

Chapter 6

The Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods

by Andrew Reynolds

Introduction

The High Speed 1 (HS1) project has made a significant contribution to our knowledge of Kent during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. Extensive excavations and minor interventions have revealed important insights into the nature of the communities that inhabited the county in the centuries following the Roman occupation up to and after the conquest of England by the Normans in the mid 11th century. Kent itself has long held a very special place in Anglo-Saxon and medieval studies. It is by no means an overstatement to describe the county's pre-Christian archaeology as exceptional in terms of its quality and quantity, while the tenorial and agricultural history of Kent throughout the medieval period has presented generations of scholars with a challenging task in terms of understanding the origins and, in many ways peculiar, developments of early Kentish society and

landscape. The evidence from the various HS1 excavations and evaluations has provided valuable insights into a series of long-standing questions regarding social structure in the early Christian centuries and the fabric of landscape across the whole medieval period (Figs 6.1–2). This chapter seeks to present that evidence against not only the Kentish background but also in a national context so that the full value of an archaeological enquiry of the scale and nature of that undertaken in advance of the HS1 can be appreciated.

Clearly, a full discussion of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval archaeology of Kent is not appropriate here and for the early medieval period up-to-date syntheses have recently been published (Brookes 2007a; Welch 2007), building considerably on earlier overviews (Hawkes 1982a; Drewett *et al.* 1988). New works focussing on the later Middle Ages are to follow in due course as part of the Kent History Project series (Sweetinburgh in prep. a and b).

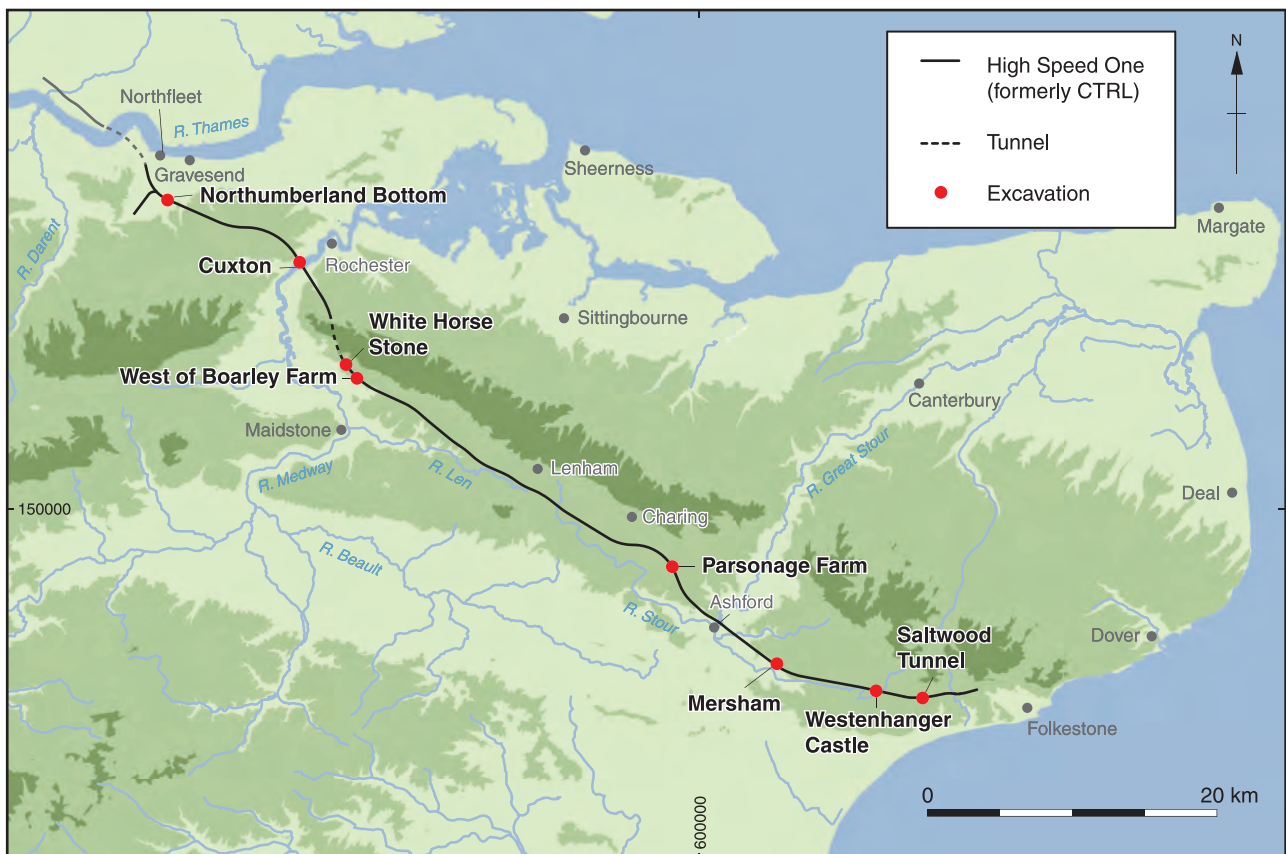


Figure 6.1 Location of major Anglo-Saxon and medieval sites along the HS1 route

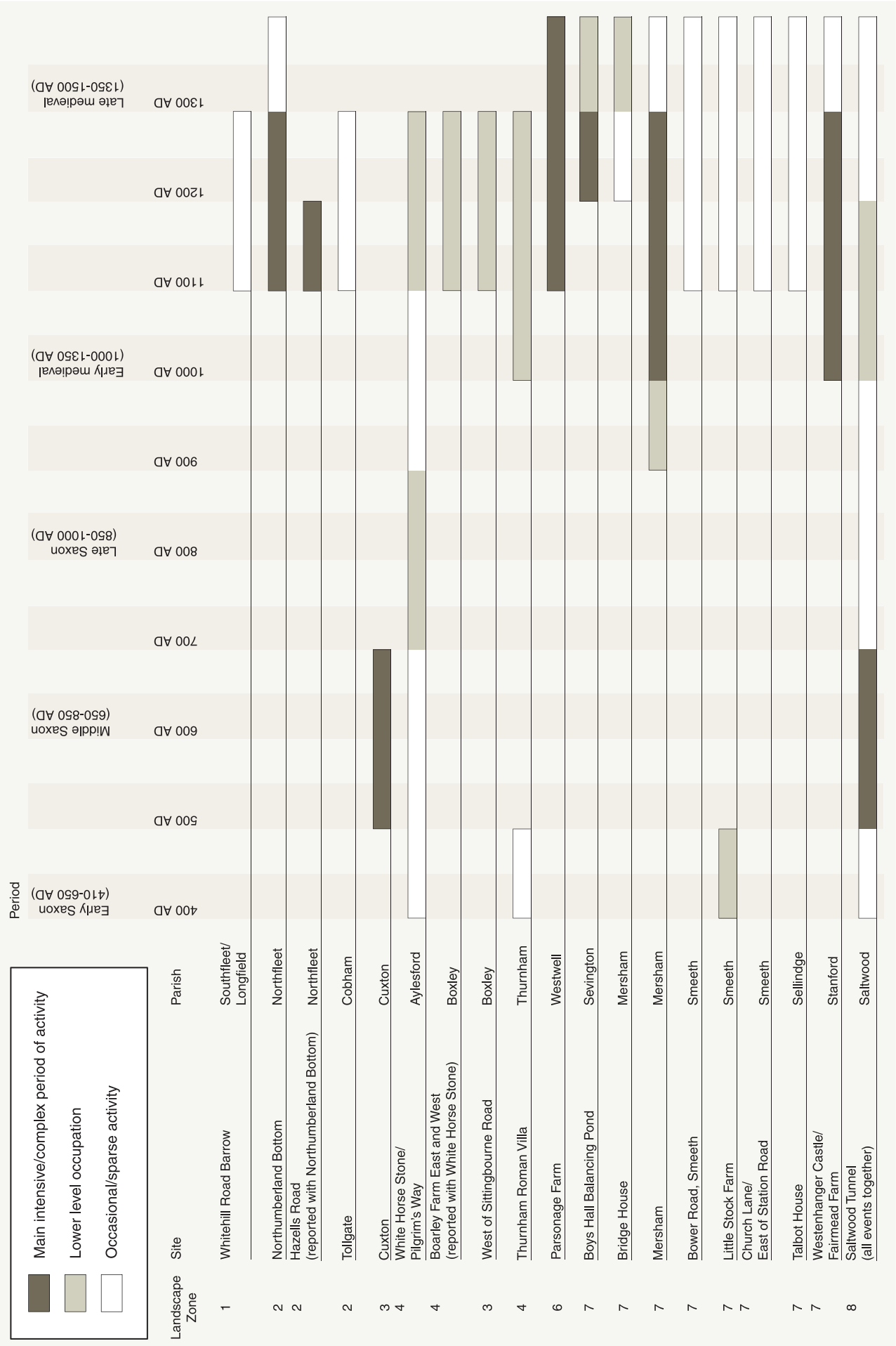


Figure 6.2 Anglo-Saxon activity along the HSI route by site and period

Instead, an outline is provided so that the HS1 evidence can be set against what is already known and its relative importance ascertained. The finer details of the HS1 investigations are available, via the internet and the Archaeology Data Service (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ctrl/>), as a series of excavation and specialist reports prepared by the various archaeological contractors engaged with the responsibility of 'preserving by record' the sites identified along the route. It is not intended to reproduce every detail of that information here but instead to summarise relevant sites and identify key aspects of individual excavations for more detailed discussion.

Nature of sites found

One of the great advantages of the HS1 project, as noted in the introductory chapters to this volume, is that it has provided a transect through a rich archaeological landscape in a way not determined by the visibility of monuments in the manner of antiquarian enquiry (see *Archaeological Background* below) or by a focus on a particular academic question. The sites considered in this chapter, then, are not 'cherry-picked' from a mass of lesser sites but representative of a more random process of identification and subsequent excavation.

A further issue with a major bearing on the nature of the discussion presented here is that it is not possible to write an evenly balanced narrative on the basis of the HS1 discoveries with regard to either site types or chronological coverage across the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. The most spectacular discoveries are the Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Cuxton and Saltwood and there is a solid background of prior discovery and academic synthesis against which to set these sites. Moving into the Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon periods, however, the evidence recovered from the HS1 investigations provides in some cases tantalising glimpses of site types otherwise largely unknown in the county and in other instances extensive excavation of archaeological evidence of a type rarely explored at a national level; in the latter category the large-scale investigation of the Pilgrim's Way junction with the Roman road running southwards from Rochester is a case in point. Evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement is exceptionally rare from the HS1 excavations and this is a characteristic of the county as a whole, although more sites are known than is often acknowledged. Conversely, evidence of later medieval date from the course of the railway is related wholly to settlement and land use.

Before embarking on a consideration of the Kentish archaeological and historical background, a brief preview of the HS1 sites that will be brought back into the discussion is necessary (see Chapter 1 for a general overview of the sites on the scheme). As noted above, by far the most impressive discoveries in terms of material culture and coherence are the Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Saltwood (6th–7th centuries) and Cuxton (7th century). These cemeteries, unlike so many previous discoveries, have been excavated and analysed to

exceptionally high standards and have a substantial contribution to make not only to Kentish archaeology, but to national and international debate. The investigations at Saltwood and White Horse Stone in particular, have thrown new light on the structure of the landscape and the nature of early communications and administrative boundaries; the archaeology takes us into the Middle Anglo-Saxon period (c 650–850) in the latter case.

Remains of the Late Anglo-Saxon period (c 850–1050) and later were recorded at a series of sites. At Mersham, just south of Ashford, Late Anglo-Saxon and early Norman activity was recovered in the form of evidence for metalworking activities. Further evidence for agricultural settlement of the late 11th and 12th centuries and later was recorded at Northumberland Bottom at the western end of the HS1 route, a short distance west of the Cuxton Anglo-Saxon cemetery. At Westenhanger just west of Saltwood the remains of buildings, pits and enclosure ditches dating from the late 11th century were found marking the start of a 200-year period of occupation. Higher status occupation was revealed at Parsonage Farm a few kilometres north-west of Ashford where a 12th–14th century moated manorial complex, probably initially a rectory, was partially excavated. Unlike the preceding periods considered in this book, standing structures of the Middle Ages and later were also examined but they are considered in the next chapter (see Munby, Chapter 7).

Archaeological and historical background

The nature of the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England is a key theme in British archaeology. The degree to which the Roman occupation determined the settlement framework of the Anglo-Saxon period has attracted particular attention, largely focussing on the survival or otherwise of rural territorial units and the possibility that certain towns continued to function as administrative centres. In Kent it has been suggested that a Roman pattern of central places lay behind the centres of units recorded from the Late Anglo-Saxon period onwards as manorial estates (Everitt 1986, 339–41; Brookes 2003, 88). A similar view based on rather different evidence has been argued for other regions of Britain, but with an emphasis on the survival of territorial units as opposed to estate centres (Bonney 1966; 1976). There are good grounds, however, for arguing that both the large grants of land made by kings for the foundation of minsters in the 7th and 8th centuries, and the smaller parcels that feature in the charters of the Late Anglo-Saxon period are wholly post-Roman creations (see, for example, Reynolds 2005, 175).

The nature of the Kentish Roman road system, however, appears to have had a strong influence on the placing of important early churches, yet continuity of occupation and settlement of individual sites from the Roman period to the 7th century need not be inferred from this situation. Indeed, the lack of evidence for occupation beyond the late 4th century, and in certain

cases the 3rd century (Millet 2007, 183), is a defining characteristic of the terminal phases of the majority of Roman sites of all types in Kent. Some have argued that Canterbury is an exception and was continuously settled through the transition period, albeit on a very much reduced scale (Bennett *et al.* 2003), although the earliest Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings from within the town are dated to the second quarter of the 5th century (Blockley *et al.* 1995, 280–335). A late Roman silver hoard, including stamped ingots used as a form of pay for troops and officials, deposited outside the western walls of the city was probably buried some time between AD 410 and 420 and suggests at the least the presence of a person with continued contacts to Roman officialdom (Johns and Potter 1985; Millet 2007, 183). Similar finds from the forts of the Saxon Shore at Reculver and Richborough might suggest that these sites served as refuges for the last few officers of the Roman state in south-eastern Britain (Millet 2007, 184).

A few villas have revealed occupation in the early 5th century, for example Darenth, Lullingstone and Wingham, while several others, at Deerton Street, near Faversham, Eccles and Northfleet, show clear evidence for early medieval settlement in the form of structures and finds, but these are largely datable to the 6th and 7th centuries and do not prove continuity of settlement (Millet 2007, 184; Welch 2007, 195). If estate centres can be seen to disappear from the archaeological record, presumably owing to the collapse of the economic network of which they were once a part, there is little sense in the survival of delineated tracts of land through a period when land was very likely up for grabs. As noted previously, the main reason why Roman central places re-emerged in the post-Roman period is probably the survival of the Roman road network rather than continued administrative functions (Millet 2007, 183; Welch 2007, 194).

Introducing his chapter 'Anglo-Saxon Remains' in volume 1 of the *Victoria County History of Kent*, Reginald Smith remarked that 'The richness of the soil in this Garden of England is reflected in the splendid furniture of its Anglo-Saxon graves...' (Smith 1908, 339). Indeed, Kent's pre-Christian communities have left a particularly striking record of their burial practices and by the 6th century it is possible to chart the re-emergence of a 'complex society' again in the county. Kentish inhumation burials of the 6th–7th centuries AD are often richly furnished in comparison with other parts of the British Isles, including the neighbouring counties of Essex and Sussex, although Kent has yet to reveal its 'Sutton Hoo'. Accordingly, Anglo-Saxon Kent has long attracted attention from those with an interest in the early history of English society and culture.

From antiquarian beginnings in the second half of the 18th century up to the present, now mainly in the context of development-led archaeology, a series of rich archaeological discoveries has ensured Kent's especial importance in early medieval studies. From an archaeological perspective, important and often visually stunning Kentish material culture of the Early Anglo-Saxon

period, particularly of the 6th–7th centuries, was recovered in quantity as a result of a series of barrow and cemetery excavations undertaken by the antiquarian Bryan Faussett between 1757 and 1773 (Hawkes 1990; Rhodes 1990). The sites excavated by Faussett, such as Barfriston, Chartham Down, Crundale, Gilton, near Ash and Sibertswold remain of key importance not only in Kentish terms, but nationally. Indeed, they still account for a substantial proportion of the data available for mortuary studies in south-eastern England (see for example Richardson's 2005 study where Faussett's material constitutes 10% of the cemeteries listed in appendix). While Faussett considered his finds to date from the period of Roman occupation, their cultural significance was recognised by a captain in the Royal Engineers, one James Douglas, who conducted his own excavations in the late 18th century on several Kentish cemetery sites and who dated many of Faussett's discoveries to the 6th century (Hawkes 1990). Much of the material from Faussett's excavations is now to be found in the Liverpool Museum and Art Gallery having been purchased in 1854; Douglas failed to acquire the material in the 1780s and the British Museum declined the opportunity to buy the collection in the early 1850s.

Up to the 1980s scholars focussed almost wholly on the material culture of richly furnished Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries rather than their landscape setting or internal organisation. Notable exceptions include Sonia Hawkes' exploration of grave orientation and her consideration of the development out from a founder grave of the Kentish cemetery at Finglesham (Hawkes 1976, 1982b). New excavations were undertaken from the 1950s, particularly by Sonia Hawkes, for example at Finglesham (1959–67) and Updown, Eastry (1976), and by others at Dover Buckland (1951–2 and 1994), St Peter's, Broadstairs (1969–71) and Mill Hill, Deal (1986–9) (Hawkes and Grainger 2006; Welch forthcoming; Evison 1987; Hogarth 1973; Parfitt and Brugmann 1997). Vera Evison's consideration of graves aligned on posts at Dover Buckland marked an important new direction in mortuary archaeology of the period, together with Brian Hope-Taylor's observations on grave alignments at Yeavering in Northumberland (Evison 1987; Hope-Taylor 1977).

Over the years, a strong picture has emerged of a clear divide between the material culture of east and west Kent (Hawkes 1982a; Welch 1984, 2007). Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the east of the county are much wealthier in comparison to their western counterparts and this distinction between the two halves is also reflected in the administrative divisions evident from early written sources. By the late 6th century the Kentish kingdom comprised those parts of the modern county both east and west of the River Medway. Prior to this, it appears that the early medieval kingdom was initially limited to east Kent, which may itself have corresponded to a subdivision (*pagus*) of the Roman *civitas Cantuariorum* (Detsikas 1983, 38–9). The name Kent is itself derived ultimately from the pre-Roman Iron Age name, *Cantium*, for the tribal region that encompassed Kent and probably

part of north-eastern Sussex and which described the extent of the Roman *civitas* (Welch 2007, 190). As noted above, the addition of west Kent to the early kingdom appears to have occurred in the late 6th century during the reign of King Æthelberht (see below), a situation supported by the fact that the bishopric of Rochester was set up during his reign, with the River Medway forming part of the boundary with the eastern archbishopric of Canterbury as described in a charter preserved in an 11th century gospel book in the Lambeth Palace library (Yorke 1990; Sawyer 1968, cat. no. 1564; Brooks and Kelly forthcoming no. 184). A similar process can be observed with regard to the westwards expansion of Wessex in the late 7th and early 8th centuries and the appointment of Aldhelm as bishop of Sherborne, Dorset in AD 705 (Yorke 1995; Reynolds 2006a, 508). In Wessex, it was the norm for sole kings to rule their dominions, while in Kent (and Essex) several instances of joint kingship are recorded during the 7th and 8th centuries, most notably the reign of the joint lawmakers Hlothere (673/4–685) and Eadric (685–7). When joint kingship prevailed, eastern Kent was the realm of the senior partner, further indicating that here lay the heartlands of the early kingdom (Yorke 1983, 33, table 1). The distinction between the two halves of the later county continued in the guise of separate ealdormanries (administrative districts overseen by ealdormen) into the Late Anglo-Saxon period. Indeed one of the key outcomes of the HS1 project has been to recover Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries under modern archaeological conditions from both ‘provinces’.

The Kentish royal court was the first to engage with the evangelising mission from Rome, led by St Augustine, which arrived in the kingdom in AD 597, at the instigation of Pope Gregory I (590–604), apparently one of the greatest popes in history (Mayr-Harting 1991, 51). While the king of Kent at that time, Æthelberht, already had a Christian Frankish wife, Bertha, with her own priest, Liudhard, the date of Æthelberht’s conversion remains unknown (Hinton 1993, 510). Indeed, even Æthelberht’s regnal dates are disputed, although Nicholas Brooks’ discussion establishes a clearer view with his reign set between 580x93 and 616x18 (Brooks 1989, 67). Whatever the complexities of chronology relating to the early Kentish kingdom derived from written sources, the special character of Early Anglo-Saxon Kent is highlighted by the fact that Æthelberht was the first English king to issue written laws c AD 600, in the vernacular Old English as opposed to clerical Latin. The business of law-making was followed throughout the course of the 7th century by Æthelberht’s successors including the joint kings Hlothere and Eadric noted above, and the rulers Eorconberht (640–664) and Wihtred (690/1–725).

Christianity was undoubtedly practised in Late Roman Kent, as evidenced spectacularly by wall paintings incorporating Chi-Rho monograms at the Lullingstone villa, part of which was apparently converted into a house-church late in the 4th century (Liversidge and Weatherhead 1987). During the greater part of the 5th and 6th centuries, however, the region is

best considered as pagan with place-name evidence indicating the worship of Woden, Thor and other deities, a feature common to neighbouring counties such as Surrey and Sussex as well as further afield. While physical evidence of pagan cultic activity is lacking, the architectural legacy of the Conversion period and the apparently distinctive ‘Kentish’ group of churches of the 7th century has received much attention from antiquarians and architectural historians (Peers 1901; Baldwin Brown 1903, 116–26; Fernie 1983; Cambridge 1999). The architectural style of these early churches has been variously attributed to Frankish and Italian influence and further supports the theme of continental influence on early Kent, although North Adriatic and North African models have also been proposed and these regions are considered by some to provide the best parallels (Cambridge 1999). Unfortunately, the results of the HS1 project have little to add to our knowledge of the ecclesiastical landscape.

By the late 7th century archaeological evidence and documents confirm the close continental connections evident from the earlier community cemeteries. While former Roman towns and the Roman road network strongly influenced later urban development, Kent’s extensive coastline and riverine networks, notably the Thames and the Medway, influenced the nature of Kentish urban settlement throughout the Middle Ages. It is an interesting factor that Kent’s continuing geographical role as gateway to continental Europe has led to the archaeological discoveries considered in this chapter.

During the Middle Anglo-Saxon period, particularly the late 7th and 8th centuries, settlements trading with counterparts in the Low Countries and Francia grew up on navigable waterways not just in Kent but at other places in England, most notably London (itself under Kentish control during parts of its early history), Hamwic (Southampton), Ipswich (Suffolk) and York. A glance at the most recent published distribution map of so-called ‘wic’ sites, however, shows an unparalleled concentration of such places in eastern Kent, at Dover, Fordwich, Reculver, Richborough, *Sandtun*, Sandwich, Sarre and Seasalter (Cowie *et al.* 2001, 85, figure A1.1). Several of these sites, however, should not be seen as major wic-type settlements and imports should be expected on sites of a more modest status in the coastal areas of south-eastern England. While attempts to archaeologically identify the sites of the documented early Kentish emporia of Fordwich, Sandwich and Sarre have met with little success, at least their locations are broadly known from modern place-names. An important archaeological characterisation of a Middle Anglo-Saxon fishing settlement with trading links is provided by the excavations at *Sandtun*, just to the west of Folkestone, where structures and finds attest to activity there between the mid-7th and later 9th centuries (Gardiner *et al.* 2001). From a different perspective, a series of important documents, originally produced in the 8th century but surviving in later copies, record the trading privileges (remission of tolls (tax) on ships coming into ports) granted by early Kentish and Mercian kings to Kentish religious houses, including

Minster-in-Thanel, Reculver and Rochester (Kelly 1992).

In combination with the development of the wic settlements and renewed central place functions at Canterbury and Rochester, a framework of central places re-emerged across the Middle Anglo-Saxon landscape of Kent as a function of the founding of minster churches and the development of royal estate centres during the 7th and 8th centuries (Welch 2007, 189).

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* describes a series of raids by, and military engagements with, the Vikings between the 9th and 11th centuries. Such activity affected both English and Continental wics, monastic sites and other settlements. Kent suffered from raids during the period of initial Viking attacks on mainland Britain in the early to mid 9th century. Sheppey and St Werbergh Abbey at Hoo were attacked in 835 and c 840 respectively, while Rochester and Canterbury suffered in 842, the latter again in 851 when Sandwich was raided and the Vikings overwintered for the first (documented) time in Britain on the Isle of Thanet (Lawson 2004a, 32). A series of engagements between King Alfred and Viking armies and naval forces is recorded in the later 9th century, and during the late 10th and early 11th centuries, the so-called second Viking age, Viking military activity took place deep within the county as opposed to the coastal and riverine locations that characterised the earlier phases of incursion. In the later Anglo-Saxon period coastal and inland defences were developed to repel Viking forces and a striking Kentish example is the fortified church of St Mary Castro in Dover, a building probably of later 10th century date built with its west end aligned on the Roman pharos there, access to the lighthouse being provided by a doorway high up in the west wall of the nave (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 214–7).

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is also our best source for the impact of the Norman Conquest on the county. After beating the English force at Hastings, William turned east through Kent taking a circuitous route that included Tenterden, Ashford, Dover, Canterbury, Maidstone and Rochester on his way ultimately to London (Banyard 2004, 34–5). Parts of the county appear to have been ravaged during the progress of William's invasion, but Kent fared rather favourably in comparison to the fate later suffered by large parts of northern England during William's consolidation of his power.

The Domesday Survey of 1086 reveals a denser population in east Kent than west, while the Wealden area was evidently sparsely populated as was Sheppey (Lawson 2004b, 36–7). While the pitfalls of using Domesday evidence to reconstruct population figures have long been known, a recent estimate suggests 70–75,000 people living in the county in the later 11th century (ibid.). Domesday Book and other sources such as the *Domesday Monachorum* (see below) and the *Textus Roffensis* record over 400 parish churches in Kent in the 11th century, a situation put into perspective by Tim Tatton-Brown's observation that in the 18th century the great Kentish antiquarian Hasted recorded 414 parishes in the county (Tatton-Brown 1988, 105; Hasted

1797). Clearly, local ecclesiastical provision was near-complete by the end of the 11th century. From the 12th century onwards a new wave of ecclesiastical institutions augmented the long-established old minsters and the more recent estate churches of the county and included nunneries, for example at Dartford and Davington, and friaries in urban settings, as at Canterbury and Sandwich. Another feature of the 12th and 13th centuries nationally was the proliferation of market towns and in this context Kent exhibits a similar picture to that seen in other English counties. The Domesday Survey, for example, refers to only eight towns and four non-urban markets, whereas by the mid 14th century various sources record c 85 markets in the county (Lawson 2004c, 50–1). Kent's population apparently recovered slowly following the mid 14th century Black Death and seems not to have recovered to the level indicated in the 1334/5 Lay Subsidy (c 125,000) until c 1600 (Lawson 2004d, 65). Kent continued to develop as a prosperous region following the Middle Ages, its proximity to the continent ensuring its significance in both economic and social terms into the modern age.

The framing of the Kentish landscape

While much preceding scholarship has focussed on Kent's relationship with continental Europe, the internal, local and regional situation also betrays a uniqueness that has in many ways defied clear explanation. Much has been made of Kent's 'peculiarly attractive' topography and a series of writers have considered the landscape of the county in terms of 'pays', or regions, described by natural resources including geology and soil types (Page 1908, xxi; Jolliffe 1933; Witney 1976; Everitt 1986). Brookes' recent reappraisal of earlier work emphasises the significance of physical geography in terms of its effect on developing territorial geography (Brookes 2007a, 36; Brookes forthcoming). A major issue with regard to the degree of 'environmental' determinism, however, is that of scale. Larger political entities are perhaps more likely to preserve their boundaries if they are defined by obstructive or distinctive topography, whereas smaller scale local units might be mapped out with regard to local ownership and agreement as much as local topography, although the latter influence evidently remains significant as exhibited by the range of local resources encompassed by small agricultural estates nationally.

Topography alone is an insufficient factor to explain the divergence of this corner of England from the social and economic trajectories experienced elsewhere, as Kent's geology, to a degree, can be followed westwards into Surrey and Sussex where patterns of landscape and agricultural exploitation bear much closer relationships to other regions of central and southern England. Significantly, as noted in the introductory chapters to this volume, the route of the railway has crossed a variety of terrain and again this aspect contrasts with the focus on downland taken by most previous students of the Kentish landscape with a few notable exceptions.

In particular, the Weald has long been neglected from the perspective of archaeological fieldwork, although its importance, notably for specialised industries such as iron-working, has long been appreciated (Gardiner 1990; Tebbutt 1982; Cleere and Crossley 1985). When archaeological finds are plotted onto a map of Kent, one is immediately struck by the lack of material from the Weald. A mapping of Anglo-Saxon finds demonstrates this issue very clearly (Fig. 6.3). Brookes' study supports Everitt's 1986 model of a colonisation of marginal lands (downland) from the so-called lowland 'Original Lands', the Foothills and Holmesdale pays of north-east and central Kent respectively, with expansion during the 6th and 7th centuries (Brookes 2007a, 100–1). Early settlement patterns reflect 'existing corridors of movement' (Roman roads, river valleys, etc.) (ibid.) and in many respects the overall distribution of Kentish settlement continued to reflect this pattern until very recently, with the Weald always sparsely populated.

While much of central and midland England developed classic open field systems of agriculture, based around nucleated villages and seigneurial or lordly residences, the pattern in Kent is different. Nucleated villages form part of the settlement pattern, although the extent of local manorial lordship is more limited, while field patterns are often more easily compared with western Britain and counties such as Devon and Cornwall in the sense that much of Kent is characterised by small enclosed fields, often in a ragged pattern suggestive of

longer term and more organic origins for the framework of the landscape, even though rigid administrative arrangements were imposed upon it at varying scales and at different times throughout the medieval period.

Nearly a century ago, the agricultural historian H. L. Gray (1915) identified the plains either side of the Thames to the west of London as the region where the Kentish pattern of landscape division and management met with the classic open field systems of the midlands and the so-called 'Champion' English countryside. Roberts and Wrathmell's important national study of settlement patterns based largely on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps shows a much less dense pattern overall in Kent when compared against the midlands, although the density is comparable with Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 22, fig. 15). Roberts and Wrathmell's study divides England into three major provinces (Northern and Western, Central and South-Eastern), with a series of subdivisions of which most of Kent (and the HS1 route) is contained within their Weald sub-Province, with a strip of land to the south of the Thames running from just west of the Isle of Thanet westwards into Surrey lying in their Thames sub-Province (ibid., 2, fig. 1). They note that nucleated settlement is '...exceptionally light but even...' in comparison to national distributions, while the predominant mode of settlement is dispersed hamlets and farmsteads, interspersed with specialised occupation associated with, for example, iron-working (ibid., 43–4).

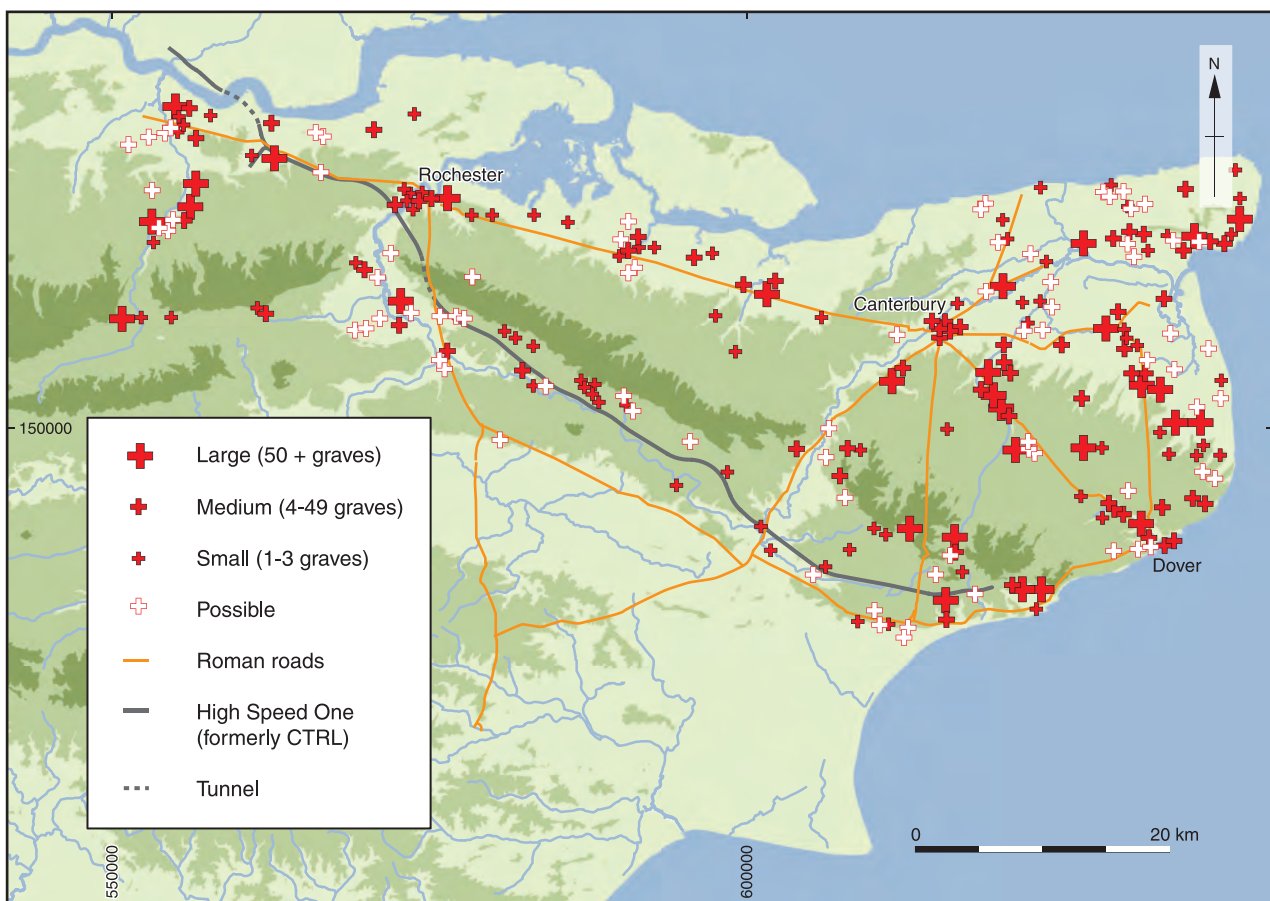


Figure 6.3 Map of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries

While this overall pattern can be charted in Kent, it is ultimately generalised and based on 19th century mapping, although there are strong indications that at least the later medieval pattern was of this nature. The paucity of deserted medieval settlements in Kent, for example, is striking when compared to the large number evident in Roberts and Wrathmell's central province as mapped in 1968 (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 66, fig. 13; Wrathmell and Roberts 2000, 2, fig. 1). The Kentish sites mapped in 1968 are largely found in the southern and eastern coastal fringes of the county and at least some of these desertions are due to environmental factors such as the coastal inundation of Romney marsh in the 13th century (Eddison 2000, 77–87). While the large-scale desertions of the midlands and central south-western England reflect a dynamic and perhaps speculative landscape of settlement in the later Middle Ages, the Kentish evidence suggests on first inspection a much more stable and thus successful situation. Again, the HS1 project has produced evidence that can contribute to this debate.

Drove-roads running roughly north-south across the natural grain of the geology and topography of the county are a further defining characteristic of the Kentish landscape. Although much debated in terms of origins, there is general agreement that these routes relate to lowland communities exploiting upland pasture far from settlements, but when does this agrarian regime begin? Indeed, a major research question is the antiquity of the Kentish pattern of land division and land use.

Administrative structures

The creation of the administrative landscape provides a key topic for study and is one that has yet to yield conclusions based upon sound evidence, although aspects of the HS1 results do allow inroads to be made into this thorny issue (see especially White Horse Stone below). One of the most significant aspects of the study of administrative arrangements is that they provide a direct and meaningful link between the higher echelons of medieval society and local agricultural communities. The burdens placed on the lower orders by their rulers required practical mechanisms to facilitate them, and the complex intertwining of top down imposition versus bottom-up reaction finds its interface in the administrative structure of the landscape and the workings of local government.

Substantial debate has taken place nationally with regard to the antiquity of estate boundaries, or what effectively became fossilised as parish boundaries by the later 12th century (Pounds 2000, 4). The principal body of evidence that has been argued to reflect the carving up of ancient royal estates into these smaller units is the surviving corpus of Anglo-Saxon charters. These documents record the conveyance of land, often recording between which parties and for what reason the land is changing hands (usually a gift to a church or, in the Late Anglo-Saxon period a grant to a lay person or perhaps forfeiture of an estate to the king for committing

an offence). The survival of these documents shows marked differences nationally with Wessex and the West Midlands exhibiting particularly high densities, while Kent has concentrations to the west of Rochester and to the east of Canterbury with a marked gap in between (Hill 1981, 22, fig. 31). In chronological terms, the majority of surviving Anglo-Saxon land grants nationally date to the central decades of the 10th century and some scholars have viewed this period as a key episode in the creation of local land units (see for example Hooke 1998). If this view is followed then there are good grounds for seeing Kent as similar to other regions of England. Overall, however, the differences far outweigh the similarities and a key issue remains to establish reliable chronologies both for boundary features and structures and for the origins of individual settlements.

Besides local estates, the administrative landscape included units of a higher order. By the Late Anglo-Saxon period groupings of local estates into what were termed hundreds had occurred. Nominally each hundred contained a hundred hides (a hide, as Bede records in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, being a unit of land capable of supporting an extended family), although the reality was far less regular across the country. In some cases, individual hundreds might reflect the territories of Early Anglo-Saxon tribal groups, whereas others are confectations of the Late Anglo-Saxon period drawn up during periods of territorial and administrative reform. Whatever their origins, by the 10th century hundreds served as self-contained supra-local units with judicial responsibilities. Courts attended by the free men of the district met at open air sites every four weeks and oversaw judicial hearings and related business. In fact, possible evidence for just such a court site, or meeting place, has been uncovered during the HS1 excavations (see Saltwood below). Wrongdoers convicted of capital offences were executed and buried on the boundaries of hundreds, while other landscape locations such as crossroads were also used for the burial outcasts (see White Horse Stone below). A yet larger administrative division below that of the shire itself is the *lathe*, a much-debated feature of Kentish administrative geography it need not concern us further.

The HS1 discoveries in context

The Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Saltwood Tunnel

The Anglo-Saxon funerary landscape at Saltwood developed in a setting already much modified by human action. A series of Bronze Age barrows set on high ground a short distance inland from the south coast became set within a landscape enclosed by trackways by the early Roman period, which then attracted four Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (Fig. 6.4). The Saltwood Tunnel cemeteries are of particular interest for several reasons. From a more traditional perspective, they contain a wealth of hugely informative material culture that allows a series of issues relating to family and broader social



Figure 6.4 Saltwood Tunnel: overlaid on the 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1877)

structure to be approached, in addition to the nature of continental contacts and more local ones given that there are three distinct burial grounds. How were Early Anglo-Saxon communities constituted? Were there significant differences between them? Is it possible in the latest furnished cemeteries to visualise the emergence of the stratified society evident from the earliest Kentish law codes? Did early Kentish society include a significant component of Germanic migrants?

At a local level, the relationship of the burial locale to the droveways that run through the site is of considerable interest. Taking a slightly wider view, the cemeteries overlook Hythe, a place-name commonly accepted as indicating a landing or marketing place, and lie a short distance from the 7th–9th century fishing and trading settlement at *Sandtun*. We shall take each of these issues in turn.

The landscape setting

The three, or arguably four, Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Saltwood developed within a long-established landscape on a south-facing hillside (Fig. 6.4). The locale is characterised by a series of pre-existing routeways traversing the 800m long (east-west) and 100m wide (north-south) excavated area, which appear to have been laid out in respect to a series of Early Bronze Age barrows (Fig. 6.5). The routeways are of especial importance as two of them still exist in the modern landscape and indeed form crossroads both within and just south of the excavated area. A ditched trackway (226) running SSW–NNE through the central part of the excavation was laid out in the Middle Iron Age with a holloway of later Iron Age or Early Roman origin (34) roughly parallel to it at the western extent of the excavation trench some 300m away. Later, but probably still within the later Iron Age or Early Roman period (see Champion, Chapter 4), another ditched trackway was laid out perpendicular to the two existing tracks and thus connected the two resulting in a crossroads (Riddler and Trevarthen 2006, 21).

Rarely can the landscape setting of an Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery be re-constructed so clearly and the reasons for locating broadly contemporary burial grounds at this locale are surely multifarious. While the Anglo-Saxons would not have had a sense of the actual antiquity of what we now know to be Bronze Age barrows, they were themselves a barrow-building society and would have identified with the principal funerary function of such monuments. Since the 1970s scholars have speculated that the ‘draw’ of such monuments was not simply a desire to avoid the effort of building mounds but was perhaps more likely to be driven by a process of appropriation of prominent features in the landscape, thereby laying claim to them by setting down physical associations and creating memorial associations at a local level (Shephard 1979, 47; Williams 2006, 158). Interestingly, the post-cemetery activity considered below indicates the continued importance of the site. The location of cemeteries and important burials by routeways is a phenomenon recognised across Early Anglo-Saxon

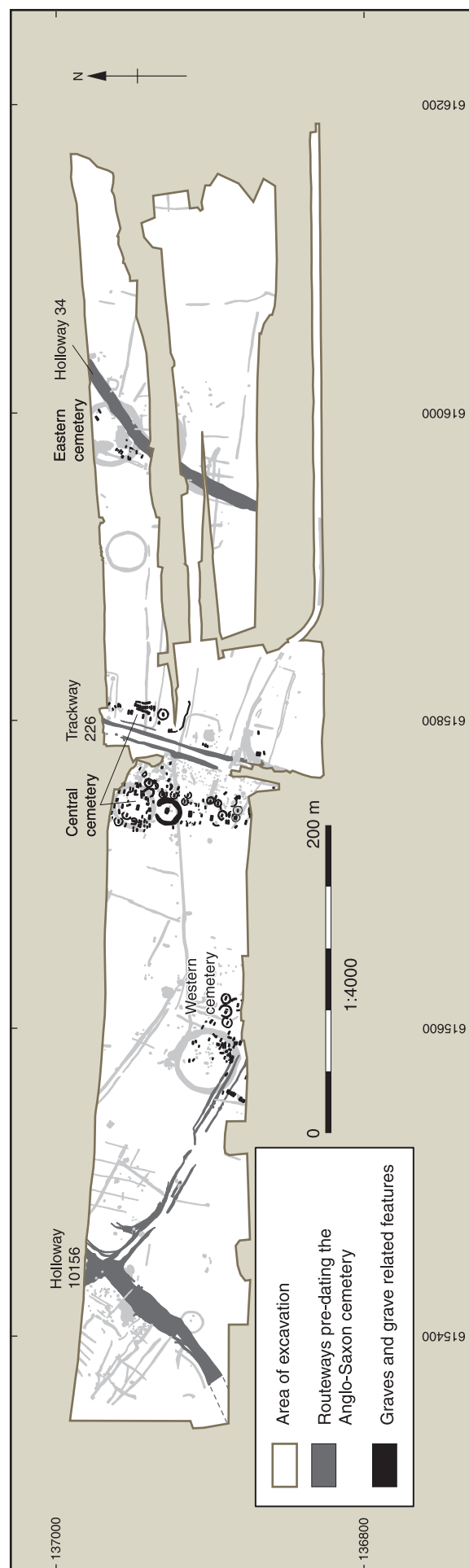


Figure 6.5 Saltwood Tunnel: routeways pre-dating the Anglo-Saxon cemetery

England and indeed continues into the Late Anglo-Saxon period in the context of what are best termed ‘outcast’ or ‘deviant’ burials (see White Horse Stone below) (Reynolds 2009). Re-using a Bronze Age barrow as a funerary location may well reflect ‘appropriation’, but for such a practice to have a genuine impact it must surely be visible, unless the placing of a secondary burial in an existing mound was viewed as a purely ‘private’ deal between the deceased and the burial feature. Locating burials by routeways, particularly crossroads achieves visibility and encourages longer-term memory. In terms of placing within the landscape, it is clear that several factors were at play and that these were very likely a mixture of ideological and practical concerns.

To find several cemeteries with a degree of chronological overlap in such close proximity is a matter of considerable interest. Are three separate communities represented or are the cemeteries those of differing ethnic background belonging broadly to the same social group? Are there other social reasons why a funerary landscape might develop in such a way? If, for example, the ‘appropriation’ model is followed then perhaps we should expect certain families or kin groups to develop strong dynastic associations each referencing individual existing barrows. This latter process appears to be particularly relevant at Saltwood as is discussed below.

The three cemeteries are referred to below by their geographical relationship to each other. Dating of the burials from all three cemeteries covers Riddler’s Phases 2 (AD 500/510–550), 3 (AD 550–590/600), 4 (AD 590/600–650), and 5–7 (AD 650–750), building on existing chronologies established for eastern Kentish cemeteries by Evison (1987) and developed by Brugmann (in Parfitt and Brugmann 1997) and Richardson (2005), although there are no Saltwood graves later than the 7th century.

The eastern cemetery

The eastern cemetery, whose extent was fully established, comprised 17 inhumation graves, 15 of which were laid out in two parallel rows to the east of a holloway (34), which itself cut the western side of the ring-ditch of an Early Bronze Age barrow; the graves lay within the area described by the ring-ditch with one exception outside to the south-west (Fig. 6.6). Two further graves lay 25m to the north-east but within the ring-ditch. Eight graves can be dated securely to the Early Anglo-Saxon period on the basis of associated grave finds, while the others lacked diagnostic attributes. Those with dating evidence fall within the 6th century as defined by Ian Riddler’s scheme (Riddler 2006, 30–1), while C14 determinations for three burials confirm the range, with wider margins possible, as might

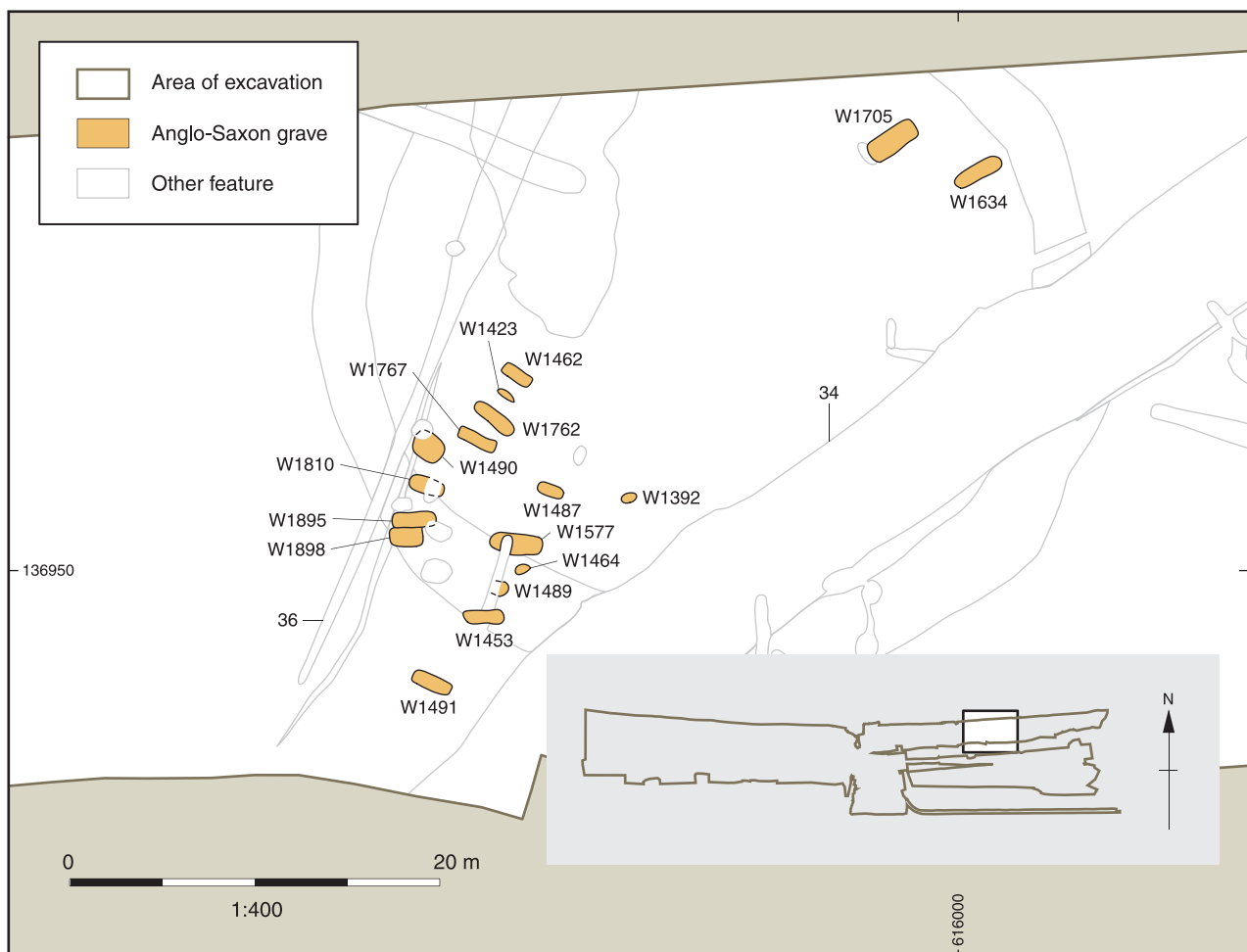


Figure 6.6 Saltwood Tunnel: Anglo-Saxon graves and grave-related features, eastern cemetery

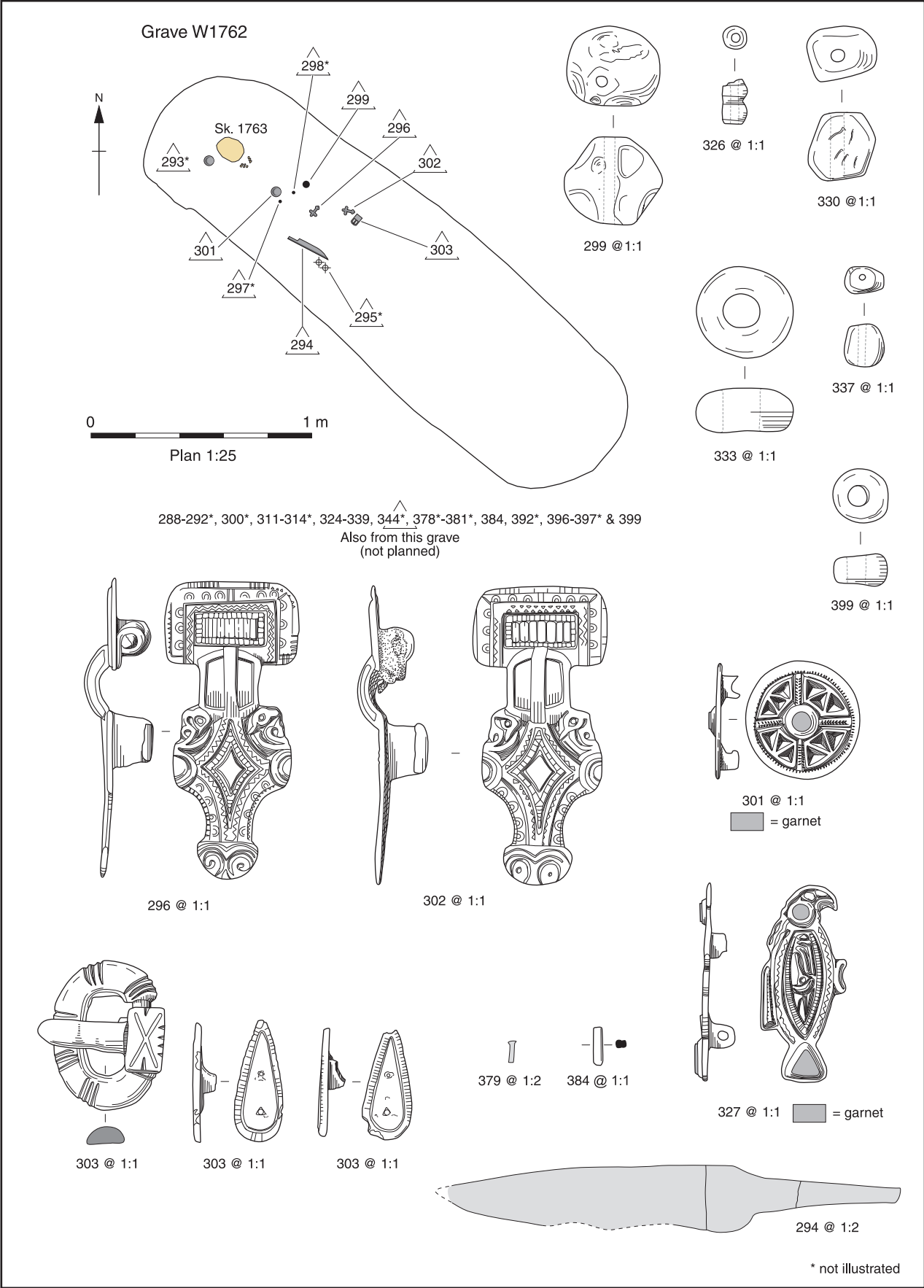


Figure 6.7 Saltwood Tunnel: eastern cemetery, grave W1762, plan and grave goods

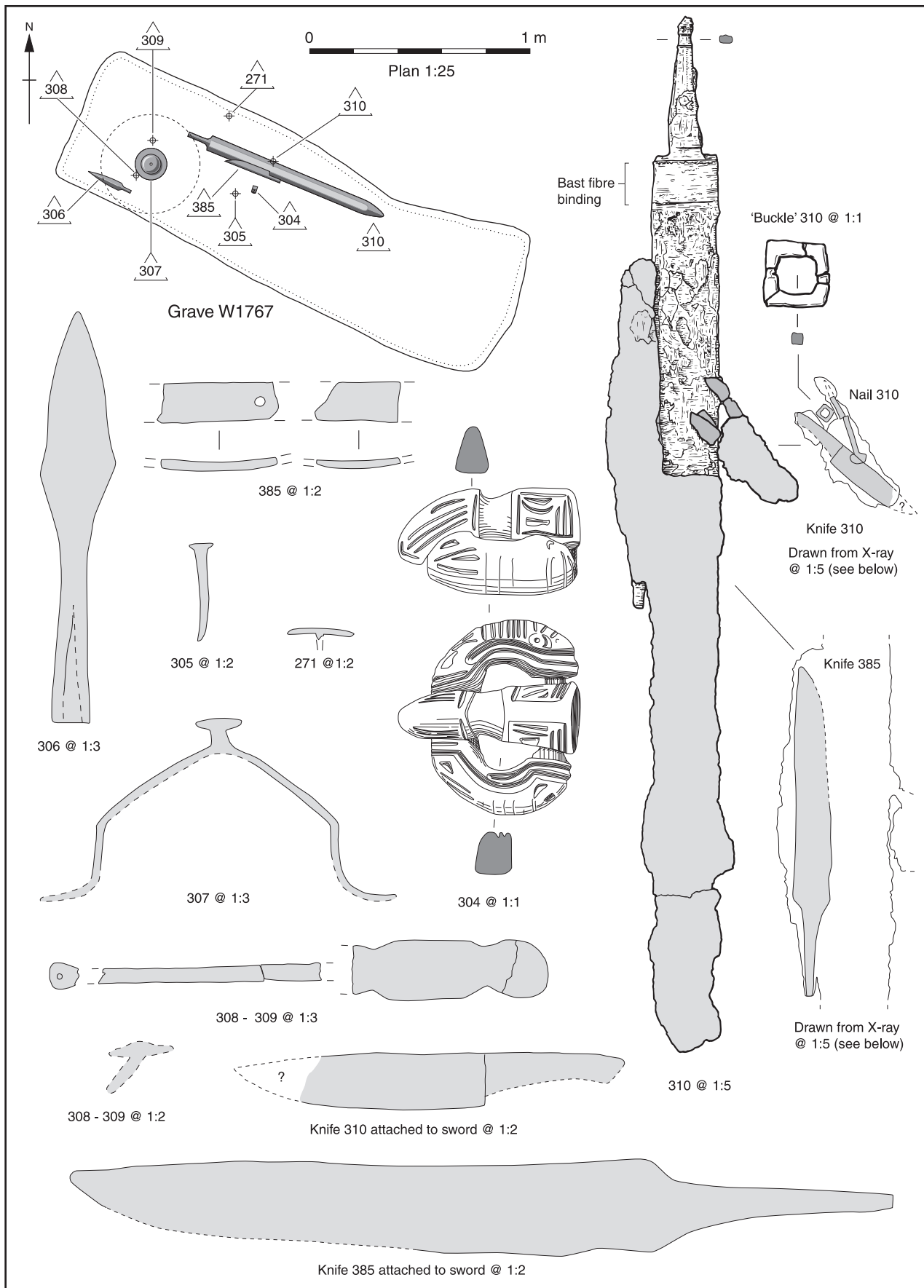


Figure 6.8 Saltwood Tunnel: eastern cemetery, grave W1767, plan and grave goods

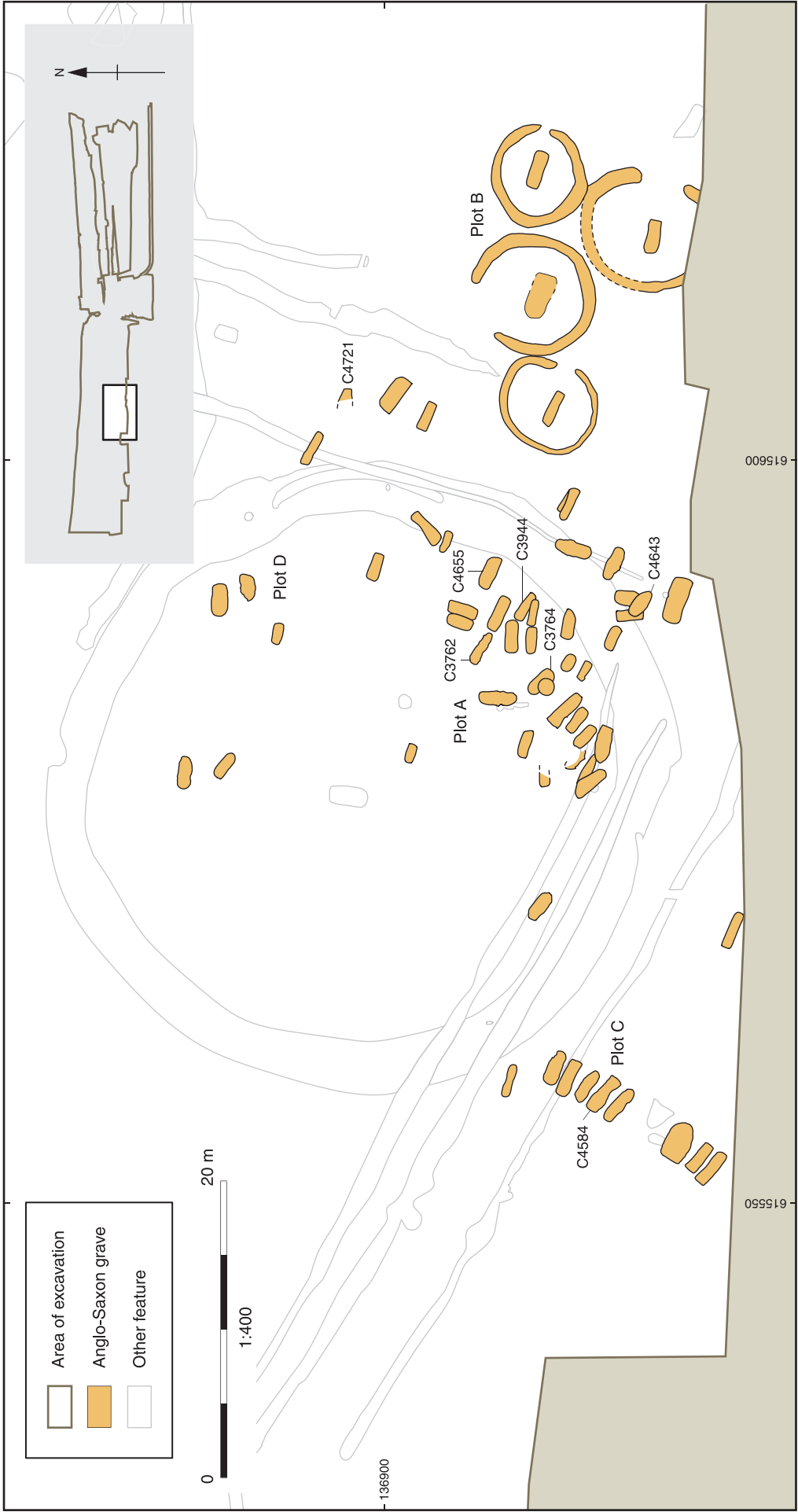


Figure 6.9 Saltwood Tunnel: Anglo-Saxon graves and grave-related features, western cemetery

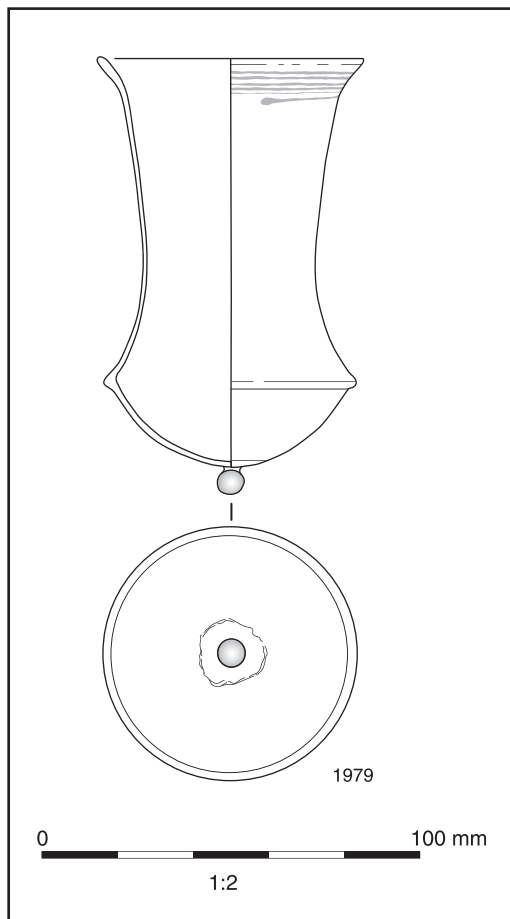


Figure 6.10 Saltwood Tunnel: glass bell beaker from grave C3764

be expected given the problems of the 6th century regarding accurate C14 dates (Allen *et al.* 2006).

Overall, bone survival was very poor. One grave (W1423) that lacked finds probably contained a child to judge by its length (less than 1m). Grave W1490 contained two juveniles, while grave W1810 contained an adult and an infant; all other graves were of individuals. Double burials are commonly found in Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries nationally and probably reflect simultaneous deaths in small rural communities (Stoodley 2002, 121). Several graves contained either iron nails or soil stains suggesting wooden coffins. Two distinctive female graves belong to Phase 2. The first is the woman in Grave W1453 furnished with a large collection of glass and amber beads and pairs of quatrefoil and square-headed brooches, while the female buried in grave W1762 was accompanied by a pair of partially gilded copper alloy Kentish small square-headed brooches, a Frankish bird brooch and a cast disc brooch with central garnet, both of silver (Fig. 6.7). Further Frankish influence is present in a Phase 3 grave (W1767), one of two male weapon burials. This impressive burial contained an array of weapons; shield, knives and a spear, and a pattern-welded sword of possible Frankish origin, a situation indicated by the presence of a north Frankish buckle type in the grave and by the suggestion, on the basis of the upward facing knife corroded onto the side of the sword

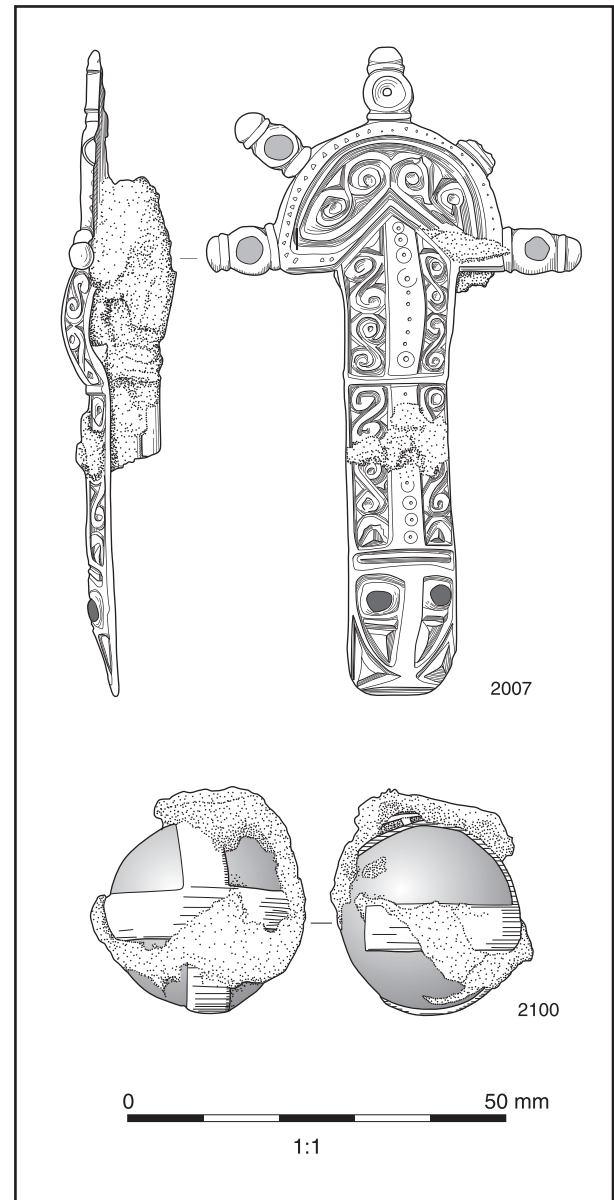


Figure 6.11 Saltwood Tunnel: copper alloy radiate-headed brooch and crystal ball amulet from grave C3762

blade, that a continental fashion of carrying weapons is represented (Fig. 6.8) (Ager 2006; Gilmour 2006). Apart from the finds-rich graves already mentioned, the remainder of the burials in the eastern cemetery was relatively poor in comparison, yielding only a few objects including keys and beads. The eastern cemetery, then, appears to have started life in the first half of the 6th century with two well adorned female burials, followed soon after by two male weapon burials. The less well furnished and unfurnished burials may relate to both Phases 2 and 3 and Riddler has suggested that the burial plot may only have been in use for two generations and was out of use by the close of the 6th century (Riddler 2006, 34).

The western cemetery

The western cemetery covers Riddler's Phases 2–6, from the first half of the 6th century to the late 7th century and

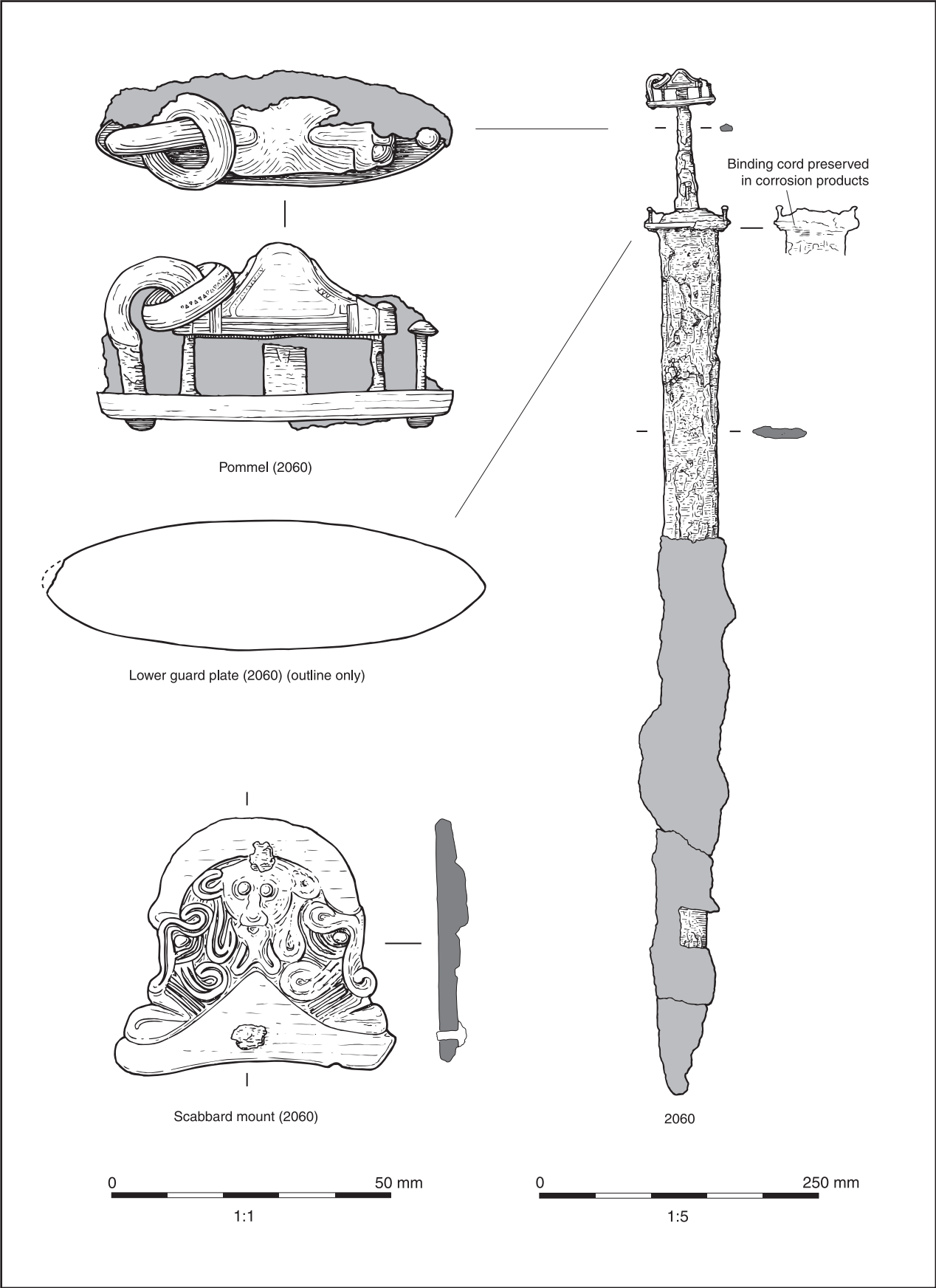


Figure 6.12 Saltwood Tunnel: iron ring sword from grave C3944

burial may have begun at about the same time as in the eastern cemetery. This burial group, like the others, was focussed on an Early Bronze Age ring-ditch at the junction of two trackways, which enclosed the former barrow on its south-western and south-eastern sides (Fig. 6.9). Fifty-nine graves were excavated which Riddler has divided into Plots A–D on the basis of a combination of their distribution in relation to the barrow and the form of the graves themselves. Plot A lay on the south-east side of the ring-ditch, both within and without, and included graves of varying orientation. Plot B comprised four graves, just to the east of Plot A, enclosed by penannular ditches, perhaps indicative of the former presence of mounds. Plot C was formed of a tidy row of nine graves arranged side-by-side running outwards from the south-western edge of the ring-ditch, while Plot D was represented by a small group of less well-organised graves within the north-eastern part of the ring-ditch. The majority of graves were orientated with the head to the north-west. The survival of human remains was poor, and sexing remained largely dependent on the presence of grave finds attributable to gender.

Several graves contained more than one burial, traces of coffins in the form of wood stains were observed in six graves, while settings of stones occurred in various positions in a number of graves, including about the head. The most distinctive graves in terms of external elaboration were the four inhumations surrounded by penannular ditches, between 15–20m in diameter, in Plot B; these are likely to date to the late 6th and 7th centuries by analogy with other Kentish cemeteries, although only a few finds, mainly of iron objects, were recovered from these graves. In three cases the causeways across the ditches faced one end of the grave within, while each of the ditches was close to its neighbour with several instances of intercutting.

With regard to dating, the earliest graves contained items potentially of late 5th century but more likely early 6th century date, including the glass bell beaker in grave C3764 (Fig. 6.10), the belt buckle in grave C4655, and the button brooch from grave C4643, all in the central part of Plot A. There are distinctive graves of (later 6th century) Phase 3, including four in close proximity, again in Plot A. Three of these were female including grave C3762, a wealthy burial equipped, among other things, with a wooden box with decorated bone and copper alloy mounts, a fine copper alloy radiate-headed brooch with garnet settings and a crystal ball in a silver cage, surely an amulet (Fig. 6.11). Four weapon burials furnished with swords also belong to this phase, including the spectacular 6th-century Kentish ring-sword, of so-called Bifrons-Gilton type after other Kentish finds, found with other objects in grave C3944 in Plot A (Fig. 6.12). Ring-swords are high-status finds and it has been suggested that the rings themselves were given to the bearers of such weapons by kings or other high-ranking persons to signify service, office and allegiance (Ager 2006, 6; Evison 1967; Steuer 1987). A fine wheel turned pottery bottle of Frankish origin dated to the first half of the 7th century, the only find from grave C4721,

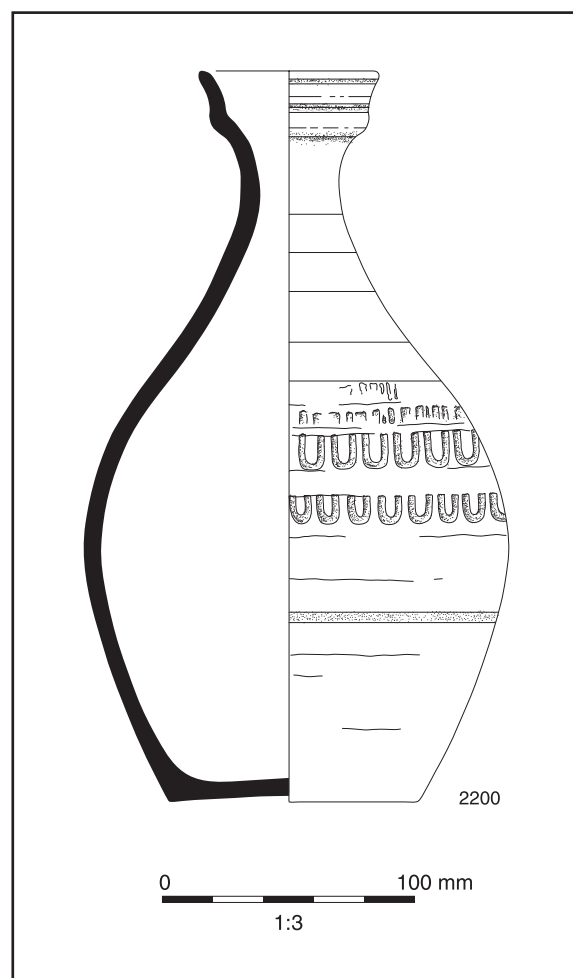


Figure 6.13 Saltwood Tunnel: wheel-turned pottery bottle from grave C4721

emphasises the continental connections identified in graves noted above from the eastern cemetery (Fig. 6.13). Among the latest datable graves is C4584 in Plot C, which contained iron hinges from a box dated AD 650–700.

The less ordered graves in Plot D contained very few finds, one a knife, another a key, and Riddler suggests, with caution, that they date to the later 7th century in comparison with similar burials from the Dover Buckland cemetery (Riddler 2006, 40 after Evison 1987). Overall, burial appears to have begun in the central Plot A and then moved outwards in all directions. The varying organisation and style of burial is strongly indicative of several family or kin traditions operating within the cemetery space.

The central cemetery

The central cemetery is the most extensive of the three burial plots; although a case is made below that within it there are two distinct burial areas. A total of 141 inhumation graves lay either side of the Middle Iron Age trackway (226). To the west of the trackway, the ring-ditch of a substantial Early Bronze Age barrow provided the focus for the majority (105) of the burials, while a smaller group (36) to the east of it is considered by some to be an extension to the western group, and thus part of

the same cemetery (Fig. 6.14) (Riddler 2006, 40). Certain features, however, suggest that part of the eastern group constitutes in its own right a discrete burial plot, an issue to which we will return below. While the limits of the burial site were very clearly reached on the western and eastern sides, a few burials no doubt remain to be discovered to the south of the main concentration of graves, and to the north on both sides of the trackway. Most of the graves were aligned with the head to the west, with a few graves in the northern part of the cemetery west of the trackway aligned with the head to the north.

The four largest graves (C1048, C1081, C6421 and C6653), all contained spectacular finds—of which more below—but significantly the graves were equidistant from each other in a line broadly parallel with the western side of the trackway. Grave C1081 was surrounded with a substantial ring-ditch (20m in diameter), while space devoid of further burials surrounded the other three burials suggesting the former presence of mounds. Postholes appear to have marked the limit of the potential mound surrounding grave C6421. At least 18 other burials were enclosed by penannular ditches (between 5–6m diameter), one of these lying at the southern end of the eastern group of burials noted above. In the majority of cases the graves within penannular ditches were aligned on the breaks in the ditches with five graves enclosed by unbroken ring-ditches. A few burials contained stones disposed variously about the grave, but usually in the head region either as ‘cushions’ or perhaps as settings for grave markers.

While all of the graves to the west of the trackway contained single inhumations, grave W3080 to the east, that of a juvenile, possibly male, was furnished with two sets of grave goods. Grave W1074 contained the body of an adult aged 50 or over, and the disturbed, or perhaps re-deposited, remains of a possible female aged 45 or older. This latter situation perhaps reflects the relatively common practice of burying men and women in a disrespectful fashion above an apparently normal burial (Hirst 1985; Reynolds 2009). Intercutting of graves was rare but included examples where graves surrounded by penannular ditches had been cut into by either directly superimposed inhumations (graves C6673/C6161), or by graves set to one side of the primary interment (graves C1391/C1393). This latter practice suggests family plots with later burials radiating out from a ‘founder’ burial, with intercutting graves perhaps creating a direct physical association with the founder. Most of the graves enclosed by ditches lay in a line 12–14 m west of the trackway but parallel to it, while a group of three lay at the north-western limit of the central cemetery. It is common to find ring-ditches clustered in Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, as in the western cemetery above. A parallel further afield is the extensively excavated cemetery at Spong Hill, Norfolk, where a group of four enclosed graves lay at the north-eastern edge of the largely cremation burial site (Hills *et al.* 1984, fig. 1).

Traces of coffins were recorded in 14 graves, and in a further grave (W1323), that of a person aged *c.* 9–11 years, two rows of clench nails found across the body

perhaps represent a lid or coffin fashioned from overlapping planks of wood, perhaps boat parts reflecting the importance of sea-travel in early Kent (Brookes 2007b, 14–15). Each of the four large, wealthy graves noted above evidently contained either coffins or timber-lined chambers.

On the basis of the exceptional range and quality of the grave finds from the central cemetery it has been possible to chart the development of the burial area with relative clarity. Riddler’s careful analysis has revealed that the earliest burials are focussed on the Early Bronze Age barrow and that they can be placed within his Phase 3 (mid to late 6th century). Distinctive burials of this primary series of graves include grave C1210, which was furnished with a bracelet, finger-ring, beads, a knife and some keys, and grave C1145, a male burial furnished with a sword, shield and spear among other objects, including a buckle, possibly from a sword belt. Significantly, the copper alloy pommel of the sword is of Frankish origin, and Ager’s discussion notes that it is of a geographically widespread type found mainly in the Rhineland, southern Germany and northern Italy, with relatively few examples from England and Scandinavia (Ager 2006, 5; Menghin 1983). The weapon from grave C1145 is notably shorter (at 795mm total length) than the other ten swords recovered from Saltwood graves (which range between 870–940mm): swords of this type have a late 5th to early 6th century date range in England, while swords in general may be up to a century old by the time they are deposited (Ager 2006, 2, 10).

During the late 6th to mid 7th century, the four very wealthy graves already referred to were laid out southwards from the early focus of the cemetery. The equal spacing and linear arrangement of these graves suggests an attempt, which appears to have been successful, to lay out four new plots focussed on high-status graves. It is rare to observe such careful planning of cemetery space. With reference to the grave finds, Riddler suggests that the northernmost grave (C1048) is the first of the sequence, followed by C1081 and then C6653, with the female grave C6421 the latest, and placed between the two latter male graves. On logical grounds, however, Riddler makes a strong case for a straightforward linear development from north to south, placing the graves in the following order: C1048 – C1081 – C6421 – C6653. The three male burials are surely heads of households, their associated grave assemblages are certainly indicative of a very high social rank. The man buried in grave C1048 was laid in a coffin placed inside a wooden chamber. Among the accoutrements placed with him was a sword with a low, convex-topped iron pommel of a type known from Germany, but also found closer to hand, for example at Dover, Buckland in late 6th to mid 7th century graves (Ager 2006, 4; Evison 1987). At least 17 antler gaming pieces, two shield bosses, iron harness fittings, 14 iron arrowheads, and a Frankish throwing-spear, or angon, serve to emphasise the high status of this grave. Perhaps the most remarkable find, however, was a Byzantine, or ‘Coptic’, copper alloy bowl of Werner’s B1 type, which is

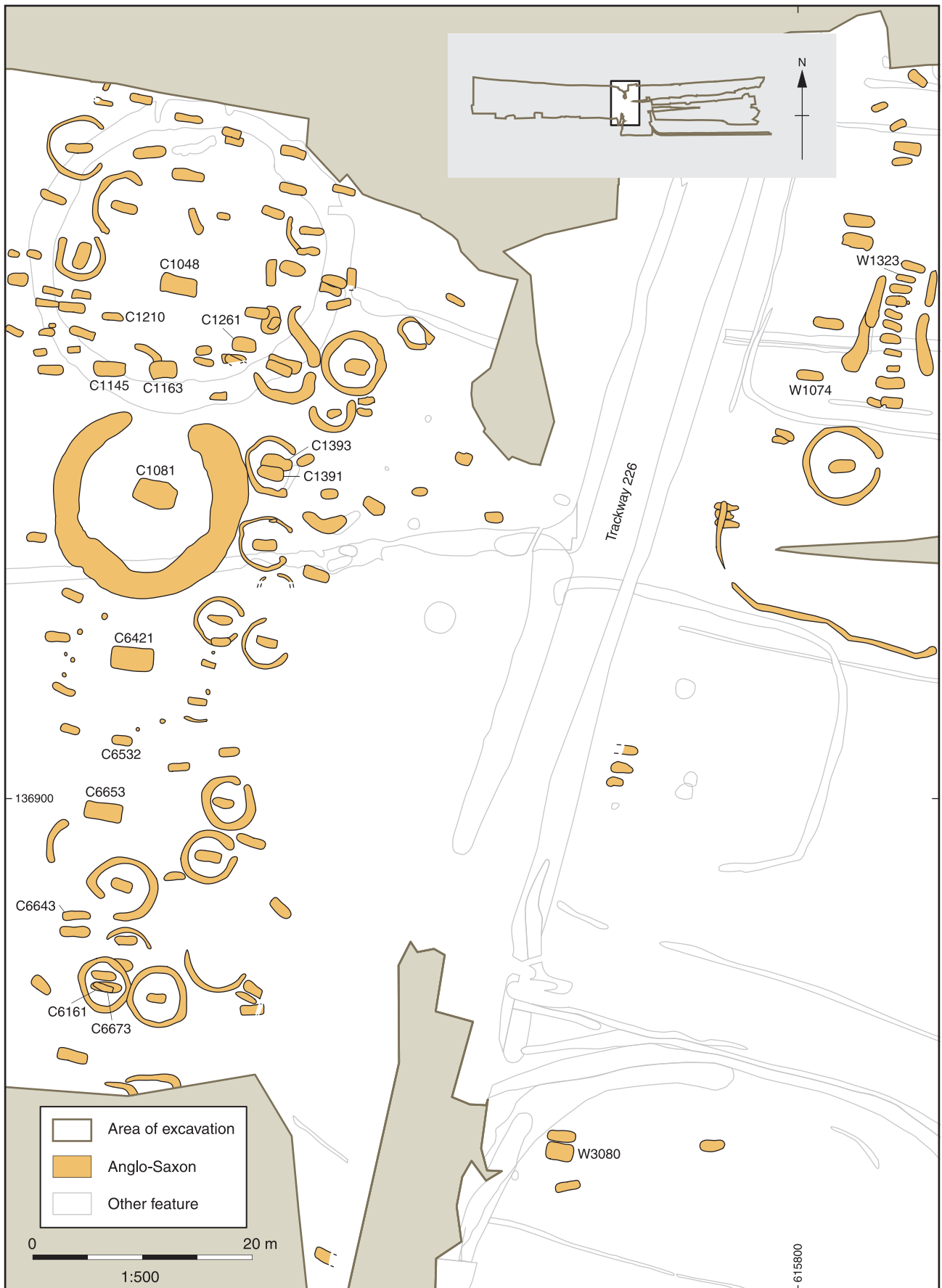


Figure 6.14 Saltwood Tunnel: Anglo-Saxon graves and grave related features, central cemetery

characteristically found in burials of late 6th and early 7th century date in south-east England, but also in the Rhineland, south-western Germany, Hungary and Italy (Fig. 6.15) (Werner 1957; Harris 2006, 1). Such bowls are known from burials of the very highest strata of Early Anglo-Saxon society, a situation well illustrated by examples from Sutton Hoo, Mound 1 and the 'princely' grave from Prittlewell (Essex) (Bruce-Mitford 1983, 732–52; Hirst *et al.*, 2004).

The male grave C1081 just south of C1048 lay within

by far the largest penannular ditch and contained a similar array of finds; it also comprised a coffin placed within a wooden chamber (Fig. 6.16). A further B1 Coptic bowl underscores the status of the individual, while iron horse gear, two shield bosses, a Frankish angon, and a sword with a fine decorated pommel indicate a man of parallel rank to that buried in grave C1048. The sword is a further continental import with applied niello inlaid silver decoration and is dated to the late 6th or early 7th century (Ager 2006, 5).

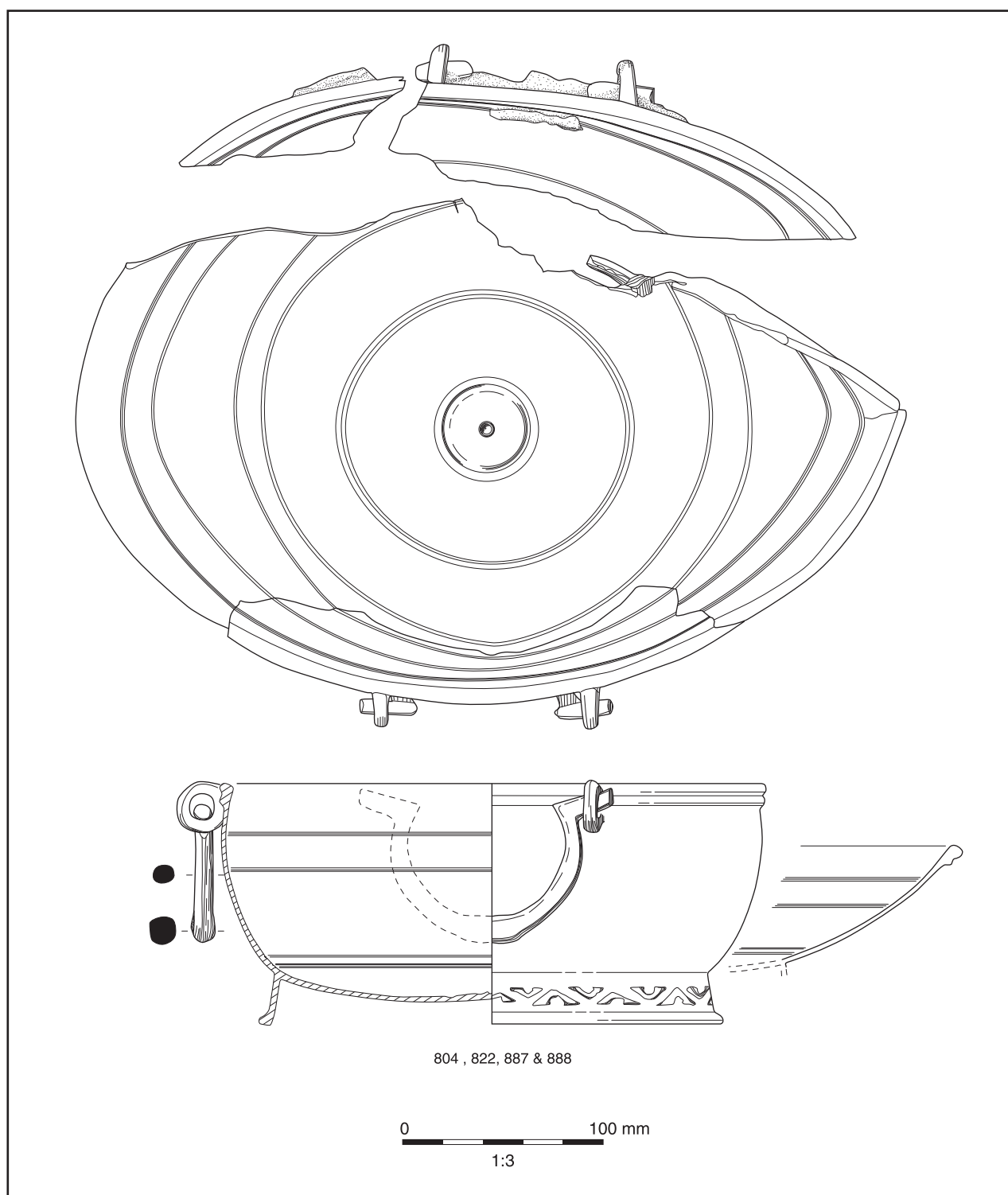


Figure 6.15 Saltwood Tunnel: 'Coptic' copper alloy bowl from grave C1048

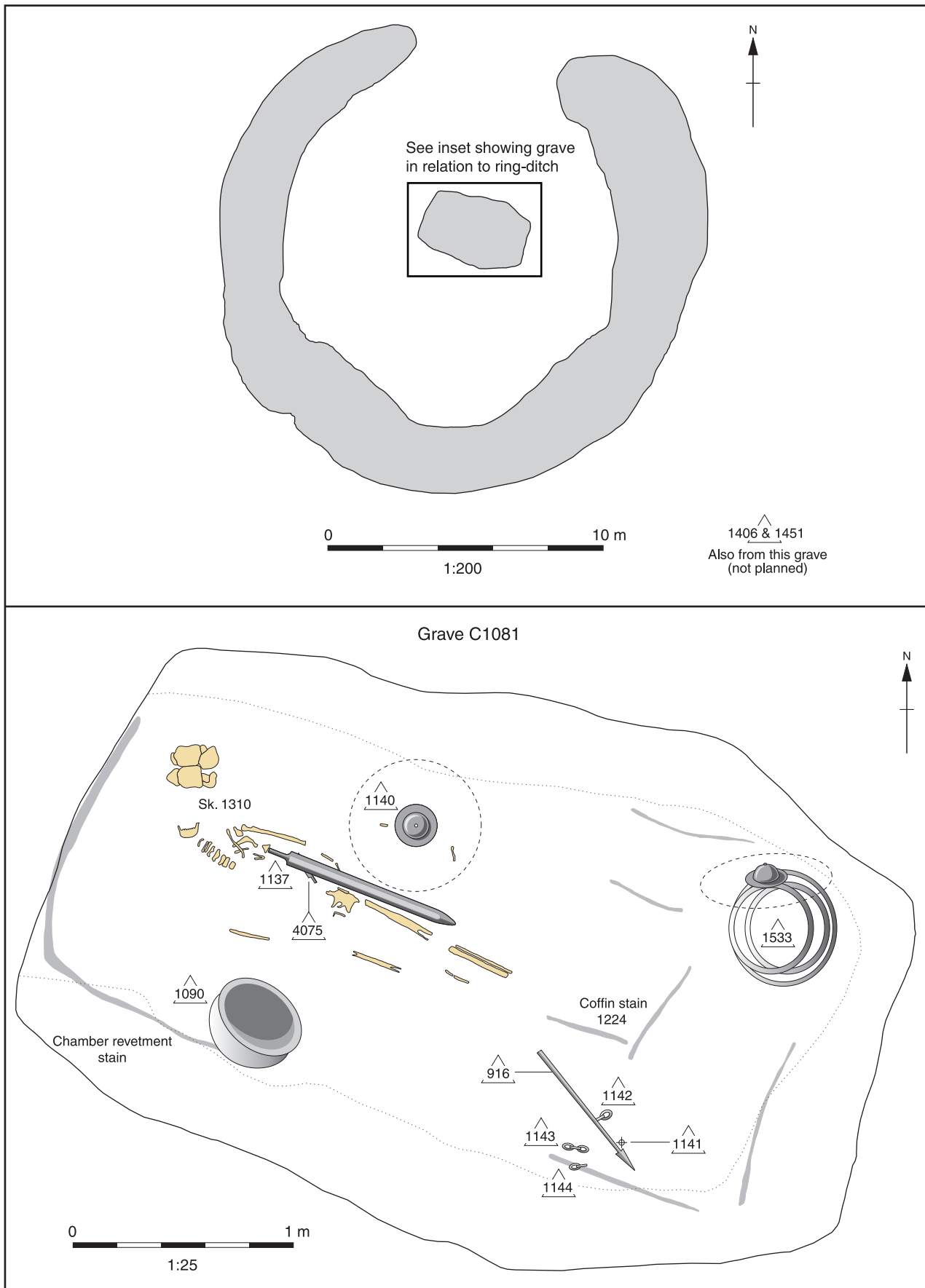


Figure 6.16 Saltwood Tunnel: grave C1081, central cemetery

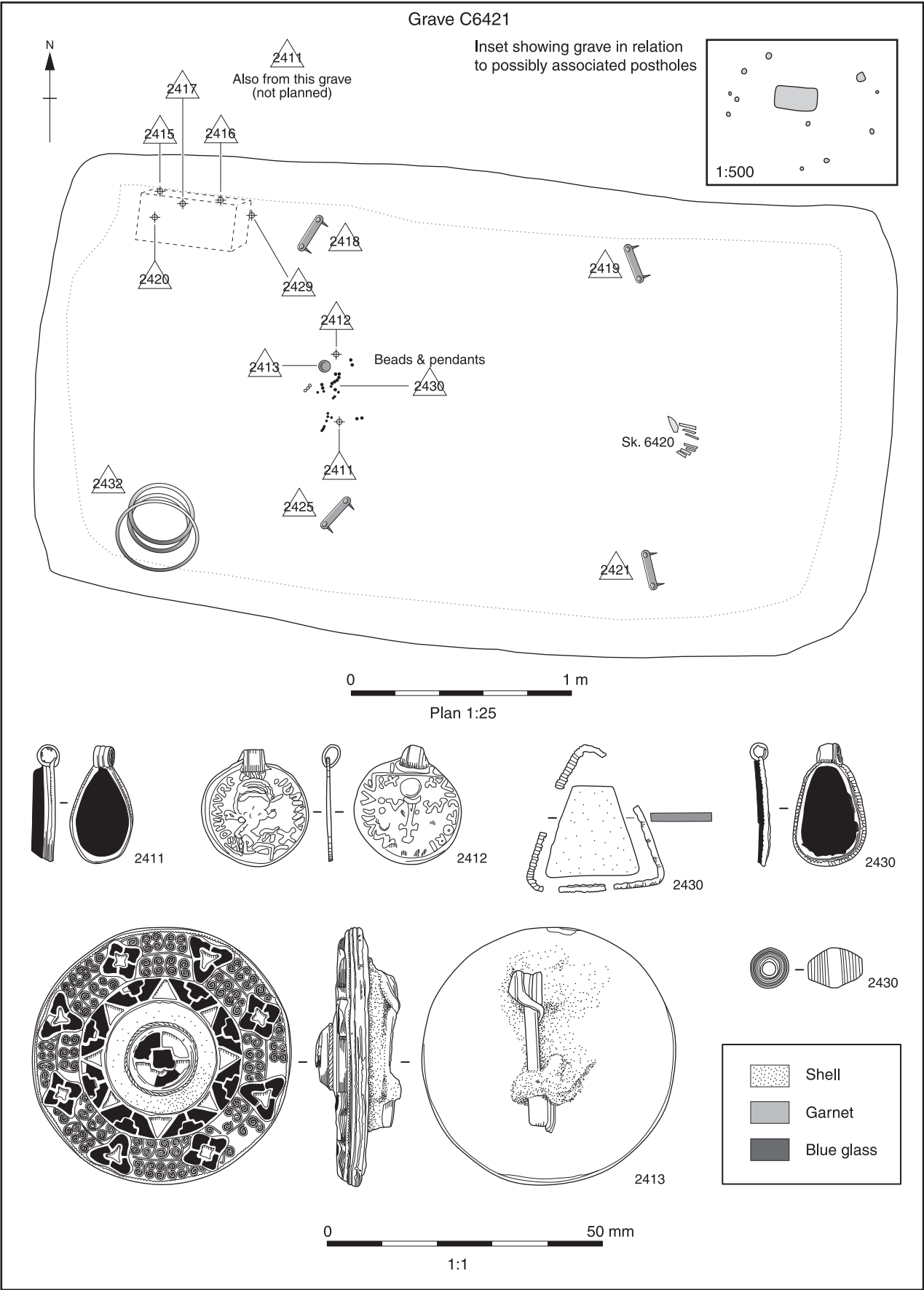


Figure 6.17 Saltwood Tunnel: grave C6421, central cemetery. Plan and a selection of grave goods

A view of high-status female attire at this time is provided by the grave assemblage with the succeeding ostentatious burial, grave C6421 (Figs 6.17–18). As noted above, the grave may have been covered with a mound, perhaps revetted by posts. The skeletal remains indicate the burial of a young woman above 13 years of age. Two gold drop-shaped pendants with garnet settings, a Visigothic gold coin (a *solidus* issued in the name of Maurice (AD 582–602)), with a suspension loop, and a gold composite disc brooch set with garnets and of Kentish type all serve to confirm a date in the first half of the 7th century for this burial. Iron fittings for a box and a bucket were also found within the grave.

The last of this group, and the most southerly of them, is grave C6653. Although no human remains were found, the occupant of this chamber grave or coffined burial was male to judge by the finds, which included three shield bosses, a Frankish angon, and a further Coptic bowl, a variant on the B1 type but not strictly classifiable as such (Harris 2006, 2). Comparisons include vessels from other very high-status burials, including Mound 6 at Sutton Hoo (Suffolk) and, closer to hand, at Coombe (Kent)

(Evans 2005, 207; Ellis-Davidson and Webster 1967). The man was also buried with a sword with a bar-shaped pommel, a type mainly known from 5th and 6th century Anglo-Saxon contexts (Ager 2006, 4).

Beyond the very rich graves there is a series of further weapon graves which, as Riddler has observed, appear to bear a direct relationship to the very high-status burials in terms of proximity and alignment (Riddler 2006, 48). Grave C1163 lay south of grave C1048 and the scabbard for the sword also seems to have held an upward-pointing knife as was the case with the sword and knife in the probable Frankish grave W1767 in the eastern cemetery. Grave C6532 with a spear and knife lay to the south of the wealthy female in Grave C6421, while grave C6643, with a spear, shield boss and other fittings, lay to the south of grave C6653.

Once these four plots had been established, the cemetery developed around them with graves of a lesser status. Further remarkable finds include a buckle of Italo-Byzantine type from grave C1261, just to the south-west of grave C1048 (Fig. 6.19, no. 1165). The latest burials in the central cemetery appear to be those at the northern

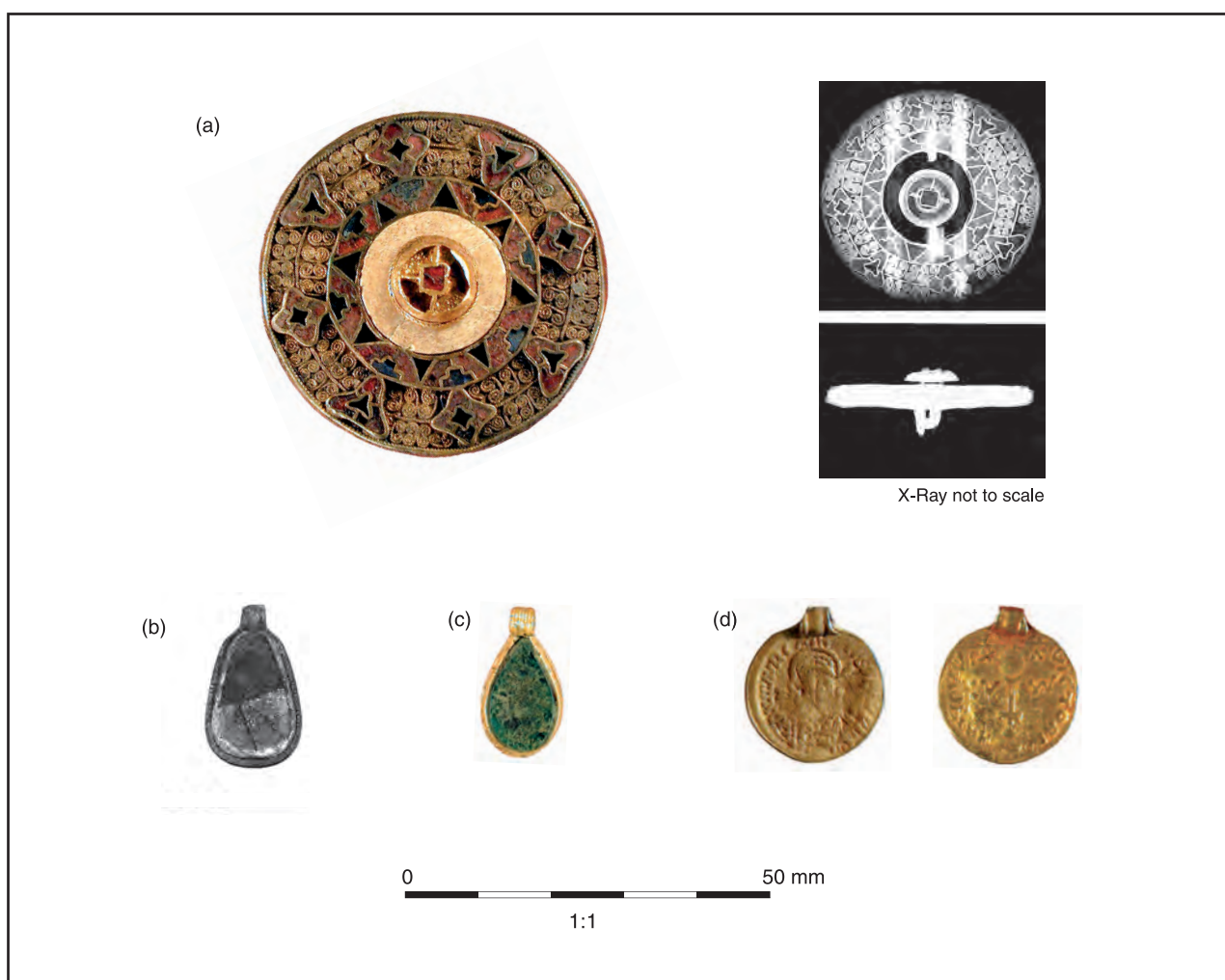


Figure 6.18 Saltwood Tunnel: grave C6421, central cemetery: gold plated disc brooch (a), set with garnets and blue glass and gold-wire filigree; pendants from necklaces: (b) flat-cut pear-shaped garnet on gold foil in silver setting (left), and (c) flatcutdrop-shaped garnet on gold foil in a gold setting (right), both from central cemetery grave 6421; (d) front and back of the coin pendant

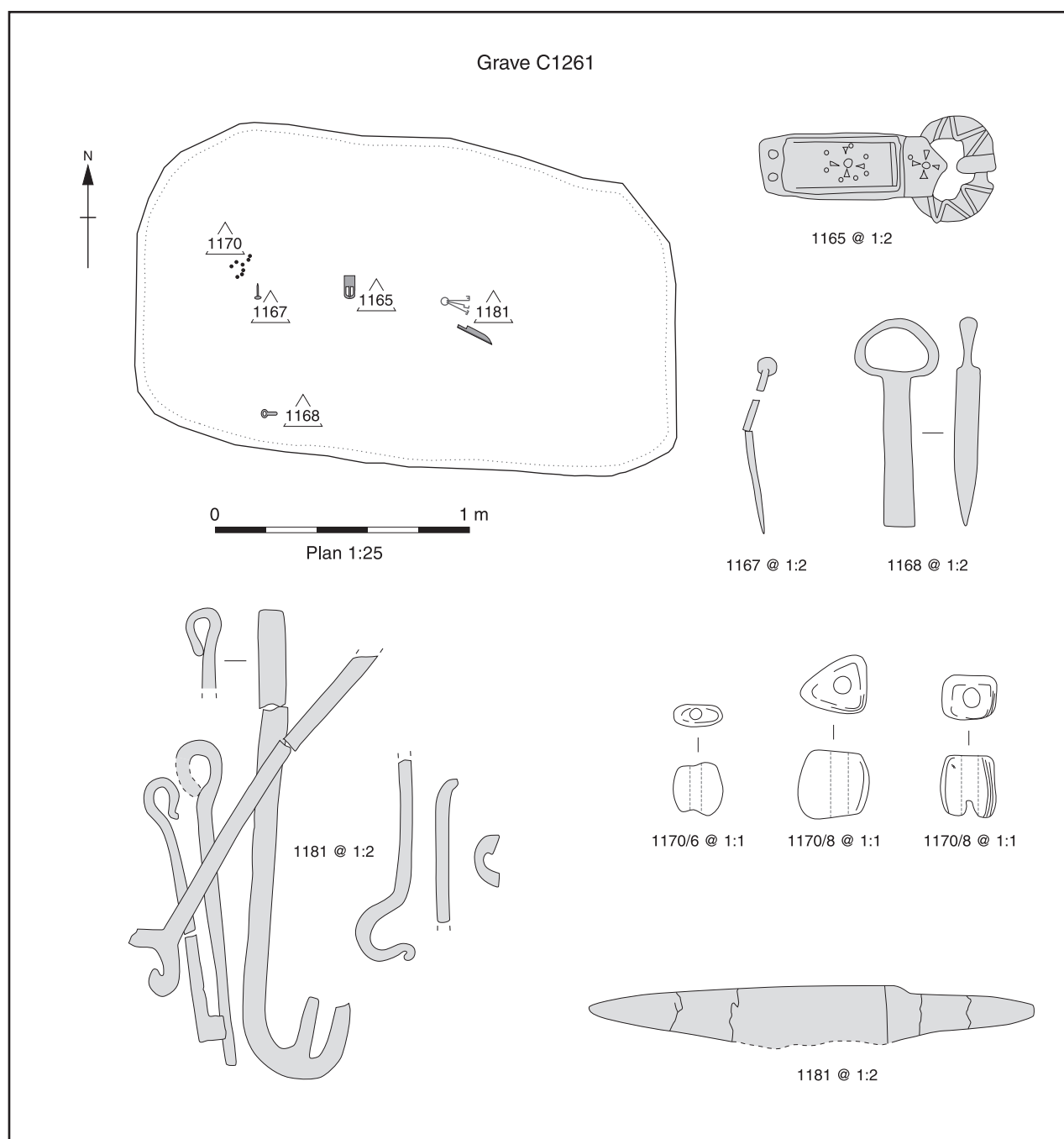


Figure 6.19 Saltwood Tunnel: grave 1261, central cemetery: Italo-Byzantine type buckle 1165 and other grave goods

limits and are characterised by graves containing amethyst and glass beads, which occur largely in later 7th century contexts (Geake 1997, 41).

It is possible to argue that the northern row of graves east of the trackway, the majority of which are dated to the 7th century, are marked out from the main part of the central cemetery by the fact that they are delimited by ditches to the east and west which flare out to the south facing the one burial in this group within a penannular ditch (Fig. 6.20). Further south a short length of ditch (229) running roughly east to west with terminals turning northwards partly delimits a space around the ditched burial. Perhaps the lack of a prehistoric barrow on the eastern side of the trackway led to the creation of ritual space; elements of planning are clear and a separate

burial plot seems likely. Such arrangements are not common and a direct parallel for the enclosed Saltwood burials is not immediately apparent, although the 7th century cemetery of c 150 burials discovered at Springhead Park, Northfleet, also connected with HS1-related activities, revealed a row of 19 graves with a ring-ditch at the northern end (Pitts 2008).

The Saltwood Early Anglo-Saxon domestic structures

In common with an increasing number of cemetery sites, the Saltwood excavations, and one earlier intervention associated with the M20 immediately to the north, have provided a tantalising glimpse of associated settlement in the form of three sunken-featured buildings. The buildings are widely dispersed (Fig. 6.21; SFB from M20

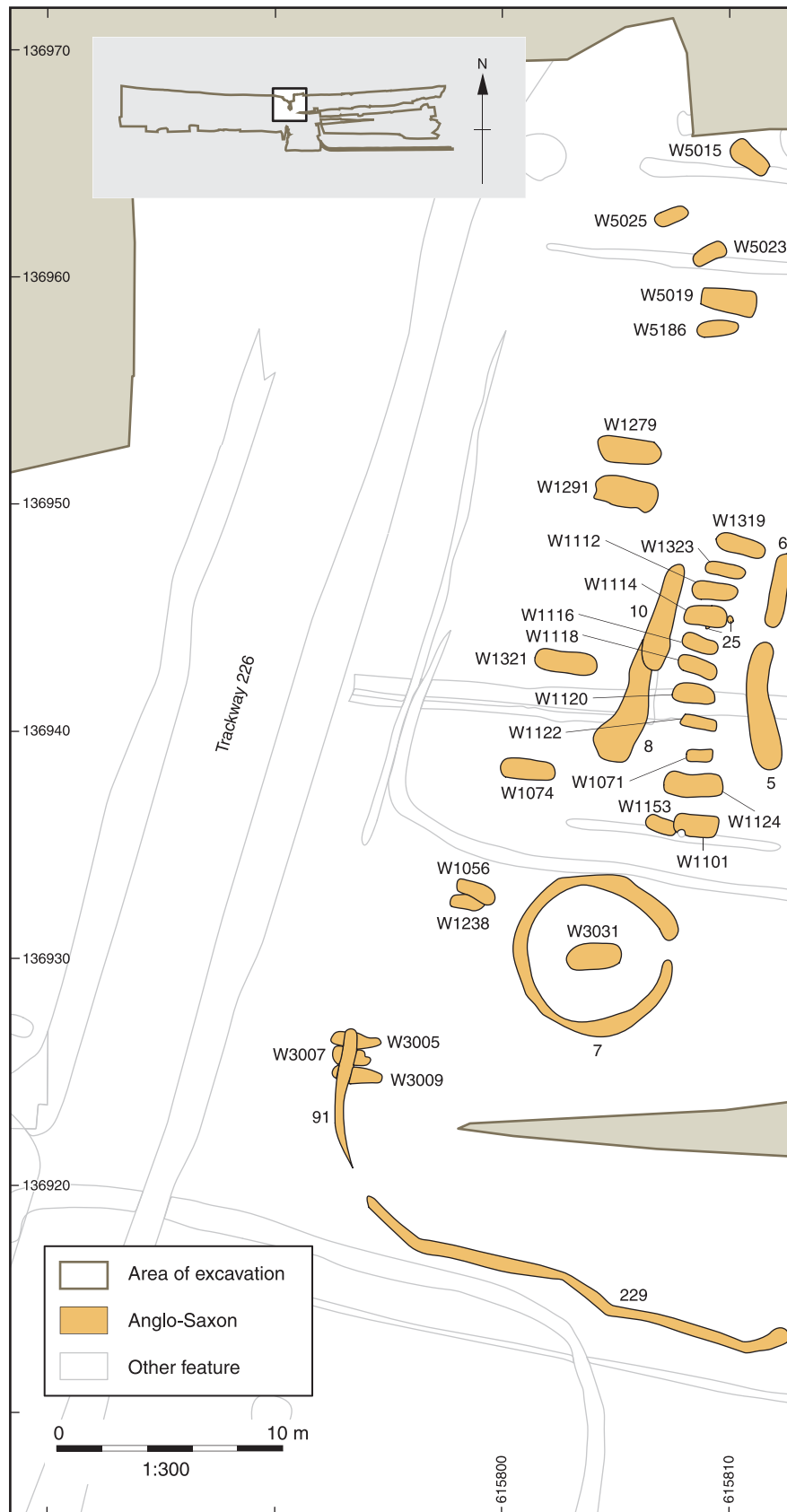


Figure 6.20 Saltwood Tunnel: graves east of trackway 226

excavation not shown) and this is what one would expect to find in a 6th–7th century rural environment. Perhaps the structures lay on the fringes of several small farmsteads just north of the cemetery. A single sunken-

featured building infilled in the 6th or 7th century was recently excavated adjacent to the 5th century cemetery at Ringlemere, near Woodnesborough (Parfitt and Needham 2007, 52, fig. 6), although later graves might yet be found

in the vicinity. Anglo-Saxon settlement archaeology is known nearby at Dollands Moor, a few kilometres to the east, and to the west at West Hythe (*Sandtun*), while the royal vill and 7th century nunnery at Lyminge lay 4km to the south, a location also characterised by several inhumation cemeteries spanning the mid 5th to 7th centuries (Gardiner *et al.*, 2001; Richardson 2005, sites 159, 160 and 161). Other settlements in eastern England, most notably Mucking (Essex), have revealed cemeteries adjacent to settlements. At Mucking two cemeteries lay within a large area of sprawling settlement, while at Bishopstone, Sussex, the cemetery focussed on a Bronze Age barrow a short distance from the settlement (Hamerow 1993; Bell 1977). At Spong Hill (Norfolk) a small settlement, probably one of several in the vicinity, lay at the north-western edge of the large cremation and inhumation cemetery (Rickett 1995). At Saltwood, further research could usefully be undertaken to establish the extent and relationship of settlement there to the extensive cemetery populations.

Saltwood: an excavated assembly site?

Potentially one of the most interesting, yet archaeologically subtle, aspects of the Saltwood sequence are the remnants of Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon use of the former burial landscape. In his consideration of the landscape of Saltwood, Riddler notes that the meeting place of the local Domesday hundred, Heane, must be close by the burial sites; the place-name scholar Wallenberg having noted the occurrence of the name Heane Wood Barn, less than 250m south-west of the western cemetery (see Fig. 6.4) (Riddler 2006, 68; Wallenberg 1934, 457). Riddler notes the convergence of tracks just south of the cemeteries and the plateau just north as possible locations, but three further factors suggest the excavated locale of the cemeteries as the meeting place.

First, in topographical terms, mounds are commonly known throughout north-western Europe, including England, as sites for public assemblies (Gelling 1978, 191–214; Reynolds 1999, 76–80; Pantos 2003) and both the Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon barrows at Saltwood would have provided precisely the type of distinctive topography required. Second, the name Heane Wood is likely to have formerly referred to a wider area than that shown on early maps (see Fig. 6.4), probably incorporating the site of the cemetery. Indeed, given that the hundred name is Heane, the wood is most likely to have been named from its proximity to the meeting-place. Wallenberg suggested that the origin of the name might be found in an otherwise unrecorded OE noun *H a*, meaning ‘mound’ (Wallenberg 1934, 366). Following Wallenberg’s analysis of Kentish place-names, another Scandinavian scholar, OS Anderson, studied specifically English hundred names. His study of south-eastern England argues for an explanation of the name as meaning simply ‘at the high (place)’, being derived from OE *H an* (Anderson 1939, 137–8). In view of the HS1 discoveries, perhaps Wallenberg’s claim deserves reconsideration. Thirdly, and crucially, the cemetery spaces, particularly at

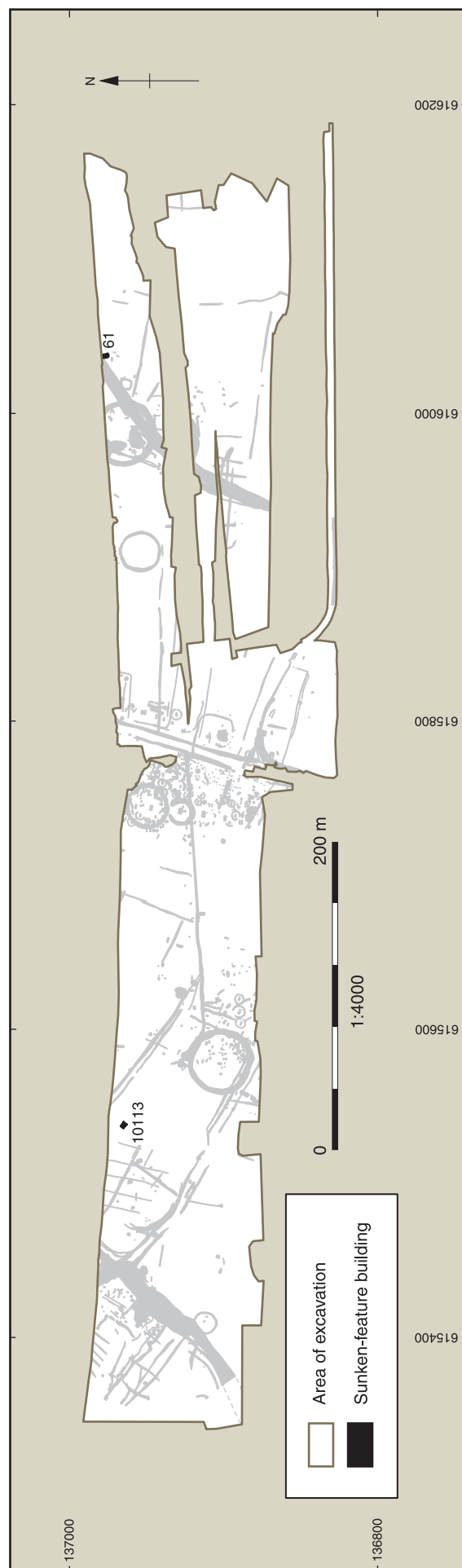


Figure 6.2 | Saltwood Tunnel: sunken-featured buildings

the western and eastern ends of the excavated area, have revealed archaeological evidence in the form of pits, some containing material culture, and pottery sherds from the topsoil indicative of sporadic non-funerary occupation of 7th century and later date—following on from the period of burial activity. These pits and other finds represent continuing use of the site after burials ceased in the late 7th century. Whether the site might have been used as a meeting place while it was still also in use as a cemetery is a distinct possibility. Several of the pits cut into graves in both the eastern and western cemeteries and demonstrate Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon use of the Bronze Age mounds. The ceramics from the Saltwood pits mainly date to the 7th to 8th century, although a fine iron knife with inlaid copper alloy wire on both sides of the blade is Mid to Late Anglo-Saxon in date. An angled back knife of 9th–12th century type and handful of Late Anglo-Saxon pottery sherds suggest a similar level of activity at the eastern end of the excavated area. Several ditches in close proximity represent further 11th or 12th century activity.

Sites elsewhere in England, such as that discovered at Dorney, near Eton, have revealed similar evidence of periodic occupation, lacking buildings or other evidence of permanent settlement, and the suggestion has very plausibly been made for that site that the remains represent those of an assembly site (Foreman *et al.*, 2002, 70). The site of the Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Loveden Hill, Lincolnshire was a hundred meeting place by the time of the Domesday Survey (Meaney 1964, 158) and perhaps a parallel process of development took place there also; further research is necessary into this interesting phenomenon.

Anglo-Saxon Saltwood: conclusions

It has been suggested, and indeed partially demonstrated, that settlement relating to the three Saltwood cemeteries lies to the north. Rather than seeking one such site, however, it makes more sense to envisage a series of farms scattered across the landscape, some perhaps comprising as few as two households, perhaps represented in death by Saltwood's eastern and western cemeteries, alongside larger settlements, as represented by the central cemetery. If such a view holds, an attempt can be made to reconstruct the dynamics of settlement in the locale, with small settlements during the 6th century running into the 7th, but with larger scale settlement developing in the later 6th century and continuing into the late 7th century. An alternative view might be to see the smaller cemeteries as attempts by individual families based within an entirely dispersed settlement pattern founding dynasties of their own marked by distinct burial places. In this respect, even the structure of the central cemetery indicates several wealthy families whose leading figures attracted the burials of those of lesser rank around their graves. The preceding discussion has raised the issue of reconstructing living communities from burial remains and the Saltwood discoveries have provided material of considerable importance, not least a snapshot of the physical environment within which these people lived. The finding of several cemeteries in close

proximity is not only sometimes a feature of Early Anglo-Saxon Kent, for example at Bekesbourne and Deal, but further afield in Hampshire, at Portway near Andover, in Wiltshire at Roche Court Down and further west still at Kemble on the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire border and at Beckford, formerly in Gloucestershire, now in Hereford and Worcester (Brookes 2007a, 205 and 212; Cook and Dacre 1985, 3; Stone 1932; Reynolds 2006b, 144; Evison and Hill 1996, 2, fig. 1).

Overall, the characteristics of the Saltwood cemeteries easily find comparisons among other cemeteries of the period in eastern Kent. Ring-ditches are known at Dover Buckland and Finglesham, for example, while the overall wealth of the cemeteries can be compared again to Dover Buckland but also with sites such as Bifrons. Although the Saltwood cemeteries lie at the south-eastern limit of the distribution of Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in Kent, their contents should come as no surprise. The close proximity of Saltwood to the sea suits continental connections and the other rich Kentish cemeteries are largely located in similar ways in the landscape. The dynastic element visible at Saltwood is paralleled at Finglesham (Hawkes and Grainger 2006), while the appropriation of earlier monuments finds a series of parallels, perhaps best illustrated recently by the excavation of the Mill Hill cemetery near Deal and the remarkable 5th century cemetery at Ringlemere near Woodnesborough (Parfitt and Brugmann 1997, fig. 4; Parfitt and Needham 2007, fig. 6). The occurrence of a high number of weapon burials is a feature of a series of coastal cemeteries, for example in Kent at Sarre and Dover Buckland, but such are known much further afield as at Bargates, near Christchurch in Dorset (Richardson 2005, no. 231; Evison 1987; Jarvis 1983). One should perhaps expect to find well armed communities in coastal locations in a climate where cross-channel movement was evidently common and where, by migration, so much was to be won and lost. In every respect, the Saltwood burials fit well with the known picture of east Kent (Brookes 2007a).

In most cases the changing nature of land-utilisation immediately following the use of a locale as a cemetery is beyond the reach of the archaeologist. In the case of Saltwood, however, it has been possible to use a combination of archaeology, place-name and topographical evidence to suggest a process whereby a place used for up to two centuries for burial by populations settled in the wider landscape retained a fundamental role in succeeding centuries as a place of assembly, by Domesday that of the hundred court. In this way, the Saltwood evidence provides a valuable model for a sacred origin for assembly sites and provides a direct link between the pre-Christian world and that of an organised society in a climate of kingship and organised religion.

Burial in west Kent: the Cuxton Anglo-Saxon cemetery

As noted in the introductory sections, west Kent is very different archaeologically to the east of the county. The Cuxton Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies on the west side

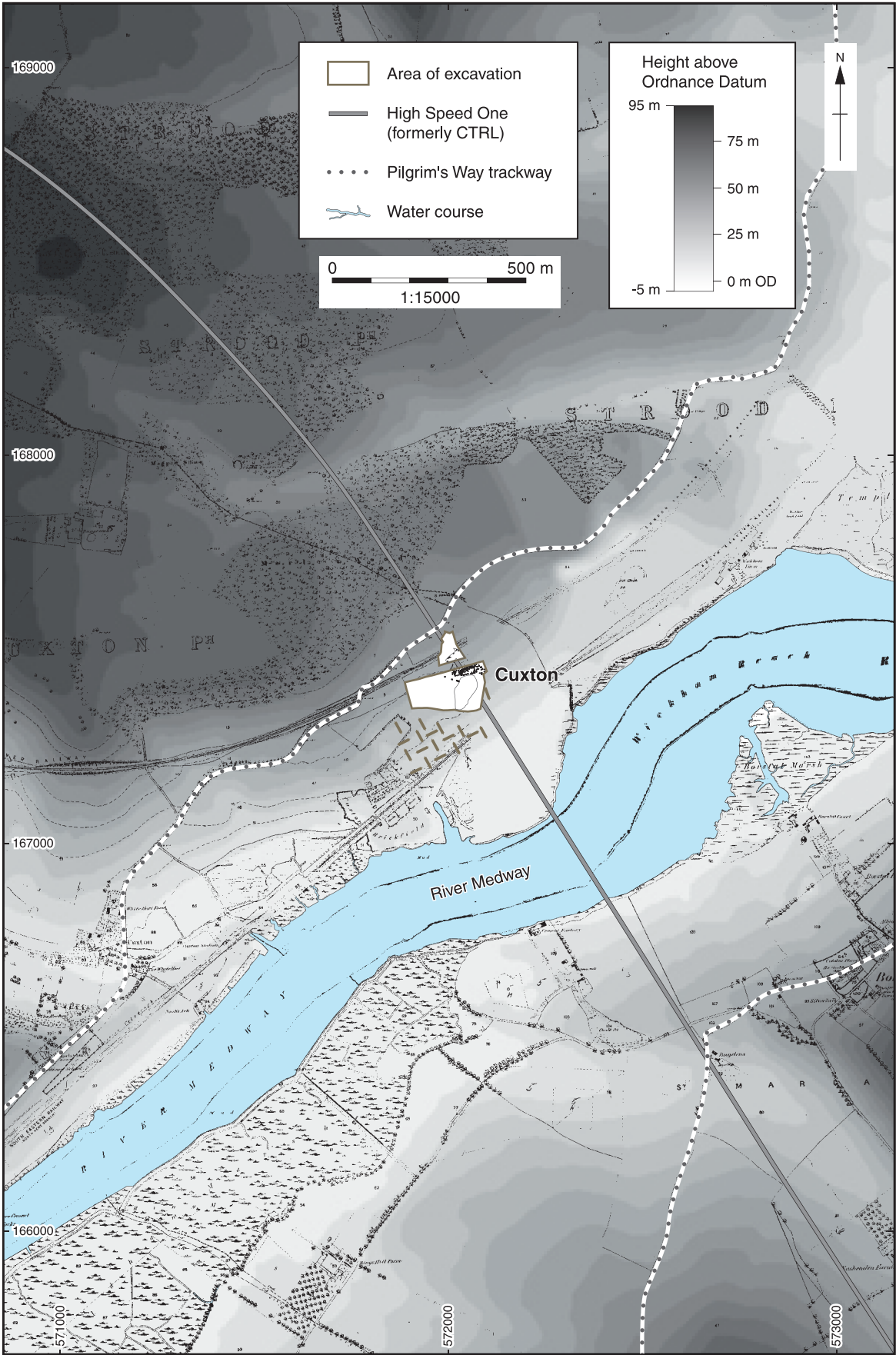


Figure 6.22 Cuxton overlaid on the 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1869)

of the River Medway and thus provides an excellent opportunity to further examine the contrast between the two regions. Does the cemetery show greater affinities with those of the Lower Thames Valley? Are different topographical characteristics evident? What contrasts and comparisons can be made with regard to social structure and social and economic relationships?

Two kilometres south-west of Rochester, the location of the Cuxton cemetery is notable, lying as it does with a south and east facing aspect overlooking the river Medway (Fig. 6.22). The limits of the cemetery are defined not by man-made features but by natural topography, a terrace *c* 30m above OD approximately halfway up the side of the river valley. Although the geology is Upper Chalk, normally conducive to the preservation of human remains, human bone was very poorly preserved. The location has commanding views along the river in both directions and directly over the river is the head of the Nashenden Valley, followed by the Pilgrim's Way, a route whose importance has already been highlighted and to which we will return. Indeed, the Cuxton cemetery would have been a highly prominent territorial marker visible to travellers coming from the east by road or from north or south along the river. An Anglo-Saxon weapon grave was discovered in the 19th century when one (it is not known which) of the two railway cuttings running parallel to the north bank of the Medway was dug, while close to the site a further record of a burial with a Frankish angon was made later in that century (Mackinder 2006).

The HS1 excavations revealed 36 Early Anglo-Saxon inhumation graves, each containing a single inhumation apart from a juvenile tooth crown found in grave 303 with an adult burial (Fig. 6.23). The majority of burials were of adults (24) with five juveniles, four infants and one individual whose age could not be determined. Half of the adults could not be sexed from the biological evidence, but of the remainder who could, half were male, half female. Nine weapon burials furnished with spears were found, four of these also with shield bosses; all the weapon graves lay in the eastern half of the cemetery (Fig. 6.24), although a relatively high-status male buried with a purse lay on the western side (see below). Five graves were without finds. A total of 11 graves were enclosed with penannular ditches, of which seven had evidence of postholes between the terminals. While the southern and western limits of the site were defined by the natural slope of the ground, the railway immediately to the north surely overlies further interments, while others probably lie outside the eastern limit of the excavation. Even so, the plan of the cemetery indicates that most of the graves have been recovered. In common with most Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, there is little intercutting of graves, apart from a degree of over-lapping of three of the penannular ditched burials at the north of the excavated area in the centre of the cemetery (see Saltwood above). As Mackinder (2006) notes, this aspect indicates either a very short chronology overall, whereby graves were still visible as low mounds of earth, or a situation where graves were marked in a more permanent way. Certainly, we should

expect the graves surrounded by ditches to have been marked with mounds, albeit on a modest scale. One grave (316), a coffined weapon burial and an outlier to the rest, east of the main concentration, may have had a canopy built over it. At least eight postholes surround the grave and are reminiscent of structures found most notably at the east Kentish cemetery of St Peter's, Broadstairs (Hogarth 1973).

Further possible structural evidence associated with burials was observed in the form of ledges along the sides of graves 176 and 382, although the profiles of both suggest a lack of squaring the grave cut on the part of the grave-digger rather than any structural intentions.

Five burials at Cuxton were probably contained in coffins, evidenced by soil stains rather than nails, and in all cases where the body position could be determined, the corpse was placed extended on its back with one exception, grave 303, where the body may have been crouched or flexed; Mackinder (2006) favours later disturbance as the cause of the corpse's aspect.

Thirty-two inhumations were furnished in varying degrees, while two of the unfurnished burials, a mature female in grave 279 and an individual in grave 379, were both associated with charcoal, a bed underneath the body in the former instance. Although a total of 190 objects were recovered from the cemetery, as might be expected there is considerable variation between individual graves. Imported materials were rare and limited to amber, which could come from north-east Scotland or much further afield (the Baltic, Portugal, Romania or Sicily), amethyst, probably ultimately from the eastern Mediterranean, and cowrie shell, potentially from India, the Red Sea or the Near East (Huggett 1988, 64, 66 and 72).

Four Cuxton graves contained finds that denote high status and it is of interest that all four were found close together on the southern edge of the burial plot (see Fig. 6.23). The westernmost of this group, burial 215, was of a female aged 17–30 buried with a range of finds of probable later 7th century date, including a silver wire ring, one whole and one partial pendant formed of a thin sheet of antler pedicle suspended by an iron loop, the former with punched dots in concentric circles, a further pendant made out of a re-used annular glass bead within a sheet copper frame and a bone comb which has a rather wider date range (Fig. 6.25). Several iron tools lay at the woman's left side, perhaps in a bag, and included a set of shears, a knife, and probable sharpening steel. An iron ring and chatelaine, among other objects, lay over the pelvis. A mass of beads was also found in the neck region which, although including several forms that span the entire Early Anglo-Saxon period, exhibited amethyst types of the late 7th century and a glass bead of a type dated to *c* 675–750 at Dover Buckland (Evison 1987, 61–3). Immediately to the east and within a penannular ditch lay grave 262, the burial of a man aged 30–45. Finds in the grave, all found at the waist, included a lace-tag and a small copper alloy buckle of late 7th century type. The most distinctive object, however, is an earlier 7th century Kentish type buckle, of copper alloy but probably

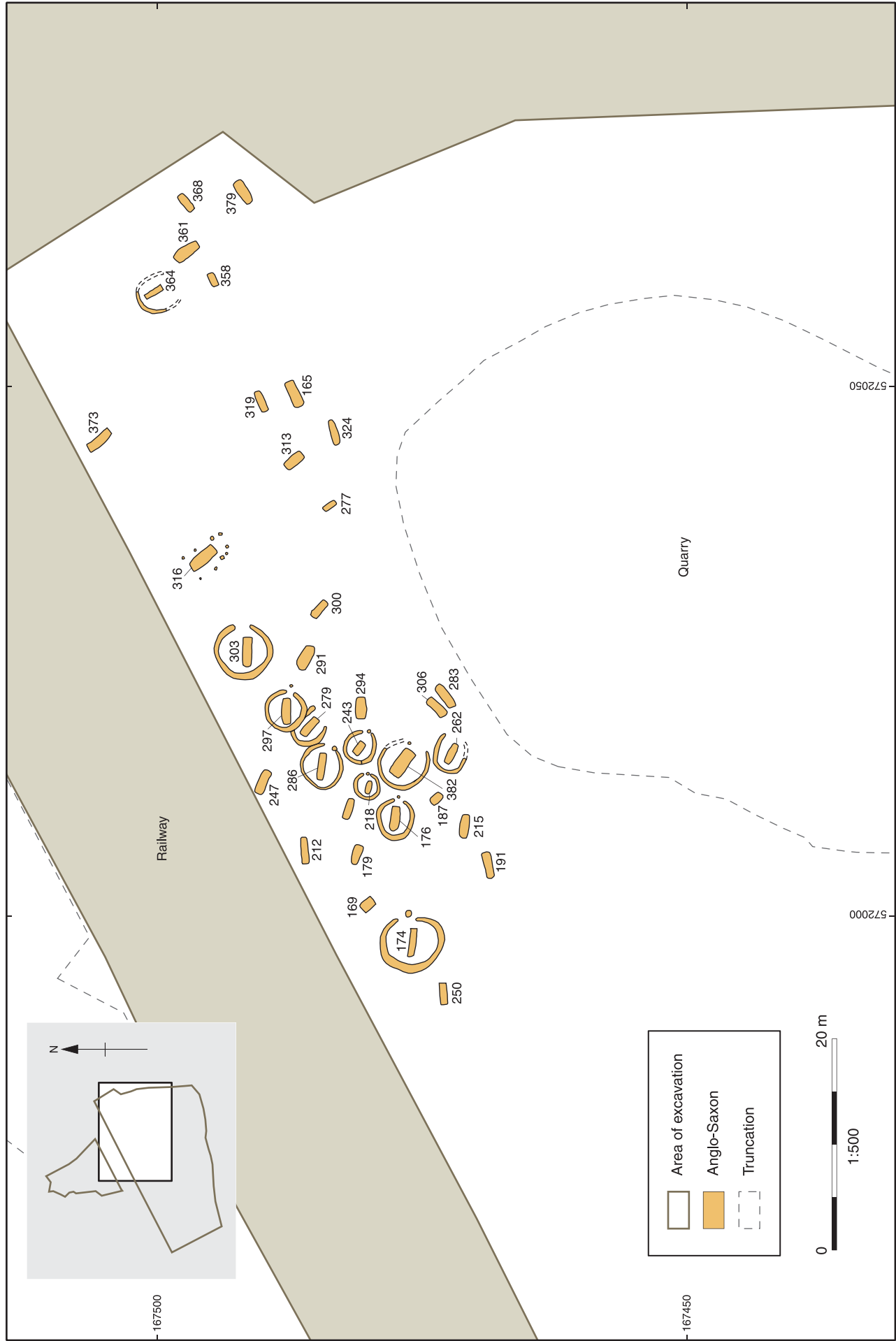


Figure 6.23 Cuxton: overall plan of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery

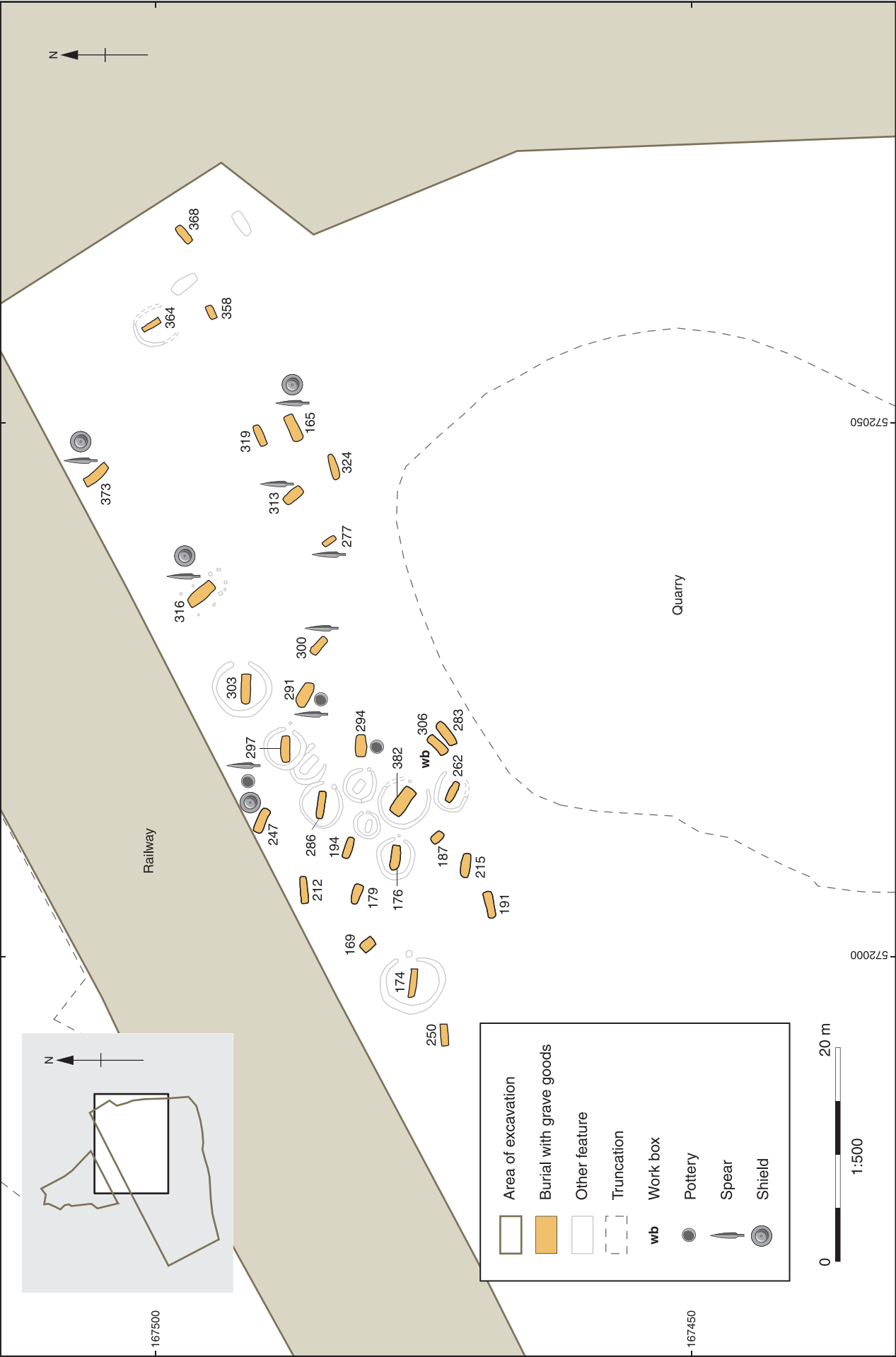


Figure 6.24 Cuxton: plan of the distribution of grave goods

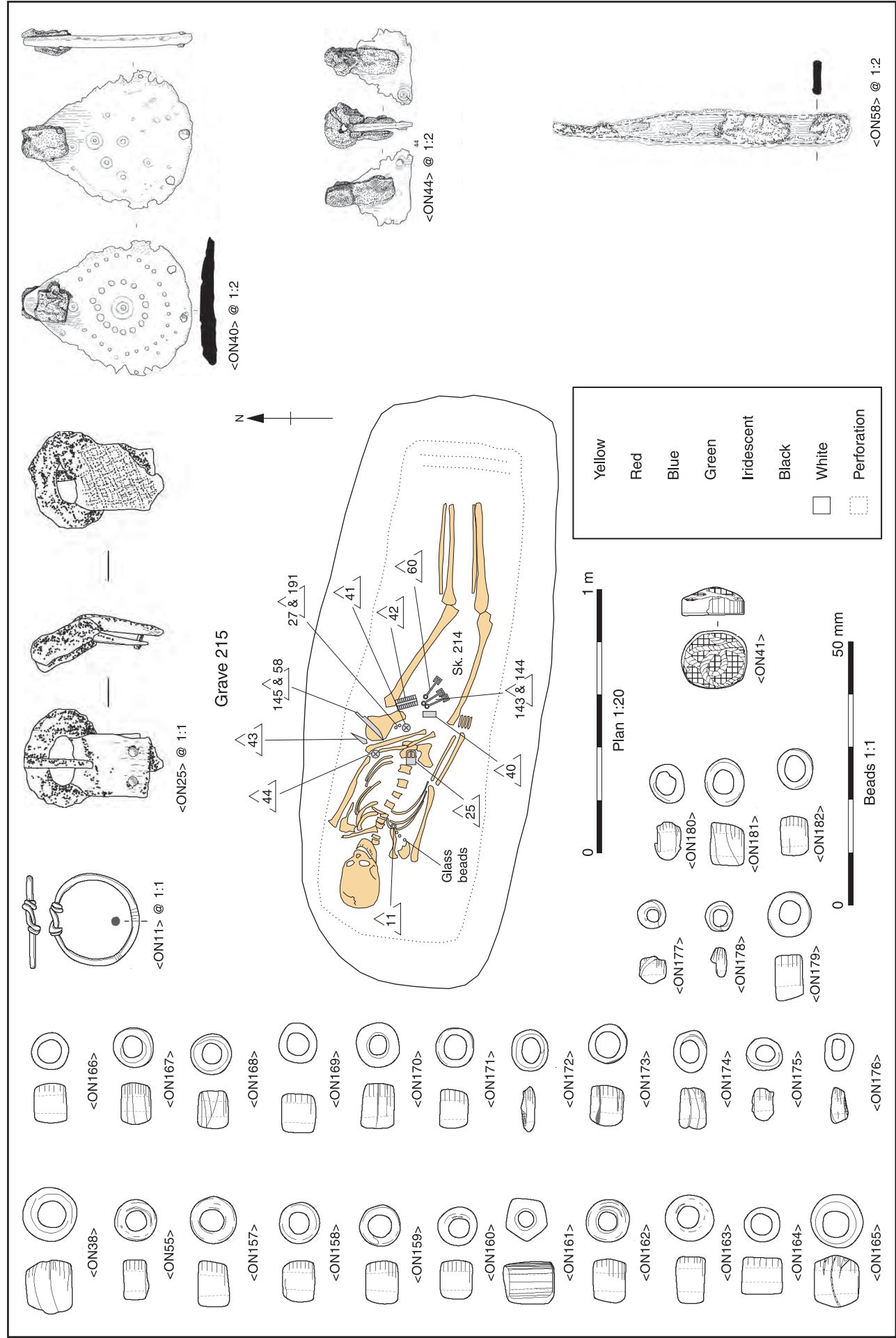


Figure 6.25 Cuxton: grave 215 and its associated finds (NB location of <ON199> not specified, ON27, 136, 142, 191 and 199 not illustrated)

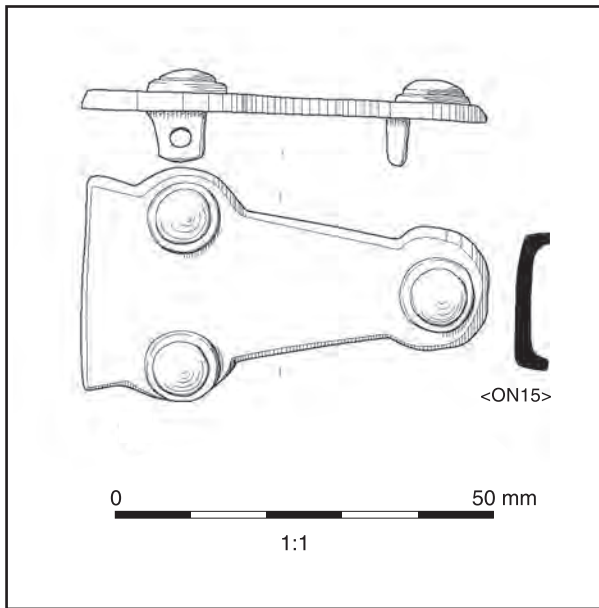


Figure 6.26 Cuxton: early 7th century Kentish type buckle from grave 262

originally gilded, formed of a triangular counter plate with three iron rivets, each formerly covered with gilded domed mounts, a buckle plate and loop (Fig. 6.26). To the east of grave 262, lay graves 283 and 306 side-by-side. Grave 283 (Fig. 6.27) contained only a few skull fragments but the objects within the grave suggest a male burial. A continental type buckle, broadly similar to that from grave 262 discussed above, with a triangular counterplate, probably dates to the first half of the 7th century and is very likely of insular manufacture, while two iron knives and an awl were also found. Most striking was the finding of a kidney-shaped, copper alloy purse frame measuring 250mm across, a 7th century artefact type, perhaps dating to the second half of that century (Fig. 6.28). Two small copper alloy buckles and a small copper alloy mount are probably purse fittings, while a possible sharpening steel may have been contained within. Purse frames are very rare finds and only three insular parallels for the kidney-shaped Cuxton example are identified by Lyn Blackmore in her discussion of the find: from the Mound 1 ship burial at Sutton Hoo (dated to the late 6th or early 7th century), from grave 1356 at the Buttermarket cemetery Ipswich, and from the high-status female burial from Swallowcliffe Down, Wiltshire (both dated to the second half of the 7th century) (Blackmore 2006, 29; Bruce-Mitford 1978, 487–522; Scull and Bayliss 1999, 41; Speake 1989, 80).

The adjacent grave 306, however, contained some truly remarkable objects. The use of the Cuxton cemetery spans the period of the conversion to Christianity in Kent (from AD 597) and evidence for the local impact of this process at Cuxton is provided by the contents of grave 306, which included two objects inscribed with indisputably Christian iconography. First, the lesser finds. Four silver wire rings confirm a 7th century date, while a gold scutiform pendant with a cross-like motif and a prominent central boss also fits this date range. A further

gold pendant has a glass setting *en cabochon*. Iron finds include a chatelaine and parts of iron knives.

The most important finds, however, are the two copper alloy work- or reliquary-boxes found by the upper and lower left leg respectively (Fig. 6.29). These objects are thought to have served either of two functions: they might contain prized personal possessions or perhaps fine tools such as sewing equipment, or they might contain relics or other devotional objects. One basic difference is that certain boxes were clearly designed to be opened, whereas others were not and Hawkes suggests that the distinction between amuletic or functional contents can be determined on these grounds (Hawkes 1973, 197). Both of the Cuxton containers were designed to be opened. Meaney's excellent discussion makes it clear that a range of purposes is likely for these objects, noting that scraps of cloth sometimes found within are very small and drawing attention to David Brown's observation that none is known to have actually contained needles (Meaney 1981, 181–9). Workboxes were apparently worn in one of two ways; either around the neck or suspended from the waist (Wamers 1995, 148–51). The larger of the two containers is probably of eastern Mediterranean Byzantine origin, whereas the smaller of the two is of probable insular manufacture. Lyn Blackmore has discussed both objects in full and what follows is drawn from her detailed consideration (Blackmore 2006, 35–41).

The larger Byzantine object (ON22) is formed of a rectangular sheet of copper alloy rolled to form a tapered tube 67mm high, with a diameter at the wider base of 25mm. The base is formed of a separate disc, while the object has three chains fixed to loops on the tube, each of which is suspended from a copper alloy ring. A further chain attached to the ring is connected to a lid which fitted inside the upper, narrow, end of the tube. Four bands of lightly incised lines run around the tube. Overt Christian symbolism has been added to the container in the form of two groups of three mounds set opposite to each other either side of the two central incised bands. The form of the mounds is varied but it is clear that this secondary decoration is intended to represent the Calvary and the hill of Golgotha.

The Byzantine container finds its closest parallels in graves of the highest status and, indeed, the closest known comparison is from a very wealthy female grave underneath Frankfurt Cathedral dated to the late 7th century (Hampel 1994, 167). Only two other English finds are known, one from the Kentish cemetery at Kingston Down (grave 222), and the other from the 'princely' Prittlewell grave found recently in Essex (Fausett 1856, 81, pl 13, 7; Hirst *et al.* 2004, 28). The second workbox (ON21) is rather larger with a diameter of 60mm and a height of 48mm. It too is formed of sheet metal although its workmanship is cruder with the exception of the zoomorphic fitting which was originally set with a hinge vertically on one side of the object. One side of this hinged plate has secondary decoration in the form of very fine, and barely visible, incised lines. The zoomorphic form of the plate has been emphasised with

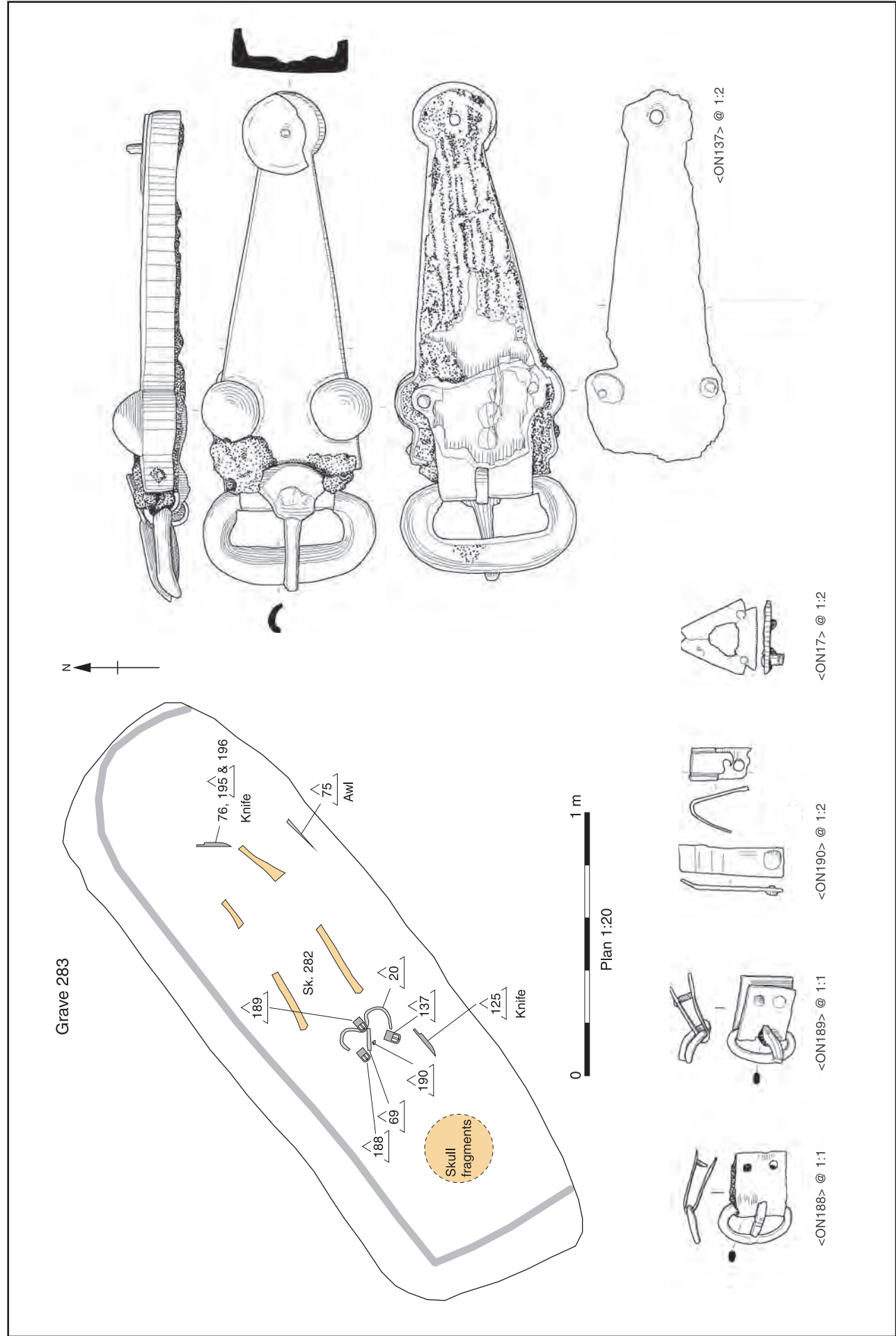


Figure 6.27 Cuxton: plan and selected grave goods from grave 283

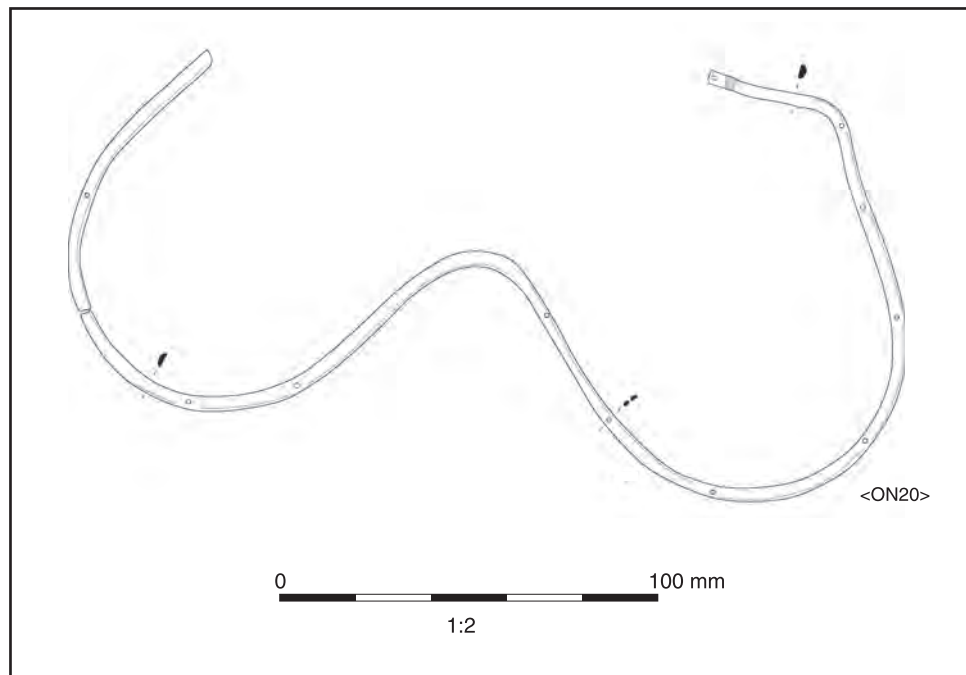


Figure 6.28 Cuxton: purse frame from grave 283

fine lines to form a central panel which has then been filled with a Latin cross with expanded arms set on a mound with two smaller crosses either side. The whole arrangement, while different in style and quality of execution, is clearly the same iconographic scene as that found on the Byzantine workbox. It is suggested that the faintness of the secondary decoration would have rendered the scheme invisible to anyone other than the owner of the object (Blackmore 2006, 39) and perhaps this reflects the reality of a society undergoing fundamental ideological change as was the case in 7th century Kent.

Cuxton conclusions

Although the graves at Cuxton were generally less richly furnished than those at Saltwood and other east Kent cemeteries, similarities are nevertheless evident. The importance of prominent topography and location by an important route of communication are shared characteristics, although no earlier barrows are recorded at Cuxton. The Kentish tradition of enclosing graves with penannular ditches is seen at both sites. The differences in wealth can be accounted for not only by geographical and economic factors, which are certainly key, but also by the fact that Cuxton is a largely 7th century cemetery and it was during this period that nationally the wealth and range of objects buried in inhumation graves rapidly declined. The full complexity of the wealth differences between the two halves of the county has been discussed by Stuart Brookes in a powerful and persuasive analysis (Brookes 2007a, 146–50). The Byzantine container from grave 306 indicates that the inhabitants of west Kent had access to continental imports, like their counterparts in the east of the county, but in a less spectacular fashion and in a rather different context, in this case probably that of personal devotion. Paranoia regarding changing religious affiliations is perhaps exhibited in the insular

workbox from grave 306 and this provides an instance of how archaeology might contribute to debates about the nature of ideological change and its social context in local communities. The purse frame from grave 283 places that burial alongside those of a very special kind elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England.

Where the Cuxton community actually lived is at present unknown, but given that only a handful of wealthy graves are known which are likely to span the entire 7th century, perhaps three generations of one social unit are represented. In this respect a comparison might be drawn with the eastern and western cemeteries at Saltwood.

Investigations at White Horse Stone

While the study and reconstruction of Roman roads constituted a field of enquiry in its own right in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, including a study of the routes of the Weald (Margary 1948; 1955), the study of Anglo-Saxon and medieval routeways has seen much less attention, despite the fact that the framework of roads and routeways in the modern landscape owes much more to the post-Roman centuries than before. Roman roads, at least the principal routes, are far more suited to study having a known structural composition in terms of materials and well-known characteristics in terms of their straightness in the landscape. While these latter features certainly apply to major Roman routes, much less is known about minor ones. The large-scale investigations at White Horse Stone, Aylesford, have provided a valuable archaeological view of the intersection between a major Roman route, leading south from Rochester across the Weald towards Hastings and the so-called Pilgrim's Way, a late name given to an early route, perhaps even that used by William during his conquest of

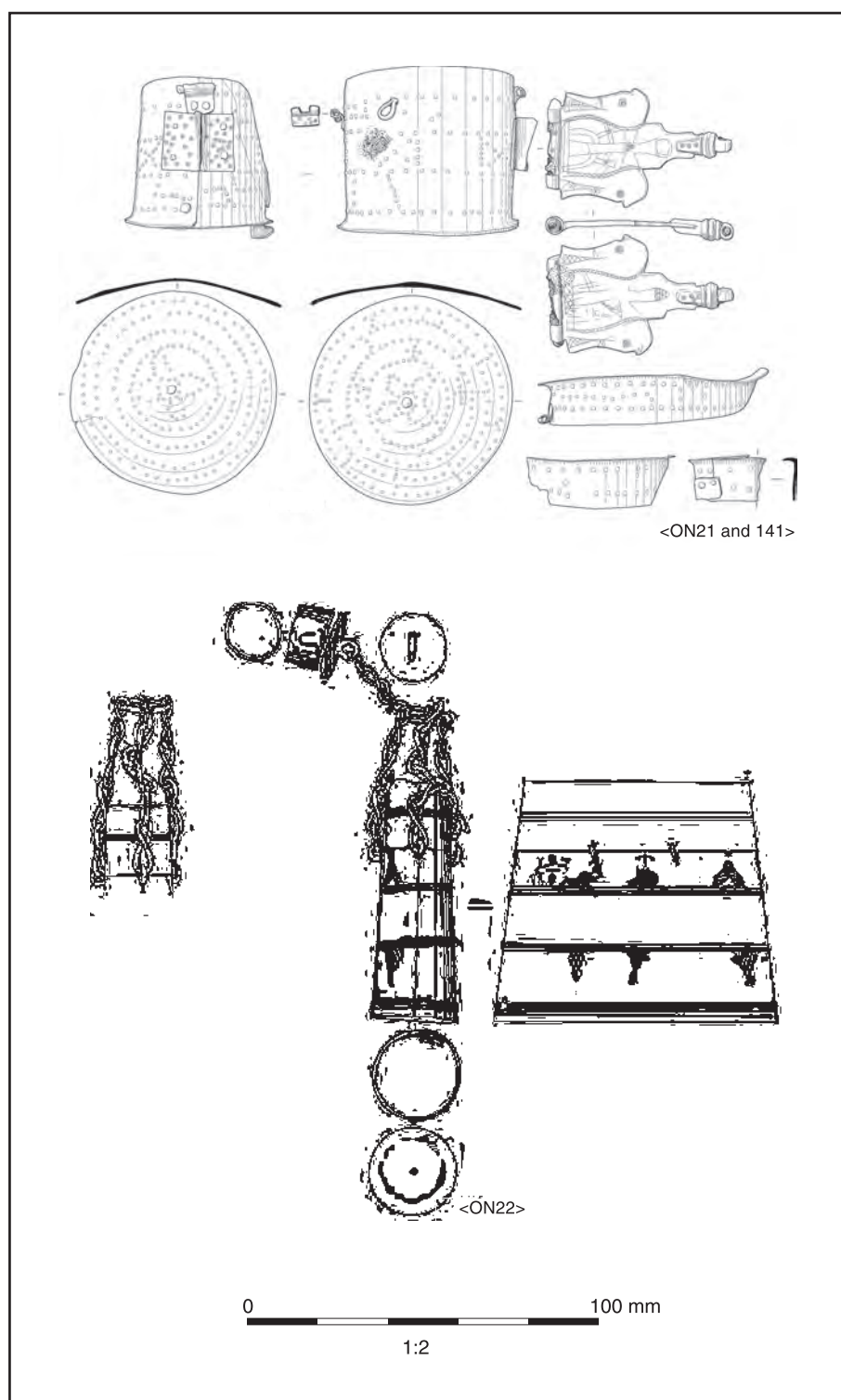


Figure 6.29 Cuxton: containers from grave 306

Kent immediately following Hastings and on his (rather circuitous) way to London (Banyard 2004, 34). Archaeology shows that the route is indeed ancient.

Three interventions were made in close proximity to each other; from north to south known as White Horse Stone, Pilgrim's Way and West of Boarley Farm (Hayden 2006a) (Fig 6.30). Parallel ditches of Roman date were recorded running north-south through the first two trenches and these are likely to represent the course of the Roman road. A section through the Pilgrim's Way

itself revealed a sequence of three holloways, each with flint metalling, the first of which was aligned slightly differently to the later routes, while the second holloway had become largely infilled before the third had formed. The current Pilgrim's Way reflects the course of the second and third holloways. Rather than reflecting periods of disuse of the route, the archaeology no doubt reflects a common feature of major early roads whereby prolonged periods of wet weather led to minor local detours being made around impassable stretches,

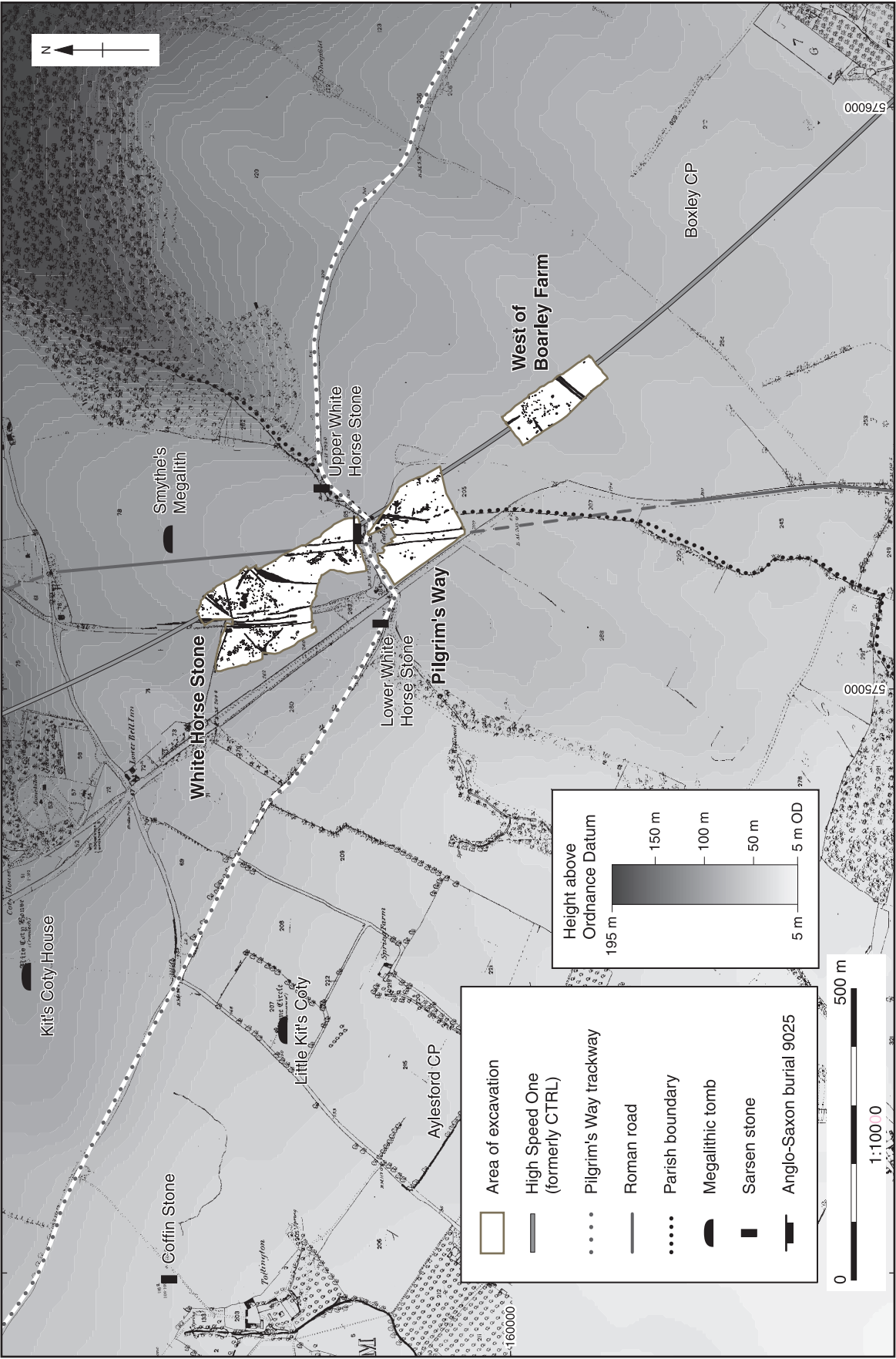


Figure 6.30 White Horse Stone overlaid on the 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1869)

perhaps for a short period or perhaps longer. The Wessex ridgeway provides a clear example of this process (Crawford 1960, frontispiece).

With regard to dating the Pilgrim's Way, several observations can be made. The earliest of the holloways overlay a buried agricultural soil which was cultivated into the Roman period but not after, while a burial (see below), which predated the third Holloway, is radiocarbon dated to between the late 7th and late 10th centuries AD. It seems reasonable, therefore, to infer at least a Middle Anglo-Saxon date for the route overall and, on the basis of the processes of infilling and re-surfacing, perhaps a date early in that range.

Besides the archaeology of the routeways, a striking archaeological example of an explicit relationship between a crossroads and an Anglo-Saxon burial was revealed. The burial of an unaccompanied female aged 25–35, laid supine with the arms folded across the chest, was found just 5m north of the boundary line in the north-east quadrant of the crossroads (Fig. 6.31). A radiocarbon determination from the woman's femur returned a date of cal AD 680–980 (GU-9013). Not only was the burial located at a crossroads, significantly the boundary between the parishes of Aylesford and Boxley, and also between the hundreds of Maidstone and Eythorne, runs across the intersection. Until recently, crossroads burial was considered to be a post-medieval practice, although re-evaluation of the evidence from Anglo-Saxon charters and careful study of isolated interments with radiocarbon dates confirms that the practice begins as early as the 6th century in England (Halliday 1996; Clarke 2004; Reynolds 2002; 2009).

The motivation to bury an individual at a crossroads is likely to have been driven by a desire to permanently remove the corpse of a person who had died in unusual circumstances, for example suicide, from the realm of the living. Certainly, there was a fear in the Middle Ages of revenants haunting the living and burial at a crossroads is often considered to reflect a desire to confuse a corpse raising itself from the dead and to prevent it from returning to the community (Caciola 1996; Murray 2000, 46–9). Burial in a boundary location was also viewed as a fitting place for the burial of social outcasts and the location of such a burial here of 8th, 9th or even 10th century date suggests also that the administrative structure of the landscape was in place by the time the interment was made. While it is unfortunate that the burial cannot be more closely dated, this latter observation nevertheless has major implications for our understanding of the chronology of territorial units in the Kentish landscape and a comparable chronological picture emerges from other southern English regions (Reynolds 2009).

Further Anglo-Saxon archaeology was recorded at West of Boarley Farm, where a series of pits, postholes and several ditches appear to represent Middle Anglo-Saxon agricultural and settlement activity (Fig. 6.32). Although no clear structural ground plans or fence lines are evident from the distribution of postholes, and very few of these were excavated, four pits containing animal burials were excavated, two of which provided radiocarbon dates. Pit 1036 contained an almost complete articulated cow skeleton and returned a calibrated date of AD 700–1000 (GU-9086), while pit 1061 contained a horse burial calibrated to AD 680–900



Figure 6.31 White Horse Stone: burial of an Anglo-Saxon woman

(GU-9087). Pit 1004 contained the maxilla, and pairs of mandibles, radii and humeri of a young horse, while pit 1040 contained pairs of femora and humeri and other bones from a neonate pig. These latter finds might reflect the consumption of selected body parts, perhaps linked to social rank, or they may be ritual deposits (Sykes 2004; Hamerow 2006). Pit 1057 was probably cut much later as it contained modern glass, and also produced a single sherd of Ipswich ware, further confirming activity in the vicinity from the 8th century (Blinkhorn 1999, 9).

This activity was found in the northern part of the trench in close proximity to two undated ditches (1301–2) perpendicular to each other that described the south-east corner of an enclosed area in the north-western part of the trench. Two further ditches (1303–4) running NE-SW through the southern end of the trench may also belong to the Anglo-Saxon phase, but equally

they may be earlier. Only two minor features were recorded to the south of these ditches and the absence of animal bone and other refuse in their filling also supports a date prior to the settlement activity, although they are respected by the settlement archaeology and were thus presumably visible in the Middle Anglo-Saxon period.

White Horse Stone conclusions

Evidence for Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement activity is currently rare in Kent away from the major urban and ecclesiastical centres and the coastal fringe, although the discovery of a Middle Anglo-Saxon domestic pit at Otford is a recent exception (Bennell and Stump 2007). Further work at Boarley Farm might well reveal more coherent settlement remains, but the absence of coins, imported pottery, or even local pottery, suggests a low-status site connected with the processing of animals of

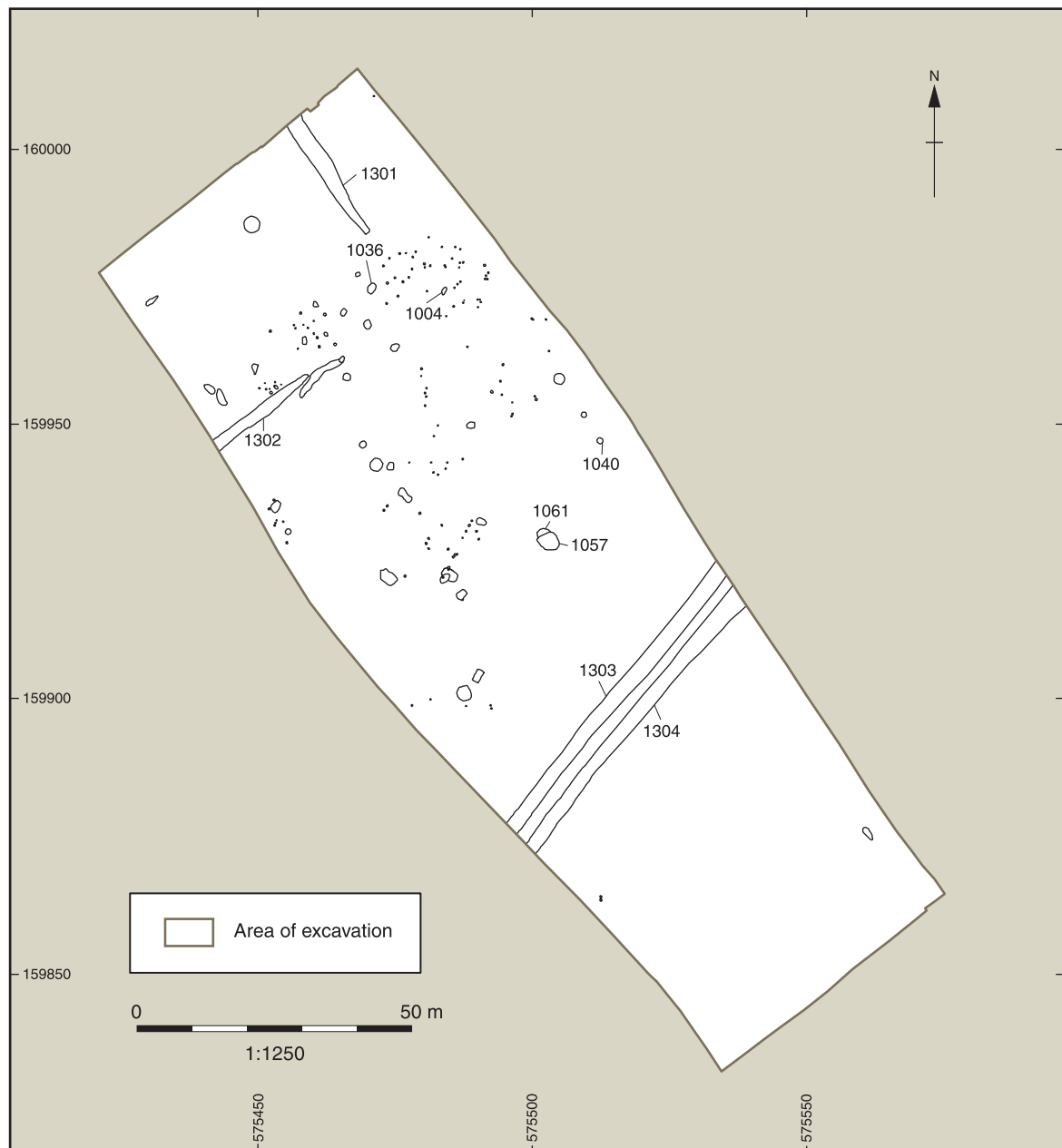


Figure 6.32 West of Boarley Farm: Middle Anglo-Saxon agricultural and settlement activity

various kinds. The proximity of the site to the junction of two major routes may have been due to the regular passage of herds and flocks. The woman buried at the crossroads may have been a stricken traveller or perhaps even an outcast of the Boarley Farm community, while the location of the burial here in the 8th century or later may have been driven by a combination of the crossroads with the boundaries of important local territories.

Later medieval activity was sparse and restricted to the Pilgrim's Way intervention. A roughly built crop-drier, formed of a pit with the sides lined with sarsen stone, is dated to the 11th–13th centuries on the basis of pottery finds from the fill, although the drier itself showed no signs of having actually been fired. The drier lay immediately to the west of a truncated holloway that ran for 83m southwards from the north end of the trench and petered out. Horseshoes and horseshoe nails from cobbling suggest that the holloway is no earlier than the 13th century. A short distance north of the drier, a scatter of postholes and a pit may represent associated features. Short sections of two small ditches containing 11th–14th century pottery were also observed in the northern part of the trench.

Mersham: Middle to Late Anglo-Saxon iron-working and medieval agriculture

Moving into the Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon periods, the nature of the archaeology revealed by the HS1 changes from a record largely of communities in death to one of communities at work. Excavations at Mersham, west of Saltwood, revealed substantial evidence of an iron-working site, with the main period of occupation dating to between the mid 11th and mid 12th centuries. The excavation site, which covered just under 1 ha, lay immediately to the south-west of St John the Baptist Church at Mersham (Helm 2006, 4) (Fig. 6.33). As a territorial entity, Mersham first enters the written record as *Merseham* (Maersa's homestead) in AD 858 when it is referred to as being converted to 'folkland' in a charter of King Æthelberht, sub-king (of the West Saxons) of Essex, Kent, Sussex and Surrey from AD 858–60 (Sawyer 1968, 152, no. 328). In AD 863, by which time Æthelberht was king of Wessex, a further grant of land was made at Mersham (*ibid.*, 153, no. 332) and it is reasonable to suggest that the basic territorial framework that survives as parish units in the modern landscape was established by this time in the vicinity. Further charters relating to lands at Mersham were made in AD 1042x1066 and AD 1053x1090, which further attest to the complexity of land ownership and transaction in the Anglo-Saxon period (*ibid.*, 312, no. 1047, 325, no. 1090; Kelly 1995, xxxii, fn. 57).

Folkland is much debated in Anglo-Saxon studies and the Mersham charter of AD 858 is a key document for understanding the meaning of this term which is otherwise referred to in only three other documents of the Anglo-Saxon period: the early 10th century laws of Edward the Elder, the 10th century poem known as *The*

Wife's Lament, and in the will of a 9th century ealdorman Alfred (I Edw 2; Attenborough 1922, 117; Sawyer 1968, 422–3, no. 1508). Folkland was long considered to be land held under common law, unlike bookland which was subject to conditions laid down by royal charter, but close attention to the wording of the earliest Mersham charter reveals that it could be created, as Æthelberht 'turned it [Mersham] into folkland for himself'; a statement that Sir Frank Stenton interprets as the king imposing obligations of food-rents and customary services on land which was formerly exempt from such burdens (Stenton 1971, 310–11). The full complexity of the debate regarding the creation and meaning of folkland is beyond the remit of this paper, and Stenton's view has been particularly criticised by Eric John (1964, 36–7), but the Mersham charter is central to its understanding whatever view one takes.

By the time of the Domesday Survey, Mersham was in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the commissioner's report describes a broadly based agricultural economy, noting land for 12 ploughs, 2 mills, 2 salt-pans, 13 acres of meadow and woodland for 30 pigs, and the presence of a church (Williams and Martin 2002, 9). Shortly after the Great Survey, the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, owners of Mersham before the Norman Conquest, appear to have re-asserted their authority over the estate (Smith 1943), according to a payment to them of 28*d* in a list of dues received from priests and churches in the so-called *Domesday Monachorum* (Douglas 1944; Tatton-Brown 1988, 114). A group of Domesday-related texts, the *Domesday Monachorum* concerns estates belonging to the archbishop of Canterbury, the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, the bishop of Rochester and several other Kentish landowners. With regard to the history of early English land tenure, then, Mersham holds a special place, but what of its archaeology?

At Bower Farm, close by the excavated site, a cemetery of 6th to early 7th century date is indicated by 19th century finds (Richardson 2005, sites 174 and 175; Brookes 2007a, 224), but otherwise occupation at Mersham itself is first indicated by three sherds of Canterbury-type Sandy Ware, which has a date range of 775–875, and one further 'miscellaneous' Middle Anglo-Saxon sherd, unfortunately all residual finds in later contexts found during the HS1 excavations; their presence is significant nevertheless (Mephram 2006a, 3).

The earliest tangible activity found at Mersham is represented by a scatter of pits and a curving gully at the northern edge of the excavation (Figs 6.34–5). The largest of these pits (1160) contained a substantial quantity of metalworking debris (51.434kg) resulting from both smelting and smithing activity as well as horn-working waste in the form of cattle and sheep/goat horn-cores. Three smaller pits contained pieces of tap-slag resulting from smelting, although no direct traces of such activity, namely hearths or furnaces, were found in the excavated area relating to either the Anglo-Saxon or medieval phase. This may be due to later truncation of features, which is thought to have led to the loss of as

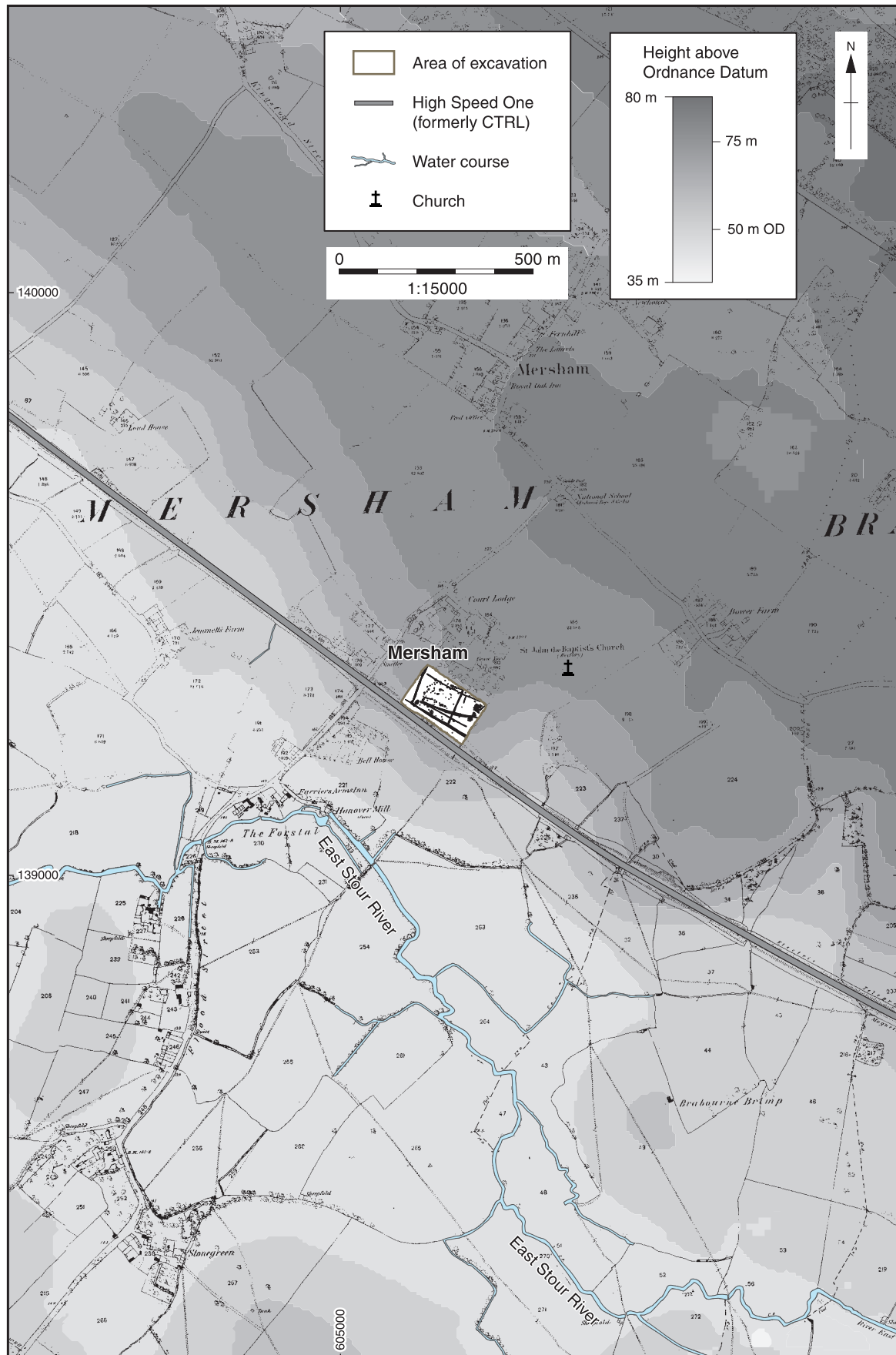


Figure 6.33 Mersham: topography and archaeological background overlaid on the 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1876–1877)

much as 1.5m of deposits in places (Andrews and Riddler 2006, 14). The type of slag found indicates the use of shaft furnaces whereby molten slag was tapped as opposed to the continental non-tapping method which is attested at the only other iron-smelting site of the Anglo-Saxon period known in the Weald at Millbrook in the Ashdown Forest of Sussex, where radiocarbon determinations place the industry there in the early 9th century (Tebbutt 1982). Continental-type furnaces were generally replaced by shaft furnaces in the 9th and 10th centuries, a process documented archaeologically at Ramsbury in Wiltshire (Haslam 1980). More widely, smithing and smelting of iron and precious metals are attested at other Anglo-Saxon secular sites, particularly at manorial estate centres, such as Facombe Netherton, but also at higher status sites, such as Cheddar (Fairbrother 1990, 244–54; Biek 1979, 252–8). Smithing and smelting are also

known, however, at Anglo-Saxon sites that appear to lack a high-status component as at Catholme, Staffordshire (Brown 2002, 113–5).

Although no structures were identified relating to this phase, the pits had evidently been re-used for the disposal of rubbish which was mainly domestic in nature and included animal bone and utilitarian pottery (Kitch 2006b; Mephram 2006a).

The mid 11th century saw an intensification of activity and a continuity of function until the mid 12th century. A new boundary ditch delimited the southern edge of the site and followed the natural topography of the plateau upon which the site lay. No features were observed to the south of this latter ditch, while to the north, adjacent to a possible entrance, lay a large sub-circular feature measuring *c* 8m by 5m, probably a pond for the quenching of iron blooms and the washing of iron ore

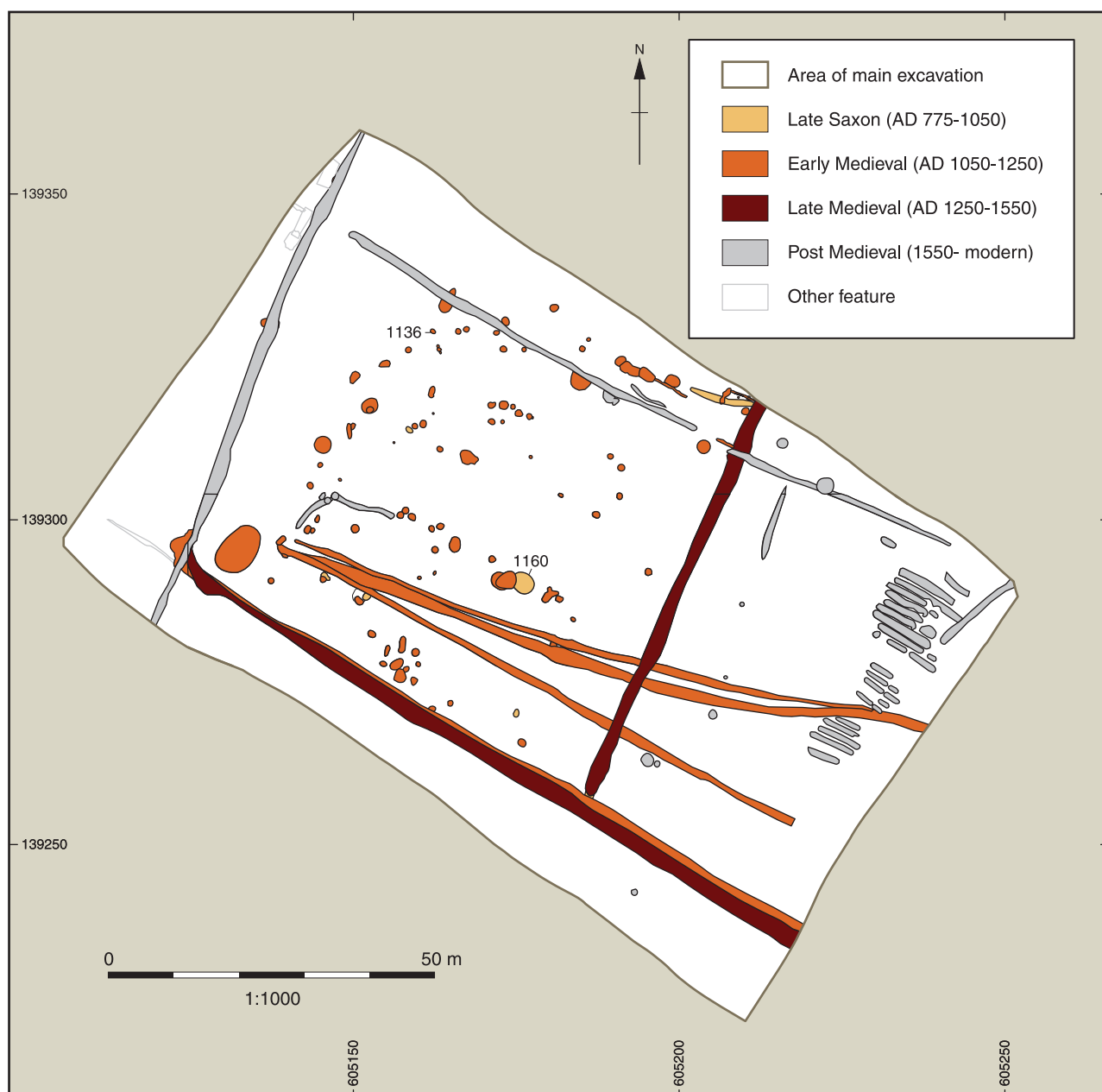


Figure 6.34 Merisham: late Saxon features (AD 775–1050)

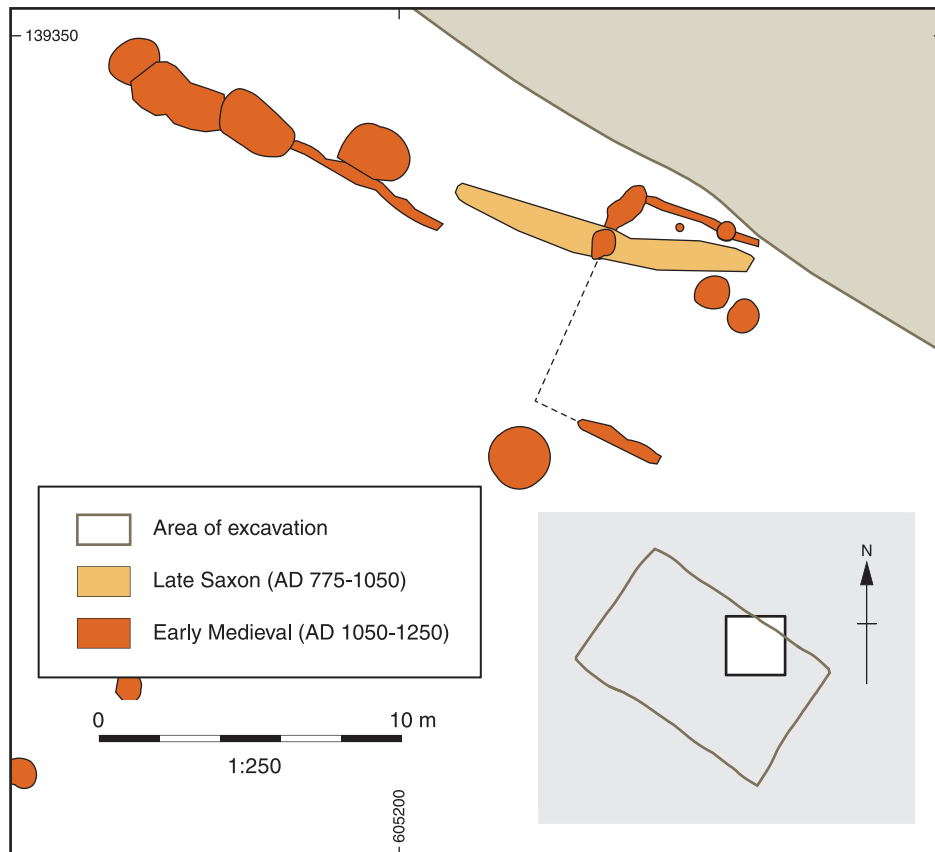


Figure 6.35 Mersham: possible late Saxon building

before roasting (Helm 2006, 9). The 'pond' was fed at one time or another by one of three linear ditches converging on it from the east. Many more pits (82) were dug, probably with the primary purpose of providing clay for the building of hearths and furnaces and for the daubing of buildings, although at least nine were used as cess pits and 41 contained metallurgical and domestic waste; 18 contained only the former and six only the latter (Helm 2006, 9–10; Andrews and Riddler 2006, 17). Most of these pits lay in the north-western part of the site covering the area of Middle-Late Anglo-Saxon occupation (Fig. 6.34). Plausible evidence for a contemporary building was identified at the north-eastern limit of the distribution of pits and at the edge of the excavation area. Parts of three beam slots and several postholes appear to partially describe three sides of a structure, measuring *c.* 7.6m by 4m internally, resting on beams set into narrow trenches (Fig. 6.35). The entire eastern side was probably removed by the cutting of a late medieval ditch (see below). A series of pits just to the west of the building contained domestic finds including two knives, a basalt lava quern, animal bones and pottery. Besides the clear evidence for metalworking, a bone pin-beater, a clay loomweight, two iron fibre processing teeth, possibly from a flax-heckle, and a lathe-turned siltstone spindle whorl suggest textile working, probably in the 11th century rather than the 12th according to Riddler (Andrews and Riddler 2006, 3 and 9). The spindle whorl was likely to have been made at nearby *Sandtun*, where manufacturing debris has been found; such whorls are common finds in East Kent

(Riddler 2001, 240, fig. 47). An iron awl indicates leather-working, a broken axe attests woodworking, while a gaming counter formed from the base of a samian vessel provides the only evidence for recreational activity (Andrews and Riddler 2006, 12–13).

Following the industrial and domestic phase outlined above, the site was evidently turned over to agricultural activity. Two new ditches were cut: one running along the southern edge of the excavated area, the other running north-east from it (see Fig. 6.34). Significantly, both ditches appear to have been preserved in the layout of field boundaries beyond the limit of excavation, in the latter case separating Court Lodge from St John's Church (see below). Dating evidence in the form of pottery indicates that both ditches were infilled in the late 15th and early 16th centuries (Helm 2006, 13), although they may have originated earlier, perhaps in the later 13th century following the cessation of industrial metalworking. Horticultural activity marked by the cutting of a series of closely spaced bedding trenches indicates a further change in land-use in the later 16th and 17th centuries.

Mersham in context

Mersham is best described as a polyfocal settlement, a morphological type first identified and discussed by Christopher Taylor in the context of the east midlands (Taylor 1977). St John's church evidently lies near the

core of the early settlement as indicated by the late 8th or 9th century sherds noted above, but almost certainly post-dates the earliest occupation, probably by about two centuries. Further distinct settlement foci are evident on Ordnance Survey maps to the north and to the south-west of the church. In this respect the layout of the settlement conforms to the character of that described in Roberts and Wrathmell's Wealden sub-province (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 43). St John the Baptist Church, probably a later 10th or early 11th century foundation, was rebuilt in the Norman period (Newman 1976, 424) and the main phase of iron-working and domestic occupation revealed during the HS1 investigation appears to belong between these periods in time. It is no doubt significant that the only timber building recorded in the excavation lies close to the church itself. Settlement features and pottery of 13th and 14th century date were found immediately east of St John's during quarrying in 1967, while an impressive stone-built manor house of Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, Court Lodge, built *c* 1320–1340 on a site known to have had high-status occupation from the late 13th century, lies to the west (Bradshaw 1967; Pearson *et al.* 1994, 90–1). Perhaps the cessation of metal-working and the layout of a new field pattern were associated with either the building or re-building of Court Lodge, although dues paid by Mersham to Christ Church Canterbury in the form of iron are documented from the mid 13th century and thus iron-working

apparently continued there but on a different site (Andrews and Riddler 2006, 21).

Further excavation is necessary to understand the full sequence of development at Mersham, but the HS1 excavations have provided a valuable insight into the nature of rural industry and settlement on the northern edge of the Weald between the 11th and 13th centuries, and also a view of the evolving nature of the landscape over time. The sequence overall suggests frequent change in the landscape with the late Middle Ages leaving the greatest impression in terms of the framework of boundaries surviving into the modern age.

Northumberland Bottom

Just as the Cuxton Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery provides a West Kentish contrast to Saltwood in the east, excavations at Northumberland Bottom have revealed West Kentish medieval settlement evidence to compare with Mersham to the east. The added benefit to the Northumberland Bottom excavations is that an extensive area was uncovered which included evidence for three locales of medieval settlement and agricultural activity during the 11th/12th and 13th centuries. In this respect, Northumberland Bottom in the centuries following the Norman Conquest also appears to verify the apparently dispersed character of much of Kent in the medieval period according to Roberts and Wrathmell (2000, 43).

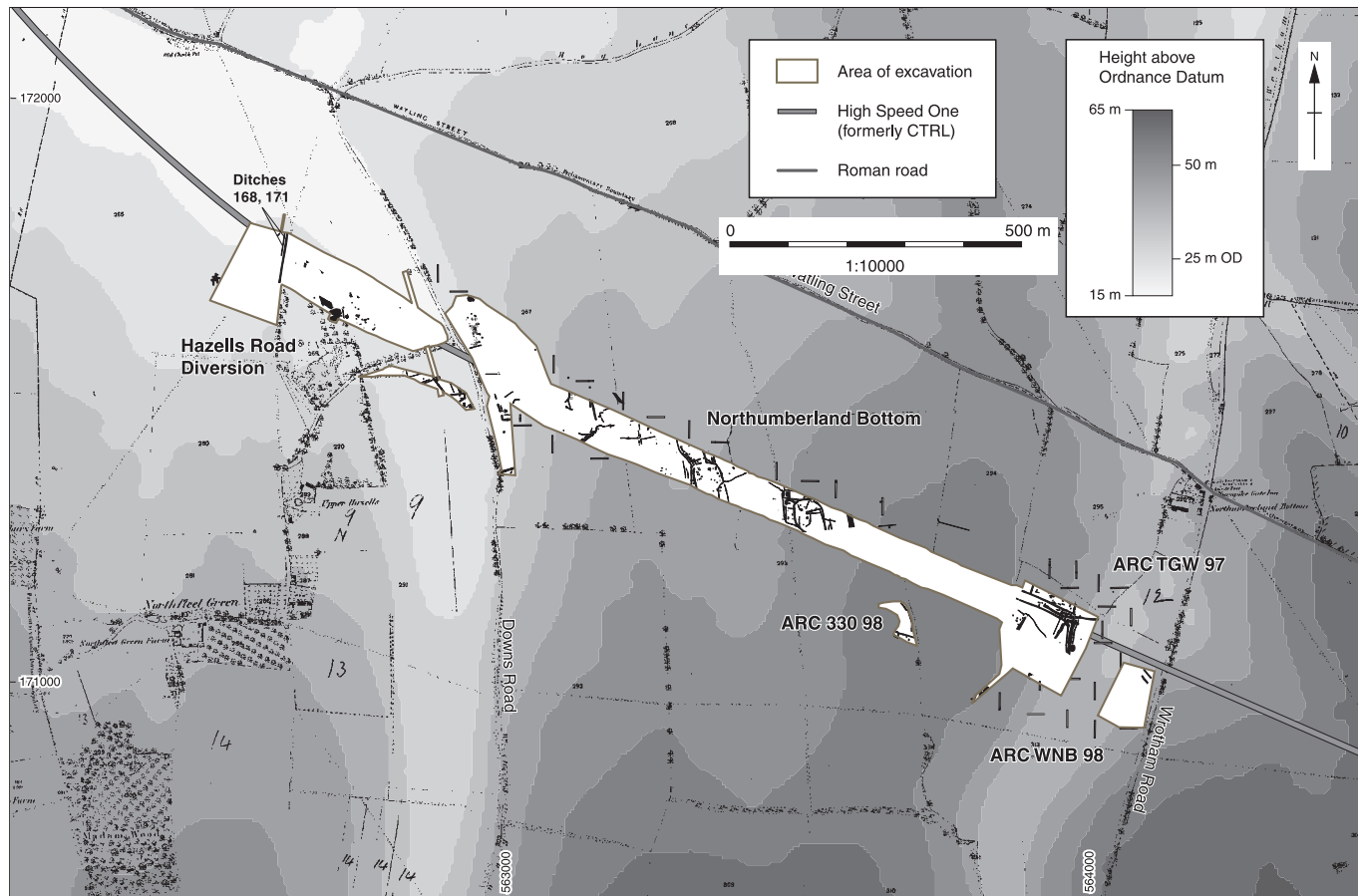


Figure 6.36 Northumberland Bottom overlaid on the 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1869)

All three sites lay about 350m south of Watling Street, which itself runs from London to Canterbury *via* Rochester (Fig. 6.36). Agricultural settlements dating to the earlier and later Roman period were excavated at three locations in the vicinity with no evidence of continuity into the Anglo-Saxon period (see Booth, Chapter 5). Medieval settlement and associated field systems lay at the western end of the area investigated on either side of Downs Road, an undated trackway leading south from Watling Street and forming an irregular crossroads continuing as Hog Lane to the north of the Roman road. While on first inspection the nature of the crossroads might suggest that Watling Street is the earliest feature, the nature of the local topography determines the dog-leg at the junction of these routes and the lanes may pre-date the road; unfortunately, in contrast to Saltwood, no dating evidence for Downs Road itself was recovered during fieldwork. The Downs Road sites are undoubtedly part of the same settlement focus, while 600m to the east lay a further medieval settlement at Northumberland Bottom proper, enclosed with ditches in a similar manner to its Roman equivalent 150m to the west.

At Downs Road the settlement comprised at least one timber building sited parallel to the eastern side of the road just above a shallow terrace (Fig. 6.37). Although the evidence is inconsistent for the full ground plan of the building, it is possible to suggest a structure of *c* 28m by 7.5m, perhaps with two compartments, aligned north-south. A small cooking pit (740) within the building contained a more-or-less complete vessel dated *c* 1050–1225, suggesting possible occupation from as early as the second half of the 11th century (Mephram 2006c, 4, fig. 1.1) (Fig. 6.38). Most of the pottery recovered, 287 sherds, was of so-called North Kent Shelly Ware with a date range of 1050–1225 (Mephram 2006c, 3). A single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery dated AD 550–725 was also recovered from cooking pit 740, although the lack of further finds of the early period precludes the likelihood of settlement of this date in the immediate vicinity.

If the building was indeed of the scale suggested, then it was very large in comparison, for example, with surviving later medieval timber buildings in Kent which, at the upper end of the scale, average about 24m in length (see the numerous plans in Pearson *et al.* 1994). Indeed, the dimensions are paralleled by those of the Late Anglo-Saxon Period 1 royal hall at Cheddar, Somerset (Rahtz 1979, 50, figure 10). The nature of the foundations, postholes of varying sizes, indicates an earthfast structure, a type which was largely defunct nationally by about AD 1200. The lack of intercutting postholes, or evidence for underpinning of rotten structural members with stone footings, suggests a relatively short life for the building. A suggested threshold along the line of the narrow south wall of the building is a further unusual feature as entrances into earthfast buildings are normally found along the long walls in rural contexts.

The density of postholes at the northern end of the building perhaps suggests more than one phase. A line of

posts just beyond the southern end of the building indicates a fence, itself perhaps superseded by a shallow ditch (700) a few metres to the south again.

Several pits lay both to the east and north of the building, which is a typical arrangement of so-called 'service features' (such as cess pits and rubbish pits) observed throughout the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. That only one possible pit (584) encroaches upon the building suggests again a short phase of occupation with most, if not all, of the features related to one phase. Overall, the structural characteristics of the building, the lack of intercutting features, and the ceramic assemblage suggest a late 11th and 12th century period of occupation on the east side of Downs Road. It is always possible that the structure is a barn. Unfortunately, environmental evidence was scarce, with only a single cattle mandible recovered from a posthole at the north-west corner of the building (Askew 2006, 38; Kitch 2006b). While one must be wary of pushing the evidence too far, it is possible that the finding of a selected body part in such a specific structural location is more than coincidence. A recent study of 'special deposits' in Anglo-Saxon settlements notes an association between high-status buildings and the placing of animal remains, drawing particular attention to the fact that many such deposits relate to the end of occupation sequences, although other examples are known where animal remains, such as ox skulls, were clearly deposited during occupation (Hamerow 2006, 26; Reynolds 2006b, 136–7). There is no good reason why elements of superstitious behaviour should not be found in later medieval contexts as is known, for example, in Scandinavia from the late 10th century through to the 17th century (Carelli 1997, 395).

To the west of Downs Road the earliest features found were two circular ovens, one of which cut the other. Both appear to have had a single chamber comprising a domed clay superstructure formed over a framework of stakes, while pottery associated with both ovens suggests a date range of *c* 1100–1250 (Askew 2006, 39); ie broadly contemporary with the occupation of the building to the east. Poorly preserved grains of rye were recovered from the floor of the earlier of the two structures, with oats, wheat and rye found in deposits relating to its destruction. The later of the two ovens yielded charred bread wheat and rye (Davis 2006). A series of boundary features describing a pattern of small rectilinear parcels of land succeeded the ovens in the second half of the 13th century, although they had silted up by *c* 1400 on the basis of pottery found within them (see Fig. 6.37).

At Northumberland Bottom itself, evidence for an enclosed settlement of two major phases provides a valuable addition to the medieval settlement record in Kent. Perched on a gentle slope with a north-west facing aspect, the earliest phase of occupation is characterised by an egg-shaped enclosure *c* 50m across, whose southern limit lay without the area of excavation (Fig. 6.39). On its northern side, the enclosure was entered *via* a 5m wide break in the ditch circuit, a gateway being indicated by two substantial postholes set back from the opening. A

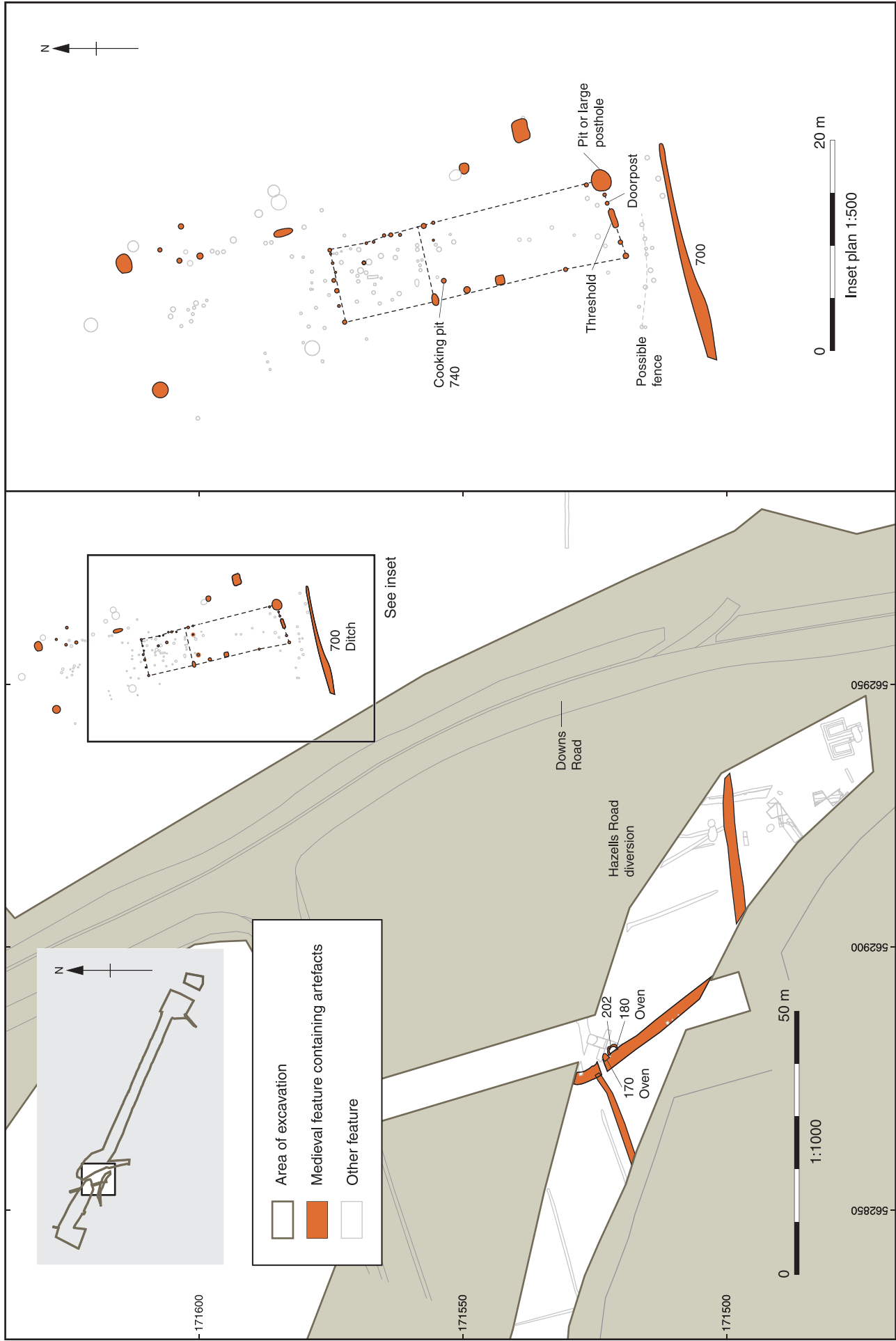


Figure 6.37 Northumberland Bottom: plan of early medieval settlement east of Downs Road and at Hazells Road

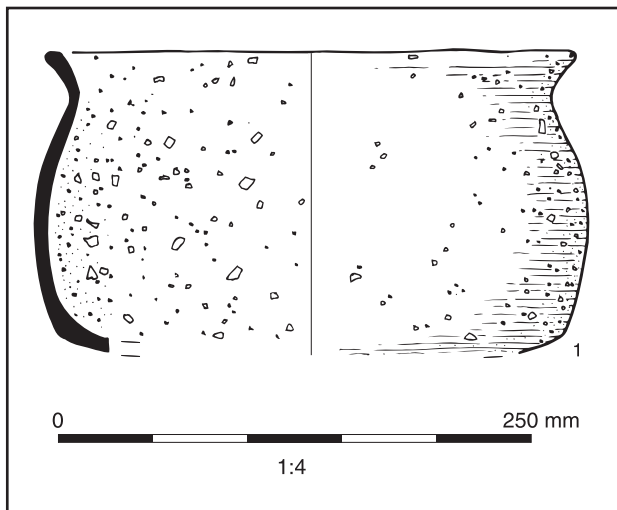


Figure 6.38 Northumberland Bottom: early medieval pot from cooking pit within the timber building

few Roman features were excavated but none appeared to have directly determined any aspect of the layout of the medieval settlement, although the medieval phase II western ditch is on much the same alignment as its late Roman predecessor. This alignment appears to be preserved in a 19th-century field boundary (see Fig 6.36), which would suggest that here, at least, there is possibly a long-lived feature in the landscape. The interior of the phase I enclosure was divided by a series of linear ditches into at least three areas. Structural evidence during this phase was limited to a line of five postholes in the southern part of the enclosure; no coherent evidence of residential accommodation was noted. It is also worthy of note that pits suggestive of domestic occupation are entirely absent from the first phase. Dating of the enclosure and associated subdivisions is provided mainly by a collection of 107 mid 11th–mid 13th century pottery sherds from one of the internal boundary ditches; a single sherd of London-type ware, imitating a Rouen style jug, is dated to after 1200 and indicates that features of this phase were being infilled in the early 13th century (Mephams 2006c, 5). The lack of pits, domestic debris and accommodation suggests a purely agricultural function for the enclosure during its early life, although it is possible that settlement lay just beyond the limit of excavation.

The second phase of activity saw a remodelling of the phase I enclosure with the addition of a rectilinear enclosure on its western side. Within this extension at the north lay a sunken area (998) possibly representing a building to judge by a series of undated postholes set around the edge of the depression. Unfortunately, the filling of this feature was not fully investigated. Further to the south, also within the area of the westward extension was another sunken area (896), either a 'working hollow' or a sunken-featured building, containing an oven. Charred remains from the building of bread wheat, barley, oats and pulses, but also plum/bullace and cherry, indicate domestic food preparation, but probably also crop-processing to judge by the

concentration of cereal grain (Davis 2006). Late 13th to early 14th century pottery from the sunken featured structure associated with the oven is the main dating indicator for the second phase, although most of the pottery found is similar to that of the first phase and overall the ceramic affinities appear to lie in the direction of London rather than eastwards (Askew 2006, 41–2). A few pits containing domestic refuse could be related to Phase 2, but the remains of human occupation within them are sparse being limited to a single Niedermendig lava quern, from pit (890) close to the oven structure, and only two sheep/goat and two horse bones (Kitch 2006b).

Northumberland Bottom in context

The Downs Road settlement is in many ways similar to the 11th–13th century phase at Mersham in the sense that the landscape appears to have been characterised by small rectilinear fields of later medieval date, with a dispersed settlement pattern. Besides the lasting influence of the course of Watling Street, little if any residue from earlier periods appears in the field boundaries across the area investigated and similarly, the later medieval landscape appears not to have lasted long, having been re-planned with regular large rectilinear fields. The only possible exception was the trackway running north-south across the landscape, which appears to reference the western side of the Northumberland Bottom Settlement, which itself may have been laid out in relation to this trackway. Unfortunately, as at Downs Road, no evidence was forthcoming for the age of this routeway.

The enclosed settlement at Northumberland Bottom finds clear parallels both in Kent and further afield. Sub-circular settlement enclosures on the scale of medieval Phase I, in the region of 50–60m across, have their origins in the Middle Anglo-Saxon period, and by the 12th century when that at Northumberland Bottom was laid out they should be considered an archaic settlement type (Reynolds 2003, 112, fig. 6; Reynolds 2004). At Well Wood, Aylesford, an enclosure of similar dimensions contained clear evidence of domestic occupation, including stone buildings, and appears to have functioned between the 12th and 14th centuries (Philp 2006, 28–31, fig. 2). A similar settlement is evidenced at Lot's Hole, a site excavated at Dorney, near Eton, Berkshire, where an enclosed settlement of 12th–13th century date was evidently short-lived in a continually evolving landscape (Foreman *et al.* 2002, 75, fig. 6.1). At Trowbridge, Wiltshire a probable manorial enclosure of 11th or 12th century date, of similar proportions to that at Northumberland Bottom medieval phase I, has an identical entrance with two large postholes set just inside the enclosure ditch marking the position of a gateway structure (Graham and Davies 1993, 34, figure 12). Slightly smaller enclosures of this type are evidenced at Wroughton Copse, also in Wiltshire, in the 13th century (Fowler 2000, 123, fig. 7.9).

Environmental evidence suggests that the Northumberland Bottom sites developed in a marginal area characterised by stinking mayweed, a plant that favours



Figure 6.39 Northumberland Bottom: plan of the medieval enclosures

heavy, waterlogged soils (Askew 2006, 43). The overall chronology of occupation, 11th–13th centuries, fits with what is known nationally of a period of population expansion. As Chris Dyer (2002, 156) has noted, the population of England in 1300 was equivalent to that in the 18th century and the period during which the Northumberland Bottom sites developed was one where less favourable lands were newly occupied, in many cases for the first time since the Roman period, and brought under agriculture in response to population growth. Put simply, the pioneering role of certain settlements that emerged during this period may have led to their failure, while others failed due to the downturn in climate, and widespread famine of the early 14th century and the onset of plague from the middle of that century (*ibid.*, 228–9).

Westenhanger

A few kilometres west of Saltwood, the line of the railway runs immediately north of Westenhanger Castle, perhaps better described as a fortified house, of which the standing structure largely dates to the 14th century. The castle's origins, however, may well lie in the period of the Norman Conquest (Gollop 2006, 2). With such a significant element of the medieval landscape close to the route of the new line, the likelihood of further evidence for settlement was confirmed by excavation (Fig. 6.40). While medieval settlement other than the castle is first documented, or at least implied, by a grant of land from King Cnut to Bishop Eadsige in 1035, the settlement is no longer evident, nor is the lost church of St John, probably the church mentioned at Berewic in the *Domesday Monachorum*, in the same list, incidentally, as the church at Mersham; Berewic is also the name of the estate in the 1035 charter (Sawyer 1968, 292, no. 974; Tatton-Brown 1988, 114). It is worthy of note that the boundary clause of the 1035 charter describes the limits of a land unit virtually identical to those of Westenhanger Manor when it was sold in 1885, even to the extent that a detached parcel of woodland recorded in the early document (at *Gimmince*) appears to be that at Gibbins Brook in the late 19th century sale (Ward 1935; Gollop 2006, 2). By 1191 the estate (known as *Hangre*), had been divided into Westenhanger and Ostenhanger; Hasted, writing c 1800, noted that the church was only recently pulled down (Hasted 1797–1801).

The archaeological evidence for medieval activity in the landscape to the north of the castle is not entirely coherent, but it is possible nevertheless to discern episodes of landscape planning and, to a degree, to investigate the nature of settlement below the level of that experienced by the inhabitants of the castle. As at Northumberland Bottom, the influence of the medieval period on the form and layout of the modern landscape appears to have been minimal with only post-medieval field boundaries in the eastern part of the area investigated traceable beyond the limits of the HS1 investigation. The excavated area covered some 6.37ha and has

provided a significant opportunity to re-construct at least part of the landscape in which the castle lay.

The earliest post-Roman activity from the excavations is limited to a single sherd of Canterbury-type Late Saxon sandy ware with a date range of the mid 9th–mid 11th century (Mephram 2006b, 3). The lack of related material suggests settlement at this time in the wider locale, as is known from the documentary evidence considered above, but that the core of Anglo-Saxon settlement lay elsewhere, perhaps focussed on Stone Street to the east, the line of the Roman road from Canterbury to *Lemanis* (Lympe) (Gollop 2006, 2).

Three main periods of medieval activity were determined. The first is dated by pottery to between 1050 and 1175 and, in this respect, compares well with both Mersham and Northumberland Bottom, where settlement either begins or becomes much more substantial at the earlier end of that chronological range. Occupation during this phase is difficult to understand, owing to both a paucity of finds and direct stratigraphic relationships between features, but also to issues of archaeological visibility during fieldwork and truncation of features by later activity particularly in the southern part of the area investigated. Nevertheless, what is clear is that from the mid-11th century a series of ditches running on a NW-SE alignment formed a series of plots perpendicular to, and to the north-west of, a linear ditch (429) that ran across the entire excavated area (Fig. 6.41). Ditch 429 appeared to delimit the settlement area and no further evidence of this phase was observed to the east of it. Evidence for four structures was recorded, although in every case the remains were either truncated (Structures 1, 3 and 4) or undated (Structure 5). Structure 1 comprised two concentric gullies which, if complete, would have described a circular space c 11m in diameter. The gullies were narrow, between 0.25m and 0.45m wide, and several postholes and stakeholes are perhaps the remains of a superstructure. Structure 1 predated the laying out of ditched plots, although 20 sherds of pottery contemporary with the other material from the first medieval phase was recovered from the gully fills. Circular structures are known from several Anglo-Saxon settlements, Quarrington, Lincolnshire, Yarnton, Oxfordshire, and perhaps Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire (Taylor 2003, 239, fig. 7; Hey 2004, 113, fig. 6.9; Enright and Watts 2002, 11). Although these latter are all of early to Middle Anglo-Saxon date (6th–9th centuries), there is no good reason to exclude the possibility of yet later examples.

On the basis of the plan of the features of this phase, it is possible to suggest that Structures 3 and 4 lay within plots described by ditches 518, 445 and 553 respectively (Fig. 6.41). Such a configuration allows for two plots of equal width (45m) with a building in each of similar beam-slot construction and, in each case, with the narrow end facing to the south-east. It must be said, however, that the traces left by Structures 3 and 4 are not as substantial as one might ideally like. Several pits were located in the vicinity of Structure 3, including pit 721 which contained fragments of daub with wattle impressions, while to the north-west of Structure 4 lay evidence

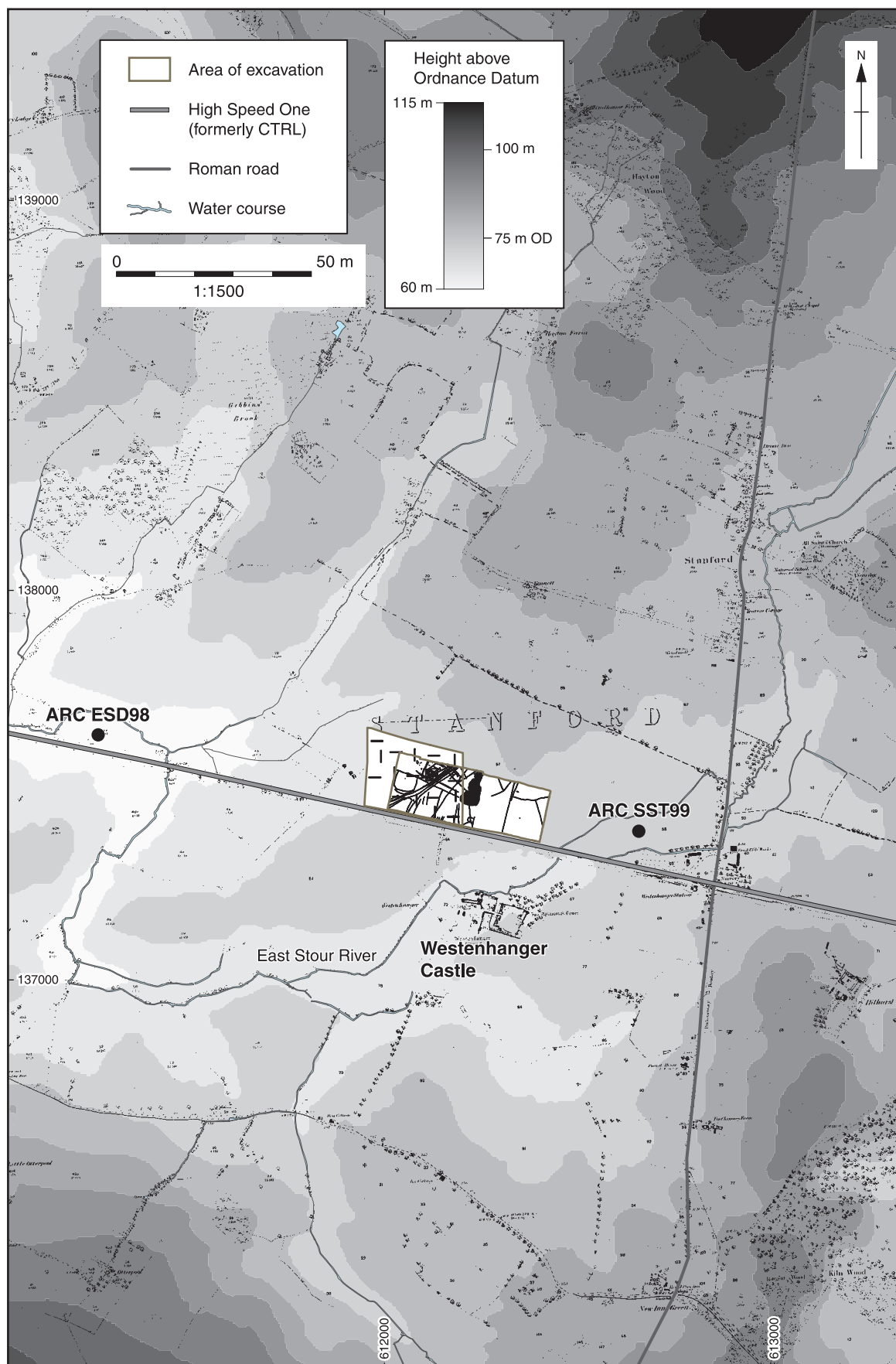


Figure 6.40 Westenhanger Castle overlaid on to 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1877)



Figure 6.41 Westenhanger Castle: medieval phase plan. Inset: early medieval

for an earthfast building (Structure 5). Although only part of Structure 5 lay within the excavation trench, its visible elements do not inspire great credibility as a domestic structure and perhaps a fence at the rear of the plot is represented by these features. A series of pits, perhaps surrounded with a fence, marked the western limit of settlement of this phase. Various other linear ditches were cut within the area of both plots during this period.

Material culture associated with this phase is unimpressive, being limited to a relatively small collection of pottery, mostly of Ashford and Canterbury type, but much of it with affinities to wares from East Sussex, two knives of probable 11th–13th century date, and several hones of local provenance (Mephram 2006b, 3; Riddler 2006, 3). Environmental evidence associated with the settlement phase reveals the cultivation and processing of wheat, barley, rye, oat and ‘celtic’ bean (Stevens 2006d).

The second medieval phase is marked by the digging of a series of drainage ditches across the site, running broadly parallel to, but largely east of, ditch 429, which had limited the eastern extent of the earlier settlement. This reorganisation is dated by pottery to the late 12th and 13th centuries. During the late 13th and 14th centuries the shift in activity appears to have moved further eastwards with the cutting of a very few drainage ditches, although dating evidence is scarce for this late phase.

Westenhanger in context

Clearly, the nature of the remains from Westenhanger limits comparative discussion, yet the evidence from the other medieval settlements considered so far allows what has been found to be placed within an emerging sequence. While the origins of Westenhanger Castle have yet to be determined, documentary sources indicate settlement from the 11th century, a date confirmed by the earliest finds from the excavations, and perhaps the first phase of settlement and landscape planning, is linked to the establishment of the castle, the land perhaps having been down to pasture in the Anglo-Saxon period to judge by the lack of pottery that might be expected from the manuring of arable. In common with both Mersham and Northumberland Bottom, the Westenhanger sequence indicates dynamic settlement development, and serves to confirm a view of short-lived pioneering settlement during the post-Norman Conquest era of population expansion and the settlement of marginal land; it also underscores the limited economic sphere within which the occupants of such settlements existed. Similarities can also be drawn in the nature of dividing the land into small parcels from the mid 11th century onward.

Parsonage Farm: a medieval rectory?

A complete contrast to the living conditions of the populations whose settlements we have examined up to now is provided by the rich structural and artefactual

evidence from Parsonage Farm, near Ashford, where a sequence of high-status later medieval occupation was revealed (Fig. 6.42) (Hill 2006). A short distance south of the Pilgrim’s Way, the site lies on a small south-facing knoll sloping to the south. Streams on either side of the knoll converge to the south and form a partially enclosed plot of ground within which the medieval occupation lay. Immediately east of the site is Parsonage Farm itself, an impressive 16th century building.

The settlement history of the parish within which Parsonage Farm is located, Westwell, is complicated. In a recent paper, Mary Adams has reviewed documentary evidence in the Canterbury Cathedral archives relating to the foundation of the village of Westwell, which lies about a mile to the NNE of Parsonage Farm, in the 13th century (Adams 2007). Westwell was known as *Welles* in the Middle Ages and is first recorded in a will of 1005, of Archbishop Aelfric of Canterbury; the *Domesday Monachorum* records a church there by the later 11th century (Tatton-Brown 1988, 114). Before considering the development of settlement within the parish any further, however, the archaeology of Parsonage Farm requires presentation.

One of the first issues to note is that not all of the archaeological levels and features encountered were excavated. A decision was taken to protect strata not threatened by the railway and thus only very partial traces of the earliest medieval activity were revealed; masonry walls were left *in situ*.

The medieval sequence is divided into three principal phases. The earliest dated medieval activity (Phase 1 – c AD 1100–1175/1200) comprised a dump layer that sealed a stream channel on the eastern side of the knoll. A ditch (43503) running broadly parallel with the eastern stream, a barrel-lined well, a pit and a series of postholes and possible beam-slots were cut through the dump layer and appear to represent a building and associated features (Fig. 6.43). Dating evidence for this phase offers only a broad range. Pottery from the ditch included local types, Ashford Potters Corner ware and North-west Kent Sandy ware datable to the 12th and early 13th centuries, while imported North France/Flanders Fine White Sandy ware supports a similar date range. No material datable to before AD 1100 was found and the filling of the well, which was stratigraphically later than the structural remains, could have been deposited at any time between about AD 1125 and 1250. The dating of the Phase 2 assemblages, however, suggests a more restricted date range for the early phase with a terminal date of c AD 1200.

Wholesale redevelopment occurred in Phase 2 (c AD 1175/1200–1250) with the construction of a substantial medieval house (Fig. 6.44). The streams to the south-west and south-east were modified to create a more moat-like appearance, although the whole site was not completely enclosed until Phase 3. The absence of aquatic taxa in pollen samples and iron staining within the ‘moat’ sediment indicate only periodic flooding as opposed to a continually flooded water feature. The principal space of the new building was a structure 20m long and 7.5m

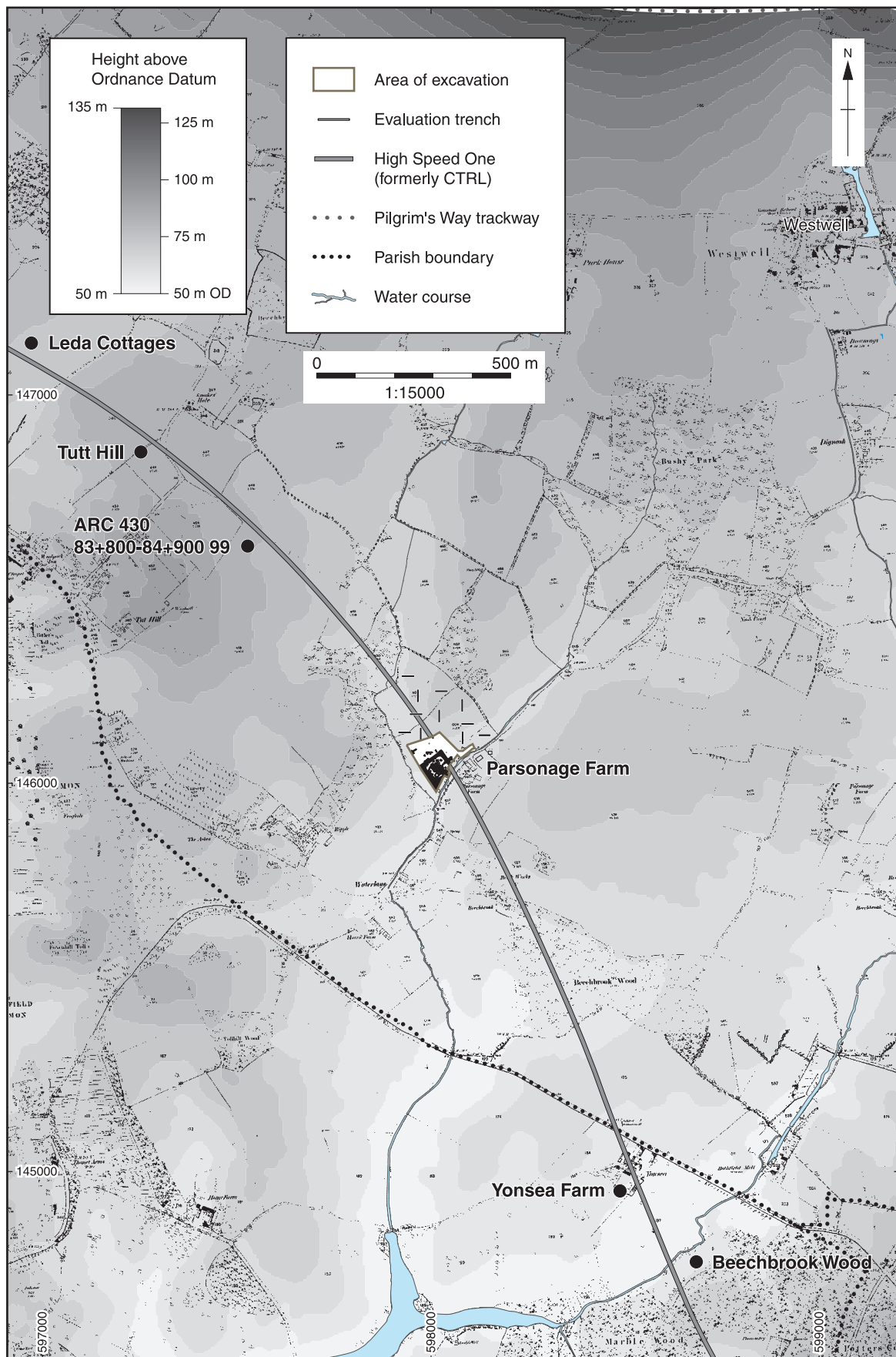


Figure 6.42 Parsonage Farm overlaid on the 1st Edition OS map (6 inches to 1 mile, 1876)

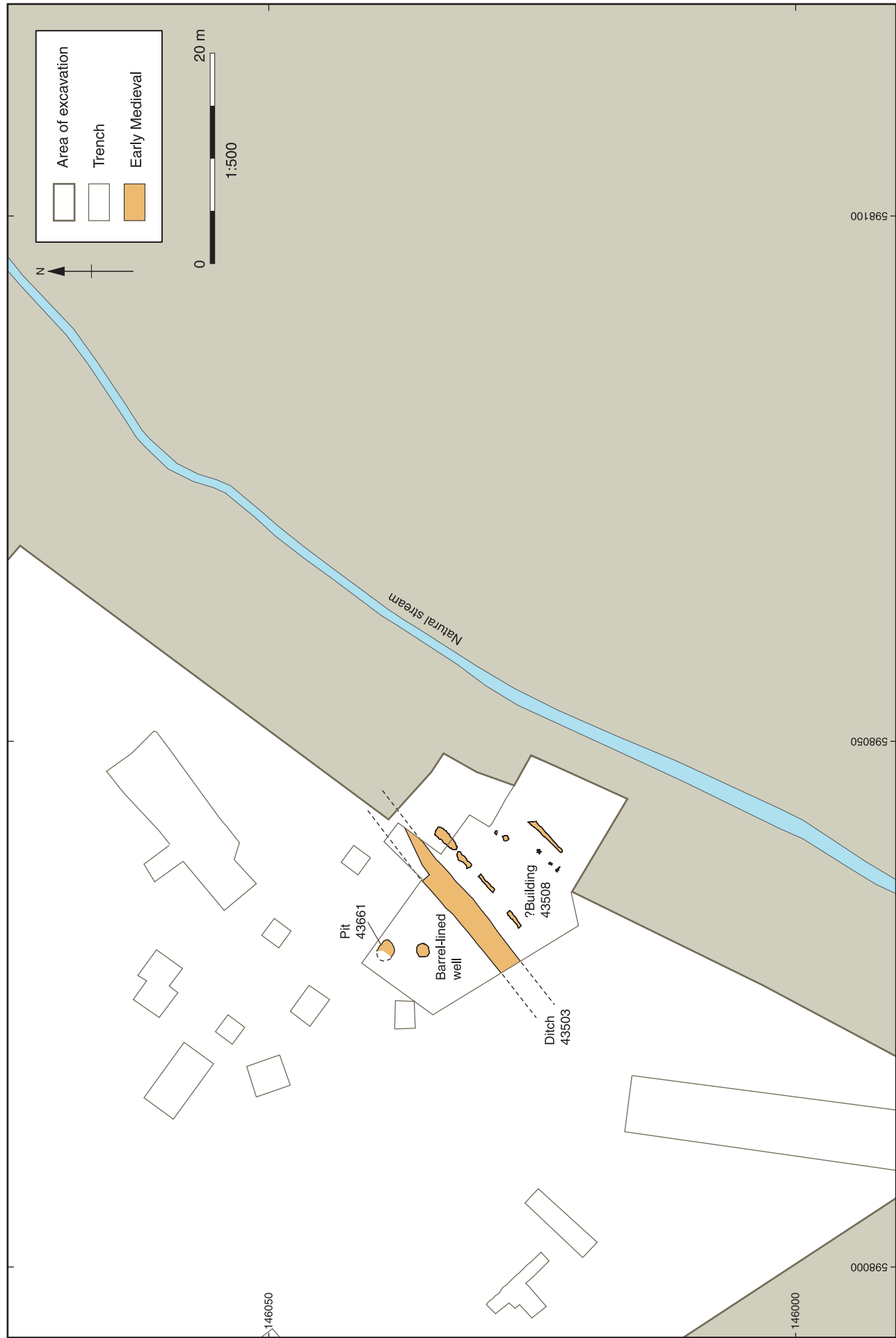


Figure 6.43 Parsonage Farm: medieval phase I features

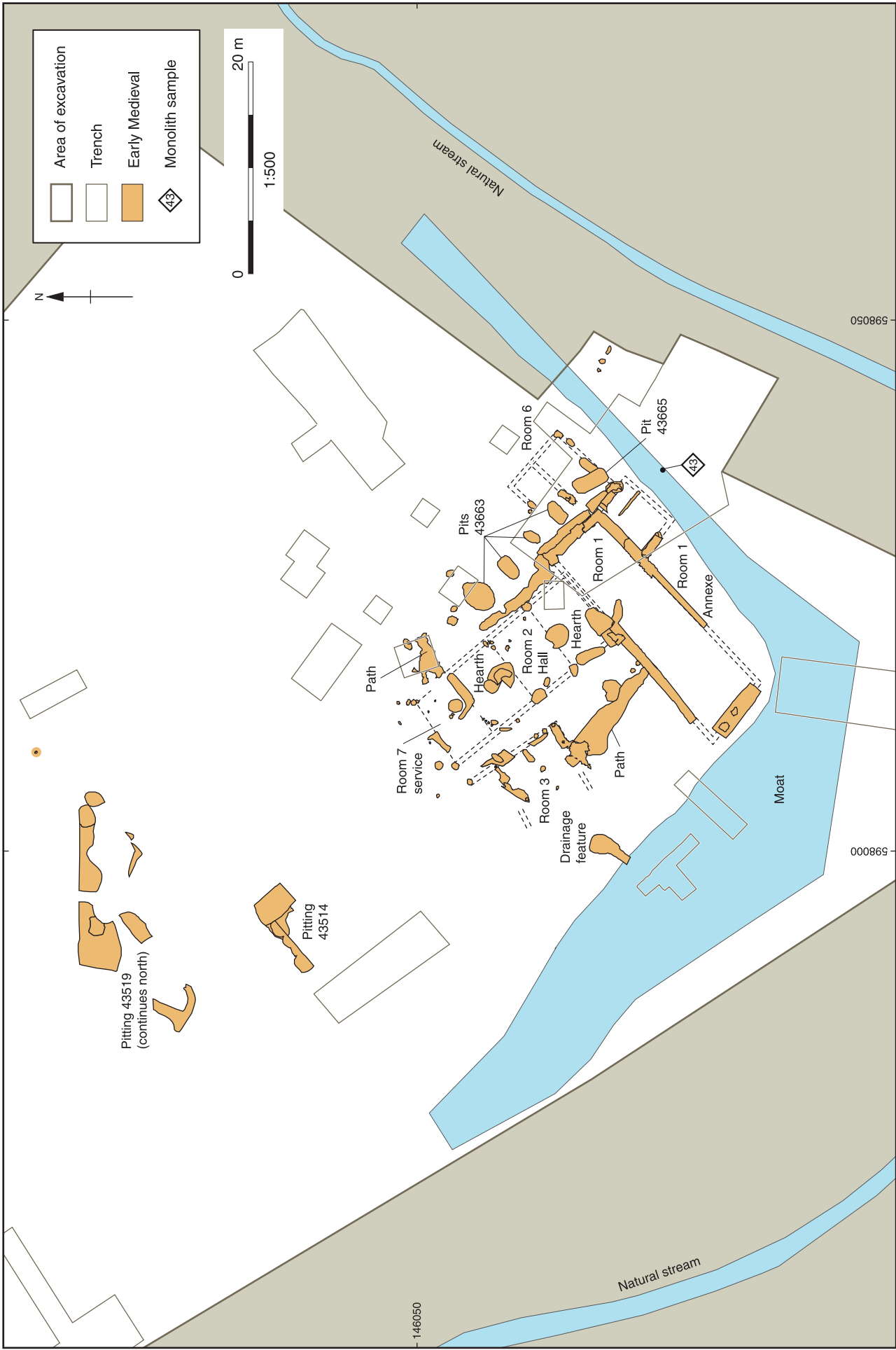


Figure 6.44 Parsonage Farm: medieval phase 2 features

wide of four equal bays. The building was timber-framed as indicated by a series of stone post-pads that described the outline of the structure. The north-westernmost bay (Room 7) was evidently divided off from the other three bays (Room 2) and is interpreted as the 'service' end of a hall. External access to Room 7 was through a doorway in its eastern wall where evidence for a cobbled path was recorded. The hall, Room 2, contained two large hearths centrally placed at each of the bay divisions and access to Room 7 was by way of a doorway between the two spaces.

At the eastern end of Room 2, a further structure (Room 1) was added at right angles to the main building. Room 1, which measured 18.8m by 7m, was formed of masonry foundations cut into make-up layers and appears to have been free-standing, albeit so close to the east of Room 2 as to necessitate remodelling of its east wall. A small annex was then added to the south-east side of Room 1 and clearly overlay the infilled ditch of medieval Phase 1. Room 3 measured at least 10m by 5m and lay in the north-western part of the courtyard formed by Rooms 1 and 2/7. It was formed of a series of slots, presumably for beams, and had two entrances, one marked by a shallow cut filled with gravel in the north-west wall and another more substantial opening in the south-east wall where a path led to the north-east wall of Room 1.

The features described so far suggest a principal north-east facing hall with a wing on the south-east side and a yard behind the property. Further structural evidence (Room 6) was recorded at the north-east end of Room 1 and appears to represent a further free-standing ancillary structure of two bays. Sherds of so-called Tyler Hill ware from a modification to Room 3 and the foundations of Room 6 suggest a date after *c* AD 1225 for elements of those structures, while ceramics from a group of pits (43519) to the north-west of the structural complex can be divided into sub-groups with the following date ranges: AD 1125–1250, AD 1175–1250 and AD 1225–1400. The latest group probably relates to the subsequent medieval Phase 3. A further pit group (43514) just south of the aforementioned features is actually cut by the medieval Phase 3 moat. A mid to late 13th century date range for these pits is indicated by the presence of 28 sherds of decorated pottery of North French or similar type. Local wares predominated, however, and comprised largely Ashford-type, Tyler Hill and London-type wares; the latest Ashford-ware is dated *c* AD 1250–1450 and overall a date in the second half of the 13th century seems likely for the end of medieval Phase 2.

The end of medieval Phase 2 is of interest in the light of the documentary evidence for the foundation of the new village of Westwell in the 13th century. While the pit groups just discussed indicate a date in the second half of the 13th century for their infilling and subsequent cutting of the medieval Phase 3 moat, a line of five regularly spaced pits (43663) along the north-eastern frontage of the Phase 2 house are probably connected with the demolition and clearance of the site. Significantly, these pits are dated slightly earlier to *c* AD 1225–1250 (Hill

2006, 15). One of these pits (43665) actually cuts the foundations of Room 6, while all contained quantities of peg tile unsuitable for re-use in their upper fills.

Substantial spreads of dumped and trampled material mark the end of medieval Phase 2 and represent a clear horizon prior to the construction of the Phase 3 building. Dumped material extended as far as the north-western side of Room 1 of the Phase 2 house, but did not encroach upon it indicating that this part of the structure was initially incorporated into the Phase 3 rebuilding. Dating evidence from the dumped layer included a short-cross farthing of Henry II to Henry III type with a date range of AD 1180–1247 and an ornate annular brooch of 13th century date (Keily and Richardson 2006b, 4) (Fig. 6.45), while dating of the ceramic assemblage overall is placed in the mid-late 13th century. In summary, the dating evidence indicates a major period of remodelling of the site in the mid to late 13th century.

The final period of medieval occupation (Phase 3) saw the cutting of a moat around the entire site (Fig. 6.46). To the north and west new channels were cut, while the same cut was also identified to the south of the site indicated complete re-furbishing sometime after AD 1250. Conjoining sherds of a stamp-decorated jug from the primary fill of the moat and the medieval Phase 2 pit group (43514) suggest that they are linked, although given that the moat cut into these infilled pits, the sherd in the moat may have been re-deposited from disturbed pit fill.

The moated site lay within the area described by the two modern streams and comprised a more-or-less square enclosure measuring *c* 70m across externally and *c* 49m by 45m internally. On the north-west and north-east sides the ditch was *c* 8m wide and *c* 3m deep, although rounded inner corners and squared outer corners extended the width to *c* 20m diagonally across the moat at the north and west corners. The moat was evidently much wider on the south-west and south-east sides. Environmental samples suggest a flooded moat in

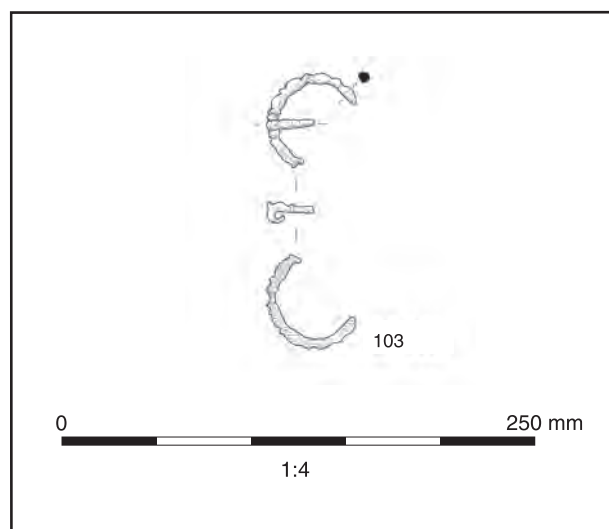


Figure 6.45 Parsonage Farm: annular brooch of 13th century date



Figure 6.46 Parsonage Farm: medieval phase 3 features

contrast to Phase 2. Passage across the moat was apparently on the north-east side where timber revetting, an external gravel surface and an internal tile and flint path leading towards the main building indicate a causeway or bridge.

The new structural complex comprised a principal hall of three bays (Room 3) built on the site of its predecessor with a service room at the northern end separated from the main hall by a passage. Built on a larger scale than the Phase 2 hall, at 21.5m in length and 9.8m in width, Room 3 was built on sill beams to judge by negative traces on the ground, although various slots and post-settings indicate further structural members. The building was aisled along each of its long sides, while two hearths and associated waste were located in the southernmost bay. Immediately west of the service room lay a garderobe pit with associated structural evidence (43761), including a tile-lined drain (43763) leading to a sump or soakaway. A short distance to the north lay features probably connected with cooking (43772), including an oven, later replaced by hearths with a semicircular arc of postholes to the west probably marking a windbreak. A little to the north again lay a further hearth and pits (43771).

Room 1 of the preceding Phase 2 house was shortened in length, the north-east part of the west wall was remodelled and the former annexe (Room 2 of the new house) was augmented with massive foundations where the wall followed the edge of the moat, almost certainly reflecting the addition of an upper storey or solar.

The area between the main hall and the south-western arm of the moat was infilled with two further structures, Rooms 4 and 5. A masonry revetting wall (43741) along the inside of the south-western arm of the moat may have formed the end wall of both structures, although the evidence was not well enough preserved to provide a clear view of the nature of either structure. Only fragments of each building survived, mainly the north-east ends, while Room 5 may have started life as a post-built structure only to be partially replaced in stone, or at least with stone footings. A drain connected the north-east corner of Room 5 with the garderobe pit at the corner of the main hall.

Ceramic changes can be associated with the transition from medieval Phase 2 to 3. Later-type Ashford wares and Tyler Hill wares are more common, although the range of vessels remains similar (Hill 2006, 21). The latest finds of this phase are derived from the garderobe pit and include two sherds of Early Valencian lustreware (c 1380–1450), although evidence for occupation later than the mid 14th century is otherwise lacking. The end of life of the complex is marked by a series of deposits reflecting demolition and robbing of walls and foundations, presumably for use elsewhere. Destruction debris was found within and around individual buildings as well as in the moat itself, and included tile and lead-melt from either roof covering or window cames. Broken roof tiles and cobbles were dumped along the inner edge of the moat, but only three pieces of moulded stone were recovered. Overall there is no evidence that the complex

was left to decay and the archaeology suggests a systematic clearance of the site (*ibid.*, 2006, 22).

Parsonage Farm in context

Among the accounts of building works in the Canterbury archive is a record of the moving of a great barn to Westwell. Mary Adams, however, notes that such records normally state where a building has been moved from, sometimes providing details of the cost of transporting the dismantled structure (Adams 2007, 180–1). The absence of such details relating to Westwell suggests to Adams that the great barn must have come from a site close by, that of the original Anglo-Saxon manor. While the results of the Parsonage Farm evaluation suggested that the site of the original manor had been located (Glass 1999), subsequent full excavation revealed, as described above, occupation which lasted until the 14th century. Initially, the excavators considered that the wholesale nature of demolition and reconstruction between phases 2 and 3 was unlikely to occur at a functioning farm (Hill 2006, 9). Razing of the site to move it elsewhere, to the site of present Westwell, however, makes sense of the archaeological sequence. Reappraisal of both documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that Parsonage Farm was in fact a rectory in the Middle Ages, perhaps becoming a farmhouse before 1328, by which time the rector no longer resided in the parish (Adams 2007, 183). The earliest occupation at Parsonage Farm, however, may be related to the two mills rendering 5s recorded in the Domesday Survey (Williams and Martin 2002, 9), although all too little of the earliest phases of occupation was revealed. Adams further suggests that the site of the documented Anglo-Saxon church lay immediately west of the Parsonage Farm site; the present parish church at Westwell is a 13th century building and further Canterbury documents support her conjecture that a wholly new church was built at this time (Adams 2007, 187).

Observing the actual process of village formation in the Middle Ages in documentary sources is very rare, yet the difficulty of reconciling written and excavated evidence is exemplified at Parsonage Farm. While the precise location of the Anglo-Saxon church and manor of *Welles* are yet to be established, Adams' interpretation of Parsonage Farm as a rectory is entirely plausible.

Conclusions

Concluding remarks can be made with regard to a number of key areas where the results of the HS1 project have contributed significantly to our knowledge of Kentish society and landscape between the end of the Roman period and the end of the Middle Ages. The discoveries at Cuxton and Saltwood, spectacular though they undoubtedly are, serve to confirm existing thinking about the distinctiveness of eastern Kentish society in the 6th and 7th centuries, and the cultural differences between the west and east of the county that became

formalised in an administrative sense by the ecclesiastical division of the county into the dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester in the 7th century. It is also worth noting that even though over 100 years of archaeological enquiry and discovery have elapsed since Smith's discussion of Anglo-Saxon Kent in 1908, the known extent of material remains of the period is basically unchanged despite many new sites and individual finds (compare Smith 1908, map facing p. 339 with Brookes 2007a, 77, fig. 36). Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon finds from the north-eastern part of Romney Marsh are the main noticeable difference.

The distinct possibility that a hundred meeting place has been excavated at Saltwood should not be underplayed, particularly regarding the social implications of converting a community cemetery to a place of social gathering; perhaps the cemetery had long served that function. The archaeology recorded at Saltwood and White Horse Stone both provide key data from which to assess the antiquity of the framework of the Kentish landscape. Saltwood reveals a very ancient fabric of field boundaries and trackways, White Horse Stone a Roman landscape augmented by an Anglo-Saxon and medieval (if not earlier) route of communication, the crossroads created by the intersection of the two routes itself creating an environment deemed suitable for an isolated burial, perhaps of a suicide. It is of particular interest that both Saltwood and White Horse Stone allow for an assessment of past perceptions of places in the landscape using archaeological evidence.

Village origins and the working life of the lower orders are accessible at Mersham where the origins of a typical Wealden polyfocal settlement apparently lie in the late 8th or 9th century. The evidence from Mersham, however, cautions against using individual excavations to model patterns and processes in landscape development more widely. The Mersham sequence evidences a continually evolving landscape, with changes in field boundaries and economic function; Saltwood's 'archaic' landscape is only a few kilometres to the east.

As at Mersham, the archaeology of Northumberland Bottom and its environs belies a continually changing landscape, although the major difference between the two sites is that the latter appears to represent short-lived pioneer settlement and the former part of a longer term occupation of the same locale. At Parsonage Farm, the settlement archaeology is certainly of a higher social order than that excavated at the other sites, but the picture is similar with the evolution of settlement in the Westwell environs mirroring the marked dynamism observed elsewhere.

Comparable chronological horizons include residual ceramics of Middle Anglo-Saxon date at Mersham and Saltwood, while settlement features indicate more tangible activity at White Horse Stone. The mid-11th century sees the beginning of settlement at Mersham, Northumberland Bottom and Parsonage Farm, while at the first two of these sites, the laying out of field boundaries characterises activity in the 13th century. In many cases both settlement and agricultural features continued to influence boundary patterns into succeeding centuries, sometimes up to the present.

The major lesson to be learned is that while large-scale landscape characterisation of the kind undertaken by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000) provides a snapshot based on 19th century evidence, which may provide a relatively accurate estimation of the medieval situation, only site-specific work will reveal the full complexity and chronology of landscape development. Ultimately, the HS1 investigations have provided a much needed injection of key new evidence into long existing debates. To return to the comparison made at the start of this chapter between the landscapes of the south-western counties and those of Kent, it now seems that in both 'provinces' a simplistic characterisation of such landscapes as 'archaic' because they are markedly different in appearance to the great tracts of medieval planned arable of the English midlands is misleading. Throughout the medieval period the Kentish pattern of landscape development north of the Weald was both complex and continuous.

