West Mids Arch 24
1981 - (Part II)

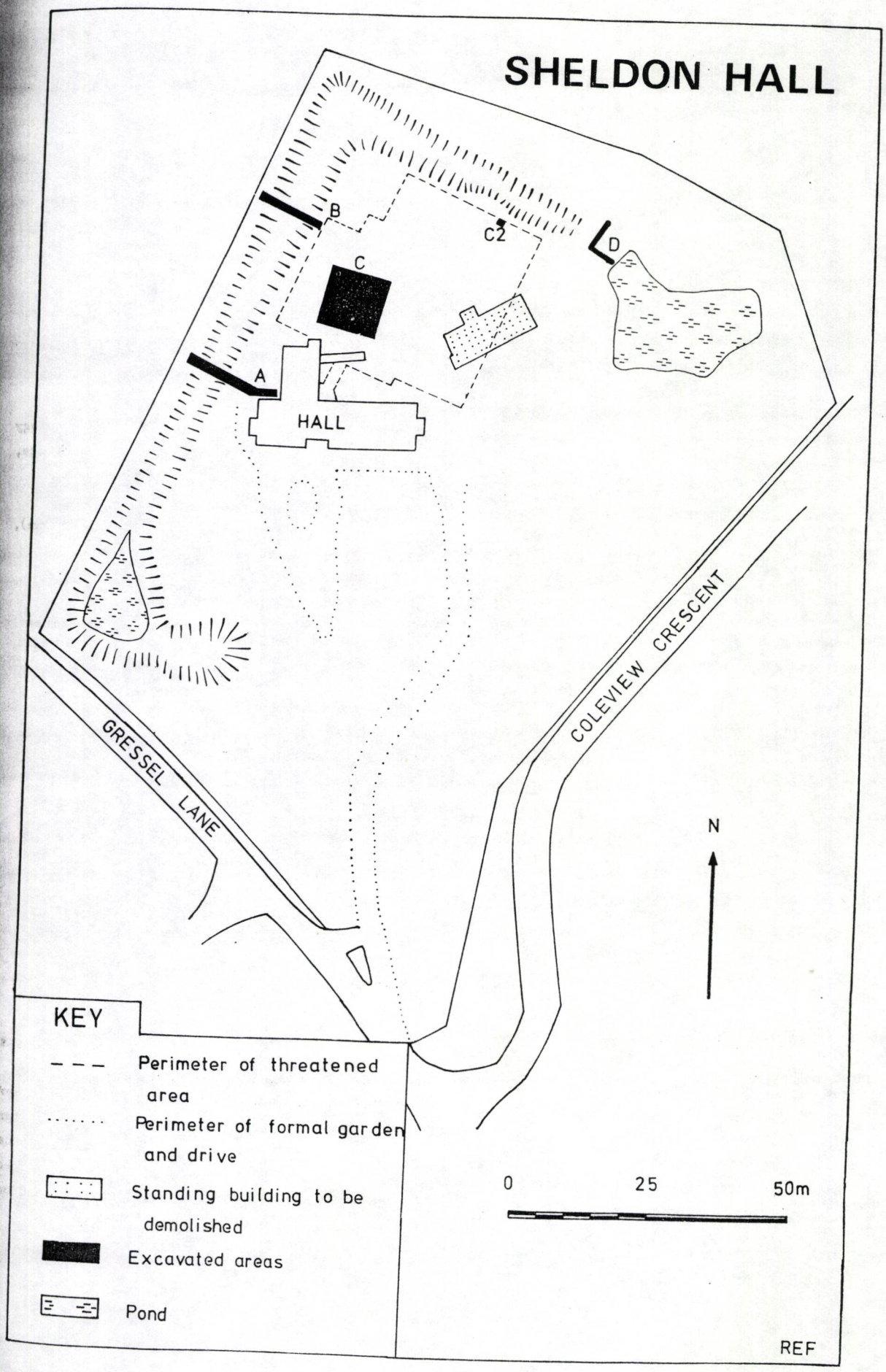

Fig. 30: SHELDON: moated site at Sheldon Hall; areas excavated. (Ferguson)

SHREWSBURY, Shropshire

Medieval coins from SJ 4950 1522 and SJ 4956 1290 SA 2803; SA 2807

The two silver coins which form this note were found in the modern parish of Shrewsbury during the winter of 1980/81 and reported to the Shropshire County Sites and Monuments Record. Identification was carried out by David Symons, Department of Archaeology, City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Both coins are currently in a private collection.

Short Cross Cut Halfpenny of John (1199-1217)

Crosshill (SJ 4950 1522) is situated at the top of a bluff above the old bed of the River Severn about 67m above OD. To the south, the land falls steeply to the flood plain of the River Severn, while to the north it is gently undulating. In general, the drift consists of Boulder Clays but in detail the situation is rather complicated, which goes some way to explaining the morphology of the site (Pannett and Morey 1976: 7). The underlying solid geology is Bunter Sandstones of the Triassic period. The find spot is adjacent to the site of a bridge, Folbrugge, and an ancient road which is constantly referred to in deeds as the King's Highway (Janes 1949/50: 244). The field is permanent pasture and is likely to have always been so. In September 1980 the coin was located with a metal detector at a depth of about 6 inches (150mm), the finder, Jim Perkins, was sure that tne coin was a single find and not part of a hoard.

On the obverse of the coin (SA 2803) is the right hand side of the King's bust and ...] NRICVS [..., while on tne reverse, the legend is ✠ [.....] N.LVND. This is the London mintmark but the moneyer's name is unfortunately lost. The coin is worn, but the form of the letters, especially of the R, identifies it as Class Vb which is dated by North to c. 1205-18? (North 1963: No. 970).

Short cross cut halfpenny of John (1199-1217)

Obverse ...] NRICVS [....
Crowned bust facing

Reverse Cross pattée [....] N.LVND
Voided short cross with quatrefoil in each quarter. London mint, Class Vb, c. 1205-18

Diameter	18.2mm
Cut Diameter	9.4mm
Thickness	0.5mm
Weight	0.501gm

Long Cross Penny of Edward I (1272-1307)

The silver penny from the gardens of H.M. Prison, Shrewsbury, on The Dana (SJ 4956 1290) was found by a member of a working party during March 1981. The find spot is at the top of a steep slope, about 60 m above OD, overlooking the River Severn to the east. While the drift is Boulder Clay, which overlies Keele Beds of Carboniferous date, the find spot consists of fairly typical grey garden soil. Unfortunately, little reliance can be placed on the find spot as it has been recorded that upwards of 26000 loads of soil were removed during the late 18th century in this area (Pidgeon 1837: 180). The railway station was subsequently built immediately south of the find spot and on a terrace immediately below the garden there was a building - since removed.

The coin (SA 2807) is in poor condition and one of the letters of the inscription is chipped away but it is fairly clear that it is a sterling of Edward I (1272-1307) minted in London. The unbarred N's and star on the breast of the bust makes it almost certain that it belongs to Class IXb (1299-1302) (North 1975: No. 1037).

Sterling penny of Edward I (1272-1307)

Obverse Cross pattée EDW R ANGL DNS HYB
Crowned bust facing, star on breast

Reverse CIVITAS LONDON
Cross with three pellets in each quarter
London mint, Class IXb, c. 1299-1302

Diameter 18.2 x 17.2mm
Thickness 0.5mm
Weight 1.067grms

Alan Tyler and David Symons

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STAFFORD, Staffordshire — Area: SJ 9122

Excavations in central Stafford — Figs. 31, 32, 33, 34 — SMR: ST 1600

Strategy and Progress

A site evaluation for the central area of Stafford town (fig. 31) was carried out in 1979 (see BUFAU Report 2, 1978/79 and Carver 1981). It predicted (among other results), the survival of late Saxon artisanal tenements, north of St. Mary's Church in an area crossed by the north boundary of the "College Quarter" (BUFAU Report 2, 1978/79, fig. 3). This area subsequently came under threat as part of the extensive redevelopment of the Market Area by Messrs. Arrowcroft. Thanks to the co-operation of the developer himself, together with the Department of the Environment, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Borough Council and the Manpower Services Commission, an excavation campaign was begun in November 1980, and is still continuing.

As a deliberate strategy, it was decided to use the first area available for large scale area excavation (ST 29, fig. 31) to thoroughly test the black earth which generally characterises the post-Saxon deposits in Stafford. It was feared that the supposed general ubiquity of intermittent horticultural or perhaps agricultural activity from the 13th century onwards, which had been inferred from a dozen sightings, might have been a misinterpretation from cuttings that were too small. The area excavations in ST 29 revealed the presence of few possible structures within these deep and opaque deposits, among them a barn whose staddle stones were the only relic indication. The overall picture, supported by the paucity of 14-17th century pits and pottery, is currently one of reduced late-medieval activity. The 18th century tenement, by contrast, was exceptionally rich, having not only the surviving town house (fig. 33) but, rejected at the rear, a large part of its contents (fig. 34).

The dark deposit having been tested in area, it has been and will be removed at Level A (i.e. by machine) elsewhere. Work will concentrate on the extensive sample of late Saxon settlement that is currently available in the area surrounding St. Mary's Church; recovered over the next two years, it is hoped that this information will throw light on the organisation, contacts and livelihood of a typical Mercian burh. At the same time it is hoped to explore the status of the burh, and of post-Saxon Stafford, by an extensive survey of the surrounding 'hinterland'. This work is to begin next year.

Meanwhile, the opportunity provided by other developments in the town (College of Further Education, North Car Park, North Walls) have been used to refine further the Site Evaluation. The latter is due to appear as the first as a series of "Stafford Archaeological Papers" to be published by a local journal.

N.O.H. Carver

MARKET AREA EXCAVATIONS: St. Mary's Grove (ST 29) SJ 9213 2327

The site currently being excavated lies behind Nos. 7 and 8 St. Mary's Grove (fig. 31) and the aim of the excavation is to recover and analyse evidence of activity in this rear of tenement area, from the earliest to the post medieval deposits, with special emphasis on the earlier medieval and Saxon deposits. Of the threatened area, just under 30% has been opened. The site covers c.60% of the rear property of No. 8 and c.40% of the rear property of No. 7 (the total area available until the development begins).

The Late Saxon Period

The sequence begins with a series of late Saxon features so far revealed only in the north-west corner of the site (fig. 32). A trial trench dug in 1979 in this area, revealed a clay-built low temperature oven, probably for baking, and a rubbish pit 2 metres to the south; both these features produced 10th century "Stafford Ware". The current excavations have shown that the oven and rubbish pit are only part of a group of as yet unexcavated features which lies between this trial trench and a substantial pebble surface c.6 metres to the east. This surface shows signs of considerable wear and has a thin but even scatter of very poorly preserved bone, and sherds of "Stafford Ware" set onto the surface. The most potentially interesting feature is linear, running north - south, and may be a property boundary of some sort. This horizon is very uneven, in the area so far excavated, but there is a general slope towards the north east.

The Medieval Period

The late Saxon features are sealed by a thick layer of soil, which produced sherds of abraded medieval pottery. This layer varied in depth from 10 - 40 cms., depending on the height of the underlying Late Saxon ground-surface. The upper part of the layer is very mixed, with large quantities of very small flecks of charcoal. This, and the abraded nature of the pottery, suggests that it had been cultivated. However, it seems to have arrived on the site as a deliberate dump of soil (leaving the Late Saxon layers essentially intact) which was cultivated, and later supported structures.

Building activity is evidenced by a series of post holes and post pads and a clay floor. The post pads are either simple, large slabs of sandstone set on the surface, or more complex types, with sandsone fragments packed into a hole, and clay packed around the base of the post. Judging by the depth to which these have been pressed into the soil, the building or buildings must have been framed and fairly substantial. The clay

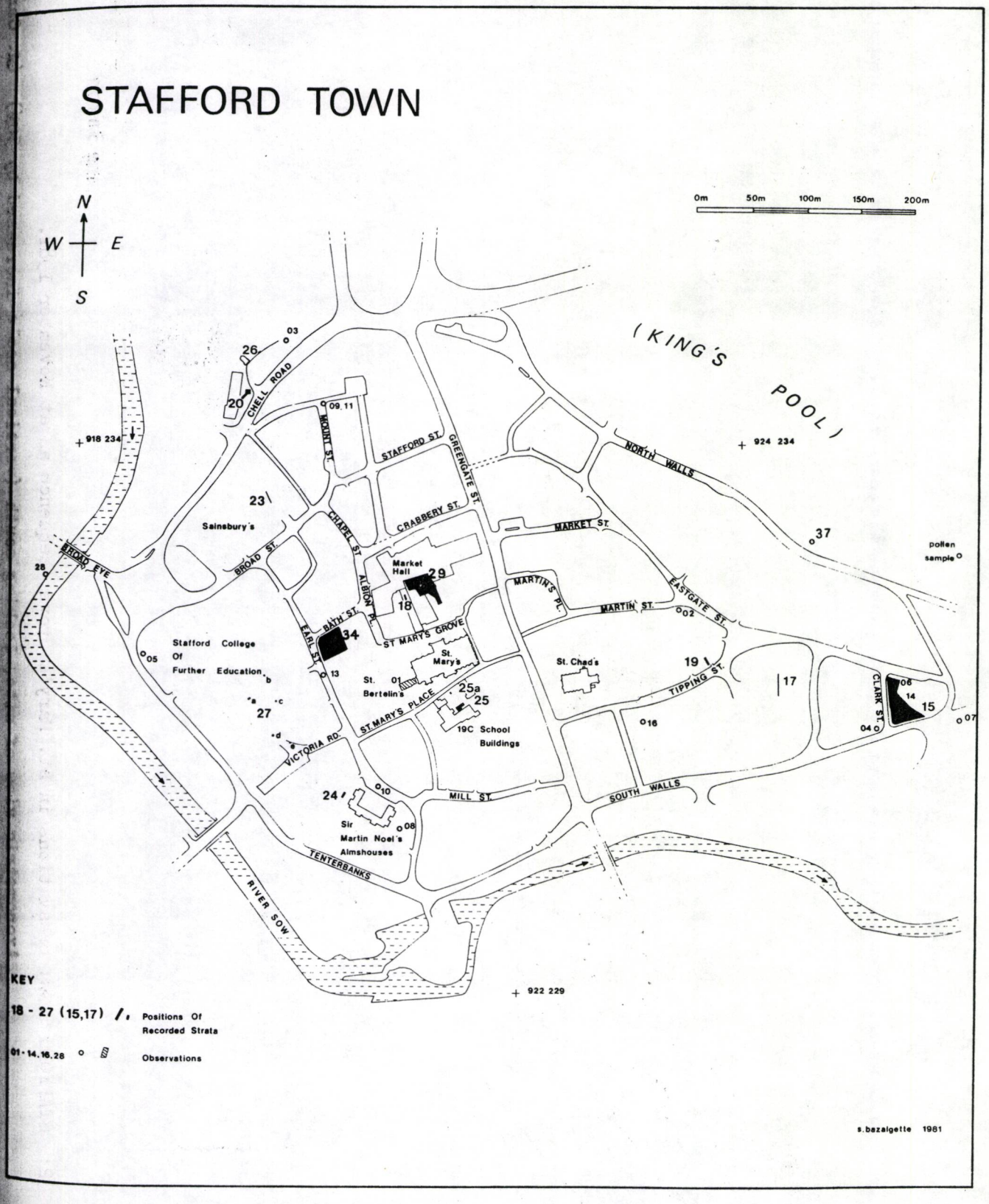
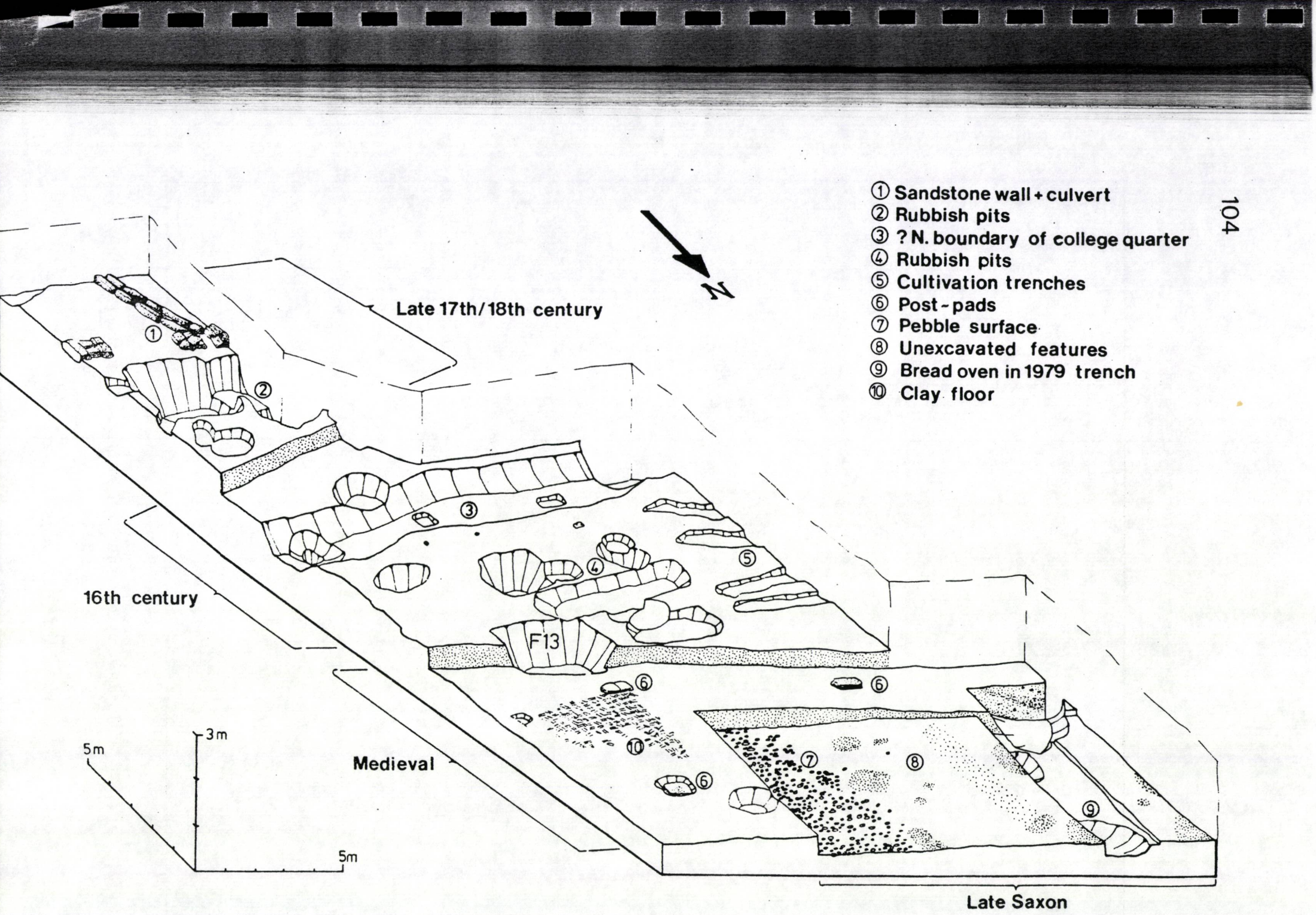


Fig. 31: STAFFORD TOWN: excavations and observations to 1981. (Bazalgette)


① Sandstone wall + culvert
② Rubbish pits
③ ? N. boundary of college quarter
④ Rubbish pits
⑤ Cultivation trenches
⑥ Post-pads
⑦ Pebble surface
⑧ Unexcavated features
⑨ Bread oven in 1979 trench
⑩ Clay floor
N
Late 17th/18th century
16th century
Medieval
Late Saxon
F13
5m
3m
5m

floor is very disturbed, possibly by cattle hooves, but may have been associated with the post pads. It seems likely that these buildings were barns, but it is not yet possible to draw any but the most tentative lines between these features, and even more tentative conclusions about the shape and nature of the buildings which they represent. Other features include a clay-lined pit, which may indicate puddling of clay, and a complex group of pits and possibly linear features on the western edge of the site.

No property boundary of any sort has been identified for this period, which suggests that this large area to the north of the church was all under cultivation during the medieval period.

The 16th and 17th Centuries

The medieval deposits were sealed by another dump of soil, cut by a series of very substantial features of possibly 16-17th century date. Of these the most significant is a property boundary which runs east - west across the site. It seems originally to have consisted of a post-built fence, the larger post hole, at the east end, being dug to take an end or gate post. This was replaced by a shallow ditch, which restated the boundary along the same line. Its position and date suggest that it may have been part of the northern boundary of the ecclesiastical college of St. Mary's, attached to the church of St. Mary's until its dissolution in 1548, (see WMANS 22 (1979) fig. 3).

A group of rubbish pits cluster immediately to the north of this boundary. They vary in shape and size but are generally very large and deep. Large quantities of broken roof tile were recovered from the fills of most of these pits and also from the backfill of the boundary ditch. It is possible that this is a result of the high winds that caused the collapse of the spire of St. Mary's in 1593, and widespread damage to roofs in the town. Large quantities of butchered animal bone were also recovered from these pits.

When these features had been backfilled, the area was once again cultivated, the evidence this time being in the form of shallow irregular cultivation trenches, possibly for fruit bushes.

The Late 17th and 18th Centuries

The next major event in the sequence is the building of the houses which now stand to the south of the site. They were built as a symetrical pair and are fairly typical town houses, built at a time when brick was increasing in popularity as a building material. However, a lingering preference for the known reliability of oak is evident in the extensive use of timber framing in the internal partitions (see fig. 33). Judging both from the house itself and from its position (overlooking the church) the owners were fairly affluent.

A pit group, contemporary with the first 70-80 years of the life of the house, occupies an area just north of a sandstone wall which runs c.6m from and parallel with the rear of the house. They range from shallow scoops, less than 0.5m deep to substantial pits 1.5-2.0m deep and produce, with a few exceptions, very little material evidence. The major exception is the massive assemblage from F13 described below. Most of these pits seem to have been used for the disposal of rubbish, but some may have been dug as quarries for the natural sand.

Surprisingly, the distribution of these pits seems to respect the line of the earlier east-west boundary. It may be that, although not physically extant, this boundary may have had a nominal significance in the 18th century.

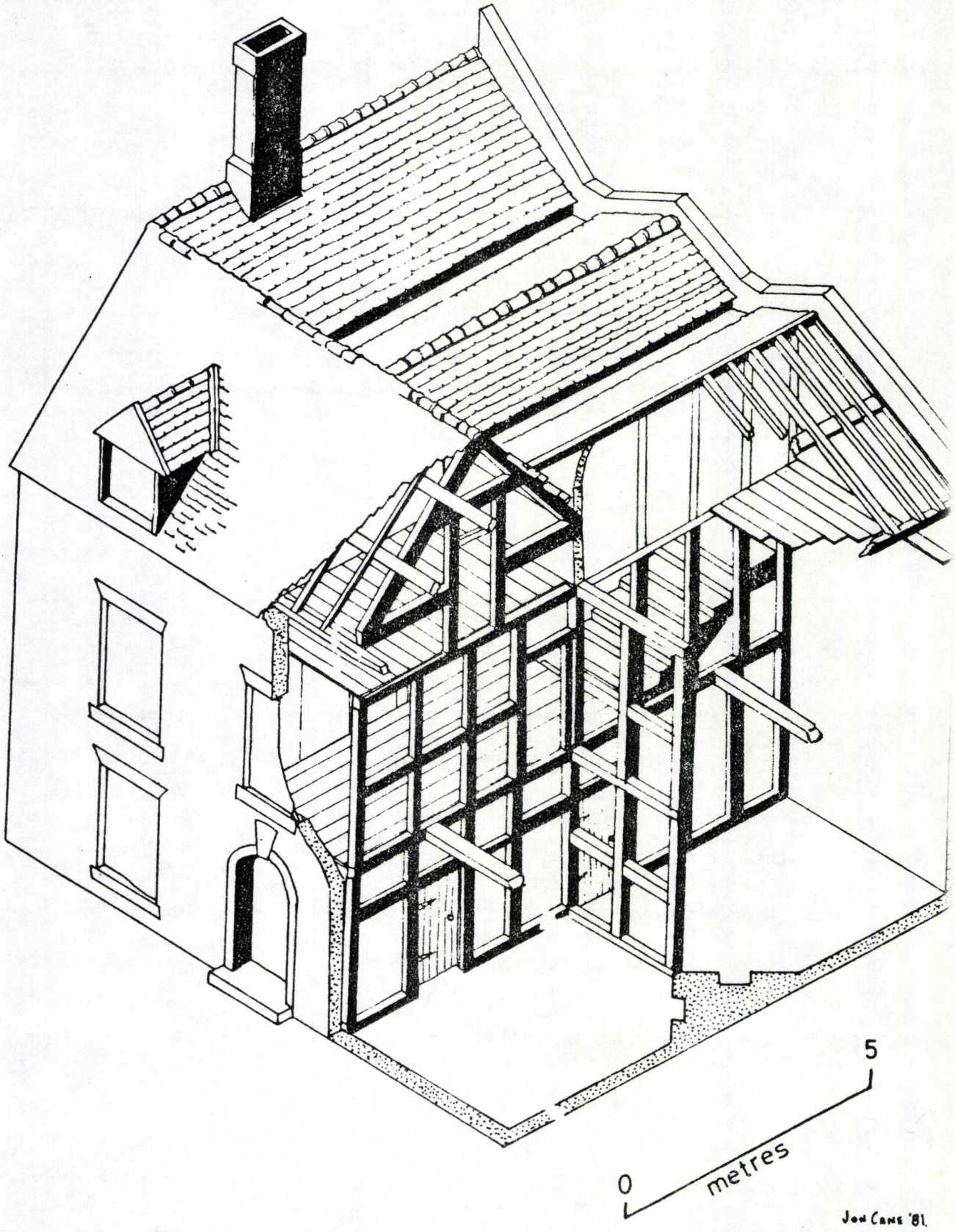


Fig. 33: STAFFORD TOWN: excavations in St. Mary's Grove; No. 8 St. Mary's Grove about 1700 A.D. Cutaway drawing, showing internal timber structure (J. Cane)

The possibility of linking excavated evidence with the architectural and documentary evidence is of obvious importance in our understanding of 18th century lifestyles. The documentary resource remains, as yet, untapped but may eventually provide, for example, a link between assemblages such as that from pit 1051 and its owner.

The 19th and 20th Centuries

The site in this period went through various stages of planned garden with gravel paths and insubstantial brick buildings. In addition a well and three brick lined waste-water soakaways were dug. When excavation began, No. 8's garden was a tea garden for the adjacent restaurant and No. 7's was completely overgrown.

The excavated sequence runs from the 10th to the Late 18th centuries and should be useful not only in answering immediately local questions, but also wider questions which concern Stafford as a whole. For example, it has been suggested (M.O.H.C.), that the fortunes of Stafford, like those of some other West Midlands towns, varied considerably in the post-Saxon period. Excavation of large sites in central areas should give some idea of what these "slumps" meant materially. From the evidence so far, the use of this area in Stafford has certainly not been consistent over the last 900 years.

Jon Cane

MARKET AREA EXCAVATIONS: Assessment of post-medieval material

Because the most recent deposits were excavated by machine, the latest major groups of stratified finds are from the 17th and 18th centuries. This material comes from the group of pits described above. Most of the pits within this group contained very few artefacts. However, they did contain pottery which is largely manganese, lead, iron or salt glazed, with some slipware, creamware and porcelain. Most of these types were produced in the Stoke and Shropshire industries, although some must have come from further afield - Nottingham and possibly Leeds, Germany and the Orient. A large range of clay tobacco pipes were also recovered from these features, spanning the period 1600-1850. The identified makers of these pipes ar known to have worked in Broseley, Shropshire. The features contained varying numbers of bottles, painted window glass, bronze pins and other bronze work, iron work, ashlars, animal and fish bone, shells, seeds and charcoal.

One pit, F13, stood out from the rest, by virtue of the quantity of material within it. This pit contained 97 nearly complete vessels, and fragments suggesting a further 20 vessels (fig. 34). The majority of the table ware is white salt-glazed. There is also some brown salt-glazed stoneware, creamware, slipware (including a very impressive press-moulded dish with piecrust edges and combed and trailed slip), porcelain and "Jackfield Type" vessels. Most of the kitchen ware is manganese glazed, with some lead and iron-glazed vessels. Apart from one salt-glazed pot, all the chamber pots are manganese glazed.

D. Barker, of Stoke-on-Trent Museum, suggests a TPQ for the assemblage of 1765-1770, because of the lack of later creamware and the predominance of salt glazed stoneware. There were also about 30 almost complete bottles. All these bottles agree with a TPQ of 1765-1770. Other dating evidence comes from the 13 clay tobacco pipe bowls. With one earlier exception, these confirmed the date assigned to the pottery. Large amounts of bone and oyster shell were also recovered, as well as many iron objects, mainly nails, and two bone knife handles.

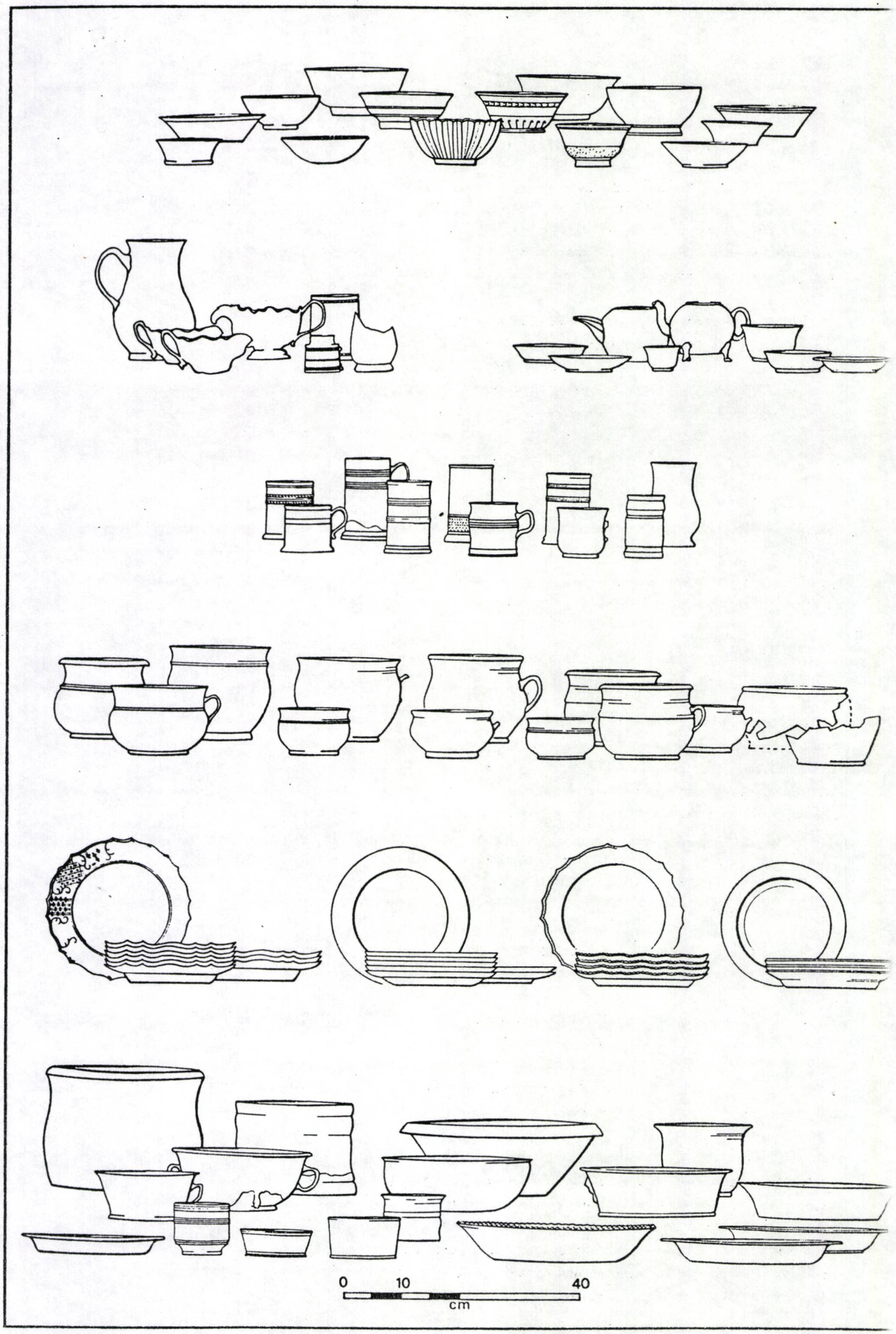


Fig. 34: STAFFORD TOWN: excavations in St. Mary's Grove; 18th century pit group from F13. (Skippon-Cook)

Two explanations for such an assemblage could be:

1) The household was clearing out the "old fashioned" crockery to replace it with the lighter creamware which was becoming very popular around 1770.

2) A change of ownership for the house, with the new owner throwing out most of the previous owner's household goods.

Such a group of stratified post medieval material from a domestic site is of great interest to post-medieval historians. A list of clay pipe makers from pipes found in Stafford, and the pipe types, coupled with lists from other sites, and documentary evidence from the Broseley area will provide a far more complete picture of the Shropshire tobacco pipe industry. The study of the bottles can be linked with the known "glasshouses" and may possibly suggest the existence of more local "glass-houses". The pottery groups are very important, showing types of pottery which were apparently in use at the same time. The shortage of tea-bowls and storage jars in the assemblage may suggest an unexpectedly low use of these vessels, or in the case of the tea-bowls, the fact that they were too precious to allow breakage. Above all it is the range of vessels in use together which helps to define, for the first time outside written inventories, the crockery available to an 18th century householder.

C.K.B. Cane

TRIAL EXCAVATIONS: North Car Park

ST 35: North car park. SJ 92028 23204 (SW corner)

Between 9 March, 1981 and 23 March, 1981, a trench was cut using a JCB, and the south and west facing sections recorded. Natural sand at 78.51 m OD at eastern end sloping to 78.26 m OD at the western end (1.20 m below g.s.). Natural sand and earliest, undated strata cut by medieval pits. These were sealed by 18th century garden soil. 19th and 20th century features cut this, and were, in turn, sealed by the 20th century car park's hard core and surface.

Size of cutting: 30.5 m x 1.2 m. Total depth: 2.41 m
Depth of intact strata: (earliest and medieval) c.0.30 m; (PM) c.0.70 m; (modern) c.0.30 m. Survival: features, good; finds: organic, poor, other, good.

ST 36: North car park. SJ 92032 23223 (SW corner)

Between 9 March, 1981 and 16 March 1981, a trench was cut using a JCB, and the north-facing section recorded. Natural sand at 78.28 m OD (1.30 m below g.s.) Sequence of intact strata similar to ST 35, but not possible to date due to lack of finds. Only modern featuers were encountered, including a 19th century cellar to the north of the trench.

Size of cutting: 4.0 m x 1.20 m. Total depth: 1.70 m. Depth of intact strata: 1.30 m
Survival: features, insufficient information; finds, insufficient information.

ST 30: Stafford College of Further Education car park. SJ 9196 2318

On 6 November, 1980, a builder's trench was examined in advance of redevelopment, and the height of the natural sand was recorded.

Length of cutting: 26.40 m. Height of natural: 78.10 m OD sloping to 77.20 m OD to the SW.

ST 31: Stafford College of Further Education car park. SJ 9195 2315

On 6 November, 1981, builder's trench was examined in advance of redevelopment, and the height of the natural sand was recorded.

Length of cutting: 12.60 m. OD. Height of natural: 76.90 m OD.

M. Taylor

ST 37: North Walls SJ 9248 2331

A cutting was made in advance of possible demolition at the rear of 83, North Walls. Natural marsh deposits were encountered 3 metres below present ground surface; upon the marsh lay a sequence of modern demolition layers. The deposits beneath the houses were revetted by a sandstone wall, and were not explored. No trace was found of the pallisade thought to have crossed the site in the middle ages and later, and it is assumed to lie further south beneath the houses or the road.

Length of cutting: 7 m. Height of natural (marsh deposit) m AOD
Depth of intact status: 3 m (modern).

J. Glazebrook

Bibliography:

Carver, M.O.H. 1981 Underneath Stafford Town (Stafford)

SUTTON CHASE, Staffordshire/Warwickshire/West Midlands

Fieldwork

fig. 35

The research project reported in WMA 23 (pp.114-117) continued. Fieldwalking, earthwork and standing building recording, and small-scale excavations were undertaken in a study of the development of four elements of the landscape, unenclosed common waste, parks, minor settlement nucleations ('hamlets') and moated sites. Site numbers refer to the accompanying map.

Unenclosed common waste

Within the largest area of waste in 1790, 'The Coldfield', fieldwalking was undertaken east of Barr Beacon (1) and in New Oscott (2), producing struck flints. The absence of any later material from the areas sampled suggests that it may have become unsettled and uncultivated heathland, as in the 18th century, by the Roman period. Traces of ridge and furrow in Doe Bank Wood (3) are probably best interpreted as the result of preparation of the gound for tree-planting; the wood is not marked on maps until after the enclosure of The Coldfield c.1800. At Manorial Wood (4) a small area within the former Hillwood Common was walked and produced flint flakes, but again no evidence of later activity. Small-scale excavations were undertaken at the Ancient Encampment, an earthwork site in Sutton Park (5), but no evidence of its date was obtained.

Parks

Fieldwalking within the early medieval parks produced evidence of prehistoric activity in the form of flint flakes. At Weeford (6) no later material was found, but at Drayton (7), Shenstone (8),

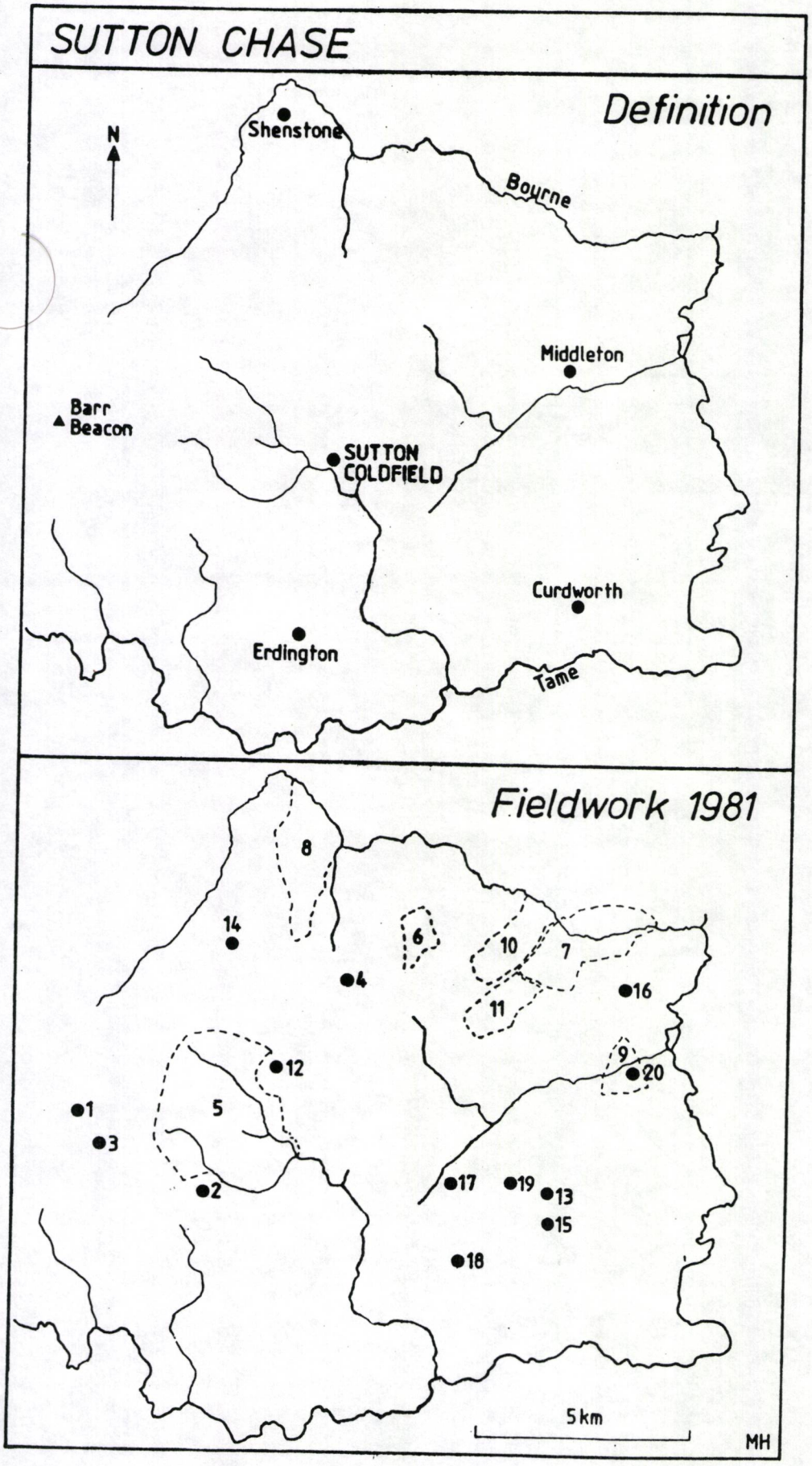


Fig. 35: SUTTON CHASE: fieldwork in 1981. (Hodder)

and Middleton (9), Roman and medieval pottery was found. The quantity and distribution of medieval pottery in each case suggested arable farming within the parks during their existence. Two of the later medieval parks were sampled by fieldwalking. At Bangley (10) struck flints were found, and on the northern edge of Shirral Park (11) a concentration of medieval pottery in a small area suggests the presence of a settlement here before the creation of the park. In Sutton Park (5) more of the boundary earthwork of a woodland enclosure of probable 15th century date was traced, cutting across the Roman road. Peat samples by S. Colledge and K. Edwards contained abundant pollen but the profile had been truncated, probably by documented post-medieval peat-cutting in the park. The boundary of Sutton Park was changed on the north-eastern side in the 18th and 19th centuries, and part of the former boundary earthwork, probably of 16th century date, was found in a garden in Luttrell Road (12).

Minor settlement nucleations

At Lower Green (13) further fieldwalking produced more struck flints and Roman and medieval pottery The distribution of pottery suggested that the medieval settlement plan was similar to the existing one, strung out along the road. No evidence of Roman activity was found in the other hamlets sampled. At Little Aston (14) the quantity and sherd size of pottery found in fieldwalking around Home Farm suggest that this was the nucleus of the medieval settlement. Further fieldwalking around the isolated Wishaw Church (15) produced no evidence of medieval settlement around it, and this, together with the evidence of 19th century maps, suggests that the church was built in the middle of the open fields to serve a parish of scattered hamlets. A small area of ridge and furrow was recorded to the south of the church.

Moated sites

The quantity and condition of Roman pottery found in fieldwalking around Shenstone Park moat (8) indicated pre-medieval settlement here, but at the other sites sampled by fieldwalking, Moat Close in Drayton Bassett (16), Langley Hall (17), and Peddimore Hall (18), nothing earlier than medieval pottery was found.

The last two sites are in isolated locations and may conform to the model moated sites as characteristic of medieval colonisation of previously unsettled areas. At Grounds Farm (19) a small concentration of Roman pottery was found adjacent to an isolated farmstead marked on 18th century maps. Small-scale excavations at Middleton Hall (2) located a former inner moat with a possible bridge abutment on its inner lip, but no definite medieval features were found in a trench across the platform. In an examination of the standing building (by N. Molyneux), two 14th or 15th century roofs were located.

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SYDENHAM'S MOAT, Solihull, West Midlands

Excavations of medieval moated site at SP 144 757 fig. 36

In a very poor year for digging conditions, work on Sydenham's Moat in 1981 has concentrated on the north east parts of the moated platform. For a plan of the platform as a whole, see WMA 23 (1980), 118. This year's plan covers only the north east part of the site.

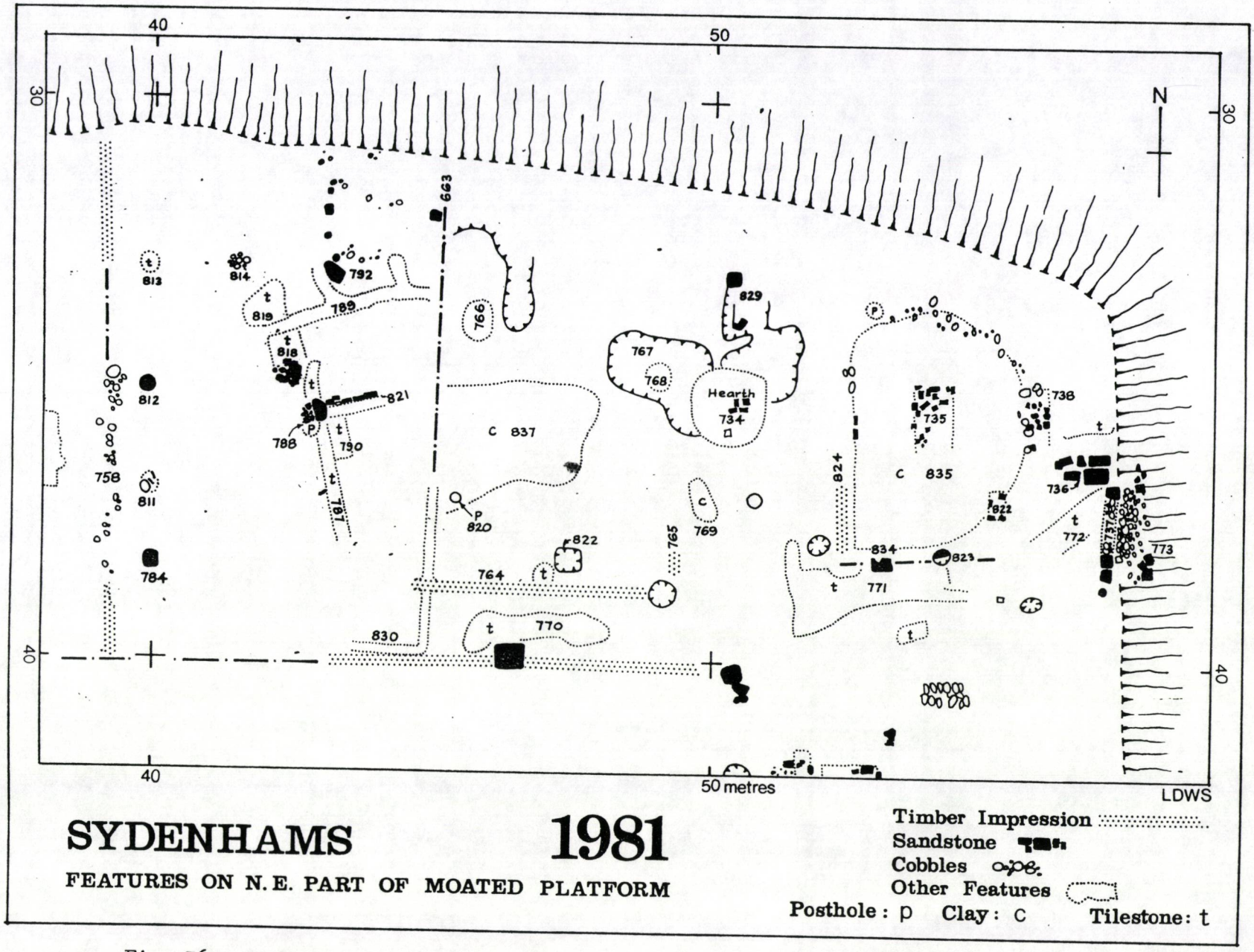


Fig. 36: SYDDENHAM'S MOAT: plan of excavated features in north-east part. (Smith)

An area of large and well compacted cobblestones interpreted as a stable or byre, incorporat a well-made drainage channel, was removed, revealing a series of features (787, 789 etc.) not seen aligned with the later structures. Features marked 't' on the plan consist of tilestone (local laminating sandstone) laid flat, perhaps as the bed for cill beams, tanks, drains or slabs. The of features seems to come to an eastern limit at the line of the later north-south stone-built dra feature 663.

Also revealed are a series of post foundations (784, 811-13), at the west edge of the now re cobble floor. A suggestion is that the latter four 'post pads' are bases for the uprights of a framed manger along the west wall of the stable, the wall itself lying beyond them on the line of feature 758. A post-hole (788) may mark the position of a partition post. The sandstone pad 79 and the line of sandstone fragments running north from it may be the remains of a footing for anoth partition.

It remains to decide whether the tilestone beds are early features of the stable associated w drain features 789 and 821. Alternatively they may well all be features of an earlier structure t walls of which are as yet undiscovered. Perhaps 789 and 821 are opposite walls of a small buildi the ground between them being conspicuously darker. Whatever the explanation, these non-aligned features went out of use when the final cobbled floor was laid over them.

It seems likely that the construction of the later stone-built drain integral with the cobbled floor on line 663 removed most traces of an earlier drain or wall on the same line, a continuation o which lies to the south.

The area to the east surrounds a burned disturbance 734. Forge slag and a piece of hematite suggest the presence of workshops, but there is no trace of a north wall to define a convincing building. The cill beam 764 may be for a pentice attached to a main building to the south.

A large spread of clean clay 835 recognises a regular edge on its west and south. To the oth sides it has only an irregular border of large stones. The clay layer was only about 2 cm thick, lying on the original upcast surface of the platform. It may have been inside a detached building at the platform corner. Later stone bases 735 738 and 822 have been dug through the clay.

Against the east edge of the platform and dipping down into the moat is a sandstone and cobble structure regarded as a bridge abutment (736, 737 and 773), which is not primary. This may have led to a path which overlay the tilestone beds 770 and 771.

The northern part of the site is proving to be very shallow, and the features discussed have been revealed by only a minimum of trowelling. The clearest elements are the stable or byre and the bridge, but their association is not yet proved. Better definition of structures is needed if the phasing of features in this area is to be achieved satisfactorily, but as the area is almost archaeologically worked out this may be a tall order even for the very practiced trowellers regularly working at the site.

Lance Smith
Solihull Archaeological Group

TONG, Shropshire

Survey and salvage recorded on line of M54 construction fig. 37 SJ 80 06

The start of motorway construction coincided with the establishment of a Community Enterprise Programme sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission, administered by the Telford Development Corporation, and directed by the Group which completed the Rescue excavation work at Tong Castle. While the Department of the Environment's Central Excavation Unit excavated and removed the Bridge Timbers at Shackerley Mound, the Tong Archaeological Group carried out work elsewhere on the motorway construction area. Work carried out previous to June 1st 1981, at both Tong Castle and Shackerley Mound, is detailed in previously published Reports and with the C.E.P. Team now completing the excavation and conservation of areas outside the motorway cutting through Tong Castle, the Rescue excavation is now almost complete and a full Report on the overall area will be produced when all the excavation work is completed.

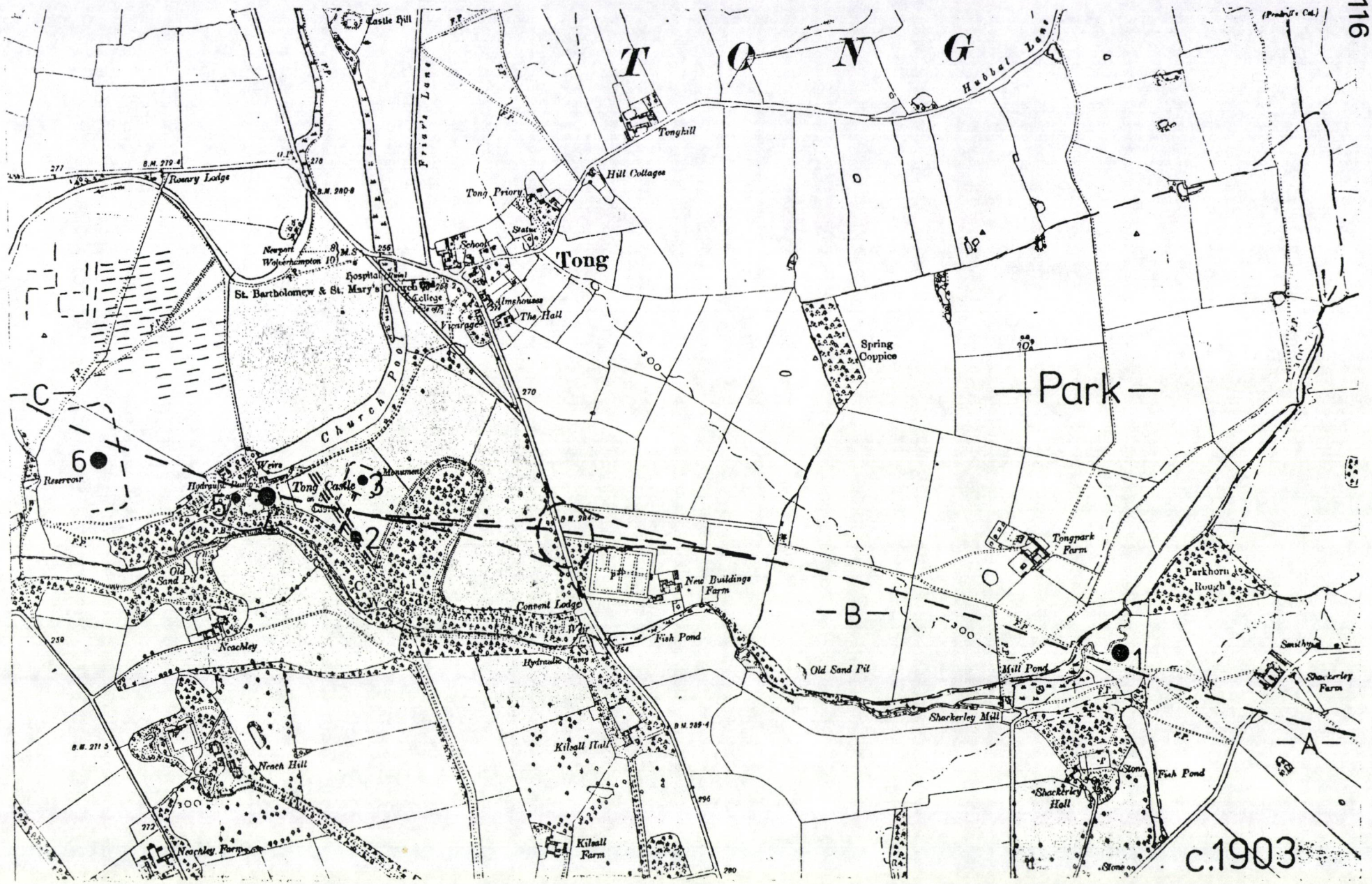
The motorway from the M6 Essington Junction leaves Chillington Park and enters Area A - from where Romano-British pottery had been previously found in the fields near Wigmore Wood. A period of walking the area following the top-soil scraping failed to produce any further evidence to confirm the reason for the presence of the pottery or further artifacts.

Walking of the area east of Shackerley Mound (1) produced one opaque flint flake, which was similar to other flints both worked and unworked, found earlier in the upper non-occupational layers during the Mound excavations. The excavation and removal of the bridge timbers in the moat produced no further evidence to that of a late 13th century moat cutting and bridge construction, and excavation of the adjacent Causeway confirmed the construction material to be from the northern moat cutting area. Excavation adjacent to the bridge showed the medieval build-up used for the extension of the Mound during, or prior to, the 13th century cutting of the moat. A machine-cutting, to 'rescue a construction machine', at tne north west corner of the Mound, revealed a 'baulk/bank' section of grey/red marl backed with a series of ash fillings of late 12th century origin. The baulk/bank was similar to that located in the north trial trench and the absence of any such feature in the south, east and west trial trenches, suggested its use as a baulk/bank along the stream side of the original Mound to stop the flooding of the earlier timber-framed buildings on the Mound.

The motorway cutting between Shackerley Mound and the Castle Wood - Area B - runs parallel to the medieval track from Tong Castle to the old Tong Castle Park and was closely watched during the initial scraping. The area to the east of the A41 interchange produced only post-medieval material whilst the area to west and around Tong Castle wood produced a Roman and a medieval coin and medieval bronze pendant during an intensive ground search after topsoil removal.

The top-soil scraping of the field in front of Tong Castle revealed nothing of the double bank and ditches shown clearly on the aerial photograph, but a ground search of the earthworks (2) produced a bronze rim sherd and a flint scraper and flake. Within the motorway cutting area parts of the Italian Style Gardens shown on the 1739 map were visible. The deep cutting across the banks/ditches revealed two parallel deep ditches cut into the natural hard sand filled with gravel and pebbles but no indications as to their use or date.

The completion of the field scraping enabled an intensive watching brief to be carried out during the machining to try and locate the Enclosure (3) and the Trackway to it which were features on the aerial photograph. The machines were 'followed' and whilst no signs of the surrounding ditches


TONG
Castle Hill
Tonghill
Hubbal Lane
Priory Lane
Hill Cottages
Tong Priory
Statue
School
Tong
Rosary Lodge
Newport 9 M.S.
Wolverhampton 10
Hospital (Rem.)
St. Bartholomew & St. Mary's Church
College
Almshouses
The Hall
Vicarage
Spring Coppice
Park
Church Pool
Weir
Reservoir
Hydraulic Pump
Tong Castle
Monument
Old Sand Pit
Neachley
Tongpark Farm
New Buildings Farm
Parkhorn Rough
Convent Lodge
Weir
Fish Pond
Hydraulic Pump
Old Sand Pit
Mill Pond
Shackerley Mill
Shackerley Farm
Neach Hill
Kilsall Hall
Kilsall Farm
Neachley Farm
Shackerley Hall
Stone Fish Pond
Stone
A
B
C
1
2
3
5
6
c.1903

were seen, white sandstone in the form of a hearth or oven was located in the centre of the Enclosure. The hearth was excavated and the fill of the stoke-hole was of 11-12th century origin and the fill of the hearth/oven excavated, but very little further evidence was revealed. During the deep cutting across the corner of the Enclosure ditch a shallow cutting into the hard sand, filled with pebbles, revealed the possible south east corner with a layer of compact pebbles at the trackway position.

There was a complete lack of C18 or other general material overall in the fields adjacent to Tong Castle, and with only a shallow top soil it suggested that part of the top-soil had been removed for the 18th century landscaping in the area. Originally parkland, it is only in this century that it has been under plough and is generally regarded as of poor quality farmland, in contrast to the rich farm lands in and around Tong.

The C.E.P. Team completed the excavation and removal of the Ice-house at Tong Castle (4)- and the full extent of the C16-C18 Cellars investigated to give a unique picture of Tong Castle underground. The excavation of the 11th century defensive area was completed, and earlier speculation confirmed of an entrance to the area from the west or Neachley area. Although a 14th century re-built bridge or Causeway across the Inner Ditch was located, it was impossible to complete the excavation of the 12th century Inner Ditch Gateway areas, but 12th century pottery from the initial bedrock cutting in the area confirmed the original dating. Demolition and removal of the Chamber into the 14th century Outer Wall, which in turn cut through a rough sandstone Inner Wall foundation. Excavation of the wall foundation revealed a large circular Tower foundation of 12-13th century origin which alters all the earlier projected outlines of the Castle.

Machining through the north west Outer Wall went through an early medieval rubbish dump against the outside of the wall and amongst the large amount of pottery, there were numerous bronze rim sherds and bronze slag enough to suggest smelting of bronze somewhere on the Castle Keep area.

The early medieval mill-stones found below the Castle, suggested that the 12th century Tong Castle Corn Mill (5) was in the area prior to the construction of the old South Pool, which moved the corn mill to below the dam of the pool. Although masoned red sandstone was found initially in the machine cuttings a full cutting was not made to confirm the positive location of the mill.

A full watching brief was carried out on the Vauxhall Farm Enclosure (6) and during the ground search of the cutting area Roman artifacts of first half of the 1st century AD were found. Two ditches were observed on a line projected in the aerial photograph and in the inner area various features were located interpreted from the photographic evidence.

No definite conclusions can be drawn, but indications so far would seem to favour a native enclosure, the siting of which took advantage of the natural landform. Further work in the area will concentrate on this, and open fieldwork, during the agricultural operations in the adjacent areas.

A continuous ground search of the cutting in Area C failed to produce anything other than 19th century material associated with the extensive landscaping in the area during 1765. Further investigations will have to be carried out in view of the nearby field patterns clearly shown on the aerial photograph, which will be in conjunction with the Vauxhall Farm enclosure.

Alan Wharton
Tong Archaeological Group

Fig. 27. TONG: salvage recording on the line of construction of the M54 motor

WALL, Staffordshire

Roman features at SK 096 065

Excavations carried out at the west end of the village of Wall prior to its being developed by Lichfield District Council have now been completed, the work being carried out by a volunteer group working at weekends.

The area measured approximately 0.76 acres (0.304 hec.), and as reported in West Midlands Archaeology No. 23 two trenches were dug. Although there was less disturbance to the east of the entrance, it was not possible to examine the whole of this part of the site as all the debris from a demolished cottage and re-building activities in the village had been dumped there. This was eventually removed by the Council, but not until the land had been handed over to the contractors and building was imminent.

A trial trench was dug at the east, and the remains of a stone-built drain running north/south were discovered. It was possible to trace this drain for a distance of 14 metres, although it had been partially robbed. Little dating evidence was found associated with it, although the decorated Samian sealed in the fill suggested a Flavian or post-Flavian date.

Examination also continued in the trench No. 2 to the east around the two stone foundations running north-south, and although the full extent of these was never found, a similar foundation at right angles running in an easterly direction was uncovered, and also a number of earlier timber slots on a north-south alignment. Again it was not possible to examine the full extent of these features, but although the slots themselves yielded no artifacts or dating material, the chronology is evident. Two brooches were found at the side of the stone foundations, but apart from a coin (Claudian copy) and a piece of cavalry equipment identified by Dr. Graham Webster, recovered from the same layer, no other small finds came to light.

Although work had been concentrated on the stone foundations (Trench 2), further examination continued to the west (Trench 1), and two trenches were dug to assess the stratification and establish the natural. The gravel layer containing a considerable quantity of R.B. pottery was found to be separated from a lower gravel layer by a layer of peat and sand. This earlier gravel layer also contained much R.B. pottery. The presence of small wooden stakes, with larger wooden posts still in position suggest, perhaps, a revetment associated with the lower gravel layer. The upper gravel would appear to be a later possible road surface, and in one area there was a slight indication of a corduroy connected with this. The purpose of this grave and its relationship with the remains of the sandstone wall foundations and sandstone pads reported in 1980 have yet to be ascertained.

The builders, Sheldon Contracting Co., of Solihull, have been very co-operative and have given every assistance for recording to be carried out during their operations. The discoveries made by them consist of R.B. pottery, a column capital and a lower mandible of a male aged 25/35. They also uncovered a stone built drain with 5 courses of sandstone still remaining.

Occupation of the area appears to commence with timber structures related to the early Roman period and continues into the post-Roman period. The shallow stone foundations in Trench No. 1 could conceivably be Medieval.

Post-excavation work is being carried out on the material recovered, and the report is being prepared for submission to the Department of the Environment and publication.

Frank and Nancy Ball
for Department of the Environment

WALSALL, West Midlands SP016983

Excavation in St. Matthew's Church crypt. Fig. 38

In late April 1981 BUFAU was contacted with respect to a current programme of restoration in the crypt of St. Matthew's Church. This work involved the removal of a brick flue, associated with an earlier coal fired boiler, and its supports. This flue had blocked an access stairway leading up into the church; this stair was further blocked by a large amount of presumably graveyard debris, containing at least three skulls, one of which was probably pre c.1850.

Volunteers had removed c.1m of coal and rubble in an attempt to reveal earlier floor levels, in order that the skeletal remains recovered from the staircase packing could be reinterred. No such floor was recognised and the natural gravel was exposed. At this point BUFAU was asked to investigate the area in question and carried out two days work, with two basic aims:

1) To ascertain whether any archaeological evidence had survived of the construction of the crypt (probably in the 11th/12th century), of its possible use as a shrine or reliquary, or earlier activity on the site.
2) To investigate the nature of the remaining deposits in order that restoration work could continue and the human remains recovered be reinterred.

Firstly, the remaining loose rubble was removed and the area cleaned. This revealed the extent to which the volunteer work had disturbed any stratigraphy: the majority of a probably 19th century crushed plaster and pebble floor had been destroyed and the remainder was excavated (1002) (see plan). This layer sealed a number of pits of roughly similar date, probably 19th century, which were cut into the natural gravel. These pits varied in shape and depth and their function is uncertain, although the nature of their fills suggest that they were dug as quarry pits to provide sand for construction work.

Most of the crypt floor seems to have been distrubed in this way although the extreme northern end of the chamber was not entirely cleared. No medieval or earlier features, or other material, were recovered, probably for two reasons: the disturbance caused by later features; and the truncation of the natural gravel either by 19th century building works or by recent volunteer work. The natural gravel had been lowered to such an extent that only what appeared to be the base of the crypt walls were exposed.

Jon Cane

St. Matthew's Church Crypt,
Walsall

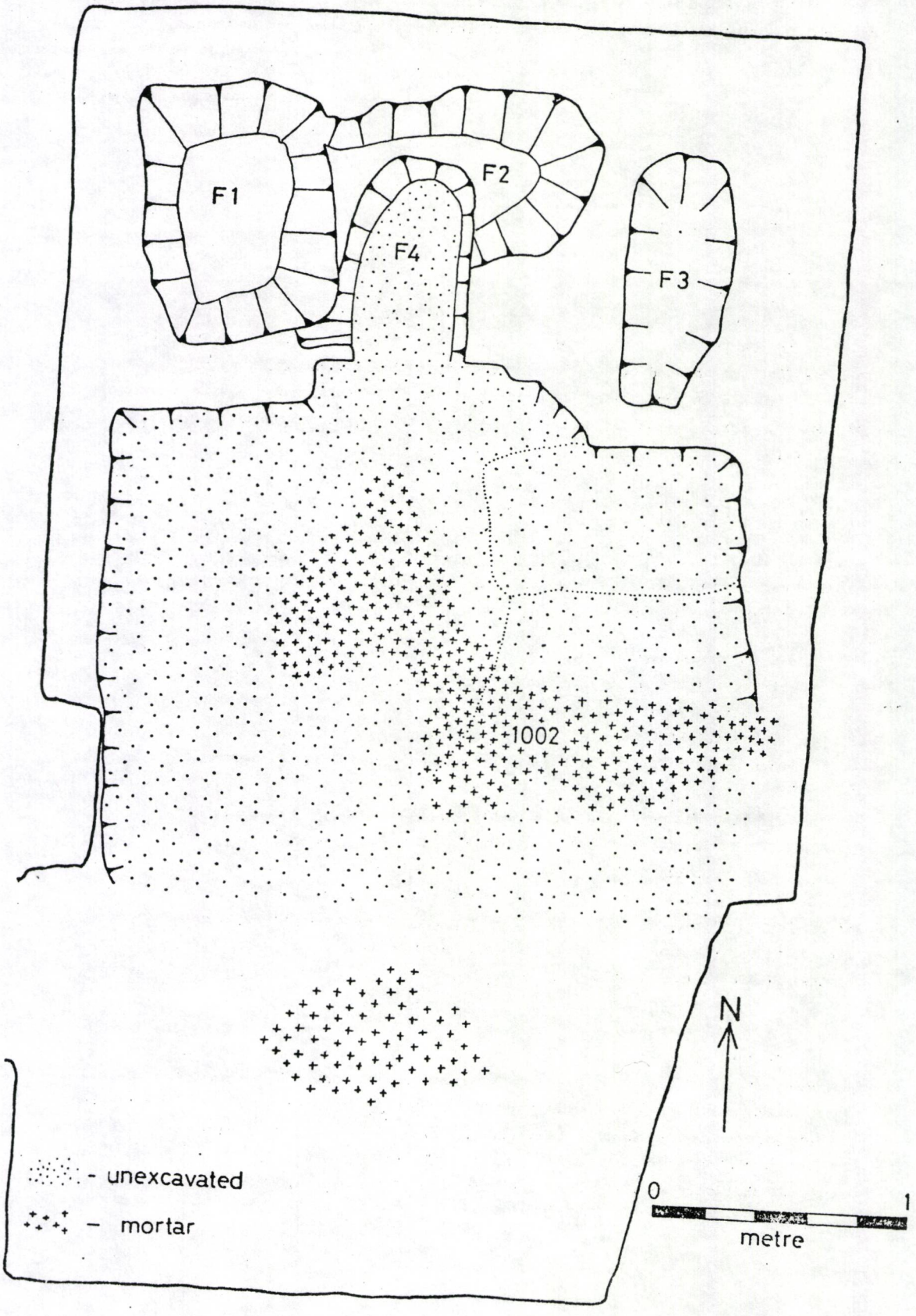


Fig. 38: WALSALL: St. Matthew's church; post-medieval features in the crypt (Cane

WASPERTON, Warwickshire — Area: SP 261 581

Excavation of gravel site. Figs. 39,40,41, — SMR: WA 1845

Introduction

The current archaeological excavations on the cropmark complex at Wasperton began in December 1980 in advance of gravel extraction. The site is located 8km to the south of Warwick on the east bank of the river Avon, occupying a position on the second gravel terrace at between 40 and 45m O.D. The area currently under threat is 12.5 ha in extent and corresponds to Site 70 of the Aerial Survey of the Warwickshire Avon; a plot of the cropmark (Fig.39) shows that the site itself comprises a series of overlapping subrectangular enclosures concentrated in a band running E-W across the field, traversed by a number of linear features running north-south.

Taken with the rest of the cropmarks in adjacent fields, it appears to be part of a complete 'landscape unit', bounded on the west by the river Avon and on the east by the Thelsford Brook and, to the north and south, by approximately parallel 'pit alignments'. This 'landscape unit' appears to comprise a field system to the south, with the presumed settlement area to the north. Before the present excavations started, the site was though to be mainly of Iron Age date with possible later, Romano-British settlement, 'spilling over' the northern 'pit alignment'. However, investigations so far have shown a Romano-British settlement and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery in discrete locations separated by fields, and the opportunity exists for an understanding of a large segment of the rural landscape.

Site Evaluation

The threat of an imminent start on gravel extraction in the field immediately south of Site 70 prompted preliminary investigations, in March 1979, by the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, assisted by Warwickshire Museum. They carried out a programme of limited excavation where the southern 'pit alignment' traversed a small enclosure, and geophysical and phosphate analyses, as well as an assessment of the possible survival or organic remains, such as seeds and bone across the main cropmark area (WMANS 1979). High phosphate readings were obtained over much of Site 70: the possibility of seed survival was not thought to be promising: and no assessment was made on bone survival as none was found in the trial excavation. Alternative sampling strategies for obtaining sufficient data to prove or disprove current assumptions about the site were also proposed (OAU report 1979).

Strategy

Excavation resumed in December 1980 at the instigation of Warwickshire County Museum; it was placed under the direction of BUFAU and funded mainly by the Manpower Services Commission, Warwick District Council acting as sponsor. Birmingham University contributed their annual training excavation in June 1981. The following excavation strategy was adopted: rather than totally neglecting large parts of the cropmark and concentrating solely on selected areas for detailed study, it was decided that every archaeological feature should be investigated, recorded and sampled (for details of recovery levels, see fig.39). Three areas of high feature density were also designated for more intensive excavation to provide a more detailed 'focus' or 'recovery'.

It was hoped that such an approach would give a perspective on sampling strategies currently being applied on other large cropmark sites in Britain. It would also act as a check on the proportion of features not represented on A.P.'s, and on the accuracy of aerial photograph plots.

Salvage Recording and Excavation

Topsoil stripping was carried out by Mixconcrete Aggregates, the gravel company, using large box scrapers. Three areas were left for stripping by lighter machines under closer archaeological control (see plan Fig. 39). The main stripping was only partly monitored, but it was possible to halt the machines during wet weather. Despite this, the resultant surface varied considerably: from a clean, smooth surface, obtained during dry or frozen conditions, to a rutted mess when wet.

Gravel is extracted by dragline crane, feeding into a system of conveyor belts which take the material to be processed, 1.5km south of the site. The main conveyor runs NE-SW, parallel and adjacent to the eastern edge of the field. A second conveyor bisects the field from east to west. These two are 'permanent': a third, moveable conveyor, which presently runs south from conveyor 2 is further used to subdivide the field into 'workable' units. These are approximately 30m wide.

To date, the archaeological work on site can be divided into four separate categories:

1) Initial monitoring of the topsoil stripping.
2) Salvage recording and excavation prior to the installation of the conveyors.
3) Salvage recording and excavation in approximately 30m strips, prior to excavation.
4) Intensive excavation in those areas not stripped by box scraper (see above).

Although most of the 30,000m^2 already destroyed by the quarry has been salvage recorded, the plan so far recovered is fragmentary, reflecting both the above approach, and, in some cases, emergency reaction to the gravel company's programme (Fig. 39).

Salvage recording recovered many features not visible on the aerial photographs, especially in the southern part of the field. Whilst many of these were small pits, or, in many cases, natural features similar to periglacial ice wedges, one major E-W ditch, F6, a few minor ditches which cut it, an Anglo-Saxon cemetery and a number of other features were discovered. In general, the landscape was found to show a high degree of resolution into discrete areas.

Anglo-Saxon Cemetery (Area A)

The line of conveyor 1 lay across two interconnecting subrectangular enclosures, (Fig. 39) which had been cut by two inhumation burials, presumably of Anglo-Saxon date. The first burial cut into the southern ditch of the western enclosure was of a juvenile, lying on his front, and aligned north-south. The skeleton was complete except for the lower right arm: there were no grave-goods, though a single animal bone was found in the grave. The second grave was also oriented N-S. It was cut into the northern ditch of the eastern enclosure. Unfortunately it had been badly disturbed by the box

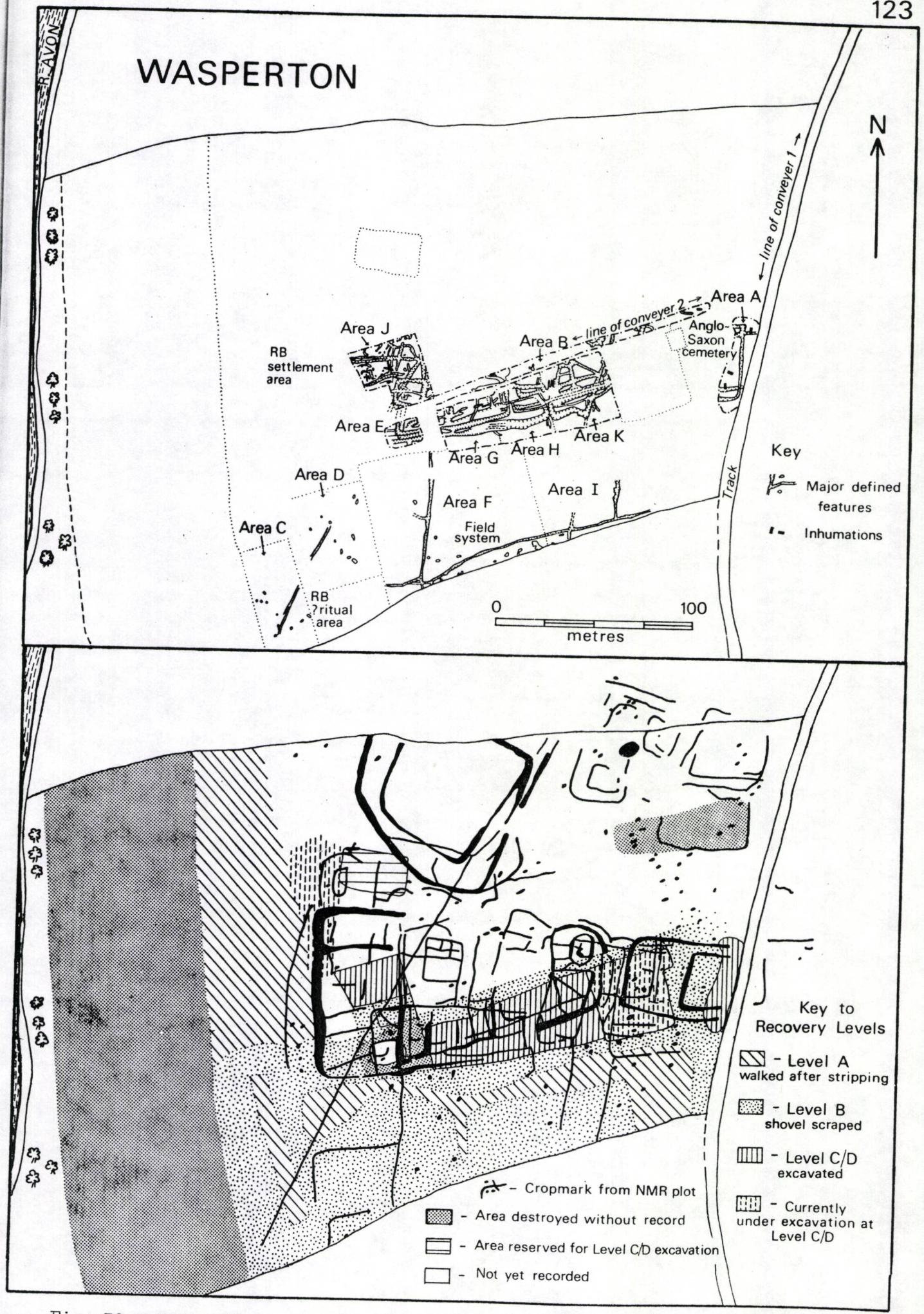


Fig. 30: WASPERTON

scrapers, and no articulated bone was found. However, an impressive array of grave-goods was recovered: this comprised two gilt saucer brooches, amber beads, an alloy belt buckle and various iron objects too corroded for immediate identification. These had also been disturbed by the scrapers. A third grave, situated between the others, within the enlosures, was also found. It was oriented east-west, and contained an adult in a wooden coffin.

Subsequently a concentration of cremations and inhumations with grave goods of presumed 5-6th century date has been located in the same area and is now under excavation at Level D.

Romano-British Ritual Area(?)

In the extreme SW of the site, on the edge of grave terrace, a subcircular pit approximately 1.5m in diameter, lay outside a 'curve' of similar pits. At first these were thought to be prehistoric, and to be connected with the boundary of the supposed territory analogous to the north and south pit alignments (see above). Unfortunately, the pits which comprised the 'curve' proved devoid of artifacts (a common problem when dealing with pits of this nature). The outlier, however, proved different: after the initial scraping it had appeared as a patch of heavy burning - a hearth perhaps. Cleaning revealed two sets of antlers, with parts of the skulls still attached, set so as to form a square. The burning continued below the antler setting, though they themselves were unburnt. Underlying this was a roughly squared slab of local sandstone, bearing the inscription FELICITER in a crude hand. Such inscriptions meaning 'by chance' or 'luckily' are rarely found outside temple or ritual contexts. Its discovery at Wasperton leads to speculation that the area, possibly the river, was of some ritual significance.

Enclosures

Other features investigated have included the ditches of the field system, and the outer ditches of the main series of enclosures. The field system is made up of single ditches, without recuts and possibly banks, indicative of a single phase of laying out. The southern outer ditches of the main enclosures show numerous recuts and may in fact represent only a few enclosures whose outer limits shifted slightly with each recut.

Main Romano-British Settlement Area (Area J)

The three areas designated for more intensive investiation were deliberately laid out along the remnants of a medieval headland which ran north-south across the site. It was hoped that the greater depth of soil under the headland would have protected the archaeological deposits to their maximum height.

The first area intensively excavated was Area E (Fig.39). This area, of 15m x 9m, was taken down entirely by hand. However no additional stratigraphical information was recovered by this exercise. What the excavation of Area E did reveal with the complexity of the enclosure ditch system and its recuts; the southern ditch (width over 1.5m) had been recut eight times, each time on a slightly different alignment.

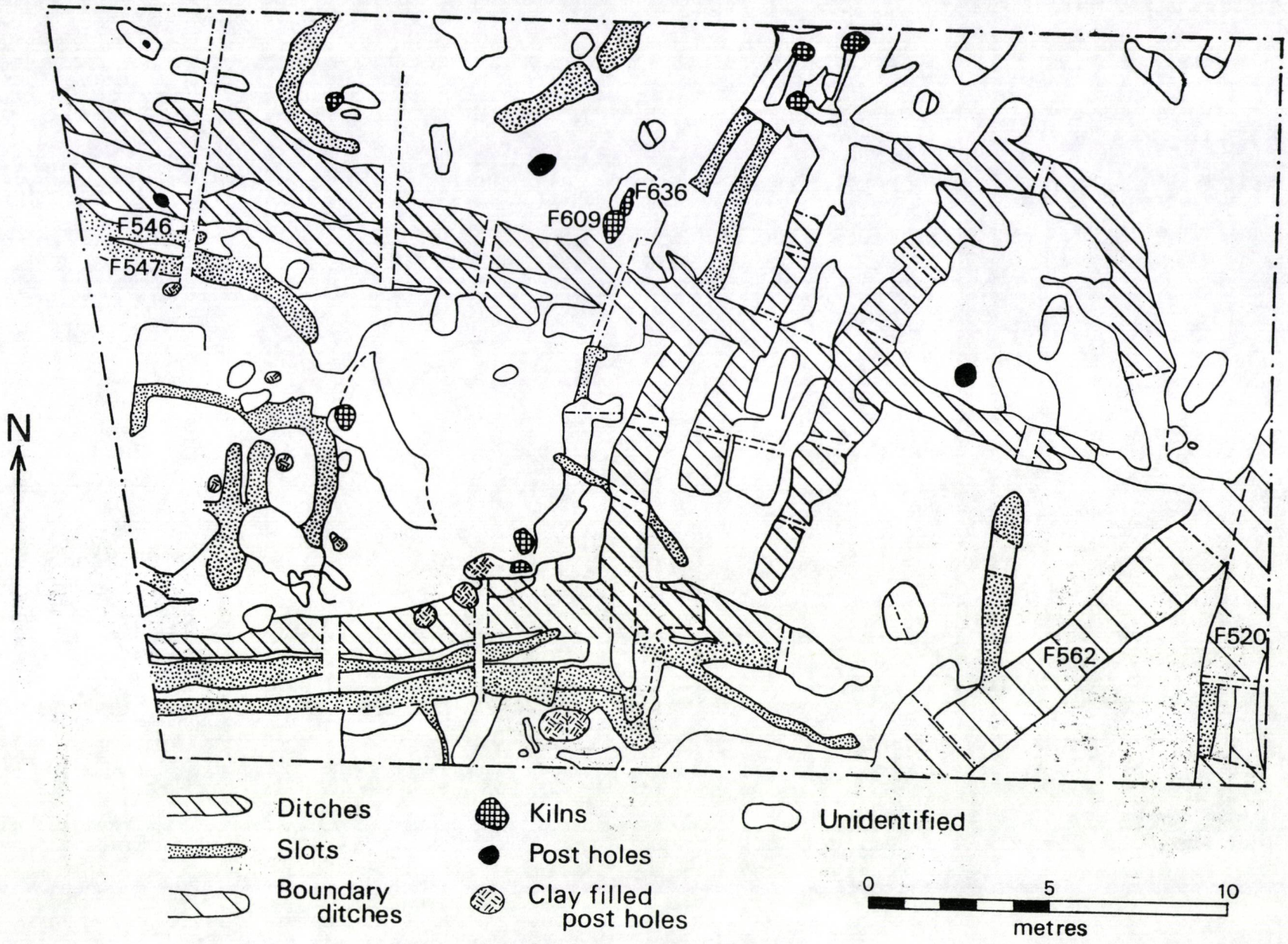
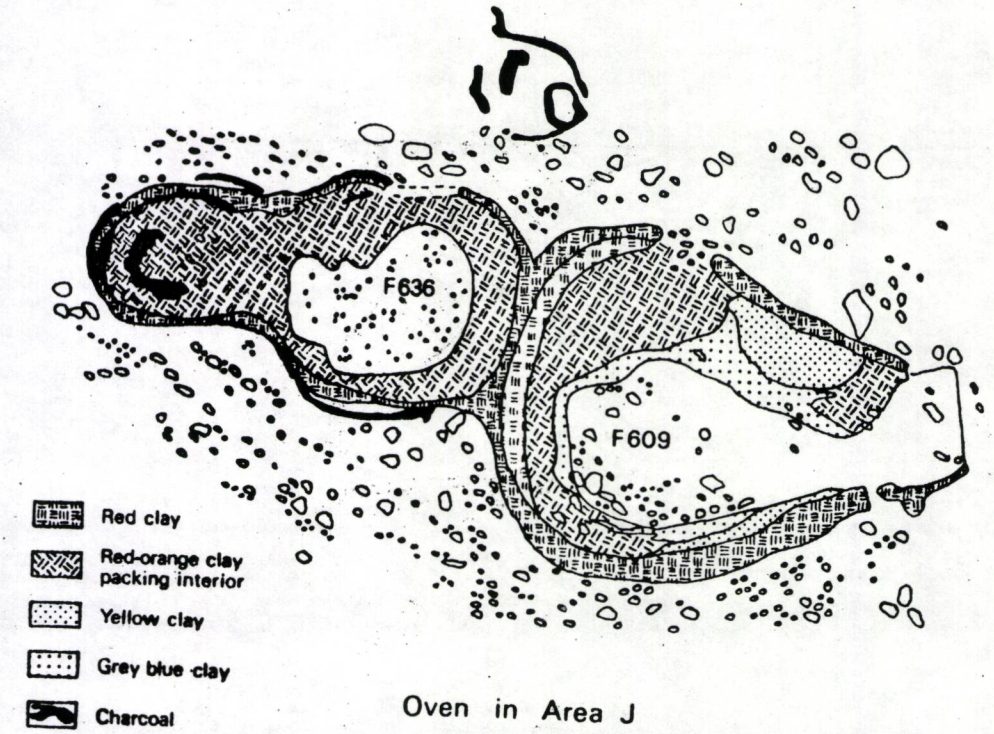
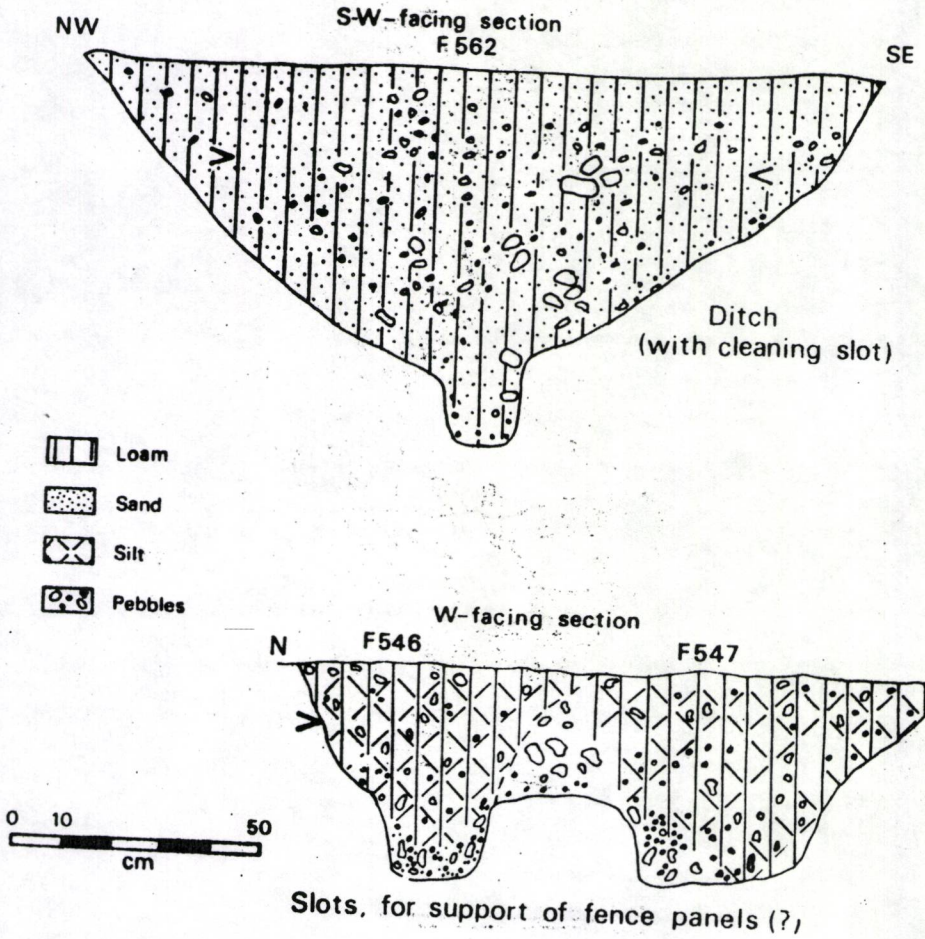


Fig. 40: WASPERTON: Plan of Romano-British settlement area (Area J).
Site of University's Training Excavation, 1981 (Crawford/Hooper)



Oven in Area J



Slots, for support of fence panels (?)

Fig. 41: WASPERTON: excavations in RB settlement (Area J); plan of oven, and profile of ditch and slot. (Crawford/Hooper)

Area J (Fig.39, 40, 41) was the second area to be intensively investigated. The area lay toward the SW corner of the main enclosure complex, but north of the second main conveyor. The topsoil was stripped off using a Volvo BM4400 loading shovel, loaned to the excavation by Mixconcrete. This machine, despite being unable to 'backblade' left a remarkably clean surface, revealing a greater density of features than in any part of the excavation to date.

The earliest feature is a V-shaped ditch, cut about 1.5m into the natural gravel with a 'footbreaker' or cleaning slot in the bottom. Judging by the fill, a bank had been erected along the western edge of the ditch. This ditch was part of the field system and had been traced across the southern part of the field. Cutting the field system were two categories of ditch (Fig. 41): vertical-sided, flat-bottomed slots averaging .30m in width; and U-shaped ditches of generally much wider (over 1m) section. The slots tended to occur in groups of two or more, running parallel. Wherever a stratigraphic relationship occurred, the U-shaped ditches cut the slots. However, the tendency was for the two types of ditch to run broadly parallel, and a simple sequence of slot superseded by ditch is not probable.

Area J also contained 10 small kilns, ovens or hearths (Fig. 41), all of which occurred in the area of the main excavation, with none being found inthe area cleared immediately to the south. Each consisted of a shallow pit of approximately .50m diameter, cut into the natural: this had then been lined with clay and a clay superstructure presumably domed, built up. Each also had a simple flue, usually clay-lined (though in one case it was stone-lined). The kilns had not been fired to a very high temperature: in each case the superstructure baked hard except on the inner face. No slag or other indications of an industrial process have been recovered, and a domestic interpretation, e.g. for the baking of bread, is favoured.

Despite the abundance of domestic kilns, there were no structures recognisable as huts in association. One kiln in the NW corner of Area J was partly enclosed by a shallow semicircular slot; this however, would appear to have held only a windbreak or similar flimsy structure. 'Postbases' form the other major class of structure feature found in Area J. They appeared as clay-filled postholes, with diameters ranging from 0.2m to 0.6m. The packing of post-holes with clay would have provided a more solid base for the setting of posts than placing them directly into the natural gravel.

Two fragmentary burials were also found in Area J. The first was in a rectangular grave cut by a ditch: only the lower left arm and parts of pelvic and leg were recovered: it was accompanied by a bronze bracelet. The second was also cut by a ditch in the SW corner of J. Only the femurs were recovered.

As stated above no traces of substantial buildings were recovered in Area J. There appeared, however, to be afunctional difference between the slots and ditches. The vertical sides of the slots indicated that they must have been backfilled almost immediately (as only a few weeks of a British summer soon started to erode their edges). The absence of postholes in the bottom of the slots implied that if they held fences (which they presumably did since they were unlined) they would have consisted of

prefabricated hurdles, whose feet could have rotted without trace. At no point did slots which ran parallel converge or cross. This implied that, rather than being successive recuts of the same slot, they were cut and in use at the same time. The resulting fences would thus have consisted of parallel thicknesses of hurdle, possibly braced for extra strength. The interpretation of the U-shaped ditches was also that they were property boundaries. They were deeper and wider than the slots, and would have provided quite a formidable barrier to livestock without fences.

The absence of definable living quarters, and the profusion of property boundaries and kilns (which may have presented a fire risk) suggested that this area was removed from the nucleus of the settlement, and may have been a type of 'back yard' located as it is close to the western boundary of the enclosure complex.

The third area for intensive excavation has not yet been investigated.

Finds

The majority of the finds from the area examined have been Romano-British in date. Exceptions have been a Group I polished axe, a barbed and tanged arrowhead, both found in unstratified contexts; various barbed flint blades and flakes (which may after all be R.B.) found in Area J; and the Anglo-Saxon grave-goods from both inhumations and cremations. The latter have yet to be fully analysed. The 'normal' range of Roman pottery has been found, including grey wares with some Samian, mortaria, Severn Valley etc., together with a range of coarse handmade native wares. The wheelmade pottery which predominated, suggested a 2nd-century date for the settlement with some 4th century material. Few metal objects have been recovered. These have included two coins, a fine 'trumpet' fibula, and a plain bracelet, all of bronze, from Area J. Fragments of quernstones, including a complete upperstone, unfinished and unused, have recently been found, all within the southern limits of the enclosures. Quite large quantities of animal bone have also been found. While these have mainly been of cow, some horse and deer bones have been found, and possibly some pig. Some post-Medieval pottery has also been found during surface cleaning.

Conclusions

The current excavations have so far produced the following conclusions. The site at Wasperton comprises many elements of differing date in contrast to the impression of a unified settlement unit gained from the aerial photographs.

The field system, where excavated, has been shown to consist of single ditches, without recuts, but possibly with associated banks. These ditches have been largely devoid of finds, but a few sherds of R.B. pottery have come from the upper fills of the ditches.

The main settlement comprises a series of rectilinear enclosures. Unfortunately it was not possible to investigate the junctions between the outer limits of the enclosures and the ditches of the field system, as these had been obliterated by the graders. However, within the enclosures, especially in Area J, it has been noticed that the field system ditches have been the earliest features.

The outer ditches of the main settlement area exhibited multiple recuts often on diverging lines and implied use over quite long periods of time (although rapid or seasonal silting of ditches may be a factor).

Although this area has been designated the 'main settlement area' no substantial buildings have so far been resolved. However, the presence of domestic kilns and the evidence for rather flimsy fences imply that it was an area of settlement. Judging by finds of quernstones, kilns and both domestic and wild animal bones within the main settlement area, it is apparent that a mixed economy was being practised. All of the finds from this area so far indicate a 2nd-4th century date.

A short distance east of the main settlement area are two interlocking rectangular enclosures and the possibly associated Anglo-Saxon cemetery. Whilst it is clear that the enclosures predate the graves, their relationship with the other enclosures has yet to be determined.

G. Crawford

Acknowledgements

The setting up of the present excavations at Wasperton and its current viability are due to the efforts of many people. I would like to acknowledge with thanks Martin Carver of BUFAU, Helen Maclagan of Warwick Museum for setting up the project and Simon Buteux and Sarah Hawling for enduring with me what felt like the worst winter on record (1980/81). I would also like to thank Professor Tomlinson of Birmingham University for bringing the Archaeology Department's training excavation to Wasperton. The viability of the project has been assured, at least until August 1982, by the recruitment of Community Enterprise Programme Scheme funded by M.S.C.; without this scheme the project could not have kept apace with the grand extraction programme.

And lastly I acknowledge the cooperation of Mixconcrete Aggregates and its employees for accommodating the excavation team within their extraction programme.

WHITBOURNE, Hereford and Worcester

Excavations at hill-fort SO 7224 5656 HWCM 3954

Whitbourne hillfort was rediscovered by Mrs. Phyllis Williams in 1977, while carrying out her research into the parish (Williams, 1979, 22). It covers c. 9.0 hectares (c. 26 acres), and is situated on the eastern side of the parish, overlooking the crossing of the River Teme by the main Worcester-Leominster routeway. Little remains of the earthworks, although one length of rampart and ditch on its north-eastern side is quite pronounced. Field walking of the ploughed interior has produced a small number of early Roman potsherds (Williams, 1979, 14).

In May 1981 the landowner, Mr. Richard Freeman, kindly allowed archaeological recording to take place in conjunction with the construction of a silage pit. This building work involved the levelling of part of the rampart and ditch at the northern end of the hillfort (SO 7224 5656), to the west of Court Buildings.

An 11 m. longitudinal section along the line of the rampart was cleaned and drawn; because of the nature of the mechanical excavation it was not possible to obtain a section at right angles through the rampart. The section line was to the north of the postulated crest of the rampart, and was c. 1 m. deep. A simple stratigraphic sequence was observed.

The base of the section was composed of red sandy clay (layer 5), above which was a 0.14 m. thick layer of reddish brown clay loam, containing charcoal flecks (layer 4). Two layers of red clay (layers 2 and 3) were above this, and were very similar in colour and texture to layer 5. The top layer (layer 1) consisted of reddish brown clay loam, heavily disturbed by roots. The top of the section was much disturbed by the mechanical removal of these tree roots before the section was cleaned. (A full description and drawing of this section may be obtained from the Hereford and Worcester County Archaeological Department.)

Layer 5 is interpreted as the natural subsoil, and layer 4 as a buried soil beneath the rampart constructed of redeposited natural subsoil (layers 2 and 3). No sign of rampart revetment or other reinforcement was seen but the fact that the alignment of the section was along the rampart, rather than at right angles to it, might have hindered observation of such features. A charcoal sample was taken from layer 4, and it is hoped that a radio-carbon date will be obtained for this deposit. No other dating material or artefacts were found.

I would like to thank the landowner of Poplands Farm, Richard Freeman and the contractor, Mike Smith and Son, for their co-operation and interest; and Sue Hirst and Phyllis Williams for bringing the site to our attention and for so readily making available the results of their previous work.

John Sawle
Archaeological Excavations Officer
Hereford and Worcester County Council

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WOLVERHAMPTON, West Midlands County

Recording of late 18th-early 19th century ice house fig. 42 SO 907 974

Located in the grounds of the now demolished Graisley Villa, 1.5 km SW of Wolverhampton town centre on the Penn Road, is an intact example of a small domestic ice-house. This building is endangered by a proposed road-widening scheme for the Penn Road, and its house grounds are awaiting redevelopment.

The ice-house is of late-18th/early-19th century red brick construction, and is first recorded on the 1834 first edition OS map. It is of octagonal plan, with a domed roof, and is entered from a short tapering passage (1). Internally, there are three full-length 'niches' built into alternate walls away from the doorway, each with an arched roof a little below the start of the roof dome (2,3,4). Between 'niches' 3 and 4 is a trapezoidal opening, originally penetrating further into the body of the wall, but now foreshortened by a brick blocking (5). Two other secondary features are to be seen, a short additional length to the entrance passage, and a penetration through 'niche' 4, extending to the outside (6). A small hole (7) through one wall reveals the presence of an air-space separating brick skins of the building, and in the diagram this is assumed to be continuous (8). Through the roof there are three circular vents, apparently of primary construction (9,10,11). Externally, the dome is rendered with a deep layer of pink gritty mortar, while inside the passage and possibly also the octagon, the walls have been lime-washed. The building is predominantly stretcher-bonded with large bricks ($9\frac{1}{2}$ x $4\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 in), forming an octagon with internal sides 4ft 6in wide. It is still buried substantially beneath soil, though the roof vents indicate that it may never have been completely buried. Their presence is seen to be as an aid to air-circulation and freshness, with the small hole (7) as an inlet to the wall air-space.

On the Wolverhampton Tithe Map (1942) three pools are shown in the house grounds, and these may have been the source of ice in winter, for storage through to summer. The roof vents may have allowed the building to be used as a 'cool-house' for perishable foodstuffs, allowing free circulation of fresh air, reducing the possibility of a summer 'greenhouse-effect'.

Details of this building have been submitted to the 'Ice-House Hunt' project, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

J.P. Malam and D.M. Thom
Wolverhampton

WOLVERHMAPTON, West Midlands County

Find of late Bronze Age socketed axe and wooden shaft fragment fig.43 SJ 933 025

In July 1980 a socketed bronze axe was found in the rear garden of a property in Keats Road, Bushbury, Wolverhampton. It was reported as having been found at a shallow but unspecificed depth,

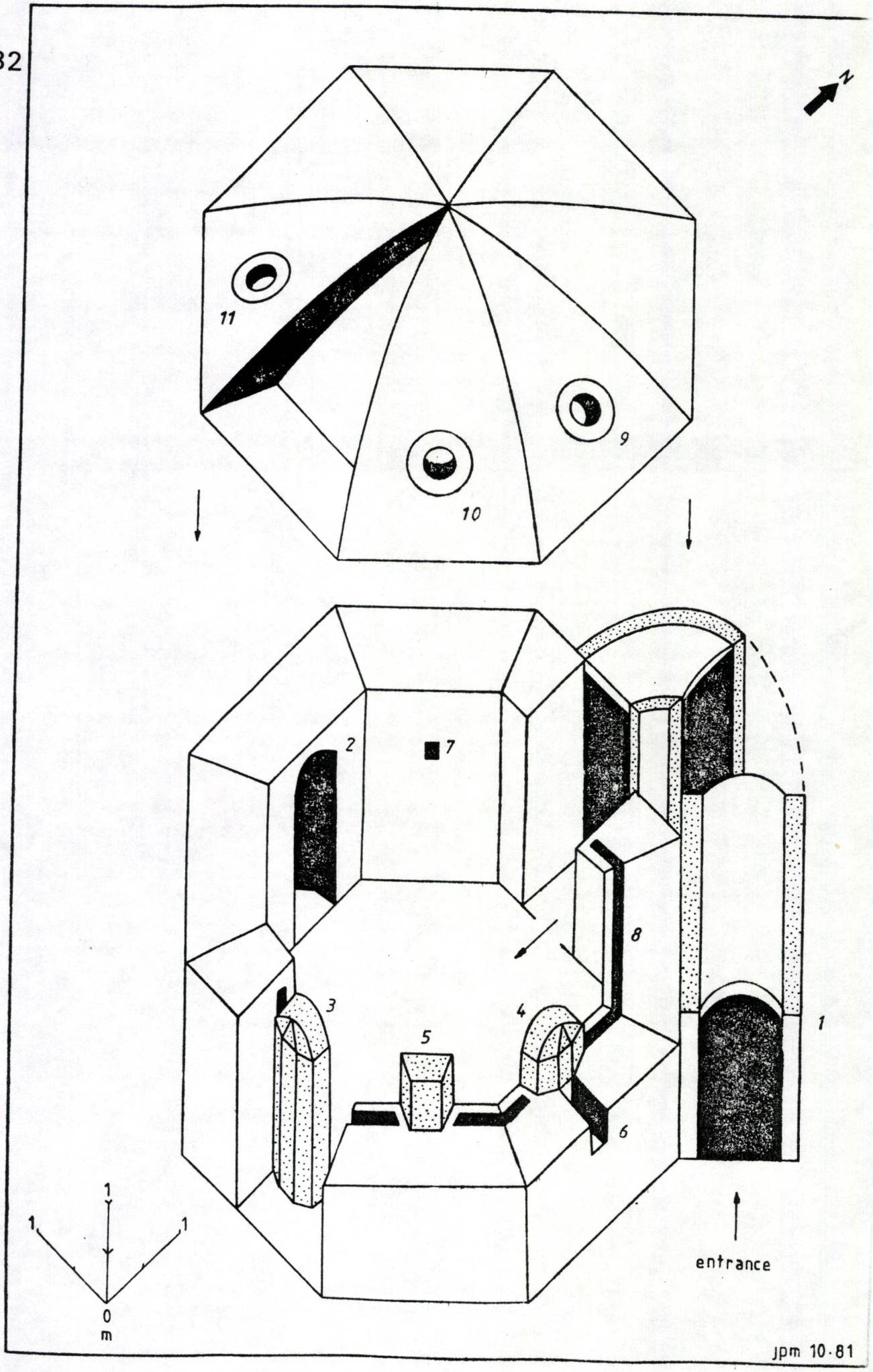


Fig. 42: WOLVERHAMPTON: late 18th - early 19th century ice house. (Malam)

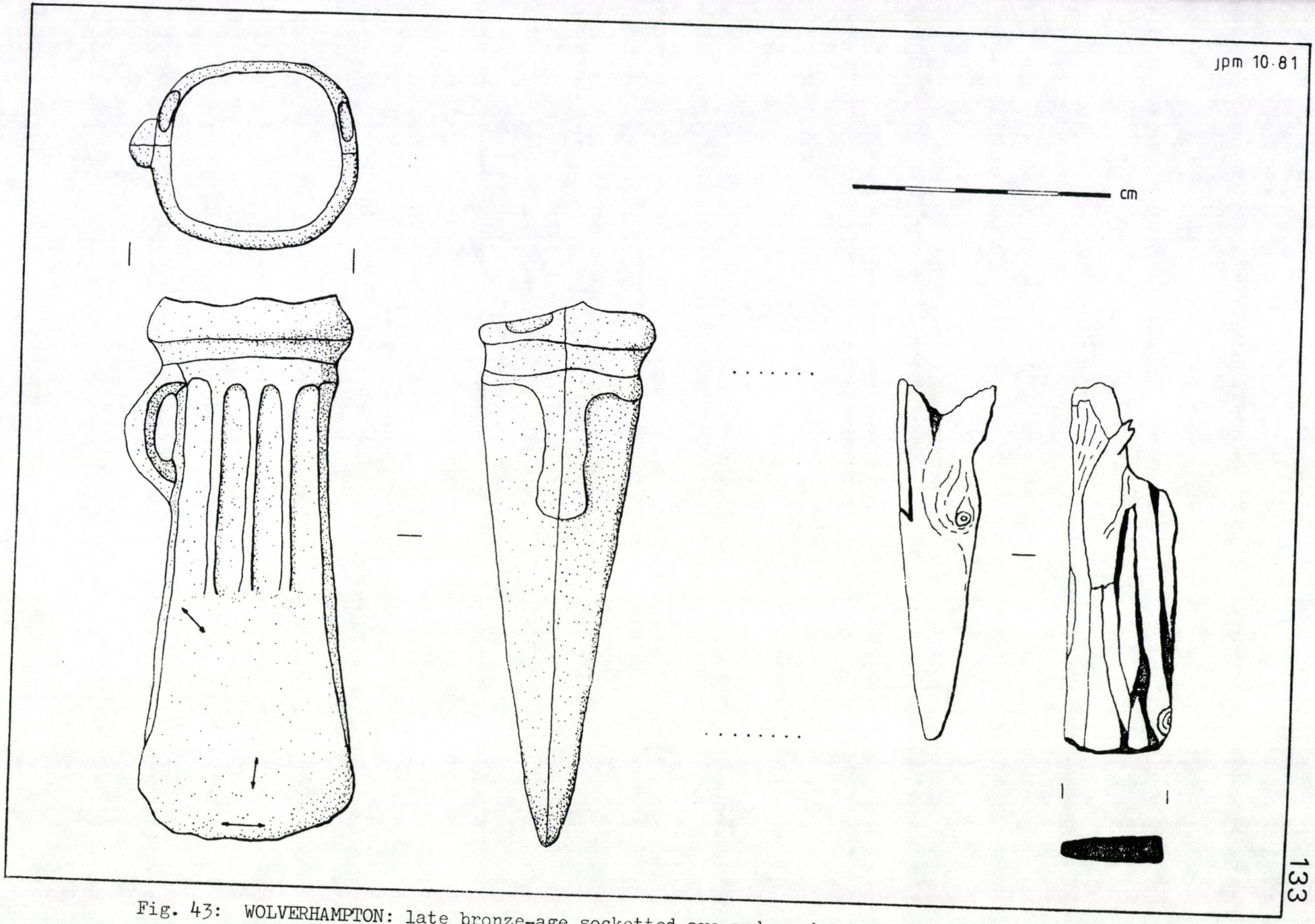


Fig. 43: WOLVERHAMPTON: late bronze-age socketted axe and wooden haft fragment. (Malam)

while removing soil for an ornamental pond. It is now in the collection of Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Museums.

Axe description

Weight	:	280 gm
Length	:	106 mm
Socket length x width	:	40 x 36 mm
Cutting edge width	:	42 mm
Central width	:	33 mm
Central facet width	:	21 mm

It is decorated on both faces with three parallel raised ribs, which originate from a cordon running around the upper part of the axe beneath the collar, and which joins the top return of the small loop-handle. Only one face preserves good detail, and it is covered with many short scratches of a very fine penetration into the surface of the axe. These are aligned in three principal directions (indicated by arrows on the diagram), and it is possible that they are utilisation marks, which may be contemporary with the life of the axe. Two shallow oval depressions on the socket rim probably reflect a feature of the mould.

Haft tip description

Length	:	72 mm
Width	:	20 mm
Thickness	:	17 mm

Within the socket is a well-fitting wedge-shaped fragment of cut wood, which, when intact, may have formed the axe haft. The exact identification has been made difficult by the poor state of preservation of the wood, though it closely resembles material of the family Rosaceae subfamily Pomoideae, which includes Crataegus (hawthorn), Pyrus (pear), Malus (apple) and Sorbus (mountain ash and whitebeam). It seems likely that it would have come from a tree the size of a Sorbus, which may contain knots, as is the case with this fragment. Mountain ash and whitebeam are both hard woods, and have been used for tool handles.

Discussion and dating

This axe probably belongs to the most widespread three-ribbed form in Britain, with an as yet unidentified regional concentration (unlike the South Welsh and Yorkshire types), and it is the common type of the west Midlands/Marches/Upper Severn area, dated broadly to the 9th-8th centuries BC. Activity during the Bronze Age in the Bushbury area has been listed previously as consisting of a palstave and a barrow, both now lost (Plot 1686, 403). The local place-name 'Low Hill' may be significant, and the likely position of a barrow in the parish may have been on the prominent Bushbury Hill (602 ft), which Keats Road climbs to the 525 ft. contour.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr. C.B. Burgess (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) for his advice on an earlier draft of this note; Dr. D.F. Cutler (Jodrell Laboratory, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew) for the identification of the wood fragment; and Miss J. Pierson Jones and Mr. G.S. Learmonth (City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) for their comments on the object's analysis.

J.P. Malam
Wolverhampton

Reference:

Plot, R. 1686 Natural History of Staffordshire

WROXETER, Shropshire

Excavations on the site of the macellum in the Roman city of Viroconium fig. 44 SJ 1608

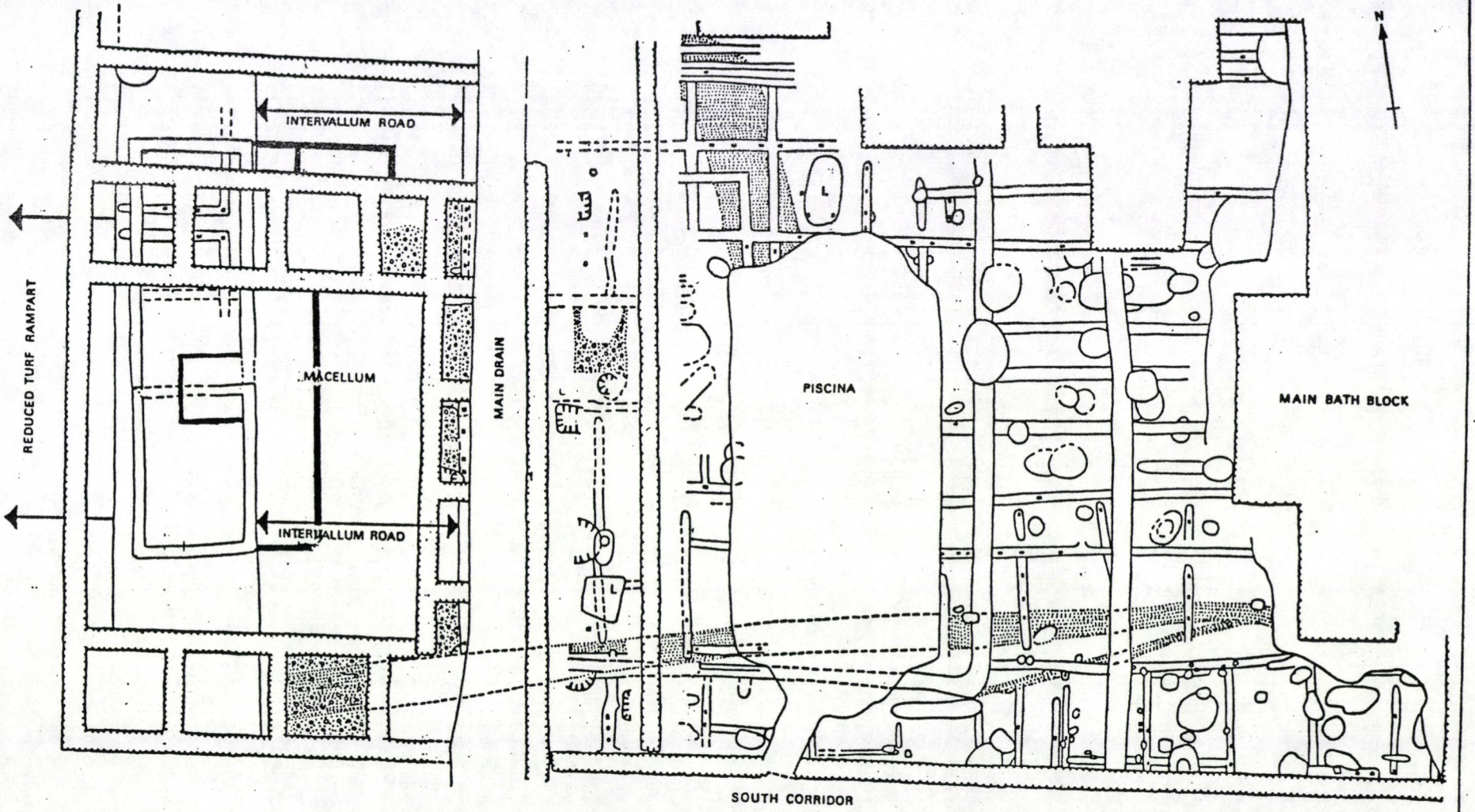
The most difficult problem presented by this season's work has been the identification of, and relationships with, the structures and levels of the period of the latest legionary fortress (c. AD85) and those of the town houses of the first city (c. AD 85-125). The area at present under exploration below the Hadrianic macellum is that of the legionary defences and intervallum road, above which lies the western sector of the early city. The uppermost intervallum road and the stone rampart building have been clearly defined. The latter had undergone changes which included an extension to the N. which more than doubled its length and which led to the demolition of two small timber cook-houses. The interior had several clay floors and the fireplace had been altered three times, each with a raising of the level. In the final phase, a new door was placed at the point where the building had been extended and there were two timber E-W partitions with a third N-S joining them to form an entrance vestibule. An interesting and unexpected development was an extension to the E from the SE corner of the stone building in the form of a beam slot with a return, which gave a width of 2.25 m to the added building. It had a clay floor abutting the outer E wall of the stone building, but this floor extended even further to the E beyond the NS beam slot. More beam slots from the NE corner of the stone building in Area 91 indicate the presence of a large and more complicated building which would have effectively prevented any through passage along the intervallum road. At first it was thought that this was civil development using the E wall of the stone building, but this was proved to be stratigraphically impossible. The E part of the clay floor, E of the Hadrianic trench had two levels over it. The earlier was a pinkish-white mortar bedding for a pebble surface, above this was a spread of broken amphorae, other pottery and tiles, including roofers, with pebbles and showing a well-trodden surface. The pottery from this layer has a distinctly civil flavour. When this was removed it appeared that the surface below had been disturbed and a stone and tile structure, possibly a hearth, dismantled. The evidence, although slight, seems to indicate a levelling and removal of the latest military deposits, including the demolition spread for the laying of a pebble surface in the civil period. On the W wide of the Hadrianic trench there were no indications of the civil period, the highest surviving deposits being military destruction.

In Area 91 (the N corridor) there were greater complications. An EW beam slot extended from the NE corner of the stone building, with a return at a distance of 1.70 m and its NE corner 6 m from the corner of the stone building. This plan does not fit the added timber structure in the central macellum area, and it will be necessary to examine two of the square shop areas of the macellum between this and 91 to fill in the missing structual elements. At the E end of 91, there is a building with clay and timber walls and a clay floor, previously considered to be civil, but the structual sequence combined with the difficult stratigraphical relationships, worsened by the cutting of the Hadrianic trench, seem now to indicate that it may be a military building, but this question remains open for further study next year.

At the W end of 91, it appears that the undoubted civil buildings, the deep slots of which cut into the rampart and military structures, have no floors or demolition layers associated with them and a clearance and levelling must be presumed at an early stage of the Hadrianic building programme.

The discovery of a second abortive Hadrianic trench at the E end of 91 gives some support for the suggestion that the first plan for the insula was that of a forum.

WROXETER BATHS INSULA. SOUTH WEST CORNER



In the W portico, work was continued in the Hadrianic construction layers with an effort to understand the original flooring arrangements. A plan of the emplacements for the stone blocks or slabs is emerging, but the problem remains of the floor in the strips against the W wall of the macellum and E side of the stylobate. The interpretation is made difficult by the presence of a number of large pits cut through the Hadrianic mortar construction layer after the stone paving blocks had been removed. One pit (101), was emptied completely and found to contain a large quantity of bone with a sterile sealing layer. The bones are mainly ribs, scapulae and skull fragments, suggesting the absence of prime joints and hinting at possible meat-pie or sausage production in the stylobate with a stall on the street side. The area at the S end of the portico is full of very large pits, exhibiting considerable sinkage which has preserved several layers of pebble floors. This should help considerably in building a complete sequence of the flooring which post-dates the pits. The dating of the pits is not yet secure, but No. 104 contained at least one vessel of the early-mid 3rd century. In the S corridor, a sequence of timber structures was examined at the W end, but beyond the modern septic-tank trench a large pit produced a quantity of animal bones.

Area 80 was the most satisfactory in producing conclusions. The two-period stylobate wall was studied and it soon became evidence that they both belonged to the change in the Hadrianic scheme, since the foundations of the second wall were entirely composed of re-used stones, presumably from the demolished first period bath-house, including a sawn tufa voussoir and pieces of flue-tile. At the base of the Hadrianic fill was a well-trodden pebble layer, assigned to the early civil period and below this, immediate contact was made with the demolished military structures and pits. This area has to date produced at least 5 palisade slots, 5 pit and 3 post-holes.

Among the small finds was a fragment of an occulist's stamp with remarkably fine lettering cut in a piece of fine grained schist and a sherd of pottery of unusual interest. Dr. Ian Kinnes reports that in outline the sherd is within the Later Neolithic Peterborough tradition in the formative Ebbsfleet style. This material is rare in the west but the assemblage from Bryn-yr-Hen Bobl, Anglesey, provides relatively good parallels (Archaeologia 85, 253; Megalithic Enquiries in the West of Britain, 161; Lynch: Prehistoric Anglesey, 68). Form: necked bowl with everted thickened rim. Decorations: on rim 2 rows of close set 'comma'-shaped stabs; on internal bevel three rows of paired oval impressions accomplished by 'rocker' techniques; on exterior below rim what might be the edge of an impressed pit. The lower register is almost certainly accomplished by the use of a bird-bone, the distal condyles of a femur or humerus; the upper 2 lines might well have been made by the proximal end of the same bone. Fabric: unusually well-fired; exterior surface wiped and smoother; external light brown, core dark; sand filler with quartz inclusions and rare burnt flint. It was recovered from the Hadrianic levelling dump and can be reasonably assumed to have come originally from the vicinity of Viroconium, if not the site itself.

G. Webster

WROXETER, Shropshire

Excavations on site of Basilica in the Roman City of Viroconium SJ 565 087

Work in the 1981 season was concentrated on four areas - the northern portico with part of the adjacent north aisle at its eastern end; the robber trench of the north wall of the basilica, and part of the robber trench of its north colonnade; the annexe at the east end of the basilica; and the building frontages in Insula 2 to the north of the east-west street.

A short rescue excavation was also carried out on the site of an extension to the post office which lies on the cross-roads north of the main excavation.

The Northern Portico

There has been evidence from earlier years that, at a late stage, the basicila's northern portico had been covered by a planked side-walk resting on longitudinal joists (Barker ed. 1981: 12). The surface of the portico had been levelled-up (for reasons which will be discussed below) with layers of sandy material, or, elsewhere, with mixed rubble. Further excavation of these upper surfaces revealed a mass of small post-holes. The post-holes had been cut into these levelling-up layers, and, for the most part, lay in rows between the joists, as if they were connected with the board-walk in some way. However, this was not the case everywhere, and it is possible that they had a purpose independent of, and later than, the board-walk, though what that could be is unclear.

The various layers of sand, earth and rubble were removed from the underlying pebble suface of the portico (the last of many, so far as one could see) and it was apparent that the levelling-up had been made necessary because the portico surface had collapsed in a number of places leaving depressions as much as six metres long and half a meter deep. These collapses had been so severe that they remind one of sewer collapses in modern streets and it seems most unlikely that underlying back-filled pits could have consolidated sufficiently to have caused such deep holes. It seems much more probable that the portico surface collapsed into voids. The only likely way in which this could have happened is if large open pits, such as cess-pits or settling tanks, were planked over instead of being filled in. When the planks eventually rotted, the portico surfaces would fall into the spaces. If this was so, it implies a degree of sharp practice, or at least of thoughtlessness, on the part of the contractors who built the portico floor. Dame Kathleen Kenyon demonstrated in her 1940 report (Archaeologia LXXXVIII, 1940, plate LXIX) that at least one of these pits was 2nd century or later, probably contemporar with the building of the basilican complex, and our own emptying of earlier trenches tends to confirm this. The pits were therefore known by those who filled them in to lie on the line of the portico. (They could, for example, have been latrine pits used by the basilica's builders.) If this is so, there is little excuse for leaving them as voids. Further excavation of the portico should be very interesting.

When the levelling-up layers were being removed it was found that long ridges of the material were much harder than the rest. These ridges lay in five equidistant parallel lines across the width of the portico, and seem certainly to represent places where the joists of the board-walk, carrying not only the planks but the weight of the traffic using the portico, had compressed the underlying material.

When the levelling-up material had been removed it was seen that the underlying pebble surface had, at an earlier stage, been covered with layers of hard sand and earth which had been eroded away almost entirely, except in a few places close to the wall of the basilica, where there would naturally be less wear. At one point, however, the sandy layer was worn right up to the line of the wall (since robbed out). Opposite this point, in the basilica's north aisle, was a large patch of sandstone blocks packed with small pebbles, very heavily worn. The implication must be that there was a break in the wall here, presumably at a later date, since the worn floor in the north aisle was among the latest of many.

At the extreme eastern end of the portico a hearth or oven, very late in the sequence, has been left for remanent magnetic dating, which, it is hoped, will be carried out this autumn.

The North Aisle

The eastern end of the north aisle has been very badly cut about by the trenches of earlier archaeologists which penetrated in most cases to the floor of the basilica. These trenches were emptied and the resulting islands of intact stratified material were excavated. They consisted of at least eight mortar or beaten earth floors, some of them worn as if crossed by paths. These floors seem to be confined, like the later mortar floors of the nave, to the eastern end of the aisle, though extending further westward than those in the nave.

The original floor of the basilica still caries fragments of mosaics, though much smaller in area than those published by Fox (Archaeological Journal, LIV, No. 214, 2nd series, IV No. II, plate III op. p.166), probably due to recent robbing. However, it is apparent that most of the mosaic had gone in Roman times, since large areas of the mortar surface of the opus-signinum base were worn, and had been patched with spreads of pebbles which were themselves worn.

Near the eastern end of the basilica a late mortar floor spread over a still-surviving fragment of the stylobate of the north colonnade and into the nave, forming the only surviving bridge between the two areas. Clearly there had been access at that time from the nave to the aisle between two of the columns of the nave.

The robber trench of the basilica north wall was emptied along its entire length. However, we know from previous work that the wall had been robbed out in Roman times and that the foundations of our massive timber building X overlay it (Barker, ed. 1981 p.12). In 1981, from deep in the back-filling of the robber trench below building X came a coin of Valens (364-378), and a coin of Valentinian (364-375). The construction of building X must therefore date from very late in the 4th century, and since only a very few later coins have been found at Wroxeter, a 5th century date is possible.

Cut into the opus-signinum base of the aisle floor were a number of postholes, three or four of them quite substantial. All but one appear to be for scaffolding or temporary structures, but one looks more permanent and some of the smaller ones are, inexplicably, in a half-circle.

The Annexe

The excavation of the eastern annexe of the basilica was carried out by the students of two successive fortnight's summer schools, run by the Extramural Department of the University of Birmingham. The large number of earlier archaeological trenches which had destroyed much of the site had been emptied during the 1980 season. Work in 1981 was therefore able to concentrate on three islands of intact stratification, one comprising what was left of a lime-slaking area which had perhaps been constructed in the corner of the then partly-standing building, another a small area with a late hearth, and the third a much larger spread of dark earth and rubble a metre deep. It might have been thought, from inspection of the exposed edges of this layer, that it was a homogeneous deposit of dumped earth, stones and tiles, but horizontal excavation revealed that it contained no less than three worn surfaces, perhaps paths, leading to a break in the precinct wall, all underlying a double path found at a higher level still. A coin of Valentinian sealed beneath the earliest of these paths shows that they were very late in the sequence of events on the site.

Preliminary examinatioh of lime from the slaking area suggests very strongly that it is the same as that used for the late and very massive mortar base which lay near the east end of the basilica (Barker, ed. 1981, p.15). There seems to be no other purpose for slaked lime at this very late date in the occupation of the site. All the contemporary buildings were of wood, and if they were plastered no trace of the plaster has survived.

The Frontages of Insula 2

The northern edge of the excavation takes in a narrow strip of the frontages of the buildings lying in Insula 2 on the northern edges of the east-west street. The problem of where to draw the line in an excavation is always a difficult one. If we had taken the apparently logical step of making the edge of the excavation the centre-line of the street we now know that we should never have understood it, because of its extraordinary nature. Taking in the frontages of the buildings beyond the street has provided important information about the extent of the latest rebuilding of the city centre, together with an invaluable dating sequence (Barker, ed. 1981: 13).

It was decided to extend the excavation northward only as far as the long east-west trench dug in 1967 and not to continue the excavation below the immediate penultimate layers, those of the buildings of the latest phase. The evidence thus exposed has been recorded and left intact so that future excavators of Insula 2 will be able to key their work into ours. In 1981 the excavation was confined to the western end of the strip previously dug and revealed the frontages or facades of further buildings, two certain and two possible. The evidence for the most westerly consisted of a rectangle of rubble with a beam-slot 2.7 metres long at its front edge and with recurrently-appearing, rectangular damp marks around and within it. Further east, a second building frontage 6.7 metres wide was marked by two clay and pebble post-pads with a beam slot (not excavated) between them. There were fewer features east of this building though lines of nails and an edge parallel to the street between dark earth and a yellow clay/earth mixture suggests one or two framed buildings here.

The variety of building techniques used shows that each was constructed individually, although the use of red clay for post-pads and post-hole packing links most of the buildings north of the street.

Dating

The sequence of events and their dating is now becoming clearer.

The stratified coins of Valens and Valentinian (see above) are further evidence that the last extensive re-building of the city centre was at a date close of AD 400. The relative sequence of events is also becoming more certain. When the drains and water-pipes along the southern edge of the east west street were excavated (in 1980) a large number of curved, moulded lumps of mortar were found associated with the wooden water pipes. Their function is uncertain, though the most likely suggestion is that they were chocks to hold the wooden pipes in position. However that may be, a number of them were found incorporated in the rubble which had been used to level-up the portico floor before the building of the wooden board-walk. In addition, much of the rubble used for this levelling-up looked very like the debris left over from the routine sifting of all deposits which is carried out during the excavation. It is not easy to understand how the water-pipe 'chocks' arrived in this rubble unless the drain in front of the portico colonnade had recently been dug out. The material used to level-up the portico does not include rounded pebbles such as those used to build the original streets, so that the digging out of the pebble street for the laying of the 'gravel' street may be a later operation. It is certainly difficult to understand why the board-walk and the 'gravel' street should have been built simultaneously. Ultimately the board-walk was removed for the construction of the large timber-framed building X (Barker, ed. 1981. Fig. 4 pp.10-11) which extended to the northern edges of the portico and this is probably when the 'gravel' street was constructed.

Building X, therefore, also extended across the back-filled robber trench of the north wall of the basilica (which may have been still standing at the time of the board-walk, though with openings through it). The filling of this trench contained large fragments of human skull similar to those found in the rubble platforms which were laid as the foundation for building X. It appears, therefore,

that the dispersion of the skulls, the robbing-out of the basilica's north wall and the laying of the rubble foundations were all contemporary, and it is likely that the demolished north wall provided much of the rubble for the foundation of building X.

The beaten earth floor immediately above the earliest mortar floor of the north aisle of the basilica floor contained a coin of Julia Mamea (c. 218-235) and early 3rd century pottery, while the latest levelling-up dumps and paths over the aisle excavated in 1981 contained a coin of Constantine the Great dating from 330-335.

In 1979 a number of exotic sherds was found in one of two rectangular pits or post-holes on the extreme northern edge of the site in grid 48 alpha. One of these sherds, from a thin-walled ribbed jar, has been identified by John Hayes as being of Carthage, Late Roman Amphora Type 15, of Aegean origin and datable at Carthage to c. 425-440. Although the post-hole/pit from which the sherds came was not sealed nor cannot, at present, be linked to a particular building, it must have been open in the second quarter of the 5th century or later. This lends further weight to our assumption that the latest buildings on the site lasted well into the 5th century.

The Wroxeter Post-office Extension

The writer was asked to organize a rescue excavation in advance of the enlargement of the Post Office at Wroxeter. This building, the old smithy, lies on the north-eastern corner of the modern crossroads, about 100 metres north of the excavation described above.

The Post Office excavation will be the subject of a report now in preparation, so that this note merely records the results briefly. Inevitably, this small excavation proved to be much more complicated than had been expected. The modern building had itself been rebuilt on a different alignment in the 18th century (presumably after the fire recorded by Thomas Telford in Archaeologia IX, 1789, p.324).. At least one of the rebuilt walls stood directly on a Roman wall, and, although our excavation was everywhere limited in depth to the minimum requirements of the rebuilding, Roman features were discovered in many of the trenches. Principally, two parallel walls lay at right angles to the line of the Watling Street. The trenches did not, however, reach the floors associated with these walls.

The digging of a soakaway in the north-eastern corner of the garden provided an unexpected sequence. The pit for the soakaway exposed the southern edge of the east-west street bounding the insula, together with an open drain (which may have been an open sewer, soil analysis pending) that had replaced a tile-built drain. What was most interesting was that the drain and the street so far as it was seen had been cut across by a wide and massive foundation, of alternate layers of keuper marl, river boulders and large pebbles. On the analogy of similar foundations discovered on the site of the main excavation, this must be the foundation for a very large timber building with ground-wills, which lay across the street at a very late date in the history of the city. This is further evidence therefore, that the final rebuilding of the city centre extended at least into Insula 2 and probably beyond.

Acknowledgements

Once again thanks must go principally to those who worked onthe site in all capacities from trowellers to supervisors, especially as the season was one of the best in the history of the excavation. Thanks also to the staff of the Department of the Environment for their help with the organization of the work, to Mrs. Sue Everall for permission to survey the putative site of Wroxeter Castle, and to those friends and colleagues who visited the site, giving their time to lecture to the training schools,

or discussing the excavation and its implications.

P.A. Barker
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University of Birmingham

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Forum

Fieldwalking as a Method of Extensive Archaeological Survey

by M.A. Hodder

Fieldwalking may be defined as the systematic collection of artifactual material from the surface of a ploughed field. It is a non-destructive and rapid method of archaeological survey, but the type and quantity of material recovered is determined not only by what is present in the ploughsoil, but also by present land use, soil type and condition, weather conditions, and the fieldwalker's recognition of the material. Because of these limitations and the consequent difficulties in interpretation of the results, many archaeologists regard the method as marginal and unimportant, one that is done only by, and best left to, local part-timers. On the other hand the practitioners of the method have been aware of its potential but not fully appreciative of its limitations.

This paper, which is based largely on the writer's experience of fieldwalking as part of a research project in Sutton Chase, attempts to rationalise these two attitudes by advocating greater use of fieldwalking, but also of research designs and methods which fully utilise its potential for rapid survey of large areas.

Research Designs

There are three levels of fieldwalking in terms of the size of the area which it is intended to walk. The lowest level is concerned with a single archaeological 'site', the limits of which are defined by earthworks or crop-marks. However it has been shown that a concentration of artifactual material may not coincide with the contemporary occupation area (Foard 1978: 263; Pryor 1980: 494). If the 'site' was not a settlement but an arable, stock, or woodland enclosure, then the material apparently associated with it may be related to earlier or subsequent activity in the area. At the second level fieldwalking areas are intuitively selected within a wider landscape to answer specific research problems; this approach was adopted in Norfolk by Wade-Martins (1980: 4) and by the present writer in Sutton Chase (Hodder 1980). In both cases selection was based on the post-medieval landscape, thus features of earlier landscapes not conforming to the later pattern were located fortuitously or were inferred from negative evidence. When this method is used there is a tendency to select the most easily accessible fields, often adjacent to a modern road (Cherry and Shennan 1978: 25).

However fieldwalking is better employed as a method of survey of the whole landscape than small areas; the intensive survey of a single 'site' is better achieved by geophysical and chemical prospecti and trial excavation. The major problem therefore is to determine how the landscape should be walked. Various sampling strategies have been devised, based not on human, as in Norfolk and Sutton Chase, but on natural features of the landscape such as geology (Schadla-Hall and Shennan 1978). Such sampling methods cannot, however, have the statistical validity claimed by their advocates when applied to field-walking, because only the present arable may be walked, and not all of this will be available for fieldwalking because of its inaccessibility, or the attitude of the landowner. A research design for fieldwalking should therefore not be selective but should aim to cover the whole of the available area; this approach requires a reassessment of the methods employed.

Fieldwalking Methods

It is essential that the whole of each available field is walked in a systematic manner. Because of the small quantities of material often recovered even in a toal systematic coverage, the results of systematically walking parts, or superficially walking all of the field may be totally misleading.

In order to record the distribution of material within a partiular field most writers advocate the imposition of a regular grid across the surface, but this is time-consuming, and where very little material has been found the resultant distribution may have little meaning. A more rapid method is to consider the whole of a small field, 4 ha or less in area, as a single unit. A larger field may be divided up into units of about this size, which need not be regular in shape, using existing features such as field corners, trees or ponds. Within these units walking should follow the line of cultivation, even where it changes direction at the edges of the field, for speed and for maintenance of a regular interval between each traverse. The use of this method results in distributions over a wide area rather than within the field, but the latter may be recorded subjectively.

There is much variation in the recommended distance between each traverse across the field. For instance Fasham et al. (1980: 9) suggest that this interval should be 30 m for experienced fieldwalkers and 15 m for inexperienced but quote a 3 m interval in a table, while Foard (1978, 358-9) seems to have used a 2.3 m interval. The field of view, in which the field surface can be seen in detail, depends on cultivation methods but is about 1 m, i.e. o.5 m on either side of the traverse line. The 30 m or 15 m intervals are therefore too large, since only a small proportion of the surface will actually be seen, but using a 2.5 m interval means that about 40% of the surface is seen in detail. In the Sutton Chase project, rather than selecting a rigid interval size, the distance within a range of 2 to 3 m was chosen to suit the cultivation conditions of each field. Within

units of field size, this enables c. 4 ha to be walked per person per day (hence the choice of this figure as a maximum unit size), compared with the 2 ha per person per day which can be calculated from the figures quoted by Fasham et al. (1980: 9).

The collection policy must also be resolved, since any field surface will contain quantities of relatively modern pottery, clay pipes, brick, tile, bones, coal, charcoal, etc. Fasham et al (1980: 21) suggest that everything should be collected but that it may be possible to discard some types of material after recording them. In the Tame Valley, Smith (1977: 153) did not collect brick or glass because of the problems of dating and processing the large quantities recovered. He retained post-medieval pottery but did not make a detailed analysis of it, since he considered the period well-provided with other sources of evidence. Another problem with post-medieval material is the determination of its source, which may be distant from the field in which it is found, since in the period between the construction of canals and the creation of council rubbish tips rubbish and night soil was transported by canal from cities to adjacent agricultural areas where it was tipped on arable fields (Coney 1980: 31). In Sutton Chase this is known to have occurred at Middleton, where fields received refuse transported from Birmingham along the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal (inf. W. Davies). Because of the problems of its date, volume and source it was decided not to collect post-medieval material in the Sutton Chase project, and this probably considerably increased the speed of fieldwalking.

Summary

Total survey of available areas by fieldwalking is therefore advocated, to obtain broad distribution patterns of artifactual material over the landscape. To this end rapid methods of fieldwalking must be employed, involving the collection of selected types of material only and the systematic and intensive walking of large areas.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to members of the Sutton Coldfield Archaeology Group for their practical assistance in the research project which provided much of the material for this paper, and to the farmers of Sutton Chase without whose co-operation none of the fieldwalking would have been possible.

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The Archaeology of Standing Buildings: Background to the Stoke-on-Trent Historic Buildings Survey

by C.F. Hawke-Smith, City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

There are several disciplines concerned with standing buildings and some people may think that archaeologists can reasonably ignore this field and concentrate on the more recondite areas of research in which it has a monopoly. But each of these other disciplines, such as architectural history and social geography, selects its subject-matter for its own objectives, which are distinct from those of archaeology. The architectural historian is only interested in a very limited number of buildings: he treats them individually, as examples of particular architects of specific styles. He is not normally concerned to define the total built environment of a period and explain its constituent elements in relation to social and economic factors. The social geographer, though preoccupied with social and economic factors, has normally little interest in the way these factors are reflected in detail in standing buildings. Only the archaeologist is really in a position to extract the full singificance of extant structures for the societies that produced them. He is in this position because the peculiar limitations of his discipline compel him to consider both the totality and detail of material remains, irrespective of their aesthetic value in terms of our own culture. The historic environment, by which I mean the houses, factories, bridges, waterways, institutional buildings, which survive in conspicuous form today, even though they were established at some period in the past, must therefore be a legitimate and essential object of archaeological investigation.

A major project, financed by Manpower Services to the tune of £93,000 is being launched in January 1982 for a twelve-month period, with the object of recording all buildings of historic, social or industrial significance within the City boundary of Stoke-on-Trent. The immediate objectives of this project, apart from providing short-term employment for unemployed people, are to make a record of buildings as they exist in 1982 for the following purposes:

(a) as a permanent source of reference for archaeologists, historians and geographers of the future, particularly on buildings that will be destroyed or substantially changed;

(b) as a guide for present-day planners to the existing resources of the City, so that new developments can take the historic environment into account;

(c) as a bank of data on which conservationists can draw in making effective arguments against demolition and more positively in planning programmes of restoration.

Stoke-on-Trent is not a name that immediately springs to mind when one is thinking of historic towns or a rich artitectural heritage.

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The record of destruction is appalling and goes back two or more centuries. This is in part due to the demands of extractive industry and the exceedingly rapid population growth of the 19th and early 20th centuries (see Beaver, 1964). The earliest building of which anything remains is Hulton Abbey, a Cistercian foundation of the early 13th century. Following dissolution the site was so effectively plundered for stone that even its whereabouts was forgotten until some chance finds were made c. 1880 AD. Charles Lynam, a leading local architect and antiquary, must take the credit for drawing attention to the importance of the site, as of several others in the City. The Abbey has been partly excavated and restored during the last 20 years by the Museum Archaeological Society and it is hoped to lay it out as an open-air museum in the next year or so. Apart from this site there is very little surviving from before 1800 AD. Several of the churches of the villages that became the Six Towns of Stoke-on-Trent were founded in the Medieval period, but apart from the tower of the church of St. John Baptist at Burslem all were demolished and replaced by large Victorian Gothic churches large enough to contain the expanding 19th century congregations. Excavation and documentary research can, however, recover much of the built environment of earlier periods, and it is probable that the Survey will bring to light many buildings of earlier date concealed behind 19th or 20th century facades. But essentially Stoke-on-Trent is a product of the last two centuries.

The obliteration of pre-19th century buildings in the Victorian period was inspired by a not very successful attempt to emulate the great manufacturing cities of northern England. Each of the Six Towns built its assemblage of monumental public buildings: Town Hall, Library, Market Hall, and some built Public Baths and Mechanics' Institutes. But with the exception of Hanley the populations of each town were not really large enough to support this superstructure. These buildings existed alongside the monumental facades of large pottery manufactories and the jumble of 'potbanks' on which the wealth of the area was principally based.

Even as late as the end of the last century the separate identity of the Six Towns and the associated villages was apparent in the spatial clusterings. Open fields could normally be seen at the end of each row of terraced cottages (and the City still has at least two farms within a mile or two of its centre). Since that date the trend has been towards centralisation. This has had several rather conflicting effects. First, with the exception of Hanley, the status of the original town centres has been downgraded. Paradoxically, this means that while Hanley has lost or is losing practically all its historic environment through commercial pressures, the remaining five towns still retain much of their historic character. Second, while the separate identity of the original centres has to some extent been kept, the outlying areas have merged into one another under a sprawling and incoherent mass of modern housing and factories. Third, the attempt to impose modern town-planning ideas (perhaps appropriate to

a 'normal' city with a single main centre) on the highly structured but heterogeneous complex of the Six Towns has led to the partial denaturing of its idiosyncratic compound, of small-scale industry, competitive civic pride and non-conformity. The jumble of terraced houses, potbanks, chapels and Town Halls gives Stoke-on-Trent its unique personality. But it does not fit easily into a planner's scheme for a twentieth-century city. Nor does it necessarily conform to the aspirations of the modern citizens.

Stoke-on-Trent has lost many buildings in the last 20 years through the normal demands of industry, commerce and roadworks. Some 20% of the buildings mentioned in Pevsner (1974) have now been destroyed. But vast areas of the better type of working-class housing remain practically unchanged from the last century. (The earlier and poorer types of housing have in general been demolished in slum clearance programmes, though some traces remain.) Many of the pottery factories survive, though the number of "bottle-kilns" - that unique architectural feature of The Potteries - has been severely reduced. Until very recently the importance of the industrial heritage was ill-appreciated: too often it was seen as a reminder of the appalling conditions of life arising from the Industrial Revolution (c.f. Hoskins, 1970, 227) which should be swept away as quickly as possible. Only lack of money, one suspects, has saved Stoke-on-Trent from the fate of the majority of major industrial cities, the almost complete eradication of its industrial roots (see Cossons, 1981, for an up-to-date review of the problems).

There is then much of interest to be recorded and - in view of the continuing destruction - an urgent need to do it. At a practical level, however, a decision had to be made as to what should be included, since the possibility of undertaking a total survey of the City as it exists in 1982, even with a team of 15 people, was out of the question.

The problem was how to select? From the outset it was decided that the Survey should not concentrate exclusively on <u>types</u> of buildings, e.g. those of architectural merit, but would include all sorts. Only in this way could the complimentarity of the industrial, residential and institutional structures be understood. The question then was whether certain areas of the City should be selected for <u>total</u> recording, i.e. including all buildings up to the present, or whether a "cut-off date" should be proposed, and if so, when?

As indicated earlier, Stoke-on-Trent as an industrial settlement has its roots in the eighteenth century. Its origin is closely connected with the social and technological developments of that century and in particular the beginnings of large-scale coal-mining and long-distance freight movement by canal (Beaver, 1964; Warrilow, 1960). What had been a minor rural craft serving the predominantly pastoral communities of this part of Britain was transformed into a national ceramics industry by the late eighteenth century. But the main period of expansion came in the following century when Stoke-on-Trent was supplying the entire British Empire with its crockery and chamber pots. This was also the main period of development of the

coal-mining and steel industries, which have since declined. The City belongs to the Victorian epoch and reflects the social aspirations of that period. This seemed a good theoretical reason for concentrating on it. There was also a good practical reason, in that styles of building changed so radically after the 1st World War that it is easy even for the untrained eye in most cases to distinguish earlier structures.

On the question of geographical selection the answer was easier. Each of the early centres of population, as recorded on our first reliable large-scale map dated 1832, will become the focus of attention by a separate team. The 1832 maps enlarged for easy use will be used in conjunction with maps of 1914 and modern maps as the basis for fieldwork. Each team of two people will work from a different centre, getting to know it intimately. The number of buildings that can be covered is difficult to predict, but at least it is hoped that within the 12 months all the historic foci can be systematically surveyed.

On the question of type of survey and level of detail, consultations have been held with the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments. It was felt that the several groups likely to make use of the data would need information at two levels: (1) A non-intensive survey on cards, giving a brief description of each building or group of buildings, noting current use, owner, occupier etc. This would also serve as an index to the more detailed records, where they existed. These cards will be reproduced on microfiche for ease of reference and they will be accompanied by a set of snapshots. (2) Drawings and photographs of selected representative buildings. These would be of publication standard and would aim to present a good sample of the surviving pre-1914 buildings in each of the main historical centres. These would form the basis for the Report on the survey and would also remain in a permanent archive in the Museum. Together these two sets of records should fulfil the primary needs of academics and planners, whether they require superficial or detailed information.

Whilst the main thrust of the exercise must be the recording of extant buildings, given the rate at which the face of the City is being changed, documentary work will not be neglected. It is desirable that all existing plans, drawings, records and photographs of destroyed and extant buildings should be indexed and, if possible, copies kept with the main archive. Without this retrospective work the research potential of the survey will be severely limited.

For the one person who may visit a Museum or library to consult archive there must be many thousands who respond directly to the historic environment. These people may not write to the local papers in protest against the "erosion of history" but they are still sensitive to the disappearance of familiar landmarks, irrespective of their conventional aesthetic value. The importance of a sense of continuity in an insecure age must not be underestimated. This is something that cannot be quantified, but anyone who has stood in a public street making drawings and listening to passers-by will have no doubt of its reality. There are also increasingly good economic reasons

for preserving buildings, rather than knocking them down and rebuilding. The conservation lobby wins most attention when it can give practical demonstration of the feasibility of restoration.

For this reason a structural surveyor will be appointed as a permanent member of the team. It will be his job to report on the structural condition of selected buildings for which maintenance or renovation is needed. These will include those listed by the Department of the Environment for which the owners have responsibility of upkeep. At the end of the project it may be possible to make recommendations as to the most practicable course for the preservation of those buildings of special importance. Since maintenance and renovation costs are often beyond the resources of private individuals and Local Authorities further schemes are under way. These include the establishment of a Staffordshire Historic Buildings Trust and possibly a new CEP/YOP project, specifically to help with the conservation of buildings. Already much has been achieved by the Gladstone Pottery Museum and the Chatterley-Whitfield Mining Museum.

Anyone involved in this sort of work soon becomes aware of the strength of different views about the historical urban environment. The spiritual health of a society is reflected in the state of its buildings. Bureaucratic indecision, confusion, and stupidity are ultimately recorded visibly. The dereliction of terraced houses, the decay and abandonment of industrial and monumental structures, the accelerating rash of urban wastelands, are symptomatic of a society that has failed to resolve the problems of an aging industrial civilisation. Stoke-on-Trent was referred to by Pevsner (1974) as "an urban tragedy" and other writers have almost without exception recoiled from its ugliness. In fact like any other urban environment, it expresses in material form the social and industrial conditions of its growth, development and decay. The present project is one small attempt to understand its social and industrial history from a new standpoint, and perhaps to contribute something positive to its future development.

Acknowledgements

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Primeval Woodlands, Clearance and Regeneration in the West Midlands

by Jim Gould

When Sir Cyril Fox published his Personality of Britain in 1932, he explained blanks on his distribution maps by postulating areas of

> "... damp oakwoods - an unending canopy of oak with interlacing undergrowth of hazel, thorn, holly and bramble, unattractive to early man."

One blank area so explained included much of the West Midlands. Since then the pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme. Fuelled by aerial photographs of extensive cropmarks, motorway archaeology and the results of greatly increased activity by archaeologists, it is now fashionable to speak of neolithic clearance of woodlands and to explain medieval documentary references to woodland as regeneration. Thus we find statements such as, that the huge timbers from which the Saxon mill at Tamworth was constructed, as being

> "... from trees which had started growth in the early fifth century. It is likely that these represent a regeneration phase in conjunction with the Roman decline." (Baillie 1980)

Since the normal life-span of oak trees is some 400 to 500 years, and as only large, mature trees could give timber of the size needed for the 9th century mill then the oaks used must have begun life in the early fifth century, and that they did so has no bearing whatsoever on forest regeneration then.

In our own West Midlands Archaeology, Hodder has stated in reference to Sutton Chase (that is the area between the Tame and the Bourne Brook) that

> "... the largest area of waste ... was known as the Coldfield, a name which first occurs in 1203 and has been derived from Medieval charcoal burning. An analysis of Domesday entries shows this area had the lowest population and woodland densities in the study area, suggesting it had by then reached its 18th century form (Hodder 1980)

By 18th century form, Hodder is referring to "heathland used for sheep grazing". It is extremely difficult to follow the reasoning behind this statement. The Colefield (Coldfield is a modern spelling) which stretched from Sutton, through Little Aston and modern Streetly to the crest of Barr Beacon, lay within the medieval manors of Sutton, Shenstone, Great Barr and Perry. Domesday records woodland 2 leagues by 1 league at Sutton, 3 leagues by 1½ leagues at Shenstone, 1 league by 4 furlongs at Great Barr and 1 league by ½ league at Perry. Woodland entries in Domesday pose many difficulties (Welldon Finn 1963) but how can it be claimed that these particular entries suggest

the Colefield was then heath, unless there is a considerable bias to the modern tendency to exaggerate early woodland clearance. This i especially so in this case as one also needs to explain the medieval place-name (Colefield' and the 13th and 14th century reference to charcoal burning there.

This concept of early woodland clearance from the Colefield ha also been put forward by Forsberg without supporting evidence (Forsberg 1970) in his anxiety to prove that ad in Saxon charter boundaries may indicate a beacon. Again the implications of the place-name and the medieval references to charcoal burning are ignor

The existence of much woodland in South Staffordshire during t post-conquest period is well attested by

a) the creation of the Norman royal forests of Cannock (not to be confused with Cannock Chase), Kinver and Brewood whilst Needwood Forest and New Forest lay a little further north (Gould 1970)

b) the records of fines exacted for the destruction of woods and assarts within these forest areas, especially in the 13th century (Wrottesley 1884).

c) early deeds referring to woodland and the feeding of swine there (for example Staffordshire Record Office MS 3005/1).

That this same area was largely woodland earlier in Saxon times, is apparent from the abundant Saxon forest place-names. Earlier still, in the Roman period, the local population was sparse and no evidence has yet been produced for extensive forest clearance in Staffordshire, then or earlier, save in the immediate vicinity of the few small Roman towns and on the terraces of the Trent, Tame and their tributaries where cropmarks abound. This is not to say the woodlands between the gravel terraces were dense and impenetrable. They obviously were not for there is a widespread scatter of flint, stone and bronze axes but as Bradley has suggested (Bradley 1972) prehistoric axes were most usually lost or broken away from settlements such as those on the terraces. The axes indicate woodlands rather than settlements, where holly, elm etc. were lopped for animal fodder. There is much need for caution when postulating woodland clearance or regeneration in the pre-conquest West Midlands as there is also need for caution before classing woodlands as dense and uninhabited.

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Reviews

Oswestry Town Wall, n.d., no price, published by

The Border Counties Archaeological Group

Oswestry has a long and sad history of the destruction of archaeology. Its castle, called Luvre (L'Oeuvre or The Work), one of only four castles mentioned in the Shropshire Domesday, and therefore of great importance, is a wreck, and the Town Walls, though well documented, have proved to be elusive.

This most useful publication brings together all the information at present known about the Town Wall. The first part of the report describes the building of the wall, with the aid of murage grants, from 1257 onward. The second, and, appropriately, the longest, catalogues the destruction and disappearance of the defences, while the third and fourth record sightings of the wall and report on three small excavations. A plan on p.28 sums up the present situation, showing the positions of sightings of footings etc and the sites of the excavations. The whole compilation is the sort of integration of documentary sources, hearsay and physical evidence which is necessary before serious work on a town's defences can begin and the Border Counties Group are to be congratulated on it . The publication is marred only by the indifferent quality of the reproduction of many most interesting early engravings and other pictures, and the very poor quality of the original drawings which illustrate the excavations and fieldwork carried out by the group. The project is worthy of a much higher standard of publication (which might lead to more sales rather than fewer) and a level of draughtsmanship and lettering (especially with Letraset easily available) equal to that achieved by other amateur and extra-mural groups. It is to be hoped that a second edition might become necessary when the publication could be made worthy of the group's dedicated work on their town.

P.A. Barker
March 1982

Ancient Woodland, its History, Vegetation and Uses in England

by O. Rackham London, Edward Arnold, 1980. pp.402 + vii. Price: £50

This book brings together botanical, archaeological and documentary evidence in a study of the development of those woods which have existed for at least 200 years. It is based on the author's work in eastern England, but examples are drawn from all over the country.

The first chapter defines woodland types and management systems. It is followed by a discussion of sources. Palynological, documentary, botanical, archaeological and iconographic evidence has been employed, and the author stresses the importance of using several different methods in the study of woodland. A series of chapters on vegetation classifications, soils, and flora and tree communities is largely biological in content. The history of woodland from the late Glacial to the present is discussed in three chapters, followed by the economic and social uses of woodland and 'wood pasture' systems, i.e. forests, chases, parks and common. The remainder of the book consists of chapters on individual tree species or groups of species normally occurring in association. The history and uses of each are discussed, accompanied by plans of particular woodlands, with their earthworks marked in each case. In the chapter on elm, the frequent occurrence of Dutch Elm Disease in the historic period is inferred from documentary and illustrative evidence, and put forward as a cause, encouraged by some human forest clearance, for the Neolithic 'Elm Decline'. The book is well cross-referenced throughout, and English rather than Latin names are used for plants where possible.

Woodland is an artifact itself by virtue of its management (or lack of it) by man, and in addition it may contain archaeological features related to the wood itself, particularly earthwork boundaries or 'woodbanks', and those related to a non-wooded phase, such as ridge-and-furrow. For the archaeologist there are clearly problems in locating former woodland areas. Only Smith (1978, 95) has ventured to suggest in print that some cropmarks may represent former woodland enclosure ditches, although a cropmark known to be a former ditched woodland has been given as an example of a possible pitfall in the interpretation of cropmarks (Wilson 1975, fig. 5, p.64)!

Preservation is such within ancient woodland that Rackham claims that even some minor periglacial features survive (p.13). In archaeological terms, ancient woodlands may be regarded as micro-zones of survival within Taylor's (1972) Zone of Destruction. However there are problems in both tracing and recording earthwork features in wooded conditions; this is clearly shown by Rackham's fig. 15.6 (p.246) which has a blank area in the north-east corner of the wood where the author found it impossible to record the internal features.

The book demonstrates how different approaches can be combined in the study of ancient woodlands, and should appeal to all those whose disciplines are involved. The price of the book will doubtless discourage purchase, but fortunately Rackham has also published (1976) a smaller, cheaper book, dealing with the subject in much less detail.

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