

# The Excavation of Medieval and Post-medieval Features at the Rear of 42c Bell Street, Henley, Oxfordshire

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## SUMMARY

*An excavation at 42c Bell Street, Henley, revealed archaeological features of medieval, early post-medieval, and Victorian date. These deposits relate to domestic activity to the rear of buildings fronting both Bell Street and New Street and are typical of a medieval urban backland. Dated features include 13th- to 15th-century pits and postholes and post-medieval walls and foundations. A small pottery assemblage includes residual Roman and 11th- to mid 12th-century AD sherds. The bulk of the animal bone recovered is of cattle, sheep and pig, but the collection also has horse, fallow deer, dog, fowl, goose, duck, corvid and cod. This collection is interesting in that no other groups of medieval animal bone from Henley have yet been published. The metalwork from the site includes a plaited copper-alloy chain which may be part of a 14th-century chatelaine.*

## INTRODUCTION

An excavation was carried out at 42c Bell Street, Henley, Oxfordshire (SU76108279) during July and September 1997. The site is located in the centre of Henley, on the eastern side of Bell Street, close to the river Thames (Fig. 1) and as such provided an ideal opportunity to examine the archaeology of this central part of the town.

Little is known about the early history of Henley. The few documentary references to medieval Henley are rather ambiguous. For example, the Hundred Rolls (1278) describe Henley as a hamlet of Benson, although an earlier document (1269) refers to Henley as a town.<sup>1</sup> The later medieval history of the town is better documented and a number of timber-framed buildings, still present in the town centre, date to the 14th to 15th centuries.<sup>2</sup> Excavations in and around the town centre have revealed the remains of buildings, pits and ditches dating to the 13th to 17th centuries.<sup>3</sup> A 13th- to 14th-century wall was observed at 32 Market Place<sup>4</sup> and foundations, pits and a medieval ditch were found at the Old Rectory on Hart Street.<sup>5</sup> One of the larger excavations in Henley, at a site on the opposite side of Bell Street, uncovered Roman, medieval and post-medieval deposits.<sup>6</sup> The Roman features

<sup>1</sup> M. Airs, K. Rodwell and H. Turner, 'Henley', in K. Rodwell (ed.), *Historic Towns in Oxfordshire* (1974), 125-33.

<sup>2</sup> Information gained from the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> R.J. Kendal and A. Cottingham, 'Excavations at the Stable at the Rear of no. 32-36 Market Place, Kings Arms Public House', *Jnl. of the Henley on Thames Archaeol. and Hist. Group*, 10 (1994), 1-32.

<sup>5</sup> A. Cottingham, 'The Rectory Garden Site', *Jnl. of the Henley on Thames Archaeol. and Hist. Group*, 3 (1985), 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> C. Moloney, 'Excavations and Building Survey at Bell Street, Henley-on-Thames, 1993-1994', *Oxoniensia*, lxii (1997), 109-34.

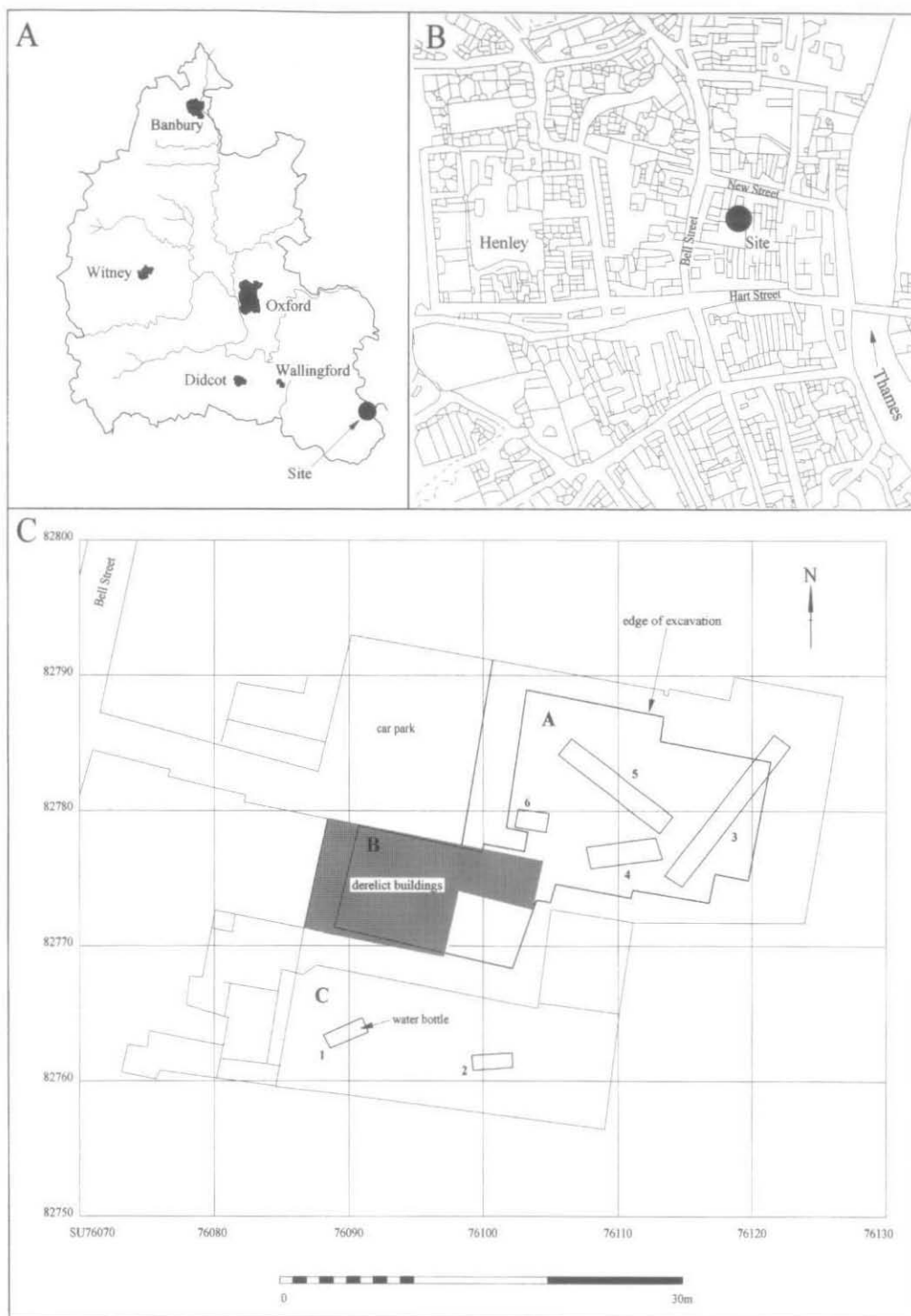


Fig. 1. The location of the site within Oxfordshire (A) and Henley (B) and a close-up of the site (C) showing the evaluation trenches and excavated areas.

comprised a 1st-century AD metal surface and a possible associated building. Medieval features included stone buildings, property boundaries and refuse pits. The previous evaluation carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services at 42 Bell Street<sup>7</sup> revealed evidence of 13th- to 15th-century occupation in the form of a number of postholes and pits. Post-medieval deposits included a water bottle likely to date to the 19th century. The evaluation also revealed two walls, neither of which was securely dated. One was not likely to be earlier than the 13th to 15th centuries, whilst the other was thought to be post-medieval. Excavations at the rear of 32-36 Market Place<sup>8</sup> revealed postholes and a coin dating from the 16th century and the floor surface of a 17th-century barn. Excavations close to Hart Street uncovered a corner fire-place or oven made of 17th-century bricks, which cut a series of earthen floors and a hearth possibly dating to the 16th century. The Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record also lists a number of timber-framed buildings attributed to the 16th to 17th centuries in the modern town centre.

The excavation at Bell Street was carried out in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning*<sup>9</sup> to a scheme of investigation approved by the County Archaeological Officer. The site lies at a height of 118 m. above Ordnance Datum and is located on the boundary between the Upper Chalk and River Gravels, with the possibility of alluvial deposits also being present.<sup>10</sup> During the excavation the site was partially occupied by derelict buildings and some parts contained buried concrete and asphalt.

The site archive is to be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museum Services, with some objects to be displayed in the Henley River and Rowing Museum (accession number OXCMS1997.68).

## THE EXCAVATION

### *Methodology*

The fieldwork had three components (Fig. 1): the area excavation of part of the footprint of the main building (A); the recording of the derelict buildings before demolition and excavation beneath these on the remaining part of the footprint of the main building (B); and the recording of the water bottle (C).

Area A, 20 m. x 15 m., was stripped of concrete, topsoil and overburden using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). A photographic and brief descriptive record (RCHME level 1) of the derelict buildings in Area B was undertaken and, after demolition, an area 8.00 m. x 13.00 m. beneath these buildings was stripped of topsoil and overburden. (The record of the derelict buildings is to be found in the site archive.) A watching brief was carried out in Area C, where the water bottle was previously discovered. The brick-built water bottle was exposed during the groundwork and a complete photographic record was made (see site archive).

All archaeological features identified in Areas A and B were examined. Features of 18th-century or later date were not always fully excavated and recorded but where possible datable finds were retrieved and a brief context description and plan were made. All earlier features were half-sectioned, planned and recorded, the majority being fully excavated. Environmental samples were taken from well defined and closely dated contexts.

### *Description of features*

The site appears to have been occupied from medieval through to late post-medieval times. The earliest evidence comes in the form of redeposited pottery in later features: a single sherd of Roman pottery was

<sup>7</sup> J. Pine, '42c Bell Street, Henley, Oxfordshire, An Archaeological Evaluation' (Thames Valley Archaeological Services Report 97/43, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Kendal and Cottingham, op. cit. note 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Archaeology and Planning* (1990) (Dept. of Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16).

<sup>10</sup> *British Geological Survey* (1980), 1:50000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition.

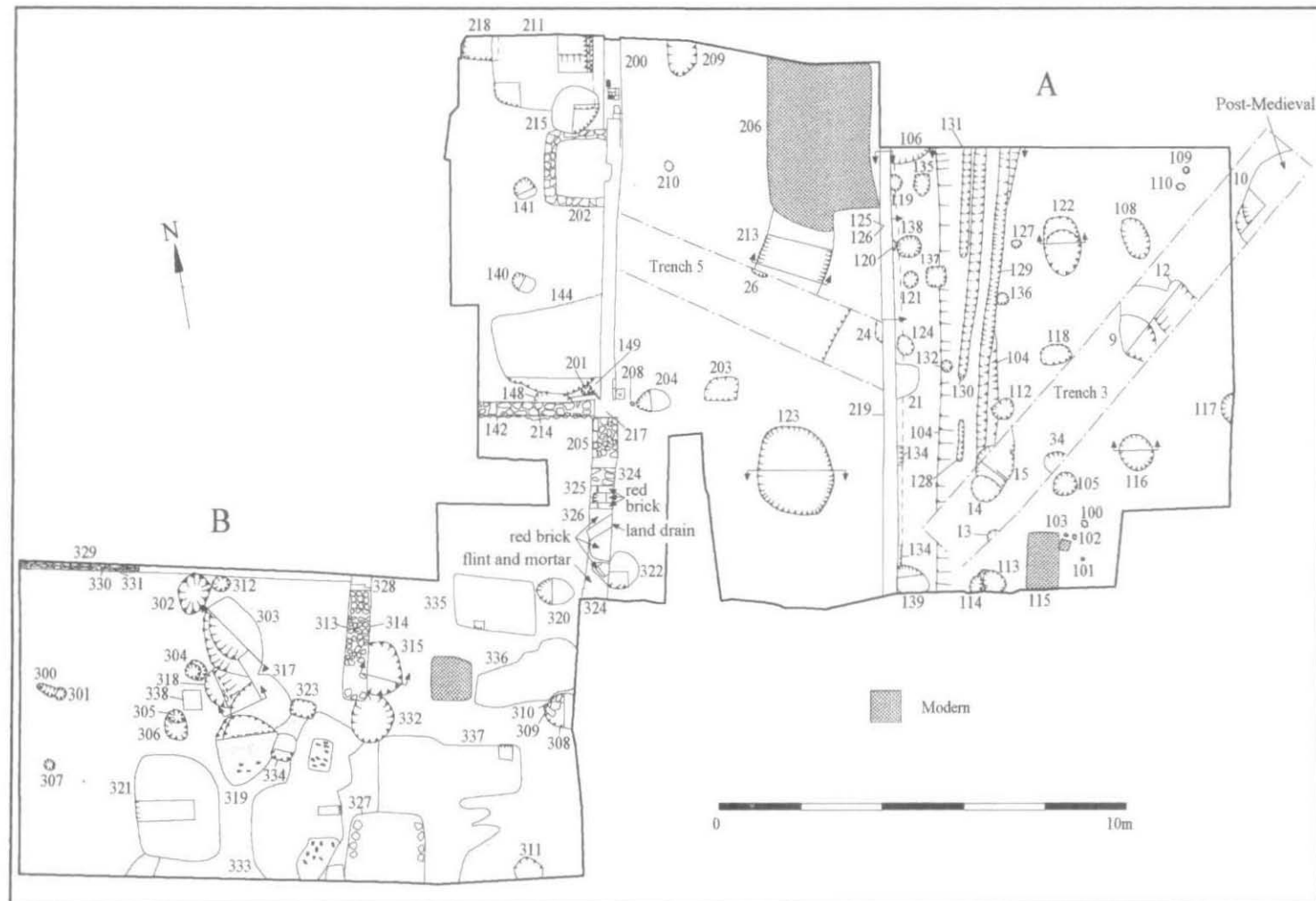


Fig. 2. A plan of the excavated areas A and B.

found in pit 31; the same pit contained a grog-tempered sherd of late 11th- to mid 12th-century date and a possible contemporary shell-tempered sherd came from the topsoil (38). The features identified in the evaluation<sup>11</sup> have been integrated into the following discussion. Five phases of activity have been identified:

*Phase 1: Mid/late medieval, 13th to 15th century (Figs. 2 and 3)*

This phase is represented by twenty features: fourteen pits; two pits/linear features; and four postholes. The pottery for this period comes from the Camley Garden kilns at Maidenhead which, as yet, are not fully understood. For this reason the date range for these features is broad, spanning the 13th to 15th centuries.

The fourteen pits varied in diameter from 0.60 m. to 1.74 m. and in depth from 0.40 m. to 0.70 m. Many of the pits contained fragments of tile, some of which has been identified as peg tile. More substantial building material was recovered from two of the pits: 303 contained burnt clay/daub (368 and 369) and a layer of compact limestone/chalk mortar (366) which may be the remains of a floor surface; both this and pit 317 produced large flint nodules with mortar still attached and large quantities of tile. The four postholes (10, 105, 210 and 301) ranged in diameter from 0.25 m. to 0.50 m. and in depth from 0.13 m. to 0.33 m. They were spread across the excavated area and did not appear to represent a particular structure.

Two features went beneath the baulks (106 and 117) and it was not possible to determine whether they were pits or ditch terminals.

*Phase 2: Late medieval to early post-medieval, 15th to 17th century (Figs. 2 and 3)*

This phase was represented by three pits, two flint foundations, a flint wall, one posthole and one stakehole. The pits varied in diameter from 0.64 m. to 2.00 m. and in depth from 0.23 m. to 2.10 m. Pit 22/123 was quite substantial and contained 57 sherds of 13th- to 16th-century pottery together with a large quantity of animal bone. It also contained part of the chain from a copper alloy ?chatelaine (Fig. 5; 1), a bone pin (Fig. 5; 2), and eleven iron nails. Pit 319 contained three sherds of early post-medieval pottery and a large quantity of brick and tile (9.2 kgs.). The small pit 320 contained three 15th- to 17th-century potsherds and a piece of a bone pin dating to between AD 1250 and 1350.

Wall 207 was constructed of mortared faced flint and had flint foundations (126) (Fig. 4). It may have been built during this phase as the construction cut for the foundations (134) contained nine 15th- to 17th-century pottery sherds, the majority being 16th-century Tudor green-glaze. The wall ran north-south for over 13 m. between the baulks, parallel with Bell Street and aligned with existing walls in adjoining properties.

A flint foundation (313) may also belong to this phase as its construction cut (314) contained three sherds of 15th- to 16th-century pottery. These foundations were also aligned north-south and ran for 2.7 m. from beneath the northern baulk. The original wall no longer survived but a later red brick wall had been built upon the older foundations. It appears, therefore, that the 16th-century foundations had been reused and incorporated into the structure of the derelict buildings.

A single posthole (100) and a stakehole (102) are attributed to this phase. Although these were adjacent to each other, it is not possible to speculate as to their function.

*Phase 3: Later post-medieval, 17th to late 18th century (Figs. 2 and 3)*

This phase was represented by 17 pits, one pit/linear feature, six postholes, and a stakehole. The pottery evidence for this phase is broadly dated to between the 17th and 18th centuries but clay pipe and glass evidence has provided a mid to late 18th-century date for the majority of the features.

Many of the pits belonging to this phase were large and rectangular with near vertical sides, in some cases over 2.00 m. in diameter. Many contained large quantities of brick and tile, glass and clay pipe. It is likely that some of the pits had a primary function, the nature of which is now unknown, their use as rubbish pits being a secondary function. For example, the sides of one pit (202) had been lined with a dry stone wall made of flint nodules, which would seem to imply that this was not just a rubbish pit. It was 1.94 m. long, 1.85 m. wide, 0.59 m. deep and had a flat, unlined base. It contained many artefacts: a large assemblage of late post-medieval pottery; animal bone; glass fragments (one complete bottle); and 18 bowls and 62 stems of clay pipe dated to the mid to late 18th century. At a later date wall 200 had been constructed over this.

The postholes dated to this period ranged in diameter from 0.26 m. to 0.50 m. and in depth from 0.14 m. deep to 0.30 m. In plan they were circular or rectangular and did not seem to form any coherent ground plan.

<sup>11</sup> Pine, op. cit. note 7.



Fig. 3. Phase plans of excavated areas A and B.

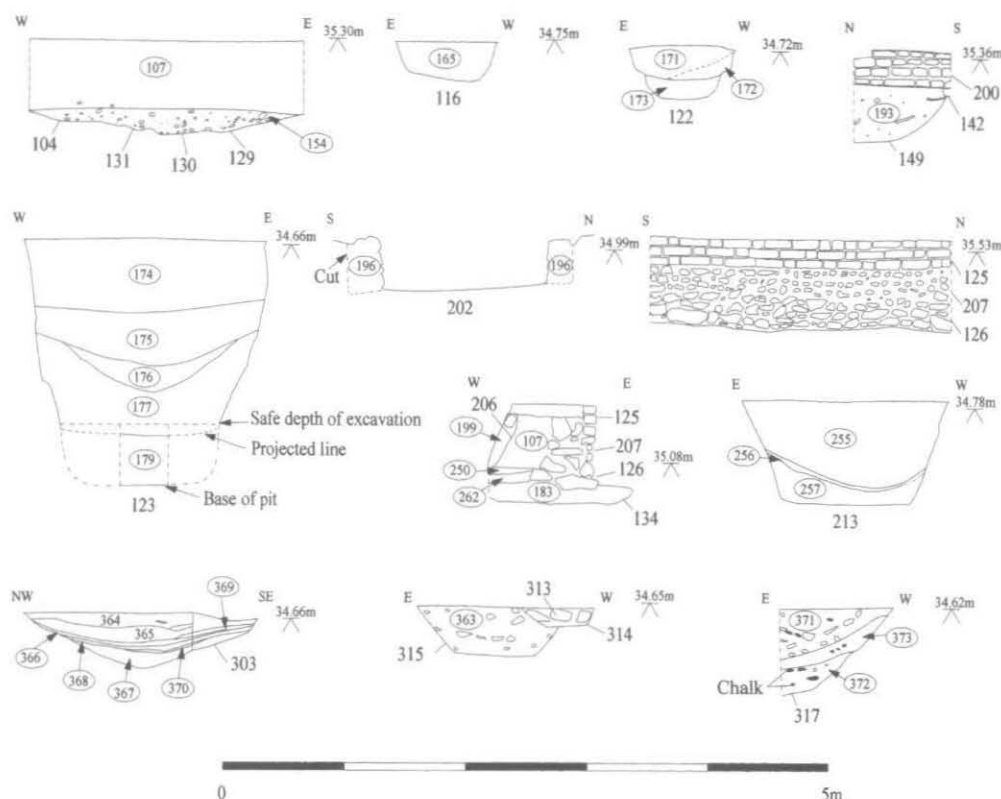


Fig. 4. Sections of selected features (heights are given in metres above Ordnance Datum).

*Phase 4: Victorian – late 18th to 19th century (Figs. 2 and 3)*

A late 18th- to early 19th-century phase has been suggested by combined stratigraphic, ceramic and cartographic evidence. This phase is represented by the derelict buildings, other walls and foundations, and a trackway.

It is suggested that the derelict buildings were constructed during the 19th century. Excavations beneath the buildings revealed features dating to the mid to late 18th century. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map, published in 1878, shows structures located in exactly the same position as the derelict buildings. Therefore, the buildings were constructed at some time prior to 1878 but the evidence from below the buildings suggests that they were not built before the mid to late 18th century.

Parts of the derelict buildings were excavated below ground level (328–9, 330 and 338). Red brick wall 329 and stepped flint foundations 330 were the remains of the north facing wall of one of the derelict buildings. Red brick wall 328 was probably an internal dividing wall. It ran north-south and rested on flint foundations 313, which have been dated to the 16th century. Feature 338, constructed of red bricks and mortar, was probably a foot pad.

Two other walls, 200 and 214, corner piece 217, and foundations 205/324 and 142, were apparently constructed during this phase. Features dated to the mid to late 18th century were excavated beneath 200, 217 and 205/324, and the walls were present on the Ordnance Survey map of 1878. This confirms the date of construction as being between the mid to late 18th century and 1878. Wall 200 crossed the site from north to south and was poorly constructed of red brick. At its southern end it was bonded to a red brick corner piece (217) which was also bonded to a flint and mortar faced wall (214) which ran west from this under the edge of the excavation. Wall 214 was built upon flint foundations (142) which may be of an earlier date as the only feature excavated below it, pit 148, was dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries. However, wall 214 is clearly later than mid 18th century in date. Flint foundation 205/324 butted the eastern end of 142 and ran in a north-south direction. On the top of these foundations was a chalky mortar (381) with two displaced red bricks, which indicates that a red brick wall was probably built upon these foundations at one time.

Wall 126/207 (phase 2, 15th to 17th century) seems to have been altered during this period, or slightly earlier. A red brick facing (125) was added to the eastern side of the wall (207). The western side of the wall remained the same.

A north-south path or trackway (104) is also attributed to this phase. At first this was a shallow linear feature and the remains of three wheel ruts were observed in its base (129, 130 and 131). Later, the track or pathway was in-filled with rounded gravel and tile (154). This contained two pottery sherds dated to the 15th and 18th centuries and a late 18th-century clay pipe bowl. A similar path/trackway is on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map although this appears to be slightly to the east of 104.

#### *Phase 5: 19th to 20th century*

The later history of the site includes the demolition of some of the garden/boundary walls, alteration and moderation of the derelict buildings, and the in-filling and levelling of the site. Additionally, four postholes (112, 132, 136 and 137) and a rectangular pit (206) have been attributed to this phase. No finds were retrieved from the postholes but they cut the gravel path/trackway (104) and are therefore later. The large rectangular pit 206 cut a modern make-up/levelling layer, 107.

#### *Unphased features*

A number of features cannot be attributed to a particular phase as they produced no datable evidence. These include 109-10, 118-19, 121, 127, 305-10, 312, 323 and 332. Posthole 119 has been included in this group, as although it cut the construction cut (134) for a 15th- to 17th-century wall, it did not contain any datable artefacts.

#### POTTERY by JANE TIMBY

The evaluation and subsequent excavation yielded a small assemblage of just 304 sherds, 4,019 kg., dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods. Material was present spanning at least the 12th to 18th centuries and was distributed between 58 individual features. The assemblage was of variable condition with the earlier material in general being abraded and poorly preserved. The post-medieval wares, particularly those from (202), one of only two features to produce a diverse assemblage of more than 15 sherds, were better preserved. The group was sorted into fabric/ware types and quantified by sherd count and weight. Fuller details are available in the site archive and a brief summary is given here.

#### *Medieval*

The majority of the medieval sherds comprise plain sandy wares typical of those from the Camley Garden kilns, Maidenhead.<sup>12</sup> Most of these sherds derive from plain cooking pots. The date and products of the kiln are poorly understood at present and this, combined with the paucity of featured sherds, only allows a broad date range of the 13th to 15th centuries to be offered for this material. Other medieval wares present include sherds from the Surrey-Hampshire border industry, in particular glazed jug sherds dating from the 13th century and a sand and flint tempered ware probably related to Newbury fabric B.<sup>13</sup> The earliest material is probably an abraded grog-tempered sherd from pit 31, which may be of late 11th- to mid 12th-century date.<sup>14</sup> Possibly contemporary with this is a redeposited shell-tempered sherd from pit 138;<sup>15</sup> both pieces perhaps suggestive of earlier activity in the general locality.

Several features produced exclusively medieval material but none in any great quantity, usually between 1 and 6 sherds. These include postholes 10, 105 and 210; pits 14, 15/128, 21, 31/148, 34, 108, 122, 209, 300, 303, 311, 315 and 317; and pit/linear features 106 and 117, all of which fall within the 13th- to 15th-century bracket. Several further sherds appear as redeposited finds in post-medieval features.

<sup>12</sup> Subsumed in Oxford Archaeological Unit fabric OXAG in M. Mellor, 'A Synthesis of Middle and Late Saxon, Medieval and Early Post-medieval Pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, lix (1994), 71ff.

<sup>13</sup> A.G. Vince, 'The Medieval Ceramic Industry of the Severn Valley' (Southampton Univ. unpubl. Ph. D. thesis, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> A. Vince and A. Jenner, 'The Saxon and Medieval Pottery of London', in A. Vince (ed.), *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London, II: Finds and Environmental Evidence* (LAMAS spec. pap. no. 12, 1991), 80.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 64.



### *Post-medieval wares*

Surrey-Hampshire border wares dating to between the 15th and 17th centuries are well represented in the assemblage including several sherds of 16th-century Tudor Green ware. Other wares belonging to the same period included products of the later Brill industry<sup>16</sup> and Tudor redware. Features producing these wares include pits 22/123, 149, 319 and 320; pit/linear feature 26/213; stakehole 102; and construction cuts 134 and 314.

A variety of wares of later post-medieval date were present, probably largely dating to the 17th to 18th centuries including tin glazed wares, porcelain, glazed red wares, slipware, iron glazed kitchen ware, German and Staffordshire stoneware and miscellaneous 'china'. Significant groups of these wares were recovered from postholes 124 and 140-1, pits 115, 144, 202-3, 211, 215, 321, and 335-7, and pit/linear feature 213.

## ANIMAL BONE by SHEILA HAMILTON-DYER

### *Introduction and methodology*

The animal bones comprise material recovered from a range of features of medieval to recent date. The majority of the bone was recovered by hand; some additional material was obtained from wet sieving. Species identifications were made using the modern comparative collections of the author. Measurements follow von den Driesch<sup>17</sup> and are in millimetres. Withers height estimations of the domestic ungulates are based on factors recommended by von den Driesch and Boessneck<sup>18</sup> and are in metres. The factors of Harcourt<sup>19</sup> were used for dog. The archive contains further details of each fragment including data on anatomy, butchery, fragmentation, ageing, measurements and pathology.

### *Results*

The total number of individual bones recorded is 407. The majority of the identified bones from all periods are of the expected domestic ungulates: cattle, horse, sheep and pig. Other taxa are rare and include fallow, dog, fowl, goose, ducks, corvid and cod. The distribution of taxa in each context is given in Table 1. Most of the material is well preserved and a high proportion of the fragments were identifiable to taxon. The majority of the unidentified fragments are probably (and most of the ribs and vertebrae are certainly) of cattle.

### *Phase 1: 13th to 15th century*

The 73 animal bones attributed to this phase were recovered from 11 of the 20 features, mainly from pit fills. At least seven taxa are represented and in addition to the domestic ungulates are a fallow tibia from pit 21, the only deer bone from the site, and several bones of fowl and goose from pit 14. This pit offered the largest group, of 22 bones. The 13 fowl bones comprise the major part of one individual together with one bone from another bird. The skull, sternum and phalanges were not recovered. These elements are either very small, and therefore probably missed in hand excavation, or fragile and probably did not survive. The skeleton is of a mature hen in lay at the time of death<sup>20</sup> and is of the small size expected of medieval birds or hens. The two goose bones are from near the end of the wing and may represent that part of the wing which is normally trimmed away in preparation. The few other bones from this pit include a horse third phalanx, a sheep metatarsal, two sheep-sized ribs, two cattle tibia fragments and a shaft fragment. A gnawed shaft fragment from pit 15/128 offers indirect evidence for the presence of dog. Butchery marks are very few but pits 315 and 317 contained butchered cattle and pig bones. These include jointing by chopping and the use of a knife for removal of the foot. Apart from the fowl bones very few fragments were measurable but the bones are of the small size typical of medieval material. Pit 317 contained a cattle calcaneum with a greatest length of 98.7 mm.

<sup>16</sup> Oxford fabric OXAM in Mellor, op. cit. note 12, pp. 111ff.

<sup>17</sup> A. von den Driesch, *A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* (Peabody Museum Bulletin 1, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> A. von den Driesch and J. Boessneck, *Kritische Anmerkungen zur Widerristhöhenberechnung aus Längenmaßen vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Tierknochen* (Säugetierkundliche Mitteilungen 22, 1974), 325-48.

<sup>19</sup> R.A. Harcourt, 'The Dog in Prehistoric and Early Historic Britain', *Jnl. Archaeol. Sci.* i (1974), 151-76.

<sup>20</sup> J.C. Driver, 'Medullary Bone as an Indicator of Sex in Bird Remains from Archaeological Sites', in B. Wilson, C. Grigson and S. Payne, *Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* (BAR Brit. Ser. 109, 1982), 251-4.



TABLE 1. ANIMAL BONE SPECIES DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY (continued)

## Phase 2

<i>Feature (Context)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep/ Goat</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Fallow</i>	<i>Cattle- size</i>	<i>Sheep- size</i>	<i>Mammal</i>	<i>Dog</i>	<i>Fowl</i>	<i>Goose</i>	<i>Other bird</i>	<i>Fish</i>	<i>Totals</i>
22/123(63)	Pit	1	5	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
(174)		1	14	8	3	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	31
(175)		1	6	3	7	—	7	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	27
(177)		—	3	6	6	—	6	5	—	—	—	1	—	—	27
(179)	Pit														14
120(169)	Posthole														2
134(185)	Cut														4
319(374)	Pit														1
320(376)	Pit														13
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>129</b>
<i>percent</i>		<i>2.3</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>16.3</i>	<i>17.1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>10.9</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>0</i>	
<i>% cattle, sheep, pig</i>		<i>39.4</i>	<i>29.6</i>	<i>31</i>											<i>20</i>



TABLE 1. ANIMAL BONE SPECIES DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY (continued)

## Phase 5

Feature (Context)	Type	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/ Goat	Pig	Fallow	Cattle- size	Sheep- size	Mammal	Dog	Fowl	Goose	Other bird	Fish	Totals
112(161)	Posthole	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
132(183)	Posthole	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
	<i>percent</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>66.7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	
	<i>% cattle, sheep, pig</i>		<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>										<i>2</i>

## Undated

Feature (Context)	Type	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/ Goat	Pig	Fallow	Cattle- size	Sheep- size	Mammal	Dog	Fowl	Goose	Other bird	Fish	Totals
(18)		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
(107)		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
113(-)	Pit/linear	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
118(167)	Pit	-	1	1	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
121(170)	Posthole	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	4
305(354)	Posthole	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>
	<i>percent</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>52.9</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>0</i>	
	<i>% cattle, sheep, pig</i>		<i>33.3</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>33.3</i>										<i>3</i>

## Totals

Feature (Context)	Type	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/ Goat	Pig	Fallow	Cattle- size	Sheep- size	Mammal	Dog	Fowl	Goose	Other bird	Fish	Totals
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>407</b>
	<i>percent overall</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>17.4</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>11.5</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>22.6</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>0.7</i>	
	<i>% cattle, sheep, pig</i>		<i>40.3</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>26.7</i>										<i>176</i>

*Phase 2: 15th to 17th century*

This phase contained fewer features with bone but more bones were recovered (129 bones). The majority are from the fills of pit 22/123 which totalled 109 bones. The ceramics from this pit range in date from 13th to 16th centuries.

The proportions of cattle, sheep and pig are similar with cattle slightly more frequent. Horse and birds are present at low levels. Apart from fowl and goose the bird bones include a duck furcula. This is not of mallard or even of teal, the two most common duck species in archaeological material. The bone best matches tufted or garganey.

Many of the bones are from kitchen or table waste, that is they are from the parts of the body which offer the most and best meat cuts, but there are also bones from low value areas such as the head and feet. These may be discarded at the primary slaughter and butchery stage but they may also be used by the less affluent. The condition of the bones varies considerably. Some are eroded to varying degrees, others are well preserved. Several bones were accessible to dogs before burial and it seems likely that the pit contains material from several sources.

In spite of a high level of butchery several bones are measurable and five were sufficiently complete to offer withers height estimates. A complete horse metacarpus gives an estimated height of 1.308 m., a cattle metacarpus from the same context gives a height of 1.035 m. This bone has a length/distal breadth index of 0.28 and is probably female. The three sheep withers heights are calculated from two radii and a humerus, these are of 0.588 m. and 0.529 m. and 0.597 m. None of these measurements exceeds expected values for late medieval material and most of the bones differ little in appearance from the earlier, Phase 1, material.

Amongst the other bones was the broken remains of a large bone 'pin' or awl. This was probably manufactured from a horse peripheral metapodial. The three identified horse bones from the pit are a metacarpus, a third phalanx and a calcaneum, all bones from the feet and perhaps discarded from skinning elsewhere. The calcaneum had been dog-gnawed.

*Phase 3: 17th to 18th century*

This phase contained a large number of features of which eleven produced bone, a total of 145 fragments. None of the contexts produced any horse bones, but two dog bones were recovered, the only positive proof of dog from the site but several contexts from all phases contained gnawed bones. The dog bone from pit 202 is complete and would have been from a slim animal estimated to be 0.336 m. at the shoulder. This pit also contained two neonatal piglet bones, evidence of probable backyard pig-keeping. Most of the bird bones are also from this feature and include three bones of a young duck, a pair of ulnae and a pair of tarsometatarsi of a young corvid (probably rook or crow) and a pair of hen tarsometatarsi which had been cut or broken off mid-shaft. Some of the cattle bones are very large but several of the sheep bones are still of the small size typical of medieval material and include one with an estimated withers height of 0.551 m. Another the same size was recovered from pit 321 together with a metatarsus giving a height of 0.59 m. Posthole 334 offered a radius of 0.603 m. estimated height. Four of the cattle vertebrae from pit 202 had been axially chopped. This butchery implies the presence of a suitably strong beam from which to hang the carcass for the division into sides of beef. Pit 144 contained a sheep radius with distinctive sawn butchery. This is characteristic of early modern and recent material.

This phase contributed the only fish bones from the site, which were identified as cod and cod family. Cod is typically the most frequently identified of the large species and its presence here indicates trade, probably imported via the port at London.

*Phase 4: 18th to 19th century*

All the bone from this phase relates to the fills of the path or trackway. Most of the material is eroded, some considerably so, and the bones are biased in favour of the most resistant elements. Cattle, sheep and pig are represented in the 40 fragments.

*Phase 5: 19th to 20th century*

Just three bones were recovered, two cattle and one unidentified fragment.

*Undated*

Just 17 bones were recovered from six undated contexts. Cattle, sheep and pig were positively identified. None of the bones are distinctive in species, size or butchery and, therefore, offer no assistance in dating.

### Comments

Detailed analysis of the assemblage is inappropriate given the small sample size and spread of dates. Overall the material is similar to that from other sites. Cattle, sheep and pig form the bulk of the identified bone and other taxa are few.

With regard to the medieval (Phase 1) assemblage in particular, the few bones offer little information other than a species list but, as no other material of this date has yet been published from Henley, it is of interest. The single deer bone from the site is from this phase and is worthy of note as the fallow was introduced post-Conquest to provide hunting for the nobility.

The bones from the other phases do not give an impression of a high status area but it should be remembered that much of the pit fills in Phase 3, for example, contain building material and come from a period of demolition rather than direct occupation. The bones are unlikely to represent material from an extant kitchen but rather an assortment from various sources dumped in a convenient hole.

In general the bones include most anatomical parts and represent a mixture of waste and meat bones. The remains of veal calves can be common in post-medieval material but there are few in this assemblage. It is not clear whether the occasional horse bones derive from buried carcasses or were utilised for skins and/or meat before disposal. Some bones, along with those of the other ungulates, had been dog-gnawed.

Metrical information is sparse but does include a number of useful measurements and withers height estimates. Unmeasurable bones can also be compared with reference material. The bones from Phase 1 and Phase 2 are comparable with late medieval material from other sites. Several of the cattle bones from pit 202 are very large. This is consistent with a mid 18th-century date, and the stock changes of the Agricultural Revolution. The sheep from this feature appear, however, to be little different from medieval material.

This small assemblage contains a number of interesting bones and provides a starting point for further research on faunal material from the town.

### CHARRED PLANT REMAINS by JOHN LETTS

Fourteen of the samples taken contained charred seeds, primarily cereal grain and peas, but none had sufficient seeds for detailed analysis (Table 2). All samples contained charcoal and few of the cereal grains recovered are well preserved. The single grain of barley in samples 5 and 11 had sprouted prior to charring but it is not possible to attribute this to malting and beer production based on the presence of single grains. Cultivated pea, a staple of the medieval diet, appears in pit 315 and posthole 119.

### METALWORK by NICKY CLARKSON

A large number of metal objects were recovered during the excavation but the majority of these are iron nails. A complete catalogue is to be found in the site archive and the most significant pieces have been included here.

A copper alloy chain broken into three lengths of 115 mm., 97 mm. and 79 mm. was recovered from pit 22 (123) (Fig. 5.1). The chain was 7 mm. wide and 1.5 mm. thick and appears to have been made by plaiting several strands of copper alloy wire in a herringbone pattern. All the ends are broken except one, which has a solid, thickened end with a straight edge, suggesting it is a terminal.

A similar chain dated to the late 14th century is listed among artefacts from medieval Winchester.<sup>21</sup> This example has a hook attached to one end but the other end is broken. It is suggested that this comprises the remains of a *chatelaine*, missing the end from which keys and other small articles would have hung. The broken pieces of chain from the Bell Street site may be the remains of a similar article and a comparable date could be applied to its manufacture.

Post-medieval pit 202 contained a large iron piece which, although corroded, appears to have three slits or keyholes in an otherwise solid flat surface. This is attached to a length of iron with a hook at its extremity. No parallel has been found for this object, although its form suggests it may have been a piece of door furniture. From the same pit came a bone handle with the remains of a scale-tang knife hafted to it; the bone is unidentifiable. The handle expands towards a spur at the butt end and has a rectangular section. It is decorated with dark round patches which appear to have been burned into the surface. The same pit also

<sup>21</sup> M. Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester* (Winchester Studies, vol. 7 pt. ii, 1990), 655.





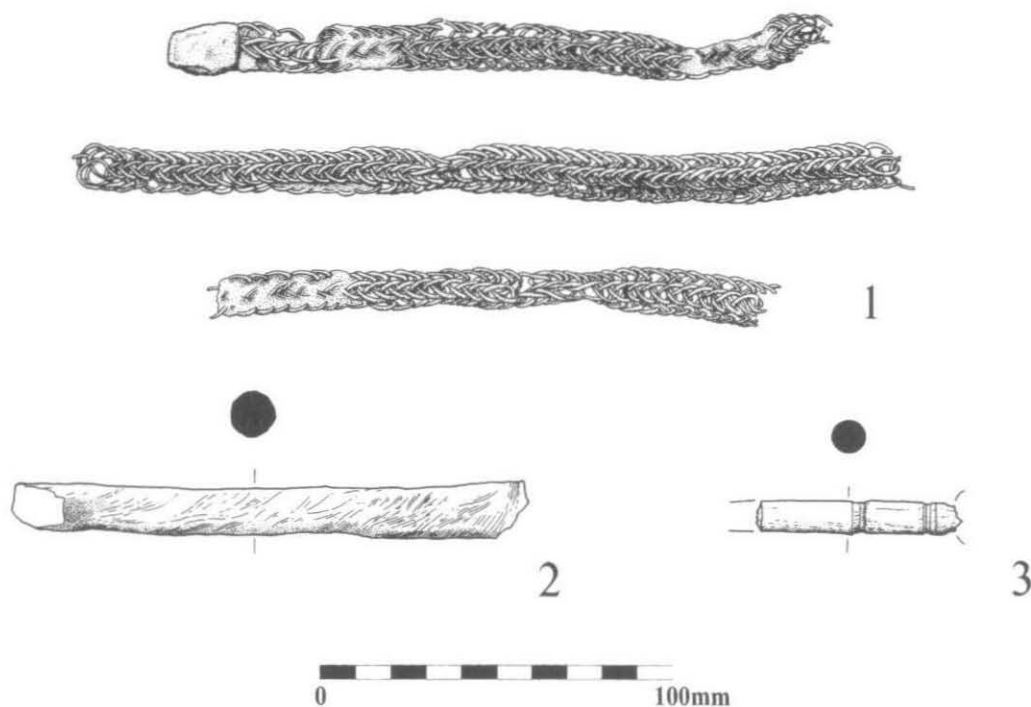


Fig. 5. 1. 14th-century copper-alloy ?chatelaine from pit 123. 2. Bone pin fragment from pit 123 (177). 3. Bone pin fragment from pit 320 (376).

contained part of a copper alloy buckle frame. Similar buckles have been recovered from post-medieval contexts in Winchester.<sup>22</sup> These objects have been dated, by association, to the mid to late 18th century.

A broken whittle-tang knife was recovered from pit 209 (252). It appears to have an iron fitting or bolster, perhaps separately applied, at the shoulders of the blade. It was found in association with pottery of 13th- to 15th-century date and stylistically it corresponds with this date.

#### WORKED BONE by NICKY CLARKSON

Two bone pin fragments were recovered during the excavation: one from pit 123 (177) and the other from pit 320 (376) (Fig. 5; 2 and 3). The first comprises part of a shaft which widens slightly at one end, with the head and point missing. The shaft does not appear to be decorated but does bear small tool marks and a transverse saw mark at the widened end. (Dimensions: length 73 mm., width from 55 mm. to 73 mm.) This pin is difficult to date as it is incomplete and has no diagnostic features. It was found in association with 13th- to 16th-century pottery and its crude and unpolished nature suggests an earlier rather than later date. The second pin comprises the top part of the shaft with the head missing. The shaft is decorated with two groups of incised rings: one group of four near the top as the shaft narrows slightly before the head; and another of three incised rings 9.5 mm. below. (Dimensions: length 27 mm., diameter 30 mm. at the point where the head is broken off, diameter 35 mm. at the broken end). Excavations in Southampton recovered three very similar but more complete bone pins dated to between AD 1250 and 1350.<sup>23</sup> The style of the bone pin from Bell Street, Henley, notably the groups of incised rings decorating the shaft, suggests it was slightly earlier and it was probably manufactured before AD 1300.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 524-6.

<sup>23</sup> C. Platt and R. Coleman-Smith, *Excavations in Medieval Southampton 1953-1969, Vol. 2: The Finds* (1975), 271-4.

## CLAY PIPE by ANDY SMITH

A total of 156 clay pipe fragments were recovered from 12 contexts. The majority of the bowl fragments have a long cylindrical shape with the top parallel to the stem which can be dated to between AD 1700 and 1770 (from pits 202, 211, 215 and 149). A wide heeled bowl, which is slightly earlier at AD 1690 to 1720, was also found in pit 149. Pit 204 contained a flat heeled barrel bowl which was made between 1640 and 1680.

There are stamps on the heels of 20 fragments which is a typical 18th-century trait. The insignia present are in the form of single letters in pairs, one either side of the heel. Fourteen pipes bear the letters 'RS' (pits 202 and 215), three have 'RP' (pits 211 and 215) and three bear the letters 'TC'. A clay pipe manufacturer in Eton, Richard Sutton (RS), is mentioned as having premises in 1717 and 1723.<sup>24</sup> The 'RP' stamp refers to Richard Pickman who was established in Henley by 1752.<sup>25</sup> However, there are no known local manufacturers with the mark 'TC'. It is quite likely that these pipes were from London due to its proximity to Henley and the probability of riverine trade and exchange along the Thames.

## OTHER FINDS

Complete catalogues of other finds from the site are to be found in the site archive. Very briefly they comprise the following: tile and brick from both medieval and post-medieval features; one prehistoric flint flake from pit 123; a small amount of oyster shell from eight features and a large quantity observed within the 19th- to 20th-century layer 107; a very small quantity of burnt flint (32 gms.) from pit 123 and postholes 112 and 124 and 118; and 105 fragments of post-medieval glass consisting of wine bottles, small bottles, window glass and drinking glasses.

## DISCUSSION

The evaluation and excavation described above have revealed five phases of activity on the site from mid/late medieval times to the present day.

The first phase of medieval occupation (1) is represented by fourteen pits, two pits/linear features, and four postholes, which have been dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries. The presence of two residual sherds of late 11th- to mid 12th-century pottery suggests earlier medieval activity in the general area of the site, but no subsoil features were identified as belonging to this period. The spatial patterning of the postholes does not indicate the ground plans of timber structures. However, many of the pits, which were probably used for rubbish disposal, contained fragments of roof tile. The presence of tile suggests medieval buildings nearby, probably on the street frontage, and it is interesting to note the quantity of building material from two pits (303 and 317) closest to the front of the plot. The environmental, faunal and artefactual evidence recovered from the pits and postholes appears to be of domestic rather than industrial origin and there is nothing to suggest what, if any, craft or trade took place on this plot. Reasonably choice cuts of meat, barley, free-threshing wheat, and pea were being utilised by the occupants of the site. In conclusion, these excavated deposits suggest light usage of the rear of plots, presumably relating to domestic dwellings fronting both Bell Street (to the west) and New Street (to the north), and are typical of a medieval urban backland.

The late medieval/early post-medieval phase (2) is represented by three pits, a posthole, a stakehole, a wall and two wall foundations. In broad terms, the nature of the site usage, the artefactual, and environmental evidence is similar to that of the earlier phase and continues to reflect domestic rather than industrial activity. Given the evidence, it is reasonable to assume that the status of the site had not changed from the earlier medieval period.

<sup>24</sup> A. Oswald, *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist* (BAR Brit. Ser. 14, 1975), 161.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 161.

Wall 207 also appears to belong to this phase. It crossed the site from north to south, parallel with Bell Street and aligned with existing walls in the adjoining properties. This was probably the back wall of the plot which fronted Bell Street and it is plausible to suggest that it was the original back wall of a burgage plot. The short length of flint foundation, 313, may also belong to this phase; it was apparently reused in the late 18th to 19th centuries when it was incorporated into the derelict building.

The 17th- to 18th-century features (phase 3) comprised rectangular pits, postholes and a flint-lined pit (202). These were probably garden features and rubbish pits; there is no evidence of industrial activity taking place. The spatial patterning of features of this phase is interesting. Features appear to be concentrated to the west of wall 207 (Fig. 2) but to the east were just four small postholes. As wall 207 separated two plots of land the difference in the density of features either side probably reflects different usage.

The late 18th- to 19th-century or Victorian phase (4) is represented by the construction of the now derelict buildings and other walls and foundations, probably garden and property boundaries. These have been dated to between the late 18th century and 1878 (the date of the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey). A track or pathway (104), also apparently constructed during this period, is illustrated on the 1878 Ordnance Survey.

This excavation has provided some important information regarding the development of the town to add to that gained from other excavations, building surveys, and documentary sources. Evidence for the early history of the town is scant (see above). It has been suggested, based upon the rectilinear layout of Henley and the regularity of house plots, that the main streets of the town were fully built-up by the 15th century.<sup>26</sup> The findings do support the view that the town was well developed by the 15th century, although it is still not clear whether the main streets were fully built-up by this time. The probable burgage wall discovered at 42c Bell Street dates to the 15th to 17th centuries which, unfortunately, neither confirms nor denies the proposal, taken from a study of documentary and cartographic sources, that rectilinear house plots were established during the 15th century.<sup>27</sup>

The development of Henley in the 17th and 18th centuries is at present best understood by the study of documentary sources and the standing building survey and excavation at 42c Bell Street have done little to alter this. However, the discovery of a remodelling of the site during the late 18th to 19th century is interesting. This activity probably relates to rebuilding that occurred between 1780 and 1850<sup>28</sup> which was the result of an economic boom in Henley due to the expansion of the agricultural, river, and coaching trade. The result of this economic wealth was that Henley became gentrified, reflecting its growing riches. Leading citizens remodelled their houses in brick following the fashion from London, Acts of Parliament were passed to allow the construction of a new bridge, the demolition of slum areas, paving and lighting of the streets, and the construction of new working-class housing.

This small excavation at 42c Bell Street has provided firm evidence of the development of the town and further investigations within Henley should enable the results of this project to be discussed in a broader context.

<sup>26</sup> Airs et al., op. cit. note 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> G. Tyack, 'The Rebuilding of Henley on Thames 1780-1914', *Jnl. of the Henley on Thames Archaeol. and Hist. Group*, 7 (1989), 1-10.

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