

# Durobrivae

A Review of Nene Valley  
Archaeology: 5  
1977





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## Editor's Note

In 1976 the Nene Valley Research Committee issued its first independent *Annual Report* which gives full information on all facets of the Committee's activities. Consequently, the section in *Durobrivae* devoted to the Year's Work has been made more concise. Readers who would like to have fuller details should write for a copy of the *Annual Report* to the Director of Excavations at:

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John Peter Wild

Nene Valley Research Committee

*The cover shows a mosaic from the Cotterstock Villa (see p.24) and the title page shows a photograph of the lead tank from Ashton (p.10).*

## Acknowledgements

The Nene Valley Research Committee wishes to record once more its thanks to the Peterborough Development Corporation Design Group for practical help with the design and layout of the Review. Credit should also be given to: Nicholas Hawley for title page and fig. 4; Mrs V. Taylor for fig. 5; Mr S. G. Upex for figs. 8, 9; Mr D. F. Mackreth and Miss C. Turnock for fig. 11; Mr Eric Standen and Miss C. Turnock for fig. 17; the Peterborough Advertiser Co Ltd for fig. 19; Mr R. Hillier and Miss C. Turnock for fig. 21; the Peterborough Development Corporation Photographic Department for figs. 22-25.

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# The Year's Work: 1976

by John Peter Wild

The most significant recent event in Nene Valley archaeology was the formal opening of the Archaeological Field Centre in Ham Lane, Orton Waterville, on January 11th 1977. The Mayor of Peterborough, the Chairman of the Peterborough Development Corporation and many other prominent guests were present. Designed by the Director of Excavations, Mr D. F. Mackreth, in cooperation with the architects of the Development Corporation this structure is the first purpose-built archaeological field centre in the country (fig. 22).

The first stage of the project, the conversion of Ham House to office and living accommodation, was completed in 1975 (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 6). In the second stage an annexe was added to the north side of Ham House to provide accommodation for finds-conservation and analysis, drawing and photography. The Committee owes the Development Corporation a great debt for their help in making the Field Centre a reality.

In 1976 Miss Carolyn Dallas, Assistant Director, resigned and took up a post in Norfolk. Her service to Nene Valley archaeology has been long and fruitful, and her departure is our loss. The opening of the Field Centre made it possible for the Committee to appoint Mrs Fiona I'Anson as Pottery Assistant, Miss Lindsay Froggatt as Secretary and Mr Robert Boyle as Illustrator.

Despite the slower rate forecast for building and industrial development archaeologists in the Nene Valley were working under the same pressures in 1976 as before.

At *Fengate* Mr Francis Pryor made the important discovery of a house and industrial area linked to the extensive Bronze-Age field-system already revealed there. He was also able to complete the excavation of the later Iron-Age village containing some 30 round houses (p. 14). In a salvage operation at *Maxey* in the Welland Valley Mr Robert Powell and the Fengate team recorded a triple ring-ditch (p. 12). Another ring-ditch came to light at *Werrington* (TF 17270410) excavated by Mr Arnold Pryor in advance of road works. A pit within it suggests that it may have been of Bronze-Age date.

Postponement of the construction of the Oundle bypass gave a breathing space for the investigation of the small Roman town at *Ashton* under the

direction of Mr John Hadman and Mr Stephen Upex (p. 6). Further examination of the stone-founded workshops, their yards and the roads between them revealed an unusual depth of stratigraphy. From a well behind Building I came the exciting find of a late Roman lead tank carrying the Chi-Rho monogramme (p. 10). Taken in the context of the *Durobrivae* silver treasure (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 7ff.) the tank is another piece of evidence for early Christianity in the area.

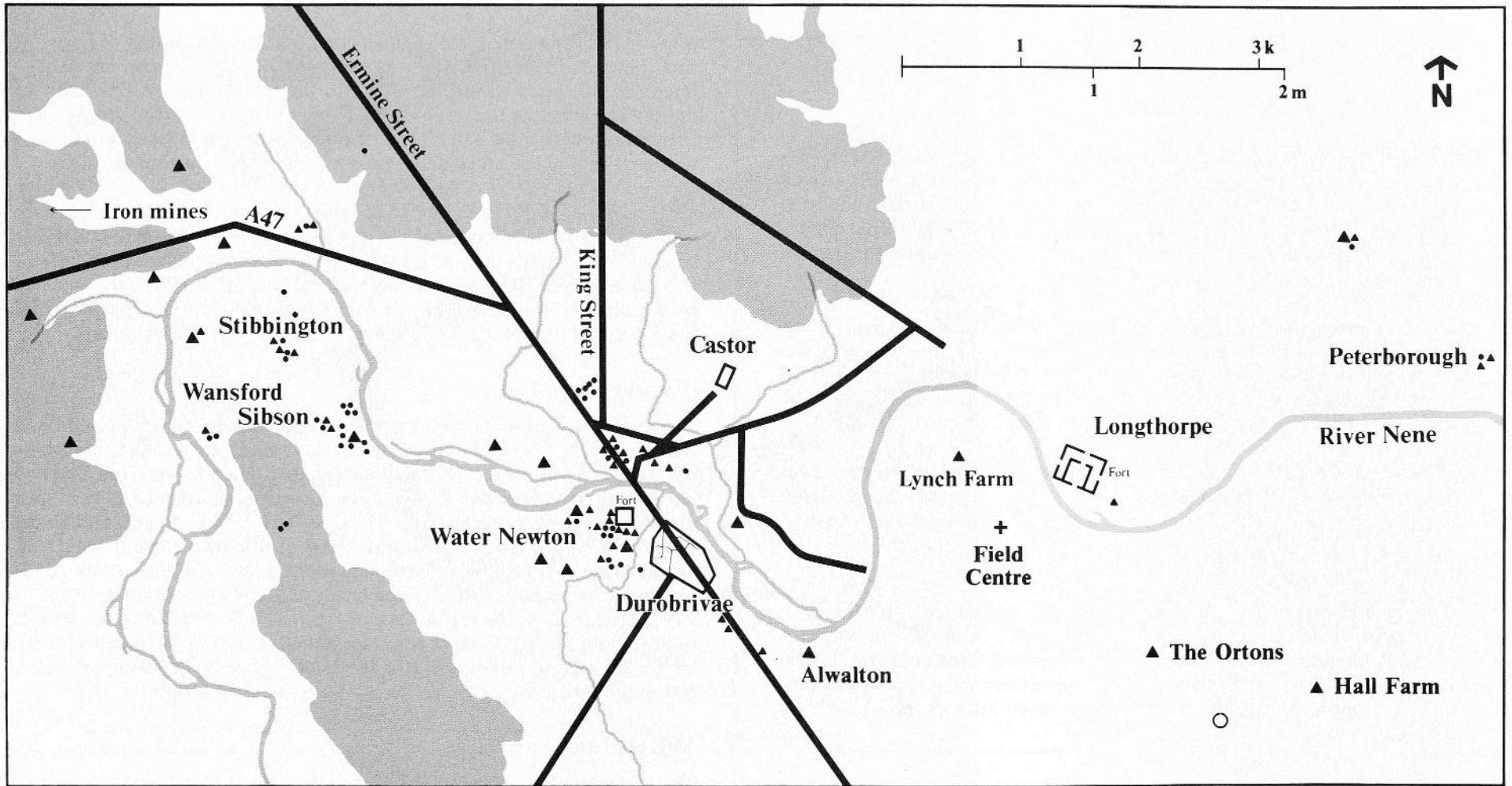
During the year survey of the *Car Dyke* between the Nene and Welland has given new information on this enigmatic Roman monument, now best construed as a catch-water drain. In *Bourges Boulevard*, Peterborough, traces of the Roman Fen Causeway were noted on an unexpected alignment.

In this number of *Durobrivae* (p. 20) Mr Mackreth reports on the Anglo-Saxon presence at *Hall Farm*, Orton Longueville. Our new ability to recognise the earliest Saxon pottery in the Nene Valley has already led to a wider understanding of Saxon settlement. A Middle Saxon domestic site was discovered west of the new distributor road at *Werrington* (TF 17700390).

In Peterborough itself the mediaeval site examined by Mr Francis O'Neill in *Bridge Street* proved rewarding. The first timber buildings, dated to the twelfth century, followed earlier drainage of the site. Later houses increased in size and improved in quality of construction. For the late or post-mediaeval period there was evidence for baking on the spot. The organic material in the earliest levels was well preserved and a ceramic sequence for Peterborough was obtained for the first time. At *14-16 Long Causeway* a timber-framed building, perhaps of late sixteenth-century date, but much altered later, was recorded before demolition.

The drought of 1976 brought exceptional conditions for aerial photography, as Mr Stephen Upex describes below (p. 22). Knowledge of local sites increased remarkably, and our belief in the value of regular flying within a limited zone was confirmed.

The Publications Subcommittee has now made firm plans for the first volumes of final reports to be issued under the aegis of the Council for British Archaeology. The Publicity Subcommittee was concerned with preparations for the opening of the archaeological exhibition 'Peterborough 6000' in April 1977.



- Iron Age or Roman Farm
- ▲ Roman building
- Potter's kiln
- Land over 100 feet (height)
- Roman roads

Fig 1 Map of the archaeological sites in the Nene Valley



# Ashton, 1976

by John Hadman and Stephen Upex

Contained in the plans for the future development of Oundle is a bypass road following the disused railway line from Barnwell to Oundle. It crosses the Nene to join the A605 immediately east of the junction with the road to Ashton and Polebrook. Aerial photography here in 1974 by Stephen Upex revealed an abundance of crop marks and a road through the known Roman settlement (*Durobrivae* 3, 1975, fig. 4).

Joint excavations by the Middle Nene Archaeological Group and Prince William School were carried out in 1974 and 1975. The importance of the site became increasingly apparent and the Nene Valley Research Committee set up the Ashton Excavation Committee to oversee further work. The landowner, the Hon. Mrs G. Lane, offered her kind cooperation.

In 1974-5 two roads came to light, with buildings lining the western edge of the main road. One building has so far been investigated in depth (*Durobrivae* 3, 1975, 13ff.). Parts of two other buildings were discovered.

## Geophysical survey

Geophysical survey was carried out on the unexcavated areas under threat. To supplement the completed magnetometer survey, Mr Martin Richards selected a 30 metre square box adjacent to the excavated area for detailed work with a resistivity meter. Initial results looked confusing, but by smoothing and filtering the contoured levels the possible lines of three structures emerged.

## The main road

For convenience the wider of the two roads seen from the air in 1974 as a parch mark has been called the main road (fig. 2).

A section cut across the road in 1976 produced a picture which is anything but simple. The earliest surface, which is much narrower and possibly on a slightly different alignment from the later ones, dates to the Flavian period. Above this was an accumulation of industrial and domestic debris. A wide area in a depression to the east of the road seems to have been used for metalworking processes which are not yet understood. Another surface dating to the Hadrianic period was again covered with debris from metalworking. The final road surface was laid down on top of this iron-stained

ashey deposit, probably late in the second century. Consisting of layers of small limestone cobbles with mortar and gravel, topped by larger flat slabs of limestone, the road was in use well into the fourth century. One layer of mortar had several wheel grooves made by a small truck. The grooves had immediately been filled with gravel, the next construction layer. Both heavy wear and subsidence necessitated road mending in the final phase of use.

The 'industrial' depression east of the road seems to have been in use over a long period for dumping industrial and domestic waste. The high phosphate content suggested the presence nearby of farm animals. The soft nature of this deposit caused the road to sag and the final layer of roughly pitched road metalling was an attempt to counteract this. Set on a thin layer of black earth, this final surface must have followed a period of disuse.

## The minor road

The minor road runs due west from the main road between Building I and Building III (fig. 2). The surface exposed in 1976 continued to show the dense packing previously observed. Although less than 3 metres wide, the road had a pronounced camber and its edges were sealed by an accumulation of dust and debris kicked or washed off the surface of the road proper. Unlike the main road, it had the character of a well-maintained surface with consistent wheel-ruts worn into the top limestone cobbles. When sectioned, the road revealed several superimposed layers of limestone cobbles, interleaved with gravel. Part of the top surface of the road was overlaid by an area of rough paving resting on black soil. This butted against the wall stones of the back yard west of Building I. It may represent a ramp or threshold and is certainly subsequent to the last period when the road was in full use.

## The ditches

The earliest surface of the minor road sealed two earlier ditches which had already silted up enough to bear the weight of road traffic and the foundations of one wall of Building III. The wall of the back yard of Building I was built into the ditch on the south side of the minor road and the ditch filling had been cut back to solid natural to support it. Both ditches seem too deep and too wide to be just road ditches and were possibly pre-existing boundary ditches; but adequate dating evidence is still lacking.

## Building III

Part of the wall of Building III was located with its foundation in the ditch of the minor road. There were traces of a return wall, a partition wall and a small area of rough paving.

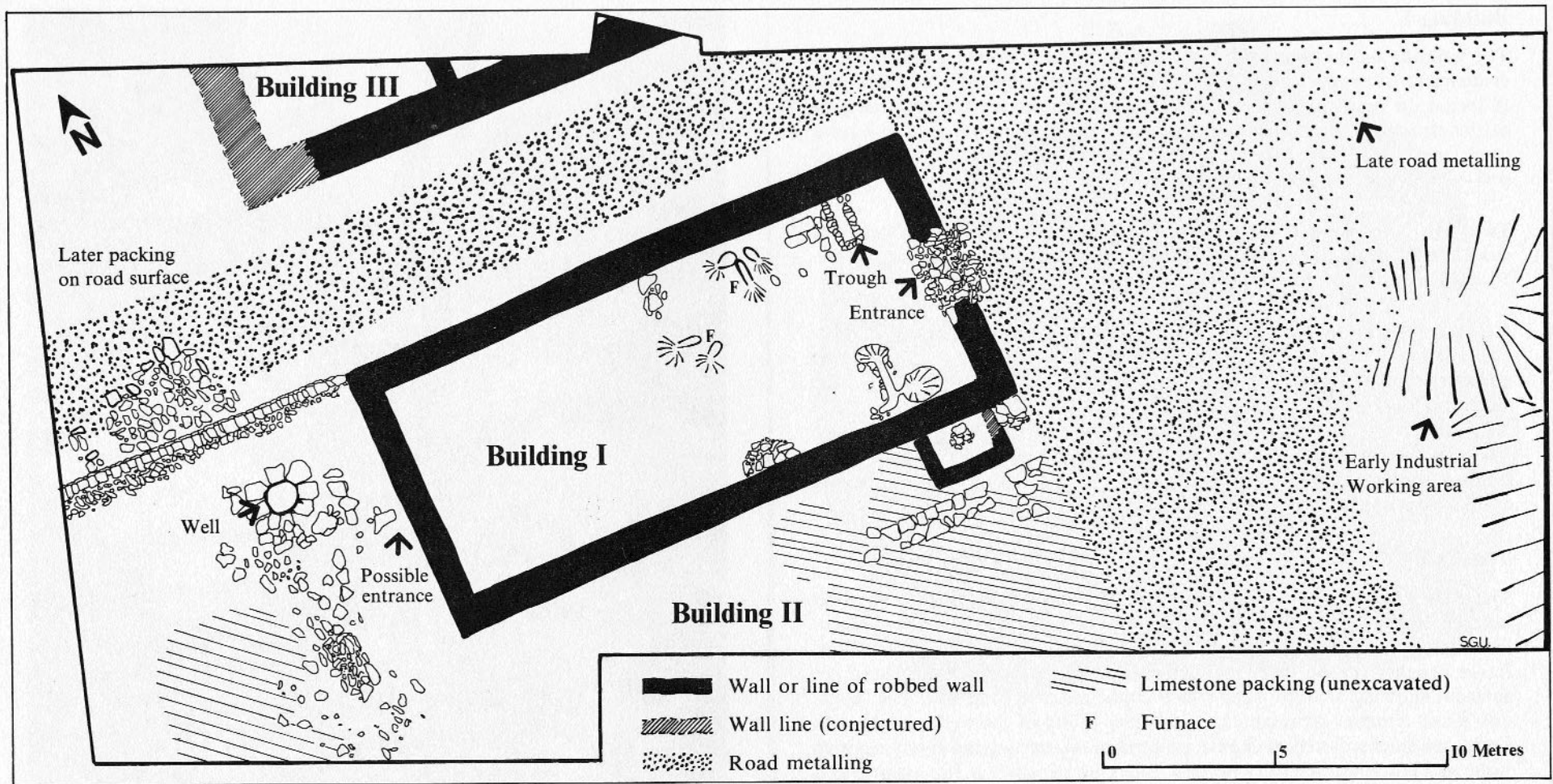


Fig 2 Plan of the excavation on the Roman site at Ashton near Oundle



## Building I

The building on the south side of the minor road provided a great deal of evidence for iron-smithing in 1974-5, and the main objectives of 1976 were to locate the rear wall of the building and to investigate the possibility of earlier structures. Both aims were realised. The building was seen to have a total length of almost 17.5 metres. In removing floor levels post-holes of first-century date were located.

Two post-holes were cut by the wall of the stone building which was associated with the Hadrianic road level, and so they may be related to the Flavian layers beneath it.

At the rear of Building I progress was hampered by plough grooves which had cut into the last two phases of flooring. The only feature visible at present is a stony arc-shaped area which together with the rest of the interior of the building will be considered in 1977.

The area west of Building I has for the moment been called a back yard. Several layers can be recognised, one being an area of very rough paving connected with the feature which includes a well.

## The well

The well which became evident towards the end of the excavation soon became the main focus of attention (fig. 3). The well-head had disappeared, leaving the shaft (about 1 metre wide) which is of dry stone construction. Large roughly shaped tapering masonry blocks had been used, the inner surfaces showing smooth wear which could indicate long use. The layers down to 3.5 metres represented a deliberate filling of the well, mainly with limestone blocks, closely packed in a matrix of relatively clean sandy silt with bone and late fourth-century pottery. Blocking the shaft at this point was a large lead tank (fig. 4). It lay at the highest level reached by the water table. Below it were layers of black sandy silt with varying amounts of stone, bones, fourth-century pottery and organic remains. They extended to the bottom of the well, which at 8.1 metres deep was set on solid grey clay.

Apart from the lead tank the more interesting finds included leather and shoes, well preserved ironwork, the handle, brackets and staves of a bucket and a number of wooden objects that had been lathe-turned.

The construction of the well has not yet been investigated, but there is a slight change in the stonework at one point which may indicate the use of two separate building techniques.



Fig 3 Excavation of the Roman well at Ashton

### **Trial trenches E and F**

In the autumn students from Prince William School investigated the alignment of the main road further south. The two long trenches revealed that at that point the road only existed as a gravel bank. There was no substantial metalling. Several pieces of evidence showed that humble structures existed to the west of the road.

Just before the excavation finished three students sectioning what was thought to be a small ditch began to produce early pottery. Further work has now revealed a late Belgic ditch with many thousands of densely packed sherds. Many of the vessels were imported fine wares, including terra rubra, terra nigra and Lyons cups and beakers. The complete absence of Romano-British vessels helps to date the filling of the ditch, tentatively, to between A.D. 10 and the Roman conquest. The finding of a fine bronze coin of unrecorded type minted at Verulamium by Tasciovanus, together with the sheer quantity of fine ware, underlines the strong influence of the Catuvellauni in this area.

### **Conclusions**

The overall picture which is emerging from the present excavations is one of a nucleated settlement or small town beginning in the late Iron Age and spanning the whole period of Roman occupation.

In the earlier periods evidence of all kinds points to a thriving community with agriculture and metal industries prominent. The substantial nature of the buildings and the street planning show the early growth of the settlement. Its position on the Nene and its distance from Durobrivae hint at an original strategic importance, but as yet there is no clear evidence of a military presence. Life was not always of a humble nature as the abundant finds of imported pottery, the glass and metalwork bear witness. Agriculture on the rich soils of the river valley and its surrounding uplands would have brought prosperity, reflected perhaps by the large villa at Cotterstock less than 2.5 km away (p. 24).



*Fig 4 The lead tank from Ashton*



# The Lead Tank from Ashton

by Christopher Guy

The lead tank found in the Roman well at Ashton (fig. 4) is one of about 12 such objects found in Britain, the majority from southern and eastern England. They are of varying size, but are of similar construction and would seem to have had a similar (if uncertain) function.

The Ashton tank is about 84cm in diameter, 38cm in height and its estimated capacity is 220 litres (46 gallons). It was made from 3 sheets of lead approximately 3mm thick, a circular piece for the base and two rectangular sheets for the sides. Strips of lead seal the junction of the base with the sides and the two side-seams, which contain lugs at the top. The lead on either side of the joins was slashed and molten lead was poured on. This partially fused with the sides and gripped them as the cooling metal shrank to create a watertight joint. This type of join is found on other tanks, e.g. on the tank from Ireby, Cumbria (*CW XLV*, 1946, 163-171). The lugs are of one piece with the side-seams, jutting out about 7cm and being 12.5cm deep. They contain roughly circular holes 3cm in diameter. It is very unlikely that the lugs were ever used for lifting the tank, but a lid may have been fastened to them. The top of the sides was slightly thicker and had been bent out at a right angle to form a rim.

The cast decoration on the sides of the tank (fig. 5) is very simple. It consists of a raised double cable running horizontally round the tank about 8cm below the rim and vertically from rim to base to divide each panel into three sections. As a single cable it also runs from the top corners of each section diagonally down to meet at the middle of the bottom. The pattern was probably cut into a strip of wood which was then pressed into the mould to leave the decoration standing in relief. This type of double-cable decoration is found on the tank from Willingham, Cambridgeshire, where the space between the cables is much less, and also on the tank from Walesby, Lincolnshire (*LAAS NS IX*, 1961, 13). The practice of dividing the side-panels into sections by vertical decoration is found on all the examples, except on that from Ireby. Diagonal, single-cable decoration (crossing, not just meeting) is found on the tanks from Bourton-on-the-Water (*BG LV*, 1933, 377) and Pulborough, Sussex (*Ant.J.* XXIII, 1943, 155-57).

The most interesting part of the decoration on the tank is the Chi-Rho monogramme in the middle section of one of the side panels. This is formed from three strips of lead 11cm long and a shorter curved piece forming the open loop of the Rho. This monogramme would seem to indicate that the tank either had a Christian function or that it was owned by Christians. The Chi-Rho monogramme also occurs on the two tanks from Icklingham, Suffolk (*Ant.J.* XXII, 1942, 219; *PSIA XXXII*, 1971, 209) (one also bears an Alpha and an Omega) and on those from Pulborough and Walesby. It is possible that these tanks were used for baptism, the candidate standing in the tank while water was poured over his or her head.

Two other pieces of lead were found in the well, immediately below the tank. One of them was folded and no decoration was visible, while the other was part of a side-panel for another tank. This piece, about 49cm long and 33cm high, has a lug and side-seam down one edge, and the lead strip which would have held it to the base runs along the bottom. It has an everted rim and immediately below this runs a band of decoration 11cm wide. At the bottom the border of this band is two plain strips. The decoration consists of three and a half small panels divided into quadrants by diagonal single cables and in each quadrant there is a circle with a dot inside it. A line of these circles runs horizontally below the plain strips. Similar decoration to this, but on a larger scale, appears on a tank in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge (*BG LVI*, 1934, 115).

## Abbreviations

- Ant.J.*     *Antiquaries Journal.*
- BG*         *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society.*
- CW*         *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society.*
- LAAS*      *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers.*
- PSIA*      *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology.*

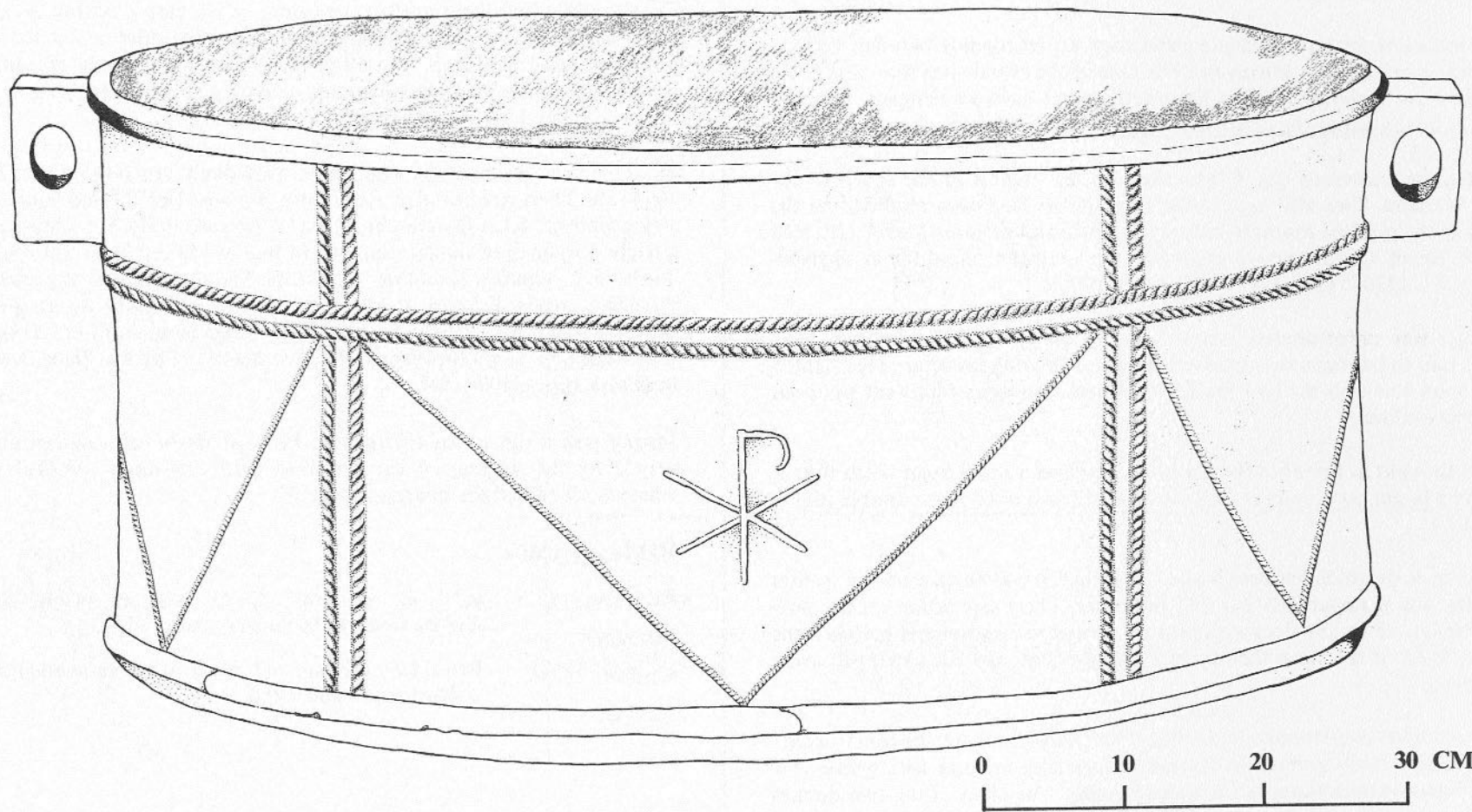


Fig 5 Reconstruction of the lead tank from Ashton



# A Triple Ring-Ditch at Maxey

by Robert Powell

In conjunction with the Fengate excavation an emergency two-day excavation was carried out at Maxey in 1976. One of the initial aims was to provide comparative material for Fen-Edge settlements such as Fengate. Circumstances finally led to the discovery of a triple ring-ditch.

The feature excavated (fig. 6) was sited on the gravels to the south of the river Welland. Two striking double ring-ditches had been recorded to the north of the marked southern end of the Neolithic cursus at Maxey (RCHM (1960), fig. 6). Of the two we excavated the southern ring-ditch at approximately TL 132075 (RCHM (1960), fig. 6, 100).

The site was unfortunately covered with loose gravel, about 15cm deep, which had to be manually removed. In fig. 6 the dug areas are represented by a solid line and the soil marks by dashes; the dots represent the conjectured outline.

It was thought at first that the feature comprised a small inner ditch (fig. 6, A) and a larger outer one. In fact the outer ditch proved to be double (fig. 6, B and C).

If one takes the ditch features B and C together, it will be seen on the section that the one is apparently cut into the other. Their separation on the plan may be caused by the deep stripping of the topsoil and gravel to reach the quarry level. It is known that up to 25cm of gravel had been stripped away in parts.

Are the ditches contemporary and, if not, which was the first to be constructed? The filling is fairly uniform in section: a dark silty mixture with gravel. No recut line was noticed to indicate any phasing. The inner of the two ditches had an organic lense below the outline of the ditch bottom. That lense would appear to respect ditch C. One may suggest that ditch B was dug and left open briefly for the organic lense to form by leaching; then C was dug, cutting into B. Thereafter both filled up quickly and uniformly.

Ditch A proved to be of the greatest interest: it revealed post-holes set into its filling to form a palisade (fig. 6, feature 20). Most of the post-holes were

of fairly uniform profile, with steep sides and rounded bottoms. They were distinguishable in that their filling was darker than that of the ditch. Nothing was found in the filling of the post-holes excavated (solid lines on the plan), except for a few unidentifiable traces of snails. There were some irregularities in the outline of the ditch and there was a possible entrance at the north of ditch A.

On cleaning away the gravel at the centre of the ring a central pit came to light, measuring c.90cm in diameter. It had steep sides and a flat bottom and averaged 25cm deep. The filling was a very dark sandy silt with a few stones. Here the only finds were made, two waste flint flakes. Both are small, fairly crude and heavily patinated.

In conclusion one must ask whether the ring-ditch is of Neolithic or Bronze-Age date. There are parallels from both periods. For the Neolithic there is Atkinson's site XI at Dorchester, Oxon (Atkinson (1951), 61). This comprised a triple ring-ditch of similar diameter to that at Maxey, a central ring of pits and several definitely Neolithic small finds. The site was also respected by the Neolithic cursus. Of note at Maxey is the relationship of the ring-ditch to the cursus (RCHM (1960), fig. 6). On the other hand from the Bronze Age is an example of a multiple round barrow described by Mr Peter Donaldson in *Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 14f.

Maxey was a dig in an emergency. Perhaps more information could be gained by the digging of the apparent twin ring-ditch (RCHM no. 98) which is scheduled for quarrying in 1977.

## Bibliography

- Atkinson (1951) R. J. C. Atkinson, C. M. Piggott, N. K. Sandars, *Excavations at Dorchester, Oxon*, 1951.
- RCHM (1960) Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), *A Matter of Time*, 1960.

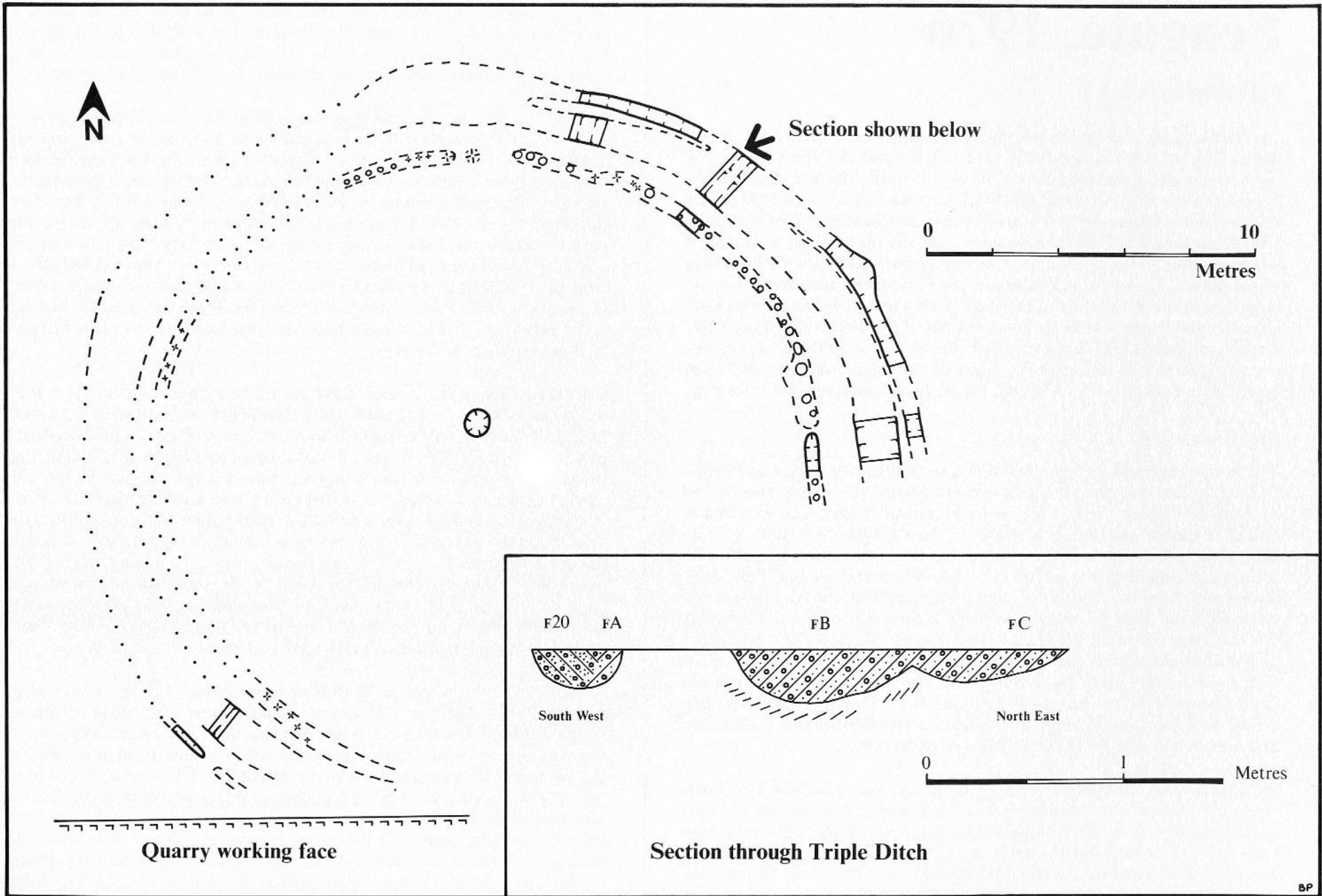


Fig 6 Plan of the triple ring-ditch at Maxey



# Fengate, 1976

by Francis Pryor

The 1976 season at Fengate was both demanding and rewarding. It was demanding because we decided to strip larger areas than ever before and these turned out archaeologically to be very fruitful. The hot, dry weather, however, made digging extremely difficult, so we had to extend the season into September when more or less continuous rain caused problems of another sort. While the elements were not on our side, the site was; for we managed to achieve both of the major objectives we had set ourselves at the beginning of the season. First, we located one of the settlements associated with the large complex of Bronze-Age ditched enclosures that parcel up the Fen Edge so neatly and which appear to have gone out of use about 1000 B.C. These ditches, numbered 1-15, are mapped in *Durobrivae* 3, 1975, fig. 2. Second, we managed at last to locate the edges of the large Iron-Age settlement described in *Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 10ff. I shall discuss each sub-site separately.

## The Bronze Age

The Bronze-Age field-system when first dug in 1971 was unique in Eastern England. Since that time, however, similar ditched fields have been found in south-east Essex, around the rivers Stour and Colne, and also nearer home, at Castor and Barnack. None of these crop-marks have yet been excavated, so their date is not yet proven; but their association with probable Bronze-Age ring-ditches would make such a date more likely than not. I have also recently been informed by Mr Brian Simmons of the South Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit that they, too, have Bronze-Age enclosures covering the Fen Edge for many miles and the dating of these seems much more secure. It would appear, then, that suitable parts of the Fen Edge, together with lower valleys of rivers draining into the Fens, carried a developed landscape early in the second millennium B.C. This is a most startling conclusion; for it would imply a considerable population, able both to use and maintain a large network of fields and enclosures.

We may assume, for the time being, that the very heavy Oxford Clay lands north and south of Peterborough were still cloaked in thick forests and only sparsely settled, if at all. Alternatively, settlement of the clays may have been sporadic or seasonal — clearly more research is needed here. There is, however, good evidence that the Oxford Clay Fen Edge near Holme Fen, just 4 km south of Fengate, was partially deforested and settled for a few hundred years in about 1400 B.C. (Godwin, Vishnu-Mittre (1975)). This type of shorter-lived settlement is what one might expect on heavy clay soils

which would tend to deteriorate unless local communities had the use of a very stout plough — and such ploughs were not available in the Bronze Age. At Fengate, however, where the soil is much lighter, occupation was intense and uninterrupted from about 2000 B.C. until later Roman times.

It should by now be apparent that our work at Fengate is becoming less a study of individual settlements and finds and more an attempt towards landscape history. The results of excavations such as those at Fengate have traditionally been usefully augmented by detailed field survey. A good recent example is that carried out by Mr R. Bradley around Ram's Hill in Berkshire (Bradley, Ellison (1975)). Our area is not suited to such an approach; for modern Peterborough has already destroyed much important information, and the great thickness of topsoil seems largely to have prevented finds from coming to the surface. The Nene Valley Research Committee's commitment to a policy of excavation is therefore of the greatest importance; for digging is the only way in which we can hope to build up a picture of prehistoric land-management in the area.

I mentioned above that we had found one of the settlements associated with the Bronze-Age fields. The most easily distinguishable feature was a round house of a form usually associated with the Iron Age (fig. 7). It had a four-post porch and a circle of internal roof-support posts. The wall-foundation posts have left very few traces, but the area occupied by the building is neatly defined by a circular eaves-drip gully which drains into one of the straight enclosure ditches via a short S-shaped trench. This trench securely links the house to the field-system which has been dated by over a dozen radiocarbon dates. We must assume, therefore, that the house had gone out of use before 1000 B.C. Behind the house, to the west, and also within the bounds of the straight field-ditches, we uncovered an area of many small pits and post-holes, and a piece of once-molten bronze was found in a field drain nearby, indicating that metal-working took place on the site.

At first glance this wealth of settlement features would seem to contradict the hypothesis offered in *Durobrivae* 3, that groups in the Bronze Age at Fengate spent much time out in the Fens grazing their cattle. If such were the case, one would not expect to find permanent settlement sites. We do indeed have a house, but I have many reasons to believe that it was only occupied for a very short period of time. Firstly, although every feature was excavated, finds from the area of settlement were very few and far between. We also expected a massive increase in density of finds along the enclosure ditches as the settlement was approached, but this did not happen: the finds and the phosphate concentrations (see *Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 10 for the significance of soil phosphates) remained constant along the ditches. Secondly, a phosphate survey of the settlement, when compared with open

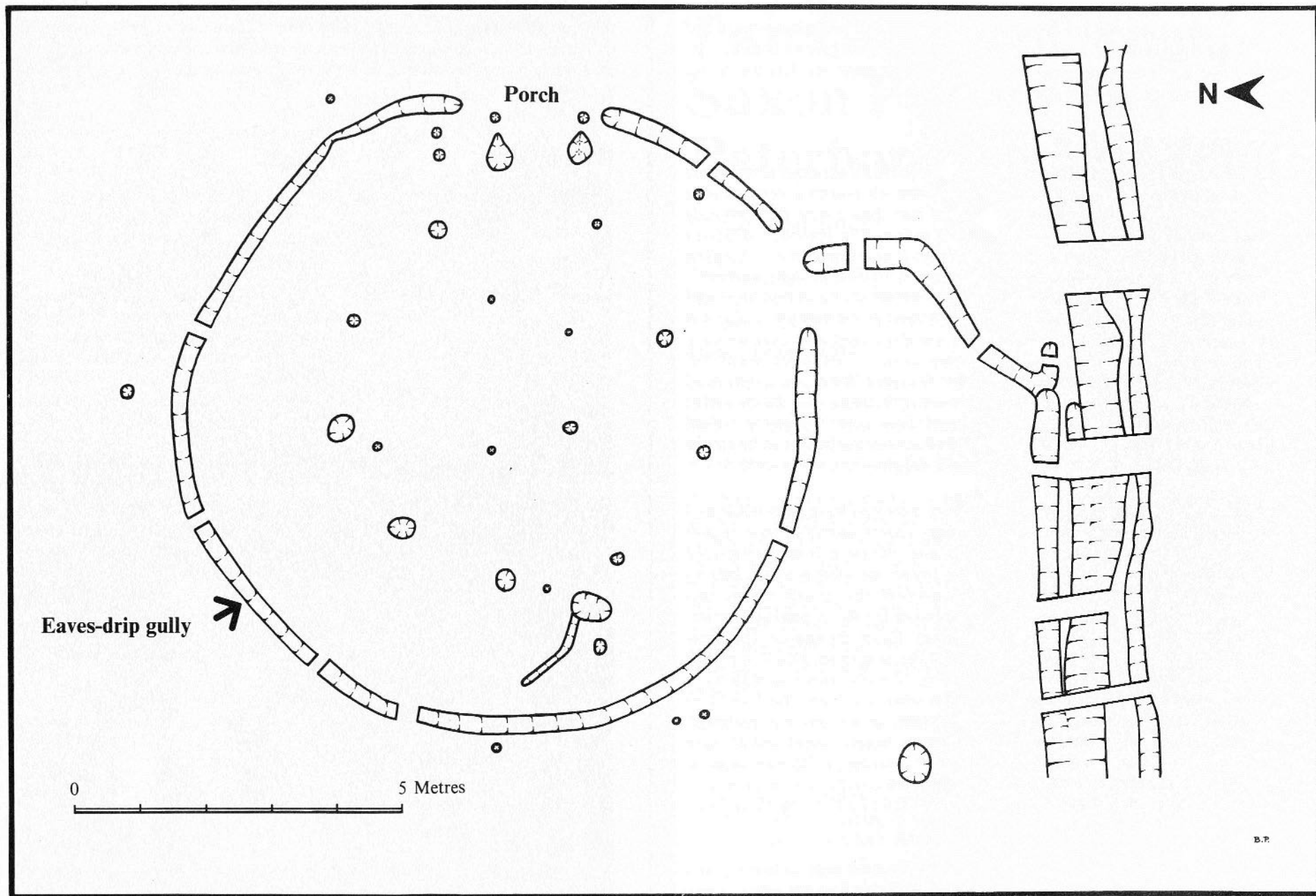


Fig 7 Fengate, 1976: plan of the Bronze-Age house (Newark Road sub-site, Area IV)



grazing land outside the enclosure, showed no appreciable difference between the two areas. Thirdly, the absolute amounts of soil phosphates were far lower than those of the Iron-Age settlement discussed below. Finally, the house had never been repaired or rebuilt. All this suggests that the house had only been occupied for a few seasons.

### The Iron Age

The Iron Age sees a change in economy away from pastoralism towards (at first, I suspect) mixed agriculture, in which livestock played a very reduced role. In the fifth or sixth centuries B.C. there was then a slow drift towards mixed farming, more or less as we know it today. The markedly different character of the Bronze-Age and Iron-Age sites is best illustrated by Stephen Upex's air photographs of the 1976 season (figs. 8, 9). The straight, surveyed, ditches of the Bronze Age contrast with the jumble of round buildings and sinuous ditches of the Iron Age. The barren area at the bottom of fig. 9 is the eastern edge of the settlement and we are quite confident that we have found the other three sides, although further work is required to make this certain. Dr Paul Craddock of the British Museum Research Laboratory has again carried out soil phosphate tests which indicate that the centre of the settlement was the area where animals were kept. People, it would appear, lived around the periphery. This implies that the layout of buildings is not as haphazard as the plan alone would suggest.

It is often supposed that, although fine wares may well have been made and distributed by specialist potters, the ordinary coarse domestic pottery was made by the women of the community on site. We have almost excavated the complete settlement and so far have found no evidence for pottery manufacture. It is tempting, therefore, to suppose that coarse wares, too, were obtained from outside, perhaps in exchange for dairy products, grain, salt or items of wickerwork. Mrs Gay Wilson, Palaeobotanist to the Nene Valley Research Committee, informs me that the long twigs used to form the brush drain referred to in *Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 10 were indeed of willow, as we had suspected, and were aged 7-9 years when cut from the tree. This strongly supports the suggestion that coppicing of willow was a regular practice, and one can imagine that its strong, supple wood would have been used to make a variety of boxes and baskets. It should also be remembered that until recently Fenland folk boiled up willow bark when they felt ill, to produce a 'tea' naturally rich in salicylic acid (from the Latin *salix*, 'willow'), the active ingredient of aspirin.

The 1977 season will complete excavation of the Iron-Age settlement and this will be followed by about eighteen months to two years of study, during which time reports Three (Bronze Age) and Four (Iron Age) will be prepared.

Provided that the area has not been covered by factories, we intend to start the second phase of the Fengate project in the summer of 1979. This work will probably be on a slightly smaller scale than hitherto and will concentrate on solving a number of specific problems raised by the first seven years of excavation.

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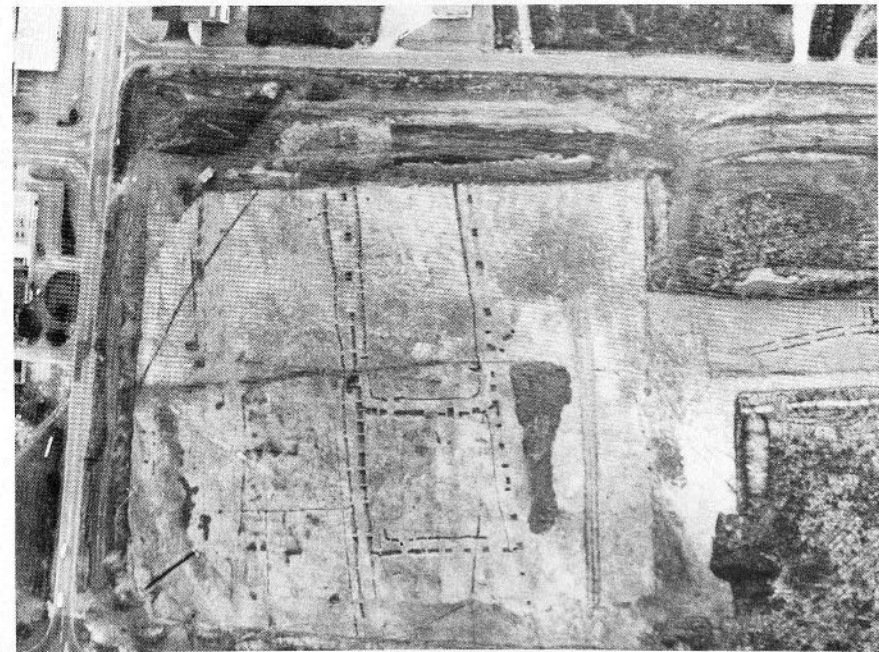


Fig 8 Aerial view of the Fengate Bronze-Age fields (Newark Road)



Fig 9 *Aerial view of the later Iron-Age settlement at Fengate (Cats's Water sub-site), showing drainage ditches and foundations of circular buildings*

## Two Groups of Anglo-Saxon Pottery in Peterborough Museum

*by Carolyn Dallas*

The pottery illustrated in fig. 10 represents two groups of Anglo-Saxon hand-made pottery in the storeroom of Peterborough Museum. The exact place and circumstances of their finding is unknown.

### **Orton Longueville**

This group is labelled 'King's Pits' and two of the three boxes give additional information. One reads: 'Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville boundary. Post-holes and trench'; and the other: 'Found in hut site near post-hole about 15 inches from surface. Animal bones also found and bone pin'. (The pin in question is probably fig. 10, no. 10 which was in this box.)

An Anglo-Saxon settlement-site on the Orton Longueville-Orton Waterville parish boundary is noted on the Ordnance Survey Record Cards (Taylor (1969), 31 no.15). This is situated at about TL 15919608 and seems to have been a sizeable area of features producing pottery and small finds which was found by Mr G. Wyman Abbott before 1932. Nothing in the Wyman Abbott collections in either Peterborough Museum or the Cambridge University Museum could be the finds mentioned in this reference; but conversely there is no evidence that these sherds and bone point are those found by Abbott. It is, however, more than likely that they are from the same site.

The pottery totals almost 70 sherds, representing 14-23 vessels. There are 3 basic fabric-types, which really only vary in the amount of temper and particle-size. They are:

- a. Fine grit and sand, sometimes with a burnished surface, comparable to Maxey Fabric B (Addyman (1964), 47); usually dark grey or black (see Peakirk Road fabric (a) below).
- b. Fine sand with sparkling surface and some fine grit; variously black, grey, red or light brown.
- c. Very gritty, including particles of mica, comparable to Maxey Fabric A; black or dark brown in colour.



Of the drawn sherds (fig. 10) no. 1 is fabric (c) (Maxey A), nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 are fabric (a) (Maxey B). No. 5 is similar to (a), but some organic particles are visible, and no. 9 includes calcitic material as well as sand and grit. Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 are black throughout and the rest are basically black, but have some areas of dark grey, brown or reddish brown.

Nos. 1-5 were in one box, nos. 6-7 in another and nos. 8-9 in another with the bone point no. 10 — but this may not be significant, as the material could have been muddled since finding.

The forms of these vessels are not distinctive and they are therefore difficult to date. Some differences in function covering a range of kitchen activities may be suggested by the variation in vessel-size from the basic cooking-pot (e.g. nos. 4, 6, 7, 8) to the smaller, narrow-mouthed, vessels (e.g. nos. 1, 2, 5). No. 9 is a most unusual form, but is probably a thicker, undecorated, version of the small fifth-century carinated jars; but it might also be Iron-Age, as the ceramics of that period are very similar to the Saxon types.

This group as a whole lacks distinctive early or late forms, and is probably dateable to the later Pagan period, the sixth to seventh centuries A.D.

### Peakirk Road

The words 'Peakirk Road' are the only labelling attached to this box. This is most likely to be Peakirk Road at Glington, north of Peterborough. The main road through Glington, called High Street in the village centre, becomes Peakirk Road on the east side of the village where it runs to Peakirk as the B1443. Some 20 modern building plots and a few older houses line Peakirk Road at Glington and the distance between the two villages is barely a mile, so that the area from which this material could have come is fairly limited. The large non-abraded pieces of the group suggest that it is not surface material, but was found in some building, ditch-digging or pipe-laying operations. Its homogeneous character argues for the presence of a Middle Saxon site somewhere west of the Car Dyke near modern Glington at about TF 156057. The box also contains a few Romano-British sherds and about 20 Iron-Age ones.

There are 45 Anglo-Saxon sherds, representing less than 10 vessels. Other than one organic-tempered sherd, the pottery can be divided into two basic fabric-types, of which the first predominates:

- a. Fine grit (1mm or less) and quartz sand, comparable to Maxey Fabric B (Addyman (1964), 47).
- b. Mixed sand, shell and grit.

The drawn sherds nos. 14, 15, 16 are in fabric (a); nos. 11-12 are in fabric (b); no. 13 is as (a), but has occasional micaceous particles. Fabric (a) is similar to Maxey Fabric B, as is (a) at Orton above, and fabric (b) can be paralleled in basic character by some of the Middle Saxon wares found at Castor (*Durobrivae* 1, 1973, 16f.). The vessels are black, except for some red and grey patches on no. 12 and grey surfaces on no. 14. One body sherd in fabric (a) has an elongated vertical pierced boss; but otherwise all the sherds are plain.

This group of pottery is probably of Middle Saxon date (c.A.D. 650-850). Forms nos. 13 and 14 are indicative of this period; for they do not seem to occur in pagan graves and have been found in Middle Saxon contexts on sites such as Southampton, North Elmham in Norfolk and Upton in Northamptonshire, as well as on Continental sites of the period. The miniature vessel no. 15 (usually called a 'thumb pot' and probably used for small quantities of more precious substances such as spices or perfume) and the foot-stand no. 16 occur in pagan contexts and may be residual or indicative of extensive occupation. The pots in this group therefore range from the sixth to the eighth or ninth centuries and are best taken as a whole to be Middle Saxon.

I should like to thank Mrs Miranda Green for allowing me to study all the material in Peterborough Museum and Miss M. Cra'ster for access to Wyman Abbott material at the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

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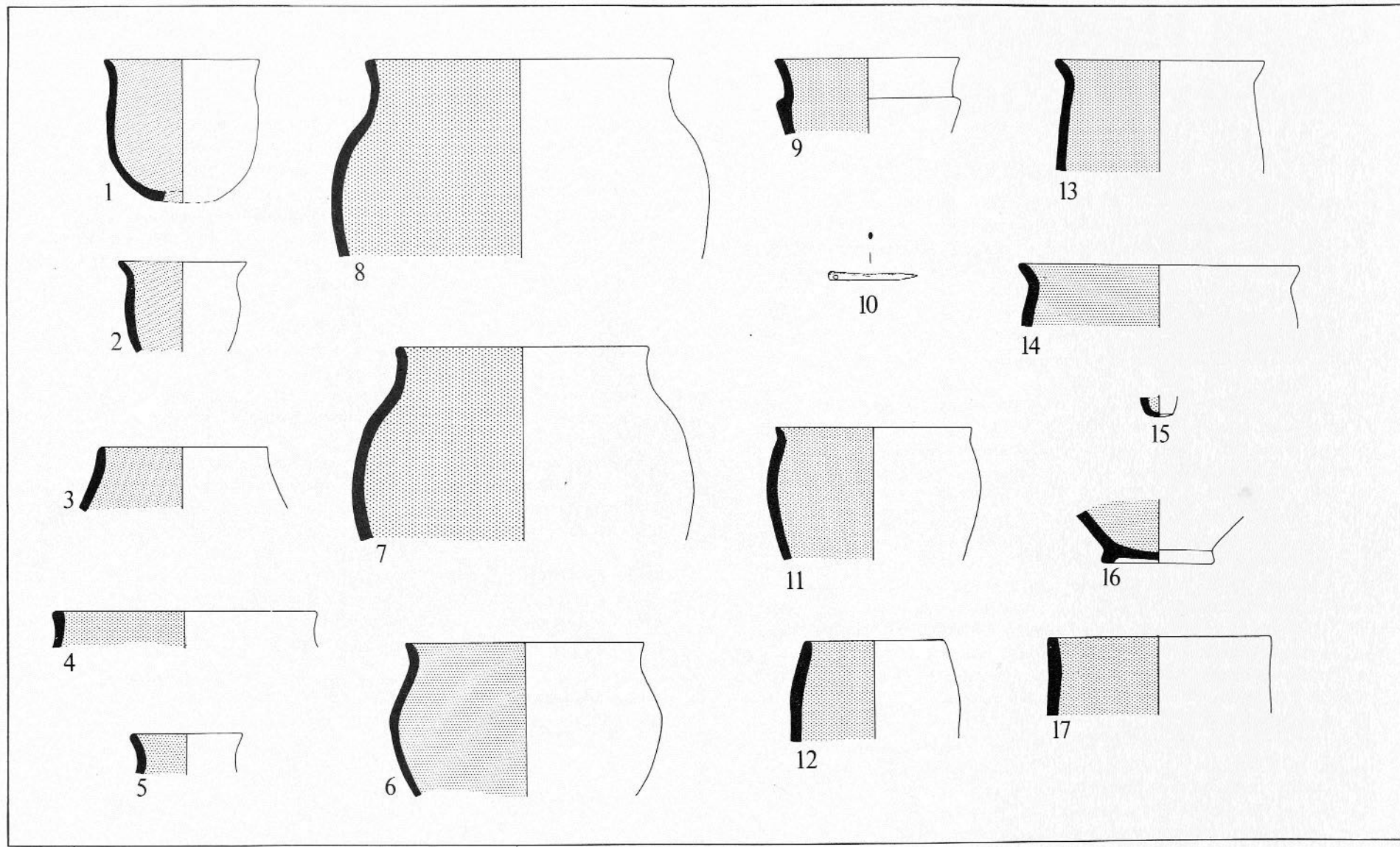


Fig 10 Anglo-Saxon pottery from Peterborough Museum: nos. 1-10 from Orton Longueville (no. 10 is bone point), nos. 11-17 from Peakirk Road



# Orton Hall Farm— the Saxon Connection

by Donald Mackreth

There was a time when it was thought that Saxons shunned Roman buildings as works of evil forces. This view was to a large extent based upon the apparent lack of Saxon finds on late Roman sites. In recent years knowledge of Saxon domestic pottery has greatly increased and many late Roman sites with a Saxon presence are now known. Besides Orton Hall Farm there are at least four others in the Peterborough neighbourhood. Nevertheless, at Hall Farm it was a surprise to find not only the pottery, but also pits, hearths and post-holes belonging to pagan Saxons.

The plan in fig. 11 shows the whole of the excavated site, with features of all periods (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 24f.). The Saxon presence was found mainly on the east. There was a house (a) and traces of two others in the same enclosure. The enclosure ditch had been recut by the Saxons for their own use after the original Roman one had already received some Saxon pottery. The only *Grubenhäuser*, or sunken floored hut, was found nearby (b). The main Saxon occupation was most probably on the south side of the site (c) where a Frisian barred comb and a wrist clasp were found as well as early Saxon pottery. Other Saxon features (d and e) occupied the west side of the site. Feature d. has a plan which is normally interpreted as a granary, while e. seems to have been a Saxon hut floor. At f. the Roman building had been replaced by one on wooden posts, which may be of Saxon date; but there was certain Saxon occupation further north (g). On the north side of the site (h) was a Saxon well with a fence near it.

From this brief description it can be seen that the Roman farm itself was largely left alone; yet it is inconceivable that it should not have been used. The answer may be that there was an agreed relationship between the earliest Saxons on the site and the local Romans. It is clear that there should have been some overlap with the Romans; for their pottery on the site carried on into the fifth century, while the Saxons seem to have been there almost from the beginning of the same century. The fifth-century barred comb has already been mentioned, but with it was found an early Saxon biconical pot in what seems to be a Romanising fabric as well as a piece of a Saxon mortarium. This, and some other pottery, suggests that the Saxons were familiar with Roman pottery still in use and were also familiar with the use of the characteristically Roman vessel, the mortarium.

The Saxon presence on the site seems to have come to an end at the end of the fifth century or in the early years of the sixth. From then on the site lay abandoned until discovered by Mr Hunting and his plough.

It has been fashionable for some years to call any such early Saxons mercenaries, *foederati* or *laeti*, quite often mixing the terms. *Foederati* were usually groups of men banded together as a fighting unit, while *laeti* were barbarian family groups, managed by Roman officers and given land in return for allowing their sons to be taken into the army as enforced recruits. In neither of these cases are the Saxons likely to have maintained sufficient social cohesion to have made their own pottery, and thin-section work on the pottery from Orton Hall Farm, and other sites in the East Midlands, suggests that some of it was made just outside Leicester.

In the late fourth and in the fifth century groups of tribes were allowed to settle inside the Empire in areas under the control of their native leaders. In the fifth century, certainly, they were settled under a convention known as *hospitalitas*, 'hospitality'. This usually applied to soldiers being billeted upon civilians. By extension, the system was used for land allotment to barbarian groups. They were given a set share of a Roman property, and this usually meant farm-buildings and implements and not just land. Under such circumstances it is possible that, after the formal break between Britain and the central government in A.D. 410, the British decided to seek protection through *hospitalitas*, offering land in return for defence.

Quite possibly, the myth of Hengist and Horsa may hide a much more realistic arrangement like this. In the event the Romano-British failed to keep hold of what is now England and the Saxons were not interested in the internal problems and history of Roman Britain.



Fig 11 Plan of the Roman and Saxon site at Hall Farm, Orton Longueville



# Recent Aerial Photography

by Stephen Upex

Many soils, especially on the heavy clay land to the south of our region, began to reveal sites for the first time in the arid conditions of 1976. Our ideas and information on settlement patterns in areas that have long been considered archaeologically sterile need now to be re-appraised. After 1976 a new aspect of 'upland archaeology' based on aerial photography is sure to develop.

The importance locally of the 1976 season was not the discovery of any major new site, but simply the number of new sites in previously unproductive areas and of course additions to known sites. Within the Greater Peterborough area much new information was recorded, especially for the parishes of Werrington, Longthorpe, Ailsworth and Castor. At Castor a 60 acre addition must now be made to the industrial suburbs to the north and north-east of Durobrivae, whilst in the parishes of Chesterton and Waternewton suspected, but previously unrecorded, suburbs were shown. They extend out along the road to Irchester, which runs from the town's south-west gate. At right-angles to this road, and crossing it to run parallel to the town walls, another road was shown, perhaps serving the cemetery area outside the town walls. In this cemetery three huge circles were photographed. One, containing at least three concentric ditch-lines, had an overall diameter of about 80 metres. Another large circular feature was noted within the limits of the town itself.

Flights into the Welland Valley and the area to the south of Stamford showed a settlement pattern of great complexity and extent. Further up the Nene Valley, both on the responsive river terrace soils and the valley crests of heavier soils, the pattern of intensive prehistoric and Roman occupation was seen to continue. The massive villa at Cotterstock (p. 24) and additions to the Ashton town (p. 6) indicate centres of settlement in the Roman period, in what now appears to be a very heavily populated region in both Roman and prehistoric times.

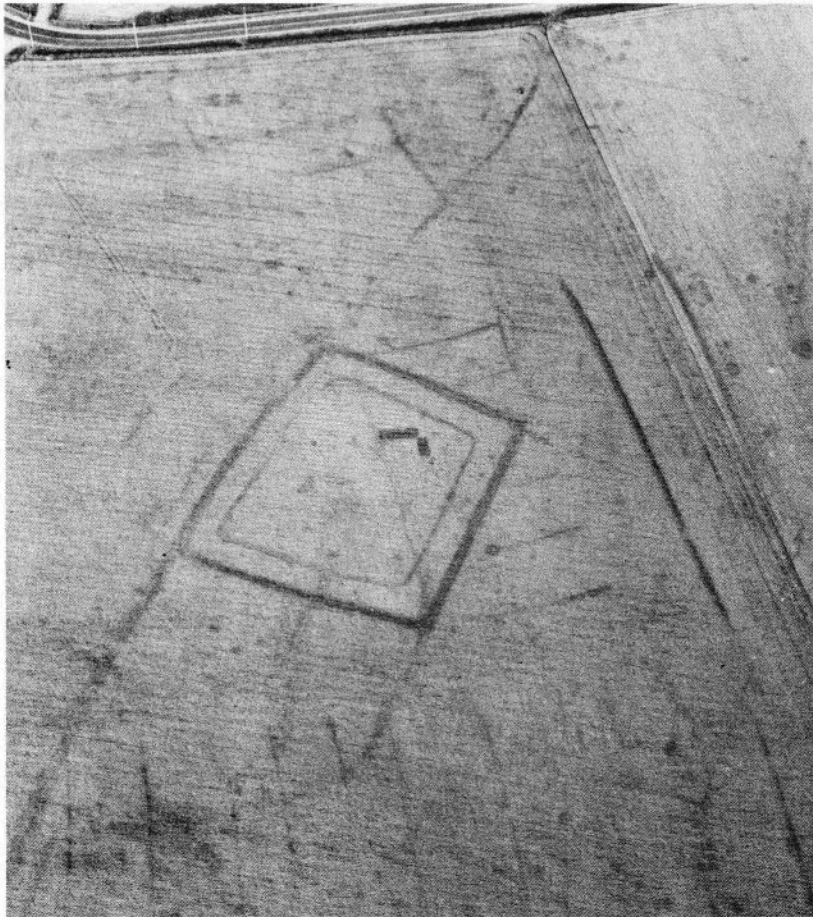
I am grateful to Mr R. Fray, my pilot, whose skill and patience in the air were enormous.



Fig 12 Northborough (TF 10 145064)

*Occasionally the combination of soil types, crop types, weather conditions and various other factors coincide to give intricate archaeological markings in a growing crop. The photograph shows an area to the south-east of Etton where such factors have all been favourable. The result here shows intensive occupation over, one imagines, many years, with certain ditches and enclosures seeming to run over or through earlier abandoned features. The total archaeological picture is thus very complex, with different levels of occupation being built up and then cut and disturbed by later levels.*

*It is possible, however, to abstract certain features from the sites which are contemporary with each other and so begin to unravel the sequence of the markings.*



**Fig 13 Northborough West (TF 10 148077)**

*The Welland Valley has long provided an area rich in archaeological crop-mark sites of many different periods. The light alluvial and fen soils respond well to most crop types and already in the parishes of Maxey, Bainton, Tallington and Helpston vast and complicated sites have been noted.*

*This photograph (taken in June 1976) shows a series of markings on the west side of the village of Northborough. It consists of two sets of sub-rectangular enclosure ditches, the outer enclosure measuring approximately 75 by 50 metres overall. Within the inner ditch are two rectangular 'pits', while on the north side of the outer ditch faint markings suggest the presence of a track or drove-way and an entrance in the outer ditch at this point.*



**Fig 14 Etton (TF 10 139063)**

*This photograph taken during June 1976 shows the central area of a very extensive series of crop marks to the west of the village of Etton (centre TF 10 139063). The large irregular circle may represent the limits of a farmstead enclosure from which run the boundaries of fields. These field boundaries extend for a kilometre to the north-west and south-west of the farmstead and have clear breaks in their lines, suggesting field entrances or gateways. Often drove-ways run between fields, indicating that at one period stock-rearing was an important part of the economy.*

*A small sub-rectangular enclosure can be seen in the centre of the photograph with an entrance and parallel ditches leading away from it.*



# The Roman Villa at Cotterstock

by *Stephen Upex*

'A servant of one Mr Campion, a gentleman farmer, being at plow in an open field belonging to the village of Cotterstock . . . on a headland commonly call'd the Guild Acre discovered in a furrow several little stones which made a very uncommon appearance, and with which having acquainted his master, he with an intimate neighbour or two, went privately to the place and caused so much of the earth to be cleared from it, as to give them a view of a small part of a very elegant piece of work . . .'

This extract from a newspaper article of 1737 describes the discovery in July 1736 of the villa at Cotterstock near Oundle. The report goes on to describe how a mosaic floor 20ft square was uncovered, with quantities of bone and pottery. Other reports suggest that more mosaics were found, but, unlike the first, were not recorded by drawings. The news of the discovery obviously spread quickly around the local villages and many people crowded to see the work taking place — so many in fact, that they eventually destroyed the principal mosaic, probably by walking over it.

Discoveries were presumably made earlier than this: for the name in 1736, 'guild' or golden acre, must refer to finds from the villa.

Further discoveries were made in 1798 when another mosaic was recorded showing a two-handled cup crowned with leaves and with a border at the top and bottom of Asiatic shields. Other mosaics are mentioned, but were described as 'of inferior character', and were not recorded in the drawings made by the farmer, Mr John Selby. Mention was also made of two cisterns or cesspools being found.

No later mention is made of the villa. Mr Richardson, the present farmer, relates how local tradition tells of discoveries in the 1860s, but no other information can be found for this period.

Even though the two principal mosaics from the 1736 and 1798 excavations were recorded and eventually published by Mr E. T. Artis and others, the exact position of the villa was forgotten and the Ordnance Survey records it as lying on the south side of a small stream running between Glaphthorn

and Cotterstock. However, during the remarkably dry summer of 1976, the villa, lying under grassland for many years, revealed itself as a series of parch marks. The site itself (centre TL 09 033911) lies close to the 125' contour on great oolite clay. To the north the Oxford and boulder clay rises to over 200', to the south the land falls for a quarter of a mile to a small stream valley. An extensive terrace seems to have been levelled from the gentle slope of the ground on which the ranges of buildings were constructed (fig. 15).

From the 1976 photographs it was possible to produce the accompanying plan (fig. 16) showing the overall dimensions and some internal features of the principal rooms. The first and over-riding impression is of the great size; for the villa is over 200 metres in length and some 60 metres wide. Villas of such dimensions are rare in Britain, and comparable structures are best found on the Continent, notably in the valley of the River Somme. The plan suggests spontaneous growth through many periods of building. At the north-west corner one room appears to have five sides, the result, perhaps, of two building periods.

Of the courtyards the western one seems more likely to be the domestic range. The buildings are arranged around three sides of a central yard, with other structures shown within the central area. Over this part of the villa, and visible from the air and ground, are three areas of disturbance where the ground is very uneven. It may be that these areas represent the positions of the 1736 and 1798 excavations and, if so, the recorded mosaics add weight to the view that this area is the domestic range. Alternatively, the areas may represent stone-robbing of more recent times.

The eastern courtyard, which is the larger of the two, may prove to be the agricultural range. On the northern side of this yard the rooms appear very long and remarkably wide, suggesting that many of the internal arrangements still need to be recorded. Ditching work along the modern hedgeline during the years 1940-50 cut through walls of this range. These walls were still visible on the ground in 1976, providing useful datum-points for planning from the aerial photographs.

To the north of these two courtyards parch marks, although indistinct, suggest further buildings (only certain structures are recorded on the plan). It is on this northern side of the main building that a spring rises (and ran throughout the 1976 summer). If it existed in the Roman period, it may possibly be associated with the markings on this northern side.

Future research and survey will obviously add to our present knowledge of the site, its date, the extent of the villa estate, its fields and its basic economy.

Interesting, too, is the relationship with the settlement at Ashton, only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles (2.5km) away.

I am grateful to Mr Richardson for allowing me to walk the field, P. P. Parnell and J. P. Wild for locating references and to A. G. Cockin for help with the ground survey.



Fig 15 Aerial photograph of the Cotterstock villa from the north-east (June 1976)

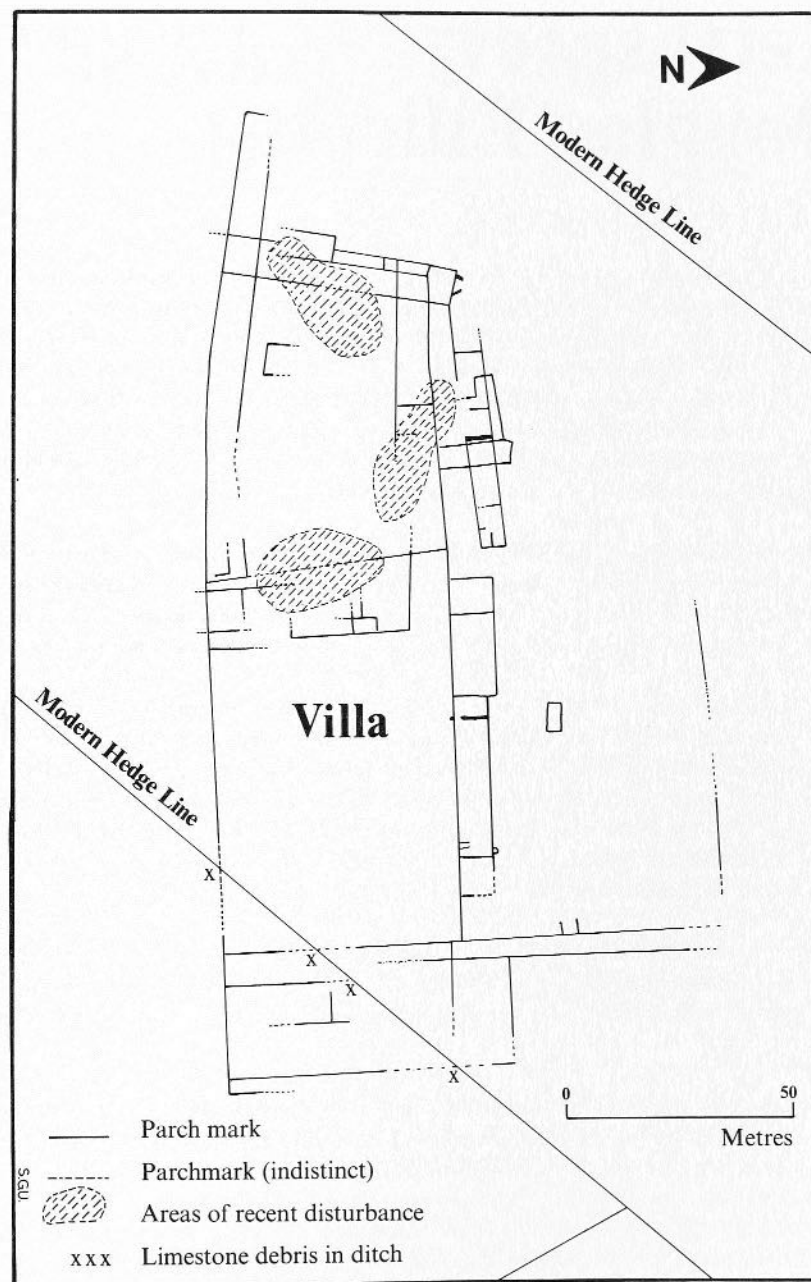


Fig 16 The Roman villa at Cotterstock plotted from aerial photographs



# Retrospect: Douglas Ellicott

by George Dixon

Stukeley, Morton and Artis recorded for us in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century their interpretation of the archaeology of the Nene Valley. The new Archaeological Field Centre in Ham Lane now presents the modern view. Between them stands the work of countless enthusiasts: Dr T. J. Walker, George Wyman Abbott, and more modest workers in the field. This article is about one such worker, who has literally covered the world with his activities and in one life's span has seen archaeology develop from a pleasant hobby to a meticulous science.

George Ellicott (fig. 17), now living in retirement in Vermont, Victoria, still spends two mornings each week, at the age of eighty, in the anthropological section of the Victoria State Museum. Here he examines skulls and other remains brought in from archaeological digs or from the coroner's office.

When he first went out to Australia in 1968 he lived in Adelaide and dug with Graeme Pretty, the local archaeological group director. Later, he confined his activities to urgent field-work on skeletons, necessary in studying the ways of aborigines. Much of his early amateur work proved invaluable when in 1974 Dr Prokopek from the Institute of Medical Hygiene, Prague, came to advise the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. This led to a permanent professional conservator being appointed.

But this article is about the Doug Ellicott we knew in the Nene Valley. He has told the world about us in *The Artefact* of the Archaeological Society of Victoria, which devoted their August 1975 issue (no. 38) to his 18-page 'Retrospect'.

Douglas spent his early boyhood near Salisbury, and whilst cycling with his schoolboy friends visited Old Sarum in about 1908. He met Colonel Hawley and Ministry of Works men who were tracing the foundations of the Norman citadel. He later realised that he had been playing on the site of an Iron-Age hillfort and the Roman town of Sorviodunum. This led him to search for flints on the chalk of Salisbury Plain, and soon he visited Stonehenge itself, about which he had avidly read in Aubrey and Stukeley. He explored the Wansdyke, Silbury Hill and Avebury, where he recalls Mr Keiller setting up a Museum. He cycled to the Uffington White Horse, the Cerne Abbas Giant

and other more modern symbols cut in the chalk downs. He was intrigued by the ridgeways, such as Icknield Way and the Pilgrim's Way, dating back to long before Chaucer. He followed in the footsteps of General Pitt-Rivers in Cranborne Chase and pondered on the legends of Camelot.

It was at this time, in the early 1920's, that he became interested in skull formation — and also obtained his first car. This took him to Maiden Castle and Hod Hill. His grandfather lived in Wells Cathedral Green and from there he visited the Mendips, Cheddar and Bath. In the Mendips he studied the palaeolithic relics of the cave-dwellers, and visited Dartmoor, the dolmens and Celtic crosses of Cornwall. He looked deeper into the legends of Glastonbury and visited the sites of the Iron-Age lake-villages there — the first glimpse for him of a peat bog. This he was able to recognise again when a few years later he moved to Whittlesey.

In Whittlesey he soon became immersed in the relics of the Roman occupation of the Nene Valley, and his home was less than 200 metres from the Roman Fen Causeway, leading to Ermine Street near Durobrivae. Opposite his home were the brickyard clay-pits. These revealed belemnites and ammonites, and he was soon accepted by local people as the fossil and bone expert. He joined in the busy activities of the Peterborough Museum Society's Archaeological Field Section and refers in his article to visits by Brian Hartley, with his special knowledge of samian ware, to the young Adrian Challands, who had become the group's coin expert, to 'that talented amateur, the late G. F. Dakin, who looked into the recording', to Eric Standen for general direction, to the lady members for their delicate trowelling and to himself, humbly, as doing the only job left — studying and identifying animal and human bones. He learnt to recognise the sites where E. T. Artis had already dug and pays tribute to the good trench discipline expected by Fred Dakin.

His brief and accurate summing up of the Roman occupation reads: 'As the Nene Valley had been inhabited by the Coritani, a tribe which it seems offered no great resistance to Roman colonisation, and to the east by the Icenii, who, after their suppression following the Boudiccan revolt, appeared to live in amity with the colonisers, the district settled down to a long period of farming and pottery making in peace'.

Douglas Ellicott left for Australia at an exciting time, with the prospect of large-scale excavation becoming necessary in face of plans for the Greater Peterborough townships. He realised reluctantly that the role of the amateur needed to give way to the professional, and he has been interested in my keeping him abreast of the Nene Valley Research Committee's activities. We remember his short, scholarly, figure, his ever-willing help in identifying bone finds and wish him well in his continuing efforts Down Under.



Fig 17 Douglas Ellicott (shirtless) on the King's Dyke excavation

# The King's Dyke Burials

by Adrian Challands

In March 1961 the Central Brick Company was removing topsoil and gravel at Funtham's Lane, King's Dyke, Whittlesey prior to working the underlying Oxford clay. The Company's foreman, the late Mr Peck, noticed that Roman pottery and human bones were being unearthed. He reported this to Mr Eric Standen who, together with the late Mr G. F. Dakin, directed a rescue excavation with the Peterborough Museum Society's Archaeological Field Section.

It soon became clear that the Section was dealing with an enigmatic group of eight burials which lay in three short rows in a restricted area (fig. 18).

Directly west of the grave-group there was a ditch, 2 metres wide, curving at its northern end north-eastwards to disappear into the excavated clay-pit face. Sections cut through the ditch and its dark brown and lighter brown loam filling revealed a flattened W-profile with a maximum depth of 0.75 metres. The ditch produced quantities of first- and second-century Romano-British pottery and an iron object, possibly a spearhead. At a depth of 0.6 metres a Roman coin came to light, probably bearing the head of the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-116). It was very badly worn — suggesting that it may well have been in circulation towards the end of the second century. Close to the bend in the ditch-line, another ditch 1.4 metres wide formed a junction with the north-south ditch to run off the site in a westerly direction. Whilst time would not permit detailed investigation, it appeared to be contemporary with the north-south ditch.

Two oval pits were located between the northern row of skeletons and the bend in the ditch. Pit 1 measured 2.75 metres on its wider axis and Pit 2 2 metres. Both pits contained first- to second-century pottery. Pit 2 also produced quantities of bone from domestic animals.

Although topsoil had been removed before the archaeological work commenced, the skeletons were still covered with from 30 to 45cm of soil (fig. 19). However, some had been damaged by the weight of the machine skimming the soil from above them; but none had been displaced from their burial place.



skeleton no.	estimated age at death	height	burial position	other comments
1	at least 25	5' 4½" (164cm)	Left arm extended, right arm folded across breast	<i>Entire skull missing. Evidence of decapitation before burial.</i>
2	late 20s or early 30s	6' 8" (203cm)	Arms extended at sides, hands across pelvis	<i>Leg bones unusually long and thick. Cranium missing. Lower jaw lying on right shoulder. Small piece of iron with skeleton</i>
3	35 to 40	5' 5¾" (167cm)	(Not noted)	<i>No signs of bone injury in life</i>
4	30 to 33	5' 4" (163cm)	Face down, arms extended at sides	<i>Legs amputated 7.62cm below knees and buried laterally 10.16cm beyond cut</i>
5	35 to 40	5' 8½" (174cm)	Arms extended at sides	<i>Evidence of heavy blow on left side of face</i>
6	at least 25	5' 5¼" (166cm)	(Not noted)	<i>Skull, upper body and feet missing (perhaps due to earth stripping), small portion of metal amongst ribs and 2.54cm dia. bronze ring near left femur</i>
7	not more than 20	5' 3¼" (161cm)	Arms extended at sides, head buried beside right leg	<i>Both feet missing</i>
8	adult	5' 5¾" (167cm)	Right arm extended left arm across breast	<i>(None)</i>

All the skeletons were north-south orientated, and the upper torsos of all, except skeleton 3, were northernmost. Mr D. F. Ellicott, who for many years studied bones found on archaeological sites, has made the following observations on the skeletons, all of which were of males.

Pottery fragments found among the skeletons suggest that the date of burial was not earlier than the early to mid second century. The orderly arrangement of the burials suggests either a burial ground with grave-markers or that the deceased were all buried within a short space of time. The mutilation of several of them before burial, the common male sex and the close age-range require explanation. By contrast a cemetery at Guilden Morden near Cambridge (used from the second century onwards) contained two burials with heads between their feet (*Journal of Roman Studies* LIX, 1969, 233); but the graves were randomly orientated and were of both sexes and various ages.

Could the King's Dyke men have been casualties of battle or capital punishment? What battle could have caused such casualties? The dating of the interments rules out the Boudiccan uprising — but it would fit nicely with native opposition to Roman engineers draining the Fens! That may well explain the Roman *gladius* found close by (*Journal of Roman Studies* LVI, 1966, pl. IX, 5). A more recent parallel during the seventeenth century was local opposition to Dutch drainage engineers.

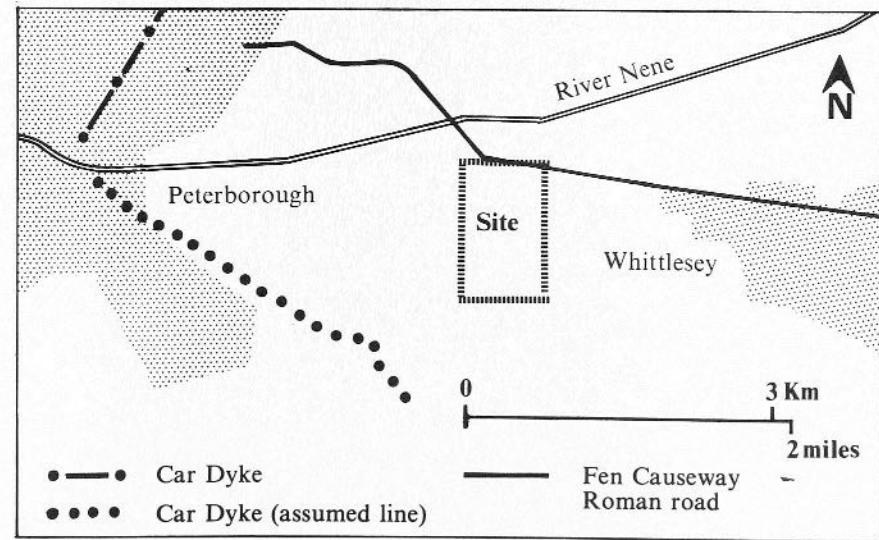


Fig 18a General location plan

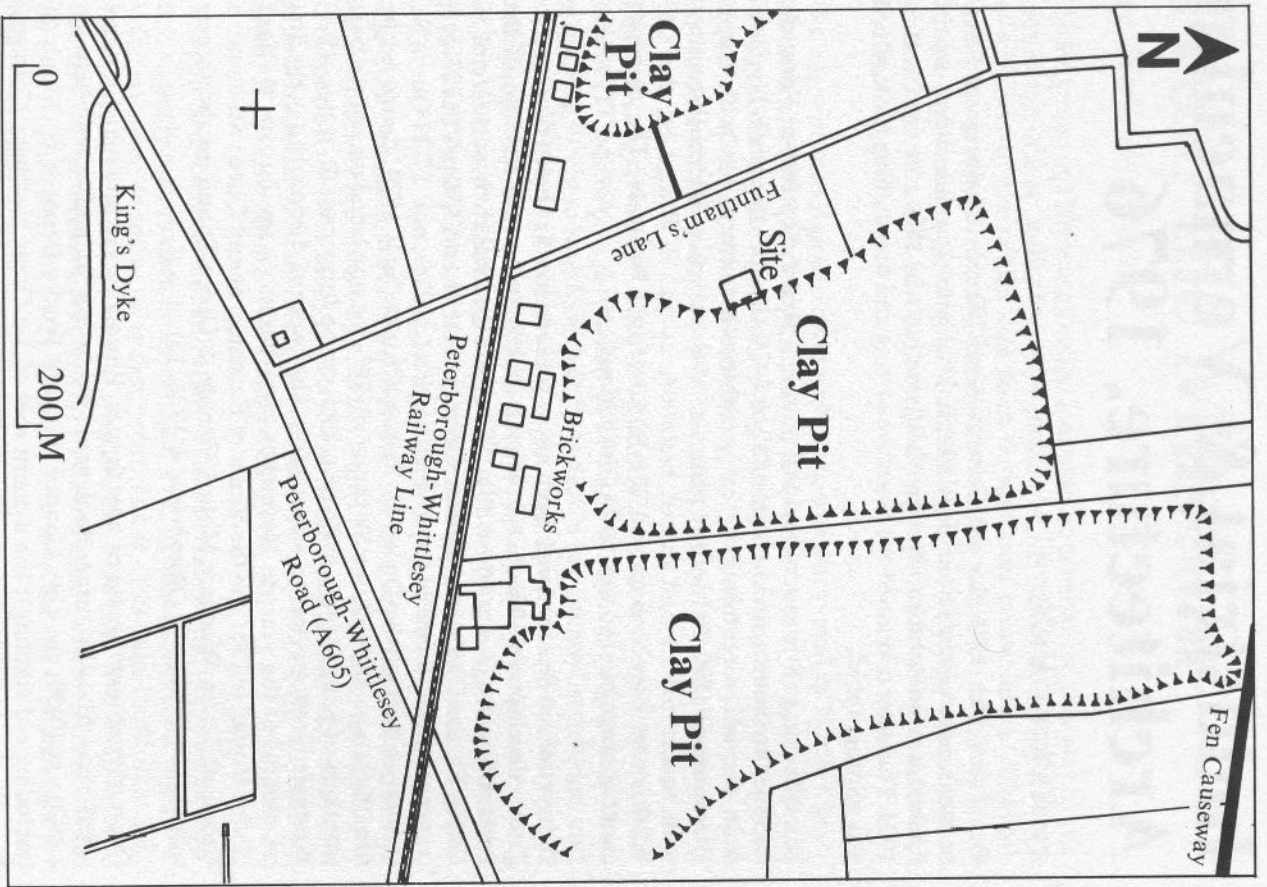


Fig 18b Detailed location plan

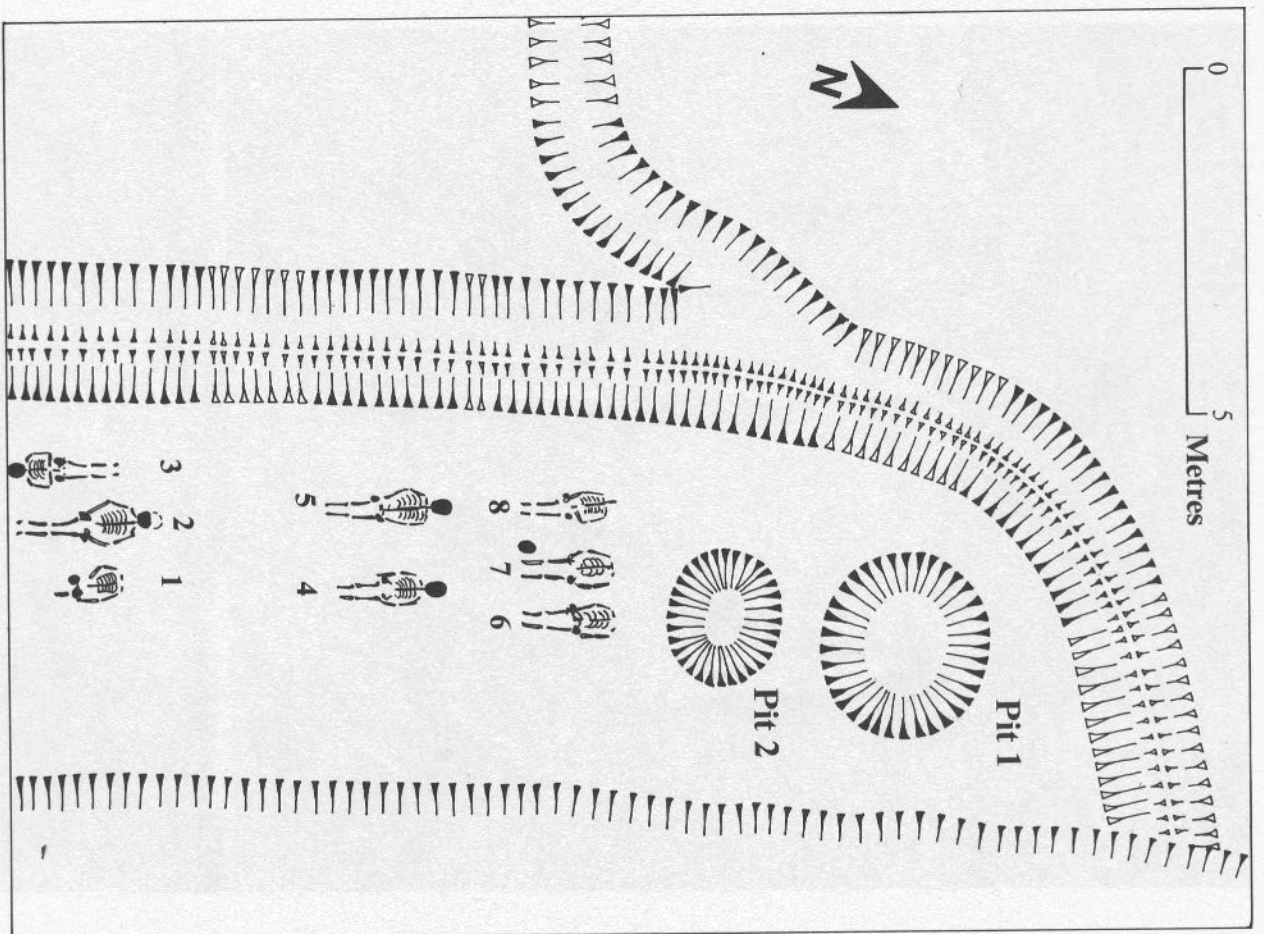


Fig 18c Site plan of the King's Dyke burials



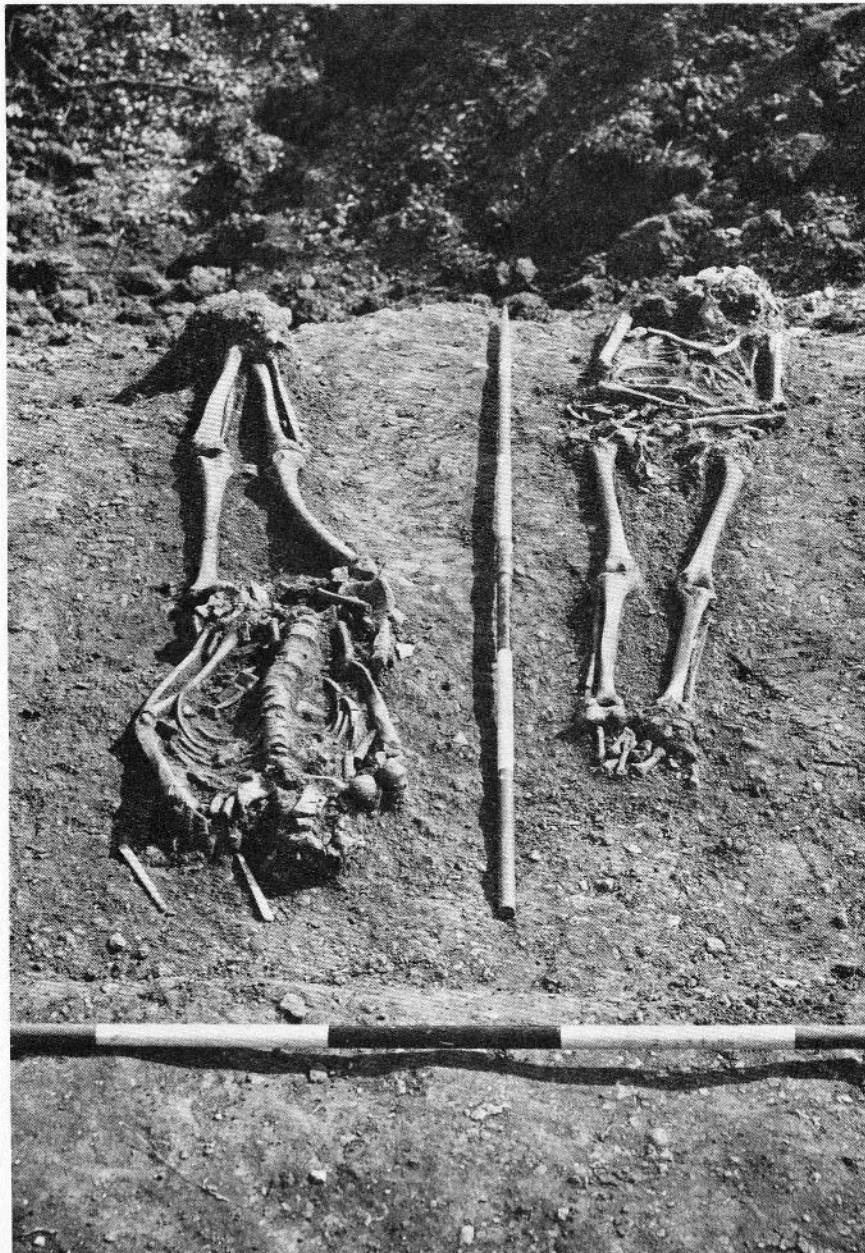


Fig 19 Two of the King's Dyke burials

# Industrial & Vernacular Architecture, 1976

by Richard Hillier

On March 27th 1976 the old General Post Office in Cumbergate, Peterborough, was closed. Four days later a brief photographic survey of the interior was undertaken. The east half was built in 1874, the west half in 1904. The latter contained the extensive sorting and despatching room which was photographed.

No. 8 Exchange St was surveyed and photographed in September. Formerly occupied by Snowdens Ltd from 1880 to 1974, this building probably dates from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, but with major alterations of 1890. Part of the main staircase was early eighteenth-century, with square newels and turned balusters, as no. 78 Bridge St, the Old Workhouse, Cumbergate, and the Royal Hotel, Westgate. The cast-iron cooking range of 1890 was by 'Amies & Sons'.

Demolitions in Peterborough have nearly all been for the Queen St (Queensgate) redevelopment. These include: the engineering works formerly of the Perkins Engines Group (started in 1854 as the Queen St Ironworks); no. 36 Queen St, the City's first Roman Catholic School and Chapel (c.1856); a transport depot, formerly the covered market (c.1925); nos. 27-29 Queen St, formerly a part of the Queen St Baptist Chapel (built 1870, destroyed by fire 1905); nos. 31-41 Queen St, shops of 1907; the north and part of the west frontages of King St (all c.1890-1900, including a former smithy); nos. 45-49 Westgate, Trollope's former store (1884). They were all demolished in the first six months of the year. In November work began on the former 'Bedford Coffee House' (c.1881) on the corner of Exchange St and Queen St, on no. 8 Exchange St, on Westgate Motors Garage in Queen St and on the former maltings in Deacon St (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 18).

Other demolitions included the former Boroughbury Methodist Chapel (1865); nos. 61-191 Bourges Boulevard (Westwood St), houses built between c.1870 and 1900; the City Council's former Works Depot in St John's St (including old stabling); the western row of the Great Northern Cottages, New England (c.1855-65); the Great North Station (1850).

# From the Museum

by Miranda Green

The Peterborough Museum's collections have been enhanced this year by the acquisition of four prehistoric implements. All were chance finds picked up by members of the public, and three possess local provenances, although none has an exactly-recorded find-spot. The new accessions comprise three Bronze-Age items — a narrow-butted flat axe, a haft-flanged axe, and a socketed axe — and a late Neolithic/Early Bronze-Age polished discoidal flint knife (fig. 20).

The Early Bronze-Age narrow-butt flat axe was discovered in North Kyme, Lincolnshire (TF 152528). It measures 142mm in overall length. The axe belongs to Group B in flat-axe typology, and was perhaps made as early as 2000 B.C. (Case (1966), 142-152; Burgess (1974), 191), possibly part of a Beaker assemblage, although definitely of British or Irish manufacture.

The haft-flanged axe was discovered during construction work between the Ortons (TL 163969), in the bucket of a JCB. It is a small, parallel-sided axe, measuring 91mm in length, with deep flanges, a pronounced stop-ridge, and an expanded blade. The haft-flanged axe-type (similar to the palstave, but with flanges limited to the hafted portion) is concentrated in the eastern half of England, with centres in Yorkshire and the Cambridge-Norfolk Fens (Smith (1959), 173). The date of manufacture was probably around 1200 B.C.

The Late Bronze-Age socketed axe, and the discoidal flint knife are both surface finds from Farcet Fen (TL 203943). The axe is 110mm in length and is decorated on both main surfaces with three longitudinal ribs ending in raised knobs or pellets — a characteristic of axes belonging to the final phase of the Late Bronze Age (Langmaid (1976), 56).

The polished discoidal flint knife (fig. 20) is the cream of the year's accessions. It is virtually undamaged, finely worked, with a polished, bevelled edge. The knife measures 88mm at its widest point, and is of brown, translucent flint with a blue-grey patina. Its date is around 2000-1700 B.C. The knife belongs to Clark's Type I (Clark (1929), 41); its distribution-pattern, which focuses on East Anglia (*ibid.*, 48, 51-2), probably relates to the use of mined flint for this type of artifact.

On behalf of Peterborough Museum, I should like to thank the donors of these important finds: Messrs A. Bell, M. Munns, P. Spademan and P. J. Hand.

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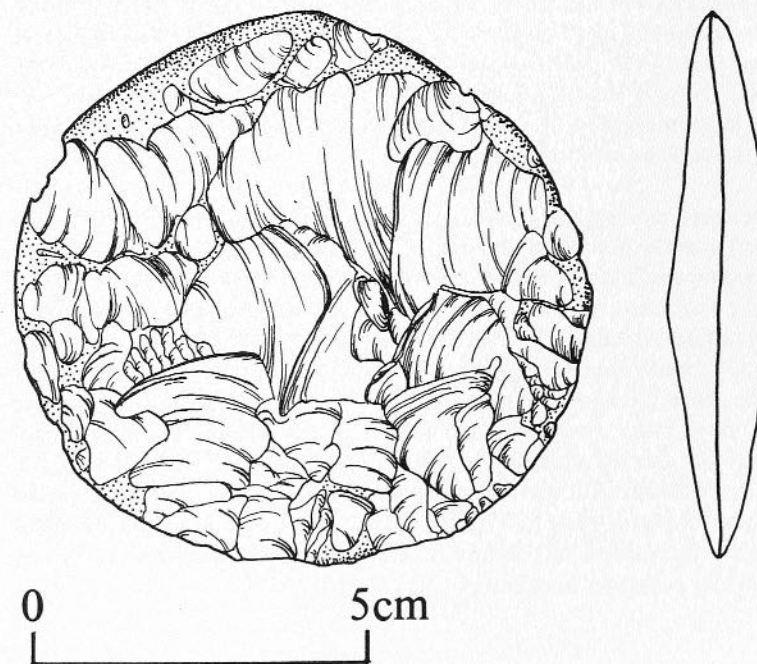


Fig 20 The discoidal polished flint knife from Farcet Fen



# Burgh Park

by Richard Hillier

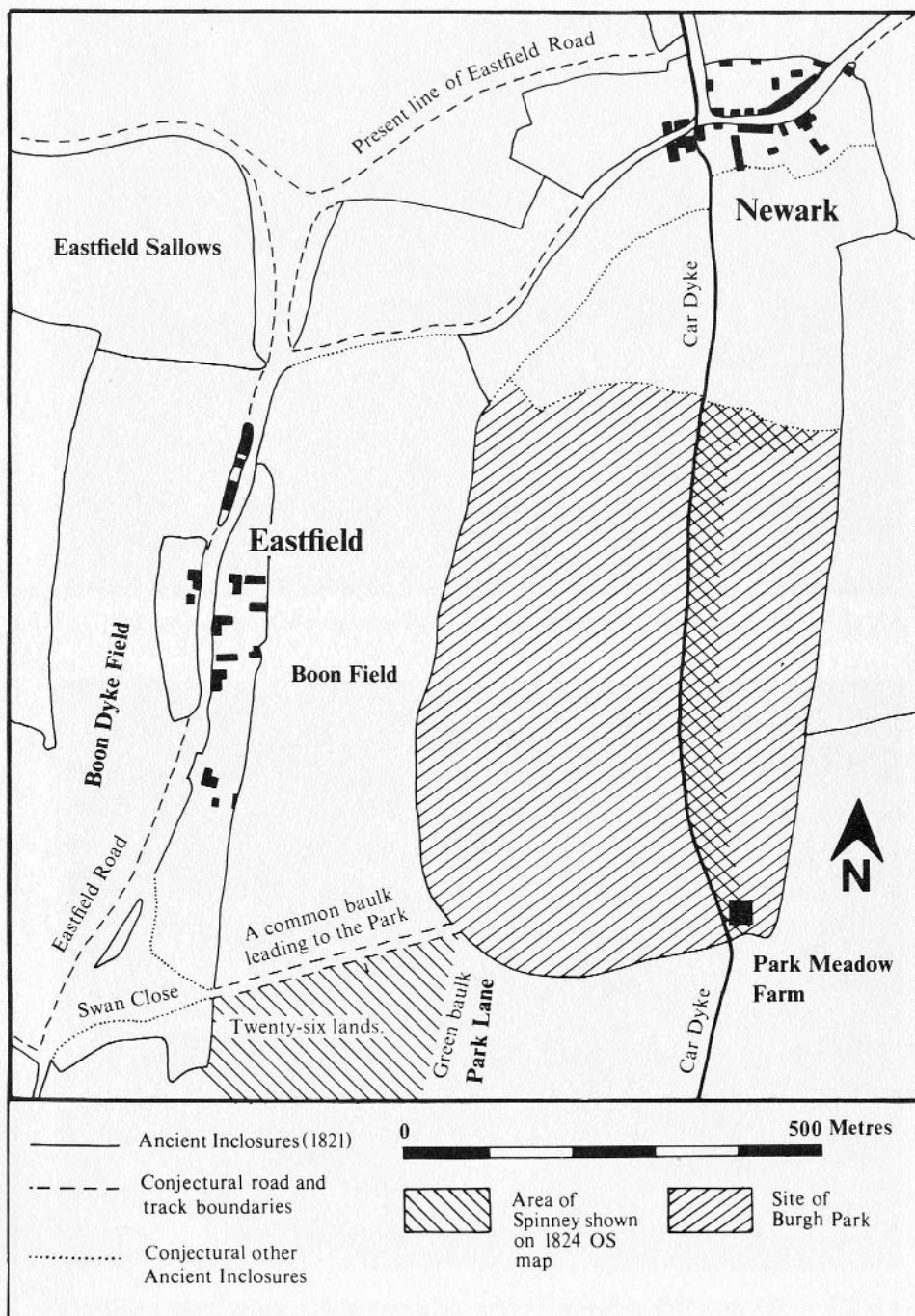
In most of the Northants Record Society publications edited by Mr W. T. Mellows there is to be found at least one reference to 'Burgh Park'. Indirect references to the Park occur in archives of 1200-1210 in connection with the 'Chapel of the Blessed Mary of the Park', which stood south of Newark. The 'Park Gate' is referred to c.1214-22 and again in 1461-2. In 1215 the 'Parcwode' is mentioned, and in 1539 it was estimated to contain 26 acres. It was granted in 1541 to the Dean and Chapter ('and all those our woods and underwoods . . . commonly called Burgh Park, Grimshaw and Dame Agnes Wood . . .') (Mellows (1941), 36)). The Bishop was granted the 'Park Launde' of 8 acres.

Mellows noted the position of the Park as part of the Park Meadow Estate north of Padholme Road, Peterborough. The 1888 Ordnance Survey Map (*Northants VIII*, 8;12) illustrates its shape and position quite clearly, together with an access road, Park Lane (fig. 21). The Inclosure Map of Peterborough (1821) shows a similar picture. Here the park boundary is marked as one of the 'Ancient Inclosures'. On the acreage given in 1888, the Park must have been around 73 acres. In the 1811 Inclosure Claims the Park was said to be two closes containing (on two surveys) either 41 or 50 acres. The latter accords with the area west of Car Dyke.

As we have seen, during the nineteenth century the road to the Park was aligned north-south. However, in 1649, the Swanspool/Lincoln Place Farm included 'twenty-six lands besides the headland lying in Boonfield . . . a Green Baulk on the East, Swan Close West, a common baulk leading to the Park North, a Headland South . . .' (*Parliamentary Survey* (1649), 368). Between 1649 and 1821, therefore, the road had moved through 90°. This was almost certainly the work of the Inclosure Commissioners; but they did not create an entirely new road; for Park Lane in 1821 is shown as an 'ancient boundary'. They merely utilised the 'Green Baulk on the East'. Assuming that the actual entrance (or gate) to the Park had not been altered, the road implied in the 1649 account must have led roughly west towards Eastfield Road. A close inspection of the line of the 'ancient boundaries' shown in 1821 indicates a possible junction (fig. 21).

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- |                                       |   |
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| Inclosure Claims                      | <i>Claims on Peterborough Inclosure</i> , 1811, 108.  |
| <i>Parliamentary Survey</i><br>(1649) | <i>Parliamentary Survey, 1649</i> , Northants Record Office ML892.  |



## Northamptonshire Archaeological Society

The Northamptonshire Archaeological Society was formed in 1974 in succession to the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies. Its aim is to promote the study of archaeology in all its branches in Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough and to ensure proper publication and dissemination of archaeological work.

The Society publishes an annual journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, which contains reports on archaeological work carried out in the area, together with a summary of recent finds and fieldwork. This is distributed free to members.

Enquiries about membership should be directed to the Secretary of the Society, Mrs F. Williams, 41 Stannard Way, Brixworth, Northampton.

Fig 21 The site of Burgh Park (1888)



# The Archaeological Field Centre— Ham Lane House

*by Adrian Challands*

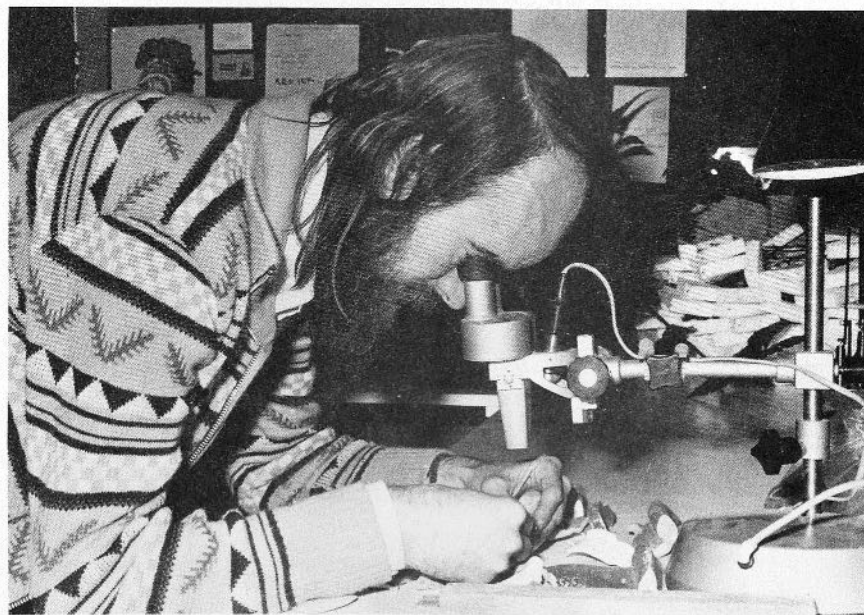
An Edwardian farm house, situated in a rural setting near what will ultimately be the Ferry Meadows Water Recreational Area, has been converted and extended (fig. 22) by the Nene Valley Research Committee, with the financial backing and practical architectural supervision and design of the buildings by the owners — the Peterborough Development Corporation, to form the first purpose-built archaeological field centre in the country.

The converted house now contains three splendid offices to accommodate the Director of Excavations, Assistant Director and a Secretary/Archive. In addition, a single room is fitted out for the storage of archives such as site records, books and stationery. The staff comfort is catered for in the house by the provision of a small kitchenette and staff room. A one-person flat comprises most of the first floor of the house section.

As the main aim of the Nene Valley Research Committee is to publish the results of its archaeological excavations, adequate space is required to carry out the task. To this end an extension, joined to the existing house by a passageway, was added. It is designed to provide an area where artifacts from excavations may be studied (fig. 23), compared, initially conserved and drawn. The open-plan arrangement of the new building is ideal for sorting and classifying pottery on long benches (fig. 24). One section houses three drawing boards, of which one is two metres long! A small, well equipped area copes with items requiring urgent conservation (fig. 25) such as small bronze items, leather, iron and wood. Another section is equipped with a re-inforced polythene tank, over three metres long, used for storage below water of large timbers recovered from waterlogged sites. Small finds are stored in a separate room which is monitored for variations in temperature and humidity. The photographic dark-room, again separate from the main area, is not yet equipped. The Nene Valley Research Committee's archaeological unit finally moved into the Field Centre from temporary accommodation in a bungalow at Fengate in April, 1976. A total of seven full-time staff now work at the Centre, supplemented at intervals by site staff.



*Fig 22 Archaeological Field Centre with new extension to the left*



*Fig 23 Pottery fabric being examined under a binocular microscope*



Fig 24 Sorting and classifying pottery in the Finds Processing Area

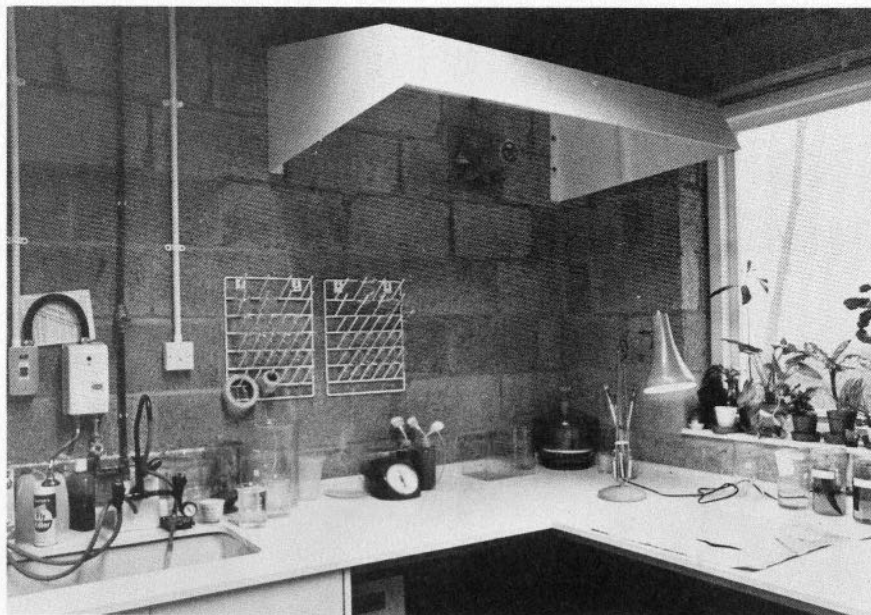


Fig 25 Conservation Bay

## Publications

The Nene Valley Research Committee has published the following works:

J. P. Wild, *The Romans in the Nene Valley* (1972)  
Price 20p (overseas price \$0.50 U.S.)

F. M. M. Pryor, *Prehistoric Man in the Nene Valley* (1973)  
Price 20p (overseas price \$0.50 U.S.)

F. M. M. Pryor, *Earthmoving on Open Archaeological Sites, Nene Valley Archaeological Handbook 1*, 1974  
Price 45p (overseas \$1.00)

*Durobrivae 2*, 1974 Price 75p (overseas price \$1.50)

*Durobrivae 3*, 1975 Price 90p (overseas price \$1.70)

*Durobrivae 4*, 1976 Price £1.10 (overseas price \$2.00)

F. M. M. Pryor, *Excavations at Fengate, Peterborough, England: The First Report, ROM Archaeology Monograph 3*, 1974. Price £1.50 (overseas price \$3.50)

(Prices above include postage and packing.)

These publications, together with this Review for 1977, are available post-free from Mrs C. Mackreth, 32 Hall Lane, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 6RA.