NOTES

Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2011

During 2011 the Heritage and Specialist Services Team continued work on an archaeological plan for Oxford. This involved the completion of historic landscape characterisation and historic urban characterisation mapping and the production of period-based archaeological resource assessments and research agendas for the city. In terms of development-led archaeology, the year saw a number of fieldwork projects resulting from the replacement, upgrading and extension of college facilities and from small-scale suburban infill development. Provisional summaries for selected sites are provided below.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Pembroke College, Brewer Street

Between January and July Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook a programme of trial trenching and excavation at the site of the new extension to Pembroke College on the corner of Brewer Street and Littlegate Street. Initial recording revealed a series of stone-lined wells and pits of late post-medieval to modern date. Subsequent investigation of the Brewer Street frontage revealed evidence for brewing including a deposit of charred grain and a stone-lined channel. A niche was cut into one of the stones, presumably for a small sluice gate. The channel was orientated on a sub-circular tank made out of a mill stone and rough limestone blocks. These features sat within a structure or series of structures, the earliest of which was provisionally dated to the thirteenth century. Below this a series of ephemeral features were recorded cut into a band of London Clay.

On the Littlegate Street frontage a structure was encountered which contained a variety of floor surfaces, including part of a knucklebone floor. Here a sequence of stone walls and surfaces were associated with a sixteenth-century building. Below this were traces of earlier activity, provisionally dated to the fourteenth century, lying over reclamation deposits. A trench adjacent to Rose Place produced evidence for post-medieval tanning waste, part of a post-medieval or Victorian malthouse and a large retaining wall of limestone blocks following the edge of the Trill Mill Stream. Beneath the stone structures was a sequence of channel wash deposits, timber stakes and a wattle fence provisionally dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

An excavation on the site of the proposed basement in the centre of the plot revealed the remains of a long north–south stone-built structure shown on the 1876 OS map as a malthouse. The building contained a series of internal hearths, ovens, stone-lined drains and clay-lined tanks set into cobbled limestone and beaten gravel floors. Below this structure an east-west channel anticipated from previous borehole results failed to materialize. Instead an area of dark brown silty clay was recorded, perhaps originating as a shallow embayment of water associated with the Devensian precursor to the Trill Mill Stream. A number of ditches and pits had been cut through this silted up embayment in the late Saxon or medieval period.

Fig. 1. The revetment and wattle panel at Rose Place, spot dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, looking south.

76 Rose Hill, Former King of Prussia Site

In May a watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) during ground reduction works for a new car park at the site of the former King of Prussia pub. The reduction revealed a sequence of Iron-Age ditches and a small Roman kiln. Several of the associated pottery forms recovered do not appear in Christopher Young's study of the Oxford Roman pottery industry and therefore extend the repertoire of types thought to be made at the Rose Hill kilns.

St Anne's College, Woodstock Road

Between August and September OA undertook trial trenching and a subsequent watching brief at the site of the new kitchen extension at St Anne's College. No deposits datable prior to the sixteenth century were found, but residual sherds of late Saxon and medieval pottery and a silver halfpenny of Edward I were recovered. Two rubbish pits containing sixteenth-century pottery were recorded. One contained a sawn deer antler, indicating small-scale antler working. Two phases of cobbles of seventeenth- to eighteenth-century date were also encountered and may have formed part of a courtyard or lane leading off Woodstock Road.

4 Mill Lane and Land to the Rear of the Bricklayer's Arms, Butts Lane, Old Marston

Two pieces of fieldwork in Old Marston produced information regarding this little-investigated village. Between October and November Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) undertook an evaluation and subsequent excavation to the rear of the former Bricklayer's Arms

prior to construction of new housing. The site produced evidence for a dense cluster of pits, post holes and linear features of eleventh- to mid fourteenth-century date. In November a watching brief was undertaken by JMHS during the construction of an extension at 4 Mill Lane. A ditch containing eleventh-century pottery was found to be cut by a ditch running roughly perpendicular to Mill Lane. This contained late eleventh- to twelfth-century pottery and was sealed by a deposit which was limestone and flint rubble-rich and contained thirteenth-century pottery.

Building Recording

Several standing structures in Oxford were subject to varying levels of building recording in 2011. Detailed recording was undertaken at Bannister House, 7–8 Brewer Street by the OBR in May and by OA in August. The timber-framed townhouse was subject to extensive repairs after initial investigations showed that the underlying fabric was in very poor condition. The earliest structure proved to be No. 7, which was dated to the mid to late seventeenth century with possibly earlier retained elements.

At Christ Church, Demant's Cottage was subject to test pitting, building recording and a watching brief by Graham Keevill intermittently between July and December. The *c.*1670–1730 cottage is located between Tom Quad and Blue Boar Quad. It is of interest as a likely functional building associated with the college, possibly a coach house. It also contains earlier elements that may be associated with the grand chapel commenced but not completed by Cardinal Wolsey. The test pit investigation demonstrated the presence of floor surfaces pre-dating the cottage. The spine wall to the existing staircase also appeared to be an earlier feature.

Further limited building recording was undertaken by a variety of archaeological contractors on a range of structures, including the following: the former Turl Bar, Turl Street; 16–17 Turl Street; 27 Hollywell Street; Staircase IX at Wadham College; and the corner buildings at 126 Walton Street–32–32A Little Clarendon Street.

The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project

The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project began in October 2010 and since then has involved local residents in a range of community archaeology and history initiatives. The project was initiated by David Griffiths and Jane Harrison of the University of Oxford's Department for Continuing Education, supported by the John Fell Fund and a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In its first year the project has undertaken extensive garden test pitting and completed field and geophysical surveys at a number of sites, including South Park, Bartlemas Chapel, Iffley village and Christ Church Meadow.

In autumn 2011 the project spent six weeks excavating three trenches in the grounds of Bartlemas Chapel. The standing fourteenth-century chapel is located on the site of a twelfth-century leper hospital which by the fourteenth century had become an almshouse attached to Oriel College. The excavation of a trench around the base of the chapel identified remains of an earlier stone structure, built on a slightly different alignment to the later chapel. A second trench to the south of the chapel located another stone-built structure. A number of other more ephemeral buildings were discovered to the west of the chapel, as well as burials and charnel pits. A short report on the excavations can be found on the project website along with test pit reports: www.archeox.net. A full interim report on the excavations is to follow.

DAVID RADFORD, CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST

Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire, 2011

Despite the economic climate, the County Archaeological Service (now part of the Historic and Natural Environment Team) was consulted on approximately 900 planning applications between April 2011 and April 2012. In addition, the service scanned in the region of 7,500 applications and appraised a further 400 applications from the weekly planning lists. The service also produced sixty-four design briefs for archaeological work including twenty-four for evaluation ahead of the determination of a planning application. Enquires to the Historic Environment Record (HER) for desk-based and heritage assessments doubled over the past year. This was thanks largely to the introduction of PPS5, now replaced by the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Historic Environment Record is now available via Heritage Search (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/heritagesearch), the County Council's own database which also includes catalogue entries from the Oxfordshire History Centre and the Museum service, and via Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk), a national database with data from many HERs and some of the datasets held by English Heritage.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Hanwell Castle, Hanwell, near Banbury

Hanwell Castle, formerly known as Hanwell House or Hall, was built by William Cope *c.*1498, but only the south-west tower and south range survives from his two-storey courtyard house. Archaeological evaluation and a geophysical survey recorded a north–south wall with a drain that may have formed part of the internal quad of an earlier medieval great hall, located possibly beneath the present house or closer to the lake. The fieldwork also revealed an east–west aligned wall with a step footing constructed of Cotswold stone which could be the surviving remains of a tower or north–south enclosing wall of Cope's early Tudor house.

Crowmarsh, South Oxfordshire

An evaluation and investigation have been carried out on the Walter Lister site in Crowmarsh. The fieldwork recorded a large defensive ditch which may relate to the twelfth-century siege castle thought to survive in the area. This is shown on the 1914 OS map as a large oval platform with other earthworks and ditches to the west and north, called 'Stephen's Mount'. Evidence of a wide ditch was found in five of the trenches with possible remains in two others and in the eastern end of the stripped area A. The evidence suggests that the *c.*25 metre wide ditch was hastily dug and the excavated material probably moved to the inside edge of the ditch to form a mound or embankment. Other features to the north of the evaluation area, such as an area of chalk hard standing and several ditches and pits, were excavated ahead of development. The defensive ditch, located below a significant amount of made ground, has been preserved below piles. The large amount of twelfth-century pottery recovered throughout the site supports the hypothesis of a very short period of intense activity.

Great Western Park, Didcot

Excavations at Great Western Park in Didcot are now reaching their final phase and an interim report is expected shortly. The archaeological investigations are being undertaken by Oxford Archaeology under the overall project management of RPS on behalf of Taylor Wimpey. To

date the project has recorded settlement evidence from the middle Iron Age through to the late Roman period. The middle Iron-Age site consists of over 600 pits, at least 25 round houses and a complex series of intercutting ditches and enclosures. A large north–south trackway forms the focus of the settlement and appears to have remained in use throughout the Iron Age and Roman period. Several of the pits were found to contain placed deposits of pottery and animal and human remains. The site also contained a number of four- and six-post structures and a pit alignment.

Further to the south, along the trackway, the excavations have recorded a smaller late Iron-Age and Roman settlement associated with a villa, originally identified during the evaluation phase of the project. The villa itself is to be preserved within an area of green space as part of the development although a section of it was stripped and planned before being re-covered for preservation. This gave a much better understanding of its size than had been gained from the evaluation. The excavations have recorded several corn-driers, a well and an area of cobbled surface or flooring. A number of late Iron-Age roundhouses and numerous enclosures and field ditches have also been recorded. The excavations are currently ongoing.

Fig. 1. One of the Roman corn-driers at Great Western Park, Didcot.

One significant aspect of the project is the unexpected discovery of a shallow (*c*.0.2 m deep) natural hollow over an area of approximately 8 m by 5 m on the hillcrest of the middle Iron-Age site. The hollow was filled with reworked silty clay containing a large collection of worked flints with a number of characteristically early Mesolithic dates of probably *c*.10,000–8,000 BC. The area was excavated and sampled in spits on a grid system with identifiable tools recorded in three dimensions. The majority of the assemblage consisted of knapping debris, numerous small tools and blade cores. It is very unusual for Mesolithic sites such as this to be found away from the valley bottom.

Bryan House, Bicester

Evaluation recorded sparse remains of Bicester priory church surviving within the area of Bryan House as the first phase of a staged programme of investigation, as well as a late- and post-medieval house on Chapel Street. A subsequent excavation on Chapel Street recorded the house in detail, as well as a medieval inhumation and earlier pits, thought to be of Anglo-Saxon date.

Further excavations on the western side of the priory site revealed that much more of the priory church had survived than was identified in the evaluation, including much of the footprint of the east end of the church, from the northern edges of the transepts to the eastern wall. Numerous burials were recorded along with a few small surviving floor fragments and wall footings. A lead box containing human remains was recovered within the north transept. This is close to the area where the shrine was supposed to have been located before it was moved to Stanton Harcourt and there has been media speculation that the remains are those of St Edburga herself. Post-excavation work is currently underway and C14 dating is planned.

11 Wittenham Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames

An evaluation and subsequent excavation has been undertaken at 11 Wittenham Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames on the redevelopment of a bungalow plot south of the Roman town in a suspected cemetery area. The evaluation, carried out before the determination of the application, recorded a number of Roman features and a single burial. Following the demolition of the bungalow the site was archaeologically excavated and a further 23 burials were recorded. These inhumations were laid out in formal rows and a small number of burials had Roman tiles as headstones. A large pit and a series of recut ditches were also recorded. A post excavation assessment is being prepared.

Four Pillars Hotel, Sandford

A geophysical survey and evaluation was undertaken at the Four Pillars Hotel, Sandford which recorded a number of pits, post holes and gullies associated with the former preceptory site. There were also early post-medieval remnants of a possible walled garden. The recovery of late Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery suggests that settlement on the site pre-dated the thirteenth-century preceptory. The results of a ground-penetrating radar survey undertaken within the car park area indicate a series of linear anomalies which may possibly be surviving foundations of the preceptory walls.

St Peter's Church, Hook Norton

A small watching brief during drainage works at St Peter's church, Hook Norton has revealed early stone foundations. These are thought to date to between the eighth and tenth century. The works did not require planning permission but the watching brief was arranged on the initiative of the PCC. The drainage excavation was very narrow, but it covered a fairly large area and the findings may allow the extrapolation of a suggested plan of the earlier church.

Chilton Fields, Harwell

A small Romano-British villa was revealed on a former airbase in Chilton during excavations by TVAS ahead of housing development. Four chronological phases are reasonably clearly defined. Phase 1 was represented by an Iron-Age roundhouse approximately 12 m in diameter with an entrance to the north and associated storage pits. In phase 2, a timber post-built structure (building 2), measuring 9.5 m by 6.2 m, was erected north-west of the roundhouse. It is unlikely that this was contemporary with the roundhouse, given the change from circular to rectangular architecture, but pottery analysis will determine whether or not this is the case. In phase 3, two rectangular buildings set in foundation trenches were constructed. One measured 10 m by 4 m and was built of shaped chalk blocks and flint nodules on a north-west by south-east axis. A smaller building, measuring 4.5 m square, was constructed over the roundhouse.

Phase 4 saw the appearance of a building which can justifiably be called a villa. It consisted of a large rectangular central hall on a north-east to south-west axis (measuring 15 m by 8.5 m) with two identical small rooms, one on the south-east corner and one on the north-west corner (each measuring 6 m by 2 m). The foundations comprised chalk blocks and flints. The whole plan seems to have been built in one phase because the flanking rooms do not appear to be later additions. A double row of large post holes along the south-west wall may suggest the location of a veranda, or an overhanging upper storey. Another arrangement of posts, which appears to represent fencing for a courtyard, extends from the north-west corner for *c.*10 m and then turns through a right angle to head south-west.

Almost certainly contemporary with the main villa was a small two-celled building to the east, which had under-floor heating. The remains consisted of a two-roomed structure which comprised an arched stokehole and a covered hypocaust. After the structure went out of use it served as a rubbish dump and it was here that much of the painted wall plaster from the villa was found.

Fig. 2. Two-celled Roman building at Chilton Fields, Harwell.

Finds such as pottery, second- and fourth-century coins and animal bone were recovered from features within the villa structure. While the ground plan of the main villa building is modest enough, only a small step up from a basic hall plan, the presence of painted wall plaster, roof tile and underground heating qualify this as a villa. In fact the unusual 'Z'-shaped symmetry of the arrangement of rooms and the suggestion of a veranda or an upper storey may suggest an accomplished architect perhaps working within modest means.

Smaller Investigations

A number of small excavations, evaluations and watching briefs were undertaken within the county. A small excavation in Queen Street, Banbury recorded an eighth-century ditch and a number of medieval linear features. An evaluation at Crouch Hill, Banbury recorded a series of Iron-Age ditches and a possible ring ditch. Investigation in advance of extraction recorded a ring ditch and burials at Sutton Courtenay quarry.

At Caversham quarry, a programme of archaeological investigation has been completed in advance of application for a quarry extension. The known barrow cemetery is to be excluded from the new quarry area. The fieldwork recorded several Bronze-Age enclosures, and further investigations will be undertaken ahead of any quarrying on the site.

HUGH CODDINGTON and RICHARD ORAM,
COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

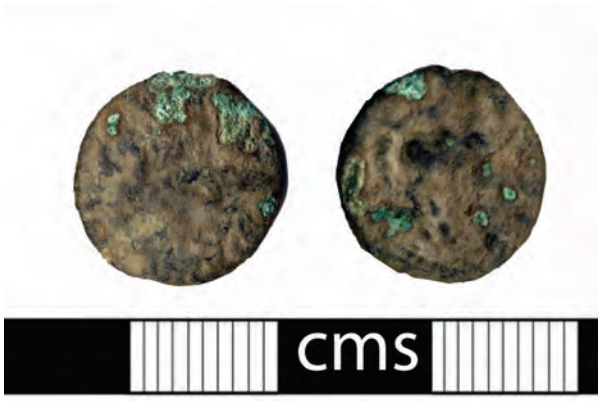
The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire, 2011

Between January and December 2011, 1,558 digital records were created on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database for 1,790 Oxfordshire finds. The finds date from the Palaeolithic to *c.*1700 AD and can be broken down into the following periods: Palaeolithic to Neolithic (6 per cent); Bronze Age (0.5 per cent); Iron Age (1.5 per cent); Roman (49 per cent); early medieval, AD 410–1066 (3 per cent); later medieval, 1066–1499 (22 per cent); post-medieval, 1500–1850 (17 per cent); and modern or unknown (1 per cent). The vast majority of finds were discovered while using a metal detector (97 per cent). Other methods of discovery included building and agricultural work, gardening and fieldwalking during archaeological investigations.

The number of Oxfordshire finds submitted to the PAS in 2011 was lower than in 2010 since the totals given above include about 500 artefacts recorded during metal-detectorists' rallies in West Hanney in 2009 and 2010 which were only entered into the database over the last year. No large detecting rallies were held within the county in 2011. The number of Treasure finds reported continues to increase at a steady rate. Twelve finds were submitted under the Treasure Act 1996 or earlier Treasure Trove laws. These consist of six gold or silver finger rings dating from the medieval or post-medieval periods, one medieval silver hawking vervel, two post-medieval silver cufflinks, one silver post-medieval thimble, one fragment of Bronze-Age gold foil and a pair of silver spectacles (described below).

A selection of the finds recorded by the Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) in 2011 is presented below. More information on these and other finds can be found by visiting www.finds.org.uk/database. For any other information or queries please contact the FLO, Anni Byard (anni.byard@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Iron-Age Coin of Rues from South Stoke CP (BERK-A22111)



A worn Iron-Age copper alloy inscribed unit of the ruler Rues (*c.*AD 1–10). This coin is attributed to the Catuvellauni tribe since Rues may be a cognomen of Tasciovanos.[1] This is the first unit of Rues recorded through the PAS. Thanks are extended to Ian Leins at the British Museum for help with identification. Phase 7/8: *BMC 1698–1701, ABC 2754*.

[1] E. Cottam et al., *Ancient British Coinage* (Norfolk, 2010), p. 134.

Possible Roman Strap Fitting or Buckle from Sutton Courtenay CP (BERK-ECEE18)

A cast copper alloy probable strap fitting or buckle in very good condition. The fitting is of an unusual form: a pelta-shaped openwork frame with quite large pronounced knops at the junction of all the openwork elements and frame on both the top and underside. The underside is worn and has thinly incised lines giving a feathered effect around the external edges, while the top side also has this decoration but with additional ring and dot decoration. The style of this fitting has been compared to buckles recorded by Hawkes and Dunnings (type IIb),[2] and the object is likely to be late or, more likely, post-Roman in date. The style and feel of the object suggests an early medieval date. No direct comparison for this fitting has been found in the standard literature although objects with bifacial knops are recorded on the PAS database and given a variety of dates. It is uncertain what the purpose of this object actually was, but wear on the outer bar of the squared frame suggests it was a fastening strap. Any comparisons and suggestions of date are welcomed.

Early Medieval Cross Brooch from Somerton CP (BERK-9FA163)

A cast copper alloy Anglo-Saxon cross brooch in the Carolingian style and dating to the eighth century. The brooch is incomplete and in two pieces but it fits back together perfectly suggesting a relatively recent post-depositional break, probably due to ploughing. Just over half of the original brooch survives, including two of four equal arms. The arms are splayed at the termini and decorated with chip-carved floral and/or zoomorphic interlaced patterns. The centre of the cross has a diamond-shaped design with rounded knops at each corner, within which are two squares; the inner one is solid and the outer one open. The entirety of the object has been gilded and much of the gilding survives. The reverse of the brooch, also gilded, retains the remains of what appears to be a pin hinge: two integrally cast 'loops' would have held a pin or other attachment in place through the hole in each loop, like simple hinged-brooch pins of both earlier and contemporary date. It should be noted that similar styled examples are actually pendants, and it is possible that the fittings on the reverse were actually for a suspension attachment rather than a brooch pin. This is an unusual object. No direct comparison is recorded on the database, but a related example is recorded from Wyverstone in Suffolk (SF-BABE11). The two pieces of the brooch were found several metres apart by two different detectorists. Thanks are extended to Helen Geake and Kevin Leahy for their assistance with dating and interpretation.

[2] S.C. Hawkes and G.C. Dunning, 'Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century', *Medieval Archaeology*, 5 (1961), p. 57.

Medieval Sword Pommel from Bicester Area (BERK-65B4A2).

An iron medieval sword pommel from a large sword, probably a broad sword, recovered in very good condition. The pommel is spherical and is hollow cast. It has a rectangular hole on the underside for the sword handle tang, and an oval hole on the top which would have had a securing end cap terminal. The pommel has eight vertical ribs cast down the length of the body and what appears to be a casting seam around its girth. A very similar example is classed as Type VI in the London Museum catalogue.[3] A direct comparison from Sharow (Yorks.) has been recorded on the database (YORYM-BB8673). The latter example retains some gilding on the vertical ribs which suggests that the Bicester example may also have been gilded. The spherical iron pommel is of a type found on swords in use during the twelfth and thirteenth century; the design probably derived from earlier Viking and Norman types.[4] For this pommel to survive in such good condition is unusual. It should be noted that many metal detectorists discriminate against iron and this may be a reason why so few examples are recorded.

Silver Spectacles from South Oxfordshire (BERK-7F0834)

A pair of folding post-medieval silver spectacles and their copper alloy carry case dating from the late sixteenth to seventeenth century. The spectacles have thin round lens' frames each with a scrolled 'Y'-shaped bridge arm which joins from the opposite lens; the bridge arms are joined by a silver rivet that enables the spectacles to be folded in half. The copper alloy case is simple in design, its rounded body leading into shoulders above and a sub-rectangular neck, the outer edge of which retains a very small fragment of a suspension loop. The walls of the case are complete to about half way down; the lower half of the case is open and has suffered some post-depositional damage. The outer surface of the case is corroded but does not appear to bear any decoration. The spectacles were found folded within their carry case but were carefully removed and opened by the finder. Oxfordshire Museums Service hopes to acquire them.

ANNI BYARD, PAS

[3] J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Medieval Catalogue*, London Museum Catalogues, 7 (1940), p. 22 and plate II.
[4] Ibid. p. 25.

Tree-Ring Dating Supported by OAHS – Third Report

Since the inception of the OAHS Oxfordshire Dendrochronology Project in 2004, a total of 23 buildings have been sampled and dated. Twenty-two of them were published in *Vernacular Architecture* (*VA*), the annual journal of the Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), between 2005 and 2010. A handful of these have also been summarised in earlier reports in *Oxoniensia*,[1] and seven have been included in the *VCH*'s England's Past for Everyone (EPE) book on Burford and six more in the Henley-on-Thames book in the same series and in *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 16.[2] For the sake of completeness, all dates already published in *Vernacular Architecture* but not in *Oxoniensia* are therefore summarised below, with our current interpretations of the buildings themselves.

BURFORD *VCH* PROJECT

Seven buildings have been dated in Burford in association with the *VCH* and the Oxfordshire Buildings Record (OBR). The first six were published in 2006,[3] and the final building was published the following year.[4] The building descriptions were primarily drafted by David Clark, who organized the fieldwork and co-ordinated the selection of the buildings with Simon Townley of the *VCH*. The dating of the Burford buildings was jointly paid for by the individual property owners, EPE (supported by the HLF) and the OAHS.

Reavley's Chemist, 124 High Street (SP 252 122)

Felling date: spring 1401.

No. 124 High Street is situated on a prominent site on the corner with Sheep Street. Recording work by the OBR in 2010 showed that its structure was more complex than previously thought. There is a basement undercroft under the northern half of the building; above this the shop has domestic accommodation to the rear, but near the street doorway a massive timber post (which seems to be an insertion) supports the first floor. Some 5 ft below this is an inserted ceiling, which now conceals fragments of a coved jetty facing High Street. The roof structure above suggests a truncated two-bay hall running parallel to High Street, with a four-bayed cross-wing along Sheep Street. Although the integration of the two roof structures suggests that both ranges were constructed at the same time, the hall roof is heavily smoke-blackened while the wing roof is not. The most likely explanation is that the wing roof is earlier and was covered with tiles. Then the hall was built over the top of it but the tiles were retained in place.

[1] D. Clark et al., 'Tree-Ring Dating Supported by OAHS', *Oxoniensia*, 71 (2006), pp. 501–4; D. Clark et al., 'Tree-Ring Dating Supported by OAHS', *Oxoniensia*, 73 (2008), p. 200.

[2] A. Catchpole et al., *Burford. Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town* (Chichester, 2008); S. Townley, *Henley-on-Thames. Town, Trade and River* (Chichester, 2009); idem (ed.), *VCH Oxfordshire, XVI: Henley-on-Thames and Environs* (London, 2011), p. 32, fig. 7.

[3] D.H. Miles et al., 'Tree-Ring Dates from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory', *VA,* 37 (2006), pp. 124–7.

[4] D.H. Miles and M.J. Worthington, 'Tree-Ring Dates from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory', *VA*, 38 (2007), pp. 128–31.

The hall roof has a central arch-braced truss with truncated hammer-beams and the interesting feature of the common rafters having ashlars rising from an inner wall plate.

The cross-wing roof structure is even more remarkable given the simple carpentry typical in Oxfordshire. Both the tiebeams and the arch-braced collars are cranked. Above each collar, a king post rises to a yoke in the angle beneath the junction of the principal rafters. Braces rise from the struts to the square-set ridge; the latter is threaded through the principal trusses. Scarf joints include splayed scarfs. The undercroft is beneath the original timber structure of the hall floor which has central tenons and charring evidence for a central hearth. The building was recorded as an inn in 1423. By 1464 it had been bequeathed to the church, and from 1501 to 1734 it was known as the Crown. After that date it became a pharmacy, and it is reputed to be the longest-functioning chemist in England.

Calendars, 25 Sheep Street (SP 252 122)

(a) Front, middle and rear ranges
Felling date: spring 1473.
(b) Rear range, inserted floor
Felling date: spring 1487.

Calendars is a courtyard complex of which three ranges survive: a jettied range along the street, another jettied range running back and a stone kitchen range at the rear of the plot. All three elements are coeval, with a tiebeam of the middle range originating from the same tree as a collar of the front range. Timbers in the reconstructed rear range roof also had the same 1473 felling date as another tiebeam from the middle range. The front range has a close-studded first floor over a stone ground floor, as well as an extended jettied gabled projection at first floor level. The middle range is jettied on the courtyard side with the studs set at wider spacings than those used for the front range; it also has an original timber window. A ceiling beam dated to 1487 in the rear range relates apparently to the insertion of the floor in this range.

No documentary evidence has been found for the early history of this house. The purpose of the middle range is thus unknown, but it has a cellar and may have been for storage, possibly of wool, for which Burford was famous in the fifteenth century.

The Tolsey, High Street (SP 251 122)

Primary structure
Felling date: spring 1525.

The earliest documentary reference to the Tolsey – traditionally where market and other tolls were collected – is 1561, but recording work in 1999 by John Steane and Pat Harding suggested an earlier building date. It consists of a timber-framed structure supported on octagonal stone columns forming an open market area with a small lock-up. The roof comprises two parallel ranges of two bays each with tiebeam and collar roof trusses, two rows of purlins and wind braces (mostly curved but with some straight ones). The kinked continuation of the southern range to the west has been shown by the dendrochronology to be contemporary with the main structure.

82 and 84 High Street (SP 251 122)

(a) Front range No. 84a
Felling date: winter 1431/2.
(b) Rear wing No. 84a, reused timber
Felling date range: 1433–65.
(c) Rear wing No. 82, reused timber
Felling date: ?spring 1473.
(d) Front range No. 82
Felling date range (OxCal modelled): 1529–49 (unrefined 1523–55).

These two High Street tenements were united by a common frontage when the sixteenth-century roof of No. 82 was raised in the eighteenth century. In this work, cambered collars or

wind braces were reused as struts between the old and new roof structures. In (a) the dated principal is thickened at the point where the purlin (now missing) went through it. This feature was noted at Corpus Christi Farmhouse, Littlemore (1424) and the detached kitchen at Shapwick House in Somerset (1428).[5] The principals support a square section ridge. Two rear wings at right angles contain much reused timber including the two timbers sampled.

2–4 Priory Lane (SP 252 123)

Felling date: spring 1650.

These two cottages are built up against the rear wall of Falkland Hall, an imposing building on High Street (probably also mid seventeenth-century in date). The stone wall of No. 2 and the drip-mouldings on its Priory Lane elevation continue those of the Hall, although it is structurally separate. Inside, the axial beam supports the floor of what at one time seems to have been a large reception room, accessible through an internal doorway through the wall from Falkland Hall. It was heated by a large four-centred arched fireplace. The axial beam is moulded and the carpentry is of good quality. The beam dates from around the time that the Bear Inn was founded on the adjacent tenement, and it is possible that these cottages and the Falkland Hall were also part of the inn; doorways through to the Hall were found at each level during renovation work in 2005.

The Gabled House, 162 The Hill (SP 252 120)

Front range

Felling date: spring 1459.

One of a number of houses extensively restored in the 1920s by E.J. Horniman, it had a series of earlier remodellings, notably the addition of a gabled front in the seventeenth century. The main roof of the front range consists of four bays of which the upper parts of three trusses are visible. The southernmost 'A'-frame truss is a relic of an earlier lower roof. Next is an upper cruck truss (dated to 1459) with cranked blades and a type A apex with a short collar linking the blades a few inches below the ridge, and a lower collar which has been removed. The third truss is again a pair of upper crucks, with long knees visible below the present floor level. This has a type C apex, with the blades almost touching beneath the yoke. The west wing has simple principal rafter trusses; the purlins are crudely scarfed within the principals using visible tongues and edge pegs. Six samples from the principals and purlins failed to date conclusively due to pollarding.

10 Sheep Street, Titcombs (SP 251 122)

Barn

Felling date: winter 1570/1.

Behind Titcombs is a two-bay stone barn with a through passage, connected by a linking structure to the front range. The barn has an upper cruck truss in the centre with a collar and two sets of trenched purlins, and the link also has an upper cruck truss. The west gable of the barn has a distinctive 'candle-flame' ventilator found in other local buildings. Previously the barn was believed to be eighteenth century, with the linking upper cruck probably brought in from elsewhere, possibly in the early twentieth century. However, the precise date of 1570/1 for the link, and date ranges consistent with this from the upper crucks in the main part of the building, suggest that all are of one phase. It is known that the house was altered by local architect Russell Cox in 1963, but the full extent of this work is not known. The style of ventilation slit does not seem to be found before the eighteenth century (and here may have been introduced by Cox) and suggests that some of the stone walling of the barn may be later than the roof.

[5] D.H. Miles and M.J. Worthington, 'Tree-Ring Dates from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory', *VA*, 30 (1999), p. 103; D.H. Miles and D. Haddon-Reece, 'Tree-Ring Dates. List 71', *VA*, 27 (1996), pp. 96–7.

HENLEY-ON-THAMES *VCH* PROJECT

The Henley project builds on the work of the Henley Archaeological & Historical Group and was instigated to provide secure dates for the *VCH* publications on Henley. Most of the work was supported jointly by the OAHS, the Marc Fitch Fund, the *VCH* and individual house owners. Previous dendro work in Henley found fast-grown and idiosyncratic timbers and the present group of buildings contained the same. In some phases of construction only one or two timbers dated, and it is only through the wide range of chronologies from Oxfordshire that certain buildings could be dated. A number of marginal buildings have been assessed but not sampled, but may be sampled in the future. Most of the building descriptions below were drafted by Ruth Gibson, who co-ordinated the work. The first five were published in 2008,[6] and the remaining four the following year.[7]

Baltic House, Thameside and Baltic Cottage (60 Friday Street) (SU 762 825)

(a) Hall, primary phase (Baltic House and Cottage)
Felling date: winter 1438/9.
(b) Cross-wing to Baltic Cottage
Felling date: winter 1537/8.
This two-bay hall house (a) is located close to the river at the eastern end of Friday Street. It has a smoke-blackened crown post roof, a rare type of roof structure in the town. The collars are lap-jointed to the paired rafters, virtually all of which are of small, boxed-heart scantling, with only one timber producing a positive date. A large brick stack has been inserted in the centre, creating a lobby-entry house. The two-storey cross-wing (b) was built at the western end in 1537/8, by which time the hall must have been chambered over, as there is no smoke blackening on its timbers. This was subsequently truncated at the front along the plane of the hall range roof. Three roof timbers from this phase produced dates. In *c.*1800 the building was extended on the eastern/river side by an elegant front wing with two reception rooms and central staircase. It is now subdivided into two dwellings, each with one bay of the medieval wing.

13 Gravel Hill (SU 758 825)

Roof
Felling date: spring 1454.
This is a two-bay, two-storey cross-wing added to the west side of a double hall house of three small bays, now Nos. 9–11 Gravel Hill. All three buildings have trusses of the crown strut type, of which there are many examples in the town, most of them undated. The rear truss of No. 13 has a single strut, whilst the front, street-facing one is of a fan shape with a central straight strut from tie to collar and two curved struts. The two small halls, which may have been rented out to small craftsmen working in the upper market place, have smoke-blackened roof timbers. This use of the halls must have ceased by the time the wing was built as its rafters and plate intrude into the smoke-blackened space, but are totally clean. The 1454 date for the cross-wing confirms the adjoining small halls to be some decades earlier.

Granary Cottage, 10 Thameside (SU 762 825)

Roof and floor
Felling dates: spring 1548, winter 1549/50, and spring 1550.
Granary Cottage and the adjacent Barn Cottage form part of an interesting group of (almost) continuous timber-framed and jettied buildings along Thameside and Friday Street. Only

[6] D.H. Miles et al., 'Tree-Ring Dates from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory', *VA*, 39 (2008), pp. 138–40.
[7] R. Gibson and D.H. Miles, 'Tree-Ring Dates from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory', *VA*, 40 (2009), pp. 129–30.

Granary Cottage was sampled, but it is important to look at the group as a whole. They were used as grain stores during their known history, which only goes back into the late eighteenth century. Photographs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century show them with shuttered and barred upper openings and barn and stable type doors at the ground floor. However, they all have chamfered and stopped ceiling joists of excellent quality, but only in the ground floor rooms, and Barn Cottage has a splendid dragon beam for the jettied corner. The joists at the furthest western end of Friday Street are flat laid and more closely spaced, whilst further along towards the eastern end and into Thameside the joists are square cut. There are clearly two building phases, with two trusses spaced less than one foot apart between No. 71 Friday Cottage and No. 73 Barn Cottage. The bays to the west are certainly part of the earlier phase. Their purpose at the time of construction was probably a dual one – that of offices and accommodation on the ground floor and storage of goods on the upper floor, safe from water and thieves. The buildings belonged to the Fawley Court estate from at least the late sixteenth century until 1925.

Tudor House, 49 Duke Street (SU 761 825)

Felling date range: 1569–1601.

This is a modest, one-and-a-half-storey house, jettied at both front and rear, and built gable-end onto the street near the corner of Duke and Friday Street. It is the only survivor of its kind in this street, which leads to the central cross roads/market place of the medieval planned town. A photograph of the 1860s, which has a view of the now demolished west side of Duke Street, shows nothing but jettied buildings crowded onto the narrow footway, illustrating early pressure on space. Tudor House may have been the storied cross-wing to a now vanished hall. It has square-laid joists to the jetty, with rectangular joists behind. The roof is of a single crown strut from cambered tie to collar truss, arch braces from posts to tie, clasped purlins and curved wind braces, typical of Henley. Many of the timbers used to construct the building are reused, and the date of the present building is represented by only a jetty joist and a rail. The street elevation is a modern pastiche using old timbers, though interestingly it is one of several pastiche timber fronts in Henley which conceal genuine late-medieval timber framing.

93/95 Bell Street (SU 760 829)

Rear wing

Felling dates: winter 1758/9.

Located at the northern entrance to Henley, this was originally a rather grand house consisting of four unequal bays, aligned along the street. The two southern bays represent either a hall or a solar with an arch-braced truss, of which the principal rafters remain as well as moulded purlins and wind braces. The two northern bays, which form one large room on each floor, retain richly moulded ceiling beams, wall plates, posts, knee braces and also cusped wind braces. The double hollow chamfer mouldings indicate a building date between 1450 and 1500. None of the timbers gave dendro dates because they were fast grown. However, a three-bay rear range produced a date of 1758/9; this was very likely built when the house had gone down the social scale and had become a bakery, for which there is documentary evidence in 1777.

20 Bell Street, The Old Bell (SU 760 826)

Felling date: spring 1325.

This is now a small public house on Bell Street (formerly North Street), which runs north from the central crossroads and was one of the primary streets of the planned medieval town. Its mock-timber framing hides a medieval three-bay building of outstanding quality. The front has a 'tacked on' jetty in which the front corner posts rise through both storeys. A complete crown-post roof survives in the centre in the form of an arch-braced, cambered tie beam supporting the octagonal shaft, from which four braces rise to the collar and collar purlin. The front/west truss lost its crown post when the roof was later cut back and hipped, but preserves the top arch and splayed jambs of a gothic window below the tie, possibly formerly a projecting

oriel. The roof has what appears to be original framing for a lateral chimneystack immediately beyond the first truss in the middle bay. It is Henley's earliest vernacular structure yet identified, very probably the cross-wing of a once larger building.

77–81 Bell Street, The Bear (SU 760 829)

(a) Rear kitchen
Felling date: spring 1438.
(b) North extension to rear kitchen
Felling dates: winter 1500/1501 and winter 1589/90.
The former Bear inn, with its long, narrow courtyard, is located at the important northern entrance to the town. It was first documented as an inn in the 1660s, but it may have had the same function in the later Middle Ages. The street front has four gables, which provided first-floor chambers with comfortable accommodation for travellers. The two left-hand gables, which include the two chambers over the carriage arch, have crown strut trusses of high-quality scantling. These truss types are repeated over a large first floor parlour of the range behind No. 77. None of these trusses were suitable for dendro dating, but similar ones in the area date to the mid fifteenth century. The two right-hand bays at No. 81 have large, canted oriel windows and are of seventeenth-century date. Behind this and separated by a one foot gap is an earlier two-bay open hall (dated to 1438), which appears to have had a smoke bay in its smaller, eastern bay. This hall was enlarged by the unusual method of extending it sideways (to the north); this involved the construction of a new, taller roof over the wider building, achieved by extending the common rafters, leaving the earlier ones on the south side of the roof in situ, and by extending the tie beams with scarf joints. The new principal rafters have been dated to 1589/90 which represents the construction date of this extension; the 1500/1501 date for the tiebeam extension suggests that the timber had been reused from elsewhere. The entire roof of this range has sooted timbers and was probably used as the inn's kitchen. It may have started as a small detached kitchen or represent the remnant of a once longer hall, which made way for the new seventeenth-century front.

88 Bell Street, Countess Gardens (SU 760 829)

Reused rafters
Felling date: spring 1611.
This is one of the town's grandest early eighteenth-century houses, located at the northern entrance to the town. It takes its name from the large grounds behind it, which are associated with the former royal manor and named probably after Countess Margaret (d. 1312), widow of Edmund, earl of Cornwall. It is built of silver grey bricks, has red gauged window arches, tall sash windows, an elegant door case and a parapet (which hides the hipped roof). Much of the interior is fully panelled and has an elegant, open string staircase with a variation of turned balusters and toads-back hand rail, both typical for the early part of the eighteenth century.[8] The roof is divided into three low ridges ending in hips. The low quality of the timbers used for the pegged common rafters, single purlins and irregular struts is surprising in a house of this status and the date of 1611 shows that second hand timbers were used for its construction with the builder saving on those parts not intended to impress.

19–23 Hart Street, The Old White Hart

Courtyard ranges
Felling dates: winter 1530/1 and spring 1531.
The inn was first documented in 1428/9, when it was called the Hart. Remnants of a three-bay crown post roof in the front range may date to this period, but were not suitable for sampling.

[8] L. Hall, *Period House Fixtures and Fittings, 1300–1900* (Newbury, 2005), pp. 112, 127.

Around the courtyard, accessed by a wide carriage entrance, are three lodging ranges, most of them still connected by a jettied gallery, which gives access to first-floor chambers. Two bays of the west range were built as an open hall, but with a large brick fireplace in the south gable wall. The roof structure may not be in its original position since there are signs of alterations to rafters and a wind brace; no dendro dates were obtained from it. Bricks about two inches thick, laid in English bond, were used for the outer walls and gables and up to jetty height for the courtyard walls. These brick walls support the jetty beams, timber gallery and roof structures and are integral to the 1530s dated timbers. This is the earliest known brick building in Henley, erected at a time when brick was still the building material of royalty and nobility. The importance of the building for the town is also reflected in the fact that it gave its name to the main street, formerly called High Street.

OXFORD

Wadham College (SP 516 065)

Chapel roof

Felling date: winter 1610/11.

Oxford University part-funded the Wadham College dating as part of the MSc in Archaeological Science syllabus. The results were published in 2010.[9]

The college, founded in 1610, consists of a main quadrangle set back from Parks Road incorporating a gatehouse with tower, chapel and hall. The hall has a fine hammer-beam roof in typical early seventeenth-century style and detailing, and was originally heated by an open brazier below the lantern or smoke louver. This was in use until 1828 when the present fireplace near the high table was inserted. The chapel is 'T'-shaped with a large antechapel, typical of many Oxford colleges. The roof trusses consist of common rafter trusses with collar set midway up the roof, braced with soulaces and with an upper collar with king struts between. There are no longitudinal purlins. The original roof was boarded below giving a five-cant ceiling.

The college is exceptional in having a complete set of building accounts. These show that the workmen were brought up from Somerset, and the building timber from nearby Cumnor Wood. The master stonemason and architect was William Arnold, responsible for Montacute House and Dunster Castle. The first entry in the accounts is for 9 April 1609, when an agreement was made with twenty-nine workmen from near Ilminster. The men were brought from so far away because there was a shortage of masons in Oxford due to the work at Merton and on Bodley's new quadrangle. The first stone was laid on 31 July 1610. By the middle of June 1611 three sides of the quadrangle were up to plate level, whilst fourth side encompassing the hall and chapel was only at window sill level. By November 1611 the three more advanced sides of the quadrangle were basically completed and weatherproof.

In July 1612 the chapel roof was begun, with Edward Thornton as head carpenter. The last payment for the chapel roof is dated 17 October 1612, by which time the carpentry must have been completed. The first payment for timber from Cumnor was made in August 1610, and felling continued until June 1611. The felling date of winter 1610/11 for one of the timbers incorporated in this frame provides clear evidence for stockpiling. The chapel was consecrated on 29 April 1613, although the carved screens were incomplete and the painter had not finished.[10]

[9] D.H. Miles and M.C. Bridge, 'Tree-Ring Dates from the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory', *VA*, 41 (2010), pp. 108–10.

[10] T.G. Jackson, *Wadham College, Oxford* (Oxford, 1893), pp. 29–49.

STEVENTON

Three buildings in Steventon were studied in advance of the VAG spring conference in 2011. OAHS contributed to dating the buildings, supplementing a generous grant from the VAG and contributions from the house owners. The work was co-ordinated by David Clark, who provided part of the following building descriptions, and intensive documentary research in the Westminster Abbey muniments by Christopher Currie and Nat Alcock has revealed much of the post-medieval history of the occupation of the buildings. The tree-ring dating results were published in 2010.[11]

Milton Lane, Fir Tree House (SU 473 920)

a) Hall range
Felling dates: winter 1569/70 and winter 1571/2.
b) Cross-wing
Felling date: winter 1572/3.
The house consists of an eastern cross-wing, jettied at tie-beam level, and a range at right angles, parallel to the road. Although rendered, the building is timber-framed, the street range set on a low stone plinth. The gable end has a decorative timber framework of circles and braces similar to those on the gable of the Reindeer Inn in Banbury (1570) and elsewhere. The doorway opens to a passage in which there is a staircase with moulded handrail and turned balusters, considered to be seventeenth century. In 1958 Rigold suggested that the staircase had been inserted into a former hall.[12] Currie considered the cross-wing to be sixteenth century and the main range to have been rebuilt in the seventeenth century, with no trace of the medieval hall surviving.[13] The ceiling structure may have been inserted into a former open hall, although the highly finished, ovolo-moulded and chamfered joists, which showed no evidence of sapwood, could not be sampled.

The felling dates for these samples cover a four-year period, suggesting that the timbers were collected over a few years. The cross-wing samples were the later ones felled, and this may suggest that the cross-wing was built slightly later than the main range. One hypothesis is that the hall range was erected in 1572 next to a pre-existing chamber block which the owners planned to have replaced the following year by a new chamber block, as evidenced by the unfinished eastern ends of the hall purlins. The old chamber block was then demolished and replaced with the present cross-wing in 1573 or shortly after, at which time the staircase linking bay was inserted to join the two blocks together. This might explain the use of some reused timbers in this staircase bay.

39 The Causeway (SU 470 918)

(a) Cross-wing
Felling dates: winter 1356/7, winter 1361/2 and winter 1364/5.
(b) Kitchen range
Felling date: winter 1518/19.
The house is in three main parts: a cruck range to the east, a two-storey box-framed range to the west and an in-line kitchen extension. The cross-wing has distinctive scissor-bracing at first floor level and a crown-post above, with ogee-bracing to the tie-beam. The west range consists of three later fourteenth-century bays with dragon ties, diminished principals and a spine beam supporting the floor of lodged joists with a 'Traite de Jupiter' scarf. These features, and the scissor-bracing at the gable, are generally found in early fourteenth-century buildings, so the

[11] Ibid.
[12] S.E. Rigold, 'The Timber-Framed Buildings of Steventon and their Regional Significance', *Transactions of the Newbury and District Field Club*, 10, 4 (1958), pp. 4–13.
[13] C.R.J. Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse', *Oxoniensia*, 57 (1992), p. 201.

date of 1364/5 suggests a continued use of earlier techniques in this part of the country. The roof has clasped purlins, one of which has a simple splayed scarf. It appears the west range was floored from the start.

Samples taken from the cruck range could not be dated because they had too few rings. These were later subject to radiocarbon analysis, which again did not prove definitive, but strongly supported a date of *c*.1350. If this date is correct then the wing is a later addition, replacing at least a half-bay of the cruck range.

Tudor House, 67 The Causeway (SU 467 917)

(a) Cross-wing
Felling date: spring 1299.
(b) Reconstruction of cross-wing
Felling date: winter 1448/9.

Tudor House consists of a two-bayed cross-wing dated to spring 1299 together with a cruck hall dated to 1355/6. The hall range was sampled and dated in 1988 as part of the Leverhulme-funded Cruck Dating Project.[14] At this time only one sample was taken from the cross-wing, which had a heartwood/sapwood boundary date of 1284. The objective of the present study was to try to date more accurately the cross-wing and what appeared to be a later reconstruction phase at the back. The box-framed cross-wing contains two tall bays and a third bay apparently for a kitchen. The original roof, of which only the front gable survives, has clasped purlins with a crown-strut with down braces, and an empty mortice for a brace to a missing collar purlin. The posts are down-braced to a heavy mid-rail and the truss originally had scissor-bracing.

The southernmost (rear) bay in the cross-wing was previously thought to have been reconstructed in the seventeenth century to provide a kitchen. The tiebeam and upper roof of this truss were also replaced. The dendrochronology has here shown this to have taken place in or shortly after 1449.

The two-bay cruck hall range of 1355/6 has a central open cruck truss which is particularly notable for its massive and elegantly chamfered timbers, whose cusps form an ogee pointed arch under the collar. Short upper principals form a cinquefoil arch above this. The right-hand end truss against the wing is a light arch-braced truss carried on the wall plates. That at the other end has short principals supported on a dropped tiebeam. A further bay, which was presumably the service end, has been removed beyond this truss.

The historical development and structural details of both ranges have been covered by Currie.[15] The hall open truss has previously been described as a base-cruck, but the range lacks any of the features associated with base-crucks, such as square-set purlins, or arcaded end trusses. It is therefore considered to be a true cruck with F2 apex (collar carrying upper principals).

DANIEL MILES, RUTH GIBSON and DAVID CLARK

[14] N.W. Alcock et al., 'Leverhulme Cruck Project Results, 1988', *VA*, 20 (1989), pp. 43–5.
[15] Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses', p. 201.