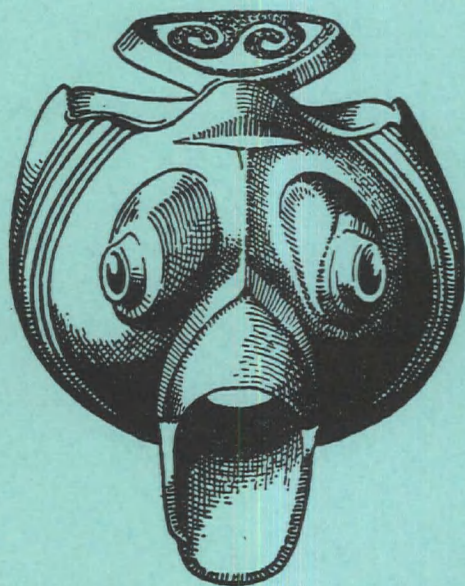


BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL JOURNAL



VOLUME 6 1971

The **BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL JOURNAL** is published by the **BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL**.

Additional copies may be purchased from the Hon Treasurer at 63 Ampthill Road, Maulden, Bedford, price £2.10. Members of the constituent societies of the Bedfordshire Archaeological Council enjoy a reduced subscription of £1.75.

Contributions and matter for review should be sent to the Editor, the Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal, 55 Mount Grace Road, Stopsley, Luton, Bedfordshire. LU2 8EP.

Manuscripts should be typed on good quality paper with double spacing and a broad left-hand margin; photographs should be at least of half-plate size; and line illustrations should be of a size proportional to the page size of the journal, wherever possible. (Notes for contributors are available on request.)

Bedfordshire Archaeological Council has representatives from :

Ampthill and District Archaeological Society
Archaeological Liaison Officer, Bedfordshire County Council
Bedford Archaeological Society
Bedford College of Education
Bedford Museum
Department of Archaeology and History, Putteridge Bury College of Education
Higham Ferrers Hundred Archaeological Society
Letchworth and North Hertfordshire Archaeological Society
Luton Museum
Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable
North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society
South Bedfordshire Archaeological Society

Bedfordshire Archaeological Council

Officers :

Chairman : R. Fowler
Secretary : Miss E.G. Cole
Assistant Secretary : J.M. Bailey
Treasurer : B.D. Lazelle
Editor : David H. Kennett, James Dyer

Material in the Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal is copyright. The views expressed by the individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Bedfordshire Archaeological Council.

BEDFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL

Volume 6 1971

THE BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL
LUTON MUSEUM, WARDOWN PARK
LUTON, BEDFORDSHIRE

CONTENTS

Archaeology in the <i>Bedford Times</i> , 1845 - 1850 by Geoffrey Fisher	.. .. .	1
Excavations at Sandy Lodge, Bedfordshire by James Dyer	.. .. .	9
Pre-Roman Iron Age Sites at Bozeat and Strixton, Northamptonshire, by D. N. Hall	.. .. .	17
Anglo-Saxon burials from the vicinity of Biscot Mill, Luton by Richard Hagen	.. .. .	23
An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Hertfordshire by John Moss-Eccardt	.. .. .	27
Anglo-Saxon work at Carlton and other Bedfordshire Churches by Michael Hare	.. .. .	33
Excavations inside Ravensden Church, 1969 by D.N. Hall, J.B. Hutchings and G.J. Dring	.. .. .	41
Excavations at Elstow Abbey, Bedfordshire, 1968 - 1970 by David Baker	.. .. .	55
Notes: Neolithic Flint Implements from Wymington by G.J. Dring	.. .. .	65
Neolithic Axes in Bedford Museum: Some Recent Acquisitions by David H. Kennett	.. .. .	67
Iron Age Pottery from Mowsbury Camp, Ravensden, Bedford by G.J. Dring	.. .. .	68
Romano-British Pottery Kiln site near Elstow by G.J. Dring	.. .. .	69
A second century Roman well near Leighton Buzzard by Richard Hagen	.. .. .	71
The Lack Collection by David H. Kennett	.. .. .	72
A Roman bronze bowl from Sandy by David H. Kennett	.. .. .	74
The Graveyard of St Peter-de-Dunstable, Bedford by D.N. Hall	.. .. .	75
An Earthwork at Newnham Priory, Bedford by William Annan and David Baker	.. .. .	77
Bedfordshire Archaeology, 1970-71 compiled by David Kennett	.. .. .	81
Reviews: F.W. Kuhlicke, <i>Bedford Museum Guide</i>	.. .. .	89
L.R. Conisbee, <i>Bedfordshire Bibliography: second supplement</i>	.. .. .	89
B.M. Marsden, <i>Discovering Archaeology: Central England</i>	.. .. .	89
E.A. Fisher, <i>Anglo-Saxon Towers</i>	.. .. .	90

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Excavations at Sandy Lodge, Bedfordshire

Fig 1	Sandy Lodge: location map	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
2	Sandy Lodge: contour survey and site plan	..	..	..	..	..	..	opposite	10
3	Sandy Lodge: sections	..	..	..	..	..	..	opposite	11
4	Sandy Lodge: plan of excavations at entrance	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
5	Sandy Lodge: flints	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
6	Sandy Lodge: pottery	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15

Iron Age Sites at Bozeat and Strixton

Fig 1	Plan of Iron Age enclosure at Bozeat, Northants	..	..	..	..	..	..	18
2	Plan of Iron Age enclosure at Strixton, Northants	..	..	..	..	..	..	19
3	Sections of Iron Age ditches at Bozeat and Strixton	..	..	..	..	..	..	20
4	Plan of Iron Age site at Easton Maudit, Northants	..	..	..	..	..	..	21

Anglo-Saxon Burials from the vicinity of Biscot Mill, Luton

Fig 1	Location of burials	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	24
2	Spearhead found 1923	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25
3	Anglo-Saxon objects found 1937 - 1970	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	25

Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth

Plate 1	Burial 6 at Blackhorse Road, with spear in chest cavity								
2	Burial 7 at Blackhorse Road								
Fig 1	Blackhorse Road, Letchworth: site and location of burials	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	28
2	Anglo-Saxon iron objects	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31

Anglo-Saxon work at Carlton

Fig 1	Plan of Carlton Church	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	34
2	Carlton Church: windows	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	36

Excavations inside Ravensden Church

Plate 3a	Ravensden Church. Trench I, north wall of the first church. Looking south.								
3b	Ravensden Church. Trench VI, west end looking west. Burnt destruction level of the first building.								
4a	Ravensden Church. The south side of the font base.								
4b	Ravensden Church. Trenches IV - V. The stones at the east of the nave monument. Looking west.								
Fig 1	A general plan of Ravensden Church	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	42
2	Plan of Excavations inside Ravensden Church	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	45
3	The small finds	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	48
4	Architectural details of door and window mouldings	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	49
5	Genealogy of Wagstaffe of Ravensden	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	50

Plate 5 Robbed Norman *Rere-Dorter* under south end of fourteenth century *Dorter* and related outbuildings.

6a Thirteenth/fourteenth century Chapter House extension.

6b View facing north-west of east side of fourteenth century *Dorter* range with nave of Abbey church in background.

6c Monastic burials: priest with dummy lead chalice.

7a View facing south of excavations on outbuildings in 1970: M1, M2, M8, M9 at left, M4 at right.

7b South wall of M2, showing lean and bulge of footing.

7c Stream: bridge abutments.

8a M5 facing north-west, showing central portion with hearth, and side units truncated by later buildings.

8b East side of M1, showing earlier hearth against south wall followed by central corridor and external step.

Fig 1	Early features cut into natural gravel	.. .. .	56
2	Elstow Abbey: Medieval and Post-Medieval: General Site Plan	.. opposite	58
3	Elstow Abbey: Monastic Outbuildings south of Claustal ranges	opposite	59

Notes

Fig 1	Flints from Wymington	.. .. .	65
2	Neolithic Axes in Bedford Museum	.. .. .	66
3	Iron Age pottery from Mowsbury Camp	.. .. .	68
4	Pottery from Roman well at Leighton Buzzard	.. .. .	71
5	Pottery from Roman well at Leighton Buzzard	.. .. .	72
6	Pottery and brooch from the Lack Collection	.. .. .	73
7	Roman bronze bowl from Sandy	.. .. .	74
8	St Peter-de-Dunstable, Bedford	.. .. .	76
9	Newnham Priory earthwork	.. .. .	79

Notes on Contributors

WILLIAM ANNAN is an undergraduate of New College, Oxford.

DAVID BAKER MA is currently Lecturer in History, Portsmouth Polytechnic, and Archaeological Liason Officer designate to the Bedfordshire County Council.

G.J. DRING MBIol is a microbiologist and a member of the Colworth Home Natural History Society (Archaeological Section) and the Higham Ferrers Hundred Archaeological Society.

JAMES DYER MA FSA is Head of the Department of History and Archaeology, Putteridge Bury College of Education and series editor of the *Discovery Archaeology* series.

GEOFFREY FISHER is a member of the local history group of the sixth form of Bedford School.

RICHARD HAGEN is Archaeological Assistant at Luton Museum.

D.N. HALL MA is a chemist and a member of the Higham Ferrers Hundred Archaeological Society active in fieldwork in south Northamptonshire and north Bedfordshire.

MICHAEL HARE BA is interested in the study of Anglo-Saxon churches.

J.B. HUTCHINGS is a physicist and a member of the Higham Ferrers Hundred Archaeological Society.

DAVID H. KENNETT is an archaeologist and historian whose major interests include Roman bronze and glass vessels and the study of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries.

JOHN MOSS-ECCARDT AMA is the curator of Letchworth Museum.

Archaeology in the *Bedford Times*, 1845-1850

GEOFFREY FISHER

SUMMARY

An account of the entries in the Bedford Times of items of archaeological interest at a time when there were no proceedings of a local archaeological society but including the earliest years of the Bedfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society founded in 1847. A number of hitherto unknown items of interest, including notes on the first Anglo-Saxon finds made at Kempston, have been revealed. Other notes not otherwise available are the discovery of a coffin lid at St Leonard's Hospital, Bedford, and the 'excavation' of a round barrow on Dunstable Downs.

INTRODUCTION

During 1970-1971 the *Bedford Times* from 1845 to 1850 was checked for articles of archaeological interest. Founded in 1845, only the Bedfordshire County Record Office and the Bedford Office of the *Bedfordshire Times* have copies of the paper for the early years. The Record Office copies have been used and my grateful thanks are due to the staff for their kind assistance.

All details of finds from the county have been recorded, and important entries not elsewhere published are given in full. Notes and references have been added where appropriate. The comprehensive coverage given to archaeological finds and to the activities of the Bedfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society can be traced back to James Wyatt, the well-known local antiquary and archaeologist, who was the first editor of the *Bedford Times*. The society was founded in 1847. Every meeting was reported fully and many of the papers read were printed in full; consequently there is much of little interest, and much that is available elsewhere. Reports of meetings have only been included here if archaeological material from the county was exhibited, if presentations were made to the society, or if papers were read. The titles and authors of all papers have been noted. A small number are not printed, and occasionally papers appear in the *Bedford Times* only. Otherwise they

are printed in the *Proceedings of the Bedfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society* (abbreviated to *Beds A A S*), published from 1848, or the *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers* (abbreviated to *A A S R*) which superseded them. Here annual reports of the Bedfordshire society appear from 1850, together with an annual selection of papers. The first *A A S R* volume includes many of the more important papers delivered from 1847. Reference is made to these and other contemporary and later publications. Also checked was the Minute-Book of the *Beds A A S*, 1847-73 (*Beds CRO* document X 69/16). After 1850 newspaper cuttings referring to the society, chiefly from the *Bedford Times*, are inserted in the Minute-Book. Further checking will reveal whether or not these cuttings are complete.

THE EXTRACTS

Saturday 13 December 1845

Roman Remains

On Monday [8 December] some labourers found a quantity of Roman Remains whilst digging for gravel in a pit at Kempston. A skeleton was discovered a little below the surface, and beside it was a very beautiful urn, of the beaker shape, which is now in the possession of Mr Blower of Bedford. There were also a quantity of pieces of urns and vases. Several fragments and skeletons have lately been found in the same pit.

Saturday 27 December 1845

Roman Remains

A few days ago the labourers working in the gravel pit between Bedford and Bromham discovered six Roman urns entire, together with some fragments. Five of the urns were immediately conveyed to the museum of the Hon G. R. Trevor; and the

other, we believe, was taken possession of by a parishioner. In the course of the day the men found an immense ante-diluvian tooth below the gravel. It is not known if these are still extant.

Saturday 31 January 1846

Paragraph from an article on the history and antiquities of *Warden Abbey*.

Within the last few years W.H. Whitbread, Esq has dug up vast portions of the stone foundations of Warden Abbey, and with them many relics of great interest; such as vitrified and encaustic flooring bricks and tiles, with various figures and devices impressed upon them; a bridle bit; the original key of the Chapter House or Chapel; a bishop's crosier, with the bones of the old Abbot, whom it was buried with; and not to be forgotten fragments of several holy vessels having ears by which to sling them to the girdle, thus to bear about their persons the potations so necessary for the old monks' ghostly comfort. Amongst other relics from Warden Abbey, and preserved at Southill House, are some highly ornamented capitals, beautifully sculptured with personifications of purity and sin allegorically represented, and much in the same poetic manner that would have been described by Spenser. There is also some tessellated pavement brought in a tolerably perfect state from the abbey, and representing a scripture subject; an imitation of the Roman art but in much larger tesserae. A bronze implement of singular construction is amongst the reliquiae of the abbey, which I have little doubt was the staff of a crucifix; there is one exactly like it at Cambridge, dug from the ruins of a religious house there.

Saturday 28 February 1846

Roman Antiquities

On Saturday last [21 February] some more relics were discovered by the men employed to dig gravel in the Kempston pits. Several spearheads were found among human bones; and a handsome brooch of silver with thin gold ornaments, each containing a ruby. The ornaments were detached, probably owing to the fastenings having become corroded.

[This clearly refers to the seventh century silver pendant, with gold foil attachments ornamented with gold wire and garnet settings, now in Bedford Museum (B M 160). Noted by James Wyatt, *Gentleman's Magazine* 16, 1864, 223-4, but not other-

wise published. This pendant clearly exhibits a similar standard of workmanship and concept of design to the quoit brooch from Chamberlains Barn, Leighton Buzzard, grave 13,¹ and the lost annular brooch found between Husband's Bosworth, Leics., and Welford, Northants.² (D.H.K.)]

Saturday 25 September 1847

Bedford Archaeological Society

The following circular, in reference to this society, has recently been issued :

At the annual meeting of the subscribers to the Bedfordshire Library, held 26 August [1847], an intimation was made by some gentlemen present of a project for forming a society for promoting Archaeological and Architectural knowledge in this county, by collecting and circulating, periodically, information concerning its local history.

For the furtherance of this design the sanction and support of the influential residents in the county are respectfully looked for, without which it will be obviously impossible to carry out the undertaking in a creditable or beneficial manner.

The excellent example set by the admirers of Antiquity and Ecclesiastical Architecture in an adjoining county, by the establishment of a society of this kind, and the success of their undertaking, are highly encouraged to those who would promote, in their own county, intellectual and social advancement — and Bedfordshire is rich in materials for so laudable a purpose.

For the further consideration of this project, a meeting will be held at the Library in the Bedford Rooms on Tuesday the 28th instant, at which the attendance of the nobility, clergy, and gentry of the county is earnestly requested.

The chair to be taken at two o'clock.

The article goes on to describe the Library's efforts to raise money to purchase a copy of Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

Saturday 2 October 1847

An article entitled *History of Bedfordshire* describes the meeting of 28 September, and outlines the foundation of the Bedfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society and resolutions concerning its constitution and future.

Saturday 16 October 1847

A leading article praises the establishment of the society and its aims. A second article on the same

page describes the meeting held on Monday 11 October: a proposal to unite the society with its Buckinghamshire counter-part was rejected and discussion centred around the constitution and the frequency of meetings.

Saturday 27 November 1847

Antiquarian Discovery at Bedford

On Saturday [20 November] morning a great stir was made in Bedford in consequence of some workmen having discovered a stone coffin of a very early date in the ruins of the old Religious House, near the Railway Station, known as the Hospital of St Leonard. It appears that this old building which has been for a long time occupied as a farm-house, and latterly as a beer-shop, was purchased with surrounding property by the Railway Company, who sold the materials of the building to Mr Edward Masters, builder. Nearly all the walls had been taken down and the materials removed; and on Saturday morning the workmen were taking up a brick flooring and then discovered a long slab of stone. Curiosity being whetted they dug round it and found it was a coffin-lid; they continued their excavations until the coffin itself was laid bare. The news spread like wild-fire and in a very short time hundreds of persons were collected round the spot. Some of the officials connected with the railway interposed and seized the coffin; a dispute then arose between them and Mr Masters as to the right of ownership. However the officials took possession of the coffin and conveyed it to the store-room of the station, where it will remain until the question is settled. The lid of the coffin was cracked across the upper part, and in consequence of the haste and clumsiness with which it was removed, a second fracture was made. It was then discovered that at some former period the lid had been reversed. The side which should have been uppermost is prismatic in form, and has got upon it a fine cross in relief, which formerly had a florid circular head, but that, as well as the symbol at the foot of the cross, had been mutilated, in all probability at the time of the Reformation. These ornamental portions had been roughly chiselled off, but the staff of the cross remained. On removing the lid the skeleton of a man was found almost entire, but the exposure to the air, and subsequent rude removal of the coffin displaced the bones and mingled them with the earth which had fallen into the coffin. The skull is finely developed in the interior region. When the upper portion of the lid was

first removed the skeleton was entire, and on the breast was a small leaden vessel, which the workmen described to be a flat candlestick. When we saw it, it was in fragments so small that the original form could not be detected. No further examination has been made.

There follow further details regarding the dispute as to the ownership of the coffin. The article ends with the account of St Leonard's Hospital given in Lysons' *Magna Britannia*, but notes also some interesting details mainly of the piscina and moulding of the chapel.

Saturday 25 March 1848

Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Beds A A S, held in Bedford on Tuesday 21 March.

Archaeological finds exhibited included the following from Bedfordshire.³

A collection of coins found at Cranfield church during its late restoration; some others found in the parish of Houghton Conquest; specimens of Roman pottery found in and near Bedford (exhibited by the Library Committee); two earthen urns [Anglo-Saxon]; fragments of gold, silver, and metal ornaments, one of them a locket with garnets set in fillets (exhibited by W. Blower); an ancient seal, of jet, lately found in Bedford (exhibited by James Wyatt); a small collection of Roman and Saxon coins.

An ornamented Samian bowl, without provenance, was exhibited by Thomas Inskip of Sheffield; and 'an antique drinking vessel found in Bedford' by the Rev Dr Brereton.

The business meeting was followed by four papers; all are there printed:

G. Russell French, 'On the Progress of Architecture'; also printed *Beds A A S*, 1848, 9-20.

Rev W. Airy, 'On the Ecclesiastical Architecture of the Northern parts of Bedfordshire'; also printed *Beds A A S*, 1848, 21-30, and subsequently *AASR*, 1, 1850-51, 144-154.

Thomas Inskip, 'On Archaeological Researches in Bedfordshire'; short, of a general nature, and with no specific references; printed *Beds A A S*, 1848, 31-32.

Rev H. J. Rose, 'On the Conventual Seals of Bedfordshire'; also printed *Beds A A S*, 1848, 32-43, and subsequently *AASR*, 1, 1850-51, 154-165.

Saturday 24 June 1848

Report of the quarterly meeting of the Beds

A A S, held in Bedford on Tuesday 20 June. Bradford Rudge presented a drawing of the Market Cross at Leighton Buzzard, which was adopted as the device of the society. The Rev E.R. Williamson exhibited a very curious seal, which had been found at Wooton, by a labourer who was stocking a hedge-row. The setting is of very pure gold; the seal itself is a dark red stone, in which is deeply cut the head of a female wearing, apparently, a Saxon head-dress. On the band of the gold setting, surrounding the stone, are the words *Clausa secreta tego*. E.W. Smith exhibited drawings of the stone coffin found at St Leonard's, Bedford in November 1847; and the Rev H.J. Rose stated that the jet seal exhibited by James Wyatt at the meeting of 21 March had been assigned by Mr Hartshorne to the reign of Edward IV.

Three papers were read :

Rev Henry Addington, 'A Memoir on several of the Churches of Bedfordshire, South of the Ouse, of the Norman and Early English period'; which is not printed.

T. J. Jackson, 'A Memoir on St Paul's Church, Bedford'; printed that week.

E.W. Smith, 'A Memoir on Elstow Conventual Church'; printed *Bedford Times* 1 July 1848.

Saturday 23 September 1848

Report of the general meeting of the Beds AAS held in Bedford on Tuesday 19 September. A letter from E.W. Smith announcing his resignation as Secretary and Curator was read; and after the chairman's address a circular on churches, their ornaments and furniture, and the antiquities and records of each parish was distributed to the clergymen present. The following articles from Bedfordshire were exhibited. Lithographs of glass, metal, and other Roman ornaments (by Thomas Inskip); sundry Roman vases found in the gravel pits at Biddenham, with a portion of human bones; also several coins; and a metal thumb ring, supposed to be of the reign of Richard III (by the Hon G.R.R. Trevor); and the Solemn League and Covenant, as taken by the inhabitants of Swineshead in the County of Hunts [now in Beds] in 1644, found concealed in the rectory house of that parish, 1846 (by Mr Airy).

Two papers were read :

G. Russell French, 'Ancient Egypt'; which is not printed.

Thomas Inskip, 'On Ancient Relics collected in Bedfordshire'; printed *Bedford Times* 30 September

1848 and subsequently *AASR* 1, 1850-51, 165-172; he writes :—

British relics are the most scarce and my instances of good fortune in procuring such specimens have been few indeed; — a gold coin of the earliest age, found at Silsoe, — a rude Celt, formed of jade stone, found in Bedfordshire, and a British flint spear of very large size and exquisitely wrought, dug from the railroad near Leighton, are all that have fallen to my possession.

A description follows of the material of the Shefford and Stanfordsbury burials, now in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.⁴

Saturday 12 May 1849

Architectural and Archaeological Union

Report of the Spring Meeting of the Northampton and Bedfordshire societies, held at Higham Ferrers on Tuesday 8 May. The business meeting was followed by three papers :

Rev H.J. Rose, 'On Hebrew Shekels, and on some architectural devices found on coins'; which is summarised in this issue and printed *Beds A A S* 1849, 1, 10-13, and *AASR* 2, 1851-52, 361-371. M. H. Bloxam 'On an ancient stone Offertory box, in Bridlington church, Yorkshire, and on an ancient stone Offertory bason, in East Kirby church, Lincolnshire' which is transcribed in full in this issue.

G.G. Scott, 'On the principles of Church Restoration'; which is summarised in this issue.

Saturday 19 May 1849

Interesting Relic

On Sunday last [13 May] great interest was excited at the village of Wooton, near Bedford, by the discovery of an ancient stone coffin lid in the churchyard. A man commenced digging a grave, and on getting about a foot below the surface struck against an unusually large stone. On examining it he found some relieved work upon it, and then he communicated his discovery to Mr Hill, the parish clerk, who directed him to leave it and make the grave in another spot. On the following morning the Rev J. Jenkyn, the vicar, the churchwardens and the parish clerk, had the ground excavated further, and eventually succeeded in raising and removing the slab. On cleaning it they found on the upper surface an elaborate and beautiful cross in bold relief. The slab is of the following dimensions, being in length 6 feet 5 inches; width at the head 1

foot 11 inches; at the foot 14½ inches; thickness at the outer edges 7 inches; and in the middle or ridge 9½ inches. Beneath the slab there was a layer of gravel to the depth of about two feet, and the excavators then came to a skeleton entire. There was no coffin. The body had been laid on the natural soil, which is a stiff clay. The bones were left undisturbed, and the vicar directed a brick arch to be turned over and the slab placed upon it. Many persons have been to view the relic. The carving is peculiar, as, in addition to the head and base, the shaft is ornamented with branches. The lid is prismatic in form, of the twelfth century, and made of native stone.

Saturday 23 June 1849

Report of the annual meeting of the Beds AAS, held in Bedford on Thursday 21 June, when objects exhibited included an ancient seal with four matrices, found in the ruins of the old bridge at Bedford;⁵ a die for a tradesman's token, found in St Cuthbert's, Bedford, exhibited by Dr Tattam; a cannon ball ploughed up at Keysoe, exhibited by the Rev W. Airy; an ancient dial plate, a bronze key, a silver coin, and a corbel-head, found by Mr E. Masters, in the Priory of St Leonard's, Bedford, exhibited by Mr Wyatt;⁶ fragments of pottery, a brass spur, a pair of shears, a bridle bit, some coins, and an ancient mortar, dug up on the premises of Mr W. W. Kilpin, in Castle-lane, Bedford, exhibited by Mr Wyatt.⁷

The Report was followed by three papers: M. H. Bloxam, 'Remarks on Conventual Arrangements'; printed *Bedford Times* 30 June 1849, *Beds A A S*, 1849, 1, 2-7, and *AASR* 1, 1850-51, 177-193.

Talbot Barnard, 'A Memoir on the Basilicas of Christian Rome'; printed *Bedford Times* 7 July 1849, *Beds A A S*, 1849, 1, 7-9, and *AASR* 1, 1850-51, 172-177.

T. J. Jackson, 'A Memoir on Felmersham Church'; which is not printed.

Saturday 18 August 1849

A letter to the editor of the *Bedford Times* from John Martin notes that in removing a coat of plaster near the clerestory window, adjoining the chancel at Eversholt church, a curious fresco was discovered. It is a picture of St Peter receiving the blessed at the gates of paradise; there are considerable remains of colour, especially the robe of the apostle; he

holds in his hand the sword and the keys, and is at the same time firmly grasping one of the candidates for reception into the realms of the blessed. The painting is nearly four feet square. The height of the principal figure 2ft 2in. A fresh coat of plaster now obscures it from view, as well as the grey stone of Totternhoe. Whilst it was exposed a tracing was taken the size of the original; from this a reduction has been made by a resident in the village, who takes an interest in ecclesiastical remains, and has been sent to the Bedfordshire Architectural Society, where it can be seen by all who attend to this study.

Saturday 25 August 1849

Report of the monthly meeting of the Beds A A S held in Bedford on Tuesday 21 August. The reduced copy of John Martin's tracing of the wall-painting at Eversholt was accepted. Talbot Barnard presented some fragments of stained glass from Stevington church, and the Rev H. J. Rose two encaustic tiles from Cranfield church.

Saturday 27 October 1849

Report of a general meeting of the Beds A A S held in Bedford on Tuesday 23 October, when three papers were read:

Rev W. Airy, 'An Apology for Rubble Walls in the Interior of Churches'; printed in this issue and *Beds A A S*, 1849, 2, 1-3.

Rev H. J. Rose, 'On the Lombardic Inscriptions on Monuments in Bedfordshire'; printed *Bedford Times* 3 November 1849, *Beds A A S*, 1849, 2, 3-4, and *AASR* 1, 1850-51, 193-197.

Rev B. E. Bridges, 'On the Distinctive Features of Christian and Classical Architecture' (Part One) printed *Bedford Times* 8 December 1849 and *Beds A A S*, 1849, 2, 4-8.

Rev H. J. Williams called attention to the circumstance of a cross, of the character alluded to by Mr Rose in his paper, having been found on a coffin slab which was dug up at Kempston church about two years ago.

Saturday 24 November 1849

Report of a meeting of the members of the Beds A A S held in Bedford on Tuesday 20 November 1849. Rev H. J. Williams presented a drawing of the Lombardic cross which had been found on a monumental slab in Kempston church. The Rev H. E. Havergal submitted a plan for a proposed restoration of Elstow church. Rev H. J. Rose read a paper

'On Hebrew Coins'; printed *Bedford Times* 1 December 1849.

Saturday 31 August 1850

Report of a general meeting of the Bedfordshire and St Albans societies held at Dunstable on Tuesday 27 August.

Lord Alford, the lord of the manor, had given the society permission to open one of the barrows on Dunstable Downs.

Soon after ten o'clock hundreds of persons had assembled on the Downs to witness the opening of one of the barrows, supposed to be the sepulchral monument of ancient British warriors or other distinguished characters of that early period. Amongst those present were Lord Alford and his family and a considerable number of local clergy and gentry.

There follows a description of Dunstable and the Downs.

The Secretaries of the Bedfordshire society [Rev W. Airy and Rev H.J. Rose] had on the previous afternoon selected the only barrow, which did not appear to offer clear indications of having been opened at some previous period. This was the smallest of the Five Knolls, the third from the extreme point of the hill. The turf was neatly pared away from a stripe, about four feet in width, reaching from the outer circumference of the barrow to its centre, and the upper portions of the soil removed. About eleven o'clock, the labourers, in the presence of the company assembled, began to prosecute their task with greater vigour, and to dig deeper down into the barrow. The first object which attracted any attention was a small portion of horn, which was supposed to belong to a roebuck; but no further discoveries of any importance rewarded the researches of the society. A few bones, consisting of portions of the skeletons of an ox, a deer, and some large bird, were the only remains of former ages deposited in the barrow. All the artificial soil was removed, till the native stratum of chalk was arrived at, and in this stratum a few circular holes were found, about two feet in diameter each, and about eighteen inches in depth. The soil was not discoloured as it would have been had any large amount of animal matter been deposited in the barrow. The conclusion formed by the most competent persons was that the barrows must have been the work of a period anterior to the occupation of the island by the Romans. Had they been of Roman formation, it is most probable that portions of Roman pottery, bricks or tiles, or other articles

of manufacture, would have been discovered in them. When it had been ascertained that nothing could be found in the barrow already opened, it was proposed to cut down into the centre of one of the other barrows, a proposition which was immediately carried into execution. It appeared however, that the earth must have been disturbed at some comparatively recent period, a conclusion which was immediately confirmed by the discovery of many portions of a human skeleton almost on the very surface of the soil. It was considered useless to make further researches in this quarter, and the fragments already discovered were carefully restored to their resting place, and the excavations discontinued.⁸ The company on the Downs was increased by a very large assembly of persons of the middle and working classes, who exhibited much interest in the progress of the works, and whose conduct was extremely orderly.

Some of the party now visited the mound of Totternhoe Castle, while others inspected the Maiden Bower.

Amongst items exhibited at the meeting held afterwards were a curiously-formed knife, with carved bone handle, silver-mounted, in a wooden case, found amongst the ruins of an old house in Dunstable, and three ancient vases, found under similar circumstances, exhibited by Mr E. Burr; an ancient vase found eight feet below the bed of the river Ouse, and a key discovered under a saw-pit at the back of an ancient house in Well-street, Bedford, exhibited by Mr Wyatt; a specimen of tessellated encaustic tile, found on the glebe land at Kensworth, by the Rev T.C. Boone. Beautiful specimens of encaustic tiles, of various designs, found near the site of an ancient hospital at Dunstable, also attracted much attention.

Three papers were read :

T. G. Somers Clarke, 'A Memoir on Dunstable Priory Church'; summarised in this issue.

J. Evans, 'An Essay on Local Tokens'; summarised *Bedford Times* 7 September 1850.

Rev H. J. Rose, 'On the Architectural Devices found on Ancient Coins'; which is not printed.

After the meeting a party was shown around the church.

Saturday 21 September 1850

Report of the monthly meeting of the Council of the Beds A A S, held in Bedford on Tuesday 17 September.

It was stated that some of the bones discovered

in the barrow on Dunstable Downs had been submitted to a gentleman in the neighbourhood [Rev J. Thornton of Kimbolton Grammar School] who is a good comparative anatomist, and he pronounced that they were the caudal vertebra, a rib, and foot of a pig, a tooth of deer, a tooth of a fox, and some bones of an ox.⁹

Bradford Rudge presented to the society some valuable Roman remains lately discovered in the cutting of the Great Northern Railway near Sandy. They consisted of a spear head of large dimensions having on one side a large hook; an earthen vessel ewer-shaped and a curious drinking-cup of earthenware.

Saturday 19 October 1850

Report of a general meeting of the Beds A A S held in Bedford on Wednesday 16 October. Some Roman vessels and other antiquities were laid on the table, and a collection of coins belonging to Mr C. Bithrey was exhibited. The society made a grant of £10 towards the restoration of Dunstable Priory Church. The Report for 1849-50, read at the meeting, except in minor details is that printed *AASR*, 1, 1850-51.

Two papers read :

Rev B. E. Bridges, 'On the Distinctive Features of Christian and Classical Architecture' (Part Two — continued from 27 October 1849); printed *Bedford Times* 2 November and 9 November 1850. Rev W. Airy, 'The Solemn League and Covenant'; transcribed *Bedford Times* 26 October 1850, printed *AASR* 3, 1852-53, 395-406.

Saturday 14 December 1850

An article describing the meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of London on 21 November includes this passage :

Mr R. Smith exhibited three remarkable cup-shaped Saxon fibulae, recently found in Bedfordshire.

[These were probably saucer brooches, but no further details are known, nor are their present location (D.H.K.)]

NOTES

- 1 *Arch J* 120, 1963, 117 and fig 10.
- 2 N Aberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, 1926, 138 and fig 266.
- 3 Exhibits are described more fully *Beds A A S*, 1848, 6-8.
- 4 On these see, in general H Dryden, 'Roman and Roman-British remains, at and near Shefford, co. Beds.' *Publ Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 1, 10, 1845; C F Fox, *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, 1923, 99-100 and 189-216. For Shefford see D H Kennett, 'The Shefford Burial', *Beds Mag* 12, 1969-71, 201-203. I understand a new study of the Stanfordsbury burials by Mr Mansel Spratling is in preparation and will be published in a forthcoming *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*. A modern resume with drawings is given by I M Stead, *Archaeologia*, 101, 1967, 55-56.
- 5 T A Blyth, *History of Bedford*, 1868, 183.
- 6 Blyth, 1868, 208.
- 7 Blyth, 1868, 21.
- 8 For further details of the excavation see Report of Beds A A S in *A A S R*, 1, 1850-51.
- 9 A detailed account appears *op cit* n.7.

Excavations at Sandy Lodge, Bedfordshire

JAMES DYER

SUMMARY

Excavation of an hitherto unknown promontory hillfort at Sandy suggested that the site was unfinished and had only been occupied for a brief period of time, probably early in the Iron Age sequence. A wide flat-bottomed ditch had provided quarry material for a glacis rampart faced with a low dry-stone wall. There had also been Mesolithic occupation of the area, producing a small series of cores and scrapers.

INTRODUCTION

The area under investigation lies within the parish of Sandy in the grounds of Sandy Lodge, the Headquarters of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and is protected as a nature reserve. The site under examination is situated on a south pointing spur of lower greensand, overlooking the valley of the river Ivel and Biggleswade Common, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south-east of Sandy railway station. (TL 187478).

In the Autumn of 1967 the Director of the RSPB Mr Peter Conder, noticed a substantial bank and ditch cutting-off the northern end of the hillspur on the south-western side of the Nature Reserve. He drew the attention of the writer to the hitherto unrecorded earthwork and it was provisionally identified as a promontory fort of probable Iron Age date. At the invitation of the RSPB and with their fullest support, part of the site was excavated by students of the Department of Archaeology and History at Putteridge Bury College of Education, Luton, during July in 1968 and 1969, under the direction of the writer, assisted by Mr W.L. Gates.

The promontory forms part of the grounds of Sandy Lodge, a country house designed by Clutton (1869-77) for Sir Robert Peel. The grounds were landscaped at that time and many exotic trees were planted. The area of the promontory fort is somewhat wilder with bracken and coarse grass as well as many trees. Whilst this makes a beautiful and

ideal bird sanctuary, it creates difficulties for archaeologists, as it will be appreciated that any disturbance of the undergrowth and low-branched trees disturbs the habitat of the birds under protection. With this in mind, trenches had to be placed where they were least likely to disturb the natural vegetation.

Previous Work in the Area (fig 1)

Although the Sandy Lodge site is newly discovered, the area has long been of archaeological interest. For some centuries the market town of Sandy to the north-east has been recognised as a Roman settlement, and many attempts were made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to identify it with *Salenae*, one of the two towns attributed by Ptolemy to the Catuvellauni (the other being *Verulamium*). This identification is no longer accepted. Most of the discoveries relating to the Roman period were made between 1850 and 1880 when quarrying was taking place on Tower Hill and the Great Northern Railway was being built. The main area of Roman settlement seems to have lain around the railway station, with a cemetery lying further north below the modern one.¹

Primary occupation in the Sandy area is considerably earlier than the Roman period. Mesolithic flint tools have been found at Caesar's Camp and on Sandy Heath, both on top of the greensand ridge. Blades and scrapers of neolithic and Bronze Age date are also exhibited in Bedford Museum, and there is a Bronze Age collared urn in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Farnham, Dorset.

Two Iron Age forts already exist on the hills overlooking Sandy. The northernmost, a contour fort known as Caesar's Camp, has a single rampart and ditch following the top of the hill, with a simple inturn-outturn entrance on the south-eastern side. It encloses 7 acres.

South-east of Sandy is a second fort, Galley Hill. This is a small rectangular promontory fort, and a single line of rampart and ditch isolates a

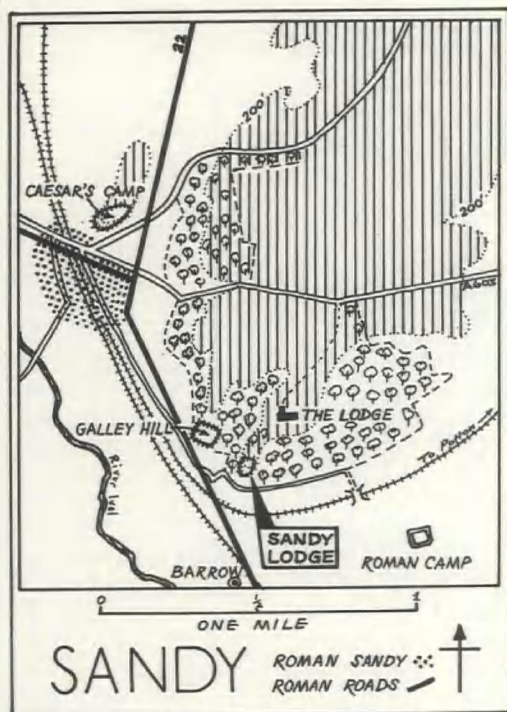


Fig 1 Sandy Lodge : location map.

hill-spur immediately west of the new site at Sandy Lodge. The two sites are separated by a narrow dry valley, and both are clearly visible from each other. Goddard in 1904 when describing Galley Hill observed 'There are also signs of other earthworks on these heights, which call for further examination'.² He may have been referring to the Sandy Lodge site.

Neither Caesar's Camp nor Galley Hill have been scientifically excavated, although sherds of Iron Age 'A' pottery are recorded from the former. Numerous Iron Age coins have come from Sandy at various times, including a gold coin of Cunobelinus, minted in Camulodunum, together with seven other coins of that reign and three of Tascivanus, and a silver plated coin of the Gaulish tribe, the Aedui. It is presumably this range of coins which led the Ordnance Survey on their map of *Southern Britain in the Iron Age* to label both the known camps as 'C' imposed on 'A' or 'B'.

A small Roman fort was discovered to the south east of Sandy Lodge by aerial photography, and excavated some years ago. The results have not been published. One further point of interest was the finding of a 'U' shaped pit 7 or 8 feet deep and 6 to

8 feet wide in a corner of the modern cemetery in 1953. It contained three probable male skeletons 'dumped in head-first', together with Romano-British pottery. Dr Anne Ross has provisionally identified this as a ritual pit connected with pagan Celtic religion.³

Survey

As no detailed survey of the Sandy Lodge site existed the Geography Department of Putteridge Bury College, under the supervision of E. Edwards, produced a chain and contour survey during the period of the excavations, for which the writer is indebted.

Topography of the site (fig 2)

This small fort is roughly oval in shape and encloses some 2 acres of land. Part of the north-west side has been destroyed by an old sand quarry, which has also removed part of the rampart, ditch and entrance causeway. The enclosed area of the spur slopes gently southwards from a central point at 210 feet O D, the greatest fall in height being at the southern end of the spur where the ground is 13 feet below central height. At this point, and on all sides except the north, the hill then falls very steeply away to the river valley 75 feet below. It is unlikely that there was ever any additional defence along the escarpment sides.

At the northern end of the fort a shallow dry-valley has almost cut across the spur. The western end of this valley has been artificially deepened by cutting the fort ditches along its length. The material taken from it has been piled on the southern, inner side.

The entrance to the fort seems to have been approximately at the centre point of the rampart and ditch; a causeway 34 feet wide (at least) crossed the ditch at this point. The western side of this causeway, and the rampart and ditch beyond, were all quarried away in the last century.

The rampart stands 5ft 6in above ground level close to the entrance, but gets steadily lower as it extends to the east, until it eventually fades out. This is presumably due to lack of construction material at the eastern end, since the ditch which formed the quarry runs into the existing dry valley at this point, and did not need artificially deepening.

Fig 2 (opposite) Sandy Lodge : contour survey and site plan.

Prior to excavation the ditch had a stepped or causewayed appearance, which suggested that the shallow dry-valley had been deepened by a series of pits that had not been properly joined together. Three ridges or causeways can be clearly seen. The whole of this area supports thick bracken.

THE EXCAVATION

It was decided in 1968 to test the interior of the site and in 1969 the rampart and ditch. As a few sherds of handmade prehistoric pottery were found in a mole-hill at the highest central point of the site on a preliminary visit, it was decided to lay out a grid of trenches at Site A, in the centre of the fort.

Site A – Interior

An area of 133 sq yd was cleared to an average depth of 2ft 6in. The stratification was identical across the whole area :

- a) Topsoil – about 6in thick – containing tangled bracken roots.
- b) Clean yellow windblown sand – about 1ft thick.
- c) Dark rusty-brown sand – from 6 to 9in thick.
- d) Greensand bedrock.

There were no structural features of any kind within the area examined.

The yellow windblown sand was entirely sterile, but the lower dark rusty-brown sand contained some 25 very abraded sherds of handmade pottery of Iron Age 'A' character. Mixed with this were a scatter of flint blades and flakes, most of which were mesolithic in character, with a few probable neolithic specimens. The distribution of the flint-work was more intensive in the south-western corner of the area excavated, suggesting that it had originated from somewhere outside our trenches in that direction (under a large ornamental tree). It may at first be considered curious to find material spread over four or five millennia stratified together, but as Ian Cornwall has pointed out⁴ sandy areas of this kind carry comparatively sparse vegetation and are very exposed to wind erosion, which can be speeded up by human agencies such as ground clearance by felling and fire, or even by very dry weather. Consequently it would be unusual to find mesolithic or other prehistoric material in its original stratified position.

Fig 3 (opposite) Sandy Lodge : sections of rampart, ditch and entrance causeway.

Site B – The Fortifications (figs 3 and 4)

The Rampart (fig 3)

A single cutting was made through the rampart to determine its construction. This was at its highest point near the entrance on the west side of the spur. Before excavation the rampart stood 5ft 6in high and 36ft wide at its base.

The cutting showed that the rampart was composed entirely of yellow sand, with thin runs of grey sand here and there, perhaps indicating decayed branches or wattle placed to stabilise an otherwise unstable feature. At the rear of the rampart was a small bank of grey material which represented a stack of decayed turves. This varied in height from one side of the cutting to the other, but got higher as it approached the entrance, 12ft to the west. This seemed to serve the dual function of demarcating the back of the rampart and stopping the spread of the sand, and also acting as a revetting to the rear of the entrance.

At the front of the rampart was a tumble of sandstone blocks which seemed to have been piled some half a dozen layers high as a revetment. These were flat slabs of ochreous sandstone and were graded with larger slabs below, and smaller ones near the top. Some of these blocks had tumbled forward due to pressure of sand behind them. Lack of fallen rubble in the ditch below showed that this wall had not continued any higher, and as at the rear, it could have done little more than demarcate the front of a great bank of sand. There was no indication of any timber work either vertical or horizontal, (other than the suggested stabilising branches mentioned above), and one can only conclude that the rampart was nothing more than a sand glacis.

The Ditch (figs 3 and 4)

As has already been said, the ditch seems to have been constructed by deepening a natural minor dry valley that was about 35ft wide at this point. At the eastern end of the valley no deepening is likely to have taken place at all, but at the west beside the entrance causeway, the ditch was dug 10ft deep and 35ft wide. It has already been noticed that the ditch appeared to be very irregular, with ridges running across it, dividing it into four causewayed sections.

Excavation soon showed that the ditch bottom was very irregular, with outcrops of sandstone 3ft high jutting up in places. The end nearest the entrance causeway was steep and square-cut with a

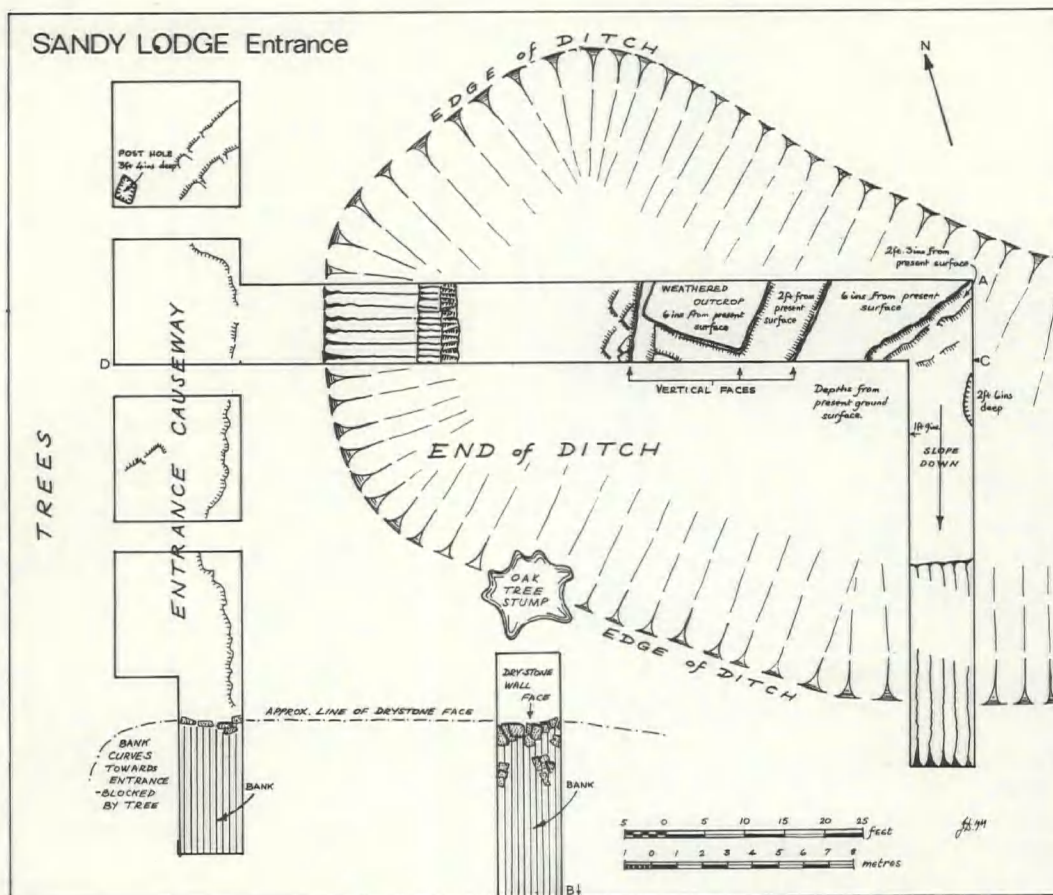


Fig 4 Sandy Lodge : plan of excavations at entrance.

flat bottom, whilst the inner edge of the ditch floor below the rampart lay at 45 degrees with a very irregular face. The ditch was devoid of finds, except for a single serrated flint flake of mesolithic type.

The clean sand silting in the ditch and lack of finds suggests that it was open for only a short time. This is also borne out by the unweathered and angular appearance of the rock-cut surfaces. Even so, the ditch was open long enough for two pairs of prehistoric sand martins to make burrows in the sides of it. These features were buried some four feet below the silted surface of the ditch. The adjoining modern quarry is still a favourite nesting place for sand martins!

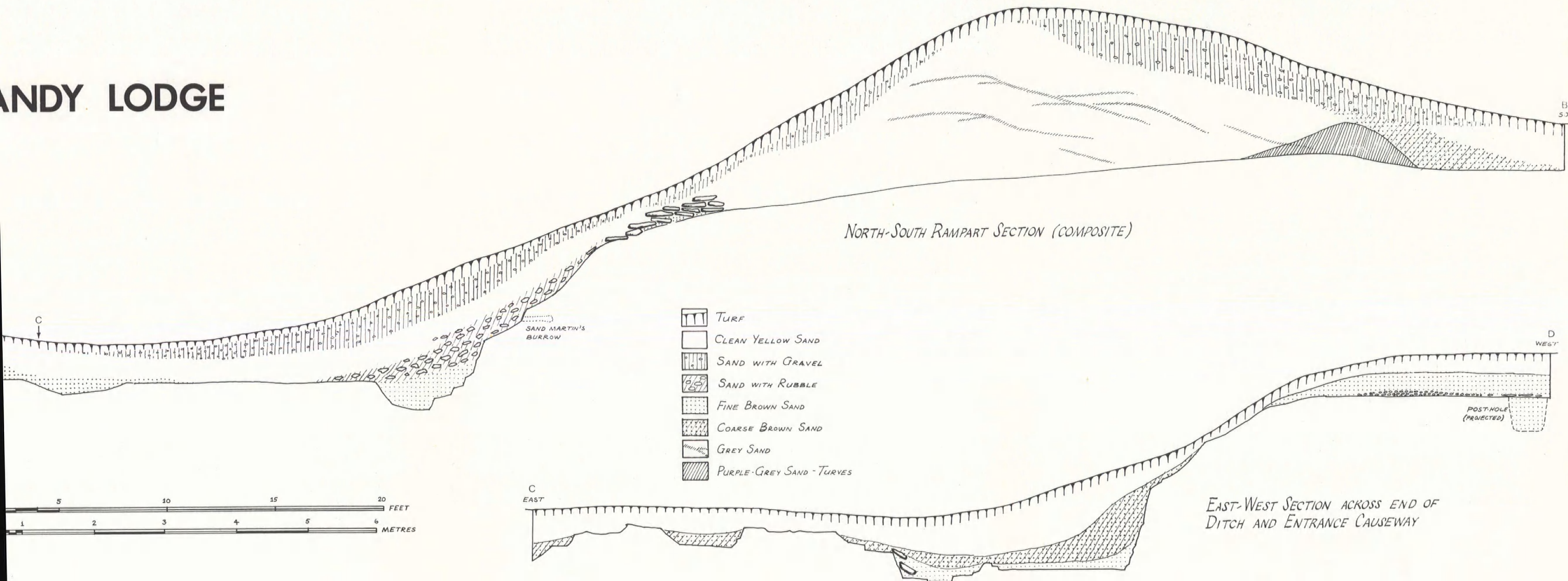
The Entrance Causeway (fig 4)

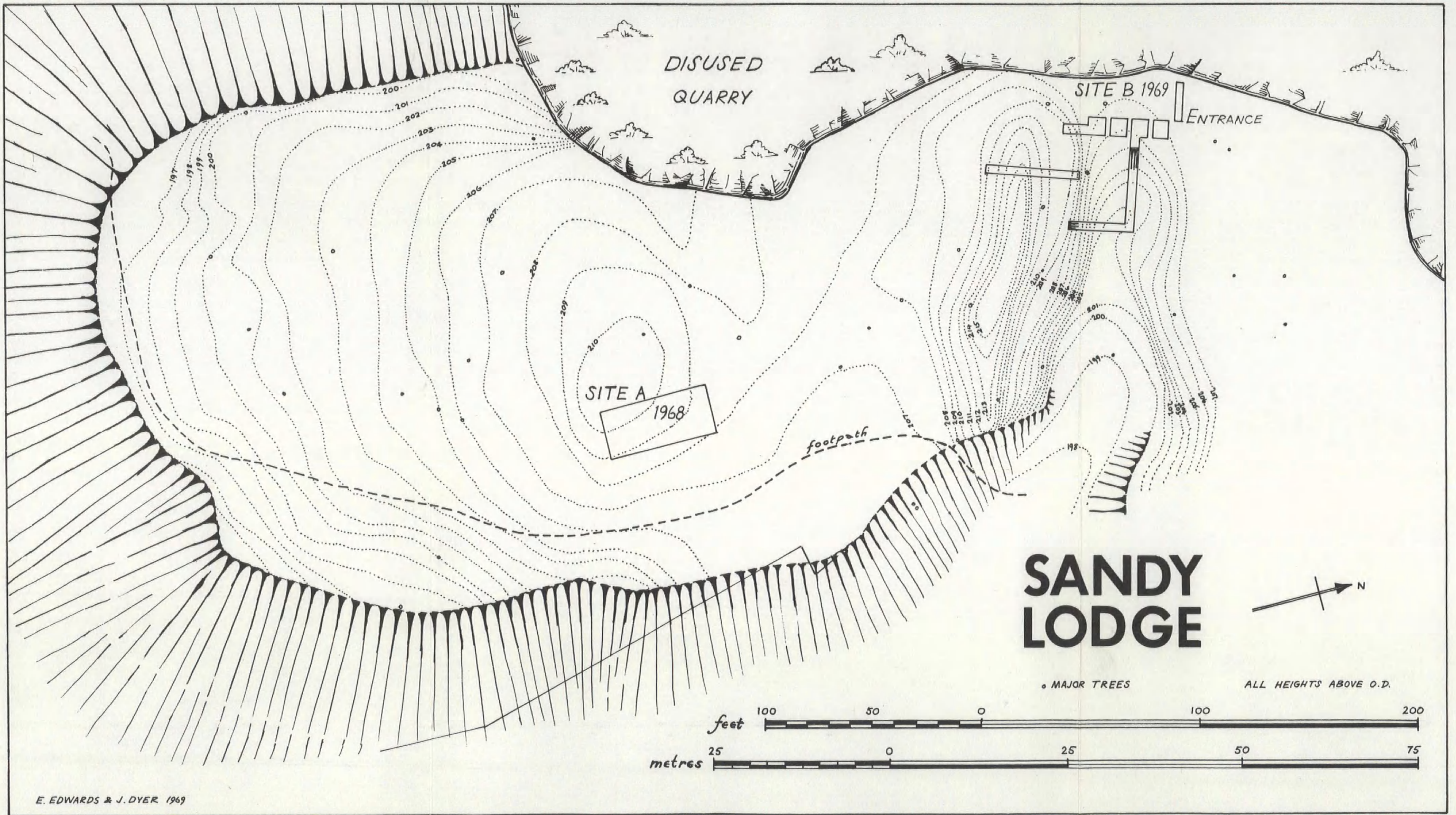
The causeway across the ditch was at least 34ft wide; it may have been more but the west side of

the fort, including the rampart, ditch and edge of causeway have all been quarried away.

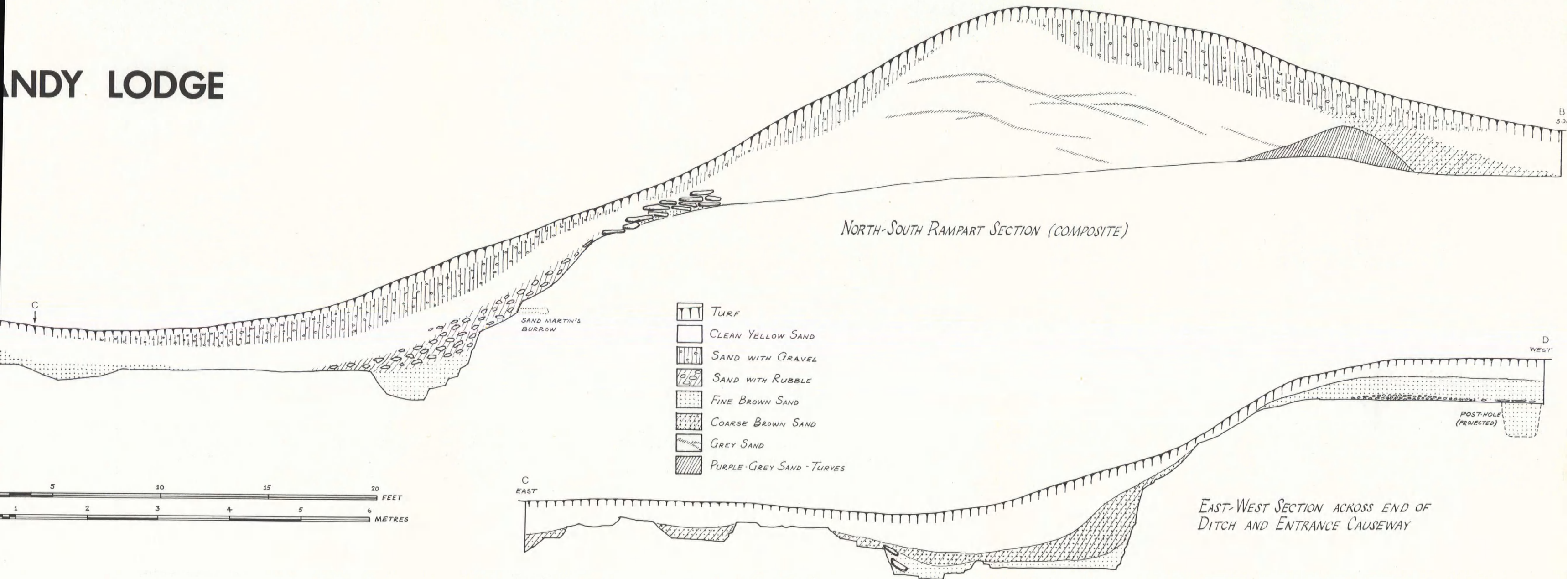
The sand over the causeway was 18 inches thick before bedrock was reached. As with the centre of the site (Site A) it had clearly been eroded by the wind, and it was only in the lowest 6 inches of dark rusty-brown sand that a few flint flakes and cores were found, though no traces of pottery. There was no indication of any road surface across the causeway, or any sign to indicate that it had been frequently used by traffic. On the other hand the bedrock was lower along the centre of the causeway than at the edges, where the natural rock formed a noticeable ridge, before plunging into the ditch. A single post-hole was found at the northern end of the causeway, in a position which cannot be explained on the evidence available. It was 2ft in diameter and 3ft 4in deep from the present ground surface, and extended 1ft into the greensand rock. All

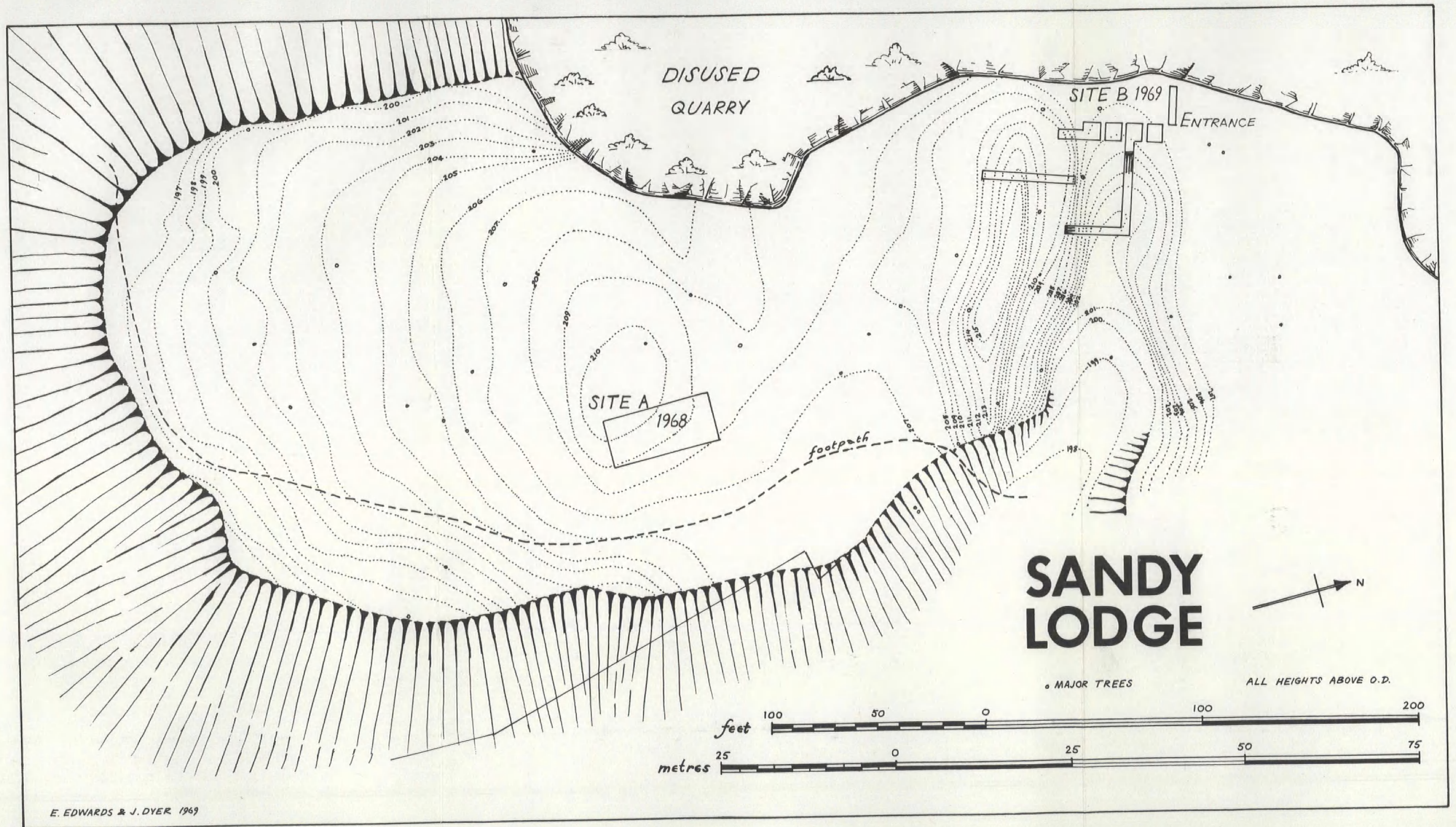
ANDY LODGE



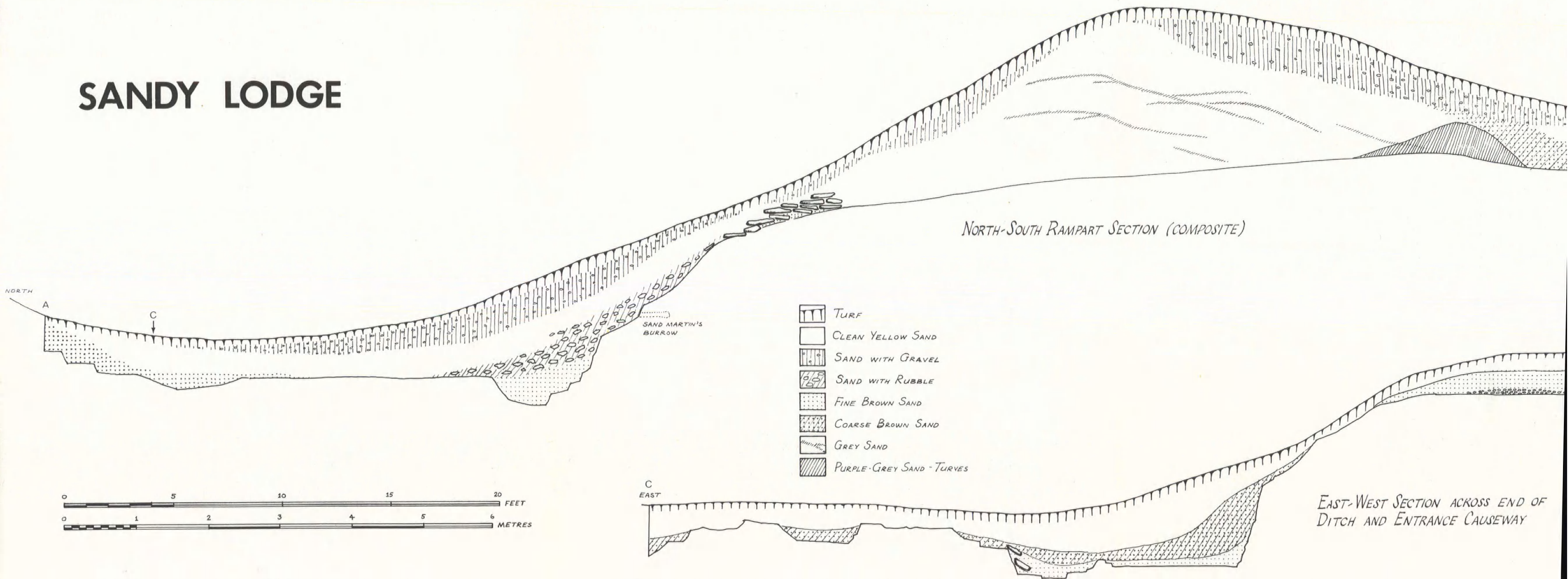


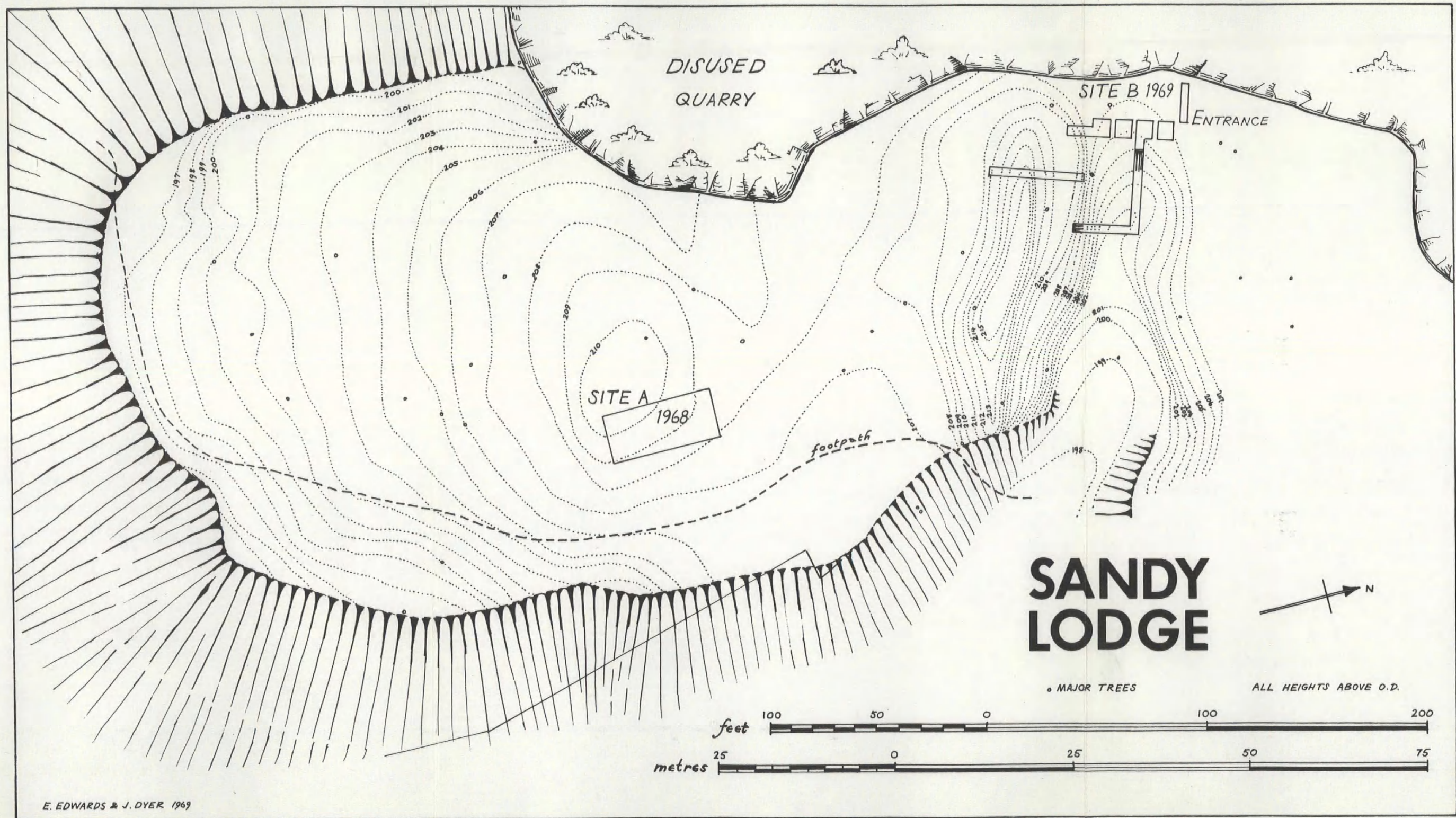
ANDY LODGE





SANDY LODGE





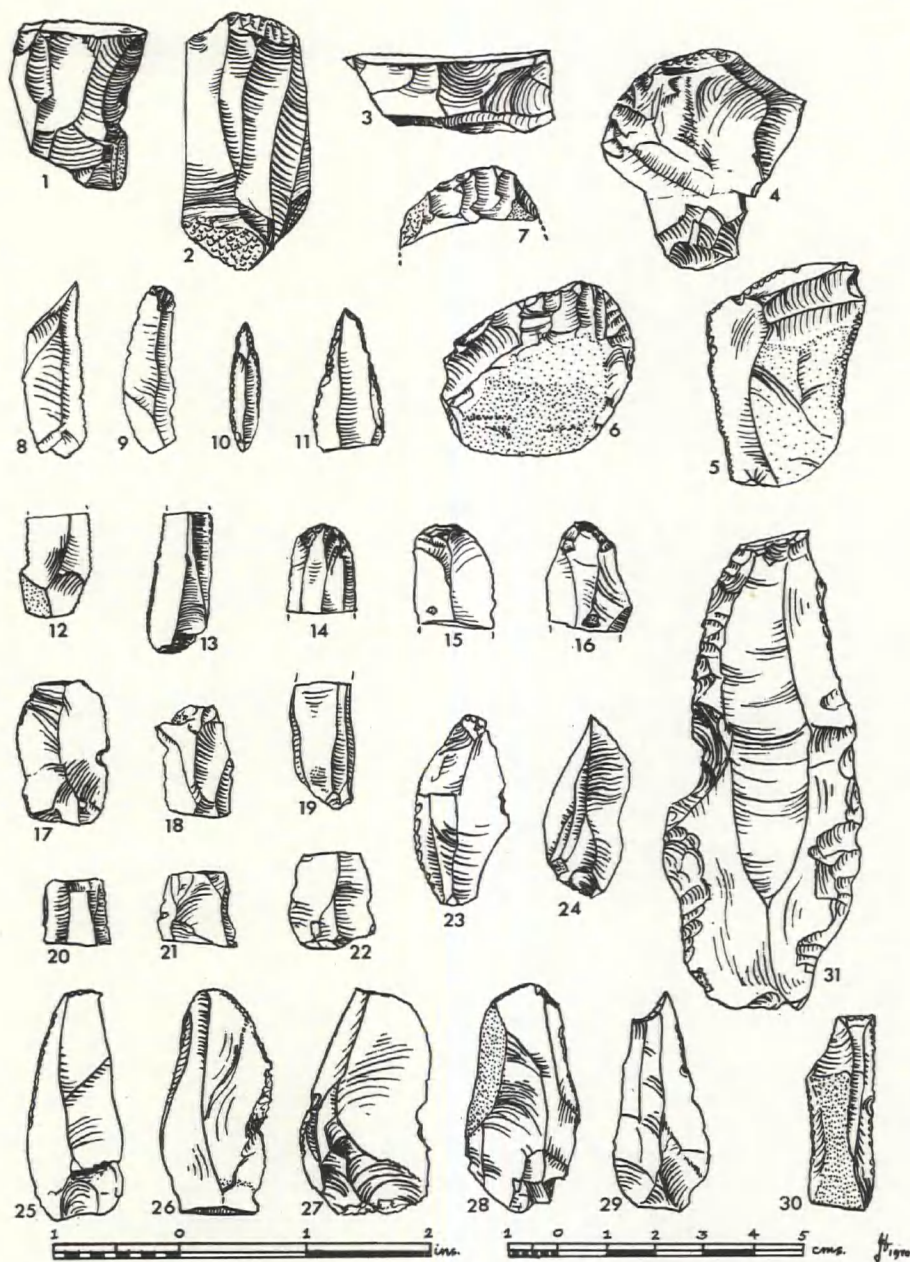


Fig 5 Sandy Lodge : Flints.

trace of any post which it contained had vanished.

It was impossible to examine the inner southern end of the causeway and gate area, due to the presence of two large trees.

DISCUSSION

Sandy Lodge leaves us with a number of tantalizing problems, which at present cannot be answered. Was the site ever completed as a defensive work? The irregular appearance of the ditch bottom, the instability of the rampart, and the apparently unused appearance of the entrance causeway tend to point to a hasty construction and short life. This latter point is borne out by the meagre Iron Age finds from the rest of the site. The simplicity of the Sandy Lodge rampart construction suggests that on typological grounds the promontory fort may be very early and constructed at a time when people, perhaps a single family, were still unsure of the best methods of defence. This suggestion is borne out by the sherds of pottery found which are very coarse and crude, and some of which would not be out of place in the late Bronze Age.

It is noticeable that at Ivinghoe (Bucks), Frere saw the timber reinforced ramparts there as very amateur affairs, and these he had good reason to date to the beginning of the 6th century B.C.⁵ At Sandy Lodge there was no apparent attempt to use timber to retain the rampart at all. The wide and relatively shallow ditch and dumped rampart is a feature of Fécamp type ramparts⁶ and traditionally this style is too late for our consideration, but Avery⁷ has recently suggested that some dumped ramparts and wide ditches may be considerably earlier, and Sandy Lodge seems to bear this out. The writer has drawn attention to this same feature further south in Bedfordshire on the chalk at Sharpenhoe.⁸

THE FINDS FROM SITE A

All finds from the site have been placed in Bedford Museum, by permission of the Director of the RSPB, Mr Peter Conder. It should be noted that due to the acid nature of the sand, no bone or metal was found. The writer would like to thank John Wymer for discussing the flint material with him.

1 The Flintwork (fig 5)

The flints from Sandy Lodge are predominantly mesolithic, though it is not possible to say to which

industry they belong. The patina of the flint varies, but this need not necessarily indicate relative age, but more likely some local soil factor.

- 1-3: Cores. 1 is a good example of a single-platform conical core for micro-blades. 2 may have been an undeveloped double-platform core which broke in half and was subsequently burnt.
- 4-7: Scrapers. 7 is the working edge of a broken (thermal) end scraper.
- 8: Saw.
- 9: Scraper on end of blade.
- 10: Rod-like microlith blunted down whole of one side and part of the other. Patinated. Such microliths are usually associated with Late Mesolithic industries.
- 11: Bottom half of microlith, almost certainly an obliquely blunted point with basal trimming. More characteristic of Late Mesolithic industries.
- 12-30: Flake blades and flake blade segments. 12, 13 and 25 are serrated blades of saw type. 14, 15 and 16 are the scraper ends of broken blades. 29 is a flake-blade with a shallow concavity worked on the tip.
- 31: Sickle blade. There are traces of corn gloss on the bulbar side. The secondary working is not like Mesolithic work, and is thus almost certainly Neolithic.

2 The Pottery (fig 6)

All the pottery was found in the dark rusty-brown sand layer of Site A. It is in each case handmade and extremely abraded, suggesting that it lay on the surface and was subjected to rain and blowing sand for a long period. Due to this abrasion, edges of some sherds have become smoothed and it is difficult to identify rims with certainty. Similarly the softer surfaces have been worn in such a way that the grits used in tempering have been left upstanding on the sherd surfaces.

The paste of nearly all the 25 sherds discovered is slightly micaceous. Flint has been used to grit all of them: the size of grits varying considerably, some very fine, others extremely coarse. All are similar in general character to the Iron Age material from Ravensburgh Castle, Herts., in Letchworth Museum. A number of the sherds are poorly

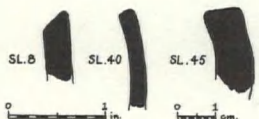


Fig 6 Sandy Lodge : pottery.

fired. Only three rim sherds can be identified, all the rest being wall sherds with one possible handle (or pottery bead). None of the sherds show any obvious decoration. All the pieces seem to form part of an homogeneous group, and although they are very abraded one can feel fairly confident in placing them in an early phase of the Iron Age southern first A culture, though it would be difficult to give a precise date.

- SL.8 Soft, grey exterior, pale orange interior.
- SL.40 Soft, grey-brown ware, with medium grits. Inner and outer surfaces roughly smoothed.
- SL.45 Soft, sandy coloured ware, fine paste tempered with a few large flint grits. Inner surface roughly smoothed.

NOTES

- 1 D E Johnston *Beds Archaeologist*, 1, 1955-56, 17,102.
- 2 A R Goddard *VCH Beds* 1, 1904, 274.
- 3 In conversation with the writer.
- 4 I W Cornwall *Soils for the Archaeologist*, 1958, 42-3.
- 5 S S Frere, *Rec Bucks*, 18, 1968, 191.
- 6 R E M Wheeler and K M Richardson *Hill-forts of Northern France*, 1957, 62ff; Oldbury II, J B Ward *Perkins Archaeologia* 90, 1944, 127-76.
- 7 M Avery *P P S*, 33, 1967, 251-2
- 8 J Dyer *Beds Magazine* 8, 1961, 114.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to Putteridge Bury College of Education for a grant towards the cost of this paper.

Pre-Roman Iron Age Sites at Bozeat and Strixton, Northamptonshire.

D. N. HALL

INTRODUCTION

There are many pre-Roman Iron age sites on the watershed between the Ouse and Nene valleys; a few show characteristic crop marks from the air, but most have been discovered by field work.¹ Since nothing was previously known about any of them, two of the Northamptonshire sites were partially excavated between 1963 and 1967. With improvements in modern agricultural techniques and consequent deeper ploughing, it was a matter of some urgency to investigate these sites before all occupation layers were destroyed. This paper reports the excavations at Strixton 1 and Bozeat 2 and 5, and also gives a field-work plan of the site Easton Maudit 10.¹ The pottery from the excavations has already been published.²

At Bozeat (sites B2, SP 900566 and B5, SP 900565), the Iron age settlement runs into two modern fields, which contain slag patches and dark areas of occupation. From the air three enclosures can be seen, the larger two apparently being regular hexagons. The settlement is part of a series of adjacent sites on the Bozeat Plain including Easton Maudit 10 (SP 897571). The geology is a stiff glacial clay-with-flints.

The site, Strixton 1, (S1, SP 894618) lies on a spur near Hill Mount Spinney commanding extensive views of the Nene Valley, including the contemporary hill-fort of Hunsbury. The subsoil is a yellow lime-with-fossils ('penny-land') overlying a blue clay, both belonging to the upper Jurassic series.

THE EXCAVATION

Bozeat 2 and 5 (Fig 1)

The ditch D1 of the largest enclosure was sectioned in 1964; it was V-shaped, 10ft wide and 8ft deep (fig 3, CD), enclosing an apparently hexagonal area about 350ft across. Another trench inside the enclosure revealed an entrance arm of a hut-circle, ditch D2, 7ft wide and 5ft deep; within the hut-circle there was a floor or yard made of small pebbles which stopped 3ft from the ditch edge.

The smallest enclosure was examined in 1966 (fig 1). Underlying it was the ditch D5, 4-5ft wide and 4ft deep. The earliest fillings of alternate well-

defined layers of clay silts and black occupation debris strongly suggest a seasonal occupation (fig 3, GH). The upper level had been re-cut and filled with black occupation and some pebbles.

The outer enclosure ditch, D3, was 8ft wide and 5ft deep, enclosing a circular area 120ft in diameter.

The section (fig 3, EF) showed that it had been re-cut and eventually filled with natural silting; clearly the period of use was a fairly long one. No trace of the rampart survived. Within the enclosure was a hut-circle ditch D4 5ft wide 2ft deep, enclosing a circular area diameter 50ft. The courses of ditches D3 and D4 could be seen as dark marks in the plough soil where unexcavated; D4 would be expected to have an entrance. The intersection of D4 and D5 showed that D4 was the later (fig 3, NO). D4 was filled with occupational debris and natural silting. Within the hut circle and partly overlying D5, there was an area of floors made of large pebbles and limestone pieces; on the east side there were many 2-6in diameter stake holes, some defining a circle 5ft diameter. Two substantial post holes in the central region, P1 3ft diameter, 3ft deep; P2, 1ft 6in diameter, 2ft 3in deep, could well have supported a roof.

The pottery from this site² is hand-made in a shelly fabric of the Iron Age B tradition. The following vessels were recovered from the features:

- D1 Sherds 19 (3 similar), 25, 42, and a sherd like 24.
- D2 18, 24 (2), 34, 36, and sherds like 28 and 30.
- D3 Produced only body sherds.
- D4 15, 27, and sherds like 28, 30, 32 and 44.
- D5 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 26, 31 (2), 37, 43, and sherds like 14, 28, 29, 30, 34 and 39.
- P1 14.
- P2 A sherd like 29.

Two vessels not represented in the previous selection are illustrated in fig 1 of this report, they came from D5. 838 sherds were recovered.

Small quantities of burnt clay, probably from hut walling, were found in the hut-circle ditch D4. Since the appearance of the previous paper, similar B pottery has been published from Harrold,³ and in Northamptonshire, Hardingstone,⁴ Rainsborough camp,⁵ and Upton.⁶ The Upton and Rainsborough

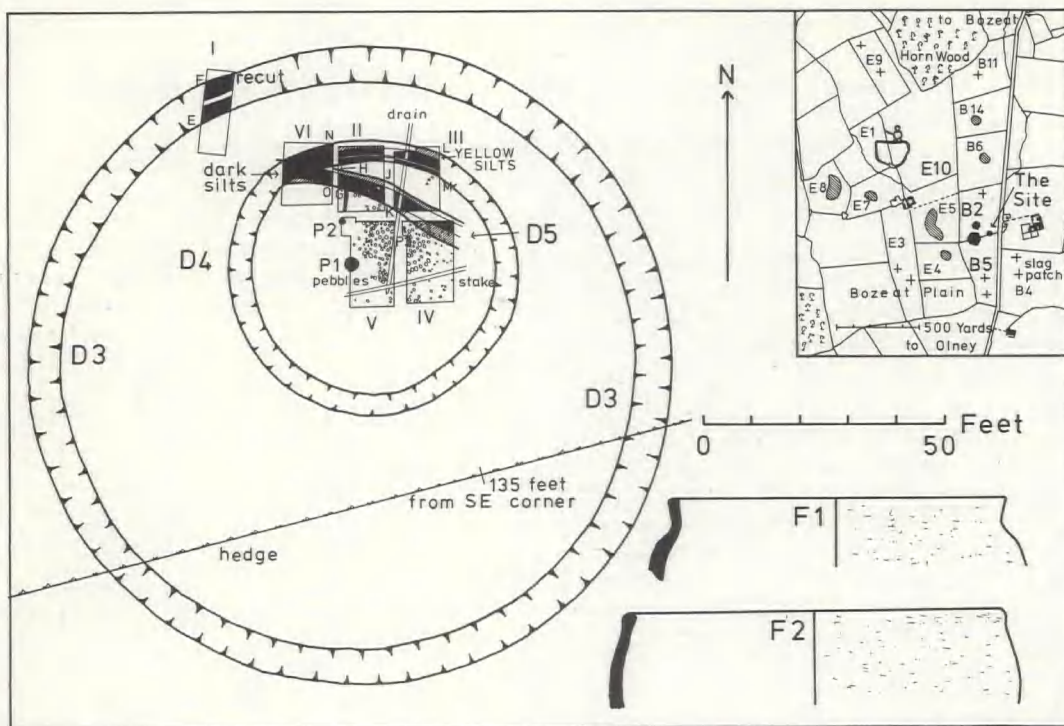


Fig 1 Plan of Iron Age enclosure at Bozeat, Northants. (F1 F2, $\frac{1}{4}$)

material is dated at about second century BC. Since in D5, the earliest ditch, there is a sherd of Belgic pottery, the Bozeat site must be contemporary with the Belgic period farther south, about the first half of the first century BC. A later date would not be consistent with the three well-developed phases of Belgic occupation which must be accommodated between Iron B and the Roman conquest at nearby Irchester.⁷

Strixton I

During 1963, cuttings I–IV established the nature of the main enclosure (ditches D1, D2, fig 2) and in 1967 cuttings VI–VIII were made between the medieval furrows where there would be least plough-damage.

All features were filled with dark occupation refuse unless noted otherwise.

The earliest occupation is represented by ditch D3, 2ft 9in wide, 1ft deep, and probably pit P1, 4-6 in to 1ft 4in deep, and the gully D7, 2ft wide and 4-6in deep. Ditch D3 was cut by the enclosure ditch D1, as shown by the abrupt ending of pottery deposits on entering D1, and in D1 a gap in a layer

of yellow silting weathered from the subsoil on either side of D3. D7 and P1 cannot be contemporary with the enclosure because they would be buried by its rampart; they are most likely earlier.

The main enclosure had two phases; the first represented by the cross-ditch D2 which has a V-shaped section 10ft wide and 5ft deep (fig 3, TU). The absence of primary silt and the irregular stratification of the subsoil fillings showed it had been filled shortly after being dug, presumably to enlarge the enclosure to its present size. The first enclosure was 90ft square and the later 90ft by 140ft. The ditch D1, of the later stage was 10-12ft wide and 6ft deep (fig 3, RS) with an entrance to the east 7ft 6in wide; two post holes suggest there may have been a gate. The ditch was filled with natural silting and occupation debris, and had clearly been open for some time. No trace of any rampart survived. Lying on the sides of the southern entrance arm were many flat pieces of lime stone, some with small holes pierced through them.

The interior of the enclosure contained a gully of the hut-circle type (D5) in the form of a semi-circle 60ft diameter, which had been re-cut. The earlier phase had a ditch 1ft 6in wide and 1ft deep,

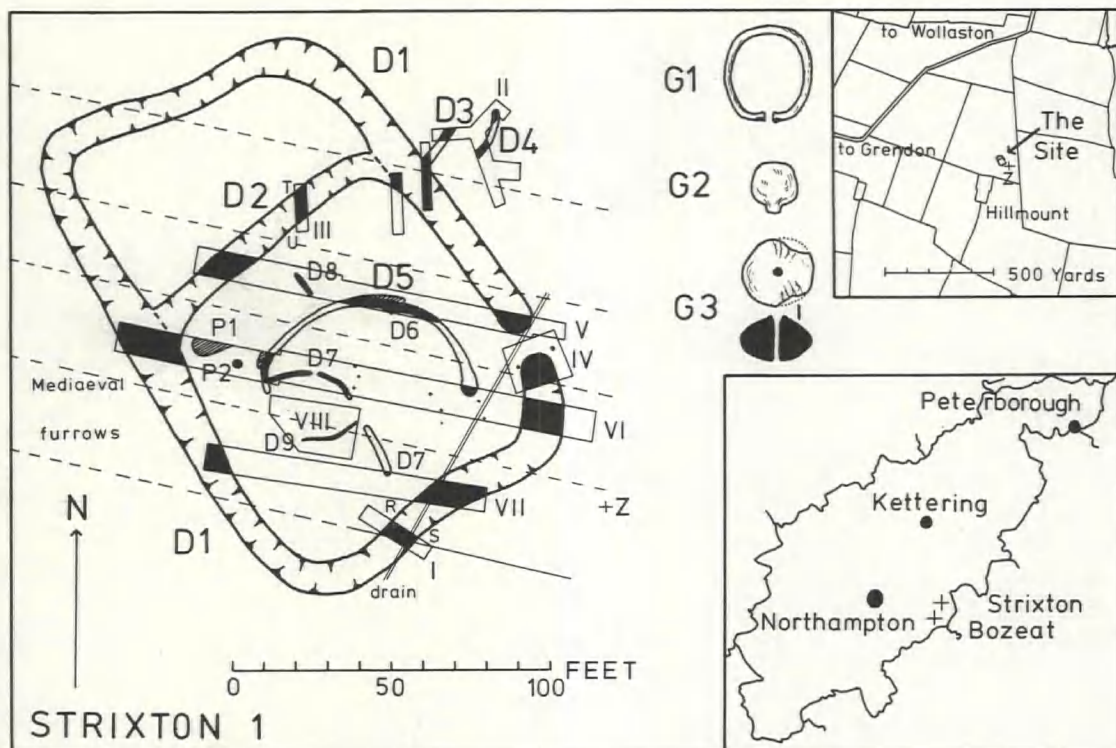


Fig 2 Plan of Iron Age enclosure at Strixton, Northants. (G1 $\frac{2}{3}$; G2 $\frac{1}{3}$)

filled with dark silts, and the later was 2ft wide, 2ft deep with a 9in flat bottom, filled with yellowish silts. Apart from a few post holes and shallow features, P2, D8, and D9, all 6in deep, no other structures survived; indeed it is impossible to relate the hut-circle gully to the main enclosure stratigraphically, but it is likely to be contemporary because of its central siting in the earlier enclosure. The pottery from this site²:

- D1 15 (2 sherds) 46, 47, (2), 49, 50, (6), 53, 57, 58, 60, 61 (2), 62, 64 (2), 65, 67 (2), 69, 71, 74 (3), 75, 76, 77 (7), 81, 82; and sherds like 14, 17, 18, 35, 38, 39, 54, 66, 68, 72, 73, and 79 (2).
- D2 Two sherds like 79.
- D3 51, 68, 80 and sherds like 50, 74, and 77.
- D4 70 and sherds like 44, 79, and 80.
- D5 48, 55, 56, 72, 73, and sherds like 14, 17, 39, 40, and 77.
- D6 D7 and D8 produced only body sherds.
- D9 59 and sherds like 21 and 75.

The pottery is very similar to that from Bozeat; a Belgic sherd was found in the upper fillings of ditch D1, so again the site must have been flourish-

ing during the earliest part of the first century BC. Since the upper stages of D1 are the latest phase of occupation here, the material from D3 may be rather earlier than that from Bozeat. 1348 sherds were recovered.

The small finds (fig 2).

G1 A penannular bronze ring from D5.

G2 A burnt clay sphere with a hole pierced from the bottom.

G3 Pottery loom-weight, worn by use to an irregular shape, from D1. Another similar fragment was found.

Daub with twig impressions was found in most of the features, particularly in D5, strongly suggesting the presence of a hut nearby.

Easton Maudit 10.

The plan of the field known as *Banky*, drawn-up from field-work, is given in fig 4. The general context of the site is given in the inset of fig 1. There are three connected enclosures with various other linear ditches probably belonging to field systems. The largest enclosure is in the form of an irregular 'D' covering 5½ acres. The eastern part of the site

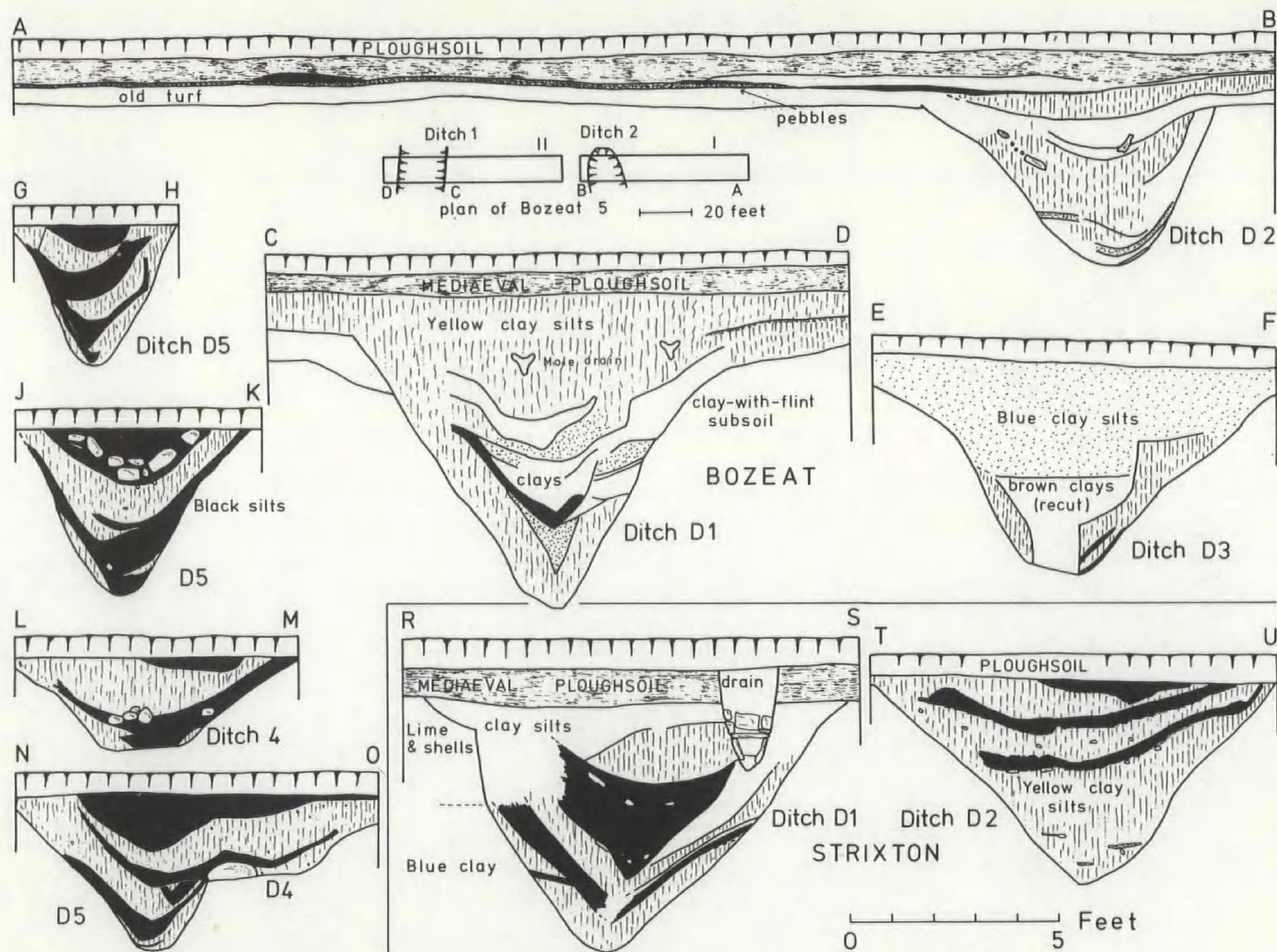


Fig 3 Sections of Iron Age ditches at Bozeat and Strixton, Northants.

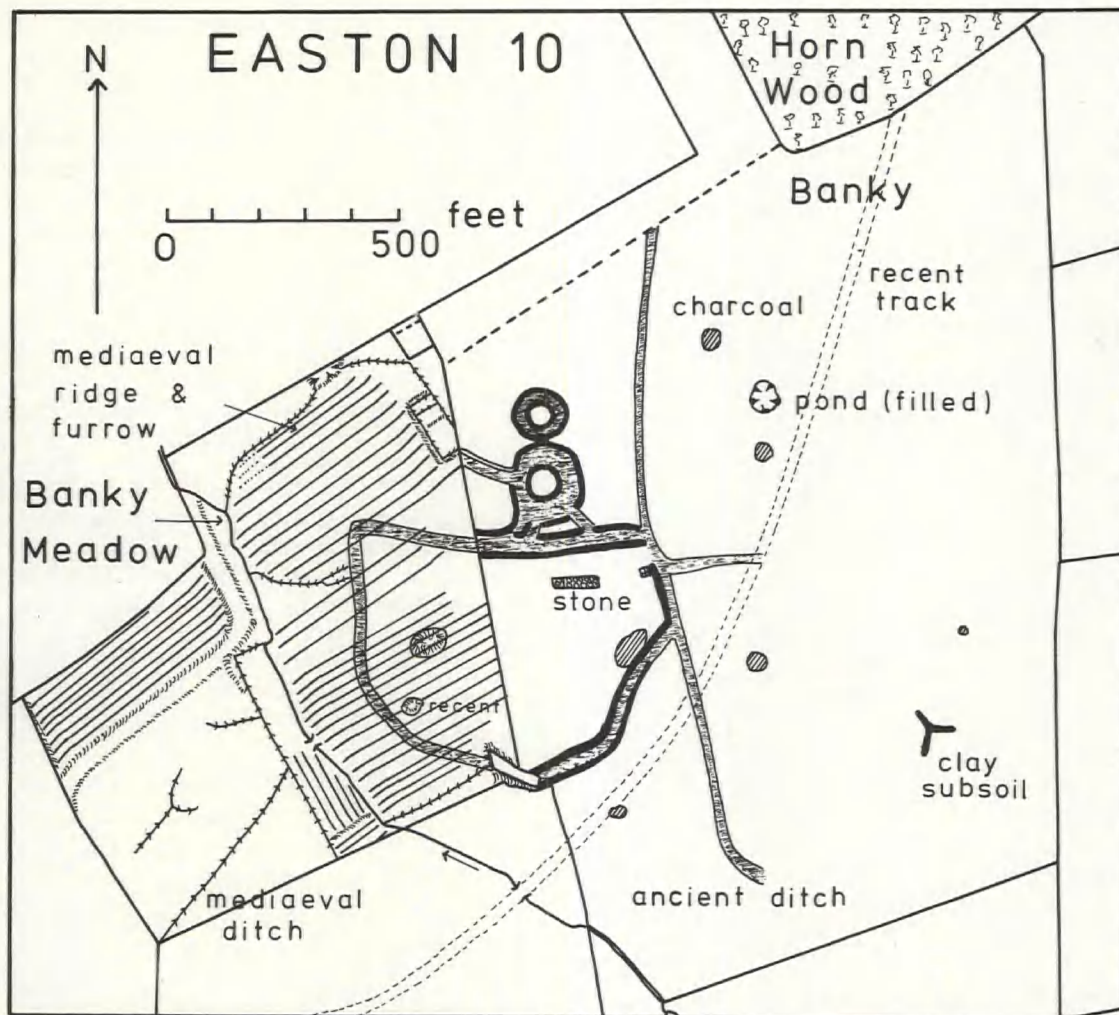


Fig 4 Plan of Iron Age site at Easton Maudit, Northants.

is ploughed and has been bulldozed showing up the ditch sides as yellow-clay subsoil, contrasting with the dark fillings. In the largest enclosure there are the footings of two stone buildings, one about 25ft square at the eastern entrance, and the other in the middle 100ft by 10ft with a cross-wall 20ft from the west end. At the west side of this same enclosure is a stone-covered mound, probably a barrow. Nearly all the pottery ploughed out of the Iron B type, although a few Romano-British sherds and roofing-tile are associated with the stone features. It may be that the buildings are Roman, a similar case of Roman buildings in an Iron Age enclosure

was found at Rainsborough.⁵ The west side of the site was grass until 1968; the ditch had been filled in anciently and mediaeval strips ploughed over. Nevertheless, the ditch was plainly visible as a hollow with greener grass growing in the bottom.

To the south east of the field is a ploughed-out subsoil feature in the form of a Y with arms 50ft long.

The size of these enclosures, which even now survive partly as visible earthworks, suggests that they are the most important part of this complex of sites on the Bozeat Plain.

DISCUSSION

These sites with superimposed ditches representing successive phases of occupation have general parallels at Hardingstone⁴ and Knuston, Northants.⁸ The latter is particularly complex with several hundreds of ditches covering 15 acres. No doubt Strixton and Bozeat are more complex as a whole; a recent photograph suggests a network of enclosures at Strixton.⁹ At Harrold³ there were many ditches, but this site was so poorly recorded that comparisons are difficult to make.

The excavations showed that faint marks on aerial photographs can be misleading; the discovery of ditches D3 and D4 at Strixton was made when searching for an apparently circular ditch with a central pit.

The best local parallel for the Bozeat site is at Draughton¹⁰ although the hut-ditches are on a smaller scale. The near-circle defined by the enclosure ditch is unusual.

The problem of the precise interpretation of hut-circle ditches remains. The nature of the fillings shows they are not palisade-trenches; the sometimes used term drip-circle implies a building nearly as big as the ditch area, yet circles of post holes, representing hut walls just inside the ditches are rarely found (eg at Longbridge Deverill Cow Down, Wilts).

The earth dug from the ditches could be used to make a mud (cob) wall to support roof-timbers. The average cross-section of the hut-circle ditch at Bozeat is 10 square feet which would make a wall 3ft wide and rather more than 3ft high; this would be quite adequate to take timbers sloping up to a massive central post. The gully was full of occupation debris which suggests that it was important as a source of soil rather than a ditch or water-reserve, otherwise it would have been kept clean.

The half-circle at Strixton is more difficult to interpret in terms of structure. If a circular hut did stand there, material for a wall where there is no ditch could have come from the adjacent rampart of the main enclosure. However, at Rainsborough⁵

and elsewhere, semi-circular ditches are found away from the enclosure ramparts.

The suggestion of cob-walled huts gains some support from the nearby site Wollaston 18¹¹ where the subsoil is solid limestone and no suitable material for a mud wall could be dug out; here timbers would have to be used and there are circles of post-holes some 50ft diameter.

The plans of these sites are not diagnostic of late Iron age B, similar sites occur throughout the period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to E. Corby, J.B. Hutchings, N. Nickerson, and R.W. Thomas, my co-excavators; Compton Estates and Mr E.W.B. Skinner, farmer, for permission to excavate at Bozeat; Mr A. Cooper, Surveyor of Lands, Duchy of Lancaster, and Messrs. W.W.S. Gibbard and P.J. Hutchinson, farmers, for permission to excavate at Strixton; Mr W.W.S. Gibbard and Mr E.W.B. Skinner for help with infilling the excavations.

NOTES

- 1 For the method of coding archaeological sites see D N Hall and N Nickerson, *Beds Arch J*, 3, (1966) 1 - 6 and Hall and Hutchings, *Beds Arch J* forthcoming.
- 2 D N Hall and N Nickerson, *Beds Arch J*, 4, (1969), 1 - 12. Pottery numbers refer to this paper.
- 3 B N Eagles and V I Evison, *Beds Arch J*, 5, (1970), 17 - 55.
- 4 P J Woods, *Excavations at Hardingstone, Northants, 1967 - 8* (Northants C C, 1969).
- 5 M Avery, J E G Sutton and J W Banks, 'Rainsborough, Northants, England : Excavations 1961 - 5.' *P P S*, 33, 1967, 207-306.
- 6 D A Jackson, D W Harding, and J N L Myres, *Ant J*, 49, (1969), 202 - 221;
- 7 D N Hall and N Nickerson, *Arch J*, 124, (1965) 65 - 99.
- 8 P J Woods, recent work forthcoming.
- 9 R Hollowell, *Bull Northants Fed Arch Soc*, 5, (1971)
- 10 W F Grimes in S S Frere, *Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain* (1958).
- 11 D N Hall and N Nickerson, *Beds Arch J*, 5, (1970) 113.

Anglo-Saxon Burials from the vicinity of Biscot Mill, Luton

RICHARD HAGEN

SUMMARY

A record of the eleven burials found near Biscot Mill, Luton, (TL 079231) at various dates between 1923 and 1970. Grave goods were few and consisted of weapons and a pot of seventh century date.

INTRODUCTION

The site lies to the west of the valley of the River Lea, about one and a half miles from the centre of Luton. Many Saxon burials have been found on the north-western fringe of the town, usually revealed by housing development. These burials seem to have occurred as scattered individual interments; however, in the Biscot Mill locality two distinct groups may be discerned. The first is the early sixth century cemetery discovered in 1925 in the road now known as Argyll Avenue.¹ The second is a group of interments found in the vicinity of the windmill itself, the burials from which have turned up on several occasions over the last fifty years. Reports of the finding of individual graves are listed below. Most of the information comes from newspaper reports made at the time of each find, and these vary a great deal in the amount of useful information which they contain.

THE GRAVES

Graves 1 - 4

These were found in 1923 during the construction of Montrose Avenue, along the line of the ancient trackway called Peddar's Way. Four skeletons were discovered,² two with heads to the west lying on their right sides,³ the lower limbs in a semi-crouched position. The skeletons lay in graves cut 'partly' in earth and partly in chalk⁴ and were situated 'on the Biscot side of the mill and some few yards south.' William Austin⁵ comments on the abnormally large stature of one of the individuals.

With one of the skeletons lying head to west was an iron spearhead and a knife. The spearhead and knife do not appear to have survived, and no measurements are recorded, but a photograph of the spearhead appeared in the *Luton News* in mid-February 1923. The picture is taken from an oblique angle, looking down on the point from above. An outline of the spearhead as it appears in the photograph (fig 2) shows it to be of the large, flat type with relatively small socket and leaf-shaped blade similar to specimens found locally at Marine Drive, Dunstable grave B11⁶ and at Pitstone, Bucks.⁷

Graves 5 - 8

These were found during the building of St Margaret's Church in 1937 (see map fig 1). Two iron knives were found in these graves. The fragmentary skeletal material which survives appears to be from three adults and one child.⁸ The knives (fig 3.2) measure 108mm and 105mm in their present state. Both have been stripped of their rust and are now clean iron.

Grave 9

This was found in 1950 during construction of an electricity sub-station for the Eastern Electricity Board in Montrose Avenue. The skeleton, an adult male, was accompanied by a spearhead.⁹ The iron spearhead (fig 3.1) is 260mm long.

Grave 10

This was discovered in 1959 during the construction of the Biscot Mill public house on the site of the old Biscot windmill. The skeleton appears to be that of an adult male.¹⁰ No grave goods were found.

Grave 11

This burial was found in June 1970 during alterations to the sub-station where burial 9 was found.

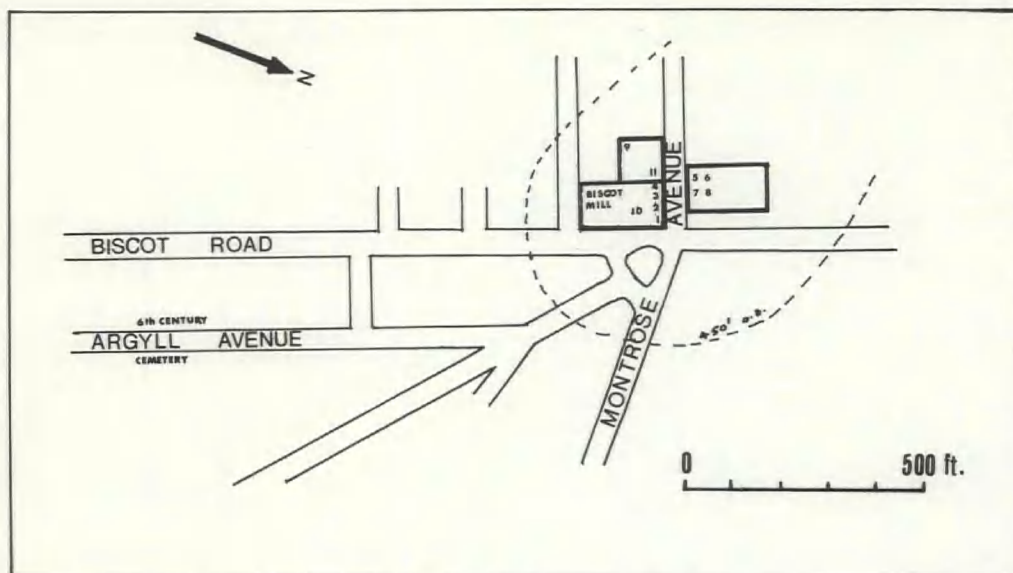


Fig 1 Location of Anglo-Saxon burials at Biscot Mill, Luton.

The skeleton was that of a powerfully built adult male. The body lay on its back, head to the west, along the north side of the grave, which was three feet wide. The grave was dug into natural chalk and survived to a depth of two feet below the surface of the modern concrete floor of the sub-station. The skeleton measured 22 inches across the shoulders. The bones were in a poor state of preservation and were extremely fragile. The pelvis and lower limbs had been destroyed without record during the construction of the sub-station in 1950, so no other measurements were possible.

On the right hand side of the skeleton, at about chest height, a small hand-made pot was found (fig 3.3). The vessel is almost complete, and was lying on its side in the bottom of the grave. The pot is badly cracken and mis-shapen and it is difficult to see how it could have been deformed to this extent after burial without disintegrating. It seems probable that the vessel had cracked due to shrinkage during firing, so that it was useless as a container. A similar vessel was found in grave 27 at Shudy Camps, Cambs., and dated to the seventh century.¹¹

An iron arrowhead was found on the right hand side of the skull (fig 3.4). It is similar to a specimen found in grave G2 at Marina Drive, Dunstable¹² and measures 75mm in length. From the position of the arrowhead, the shaft would have laid diagonally across the body at the time of burial.

The fill of the grave was red clay, apparently

brought from 200 yards down the slope where it occurs as a natural covering to the chalk.

Our thanks are due to Mr G. Mead, Contractor, of Markyate who found and reported the grave, and to Mr Brinklow, Chief Assistant District Engineer of the Eastern Electricity Board for allowing the excavation and recording of this grave. The finds are now in Luton Museum.¹³

DISCUSSION

In 1925 the Argyll Avenue Saxon cemetery was discovered 500 yards south east of the Biscot Mill. The Biscot Mill burials have usually been regarded as part of the Argyll Avenue cemetery,¹⁴ which dates from the early sixth century.¹⁵ The graves at Biscot Mill lie 500 yards north west of the Argyll Avenue group, on the same chalk ridge. The graves differ from those at Argyll Avenue in that, out of eleven graves, only three appear to have had items accompanying the body, and these very poor, whilst some of the graves at Argyll Avenue were extremely rich, and at least half had grave goods of some kind. The Argyll Avenue cemetery had a high proportion of the graves of women and children, whereas the Biscot Mill group consists, as far as is known, of male skeletons, with the exception of one juvenile burial from St Margaret's Church.

When the Argyll Avenue cemetery was discovered in 1925, Mr T.W. Bagshawe watched the builder's excavations between Argyll Avenue and the Biscot

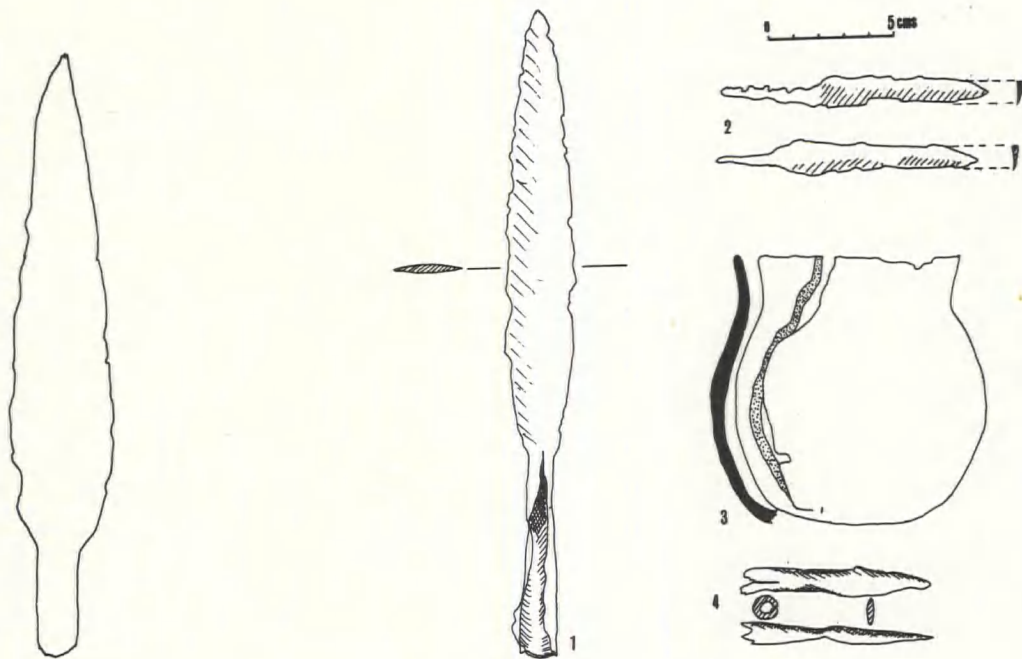


Fig 2 (above left) Spear-head, not to scale.

Fig 3 (right) Anglo-Saxon objects found 1932-1970 1 spearhead grave 9; 2, knives graves 5-8; 3, pot, grave 11; 4, arrowhead, grave 11.

Mill but was unable to find any trace of graves between the two groups.¹⁶

Upon the discovery of the first burials in 1923, Mr W. Austin received a letter from Captain Wight Boycott, who said that when he was stationed at Biscot Training Camp in 1915 he had found several ancient burials 'on the south side of Biscot Windmill'.¹⁷ No grave goods are mentioned from these graves, and it is possible that they are of the same date as the others from the mill area.

A newspaper report of the finding of burials at Biscot Mill in 1923 has a photograph of the spearhead from graves 1-4. This is stated to be a sixth century type, but allowing for the angle at which the picture was taken, the spearhead is apparently similar to two others found locally, both in seventh century contexts. One is from the Saxon cemetery found at Marina Drive, Dunstable, in 1957, and the second was found with a group of Saxon burials near Pitstone, Bucks. The pot from Grave 11 is similar to a specimen found at Shudy

Camps, Cambs., also in a seventh century context. It appears, therefore, that the graves around the Biscot Mill are probably of a rather late date than those in the Argyll Avenue cemetery. It is possible that the area held some attraction as the highest point for some distance around. Perhaps the Neolithic long barrow¹⁸ thought to have crowned this knoll was used as a focal point for the Saxon graves. Much later, in Medieval times, a windmill was built on the same spot, destroying the barrow but leaving the peripheral burials largely unharmed.

NOTES

- 1 W Austin and T W Bagshawe. 'A Saxon Cemetery at Luton, Beds', *Ant J* 8, 1928, 177-92.
- 2 *Luton Saturday Telegraph*, February 1923 (Luton News Library).
- 3 *Luton News* undated report (1923) in Luton Museum files.
- 4 *Luton Saturday Telegraph*, February 1923.

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 5 | William Austin, <i>History of Luton</i> , 1928. | | |
| 6 | C L Matthews, 'A Saxon Cemetery at Marina Drive, Dunstable', <i>Beds Arch J</i> 1, 1962, 29 and fig 2.3 | 12 | Matthews, 1962. 33 and fig 5.5 |
| 7 | Luton Museum. Unpublished, except for note in <i>Manshead Magazine</i> , 7, 1961. | 13 | Luton Museum, A 3-5/1970. |
| 8 | Luton Museum, 60-62/37. | 14 | J F Dyer, F Stygall, and J G Dony, <i>The Story of Luton</i> , 1964. |
| 9 | Luton Museum, 106/50. | 15 | Austin and Bagshawe, 1928. |
| 10 | Luton Museum, 11/59. | 16 | Austin and Bagshawe, 1928, 179. |
| 11 | T C Lethbridge. <i>A cemetery at Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire</i> , [<i>Camb Ant Soc Quarto Publicat-</i> | 17 | <i>Luton News</i> , February 1923. |
| | | 18 | J F Dyer 'Barrows of the Chilterns.' <i>Arch J</i> 116, 14. |

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to County Borough of Luton for a grant towards the cost of this paper.



Plate 1 Burial 6 at Blackhorse Road, with spear in chest cavity.

**BLACKHORSE ROAD
ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY**



Plate 2 Burial 7 at Blackhorse Road.

**BLACKHORSE ROAD
ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY**



a



b

Plate 3a Ravensden Church. Trench I, north wall of the first church. Looking south. The black line in the floor section (arrowed) is the first building destruction level.

3b Ravensden Church. Trench VI, west end looking west. Burnt destruction level of the first building. The stones on the mid left are the corner stones of the door.

RAVENS DEN CHURCH



a



b

Plate 4a Ravensden Church. The south side of the font base. The north west corner stone is visible at the top right.

4b Ravensden Church. Trenches IV – V. The stones at the east of the nave monument. Note the burnt level on the right. Looking west.

RAVENS DEN CHURCH

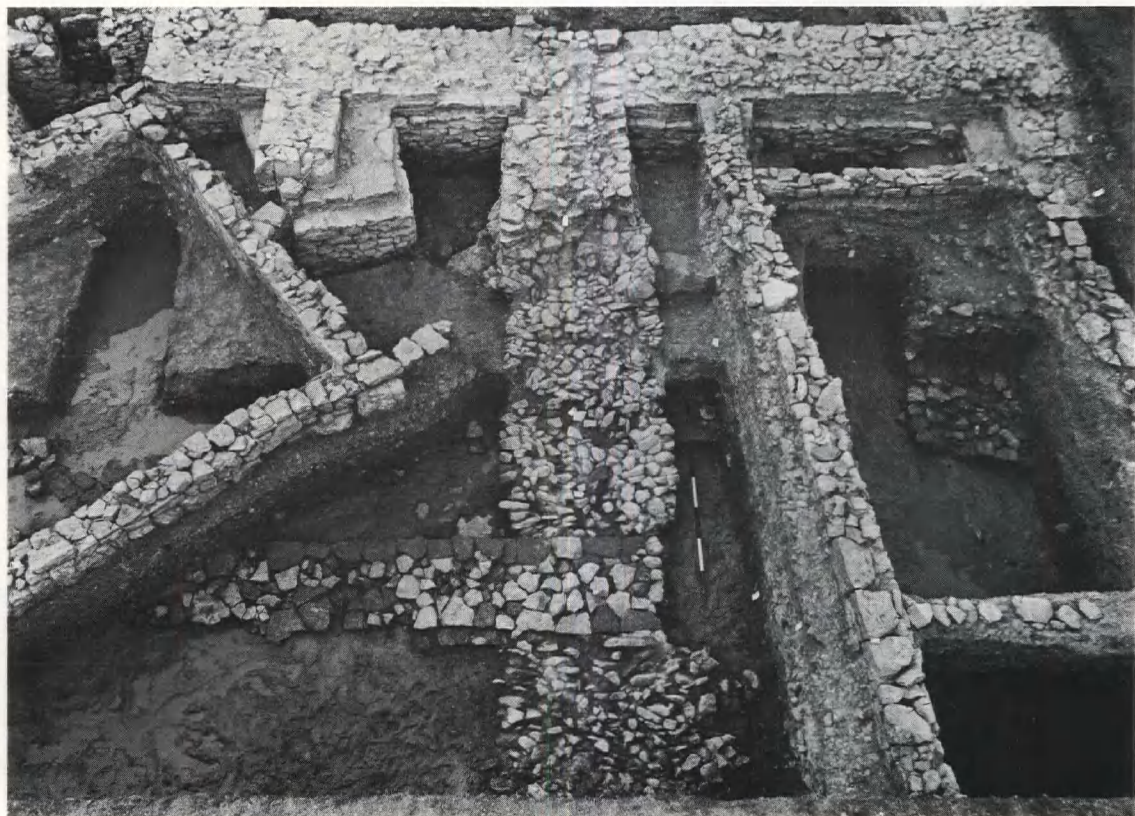


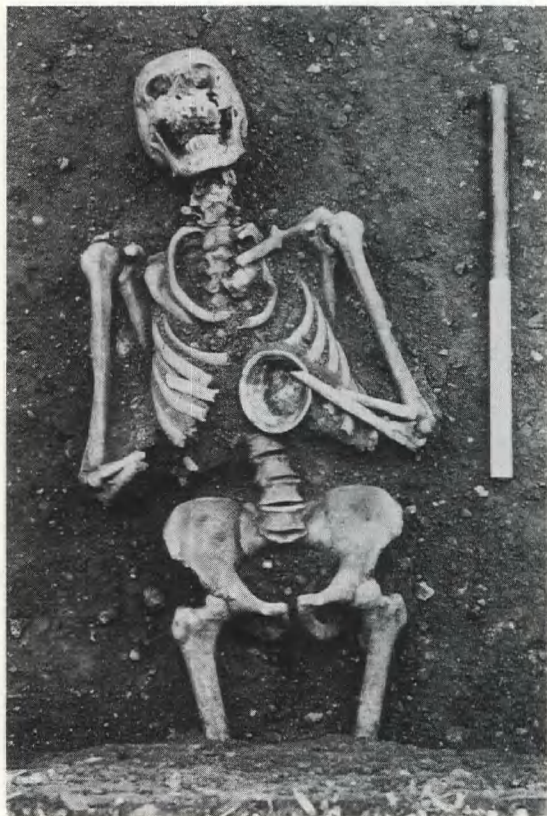
Plate 5 Robbed Norman *Rere-Dorter* under south end of fourteenth century *Dorter* and related out-buildings.



a



b



c

Plate 6a Thirteenth/fourteenth century Chapter House extension.

6b View facing north-west of east side of fourteenth century *Dorter* range with nave of Abbey church in background.

6c Monastic burials: priest with dummy lead chalice.

ELSTOW ABBEY



a



b



c

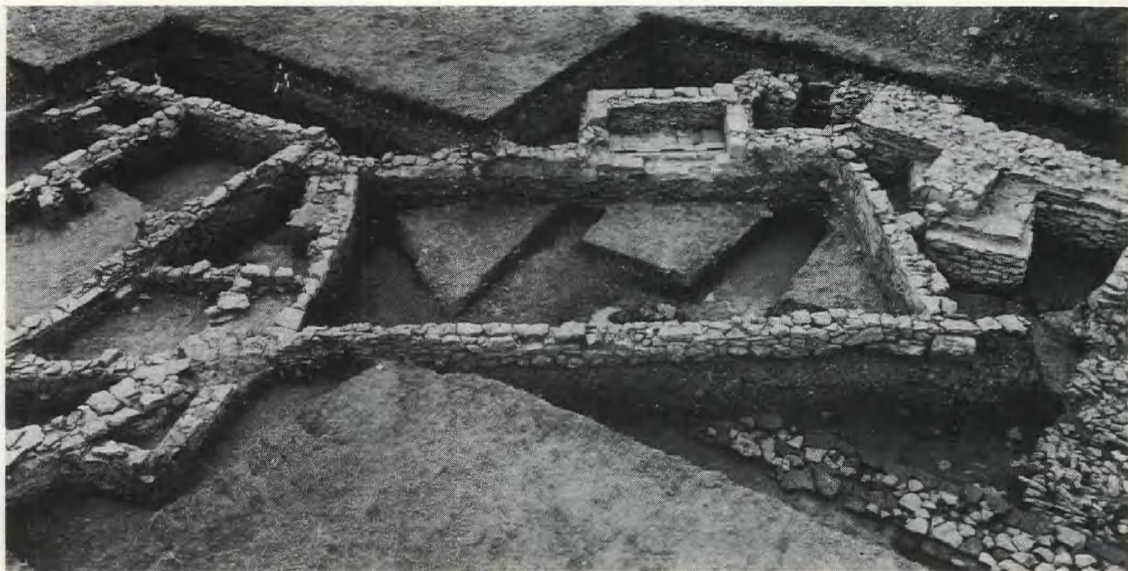
Plate 7a View facing north of excavations on outbuildings in 1970: M1, M2, M8, M9 at left, M4 at right.

7b South wall of M2, showing lean and bulge of footing.

7c Stream: bridge abutments.

ELSTOW ABBEY

a



b

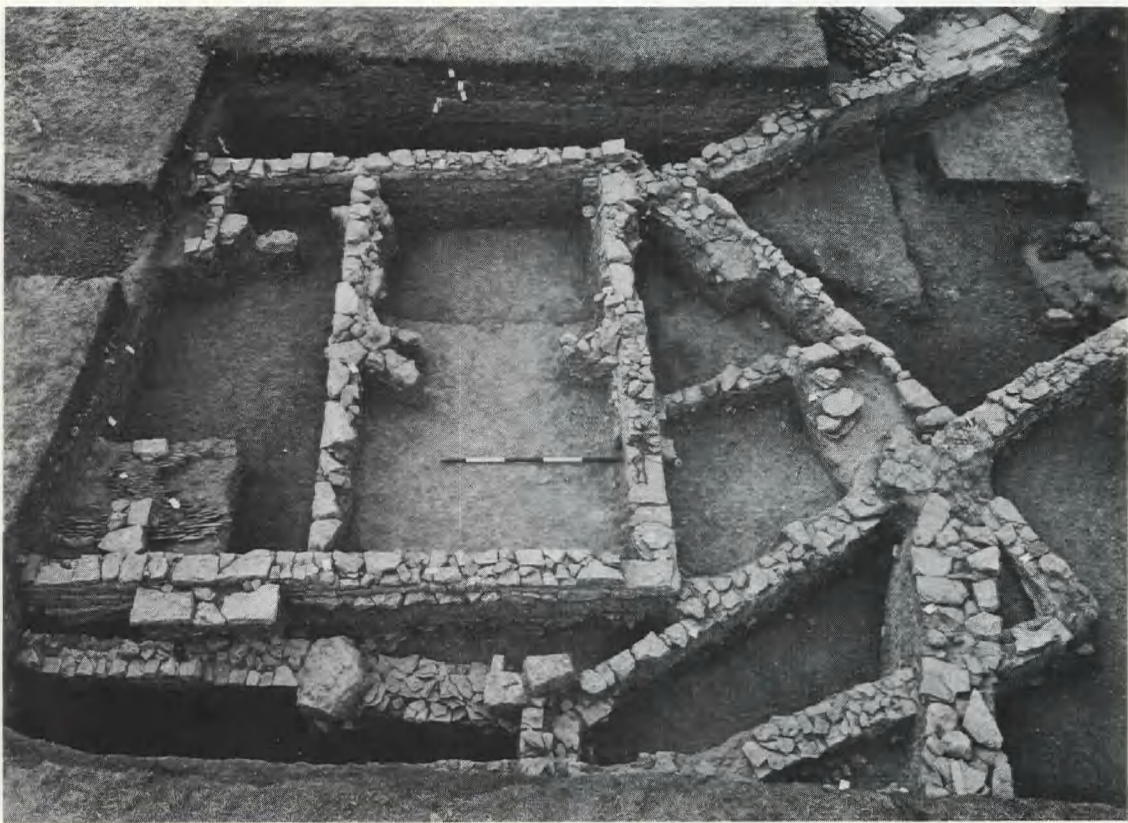


Plate 8a M5 facing north-west showing central portion with hearth and side units truncated by later buildings.

8b East side of M1, showing earlier hearth against south wall followed by central corridor and external step.

ELSTOW ABBEY

An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

JOHN MOSS—ECCARDT

SUMMARY

Industrial development and subsequent rescue excavation produced a small Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, between 1958 and 1966. The finds, though few may be suggested as seventh century, a date which their paucity would help to substantiate. A distinctive burial with a spearhead embedded in the chest is discussed in detail, including a pathological report on the probable cause of death.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of industrial development and rescue excavations for Letchworth Museum and the then Ministry of Public Building and Works (now the Department of the Environment) at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, during the years 1958-1966, nine human skeletons of probable Saxon date were discovered. The varying circumstances of discovery have led to incomplete information being available for this report.

Blackhorse Road is situated about one mile east of the centre of Letchworth (TL 233336). The centre of the site is a slight rise at 285ft (87m) above Ordnance Datum, which slopes to the south, east and west, with the traditional line of the Icknield Way to the south, now obstructed by factory buildings (fig 1). The plough soil gives way to solid chalk almost at once, with a depth seldom more than 12 in (305mm). The area from which the skeletons came is occupied by extensive archaeological features of the Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman periods. Graves I, II, III and IV were on the hill-top, while V - IX were roughly aligned to the south in the vicinity of the Icknield Way, (fig 1).

THE BURIALS

S I Found by workmen during kerb-stone trench digging. The skeleton was extended on its back in a grave cut into the chalk lying ENE by WSW, with the head to the west and arms lying naturally by its sides. Grave 4ft 9in (1.477m) long, 2ft 6in (762

mm) wide, 2ft (610mm) deep, with rounded ends and the bones of the feet against the eastern end. Comparison of the grave's dimensions and the estimated stature of the individual, 5ft 7in (1.7mm), explains why the bones appear to be crammed into the hole. Fragments of an iron pin lay near the left ribs and animal bones high up in the grave fill.

S II 9in (228mm) distant from *S I*, destroyed by mechanical equipment. Skeleton at 16in (407mm) down, minus skull, lay extended on its back with the right hand resting on the right side of the pelvis, orientated WSW by ENE, head presumably at west. Small knife (fig 2.2) lay touching left pelvis and a fragment of eroded samian ware lay beneath the bones of the right foot.

S III Skeleton extended on its back, orientated WSW by ENE, head at western end and feet close to solid chalk wall. Grave round-ended, 6ft 10in (2.083m) long, 2ft 10in (863mm) wide, 1ft 7in (582mm) deep. No associated finds.

S IV Infant burial in drainage trench. Skeleton extended on back, left hand on left pelvis, right hand by right side, orientated WSW by ENE, head at western end. Grave 3ft (0.914m) long, 1ft 6in (457mm) wide, 2ft 8in (813mm) deep. Small iron knife (fig 2.3) on left pelvis with point touching upper part of femur.

S V Grave in builder's trench. Skeleton, extended on its back, with left arm at side and right arm bent with hand against pelvis; cranium and mandible were resting on vertebral column; right side of rib cage was higher up the grave than the left. Grave orientated WSW by ENE, 6ft (1.829m) long, 2ft (609mm) wide, 1ft 6in (457mm) deep. Fragment of Iron Age pottery on bottom of grave.

S VI Grave found at northern margin of Neolithic pit. Skeleton, extended, lying on its back, arms bent at elbows and hand resting on pelvis. Orientated

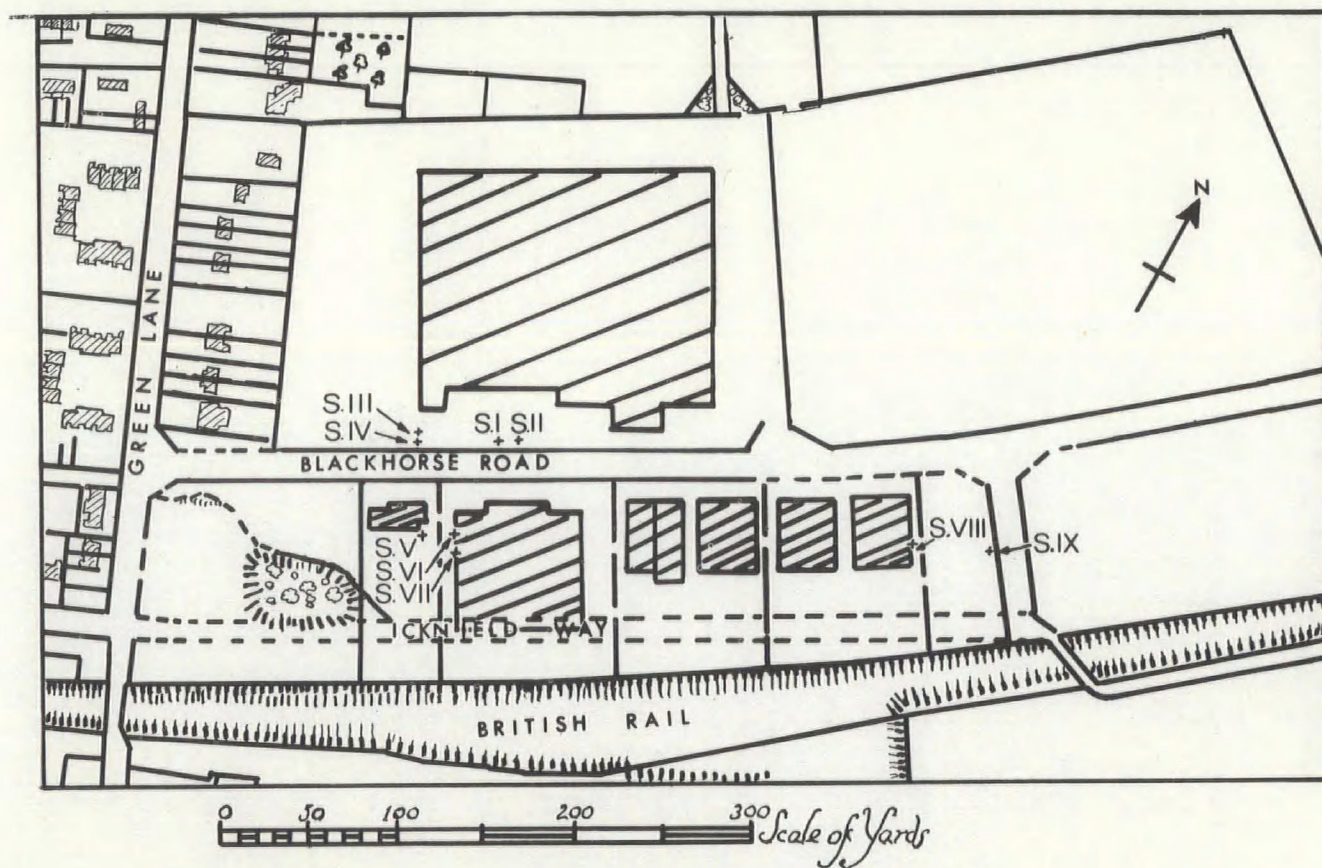


Fig 1 Blackhorse Road, Letchworth : site and location of burials.

WSW by ENE, head at western end, turned to the right; skull against rounded end of grave, foot bones well clear of eastern end of grave. Grave 7ft 3in (2.209m) long, 2ft (609mm) wide, 1ft 9in (533mm) deep. An iron spearhead (fig 2.1) lay just inside the chest cavity with its point downwards; this weapon appears to have been the cause of death (pl 1).

S VII Grave dug into Iron Age storage pit. Skeleton, extended, lying on its back, arms well clear of the sides, orientated WSW by ENE, head at western end. Grave 6ft 6in (1.981m) long, 2ft 6in (762mm) wide, 2ft (609mm) deep. Iron knife in crook of left arm. (pl 2)

S VIII Skeleton in builder's trench, no sign of grave. Skeleton, extended but with bones twisted so that right hand and wrist lay under the pelvis, left arm and leg missing. Orientated N by S, head to north facing east. No associated finds.

S IX Skeleton in shallow grave just outside Romano-British enclosure ditch. Bones in some disorder; knees bent, ankles crossed, arms cross with left hand on pelvis and right hand on left shoulder. Orientation N by S, with head to north facing east. No associated finds.

S X Part of cranium, given to Letchworth Museum, alleged to be from Blackhorse Road site, but it has not been possible to question the finder.

SKELETAL REMAINS

by D.R. Brothwell and C.B. Denston, respectively British Museum (National History) and Duckworth Laboratory, University of Cambridge.

S I Bones present: cranium without mandible, right half of pelvis, two femora, left tibia, left fibula. Condition of skull good, although there is some surface erosion.

Sex: male.

Age at death: middle age.

Stature: 5ft 7in (1.727m).

Dentition:

X X / / / / / X X

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

/ - tooth loss, socket present.

X - tooth loss ante-mortem.

Caries: none.

Abcesses: none.

Periodontal disease: none.

S II Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 413. Bones present: two femora, one tibia, one humerus, one radius, one clavicle, one scapula, two iliae of innominate bones, two phalanges, sixteen vertebrae. Sex: indeterminate.

Age at death: 12 years.

S III Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 414. Bones present: cranium, two femora, two fibula, two tibiae, two petallae, one innominate bone, three vertebrae, some foot bones.

Sex: male.

Age at death: approximately 50 years.

Stature: 5ft 7.5in (1.074m).

Dentition:

loss post-mortem: four incisors, second left premolar.

Loss ante-mortem: four molars.

Caries: none.

Periodontal disease: slight resorption of the alveolar border of the maxilla. Tooth rotation from the normal had taken place in six teeth.

Torus palatinus: slight degree.

General Pathology:

Disease: possible arthritis shown by lipping at rim of the bodies of twelfth thoracic, first and second lumbar vertebrae.

Other changes: three vascular grooves on the left tibia were noted.

S IV Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 415. Bones present: fragmentary cranium, portions of a femur, one humerus, one innominate bone, two clavicles.

Sex: indeterminate.

Age at death: 5 - 6 years.

Dentition: all deciduous teeth present at death.

Loss post-mortem: seven.

Caries: none.

S V Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 416. Bones present: a fragmentary cranium, a well-preserved mandible, remains of two femora, two tibiae, two humeri, two fibulae, two radii, two ulnae, two clavicles, two innominate bones, fragments of post cranial remains.

Sex: female.

Age at death: approximately 45 - 40 years.

Stature: 5ft 3in (1.613m) (?)

Dentition: loss ante-mortem of upper left third molar; loss post-mortem of upper left incisor.

Caries: a cavity on the mesial aspect of the neck of the crown of third molar of the mandible.

Periodontal disease: signs along alveolar borders of the maxilla and mandible, most evident in region of the lower molars. Tar-tar present on some teeth. Tooth rotation from normal and overbite when occluded.

General Pathology:

Disease: possible arthritis. Medium degrees of osteophylitic growth around the body of the sacrum, at the inferior border of the fifth lumbar vertebra, the fifth and sixth cervical vertebrae, and, to a lesser degree, one thoracic, possibly the third. Rest of the vertebrae were eroded post-mortem.

S VI Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 406
Bones present: near complete skeleton, cranium fragmentary and distorted due to post-mortem earth pressure.

Sex: male.

Age at death: approximately 20 - 25 years.
Stature: 6ft 2-75in (1-885m).

Dentition: loss post-mortem of lower left third molar.

Attrition: very slight of the occlusal surfaces, first molars most worn.

Caries: possible cavity on the occlusal surface of lower right third molar.

Periodontal disease: slight degree along alveolar borders of the maxilla and mandible, especially in the lower molars. Overbite when occluded.

General Pathology:

Parietal notch bone: left. .

Osteoporosis: superior surface of left orbit, degree of pitting only slight.

Dr J.R.B. Williams, Consultant Pathologist, the Lister Hospital, Hitchin, provides the following observations on the probable cause of death:

It looks as if the point of the instrument lies in the right axilla, or just inside the chest cavity. Providing that this is so, the stab wound should have entered the pleura, possibly penetrated the lung, and in all probability divided the subclavian artery or vein. The posterior surface of this instrument would probably have involved the brachial plexus. Death would result from this injury and be due to haemorrhage from the divided vessels, or from collapse of the lung following entry of air. After experimenting a little it seems likely that this was a left-handed down stroke into the right side of the neck, possibly originally intended to enter the spine and, in fact, being misplaced slightly to the right. If the spear handle was short it would be easy to do this from a standing position but otherwise the subject would have to be leaning forward or lying prone.

S VII Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 407
Bones present: near-complete skeleton.

Sex: male.

Age at death: approximately 30 - 35 years. Some conflict between the degree of sutural closure of the ecto-cranium suggests an age of 45 - 50 years, as does pubic symphysis, and the degree of attrition of the occlusal surfaces of the teeth which suggest 25 - 35 years. Some slight lipping on the borders of the bodies of the vertebrae and sacrum are in favour of the minimum age of 35 years.

Stature: approximately 5ft 5-25in (1-758m).

Dentition: loss ante-mortem: two upper second molars.

Caries: cavities in the distal aspect of the crown of the upper second left molar, and in the mesial aspect of the crown of the upper third right molar.

Abcesses: in the maxilla where missing molars had been. Loss of bone caused perforations on buccal and lingual surfaces.

Periodontal disease: slight to medium degree of resorption of the alveolar borders, especially in the region of the upper molars.

Calculus: slight to medium degrees.

Overjet bite when occluded.

Parietal notch bones: unilateral, left side.

Torus palatinus: slight.

Tori mandibulares: bilateral, slight.

Disease: arthritis possibly indicated by very slight lipping along borders of the bodies of the sixth thoracic down to the fifth lumbar vertebrae, and the body of the sacrum.

S VIII Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 425.
Bones present: a fragmentary cranium, a well-preserved mandible, fragmentary post-cranial remains.
Sex: male.

Age at death: 20 - 30 years.

Stature: approximately 5ft 7-5in (1-740m).

Dentition: loss post-mortem of upper first left molar.

Caries: none.

Abcesses: none.

Periodontal disease: none.

Calculus: slight.

General Pathology: marked degrees of platymeria and platycnemia featured on femur and tibia.

S IX Duckworth Laboratory no. Eu. 1. 2. 428.
Fragmentary remains: cranium and mandible.

Sex: female.

Age at death: 40 - 45 years.

Stature: 5ft 8in (1-726m).

Dentition: loss ante-mortem: four molars.

Caries: neck caries in five maxillary molars. Periodontal disease: medium degree, resorption of alveolar borders.

S X Letchworth Museum.

Bones present: facial area of cranium and part of a mandible.

Sex: male.

Age at death: 25 - 35 years, mid-range possible age. Dentition: loss ante-mortem: upper right second and third molars.

Abscesses: sockets of second and third right molars, Socket of third left molar. Overbite when occluded.

The bones were mainly in a good state of preservation, although some of them had been eroded due to the nature of the soil in which they were buried. One cranium was grossly distorted through post-mortem earth pressure. The remains represented three males, one female and two immature individuals.

The statures of the adults were reconstructed by use of the tables based on the multiple regression formulae for whites of Trotter and Glesser (1952). These are :-

males : 5ft 7.5 in. (1.740m)

5ft 9.25in. (1.758m)

6ft 2.25in. (1.885m)

females : 5ft 3.5 in. (1.613m)

A recalculation of the means of 1066 long bones of male Anglo-Saxons measured by Munter (1936) made by J.C. Trevor, using the Trotter and Glesser formulae, gives a mean figure of 5ft 8.25in (1.732 m). It can be seen from this that two of these individuals were 1in and 6in taller and on 0.75 in shorter.

The measurements of the limb and skull bones were taken according to the techniques of Buxton and Morant (1933), Morant (1936) and Mukherjee, Rao and Trevor (1955 & 1948-50). The indices of the maximum glabello-occipital length and maximum biparietal breadth of the two male crania which could be measured were 78.4 and 75.5, the latter being about average and the former above average for Anglo-Saxon populations. All the femora of the adults exhibited excessive antero-posterior flattening in the region of the shaft just below the greater trochanter, a condition known as platymeria.

From what could be recorded it would seem that the dental health of these individuals was fairly good. Caries occurred in one tooth in each of two dentitions, in two teeth of a third and one in two others; in only one case was the carious cavity

large. Abscesses were noted in one upper dentition only and was a rather bad case, while varying degrees of periodontal disease were evident along alveolar borders of the dentition of four of the adults.

Lipping of the borders of the vertebral bodies of three individuals occurred, two to a slight degree, and one to a medium extent; the possible cause was osteo-arthritis.

The standard biometric measurements and fuller technical information is available for study in the archives of the Duckworth Laboratory of Physical Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

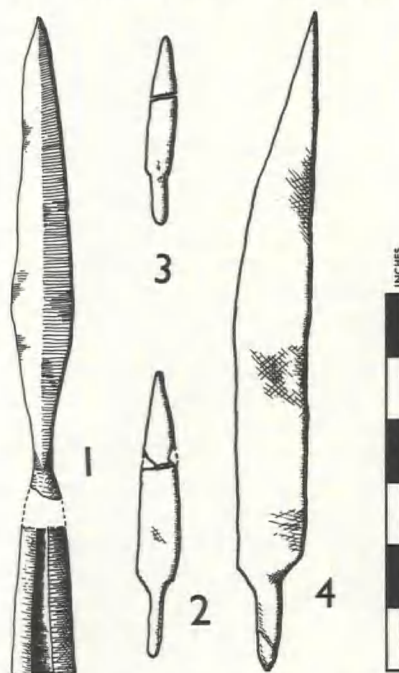


Fig 2 Blackhorse Road, Letchworth: Anglo-Saxon iron objects.

METALWORK

1. (fig 2.1) Iron spearhead, found lodged in the chest of S VI; split socket type, with wood in the socket (not identifiable). Length 10.5in (267mm), maximum width 1in (25mm). This spearhead may be assigned to the type illustrated by Wheeler (1935, pl 12. 6, 7, 8) as being of the middle and late Saxon periods.

2. (fig 2.2) Iron knife, found on the pelvis of S II. Length 4.5in (114mm), width 0.4in (10mm).

3. (fig 2.3) Iron knife, found on pelvis of S IV. Length 3in (76mm) width 0.9in (22mm). Such

knives are common in burials of the Anglo-Saxon and many examples occur on the Icknield Way, as for example at Luton (Austin, 1928, pl 35, 1-13), Puddlehill with the remains of an iron ring, probably the means of its suspension from the belt (Matthews, 1962b, 48), and Marina Drive (Matthews, 1962a).

4. (fig 2.4) Iron knife or scramasax, found with S VII. Length 10.5in (267mm), width 1.1in (28mm). This larger knife, or scramasax, appears to fall within the group Wheeler (1935, fig. 48) calls type II. Such knives, possibly Scandinavian in origin, are common on the Icknield Way; they have been found in the cemeteries near Dunstable, and may be dated to the sixth and seventh centuries.

DISCUSSION

The site plan (fig 1) shows that burials I-VII form a group, separated by a considerable distance from burials VIII and IX. The former are all orientated WSW by ENE, with heads to the west, while the latter are laid N by S. The main group are skeletons fairly carefully disposed in chalk-cut graves. The objects of iron found with them are of frequently found types in Anglo-Saxon graves, and may be dated to the sixth and seventh centuries. Skeletons VIII and IX, on the other hand, are without dateable objects at all, and have been disposed of in a somewhat casual fashion near a fourth century ditch. The position of the bones strongly suggests that the hands and feet were tied before the bodies were placed in shallow graves.

The individuals of the main group — two middle-aged males, a middle-aged female, two mature males and two children, — do not suggest the cemetery of a large settlement, nor occupation of any length of time. Skeleton VI is of interest because of its stature and mode of burial: a substantial grave in which the body was laid with some care, suggesting that the burial is not of an outsider but one of a member of the group, slain near the site. Had this

not been so, the spear would probably have fallen from the body and not remained in situ.

The circumstances relating to this cemetery must remain unknown through lack of evidence. It is simply another Icknield Way discovery in an area where Saxon Burials are to be expected. The major excavation programme for the Department of the Environment, currently being undertaken, under the direction of Dr I.M. Stead, at near-by Baldock could well bring to light further information concerning this period and so help to place the Anglo-Saxon burials at Blackhorse Road in a wider context.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Austin W., 1928, 'A Saxon Cemetery at Luton, Beds'. *Ant J* 8, 1928, 177-192.
- Buxton L.H. and Morant G.M., 1933, *J Anthropol Inst* 63, 1933, 19-47.
- Matthews C.L., 1962a, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Marina Drive, Dunstable' *Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 25-47.
- Matthews C.L., 1962b, 'Saxon Remains on Puddlehill, Dunstable'. *Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 48-57.
- Morant G.M., 1936 *Biometrika* 28, 1936, 84-122.
- Mukherjee R. *et al*, 1955, *The Ancient Inhabitants of Jebel Moya*.
- Munter A.H., 1936, *Biometrika* 28, 1936, 258-194.
- Trotter M. and Gleser G.C., *Amer T Phys Anthropol* 10, 1952, 463-541.
- Wheeler R.E.M., 1935, *London and the Saxons*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to D.R. Brothwell and C.B. Denston for their help over the skeletal remains and their report on the skeletons. Dr J.R.B. Williams, was kind enough to provide a pathological report on S VI, and I am grateful for his help. The material finds from the site are in Letchworth Museum, together with the site records.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to the Department of the Environment for a grant towards the costs of this paper.

Anglo-Saxon work at Carlton and other Bedfordshire churches

MICHAEL HARE

SUMMARY

A discussion of the Anglo-Saxon work in the nave and chancel of St Mary the Virgin, Carlton, and subsequent Anglo-Saxon work in the tower of the same church, forms the main part of this paper which also reviews Anglo-Saxon work in a number of other Bedfordshire churches: Kempston, Riseley, Harrold, Shelton and Biddenham; and rejects claims made for Anglo-Saxon work in others: Thurleigh, Great Barford and Caddington.

INTRODUCTION

In a recent article¹ T.P. Smith gave descriptions of those Bedfordshire churches in which Anglo-Saxon work has been recorded. The present article proposes to add the churches of Carlton and Kempston to his list and to discuss briefly the claims to an Anglo-Saxon date of a number of other Bedfordshire churches.

At both Carlton and Kempston, as at most of the churches described by Smith,² the early work is distinguished by the almost total absence of dressed stones from quoins and facings, which are formed of the same rubble fabric as the walling. As Dr and Mrs Taylor have noted,³ this characteristic occurs very frequently in Anglo-Saxon churches and may often provide a fairly reliable indication of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. Similar rubble quoins and facings are also found in a number of other Bedfordshire churches, and brief accounts of these churches are given below. Not all of them are necessarily of Anglo-Saxon origin; their date is considered further at the end of this article.

CARLTON

The church of *St Mary the Virgin, Carlton* (SP 952549) contains in its fabric clear evidence of a two-cell late-Saxon church and a late-Saxon or

Saxo-Norman west tower (fig 1). A south aisle was added to the original church about 1275, and a north aisle about 1310. A south chapel, later demolished, was built about 1330 when the chancel was extended eastwards.⁴

Of the original two-cell church the most complete remains are visible in the chancel. Its walls, which are 2ft 8in thick, are constructed of roughly coursed rubble. The quoins of the original chancel may be seen clearly as straight vertical joints, marking its junction with the later extension; these quoins are of the same rubble fabric as the walling, with specially selected large stones. In the lower part of the north wall there is a considerable amount of herring-bone masonry. In the upper part of the wall in the exterior face there survives a blocked round-headed window 2ft 1in wide and 3ft 10in in height at the wall-face (fig 2a). The jambs and head of this window are of rubble and the head shows the common Anglo-Saxon characteristic of non-radial setting of its stones. The *Victoria County History* described this window as probably double-splayed; this is a distinctive Anglo-Saxon form, and occurs in several of the Anglo-Saxon churches in the Bedford region. However, it cannot be asserted with complete certainty that the window is double-splayed unless it is unblocked or the plaster removed from the interior face of the wall. The possibility of a single internal splay cannot be discounted entirely, but the width of the window, taken in conjunction with its rubble construction, makes this very unlikely. But whether the window is single- or double-splayed, its rubble jambs and head give a strong indication of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. If there was originally a similar window in the south wall of the chancel it was destroyed when an arch was cut through this wall to the south chapel in the fourteenth century. The original chancel-arch was replaced by the present arch in the same century.

Little evidence of the original nave can now be found at Carlton, but the partial survival of the south-east and north-west quoins shows that it was

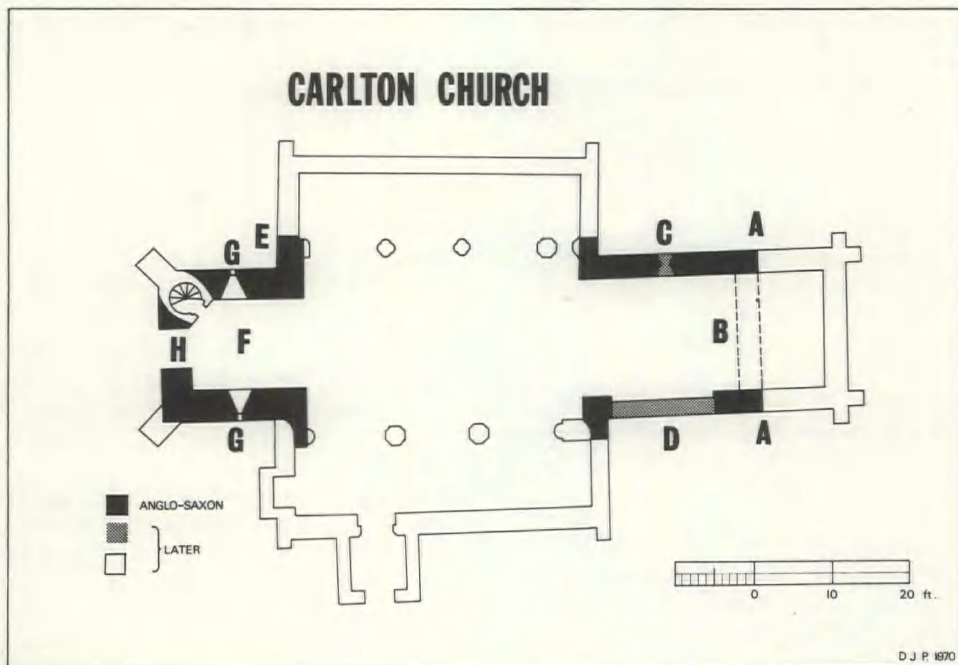


Fig 1 Ground plan of Carlton church, showing the surviving Anglo-Saxon fabric. Later wind have been omitted. A, original east quoin of chancel; B, line of former east wall of chancel, destroyed fourteenth century south chapel; E, north-west quoin of original nave, not aligned with the present nave wall; F, west tower; G, original ground floor windows of tower; H, west doorway, possibly original.

aisleless. These quoins appear to have been of similar character to the east quoins of the original chancel. Examination of the north-west quoin shows that the clerestory wall of the present nave is not aligned with the original nave, and it therefore seems likely that the nave walls were rebuilt completely when aisles were added. Both nave and chancel show the irregular setting-out⁵ so common in Anglo-Saxon churches. Before the north wall of the nave was rebuilt on a slightly different line the nave was some 20in wider at the west than at the east, and the axis of the chancel diverges slightly to the north from that of the nave.

The positive indications of Anglo-Saxon workmanship in the nave and chancel may be summed up as follows: the use of rubble for all quoins and facings; the thin walls⁶ of the chancel; the non-radial setting of stones in the arched head of a blocked window; the almost certainly double-splayed character of this window; and the irregular setting-out of the ground plan. These features, taken in conjunction, constitute a clear case for an Anglo-Saxon date. Double-splayed windows are

usually considered as an indication of late-Saxon workmanship,⁷ and it therefore seems likely that the early work in the chancel was built at some date between 950 and 1100. Harvey in his brief account⁸ of Carlton church described the early work as Saxon or early Norman, but the *Victoria County History*, in 1912, ascribed the church to a late eleventh or early twelfth century date. The reluctance of the *Victoria County History* to assign an earlier date is perhaps best explained by the presence in the chancel of herring-bone masonry, which was in 1912 widely believed to be an indication of Norman workmanship. This belief has now been shown to be mistaken,⁹ and herring-bone masonry is in fact fairly frequent in Anglo-Saxon work; local examples occur at St Peter's, Bedford and Lavendon.

The original west tower survives only in part, for the belfry stage was rebuilt in the fifteenth century; diagonal buttresses were added at the same time and a spiral staircase inserted in the north-west angle. The original tower-arch has been replaced by a fourteenth century arch. The fabric

of the earlier part of the tower is different in character from the walling of the chancel; in both parts limestone rubble is used, but in the tower it consists of thin, flat stones, without any use of herringbone work, and is uncoursed. Until the fifteenth century remodelling the tower was unbuttressed. The original quoins survive only at the east above the roof of the nave, where they can be seen to have been of the same rubble as the walling, with a few larger stones. The ground and first floors of the original work survive, rising without any string-course or off-set. The tower was no doubt originally similar to the tall, gaunt western towers at Clapham and Lavendon. The walls are 3ft 7in thick, unusual for an Anglo-Saxon tower, but by no means unprecedented; the walls of the tower at Clapham are 4ft thick. There are no original openings in the first floor, but the north and south walls of the ground floor each have a very narrow round-headed window with a single internal splay (fig 2b). The splays are shallow and stop about two inches short of the wall-face, at which point the glass is set. Inside the tower the walls are plastered so that the construction of the head and jambs of the windows is not visible, but externally the jambs are of the same rubble as the walling and the heads are formed from a single stone. On the north side this is little more than a rough lintel; on the south side it is carefully shaped below, but left irregular above. This type of splay occurs in both the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman periods, but the primitive construction of these windows provides a further indication of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. In the west wall of the ground floor there is a square-headed doorway which the *Victoria County History* described as of "uncertain date". A noticeable break in the masonry between the jambs and the adjacent walling round much of this doorway indicates it is probably a later insertion, perhaps of post-medieval date. However, its jambs are partly of rubble and it is cut straight through the wall without a rebate, in the manner of many Anglo-Saxon doorways. It may therefore represent the partial survival of an original doorway. There is a thin modern lintel, immediately above which is a two-light thirteenth century window.

The tower was not built at the same time as the early work in the chancel. This is established both by the difference in character between the masonry of the chancel and of the tower, and by the different types of window used. Unfortunately it is not possible to determine the exact relationship between the two building periods, for insufficient

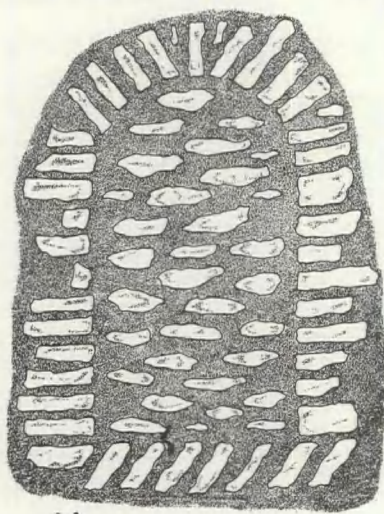
evidence has survived of the original nave; all that is visible at the west is a small section of much patched masonry between the north-west quoin and the tower. However, in the normal sequence of development a west tower would be built last, and this suggests that the chancel is the earliest part of the surviving fabric. But the possibility that the present chancel replaced an earlier chancel after the tower was built cannot be eliminated. With the disappearance of the original belfry-openings and tower-arch, any clear evidence of the date of the tower has vanished, but it is unlikely to be later than 1100, for by this date Norman techniques had fairly generally superseded those of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Dimensions: The chancel is 15ft 2in (4.62m) wide internally. The external length to the original quoins is 19ft (5.79m); as the walls are 2ft 8in (0.81m) thick, the internal length of the original chancel must have been about 16ft 4in (4.98m), giving a chancel nearly square in plan. The walls stand to a height of 16ft 7in (5.05m). The blocked window in the north wall of the chancel is 2ft 1in (0.63m) wide and 3ft 10in (1.17m) high. The sill is 8ft 6in (2.59m) above the ground. The internal measurements of the nave are 34ft 11in (10.64m) long and 21ft 2in (6.45m) wide at the east; originally it was about 20in (0.51m) wider at the west. The west tower measures 11ft 6in (3.50m) from north to south and 12ft 4in (3.76m) from east to west internally, with walls 3ft 7in (1.09m) thick. The original work survives to a height of 33ft (10.06m). The windows in the ground floor are 2ft 6in (0.76m) high by 6in (0.15m) wide externally, splayed to 4ft 1in (1.24m) by 3ft 11in (1.19m). The west doorway is 3ft 10in (1.17m) wide and 6ft 6in (1.98m) tall in its present form.

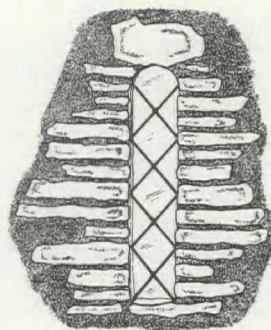
KEMPSTON

In the chancel walls at *All Saints, Kempston*, (TL 015480), there are to be seen two blocked windows similar to that noted in the north wall of the chancel at Carlton. These windows afford very strong evidence in favour of an Anglo-Saxon date for Kempston church, although there is little additional corroborative evidence. Nevertheless it may be fairly asserted that there were two periods of early building at Kempston, for the work in the undoubtedly Norman west tower is different in character from that in the chancel walls, both in the form of the windows and in the nature of the

CARLTON CHURCH : WINDOWS



(A) BLOCKED WINDOW IN
NORTH WALL OF CHANCEL



(B) WINDOW IN NORTH
WALL OF TOWER

SCALE : 1 inch = 2 ft.

D. J. P. 1970

Fig/2 Charlton church : windows.

rubble walling.

In its present form the church consists of a west tower; an aisled nave with a south porch; and an aisleless chancel with a vestry and mausoleum to the north.¹⁰ The chancel walls, which are 2ft 10in thick, consist of uncoursed rubble. On both the north and south sides there are traces of blocked round-headed windows set high in the walls. These traces are clearest on the south side, where the blocked window is above and to the east of a two-light fifteenth century window. The blocked window, which is 2ft 5in wide at the wall-face, has jambs of the same rubble as the walling and the head is turned in flattish pieces of rubble laid with considerable disregard for radial setting. The window is not visible on the interior face of the wall, which is heavily plastered, nor could the window be unblocked owing to the position of one of the wall-posts of the nineteenth century roof. As at Carlton, this window can be assumed with reasonable con-

fidence to have been double-splayed; its width makes it very unlikely that there was a single internal splay. Directly opposite this window in the north wall of the chancel more fragmentary remains of a similar window are visible above the roof of the mausoleum built in 1823; the head, very irregularly laid in flattish pieces of rubble, and part of the eastern jamb, are all that remain of this window. There is nothing to determine the exact eastward extent of this early chancel, but the random rubble extends some 19ft from the east wall of the nave; at this point it is superseded by coursed rubble belonging to a later extension, probably of the thirteenth century.

The church was considerably enlarged in the late eleventh or early twelfth century; the west tower and the chancel-arch date from this period. The nave was probably rebuilt at the same time,¹¹ for the outline of its gable is visible on the east wall of the nave above the roof of the chancel, and

seems to be in the same coursed rubble as the west tower. The east wall of the nave is, nevertheless, in part contemporary with the walls of the chancel, and is of the same thickness. A small section of walling, in bond with the chancel walls, survives between the chancel and the original south-east quoin of the nave. Some of the stones which formed this quoin have been removed for the better bonding of the south aisle, which has been built against the quoin at this point; however, it is clear that this quoin was originally of rubble. This quoin serves to show that the early, and probably Anglo-Saxon church, at Kempston was of two-cell type.

Dimensions: The chancel is 17ft 1in (5.21m) wide internally; its original external length was at least 19ft (5.79m). Its walls are 2ft 10in (0.86m) thick and 21ft 6in (6.55m) high to the base of the later parapet. The blocked windows are 2ft 5in (0.74m) in width at the wall-face. Their original height is difficult to determine but must have been about 3ft (0.91m). The apex of the window on the south side is 17ft 8in (5.38m) above ground level.

RISELEY

The church of *All Saints, Riseley* (TL 039631) consists of a west tower; a nave with south aisle and south porch; and a chancel with south chapel. However, until the fifteenth century the present south aisle and south chapel formed the nave and chancel of the church.¹² The south wall of this original nave (the present outer wall of the south aisle) contains masonry of early, probably Anglo-Saxon character.

The wall, which is built of uncoursed limestone rubble, is tall and thin, and has been considerably patched in parts. There are thirteenth century buttresses at both south-east and south-west corners of this early wall, and no traces of the original quoining are now visible. At first sight there are no openings in this wall earlier than the south door and two three-light fifteenth century windows, one on either side of the porch. However, a close examination reveals a blocked window behind the east wall of the south porch. The western jamb and part of the head of this window are visible inside the porch. Outside, to the east of the porch, a small part of the head can also be seen, but the rendering which covers parts of the south wall of the nave hides any traces that may remain of the eastern jamb of the window. The aperture of the window

is concealed by the porch, and no traces of the window can be found on the plastered internal face of the wall. The jambs and round-arched head of the window are built of thin pieces of rubble, and the head appears to have been turned with reasonable regard to the principle of radial setting. The dimensions of the window cannot be accurately determined, and it remains uncertain whether the window was originally single- or double-splayed.

The description of the church in the *Victoria County History* attributes the south wall of the south aisle to the twelfth century. However, the tall and thin character of the wall makes this unlikely and suggests an earlier date. This inference is supported by the rubble construction of the newly discovered window, which is a strong indication of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. The fragmentary nature of the surviving remains precludes any accurate dating, but the prevalence of late-Saxon and Saxo-Norman churches in the area suggests a tenth or eleventh century date. The outer wall of the south aisle almost certainly represents the south wall of an aisleless Anglo-Saxon nave, probably with a short and narrow chancel to the east. No the plan in the *Victoria County History* shows the west wall of the south aisle as contemporary with the south wall. The west wall of the aisle is, however, 8in thicker than the south wall, and therefore unlikely to be of the same date. The most puzzling feature of the early church is the position of the surviving window, the head of which is only about 7ft above ground level. The tall, thin walls of early churches were usually lit by windows set high up, and the position of this window presents a problem for which there is no immediately obvious solution.¹³

In a footnote to his description of Riseley church in the *Buildings of England*, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner wrote,¹⁴ 'Rev F.J.C. Davis tells me that very recently, embedded in the east wall, part of a Saxo-Norman arch has been found'. This refers to a re-used stone found embedded in the thirteenth century east wall of the south chapel during repairs in 1966. The stone, which measures 7.5in by 3.5in by 3in, has raised ornament on its slightly curved surface. In the writer's opinion, the stone is too fragmentary to permit an accurate interpretation, and there are no good grounds for describing it as part of a Saxo-Norman arch.

Dimensions: The south wall of the south aisle is 2ft 3in (0.69m) thick and 21ft 6in (6.55m) high from the floor of the nave; however the wall was probably heightened a little in the fifteenth century.

If the present walls of the south aisle follow the lines of the original nave, this was about 48ft (14.63 m) long by 16ft 5in (5.00m) wide at the west, broadening to 17ft 4in (5.28m) at the east. The window behind the east wall of the south porch seems to have been about 1ft 8in (0.51m) high, with its apex about 7ft (2.13m) above ground level. Its width cannot be accurately measured, but would seem to have been between 1ft 4in (0.41m) and 1ft 9in (0.53m). Unfortunately this is insufficient to determine whether the window was single- or double-splayed.

OTHER CHURCHES OF EARLY DATE

Although no original features have survived, considerable evidence can be adduced to show that the nave walls of *St Peter's, Harrold* (SP 954567) belong to a building of Anglo-Saxon date. It has long been recognised¹⁵ that the north arcade of the nave was cut through the wall of an earlier aisleless nave; this is shown by the clumsy square piers and unequal spans of the arcade, and by the survival of the original eastern quoins of this nave. As the arcade belongs to the beginning of the thirteenth century, this earlier church must have been either Anglo-Saxon or Norman. The nave walls which formed this earlier church were tall and thin; as they stand today the nave walls are 2ft 5in (0.74 m) thick and some 25ft (7.62m) tall to the bottom of the later clerestory wall. Tall, thin walls are rare in Norman building, but are a common characteristic of Anglo-Saxon churches. Moreover, the south-east quoin of the nave provides some confirmation of these indications, for it is built of rubble. Clearly this is an argument which must be used with caution; however, these observations do give grounds for a tentative acceptance of the nave at Harrold as Anglo-Saxon. The nave is 46ft (14.02 m) long and 20ft (6.10m) wide internally.

Similar evidence for an early church survives at *St Mary the Virgin, Shelton* (TL 034688). The present nave arcades probably date from the late twelfth century,¹⁶ but the survival of a quoin at the south-east corner of the nave indicates an earlier aisleless nave. This quoin, which survives in its original form to a height of about 15ft (4.57m), is built of the same limestone rubble as the surrounding walling. The present nave walls are 2ft 6in (0.76m) thick, and define a nave measuring 36ft (10.97m) long and 16ft (4.88m) wide internally.

At *St James', Biddenham* (TL 014499) a rubble-built quoin occurs in conjunction with work of early Norman character.¹⁷ The south-east quoin of an early aisleless nave survives and seems to be contemporary with the Norman chancel-arch and the small single-splayed Norman window in the south wall of the nave. The nave walls are 2ft 7in (0.79m) thick, and the nave measures 36ft 8in (11.20m) long by 19ft 7in (5.97m) wide internally.

THURLEIGH, GREAT BARFORD AND CADDINGTON.

In his volume on Bedfordshire, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner advanced claims for a pre-Conquest origin for three churches previously regarded as Norman. These claims require careful examination. Of *St Peter's, Thurleigh* (TL 051584) Pevsner wrote:¹⁸ 'The crossing tower is Anglo-Danish, that is certain from the proportions of the doorway on its S side which must have led into it from outside or from a porticus'. This ignores the evidence of Thomas Fisher's engraving, dated 1813,¹⁹ in which architectural features now much weathered are still quite distinct. The engraving shows that the doorway was decorated with billet-ornament on the hood-mould and zig-zag on the impost, both of which are Norman features. Moreover the doorway is constructed in two orders, which was rare before the Norman Conquest. In fact the doorway is twelfth century in date, and must be regarded as a rare and late example of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of the tall and narrow opening occurring in Norman work. The tower itself is Norman in appearance with its short and squat proportions and its quoins of small dressed stones.

Of *All Saints, Great Barford* (TL 134517) Pevsner wrote:²⁰ 'The nave E quoins have long-and-short work, i.e. must be Anglo-Danish'. Careful examination shows that long-and-short work as such is not present. On the south side the whole of the south-east quoin of the formerly aisleless nave is visible. The lower ten feet contains three 'long' stones of oolitic limestone, but no binding 'short' stones.²¹ No trace of long-and-short work is visible at the north-east quoin, although its lower part is heavily plastered. The 'long' stones in the south-east quoin do give a strong presumption of Anglo-Saxon workmanship at Great Barford, but there is insufficient evidence to determine whether this is as original work or as re-used material. Unfortunately the chancel arch, described as 'early

Norman',²² was destroyed in 1849.

Pevsner also claimed that the western quoins of the formerly aisleless nave at *All Saints, Caddington* (TL 064198) "look Anglo-Saxon and may be of the eleventh century".²³ In fact these quoins are of the side-alternate type common throughout the medieval period and contain in themselves no clear indication of date. The stones forming the quoins are mostly 9 - 12in (228-305mm) in height.

CONCLUSION

In a considerable number of the churches discussed above, attention has been drawn to quoins and facings built in rubble. Quoins and facings of this type are frequently found in churches of the pre-Conquest period, especially in regions lacking good quality building-stone such as Kent and East Anglia. The present writer has noticed this feature in the following Bedfordshire churches: Bedford St Peter, Biddenham, Carlton, Clapham, Harrold, Kempston, Riseley, Shelton, Stevington and Turvey.²⁴

In six of these²⁵ this feature appears in churches showing Anglo-Saxon characteristics, while in one case (Biddenham) it is found in conjunction with Norman work. The remaining examples (Harrold, Riseley and Shelton) are of uncertain character, but all date from before 1200. Such rubble quoins and facings therefore seem to occur above all in the early churches of the county; from the Norman period onwards local masons appear to have been careful, as a general rule, to use dressed stone for quoins and facings. It should be stressed that this feature does not in itself indicate the presence of early work, for occasional examples of later churches with rubble quoins and facings can be instanced.²⁶ However, this concentration in the Ouse Valley of early churches does show that in this area the use of this technique is a strong indication, if not proof, of Anglo-Saxon or Saxo-Norman workmanship.

There can be little doubt that the use of this essentially Anglo-Saxon technique continued into the period after the Conquest. The church at Biddenham, with its rubble quoin and thin walls, shows how traditional methods continued in use alongside the new Norman techniques. In a later paper the writer hopes to be able to show that the tower at Clapham, which has rubble-built quoining and double-splayed windows, belongs in its entirety to the period of Saxo-Norman overlap. There is no evidence to determine how long such Anglo-Saxon

techniques continued in general use after the Conquest, but their absence from other Norman churches in the area such as Bedford St Mary, Milton Ernest, Thurleigh and Knotting would suggest that they had probably died out by the beginning of the twelfth century. One may surmise that Norman methods probably became normal in the area after the building of the important church at Elstow Abbey in the last quarter of the eleventh century.²⁷

It is more difficult to arrive at a *terminus post quem* for this group of early churches. A number of them (Bedford St Peter, Carlton, Clapham, Kempston, Stevington and Turvey) contain double-splayed windows, which are usually considered as a late-Saxon feature, dating from after 950.²⁸ The remaining churches probably also belong to the late-Saxon or Saxo-Norman overlap periods, but, strictly speaking, there is no architectural reason why they should not be earlier.

Smith noted²⁹ that the Anglo-Saxon churches of Bedfordshire were grouped 'close to each other and along the Ouse valley west of Bedford', and he concluded that this represented a former greater number of stone, as opposed to wooden, churches in this area. This pattern is now quite unmistakable, for Carlton, Kempston, Harrold and Biddenham are close to the River Ouse, while Riseley and Shelton are in the same part of the county, though not in the Ouse valley itself. However, Smith's suggestion that this distribution is explained by the transport of building limestone along the Ouse valley from the Northamptonshire Uplands must be considered as doubtful in view of the fact that the long-and-short quoins of St Peter's, Bedford are of Barnack-type limestone, quarried near Stamford.³⁰ Moreover, very little fine freestone was in fact used in most of these early churches, while ordinary limestone rubble for walling was easily available in north-east Bedfordshire itself, especially in the Ouse valley which cuts down into the underlying limestone beds.³¹ This ready availability of walling material is a much more likely explanation of this striking distribution of early churches.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the help received in many ways, and would particularly like to thank Dr H.M. Taylor, who was kind enough to read the typescript; Mr T.P. Smith, who made a number of valuable comments; and Mr D.J. Prosser, to whom the writer is much indebted for preparing the figures.

REFERENCES

- 1 T.P. Smith, 'The Anglo-Saxon Churches of Bedfordshire', *Beds Arch J* 3, 1966, 7 - 14. Smith is now preparing a monograph entitled 'Anglo-Saxon Architecture in Bedfordshire Churches' in which fuller treatment will be given to these churches.
- 2 Of the churches described by Smith, those at Bedford St Peter, Clapham, Stevington and Turvey display this characteristic. The Anglo-Saxon church at Lavendon, just across the Buckinghamshire border from Carlton, also has rubble quoins and facings, H M and J Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 1965, 376-7.
- 3 Taylor and Taylor, 1965, 7 - 8.
- 4 *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 52 - 4.
- 5 Irregular setting-out occurs in churches of all periods, but it is a particularly frequent trait of Anglo-Saxon churches; typical examples are at Chickney and Hadstock in Essex. A brief discussion of this irregularity in Anglo-Saxon and later churches is to appear in T P Smith, *The Anglo-Saxon Churches of Hertfordshire*.
- 6 Anglo-Saxon walls were commonly less than 3ft in thickness, whereas Norman walls tend to be thicker than 3ft. Many Norman churches can, however, be found with walls between 2ft 6in and 3ft in thickness.
- 7 Taylor and Taylor, 1965, 9 - 10.
- 8 W M Harvey, *History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Willey*, 1872-8, 256. Harvey records that the blocked window in the north wall of the chancel and the two small windows in the ground floor of the tower were discovered in 1871-2.
- 9 Taylor and Taylor, 1965, 12-13 and 211-4.
- 10 *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 303-4, including plan.
- 11 An alternative sequence of development is that after the chancel and east wall of the nave had been built in the Anglo-Saxon style, there was for some reason a delay in building operations; when resumed, the work was in the Norman style. The chancel-arch is puzzling and contains a number of Saxon-looking features: non-radial setting of the stones of its arch; the springing of the arch set back well behind the line of the jambs; and imposts of through stones. As it stands at present, the chancel-arch can be dated with some probability to the late eleventh or early twelfth century by the ornament on its imposts, particularly on the south side, where the mouldings are very similar to those in the nave at nearby Elstow Abbey. (For the date of the nave at Elstow Abbey see note 27).
- 12 The complex history of the church is clearly explained in *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 160-1, including plan.
- 13 It is just possible that the surviving traces originally formed the head of an exceedingly narrow doorway.
- 14 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England : Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough*, 1968, 137.
- 15 *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 67 - 8. There is a plan of Harold church in Harvey, 1872 - 78, 336.
- 16 There is some doubt as to the date of the south arcade. In *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 163-4, the arcade is described as fourteenth century, but the present writer agrees with Pevsner, 1968, 142 - 3, that it belongs to the late twelfth century, like the north arcade.
- 17 *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 38 - 9.
- 18 Pevsner, 1968, 154.
- 19 Thomas Fisher, *Collections, Historical Genealogical and Topographical for Bedfordshire*, 1836, 140. The same features appear in a drawing of the doorway dated 1843 in the Dryden Collection in the Northampton Public Library.
- 20 Pevsner, 1968, 94.
- 21 Similar irregular quoining with very large stones is found at the east end of the chancel of Everton church, *VCH Beds*, 2, 1908, 228 - 9. There can be no doubt about the mid twelfth century date of the present church at Everton; however, these quoin-stones may well be re-used material from the earlier church on the site mentioned in Domesday Book.
- 22 W. Airy in *Assoc Arch Soc Rep* 1, 1850, 147. It is clear from contemporary correspondence preserved by the Incorporated Church Building Society that a drawing of the chancel-arch was made before its destruction; however, the present whereabouts of this drawing is unknown.
- 23 Pevsner, 1968, 61.
- 24 The quoining at Poddington church deserves a brief mention. All four quoins of an originally aisleless nave survive, and must be earlier than 1200, when the present nave arcades were built, *VCH Beds*, 3, 1912, 86-7. The small stones used for the quoining are roughly dressed on the two exterior faces only, but not on their upper and lower surfaces.
- 25 Bedford St Peter, Carlton, Clapham, Kempston, Stevington and Turvey.
- 26 For example, the thirteenth-century tower at Lower Halstow in Kent has rubble quoining. Minor internal facings in the upper storeys of towers were also frequently built without dressed stone throughout the medieval period.
- 27 For Elstow Abbey see D B Baker, *Beds Arch J* 4, 1969, 31 - 2.
- 28 See note 7.
- 29 Smith, 1966, 8.
- 30 E M Jope, 'The Saxon Building-Stone Industry in Southern and Midland England', *Med Arch* 8, 1964, 101. Barnack stone was also used for the early eleventh century tomb-slab at Milton Bryan, *ibid.*, 101.
- 31 Geological Survey One Inch Maps, Sheets 186 and 203.

Excavations Inside Ravensden Church, 1969

D.N. HALL, J.B. HUTCHINGS and G.J. DRING

SUMMARY

Excavation in the nave and aisle of Ravensden Church revealed early medieval building phases. The earliest structure was a twelfth century church, 35ft by 15ft, with earthen floors. Related features included a pit, probably used for bell-founding, and a base, possibly for a font. The evidence found, together with architectural details and material from documentary sources, allows a reasonably complete account of the church to be compiled.

INTRODUCTION

During February 1969 the nave and aisle of Ravensden church (TL 078544) were re-floored. This was necessary because the existing red tile floor was uneven and had been laid directly on the earth, making the church very damp. The old tiles were removed and about one foot of earth taken out to make room for a hardcore and concrete base. A total excavation was not possible because of time limits imposed by the contractors. Areas marked I - VII on the excavation plan were taken down carefully; the remaining parts were dug out by the workmen leaving the whole area excavated to the earliest building level.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

The earliest known reference to a church at Ravensden is dated 1166.¹ No details of the building are given until the sixteenth century visitations, when the nave roof was in a ruinous state.² Much information may be learned from the eighteenth century Churchwardens' Accounts³ and later Archdeacon's Visitations,⁴ Parish Returns,^{5, 6} and other descriptions.^{7, 8, 9} The relevant documentary evidence is considered in the discussion section.

THE EXCAVATION

A plan of All Saints, Ravensden, is given in fig 1 and full architectural details in appendix 1. A detailed plan of the excavation is shown in fig 2.

Remains older than the church

On the north side of the nave there was a gully approximately 2ft wide by 7ft long and 3ft deep¹⁰ (Fig 2, Fl.) The exact length could not be found because of the disturbance caused by an eighteenth century burial on the south side, nor the exact depth because the water table was only 2ft down. The gully had a blackened, red burnt clay lining 1in thick and the fillings showed signs of intense heat and contained many shapeless lumps of once molten bronze. The feature is dated immediately before the first phase of the church because the sandy layer, left by early builders, ran over the fillings, which were loose enough to allow this sandy stratum to sag into the gully slightly. It is possible that this pit was made and used by bell-founders.

The pottery found in the gully (fig 3. 1 - 2) is of mid twelfth century type.

The first church

The first building was rectangular almost exactly 30ft by 15ft, corresponding approximately to the present nave. None of the walls now survives above floor level. The position of the north wall was established by three sections, one under each arch (pl 3a); at a later stage in the excavations it was exposed in its entirety. It was 4ft 6in thick. The footings consisted of flint pebbles bonded with blue clay laid in a trench 3ft wide and 2ft deep. At about the level of the old top soil (now a brown clay) 1ft 2in below the floor, the wall widened 6in

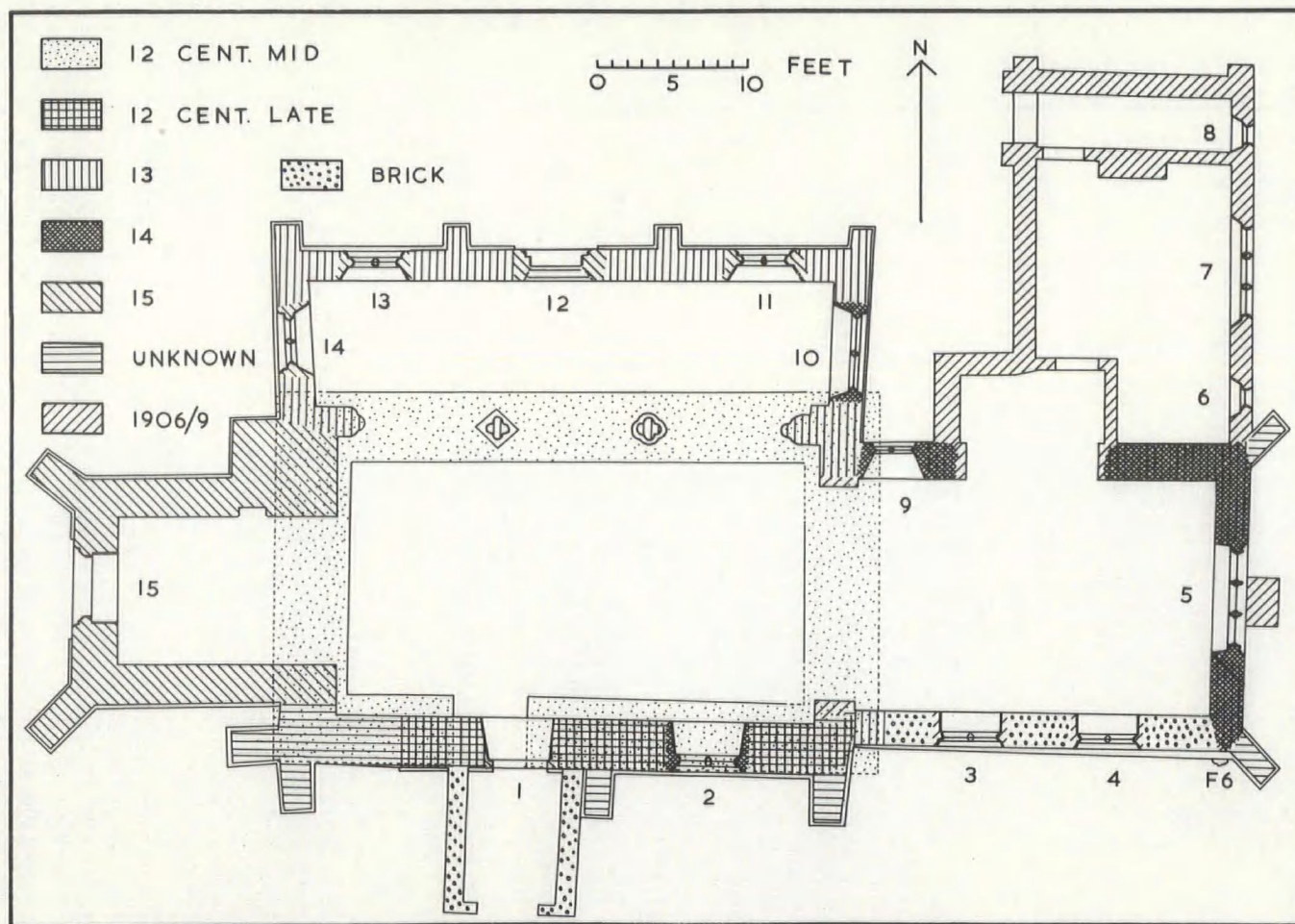


Fig 1 A general plan of Ravensden Church. The numbers refer to architectural details described in appendix 1.

on the outside and 1ft on the inside to make up the 4ft 6in width. In the area of trench 1 the full width of the wall was set slightly in the subsoil on the south side, leaving the line of a shallow footing trench. At the level of the full width, the wall was constructed of flints and pebbles bonded with a very coarse sand. This sand was spread by the builders on the ancient topsoil over most of the nave area and formed the lowest artificial stratum.

It was not possible to check the widths of the other walls of the first building. The lower courses of the west wall survive below the tower arch (pl. 3b). The line of the south wall was represented principally by a robber trench, and was interrupted by a doorway 5ft wide (pl. 3b). The present south wall stands on the central flint and clay footings of the first wall. The original east wall survives as the flint and clay footing which now supports the chancel step.

The area of the modern pulpit in the north east corner was not examined fully, but some laid flints and pebbles not in line with the old east and north walls could have been the footings for an, at present, unknown object.

The floor consisted of a 4-6in layer of blue clay which covered the builder's sand layer. (pl. 3a).

There is no direct dating evidence, but the building must be earlier than, or of the same date as, the twelfth century Norman tympanum and chevron moulding over the inside arch of the south door. This tympanum could indeed have belonged to the first church, it is quite a common feature for door mouldings to be re-used.¹¹ The first building must be earlier than the pottery found in the latest destruction layer (fig 3, 3) so, a late twelfth century date seems to be suitable.

Fire damage to the early church and the rebuilding.

Not long after the completion of the first building, and before the earthen floor layers had had time to accumulate, there was extensive fire damage. The area at the south west was scorched deep red, and a blackened layer was found over most of the early floor (pl. 3b and 4b). In the south east part there were two reddened and black marks probably caused by burning roof timbers (fig 2 F2). The south wall, at least, probably needed rebuilding as a result of the fire and still survives as the oldest part of the present church.

The dating of this fire and the rebuilding is still within the twelfth century, according to the pottery found in the burnt layer at the south west (fig 3,3), and the nature of the existing south wall. Both the tympanum and the thickness of the wall confirm a twelfth century date. The wall, is however, thinner than the first long walls, and shows an increasing appreciation of the stress which a stone wall is capable of withstanding.

Immediately on the black burnt layer a nearly square limestone footing, 4ft 6in by 4ft 3in, was built in the centre of the west end of the nave (fig 2 F3, pl. 4a). The insertion of an eighteenth century burial partly destroyed it (fig 2 F4). This footing was that of some small superstructure, perhaps a font, constructed in the late twelfth century as part of the rebuilding after the fire. It did not survive the period of the earthen floors, since late ones ran over it. It was, very probably, destroyed at the time of the reformation in the sixteenth century.

Also placed on the burnt layer was a feature in the north east of the nave (fig 2 F5). Like the footing of the presumed font it was covered by the later earthen floors. When these were removed it first appeared as an elongated oval area of blue clay with flints and chalk, about 5ft by 1ft 6in, orientated east and west. As the medieval earthen floors were removed down to the late twelfth century burnt layer it was seen that they ran up to and partly over the clay mass, so that the bottom was larger than the top, some 6ft by 2ft. Excavation of the clay feature itself showed the east end was formed by chalk pebbles around and covering the clay mass (pl. 4b). Total removal of the feature showed that no interment had existed beneath it. The purpose of this structure is not clear. Again the date is late twelfth century because the clay is set directly on the blackened layer, except at the west end where it cut through the black slightly.

Earthen floors were used during the medieval period. They are in layers of sand or plaster, presumably laid down when the previous level became muddy or was worn away. Just east of the presumed font there was a change of level in the floors across the nave; north from this font there was a line of stones (fig 2 F8), but by the font the floor layers merely dipped steeply down to the lower level. This dip showed up during the excavation as sectioned lines of sharply upward-rising layers (fig 2 F9). A brown mark in front of the doorway of the first building represents a wooden step set askew, presumably to allow ready access to both the floor levels.

Medieval expansion of the church

In the thirteenth century the north wall was knocked down and the north aisle built with a triple arcade. The quatrefoil piers are characteristic of the Early English style. The aisle walls, much thinner than those of the first church, have footings of large blocks of limestone going down to 2ft 9in below the floor level. The windows are fourteenth and fifteenth century insertions. The floor levels were all disturbed in the eighteenth century except near the old nave north wall (pl. 3a). There was a concentration of pebbles near the north door.

There is little evidence about the early roofs. A few stone and pottery tiles were found (fig 3, 6-8), so both these materials must have been used at some stage. The timbers of the present nave roof are late medieval and are dated between 1518 and 1530.²

The site of the altar in the early church was disturbed by an eighteenth century gravestone (fig 2 F11). In the aisle a modern side-altar stands on the site of the ancient one. There were a number of pebbles at the east end which probably derived from the base. The mosaic and plain flooring tiles (fig 3, 10) may have come from the steps and surrounds of these altars.

A small quantity of weathered medieval glass and window lead was found. All the glass was opaque and crizzled, but did not seem to be coloured or painted.

Post-medieval changes in the church

The aisle roof is of two gables facing north and covered with seventeenth century tiles. Similar tiles appear in the south west part of the nave wall and the two buttresses. There is a discontinuity here (fig 2 F7) in the plinth outside, and the stone courses inside. It is possible that these were later repairs.

Earthen floors continued to be used until well after the end of the medieval period. An unstratified seventeenth century reckoning counter was found and near the south door on the earth floors there was a small badly worn copper coin or token. This is either a farthing of James I (1603-25) or a mid seventeenth century token. Clearly the earthen floors were still in use. Several brass pins of an eighteenth century type were also recovered. It is very likely, therefore, that the church was not tiled

until this late date. Confirmation comes from entries in the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1739 when 1300 'paving bricks' were paid for.³ These tiles are the small square ones replaced in 1969; the oblong tiles are probably Victorian.

There are no burials in the aisle but four in the nave, all of eighteenth century date. Jasper Wagstaffe (1685-1722) probably still lies beneath his gravestone (fig 2 F10), since all the earthen floors were cut through.

Elizabeth Wagstaffe does not lie under her stone (fig 2 F11) since the old floors ran uninterruptedly underneath. Both of these stones were moved a few inches in 1969 to align them squarely with the nave. To the south of the gravestones probing detected two coffins probably made of lead (fig 2 F12, F13). These are almost certainly those of Elizabeth (1650-1713) and John Wagstaffe (1646-1718) commemorated by the plaque on the south wall. Both these persons must have been small because the coffins are only 4ft 11in and 5ft 6in long respectively. The stone base of the presumed old font was damaged by another burial without a lead or stone coffin. The upper fillings of the grave contained a piece of tin-glazed eighteenth century pottery (fig 3.5), and some disturbed bones. The latest burial had therefore probably disturbed an earlier one. None of these burials was disturbed in the present excavation.

On the south east side of the west pier there was what seems to have been a hearth in the earthen floors (fig 2 F14). Here were also found churchwarden pipe fragments and post-medieval glass, showing the latest stage of use was during the seventeenth century until the 1739 tile floor. It may be possible that this hearth was built in the medieval period; but it would not be before the thirteenth century as it lies partially over the first church north wall.

In 1906 there were extensive repairs⁵ and the vestry was built in 1909.⁶

DISCUSSION

The excavations revealed the stages of development of Ravensden church, from the simple rectangular twelfth century structure to the relatively complex lay-out of today.

Nothing earlier than the twelfth century was found, and no post holes or other remains of an earlier Saxon building. This could be taken to accord with the absence of the name *Ravensden*

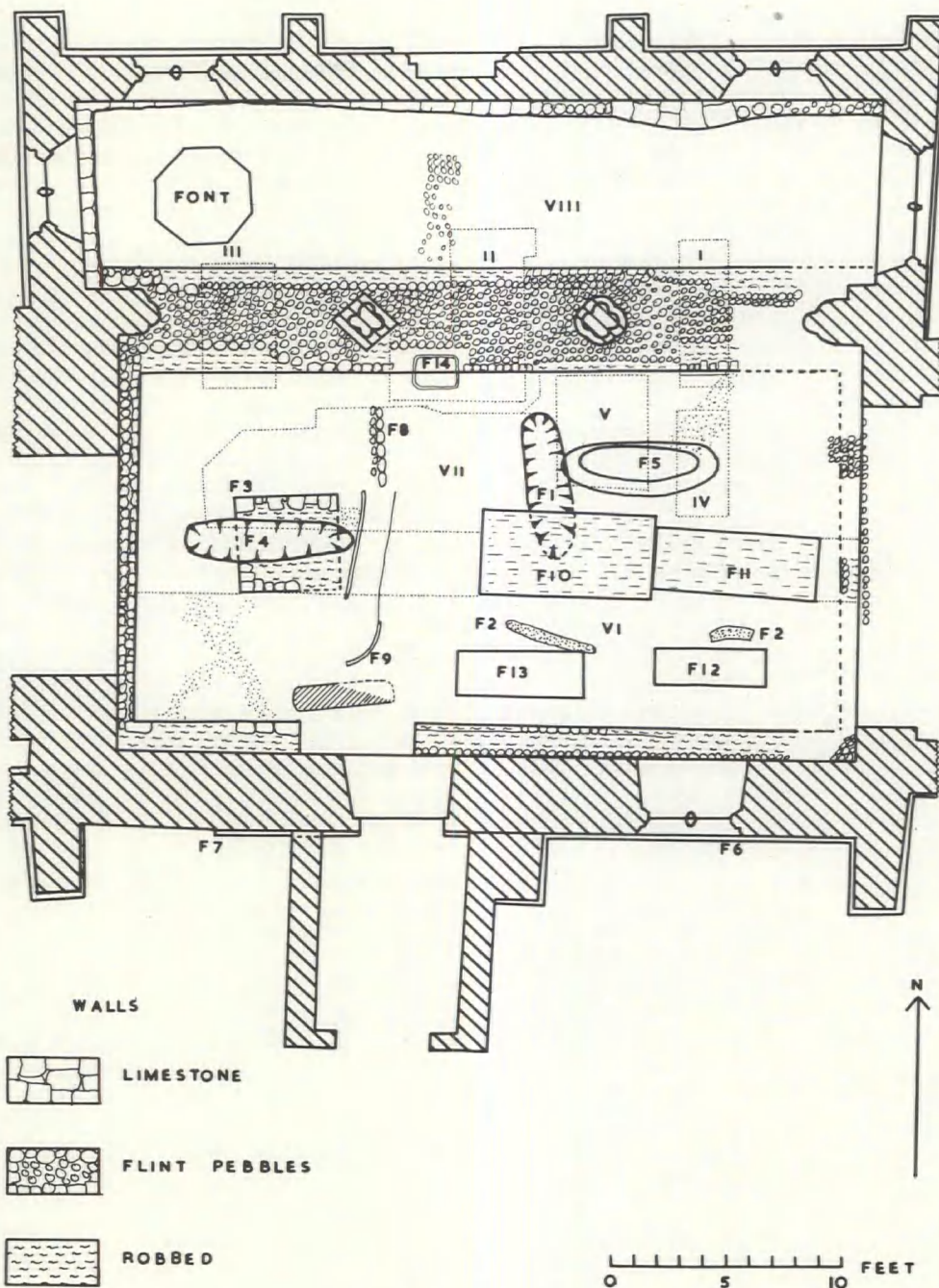


Fig 2 Ravensden church: plan of excavations

from the Domesday Book, leading to the conclusion that the vill is a late settlement. However, the case is more complicated. In 1914 Fowler gave evidence for identifying the Domesday name *Chainhalle* with the settlement later called *Ravensden*.¹² Elliott criticised this, pointing out that *Chainhalle* had a valuable mill which must have been situated in the Ouse.¹³ Fowler replied that sometimes mills were detached from the main vill, examples being Bletsoe and Bromham.¹⁴ He could also have cited the example of Chelveston, in Northamptonshire, which has a long, narrow tongue of land stretching two miles from the vill to the river mill. With change of ownership such a narrow strip of land could easily be taken in with adjacent holdings or manors. It is not likely that *Channels End*, in Colmworth, is *Chainhalle*, it simply indicates that *Channels End* is the *End* of Colmworth nearest to *Chainhalle* or *Ravensden*. Similarly *Podington End* at Wollaston, Northamptonshire is two and a half miles from the Bedfordshire village of Podington.

If it is accepted that Ravensden is a Domesday settlement under a different name at that time, we are left with the problem of the whereabouts of the Saxon church and burial ground. They could be on an entirely different site at one of the Ends of this fragmented settlement. Recent work at Bletsoe¹⁵ (TL 019585) has shown that the Saxon Christian cemetery is an appreciable distance (500 yards) from the medieval church and vill. The absence of burials in Ravensden north aisle further suggests that the church site was a new one. The burials round the first church had not reached the north side by the thirteenth century, when the aisle was built.

The excavations showed that the first building was a simple rectangle, and proved incorrect the unsupported assertion of the *Victoria County History* that there was a twelfth century nave which had been widened on the north.¹⁶ No trace of such a widening was found.

The first known reference to a church is of about 1166¹ and accords well with the dating of the earliest building; the pottery in the 'bell-founders pit' must be at least as old as that and so forms a valuable, closely dated group.

Although it was rather surprising to find a bell-founder's pit in the area which subsequently became the inside of the church, it is apparently not unusual. The authors have found a larger one in the twelfth century nave of neighbouring Thurleigh church. It is known that bell-founders did travel a-

round to churches rather than deliver the finished goods from a central workshop.¹⁶

The east-west aligned clay mass is very difficult to explain. A similar one, 2ft by 10ft was found in the late twelfth century levels in Thurleigh church nave. Something must have stood on or over the clay, and have been sufficient importance to have existed many years. Whatever it was, perhaps a tomb or table, was supported in such a way that the earth floors were able partly to cover the clay.

The chancel requires some comment. Only the east and part of the north walls are medieval. From the stonework it is clear that the windows are not insertions. Their tracery shows the oldest part of the chancel was built no earlier than the beginning of the fourteenth century. The absence of a plinth round the outside of the chancel is further evidence that the chancel is not contemporary with the aisle. Also the corbels of the arch are Decorated and were used when the arch was rebuilt in 1906. It seems unlikely that an aisle would be built without a chancel in the thirteenth century, and therefore possible that a previous chancel and chancel arch were entirely rebuilt in the fourteenth century. The stone footing immediately to the west of the present south east buttress (fig 1 F6) may well be the remains of a 'square-on' Early English buttress.

From the eighteenth century onward there are various records giving details of repairs and upkeep of the church. There was considerable activity in the first half of the eighteenth century.³ In 1729 there was expenditure on the roof, 2,000 plain tiles being fetched from 'Wotton', along with 'gutor' and 'ridg tils' and laths. In 1739 there was the tiling of the floor already mentioned. The area covered by 1,300 tiles 6in square is rather in excess of 325 sq ft. The area of the nave, aisle and chancel are 576,344 and 365 sq ft respectively. However, it is very probable that the whole building was tiled at that date. In 1747 there were repairs to a 'pue' door and the seats; from a later account⁷ it is clear that these were in the chancel, and that in the nave, as now, the 'sittings are for the most part open' (1852). Another repair in the eighteenth century, not specifically recorded, is the rebuilding of the chancel south wall. The bricks used correspond very closely with examples dated 1740 from a vault at Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire. An unexpected entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts is for various colouring matters in 1785, 'witin, bleu, yellow oker and lamp black', presumably parts of the building received a colour wash.

The occurrence of pins in the eighteenth century

levels is common to several churches in the area.

In 1817 the tower arch was built up,⁷ and the tower roof repaired in 1823.³ In the same year a new font basin, plated paten and flagon were bought.⁴ There were a few other minor repairs, but by the time of the detailed account in 1852⁷ the whole fabric was in a very poor state. By this time there was a building to the north of the chancel, variously used as a school and vestry. Apparently it was built in the early years of the nineteenth century according to the later references.^{8,9} No repairs were made and the reports of 1894 and 1905⁸ described the bad state of the building and particularly mention that the vestry should be replaced, the tower arch opened and the chancel arch, east window tracery and roof be repaired. In 1906 all the repairs were completed except those of the vestry and floors. The pews were removed from the chancel and the organ replaced in a recess. The font was removed from the nave to the aisle. The total cost was £727 - 17 - 0.⁵ In 1909 the vestry was built, £50 being spent on it in that year.⁶ The chancel floor was relaid with wooden blocks in 1966. The remaining floor area was replaced with new tiles in 1969, some of the old tiles were relaid down the centre of the nave. The cost was £1,000.

THE FINDS

Pottery (Fig 3)

- 1 Pink — buff with a grey core; shelly.
- 2 Outside blackened orange, inside pink, grey core; shelly. These two sherds and many body sherds came from the gully predating the church (fig 2 F1). They are in the 'developed' St Neots ware tradition, and are almost certainly the same cooking pot. Parallels can be found in the early levels at Strixton, Northants¹⁸ which are twelfth or thirteenth century; at Eaton Socon castle¹⁹ of the mid twelfth century; and at Southoe, Hunts also of the twelfth century.²⁰ These parallels agree well with the architectural evidence of the sherds' date (see above). Since the first reference to the church is about 1166, the sherds must be earlier still.
- 3 Blackened brown and purple outside, buff inside, blue core. From the first church burnt layer. A shelly 'developed' St Neots ware; some shells leached out on the inside. Parallels at Strixton dove-cote, Irchester manor,¹⁸ and Eaton Socon²¹ are dated of mid twelfth century.

A further eight body sherds were found in the

medieval floor levels. Four were shelly and four sandy.

- 4 Hard sherd fired orange throughout; a green glaze on the outside below the spur on the rim, and an orange glaze on the inside. Fabric similar to a late sixteenth century group found at Beacon Hill, Wollaston, Northants.²² Unstratified.

- 5 Very hard white sherd, with white tin glaze. Not a 'delft' ware, therefore dating after about 1750. From the fillings of the grave cutting the medieval font (fig 2 F4).

Roofing Tiles

All from the disturbed levels in the aisle. 6 and 7. Two stone tiles.

- 8 Hard red tile with blue core. Two holes for pegs. Not closely datable in the range thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

- 9 Hard red tile with red core. Part of a ridge tile, very similar to a fifteenth century example from Eaton Socon.²³ Mrs E.S. Eames of the British Museum suggests a fifteenth century date, since earlier examples are normally glazed.

Flooring Tiles

- 10 Green glazed tile; buff lower part changing to a bluish fabric near the glaze. A porous leached material. The glaze is splashed over the edge. One side has only been cut half way through before firing, and then broken afterwards. It is not possible to tell whether the tile was lozenge shaped or triangular. The fabric exactly corresponds to tiles found by D. Baker at Elstow Abbey, dated to the first half of the fourteenth century.²⁴ Two sizes of early unglazed tile were found in the nave north of the old font. They were 8.75in square by 1in thick; and 7in square by 1.5in thick. The tiles replaced in 1969 were of two types; 6in square by 1in thick and 9in by 4.5in by 1.25in thick. The first are almost certainly those laid in 1739; the larger appear to be of nineteenth century workmanship.

Iron

- 11 Ornamental iron strip, probably from a door. From south of the Wagstaffe gravestones (fig 2 F10, 11).
- 12 Thumb-piece of a door latch; from the seventeenth century levels near the south door.
- 13 A bolt of near square section. Various hand-made nails were recovered.

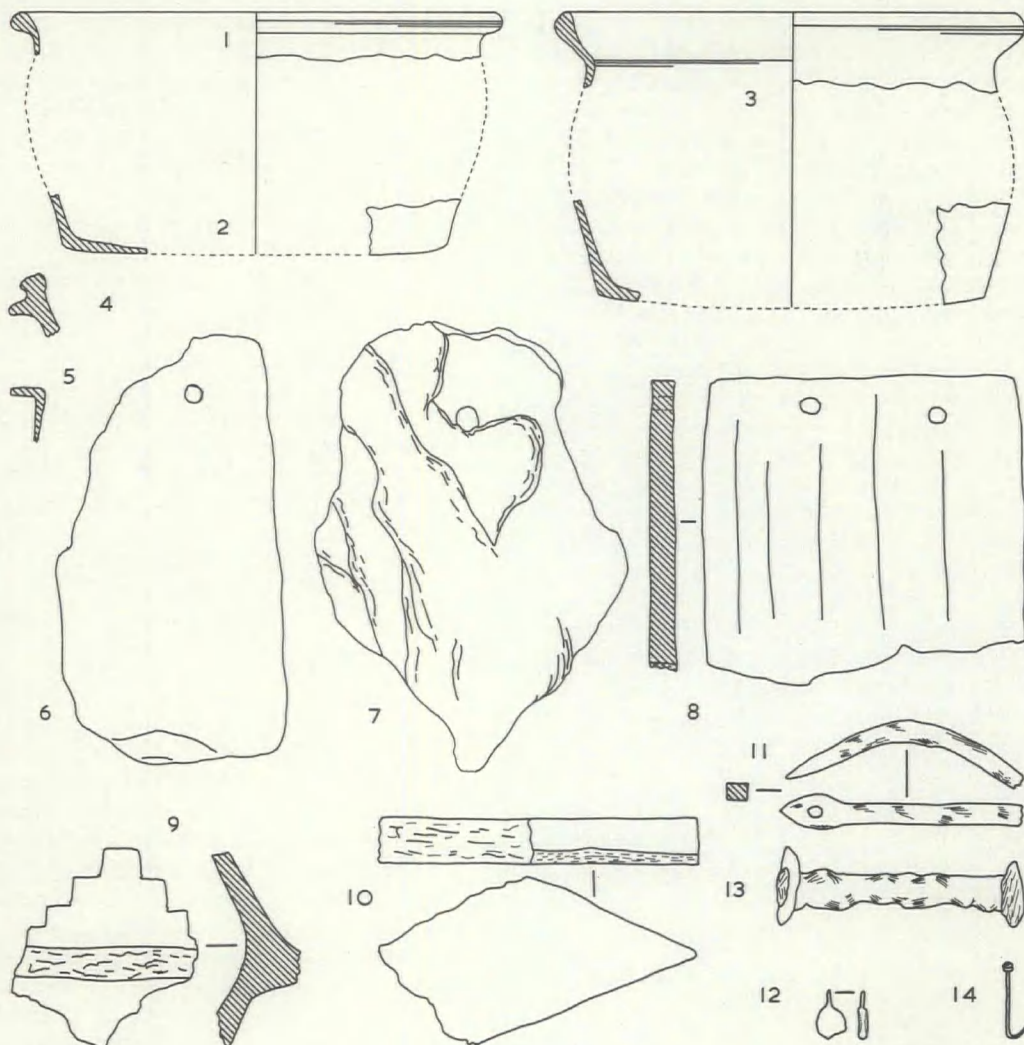


Fig 3 Ravensden church excavations: small finds ($\frac{1}{4}$ scale)

Brass

14 A bent pin, of the same type as the late eighteenth century pins found at Newton Willows church, Northants.²⁵ From the nave floor north of the Wagstaffe stones.

Also found in the aisle was a bundle of wire strands each 0.01in thick, looped and twisted into a 'rod' of bronze 0.75in long and 0.1in thick. In the same area was a solid rod bent into an approximate half circle 1in in diameter; the rod ends are 0.15in thick and the middle 0.2in.

APPENDIX 1

Notes on Architecture

The architectural periods of the walls are marked on fig 1.

The tower arch is of simple fifteenth century Perpendicular workmanship springing from corbels. The chancel arch springs from fourteenth century Decorated corbels which were reused when the arch was rebuilt in 1906. The aisle arches are of two chamfered orders springing from quatrefoil piers

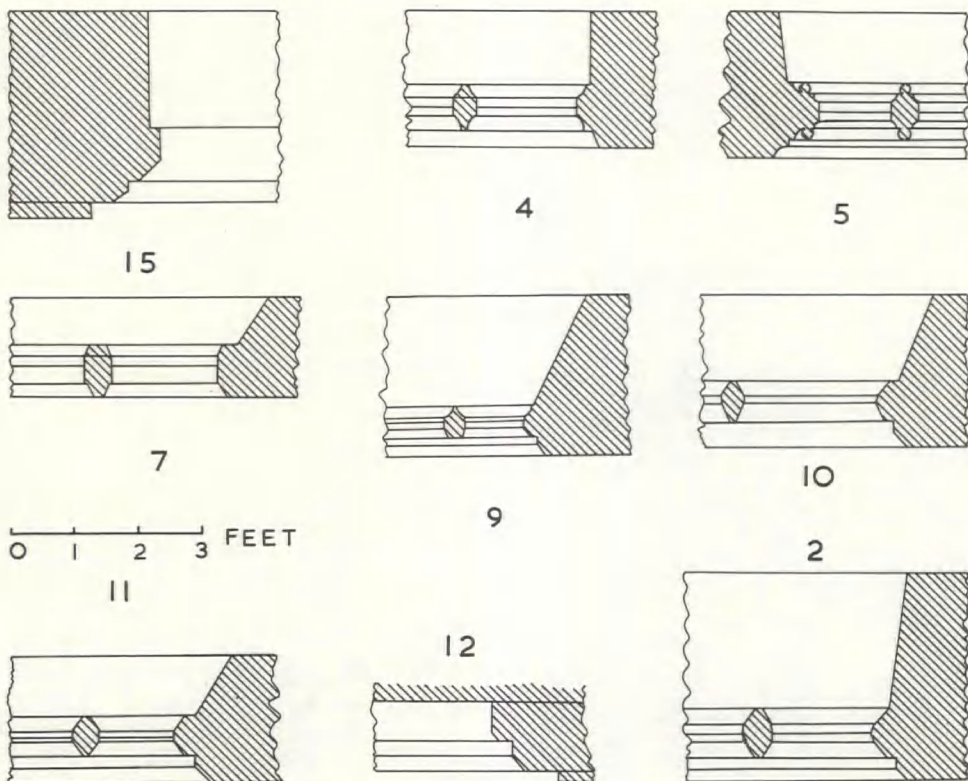


Fig 4 Architectural details of door and window mouldings

so characteristic of the thirteenth century Early English period.²⁶

Considering the doors and windows, and using the numbering system given in figure 1. Relevant sections are drawn in figure 4.

1 The south door. On the inside is a damaged twelfth century Norman tympanum. The arch is semi-circular and two stones have Norman chevron patterns on them. The outer arch is two centered, with a slight chamfer and no capitals, so presumably it is fourteenth or fifteenth century. The date of the brick filled, wooden framed porch is very difficult. The bricks do not look of quite the same character as the eighteenth century material used in the chancel south wall and are probably older. Pevsner gives a seventeenth century date.²⁷ The character of the brick infilling suggests it replaced lath and plaster. The tiles on the roof appear to be seventeenth century.

2 Nave south window. A typical Decorated example but the mullion is rather weathered and so is now very asymmetrical.

3 and 4. Square framed windows of the eighteenth century fitted with 1906 Gothic revival tracery.

5 East window. A fine example of Decorated work, similar to a window at Saint Peter's Church, Bedford. The upper parts were blocked out in 1823,³ and opened up again in the extensive repairs of 1906. The buttress underneath was added at the same time.

6, 7 and 8. Gothic revival of 1909.

9 Chancel north window. A square framed Decorated work. The concave moulding of the mullion and jambs, and the ogee tracery leave no doubt as to the period.

10 Aisle east window. Probably Decorated. 11, 13 and 14. Aisle north and west windows. The mullions continue to the point of the arch in the Perpendicular manner. The inserted nature of these windows is very evident from the outside, in contrast to the chancel east window.

12 North door. Double chamfered without bases or capitals. Perpendicular. It is blocked up on the inside.

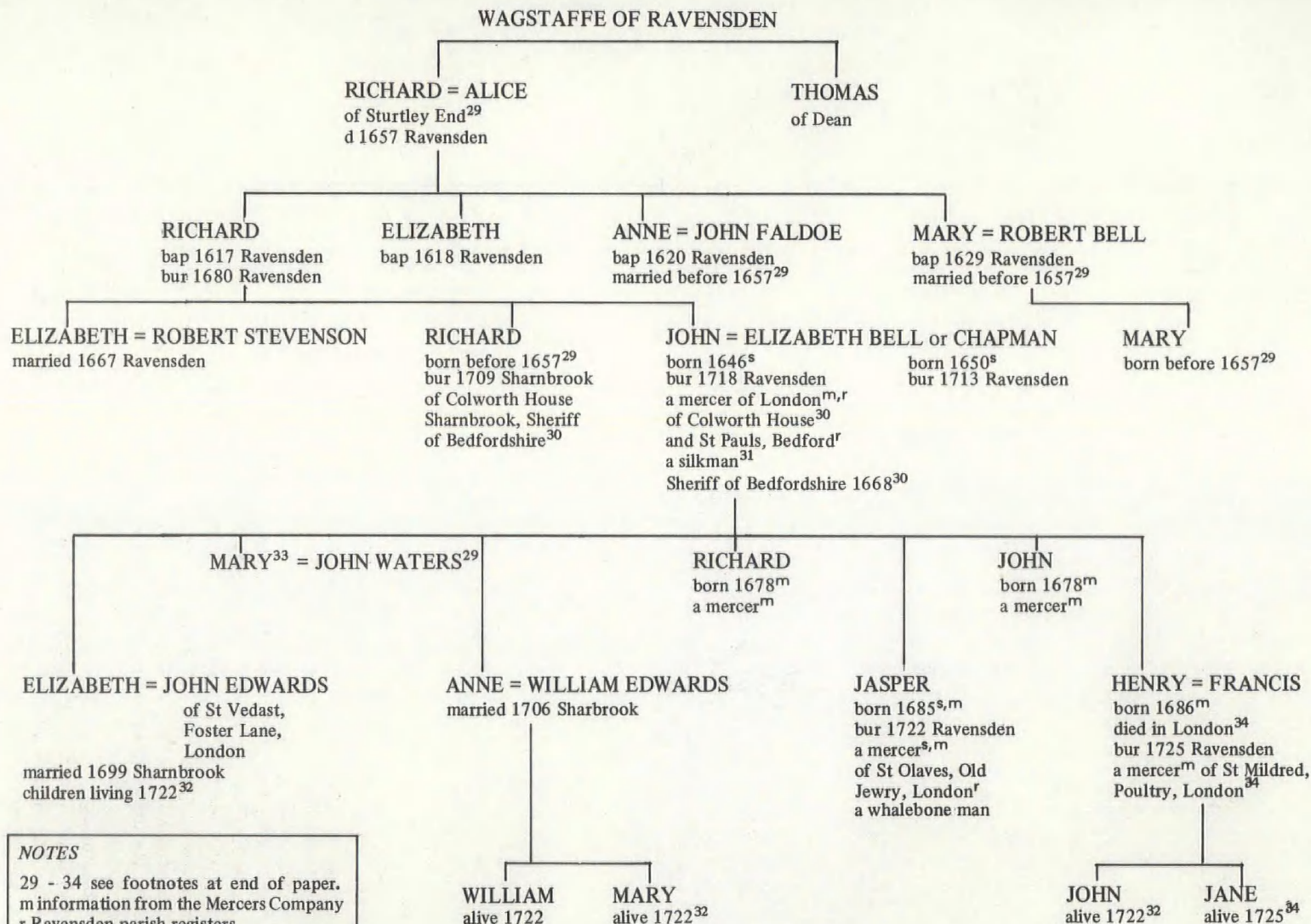


Fig 5 Genealogy of Wagstaffe of Ravensden

15 Tower door. Very similar to the north door. Perpendicular. The tower has a stone staircase on the north east, not indicated in figure 1.

The nave south buttresses have been repaired. Since they are at right-angles and not diagonal to the wall, they are probably thirteenth or fourteenth century work. The rebuilding of the south west part of the nave could be of the same date. The chancel diagonal buttresses are probably 1906 (replacing fourteenth century?) The aisle buttresses are original thirteenth century and those of the tower are original fifteenth century.

The tower and steeple are principally fifteenth century work, with a sixteenth century parapet and belfry.

APPENDIX 2

The Memorials

Note, full sources, where quoted, refer to documents at the Bedford Record Office.

There are four monuments inside Ravensden church; one is on the chancel floor, one on the nave south wall and two on the nave floor (fig 2 F10 and 11).

This chancel memorial is half buried under the organ and the visible part is below on the right hand side of the vertical line. On the left hand side is an attempt at the probable full version using details found in the parish registers.

Here lies de	posited
the body of R	ichard
son of Richard	Leech
vicar of this p	arish
died at Golding	ton
on November 1	5 1787
aged 15 ye	ars
also Carol	ine
sister of the	above
who died on March	13 1791
aged 9 mon	ths

In the register we read of Richard's character 'this beloved youth was blessed with every virtue and clear from every vice.'

Caroline died at Goldington, no mention being made of the whereabouts of Richard's death. However, it may be assumed that Richard died at the same place. A clue to the reason the vicar was living outside the parish can be found in an undated newspaper cutting which described the Ravensden vicarage as 'uninhabitable' (circa 1880) and the

living of £80 as 'being very poor'.²⁸ From the records studied it is apparent that there was no substantial period of recovery in the finances of the church between 1787 and 1826 when the Archdeacon, at his Visitation, noted the 'great poverty of the village'.⁴ It is possible, therefore that the vicarage had been uninhabitable for the century prior to 1880.

The other three memorials are to members of the Wagstaffe family. The memorial on the nave south wall reads :

'Here lieth the Body of John Wagstaffe Esq^e
Died ye 11th April 1718 in ye 72 year of his
Age And Elizabeth his wife Died y^e 6th October
1713 in y^e 63 year of her Age.

The memorial on the nave floor (fig 2 F11) reads :

'Here Lyeth y^e Body of Elizabeth Wagstaffe y^e
Wife of John Wagstaffe Esq Who Departed this
Life Octob 6th 1713 In y^e 63 year of her Age.

The other memorial on the nave floor (fig 2 F10) reads :

Jasper Wagstaffe Citizen & Mercer of London
Whalebone man^{et} departed this Life the 14th
of November 1722 Aged 37 years.

From the parish records it appears that there were two families of Wagstaffes in Ravensden during the period 1600 to 1800. One line is of Sturtley End, Ravensden, to whom the above memorials belong, the other line originating in Udwick End, Wilden. Part of the family tree (fig 5) was built from parish registers but much of the information came from wills and other sources. None of the generations which included John and son Jasper was baptised in Ravensden parish church but many members returned to be buried there.

Richard (ob 1657) held land at Mowsbury, Ravensden,³⁴ Kempston,²⁹ and part of Salpho Manor, Beds;²⁹ his son Richard also holding land at Graves Hill, Ravensden (WG 543). Richard's sons, Richard and John, held Colworth House, Sharnbrook, Beds and still held land there in 1708 (BS 2038); John's daughter Anne was married at Sharnbrook in 1706 and Richard was buried there in 1709 although, according to Harvey,²⁵ Mark Antonie had purchased Colworth manor from the Wagstaffes in 1700.²⁵

At the time Richard (1617-1680) took occupation of the 10 acres at Graves Hill (1647) he was already a Captain in the Parliamentary army. He took part in the suppression of the regiment's mutiny at Oxford (for which Parliament voted him

£40); with Okey, his commanding officer, he took and maintained the Bedford religious house of St John the Baptist for 'John Bunnion the tinker'; he examined (as a J.P.) and gave evidence against county Royalists; he represented Beds in Cromwell's Parliaments and took part in the thwarted plot of 1654 to seize the Tower of London for Parliament. He was promoted major but at the Restoration was ordered by proclamation of the Council of State to surrender at Whitehall upon pain of sequestration. He appears not to have taken part in the final battle with the Royalists near Northampton and he escaped the fate of Okey who was executed for failing to surrender to the proclamation.³⁵ However, even though a Parliamentarian he was buried at the parish church 20 years later. Perhaps it is not too much of a stretch on the imagination to believe that the ruination of the church and the vicarage commenced with Richard and a strong local non-conformist attitude to religion.

It appears that it was this Richard who led the family into the City of London, his younger son John was apprenticed to Maurice King for 8 years at the age of 16, and all of John's sons were admitted to the Freedom of the City of London via membership of the Mercer's Company. This branch of the Wagstaffe family does not appear in the Ravensden registers after Henry's death in 1725, he died in his sick bed at his home in London and was brought to Ravensden and buried there 8 days later. The wills of John and son Jasper request that their bodies be buried inside the church and, as Henry's will contains no such request, the identity of the fourth burial in the nave remains unknown.

The Wagstaffes living in the village for about 60 years after Henry's death were probably descendants of the Udwick End family. The Bedford Wagstaffes held land at Ravensden as late as 1783 (BS 568) and therefore could have been some relation to the Ravensden family. George Wagstaffe, a maulster, mayor of Bedford in 1702 was buried in St Pauls Bedford. He was a plumper for Sir William Gostwick in the County Election of 1705, when the Gostwicks held the advowson to Ravensden church.

Above the monument of John and Elizabeth there is an impaled coat of arms without tinctures: (Argent) two bends engrailed (gules), in chief an escallop (of the second) impaling party per chevron (—) and (—) a crescent counterchanged. Jasper's monument displays his shield, helmet and crest. His

coat of arms is the same as that of his father with the addition of the cadency mark a crescent. The first arms granted to a Wagstaffe was made in 1611 to a member of the Derbyshire family but the Ravensden shield is that of the Warwickshire family which was differenced by the addition of the escallop; the crest being that of the Earls of Warwick, a demi lion holding a staff, raguly. The shield of the Hinwick, Beds. Wagstaffes was not differenced by the escallop. The coat of arms with the tinctures of Richard of Ravensden was described in 1634³⁶ as: Argent, two bends engrailed gules the lower one coupé at the top, in chief an escallop of the second. A slight quandary exists over Jasper's cadency mark; the crescent is the mark of the second son and, according to the Mercer's records, he was the third son. He may have used the cadency mark of his father, who was a second son, as a difference, but this cadency mark is not on John's impaled shield. Elizabeth's coat of arms is that of Bell or Chapman, depending upon whether the tinctures are argent and gules or argent and sable. Therefore the exact identity remains unknown until the marriage record is found. It is perhaps more likely that she was a Bell, as references to cousin Robert Bell were made in the wills of John (1718) and Jasper (1722); however these may have been made to descendants of Mary Bell daughter of Richard Wagstaffe (ob 1657).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

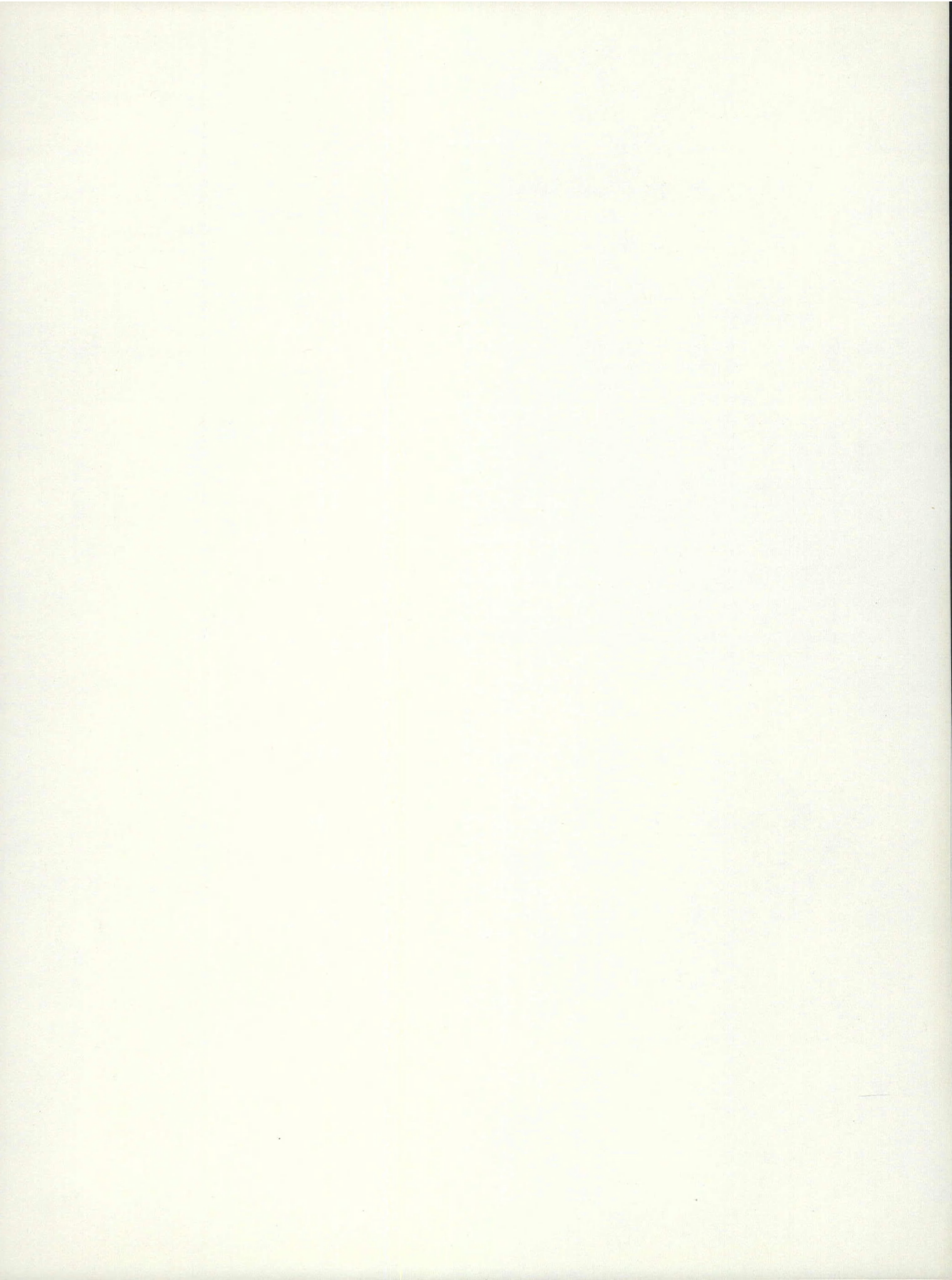
We would like to express our thanks to the Vicar, Rev L.B. Impson, the Church Authorities; the architect, B.B. West; the builders, Messrs Birch and Chesshire; the site foreman M. McNally.

We are most grateful to our co-excavators; the Misses C.A. Wills and M. Appleby, Mrs M. Robinson and Mrs M.E. Dring, and Messrs E. Corby, I.S.L. Dampney, G. Robinson and R.W. Thomas.

Our thanks are also due for the help given by the Bedfordshire County Archivist, Miss P. Bell; her assistants Mrs M. Richards, Mrs S. Holgate and Mr Cirket; the staff of the Literary Room, Somerset House; Miss J. Imray, archivist to the Mercers' Company and Dr A.E.J. Hollaender of the Guildhall Library. We are grateful also to Mr F.W. Kuhlcke for his assistance with the heraldic aspect of this paper.

NOTES

- 1 British Museum Harl MS 3656 fol 14b.
- 2 *Lincoln Rec Soc* 33, 115 'Navis ecclesie est in magna ruina in tectura' (1518); *ibid* 35, 2 'omnia bene' (1530).
- 3 Ravensden Churchwardens Accounts, Bedfordshire County Record Office document P89/5/1. (The Bedfordshire County Record Office is hereafter abbreviated as B.C.R.O.)
- 4 Archdeacons Visitations, B.C.R.O. ABV 3 and ABV 28.
- 5 Parish Returns, (1908) B.C.R.O., P89/2.
- 6 Parish Returns, (1910) B.C.R.O., P89/2.
- 7 *Northampton Mercury*, (1852) B.C.R.O., CRT 120/34.
- 8 Architects Reports, B.C.R.O., P89/7/2.
- 9 Graves, *The Way About Bedfordshire* (1901).
- 10 Depths are given from the present floor level, which is the same as that before the 1969 relaying. Both floors were brought to the level of the Jasper Wagstaffe gravestone (fig 2 F10).
- 11 Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Northamptonshire* (1961) 27.
- 12 *Beds Hist Rec Soc* 1 (1913) 63.
- 13 *Beds Hist Rec Soc* 2 (1914) 265.
- 14 *Beds Hist Rec Soc Quarto Memoirs, Bedfordshire in 1086*, (1922).
- 15 Unpublished work of the North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society.
- 16 *VCH Beds* 3 (1912) 213.
- 17 North, *The Church Bells of Bedfordshire* (1883).
- 18 D N Hall and N Nickerson, Medieval Pottery from Higham Hundred, Northamptonshire, *J Northampton Mus* forthcoming.
- 19 *P Camb Ant Soc* 58 (1965) 72; fig 14,28 to a lesser extent, fig 14,26 and 29.
- 20 *P Camb Ant Soc*, 49 (1956) 68; fig 7, 22.
- 21 *P Camb Ant Soc*, 58 (1965) 57 and fig 8 20-22, and 70-72 and fig 14.
- 22 D N Hall and N Nickerson, 'Post-medieval pottery', forthcoming.
- 23 *Beds Arch J* 4 (1969) 46.
- 24 British Museum, National Reference Collection of Medieval Tiles, of which Mrs E S Eames is Assistant Keeper in charge.
- 25 D N Hall and J B Hutchings, 'Newton Church', *J Northampton Mus* forthcoming.
- 26 Pevsner, 1961, 29.
- 27 Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough* (1968) 136.
- 28 'A.R.' *Bedfordshire Times and Independent* undated cutting found in the Archdeacons Visitations B.C.R.O., ABV 3.
- 29 The will of Richard Wagstaffe, 1657 Folio 23, The Literary Room, Somerset House.
- 30 Harvey, *History and Antiquities of Willey Hundred*, (1872-8), xx.
- 31 Blaydes, *Genealogia Bedfordiensis* (1890).
- 32 The will of Jasper Wagstaffe, 1722 Folio 227, The Literary Room, Somerset House.
- 33 The will of John Wagstaffe, B.C.R.O., APW 1718 83.
- 34 The will of Henry Wagstaffe, 1726 Folio 63, The Literary Room, Somerset House.
- 35 *Beds Hist Rec Soc* 35 (1955) 79.
- 36 *The Visitations of Bedfordshire [Harleian Soc* 19 (1884)]



Excavations at Elstow Abbey, Bedfordshire, 1968 - 1970

Third Interim Report

DAVID BAKER

SUMMARY

Further excavations at the Benedictine nunnery of Elstow Abbey (c. 1080-1539) have shown parts of a complicated plan for the eastern arm of the church; many details of this are obscured by a modern graveyard. The development of the Chapter House, from within the Norman dorter range to a lengthy eastern extension of the 13th or 14th century, has been investigated. The rebuilding and repositioning of the dorter range and the rere-dorter is discussed. A complex series of outbuildings is being explored.

INTRODUCTION

Excavation continued during six sessions between December 1968 and July 1970, and the results up to the last date are discussed here. The complexity of the structural and occupational evidence recovered has amply justified a fifth and sixth year on the site. The main efforts were concentrated upon further elucidation of the eastern arm of the Abbey church, examination of the eastern claustral ranges, and the outbuildings south of the main complex. The policy of excavating in large areas has been continued, though time and resources have varied their size. Several trial trenches were dug, some mechanically, in attempts to determine the limits of occupation in various periods.

SEQUENCE OF OCCUPATION

The scheme proposed in the second interim report¹ holds generally secure. The outbuildings can only be partially integrated with this main sequence of occupation due to the general lack of precise dating and the incompleteness of their exploration at the time of writing. Of the periods discussed previously, nothing new can be added for the Roman or pagan Saxon. If the main chronological pattern seems established, however, it may still be altered in the light of the remaining excavation programme.

EARLY LINEAR FEATURES (Fig 1)

Two sections of a ditch defining a circular area, possibly parts of a Bronze Age ring ditch, have been described.² Trenches on the only other accessible parts of the circumference showed deep and extensive medieval disturbances that would have destroyed any evidence of earlier structure.

Mechanically excavated trial trenches running west-east between the Abbey church and the modern A6 (north of, and parallel with, the mansion sunken carriageway) cut across a linear feature running north-south. Its profile was 'V' shaped, with a flat bottom, and the silting sequence within it was similar to that in the ring ditch. Its bottom was cut to a maximum of 4ft 10in (1.47m) into the natural gravel.

Other irregularities in the natural gravel surface were seen in trial trenches mechanically excavated south-east of the main Abbey buildings. Its level falls off drastically as the stream is approached. Particular features noted here, where the depth of gravel from the surface varies between within 4ft (1.0m) and deeper than 17ft (5.0m) included the sides of at least three large features: these were unlikely to have been linear since they did not appear in an adjacent trial trench: the fill of two produced early medieval pottery at the bottom, so they may indicate medieval gravel extraction.

SAXON : PAGAN

Following the discovery under the east end of the Abbey church in 1968 of a fifth or sixth century cremation vessel and sherds of similar examples, further trenches were designed to test whether they represented the edge of a larger burial area.³ Five hand-excavated and two mechanically-excavated trenches produced little evidence. Other cremations may have existed here, but have been destroyed by the density of monastic burial around the outside of the church. Indeed the survival of the original find was fortunate. However, all the trenches to-

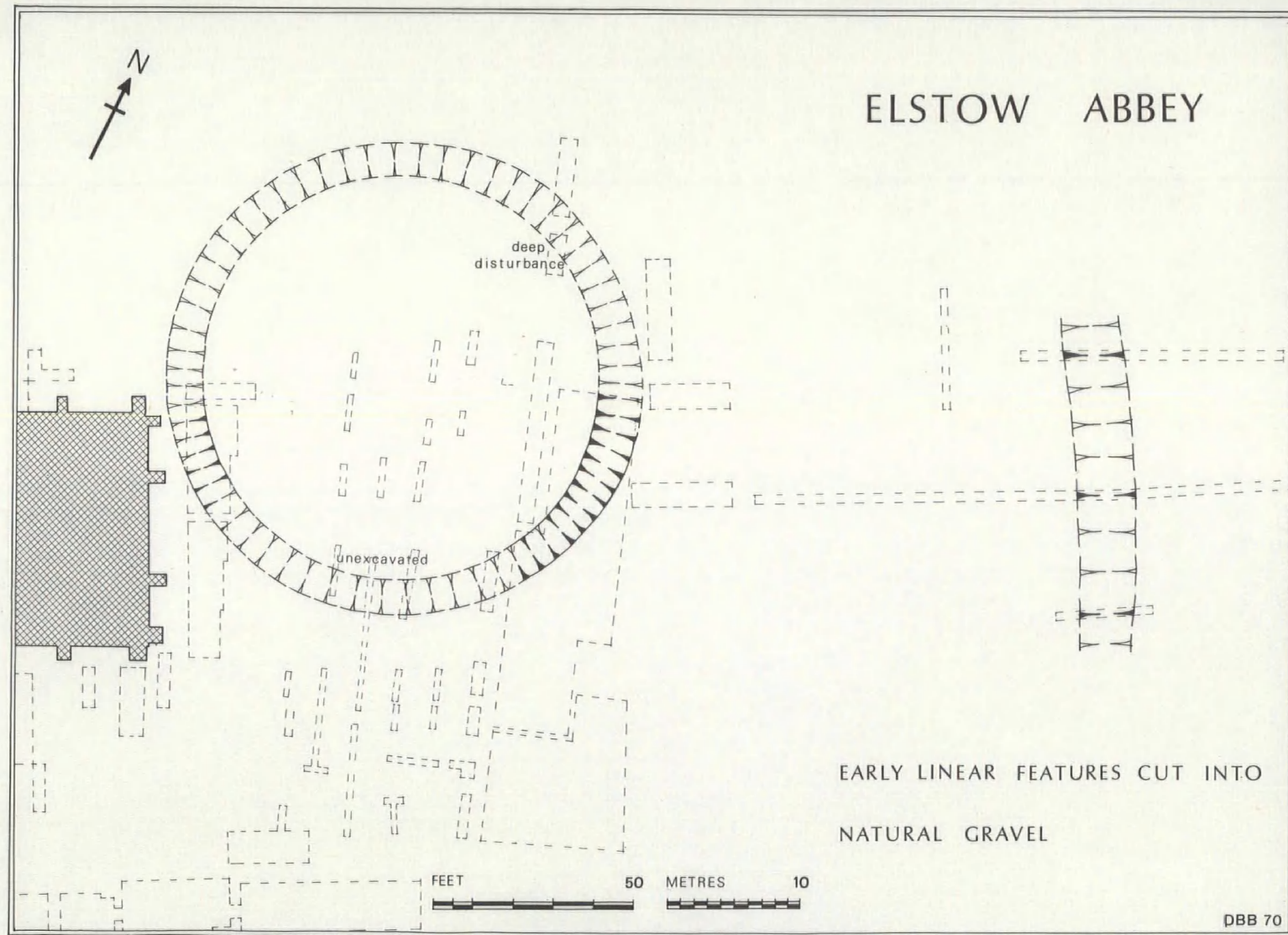


Fig 1 Early features cut into natural gravel.

gether failed to produce either the distinctive clean soil within which the first cremation had been placed, or more than a few sherds of contemporary pottery. Trenching out to the south-east would only encounter further inhumations, first medieval and then late Saxon, while the modern churchyard imposes another limit on the western side.

SAXON :CHRISTIAN

The total of late Saxon burials or parts of burials has been increased to nearly 270 individuals by further discoveries in trenches primarily concerned with examining other problems. A group of this size is adequate for study purposes and comparison with the monastic group, and work on them proceeds.

A Saxon parish church has still not been located. If it is in the immediate vicinity of the burials it can only be under the existing parish church or to its north or west: all of these areas are inaccessible and most have been disturbed by centuries of grave-digging associated with both Abbey and the present church. Alternatively the parish church may have been some distance away, and the cemetery have been surrounded by a fence or some similar delimitation. Perhaps the chapel of St Helen should be considered in this context: it stood in the churchyard by the 1340s, and was a desirable place of burial in 1509; it served as a parish church in the mid fourteenth century, maybe reviving a role it or an earlier building nearby had carried out before c.1080.⁴ Suggestions that the anomalous east end of the abbey church can be explained in terms of a surviving Saxon parish church have to contend with the presence of late Saxon burials underneath it: neither is there any obvious confirmation for an hypothesis involving a two period Christian Saxon cemetery, with the Saxon church built over the earlier part of it.

MEDIEVAL (Fig 2)

1 late eleventh century : church

The plan of the Abbey church, eastwards from the nave, presents many difficulties. The sequence is clearly complex, and the original version unusual. Moreover the evidence is most incomplete; the footings have been considerably robbed, and information from the area of modern churchyard between the two sets of trenches excavated in 1968 could only come from shallow, narrow trenches dug precisely beneath the paths between the rows of graves. The tops of footings seen here were of identifiable

construction types, but allowed little more than the attempt to establish the main ground plan.

The arrangement of transepts and *quire* aisles needs comment. Sufficient trenches could be dug on the south side of the church to show that the south nave aisle wall must have turned south for some 12ft (3.6m) at a point about 104ft (31.7m) from the Norman west end of the nave, before returning east to limit the transept. Although there was a return wall north, giving a transept of external length about 32ft (9.75m), this southern wall continued east until it turned north again as the eastern termination of the aisle flanking the presbytery. The eastern walls of both transept and aisle had unmortared footings with large stone and gravel layers, of the kind seen at the main eastern apse, and could not be separated chronologically on this criterion. The eastern wall of the south transept was on a direct line with the eastern wall of the Norman *dorter* range. If this indicates the original transeptal plan, modified in execution or soon after, it draws attention to the correspondingly extended nature of the horseshoe apse at the main east end. The evidence for a similar arrangement on the north side is less clear since the north transept lay out of this most recent addition to the churchyard, in ground that is inaccessible and anyway much more disturbed. The sleeper walls for the nave arcade, found in 1968, seemed to continue east until they attached to the end of the main apse. These had been overlain by later footings (on the south side) or robbed (on the north side) so the intervals of piers upon them cannot be readily reconstructed.⁵

A consideration of the west end of the nave in relation to the known west ranges of the Norman and fourteenth century periods suggests that the present thirteenth century west front was an extension rather than a rebuilding. This cannot be confirmed by excavation due to current use of this part as a parish church; however if one replaces the Early English nave piers with Norman responds, against a Norman west wall, spaced at the interval set by the rest of the Norman arcade, this proposed church west wall would have been exactly on a line with the west wall of the Norman *cellarium*. It would also have placed the Norman door into the north aisle centrally in what would have been the north-west bay.

Timber buildings

The prospect envisaged in the last report, of locating evidence for temporary Norman timber structures predating the early claustral range, has

not materialised.⁶ Extensive excavation of ground later covered by *frater* and *dorter* has produced more occupation spreads with pottery of late eleventh or early twelfth century date. Some possible post-holes and clay and gravel spreads were also seen, just above the present watertable, but not in any coherent pattern. These layers were cut by or sealed by the robber trenches or footings for the earlier claustral buildings. This implies the first stone plan was not built until some time after the Abbey's foundation, though the lack of precise dating for the pottery makes it difficult to determine the exact interval. It is also possible that these spreads represent rubbish or dumping deposits on open ground rather than actual occupation associated with buildings.

2 early-mid twelfth century: claustral buildings *Dorter range*

Extensive work has been done in the last two years on the Norman eastern claustral range. It attached directly on to the south transept of the church, and had a slype running across it on the ground floor against the transept. The southern limit of this passage may have also formed the north wall of the Chapter House, in this period confined entirely within the range. The ground immediately to the east of the range at this point was investigated but failed to show any extended apsidal end. The site of the entire range down to south of the Chapter House lies within the modern churchyard, so evidence on this point is accordingly limited.

The robber trench for an internal partition wall within the range was found south of the modern churchyard wall, 72ft (21.94m) from the south wall of the transept. This stood equidistant between the north wall of the *rere-dorter* and the probable position of the south wall of the Chapter House. This robber trench did not continue the line of the north wall of the *frater* eastwards, linking the two ranges integrally, as occurs with the *frater* and *cellarium*. This may suggest that the east range was built first, and the other two subsequently as a planned unit. A small hearth was located towards the eastern side of the range, 10ft (3.05m) north of the *rere-dorter* north wall. It was 2ft 4in (0.71m) square and bordered with four reused architectural fragments.

The *rere-dorter* block for the Norman claustral complex was attached at right angles to the *dorter* range; it may have extended east beyond the present limits of excavation. Its plan shows two unequal

sized units, with the drain set into the southern wall. It had been robbed almost entirely. (pl. 5). The wide drain floor (3ft: 0.91m) consisted of flat, waterworn limestones with a clay sealing; its sides were built upon the edges of the floor, with internal faces shaped and dressed. This *rere-dorter* had certainly been demolished by the time the fourteenth century *dorter* was constructed. It may have been pulled down even earlier, since outbuilding M5 which contained a substantial chimney footing and hearth perhaps of late thirteenth century date, was built over its western end. It is likely that M5 had originally extended further north-east, covering more of the *rere-dorter* site, before the fourteenth century south end of the new *dorter* range had truncated it.

The normal placing for *rere-dorter* blocks was intended to make use of existing drainage, natural or artificial, to flush out the drains. While this example showed clear signs at its eastern visible limit of heading towards the stream, there was no evidence at its western end for any consistent water supply other than that which might have been provided by the marshiness of the whole area. The dis-use of the *rere-dorter*, if it preceded the reconstruction of the main range, might perhaps be explained by its subsidence into this marshy ground, or through the draining and canalisation of the wider wet area removing the cleansing water supply.

3, 4 twelfth century: church

Rebuildings at the eastern end of the Abbey church are suggested by the footings and robber trenches seen in 1968; they indicate further problems when it is attempted to work out their implications for the area under the modern churchyard.⁷ The south *quire* aisle was extended east, early or in the middle of the century, and the main presbytery was later squared off on its originally apsidal footings. As first built, these two parts had shared a common sleeper wall which may have supported an arcade dividing up that part of the church. After the reconstructions, however, the new footings suggest that the *quire* gained its own south wall, and the south *quire* aisle its own north wall, with an infill between them.

The main problems concern the extent to which these rebuildings were carried west-wards in superstructure, and also the nature of that superstructure. It has been possible to trace the footing

Fig 2 (opposite) Elstow Abbey: Medieval and Post-Medieval: General Site Plan.

between the two areas, distinctive as three parallel foundations, back for 49ft (14.93m) from the east end of the rebuilt chapel. The footing for the eastward continuation of the Norman nave arcade sleeper wall can be followed eastwards for 20ft (6.09m) from the west end of the transept. The junction between the single early and the triple later footings might be expected to occur in relation to the east side of the south transept, but, as is often the case in this part of the site, the evidence is not available. Thus the reconstruction of the severely robbed ground plan is difficult; it is doubly difficult to visualise a viable superstructure upon it.

7 mid fourteenth century : claustral rebuilding. Cellarium

Two small trenches were excavated against the west side of the modern churchyard wall which overlies the west wall of the fourteenth century cellarium. Two external buttresses were found which correspond to the abutments found previously supporting vaulting within the range. If their intervals are consistent throughout the range, it would give the undercroft six bays south of the thirteenth century Outer Parlour, whose vaulting arrangements, being earlier, do not fit this spacing. Both external buttresses were seen as robber trenches, their fill being the same as that of the similarly robbed main wall which was retained in the mansion period, and removed after the late eighteenth century. This does not help to resolve the problem of whether the Abbey wall was reused in its entirety after the early seventeenth century, complete with its buttresses, or whether a new wall was built on the old footings; the surviving buttress footings could have been removed when an unbuttressed mansion wall was robbed to its lowest courses.

Frater

Investigation of the fourteenth century *frater* is now complete, with most of its total area excavated. Work since 1968 has been concentrated upon the eastern half of the range.

The complex junction between this and the rebuilt *dorter* range can be explained, through the extension of the first floor *dorter* over its adjacent eastern cloister walk. Since the range extends south beyond the *frater*, yet is abutted by it, part of the

first floor *dorter* extends over the extreme end of the south range undercroft. Thus on the ground floor of the *frater*, the main load-bearing west wall of the east range serves as a partition, making the slype which was later used as a warming room. This suggests that these two ranges were planned and laid out at the same time. The continuous walls of both ranges — a north and south in the *frater*, central and eastern in the *dorter* — were laid out as continuous footings, with the other sections, like the interrupted footings of the *dorter* west wall, laid out afterwards. This provides a satisfactory explanation for the relationship of footings to each other.

The south wall of the *frater* range had been strengthened at some time in its life, with a doubling of its width for a length of at least 20ft (6.0m) between the *dorter* range west wall footing and the first buttress to the west. Consequently this south wall appears both to abut and be abutted by the west wall of the *dorter* range. The additional length had been inserted by working from the ends to the middle, with a consequently awkward join. This may indicate a staircase in the thickness of the wall, representing the *frater* pulpit and its stairs, as at Battle, Tynemouth, Lacock and elsewhere.⁸ If so, it was a later addition, though the time interval is unknown.

Areas excavated across the whole width of the range have confirmed the previous impression that there was no central sleeper wall. The *frater* itself may have been on the ground floor of a single storey building, since its internal span is quite wide at 23ft (7.01m): certainly the southern cloister walk would have leant against the range rather than have been included in any first floor going over the top of it.

Dorter Range

The relationship of the east to the south claustral range has already been described. In the fourteenth century, this range moved inwards, while the other two contributed to what was in general an overall claustral expansion. The length of the range from the south transept was 126ft (38.4m) and its width was 29ft (8.84m).

The attachment of the new range to the church is not fully understood, since the evidence lies in the modern churchyard and is mostly inaccessible. The westward resiting of the range without a corresponding shift of the south transept means that either the north-west corner of the *dorter* range was not attached to the church at all, or that the

Fig 3 (opposite) Elstow Abbey: The Monastic Outbuildings of Claustral ranges.

western side of the south transept became masked by the extension alongside it of the new wall up to the south aisle wall. The second arrangement would involve vaulting over the north cloister walk; the first would need at least a door in a wall continuing the line of the south wall of this transept. It is also possible that the south transept may have ceased to be a planning obstacle by reason of its demolition, though there is as yet no evidence to support this.

Assuming for present purposes the simpler picture of a transept retained in the fourteenth century, the first floor *dorter* would presumably have abutted right up to it to allow access into the church by way of night stairs. Outside the transept, in the north end of the undercroft, and north of the Chapter House, was a slype through from the cloister, probably providing access to the monastic cemetery. In this period, though, there can have been barely sufficient width between the south wall of the south aisle and the north wall of the Chapter House.

The large building in the Chapter House position is discussed in this part of the report even though there are uncertainties about its dating. It was first seen in 1968 when a length of robber trench and a buttress footing were found at the southern end of the area excavation on the east side of the church. The eastern half was completely stripped subsequently and trials were made in the western half where the modern churchyard permitted. (pl 6a) The building had been placed squarely within the sunken carriageway dug out later, in the seventeenth century, leading from the porch of the Hillersden mansion to the main road. As a result, only a fairly thin stratification upon natural gravel remains under the carriageway metalling, which lies directly over the lower parts of the Chapter House robber trenches which are cut into natural. The only masonry *in situ* consists of the buttresses on the north side. Half the southern robber trench had been removed longitudinally by a large later disturbance. Dating evidence has been scarce, and the vital relationships to other buildings have been obscured by the modern churchyard.

An initial interpretation saw this building as the first Chapter House in the Norman stone plan, with a construction date set late in the twelfth century. The robber trench for its east wall had been cut into a pit containing twelfth century pottery. The north-east corner buttress foundation was seen as representing a Norman buttress of clasping type, although its construction did not consist of the usual unmor-

taired layers of alternate stone and gravel. The presence of a short length of footing with yellow mortar continuing the line of the south wall between the west walls of earlier and later *dorter* ranges was suggested as evidence that an existing Chapter House was lengthened westwards at the claustral rebuilding to reconnect it with the re-treating east range.

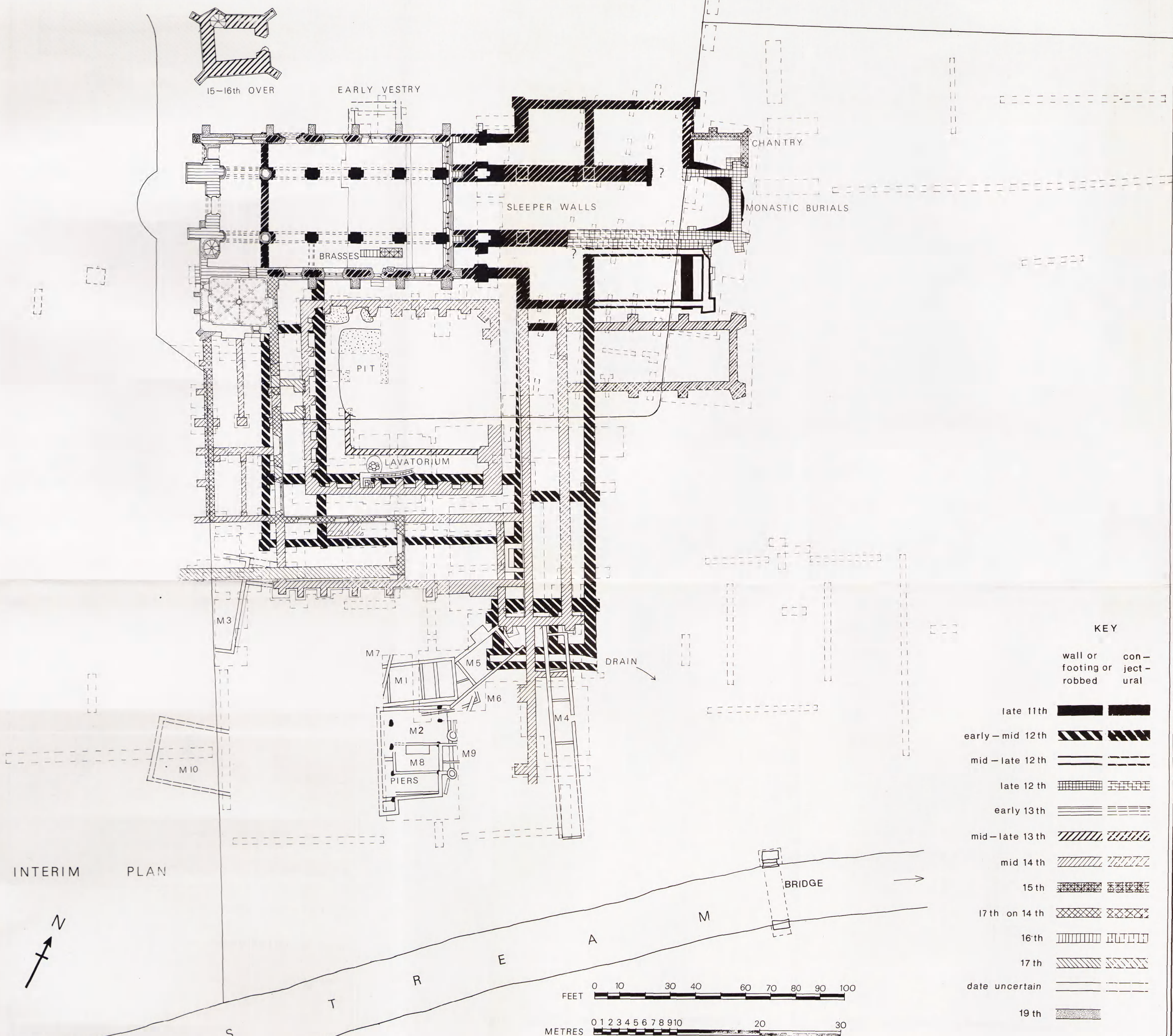
This dating and construction sequence must however be questioned in the light of more recent work. The south wall of the slype at the north end of the east range undercroft had a Norman footing, and may well have done service for the north wall of a Norman Chapter House entirely enclosed within the east range undercroft. Also, the north-east buttress footing might be given a later dating if it is argued that its shape represents a diagonal corner rather than a clasping buttress; this argument is strengthened by the intervals between the external buttresses on the north side, three of which have now been located. Projection west-wards of these intervals shows that they relate to a standing eastern wall of the earlier rather than the later *dorter* range. It is therefore suggested that the Chapter House was extended out to this extraordinary length, as far east as the main east end of the church, at some time in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, and that the earlier Chapter House was retained within the range to become its vestibule. This gave it a total length of 88ft (26.82m) and a width of 27ft (8.23m). When the *dorter* range was rebuilt, the dimensions of the Chapter House and vestibule together remained unchanged, but the length of the former may have increased by 10ft (3.04m) at the expense of the latter.⁹

A broad section was excavated across the *dorter* range immediately south of the modern churchyard wall. (pl 6b) A small clay tile hearth had been built against the west side of the east wall. The continuation westwards of this trench, excavated in 1967, had shown the cloister walk wall footing, now known to have supported an upper storey, to be much thicker than the other, lean-to, walls, around the cloister garth.¹⁰ The main internal footing of the eastern range had been built over the Norman predecessor at this point.

The south end of the *dorter* range projected 15ft (4.75m) beyond the south range. It was built directly on the site of the Norman *rere-dorter*. A thick footing extended south from the end of the range, continuing the line of the internal load-bearing wall for at least 60ft (18.0m). It had been heavily robbed, but there were indications of two

ELSTOW ABBEY 1965-70

MEDIEVAL AND POST MEDIEVAL



KEY

wall or
footing or
robbed

con-
ject-
ural

late 11th

early - mid 12th

mid - late 12th

late 12th

early 13th

mid - late 13th

mid 14th

15th

17th on 14th

16th

17th

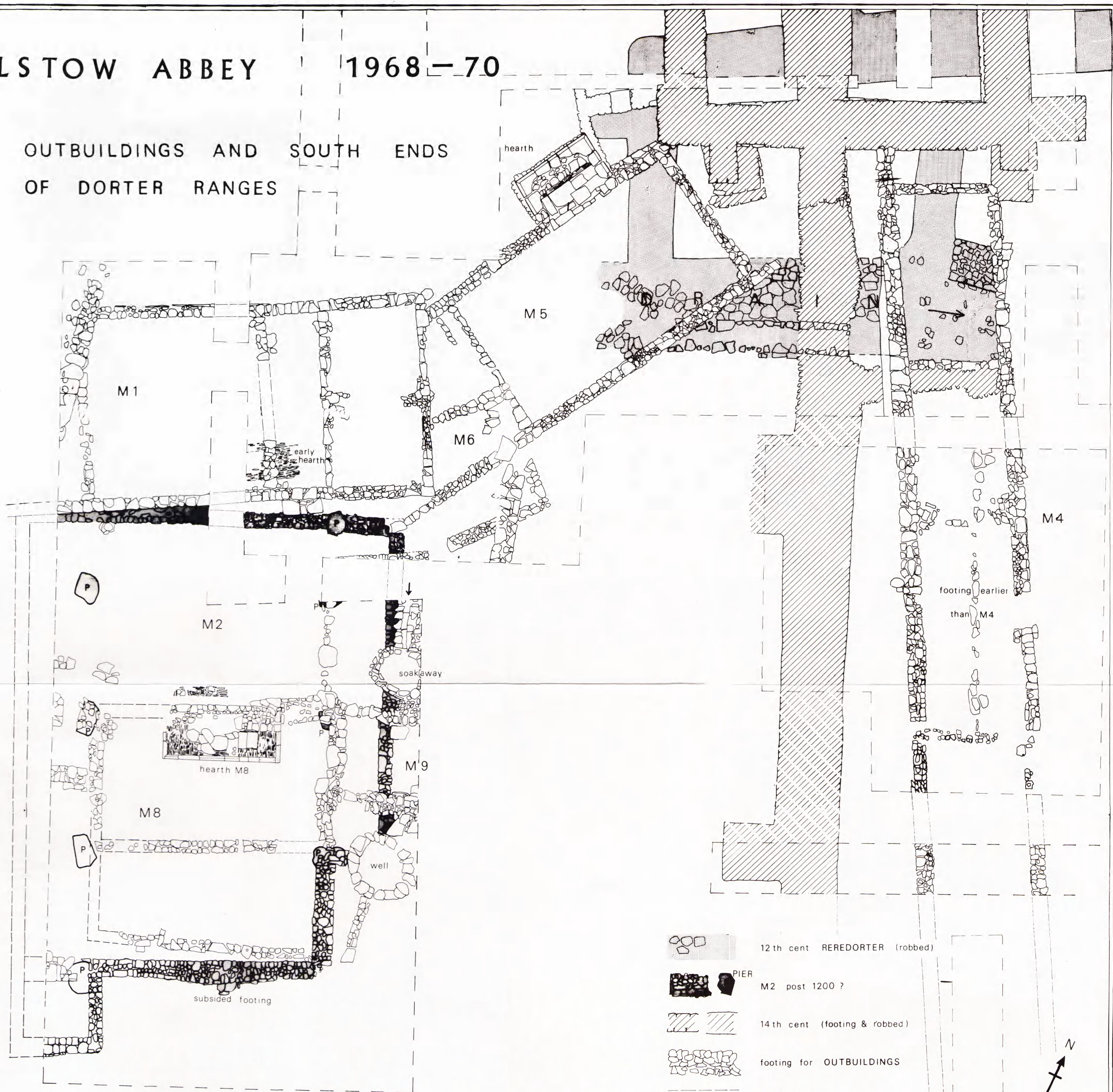
date uncertain

19th

ELSTOW ABBEY

1968-70

OUTBUILDINGS AND SOUTH ENDS OF DORTER RANGES



0 5 10 20 feet

0 1 2 3 4 5 metres

buttresses on its west side, and of a slighter footing coming off to the east. Though they suggest the west side of a large fourteenth century building, in the position for a detached *rere-dorter*, nothing has been seen of an eastern wall within a distance of 30ft (9.0m). Thus there may be a large building here, or this single much robbed footing may represent a drain running south from the *dorter*, whose south end contained the monastic lavatories. There was some fragmentary stonework under disturbed ground in the mechanical trial trench dug further to the south and at right angles to this wall, which may represent the line continuing. If it was a building and not just a drain, it must have been demolished by the time outbuilding M4 was constructed.

Examination of robber trench fills showed that the east range had been demolished before the south range. While the interval between the two events cannot be established, it is tempting to think of this sequence as representing the immediate removal of one range at the Dissolution while the other was preserved until the erection of the mansion in the early seventeenth century.

MEDIEVAL BURIALS

Trenches were excavated beyond the east end of the Abbey church to encompass more medieval skeletons as well as pagan Saxon cremations, so that comparisons could be drawn between the monastic population and that represented by the late Saxon inhumations. Several more skeletons or parts of skeletons were recovered, bringing the monastic total to about 90.¹¹ Some were buried in rough stone coffins, others in wooden ones as indicated by the presence of nails; some may have been only wrapped in a shroud. This monastic group comprises mainly females, though males and children were represented. The density of burial resulted in overburying and the disturbance of earlier by later burials. All were properly oriented, with arms more usually crossed, but sometimes by their sides. One burial was on its right side, with legs slightly flexed and arms pointing down at about 45° in front of it. One was a priest, with a substitute chalice, of poor quality lead and much decayed. (pl 6c). A limit to this graveyard was seen in a mechanical trial trench at about 90ft (27.0m) east of the church. At this point, the level of natural gravel, generally cut into by the graveyard, rose up sharply.

BUILDINGS TO SOUTH OF CLAUSTRAL AREA (Fig 3) (Pl 7a)

Up to 1968, three outbuildings had been noted

between the main abbey claustral complex and the stream, one between the south and west ranges, and two in trial trenches south of the refectory.¹² At least ten such outbuildings can now be identified. The sequence of structures and rebuildings presents many difficulties, due to their flimsiness and consequent incomplete survival. It cannot be safely laid out until the entire complex, which could even stretch between M10 and M8/9, has been excavated. The system of numbering may then need revision for a final report.

The absolute dating and description of precise function for each building presents further difficulties. Of the main monastic buildings, in addition to the claustral complex, a guest house and a farmery might be expected, but have not been positively located. Among domestic outbuildings, bake-houses, brewhouses, storehouses and sundry others could be expected, but with little detail surviving beyond hearths, specific identifications here could only be extremely tentative. There is the further difficulty that such outbuildings are almost the least investigated aspect of monastic archaeology; helpful comparative material from full series fully examined is extremely scarce.

These buildings were probably half-timbered, resting upon narrow and sometimes shallow stone footings which fall into two broad categories: M2 had a narrow deep coursed footing, including much reused clunch; the others had less regular footings of varying thickness and depth, with clayey sandy mortar, limestone pieces and reused tiles of stone and clay.

The alignments of the buildings may be significant for dating purposes. M3, M10 and M7 lay on a common axis, as did M1 and M4. M5 was eccentrically aligned, while M2 seems fairly square to the main claustral axis.

A brief description of each building follows.

M2 was perhaps the earliest in the sequence and the most distinctive in plan. Most of three sides have been seen, suggesting a basic rectangular shape 30ft (9.14m) by 37ft (11.28m), with its south-east corner inset, and an additional cell bonded into the south-west corner. The position of the west wall, though predictable, has yet to be seen. The internal space was divided into nave and two aisles, aligned north-south, with four bays. The main wall footings were all of one construction date, consisting of roughly coursed Totternhoe clunch blocks, roof and floor tiles, and some limestone pieces. The pier bases were large reused architectural fragments, some with worked faces. One

was put over a large pile of rubble as further support in spongy ground. Similar large stones were built into the main north and south walls. The pier base at the south east corner had been robbed.

The southern footing bulges out and tilts over and must represent drastic if not fatal subsidence. (pl 7b). Parts of the pier system may have been incorporated into *M8* and *M9*, but the thick gravel spread between *M8* and *M1*, which partly seals the footings of *M2*'s northern wall, shows that at least the northern half of the building had been pulled down by the period of these later buildings. A construction date for *M2* can only be derived from the pottery dumped in the silt underlying it, and the reuse of clunch blocks in the footings. Together they suggest a date after 1200, perhaps towards the middle or end of the thirteenth century as a *terminus post quem*. The function of *M2* is not obvious from the evidence of its internal arrangements; part of an earlier hearth lay under the gravel running up to the north side of the hearth in *M8*. Any attempt to interpret it as a farmery hall must take into account its position south of the cloisters on the wettest part of the site. It is necessary to show that the farmery did not lie south east of the claustral area or elsewhere, or that a farmery in that position is substantially later than *M2* before this aisled outbuilding can be considered in the same role.

M6 only partly survives, and is proposed as a building to make sense of three lengths of footing. It was later than *M2* and earlier than *M5*, though on similar axis to it. What survives may be the eastern corner, with the full width possibly twice the distance between a south wall and an internal partition. The footings were shallow, and the subsequent clearing of ground to build *M1* could account for most of their disappearance.

M5, on a diagonal axis to the other structures on the site, had a complex history. (pl 8a). It probably began as a three cell unit, with the central one having a large stone built hearth and chimney, set back outside the line of the north wall to minimise fire risk to the timber superstructure. The hearth footings were much deeper than those for the main walls and the highest surviving course consisted of a dressed plinth with external camfering. The floor of the hearth was mainly of large shaped clunch blocks, which had also been used for the internal sides, though had been replaced in a few instances by clay tile when heat had disintegrated the soft stone. The floor of the hearth sloped into the building. The central unit of this building had internal plastering on its footings, of a rough kind

for waterproofing rather than for decoration. A further unit almost certainly existed to the south-west, cutting *M6*, possibly abutting the earlier *M2*, and certainly removed by the later *M1*. There is some evidence for another unit on the north-east end, destroyed by the fourteenth century claustral reconstruction and the new south end for the *dorter* range.

Assuming the central part of *M5* continued in use when *M1* was built, it is not clear whether the two buildings were separate, or joined by the surviving triangular part of *M5*'s southern-west unit.

M3 has already been described.¹³

M10 Three limits to this building have been seen, but only in trial trenches. They indicate a width of 26ft (7.95m) and a length of at least 33ft (10.0m). The construction style of the west wall, with an external offset, is similar to that of *M3*, which has the same orientation. Part of a hearth was seen in the trial trench near this wall. It is not known how far east this building extended towards *M8*.

M1 (pl 8b) This building was 17ft (5.18m) wide and so far 33ft (9.14m) of its length has been excavated. A western limit has not yet been obtained. Its main axis lay east-west. In its first stage, it had a hearth near its south wall, of stone and clay roof tiles laid on edge. Later, this went out of use, and the west wall of a corridor was built over it. Access to this passage may have been from the south, over a square step attached to the outside of the south wall. It post-dated *M2* and was for part of its life contemporary with *M8* and *M9*.

M4 This long narrow single period building, of width 10ft (3.05m), has been traced south for over 80ft (24.0m) from where it abutted the south end of the fourteenth century *dorter* range by having its north-east corner built over a buttress footing. It postdated the *rere-dorter* drain (or wall) and ran south nearly parallel with it. There is some evidence for a fragmentary early footing running underneath it at a slightly different angle. It was divided into compartments by partition walls: three of these were seen in the northern end, from north to south 13ft (3.96m) 11ft 6in (3.50m) and 16ft (4.88m) long. The north edge of another partition wall, or perhaps the end wall, was seen 81ft (24.69m) from the north end. The building seems to have been free-standing apart from its attachment to the *dorter* range at one end. It might have been accommodation for animals, though the width is a little narrow for horses.

M9 The western side of this building was seen. Further investigation to the east is needed to deter-

mine whether it existed in its own right, or as part of *M8*. It was built over *M2*. It included three units: the north-western contained a drain leading south to a well-like soakaway: the central was roughly rectangular in shape; the southern contained a well within a strengthened 'L' shaped end. This well contained 3 iron bucket handles, an iron key, and a small gold pin. It is possible that only the central unit represented a covered structure and that the other two flanked it on the outside, the whole being a lean-to against *M8*.

M8 Only part of this building has been seen, and it is too early to suggest its western or eastern limits with confidence. It had been badly robbed; it was part of, or connected with, the west side of *M9*; it was built over the central part of *M2* and may have reused its pier bases as corner foundations. For part or all of its life it was contemporary with *M1*, since a gravel spread was laid between the two buildings. This building had at least two sections, the northern of which contained a stone and tile hearth, very large for the room in which it was placed, measuring 9ft (2.74m) by 4ft (1.22m). It had reused architectural fragments with chamfered edges forming a border to it on the west, east and south sides, and appeared to butt up against the north wall of the building. It was covered in ash, containing an iron poker. The floor of the hearth was mixed construction, including clay tiles on edge, flat floor and roof tiles and large flat stones.

M7 Only one wall has been seen, and further excavation makes it difficult to relate to any known building. It overlay the footing of *M1*, and is therefore likely to have been the latest end of the sequence. 15ft (4.57m) of wall was seen.

MANSION: c.1625-c.1775.

No problems primarily relating to this period were intentionally investigated. However, a brick drain with a flat floor and curved top was found running through the east end footings of *M10*, passing through an east-west trial trench south-west of *M8*, and on into the stream. It was larger and different in construction when compared with the other mansion period drains. It may have been a sewer. Its point of departure is not known, though this is likely to have been west of the known mansion buildings.

ENVIRONMENT

A number of trial trenches have been excavated, mostly mechanically, to determine some limits of occupation on the main site. They also provided information about the fluctuating depth of gravel

subsoil, and about the condition of some of the land in the medieval and earlier periods. These trenches have corroborated earlier evidence for a marshy area bordering the stream. Under the main outbuildings (*M2*, *M8* and *M9*) were wet silty layers containing a quantity of coarse sand filled and shell filled wares, with a few glazed sherds of the thirteenth century. The footing for the south wall of *M2* showed a dramatic lean and bulge. Subsidence may have been a cause of major alterations such as the demolition of the Norman *rere-dorter*, the rebuilding of the cloisters on a new plan in the fourteenth century, the propping up of part of the post-fourteenth century south range, and the complete rebuilding of the south mansion wall rather than the reuse of the adjacent monastic refectory wall. Thick clayey silts were found in the trenches on the extreme west of the site. There was a thick spread of rubble and mortar under *M4* which, together with the stratigraphy in the southernmost trial trenches, gave the impression of many tips of material dumped to make up ground or to give it some solidity. Several tips of stone were also found under *M8*.

This consolidation of soft, wet ground may be associated with medieval canalisation of a water-course connected with the medieval fishponds, making it into the present day stream. A view of this stream on the map shows its course to be irregular until it passes south of the Abbey where it runs virtually straight for about 360 yd (328m) before resuming a meandering course. It seems probable that this straight stretch was stone-lined, as there are several lengths of this part of the stream with slabs of stone still *in situ*. The footings for the bridge discussed below, are further evidence that the stream here follows the medieval channel. On the basis of available evidence, it is therefore suggested that the area was systematically canalised, consolidated and presumably drained, at some time not earlier than the first part of the thirteenth century.

BRIDGE (pl 7c)

Two stone footings on opposite sides of the stream were examined. They ran down the full height of the banks, but were set into them for only a few feet. Yellow sandy mortar had been used to bond the limestone slabs, and the northern side had been reinforced at a later date with some brick. Both had been disturbed by the action of tree roots.

These may represent the bearing points for a bridge; if so, it would have been narrow and for

foot traffic only. There is a local tradition that it represents the position of a sluice gate used to control the flow of water in the stream, connected with the fishponds higher up. The difficulty of this explanation however is that the bearing points excavated in the banks are possibly not set in far enough to give the necessary leverage; also it is hard to see what a sluice at this point might achieve, with no obvious means to cope with any resulting build up of water. It may make more sense in the light of the full examination of stream, ponds and associated stonework.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PLANS

Though the main periods of occupation on this site had been sketched in by 1968, the continuation of this high percentage excavation policy has produced further results of importance for this site and for monastic archaeology. The unusual plan of the church's eastern arm, the extensive Chapter House, the extremely complicated series of outbuildings all underline the potential variations of plan and development which this medium sized house can show. The discussion of Elstow Abbey in its context belongs to the final report.

At the time of writing, there seems to be work for at least two more years. This will be concentrated upon outbuildings, and upon other aspects of the monastic precinct surrounding the main claustral complex.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rev P. Hartley, the Vicar of Elstow, and Mr C. Prudden, who farms the land, have again kindly permitted excavation, and have been helpful and co-operative throughout. The project is sponsored by the Bedford Archaeological Society and by Portsmouth Polytechnic. Other financial support has come from the Harpur Trust and from the Carnegie (UK) Trust. Local organisation has run smoothly thanks to Mr J. Messer, Secretary of the Bedford Archaeological Society, Messrs A. Chrystal, M.J. Long, and B.B. West, who also has advised on architectural matters.

The labour force, at times more than 50 persons a day, was drawn mainly from local schools. The Headmaster of Bedford School, Mr W.M. Brown,

and the Housemaster and his wife, Mr and Mrs D.P. Stileman, have most kindly allowed use of Sandersons boarding house as an excavation camp.

The work of supervision on the site was ably performed by the Misses Sue Linger, Kate Nichols, Angela Simco, and Messrs William Annan, Andrew Cooper, Peter Cottrell, Anthony Couchman, Robin Ferguson, and George Nell. Mrs Evelyn Baker assisted with recording and supervision, and designed and set up an exhibition of the first five years' results at the Moot Hall. Thanks are also due to many others for help with various aspects of the project. I am grateful to Mr R. Gilyard-Beer and to Professor Barry Cunliffe for reading and commenting upon this report in typescript.

NOTES

- 1 D B Baker 'Excavations at Elstow Abbey, 1966-68' *Beds Arch J* 4, 1969, 27-41; see also D B Baker 'Excavations at Elstow Abbey; 1965-66' *Beds Arch J* 3, 1966, 22-30.
- 2 Baker, 1969, 28, 34 and fig 2.
- 3 Baker, 1969, 28, 30, 34 and fig 2.
- 4 This whole problem of parish churches and chantry chapels will be discussed in the final report. The evidence is ambiguous. Some comments may be found in *VCH Beds* 1, 1904, 354; *Beds C R O*, CRT 130/3; S R Wigram *Chronicles of Elstow*, 1885, esp 134-5, 150-4. Joan Beertrofte wished to be buried in the chapel of St Helen in the churchyard of the parish of Elstow: no 103 in P Bell (ed) 'Bedfordshire Wills, 1480-1519' *BHRS* 45, 1966, 41. I am grateful to Mrs S C Hawkes for discussing the problems of the Saxon cemetery.
- 5 Description and comment upon the eastern arm of the church has been deliberately kept to a minimum. The present state of evidence, while markedly incomplete, may excite various proposals of reconstruction; but these in turn are likely to be overtaken by the results of further work. R Gilyard-Beer and M Biddle have kindly reviewed the problem.
- 6 Baker, 1969, 32
- 7 Baker, 1969, figs 1 and 2
- 8 I owe this observation to R Gilyard-Beer.
- 9 I am grateful to M Biddle for a discussion of aspects of this Chapter House development.
- 10 Baker, 1966, pl 4a.
- 11 Baker, 1969, 34 and fig 2.
- 12 Baker, 1966, 25, 29 and fig 2; Baker, 1969, 29, 39 and fig 1.
- 13 Baker, 1969, 39.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to the Bedford Archaeological Society and the Portsmouth Polytechnic for grants towards the costs of this paper.

NOTES

Neolithic flint implements from Wymington.

G.J. DRING

The two flint implements forming the subject of this note were discovered by Mr G. Wheeler of Rushden, Northants, near Wymington, north Beds (SP 944648). The flints, found within a few inches of each other, lay on the surface of scrapings from deep rabbit burrows. The burrows, on the northern aspect of a fairly steep grass slope, were dug into an extremely fine, dark black-brown soil which was devoid of stone. The slope is marked at the top by a low rounded ridge at the two hundred feet contour line and the burrows were immediately below this ridge. Medieval plough strips are visible on the plateau above the slope and the low ridge probably marks the plough boundary. At the lower end of the slope there is a small stream.

The flints (Fig 2 Nos. 1 and 2) are finely preserved examples of Neolithic implements (3000-1800 BC) showing no secondary abrasive damage. One, (1) a double sided scraper 5in (127mm) long, 1½in (38mm) wide and ½ in (13mm) thick (max) is largely a dirty pale yellow brown in colour with a blue-black portion at one end (lower end in figure). The implement retains a small amount of chalky-white cortex (stippled in figure). The second implement (2) is a combined side-knife edge and end-

scraper 4in (102mm) long, 2in (51mm) wide and 0.5in (13mm) thick (max), grey-blue in colour with some patches of white. A fairly large area of chalky-white cortex (0.5mm thick) is retained. Some retouching has been made along both long edges of (1) to produce the scraping edges. The retained cortex of (1) suggests that further work was intended. The long knife edge of (2) was formed by flake detachment using a single blow. This edge has required the minimum of very minute retouchings to produce a keen edge. A series of secondary flakings at the broad end on both sides of the flake has destroyed both the striking platform and bulb of percussion but on the slightly convex face transverse ripple marks are visible whilst in profile the flake exhibits the typical chonchoidal fracture.

Apart from examination on the ground no excavation of the site of discovery has been made and the original context of the flint remains unknown. The unusual circumstances of their discovery may indicate that a hoard of implements similar to those discovered at Temple Springs, Wilbraham, Cambs., has been disturbed.

I thank Mr Wheeler for allowing me to examine these interesting implements.

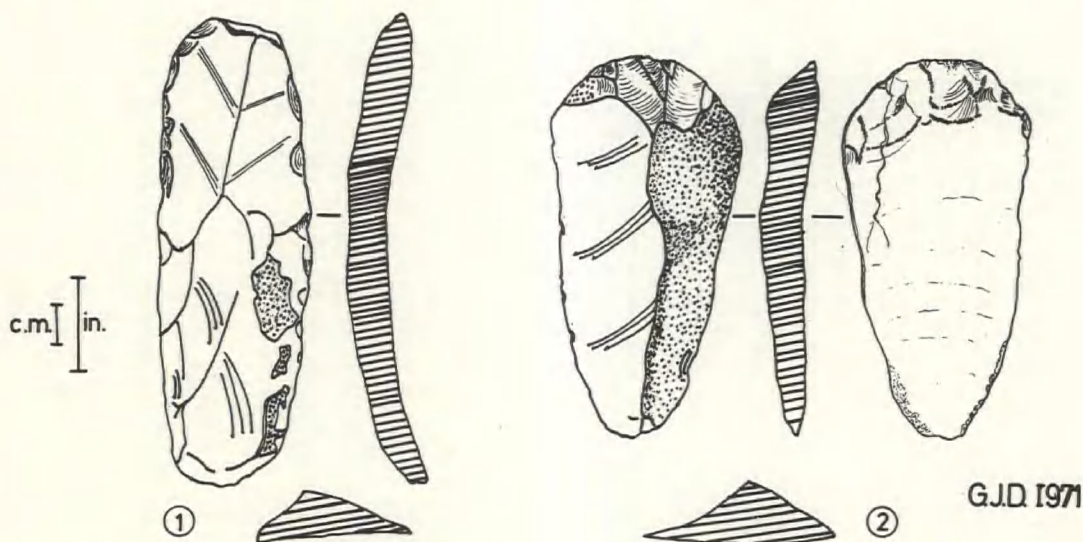


Fig 1 Flints from Wymington

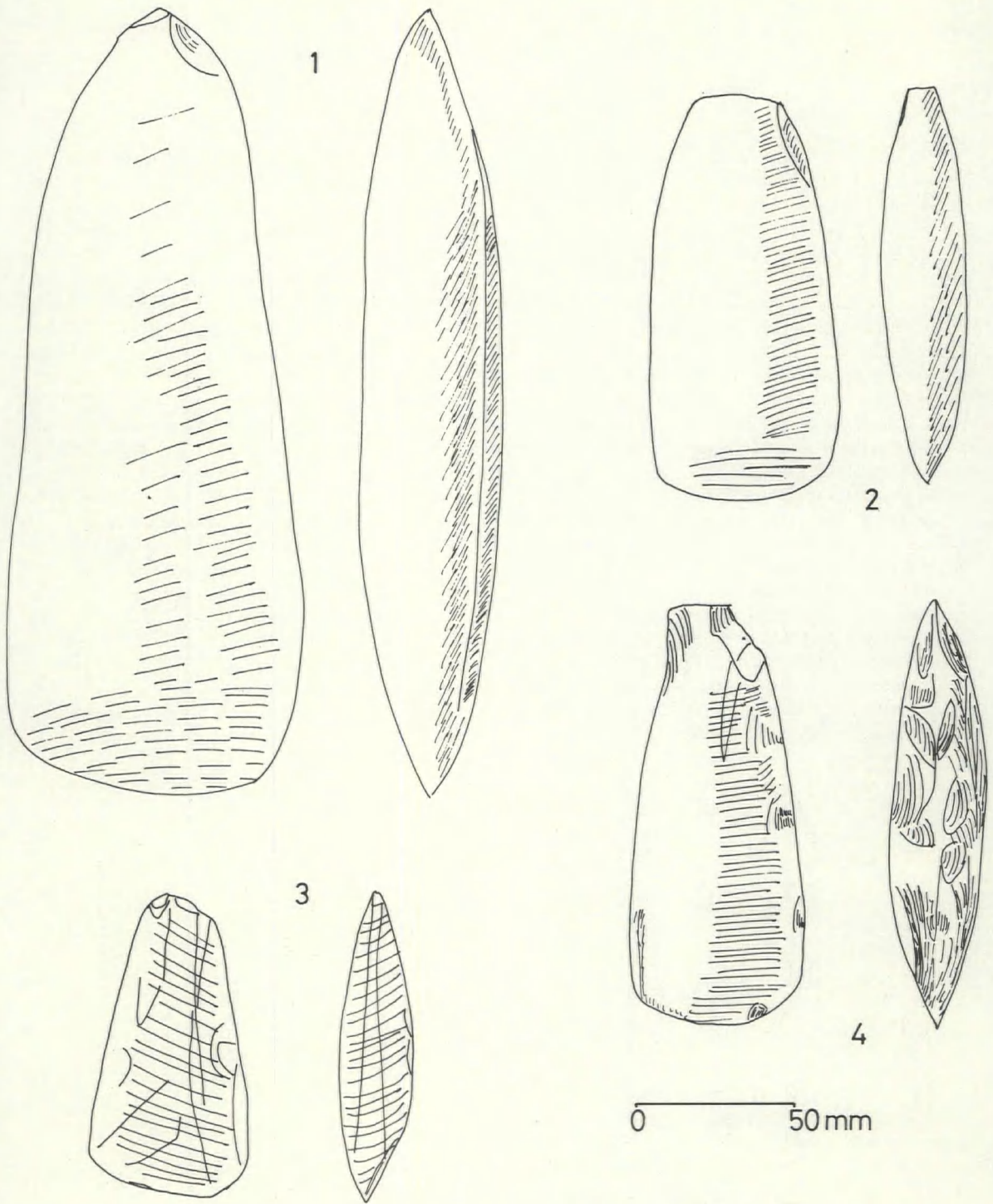


Fig 2 Neolithic axes in Bedford Museum

Neolithic Axes in Bedford Museum: Some Recent Acquisitions

DAVID KENNETT

SUMMARY

A summary of the recent acquisitions by Bedford Museum of local neolithic finds. These are stone axes from Biggleswade, Putnoe and Elstow Moors, and a flint axe from Biggleswade.

The neolithic collections of Bedford Museum have long been recognised as important, as is shown by publication a long time ago of the pottery and stone collections¹ then existing. Recently, however, a number of new acquisitions of chance finds have been made and this short note seeks with drawings to bring these finds to some greater prominence. In the last few years only one new ceramic acquisition has been made by the museum, that is a beaker from Sussex, but several finds of stone implements have been brought in.

Since 1966 Bedford Museum have acquired three stone axes all from Bedfordshire, a flint axe from Biggleswade and an axe-hammer from Rollesby, Norfolk. The local finds are illustrated on figure 2.

1 Axe of Great Langdale stone found at Furze field, Putnoe, Bedford in 1970. Length 252mm, maximum width to the crescentic blade 91mm (70/B/17).

2 Axe of Great Langdale stone found at Biggleswade, exact location not known, in 1966. Length 131mm, maximum width 58mm (66/B/17).

3 Greenstone axe, damaged at the blade and with a fault on one face, found on Elstow Moors and given to the museum in 1971. Polished with a trapezoid blade, length 101mm, maximum width 52mm (71/B/112).

4 Polished flint axe, little damaged, found at Biggleswade in 1970. Length 137mm, maximum width 54mm (70/B/50).

This group of diverse finds provide a fair cross-section of the larger stone implements of neolithic England. All ascriptions of stone have been made visually as thin slicing has yet to be done.² The publication of a range of stones in the local axes illustrates the wide connections of neolithic Bedfordshire in the areas from which axes originated. Great Langdale axes, from Westmorland, have also been found in some quantity in the Nene valley. Northampton Museum have seven examples in all:

from Burton Latimer, Bugbrook, Duston, Gretton, between Gretton and Kirby, near Irchester and from Northampton itself. There is another example from Elstow Road, Bedford, in Bedford Museum³ as well as the two here published. There is a greenstone axe from Miller's Bog, Pavenham in Bedford Museum⁴ and Northampton Museum have examples from Stimson's Avenue, Northampton, and near Helpstone. Apart from the Biggleswade axe there is a polished flint axe from Cauldwell Priory, Bedford.⁵ Cornish stone, found at a number of localities was often used for axes and Bedford Museum have examples of Cornish stone axes from Kempston⁶ and Wyboston.⁷ There are chert axes from Cauldwell Priory⁸ and Jackman's Farm, Kimbolton Road, Bedford,⁹ and one of white chert from Blunham.¹⁰ Slightly more unusual in the stone is an axe of Ophitic Dolerite found at Amptill.¹¹

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is grateful to Mr F.W. Kuhlicke for access to the collections of Bedford Museum and for encouragement and permission to publish these chance finds.

NOTES

- 1 S Piggott 'Neolithic Pottery from the British Isles' *Arch J* 88 (1929) 110-112; G C Dunning 'Bronze Age Beakers found in Bedfordshire' *Ant J* 18 (1938) 284-286; A Evans *Ancient Stone Implements* (1872) *passim*; and P G Langdon *Bedford Modern School Museum Guide* (1926) 25-29 and pl 3. The two other finds mentioned in this note will be published in appropriate periodicals.
- 2 For work on petrology of stone implements see E D Evens *et al* 'Fourth Report on the Petrological Identification of Stone Axes' *P P S* 28 (1962) 209-266 and references there cited.
- 3 Bedford Museum, 2625
- 4 Bedford Museum, 2619; Evans, 1872, 101.
- 5 Bedford Museum, 2626.
- 6 Bedford Museum, 2623.
- 7 Bedford Museum, 2668.
- 8 Bedford Museum, not accessioned
- 9 Bedford Museum, not accessioned but has contemporary label.
- 10 Bedford Museum, not accessioned
- 11 Bedford Museum, 2637.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to Bedford Corporation for a grant towards the cost of this paper.

Iron Age Pottery from Mowsbury Camp, Ravensden, near Bedford

G. J. DRING

Mowsbury or Mossbury Camp is a hillfort in the parish of Ravensden (TL 066532) some two and a half miles to the north east of Bedford. It is sited above steeply inclined natural slopes to the south and south west and commands fine views across the River Ouse valley. The nature and ground plan of the surviving earthworks suggest two main periods of constructional activity. Within a level enclosure encompassed by a now almost weathered and reduced rampart lies a moated complex. Excavations to be directed by the writer on behalf of Bedford Town Council and Museum and the Department of the Environment, Summer 1971, will no doubt show that the enclosure was fortified during the early Iron Age whilst the moated complex, not to be considered in the forthcoming work, is typical of many medieval sites.

From recent study in the field, supported by additional evidence from aerial photography,¹ the existence of a large, hitherto unrecorded ditch has been established lying outside the weathered rampart. Modern ploughing over this ditch has cut into the surviving remains of the rampart and has produced an abundant scatter of intensely burnt clay fragments bearing impressions of timber. Repeated cultivation has resulted in the accumulation of an encircling band of orange-red coloured plough soil around the earthworks. It is particularly noticeable on the south and south west aspects of the site. Rabbit scrapings also throw up such burnt material from the body of the rampart. It is very likely that this material originated from a revetted facing in front of the rampart destroyed by fire. There have been no scientific excavations of the earthworks although from diggings by various individuals within the confines of the earthworks collections of pottery have been made. A group of pottery recovered from clearance of some of the ditches sometime before 1920 was examined by T.D.Pryce and attributed to pre-Roman and Roman periods. Recent study of pottery in the possession of Mr E. G. Crouch, Cleat Hill Farm, Ravensden, extends the range of occupation with examples typical of the early Iron Age and Medieval periods.

The pottery sherds (Fig 3 Nos. 1, 2 and 3) illustrated are from the collection obtained by Mr Crouch and the late Mr W. Allen and are noteworthy since they are most probably from the earliest occupat-



Fig 3 Pottery from Mowsbury Camp.

ions of this site in the Iron Age. A fairly large number of body sherds in the same fabric were also in the group.

The Pottery (Fig 3 Nos. 1-3)

- 1 Situlate jar. Rim and base sherds from same vessel. Carefully made and finished. Surfaces very smooth but slightly uneven contour in places. The fabric is of fairly uniform thickness throughout the vessel. Overall outer-surface colour is biscuit but variable with dark brown and black patches. Inner-surface dark brown/black; core is black. Temper is unevenly distributed but shows no signs of being burnt-out during firing. Surfaces are of minimum thickness and do not contrast with the core. The profile is rather squat and globular, the shoulder fairly pronounced and the base slightly concave. A tall neck, very slightly flaired, carries a flattened T-shaped rim. Decoration on the shoulder and which was probably repetitive, consists of finger-tip impressions, lacking signs of the nail, applied with left hand. The indentations raised the inner-surface of the vessel. Rim diameter is 5.5in (143mm). Base diameter is 3.5in (90mm).
- 2 Rim sherd from Situlate jar. T-rim pinched-in, not squashed. Outer-surface variable dark-red, brown and black; inner-surface bright red; core is grey/black. Surfaces 1mm in thickness and contrast with core. Not as well made as (1) above. Uneven surface. High percentage of temper. Rim diameter 4.5in (115mm).

- 3 Body sherd. Similar fabric to (1) above, but probably not from the same vessel. Has single finger-tip impression below which is a well-formed 'boss'. It is not known whether this 'boss' constituted part of a repetitive decoration around the vessel or a devolved handle present as a decorative feature.

Discussion and Conclusions

Considered as a group the pottery is all hand-made and the sherds are similar in terms of fabric, degree of tempering and surface and core colouration. They admit to differences in the degree of manufacturing skill. The fabric which does not readily yield to abrasion is reasonably well fired but the preponderance of dark cores and variable surface colours ranging from pale biscuit through shades of red and brown to grey and black indicate poor temperature control during manufacture and also that the bodies of the pots were not totally oxidised. A considerably high percentage of tempering in the form of finely crushed mollusc was incorporated, suggesting that the clays used suffered dehydration and shrinkage on firing thus causing breakage. An uneven distribution of tempering within the clay denotes deliberate inclusion but poor puddling.

The restored vessel (fig 3 No. 1) is the situlate jar which occurs in early Iron Age contexts. At Rainsborough Hillfort, Northants,² the type is dated to the 4th-2nd centuries B C and at Hunsbury Hill Fort, Northants,³ vessels both with and without finger tip impressions are placed in the period 600-400 B C. In Bedfordshire, examples from Puddlehill, Dunstable⁴ are circa 350-300 B C. Whilst Iron Age parallels for the raised 'boss' (fig 3.3) have been noted at Fengate, Peterborough⁵ and elsewhere^{6,7} this feature also frequently occurs on vessels from the middle and late Bronze Age both in England and Europe. Protruding knobs are

present on a small late Bronze Age vessel (1000-800 B C) from Goring, Sussex⁸ and from the same period there is an example on a sherd from Mildenhall Fen (Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology Cambridge). In Europe, four vessels (Copper Age) with knobs were recovered from a grave group at Tisza-Polgar, Hungary. Middle Bronze Age vessels (Bronze Age II) from Füzesabony and Tószeg, Hungary, carry knobs (Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge). Protruding knobs would facilitate handling of vessels whilst two of the four knobs on the Füzesabony example are perforated presumably for suspension of the vessel.

The Mowsbury specimen together with those other Iron Age examples illustrate the persistence of late Bronze Age pottery traditions during the lengthy transition period to the early years of the Iron Age.

Although these sherds hint at the early historical associations for Mowsbury Camp their precise cultural and historical context can only be determined from stratified parallels which at present are lacking for this site.

I thank Mr E.G. Crouch for kindly allowing me to examine these sherds.

NOTES

- 1 Aerofilms Ltd., Boreham Wood, Herts. (Plate Serial No R10 7456).
- 2 M Avery, J E G Sutton and J W Banks. 'Rainsborough, Northants, England: Excavations 1961-5'. *P P S* 33, 1967, 207-306.
- 3 C I Fell. 'The Hunsbury Hill Fort, Northants' *Arch J* 93, 1963, 57-100.
- 4 C L Matthews, 'Ancient Dunstable' Manshead Arch. Soc, *M D but about* 1963.
- 5 C Hawkes and C I Fell. An Early Iron Age Site at Fengate, Peterborough. *Arch J* (1943).
- 6 C C Hawkes, J N L Myers and C E Stevens, *St Catherine's Hill, Winchester, P Hants F C*, 9, 1930.
- 7 M E Cunnington *All Cannings Cross* (1920).
- 8 A E Wilson, *A Guide to the Bronze Age Collections*, [Worthing Museum Publications 2]

Romano-British pottery kiln site near Elstow

G. J. DRING

During preparation of a celery trench (Spring 1970) at South Bedford Allotment Association Gardens, Mile Road, Bedford, (TL 058477) a further pottery kiln (Kiln VI) was discovered. The kiln, of mid 1st century A D origin and updraught

construction, was the sixth excavated at this site. Whilst stratification of contents within the stoke hole was largely destroyed by the celery trench the structure of the furnace and flue was well preserved with the pedestal type centre column (removed to

Bedford Museum) and fire bars surviving in situ.

Recent excavations at the site (Spring 1971) have located areas where well-stratified sequences survive and from which dating material other than pottery is enabling a more precise dating for the main phases of occupation and kiln activity to be established. Hitherto, dating has been based solely on comparative typology of the pottery, but with the exception of an incorrect date for the second phase of kiln activity at the site the general chronology remains as previously published.¹ Apart from two hand made sherds in Iron 'B' tradition in a predominantly Iron 'C' context there is as yet no evidence for settlement of this site prior to the beginning of the first century A D. This in all probability is due to the limited area excavated at this site since in a collection of sherds obtained from the Iron Age hillfort, Mowsbury Camp (TL 066533) only 3½ miles to the north of the kiln site, sherds from an early Iron Age hand-made situlate jar were present.

Iron Age pottery from the kiln site is dated by the occurrence of Butt Beakers to the late Belgic period immediately preceding the Conquest (10-43 AD). Advancement in potting technology during the first century A D, and illustrated in five of the kilns examined, probably reached the area very soon after the Conquest. During excavation of a rectangular enclosure ditch a fine example of a segmental strip bow bronze fibula (*Camulodunum*, Class B, Collingwood Type Ki, Wheeler 'Langton Down' type) was found. This type is Gaulish in origin and was introduced into Britain by pre-Conquest trade and during the Conquest. The brooch was found in fills where a transition from the typical Belgic pottery to the Romanized fabric characteristic of the kilns was clearly evident. Prototypes for most of the first century kiln products occur at the site in pre-Conquest fabrics.

The earliest structural feature excavated was a prepared layer or floor consisting of fragmented kiln bars and potsherds rammed into a depression out in the natural terrace to a depth of some six inches with its northern and eastern margins at right angles. Although no traces of walling in any form or post holes survived at its edges this structure may be the floor of a pottery hut. Nearby, a magnetic anomaly in the form of a rectangular feature, approximately 30ft by 10ft was indicated in the proton magnetometer survey carried out at the site. This feature has not been examined but a large mass of kiln bars similar to the excavated floor would produce such an anomaly.

The floor of kiln bars examined was cut by a circular enclosure ditch the primary fill of which consisted of kiln debris, fragmented kiln bars and potsherds. A fragment of samian of Dragendorf form 29 (probably Claudian), the upper end of a 'Colchester' Type bronze fibula together with further sherds of painted Belgic pottery date the deposit. The infilling of this ditch during the period following the Conquest suggest that the kiln bars and sherds in the 'floor' cut by this ditch may either indicate pre-conquest kiln activity or at least validate an immediate post Conquest date. From the upper fill of this ditch a tinned, bronze fibula (pin missing) of the 'Hod Hill' type, (Collingwood Group P) of Claudian-Neronian dating was recovered.

The stoke hole of Kiln V was formed by removing a portion of soft fill from a first century enclosure ditch lying immediately to the south of the kiln furnace. The ditch contained first century debris probably from Kilns III and IV situated close-by. The rammed packing of wasters in the furnace of Kiln V together with soil and lumps of unfired clay in the stoke hole indicated a rapid and deliberate filling of the structure when discarded. Much of this filling was first century material thrown up in the original digging of the stoke hole, and from this an imitative As of Claudius I (41-54 A D) was recovered. The reverse shows Minerva advancing left with shield and javelin. Such imitative coins were produced in large quantities in the Western provinces between 41 and 64 A D when Nero reformed the coinage.

Evidence dating the second phase of kiln activity (Kiln V) to the mid second century A D (previously but incorrectly dated to the late third century on the basis of ring-necked flagons made in the kiln and reported by Collingwood² not to appear in Britain until after 250 AD) was contained in two elongate, oval-shaped gullies, one of which cut into the circular enclosure ditch and the second through the furnaces and stoke holes of Kilns II and IV. A Tapering Bow bronze fibula, pin missing, inlaid with green and yellow enamel was recovered together with wasters from Kiln V from the gully cut into Kilns IV and II. This fibula with parallels from Caerleon Amphitheatre and Holt, Denbighshire, is dated 130 - 160 AD.

The first mentioned of these gullies also cut a rammed gravel make-up over the mid first century circular enclosure ditch and contained debris from a burnt wattle and daub building together with many nails, burnt samian ware and small fragments of

glass. From the rammed gravel a fragment of a pipe clay figurine of Apollo with lyre was recovered. Above the gravel-spread, at the transition of the plough soil hammer head mortarium rims (creamy white paste with bands of red-brown decoration) and a coin of Tetricus (barbarous radiate inscribed

TETICUS) indicate third century associations for the site.

NOTES

- 1 *Beds Arch J* 4 (1969) 85.
- 2 R G Collingwood *The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1930).

A second century Roman well near Leighton Buzzard

RICHARD HAGEN

One of the most interesting additions to the Collections of Luton Museum in 1970 is a quantity of Roman pottery found during the excavation of a Roman well on a site at Overend Green Farm, Heath and Reach, in an area rapidly being destroyed by sand quarrying.

It has been known for a number of years that Roman and other remains have been turned up from time to time during sand digging operations, and these have been recorded at various times by local archaeological groups and individuals. That this particular material was recovered was due largely to the energy and enthusiasm of Mr Jack Griffin, of Leighton Buzzard, who has for many years kept an eye on the advancing quarrying operations.

The site is at Double Arches Sand Pit, owned and worked by Messrs Joseph Arnold and Sons, of Leighton Buzzard. A heavy clay overburden up to twenty feet thick is stripped before sand quarrying can begin, and it was during the removal of the boulder clay and the underlying gault that the well was discovered.

The well lay to the north-west of the present pit (SP 936292) and was about twelve feet in depth from the surface. It was approximately circular in plan, about three feet six inches in diameter, and was lined with roughly coursed rubble and pebbles of sandstone, quartzite, etc. apparently collected from the surrounding boulder clay.

The top seven feet of the well were exposed, in section by the mechanical excavator, and much of the upper fill had been disturbed. Mr Griffin enlisted the help of the Leighton Buzzard Methodist Men's Forum, and the lower half of the well was excavated. At about 10ft 6in from the surface the first complete vessel was found, and a fairly large quantity of pottery was recovered from the bottom of the well. A few animal bones were found, and include remains of cow, sheep and pig.

The excavators found traces of what may have been a stone floor or cobbled yard in the vicinity of the well, and nearby a ditch, which contained pieces of timber and stone, suggesting that perhaps a Roman building stood nearby.

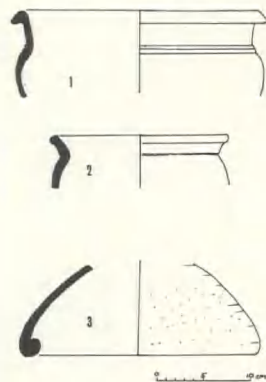


Fig 4 Pottery from the well.

The Pottery

- 1 Jar of hard black burnished ware.
- 2 Rim of grey sandy paste, hard fired.
- 3 Red shell-gritted ware, apparently part of a lid to a large storage jar.
- 4 Soapy ware with shell grit tempering. The fabric is fired buff, and there are two wide bands of fine rilling or combing on the outside of the jar. This was the first complete vessel to be recovered from the well.
- 5 The second complete vessel. This is of a sandy grey fabric with shell grit tempering, and has two plugs of lead let into the wall, just above the widest girth and both on the same side of the pot. If this and 4 were water jars, the lead plugs

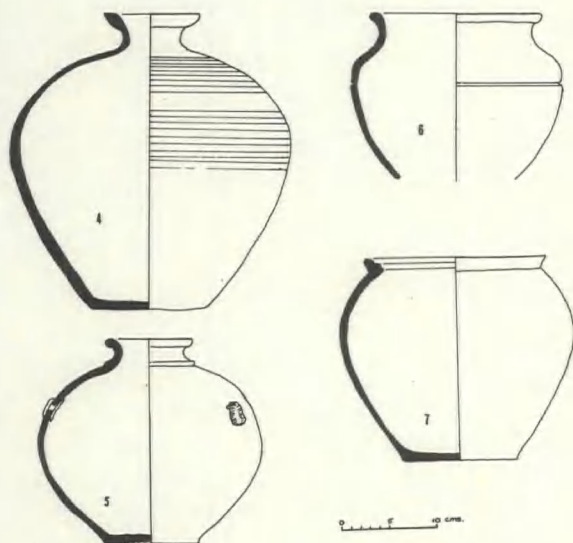


Fig 5 Pottery from Well at Leighton Buzzard.

could possibly have been intended to help tip the jar so that it would fill more easily when lowered into the water.

- 6 Red sandy ware. A fine per-shaped jar.
- 7 Cooking pot of sandy paste with sparse shell grit. The rim is recessed to take a lid. This vessel was found in fragments, but almost all the pieces were recovered, and it is probable that the pot was complete when dropped into the well.

Most of the other pottery was in small fragments, but there are at least three other vessels of which substantial portions survive, though in many pieces. Unfortunately the rims of these do not appear to be present among the fragments.

No fine wares were found, although colour-coated and samian wares have been found elsewhere in the sand pit area.

Parallels for the pottery can be found at most major sites, (e.g. 2, 6 and 7 at Verulamium) where they are described as styles which reflect native traditions, but use Roman methods of manufacture. These would suggest a date for the well of not later than the first half of the second century.

The Lack Collection

DAVID H. KENNETT

SUMMARY

A brief resume of one of the constituent collections of the Pritchard Museum of Bedford Modern School, now in Bedford Museum, recently enlarged by a deposit of nineteen palaeoliths and four Roman pots. In one of the pots was a cremation with a brooch.

INTRODUCTION

The collections of Bedford Museum come from a number of sources. Principal among these is the Pritchard Museum of Bedford Modern School which forms the bulk of the collection and the base to which later additions have been made. This collection, in turn, is an amalgam of a number of collections presented since 1886 to the Pritchard Museum of Bedford Modern School. Generally these collections, which in the original register of that museum, had individual numbering systems, are known by

the name of their donor. Thus the extensive Romano-British and other material from Sandy given by the late E.T. Leeds-Smith was known as the Leeds-Smith collection.

A small but important collection given to the museum in 1904 was the finds made at Kempston and other places by Edward Lack of Kempston. Many of these finds were made on land owned by him at 1, High Street, Kempston and opposite on the north-western corner of the central triangle of Kempston: an area well-known to be productive of archaeological finds from the Neolithic to the Anglo-Saxon period (approx TL 028474). The Lack collection has finds from a number of other places but these are purely of Palaeolithic hand-axes. Bedford Museum have Lack collection palaeoliths from Cople, Biddenham, and Bedford, but the other main group of Lack finds, Romano-British pottery and brooches, have only one provenience: Kempston.

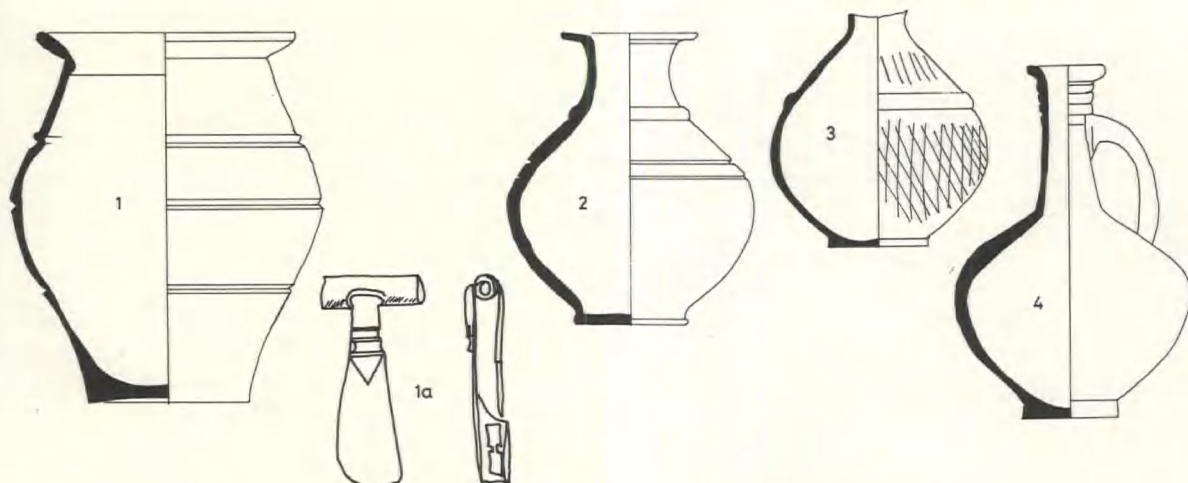


Fig 6 Pottery and brooch from the Lack Collection (Pots $\frac{1}{4}$, brooch $\frac{1}{2}$).

The finder of the Lack collection presented the majority of his finds in 1904 but some remained in his possession. These have now been given to Bedford Museum by his nephew, the Rev L.J.W. Lack, of Leighton Buzzard. The new material consists of a series of nineteen palaeoliths, mainly from Kempston but including one from Bedford, and a group of four Romano-British pots from Kempston. In one of the pots was a cremation with a bronze brooch.

The four pots and the brooch are illustrated in the present note; and a future issue of the *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* will contain descriptions and illustrations of the palaeoliths by Mr David Philpott.

THE ROMANO-BRITISH FINDS

The Romano-British finds in the original Lack deposit were six pots and nine brooches, all of fairly standard Romano-British types readily paralleled in other collections in Bedford Museum. The pots were remarkable only for that illustrated in the *Bedford Modern School Museum Guide*, a small, narrow jar, with a bulbous central portion, in a black ware with a spiral ornament in a white slip. The brooches are all of the simple, safety-pin type. The new vessels and brooch are :

1 Jar in grey ware, with dirty grey surface to a grey core, hard-fired; distinguished by three depressed cordons, of which the central one is at the greatest diameter of the pot. Height 198mm, rim diameter 136mm. This pot (70/B/56) on cleaning was found to contain a cremation with much earth packing it. Associated with the cremation was a brooch.

1a Bronze brooch (70/B/57) with a long narrow foot and a protective collar above the coil of the spring. Of Claudian date, the brooch can be paralleled locally by another find from Kempston, where the foot of one was found in a poppy-head beaker. Another cremation pot with an inclusion is one with an iron ox-goad also found at Kempston. This was found in a jar in a blue-black ware.

2 Jar in a dark grey ware, rough-surfaced, with a row of curves at the base of the shoulder. Height 155mm, (70/B/58).

3 Small jar, narrow-necked with rim missing, in a burnished grey ware with irregular criss-cross decoration on the body and above the collar. Height extant 127mm (70/B/59).

4 Small jug in buff ware, lost part of rim and neck on one side. Height 188mm (70/B/60). This type of jug is fairly common in Bedfordshire. Examples in a number of colours may be cited from Wooton, Kempston, Putnoe, Sandy, both at about this size and at a larger size.

While, individually with the exception of the pot with the cremation and brooch, contributing little new to our knowledge of Romano-British Bedfordshire, these pots and the palaeoliths yet to be published demonstrate the large wealth of material for the study of the archaeology of the county that lies not only hidden in the ground but which has been dug up and now lies hidden in people's attics. For rescuing these finds from his attic the Rev L.J.W. Lack deserves our thanks. May others be so encouraged to look.

A Roman Bronze Bowl from Sandy

DAVID H KENNETT

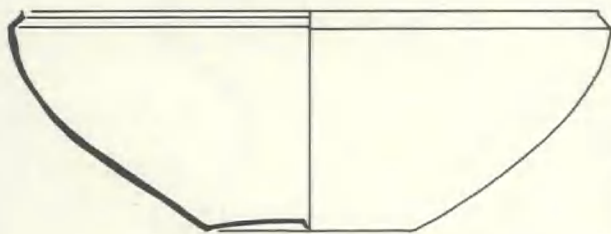


Fig 7 Bronze bowl from Sandy.

Bedford Museum have three late Roman bronze bowls found at Sandy in 1856 in the course of railway building.¹ These, it is hoped, will form the subject of a detailed study in the *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* at some future date when further research has extended the known distribution of the types there represented beyond the present area of Britain, northern France, Holland, Belgium and the Rhineland, with outliers in free Germany.² Indeed, the distribution of the bassin bord à godronné has already been expanded to include the possibility of examples in Italy and Malta as a villa at Melita has a mosaic representation of one type,³ and in the main distribution area an example is known from the settlement at Belfort, above Maastricht.⁴ The recently discovered hoard from Burwell, Cambs,⁵ has brought to light a further example of the general type of fourth century hoard which has been the subject of two recent and extended essays.⁶ In view of their lengthy treatment of the types with continental connections there seems little validity in a speedy publication of the Sandy hoard in an English periodical and it is better to await the results of further fieldwork.

There is, however, a fourth late Roman bronze bowl from Sandy whose exact find-spot is unknown but which was not connected with the hoard found in 1856. In 1900 it was purchased by the British Museum from Mr G.F. Lawrence of Wandsworth, London, together with a quantity of material from the Thames at Hammersmith. The bronze bowl (fig 7) is well-preserved (with the exception of a (?) modern hole below the rim) with a golden brown patina to its convex, rounded profile, and has the distinctive features of an omphalos base and a thickened and inturned rim. The rim has a diameter of 231mm.⁷

This vessel has appeared in the archaeological literature a number of times but has not previously been illustrated. It has been attributed to the late pre-Roman Iron Age by Sir Cyril Fox⁸ on account of the strange 'water-clock' theory of R.A. Smith⁹ and partly on the not particularly close comparison of the Sandy bowl with a vessel from the River Wissey. Smith, himself, however, a long time ago suggested that it might be Anglo-Saxon on account of its analogous form to hanging bowls, through clearly it never had any escutcheons and in view of this a late Roman date was possible.¹⁰ It is this suggestion, made originally in 1904, which has recently been demonstrated as the most valid. Smith compared this bowl to four of the bowls in the Irchester hoard,¹¹ namely those of Kendrick's 'Irchester type'¹² and this type has recently been shown to be a product of the native Romano-British bronze industry of the late fourth century.¹³

NOTES

- 1 *Bedford Modern School Museum Guide*, 1926, 45 and pl 9; D H Kennett 'Late Roman Bronze Vessel Hoards in Britain' *Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 16, 1969, 123-148, esp 124 and 138-145 with fig 2.
- 2 Kennett, 1969, 138-145; see also D H Kennett 'The Irchester Bowls' *J Northampton Mus* 4, 1968, 12-29.
- 3 This is the traditional site of the shipwreck of St Paul (*Acts* 28). I owe knowledge of this mosaic to Mr H O Heather who kindly showed me a slide. The mosaic representation shows a bowl with two handles, a feature not otherwise known, but the godrons are clearly visible: i.e. continuous and not separate bosses are represented on the rim.
- 4 Bonnefantum Museum, Maastricht; as far as I am aware not yet published.
- 5 A preliminary note has appeared *Ant J* 50, 1970 344 with pl 59. I understand publication of this hoard by Mr A. Gregory is in preparation and will appear in a future *Proc Camb Ant Soc*.
- 6 Kennett, 1968; Kennett, 1969.
- 7 British Museum, accession number 1900, 10-3, 6.
- 8 C Fox *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, 1923, 105.
- 9 *PSA* 21, 1907, 319-334.
- 10 *VCH Beds* 1, 1904, 184.
- 11 Kennett, 1968, 29-32 with figs 6 and 7.
- 12 *Antiquity* 6, 1932, 162.
- 13 I am grateful to Mr J W Brailsford for access to the bowl and for permission to publish this object in the collections of the Department of Prehistory and Roman Britain, British Museum, London.

The Graveyard of St Peter-de-Dunstable, Bedford

D.N.HALL

SUMMARY

A resume of notes made when commercial trenching exposed part of the churchyard of St Peter-de-Dunstable, Bedford. The finds from pits included pottery of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.

The church of St Peter-de-Dunstable was situated on the corner of Cauldwell Street and St Mary's Street, Bedford, opposite St Mary's Church. It was pulled down in 1546 by order of the Bishop of Lincoln to prevent disputes between the parishioners of the united benefice of St Peter and St Mary (Godber, 1969, 194-195). The fabric was dispersed and re-used for various purposes, including repairing the town bridge. Some fragments exist in Bedford Museum: these include a corbel in the form of the head of a king and the much mutilated torso of a saint.

In the summer of 1971 Bedfordshire County Council continued the expansion of Mander College, and builders trenches revealed the church graveyard (fig 1). An excavation was not possible, but the following notes and plan were considered worth recording since no further work on the site is anticipated.

There was much nineteenth century disturbance by walls and drains, and a general make-up of 2-3ft except on the south. The graveyard extended in all four directions beyond the builders footings, which covered an area of 50 by 70ft. On the south side the burials were in three superimposed layers, the uppermost being only 1ft under the present footpath of Cauldwell Street. Clearly the churchyard wall or boundary was yet farther south. The church itself was not revealed and presumably lies farther east; it is therefore likely that St Mary's Street was narrower because there is not much room between the present trenches and the road.

There were various pits, the most interesting being Pit 1, which was full of burnt clay and bronze slag, presumably left by bell-founders. It probably related to the primary building stage, since it contained early St Neots ware sherds, and had a thirteenth century burial inserted through (s4). The

full extent was not found but the depth was 3ft 6in.

Pit 2 had black fillings with dense black iron slag associated with early St Neots-ware sherds and a pink shelly twelfth century sherd. The plan was not obtained.

Pit 3 was not fully excavated, but was about 4ft deep. It contained a Romano-British kiln bar and many derived sherds, the latest being a green-glazed sixteenth century type.

From the sherds collected it seems that the churchyard was in use from about the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. The area was left clear for most of the post-medieval period according to the various maps available. The stone footing (fig 1) is probably early nineteenth century; at first sight the east wall was thought to be the church west wall, but it contained pieces of coal in the mortar and proved to belong to the rectangular building shown.

The Pottery

A small quantity of pottery was recovered from the pits, associated with the skeletons, and unstratified on the builders heaps. The most interesting sherds are illustrated on fig 1.

1 and 2 Everted rims of small cooking pots in early St Neots ware dark smooth shelly fabric. Compare Baker, 1970, fig 6, 17 and 18; Hall forthcoming, fig 1.23C; and Hurst, 1956 fig 7.3, which is eleventh century. Both unstratified.

3 Small inturned bowl in early St Neots ware; compare Kennett 1969 fig 3.10; Hall forthcoming fig 1, 12A and 17D; Hurst 1956 fig 5.38, and fig 7.7, which is eleventh century. From pit 3.

In the Higham Ferrers region of Northants these small cooking pots and bowls are characteristic of the preconquest period.

4 Large bowl with up-right rim, St Neots fabric. At Irchester, Northants, this form is late eleventh and early twelfth century. With skeleton 3.

5 A lamp base in hard grey sandy Early Medieval fabric (eleventh to twelfth century). Unstratified.

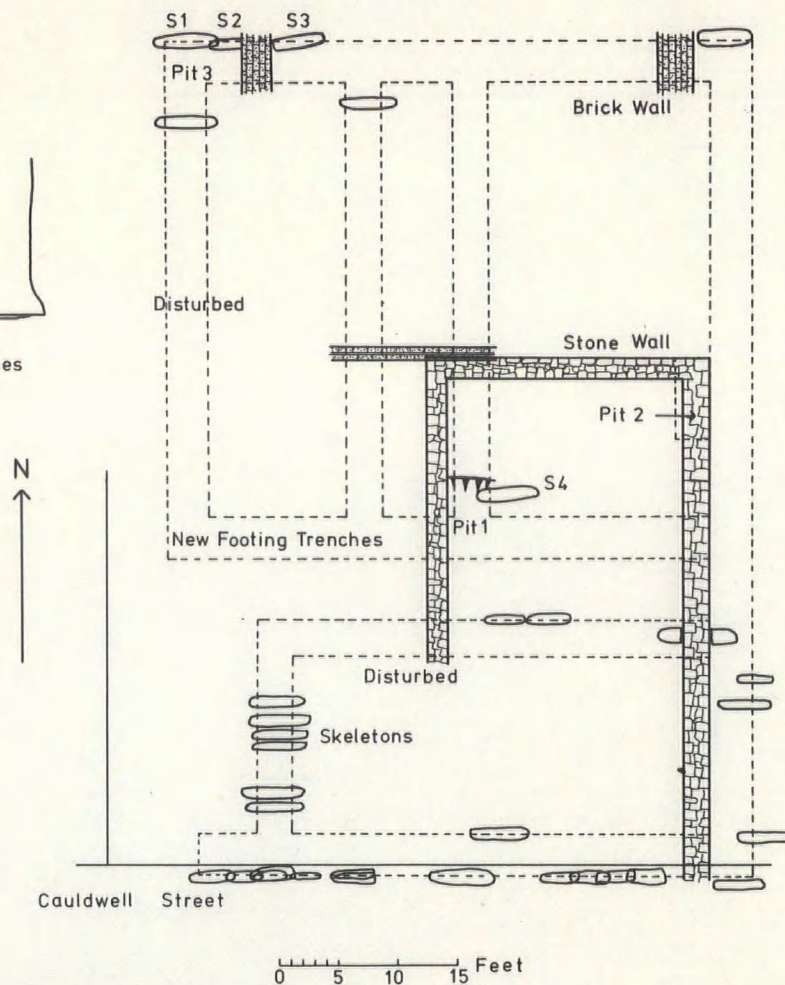
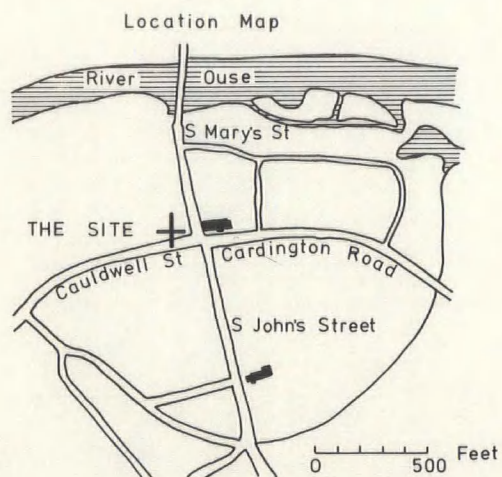
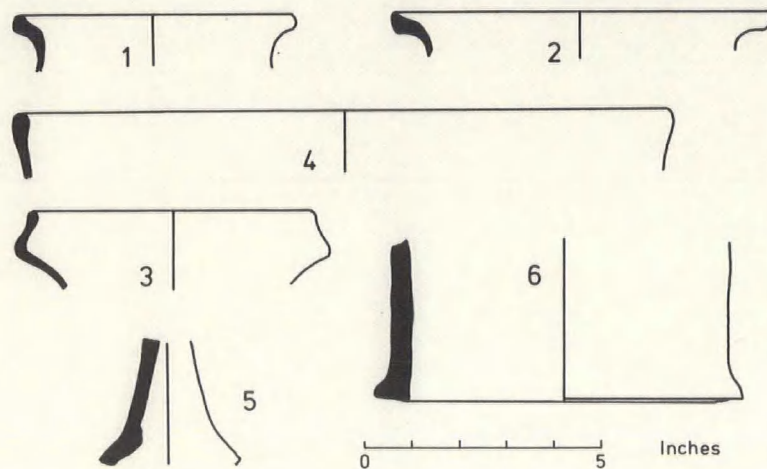


Fig 8 St Peter-de-Dunstable, Bedford.

6 Chimney-pot sherd in red-pink ware with blue-grey core, patches of green glaze. Probably thirteenth century, compare Dunning 1970, fig 11, 1. Medieval chimney-pots are not common, this is the second one found south of the river in Bedford.

Not illustrated, a piece of Romano-British kiln-bar of an inch square cross section and 3in long, brown with blue core. Similar to types from Mile Road, Bedford.

Bibliography

D B Baker, 1970, 'Excavations in Bedford, 1967;

Beds Arch J 5, 1970, 67-100.

G C Dunning, 1970, in Baker, 1970, 85-90.

J Godber, 1969, *History of Bedfordshire*.

D N Hall, forthcoming, 'Pottery from Higham Ferrers Hundred, Northamptonshire' *J Northampton Mus* forthcoming.

J G Hurst, 1956, 'Saxo-Norman Pottery in East Anglia: 1 St Neots ware' *P Camb Ant Soc* 49, 1956 43-70.

D H Kennett, 1969, 'St Neots ware from Bedford' *Beds Arch J* 4, 1969, 17-25.

An Earthwork at Newnham Priory, Bedford

WILLIAM ANNAN and DAVID BAKER

SUMMARY

The rescue excavation in advance of road widening of an earthwork at TL 069495 within the precinct of Newnham Priory (founded C.1166) showed that an elongated mound aligned north-south had originally been more circular in shape. It was probably the last visible part, to the north of the River Ouse New Cut, of the monastic complex of ditches, banks, mounds and fishponds which appear on early maps of the area.

INTRODUCTION

In January 1971 the Technical Services Division of Bedford Corporation requested the second writer to examine an earthwork within the precinct of Newnham Priory, immediately south of Barker's Lane, in the path of a road-widening scheme that required its destruction. This long, much overgrown and considerably eroded mound was oriented north-south and lay within existing allotment holdings.

The site of the Augustinian canons' house at Newnham has its precinct limits represented by Barker's Lane on the north, Newnham Avenue on the west, the main river on the south and a length of upstanding post-Dissolution wall on the east: building has encroached on the western side. The only visible remains of the priory are some of its earthworks: today these are less complete than

they were at the turn of the century. The site is diagonally bisected by an embankment supporting what originally was the Bedford and Cambridge branch of the London and North Western Railway and, parallel with it, an artificial channel, the Great Ouse New Cut. The two are contemporary in construction, and the railway was opened in 1862.¹ South of this the priory earthworks have been only partly levelled, but to the north the only feature visible at the time of excavation was the oblong mound here discussed. This is on the site of a circular mound shown on early maps of the full set of earthworks, and for this reason its systematic investigation was required.

The earthwork was partly excavated archaeologically, recorded, and its mechanical destruction was overseen by the writers and Mr A. Cooper, with further records being made. The Bedford Archaeological Society, under whose auspices the operation was carried out, wishes to record its appreciation to the Borough Council for an exemplary execution of its archaeological duties in bringing to its notice the threat to the earthwork, and in financing both the investigation and subsequent publication in this Journal.

THE EXCAVATION (Fig 9)

Method: A small trial trench 1.25m wide was dug by hand through the middle of the east side of the earthwork as far as its central long axis, and

vertically to a depth of 0.30m below the surrounding modern ground surface. This was then extended horizontally northwards by the mechanical removal of the north-east quadrant of the earthwork, and the original trench was deepened to about 1.40m. The south and west sections of the quadrant were drawn. The remainder of the mound was removed mechanically, quadrant by quadrant, enabling the north-south and the east-west section-drawings to be completed and its entire structure to be examined.

The Earthwork: The original mound was made of hard, compact pebbly orange clay 5 piled up about 1.9m above the present ground surface. It was about 12.0m long and 8.0m wide, with sloping sides and a fairly flat top. This material contained no finds at all. It was largely homogenous apart from an area of fine yellow and orange gravel within the pebbly clay about 1.0m below the present ground surface. This may represent a ground surface predating the mound, but lacked any evidence of humus upon it and may be therefore another layer of redeposited material.

Over the top of the pebbly clay mound were a number of irregular and varying thin layers, of orange gravel 4, yellow sand and gravel 13, 14, dark brown earth and pebble 2 and yellow gravel 3, 15. These were insubstantial apart from 13 which had been tipped against the south side of the pebbly clay mound, thus elongating its plan. This gravel was followed down by excavation to a depth of 1.80m below the modern ground surface at the south end of the earthwork, and no bottom was seen to it. This may suggest that the build-up of ground here is so thick that no original ground surface could be seen in the excavation: or that the monastic ground surface and other features had been disturbed by gravel digging, the waste products of which had been scattered on and around the mound.

Over the whole area of the composite mound was a thick layer of dark brown earth 1 containing much rubbish of Victorian and later dates, including bottles, broken glass, tile, slate, china, ash, cinders, etc. The surrounding allotments topsoil contained similar material.

Two pits had been cut into the mound. The later 7 contained material of the kind mentioned above, had a diameter of about 2.2m, sloping sides and a depth of about 1.0m into the mound. Its bottom cut the second pit, whose fill was mixed light-brown pebbly earth 8, fine dark soil 9 and brown earth and gravel 10, yellow gravel 11 and

orange gravel 12. Its sides were almost vertically cut into the pebbly clay, and it was seen in excavation to a depth of 2.50m into the mound. It contained no finds apart from a few animal bones.

No other features were seen in the mound.

DISCUSSION

The lack of finds from the compacted clayey mound prevents the provision of a definite context for it. It had no local reputation of antiquity, and its superficially battered appearance might also have helped it escape notice had it not figured as a circular feature in the *Victoria County History* plan of the priory earthworks.²

Local traditions associated it with a variety of fairly recent events. The latest, the spreading of municipal rubbish over the area at the turn of the century had clearly built up the surrounding ground level but had only added an irregular skin to a pre-existing mound whose material was uncontaminated by it. There are local memories of earlier gravel extraction from this area in the last century: one tale had the mound consisting of the residue from gravel sifting, and there certainly was an accumulation of poor quality gravel extending the compacted clay mound to the south; another version, unconfirmed by this excavation, explained the mound as a reburial earthwork for the bones of canons disturbed when gravel was extracted nearby the presumed vicinity of the claustral buildings. It had also been associated as a spoil heap with the digging of the New Cut c. 1860 and the creation of the railway embankment beside it; however, a single well-defined earthwork, with such stratigraphy, far away from the river bank, does not seem consistent with this explanation.

If these contexts appear unsatisfactory, there remains that of Newnham Priory. This house of Augustinian canons was founded about 1166, being a transference from Bedford itself of the canons of St Paul. It seems most likely that this mound was the last surviving earthwork north of the New Cut, given that excavation has satisfactorily explained the discrepancy between its modern oblong appearance and circular record on earlier maps. The account of the earthwork in the *Victoria County History* suggested that the mound under discussion had the function of a watchtower at the corner of the main enclosures, before the precinct was extended out to the east in the late monastic or early post-Dissolution period.

The earlier of the two pits may be relevant in this context but by itself does not admit a specific

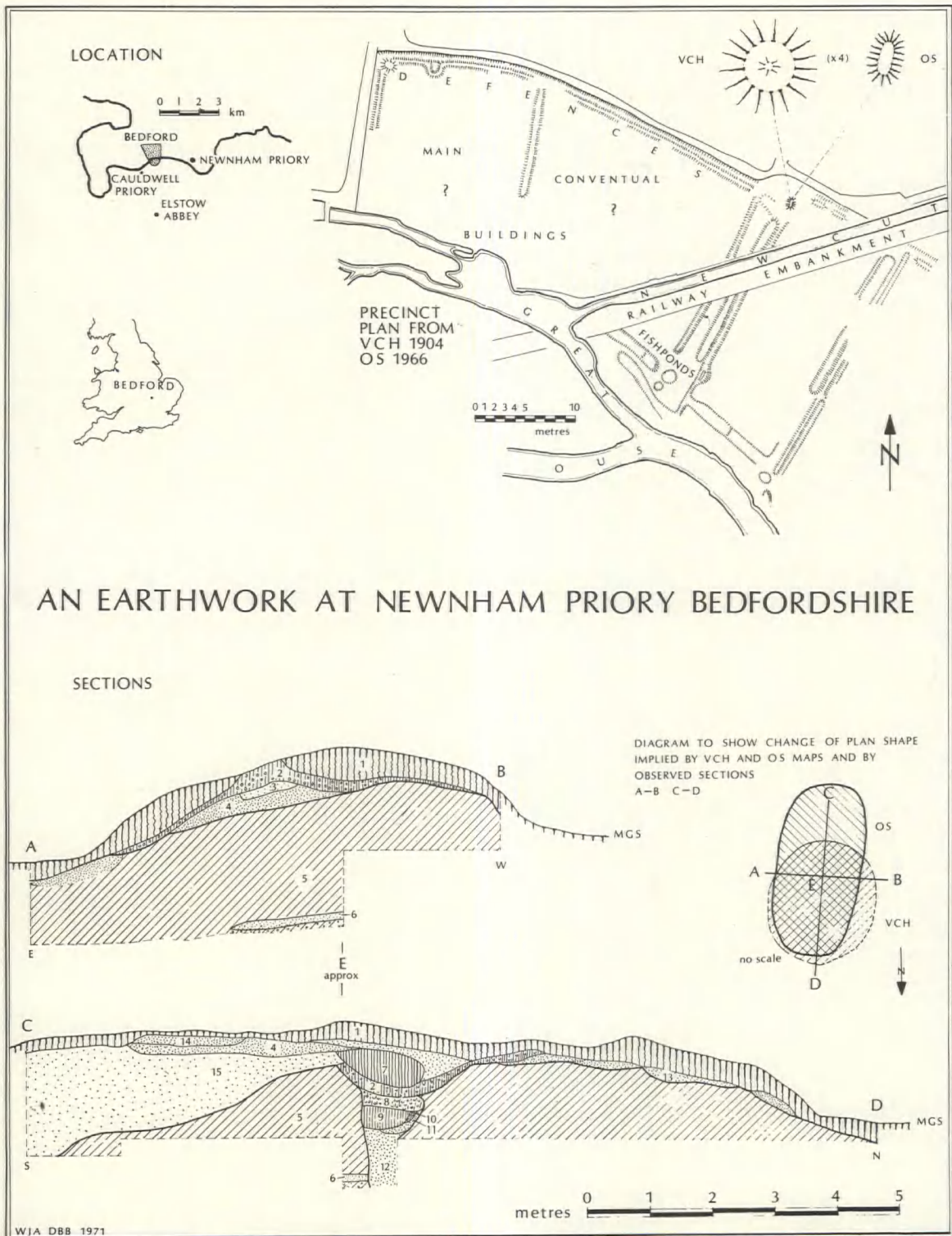


Fig 9 Location and precinct plans of Newnham Priory, with sections through earthwork. North of the Railway Embankment the earthworks are based on *VCH*: south of it they are taken from O.S. 1/1250 sheet TL 0649SE.(by courtesy).

structural interpretation.

Since the publication of the plan in the *Victoria County History*, The Newnham Priory earthworks have steadily disappeared under the invasion of the precinct by gravel digging, rubbish tipping, allotment cultivation and redevelopment. A discussion of the full site is beyond the scope of this note, and belongs more properly with a full survey of monastic earthworks and other medieval moated sites in Bedfordshire.³ Indeed the whole of the Priory area, on gravels adjacent to the river, is likely to contain archaeological evidence.⁴

NOTES

- 1 Information from Bedfordshire County Record Office, and from the Assistant Solicitor, Bedford Corporation.
- 2 *VCH Beds* 1 (1904) 303-5.
- 3 The *VCH* and Beauchamp Wadmore: *Earthworks of Bedfordshire* (1920) between them cover many sites. The latter however deliberately does not include several earthwork complexes, including that under discussion, and, on matters of interpretation, necessarily reflects the state of knowledge at its date of publication.
- 4 *Beds Archaeologist* 2 (1959) 16 - 19.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to Bedford Corporation for a grant towards the cost of this paper.

Bedfordshire Archaeology, 1970 - 71

Compiled by DAVID KENNETT

The summaries below are intended to serve as a guide to current fieldwork and excavations being conducted in Bedfordshire. Important isolated finds and museum acquisitions are also included. The compiler wishes to thank all those who have contributed summaries for this section and hopes that future work and finds will be brought to his notice for subsequent issues of the *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*.

ANGLO-SAXON SILVER PENNIES

Luton Museum have been fortunate in acquiring seven late Saxon silver pennies from the Elmore-Jones Collection which was sold in London recently. The coins are of special interest as they were minted at the Bedford Mint, and coins from this source are considered to be uncommon.

The coins are of the reigns of Aethelred II (March 979-April 1016) and Edward the Confessor (June 1042-January 1066) and include rare types by the moneyers Oswig, Aelfwi (Aethelred) and Swota, Godwine, Wulfwi and Wulfwine (Edward).

With these additions, the Museum now possesses a small but impressive collection of Saxon pennies and it is hoped that these can be exhibited in the near future.

GREAT BARFORD

Bedford Museum were asked to identify a palaeolithic hand axe of white flint found in the river gravels at Great Barford. The white flint is unusual for the Ouse, where it is more usual to find brown flint hand axes.

BEDFORD Castle TL 053597

Rescue excavations by David Baker for the Bedford Archaeological Society, Bedford Corporation and the Department of the Environment concentrated on areas to the east of High Street. Trenches south of 17 Castle Lane produced post-holes and slots with postholes containing possibly Middle Saxon pottery: these may represent two large hall-like buildings; that the Norman occupation layers were stratified directly over these features

may point to a levelling of the existing ground surface when the post-Conquest Castle was constructed. A substantial narrow masonry structure of Castle period was found, with a maximum width of 12.5m; its eastern end was seen and 39.0m of its length. Its north-east corner had a small apsidal projection, falling north perhaps for a newel staircase. Two lateral partition walls were seen. Although the footings had been heavily robbed, mainly in the post-medieval period, sufficient survived to show modifications to the original Norman structure. Trenches north of the sites of 22-32 Castle Lane revealed pits of varied size and distribution and two timber buildings contemporary with the life of the Castle. These were sealed by stone debris under a thick gravel and earth build-up possibly connected with the destruction of the Castle after 1224 and the subsequent changes of use for the site. Nothing was found to place either site in relation to inner or outer baileys.

A 1m wide trench was excavated through the east side of the small mound by the Cecil Higgins Museum, at the traditional north-east corner of the Castle. The tail of the mound was made up of post-medieval accumulations and disturbances overlying some evidence for a watercourse or ditch east of a smaller and steeper mound under the main earthwork. Dating evidence for this was scarce, but a medieval context may be appropriate.

BEDFORD St Mary's Church TL 052494

In examining this church T.P. Smith has found further traces of Saxo-Norman work in the fabric. H.M. and Joan Taylor (*Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 1965, 58) date the south transept as possibly Saxo-Norman. Additional features observed are in the west face of the central tower, within the nave and above the later, Norman crossing-arch. At the north and south ends of this wall, starting about 20ft above floor-level, are the remains of the quoins of an earlier tower of slightly smaller width than the present one. The quoins are of large stones apparently laid in side-alternate manner. Midway between these quoins is a small window, single-splayed and unrebutted. The window, which is made from the

same random rubble as the rest of the fabric, has a semi-circular arch-head cut from the underside of a single-semi-circular stone.

These features are best interpreted as belonging to an earlier tower, dateable to the period between c 1075 and 1115, when the Saxon vernacular tradition was still strong enough to exert influence. These features therefore belong to the same time as the south transept.

It now seems clear that the irregularity of plan, which is a conspicuous feature of the church, is due to a reorientation of the church at the end of the Saxo-Norman period, when the Norman additions were made to the fabric (T.P. Smith, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture in Bedfordshire Churches*, forthcoming).

BEDFORD Mint

Bedford Museum have acquired three Anglo-Saxon coins minted at Bedford mint. One is by the moneyer Aelmon on the mint mark 'Bedefo', a penny of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066); the second by Gunni, with the mint mark 'mo Beda' a penny of Aethelred II (976-1016); and the third a cut penny of Edgar (959-975) by the moneyer Grim with the mint mark 'Bdafo'. These join the collection of Anglo-Saxon pennies assembled by the late Alderman G H Barford and presented to the museum in 1924.

BIGGLESWADE

Mr H. Millard has placed on permanent loan to Bedford Museum a series of chance finds from Biggleswade, whose exact find spot is not recorded. The material comprises:

- a. Palaeolithic hand axe (70/B/49).
- b. Neolithic axe (70/B/49), see above, p. 67
- c. Flint flake, worked on one side (70/B/51).
- d. Late medieval bronze tool, damaged in casting, with a short narrow cutting edge and a transverse hole at right angles to the cutting edge. The function of this object which is damaged at the hole is uncertain, but it is suggested that it was a metalworker's tool, possibly to cut metal, but equally possibly used as a means of tracing decoration. As it was damaged in casting it is unused (70/B/52).
- e. Fragment of a broad rimmed, ? late medieval bronze bowl (70/B/53).
- f. Ornate bronze whorl, with central hole and worn at one point on the rim. The whorl is decorated with raised lines and dots and is possibly

a spindle whorl but the richness of the decoration makes this unlikely (70/B/54).

- g. Fragment of a bronze chape with a piece of wood still remaining (not accessioned by Bedford Museum).

BLETSOE TL 018586

Excavations by Christina Collyer for the Department of the Environment continued on the cemetery located by the North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society to establish its date and to determine its relationship to finds made of Romano-British material during housebuilding. Forty graves were excavated of both sexes and including infants and children. Extended inhumations with arms crossed or placed along the body were buried in stone cists, with only head and foot stones or in wooden coffins indicated by surviving iron nails. All graves were aligned with the skulls to the north-west. Two skeletons had finger rings of bronze but otherwise grave goods were absent. Pits and gullies of Roman date were found on the site, including one with fourth century pottery and coins on the same alignment as the graves but cut through by graves. There was a filled and levelled ditch in the north-western part of the site which produced pottery probably of the first century.

BLUNHAM

Bedford Museum have acquired a late fourteenth century stoneware jug found at Blunham Ford in 1964.

BRONZE VESSELS

Bedford Museum have a number of Romano-British bronze vessels, not all local finds. The local finds are a handle of a first century military type skillet from Kempston, a jug handle from Sandy and a group of three imported late Roman Gallo-Roman bowls (*Jb R G Zm Mainz* 16, 1969, 123-148, esp 124, 138-145). Non-local material includes an early swan's neck skillet from London (unpublished) and a skillet from Swaffham, Norfolk (*Norfolk Arch* 34, 1969, 435-6). Recently the museum were asked to comment on the small skillet of Eggers type 146 found in the group at Hallaton, Leics, and part of a larger group of finds, including a ram's head patera handle and glass vessels found in 1862 (*T Leics Arch Soc* forthcoming).

CADDINGTON

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the celebrated Dunstable historian and antiquary Worthington G. Smith identified and systematically recorded an old land surface of Pleistocene date, in the clays and brickearths which cap the chalk hills of South Bedfordshire.

Worthington Smith published the results of his work in *Man The Primeval Savage* (1894), and one subsequent paper. In his book, he describes the discovery of the land surface and the working places of Palaeolithic man found there.

The working places or floors were revealed in the claypits which were extensively worked in the area at the end of the last century, for brickmaking. The land surface lay between 3 and 40 feet below the modern surface, although it was usually between 10 and 20 feet down. A layer of fine 'Brick-earth' lay above and below the Palaeolithic 'floor', and this in turn was covered by a surface deposit, called by Smith 'Contorted Drift' which he considered to be the remains of a sludge of clay and gravel of glacial origin, or a solifluxion deposit related to 'Permafrost' conditions during the later part of the Ice Age. The Brickearth he considered as a water laid clay, and he envisaged Palaeolithic man living and working on the edge of a shallow lake or swamp, subject to periodic flooding, which covered the artifacts with a layer of clay without disturbing their relative positions.

On the old land surface, Worthington Smith found the places where Palaeolithic men had made handaxes and other implements. By carefully collecting every flake and chip of flint from a given area, he was able to reconstruct the original blocks of flint, as flaked by Palaeolithic man. In a very few cases he was able, by pouring liquid plaster into the middle of the conjoined block, to obtain an impression of the hand axe which had been made from it. Obviously, unless broken during manufacture, the hand axes would not be found with the flakes, as the finished tools would have been taken away for use, and probably lost elsewhere. A few complete hand axes were, however, found on the site at Caddington.

Most of Worthington Smith's material and some of his manuscript notebooks are preserved in the T.W. Bagshawe Collection at Luton Museum, where they will be examined as part of the Caddington Research Project. The Project is a joint venture between the University of Oregon, U S A, and the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford University.

Work on the Caddington material already done by Dr Derek Roe (*PPS* 34, 1968, 1-82) has shown that there is a strong Levallois element in the Achaeulian industry at Caddington – typical ovate hand axes were being produced alongside flake tools made by the tortoise core technique. This is considered unusual in Britain, and as the site is one of a very few in the world where material of such antiquity survives in an apparently undisturbed context, a precise dating for the floor and the deposits in which it occurs is desired: This is to be sought in the laboratory rather than in the field, using the latest techniques in pollen analysis, for which purpose the Luton Museum laboratory is being used by the Project.

The notes and observations made by Worthington Smith have been shown to be extremely accurate, and there is no reason to suppose that his conclusions as to the method of deposition of the various deposits are incorrect; however, there is still a great deal to be learnt using up to date methods, and it is hoped that by the end of the research programme, which is expected to last three years, the Palaeolithic working places at Caddington will have been assigned to their correct niche in the British Palaeolithic sequence.

CHALGRAVE TL 008275

During September 1970 a rescue excavation was carried out for the Department of the Environment by Brian K. Davison on the site of the earthwork castle which lies to south-east of Chalgrave Church. The earthworks were threatened with destruction in the course of farm improvements, and since the excavation have been completely levelled.

Excavation was confined to the low motte, which proved to have been thrown-up in the mid-twelfth century over the remains of the eleventh century manor. Unfortunately, time did not allow for the detailed examination of these earlier features.

The motte itself achieved its final form as the result of two separate phases of construction. First, the site of the early buildings was ditched round, and the spoil thrown inwards to form a low platform 22m in diameter and 1m high, surrounded by a ditch 6m wide and 2m deep. This platform was apparently constructed in order to give stability to a central structure 10m square, possibly a tower.

This square building was dismantled late in the twelfth century, and the platform was extended to

form a more oval area on which a new single-storied building was erected. At the same time, the motte ditch was re-cut.

The site was finally abandoned, in favour of a more convenient site adjacent to the north, early in the thirteenth century.

CLAPHAM TL 017523

Rescue excavations by Peter Tilson, partly financed by the Bedford Archaeological Society, continue at Clapham. Work has been in progress since 1968, when a large number of ditches were exposed by gravel digging on a site on the south bank of the River Ouse. Over half the site, owned by Bedford Rural District Council, who readily gave permission to excavate, is now destroyed. To date three main occupation periods have been located.

Period 1 Pre-Roman

Belgic occupation, ditches, gullies and traces of three kilns. The gullies, running in all directions across the site, contain pottery wasters, kiln bars and bricks, parts of pedestals, charcoal and lumps of unfired clay, and probably served as drainage ditches to the kilns. A shallow grave had been scooped out of the newly-cut bottom of one of the main ditches and contained a burial without grave goods. It was covered by a thin layer of gravel, on which later rubbish had accumulated.

Period 2 Mid-first to mid-second century

During the middle years of the first century a large rectangular enclosure was constructed between the river and the Belgic occupation, with ditches, cut on military lines 2.44m deep and 4.58m wide. Most of the enclosure was destroyed by gravel extraction but the ditch remaining had pottery of the late first to mid-second century. A small cobbled surface of the same date was also found with sleeper beam slots cut into the surface and was probably the base of a granary. More work is contemplated in this area.

Period 3 Third century

Work in 1970 has revealed a later Roman occupation to the west of the site, consisting of a small ditch and a stone built oven. The oven was well-constructed, cut into natural gravel giving good drainage, and rebuilt at least twice, with a paved area round the stokehole in the final phase. Both oven and ditch went out of use by the middle of the third century. A coin of Gallienus (259-268) was found in the destruction layer.

Excavation in autumn 1971 will concentrate on

tracing other buildings connected with the oven and on determining the type and extent of occupation in the enclosed area.

CRANFIELD

A packet of chance finds of the sixteenth century from Cranfield have been brought into Bedford Museum. They are two tinned bronze buttons, a buckle and a belt-hook with a classical head above the terminal ring.

DUNSTABLE TL 00322355

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable report evidence of neolithic occupation on the chalk ridge one mile north of Dunstable. After ploughing the area is littered with flint flakes and artefacts. A pipe-line trench revealed three pits containing grooved wares and two more have recently been recorded beneath the Iron Age rampart at Maiden Bower, making a total of 14 pits so far recorded by the society. During the same pipe-lying operation two sunken-floor Saxon huts were discovered akin to that published from Puddlehill (*Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 51-53). Ten huts are now known along the mile and a half of the crest of the ridge overlooking the Guzel valley and suggest a concentration of sixth to seventh century occupation which would well repay excavation in the future in an area scheduled for chalk quarrying.

DUNSTABLE TL 018216

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable are continuing excavation of a timber building, length 61m, width 30m, of post-Roman date. The 1970 excavations concentrated on the problem of length of the building but progress was slowed by the discovery of a series of human skeletons found in wall footings, apparently massacred and included in the building as foundation burials. A second building, apparently identical, only 3.66m away from the first was discovered at the close of the 1970 season. In 1971 it is hoped to examine further areas of the buildings to throw light on structural details.

EASTCOTTS TL 064475

On the rough grass pasture, popularly referred to as the Elstow Moors and through which a small tributary of the River Ouse flows, two features were observed by G J Dring in summer 1966 as positive vegetation marks. When first discovered the features appeared as circular enclosures, the

southerly one of which was the more obvious. These enclosures were forty feet in diameter (internal) and the enhanced ring of grasses was some two to three feet wide. The features are of considerable antiquity since an almost fully-silted ox-bow of an earlier stream course has encroached on one side of the more southerly enclosure and the ring of enhanced grass growth was not continued across the area. It is concluded that these vegetation marks indicate the ditches of totally eroded barrows. Annual visits to the site show that the marks do not appear every season. They have not been examined by excavation.

EASTCOTTS TL 066476

G. J. Dring reports that during excavation for field drainage a series of pits and associated occupation layers containing pre-Conquest Belgic pottery were sectioned. The pottery was identical to the pre-Conquest fabrics at the Romano-British kiln site, Mile Road, Bedford which lies less than half a mile to the east of this site. Similar pottery, now in Bedford Museum, was found during building operations in Willow Road, off London Road, a little over half a mile to the North West. These finds illustrate the intensive occupation of these gravel terraces over a wide area South of Bedford during the late Iron Age.

EASTCOTTS TL 073457

Aerial photographs taken over the late Iron Age and Romano-British site discovered on the ground as a wide scatter of pottery sherds in September 1965 by G. J. Dring (see also *Beds Arch J* 4, 1969, 84) have been examined at the Committee for Aerial Photography Department, West Road, Cambridge. The two available plates are catalogued B.B.Y.18 and B.B.Y.19 and show the typical complex soil marks of a site occupied over a long period. A silver coin of Septimius Severus (193-211 A D) discovered in surface scatter at the site by Mr D. King of Arlesey, has been presented to Bedford Museum.

ELSTOW Abbey TL 049474

Excavations by David Baker for the Bedford Archaeological Society at the site of the Benedictine nunnery continue. (See above, 55-64).

FARNDISH

Extensive fieldwork by D. N. Hall and others on

this and other parishes has revealed several new sites of pre-medieval date. Farndish was included in a survey of the Higham Ferrers Hundred of Northamptonshire for medieval sites, which produced three new deserted medieval villages: Malloes Cotton (SP 976733), Mills Cotton (SP 971745), West Cotton (SP 976725). Also in this survey was Grendon where a deserted settlement was found (at SP 875610). The occurrence of these, and the fact that most surviving settlements in the area have the characteristic earthworks of shrunken villages, suggests that more deserted settlements may well be found by fieldwork.

HARROLD SP 933553

A. E. Brown for the Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester, and the Department of the Environment continued excavations on this Romano-British pottery manufacturing site (cf. *Beds Arch J* 5, 1970, 123; *Bull Northants Fed Arch Soc* 3, 1969, 10; 4, 1970, 9). The stripping of 250 sq m revealed twelve large clay pits, containing large quantities of pottery dateable to the fourth century AD. One, however, yielded pottery similar to that associated with the kilns excavated in 1969 and belonged to the middle years of the first century AD and two produced a few sherds assignable to the second and third centuries. Cut into one of the late pits were two kilns, one a well preserved masonry updraught example and the other a horizontal draught kiln. Both had been filled up on abandonment with large quantities of tiles, including wasters. The manufacture of a wide range of tiles in the pink shelly fabric typical of the site seems proved.

HARROLD SP 948569

D. N. Hall and other members of the Higham Ferrers Archaeological Society excavated a thirteenth century pottery kiln in a garden adjacent to Brook Lane. It was a simple horizontal-draught type, in a channel 8ft 6in long by 2ft 6in wide and 3ft 6in deep at its mid-point. No kiln furniture was found in situ, but there was much kiln wall debris, pieces of large kiln jars and discarded pottery. The kiln produced jugs with stabbed handles, cooking pots and large bowls in a rather coarse shelly fabric varying in colour from pink and buff to grey. The pottery may be dated from local stratified deposits to the first half of the thirteenth century. (*Wolverton Hist J* forthcoming).

HEXTON Ravensburgh Castle TL 098295

Ravensburgh Castle, a large, rectangular contour fort, occupying 22 acres, on the Bedfordshire-Hertfordshire county boundary, has received renewed attention in 1970. Excavations by John Moss-Eccardt and James Dyer for Letchworth Museum in 1964 have been followed by a two week season by James Dyer in 1970 and will be continued in 1972. Interim conclusions suggest the following history for the fort.

- I An early farming settlement over the whole hilltop. Traces of buried plough-soil with wheat and barley grains have been found under the east, west and southern ramparts at the places sectioned.
- II Hollingbury-type timber-laced rampart constructed with wide berm on south from steep-sided chalk ditch, but without the berm on the east and west. Front and back of this rampart marked by vertical timbers linked transversely and laterally by horizontal tie beams and with vertical facing timbers on the front and turves behind a chalk-packed rampart.
 - IIa Fort was in use long enough for rampart timbers to be replaced at least twice.
- III Phase II ditch became silted and ramparts overgrown. After which western rampart was cleaned-up and brush-wood burnt in piles on inside of defences, which charred a surviving squared upright and burnt a lateral horizontal timber. A new V-shaped ditch, width 20ft (6m), depth 8ft (2.4m), was dug, partially into the silting of the earlier ditch. Material from the ditch was most probably used to build the outer bank (shown on Stukeley's 1724 drawing), rather than transported up to form an enlarged rampart above. This was made from clean chalk, possibly obtained from quarry-scoops inside the fort (clearly visible in the 1940's). A second, outer ditch, flat-bottomed, only 5ft (1.5m) maximum width, was probably dug at this time. (This phase formed the subject of a pre-excavation note *Beds Arch J* 1 (1962) 77-78).
- IV On the western side the rampart appears slighted and deliberately pushed into the ditch where the filling is rapid and uneven. A wheel-turned pedestal base was found low in this filling, close to the south-east entrance.

These conclusions are based on six rampart sections, one on each of the east, west and south sides in 1964, and three further on the east, all near the south-east entrance, in 1970. Preliminary work on the entrance has revealed two post-holes and an area of charcoal suggesting the gate may have been burnt, and this area will be examined in detail in 1972. Just inside the south-east entrance an area of a quarter of an acre was stripped in 1964, revealing a large series of post-holes, that may have been cattle stockades or pens, but no traces of human settlement. No further work has been possible on this afforested hillfort's interior. The bulk of the pottery is of phase II, for which a date in the fourth and third centuries BC is suggested, and includes angular bowls with internal and external decoration and several typical southern 'A' pottery types. Phase III is dated by a second group of pottery, including the wheel-turned base, to a period of early Belgic occupation.

KEMPSTON Foulke's Gravel Pit TL 031478

Bedford Museum have acquired four Palaeolithic hand axes from MacDonald's 1924-25 excavations at Foulke's Gravel Pit. Three are stained brown and one is a white flint.

KEMPSTON Anglo-Saxon Cemetery TL 031474

During house building on the site of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Kempston, William Annan watched operations in anticipation of possible finds and reports that the ground was extremely disturbed from nineteenth century gravel digging. The gravel diggings were the cause of the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and it appears that they totally destroyed the western part of the central triangle of Kempston. No new Anglo-Saxon or other archaeological discoveries were made.

LUTON Roman Coins

During the past year, two Roman coins have been donated to Luton Museum, both of which were found on local sites.

The first is a bronze *Follis* of the House of Constantine (310-337) found on the site of a new block of flats in Downs Road, Luton. The coin, which is very worn, was donated by Dr D.H. Shaw,

The second coin is a bronze *Follis* of Constantius I (305-306).

obv DIVO CONSTANTIO PIO

rev MEMORIA FELIX (large altar between two eagles).

This is a commemorative coin struck not long after the death of Constantius.

Although not particularly scarce, this is the first specimen of this type to have been recorded from the Luton area. The coin is in first class condition and has a fine green patina. The finder of this coin, master Russell Harris, dug up the coin in the garden of his home in Wodecroft Road, Luton, on a site where much Roman material has been found in the past.

LUTON Parish Church

During reconstruction of the organ of Luton Parish Church a seventeenth century brass plate commemorating Lady Penelope, wife of Sir Robert Napier was discovered:

QUOD INTUS SITUM TERRIS RELIQUIT
HONORATISSIMA D^{na} PENELOPE IOANNIS
COMITIS DE BRIDGEWATER FILIA EX
FRANCISA COMITIS DERPIENSIS COHAERE-
DUM UNA ROBERTI NAPIER DE LUTON HOOE
IN COM: BEDF: EQUITIS ET BARONETTI CONJUX
DELECTISSIMA CAETERA IN CAELIS QUAERE
ILLUC ENIM ABIIT QUINTIUS SECUNDO
MDCLVIII

This plate was the only archaeological find during the rebuilding of the organ.

MAULDEN Ruxox Farm TL 051363

The Ampthill Archaeological Society continued their excavations on the Romano-British settlement site at Ruxox and discovered two child burial cists made from roofing tiles set in the form of a cube. The cover tile in each case had evidently been knocked off by ploughing and no sign of the burials were found.

A considerable amount of third and fourth century pottery was found in association with the cists. One cist was set in plaster of paris before lifting and is now in Bedford Museum.

Parallels for this type of burial have been found at Verulamium.

PERTENHALL

A small pottery fragment was brought into Bedford Museum for identification in March 1971. It was a light orange-buff ware knob, with a hollow centre, double-waisted with a ridged middle, around which the fingers naturally fall. Most probably this was from a lid, but this is not certain as the fragment ends at the base of the knob. The ware is most probably Romano-British, though whether the thin edges to the lower part of the knob indicate a waster from a kiln is not clear.

PODINGTON SP 913642

W.R.G. Moore reports the discovery of two areas of dark soil with glacial pebbles and limestone pieces, apparently foundations, at Podington. Finds of third and fourth century pottery are now in Northampton Museum (*Bull Northants Fed Arch Soc* 4 (1970) 12). From the same field, Bellams in Hinwick, came the ploughed up discovery of a small bronze figure of a soldier in armour, complete with helmet, supposed to be Roman, with the man's legs apart, as if the figure of a horse had been between them, height about 3in (75mm)' (*VCH Beds* 3, 1912, 82). The description suggests a votive object similar to the horseman from Brigstock, Northants (*Ant J* 43 (1963) 264-268).

ROMAN BURIALS

D. H. Kennett is making a gazetteer of Roman burial sites on the Ouse Valley (for *Beds Arch J*). He would be grateful for information on Romano-British burials in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

ROXTON

Bedford Museum have been given a tanged flint arrowhead, length 47mm (Bedford Museum, B655/64). The museum also have a large example from Mill Street, Bedford, found in 1868.

STANFORDBURY BURIALS

Mansel Spratling is preparing a detailed study of the two rich late pre-Roman Iron Age burials found at Stanfordsbury in 1832 (*Beds Arch J* forthcoming). In the course of his investigations, the bronze jug from burial A has been radiographed. The shape has been found to be a nineteenth century reconstruction and it seems that the shape is much more akin to that of jugs of Eggers type 125 as found in the Santon Downham, Suffolk, hoard, the burials at Thornborough barrow, Bucks, and Shefford, and in the Hauxton, Cambs, find.

STREATLEY Dray's Ditches TL 080266 to TL 085265

Rescue excavations by James Dyer for the Department of the Environment on a quarter mile length of this Early Iron Age triple dyke, of which an eastern section was examined in 1959 (*Ant J* 41, 1961, 32-43) took place in 1970 and are possibly going to continue in 1971. Excavation showed a dyke extending east of the A6 trunk road a quarter mile from Great Bramingham and forming an effect-

ive barrier across the Icknield Way. The sequence of ditches, three each *c* 16ft wide and 8ft deep, separated by a double pallisade was shown to be repeated with minor differences. When 180ft of the double pallisade between the south and central ditches was stripped down to chalk, it was seen that both rows followed an irregular course, though maintaining a distance of 4 to 5ft between them. Posts in each row were between 2 and 4ft apart in post holes varying from 6in to 2ft in diameter and of an average depth of 3ft. Such irregularities recall the rampart posts of Ivinghoe Beacon hillfort, 10 miles south-west, dated by Frere to perhaps as early as the eighth century BC on the evidence of associated bronzes. The only find from Dray's Ditches was a coarse rim sherd of probable Bronze Age pottery. By the Roman period the ditches had silted up and the traffic ruts of the Icknield Way crossed them. There pieces of iron horseshoes and a very worn barbarous radiate of Tetricus I were embedded.

TOTTERNHOE Castle SP 979221

This fine early Norman motte and bailey earthwork castle had after the disappearance of sheep grazing become covered with unpenetrable scrub.

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable have begun a programme of clearance by cutting and burning to enable the defences to be clearly seen.

TURVEY SP 959511

A. Kirk reports a scatter of Romano-British pottery covering about half an acre, mostly coarse wares but including samian and colour-coated fabrics. Other objects were a possible kiln bar, roofing tiles and a lead object, pulley shaped, possibly a weight.

TURVEY

Bedford Museum have acquired a handle sherd of Roman amphora in a buff ware. The handle has the stamp CILC and was found in Turvey in 1961.

YILDEN

D. N. Hall and other members of the Higham Ferrers Hundred Archaeological Society have carried out intensive fieldwork in Yilden parish. One feature has been the discovery of a quantity of hand-made pottery of middle Saxon date and type found on the western edge of the parish near the boundary with Newton Bromshold.

Bedford Museum Guide by F.W. Kuhlicke (Bedford Corporation, second edition, 1971. 12½p).

The first edition of Mr Kuhlicke's *Bedford Museum Guide* appeared after volume 4 of this Journal had gone to press and had been totally sold out by the time volume 5 was ready for publication. A second edition has now been published, 16 pages as before, but printed in an A5 format giving a smaller but neater type-face. Some changes in the illustrations have taken place between the two editions. A new photograph of the Old Warden mirror replaces a poorly defined and pre-repair shot and a blank space on page 7 has been filled with an excellent photograph of that much illustrated vessel, the Saxon urn found at Sandy in 1850, of which this photograph is by far and away the best that has yet appeared. Other archaeological objects illustrated are the Belgic bronzes from Felmersham, the Mavourne disc, the small window urn from Kempston, the Clifton beaker and Bedford Museum's Roman altar. The text of this new edition is substantially unchanged. There is an introduction to the history of the museum and its collections and a summary of the principal exhibits, much of it concentrated on the archaeological collections rather than on the extensive and unworked rural life, ecological and ethnographical collections.

With its improved photographs and clear, concise text the new *Bedford Museum Guide* not only gives the lie to any claims that Bedford Museum is merely a heap of junk but also proves that it remains one of the most important local museums in Britain. The first edition sold out within fourteen months, and one hopes with its annual number of visitors approaching the 50,000 mark the second edition will be equally successful.

D.H.K.

A Bedfordshire Bibliography. Second Supplement by L.R. Conisbee. (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1971, no price stated).

One can well imagine the enormous sigh of relief, and, we hope, of satisfaction uttered by Mr Conisbee when, last December he wrote the introduction of the second supplement of his *Bedfordshire Bibliography*. In spite of ill health he has

laboured industriously since 1967 to bring this work up to date. In addition to the assiduity and care shown in his original work he has extended the field of his researches and so gathered in a harvest which will be gratefully drawn upon by students of local history. It would be niggling to dwell upon omissions, every harvester leaves something for the gleaner, nevertheless in the interests of both the compiler as well as the users we would point out a few important omissions. No reference is made to the Museum and the Art Gallery in Bedford both of which contain written and printed matter of local interest and although Mr Conisbee has made good use of the Bedfordshire card-index at the Society of Antiquaries' Library he has, understandably, omitted several works in the other sections which have important references to our county. Among these is J.N.L. Myres *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England* (1969) with references to and illustrations of pots from Kempston, Sandy and Luton. There is also Dr Dorothy Whitelock's *The Will of Aethelgifu* (The Roxburghe Club, 1968). This Saxon lady held land in both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and there are interesting local references. Mention should also have been made to David Kennett's article on 'Roman Bedfordshire' which appeared in the *Bedfordshire Times* in September 1969. These last are far more important than the trifling and useless pamphlets of K.M.W.

However the 'students, librarians, collectors of Bedfordiana and casual inquirers' for whom Mr Conisbee has compiled this compendious Bibliography owe him a very great debt of gratitude.

F.W.K.

Discovering Regional Archaeology: Central England By Barry M. Marsden (Shire Publications, 1970, 30p)

This little book is another in the series of regional guides produced by Shire Publications, and designed to help the lay archaeologist in discovering which sites in a given region are most worth visiting. Brief descriptions of the sites are given, together with details of location and the National Grid Reference. The book under review covers the region north-west of Bedfordshire, bordered by the counties of Cheshire, Herefordshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire. The descriptions are short

but useful, and are supplemented by county maps, site plans, one drawing, and photographs. The line drawings, some by Marsden and some by James Dyer, the series editor, are all very clear, and show a marked improvement on those of earlier books in the series. Marsden's book is a worth-while contribution to this useful series. It is a pity, however, that the publishers do not staple or stitch the pages together.

T.P.S.

Anglo-Saxon Towers: An Architectural and Historical Study By E.A. Fisher (David and Charles, 1969 £2-50)

Dr Fisher's book sets out to discuss Anglo-Saxon towers as 'a separate group of buildings, independently of the churches to which they may or may not be attached'. The first paragraph of the book attempts to justify this programme, though the three-line justification left me unconvinced. 'Towers', writes Fisher, 'have specific functions and, one might almost say, personalities of their own'. Of course they do. But so do, say, chancels have a specific function, but this fact *in itself* would hardly merit a book on Anglo-Saxon chancels. In any case, Fisher's remark is hardly true *tout court* of the towers of centrally-planned churches; when directed to these buildings Fisher's approach seems particularly arbitrary. In fact, such churches must be treated as organically-planned wholes, as Fisher himself recognizes when he comes to deal with them.

Part II, the most important part, of the book discusses various types of towers and their features: central towers; bell towers; round towers; and 'other towers'. The treatment of most of these is adequate and there are some interesting readings of the evidence.

The book, unfortunately, shows too much lack

of care. Why is the treatment of quoin-types stuck into the middle of the chapter on central towers? On p.62 is a reference to 'Westdean' (East Sussex) followed in the next sentence by a reference to 'West Dean', both referring to the same building. There is a West Dean, in West Sussex, but this is not meant here. The map of Lincolnshire has 34 numbered sites, but only numbers 1-25 are given in the key. In the discussion of Lincolnshire bell-towers there is no discussion of the fact that those ranged along the Ouse valley form a distinct group just as much as those in Lincolnshire, or – better – Lindsey.

Three Bedfordshire churches are briefly described in the Gazetteer: St Peter's, Bedford; St Thomas', Clapham; and St Mary's, Stevington. The last named is adequate and it is useful to have attention drawn to the elliptically-headed arch at St Peter's, for this may well be an early feature. But no mention is made of the blocked window in the topmost stage of the north face, nor is it stated that the upper part of the tower has random rubble quoins. That the tower is built over an earlier porch is mentioned in neither text nor Gazetteer.

Fisher is right to include the belfry stage of Clapham, for it is evidence for the survival of a vernacular type into the twelfth century. There is evidence of a building (perhaps early) to the south of Clapham tower; this was mentioned by Fisher in his *The Greater Anglo-Saxon Churches* (Faber, 1962, 154-5), but is not included in *Anglo-Saxon Towers*.

There are *some* useful discussions in this book, and for those of us who study Anglo-Saxon churches no doubt a good deal of what Fisher has written will have to be taken into account. But the final impression of the work is one of disappointment: this is not the valuable treatment of the subject that I anticipated on first picking up the book.

T.P.S.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council have copies of the following of their publications:

Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal 2 1964.

J Dyer: A Secondary Neolithic Camp at Waulud's Bank, Leagrave.

N Thomas: A Gazetteer of Neolithic and Bronze Age Sites and Antiquities in Bedfordshire.

J Moss-Eccardt: Excavations at Wilbury Hill, 1959.

W H Manning: A Roman hoard of Ironwork from Sandy.

G T Rudd & B B West: Excavations by Warden Abbey in 1961 and 1962.

with shorter notes; price £1.75.

Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal 4 1969

D N Hall & N Nickerson: Iron Age Pottery in north Bedfordshire and south Northamptonshire.

A Smallridge: A late eighth century disc from Mavourne Farm.

D H Kennett: St Neots ware from Bedford: Jugs and Bowls.

D B Baker: Excavations at Elstow Abbey, 1966-68.

N W Alcock: Timber-framed buildings in north Bedfordshire.

J B Hutchings: Milton Ernest—a field survey.

with shorter notes; price £2.10.

Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal 5 1970

K Fadden: Ruxox Farm, Maulden: the prehistoric finds.

D H Kennett: A lost collared urn from Kempston.

M G Spratling: The Late Pre-Roman Iron Age Mirror from Old Warden.

B N Eagles & V I Evison: Excavations at Harrold, 1951-53.

D N Hall & N Nickerson: Circular Roman building at Bozeat.

D B Baker: Excavations in Bedford, 1967.

J Dyer: The burial ground at Chicksands Priory.

with shorter notes; price £2.10.

Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal 1 1962 and 3 1966.

are currently out of print but when sufficient orders have been received arrangements will be made to reprint them. Further details from the Hon Treasurer, 63 Ampthill Road, Maulden, Bedford, from whom back numbers may be purchased at the prices stated.

