

**MELFORD MEADOWS, BRETtenham, NORFOLK**  
**ROMANO-BRITISH AND ANGLO-SAXON OCCUPATION**  
**POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT AND PUBLICATION PROPOSAL**

**OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

**DECEMBER 1994**

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# MELFORD MEADOWS, BRETtenham, NORFOLK

## SITE: 17269 BRT

### 1 Excavation summary

The site was located just outside Thetford on a sandy ridge on the SE side of the river Thet (NGR TL 878826). Fieldwalking and trial-trench evaluation on the 9 ha development site in 1993 had established two principal areas of archaeological interest - a dense concentration of Romano-British features and finds in the northern part of the field, and a light scatter of early Saxon features and pottery in the central part. Provision was therefore made for the preservation *in situ* of these two centres of archaeological activity, and an excavation covering about 1 ha between these two areas. The excavation took place in April and May 1994.

The Romano-British settlement was concentrated in the northern part of the excavation site and comprised several phases of ditched enclosures, drainage gullies, pits, postholes, beam-slots and ovens. A small, late, inhumation cemetery of 22 graves, located on the southern periphery of the settlement, was also excavated. The early Saxon occupation was represented by eleven Sunken Featured Buildings (SFBs), pits and hearths. A shallow waterhole, probably of Romano-British origin, containing a small amount of organic material was also investigated. The excavated Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon features represent only a sample of the original settlements, the overall sizes of which are not known.

Except for a scatter of modern features there was no indication of later occupation. The site had been truncated everywhere by ploughing and there was locally severe disturbance by rabbits and moles. Worked flint was recovered from superficial layers and some excavated features, but no definitely prehistoric features were encountered.

### 2 Project background

The excavation at Melford Meadows, Brettenham was conducted on behalf of Abbey New Homes in fulfilment of an archaeological condition placed upon planning permission by Breckland District Council (Application No. 3/93/0059) in advance of housing development. It was undertaken in accordance with a brief set by the Norfolk Museums Service.

It followed an archaeological evaluation by the OAU which comprised fieldwalking and metal-detector surveys and trial trenching and which had identified apparent foci of Romano-British and early Saxon occupation (*Brettenham, Melford Meadows: archaeological evaluation of the site of proposed residential development near Thetford, Norfolk*. OAU, October 1993).

#### Research frameworks

In the pre-excavation project design the excavation was seen as offering the potential for examining various aspects of Romano-British and early Saxon settlement in local, regional and national frameworks.

#### Local framework

The site was seen to be of considerable importance in understanding the origin and early

development of Thetford. The town has undergone rapid post-war redevelopment and expansion and the archaeological opportunities presented have largely been missed. Evidence relating to Romano-British settlement of a similar date has recently been recovered from excavations at St Nicholas Street 1 km to the NW of Melford Meadows, while trial trenching on Site 24849 THD on Brandon Road, about 3.5 km to the NW, has recovered settlement evidence spanning the Roman to mid Saxon periods. Taken together, these sites may radically alter our understanding of the town's origins, until recently thought to lie predominantly in the 9th century.

### Regional framework

The traditional notion that Roman Norfolk was devastated and remained a backwater after the Boudiccan revolt has long been discarded, but the nature and pattern of its development remain unclear. The identification of sites from surface finds and aerial photography would seem to indicate that the predominant form of settlement in later Roman Norfolk consisted of farmsteads, hamlets, and small nucleated settlements. However, few of these sites have been excavated. The research priority for the Roman period should be to establish the nature and development of the settlement, particularly in its later phases. The lack of excavated settlements nearby (with the exception of the atypical Gallows Hill temple site) enhances the significance of Melford Meadows and the site offers the opportunity of understanding an element of the regional pattern. National, as well as regional, comparisons might be appropriate.

Evidence for early Saxon settlement in East Anglia is comparatively slight. These sites are notoriously difficult to discover using conventional prospecting techniques and knowledge of the 5th - 7th centuries has relied heavily on the evidence of cemeteries. Integrated study of the Anglo-Saxon archaeology of the area has been a recent research priority in which the Norfolk and Suffolk Archaeological Units, the University of East Anglia and the Sutton Hoo Research Committee have collaborated. The major aim of integrated research has been to understand the growth of the Kingdom of East Anglia and the context of the Sutton Hoo site. Melford Meadows should support these research aims by contributing to the picture of early Saxon settlement.

In addition, the nature of Anglo-Saxon settlement in East Anglia is currently undergoing re-evaluation as evidence emerges for early settlement from the Saxon homelands, followed by further migration from southern Denmark and southern Norway. A Scandinavian cultural and economic bias throughout the early Saxon period is suggested. Melford Meadows may provide information about the culture and economic links of the population of the region.

### National framework

On a national level there is a general shortage of well-excavated and well-published Anglo-Saxon settlements which is a serious drawback to the advancement of research in this period.

English Heritage have highlighted the process of change from late Roman to early Saxon England as a national research priority (*Exploring Our Past* 1991a, 36) and the evidence from Melford Meadows will be important in this regard. Current research favours the view that there was a considerable degree of interaction between the Romano-British rural peasantry

and the Anglo-Saxon settlers, and evidence for peaceful contact has been seen in the spread of forms and decorative styles in metalwork, in the continuity of land use and boundaries and in the apparent use of Romano-British building forms in early Saxon post-built halls. Complex questions such as the role of geographical determinism in early Anglo-Saxon settlement and the quest for legitimisation by association with earlier settlements and monuments require careful consideration. It is generally held that the Romano-British economy collapsed in the first decades of the 5th century, and the absence of coins and pottery need not imply an absence of Romano-British occupation.

The research priorities for the early Saxon settlement should be, the determination of the form, extent and phasing of the settlement, the nature and use of the buildings, the evidence for social stratification, the evidence for cultural associations, and the evidence for economy and trade. Melford Meadows should present a good opportunity for addressing these questions.

No clear pattern has emerged for the form of early Saxon settlements. Current research suggests that they were small and dispersed. The early settlement at West Stow has been interpreted as four farming units constituting a small hamlet. Most settlements show little evidence of planning or formal layout, but there are sometimes indications of less formal zoning for domestic occupation, craft activity and agricultural processing.

The form and use of early Saxon buildings is an important research interest. The view advanced at West Stow, that sunken featured buildings had a suspended floor and underground storage space has been supported by some researchers and questioned by others. It is likely that sunken featured buildings were used for craft production, but they may have had a wide range of functions.

Evidence for social stratification may be expressed in terms of building size, demarcation of property boundaries and unequal occupation of space. High status sites have been recognised for the early Saxon period and current research suggests that early Saxon settlements may have functioned within a formal or informal hierarchy.

The recovery of environmental evidence for the landscape context and agricultural activity of both the late Roman and early Saxon settlements is important for understanding the nature of change in this period. Current research suggests there might have been a limited abandonment of cultivated land in the late Roman period, and there was generally a high degree of continuity between late Roman and early Saxon patterns of land use.

The excavation should also offer the possibility of examining the nature and spatial arrangements of industrial/craft production in both periods.

The mechanisms of trade and exchange in the early Saxon period are barely understood, but East Anglia has some of the best evidence for regional exchange networks from its extensive pottery series. Ceramic evidence from both periods of occupation might offer an opportunity for examining and comparing these links across the transition. Comparisons of assemblages with other sites in the region will contribute to the development of models of pottery manufacture and distribution. Evidence of other imported goods should also be forthcoming.



### 3 Results of assessment

#### 3.1 Approximate quantification of the archive

Records	Quantity
Context sheets	1100
Small Finds	230
Plans: A1	27
Plans: A4	45
Sections	290
Photographs	22 films
Level Record Sheets	30

Artefactual and Ecofactual Material	Quantity
Romano-British Pottery	c. 2500 sherds
Anglo-Saxon Pottery	c. 600 sherds
Fired Clay (inc. loomweights)	245
CBM	86
Cu Alloy Finds	52
Fe Finds	c. 150 (including 130 nails)
Metalworking Residue	58
Glass (incl. beads from cemetery)	17
Worked Stone	88
Flint	c. 700 (inc. fieldwalking)
Burials and Cremated Human Bone	26, 1 sample
Animal Bone	c. 4000 fragments
Soil Samples	30

#### 3.2 Statement of potential

This section follows the guidelines proposed by English Heritage in their recommendations for post-excavation assessment (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991b: Appendix 4).

The following is a summary statement of the value of the data gained in the excavation in terms of their potential in addressing the research aims of the investigation. Fuller finds assessment reports by individual authors are contained in Appendices 1 - 8 and section 4 contains a statement of the academic objectives of the project.

#### Romano-British Pottery (Appendix 1)

The pottery is abundant and generally in good condition. It will be crucial in phasing the site, particularly where stratigraphic relationships are absent or unclear. However, it is not yet clear whether sufficient information will be forthcoming from 'key' contexts to provide unequivocal phasing evidence. Detailed consideration of mixing and redeposition will be required.

#### Anglo-Saxon Pottery (Appendix 2)

The site produced a small but important assemblage of Saxon pottery which deserves detailed publication. On the whole it appears to be relatively early and various 5th century forms have been noted.

#### Metal Finds other than coins (Appendix 3)

There are a small number of copper alloy objects approximately half of which are from stratified contexts and require detailed consideration. A number are from SFBs. The majority of the 151 iron objects are nails and require little attention. Of the remaining iron objects a number of the stratified finds are from SFBs.

#### Coins (Appendix 3)

There are 31 coins, most of which are well preserved, but only two are from stratified contexts.

#### Human bone (Appendix 4)

The bone from the small late Roman cemetery was generally in poor condition due to soil conditions and will be of limited value in contributing to population studies for this period. It will of some value as a corpus of inhumations showing some variety of burial practice, including principally decapitation and multiple burial.

#### Faunal remains (Appendix 5)

The animal bone formed a relatively small sample but, given the acidic nature of the soil, was reasonably well-preserved. It was present in both Roman and Saxon contexts and is important because such assemblages are rare in the region.

#### Flint (Appendix 6)

The flint assemblage, while large, appears to be entirely unstratified or redeposited and therefore has limited potential. Basic quantification and description is all that is required. The report should be included as an appendix to the main site report.

#### Worked Stone (Appendix 7)

*contribution awaited*

#### Environmental remains (Appendix 8)

The charred plant remains are unexceptional and, excepting those from the waterhole (which contained charred but not waterlogged remains), are not well preserved (M Robinson, pers. comm.). Samples from Saxon contexts should be analyzed in detail and compared with selected Romano-British samples.

#### Fired clay



There is a large quantity of fired clay, a high proportion of which appear to be loomweight fragments.

#### Other finds

The remaining finds consist of slag, glass and brick/tile. The slag is likely to be (mostly) Roman. The glass appears to be modern, with the exception of 6 beads from one of the graves. The brick/tile fragments seem to be largely post-medieval although Roman material may be present.

#### Conclusion

A preliminary appraisal of the excavated evidence suggests that there is a good opportunity for addressing many of the objectives of the investigation. The density of features relating to both the Roman and Saxon occupations was higher than expected and included an unanticipated small late Roman cemetery. The excavation was able to examine a relatively large area relating to both periods of occupation and there was a reasonably large, though not prolific, quantity of pottery and other finds.

There should be sufficient evidence to assess the nature and date of latest Romano-British and earliest Saxon phases of settlement. The pottery suggests a 5th century beginning to the Saxon occupation and there seems to be an opportunity for examining the transition period. While there is no immediately apparent suggestion of 'continuity' from the physical form of the site, an appraisal must await detailed examination of site phasing and finds.

The overall form and status of the Romano-British and Saxon settlements would appear to be handicapped by an incomplete picture of either. This may be offset by careful analysis of finds patterning, but the lack of Saxon post-built structures may limit the interpretation which can be put upon aspects such as site and social organisation, and building tradition.

The excavation of nine SFBs of varying dimensions suggests that there will be a better than expected opportunity for interpreting the functions of these structures. Interpretations may also be possible of the Romano-British beam-slot and posthole structures.

Economic evidence appears to be relatively abundant. Loomweights, quernstones, metalworking residues and carbonized remains were present. Unexpectedly large quantities of animal bone offer an additional opportunity for examining the economy of the settlements.

## **4 Academic objectives**

### **4.1 Original research aims**

In the pre-excavation project design the excavation was seen to offer an important opportunity for examining the late Roman/early Saxon transition in this part of Norfolk. The main emphasis of the research was to address the following questions:

- 1 What was the date of the Romano-British occupation, particularly its later phases?

- 2 What was the date of the earliest Saxon occupation?
- 3 What was the relationship between the two settlements: overlap, reuse or continuity?
- 4 What was the status of each of the settlements?
- 5 What economic and industrial activities took place?

#### **4.2 Revised research aims**

- 1, 2 & 3 as above;
- 4 What was the status of each of the settlements in terms of their type or functional class, rather than their position within a hypothetical hierarchy?
- 5 What economic and industrial activities took place?
- 6 What external contacts did the site have in both periods?
- 7 What was the relationship between the Romano-British settlement and cemetery, and the relationship of the latter to regional practices?

#### **5 Methods for achieving aims**

**Aims 1 & 2** Dating Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon settlements.

To be achieved through: phasing and relative dating of features; integration of pottery and chronologically diagnostic finds; assessment of site formation and soil and finds deposition.

**Aim 3** Examining relationship between two settlements.

To be achieved through: assessment of dating and phasing; assessment of biological and zoological evidence; consideration of Anglo-Saxon curation of Romano-British artefacts.

**Aim 4** Evaluation of settlement function/status.

To be achieved through: consideration of site layout and interpretation of structures; consideration of the nature of the SFBs; analysis of finds distribution for significant spatial patterning; appraisal of 'special' finds; intra- and inter-site comparison of Romano-British burial data; examination of economic data; comparisons with other sites of this period.

**Aim 5** Assessment of economic/industrial activity.

To be achieved through: analysis of organic remains; analysis of metalworking residues; detailed analysis of faunal remains (proportions of type, herd structure etc.).

**Aim 6** Examination of external contacts in both periods.

To be achieved through: ascertaining sources of pottery and other imported artefacts.

**Aim 7** The relationship between the Romano-British settlement and cemetery, and the relationship of the latter to regional practices.

To be achieved through: phasing and relative dating of features; detailed recording of skeletal material; intra- and inter-site comparison of Romano-British burial data.

## 6 Publication

### 6.1 Proposed publication synopsis

It is proposed to publish the report as an East Anglian Archaeology monograph or part thereof.

The publication will be produced by mid-1996, subject to approval by the publications committee.

'The Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon occupation at Melford Meadows, Brettenham, Norfolk'

by A Mudd and others

Front Cover - to be decided

TEXT ..... Pages (@ c. 1150 words per page)

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Total	36

PLATES (to be decided)	c. 6
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TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	c. 141
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## 6.2 Site Archive

The archive is to conform with the terms laid out in *Guidelines for the organisation of excavation and field survey archives for deposition with the Norfolk Museums Service and for microfilming by the NMR* (Norfolk Museum Service Field Archaeology Division, Landscape Archaeology Section 1989).

The site archive, research archive and finds are to be deposited with the Norfolk Museums Service.

## **7      Programming and Resources**

### **7.1    Personnel**

E McAdam

Post-excavation Manager (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

A Mudd

Field Officer (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

I Scott

Senior Research Officer (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

M Robinson

Environmental specialist (University Museum Oxford)

L Rollo

Freelance Roman pottery specialist

C Underwood-Keevill

Freelance Medieval pottery specialist

P Bradley

Research Officer (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

A Barclay

Research Officer (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

A Boyle

Research Officer (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

K Nichols

Illustrator (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

C Salter

Metal residue specialist (Research Laboratory for Archaeology, Oxford)

K Clark

Faunal remains specialist (Centre for Human Ecology, University of Southampton)

N Scott

Archives Officer (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

R Whiteman

Computer technician (Oxford Archaeological Unit)



## 7.2 Task List

Task No.	Aims	Task description	Performed by	Days
01	All	PX proposal assembly	A Mudd	4
02	All	Site Archive: matrices, summaries, reduced plans	A Mudd	7
03	All	Dbase archive set up	R Whiteman	1
04	All	Dbase archive input	Tech	9
05	1 - 6	Research Archive: interpretation of features & deposits	A Mudd	7
06	1 - 6	Research archive: phasing of site elements	A Mudd	5
07	1 - 6	RB pot processing	L Rollo	15
08	1 - 6	RB pot analysis, drawing prep.	L Rollo	6
09	1 - 6	RB pot report writing, checking	L Rollo	10
10	1 - 6	RB pot Dbase	R Whiteman	3
11	2 - 6	AS pot analysis, drawing prep.	C Keevill	6
12	2 - 6	AS pot report writing	C Keevill	3
13	2 - 6	Flint analysis & report	P Bradley	6
14	3,4,5,6	Worked stone	F Roe	
15	3,4,5	Metal residue analysis & report	C Salter	
16	1 - 6	Metals analysis & report	I Scott	7
17	1,3,4	Coins analysis & report	I Scott	2
18	1,2,3,4	Fired clay analysis & report	A Barclay	2
19	1,3,5,6	Glass analysis & report	Specialist	2
20	3,5	CBM analysis & report	Specialist	2
21	1,3,5,	Human bone recording, catalogue	A Boyle	4
22	1,3,5	Discussion	A Boyle	2
23	3,4,5	Animal bone recording, analysis	K Clark	17
24	3,4,5	Research	K Clark	5
25	3,4,5	Report, edit	K Clark	13
26	3,4,5	Plant remains recording & report	M Robinson	
27	1,3,4,5, 6	Report; RB gazetteer	A Mudd	5
28	1,3,4,5, 6	RB synthesis & discussion	A Mudd	5
29	2 - 6	AS gazetteer	A Mudd	3

<b>Task No.</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Task description</b>	<b>Performed by</b>	<b>Days</b>
30	2 - 6	AS synthesis & discussion	A Mudd	6
31	1 - 6	Background & general discussion	A Mudd	5
32	1 - 6	Integrate evaluation	A Mudd	2
33	All	Drawing preparation	A Mudd	6
34	All	Drawing time	K Nichols	45
35	All	Report assembly	P Bradley	6
36	All	Edit	I Scott	10
37	All	Proof reading	P Bradley	2
38	All	Final archive	N Scott	5
39	All	PX management	E McAdam	2
40	All	PX monitoring	P Bradley	2
41	All	Project management	A Mudd	4

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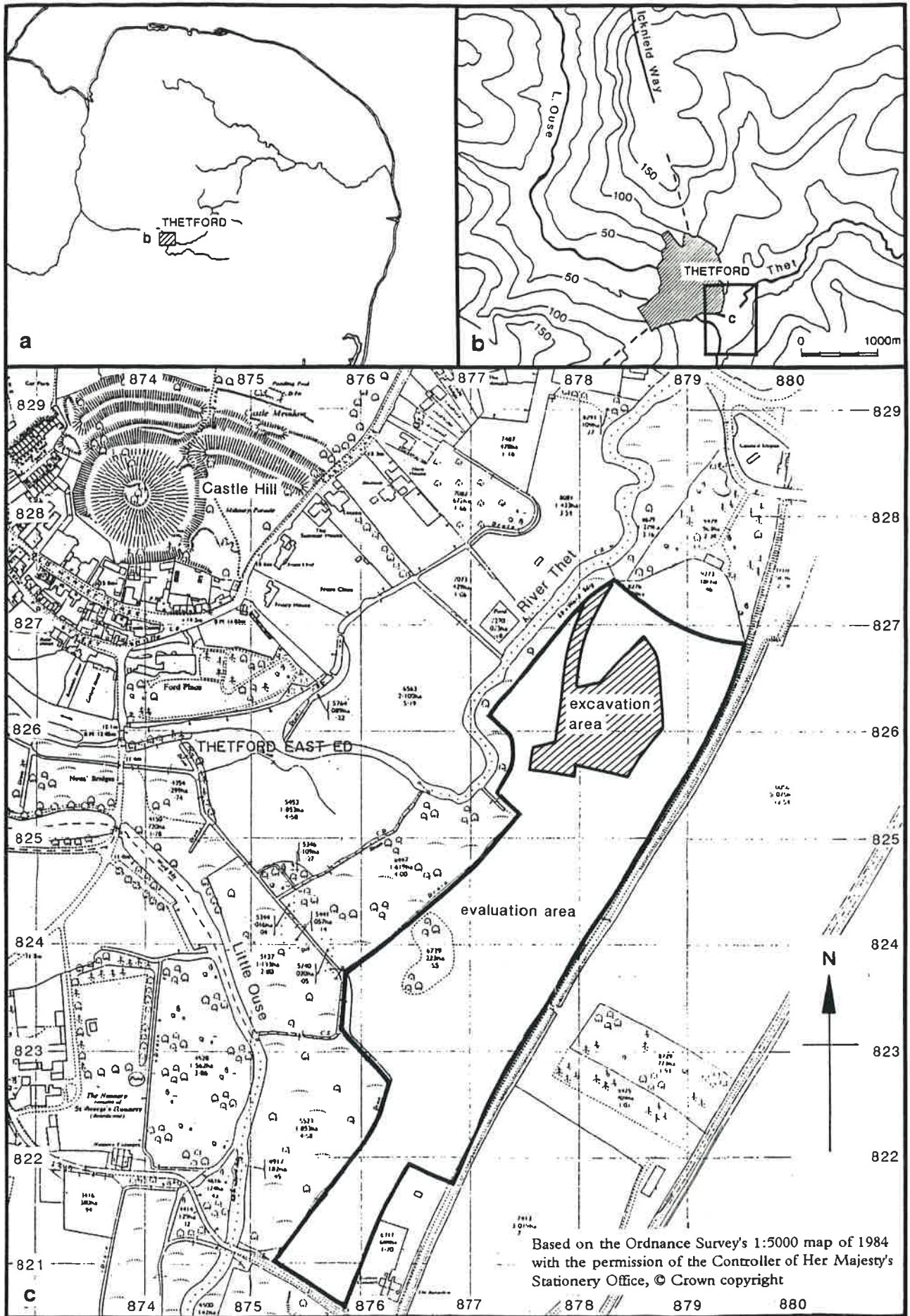
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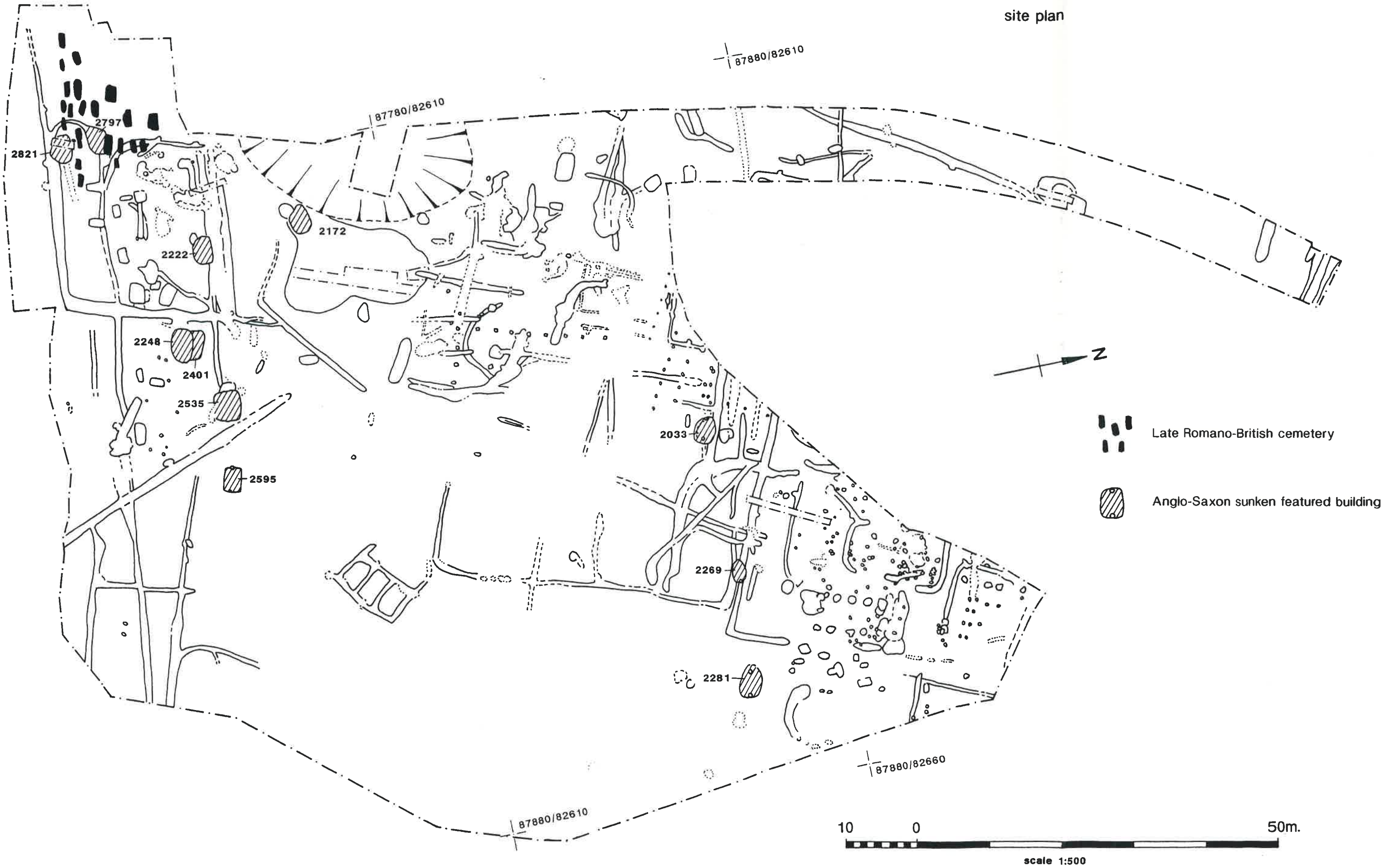


location plan

Figure 1



Melford Meadows, Brettenham  
site plan



## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Romano-British Pottery Assessment by Paul Booth

#### Introduction

The total pottery from the site is contained in 18 boxes, which combined are the equivalent of about 11 standard OAU boxes. This includes a small amount of material from the evaluation phase of the project. Some Anglo-Saxon pottery is also included in this total, but the chronological emphasis seems to be on the later Roman period. The following brief assessment is made on the basis of a very rapid scan of most of the material.

The pottery is generally in good condition, ie. surfaces have not been eroded by adverse soil conditions. The size of the sherds is variable, however. Some contexts have high proportions of relatively large sherds, others consist of fairly well-fragmented material.

The assemblage is dominated by reduced coarse wares, many of which are in micaceous fabrics characteristic of (but not necessarily exclusive to) the Wattisfield industry. Other sources represented include the main Midlands late Roman fine ware producers, the Oxfordshire, Lower Nene Valley and Much Hadham industries, as well as the widespread late Roman shell-tempered ware. Closer at hand products from Horningsea and perhaps from Cherry Hinton have also been recognised. There is a little samian ware. The general character of the assemblage, however, is of domination by relatively local products which were sometimes used for fine ware forms (such as indented beakers) as well as for the normal range of coarse wares. The assemblage gives the impression of being of relatively low status.

The group is of regional importance, however, in deriving from a relatively extensively excavated settlement. The pottery will be crucial for dating the excavated features. It is therefore essential that the material be carefully recorded in order to establish the chronological range of fabric and form types. The distribution of fabrics and forms across the site may enable chronological variations in the settlement layout to be identified and may indicate functional patterning within the settlement. Additionally, in conjunction with other aspects of the finds assemblage, the pottery will illuminate aspects of trade and status, enabling the site to be placed clearly within its regional settlement context.

#### Post-excavation requirements

The pottery is contained in a total of 18 boxes, one of which contains material from the evaluation. Eight half boxes contain sherds probably of a single large vessel from one context and may be equivalent to one box. There is therefore about 11 boxes-worth of pottery in total (about 3000 sherds). This includes a little Anglo-Saxon material (about 600 sherds).

Estimated processing time	15 days
Data checking, analysis and drawing preparation	6 days
Report writing and checking	10 days

The character of the group and the availability of comparative material impose special constraints. Visits to Norfolk and Suffolk museums will be needed in order to assign material to sources, and library time will also be required. These factors are included in the time required for report writing.

#### Additional requirements

Computer data entry (A R Whiteman)	3 days
Drawing office	5 days



## Appendix 2 The Saxon Pottery by Catherine Underwood-Keevill

### Introduction

Brettenham Meadows produced a small collection of early Saxon pottery. Although limited in number, especially when compared to other sites such as West Stow and Spong Hill, the assemblage is still vital for establishing an early Saxon sequence in the vicinity of Thetford, an important late Saxon pottery production area (Rogerson and Dallas 1984).

Over 600 sherds of Saxon pottery were examined from excavated contexts. These have been divided into broad fabric groups based on the major inclusion types within the fabrics. All decorated sherds have been recorded and illustrated, and vessel types such as large rim fragments and profiles drawn. Seventeen fabric types have been described and can be compared with a similar variety of fabric types as described at West Stow (West 1985, 129 and 131). Further work is envisaged on the fabric types so that comparisons with the inhumation (Brisbane 1984) and the cremation pottery (Hills 1987) at Spong Hill can be attempted and a closer correlation with material from West Stow can also be achieved.

The vessel types have also been described. It should be noted that there were only 31 rim sherds, 12 bases and 24 decorated sherds. The rims and profiles indicate a variety of jars and bowls with everted and upright rims and rounded globular bodies and straight sided forms and also shouldered jars/bowls. Bases range from rounded wide angled bases to pedestal bases. Decoration consists of linear diagonal decoration, which usually is a series of four vertical incised lines on the vessel girth which is usually carinated, incised *stehende bogen* type decoration, interlocking spiral decoration, rustication, fine rouletting and punched dot decoration.

There are also a number of distinctive carinated bodysherds, which indicate the presence of 5th century forms. Carinated and biconical vessel types were recovered predominantly from the 5th century area at Mucking (Hamerow 1993) and line and groove decoration types were also concentrated in the 5th century area. Pedestal bases are also normally indicative of an early date. The decoration types and the vessels may however be in use over a prolonged period; small bowls with notched or slashed carinations according to Myres can be early but may continue into the 6th century (Myres 1977, 17 and 40).

It is interesting to observe that these decoration types do have close parallels with the material from the Saxon homelands in Schleswig-Holstein and the Elbe-Weber coastlands dated to the 4th to early 5th centuries (Myres 1977). Similarly decorated vessels have also been recovered from Witton, North Walsham, and the comparisons with the early homeland material were treated with some caution due to the lack of 5th century decorated material in England. The late 4th century homeland parallels might occur 5th-century contexts in England (Wade and Elmhirst 1983, 67). Other types such as the rusticated decoration date from the 5th century to the 6th century. *Stehende bogen* decoration, by comparison with types in the Saxon homelands, is regarded as an early feature (Myres 1977, 29).

Decoration types have been recorded in detail at West Stow, in particular the rustication types. The other decoration types and the stamp decorated sherd in contexts 2247 need further comparative work. *Stehende bogen* decoration and spiral motifs are apparent at Loveden Hill, Lincolnshire (Myres fig 162, corpus no. 546) and North Elmham (Myres fig 343, corpus nos 3437, 4139 and 4140). Spiral type design may be indicative of an East Anglian workshop (North Elmham IV), and specialised production. The possibility of different source areas and production areas needs to be considered and this could be ascertained by any correspondence between decoration and fabric types and comparing this with the work done at North Elmham, Spong Hill (Brisbane 1981, 234). Admittedly any work on fabric types and decoration will be tentative due to the limited number of examples at Brettenham.

In conclusion the material needs a detailed record of fabric types, correlated to major fabric series at Spong Hill and West Stow and any early Saxon material in archive/storage from the Thetford area. All vessel forms and decoration types need to be drawn and described in detail following a scheme similar to that devised at Mucking so the rims and base type can be cross-referenced with ease. Vessel and decoration types can then be tabulated against fabric types and compared to possible workshops/specialised production possibly within the North Elmham area. Early vessel types and fabric types need to be plotted and a site distribution plan constructed to ascertain any concentrations of material.

The numbers of sherds may preclude any detailed investigation on diversity of fabrics being linked to date, and the possibility of limestone/chalk tempered fabrics being early indicators as noted at Mucking, but these factors should be considered. The importance of a 5th century assemblage in this area dictates that the recording and analysis of this pottery should be as detailed as possible within the limitations of the assemblage size and the time available. The fact that only one early medieval Thetford ware sherd was present means that the group is not contaminated by any later material, although some of the assemblage may be intrusive in Roman features. The possibility of close links with other major sites means that this site can be fitted into a larger regional overview and contribute to the understanding of an early Saxon background to an important late Saxon area.

#### Estimated Work programme

600+ sherds (601 sherds counted, which may not account for sherds in need of conservation and scientific analysis, which were subject to a rough count and sherds that may have been missed in otherwise predominantly Roman contexts).

- 1 Fabric analysis and recording, using the assessment recording as a guideline, and cross-correlation of fabric series when constructed to the major fabric series at West Stow and Spong Hill. All material to be recorded onto database on computer with detailed recording manual and definition of terms as per Mucking.  
4 days
- 2 Report writing and cross-references, using any plotting of results on a site basis and any results of correlation with other sites.  
3 days
- 3 Illustration of all decorated sherds and diagnostic sherds (includes 3-4 whole vessels/profiles, up to 31 rims, 3-4 base types, 7-8 decoration types and 1 stamped sherd).  
5 days
- 4 Drawing up of tables of fabric types to vessel forms and decoration types.  
2 days

## **Appendix 3 Metal Finds and Coins Assessment by Ian Scott**

### **1 Copper Alloy**

#### **1.1 Preservation -**

There are 52 cu alloy finds, of which 31 are coins. Of the remaining 21 objects the majority are all well preserved and worthy of publication. Slightly more than half of these are from stratified contexts (12 of 21). Most of the copper alloy objects are worthy of publication.

#### **1.2 Dating -**

The objects are typologically almost all of Romano-British date - eg the brooches (sff 11, 48 and 62) and possibly the scoops (sff 52 & 153). The rectangular buckle (sf 25) may be of later date.

Only sff 108, 121, 124, 125, 135, 136, 141, 153, 186, 229, 240 and 241 are stratified. Six of these (sff 108, 121, 124, 125, 141 & 153) are from SFBs. Three others are from late RB burials (sff 186, 229 & 241). Two objects (sff 135 & 136) come from a pit probably of RB date, and the final stratified object (sf 240) was found in a pit of uncertain date.

#### **1.3 Conclusions -**

The cu alloy objects, both stratified and unstratified, have an integrity as a group, and the preservation of the individual objects is such, that publication of the complete collection of identifiable objects can be justified.

### **2 Iron**

#### **2.1 Preservation -**

There are approximately 151 iron objects, of which approximately 22 are objects other than nails. Of these 22 objects, 9 (possibly 10) are unstratified. The objects are not well preserved. Few of the non-nail iron objects are worthy of publication. Two knives (sff 26 and 126), a pair of shears (sf 35), a swivel (sf 22), a plain ring with attached loop (sf 58) and two spearheads (sff 10 and 118) are worth illustration and publication.

The nails were not scanned for the assessment, and would require a further scan prior to analysis to ensure that no objects other than nails have been missed. The nails need not be published in detail, but any stratified concentrations of nails may be worth of noting.

#### **2.2 Dating -**

None of the objects can be readily dated on typological grounds, although it is probable that the spearheads are romano-british rather than saxon. The knives have not been identified typologically. Of the 7 identifiable objects (sff 10, 22, 26, 35, 58, 118 & 126), only a spearhead (sf 118) and a knife (sf 126) are stratified. The knife is from an SFB and the spearhead from a pit of uncertain date.

#### **2.3 Conclusion**

The number of identifiable iron objects is small. Only the identifiable objects noted above justify publication, along with a note of any concentrations of nails which may be identified.

### **3 Coins**

### 3.1 General comments

31 Roman coins were recovered, only 2 from stratified contexts. Most are well preserved and legible, but will be of limited use in phasing the site.

**Table 1 Stratified Finds: Cu alloy**

Context	sf no(s)	object(s)	Comment	Context description/date/phase
2034	108	sheet fragt	publish	SFB 2033
2216	121, 141	? nail shank; ? fitting	121 - archive 141 - publish	SFB 2222
2270	124, 125	sheet; frags	archive only	SFB 2269
2328	135, 136	toothed plate; bracelet fragt	publish	Pit 2329 ?RB
2666	153	scoop	publish	SFB 2401
2768	186	bracelet	publish	burial
2859	229	earring	publish	burial
2935	240	? bracelet fragt	publish	pit 2946
3005	241	? bracelet fragt	publish	burial

**Table 2 Stratified finds: Iron**

Context	sf no(s)	object(s)	Comment	Context description/ date/phase
2034	68, 83, 111	lump; ? wire; fitting;	archive only	SFB 2033
2069	93	? hobnail head	archive only	grave 2067
2222	142	rod	archive only	SFB 2222
2230	126	knife	publish	SFB 2222
2270	-	frags	archive only	SFB 2269
2271	142	lump	archive only	SFB 2269
2330	-	frags	archive only	posthole 2331
2330	-	frags	archive only	posthole 2331
2832	234	fragt	archive only	pit 2830
2292	118	spearhead	publish	pit 2293

## **Appendix 4 Human Bone Assessment by Angela Boyle**

### **1. Introduction**

This report assesses the potential for further analysis of the human remains from a Romano-British cemetery at Thetford, Brettenham. The excavated assemblage comprised 24 individuals. A single deposit of undated cremated human bone was also recovered.

### **2. The cremation**

The cremation deposit comprised two fragments of well calcined bone, one of which was identifiable as human skull, probably adult. No further work is required.

### **3. The inhumations**

The skeletal assemblage was examined with a view to providing a basic assessment of the completeness of each skeleton and the preservation of individual bones. Both these factors have a direct bearing on the potential for further analysis. On the whole preservation was poor, and at best fair. There were no complete skeletons: they largely comprised skulls and fragmentary leg bones. Details appear in the table below. With the exception of skeleton 3005 which was located within the fill of ditch 3001, all of the skeletons were located within a coherent group of W-E aligned graves. The position of at least four of the skulls belonging to skeletons 2122, 2766, 2769 and 2793 indicated that these individuals had been decapitated. A further individual was buried in a prone position, that is, face down in the grave.

### **4. Potential**

The assessment has indicated that the potential for further detailed analysis of the assemblage is limited by poor preservation. This is reflected in the estimate of time required for further study. It is additionally intended to produce a burial catalogue and a brief discussion of Romano-British burial practices within the region in the 4th century.

- i. Detailed recording of the entire assemblage (excepting skeletons 2671 and 2813 which have no further potential): - 2.5 days
- ii. Discussion of human bone: - 0.5 days
- iii. Production of burial catalogue, incorporating details of grave cuts, fills, grave goods, body position and orientation: - 1.5 days
- iv. Discussion of Romano-British burial practice in the 4th century with particular reference to decapitation and examination of regional parallels: - 1.5 days

**Total: - 6 days**



*Table 1: assessment results*

Skeleton No.	Grave No.	Preservation	Completeness	Comments
2122	2083	fair	skull and legs only	adult, possible female
2123	2067	fair	skull and legs only	
2149	2067	fair	skull only	possible subadult
2671	2669	poor	legs only	no further potential
2674	2672	poor	skull and legs only	
2736	2738	poor	skull vault only	
2743	27 38	fair	skull and legs only	
2749	2699	poor	skull	
2758	2667	poor-fair	skull and legs only	at least two wormian bones
2765	2738	fair	skull and mandible	dentition present
2766	2695	fair	skull, mandible and legs	adult?
2769	2770	fair	skull, legs and feet,	adult, possible male; dentition present
2787	2763	poor	legs only	adult
2793	2794	fair	skull, mandible, left arm, legs and left foot	adult, possible male; dentition present
2795	2790	poor	skull vault only	possible subadult
2800	2798	fair	skull and legs only	adult, possible male
2813	2811	poor	skull and legs only	no further potential
2827	2788	fair	skull, spine, pelvis and legs	
2828	2811	fair	skull only	adult?
2844	2815	poor	legs and feet	
2845	2761	fair	sacrum, pelvis and legs	adult, possible female
2858	2811	poor	right and left femur	
2859	2776	fair	skull, clavicle and legs	dentition present
3005	3001	fair-good	skull, torso, arms and legs	adult, possible male; vertebral osteophytes; dentition present



## Appendix 5 Animal Bone Assessment by Adrienne Powell Msc, BA. and Kate M Clark PhD Bsc.

### Introduction

The bones were assessed at Oxford Archaeological Unit by K Clark and A Powell on 10th October 1994. All bone from all contexts was examined and information on period and context was provided at that time.

The total number of fragments assessed was 3911, with 19.1% being identifiable to species (Table 1).

*Table 1 Number of fragments and number of identifiable fragments*

Period	No. fragments	No. identifiable fragments	% identifiable
R-B	1835	355	19.3
Saxon	2076	392	18.9
Total	3911	747	19.1

### Bone Condition

The bone was in variable condition, but in general was fragmentary and friable with numerous recent breaks which demonstrate the fragile nature of the bone and its tendency to fragment on handling. To help assist the usefulness of the assemblage for further analysis, the condition of the bone from each context has been rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 applies to very well preserved bone with little post-depositional alteration, and 5 to bone so altered that even species identification is unlikely. Table 2 summarises the condition of the identifiable bone from both periods.

Burnt bone was noted in four Saxon contexts, but was infrequent overall.

*Table 2 Condition of bone*

Period	Condition (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
R-B	0.8	22.0	56.1	17.5	3.7
Saxon	0.0	43.1	31.6	24.7	0.3

### Species representation

The proportional of the main domesticates are as shown on Table 3.

*Table 3 Percentage of identified fragments by period*

Period	Percentage of identified fragments			
	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Horse
R-B	60.5	18.3	4.5	8.2
Saxon	63.5	18.6	9.4	5.9

### Romano-British

Cattle are the predominant species present, with sheep/goat the next most frequent. Pig was poorly represented but horse was relatively common. Dog was rare, mainly represented by a few loose teeth. Bird, mainly domestic fowl occurred in low numbers.

### Early Saxon

The proportions of cattle and sheep/goat are similar to the Romano-British contexts. Pig is slightly more common, but still relatively under-represented. Horse is less common, although considering the number of fragments involved the difference is probably not significant.

No amphibia, fish or wild mammals were observed, except rabbit which occurs in both periods and represents intrusive material from the burrowing activity noted during the excavation. Also intrusive was the skeleton of a young lamb.

### General comments

Butchery marks were visible occasionally on cattle bones. Gnawing appeared infrequent, although one bone from the Romano-British period showed puncture marks.

Fragments of vertebrae and pelvis were scarce. However, skull fragments from cattle and horse were common.

In view of the fragmentation, measurements on the bones will probably not be possible for most of the assemblage, with the exception of the horse remains which included some metapodia in good condition.

### Recommendations

The identified material from both the Romano-British and early Saxon periods forms a relatively small sample. However, a literature search revealed a scarcity of contemporary assemblages from the region. This is particularly so of the early Saxon material. There are several late Saxon assemblages but, apart from a few bones from Brandon Road, Thetford, the only sizeable assemblage is from West Stow, Suffolk. This alone makes the Melford Meadows material worthy of further study, although we should perhaps add the quantity is still small.

Interesting features of the assemblage include:

- a) The apparent continuity in species exploitation between the Romano-British and early Saxon occupations at the site.
- b) The relatively high proportion of cattle at the site in both periods compared with contemporary sites - 50% at Romano-British Scole, and 38% and 34% at West Stow (Romano-British and early Saxon respectively). Sheep/goat are usually more prominent than we have observed in the Melford Meadows material, and their prominence tends to increase over time, a trend related at least in part to the increasing importance of wool production. The low level of sheep/goat remains in this assemblage is an interesting characteristic.
- c) The relatively high proportion of horse material.

In order to explore these points it is recommended that:

1. Further analysis of the assemblage is carried out, including calculation of the number of identified specimens present and the minimum number of individuals.

2. Estimation of age at death from bone fusion, and possibly from teeth, and analysis of body part representation and butchery patterns where possible.
3. More detailed comparison with assemblages from contemporary sites in East Anglia to investigate the differences in husbandry practices.

## Appendix 6 Flint Assessment By Philippa Bradley

### Introduction

Approximately 700 pieces of struck flint were recovered from fieldwalking, evaluation and excavation. Burnt, unworked flint is present in some quantity. The material is quite abraded and is generally lightly corticated; occasional pieces are heavily corticated, perhaps indicating the reuse of 'old' nodules. The flint seems to be exclusively good quality chalk flint.

### 1. Method

The material was briefly scanned but not fully quantified. Diagnostic forms were noted and brief technological details were recorded.

### 2. Technology

The assemblage is characterised by unsystematic, mostly hard-hammer flaking and would seem to be of Bronze Age date. There are frequent hinge fractures and other mis-hits. There is some evidence for slightly more controlled flaking; blades and blade-like flakes were recovered from the fieldwalking (H/30, I/190, K/90, M/210, O/70, O/170, P/130, P/150, Q/30, R/70, R/110, S/70), the evaluation (blades and a blade core) and from the excavation (for example, context 3678). Although the majority of these have been hard-hammer struck and may be accidental rather than deliberate removals. Previous parallel blade scars were noted on the dorsal faces of some flakes and there is evidence for platform preparation. Soft-hammer struck blades, blade-like flakes and flakes were found in the fieldwalking (G/90, Q/150, R/90), and there was also evidence for platform preparation (Q/150 and possibly F/150). A core rejuvenation flake was also found in the fieldwalking. The more carefully produced flintwork is probably of Neolithic date. The cores recovered are generally unsystematically worked, with one, two or more platforms. They have all been extensively worked and do not appear to have been prepared prior to, or during flaking.

Retouched forms are mostly fairly undiagnostic and consist of scrapers, piercers, and miscellaneous retouched pieces. A chisel arrowhead from context 2001 is later Neolithic in date. The scrapers are neatly retouched and are probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age in date. A miscellaneous retouched piece may be a fragmentary leaf-shaped arrowhead. The backed knife may also be of this date. The end and side scraper from K/150 is invasively retouched and may be early Bronze Age in date. The piercer has a long point and may be mid to late Bronze Age in date.

Burnt and calcined flint was recovered from all phases of fieldwork on the site, including some large fragments (80-150 g). A concentration was found in the fieldwalking (transect L). Heavily calcined flint is frequently found on Bronze Age sites.

### 3. Potential

The assemblage is Neolithic and Bronze Age in date and is of local and regional importance. The collection is typical of the many from the East Anglian Breckland in raw material and composition. There is no obvious Grime's Graves Floorstone.

### 4. Recommendations for further work

The material warrants further work to enable the assemblage to be fully quantified and characterized. Metrical analysis is not thought to be worthwhile as the material is largely redeposited. Limited recording of technological traits, such as hammer mode, butt and termination types will enable the Neolithic material to be isolated from the Bronze Age flintwork.

### 5. Estimate of further time required

Recording (full quantification and characterisation)	4 days
Report writing and drawing preparation (if required)	2 days

## Appendix 7 Worked stone Assessment by Fiona Roe (*awaited*)

## Appendix 8 Environmental remains Assessment by Dr Mark Robinson

During the excavation of Romano-British and Saxon features at BRT Thetford, samples were taken for charred plant remains. Samples of c.10 litres were floated onto a 0.5mm mesh and dried. The dried flots were spread out and scanned at x10 magnification under a binocular microscope for charred seeds, chaff and charcoal. The species present were noted along with an estimate of their abundance. Of the 15 samples assessed, remains were only entirely absent from a single sample. Indications of the concentrations of remains are given in Table 1 for charred seeds and chaff and Table 2 for charcoal.

The Romano-British and possible Romano-British samples mostly fall into two categories. Firstly, there are those samples from which cereal remains are absent but contain *Quercus* (oak) charcoal, in some instances in large quantities (Samples 8, 9, 18, 19, 20). Secondly, there are samples (all Romano-British) with few or no charcoal fragments of identifiable size but which contain between from about 5 to about 70 charred cereal grains (Samples 2, 3, 5, 13, 17). The former samples, which were all from pits, possibly relate to the metal working activity which occurred on the site, with the oak being used as fuel. The latter group of samples probably represent crop processing or domestic activity at the site. In all cases the assemblages are dominated by grain, mostly *Triticum* sp. (wheat) although *Hordeum* sp. (barley) is also present. Some of the wheat grains resemble *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat) and Sample 3, the only sample in which chaff was observed, contains a few glumes of *T. spelta*. Most of the samples also contain seeds of arable weeds, *Fallopia convolvulus* (black bindweed) being the most abundant, but *Chenopodium album* (fat hen), *Carex* (sedge) and Gramineae (grass) are also present.

Of the other two Roman samples, remains are absent from Sample 4 and Sample 14 contains a few unidentified charred twiggy fragments.

The three Saxon samples (Samples 15, 16, 21) were all from sunken-floored buildings. They contain mixed charcoal, including *Quercus* (oak), *Corylus* / *Alnus* (hazel or alder) and Rosaceae tp. (hawthorn, sloe etc.), and small quantities of charred grain. *Avena* sp. (oat) is present in Sample 15, a single grain of *Hordeum* sp. (barley) was noted in Sample 16 while several barley grains and a wheat grain are present in Sample 21. One of the barley grains from Sample 16 is hulled *Hordeum vulgare* (six-row hulled barley). The wheat grain resembles *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat).

The results from the Romano-British and possible Romano-British samples are unexceptional, and further analysis is probably only justified if it is of help with the interpretation of the site. The Saxon assemblages are also typical, but much less material of this date has been analyzed from the region. The record of possible *Triticum spelta* from Sample 21 is of interest, because this crop does not appear to remain in cultivation for long into the Saxon period. However, it could have been residual from Roman activity on the site. The potential for further analysis of the Saxon samples is unfortunately limited by the paucity of charred seeds in them (the sum total of 11 cereal grains and 2 weed seeds being noted from the three Saxon samples that were assessed).

**Table 1: Concentration of Charred Remains (excluding charcoal)**

No. of items per sample	Number of samples for each period		Saxon
	Romano-British	Possible Romano-British	
0	4	2	
1-9	1	1	3
10-49	2		
50-99	2		
Total no. of samples	9	3	3

**Table 2: Concentration of Charcoal**

Quantity of charcoal	Number of samples for each period		Saxon
	Romano-British	Possible Romano-British	
absent or only very small fragments	5		
some	2	2	2
much	1		1
very much	1	1	
Total no. of samples	9	3	3