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Manor Farm, Old Grimsbury, Banbury, Oxon

Post-Excavation Assessment and Research Design

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

April 1999

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Contents:

Illustrations:

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INTRODUCTION

Site Location

The site lies on the north eastern edge of the market town of Banbury (NGR 4644 4165) and is bounded by Hennel Way to the north, by Manor Farm to the east and Marsh Farm to the west. The geology is Lower Lias.

Historic background

Banbury and Grimsbury are both Saxon or pagan place names, `bury' meaning *Burh* or defended enclosure. During the Saxon period Banbury became the centre of a large estate belonging to the bishops of Dorchester. However, very little archaeological evidence has been produced to support the Saxon origins of the town. The medieval development of the town followed the establishment of the castle which was built by Alexander de Blois, the Bishop of Lincoln in the 12th century. The present suburb of Grimsbury was built at the end of the 19th century, and was described by Pevsner as `red brick terraced cottages of the most dismal kind'.

Archaeological background

A concentration of Bronze Age, late Saxon and medieval features were revealed during excavations carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1989 prior to the construction of Hennel Way, in the vicinity of Grimsbury House, immediately to the north-west of the site (T.G. Allen, Archaeological Discoveries on the Banbury East-West Link Road. *Oxoniensia* **LIV** 1989, 25-44).

An archaeological evaluation of the present site was carried out by the OAU in 1993. This revealed evidence for activity to the west of the farm from the 13th century onwards. The earliest activity was associated with ditches and probable field boundaries. In the later medieval and post-medieval period there was evidence of possible building and occupation, particularly on the extant earthwork in the south-west part of the site.

EXCAVATION RESEARCH AIMS

The research aims for the excavation were set out as follows in the WSI prepared by OAU:

- To establish the character and relationship of the various periods of occupation.

Specific aims were to:

- Date and phase the main features and contexts

- Determine the nature of the various periods of occupation
- To establish the extent of the medieval field boundaries
- Determine the relationship between and character of the various features within the excavation areas, specifically the ditches and buildings
- Obtain information on the economy and environment during the various phases of settlement
- To recover artefactual, environmental and stratigraphic information provide a better understanding of the late medieval structures, in order to refine our knowledge of how medieval buildings were used and how their function might have changed over time
- Many comparable sites have yards with buildings to the rear of the road frontage. If such buildings are present on the building platform to the rear of the hollow way their use may have changed over time. Even if the buildings are truncated additional sampling of pits and boundary ditches nearby may provide useful evidence of function and enable comparisons to be made within the settlement
- Define the function areas within the limits of the excavation and obtain evidence on the occupation history (e.g. continuous or sporadic: shifting or static) specifically of the shift from late Saxon to early medieval, if present.
- The recovery of plans of any buildings which may be either simple (i.e. single phase) or truncated will aid in establishing activity within tofts and again to compare tofts.

THE 1998 EXCAVATION - SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The fieldwork strategy for the 1998 excavation consisted of two elements:

1. Based upon the results of the evaluation, an area of approximately 1600 sq m , which included the putative building platform, was subjected to an area excavation (Area A).
2. Four further evaluative trenches (Nos 13 - 16) were machined excavated, one immediately north of Wildmere Farm, Area C, to the north-west of the area excavation, and three around the north and west of Manor Farm, Area D, to the north-east of the area excavation.

The excavation produced significant results. The earliest occupation was of late Neolithic date. The evidence was slight and comprised two small pits and a possible field boundary ditch.

The main phase of occupation was medieval and later in date. Occupation began in the 12th century, with evidence of field ditches, possible trackway gullies and associated postholes and pits. In the 13th century the area appeared to be unoccupied and under the plough for a short period, after which a platform was raised, possibly to alleviate flooding. Stone footings of a possible rectangular farmhouse and associated barn were found, and a deep stone-lined well. By the 17th century the platform was in use as an agricultural yard, the buildings having been demolished. The extant Manor Farm, probably of 17th century construction, situated east of the site, may represent the successor to the earlier building.

None of the additional evaluation trenches produced any evidence for significant occupation at any period, nor did they produce deposits which could link the activity on and around the platform of Area A with that revealed by the 1989 excavation on the line of Hennel Way.

QUANTIFICATION OF EVIDENCE AND STATEMENTS OF ANALYTICAL POTENTIAL

Quantification of excavation records (Areas A, C, D)

RECORD TYPE	*QUANTITY*
Context sheets	392
Plans (A1)	9
Plans (A4)	9
Sections (A1)	1
Sections (A4)	40
Levels sheets	8
Small finds sheets	2
Bulk finds sheets	12
Worked stone list	1
Sample list	3
B&W Films	5
Colour slide films	5

Analytical potential of the stratigraphic record

Stratigraphic integrity of the various phases of occupation is high. This was the impression gathered during excavation, and confirmed by the initial assessment and dating of the pottery. There was some residuality in the latest phase of occupation, but this is to be expected, and should not significantly affect the interpretation.

Although the platform was not subjected to 100% excavation, the footprints of both the main buildings were fully excavated and recorded, and a sufficient percentage of the yard areas and the margins of the platform itself were sample excavated to enable analysis of both the buildings and their surroundings. Similarly, a satisfactorily large proportion of the archaeology beneath the platform was exposed, fully recorded and sample excavated.

The results from the four additional evaluative trenches were meagre, both in terms of archaeological deposits and recovered artefacts. However, at least the absence of remains serves to set limits to the focus of occupation, on and around the platform.

The watching brief planned for Area B did not happen, and therefore the interpretation of the excavation results in the light of the immediate environment of ridge-and-furrow will be restricted.

Quantification of finds and environmental evidence (Areas A, C, D)

MATERIAL	*QUANTITY*
Prehistoric pottery	74
Post-Roman pottery	2105
Ceramic building materials (CBM)	104
Animal bone	894
Shell	6
Iron	44
Nails	158
Copper Alloy (incl. 2 coins)	22
Lead	5
Clay Pipe	5
Stone	72
Flint	29
Glass	31
Slag	5
Fired Clay	21
Charcoal	3
Wood	1

Analytical potential of the finds and environmental evidence

Pottery

Prehistoric pottery

Some 74 sherds derived from just three features. Given the scarcity of evidence of prehistoric, and in particular Neolithic material from the region, this assemblage of Grooved Ware is an important find. The material will need to be characterised to establish whether it has affinities with material from the Upper Thames or from East Anglia or the Peak District.

Post-Roman pottery

This assemblage comprises 2105 sherds (3.3 kg) and should prove valuable both for our understanding of the occupation of the site, and for comparison with other recent assemblages in the region. This is especially so given the lack of residuality through most of the assemblage. The full post-Roman pottery report is contained in Appendix 1

Animal Bone

The animal bone assemblage comprises 894 pieces of bone, which are generally highly fragmented. the animal bone was mostly recovered from mixed deposits, with a moderate degree of redeposition. Within the constraints of the bpresent project, therefore, it has not merited a full assessment. It is proposed that, following thecompletion of the stratigraphic analysis and phasing, selected groups of the better dated material will be reported on by the specialist.

Building Materials

These consisted of 104 pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) and a single oak shingle. The latter was retrieved from the well and will be examined. The CBM comprises mostly roof tile and was recovered mostly from late- and post-medieval contexts. The CBM assemblage has limited analytical potential and will be subject to a rapid scan to identify and record forms and fabrics.

Small Finds

The small finds are almost all of metal. One glass linen smoother was recovered.

The assemblage of metal finds consists of 229 objects, almost exclusively of Post-Medieval date. While only a few objects have potential for further study, the assessment and interpretation may require augmenting and/or amending in the light of the overall archaeological interpretation. The full assessment of finds in included in Appendix 2

Charred Plant Remains

A total of 27 flots were processed and these indicate a fairly unremarkable agricultural environment in the later medieval and post-medieval period. Selected samples - with reasonable quantities of material - has some potential for further analysis, and may help in understanding the apparently changing pattern of site use. The full assessment of charred plant remains is included in Appendix 3.

REVISED RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

Research aims

- To date and phase the main features of the excavation

- To determine the nature of the occupation through the various periods, and specifically:
    - To consider the apparent continuity of the site from the 11th century onwards as suggested by the ceramic evidence. Was there a break in occupation in the 13th century, and if so, was this connected to the construction of the platform?
    - To compare the character of the occupation of the site before and after the platform construction.
    - To consider the late medieval structural evidence, and the form and function of both the buildings and the spaces in between, in the light of the finds and their distribution.
    - To consider the structural evidence of the two late-medieval buildings, and their immediate environment. Are they typical of agricultural buildings of this period in this region?
    - To consider if the post-medieval abandonment of the platform as an occupied site corresponds to the documentary evidence for the construction and development of the present Manor Farm.
    - To make available the results of the excavation and evaluations, and to create an ordered archive

Methods

- Analysis of the excavation records will be completed to determine the stratigraphic sequence and to establish a site matrix (for Area A). Dating information from finds assemblages will be incorporated, and a phased sequence will be produced.
- A phased plan of Area A will produced based upon the stratigraphic and dating information.
- Finds will be recorded and analysed to the appropriate level as defined in the assessment phases.
- Limited research will be undertaken into the post-medieval documentary history of the local area generally and Manor Farm particularly.
- A report will be prepared for publication. The proposed synopsis is attached. The report will concentrate on the excavation in Area A, but will draw upon the results of the evaluative trenches in Areas C and D, and the results of the 1993 evaluation, where appropriate. The report will be offered to *Oxoniensia* for publication
- The site and research archives will be ordered, indexed, security copied onto microfilm and deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service at the end of the project. Metal Small Finds will be X-rayed to create a permanent record of the assemblage

APPENDIX 1

LATE NEOLITHIC GROOVED WARE

by Alistair Barclay

A total of 17 sherds of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware was recovered from two excavated contexts. Sherds from at least two vessels were recovered from context 2269. This includes two decorated bevelled rims and a number of base sherds. Decoration consists of either horizontal rows of impressions or grooved panels. Similar grooved sherds occur in context 2194 (sample 15). The fabric typically consists of an admixture of sand and grog temper. The rim forms, decoration and fabric indicate that the vessels all belong to the Durrington Walls substyle of Grooved Ware.

In addition, as well as Grooved Ware context 2269 produced 29 fragments of fired clay. Twenty eight amorphous fragments of fired clay also came from the undated context 2354, although this material does not have to be prehistoric and could be medieval.

Potential

Grooved Ware is very common on gravel sites in the Upper Thames Valley but is rare to the north of this area, although a small quantity of similar pottery was recovered from Briar Hill, Northampton some 30 km to the north-east (Bamford 1985). Grooved Ware from the Midlands is generally rare and this is an important find and deserves to be published in full. Characterisation of the assemblage should be able to demonstrate whether it has closer affinities with comparable material from the Upper Thames or if it is more like material from elsewhere (e.g. East Anglia or the Peak District).

Further work

Full report and illustration 2 days total.

Reference

Bamford, H M. 1985 *Briar Hill excavation 1974-1978*, Northampton Development Corporation Archaeol Mono **3**, Northampton

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT OF THE POST-ROMAN POTTERY

By Paul Blinkhorn

Introduction

The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprises 2,105 sherds with a total weight of 33,956 g. The range of ware types present is typical of the pottery from medieval and later sites in south Northamptonshire and north Oxfordshire.

Fabrics

Where appropriate, the alphanumeric coding system of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994) has been used. The numeric codes are those used in archive and the data tables.

F200: OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 7 sherds, 74 g.

F301: OX234: Banbury ware, L 11th – L14th century. 401 sherds, 8,774 g.

F300: OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 – 1350. 140 sherds, 1,471 g.

F352: OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 336 sherds, 5,331 g.

F353: OX68: Potterspury ware, Late 13th – 17th century. 579 sherds, 6,537 g.

Other wares were also present:

F330: Shelly coarseware, AD1100-1400. Shelly limestone wares, produced at numerous sites along the Jurassic spine in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire (cf Denham 1985). 110 sherds, 1,502 g.

F401: Red Earthenwares, AD 1550+. Fine, uniform, brick-red sandy fabric. Sparse quartz and ironstone inclusions up to 0.5 mm. Produced at numerous centres throughout Britain (cf Orton 1988, 298). 187 sherds, 3,675 g.

F404: Cistercian Ware, c AD1470-1550. Hard, smooth fabric, usually brick-red, but can be paler or browner. Few visible inclusions, except for occasional quartz grains. Range of vessel forms somewhat specialised, and usually very thin-walled (c 2 mm). Rare white slip decoration. 53 sherds, 435 g.

F405: German Stonewares, AD1480+. A range of hard, grey, salt-glazed fabrics produced at numerous sites in the Rhineland and beyond (cf Gaimster 1997). 2 sherds, 65 g.

F477: Midland Purple wares, c AD1450-1600. Very hard, dark purplish-grey 'semi-stoneware' fabric. Occasional quartz grains up to 1mm. Purple to black glaze, often thin and patchy (cf McCarthy 1979, 161). 32 sherds, 820 g.

F431: Midland Yellow wares, c AD1550-1700. Hard creamy-white fabric with brown to white surfaces. Yellow to greenish yellow glaze (cf McCarthy 1979, 162). 7 sherds, 300 g.

F412: Midland Blackwares, c AD1550-1700. Very similar to Cistercian ware, although usually thicker-walled (c 4 mm) and with a slightly coarser fabric with more quartz (cf McCarthy 1979, 164). 233 sherds, 4,784 g.

F417: Tin-Glazed Earthenwares, c AD1600-1800. Fine white earthenware, occasionally pinkish or yellowish core. Thick white tin glaze, with painted cobalt blue decoration, occasionally manganese purple and ochre. Rare inscriptions. Glaze tends to flake away from surface of body clay. Vessels usually ointment pots, albarellos and plates (cf Orton 1988, 298). 6 sherds, 67 g.

F416: Metropolitan Slipwares, c AD 1612 - 1800. Fine, uniform, brick-red sandy fabric. Sparse quartz and ironstone inclusions up to 0.5 mm. Generally flatwares such as dishes, bowls and plates, with an internal orange or green glaze over painted slip decoration. Produced at numerous centres throughout England. (cf Orton 1988, 298). 3 sherds. 71 g.

Assessment of Potential

This pottery assemblage is a useful addition to the corpus for north Oxfordshire. In qualitative terms, the assemblage is fragmented, but some of the earlier medieval groups appear to be primary deposits, with several largely complete although broken vessels noted. Despite this, the range of fabrics present suggests that there was virtually unbroken occupation on the site from the early medieval period onwards.

The lack of excavation in the town of Banbury in the last 20 years (cf Mellor 1994, 186), means that this assemblage offers the first opportunity to place the settlement in the context of the large amount of work which has been carried out in the region in that time. The longevity of the site also allows an examination of the nature of pottery use and supply at the site during over that time, especially as pottery assemblages from the earlier excavations appear to have suffered a high degree of residuality.

Pottery task list

No.	Task	Time Req.
1	Processing and database compilation	2
2	Quantitative and qualitative Analysis	2
3	Report writing and selection of sherds for illustration	1

References

Denham, V, 1985 The Pottery in JH Williams, M Shaw and V Denham Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton Northampton Development Corporation Monog Ser **4**, 46-64

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APPENDIX 3

THE METAL ARTEFACTS

by Leigh Allen

Factual data

Quantification

There were a total of 251 objects of metal recovered from the excavation, of which objects of copper alloy (22), lead (5) and iron (202) were represented. The objects have been discussed and catalogued according metal type and function.

Objects of Copper Alloy

There were 22 objects of copper alloy recovered from the excavations. The assemblage comprises coins (2), personal items (9), lock furniture (1), harness fittings (2), vessel components (2) and miscellaneous fragments of strip or sheet (6).

The two coins are both very worn. SF 163 is a 4th-century Roman coin, with a very faint figure, possibly Victory, on the reverse (identified by P Booth, OAU). The second coin SF 125 is a coin or token of medieval date (requires formal identification). Both examples were recovered from contexts containing 17th-century pottery.

The personal items include buckles, pins, a button, a lace tag and a thimble. SF 161 from context 2181 is a small circular buckle probably from a shoe (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 57-64). SF 131 from context 2041 is a broken fragment from an undecorated buckle plate It is recessed for the frame and has a slot for the pin. Similar examples recovered from excavations in London date from the mid 14th to mid 15th centuries (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 110-114). The remaining buckle SF 139 is an ornate example formed from filigree wire twisted around a circular or possibly D-shaped frame. This buckle was recovered from context 2006 which contained 17th-century pottery. The three pins from the assemblage are all examples of drawn pins with wire wound heads. SF 113 from context 2003 and the shank fragment from ctx 2114 are both examples of 'sewing pins'. The earliest examples of this type of pin appear in 13th and 14th century contexts at Winchester (Biddle and Barclay 1990) and Southampton (Platt and Coleman 1975). However they are more commonly seen in contexts dating to after the 14th century with many hundreds or thousands coming from 17th- and 18th-century deposits. The third pin SF 121, from context 2032 is larger, again with a wire wound head. These larger examples tend to be earlier in date than the finer pins. The button SF 108 from context 2014, is a plain slightly dome headed blazer button of post-medieval date. The single lace tag SF 120 from context 2032 has edges that overlap at the join. Tags were used to secure the ends of laces and facilitate easy threading from the 15th century onwards, and examples are found in huge numbers in the late medieval and post medieval periods(Margeson 1993, 22-24). The final personal item in this category is the thimble SF 115 from context 2029. It is constructed from sheet metal and has straight sides; The indentations have been applied in a spiral beginning at the open-end and continuing up over the crown. This example is post-medieval in date (Holmes 1988).

There is one item of lock furniture in the form of a key. It is cast with a stamped circular bow and the hole is not central. The stem is oval in cross section, the bit is cut from a thick sheet and has no teeth. A similar key comes from Westbury , Buckinghamshire (Mills 1995, fig. 151, no.48), which is compared to an example from the late medieval period at Colchester (Crummy 1988, fig. 87, no. 3230).

There are two items that are possibly associated with harness, both types of bell. SF 106 from context 2014 is a clapper bell with a perforated rectangular tab for suspension and remains of an iron clapper inside. Similar examples have been recovered from Aldgate High Street, London (Thompson, Grew and Schofield 1984 fig.57, no.93) and dated 1670-1700, and from Great Linford, Buckinghamshire (Zeepvat 1991, 171, fig.80, no. 216). The second example is a crotal with a semi-circular perforated suspension tab and the iron pellet still present. The bell is plain apart from 8 circular perforations one in each quadrant of the sphere. Other similar crotal were recovered from Great Linford (Zeepvat 1991, 170-171, fig. 80, nos.211-214).

There are two items from vessels; SF 141 from context 2132 is a fragment from the rim of a cast vessel and SF 157 from context 2260 is a heart-shaped drop handle possibly from chafing dish. A similar example was recovered from Southampton (Harvey 1975, fig 245, no.1864) and is dated to the 16th century.

The remaining fragments of copper alloy are miscellaneous fragments of strip or sheet.

OBJECTS OF LEAD

There were 5 objects of lead, of which only two are distinguishable objects. There is a plug or pot rivet from context 2182 and a fragment of unstratified window came.

OBJECTS OF IRON

There were a total of 202 iron objects recovered from the excavations, 158 of which were nails (including 3 horse shoe nails), with a further 19 of miscellaneous fragments of strip and sheet. The contexts from which the nails were recovered are listed below. The remaining 25 objects comprise buckles (2), knives (6), horsegear (5) and structural ironwork (12).

There are 2 buckles in the assemblage; SF 151 from context 2180, and a second example from context 2130. They are both D-shaped frames of utilitarian form. The knives include two whittle tang knives, two fragments from scale tang knives and two damaged fragments from blades. Whittle tang knife SF 155 from context 2181 has a long triangular blade and a centrally placed tang, and is probably of medieval date. SF 107 from context 2007 is a knife with most of the blade missing; only the bolster and the tang are present. The tang is set into a cylindrical bone handle which is slightly bulbous and plugged at the butt end. The bolster is an innovation in hafting probably introduced around the middle of the 16th century. From the X-Ray it would appear that the bolster is decorated; similar decorated examples have been recovered from excavations at Norwich (Goodall 1993, fig. 96, no.878) and Great Linford (Zeepvat 1991, 185-187, fig.92, nos 280 and 282). The two fragments from scale tang knives are only scale fragments with either rivet holes or rivets visible.

The horsegear consists of 4 fragments from horseshoes which are too damaged to be diagnostic, and a damaged rowel spur. The rowel spur is unstratified but is probably of

mid 13th- to mid 14th-century date. It is similar to an example from Great Linford (Ellis 1991, 172-181, fig. 85, no.234).

The structural ironwork consists of fragments from hinges probably from doors, hasps and staples.

Statement of potential

With the exception of one or two items the assemblage is post-medieval in date and requires little further work.

Aims and methods

The catalogue is complete with the exception of the identification of the medieval coin or token. The nails may require detailed recording.

Resources

Time will be required to prepare a discussion looking at the objects in relation to the stratigraphy and chronology of the site, and comparing the assemblage with other artefact groups, and to amend results according to take into account any revisions of the site phasing.

A small number of objects (5) could usefully be illustrated.

Research and final report production including drawing briefs 1 day.

References

M Biddle and K Barclay 1990 'sewing pins' and wire in M Biddle *Objects and Economy in Medieval Winchester*. (Oxford University Press)

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G Egan and F Pritchard 1991, *Medieval Finds From Excavations in London: 3. Dress Accessories c.1150-c.1450* (London, HMSO).

B. Ellis. 1991 in Maynard and Zeepvat, 1991

I H Goodall 1993 in Margeson 1993

Y Harvey 1975, 'The small Finds' in Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975

E F Holmes 1988, *Sewing Thimbles*, Finds Research Group 700-1700. Datasheet 9.

D C Maynard and R J Zeepvat, *Excavations at Great Linford 1974-1980*. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series No. 3.

S Margeson 1993 *Norwich Households: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Norwich Survey Excavations 1971-1978*. (East Anglian Archaeological Report No. 58).

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J Mills 1995, in R J Ivens, P Bushy and N Shepherd, *Tattenhoe and Westbury: Two Deserted Medieval Settlements in Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series No.8.

C Platt and R Coleman-Smith 1975, *Excavations in Southampton 1953-1969. Volume 2: the finds* (Leicester University Press).

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APPENDIX 4

ASSESSMENT OF THE CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

By Ruth Pelling

Introduction

A total of 27 flots were taken during excavations and submitted for assessment of the charred plant remains. The samples were from deposits with a range of dates: 2 samples from deposits with associated finds of Neolithic Grooved Ware; 1 sample from a deposit of possible later prehistoric date; 24 samples were from medieval deposits ranging in date from the 11th/12th century to the 14th/15th century; 1 sample is from a deposit possibly of 17th-century date.

Samples were processed by bulk water flotation and flots collected on a 500μm mesh. The dried flots were submitted for assessment. The volume of deposit processed for each sample ranged from 10 to 40 litres.

Assessment Methodology

Each sample was first put through a stack of sieves ranging in mesh size from 500μm to 2mm, in order to break it into manageable fractions. Each fraction was then scanned under a microscope at magnification of x10 to x20. Any charred seeds or chaff noted were provisionally identified and an estimate of abundance was made. The results are displayed in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Prehistoric remains

The Neolithic samples contained occasional cereal grains, nut shell fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel) and large quantities of *Quercus* sp. (oak) charcoal. *Hordeum vulgare* (barley) grains were identified. The *Avena* sp. (oats) grain is likely to be of a wild species. Such samples with low levels of cereal remains and a wild woodland element are typical of the Neolithic.

The Bronze Age/Iron Age sample (26, context 2354) produced two *Triticum* grains of indeterminate species and a single *Chenopodium album* (fat hen). The sample also contained some dried out matted waterlogged material, within which occasional seeds of *Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle), a nitrogen loving ruderal species, were recognised.

Medieval remains

Charred seeds and chaff were present in 19 of the deposits of medieval date. In the majority of samples this consisted of occasional cereal grain only. Several samples did produce more useful quantities. Free-threshing *Triticum* (wheat) grains were the most abundant items noted. No *Triticum* rachis was present. Given the inherent difficulties in distinguishing ploidy level on the basis of free-threshing grain, it was not possible to identify the wheat to species. Also present in smaller quantities were grains of *Hordeum vulgare* (barley), *Secale cereale* (rye) and *Avena* sp. (oats). Occasional large legumes were present which were identified as *Pisum/Vicia* sp. (pea/vetch/bean).

Chaff was almost totally absent limited to a single cereal sized culm node. Weeds were present in small numbers.

The assemblage has the appearance of the small scale crop processing, or domestic waste, typical of rural medieval settlements. The chaff elements of earlier stages of crop processing were absent. It is possible that the grain was brought into the site in a relatively clean state, perhaps with occasional contaminating weed seeds. The remains may have resulted from several episodes of burning.

Recommendations

Detailed analysis is unlikely to extend the cereal species list much further, although more chaff could be recovered and the weed seeds identified. Two samples analysed from early excavations at Old Grimsbury produced a similar assemblage (Robinson 1989), although there has been very little analysis of other medieval material from the Banbury area. It is therefore recommended that the five samples containing reasonable quantities of material (samples 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7) are sorted and analysed fully. This would take up three days. At the very least the assessment results should be incorporated in to the final excavation report.

Reference

M. Robinson, 1989 Carbonised Plant Remains, in T.G. Allen, Archaeological Discoveries on the Banbury East-West Link Road, *Oxoniensia* **54**, 25-44

Table One: Prehistoric Charred Plant Remains

	Sample	10	15	26
	Context	2269	2194	2354
	Volume	20	20	20
	Date	Neol	Neol	IA/BA?
Triticum sp.	grain	-	-	2
Hordeum sp.	grain	1	-	-
Avena sp.	grain	-	1	-
Corylus avellana	nut shell fragment	2	1	-
Weeds	seeds	-	2	1
Quercus sp.	oak charcoal	+++	+++	-

+ = present; ++ = frequent; +++ = abundant

Frequencies are approximate.

Table Two: Medieval Charred Plant Remains

	Sample	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	11
	Context	2028	2022	2074	2038	2073	2022	2028	2096	2299
	Volume	10?	10?	40	40	40	10	10	30	30
	Date	11/12th	L13th	14/15th	14/15th	L13th	L13th	11/12th	L13th	14/15th
Triticum sp.	naked grain	35	25	2	-	20	50	80	3	6
Triticum sp.	grain	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Hordeum sp.	grain	5	5	-	-	-	3	5	-	-
Avena sp.	grain	5	1	-	2	5	5	-	-	-
Secale cereale	grain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indet	grain	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Cerealia indet	culm node	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pisum/Vicia sp.	Pea/bean/vetch	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	-	-
Weeds		50	40	5	2	30	40	50	-	-

Table Two cont.: Medieval Charred Plant Remains

	Sample	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	23	25
	Context	2292	2242	2219	2247	2238	2240	2246	2283	2234	2289
	Volume	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	10	10	10
	Date (century AD)	L13th	13th	12th	12th	12th	13th	12th	L13th	15th	L13th
Triticum sp.	naked grain	1	1	1	2	10	3	10	10	1	2
Triticum sp.	grain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hordeum sp.	grain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Avena sp.	grain	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Secale cereale	grain	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indet	grain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cerealia indet	culm node	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pisum/Vicia sp.	Pea/bean/vetch	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Weeds		-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

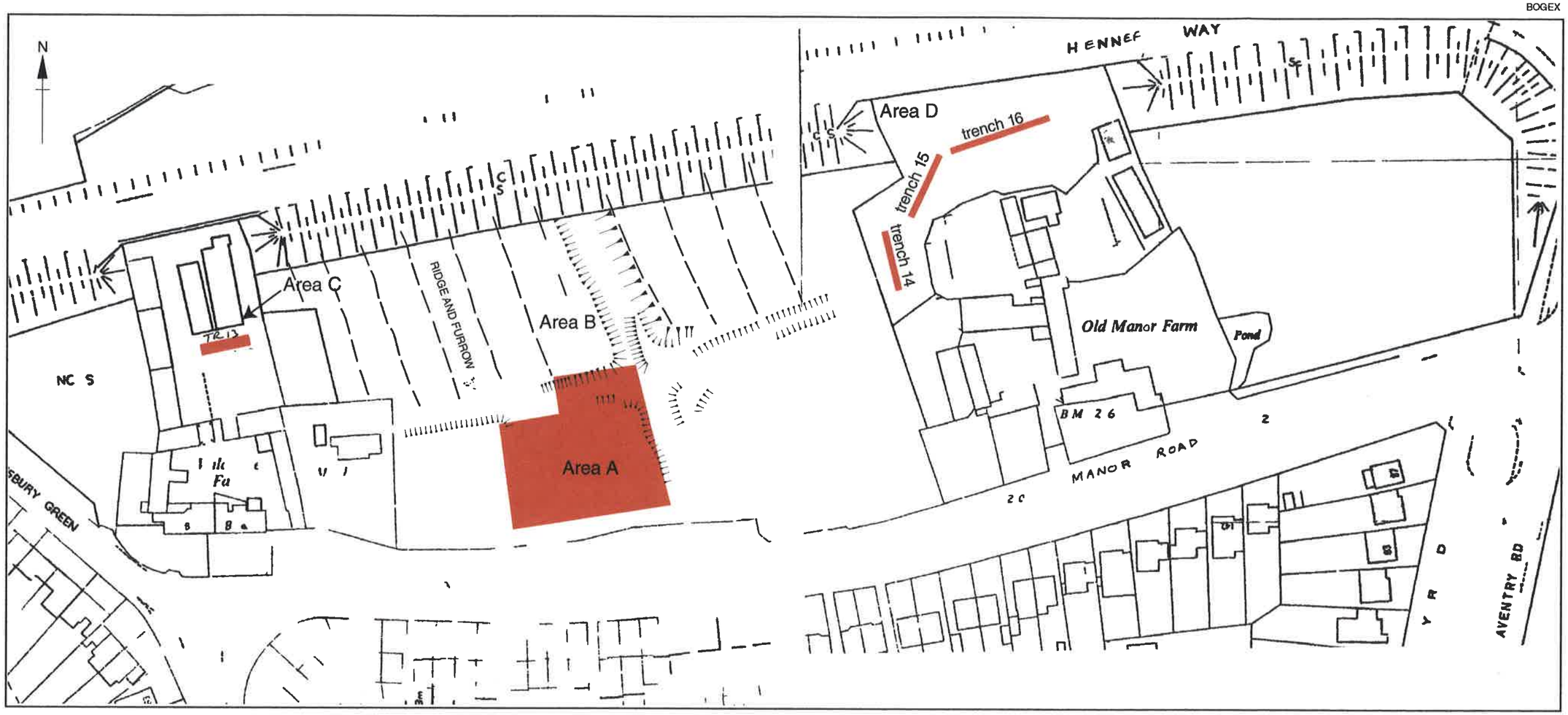

Figure 1: Area A excavation and trenches in Areas C and D.

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