

# NOTES

## Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2010

In 2010 Oxford City Council was pleased to receive an English Heritage grant to help develop the evidence base for the city's historic environment and improve public access to this information. Work commenced on an archaeological plan which involves the production of an urban archaeological strategy, period research assessments and agendas, and the completion of a programme of historic urban and landscape characterisation. The results of this project will be made available on the council website once a consultation process has been completed. An English Heritage grant was also received to allow public access to the Urban Archaeological Database via the Heritage Gateway website.

The year also saw a number of significant fieldwork projects, many of them resulting from the replacement and upgrading of college and university facilities. Most sites are currently subject to post-excavation work and therefore only short provisional summaries are provided below.

### SELECTED PROJECTS

#### *The Queen's College, Nun's Garden Lecture Theatre*

Between February and June Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an excavation prior to the construction of a new lecture theatre in the Nun's Garden to the rear of Drawda Hall. The investigation revealed the remains of nineteenth- and twentieth-century outbuildings (including a corrugated air raid shelter), a truncated stone vaulted structure associated with the hall, medieval and post-medieval rubbish and cess pits, and a small quantity of late-Saxon pottery. Along the eastern boundary of the Nun's Garden a substantial stone boundary wall of medieval character was exposed, and to the east of Drawda Hall the reduction of a raised flower bed revealed an intact single-build vaulted stone cellar, provisionally dated to the seventeenth century (based on the incorporated brick). At the southern end of the cellar was a well-preserved rectangular access chamber (see Plates 10 and 11). The college and BGS Architects are to be commended for their efforts to secure the *in situ* preservation of this structure as a garden feature.

#### *The Wesley Memorial Church, New Inn Hall Street*

In June OA excavated a small trial trench against the south side of the city wall to the rear of the Wesley Memorial Church, New Inn Hall Street, just west of bastion number 1. The trench was designed to assess the impact of a proposed extension to the church hall. The robber trench for the thirteenth-century city wall and seventeenth-century and later garden soils were revealed. The remaining section of city wall had been subject to at least two repairs or alterations, one of which may have comprised the creation of a doorway or postern close to the bastion.

#### *Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road*

Further to last year's note on excavations at the former Radcliffe Infirmary site on Woodstock Road, a watching brief was undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology in July during utility works to the rear of the eighteenth-century infirmary building. This recorded the edge of a fourth late Neolithic to early Bronze-Age ring ditch extending under the infirmary building.

#### *Brasenose College*

From July and intermittently into 2011 OA undertook a watching brief and historic building

recording during building work required for new kitchen facilities at Brasenose College. Stone walls predating the sixteenth-century college and a vaulted stone structure were partially exposed during ground works. The foundation and service designs were subsequently amended to preserve these *in situ*. The most remarkable discovery related to the fabric of the east wall of the Eckersley Room in the south-west corner of the Old Quad where the removal of panelling revealed a section of wood panelling painted black and green with a series of seven- to eight-pointed stars in yellowish gold. The decoration extended over the chamfered beam directly above the panelling and also to a beam on the south elevation, suggesting this decoration belonged to a small bed closet or study. A section of the wall retained layers of lath and plaster and the remains of earlier wattle and daub from the original sixteenth-century build. A blocked doorway was set within the panelling and traces of paste from affixed notices were preserved, providing an evocative and readable example of a minor college space, dated to the seventeenth or possibly early eighteenth century. The discovery of the panelling necessitated a significant redesign of the new kitchen to preserve the feature behind a protective membrane. The college and BGS Architects are to be congratulated for their determination to secure the long-term preservation of this important heritage asset.

*University Science Area, Proposed New Physics Building, Parks Road*

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in September by Cotswold Archaeology at the site of the proposed new physics laboratory in the university science area, Parks Road. A series of gullies were recorded containing residual medieval pottery and post-medieval clay tobacco pipes and were interpreted as wheel ruts. One rut had been consolidated with fragments of limestone. A number of horticultural or landscaping features associated with the University Parks were also noted.

*Saïd Business School, Park End Street*

Between October and November OA undertook an excavation prior to the extension of the Saïd Business School, Park End Street. The site is located on what was the western edge of the grounds of Rewley Abbey. Investigations revealed a series of ponds and managed channels of medieval and later date as well as pottery, tile, and metalwork associated with the abbey.

*Eastgate Hotel Car Park, High Street*

In November Cotswold Archaeology undertook an evaluation in the car park of the Eastgate Hotel, High Street, providing a rare opportunity to investigate the area outside of the Eastgate. Trial trenches recorded two pits of late thirteenth- or fourteenth-century date. There then appeared to be a hiatus of activity until the mid to late seventeenth century when a single-storey building was erected. The building's walls were robbed in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and a layer of soil was imported. No trace of the medieval city ditch was identified.

DAVID RADFORD, CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST

# Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire, 2010

In 2010 there were significant changes in the curation of archaeology in Oxfordshire. The government's new PPS5 guidelines replaced the old PPG16 (introduced in 1990) as the backbone of historic environment conservation. The new practice guide aims at a more holistic approach, but its long-term implications remain uncertain. Closer to home, the retirement of long-serving county archaeologist Paul Smith led to a period of adjustment and adaptation within the county archaeological services, particularly since spending cuts have meant his post has been frozen.

The recession has caused a drop in the level of development and the number of archaeological investigations. This has been partly counteracted, however, by a considerable number of consultations for agri-environment schemes, which will hopefully assist in preserving archaeological sites and features throughout the county. The following sites investigated during the year were of particular interest.

## SELECTED PROJECTS

### *Great Western Park, Didcot*

Excavations continued as part of the first phase of this large development on the western side of Didcot. Linear excavations carried out by Oxford Archaeology (OA) along the proposed routes of the roads and service trenches revealed an Iron-Age settlement consisting of at least seven roundhouses and a number of four-post structures and associated pits. The roundhouses were fairly well preserved, and at least three of them retained complete rings of postholes and pronounced porch-ways. An area of open excavation uncovered Iron-Age and Roman settlement immediately to the north of these roundhouses, centred around two large enclosures. This was aligned with a large Iron-Age driveway heading north from the settlement area.

### *Langford Lane, Wendlebury*

Geophysical survey and evaluation trenching was carried out by OA on the proposed Langford Lane diversion as part of Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 improvement scheme. An area of disturbance on the eastern side of the Parade Ground proved to be a very well preserved section of Roman road. The evaluation showed that a series of Roman surfaces, flanked by ditches, survives c.100 mm below the current ground surface along the line of the south-east to south-west segment of Langford Lane. Further trenches in this area recorded additional features which were not fully investigated in the evaluation. Large unrolled sherds of pottery and amphora were recovered from the surface of these features.

The remaining trenches along the proposed route recorded aspects of a Roman field system, already known from cropmarks in aerial photographs. The features had seen little truncation from ploughing. The route of the Alchester–Dorchester road was not recorded by the geophysical survey due to modern field boundaries and the presence of a badger set, which prevented evaluation in this area.

### *Langford Park Farm*

A small evaluation was carried out at Langford Park Farm (east of Alchester) by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS), ahead of the excavation of a flood alleviation pond. This recorded a series of Roman features including linear features and pits as well as a large spread of Roman material on the western side of the area. This material included sixteen pieces of *opus signinium* pavement.

*Slade End Farm, Wallingford*

Evaluation by OA, ahead of a planning application and in conjunction with an earlier phase of geophysical survey, has indicated a concentration of Iron-Age activity in the southernmost part of the site. A series of double-ditched trackways and enclosures were recorded in the eastern half of the site. Pottery finds suggest a mainly middle Iron-Age date but early Iron-Age material may indicate that the eastern of two enclosures identified was the earlier of the two. Evidence of Bronze-Age activity was also located. The lack of Roman features or finds indicates that, unlike others in the area, this site did not continue to be used in the Roman period.

*Church of the Immaculate Conception, Bicester*

Archaeological investigation was carried out by TVAS on the site of a known cemetery beneath the car park of the 1960s Catholic church, before construction of a new parish room. The cemetery was originally recorded by the county archaeology service in 2000. The burials were aligned east–west and although undated are thought to be Anglo-Saxon and related to the minster; later burials were likely to have been interred at St Edburg's church. Seven articulated burials and seven disarticulated burials were recorded. An evaluation east of the known area of the cemetery did not record any further burials.

*Old Gaol, Abingdon*

Archaeological investigation prior to residential development was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS). The original gaol buildings have been retained to form part of the development, but the requirement for underground car parking necessitated extensive archaeological investigation in the areas where development was to be undertaken. Previous excavation by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (AAHS) had revealed later prehistoric deposits and a Romano-British building. Further evidence of dense occupation during the Iron Age was revealed, including pits, postholes, gulleys, and two hearths. Beneath one of the hearths was a pit containing carbonised seeds. Other finds included a copper ring, a bone pin, and a spindle whorl. The evidence was, however, significantly disturbed by later pits.

The Iron-Age features were sealed by a series of Romano-British yard surfaces. Cutting through one pebbled yard surface was a large Roman quarry pit. This and other smaller pits of the same period contained waste material. Overlying this was a stone-walled building previously identified by AAHS. The building was not revealed in its entirety but the part that was excavated measured 11.5 m by a minimum of 9.5 m. The remains included partially robbed wall footings and *in situ* floor surfaces made up of fine gravel and compacted clay. It was constructed, in part, through the fills of the large quarry pit and therefore some of the wall footings were excavated to a considerable depth to reach stable ground.

The medieval period was mainly represented by pits containing organic material and general waste, including large quantities of butchered animal bones. A probable boundary ditch crossed the site on a north-east to south-west axis. The medieval pits were noticeably denser on its western side.

*Smaller Investigations*

Small evaluations, excavations, and watching briefs included the evaluation at Market Place Mews, Henley, which recorded medieval and post-medieval property boundaries. At the Walter Lister site in Crowmarsh evaluation and subsequent excavation recorded evidence of medieval settlement adjacent to the bridge head; work is ongoing, but early indications suggest a twelfth-century date. Excavation off Newbury Street, Wantage by TVAS revealed medieval activity, suggesting that medieval Wantage spread much further south than previously thought. Further investigation at Malthouse Farm, Standlake by JMHS uncovered Romano-British and medieval settlement. The Romano-British settlement appears to have been of relatively low status and dated to the third

and fourth centuries. Medieval settlement dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries was found, including a small dovecote. Further investigation off Coxwell Road, Faringdon by OA provided additional evidence of late prehistoric and Romano-British activity.

HUGH CODDINGTON and RICHARD ORAM, COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

# The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire, 2010

A total of 1,231 digital records for 1,589 Oxfordshire finds were created in the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database in 2010. These finds dated from the Palaeolithic to c.1700 AD and can be broken down into the following categories: Palaeolithic to Neolithic (2 per cent); Bronze Age (2 per cent); Iron Age (1 per cent); Roman (50 per cent); early medieval, AD 410–1066 (2 per cent); later medieval, 1066–1499 (17 per cent), and post-medieval (16 per cent). A small number of modern (post-1850) finds were recorded for interest or comparison (less than 1 per cent), while some finds have yet to be assigned a period (9 per cent). The vast majority of finds were discovered by metal detectorists (93 per cent), including ‘eyes only’ finds. A two-day detectorists’ rally in West Hanney and Grove in 2009 led to the recording of over 800 finds, of which about a third have been processed and included in the statistics for 2010. Other methods of discovery include building or agricultural work (5 per cent) and gardening (1 per cent). Less than 0.5 per cent were recovered from controlled archaeological investigations (including fieldwalking).

A selection of interesting and unusual finds recorded on the database during 2010 is presented here. For further information on these and other finds see [www.finds.org.uk/database](http://www.finds.org.uk/database).

## *Iron-Age Strap Fitting from Goring CP (BERK-1532C5)*



A cast copper alloy late Iron-Age or early Roman strap fitting measuring 39.79 mm by 18.01 mm by 9.39 mm and weighing 14.3 g. The fitting is symmetrical in form and from the centre has a recessed band flanked by a raised and thickened oval moulding with a thin incised line decorating its edges. The body of the fitting flares outwards to where it meets a sub-rectangular terminal with five circles arranged vertically, each inlaid with red enamel. A thinly incised line separates the terminal from the flared body. The reverse of the object is undecorated and has two integrally cast rectangular strap loops set vertically along the terminals. There are no other strap fittings of this type recorded on the PAS database.

## *Roman Military Strap Fitting from Great Faringdon CP (BERK-54F9E7)*



A cast copper alloy Roman military harness junction fitting or *phalera* connector dating from the first to third centuries AD. The fitting measures 54 mm by 16.07 mm by 11.92 mm and weighs 30.9 g. The strap fitting is formed of a sub-circular face plate with rivet hole for attachment to a strap; a small triangular-shaped back catch would have helped hold the strap in position (maximum depth of strap 5.3 mm). The thick, tapering body of the fitting has two deeply recessed mouldings running around its width, stopping at the edge of the reverse,

while the foot of the fitting has a distinctive raised ‘T’-shaped terminal that curves outwards. The reverse of the connector is worn smooth through use. These connectors were probably related to

horse harnesses, although they may also have been belt connectors or *phalera* connectors worn by soldiers (A. Appels and S. Laycock, *Roman Buckles and Military Fittings* (Witham, 2007), p. 133). This is not a common find.

*Early Medieval Harness Mount from South Stoke CP (BERK-14F381)*



A gilded copper-alloy horse-harness mount measuring 32.03 mm by 39.33 mm by 3.29 mm and weighing 15.8 g. The mount consists of a flat sub-rectangular horizontal bar with in-curved ends, one face decorated with chip-carved reticulate interlace. On one side of the bar is a pelta- or mushroom-shaped projection containing a panel of chip-carved reticulate interlace flanked by two spirals. On the opposite side of the bar is a second broader but shallower projection containing two long-nosed animals' heads flanked by two spirals. The reverse of the object is undecorated, but has two integrally cast

loops orientated longitudinally along the bar. This object is complete and in very good condition. The object is Irish and of eighth- or ninth-century date. It can be closely paralleled by mounts from Soma Farm in Hoyland, Norway (S.M. Youngs, *'The Work of Angels': Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork 6th to 9th Centuries AD* (London, 1989), p. 118, items 114a–e) and, like the Norwegian find, is likely to represent Viking activity. These objects are discussed by Susan Youngs in C. Hourihane (ed.) *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and its European Context* (Princeton, 2001), including one of very similar shape from Upper Bush near Cuxton (Kent). Youngs identifies this object as a bridle mount but comments that these mounts could have been developed into shrine or box mounts. There are several more distant parallels on the PAS database, including SF8875, BUC-B9B352, LEIC-09D1C8, and NMS-4CF1B6.

*Medieval Coin of William II from Chinnor CP (BERK-857C54)*



An Anglo-Norman silver penny of William II of England (AD 1087–1100) measuring 19.7 mm in diameter and weighing 1.38 g. It was struck in Cambridge, probably by the moneyer Wibern between 1092 and 1095. The obverse depicts the crowned bust of William II facing between two stars. The obverse inscription reads +PILLELMRE (M and R ligated). The reverse of the coin has been double struck and is hard to decipher

but it depicts a voided cross pattée with an annulet in the centre over a cross annulettée. The reverse inscription reads '+[...][RN?] ON GRANT'. See J.J. North, *English Hammered Coinage, Volume I. Early Anglo-Saxon to Henry III, c.600–1272*, third edition (London, 1994), no. 853. This coin is recorded in the Fitzwilliam Museum Corpus of Early Medieval Coins (2010.0410).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Helena Hamerow and to PAS Finds Advisors Kevin Leahy and especially Helen Geake for their help in identifying and paralleling find BERK-14F381. Thanks to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge for the full identification of the reverse of find BERK-857C54.

ANNI BYARD, OXFORDSHIRE FINDS LIAISON OFFICER



## A Roman Lead ‘Tank’ from Wigginton, North Oxfordshire

The Roman villa at Wigginton (SP 392 334) was first brought to general attention as a result of antiquarian excavations undertaken in 1824 and publicised in Alfred Beesley’s *History of Banbury* (1841).<sup>1</sup> Beesley’s account included illustrations of a number of mosaic pavements, from which it was clear that, in its late Roman phase at least, this was a substantial and well-appointed villa. Extraordinarily, the site was not made a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and it was not examined again until 1965–6, when excavation was undertaken for the Ministry of Public Building and Works by Ernest Greenfield.<sup>2</sup> This work, prompted by continued plough damage to the main building, was confined to parts of this building lying within the more easterly of two fields within which the villa is now known to be sited. Regrettably, Greenfield’s excavation was never published, though some records are extant and a summary plan appeared in print in 2000.<sup>3</sup> This plan shows part of the presumed main range of a complex building, aligned approximately east–west. Some of the finds, including further mosaic pavements and painted wall plaster of unusually high quality, supported the view that this was a particularly wealthy villa of the mid third century, rebuilt in the early fourth,<sup>4</sup> in part overlying an earlier structure.<sup>5</sup> The fifteen or more rooms examined contained fragments of ten tessellated pavements.<sup>6</sup>

In 2001–5 the western part of the site was investigated by Phoenix Archaeology and Historic Research, a Banbury-based amateur group. This intervention revealed part of a west wing or range of the villa, including a long north–south corridor and a bath suite with further mosaic pavements.<sup>7</sup> Geophysical survey and a plot of aerial photographic evidence provided further detail of the layout and wider context of the villa and related features, as well as probable earlier ones.<sup>8</sup> On the morning of 14 July 2005, near the end of the excavation, a member of Phoenix Archaeology using a metal detector identified a large anomaly c.50 m west-south-west of the south-west extent of the excavation of the bath area of the villa. Digging to locate the anomaly revealed the rim of a lead tank, which was then emptied, while part exposure of the exterior showed decorated vertical strips and what turned out to be a chi-rho monogram.

At this point Phoenix contacted Hannah Fluck (deputy county archaeologist), with whom the group had been liaising. She and Paul Booth (Oxford Archaeology) visited the site in the afternoon. Meanwhile, Esther Cameron (then a freelance conservator based at Oxfordshire County Museum Store, Standlake), had been contacted and had agreed to come and provide assistance in raising the vessel. By the time she reached the site, in the late afternoon, permission to remove the object had been obtained from the landowner. The tank was then lifted and, after very rapid examination of the material beneath it, the hole was backfilled, as required by the landowner and the tenant farmer. The tank was subsequently taken to Standlake for examination.

<sup>1</sup> Conveniently summarised with other early references in *VCH Oxon.* 1, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> D.R. Wilson and R.P. Wright, ‘Roman Britain in 1965’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 56 (1966), p. 208 n. 94; idem, ‘Roman Britain in 1966’, in *ibid.* 57 (1967), p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> M. Henig and P. Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 2000), p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson and Wright, ‘Roman Britain in 1965’, p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, ‘Roman Britain in 1966’, p. 186.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, ‘Roman Britain in 1965’, p. 208.

<sup>7</sup> M. Morris, ‘Phoenix Archaeology and Historic Research’, *SMidLA*, 32 (2002), p. 65, 33 (2003), p. 82, 34 (2004), pp. 77–8, 35 (2005), p. 87; D.S. Neal, ‘New Mosaics from Wigginton’, *Mosaic*, 32 (2005), pp. 15–18.

<sup>8</sup> Unpublished geophysics report by Roger Ainslie; H. Winton, ‘Wigginton Roman Villa, Oxfordshire, Aerial Survey and Investigation’, English Heritage survey report AER/7/2005 (2005).



## THE VESSEL CONTEXT

Digging by the Phoenix team created a large, roughly circular hole around the tank. The soil from within the vessel, described as 'ordinary soil', was not been kept separate from the other material removed from the hole. The vessel, a typical late Roman 'baptismal' tank roughly 0.50 m in diameter, had been set approximately upright in the ground with the handles aligned roughly north and south and the chi-rho panel facing approximately east. The highest part of the rim was c.0.33 m below the modern ground surface of the field. At this point, in the north-east quadrant of the vessel, the rim had been slightly damaged, probably by fairly recent ploughing, and a small section of it removed. This was found at a high level within the fill of the vessel, presumably having been dragged there by the plough. The location of the damage is consistent with the orientation of contemporary agricultural work in the field, running roughly north-south down the long axis of the field (which slopes down to the south and west from a high point in the northern corner).

After removal of the tank a very limited examination of the hole revealed part of a curving feature edge suggesting that the object was set in a pit, rather than being (for example) deposited within the backfill of a ditch or some other feature. The pit may have been dug specifically to accommodate the vessel. Its dimensions are not known as there was insufficient time to examine the feature properly. It would have been at least 0.10 m deeper than the base of the vessel. The lowest fill encountered was a smooth grey-brown loam with very few stone fragments. Above this, and underlying the tank, was a similar layer but with a rather higher content of ironstone, including pieces up to c.0.15 m in length, some apparently burnt. It is not clear how far this deposit had extended around the sides of the tank but it may have reached some way up the sides. Only fragments of a probable upper fill of different texture survived. This was a compact, dry, reddish brown, slightly loamy sand, again with fairly frequent fragments of ironstone. Most of these were quite small, typically only 30–40 mm in length. Two larger pieces of stone (c.0.25 m long) within (probably) the same fill were not observed *in situ* but were reported to have lain against the north-east and north-west quadrants of the outer side of the tank, probably on edge, and may perhaps have been intended to help pack it in place. Neither stone appeared to have been worked. The only objects perhaps from this probable upper fill of the pit were two square-sectioned iron nails, of which the more complete was 130 mm in length.

The fill of the tank seems to have consisted of the same material as the putative upper fill from outside it. A single larger stone, c.0.20 m in length, came from about halfway down the fill of the tank. No other characteristics of the fill were noted by the Phoenix diggers.

## THE TANK

The tank has a flattish base and is approximately vertically sided (Figs. 1 and 2). The sides are made of two sheets of lead, joined by substantial seams, into each of which is inserted a simple but robust handle, consisting of a roughly rectangular block with a circular hole. The holes could have been used for suspension, either in use or during transport. The base is 'dished' and joined to the sides by a circumferential seam 50 mm above the base. The method used to join the seams has not been investigated, but extrusions of metal along the seams inside the tank suggest they were welded with molten lead in the manner described by Tylecote.<sup>9</sup>

The rim of the vessel is expanded and decorated with cabling. Each 'half' of the vessel side is divided into five panels, three main ones whose edges are marked by raised vertical strips decorated with herringbone incisions, and a narrower one at each 'end', adjoining the two vertical seams. The latter do not seem to have been decorated. In the central panel on one side is a well-defined chi-rho. The rounded part of the rho is approximately circular. The arms of both letters are of equal length and touch or slightly overlap a circular border; both the letters and border are cabled,

<sup>9</sup> R.F. Tylecote, *The Prehistory of Metallurgy in the British Isles* (London, 1986), p. 75.

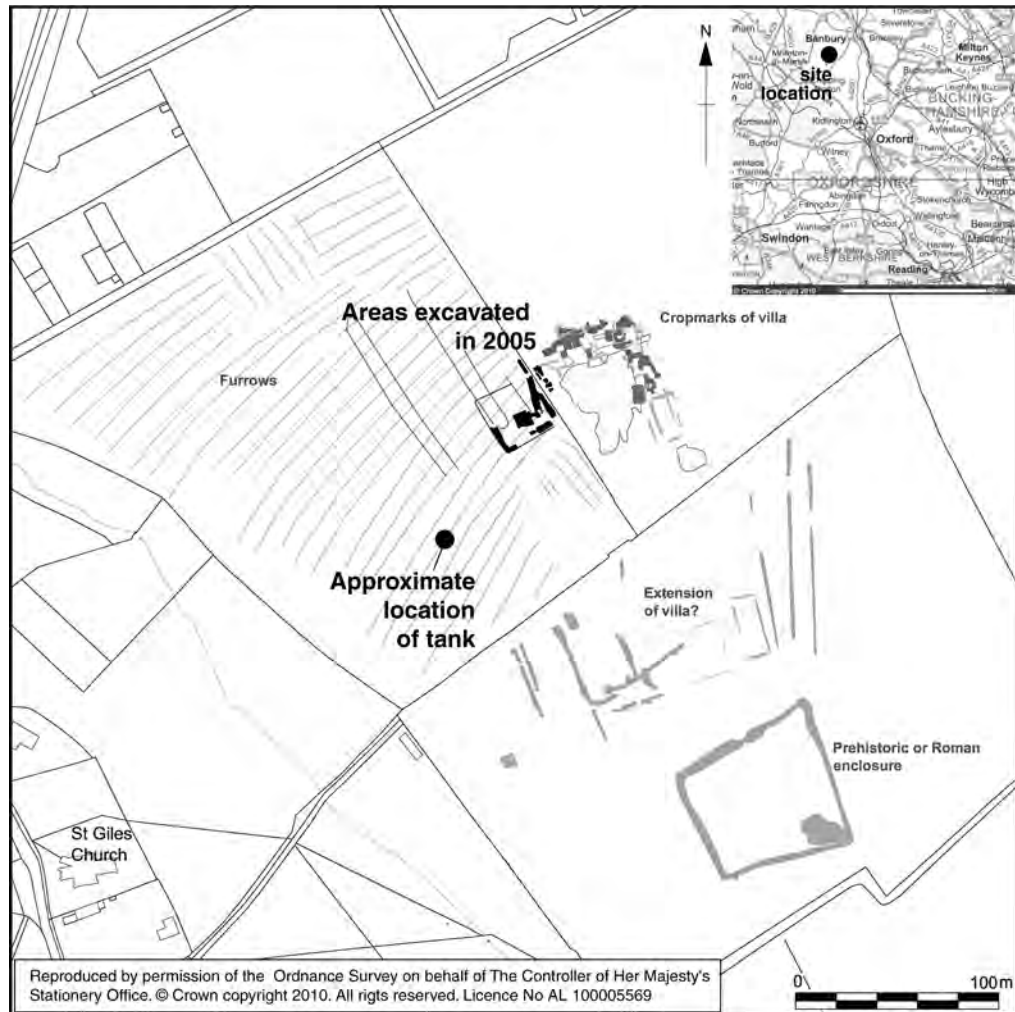


Fig. 1. The Wigginton site.

the latter perhaps intended to represent a wreath, as in some more complex renditions of this motif, such as the (restored) chi-rho from the painted wall of the 'chapel' at Lullingstone (Kent).<sup>10</sup> A similar treatment of the chi-rho is seen, for example, on the tank from Wiggonholt (Sussex), but without the surrounding border,<sup>11</sup> while in the example from near Rushden (Northants.) the linear elements of the chi-rho are cabled, but the loop of the rho and the surrounding ring are not.<sup>12</sup> With the exception of the herringbone, most of the decoration on the Wigginton tank was cast, possibly in a dried clay-sand mould before the vessel was constructed.

<sup>10</sup> J.E.A. Liversidge and F. Weatherhead, 'The Christian Paintings', in G.W. Meates, *The Roman Villa at Lullingstone, Kent, Vol II: The Wall Paintings and Finds*, Kent Archaeological Society Monograph Series, 3 (1987), pp. 11–40.

<sup>11</sup> R.G. Collingwood et al., *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain, II* (Stroud, 1990–5), 2416.12.

<sup>12</sup> J. Looker, 'Another Early Christian Font/Tank from Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 28 (1998–9), p. 163, plate 1.

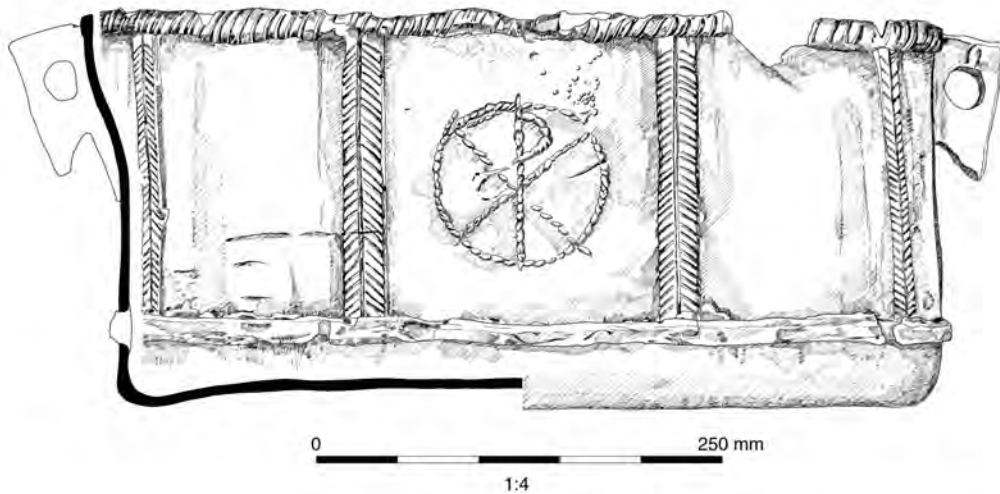


Fig. 2. Side view of the tank with chi-rho symbol.

The vessel shows signs of damage, some of which can be attributed to the circumstances of its discovery. The entire upper rim, which is the most corroded part of the vessel, is chipped and scraped, and on the inside further scrape marks on the walls and base testify to its hurried excavation. However, more serious damage to the upper north-east-facing wall, where it is buckled and a piece of rim detached, and to the lower south-facing wall, which has been distorted apparently by impact, must have happened prior to the vessel's discovery as the corrosion layers here are intact (Fig. 3). Reference has already been made to the likelihood of ploughing being the cause of damage to the north-east section of rim. The other damage, resulting from a blow sustained below the south handle, caused the seam to split and the lower wall to be pushed inwards. A small hole in the vessel wall adjacent to this may also be related to this event, which could have occurred during or immediately before the vessel's concealment.

#### DISCUSSION

The tank is, as was recognised on site, a good example of a well-known class of late-Roman objects. Some twenty-nine examples, including the present one, are known from Britain, from twenty-five different sites. In addition to these, four similar tanks have been discovered on the continent, three in Italy,<sup>13</sup> and one at Schleithem in Switzerland.<sup>14</sup> Detailed discussion of the whole collection is unnecessary since they are summarised in a forthcoming paper by Belinda Crerar,<sup>15</sup> but a few points can be made to inform understanding of their significance.

Present evidence suggests that the Wigginton villa was substantial and probably had a complex development history, perhaps involving a pre-Roman phase. The villa provides the wider context for the appearance of the tank, but unfortunately the circumstances of the discovery do not allow the relationship between the two to be clarified. What is more, the tanks as a class remain enigmatic. They range in diameter from 0.28 m to almost 1 m, and vary in the degree of elaboration of their

<sup>13</sup> G. Gatti, 'Capselle Reliquiarie Cristiane e Misure Romane di Capacità', *Bulletino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale*, 33 (1905), pp. 316–28.

<sup>14</sup> M. Bossert, 'Eine Warmwasseraufbereitungsanlage in den Römischen Thermen von Schleithem-Jüliomagus', *Jahresberichte aus Augst und Kaiseraugst*, 3 (1983), pp. 81–5.

<sup>15</sup> B. Crerar, 'Romano-British Lead Tanks: a Study in Design, Destruction and Deposition', *Britannia*, forthcoming.



Fig. 3. Photograph of side and end views of the tank.



decoration. Ten of the tanks have a chi-rho or related motifs, although it is possible that the original number was slightly higher as some are incomplete. The contexts from which they come vary, but where they are known include ditches, and particularly pits, wells, and rivers. In this respect the Wigginton example is quite typical. Most have been found in lower order nucleated settlements, such as Ashton (Northants.), Rochester (Kent), Bourton-on-the-Water (Glos.), and Brough and East Stoke (Notts.). A minority have come from more strictly rural sites, although only in the case of Wilbraham (Cambs.), Rushden (see above), and probably Icklingham (Suffolk) are these likely to have been villas. Wigginton and Rushden appear to be the clearest examples of the direct association of a tank with a villa. There are no clear associations with major towns or military establishments.

The Wigginton tank was buried whole, apparently fairly carefully and therefore presumably deliberately, at a short distance from the villa. It may have been placed within a discrete feature, but whether this was specially dug to contain it, or if there were other earlier or contemporary features in the vicinity, is unknown. Several characteristics of the Wigginton tank's deposition parallel treatment observed for other lead tanks, suggesting that their deposition may have been subject to a particular behavioural pattern. Evidence of damage, presumed to be contemporaneous with deposition, is seen on several of the tanks, many being cut into fragments, flattened or more generally harmed. The damage to the seam and puncture to the side of the Wigginton tank may result from similar behaviour. In no known cases does this damage target the religious imagery on the tanks and in several cases takes care to avoid it, making the interpretation that these were punitive attacks on offensive religious objects untenable. While such damage may have been inflicted for different reasons on different tanks, in the case of the Wigginton tank the punching of a hole through the side may reflect ideas similar to the 'ritual killing' of ceramic vessels, where a hole would be bored through the base or the side of a vessel with the apparent intention of making it useless for its original intended purpose before it was deposited in a well or similar context.<sup>16</sup> If so, this would suggest a religious or superstitious element surrounding the tank's deposition.

The signs of burning surrounding the Wigginton tank bring to mind similarities in the treatment afforded to some other tanks. A tank from Enford (Wilts.), reportedly associated with a building of unspecified type, was discovered in an area of scorched earth and seems to have been subject to *in situ* heating.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, tanks from Caversham (Berks., formerly Oxon.), Perry Oaks (Greater London), and Kenilworth (Warks.) show evidence for damage by fire, although how this relates to the use of these tanks is far from clear. Since only five of the twenty-nine tanks show evidence of fire damage, and not of a consistent nature, this may result from idiosyncratic, unrelated events in each case.

The original function of the tanks is unclear. It is often assumed that they were related to Christian baptism rituals but the evidence for this is highly problematic. The proximity of the Wigginton tank to a bathhouse is suggestive. It is paralleled by the discovery of another tank adjacent to a bathhouse at Rushden,<sup>18</sup> and by two continental examples (one from the baths of Juliomagus at Schleithem, and the other from Castel di Sangro, Abruzzo).<sup>19</sup> It is possible that these tanks served a purpose within the baths, perhaps in the heating, storage or conduction of water, though it cannot be said with confidence that such a function applied to all of the other examples.<sup>20</sup> It is also unclear whether the chi-rho monogram signifies a connection between the tanks and the early Christian church, the personal faith of the (?villa) owner, or a popular emblematic device of

<sup>16</sup> M. Fulford and J. Timby, 'Timing Devices, Fermentation Vessels, "Ritual" Piercings? A Consideration of Deliberately "Holed" Pots from Silchester and Elsewhere', *Britannia*, 32 (2001), pp. 293–7.

<sup>17</sup> H.F.W.L. Vatcher, 'Excavation and Fieldwork in Wiltshire', *WAM*, 62 (1967), pp. 124–31.

<sup>18</sup> Looker, 'Another Early Christian Font', pp. 163–4.

<sup>19</sup> Bossert, 'Eine Warmwasseraufbereitungsanlage', pp. 81–5; Gatti, 'Capselle Reliquiarie Cristiane'.

<sup>20</sup> Crerar, 'Romano-British Lead Tanks'.

the period associated with the imperial house and the elite.<sup>21</sup> These and other issues relating to the tanks are discussed at greater length by Belinda Crerar in her forthcoming article.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Oxfordshire Museums Service thanks Mr and Mrs Cobb for their generosity in giving this remarkable find to the county for safekeeping. The illustrations were produced by Magdalena Wachnik of Oxford Archaeology.

PAUL BOOTH, ESTHER CAMERON, and BELINDA CRERAR

<sup>21</sup> For a recent perspective on this subject see S. Pearce, 'The Hinton St Mary Mosaic Pavement: Christ or Emperor?', *Britannia*, 39 (2008), pp. 193–218.

# Possible Early Christian Enclosure and Deserted Medieval Settlement at Prescote, near Cropredy

In 1994 John Blair published an account of the 'bizarre and outrageous' legend of St Fremund, whose final resting place was supposedly at Cropredy.<sup>1</sup> He drew attention to the round outline of a field called Madcroft at Prescote, just to the north-east of Cropredy (Fig. 1), suggesting that this could mark the position of an Anglo-Saxon minster enclosure similar to those identified at Bampton, Binsey, and Bloxham.<sup>2</sup> The site, close to the river Cherwell, was investigated by the authors in 1997 as part of an A-Level archaeology project. No clear evidence was found for an early religious enclosure, but it was possible to identify the surviving earthworks of the deserted medieval settlement of Prescote, in contradiction to the assertion made in the *VCH* that 'the layout of the medieval hamlets [of Prescote and Upper Prescote (to the north-east)] is not visible'.<sup>3</sup> A further visit to Prescote in 2010 revealed that the field had been ploughed for the past three or four years and the earthworks had been degraded to the faintest traces. This therefore appeared an appropriate time to publish our earlier findings.

## ST FREMUND

Blair draws attention to the remarkable stories of several saints associated with Oxfordshire, including Osgyth of Aylesbury (Bucks.) and Rumbold of King's Sutton (Northants.), and of course St Frideswide of Oxford. He notes that though these stories do not provide accurate historical details and were often reworked by twelfth-century and later hagiographers, they may nonetheless contain elements of genuine local folklore from the Anglo-Saxon period.<sup>4</sup> The extraordinary tale of Fremund describes him as a son of King Offa of Mercia (d. 796) who became a hermit but abandoned this life to fight against the Vikings.<sup>5</sup> He was murdered by a disaffected kinsman, Oswy, who struck off his head. Fremund's corpse picked up his head, forgave his killer, and walked to a site near Harbury (Warks.). There the repentant Oswy retrieved the body and buried it at nearby Offchurch. Sixty-six years later Fremund was moved by three crippled virgins to a place surrounded by marsh between the Cherwell and the Bradmere (probably High Furlong brook, separating Prescote and Cropredy) about three miles from Banbury. Later a pilgrim in Jerusalem called Albert had a vision instructing him to recover Fremund's body from a grave near the house of five priests (presumably Prescot, or 'priests' cottage') and remove it to more suitable holy ground. Albert returned to England and loaded the remains onto a cart to take to the nearest monastery, but when he reached Cropredy the cart became miraculously fixed in place. A chapel was built on the spot and the saint's remains reburied. Here they supposedly remained, at least in part, until the Reformation.<sup>6</sup>

For all its fantastic details, the story conveys a 'strong sense of place' and 'repeated references to places and landscape features which the writers or their sources must have known'.<sup>7</sup> Possibly it preserves the tradition of a local hermit living in isolation at Prescote who was killed during a Viking incursion. When miracles were reported at his burial place, his body may have been moved

<sup>1</sup> J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 75–6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 62, 67–8, 120.

<sup>3</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 10, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, pp. 52–3, 75–6.

<sup>5</sup> For the full text of Lydgate's verse life of saints Edmund and Fremund see <http://www.ualberta.ca/~sreimer/edmund/edmund.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 10, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, p. 75.



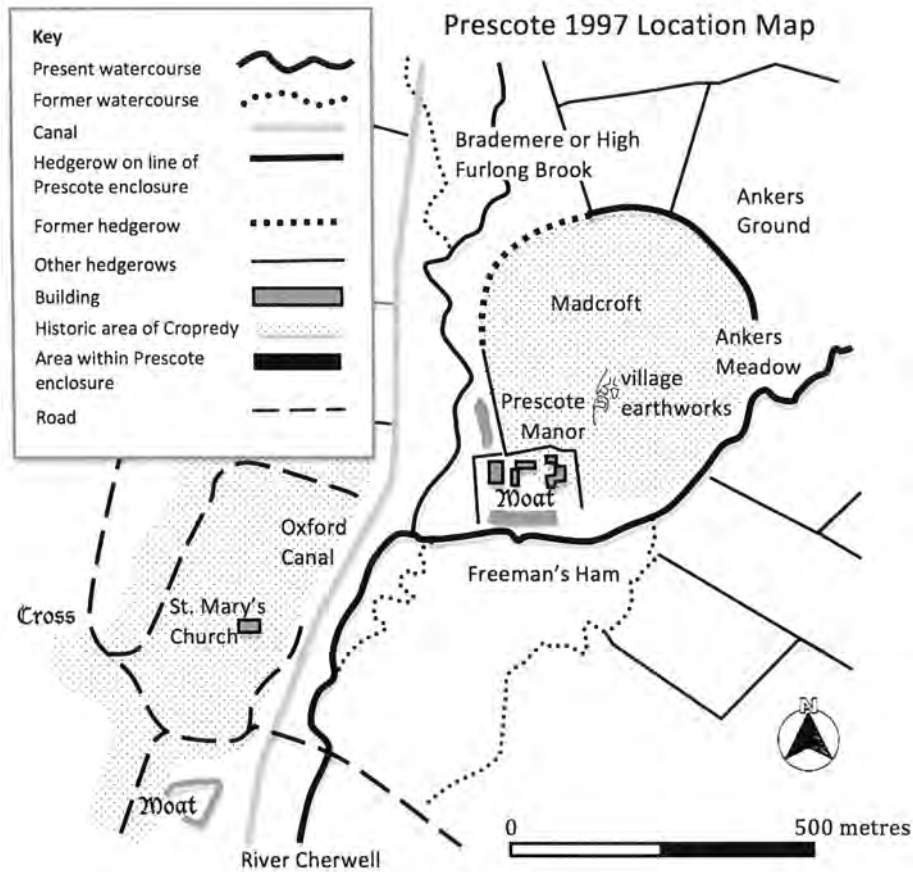


Fig. 1. Location map.

to a purpose-built shrine in Cropredy.<sup>8</sup> The local field name Anker probably contains the Old English 'acra', hermit, and Freemans Ham, south of the Cherwell, may refer to 'Fremund'.<sup>9</sup> The link between Prescote and Cropredy prompted Blair to suggest tentatively that these places might have supported a pair of minsters.<sup>10</sup>

#### AN EARLY CHRISTIAN ENCLOSURE?

Cropredy seems to have been a place of some significance in the early Middle Ages. It was assessed at 50 hides in 1086, and the very large (8,716-acre) ancient parish contained eleven settlements, including Prescote.<sup>11</sup> The ovoid outline of the field known as Madcroft is very suggestive, looking superficially like those of known minster enclosures. An aerial photograph taken in May 1965 shows this outline clearly, together with some cropmarks in the north-west of the field (Fig. 2).

Unfortunately, part of the hedgerow around this side was removed between 1965 and 1997 and the line ploughed out. Inspection on the ground revealed no traces of an earthwork bank or ditch

<sup>8</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 10, p. 158.

<sup>9</sup> Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, p. 76 (caption to fig. 51).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 10, pp. 157, 162.



Fig. 2. Aerial photograph of 11 May 1965. NMR, NAL/65040, frame 178.

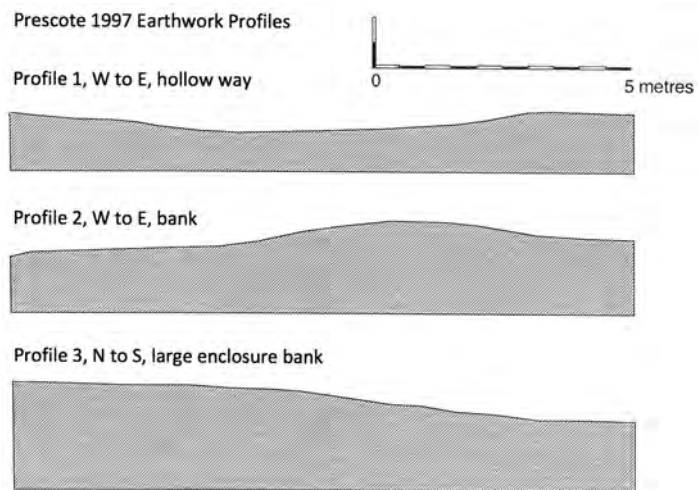


Fig. 3. Earthwork profiles, 1997.

either here or round the north-west side where the hedge line survives. There was the indication of a large bank or terrace immediately to the east of Prescote Manor (Profile 3, Figs. 3 and 4), but this can only be traced for c.20 m before it is lost in a jumble of surface quarrying perhaps associated with the re-building of the manor house in the late seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup>

Further cropmarks are visible in the aerial photograph along the eastern side of the site, presumably connected with water management, and in 2010 a series of small enclosures and

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp. 207, 209.



Fig. 4. Prescote Manor, looking north-east. The rise of the bank is clearly visible along the fenceline. The site of the medieval hamlet of Prescote is c.100 m beyond the parked cars. Photograph by Verna Wass.

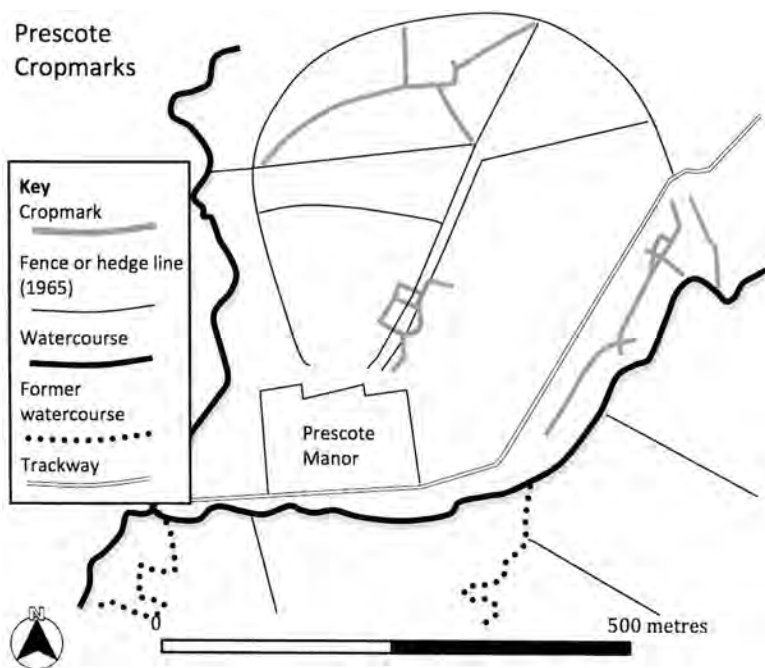


Fig. 5. Cropmarks, 1997.

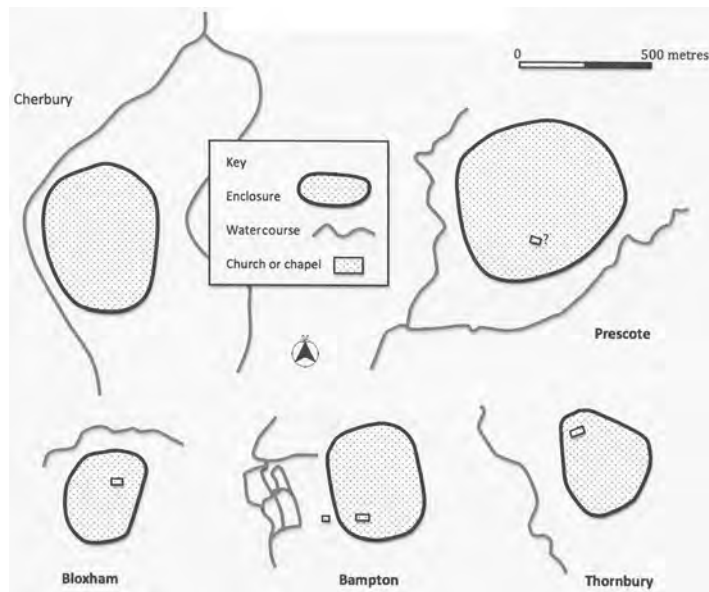


Fig. 6. Comparative enclosure plans.

ditches could be seen in just to the north (Fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> These represent the deserted settlement of Prescote (see below).

In order to compare the enclosures at Bampton, Binsey (Thornbury), and Bloxham with that at Prescote they were all drawn to a common scale (Fig. 6). This exercise made it clear that the enclosure at Prescote is significantly larger than these more firmly identified Anglo-Saxon religious sites. Indeed, in terms of size and location, the Prescote site seems to have more in common with Iron-Age valley forts, such as Cherbury (Fig. 6), described by Henig and Booth.<sup>14</sup> A final thought was that the shape of the field was perhaps simply a response to the natural lie of the land and was following the contour to define an area above possible flooding. However, an inspection of the Ordnance Survey Explorer maps covering the Cherwell valley (180, 191, 206) revealed no parallels to the Prescote arrangement. In similar situations straight hedge lines cut across land lying at the confluence of two streams and other hedge lines follow the line of the water courses.

#### THE DESERTED MEDIEVAL HAMLET OF PRESCOTE

The medieval settlements of Prescote and Upper Prescote shrank in the late Middle Ages and at Prescote only the manor house remained by the later seventeenth or eighteenth century. A small hamlet surviving at Upper Prescote in 1797 was reduced to a single farm by 1823.<sup>15</sup> By walking the ground to the north-east of Prescote Manor we were able to discover the remains of Prescote hamlet, surviving as a small series of well-defined earthworks in rough pasture given over to cattle (at SP 474474). A measured survey of these remains was carried out (Figs. 7 and 9) and earthwork profiles drawn (Fig. 3, above).

Four possible house platforms were identified, divided by a hollow way running north–south. To the south-west was a larger platform with a further raised area to the south with a central hollow indicating the presence of a more substantial building, possibly the chapel referred to

<sup>13</sup> Google Earth (2010).

<sup>14</sup> M. Henig and P. Booth, *Roman Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 2000), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> *VCH Oxon.* 10, pp. 206–7, 209.





Fig. 7. Prescote, western bank looking north, 1997.  
Photograph by Stephen Wass.



Fig. 8. Stonework eroding from the northern end of western bank, looking east.  
Photograph by Stephen Wass.

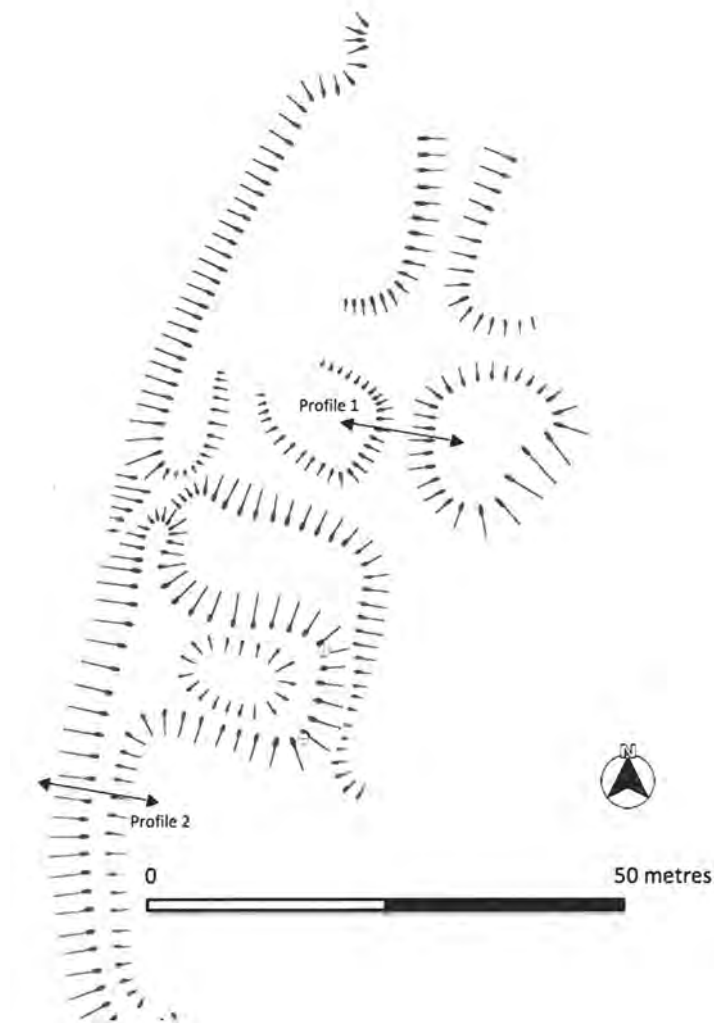


Fig. 9. Earthwork survey of Prescote, 1997.

in 1655.<sup>16</sup> The whole complex was bounded on the west by a low slightly curving bank (Fig. 7). Close to its northern end considerable erosion had been caused by cattle gathering round a water trough, revealing the line of a fairly substantial stone wall (Fig. 8), possibly the 'foundations of old buildings' reported in a field north of Prescote manor house in 1876.<sup>17</sup>

All this leaves us to conclude that whilst the case for Prescote as an early Christian enclosure cannot be decided at present, further investigations could help explain the origins of this anomalous feature in the landscape. The regular ploughing of the site in the last few years opens up the possibility of systematic fieldwalking and metal-detecting.

STEPHEN WASS and REBECCA DEALTRY

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 207.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

# Flint House and Flint Cottage, Wallingford

A long series of title deeds can reveal much about the history of a building or a sequence of buildings on the same site. In the absence of such deeds, other records must be relied upon. The example of Flint House and Flint Cottage in Wallingford, south Oxfordshire (until 1974 in Berkshire) illustrates the value of using a variety of sources, including the structure itself, for piecing together the history of an old building. It also underlines the mobility of house names and the need for caution when identifying a name mentioned in an old document with a particular modern property.

Flint House, 52 High St, is currently the home of Wallingford Museum (Plate 12). Together with its adjoining eastern neighbour Flint Cottage (No. 53), it stands near the western end of the High Street, in the parish of St Mary the More (Fig. 1, below). The two properties (52–3) were originally one house, which was divided in the nineteenth century. A second house (No. 51) was built on the site in the eighteenth century. The earlier house (52–3), which like many properties in the north-west of the town belonged originally to the Benedictine priory of Holy Trinity, was called Stone Hall. The name Stone Hall was applied indifferently to 51 and 52–3 until the late nineteenth century, when it was used for No. 51 alone. The names Flint House and Flint Cottage came into use thereafter.

## ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

This former priory property is listed at Grade II. The *VCH* described it as a modernized sixteenth-century house, and in 1947 Peter Spokes suggested it may have been built around 1547 from stone taken from the dissolved priory.<sup>1</sup> However, the house already existed in 1516–17, when it was named in a priory rental.<sup>2</sup> The authors of the recent *Buildings of England* volume saw it as a hall and cross-wing house of c.1500.<sup>3</sup>

Following inspections by the Oxfordshire Buildings Record (OBR) in 2009–10, 52–3 has now been shown to be a high-status fifteenth-century hall house.<sup>4</sup> It was converted into a family residence with fireplaces and circulation at ground- and first-floor levels in the seventeenth century, but 300 years of subsequent benign neglect have left many early features. The original structure seems to have been a building with cross-wings extending forwards from a central hall parallel to the street. There is no surviving evidence for the original hall, which has been replaced with a gabled infill to create a continuous wall along the street (see Plate 12). The ground floor and front gables of the wings were of stone (probably clunch) with a flint façade added for display. The first floor seems to have been of timber, later clad in stone. In 1980 a serious fire destroyed part of the roof, but most of that of the east wing survives. Its clasped purlins, cambered collars, queen-struts, and assembly marks suggest a fifteenth-century date.

Oddities in the way the upper floor of the west wing was pegged together suggest that it was built before the central infill. Its fire-damaged roof seems to be a later addition, and is of a form dated to c.1568 at Harpsden Court and also found at Penn (Bucks.) and 55 East St Helen Street, Abingdon.<sup>5</sup> The construction of this roof was probably prompted by the building of the great chimney stack in the centre. The large side stack, in clunch with brick dressings, has only a single flue; it was not for a kitchen, given its prominent position. Lining of the mortar, and the

<sup>1</sup> *VCH Berks.* 3, p. 520; P. Spokes, 'Some Notes on the Domestic Architecture of Wallingford, Berkshire', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 50 (1947), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> TNA: PRO, SC11/70.

<sup>3</sup> G. Tyack et al., *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (London, 2010), p. 582.

<sup>4</sup> 'Flint House, High Street, Wallingford, OX10 0DB' and 'Flint Cottage, Wallingford, OX10 0DB', unpublished OBR reports, 2010–11 (nos. 83 and 125).

<sup>5</sup> D. Clark, 'Timber Framing in Berkshire to c.1700', in Tyack et al., *Berkshire*, p. 32.



obvious display of the west wall, suggest an eighteenth-century date. The present staircase, and creation of internal steps to the cellar, point to this wing becoming a service area by the nineteenth century. The front door is typical of the eighteenth century, including the deeply rusticated 'Gibbs' surround to its round arch and the accentuated keystone, and may be contemporary.

The east wing was at least three bays in length. It was probably floored from the start, but the first floor may have been open to the roof, judging by the blackening of the timbers. Later this was ceiled – perhaps first in the north bay (where the work was done carefully) and then in the other two bays. All this suggests a 'high end' of the building, with parlour and chambers, but subsequent demotion to a service area when the west wing was modified and the functions were reversed. At the north end, a large stack was added and the end truss moved south (to avoid fire damage?), probably in the seventeenth century. This wing was likely to have functioned as part of the malthouse removed in the early twentieth century.

An eastern extension is eighteenth century, judging from the English Bond brickwork and the style of roof structure, which is commonly found in stables of that period. It had a door from the street and access to the roof space was probably by ladder. Creation of the stable probably required blocking of the east windows of this wing at ground and first floors. The stable was converted to domestic use in the early nineteenth century, when the doorway was blocked and a new one put into the north wall, and a connecting porch added to the back door of the east wing. Entry to the roof space was subsequently by means of a doorway with an ornamented lintel that may well have remained in place from a previously blocked oriel window. Examples of similar ornamentation are known in Oxfordshire, probably dating from the first half of the seventeenth century. The street entrance to this wing is likely to have been earlier than that of the west wing, although the doorway is probably early nineteenth century.

The central infill is certainly no later than its main window, which is of a style typical of the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Similar windows in the wings are thus replacements, inserted probably at the same time. The attic of this infill seems to have been used for storage – judging by the timber wainscoting and the heavy wear of the floor boards – but it came into domestic use, probably in the nineteenth century, with the creation of a partition separating it from the roof space of the east wing.

## DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

### *Private Dwelling*

In 1516–17 Stone Hall, then occupied by Thomas Spicer, was described as a tenement with a close and garden. Possibly it was built in 1445, when Wallingford priory was enlarged,<sup>6</sup> or it may have replaced a 'house next to the priory' mentioned as early as 1260.<sup>7</sup> At any rate, use of the name Stone Hall indicates that the house had by then been clad in stone, distinguishing it from the mainly timber-framed buildings of the town.

The house next appears in detailed town surveys of 1548 and 1606.<sup>8</sup> In 1548 properties in this part of the High Street were described (from east to west as far as the town wall) as follows:

1. site ... [of the] late priory with all the lands ... by estimation 281 acres 3½ roods
2. a tenement called Stone Hall with a small close called Stone Close (1 acre)
3. a tenement with garden 90 ft by 55 ft
4. a sheephouse 30 ft by 28 ft with 3 roods of pasture on the bank.

The priory was owned by John Norris of Bray (Berks.), who had been granted it in 1546, when it

<sup>6</sup> M. Heale, *The Dependent Priors of Medieval English Monasteries* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 164, 172.

<sup>7</sup> N.M. Herbert, 'The Borough of Wallingford 1155–1400', Reading University PhD thesis (1971), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Bodl. MS Top Berks b. 41; TNA: PRO, E315/369, pp. 101–23.

was occupied by John Purdon.<sup>9</sup> Purdon, sometime mayor of Wallingford, had obtained the lease in 1538,<sup>10</sup> and also occupied property 4. Property 2 was owned by Nicholas Aston, but he is unlikely to have been the occupier because his name does not appear in any other town record. Property 3 was held by William Stacy, but he too is unlikely to have been the occupier.

In 1606, the sequence from east to west was:

5. site of the priory ... with the Bullcroft (12 acres)
6. a tenement with garden, orchard and a close of pasture (1/2 acre 1 rood)
7. two cottages with orchards (1/16 acre each)
8. a tenement 'without the west gate of late built', with an acre of arable on the banks adjoining.

Property 6 was clearly Stone Hall, although it was not named as such. Property 7 presumably corresponds to 3 and 4; 8 has no earlier equivalent. Property 5 was held by Sir Richard Hide and the other three by Griffith Payne, but neither is likely to have been an occupier. Payne was a prominent resident and owner of most other former priory properties in the town.

The next known mention of Stone Hall was in 1634, when James Jennings was living there.<sup>11</sup> Around 1673 Francis Day bequeathed to his wife 'my house called Stone Hall which Richard Skinner now lives in'.<sup>12</sup> Day was a grandson of Dr William Day, bishop of Winchester and dean of Windsor.<sup>13</sup> He had been the founder of Fort George, Madras (now Chennai) in 1639,<sup>14</sup> and became a prominent inhabitant of Wallingford from c.1650. He paid tax on six hearths in 1662–4, but by 1665 was living in Great Haseley.<sup>15</sup> Day probably made the main seventeenth-century improvements, since the presence of six hearths shows that 52–3 was by then a substantial residence.

#### *A Maltster's House*

Richard Skinner was a maltster who had lived in Wallingford since at least 1655.<sup>16</sup> He presumably leased Stone Hall from Day after the latter had left Wallingford. Skinner seems to have bought the house since his bequests to his wife in 1694 included 'the messuage I now live in commonly called Stone Hall', along with a malthouse.<sup>17</sup> This is the earliest known reference to a malthouse on the site, and it seems likely Skinner had built it. Presumably the chimney stack at the north end of the east wing was added at this time, and perhaps this was when the attic of the gabled infill started to be used for storage.

By 1704 Stone Hall was owned by a William Smith,<sup>18</sup> though apparently it was occupied by John Leaver in 1715.<sup>19</sup> In his will of 1735, Leaver (who was then living at the site of the priory) devised Stone Hall, 'in the possession of myself and Michael Cripps', to his wife for life and then to his grandson Edward Blandy.<sup>20</sup> Cripps described himself as a maltster in his will of 1751.<sup>21</sup> His widow, Frances, had left Stone Hall by 1753.

<sup>9</sup> *Letters & Papers Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII*, 21ii (4 December 1546).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 13i, piece 1309:16 (4 June 1538).

<sup>11</sup> I. Mortimer (ed.), *Berkshire Glebe Terriers 1634*, Berkshire Record Society, vol. 2 (1995), p. 185.

<sup>12</sup> BRO, D/A1/63/58.

<sup>13</sup> W.H. Rylands, 'The Four Visitations of Berkshire 1532, 1566, 1623, 1665–6, volume II', *Harleian Society*, 57 (1908), p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> A. Grout, 'Day, Francis (c.1605–1666x73)', *ODNB* online edn (accessed June 2011); J. Day, 'The Origins of Francis Day, Founder of Fort St George (Madras)', *Genealogists' Magazine*, 28 (2005), pp. 296–302.

<sup>15</sup> BRO, W/AZ9, no. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* W/AC1/1.2, f. 11v.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* D/A1/122/73.

<sup>18</sup> WRO, D1/24/352/2 (list of payments in lieu of tithes).

<sup>19</sup> BRO, W/FVA/4, 1714–15.

<sup>20</sup> TNA: PRO, PROB11/687/41.

<sup>21</sup> BRO, D/A1/59/252.

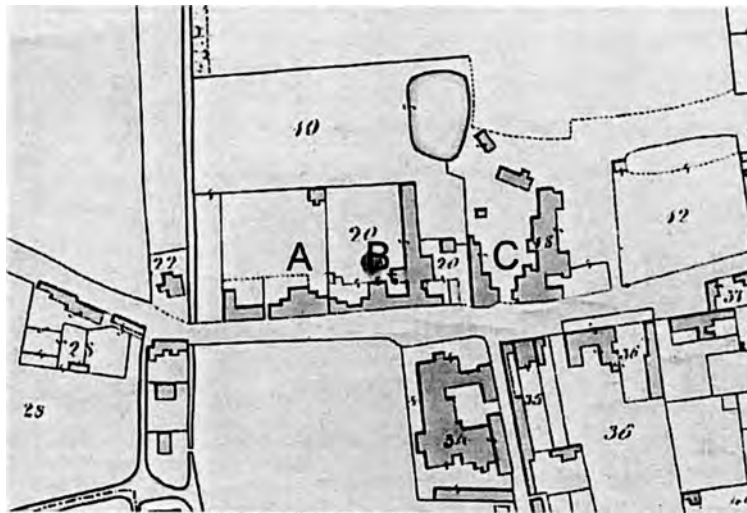


Fig. 1. Detail from the tithe map of 1850 for the parish of St Mary the More, Wallingford. A: Stone Hall. B: Flint House and Flint Cottage (with malthouse extending to the north). C: The Priory.

Newspaper advertisements show that John Greenwood, an attorney-at-law living in Berrick Prior, could be contacted at Stone Hall on Fridays (market days) in 1761–5.<sup>22</sup> By 1768 he had a property in Wallingford occupied by a Nathaniel Brown.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Greenwood had been leasing Stone Hall from Edward Blandy. When Stone Hall came up for auction in 1773 it was described as ‘containing two exceeding good houses adjoining together, and a malthouse that will make 40 quarters of malt weekly and is in excellent repair with every conveniency’.<sup>24</sup> Although this property had become two houses, this does not necessarily imply the present-day division into Flint House and Flint Cottage. However, use of the word ‘adjoining’ does suggest that the two houses were connected, which was certainly the case in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – as shown by the tithe map (Fig. 1) and OS maps, and by photographs (for example, one of around 1907 depicting a single-storey building linking them).<sup>25</sup> The two houses are currently 51 and 52–3.

The existence of two houses in 1773 is confirmed by a list of voters in 1774.<sup>26</sup> This shows that John Greenwood occupied the western house (51) and Mathias Brown occupied the eastern one (52–3). The Nathaniel Brown mentioned in 1768 does not appear elsewhere in the town’s records, and the name was presumably a misreading of Mathias Brown. Mathias had moved to the parish between 1757 and 1763; he appears repeatedly in records from 1738 to his death in 1775.

The construction of a second house on the site seems to have occurred in the 1760s. Present-day Stone Hall has a lead panel on its rear western elevation that reads ‘I G 1768’. The only known substantial inhabitant at that time with initials ‘I G’ was John Greenwood (initial ‘J’ was commonly written ‘I’ on house inscriptions). The year 1768 suggests that this was when the western house was built by Greenwood, and that it was under construction when he was living at Berrick Prior.

‘Stone Hall’ continued in use for many years as the name for both properties, thereby creating difficulties when interpreting old records. Who were the owners and occupiers of the two houses after the auction of 1773? We have seen that John Greenwood was living at the western house

<sup>22</sup> *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, various editions.

<sup>23</sup> *The Copy of the Poll for Knights of the Shire for the County of Berks.* 1768.

<sup>24</sup> *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 27 August 1773, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> J. and S. Dewey and D. Beasley, *Window on Wallingford, 1837–1914* (Wallingford, 1989), p. 245.

<sup>26</sup> OHC, Thame II/i/11.

in 1774, and almost certainly remained there until his death in 1799.<sup>27</sup> He never married, and his Wallingford property had passed to a distant cousin, Thomas Greenwood of Easington, by c.1814.<sup>28</sup> By 1816 Thomas had moved to Wallingford.<sup>29</sup> He was chamberlain in 1823–4, and mayor in 1826 and 1831. He died in 1832 and was buried at Easington.<sup>30</sup> Thomas is confirmed as living at Stone Hall in 1820 by an entry in the diary of Charles Morrell.<sup>31</sup> However, by 1830, according to a trade directory,<sup>32</sup> he was at 'Priory House', and this is the name he used when he made his will there in 1832.<sup>33</sup> He had probably given this name to the western house that he owned and occupied because it lay on former priory land. The presence of Thomas in the western house (51) supports the deduction that John Greenwood had lived there previously. When Thomas died, ownership of present-day Stone Hall passed to his widow Phillis and then to a nephew, another Thomas Greenwood of Easington, whose sons sold it in 1902–3.<sup>34</sup> Phillis lived there with her unmarried sister, and afterwards Elizabeth Fairthorne, Thomas's unmarried sister-in-law, was there for over half a century until her death in 1915.

### *A Lawyer's House*

The western house (present-day 51, the rendered house on the far left in Plate 12) had been in the Greenwood family for nearly 150 years, which accounts for the lack of deeds accompanying sales or mortgages. But what happened to the eastern house, present-day 52–3? After Mathias Brown died in 1775 the overseers' rates for his house were paid until at least 1780 by Charles Greenwood, a first cousin of his neighbour John. It is therefore likely that John had sold (at the auction of 1773?), or given, 52–3 to his cousin. Perhaps it was around this time that either John or Charles made the changes to the west wing as well as the eastward stable extension to the east wing, perhaps with a chaise-house. Charles was a gentleman farmer not a maltster, and mayor in 1783, so it is likely that Mathias Brown was the last resident maltster at 52–3, although the malthouse apparently continued in use,<sup>35</sup> and it or an adjoining cottage was inhabited as late as 1871.

Charles Greenwood may have lived at 52–3 for a short while after 1780, but he seems to have moved to the subsequent Greenwood home (later called Croft House) in Castle Street, presumably following the death of his father there in 1781. Who then occupied 52–3 is unknown until the early nineteenth century, but the owner is shown on a plan drawn in 1786 of the adjoining Town Farm (as the site of the priory was then called) as 'Mr Greenwood', very likely the Charles of Croft House.<sup>36</sup> At his death in 1788 his property passed to his son,<sup>37</sup> another Charles, who when he made his will in 1834 mentioned not only his house in Castle Street but also other (unspecified) property in Wallingford.<sup>38</sup> This must have included 52–3 because his son, yet another Charles, was the next recorded owner in 1836 when the occupiers were George Holding and Mrs Langford.<sup>39</sup> By this time the house seems to have been divided into two, like present-day 52 and 53. George Holding was a solicitor, who still lived at 52–3 in 1841.

The next known occupier of 52–3 between the first named Charles Greenwood and George Holding was another attorney, William Sheen. He probably came to live there soon after he

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, BRO, D/P 138/5/11/1.

<sup>28</sup> OHC, Amb I/26.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Amb V/3.

<sup>30</sup> Monumental inscription in Easington church.

<sup>31</sup> OHC, Morrell's Brewery records, C 1 (diary of Charles Morrell, 1820–1).

<sup>32</sup> *Pigot's Berks. Directory* (1830), p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> OHC, Amb V/9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Amb V/45; private deed.

<sup>35</sup> J. and S. Dewey, *The Book of Wallingford* (Chesham, 1977), p. 114.

<sup>36</sup> HRO, D/EAm P1.

<sup>37</sup> TNA: PRO, PROB11/1161/19.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. PROB11/1844/168.

<sup>39</sup> BRO, W/FRa/48.

married in 1806 and may well have improved the eastern doorway, to make a business entrance separate from the western doorway, and it may be around this time that the stables were converted to domestic use. The overseers' rates show Sheen was living in St Mary's parish by 1824,<sup>40</sup> and a trade directory of 1830 lists him at 'Stone Hall', further illustrating the use of that name for both houses. He was succeeded by his partner George Holding from 1835 to c.1845, when another solicitor, Rowland Atkinson, took over until c.1877.

#### *Private Dwellings Again*

After Atkinson left, 52–3 was no longer considered to be part of Stone Hall; that name subsequently referred to 51 alone. Moreover, 52–3 had already been divided, a change perhaps facilitated by the presence of two front doors, and the parts acquired separate names: 53 soon became Flint Cottage, and for a while 52 was known as Old Lodge. Both were occupied as private dwellings until the later twentieth century. Nos. 52–3 had been bought by Leonard Shepherd from the Powys-Lybbe family (heirs of the last Charles Greenwood) in 1916.<sup>41</sup> Shepherd mortgaged the property and when he died in 1955 it came into the hands of Lloyds Bank. In 1965 it was proposed to demolish Flint House but a Preservation Order was placed on it and eventually it was purchased by the town council, who leased it to the Museum trustees in 1980.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This note is based on OBR surveys of the building led by David Clark in 2009–10 and on records found and abstracted by the Documents Group of TWHAS.

DAVID E. PEDGLEY, with DAVID CLARK

<sup>40</sup> BRO, D/P 138/5/11/2. St Mary's poor rates from 1781 to 1823 are lost.

<sup>41</sup> Private deed.





Plate 10. Vaulted stone cellar discovered during recent work at The Queen's College, Oxford.  
Photograph by Mark Vice, BGS Architects. [Radford, p. 259]



Plate 11. View of the rectangular entrance chamber at the southern end of the Queen's cellar.  
Photograph by Mark Vice, BGS Architects. [Radford, p. 259]





Plate 12. Flint House (left) and Flint Cottage (right), 52 and 53 High Street, Wallingford. Photograph by author. [Pedgley, p. 280]