

The Archaeology of the Ashbury to Bishopstone Pipeline, South Oxfordshire/Wiltshire, 1993

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SUMMARY

This report describes the observation and rescue excavation of archaeological deposits on the route of a sewerage pipeline spanning the Oxfordshire and Wiltshire border. Two probable archaeological sites were discovered during the initial fieldwalking phase and a further three concentrations of pottery were located during the reconnaissance of the pipeline easement. Another section of the easement was found to contain archaeological features which were subsequently rescue excavated. The excavations consisted of two narrow areas which followed the pipeline route through features of Roman, Saxon and medieval date. These include ditches, gullies, pits and a pit complex.

INTRODUCTION

The Thames Water sewerage pipeline lies to the E. of Swindon and runs for approximately 3 km. heading SW. from Shrivenham Road, Ashbury, Oxfordshire (SU 2585 8575), skimming the northern edge of Idstone and crossing the county boundary before finishing on the north-western side of Bishopstone, Wiltshire (SU 2425 8388) (Fig. 1). The pipeline roughly follows the foot of the scarp of the Berkshire Downs, rising to slightly higher ground towards the Bishopstone end. This takes it along the edge of the Gault Clay from Ashbury, past Idstone and towards the Upper Greensand at Bishopstone.¹

The project was commissioned by Thames Water Utilities and comprised three stages: (a) pre-groundwork survey, (b) reconnaissance of the stripped surface and (c) excavation/preservation of threatened archaeological deposits. The project code is ASBP92 and the finds and archive have been deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service (accession number 1994.35).

PRE-GROUNDWORK SURVEY

This consisted of three elements: (i) examination of aerial photographs, (ii) fieldwalking the route of the easement in arable areas, and (iii) geophysical survey of areas adjacent to known archaeological sites. An Interim report covering these aspects was produced in January 1993.²

Aerial photographs

A search of aerial photographs in the collections of Oxfordshire and Wiltshire County Councils and of the Air Photo Unit of the RCHM(E) and the Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography revealed no new information.

¹ British Geological Survey 1:50,000 (1971).

² L. J. Torrance, 'Ashbury to Bishopstone Sewerage Scheme. Archaeological Watching Brief Interim Report' (Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Report 92/22, 1993).

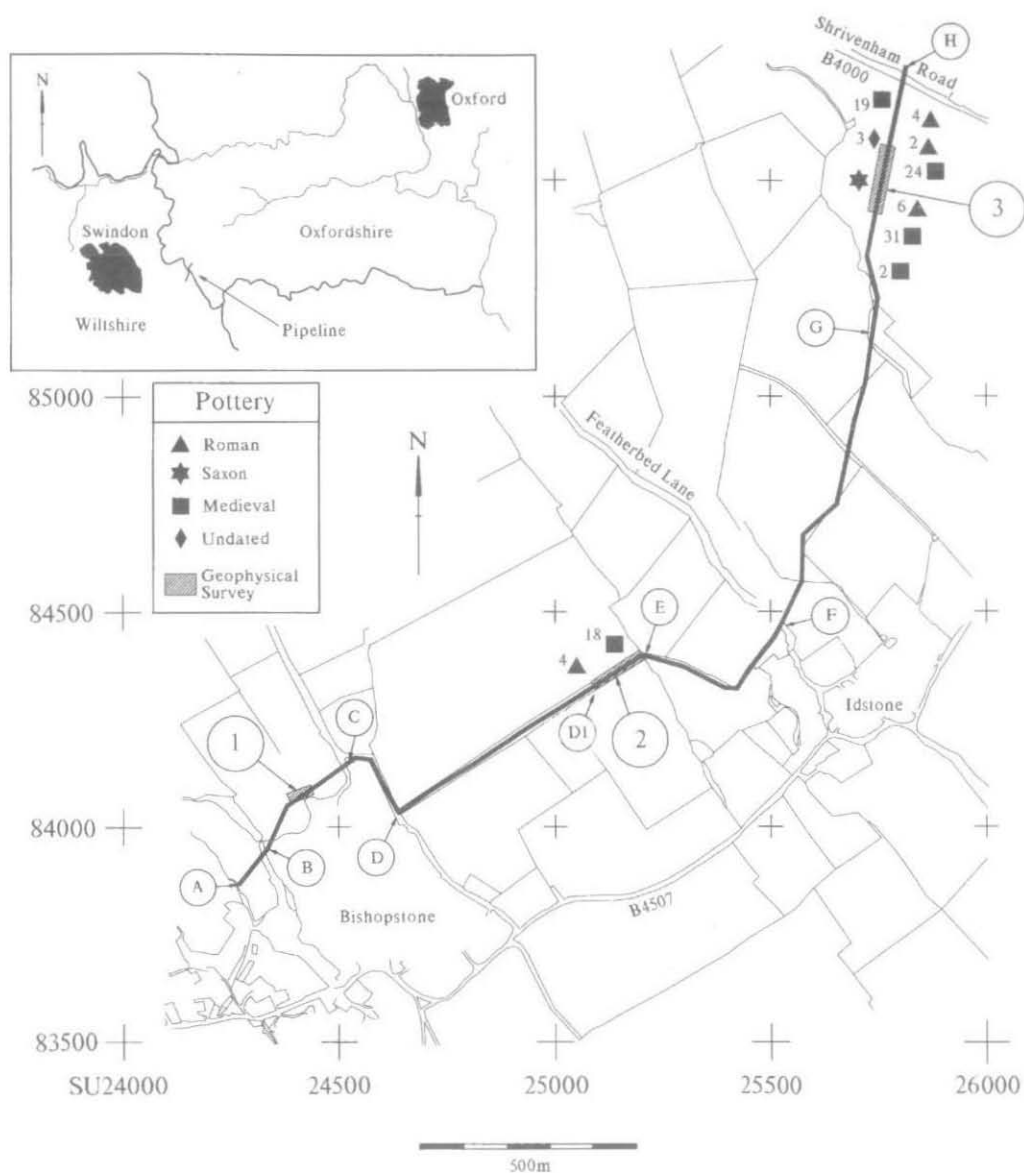


Fig. 1. Location and route of the pipeline showing fieldwalking finds and location of the geophysical survey (1, 2, 3).

Fieldwalking (Fig. 1)

Only two areas were available for fieldwalking, stretches D1 to E and G to H, as the rest of the route was under pasture (Fig. 1). The methodology used consisted of examining the pipeline route along two lines 10 m. apart, aligned along the proposed easement. A surprising quantity of pottery was recovered, particularly from segment G to H: 76 medieval sherds, 12 Roman and one (possible) Saxon; section D1 to E produced 18 sherds of medieval pottery and 4 Roman. Most of the medieval pottery was of 12th- to 13th-century date and its homogeneity and condition suggest that it was not derived from manuring practices.

Geophysics (Fig. 1)

Three areas of the proposed easement were subject to geophysical survey: a pottery scatter noted on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) NW. of Forty Farm and adjacent to the easement, which contains considerable quantities of Roman material (Fig. 1, Area 1; SMR SU28SW305); section D1 to E (Fig. 1, Area 2; SMR SU28SE450); and section G to H (Fig. 1, Area 3). The survey located several anomalies of tentative archaeological origin but, with the exception of a possible ditch in Area 1, the responses are likely to have been produced by ferrous debris of more recent origin.³ The single ditch-like anomaly in Area 1 was oriented approximately NW. to SE. and, although situated in the vicinity of a known Roman pottery scatter, it may represent a modern service trench as it runs in the direction of the nearby Forty Farm. A pair of isolated pit-like anomalies were recorded in the south-western corner of section G to H (Fig. 1, Area 3). As will be seen below, the subsequent relocation of the pipeline route meant that this area was no longer under threat and the geophysical results were not tested by fieldwork.

RECONNAISSANCE OF SPOIL HEAPS AND STRIPPED SURFACE OF EASEMENT (Fig. 2)

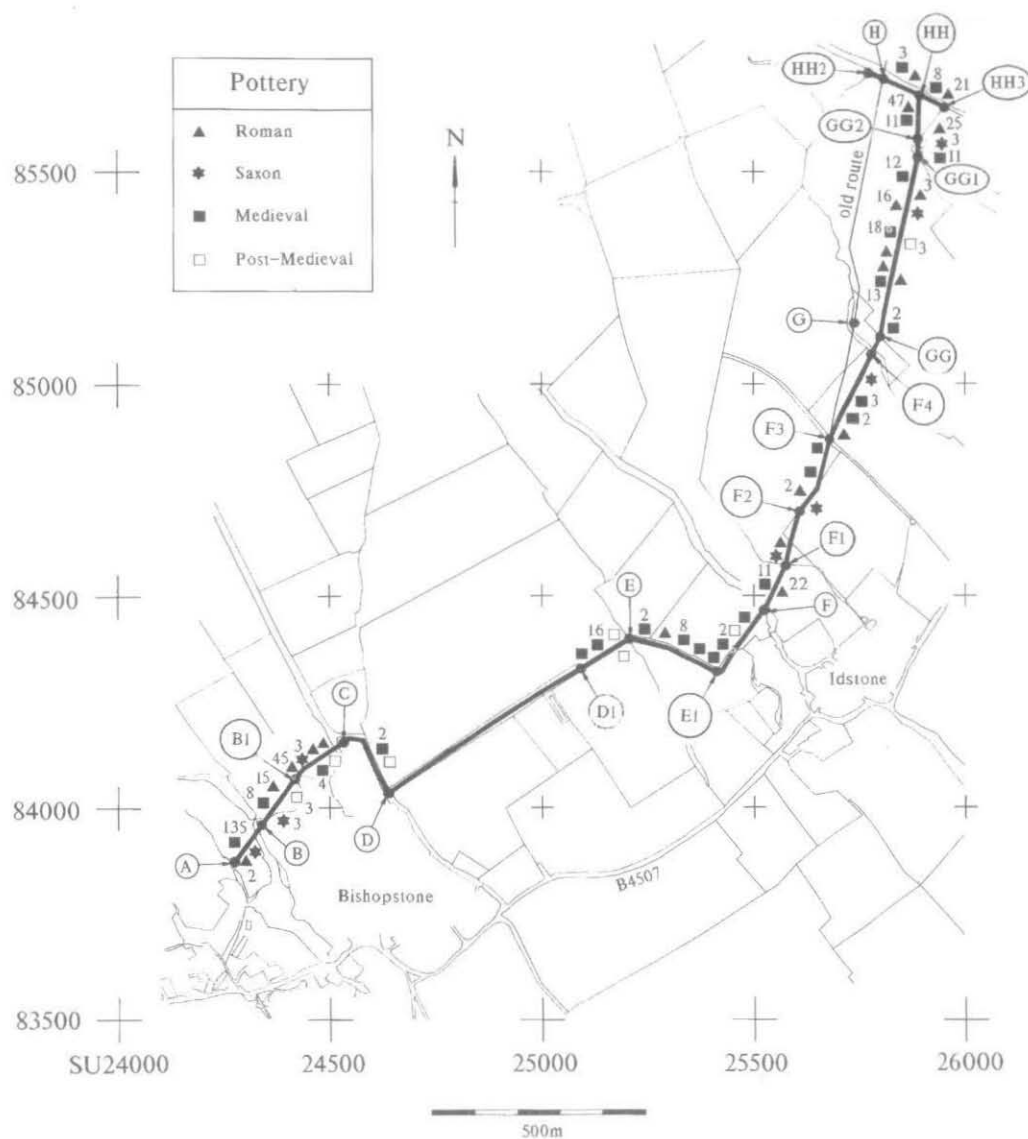
By August 1993 approximately 75% of the pipeline had been laid (A to GG), prior to instruction to proceed with the second stage of the archaeological survey. The remaining c. 800 m. of the easement (GG to H and HH to HH3) were monitored after the easement had been stripped but prior to the pipe laying. A change to the route of the pipeline also meant that some areas subject to the pre-groundwork survey were not now under threat (F3 to H), whereas other areas not included in the pre-groundwork survey had been stripped in preparation for pipe-laying (GG to H and HH to HH3).

Where possible, the easement and spoil heaps were examined and as a result three concentrations of pottery were located. An 80-m. stretch of pipeline in segment A to B produced 135 sherds of 12th- to 14th- or 15th-century pottery (Fig. 2), the quantity and general condition of which suggests its presence is not due solely to accidental incorporation of pottery in manuring scatters, but represents archaeological deposits of this date in the near vicinity which may have been damaged or destroyed by the ground-works. A length of the pipeline centred on point B1, which had been under pasture, produced 57 Roman sherds (Fig. 2); a collection of Roman pottery had previously been recovered from an area to the NW. of this (SMR SU28SW305). Lastly, 22 sherds, mostly earlier Roman in date, were recovered from segment F to F1 (Fig. 2). This would appear to indicate another Roman site/activity area in the vicinity. Unfortunately, the easement was too disturbed by the pipe laying to make confirmation of the presence or absence of subsoil features in these three areas possible. However, the easement from GG to H and HH to HH3 was the one area that could be examined for archaeological features as well as finds. It was during this investigation that features were located in segment GG2 to HH (Shrivenham Road Area 1) and subsequently from HH to HH3 (Shrivenham Road Area 2). The two areas are referred to as the Shrivenham Road site in the text. The site code is SRA93 and a complete record of the excavation is kept in the archive.

RESCUE EXCAVATION (Fig. 3)

Rescue excavation was carried out on both Areas 1 and 2 of the Shrivenham Road site, the aim of which was to record those features certain to be destroyed by the pipe trench and, where possible, to establish their date and nature in order to put the excavated features in a local/regional context. The excavation was carried out with the full co-operation of the sub-contractors laying the pipe, but necessarily within considerable time constraints as the pipe-laying process was already well under way. Some features in Area 2 could only be recorded in plan in the time allowed.

³ D. Shiel, 'Report on the Geophysical Survey, Ashbury - Bishopstone Pipeline' (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, Report 92/112, 1993).



SHRIVENHAM ROAD SITE

The site lies adjacent to the main Ashbury to Shrivenham road, just N. of Ashbury itself (SU 2585 8575) (Fig. 2, GG2 to HH and HH to HH3). It is situated on relatively flat ground on the Gault Clay at the foot of the Berkshire Downs. The local geology was calcareous in places, presumably as a result of proximity to the junction with the Lower Chalk. During the excavation members of the Wessex Metal Detecting Association assisted in the recovery of metal artefacts from features and spoil heaps.

A JCB was used, under archaeological supervision, to clean the surface of the easement in Area 1 for the width of the pipe trench itself. A stretch of the pipeline route from several metres to the W. of F11 to just past ditch F2, 60 m. to the E., was hand cleaned (Fig. 3). This area was found to contain a series of ditches, gullies, pits, a small pit/large posthole, and a dark layer. A total of 24 features were investigated in all and with a few exceptions the majority of the features were relatively shallow; two may be tree throw holes.

Area 2 was topsoil stripped at a later stage and initially, although some features were apparent, other areas were obscured by a spread of dark soil filling undulations in the bedrock (Fig. 3). Some modern disturbance was noted in the SE. corner. A JCB-type machine was used to remove the dark spread from the part of the easement threatened by the pipe trench and a number of archaeological features including a large ditch, several smaller ditches/gullies and two pits were revealed, the majority of which (15) were excavated. It is presumed that Area 2 is associated with, or the same archaeological site as, Area 1 due to their proximity and the similarity of features, fills and finds, although there is no proven link between the two.

DESCRIPTION OF FEATURES BY PHASE (Figs. 4 and 5)

Broadly speaking, the site consists of three phases of activity: phase 1, the main phase of the site, is represented by 17 features of Roman date; phase 2 is of sub-Roman/Saxon date and consists of five features; and lastly, phase 3 comprises just two features of medieval date.

Phase 1: Roman

Pottery dating from the 1st to 4th centuries AD was retrieved from 17 features. Of these, the pottery from 9 features suggests an early to mid 2nd-century *terminus post quem*: F3-6, F14-17 and F19. Ditch F3 had a V-shaped profile and crossed the pipe trench from SW. to NE. at the northern end of Area 1 (Fig. 5, Section 11). A small gully/ditch F6, a little further to the S., crossed the trench in a similar direction (Fig. 5, Section 7). Three pits and a pit/scoop, all partly obscured by baulks at the northern end of the site, also fit this date range: a small oval-shaped pit F4; a medium sized pit F5; a shallow flat-based pit F15; and a pit/scoop F14, 1 m. S. of F15 (Fig. 5, Sections 8, 9, 10 and 14). A probable pit (F19) revealed below layer C8 further to the S. was only partially excavated and may also have an early to mid 2nd-century *terminus post quem* (Fig. 5, Section 12). Lastly, two shallow scoops also at the northern end of the site (F16 and F17) produced pottery of this date. However, the form and fills of these last two suggest that they may be tree throw holes, in which case the pottery is residual.

A further four features, all in Area 2, produced pottery with a 2nd to 3rd-century *terminus post quem*: F100, F103, F107 and F108. Ditch F108 was in the centre of Area 2 and crossed the trench in a NW. to SE. direction (Fig. 5, Section 25). One part of it was cut by a small pit/large posthole F109 (see below). F100 was a very shallow gully which crossed the area from SW. to NE. and gully F103 became apparent when a slot was excavated through a dark spread in the western sector of the site. This may be the same as the undated gully F104 just over 3 m. away, as although it was narrower at this point, it was the same depth.

Other features which may be of the Roman phase include: a shallow ditch/gully (F18) towards the centre of Area 1 which contained a single sherd of 2nd- to 4th-century date; a small pit/large posthole (F10) at the southern end of Area 1 which produced five sherds of 2nd- to 4th-century pot; and a small pit/posthole (F109) which produced a single sherd of 2nd-century pot (as mentioned above, this cut ditch F108, which produced pottery with a 2nd- to 3rd-century *terminus post quem*, and must therefore post-date it).

The broad, flat-based ditch F2 produced one of the largest assemblages of Roman pottery, mostly of 2nd- to 3rd-century date. However, it also contained 4 sherds of Saxon pottery; three from the surface and one from within the fill. It is possible that the single sherd from within the feature came from disturbance caused by the modern pipe trench which bisected it and it is more probable that this is a ditch infilled in Roman times. It crossed the pipe trench in a NW. to SE. direction and appeared to be heading to intersect ditch F3 at some point east of the baulk.

The largest collection of Roman pottery was recovered from layer C8, over 450 sherds in all, ranging in date from the 2nd to 4th centuries. This layer was observed after topsoil stripping and four slots were put through it during the course of the excavation. As 23 Saxon sherds were also found in this layer it is discussed in more detail below.

Phase 2: Sub-Roman/Saxon

Of equal interest, although far fewer in number, are the small number of sub-Roman/Saxon features: F7, C8, F13, F24, F25, F102; the best dated of which are F7, C8 and F102. Most were in Area 1, concentrating towards the middle of the site, but a single sub-Roman/Saxon feature was located in Area 2.

There were three parallel ditches in the centre of Area 1 which belong to this phase (F7, F13 and F24), all crossing the trench from SW. to NE. The small gully/ditch F7 produced pottery which included 6 sherds of early Saxon date. Gully F13 was broad but shallow and produced a single sherd of handmade sandy ware of uncertain, but probably post-Roman, date. Also likely to be of Saxon date are F24 and F25, two of the features found to be underlying layer C8. F24 was a wide flat-based ditch (or possibly a pit) which is conceivably the same feature as F25 to the west of F24 in the corner of a slot taken through layer C8 (Fig. 4). Both features produced only a single sherd of Saxon pottery each, but from lower fills.

The largest collection of Saxon pottery came from layer C8, which produced 23 sherds. This layer occupied approximately 12 m. of Area 1 and was up to 0.5 m. deep in places, below which the outlines of other features became clear. Also from context C8 were 10 metal objects, two of which (a spearhead and a crude bronze pin) are Saxon, or possibly later (Fig. 6.1 and 6.2). At least one other metal object from C8 has a Roman parallel.

Lastly, the small ditch/gully F102, in Area 2, contained 9 sherds of sub-Roman/early Saxon pottery together with a late 4th-century Roman sherd. This gully ran parallel with a similar gully (F101) which remains undated. Both could be seen curving across the site in a SW. to NE. direction but could not be located within the dark spread to the NE., nor in the deeper trench which was excavated through this along the route of the pipe trench itself.

Phase 3: Medieval

Two features in Area 1, F9 and F12, may belong to the medieval period. The V-shaped ditch F9 (Fig. 5, Section 3) contained two sherds of medieval pottery together with two sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, a 4th-century Roman coin and several sherds of Saxon pot (possibly from an upper layer). F12 was a shallow gully crossing the trench in a SE. to NW. direction and it contained three 12th- to 13th-century pot sherds (Fig. 5, Section 5).

Iron Age/Early Roman activity

A handful of pre-Roman sherds were residual within dated features: one sherd each came from F3, F10, F24 and F108, and two came from ditch F9. Some of these are of possible late Iron Age/early Roman date and they may indicate activity of this period somewhere in the vicinity.

Undated features

A total of nine excavated features could not be dated (F11, F20-23, F101, F104-106), together with five unexcavated features (F110-114). As already discussed above, the unexcavated gully F110 may be the same feature as F100, and therefore belong to the Roman period. Also, the undated gully/ditch F104 could be the same as F103 to the SW. which also belongs to this phase (Roman). Lastly, the environmental sample taken from pit/scoop F11 was found to contain spelt wheat, a hulled wheat typical of the later Iron Age and Roman periods, which could indicate that F11 is similar in date to the nearby posthole F10.

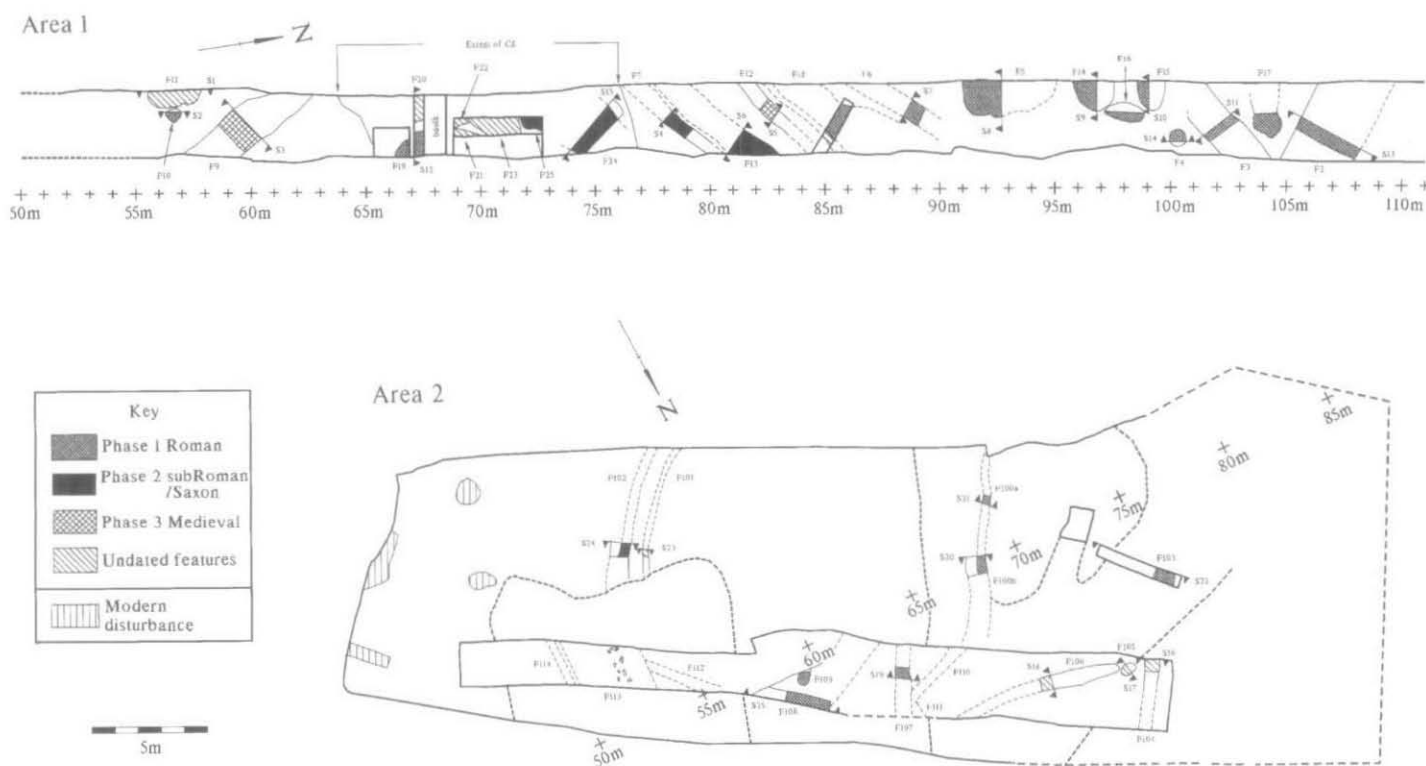


Fig. 4. Shrivensham Road Areas 1 and 2 showing likely phases of use.

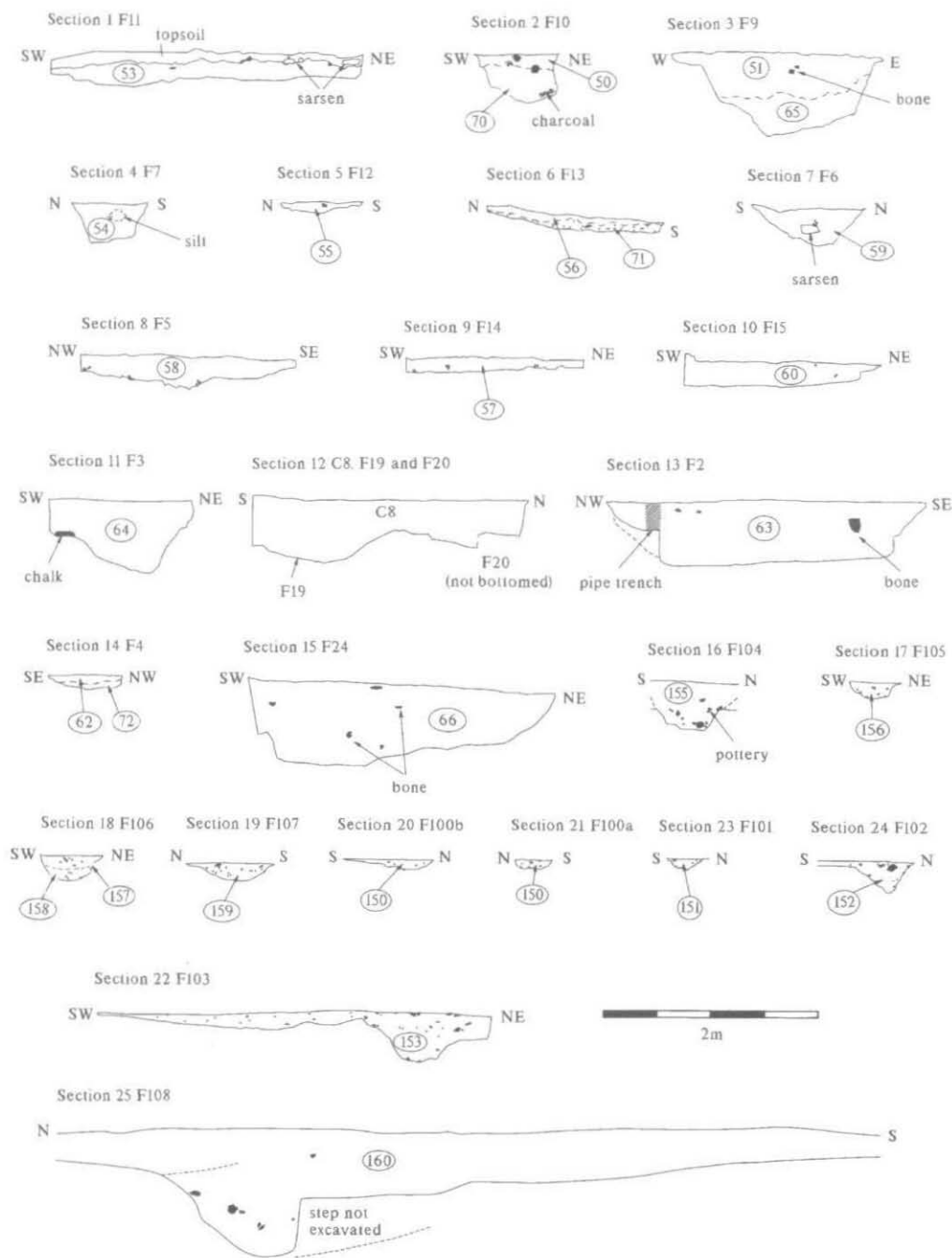


Fig. 5. Sections of features shown on Fig. 4.

THE FINDS

POTTERY by JANE TIMBY

This project resulted in the recovery of some 20.7 kg. of pottery (*c.* 1,640 sherds). The assemblage can be split into two categories; material recovered from the fieldwalking and easement search of the pipeline route and that recovered from the Shrivenham Road site (Areas 1 and 2). The pottery as a whole ranges in date from Iron Age/early Roman through to post-medieval, with marked quantities of Saxon and medieval sherds. The wares were separated into fabric types and quantified by weight, number and estimated vessel equivalent (eve) for each recorded context. Inevitably, with such a wide chronological range the number of fabrics recorded is fairly high but for the purposes of this report these have been somewhat reduced and the descriptions kept fairly brief.

Fieldwalking

During this stage of the project *c.* 115 sherds of pottery were collected, mainly of Roman and early medieval date (Fig. 1). The sherds are variable in size, with the majority being relatively small and abraded, which would not be unusual for material that has been exposed in the topsoil-ploughsoil for some time. Most of this pottery belongs to one fabric type; a handmade unglazed ware used for making cooking pots and dishes, which has a sandy fabric containing sparse limestone/chalk and flint. Several rim sherds are present and a date range from the 12th to 13th centuries is likely for these wares. A small number of other fabrics of comparable date are also present, including a few sherds of oolitic limestone-tempered Minety ware. The density of sherds from one period, together with the occasional larger sherd, would suggest that the pottery is associated with a specific source and does not derive from manuring.

The Roman material was in poor condition and comprised *c.* 16 sherds, mainly unfeatured. Prominent are sherds of Savernake ware and fine grey Wiltshire sandy ware which, if representative, suggest activity in the 2nd century AD.

Easement Search

A summary of the relative proportions of different fabrics blocked into main periods by sherd count is presented in Table 1 for the various divisions of the pipeline (see also Fig. 2). The first section of the route (A to B) produced a collection of which 96.5% were medieval, i.e. 12th- to 14th- or 15th-century. These include several cooking pot rims of simple everted, thumbled and clubbed forms and sherds from pitchers/jugs with applied strip decoration. The majority of the wares are plain but a small quantity have a thin green glaze. One sherd of Minety ware (fabric M1) has wavy line combed decoration. A single rod handle with stab impressions in fabric M5 was also recovered. In addition, two Roman and one organic-tempered Saxon sherd are present. The pottery from stretch B to B1 shows a change in emphasis in that 52% are of Roman date, 28% are medieval, and 10% each are post-medieval and Saxon. The Roman wares appear to be slightly mixed chronologically, with later Roman fabrics such as S12, and Oxford colour-coat (OX1) but also a range of early to mid 2nd-century Wiltshire grey sandy wares and Savernake ware. The Saxon wares include both organic-tempered and chalk-tempered sherds.

The Roman material continues to increase at the expense of the medieval sherds in stretch B1 to C where 85% are Roman, including Oxfordshire colour-coated and white-slipped sherds and Dorset black-burnished (BB1) wares dating to the later 3rd to 4th century. A single scrap of Samian and various local Wiltshire wares suggest evidence of slightly earlier activity as well. This would appear to be nearest to the focus of Roman activity as no Roman sherds were picked up in sections C to D and D1 to E. The medieval material from stretch D1 to E seemed substantially the same as that from A to B.

The pottery recovered from sections E to E1 and E1 to F is all medieval, with one Roman exception. Slightly more material came from F to F1, of which 67% was Roman, suggesting the proximity of a second Roman site/activity area. On balance, this group would appear to be slightly biased towards the earlier Roman period (2nd-century plus). The medieval material continues to include the same fabric and form range as seen earlier. The stretches from F1 through to F4 produced only small groups of sherds but among these were three Saxon handmade wares and three later Roman sherds.

The slightly longer stretch between GG and GG1 produced a correspondingly larger assemblage, of which 60% was medieval and 34% Roman. The medieval material includes at least two jug/pitcher rims (fabric M5), cooking pots and dishes. The Roman sherds include an Oxfordshire whiteware mortarium dating to the period AD 240-300, part of a colander (fabric S15) and late 4th-century shelly ware (fabric H1). Sections GG1 to GG2 and GG2 to HH contained 67% and 72% of Roman wares respectively, ranging in date from the later 1st to early 2nd century through to the later 4th century. For the most part all the sherds were fairly small in size with relatively few rim sherds, suggesting a certain degree of disturbance and/or

TABLE 1. INCIDENCE OF POTTERY BY SHERD COUNT ALONG THE PIPELINE ROUTE

No. of sherds: Section:	Undated	Post-medieval	Medieval	Saxon	Roman	Total
A-B	2	—	135	1	2	140
B-B1	—	3	8	3	15	29
B1-C	—	1	5	22	47	55
C-D	—	1	1	—	—	2
D1-E	—	11	26	—	—	37
E-E1	—	—	12	—	1	13
E1-F	—	—	3	—	—	3
F-F1	—	—	11	—	22	33
F1-F2	—	—	—	1	1	2
F2-F3	—	—	2	1	2	5
F3-F4	—	—	7	1	2	10
GG-GG1	—	3	40	1	23	67
GG1-GG2	—	3	11	—	30	44
GG2-HH	4	—	21	1	65	91
HH-HH2	1	—	3	—	1	5
HH-HH3	2	—	8	—	22	32
Total	9	22	293	11	233	568

redeposition. Lastly, section HH to HH2 yielded only five sherds but HH to HH3 also had an emphasis on Roman material (72%). Some of the sherds from the latter are relatively fresh and in good condition. Several pieces of fired clay, with chalk temper or organic impressions on the surfaces, are also present.

The Shrivenham Road Site

Area 1: A number of features were recognised in Area 1, the majority of which appear to be Roman in date (Figs. 3 and 4). One of the largest assemblages was recovered from ditch F2 (63) which appears to be largely 2nd- to 3rd-century in date, although four Saxon sherds are present, three from the surface and one from the fill (this feature was cut by a modern pipe trench which could account for the Saxon sherd in the fill). The main collection of material was recovered from C8, some 468 sherds (7 kg. in weight). Although the majority of this is Roman (2nd- to 4th-century) it also produced the largest single concentration of Saxon pottery, some 23 sherds, including the only featured sherd, a rim from a handmade simple rim cooking pot. Also present are a number of distinctive fragments of fired finely micaceous clay with organic impressions on the surface.

Small samples of pottery from gully/ditch features F3 and F6, pits F4, F5, F15 and F19, and shallow scoops F14, F16, and F17 suggest an early to mid 2nd-century *terminus post quem*.

Amongst the potentially later features is gully F7 which produced a small assemblage of 22 sherds, including six of early Saxon date, mixed with Roman material. Saxon material was also present in the lower fills of F24 and F25. Further fragments of the fired clay material noted above were recovered from F24, perhaps suggesting that this may derive from Saxon activity. The gully F13 produced a single handmade sandy ware of uncertain date but probably post-Roman.

Feature 9 produced two medieval sherds from the upper fill, below which were two handmade flint-tempered sherds. The lower fill produced seven shell-tempered wares. The date of this material is uncertain as no comparable material is known. It would seem likely that it belongs either to the Saxon or earliest medieval period, neither of which is particularly well documented generally in ceramic terms. Gully F12 produced four sherds, three being medieval, suggesting a 12th- to 13th-century date for the filling of this feature.

Area 2: Moderately small groups of material were recovered from features in Area 2 (Figs. 3 and 4). Gullies F100, F103, F107 and F108 all contained Roman material, suggesting a 2nd- to 3rd-century *terminus post quem*. The small pit/posthole F109 produced a single sherd of 2nd-century pottery. The only other feature with pottery is ditch F102 which contained late 4th-century Roman material and handmade organic-tempered sub-Roman/early Saxon material.

Material collected from the spoil includes a single fine-flint-tempered sherd with a small part of an incised tram-line style of decoration typical of the mid to later Iron Age. One or two flint-tempered sherds from the general area may conceivably also be of Iron Age or early Roman date.

TABLE 2. DESCRIPTION OF FABRICS

?Prehistoric

- SF1* Dark grey-brown hard, sandy ware with a red-brown core. Sparse temper of white calcined flint fragments. *Forms:* Handmade. *Date:* ?Iron Age. (No. 3, wt. 60, eve 0.)
- Q1* Coarse calcined flint-tempered ware. Similar to Silchester ware. *Forms:* Handmade. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* ?Late Iron Age-early Roman. (No. 5, wt. 83, eve 0.)
- Q2* Very hard grey-brown ware with a smooth finish. Common frequency of angular, white calcined flint up to 1 mm. in size. *Form:* Single sherd with edge of incised line decoration with transverse marks. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* Mid-late Iron Age. (No. 1, wt. 13, eve 0.)

*Roman**Sandy wares:*

- S1* Grey wheelmade sandy ware with grey or white core. Fine-medium grade sand producing a sandy texture. Vessels often have a burnished surface finish. *Forms:* Include jars, beakers, bowls. *Source:* North Wiltshire. *Date:* Later 1st century onwards. (No. 337, wt. 2736, eve 336.)
- S2* Very fine orange ware with no visible inclusions. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* ?2nd century. (No. 23, wt. 129, eve 5.)
- S3* Dorset Black burnished ware. *Forms:* Jars, flanged dishes, straight-sided dishes. *Source:* Poole harbour, Dorset. *Date:* 2nd-4th century. (No. 42, wt. 317, eve 99.)
- S4* Hard, light orange sandy. Paste contains dense sand, occasional iron and white inclusions. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* Roman. (No. 5, wt. 39, eve 6.)
- S5* Dark grey sandy ware with a light grey core with red-brown margins. Sandy micaceous paste. *Forms:* Wheelmade. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* Roman. (No. 1, wt. 10, eve 0.)
- S6* Very fine grey ware, no visible inclusions. *Forms:* Jars, beakers, lids. *Source:* ?North Wiltshire. *Date:* 2nd century plus. (No. 74, wt. 606, eve 43.)
- S7* Medium to coarse sand version of S1. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars. *Source:* North Wiltshire. (No. 8, wt. 51, eve 1.)
- S8* Hard fine grey ware with red-brown/grey sandwich core. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars with slipped/burnished finish. *Source:* ?Wiltshire. *Date:* Later Roman. (No. 5, wt. 66, eve 10.)
- S9* Medium-coarse sandy ware with a gritty feel. White specks. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars. *Source:* ?Wiltshire. *Date:* Roman. (No. 3, wt. 31, eve 10.)
- S10* Other miscellaneous wheelmade sandy wares. (No. 46, wt. 301, eve 35.)
- S12* Late Alice Holt ware (=Portchester fabric D). *Form:* Lid. *Source:* Alice Holt, Surrey. *Date:* 4th century. (No. 2, wt. 34, eve 10.)
- S13* Very dense dark red-orange sandy ware. *Form:* Wheelmade jar. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* Roman. (No. 1, wt. 9, eve 5.)
- S14* Medium grey/brown sandy ware with black burnished surface. *Form:* Wheelmade copies BB1 jars with lattice decoration. *Source:* ?Wiltshire. *Date:* 2nd-4th century. (No. 35, wt. 222, eve 18.)
- S15* Fine sandy oxidised ware, slightly micaceous fabric with macroscopically visible quartz sand. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars, beakers, lids. *Source:* ?Wiltshire. *Date:* 2nd century. (No. 6, wt. 52, eve 12.)
- S16* Grey sandy micaceous ware with sandy texture. *Forms:* Wheelmade jars, dog-bowls. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* 2nd century plus. (No. 16, wt. 255, eve 39.)

- S17 Dense fine to medium grade sandy ware, generally brown in colour. *Forms*: Wheelmade jars, beaded rim, dishes. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: ?Early Roman. (No. 12, wt. 272, eve 13.)
- S18 Fine oxidised ware with a pale grey core. Sparse fine quartz sand and occasional calcareous inclusions. *Form*: Probably flagon. *Source*: Unknown but similar to Gloucester TF 24. *Date*: ?1st century. (No. 1, wt. 9, eve 0.)
- S19 Medium to fine orange sandy ware. Oxidised version of S1. *Forms*: Jars, bowls, flagons. *Source*: North Wiltshire. *Date*: Early 2nd century plus. (No. 9, wt. 124, eve 60.)
- S20 South-west white slipped ware. *Forms*: Wheelmade beakers, small flagons. *Date*: 2nd-3rd century. *Source*: ?Wiltshire. (No. 15, wt. 76, eve 0.)
- S21 Hard, fine orange-pink ware with a white surface. *Form*: Wheelmade ?flagon. *Date*: ?1st-2nd century. *Source*: Unknown. (No. 2, wt. 32, eve 2.)
- S22 Dark orange medium to fine sandy ware with grey core. White slip. *Form*: Flagon. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: Roman. (No. 4, wt. 27, eve 2.)
- S23 Hard, dark grey fine sandy ware with lighter grey core and dark grey inner core. *Forms*: Wheelmade jars, burnished line decoration. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: Later Roman. (No. 2, wt. 29, eve 17.)
- S24 Hard, fine grey or brown micaceous ware. Fine sandy texture. *Forms*: Wheelmade jars, lids. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: Roman. (No. 6, wt. 61, eve 12.)
- S25 Dense grey sandy ware with a granular texture. Sparse rounded clay pellets. *Forms*: Wheelmade jars - everted and beaded rim types. *Source*: ?Wiltshire. *Date*: ?2nd century. (No. 14, wt. 307, eve 29.)
- S26 Dense sandy ware with occasional fine flint. *Forms*: Wheelmade beaded-rim jars, bowls. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: ?Early Roman. (No. 6, wt. 71, eve 8.)
- S27 Grey sandy micaceous ware. *Forms*: Wheelmade jars, dog bowls. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: 3rd-4th century. (No. 15, wt. 226, eve 59.)

Oxfordshire industries:

- OX1 Oxford colour-coated ware. *Forms*: Mortaria, bowls. *Date*: AD 240-400. (No. 22, wt. 125, eve 3.)
- OX2 Oxfordshire white-slipped ware. *Form*: Mortaria. *Date*: AD 240-400. (No. 2, wt. 30, eve 5.)
- OX3 Oxfordshire whiteware. *Forms*: Mortaria, bowls. *Date*: 2nd-3rd century. (No. 9, wt. 108, eve 11.)

Finewares:

- F1 Samian. (No. 17, wt. 45, eve 21.)
- F2 Local red colour-coated ware. *Source*: ?Wiltshire. (No. 3, wt. 29, eve 0.)
- F3 Rhenish colour-coated ware. *Source*: Rhineland. *Date*: 2nd-3rd century. (No. 2, wt. 5, eve 0.)
- F4 Fine oxidised ware with a micaceous slip. *Source*: North Wiltshire. *Form*: Indented beaker. *Date*: 2nd century. (No. 2, wt. 5, eve 0.)
- F5 Local dark grey-brown fine ware with a red core. *Form*: Beaker with rough-cast decoration. *Date*: ?2nd century. (No. 1, wt. 1, eve 0.)

Grog-tempered wares:

- G1 Savernake variant. Dark grey-black surfaces. *Forms*: Handmade and wheelmade jars - everted and beaded rim. *Source*: Wiltshire. *Date*: 1st-2nd century. (No. 49, wt. 556, eve 66.)
- G2 Savernake proper. *Forms*: Handmade storage jars, everted and beaded rim. *Source*: Wiltshire. *Date*: 1st-3rd century. (No. 251, wt. 7443, eve 107.)
- G3 Savernake variant. Wheelmade. *Form*: Jars. *Date*: 2nd century plus. (No. 30, wt. 446, eve 22.)
- G4 Savernake variant. (No. 5, wt. 32, eve 5.)
- G5 Sandy Savernake variant. *Forms*: Handmade and wheelmade jars. *Source*: Wiltshire. *Date*: 1st-2nd century. (No. 79, wt. 1157, eve 87.)
- G6 Dark brown smooth soapy ware with a dark grey core, grog temper, burnished surfaces. *Forms*: Wheelmade/wheel-turned closed forms. *Source*: Unknown. *Date*: ?Late Iron Age-early Roman. (No. 2, wt. 10, eve 0.)
- G7 Hard sandy grey ware with a dark grey surface. Sparse scatter of rounded brown iron/clay pellets. *Form*: Wheelmade jars. *Source*: Wiltshire. *Date*: ?Early Roman. (No. 15, wt. 353, eve 14.)

Shell-tempered wares:

- H1 Midlands shelly ware. *Forms:* Wheelmade bowls, jars. *Source:* ?Midlands. *Date:* Late 4th century. (No. 7, wt. 64, eve 10.)

Calcareous ware:

- C1 Very hard-fired mid grey ware with fine voids and occasional calcareous inclusions. *Forms:* Handmade/wheel-turned jars/bowls, burnished finish. *Source:* Unknown. *Date:* ?Early Roman. (No. 3, wt. 30, eve 10.)

Saxon

- O1 Very hard dark brown to grey ware with dense organic tempering, occasional iron grains. *Form:* Handmade cooking pot. (No. 16, wt. 155, eve 5.)
- O2 Similar to O1 but with a finely micaceous clay. Handmade. (No. 18, wt. 148, eve 0.)
- O3 Similar to O1 but with a scatter of visible rounded quartz sand. Handmade. (No. 19, wt. 161, eve 0.)
- C2 Dark brownish-black ware with a smooth soapy feel. Sparse grains of oolitic limestone. Handmade with burnished exterior finish. Moderately thick-walled. (No. 6, wt. 90, eve 15.)
- C3 Dark grey hard sandy ware with a mid brown matt exterior. The paste contains a sparse frequency of fine organic material and rounded ?chalk pellets up to 3 mm. across. Handmade. (No. 1, wt. 10, eve 0.)
- C4 Dark brownish-black ware with a common frequency of fine fragments of fossil shell and limestone. Voids on the surfaces. Handmade. (No. 4, wt. 80, eve 0.)
- H2 Moderately soft ware with a black core and pale brown exterior surface. Contains a sparse coarse temper of fossil shell, fragments several millimetres across. Handmade. (No. 7, wt. 30, eve 0.)

Date uncertain

- S11 Handmade, hard, moderately fine, sandy ware with occasional grog/iron compounds. Burnished surface. *Form:* Closed form. *Date:* Saxon or possibly Iron Age. (No. 1, wt. 48, eve 0.)

Medieval

- M1 Minety ware. *Source:* Minety, Wiltshire. *Forms:* Cooking pots, plain and partially glazed, one with combed decoration. *Date:* 12th-15th century. (No. 66, wt. 671, eve 10.)
- M2 Sand and limestone-tempered ware. Similar to Gloucester type fabric 43. *Forms:* Handmade cooking pots. *Date:* 12th-13th century. (No. 146, wt. 1084, eve 81.)
- M3 Sand and flint-tempered ware. Handmade cooking pots. *Date:* 12th-13th century. (No. 52, wt. 574, eve 50.)
- M4 Fine red sandy ware, some with a green glaze. *Date:* ?Late medieval. *Forms:* Dishes, cooking pots. (No. 9, wt. 147, eve 10.)
- M5 Hard fine pinkish-buff sandy ware with a partial thin glaze. *Forms:* Wheelmade jugs, pitchers. *Source:* ?Wiltshire. *Date:* 13th-15th century. (No. 25, wt. 178, eve 19.)
- M6 Hard pinkish-orange ware with a grey core. Sparse scatter of ill-sorted, rounded quartz sand up to 1.5 mm. and angular voids, ?from chalk/limestone. *Forms:* Unglazed handmade cooking pots. (No. 3, wt. 19, eve 0.)
- M7 = M5
- M8 Very hard dense sandy ware, pinkish-buff surfaces with pink-orange/grey core. Pimpily surface showing through external brownish-green glaze. *Forms:* Wheelmade jugs with applied strips and underglaze slip decoration. (No. 2, wt. 11, eve 0.)
- M9 Black oolitic limestone tempered ware. Similar to Gloucester TF 41. *Form:* Handmade cooking pot. *Date:* 12th-13th century. (No. 1, wt. 19, eve 5.)

FAUNAL REMAINS by KEVIN RIELLY

A total of 1494 animal and bird bones were recovered from Shrivenham Road Areas 1 and 2 in contexts belonging to all phases: Roman (phase 1), sub-Roman/Saxon (phase 2) and medieval (phase 3). The species composition for each of these phases is shown in Table 3. A small number of features in the Roman and sub-Roman/Saxon phases are less securely dated than the rest and the bones from these contexts have been noted separately in Table 3. These two phases produced the vast majority of the site assemblage. Bones provided by the Roman phase were scattered throughout the two sites with a large proportion found in ditch F2 in Area 1 (74 bones), while most of the sub-Roman/Saxon assemblage was contained in layer C8, also in Area 1.

The medieval material came from just two features (F9 and F12). All the bones were found in potentially deep feature types, mostly in ditches, and the preservation of the assemblage, with the exception of a small number of bones, is very good. Conversely, the level of fragmentation is high, which has undoubtedly introduced survival biases. In addition, in the absence of widespread sieving, it can be expected that certain bones will be under-represented.

TABLE 3. SHRIVENHAM ROAD AREAS 1 AND 2 ANIMAL BONES:
SPECIES REPRESENTATION AND TOTAL FRAGMENT COUNT

Phase:	1	2	3		
	Roman	+ possible Roman	sub-Roman /Saxon	+ possible sub-Roman/Saxon	medieval
Cattle	17	25	144	162	13
Sheep/goat	19	28	48	55	—
Pig	9	11	20	24	—
Horse	11	14	15	20	1
Dog	—	—	14	15	2
Red deer	—	—	1	1	—
Roe deer	—	—	—	1	—
Chicken	—	2	—	1	—
Large mammal	31	34	157	183	32
Small mammal	19	25	94	100	2
Indeterminate	7	8	64	64	—
Total	113	147	557	626	50

All bones which could not be identified to species or species group (e.g. sheep/goat) are categorised by size, i.e. cattle and sheep-size. Bones which could not be identified or sized are classed as indeterminate. The level and extent of the analysis is necessarily limited by both the small sample size and the high degree of fragmentation.

Species representation

Although sample sizes are small, it would appear that the sub-Roman/Saxon phase differs markedly from the Roman phase, with the former showing a substantial increase in the representation of cattle at the expense of sheep/goat (see Table 3). (Similar results are given when features of doubtful date are included.) To determine whether this difference is real it is necessary to examine the possibility of preferential survival. Fragmentation of the sample will favour both the survival and the recovery of cattle fragments compared to those of smaller species, such as sheep or pig; the greater the damage the greater the tendency towards a cattle dominated assemblage. A rough indication of the level of fragmentation can be seen by looking at the proportion of non-specific fragments i.e. cattle/sheep size and indeterminate, and loose teeth (restricted to the cattle and sheep/goat assemblages). The proportion of non-specific fragments in phases 1 and 2 are similar at about 50% each, while loose teeth provide 11.3% (n=6) of the total number of cattle and sheep/goat in phase 2. Thus, while the former indicates similar fragmentation, the latter suggests a higher level of damage in the later phase. Any conclusions must remain tentative but it seems likely that the difference between the two phases regarding the level of fragmentation is too slight to have affected the species representation. Damage was undoubtedly also caused by dog gnawing but, as with the non-specific fragments, phases 1 and 2 have similar quantities, with about 10% gnawed in both phases.

Meat species

The presence of cut marks, the level of fragmentation (particularly of longbones) and assumptions based on historical and modern day usage can enable us to deduce which animals were used for their meat. Cut marked bones are confined to phases 1 and 2 and the number and species of examples are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4. SHRIVENHAM ROAD AREAS 1 AND 2 ANIMAL BONES:
CUT MARKED BONES BY SPECIES AND PHASE

	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep/goat</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Dog</i>
Phase 1	5	1	1	—	—
Phase 2	11	2	1	1	1

All but the horse and dog were clearly used for their meat. The horse bone, a humerus with a knife cut to the shaft, could be interpreted as meat waste but a noticeable feature of the horse assemblage as a whole is the lower level of fragmentation relative to cattle, sheep/goat and pig. The horse longbones are often at least 50% complete as opposed to rarely 25% complete in the cattle assemblages. If horse did form a part of the diet in the sub-Roman/Saxon phase its contribution was possibly a limited one. The butchered dog bone, with cut marks to the anterior part of the calcaneus, can be interpreted as damage caused during skinning but does not necessarily indicate the use of dog meat. Although the cattle bones in the medieval phase and the deer and chicken bones in the Roman and sub-Roman/Saxon phases do not display cut marks, it can be assumed that these species are present to satisfy the dietary needs of the site occupants. These needs were predominantly catered for, in each phase, by cattle, even allowing for the likely under-representation of sheep/goat and pig (assuming a meat weight of 500 lb. per cow, compared to 60 lb. per sheep and 100 lb. per pig).⁴

Each stage of the butchery process, from dressing to defleshing, is represented by the cattle assemblages in the Roman and sub-Roman/Saxon phases and both cattle, sheep/goat and pig are represented by a mix of skeletal parts in the same phases. These domesticates were possibly killed and butchered in the vicinity of the site during these periods. The presence of neonates in these phases indicates that these animals were locally bred.

The wild species show the importance, though limited, of hunting in the sub-Roman/Saxon phase and also indirectly suggest the presence of woodland in the surrounding area.

Other products

The intensive exploitation of any product, be it meat or a secondary product like milk or wool, can be recognised in the age profile by the concentrations found within particular age groups. It could be suggested for both cattle and sheep/goat that the ageing evidence at this site points to a majority of mature individuals, which would indicate the importance of secondary products. However, it is likely that younger individuals are under-represented due to both fragmentation and recovery bias. Assuming this to be the case, the evidence points to a wide distribution of ages indicating an extensive use of a variety of exploitation strategies i.e. mixed farming. Pigs are kept principally for their meat and the proportion of mature individuals may represent breeders. All the chicken bones are from mature individuals, which suggests the use of eggs. The horse and dog bones are from fully adult individuals and it is likely that both species were primarily used as work animals.

Size

A small number of measurements could be taken,⁵ mostly confined to bones from phase 2 (sub-Roman/Saxon) contexts. These suggest that the domestic animals represented are within the normal size ranges for their periods.

Conclusion

The bones clearly represent a series of dumps of domestic waste, possibly from some nearby habitation. Domestic species dominate the individual phase assemblages with cattle as the main meat provider in each phase. There is evidence for the eating of horseflesh and the exploitation of dogs for their skins in the Saxon period. Overall, both the Roman and sub-Roman/Saxon assemblages suggest a mixed use of animal resources indicative of extensive exploitation strategies.

⁴ Figures taken from M. Maltby, 'The Animal Bones from Exeter 1971-75: Faunal Studies on Urban Sites', *Exeter Arch. Reps.* 2 (1979), 140.

⁵ After A. von den Driesch, 'A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites', *Peabody Mus. Bull.* 1 (1976).

The greater proportion of cattle bones in the Saxon relative to the Roman period is not related to any difference in either fragmentation or recovery. However, it should be mentioned that in both periods, due to the high level of fragmentation, sheep/goat is likely to be underrepresented.

These results can be tentatively compared with the general species abundance trends found at Roman and Saxon sites in Southern Britain.⁶ Roman Britain saw a steady increase in cattle abundance except in the more rural or less Romanized areas/sites where sheep/goat continued to dominate. Conversely, in the Saxon period there was a move towards a sheep-based economy (clearly shown at Portchester).⁷ However, there are exceptions such as at Pennyland and Bancroft Mausoleum in the Milton Keynes area, where cattle is the dominant species.⁸

HUMAN BONE

A small number of human bones were found in layer C8 (five bones) and pit F5 (one bone). The presence of such disarticulated remains would suggest that both these had been redeposited from elsewhere.

METALWORK by DAVID RICHARDS

Iron, copper alloy and lead or pewter objects were present in this very miscellaneous collection (complete details are available in the archive). Apart from nails, however, there are only a few recognisable objects. Hand-made iron nails of basic similarity occur from the Iron Age through to medieval times, so these are not helpful in suggesting dates for the various features from which they were recovered. Of the 44 objects in the assemblage, ten came from layer C8 which overlay a complex of intercutting pits (Fig. 4). Two objects from this context, a spearhead and a rather crude bronze pin (Fig. 6.2), are not typical of Roman workmanship and are perhaps Saxon or even later. A small lead weight from pit/scoop F14 (Fig. 6.3) may be of Roman date, as may a barrel-padlock bolt found in gully F104 (155), although similar padlock bolts are known from the late Saxon and Norman periods.

COINS by PAUL CANNON

A total of 26 coins were recovered from the route of the pipeline and from the Shrivenham Road site. The majority are of 3rd- to 4th-century Roman date, but there is also a single 12th- to 13th-century farthing.

GG-GGI

- 1) AE follis, Constantine I, rev: SOLI INVICTO COMITI *c.* AD 313
- 2) AE 4, Constantine I, obv: VRBS ROMA, AD 330-335
- 3-5) Unidentified 4th-century AE coins

⁶ Taken from A. King, 'A Comparative Survey of Bone Assemblages from Roman Sites in Britain', *Univ. London, Inst. Arch. Bull.* 15 (1978), 207-32, and A. King, 'Animal Bones and the Dietary Identity of Military and Civilian Groups in Roman Britain, Germany and Gaul', in T. E. C. Blagg and A. C. King (eds.), *Military and Civilian in Roman Britain. Cultural Relationships in a Frontier Province* (BAR Brit. Ser. 136, 1984), 187-217, for Roman Britain, and from M. A. Robinson and R. Wilson, 'A Survey of Environmental Archaeology in the South Midlands', in H.C.M. Keeley (ed.), 'Environmental Archaeology - a Regional Review', *H.B.M.C. Occ. Paper 1*, vol. 2 (1987), 51-4, for both periods.

⁷ See A. Grant, 'The Animal Bones', in B. Cunliffe, *Excavations at Portchester Castle, I: Roman* (Rep. of Research Comm. of Soc. of Antiq. of London, 32, 1975), 378-408; A. Grant, 'The Animal Bones', in B. Cunliffe, *Excavations at Portchester Castle, II: Saxon* (Rep. of the Research Comm. of Soc. of Antiq. of London, 32, 1976), 262-87.

⁸ J. Holmes and K. Rielly, 'Animal Bone from the Mausoleum', in R. J. Williams and R. J. Zeepvat, *Bancroft: A Late Bronze Age/Iron Age Settlement, Roman Villa and Temple-Mausoleum*, vol. 2. *Finds and Environmental Evidence* (Bucks. Arch. Soc. monog. ser. 7, 1994), 531.

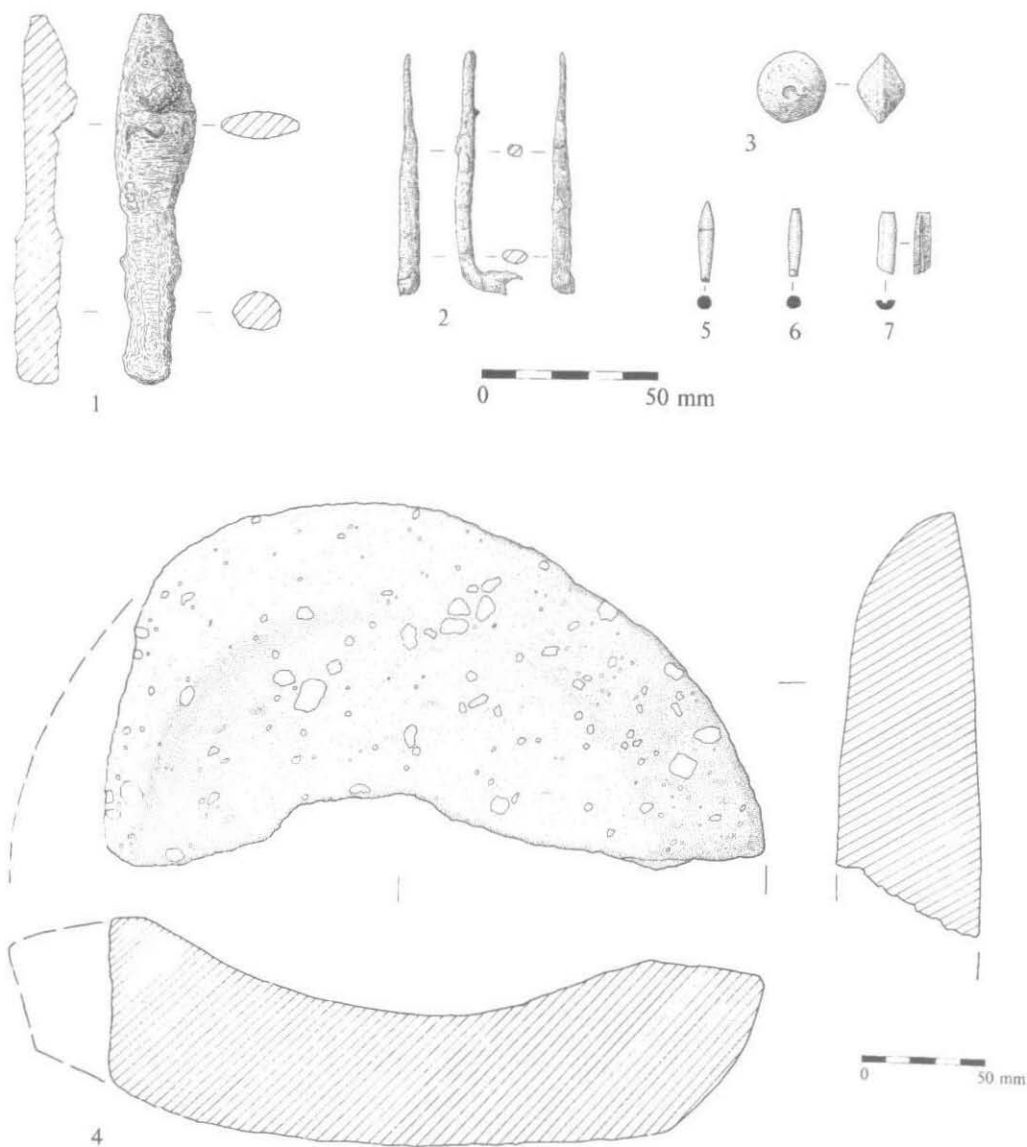


Fig. 6. 1. Saxon? spearhead (C8); 2. Saxon? crude bronze pin (C8); 3. Roman? biconical lead weight (F14); 4. Large fragment of upper quernstone, Roman or earlier (F5); 5. Belemnite fossil from C8 (52) possibly used as a bead?; 6. Similar belemnite fossil from F3 (64); 7. Broken belemnite fossil found during fieldwalking (SU25728532).

GG1-GG2

- 6) AE antoninianus, plated, Probus, rev: SALVS AVG, AD 276-282
- 7) AE follis, Constantine I, rev: SOLI INVICTO COMITI, c. AD 313
- 8) AE 3, rev: GLORIA ROMANORVM, AD 383-392
- 9-11) Unidentified 4th-century AE coins
- 12 and 15) 2 x AE 4, Constantine I, obv: VRBS ROMA, AD 330-335
- 13) AE 4, rev: GLORIA EXERCITVS, AD 330-335
- 14 and 16) 2 x unidentified 4th-century AE coin

F8

- 17, 18, 19 and 21) Unidentified late 3rd- or 4th-century AE coins
- 20) Unidentified late 3rd-century AE radiate, probably barbarous

F9

- 22) Unidentified 4th-century AE coin

Unstratified

- 23 and 26) Unidentified 4th-century AE coins
- 24) Unidentified late 3rd-century AE radiate
- 25) Cut AG 'Short-Cross' farthing, uncertain class, moneyer or mint, AD 1180-1247

STONE by DAVID WILLIAMS

The Shrivenham Road site lies in an area with Cretaceous rocks including Upper Greensand and Gault with Upper Jurassic formations less than 3 km. away to the N., and Pleistocene and recent deposits some 10 km. to the N.⁹ A large segment of an upper quernstone of Quartz Conglomerate, most probably from the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, was found in F5 (Fig. 6.4). This type of quernstone does not seem to occur later than the Roman period. Also, a roughly oblong block of Malmstone from the Upper Greensand of the Cretaceous, chiefly used in the medieval and post-medieval periods for building, came from layer C8.

FLINT by STEVE FORD

Just ten prehistoric struck flints were recovered during the course of the project. Two scrapers came from sections A to B and B1 to C during the fieldwalking survey. The easement search produced four finds: three from section GG to GG1 (two flakes, one possibly notched, and a narrow flake/blade); and a single flake from section GG1 to GG2. Lastly, three flakes were recovered from the excavated areas, one each in layer C8, gully F106 and small pit/posthole F109, with a further flake from the spoil heap.

?BEADS AND GLASS

Three bead-shaped objects were recovered: two from Shrivenham Road Area 1, one from ditch F3 and the second from layer C8; and the third was discovered during fieldwalking in section G to H (Fig. 6). These have been identified as small belemnites (conical pointed fossil shells) by Dr. R. Goldring of the Sedimentology Department at Reading University. All three are similar in shape, size and colour, although the example found during fieldwalking is more abraded and has been split laterally. They measure from 16 mm. to 21 mm. long and between 3 mm. and 4.5 mm. wide at their widest points. All three examples were naturally perforated through their centres and, although there is no direct evidence, it is possible that they were collected and used as beads.

A single fragment of probable Roman glass was recovered from ditch F2.

⁹ Geological Survey 1" Map of England, Sheet nos. 252 and 253.

PLANT REMAINS by JOHN LETTS

Of the 19 bulk samples floated for botanical remains only six produced results. The sample from F11 is clearly Roman or Iron Age due to the prevalence of spelt wheat. The nine spelt grains in this sample are sprouted and de-husked, which might indicate malting for beer production (but natural sprouting cannot be ruled out given the small number of specimens). Spelt is a hulled wheat typical of the Roman and later Iron Age periods, and one chaff specimen – a glume base – also occurs in the sample. F11 also contains a grain of barley and a poorly preserved fragment of a large legume seed (possibly pea or bean, but large wild members of the *Vicia/Lathyrus* sp. group cannot be ruled out). A single specimen of hulled barley in sample F5 is well-preserved and is clearly derived from a lateral floret of the 6-row subspecies.

DISCUSSION

The fieldwork associated with this relatively short stretch of pipeline has led to the discovery of several previously unknown archaeological sites. These include two concentrations of Roman pottery and one scatter of 12th- to 14th- or 15th-century pottery discovered during reconnaissance of the pipeline and two 12th- to 13th-century scatters found whilst fieldwalking. The excavations at the Shrivenham Road site revealed occupation evidence of Roman, post-Roman/Saxon and medieval date. Although only two features were medieval, large quantities of 12th- to 13th-century pottery were also recovered during fieldwalking just over 100 m. to the W. It is possible that the features excavated relate to a more substantial area of activity perhaps located to the W. The very limited nature of the excavations precludes a detailed assessment of the nature and significance of the site and the extent and true nature of the settlement area remains unknown. However, there is evidence for continuity of occupation from at least the Roman period through to the sub-Roman/Saxon period and the few sherds of earlier pottery may even indicate an Iron Age origin for occupation at this site.

Little can be said with regard to the economy of the site as a whole, but the environmental evidence suggests that the Shrivenham Road site has revealed part of a mixed farming settlement. The faunal assemblage suggests that cattle were the main meat providers in each phase of activity, although the high level of fragmentation of bone throughout the site may have led to the under-representation of sheep/goat relative to cattle. There is also some evidence for the eating of horse flesh in the Saxon period and the exploitation of dogs for their skins. Unfortunately, not much more can be added from the information gained by flotation of bulk samples, as only six samples produced results. Spelt, a hulled wheat typical of the Roman and later Iron Age periods, was present in one feature (F11). The nature of the grains, which were sprouted and de-husked, could indicate malting for the production of beer.

Up to the mid 1980s very few Roman and even fewer Saxon sites were known in this region,¹⁰ especially when compared to better surveyed areas such as the Thames Valley to the N. and E.¹¹ Field surveys such as that on the Berkshire Downs¹² and a similar study extending across the Vale of the White Horse¹³ have shown that the picture hitherto was more a result of research/excavation bias than a true reflection of activity in the area. Fig. 7 shows the extent of known sites at the time of writing. Evidence of Saxon occupation from

¹⁰ G. Briggs, J. Cook and T. Rowley (eds.), *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region* (1986).

¹¹ D. Miles, 'Confusion in the Countryside. Some Comments from the Upper Thames Region', in D. Miles (ed.), *The Romano-British Countryside* (BAR 103(i), 1982), 53-80.

¹² V. Gaffney and M. Tingle, *The Maddal Farm Project* (BAR 200, 1989).

¹³ M. Tingle, *The Vale of the White Horse Survey* (BAR 218, 1991).

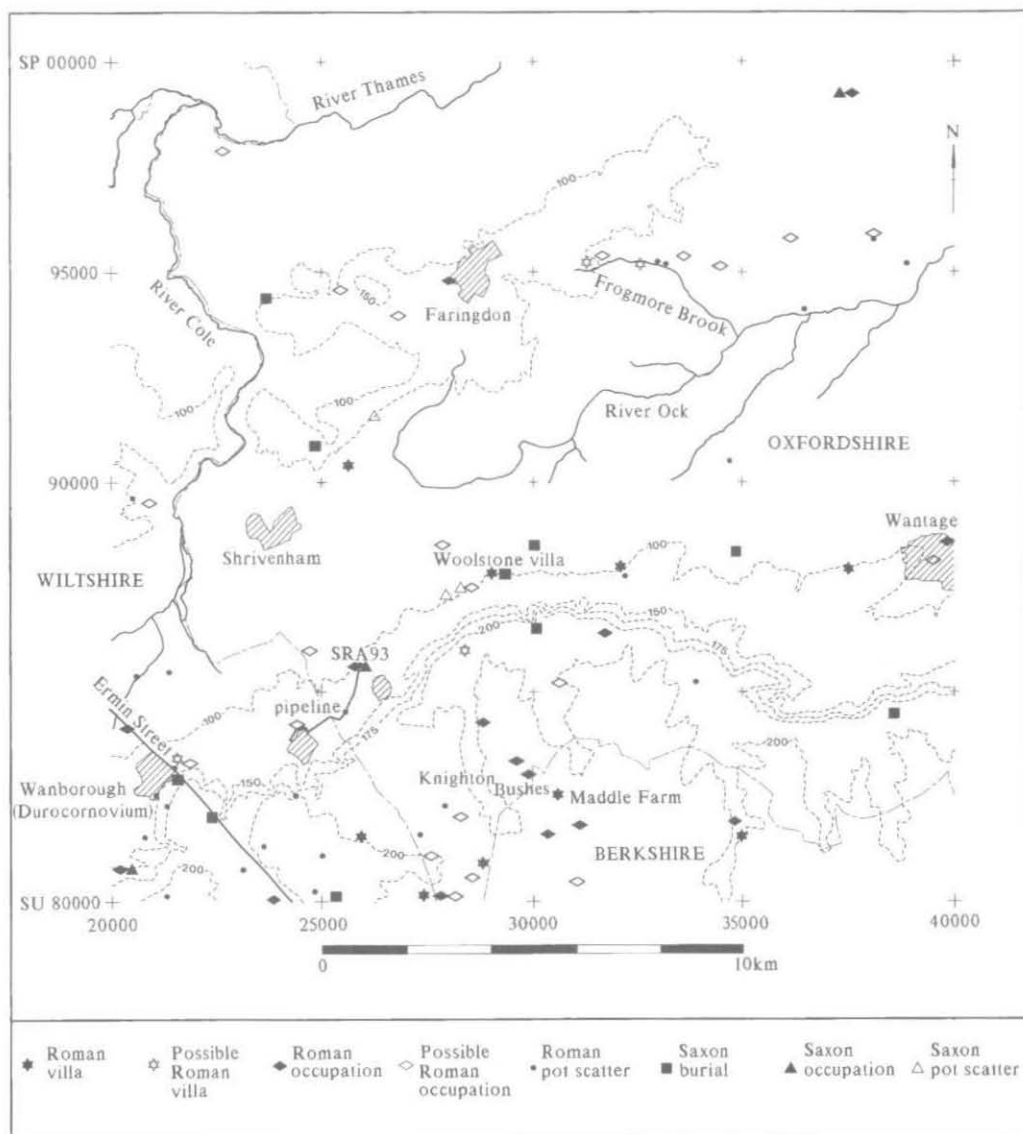


Fig. 7. The site in relation to other Roman and Saxon sites and finds in the vicinity.

the edge of the Berkshire Downs and across the Vale of the White Horse to the Corallian ridge is still very sparse although traces of a Saxon settlement were discovered during the construction of the M4 S. of Wanborough.¹⁴ The main indication of Saxon settlement in the region is still the number and location of Saxon burials, although fieldwalking surveys have done a little to increase the number of known sites in the area; the Vale of the White Horse Survey¹⁵ recovered 48 Saxon sherds, whilst the Maddle Farm Survey on the Berkshire Downs¹⁶ found just five sherds (four from Knighton Bushes). The former indicates a significant level of activity, especially around the foot of the Berkshire Downs, where scatters of Saxon pottery may represent manuring from settlements located at the foot of the scarp. The evidence uncovered at the Shrivenham Road site may represent one such settlement.

With regard to Roman occupation, fieldwalking in the early 1980s found high densities of Roman sites in parts of the northern edge of the Vale,¹⁷ and intensive ploughing on the Berkshire Downs has meant that there is now evidence of substantially rural occupation, with occasional major villa developments such as that at Maddle Farm and Knighton Bushes.¹⁸ A number of villas are also present along the base of the chalk scarp, for example at Woolstone.¹⁹ This location is a focus for a band of spring line settlements at the junction between the permeable chalk and Greensand and the impermeable Gault Clay. The best rated soils (using modern grading techniques) are also to be found on the scarp face of the Downs around the spring line and across the vale on the Corallian ridge around Badbury Hill.²⁰ This is not to say that the heavier soils of the valley itself would not be exploited but the settlement pattern within the vale for these periods is as yet not fully understood, although it would now seem likely that it was not an unexploited hinterland. The Vale itself is surrounded by Roman towns, with Cirencester (Corinium Dubonorum) to the NW. and Dorchester-on-Thames to the SE. A very short distance SW. of the Shrivenham Road site is the Roman town of Durocornovium (Wanborough) which is linked to Cirencester by Ermin Street.

Taking other evidence from this region into account it is not surprising that evidence of Roman and sub-Roman/Saxon occupation was uncovered at the Shrivenham Road site, as it is in an ideal location on the spring line at the foot of the chalk scarp and within easy reach of both the Downs and the Vale of the White Horse.

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¹⁴ P. J. Fowler and B. Walters, 'Site 25 Liddington Hill, Medbourne', in *Archaeology and the M4 Motorway 1969-71* (1979-80), 69-130.

¹⁵ Tingle, op. cit. note 13.

¹⁶ Gaffney and Tingle, op. cit. note 12.

¹⁷ Miles, op. cit. note 11, p. 63.

¹⁸ Gaffney and Tingle, op. cit. note 12.

¹⁹ Anon. 'Note concerning the Woolstone Villa', *Antiquary*, no. 57, vol. x (1884), 133.

²⁰ Tingle, op. cit. note 13.