brill. The absence of any significant quantities of medieval Brill ware suggest that the immediate area, while used for quarries, was not close to any pottery production site. A ditch containing pottery dating from the 16th to 19th centuries possibly marked the boundary between the quarry and the village. A garden with a thick cultivated garden soil, which formed the ground level until a garage was built in the late 20th century, was also uncovered.

Cold Brayfield, Brayfield Estate (SP 93369 52140)

Daniel Dodds

Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Natural England. The earliest phase of activity was represented by north-south and east-west aligned ditches, probably part of a Roman-period field system. Fired clay kiln-furniture and debris recovered from one of the ditches was in very good condition, suggesting that the kiln site was nearby. None of the pottery collected from the site showed obvious signs of firing-damage, but generally suggested a 3rd century date for the system. The fieldwork also uncovered a group of pits and a second complex of ditches, which were higher in the stratigraphic sequence and dated to the 3rd or 4th century. A possible gravel extraction pit, post-medieval in date, was recorded.

Marlow, 23-25 High Street (SU 849 865)

Mike Sims

An evaluation by Oxford Archaeology at 23-25 High Street for Comland Commercial plc revealed layers of post-medieval occupation deposits cut by a chalk block lined feature. This is a probable well, or possibly a cess pit, that had been reused as a rubbish pit in the 19th/20th centuries. No evidence for any earlier periods, including any possible structures was observed.

Milton Keynes, Brooklands (SP 907 397)

Daniel Stansbie

Oxford archaeology continued a strip, map and sample excavation (see *SMA* 38) on behalf of CgMs Consulting, acting for Places for People Ltd, Cofton Ltd, Hallam Land Management Ltd and William Davis Ltd. The Brooklands development is located on the eastern flank of Milton Keynes. The excavation focused on three areas (numbered 2, 3 and 4) of extensive archaeology previously revealed by geophysical prospection and evaluation trenches.

The earliest evidence for activity in Area 2 comprised three gravel extraction pits. The heavily plough-truncated pits produced four sherds of 12th century pottery. Two ditch

termini may also belong to this phase, as an upper fill contained 12th century pottery. Two enclosures were established by the mid 13th to mid 14th century. There was no evidence for structures inside them, but a number of pits were uncovered. A narrow ditch extended across the site. No dating evidence was recovered, but the ditch may have been contemporary with enclosures. Three small pits located outside the enclosures contained mid 13th to 14th century pottery and the articulated remains of sheep. After the enclosures were abandoned, activity was limited to the digging of a gully, which went out of use at some point in the mid 14th to 16th century.

The earliest activity in Area 3 also dated to the medieval period. It comprised a number of short ditches and gullies, along with a stone-lined well and a dense scatter of pits and postholes. The ditches and gullies are likely to represent the boundaries of a sub-rectangular enclosure, possibly a tenement or part of a tenement bounded by Broughton Grounds Lane. The well, measuring 2m in diameter by 3.5m in depth, was lined with squared limestone blocks and was backfilled with a series of silty clay dumps, the lowest of which contained pottery dating up to the 16th century. Some of the larger features probably represent gravel extraction pits. Post-medieval plough furrows and a land drain were encountered.

Excavation in Area 4 revealed evidence dating to the Roman period beginning with series of ditches, which have been assigned to the early Roman period on stratigraphic grounds. At some point, probably in the early 2nd century, the landscape was remodelled, with the addition of three new enclosures (one of which contained a corn drier), and a track or driveway. The triangular shaped corn drier was made of roughly shaped limestone blocks with up to four courses surviving. Three large amorphous quarry hollows or waterholes averaged 4.5m in diameter and produced assemblages of Roman pottery and ceramic building material. There is no evidence for occupation in Area 4 after the Roman period, although a series of regularly spaced plough furrows dated by pottery to the 14th or 15th century indicate that the area had been turned over to agricultural activity by that time.

Penn, Church Road (SU 9084 9341)

James Mumford

Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation at Winter's Garage on behalf of Mr T Winter. The two-trench evaluation revealed a quarry pit dated by tile and pottery to the 14th/15th century. The feature itself and the quantities of tile fragments in its backfill are consistent with a group of quarry pits along the north side of Church Road and a clay pit opposite the present site that relate to a medieval tile making industry. The quarry was sealed below a thick cultivated garden soil dating to the 19th century. This provided the necessary levelling when the next-door house, 'Hampdens', was built in 1906.

RAF High Wycombe

Mike Sims

(a) SU 829 988. Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief on Grim's Ditch on behalf of Costain Ltd. This

exposed a section across the ditch, confirming its known dimensions and also identifying a possible earlier feature on its northern edge. However, no dating evidence was recovered. Elsewhere the watching brief encountered natural deposits and areas of modern intrusion.

(b) SU 834 787. A subsequent evaluation for Debut Services Ltd revealed extensive truncation within the northern extent of the site exposing colluvial deposits directly below layers of modern made-ground and landscaping deposits. Two sherds of black-burnished ware and a sandy grey ware found in a tree-throw suggest Roman-period activity in the vicinity. A probable post-medieval field boundary ditch was also recorded. Another part of Grim's Ditch was recorded outside the footprint of the proposed development, although no dating evidence was recovered from its fills.

Thornborough, Old Manor (SU 741 336)

Mike Sims

An evaluation by Oxford Archaeology for Mr and Mrs Hall revealed layers of modern worked soil overlying natural clay and alluvial deposits.

RICHARD IVENS

Olney, 23a East Street (SP 8898 5175)

A watching brief was maintained during groundworks in connection with extensions to 23a East Street, Olney. The site proved to have been much disturbed in modern times and only very slight traces of medieval and post-medieval activity were observed.

THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

Aylesbury, Masonic Hall, Ripon Street

(SP 8169 1399)

Andy Munda

Nothing of archaeological interest was observed during a watching brief.

Bletchley, Romansfield School, Shenley Road

(SP 8526 3432)

Andy Taylor

During an evaluation, two ditches, either field boundaries or enclosure ditches, one late Iron Age or Roman, one undated, were discovered. These were either contemporary with or earlier than Roman deposits found during the school's original construction. Worked flints and 14th century pottery are likely to be residual or to result from manuring.

Boarstall, Village Farm, Main Road (SP 6254 1432)
Danielle Milbank

Evaluation trenching revealed a late medieval kiln, ditches and a post hole, along with several undated features. Boarstall is well known as a regionally important centre of the medieval pottery industry.

Brill, 52 Temple Street (SP 6562 1414)

Joanna Pine and Andy Munda

Despite the potential for medieval evidence, no finds or features were discovered.

Burnham, Sand Lodge, 659 Bath Road (SU 9235 8115)
Steve Ford

No features of archaeological interest were revealed by evaluation trenching; two flint flakes indicate a low level of prehistoric activity in the area.

Haddenham, 23 High Street (SP 7398 0852)

Andrew Weale

The earliest deposits were two medieval pits, one dated by just a single sherd of pottery, the other below the street frontage. One gully contained late post medieval pottery, other features were of 19th and 20th century date. Two undated phases of structural remains discovered at the street frontage are believed to belong to buildings shown on a map of 1799.

Haddenham, 5 Townsend (SP 7414 0912)

Sean Wallis

The evaluation revealed numerous features typical of early medieval occupation, dating to the 11th - 13th century. Saxon pottery was present, although Saxon deposits were not. Saxon or early medieval features were discovered.

Hanslope, Cuckoo Hill Farm (SP 7995 4660)

Simon Cass

The presence of ridge and furrow across the site suggested no contemporary medieval or post medieval occupation. The possible features examined were undated and of dubious antiquity.

High Wycombe, 30-48 Castle Street (SU 8675 9305)

Andy Taylor, Jennifer Lowe

No archaeological finds or features were discovered.

High Wycombe, 473 West Wycombe Road

(SU 8350 9457)

Simon Cass

Three undated postholes and a Roman well, backfilled in the 2nd century AD, were recorded. A modest collection (72

Buckinghamshire

sherds) of pottery came from the well, which was only partially excavated.

Saunderton, Molins, Haw Lane (SU 8075 9850)

David Platt and Andy Taylor

Terracing had truncated most of the site. Even in the parts that had not been disturbed, no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed.

Stokenchurch, Mallards Court, Park Lane

(SU 7616 9672)

Andy Taylor

Nothing of archaeological interest was observed during evaluation trenching.

Terrick, Chalkshire Road (SP 8398 0808)

Simon Cass

Three furrows, the remains of a medieval ridge and furrow system, were investigated. No finds nor other deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Wendover, Red Lion Hotel, High Street (SP 8691 0781)

Andy Taylor

The site was in the town's historic core, to the rear of a listed building, but no deposits or finds of archaeological interest were discovered. Modern material was noted.

Wing, Wing Lodge (SP 8808 2240)

Andy Taylor and Steve Ford

One Roman and two medieval (12th - 14th century) ditches were discovered. Roman sherds and struck flints were also present. A further ditch and post hole were undated.

WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

High Wycombe, Ercol Furniture Site, London Road

SU 88350 92520

The site of the former Ercol factory was subject to a small area excavation and an evaluation comprising five trenches. The natural chalk was overlain by modern made ground. The 10m by 10m excavation, targeted two possibly prehistoric features recorded during an evaluation by AOC archaeology in 2006, revealed no additional features apart from a tree-throw hole. The only feature recorded during the evaluation was a large subcircular feature, probably a natural solution hollow, from the upper fill of which a small number of finds (two animal bones and ceramic building material) were recovered.

Stoke Poges, The Manor House (SU 97570 82880)

An evaluation comprising seven trenches was undertaken on land to the north and east of The Manor House, Stoke

Poges, which may originally have been part of the service wing of the 16th century manor house. Although the truncation of deposits by modern landscaping was noted in several trenches, the evaluation revealed evidence of late 17th century rebuilding work and a cobbled surface immediately north of the present building. No evidence was found of the 16th century manor house, although a raised platform southwest of the present building suggests its original ground plan may have extended in that direction.

Post-medieval postholes were recorded further to the north of the present building, and to the northeast there was a substantial robbed out brick wall and ditch, possibly a medieval or post-medieval garden feature or boundary.

Time Team Report

Chesham Bois, Chesham Bois House, 85 Bois Lane

SV 9680 9970

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to carry out archaeological recording and post-excavation analysis on an archaeological evaluation by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at Chesham Bois House in Buckinghamshire, centred on SV 9680 9970. The evaluation area comprised the garden of Chesham Bois House and the Church Field, the field adjacent to St. Leonard's Church, which contains several earthworks, some 80m to the north-east.

The manor of Chesham Bois can be traced back to the Saxon period, transferring into the ownership of Odo of Bayeaux after the Norman Conquest. The manor later passed through several owners including the du Bois, the Cheynes and in the 18th century, the Duke of Bedford. An estate map made for the Duke of Bedford in 1735 shows an extensive house, outbuildings, a bowling green and formal ornamental grounds. After a period of tenancy the house appears to have been allowed to fall into decay and was finally demolished in the late 18th or early 19th century. The present Chesham Bois House was probably built in around 1820.

The objective of the evaluation was to investigate the occupation and development of the site, particularly the structural evolution of medieval and post medieval buildings, and evidence of any early domestic and craft activities. This continues the work of the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society Field Group, who carried out limited geophysical and topographic surveys at Chesham Bois House and the Church Field and excavated a number of hand-dug trenches in the garden of Chesham Bois House in 2004.

Medieval features and deposits were encountered in one trench to the south of the present Chesham Bois House and in two trenches in the Church Field, along with post-medieval and modern remains, which were recorded in almost all trenches. A series of hearths and associated structures and deposits excavated to the south of Chesham Bois House appear to be of later medieval and early post-medieval date and probably represent a kitchen or bakehouse either within the manor house, or in a separate, auxiliary building. The large boundary ditch, examined in the Church Field, which appears to surround the present house and garden, and presumably the earlier manorial complex, was probably constructed some time in the

Northamptonshire

medieval period and eventually backfilled in the early post-medieval period.

The structural remains recorded in trenches to the west and north-west of Chesham Bois House are of post-medieval date, and may represent parts of the buildings depicted on the 1735 Bedford estate map.

The full assessment report can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/timeteam/reports>.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

ALBION ARCHAEOLOGY

Rushden, Westwood Biogas Plant (SP 9889/6323)

Adam Lodoen and Robert Wardill

Trial trenching identified the remains of an extensive former field system. Although no dating evidence was recovered, its form was characteristic of similar systems dating to the Roman period. A subsequent watching brief on construction groundworks identified further elements of the field system; however, no reliable evidence was recovered to confirm its putative Roman date.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Compiled by Pat Chapman

Ashby St Ledgers, Main Street, Corner Farm (SP 57210 68119)

Leon Field

Building recording and watching brief was carried out at Corner Farm. This is an early 18th century two-storey, three-bay house listed Grade II (17/39), which was extended by the addition of a further two bays and second floor in the later 18th century. Few original features survive inside due to recent fire damage and alterations. Much of the upper storeys had been completely remodelled following the fire, with only the ground floor showing any early features. OASIS 55542

Brackley, Brackley Park Playground (SP 587 373)

David Leigh

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken at Brackley Park Playground on behalf of The National Trust. The work comprised the archaeological excavation of a single pit for a new trampoline followed by a watching brief during the replacement of the remaining playground equipment. A truncated natural substratum was present across all of the development area. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

Braybrooke, Braybrooke Castle (SP 76811 84591)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new stone ford at

Braybrooke Castle. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

Burton Latimer, 111 High Street (SP 900 746)

Tim Upson-Smith

An assessment of the attic space at 111 High Street was carried out. The surviving thatched roof was in poor condition. The walls of the building had been raised to accommodate a slate roof over the original thatched roof. The roof structure in some cases utilised roughly squared branches and untrimmed branches. As such the roof is a fairly typical example of a small vernacular building, comparable with others across the county. OASIS 55479

Denton to Brafield, Anglian Water Pipeline (SP 829 582)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for the laying of the new Denton to Brafield Anglian Water Pipeline. Undisturbed soils were noted within the pasture fields with plough soils presents within those fields currently in agricultural use. No archaeological deposits were present and one un-stratified sherd of Roman pottery was recovered.

Fawsley, The Church of St Mary the Virgin (SP 565 568)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the laying of new drainage channels at The Church of St Mary the Virgin. No archaeological deposits were present.

Gayton, The Church of St Mary the Virgin (SP 706 547)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during new drainage works at The Church of St Mary the Virgin, on behalf of CgMs Consulting. The excavation comprised a new drainage trench which extended from the north-east corner of the church across the churchyard to the northern wall of the churchyard adjacent to the main entrance. Articulated burials were noted between 0.30m and 0.50m deep as a result of the higher ground level in the north-west corner of the churchyard. No other archaeological deposits were present, and no artefacts were recovered.

Harpole, Barn Close and Harpit

(SP 6890 6200 and SP 6000 5840)

Adrian Butler

Geophysical survey was conducted on behalf of CLASP (Community Landscape and Archaeology Survey Project) on sites considered likely to contain Roman buildings. At Barn Close gradiometer survey revealed a succession of ditched field systems, at the centre of which earth resistance survey identified the remains of a probable Roman courtyard villa. Two kilometres south at Harpit further field systems were identified by gradiometer survey, but earth

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resistance survey revealed few indications of masonry structures.

Harpole, The Old Rectory (SP 690 610)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new swimming pool and a small building on land at The Old Rectory. A truncated natural substratum was present across all of the development area. No archaeological deposits and no artefacts were present.

Helmdon, 47 - 55 Church Street (SP 589 434)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new residential development on land to the rear of 47 - 55 Church Street. An undisturbed stratigraphy was present across all of the development area. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

Irthlingborough, Victoria Street, Atlanta Works

(SP 9419 7044)

Joe Prentice

Archaeological desk-based assessment and building survey was carried out on the site at Atlanta works. The present site comprises a variety of buildings, all of which are constructed in red brick. The first building was relatively small, but well built, and of a coherent four-bay design spread over three floors with a small extension at the north-west corner. It was relatively narrow and would have been exceptionally well lit, with large windows on both the north and south sides. The first expansion doubled the space available, and then each subsequent addition added on a similar-sized area each time until the present layout was reached, all completed by 1926. The bulk of the present factory therefore dates to the early years of the 20th century. The quality of the first phase is good, if unremarkable, but each subsequent phase is less so and the later additions are not only built with cheap materials, but are poorly put together. The re-use of the large cast iron windows can be seen either as a sensible recycling of materials or an indication that the owners wished to maximise output but minimise outlay. OASIS 5590

Kettering, Lower Street, Chesham House

(SP 8649 7888)

Joe Prentice

Chesham House, a Grade II listed building, is a late 18th century stucco-fronted house with a Welsh slate roof. It comprises three storeys, and three bays with a stone cornice moulding at eaves level. The windows on the principal elevation are fitted with sash windows beneath gauged heads with keystones. There is a later 19th century canted bay window on the ground floor. The main entrance door comprises a four panel door in a surround with engaged columns, entablatures with swags and urns to frieze with an

open pediment above a rectangular traceried fanlight. An extension to the building is also stuccoed with a slate roof. It has three floors and a less regular principal façade and arrangement of windows. It is possible that this different fenestration reflects different usage, perhaps being used as the Gotch boot and shoe business offices. A slightly forward-projecting range at the southern end appears to be the truncated remains of a now largely demolished range shown on the 1826 and 1886 maps.

Kettering, Market Place (SP 866 784)

Jim Brown

A watching brief was conducted at the Market Place at the time of geotechnical test pit excavation conducted in advance of its rejuvenation. Remains of late post-medieval structures were observed in two of the three pits located under the car park at the southern end of the site and relate to the former properties demolished c 1926-1950. The features that were identified comprised an ironstone cellar wall, a brick-lined pit and an ironstone wall footing. No other archaeology was observed and no finds were retained. OASIS 55481

Milton Malsor (SP 73200 54800)

Stephen Morris

A fieldwalking survey was conducted on farmland at Milton Malsor to the south of Northampton. The development area comprised 39 fields totalling 410ha of which 11 fields, covering 83ha were suitable for walking. A small number of worked flints were recovered, but with no significant concentration. A single sherd of late Iron Age pottery was recovered and a light spread of Roman pottery. Medieval pottery was present in two areas of concentrations and a low to moderate manure scatter. Most of the post-medieval finds probably relate to field manuring, but the two concentrations of post-medieval pottery possibly relate to rubbish tipping. A general, but light scatter of medieval and post-medieval roof tile, metalworking debris and clay pipe were also collected. Other finds were minimal, but included fragments of medieval and post-medieval whetstones.

Northampton, Little Houghton, 'Old' Bedford Road

(SP 480400 59600)

John Walford and Stephen Morris

Geophysical survey followed by archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out on a plot of land off the 'Old' Bedford Road. Ditches of Iron Age and Roman date were found, but dominating both trenches were three large Victorian rubbish pits, from which several pieces of 18th to 19th century porcelain were recovered, including two fine 18th century Chinese export serving plates, for the western market. The plates measured approximately 450mm in diameter and both had cobalt blue decoration depicting Chinese landscapes, one with a Chinese lady and the other with two peacocks (Fig 1). OASIS 55875

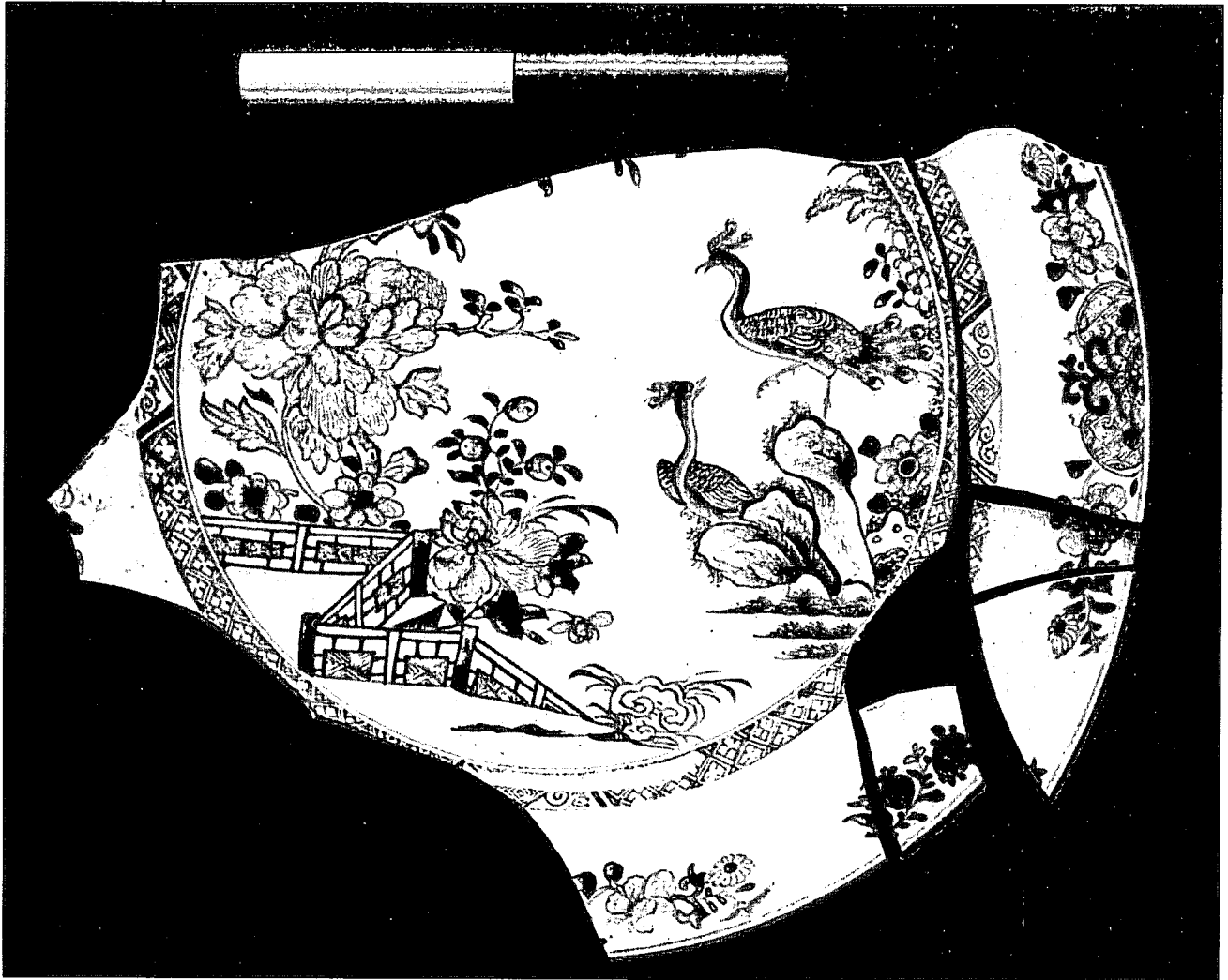


Fig 1. Eighteenth-century Chinese export serving plate from Victorian rubbish pits at Little Houghton, Northampton (Scale 200mm)

Northampton, Milton Ham (SP 730 573)
Anne Foard-Colby

A Romano-British 'ladder' enclosure was excavated at Milton Ham, following an evaluation in 2002 by NA (*SMA* 33 (2003), 52). The earliest evidence for activity on the site dates to the late 2nd/early 3rd centuries AD and comprised a number of small gullies and a small oven. Two cremation burials probably date of the same period, were recovered from the southern part of the site. The 'ladder' enclosure system, which is dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, was 150m long by 35m wide and was divided into several sub-enclosures. There was a triangular annexe on the eastern side. Access to the annexe and 'ladder' enclosure system appears to have been from the east. There was no clear evidence for habitation within the enclosure or annexe, although the pottery, glass and building material suggest that there was a building nearby. Medieval furrows and a possible headland were also identified. (Fig 2)

Northampton, Western View (SP 7491 6044)
Mark Patenall

A watching brief was commissioned by Clayson Country Homes Ltd on land at Western View, which lay within the outer bailey of Northampton Castle. Immediately below

modern deposits, there was natural ironstone, disturbed by numerous modern services. No archaeological deposits or finds were present.

Northampton, Wootton (SP 775 565)
Simon Carlyle

Following detailed geophysical survey by Northamptonshire Archaeology, three areas of archaeological interest were investigated by trial trench evaluation, on behalf of GgMs Consulting. Two, possibly three Bronze Age ring ditches, probably the remains of round barrows, were situated on Hunsbury Ridge, and another ring ditch, possibly the remains of a Bronze Age barrow, lay on lower ground south of Wootton Brook. A Bronze Age pit, containing cremated animal bone and three flint barbed-and-tanged arrowheads lay north of Wootton Brook. There was a dispersed pattern of Iron Age field or enclosure ditches as well as a ring ditch and a middle/late Iron Age settlement comprising a sub-rectangular, double-ditched enclosure and a number of subsidiary enclosures and pits to the south of Wootton Brook. Medieval/post-medieval furrows were encountered in the majority of trenches in the central and northern parts of the site. There was evidence of quarrying in the 19th century to the east of Hardingstone.

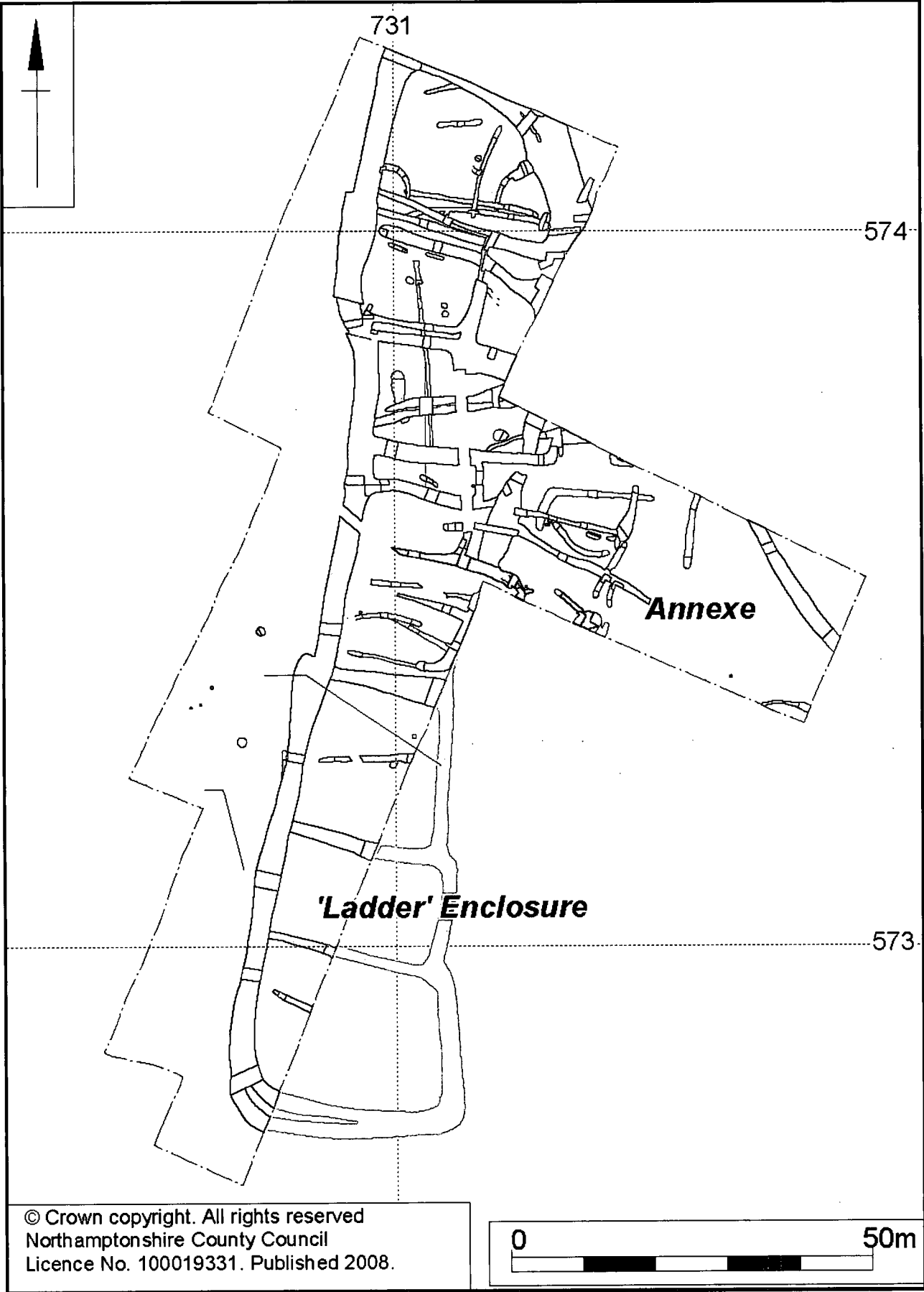


Fig 2, The late Roman ladder enclosure at Milton Ham, Northampton.

Northamptonshire

Oundle, Ashton Road and Herne Road (TL 0455 8794)
Ian Fisher

A gradiometer survey was commissioned by Twigden Homes across a proposed development area on land between Ashton Road and Herne Road. The survey covered all or part of five fields, totalling 2.7ha, identifying three potential archaeological anomalies. Gradiometer survey also mapped the medieval ridge and furrow and modern pipes.

Oundle, 18-20 Benefield Road (TL 0357 8820)
Joe Prentice

Desk-based and building assessment revealed that the two cottages, dated to the 17th century and listed Grade II, had been originally built as one-up one-down structures, with the upper room contained within the eaves and probably had thatched roofs. They were each constructed of dressed, coursed limestone, with a single door and window on the ground, and two windows on the first floor, although the majority of the façade of Number 18 is cement-rendered, apparently the result of much of the front wall collapsing and having been rebuilt in brick during the 20th century. The roofs are covered with Collyweston stone slates. At some stage during the 19th century the upper walls were raised to provide more headroom on the first floor. Probably at the same time the dividing wall between the two properties was replaced in brick. On the ground floor this has subsequently been replaced by modern brickwork and breeze blocks.

Oundle, Oundle School, Gascoigne Building
(TL 0420 8826)
David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a new wall and gateway on land at the Gascoigne Building, Oundle School which lies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 200) and Conservation Area of the historic town. A truncated natural substratum was present within the area of the groundworks. No archaeological deposits were present.

Oundle Station Road, Riverside (TL 046 889)
Joe Prentice and Jim Brown

A desk-based assessment and building survey was conducted on the present buildings, most recently named The Riverside public house. The main building is a four-square stone structure of two storeys with a single-storey wing on the south side. A separate barn of three open bays with a two-storey attached range lies to the south, all built shortly after the construction of the railway station in 1845-1851. The Railway Hotel, as it was then called, provided refreshment and accommodation for passengers using the Blisworth to Peterborough line of the London and North Western Railway. OASIS 55488

Preston Capes, Preston Capes Manor (SP 57650 54850)
Iain Soden

A watching brief was conducted throughout works to refurbish the house, outbuildings and grounds at the manor. A variety of structural features of potential medieval date and others of post-medieval origin were recorded, apparently connected with earlier manor layouts and the pre-existing motte and bailey castle. These may include part of the bailey defences and a possible manorial chapel. Fragments of painted wall-plaster were recovered from below the south room of the manor house, associated with wall foundations surviving below the floor. The plaster bears traces of a simple line-painted design in black executed with two separate brushes of c3mm and 5mm width. Areas or panels between some of the lines are filled in with a mid-grey wash. While no specific design is recognisable some of the angles they make and the arcs they describe are redolent of architectural tracery. Black and white painted schemes on wall plaster were particularly popular in the later 16th century. OASIS 55886

Raunds Area Project

Andy Chapman

Those aspects of the Raunds Area Project for which Northamptonshire Archaeology has been responsible are now all finally published. The volume describing the church and cemetery at Furnells manor, Raunds, was published by English Heritage in 1996 (Boddington, A, 1996 *Raunds, Furnells, The Anglo-Saxon church and churchyard*, English Heritage Archaeological Report, 7). The companion volume describing the early Saxon to medieval settlement in north Raunds, including Furnells manor, was published at the beginning of 2009 (Audouy M and Chapman A (ed) 2009; *Raunds: the origin and growth of a midland village, AD 450-1500. Excavations in north Raunds, Northamptonshire 1977-87*) and is available from Oxbow Books. The volume describing the excavation of the deserted medieval hamlet of West Cotton, Raunds will be available later in 2009, also from Oxbow Books (Chapman A 2009; *West Cotton, Raunds: a study of medieval settlement dynamics, AD 450-1450. Excavation of a deserted medieval hamlet in Northamptonshire, 1985-9*). The results of the Raunds Survey are also available from Oxbow Books (Parry S 2006; *Raunds Area Survey: An Archaeological study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire 1985-92*).

The volume describing the Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments has been published by English Heritage (Harding J and Healy F 2007; *A Neolithic and Bronze Age Landscape in Northamptonshire*, English Heritage). This volume is available either as a free download from the English Heritage web site (www.english-heritage.org.uk), follow the path: Home/Learning and Resources/Publications/Research Monographs) or as a Print On Demand (POD) volume, details on the EH website. Some of the Saxon and medieval finds from both Furnells manor and West Cotton will be on long-term display at the new Stanwick Lakes Visitor Centre, which opened Easter 2009.

Rushden, Higham Park Road, Higham Park Farm House (SP 982, 643)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new extension and the excavation of a service trench on land at Higham Park Farm House. A truncated natural substratum was present in the area of the new extension whilst undisturbed soils were noted throughout the length of the service trench. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

Thorpe Mandeville to Greatworth, Anglian Water pipeline (SP 521443 to 568422)

Mark Patenall

Excavations and a watching brief were undertaken during groundworks associated with the laying of a new Anglian Water pipeline between Thorpe Mandeville and Greatworth. Excavations were focused on two sites - one middle Iron Age and the other early Roman - which had been identified by previous geophysical survey (*SMA* 38 (2008) 44). The scheme-wide watching brief yielded little more of interest. A single Beaker sherd indicated at least a minimal Bronze Age presence.

Upton, Cross Valley Link Road

(SP 708 602 to SP 710 587)

Simon Carlyle

An archaeological strip, map and sample excavation was carried out during the construction of the Cross Valley Link Road (CVLR) at Upton, on the western outskirts of Northampton. The investigation confirmed the presence of an Iron Age pit alignment, which had been identified by earlier archaeological evaluation (*SMA* 37 (2007), 20). A gully, possibly part of a Roman or early medieval field system, and medieval furrows were also identified. In addition, an archaeological watching brief was maintained during construction work on the new road and river crossing over the River Nene. No significant archaeological remains were identified within the road corridor, although a sharpened wooden stake/peg, radiocarbon dated to the middle Saxon period, (Cal AD 650-780, 95% confidence, 1300 ± 40BP, Beta 238064), was recovered from the base of a possible palaeochannel.

Upton, Flood Alleviation Works

(SP 700, 596 – SP 720, 590)

David Leigh

A watching brief was undertaken during Phase 3 of Flood Alleviation Works at Upton. The work comprised archaeological observation during the stripping of topsoil and subsoil along the line of the new flood defences. Undisturbed soils were recorded throughout the area of observation. The only archaeological features present were the surviving earthworks of medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation.

Weedon, Watling Street, Weedon's Manor Farm

(SP 6327 5970)

Iain Soden

Building recording was carried out on the farmhouse at Weedon's Manor Farm, listed Grade II. It was built on the Watling Street in the early 18th century, perhaps 1710-1720, in the local vernacular style of a simple, three-cell plan. It was extended twice, the first time around 1800, the second before 1860. For much of the 18th and 19th century it was better known as the Bull Inn, a coaching inn.

A series of outbuildings, listed by curtilage, lie to its rear. These constitute a complex of farm ranges of different phases of construction. The earliest is probably coeval with the farmhouse, while the others are of a variety of dates as late as 1885-1905. Together they constituted a working farm given over to a mixed arable and pastoral regime. Few interior fixtures or fittings survived in the farmhouse while none survived in the outbuildings. The complex was much denuded, inside and out. OASIS 55648

Wothorpe, Wothorpe Towers (TF0254 0526)

Adrian Butler and Mark Holmes

An earth resistance, geophysical survey was conducted over an area of 1.03ha in two separate locations: the area of the former Great Garden and the area of the former Bowling Green. The survey of the Great Garden revealed a series of high and low resistance anomalies representing features associated with the 17th century garden. Of great interest was the potential rediscovery of a zigzag water feature along the centre of the garden. The survey of the Bowling Green did not reveal any archaeologically significant anomalies. OASIS 55894.

Yarwell Mill (TL 07405 97305)

Joe Prentice

Yarwell Mill, a Grade II listed building, dates from 1839 and was built in a single phase on the site of an earlier mill, no traces of which remain. The mill is rectangular in plan situated over the River Nene, which flows from south to north and passes under the mill in two races. The building is constructed of local limestone and the walls are of coursed, squared stone bonded in lime mortar. The roof is of blue Welsh slate, possibly the original covering. It has undergone substantial structural changes during the 20th century both inside and out, but most significantly in the interior. It retains no machinery associated with milling and only small sections of flooring, the majority having been removed when converted to use as a grain storage depot c 1940.

RICHARD IVENS

Ashton, The Church of St Michael and All Angels

(SP 76525 49975)

A watching brief was maintained during the mechanical excavation of a combined service trench (c 90m). The

Northamptonshire

trench extended from the mid point of the north aisle, around the west end of the church and then eastwards along the southern side of the churchyard, to the entrance on to Roade Hill. Numerous modern disturbances and burials were noted. The robbed remains of a possible pre-1900 eastern boundary wall to the churchyard were also observed. No medieval or earlier remains or artefacts were exposed.

Northampton, The Church of All Saints (SP 7545 6044)

A watching brief was maintained during the hand-excavation of a service trench (37m long, c 0.3m wide and 0.3-0.4m deep) along the north side of the church. Due to a complex of existing services at the west end the planned route was modified and a further c 15m of trenching excavated on a different alignment. The service trench was designed to connect new toilet facilities (to be built in the new vestry) at the east end to an existing main drain below the existing toilets at the west end, north of the entrance hall. Aside from a large number of modern service trenches, particularly towards the west end, only one certain archaeological feature was observed: a clear grave cut, whose fill contained 19th-20th century pottery; a second, possible, grave cut was also noted. Due to the very shallow nature of the trenches very little of the north wall foundations was revealed. No pre-modern internal deposits were disturbed.

Wilby, The Church of St Mary the Virgin (SP 8665 6618)

An L-shaped archaeological evaluation trench (each arm measuring 3m x 1.5m) was hand-excavated. The trench was situated within the area of a proposed extension on the north side of the nave, in an area formerly occupied by a medieval aisle (demolished 1839). Almost all of the east-west trench was occupied by a 1.1m wide trench with vertical sides, cut to a depth of 1.4m below modern ground level. This appears to be the remains of the totally robbed north wall of the former aisle. The only other features observed consisted of a 19th-20th century stone-built drain, a modern gravel path, a modern tarmac path and a modern lightning conductor. Pre-19th century artefacts consisted of three small, redeposited, pieces of medieval floor tile. A small number of human bone fragments were also recovered scattered through the excavated deposits. No actual grave deposits were encountered.

WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

Time Team Reports

Towcester, Swardsley Priory, Showsley Grounds (SP 71810 50740)

In June 2007, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the site of Swardsley Priory within the gardens of Showsley Grounds, Towcester, Northamptonshire (SP 71810 50740) to investigate the remains of a Cistercian Priory founded, according to

documentary sources, around 1155. The priory remained relatively poor throughout its existence, but also had an unfortunate propensity for scandal in the later medieval period. This involved financial irregularities and other excesses, culminating in an association with a case of witchcraft in 1470, and the declaration as null and void of the election of one of the last prioresses in 1530 on the grounds of her unfitness for the post. At the time of the Dissolution in 1536, Swardsley was the second poorest nunnery in the country.

The aim of the evaluation was to attempt to reveal the layout of the monastic buildings, to confirm (or otherwise) the suggested mid 12th century construction date, and to establish the date range of the surviving archaeological remains. The evaluation revealed that the priory had a similar layout to many religious houses in Britain, based upon a 9th century hypothetical blue-print of the ideal monastery known as the St. Gall Plan. The layout comprised a central cloister with a chapel or church to the north, and ranges of buildings surrounding the remaining three sides.

A number of phases of construction were identified, the earliest dating to the 12th century, with later buildings constructed at times of relative prosperity. Burials accompanied the earliest phase of construction, and further burials dating to the 13th century were also excavated. A possible two-storey building was located to the south-west of the cloister, perhaps the remains of the Prioress's lodgings, although its precise nature and function is uncertain.

The full assessment report can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/timeteam/reports>.

Wicken (SP 74539 39362)

In July 2006 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' in the village of Wicken in Northamptonshire (centred on SP 74539 39362), to investigate the lost site of the church of St James at Wick Hamon, and to examine the early 'nucleated' settlement in the northern half of the village, Wick Dive.

The evaluation was concentrated within two areas of the village and was focused in a field known as The Warren, where a series of earthworks are located, and Home Farm, thought to be the site of St James Church, with further work being carried out in gardens along Cross Tree Road and Leckhamstead Road.

The primary aim of the evaluation was to confirm the exact location of the lost church of St James thus adding to the understanding of the manorial relationships in Wicken and to further evaluate the condition and extent of the early settlement site of Wicken, already under investigation by Richard Jones of the University of Leicester.

A series of six trenches and nine test pits was excavated within the village to evaluate the location, extent, character, date, and significance of any underlying archaeology.

The archaeological evaluation provided a small but significant contribution to the story of Wicken which, when taken in conjunction with the work of the University of Leicester, will help to provide further insight into the beginnings and subsequent expansion of the village.

It was successful in achieving its aim of pinpointing the lost location of the Church of St James and of piecing together a

basic floorplan of the structure from the archaeological remains. However, little evidence for early settlement was revealed during the evaluation.

The full assessment report can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/timeteam/reports>.

OXFORDSHIRE

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Abingdon, "Hathaway's" 13 High Street
(SU 49717 97065)

Rachel Everett, Terry Stopps and Jeff Wallis

The society was invited to investigate the cellar of this property in May 2007. The house is given a date of seventeenth century at the earliest by the HER (PRN: 21902). However, the cellar is a substantial stone built structure which includes the remains of a large fireplace and stone steps leading up to the street. It may therefore be considerably older in origin.

A small trench, 1m x 1m was dug by hand in the centre of the cellar to a depth of 0.95m. A floor of small hand-made bricks was laid directly onto three layers of yellowish-brown clay mixed with stone and brick building rubble, mortar, lenses of coal dust and fragments of coal. These layers contained pottery of mid-18th century date together with residual 16th century and medieval sherds and the fragmentary bones of cattle and sheep. Conjoins between the 18th century sherds showed that the three layers were all part of the same event, presumably dumping to level the floor at the time the bricks were laid. The deposits were not bottomed and neither earlier levels nor the natural ground surface was reached.

AOC ARCHAEOLOGY

Brize Norton Airfield (SP 300 065)

Paolo Guarino

A watching brief was carried out on behalf of Environs Consulting. The project comprised the archaeological monitoring of ground works at the site. There was deemed to be potential for uncovering medieval features. An undated ditch containing 3 animal burials, a medieval pit, a post medieval pit and a stone-lined well were identified.

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

Crowmarsh, Carmel College (SU 6078 8776)

Neil Adam

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in April 2008. Two trenches were excavated. The evaluation exposed a series of interleaving gravel and alluvial deposits sealing Thames River Gravels. A layer of demolition rubble dating from the 19th century was also exposed.

Yarnton, Land Adjacent to Kings Bridge (SP 4896 1176)

Neil Adam

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in November and December 2008. Nine trenches were excavated. The evaluation established that the site was covered with alluvial clays that sealed a natural sandy clay substrate. While the potential remained for pre-Roman archaeological features and deposits to be sealed by this alluvium, further excavation of the deposit beyond three trial holes was not possible due to the ingress of ground water. A series of earthworks that were previously interpreted as the remnants of ridge and furrow were found by the evaluation to be a series of post-medieval/modern open drains running east-west and north-south across the site.

DAVID ASHBY

Stanford in the Vale, Priors Farm field (SU 3443 9364)

Excavations of 2008

During the 2008 excavation seven test pits and one trench were excavated. The findings from these seven tests pits were as follows. Test pits one and two were found to contain no archaeological material. Test Pit three contained both late Saxon pottery and also medieval pottery (11th - 14th century) which has been interpreted as being present within a large pit. Test Pit five contained an unidentifiable stone feature, with medieval pottery found above this. Test pit eight contained a cobbled track, which was previously unknown, which seems to run down the north side of the field. The width and date of this track are currently unknown.

The findings of Test Pits four and seven, and Trench six, show that there is a large midden, measuring about 15m wide and stone capped, which is late Saxon to medieval in date. Also within Trench six a large amount of metal working slag and two post holes were found. Trench six has also showed that there was prehistoric activity on the site, in the form of both Bronze Age and Mesolithic flints.

Geophysical survey

The results of the geophysical survey are illustrated in Fig 1. The survey was carried out using a magnetometer. The results show large numbers of pits and three ditches. Also shown, in the southeast grid, is a large magnetic feature, which is thought to be a very large ditch, a metalworking area, or a kiln. This feature will be excavated in the 2009 excavations.

Aims of 2009 excavations

The aims of the 2009 excavations are to examine and excavate some of the geophysical anomalies shown on the survey and also to further excavate the cobbled track that runs down the north side of the field.

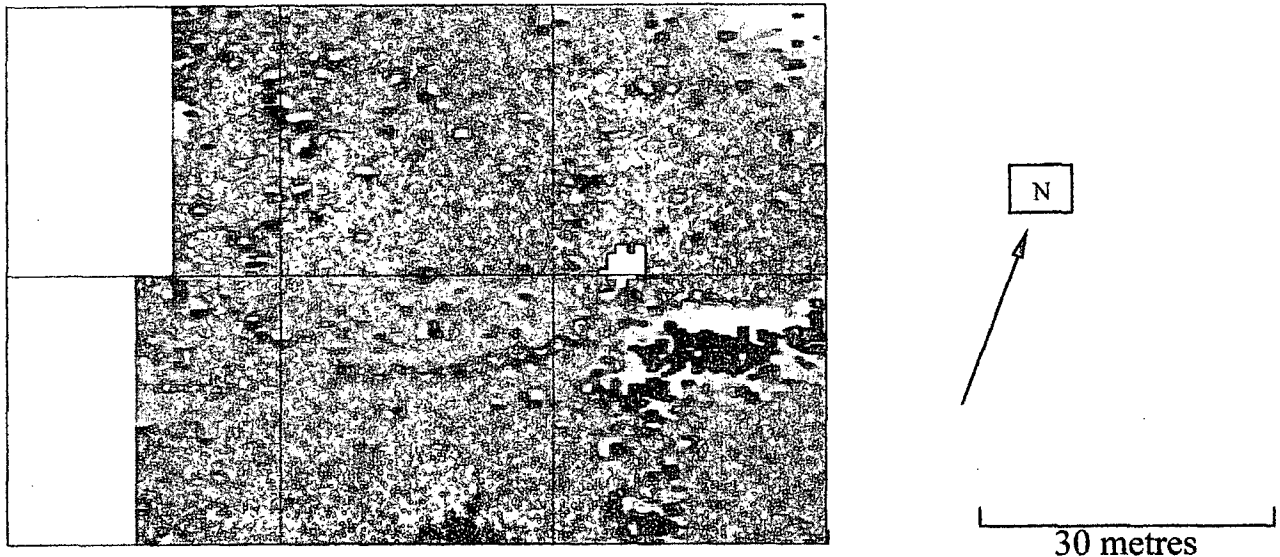


Fig 1. Geophysical survey, Stanford in the Vale, Priors Farm field.

FOUNDATIONS ARCHAEOLOGY

Didcot, Sutton Courtenay Lane (SU 502 921)

Andrew Hood

In 2008 Foundations Archaeology was commissioned by Waterman CPM, on behalf of McLaren Construction Ltd., to undertake a programme of archaeological strip, map and sample recording in advance of development on land off Sutton Courtenay Lane.

The archaeological investigation revealed moderate preservation of archaeological deposits. These comprised part of an earlier Roman field system and evidence for Medieval/Post-medieval ridge and furrow, along with agricultural drainage activity.

JOHN MOORE

Abingdon, Old Gaol (SU 4984 9694)

Steve Hammond

Two phases of work have been carried out at the site. The first investigation involved the mechanical excavation of a trench down onto the uppermost archaeological horizons supplemented by the hand digging of four sondages onto the latest surviving Roman remains. The second was the mechanical excavation of a trench down onto the uppermost archaeological horizons supplemented by the hand digging of six features. This was done to determine the level above Ordnance Datum at which Roman archaeology survived in comparison to those found previously in earlier investigations and to assess the impact recent activity (from 1989 onwards) has had on any surviving remains. Further work is planned for the following year.

Bablock Hythe (SP 4356 0522)

John Moore

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation for a new Thames Water pipeline. An undated ditch and

ploughed out bank was found containing a primary deposit of burnt material. Two undated pits were also recorded.

Bainton, The Woodyard (SP 5769 2705)

David Gilbert

An evaluation was carried out on the site. There would appear to be at least two phases of occupation present, foundations for two stone built buildings were recorded as well as pits and a possible well. The features are all of a probable 10th to 12th century date. Although some material could date as late as the mid 14th century the lack of Brill/Borstall ware, usually so common in the region, would suggest the earlier date range.

Bampton, Shrewsbury Place (SP 3128 0311)

Gwilym Williams

The evaluation revealed undated features comprising a ditch, a gully and two postholes sealed by a post-medieval cultivation soil and the wall of a building associated with the former school. Only one sherd of pottery was recovered during the evaluation, from the cultivation soil.

Bletchington, Greenhill Leisure Park, Greenhill Farm (SP 4881 1761)

Clare Roberts

An archaeological field evaluation was carried out as part of the consideration of a planning application for further development of the leisure park. The only items of note were in one discrete area. Two postholes were found, both were undated, though probably associated. A fragment of Post-medieval bottle glass was recovered from a thin spread overlying one of the postholes. An utilised flint flake was also recovered from the area.

Chipping Norton, Albion Street (SP 3142 2708)
Gwilym Williams

The evaluation investigated the rear of three burgage plots. The wall that formed the line of the medieval boundary of one of the burgage plots was investigated; it could not be dated, but cut through a dump of rubble which was cut elsewhere by pits with a date-range between the 11th to 13th centuries. The wall of a possibly medieval building was also observed here. A further, undated wall was observed to the north. Two trenches yielded evidence of part of a pre-19th century terrace or group of outbuildings. In the northernmost trench the remains of two 19th century buildings and a cobbled surface were observed.

Chipping Norton, Castle View Nursing Home (SP 3138 2746)
David Gilbert

An evaluation of this site was conducted. Two trenches, totalling 25m in length, were excavated to the natural geology. A sequence of modern made ground was recorded and no archaeological features observed.

Combe Mill (SP 4174 1496)
Stephen Hammond

The archaeological investigation involved the inspection of an electricity-cabling trench already partially dug prior to archaeological involvement. Archaeological intervention became necessary once human remains were uncovered. Three inhumations, four wall foundations, a possible quarry pit and two unidentified stone filled features were discovered.

Didcot, 94 Abingdon Road (SU 5375 9054)
Gwilym Williams

The evaluation revealed possible evidence of palaeohydrological activity, in the form of rivulets, but this could not be associated with any archaeological data. Truncation on the west side of the site had removed any potential archaeological deposits.

Didcot, Milton Park Industrial Estate (SU 4970 9235)
Gwilym Williams

An evaluation was carried out on the cropmark, Scheduled Ancient Monument OX250 on land north of Milton Park Industrial Estate, Didcot, in the parish of Sutton Courtenay. Trenching was targeted on areas of low activity as indicated by the results of geophysical survey. Evidence for some archaeological activity, extending west and south of the main cropmark site, was revealed; this dated from the late Bronze age to early Saxon. Limited Saxon activity was also revealed in the centre of the site under a post-medieval mound c 0.7m deep, running east/west for several hundred metres. The evaluation confirmed that for the most part the apparent empty area in the centre of the scheduled monument did not contain significant archaeological remains.

Dorchester-on-Thames, 19 Bridge End (SU 5790 9370)
Clare Roberts

A watching brief was carried out at Green Acre, 19 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames during the excavation of footings for a new conservatory. No archaeological remains of significance were revealed.

Dorchester-on-Thames, Land adjacent to 86 High Street (SU 5772 9461)
David Gilbert and Austin Ainsworth

The evaluation recorded a mid 3rd century Roman ditch and two pits also of possible Late Roman date. These were cut into the alluvium that displayed evidence for prehistoric activity in the form of a flint flake.

Faringdon, 62 Coxwell Road (SU 2825 9471)
John Moore

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground-works for the redevelopment of this site. No finds of significance were present.

Hanwell, Hanwell Castle (SP 4363 4360)
David Gilbert

A watching brief was conducted during the ground work at Hanwell Castle during the restoration of the western boundary wall. The foundations of the original boundary wall were located as was a pentice leading to the nearby Church of St Peter.

Idbury, Idbury Camp (SP 2284 1936)
John Moore

A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of part of a trench for a new electricity supply. Nothing of significance was found.

Kirtlington, Crowcastle Lane, Land adjacent to Sundown (SP 4984 2006)
Clare Roberts

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of footings for a new three-bedroom bungalow. Topsoil overlying subsoil was observed, which in turn overlay an old cultivation layer. A large possible pit was uncovered below this layer, cutting the gravel natural. Some burnt limestone, and some animal bone was recovered from the fill, however this was not enough to date the feature.

Kirtlington, Gossway Fields (SP 4985 1970)
David Gilbert

An archaeological excavation was conducted on land north of Gossway Fields, Kirtlington. During the excavation a system of 2nd-4th century Roman fields was recorded. Encroaching on these was a series of later 3rd and 4th century pits. A building with stone foundations believed to

Oxfordshire

be part of a late Roman villa or higher status farmstead with an associated well was also recorded. One small pit containing a human cremation believed to be Roman was recorded. At least two, possibly three, Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings were located with a contemporary stone lined well. While the activity could be of 5th century, a 6th century date is more likely. A small assemblage of Neolithic flint-work was also recovered.

Roman Period

Residual Roman pottery of the 1st century was present on the site indicating some activity of that date in the vicinity. A cremation burial was undated but it is possible that it was of Early Roman date, which would pre-date all other activity recognised on the site or be contemporary with 2nd century Roman activity investigated.

The earliest recognisable phase of activity is represented by a Roman agricultural field system defined by a series of ditches. These were in use from the 2nd century and appear to be roughly of similar size.

These ditches were obviously established boundaries for the fields and were re-cut over the Roman period from the 2nd to 4th centuries. The Roman road of Akeman Street lies approximately 700m to the north of the site. Around the town of Alchester 6km to the east, lies a substantial block of regularly laid out field systems to the north of this road, there is more limited evidence for a similar pattern on the south side of Akeman Street. There is no indication that this scheme was extended beyond the immediate vicinity of Alchester, although there are similarities in the layout here to those closer to Alchester.

Within the fields several shallow gullies were noted. These appear to be aligned on an alternating pattern from field to field of north-south and east-west orientations. These would appear to relate to agricultural practices. Plough marks have been recorded in Roman fields at Drayton, these were made by simple Iron Age type ploughs. Wooden shares of this type have been found at Ashville (Abingdon), these were approximately 0.45m wide. The dimensions of these ploughs are similar to the width of the gullies recorded.

A Roman road runs from Kings Sutton crossing Akeman Street (approximately 1.2km to the north of the site) and south onwards to north Oxford. The road is 100m east of the site and the field system may be associated with a small settlement/farmstead adjacent to this road.

It would appear that towards the end of the 3rd century or early 4th century one of the fields was made narrower. The land to the east was then subject to a series of pits being excavated. The purpose is not known but may be they were for refuse disposal.

During the 4th century it would appear that a further field was no longer used. The area used for pits seen to the east was extended into this area and a well was dug. A building was erected to the east over the original area of pits that had obviously been filled by this time.

It would seem likely that the putative farmstead to the east was expanding in size during the 4th century and the closer fields were being used for this expansion, first for refuse pits on the edge of the settlement and then for further buildings. The style of the building is clearly indicative of Roman traditions, with stone foundations and a flagged

floor. Unfortunately it was not possible to establish if it was an isolated building or part of a range of rooms. Although it is probably not part of a large wealthy estate it would appear that it may belong to a villa site nonetheless.

Certain villa sites in northern Oxfordshire expanded during the later Roman period, and these were often very wealthy. These villa sites could be extensive such as at North Leigh, but were generally smaller and less complex such as those at Garford and Little Milton. All show Romanised building traditions.

Only a small percentage of the pottery assemblage was imported wares, the majority was locally produced although the catchment area for this pottery extended as far as Dorset. This may be explained by the importance of Alchester as a regional market centre attracting goods from a wider area. The high proportion of oxidised coarse wares and the evidence for likely wasters at the site supports the suggestion of very local production perhaps intended specifically to supply a small nucleated-settlement close to the junction of the north-south Roman road and Akeman Street.

Anglo-Saxon Period

The excavations at the nearby site of Yarnton indicated that Romano-British occupation had influenced the location of the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Early Anglo Saxon occupation was located within and adjacent to late Roman settlement. This is mirrored at Barton Court Farm near Abingdon where sunken-featured buildings were found on the site of a Roman villa. A similar occurrence is evident here.

Three 'sunken featured buildings' were found on the site. The settlements associated with this type of buildings tend either to be formless and haphazard in layout or have a tendency to sprawl over large areas. Characteristically a scatter of sunken-featured buildings is interspersed with a smaller number of timber hall-like buildings. Unfortunately deep root penetrations combined with the nature of the natural geological deposit made the location of small post-holes difficult.

Contemporary with the buildings was a stone lined well. This was of a different construction method than the earlier Roman well. It would seem likely that the robbing of the upper courses of stone and capping of the Roman well occurred during the Anglo-Saxon period. This well may have been considered too small for the settlement, it may have become unstable at lower levels or the water table had lowered requiring the digging of a deeper well. The stone from the upper structure of the well may have been robbed at this time to help build the new well.

The Roman boundary ditch to the south of the site must have been still visible and a significant marker, as it was re-cut in the Saxon period obviously retaining its boundary status. It is possibly indicative of continued use from the Roman into the early Saxon period.

The Anglo-Saxon features appear to respect the line of the Roman fields demarcated by north to south aligned ditches. It is not known if these fields remained under cultivation during this period or if this juxtaposition is simply a coincidence.

Letcombe Regis, Letcombe Laboratories
(SU 3797 8634)

David Gilbert and Helen Noakes

An archaeological excavation was conducted on part of the site of the former agricultural laboratories at Letcombe Regis. During the course of the excavation, a complex system of Roman ditches dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries was investigated. Agricultural practices are represented by a 2nd century rectilinear field system which is remodelled perhaps in the later 2nd century and again at times in the 3rd to early 4th centuries. The area would appear to have gone out of agricultural use in the 4th century, possible due to soil degradation over years of cultivation. A 2nd century small enclosure may also be represented in the area

Limited prehistoric activity from the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages was seen mostly as residual artefacts. Sparse features indicated activity at later periods, including; Anglo-Saxon, 12th-13th century, and post-medieval.

Long Wittenham, Northfield Farm (SU 5555 9485)

Stephen Hammond

An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham. Three trenches totalling 60m in length were excavated to reveal the underlying natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered.

Newington, Newington House (SU 608 963)

Gwilym Williams

A watching brief was conducted on the site of a proposed lake. During stripping it became clear that a structure and ditches were present. Cleaning of the exposed area revealed extensive remains; the client was obliged to close the site down.

The remains of one medieval building having survived later ploughing in a fragmentary state were extensively recorded. This structure is believed to have been a smithy or other metal-working building. One was located on the east side of the site in the vicinity of the now-raised house platforms and ridge and furrow. In addition to this two further structures were investigated. Numerous ditches and gullies cross the area, dividing the excavation area into three discrete plots; the putative smithy is at the centre of the group.

The excavated ditches were aligned north-south at right-angles to the drain which separates Newington House garden from the rest of the estate. Significantly this drain is shown on the 16th century estate map, and may well be an older boundary. In the central part of the north side of the site largely to the north of the smithy, there was an extensive area of middening. This backfilled an area with some cut features as well as possibly naturally lower lying land toward the drain.

The enclosures identified may well be part of a planned organisation of land at Newington in the aftermath of the Conquest. Notwithstanding the possible presence of earlier Roman features, there is no evidence for extensive pre-existing settlement in the immediate vicinity.

Northmoor, Church Farmhouse (SP 4207 0277)

Clare Roberts

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of footings for an workshop and garages. In part topsoil overlying disturbed ground, elsewhere made ground was observed within the yard area; outside this area the topsoil overlay subsoil. A short length of limestone wall of unknown date was uncovered in the north eastern side of site. It ran southeast-east to northwest-west, and could either be part of old farmyard buildings associated with Church Farmhouse, or part of an even earlier structure or boundary wall.

Oddington, 1 Moorsights (SP 5526 1484)

Clare Roberts

An evaluation and a watching brief were carried out on this site. Two trenches were excavated for the evaluation and the foundation trenches for the new buildings were observed for the watching brief. During the evaluation, the remains of three truncated pits were found in one trench; the area containing the pits had been reduced, most likely through use of the area as a garden over a long period of time. The pits contained animal bone and pottery of late 11th to 12th century date. One trench had no archaeological remains, although traces of a possible thinly cobbled surface were later observed in the section through this area.

Oxford, Christ Church, Blue Boar Quad (SP 5145 0608)

Eoin Fitzsimons and Daniel Sausins

A watching brief is ongoing at the site during the instillation of new services. So far medieval activity and remains were located dating from the 13th century have been located.

Oxford, Cowley, 169 Oxford Road (SP 5441 0432)

Eoin Fitzsimons

A watching brief was carried out during ground-works for a 2/3 storey building to provide residential and community facility for homeless with parking at rear. The investigation revealed three phases of medieval activity dating from the late 11th century through to 14th century. The earliest phase comprised an enclosure and several pits, the second phase the corner of a building probably associated with the Templar preceptory and the third phase a field or paddock dating to after the establishment of the new preceptory in Sandford. No evidence of activity was found thereafter until the late post-medieval period.

Oxford, Littlemore, Littlemore Park (SP 5370 0230)

David Gilbert and Steve Hammond

An archaeological evaluation was conducted of the proposed development site. One ditch dating to the Roman period was located along with a second undated ditch on a similar alignment and one undated posthole.

Oxfordshire

Oxford, New College, Monk's Passage (SP 51765 06455)
Gwilym Williams

A watching brief was carried out on works between Bastion 11 of the city wall and Monk's Passage, New College. The intervention revealed traces of the Saxon rampart, a blocked postern which dates to the 13th century or later, a later undated rebuild of the city wall, a post-medieval privy and a small room of uncertain purpose. A part of a gravestone was also recovered during the intervention.

Oxford, Rose Hill, King of Prussia (SP 5358 0365)
David Gilbert

Three evaluation trenches, totalling approximately 70m in length, were excavated to reveal the underlying natural geology. A sequence of at least five ditches re-cut on roughly the same alignment were located. All appear to date from the Early to Middle Iron Age, with perhaps the last ditch of a Late Iron Age date. There is limited later Roman activity in the 2nd - 4th centuries AD on the site, which is probably associated with the local pottery production centre.

Standlake, Malthouse Farmhouse (SP 3833 0334)
Austin Ainsworth

Six evaluation trenches, totalling 79.6m in length, were excavated to the natural geology. Archaeological deposits were mainly confined to the Romano-British period along with two features of Anglo-Saxon date and comprised ditches, pits and postholes. Evidence for other structures was present and these are probably dated to the post-medieval period.

Wallingford, 17a Castle St (SU 60677 89787)
John Moore and Gwilym Williams

A watching brief was carried out on the site and all ground disturbance work was monitored. Three phases of activity dating from the mid 11th century to the late 12th century were found. The site appears to have been abandoned by the 13th century. Parts of three closes or plots were found separated by two ditches. Fragmentary evidence for possible buildings was present within two of them. The majority of remains were pits including some identified as cess-pits.

Wallingford, Crispin Place (SU 6051 8930)
Gwilym Williams

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of footings for an extension. Topsoil overlying disturbed ground was observed. No archaeological remains of significance were revealed.

Wallingford, 44 St John's Road (SU 60325 89075)
Gwilym Williams and Austin Ainsworth

Two evaluation trenches, totalling 27.5m in length, were excavated to the natural geology. Archaeological deposits

were limited to late 19th-early 20th century topsoil and subsoil deposits.

Wendlebury, Langford Lane, (Alchester, Roman Town) (SP 57652035)
John Moore and David Gilbert

Further geophysical survey was carried out and a LIDAR survey commissioned by English Heritage. The gradiometer survey identified a main feature composed of a series of ditches enclosing a rectangular area across the centre of the survey area, with its limits probably extending south beyond Langford Lane. These ditches are characteristic of a Roman fort especially as they appear to be double ditched. The LIDAR survey shows the internal area of the enclosure to be slightly higher terrain. The enclosure is bisected by two parallel ditches running north-south across the survey area. These correspond to the linear anomalies seen within aerial photography and LIDAR survey and are likely to represent the main north-south road through the fort heading towards Akeman Street and southwards to the parade ground.

Given the location of the enclosure, its form with the rounded corners, apparent double ditches, and bisected by two roads, this must be considered to be a further fort at Alchester as previously speculated (Henig and Booth 2000). Whether it is earlier, contemporary with, or later than the vexillation fort is unknown. The positioning of this fort is far more defensively minded than the west fort. The river forms a natural protective barrier on two sides. It guards the ford on Akeman Street and a possible one on a projected line of the known road to the north, roughly where the railway now crosses the river.

With respect to the rounded corners of the enclosure some hedge lines seen in the area do have distinctive rounded corners (Harden 1937). However, none appear to be at right angles.

It is possible that this fort was established first; given its more defensive position, its proximity to the camp, and the location across a road from the camp to Akeman Street. However, the early date of the gateway posts of the western fort or annex suggests otherwise unless Sauer is wrong with his postulated fortress. If so, then the western fort could have been built slightly later when a larger structure was required. Indeed the date of the felling of the trees used in its construction could be the result of re-use of timbers from an eastern fort. Alternatively the eastern fort could have been a replacement for the western one after the town had been founded when it possible that the defensive rampart was built across part of the fort, Sauer's (1999) postulation notwithstanding. The possible time for a new fort could have been the Boudican Revolt of 60-61 AD. Akeman Street joins Watling Street further east. Indeed this area may not have been too far from the line of Boudica's advance. Strengthening its eastern defences may have been prudent. Again it is possible that a reduced garrison size was required at a later period and therefore the older fort was too large, so a new one was constructed.

The fort and associated road does appear to be the primary structure. The ditch cutting through the west side of the fort appears to respect the west side of the road (gradiometer survey). The continuation west of the fort suggests a field

system has been established after the fort has been abandoned and while at least part of the road was still in use. Whether the whole road was in use at this time is unknown but either at the same time, or at a later date, a field is established to the north of the north-east quadrant of the fort (resistivity survey). This clearly cuts across the road (aerial photographs). The northeast-southwest linear features (LIDAR and gradiometer survey) presumably are a latest phase of activity predating the more modern period. However Henig and Booth (2000) consider the main northeast-southwest double ditched feature as the early branch road to the fort although the crop mark evidence suggests that it is later than the north-south road.

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Wroxton, Stratford Road (SP 4134 4226)

Milena Grzybowska

The watching brief involved the inspection of foundation trenches for a new extension to the existing property. No finds of archaeological importance were recovered.

MUSEUM OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Compiled by Karen Thomas

Begbroke Science Park Access Road, Sandy Lane Yarnston (SP 47972 13187)

Tim Braybrooke

Seven 30m x 2m trenches were dug in July 2008, arranged from north to south, swinging to the southwest, across a 500m strip of agricultural land. Natural ground was observed between 67.22m and 61.07m OD, which was a mixture of gravels, sands and clay deposits. As the line of trenches swung towards the south-west, a small ditch was uncovered cutting into the natural across the line of slope, north to south, containing one sherd of 17/18th century Brill/Boarstall pottery. To the south-west of this, four further possible ditch remnants were found also aligned north to south. No other archaeological finds or features were encountered.

NORTH OXON ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Edward Shawyer

This year (2008) we carried out two excavations; the first, on a Roman farmstead at Warmington (SP 411474) in conjunction with two other local groups, which lasted from May to October and the second, on the Iron Age settlement at Swalcliffe Lea (SP 38203875), lasting just a week in September, continuing the work we did in 2007.

Our latter excavation was plagued by the worst weather we have encountered in twelve years of digging; what should have been a weeks excavation was reduced to three days by torrential rain. We also had great difficulty locating the exact position of the 2007 trenches since when we reexcavated parts of the old trenches the infill above the soft features had so consolidated with the aid of the heavy rain that it gave the appearance of archaeology, so we had to proceed slowly with great caution. Perseverance eventually paid off and on the last day we were able to get our bearings and extend the 2007 trench a little.

The first dig however since it lasted longer had much better weather. This site, though it lies just over the Warwickshire border is only six miles from Swalcliffe and so provided a good example of local rural settlement in the area, which consisting of a large number of small villas and farms, has had little archaeological investigation conducted on it.

Excavations

Swalcliffe Lea Iron Age Settlement (SP 38203875)

The first day we dug a 8m x 1m strip trench running east-west and located the 2007 trench at the west end. The remaining 7m consisted of the natural brash, which lies just above bedrock. This layer lying just 25-30cm below the surface yielded bits of Middle Iron Age pottery, odd bits of burnt stone, charcoal and possible iron slag. We dug extra trenches trying to pick up the edge of the old dig, but what with the rain and the way the soil had consolidated, it was difficult to see where exactly we were without re-excavating large sections of the 2007 dig.

Our bearings were finally pinpointed when we relocated Pit 2, but even this gave the false impression of being fresh archaeology. Our grid, measurements and photographs told us where we were, but the conditions and the mixed infill gave the illusion of features, which had to be treated as such, until proven otherwise. One can observe that re-excavating hard features is much easier than doing the same with soft features!

It was a frustrating, but useful exercise. At the east end of the old Trench 2 we found that the ditch continued southwards and seems to have been cut by another trench running east to west. The pottery was the same Middle Iron Age material encountered before.

Time was lacking to investigate further, but the evidence indicates now that the pits and sunken work space found in 2007 are situated within the westernmost enclosure, nearest the present track, as shown on aerial photographs; this we have designated Enclosure 1.

There was also a possible ditch or cutting near the northern edge of Trench 2, but it is not very convincing and may be just a natural outcrop of bedrock which looks like the edge of a feature.

Oxfordshire

Warmington Roman and Iron Age settlement (SP 411474)

Since the site belongs within CBA West Midlands, I will merely confine this summary to the facts which shed light on the CBA South Midlands area. Our involvement with this site began when we were invited to examine a Roman settlement rediscovered by fieldwalking, after an initial discovery in 1971 by Mr G Webster. Together we walked the site again and noted at least two areas where buildings existed. The Warmington society then paid for a geophysics study which revealed two buildings and also a collection of Iron Age enclosures, which appears to have been a small village. A year later we were invited, together with the Felden group of Fenny Compton to excavate the site for them, since they lacked any archaeological experience and had failed to attract professional help. Consequently we excavated from May to September and made such good finds that the interest of the Warwickshire County Services was aroused and the Warmington group then decided to invite a professional archaeologist to take over with the intention of trying to win a lottery grant.

The settlement was spread over three fields and consisted of three separate Roman sites, one of which is of the small villa type, the other two being probably dependent upon it. The site we excavated was that of the villa and is located near the church. We revealed possibly five rooms, one being a corridor. The back walls were quite wide and possibly supported a timber superstructure, being bound by the local clay soil. The villa looked out over a lovely valley and was quite scenic. The roof was definitely tiled since we found a large amount of white limestone tiles and also a fair number of baked tiles, some of which were box tiles. We also found a number of tesserae, but no trace was found of any mosaics or hypocausts, so it might just be reused material from elsewhere. The floors were made of white clay on stone footings and there was ample evidence for decorated plastered walls. The pottery contained a fair amount of fine table wares and was typical of Roman sites in our area. The villa building was late Roman, but there were at least two earlier phases, the middle being a beam slot for a timber building and beneath that an early ditch. Since the new management didn't want to take on any more work the opportunity was not taken to investigate further this year.

The only indicator of any post-Roman settlement was a late Saxon copper alloy polygonal pinhead found in the area between the church and the villa. The most significant discovery however was the Iron Age village, which lies just over a mile south of the hillfort at Nadbury camp. What interests the archaeologists is the apparent continuity of settlement from the Iron Age to the Roman and possibly Saxon period. However, this is quite a common feature in the Banbury area. Roman settlements and farms are found next to a number of Iron Age hillforts and villages at Brailes, Swalcliffe Lea, Fenny Compton, Chipping Warden, Ilbury Camp and Rainsborough Camp. Also all the Roman sites we have fieldwalked in the area have had prehistoric finds in the immediate vicinity. The Warmington site then has many points of similarity to other settlements in our area, not just for the Roman period, but the Iron Age as well.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Compiled by Pat Chapman

Crowmarsh Gifford, Coldharbour Farm (SU 619896) Ian Fisher

A geophysical survey was conducted as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site at Coldharbour Farm. Two fields, with a combined area of 23.44ha, were investigated by detailed magnetometer survey. This work revealed a ring ditch, possibly part of a Bronze Age round barrow, and an adjacent oval feature which could also be of prehistoric date. Several linear ditches, a large palaeochannel and a modern pipeline and cable were also detected.

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Compiled and edited by Edward Biddulph

Aston Upthorpe, The Smithy, Thorpe Street (SU 55337 86194) Mike Sims

In March 2007, Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief commissioned by Mr and Mrs N Marks in advance of the construction of a swimming pool and water features and the stripping of an access road. The fieldwork revealed large deposits of post-medieval garden soil and the post-medieval backfilling of part of the spring valley, but no other significant archaeology was observed.

Banbury, St Mary's Church (SP 454 405) Mike Sims

A watching brief by Oxford Archaeology for Cherwell District Council revealed several phases of churchyard soil deposits, an 19th century brick built vault and two articulated burials probably dating to the 17th century.

Banbury, Tudor Hall School (SP 4408 3804) James Mumford

An evaluation by Oxford Archaeology on behalf of Mr I Catchpole revealed no archaeological features or deposits. The evidence suggests that the site had been extensively landscaped in the mid-20th century.

Barford St Michael, St Michael's Church (SP 4327 6260) Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief for the Parochial Church Council in advance of the installation of new drains along the south and east sides of the tower. The watching brief revealed deposits of made ground probably originating during the construction of the south aisle in the 14th century and from the restoration of the church in the 1850s. Also exposed were probable 19th century repairs to the foundation plinth of the east side of the tower.

Bicester, Leycroft Manor Farm, Souldern
(SP 5238 3094)

Laura Piper and Paul Murray

In April 2008 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Richard Deeley. Evaluation Trenches 3 and 4 revealed three ditches close to the southern boundary of the site, almost certainly relating to a square enclosure. Linear features identified as crop marks were also seen in the adjacent field to the south. The ditch in Trench 4 produced 1st century Roman pottery and abraded fragments of lava quern. An undated ditch was revealed in Trench 1; four undated gullies and a series of medieval or post-medieval plough furrows were also revealed.

Dorchester-on-Thames (centred at SU 577 941)

Paul Booth

Excavation commenced on an area c 30m x 20m within the south-west quarter of the walled Roman 'small town' as part of the Dorchester research project, a joint venture between Oxford Archaeology and the Institute of Archaeology, with Dorchester Museum. The area incorporated trenches in which Professor Frere had located features of the very early Roman period and of the late Roman/Early-Middle Saxon period, key areas of interest for the Dorchester project, in 1963. The earliest deposits examined were traces of the north-south Roman road that probably formed the central axis of the defended Roman town and which lay at the eastern margin of the excavated area. At least two gravel surfaces and traces of a later but poorly preserved limestone surface were seen. A sub-rectangular pit cut into the western edge of the road produced large quantities of late Roman finds and a couple of possible Anglo-Saxon sherds.

Both the fill of the pit and the road surfaces were in part overlain by deposits including redeposited Roman building material - flint, limestone and brick and tile. Such material was widespread across the site but had a variable and apparently non-random distribution and density. These rubble spreads were carefully examined for traces of structural features. Such traces were scarce and ephemeral, but possible east-west alignments of stones, potentially relating to structures based on horizontal timbers, were seen in at least two locations in the uppermost rubble spreads. Only in one case, however, were there two possibly related (parallel) alignments, which might indicate the presence of a structure some 3.6m wide and perhaps at least 5m in length (east-west). The rubble spreads lie above the level at which Frere identified possible middle Saxon structural features. This suggests that the deposits examined in 2008 are themselves mostly of middle Saxon (ie 8th-9th century) or later date. Pottery of this date is rare in the region and most of the numerous finds were, unsurprisingly, of late Roman date, although Saxon material included a little pottery and also worked bone items and a loomweight fragment.

Goring, St Thomas of Canterbury (SU 5976 8071)

Sharon Clough

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Acanthus Clews Architects to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works to assess soil quality in the churchyard. The watching brief revealed sandy silt soil above natural chalk relating to the build-up of the ground surface as a result of centuries of burial activity. The deposit contained small quantities of post-medieval pottery, clay pipe, tile and animal bone.

Kirtlington, St Mary the Virgin Church (SP 500 196)

Mark Gibson

Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief commissioned by Acanthus Clews Architects on behalf of the Incumbent and Church Wardens. The work revealed 37 inhumations aligned west-east, one in a coffin, the fittings for two further coffins, and a quantity of charnel. Little dating evidence was recovered from these burials, although the few coffin fittings retrieved were 18-19th century in date. No evidence for earlier church structures was observed during the course of the watching brief.

Little Faringdon, St Margaret's Church (SP 224 015)

Mike Sims

A watching brief by Oxford Archaeology for the Parochial Church Council revealed a layer of graveyard soil overlying natural geology. No significant archaeology or evidence for earlier phases of the church's construction was observed. No burials were disturbed during the course of the work.

Oxford, Bartlemas Nursery School (SP 524 055)

Robin Bashford

Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation at the former nursery school off Cowley Road for Marcus Beale Architects Ltd on behalf of Oriel College. The evaluation revealed natural geology comprising Upper Oxford Clay. This was overlain by a colluvial soil, which may represent a buried ploughsoil.

Two north-south aligned linear features produced post-medieval artefacts, and are likely to be a precursor to the system of ceramic field drains on the same alignment, which was also evident in a number of the trenches. Evidence for 20th century landscaping was recorded. This was associated with the construction of the existing school buildings in the 1950s.

The evidence recovered probably reflects the agricultural use of the site on which the school was built, possibly on marginal land on the periphery of Cowley Marsh, as indicated on a number of cartographic sources.

Oxford, Bonn Square (SP 5118 0615)

Andrew Norton

Oxford City Council commissioned Oxford Archaeology to undertake an excavation ahead of refurbishment and development of the site. The 11th century church of St

Oxfordshire

Peter-le-Bailey was situated within the southern part of the development, and an associated graveyard lay to the north. The church collapsed in 1726 and a new church was constructed on the site in 1728. The new church was demolished in the early 1870s to allow for road widening and the site remained a disused graveyard into the 20th century when it was acquired by Oxford City Council. Much of the work took place within the foundation trenches for four 15m high phosphorus bronze street lights. The foundations were approximately 3m² and over 2m deep (over 90 inhumations were recovered from the most northerly light pit). Other work involved excavating burials in advance of the terracing of the western and eastern sides of the development, and within any groundworks.

A total of 175 burials associated with the 18th century church were rapidly excavated and recorded. The burials were dated by the presence of coffin handles, which were only in common use from the early 18th century onwards. A total of 124 burials dating from the 11th to early-18th centuries were subject to more traditional excavation and full recording. The skeletal remains show evidence for pathology; including a fractured skull displaying evidence of trepanation, which may have released the pressure from intracranial bleeding; and a female skeleton with eight fractured ribs, possibly a result of interpersonal violence.

Several of the medieval burials were found within stone lined graves, some of which were disturbed by the stone foundations of the 18th century church. Apart from the excavation and recording of the individuals the work comprised the recording of 54 memorial stones and 14 19th century brick shaft graves.

Oxford, Brasenose College (SP 515 062)

Mike Sims

A watching brief by Oxford Archaeology revealed deposits of made ground associated with the 19th century landscaping of the college grounds. No other significant archaeology was observed.

Oxford, Brewer Street (NGR 451250 205925)

Robin Bashford

Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Pembroke College. Two trenches were excavated. The evaluation revealed deeply stratified clay rich deposits which may represent fills of the pre-conquest configuration of a branch of the Thames, subsequently known as the Trill Mill Stream. Overlying and also to the north of these possible fills were a series of deposits, which may correlate to the deliberate deposition of material along the interface between the Thames floodplain and the second gravel terrace to the north, upon which is located the medieval walled town of Oxford. This process of land reclamation has been identified elsewhere along the edge of the second terrace, in particular during recent archaeological work at the Westgate car park to the west of Brewer Street, where the reclamation deposits were dated to the 12th-13th century. The dating evidence from the deposits encountered during the evaluation at Brewer Street would suggest that

these date to the 13th-14th century. Consequently, if the interpretation of these deposits is valid, then the process appears to be later at Brewer Street, possibly suggesting that the reclamation of land was by no means synchronous between all the sites where it has been identified.

A possible pit and a north-south aligned linear feature truncated these deposits in the south of the investigation area. The function of the pit was unclear, although it may relate to a tenement plot fronting on to Brewer Street. The function of the linear feature was also unclear but it is possible that it formed a drainage channel running from the town to the Trill Mill Stream. Overlying the fills of these two features were a series of imported garden soils, which are possibly contemporary with the construction of the existing buildings fronting on to Brewer Street in the 17th century.

In the north of the investigation area, the land reclamation deposits were truncated by a north-south aligned limestone wall, a similarly aligned ceramic drainage pipe, and a 20th century brick built inspection pit associated with the use of the current building as a garage. The date of the limestone wall was uncertain, as it had been truncated to the west by the trench for the ceramic pipe, and to the east by what appeared to be a 19th century pit. However, to the north of the wall, a potentially contemporary compacted gravel surface, produced 14th-15th century roof tile. The wall also appeared to have been modified, possibly in the 19th century, by the addition of a chute. Despite the uncertainties with regard to the date of this structure, it seems likely that the wall relates to the cellar of a building which formerly fronted onto Brewer Street.

Oxford, Castle Mound (SP 5096 0619)

James Mumford

Oxfordshire County Council commissioned Oxford Archaeology to undertake a watching brief and excavation to record the restoration and stabilisation works on the north-west side of the Norman motte. The archaeological works revealed aspects relating to the construction of the mound, the remains of a 12th century stone tower on its summit, and evidence for English Civil War earthworks and later 18th and 19th century landscaping.

The core of the mound was constructed with sandy gravels, which were excavated during the creation of the castle moat. These deposits appeared to have been unconsolidated and inherently unstable. Without the presence of a clay cap they could have become saturated and liable to subside. The stone foundations for a ten-sided tower that had been cut into the top of the mound during the 12th century were recorded. The flat 'pimple' seen on the top of the mound is the remains of a 17th century earthen rampart belonging to the English Civil War when Oxford was held by the Royalists. This earthen rampart was laid directly on the gravel surface inside the tower.

From the early 18th century the tower was a ruin and the mound covered with trees. Various illustrations of Oxford Castle from the mid-18th century show a pathway to the top

of the mound. This curved up from the south base and as it curved round the north side it became broader and cut deeper into the slope. The construction of this pathway was the cause of the present slippage. The workmen creating the path cut through the clay cap of the upper part of the mound and into the gravel core. This allowed water to seep through the gravel and collect at the impermeable lower clay cap. Eventually the gravels of the upper mound sheared away from the intact lower clay cap.

Oxford, Corpus Christi (SP 516 060)

Andrew Norton

Oxford Archaeology carried out an excavation and subsequent watching brief at the site of the new auditorium at Corpus Christi. The excavation followed on from a five-trench evaluation in 2006/7 (see *SMA* 38). A further 23 trenches of varying dimensions were excavated at the locations of the foundation pad pits for the development. All trenches were excavated to natural gravel.

The excavation revealed evidence for late Saxon activity including a possible 10th century inhumation and associated charnel pits, which probably relate to St Frideswide's Priory. Some evidence for features which may be associated with the perimeter of the burh was also recovered.

A significant amount of 13th century pits were excavated which either related to nearby domestic focus or represented backfilled quarry pits associated with the construction of the post-conquest defensive circuit, or potentially a phase of cathedral construction. This was in contrast to what appeared to be a hiatus of activity in the 14th and 15th century, possibly reflecting the peripheral nature of the site following its acquisition by Merton College in the early 14th century, and preceding the foundation of Corpus Christi in the early 16th century.

A second phase of pit digging appeared to have occurred in the 16th century and is likely to be related to the foundation of Corpus Christi College.

Oxford, George Street (SP 5122 0641)

Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by Borgos Architecture to undertake a watching brief during geo-technical test pitting. The fieldwork revealed deposits of made-ground construction and showed that the development area had been truncated down to terrace gravel deposits by the excavation of a basement.

Oxford, Jesus College (SP 514 063)

Daniel Dodds

A watching brief within the kitchens of Jesus College revealed limestone footings beneath the southern wall of a pantry and a modern poured cement foundation beneath its northern and eastern walls. Two fragments of East Wiltshire ware recovered from associated deposits suggest

that the limestone footings are likely to be medieval in date. The underlying natural was not found during this fieldwork.

Oxford, Mansfield College (SP 516 068)

Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief during geo-technical test pitting and boreholing. The work was commissioned by A Mathews and R Mather Architects. The watching brief revealed details of the construction of the main college buildings and deposits of made ground associated with the 19th century landscaping of the college grounds. No other significant archaeology was observed.

Oxford, Osney Mill, Mill Street (SP 5040 0590)

Mike Sims

W H Munsey Ltd commissioned Oxford Archaeology to carry out a watching brief in advance of the partial demolition and conversion of existing mill buildings to new dwellings and the conversion of a scheduled monument building to offices. The fieldwork revealed extensive 19th century brick foundations, a brick floor sealing an earlier stone cobble floor, and details of the internal construction of the 19th century mill building. The majority of the structures observed date to the 19th century, with only the stone cobbles pre-dating this. No evidence for the continuation of the standing medieval range building was observed.

Oxford, Queen's College (SP 5179 0635)

Jon Hiller

Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological investigation on behalf of BGS Architects and the College. The work took place in advance of proposals to construct a new below-ground basement north of the existing kitchen building, specifically to determine whether piled foundations would encounter below-ground structural remains associated with the medieval college.

The work revealed layers of construction/demolition debris cut by the foundation trench and wall forming the northeast corner of the medieval West Range depicted on historic views. The northern end of the West Range was equipped with a hearth, and later a possible doorway inserted within the wall leading to the yard outside. A narrow garden wall and a path were identified leading to the building, and these are probably of later medieval/early post-medieval date. The northern line of the medieval North Range, identified in a previous excavation, was confirmed in service trenches and trial pits by its robber trench. Demolition debris above the structures and the robber trench dates to c 1719, when the present North Quadrangle circuit was completed with a new north range.

Oxford, Ruskin College (SP 543 078)

Mike Sims

A watching brief carried out by Oxford Archaeology for West Waddy ADP in advance of the proposed construction of new buildings and associated access roads revealed

Oxfordshire

deposits of made-ground associated with landscaping of the college grounds. No other significant archaeology was observed.

Oxford, Springfield House, 76 Temple Road (SP 545 045)

Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief commissioned by Vivienne Cuffolo in advance of the development and alteration of the listed building. Evidence pointed to 19th century refurbishment of the cellar. This included the insertion of a brick pillar and plinth in the centre of the cellar, the addition of brick piers to the south-east and north-west walls, and the insertion of a brick arch into the fireplace in the south-west wall. Bricks used to construct channels underneath the original cellar floor were of identical type to those used for the pillar and piers and it is reasonable to assume the channels were also part of the refurbishment. No evidence of reused building material was observed.

Oxford, St Aldates (SP 513 061- SP 514 056)

Mike Sims

(a) A watching brief carried out by Oxford Archaeology for Scotia Gas Networks revealed redeposited material deriving from earlier service trenching work. The deposits contained a mixture of terrace gravel (probably from cellar excavations), material dredged from the river, and demolition debris from the Georgian and Victorian redevelopment of the city centre.

(b) A second watching brief in St Aldates was commissioned by Oxfordshire Highways. This uncovered stratigraphy relating to earlier road construction and modern made-ground. In addition, the truncated base of a substantial stone wall running parallel to Christchurch College Gardens was recorded. This was probably the original college boundary wall.

Oxford, Chapel of St John's College (SP 5127 0666)

Brian Dean and Jonathan Hiller

In June and July 2007, Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief prior to the installation of foundations for a new organ. Excavation of the foundation pits for the new structure revealed six brick-built burial vaults containing human remains, probably of late 17th or 18th century date. Two of the vault roofs had been disturbed during the installation of stone heating ducts in the 19th century. As a result of the discoveries, the design of the foundation pads was altered to accommodate the preservation of the burial vaults in situ.

Oxford, Church of St Laurence, South Hinksey (SP 509 039)

Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council to carry out a watching brief. This revealed deposits of earlier churchyard soil and two 19th century

inhumations. No evidence for any earlier phases of the church's construction was encountered.

Oxford, Westgate Centre (SP 5108 0594)

Robin Bashford

Between September 2007 and February 2008, Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation at the Westgate Centre for Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd on behalf of The Westgate Partnership. The current phase of evaluation (Phase 2) continued an evaluation (Phase 1) that began in 2006.

The Phase 1 evaluation comprised 16 trenches. The majority were excavated on the floodplain and the deposits encountered reflected this, being predominantly palaeo-environmental in nature. Trenches to the north within the multi-storey car park did reveal, however, architectural and other remains associated with the medieval Greyfriars.

Phase 2 consisted of a further 19 trenches, seven within the multi-storey car park and five in the surface car parks, with a further seven in areas adjacent to the car parks affected by proposed development. The evaluation largely confirmed the results of the first phase, although the additional data recovered have allowed the site-specific model for the hydrological and sedimentary development of the floodplain to be refined. This model still correlates broadly with the sequence postulated from previous excavations to the south of the medieval walled town, and elsewhere on the floodplain of the Upper Thames. Evidence for an elevated area of gravel to the south-east of the site suggested that this area is on the periphery of an 'island' of higher ground, although the nature and elevation of the deposits encountered imply that this was marginal land and unlikely to be the focus of settlement similar to that previously excavated at Whitehouse Road.

The evaluation confirmed that the Trill Mill stream crossed the centre of the site, and evidence for the origin, development and orientation of the channel was recovered. In addition, the results from a number of trenches suggested the existence of a complex system of intercutting side channels (some timber lined) to the south of the stream. One of these comprised a set of substantial timber beams, which were encountered in previous investigations and have been interpreted as part of a mill race. Demolition material overlying these timbers suggested an adjacent mill associated with the Greyfriars priory to the north-east. There was also some evidence for managed water courses between the Trill Mill stream and the Thames, which may have been contemporary with the Greyfriars' ownership of this area of the site, referred to in documentary sources as Boteham Island.

A deposit relating to 13th-14th century land reclamation that extended southwards from the second gravel terrace was also revealed. Further robbed and partially robbed walls associated with the priory and its subsequent demolition were seen to cut this deposit, as was a possible western boundary to the Greyfriars complex. This comprised a north-south aligned ditch and was superseded by a

limestone wall, which appears to correspond to the boundary between the priory complex and the area known as Paradise to the west.

The remaining recorded deposits appeared to relate to the use of the area as gardens or pasture, and subsequently the construction of Victorian terraced housing and the demolition of same in the late 1960s.

Rollright, Flick Quarry (SP 281 306)

Mike Sims

A watching brief undertaken by Oxford Archaeology for Hanson Quarry Products (Europe) uncovered ploughsoil, which contained 19th and 20th century nails, slate, and brick fragments.

Somerton, St James Church (SP 4965 2860)

Mike Sims

The Parochial Church Council commissioned Oxford Archaeology to carry out a watching brief. The fieldwork revealed deposits of made-ground, probably originating from the construction of the north aisle in the 14th century and from the restoration of the church in the 1850s, which included the addition of the buttresses. Repairs made in the 19th/early 20th century to the foundation plinth of the south wall of the south aisle were also exposed.

South Leigh, Gill Mill (SP 382 069 centred)

Paul Booth

Investigation by Oxford Archaeology in advance of gravel extraction in the Tar Farm area of Smith and Sons Gill Mill pit continued. A further 4ha were stripped, incorporating parts of the south-eastern end of the Roman settlement (Tar Farm 4) and its environs (Tar Farm 5). In Tar Farm 4 ditches belonging to the system of enclosures laid out along the northern side of the westnorthwest-eastsoutheast aligned road running down the Windrush valley from the focal area of the settlement in the vicinity of Gill Mill house were examined. Associated with the ditches were numerous pits, comparable to those already recorded in immediately adjacent areas, and occasional cremation and inhumation burials. Structural evidence remains elusive. Important finds from this area included a small stone figure of a female deity (head missing) of a recognisable Cotswold type, a small uninscribed stone altar and the feet of a fired clay Venus figurine, further additions to the body of religious objects already recovered from this site. One of the 4th century pits produced, amongst much other material, the top of an elaborately decorated pottery face flagon and part of a well-preserved small basket, apparently woven from grasses.

Much of the area of Tar Farm 5 was completely devoid of archaeological features, lying beyond the limit of Roman settlement. At its south-eastern margin, however, the line of the westnorthwest-eastsoutheast Roman road was again encountered, some 300 m south-east of the most easterly part of Tar Farm 4. The road was defined by ditches c 20 m apart but had no metalling, in contrast to the situation

further west. A single row of regular rectilinear enclosures also defined by ditches was laid out on the northern side of the road. Parts of four such enclosures, each roughly 40m wide and 50m deep, were examined. Very few internal features were present (pits were notably absent) and these enclosures probably represented paddocks. There were no corresponding features south of the line of the Roman road, closer to the river.

Swinbrook, Pebble Court (SP 2798 1209)

Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology carried out a watching brief for Mr and Mrs T F Bell. The work revealed at least two phases of garden landscaping to the west and south of the court, both tentatively dated to the 19th century. The alignment of a truncated terrace wall and visible above-ground remnants suggest that the south wing of the court had been extended in the past, with possibly the garden terrace extended southwards at the same time to its present extent. The truncated terrace wall was covered by layers of made ground.

Wallingford, Bullcroft Park (SU 606 896)

Mike Sims

Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Wallingford Town Council. The fieldwork revealed deposits of modern made ground sealing an earlier worked soil and layers of alluvium. In two of the trenches evidence for probable Burgage plot boundary ditches and a post-medieval robber trench were observed. Two of the trenches revealed layers of demolition debris and the remaining two encountered deposits of worked soil overlying alluvium. No deposits or features relating to the Saxon origin of Wallingford were observed.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY

The Vale and Ridgeway Project: Excavations at Marcham/Frilford 2008: interim report

Kamash Z, Gosden C and Lock G (with contributions by Jane Harrison, Paula Levick, Jane Smallridge and Sheila Raven)

Introduction to the Vale and Ridgeway Project

The background to the project and site has been detailed in the previous seven interim reports in *South Midlands Archaeology* (Lock and Gosden 2002; Lock and Gosden 2003; Lock *et al* 2004; Gosden and Lock 2005; Lock and Gosden 2006; Kamash *et al* 2007; Kamash *et al* 2008), as well as on the project web site:

http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/research/research_projects/marcham

As in previous years the excavation acts as a training excavation, and is committed to education in the widest sense. This season's excavation saw participants from across the world including Poland, USA, Portugal and Kenya as well as from a selection of British schools and

Oxfordshire

universities. Education Officers were on-site throughout the month of excavation and gave tours to many visitors including groups from local schools and community organizations. Various activities were organized for National Archaeology Day when over 1000 people visited the site.

The 2008 Excavation Season

Excavations this year were spread across Trendles Field and the Noah's Ark garden.

In Trendles Field, which has been the focus of our excavations until this year, several trenches were continued from the previous season (MF08: Trenches 14, 21, 29, 33 and 36) [Fig 2]. The aims of the season included: completing the excavation of the large pit in Trench 14 and of the western entrance to the semi-amphitheatre (Trench 29); continued exploration of the shrine in Trench 36, in particular its relationship to the Iron Age pits in the vicinity and to trace the southern continuation of the semi-amphitheatre drain with a view to finding where it ended (Trenches 21 and 33). As last year, bad weather and a high water table prevented excavation inside the arena of the semi-amphitheatre. In addition, a new trench was excavated to investigate further the Iron Age occupation at the eastern end of the field (MFP08: Trench 2).

This was the first year of excavations inside the Scheduled Ancient Monument (OX211, Scheduled Monument

Consent HSD 9/2/9919) in the Noah's Ark Inn Garden, where Bradford and Goodchild (1939) first excavated the temple site. Three trenches (MFNA08: Trenches 1 to 3) were excavated in the scheduled area to investigate the date and character of the barrel-shaped, ditched enclosure, including several other curvilinear features visible on the geophysical plot and to explore the southern wall of the temenos and its relationship, if any such existed, with the ditched enclosure (Trench 1) (Wintle 2007) [Fig 3]. The geophysics also shows a linear feature running parallel to the enclosure ditch on its inside, possibly a palisade trench. Two further trenches were excavated outside of the scheduled area to the west to find the continuation of the outer enclosure ditch (MFNA08: Trenches 4 and 5); no definite archaeology was identified in either trench, though excavation is on-going in Trench 5.

Excavations inside the Noah's Ark Inn garden, Frilford (SAM OX211): MFNA08 Trenches 1-3 [Figs 4-6]

The excavations inside the Noah's Ark Inn garden this year revealed a long sequence of activity in the area. A series of ditches and pits seem to have pre-dated the ditched enclosure, suggesting activity from at least the Bronze Age. Residual finds of a leaf arrowhead and a thumbnail scraper from Trench 1 may indicate even earlier activity. The ditched enclosure seems to have dated from the middle Iron Age. A large assemblage of early Roman pottery from the upper fills of the enclosure ditch in Trench 1 suggested that

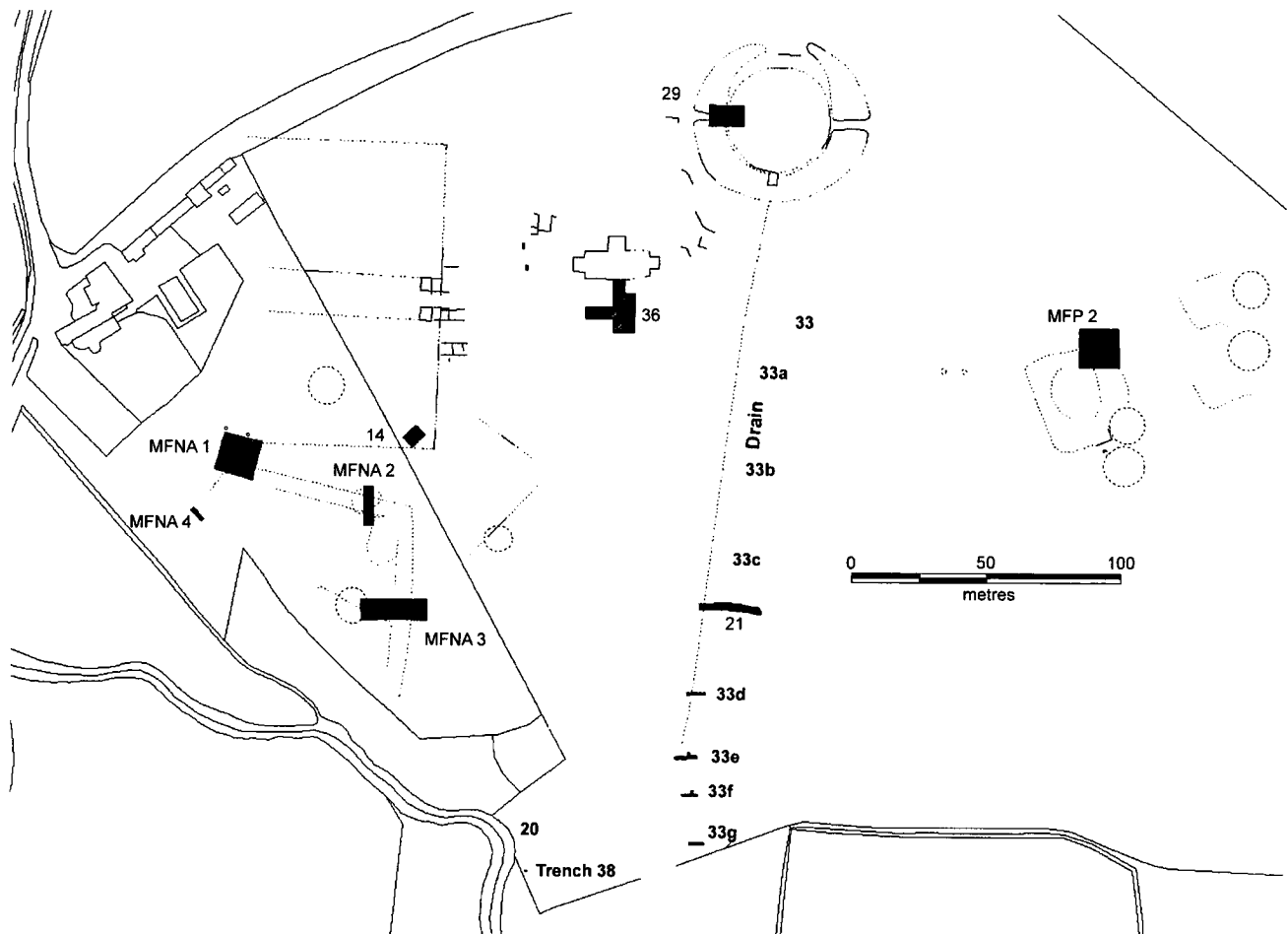


Fig. 2. Overall site plan showing the excavation areas and all trenches (those excavated in 2008 are indicated in darker grey).

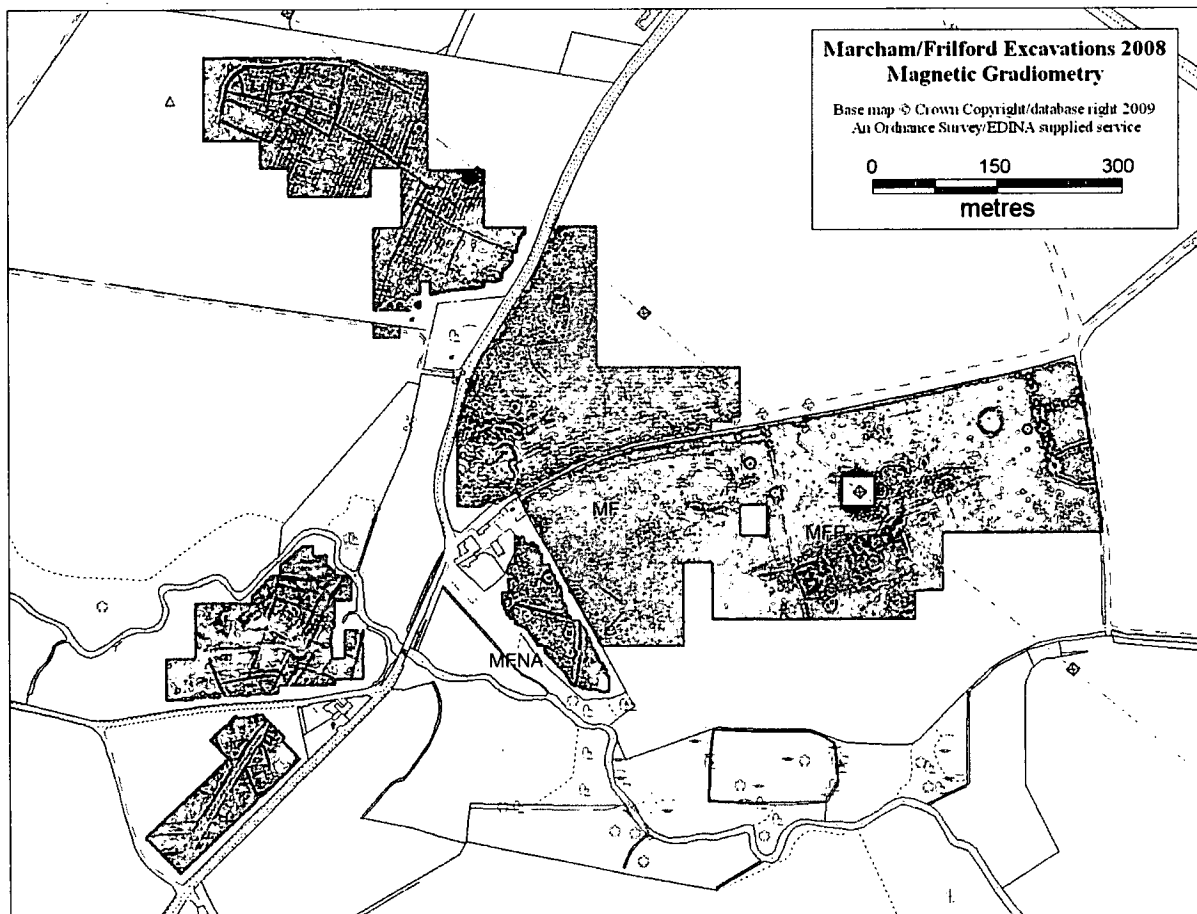


Fig 3. Plan showing the areas subject to geophysical survey. Excavations have been undertaken in the areas marked MFNA, MF and MFP.

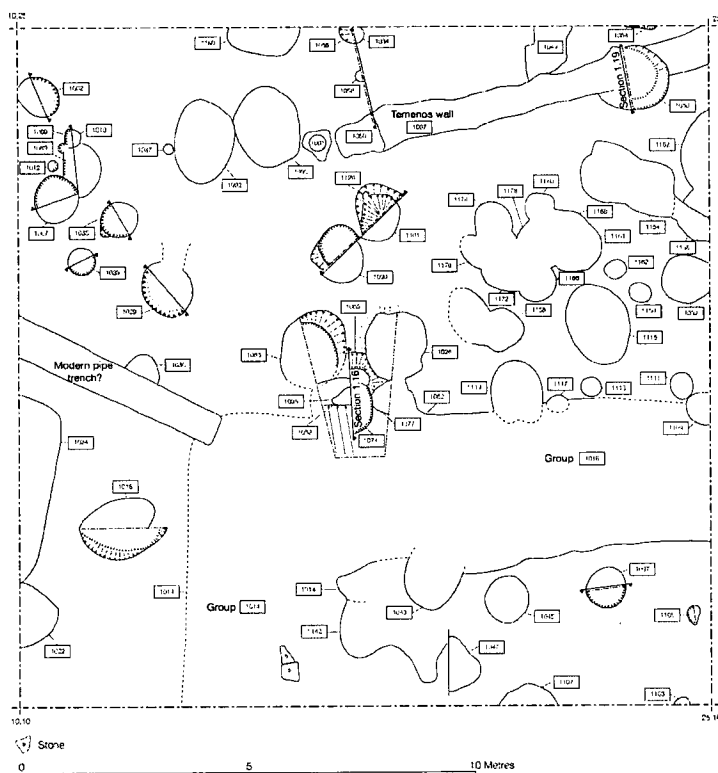


Fig 4. Plan of MFNA trench 1 showing features excavated in 2008.

it was still open into the early Roman period. Significantly, this pottery and other Roman finds, including coins and brooches, seem to pre-date the earliest suggested date for the construction of the main temple inside the temenos. Excavations in Trench 1 are still on-going, which should reveal more about any relationship between the ditched enclosure and the construction and use of the temenos. Trenches 2 and 3 were completed this season and have been back-filled.

Activity in the Noah's Ark Inn garden before the enclosure

One of the key aims of Trench 2 was to investigate the relationship between the enclosure ditch, the palisade, and one of the curvilinear features that appear on the geophysical plot. Excavations revealed that the curvilinear feature (group 2071 [2007=2044=2065]) pre-dated both the enclosure ditch and the internal palisade [2009=2042 and 2004 respectively] [Figs 7-8]. Ditch group 2071, which had up to 3 fills, was 1.2m to 1.5m wide and 0.65m to 1.0m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It had an internal diameter of *c* 7m. The size of this ditch suggests that it was a ring ditch, rather than a roundhouse gully; this would also fit with its probable Bronze Age date.

MFNA 08

Trench 2

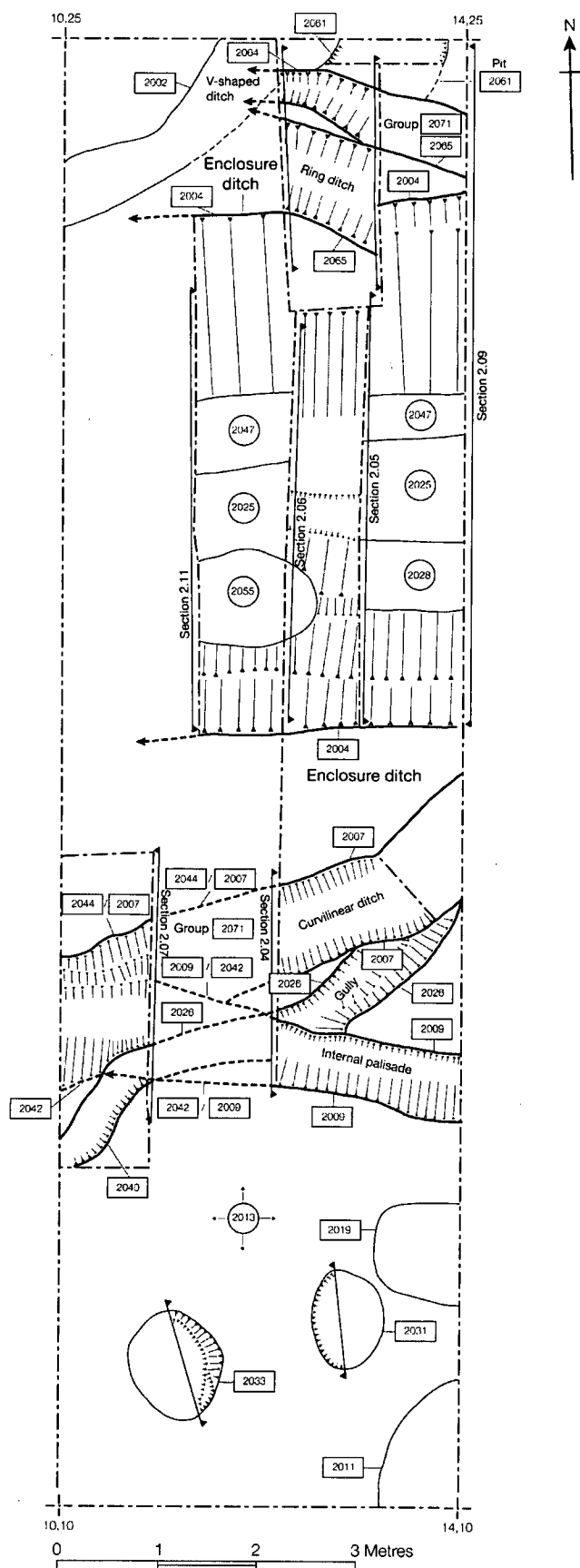


Fig 5. Plan of MFNA Trench 2.

Ditch group 2071 also cut two earlier features in the northern part of trench 2: pit 2061 and ditch 2064. Pit 2061, which was circular with vertical sides and a flat base, was 0.9m in diameter and 0.6m deep. It had two dark, charcoal-rich fills. This pit itself cut a v-shaped ditch 2064, which was 0.5m wide and 0.4m deep.

Further to the south in Trench 3, a large ditch (group 3087 [3029=3088=3109]) may also have been earlier than the enclosure as it was cut by pit 3025 and penannular gully group 3073, which both appear to have been contemporary with the enclosure. Ditch group 3087 ran on a northwest-southeast alignment through the centre of the trench and terminated near the north-western corner. Although the ditch does not appear to run further south-east on the geophysics, the south-eastern terminus of the ditch was not found inside the trench and seemed to run through pit 3018 under the southern baulk. The ditch was c 2m wide and 1.5m deep [Fig 9]. Its sides were badly eroded at the top, so much so that large pieces of bedrock had collapsed into the fill (eg 3013), which also accounts for its scalloped shape in plan. Towards the bottom it narrowed to 0.5m and had vertical sides that broke into a flat base. The ditch had up to three fills, the primary of which (3112) was a light whitish grey clayish sand that may have been laid down in water. The ditch was subsequently re-cut [3099] as a much shallower ditch 0.9m - 1.1m wide and 0.3m - 0.4m deep with a concave base and gently sloping sides. It is possible that ditch group 3087 relates to the ditch complex excavated in Trendles Field (MF trenches 3, 4 and 12).

Two pits in Trench 3 [3018 and 3078] appear to have been earlier than the enclosure. Pit 3018, which was oval (1.9m x 0.5m) with a flat base and vertical sides, was cut by ditch group 3087. This pit was also distinguished from other pits in this area by being significantly deeper (0.9m) and containing large amounts of animal bone in its fill (3019). Pit 3078, near the northern baulk, was circular (0.9 m in diameter) with vertical sides and a stepped base (0.4m deep). Its primary fill (3114) was a mid greyish red sandy silt. Where encountered elsewhere on site, in MF Trench 14 and MFNA Trench 1, red fills seem to be characteristic of earlier prehistoric features.

The pit [1065] in trench 1, which had a red secondary fill (1076), was the earliest feature in a series of intercutting pits [1074 and 1095] to the north of enclosure ditch group 1016, which was dated to the Middle Iron Age in Trench 2 [Fig 10]. These pits were cut by ditch group 1016 [intervention 1052], so may also be earlier than the enclosure, though more excavation is needed before it is known whether 1052 was the original cut. The upper fill (1075) of this pit was a dark, charcoal-rich fill that contained a near-complete foetal canine skeleton.

The enclosure ditch and palisade

The barrel-shaped enclosure, which was c 60m wide and over 75m long, was surrounded by a large ditch and a smaller inner linear feature visible on the geophysics. These were investigated in Trench 2 where they were aligned east-west and formed the northern extent of the enclosure. The enclosure ditch [2004] was a stepped v-shape c 4m



The inner feature [2009=2042] was only excavated in Trench 2 where it ran c 4m to the south of ditch 2004 and on

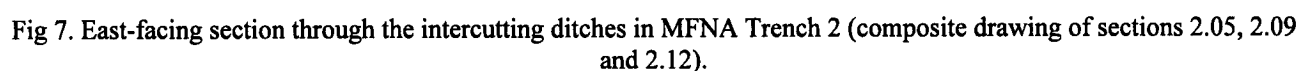
The eastern entrance to the enclosure

The barrel-shaped ditched enclosure had at least one entrance in its eastern side. This entrance was excavated in Trench 3 that was positioned over the entrance including the northern terminus of the outer enclosure ditch ie the southern extent of the entrance [Fig 6]. The terminus of the ditch [3008] had a similar profile to the ditch as seen in Trench 2 (see above). It was 3.2m wide and 1.4m deep. There appeared to be no significant placed deposits in the ditch as are sometimes encountered in the terminus section of ditches. A layer of redeposited bedrock (3126) to the west

Trench 2

Section 2

Section 2.13 (=2.05; 2.09; 2.12)



Oxfordshire

MFNA 08
Trench 2
Section 2.07

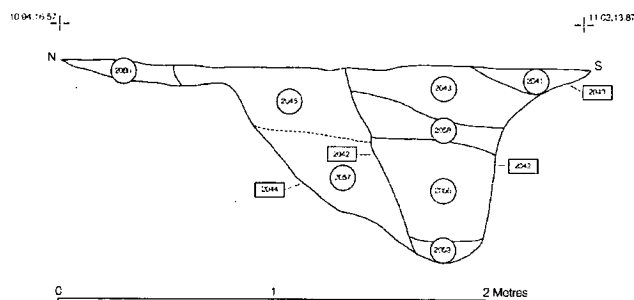


Fig 8. West-facing section through intercutting ditches in MFNA Trench 2.

MFNA 08
Trench 3
Section 3.28

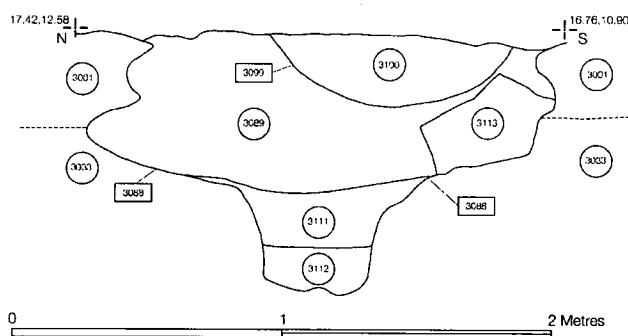


Fig 9. Section through ditch [3088] (group 3087) in MFNA Trench 3.

of the ditch terminus may be the scant remains of a bank inside the enclosure.

The geophysics seemed to suggest that there were two large pits positioned in the entrance area slightly to the east, but these were not confirmed by excavation. Instead, an arc of shallow pits or postholes [group 3137: 3004, 3002, 3010, 3130 and possibly 3067] surrounding the ditch terminus was identified. Where excavated, these features were all circular with near vertical sides and flat bases. They were all 0.8m to 0.95m in diameter (except [3067], which was just 0.45m in diameter) and comparatively shallow, varying from 0.23m - 0.3m deep. These unusual dimensions, particularly their shallow depth, make any interpretation of their function tentative. The spatial association of group 3137 with the ditch terminus, however, suggests that they were related to it and may have been used to further mark out the entrance. The other side of the entrance was not in the excavation area, but it is possible that a similar arrangement also existed there.

Activity inside the enclosure

An area of c 12m x 8m inside the enclosure was excavated in Trench 3, which revealed an assortment of cut features that may have been associated with the enclosure. This picture may be further refined on analysis of the pottery. The enclosure seems to have been divided into two by a row of at least five postholes [group 3106: 3012, 3038/3102, 3052, 3031 and 3023/3080] that ran on an east-west alignment through the enclosure from its eastern entrance.

MFNA 08
Trench 1
Section 1.16

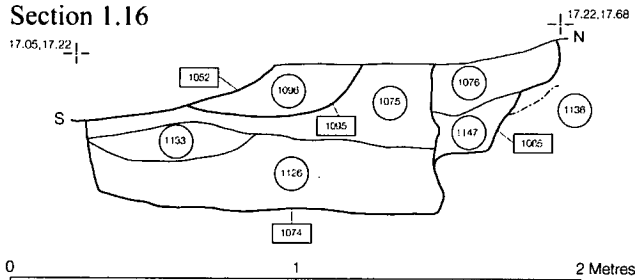


Fig 10. Section through pits [1074 and 1095] and ditch [1052] in MFNA Trench 1.

The postholes were spaced at alternating intervals of 3m and 2.6m (from east to west). Posthole 3119 may also have been part of this group, but was spaced further to the west from [3023/3080] than might have been expected in this pattern (c 3.6m). The postholes were all circular with vertical sides and flat bases. They varied in diameter from 0.6m to 0.8m and in depth from 0.3m to 0.6m, getting generally deeper towards the west. Each of the postholes, except 3023, had a single fill, but these were not consistent in colour or composition. There were hints of further divisions inside the enclosure in the form of intercutting groups of pits and/or postholes. These groups [3138, 3139, 3140 and 3141] all seemed to be on a north-south alignment and may have formed smaller radial divisions from the central group 3106. Indeed, group 3141 incorporates one of the group 3106 postholes [3012]. Evidence for internal organisation of a similarly-sized Iron Age enclosure (c 80m long x c 60m wide) has been excavated at Horcott Pit, near Fairford, Gloucestershire where ring gullies were predominantly found in the eastern part of the enclosure and pits in the western part [Lamdin-Whymark *et al* forthcoming]. It is possible that similar divisions were in action in the Marcham enclosure, though given the limited extent excavated this cannot be proven.

At the western end of Trench 3 a curvilinear, U-shaped gully [group 3073: 3021 = 3074] terminated 3.6 m south of the northern baulk. It is possible that this was a penannular gully associated with a roundhouse, but a southern continuation of the gully was not found within the trench. The gully was 0.9m to 1.0m wide and 0.4m deep. A series of small postholes [3046, 3048 and 3042] were found cutting the top of the gully on both the western and eastern sides in

MFNA 08
Trench 2
Section 2.14 (=2.06; 2.10; 2.11)

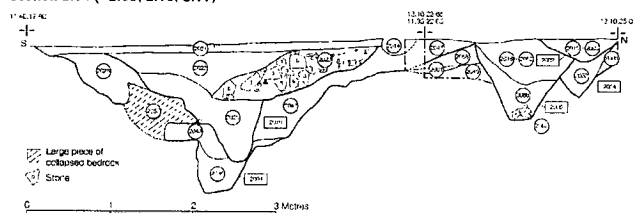


Fig 11. East-facing section through intercutting ditches in MFNA Trench 2 (composite drawing of sections 2.06, 2.10 and 2.11).

MFNA 08
Trench 2
Section 2.04

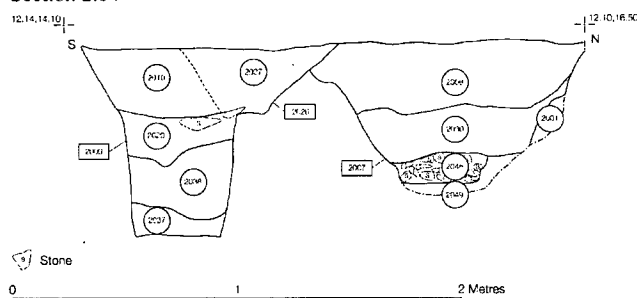


Fig 12. Section through palisade trench [2009] and intercutting ditches [2026 and 2007] in MFNA Trench 2.

MFNA 08
Trench 1
Section 1.19

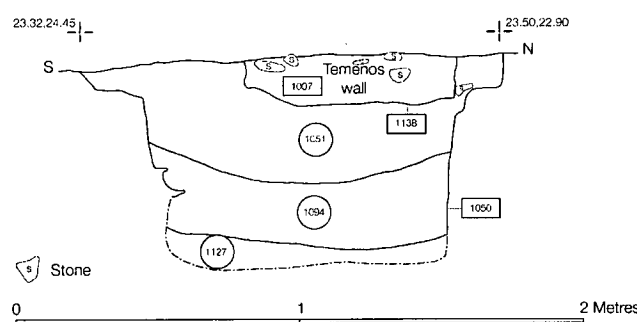


Fig 13. Section through pit [1050] showing where the temenos wall [1007] was later inserted.

intervention [3021]. A group [3142] of intercutting pits was also excavated in the south-western corner.

A row of three pits [2019, 2031 and 2033] and a probable ditch [2011] in the southern part of Trench 2 would also have been inside the enclosure, though not necessarily contemporary with it. The two excavated pits [2031 and 2033] were both circular with flat bases and *c* 0.95m and 1.2m in diameter respectively. Like some of the features in Trench 2, pit 2031 was very shallow (*c* 0.19m deep), so its function and description as a pit is tentative. Pit 2033 was deeper (*c* 0.5m deep) and may have been deliberately dug down to the level of the natural clay (which interleaves with the natural sand in the area) to provide a waterproof base for storage. Only a small portion of the ditch, also visible on the geophysics, was exposed in the south-eastern corner of the trench and was not excavated. These features all cut a layer of redeposited bedrock (2013) that probably derived from the digging of ditches in Trench 2, though it is not clear which ditch.

There appears to have been very little activity outside the enclosure in Trenches 2 and 3. In the north-western corner of Trench 2 a narrow and shallow curvilinear ditch [2002] (0.4m wide and 0.3m deep), possibly a roundhouse gully, was excavated [Fig 11]. In Trench 3 a tree-throw hole [3082] was excavated *c* 3m to the east of the eastern entrance to the enclosure. In contrast there appears to have been significantly more activity to the north of the enclosure

in Trench 1 in the form of pits and postholes. Most of these features await further exploration next season, so it is currently unclear how they relate to the enclosure. Their presence, however, may begin to provide an explanation for the location of the temple and its temenos in the Roman period (see below).

Activity after the enclosure

The date when the enclosure goes out of use is currently unclear. At the northern end of the enclosure, particularly in Trench 1, there is clear evidence for early Roman activity in the area. The upper fills (1017, 1015 and 1089) of ditch groups 1014 and 1016 produced a very large assemblage of late 1st century AD pottery, two late 1st century AD asses, one of Domitian and the other a Claudian copy and three early Roman brooches (a Nauheim derivative, a T-brooch and a penannular brooch). A Hod Hill brooch also came from this vicinity in topsoil. This type and density of deposition was not encountered in the upper fills of the enclosure ditches in Trench 2 and seems to be particular to this location.

One explanation for this level of deposition might be a southern entrance into the temenos. Until this season it was assumed on analogy with other Romano-Celtic sites that the temenos had a single entrance to the east (excavated in MF Trench 32). Excavations in MFNA Trench 1 this year, however, suggest that there was also a southern entrance. The southern temenos wall [1007=1060] was traced entering Trench 1 in the north-eastern corner, where it cut through an earlier pit [1050]. The wall, which was *c* 0.8m wide, was not robbed out as in Trendles Field and existed as a single foundation course of non-local limestone pieces. Notably, the wall had deeper foundations through pit [1050] [Fig 13]. After running *c* 8m into the trench from the north-eastern corner, the temenos wall seemed to come to an abrupt end. No continuation of the wall was identified further to the west, even through the pits in this area. This break in the wall coincided with, and may have been deliberately positioned on, the corner junction between ditch groups 1014 and 1016. It seems possible, then, that the deposition in the upper ditch fills was related to activity inside the temenos. Furthermore, the finds assemblages from these fills may also provide backing for Bradford and Goodchild's (1939) original dating of the temple to AD80-90, which was subsequently disputed by Harding (1987) who preferred a later date in the 2nd century AD. Further to the east in Trench 2, a southwest-northeast aligned ditch [2026=2040] that contained large amounts of

MF 08
Trench 14
Pit [14295]

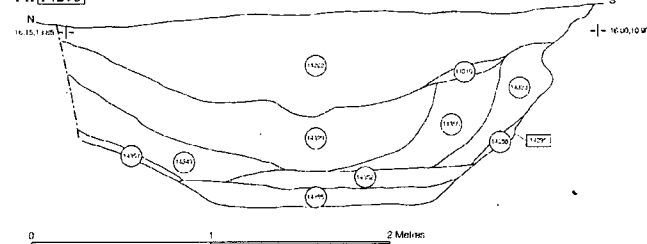


Fig 14. Section through pit [14295] in Trench 14.

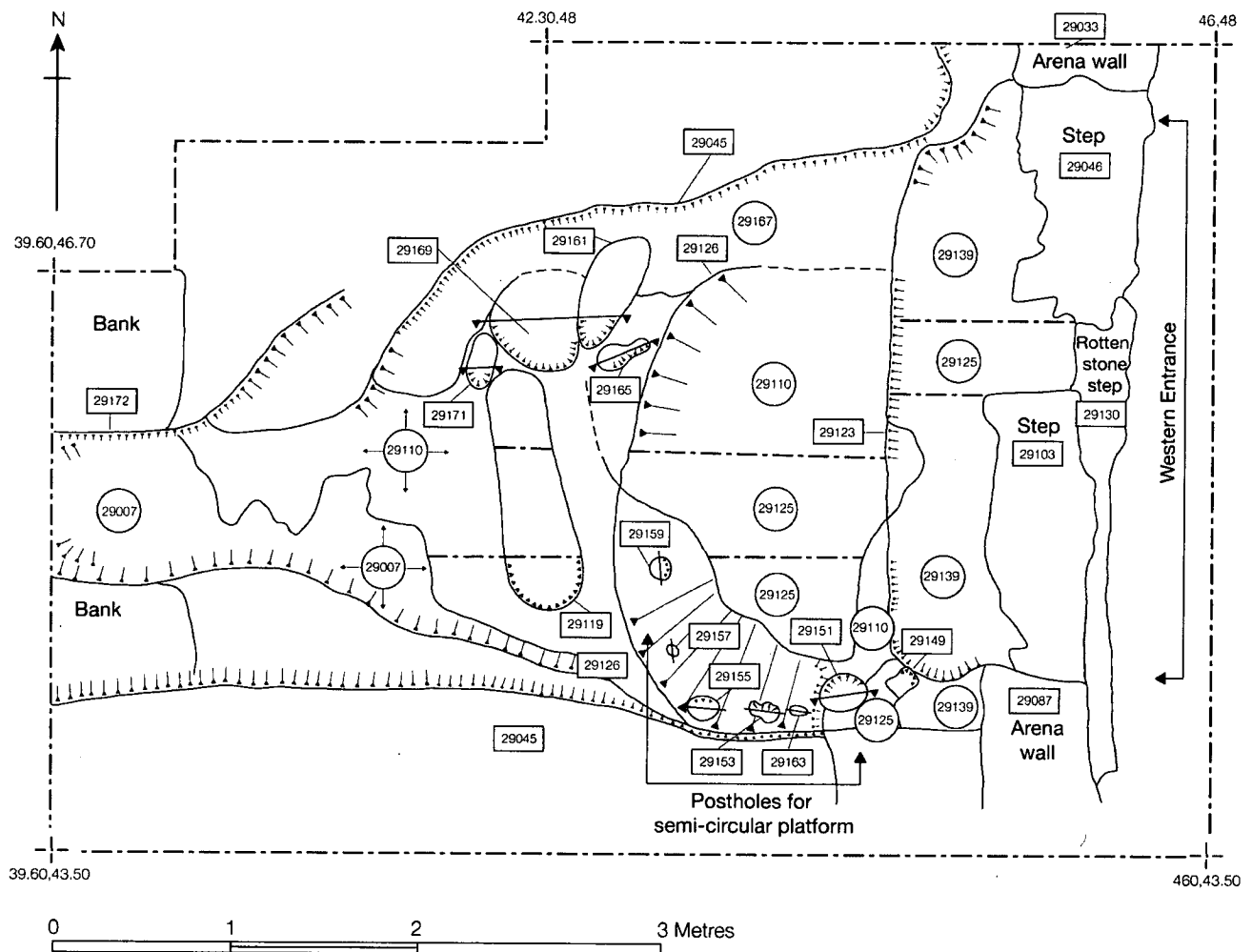


Fig 15. Plan of the western entrance to the semi-amphitheatre in Trench 29.

oyster shell and cut the inner enclosure ditch [2009=2042] [Fig 8] may also date to the Roman period. Inside the enclosure in Trench 3 there was no evidence of any activity extending into the Roman period and later. This suggests that by the Roman period the focus of activity was to the north of the enclosure.

Excavations inside Trendles Field

Pit 14295 in Trench 14

Excavations of the large pit [14295] inside Trench 14 were completed this season. The pit was oval (*c* 5m x *c* 3m) and *c* 1.2m deep. It had vertical sides cut through bedrock and sloping sides when cut through the sand and a flat base [Fig 14]. The pit had multiple fills, most of which produced large numbers of finds. The majority of these finds date from the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, which suggests that the pit was not in use during the early life of the temple and temenos. This may also explain the large amount of stone in the pit, which may derive from reorganisation and rebuilding of the temple complex. The late date of the finds also suggests that similar pits may have existed in other parts of the temenos.

The western entrance to the semi-amphitheatre (Trench 29) [Fig 15]

The excavation of the western entrance was completed this season; further excavation still needs to be undertaken inside the arena in Trenches 29 and 9. The development of the western entrance seems to have taken place in at least two phases. Phase one was contemporary with the original construction of the semi-amphitheatre and saw the construction of the entrance way with a step and platform leading into the arena. In Phase two, there was a general remodelling of the area when the entrance was narrowed.

In Phase one, the cut [29045=29085] through the bedrock and sand natural for the entrance was made. This cut was 3.3 m at the edge of the arena and narrowed to 2.2 m as it went west out of the arena. The arena walls were built up to this cut, an original section of which [29033] survives to the north of the cut. The first phase step [29130: 3.3m long x 0.3m wide x 0.2m high] filled this break in the arena walls. While part of the step was constructed using mortared limestone pieces, a large part (2.6m x 0.3m) made use of a natural outcrop of rotten stone. At the same time a cobbled surface (29131 - not on plan) was laid down inside the arena and a rubble deposit (29139) was packed behind step 29130



In the second phase, repairs were made to the original arena walls to the north and south of the entrance [29068 and 29087 respectively]. The original platform seems to have been removed and a new, narrower step [29046] constructed. This new step was constructed from a single

The drain (Trenches 21 and 33)

The southern continuation of the drain was traced running through Trenches 21 and 33E [21060 and 33037 respectively]. In both trenches the drain was constructed in a

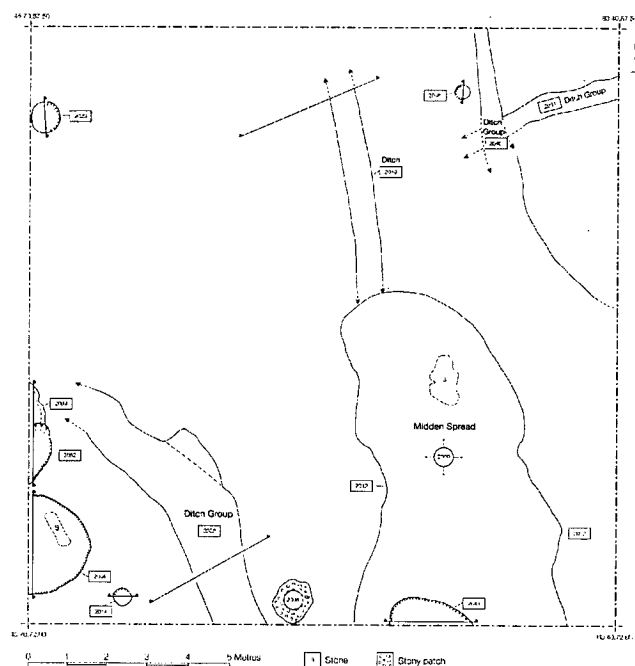


Fig 17. Plan of MFP Trench 2.

similar manner to the rest of the drain (Kamash et al 2008); it was c 1.1m wide and c 0.6m deep. In Trench 33E it was sealed beneath a post-medieval field boundary ditch [33030], which was on a north-east - south-west alignment. A further trench, 33F, was dug to the south where ditch [330556], which was on the same alignment as the ditch in Trench 33E, was exposed and excavated. The drain, however, did not continue this far to the south. Excavations in the next season will concentrate on the area between Trenches 33E and 33F to find the precise location of the end of the drain.

The Iron Age pits and Roman shrine in Trench 36 [Fig 16]

Excavation of the two large pits [36025 and 36023] to the north-east and south-east (respectively) of the central shrine structure [walls: 36010, 36035, 36006 and 36007] was completed. In addition, several smaller pits were excavated in extensions made to the east and north. In an extension to the west of the central shrine, excavation revealed an adolescent crouched burial. The burial was placed into an oval pit [36104], which was 1.6m long x 1.2m wide x 0.4m deep. This pit had in turn been cut through a larger oval pit [36072], 2.1m long x 1.6m wide x 0.5m deep.

Investigations also continued inside the central shrine, which revealed that (36065) was capping for a circular well, rather than the foundations of a structure. The well [36123], which was 0.6m in diameter, was excavated to a depth of 1.3m, but not bottomed. The upper fills of the well contained large numbers of late Roman coins, which suggest that the later phases of this building may have been related to the activities in the late Roman building to the north (MF Trench 2) where high concentrations of late Roman coins were also found.

MFP Trench 2 [Fig 17]

This 15m x 15m trench targeted a number of features identified during a geophysical survey of the site. These included intercutting ditches and probable pits which lay within a large D-shaped enclosure, one of several identified during the survey. A thick layer of hillwash overlay the archaeological features and it is also possible that colluvial and fluvial deposits currently mask some features. The main features identified during this season's excavation included a midden, several discrete pits and intercutting ditches.

Midden (2009), which was c 4.4m wide and 8.8m long (minimum), dominated the south-eastern area of the trench. It was formed from the upper layer of a large irregular pit [2012], whose excavation is not yet complete. The midden contained small amounts of Roman material as well as large quantities of early and late Iron Age pottery. It is possible that this was curated material brought in from elsewhere and deposited as a single fill after the pit had remained empty for some time. A large single weathered tabular limestone rock (1.3m x 0.7m) lay in the middle of the midden.

Another similarly large piece of limestone had been used to cap pit [2004] (2.5m in diameter x 1m deep) in the south-eastern corner. This pit contained few finds and appears to have been backfilled rapidly. The large stones seem to function as markers and/or capping stones, but it is currently unclear why. Two other pits [2052] and [2043] were excavated in the southern part of the trench. Pit [2052], which has not been completely excavated, cut an earlier ditch [2089]. Pit [2043] to the south of [2012] had clay deposits at its base. Extensive shallow features interpreted as quarries have been identified at the Roman and pre-Roman settlement at Baldock, Hertfordshire (Stead and Rigby 1986: 47-50). These pits in the southern part of the trench might have served a similar purpose, possibly for the removal of clay deposits.

To the west of pit [2012] ditch group 2026 ran on a north-west - south-east alignment. This V-shaped ditch was 1.5m wide and c 1.15m deep. Between ditch group 2026 and pit [2012] lay a small patch of stones (2008), which might be the remnants of a cobbled surface whose date and relationship with the other archaeology in the area is unknown.

Excavations in the northern part of the trench revealed a complex network of intercutting ditches. In the north-eastern corner a possible ring ditch [group 2031], which was c 0.4m wide and 0.25m deep, was cut by ditch group 2040. This ditch, which was 0.3m wide and 0.2m deep, ran on an approximately east-west alignment. The continuation of these ditches to the south and west is currently unclear. To the west of these ditches, another ditch [2049] (0.67m wide x 0.31m deep) ran on a north-south alignment. A single heavily truncated pit [2023] (c 0.8m in diameter and c 0.14m deep) was excavated in the north-eastern corner.

Future work

Excavations in MFNA Trench 1 will continue next season in order to clarify the later history of the ditched enclosure and its relationship with the temple and temenos. It is also hoped that a further trench will be opened in the scheduled area to re-examine the site of the central temple excavated by Bradford and Goodchild with the aim of refining theories concerning its origins.

In Trendles Field, the aim for the 2009 season will be to complete the excavations of the area that formed the focus for the Roman period ceremonial centre. This will involve completing the excavations inside the arena (Trench 9), conditions permitting, as well as finishing the excavation of the interior of the shrine in Trench 36. A new trench will be opened between Trenches 33E and 33F to locate the drain and see if any notable activity occurred in its vicinity. The shift in focus towards the prehistoric enclosures at the far eastern side of the field (MFP) will continue with further excavation in Trench 2.

Acknowledgements

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OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD

Home Farm House, Charlton-on-Otmoor (SP 561 159)
David Clark

The only possible medieval fabric was a transverse beam in the lower west room, and one smoke-blackened rafter. The main finding was that Home Farm House was built against Cumberland House (to the left - west - in Fig 18). The chimneystack could be a later insertion, contemporary with the spine beam in the ground floor room, which it supports.

This initial phase could either have been built for agricultural storage purposes, at the entrance to the farmyard, with no heating or upper floor; or it was built as a service range, ie a kitchen and pantry, with a central stack and bread oven, with access from Cumberland House and no upper floor.

The next phase was the insertion of the first floor, the spine beam having been ordered with chamfered joists to give the east room a certain status, and an earlier moulded beam, previously a girding beam against a wall, chamfered on its previously plain rear side and reused in the west room to support new joists there. The staircase was probably contained within an external stair turret, now incorporated into the later fabric of the rear extension.

The final phase, shown by the change in quoin type, and window brickwork, was a substantial rebuilding, probably in the 19th century, by raising the height of the walls, and rebuilding the roof, probably reusing the existing purlins and rafters. It is possible that this was done to accommodate agricultural labourers, and it may have been divided into two separate one-up-one-down cottages, with an additional doorway in the road elevation.

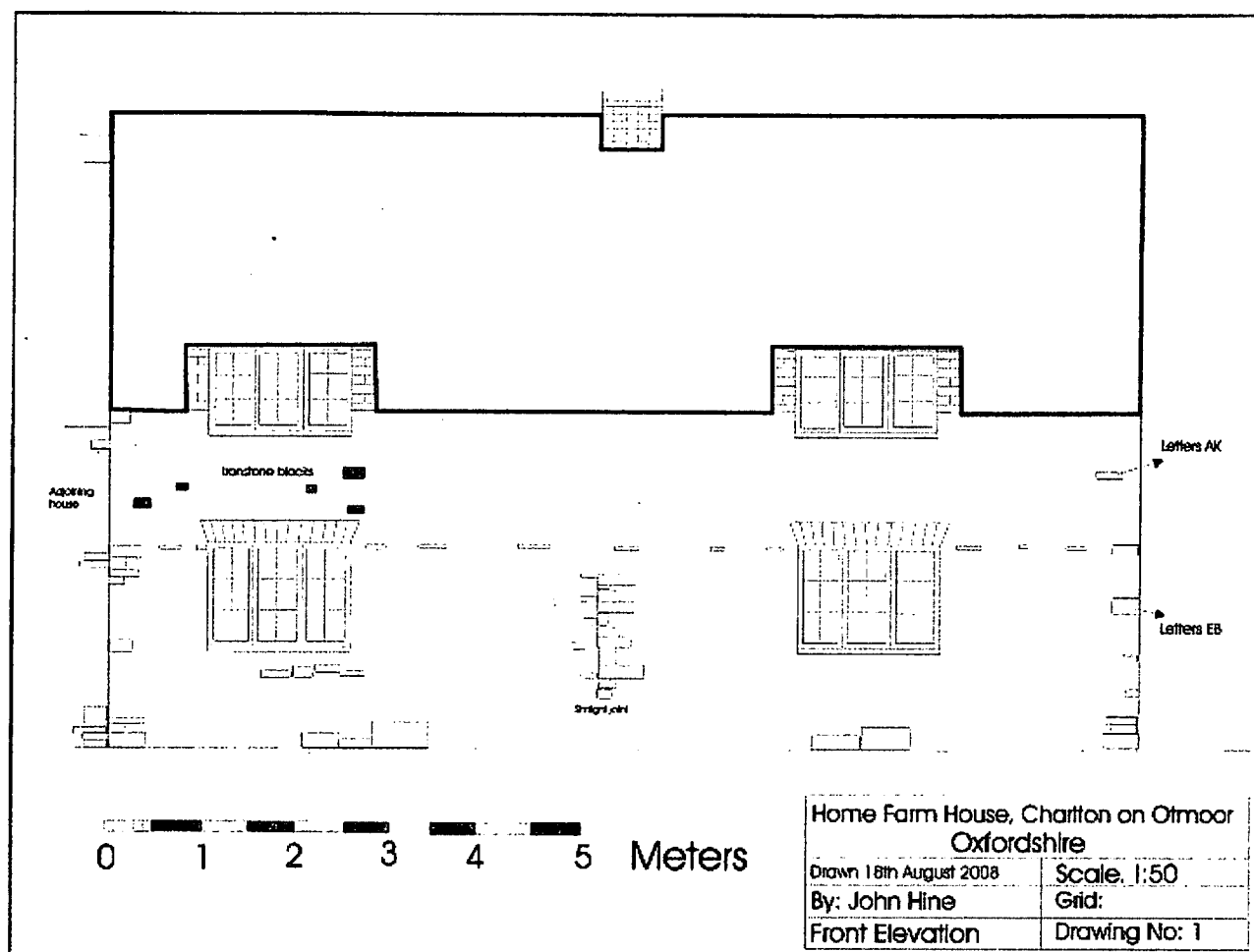


Fig 18. Home Farm House, Charlton-on-Otmoor, South elevation (J Hine)

Dovecote, Brightwell Park (SU 6528 9540)

David Clark

The dovecote at Brightwell Park (Fig 19) is a fascinating structure raising many questions of style, structure and use. It is an elongated Greek cross, orientated roughly north-south, some 9.8m long by 8.5m wide. The walls are some 1.3m thick at the base, where there is a 10cm wide plinth. The single doorway (0.9m (3ft) wide) is in the centre of the east wall. There are windows in the upper part of each wall. The roof is hipped with a covering of red tiles and there are two octagonal glovers. It has approximately 1200 nesting boxes.

The recording resulted in a tentative suggestion that it is basically a building of the late 16th century, possibly designed by a recusant landlord as part of a manorial complex sited below the present ruined house near the fish-ponds. It was retained in the late 18th century when a new house was built, possibly as a working dovecote but later as a parkland feature, and repaired and maintained in the 19th and 20th centuries partly because of a local legend, partly as an animal shelter.

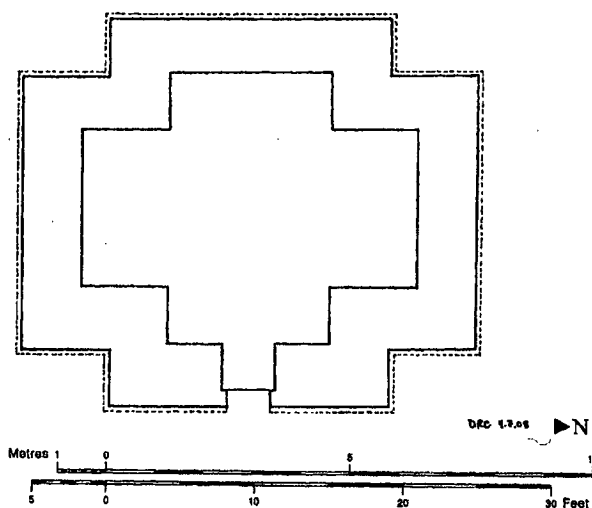


Fig 19. Dovecote, Brightwell Park Ground Plan.

The Clappers, Church Lane, Charlbury (SP 355 195)

David Clark

The Clappers is part of a larger house built in the 17th century, and subdivided and remodelled internally, partly for schoolteaching purposes, making interpretation difficult. There is clear evidence of agricultural use, which is surprising given that farming ceased in 1813, and access

to the attics by means of external stairways would have been somewhat hazardous. Later phases of schoolroom and domestic use have, however, not obscured some of the interesting early features and character of the building, and it is hoped that ways can be found to retain this character while making it usable for present-day living. Perhaps the most interesting spaces are at attic level. The floor of this southern room has had a number of metal plates nailed over cracks, suggesting that the room was used for the storage of agricultural produce, probably grain (being of value, it was important that it did not fall through the cracks in the floorboards).

The roof structure is largely hidden, but a secret-bridled scarf with squinted abutment can be seen in the front purlin where it meets the principal rafter. This joint seems to have a long period of use in Oxfordshire, but is fairly common in the 17th century. The northern room, however, contains most of the unaltered visible fabric. Limewashed throughout, it also seems to have had an agricultural function. The truss seems to consist of a truncated principal to the left and a base-cruck to the right (there is a small curve in the lowest part of the principal). Both principals terminate below the collar and the roof consists of common rafters with a thin ridge plank.

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project: 2008 interim report

Ian Clarke

Introduction

The Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP) is a community-based project being run in association with the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG). An introduction to the project was published in *SMA* No 37 (Clarke 2007a), in *SOAG Bulletin* No 61 (Clarke 2007b) and appears on the SOAG web site at:

<http://www.soagarch.org.uk/bbintro.html>.

Early work is concentrated on two areas: Cadwell, in the north of the parish, where we have evidence for Roman occupation and a DMV, and the central and southern areas of Brightwell Park where extensive earthworks also suggest decayed, or moved, earlier settlement. Large parts of these areas are permanently under grass where geophysical survey is essential. In July 2007 SOAG was awarded a National Lottery grant of £10,000 for BBCHAP through Awards for All for the purchase of a Geoscan Research resistance meter and support equipment. This equipment was first used for a survey at Cadwell Farm in 2007. A balance of about £1500 was used in 2008 to support a training excavation at Cadwell Farm, as reported below.

A resistivity survey of the central enclosure of Brightwell Park was also carried out in 2008, covering an area close to 4.8ha. The survey has located what is believed to be the old

Manor of Parks, burnt down in 1788 and the location lost. It reveals an extensive complex of buildings linked to the extant dovecote which has been tentatively dated to the late 16th century by David Clark of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record. There are signs of Italianate gardens laid out to the east of the buildings, supporting a Tudor date for the complex. Further survey work and an exploratory excavation are planned for 2009 and an interim report will be published in 2010.

Excavation at Cadwell Farm: Monastery Field

(SU 646 958)

A note on the background for Cadwell, with details of earlier and recent survey work are given in *South Midlands Archaeology* No 38 (Clarke 2008a) and in *SOAG Bulletin* No 62 (Clarke 2008b). Aerial photographs from 1943 in the National Archive at Swindon and the resistance meter survey in 2007, revealed a moated enclosure in the north-east corner of Monastery Field, presumed to be the location of the medieval manor of Cadwell. James Bond earlier found a scatter of stone in this area (Bond 1975). The moat is fed by the spring at the east end of Monastery Field and encloses a roughly rectangular area of about 0.6ha. Its size is fairly typical for Oxfordshire domestic moated sites, which vary from 0.3-0.8ha, as is its location on the spring line, in this case where the Upper Greensand gives way to the Gault clay vale below the Chiltern scarp (Bond 1986, 150-151). There is a raised platform at the western side of the enclosure - presumed to be the site of the manor house - which the aerial photos and geophysical survey suggest was separated from the rest of the enclosure by another moat cut, parallel to the western arm of the outer moat. The photographic and geophysical evidence suggests this inner arm may possibly be narrower and shallower than the main moat.

In the Summer of 2008 an exploratory excavation was carried out on this moated site. Three trenches were opened by machine excavator: Trench 1 across a high resistance feature just outside the southern arm of the moat; Trench 2 across the western arm of the moat; and Trench 3 on the 'house platform' over an area showing higher resistance and thought possibly to be a building. Unfortunately, Trench 3 contained no recognizable archaeology and so was closed down. A fourth trench was opened to section a Roman road crossing the site that the 2007 geophysical survey had revealed.

Trench 1: Medieval track (Fig 20)

This trench revealed a well-laid track paved with medium and large stones rough-hewn from the local Lower Chalk (Totternhoe stone) and some from the Upper Greensand, tightly packed together and bonded with clay and clayey-soil. A single line of stones marked the northern side, these being laid on edge and at right angles to the line of the track for greater stability. We may reasonably assume that the south side was similarly treated but plough damage had removed all trace from the area examined. The track was laid directly on the natural clay after removing the turf and thin topsoil. On the uphill (south) side there were indications that the clay may have been cut into slightly to even out but not eliminate the slope. Natural processes and

Oxfordshire

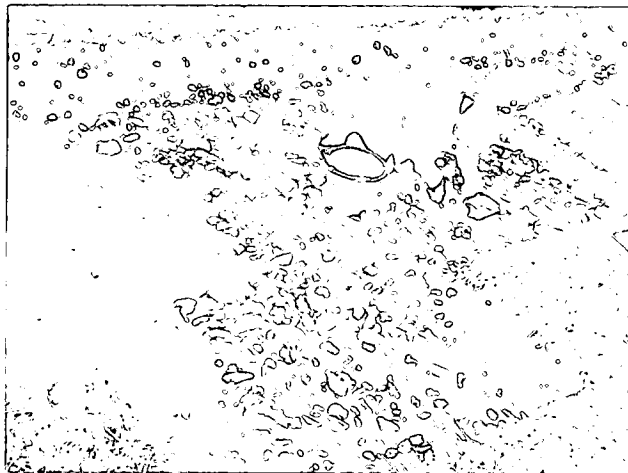


Fig 20. Trench 1 - Medieval track.

human activity had caused the metalling to become partially embedded into the clay. Due to the plough damage on the uphill side, the width was difficult to determine but seems to have been 3m (10ft), although it is possible that it was originally only 2.4m (8ft) and was later widened to 3m (10ft). There were indications of local, patch repairs using mixed-size flints. Later, a layer of medium sized flints had been laid over the whole track to a depth of about 75mm (3in), tapering out beyond the previous width for a distance of about 0.75m (2½ft) on each side. This layer had been much disturbed by the plough which may partly account for the greater width. The flints had either been mixed with sand and gravel when laid or perhaps top dressed with the fines: the distribution of sand and gravel within the layer was uneven.

The track is on an east-west alignment, parallel to and outside the moat, and leads from just outside the crossing of the moat to the spring. It probably dates from the time of the manor house - a few sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the track surface - and was most likely for fetching fresh water for the kitchen, quite possibly using mules. It would of course also have been used by the villagers. An animal bone was embedded in the track between large stones and lay directly on the clay. Whether it dates from the time the track was laid or was dropped and trodden in later we cannot know for sure, although the degree of wear might suggest the former. Carbon dating of this should at least give us a terminus post quem for the track.

On opening this trench with the mechanical excavator, some damage to the archaeology was caused when the bucket was allowed to go too deep, removing part of the track edging on the north side over a width of 1m. This was no fault of the operator, simply inexperience and lack of attention on the part of myself!

Trench 2: Medieval moat (Fig 21)

The moat was cut directly into the Gault clay natural which at the time was overlaid by a thin topsoil and turf layer only 0.1m deep. The western arm of the moat was sectioned to the full width and depth and is of a typical, symmetrical shape with sloping sides and a flat bottom. The width was 6.1m (20ft) and depth 1.55m (5ft) with both sides steeply

sloped at about 40°. When flooded, this would have been a significant statement and deterrent to vagabonds. The moat had silted up to a depth of about 0.75m (2½ft) before being put out of use and grassing over. In the late 1950s or early 1960s it was levelled with top soil and the field deep ploughed for potatoes. Fortunately the top soil in this part of the field had built up sufficiently by then to protect the original land surface from which the moat was dug, which showed clearly as an organic layer in the side of the trench, overlying the Gault clay natural.

A fragment of medieval roof tile found resting directly on the lower part of the east-side cut may be contemporary with the digging of the moat. Arguably the tile could be later if the moat was cleaned out at some time, although there was no evidence that such had occurred, also significant tree root activity apparent on this side of the moat could have disturbed the stratification. If the tile is contemporary, then it could support a date for the construction of the moat in the 13th or 14th century. Tilers were certainly active in the area from the early 14th century but probably earlier: documentary records for nearby Cuxham show that many of the domestic and agricultural building of the manorial centre there were tiled between 1312-13 and 1335-36 (Bond *et al*, 1980). The tile is oxidised to a pale buff colour and may come from nearby Nettlebed. A c 13th century dating is supported by pottery analysis. A body sherd of Abingdon Ware (OXAG) from a pitcher was found low down in the primary silting of the west side cut. The transparent lead glaze fired to light green is suggestive of an early date, perhaps prior to the mid 13th century. A body sherd of East Wiltshire Ware (OXAQ) from a pitcher or cistern was found in a similar location in the primary silting of the east-side cut. This ware is unlikely to have penetrated the area before the very late 12th century. The evidence therefore suggests a 13th century date for the construction of the moat, with some time in the first half perhaps more likely. This is consistent with the high period for domestic moats (Bond 1986, 151). Animal bone was recovered from two levels in the moat and carbon dating will hopefully help to confirm the dating framework.

Outside and close to the edge of the moat was a small, V-shaped ditch with rounded bottom, cut from the same ancient land surface. This was about 0.7m wide and 0.4m

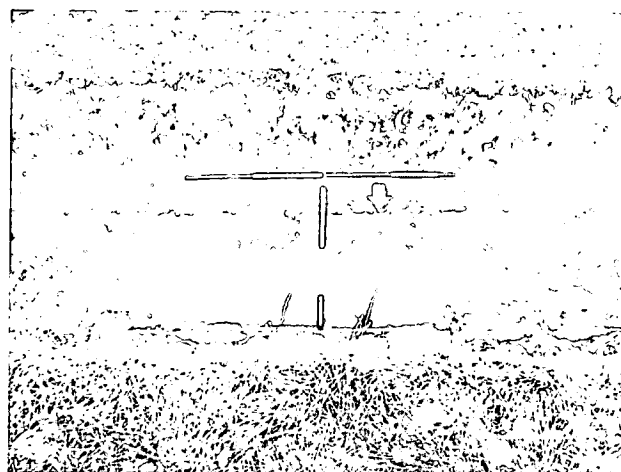


Fig 21. Trench 2 - section of the western arm of the medieval moat.

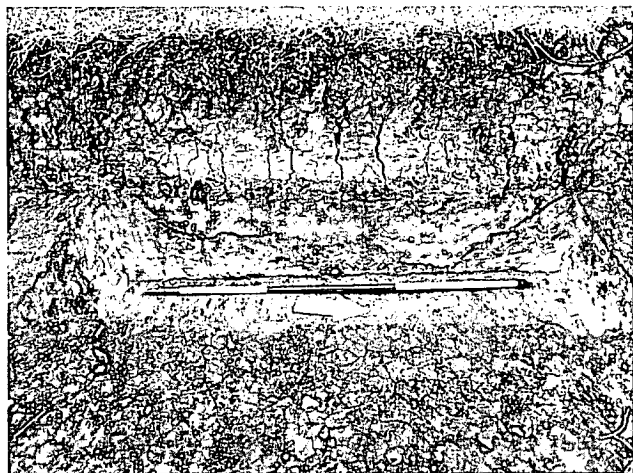


Fig 22. Trench 3 - section of the south ditch of the Roman road.

deep. Lack of time and resources prevented us from fully exploring this smaller ditch and so the chronology relative to the moat could not be determined. It is probably related to other linear enclosure ditches in the lower part of the field, revealed by the aerial photographs. It might possibly be an earlier enclosure ditch for the manorial site but seems too small for that.

Trench 3: Supposed manor house site

This trench was mechanically excavated down to the clay natural but revealed no material evidence of buildings. The soil removed was noticeably clean with no signs of building rubble and no demolition layer in the side of the trench. Our conclusion is that the buildings have left evidence in the sub-soil and natural which the resistance meter is picking up, but that all trace of the building fabric has been removed. We have an eye witness account from a farm hand who worked there in the 1950s and 60s, that significant stonework was removed from this area of the field and that his instructions were to remove all trace of buildings. Careful trowelling of the old (buried) land surface in this area should reveal evidence for timber-framed buildings, something we may well do once the volunteers have acquired the necessary skills.

Trench 4: Roman road (Fig 22)

This road runs roughly east-west across the entire length of Monastery Field, passing just under the north end of Cadwell Farm house where the line kinks to the south slightly and continues on towards Berwick Salome, following the line of an old ride called the Slipe. The 1943 aerial photos show this ride lined with Ash trees that were cut down shortly after for the War effort. It was ploughed out in the 1950s by the same farmer who levelled and ploughed Monastery Field. Roman coins were earlier recovered from the front garden of Cadwell Farm by the present owners. Eastwards, the line of the road is pointing towards the old ford across the Chalgrove Brook once known as Cadwell Ford and identified as the strætforda of the Anglo-Saxon charter of Brightwell of 887 (S 217; Clarke 2006), pointing to this having been a Roman ford. The Roman road is likely to have passed just to the south of the spring, which must then have emerged slightly further north.

Whatever hard surfacing the Roman road once had (probably gravel) has been ploughed away from the area excavated, but from the spacing of the ditches either side we can be sure that it was a standard, single lane highway about 8-10 Roman feet wide (2.4-3.0m). From excavation of the south ditch we know that the ditches were originally a standard Roman V-shape with slot bottom. This is suggestive of military involvement which, if taken together with the early annexation of this area of Britain, probably points to a 1st century date. The north ditch (not fully excavated) remained a V-ditch but the south ditch had later been re-cut on the outer (south) side to create a trapezoidal ditch of about three times the capacity. This must have been in response to problems of run-off from the slope. No Roman finds were recovered from the road but some fine medieval pottery was recovered from the spoil heap.

Summary/Conclusions

The well-laid track in Trench 1 and the moat in Trench 2 confirm that there was formerly a high-status, medieval house on this site. We can reasonably conclude that this is the 'Manor of Cadwallis/Cadwallys' mentioned in several documents in early Brightwell Baldwin estate papers (ORO E43). Although no building rubble or demolition layer was found in Trench 3, it is likely that there was a substantial timber framed house on the raised platform, something we will hope to prove in the future. The stratified pottery is all medieval and analysis of this suggests the moat was most probably dug in the 13th century, perhaps some time in the first half. None of the residual pottery is later than the late medieval, which is consistent with the site having been abandoned quite early. Carbon dating of stratified animal bone will hopefully provide further dating evidence for the moat and track. The presence of a Roman road across the field is confirmed but it cannot be precisely dated, although an early date seems likely.

Acknowledgements

A community project's success is entirely dependent on the enthusiasm and skill of its volunteers. I would like to thank all who took part in the excavation and congratulate them on their achievement. Thanks are especially due to the National Lottery for the generous grant through Awards for All, part of which funding supported the excavation; and to Maureen Mellor, Curator at the British Museum, for her valuable advice on the pottery. And finally I express a very big thank you to the landowners, Richard and Kellie Davey for their enthusiastic support. We are very fortunate that they have once more returned Monastery field to permanent pasture.

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THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

Abingdon, Abingdon School, Wootton Road
(SU 4939 9751)
Steve Ford

Much of the site had been truncated by 19th - 20th century quarrying. Only modern remains were found in the untruncated area.

Abingdon and Witney College, Witney Campus
(SP 3541 0976)
Andy Taylor

The site was on the margin of historic Witney, but no deposits or finds were observed. Modern construction and terracing may have removed archaeological remains.

Aston, Thistle Cottage, Ham Lane
(SP 3402 0292)
Danielle Milbank

Nothing of archaeological interest was observed during evaluation trenching.

Aston Upthorpe, Old Boot House, Thorpe Street
(SU 5531 8624)
Andy Mundin

One pit, possibly of medieval date was observed, but the date rests on only three sherds of pottery.

Bampton, Chimney Farmhouse, Chimney
(SP 3580 0087)
Sean Wallis and Steve Hammond

Saxon burials had previously been discovered adjacent to the site, but on this occasion no finds were recovered and the only feature of note was a natural water channel.

Banbury, 7/7a High Street (SP4565 4052)
Danielle Milbank

Only modern foundations were recorded in a small watching brief; two sherds of medieval pottery were present.

Banbury, Spital Farm, Overthorpe Road (SP 4740 4040)
Steve Ford

No deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered in over 100 evaluation trenches. In particular, an enclosure visible on aerial photographs was not discovered in the trenches that targeted its location. A single sherd of Roman pottery, and a handful of medieval date, were the only finds of interest, and probably derive from manuring of fields.

Beckley, Ashling, Woodperry Road (SP 5667 1100)
Andrew Mundin

Nothing of archaeological interest was present.

Bicester, Manor Farm, Kings End (SP 5825 2240)
Andy Mundin

Two features were discovered: a pit of possibly late Saxon or early medieval origin and a larger pit or quarry of early post medieval date.

Bicester, 1 Priory Terrace, Priory Lane (SP 5845 2215)
James Lewis

Only post-medieval deposits were identified in a watching brief; a single sherd of medieval pottery was present.

Crowmarsh, Howbery Park, Benson Lane
(SU 6170 8975)
Simon Cass

Evaluation trenching revealed a single, undated gully.

Dorchester-on-Thames, Pippens, Orchard Haven
(SU 5781 9382)
Andy Mundin

Several early Roman pits, and a single inhumation burial that is assumed also to be Roman, were recorded in a watching brief, in an area south from the Roman town and to the north of the Iron Age oppidum at Dyke Hills, and probably very close to the line of the Roman road leading to Silchester. This adds to the evidence for an extensive Roman extramural cemetery here (or perhaps more likely, an extensive zone of small clusters of burials).

Eynsham, 36 Newland Street (SP4362 0952)
Danielle Milbank

A medieval ditch and several undated features were recorded. Three sherds of Roman pottery were also present.

Eynsham, 3 Thames Street (SP 4327 0931)
Andy Taylor

One 11th century pit and two post-medieval pits were recorded in a watching brief.

Faringdon, Bowling Green Farm (Chinham Farm)

(SU 313 948)

Jo Pine

A Bronze Age barrow ring ditch was excavated, along with isolated features from the Iron Age and Roman periods. The barrow ditch seems likely to have been created in the Early Bronze Age but remained in use into the Middle Bronze Age. The partially back-filled ditch was used as the site for a crouched inhumation burial towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age, and small quantities of cremated bone were also deposited into it. The ditch was remarkably clean of finds except in its top fills, where large quantities of both Early and Middle Bronze Age pottery were deposited, along with a bronze rapier and stone that may have been facing for the barrow mound. It would appear that the barrow and its ditch were ritually closed.

Finmere, Finmere Quarry (SP 6291 3196)

Steve Ford

Trenching revealed just three undated ditches and a single sherd of late medieval/early post-medieval pottery.

North Stoke, Chiltern View, Cook Lane

(SU 61184 86075)

James McNicoll-Norbury

Only modern finds and features were recorded in a small watching brief.

Oxford, Wycliffe Hall, 54 Banbury Road (SP 5115 0740)

James Lewis

Evaluation trenching revealed a small ditch and a pit which might be of prehistoric origin, although just a single small sherd of prehistoric pottery was present. Other features were certainly or probably of 19th or 20th century date.

Oxford, Shotover View, Craufurd Road (SP 5548 0469)

James Lewis

Evaluation trenching revealed nothing of archaeological interest.

Oxford, Headington School, Headington (SP 5374 0685)

Simon Cass

Geophysical survey and evaluation trenching revealed several early Roman ditches, with residual later prehistoric pottery.

Oxford, Blackhall Road, St John's College

(SP 5124 0688)

Sean Wallis

Excavation revealed significant remains of several periods. The most numerous remains date from medieval into early post-medieval times and add to the understanding of the later development of Oxford. However, the site,

exceptionally, boasts two other sets of features which are of regional if not national significance.

Features dating from at least the 12th century abound in an area of the site which would have been garden and yard areas for medieval buildings fronting onto St Giles. Most of these features are pits backfilled with rubbish but other features such as hearths and ovens, a well, cesspits and boundary ditches are present. All these features contain a wealth of artefacts, mostly pottery and animal bone. Above these, the foundations of a range of stone built post-medieval buildings and associated yard and floor surfaces seem to relate to structures shown on 17th century maps.

Below the medieval levels on the site, human remains comprising complete or near complete skeletons of some 22 individuals, and isolated parts of at least six or up to a dozen more, had been buried together in a mass grave. Initial analysis suggests all were young adult males, but detailed analysis is still in progress. This is clearly not an organized cemetery, nor is it a collection of disarticulated bones such as a charnel pit; articulated skeletons form the majority of the remains, but all bundled into the ground together: and therein lies the mystery.



Fig 23. Part of the Oxford mass grave during excavation.

A programme of radiocarbon dating is also underway, as without it, the human burials would have to remain virtually undated, except that they were found beneath the medieval levels on the site, and above a prehistoric ditch. They were buried with no grave goods or finds of any sort. It is tempting to speculate that they may be related to a known slaughter of Danes resident in Oxford on St Brice's Day (November 13) AD1002, or reprisals by the Danes when

Oxfordshire

they attacked and burnt the city in 1009. Further scientific analysis (isotope and DNA) will hopefully be able to establish if the remains are those of natives or foreigners.

Finally, underlying the graves is a massive ditch containing Early Bronze Age pottery in its deeper fills (although it also had a small amount of Roman pottery on top). This is confidently interpreted as part of a henge. Henges are one of a range of near-contemporary monument types which are often found near one another, including stone circles, timber circles, round barrows and cursus. The ditch excavated here is up to 10m across and at least 2.5m deep, curves only slightly, and based on the small part of the plan recovered, if regular it would have enclosed an area of at least 120m diameter, possibly 180m, encompassing most of what is now Keble College. The smaller diameter would make it about the size of the Devil's Quoits at Stanton Harcourt.

This discovery adds interest to cropmark evidence in The Parks, already well known since the 1970s, showing three large circular ditches, and other features. These are usually thought to represent levelled Bronze Age round barrows (tumuli) but may be too large (40 - 50m across) for that interpretation; further, smaller circles more likely to be barrows surround them, extending across The Parks, the University Science Area and to the Sackler Library site in St John Street. Several of these have been partially excavated in recent times. If the ditch in Blackhall Road is indeed a henge, this points to an even more significant ritual focus in this area.

About halfway up the fill in the ditch was a turfline, showing that the ditch had settled, partly filled, long enough for grass to grow. On this was set a hearth associated with Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. Lower in the ditch was more Beaker pottery, animal bone and red deer antlers that had been used as picks during the digging of the ditch and discarded (or reverentially offered to the earth they had just transformed) once it was finished. The antler unfortunately was too degraded to be dated by radiocarbon analysis, but charocal and animal bone should provide dates for this episode.

Post-excavation work is in progress; the research potential of this site is clearly significant.

Oxford, South Lodge Courtyard, Merton College (SP 5192 0608)

James Lewis

Only post-medieval/modern finds and features were recorded in a small evaluation.

Oxford, New Bin Store, Eagle Iron Works, Walton Well Road, Jericho (SP 50455 07253)

Sean Wallis, Danielle Milbank

The evaluation revealed a 17th century pit and 19th century well behind 25 Walton Well Road. 18th and 19th century pits, residual medieval pottery and gravel quarrying were present at the Eagle Ironworks.

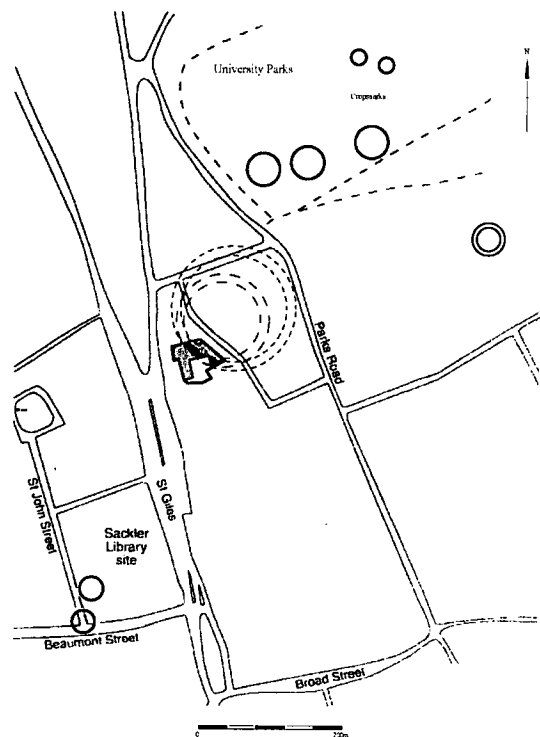


Fig 24. Sketch showing minimum and maximum extents of projected henge, and related monumental features in the area.

Stratton Audley, St Mary and St Edburga's Church (SP 6085 2603)

Steve Ford

Despite the location, no finds or features of archaeological interest were discovered.

Wallingford, 18-20 St Mary's Street (SU 60730 89270)

Simon Cass

Only late post-medieval deposits were encountered in this watching brief, but groundworks did not penetrate to the natural geology, so the possibility remains that earlier deposits might be present.

Wallingford, former Lamb Garage, Castle Street (SU 6075 8955)

Andy Munday and Steve Ford

A watching brief revealed a chalk-filled cut, probably a robbed out wall foundation, and jumbled limestone building rubble, overlying buried soil horizons dating to the early medieval period, probably the 11th century. While the possible wall cannot be dated, it may also be of medieval date. A photographic and drawn record was made of the former coach house on the site prior to its refurbishment.

Wantage, 61 Mill Street (SU 3951 8800)

Jamie Lewis, Sean Wallis

Despite the discovery of a Roman pit and ditch and a medieval sherd during the evaluation, and Iron Age finds

discovered at the site previously, nothing of archaeological interest was discovered during the watching brief.

Wantage, St Mary's School (SU 3993 8774)

James Lewis

Excavation has revealed evidence for activity from the Mesolithic to the Post-Medieval period. Most of the activity is focused around the late Saxon to High Medieval period. The features include boundary ditches, rubbish pits, a medieval well, possibly a smithy, and a large previously unrecorded medieval town ditch. The finds range from Mesolithic flint blades, late prehistoric cremation urns, Roman, Saxon and Medieval pottery. Among the finds the highlights include: a Saxon coin from the reign of King Burgred (AD852-74) the last independent king of Mercia; a complete Medieval Boarstall Ware jug which was found at the bottom of a well; and a single unaccompanied crouched female burial.

THE WALLINGFORD BURH TO BOROUGH RESEARCH PROJECT: 2008

Interim Report

Neil Christie, Matt Edgeworth, Deirdre O'Sullivan, Jeremy Taylor (Leicester University), Andy Hyam, Gavin Speed (ULAS), Oliver Creighton, Michael Fradley (Exeter University), Helena Hamerow (Oxford University)

Introduction

The Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project is a multi-faceted project integrating geophysics, survey, documentary research and other methods alongside select excavations. The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the results of excavations which took place during a three week period between July 19th and August 9th 2008. These were carried out by a team from the Universities of Leicester, Exeter and Oxford working alongside Wallingford Museum and The Wallingford Historical & Archaeological Society. Based partly on the results of geophysical surveys conducted earlier in the year, three trenches were opened up in different parts of the town. Fig 25 shows these in relation to sites of other important investigations in the town, including previous Project excavations (see Christie 2004, 2005; Christie *et al* 2003, 2004 for accounts of earlier work and background to the Project).

Trench 1 - Castle Meadows

A trench 20m x 20m was excavated in Castle Meadows just to the north of the outer moat of Wallingford Castle earthworks. It was located with the specific aim of investigating a large geophysical anomaly, thought to be a defensive outwork, detected by gradiometer and resistivity surveys. Removal of topsoil and subsoil revealed a large artificial platform of unknown function, comprising compacted chalky clay-silt, surrounded by a substantial ditch. Although no conclusive dating evidence was found, this is thought to be of Civil War date – perhaps part of the

same line of defences as a similar and already known outwork further to the east. The absence of features cut into the platform means that its precise function remains uncertain. Under the platform and cut by the side of the ditch, at least in the north of the trench, there was a uniform layer up to 1m deep, of reddish brown soil containing medieval pottery. No natural layers were encountered, and the depth of stratigraphy indicates the extensive earthmoving and landscaping activity which has taken place over the centuries in this part of Castle Meadows.

In conjunction with the excavation, an earthwork survey added to existing knowledge of the development of the castle through its many phases of construction, prior to its demolition by Parliamentary forces in the Civil War. Newly identified features include a fortified dam which was associated with the building of the 13th century circuit of outer defences; this would have maintained the water level of inner castle ditches. Outside the castle to the east, in the Queens Arbour, several channels and other features which may represent former mill-leats and ponds were recorded.

Trench 2 - Bullcroft

An area of 10m x 6m was opened up in the northwest corner of the Bullcroft. Traditionally this large open area is thought to have been the site of the Benedictine Priory of Holy Trinity, but the exact location of the priory buildings within it was not known. The probability is that the priory was situated close to the High Street, and the absence of archaeological features or demolition debris within Trench 2 makes that more likely.

Excavation revealed considerable build-up of orange brick-earth thought to be originally of post-glacial origin. However, the brick-earth had been disturbed by ploughing without any clear horizons surviving to indicate archaeological or natural levels. At a depth of about 0.9m from the ground surface, a small number of features of natural origin were found cut into the brick-earth. These included a large tree hole, over 3m wide, containing medieval pottery indicating that it was re-used as a rubbish pit. Traces of north-south running ridge and furrow were noted in the sections on the north and south sides of the trench, as well as in preceding geophysical surveys. Overall, the results of the trench are in accord with the view that the Bullcroft served as a largely 'rural' space within the town; lightly wooded in the earlier part of the medieval period, it was utilised for ploughing in the later part, probably as part of land owned by the priory. The picture emerging from Trench 2 presents an interesting comparison with that from Trench 3, where evidence for urban infiltration of open spaces was discovered.

Trench 3 - Kinecroft

A trench measuring 20m x 6m was opened up by machine in the central area of the Kinecroft open area, opposite the Coach and Horses public house. The purpose of the trench was partly to try to pick up the line of a possible street (a projected extension of an existing east-west street) and associated buildings fronting on to it; this was successful. Topsoil and subsoil were removed to reveal a layer of degraded gravel natural, into which archaeological features

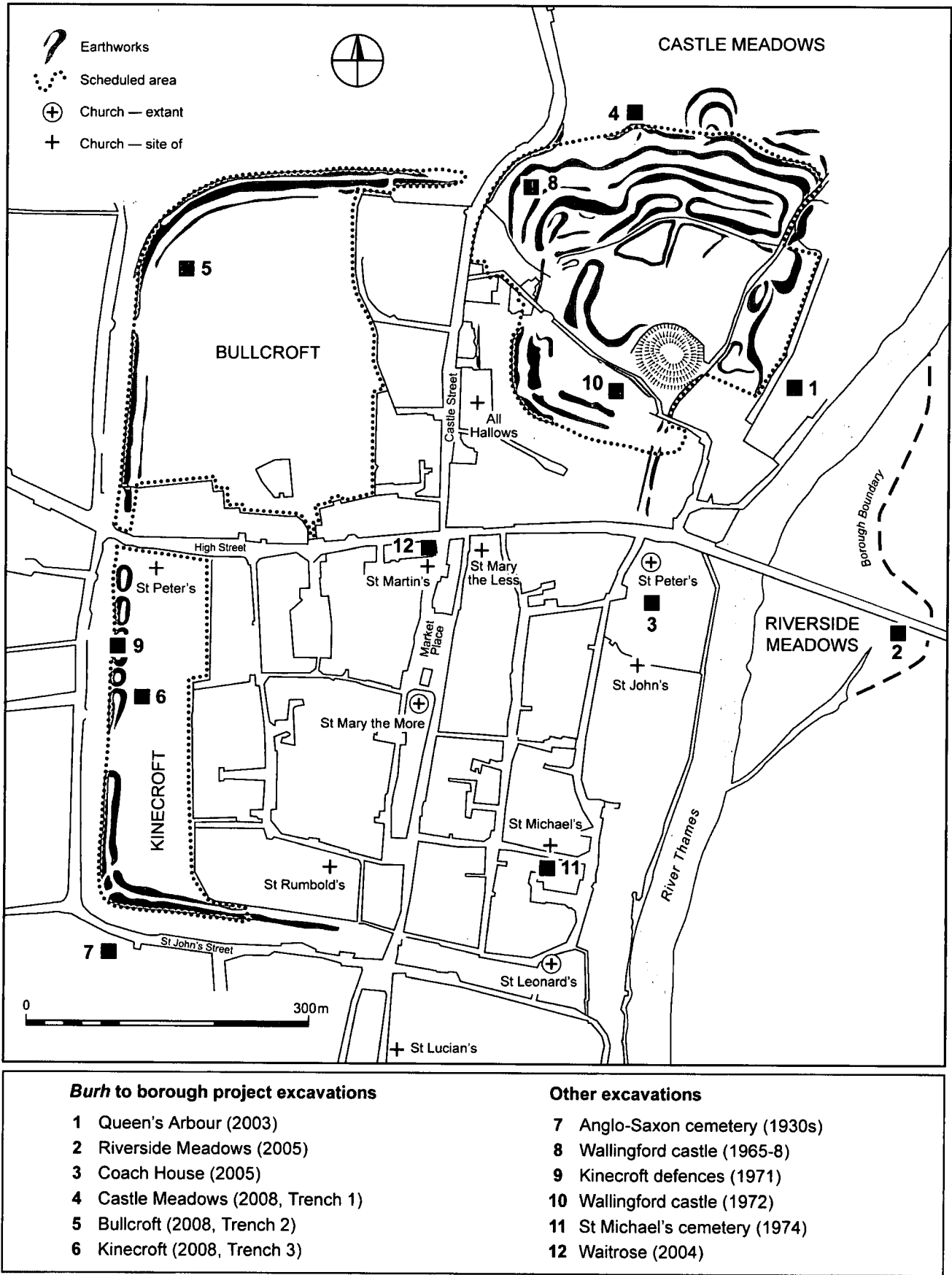


Fig 25. Location map of trenches. Nos 4, 5 and 6 mark positions of 2008 trenches.

were cut, at a surprisingly shallow average depth of about 0.45m from the ground surface (Fig 26).

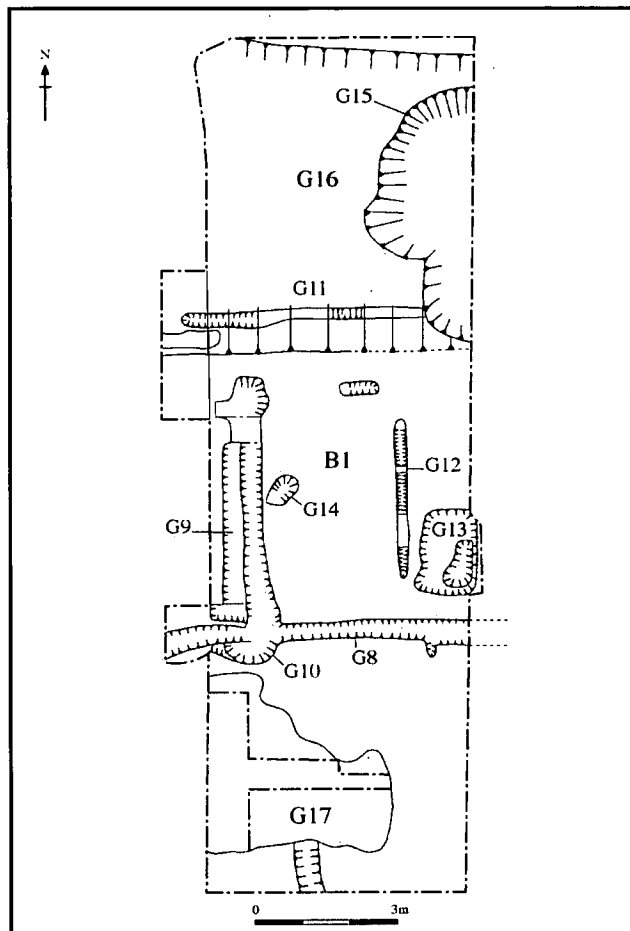


Fig 26. Plan of Trench 3.

In the central part of the trench were three substantial beam-slots oriented parallel and perpendicular to each other (orientated north-south and east-west), representing the footings of a large rectangular building. The corner of beam-slots G8 and G9 was a complex juncture of interconnecting beams, indicating that the features were contemporary. There is likely to have been some kind of corner post at both south and north corners. In the interior were several features, probably associated with activity within the building: narrow gully G12 was interpreted as an internal partition, and shallow rectangular pit G13 as a cellar. These are all described together here as Building 1, although it is likely that more than one building is represented. Beam-slots continue into the sides of the trench to both east and west, giving rise to the possibility that this is actually part of a row of buildings. Pottery from the fills of the beam-slots indicates a date of the 11th-12th centuries.

To the south of the building were a series of intercutting pits G17, covering an area of about 13m². There were numerous pits and it was only possible to excavate a portion of them. The pits are thought to be contemporary with Building 1 and their sheer density suggests they were located in a limited space within some sort of enclosure, such as a rear yard.

To the north of the building was a large linear hollow G16 running across the trench in an east-west direction and

about 8m wide, filled by a series of gravel and sand layers. Given that this feature lines up with the present east-west road leading into the Kinecroft, a feasible interpretation is that it is a 'hollow way' or road which once extended right across the open space, possibly towards an as yet unknown former gap or postern in the ramparts. The stratigraphic relationship between the structures and the possible hollow way suggests that the latter continued in use after the abandonment of the former. Some truncation of the most northerly beam-slot G11 seems to have taken place as a result of widening of the existing road after the buildings had fallen into disuse. The disuse of the hollow way a short time later is marked by the digging of pits G15, which contained 13th century material.

A 10th century metal strap-end ornamented with the figure of two dragons with interlaced tails was found in one of the fills of the hollow way.

In sum, Trench 3 produced remarkable evidence of a single phase of medieval occupation in the form of traces of a large timber building (or row of buildings), a possible street line, and a backyard area. As Fig 27 shows, all of these three zones may have extended to east and west. There were no traces of earlier occupation below the 11th-12th century levels.

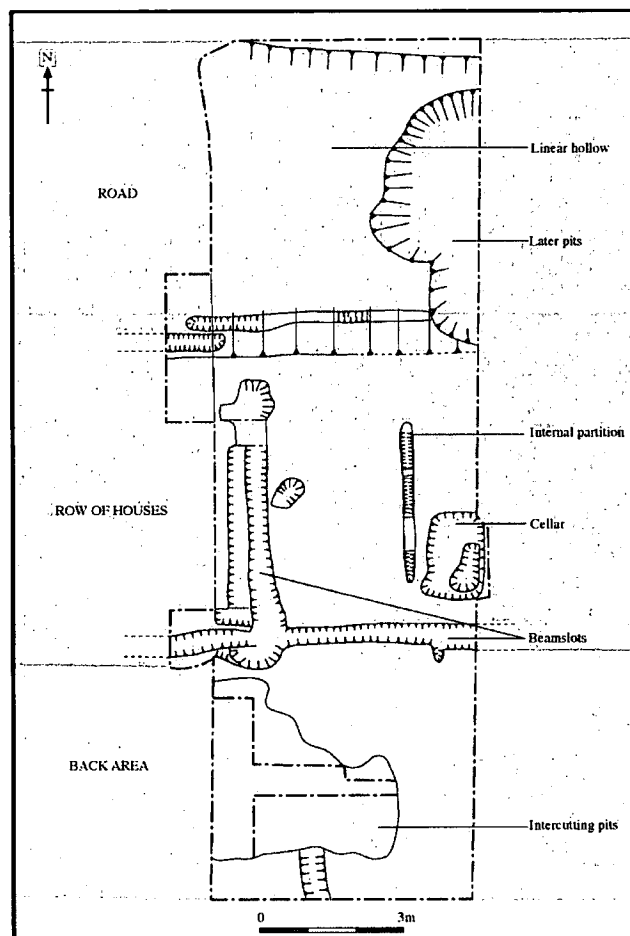


Fig 27. Interpretive plan of Trench 3.

Oxfordshire

Discussion

This evidence adds significantly to our understanding of Wallingford's internal expansion in the medieval period, as well as indicating a later phase of town contraction. It seems that the story of the town's open spaces is quite a complex one. The Kinecroft and the Bullcroft may have started out as open spaces within the original design of the Anglo-Saxon burh, but they had multiple functions which changed over time as the town developed. In the case of the north part of the Bullcroft the area was never utilised for urban settlement. But the central part of the Kinecroft provided both space for the town and its grid of streets to expand into when the town was flourishing, and space to contract out of when the town was in economic decline. As Smith (2008) suggests, such adaptive spaces form an important part of the story of town development.

Other aspects of the Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project

Programmes of geophysical survey, earthwork survey, desktop study, and the writing up of archives from 1960s and 1970s excavations are ongoing. The Project is also working in close collaboration with Wallingford Museum and The Wallingford Historical & Archaeological Society on a programme of test-pitting in back gardens within the town. The adaptation of test-pitting methodologies to an urban context will enable detailed deposit models to be drawn up and pottery distribution patterns to be discerned across the town as a whole. Test-pits may also help in locating medieval structures which no longer survive, such as the many demolished churches or the Priory of Holy Trinity. Evidence from the test-pits is already proving useful in deciding where larger trenches might produce useful results. Further excavation will take place in the summer of 2009, and the results can be viewed in the online site diary at tinyurl.com/5752zd.

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WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

Bicester, Land South West of (SP 57100 22000)

A series of excavations was undertaken on land at Whitelands Farm, southwest of Bicester. Seventeen areas were selected on the results of an earlier evaluation (three of which abandoned due to flooding). The site lies c 2km northwest of the Roman town of Alchester and 1km north of the Roman road of Akeman Street, and its western boundary was adjacent to the Roman road between Dorchester and Towcester.

The density of archaeological remains varied considerably between the excavated areas, with some containing either no or only small numbers of features but with others containing a high density and wide variety of features. The earliest feature was a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Beaker burial, but most features related to settlement; agricultural activity and quarrying dating to the Late Iron Age and Roman period. These included the remains of field systems, trackways and a number of enclosures. There were numerous pits and postholes, a number of undated corn drier/ovens and four-post structures, as well as a cremation burial. A number of stone-lined tanks were also recorded, one with a stone-lined and capped culvert connecting it to a ditch with the remnants of a stone sluice gate. The tank produced a large quantity of Roman pottery and lesser quantities of early Saxon pottery. Apart from a small number of Saxon features, most of the archaeological remains appear to represent three or four phases of activity spanning a relatively short time in the Late Iron Age to Roman period.

Wantage, Post Office Lane (SU 39952 87831)

A watching brief was maintained during excavation of a 90m long trench running south along Post Office Lane then west to an electricity substation. Wantage was an important town in the Late Saxon and medieval periods and the trench ran close to the location of the medieval market. However, only three large post-medieval refuse pits, containing some residual medieval pottery sherds, were observed towards the western end of the trench.

Wallingford, Land North of Winterbrook Lane SU 60450 88640

An evaluation comprising eight trenches was undertaken within two adjacent fields, north of Winterbrook Lane. Some of the trenches were targeted on anomalies detected during an earlier geophysical survey.

Apart from a flake of prehistoric worked flint and a possible Middle/Late Bronze Age ditch in the north-west of the site, most the features, including post-built structures, pits, two roundhouse foundation trenches and a possible roundhouse drip-gully, were of Middle Iron Age date. Their overall density indicates a Middle Iron Age settlement in the northern field, which was probably enclosed at some point during its development. In addition, an area of Late Saxon to early medieval (10th-13th centuries) pits was recorded. In the northwest of the site, the presence of residual Early Saxon (5th-8th centuries) pottery from these features being not unexpected given the importance of Wallingford from the Early Saxon period onwards.

Time Team Report

Radcot (SU 28467 99650)

In May 2008 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at a site known locally as 'The Garrison', in Radcot, Oxfordshire (centred on SU 28467 99650), to investigate the remains of Queen Matilda's moated castle complex of the 12th century Anarchy Period and a 17th century Civil War Royalist enclosure.

The layout of the medieval castle complex and later Civil War earthworks had been previously investigated in a geophysical survey undertaken by Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics, which revealed the castle keep and associated ancillary buildings, as well as the line of a large defensive ditch. A small evaluation trench was subsequently dug across part of the keep by John Blair of Oxford University.

The evaluation by Time Team added to the information gathered previously by revealing the north-eastern corner of the keep and also the supporting pier for the first floor of the castle within the interior. The remains of the heavily robbed gatehouse and main access road into the castle complex and the northern moat were identified, as well as a heavily robbed structure interpreted as a chapel. The remains of a medieval ancillary building were also revealed. These structures post-dated deposits containing 11th/12th century pottery, consistent with an early post-conquest construction date, which could link it with Hugh of Buckland, the local major landowner around the turn of the 12th century. Possible evidence of the subsequent strengthening of the keep was observed, perhaps associated with Matilda's fortification of the castle during the Anarchy Period of the mid 12th century.

The abandonment of the castle complex was dated to the late 13th/early 14th century, and there was a clear hiatus in the pottery sequence from that date until the 16th century, which fits with the later occupation of the Site by the de Besilles family.

In the mid 17th century a 'minor Royalist fort' was constructed that involved the refortification of the eastern half of the medieval moated complex by the excavation of a large ditch which split the moated site in two. The 17th century defensive ditch was shown to surround an earthen bastion for the placing of cannon.

Several late Romano-British ditches, possibly field boundaries, were also identified, as well as a low level of residual later prehistoric material, suggesting activity on or close to the Site.

The route of the medieval road from Faringdon to Witney, which apparently ran through the site, was also investigated, but no trace of the road was found.

The full assessment report can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/timeteam/reports>.

WILLIAM WINTLE, JOHN HAWES AND KNIGHT BOYER.

Geophysical Survey at and near Cherbury Camp

Introduction

Since 2001 the University of Oxford has been excavating a late Iron Age and Roman site at Marcham/Frilford as both a research and training excavation (Kamash *et al* 2008). This

excavation has stimulated wider research into the landscape of these periods in the Vale of the White Horse (Boyer *et al* 2007; 2008). Situated six kilometres west of Frilford and to the north of Charney Bassett is the Iron Age enclosure of Cherbury Camp. A geophysical survey of its interior was undertaken in May 2007 to assist in understanding the Iron Age landscape of the Vale of the White Horse and to provide a comparison with two earlier surveys of hillforts on the chalk of the Berkshire Downs (Payne 1996; 2003; 2005). A second geophysical survey of a small Roman settlement enclosure to the east of Cherbury Camp was performed in September 2008.

Cherbury Camp

Unlike the hillforts of Segsbury Camp and Uffington Castle on the Berkshire Downs, Cherbury Camp is not located on a natural high point. Instead, it is situated in a low-lying part of the Vale of the White Horse, two kilometres north of the river Ock, where it is surrounded by small streams and wet ground. It has been argued that this wet and boggy environment provided a natural defensive position with access only from the north (Arkell 1939). The enclosure lies on the southern edge of the Corallian beds where much of the camp sits on a small island of sand within a larger island of limestone. Alluvial silts cover the approaches from almost all directions and through them small streams flow from the west and north, draining south towards the river Ock.

In 1939 a five week excavation was undertaken by Bradford (1940) but this was not followed up due to the outbreak of war later that year. His work focussed on the entrances and eastern ramparts and the interior was not investigated. He confirmed that the original entrance to the hillfort is in the east where he located a gateway defined by two large postholes and a cobbled street.

The hillfort is defined by three concentric banks with intervening ditches. This multi-vallate system of defences led Bradford to date the hillfort to the century before the Roman conquest. Moreover, he argued that the pottery evidence was consistent with a date early in the 1st century AD. However, Harding (1972, 52) has argued that this seems unnecessarily late and that the pottery is not later than the second half of the 1st century BC. Instead, he views the absence of late Iron Age pottery as indicating that Cherbury was abandoned by the last quarter of the 1st century BC and suggests the ramparts may have been constructed in more than one phase, with the latest, tri-vallate phase obscuring earlier ramparts. Subsequently Hingley (1983, 123) has argued that the Camp (and possible nearby settlements) were occupied in the Early and Middle Iron Age, with the multi-vallate defences dating from the Middle Iron Age.

Cherbury Camp lies within the area covered by the Thames Valley National Mapping Programme (Fenner 1994). Sheet SU39NE of this survey suggests features such as roundhouse gullies and pit clusters within the hillfort. In addition, possible nearby settlements are also indicated within an extensive area of undated crop marks which lie both to the south-east and south-west of the hillfort.

Oxfordshire

The 2007 Geophysical Survey

The geophysical survey had the following objectives:

- to determine the location and extent of features such as roundhouses (or their gullies) and pits, thereby indicating the density of settlement within the hillfort.
- to allow a comparison with the aerial photographic evidence as mapped by the Thames Valley Mapping Programme.
- to provide a comparison with previous results obtained in the surveys of Uffington Castle and Segsbury Camp.
- to provide a reference for further geophysical and fieldwalking surveys at other recorded crop mark locations to assist in the construction of a detailed description of the Iron Age landscape at Cherbury Camp and its environs.

Fig 28 shows the processed results of the forty-two grids surveyed, while Figs 29 and 30 show the survey location within the hillfort and a provisional interpretation respectively. Importantly, the geophysical survey shows distinct areas with and without magnetic anomalies. The areas with anomalies appear to contain a substantial number of pits, while there are at least a dozen circular features which can be interpreted as gullies surrounding Iron Age roundhouses. In a small number of them entrances and postholes for posts to support the roof can also be detected.

The magnetic contrast between features is highest in these areas of magnetic anomalies. Human activity represented through burning in hearths, kilns or furnaces is often a significant cause of such increases in magnetic contrast. The majority of these anomalies most probably represent

pits, although some may represent hearths. Iron Age pits are frequently interpreted as being for grain storage, but given the damp environment at Cherbury, this may not have been their function here. Even where pits had initially been used for storage, they may later have been used for structured and unstructured rubbish disposal.

Discussion

Geophysical survey can provide an indication of the density of settlement within a hillfort. The earlier surveys of Uffington Castle and Segsbury Camp yielded quite different results: Uffington Castle had very low levels of occupation while Segsbury Camp provided evidence of circular gullies and extensive areas of occupation denoted by pits and hearths. As the results from Cherbury Camp demonstrate many similarities to those from Segsbury Camp the two sites can usefully be compared.

In his survey of Segsbury Camp, Payne was able to identify clearly about twenty gullies defining roundhouses (1996, 175). Additionally, a considerable number of partial gully features were detected or suggested (Payne 2005, 26). The same situation occurs at Cherbury. While ten of the clearest examples of gullies are shown in Fig 30, there are many more possible circular features present in the image, often partial, and mostly smaller than the selected ten. In some cases the gullies may be obscured by pits or other magnetic anomalies. Those shown on Fig 30 are probably the largest, and vary in size from 9m to 14m in diameter.

At Segsbury the gullies appear to be associated with pit clusters and are set well back into the hillfort interior with few near the enclosing earthworks. The situation is similar, but not quite the same at Cherbury Camp, possibly because

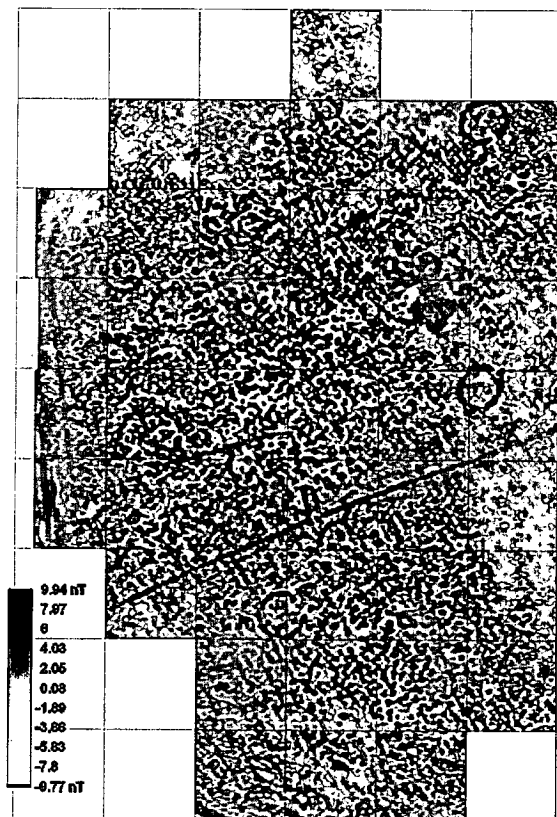


Fig 28. Cherbury Camp geophysical survey.

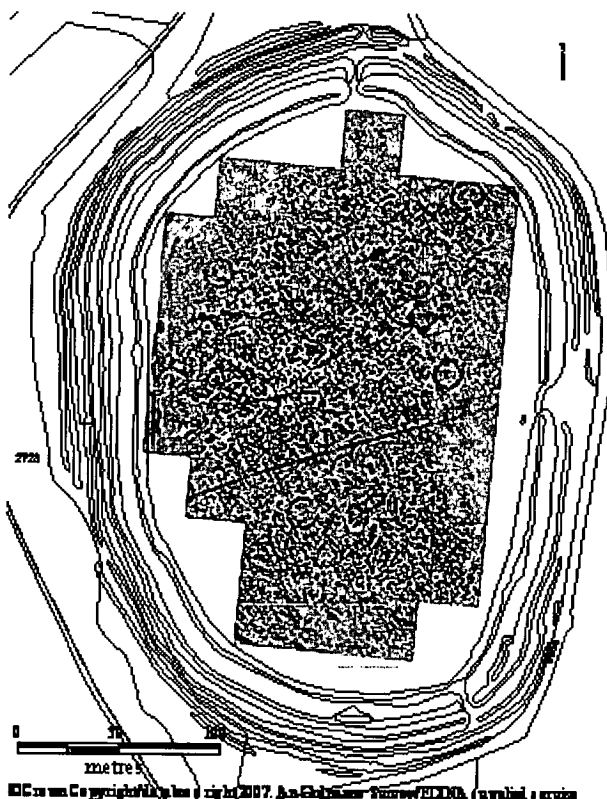


Fig 29. Cherbury Camp.

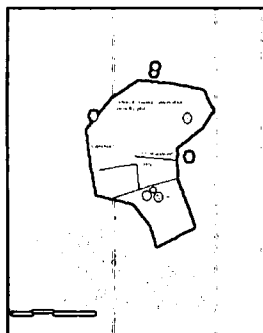


Fig 30. Interpretation.

of its smaller enclosed area. The central part of Cherbury is dominated by pits and these pits do not extend to the ramparts. The clearest evidence of circular gullies is on the edge of these pit areas, with a few gullies approaching the ramparts. Gullies in the central area may be obscured by the pits, thus distorting the evidence for the location of houses.

There is a very faint indication of a roadway passing directly west across the hillfort from the eastern entrance. This is represented by a faint negative (white) feature which passes through the central, pitted area, but fades away before reaching the western rampart. This 'road' does not appear to divide the hillfort into two zones, and one circular feature is cut by, or cuts, the road near the eastern entrance.

A disjointed, curvilinear feature around the northern and eastern side of Segsbury's interior was noted by Payne and potentially similar anomalies also appear in the data from Cherbury. This is most clearly apparent at the western edge where the survey most closely approached the ramparts. Here there appears to be evidence of a double line of ditches. This double line is also visible for a short distance in the south-west, and a single ditch appears in the extreme north-east. These indications strongly suggest a continuous, concentric single or double ditch within the hillfort. Although these may be post-medieval drainage channels, they may be Iron Age features. At Segsbury Camp one element of the ditch was excavated and the pottery recovered suggested an Iron Age date (Payne 2005, 28). Payne suggests such features may represent quarries for earlier, less substantial ramparts. The possibility of earlier ramparts preceding the multi-vallate defences at Cherbury has been suggested by Harding (1972, 52).

A Settlement to the South-East of Cherbury Camp

The 2008 Geophysical Survey

The geophysical survey had the following objectives:

- to allow a comparison with the aerial photographic evidence as mapped by the Thames Valley Mapping Programme.
- to determine the location and extent of features within the settlement.
- to assist in the construction of a detailed description of the Iron Age landscape at Cherbury Camp and its environs.

Fig 31 shows the processed results of the 71 grids surveyed while Fig 32 shows the survey location in relation to Cherbury Camp.

Discussion

The geophysical survey has revealed an enclosed settlement aligned on a north-west to south-east track defined by a

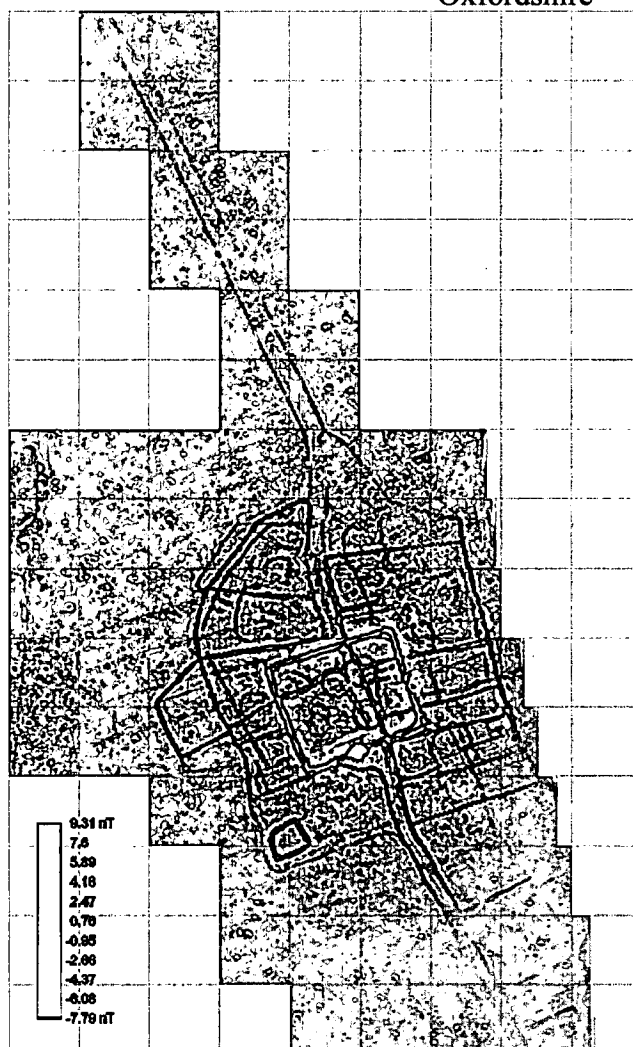


Fig 31. Geophysical Survey to the South-East of Cherbury Camp.

double ditch. The settlement consists of an ordered collection of rectangular and sub-rectangular enclosures. Although the northern limit of the settlement is well defined, the survey has not captured its full extent in the south-east where the magnetic contrast decreases. This may be due to an increasing depth of alluvial material.

At the centre of the settlement is a substantial ditch defining a rectangular enclosure with a possible entrance to the south. Within this enclosure are three circular features which may represent roundhouse gullies. A fourth such feature may lie just to the west of this enclosure. It is not clear whether there is a relationship between these gullies and the enclosure ditch.

Nevertheless, a possible phasing may be suggested. In the first phase, possibly towards the end of the Iron Age, there was a small settlement of one or a few roundhouses. These roundhouses may have been enclosed by a substantial ditch defining a rectangular enclosure. Later, this area was substantially remodelled, when a settlement of rectangular enclosures was established on a trackway which passed through the centre of the original enclosure. The dating of this settlement to the Roman period is suggested by pottery collected during the geophysical survey and SMR records of Roman pottery and metal work found in this field.



Fig 32. Cherbury Camp and settlement to south east.

Roman rural settlements display a wide variety of forms. Recently Taylor (2007, 19) has described three basic types: enclosed, unenclosed and linear system settlements. An example of the latter is at East Hanney (Hearne 2001; Boyer et al 2007) while there is evidence for both enclosed and unenclosed settlements at Frilford (Boyer et al 2008). This settlement east of Cherbury Camp is clearly enclosed. Although it does not show the same extensive linear alignment as at East Hanney there is a strong case for considering it also as a linear settlement. This illustrates the difficulty of constructing a clear and unambiguous settlement typology.

Conclusions

At both Cherbury Camp and the settlement to its south-east the geophysical survey has confirmed and extended the archaeological information known from aerial photographs. A beginning has been made in understanding the Iron Age and Roman landscape of Cherbury Camp and its surrounding area. It appears as though late Iron Age features remain within Cherbury Camp largely undisturbed by any later Roman activity. In contrast, to the east, it is possible a small, late Iron Age enclosure was replaced by a larger, Roman settlement.

Survey Technique

The magnetometer survey was undertaken using a Bartington Instrument's GRAD601 gradiometer with a single magnetometer tube and set to a scale of 100nT with a sensitivity of 0.1nT. Grids were laid out in 30m squares and were walked in a clockwise "zigzag" pattern. Traverses were one metre apart with readings taken four times a metre. The results have been processed by Archeosurveyor and are displayed as block shaded images using a grey-scale.

Acknowledgements

The authors are very grateful to Mr and Mrs Cox for permission to conduct these geophysical surveys on their land. They are also very grateful to Mr Chris Welch of English Heritage for permission for the 2007 survey to take place on a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

This fieldwork forms part of a D.Phil dissertation by William Wintle supervised by Professors Gary Lock and Chris Gosden at the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford.

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animal burials

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