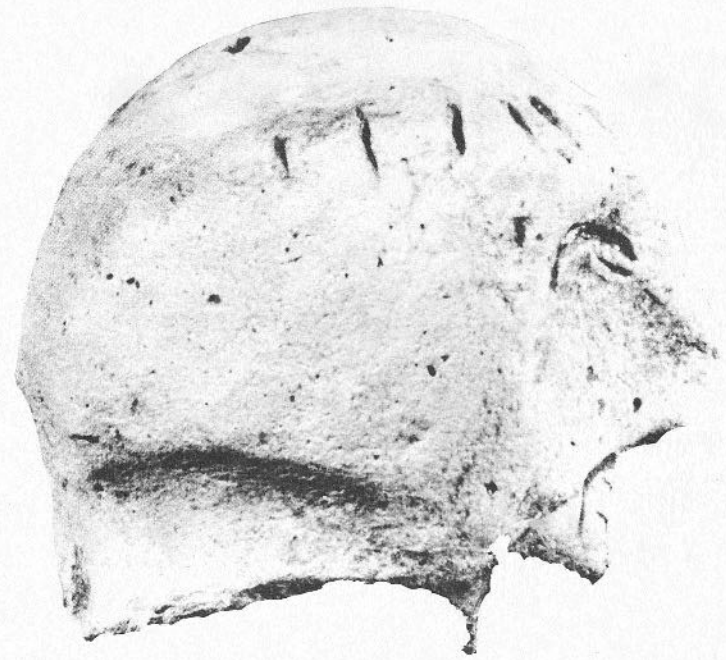




Durobrivae

A Review of Nene Valley
Archaeology: 2

1974



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Durobrivae: a review of Nene Valley Archaeology

Editor's Note

I expressed the hope in the first number of *Durobrivae* that the Review would go some way to meet the general demand for information about the current excavation programme of the Nene Valley Research Committee.

The response to *Durobrivae* 1 has been excellent and good national and local sales have given us a firm foundation for the second and future numbers.

I am grateful to all who have helped to launch the Review and make it a success. Mrs Christine Mackreth has had no small part in this!

John Peter Wild

Nene Valley Research Committee

The Nene Valley Research Committee wishes to record its thanks to the Peterborough Development Corporation Design Group for a great deal of practical help with the design and layout of the Review. The Corporation's Photographic Department kindly prepared the photographs of the Sacrewell head and the Hall Farm intaglio.

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The cover shows the intaglio from Hall Farm (see p. 20) and the title page shows the terracotta head from Sacrewell (see p. 17).

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The Year's Work: 1973

By John Peter Wild

In September 1973 Professor W. F. Grimes retired as chairman of the Nene Valley Research Committee. A founder member of the Waternewton Excavation Committee (1957), later the Nene Valley Research Committee, Professor Grimes has made a major contribution to archaeological research in the Peterborough area. His diplomatic skill, coupled with his unrivalled experience of practical archaeology in difficult circumstances, gives him an *auctoritas* which is respected everywhere. He will be greatly missed.

Dr Graham Webster was elected chairman of the Committee in succession to Professor Grimes. His wide experience of local government affairs will be particularly welcome at a time when the composition of the Committee, its responsibilities in the new county of Cambridgeshire and the financing of its archaeological objectives are under scrutiny.

The two full-time archaeologists in the Nene Valley, Donald Mackreth (Director of Excavations of the Nene Valley Research Committee) and Adrian Challands (Archaeological Officer of Peterborough Development Corporation) were in the field throughout the year, and shouldered in addition a great administrative burden.

More sites than ever have required excavation in 1973. In August eight sites were being investigated simultaneously. Grants totalling £40,000 have been made to the Committee by national and local bodies, principally the Department of the Environment (Ancient Monuments Division), the Peterborough Development Corporation, Peterborough City, and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough. Excavation at Fengate was financed by the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

In July 1973 the Peterborough Archaeological Working Group was formed at the instance of the Development Corporation to co-ordinate the efforts of the Nene Valley Research Committee and the local authorities in the archaeological field.

In the brief of the Working Group is the establishment of an Archaeological Field Centre in the Nene Valley, with facilities for storage, conservation and study of material. Ideas have been put forward for a purpose-built Centre designed by the Director of Excavations in consultation with the Development Corporation and the other local authorities. In the present economic climate, however, it seems unlikely that building could begin within the next two years.

The problem of storing finds and halting their deterioration becomes worse with each excavation. As a temporary measure, the Committee has leased the former W. H. Smith's premises in Exchange Street in

Peterborough, and is installing there some of the most urgently needed facilities.

In this number of *Durobrivae* we can review in detail the results of only a few of the many excavations undertaken in 1973 (see fig. 1 for sites).

Fengate lived up to its reputation (see p. 10). Francis Pryor, leading the Royal Ontario Museum expedition for 1973, worked on a 2½-acre site on Storcey's Bar Way, Fengate. The principle features revealed were a ring-ditch and a quarry-pit associated with neolithic Grooved Ware, and a contemporary drove-way and field-system. The sheer quantity of small finds was astonishing, and new methods of recovering and recording them were developed.

The long campaign of excavation on the *Lynch Farm Complex* (Site 1), Orton Waterville, is nearing its end. This season Adrian Challands concentrated on the linear ditches on the southern approaches to the site, and located what may be an entrance (see p. 23).

The neighbouring Roman site at *Lynch Farm* (Site 2) was shown by G. B. Dannell and J. P. Wild to have had military occupation. Two phases of ditches were traced, forming two sides of a small temporary camp. Excavation of a half-timbered building, possibly a temple, completed the work on the late Roman farm.

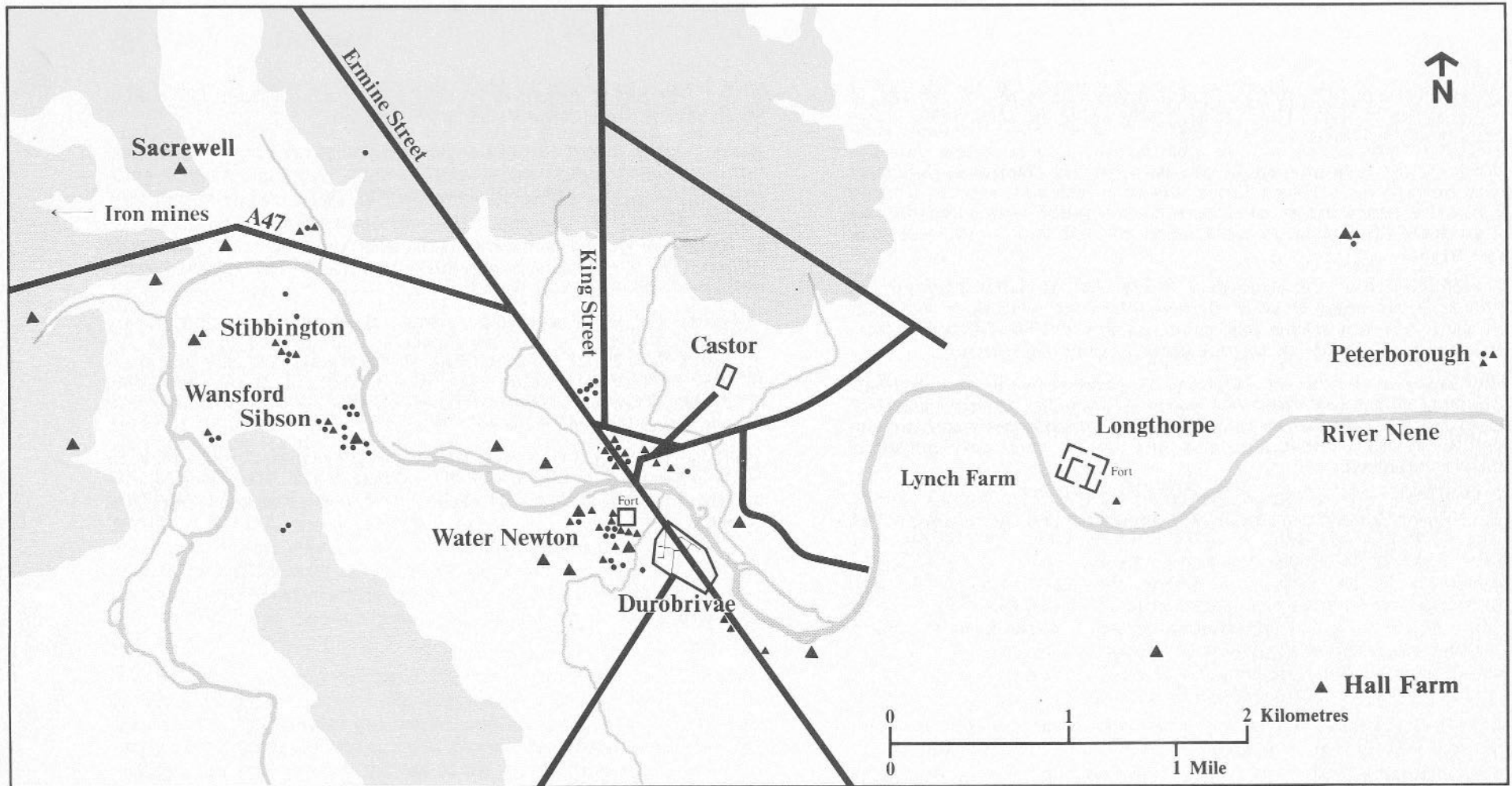
Across the Nene at *Longthorpe* progress on the new golf-course has been rapid and 1973 was the last season in which further excavation of the fortress was possible. Professor Frere examined an area south-west of the headquarters building (see p. 20). It contained two barrack-blocks and two other buildings of unknown function.

At the eastern end of the Longthorpe Scheduled Area a new hotel is planned. The site was surveyed by proton-magnetometer and likely anomalies were dug by Richard Jones. No significant archaeological features were traced.

In this number of *Durobrivae* G. B. Dannell reviews recent excavations in *Normangate Field*, Castor, and puts the results into historical perspective (see p. 7). In 1973 a small aisled barn was uncovered and found to oversail the footings of an earlier circular building of unknown purpose.

While the Committee's main responsibility is to the threatened sites within the Designated Area of Greater Peterborough, it must still cope with threats outside.

The Welland-Nene pipeline cut a known site at *Sacrewell* near



- ▲ Villa or large Roman building
- ▲ Small Roman building
- Potter's kiln
- Land over 100 feet (height)
- Roman roads

Fig 1 Map of the archaeological sites in the Nene Valley

Wansford late in 1973. Adrian Challands was able to record the remains of an extensive villa. The related iron-working furnaces were exceptionally well preserved (see p. 13).

Work on the long-awaited flyover to carry the Peterborough-Oundle road over the A1 at *Kate's Cabin*, Alwalton, will start shortly. Richard Jones cut trial-trenches at Christmas 1973 and discovered Roman stone buildings and other features which will require excavation in due course.

The Middle Nene Archaeological Group, led by John Hadman and Steven Upex, began a series of excavations at a Roman villa near *Barnwell*. The first results were promising (see p. 27). Conditions there are particularly good for the preservation of organic material.

Excavation of the Roman building (the *praetorium*) in *Castor village* continued under J. P. Wild at Easter 1973. Carolyn Dallas' excavation in the garden of Elmlea revealed a sequence of early mediaeval occupation levels which should shed new light on the early development of the present village.

Evidence of pagan Saxon occupation on the site of the Roman farm at *Hall Farm*, Orton Longueville, was found by Donald Mackreth (see

p. 19). The Saxon structures promise a great deal of new information about settlers in the Nene Valley at that period.

Richard Jones, diverted from Longthorpe, undertook a limited examination of a Roman farm with overlying Saxon occupation at *Walton*, North Bretton (see p. 29). The historical sequence here may have mirrored that at Hall Farm.

In Peterborough City Anne Sandford uncovered a mediaeval culvert in *Midgate*. Richard Hillier is recording some of the characteristic post-mediaeval architecture of the city.

Publication of the excavations is one of the Committee's prime tasks, and some progress has now been made on this. Francis Pryor has just published as a Royal Ontario Museum monograph the first report on Fengate 1971-72 (see inside back cover). Richard Jones' excavation of the late Roman cemetery at Lynch Farm (Site 3) will follow as a *British Archaeological Report*.

Manuscripts for the final report on work in Normangate Field should be ready in the autumn. The first NVRC Archaeological Handbook, *Earth-moving on Open Archaeological Sites* by Francis Pryor, has just been issued.

Roman Industry in Normangate Field, Castor

By Geoffrey Dannell

The Roman remains in Normangate Field lie within an area of some 28 hectares (69 acres), immediately north of the Nene. Ignoring the modern intrusions of the railway and Station Road, Castor, the site is bounded by three principal roads: to the west, by Ermine Street and the King Street branch (fig 2:1); to the east, by a branch road (2) to the Fen Causeway, which meets Ermine Street at the bridge-head (3); to the north, by a by-road some 400 metres north of the river (4). Within this crude triangle, internal drove-ways serve the various nuclei of occupation (5), and the wide feeder-road to the Roman house in Castor village strikes out to the north (6).

This skeleton of roads, so clearly visible from the pioneer air photographs of Major G. W. G. Allen, is certainly not of one period. Artis (1828, pl. XXXIX) shows an earlier, flat and supposedly "military" version of Ermine Street, diverging from the line of the huge *agger* still visible in the field. Recent excavations failed to find it, but suggested a Hadrianic date for the principal road embankment. The other main roads certainly existed by this period, but the drove-ways may be later.

Wherever excavation has taken place recently, the first substantial Roman activity is represented by large areas of burnt natural sand, covered by friable clay and wood-ash. Pits associated with this work contain fine grey-wares of the mid-second century, but no kilns are known and we must begin to think seriously of the problems involved in firing vessels in bonfires and in clamps in which the leather-hard pots were covered by turves.

While the pits contain domestic rubbish, neither stone nor wooden buildings have been located. Perhaps the potters were throwing their vessels within the town at this period, and using the scrub-lands by the river only for firing. If this is right, Normangate Field remained fairly open ground until towards the end of the second century.

By this time, however, a major technical revolution had swept the area. The art of colour-coating was introduced to the indigenous workers and the Castor potteries emerged to send their beakers throughout the Roman provinces.

Exactly where the first kilns were built is as yet uncertain; but Brian Hartley excavated a small and seemingly experimental kiln in Normangate Field (7). Pits containing the earliest vessel-forms are also present in the general area north of the railway embankment. The new

prosperity affected the whole social and economic life of the lower Nene Valley, and its market town of Durobrivae. As imports of samian ware from Gaul continued to decline, sales of colour-coated wares boomed, and it is not coincidental that this period saw an abrupt development of stone and half-timbered buildings (8).

Ore roasting and smelting was carried out to the west, near Wansford, from ore mined in Bedford Purlieus. The workshops in Normangate Field dealt with the smelted product, and both further refined and fabricated it. The buildings appear to be set in pairs, so that they are separated by a narrow alley on the one side, while on the other wide doors allowed carts to discharge their loads under cover.

In the back yards of the buildings kitchen gardening doubtless supplied the workers' families; but soon the pressure on available land forced further industry into the free space. Artis records furnaces and clay dumps in the back yards, while recent excavations have revealed more kilns.

Along the drove-way parallel to Ermine Street a series of unexpected structures came to light. The frontage of Ermine Street was apparently too valuable to be used for the burial and religious monuments often found close to towns. Against the drove-way was found a small mausoleum containing three burials and belonging to the fourth century (9). A woman buried there with gold and silver ear-rings, silver brooch, bronze bangles, and jet spindle-whorl is a reminder of the affluence of this provincial society. A large number of weights probably from goldsmith's balances have come from Durobrivae, showing that there was sufficient demand for such craftsmen to settle there.

The other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the drove-way are open to various interpretations, but the circular structures are strongly suggestive of religious use. Circular shrines are known locally at Collyweston and Brigstock in the third century. The most northerly of the Normangate Field series (10) has a broad entrance to the South, and a support for a bench along the inside of the northern half; the southern building (11) had a tessellated floor. The simple barn adjoining it (12) had a portico added, together with an apse, and then it, too, received a tessellated floor. The way in which the apse faces the wide entrance suggests that perhaps there was a cult statue which could be seen immediately on entering the building.

Land pressures allowed the erection of an aisled barn over the northern circular building in the late third or early fourth century as the industrial activity continued to expand. Dr Graham Webster has confirmed the intensity of industrial settlement in the eastern sector of Normangate Field where he investigated buildings along the roads, and a mass of ditched plots can be seen in the area of the drove-way to Castor village (13).

Occupation clearly lasted until the end of the fourth century; for the framework of local organisation maintained the drove-way drainage ditches. Near the mausoleum the final rapidly deposited filling contained coins of the House of Valentinian (after 370), but nothing of Theodosius. Late forms of colour-coated wares were present, together with new, heavy, grey-wares from still unidentified sources.

Future work should prove rewarding. A recent air-photograph by Mr S. G. Upex records the outline of what may be a theatre in the eastern sector, together with a series of substantial stone buildings (14). To the west, the junction of Ermine Street and King Street must rank as a major site of historical interest, while the winding drove-ways suggest heavy occupation on the building plots to the north.

We must remember the vast extent of the northern suburbs of Durobrivae. Professor St. Joseph has recorded closely packed buildings from the town to the river. These almost certainly equal the area of Normangate Field which we have surveyed. Moreover, stone building debris and kiln waste has been found as far north as the A47.

So it is likely that by the beginning of the fourth century many more people were living immediately outside the town than within it. It seems probable, on present evidence, that the larger towns do not boast suburbs on this scale, and Durobrivae may one day be seen to rank with its "twin" at the other end of the limestone ridge at Corinium Dobunorum (Cirencester).

Finally, we must ask what those industrial suburbs looked like. Today's green fields and quiet river, which we are striving to preserve, are probably deceptive. Then the smoke hung like a pall on the prevailing south-west wind. Sparks flew from the kilns and furnaces, while the noise and activity betokened Birmingham rather than John Clare's Northamptonshire. Disraeli described the industrial squalor of Bromwich and Cradley; the master craftsmen labouring over their hearths; the families and apprentices hammering and filing away; the noise; the dirt; the drinking.

"On Sunday the masters begin to drink; for the apprentices there is dog-fighting without any stint. On Monday and Tuesday the whole population of Woodgate is drunk."

For what else were all those beakers used?

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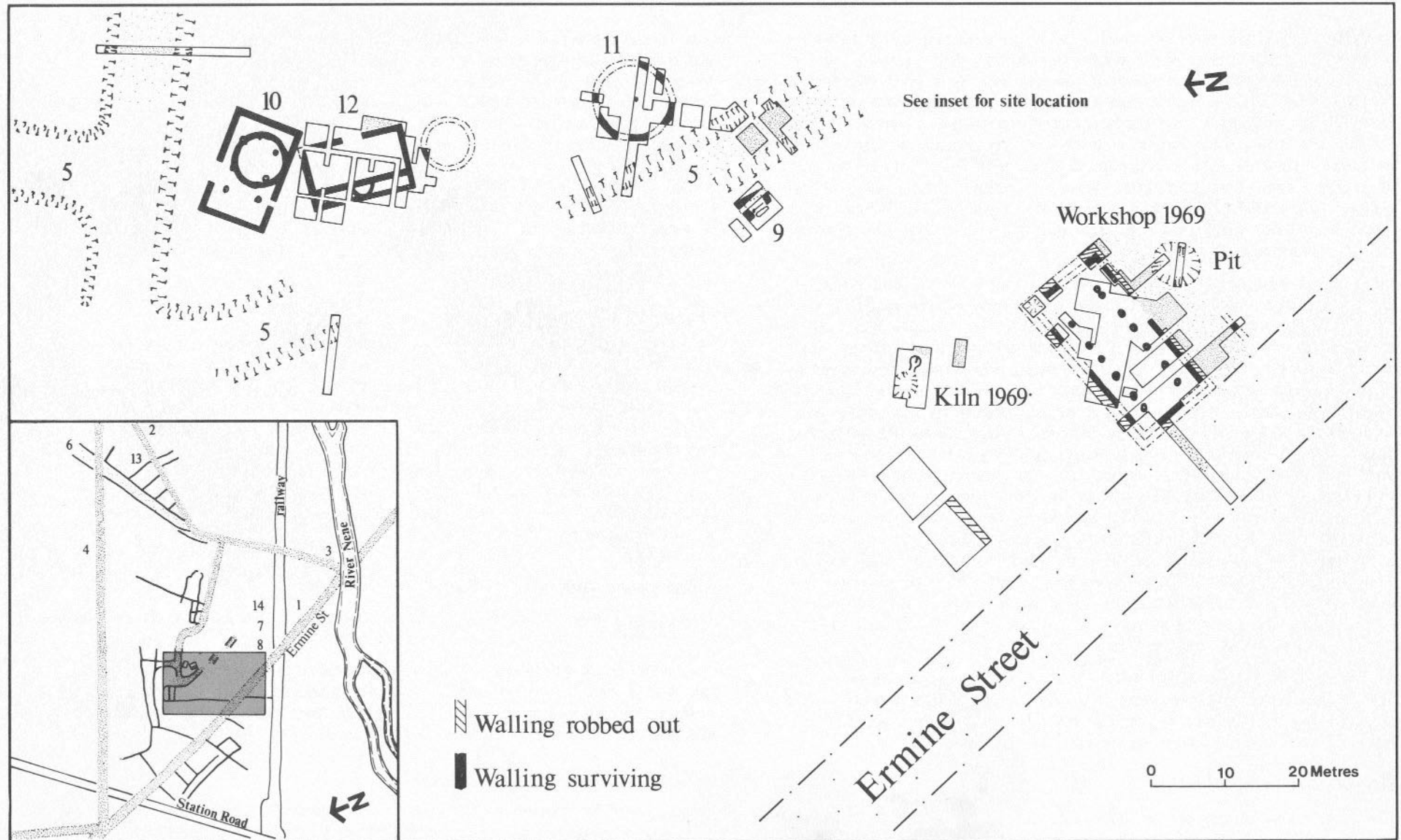


Fig 2 Plan of Roman buildings and roads in Normangate Field, Castor

Fengate, 1973: the Flint Projectile Points

By Francis Pryor

Excavations in 1973 were confined to a 2½ acre site opposite Fowler's Mothers Pride bakery in the Storey's Bar Road (Pryor (1974), fig. 2). Rather to our surprise, we revealed the remains of a very substantial later neolithic/Bronze-Age settlement, the principal elements of which were a large ring-ditch and contemporary quarry-pit, a series of field boundary ditches, including a well-defined drove-way, a wattle-lined well and a number of other occupation features. As the total number of artifacts recovered numbered well over 6,000, I have decided to confine this account to just one type: projectile points. These were found associated with sherds of Grooved Ware, a widespread type of neolithic pottery.

The large number of points found indicates that hunting, and probably also fishing in the nearby Fen streams and meres, played an important part in the economy at Fengate c.2,000 B.C. We should not forget, however, that sometimes even easily identifiable artifacts, like our projectile points, can be used in several ways. The Masai cattle-herders of Kenya, for instance, use transverse arrowheads identical to the Fengate specimens to obtain blood, an important part of their diet, from a vein in the bullocks' necks (Forde (1943), 295-6). Blood-letting does not kill the beasts; it does, however, afford a useful example of the kind of practice that cannot conceivably be demonstrated directly by archaeology. We know from a study of the animal bones that cattle formed an important part of the Fengate economy in later neolithic times (Harman in Pryor (forthcoming)), and we also know that transverse arrowheads were in use at the same time. But the fact that modern Africans have used the latter to bleed the former will only be significant when we know enough about the social organisation and subsistence patterns of later neolithic man in eastern England to attempt a comparative study. Such a time is a long way off.

All but two (fig. 3, nos. 23-24) of the projectile points shown here belong to Clark's 'petit tranchet derivative' type (Clark (1934)). This classification can often be ambiguous, however. For the Fengate reports I shall use the following simpler scheme.

Single barb, pointed tip

The length and shape of the barb (fig. 3, 1-19) varies from being pronounced (nos. 5 and 7) to almost absent (no. 9). Nos. 8 and 9 can

only be distinguished from tangless versions of no. 23 by virtue of the fact that they appear to be asymmetrical — an admittedly amorphous distinction; but flint artifacts seldom fit neatly into pigeon-holes. Perhaps the larger examples with pronounced barbs were used as fish spearheads or eel-forks (fig. 4). Durrington Walls and Woodhenge — Grooved-Ware sites that produced many similar points — are both situated near the river Avon. Indeed, eels have always been important in the Fenland (Wild (1973), 20) and eel-forks may be seen in many Fenland pubs today (try the public bar of the Spade and Shovel, Eye). However, whether the arrangement illustrated in fig. 4 would be strong or flexible enough, is another question. Eel-forks are discussed by Clark (1948), 64, 73.

Single barb, blunt tip

This type (fig. 3, nos. 10-14) is not always readily separated from the transverse type discussed below. The impression given is that of a pointed type deliberately blunted (nos. 12 and 14). The barb's lower edge is often concave (nos. 10, 13, 14), but is less carefully or completely retouched (or blunted) than the edge which, I suggest, slotted into the spear or arrow shaft (fig. 4). This idea was first suggested to me when I noticed that the striking platform and bulb of percussion — usually the thickest part of a flake — were at the tip of the supposed arrowhead (fig. 3, nos. 10-12, 14). Little or no attempt has been made to remove these protuberances.

Transverse points

These (fig. 3, nos. 15-22) were probably mounted as shown (fig. 4) and were intended to produce a bleeding wound.

Two other points, almost certainly arrowheads, were also found. No. 23, the barbed and tanged example, is usually associated with Beaker and Bronze-Age sites, whereas no. 24, a broken leaf-shaped type, is more often found in earlier or middle neolithic contexts.

A note on the reconstructions

Points could be secured to the spear or arrow-shafts by binding them with animal sinew or by applying resin glue to the slotted shaft. More resin would have been used than is shown in fig. 4.

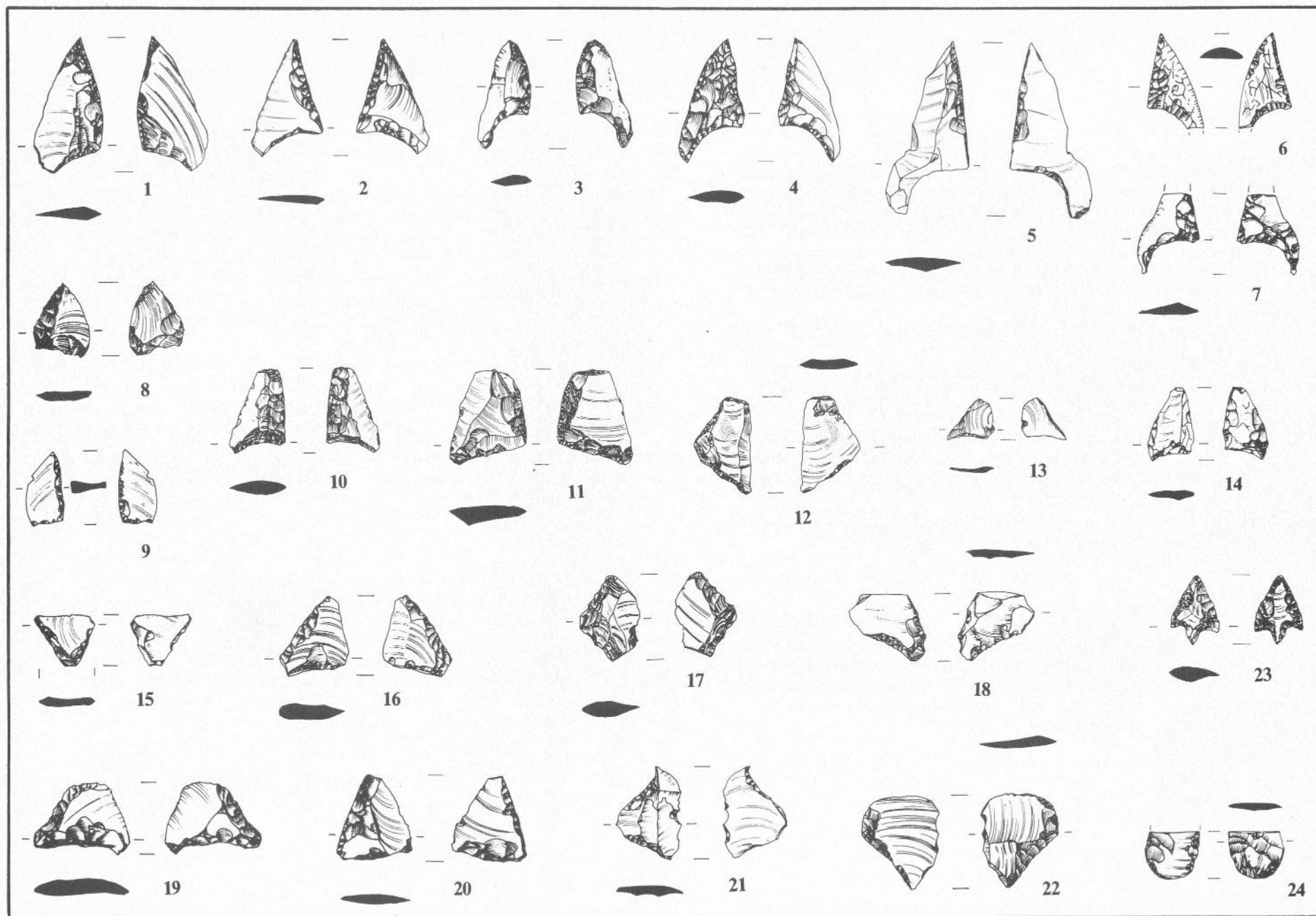


Fig 3 Fengate 1973: the projectile points

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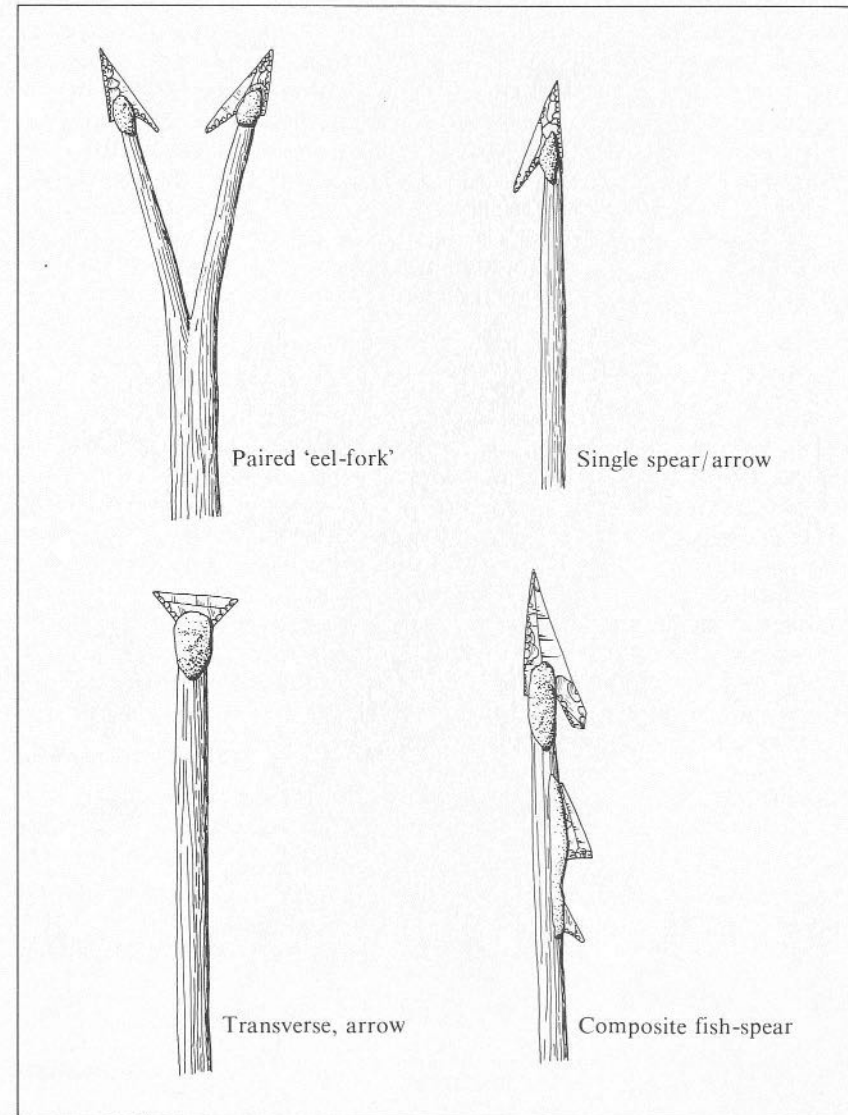


Fig 4 Suggested ways of mounting the Fengate points

A Roman Industrial Site and Villa at Sacrewell, Thornhaugh

By Adrian Challands

Introduction

During construction of a major water-supply pipeline north of the Nene at Sacrewell 30cm of topsoil was stripped from an area $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long by 36 metres wide (fig 6). Between the 100 and 150 foot contours, extensive structural features were noted (*O.S.* (1956), 33) on the line of the 12 metre wide pipe-trench. Partial destruction was inevitable across the remaining 24 metres. It was decided that before further construction was started recording was necessary.

Geology

In the vicinity of the buildings, flaggy basal beds of Lower Lincolnshire Limestone lie immediately below the topsoil. Fissures within this are filled with a drift deposit of very sandy clay.

Lower Estuarine sands outcrop 30 metres further south and contain lenses cemented by iron oxides. At the base of this stratum Northampton sands and ironstones occur, represented at Sacrewell by ironstone, 0.3 to 0.6 metres thick.

The Villa

Projecting from the trench side, building 1 (fig 5) was represented by one course of herringbone pitched limestone footings. The north footing was only 1.0 metre wide and the south footing 1.3 metres. Only slight traces of the east footing remained. The room measured at least 19 metres long by 5.5 metres wide, floored with limestone set in mortar, which was so far decayed that it was impossible to determine if floor or sub-floor was represented. No trace of internal partitions could be found, although a horizontally pitched earlier footing on a different alignment was utilised in the flooring. Localised burning directly on the floor (F2, 4) together with a heavy charcoal deposit (F3) may indicate use after the building's destruction. An area of dark loam (F1) containing fragmented limestone, mortar, *opus signinum*, flue-tiles, roof-tiles, nails and tufa, appeared to have been levelled and heavily trodden.

Footings of buildings 2 and 3 may represent one structure. Building 3 had been badly damaged. The footings of both were 0.8 metres wide, with similar well-mortared herringbone pitching. Considerable quantities of tufa surrounded them, and spread over the patchy internal flooring of mortar which had been laid directly on the natural rock

surface. Simple mortar flooring (F5, 7, 10) was laid directly on natural bedrock. Considerable signs of burning were noted on the flooring (F7), while that at F5 included large fragments of broken tile. Beneath dark loam and charcoal containing fragments of red painted wall plaster (F21) were similar mortar floors (F8, 18), together with mortar levelled over limestone hardcore (F9). In addition, a short length of damaged footing (F21) suggested another building.

On the same orientation as building 1, the building 4 had similar footings, but less substantial at 0.65 metres wide. They formed a room at least 9 metres long by 5 metres wide. The interior was filled with a mixture of soft lime and charcoal. Projecting south a short length of footing suggested a further room.

An enigmatic structure (F22), which may represent a malt kiln (Corder (1961), 53), lay south-east of building 4 on the same alignment and had a well-mortared horizontally pitched wall, 0.25 metres wide. The walling formed a 2.2 metre square chamber with a central flue 0.7 metres wide by 1.0 metre long, pointing south (fig 7). Internally it was paved with mortared limestone slabs, extending through, and 0.7 metres beyond, the flue. Although the flue sides were burnt, no sign of burning could be seen within the chamber.

The Industrial Site

In 120 metres of trench running southwards from the buildings no fewer than 8 ironworking furnaces were located. Three of these had been badly damaged and were recognised only by quantities of slag and reddening of the natural rock. The better state of preservation of the remaining furnaces may be due to their location around the buildings which saved them from the plough. It is probable that all the furnaces are of simple bowl type with the exception of furnace 4 and an additional furnace outside the main trench.

A diameter of 2.5 metres was indicated for Furnace 1 on the evidence of the burnt underlying bedrock. Fragments of fired clay indicated a lining. Some slag was found within the furnace itself, although most of it was embedded in charcoal, where it has been raked out to the west.

The better preserved clay lining of furnace 2 demonstrated how the lining was positioned around the perimeter to form a bowl. The filling comprised of purple clayey mixture containing charcoal and iron slag,

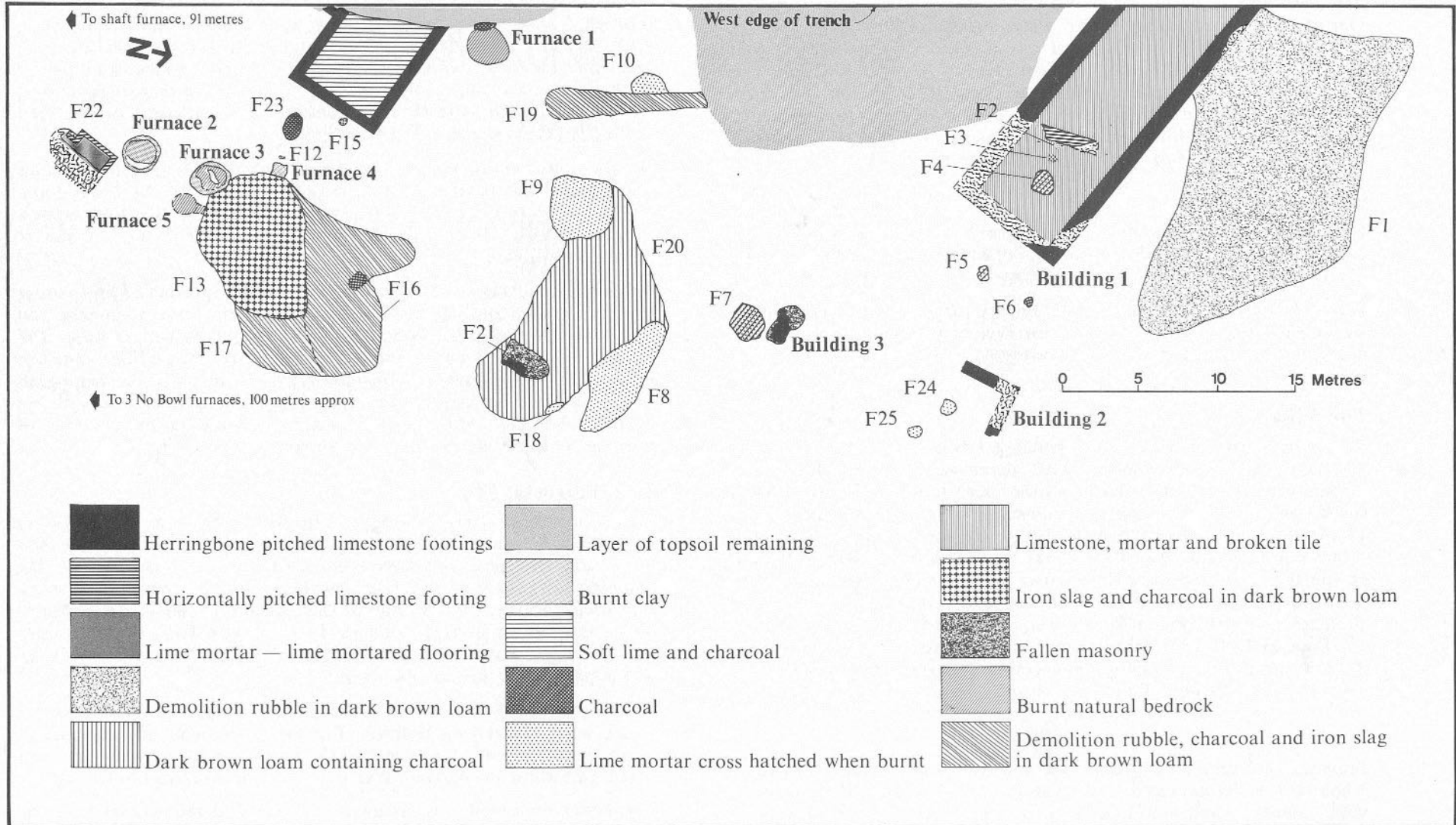


Fig 5 Plan of the villa at Sacrewell

giving way on the eastern edge to pure charcoal and slag.

Furnaces 3 and 5 were of similar construction. Furnace 5 had probably been demolished and replaced by 3. Furnace 4 was of different construction, comprising a burnt clay and mortar floor surrounded by traces of a rectangular masonry chamber. No slag was found within it. The function may have been ore roasting, to drive off moisture. These furnaces shared a common raking area (F13, 16, 17), composed of dark brown loam, demolition rubble, charcoal and slag, the latter increasing in density (F13) towards the furnace.

The shaft-furnace was located outside the main trench, and was cut by a minor pipeline trench. Calcareous clay which had been subjected to very high temperatures formed the lining, still standing to a height of 0.45 metres (see p. 18). Its diameter could not be established, although it was more than 0.6 metres.

Conclusions

A period of occupation from at least the mid-second to the late fourth century is implied by the pottery finds.

The general layout of the buildings suggests a winged villa which underwent at least one major alteration. Debris extending for 100 metres in the field to the west suggests that the principal rooms lie in that direction. It is in this area that the fired clay head (see p.17) was ploughed up.

The amount of building material found associated with iron smelting debris implies prior demolition and levelling of at least part of the structure. Indeed, the proximity of working furnaces would make occupation, to say the least, uncomfortable. The filling within building 4 may be associated with iron smelting. It may be tentatively suggested that an agricultural unit, based on the villa, was superseded, possibly in the late fourth century, by more remunerative metalworking activities.

A similar site is located two miles north of Sacrewell at Barnack. Together they may point to a major change in the economy of this section of the Nene Valley. However, only extensive investigation of sites such as Sacrewell can clarify this point.

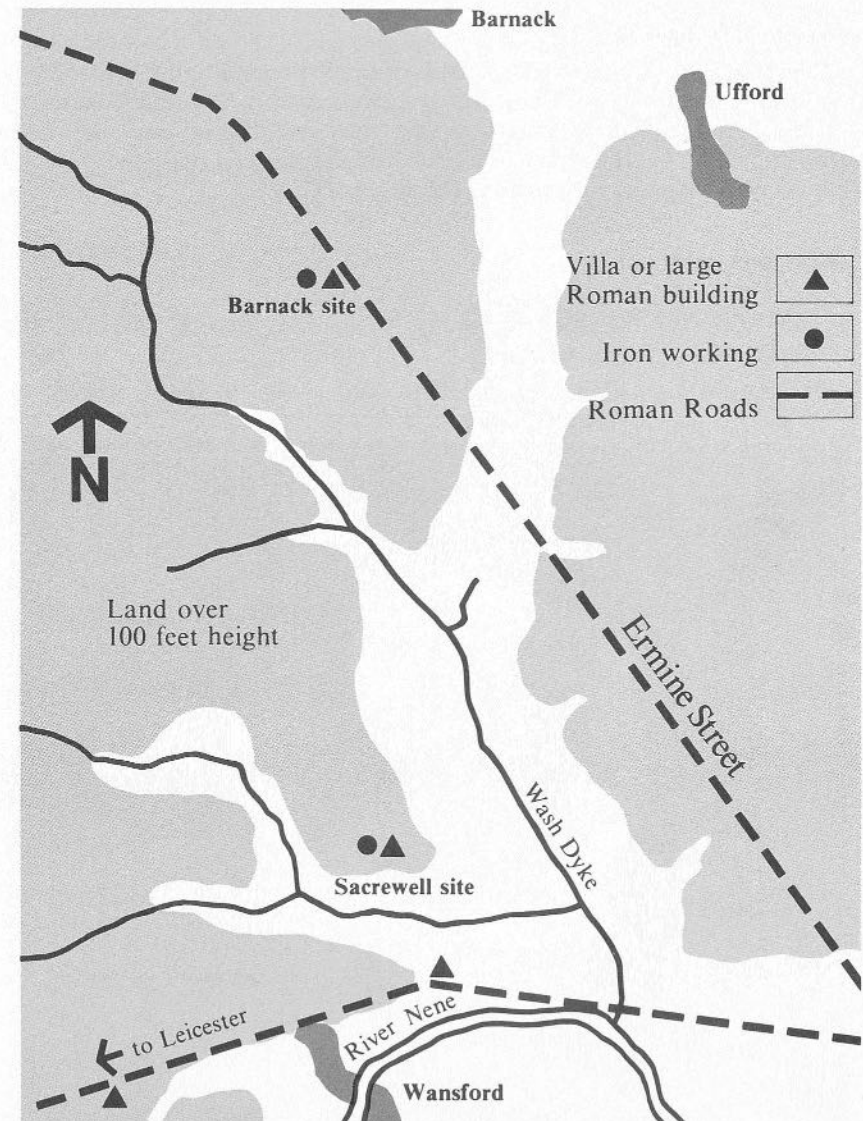


Fig 6 The situation of the Roman villa at Sacrewell

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Mr D. O. Powell of the William Scott Abbott Trust, Sacrewell Farm, for his help and encouragement; to Messrs. Edmund Nuttall Limited, the contractors, for their indulgence and assistance on site; to T. C. Hawksley, the consulting engineers; and finally to all those who materially assisted in the site work.

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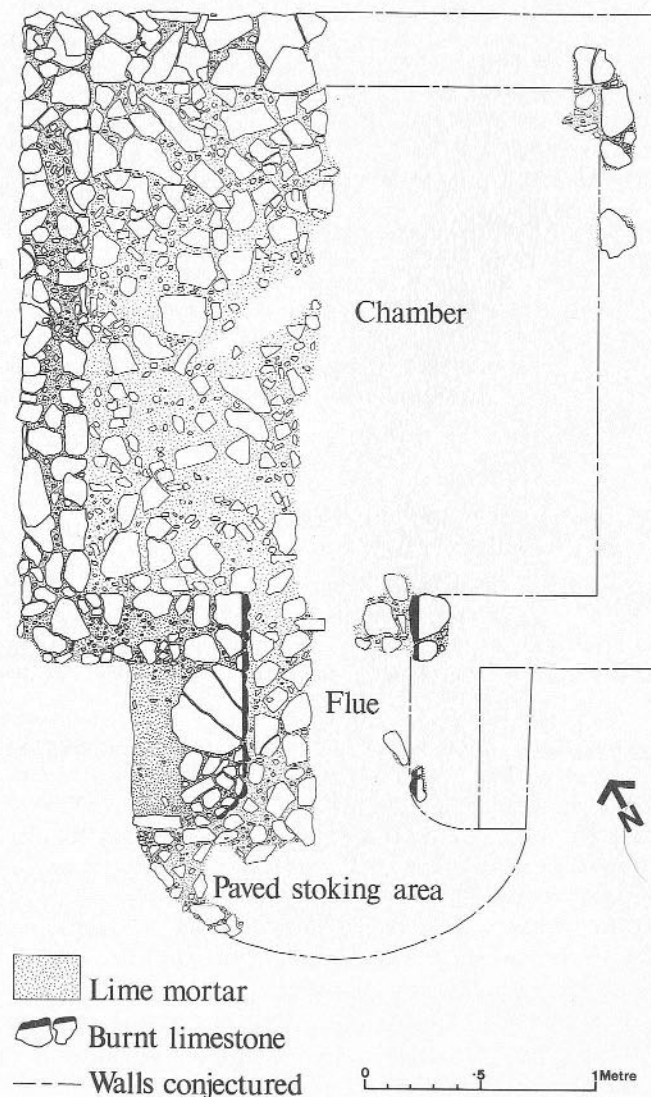


Fig 7 The possible malt-kiln from Sacrewell

A Terracotta Head from Sacrewell

By Professor Jocelyn Toynbee

This small fired clay male head, 5.5cm high and measuring 5.5cm from back to front, was found unstratified at Sacrewell near Thornhaugh on the site of a Roman villa (TF 075004). The area has produced 80% third-century and 20% second-century pottery, but nothing mediaeval. The clay is of a deep pink colour, and of the same colour and fabric as are most of the *tegulae* discovered in this region. There can be little doubt that the object is of Romano-British origin.

There is an irregular break at the base of the neck, which indicates that the head once crowned a full-length statuette, less probably a bust, but possibly a long giraffe-like neck, to which no body was attached. The tip of the nose and tip of the chin have been broken off. There is no trace of a beard. The top and back of the head are completely plain and smooth. No ears are shown; but above the places where they should have been there projects, more strongly on the person's right side than on his left, a kind of brim suggestive of a cap shaped like a shallow dome. Below this brim, on the low brow, there are 11 crudely cut, short, vertical incisions, probably representing hair, one immediately above the nose, 4 above the right eye and cheek, and 6 above the left eye and cheek. The large bean-shaped eyes are outlined by incision, the right eye being much more sloping and a good deal larger than the left eye. The nose is large and very projecting. Beneath the nose a roughly rectangular area, outlined with straight, continuous, incised lines, appears to represent a huge gaping mouth, along the top and bottom of which are slight indications, by incising, of an upper and a lower row of teeth. The cheeks are full and smooth.

Crude provincial work of this kind is almost impossible to date. A late second- or third-century date would seem to fit the pottery evidence.

Still more problematical is the question as to whom the head is meant to represent. I cannot recall ever having seen its parallel. The treatment of the hair by incision and the incised outlining of the eyes remind one of the grotesque human face worked on the outside of a mould for a jug-neck mask found at Horspath near Oxford (Toynbee (1963), no 163, pl. 166-8), where the eyebrows are rendered and the eyes are outlined in the same incising technique. But there the mouth is quite naturalistic. As regards the open rectangular mouth of the Sacrewell terracotta, the nearest thing known to me is on the stone head of a Celtic god (?) found at Netherby in Cumberland and now in the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle (Toynbee, (1963), no. 42a, pl. 44). But it is

really impossible to say whether the terracotta head was an intentional caricature of a living person, as the Horspath face seems to have been, or presents a local deity worshipped in the villa's domestic shrine.

Best thanks are due to the object's owner, Mr D. O. Powell of the William Scott Abbott Trust.

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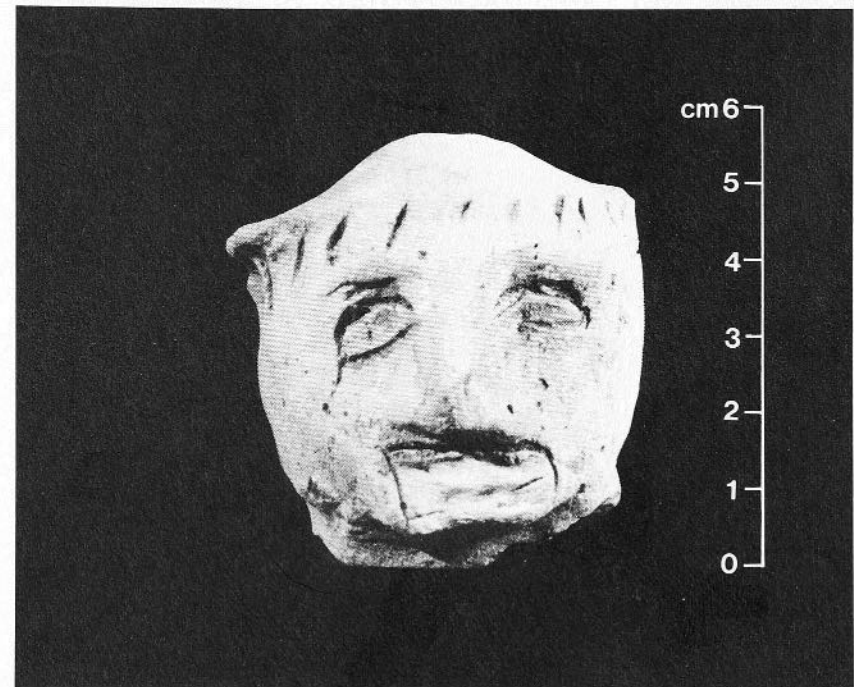


Fig 8a View of the terracotta head from Sacrewell

Furnace-Lining from Sacrewell

By Roger Norwich

The lining and slag recovered from the furnace area at Sacrewell showed something of the construction, length of use and technology of the smelting furnace at this site:

Geological investigations of the chemical and optical properties of the lining prove that it had originally been of a rather crumbly calcareous clay, one of the types found in the Nene Valley. For practical purposes the choice of clay would seem to have been a bad one, as the crumbly consistency would have made it a difficult material to mould into a furnace lining, and problems of collapse would have arisen during the initial drying stages.

The furnace builders overcame these difficulties by mixing organic materials such as grass and twigs with the clay, thereby bonding it into a more solid mass. This, however, does not alter the fact that there are other clays in the area which would have been easier to work, so the question of what influenced the smelters' choice must be considered.

The answer lies in the chemistry of iron smelting. Although the Roman shaft-furnace was an improvement on the bowl type, both in capacity and in the amount of heat generated, it was still unable to produce fairly liquid and therefore easily manageable blooms, only retaining a small percentage of slag. At this site, however, examination of both blooms and slag shows that quite a high degree of liquidity was reached, although that liquidity was not a function of temperature alone. The addition of limestone (CaCO_3) to iron ore during the smelting process means that as well as removing impurities, the required temperature for the reduction of iron from its oxide to its metallic state is much lower than it would otherwise be. As far as can be ascertained there was no addition of crushed limestone to the iron ore in these furnaces and it must be assumed that the fluxing of the ore was brought about by the CaCO_3 in the clay. The CaCO_3 adjacent to the facing-surface of the lining separated out into the iron ore, as is shown by the mineralogical distribution in the clay. The facings are wholly without calcium products, but the core of the lining still contains a considerable amount.

The furnace was evidently used only once before re-lining, because the limestone from the facing of the lining would have fallen out at the first firing, leaving none for subsequent use. The lining-core is still

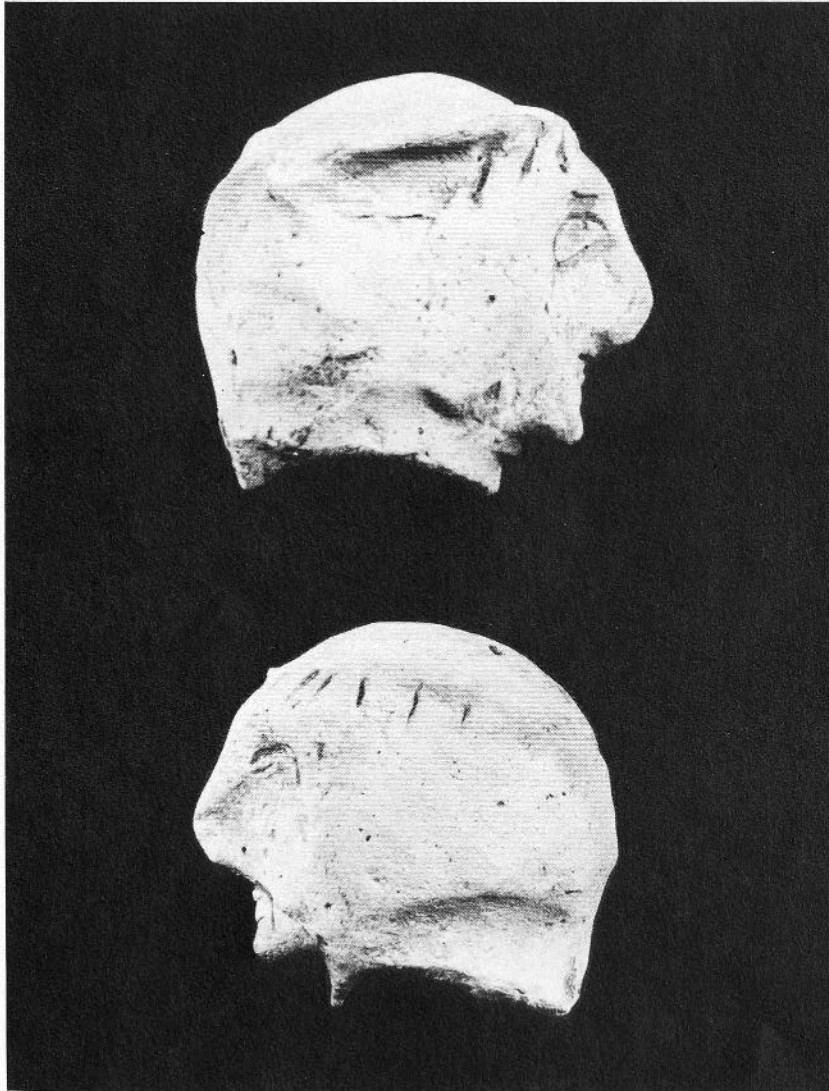


Fig 8b, c Views of the terracotta head from Sacrewell

Hall Farm, Orton Longueville

By Donald Mackreth

rich in organic debris which has not been completely burnt away. This implies short-term heating.

From the evidence it can be seen that the iron smelters were aware that variations in their basic materials could affect the quality of their products, and though they did not understand the chemistry involved they were able, through experiment, to improve their production techniques.

STOP PRESS AIR PHOTOGRAPHY 1974

The dry conditions in Spring and early Summer made 1974 an exceptional season for air photography. Steven Upex flew a series of sorties for the Nene Valley Research Committee between May and July, and reported on a considerable number of new sites, particularly in the Castor area. On the higher ground north-east of Castor, on both sides of the boundary of New Town Designated Area, the crop marks were unusually impressive. The ditched enclosures of early field systems, many unknown before, were recorded and plotted. In Normangate field the contrast was marked between the clear crop marks promoted by ditches and the comparatively feeble traces left by gravelled roads and stone buildings. Despite intensive flying in the Nene Valley there is evidently still much to be learnt.

The site at Hall Farm (TL 176956) was first identified in 1964 and was excavated in succeeding years by the Peterborough Museum Society Archaeological Field Section under the late Mr G. F. Dakin. Further work on the east end of the site was done in 1971 under Mr G. B. Dannel, Mr A. Challands and Dr J. P. Wild. This work revealed parts of a large Roman farmstead, which has now been stripped and is being excavated in advance of the Fletton Parkway, which will skirt Orton Township.

The main use of the site seems to begin towards the end of the third century A.D., with extensive alterations in the mid fourth century. The plan of the farm is of a large partially walled yard. Around its margin, and starting at the east end on the north side, lie a barn, a yard, a rectangular building, another yard and then another building lying athwart the boundary wall, all others being behind it. In the middle of the west side is a large barn with a walled courtyard to its north which has another building along its north side. On the south, the courtyard wall forms the back of a third barn which, at the moment, seems to terminate the southern range. It is the west barn that was excavated by Mr Dakin and the east by Mr Dannel, Mr Challands and Dr Wild.

Of interest is the continued occurrence of Saxon pottery first identified by Mr Dakin. He found it in ditches attached to part of the site which he excavated, but no buildings were recognised. The recent excavations have located Saxon buildings, pits and hearths as well as ditches. These are at the east end of the farmyard and, at present, seem to fill in the Roman plan. It is certain that some of the Roman ditches were re-dug after they had accumulated some Saxon pottery and it seems more likely that the first Saxon occupants of the site were familiar with Roman pottery. It is too early yet to be sure how the Saxon occupation fits in with the Roman farm.

The economy of the farm seems to have been mixed. The first main late period appears to be characterised by a corral and a pond, and there is a high cattle content in the bone collection in both main periods. However, the barns of both the first and second late periods were fitted with corn dryers and the presence of mill-stone fragments on the site suggests that corn production was not of minor proportions.

The excavation still continues and it is hoped that a fuller account and plan will appear in *Durobrivae* 3.

An Intaglio from Hall Farm

By Martin Henig

The stone (fig 9) is a red jasper, with a flat upper surface (dimensions 16 x 13 x 3mm). It is in excellent condition apart from some chipping around the edges and is very highly polished except within the cut area.

The intaglio presents the device of *Cupid* seated on a light, two wheeled cart (*cipium*) and driving the pony within the traces towards the left (to the right on an impression taken from the gem). He holds the reins, attached directly to the bit, in one hand and a whip in the other hand; one of the pony's forelegs is raised high and the animal is evidently trotting forward at some speed.

A similar intaglio, also in red jasper, is published by A. Furtwängler, *Beschreibung der Geschnittenen Steine im Antiquarium, Königliche Museen zu Berlin*, 1896, Nr. 8445, while a paste gem depicting a countryman in a similar pony-trap has actually been found at Wall, Staffordshire (information from Mr A. A. Round — for the type see F. Henkel, *Die römischen Fingerringe der Rheinlande*, 1913, Nr. 438 from Cologne). These paste intagli are of a type datable to the third century A.D., but although our gem and the one in Berlin could be as late as this, they might have been cut in Antonine times, when the glyptic workshops were particularly flourishing and red jasper had assumed pre-eminence as the commonest stone employed.



Fig 9 The intaglio from Hall Farm

The Longthorpe Roman Fortress, 1973

By Professor Sheppard Frere

An opportunity for a final season at Longthorpe unexpectedly became available at short notice in August during construction of the golf course (for previous work and plan see *Durobrivae* 1 (1973), 7ff., fig. 2). Three weeks digging was done with the aid of volunteers provided by Dr J. P. Wild and Mr G. B. Dannell. An area was examined in the western field, in the *praetentura* of the fortress, in order to see whether the area between the *via principalis* and the south defences, whose dimensions are suitable for legionary barracks, in fact contained any.

Excavation showed (fig 10) that the area beside the *via praetoria* contained two buildings which were not barracks, but whose plans could not be further elucidated in the time available. West of these, one barrack and part of a second were found. Barrack 1 was a building 110.8 metres long, exclusive of the 2.70 metre wide colonnade beside the *via principalis* down to its extremity at the *via sagularis*. There was a centurion's house measuring 35.5 by 16.5 metres adjoining the colonnade, south of which lay a long irregularly laid out building tapering in width from 15 metres to 9.7 metres. It contained 16 sets of rooms, 14 of which were clearly *contubernia* (private soldier's quarters). The verandah was divided by extensions of the partitions, differing in this from Barrack 2 which had posts. At the south end a further room facing the *via sagularis* did not appear to be a *contubernium*, but was perhaps a store. Attached to the east (rear) side of the barrack was a long building differently subdivided.

The length of the barrack, its provision of 14 sets of rooms (as at Inchtuthil), the presence of wall plaster (not found elsewhere at Longthorpe save in the *principia*), a bone *gladius*-handle and other pieces of legionary equipment reasonably suggest that the garrison consisted of a vexillation of Legion IX, together with the auxiliary force (which included cavalry) suggested by previous discoveries in the *retentura*.

The irregular planning, common to most of the Longthorpe buildings, emphasises the contrast with military buildings of the Flavian period, and perhaps suggests the hurried construction with unseasoned timbers of a conquest-period campaign fortress which in the event was held for longer than may have been at first envisaged. There were slight suggestions of alteration at the north end of the mens' quarters, such as might have their context in the reduced fort of Period II.

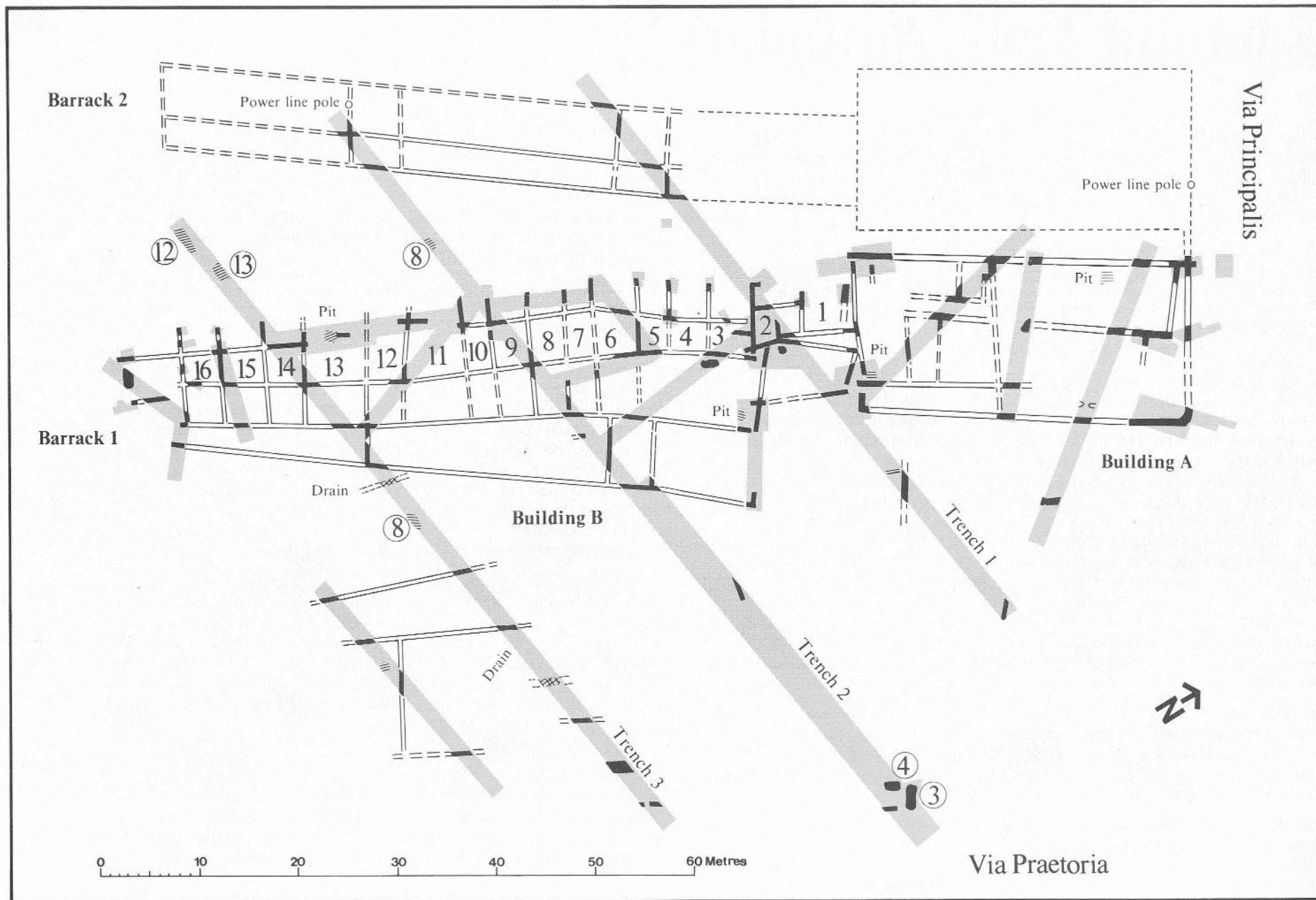


Fig 10 Barracks in the Longthorpe fortress, 1973

Edmund Artis, Antiquary

By Steven Tomlinson

Edmund Tyrell Artis was born in 1789 in the Suffolk village of Sweffling. His early life is little documented, but one account states that he was the eldest son of parents in easy circumstances and certainly his subsequent career seems to indicate that his family was of some standing.

He must have left his native county while still fairly young, however, for by 1813 he already occupied a high position among the household servants at Milton, the Northamptonshire home of Earl Fitzwilliam. In November 1816 he became house steward with full control over the other servants and the running of the household; for this he received £100 a year. He performed the duties of this responsible position efficiently for nearly 10 years, despite the other activities which took up increasing amounts of his time.

For as early as 1816 he had begun collecting geological specimens in the Yorkshire and Derbyshire coalfields, taking especial interest in carboniferous fossil plants. During the next few years he amassed a large collection. (They numbered over 1500 at the time of their sale to the British Museum in 1825.) Some of the specimens first identified by Artis are still recognized, and a genus of plants is named *Artisia* after him. His researches culminated in the publication in 1825 of a volume of coloured plates illustrating his finds, accompanied by an introduction which displays a wide knowledge of contemporary geological studies. This was *Antediluvian Phytology* and was successful enough to merit a second edition in 1838. His pioneering work led to his election as a Fellow of the Geological Society in 1824, his sponsor being no less a person than the then President, William Buckland, who had assisted him with *Phytology*.

Geology was only one of many interests. His friend, the poet John Clare, once described him as a clever man and everything but a poet, and other evidence bears this out. In addition to fossils Artis collected and studied plants and birds, he read extensively, he could draw and paint; he even made a clay bust of Clare.

But his ruling passion was archaeology. From 1821 Artis conducted large-scale, systematic excavations in the Nene Valley in and around Castor. The fruits of his labours can be seen in a magnificent volume of plates entitled *The Durobrivae of Antoninus*, published in its complete form in 1828, having been previously issued in parts in 1823-4. Artis left no text to augment the drawings and plans (most of which he did

himself), but the plates themselves give a fair indication of the scope and nature of his excavations. His work attracted the attention of the scientific and literary world, among others the Northamptonshire historian, George Baker, who was impressed enough to write a long letter on the discoveries to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1822. Artis received official recognition when he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1825.

Excavations on a large scale continued into the spring of 1827, but then a new chapter in Artis's life opens. He had made visits to Yorkshire previously to collect fossils; now he went north once more on very different business. He began negotiations for the purchase of the Doncaster Club House, an establishment which catered for the racing fraternity who came to Doncaster each autumn for the St Leger meeting. The Club House opened under his management for the September 1828 meeting. Contemporary advertisements speak of the dinners, desserts, teas and wines available and of "living Turtles, from 40 to 100 lbs each". The venture was a success; Doncaster was crowded with nobility and gentry every autumn and establishments such as Artis's were bound to be in demand. He was encouraged to expand and the following year's business was undoubtedly swelled by the presence in Doncaster of the Duke of Wellington.

Running the Club House, however, involved little for most of the year and Artis had ample time to spare from his duties as manager. In 1830 he returned to Castor and purchased two houses in the village, occupying one of them himself while renting out the other to a succession of tenants. But he seems to have taken little interest in local affairs and in fact spent the next 12 years or so fairly quietly, dividing his time between his business in Doncaster and regular but small digs.

In 1844, however, Artis appears to have begun digging in earnest again. In this year he sold both his houses to Earl Fitzwilliam; we may conjecture that this was to provide money for excavations, since the Earl's labourers would not be at his disposal as in the 1820's. We have a more detailed knowledge of his work in this period. Artis became a regional committee member of the newly formed British Archaeological Association and its *Journal* contains several articles and communications on his discoveries. He concentrated his work on the Duke of Bedford's land at Sibson, encouraged by finds made during excavations for the Northampton-Peterborough railway. But although

The Lynch Farm Complex: Recent Work

By Adrian Challands

he made several important finds, the excavations did not go smoothly and in the winter of 1846/7 his men deserted him because of the conditions; Artis stayed on — a tribute to his dedication.

It was to be his last season digging. On a visit to Doncaster in December 1847 Artis fell ill; he died on Christmas Eve. His body was returned to Castor for burial, where it lies in the churchyard in the heart of the area where he made the discoveries for which he is best known. But although Artis is remembered primarily for his archaeology, this was only one of many talents. Steward, geologist, artist, botanist, ornithologist and restaurateur as well, Edmund Tyrell Artis was truly “everything but a poet”.

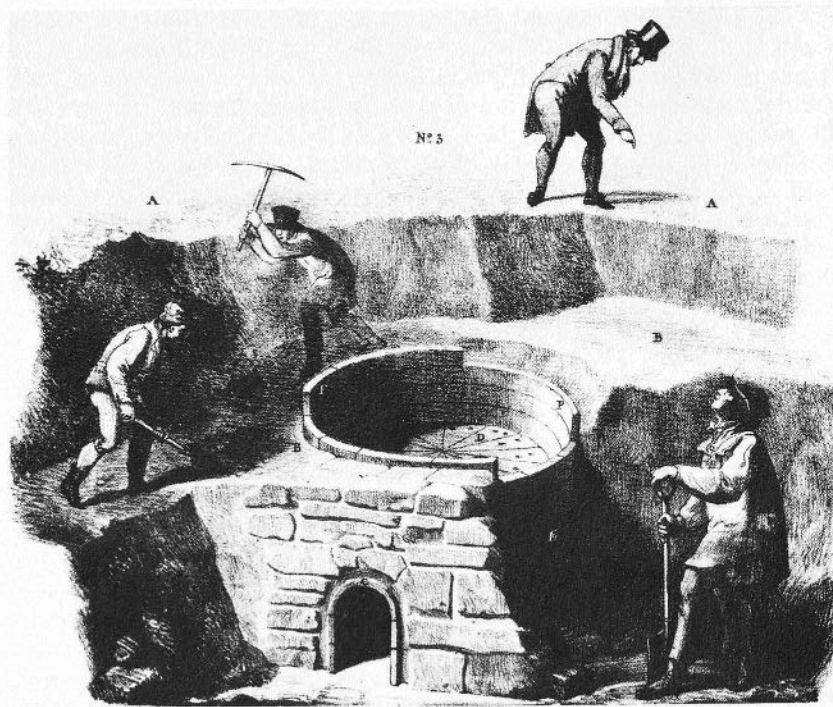


Fig 11 Edmund Artis directing work on Roman pottery kilns at Castor

Work on the site has been continuous throughout 1973 on the main ‘defensive’ quadruple linear ditches (*Durobrivae* 1 (1973), 22f.) and the areas immediately surrounding them. The aim was to locate an entrance and determine the period of construction.

On all four ditches, 5 metre sections were carefully cut by hand over a distance of 50 metres close to the centre of their 300 metre run. As in the case of those ditches dug previously, great variation in profile and filling was noted. The layers making up the top 0.30 to 0.50 metres appeared to be deliberate filling and contained a significant proportion of pottery of Belgic Iron-Age style. Mixed with this was a small percentage of Roman pottery dated to the mid-second century. Thus it may be assumed that partially silted ditches were open in the mid-second century, although they had lost their effectiveness. Lack of dating material from the lowest layers again prevents our making an estimate of their period of construction.

The profile of the ditch was gradually reduced in size as it drew nearer to the existing central hedge. It soon became obvious that an entrance was located at this point. The strip was extended to take in the terminals, where slight inturns were noted in plan. Sections are at present being cut through these, and we are paying special attention to the possibility of finding traces of timber gateworks. The failure of crop-markings to indicate the entrance is probably due to the close proximity of the hedge line.

Oval pits north of the ditches produced substantial fragments of iron slag, sealed beneath well-stratified late Iron-Age pottery. Iron ore within the gravels may well have been exploited during the latter part of the first century B.C. or more probably the early first century A.D.

Future work will be concentrated on the extreme western portion of the site where pit alignments and hut circles may be revealed.

Tout Hill Close, Peterborough

By Donald Mackreth

Tout Hill Close lies north of Peterborough Cathedral Precinct, between Peterscourt and St. Mary's Court. City Road forms its northern boundary. Virtually all the northern half of the site has now been destroyed to accommodate the basement of a new office block. The site was chosen for excavation because of its proximity to the Cathedral where seventh-century occupation may be presumed. Moreover, it was almost the last open space left in this part of Peterborough outside the Precinct and it seemed to have been unoccupied for several hundred years. There is also good evidence that the *burh* founded under the influence of Saint Aethelwold lay to the east of the then monastery until it was removed in the twelfth century to the west side where the modern town centre is.

It was not known whether there would be any substantial archaeological remains on the site and, with limited time and labour in the depths of winter, the objectives were simple: what was the nature of the occupation, if any; when did it start and end; was there any evidence for the earliest days of Medeshamstede and for the tenth-century *burh*.

The main excavation (fig 12) covered a large part of the southern side of the proposed office block. Within its confines all soil had to be removed to a depth of over 2 metres. At the east end many pits were identified, and it was during the excavation of these — and in the attempt to find natural — that we realised that there was very extensive pitting. A machine-cut trench across the site, outside the late building described below, showed that it was extremely unlikely that any natural had been seen on the ground surface. The sections revealed a minimum of 33 pits, many of them large, which had effectively cut away nearly all the natural above a cornbrash base. When the office block basement had been excavated by the contractors, the dense mass of pits was seen to spread beyond the edge of the hole in all directions. It is not an exaggeration to say that there could not have been less than 1,700 pits in all.

There was some evidence for timber buildings, but pit-digging, as well as the limitations of time, prevented any plan from being recovered. Apart from a few sixteenth- or seventeenth-century pits at the east end, all the pits were mediaeval. There was the distinct possibility that many, if not most, were Saxon or Saxo-Norman. Samples were taken of the pits in the sides of the machine cuts, but the results, from the point of view of pottery, were disappointing. In 40% there was no

pottery or only a few Roman sherds, 30% had some shell-gritted sherds, and the rest contained ordinary mediaeval wares. 70% of the pits were in theory undatable or contained sherds belonging very probably to Saxo-Norman times at the latest. With the paucity of sherds there can be no certainty that some of the shell-gritted pottery is not later than, say, the twelfth century, although the absence of other wares may be significant. It is possible to argue that there is evidence for intense early use of the site. The absence of Stamford ware in the bulk of these pits is remarkable. There is also a lack of sherds which characterise the Middle Saxon sites at Castor.

The evidence for the *burh* being sited east of the monastery is thin, but consistent. Martin de Bec (Abbot, 1133-55) is said by Hugh Candidus to have changed the position of the monastic gate, the hithe and the market place. The original parish church of Saint John's, however, stood at the east end of the monastery until the fifteenth century, when it was re-sited in the market place. Before the bridge was built in 1308, the river was crossed by a ford east of the monastery and the way into the present town was along the line of City Road. The main road to the north was until last century a direct continuation of the road over the ford. Eyre's map of 1791 reveals what looks suspiciously like a colonised market place and a circuit road which may mark the line of a ditch, both lying east of the Cathedral. Unfortunately, a great deal of this hypothetical *burh* must have been destroyed when St. Mary's Court was built.

Tout Hill Close produced no good evidence for major occupation during the thirteenth, fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Only at the end of the Middle Ages was there any extensive development. A large house was built, of which only part of an eastern range, with a courtyard to the west and two closes to the east, was uncovered. Room 1 had plastered walls and an earth floor. Room 2 had been remodelled and once had a flagged floor and what appears to have been a tank in the north-west corner. There was no evidence for fireplaces or hearths and the room may finally have been used as a barn: the pitched stone area inside the east entrance may have been for carts. Rooms 3 and 4 had no surviving floors; but Room 3 had a drain leading from it to a main north-south drain, which ran across the courtyard to the west, through Room 5 and out, possibly, to the ditch on the south. The dating evidence for the building was sparse. It could have been built at the end of the fifteenth century and occupied into the seventeenth. The

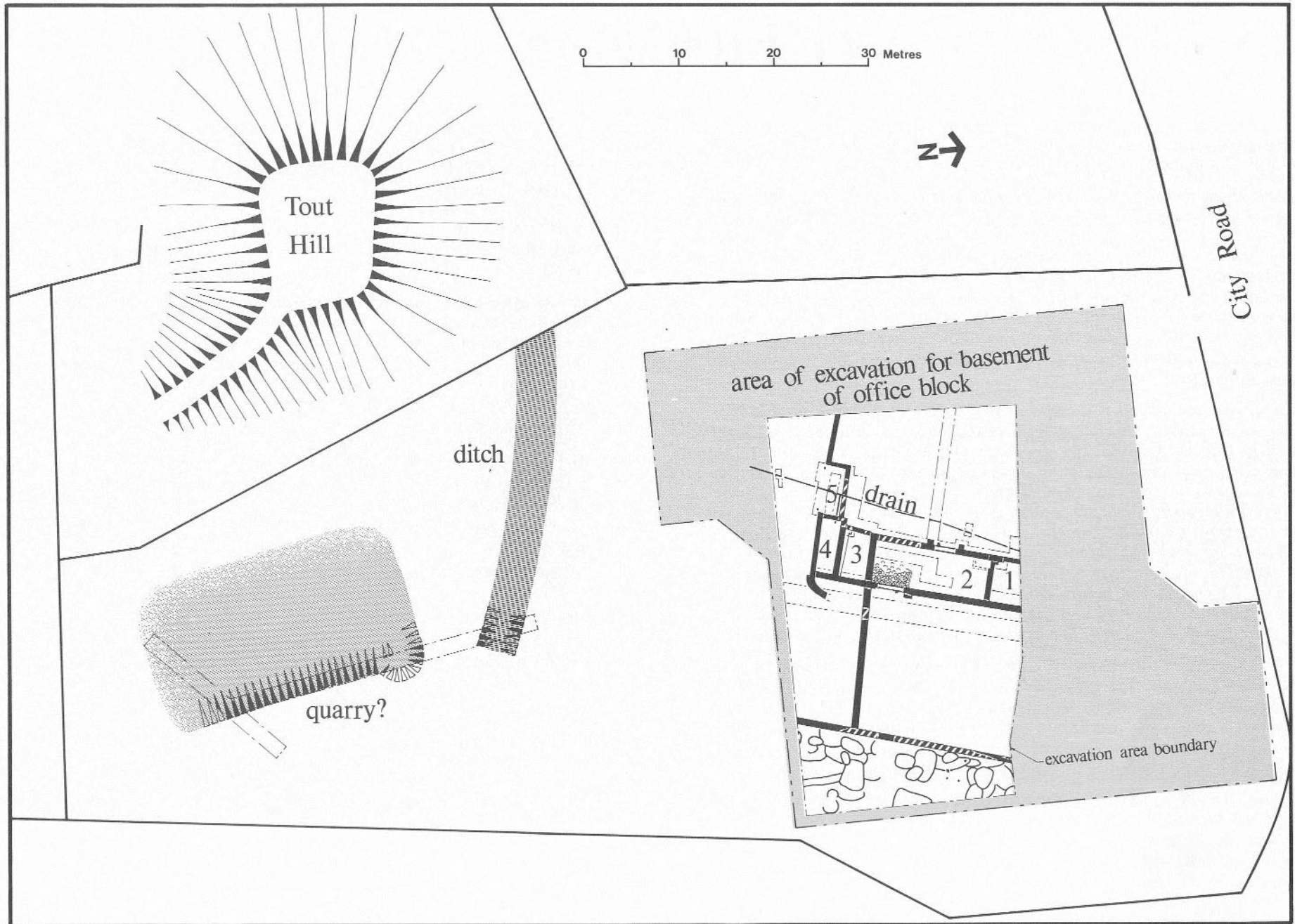


Fig 12 The mediaeval site at Tout Hill Close, Peterborough

structure could originally have belonged to the monastery, but no record of a building here seems to survive.

South of the main site two trenches were laid out in the hope that some sign of the seventh-century settlement might be found. In this respect the results were entirely negative. The cornbrash here was at a higher level and its overburden of sand and gravel was largely intact up to the modern turf. What was completely unexpected was a large ditch and an even larger hole to the south of it. The lower part of the ditch may have been deliberately filled, but most of its contents had slowly accumulated over some centuries. The line of the ditch to the west showed as a very slight hollow into which the machines used for digging the trenches tended to sink.

The ditch line looks as if it could skirt the mound in the eastern end of the Dean's Garden. This mound is Tout Hill and is traditionally the castle built in 1070 by Thorold, the new Norman Abbot. If the ditch is to be associated with the motte, it is presumably part of the circuit of the bailey. However, no sign of a rampart was found. The siting of the castle is interesting; for, if it was Thorold's work, it was placed to counter any approach from the north. It may have been intended to overawe the *burh*, which may have lain to the east of the monastery. In 1069-70 William was ferociously suppressing a rebellion in the north; Hereward, just before Thorold's arrival, had destroyed by fire the conventual buildings and the town; and the Danes were involved in the north and the Fens. The castle, in Norman eyes, was a necessity.

The large hole south of the ditch is much more of a problem. Where the ditch had only cut into the cornbrash, the hole appears to have penetrated the stone down to the heavy clays beneath. It is of such a size that it may well have been a quarry. If so, only the monastery itself would have had the resources to create it. The hole had been deliberately filled with a mixture of sand and gravel and some cornbrash and

blue clay. Since the ditch had been allowed to remain open through the Middle Ages, but the putative quarry had been deliberately filled and contained no purely mediaeval pottery, it should be earlier than the castle and its fillings should be associated with the castle's creation. If this was the case, the siting of the castle here was of such importance that the labour involved in filling the huge hole was of no consequence.

The only useful pottery from the quarry was recovered from a turf line which sealed the lower parts of the hole and which was in turn sealed beneath the deliberate filling. There was a little glazed Stamford ware and some other wares which best fit a tenth- or eleventh-century date, but are not more closely datable in themselves. It looks as if the hole had been abandoned for some time before the castle was built. The main early monastic works known for which a quarry would have been needed are the building of the monastic church after 963; the building of the Precinct wall between 992 and 1006; the rebuilding of the conventual buildings after 1070, finished by 1116; and the rebuilding of much of the monastery after the fire of 1116. If the castle is Thorold's work, then the quarry must be Saxon. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the castle was not built or altered during the Anarchy; Hugh Candidus mentions troubles at this time, but deliberately avoids talking of them.

For a site which had no known potential, Tout Hill Close proved to contain much of interest, and it is to be regretted that more work could not have been done on the various aspects of early Peterborough glimpsed here. I am grateful to the Peterborough Development Corporation, especially Mr L. B. Campbell, to Miss C. Mahany and Mr J. G. Hurst for their comments on pottery, and I am happy to acknowledge my great debt to Canon J. L. Cartwright and Mr H. F. Tebbs for their knowledge of the history of the town.

The Roman Villa at North Lodge, Barnwell, 1973

By John Hadman and Steven Upex

Excavations were carried out by the Middle Nene Archaeological Group and Prince William School at North Lodge, Barnwell, in the autumn of 1973 at the request of the farmer, Mr T. Litchfield, an eminent local antiquarian. For several years the plough had been removing masonry in the field, and this disturbance gave the impetus to begin investigations. The site at North Lodge is one of a group of Romano-British sites discovered in recent years near the 200 foot contour above the Nene Valley. To date, there are 6 sites known on the ridge running from Clopton to Luton. It is hoped that in due course light will be shed on Romano-British agriculture on heavy boulder clay soils in what was probably a wooded area (fig. 13).

A magnetometer survey of the field showed two areas with heavy anomalies and several curvilinear features (probably ditches). It was decided that initial excavations should concentrate on one of the areas of high anomaly. This eventually revealed itself to be a pit some 15 metres long by 6 metres wide and 3.5 metres at its deepest point. Immediately to the east, not detected by the magnetometer, were the stone foundations of a building.

The building covered a rectangular area and was open at first on its south side (fig. 14). The pottery from the mason's trench for the north wall suggests that the first phase came at the end of the second century. Although only 12 metres long, the foundations for the north wall were quite massive, being of herring-bone construction, 1.2 metres wide and over 1 metre deep at the west end. In contrast, the 3 post-holes on the south side were quite shallow and insubstantial. It seems probable that the first structure had a clay floor.

The pit was probably dug sometime later, perhaps when the building had gone out of use or was in a state of disrepair; for its edge reached right up to the foundations of the west wall. Spectrographic analysis by Mr M. Bull of Leicester shows that clay from the pit was used to produce tiles, fragments of which abounded on the site. The tiles included roof-tiles, box-tiles and several types of floor-tiles, some of them coarsely made with little attempt at removing inclusions.

It was obvious that after the clay had been extracted, the pit had remained open for a number of years. The bottom layers consisted of organic material to a depth of over 0.5 metres. Twigs, leaves, seeds, insects and molluscs had all been preserved below the level of the

water-table and, before the pit was eventually filled in, it could have served as a pond. The sides and the east end were very steep and time did not allow the excavation of the west end, but the magnetometer readings suggest that here it shelved upwards, quite gently, and could have been used for watering stock.

Animal bones from the site including many from the pit indicate that cattle and pigs had a place in the economy. The absence of sheep bones may be accounted for by the presence of woodlands and the heavy clay land.

Preliminary inspection of organic matter from the pit shows wheat-straw and several grasses, and imported molluscs include fresh-water mussels, whelks and oysters.

The second and final phase of the building took place sometime after the mid-third century when a wall with shallow foundations replaced the posts on much of the south side, still leaving it open for approximately 1.5 metres at the east and west ends. In the central part of the building a floor had been laid. Limestone underpacking butted right up to the top foundation course of the north wall and varied in depth across the building. It was held by a loose crumbly mortar and covered by a firm layer of *opus signinum*, 25cm thick. On top of this had been a floor of square building-tiles. In the open area within the west end of the building was a stokehole and part of a flue-arch, built of tiles directly on top of the filling of the mason's trench for the north wall. A post-hole to the south of this suggested a lean-to type of shelter over the stoking area. The heating channels underneath the tile floor could be located by areas of baked mortar. There was no evidence for the function of the heated room.

Contemporary with the final phase of building was the consolidation of the east end of the pit. To prevent further erosion and possible subsidence, oak posts and planks had been used as revetment, backed by limestone boulders and redeposited yellow clay. A coin of Gallienus (253-268) was sealed in this. Colour-coated pottery from the pit and the destruction layer over the building confirm the dating evidence of the coin. The oak posts were in good condition, showing adze marks, and at the upper ends which had been pointed after insertion the marks of a saw could be seen.

Finds from the site include third- and fourth-century coins, brooches, glass, iron knives and painted wall plaster. The nature of the evidence points to a much larger site than was anticipated; the excavated building is a small part of a larger complex. The association of industry with agriculture makes it potentially an extremely interesting site.

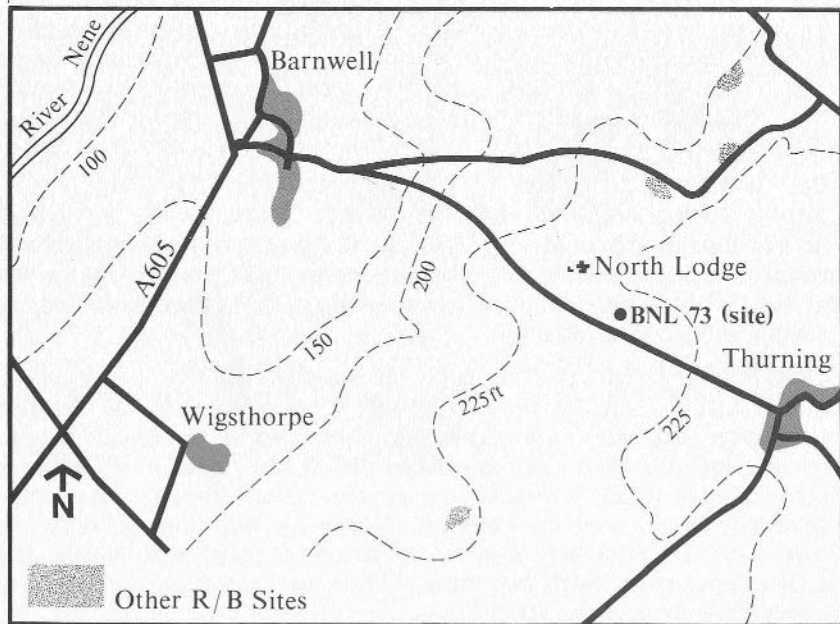


Fig 13 Map of sites in the Barnwell area.

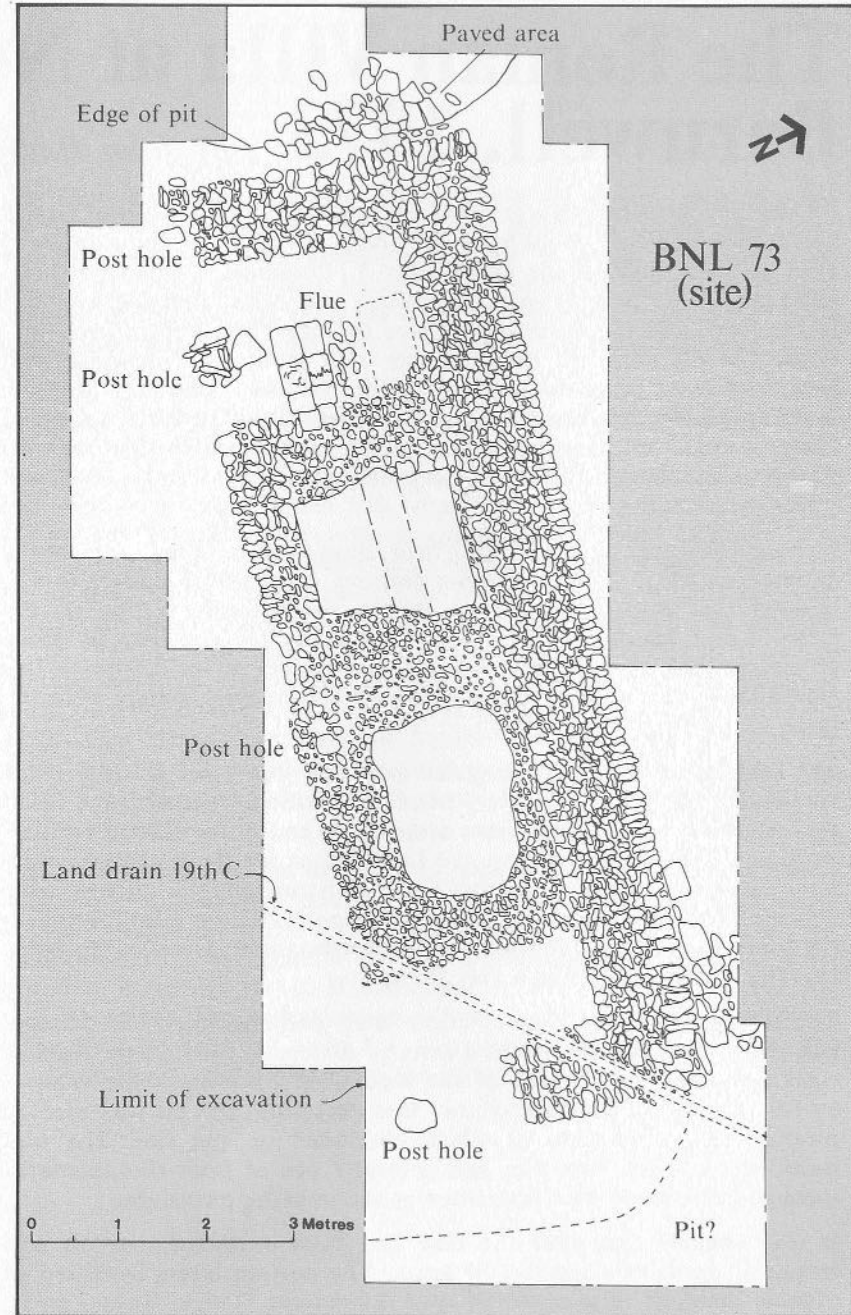


Fig 14 The Roman building at Barnwell, 1973

A Roman and Saxon Farm at Walton, North Bretton

By Richard Jones

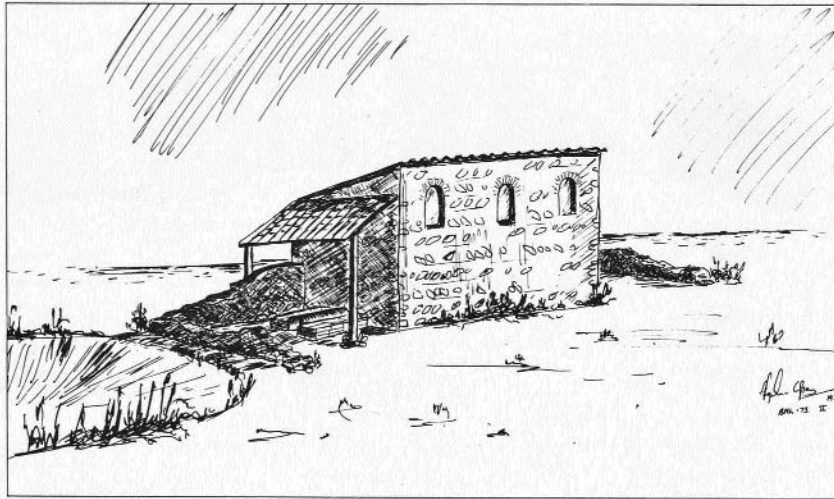


Fig 15 A reconstruction of the second phase of the Roman building at Barnwell

In August and September 1973 a site was dug rather hurriedly on the Marholm Road, now in Walton parish, but destined to be known as North Bretton. It consisted of a Romano-British farm, which went out of use in the late fourth century, and a Saxon one which succeeded it. There was limited time before a service road was due to be started in early September, to be followed by industrial development. So excavation was restricted and it was possible to examine thoroughly only a small part of the threatened field and to make a very limited investigation of the rest. Thanks are due to the Peterborough Development Corporation, both for the initial permission to dig on the site and for continued help and interest.

A small amount of material dated before A.D. 70 suggests some sort of occupation in the first century, but the earliest definite evidence of the farming activity comes a little later. Two distinct ditch systems were found, one of which was deliberately filled with household rubbish and burnt material, probably towards the end of the second century (fig 16). The later ditches seem to have remained open at least until the late fourth century. As it was impossible to strip the topsoil from the whole field, no full plan of the ditch systems could be obtained, but it was clear from the areas opened that it extended over most of the field.

One building was identified, but it was badly damaged by the Saxon activity and by more recent ploughing. Only two walls could still be recognised. Its overall dimensions were probably about 8 metres by 16 metres. These proportions suggest that it was of the aisled barn type, if rather small, although no post-bases survived. At the northern end there were two adjacent areas of paving with large flat stones, which were taken to mark a double entrance, in all some 5 metres wide.

Fine building stone, roof-tile, hypocaust-tile (some with mortar still adhering to it), and tesserae were found in various parts of the site, but in a greater concentration near this building. In the absence of another candidate, the possibility cannot be ruled out that this material is derived from the building. Probably the occupants were reasonably prosperous farmers, who might not have been able to aspire to a full scale *villa urbana*, but could afford to live in some comfort.

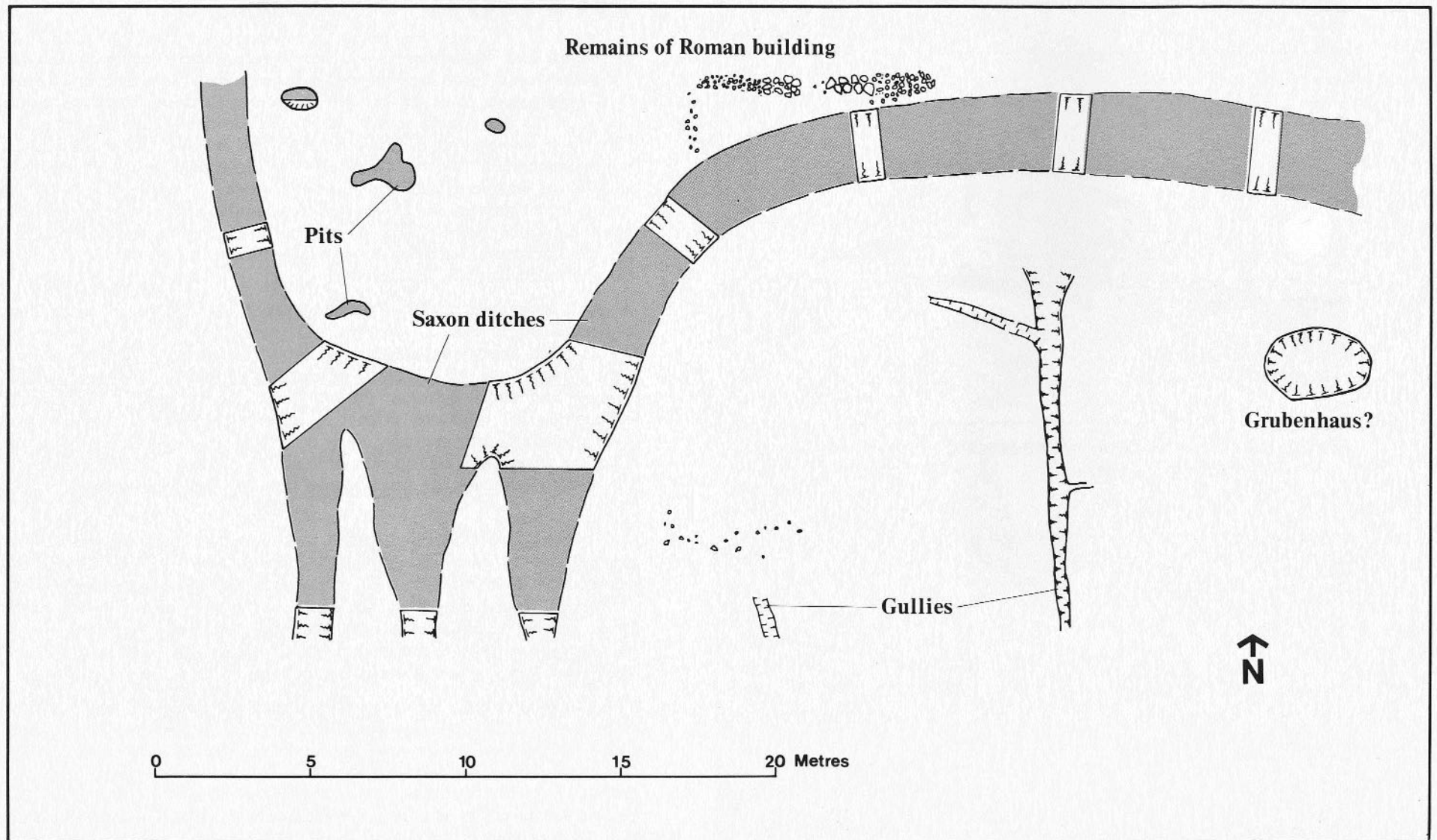


Fig 16 Part of the Roman and Saxon Farm at Walton, North Bretton, 1973

Nearby was an area of natural cornbrash which had been levelled off with small pebbles to make a better surface, perhaps to act as a threshing floor. It is clear that corn was grown, since several broken querns were also found. The common farm animals, cattle, sheep, and pigs, were all present, as well as some goats whose horns had been sawn off.

How the building fell out of use was not clear. The northern wall had been partly demolished, and in the rubble were a coin of Gratian (A.D. 367-75) and distinctive brooch of the very early Saxon type. This shows a Saxon presence on the site at the time of demolition, but there was no sign of any burning or other violent destruction. Perhaps the Romano-British occupants had already left. Otherwise the latest coins from the site were of Constantius (A.D. 348-59) and of Constans (A.D. 348-50). The probable date for the end of the Romano-British occupation is thus in the last quarter of the fourth century, perhaps as early as A.D. 380.

The Saxons seem to have cleared the site of loose rubble and household objects of no use to them. These appear in their ditches and pits with their characteristic pottery. The latter is distinguished by having small stone grits and is hand-made and black in colour. Quite large quantities of Saxon pottery were found, including some decorated pieces. The Saxon sherds were always with at least an equal number of Romano-British ones in each feature, and were often greatly outnumbered, suggesting that the Saxon occupants had more than a residual supply of Romano-British pots available to them. The features of the Saxon period were again mostly pits and ditches, laid out without concern for the existing system. One ditch cut across where the Roman building had stood. A large pit, 3 metres by 2.5 metres by 50cm, may possibly have been a *Grubenhäus*, or sunken hut. It had two layers of filling, natural silting beneath a deposit of burnt debris which also extended to seal one of the ditches; but no positive structural remains were found.

As at Hall Farm, Orton Longueville (see p. 19) there was no direct evidence here for an overlap in the two phases of occupation; but it seems likely that the Saxons were in close contact with the local Romano-British population. It may well be that this area would have been one of the first to have been settled by the Saxons, as it lay outside the Nene Valley proper, yet not quite in the Welland Valley, and it appears to have been much less densely occupied than the river

gravels in the Roman period. The Saxon farm itself does not seem to have lasted very long; there were relatively few features, each of one phase. Perhaps it spanned only one generation of settlers.

Publications

The Nene Valley Research Committee has published the following works:

J. P. Wild, *The Romans in the Nene Valley* (1972) (Price 15p)

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F. M. M. Pryor, *Earthmoving on Open Archaeological Sites, Nene Valley Archaeological Handbook 1*, 1974 (price 30p)

Durobrivae 1, 1973 (price 60p)

F. M. M. Pryor, *Excavation at Fengate, Peterborough, England: The First Report, ROM Archaeology Monograph 3*, 1974 (price £1.25)

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