

# Chapter 7:

## Saxon and Medieval Activity (Phase 5)

by David Miles, Simon Palmer and Alex Smith

### INTRODUCTION

After the villa complex fell into disuse at the end of the 4th or early 5th century AD renewed activity is indicated by a number of finds and features, although many of these were not well dated (Fig. 7.1). A group of burials, radiocarbon dated to the middle-late Saxon period, cut through the eastern walls of Building 8, and two pits (1905, 1906) were dug within Rooms 1 and 7, seemingly at a time when the outer walls were still standing to some degree. Two distinct medieval ceramic phases were identified, dating broadly from the 11th to 15th century. A stone-lined box well (696; see Pl. 6.3) and section of walling (1999) were the only structural features associated with the medieval phase, although the later Roman outer boundary (E 22; Fig. 6.4) was clearly still a visible feature.

### THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

#### Middle-late Saxon activity

##### *Burial group*

A total of five east-west inhumation burials cut the late Roman villa (800 (Pl. 7.1), 1971, 2105, 2129, 2277), while a further inhumation (702) lay *c* 4 m to the west (Fig. 7.1; see Witkin below). All lay within grave cuts and most were in good condition with the exception of skeleton 2277 which had been extensively disturbed post-mortem, probably as it lay within a shallower cut. The child burial 702 was only represented by parts of the skull, vertebrae, pelvis and femora.

The four adult graves cut through the eastern part of Building 8 in close proximity to each other. All were fully extended supine burials, with the possible exception of 2777 which was too disturbed to be certain (Fig. 7.2). An isolated crouched juvenile burial (800) was cut into the hypocaust room of Building 9 just to the north of late Roman enclosure E 21, and may have had stones deliberately placed around the head (Pl. 7.1, Fig. 7.2). The infant burial was also in an isolated position, cutting Phase 3 cobbled surface 687 to the east. There were no finds associated with any of the burials, although radiocarbon dating on three adult skeletons (2129, 1971, 2105) confirmed a mid to late Saxon date (see below). It is possible that the isolated infant and juvenile burials could be earlier, possibly contempo-

rary with the Phase 4 settlement, and this is especially likely with the former as infant burials are well known on Roman settlements sites (eg Barton Court Farm: Miles 1986, 15).

##### *Pits 1905 and 1906*

Cutting through the northern side of Building 8 was a series of pits initially defined by 1905 and 1906 (Fig. 7.1). They cut through the internal wall between Rooms 1 and 7 but otherwise they seemed constrained by the Roman building. The pits were sub-rectangular in plan, measuring between 1 and 2 m across and *c* 0.5 m deep, with a clear stone and silt fill. The pits were clearly inter-cutting but the majority of their initial cuts was into gravel rather than adjacent pit fills. They may have been for gravel extraction; the clean fills do not indicate other functions.

The pits were not fully infilled and a depression was left. This was levelled out by gravel free silt, probably water-deposited, which contained pottery of the 11th-13th century AD. A Saxon coin of Alfred

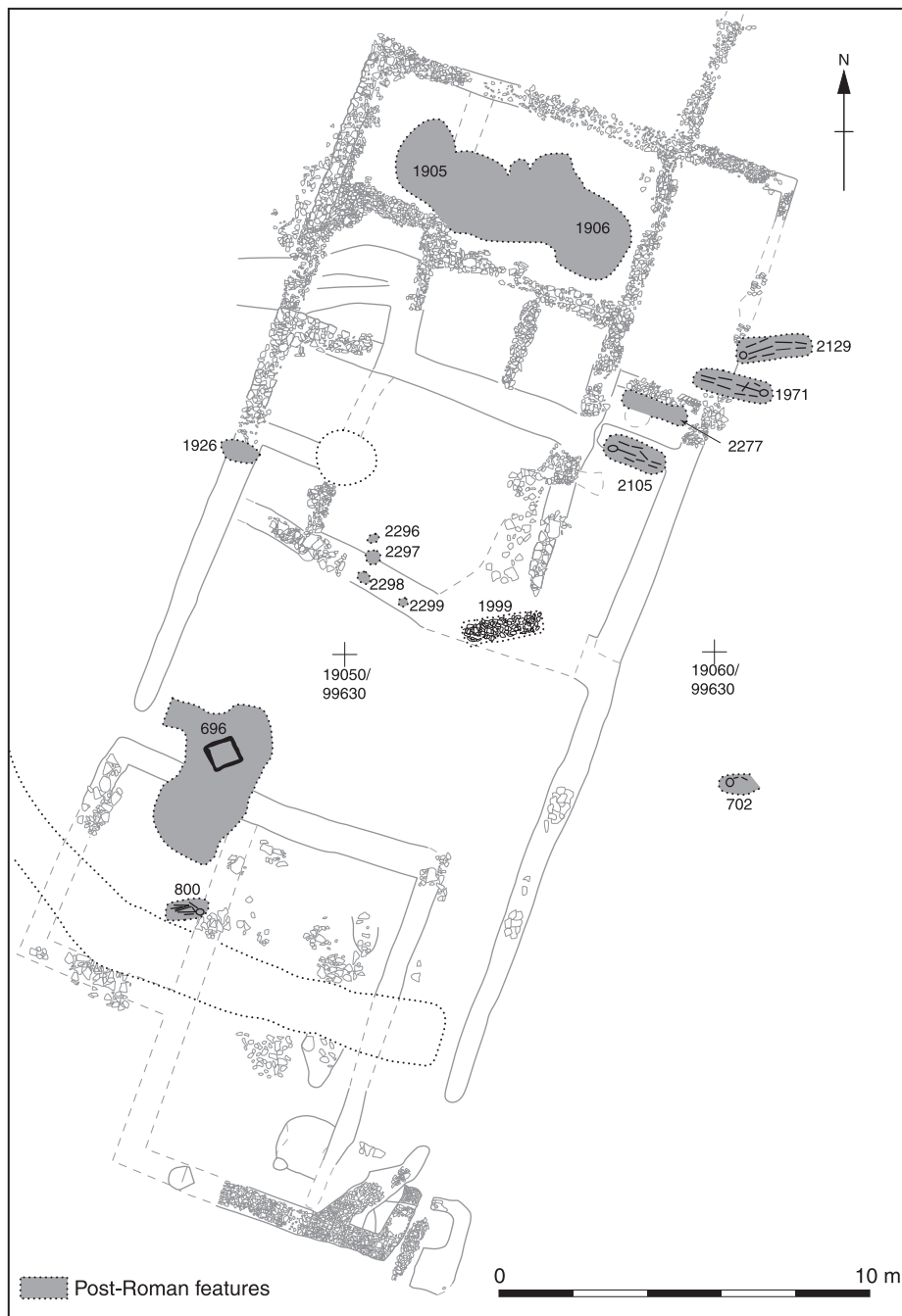


Plate 7.1 Probable mid Saxon burial 800 looking east

(AD 871-99) was also recovered from this late silting (layer 694). It is of interest to note that several metres to the west a further late Saxon coin (Baldred of Kent, AD 823-24) was recovered in the rubble layer (693) immediately beneath the topsoil. The pits can thus be dated only by a broad range between the destruction of Building 8 (late 4th/5th century) and the late Saxon/early medieval activity on the site. The coins could well have been contemporary with the burials cutting the villa, which would then refine their dating to the 9th century (see Discussion below).

### Medieval activity

The medieval activity on the site divides itself spatially and ceramically (see Mellor below) into two distinct phases. The focus of both phases of activity was Trench 13; it is perhaps significant that the late Roman enclosure (E 22) would still have formed a perceptible earthwork during this period (Fig. 6.4). The poor preservation of the southern side of Building 8 is obviously explained by this later activity on the site.



*Fig. 7.1 Saxon and medieval features in Trench 13*

### Phase 1

The earliest phase, comprising several features and a spread of domestic pottery (11th-13th century), was centred over Building 8. The pottery was derived from layer 694 sealing pits 1905 and 1906, the southern part of Building 8 and the area between Building 8 and Building 9 (the later Roman open courtyard; Fig. 7.1).

Three postholes (2296-8) cutting the southern edge of Building 8 contained this earlier medieval pottery, while another posthole (2299) nearby was of similar dimensions and seems to have been contemporary. A small pit (1926), which cut the south-western corner of the robber trench of Building 8, also contained similar pottery. No structures were defined but the pottery was of domestic character, suggesting occupation of a slight nature.

### Phase 2

The later medieval phase, dated on ceramic grounds to the 13th-15th century, was also confirmed by two stratified coins dated 1205-15 and 1473-7. Pottery in this phase was more dispersed but still confined to Trench 13. Four distinct sections of the late Roman enclosure ditch (E 22) produced this ceramic material on the west, south and east

sides, always from the top layer, associated with alluvial deposits. A 13th-century cut half penny also come from this top ditch layer.

Two distinct features from the central area of Trench 13 can be assigned to this phase. Wall 1999 orientated NE-SW across the south-east corner of Building 8 overlay pottery of the earlier medieval phase (Fig. 7.1). This wall was only fragmentary and overlay collapsed rubble of the earlier villa, along with the layer of dark earth (1929) which lay in between B 8 and B 9. It may well have formed part of a structure. Associated pottery again was of a domestic nature including tableware.

To the south-west of this wall – and constructed on the same axis – was well 696, which cut the later Roman well 697 (Fig. 7.1, Pl. 6.3). This had been constructed by inserting a stone-lined box, 0.6 m<sup>2</sup>, into the bottom of an excavated hollow. A series of steps led down to the 'box' from the north-east. The depth of the well was 1.9 m deep with the box forming the lower 0.7 m of it. The medieval date was confirmed by the recovery of ceramics and a 15th-century coin from the lowest level. The axis of the 'box' was divergent to the late Roman buildings but matched well that of wall 1999. The well contained well-preserved organic material (see Robinson below).

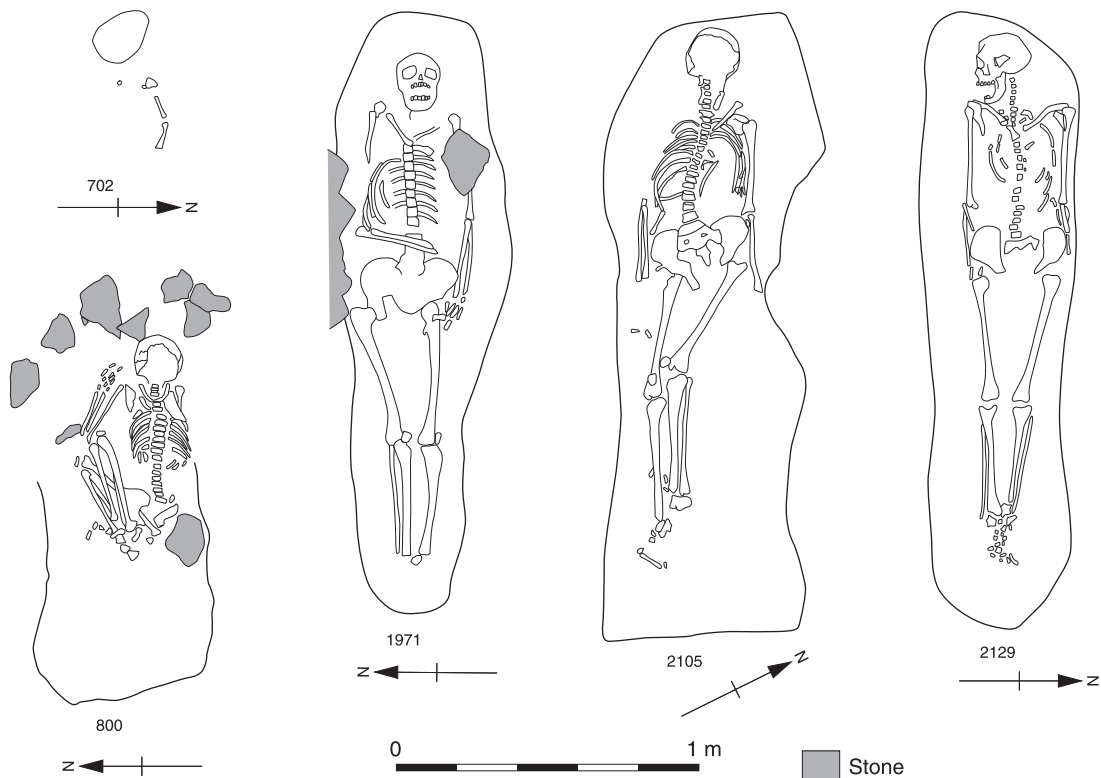


Fig. 7.2 Middle Saxon burial group in Trench 13

## THE FINDS

### **Medieval and later pottery** by *Maureen Mellor*

Some 100 medieval sherds were recovered. Four major ceramic traditions were present on the site between the 11th and 15th centuries. The first, a flint- and quartz-tempered ware similar to Oxford *BF*, Group II (Durham 1977, 113-20), supplied mainly cooking or storage pots P694/A/1. It is believed to originate in the vicinity of Newbury where it is a major tradition during the 12th century (Alan Vince pers. comm.). This Newbury ware was in competition with another tradition, a calcareous gravel-tempered ware similar to Oxford Early Medieval ware (Oxford *AC*, Group IB), which was ubiquitous throughout north Oxfordshire from the mid 11th- to the 13th centuries. Vessels from this site included two types of cooking or storage pots, globular types P694/A/1 and P694/A/1 and straight-sided or vertical cooking/storage pots P694/A/1. The pottery workshops for this tradition probably centred on Bladon, some 8 miles (13 km) north-west of Oxford.

The third source to supply domestic wares was Minety, in north-east Wiltshire (Vince 1983; Oxford *BB*, Group IB). These cooking pots often exhibit a poor glaze on the inside of the rim P501/U/1. It is probable that these Minety wares replaced the flint tempered and calcareous gravel-tempered wares in the 13th century.

The final major pottery source was the Brill/Boarstall kilns in central Buckinghamshire, which supplied fine tablewares. These pottery workshops were operating by the second quarter of the 13th century (Lambrick 1985, 177).

Two other sources were present. One, represented by a cooking pot rim and base, can be paralleled at Warminster and Potterne (Alan Vince pers. comm.), while the other, which comprised only a single vessel, may possibly be a London shelly/sandy ware P2366/A/1 (Pearce *et al.* 1985, 37). This may have travelled up the Thames as far as Lechlade in the later 12th/early 13th century.

The four major pottery sources suggest that Claydon Pike may be situated on the periphery of the major ceramic markets. Two operating during the 11th and 12th centuries, situated to the east and south-east of the site, to be replaced in the 13th century by the Minety kilns, lying to the south-west of the site and the Brill/Boarstall kilns to the east.

Small amounts of red earthenware dating from the 17th-19th century were found, some possibly originating from kilns at Ashton Keynes in Gloucestershire. An 18th-century moulded Staffordshire slipware dish was also noted.

Two groups of pottery were considered in more detail. Silting layer 694 sealing pits 1905 and 1906 contained 18 sherds, along with a coin of Alfred (AD 871-99). The pottery from this layer originated from two sources only, Oxford *BF*, Group II and *AC* Group IB. Both of these fabrics are present under the castle mound at Oxford built *c* 1070 AD (Hassall

1976, 233), but continue in use throughout the 12th into the 13th century. They do not occur in early 11th century deposits at Oxford, and while it may be argued that these traditions could begin slightly earlier on the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire border than in Oxford, a date some 100-150 years earlier would be untenable and the coin must be regarded as residual.

A well (696), with a coin dated 1473-7, contained only two sherds – a fragment of a Minety pitcher (Fabric *BB*, Group IB) with combed decoration and green glaze, and a sherd with applied red strips from a pitcher from the Brill/Boarstall kilns (Fabric *AM*, Group III).

### **Post-Roman small finds** by *Hilary Cool*

A small number of late Saxon and late medieval items were recovered. They consist of an item of harness and dress and belt fittings. As with the evidence provided by the very late 4th-century items, their significance is questionable, although the late Saxon objects are consistent with the revised dates for the small cemetery group cutting through the villa (see below). The few medieval items can be grouped with the pottery as evidence for low level activity at the site during this period.

### **Medieval glass** by *Hilary Cool*

Only a single fragment of vessel glass (607), found unstratified in Trench 13, can possibly be ascribed a medieval date. It is a small blue/green body fragment decorated with opaque red spiral trails. Though the quality of the glass is very similar to that of all the fragments of Roman blue/green glass found, it is unlikely that this fragment is of Roman date as the combination of blue/green ground with opaque red trails would be most unusual for this period. Tentatively it may be suggested that it comes from a vessel of late medieval date when opaque red trails were used to decorate vessels of green glass, seen for example in a spouted jug found in a pit dated to AD 1200-1338 at Southampton (Charleston 1975, fig 221.1489).

## THE ENVIRONMENT

### **The mid-late Saxon inhumations** (Figs 7.1-2)

by *Annsophie Witkin*

A small group of five inhumations cut through the late Roman villa (B 8 and B 9), while another skeleton (702) lay *c* 4 m further east (Figs 7.1 and 7.2). Three of the burials have been radiocarbon dated to the mid-late Saxon period (see below). In striking contrast to the late Roman inhumations in the western cemetery, these were all in a good state of preservation with slight degenerative changes to the cortical surfaces of the bones. Post-mortem breaks were generally minimal apart from skeleton 2277, which was very fragmented. Completeness

varied from fair to excellent. The children were generally less complete than the adults. Only part of the face and a few hand and foot bones were missing from skeletons 1971 and 2129.

The individuals consisted of four adults and two children (Table 7.1). The age and sex distribution are consistent with a small family burial ground used over a couple of generations. Complete long bones for the calculation of the stature was present from three of the four adults (Table 7.1), and this indicated one male in particular (1971) was especially tall, as the average stature for an Anglo-Saxon male was 1.73 m (Roberts and Manchester 1995, 27).

All of the individuals have dentition present with a variety of dental diseases – caries, ante-mortem tooth loss, enamel hypoplasia, calculus and periodontal disease. The causes of such diseases include trauma, childhood illness, weaning and malnutrition. The occlusal surfaces of the maxillary incisors on skeletons 1971 and 2129 are also damaged. The slight chipping on the occlusal margins is likely to have resulted from the use of the teeth in craft activities rather than being related to diet.

All pathological lesions observed are present on the adults only. Though there are only four adults in this group, there is a marked difference in the amount of lesions present when compared to the late Roman assemblage (see Witkin, Chapter 6). This is however not likely to be an indication of these people being in a generally poorer health but is likely to be an indication of the markedly better preservation and completeness amongst the Saxon skeletal remains.

Skeleton 2277, a young adult female, has pitting present on the orbital roofs (cribra orbitalia), caused by anaemia. The anaemia is likely to have occurred due to the bodies response to an infectious disease.

An oblique fracture is present on the distal end of the left fibula of skeleton 1971. The fracture was longstanding and completely remodelled. The bone appeared to have been poorly aligned causing the bone to bow medially at the fracture site. The distal articular joint surface of the right tibia may also have been fractured. Unfortunately the bones of the foot are missing but the appearance of the distal end of the tibia suggests that there had been major trauma involving the foot and ankle. The under-

lying aetiology of the infectious lesions present on the tibiae, fibulae and the bones present from the left foot of individual 1971 is likely to be traumatic in origin. The infectious lesions seen may have been caused by for example, a crush injury to the feet and ankles. This injury may also have caused open wounds, which would have enabled bacteria to enter causing an infection which became chronic. The abnormal grooves from the muscle tendons on the calcaneus indicates that this individual was walking on the outside of the left foot only. This altered gait would have caused him a great deal of pain. Osteoarthritic changes were also present on the distal right joint surface of the tibia, which was secondary to the traumatic injury.

Skeleton 2105, aged over 50, had osteoarthritis of both hip joints. Mild degenerative changes were present throughout the spinal columns of skeletons 1971 and 2129.

Skeleton 2129 had small areas of healed lamellar bone present adjacent to the *linear aspera* on both femora. The lesions were healed. A mixed woven and lamellar bone lesion was present on the distal end of the left fibula indicating that the periostitis was active. Periostitis is an inflammation of the periosteum, a lining of the bones. The healed periostitis on the femora of skeleton 2129 is very minor and was likely to have been caused by minor muscle tears at the attachment sites. The active lesion on the fibula may be due to minor shin trauma since the bone is very close to the surface.

As far as burial practice is concerned, there is no correlation between body orientation and gender, as the general direction of either east-west or west-east is applied to both sexes. It is interesting to note that the immature individuals were buried in a crouched position, away from the group of adults.

The inhumations were not buried with any grave goods, which with the general east-west orientation of the adults strongly suggests that this small family group was Christian.

#### *Radiocarbon dating and stable isotope measurements of the burial group by Alex Bayliss (Fig. 7.3)*

Of the nine samples of human bone from Claydon Pike submitted for radiocarbon dating, only three – from those burials cutting the late Roman villa – could be dated at all, and even these were not at

Table 7.1 The burials over the villa building

Skeleton Number	Sex	Age	Category	Height (m)	Date (see Table 7.2)
702	Unknown	1	Infant	-	-
800	Unknown	11-12	Juvenile	-	-
1971	Male	35-45	Mature adult	1.78	Mid-late Saxon
2105	Male?	Over 50	Ageing adult	1.72	Mid-late Saxon
2129	Female	35-45	Mature adult	1.65	Mid-late Saxon
2277	Female	18-23	Young adult	-	-

high precision. This was due to the very poor condition of the collagen in the bone, which resulted in no collagen being extracted following the demineralization and gelatinization processes. The dates for the three successful samples are given in Table 7.2. All fall into the mid to late Saxon period.

The samples were processed at the Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Palaeoecology Centre, University of Belfast. The sample pretreatment procedures used are based on Longin (1971). Radiocarbon content was measured by Liquid Scintillation Counting (McCormac 1992). The results reported here are conventional radiocarbon ages (Stuiver and Polach 1977), which are quoted according to the standard known as the Trondheim convention (Stuiver and Kra 1986). The corresponding

calibrated date ranges were obtained by the maximum intercept method (Stuiver and Reimer 1986), using the IntCal04 data set (Reimer *et al.* 2004) and the calibration program OxCal v.3.10 (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 1998; 2001). Figure 7.3 shows the calibration of these results by the probability method (Stuiver and Reimer 1993), again using the IntCal04 data set and OxCal v.3.10.

Stable isotope measurements were also gained on sub-samples of the bones, carried out at the Rafter Radiocarbon Laboratory of the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences, Lower Hutt, New Zealand (Beaven-Athfield *et al.* 2001). These are shown in Table 7.3, and indicate a largely terrestrial diet (Chisholm *et al.* 1982; Schoeninger *et al.* 1983).

Table 7.2 Radiocarbon dates from Claydon Pike

Laboratory code	Sample	Burial	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)	Radiocarbon age BP	Calibrated date range (95% confidence)
UB-4896	FCP A	1971	-19.8	1233±60	cal AD 655-965
UB-4897	FCP B	2105	-20.1	1187±60	cal AD 675-990
UB-4898	FCP C	2129	-19.9	1271±60	cal AD 650-895

Table 7.3 Stable isotope measurements from Claydon Pike

Laboratory code	Sample	Burial	%N	$\delta^{15}\text{N}$ (‰)	%C	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰)	C:N ratio
28153-7	FCP A	1971	12.5	10.0	34.5	-19.5	3.2
28153-8	FCP B	2105	13.8	9.8	39.0	-19.8	3.3
28153-9	FCP C	2129	12.7	8.4	36.0	-19.6	3.3

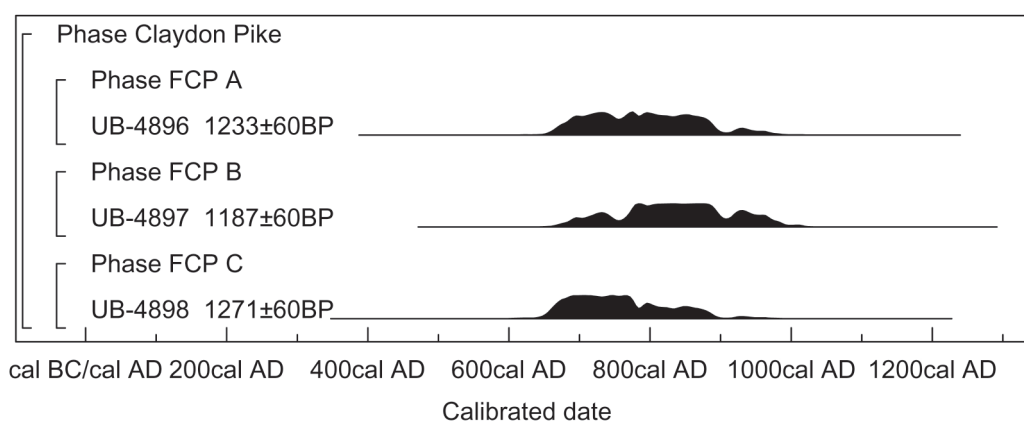


Fig. 7.3 Calibration of Longdoles Field, Claydon Pike, radiocarbon results by the probability method

**Waterlogged remains** by Mark Robinson

Two waterlogged samples were investigated from a medieval (Phase 5) well (696) cut through the late Roman ruins at Longdoles Field (Pl. 6.3, Fig. 7.1), while two samples of medieval alluvium from the top of Roman ditches were also investigated for molluscs. Water plants do not seem to have grown in the well but various small water-beetles, particularly *Helophorus* and *Ochthebius* spp., lived in its waters. Almost all the other plant and invertebrate remains seem to have entered the well through natural agencies. The molluscs from the alluvium comprised both riverine aquatic species which had been transported in floodwaters, and amphibious and terrestrial species which mostly lived on the site.

Pollen analysis (by J Greig) of the medieval well samples revealed rich open grassland floras. The Coleoptera also comprised rich grassland assemblages. Chafer and elaterid beetles which feed on roots in grassland (Species Group 11) had increased in abundance since the late Roman period to 6.9% of the terrestrial Coleoptera. However, the proportion of Scarabaeoid dung beetles (Species Group 2), at 2.3% of the terrestrial Coleoptera, was very low. This suggests that domestic animals were not concentrated in the vicinity of the well and that the grassland was no more than lightly grazed. The clover and vetch-feeding weevils of the genera *Apion* and *Sitona*, which tend to be more prolific in meadowland than pastureland (Species Group 3) were, at 7.8% of the terrestrial Coleoptera, rather abundant.

The macroscopic plant remains were almost entirely from grassland plants with a strong hay meadow element. However, the remains were not cut hay which had been brought to the site, they had mostly probably blown into the deposit from the surrounding vegetation. There were so few seeds from non-grassland plants that the well seems to have been set in an expanse of species-rich meadowland. Seeds of the hay meadow plants *Rhinanthus* sp., *Leucanthemum vulgare* and *Centaurea* cf. *nigra* were conspicuously present.

Much of the medieval meadowland at Claydon Pike would have experienced seasonal inundation. The upper fill of the Roman features around the edge of the platforms was silty clay alluvium of medieval date, although alluvium was not recorded from the top of the platforms. Late Saxon and early medieval alluviation in the Upper Thames Valley seems to have extended further than Roman alluviation (Robinson and Lambrick 1984). The molluscan assemblages from the alluvium at Claydon Pike were of a sort which is characteristic of flood-meadow rather than pasture (Robinson 1988).

The seeds suggest some variation in the vegetation. Seeds of *Carex* spp. were numerous and there were possibly stands of *Carex* spp. in the wetter parts of the meadowland. The thin dry soil over the Roman ruins perhaps supported *Daucus carota* and *Crepis capillaris*. Curiously, there was a single seed of

*Centaurea cyanus*, a weed that is closely tied to arable agriculture, although there is no other evidence for this in the vicinity of the site.

The insects do not add much information on the composition of the grassland, although they comprised a very full meadowland fauna. There were numerous cicadellids from the genus *Aphrodes* which feed on grasses and chrysomelids from the genus *Longitarsus* which feed on meadowland herbs. There were also various beetles which tend to congregate on meadowland flowers such as *Cantharis rustica*, *Rhagonycha fulva* and *Oedemera lurida*. The carabids from the samples included many specimens of *Pterostichus madidus*, showing that by the medieval period this species had become very well established in the region.

Tree pollen was very sparse, comprising 0.8% of the total identified pollen. Wood and tree-dependent Coleoptera (Species Group 4) were absent, indicating that the medieval landscape was very open. The trees or woodland that were giving values of just under 10% for tree pollen from the 1st century AD to the late Roman period had been lost. There was only a slight presence of shrub pollen and a couple of seeds of *Sambucus nigra* from the samples. Any scrub or hedges seem to have been a minor or distant feature of the landscape.

Woodworm beetles (Species Group 10) were absent and the low values for the other groups of beetles associated with various sorts of accumulated organic material (Species Group 7-9) are consistent with the absence of any medieval settlement on the site. The values for these groups are no more than would be expected for grassland. However, the occurrence of a couple of individuals of *Typha stercorea* might hint at a small accumulation of old hay.

Overall, little remains to be said about site activities and the use of the site because the medieval evidence is for a block of meadowland rather than an occupation site surrounded by a somewhat varied landscape. Hay meadow does seem, on the basis of documentary and molluscan evidence, to have been one of the major uses of the floodplain of the Upper Thames Valley during the medieval period (Robinson 1988).

**DISCUSSION** by Alex Smith**Saxon graves**

Prior to the recent radiocarbon dating of the skeletons cutting through the villa building, the burials were presumed to be of 'sub-Roman' date (5th to 6th century AD). However, the mid to late Saxon chronology provided by the radiocarbon dates (see above) places them within an increasing body of evidence for apparently isolated burial groups belonging to this period within the region (Blair 1994, 72). The three radiocarbon dates are not particularly precise, ranging from the late 7th to the 10th-early 11th century, although the calibrated dates

suggest that at least two burials, 1971 and 2105, probably belong to the 9th century (Fig. 7.3). Burial 2129 may have been slightly earlier, perhaps 8th century, although it is likely to belong to same general family group. The infant and juvenile burials are less certain, with the former at least possibly belonging to the later Roman period. The crouched juvenile burial may have been contemporary with the middle-late Saxon graves, but seems to have been deliberately isolated from them and disposed of in a different manner (see below).

Approximate parallels for the Claydon Pike burials may be found across the Upper Thames Valley region, and have been commented upon by Blair (1994). At Yarnton a small group of seven 9th-century burials were located *c.* 100 m to the west of a middle Saxon settlement (Hey, 2004). The bodies, which were all adults, were laid out in an extended position with their heads to the west, and were presumably Christian (Hey 2004). Calibrated radiocarbon dates for two of the skeletons placed them in the 9th century, while one of group of sub-adult (6-8 years) burials within the nearby settlement also produced a date of this range. The apparent segregation of adult from juvenile burials at Yarnton in this period may present a parallel to the situation at Claydon Pike. Other cemeteries which have produced radiocarbon dates of this period include Chimney near Bampton (Crawford 1989) and Beacon Hill, Lewknor (Chambers 1976), both in Oxfordshire, while a number of isolated graves containing knives, probably dating from the 7th or early 8th centuries, have also been found across the region (Blair 1994, 72).

Perhaps the most striking parallel to Claydon Pike is the group of east-west inhumations which were aligned upon and partially cutting through Shakenoak Roman villa (Brodrigg *et al.* 1972). These were probably slightly earlier than those at Claydon Pike, being 7th- to early 8th-century in date, but do form part of a growing corpus of Anglo-Saxon burials associated with Roman remains, with other examples at Great Tew and Frilford (Blair 1994, 33). A small group of burials overlying Barton Court farm villa were dated to the mid 6th century (Miles 1986, 19), suggesting that the association of Saxon graves and Roman monuments was quite long-lived.

Overall, Blair has suggested that many of the fifty or so undated isolated human burials across Oxfordshire may in fact belong to the 7th to 10th centuries (1994, 72), and the same may be true in Gloucestershire. Prior to the late Saxon period, when burials were formally organised in minster churchyards, it seems to have been the case that small dispersed family cemeteries were the norm, although these were probably still controlled to some extent by the ministers (Blair 1994, 73). The Claydon Pike cemetery is quite likely to have belonged one such family group, who may have

chosen the site specifically as it was still clearly defined by the visible late Roman outer ditch, and the lower wall courses of the villa are likely to have still been standing.

There is no evidence for any associated settlement for this burial group, but one must have presumably lain in the vicinity. The cemetery at Butler's Field, 2 km to the east, went out of use in the 7th century, although 6th- to 8th-century pottery was recovered from cropmarks near to the site (Boyle *et al.* 1998, 5). The earliest documentary reference to Fairford is dated to AD 850, when two hides of land were transferred to the Abbess of the Church of Gloucester, and by 1066 it was an established Anglo-Saxon manor with the nobleman Brittric as its lord. There are no known early ministers in the immediate vicinity, although 9th or 10th-century ministers are well known along the Thames Valley, with examples at Bampton, 10 km to the east, Coleshill 6 km to the south-east and Cricklade, 10 km to the west (Blair 1994, fig. 41).

### **Medieval activity**

The medieval activity at Claydon Pike appears to have been of very low intensity. The lower gravel terraces and floodplain surrounding the site appear to have been utilised as hay meadow, as was the case over much of the Upper Thames valley at this time (see Robinson above). The surrounding late Roman enclosure ditch would still have been a pronounced feature, although it appears to have been gradually filling up with alluvium. The late villa building appears to have acted as a focus for the limited activity on site, possibly because it lay at the highest point and was therefore the least susceptible to flooding. The nature of activity in the medieval period is unknown, but it does not appear to have involved any extensive domestic occupation. A structure of some kind was built, although little of this remained except a small section of masonry wall footings lying on the compacted rubble of the earlier building, while a stone-lined box well was inserted just to the south. A small number of postholes of possible 11th-13th-century date may have formed an earlier structure (see above). While the environmental evidence does not indicate the presence of animals in any quantity, it is possible that the site was used for limited quantities of livestock on a seasonal basis, possibly as part of the cycle of hay-making, with the well providing the necessary water source. The region around Claydon Pike certainly appears to have been flourishing in the 13th to 15th centuries, with the nearby towns of Lechlade and Fairford being granted market charters, and Cirencester to the west becoming one of the largest wool markets in England.

There is no evidence for any activity at Claydon Pike beyond the 15th century, with the exception of a few sherds of 17th- to 19th-century pottery.