

# A Romano-British Settlement Site and Seventh-Century Burial, Ducklington, Oxon., 1974

By R. A. CHAMBERS

## SUMMARY

*Rescue excavation near Ducklington produced evidence of mid 3rd- to 5th-century activity. A 7th-century Saxon burial group was also located.*

## INTRODUCTION

DURING November-December 1974, the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit conducted a programme of rescue excavation on part of a large crop mark site<sup>1</sup> near Red Lodge, during the construction of the south-eastern end of the Ducklington bypass.

Preliminary work had been conducted the year before when field walking and trial trenching revealed intensive Romano-British occupation with a wide surface scatter of pottery.

In 1974 mechanical trial trenching in advance of the contractor's machines revealed many ditches, pits and post-holes, and apart from several sherds of Antonine period samian ware, the pottery recovered was from a mid 3rd-century to late 4th- or 5th-century context.<sup>2</sup> Stripping of the site for further excavation was prevented by the weather and by the progress of construction.

This crop mark site had been known for several years from aerial photographs as a possible villa site although excavation has so far not uncovered such a building. The crop marks (area centred SP 363072) lay on shallow, terrace gravel, at the bottom of a gentle hill slope which defines the western edge of the River Windrush flood plain. The crop marks indicated in the aerial photograph (PL. IV, A) show that the boundary ditches extended across field 2 into field 3 (FIG. 2) and probably to the northern side of the Standlake road. Contractor's topsoil stripping showed that the boundary ditches also extended eastwards into field 1. The lack of crop marks in field 1 was because field 1 lay under pasture whereas fields 2 and 3 were cropped with barley.<sup>3</sup>

The site lay under some 0.25-0.3 m. of plough soil which in places lay directly on gravel and elsewhere sealed 0.05-0.15 m. of red-brown silty clay, a Loessial material which capped the gravel. The gravel itself appears to have been derived from Jurassic limestones further north and it has a small flint content.

I would like to acknowledge West Oxfordshire District Council both for permission to excavate and for their general assistance. I would also like to thank the

<sup>1</sup> D. Benson and D. Miles, *The Upper Thames Valley, an Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels* (1974), 43, Map 18.

<sup>2</sup> The finds and excavation records are in the care of the Oxford City and County Museum, Woodstock.

<sup>3</sup> Information kindly supplied by Mr. S. W. Smart.

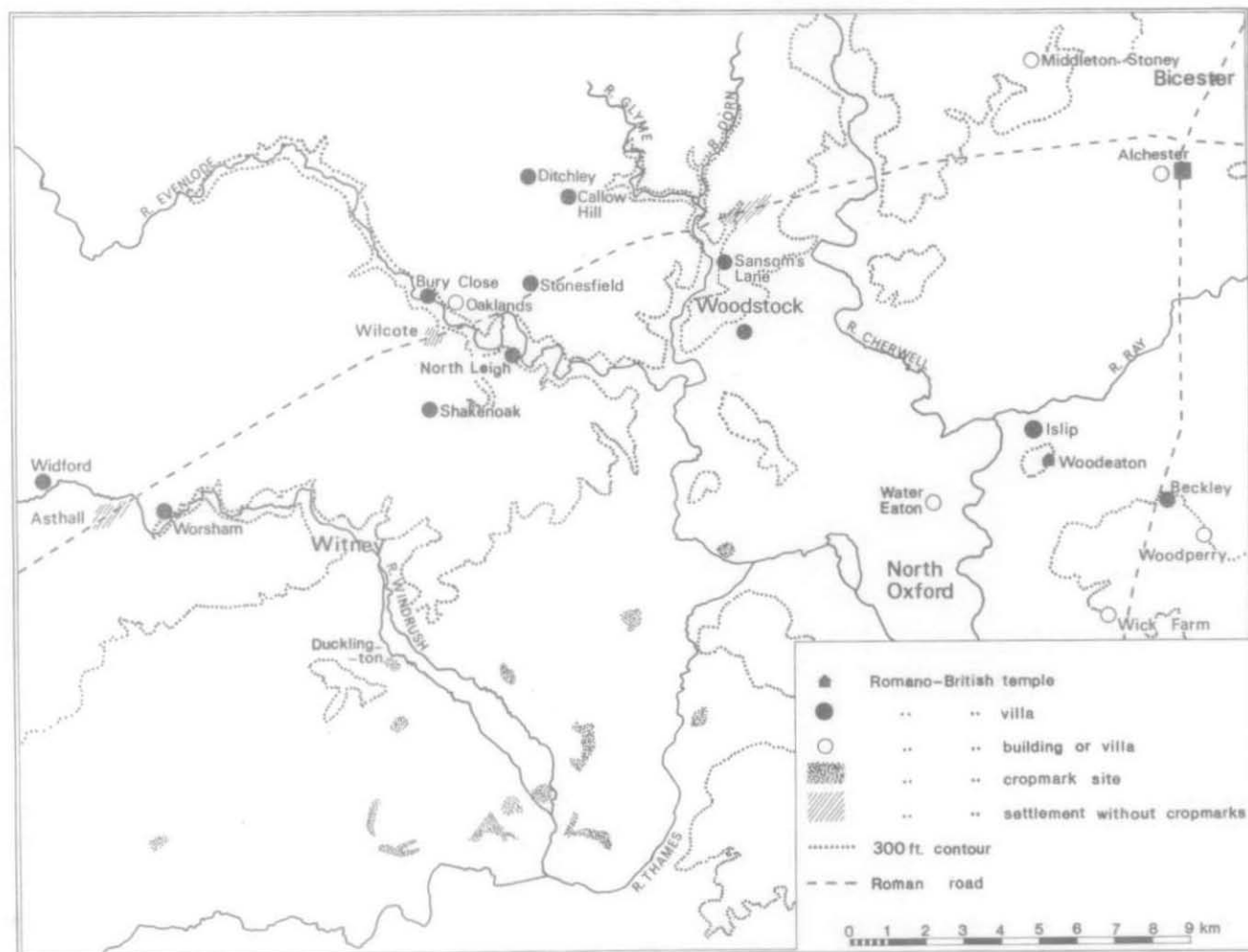


FIG. 1

Location plan of Ducklington and other Romano-British sites. Based on 1 in. O.S. map.

farmer, Mr. S. W. Smart, for permission to carry out field walking and trial excavation over the past year and also for his general assistance and interest during November-December 1974. I am grateful to Mr. J. Hazelden of the Soil Survey for England and Wales for advice on geological aspects and also the volunteers who assisted with the excavation. I am indebted to Mrs. J. M. Chambers who typed out the text.

## PART I : THE ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT

### THE 1973 TRIAL EXCAVATION

This was conducted by Mr. G. Williams and the Witney Archaeological Research Group<sup>4</sup> for the Oxford City and County Museum, Woodstock. A 4 m. square trial trench was opened to examine a linear crop mark. The plough soil was removed by hand and carefully checked for finds. An abundance of pottery sherds, two fragments of glass, a bone pin, two segments from a shale bracelet and an unidentifiable piece of sheet bronze were retrieved. Removal of the plough soil revealed several intersecting pits cut by a late ditch. It was difficult to differentiate between the various pit fills which contained a large amount of pottery, mainly Oxfordshire wares. These pits are therefore collectively referred to as F5 for the rest of this report.

### THE 1974 EXCAVATION

The excavation of the site was confined to the area of the new road and comprised two trial trenches across the main body of the crop marks in field 2. These 0.85 m. wide trenches were mechanically excavated by a J.C.B.3C to the base of the plough soil and for much of their lengths exposed the underlying gravel. The features revealed were then excavated within the limits of the trial trenches. Unfortunately circumstances prevented stripping an area of the site selected from the evidence contained in the trial trenches. Further features were recorded in fields 1 and 3 when the contractors stripped the topsoil. As the Ducklington bypass was so short the contractor's work proceeded quickly and only in the case of field 1 was there enough time to permit the excavation of the features so exposed.

As the road was up to 1.5 m. below the original land surface examination of the road side drainage ditches that were dug later on both sides of the carriageway revealed nothing that had not been previously recorded. Consequently these open drainage ditches have not been added to the site plan.

### THE FEATURES

These are numbered, the number preceded by an F. These numbers are the ones used in the original recording of the site. Where a feature contained a homogeneous fill it has only been allotted a feature number, i.e. F63, but for features containing more than one layer the feature is known as F63 and the individual layers as F63.1, F63.2, etc. The abbreviation RB stands for Romano-British in

<sup>4</sup> *Britannia*, v (1974), 436. The finds are in the Oxford City and County Museum, Woodstock (P.R.N. 5991).

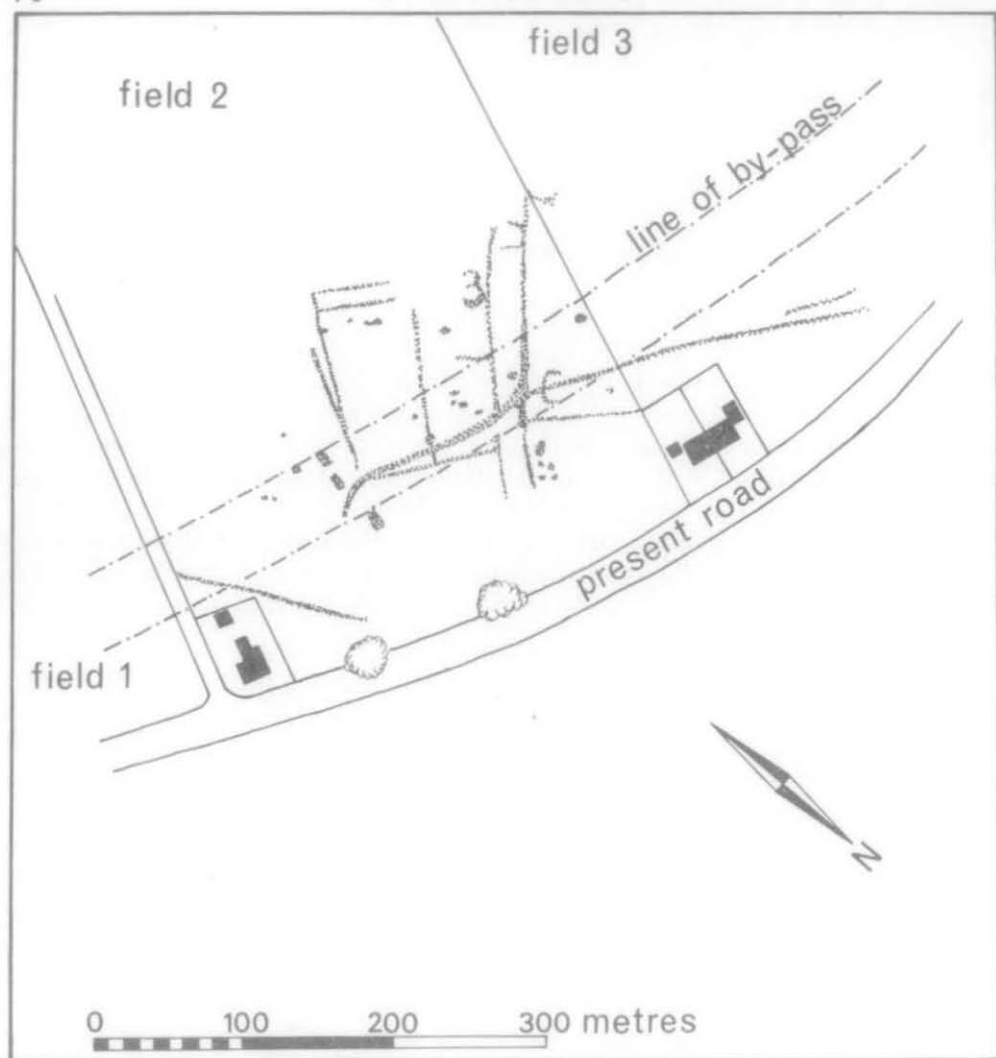


FIG. 2

A plan of the cropmarks taken from the aerial photograph. Based on 25 in. O.S. map.

the feature catalogue. Unless otherwise indicated depth measurements are quoted from the exposed surface of the gravel subsoil.

The Romano-British features are categorized under their various field numbers. Later features, mainly ridge and furrow, are mentioned under either *Miscellaneous* or *Ridge and Furrow*. As the Romano-British features could only be dated to the general period spanning the mid 3rd to late 4th or 5th centuries, and due to the limitations of the excavation, no phasing of the features was possible.

#### *Miscellaneous*

*F1* & *2* were numbers given to finds from the plough soil made during field walking. This comprised RB coarsewares and some Samian of the Antonine period.

*Ridge and Furrow*

*F50, F52-59 and F69.* The medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow which once covered the fields to the south of the present road was no longer visible on the surface.<sup>5</sup> Topsoil stripping revealed several of the furrows as broad bands of greyish-brown, clayey gravelly loam up to 0.2 m. deep, running N.N.E.-S.S.W. in the lighter coloured gravel (section S27-28, FIG. 4). A section through each furrow to ensure a correct physical interpretation showed that there were often two pronounced bottoms to each furrow, either close together, suggesting a double out-turned furrow on either side of a grass baulk strip boundary or when the two 'bottoms' were wider apart, i.e. 1-2 m., indicating a change in width of strips during the period in which the open fields were in use.

*Field 1*

Within the line of the carriageway the topsoil was stripped by a large, front-loading mechanical shovel which left much soil and mud behind and this obscured features that might otherwise have been visible.

At the eastern end of the roadway in field 1 a small, 90 sq. m. area of gravel subsoil was cleaned by hand to investigate the nature and quantity of any remaining features (FIG. 3). This revealed Features 48, 49, 51 and 62. The soil horizons in field 1 comprised 0.25-0.3 m. modern plough soil over 0-0.2 m. reddish-brown, sandy, clayey soil (natural) which sealed the surface of the gravel terrace.

*F3* Ditch; palisade trench? Cutting lengthwise through a natural frost wedge. Post pit at southern end measuring 0.25 m. by 0.4 m. oval and 0.15 m. deep. Southwards from this extended a very shallow, narrow 0.25 m. wide slot in the gravel surface (*F4*). Ditch fill homogeneous dark brown gravelly soil with RB coarsewares; FIG. 4. Approx. half way along *F3* could be seen the protruding edge of a pit.

*F4* See under *F3*.

*F47* 7th-century grave—see Part II of this report.

*F48* Undated, oval pit approx. 1.06 m. by 2 m. and 0.9 m. deep.

Fill:

- 1 Dark brown loam with charcoal, ash and burnt limestone fragments. Sealed layer 3 but missing in the section.
- 2 Light coloured, bluish grey clay below *F48.1* and within *F48.2* but was not very evident in section.
- 3 Loamy gravel fill.
- 4 Slightly loamy, loose gravel fill with charcoal flecks. Primary gravel silting, infall from pit sides not distinguishable from layer 4. Several tip lines visible. This layer appears to be an intentional backfilling soon after the excavation of the pit had taken place.
- 5 Lining very bottom of pit, a thin layer of burning residue.

*F49* Broad, deep ditch 2 m. wide by approx. 0.5 m. deep. Fill contained RB grey wares.

Fill (western trench):

- 1 Dark reddish-brown gravelly, sandy, silty loam.
- 2 As last but with more gravel.
- 3 Gravelly, sandy silts.
- 4 Greyish-brown clayey silt.
- 5 Light-coloured gravelly primary silt.

*F50* See under *Ridge and Furrow*.

*F51* Linear, shallow depression 0.05 m. deep by 0.5 m. wide ending in a shallow pit 0.6 m. by 1 m. oval and 0.15 m. deep. Homogeneous, sterile, dark brown gravelly soil fill.

*F52-59* See under *Ridge and Furrow*.

*F61* Frost wedge sectioned as a check.

<sup>5</sup> M. Aston and T. Rowley, 'Landscape Archaeology' (1974), Fig. 37, 135. This details a topographical survey of the parish carried out by the Oxford University Archaeological Society.

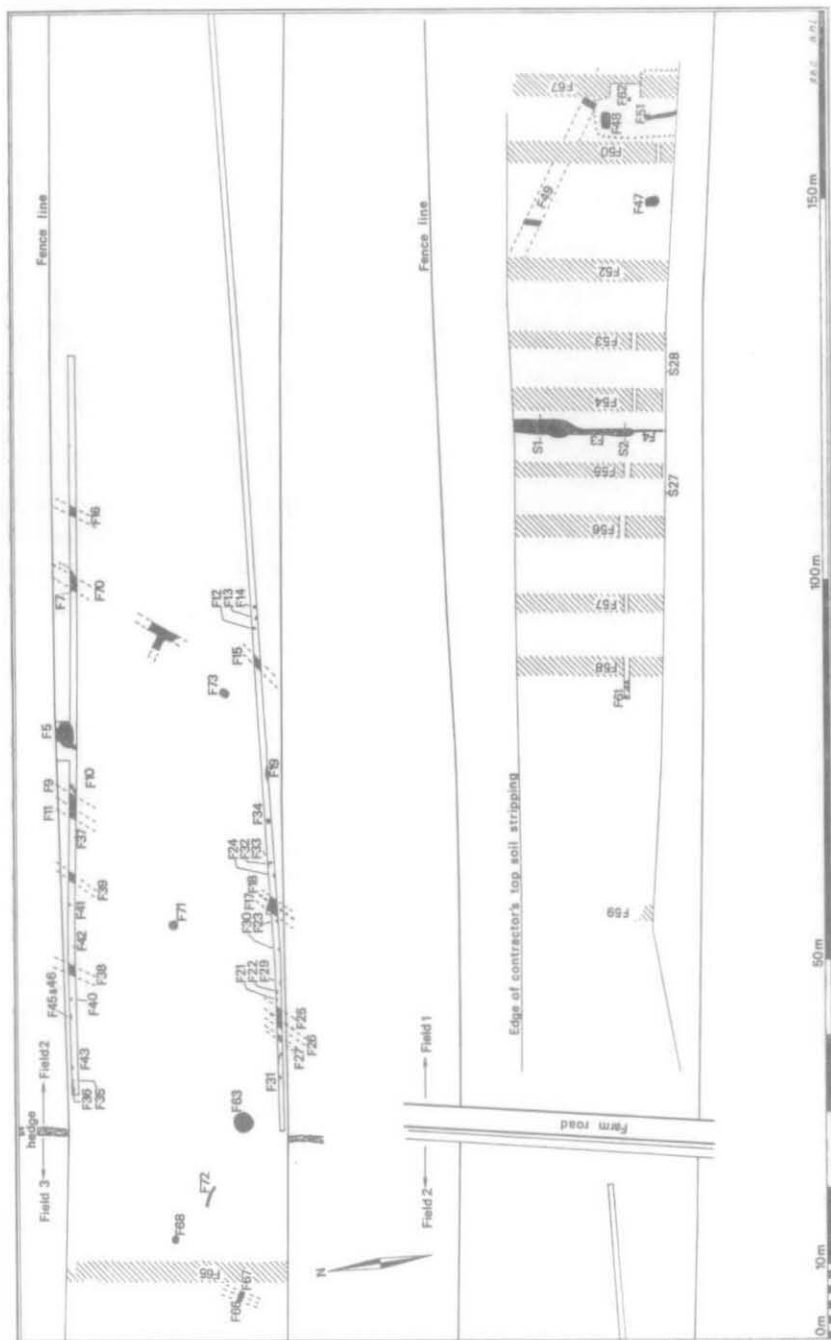


FIG. 3  
Feature plan.

*F62* Post pit? Circular, 0.5 m. diam. by 0.15 m. deep. Sterile, dark brown gravelly fill.

*F67* See under *Ridge and Furrow*. An area of *F67* was removed to reveal linear plough marks in the gravel surface averaging 0.25–0.3 m. apart.

### Field 2

The majority of the features in field 2 were exposed by careful cleaning of the trial trenches. Rapid topsoil stripping by the contractors revealed many features of which several were planned although the well *F63* was the only feature that proved possible to excavate.

*F5* Intersecting pits excavated by Mr. G. Williams in the 1973 trial trench. The RB pottery dated from the mid-3rd century to the late 4th or 5th century.

*F7* Edge of large pit. Upper part excavated revealing a fill comprising layers of dark brown loam and gravel. Several RB colour coat sherds present. Cut by an earlier ditch, *F70*.

*F9* Ditch approx. 2 m. wide by 0.85 m. deep. This ditch cut and was consequently later than Ditch *F10* and probably also *F11*.

Fill :

- 1 Mid-brown loamy silty gravel, charcoal flecks, animal bone and RB colour coat sherds.
- 2 Mid-brown clayey loam merges into layer 3 below.
- 3 Layers of coarse and finer gravel silts.
- 4 As layer 2 above but with sandy inclusions from natural band of sand in side of ditch.
- 5 Primary silts comprising fine gravel below grey sandy silts.

*F10* Ditch filled with homogeneous, sterile, mid-brown silty loam with pea gravel. Cut by and so earlier than Ditch *F9*.

*F11* Ditch, palisade trench? Homogeneous, sterile, mid-brown silty fill with gravel.

*F12* Post pit 0.15 m. deep with sterile, light brown, clayey, gravelly soil fill.

*F13* As last with irregular bottom, 0.26 m. deep.

*F14* As above with shallow, flat bottom, 0.22 m. deep.

*F15* Shallow ditch 1.2 m. wide by 0.2 m. deep. Homogeneous, sterile brownish-grey clayey loam fill with charcoal specks.

*F16* Ditch : contained bronze coin of Tetricus I (270–4 A.D.).

*F17* & *18* Two shallow ditches with homogeneous sterile dark greyish-brown loamy clay fill.

*F19* Edge of depression in west edge of trial trench containing dark brown soil.

*F21* Post pit : sterile greyish-brown fill.

*F22* Post pit 0.2 m. long with edge just showing in the trial trench. Sterile dark gravelly humic soil fill.

*F23* Post pit with sterile greyish-brown fill, 0.25 m. diam., 0.2 m. deep, flat bottomed.

*F24* Post pit with sterile greyish-brown fill. Ovoid, 0.46 m. by 0.4 m. and 0.2 m. deep.

*F25* Ditch approx. 1.9 m. wide and 0.7 m. deep below present plough soil.

Fill :

- 1 Dark brown, slightly gravelly loam.
- 2 As last with charcoal flecks.
- 3 Line of large pebbles.
- 4 Reddish-greyish-brown clayey loam with gravel which intensifies at the bottom of this layer indicating the primary silt.

*F26* Ditch approx. 1 m. wide and 0.4 m. deep below present plough soil. Upper fills of *F25* seal *F26*. Sterile fill.

*F27* Shallow ditch bottom 0.45 m. wide by 0.05 m. deep and filled with sterile dark brown clayey loam.

*F28* Broad, shallow, flat-bottomed depression filled with sterile greyish-brown slightly

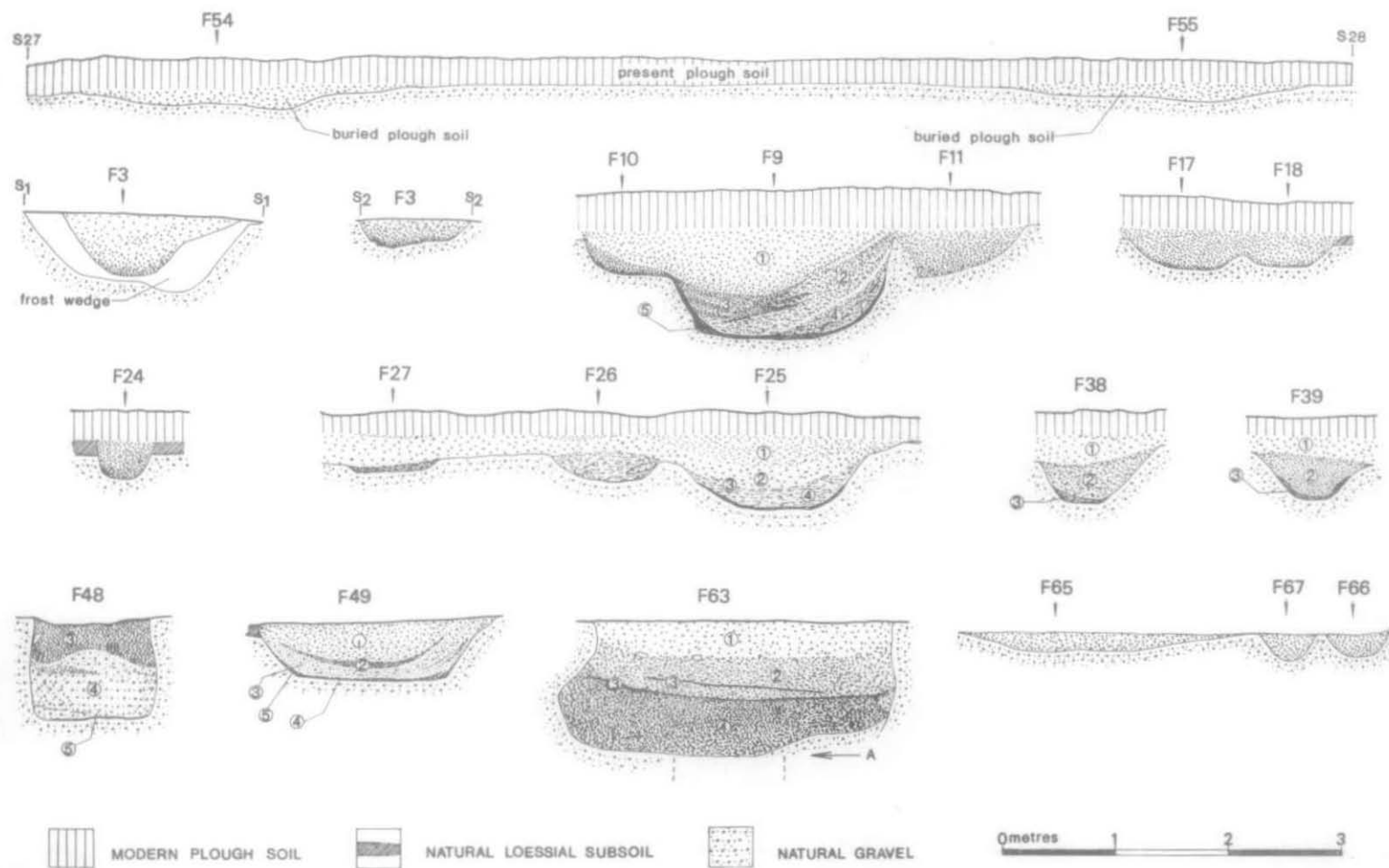


FIG. 4  
Sections.



gravelly clayey soil. This feature lies north of F25 and F26 and seals the darker fill of F27 cutting very shallowly into the surface of the gravel. Extends some 3 m. north of F27 in northern edge of trial trench.

F29 Pit filled with sterile red gravelly soil ; natural frost hollow?

F30 Post pit with sterile greyish-brown soil fill. Flat bottomed and vertical sided, 0.3 m. wide by 0.2 m. deep from the base of the present plough soil.

F31 Post pit with sterile fill, 0.15 m. deep and roughly 0.36 m. by 0.2 m. rectangular.

F32 Post pit 0.33 m. wide containing post-hole in northern edge of trial trench. Reddish-brown, gravelly clayey loam packing with charcoal specks, and darker outline of pointed post. 0.4 m. deep below present plough soil.

F33 Shallow depression 0.06 m. deep—post pit? 0.2 m. deep below base of present plough soil.

F34 Small pit, post pit? 0.55 m. diam., 0.11 m. deep from surface of gravel and 0.36 m. deep from bottom of present plough soil. Dark brown gravelly loamy clay fill.

F35 Post pit, rectangular with rounded corners 0.38 m. wide, bottom 0.2 m. below present plough soil. Partly outside trial trench.

F36 Pit edge. Dark brown gravelly uppermost fill only excavated.

F37 Post hole, partly outside trial trench.

F38 Ditch, trapezoidal cross section ; over 1 m. wide and 0.6 m. deep below present plough soil.

Fill :

- 1 Buried plough soil.
- 2 Stone and gravel in dark humus.
- 3 Stone and gravel primary silt.

F39 Ditch, trapezoidal cross section ; about 1 m. wide by 0.6 m. deep below present plough soil.

Fill :

- 1 Buried plough soil.
- 2 Stone and gravel in dark brown soil.
- 3 Stone and gravel primary silt.

F40-43 and 45-46 Shallow depressions with red soil fills. Probably natural periglacial features.

F44 Continuous gully in the gravel of F43, root hole or animal burrow.

F63 Stone-lined well with upper lining robbed? A large pit 2.6 m. diam. by 1.5 m. deep, formed by the collapse of the sides of a well head, possibly brought about by robbing out the upper part of the stone lining before the site was deserted. Excavation of opposite quadrants of this pit revealed the top of the approx. 1 m. diam. circular stone lining which was inserted to retain the loose, crumbly natural gravel into which it had been sunk. Excavation could not proceed below the level of the new road and the remainder was left undug.

Fill :

- 1 Dark greyish-brown gravelly clayey loam with charcoal specks.
- 2 Dark greyish-brown loam.
- 3 Thin layers of grey and red ash and charcoal, thickest in southern quadrant.
- 4 Dark greyish-brown loam with traces of ash and charcoal. Darker than 2 above.

Point A was the depth at which the stone lining appeared and was also the limit of the excavation.

F70 Ditch cut by Pit F7.

F71 Stone-packed post-hole observed briefly.

F73 Small rectangular pit some 1.2 m. by 1 m., observed briefly.

### Field 3

F65 Furrow base—see under *Ridge and Furrow*.

F66 & 67 Two parallel shallow palisade trenches almost destroyed where cut by the later furrow base.

F68 Circular pit 1 m. top diameter with stoney top fill observed briefly.

F72 Shallow, narrow, arc-shaped trench containing large stones, observed briefly.

## THE FINDS

Abbreviation :

*Shakenoak I-IV* A. C. C. Brodrigg, *et al.*, *Excavations at Shakenoak, I-IV* (1971-4).

### STONE

Several pieces of limestone roofing slate came from stratified Roman levels though only one slate retained its 5 mm. square nail hole. Several of the slate fragments showed signs of burning perhaps either through secondary use in a hearth or from the destruction of a stone-roofed building by fire. I am grateful to Mr. Philip Powell of the Department of Geology, University of Oxford, who identified the slates as grey laminated calcareous sandy limestones and shelly limestone probably from the Forest Marble which may be found in the vicinity of the site or further along the Windrush valley. Some of the slates may or may not have come from the Stonesfield area.

### TILE

The site produced many fragments of tegula and box tile. Fragments of the latter bore the usual combed decorations.

### IRON OBJECTS

The majority of the iron objects, including the shears, key, knife and link arrangement, came from the upper fill of the well F63. The pottery contained in this fill indicated a date range from the mid-3rd century to the late 4th or 5th century.

#### *Descriptions* (FIG. 5)

1 Shears; overall length 140 mm., blade length 57 mm.; F63.3. Cf. K. D. White, *Agricultural Implements of the Roman World* (1967), 119.

2 Knife blade with tang of square cross-section; end broken; blade length 102 mm.; short groove (due to corrosion?) at top edge of blade (side illustrated); F63.4.

3 Key; length 93 mm.; F63.4. The thick, ring-ended handle is typically Roman. Cf. *Shakenoak III*, No. 208.

4 Link arrangement, possibly part of a cauldron suspension chain; F63.3.

5 Unworked iron strip; length 121 mm.; F6.1.

6 Unworked iron strip; length 117 mm.; F6.2.

7 Nail; F63.

8 Nail; F63.

9 Nail; point broken; F63.3.

10 Nail; F63.4.

11 Nail; F63.4.

12 Nail; point broken; F29.

### BRONZE OBJECTS

No analyses of the alloys used have been attempted. Not illustrated is a battered fragment of sheet bronze. Also not illustrated is part of a late Roman bronze buckle plate of Type I found during the 1973 trial excavation in one of the pits comprising F5; see S. Hawkes, 'Some Recent Finds of Late Roman Buckles', *Britannia*, v (1974), 386.

#### *Descriptions* (FIG. 5)

13 Bent fragment of undecorated bronze bracelet; F63.3.

14 Fragment of 2 core twisted wire bracelet lightly hammered oval to 3 mm. wide by 2.4 mm. thick; F19.

## SHALE OBJECTS

Not illustrated is a shale sliver with one smooth face.

*Descriptions (FIG. 5)*

15 Two shale bracelet segments, each bearing two incised concentric circles, plain back. Two small, parallel holes have been bored through the length of each segment for the cord

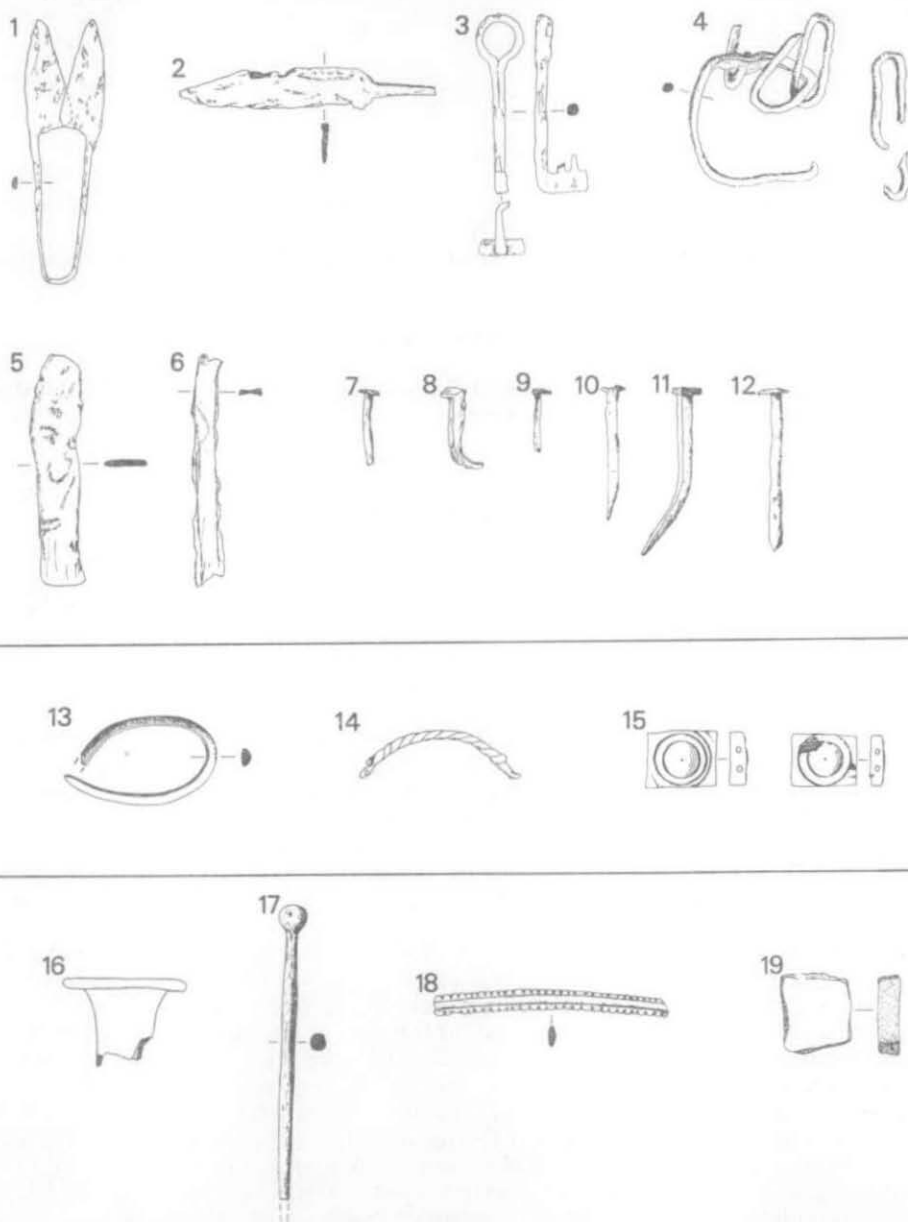


FIG. 5

Objects of Iron, 2-12 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Bronze, 13 and 14 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Shale, 15 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Glass, 16 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Bone, 17 and 18 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ); Pottery, 19 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ).

linking the bracelet together. Single, central dimples on front and back of each segment from lathe on which design was turned. F5.

## GLASS OBJECTS

Two pieces of glass were recovered during the 1973 trial excavation. One piece which has not been illustrated is a small fragment of thin, clear colourless glass representing a body fragment from a vessel.

*Description* (FIG. 5)

16 Top from unguent bottle, clear glass with slight green tint ; F5.

## BONE OBJECTS

*Descriptions* (FIG. 5)

17 Round-headed bone pin ; point broken. F5. At Shakenoak such pins only occurred in a later Roman context. Cf. *Shakenoak II*, No. 32 ; I, No. 16.

18 Curved bone decorated with segmented edges formed by knife-cut V-shaped notches ; F5.

## MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS

*Description* (FIG. 5)

19 Roughly squared plain counter formed from a coarseware pottery body sherd and measuring approx. 20 mm.  $\times$  17 mm. ; F5.

## THE ANIMAL BONES. By ROBERT WILSON

A total of 171 bones and fragments and two shells were examined from thirteen features at Ducklington. The bones were well preserved apart from four weathered fragments. Seven fragments had been burnt black and two had been gnawed by animals. However, recent breakages showed on over a third of the sample, restricting the usefulness of the report as most of the evidence is related to fragment numbers in some way. Fifty fragments were identified, the remainder consisting of 91 large fragments and 26 smaller chips.

At least four cattle beasts and two sheep are represented amongst the 41 cattle and 7 sheep bones<sup>6</sup> and there are two individual oyster shells.<sup>7</sup>

One of the four cattle beasts was immature when it died and nine of the eleven cattle epiphyses are fused. There are two unfused sheep epiphyses, although mature animals appear to be represented by the shafts of two tibiae. In the unclassified residue there are three neonatal bones which seem most likely to be of lamb. A single sheep jaw has the fourth milk premolar jammed on top of the erupted permanent tooth but the third molar has been broken away and lost.

Heavy knives or chopping blades were the main butchering instruments and a third of the cattle bones have either definite chop marks or have at least been fragmented by heavy blows. Thin bladed cut marks are virtually absent and dubious on two fragments. The meat blades were used to trim the meat off the tops of the spines of the two scapulae, and at least partially to disjoint the glenoid articulation by chops taking just the anterior edge of the glenoid cavities. Humeri, radii and ulnae were not identified, but could be represented amongst the residue of broken fragments. The anterior tuberosities of the three proximal tibiae are slightly trimmed as if the ligaments to the patella had been sliced off the bone. Some of the processes of the three vertebrae appear to have been trimmed by the meat blade but each vertebral body was left intact. While only four other small cattle bones were complete it is likely that more were intact before they were buried.

<sup>6</sup> R. E. Chaplin, *The Study of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* (1971), 70-75.

<sup>7</sup> Of the oyster shells from the site only these were kept.

Two bird bones from a Golden Plover came from the intersecting Romano-British pit complex F5. These were identified by Mr. D. Bramwell as a left and right tibia which appear to belong to one individual. This esteemed table bird is commonly found among remains of Roman date.

## COINS

Two bronze coins were found, the first was of Tetricus I, 270-74 A.D. (F16) and the second was a follis of the Trier mint, 350-53 A.D., L.R.B.C. 59 (F63.3). I am grateful to the staff of the Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for the identifications.

## THE POTTERY. Identified by CHRISTOPHER J. YOUNG

Abbreviations	
<i>Black Burnished Wares</i>	R. A. H. Farrar, 'The Techniques and Sources of Romano-British black-burnished Ware', in A. Detsicas (ed.), <i>Current Research in Romano-British Coarse Pottery</i> (1973), 67-103.
<i>Black Burnished Pottery</i>	<i>Ibid.</i> , D. P. S. Peacock, 'The Black Burnished Pottery Industry in Dorset', 63-65.
<i>Broad Street</i>	M. Parrington and Chris Balkwill, 'Excavation at Broad Street, Abingdon', (this volume).
<i>Oxford Pottery</i>	C. J. Young, 'The Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region', in A. Detsicas (ed.), <i>Current Research in Romano-British Coarse Pottery</i> (1973), 105-15.
<i>Shakenoak I-IV</i>	A. C. C. Brodribb, <i>et al.</i> , <i>Excavations at Shakenoak, I-IV</i> (1971-74).

All the pottery was late Romano-British with the exception of several medieval sherds from the base of the modern plough soil and the residual samian which Mr. W. J. Rodwell kindly identified. All the fine wares, except nos. 5 and 8 below, are from the Oxford area. Most of the ordinary grey wares could also have come from the Oxford region. Most of the black burnished ware jars are probably normal black burnished wares but most of the burnished black ware bowls present are of a softer, sandier fabric and suggest a locally manufactured imitation of the black burnished ware finish. The fabric of this imitation ware is always medium or dark grey with a brownish tinge (*Cf. Black Burnished Wares*), is sandy in texture and has occasional small white inclusions (*Cf. Broad Street and Shakenoak I*).

Large quantities of low quality, coarsely finished pottery, especially bowls, represented a very local fabric. None of the pottery present need be later than 350 A.D. but none need be earlier either. There were no forms that only appear after the mid 4th century.

In this catalogue the description gives first the temper and texture of the fabric, followed by its colour (E = outside surface; I = inside surface; Bk. = cross-section). Any special feature of the fabric, such as colour-coating or other surface treatment, is described next to last. The number preceded by F denotes the provenance in the original records of the site. These provenance numbers have been retained throughout this excavation report.

## SAMIAN POTTERY. By WARWICK RODWELL

## Unstratified :

Form 36, Central Gaulish ; first half of 2nd century.

Form 33 (2 sherds and half base), Central Gaulish ; Antonine. Stamped SEVERIAN[NI·W]. Die 3a. A product of SEVERIANUS I of Lezoux. c. A.D. 160-200.

Rim form 18/31R or 31R, Central Gaulish ; mid 2nd century.

Form 31 rim, Central Gaulish ; Antonine.

Indeterminate body sherd, East Gaulish ; Antonine.

F25.3 A quarter of the base of a cup, form 80. Stamped ALBVC·I·, die 6a.<sup>8</sup> A product of ALBUCIUS of Lezoux : c. A.D. 150-180.

*Descriptions* (FIGS. 6, 7 & 8)

WHITE WARE MORTARIA

1 Mortaria rim ; hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. off white ; multicoloured translucent quartzite grit ; Oxford kiln product ; F63-4.

COLOUR COATED POTTERY

2 Imitation Dr. 36 ; hard, sandy ; E, I orange, Bk. grey ; red-brown colour coat ; topsoil, field 2.

3 Mortaria ; hard, sandy ; E, I Bk. dark orange ; red colour coat, multicoloured translucent quartzite grit ; Oxford kiln product (see *Oxford Pottery*, Fig. 2, 19). F63.2.

4 Imitation Dr. 31 ; hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. brick red ; darker red colour coat ; single concentric line of rouletting ; F63.4.

5 Bead rim, hemispherical bowl ; hard, sandy, micaceous ; E, I orange, Bk. grey ; red colour coat ; rouletted decoration ; F5.

6 Double bead rim wide mouthed bowl ; hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. orange ; red-brown colour coat ; F5.

7 Wide mouthed jar ; hard, sandy, micaceous ; E, I, Bk. light orange ; red-brown colour coat on outside and running down over inside of rim ; topsoil, field 2.

8 Wide mouthed jar ; hard, sandy ; E, I light orange, Bk. dark orange ; red-brown colour coat on outside with dark concentric lines and colour coat running down over inside of rim ; topsoil, field 2.

9 Body sherd ; hard, sandy ; E, I orange, Bk. grey ; red brown colour coat with darker areas, rouletted decoration ; F5.

10 Beaker rim ; hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. orange ; red-brown colour coat ; Oxford kiln product, not before mid 3rd century (see *Oxford Pottery*, Fig. 3, 25) ; F6.2.

11 Beaker body sherd ; hard, sandy ; E, I reddish-brown, Bk. orange ; Oxford kiln product (see *Oxford Pottery*, Fig. 3, 26) ; F5.

12 Body sherd ; hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. dark orange ; red-brown colour coat on exterior with white barbotine decoration and lighter colour coat running down inside over heavy wheel corrugations ; not an Oxford product ; topsoil, field 2.

13 Beaker body sherd ; E, I, Bk. dark orange ; red-brown colour coat with dark patches, white barbotine decoration ; not an Oxford product ; F5.

14 Bowl ; hard, sandy ; E, I orange, Bk. grey ; off-white colour coat ; Oxford kiln product imitation 'Parchment ware' (see *Oxford Pottery*, Fig. 3, 21) ; F63.3. White colour coated wares were produced at the kiln site at Baldon.

15 Flanged rim ; hard, sandy ; E, I dirty brown, Bk. reddish-brown ; traces of off-white-buff slip ; F5.

16 Dish rim ; hard, sandy ; E light reddish-brown, I cream, Bk. reddish-brown ; inside and over lip coated in off-white slip burnished on interior ; F63.4.

Not illustrated : One sherd of imitation Dr. 31, red colour coated ; F63.3.

BURNISHED BLACK WARES

17 Dish ; sandy with inclusions of grog and occasional white flecks ; E, I black, Bk. grey ; burnished on interior ; F5.

18 Texture as last ; burnished ; F5.

19 Texture as last ; E, I black, Bk. red-brown and grey ; burnished and with burnished lines on base inside and out ; F63.4.

20 Texture as last ; E, I Black, Bk. grey ; burnished on interior ; F5.

<sup>8</sup> Details of the die kindly supplied by Mr. B. R. Hartley.

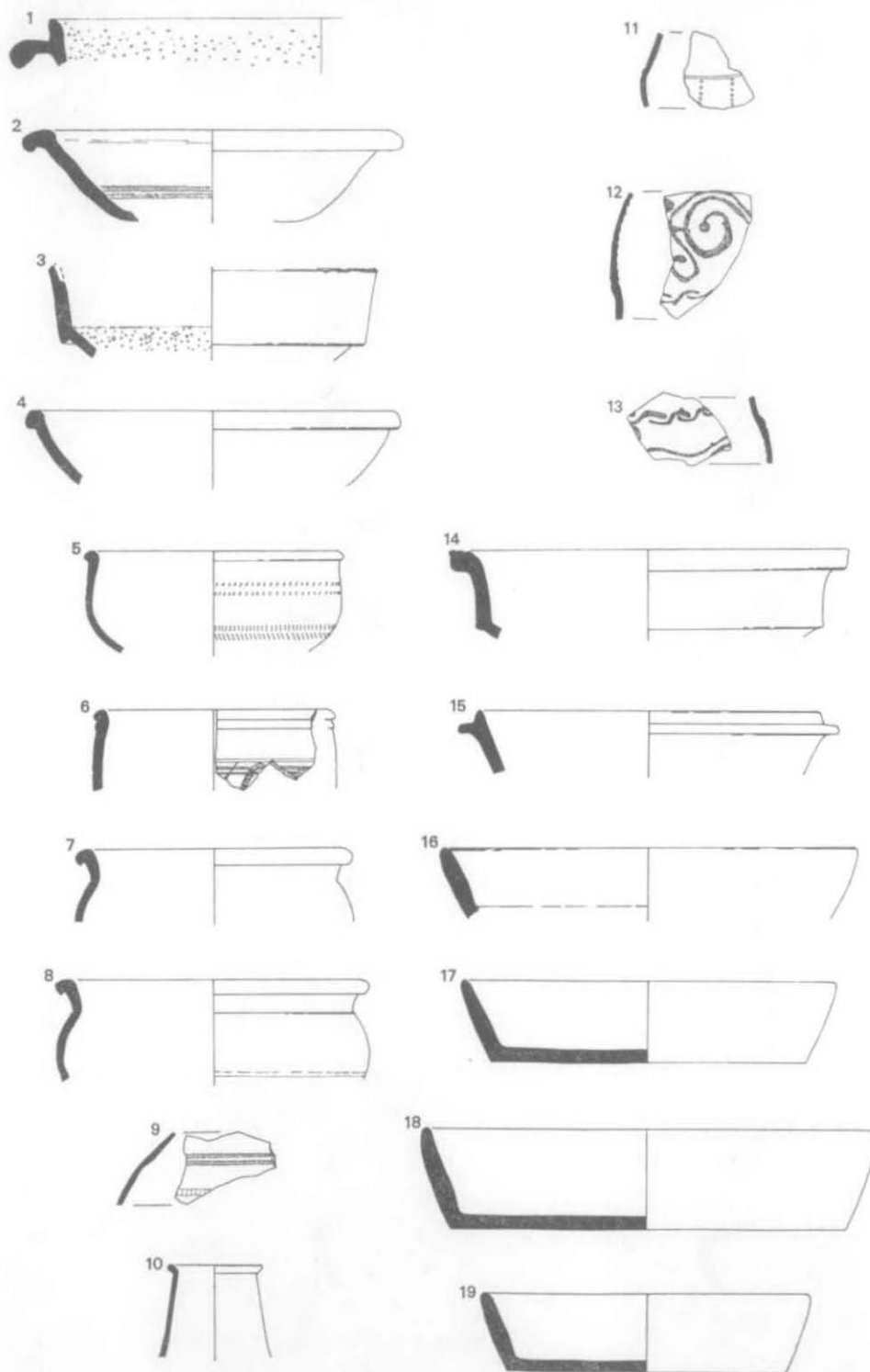


FIG. 6  
Pottery (1/2)

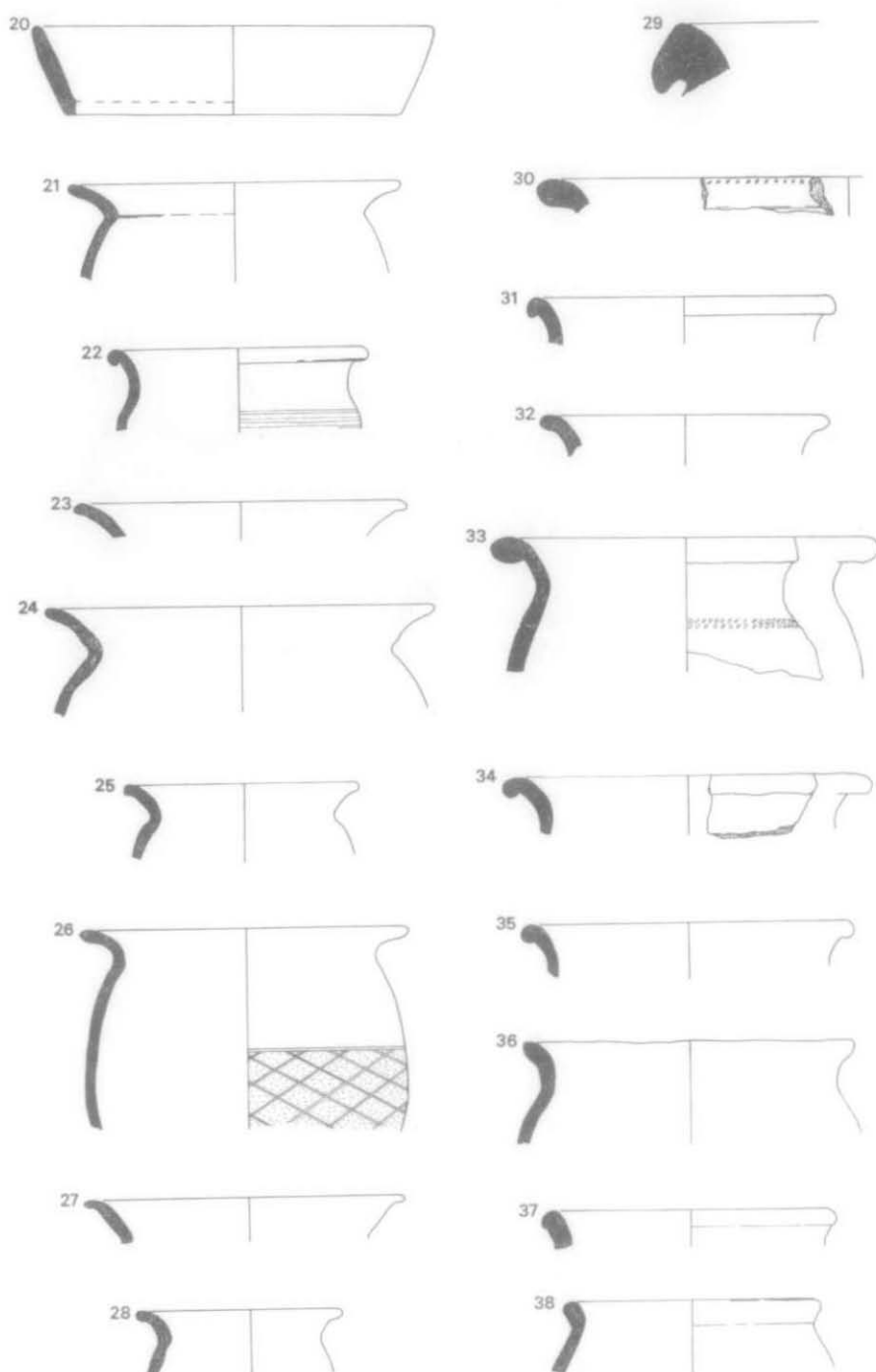


FIG. 7  
Pottery (4)



Not illustrated : bowl base fragment similar to above with burnished decorative lines on both surfaces.

21 Jar ; hard, sandy with occasional grog and large flat grit inclusions ; E grey-black, I brown below shoulder, Bk. grey ; burnished except inside below shoulder ; imitation of black burnished wares below ; F63.4.

22 Jar ; hard, sandy, micaceous ; E, I black, Bk. grey ; burnished concentric lines externally and on inside of lip ; F63.2.

#### BLACK BURNISHED WARES

The sherds listed below are comparable with J. P. Gillam's *Category 1* black burnished wares which D. P. S. Peacock suggests may originate from the Dorset area (see *Black Burnished Pottery*). The obtuse lattice decoration style applied to the vessels from Ducklington appears to begin in the mid 3rd century (*Black Burnished Wares*, 7).

23 Jar ; White quartz sand ; E, I, Bk. black ; burnished except for untouched greyish surface on underside of lip ; F63.5.

24 Jar ; fabric as last ; E, I, Bk. black ; burnished inside rim above the shoulder and externally on the body below the shoulder ; F63.4.

25 Jar ; fabric as last ; burnished inside rim above the shoulder and externally on the body below the shoulder ; F63.4.

26 Jar ; fabric as last ; burnished inside rim above shoulder and externally on the body below the shoulder with external obtuse lattice decoration ; post A.D. 250 ; F63.4.

27 Jar ; fabric as last ; burnished as last ; F63.2.

28 Jar ; fabric as last ; similarly burnished. F63.5.

Not illustrated ; 2 jar sherds with obtuse burnished lattice decoration and several small burnished body sherds and a rim similar to no. 26 above.

#### CALCITE-GRITTED WARE

29 Storage jar ; coarse, hard, sandy, grit, grog and occasional calcareous inclusions ; E, I dark orange, Bk. dark grey ; a local product ; F5.

30 Rim ; hard, heavily tempered with coarse calcite and grit inclusions, shell occurs in large flakes ; E orange, I brown, Bk. grey ; stabbed rim decoration ; local product ; F63.3.

31 Texture as last ; E orange-brown, I grey and black, Bk. dark grey ; F63.4.

32 Fabric as last ; F63.2.

33 Texture as last ; E, I, Bk. orangey buff ; fire blackened in part, stabbed exterior decoration ; F63.3.

34 Texture as last ; E, I, Bk. orangey buff ; fire blackened surfaces ; F5.

35 Similar texture to last but more grit ; E grey, I black, Bk. grey/black ; F63.4.

36 Texture as last ; E light buff-grey, I light pinky-grey, Bk. dark grey ; sooty surfaces ; F63.4.

37 Rim ; heavily tempered with limestone grit ; E, I, Bk. grey-black ; probably precedes last fabric in date ; F5.

38 Texture as last with much detritus leached out ; E, I, Bk. black ; F3.

#### GREY WARES

At the end of this section there are several vessels in which the rim is flattened to give varying degrees of triangulation and this is a practice well known in Southern England as dating from the 2nd half of the 4th century onwards. This dating is confirmed on several Oxfordshire sites of which Shakenoak is the nearest (see *Shakenoak I*, 68, (ii)).

39 Flagon rim ; hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. grey ; concentric burnished lines on neck and both under and on inside lip of neck ; Oxford kiln product ; topsoil, field 2.

40 Hard, sandy ; E, I grey, Bk. lighter grey ; burnished exterior below shoulder ; F63.2.

41 Hard, sandy, micaceous with occasional small white calcareous inclusions ; E, I, grey, Bk. lighter grey ; burnished rim and external line on shoulder ; F63.2.

- 42 Hard, sandy ; E, I, Bk. grey-pink ; concentric burnished lines on neck and inside lip of rim ; F5.  
 43 Hard, sandy, micaceous ; E, I, Bk. grey ; lightly burnished inside rim ; F63.2.  
 44 Fabric as last ; burnished bead and inside rim and body below shoulder ; F63.3.  
 45 Fabric as last ; sooty, and has been burnt ; F63.4.  
 46 Fabric as last ; F49.  
 47 Fabric as last ; slightly burnished ; F63.2.  
 48 Fabric as last ; slightly burnished inside rim, and externally below shoulder ; F63.5.  
 49 Hard, sandy, micaceous, E, I, Bk. grey ; F49.

## OTHER REDUCED WARES

- 50 Fabric as last ; slightly burnished rim but here the burnished area is very dark grey as opposed to the lighter grey of the fabric ; F63.3.  
 51 Texture as last ; E, dark grey, I light grey, Bk. pinky brown ; external burnished areas on rim and below shoulder almost black ; F63.3.

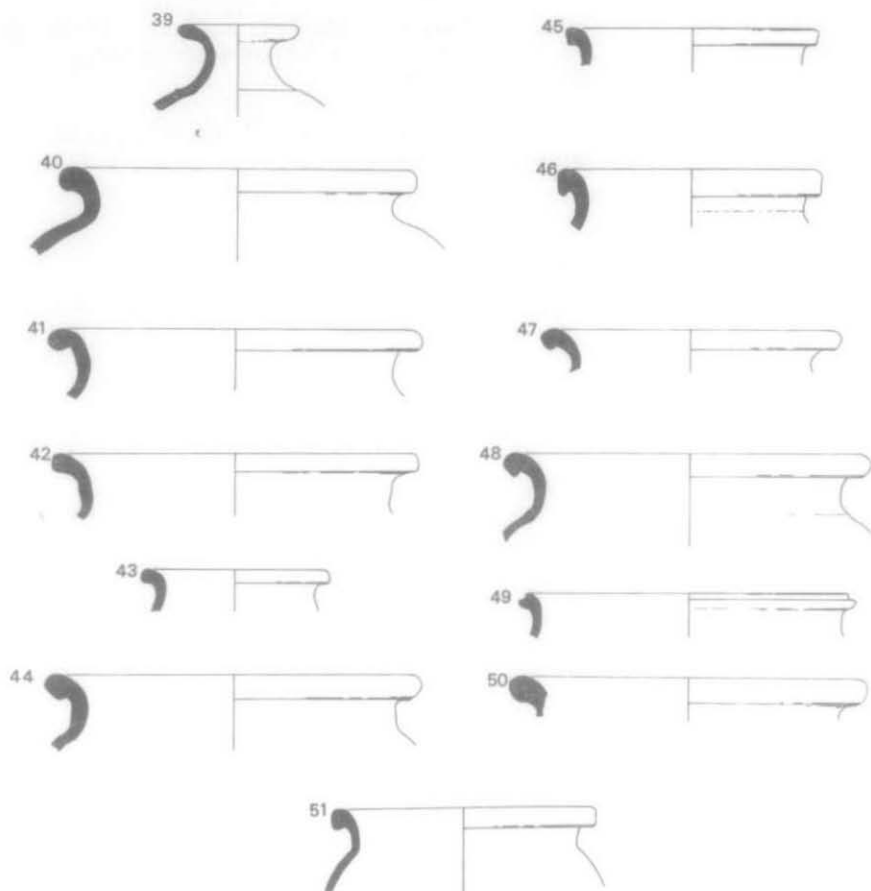


FIG. 8  
Pottery ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

## COLOUR COAT NONSENSE STAMP (FIG. 9)

The Oxford potters used potters' stamps in imitation of the samian potters', whose products they were copying. Such stamps have been found on copies of both Dr. 31 and Dr. 36. This stamp is not otherwise known.



FIG. 9  
Nonsense Stamp (†)

## PART II : A SEVENTH-CENTURY GROUP BURIAL

## INTRODUCTION

The isolated grave pit, F47, which contained three bodies was situated halfway across field 1 (FIG. 3) on the eastern edge of the Romano-British settlement area. Mr. David Brown of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, dated the inhumations to the 7th century from the associated grave goods.

## THE GRAVE

The grave pit was orientated S.-N. and was broad and shallow, varying between 0.15-0.3 m. deep below the surface of the gravel which at this point was directly overlain by the modern plough soil. The grave contained three skeletons of which two lay supine and the third, a child, lay on its side (FIG. 10). For ease of reference the eastern skeleton will be referred to as No. 1, the central skeleton No. 2 and the child No. 3. The three skeletons lay S.-N., heads at the southern end of the grave. In all three cases the heads lay facing east.

*Skeleton No. 1* Supine, probably male although the sex could not be accurately determined by the pathologist because of the state of preservation of the bones (see below, p. 197). Right arm doubled back over sternum, left arm by side with hand over abdomen. Legs flexed. Head facing east.

*Skeleton No. 2* Supine, female? Left arm over body, right arm by side. Legs unequally flexed, left foot above right foot. Head facing east.

*Skeleton No. 3* Child approx. 3 yrs. old. Little remained of this skeleton which was in an advanced state of decomposition. The child lay on its right side facing east, with legs slightly flexed, the left leg above the right.

## THE FINDS

*Bronze bucket bindings* One fragmentary, punch-decorated bronze strip (FIG. 12, 12) lay at the head of the grave between Skeletons 1 and 2 touching the back of the cranium of Skeleton No. 1. A second, punch-decorated bronze strip (FIG. 12, 11) lay half opened out over the child's skull and against the rear of the cranium of the central skeleton.

*Spindle whorl and thread picker* (FIG. 11, 8 and 2) At the head of the grave directly south of the skull of the central skeleton.

## F47 — THE GRAVE

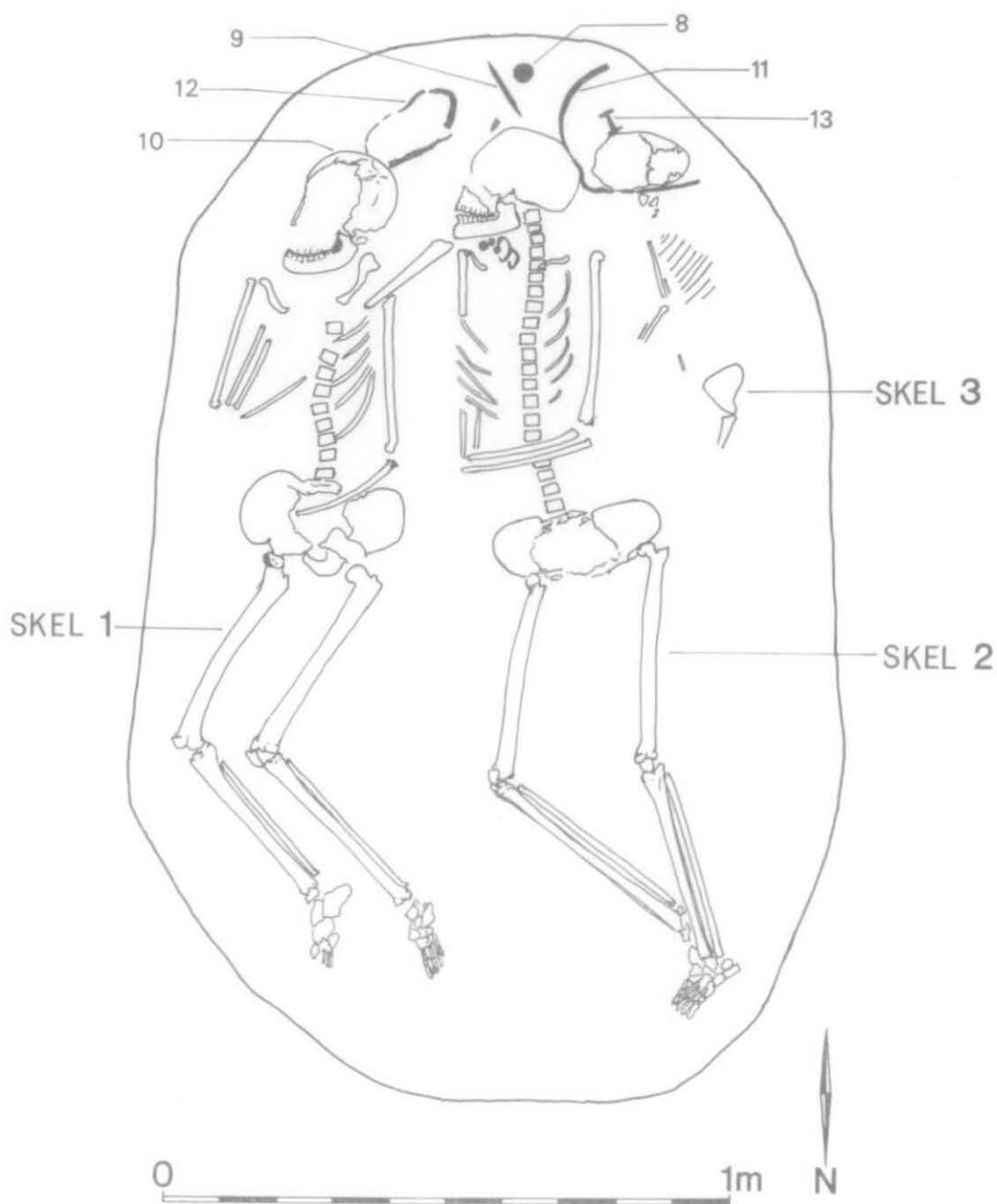


FIG. 10  
Grave Plan.

*Gold mounted beaver tooth pendant* (FIG. 11, 10) Beneath the cranium of Skeleton No. 1.

*Iron rivet* (FIG. 11, 13) Resting against the centre of the child's cranium.

*Necklace* (FIG. 11, 1-7) This adorned the neck of the central skeleton but upon decomposition of the body and the cord on which the necklace was threaded parts of the necklace fell down in between the bones of the skeleton.

#### OBJECTS FROM THE GRAVE. By DAVID BROWN

The *Necklace* is made up of a number of different elements, silver rings and pendants and various types of beads, as follows (FIG. 11, 1-7) :

1 *Silver knot-rings*. One complete (diam. 2.4 cm.) and fragments of at least four others, possibly more. The complete example and one of the fragments have groups of grooves engraved on them. These grooves show best on the inside of the rings where there has been least wear ; the grooves have been completely worn away from the outer edge of the complete ring.

2 *Silver spiral beads*. A spiral tube made up of  $13\frac{1}{2}$  turns of silver wire (length 0.9 cm.). Beads of this type in silver and gold wire occur on contemporary necklaces elsewhere, though they are normally barrel-shaped rather than cylindrical.

3 *Silver bullae*. Six hemispherical pendants with fragmentary loops projecting from their edges. Each bulla had a plain back plate ; four and some fragments survive and all are now detached. The edges of both bullae and back plates are made up of a series of straight cuts, showing how the metal was finally trimmed to shape. Overall diam. 1.2 cm.

4 *Silver pendant*. A mere fragment of plain flat sheet silver of lozenge oval shape, broken at the bottom end and across the suspension hole at the top (length 1.0 cm.). Similar oval sheet silver pendants occur on a necklace at Melbourn, Cambs., grave 9, but they are decorated with punched dots around a central boss.<sup>9</sup>

5 *Glass beads*. 5a, one seven-lobed melon bead with comparatively large hole, dark blue translucent glass, diam. 1.1 cm. ; 5b, one tubular spiral bead of  $6\frac{1}{4}$  turns of a single narrow thread of the same dark blue transparent glass, diam. 0.4 cm., length 0.8 cm. (this is a straight copy in glass of the silver spiral bead) ; 5c, one small angular bead with a small hole, flattened on one side, blue tinted clear transparent glass, diam. 0.9 cm. ; 5d, one very pock-marked and weathered bead of greenish translucent glass, large hole, diam. 0.8 cm.

6 *Composite bead*. One wedge of royal blue translucent glass being a segment from a composite bead made up of glass shaped around a tubular bronze core. Originally spherical in shape, diam. 0.9 cm.

There is an identical bead from the rich woman's grave, grave 2, from the 7th-century cemetery excavated in Wormwood Close, north-east of Ducklington church, in 1860. Other examples are known from Camerton, graves 32 and 79, and possibly others from Winnall, grave 5.<sup>10</sup>

7 *Shell beads*. Three pieces cut from the edge of a cowrie shell ; each one is pierced for stringing.

Beads cut from cowries, as distinct from complete cowrie shells, come from Shudy

<sup>9</sup> *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, 49 (1955), 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant.* series 2, 1, 100-101, now in Ashmolean Museum ; *Proc. Somerset Ant. Soc.*, 79 (1933), 46 and *Antiq. Journal*, 13 (1933), 167 ; A. L. Meaney and S. C. Hawkes, *Two Anglo Saxon Cemeteries at Winnall* (1970), Fig. 8.

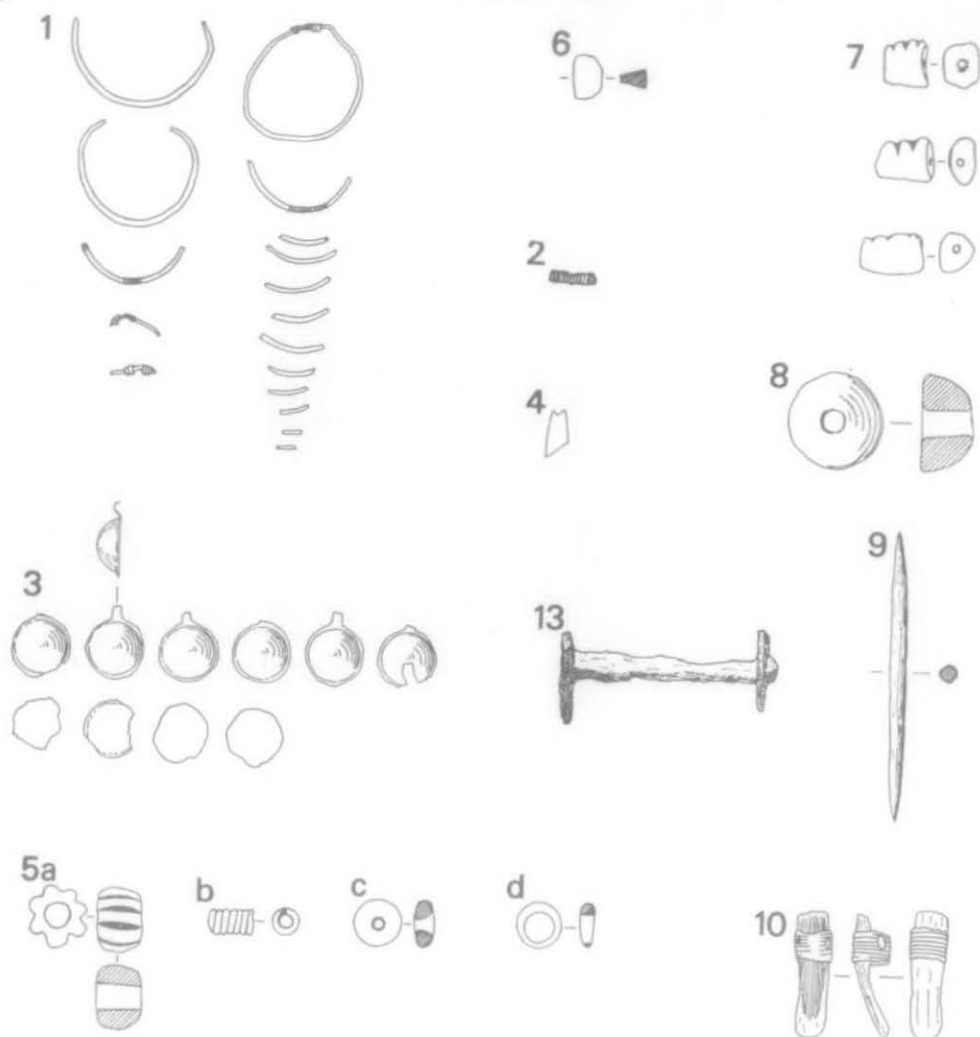


FIG. 11

Objects from the grave : Silver, 1-4 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) ; Glass, 5 and 6 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) ; Shell, 7 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) ; Bone, 8 and 9 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) ; gold mounted beaver tooth, 10 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) ; iron rivet, 13 ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ).

Camps 11 and 121, Camerton 5 and 79, Sarre 120 and 128 and from a numberless grave from Burwell.<sup>11</sup>

Necklaces of this type are known by numerous examples from graves of the middle and second half of the seventh century. The nearest example is that from grave 2 in the contemporary cemetery near the church at Ducklington.<sup>12</sup> A gold pendant, a jewelled silver pendant, fragments of a silver knot-ring and beads survive from this grave and various small

<sup>11</sup> T. C. Lethbridge, *A Cemetery at Shudy Camps* (1936), 2, 25, Fig. 9 ; *Proc. Somerset Arch. Soc.*, 79 (1933) ; *Arch. Cant.*, 6 (1864-5), 177 and 7 (1868), Pl. 7 ; T. C. Lethbridge, *Recent Excavations in Anglo Saxon Cemeteries* (1931), 47. Complete cowries were listed in *Antiq. Journal*, 11 (1931), 283 ; finds since then came from Dunstable B2, E3, F2 (*Beds. Ant. Journal*, 1 (1962), 28 f.), Shudy Camps 48 and 91 ; Burwell ; Camerton ; Luton (*Antiq. Journal*, 13 (1933), 282-3) ; and Staxton, Yorks (*Naturalist*, Jan. 1938). Literature on continental finds is cited by U. Koch, *Die Grabfunde aus dem Donautal um Regensburg* (1968), 58.

<sup>12</sup> See note 10.

fragments of silver, doubtless from more knot-rings and perhaps bullae too, were broken and dispersed by the finders. In the immediate neighbourhood similar silver knot-rings have been found at North Leigh, grave 3.<sup>13</sup> Silver bullae have not so far been recovered from graves in the Upper Thames area, though silver and gold examples are well known from graves elsewhere. Lists of graves with silver knot-rings and silver and gold spiral beads and bullae are given by Audrey Ozanne in her study of the Peak Dwellers. To these should be added the more recently published finds from Winnall and Leighton Buzzard. The Leighton Buzzard results are particularly valuable for there fragments of thread survived to show how the rings and beads were strung together.<sup>14</sup>

8 & 9 *Spindle whorl and thread picker*. Found above the head of the centre skeleton. Both are made of bone. The thread picker (9) is of the normal double pointed type. The whorl (8) is hemispherical, quite flat on one side having been cut from the head of a femur. The drilling of the hole is somewhat inaccurate after what appears to have been a false start.

Flat sided, hemispherical whorls of this type in bone, chalk and stone occur in a number of 7th-century graves (Winnall 31, Leighton Buzzard II, 32, Garton Slack 7, Shudy Camps 48, Burwell 121) and at this time are commoner than the sub-spherical round-on-both-sides types. They seem likely to be a seventh-century, perhaps mid seventh-century, innovation.<sup>15</sup>

10 *Gold mounted beaver tooth*. This was found beneath the head of Skeleton No. 1. It lay a considerable way from any of the beads and silver items of the necklace belonging to the centre skeleton and it seems more likely that it had been worn alone by Skeleton No. 1, than that it had become detached from the necklace of the central skeleton.

The beaver tooth has been mounted in a gold collar decorated with six deep grooves; the ends of the collar overlap and were presumably soldered together. A hole through the collar allows the tooth to be worn as a pendant.

There are extensive signs of wear. The suspension hole is much enlarged and the gold has worn very thin along the top edge. The grooves in the gold band have been worn smooth around the edges of the tooth. The tooth itself has now disintegrated so that only the front casing of enamel survives. Dimensions are: width 0.7 cm., length 2.6 cm.

Beaver tooth pendants are known from the following Anglo-Saxon graves: Dunstable A1, a beaver tooth without mount amongst other beads in the grave of an 8-month-old baby; Dunstable E2, a beaver tooth without mount amongst beads at the neck of a 12-year-old child; Burwell, a beaver tooth 'set in a bronze ring' from an unnumbered grave of a woman with infant which also contained glass and shell beads; Castle Bytham, a beaver tooth mounted in a metal (? bronze or gilt bronze) collar found in a grave with beads and a jewelled annular brooch; Wigber Low, a beaver tooth mounted in a gold collar found in a grave with beads, a fragment of a gold pendant and a pair of silver pins with garnet-studded crossheads.<sup>16</sup>

These graves are seventh-century. Those that can be sexed are women's, and where there is any indication of age, the emphasis is on youth—a baby and a child at Dunstable, a teenager here at Ducklington, a woman or perhaps an infant at Burwell. I can think of no obvious significance for a beaver's tooth and perhaps these graves ought not to be considered separately from others with bits of boar's tusk and other animal teeth in them. However, the beaver teeth pendants are comparatively restricted in time whereas other varieties occur in fifth- and sixth-century contexts as well, and they do appear to have been particularly prized, for other varieties were not equipped with the same metal mounts.

Place names such as Beverley (Yorkshire), Bevercote (Notts.), Beversbrook (Wilts.),

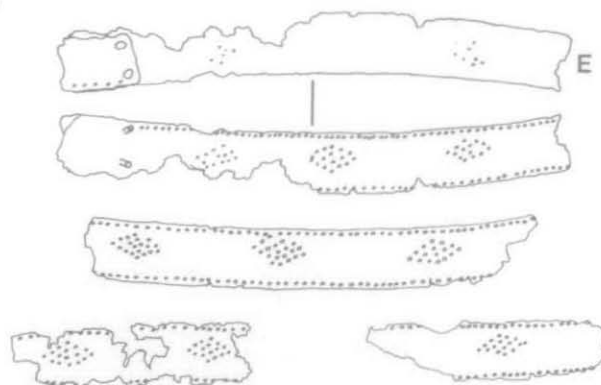
<sup>13</sup> *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 21–30.

<sup>14</sup> A. Ozanne, *Med. Arch.*, vi (1962), 26–30; Winnall, see note 10; Leighton Buzzard, *Arch. Journal*, 120 (1963), 161–200.

<sup>15</sup> Garton Slack, J. R. Mortimer, *40 Years Researches in Burial Mounds in East Yorkshire* (1906), 264–70; Winnall, see note 10; Shudy Camps and Burwell, see note 11; Leighton Buzzard, see note 14.

<sup>16</sup> Dunstable, *Beds. Arch. Journal*, 1 (1962), 28 f.; Burwell, T. C. Lethbridge, *Recent Excavations in Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries* (1931), 47; Castle Bytham, J. Y. Akerman, *Pagan Saxondom* (1855), 26–27; Wigber Low, *Med. Arch.*, vi (1962), 29, Pl. 3 and V.C.H. *Derbys*, plate opp. 270.

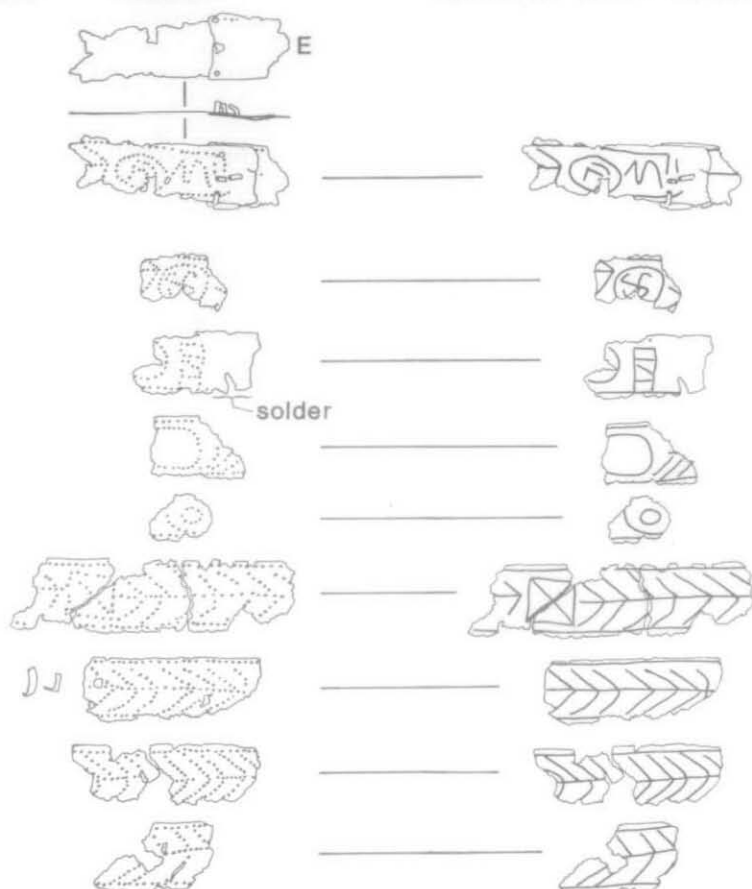
11



12

OBJECT

PATTERN INTERPRETATION



KEY: E — Exterior (otherwise reverse side shown)

FIG. 12

Decorated bronze binding strips 11 and 12 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ).



etc., are based on old English *beofor*, *befor*, and provide widespread evidence of the distribution of beavers in Anglo-Saxon times.<sup>17</sup>

*Bronze bindings.* Above and around the heads of the two skeletons on either side of the grave were a number of fragments of bronze binding strips with traces of attached wood. At the time of discovery these appeared likely to be the bindings of buckets, or perhaps of some other sort of wooden vessel; but now that they can be examined after cleaning this identification appears less certain.

The fragments are as follows:

11 *From above the head of the child, Skeleton No. 3.* Fragments of bronze strip binding decorated with a punched pattern, a continuous boundary of dots along the upper and lower edges with a repeating diamond pattern formed of rows of dots in between. The individual diamonds vary a little in the arrangement of the dots.

The longest piece is 24½ cm. and has six diamonds; there are two pieces about 6 cm. long with one and two diamonds respectively and various other fragments link parts of another three diamonds. The minimum length of the complete band is about 47 cm. The small fragments are mostly flat but the largest piece has a definite curve on it; it seems reasonable to assume that the band was originally circular. At one point there is an overlap joint fastened with two rivets. The rivets are made of rolled up bronze sheet and are burred over to make heads on each end. As well as fastening the overlapping ends of the band the rivets were fastened through the wood which was a maximum of 5 mm. thick.

Of the few fragments of wood which remained, one fortunately was the piece pierced by the rivets. Matching up the holes in the band and the wood enabled the fragments of wood to be positioned correctly with respect to the band. It could be seen at once that the grain of the wood ran along the band rather than across it as would have been the case had the binding come from a bucket.

The fragments of wood have been examined by Miss A. C. Western, senior conservator in the Ashmolean Museum, who reported that some of the fragments submitted were of wood but others may possibly be of bark or partly bark. The wood was a hard wood and not a conifer and it was definitely not yew wood. It appeared to be a diffuse porous wood, that is one in which the cells are more or less the same size all through the growing season.

12 *Bronze band fragments by the head of Skeleton No. 1.* A similar collection of bronze strip binding fragments, also decorated with punched dots. The punch is different, being sharper and tending to pierce the metal rather than make a dot; consequently the decoration is scarcely visible on the front. This strip is unfortunately more fragmented than the last (No. 11) and few joins can be established with certainty. The basic pattern is a chevron or fir tree design which is interrupted by oval or square cartouches in which are various symbols. One oval is empty, one contains another small oval or circle, a third contains a swastika, a fourth contains an uncertain device not unlike another swastika, there is a square crossed by diagonal lines and there are two patches of infilling, one with a ladder pattern and the other with a zig-zag. The longest uninterrupted stretch of the fir tree pattern has seven pairs of branches.

These pieces show no obvious signs of curvature but they are very fragmentary. There is one complete overlapping joint fastened with four rivets, of these three go through to the wood and are folded over, the outer ones being folded inwards. The thickness of the material was 2.5 mm. but nothing of it now remains. In addition to this complete joint there is one butt-ended piece with two rivet holes and another piece links an undecorated patch which looks as though it was once soldered. Despite these odd ends the analogy with the other band suggests that all these pieces are part of a similar band. If so, adding up all the fragments indicates a continuous length of 40 cm. None of the surviving wood fragments can be located anywhere on this band.

What is the purpose of these bindings? They are certainly not bucket bindings. There are not enough of them, the wood is not yew, the grain of the wood runs the wrong

<sup>17</sup> English Place Name Elements, s.v. *beofor*, in *Eng. Place Name Soc.* Vol. 25; *E.P.N.S. Words III*; *E.P.N.S. Glos.* Vol. 2, 213; E. Ekwall, *Dictionary of English Place Names*.

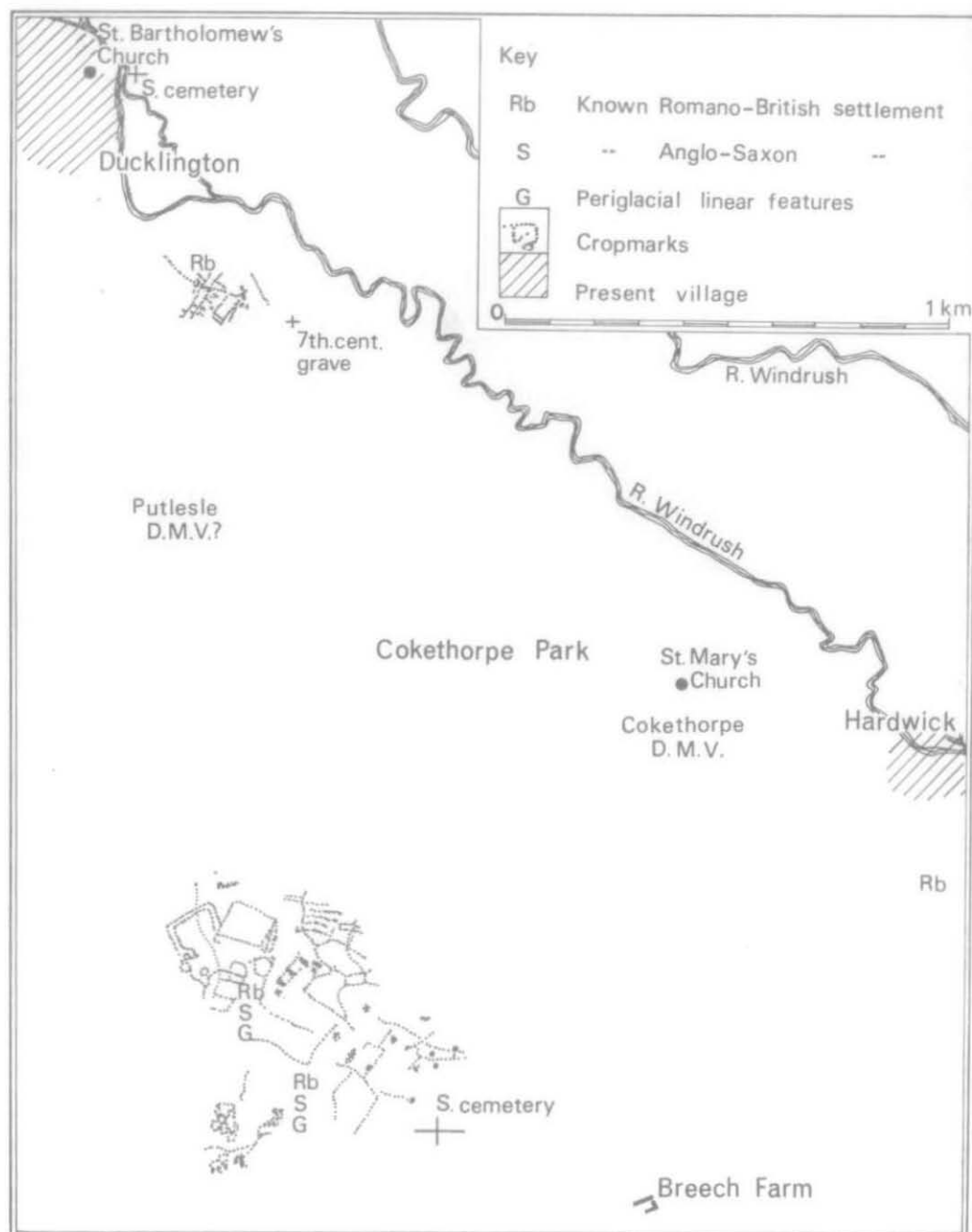


FIG. 13  
Based on six in. O.S. map.

way, and they are of bronze ; by the seventh century, buckets were usually being made with iron bindings and only an occasional bronze band.

They do not seem to be bindings for the rims of drinking bowls or small wooden vessels. The characteristics of such bindings are that they have a 'U'-shaped cross-section where they fit over the rim ; also they are much smaller than these bindings, seldom more than about 4 inches (10 cm.) in diameter giving a circumference of 12-14 inches (30-35 cm.). The minimum length of these bands is greater than this. I can find no parallel for a decorated bronze band around the girth of a wooden bowl and I discount this as a possible interpretation.

The alternative which remains is that the bronze bands were the outer surface covering of a similar wooden band running around the outside—a sort of bronze-faced wooden hoop. The grain of the wood is in the correct direction for this, and the evidence of the rivets on the second band supports this interpretation ; the two outer rivets were folded over inwards as though the wood was not intended to be wider than the bronze band.

It appears then as though above and perhaps around the heads of two skeletons on the left and right of the grave were two bronze-covered wooden hoops. It is very difficult to get away from the idea that these may have formed some sort of headband, though whether functional or ritual there is no means of knowing. Certainly the minimum measurements of the bands, 40 cm. and 47 cm., are very little short of what would be required for headbands ; and the elaborate decoration of the bands would be appropriate to something worn in so conspicuous a position. It remains to be seen whether parallels can be found to support this interpretation.

The grave is an isolated one in an area which already has three known contemporary cemeteries (FIG. 13). All are typical of the seventh century. The graves found in Wormwood Close near the church at Ducklington in 1860 seem likely to be the forerunners of the graveyard around the church ; as such they are probably in the cemetery being used by the people of Ducklington in the 7th century. The cemetery known as Yelford is situated near Breech Farm, on the eastern edge of the gravel island south of Cokethorpe Park. Crop marks and various miscellaneous finds indicate that this patch of gravel was the site of a settlement which has now disappeared. This settlement and the Yelford cemetery logically go together. A mile away to the east is the cemetery at Standlake which served the seventh-century community in that village. All these cemeteries have in them graves which are as rich as and more or less contemporary with this new grave.<sup>18</sup>

The grave lies between the Ducklington cemetery and the Yelford cemetery/settlement complex. It is nearer the Ducklington cemetery, and is separated from the Yelford complex by the woodland of Cokethorpe Park. It seems therefore more likely that its occupants belonged to Ducklington rather than the now deserted Yelford complex. There is another isolated grave from this area, and it may also be of this date. Stephen Stone records that workmen digging a drain 'near Cokethorpe Park' in 1858 discovered a skeleton which had a knife with it.<sup>19</sup> The knife has not survived. There is no obvious explanation of why these people were not buried in their village cemeteries.

#### THE HUMAN SKELETONS. By MARY HARMAN

The condition of the bones of the three skeletons varied considerably, in accordance with the age of the individuals at death, the youngest being the least well preserved and only partially complete, while the adult was represented by a well preserved complete skeleton.

The age of the individuals at death was assessed from the state of tooth eruption and degree of tooth wear, and the state of epiphyseal fusion, using the criteria published by

<sup>18</sup> Ducklington, *Proc. Soc. Ants.* series 2, 1, 100 ; Yelford cemetery, *Proc. Soc. Ants.* series 1, 4, 97-8, 213-4 ; settlement, D. Benson and D. Miles, *The Upper Thames Valley : An Archaeological Survey* (1974), 42-3 ; Standlake, summarized in *Oxoniensis*, xxxviii (1973), 233-257.

<sup>19</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ants.* series 1, 4, 217.

Brothwell<sup>20</sup> and from the length of juvenile diaphyses, using the chart prepared by Miss Powers.<sup>21</sup>

The state of the dental health is shown by a chart and the following symbols :

		Upper Jaw																	
Right		8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Left	
side		8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	side	
		Lower Jaw																	

- part of jaw missing
- / tooth missing post mortem
- O tooth erupting
- U tooth unerupted
- Np tooth not developed

Deciduous teeth are represented by lower case letters.

*Skeleton 1. c. 15 years*

Present : Skeleton virtually complete apart from most ribs and vertebrae.

<del>X</del>	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	<del>X</del>	2	3	4	5	6	7	<del>X</del>
<del>X</del>	7	6	5	4	3	2	<del>X</del>	<del>X</del>	<del>X</del>	3	4	5	6	7	8
O															

*Skeleton 2. ♀ 18-23 years, Height 5 ft. 2½ in. (159.1 cm.)*

Present : Skeleton virtually complete. Features of the skull and pelvis and the size of the bones suggest that it is probably female.

Np	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	<del>X</del>	<del>8</del>
Np	8	7	6	5	4	3	<del>4</del>	<del>+</del>	<del>X</del>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

The right lateral spine of the last lumbar vertebra is slightly enlarged and articulates with the sacrum.

*Skeleton 3. c. 3 years.*

Present : Skull, 13 vertebrae, scapula, humerus, ilium, femora, tibiae, fibulae, all fragmentary.

<del>e</del>	<del>d</del>	<del>e</del>	<del>b</del>	<del>a</del>	<del>a</del>	<del>b</del>	<del>e</del>	<del>d</del>	<del>e</del>
<hr/>									
<del>e</del>	<del>d</del>	<del>e</del>	<del>b</del>	<del>a</del>	<del>a</del>	<del>b</del>	<del>X</del>	d	c
6									
U									

## CONCLUSIONS

The examination of the site has shown that a substantial Romano-British settlement of indeterminate status has been located, of which the nucleus appears to be in field 2. The pottery indicated that occupation of the site began in the mid 2nd century : fragments of earlier Antonine samian ware were probably residual as

<sup>20</sup> D. R. Brothwell, *Digging up Bones* (1972), 59, 60, 69.

<sup>21</sup> R. Powers, Pers. comm.

such fine table wares often appear to have remained in use for much longer than the general domestic coarse pottery for which the chances of breakage were greater. The latest datable material was part of a Type I Romano-British bronze buckle plate of the second half of the 4th century.<sup>22</sup> Similar finds of military metalwork from villa sites<sup>23</sup> including the Shakenoak villa<sup>24</sup> have been argued as evidence for a late 4th- or early 5th-century military presence within these settlements.

There was no more evidence about the site until the 7th-century grave inserted on the eastern edge of the Roman settlement. The burial is not evidence of continued occupation on this particular site. The reasons behind the location of isolated Anglo-Saxon burials is at present unclear. However, the excavation was restricted to within the limits of the new road and may have missed occupation areas. Several large subrectangular pits which could represent Saxon sunken-floored huts are indicated on the aerial photographs at the eastern end of field 2 between the new and present roadways.

The excavated evidence to indicate that substantial Roman buildings existed at Ducklington comprised limestone roofing slates, tegulae, and box tile fragments, and spreads of limestone in the modern plough soil, the limestone scattered generally in fields 2 and 3, with a higher concentration in field 2 north of the new road. Stratified evidence for the use of limestone came from the stone-lined well F63. The only other building evidence came from occasional post-holes and post pits.

The upper fills of several pits and ditches indicated that the site had been levelled by ploughing but the date at which this began is uncertain. Continued ploughing has resulted in the obliteration of the Roman period ground surface, all floor levels and any shallow foundations, leaving a large amount of Romano-British occupation debris in the present plough soil. Although the limited excavation did not permit a general phasing of the site successive boundary ditches were found in several sections (FIG. 4). It should be noted that the settlement did not extend eastwards onto the lake beyond the edge of the gravel terrace in field 1.

The cropmarks by which the site was originally located comprise mainly straight boundaries with a general scatter of pits over the whole site. The boundary ditches appear to define a central lane or driveway with rectangular enclosures on either side. This is a common pattern which may be seen locally in a more complete form in the area surrounding Long Wittenham,<sup>25</sup> especially at Northfield Farm where excavation has placed their construction to the 1st or 2nd centuries.<sup>26</sup> Similar patterns also exist south of Sutton Courtenay<sup>27</sup> and there are other localities where such patterns may be seen from the air but the cropmarks are less well developed. Mr. D. Miles has suggested that the cropmarks do not compare in form with the nucleated villa settlement at Barton Court in which the lane or driveway runs around the perimeter of the settlement<sup>28</sup> suggesting that the settlement grew up around the villa. This suggests that if a villa is present at Ducklington it may have

<sup>22</sup> S. C. Hawkes, 'Some Recent Finds of Late Roman Buckles', *Britannia*, v (1974), 386.

<sup>23</sup> A contribution by Mrs. S. Hawkes in A. C. C. Brodrick, *et al.*, *Excavations at Shakenoak III*, (1972), 74-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-6.

<sup>25</sup> D. Benson and D. Miles, *The Upper Thames Valley, an Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels* (1974), Map 35.

<sup>26</sup> M. Gray, 'Excavations at Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham, Berks.', *Oxoniensia*, xxxv (1970), 107-9.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.* note 25, Map 34.

<sup>28</sup> Information kindly supplied by the excavator, Mr. D. Miles. Excavation report in preparation.

come after the establishment of the settlement and that the villa was incorporated within the main pattern of the already established settlement (possibly as at Northfield)<sup>29</sup> rather than providing a nucleus itself as at Barton Court. However it must be borne in mind that the cropmarks at Ducklington do not reveal the full extent of the settlement.

From the distribution map (FIG. 1) it may be seen that there is a total lack of villa sites in the Witney area. It has been generally argued that the villas were confined mostly to the higher ground of the Cotswolds, leaving village settlements to fill the lowland areas, mostly the terraced river gravels. This argument has relied heavily on cropmark surveys which very often are not backed up by field walking. Over the past ten years field work on an area of the gravels surrounding Abingdon has revealed the existence of five substantial Roman buildings, all within 5 km. of Abingdon itself.<sup>30</sup> One of these buildings is the Barton Court villa which could not be identified from the cropmarks alone. Stone robbing has always been rife in the lowland valley gravel areas of the Thames Valley where there is no natural building stone available. Once substantial buildings are robbed, their often shallow foundations produce few cropmarks, again as at Barton Court, and such sites may be difficult or impossible to identify from cropmarks alone. Sites such as Ducklington should therefore be examined where possible for further evidence of such buildings. The possibility of a Romano-British villa at Ducklington remains an open question.

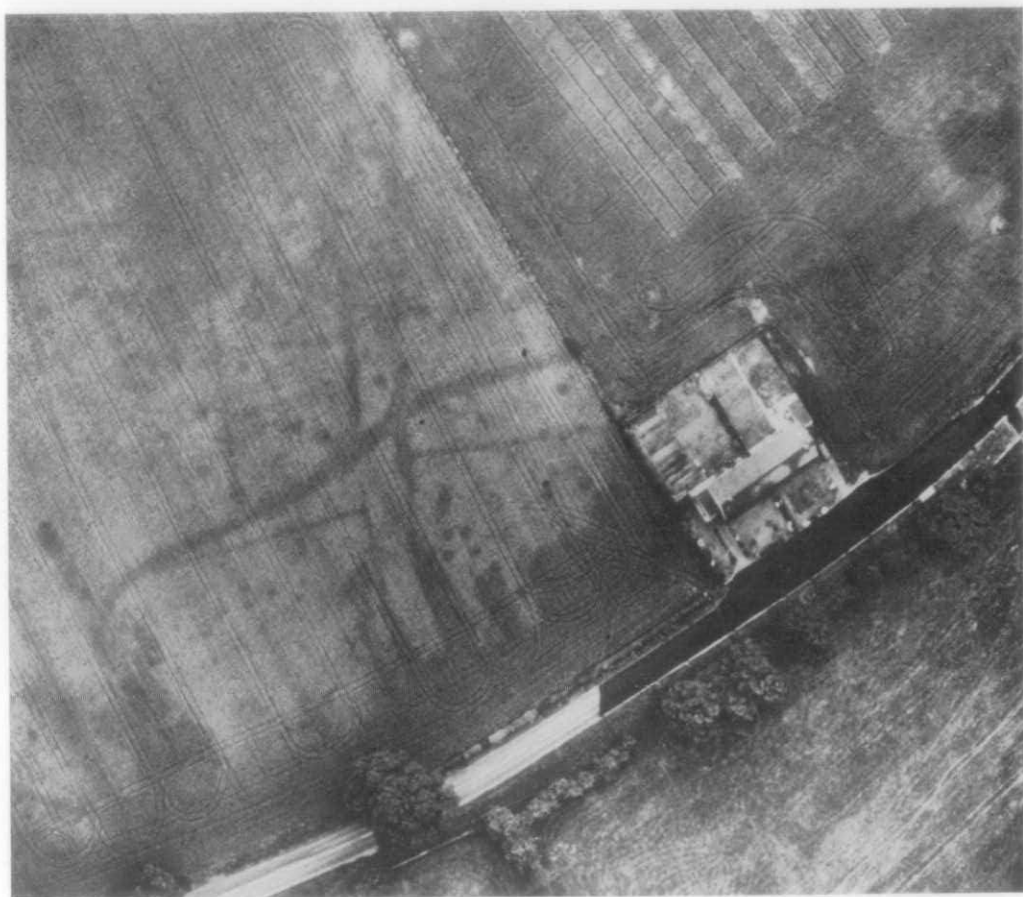
*A Department of the Environment grant was received for the publication of this article.*

<sup>29</sup> See Gray, *op. cit.* note 26 for ref. of excav. by Hewitt in 1893-7.

<sup>30</sup> T. Rowley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlement and Landscape* (1974). Information from a paper by D. Miles, Fig. 3, 37.



PLATE IV



A. The Ducklington cropmarks, south-west at top of photo (July 1972). See Fig. 2.  
*NMR Air Photograph: Crown Copyright*



B. Chipping Norton : The Circular Hearth.