

Durobrivae

A Review of Nene Valley
Archaeology: 6
1978

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of the Rules I am equally
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Yours truly

E. J. Atter

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Durobrivae

A Review of Nene Valley
Archaeology: 6
1978

Durobrivae: a review of Nene Valley Archaeology

Editor's Note

The first number of the house-journal *South Lincolnshire Archaeology*, published in 1977, bears an uncanny resemblance to *Durobrivae*. The Editor is delighted to note that the trend set by the Nene Valley Research Committee and the style established by Mr Colin Ashfield of the Peterborough Development Corporation Design Group is being followed now by others. When full publication of archaeological research takes so long, there is much to be said for speedy publication of brief accounts, with illustration.

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The cover shows Edmund Artis supervising the excavation of a Roman pottery kiln (p. 6) and the title page carries an extract from one of his letters, dated 1844.

Acknowledgements

The Nene Valley Research Committee wishes to put on record again its debt to the Peterborough Development Corporation Design Group for practical help with the design and layout of this Review. Credit should also be given to: Mr R. Boyle for fig 1; Mr E. Rickets, Mr D. Rayner and Mr A. Smith for fig 4; Mr R. O. Powell for fig 5; Mr M. Howe for the original drawing of fig 7; Miss L. Purchas for the original of fig 8 and fig 13; Mr R. Boyle for figs 18, 19.

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The Year's Work: 1977

by John Peter Wild

The year 1978 marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the publication by Mr Edmund Tyrell Artis of *The Durobrivae of Antoninus Identified and Illustrated* (London, 1828). This impressive volume of plates was to have been followed by a volume of text; but the author's death in 1847 intervened. Nevertheless, Artis' published drawings focussed the attention of the antiquarian world on the richness of Nene Valley archaeology. The interest which he aroused has been long-lasting — and today *The Durobrivae* remains an essential archaeological sourcebook. In this number of our Review (p. 6) Mr Steven Tomlinson considers the relations between Edmund Artis and his famous contemporary, John Clare.

In recent years the Roman town of Durobrivae has suffered both from the attentions of treasure-hunters and from erosion through ploughing (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 36). In 1977 it was announced that the Interim Preservation Order placed upon the site in 1975 by the Secretary of State for the Environment had been converted (with the approval of the landowner) into a full Preservation Order. The protection which Durobrivae now enjoys will be warmly welcomed. Ironically, the provisions of the Order may mean that the site may ultimately not promote the striking cropmarks which Messrs Mackreth and Challands have plotted recently. That landscape will nonetheless be safe.

Miss Sarah Jennings, the Committee's first Finds Research Assistant, has left the Field Centre to take up a new appointment in Norwich. The Field Centre, and particularly the conservation bay, were shaped under her care; she will be missed. Mr Robert Perrin, an expert on Roman pottery, formerly with the York Archaeological Trust, succeeded Miss Jennings in November 1977.

The problem of how final reports on emergency excavations can best be prepared and published remains an urgent topic of national debate. The problem has been compounded by a general failure to appreciate until now the sheer magnitude of the academic task ahead of most excavators and their units. It came as something of a relief therefore to find that 1977 was a relatively quiet year for emergency excavations in the Nene Valley. The backlog of unpublished excavations

is considerable, but a good start has now been made at the Field Centre on reducing it. The Fengate team were able to remain in the Nene Valley during the Winter 1977-78 and work towards the final report on their site.

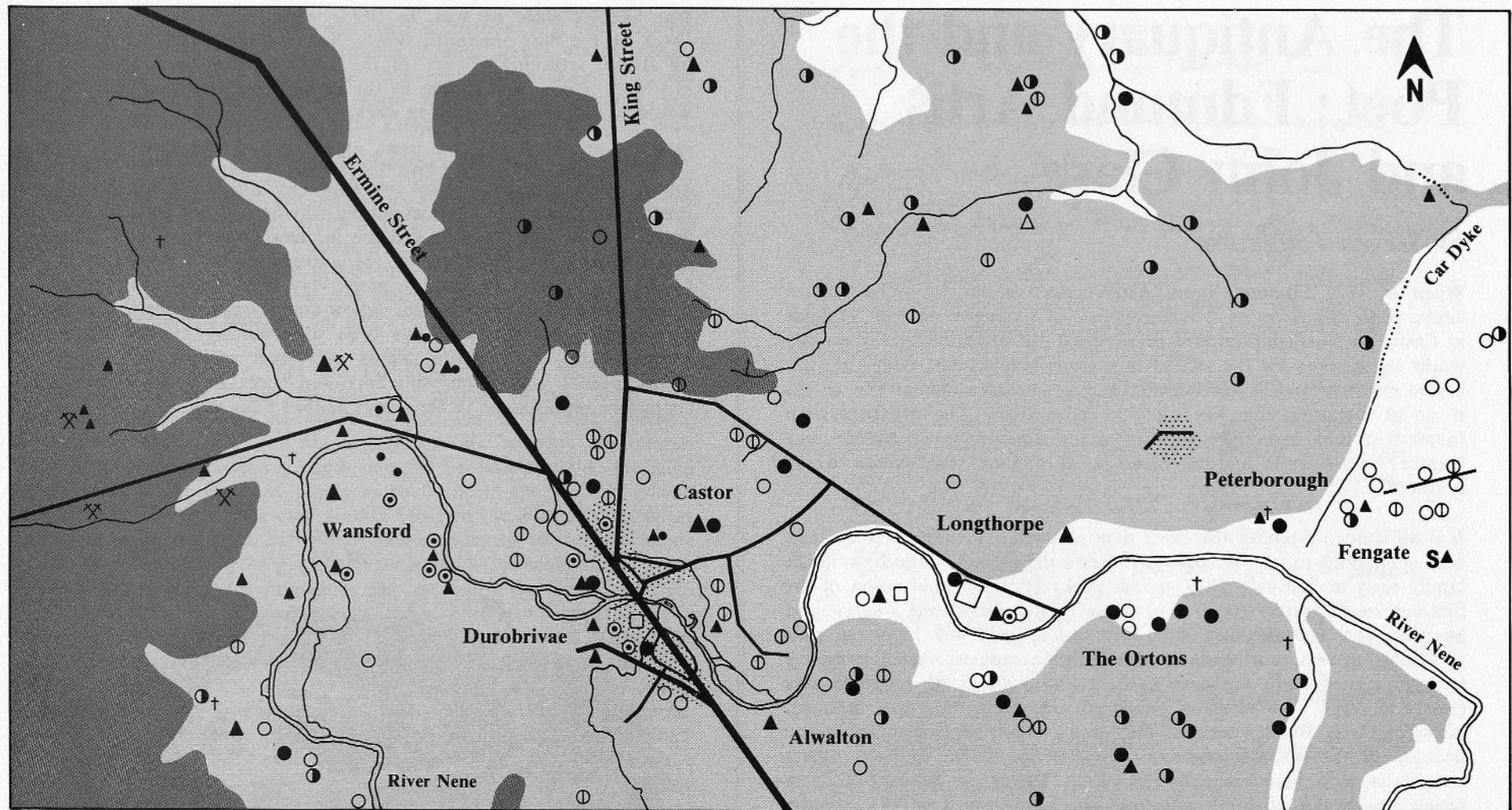
The long-term excavations continued in 1977 as before. The Iron-Age village at *Fengate* (*Durobrivae* 5, 1977, 16f.) is now known to have comprised at least 45 structures, including 18 round houses. The 1977 season was devoted to further work on the Iron-Age settlement and to investigation of early Roman occupation on the spot (p. 10). The Roman ditches contained an interesting group of Roman pottery, on which Dr John Hayes has reported (p. 12).

There have been very few archaeological emergencies in the Nene Valley in which a site has been discovered and simultaneously destroyed. The Manor at *Elton*, however, would have suffered this fate in November 1977, had it not been for prompt action by Mr S. G. Upex, the landowner and the Water Authority (p. 26). In the event the site was recorded and something of its background elucidated.

Exploration of the small Roman town at *Ashton* near Oundle continued in 1977 (*Durobrivae* 5, 1977, 6ff.). Further workshops were revealed south-west of the cross-roads within the town, adjacent to the backyard of Building 1. A large fourth-century pit at the southern end of the site was emptied and yielded a significant group of late Roman pottery and small finds. Along the line of the planned bypass road more building remains were traced.

Observations were made at a number of smaller sites during the year. At *Torpe Manor* (*Durobrivae* 4, 1976, 28f.) excavation before the erection of an electricity pylon revealed to Mr Adrian Challands mortared limestone footings of a substantial rectangular building. Pottery indicates that it was occupied from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. The sections of drainage trenches cut at *Thorney Abbey* were recorded, and at *Castor* the church appears from recent work to overlie part of the Roman *praetorium*. In *Peterborough City* a watching brief was kept on a number of redevelopment sites.

The highly successful archaeological exhibition 'Exhibition 6000', mounted by the Development Corporation in April 1977, is described by Mr Challands (p. 35). Members of the NVRC have also assisted in the preparation of a new Archaeology Gallery in Peterborough Museum, to be opened in May 1978.



- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ○ Prehistoric | ● Single kiln | † Saxon Church |
| ⊕ Prehist-Roman | S Saltern site | ■ Land over 125 feet |
| ◐ I/A-RB settlement | — Roman Road | ■ Land over 25 feet (above sea level) |
| ▲ Roman building | ⊘ Roman settlement | |
| □ Roman Fort | ⚒ Iron working | |
| ⊙ Kiln group (Pottery) | ● Saxon site | |

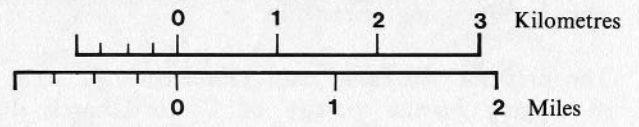


Fig 1 Map of the archaeological sites in the Nene Valley

The Antiquary and the Poet: Edmund Artis and John Clare

by Steven Tomlinson

When in 1821 Edmund Tyrell Artis created a stir in archaeological circles with the news of his discoveries of extensive Roman remains at Castor in Northamptonshire he focussed the attention of the outside world on the area for the second time in as many years. Only the year before a native of nearby Helpston had produced a similar stir in the world of literature; this was the poet John Clare. The two men soon found that they had more than fame in common, however; for they became close friends and remained so throughout the decade which followed.

It is difficult to establish the exact date of their first meeting. Clare had been summoned to Milton House to receive the praises of the Fitzwilliam family early in February 1820, a few weeks after the publication of his first volume of poetry, *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, and he may have become acquainted with Artis, who was house steward at Milton, at that time. Indeed in an autobiographical sketch written a few years later Clare seems to indicate that his official invitation was closely followed by a series of unofficial ones from the upper servants, including Artis. But his account may well contain an element of poetic licence; for the first contemporary reference he makes to Artis occurs in a letter written to his publisher, John Taylor, in January 1822 in which he speaks of him in terms which suggest a recent, though already flourishing, friendship.

The previous November and December had seen Artis' second season of digging in the vicinity of Castor church during which he had unearthed a Roman bath-house and Clare had been invited to view the new find. Clare spent three days 'very pleasantly' with Artis, looking over the excavations, hearing his plans for publishing his discoveries, and consenting to have a cast taken of his face so that Artis could make a plaster bust of him. The plaster cast was taken in mid-February, although Clare was dubious about whether it would turn out to be a

true likeness since he was 'in terror when the plaster was laid on'. Work on the bust proceeded slowly, but on March 11th Artis wrote to his friend, returning a copy of the *London Magazine* containing one of Clare's poems, sent to him by the author, and promising that the bust would be finished the following week.

Artis was busy with his excavations once more in March and April, having moved the scene of his operations to Mill Hill Field. But he still found time to write to Clare enquiring why he had not been to visit him lately, inviting him to come and see his new discoveries, and lamenting that although not forgotten by the antiquaries he is 'rather neglected by the poets'. Another letter in early May finds Artis highly critical of a new volume of poetry by his fellow-countryman, Robert Bloomfield, complaining that the poet has been ill-served by his publishers and describing the work in his highly individual spelling as 'eluminated in the juvenal stile, propt with borrowed trash, in which the principle characters appear to be rather sludge daubed than painted'.

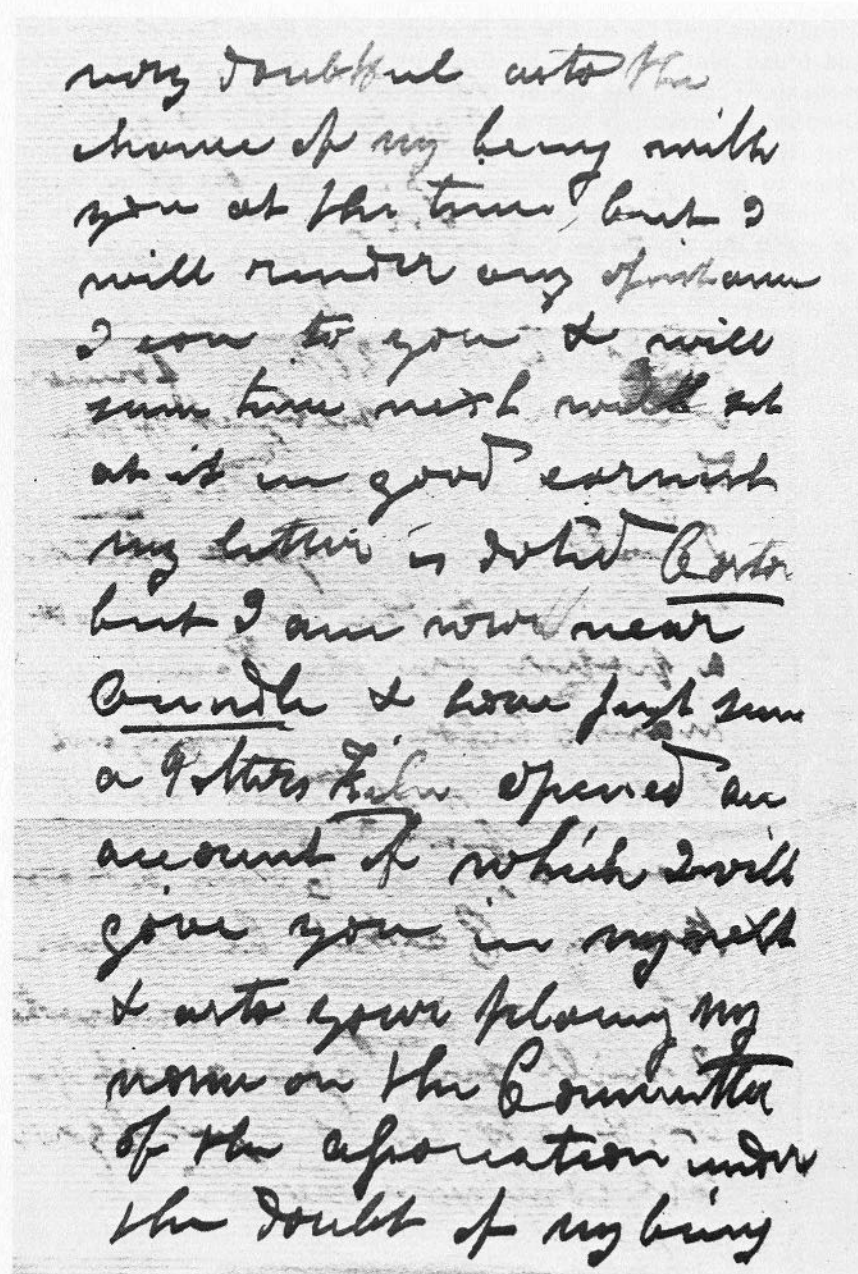


Fig 2 Edmund Artis supervises the excavation of a Roman pottery kiln

Clare and Artis exchanged frequent visits throughout this year and the next, during which time Artis continued digging in the winter months and spent much of the rest of the time preparing a series of plates illustrating his discoveries, while Clare busied himself writing new poems. One of these, published in the *London Magazine* of April 1823, was entitled 'Antiquity' and no doubt owed much to Artis and his work as a source of inspiration. Number 1 of Artis' *Roman Antiquities or the Durobrivae of Antoninus* was issued in June of the same year, but Clare greeted its appearance without much enthusiasm. In a letter to Taylor he exclaims: 'Artis' Castor is out — have you seen it? 'Tis nought but plates...' Clare's displeasure may have been fuelled by the fact that Artis' bust of him had recently fallen to pieces, although Artis had promised to take another cast.

Archaeology and poetry were not the only common bonds between the two. Both were deeply interested in natural history. Artis' first archaeological discoveries had been by accident as he was searching for fossils and this had been his earliest scientific activity. His interest went beyond mere collecting, however; for he had made a speciality of the study of the fossilised plants to be found in the West Yorkshire coal seams. His researches over several years in the Elsecar coal mines belonging to his employer Earl Fitzwilliam culminated in the publication of his *Antediluvian Phytology*, a pioneer work in palaeobotany. Clare's interests lay more in his immediate surroundings. He had a countryman's natural feeling for birds and plants and this found expression in his letters and poems. So much so that early in 1824 James Hessey, the other partner in the firm which published his work, persuaded Clare to embark on a series of natural history essays in the form of letters to him with a view to their eventual publication. This aim was never realised, but a number of letters were written in 1824 and 1825 in which Clare describes the flora and fauna of his neighbourhood. Here too Artis played his part; there are frequent references to specimens Clare saw in Artis' collection of stuffed birds, and he often quotes remarks his friend had made on the habits of particular species.

In May 1824 Clare had gone on an extended visit to London, towards the end of which he fell ill. He remained in a poor state of health throughout the summer and about this time became preoccupied with his will. One drawn up earlier in the year now dissatisfied him and he determined to draft a new one. He sent Artis a copy of the new will asking for his comments and in his journal for October 1st notes that Artis is to be one of his executors. Artis, however, seems to have been away with the Fitzwilliam family at Wentworth, their Yorkshire home, for the whole of the summer and autumn and Clare did not see his



very doubtful as to the
chance of my being with
you at the time, but I
will render any assistance
I can to you & will
soon have much work to do
as it is in good earnest
my letter is about Castor
but I am now near
Beard & have just seen
a Potter's Table opened an
account of which I will
give you in my next
& as to your placing my
name on the Committee
of the Association under
the doubt of my being

Fig 3 Extract from a letter of Edmund Artis to C. Roach Smith, dated August 2nd 1844

friend again until the middle of December when he paid a visit to Milton and found him 'busy over his fossil plants & Roman antiquities'. They exchanged complaints about their respective publishers. Part IV of *Durobrivae* eventually appeared in February 1825, 18 months after Part III, and no more were issued until 1827. Clare for his part was vainly trying to get Taylor and Hessey to do something with the manuscript of what became *The Shepherd's Calendar*, but despite Artis' efforts on his behalf this too did not come out until 1827.

In the spring of 1825 the two men made several expeditions to Harrison's Close near Oxey Wood in Helpston, where Clare had found several sherds of Roman pottery of which '1 piece was the lettered'. Clare was convinced that some Roman camp or pottery was situated there and events show that Artis took the idea seriously. The *Stamford Mercury* of December 28th 1827 records the discovery by Edmund Tyrell Artis 'of a Roman villa in the neighbourhood of Helpston ... on a spot where even an antiquarian would not have anticipated anything of the kind'. The exact location, as we find from the plate published in *Durobrivae*, adjoined Oxey Wood.

Artis does not seem to have done much serious excavation in 1825 and the first half of 1826 when both men were preoccupied with their various publications. The two still visited each other, however, and continued to meet even after Artis' departure from Milton in August 1826 in slightly mysterious circumstances. Nothing explicit is known, but there is talk in letters of 'misdeeds' and a local tradition maintains that Artis got a local girl pregnant. Whether or not this is true, he does not seem to have left the area altogether; for he spent the winter of 1826-7 digging at Water Newton, possibly with Clare's assistance.

But after this excavation Artis embarked on a new career which did lead to his spending less time at Castor. As a youth he had found employment in a leading London confectioner's establishment and it was here that his skills attracted the attention of Earl Fitzwilliam and led to his departure for Milton. Now Artis became able to employ this particular talent on a grander scale; for in March 1827 we find him the new owner of premises in Hall-gate, Doncaster, the home of the Doncaster Racing Club. From this time on each Autumn Artis was in Doncaster acting as host to the gentlemen up for the St Leger meeting, where at the Club-rooms they might obtain accommodation and 'dinner, turtle, desserts, ices and wines'.

Artis did not neglect his old haunts entirely though. Although in November 1827 Clare complains that he has not seen his friend since

the previous winter, the following month finds Artis excavating the villa at Helpston Clare had helped to pinpoint. This was, however, his last full season of digging for a while and in May 1828 came the publication of *Durobrivae* in a complete edition incorporating his latest discoveries. Despite seeing each other only infrequently at this time Artis and Clare still kept in touch and in a long letter written about May 1829 Artis tells of the sale of his fossil collection forced on him by the need to give up his London premises, and announces that he intends to reside permanently in Castor, which he hopes will allow them to have a day's fishing together occasionally. In London that July Artis saw the bronze bust of Clare made by the sculptor Henry Behnes, but seems to have been unimpressed by it, perhaps comparing it unfavourably with his own efforts in plaster of a few years before.

By August 1830 Artis had settled in Castor, but it seems clear that his friendship with Clare was not so deep as before. For the next two or three years it is Henderson, the gardener at Milton, who is close to Clare and it is he who helps him to move to his new home in Northborough in 1832. A letter from Clare to Artis in May of this year is the only evidence of any contact between the two after 1829. Clare tells him of his plan to publish a new volume of poetry by subscription, but a list of subscribers published in the following October contains no mention of Artis.

For several years before this Clare had been prone to illness and depression and after 1830 he became worse. His mental state deteriorated and he began to lose touch with reality, a process which ended in his confinement in a private lunatic asylum in 1837 and later in Northampton Asylum where he remained until his death. Artis was essentially a practical man and it is possible that their friendship cooled as the one became more and more a man of the world, the other less and less in contact with it. But whatever the reason for its end their friendship, while it lasted, provides a fascinating link between two men of very different callings, the antiquary and the poet.

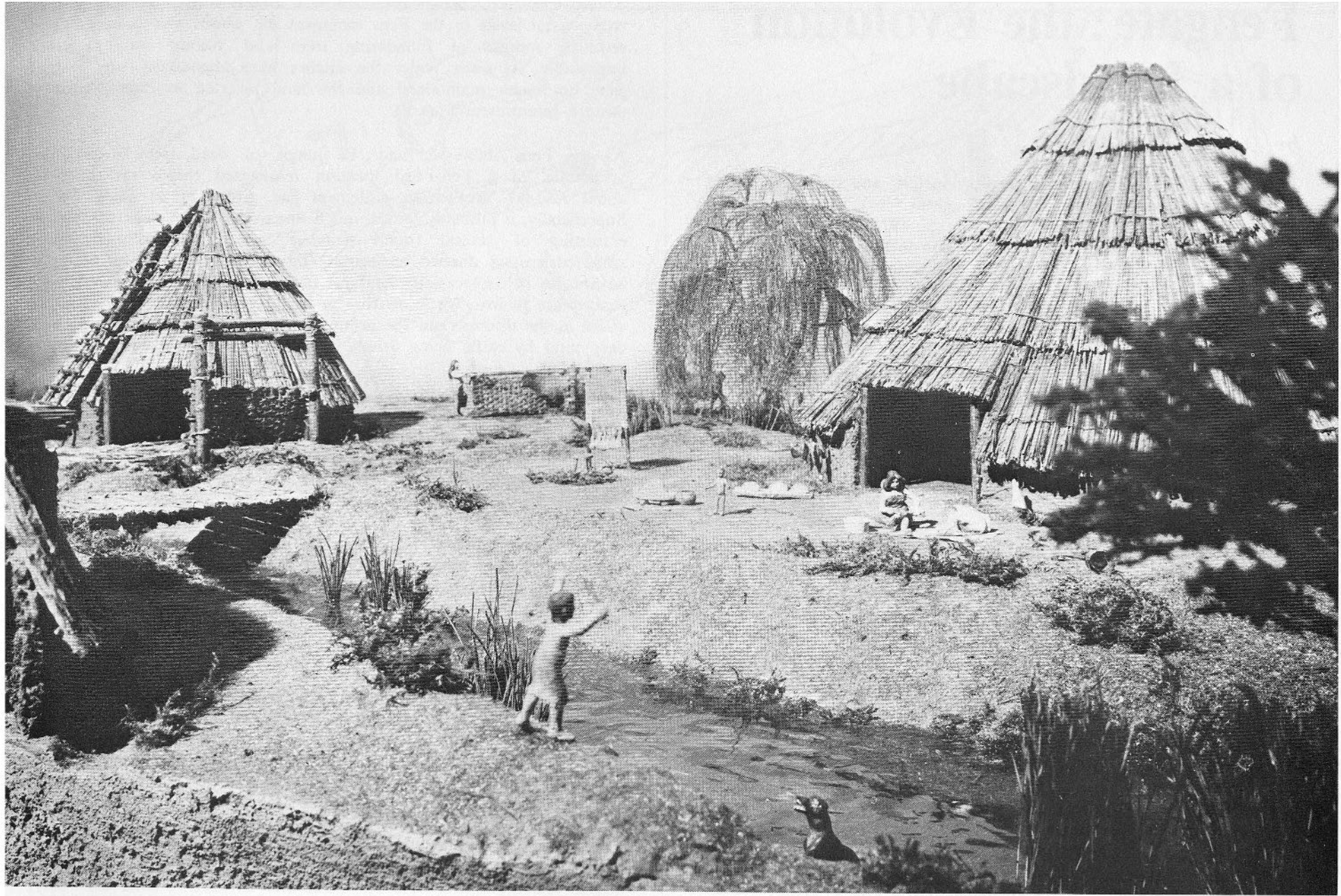


Fig 4 Model of part of the Cat's Water settlement as it might have appeared about 100 B.C.

Fengate: the Evolution of a Landscape

by David Cranstone

The 1977 season at Fengate was very productive, and for once we had few problems from downpours and droughts. Work was concentrated on the Cat's Water sub-site (*Durobrivae* 5, 1977,17), examining the Iron-Age settlement and a group of Romano-British enclosures (fig 5). We also started the mammoth task of converting the various records kept during the dig into a coherent report. As a result we are beginning to see how the landscape of Fengate developed from 4000 B.C. onwards, as seen from what is now the Cat's Water sub-site.

From shortly after the end of the last Ice-Age until after 4000 B.C. the whole area was covered by forest, probably composed largely of oaks up to 21 metres tall. The Nene probably flowed some 300 metres east of the site, and was fringed with alder woods and marshes. As sea levels slowly rose, the marshes spread, until by 3000 B.C. all the lower ground east of Fengate was covered by reed-swamp, sedge-fen and alder carr.

By about 3000 B.C. the first clearings had appeared in the forest, as farmers moved in. The first known house at Fengate (*Durobrivae* 1, 1973, 18ff.) stood to the west of Cat's Water, and four people, perhaps from this house, were buried in a pit on the site. Rather later, around 2000 B.C., a settlement and field-system were laid out to the south-west of the site. Throughout this period, the forest was probably gradually destroyed both by deliberate felling and by the browsing of livestock, which killed saplings and prevented regeneration.

The forest must have been totally destroyed by about 2000 B.C.; for shortly afterwards the whole of Fengate was divided into rectangular fields, with droeways leading to the Fen pastures. The straight ditches that divided the fields could not have been set out or dug through forest or through the stumps left by recent clearance. Cat's Water formed part of this field-system and for much of the second millenium B.C. it probably looked much as it did before our excavations started — flat pasture, divided by hedges and ditches into a grid of fields.

About 1000 B.C. the field-system was abandoned, probably because rising water-levels in the Fens swamped the woods and pastures. The resulting morass of foundering trees and swamp was probably impassable. At Cat's Water the ditches were abandoned, any hedges were no longer maintained and the land reverted to damp, scrubby pasture, intermittently grazed.

As the Fens stabilised, and the jungle of dead trees rotted, the attractions of a Fen-Edge location re-asserted themselves, and by about 300 B.C. a thriving settlement had grown up at Cat's Water. Superficially, it probably looked much like a modern African compound consisting of several round wooden houses, probably thatched, scattered around ditched enclosures (fig 4). But despite the practical advantages of its location, the farm or hamlet must have been a very nasty place to live. We know that in its later stages there was standing water in the ditches, and the ground was probably often churned into deep mud by cattle being driven in and out of the enclosures.

Possibly this was why the site was eventually abandoned. But study of the finds suggests another reason: the abandonment seems to have occurred very close to the Roman conquest of the area. There is no sign of violent destruction, but the inhabitants may have fled, or been deported. Alternatively, they may have left as a result of the general economic dislocation accompanying the conquest.

After nearly a hundred years, the site was re-occupied. By this time, it probably looked much like a deserted mediaeval village does today — an area of grassed-over hollows, probably with rushes growing in the bottom, and scrub spreading from the derelict hedges.

The site probably became usable again because Roman drainage had lowered the water-level and diverted floodwaters; but there is no sign that it was actually inhabited. We have found no buildings and very little pottery. It was probably used as stockyards, perhaps attached to a large settlement some 500 metres to the west (destroyed by gravel-working in the 1930's). The main concentration of pottery in the ditches (p. 12, fig 5, A) is associated with a distinctive organic filling and probably represents slippage from a large manure heap!

After no more than 50 years the site was again abandoned, this time permanently, as massive flooding developed. The upper filling of the ditches and the topsoil over the whole area consists of solid dark clay, almost certainly deposited by prolonged freshwater inundation. Until the post-mediaeval draining of the Fens, the site remained uninhabitable.

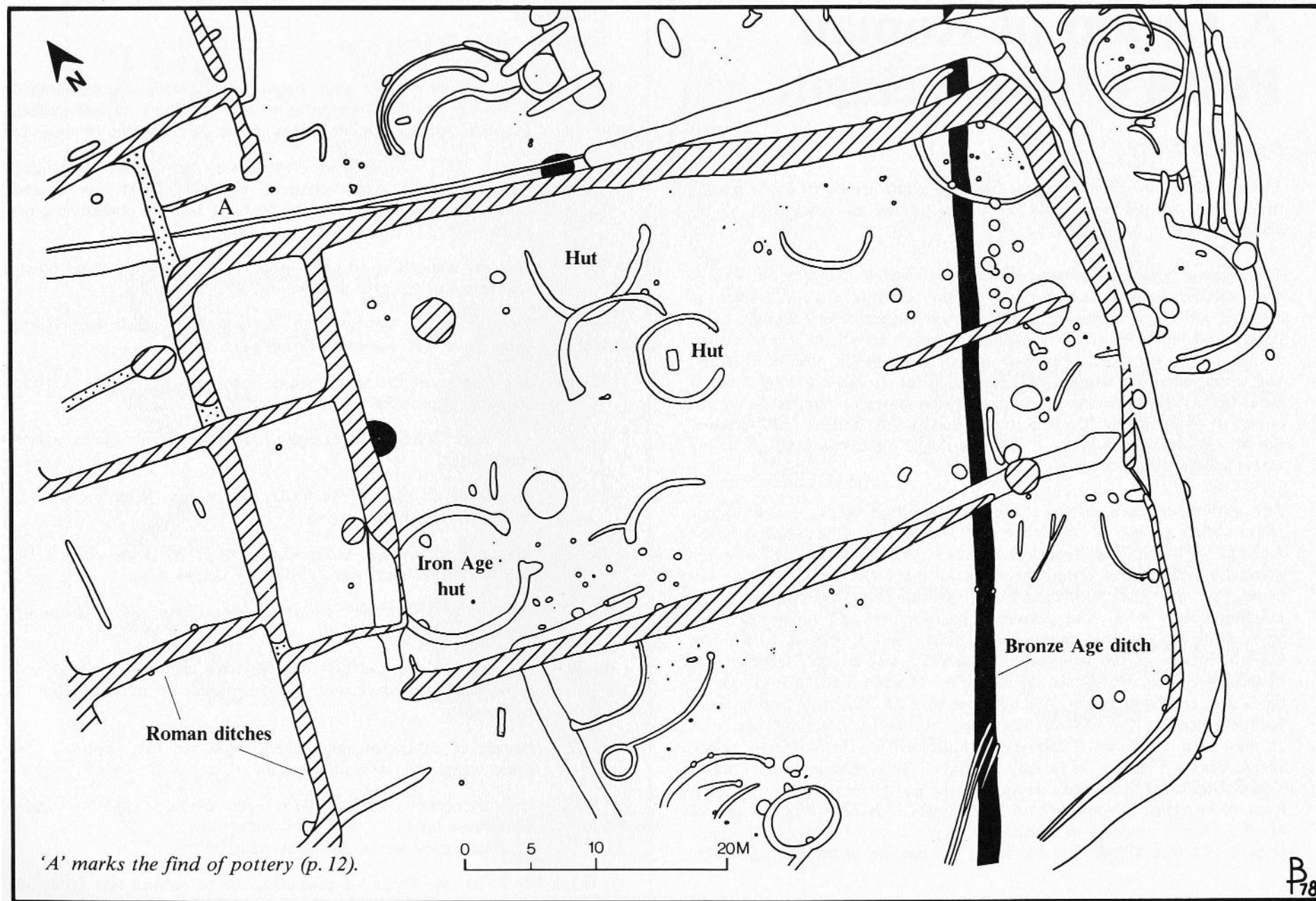


Fig 5 Plan of the south end of the Cat's Water sub-site, Fengate. The earlier Roman ditches are stippled, the later hatched.

A Group of Roman Pottery from Fengate

by John Hayes

The aim of this article is to provide a fixed point for Nene Valley pottery of the mid second century A.D. — the period of emergence of the classic 'Castor' colour-coated ware.

The deposit described here comes from one of a complex of Roman farm ditches on the eastern part of the Fengate site, excavated in Summer 1977 (code FNG 77 F 412). It was concentrated within a 6-7m stretch and sealed by the clay capping common to all the main Roman ditches on the site (fig 5, A). Rich organic remains (in process of study) and a considerable amount of brick and tile (some 7.575kg) from a building as yet unlocated accompanied the pottery. The ditch cut an earlier ditch belonging to the Roman farm (F 65) and in part followed the line of, and overlapped, a Late Iron-Age ditch connected with the earlier village on the same site.

The pottery evidence — there are no associated coins — indicates a rather brief period of existence for the farm as a whole around A.D. 120-150/160. The deposit in ditch F 412 should, on both stratigraphical and stylistic criteria, be late in the sequence, and may well belong to the final destruction or abandonment, to judge by the building debris in it. The pottery comprises a broad range of wares from samian to coarse calcite-gritted; the total weight is c.24.675 kg ($\pm 2-3\%$). Many of the vessels are restorable, and should therefore not be residual. The best-preserved examples of each ware are shown in fig 6, and are listed below. A date close to A.D. 150 may be suggested for them and for the date of deposition. A number of similarities may be seen with the Sulehay kiln-group published in *Durobrivae* 3, 1975, 16-18, but the Fengate group may be slightly later. The pattern of wares is quite different from that found in the early second-century dump from Monument 97 (*Durobrivae* 3, 1975, 26f.). Nene Valley grey ware of the classic second to fourth-century variety is the commonest present. Almost all the coarse wares should be from local sources.

Catalogue

(Numbers refer to fig 6)

1. (Not drawn) Samian dish, form 18/31, Lezoux ware, stamped PINNAE M. Near-complete; rivet-holes from ancient repair. (Samian ware comprises 2.59% of the total deposit by weight.)
- 2-5., 7., 9-10. Jars and dish in Nene Valley grey ware. Steel-grey (core off-white), with horizontal polishing-marks (see 2) and burnished patterns. No. 4 is misfired buff to brownish-grey. (This ware: 35.125% of total by weight.)
6. Jar in smooth light-grey ware (core darker); rivet-holes. (A variant of the preceding ware; 2.45% by weight.)
8. Dish, imitating Samian form 36, in grey to black ware (some sand, mica) with sandwich firing; parts burnt.
- 12-13. Jar fragments in creamy-white ware, slightly sandy; carbon remains on outsides.
14. Lid, ware as no. 8, fired light red (grey tint at core); carbon round edge.
15. Sherds of an early Nene Valley mortarium. Ware as no. 12, more sandy; red-brown grits.
16. Flagon neck in soft yellow-buff version of ware of no. 12. (All white-buff local wares; 5.47% by weight.)
17. Jar(?) rim in rough reddish calcite-gritted ware, unevenly fired. (31.07% by weight.)
- 18-20. Cooking-pot, lid and casserole, in hard thinnish calcite-gritted ware, dark grey-black with brownish areas on outside. (10.95% by weight.)
- 21-22. Sherds of colour-coated beakers; light red clay, reddish slip (local ware). No slip on base of no. 22.
- 23-26. Colour-coated dishes (24-25 are sherds); slightly sandy white ware (as 12-13) with dark slip. (Colour-coated wares: 3.21% by weight.)

I thank Mr F. M. M. Pryor for permitting me to publish this group in advance of the final Fengate report. Mr Robert Powell and Mrs Faye Powell were responsible for the processing of the finds. Dr J. P. Wild has advised me on identifications.

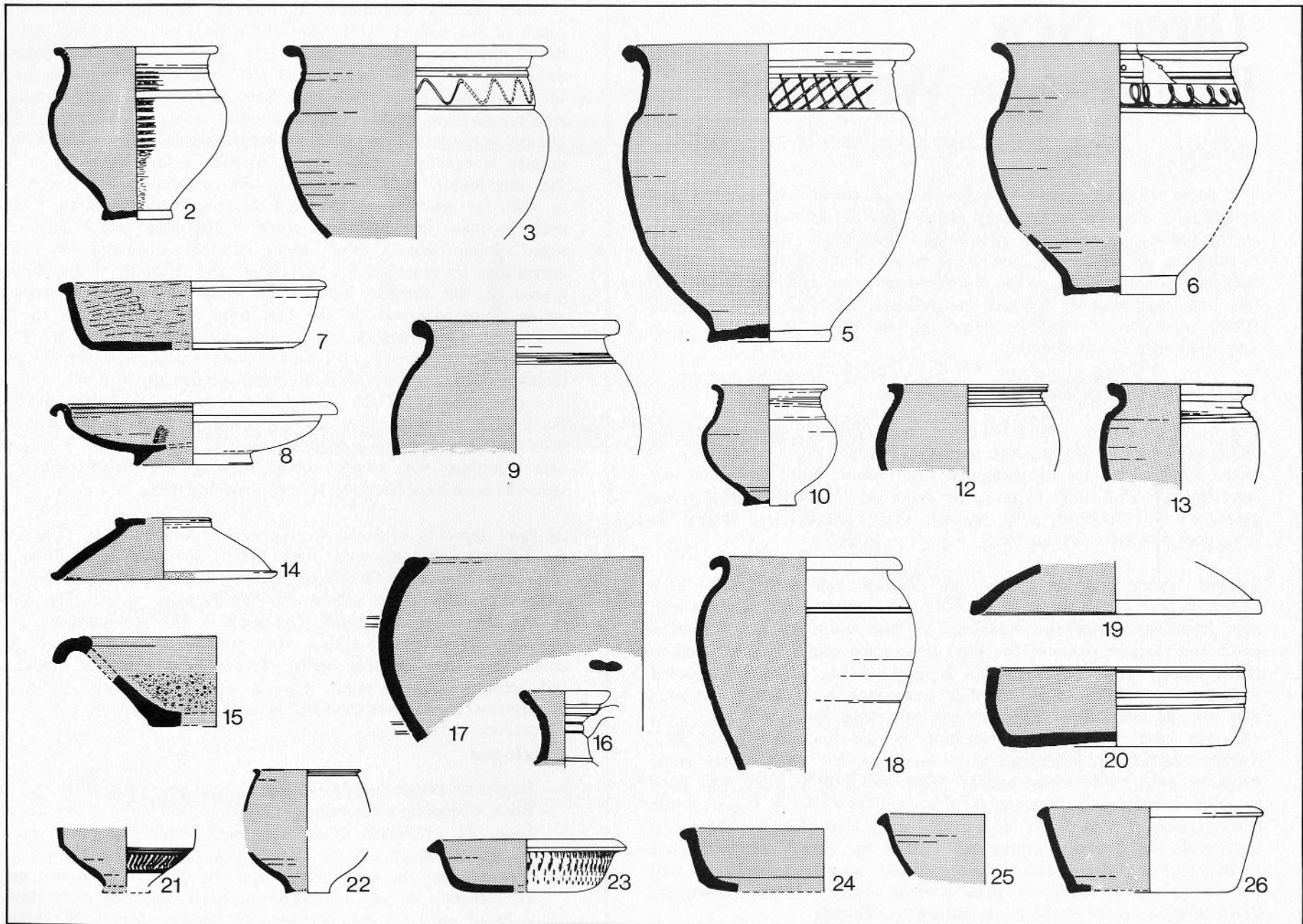


Fig 6 A mid second-century group of Roman pots from Fengate (selected vessels)

Three New Bronze-Age Weapons

by Francis Pryor

The three weapons described below are all recent chance finds and their dating depends on typology alone. This unfortunately limits their archaeological significance. However, published studies of the distribution of prehistoric metalwork in the Fenland generally underestimate the importance of the Peterborough area and it is hoped that this note may partially redress the balance. Miranda Green's recent (1977) catalogue of the City Museum's collections is another, more important, step in this direction.

The Deposition of Fenland Metalwork

The three weapons considered here are typical examples of the numerous finds of Bronze-Age metalwork from the Fenland and it would be avoiding an interesting, if contentious, issue if we did not consider how these finds came to be deposited in the Fens in the first place. We will, however, only consider stray finds and not hoards, as these pose problems of their own.

Bridget Trump, in her study of Fenland rapiers ((1968), 225), suggested that they may have been discarded during rituals for which men travelled considerable distances to 'cast offerings into the dark pools and sluggish rivers of the Fens to appease spirits they believed to reside there'. More recently, Colin Burgess ((1974), 195) has proposed that the many finds of Bronze-Age metalwork from watery contexts may also be attempts at appeasement, but more specifically associated with the onset of the wetter climate of the first millennium B.C. Rather surprisingly, experimental archaeology has shown that some weapons, particularly metal shields, were too thin to have been used in actual combat and must therefore be seen as ritual or display items (Coles (1973), pl. 16). Some of the very long, elegant later Bronze-Age spearheads are similarly impractical. Finally we should remember that a Bronze-Age water-based religion would accord remarkably well with what we know, from documentary sources, about subsequent Celtic religion, where sacred pools feature prominently.

A more practical explanation is, however, possible. We know that for much of the second millennium B.C. the Fens were quite dry; Fox's distribution map ((1923), map III) shows clearly that Bronze-Age metalwork was spread widely and not confined to river beds or meres. Many of these finds must have been deposited on dry ground. The striking absence of Fenland habitation sites in the Bronze Age is almost certainly the result of a biased sample: contemporary domestic pottery is usually very poorly made and is far less likely to survive the intervening 3000 years than its associated metalwork (which is also far more easily spotted by the archaeologically untrained eye). To make matters worse, most of the upper peats in which such sites should occur have been severely disturbed by intensive agriculture or removed by 'shrinkage' and erosion. If the Fens were grazed in the summer months by herds belonging to communities whose home-base was on the Fen Edge, as recent work at Fengate and other sites suggests, then such temporary camps could hardly be expected to survive until today; there would, however, be no need to invoke long journeys to deposit treasured items in murky Fen meres. The vast majority of the Fen finds are purely utilitarian, particularly the various types of axes, and even the weapons could simply have been lost by accident or in combat (a rapier from Pondersbridge near Whittlesey was actually found sticking into the Fen Clay). Many weapons must have been lost in cattle rustling raids.

In sum, there is evidence to support both arguments. The fault of the ritualist explanation is, first, that it assumes Bronze-Age society and religion were uniform over Britain and, second, that there was a distinction between the sacred and secular sides of life. The drawback of the alternative 'domestic' hypothesis is the lack of hard evidence to support it. The answer to the problem probably lies in compromise: the present writer favours the 'domestic' explanation, but recognises, nonetheless, that a small proportion of the finds (mainly finer pieces) were deposited in the Fens during rituals.

Catalogue

1. Rapier of Burgess (1968) Group II (fig 7, 1). Found in the Central Brick Company's Funtham's Lane pit, Whittlesey, near the King's Dyke (TL 23759688). It was apparently found in a peat layer within the gravels which cap the Oxford Clay in the area. The peat is still exposed near the road bridge over the Dyke. The rapier was sold at Sotheby's to an unknown purchaser and the illustration here is based on a full-scale drawing by the late Mr G. F. Dakin who

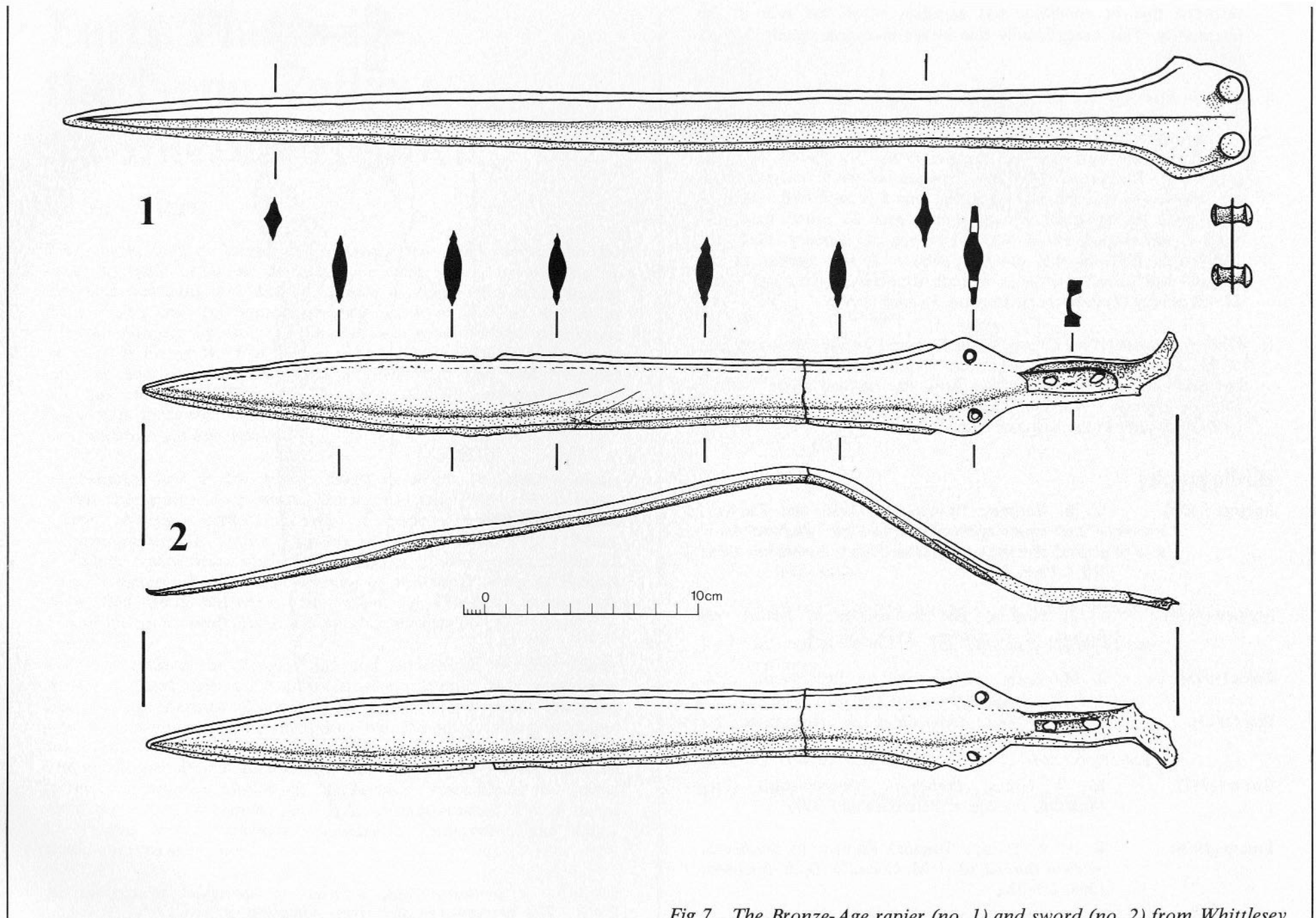


Fig 7 The Bronze-Age rapier (no. 1) and sword (no. 2) from Whittlesey

recorded that its condition was excellent when last seen in the late sixties. This exceptionally fine rapier is approximately 55.7cm long.

2. Late Bronze-Age leaf-shaped sword of 'native' (i.e. British) Ewart Park type (fig 7, 2). It was found close to the rapier and the possibility of association (although typologically improbable) cannot be ruled out. Both finds were made in August 1969. This sword is in the care of Mr Haslam, onetime Site Engineer at the Funtham's Lane pit, who recalls that the damage — the sword is bent and broken — took place during discovery. It should also be noted here that another leaf-shaped sword was discovered in January 1964 just 1750 yards ENE of that described above. It was broken at the hilt and had paired rivet-holes in both shoulders; it was just under 20 inches long (Peterborough Museum Record Cards).
3. Dirk of Burgess (1968) Group II (fig 8). Found on the 'landward' side of the River Nene bank at Alwalton. It is in need of conservation, but encrustations on its surface show that it had been dredged from the river. It is 16 cm long and was reported to the City Museum by its discoverer in the Summer of 1977.

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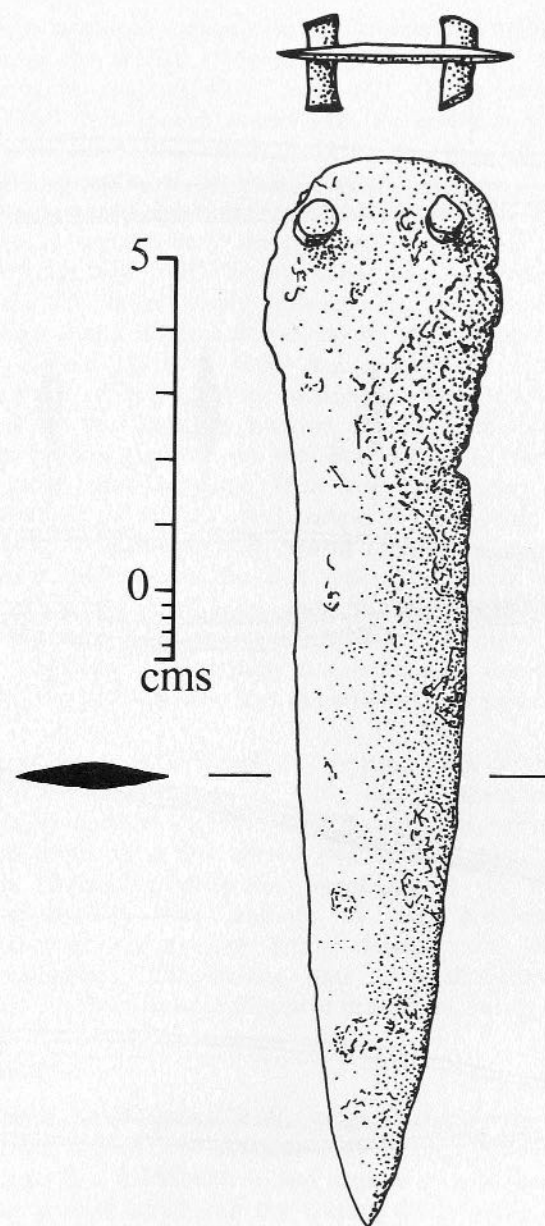


Fig 8 The Bronze-Age dirk from Alwalton

Early Plants in the Nene Valley: an Interim Report

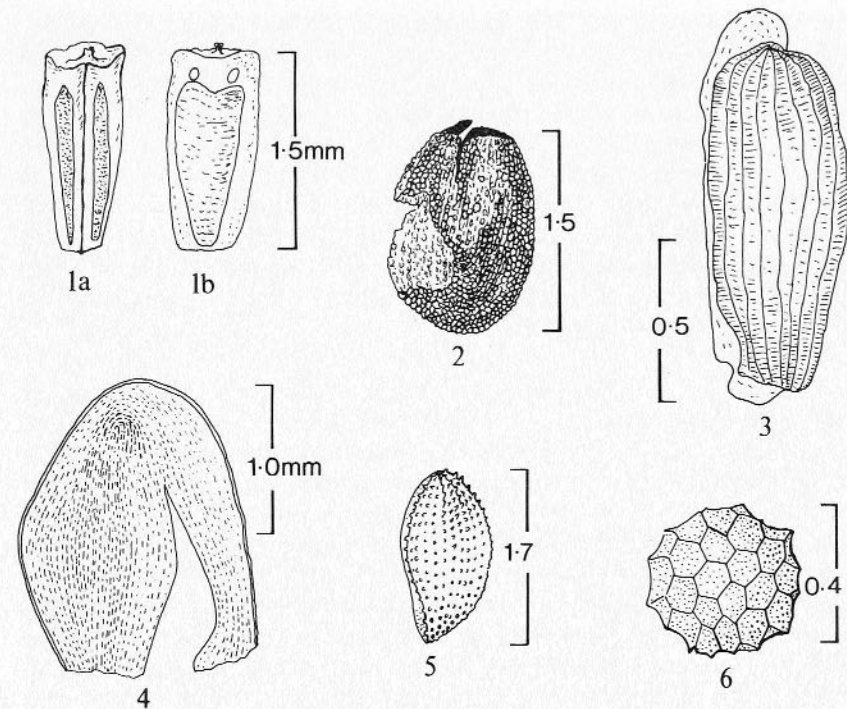
by Gay Wilson

The Roman farm at Longthorpe yielded a few sediments suitable for botanical study, from the gravel terrace close to the fortress (fig 9). The area was quite well drained, despite a higher water-table than at present, and only the water meadows can have been as wet as at Fengate. Fengate by contrast provided an embarrassment of organic deposits. It lies at the Fen margin, where the water-table is high and drainage poor. Some ditches became filled with peat and inwashed silt, and the fen itself would have been flooded seasonally. When research is complete, we hope to correlate changes in land use with fluctuations in fen development.

At Fengate, 20% of the species found as fossils are aquatic plants or can only grow in very wet conditions, compared with 11% at Longthorpe. Wetland plants common to both sites include *Alisma plantago-aquatica* L. (water plantain), *Eleocharis palustris* (L.) Roem. & Schult. (spike rush), and *Typha latifolia* L. (reedmace). These all grow in muddy places by slow-flowing or still water. Only at Fengate do we find species restricted to still water, e.g. *Characeae* (stoneworts), *Lemna* spp. (duckweed) and *Bidens* sp. (bur marigold).

There is evidence at Fengate for the exploitation of fen woods. A pit was lined with oak wattle on alder uprights, while brushwood from a drain consisted of coppiced or pollard willow poles. The poles were all between seven and eight years old. We may envisage managed woodland with 'mixed fen' developing after each clearance (Tansley (1965)). Species of this community found at Fengate include *Lythrum salicaria* L. (purple loosestrife), *Eupatorium cannabinum* L. (hemp agrimony) and *Filipendula ulmaria* L. (meadowsweet). *Urtica dioica* L. (stinging nettle), *Solanum dulcamara* L. (bittersweet) and sedges would have moved in later.

At Longthorpe hedgerow or open scrubby woodland is indicated



1. Achene of *Tripleurospermum maritimum* ssp. *inodorum* (L.) Koch: a. dorsal view, b. ventral view (drawn from a fresh specimen).
2. Fossil seed of *Capsella bursa-pastoris* L. from Fengate.
3. Fossil seed of *Odontites verna* (Bellardi) Dumort from Longthorpe.
4. Split fossil seed of *Legousia hybrida* (L.) Delarb from Longthorpe.
5. Fossil seed of *Saxifraga granulata* L. from Longthorpe.
6. Fossil seed of *Centaurium* sp. from Longthorpe.

Fig 9 Plant fossils from the Nene Valley

rather than thick forest. Oak appears only as the upright of a ladder, the rungs of which were of birch. Apart from alder, catkin scales and one fruit, all the remaining tree or shrub fossils are the seeds of edible fruits such as raspberry, hawthorn and elder. These occur also at Fengate and are typical hedgerow species (Wilson (1968)). *Umbelliferae* were probably a feature of the Roman hedgerow just as they are today, with *Anthriscus caucalis* Bieb. (bur chervil), cf. *Heracleum sphondylium* L. (hogweed) and *Torilis japonica* (Houtt.) DC. (upright hedge parsley). There was also *Arctium* sp. (burdock), *Hypericum perforatum* L. (St John's wort) and *Myosotis sylvatica* Hoffm. (wood forget-me-not).

Most of the Longthorpe fossils are weeds of disturbed ground, grassy waste, arable and pasture. The arable weeds are mostly characteristic of dry soils, while the pasture species indicate wetter conditions. Stock was probably grazed on water meadows, with higher ground under cultivation. Four weed species at Longthorpe are rare or previously unknown as fossils (Godwin (1975)). *Centaurium* sp. (centaury) and *Saxifraga granulata* L. (meadow saxifrage) grow in grassy places on calcareous soil. Meadow saxifrage is an uncommon plant nowadays. The other rare fossils are seeds of arable weeds. *Odontites verna* (Bellardi) Dumort. (red bartsia) is common today, whereas *Legousia hybrida* (L.) Delarb. (Venus's looking-glass) occurs infrequently. Twenty-four seeds of *Legousia* were found in the Longthorpe samples, suggesting that it was fairly common there.

Fengate has so far yielded fewer weed species than Longthorpe, although thistles and docks were common in several samples. Seeds of *Capsella bursa-pastoris* L. (shepherd's purse) and *Tripleurospermum maritimum* ssp. *inodorum* (L.) Koch. (scentless mayweed) occurred at Fengate. Both are rare or new to the fossil record, despite being common arable weeds nowadays. Another rare fossil is *Geranium molle* L. (dove's foot cranesbill), one of the few dry-ground species at Fengate. Others include *Erophila verna* (L.) Chevall. (whitlow grass) and *Papaver argemone* L. (long prickly-headed poppy).

Few cereal grains have yet been found at Longthorpe or Fengate. Spelt and oat occurred at Longthorpe, while Fengate yielded two-row barley, oat and possibly wheat. Other food plants include *Brassica* sp. (cabbage or mustard) and *Daucus carota* L. (carrot) at Fengate; *Valerianella locusta* (L.) Betcke (lamb's lettuce) and cf. *Pastinaca sativa* L. (parsnip) at Longthorpe; and *Apium graveolens* L. (celery) at both sites. *Stellaria media* (L.) Vill. (chickweed) is nowadays thought of as a weed, but is well known as a former food plant. It might even

have been cultivated. In 1606 gardeners were instructed to sow it at full moon in February and 'in ye old moone' during March. Several aromatic or medicinal species occur, though sparsely, at Longthorpe. They include *Anethum graveolens* L. (dill), *Hyoscyamus niger* L. (henbane), *Linum catharticum* L. (purging flax), *Calamintha ascendens* Jord. (calamint), *Humulus lupulus* L. (hop), *Marrubium vulgare* L. (horehound), *Origanum vulgare* L. (marjoram) and *Papaver somniferum* L. (opium poppy).

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Three Mediaeval Sites from the Air

by Stephen Upex

Little has been said in recent issues of *Durobrivae* about aerial photography and mediaeval archaeology. Perhaps our area has been overshadowed for too long by the Roman antiquities for which the Nene Valley has become famous. Not only has our understanding of local mediaeval society, housing and pottery suffered, but so have other areas of interest including the study of the mediaeval landscape.

Needless to say, much mediaeval material lies locked up as it were beneath our modern villages. House replacement has taken place in some cases on the same plot of land for nearly a thousand years. Obviously the early structures of wood and thatch were replaced more quickly than, say, Tudor stone cottages, because of the fire risk or wood-decay. In some villages this house replacement shifted site slightly, and houses once abandoned or decayed were left or pulled down and new structures built nearby. From the air one can see that just this sort of thing has happened in many villages in the Nene Valley. Areas perhaps on the edge of a village have earthwork-remains of house platforms and tracks or lanes leading to them. It has been thought that all earthworks of this kind show the influence of plague, famine or economic depression, causing drastic reductions in population, with the result that houses were abandoned. In some cases this may be so, but it is becoming increasingly clear that through time villages move their centres over considerable distances, perhaps as a result of changes in communications or economic influences, and houses and streets and even church sites can be left behind. This accounts for some parishes having isolated churches away from the modern village core. Occasionally villages have declined until just a few houses remain, while a few villages show themselves to have been completely abandoned and often long forgotten.

Away from the village core, many other sites of mediaeval date remain, large and small. They have a multiplicity of uses from rabbit warrens and mounds to support windmills, to banks around parks and woodland and even the cultivation remains now seen as ridge and furrow.



Fig 10 Wakerley (SP 956995)

The parish of Wakerley lies in the Welland valley and it was here in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries that a large manorial complex developed, possibly from humbler beginnings. The exact date of the house is unknown, but in 1615 it was referred to as 'The Great Place', and in 1633 the house is recorded as having 30 rooms as well as outbuildings and gardens. By 1720 the site was probably in ruins and abandoned, the reasons for this being unclear.

Today the site shows as a series of well preserved earthworks covering a large area. The house is probably represented by the hummocks near the road, while the large rectangular flat area is likely to be the gardens and garden terraces.

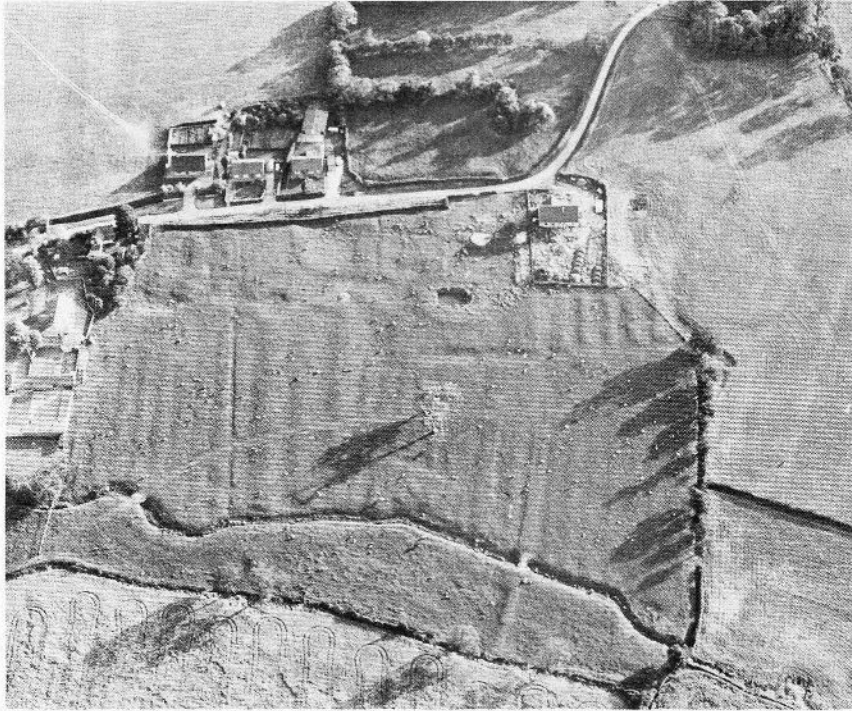


Fig 11 Caldecote (TL 144883)

The hamlet of Caldecote lies at the head of a low flat valley extending from the Fen Edge up to the Oxford Clays. The soils are wet and heavy and perhaps in the mediaeval period were never particularly attractive for farming. However, here it was that settlement grew, with the people working their comparatively small parish area of under 1000 acres.

Now the site lies semi-deserted. Some modern houses have filled in spaces between older farms, but where spaces still remain the house-sites of farms and cottages from long ago can be seen as earthworks, with the ridge and furrow of the open fields right behind.

The name Caldecote, meaning 'cold cottages', perhaps gives us a clue to the life of the mediaeval people who lived there.

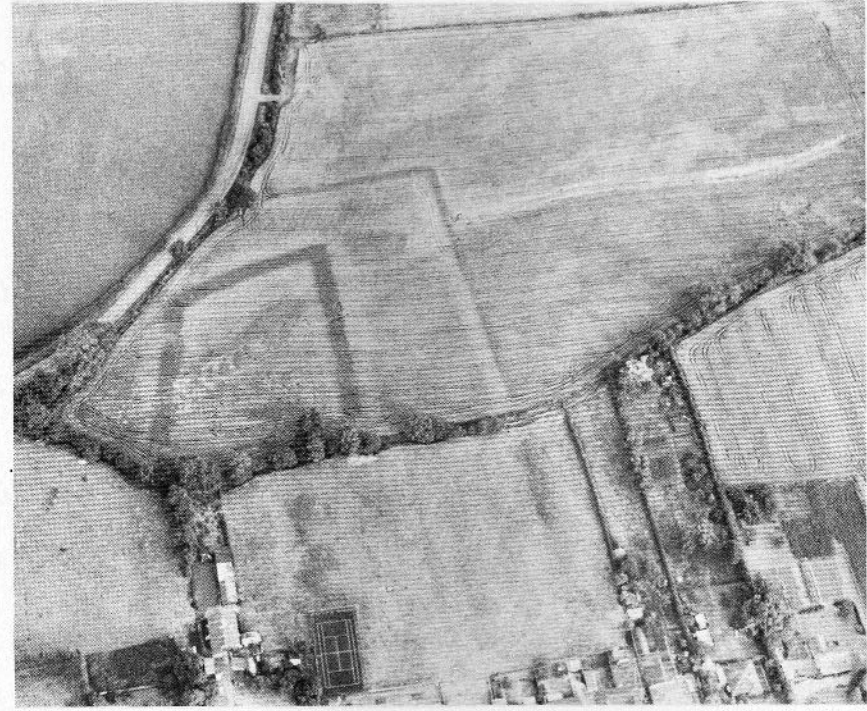


Fig 12 Bainton (TF 094059)

On the outskirts of Bainton lies this small manorial site. The inner large ditch possibly contained structures, while there is a suggestion of an entrance on the eastern side of this circuit. Surrounding this large ditch is a smaller ditch circuit, perhaps not contemporary with the first. It is possible that the ditches were water-filled, because a small stream course leads into the site from the right-hand side of the photograph.

Nothing is known of the date or the desertion of the site, or how it related to the village; it is in this area that documentary sources may provide some of the answers.

From the Museum

by Martin Howe

Several items of Roman military equipment are to be found in the City Museum's collections. Among them a sword (acquisition number 28/65) found at Funtham's Lane, Whittlesey (TL 238968) and a belt-mount (acquisition number 42/1977(i)) from the riverside near Longthorpe are of particular interest.

The sword (fig 14) was uncovered during excavations at the claypits of the Central Brick Company in 1965. It was buried at a depth of 8-10 feet below the modern ground surface, beneath layers containing pottery of second to fourth-century date (*Journal of Roman Studies* LVI, 1966, 209). The over-all length of the sword is 72 cm, of which the blade takes up 60 cm and the tang 12 cm. The end of the tang was hammered over to help secure the now vanished pommel.

The blade is thin in section, lacking the marked mid-rib which is a feature of the *gladius*, the sword of the Roman legionary. Moreover, the blade length of the Funtham's Lane sword exceeds that of the *gladius* by a considerable amount; for the blade length of the latter varies from 44 cm to 49 cm (Breeze *et al.* (1976), 83). There is a marked difference in shape between the Funtham's Lane sword and the two main patterns of *gladius*. Both have straight-sided points which turn in from the blades at a sharp angle, well demonstrated by James Turner's reconstructions based on evidence from Hod Hill and other sites (Simkins, Youens (1974), 21). The whole design of the *gladius* is intended to produce a short stabbing sword with a strong reinforcing mid-rib meant for use at close quarters. However, the Funtham's Lane weapon is long, with a thin section which would carry a fine cutting edge better suited to a slashing stroke. It thus closely resembles the so-called *spatha* used by Roman auxiliary cavalry.

Sword blades found in pits dating to the first century at the fort at Newstead in Scotland (Curle (1911), pl. XXIV, fig IV) bear a close resemblance to the Funtham's Lane example, both in length (their average blade size is 63 cm) and in their lack of a mid-rib. The Newstead weapons have been attributed to the auxiliary cavalry in garrison there. Roman cavalry have been attested in the Peterborough region by finds of equipment from the excavations at the Longthorpe fortress (*Britannia*

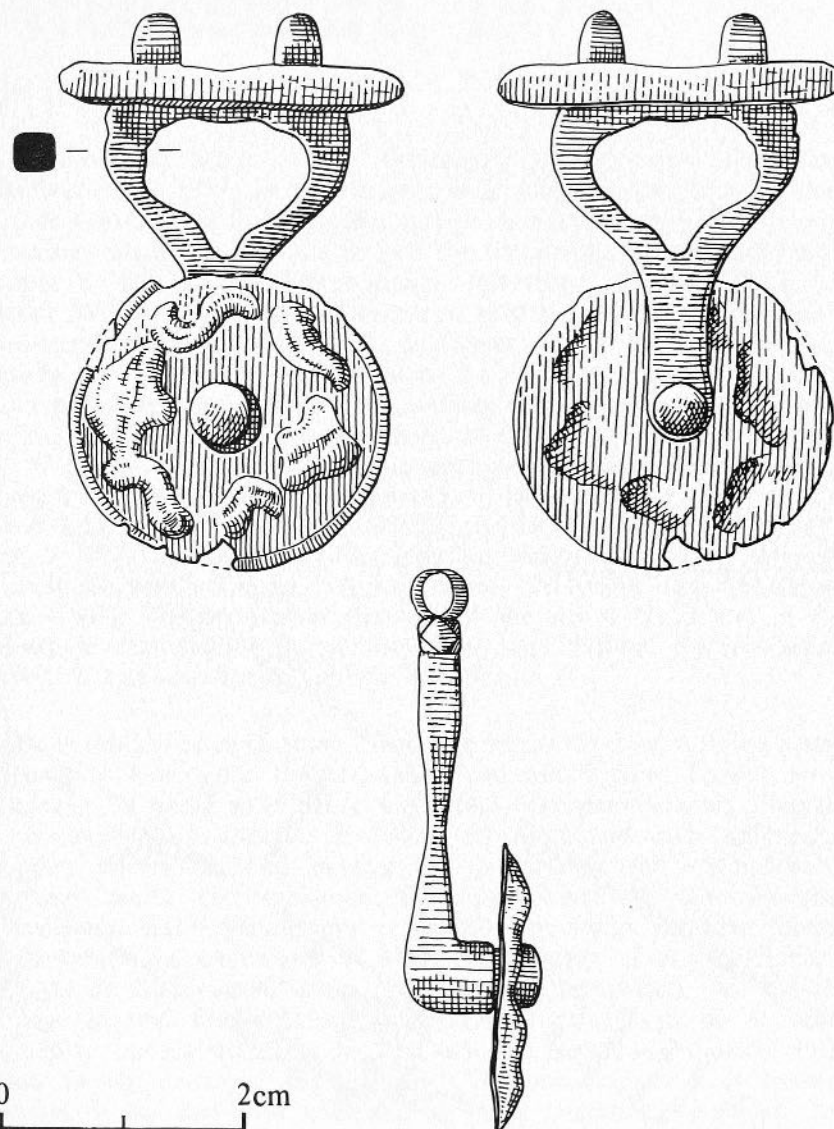
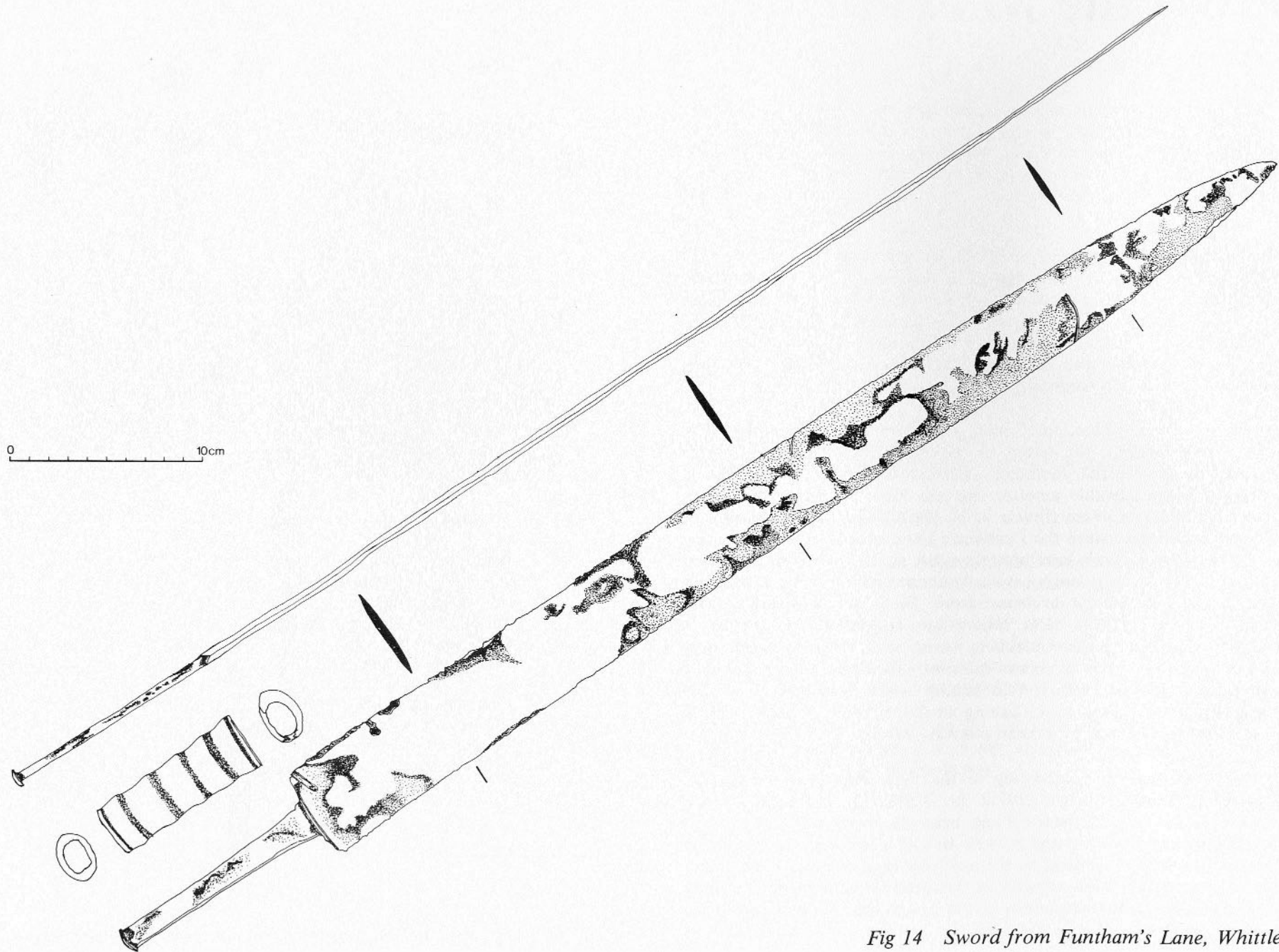


Fig 13 Legionary belt-mount from the riverside at Longthorpe



0 10cm

Fig 14 Sword from Funtham's Lane, Whittlesey

V, 1974, fig 40). It seems reasonable to suggest that the sword from Funtham's Lane, is, in fact, a *spatha*.

The date of the sword is rather harder to determine as it was found during mechanical clay extraction; but the form of the blade and the bone grip found with it confirm a Roman origin and, on the strength of the Newstead examples, a late first-century date for the sword would be appropriate.

The belt-mount of bronze was a chance find made in October 1977. It consists of two parts (fig 13), a disc decorated with repoussé ornament, and an openwork bracket which is provided with a hinge-like fitting to attach the mount to a strap. The mount originally formed part of the suspension for a legionary's side-arms and traces of the original leather-work were found when the object was undergoing conservation. The repoussé decoration on the now-loose disc, although heavily corroded, would appear originally to have represented swimming dolphins, a popular decorative motif on Roman objects of all periods. The proximity of the find to the site of the Longthorpe fortress and its similarity to mounts from Hod Hill and London (Simkins, Youens (1974), 20 and 23; Brailsford (1962), fig 4, A98) makes a date of circa A.D. 50 most likely for this object.

The writer wishes to thank Messrs Lyne, Central Brick Company, Whittlesey and Mr Warrington of Peterborough for donating these objects to the Museum and Dr J. P. Wild and Mr D. F. Mackreth for their help in the preparation of this note.

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Industrial and Vernacular Architecture, 1977

by Richard Hillier

The remaining parts of the Queensgate redevelopment area were demolished in 1977. In Cumbergate they included the General Post Office (*Durobrivae* 5, 1977, 30); nos 4-18, with the outbuildings and rear portions of the Bell & Oak and the Greyhound (mainly nineteenth-century); the former Peterborough Advertiser offices (1874); the north block of Miss Pear's Almshouses (1904); nos 23-29, shops (early nineteenth-century); nos 19-17, a former ironmongers offices and works (late nineteenth-century); and the rear parts of the following four properties: the Still (c.1700, malting or granary), the Old Workhouse, the White Horse and a shop, no. 37 (late eighteenth-century). In Exchange St shop no. 9 (seventeenth-century in origin, but mainly early nineteenth-century) was destroyed; in Long Causeway no. 11, shop (1901); nos 12-13, bank (1902); nos 14-15 (*Durobrivae* 3, 1975, 29; 5, 1977, 4); and nos 16-18, shops. In Westgate there was complete demolition of the Elephant & Castle (late Victorian) and the Crown Inn (1904), and removal of the rear of the Royal Hotel and of the Westgate Almshouses. In Milton Street, the former Police Station (built 1822 as an infirmary) was pulled down.

Demolition has revealed some interesting details. Part of the Greyhound proved to have some timber-framing and ashlar stone facing; no 9 Exchange St had a small cellar and a late seventeenth-century fireplace with chamfered bressumer; the White Horse showed early eighteenth-century stonework; and judging by the arrangement of lintels of blocked doors and windows, the front block of the Westgate Almshouses was originally one or two houses which extended further west before the conversion in 1744. By courtesy of Messrs Norman Wright & Hodgkinson, and Mr Stapleton (the owner), no 108-110 Bridge St was briefly investigated. It was reputed to be of some antiquity, but alterations in the late Victorian period and more recently have largely destroyed the evidence. The street frontage is timber-framed at the first-floor level and probably overhung the street. The roof is Victorian, possibly rebuilt before it was re-slatted after a severe gale in 1895. To the rear are vestiges of one or two eighteenth-century cottages, part of a row which ran at right angles to the front building down the building plot.

The Car Dyke

by *Arnold Pryor*

The present note gives the results of a survey of the Car Dyke between the rivers Nene and Welland. The purpose of the survey was to see if the conclusions reached by Mr Brian Simmons about the Dyke north of Bourne could be upheld in the section south of the Welland. Brian Simmons and the Car Dyke Research Group had found that the behaviour of the Dyke's bed between Bourne and the River Witham precludes its use as a canal. The survey of the Dyke described here corroborates this view.

The bed and banks of the Dyke were surveyed along as much of its length as possible. Three readings were taken at 100m intervals. Inevitably, some stretches of the Dyke had been substantially altered by re-cutting or backfilling, but the greater part can be taken as reflecting reasonably consistently the original contours of this impressive earthwork.

It is clear from fig 15, a, that the most impressive factor is the watershed between the two rivers. North of the watershed, the Dyke drains into the Welland, while to the south water drains into the Nene. Today the Dyke is fed by many land-drains and by the natural stream known as Werrington Brook which breaches the bank at TF 17650415. That the direction of flow of the Dyke changes in the region of the watershed is apparent from the longitudinal section of the bed.

The present theory on the function of the Car Dyke is that surplus water from the uplands was channelled into the nearest major water-courses, the Nene and the Welland, before it could reach the Fens. Accurate surveying would have been an absolute necessity to create adequate gradients for an effective catchwater, and, looking at the long section of the dyke (fig 15, a), they were obviously present. In plan the Dyke follows the 25ft contour very closely. The contour itself defines the Fen Edge and the fall in land-level to the east is for the most part dramatic. Obviously, the purpose of any drain is to rid itself of water as quickly as possible, and conversely the function of a canal is to retain a constant level of water to facilitate the movement of vessels. This means that, if the Dyke as actually constructed was full as it crossed the watershed, the banks near the north and south extremities would be overflowing and the central section would be dry.

The Car Dyke cannot be considered in isolation, and factors such as settlement and exploitation of the Fenland and the consequent effect on Fen Edge development must be taken into account. One should note the rapid second-century expansion in the Silt Fens for evidence of the scale of the whole settlement programme which was made possible simply by effective drainage. The saltern sites near the Car Dyke (fig 15) may suggest that there are more Romano-British sites beneath the Peat Fens. They also serve to remind us of the importance of salt in the Roman world.

Although there is no evidence for centuriation of the reclaimed Fenland, the Car Dyke and the drainage of the Fens were undoubtedly the results of official Roman planning, as they would have been far too expensive for any other source to finance. The Fenland is likely to have been public land.

The early second-century appears to be the most likely context for the construction of the Car Dyke. In spite of the dearth of dating material, this period is suggested by the new stable political and economic climate in the South-East. Fieldwork shows a sudden expansion in the number of small farmsteads in the Silt Fens and on the gravel promontories and islands of the Fens in the early second-century. Allowing for a drying-out and de-salination period of 10-20 years after drainage, one may even push the construction date for the Dyke back to the late first century.

Much has been written about the Car Dyke and most of it is based on an idea promulgated by Stukeley that the Dyke was a canal used for shipping grain to the army at York. All the archaeological evidence, however, supports the theory that the primary function of the Car Dyke was as a catchwater.

I would especially like to thank Mr Brian Simmons, the Car Dyke Research Group and the farmers (too numerous to mention), who allowed access to their land and showed an interest in this survey.

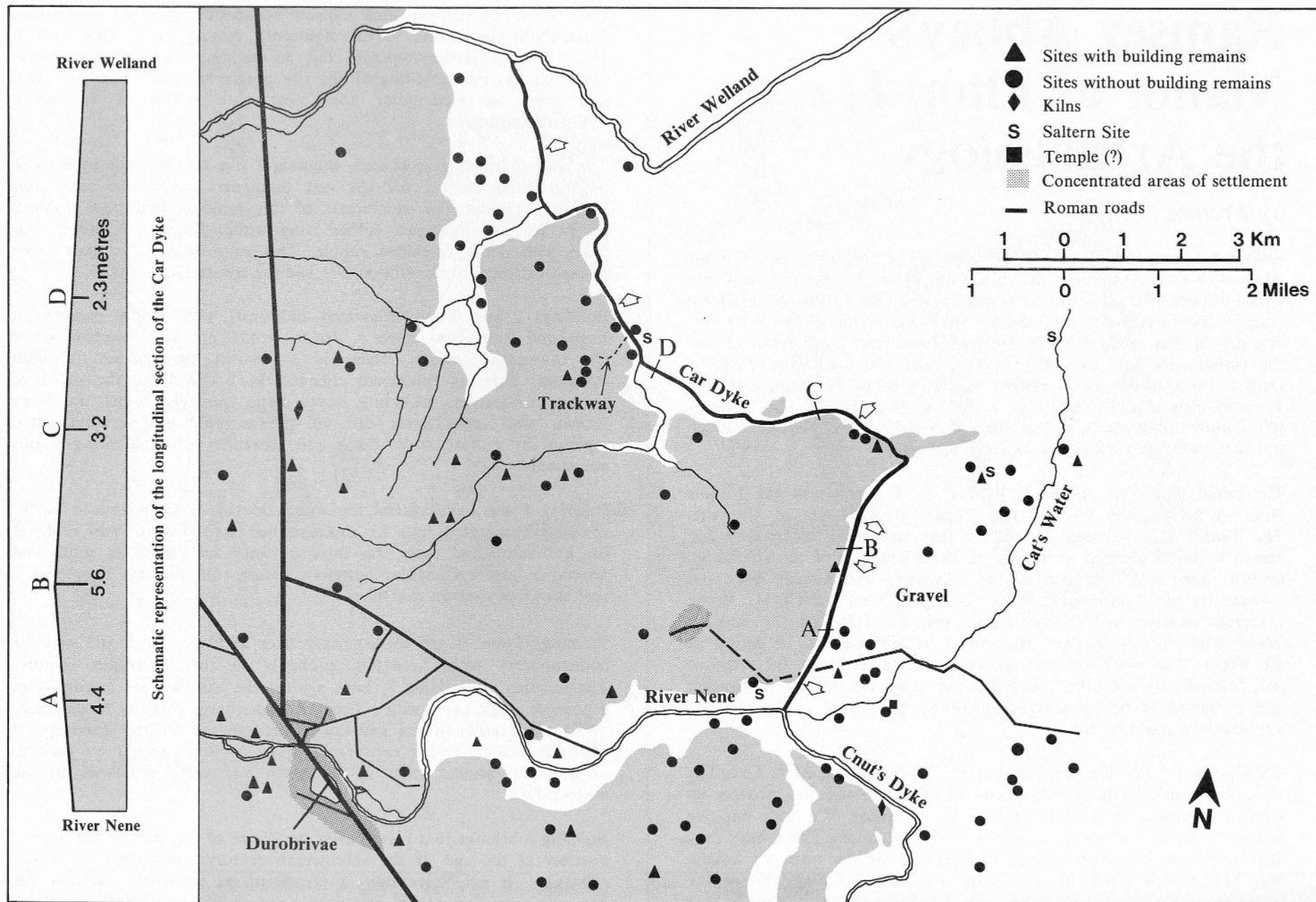


Fig 15 The Car Dyke between the Welland and Nene (with levels)

Ramsey Abbey's Manor at Elton I: the Archaeology

by *Francis O'Neill*

During the construction of a flood bank along the Nene at Elton the Anglian Water Authority, the landowner (Mr P. Proby), and the tenant farmer (Mr R. Hill) arranged to level an earthwork platform lying in 'Berrystead' field and use the spoil for the bank. The work was begun, but was stopped when limestone structures were found below the topsoil. By this time the machine had stripped away about a third of the platform on its eastern side to a depth of 45 cm, removing upper courses of limestone walls as well as floor levels. The stripping left a north-south scarp, almost the full length of the platform, which was eventually cut back and drawn as a section.

The initial discovery was made by Mr S. G. Upex and the Middle Nene Archaeological Group, who began investigation of the site. The Nene Valley Research Committee then undertook to make a full record of the uncovered area prior to the scheduling of the site as an ancient monument. (A proposal for scheduling had already been put forward by the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Committee.) Mr Proby expressed concern and by agreement with Mr Hill and the Anglian Water Authority, he allowed the site to be left open for a period of six weeks. The work carried out consisted of cleaning the exposed site, followed by planning. Time did not allow for sample excavation and consequently no sections for clarification of date or function of any structure could be dug.

The site (fig 16) lies just to the east of the River Nene at River End. The main earthwork platform on which the manor stood has around its western edge what appears to be a moat, consisting of a wide bay-like feature to north and south joined by a narrow ditch. These bays may have served as fishponds and flood basins, while the northern hollow may have served a mill at some time. To the south and west of the platform within 'Berrystead' field lay banked enclosures and further earthworks, suggesting outbuildings and paddocks to the main site.

Finds from the stripped area indicate occupation, possibly continuous, from about the second to the eighteenth century A.D. There was a lot of Roman pottery present, but no buildings to go with it were identified. As the recording of the site progressed eight buildings were uncovered, all rectangular and most with traces of substantial limestone footings.

The earliest building recovered, Building 1 (fig 16), was cut by 3. It is only partially visible; for the rest disappears under the scarp left by the machine. The stonework of this building had been robbed, except for the north-east corner lying within Building 3, which was filled with dense limestone rubble. This suggests that no great time elapsed between the demolition of 1 and the construction of 3.

Buildings 2 and 3 are orientated east-west, with solidly constructed walls and buttresses. Such a design would not be expected before the thirteenth century. There is a distinct later phase in both buildings, implying functional changes. In 2 this takes the shape of two corner-features including burnt stone, possibly ovens. In 3 an interior wall immediately east of the entrance was removed and replaced by a post at its north end, probably when Building 4 was constructed.

Building 4 was built against the south side of 3, being aligned north-south. Incorporated into its much-robbed wall-remains was evidence for buttresses, and there was interior bench seating at its south end around a large rectangular limestone hearth. On the last floor was a scatter of Collyweston roof-tiles.

Buildings 5 and 6 are consecutively later additions to 3 and may be contemporary with 4, dating probably to the fourteenth century. The remains of Building 7, built against the east side of 3, consist of a possible single room with a fireplace and a large gateway to its south. The interpretation of the gateway is strengthened by the discovery of two metal trackways converging upon it. Both appear to start at or near the present gates in the north and east boundaries of the modern field.

Building 8 belongs to a period after the disuse of this part of the manor, possibly at the end of the seventeenth century, and lasted for about 100 years. It may have been a farmhouse as there was evidence for domestic use. The gabled end walls, not visible on the plan, appear to lie to either side of the stripped area under the undisturbed topsoil.

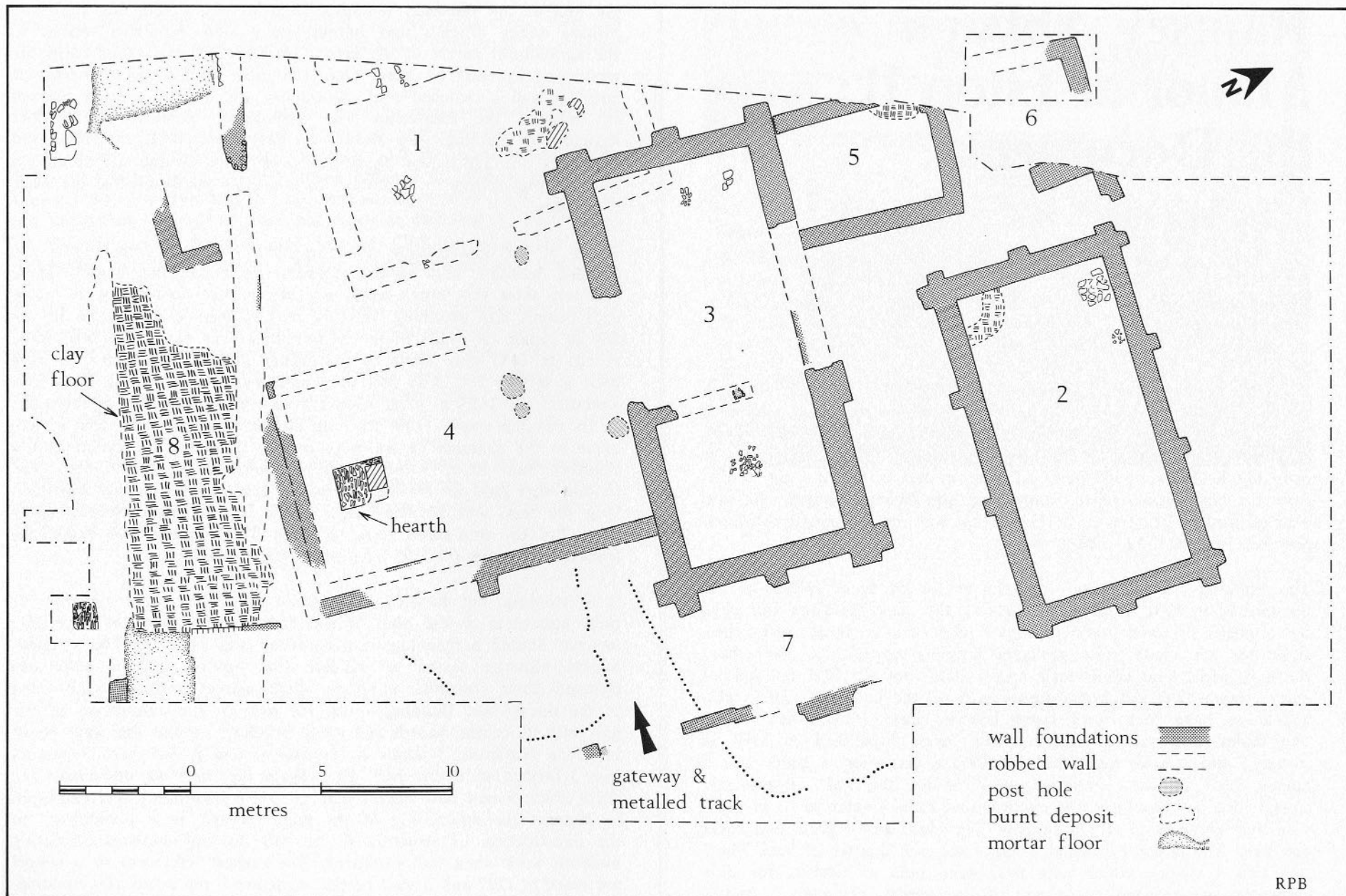


Fig 16 Plan of the Elton Manor exposed in November 1977

Ramsey Abbey's Manor at Elton II: the Documents

by Stephen Upex

The documentary history of the Manor of Elton can be traced back for over 900 years. The first reference is to the granting of the manor site and its lands to the Abbey of Ramsey in the early eleventh century. From this time onwards the field has always been referred to as 'The Berrystead' or later 'Berrystead Close'.

Elton has a very complicated manorial history; for, although Ramsey Abbey held the 'Nether End Manor', by 1218 a subordinate manor in the 'Upper End' of the parish had evolved and the two manors developed their own field systems independently. The Ramsey manor probably held about 550 acres of land in the parish and the profits from the land were sent to Ramsey for the Abbey's upkeep. We also hear of produce being sent: in 1379 wheat was sent by cart to Alwalton and then by boat to the Abbey.

The buildings on the site are referred to in some detail in the documents. In 1351 an indenture lists all the main buildings and gives the contents of each room. Indirect references to other agricultural structures are made. The principal building appears to have been the hall, which had stone walls and a slate roof. In 1391 an account entry records '200 slatston(s)' being used on the hall roof. There also appear to have been some stone benches inside (1345) as well as two tables, one pair of trestles, four forms (described in 1353 as 'rickety') and a basin and ewer. In 1297, a carpenter, a smith and a mason were at work erecting 'gates before the hall'. Presumably close to the hall would be the kitchens and buttery referred to in 1351, with their contents of '3 brazen pots, 2 pitchers and 4 pans' and casks and vats. The larder contained 3 hams and one quarter of beef. There was also a chapel, which may have been built of timber; for only carpenters are referred to in any of the repairs, although it had a slate roof and crest tiles. The chapel had a missal, chalice and 'ornaments belonging to the priest', which are not mentioned until 1453.

As well as the domestic buildings used by the bailiff, his staff and visiting abbey officials and monks, there were buildings related to the agricultural nature of the manor estate. Two granges or barns are mentioned as early as 1298. One, the great barn, had a porch-type entrance and a thatched roof. A granary and dairy are often referred to between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries and other agricultural buildings are shown to have been built in yards and paddocks. In 1379 a new pigsty was constructed on the site of an old one, the pigs having to be moved to a nearby cartshed while the work took place.

Much of the information concerning the buildings comes from the detailed building and repair accounts made for the bailiff. These accounts show that repair-work was carried out continually on walls, roof beams, and thatching. In 1352 masons were employed at 3d per day to repair the walls of the manor after four days of floods, while repairs in 1453 were made to the grange after what appears to have been a serious fire. The hall also underwent much repair work and alteration. In 1453 a 'lover' (louver) was fitted (perhaps in the roof, to let out the smoke from the central fire) and in 1458 repairs were made to the chamber at the west end of the hall. The bailiff had a chamber built in 1379 which was probably close to the hall. The masons were paid for making the wall circuit of this chamber 4 perches long (66 feet) and 14 feet high. Reeds for thatching were possibly local, but the roof-slates seem to come from Collyweston and stone from local quarries (in 1397 from the Barnack quarries).

It is tempting, but dangerous, to marry the documentary evidence for these structures to the plan of the archaeological remains, especially as only limited archaeological exploration was possible. The archaeological evidence seems to indicate that several of the structures changed their function, although these changes remain unrecorded in the documents. Building 4 (fig 16) may fit the description of the hall with its central hearth and stone benching around the walls (built in 1345). Structure 3 seems to predate 4 and it has been suggested that 3 formed an earlier hall. Here again the surviving documents are silent about a new hall, except that in 1345-6 carpenters were employed to support the south side of the hall, perhaps as a preliminary to the construction of structure 4; but no account survives indicating building work on a hall extension. The earliest references to a chapel are made in 1297 and it may be that structure 2 represents this building. Although all the references indicate the chapel to be of wood, the foundations would probably have been of stone; but due to the machine grading of the site only the foundations are left. Even so,

this structure is fairly large for a chapel and the ovens at the west end would indicate perhaps a change of function, if it were to be assigned initially to an ecclesiastical use.

It would be very optimistic to relate any of the other rooms to references made in the documents. Rooms 5 and 6 may well be part of the kitchen-larder-buttery complex and may well be those mentioned as being on the west side of the hall and repaired in 1457. It is tempting to see room 7 as the bailiff's accommodation built in 1379. However, the documents provide positive evidence for Building 8, which must be that shown on the enclosure map of 1784 to be a barn which disappears sometime between 1784 and the mid nineteenth century.

Of the rest of the site, little can be gleaned from documentary sources. It is possible that the two deep basins to the west and north of the site are fishponds referred to in 1279. The only other reference of interest is to the sum of 16 shillings allowed in 1452 to make a ditch around the manor, which may have been the ditch and bank now buried under the modern flood-prevention bank.

I am grateful to Mr P. Proby for allowing me to examine the manuscripts in Elton Hall and to Mrs J. Glen for allowing me to use her office. Other documents relating to the site are located in the Public Records Office and the British Museum.

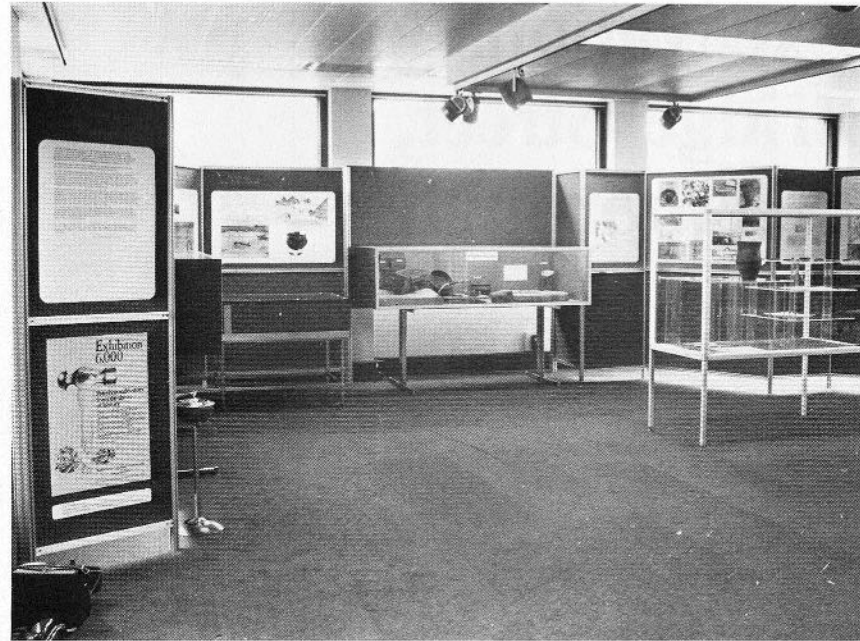


Fig 17 Exhibition 6000 (see page 35)

Excavations at Bridge Street, Peterborough

by Francis O'Neill

Excavations along the west side of Bridge Street (TL 19209834) between what was once Horry's drapery (no. 84) and Sturton's chemist shop (no. 78) took place from Summer 1975 to Winter 1976 on a plot of land vacant since 1928 when the last building was demolished (fig 18).

The site was dug, we hoped, to provide a ceramic sequence for Peterborough from mediaeval to modern times and to test the probable foundation date for the present town centre — reputedly planned by Martin de Bec (1133-55). The site lay on the original flood plain of the River Nene and was next to a causeway, now Bridge Street, which ran out to the river. It provided a suitable location for meeting both objectives stated above. The first has been achieved — with finds now in the process of being catalogued — and no evidence came to light to disprove the idea that there was a new town laid out in the twelfth-century.

Excavation was carried out within the confines of an east-west trench running along the middle of the plot (fig 18). The trench was 50m in length, 2m in width and ran from the street frontage to the end of the buildings shown on the 1:500 survey of 1884. The depth of the stratified deposits was, at the street front, 1.5m and, at the back, 2.25m. Most of the organic deposits were marked by an excellent state of preservation, and conditions here may well have been very like those at Brook Street, Winchester, where a gradually rising water-table inhibited the removal of accumulated floors and debris.

Although limited in size, the trench produced some good indications of the site's area-development in broad terms. At the bottom was found river silt with a high organic content. At the causeway end this peat-like silting, possibly as a result of tidal action up the Nene, rose to form a bank or platform some 16m wide — and this is presumed to

follow the causeway down to the river. On the bank and along the length of the trench were several tree stumps suggesting an over-all wooded area, possibly of alder and willow. As far as could be determined, the trees were cleared at one time and a north-south channel was cut, 18m from the causeway and 7m wide, apparently running parallel with the road from the river. This channel had been steyned with wattle along its eastern edge along the front of a clay bank. The purpose of the channel appears to have been for drainage as well as for access by boats up to the backs of the first tenements developing along the causeway which ran to a hythe on the river front. The new town layout with its port facilities points to the growing importance to Peterborough of trade.

The earliest timber building found was sited on the peaty bank and partially on the levelling-up deposit, and had its frontage 4m from the causeway. The earliest date which can be assigned to this, the beginning of the proper occupation, seems to be in the twelfth century. A period of optimum climate is recorded then for the British Isles, running from the middle of the twelfth into the thirteenth century. It may be significant that the beginning of the causeway and bank next to it seems to belong to the period prior to 1150, with the early tree phase and human occupation following immediately afterwards.

Over the course of the next 300 years the initial house area developed westwards over the channel, which had silted up after about 100 years. Initially, the steady colonisation took the form of minor timber structures. During the fifteenth century or early sixteenth century, stone was being used for footings and some walls, although there is good evidence for a timber-framed house of this period with jettied front over the street. The building survived in a mutilated condition until finally demolished in 1928. During the post-mediaeval period there were disturbances at the back of the plot in the form of drainage ditches. They ran north-south and east-west and were extensive enough to imply that a major drainage scheme was in operation, possibly due to climatic deterioration during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The major late mediaeval and post-mediaeval activity on the site seems to have been baking, and there was a feature belonging to the seventeenth century which can be interpreted as a donkey-mill. Nineteenth and twentieth-century site occupiers included coopers and tinsmiths.

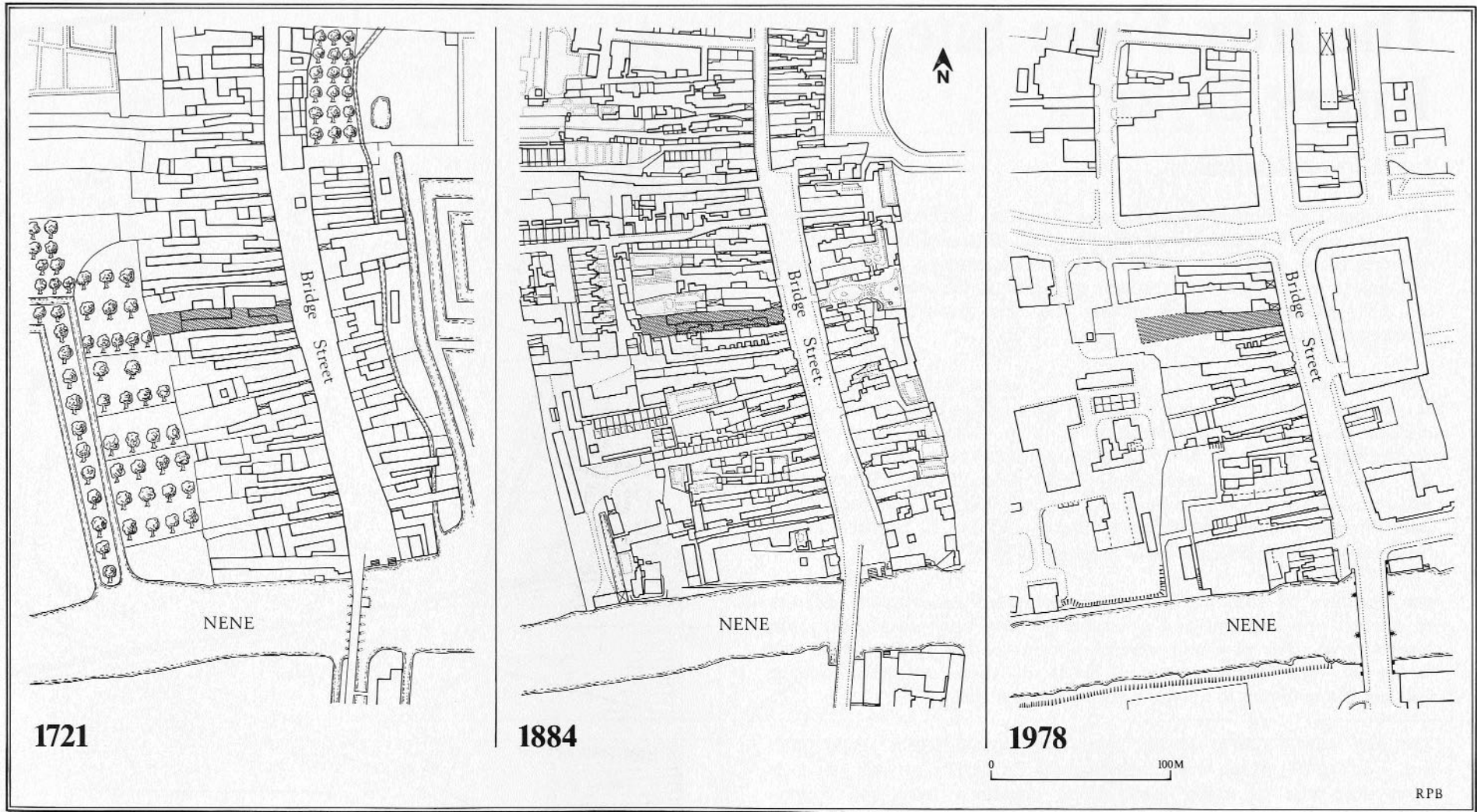


Fig 18 Bridge Street from 1721 to 1978 (excavation plot stippled)

The Itter Farm Site, King's Dyke

by Adrian Challands

The 'island' of Whittlesey has been virtually continuously occupied by man since at least the later Neolithic. Since Whittlesey 'island' was created by a hump of Oxford Clay with a capping of marine sand and gravel which protrudes through the Fens, it has been a prime site for the exploitation of brick-making clay and gravel since the early nineteenth century.

Our attention was drawn to areas at the western end of the 'island' at King's Dyke by reports of previous finds of archaeological material and the close proximity of the Fen Causeway Roman road. Accordingly, one of the first rescue excavations to be carried out by the newly-formed Archaeological Field Section of Peterborough Museum Society was at Itter Farm, King's Dyke (fig 20). The excavations were directed by the late Mr G. F. Dakin and Mr E. Standen during the early Winter of 1958 and early Summer of 1959.

An area 28m by 15m was completely excavated and revealed a series of ditches, one large pit and a smaller pit dug into gravel below the top-soil layer. The plan and selected sections of this system are shown in fig 20. The ditches represent parts of three different drainage systems, but common to all was a slight east-west fall.

The first was a system to the south. This comprised a single ditch (no. 7 on fig 20), which was falling towards Pit 5. The pit was just over 1.5m deep and its sandy loam filling contained third and fourth-century Nene Valley colour-coated sherds, mixed with residual first-century coarse pottery and a few Antonine samian sherds.

The second system included a large pit (3), 6m across by 2m deep, which was presumably the receptacle for drainage from Ditch 6 which ran into it from the north-west. A considerable quantity of artifacts was recovered, mainly from the silty organic lower filling of the pit. These included over 1000 Romano-British Nene Valley pottery sherds of late third to early fourth-century date as well as flint implements, Roman coins, fragments of millstone-grit quern,

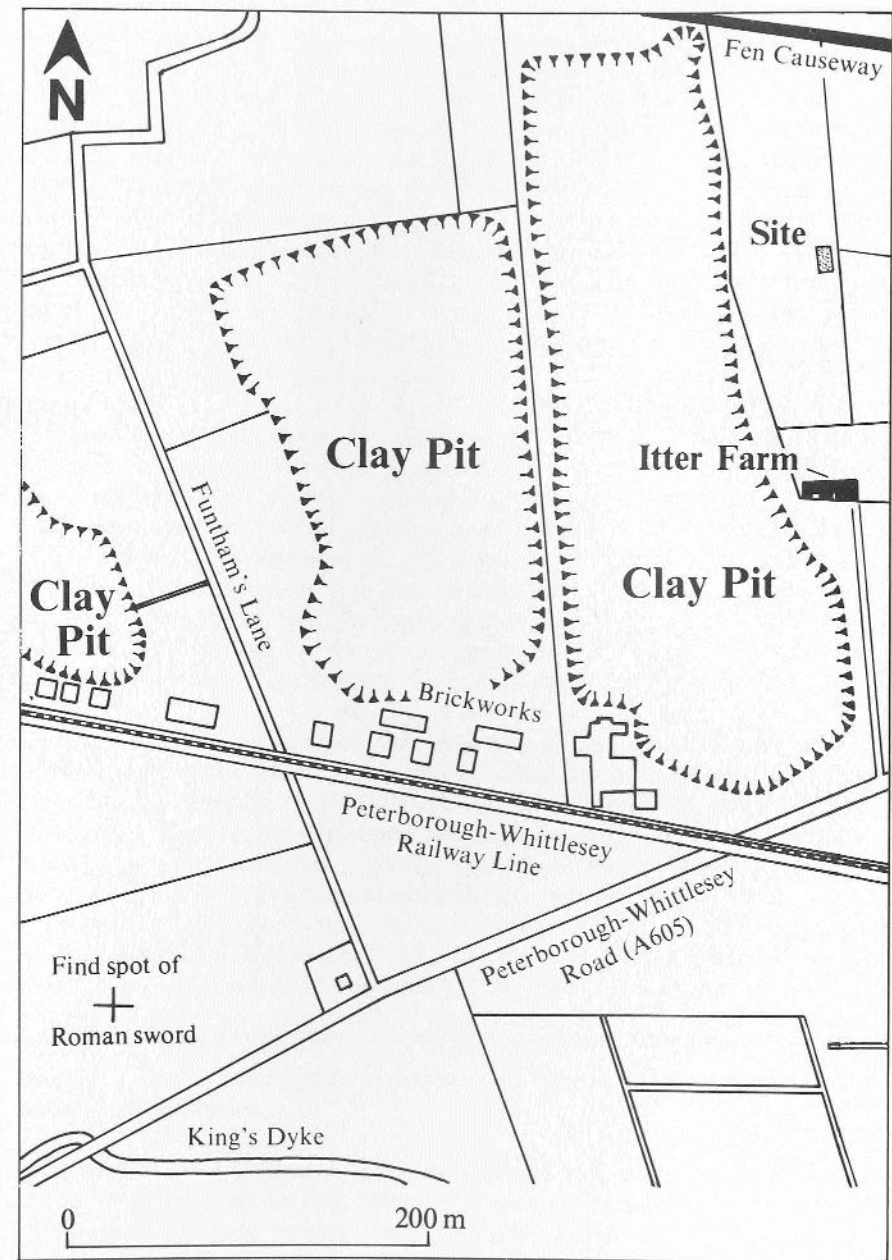
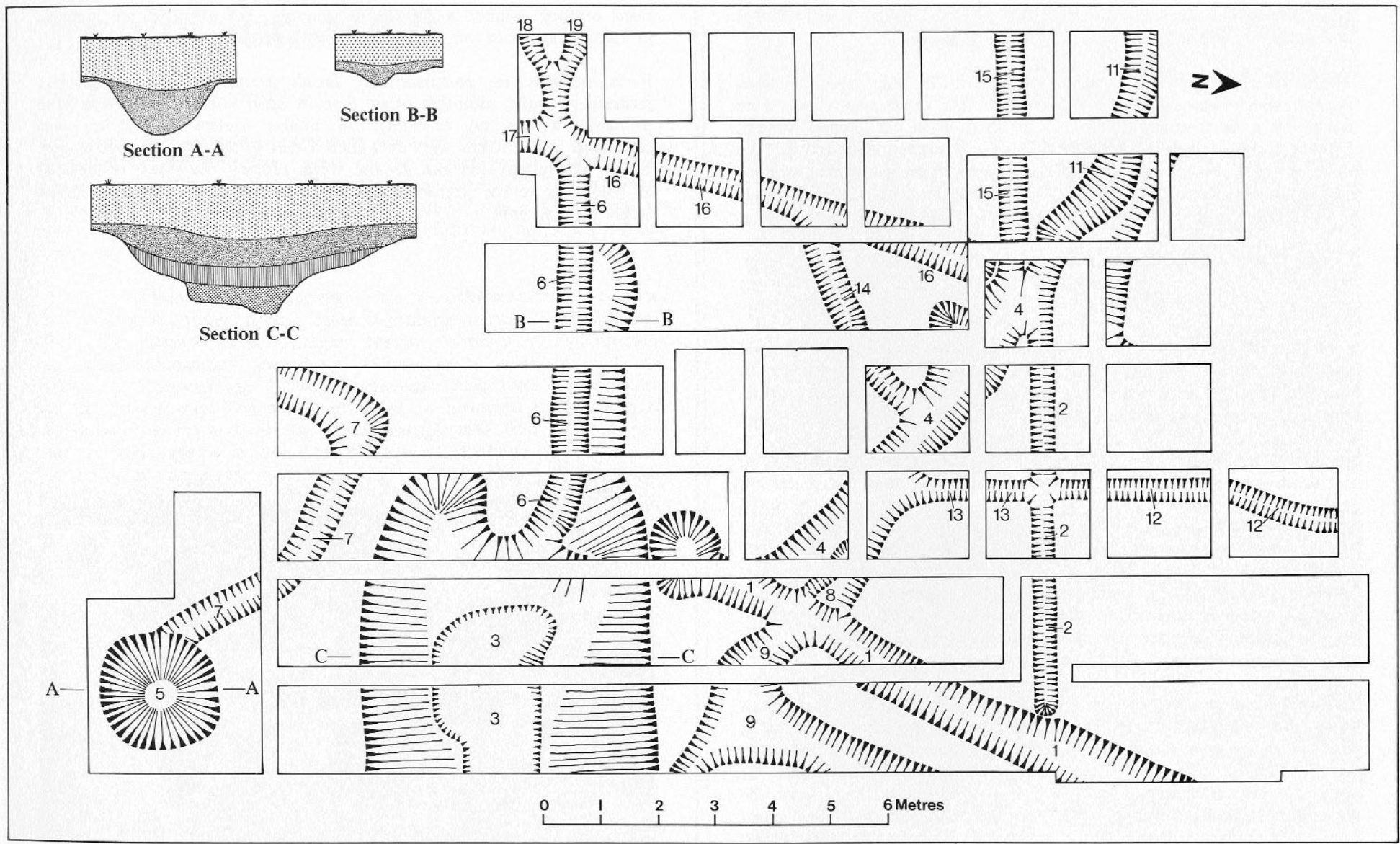


Fig 19 The Itter Farm site, King's Dyke, Whittlesey



Key to Sections





-  Sandy brown loam with pebbles
-  Darker brown sandy loam with pebbles
-  Dark brown silty loam
-  Black organic silty clay

Fig 20 Plan and sections of the excavations at Itter Farm, King's Dyke

bone pin and a faceted jet bead. In addition, quantities of animal bones representing cattle, sheep and goats were present.

The northern group of ditches (1,2,4 and 8-19) comprised the third system, which was more complicated than the other two. They were linked by a north-south ditch (16) to Ditch 6 in the second system. Ditches 1 and 4 were broader and in places deeper than any of the other ditches excavated on the site, and whilst only first-century pottery was recovered from Ditch 4, it was linked to other ditches which contained sherds of pottery dating from the first to the fourth century.

A total of ten Roman coins was found. The earliest was a heavily-worn bronze of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) and the latest a scarcely-worn specimen of Constans (A.D. 337-350).

From the evidence provided by the pottery and coins it can be assumed that this part of Whittlesey 'island' was occupied from sometime in the first century to at least the middle of the fourth century A.D., although occupation need not have been continuous. It is quite clear that only part of the system of ditches was excavated; this was confirmed by several facts. Evidence of surface finds and features to the south-west and south-east of the site indicated that the settlement had once been more extensive. In addition, ditch sections were noted in the quarry face to the west when sand and gravel was removed prior to working the underlying clay. After the site had been vacated by the Field Section, observations were made by the directors while mechanical diggers were removing the clay overburden. They noted that pits, ditches and stone-packed post-holes were being revealed to the north of the site, which covered an area at least three times as great as that excavated.

It may be that the site represents part of a Fen-Edge Romano-British farm and, although no buildings were found, the domestic utensils and post-holes give some basis for the view that there were dwellings in the vicinity. The ditches may not have bounded enclosures; for they do not enclose particularly useful-sized plots and must be presumed to have been cut at different times, but perhaps over a short period. They were probably cut as a result of rising water-tables which led to the abandonment of some sites in the Fens, such as Hockwold-cum-Wilton (*Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* LX, 1967, 39), in the mid third-century A.D. Although the Itter Farm site, lying as it does between 4.6 and 6.0m O.D., does not exhibit any evidence of flooding, the pottery datable to around the mid

third century exhibits a fall-off in quantity, but there is an increase in vessel numbers in the late third to early fourth century.

It is difficult to postulate the farm's economy, whether arable, pastoral or both, although other Roman farm sites in the Fens have primarily a pastoral economy. A similar system of ditches was excavated some 10km west at Lynch Farm (*Durobrivae* 1, 1973, 20), where the system laid out in the third century has been interpreted as belonging to the pastoral component on marginal land of a much larger farming unit.



Fig 21 Visitors to Exhibition 6000

Exhibition 6000

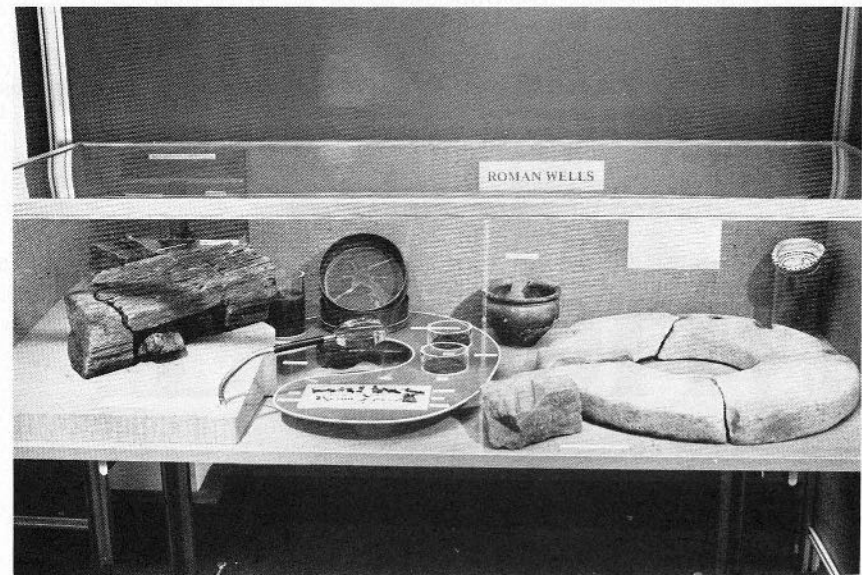
by *Adrian Challands*

A major archaeological exhibition entitled 'Exhibition 6000' was mounted in the Reception Area of the Peterborough Development Corporation's Touthill Close office block in April 1977. The aim was primarily educational: to introduce the public and local schools to the work of the Nene Valley Research Committee and to archaeological aims and methods in general.

There were four distinct components to the exhibition: a slide show, a series of illustrated panels, cases containing artifacts and a model. The slide show in the Lecture Theatre involved a synchronised recorded commentary describing archaeological methods and the history and archaeology of the Peterborough Area from the Neolithic to the present day. The panels provided an historical introduction to archaeological research in the Peterborough area and covered pre-history and aspects of the Romano-British settlement and economy. A series of large-size back-lit colour transparencies of the Water Newton Treasure in its restored condition illustrated the Romano-British Christian church. The Saxon and Mediaeval periods were covered by text and illustration and brought right up to the present time. Finally, an automatically repeating series of colour slides of exhibits in Peterborough Museum was shown in a light box with captions encouraging people to visit the City Museum.

Specific themes were selected for the cases such as 'Roman Wells', 'Post-Roman and Mediaeval Peterborough'. An antique display case housed books and articles by 'Early Archaeologists of the Peterborough Area'. A superb Iron-Age village model (fig 4) was produced by the Corporation's model makers based on part of the actual Fengate site plan. A great deal of research was done to make it as accurate as possible.

The exhibition ran for four weeks, and the end result of the exercise was that over 6000 visitors (which included 70 school parties) passed through the exhibition. Sales of NVRC publications were brisk.



Figs 22, 23 Above Exhibition 6000, bottom a display case showing Roman Well finds

Publications

The Nene Valley Research Committee has published the following works:

J. P. Wild, *The Romans in the Nene Valley* (1972)
Price 30p (overseas price \$0.75 U.S.)

F. M. M. Pryor, *Prehistoric Man in the Nene Valley* (1973)
Price 30p (overseas price \$0.75 U.S.)

D. F. Mackreth, *The Saxons in the Nene Valley* (1978)
Price 40p (overseas price \$1.00 U.S.)

F. M. M. Pryor, *Earthmoving on Open Archaeological Sites, Nene Valley Archaeological Handbook 1*, 1974
Price 45p (overseas price \$1.10 U.S.)

Durobrivae 1, 1973 (out of print)

Durobrivae 2, 1974 Price 75p (overseas price \$1.60 U.S.)

Durobrivae 3, 1975 Price 90p (overseas price \$1.80 U.S.)

Durobrivae 4, 1976 Price £1.15 (overseas price \$2.00 U.S.)

Durobrivae 5, 1977 Price £1.25 (overseas price \$2.10 U.S.)

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

(Prices above include postage and packing.)

These publications, together with this Review for 1978, are available from Mrs C. Mackreth, 32 Hall Lane, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 6RA.

friend again until the middle of December when he paid a visit to Milton and found him 'busy over his fossil plants & Roman antiquities'. They exchanged complaints about their respective publishers. Part IV of *Durobrivae* eventually appeared in February 1825, 18 months after Part III, and no more were issued until 1827. Clare for his part was vainly trying to get Taylor and Hessey to do something with the manuscript of what became *The Shepherd's Calendar*, but despite Artis' efforts on his behalf this too did not come out until 1827.

In the spring of 1825 the two men made several expeditions to Harrison's Close near Oxey Wood in Helpston, where Clare had found several sherds of Roman pottery of which '1 piece was the lettered'. Clare was convinced that some Roman camp or pottery was situated there and events show that Artis took the idea seriously. The *Stamford Mercury* of December 28th 1827 records the discovery by Edmund Tyrell Artis 'of a Roman villa in the neighbourhood of Helpston ... on a spot where even an antiquarian would not have anticipated anything of the kind'. The exact location, as we find from the plate published in *Durobrivae*, adjoined Oxey Wood.

Artis does not seem to have done much serious excavation in 1825 and the first half of 1826 when both men were preoccupied with their various publications. The two still visited each other, however, and continued to meet even after Artis' departure from Milton in August 1826 in slightly mysterious circumstances. Nothing explicit is known, but there is talk in letters of 'misdeeds' and a local tradition maintains that Artis got a local girl pregnant. Whether or not this is true, he does not seem to have left the area altogether; for he spent the winter of 1826-7 digging at Water Newton, possibly with Clare's assistance.

But after this excavation Artis embarked on a new career which did lead to his spending less time at Castor. As a youth he had found employment in a leading London confectioner's establishment and it was here that his skills attracted the attention of Earl Fitzwilliam and led to his departure for Milton. Now Artis became able to employ this particular talent on a grander scale; for in March 1827 we find him the new owner of premises in Hall-gate, Doncaster, the home of the Doncaster Racing Club. From this time on each Autumn Artis was in Doncaster acting as host to the gentlemen up for the St Leger meeting, where at the Club-rooms they might obtain accommodation and 'dinner, turtle, desserts, ices and wines'.

Artis did not neglect his old haunts entirely though. Although in November 1827 Clare complains that he has not seen his friend since

the previous winter, the following month finds Artis excavating the villa at Helpston Clare had helped to pinpoint. This was, however, his last full season of digging for a while and in May 1828 came the publication of *Durobrivae* in a complete edition incorporating his latest discoveries. Despite seeing each other only infrequently at this time Artis and Clare still kept in touch and in a long letter written about May 1829 Artis tells of the sale of his fossil collection forced on him by the need to give up his London premises, and announces that he intends to reside permanently in Castor, which he hopes will allow them to have a day's fishing together occasionally. In London that July Artis saw the bronze bust of Clare made by the sculptor Henry Behnes, but seems to have been unimpressed by it, perhaps comparing it unfavourably with his own efforts in plaster of a few years before.

By August 1830 Artis had settled in Castor, but it seems clear that his friendship with Clare was not so deep as before. For the next two or three years it is Henderson, the gardener at Milton, who is close to Clare and it is he who helps him to move to his new home in Northborough in 1832. A letter from Clare to Artis in May of this year is the only evidence of any contact between the two after 1829. Clare tells him of his plan to publish a new volume of poetry by subscription, but a list of subscribers published in the following October contains no mention of Artis.

For several years before this Clare had been prone to illness and depression and after 1830 he became worse. His mental state deteriorated and he began to lose touch with reality, a process which ended in his confinement in a private lunatic asylum in 1837 and later in Northampton Asylum where he remained until his death. Artis was essentially a practical man and it is possible that their friendship cooled as the one became more and more a man of the world, the other less and less in contact with it. But whatever the reason for its end their friendship, while it lasted, provides a fascinating link between two men of very different callings, the antiquary and the poet.