

# The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Chimney, Oxfordshire

By SALLY CRAWFORD  
with contributions by JOHN BLAIR and MARY HARMAN

## SUMMARY

*Excavations at Chimney, near Bampton, verified reports that this was the site of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. Use of the cemetery was intensive. All articulated burials excavated were laid out W.-E. Radiocarbon dates of skeletons suggest that the site was in use between c. 950 and 1060 AD. Extrapolation from the excavated areas suggests that the cemetery may contain in excess of 1,500 burials. No associated chapel was discovered by excavation, but documentary evidence shows that a chapel dedicated to St. James existed in the 16th century. The archaeological evidence suggests that this was a major late Anglo-Saxon rural cemetery, its demise probably connected with the establishment of a burial monopoly by its proprietors, the priests of Bampton minster.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer is indebted to Miss P. Gauntlett and Mrs B. Cooper of Chimney for their kind permission to excavate. She is grateful to Mary Harman for analysis of the human remains from the excavations in 1988, and to Dr. G. Jeffery for help in analysis of the bones from the 1989 excavations; to Dr. J. Wakely of Leicester University Anatomy Department for examining the 'chopped' bones; to Dr. A. MacGregor of the Ashmolean Museum for examining the small-finds; to Maureen Mellor for examining pottery; to Drs. J. Walker and R. Otlet at Harwell Laboratories for the radiocarbon dating; to Dr. W.J. Blair of The Queen's College for his advice and backing; to the Oxford University Archaeological Society for help in excavating the site, in particular to Julia Lehmann for her assistance in 1989; and to Mr. V. Christophers for access to information about his excavation. Thanks are due to the Meyerstein Committee for a grant towards post-excavation and publication costs, and to The Queen's College, Oxford for providing money for radiocarbon dating.

## INTRODUCTION

Chimney lies 3 miles S.E. of Bampton on a spur of clay overlooking the Thames, at about 65 m. above sea level (see Figs. 1-2). It has been recognized as the site of a possible Anglo-Saxon cemetery since 1895, when Percy Manning recorded the following observation: 'For some years past, up to the present time, skeletons with 'swords and armour', as my informant describes them, have been found in the garden of the farm house. The late Mr. Stephen Stone, who excavated the British settlement near Brighthampton, used to obtain most of what was found; anything now turned up is

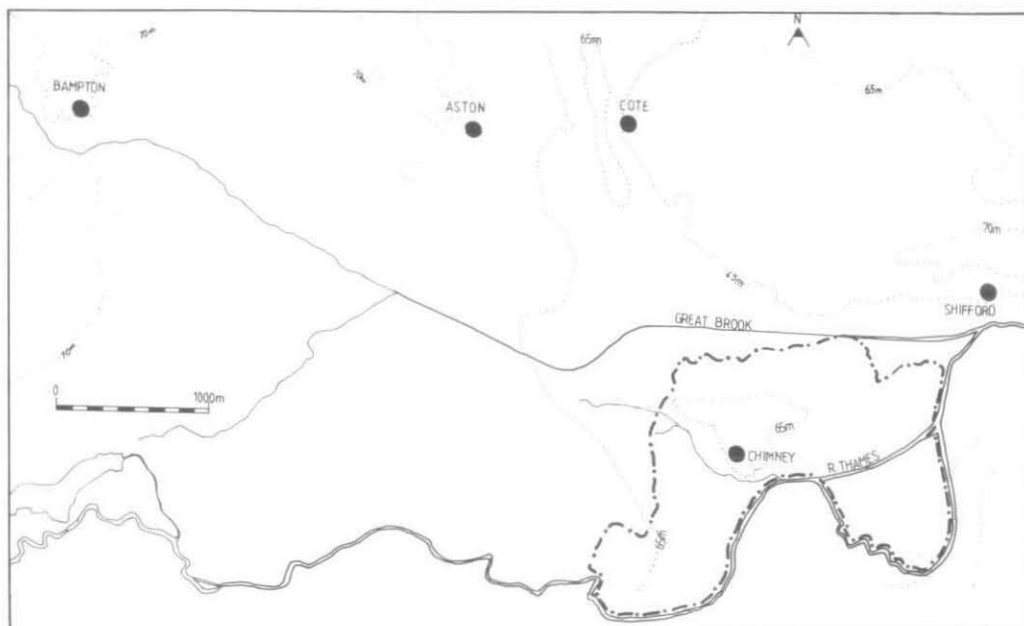


Fig. 1. Location-map of Chimney in relation to Bampton. The line of heavy dots and dashes marks the boundary of the estate given to Bampton minster by King Eadwig, as described in the 1069 charter (see note 10).

immediately buried again by order of the farmer who occupies the house. (Information from Cote, 1895). I suppose that these remains are Anglo-Saxon, but I have seen nothing to enable me to speak positively.<sup>1</sup> The find-spot of the burials is marked by a circle (see Fig. 2) on Manning's annotated Ordnance Survey map (Ashmolean Museum, Department of Antiquities), but there is no evidence that he had any precise information and this location may be purely schematic.

Unpublished excavations were carried out by Mr. Vagn Christophers, a local archaeologist, in 1952 (see Figs. 3–4).<sup>2</sup> Finds included a knife (Fig. 6C) buried with one skeleton, and sherds of late Saxon/early medieval pottery. The cemetery appeared to be intensive, containing a large number of frequently intercutting burials. Mr. Christophers (who visited the site during the 1988 season) and the landowner, Miss P. Gauntlett, indicated the position of the 1952 excavation; Miss Gauntlett also indicated where her family believed the skeletons with 'swords and armour' to have been found, in a rather different place from the circle on Manning's map. Both these approximate locations are shown on Fig. 3. Fossil 'amulets', collected from burials disturbed during unspecified work at Chimney in the late 1950s, have been noted by Audrey Meaney,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note by Manning (Ashmolean Museum, Dept. of Antiquities); printed *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Arch. Journal*, iv.1 (April 1898), 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxoniensis*, xvii–xviii (1952–3), 223.

<sup>3</sup> A. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Curing Stones and Amulets* (B.A.R. 1981), 120. Given the clayey nature of the soil here, and the number of fossils occurring naturally in the soil, the 'amulet' theory seems dubious, but Meaney comments as follows: 'The late Miss E. Begg collected some fossils, apparently from burials disturbed by sand or gravel workings. From a man's grave at Chimney . . . she obtained a piece of fossil coral, *Homatoseris complanata*, and a fragment of crinoid stem – *Isocrinus*, possibly Jurassic. The workman who saw these dug out

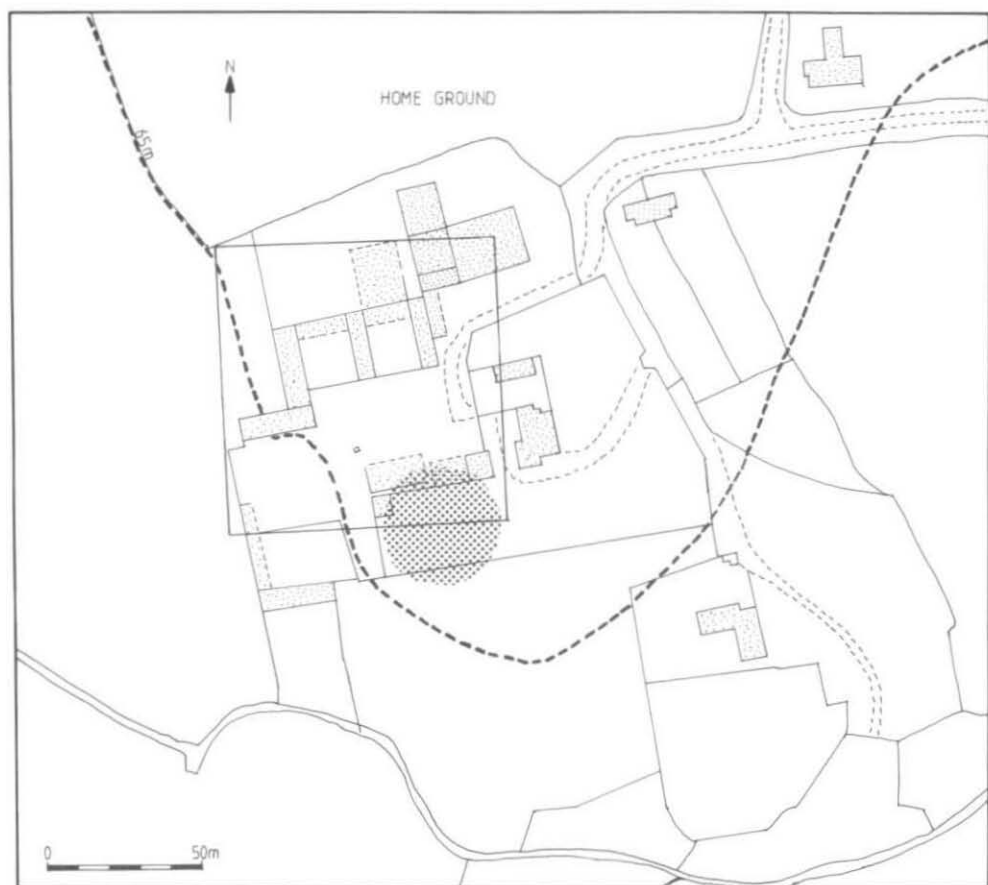


Fig. 2. The site of Chimney. The heavy broken line marks the 65-m. contour. The circle of bold stipple represents the location marked on Manning's map for the burials with 'swords and armour' (but cf. Fig. 3).

though since all but one of the fossils cited occur naturally in the local clay, this reference to grave-goods should be treated with caution.

In May 1988, at the suggestion of Dr. W.J. Blair, excavations were undertaken with the aim of establishing the date-range and spatial limits of the cemetery. Due to the nature of the site, which lies at the centre of a farm complex, areas of excavation were limited according to the convenience of the farmer. With the very kind co-operation of Miss Gauntlett, it was possible to excavate eight small trenches in 1988, and a further five in 1989. Fieldwalking was also undertaken in 'Home Ground' field. The site was considered to be unsuitable for a resistivity survey.

---

said that they were known locally as 'deadmen's eyes'. Later, possibly about 1966, Miss Begg obtained four more fossils from the same site; a belemnite, *Hibolites bastatus*, from the local Oxford clay; two serpulids probably from Corallian beds such as those at Cumnor, and the left valve of an indeterminate oyster bearing the reflected ornament of an ammonite to which the right valve had been attached. Oysters like these are mainly found in the lower lias, and could hardly have been transported to Chimney by natural processes.' (We are grateful to Dr. J.R. Maddicott for drawing attention to this reference).

## EXCAVATION

The layout of trenches is illustrated in Fig. 3. *Trench 1* was placed at the probable northern limits of the cemetery and no skeletons were found. The soil was relatively badly disturbed; finds included three sherds of Roman pottery, and deposits of modern animal bone. *Trench 2* was as close to Mr. Christophers's earlier excavations as it was possible to excavate. The soil was badly disturbed; the stockman reported that in this part of the farmyard, cows sink into the waterlogged mud up to their haunches, as was



Fig. 3. Location-plan of the trenches, also marking the approximate locations of the Victorian finds of burials with 'swords and armour' (as reported by Miss Gauntlett: but cf. Fig. 2), and of Vagn Christophers's excavation.

clearly demonstrated by the smashed state of the bones at this part of the site. Disturbed human bones were discovered at 50 cm. below the surface; natural was reached at 80 cm.

*Trenches 3 to 7* were placed in the back garden, as far S. as it was possible to dig. Again, the archaeology had been badly disturbed by cultivation; fragments of human bone lie on the soil surface, and continued use of this area as a vegetable patch will undoubtedly destroy the remaining archaeology before long. Again, the burials are shallow relative to the modern surface; grave-cuts were identified at 37 cm., natural was reached at between 35 and 40 cm.

*Trench 8* was placed under the eaves of a barn on the N.E. side of the farmyard, as close as possible to the find-spot of the 'swords and armour' burials (as reported by Miss Gauntlett). Here, where the ground is slightly higher, burials (Fig. 5) were found beneath the level of modern disturbance, but at the level of the water-table, which hampered excavation. Natural clay was reached at 1.00 m below the modern surface.

*Trench 9* was placed close to the collapsed barn on the S. side of the farmyard, known as 'The Chapel Barn' to Miss Gauntlett and her family, who believed it to incorporate remains of a chapel. This area proved to have been badly disturbed by post-medieval farming activity and domestic rubbish-pits to a depth of 1.50 m.

*Trenches 10 and 12* were placed within the 'Chapel Barn' once it had been cleared for excavation. The area appears to have been extensively used for some kind of burning over a length of time during the medieval or post-medieval period. Several layers of ash lay above, between and below a series of rough cobble floors and daub layers. Large quantities of ash filled two ditches running E.-W. at the northern end of the trenches; these ditches appeared to have been backfilled with ash very shortly after they were dug. At least two hearths were recognized, but there were no finds around the hearths, in the ash, or in the ditches, with the exception of the ubiquitous fragments of human bone, but fragments of medieval pottery were found in and under the cobble-stones. Disturbed

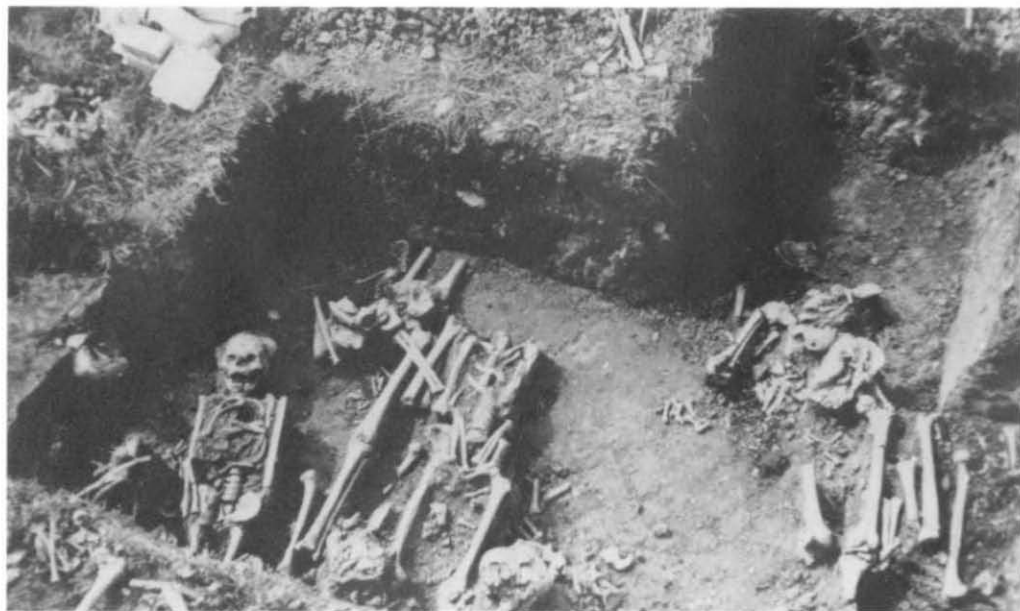


Fig. 4. Vagn Christophers's excavation of 1952. This photograph of superimposed and intercutting skeletons, much damaged by later disturbance, corresponds closely to the smaller trenches dug in 1988-9.

human remains were present from a depth of 20 cm. from the modern surface. At least three semi-articulated skeletons were found in Trench 12, partially underlying the section: skeleton 1 at a depth of 53 cm., skeleton 2 at a depth of 55 cm., and skeleton 3 at a depth of 49 cm. The articulated torso of an infant was also found, but given the stickiness of the clay, which could easily hold small bones in place while they were being shovelled up, and the proximity of the skeleton to disturbed adult remains, it seems probable that this skeleton is not in its original position. At the S. end of Trench 10 a pit had been dug to a depth of 1.25 m., into which at least two skeletons had been thrown; this would appear to be a charnel-pit to take the skeletons disturbed by the digging of the ash-filled trenches. Natural was not reached at the S. end of Trench 12 due to lack of time, but this part of the trench had been disturbed by a post-medieval pit, and was unlikely to yield new information. Natural clay was reached in the N. end of the trench at a depth of approximately 1.50 m. below modern surface level.

*Trench 11* was placed towards the edge of the 65-m. contour line at the western limits of the cemetery site. Two flint flakes were found, but there was no evidence of burials, though fragments of human bone were recovered. Natural clay was reached at a depth of 35 cm.

*Trench 13* was dug, at the suggestion of Miss Gauntlett, at the easternmost edge of the collapsed 'Chapel Barn'. Wall foundations and cobbled flooring were discovered; these may be the remains of buildings shown on the Exeter estate map of 1789 (see note 10 below). Fragmentary skeletal material was present at all levels, but again, any early archaeology had been destroyed by later disturbances.

Neither the standing fragments of the 'Chapel Barn', nor the footings found by excavation, are demonstrably medieval.

#### HUMAN REMAINS FROM THE 1988 TRENCHES

The preservation of the skeletal remains varied. Skeletons from Trenches 2 to 7 had been badly disturbed, and it was not always possible to distinguish individuals or order of deposition. The remains were drawn and photographed before removal. Orientation, where discernable, is expressed as a compass-bearing of the direction of the head. Grave-cuts were not visible unless otherwise stated. The orientation, if known, is followed by the depth from modern surface, grave width and length, state of body articulation, disturbance details, age, sex, stature, and description. All skeletons, where it was possible to tell, were deposited in an extended supine position with arms and legs straight. There were no grave-goods with these burials, but where artefacts appear to have some relationship to the graves, details are given. Identification numbers of skeletons are those given at the time of excavation.

Depths of burials found in the 1989 season (Trenches 9-13) are given in the main report above; the skeletal data are analyzed in the next section.

##### *Trench 2*

- Skeleton 1: Depth 50 cm.; not articulated, disturbed, adult male, stature 1.67m., lower legs only survive.  
Skeleton 2: Depth 61 cm.; not articulated, disturbed, adult ?male, stature 1.74m; part of left side only excavated.  
Skeleton 3: Depth 69 cm.; not articulated, disturbed, adult ?female, fragments of left side.  
Skeleton 5: Depth 79 cm.; not articulated, disturbed, adult, fragments of arms.

##### *Trench 3*

- Skeleton 1: Fragmentary remains of a robust young adult male.

*Trench 4 (extended into Trench 6)*

Skeleton 1: 265°, depth 0.35 m., width 0.53 m., length 1.28 m., articulated, stomach area disturbed, possibly by animal activity, age 25–30, ?female, lower limbs missing.

The dimensions of the grave, the 'chopped' appearance of the arm- and leg-bones, and the clear grave-cut just below the chopped femurs, suggested the possibility that the legs may have been severed before burial. The severed bones were sent to Leicester University for analysis by Dr. Jennifer Wakely, who writes:

the cut surfaces . . . have a rough and 'crumbly' surface, characteristic of bone cut some time after death when much of the organic matrix has been lost by decomposition. I saw none of the sharp edges, flat surfaces and microscopical scratch marks characteristic of bone cut in the fresh state, either before or recently after death. My feeling is, therefore, that these bones were cut some time after death. However, since the cut surfaces have darkened to the same colour as the bone surface in general this must have occurred well before excavation and not in the process of excavation. A spade or other flat and fairly sharp garden or farm tool slicing the bone during the period between burial and excavation is a feasible explanation for the appearance I have described.

Given that the lower limbs of this skeleton were probably removed after burial, some explanation must be found for the grave-cut below the cut bones. One possibility may be that the burial was disturbed by a later, shallower burial, which may have cut through skeleton 1 and created the lower grave-cut. This later burial may then have been removed by subsequent disturbances; fragmentary remains of another body in the layers above skeleton 1 may belong to this later burial.

Skeleton 2: Juvenile, age 5–10; fragmentary remains of part of the pelvis and femur shaft in the topsoil.

*Trench 5*

Badly disturbed, non-articulated fragments of at least one adult, including pelvis and femur.

*Trench 6*

See Trench 4.

*Trench 7*

Skeleton 1: Depth 0.30m.; disturbed, unarticulated; possibly redeposited after disturbance; age 30–40, female; jaws, part torso survive, teeth fair, 3 with caries, 6 with abscesses.

Skeleton 1a: Depth 0.30 m.; juvenile, age 8–12 years.

Skeleton 2: Depth 0.30 m.; disturbed, unarticulated, male adult, part of arms and hips recovered.

Fragments of at least one other individual in the disturbed layers of Trench 7.

*Trench 8*

Skeleton 1: 294°, depth 0.86m.; articulated, undisturbed, age 14–16. Largely complete, lower legs were under section and therefore not excavated. All teeth good, wisdom teeth erupting, open metopic suture. A burnt flint core was found in the fill 2 cm. above the pelvis of this skeleton.

Skeleton 2a: Depth 0.99 m.; articulated, undisturbed, grave apparently cut by skeletons 1 and 3; grave 2a itself was partially covered by a layer of white clay 8–10 cm. thick. Male, age 25–30. Skull, torso, arms, teeth good, large portion of skeleton unexcavated in section.

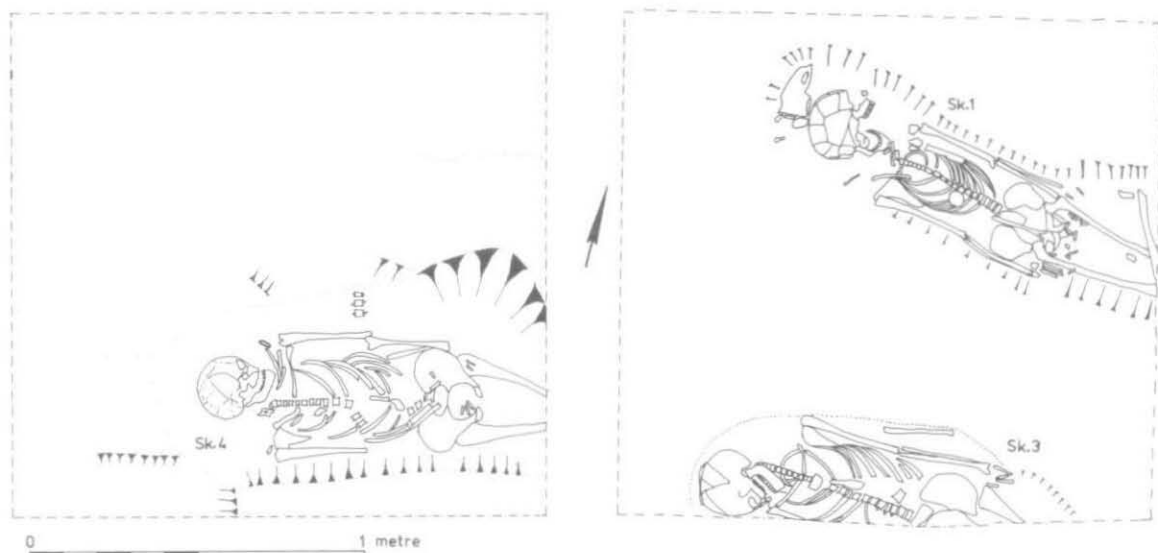


Fig. 5 Burials in Trench 8 (successive phases).

- Skeleton 3: 270°, depth 0.84 m.; articulated, undisturbed, female, age 25–30. Grave apparently cut 2a, 4 and 5. Skull, torso arms; remainder unexcavated. All teeth good, 4 lambdoid wormian bones.
- Skeleton 4: 289°, depth 0.90 m.; articulated, undisturbed, male, age 20–25, height 1.66 m. Grave underlies skeleton 3; skull, torso, femora, remainder unexcavated; 3 teeth lost before death, 3 lambdoid wormian bones.
- Skeleton 5: 0.95 m.; articulated, undisturbed, cut by skeleton 4, age 8–9 on basis of epiphyseal sutures; lower legs only excavated.

Other skeletons: fragmentary remains of a child and at least one other individual were found in the disturbed layers above the graves.

#### THE HUMAN REMAINS FROM 1988 by MARY HARMAN

All the bones from the 1988 excavations were examined. Their condition varied though most were in reasonable or good condition. Some were clearly skeletons or parts of articulated skeletons, but others were mixed collections of bones, sometimes clearly from more than one individual because of duplication or differences in size. All the bones were listed, together with notes of any indication of age or sex. Brief details of bones which could be regarded as coherent parts of individuals are included in the grave inventory above.

The age of individuals was assessed, for children and adolescents, from the length of diaphyses, the state of epiphyseal fusion and the state of tooth eruption, using the criteria suggested by Ferembach, Schwidetzky and Stloukal,<sup>4</sup> while the age of adults was based largely on the state of tooth wear, by comparison with Miles's chart.<sup>5</sup> The sex of adult skeletons was decided where possible from the size of the bones and the conformation of the skull and pelvic girdle, using the criteria of Ferembach et al. The height of adults was calculated from the total length of long bones, using the formulae of Trotter and Gleser.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> D. Ferembach, I. Schwidetzky, M. Stloukal, 'Recommendations for Age and Sex Diagnoses of Skeletons', *Journal of Human Evolution*, ix (1980), 517–549.

<sup>5</sup> A.E.W. Miles, 'Assessment of the Ages of a Population of Anglo-Saxons from their Dentitions', *Proc. Royal Society of Medicine*, xl (1962), 881–6.

<sup>6</sup> D.R. Brothwell, *Digging up Bones* (1981).



Most of the individuals found were adult. There was no evidence for the presence of any very elderly person, but in such a small number of people, the absence of the very young and the elderly is unremarkable. Both men and women are represented. The teeth are generally more healthy than those of the modern British population. Two people had wormian bones in the lambdoid suture, and one had an open metopic suture; both of these features occur as normal variations in the population.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN BONES FROM 1989

Due to the very smashed state of the bones from all the 1989 trenches, it was not possible to identify individual skeletons, except where parts of skeletons had been found in an articulated state. However, a count of femurs, the most common bones recovered, suggests that a minimum of 17 burials are represented by the bones from these five trenches; the actual number of burials is probably much higher. It was possible to identify positively, from dentition and bone sutures, parts of the following individuals within trenches;

*Trench 9:* adult, age 45; juvenile, age 10–12

*Trench 10:* adult, age 25–35; neonate/infant; adult, age 35–45; juvenile, age 8; neonate; juvenile

*Trench 12:* juvenile; adult, age 25–35; adult, age 25–35; juvenile, age 5; adult, age 17–25;

*Trench 13:* adult, age 35–45

The recovered bones exhibited the following pathological features: three examples of wormian bones in the skull; one case of marked lambdoid sutures and congenital ridging of the skull; six examples of teeth with medium to severe calcareous deposits and alveolar resorption; one tooth with severe caries; one case of possible cribra orbitalia in a juvenile; a partially-healed blow to the back of the head; two cases of osteophytes of the lumbar vertebrae, one severe; one case of bone lipping at the ulna joint; and one healed fracture of the right tibia.

The bones were too smashed for any attempts at sexing or height estimation.

#### FIELD SURVEY

The southern end of 'Home Ground' field was gridded out in 10 × 30 m. squares; each square was walked by two people for five minutes. All pottery, bone and flint objects were collected, unless obviously modern.

#### POTTERY

*Fieldwalking:* 1.52 kg. of pottery was recovered, including sherds of 2nd-century Romano-British pottery, and much abraded late medieval ware.

*Excavation:* all trenches yielded pottery, and the material included fragments of Romano-British grey ware, but no identifiable Anglo-Saxon material. The earliest post-Romano-British fragment was a sherd in St Neots shell-and-limestone-tempered fabric, not later than the 11th century, in Trench 2, and a fragment of coarse flinty ware of probable 11th-century date. Other pottery in the assemblage included fragments of a patterned pitcher of Minety type from the 13th to 15th centuries, and large body sherds of a jug, possibly from Savernake Forest, with flint and chalk inclusions in the matrix. Scattered fragments of coarse sandy ware dating from the 12th to 13th century were present throughout the site. Sherds of Brill ware, and fabric with black flint-and-chalk and mica inclusions, were also found.

#### WORKED FLINT

The field survey, and Trenches 7 and 8, yielded worked flint, as did all trenches from the 1989 excavations. The collection consists of 16 flint flakes, one with retouch, a burnt flint core, two fire-cracked flints, and a barbed and tanged arrowhead (Fig. 6A) from the early 2nd millennium BC, found in the topsoil of Trench 7.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> cf. H. Case, 'The Mesolithic and Neolithic in the Oxford Region', in G. Briggs, J. Cook, and T. Rowley (eds.) *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region* (1986), 27. I am grateful to Dr. R. Hornsey for the identification, and to J. Wallis for the drawing.

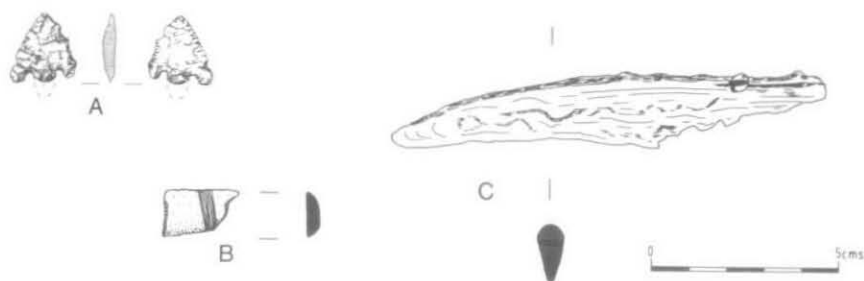


Fig. 6. Small-finds (scale 1:2).

## SMALL FINDS

Both finds were examined and identified by Mr. A. MacGregor of the Ashmolean Museum.

A small fragment of bone comb (Fig. 6B) was recovered from Trench 6, in the fill above Skeleton 1. It is from a double-sided composite comb, no later than the 12th century.

A knife (Fig. 6C) was recovered in 1952 by Mr. Vagn Christophers, who reports that it rested, point downwards, between the right arm and torso of a skeleton. The knife is encrusted with rust, but X-ray photographs show that the blade has been edged with steel. Dr. MacGregor reports that such composite knives did not become common until the late Saxon period. The back of the knife curves to the edge; the edge was originally straight but is now concave through wear. Total length 11.5 cm., blade length 7 cm.<sup>8</sup>

## DATE AND EXTENT OF THE CEMETERY

Bone samples from Trench 2 skeleton 1, and Trench 8 skeletons 1 and 4, were sent to Harwell Laboratory for radiocarbon dating. Results (Table 1) provided calibrated dates of AD 940–1025, 980–1080 and 970–1055 at 68% confidence; even at 95% confidence, Tr. 2 sk. 1 determined a date in the 10th or early 11th century. Our excavations produced no evidence for an earlier Anglo-Saxon cemetery, either pagan or Christian, although it may be that the 'swords and armour' reported in 1895 are part of a pagan cemetery in an unexcavated area of the site. The limits of the cemetery, according to excavation and the observation of Miss Gauntlett, appear to be as follows: on the S., the edge of the vegetable garden; on the E., Trench 13 and beyond; on the N., somewhere between Trench 1 and Trench 8; on the W., as far as the windpump and probably beyond, certainly no further than Trench 11. A conservative estimate would put the burial area at 2,400 square metres. In both the northernmost and southernmost trenches, intercutting burials were found. If this density occurs over the whole cemetery area, then this site must contain in the order of 1,500–2,000 burials. It is clearly exceptionally large for a rural late Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

TABLE 1: RADIOCARBON DETERMINATIONS

Site Reference	Harwell Reference	years b.p.	Calibrated ranges (data of Stuiver & Reimer 1986)	
			68% confidence	95% confidence
Tr. 2 sk. 1	HAR 9765	1050 ± 40	AD 940–1025	AD 890–1035
Tr. 8 sk. 4	HAR 9766	1000 ± 50	AD 980–1080	AD 900–1160
Tr. 8 sk. 1	HAR 9767	1020 ± 40	AD 970–1055	AD 900–1110

<sup>8</sup> cf. J. Cowgill, M. de Neergaard and N. Griffiths, *Knives and Scabbards; Medieval Finds from Excavations in London* (1987), 78–9 No. 2.

## HISTORICAL NOTE by JOHN BLAIR

The township of Chimney is first recorded as one of two small estates which King Eadwig (955–7) gave to the monastic community at Bampton.<sup>9</sup> In the 1050s Bampton minster and all its endowments, Chimney included, passed to the newly-founded cathedral Chapter of Exeter, which retained them into modern times; Chimney has thus experienced a remarkable continuity of ownership, and its recorded late Anglo-Saxon boundaries are identical with those of the modern estate (Fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> In the late 13th and early 14th centuries it was a small community of some 18 peasant households, living by farming and fishing.<sup>11</sup> Depopulation following the 14th-century plagues was severe, and by the early modern period the grounds and outbuildings of a large house, leased by the Voysey family from the Dean and Chapter, occupied the former village site.<sup>12</sup>

The written sources make it absolutely clear that there has been no cemetery at Chimney since at least the early 14th century. Depositions taken in 1317–18 show that Bampton mother church exercised a strict burial monopoly over its enormous parish, stretching along the Thames for several miles on either side of Chimney.<sup>13</sup> Chimney was served pastorally from the chapel-of-ease at Shifford, and in 1405 a 'memorandum of the vills or hamlets around Bampton whence by long-established custom the corpses of the dead have been buried at the parochial mother church of Bampton' includes 'the vill of Shifford, and also the vill of Chimney and the vill of Cote which are in the parish [*sic*] of Shifford'.<sup>14</sup> In the late 1480s or early 1490s, a canon of Exeter reported to his colleagues that 'the inhabitantes off Chilmeley and Shifford suyd unto me for licence to have there beryall at Shifford, for somoch as they be oftymes endayngeryd and gretely anoyd for the grete distaunce and fowlenesse off the wey [i.e. from Chimney to Bampton] and odyr causis resunabill . . . , and as far as I kan see we may doo a merytory dede yn gevyng them licence'.<sup>15</sup> However, burials at Bampton of Chimney people are recorded in the parish register during the 16th and 17th centuries. The only hint that the site retained any religious character are references to a chapel of St. James in 1575, and again in 1656/7 when it had recently been demolished.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the recently-discovered cemetery had been abandoned, and very likely forgotten, by the early 14th century. It is normally assumed that the burial monopolies of late Anglo-Saxon minsters were gradually relaxed as local graveyards came into existence, but Chimney implies the opposite process. The radiocarbon determinations,

<sup>9</sup> See J. Blair, 'Saint Beornwald of Bampton', *Oxoniensia*, xlix (1984), 47–8; the charter of 1069 which records Eadwig's gifts is reproduced F. Barlow, *Leofric of Exeter* (1972), Pl.I. Eadwig died in 959, but the Bampton grant must have been made before the Mercians rejected his rule in 957.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.; the boundary-clause in the 1069 charter, perhaps repeated from the original charter of Eadwig, seems to correspond exactly with estate-maps of 1789 and 1818 (Exeter Dean & Chapter MSS Maps M1 and 13/74363a).

<sup>11</sup> There are lists of tenements in 1279 (*Oxfordshire Hundred Rolls; the Hundred of Bampton*, ed. E. Stone (Oxon. Record Soc. xlvii (1968), 76–7) and 1317 (customal, Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 2931). Ten of the 1317 tenants paid fishing rents, and in 1285 five Chimney men were presented at the eyre for illegal fishing in the Thames (P.R.O. JUST 1/705 m.22).

<sup>12</sup> For depopulation see the 15th-century court rolls (Exeter Dean and Chapter MSS 4751–4774), especially the courts for 1437 (MS 4751) which record the removal of building materials and fittings; for the situation in 1789 see Dean and Chapter MS Maps M/1.

<sup>13</sup> Exeter Dean and Chapter MSS 2865, 2867; see J. Blair, 'Parish versus Village; the Bampton-Standlake Tithe Conflict of 1317–19', *Oxfordshire Local History*, ii(2) (1985), 34–47.

<sup>14</sup> Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 648.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. MS 3498/31.

<sup>16</sup> *Cal. Pat. R.* 1572–5, 411; P.R.O. E134/1656–7/Hil.20. We are grateful to Simon Townley for these references.

which indicate a date-range between the mid 10th and mid 11th centuries (see Table 1), suggest that the minster-priests of Bampton established the cemetery after acquiring the manor in the 950s. Being on their own land it can have posed no threat to their mother-church rights, and it probably existed for reasons of convenience rather than of jurisdiction. The inferred total of some 1,500–2,000 burials suggests that it served a much larger area than Chimney township, and it may have been in some sense an ancillary minster graveyard. Arrangements in the minster parishes of Christchurch (Hants.) and Pershore (Worcs.), where special graveyards were allowed for the poor who could not pay mortuaries or afford to be carried to the mother church, may provide analogies.<sup>17</sup> There is also a close parallel in the recently-published cemetery at Winwick (Cheshire): of similar size, probably also mid- or late-Anglo-Saxon, and again without an identifiable church.<sup>18</sup> Transfer of control from the local minster-priests to the canons of Exeter after the mid 11th century may have occasioned new policies, including perhaps the strict centralisation of burial at Bampton and the suppression of outlying graveyards.

<sup>17</sup> J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches: the Local Church in Transition 950–1200* (Oxford Committee for Archaeology, 1988), 13. The Abbotsbury gild of c. 1000 undertook to fetch home the bodies of deceased brethren to the minster (Ibid. 31), which suggests that some inferior resting-place awaited those who did not have access to this facility.

<sup>18</sup> D.J. Freke, R. Holgate and A.T. Thacker, 'Excavations at Winwick, Cheshire, in 1980', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, lxx (1987–8), 31–8.