Excavations at Bury Close, Fawler, Oxon

By T.G. ALLEN
with contributions by SARAH GREEN, BRUCE LEVITAN, MAUREEN MELLOR, DAVID MILES and LEIGH TURNER

SUMMARY (Fig. 1)

Occupation in the Late Neolithic period was suggested by gullies, flints and pottery. No further prehistoric evidence was found. First century AD finds come from all the trenches, showing that settlement of this date was widespread; the evidence included a dog burial, unusually accompanied by a flagon. The remains of a Roman building and adjacent yard of the late 1st or early 2nd century were found close to the River Evenlode. This building was of two phases, the second including a hypocaust, and was not demolished until the 4th century. It can be identified as a bath-house, largely destroyed by the diversion of the Evenlode when the Great Western Railway was built.

Late Saxon settlement in the vicinity is demonstrated by a scatter of residual pottery, and part of a sunken-floored building of the 11th to 12th century was seen in the garden of No. 1 Bury Close. Occupation continued in this area until the mid 13th century, ending with the destruction debris of a substantial stone building with tiled roof. The absence of later medieval finds suggests that this demolition marked the abandonment of this part of the village until the post-medieval period, when cobbled yards and walls appear. Some of these walls, which survive as earthworks, were previously thought to belong to the villa (see below p. 315), but were shown to post-date it.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report presents the results of two seasons of work by the author. In 1986 a three-week excavation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit for Thames Water Authority within the Scheduled area of Ancient Monument 73, Fawler Roman Villa, in advance of the laying of a new sewerage main. The Unit is very grateful to Thames Water for funding the excavation. We would particularly like to thank Mike Hall for his liaison with the engineers on our behalf, and the landowner Mr. Lethbridge for his help and co-operation throughout. The excavation was very ably assisted by John Lange, who not only acted as site supervisor but also provided our transport. I would also like to thank the several volunteers who came to dig. Elinor Beard, Paul Hughes and Leigh Turner drew the illustrations and Jackie Carvell typed the report.

In 1987 trenches were dug by the Oxford University Archaeological Society in the garden of No. 1, Bury Close, following alterations to the property (Fig. 1, Area 3). I am very grateful to the new owner, Mr. Williams, for allowing us to proceed with the trenches.

The finds and records have been deposited with the County Museum, Woodstock.

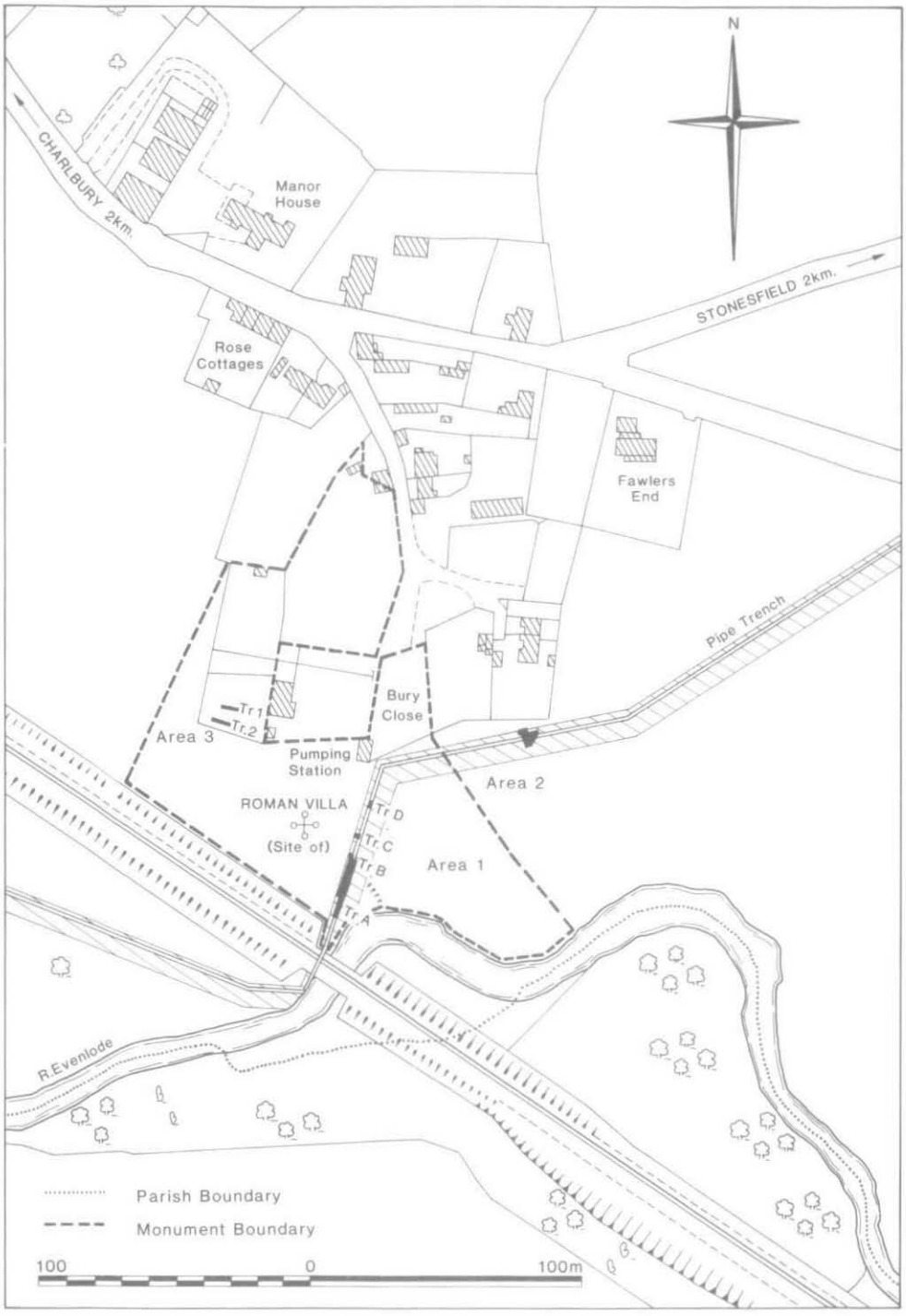

Fig. 1. Site location plan.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND by DAVID MILES

Fawler is one of the few Roman villas commemorated in the very name of the village. The name Fawler is of Anglo-Saxon origin, derived from [*to*] *fagan floram*, meaning 'at the variegated or coloured floor'.[1] Material remains have been known since 1865, when a mosaic pavement with hypocaust was uncovered while digging a land-drain in Bury Close; silver coins and pottery were also found. The pavement lay between the southernmost cottage and the railway, close to the bank of the Evenlode and to the railway bridge. By order of the Duke of Marlborough it was covered up again.[2] A hoard of coins had been discovered some 30 years previously in Ashey Close.[3]

Another mosaic was cut through in the making of the Great Western Railway, 'and no regard being paid to it, was entirely destroyed and the materials used on the line, so that now it is impossible even to fix its site'.[4] Shortly after 1912, however, a Mr. Warde Fowler of Kingham identified the site and made a plan of the villa with the help of an aged local.[5] It puzzled him that the river Evenlode in flood would flow over the destroyed floor, but this was explained by the diversion of the river to give a straight run to the railway. The plan made by Warde Fowler was handed over to the late H.M. Last, but since his death has been lost.

In 1926 'a wall near the cottage' in Bury Close was opened up by the Oxford branch of The Classical Association. Silver coins and a 2nd-century Samian cup stamped 'TAVRICI' were found. Several other coins have been found in the village, mostly of Late Roman date, and clearly belong to the site.[6]

In 1970 a watching-brief was carried out by Stephen Green when the Thames Water Authority laid a pipe N. from the bridge to the present pumping-station close to the southernmost cottage (Fig. 1). This ran just W. of the Area 1 excavations. Mr. Green reported finding a group of late 1st-century gravel-pits, all with dark primary fill overlaid by backfill of gravel, earth and stones. There were also two walls: one at the N. end of the trench was clearly post-medieval, the other was stratigraphically earlier and was not closely datable. Since neither the original plan nor section survives, however, it is impossible to be certain of the position of his findings.[7]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

Area 1 (Fig. 2)

Four trenches (A–D) were dug along the pipe-line in the scheduled area, between the river and the pumping station. A and B, which cut through the debris of a substantial Roman building, were extended into a single

[1] M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, ii (1954), 421.

[2] P. Manning, 'Notes on the Archaeology of Oxford and its Neighbourhood', *Berks. Bucks and Oxon Arch. J.* iv (1898), 17.

[3] Ibid.

[4] J.P. Earwater, 'The Roman Villa at Northleigh', *Proc. O.A.H.S.* n.s.ii (1871), 348.

[5] Canon J.D. Payne, *Notes on the History of the Parish of Charlbury with Chadlington and Shorthampton, Oxon.* (1935), 1–2.

[6] *Archaeologia*, xxxvii (1857), 433.

[7] The surviving records are in Woodstock County Museum.

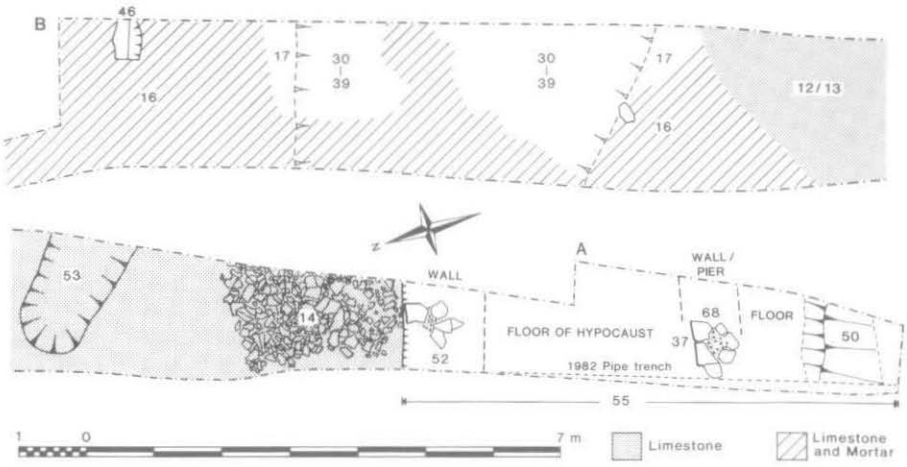

Fig. 2. Area 1, Trenches A–B, plan.

trench 24 m. long; C and D contained little stratigraphy, and that largely relating to post-medieval cobbled surfaces. The E. section of Trench A–B is illustrated (Fig. 3).

The site sits upon cornbrash. This was overlaid in all trenches by a yellowish brown silty clay loam subsoil (L23). The top of this was darkened by occupation material of the early Roman period (L40), and it was sealed by a gravel mortar surface (L22=17). Towards the S. end, L17 was overlaid by clay and charcoal (L54), and L54 by burnt patches and spreads (L58 and L59); an area of reddened flat stones may represent the remains of a hearth. The tops of other features and stone spreads such as F60 were seen in this area, but lack of time precluded their excavation. The burnt areas were overlaid by a dark charcoally layer (L62), which also infilled the terminal of ditch F53 adjacent and continued N. as L39 (Fig. 3).

L62 and F60 were overlaid by a mound of stones and clay (F61) which ran into a spread of pitched stones (F14) further N., probably part of the same deposit. The S. face of F61 was vertical, and consisted in section of six courses of horizontally-laid thin slabs, which marked the edge of a deep cut-out (F55). F55 had a vertical N. side running approximately E.–W. and a flat trampled bottom, and extended at least 6.8 m. S. to the end of the trench. It cut surface L17 and the overlying occupation layers (L54, L62 etc.). It is interpreted as the excavation for a building; along its N. edge were a succession of rubble and loose mortar fills (L52 and L65–67), probably within a robber-trench *c.*1.2 m. wide. S. of this was a foundation layer (L51) of irregular limestone slabs in clay with areas of gravel. What was probably another E.–W. wall (F37) lay upon L51 *c.*4 m. S. of L52. The area between them was covered with another foundation layer (L38). F61 and F14 may have been demolition spread from an early wall, or alternatively construction debris piled up against the outside of the building.

North of F55 both F14 and F61 were overlaid by dark and then light soils (L8 and L7), both of which contained painted plaster and *opus signinum* fragments from the demolition of a building. These layers continued N. across the yard as L47 and L43.

In the N. part of the trench, surface L17 was refurbished once, and then overlaid, along with an occupation layer (L39), by a stone yard surface (L16).

First L17 and later L16 were worn away over a large area, *c.*8 m. N.–S. except along the W. edge of the trench (Fig. 2). The hollow this created in L17 filled with soil (L39), and that in L16 with L30, probably a continuation of L7 and equivalent to L47. These successive co-extensive worn areas indicate continuity of function of this part of the yard.

L30 had patches of charcoal upon it (L31). L43 and L7 further S. were sealed by mortar (L42), and this in turn by a new yard surface of freshly-quarried limestones (L13). Close to F55 this surface mainly consisted of a gravel mortar (L12), which abutted the cut-out. L42 is interpreted as construction debris for a new phase of building within F55.

This building was eventually robbed out; the robber-trenches and walls within it all belong to this second-phase building, not to the original whose debris is represented by L7 and L8. Overlying the walls and

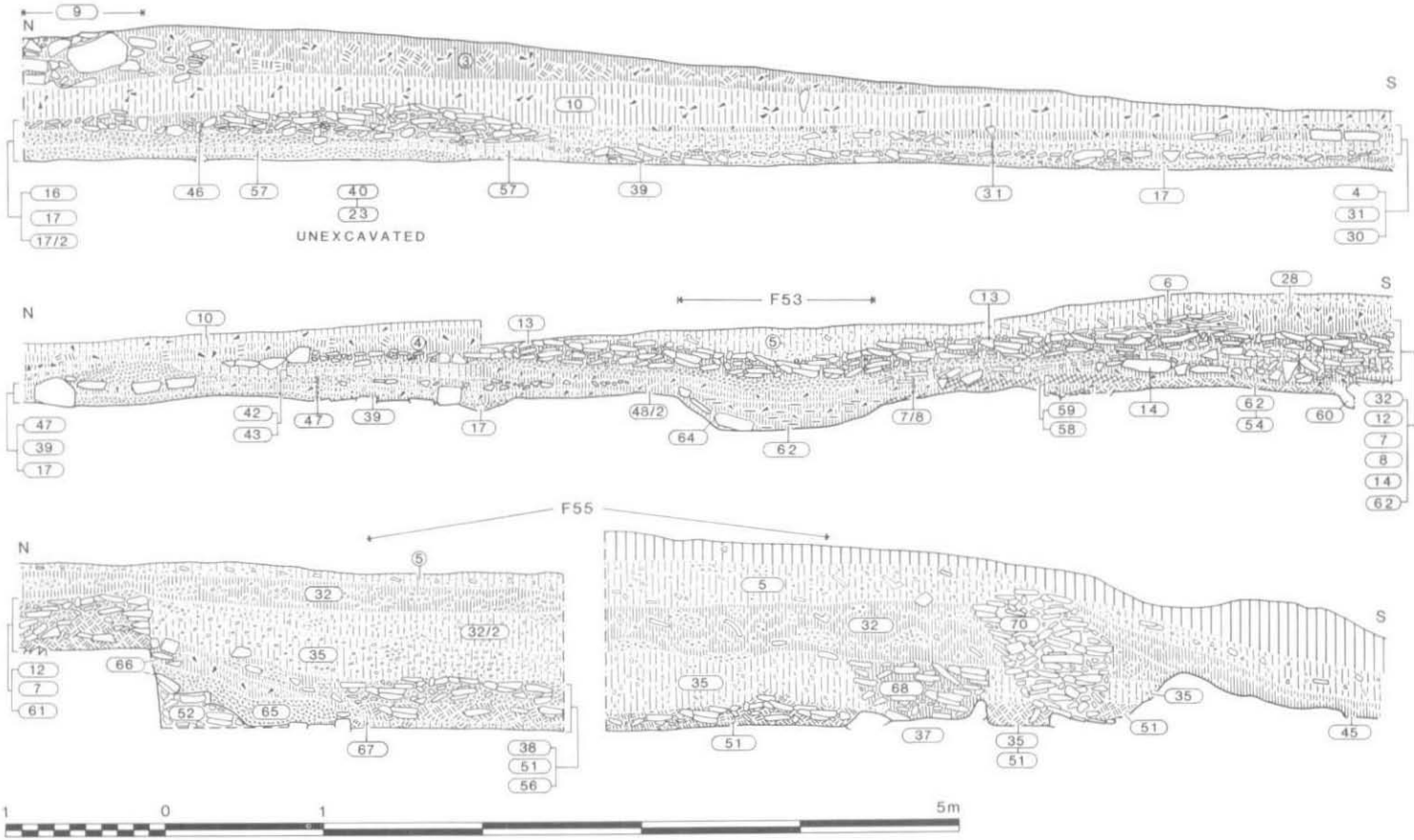

Fig. 3. Area 1, E. section of trench A–B.

robber-trenchers were thick layers of soil and building debris: L35, L34 and L32/2 within the cut-out, L32/1 = L6, L5 and L4 overlying it and the yard surface to the N.. The principal mound of debris lay in an E.–W. band along a line just N. of F55; this continued across the full 7 m. of the working strip, and the building probably did likewise. L5 and L32 contained large quantities of *opus signinum* flooring, painted wall-plaster, half-box flue tiles, tufa blocks and roof-tiles, indicating that this had been a very substantial building (see pp. 305–10).

The debris layers and the yard surfaces were overlaid by some depth of slow silting represented by L10. There were no clear horizons within this, but the pottery contained first late Saxon and then 12th/13th century sherds as it accumulated. It was overlaid by a stone wall (F9), now largely collapsed, which formed an earthwork mound along a N.W. – S.E. alignment. This was post-medieval.

Area 2

Beyond the Scheduled area the pipeline continued eastwards across the valley-bottom and then turned N.E. up the steep scarp. Observation of the surface after topsoil removal revealed a narrow N.–S. stone-lined channel, F101 (Fig. 4), overlying an extensive area of Roman pits. Very little of these was excavated, but observation of the section of the pipe-trenches showed that the pits were up to 1.15 m. deep and were filled with brown gravelly clay loam (L105) overlaid by L102, which was similar but included bands of limestones. Abraded Oxford colour-coat, tile and mortar fragments came from the pits, suggesting a date after 250 AD.

The channel faded out at the edge of the pits, but the stones defining its edge continued over them. To the S. the channel continued beyond the ends of the stone walls; its dark silty fill contained a few sherds of 3rd- to 4th-century pottery.

Area 3

Two E.–W. trenches were dug in the back garden of No. 1 Bury Close, with the kind permission of the owner Mr Williams (Fig. 5). Trench 1 proved to be dug into a disturbed area, with 1.4 m. of Victorian and later

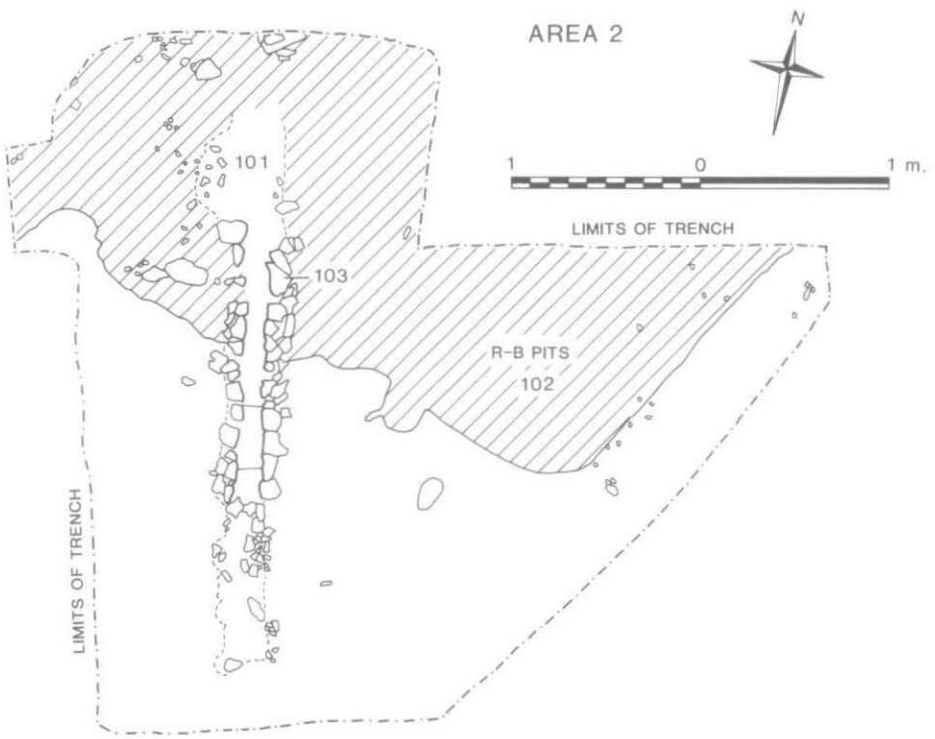

Fig. 4. Stone channel overlying Roman gravel-pits.

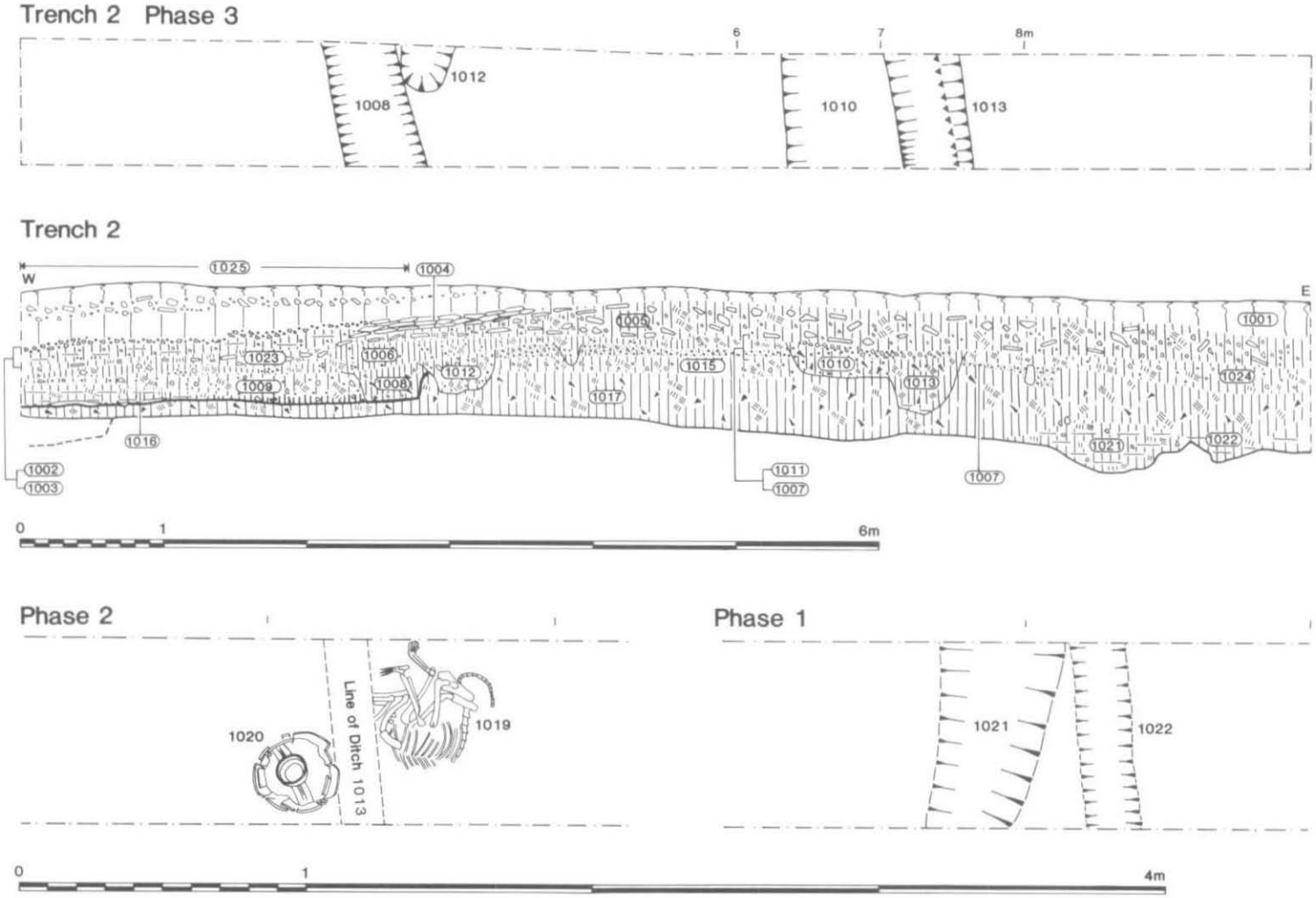

Fig. 5. Area 3, Trench 2: plans and section, showing medieval features (Phase 3), with details of Roman features (Phase 2) and prehistoric features (Phase 1) at a larger scale.

dumping coming right down onto cornbrash. However, Trench 2, in the S.E. corner of the garden, had not been disturbed, and provided an important stratigraphic sequence.

Shallow gullies (F1021 and F1022), dug into the cornbrash, whose fills were 'red' soils and whose only finds were flints, were possibly of Earlier Prehistoric date. Adjacent to these on the W. was an Early Roman dog burial (F1019) accompanied by a two-handled flagon (F1020) (Fig. 5). The flagon is dated to the late 1st century AD. Both the burial and the gullies were truncated by reworking of L1017, the clay loam subsoil overlying the cornbrash (see also Area 1 trenches p. 296). This was probably caused by an episode of ploughing.

The ploughsoil was cut into by a large feature (F1025) occupying the westernmost 2.8 m. of the trench. This was *c.*0.2 m. deep with a level compacted bottom overlaid on the W. by flat stones, E. of which was a thin occupation layer (Fig. 5). Along the E. edge was a vertical-sided slot (F1008), possibly for a timber. This slot was abutted by the stony backfill of the feature (L1009). F1025 is interpreted as a sunken-floored building with timber ground-sills. E. of the building, upcast from it is perhaps represented by L1015 lying upon L1017, which was sealed by a gravel yard surface (L1007) abutting F1008. Pottery from the building and associated yard suggests a date in the late 11th or 12th century AD.

L1007 continued for at least 6 m. to the end of the trench, and was overlaid by a thin soil (L1006 = L1011 = L1024). This was cut through by N.–S. ditches (F1010 and F1013), the latter also disturbing the Roman flagon and dog burial. These ditches had dark charcoally fills indicating continued domestic activity close by, and can be dated to the 12th or early 13th centuries AD.

The ditches and occupation soils were overlaid by a thick deposit of limestones containing much medieval roof-tile (L1004 and L1005). This was probably demolition rubble from a late medieval building. The tiles within this include a type with green glaze thought to post-date 1250, but other tile types are earlier. The associated pottery is no later than the 13th century, suggesting that the building was in use contemporarily with the ditches. After this, deposits of clean brown loam indicate long periods of undisturbed soil accumulation, punctuated by horizons of building activity connected with the present cottages.

ROMAN POTTERY by SARAH GREEN

Approximately 6 kilos of Roman pottery were recovered, plus a very small quantity of late Iron Age material. The dating evidence derived from an examination of the pottery is incorporated in the discussion of the stratigraphy and the phasing of the site.

Most of the Roman pottery was of local manufacture – mainly products of the Oxford kilns. Grey-wares, mainly jars, formed the bulk of the material, with much smaller amounts of red/brown colour-coat, white colour-coat and white-ware. White-wares were actually very poorly represented; only a few sherds of Oxford white-ware mortaria and one possibly from a flagon were noted.

Little of the pottery was manufactured outside the region: the only imports were occasional sherds of BB1,[8] late Roman shell-tempered ware, pink grogged ware[9] and two sherds of Nene Valley colour-coat.[10] The foreign imports are represented only by six fragments of samian, mainly residual, and some sherds of amphorae which are yet to be identified.

Four vessels have been selected for illustration as being either new to the range of Oxford products or unusual in the Oxford region.

Fig. 6, No. 1 Context 1020

A two-handled flagon of local manufacture with an oxidised exterior (Munsell 5YR 6/6 – reddish yellow) covered with a thick white slip which has largely vanished. Much of the interior surface (Munsell 7.5YR 7/6 – reddish yellow) is damaged and missing, revealing a heavy grey core.

The fabric is soft and contains abundant organic material, clay pellets and occasional particles of white non-calcareous material. Other inclusions present in small amounts are red iron ore, flecks of mica and, very rarely, some rounded quartz grains.

[8] D.F. Williams, 'The Romano–British Black-Burnished Industry: an Essay on Characterisation by Heavy Mineral Analysis', in D.P.S. Peacock, *Pottery and Early Commerce* (1977), 143–220.

[9] P. Booth and L.S. Green, 'The Distribution and Nature of Certain Pink Grogged Wares', *Journal of Roman Pottery Studies*, ii (1987).

[10] M.D. Howe, J.R. Perrin and D.F. MacKreth, *Roman Pottery from the Nene Valley* (Peterborough City Museum Occasional Paper No. 7, 1980).

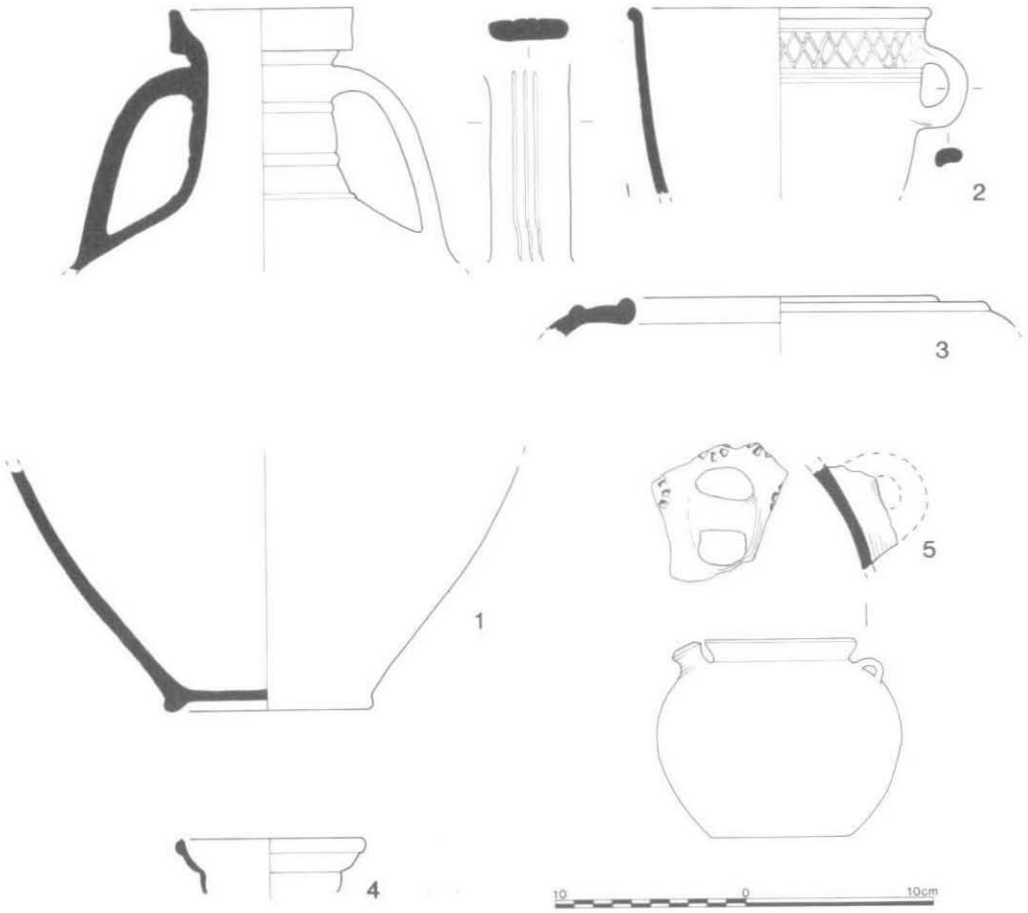

Fig. 6. Roman and medieval pottery.

The vessel is a Hofheim-type flagon made locally and very similar in form to imported types with triangular rim section, strap handles and a pronounced footring. The probable date is *c*.50–75 AD. There are no exact local parallels, but there is a similar vessel from Mill Lane, Benson, Oxon.[11]

This flagon was associated with a dog burial, and was probably buried upright as a complete vessel. It was fragmented later in antiquity by ploughing; some pieces of the vessel were scattered in L1017 overlying the burial.

Fig. 6, No. 2 Context 30/2

A tankard in a hard sandy grey fabric with light-grey core. It is tempered with abundant quartz grains and occasional larger rounded quartz and black iron flecks. The vessel is decorated in its upper zone with a burnished acute-angle lattice. The provenance of this vessel is uncertain. The fabric falls within the possible range of grey-wares manufactured in the Oxford region, although the form has not hitherto been recognised as a local product. The omission is strange considering the widespread occurrence of this form in surrounding regions. It is one of the repertoire of the N. Wiltshire kilns and is widely found in sites in Warwickshire. 2nd century.

[11] For the fabric see Stanton Harcourt, Gravelly Guy (Fabric 71), in preparation by the author; M. Parrington and C.D. De Roche, 'First-Century A.D. finds from Mill Lane, Benson, Oxon.', *Oxoniensia*, xlii (1977), 80–82.

Fig. 6, No. 3 Context 23

Grey-ware bowl or jar with inturned rim and ledge on the shoulder. The fabric is coarse, sandy and light-grey throughout with abundant poorly sorted black iron particles and quartz.[12] As with Fig. 6 No. 2 above, this form is not well documented in the region. A late 1st or early 2nd century date is suggested.

Fig. 6, No. 4 Context 44

Bowl copying Dr 27 in a fine oxidised fabric. This vessel can be paralleled by a reduced form already published in the region, Young form R62.[13] 2nd century.

PREHISTORIC POTTERY with identification by TIM DARVILL

One sherd of Neolithic Mortlake pottery came from L1017. This was a rim-sherd decorated along the top with an impressed chevron pattern, and with impressed diagonal lines continuing down the inside (Fig. 7 No. 1). It was oxidised on the exterior and interior, with a reduced core. The fabric was an iron-rich clay tempered with large (up to 3 mm.) pieces of crushed quartz, and there were frequent pinhole voids probably indicating burnt-out organic matter.

This sherd was probably associated with the flintwork in gullies F1021 and F1022 beneath L1017 (see pp.299–300).

SAXON AND MEDIEVAL POTTERY by MAUREEN MELLOR

Some 70 sherds were found in Area 1. One (grass-tempered) sherd comes from the early to mid Anglo-Saxon period (6th–8th centuries). The remaining sherds include Late Saxon sherds (Oxford Fabric *B*, and St. Neots type Fabric *R* Group IA)[14] dating from the 10th to mid 11th century (L10). Sherds tempered with calcareous gravel (Fabric *AC*, group IB)[15] form the bulk of the pottery, dating from the mid 11th to 13th century. Vessels include straight-sided cooking-pots (L26),[16] globular cooking-pots (L9 and 10), a shallow dish (L2), and a strap-handle decorated with rosette stamps, probably from a globular pitcher (Fig. 6 No. 5) (L10).[17] There are occasional regional imports from Minety (Wilts.) and Brill (Bucks.), which need date no later than the mid 13th century.

Post-medieval coarsewares dating from the 17th to 19th century are also present. The pottery from the 1970 excavation, also in Area 1, includes material of the 12th and 13th centuries together with some post-medieval coarseware.

In Area 2 one context (F101) produced 2 medieval sherds and 3 post-medieval sherds.

About 44 medieval sherds were found in Area 3. These included 3 wheel-thrown sherds of St. Neot's type (Fabric *R*, group IA) (L1003, L1013), 23 hand-made sherds tempered with calcareous gravel (Fabric *AC*, group IB) (L1005–L1013), 6 glazed sherds paralleling a type known in Witney (Witney 37, group 1B (L1004)) and a sandy sherd (Fabric 7, Witney group III).[18] The remaining sherds are from sources not previously recognised from stratified excavations within the county. The vessels included cooking pots/storage jars and a jug, and dated possibly as early as the mid 11th century up to the mid 13th century.

OTHER FINDS

Flints

There were 17 struck flints from the excavations, 13 from Trench 2 in Area 3, 4 from Area 1. All were flakes except for one blade from context 1010 and a possible scraper from gully 1021. Most of the flints were

[12] Similar to fabric 54 from Stanton Harcourt, Gravelly Guy.
[13] C.J. Young, *The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region* (BAR 43, 1977), 224, Fig. 83.
[14] B.G. Durham, 'Archaeological Investigations in St. Aldates, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xlii (1977), 114 and 121.
[15] Ibid. 115 and 121.
[16] E.M. Jope, 'Note and News', *Oxoniensia*, xiii (1948), Fig. 15.
[17] E.M. Jope, 'Late Saxon Pits under Oxford Castle Mound: Excavations in 1952', *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952–3), 103–4, Fig. 34 Nos. 37, 38 and 39.
[18] B.G. Durham and T.G. Allen, 'Witney Mount House', forthcoming.

patinated, but the raw material was clearly of two types, a light-grey mottled flint and a dark-brown to black flint. All the pieces were small, mostly under 2 mm. in length.

Most of the flint came from secondary contexts, but 6 pieces from L1017 and the possible tool from F1021 suggest that there was prehistoric occupation in the area of Trench 2. The assemblage is too small to characterise, but was probably associated with a sherd of Neolithic Mortlake ware found in ploughsoil L1017 overlying gullies F1021 and F1022 (Fig. 7 No. 1).

Stone

All the building stone was undressed slabs from the local Upper Great Oolite or 'cornbrash' on which the site sits. Fragments of Triassic Sandstone from Area 1 probably came from the Bristol area; on other villa sites in the region such stones were used as whetstones,[19] but none of these fragments bore signs of use.

From context 23, the reworked surface of the subsoil in Trench C, came a fragment of the circumference of a stone object with an estimated diameter of 0.20 m. (Fig. 7 No. 2). The diameter was greatest at the bottom, which was flat but rough; from this the convex outer edge, which was smoothed, curved inwards. The curve levelled off *c.*15 mm. up and 13 mm. in. Most of the surface had broken off at this point, but a slight lip survived, indicating that the object continued upwards at a different angle. This may have been the base or foot of a small stone vessel.

There was also a fragment of the upper stone of a rotary hand-quern of German lava from context 1004. Insufficient of the circumference was present to gauge its size; the thickness was 41 mm. at the outside tapering to 30 mm. These stones were imported from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards.

Copper Alloy

Fig. 7 No. 3: **T**-shaped, silvered copper alloy brooch with Polden Hill spring mechanism. Bilateral spring of 11 turns with the overhead chord secured by a backward hook onto the head of the bow. The axis bar is held at both ends by a backward plate extension from the wing tips. The mid-bow is decorated with a double-lenticulate moulding in inverted-chevron form. Above this is a bordered panel containing two square cells; on some examples these contain enamelling. The catch plate is plain. Date 75–150 AD.[20] Context 8.

Not illustrated: Fragments of a copper-alloy gilded strip, slightly thicker at both edges, 4–4.5 mm. wide and less than 1 mm. thick. Length of all surviving fragments *c.*150 mm. Possibly this was a bracelet, although no ends were found.

Iron

A selection of nails was recovered from the destruction levels. The only other objects were from post-Roman contexts, a fragment of sheet or strip from context 100 and part of a round-sided plate with nail or rivet holes from context 2.

Lead

Two scraps were found: an unstratified length of flashing 11 mm. wide complete with nail-hole, and a pot-rivet from context 7.

Glass: Fig. 7 Nos. 4 and 5

Thirty-five fragments of ancient glass were found, all in Area 1. 24 were window-glass, two others possibly so, and 7 came from vessels. The window-glass comprised 11 fragments of the matt-glossy variety, 13 of the double-glossy; 14 fragments were of clear metal, 10 were greenish-blue. The other two possible fragments were clear but were very thin, and may have been vessel-glass.

The vessel-glass was mostly clear metal, including a footring base fragment (context 3), three curving

[19] T.G. Allen, 'The Stone Finds', in T.G. Allen with T. Darvill and L.S. Green, *Excavations at Rough Ground Farm, Lechlade, Glos: A Prehistoric and Roman Landscape*, (forthcoming).

[20] R. Hattat, *Iron Age and Roman Brooches* (1985), 87–9.

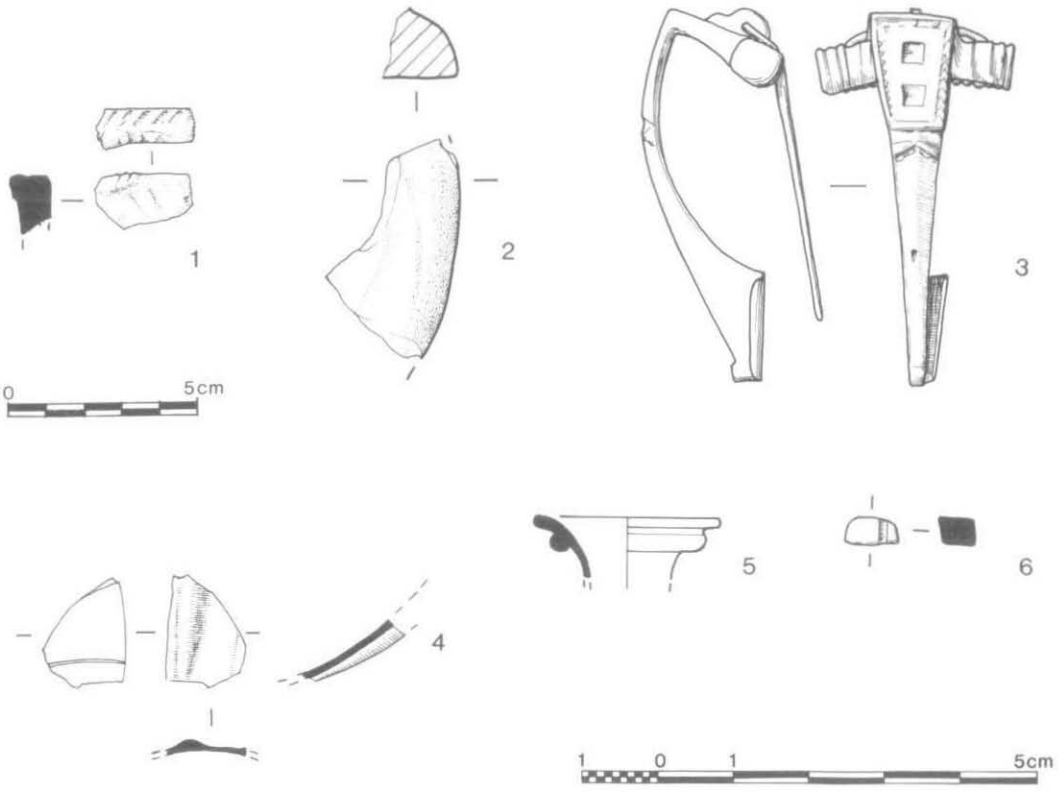

Fig. 7.

body fragments (contexts 5, 14 and 44), the base or shoulder of a bottle (context 48/2) and part of the rim of a small beaker *c.*60 mm. in diameter (context 9). The rim was rolled and slightly thickened. One fragment of green glass (context 2) came from the rim and neck of a small bottle, Isings form 126 or 127 (Fig. 7 No. 5).[21] The everted rim was folded inwards upon itself and flattened, and just below the rim was an applied spiral coil of the same metal. These forms are dated to the later 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

One further fragment of purple and white marbled glass (context 47) came from the lower body of a pillar-moulded bowl (Fig. 7 No. 4), Isings form 3a.[22] This fragment appears to belong to the more common type, in which the ribs come right down to the base. A pair of horizontal incised lines on the inside may be for decoration, or alternatively evidence of rotary-polishing. These bowls date from the 1st and very early 2nd centuries AD; the polychrome examples such as this one are more common before the Flavian period. This vessel was probably an import from the Eastern Mediterranean.

The two remaining fragments were part of a dark-blue glass bead (context 7), cut down for use as a tessera (Fig. 7 No. 6), and a lump of partly fired faience, probably a melted bead (context 53/1).

The faience, glass bead, marbled glass vessel and two possible bottle fragments came from the early phase of Roman occupation. Only one of the window fragments came from this phase. Rather more window glass came from the destruction levels of the second phase, but the majority was redeposited in later levels. The absence of poorly-made greenish glass and the relative quantity of matt-glossy window glass would suggest a 1st- to 3rd-century date for the assemblage.

[21] C. Isings, *Roman Glass from Dated Finds* (1957), 156–8.
[22] Ibid. 17–21.

Bone

Part of the shaft of a polished bone pin *c.*7 mm. across came from context 10. Too little was found to identify the bone used.

SLAG with comments from Dr. CHRIS SALTER

Fragments of slag or slagged hearth-lining were recovered from Area 1. Smithing slag came from the early Roman yard, and some possible smelting slag was also incorporated into the Type 2 mortar of the second-phase building. Fragments from contexts 27 and 30 in the later Roman period had vitrified surfaces, indicating that they had been subjected to an intense heat for a protracted period. This is unlikely to have resulted from small-scale smithing in a bowl-furnace. It could indicate large-scale forging or smelting, but could alternatively have resulted from contact with a hypocaust flue.

Pieces of 'Fawler ironstone', a high-grade goethite, were found in both early and late Roman contexts. These were possibly connected with iron-smelting, but showed no signs of heating.

ROMAN TILE by LEIGH TURNER

In total 291.12 kg. of tile was recovered. Each fragment was recorded listing context, fabric, weight, tile type, thickness, complete dimensions (if present), flange height, decoration and additional comments.

Types

A) Tegulae – identifiable by flanges, cut-away corners or thumb-grooves along the inner edge of the flange.
B) Imbrices – identifiable by their curving shape.
C) Box tiles – identifiable by the presence of a key for plaster, made by fingers, comb or roller stamp.
D) Plain flat tiles – thickness up to 31 mm. Large tiles and bricks – thickness over 31 mm.
E) Half-box tiles – identifiable by an extended flange, central cut-out in each flange and a key for plaster.
X) indeterminate fragments.

The weights of each type both in grammes and as a percentage of the total sample are shown below.

TABLE 1

Type	Weight (gms.)	% Weight
Tegula	290.85	9.99
Imbrex	150.25	5.16
Box	354.90	12.19
Plain	1292.65	44.40
Half-box	386.75	13.30
Indeterminate	435.80	43.58

Fabric

Each fragment was examined using a (×20) hand-lens according to guidelines suggested by D.P.S. Peacock.[23] 12 main fabric types were recorded. The weights of each fabric type expressed in grammes and as a percentage of the total sample are shown below.

A – Tegulae (132 fragments)
110 fragments had a measurable thickness, averaging 20.6 mm. Two partially complete examples from Fawler measured 20 mm. thick × 294 mm. wide and 22 mm. thick by 350 mm. wide. Tegulae dimensions can range

[23] D.P.S. Peacock, *Pottery and Commerce* (1977), 25–33.

TABLE 2

Fabric	Colour	Firing	Inclusions			Weight (grammes)	Weight %	Source of Fabric
			AB	MOD	SP			
1	LTR	HARD	MICA	GR	Fe	485.0	16.70	? Minety, Wilts
2	R/Y, LTR	HARD	MICA	Q, GR, Fe		989.8	33.98	? Minety, Wilts
3	LTR	SOFT, SOAPY			Fe, GR, Mi	456.9	15.69	Minety, Wilts.[24]
5	R, R+GY	V.HARD		Q, Fe	GR	657.8	22.59	
6	R	SOFT	MICA		Q, GR	151.9	5.22	? Minety, Wilts
7	LTR,GY	HARD	MICA	Q,GR,Fe		32.9	1.13	Shore Farm, Wilts.[25]
8	R/Y	HARD	MICA	Fe		43.5	1.49	
9	LTR,R	SOFT	Q,Mi		GR,Fe	23.5	0.81	
10	LTR	HARD	MICA	Q,Fe	GR	27.5	0.94	? Minety, Wilts.
11	R/Y,LTR	HARD	MICA	CAL	Fe,GR	2.5	0.08	Brinkworth, Wilts.[26]
12	LTR	V.HARD		GR	Fe,Q	6.0	0.20	
1/2	R/Y	HARD	MICA		Q,GR,Fe	33.8	1.16	

Key

Colours:

LTR – light red
R/Y – reddish yellow
GY – grey
R – red

Inclusions:

AB – abundant
MOD – moderate
SP – sparse

Mi – mica
Fe – iron
GR – grog
Q – quartz
CAL – calcareous

anywhere from 570 × 380, as at Caerleon, to 310 × 270, at Piddington.[27] The examples from Fawler appear to be about average, *c.*300 mm. wide by an estimated 400 mm. long.

84 fragments had a measurable tegula flange height ranging from 27 mm. to 57 mm. with an average of 40.7 mm.

10 fragments showed traces of semi-circular incised decoration on the lower half of the face. It has been suggested that these were signatures characteristic of a specific factory or individual.[28] Since they always appear on the lower part of the tegula they may alternatively have indicated to the roof constructor which way they should go up. One tegula had a nail hole 40 mm. from the upper edge of the tile. The nail would have been overlapped by the tile above. Tegulae requiring nails are generally those set lowest on the roof; the rest stay in place by sheer weight, provided that the pitch of the roof does not exceed 40°.[29]

The tegulae were predominantly made in fabric 2 (48.5%), fabric 1 (16.7%) and fabric 5 (16.7%).

B – Imbrices (162 fragments)

Imbrices cover the edges where two tegulae join, and are wider at one end where they overlap the imbrex below. 147 fragments had measurable thickness, the average of which was 16.4 mm. No complete examples were recovered. The imbrices seem to have been made largely in fabric 2 (44.4%) and fabric 1 (22.2%).

C – Box Tiles (Tubuli) (282 fragments)

Only 24 fragments definitely come from tubuli. Another 242 fragments have been included here because they

[24] A. McWhirr, 'Roman Tile-Kilns in Britain', in A. McWhirr (ed.), *Roman Brick and Tile* (BAR 68, 1979), 181.

[25] Pers comm. Mike Stone; Thamesdown Archaeological Field Unit.

[26] C.K. Currie, 'Excavations and Surveys at the Roman Kiln Site, Brinkworth' with contribution by M.A. Loft (Unpublished, 1986: typescript in site archive).

[27] G. Brodribb, *Roman Brick and Tile* (1987), 12.

[28] G. Brodribb, 'Markings on Tile', in McWhirr op. cit. note 24, 215–6.

[29] T. Rook, 'Tile Roofs', in Ibid. 295 ff.

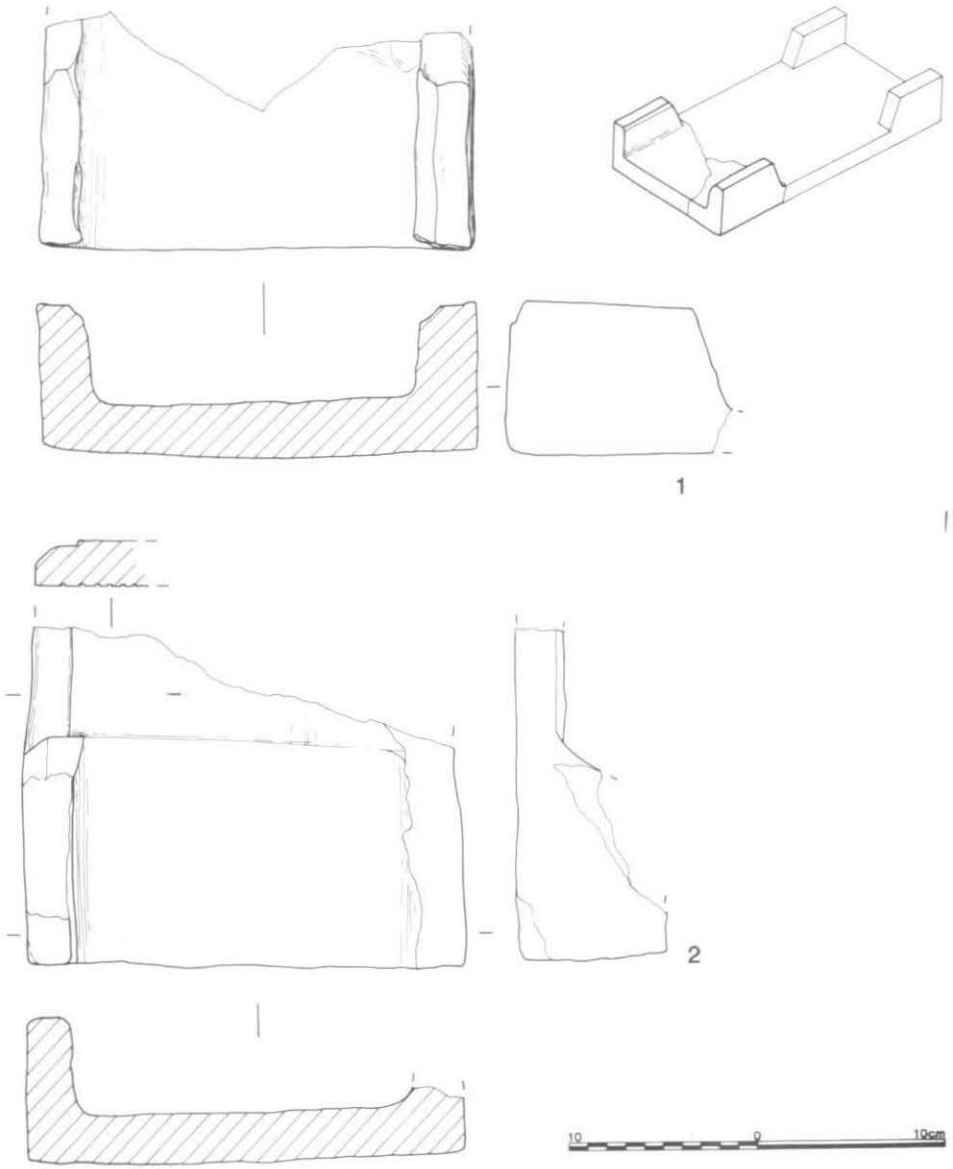

Fig. 8. Half-box tiles.

have a combed key for plaster. The fragments range from 9 mm. to 29 mm. thick and could include fragments from half-box tiles (average thickness 22 mm.).

This is a difficult category to define, but the box tiles at Fawler appear both thinner and finer than the half-box tiles (see section *E* below), and were probably constructed differently. Box tiles seem to have been predominantly of fabric 1 (62.5%).

D – Plain Tiles

This category contains 753 fragments without flange, curve or key. Their thicknesses range from 25 mm. to 90 mm. (averaging 43 mm.).

Fragments up to 27 mm. thick could be from tegulae and those up to 31 mm. from half-box tiles, so only the 126 fragments over 31 mm. thick are definitely large tiles or bricks.

The table below shows the number of fragments of each thickness (to the nearest 5 mm.), and by comparison with material from other sites suggest the dimensions and possible function of the tiles.

TABLE 3

Thickness	No.	Type and Average Dimensions	Function
31–35 mm.	70	Laterculus Bessalis. (c. 198 × 198 × 43mm) OR	Used to create pilae.
36–40 mm.	29	Pedalis (c. 281 × 281 × 46mm) OR	Capping or base brick for pilae.
41–45 mm.	13	Lydion	Bonding or lacing courses in walls.
46–50 mm.	4	(c. 403 × 280 × 41mm)	Flooring and capping pilae.
51–55 mm.	4	Sesquipedalis (c. 443 × 443 × 52mm)	Base brick for pilae.
56–60 mm.	5	Bipedale	Bonding or lacing courses in walls and flooring.
60mm +	1	(c. 591 × 591 × 60mm)	

E – Half-Box Tiles (89 fragments): Fig. 8.

Half-box tiles are an early form of cavity-wall heating, a forerunner of complete box tiles or tubuli but a development from the use of tegulae mounted vertically on the wall. Although often lumped under the general term *tegulae mammatae*, they differ in that they have an extended flange and central cut-out rather than applied clay bosses at each corner.

The average thickness of these tiles was 25 mm. Three partially complete examples were recovered, all 230 mm. wide and 25 mm. thick. G. Brodribb states that the average length of a half-box tile is 460 mm. (50 mm. longer than the average tegula) and the width 330 mm.[30] The examples from Fawler are therefore smaller than average. The external depth of the flange averages 77.5 mm, which is 30 mm. more than the average depth of tegulae, this extra depth providing more space for the air to pass. All the central cut-outs from Fawler are the same shape (see Fig. 8), and all examples show evidence of a combed key on the reverse side. Additional **T**-shaped metal clamps would have helped to secure the tiles to the wall.

The name 'half-box' given to this type implies that they resemble tubuli cut in half. Examination of the partially complete examples from Fawler, however, suggests that they were made like tegulae in a frame, not round a proforma as box-tiles are; the external surfaces and angles are very precise where the sheet of clay was pushed down into the frame, while the internal rounded corners show where the clay has curved up inside it. Unlike most tegulae, however, there is no groove along the inside lower edge.

Once the inside surface had been smoothed off the central cut-outs would have been made. Marks on one example (Fig. 8 No. 2) indicate that most of the central cut-out section was ripped off, and the break then finished neatly with a wire. This example may have been unique, but on most of the cutaways wire or knife marks can be seen down its internal slope, and in some cases along the bottom or inner surface of the half-box tile as well.

Half-box tiles seem to have been made predominantly in fabric 2 (47.7%) and fabric 5 (42%).

Only 26 sites in Britain have produced half-box tiles, with a total of 42 complete or partial examples.[31]

[30] Brodribb op. cit. note 27, 67.

[31] Ibid.

MEDIEVAL TILE by MAUREEN MELLOR

Some 60 fragments of medieval roof-tile were recovered from Area 3, Tr. 2, L1004 and L1005.

At least 4 different production sources are suspected. One used clay with calcareous gravel (group IB), another clay with predominantly sand quartz inclusions (group III), the third an admixture of red and white clay (group III), and the fourth source had grog added to the clay (group IV).[32]

The group IB source produced almost exclusively ridge-tiles, with both hand-made thumbed spurs and cut spurs.[33] These tiles may be glazed light-yellow, light-green or mottled green. The lastmentioned glaze suggests a date not earlier than the 13th century. Well-made ridge-tiles with cut spurs were also made with the grog-tempered clay (group IV) and were fired in an oxidising atmosphere to give an orange or brown glaze. One unglazed ridge-tile with cut spurs was found in group III. The remaining small fragments were uninformative. The presence of these ridge-tiles at this date would, however, suggest a house of some status.

No medieval kiln making ridge-tiles is known in Oxfordshire, but they may have been made by potters rather than tilers during the 13th century. Pottery workshops are known at Woodstock[34] and in the Leafield area,[35] and there may well be other undiscovered sources closer to Fawler.

PLASTER AND MORTAR

A sample of 24.5 kg. of plaster and mortar was kept. Of this some 11.5 kg. was painted plaster, the remaining 13 kg. being *opus signinum* and undecorated mortar.

Two main fabrics were distinguished: (1) a pinkish mortar made predominantly of crushed tile, with white soft calcareous lumps and dark grey stone chips; and (2) a cream or yellow gravel mortar, though this also included some crushed tile. Plaster fragments often had a final application of Type 1 on top of Type 2 mortar.

There was also a mortar with an even mix of both tile and gravel, Type 3. A very coarse version of Type 3 was classified separately as Type 4, and a few unpainted fragments of a white chalky mortar, Type 5, were also found.

Painted Plaster

There were 395 fragments of painted plaster; these were recorded by context as to weight and number, the composition of the mortar and its thickness and the colour and design of the paint.

Most fragments came from the late destruction levels, namely contexts 2–6, 28–9, 32, 35 and 38. A small number were found in and below stone spread 12=13, and so presumably belong to an earlier phase of decoration (contexts 7, 8, 40, 42, 48 and 51).

Just under half the painted plaster was of Type 1 (5.5 kg.), more than another third (4.2 kg.) of Type 2, and the rest of Type 3.

The range of colour was small, and of 395 fragments 344 were of a single colour. White was by far the commonest (173), with pink (84), deep pink (39) and shades of red (36) also commonly represented. Light and dark purple, black, yellow and grey were the only others. Designs were limited to stripes, spots and straight borders between panels; the most colourful were pink, grey and red stripes in Type 2 and a yellow, white and purple stripe in Type 1.

Stripes 3–5 mm. wide on a white background occurred on Types 1 and 3 in red, yellow and black; parallel red and black stripes suggest a simple geometric pattern, and a free brush-stroke in dark red over one of these thin stripes indicates designs within the geometric framework. There were also broader yellow stripes 15 mm. wide on a white background, with darker yellow spots *c.*20 mm. apart along the stripe. The other use of spots was of white on a purple background, perhaps part of a spatter-dash effect, which was often used on the dado to imitate marbling.[36]

Most of the colours were equally common on all fabrics, but yellow occurs only on Type 1 and deep pink almost always so. Conversely, purple and black are better represented on Type 2.

The fragments from the earlier phase were only of fabric Types 1 and 2, and colours were limited to white, pink and black.

[32] G. Lambrick and M. Mellor, 'The Tiles', in G. Lambrick, 'Further Excavations on the Second Site of the Dominican Priory, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, 1 (1985), 178.

[33] E.M. Jope, 'The Development of Pottery Ridge Tiles in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, xvi (1951), 86–88.

[34] N. Stebbing, J. Rhodes and M. Mellor, *The Clay Industries of Oxfordshire: Oxfordshire Potters* (Oxfordshire Museum Services Publication No. 13, 1980).

[35] M. Mellor, 'Medieval Pottery from the Wychwood: Notes', *Oxoniensia*, xlvii (1982), 133.

[36] J. Liversidge, *Britain in the Roman Empire* (1968), 87–8.

The Undecorated Plaster and Mortar

This was largely *opus signinum* (9.3 kg.), used both on walls and in floors. Fragments of two quarter-round mouldings came from context 5, one rounded and 61 mm. high, the other with an angle of 140° and 50 mm. high. Yet other fragments were surfaced with 1–2 mm. of either white or blue-gey fine mortar.

The gravel Type 2 mortar usually occurred as backing to *opus signinum*, but there were also two hard fragments of this cream mortar surfaced with crushed tile, presumably in imitation of *opus signinum* flooring. This combination also occurs at the Shakenoak Farm and Rough Ground Farm villas locally.[37] Type 2 mortar also contained fragments of smithing slag, probably from metalworking associated with the building's construction (see also above, p. 305).

TESSERAE

In all, 47 possible tesserae were recovered from Trenches A, B and D. All were single pieces from secondary contexts. They were grouped according to size, material, shape and colour. 18 were made of white limestone, 14 of blue-grey lias and 12 of tile. There was also one pebble tessera, one possible tessera made of quernstone and a fragment cut down from a dark-blue glass bead (Fig. 7 No. 6).

Most of the tesserae were rectangular (28) or square (11), but 6, all tile, were triangular. There were also two trapezoidal tesserae.

In size they fall into 3 main groups. All the tesserae over 30 mm. across (8) were of white limestone. The blue/grey lias tesserae were clustered between 17 and 23 mm. across. Some of the tile and limestone tesserae were also of this size; half of the triangular tile tesserae were cut down from squares 20 × 20 mm. across. 20 tesserae fell within this group.

The other triangular tile tesserae were in the range 16–17 mm., suitable for finer decorative designs.

The small range of colours suggest only very basic mosaic patterns. The blue-glass tessera came from context 7 in the early phase of the building; this was the only example whose size and colour might suggest a complicated mosaic design (Fig. 7 No. 6).

TUFA

Nearly 100 fragments of sawn tufa weighing 22.4 kg. were recovered. Almost all came from the late Roman destruction layers, but 9 fragments weighing 1.75 kg. were found in earlier contexts. There were no complete blocks. The largest was 220 mm. wide (possibly its full width), and sawn slabs were commonly 60 mm. thick; the only shapes were 90° corners.

Tufa is commonly used for ceilings in Roman buildings because of its light weight. This is especially so in bath-houses; possibly its porosity allowed steam to filter through and thus reduced condensation.

ANIMAL BONES by BRUCE LEVITAN

This small assemblage comprises 635 fragments of which only 284 were identified to genus level or beyond. The species identified are summarised in Table 4. The material was divided into six temporal groups, three Roman and three post-Roman to post-medieval. The former comprise 53% of the assemblage, but 78 bones (12%) are from a single dog burial (context 1019) (Fig. 5). No sieving was carried out, and the smallest species represented are rabbit and a bird bone from a species about the size of the thrush family. The range of species represented is not surprising for any of these periods, with the exception of the two rabbit bones (scapulae) which are best seen as intrusive. The size of the assemblage is too small for further analysis.

The dog burial is of interest mainly because it was buried in association with a complete pot (Fig. 6). It is an adult with a slight deformity of the left tibia (possibly the result of a greenstick fracture). It was about 0.58 m. high, similar in size to a border collie or other medium-sized breed. Some of the bones are rather weathered, probably resulting from disturbance by medieval ditch 1013.

The full archive is housed at the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University Museum, Oxford.

[37] A.C.C. Brodribb, A.R. Hands and D.R. Walker, *Excavations at Shakenoak*: IV (1973), 16; T.G. Allen et al op. cit. note 19, forthcoming.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF SPECIES REPRESENTED

Phase	1st C	1st–2nd C	2nd–3rd C	P-Roman	Medieval	P-Medieval	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Cattle		7	8	21	5	19	60
Sheep	1	2	1	1	1	1	7
Goat				1			1
Sheep/goat	4	22	11	21	3	5	66
Pig		9	8	13	2	3	35
Horse		1		4	1	7	13
Dog	78a				3b	2	83
Rabbit		2					2
Red Deer			7c	3			10
Roe Deer		2					2
Σmammal	83	45	35	64	15	37	279
ULMd	3	45	24	60	3	27	162
UMMe	2	59	36	43	17	26	183
Σunid.	5	104	60	103	20	53	345
dom. fowl	1					2	3
bird		4f	1		1g		6
Σbird	1	4	1		1		9
Human						1	1
Σbones	89	153	96	168	36	93	635

Notes:
a – skeleton (missing head)
b – skull fragments from skeleton?
c – one antler fragment: identification uncertain
d – ULM = unidentified large mammal
e – UMM = unidentified medium mammal
f – all possibly fowl
g – juvenile fowl or goose?
Σ – total

DISCUSSION

Previous evidence of prehistoric activity at Fawler is limited to an early reference to flint arrowheads[38] and the record by Hearne of a barrow,[39] presumably Bronze Age. The small collection of flintwork and pottery associated with the gullies in Area 3 indicate an occupation site in the valley-bottom close to the river. The only illustrated sherd (Fig. 7 No. 1) would suggest a Late Neolithic date; the flintwork is undiagnostic.

There were no Iron Age sherds; the Early Roman occupation, which begins in the mid or late 1st century, appears to represent fresh colonisation of the site. Since pottery of this date was found in all three excavated areas, the occupation was evidently

[38] *V.C.H. Oxon.* i (1939), 127 and 164.
[39] *V.C.H. Oxon.* x (1972), 128 gives the reference as *Hearne's Collections* (OHS iii), 142, but this is incorrect.

extensive. The dog burial with associated flagon is extremely unusual; ritual dog burials are known from the Middle and Late Iron Age in the Windrush valley, and some of these were accompanied by meat bones suggesting deliberate offerings,[40] but the association of pottery vessels, particularly a wine flagon, is unparalleled.

It is unclear how long this occupation lasted before the construction of the first villa buildings, if it predated them at all. The first-phase building found in Area 1 seems to date from the 1st or early 2nd century AD. Several other villas in this area have similarly early dates: Ditchley, Shakenoak and North Leigh.[41] This group of early villas has been linked to the North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch (cf. above, pp. 287–8).

Little evidence of the first-phase building survived: one possible wall (F61) and debris including painted wall plaster and a blue-glass tessera. The latter was certainly worn, probably implying that this building had had a mosaic and painted walls, though conceivably the debris could have derived from another building. There were no half-box or box tiles from this phase; the hypocaust-system was probably not introduced until the second phase. The few exotic finds, however, all belong with this early phase: the pillar-moulded bowl, melted faience and the silvered brooch. This may suggest that the occupation was of high status from the outset, rather than growing from very modest origins.

The painted plaster from the later phase was more varied, and the debris considerably more substantial. The building was clearly hypocausted, with tessellated floors, painted walls and tufa ceilings. The half-box tiles used are rare; their manufacture and function is discussed on p. 308. This type of box-tile is generally considered to be early, though examples as late as the 3rd century are claimed.[42] Together with the pottery, this suggests a 2nd-century date for the construction of the second-phase building.

Given its position beside the river Evenlode, this building is clearly a bathhouse. Tufa is commonly used in the roofs of bath-suites, as at Shakenoak Farm nearby; the source for both villas was probably at Bridewell Farm *c.*2.5 km. S. of Fawler.[43] This building must be that identified by Warde Fowler in 1912, the one destroyed by the railway in the 19th century. Confirmation that the river was diverted for the railway crossing is shown by the parish boundary, which follows the course of the Evenlode except where the river bends under the railway bridge (Fig. 1, p. 294). Its original course, marked by the line of the parish boundary, ran obliquely along the foot of the steep scarp on the western side of the valley.[44]

Local reports spoke of further mosaics uncovered during the recent extension and alteration of No. 1 Bury Close, the southernmost cottage, and it was to investigate those that the trenches were dug in No. 1's back garden. The results suggest that there was no substantial building within several metres of Trench 2. The report of a mosaic in the front garden of the cottage remains uninvestigated. Further work is urgently needed to establish the true limits and overall layout of the villa.

Only a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery came from the recent excavations, and no other archaeological evidence of pagan Saxon occupation has been found. The name of the village is Anglo-Saxon,[45] but the *V.C.H.* believes that it was settled later than the

[40] G.H. Lambrick, 'Stanton Harcourt: Gravelly Guy', in *South Midlands Archaeology*, xv (1985), 108.

[41] C.A. Ralegh Radford, 'The Roman Villa at Ditchley', *Oxoniensia*, i (1936), 39–41; Brodribb et al. op. cit. note 37, ii (1971), 14; D.R. Wilson and D. Sherlock, *North Leigh Roman Villa, Oxfordshire* (1980), 7–9.

[42] Brodribb op. cit. note 27, 67.

[43] Brodribb et al. op. cit. note 37, i (1971), 11 and 25.

[44] Charlbury Tithe Map, 1850.

[45] Gelling op. cit. note 1.

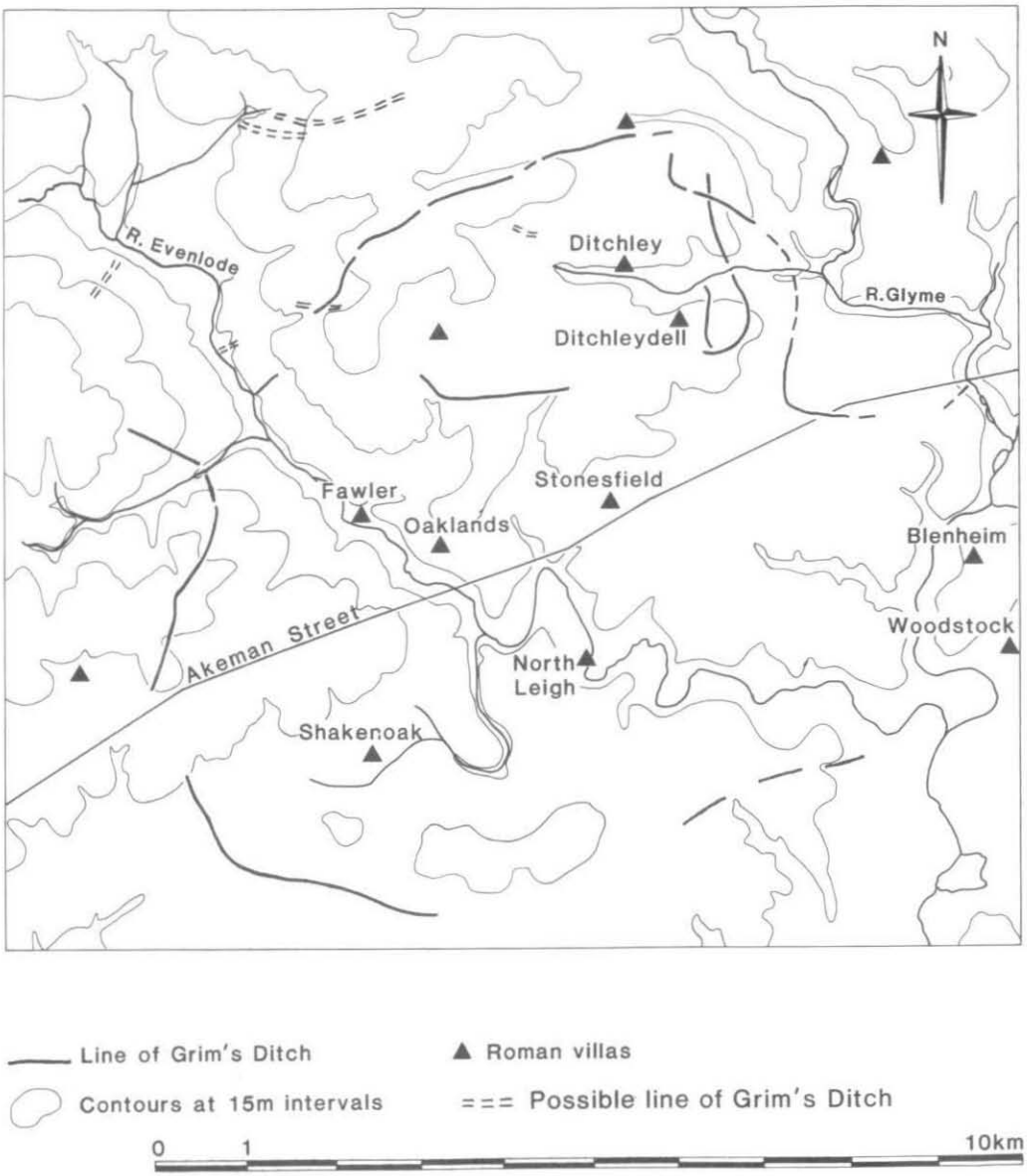

Fig. 9. Fawler in relation to neighbouring villas and the N. Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch. [cf. above, p. 286 Fig. 4.].

settlements at Chadlington or North Leigh, and thus also later than Shakenoak.[46] There were a few possible mid-Saxon sherds from Area 1, but these were not diagnostic.

Late Saxon 10th- to 11th-century pottery was found both in Area 1 and Area 3. In Area 3 this pottery was residual in medieval contexts, but in Area 1 it occurred in quantity within the slow soil build-up overlying the destruction of the villa. Horizons within this were not, except for the obvious change at the interface between layers L26 and L10, distinguished, and there may have been a discrete late Saxon horizon here. The name of Bury Close may also suggest that this was the Saxon focus of Fawler.

Mid 11th- to 12th-century pottery came from the infilling of the sunken-floored building and its associated yard in Area 3, Trench 2, and 12th- to 13th-century pottery from the succeeding ditches adjacent. Pottery of the same date was found both in Area 1 and Area 2, suggesting widespread occupation at this time. The occupation in Area 3 was sealed by the destruction debris of a substantial stone building with tiled roof. The finds associated with this suggests that it was deposited before the end of the 13th century. This debris may have been carted some distance to be deposited, but the absence of subsequent occupation material in the vicinity or signs of use or wear upon its surface implies rather that the building lay close by. The concentration of rubble at the E. end of Trench 2 probably indicates that it lay a few metres E. of this, and was in use contemporarily with the adjacent ditches. At this date a tiled roof suggests a building of high status.

In the 11th century Fawler, part of the 50 hides of Banbury in Domesday Book, belonged to the episcopal estate of the Bishop of Lincoln,[47] and in 1094 was held by one of the bishop's knights.[48] During the 12th and 13th centuries the Wykeham family appear to have been the principal landowners, but by the end of the 13th century most of their land had been transferred to Eynsham Abbey, and the Blund family, sub-tenants of the Wykehams, held the only land in Fawler not belonging to the Abbey;[49] in 1279 there were 12 yardlands in Fawler, 11 belonging to the Abbey and one, equivalent to ¼ knight's fee, held by William Blund.

There is no reference to a large manor-house in Fawler at this time, and the site of the early medieval settlement focus is not known. In 1298 a bridge at Fawler is mentioned on the road from Charlbury to Finstock, known as Stonyway.[50] This bridge reappears in the documentary sources from time to time, and its site can be fairly securely identified with that of the present bridge at the N.W. end of the village. The river next to Bury Close is not deep, and an alternative route to Finstock may have been across the Evenlode here and straight up the hill; a right-of-way, Dark Lane, is still preserved in a straight line from Finstock down to Topples Wood on the opposite bank of the river here. It is possible that this was the earlier route between the two villages, partly explaining the siting of the villa and later Saxon settlement here.

The first appearance of the *Fawlerbrugge*, in a document of 1298, may date long after its construction, but it may be significant that the abandonment of Bury Close and the first reference to the bridge are both dated to the late 13th century. Possibly the bridge was newly-built at this time, and thereafter took the traffic that had previously forded the river at Bury Close, thus making this end of the village a backwater.

[46] E.T. Leeds, 'Two Saxon Cemeteries in North Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 21–30; Brodribb et al. op. cit. note 37, iii (1972), 31–33.
[47] *V.C.H. Oxon.* x (1972), 128.
[48] *Rot. Hund.* (Rec.Comm.), ii, 709.
[49] *Eynsham Cartulary*, i, 140–141; Ibid. ii, 31.
[50] Ibid. ii, 95.

No later medieval pottery came from the excavations, probably indicating that this part of the village was abandoned. There is no further evidence for activity until the post-medieval period, when cobbled yards and stone buildings are constructed at the N. end of Area 1. Field walls of this date such as feature 9 survive as earthworks in the scheduled area (Fig. 1 and p. 298); these were probably the earthworks thought by Warde Fowler to show the outline of the villa, no clear trace of which is visible on the ground.

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