NOTES

Archaeological Work in Oxford, 2012

In 2012 the Heritage and Specialist Services Team completed the Oxford Archaeological Plan (OAP). The resulting resource assessment, research agenda and characterisation reports are available on the council website, along with a six-year Archaeological Action Plan for the city. The year also saw a number of substantial city centre projects resulting from the expansion of college facilities, and some notable new information resulting from small-scale commercial and domestic development. Provisional summaries for selected sites are provided below.

SELECTED PROJECTS

19 St Andrew's Lane, Headington

In January JMHS carried out an archaeological evaluation prior to the construction of a small extension at 19 St Andrew's Lane. The evaluation recorded a post-medieval well and a series of cess pits filled with dump deposits containing animal bone, late-medieval and early post-medieval pottery and brick. At least six post holes from an unidentified structure possibly post-dating the pits were recorded.

Nos. 6-7 High Street (Jack Wills, formerly Ryman's Stationers)

In February three test pits were excavated in the basement of Nos. 6–7 High Street by OA. A number of medieval pits containing domestic and butchery waste were recorded, along with a stone drain or wall foundation. The backfill of one feature contained a fired clay annular discoidal loom weight of likely early to middle Anglo-Saxon date (c.400-850). In June a lift pit was excavated in the basement revealing in section the edge of a possible wood-lined pit, potentially a 'cellar pit'. This contained grains of wheat, oat, barley and vetch or pea. A radiocarbon date was obtained from a grain of barley giving a broad late eighth- or ninth-century date for the material: 1186 ± 27 BP (SUERC-43616), cal AD 771–898 (91.2 per cent probability) or cal AD 809–884 (61.7 per cent probability). This is the earliest radiocarbon date yet obtained for material from the central area of the late Saxon town. A small but identifiable sherd of Oxford Shelley ware (c.775-1050) was retrieved from the base of the pit. A series of medieval pits and two wells were also recorded, dating to the high medieval period. One of the two wells was not backfilled until the early seventeenth century.

Oxford Golf Club, Hilltop Road

Between February and March a watching brief by JMHS during ground reduction in advance of the creation of three new ponds at Oxford Golf Club revealed a number of features of likely late-prehistoric or early Roman date including pits, post holes and stake holes. One large pit contained hammerscale; another pit close contained the remains of a flue. The burnt stones found in the flue suggest that this pit had a possible industrial iron-working function.

Nos. 33-35 George Street

In March OA undertook a watching brief at 33–35 George Street during works to the basement. A partial profile of the medieval town ditch was recorded.

Worcester College, Kitchen Quad and Pump Quad, Walton Street

In January a pre-determination evaluation and a watching brief during geo-technical test pitting were undertaken by OA in Kitchen Quad and Pump Quad at Worcester College. The works in Kitchen Quad revealed at least two distinct phases of features cut into natural gravel. The earliest of these was not securely dated. The later phase consisted of fifteenth- or sixteenth-century pits of undetermined function. A number of later building remains were also revealed. One of these was an east–west wall which may correspond to a garden wall depicted on a seventeenth-century engraving. The remaining structures correlated to outbuildings in the Kitchen courtyard shown on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map. In Pump Quad a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century feature was recorded overlain by a compacted layer of redeposited gravel and later garden soils.

10 Stephen Road, Headington

In January OA excavated a series of negative trenches at this site, seeking to examine anomalies identified during an earlier radar survey. In March a watching brief was undertaken during development works and part of an inhumation burial was recorded. The burial is likely to be associated with the inhumation burial of sixth-century date previously identified to the south of the site in 2002. The distance between the two burials and the lack of other burials in the previously investigated trenches suggests the presence of a dispersed cemetery at the southern end of Stephen Road.

The Clarendon Centre, Shoe Lane

Between June and September Pre-Construct Archaeology undertook an excavation within the former Curry's unit in the Clarendon Centre. The excavation revealed evidence for medieval and post-medieval buildings and associated yards and gardens. A rich assemblage of organic remains was also recovered. Medieval features and finds included rubbish and gravel quarry pits, a kiln or oven, a parchment pricker, a candle stick, redeposited fragments of window tracery, floor tiles originating from Penn (Bucks.) and glazed ridge tiles. The excavation provided an excellent opportunity for public engagement and a very successful open day was held in August.

No. 1 Park Town

In August JMHS excavated a trial trench after the demolition of an outbuilding and prior to the construction of a basement for a new building. The trench produced finds of slag and pottery provisionally dated to the Iron Age. Subsequently in September the remaining area of the basement footprint was archaeologically excavated. The area proved to have been heavily disturbed in the Victorian period, but one recorded pit produced finds of broken pottery, animal bone and a redeposited layer of stones, potentially a 'special deposit' of Iron-Age date.

Magdalen College, Longwall Quad

In September OA undertook test pitting within the 'New Library' at Magdalen College after the temporary removal of the lower book stacks. The test pits revealed the well-preserved remains of medieval and early post-medieval buildings that fronted onto High Street (formerly Bridge Street) and later Gravel Walk. In October OA commenced an excavation in Longwall Quad prior to the construction of a library extension. The excavation identified at least one late Saxon pit, as well as cess pits, quarry holes and tenement boundaries associated with the medieval tenements. Post-medieval remains included walls and two stone-built basements belonging to buildings that fronted onto Gravel Walk (located just to the south of and parallel to Bridge Street) which was established after the foundation of the college in the fifteenth century. Notable finds included a large collection of eighteenth-century wig curlers and a cut-throat razor that can be linked to John Broughton, a wig maker (perukier) and barber who occupied one of the tenements fronting Gravel Walk between 1750 and 1776. In the northern part of the Quad approximately 115 burials belonging to the burial ground of the medieval hospital of St John the Baptist were recorded.



Fig. 1. Aerial photograph of the Magdalen College Longwall Quad excavation, looking north. Peter Lovett, Oxford Archaeology.

Hinksey Side Weir Fish-Pass

Between September and October OA excavated test pits and undertook a watching brief during the construction of an Environment Agency fish-pass channel near Hinksey Side Weir on the River Thames. The work recorded two distinct layers of peat overlaid by a sequence of alluvial deposits and topsoil along the length of the channel. A radiocarbon date of 1279 \pm 24 BP (SUERC-43324), cal AD 670–775 (95 per cent probability) was obtained on a waterlogged seed from the lower peat deposit.

Lincoln College, Garden Building, Turl Street

In September OA commenced an excavation at Lincoln College on the site of the former Garden Building Lecture Room, involving work in the Fellows' and Rector's Gardens. The excavation recorded two well-crafted stone walls each over a meter thick. These were all that remained of a large medieval stone building that extended beyond the southern limits of the excavation. This structure was modified in the sixteenth century and a large stone-walled room was added to the north. The gravel and dirt floors were overlain by thick occupation deposits, as well as ash and charcoal from a well-constructed stone oven (perhaps with a specialist function). The oven was later replaced by a more domestic-looking fireplace. The building was eventually demolished in the seventeenth or eighteenth century with the northern wall retained to form the boundary between Lincoln College and the tenements of Rotten Row. The land where the building had stood became a small stone-surfaced courtyard. This was later buried below demolition rubble and garden soils. The excavation continued into January 2013.

Building Recording

Between May and July detailed building recording was undertaken by OBR during the dismantling of the rear of No. 84 St Aldate's. The provisional results indicate that the rear frame was primary, dating to a single building campaign in 1635 by Thomas Seymour (*c*.1601–69).



Fig. 2. Aerial photograph of the Minchery Paddock excavation at Littlemore Priory, looking north.

© 2012 Adam Stanford Aerial Cam.

Subsequent improvements appear to have been made during the Civil War when the building was occupied by a family associated with the royal court. Further alterations were made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The building may have been used for domestic and functional uses including brewing related activities.

Geo-technical test pitting and interior 'opening up' works at No. 107 St Aldate's in December were subject to a watching brief and a heritage statement by Foundations Archaeology and Ben Stephenson Associates respectively. The building was noted to contain late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century elements, including a fireplace and moulded windows, as well as features associated with its use as a photographer's shop in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Further limited building recording was undertaken by a variety of archaeological contractors on a range of structures, including: the Brewery Gate public house, St Thomas' Street; Christ Church Tom Quad Staircase 9 and the Killcanon building in Peckwater Quad; Nos. 20–24 St Michael's Street; the buttery, staircases 12 and 13 and the medieval kitchen, Worcester College; New College kitchen, hall and buttery; the former Coach and Horses, No. 62 St Clement's Street; and the remains of the Oxford Steam Ploughing Company buildings at the Templar Retail Park, Between Towns Road, Cowley.

The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project

The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project (Archeox) continued to involve large numbers of volunteers in a wide range of events and activities. A programme of geophysical surveys, test pitting, public talks and practical workshops was run throughout the year.

Between October and November Archeox undertook a five-week community excavation at Minchery Paddock, Littlemore, investigating part of the site of the twelfth- to sixteenth-century nunnery. Two very successful public open days were held and there was tremendous interest from local residents from Blackbird Leys and Littlemore. The excavations helped confirm the plan of the cloistral range and encountered the remains of a number of nunnery buildings. Floors, walls, hearths and also rubbish pits associated with the nunnery were investigated. An outlying building associated with metalworking debris was excavated, perhaps an outbuilding of a high-status residence associated with the complex. The excavation also examined peat deposits and an ephemeral Roman structure adjacent to the nearby water course. A number of notable prehistoric flints were recovered, including a fine Bronze-Age barbed and tanged arrowhead.

DAVID RADFORD, CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST

Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire, 2012

The County Archaeological Service (now part of the Historic and Natural Environment Team) was consulted on approximately 900 planning applications between April 2012 and April 2013. In addition, the service scanned in the region of 6,200 applications and appraised a further 400 applications from the weekly planning lists. The service also produced a seventy-six design briefs for archaeological work including twenty-nine for evaluation ahead of the determination of a planning application.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Southam Road, Banbury

A geophysical survey and a trenched evaluation were undertaken in advance of a planning application for housing on two fields either side of Southam Road. The fields are to the north and west of the deserted medieval remains of Hardwick. The survey recorded an enclosure and a small number of linear features. The trenched evaluation recorded a number of prehistoric features consisting of ditches, gullies, pits and stake holes which were mainly undated. A small number of dateable features were recorded including a Neolithic pit dated by 188 sherds of pottery as well as Bronze-Age and Roman features.

Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames

A small evaluation was undertaken ahead of the determination of a planning application for the construction of three houses. The site is located close to and north of the scheduled Palaeolithic site at Highlands Farm. Following a standard evaluation which encountered no later archaeological deposits a trial section was opened in order to examine the deeper stratigraphy. No Palaeolithic artefacts were recovered but the trial section did record deposits which had the potential to contain important secondary Palaeolithic deposits. Further investigation will need to take place during construction.

CABI Site, Wallingford

A pre-determination evaluation was undertaken as part of a planning application on the site immediately north of Grim's Ditch. Excavation ahead of the Wallingford bypass had previously recorded significant archaeological deposits including Bronze-Age and Iron-Age field systems. The evaluation on the CABI site did not record any further traces of these deposits but did record a small number of undated linear features and small discrete pits.

Cranford House School, Moulsford

An excavation was undertaken during ground reduction for a sports pitch on the playing field at Cranford House School. Evaluation had previously recorded a child inhumation, probably dated to the Iron Age or Roman period. The site contained a fairly large amount of made ground and so archaeologically relevant horizons were only encountered in a small area. Subsequent excavation recorded a cluster of eight intercutting pits. Three sherds of Roman pottery and two late Anglo-Saxon sherds were recovered from the pits.

Great Western Park, Didcot

Excavations have been completed on the northern section of the development at Great Western Park, Didcot. This marks the culmination of three years of excavation across the site north of the Wantage Road. In addition to the main areas of excavation two further areas of Iron-Age and Roman settlement have been investigated as well as an area adjacent to the larger openarea excavation.

Of particular interest was the unexpected discovery of a large Bronze-Age boundary ditch and a pond barrow, identified during the excavation of what was thought to be a spread of redeposited material. No trace of the bank has survived but a roughly circular hollow was excavated in quadrants consisting of a metalled surface sealing a small number of Bronze-Age pits. The excavation recovered three barbed and tanged arrowheads from the surface of the metalling along with other flint tools. Extensive environmental samples were taken and it is hoped that the material recovered will provide a radiocarbon date for the feature. The post-excavation analysis of the findings will take a number of years to complete.

South-West Bicester

Following on from the excavations for phase 1 of South-West Bicester undertaken in 2009 a geophysical survey and trenched evaluation was undertaken on the phase 2 site to the west. The features encountered in phase 1 did not continue onto this site although the remains of a windmill were encountered and excavated.

High Street, Dorchester

A small excavation was undertaken within the footprints of three houses adjacent to the scheduled monument of the Roman town at Dorchester. The excavation recorded Roman and medieval pits along with a number of inhumations. Post-excavation work is currently ongoing.

Land North of Fringford, East of A4421, Shelswell Park

A geophysical survey was undertaken as the first phase of a staged programme of investigation on the site of a new solar farm. The survey recorded a significant number of probable features which appear to include linear trackways, enclosures and possible roundhouses. The solar farm was designed in such a way that impact on the archaeological features was reduced to a strip down the centre of the site for the cabling and excavation on this area recorded a number of Iron Age features. Post-excavation work is ongoing and a report is expected soon.

Oak Farm, Milcombe

An excavation is underway on a medieval occupation site in Milcombe after an earlier evaluation. A number of linear features and pits have been recorded along with evidence for two medieval houses and a possible dovecote. The houses survive at the lower level of the foundations only whilst the possible dovecot consists of a substantial circular foundation approximately 10 metres in diameter with foundations around 1 metre thick.

Abingdon Precinct

A programme of archaeological recording was undertaken during development on the Precinct Shopping Centre (in the Market Place). Although the earlier phase of investigation encountered Roman activity, this phase did not go deep enough to disturb Romano-British deposits and uncovered only post-medieval pits and features. A report is currently in preparation.

Drayton Road, Abingdon

Following a geophysical survey which recorded a number of possible features an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site which recorded later prehistoric ditches, pits and post holes. The features are likely to represent a small farmstead which may be related to the scheduled Iron-Age settlement to the west. Most of the features were undated but a number were found to contain pottery dating to the mid to late Iron Age.

Fitzharris Public House, Abingdon

Archaeological recording undertaken during redevelopment of the site recorded evidence of Roman occupation during the second century. The investigations uncovered a variety of features including three parallel Roman walls, possibly suggesting a small Roman building, and

a fourth, larger, wall to the north, as well as a number of pits and post holes. Industrial activity was suggested by iron nails and slag found on top of a possible surface. The site appears to have been abandoned during the third century.

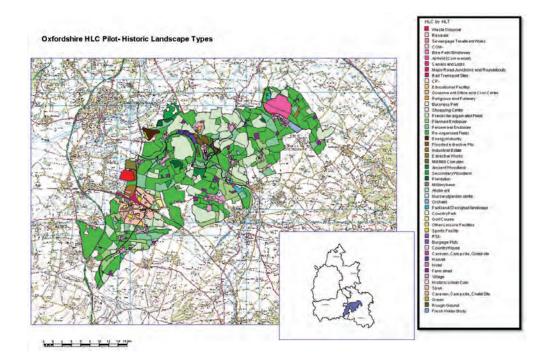
Ditchley

Archaeological recording during the installation of a biomass heating system recorded a section across Grim's Ditch and evidence of two medieval buildings as well as a number of ditches, pits and post holes. The section across Grim's Ditch provided further information about the construction of this section of the feature. A significant stone building, dated to the medieval period from twelfth- to thirteenth-century roof tiles, was recorded within parkland to the north of Grim's Ditch. Three further walls were recorded along with handmade iron nails and a fragment of decorated glass. In addition a number of culvert trenches were observed across the site.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

A new dataset is currently being produced as part of the English Heritage-funded Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. This project began in October 2012 and will continue for more than three years. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) maps traces of the past present in today's landscape, classifying historic elements still visible in the modern landscape. It provides a holistic landscape perspective on the historic environment, and complements HER monument-based data. The entire county will be analysed, and the final results presented on a county council website in due course.

Charlotte Malone, the HLC project officer, has completed the HLC pilot phase, which covers the area shown below. This area comprises c.11,000 hectares, and includes the towns of Didcot and Dorchester. The colours show the current character of the landscape: the pink, yellow and



purple tones represent urban settlement and features (waste disposal, sports grounds, hotels), and the green, grey and brown tones rural ones (extraction areas, woodland and enclosures).

This year saw a continued increase in the number of HER consultations required as the first step in planning applications. More than seventy of these consultations were carried out. There were also several requests for large projects, including HS2 and the English Landscapes and Identity Project (Oxford University).

Those wishing to find out more about HER data can utilise two main online resources. These are the county council's Heritage Search database (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/heritagesearch) and English Heritage's Heritage Gateway (www.english-heritage.org.uk). The latter has recently been provided with a more user-friendly advanced search mechanism.

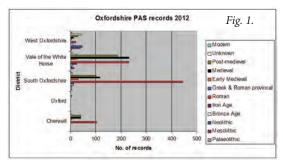
On a personal note, the Archaeology team mourns the passing of long-term colleague Ron Hillier, who almost single-handedly entered data into the county HER for nearly twenty years. His role developed from administrator to archaeological assistant, and he was able to complete routine projects and provide support on more complex ones, including identifying ridge and furrow areas from aerial photographs. His death followed two months after that of Elizabeth Leggatt, whose work on the SMR/HER for almost thirty years provided a sound footing for the records of the city and many of the listed buildings in the county.

> HUGH CODDINGTON, RICHARD ORAM and SUSAN LISK, COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

The Portable Antiquities Scheme in Oxfordshire, 2012

In 2012 some 3,148 objects were reported to the PAS in Oxfordshire and 1,910 object records were created. The latter figure includes a backlog of rally and other finds from 2011 which were entered into the database in 2012, as well as a large antiquarian lithic collection from Tackley near Banbury which contributed several hundred finds. It excludes 400 finds from a large metal-detecting rally held at Letcombe Bassett in September 2012 which were entered onto the database in 2013. Poor weather meant fewer metal-detecting rallies were held and as a result there was a reduction in the number of newly discovered finds. However, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire retains the highest number of participants across the PAS network, with 319 individuals reporting finds in 2012.

For the first time in several years South Oxfordshire overtook the Vale of the White Horse as the leading district for the recovery and recording of Roman finds (Fig. 1). This was probably because no large rally was held in the Vale in 2011, the finds from which would have been recorded in 2012. Far fewer finds were reported from West Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Oxford City. Across all districts Roman finds remain the commonest finds



offered for recording, comprising 40 per cent of the total. Medieval and post-medieval finds are the second and third most numerous, accounting for 19 per cent and 12 per cent of finds respectively. The number of reported finds of treasure increases at a steady rate. Seventeen treasure cases were reported in 2012, including a gold Bronze-Age 'basket' ornament from the Cholsey area (below), a medieval silver gilt charm pendant from Kingston Bagpuize and a Roman silver coin hoard (of *c*.70 coins) from near Wallingford.

Some of the more notable finds of 2012 are 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 Finds Liaison Officer, Anni Byard (anni.byard@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Bronze-Age Jewellery Item from Cholsey CP (BERK-0D1A05)

A thin sheet gold early Bronze-Age 'basket' type ornament with linear decoration, possibly a hair ornament or ear ring, was discovered by a metal-detectorist. This type of object dates to the earliest phase of the Bronze Age, known as the Beaker Period (*c*.2400–2100 BC), and is



associated with burials. Usually found in pairs and very rare, only a handful of examples are known from Britain. Two other examples were excavated from the Barrow Hills in Radley and are on display in the Ashmolean Museum. The Cholsey ornament has been submitted to the British Museum for further analysis and research. Oxfordshire Museum Service hopes to acquire it.



rare cast copper anthropomorphic bucket handle mount, dating to the late Iron Age was found by a metal-detectorist in August 2012. The handle mount consists of a hollow cast humanoid face, probably male, wearing a horned helmet or headdress. The facial features are depicted in plain detail, including the chin, beneath which the head narrows into the beginnings of a neck before it terminates. The horns of the head-dress protrude outwards from the head before bending down and round back in towards the face, reminiscent of some cattle's horns. Hair appears to be represented over the brow. A large suspension loop protrudes from the top of the head. The reverse of the bucket mount retains some of the bucket or vessel rim, which is also made from a copper alloy. A thin sheet is bent over at the top to form the rim, which is decorated with two or three moulded lines which would presumably have extended around the circumference. There is a groove behind the suspension loop into which the rim of the vessel fits. The mount is secured to the vessel by way of two

substantial copper alloy rivets, the ends of which extend through the horns of the head-dress. The smooth reverse edge of the outward-curving mount suggests that the vessel would have curved outwards too, at least in its upper part. This bucket mount is one of only a handful to exhibit human representations from late Iron-Age Britain and is therefore of some rarity. Other examples include pairs of mounts from Welwyn (Herts.), Alkham and the Aylesford bucket (both Kent) and a single mount from Thealby (Lincs.). There is also a poorly recorded example from the 'River Ribble' thought to have been found at Ribchester (Lancashire).² A handle mount in the form of a cow licking its muzzle was found at Felmersham (Beds.).3 In the last example the horns curve back in towards the head, as they do on the Wallingford mount, suggesting a possible source of inspiration for the latter. These mounts are all dated to the early first century AD.

E.M. Jope, Early Celtic Art in the British Isles (2000), plate 182.

M. MacGregor, Early Celtic Art in North Britain (1976), ref. 316.

I. Stead, Celtic Art (1996), p. 56, fig. 59.



An unusual form of Roman plate brooch was discovered in West Hanney in 2010 and recorded in 2012. The brooch is of copper alloy, consisting of a rectangular plate with an inner panel of four lozenges decorated with ring-and-dot motifs. The outer cells contain degraded enamel. The rectangular plate is bounded by a rounded knop both

above and below. The roughly triangular 'tail' has a small enamelled cell. The form of the brooch suggests a stylised representation of a bird. The coiled spring and pin on the reverse is intact, as is the catch-plate. No direct parallels have been found in the usual literature.

Early Medieval Saucer Brooch from Weston-on-the-Green CP (BERK-C96836)



A small cast copper-alloy early Anglo-Saxon saucer brooch, mostly complete and in good condition was found by a metal-detectorist in Weston-on-the-Green. The brooch has an angular rim, and on the reverse a single lug for the hinge and a simple catch-plate; the pin is missing but may have been made of iron as there is iron staining around the

hinge area. The front of the brooch is gilded. The decoration consists of a flat central boss surrounded by a ridge, with four irregular flat raised lozenges separating the outer field; between these lozenges are panels of indistinct relief decoration, possibly stylised or debased elements of zoomorphic Style I. These designs are all contained within a narrow-ridged border. A pair of saucer brooches with a similar design, although with only three lozenges, was excavated at Butler's Field in Lechlade (Glos.).⁴ The design of the Lechlade brooches appears to be based on the design of Kentish keystone garnet brooches which have three bosses or settings. Other keystone garnet brooches have four settings, and perhaps these have influenced the design of BERK-C96836. Saucer brooches in general date from the fifth or sixth century, but the close relationship of this brooch to keystone garnet brooches suggests it should come late in this range. The most common (and perhaps earliest) type of keystone garnet brooch with four settings is Avent's Class 1.2,⁵ which has been re-dated by Brugmann to her Phase III, *c.*530–70 AD.⁶

⁴ A. Boyle et al., The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Butler's Field, Lechlade, Gloucestershire: 1, Prehistory and Roman Activity and Anglo-Saxon Grave Catalogue (1998), p. 87 and plate 5.14.

⁵ R. Avent, Anglo-Saxon Disc and Composite Brooches (1975).

⁶ K. Parfitt and B. Brugmann, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery on Mill Hill, Deal, Kent* (1997), pp. 39–41, 97–100. Thanks to Helen Geake for help identifying this object.

Medieval Chape from Warborough CP (BERK-3228B7)



A cast copper alloy late knife or dagger scabbard chape dating to the eleventh century AD. The chape is broadly rectangular in plan but with a long arm extending from the right-side. This arm (now incomplete) would have supported and been attached to the scabbard sheath. The main chape itself is cast in openwork; it depicts a warrior

(possibly a Norman soldier), wearing a helmet with a top knop and a long tunic and carrying a kite-shaped shield and large battleaxe, leading a horse. The horse bridle can be clearly seen, as can one of the figure's hands holding the reigns, but the head of the horse is now worn beyond recognition. The soldier has his head turned sideways and crude facial features, including the large round eyes, can be discerned. There is a rounded projection with hole beneath the soldier; iron corrosion suggests an iron rivet would have secured the chape to the scabbard. The reverse of the chape, which is now missing, would have depicted a different scene. A small number of these chapes are known and a few have been recorded on the PAS database. They date from around the time of the Conquest.

Modern Toy from Chalgrove CP (BERK-245A92)



An incomplete lead alloy toy which represents the Coronation Chair Westminster Abbey. The toy has moulded decoration including lions at the base of the chair's legs and quatrefoil and arched decoration on the sides. The Coronation Chair was commissioned during the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) to contain the Stone of Scone. This toy dates to

the nineteenth or twentieth century. This object is very similar to leaden replicas of the chair made by J. Renvoize & Co of London to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII in 1902. Complete examples have stamped on the back of the chair 'made in London' and the monogram 'J R & Co' in raised moulding. Most, it seems, were once gilded. Similar souvenirs were made by the toy manufacture W. Britain (later Britains) for the coronations of George VI in 1937 and Elizabeth II in 1953.

ANNI BYARD, PAS

Lost and Found: A Flint Dagger from the River Thames at Henley

This paper discusses a previously misidentified flint dagger in the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford which was found in the Thames at Henley during the nineteenth century (accession code: 1892.66.5). It is the only complete flint dagger currently known from Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The dagger was rediscovered during research carried out for the Developing Archaeo-Prosopography Project, funded by the John Fell Fund of the University of Oxford and

In the eighty years since W.F. Grimes published his seminal typology of British early Bronze-Age flint daggers,¹ our understanding of these objects has not greatly changed. Grimes saw them as an intrinsic part of the Bell Beaker culture, primarily visible as funerary goods, and recent research has not questioned that attribution.² Similarly, Grimes' maps of flint dagger distribution have not been questioned and have only been added to in piecemeal fashion, for example in the addition of a full distribution of flint daggers found in Wales.³

by the Prehistoric Society.

None of the 145 flint daggers and dagger fragments recorded by Grimes is listed as coming from pre-1974 Oxfordshire. One of his three Berkshire finds, from the Abingdon causewayed enclosure, lies within the modern county, but thanks to a better understanding of the material culture and chronology of the British Neolithic and Bronze Age, this piece is now identifiable as a middle Neolithic ovate knife, rather than an early Bronze-Age

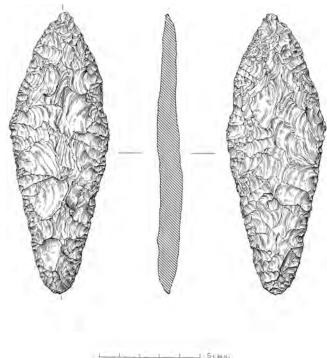


Fig. 1. Faces and profile of the flint dagger found in the River Thames near Henley. Illustration by Jeff Wallis.

flint dagger.⁴ Few daggers have subsequently been discovered in or around Oxfordshire. One has been found in Gloucestershire, one in Warwickshire, three in Berkshire and two in Buckinghamshire. The eight in Wiltshire cluster mainly in the Stonehenge area and the five in Northamptonshire are located in the east of the county, on the edge of the area of extremely

¹ W.F. Grimes, 'The Early Bronze Age Flint Dagger in England and Wales', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1932), pp. 340–55.

² For example, S. Needham, 'Competing Ethea of Seniority', *Material and Spiritual Engagements: Britain and Ireland in the First Age of Metal* (The Rhind Lectures, 2011): http://www.screencast.com/t/4w5ZwbjwTTwc.

³ H.S. Green et al., 'A Flint Dagger from Ffair Rhos, Ceredigion, Dyfed, Wales', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 48 (1982), pp. 492–5.

⁴ H.J. Case and A.W.R. Whittle (eds.), Settlement Patterns in the Oxford Region: Excavations at the Abingdon Causewayed Enclosure and other Sites (1982), p. 40.

dense flint dagger deposition in East Anglia. A dagger tip found in Swyncombe in the far south of Oxfordshire in the 1950s has not been located in any museum collection and nothing is known about its appearance.⁵

This sparse evidence makes the complete flint dagger found in the Thames near Henley of particular interest. The piece, erroneously recorded as a 'sub-oval flint knife' in the museum catalogue, is actually a very fine, bifacially worked flint dagger. It is 140 mm long, 50 mm at its widest point and roughly lozenge shaped, with the blade end slightly wider than the handle end which tapers to a rounded butt. In profile, it is lenticular and flat, 8 mm thick at the blade thickening to 10 mm at the handle end. The blade is slightly asymmetrical, perhaps due to it having been resharpened. Resharpening probably also accounts for the slightly finer retouch on the blade end. The blade and handle ends are clearly distinguishable by the smooth, rounded edges on the latter end. The blade makes up 69 mm of the total length. The dagger is made in a very high-quality, translucent, dark brown flint, and scaled knapping scars cover both faces. There are traces of handling polish on both faces of the blade and handle. Although the Pitt Rivers catalogue lists the presence of cortex on one face, this most likely refers to a small, chalky inclusion which had been knapped across.

The name of the collector, J.C. Clutterbuck, is written on one face in red paint along with the year 1872, the presumed date of acquisition. Clutterbuck, vicar of Long Wittenham (formerly Berks.) 1829–85, held a degree from Exeter College, Oxford and was active in geological and archaeological circles.⁶ He was a noted expert on the gravels and drainage of the Thames valley,⁷ and he corresponded with British archaeologists about finds from the Thames/Isis.⁸

The dagger itself, having been found in the Thames, has no direct associations or context of use. Flint daggers of similar morphology and manufacture have been found in burials across Britain with material dating to the last quarter of the third millennium BC – called the early Bronze Age, Chalcolithic or Beaker period depending on the publication. Moreover, in examining the larger corpus of British flint daggers, now known to number around 400, it is apparent that while forty-three have been recovered from burial contexts, a further forty-three have been recovered from rivers, thirty-three of those (including the Henley dagger) from the Thames. Most of the Thames depositions come from Greater London, and the find from Henley is the most upstream find of the Thames daggers. Anderson-Whymark notes that the Thames was frequently the site of depositions of contemporary material often associated with the burial sphere in dry contexts, for example Beaker pottery, bone and metal daggers and stone battle axes. He argues that the Beaker material from the Thames is not unique, but is simply the continuation of a Neolithic practice of deposition of complete objects, often those with mortuary associations, in the river – an activity which remained in practice through much of the early Bronze Age.

While it lacks datable or cultural associations, the flint dagger from Henley adds another piece to the puzzle of prehistoric activity in the Thames valley and of flint dagger production and use in Britain. Furthermore, its identification is a reminder of the riches to be found in Oxfordshire's museums for those with the time, knowledge and inclination to look.

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- ⁵ H.J. Case and J.R. Kirk, 'Archaeological Notes: Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon', *Oxoniensia*, 19 (1954), pp. 117–19; HER, PRN 2067.
- ⁶ M.E.N. Witchell and C.R. Hudleston, An Account of the Principal Branches of the Family of Clutterbuck (1924); above, p. 63.
 - ⁷ J. Morrell, John Phillips and the Business of Victorian Science (2005), p. 291.
- For example, J. Gage, ['An Account of a British Buckler, Found in the Bed of the River Isis, between Little Wittenham and Dorchester, in Oxfordshire'], Archaeologia, 27 (1838), pp. 298–9.
 - 9 Needham, 'Competing Ethea of Seniority'.
- ¹⁰ Grimes, 'The Early Bronze Age Flint Dagger'; R. Smith, ['The Chronology of Flint Daggers'], *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 32:1 (1919), pp. 6–22.
- ¹¹ H. Anderson-Whymark, The Residue of Ritualised Action: Neolithic Deposition Practices in the Middle Thames Valley, BAR BS, 466 (2008), p. 34.
- ¹² Ibid. p. 45.

An Alternative Interpretation of the Finds from the 'Boundary Ditch' of Shakenoak Roman Villa

Shakenoak was one of seven Roman villas located within the north Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch, an Iron-Age earthwork bisected by Akeman Street.¹ The site is in wooded countryside on the edge of the medieval forest of Wychwood, on the boundary between the manors of Wilcote and

North Leigh. The villa's excavators, A.C.C. Brodribb, A.R.R. Hands and D.R. Walker, suggested that there could have been continued occupation on or near the site from the Roman period until about the mid eighth century.² The evidence for this included twenty-two shallow east-west oriented burials without grave goods which were cut into the Roman deposits.3 The excavators assumed the bodies were buried in the middle Anglo-Saxon period but recently the burials have been radiocarbon dated and found to be sub-Roman.⁴ This much earlier date for the burials makes it necessary to re-examine the rest of the evidence for continued occupation, especially since almost all of the extensive post-Roman finds came from a poorly stratified ditch.

THE EXCAVATION

Most of the post-Roman deposits on the Shakenoak site were found in a ditch (see F and J, Fig. 1).⁵ The ditch was excavated over a length of about 725 feet, most of which (site F) was located west of a field boundary with New Yatt farm. Its eastern end (site J), was over the field boundary and terminated

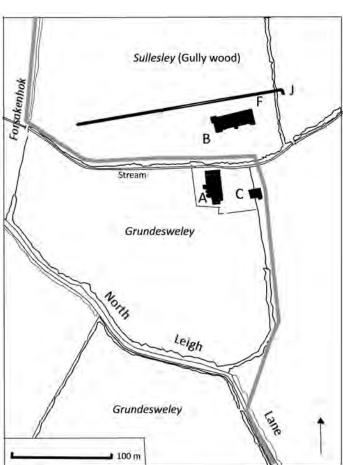


Fig. 1. The excavation sites (redrawn from Brodribb et al.), the suggested position of 'Grundesweley' and 'Sullesley', and the probable route of the 1298 forest perambulation (thick grey line).

- ¹ G. Speake, 'An Early Romano-British Villa at Combe East End', Oxoniensia, 77 (2012), p. 2, fig. 1.
- ² A.C.C. Brodribb et al., *Excavations at Shakenoak*, 5 vols. (1968–78), vol. 5, pp. 205–10. The imperial measurements used in the report are retained in this note, for clarity.
- ³ Ibid. vol. 4, pp. 32-5.
- ⁴ Information from Prof. John Blair.
- ⁵ Brodribb, Hands and Walker, Excavations at Shakenoak, vol. 3, pp. 13-131 and vol. 5, p. 171.

with a right-angled bend towards the stream to the south. Towards its western end the ditch became shallower and narrower and eventually came to the surface. Over much of its length it was $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. The excavators pointed out that it was not a drainage ditch because the bottom was almost level. They suggested that the ditch and an associated bank were built to control livestock.

The excavators proposed that the ditch was dug around 300 AD and contained five different deposits, F1 to F5. The first, F1, was sterile rock and clay; the F2 layer was Romano-British; F3 dated from the earliest post-Roman period, the fifth century; and F4 was Anglo-Saxon and dated to the sixth and seventh centuries. A single object, a silver sceat coin of the mid eighth century, was designated as F5. F4 contained stone and plaster assumed to have been taken from the building A (site A) to make a causeway (located 45–60 feet west of the field boundary). A small hearth was cut into the ditch 168 feet from the field boundary. The authors suggested that its 'slight construction seemed to exclude any industrial purpose and indicate that it was a cooking hearth.'6

Excavation revealed that there appeared to be no visible vertical stratification other than that between F1 and F2. The excavators stated that 'the fill of soft, almost stone free black earth extended from the period F1 or F2 deposits to the period F5 levels and the modern topsoil along most of the length of the ditch was, in general, almost homogeneous.' However, they noted there was a variation in objects along the ditch. Pottery from handmade vessels with pierced lugs matched the distribution of wheel-made, calcite-gritted vessels, occurring mainly between 0 and 120 feet west of the field boundary. These and other objects found in this section were denoted as period F3.

The occurrence of iron objects, bone objects, loom weights and bronze objects had a different distribution. These were found between 120 and about 450 feet along the ditch west from the field boundary. These objects were denoted as period F4. Where F3 and F4 overlapped F3 was in the lower part of the ditch.

It was proposed that the F1 layer at the bottom of the ditch was formed by weathering, and the ditch was gradually filled over time with deposits from undiscovered Anglo-Saxons houses in the near vicinity. A Saxon small-long brooch was found in the F3 deposit and gave a firm date of the early fifth century. The wheel-made pottery was assumed to be early post Roman. Sherds from twelve handmade pots found between 40 and 110 feet west of the field boundary were considered to be F3 and therefore late fourth to fifth century. These pots (nos. 399–401 and 403–411) included calcite-gritted and quartz-gritted examples and those with and without grass-tempering. The sherds from another twelve handmade pots were assumed to be in the F4 period and therefore sixth and seventh century. These were pot numbers 402 and 412–422. Five were found over 120 feet from the field boundary, but seven within the first 120 feet. Most were quartz-gritted, some were quartz-/calcite-gritted and some were grass-tempered. It would therefore seem difficult to justify inclusion of the pottery in F3 or F4 by considering the material or method of manufacture or by the position in the ditch. Thus it is possible that all the pottery could belong to one period.

This conclusion seems to be true for all the other finds in the ditch. The only truly dateable objects in the ditch were the early fifth-century brooch and the eighth-century silver coin. To this might be added a single eighth-century cast bronze lace tag. ¹⁰ This conclusion is consistent with the statement made by the excavators at the time: 'even at the most optimistic interpretation there is a period of at least 150 years, from about AD 440 to AD 600, when there is no certain evidence of occupation at Shakenoak'. ¹¹ The only evidence on the Shakenoak site

⁶ Ibid. vol. 3, p. 17.

⁷ Ibid. vol. 5, p. 206.

⁸ Ibid. vol. 3, pp. 78-82.

⁹ Ibid. vol. 3, pp. 59-64.

¹⁰ Ibid. vol. 3, p. 69.

¹¹ Ibid. vol. 5, p. 205.

as a whole after AD 600 was the incorrectly dated bodies and the three mid eighth-century sceattas. Apart from this, there were a number of objects found in a small area of the topsoil of site B.¹² This included a ninth-century pottery sherd (423),¹³ a bronze belt buckle,¹⁴ and a tenth-or eleventh-century bronze brooch.¹⁵ These will be discussed below. One of the main factors that must have led to the conclusion that the finds were deposited in the ditch over a long period of time was the very large quantity and the thickness of the deposit.

Despite defining the different regions as F3 and F4, there were numerous obvious problems with this distinction. There were 530 sherds of wheel-made pottery in F3 but there were also 524 in F4. Thirteen coins varying from Faustinia to Theodosius were found in F3 and F4 and none were pierced for use as ornaments. There were 65 fragments of Roman glass, and 31 Samian sherds, and Roman keys from among the iron objects. In addition to the problem of numerous strays, it is difficult to understand why over 200 small iron objects, somehow ended up in the ditch in the sixth and seventh century. Some of the objects such as the needles appeared to be in perfect condition and at the time iron would have been an extremely rare and valuable metal.

It is also difficult to see why vertical stratification was not more apparent if it had been the case that about 50 cm in thickness was gradually deposited over several centuries. It is clear that post-Roman objects and pottery have been deposited in the ditch. It is less clear that the deposits represent different periods in time. The premise of the present note is that F3 and F4 could both be sub-Roman. Against this it might be suggested that the large amount of industrial material in the ditch such as loom weights and pin-beaters and grass-tempered pottery was not typical of a late or sub-Roman site. But this is less of a problem when it is realised that the excavators considered that only one room on site A was used in the early fifth century and that the villa was no longer a prosperous Romano-British farm.

THE POSSIBILITY THAT SITE F WAS A DITCH WHICH WAS INTENTIONALLY FILLED

A possible explanation for the lack of vertical stratification in the ditch is that, rather than being accidentally filled from nearby Anglo-Saxon houses, at least part of the ditch was intentionally filled as a single act. The ditch would first be partly filled by the natural break-up of the banks. This would account for the F1 material. Then it is proposed that that the ditch was intentionally filled from some other convenient source.

It is possible that there was a late Roman to mid fifth-century wooden house, perhaps to the west of building A, which built up a significant waste deposits near building A. If these deposits and part of site A had been dug and carted over the stream to fill the ditch the result would probably be a rather mixed longitudinal segregation of objects. In this region there is still a depression just outside the excavated part of the field. The stones from site A could have been deposited to make the causeway, mentioned earlier, but could also have just been fill for the ditch. The iron-making slag could come from near site A or any of the other sites which had furnaces. The large number of small iron objects could have been the remaining material after people had searched for larger iron objects in a Roman or sub-Roman workshop. The lack of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. vol. 2, p. 40.
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¹³ Ibid. vol. 3, p. 59.

¹⁴ Ibid. vol. 2, p. 108, no. 65.

¹⁵ Ibid. vol. 5, p. 201.

¹⁶ Ibid. vol. 3, pp. 54-6.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 34–5.

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 67-9.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 53.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 94, nos. 208 and 209.

²¹ Ibid. pp. 86–116.

objects towards the west end of the ditch could be explained as soil coming from a sterile part of the stream bank.

The excavators dated the digging of the ditch to 300 AD – the date of a small number of sherds found between the clay and rock layer and the first grey earth layer. If, instead, it is accepted that the ditch was filled at one time, then nothing in the ditch fill can date from the time when the ditch was dug. In fact, all that can be deduced is that it was filled after the date of the last datable object in the ditch. The coin dated 720-45 would suggest that the earliest filling date was in the eighth century. To make a case for an earlier filling operation it would be necessary to postulate that the coin was a surface stay. The excavators stated the coin was found in a band of red-brown earth (F5), about 15 cm thick, above the almost black deposit (F4) and below about 30 cm of topsoil.²²

If the ditch was filled at one time, the question arises why was it filled? It would seem reasonable that it could have been filled in to make arable land for ploughing. This could have occurred at any time when there was a need for more arable land and assarting was taking place. If the ditch need not have been dug in about AD 300, when and why was it dug? It is difficult to see why a ditch of up to 1.7 m deep with a bank and hedge would be built for enclosing cattle, as proposed by the excavators. It would surely be more reasonable that during the Roman or sub-Roman period a hedge or line of hurdles would have been used for controlling cattle.

The ditch does not appear to be part of the villa boundary because it does not surround the villa. It could be a ditch and hedge to mark the limit of the user's land but this seems unlikely for the villa site because the ditch is so near the buildings. Possibly it was part of a boundary ditch for the medieval manor of Wilcote, but then it is surprising that it was shallower at both ends.

Examination of the site map (Fig. 1) shows that the line of the ditch joins up with the brook near the bridge to the west of the villa. If a dam was built across the stream in about the position of the bridge a level channel could have been dug which acted as a water storage channel or leat. Looking along the line of the ditch the land appears to be slightly higher towards the centre but this was where the ditch was deepest. It thus seems possible that the ditch or trench was dug in the hope of storing water for a mill. This would explain the level base of the ditch and the right angle bend towards the stream at the east end of the ditch (site J). If this was the case, it is probable that the attempt failed because there appears to be no evidence that the ditch was ever lined with clay.

The sherds, from the thin-walled pot 424, mentioned earlier, found in the top soil of site B, could have been deposited by the workers digging or filling the ditch. The pot was described as 'totally dissimilar from any other Anglo-Saxon pottery at Shakenoak' and was dated to the ninth century or later. The belt buckle could have been left by the workers digging the ditch. The hearth found within the ditch could have been used by agricultural workers for cooking soon after the ditch was dug. The tenth-century brooch must have been a stray.

PLACE-NAME EVIDENCE

Although not necessary for the argument for a filled ditch, it might be possible to connect the ditch to the forest perambulation in 1298 and 1300, which defined the limits of Wychwood forest. The documents are discussed in detail by Beryl Schumer.²³ The relevant passage in the 1298 document runs as follows:

and thence to Madlebrok to the spring at Madlewelle and so through the middle of the town of Northleye and so by the way of Northleye to Grundesweleye and so thence along a hedge to Sullesleye

²² Ibid. p. 39.

²³ B. Schumer, 'The 1298/1300 Perambulations of Wychwood Forest – and after', Oxoniensia, 69 (2004), pp. 1-28.

and thence to Forsakenhok and thence to Sigardesthorn...

This first part Madley brook to Madleywell is straightforward and refers to the stream running south from the pond which was near the North Leigh end of the present Common Road. There is more of a problem with Grundesweleye. In fact the uncertainty of the position of Grundesweleye was one of the reasons for a dispute in 1609.²⁴ It now appears that Grundesweleye was near New Yatt and the Hailey–North Leigh boundary. Confirmation of this has been given in Witney manor records where reference is made to assarts in Grundesweleye.²⁵

Grund means ground or foundation so that the meaning of Grundisburgh (Suffolk) is a stronghold on or near the foundations of a building.²⁶ Grundesweleye would be the wood near the foundations having water. Following Della Hooke, *leah* is taken to be a wood or woodpasture rather than a clearing in a wood.²⁷ Thus a wood to the south of the villa may originally have extended as far as New Yatt or even further.

Sull means furrow or narrow gully so that Sulgrove (Northants.) means a grove near a gully and Sulham (Berks.) a homestead near a gully. Thus 'and so thence along a hedge to Sullesleye' could mean along a hedge to the wood-pasture of the gully. This could be land on the north of the stream with a gully. This would imply that Forsakenhok was nearer the present Shakenoak Farm. Forsakenhok could mean 'the given up hook of land' and may refer to the piece of Wilcote, bounded by North Leigh lane and the old Burford Way, which intrudes into Hailey. Of course there is no need to suggest that Grundesweley or Sullesley were wood-pasture in 1298 but only that they were once wood-pasture.

The suggested path of the boundary has been added to Figure 1 as a thick line. The route becomes 'by the way of Northleye to Grundesweleye', that is along the present North Leigh lane to Grundesweleye; then along the 'hedge to Sullesleye', that is along the original North Leigh-Wilcote boundary; and 'thence to Forsakenhok', that is along the stream towards Shakenoak Farm. This is a slightly simpler route than that proposed earlier where Grundesweleye was placed near New Yatt.

Within North Leigh, the lane that becomes North Leigh Lane is called Green lane but does not go to a village green. It is possible that over 700 years the lane to Grundesweley becomes Grund Lane which then becomes Green Lane.

PROPOSED SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

It is still possible that twenty-one male bodies and one female body were buried at the same time in the mid fifth century and then occupation continued near the site for more than 300 years when the sceattas were lost. But there is no direct evidence that this occurred. A simpler explanation is to suggest that occupation ceased after the bodies were buried and that the sceattas were lost on an unoccupied site. The very large quantity of mixed late Roman to sub-Roman material which was found in the ditch was probably transported there from a debris tip which had built up over the sixty years or so before the bodies were buried.

A possible scenario would be that the last room on site A was used in the sub-Roman period as an iron-making workshop and that the inhabitants lived to the west of site A in a simple wooden building and used the handmade post-Roman pottery. This situation continued until the general unrest led to the destruction of the East End Roman villa and the killing of workers and perhaps mercenaries. All 22 people whose remains were found at Shakenoak need not have lived on the site but were buried there. This would fit in with the radiocarbon dating of the

- ²⁴ TNA: PRO, SP14/62, no. 59.
- 25 Hants. RO, 11M59/BI/88, 11M59/BI/92.
- ²⁶ A.D. Mills, Dictionary of English Place-Names (1998).
- ²⁷ D. Hooke, Trees in Anglo Saxon England (2010), p. 125.

bodies. The metal worker and his family could have been killed, leading to the use of the site as a burial place. The excavators proposed that the burials could be connected to a very much later Witney boundary charter describing a place in the vicinity as Yccenes field (Itchen or Edging field) where the *cnitas* (youths) lie.²⁸ This would still be possible.

The three eighth century silver coins, found on different parts of the site, could be explained if the landmark (of the place where the *cnitas* lie) became a market or resting place. The area may have become a *leah* or wood-pasture in the late fifth and sixth century, possibly serving settlements along the Thames and Windrush. By the early seventh century settlements were beginning to occur within the *leah* as indicated by eight east—west oriented seventh-century burials with grave goods found in North Leigh near the entrance to Hollycourt Farm.²⁹

Settlers at Wilcote in the eighth or ninth century could have dug the ditch in an attempt to make a mill leat. The ditch could have resulted in the name Sullesley being given to the woodpasture to the north of the villa. Later, when the wood-pasture was assarted, the ditch could have been filled.

CONCLUSIONS

It is proposed that much of the ditch F was filled at one time rather than gradually filling over a long period. This would explain the mixed but longitudinal deposition of the deposits. It seems possible that the ditch was dug during the late Anglo-Saxon period in a failed attempt to make a mill leat. The ditch was probably filled subsequently to convert the area into arable land. The main conclusion must be that none of the finds, other than the three sceattas, the bronze lace tag and buckle, the two ninth-century potsherds, and the tenth-century bronze brooch, need be other than Roman or sub-Roman. Thus there is no real evidence for continued Anglo-Saxon occupation at the Shakenoak site into the eighth century and that occupation probably ceased after the bodies were buried in the fifth century.

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²⁸ M. Gelling, 'The Place-Name Evidence', in Brodribb et al., *Excavations at Shakenoak*, vol. 3, pp. 134–40.

²⁹ E.T. Leeds, 'Two Saxon Cemeteries in North Oxfordshire', Oxoniensia, 5 (1940), pp. 21–30.