

A Medieval Village

By C. J. REEVES

ON the slopes of the Glyme valley facing S.S.W. the site is in the parish of Enstone, National Grid SP. 353252. It is about 150 metres from the river and 160 metres above sea level. Geologically the area is Oolite and the site seems to have been pasture with small pockets of trees for a considerable time. No trace of medieval strip cultivation can be found in the immediate vicinity, but across the valley there is a series of six small lynchets, and an air photograph shows ridge and furrow.¹

Due to its position on the valley side and to the nature of the ground, the site is well drained. The earthworks are in a good state of preservation and it is easily possible to recognize enclosures and house or building platforms.

There is a hollow-way leading to the village from the N.W. approximately 6 metres wide and 1 metre deep. This is the only road into the village and ends in the centre with the crofts enclosing it on all three sides. There seem to be three or possibly four other ways of entering but these are small and could only have been used as footpaths.

Enclosure banks vary in height from a trace to 1.5 metres; the building sites average 0.5 metres high and are of stone with a thin covering of soil and turf. Stone is visible in a number of places where the covering has been disturbed by animals.

The crofts are a good size and are square rather than the more usual oblong shape; and as can be seen on the plan, all except one of the enclosures on the southern side of the village have no lower bank, only an increased outside slope. It is thought that this may be the result of soil erosion. A feature is that two of the crofts have no apparent entrance.

There does not appear to be any boundary bank or ditch surrounding the site and it can only be assumed that the hedges to the north and east, together with the hollow-way on the west and river on the south, form the limits of the village.

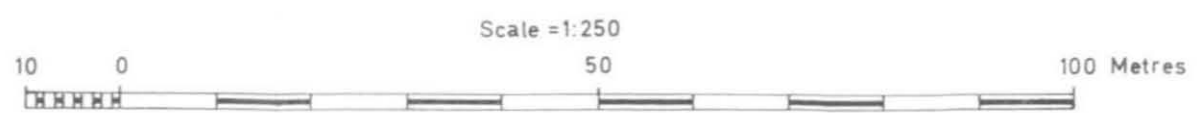
An interesting point is that the hedge on the northern side forms an irregular line, and it is possible that this line could be the outside of enclosures that are no longer visible. This hedge line can be seen on the 2½ and 6 inch O.S. maps, and on the air photograph.

At the entrance to the N.E. enclosure there are two large standing stones that have the appearance of gate posts. The north stone is approximately 2 metres high and 1 metre square and the south stone 1.5 metres high and 1 metre square. An estimate of the combined weight is eleven tons, and it is thus thought likely that this is an enclosure of some importance.

To the south of this enclosure there is a complex of banks; it is suggested

¹ No. LU6. Dr. J. K. S. St. Joseph. Cambridge.

MEDIEVAL VILLAGE
PARISH OF ENSTONE
OXFORDSHIRE
SP.353252
SURVEYED 1969-70



Vertical exaggeration, all profiles = 2:1

FIG. 1

that this is something in the nature of a manor house, and that the enclosure with the 'gate posts' which is adjoining and has a long narrow structure at one side of the entrance, is perhaps a chapel yard.

Identification of the site is difficult; across the valley to the west within a distance of about 1000 metres there are possibly two other D.M.Vs., and it seems certain from documentary evidence and place names that these sites are the villages of Over and Nether Chalford.²

The Rev. John Jordan states 'that Enstone was known as Enstone of the seven towns'.³ Two of the seven were Chalford and Broadstone, and 'that as Lidstone separates Neat Enstone field from Charlford on the west side of the high road, so Broadstone again separates the same two fields on the east side of the high road'. If this can be accepted and if the high road is the modern A.34, then this site is not Broadstone as the three sites are west of this road. The A.34 was turnpiked in 1730 but it still follows the same line.

Jordan also says that there is an 'ancient road, running parallel to the turnpike road along the hills on the west side of the valley, which was formerly the principal highway of the neighbourhood, and extended through Charlford to Chapel House and onward'. Traces of this road are shown on Thomas Jefferys' map of 1776/7 and on Stephen Jefferys' map of Chalford Farm of 1743.⁴ The course can still be followed either by road or footpath, but the three sites are east of this road.

However, the hollow-way that forms the N.W. boundary of the site, and which is shown by the O.S. as a bridle path crossing the river by a ford, joins Jordan's 'ancient road' on the west side of the valley just south of the other two sites. This bridle path is shown on Thomas Jefferys' map as a road crossing the A.34 and branching north to Heythrop and north east to the present day Broadstone Hill. Although this road N.E. of the A.34 no longer exists, the alignment of existing roads supports this route. The amount of stone along the bridle path and its sunken appearance in places, suggests that this was a road that carried a good deal of traffic.

If it can be accepted that Broadstone lies to the east of the 'high road' as Jordan says, and that this bridle path was a medieval highway, then this site is probably Broadstone.

It should also be noted that the English Place Name Society states⁵ '*Bradestan*, second element "STĀN", Old English "STONE". The first element could be either the personal name Brada or the adjective BRĀD, "BROAD", the former is perhaps more probable.' Linking this statement to the standing stones at the entrance to the eastern enclosure, this could be a further clue to the identity of the site.

In conclusion, it will be seen that this report relies heavily on John Jordan's work for the naming of this site, and though the inference is clear that this is

² Domesday Book. *V.C.H., Oxfordshire*, Vol. 1, pages 376, 411/12.

³ *Parochial History of Enstone*, The Rev. John Jordan, 1857.

⁴ Oxfordshire County Record Office.

⁵ *The English Place Name Society*, Vol. 24, 1954, page 347.

Broadstone, it must be emphasized that if anything suggesting a D.M.V. should be found in the area around Broadstone Hill, then considerable re-thinking will be necessary to identify this site.

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