OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Annual Report 1982

The Oxford Archaeological Unit is an organisation devoted full-time to the excavation of archaeological sites which are about to be destroyed by modern developments. The Unit carries out excavations in Oxford and Oxfordshire and occasionally on specific sites in neighbouring counties. The Unit works closely with amateur societies in the County.

The Unit welcomes volunteers who can help on its excavations and also assist with the sorting of finds at the Unit's offices. Details of all current Unit projects can be obtained from the Unit Secretary or by subscribing to the Unit's Newsletter. The Newsletter describes work in progress and gives details of excavations, open days and archaeological talks.

The Unit is independant of Local Government and the University and is a registered Charity. It needs a substantial income each year to carry out its work. Financial contributions however small are always welcome and can be sent to the Treasurer at the address below.

Oxford Archaeological Unit
46 Hythe Bridge Street
Oxford
OX1 2EP

The front cover shows Mr Neil MacFarlane, Parliamentary Under Secretary for the Environment, presenting the Country Life award to Mr Tom Hassall, the Director of the Unit, for the best project by a professional archaeological Unit at a ceremony at the British Museum.

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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT 1982 - Tom Hassall, Director

It is always difficult for an organisation like the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) to blow its own trumpet. It is therefore pleasant when somebody else publicly recognises the Unit's worth. In April 1982 Mr Neil MacFarlane, Parliamentary Under Secretary for the Environment presented the *Country Life* award to the Unit for the best project by a professional archaeological Unit at a ceremony at the British Museum. The Unit had submitted its project on the Iron Age and Roman rural settlement of the Upper Thames Valley. The judges described this project as 'pioneering work ... particularly impressive is the way the Unit has pursued a finely co-ordinated programme within the framework of rescue archaeology. It is one thing to carry out exemplary research another to successfully publish the results. Here again, they are praiseworthy both in quality and speed!' The Award consisted of a specially commissioned replica of a 1st century AD figure of Dionysus, together with a cheque for £250.

During the year the Unit has tried to live up to this reputation. The scale of excavations and the parallel writing-up programme has continued at the high level of activity of which the Unit has been accustomed.

During the year a long awaited change took place in the constitution of the Unit. The Unit's Committee, previously an unincorporated body has now become a Private Limited Company (Number 1618597). The object of this change has been to protect Committee members from any financial claims that might be made against them as a result of the activities of the Unit. Needless to say there never have been any such claims, but members of the Committee can now feel more secure so that in the event of a financial disaster their liability will be strictly limited. The Unit now has its own seal. The Unit's registered office remains 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP (Telephone Ox. 243888). The Unit remains a Registered Charity (Number 285627) so that it can take advantage of covenants and rate relief. We are grateful to our Solicitor, Nicholas Gardiner of Challenor and Gardiner's who steered us through the complicated legal negotiations needed to achieve these changes.

The Unit will henceforth be known officially as the Oxford Archaeological Unit which has been its unofficial name for some time. However, in parallel to the new Company the old Oxfordshire Archaeological Committee still exists with the same membership as the new Company in order to pursue strictly County interests.

The Unit is also an Associated Centre of St Cross College. Up until this year this association has largely been by way of the Personal Fellowship held by the Director at the College. However, with the Unit's change in status its constitution was altered in such a way as to allow a Fellow of the College to have a place on the Unit's Committee. The College chose to nominate Susan Hockey of the Computing Service who has for some time provided the Unit with advice and help with its computing. It is very appropriate that she should now represent St Cross. The College has also continued to provide invaluable help to the Unit in the form of the loan of a golfball typewriter for much of the year and also providing a channel through which tax-exempt funds could reach the Unit from United States citizens. By virtue

of his College Fellowship, the Director was a University Pro-Proctor during the Academic Year 1981/1982.

It is always invidious to single out particularly interesting or successful projects undertaken during the year, but as usual a summary will be given here of the more significant projects all of which are listed below. The Unit has rarely had the opportunity to examine earlier prehistoric sites. However in 1981 Richard Chambers excavated a series of Neolithic and later sites along the line of the newly constructed Dorchester by-pass. The report on these sites is now nearing completion. Richard Bradley of Reading University has provided much valuable assistance with this work. Excavation by Jeff Wallis and the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society has continued within Sutton Courtenay parish of the Drayton Cursus where it is sealed beneath alluvium in Curtis' gravel pit. The Neolithic ground surface with occupation soils and sherds of pottery was found sealed beneath the upcast of the eastern ditch. While outside the ditch a number of pits were excavated. An attempt to show how the cursus, currently under investigation, linked with the Drayton Cursus proper on the higher ground to the south suggested that there may in reality be two cursuses here in line with each other rather than one longer cursus.

George Lambrick aided by the Oxford University Archaeological Society (OUAS) has continued his investigation of the environs of the Rollright Stones. The work was originally necessitated by potential damage to the site by turf stipping and soil dumping by Warwickshire County Highways. However, the Department of the Environment asked the Unit to conduct a wider ranging survey and trial excavation of some of the other possible sites in the area as a preliminary step to redefining the Schedule Area. 1982 was an appropriate year to undertake this work since it marked the centenary of the first Ancient Monument Act when the Rollright Stones were first scheduled. George Lambrick's work has been in two parts: first, an examination of all existing information on the Stones, including antiquarian drawings and second, actual excavations. The excavations have produced evidence of Mesolithic occupation and showed that the long mound by the King Stone is actually a well-preserved Neolithic cairn with a dry stone revetment together with surrounding cremations and Later Bronze Age cremations inserted in the top. Near the Neolithic cairn is a further Bronze Age barrow. An Early to Middle Iron Age settlement was also confirmed including a major enclosure protecting a house circle and pits with a nearby trackway and possible field boundary.

The main bias of the Unit's work continued to the in the Upper Thames gravel fields. George Lambrick's survey of the Thames Floodplain, funded by the British Academy, has provided more useful data on sites, like the Neolithic site at Drayton, which are sealed by the alluvium. The survey is casting new light on the interpretation of settlement patterns and the impact of post human activity in the region. As part of this survey Mark Robinson sampled Bronze Age occupation deposits at Wallingford. A further Late Bronze Age settlement site has been identified by Tim Allen and Richard Hingley during the post-excavation work on Margaret Jones' excavations at the gravel pit at Rough Ground Farm, Lechlade, Gloucestershire. These Bronze Age settlement sites are rare, more familiar are the ring ditches of the Upper Thames three of which were examined: at North Stoke by Steve Ford; at South Parks Road, Oxford, by Brian Durham and at Stanton Harcourt by George Lambrick.

The Unit's main programme of rescue excavations continued to be concentrated on Iron and Roman rural sites where a series of settlements of different status and function are being examined as part of a wider research programme. High status sites have so far been excluded from this work not because of their lack of intrinsic interest, but simply because the threats to them, like ploughing, have not been accepted for funding by the Department of the Environment. In the future the Unit might seek to acquire research funds to examine such a site. In this context Richard Hingley's field work at Cherbury Camp, in Charney Bassett parish, has produced useful new evidence for an extensive "open settlement" to the west of the valley fort of probable Early/Middle Iron Age date. Cherbury may therefore fall within the small group of nucleated, heavily defended sites in the Upper Thames Valley like Dyke Hills, Dorchester. Richard Hingley's work is carried out as part of his research at Southampton University. Even though the Unit has not had the opportunity to examine a site of this scale it is clear the the Early/Middle Iron Age site excavated at the Ashville Trading Estate by Michael Parrington in 1974-6 is even larger than first supposed. In 1983 Claire Halpin extended the excavations to the south of the Ashville Trading Estate in the area formerly occupied by the former MG car factory. This work was begun in 1982 and has now shown that extensive contemporary occupation is to be found up to 100m from the Ashville site. Further evidence for Roman occupation was also discovered. This work was in part financed by Standard Life Assurance. Both the Ashville and the MG sites are notable for their dense cluster of pits, however, the impossibility of prior survey made it difficult to work out a detailed sampling strategy or indeed to define accurately the extent of the site. The Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society aided by Richard Chambers has also been examining an Iron Age settlement site at Didcot.

At the Gravelly Guy site at Stanton Harcourt we are faced with a discrete settlement of enclosures, pits and probable ponds. George Lambrick has begun the excavation of this site in advance of gravel extraction. This site is the last large coherent site of the great Stanton Harcourt complex. The new Blackditch by-pass runs immediately north of the Gravelly Guy site and during a watching brief, George Lambrick recorded a length of Iron Age ditch with a well preserved water-logged deposit. Water-logging was also a feature of the Iron Age site, Mingies Ditch at Hardwick with Yelford. The last part of this site was finally stripped for gravel extraction and Tim Allen has prepared the draft report. All these projects were funded by the Department of the Environment. To the north of these sites but also in West Oxfordshire, Tim Copeland has been demonstrating the rewards of private field work by identifying previously unrecorded stretches of the north Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch at Charlbury. One of these sections is being destroyed by stone quarrying.

The Unit's largest single project is still the essay in landscape archaeology at Claydon Pike, Fairford/Lechlade where David Miles with Simon Palmer is directing what in terms of area must be the largest archaeological project in the Country. The work has been funded by the Department of the Environment, the Manpower Services Commission and the Amey Roadstone Corporation with the assistance of the Coln Gravel Company. This year's excavation focussed on the centre of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement and on the Roman road where it crossed the Lechlade/Fairford parish boundary stream. The Late Iron Age settlement has now been traced over about 2.5ha. Much of this phase still lies below the Romano-British settlement and awaits excavation in 1983.

In the second half of the first century a road, fields and nucleated settlement were systematically laid out. Domestic buildings were limited to one part of the site and there may have been a shrine. The settlement is not a conventional villa or village. By the late third century the character of the Roman settlement had changed considerably: the main road and fields continued in use but within the settlement the side streets, fields and buildings were abandoned. The entire settlement was deserted by the mid 5th century and there is no trace so far of early Saxon activity. The excavations have been aimed at discovering the character and chronology of this development and have produced tantalising glimpses of possible Roman military activity in the 1st century and also suggest the existence of a shrine. Finds include a 'nest' of bronze bowls, possible military metal work, a sherd of amphora inscribed 'LEG II A' (the Second Legion Augusta) and possible lead 'curses'.

The Claydon Pike excavation was the Unit's largest Roman project undertaken during the year, however the Department of the Environment has also funded four other Roman projects. At Eynsham a watching brief by Richard Chambers on the construction of the by-pass revealed a previously unknown settlement to the north-east of the village. At Between Towns Road, Cowley the watching brief by Brian Durham on the known kiln site was concluded and a new kiln of 3rd - 4th century date was uncovered. It had produced red/brown colour coats. Sarah Green has been processing the pottery from the site and also the pottery for the much larger excavations at the Churchill Hospital which were completed in 1973. Tim Allen also completed the description of the buildings of the villa excavated in the 1960's by Mrs Margaret Jones at Rough Ground Farm, Lechlade, Glos.

As in previous years the bias in the Unit's Saxon research has been towards the two Late Saxon towns of Oxford and Wallingford. At Wallingford Rex Dixon and the Wallingford Archaeological and Historical Society attempted to section the defences east of the Southgate only to find that they must lie under St Leonard's Lane which has previously been thought of as an intra-mural street. A much larger excavation, conducted jointly by the same society and the Unit, took place at the former John Wilder foundry site in Goldsmith's Lane. The excavation was directed by Claire Halpin and largely funded by South Oxfordshire District Council. The excavation has helped to clarify the topography of the south west corner of the town: Late Saxon material was uncovered and the ground plan of one Medieval stone building and part of a second. A third stone building with associated burials is probably the Church of St Rumbold. The entire site was abandoned in the late fourteenth century.

At Oxford Brian Durham has illuminated part of the complicated sequence of silting relating to the Trill Mill Stream which defined the southern edge of the Saxon*burh*. It now seems that an original natural stream had virtually died out by the Roman period, but had water flowing in it again by the 10th century. The stream can never have been deep and its wattle fences were layed out on its northern shore. The northern side of the stream was reclaimed again in the middle of the 11th century when the stream was presumably greatly restricted in width perhaps as part of the original Mill stream. This work was funded by the Department of the Environment.

To the south of this site at 65 St Aldates where the Saxon ford was uncovered last year two well-constructed water fronts were exposed during building

work. The report at the Blackfriars, on the City wall at 39 George Street and Hertford College, and Saxon and Medieval tenements at 11-18 Queen Street and at Westgate have been actively prepared by Brian Durham, Claire Halpin and Maureen Mellor with the help of the Department of the Environment grants. The Department also financed trial excavation at Oseney Abbey which discovered a southern range of buildings and a stone-fronted river channel.

Small scale work has been undertaken in the four other towns. In Abingdon Godfrey Jones with the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society has investigated Medieval tenements at Lombard Street; in Banbury a watching brief was undertaken by Richard Chambers during building on a further part of the Castle; at Bicester Richard Chambers recorded more of the Priory and finally, at Witney, Charles Gott and members of the Witney Historical Society revealed a sequence of medieval domestic occupation.

In the countryside the continued writing-up of the medieval moated manor site at Harding's Field, Chalgrove by Phillip Page was the major work. Other notable discoveries included architectural features in Hook Norton Church recorded by Richard Chambers and Nicholas Doggett and the identification by Maureen Mellor of medieval pottery sherds from a kiln site at Swyncombe which has been discovered by David Start and Philip Catherall of the British Gas Corporation. This is the first discovery of a medieval kiln in the County.

1982 was Information Technology Year; it was therefore appropriate that the Unit acquired a microprocessor with the aid of a grant from the Department of the Environment. The microprocessor chosen was a Research Machines of Oxford, RML 380Z FDS system, which is capable of storing up to 1 megabyte of data on its dual drive 8" floppy discs. Together with the micro there are also two printers, a Microline 80 dot matrix printer, for use in data processing and a Qume Sprint 5 daisy wheel printer which gives 'letter quality' printing for reports, etc. Phillip Page has become the Unit's resident microprocessor expert and has co-ordinated the use of the machine within the Unit as well as co-ordinating our computing with the Department of the Environment's Central Excavation Unit and the University Computing Service.

This system is intended for use in three main aspects of the Unit's work. Firstly, the microprocessor is used to manipulate and process the large amounts of data produced by our rescue excavations. Maureen Mellor has for several years been using the University's mainframe computer for processing medieval pottery from excavations in Oxford. While we shall continue to use the mainframe it is possible for the microprocessor to do the same job on a smaller scale with the added advantage of instant access. Another way of using the micro will be to input the data onto floppy discs which can be 'read' by the mainframe computer and then processed. As well as pottery processing the micro is being used to sort the small finds' records and contexts data. This enables us to produce catalogues of the finds by material, tupe and location or any one of a dozen or more different categories. We are in the process of developing software that will produce a distribution plan of the small finds from the record.

Cross referencing of contexts and checking for stratigraphic loops, a time-consuming manual chore, can easily be left to the computer which having checked the contexts can provide a simple flow diagram of the stratigraphy.

Currently the backlog of data from the excavations at Claydon Pike, Fairford is being fed into the computer, and this ultimately will facilitate the process of producing the final report, while at the same time providing a copy of the site record.

Secondly, using Wordstar the microprocessor can be used for word processing. This has proved invaluable in producing justified camera-ready copy with the minimum amount of typing. It has proved particularly useful in the production of final reports, where previously the rough draft would have to have been edited and retyped, this can all be done using the original text. Blocks of text can be easily moved around within the document, while whole paragraphs, sentences and words can be inserted or deleted at will. We also have the facility to transfer text stored on one of our 8" floppy discs from the micro to the University's mainframe computer and printer using the Lasercomp.

Finally it is hoped that in 1983 the Microprocessor will be used to help handle the Unit's finances. In particular it will help to meet the estimating and accounting demands of the Department of the Environment. The Department's strict insistence on the concept of 'Project Funding' is posing an ever increasing demand on our Treasurer's time as new procedures are created with their accompanying coloured forms. Using a commercial software package it is possible to control individual project costings and to see at a glance the 'knock on' effect of any over or under spending on any particular aspect of a project. This package will also be very useful in certain aspects of pottery processing where, for example, the percentage of a certain type of pottery in a particular phase had to be altered due to re-phasing of the site.

As members of the Unit become more familiar with the use of the microprocessor the demand for time at the keyboard has increased such that we are considering the use of remote terminals to gather data. This would have two advantages. Firstly it would ease the pressure on the use of the micro, secondly, for certain categories of information the data could be typed directly into the terminal, without an intermediary paper stage. This would be particularly useful on site where data could be entered directly onto a portable micro computer and then dumped onto the 380Z's floppy discs at the office.

The Unit's close relationship with and support from Oxford University Department for External Studies continues. The Director of the Unit continues to serve as an Associate Staff Tutor of the Department. As usual the two organisations were involved with a number of joint ventures including the Oxford Smithsonian seminar based at Worcester College and a Day School for local archaeologists at which a number of part-time and professional speakers described their work. During the course of the year the Unit welcomed a number of students on secondment as part of the Department's In-Service training scheme including Susan Degnan, Nicholas Doggett, Sheila Girardon, Howard Leach, Simon O'Connon Thompson and Mark Taylor, Unit staff acted as their supervisors and also assisted with monthly seminars. Many members of the Unit also gave individual evening courses and lectures for the Department. The close association owes everything to the personal link between the Unit and Trevor Rowley, Staff Tutor in Archaeology, and his secretary Shirley Herman.

The Unit has been furthering links with archaeologists abroad. For nearly half the year Elizabeth Lorans worked with us funded by the Delegation Generale a la recherche Scientifique et Technique. An exchange was also organised between the Unit and the Murzeul de Istorie al Transilvanei, Rumania through the good offices of Professor Hadrian Daicoriciu. During August Timothy Allen worked on the site of Ulpin Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Unfortunately, it did not prove possible for Timothy's opposite number to come to Oxford as originally planned, but it is hoped that the exchange will continue in 1983.

Members of the Unit continue to give lectures and talks to a wide variety of organisations both locally and nationally. Amongst many other lectures the Director addressed a Conference organised by the University of Leicester on the problems of archaeological publication. He was a Guest Lecturer for a a round Britain Cruise organised by W E & R K Swan (Hellenic) Ltd. He also gave a talk on the history and topography of late medieval Oxford to the Medieval Pottery Research Group at its meeting held at Worcester College. Maureen Mellor also gave a paper to the same meeting on 'The Changing Pattern of Pottery in Oxford during the Late Middle Ages'. Maureen also arranged a display of Late Medieval pottery from Oxford for the same meeting. David Miles edited *The Roman Countryside: Studies in Rural Settlement and Economy* (BAR 103, 1982) also contributed to *An Atlas of Archaeology*, edited by Keith Branigan. The staff also gave a series of seminars on archaeological technique at the Oxford Institute of Archaeology.

The Unit continues to attract popular attention through David Miles' regular article in the *Abingdon Herald* and through the *Oxford Mail, Oxford Star* and *Oxford Times*, and Radio Oxford all of whom regularly feature the work of the Unit. Edward MacDonnell, the archaeological correspondent of *Country Life* wrote an article on the Unit in his magazine while BBC Radio 4 described the delight of volunteering on the Unit's excavations with a consequently dramatic increase in recruitment.

The Unit continued its policy of Open Days to great effect. At the Iron Age and Roman excavation at Claydon Pike the most elaborate a site exhibition mounted by the Unit was a feature of the Open Day held there. ARC kindly provided a marquee through the good offices of Stewart Hillier, the Regional Director. Tape-slide equipment was loaned by County Council Audio-visual aid centre. An estimated 1000 people braved the howling wind and showers to visit the site, while Maggie Herdman organised visits by 300 school children from various schools in the region during the following days. Another visitor to the site was Sir George Mosely, Permanent Secretary at the Department of the Environment. An interim report entitled *Figures in a Landscape* was written by David Miles and Simon Palmer for visitors to the site. Even more visitors came to the Open Day at Goldmsith's Lane, Wallingford where members of the Wallingford Archaeological and Historical Society shepherded the vast crowd around the site of St Rumbold's church and medieval tenements. No formal Open Day was held at Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age excavations at Rollright, but inevitably the large number of visitors to that site were interested in the excavations. George Lambrick has prepared an account of the Stones and the excavation which it is hoped will go on sale at Rollright in 1983. Susan Degman arranged a display at Thame Show.

There were various staff changes during the year. Wally Castle retired as

the Unit's Treasurer and his place was taken by Ray Gould. Ray has streamlined the Unit's financial procedures which has been an essential process now that the Unit no longer has the assistance of the County Council to help with any temporary cash flow problems. Financial control should now satisfy more fully the requirements of contributors like the Department of the Environment and the Manpower Services Commission as well as allowing individual Field Officers to see clearly how the finances of their individual projects are progressing.

Jocelyn Le Petit ceased to be Unit secretary and has returned to Australia in order to be nearer her family. We all wish her well. Her place has been taken by Sally Quiney who has mastered the intricacies of the Unit's filing system and microprocessor.

There have also been changes with the Finds Adminstrator. Gwynne Oakley left and her place has been taken, on at least a temporary basis, by Judith Russen. Judith was originally employed by the Unit under the terms of the Unit's MSC YOP Scheme as Finds Assistant on the excavations at Claydon Pike.

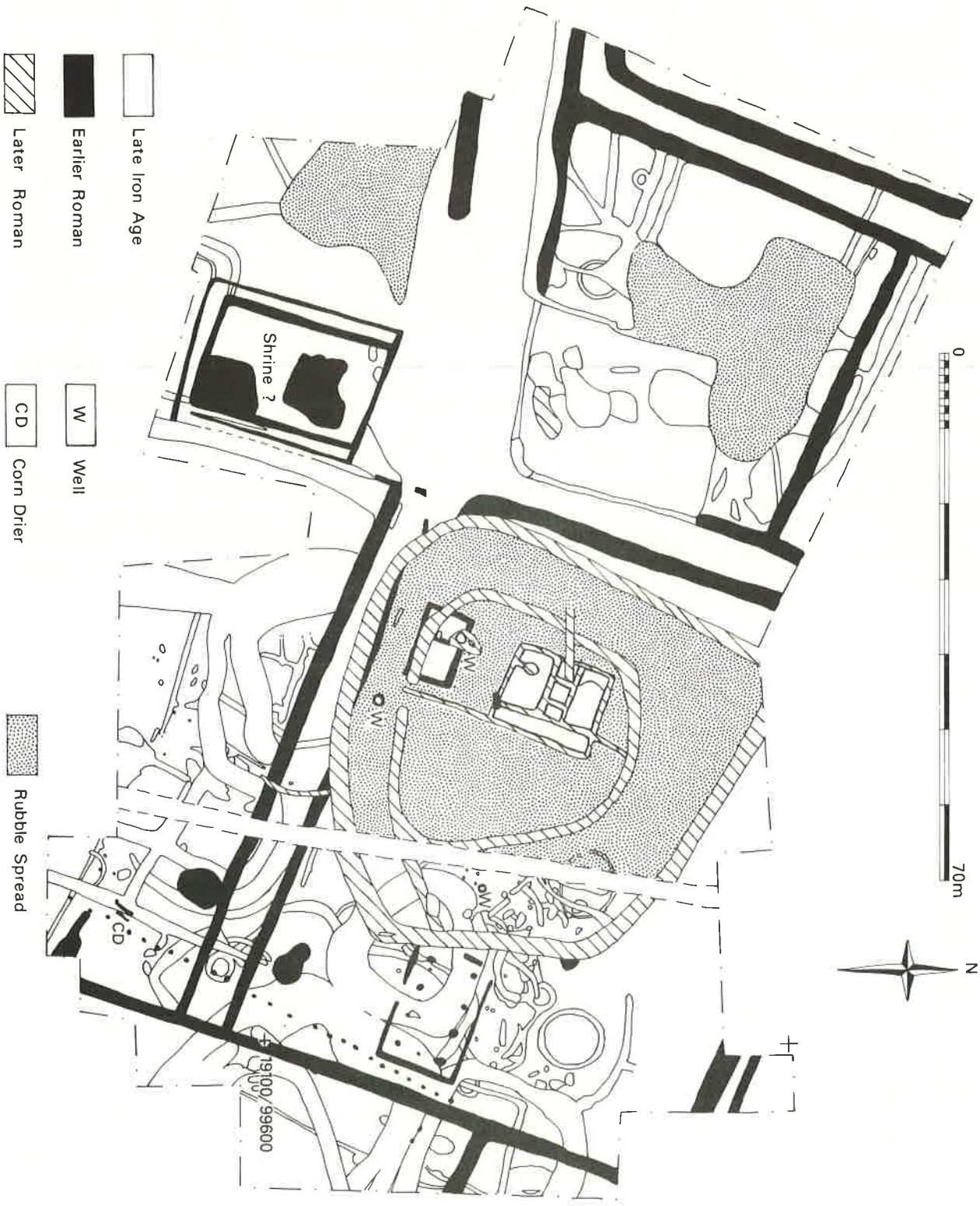
This is also an appropriate place to thank our part-time and temporary employees: Eleanor Beard, Alan Hardy, Anne Perry, Peter Rooke and Jonathan Sharpe as well as the young people employed on our YOP scheme; our voluntary helpers at the Unit: Mrs Carruthers, Jane Gordon-Cummings, Patricia Horsman, Barbara Howes, Jean Mitchell and various boys from Magdalen College School; and our voluntary and part-time excavators especially Jeff Wallis and members of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society; Tim Copeland of Charlbury; Joyce Hall and Bob North and members of the Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society; Richard Hingley of Frilford; Judy Dewey; Rex Dixon; Pat Granados and members of the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society; Geoff Williams of Witney. Numerous volunteers on the excavations came from many countries including Australia, France, the Netherlands and New Zealand. We also received assistance for a second year from the Continuation Training Phantom of the Light Infantry Depot from Shrewsbury.

Senior staff have continued to be involved with archaeology at a national level. The Director remains Chairman of the Standing Conference of Unit Managers and a Council Member of the Society of Antiquaries; he has also served as a member of other Committees including the Co-ordinating Committee for Archaeological Action, the CBA Publications and Urban Research Committees, the CBA Working Party on the organisation of Archaeology and the joint CBA and DoE Working Party on publication. David Miles remains Secretary of the CBA Countryside Committee.

It is always a pleasure to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have helped the Unit during the year and whose names do not appear elsewhere: Professor Shepherd Frere, the Chairman and Louise Armstrong, the Secretary and all the members of the Committee; the members of the Unit's Oxford, Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Advisory Committees; Mark Robinson and Bob Wilson, once of the Unit but now of the Oxford Archaeological Environmental Laboratory; James Bond, Dan chadwick, John Rhodes, John Steane and Ahmed Shishtani of the Oxfordshire Department of Museum Services; David Brown, Arthur MacGregor and Gwyn Miles of the Ashmolean Museum; David Viner of the Corinium Museum; John Ashdown of Oxford City Council and Malcolm Airs of South Oxfordshire District Council; Barry Philips of the County

Treasurer's Department; Stewart Hillier and Terry Jones of the Amey Roadstone Corporation. Particular thanks must also go to our colleagues at the Department of the Environment including Sarnia Butcher, Anthony Fleming, Jo Jefferies, Steven Nelson and Geoffery Wainwright.

It remains to thank all those bodies and institutions whose financial contributions make the work of a full-time Unit like the Oxford Archaeological Unit possible. The Unit would like therefore to acknowledge the financial support of the following:- from Central Government: the Department of the Environment and the Manpower Services Commission; from Local government: Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, the Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District council, Abingdon Town Council and the following parish councils: St Helen's Without , Sunningwell, Sutton Courtenay; from the University: The Department for External Studies and the following colleges: Christ Church, St John's, St Peter's and Wadham. Donations were also received from SCG Bach, members of the Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society, the Mary Scott Trust, and the Smithsonian Seminar. The Unit is also grateful for the major covenanted grant from the Amey Roadstone Corporation and other substantial grants from the British Academy, the Oxford Preservation Trust and Standard Life Assurance. Without the continued support of all these donors the 1982 rescue archaeology programme of the Oxford Archaeological Unit would not have been possible.



FAIRFORD/LECHLADE: Claydon Pike

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

FAIRFORD/LECHLADE: Claydon Pike - David Miles and Simon Palmer

The continuing excavation in advance of gravel extraction focussed on the centre of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement and on the Roman road where it crossed the Lechlade/Fairford parish boundary stream (SU191996).

A Late Iron Age settlement has been traced over about 2.5ha. Much of this phase still lies below the Romano-British settlement so that it cannot yet be described in detail. It appears to consist of three zones : an inner one of circular structures about 8m in diameter, small ditched circles c.4m in diameter, pits, post-holes and curving gullies; a second zone has large oval enclosures and small rectangular plots; a third outermost zone consists of large ditched paddocks.

A class 'M' Dobunnic coin probably dates to the early decades of the first century AD but was not found in a stratified context.

The site continued to be occupied into the second half of the first century AD. Many of the ditches and gullies were recut several times. The upper fills contained Romanised material and some had been deliberately backfilled with gravel. Among this upper fill material was a silver Republican coin minted in Rome in 152 BC.

In the second half of the first century a road, fields and nucleated settlement were systematically laid out. The settlement consisted of a main street, with side streets separated by rectangular ditched plots sited on the higher and drier gravel islands. At the centre of the site was an open space into which street ran from four directions. The largest rectangular enclosure east of the open space has been completely uncovered.

It was excavated from the eastern, rear end so will be described in that way. A rear boundary ditch was allowed to silt up quickly. It was replaced by a fence, the packed post-holes of which have been traced over almost 60m. A pitched stone path was laid over the ditch, through the fence line up to the back of a large aisled building which is interpreted as a barn. This building was 17m long by 11.5m wide with three main bays and half bays at either end. An entrance 2m wide was placed in the middle of the southern long axis. The foundations consisted of a shallow setting of limestone rubble and mortar up to 0.3m deep and 0.5m wide. A large Savernake ware storage jar was set in the ground on the line of the southern aisle posts. Traces of a cobbled floor survived where it had sunk into earlier features. South and west of this aisled building were a number of cobbled areas. An oven lay to the west and nearby was found a nest of bronze bowls. At the front (west) of the enclosure stood the domestic buildings. A two-roomed house (10m x 6m) had a hearth in the eastern room. North of this building are traces of another so far unexcavated.

South of the central open space at the intersection of four streets stands a rectangular enclosure (25m x 15m) with a double ditch and/or wall on three sides and a single wall along the front (north) side. This feature has so far been uncovered but not excavated so the details of construction are

uncertain.

Inside the enclosure is a large irregular pit with evidence of burning in the top. At the rear in the south eastern corner is a rectangular cobbled area (7m x 8m).

There are large quantities of finds around the perimeter of this enclosure particularly pottery and glass. Also two rolled lead objects (analysis by Mark Pollard of the Laboratory for Art and Archaeology, Oxford shows them to be almost pure lead) which resemble *defixiones* or curses. Two more have been found nearby. A limestone pillar with a carved base lay in a pit in the centre of the settlement. It had been placed along with other stone rubble, over the disarticulated bones of domestic animals.

The form of the rectangular enclosure and the finds from this area suggest that we may have here a shrine at the centre of the site.

Finds of particular interest from the later first century phase include large quantities of amphora sherds, one of which has been inscribed on the inside LEG II A. Also a gilded bronze vine leaf is probably a military insignia, closely paralleled at Cirencester. An enamelled horse brass may be a piece of military equipment.

The Roman road leading into the settlement has been traced over some 3 km by aerial photography and excavation. The road was well preserved in the marshy area alongside the present parish boundary. It was constructed of dumped gravel and Forest Marble cobbles. The road surface was 4.4m wide and flanked by side ditches. These ditches contained waterlogged biological remains. Two oak piles were found revetting the road on the west side.

The road was buried by deposits of alluvium about 0.70m deep. A sequence of parish boundary ditches cut through the alluvium. These probably originated in the late 17th century when the surrounding fields were enclosed and farms established on the medieval open fields and common. There was no evidence of a stream flowing in the first four parish boundary ditches. Only the fifth and present-day ditch seems to have had a stream. The Roman road crossed a marshy area and the excess water was channeled into field ditches. It is now possible to make some tentative suggestions as to the character and development of the settlement. In the second half of the first century the Roman settlement at Claydon Pike was systematically laid out over the site of an Iron Age community. It included a good road system, extensive fields, paddocks and storage facilities. Domestic accommodation seems to have been limited to one part of the site. There may be a shrine and military involvement on the site. The economy included flax and cereal production but was predominantly based on cattle and sheep rearing. The settlement is not a conventional villa or village. It would be premature to speculate with any degree of confidence on the ownership or organisation of the site. The possibilities include legionary *prata*, a ranch belonging to an important Dobunnic tribesman, a settlement for veterans or part of an imperial estate.

By the late third century the character of the Roman settlement had changed considerably: the main road and fields continued in use but within the settlement the side streets, paddocks and buildings had been abandoned.

To the east of the central area a D-shaped double ditched enclosure was dug. The outer ditch had a low dry stone wall constructed along the inner lip. Inside the D-shaped enclosure was a stone based, but extensively robbed building (13m x 11m). This had a corridor along the eastern side, large rooms at the northern and the southern end separated by three small rooms. A drain ran out of the western side.

Fragments of five burials were found in this area but not necessarily contemporary with the late building.

In the immediately post-Roman period the site suffered from extensive flooding. This was partly due to the failure to keep the extensive ditched drainage system in working order. The settlement was abandoned by the mid fifth century and there is no trace so far of early Saxon activity.

The late Roman house was extensively robbed. In the disturbed northern part of the building a silver coin of King Alfred was found dating to before 875. Nearby was a coin of King Baldred of Kent minted in Canterbury about 825.

In the medieval period documentary evidence indicates that the area of the abandoned Roman settlement was pasture belonging to Fairford Manor. A well, cutting into an earlier Roman one, produced a silver halfpenny of King Edward IV, dated to 1474.

See below for Plants and Invertebrates.

We would like to thank all those who have made this project possible: Coln Gravel Company and Amey Roadstone Corporation for permission to excavate and particularly Stuart Hillier for his support and assistance. The staff of Corinium Museum and David Viner (Director), Stephen Clews and Marylee Parrot (Conservation). In a multidisciplinary project much depends on the contribution of the specialists and we are grateful to Anne James (carbonised plants) Kathy King (coins), Mark Maillard (metal detecting), Phil Page (computing), Geoff Mees (phosphates), Mark Robinson (waterlogged plants and animals), Bob Wilson (zoologist) and our supervisors, Tim Copeland, Alan Hardy, Howard Leach, Phil Page, Judith Russen and Jonathan Sharp. Volunteers were too numerous to mention individually but to all of them from Britain, France, the Netherlands, the United States, Australia and New Zealand we extend our thanks. In particular we would like to acknowledge the great assistance once again from the Continuation Training Platoon of the Light Infantry Depot from Shrewsbury.

Our Open Days for the general public and schools were a great success thanks to the help of Amey Roadstone Corporation, Maggie Cunliffe and Tim Copeland.

LECHLADE/FAIRFORD: Claydon Pike - see Fairford.

LECHLADE: Leaze Farm - David Miles

Mark Maillard has drawn attention to a Romano-British site south-east of Lechlade which shows interesting parallels with Claydon Pike (SU233984). The settlement has a regular pattern of streets and slight platforms. It lies on low-lying first terrace gravel by the Thames. Finds during ploughing of the

pasture include a martingale with a modelled horse head centre piece. This is closely paralleled by a piece of military equipment from Cirencester. There are also several pieces of horse harness, two trumpet brooches and about fifty coins (mid first to late fourth century). A dozen lead rolls resemble those from Claydon Pike, but are slightly smaller. A possible alternative to their interpretation as *defixiones* is that they are fishing weights. Only unrolling these will clarify this issue, and this will be done soon at Corinium Museum.

LECHLADE: Rough Ground Farm - T G Allen

Report preparation has continued on the excavations directed in the 1960's by Mrs Margaret Jones in advance of gravel extraction. The villa buildings have been written up, though some drawings are not yet complete, and work is now concentrating on the associated enclosure groups, clearly part of the villa establishment, in one of which nearly 40 ovens were excavated.

Richard Hingley, who is looking at the later prehistoric pottery, suggests that the majority is Late Bronze Age, making this one of the very few occupation sites of this date on the gravels. The major parallel ditches of the same date may be similar to the 'ranch boundaries' of Wessex and the pit alignments of Yorkshire, dividing up large tracts of land, in this case at right angles to the river beach.

Aerial photographs have enabled some of the trackways and field boundaries to be traced for as much as 15km. Attemps to date other surrounding cropmarks by field walking have been largely frustrated by the amount of pasture, but one Medieval site has been identified north of Butler's Court Farm, dating from the late 12th century. A few sherds of St Neots ware have also come from this field, the furthest west that it has yet been found.

OXFORDSHIRE

ABINGDON: 20 Bath Street - Phillip Page

John Carter reported that a 'skeleton' had been discovered in the garden of 20 Bath Street during building work. The remains were removed by the police but the level from which they were excavated was pointed out by the builders to Phillip Page when the site was investigated.

The 'skeleton' had lain in made up ground which contained much building debris bone and a range of pottery from the late 15th - early 16th to 18th-19th centuries. This was a rather suspicious context for a burial of that date range since there are no nearby graveyards with which it could be associated. However when the 'skeleton' was recovered from the police and examined the only human remains turned out to be part of a skull of an adolescent. The rest of the bones were the remains of an articulated dog skeleton. The skull is presumed therefore to be residual.

ABINGDON: 6 Lombard Street - Godfrey Jones

The site is in the centre of Abingdon, close to the market square and was previously occupied by a late medieval timber framed structure, with a series of adjoining cellars. Later buildings extended at right angles to the street with open areas to the side.

The work by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society started with a detailed structural survey and plan of the standing buildings with. One complete frame in section was recorded showing its relationship with the cellar and an earlier medieval stone wall which serves as a substantial support for the timber frame on one side. Into this wall is set a fine tudor fireplace with a chimney on the outside wall. The recording has been completed and should enable any other dwelling on the site to be related to the standing buildings. In particular it is hoped to establish a complete floor plan of a late-medieval building if the adjoining cellars (not yet excavated) are contemporary.

The cellar floor is currently being excavated to establish the depth of archaeological layers likely to be encountered in the main trench some 4m west. This area is very disturbed by pits in use after the cellar was dug. Finds of imported glassware, possibly of 14th century date, indicate that the cellar and sidewall may be earlier than previously thought. The interpretation of the cellar floor area is uncertain but finds of Iron Age and Roman material indicate that lower layers have been cut through by these pits. This work has been started in advance of redevelopment of the site.

The main excavation trench (9m x 2m) occupies the centre of the site some 4m west of the medieval house. The whole area was covered by demolition debris to a depth of 1m, under which several walls have been exposed. One substantial wall is abutted by a well-laid stone yard or alley way leading past another structure, less substantial, possibly an outbuilding or workshop.

It is hoped to locate Roman and Iron Age undisturbed deposits with the aim of investigating the continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age to Roman periods that is indicated in previous excavations in this area. Trial boreholes by the developers have indicated a depth to natural gravel of 3m. Work continues.

ABINGDON: Ex-MG Car Factory Site - Claire Halpin

Over a seven-week period, during January to March, 1982, a second trench was excavated at the Ex-MG Car Factory (SU 484973;PRNs 13,016, 13,017). This trench, cut in advance of road construction, was c. 300m x 8m and aligned east/west. Standard Life Assurance in part financed the excavation and provided extensive help with plant hire. It lay c.80m south of the Iron Age settlement site at the Ashville Trading Estate which was excavated by Michael Parrington in 1974-6. Surprisingly throughout its entire length a dense scatter of archaeological features relating to the Iron Age and Romano-British settlement sites were present.

In the 120m stretch due south of Ashville Trading Estate a very large number of pits, and some irregular gullies and post holes were recorded. These

features were filled with a nondescript gravelly loam, and apart from an occasional deep overlying silt which produced Roman sherds, were devoid of finds. The function of these pits is uncertain since they lacked domestic debris or evidence of grain storage, and seem too shallow (c.1m) to represent gravel extraction.

West of these features ie. towards Nuffield Lane, a sudden and marked change in character occurred. Over an area of c.20m large pits or ditches, with mixed fills and relatively plentiful pottery were excavated. Preliminary pottery dates indicate Early to Middle Iron Age dates. These dates are surprising in that these features lie over 100m from the Early to Middle Iron Age sites at the Ashville Trading Estate, and one might have expected them to relate to the Late Iron Age settlement site which was not present within the confines of Ashville.

Within the trench, to the west again, a cobbled surface crossed the excavation area. This may relate to the Roman cemetery recorded in 1974 on the south side of the Ex-MG factory. Finally at the east end of the road corridor a single large Roman enclosure ditch was recorded.

Obviously to understand the archaeology more clearly and provide a context for features more work is required on this site which will take place in 1983.

ASTHALL: Fordwells - R A Chambers

Excavation for a soak-away has revealed Romano-British pottery and animal bones on what is presumed to be the edge of a spring in the bottom of the valley at Fordwells (PRN 13,187; SP 3088 1080). There is a Romano-British settlement site on the hill top overlooking the valley. Whether or not this pottery represents detritus from permanent domestic occupation in the valley bottom by the spring is unclear. Building work adjacent to the present find spot did not reveal anything.

ASTHALL: Worsham - R A Chambers

Mr Ken Betteridge has recorded cropmarks of boundary ditches on the land immediately to the east and south of his home, 400m north west of the Roman villa at Worsham (centred SP 2987 1141; PRN 12,241). Fieldwalking has provided a scatter of Romano-British pottery. Mr Betteridge has also discovered features in his own garden. The features contained fine ash and animal bone but no dating evidence. It is most likely that these features relate to post-medieval agricultural buildings that previously occupied part of the site rather than to the villa itself.

BANBURY: the Castle - R A Chambers

Site clearance to make way for the new Marks and Spencer store began in November 1981. The site includes the south-western corner of the outer defences of Banbury Castle (SP 4570 4079; PRN 1816). The castle was demolished soon after the Civil War. A watch was maintained over the ground

work for the store to confirm the line of the castle defences. The Oxford Archaeological Unit is extremely grateful to Mr Jakeman for maintaining a continuous watch over the ground work.

The site is bounded on the west by the Castle Shopping Centre, to the north and east by Castle Street and to the south by the Market Place. The ground level was reduced by machine. Only a small amount of soil was removed along the southern edge of the site but the stripping steadily increased to a depth of 2m in the Northern corner. Almost all of the soil removed had been dumped on the site of the castle since the late 17th century. The ground reduction was generally too shallow to reveal any more than indistinct indications of the line of the bailey moat and of the former stream bed to the south-east of the castle.

A scatter of local ironstone building rubble was revealed in the area thought to have been occupied by a corner tower serving the outer bailey. Although the northern corner of the site had been cleared to the level of the subsoil below the medieval ground surface, it was not possible to provide confirmation of the source of this rubble. Immediately to the south of this rubble, a series of adult, human burials were discovered on the berm between the castle wall and the moat. A minimum of ten individuals were counted although more may have remained undetected. Burials were found in similar situations during the 1973-4 excavations. The relationship between these burials and the castle, if any, remains unknown. They may date from the Civil War.

The foundation trenches for the new store did not reveal any further finds of archaeological significance.

BENSON: Fifield Manor - R A Chambers and Gordon Miles

Trenching to form a herb garden at the rear of the manor house has revealed a post-medieval out-building (SU 6009 9014; PRN 1062). The remains consisted of a lime mortared, chalk rubble and roof-tile foundation for a chimney breast sealed by 0.4m of mixed topsoil and building rubble. The hearth within the chimney breast was seen in the edge of the trench. The hearth was made of pitched clay roofing tiles and was heavily burnt. No dateable material was found in direct association with the foundations. Neither was it clear precisely when this out-building was demolished.

Externally Fifield Manor dates to the late 18th and 19th centuries but recent restoration work has revealed that a substantial part of a c.14th century, two storey, stone built hall survives intact. No traces of medieval service buildings have yet been found.

Several earthworks survive to the east of the house. Although some of these earthworks are clearly modern, others may represent part of the medieval village first recorded in the 13th century.

BERINSFIELD: Mount Farm - George Lambrick

Post excavation work on this multiperiod Neolithic to Saxon site continues (SU 583967). Efforts so far this year have been concentrated on analysing

finds distributions, post-hole structures, and the sequence of enclosures. The main body of detailed interpretation and discussion is continuing to be drafted, with many parts now nearing completion in a preliminary form. Specialist work on the worked bone, Roman pottery and Saxon pottery has been continued, and analysis of the waterlogged remains (pollen, plants and invertebrates) is now complete, and awaits final drawing together of the interpretation. Recording of the bones and the carbonized remains are both complete, but the results await interpretation. The preparation of illustrations is now well under way.

See below for Animal Bones.

BICESTER: The Priory - R A Chambers

Building work to provide an extension for an Old People's Home on the site of the medieval Augustinian priory (Centred SP 5841 2217, PRN1593) has revealed the west wall of the south transept of the priory church. The wall consisted of a mortared limestone rubble foundation c.1.3m wide and 1m deep. It rested on the limestone bedrock, which formed the former flood plain of the river Bure.

The new foundations form a rectangle of trenches which cut across the north-east corner of the cloister and into the south transept and south aisle of the priory church. No flooring survived in either place. The position of the west wall of the south transept accords with the plans drawn by Dunkin in 1819 and the records made by David Watts in 1968 (D A Hinton, "Bicester Priory", *Oxoniensia* XXXIII (1968), 28-9, Figs, 8 & 9).

Much of the ground was deeply disturbed during the building of the Old People's Home in 1968-9. The current building work did not reveal the south wall of the church although a stone foundation trench was recorded a few metres to the west in 1968.

The present building foundation trench revealed a uniform stratigraphy. At the bottom lay the flood plain of the river Bure which was clearly visible as a c.0.1m thick humic layer over brashy limestone bedrock. The flood plain was sealed by c.0.1m of mottled clay and upwards of 0.3m of dark soil that may represent foundation material dumped to raise the church floor above winter flood levels. The priory was dissolved in 1536 and the church appears to have been demolished soon after this date. (Ibid, 26). A band of yellow sandy mortar which sealed the dark soil was probably deposited during the course of the demolition. The demolition debris were sealed by 0.3 -0.4m of heavily disturbed garden soil.

No dating evidence was recovered from any level. A human burial was discovered lying beneath the foundation of the Old People's Home within the south aisle of the priory church. The burial appeared to have been disturbed by the insertion of a timber beam. This piece of timber may have been deposited at the same time as the disturbances which removed all trace of the church wall foundations. Several fragments of wooden board close to the skull suggested the remains of a coffin. The orientation of this burial which was only partly exposed, could not be positively established.

CASSINGTON - Tom Hassall

Mr J Sergent of Stanton St John has drawn attention to earthworks on both sides of the A40 south of Cassington Church. These seem to be connected with the known moat and fishpond complex at Reynolds Farm (PRN 3763) and show that the system was even more extensive than has been thought.

CHALGROVE: Harding's Field - Phillip Page

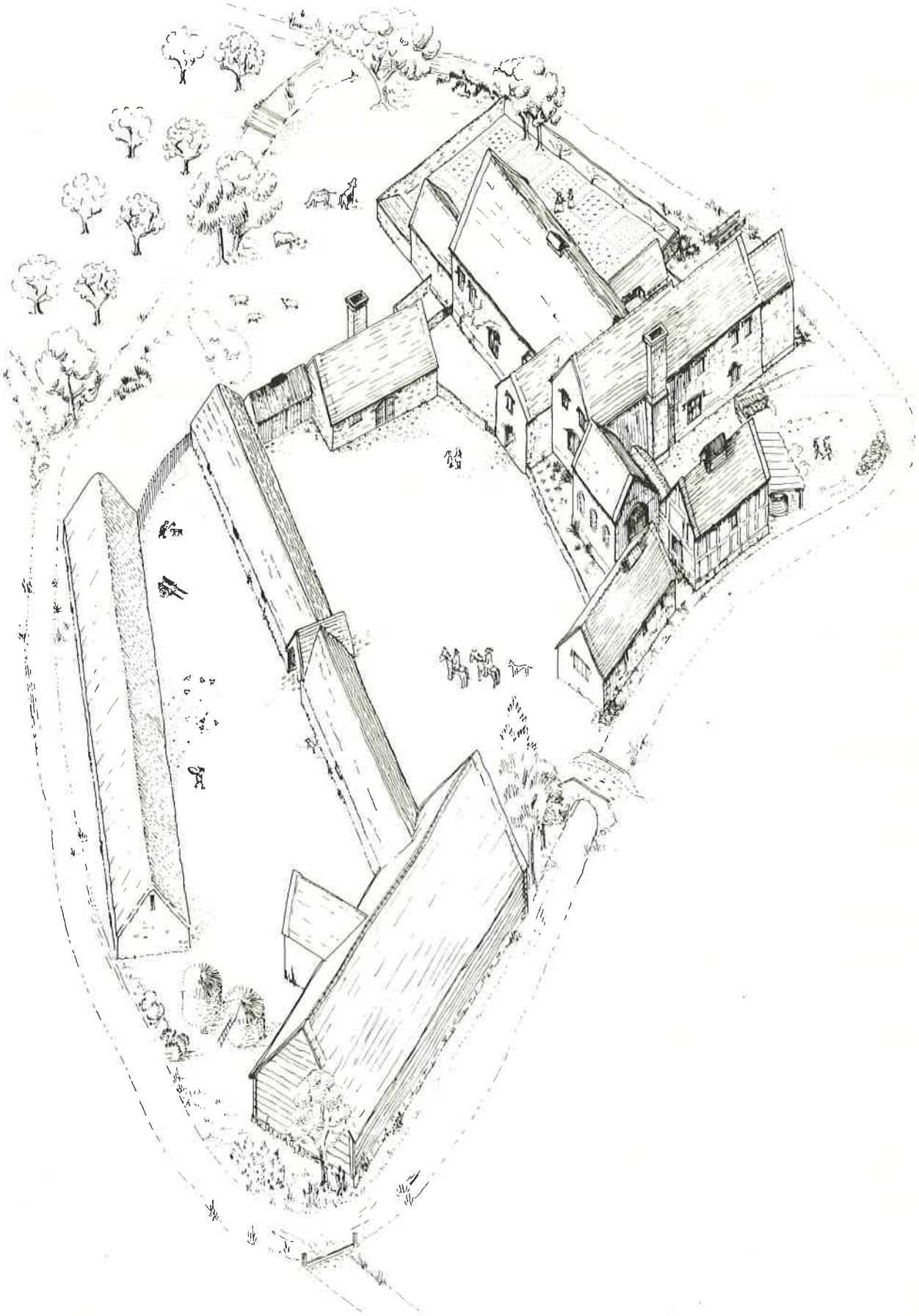
Large scale excavation on the site of the medieval moated manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove were completed in November 1979 (SU 635969; PRN 4486). The final report is due to be completed by the end of March 1983. Progress towards this completion date continues steadily, particularly as the specialist reports are completed. The major reports on the medieval pottery (Maureen Mellor), the medieval roof and floor tiles (Simon Robinson), the documentary evidence (John Blair) and the level III description and interpretation of the excavated features, together with reports on the coins and jettons (Marion Archibald), the waterlogged samples and charcoal remains (Mark Robinson, see below Plants and Invertebrates) and the slags (Chris Salter) have been completed. The report on the iron, lead and copper alloy objects (Ian Goodall) is due soon.

As a result of all this information the chronology of the site has been tightened up considerably. Phase 1 of the site, consisting of the pre-moat structures, principally a cob walled building (P), is now thought to date from the second quarter of the 13th century, or possibly slightly earlier.

The excavation of the moats and the construction of the stone aisled hall (A) in phase 2 seems to have occurred in the second half of the decade 1250-60. This conclusion is the result of documentary research by John Blair. He has discovered that the site was the principal residence of the Barentins, an important knightly and leading county family. Drew Barentin (d. 1264-5) had grown prosperous in royal service. In 1255-6 he was granted a total of 17 timber oaks from the Royal Forest at Bernwood. Since Chalgrove was the only recorded manor that he held any where near Bernwood it is assumed they were intended for use there. The pottery recovered from the phase 2 structures together with the discovery of a coin of Alexander III, King of Scots, which was incorporated in the construction of a stone bench in the hall would seem to confirm that the timbers were for use in the construction of that building.

A parlour, the extension on the west end of the hall, had been interpreted as an addition made soon after the initial foundation of the manor. However it would now seem that it was either contemporary or slightly later than the major alterations of phase 3/1. These alterations consisted of the addition of a crosswing to the east end of the manor house, the construction of a detached kitchen and bake house and the total re-arrangement of the farm buildings around a courtyard. The large aisled or half-cruck barn (C) probably belongs to this phase, forming as it does one side of the enclosed courtyard.

The pottery associated with these alterations included material from Saintonge in south-west France, usually found in early 14th century contexts. Certain pottery fabrics also displayed characteristics noted elsewhere in pottery from late 13th - early 14th century contexts in Oxford (The Hamel and



CHALGROVE: Harding's Field.
Conjectural reconstruction of the moated manor.

early 14th century. The construction of the parlour, mentioned above, seems to have taken place about a decade later for a jetton of 1310-30 was found in the construction debris, and a coin of Edward I, deposited 1320-30, in the later alterations.

The phase seems to be associated with Sir Drew Barentin II, who had succeeeded Sir William Barentin by 1291, and was sherrif of Oxfordshire from 1322-5. Chalgrove church now became the Barentin's established place of burial.

It had been suspected from the excavated evidence that there was a chapel on the site and its presence was confirmed by an episcopal licence of 1370 for an oratory at the manor. The structure which was believed to be the first phase of chapel belongs stratigraphically to phase 3/1. The reference of 1370 could simply be for the renewal of the licence for that building. Alternatively, it could refer to the granting of a licence for a new chapel, possibly the stone building which overlay the phase 3/1 structure. This building (A/11) is referred to as a sub-phase 4/1. It could quite easily be part of the final set of alterations to the manor if the episcopal licence does not in fact refer to it.

The final alterations comprised the demolition and suppression of the two buildings (D and E) to the north of the manor house, one of which (E) was a dovecote. Over the top of these a walled garden seems to have been created which was entered from a pentice on the north side of the hall. A new kitchen was attached by a corridor to the manor house and within the hall a first floor was inserted at its lower end. The courtyard south of the manor house was divided into an inner and outer court by the construction of two agricultural buildings, one of which abutted the aisled/half-cruck barn (C).

This phase seems to date from the late 14th century - early 15th century since all of the final alterations had either 'Tudor' type pottery, which in Oxford occurs from the early 15th century or coins and jettons of the late 14th - early 15th centuries. Both the pentice and stone chapel contained decorated tiles of a type made from the mid 14th century.

It is difficult to decide who was responsible for the final set of alterations as the site changed hands in 1400 when Reynold succeeded Thomas Barentin II. In 1415 Reynold Barentin inherited his uncle's manor house Haseley Court at Little Haseley some 2.5 miles to the north of Chalgrove. This was a crucial event in the history of Chalgrove Manor for within a few decades, and by 1458 at the latest Haseley Court had displaced it as the main Barentin residence. This is reflected in the numismatic evidence for none of the coins, not even from the unstratified or demolition phase, are later than the mid 15th century.

Whether the manor was totally abandoned for residential use at this date is uncertain although in 1478, when part of the property was demised the old Barentin demesne was stated to be in the hands of various farmers. In 1458 the manor was sold to Thomas Danvers, the agent for Magdalen College, and demolished in the October of the same year. It is possible that not all of the buildings were demolished at this date for in 1520 John Quartermain owed 10s rent "for a barn and a culver house.... where the manor stood". These two buildings still appear to have been standing in 1600 when the land is described as: "the syte of the manour of Magdalen College in the tenure of

Elisabeth Quartermayn, wherupon is a barn, a pigeon house and an orcharde, called Court Hayse". There was no archaeological evidence of ony structure which did not seem to be part of the medieval *curia* or that was obviously later, with the possible exception of a small rectangular building (M). This was constructed on top of one of the barns which subdivided the courtyard. It may have been constructed after the site was no longer the principal residence or in 1405 when the majority of the buildings were demolished. It could quite easily represent the culver house or dovecot. Of the other buildings only 3 and more probably 2, could be described as barns. The building most likely described in the two documents was the aisled or half-cruck barn. There was evidence that it was demolished later than some of the adjacent structures.

CHARLBURY: Coat - Tim Copeland

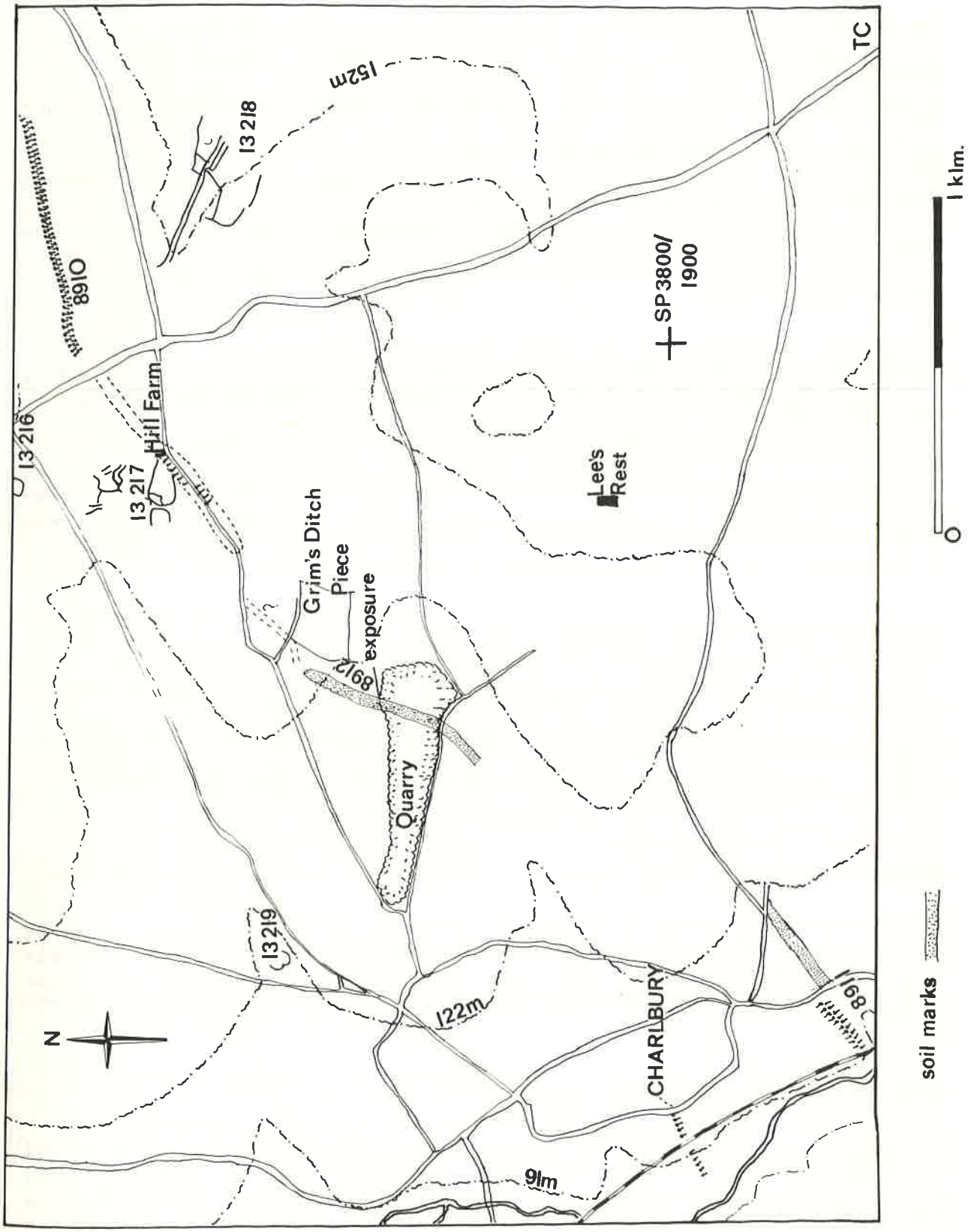
Fieldwalking on the level area immediately to the south-east and east of the Deserted Medieval Village failed to locate further habitation sites (PRN 955). The anomaly between the recorded population of the village (II taxpayers in 1327, 12 villein yard holders in the early 14th century) and the known sites remains.

CHARLBURY: Grim's Ditch - Tim Copeland

Approximately 1000m of Grim's Ditch has been discovered from examination of a variety of evidence.

A continuation of Grim's Ditch has now been identified from south-west of Hill Farm (SP37052020 - SP36801960; PRN 8912). First indications of this continuation were provided by the field name "Grim's Ditch Piece" (name centred on SP371200). Further evidence was found in an extension to Charlbury Quarry where topsoil stripping had revealed a soil filled linear feature in the upper beds of the Taynton Stone. The feature also appeared, "beheaded" in the north east quarry face at SP36911991. The round bottomed profile survived c.1m deep, the fill being light brown clay with darker brown above (perhaps the difference reflects primary and secondary filling of the feature). The feature was exposed for c.10m and appeared to be on average 2.75m wide. The dangerous position of the section precluded a measured drawing, but it was photographed. Reference to aerial photographs at the Field Department, Oxfordshire Department of Museum Services, (Fairey A/S (1961) 6125/11.057) revealed a broad, ill defined, but continuous, dark mark from Ditchley Road to a point E.N.E. of Sandford Mount. It is possible, although the quality of the aerial photographs makes diagnosis uncertain, that the northerly extreme of the soil mark is indicating a "buttend". Nothing now remains on the ground due to heavy ploughing, also, as O.G.S. Crawford pointed out in 1930 (*Antiquity* 4, p.308), "The only gap of any length (in Grim's Ditch) is east of Charlbury where in medieval times the common fields of the town lay". A planning application for the extension of the quarry is under is under consideration, which, if successful, will destroy a further stretch of the buried earthwork. The continuation of the Ditch from the previously known section at Hill Farm, may account for the angled bend in the Ditchley road at this point.

Whilst examining the aerial photographs, it also became apparent that the



CHARLBURY: Grim's Ditch

"doubtful" stretch, between the Charlbury-Finstock road and the railway could be extended across the road to the east pointing towards Gorden House (SP359186; PRN 8911). The soil mark becomes diffused where it meets the present Charlbury-Woodstock road (B4437) at SP362188. (Aerial photographs RAF 1947, aerial photograph (SP3INE) and Fairey A/S(1961) 6125/10.043). The soil mark, indicating the ditch, is slightly offset to the south-east from the previously known "rampart" of the feature. Whilst it would be expected that the ditch should be downslope, the feature is anomalous with the other sections of Grim's Ditch on the westerly perimeter of the enclosed area, in that the ditch is usually on the north-west or north side of the rampart. This might lead to the conclusion that the stretch under discussion must remain "doubtful".

Whilst the possibility of the newly discovered sections were linked must be considered, no further connecting traces have been observed on the ground or in aerial photographs. The area between the stretches has been subject to heavy ploughing and the building of housing estates. However, a further embankment, centred on SP35581900, which is cut by the railway and the B4022 where it skirts Lee Place, might be considered as an extension to PRN 8912 as it faces north-west, or an outlier to PRN 8911 as at Shillcot Wood (PRN 8913). The earthwork is some 300m long, and, at its highest c.2m. It was until recently surmounted by a hedge, although ploughing is now reducing it. It is unlikely to be a field boundary or lynchet.

CHARLBURY: High Pressure Gas Main - Tim Copeland

A swath of turf c.10m wide was removed along a line from the bottom of Grammar School Hill SP358192 to the River Evenlode at SP355193, and then due north to the Charlbury-Spelsbury road at SP355198, crossing the Evenlode again and the Mill Cut. A trench 1m wide was then excavated along the whole length. No archaeological features were seen, and the only find being a Roman coin (Faustina II AD161-176) at SP35351975.

CHARLBURY: Hill Farm - Tim Copeland

Whilst examining aerial photographs of the Grim's Ditch, remains of early field systems came to light (centred on SP37452050; PRN 13217), possibly being cut by Grim's Ditch at Hill Farm. At SP36202025; PRN 13219, very close to a scatter of Romano-British pottery on Banbury Hill (SP361203; PRN 12,853).

CHARLBURY: Walcot House - Tim Copeland

Two parallel, linear earthworks between Walcot House (SP348198; PRN 5873) and the River Evenlode, have been bulldozed. The earthworks, cut by the railway, appear to have been the terminus of an embanked, ornamental, avenue of trees ("The Grove") shown on Thomas Pride's map of 1751. The feature, which ran down the hill from Wychwood to Walcot House, has now been destroyed along its entire length. The sections of the earthworks showed clean brown alluvial clay (from the River Evenlode?) overlying the light brown clay with oolitic fragments that forms the natural. No ditches were present. The disturbed area was littered with the skeletal remains of sheep and cows. No dating

evidence was recovered.

CHARNEY BASSETT: Cherbury Camp - R Hingley

Collation of aerial photographic evidence for Oxfordshire (see R Hingley, "The Upper Thames valley Survey", CBA Group 9, *Newsletter*, 11, 1981, 141-143) provided evidence for an extensive Iron Age "open settlement" about 300m to the west of the valley fort (SU 37 965; PRN 4943). This site is undated, but on morphological grounds may be Early/Middle Iron Age. In terms of structure the site seems to involve a spread of pits, a few possible penannular gullies, and these seem to be partially enclosed by linear gullies (see illustration on next page).

The valley fort was excavated, and dated to the Middle/Late Iron Age by John Bradford ("The Excavation of Cherbury Camp, 1939", *Oxoniensia*, 5, (1940), 13-20). The pottery that survives from the excavation is mostly Middle Iron Age, and there is no apparent Late Iron Age occupation (Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin*, 1972, Oxford, 52). Fieldwork by the author on several occasions over the past three years has produced a quantity of pottery from eroding areas of the rampart on the east of the site. Much of this pottery is angular, fine ware vessels and course ware jars with finger tip decoration have been collected.

In conclusion the site on which the camp stands would appear to have been occupied in the Early and Middle Iron Age. Bradford's excavations would seem to have indicated that a multivalate phase of the defenses was of Middle Iron Age date. Whether the Early Iron Age settlement was defended is uncertain.

If the whole of the area in the interior of the camp (about 4 ha), and the open settlement to its west, were contemporary, then the area of occupation at Cherbury would seem to have been about 10 ha. If this was so it would seem that Cherbury Camp may fall within a small group of nucleated, heavily defended settlements in the Upper Thames Valley (other examples are Salmonsbury, and Dyke Hills, Dorchester; R Hingley, Forthcoming PhD dissertation, University of Southampton).

CHECKENDON: The Devil's Churchyard - R A Chambers

Work has now finished on this Iron Age site (SU 6525 8400; PRN 9,131). The archive is now complete and the results have been written up for publication.

A tree replanting scheme to replace dead elms in an area of woodland close to the Devil's churchyard will take place during 1982-83. Removal of the present undergrowth will allow any further boundary earthworks leading away from the site to be identified.

CHERBURY CAMP - see Charney Bassett

CHOLSEY - R A Chambers

A human skull cap and some animal bones have been recovered from the garden

of a house in Cholsey. There was no clue to the archaeological context of this find.

CUMNOR: Dean Court Farm, - Tim Allen

After a gap of 6 years the OUAS have resumed work at Dean Court Farm, Cumnor. (SP 47420615; PRN 10796). The site is owned by Oxford University and has been zoned for housing in the draft local plan. Greg Woolf has opened a trench in the field immediately west of the farm, right up against the by-pass, in the hope of finding more of the ditch and building partly excavated on the route of the by-pass (OAU *Newsletter* No. 3, March 1976). Stone spreads have been found, and pottery of the late 12th/early 13th centuries, some of it from the same jug as was found in 1976. Problems with ground water have made work difficult, and it is not yet clear whether the building has been located. Work will continue in Hilary term 1983.

CUMNOR: Hurst Hill - Jeff Wallis

During fieldwalking in March on land adjacent to and south east of Cumnor Hurst a large scatter of Iron Age sherds were found in ploughsoil. An area from the Hurst boundary downhill was gridded and walked. The occupation is confined to areas above the greensand. A transect was walked to clay in the valley bottom and was found to be devoid of settlement evidence.

Further indications of an Iron Age occupation here were encountered during clearance of scrub for the placement of rabbit fence in May. Fragments of clay tuyere were discovered in disturbed soil from uprooted bushes.

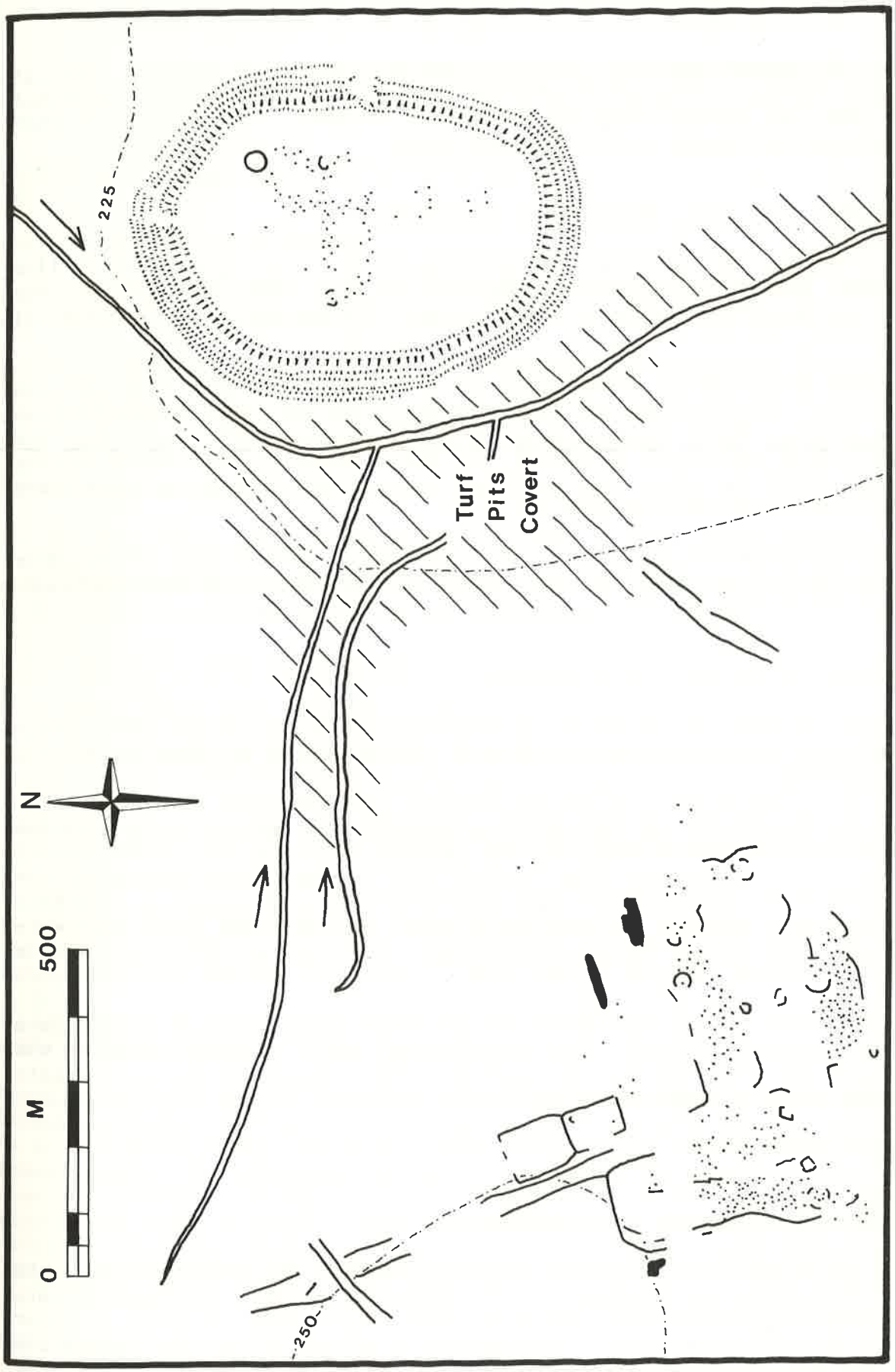
DIDCOT: The Rectory - R A Chambers

Excavation on this site in advance of house building has now been completed (SU 5195 9051: PRNs 12,391 and 13, 018-9). The Oxford Archaeological Unit is extremely grateful to Mr Bob North and members of the Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society for undertaking this work.

A small area excavation to the east of the present Victorian rectory revealed a sequence of boundary ditches containing Iron Age Pottery. Although at least three phases of enclosure were seen, their relative chronology could not clearly be determined by excavation. The ditch fillings were homogenous and identical in appearance so that the stratigraphic relationship at the intersections was not clear. Interpretation was further hindered as the majority of ditch intersections involved three ditches. All of the ditches contained domestic refuse. Two cremations were found buried in shallow pits without any dateable artifacts.

A later trench close to the present rectory provided evidence for an early post-medieval kitchen with a clay floor and brick-built bee-hive shaped oven at floor level against one wall. A quantity of wood ash had been allowed to accumulate on the oven floor.

The Enclosure Award shows that the Victorian rectory replaced an earlier, possibly 16th century rectory, E-shaped in plan, that stood along the north



CHARNEY BASSETT: Cherbury Camp and "open settlement"
(contours at 25 feet intervals)

side of the present property. The newly discovered kitchen building with its oven may represent a detached kitchen to this earlier rectory. It is not known when the rectory acquired an internal kitchen. The detached kitchen buildng does not appear on the Enclosure Award.

DORCHESTER: Green Acre, Bridge End - R A Chambers

A human skeleton was excavated and recorded on the above property which lies some 240m south of the walled Roman town (SU 5785 9375; PRN 13,029). The burial was discovered at the bottom of a post hole dug during the erection of a shed.

The burial was an adult, laid supine and orientated west-east with the head to the west. The grave had cut into the edge of an earlier, Romano-British pit or ditch. There were no grave goods obviously associated with the burial. From the style of burial and the absence of post-Roman period material within the grave filling it has been assumed that burial took place in the later Romano-British period.

A second skeleton was reported to have been found several days later. This skeleton lay in line with the first burial and was also orientated west-east. However this burial was left unexcavated and re-buried *in situ*.

DORCHESTER: the By-pass - R A Chambers

The major portion of the report on the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Romano-British sites excavated along the line of the Dorchester by pass in 1981 has been completed.

During the report writing some faint cropmarks were noticed on some aerial photographs of Queenford Farm. In the interval following the abandonment of the Neolithic monuments (the cursus and a henge) and preceding the construction of the Romano-British cemetery there now appear to have been three separate periods of land enclosure. The earliest land enclosure boundaries may belong to the Bronze Age. Each phase could represent a renewal of farming activity in the area.

The main stages in the development of the Roman cemetery at Queenford Farm have also been identified. The radio-carbon dates that will confirm the phasing of the cemetery will be ready in 1983. Dates of the prehistoric monuments are also expected in 1983.

See below Animal Bones.

DORCHESTER: 9 Rotten Row - R A Chambers

Several skeletons were discovered during groundwork for an extension to the rear of No.9 Rotten Row (centred SU 5781 9409; PRN 13,190). The burials were all inhumations orientated, where observed, west-east. No grave goods or evidence of coffins was seen. This appears to be part of a large inhumation cemetery of which glimpses are seen from time to time during building operations in the area.

cemetery of which glimpses are seen from time to time during building operations in the area.

DRAYTON: the Cursus - see Sutton Courtenay

EYNSHAM: by-pass - R A Chambers

This new road has been built east of Eynsham village over gravel terraces well known for archaeological remains. The earth-moving to prepare the ground for road construction has now taken place. A watching brief has revealed a previously unknown area of Romano-British settlement (centred SP 4376 0980; PRN 13,186) to the north-east of Eynsham. A spread of features has been recorded over a distance of some 100m.

FAWLER: Oaklands Farm - R Hingley

In 1981 and 1982 a field survey of a small area of land around Oaklands Farm was undertaken (SP 3716 to 3816). Nine fields were examined over an area of about 1km squared. These fields were surveyed by means of transects placed at 10m intervals across the length of the field.

The density of sites was not great. Thin scatters of flint were found in three places, two on hill slopes and one on the floodplain of the river Evenlode. Three thin scatters of Roman pottery were found. Two of these scatters were close to the Fawler Roman villa (PRN 1295), and one close to the Roman building at Oaklands Farm; the scatters of pottery are probably the result of cultivation of the area in the Roman period. The Oaklands Farm site (SP 382 167; PRN 1294) was located, on top of a ridge above the river Evenlode to the south of the modern farm. Most of the pottery would appear to be of first to second century AD, and a small farmstead (not a villa) would appear to be indicated.

In addition three thin Medieval pottery scatters may indicate cultivation of these areas in the Middle Ages. Modern stone quarries occur within the survey region at several locations.

FINSTOCK: Mount Pleasant - Tim Copeland

Documentary work on this suspected moated site (SP 34951575; PRN 12860) has failed to produce any further evidence. Local informants remember the area as always being marshy, and recall other ditch systems around Mount Pleasant House itself. The site lies on a patch of the Northern Drift, which also caps the limestone at High Lodge (SP 322173), where the only other moated site in the area is sited. It is possible that the Mount Pleasant site is referred to by OGS Crawford (*Antiquity* 4, 307, 1930) who presumed it was a "buttend" of the Hulwerke or Grim's Ditch.

FRILFORD/MARCHAM: Noah's Ark Inn - R Hingley

Evidence for intensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement has been

extensive Early/Middle Iron Age site with associated ritual structures (JSP Bradford and R G Goodchild, "Excavations at Frilford, Berkshire, 1937-8", *Oxoniensia*, 4, (1939), 1-70; D Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin*, Oxford, 62-5). Evidence for Romano-British settlement includes a temple with associated buildings, one of which is an amphitheatre (Bradford and Goodchild, op. cit.; R Hingley, "Frilford: Noah's Ark Inn", CBA Group 9, *Newsletter*, 12, 1982, 150-3; R Hingley, in *Britannia*, 13, (1982), Forthcoming).

In the summer of 1982 it was decided to examine a possible area of Early Iron Age settlement discovered through fieldwork, about 200m to the east of the main temple site. Fieldwork (in 1978 and 1982) indicated a settlement about 0.6 ha in extent. During fieldwork Early Iron Age pottery, burned stone and animal bones were collected from the surface of the field, after stubble-burning. Four small (4m x 2m) trenches were excavated on the north, north-west, north-east and south of the site. The trenches were intended to help to assess the nature and extent of the site. The trenches were later extended in order to produce more evidence of the structures located.

Trench 1 contained a large pit (about 1.7 m in diameter). The pit was totally excavated, and produced a quantity of Early Iron Age pottery, animal bones and a few small finds.

Trench 2 was excavated across an apparent lynchet which runs east to west across the site. This trench produced evidence for a complex sequence of intersecting Iron Age and Romano-British features preserved by the build-up of soil in the lynchet.

Trench 3 provided evidence for a series of post holes, and also a shallow gully.

Trench 4 uncovered a crescent of six post holes which may have represented part of the circumference of a round hut of about 3/4m diameter.

All the trenches produced quantities of pottery and animal bones. The pottery is mostly angular, with fine and coarse ware vessels represented. It would appear from the limited excavation work undertaken that the settlement may in part be earlier, and in part broadly contemporary with the first phase of settlement on the temple site. As a consequence it would seem possible that an extensive (if dispersed) area (or areas) of settlement existed on the Noah's Ark site in the Early Iron Age.

Mark Maltby, Chris Storey, Jeff Wallis and members of the Abingdon Archaeological Society helped with this excavation.

GREAT COXWELL: Badbury - R Hingley

Fieldwork over the past three years has produced a quantity of pottery from the ramparts of this defended enclosure (SU 2694; PRN 7101). The pottery came from an area of the rampart on the west of the site. At this point the rampart has been levelled, and the pottery comes from an eroding black layer. From its context it seems impossible to tell whether the layer was sealed by or post-dated the rampart.

Of the pottery collected some could be of Late Bronze Age date, but the mass of the pottery could appear to be of the angular phase of the Early Iron Age.

GREAT COXWELL: St Giles's Church - R A Chambers

The floor in front of the blocked south door has now been lifted and the levels beneath excavated down to natural. This work revealed a continuation of the Norman and medieval earth floor excavated last year. This concludes the excavation programme within the church (SU 2698 9344; PRN 7105).

GREAT FARINGDON: Wickleshamlodge Farm - R A Chambers

Members of the Faringdon and District Historical and Archaeological Society carried out a rescue survey of a pair of late medieval or early post-medieval fishponds which were bulldozed as part of land reclamation scheme (SU 2992 9444; PRN 12,013). Although destruction had begun prior to the arrival of the survey party a basic record of the earthworks was obtained.

The earthworks comprised two linear ponds, arranged end to end in the bottom of a valley immediately below a spring line. Their siting and construction reflected the recommendations for fishponds given in 16th and 17th century manuals on animal husbandry. In these manuals fish culture was recommended for boggy, badly drained land, of little use for arable. They were probably the best example of their type surviving in the county.

HARDWICK WITH YELFORD: Mingies Ditch - T G Allen

The text of the excavation report of the Iron Age concentric enclosure for publication is now ready to be typed into the computer for final editing. The last part of the site was finally stripped for extraction in September, and the OUAS excavated a further 26m of the main enclosure ditches. These produced very little, supporting the indications of the main excavations, but have significantly increased the reliability of our interpretation.

Elaine Morris has identified several fragments of briquetage among the burnt clay, salt containers from the Droitwich salt industry. This is the furthest south-east that these have so far been identified, the nearest site being Claydon Pike.

See below, Plants and Invertebrates.

HARDWICK WITH YELFORD: Smith's Field - T G Allen

Processing of the pottery from this late Iron Age and Roman site is continuing. The assemblage is largely coarse wares of the 1st century AD, with a high proportion of 'Necked Bowls', common in the Upper Thames in the Late Iron Age/Romano-British transition. Two small enclosures with sizeable groups should provide an interesting comparison.

Bob Wilson has reported on the Animal Bones and Martin Jones on the cereals. The economy seems to have been entirely pastoral, equal proportions of cattle

and sheep indicating an Iron Age economy persisting into the Roman period. An almost complete cow burial, partly butchered, at the corner of an unusual 4-post structure may be a ritual deposit. The 4-poster, within a rectangular deep-cut gully which has no entrance, is best paralleled at Find'Ecury, Marne, France, where a similar structure has religious associations. A possible local parallel is the enigmatic 4-poster within a circular ditch at Appleford, which was also suggested to have a ritual purpose.

The site has also produced a colourful environmental sample of the early post-glacial period, which Mark Robinson is examining.

See below, Plants and Invertebrates.

HARPSDEN: Harpsden Wood - Claire Halpin

Seventeen gold coins, subsequently dated to c.55BC were found by two men 'trying out a new metal detector' in Harpsden Wood, in June, 1981. These coins were found associated with a hollow flint receptacle, in relation to the latter a number of Iron Age hoards are known which have been buried concealed in such containers. An inquest held in April, 1982, at Henley Town Hall, declared the finds to be Treasure Trove.

The case is important in two respects. Firstly, a small excavation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit within the area of the find spot, primarily to see whether associated archaeological material was present. None was found, but the principle of examining findspots was established. Secondly, the owners of the land are considering taking a case against the finders involving the use of metal detectors on private land without permission.

HOOK NORTON: All Saint's Church - R A Chambers

In 1981 plaster was stripped from the bottom 2m of the chancel walls in All Saints parish church, Hook Norton (SP 3313 3551; PRN 5999). Three blocked recesses were revealed.

In April 1982 the OAU was asked to examine these recesses before the walls were replastered. Large areas of the chancel walls had been replastered in the 19th century and in many places only the surface of the tough Victorian plaster had been removed in 1981. Careful removal of much of the remaining plasterwork by the church architect Mr John Marshall and Richard Chambers revealed a series of blocked features within the north, east and south walls. Mrs E Baker visited the church on each of the five days that work was in progress to check for traces of wall paintings both on the plaster and on the newly exposed cleaned stonework.

These previously unknown features are described in a clockwise direction. 1.1m from the chancel arch, wall cleaning revealed a Norman doorway. A blocked arch in the east wall of the north transept suggested a former chapel to which this door provided access from the chancel. The chancel door was later blocked and the upper half of the entrance was converted into a lime-washed recess probably fitted with doors to judge from the rebates cut into

the arch and jambs. This may have acted as an aumbry for the storage of holy vessels. Later the interior of the recess was painted indicating a change of use. This recess was blocked and plastered over in the 19th century.

East of the Norman doorway, within the present sanctuary, two blocked recesses were revealed, one cutting the other. Nothing remains of the stone surround to the earlier recess. The later, rectangular recess retains a stone sill and may have replaced the suggested early aumbry in the blocked Norman north door.

An arched recess in the centre of the east wall behind the altar was unblocked to reveal a plain plastered interior. An extension of the sill and lower jambs had been cut away. A recess in this position is likely to have housed and provided security for a holy relic.

Work on the south side of the sanctuary revealed a twin-bowled piscina and a two seat sedilia. The eastern sedilia appears to have been incorporated into the Norman window splay. The western sedilia hood was cut off during the enlargement of the Norman east window in the c. 14th century. Presumably the piscina and sedilia were blocked-in at this time. The medieval window arch proved unsound and the window was subsequently blocked-up. A smaller window was constructed in the blocking. This small window was also blocked up presumably during the Victorian church restoration when the Norman window of which only the east jamb then remained, was reconstructed in its present form.

All of the features described above were tentatively dated to the early-mid 12th century by John Blair. In c. 1128 the church was given to the newly founded Augustinian Abbey at Oseney. Many of the surviving late Norman features in the chancel may have been inserted at this time for the convenience of visiting canons from the Abbey.

HOLWELL - R Hingley

Fieldwork indicates that a small enclsoure, about 50m in diameter is probably a Neolithic henge (SP 2108). This site was first photographed by Major Allen in the 1940's when it survived as an unploughed earthwork. The site has since been ploughed over but survives as a clear earthwork on the ground.

KIDLINGTON: Moat Cottage - R A Chambers

Drains and roadways have now been laid across this medieval moated site (centred SP 488 137; PRN 9219). The long sections provided by the sewer-pipe trenches provided little further information. However these trenches have skirted the area shown by excavation in 1967 to contain a medieval building complex. The watching brief will continue in 1983.

LITTLE COXWELL: Ringdale Manor - Rosemary Church

The Faringdon and District Historical and Archaeological Society have begun an earthworks survey of a possible Iron Age hillfort at Ringdale Manor (centred SU 289 928; PRN 7529). This has been made possible by a grant from

the Lloyds Bank Fund for the purchase of surveying equipment.

LITTLE MILTON: Ditch End Farm - R A Chambers

Human remains were discovered during the construction of a new pig unit at Ditch End Farm (SP 6233 0017; PRN 13,028). Some bones from a single adult burial, reputedly found face down, were collected by the workmen and given to Thame Police. The burial possibly belongs to the adjacent Romano-British villa.

LITTLE WITTENHAM: Castle Hill, Wittenham Clumps - R Hingley

In connection with the publication of an excavation by Bob Rutland on an area of Iron Age settlement external to the hill fort a field survey was conducted on the hill fort itself (SU 5692; PRN 3153). Several sherds of probably Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date (contemporary with Rutland's settlement), and a single decorated sherd of a Middle Iron Age globular bowl were discovered in eroding areas on the outside of the rampart.

M40: Oxford to Birmingham Extension - R A Chambers

A supplementary series of engineers test pits along the preferred route of the proposed M40 extension were watched for archaeological material. One test pit south of Wendlebury revealed an undated shallow ditch below the medieval - post medieval open field system.

MARCHAM - see Frilford

MARCHAM: All Saints Church - R A Chambers

A watch was kept at All Saints during the reflooring of the north-western quarter of the large Victorian nave (centred SU 4520 9681; PRN 7160). In order to concrete over the floor beneath the north-west block of pews, the floor level was reduced by some 0.35m. This did not affect any archaeologically important levels. The Victorian stone floor supports and building rubble were removed for the floor foundation. Several trial holes were excavated to a depth of some 0.6m. These holes revealed that the whole of the area opened up had been disturbed from the 18th century onwards by the insertion of brick burial vaults. These vaults had disturbed earlier burials.

The only part of the medieval church to survive the Victorian rebuilding was the 13th century bell tower. A drawing made by J Buckler in 1819 shows the medieval church from the south with the tower placed axially at the west end of a small nave. Today the tower stands at the south-west corner of a much wider Victorian nave. An octagonal pillar, later adapted to form a door jam for a north door was exposed in the southern edge of the excavated area. This suggested that the medieval nave had once possessed a north aisle which was later demolished and the arcading blocked-up. Faint traces were noted of what may have been medieval "block-work" painted onto the north side of the pillar.

The building rubble removed by the developers was from the Victorian demolition of the medieval church. The demolition rubble had been used to form a foundation for the floor of the Victorian nave. A small quantity of faced stone was found in this rubble. None of the stone was carved or bore distinctive moulding. The only painted wall plaster was of black paint on whitewash and presumably post-reformation in date. None of the fragments showed any trace of medieval painting beneath the later whitewash. None of the fragmentary floor tiles found need be any earlier than the later medieval period.

MERTON - R A Chambers and M Malin

A quantity of mid and late medieval pottery has been collected from cultivated ground some 350m west of the parish church at Merton (SP 5746 1763); PRN 13,188). There are no clear earthworks remaining in the adjacent pasture field that might indicate the extent of the former settlement. Surviving earthworks suggest that much of the later medieval and early post-medieval village lay much closer to the church.

A second century Roman bronze coin (PRN 13,189) has been discovered on a neighbouring property. The coin does not appear to mark an occupation site as no contemporary domestic debris has been found in the vicinity. Romano-British pottery was found some 300m to the west in 1978.

MIDDLETON STONEY: the Castle - see below, Plants and Invertebrates.

NEWINGTON - R A Chambers

Over the last few years pottery found during building work has revealed that cattle yards and outbuildings at Great Holcombe Farm cover an area previously occupied during the medieval period. The latest evidence for this has come to light during major structural repair work to the timber-framed farm house (SU 6103 9685; PRN 12,394). The base of a hearth comprised of roof tiles set on edge has been found beneath part of the timber framing of what was originally probably an outside wall. The tiled hearth extended over an earlier, solidly built, lime mortared stone wall. The wall foundation had been set into a mixed layer of clay and building debris about 0.3m thick. This mixed layer sealed an even earlier spread of green/grey mottled clay itself at least 0.3m thick. This clay contained grains of carbonised bread wheat identified by Mark Robinson and medieval pottery sherds dated by Maureen Mellor to the 12th or early 13th century. The earliest part of the present structure comprises the two surviving bays from a formerly larger timber framed house of about 1500. The present house contains some re-used structured timbers from an earlier building. Within the present structure Dr Malcolm Airs has also recorded traces of a former bay belonging to a hall house into which a chimney and external stair turret were later added. The hearth beneath the sill beam of the surviving 15-16th century timber framed bays appears to belong to an earlier building altogether and the wall beneath the hearth represents an even earlier building phase.

NORTH STOKE - S Ford

The excavation of a scheduled ring ditch eroding into a quarry was undertaken during August, in order to produce artefactual and environmental evidence as a part of a wider fieldwalking project by Steve Ford in the parish of North Stoke.

An area of 106 square metres was excavated. This revealed a complete E-W section across the monument, the single ring ditch in two places and a single external posthole. No direct evidence of a funerary function was revealed except perhaps for a prehistoric sherd with 'urn' fabric from the secondary ditch silts. 21 percent of the interior of the ring ditch and 7 percent of the ditch contents were examined. The trenches were located to examine a possible recut or outer ditch observed in the quarry face. This feature failed to appear in the excavated areas and was at a later date shown to be a large pit or ditch terminal.

About 20 sherds of pottery were recovered from the ring ditch. In addition to the above mentioned sherd, a second undiagnostic prehistoric specimen was recovered from the primary ditch silts. Three sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the higher ditch silts which gives a *terminus post quem* for the various ploughing episodes recorded in the ditch section. Finally, about 15 sherds of Beaker pottery were recovered from the top of the large pit seen in the quarry face.

Struck flint was fairly abundant from all layers of the site with approximately 400 from the primary silts. On first impressions these flakes and cores are the residue of quarrying activity utilising good flint produced by construction of the ring ditch. Similar quarries may also occur at Micheldever, Itford Hill and Amesbury G71. A sample of about 50 flakes have been bagged individually unwashed in order that their potential for microwear study can be evaluated.

OXFORD: Between Towns Road - Brian Durham

A watching brief on the second and third phases of this office development has now been completed (SP 544 041; PRN 3817). As expected the manufacturing activity lessened, but one new kiln was found totally isolated with no ancillary structures or pottery scatter. Though damaged by the digger, it was apparently a smaller version of the Trench V1 kiln at the Churchill Hospital, late 3rd-4th century with a high proportion of red/brown colour coats. Sarah Green has written a pottery report, and will complete a final report on the project by the end of March 1983.

OXFORD: Blackfriars - George Lambrick

A watching brief has been carried out during the building of houses and flats just east of Thames Street (SP 511057). No priory buildings were uncovered and little new information has emerged, though there were traces of a possible north-south stream channel just west of the main priory buildings, which may well have supplied water to the reredorter block. Further excavations to check this, together with examination of the nave of the

church and the possible north nave, and also trial trenches of the suspected waterfront south of the main priory buildings are due to take place in the new year.

Post excavation work on the Wharf House site excavated in 1979-80 has proceeded as far as an analysis of the stratigraphy and phasing, and the preparation of draft reports on the pottery and tiles by Maureen Mellor has been completed. The building of the reredortar block, its modification and the construction of the little cloister with a covered alley all seem to have occurred in the later 13th and early 14th centuries. There is little evidence for the later medieval use of the buildings, but one of the early silting layers in the reredorter drain, was dated probably the 15th century. A puzzling wooden disc, with various holes through it from this layer now seems likely to be part of a sandglass or hourglass, but this remains to be confirmed by specialist advice and detailed comparisons.

OXFORD: Bonn Square, Selfridges - see Westgate

OXFORD: 31-34 Church Street - see Westgate

OXFORD: Churchill Hospital - Sarah Green

Processing and recording of the approximately 250 boxes of Roman pottery recovered from the excavations directed by Tom Hassall and Chris Young in 1971-1973 is now virtually complete. These records have been computerised using the Oxford University Computing Service computers - the ICL2988 and the Digital Vax 11/780; a preliminary catalogue of material sorted by context has been compiled. Initial data verification has been done using specially written SPITBOL programs and the data will be maintained and analysed using the SIR database management packages (PSTAT and GHOST 800) has been carried out.

The only extraneous material that can be identified with any certainty are small quantities of samian, Black Burnished I amphora and Nene Valley pottery. Early material in the form of even smaller amounts of Middle Iron Age pottery has been noted by George Lambrick. Pottery occurs from other kiln sites within the Oxford area, for example, a 2nd century mortarium of type M2 with an illiterate stamp, possibly from Cowley.

It is hoped that a programme of this sectioning at Southampton University will provide definite fabric descriptions and go a little way towards lightening some grey areas in Roman pottery studies - for instance in providing some help in distinguishing between reduced and oxidised wares made in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

Two discoveries from the site which it is hoped will be followed up are: firstly a number of fragments of clay discs of between 20 and 30 cms in diameter and 1-2 cms thick, similar objects to which have been found at Farmoor (G Lambrick and M Robinson, *Iron Age and Roman Riverside Settlement at Farmoor, Oxfordshire*, CBA Research Report 32, 1979, p.54, fig 28), Pink Hill (Flood Plain Survey Site 179 see Lambrick forthcoming) and Tiddington, Warks (pers comm P Booth); one suggested use of which is that they are pot

lids. Secondly rims of large globular storage jars of distinctive form and fabric have been recorded, similar types having been found at Warborough, Cirencester (pers comm J Richardson), Rough Ground Farm, Lechlade, Alcester and Tiddington (pers comm P Booth) and their presence is suspected at Towcester and Dorchester. The origin of this distinctive type is so far unknown but one hypothesis as to its function is that it represents a sort of British Dressel 20 (an amphora imported to Britain during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD) having a very similar form and beginning chronologically where the imported amphora ends.

A range of material from the Churchill site will remain at the Oxford Unit to provide a basis for a Roman pottery fabric type series.

See below, Plants and Invertebrates.

OXFORD: 39 George Street, the City Ditch - B G Durham

A proposed rescue excavation was relegated to a watching brief when it was realised that the ditch here was 5m deep and most of the fill was post-medieval (SP 510063; PRN 6290). Maureen Mellor's subsequent review of the pottery dating from four excavations in the north ditch has shown that in every case the bulk infill dates to the mid-seventeenth century. Claire Halpin, Nick Palmer and Brian Durham have jointly prepared a report 'Oxford's Northern Defences: archaeological studies 1973-82', to be submitted for *Oxoniensia* 1983, which will show that the medieval defences were resurrected in the 1640's to protect the Royalist capital. Two bastioned traces are known from topographical sourses on this side of the town, but this third line was quite unsuspected.

OXFORD: Greyfriars - see Westgate

OXFORD: Hertford College - Brian Durham

Two major excavation projects on Oxford's northern defences have been completed within the last two years, at St Helen's Passage (Hertford College) and 21 Longwall Street (SP 516064; PRN 6036). Each has contributed new data on the medieval outer defensive line, confirming Nicholas Palmer's original dating. He has now co-operated with Claire Halpin and the writer on a report which draws together the conclusions of these and three other excavations, to give an account of the Town's land ward defences from its Late Saxon foundation. One of the more dramatic results has been a realisation that the entire medieval ditch system was recut for the Royalist defence of 1646, and this is further described under Oxford, 39 George Street. The report will be submitted for *Oxoniensia* 1983.

OXFORD: 21 Longwall Street - see Hertford College

OXFORD: New Inn Court - see Oxford, 11-18 Queen Street.

OXFORD: Oseney Abbey, Mill Street - B G Durham

One of England's ten greatest medieval religious houses, Oseney Abbey is now largely protected beneath a modern cemetery (SP 504058; PRN 3569). A rescue excavation was mounted to see whether any buildings extended beyond the south limit of the cemetery, prior to the construction of a block of single-person flats.

The situation was immediately complicated by the discovery of a stone-fronted river-channel about 30m east of the mill stream. This was clearly a major feature of the medieval topography, and the abbey seems to have extended south along the water-front. The buildings were constructed on a platform of dumped silt 1-2 feet thick, the material apparently having been dug from an area to the rear. The quarried area was separated from the platform by a buttressed wall perhaps the precinct wall, and preliminary pottery dating suggests that this had all occurred by the mid 13th century. The quarry is adjacent to some depressions which have been suggested as fish ponds, and it seems likely that it was used for this purpose in the early life of the abbey.

Three phases of building were discernible on the platform, beginning in the 13th century. The final phase seems to have been a structure at least 30m long with a massive foundation 1.3m wide, extending back from the river channel and possibly forming the southern limit of the abbey buildings. It seem to be too far from the church to be a conventual building, so it might be the 'great barn' (88ft long) or more likely the 'long stable' (no dimensions survive). On provisional dating it was built in the 14th-15th centuries, and demolished and robbed in the 16th century.

OXFORD: Portmeadow - see below, Thames Flood Plain Survey.

OXFORD: 11-18 Queen Street - Claire Halpin

A report incorporating three archaeological projects within the properties of Nos. 11-18 Queen Street and over the period from 1972-1980, is shortly to be completed. The excavation work was largely undertaken by Brian Durham, and the pottery has been examined by Maureen Mellor.

The main excavation considered is that of New Inn Court, 1972, (SPS 12061; PRN 6417) an interim for which has been published, (B Durham, 'New Inn Court', *Oxoniensia*, XXXVIII (1973), 294-98).

Excavation took place in advance of a building extension from Queen Street as far back as Pembroke Street (formerly the Co-operative, now Marks and Spencers). Post holes and stakeholes of 11th century date or earlier were found, however, the structure postulated in 1973 is now discounted. Two phases of medieval building were revealed, the later relates to Hinxey Hall, an academic hall which partly overlay the area available for excavation in 1972. A watching brief on this site was undertaken in 1976 by Robert Bell.

Excavations at Nos. 11-12 Queen Street produced several early road surfaces and also 10th century features (SPS 12061; PRN 6517).
See below, Plants and Invertebrates.

OXFORD: 65 St Aldates - B G Durham

Following the completion of the second phase of excavation (CBA Group 9 *Newsletter*, 12 (1982), 160,) this year's work has concentrated on a watching brief and the preparation of a final report (SP 514057; PRN 6500). The contractors have only dug one deep hole (for a lift shaft), but the results have once again raised questions about the medieval river channels. In an area which was expected to be the backyards of properties fronting the St Aldates causeway, two well-constructed waterfronts were exposed. The earlier was of wattle, the later of larger timbers including possibly the planking of a boat. The only find was a clench nail, again suggestive of re-used boat timbers. A radio-carbon date will in due course indicate how these revetments fit in with the known Blackfriars mill stream and the recently discovered channel to the south.

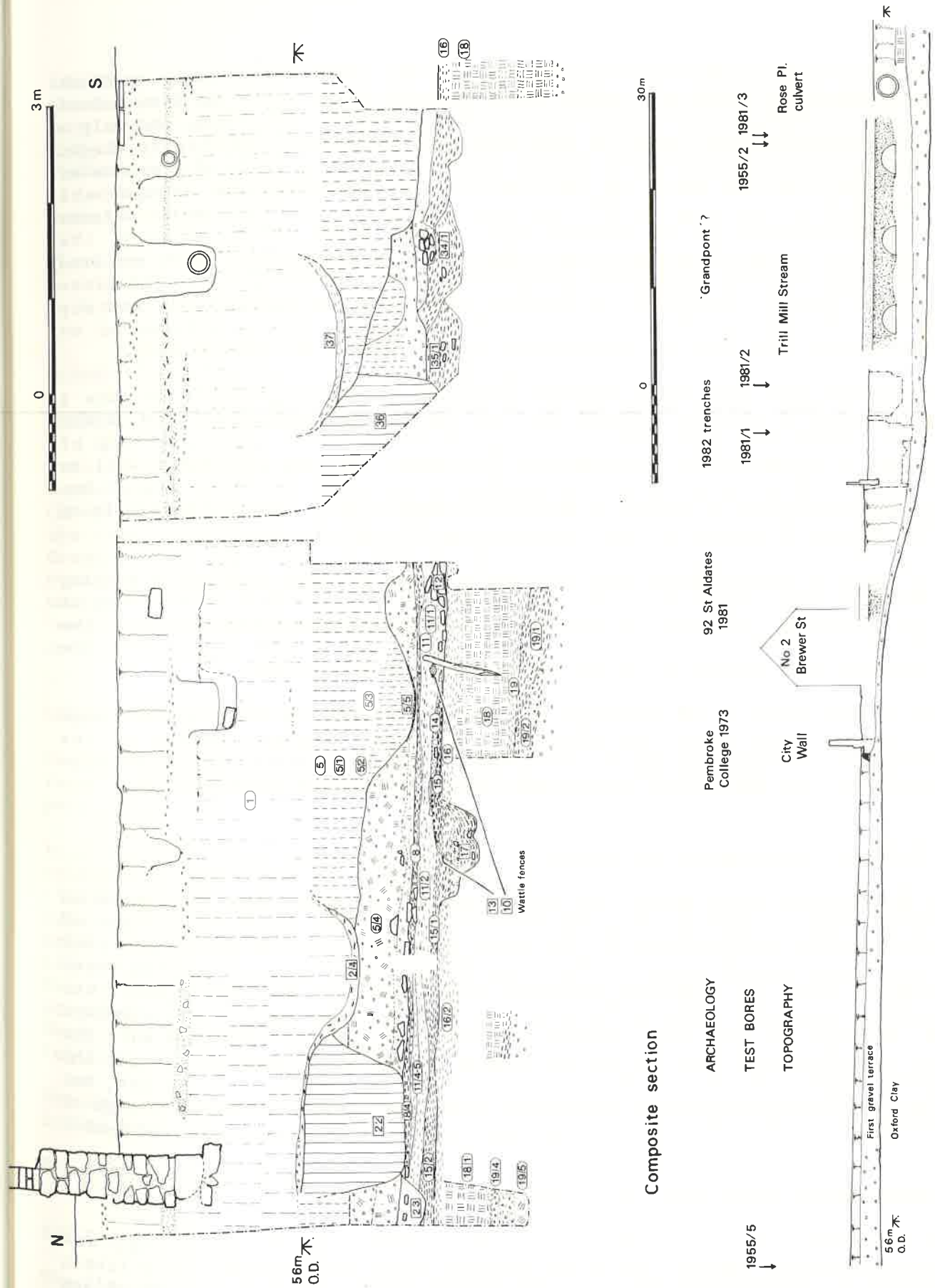
Post-excavation work is proceeding well, with Maureen Mellor's pottery report complete and the concommitant revisions of the phasing well underway. The new evidence can be combined with some surprisingly early pottery from 33 St Aldates on the downstream side of the river crossing giving a strong case for an 11th century date for the stone bridge. The later topography is also illuminated, because there are now sufficient points of contact between the tenement boundaries and the documentation to show that H E Salter was correct in his earlier attributions.

The previous doubts have arisen because the most prominent feature of the excavation was a river channel, which the medieval documentation seemed completely to ignore, while giving several mentions to another 40m to the south. The new correlations show that the 65 St Aldates channel, for all its 20m width, must be relegated to the status of a minor stream of the type which would have flowed through many of the 40+ flood arches of the medieval bridge. The simplest explanation would be that it was accommodated by two well-spaced arches, and that in the thirteenth century a tenement was established on the tongue of land between the two streams, over-shadowing them and making the frontage appear almost continuous. This vigorous ribbon development along the causeway of the Norman bridge is a testament to the continuing importance of the Thames crossing in the 13th century.

OXFORD: 89-91 St Aldates, The Trill Mill Stream - Brian Durham

For a long time it has been known that there was a major river channel, the Trill Mill Stream, just outside the south wall of Oxford SP 513059; PRN 6262). The evidence came from Victorian builders' records, modern test holes, and excavations by David Sturdy around 1960. A proposal by Christ Church to build a large student accommodation block led to an excavation close to the townward bank of the stream, and ultimately it was possible to extend this across one quarter of the known width (see illustration). The main objectives were to discover why the channel was so wide, when and in what sequence it was infilled, and whether it was ever deep enough to be navigable by river boats. Very little post-excavation work has been possible so far, but the story seems to be provisionally as follows.

A natural river channel had silted up almost completely and probably dried



OXFORD: 89-91 St Aldates, The Trill Mill Stream

out to a water meadow by the Roman period, then there was a change to black peaty deposits, which presumably means that the water level had been raised to create a marshy area. Three possible dates suggest themselves, and only a full study of the pottery plus some radio-carbon dates will clarify these. Firstly the priory of St Frideswide's may have needed a supply of fresh water or mill power as early as the 8th century; secondly the bridgeworks attributed to the reign of Offa may have merited an artificial water defence for a settlement on the Mercian bank of the flood plain; thirdly, the successful establishment of a West Saxon *burh* in 911-12 would have required both water defence, mill-power and possibly also a close access for shallow-draught boats. According to present understanding of the local pottery dating, the area must have been inundated in the 10th century, but whether we can push it back into the middle Saxon period depends on further study.

The water must have been shallow during at least the summer, because a succession of gullies fringed with wattle fences were stratified in the peat. These may have been parcelling up the area for the harvesting of reeds, or alternatively some sort of fish trap. The depth of water will be difficult to assess, but however shallow it had never dried out enough for the peat deposits to decay. A gravel path revetted by a strong wattle fence was perhaps an attempt to give access along the edge of open water.

The marsh was reclaimed around the middle of the eleventh century by dumping about a foot depth of soil. This layer seemed to cover most of the area of our trenches, but logic demands that it did not extend right across the channel, and that its south edge would be formed by the timber or stone revetment of a waterfront on the now constricted mill stream.

The fourth phase of the site was the 12th century industrial/domestic usage of the reclaimed area, now effectively dry land. Features include gullies and pits or well, and one of the latter produced an exceptionally well-preserved iron sliding key with silver inlay alternating with gold leaf.

OXFORD: St Cross Road - B G Durham

A new squash court built for Keble College in September 1981 gave an opportunity to look at the prominent break of slope at the north edge of Balliol College sports field. It seems to follow the line of an earthwork depicted by Loggan in 1675, and it has always been thought of as the inner line of Civil War defences, possibly built in 1642. The squash court was expected to show a ditch in front of the bank, but the topsoil was unbroken. In addition the bank was composed of 19th century industrial rubbish! The one consolation is that the natural ground sloped down gradually towards the bank, suggesting the possibility of a ditch a few metres to the south, but this would mean that the existing fence line was preserving the outer edge of the ditch, rather than the crown of the rampart as has always been assumed.

OXFORD: South Parks Road - Brian Durham

Contractors' excavations for the new laboratory of Enzymology and Immunochemistry exposed four ditch sections which looked suspiciously like a Bronze Age double concentric ring (SP 516070; PRN 1661). George Lambrick and Brian Durham calculated that the centre should be close to the Observatory

building, and indeed there was a burnt pit with a cremation. This was excavated by Simon O'Connor Thomson who showed the picture to be slightly more complicated. The cremation seems to have been a later insertion in the pit, so it might be just one of many secondary deposits in the barrow mound. The pit on the other hand seemed to have been burnt twice and thoroughly cleaned out. It might therefore be the site of a pyre used for previous cremations.

There are three or four single ring ditches of similar size about 150m to the north under the cricket pitches in the University Parks, so this begins to look like a major barrow field.

OXFORD: Thames Street - see above - Blackfriars

OXFORD: Trinity College - B G Durham

Brian Ward-Perkins and John Blair investigated the basement of the 15th century east range of Durham quad, survivor of the monastic Durham College (SP 513065; PRN 6635). They suggest that staircase bays on the east face of the range may be original, rather than 1687 as recorded by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. Their conclusion comes from the lack of straight-joints at basement level, and the situation becomes more intriguing because a small arched opening in the basement seems to communicate with a 'space' outside the northern staircase bay. Perhaps it was an early sanitary arrangement.

OXFORD: Westgate Centre - Maureen Mellor and Claire Halpin

Claire Halpin has completed the phasing of the medieval features recovered from 31-34 Church Street, and the phase plans have been drawn up ready for publication.

Maureen Mellor has attributed dates to all the contents from the salvage excavations (Selfridges and Westgate) and a histogram showing the percentage of medieval pottery fabric types, arranged in chronological order, from the main rescue excavation (31-34 Church Street) has been completed along with a detailed catalogue of the illustrated assemblages. The medieval pottery was illustrated by Eleanor Beard and is now paged up ready for publication. Pottery sequences from two road sections on Castle Street and Church Street provided useful dating for the laying out of these streets. The pottery from the *insula* suggests a presence in the Middle Saxon period but that the real infilling of this area did not occur before the early - mid 11th century.

Concordance tables of the medieval finds and a description of the feature and layers from the above sites have been prepared.

See below - Animal Bones

RADLEY: Tuckwell's Pit - R A Chambers and Jeff Wallis

The remains of a timber lined well just over 2m deep was sectioned by drag line during quarrying operations in February (SU 53179842; PRN 13,025). Only

the bottom 0.8m of the well remained intact. Above this lay a cone of collapsed soil and gravel which reached to the surface.

The well had been lined with a carefully hollowed out oak tree 0.6m diameter internally by 0.7m diameter externally. The lining lacked holes which would have assisted the flow of water into the well. The lining had rotted and the shaft fallen in above the water table.

No dating evidence was found either in the well filling or in the silting surrounding the lining (PRN 13,025).

Further topsoil stripping in preparation for new quarries at SU 5214 9780 has revealed more traces of early Iron Age occupation on 1st terrrace gravels in the form of pits and gullies. Four circular pits averaging 1.30m diameter were sectioned by Jeff Wallis and the Abingdon Archaeological and Historical Society and all produced pottery sherds some of which are angular bowl forms. One pit also contained slag and fragments of grit conglomerate quern. Other pits were seen but could not be excavated, finds include an amber bead. The pits are clustered together over a radius of 25m and within this group remnants of a curving gully was excavated producing similar pottery. Straight runs of ditch may be part of a field system attached to the pit group which can be traced for at least 100m.

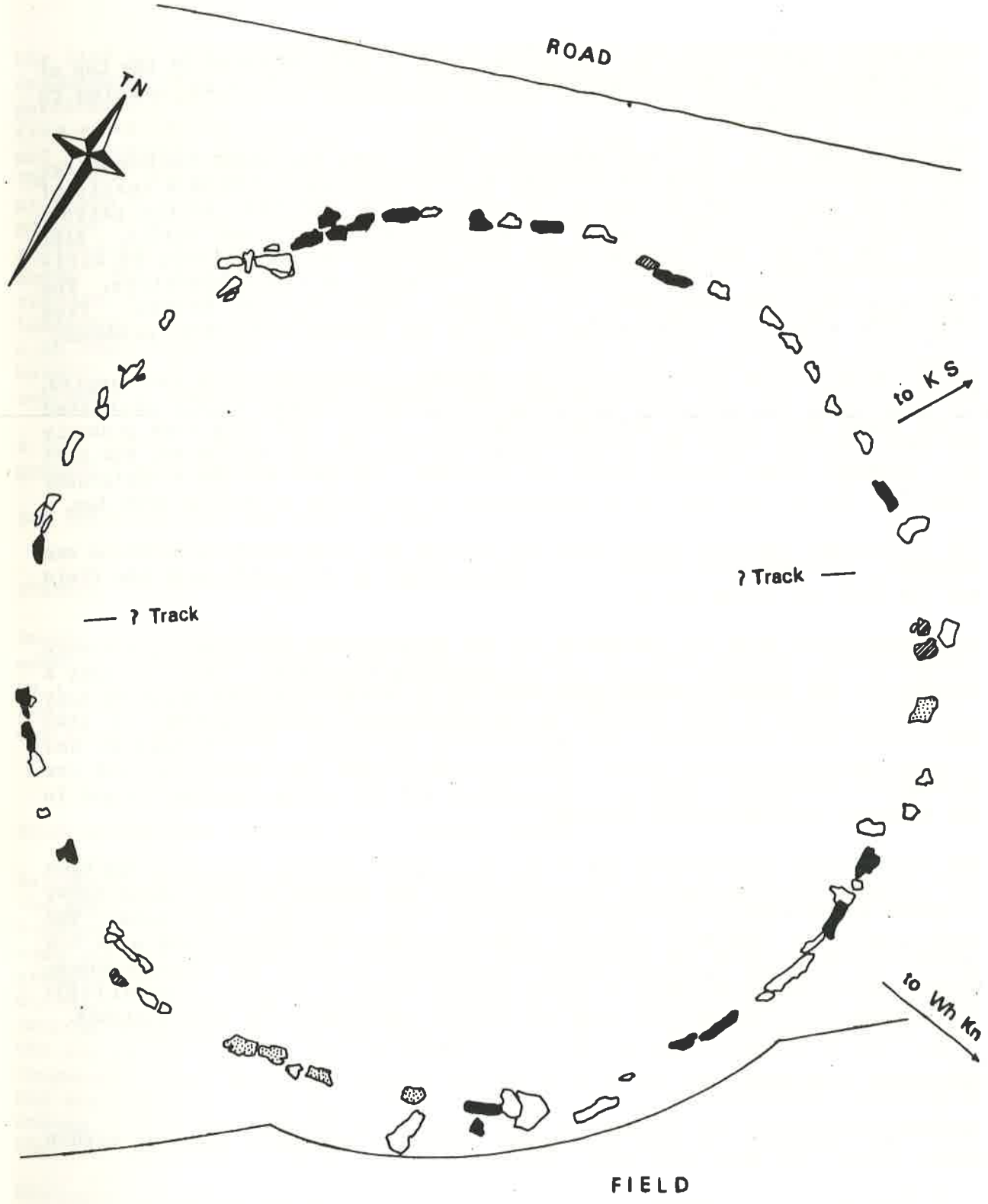
A hardwood plank split from a trunk chamfered at both ends, with a notch in the middle 1.5.m long and 32cm wide was recovered from the bottom of a water-logged ditch or water hole which although did not produce sherds contained many burnt quartzite cobbles typical of the pit group. This feature in common with all the others had been cut through and sealed by calcerous sand and loam up to 50cm thick over gravel.

A watching brief will be kept up on this site as the presence of waterlogged deposit in an area already prolific in cropmark sites such as Goose Acre Farm, Thrupp and Barrow Hills may be of value.

ROLLRIGHT: Rollright Stones - George Lambrick

A month of excavations by the OAU and OUAS were undertaken (SP 296 308). The first half was spent investigating geophysical anomalies in the Whispering Knights field, which had suggested a possible field system, trackway, ring ditch and pits. Apart from one ditch and the trackway (both late prehistoric) which converged on the ridgeway track near an Iron Age settlement (see below), the features were geological. The trackway is interesting as it coincides with the parish boundary further on perhaps suggesting a much earlier origin for this land division.

In the area next to the King Stone across the road (in Warwickshire) the second half of the excavation was spent on a possibly Neolithic cairn discovered on the long mound by the King Stone, a Bronze Age round barrow just to the west and the Iron Age settlement in the next field to the east. The cairn is well preserved and was built of quarried stone with drystone wall revetments. Evidence of cremations on the old ground surface just outside the cairn on its north-west and south-west sides suggest with other evidence that it may be a late Neolithic round barrow rather than an earlier long cairn, it could also be later, and this needs to be clarified by further


ROAD
TN
to K S
? Track
? Track
to Wh Kn
FIELD
'Original' stones in situ
Possible 'original' stones in situ
'Original' stones leaning or formerly leaning
0
5
10m

excavation. Later Bronze Age cremation deposits were inserted in the top of it and these may be the explanation of the King Stone if it was erected to mark their existence.

The cairn was built on a well structured clay loam, but under the Bronze Age barrow the soil had been transformed by leaching, probably as a result of clearance and the establishment of grassland at the time of the cairn's construction and perhaps roughly contemporary with the stone circle. Also under the Bronze Age barrow there was evidence of Mesolithic or early Neolithic activity in the form of a tight cluster of flint bladelets. The barrow itself survived only as a single layer of flat stones. Five cremations were also excavated but they did not produce any dating evidence.

In the neighbouring field the Iron Age enclosure mentioned above was sampled. Its ditch was cut 1.5m into rock and with a wall formed by the excavated stone would have formed a defendable barrier. Pits, including some probably for grain storage, were found both inside and outside the enclosure, and part of a probable house circle ditch was located. Pottery and the stratigraphy suggest a fairly long period of occupation in the Early to Middle Iron Age.

One of the most notable finds from the project was a Neolithic greenstone axe fragment, possibly from Cornwall or Wales, found on the surface of the field not far from the Stone Circle.

Post excavation work has consisted of the preparations of a full up-to-date account of the Rollright Stones and neighbouring monuments. This includes a summary of the folklore which apart from its intrinsic interest provides many subtle reminders of the pitfalls of archaeological interpretation; it also describes and discusses the extensive writings of antiquaries and archaeologists over the years. The results of the current survey and the excavations mentioned above are summarised and the whole complex is put in its regional archaeological context.

One of the more interesting parts of the current survey this year has been the correlation of antiquarian drawings with the Stones as they exist today to show which stones probably survive in their original positions. The resulting patchy circle of about 23 stones has several touching and also now appears to have had 3 stones placed immediately outside its circumference, virtually touching stones of the circle itself (see illustration). Differences in lichen growth seems to confirm the results of this analysis.

SPELSBURY - Tim Copeland

Aerial photographs revealed a possible trackway and field system, within Grim's Ditch, (SP 3860 2040: PRN 13218).

STANTON HARCOURT: Blackditch By-pass - George Lambrick

A watching brief was carried out on the construction of the new Blackditch by-pass (SP 408 061). The one major feature located was a 250m length of Iron Age ditch running along the line of the new road. It turned east at its north end and butt ended at its southern end where a well preserved water logged deposit was sampled. Only one sherd and a few bones were found, but

the lack of more occupation debris is an indication that the ditch was not immediately next to a settlement site and the environmental data will thus be particularly valuable in providing a picture of the Iron Age environment away from a settlement and on the second gravel terrace, and an area previously not represented by any well preserved waterlogged remains for this period. The result will also be valuable in the light of previous excavations nearby at Beard Mill and Vicarage Pit in the 1950's and the Unit's excavation at Mingies Ditch (Both less than a mile away) and in relation to Gravelly Guy, another major Iron Age site, even closer to hand where excavation has now begun. Preliminary results from Mark Robinson's analysis of the waterlogged remains suggest both grassland and possible woodland elements in the landscape. It is unclear as yet how important the woodland element might be - it could be no more than a thick hedge (dominated near the samply point by hazel); but might represent a nearby coppice (the ditch might actually represent a boundary between pasture and woodland).

A full report, except for the incorporation of the biological results and a general discussion has been drafted.

See below - Plants and Invertebrates.

STANTON HARCOURT: Dix Pit - R A Chambers

Several linear features have been partially uncovered by topsoil stripping in advance of continued gravel extraction. Several of these features may be due to ridge and furrow. A watch will be maintained on this site and the remainder of the features plotted and excavated when further topsoil stripping takes place.

STANTON HARCOURT: Gravelly Guy - George Lambrick

Salvage excavations following stripping for gravel extraction have begun at the southern end of this, the last large coherent site of the great Stanton Harcourt cropmark complex (SP 401 051; PRN 8281-6). The main settlement is some way further north and consists of presumed Iron Age pits, enclosures and probably ponds, but there are also the remains of a few Bronze Age ring ditches. The salvage work has revealed another small ring ditch, only 4m internal diameter, yet defined by a massive trench-like ditch over 3m wide at the top and 2m deep. No dating evidence or trace of any funerary deposit was recovered. Apart from this between 20 and 30 Iron Age pits have been located and are curently under excavation. So far most seem to be large and deep enough to have been for grain storage, and the pottery so far has suggested that all are Middle Iron Age in date.

Stripping of alluvium on the Windrush floodplain immediately adjacent to these features on the edge of the 2nd gravel terrace, has so far not revealed any archaeological remains except one probably modern ditch. There are however several lenses of peat overlying the gravel and sealed by clay alluvium, which from other occurrences is probably Late Iron Age to Early Saxon in date. These deposits are being examined by Mark Robinson. Root disturbance may be a problem but one sample from a well preserved deposit has so far been taken.

SUTTON COURTENAY: Drayton Cursus - Jeff Wallis

The Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society has continued its examination of the Drayton Cursus in Sutton Courtenay parish. In the area of gravel extraction excavation of the east ditch and surrounding features continued. The Neolithic ground surface was excavated and traces of occupation soils with Neolithic sherds were identified sealed under the cursus ditch upcast. Pottery of a similar nature was recovered from the base silts of the cursus together with Peterborough ware sherds. A Beaker rim and base sherd were found in clay alluvium almost at the lip of the ditch suggesting that alluvium had inundated part of the ditch by the late Beaker period. An area of burnt bone and charcoal at a similar level was located some 20m north of the Beaker find which will hopefully back up the date of alluviation here.

Over 70 pits stretching for 180m east of the cursus have been half sectioned at the level of gravel stripping. Most are ovoid in plan approximately 1m long and an average of 30-40cm deep. Their fill is of similar nature to the soils of the old ground surface and are believed to be contemporary with the cursus. They are sited on the edge of a suspected silted early river channel (the origin of the alluvial deposit) to the south of the quarry. The pits suggest a domestic settlement adjacent to the cursus. Only a few contained artifacts. Fragments of possible undecorated Beaker, shell temper sherds and sherds similar to those from the cursus plus three large chalk flint cores and bladelets from one pit.

Other features encountered are Iron Age or Roman and include a field system utilising the cursus. A small gully runs parallel and cuts the cursus for at least 180m with boundaries running to it. A sub rectangular enclosure 50m long cut into a sand dune to the east of the cursus may be Iron Age.

Two trenches were excavated in pasture land to the south of the gravel pit at SU 490 941. The objective was to examine a band of clay alluvium which divides the cursus terminal and barrows and the northern cropmark complex. This work dated the east ditch to the Late Neolithic with finds of Peterborough and Beaker sherds and located an intact Neolithic occupation soil.

A series of auger holes within the alluvium tends to indicate the presence of a former river channel or waterlogged area, the alluvium at its deepest being some 3.60m. Trench 4 designed to cut the east cursus ditch at a point within the alluvium 50m south of the 1981 excavation did not reveal the ditch. It was devoid of recognisable features locating 1st terrace natural at 1.10m after cutting brown and grey alluvial clay. Action of south east flowing water has either eroded away the Neolithic soil surface and ditch or the ditch terminated at a river edge, between the excavated areas.

Trench 5 was situated just above the south edge of the alluvium band, 125m from trench 4, at the base of the scarp on top of which was the site of E T Leeds' excavations. Leeds produced evidence of prehistoric ditches and pits containing early Bronze Age sherds, some of the ditch lengths possibly being part of the cursus (*Archaeologia* 73, 151). Evidence from this trench suggests that the Cursus did not exist at this point. However prehistoric

activity in the vicinity is indicated by flint within deposits disturbed by Saxon occupation. A ditch or spring had filled with peat and had been re-cut, flints were found within the peat, and at the bottom a microlithic point. Adjacent to the peat deposits an early soil surface resting on a coarse gravel and kimmeridge clay was seen with a portion of a curving gully cutting it, possibly of Saxon origin.

These trenches do indicate the presence of at least a very wet area in the Late Neolithic if not an active river channel. The cursus either had a break in its course or two cursus sites may exist the northern one terminating 30m or so north of trench 4.

See below Plants and Invertebrates.

SWYNCOMBE: Soundess Field - Maureen Mellor

Dave Start and Phil Catherall, archaeologists for the British Gas Corporation, have located the first medieval kiln in Oxfordshire (PRN 13159) in an area where kilns have been expected. The kiln and possible workshop was located by a magnetometer survey being carried out along the line of a proposed pipeline.

The pottery suggests a late fourteenth-fifteenth century date. Two types of clay were apparently used, one iron rich, giving a dark colour when fired, the other an iron-free clay giving a white or pale pink hue to the pottery. The quartz and quartzite inclusions in both types of clay are identical and probably originate from the Reading beds, which lie close to the site.

These same fabrics and forms were recovered from the manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove where independent dating evidence is available.

The forms include jars or possible cooking vessels with bifid rims, bowls or pans with external flanged rims, jugs with squared or thickened rims. Bases were nearly always depressed (only 1 splayed base was found). Decoration was sparse, glaze was apparent on a few vessels, only plain lead glazes or dull mottled green glazes were noted.

The strap handles were very broad. Some of them along with the bungholes form large bulbous bunghole jars are reminiscent of a pitcher recovered at Abingdon (M Parrington, Medieval Pottery in D Miles, 'Excavations at West St Helen Street, Abingdon 1972' *Oxoniensia* XL (1975) Fig 65 no 33, p 94), which originated from the Farnborough Hill kilns in Surrey. The knob of a lid and a tripod foot were also recovered.

A sample of this pottery is now being processed at the Unit but much remains to be done in the field.

THAMES FLOODPLAIN SURVEY - George Lambrick

This year's work (still in progress) has included the analysis of finds from fieldwalking (the pottery by Sarah Green and Maureen Mellor), an analysis of the recovery of information from the fieldwalking, the computerisation of the Survey's gazetteer of sites. Another aspect has been the drafting of a

detailed account of the sequence of floodplain deposits and their hydrological explanation in relation to human activity in the catchment area. This has proved most interesting casting new light on the interpretation of settlement pattern and the impact of post human activity in the region. Fieldwork has been confined to one sample excavation of an Iron Age house enclosure on Port Meadow, Oxford, which duly provided both dating evidence and waterlogged deposits as expected. Similar excavations on other sites on the Meadow have not been carried out yet due to other committments and/or unsuitable groundwater conditions. Other sites examined include Oseney Abbey, the Drayton cursus and Wallingford, where Mark Robinson sampled the deposits in the river bank above, below and including a late Bronze occupation deposit. The snails showed that an old river channel had gradually become filled in, and by the late Bronze Age was dry ground; it was subsequently covered by riverside levee deposits again becoming much damper, and prone to flooding. All these observations have tended to confirm the chronology of floodplain deposits, outlined in last year's report.

WALLINGFORD: John Wilder's, Goldsmith's Lane - Claire Halpin

Redevelopment of the Wilder's Iron Foundry site allowed archaeological coverage of a medieval urban site on a scale unknown in Wallingford for several years (SU 6060815; PRNs 9775 and 7805). Furthermore the archaeological material present was both extensive and well-preserved.

The site lies immediately within the extant southern Saxon ramparts, and east of the Kine Croft. The foundry building is to be retained; elsewhere on the site, housing units plus associated roads and services are planned for late 1982 - early 1983. A two-week excavation followed by selected watching briefs were conducted in late October and November, 1982, and were made possible by a grant from South Oxfordshire District Council. The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society provided volunteer assistance. Nick Doggett (an In-Service student) and Jonathan Sharpe were responsible for the documentary research.

Along the eastern perimeter of the site a long narrow trench (43m x 1m) was excavated in the hope of finding tenements fronting on to Mill Lane. Within virtually the entire length of this trench there was evidence of extensive and deep pit digging. Preliminary pottery dates range from the mid-11th to the 13th century. These pits are too far forward to be associated with the present line of Mill Lane and may be associated with a frontage to the east of Mill Lane.

An extension to the north of Trench I, c.7m x 8m and located on the junction of Mill Lane and Goldsmith's Lane, produced a very high number of undisturbed east/west burials (c. 40-60). It is believed that these burials relate to the possibly Saxon, certainly early medieval, church of St Rumbold's. Thanks to a series of watching briefs on this site and on the north side of Goldsmith's Lane it has been possible to define the limits of the cemetery. On the eastern boundary of the cemetery, which was recorded in Trench I, skeletons were found to variously overlie or be cut by 12th to 13th century pits.

St Rumbold's church itself was possibly seen during trenching within the iron foundry which is to be retained. A square end of stone walling with an

internal dimension of 5m was recorded during trenching within the foundry. The final documentary reference to the church is dated to 1352. However a lack of 14th century material from across this site suggests that some contraction occurred before this date.

Burials recorded on either side of the eastern project of Goldsmith's Lane, coupled with the fact that no early road surfaces were seen in the appropriate pipe trenches, indicate that this section of the lane is Late - or Post-medieval.

Within the eastern end of the road corridor, north of Beansheaf Terrace, possible medieval stone walling was recorded. Though no road surfaces were found, the above stonework may be coupled with the evidence of hearths and floor layers recorded in the southern end of Trench I, and be used to suggest the existence of an intramural street.

A second isolated stone building, showing two phases of construction was recorded at the west end of the road corridor. Though recorded as part of a watching brief, a ground plan was obtained and associated finds included much tile and also 12th to 13th century pottery. The east/west alignment of this building suggests that originally Goldsmith's Lane continued southwards, perhaps linking with the projected intramural street.

Future work in this site will continue in the form of limited, selected watching briefs.

An Open Day, held on 7 November attracted over 1000 visitors.

WALLINGFORD: 56 High Street - Brian Durham

This is a frontage site on the main east west axis of the town, and the developers, Trident Construction Ltd, kindly dug a small 'sondage' at the front to allow the Unit to look at the stratigraphy (SU 606 895; PRN 9279). A medieval ditch had carved through this particular area, and although there were burnt and ashy layers on both sides, it did not seem to be the 'vintage' site we are always hoping for in Wallingford. One or two Roman sherds came from a contractor's trench to the east, sealed by more Early Medieval burning.

In complete contrast to the eastern frontage, the rear of the site showed extensive graveyard disturbance. The Benedictine Priory of Holy Trinity is known to have been in this once, and burials have been noted in previous building work. Several were in cists of the local chalky 'clunch' stone, but there was no sign of masonry of the priory buildings.

WALLINGFORD: 9-11 St Martin's Street - Brian Durham

The post excavation work is scheduled for completion by April 1983 (SU 606 892). The revised phasing has been done, and Maureen Mellor has completed the recording and first draft of the pottery report. The picture resolves itself into an interesting Late Saxon horizon of a sunken-floored building and a well, and a fairly complete but less explicable 17th century horizon.

WALLINGFORD: 12-13 St Mary's Street - Claire Halpin

The foundation trenches (partially dug) for a rear extension were observed in November (SU 607893; PRN 13,191). Within these trenches, which were 1-2m deep, a thick 19th century overburden was present. Below, archaeological features probably caused by pit digging were visible. Two pre-1250 sherds were recovered from the section, and natural soil occurred at a depth of c.2m. No further archaeological work is envisaged.

WALLINGFORD: The Mill, St Mary's Street - Brian Durham

The site lies across the alignment of the defences, just beside the existing south entrance to the town and therefore probably close to the gate of the Late Saxon *burh* (SU 607890 PRN 7797). Rex Dixon of the Wallingford Archaeological and Historical Society has put a section across the pronounced break-of-slope, in the hope of exposing the face of the medieval rampart. At the maximum permissible depth of 1.5m, however, the section show only a 17th century bank covered with garden soil. The natural gravel has been shown by augering to be only 0.3m deeper, so the rampart must be further back. By implication therefore St Leonard's Lane must be running along the top of the rampart, if it is Medieval at all, and Wallingford's only example of a 'Late Saxon intramural street' is clearly not what it seemed. Considering the problems of demonstrating an intramural street on the Wilder's site just to the west, these last two excavations have added significantly an understanding of Wallingford's topography.

The existing trench extends as close as safety allows to the wall on St Leonard's Lane, but in the course of construction of the proposed houses it is still possible that the rampart face will be seen.

WENDLEBURY - see M40

WITNEY: 27 Market Square - R A Chambers and C Gott

The excavation and recording of this site has now been completed by Charles Gott and members of the Witney Historical Society (SP 3563 0958; PRN 13,024). The excavation has revealed a sequence of medieval hearths and floor levels cut by later, undated, substantial stone founded walls, all of which pre-date the inn built on the site in the 18th century.

The present town plan and associated historical evidence strongly suggests that Witney originated as a planned Medieval town. The excavation has provided archaeological evidence which appears to confirm that the line of the market place frontage has not altered since it was first laid out.

WARWICKSHIRE

LONG COMPTON - see OXFORDSHIRE: Rollright

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY

ANIMAL BONES - Bob Wilson

Oxfordshire

BERINSFIELD: Mount Farm

The bones have provided some useful data for the Neolithic and Bronze Age, as well as for later periods: particularly it is hoped, for determining the continuity of site functions over a long time.

The University Museum reference collections proved useful in identifying uncommon species at Mount Farm. Species names of interest are: Beaker period, blackbird; Iron Age, roe deer, pine marten, cat (probably wild) and raven; Romano-British: donkey and badger; and Saxon: goat and otter. The overall impression from these records is that the site was a moderately remote farming area compared to other local settlements, yet is only a few miles from Dorchester, so perhaps there was marginally more vegetational cover around or near the site.

Some large aggregations of water vole bones in Roman ditches are intriguing and suggest burrowing instrusions as the field ditches silted up. The bones are not predator meal remains but conceivably could be food caches. They are indirectly associated with the skeleton of a young badger and what appears to be a fossilised fox scat containing frog bones - except that frogs are not known to be common in the diet of modern foxes.

All these finds may point to the Roman ditches becoming over-grown, possibly from unkempt hedges, and becoming a refuge for wild animals. The observation is useful because the site was ploughed during the medieval period, so that the appearance of the landscape may well have changed.

'Articulated' bones are common. Comparison of Iron Age and modern sheep skeletons from the site give greater confidence about previous determinations for reports where there has been uncertainty about the dating of burials. Not only are modern skeletons morphologically distinctive, but the butchery was different too. Modern farmers are more economical in removing nearly all of the skin.

Most attention will focus on the economic and cultural aspects of the site particularly on the continuity of the Iron Age subsistence pattern into the Roman period. A key to this is to obtain the age distribution of slaughtered sheep from the mandibles. The contrast with results from the farmstead at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon/Radley will be of interest.

See also above: OAU report..

DORCHESTER: By-pass

Bones from Dorchester By-pass were only sufficient to say that the groups of Neolithic and Roman bones were typical of their respective periods. See also above, OAU report.

OXFORD: Westgate (31-34 Church Street)

The post medieval reports on the St Ebbe's area of Oxford were completed with the identification of 657 bird bones from the Church Street site. Interesting records include Smew *Mergus albellus* (only identified previously in the Mesolithic at Thatcham, Berkshire - in addition to modern records of course), tawny owl (perhaps roosting in post medieval buildings), turkey and peacock (first or second records in the region - the turkey was of course an introductions from North America). See also above, OAU report.

PLANTS AND INVERTEBRATES - Mark Robinson

Gloucestershire

LECHLADE/FAIRFORD: Claydon Pike

A waterlogged deposit, from between the islands of gravel upon which the Iron Age settlement was situated, was examined. It contained a late glacial flora. The lower part of the deposit was a *Chara* marl while the upper part was a peat dominated by *Menyanthes trifoliata* (bog bean). Interestingly, there was a transition between *Betula nana* (dwarf birch) in the *Chara* marl and tree species of *Betula* in the peat, suggesting a warming of climatic conditions.

Molluscs were identified from a sample of the alluvium which covers the Roman features in the low-lying parts of the site. Work also continued on a waterlogged Iron Age sample from the site.

The archaeology of the site is described above.

Oxfordshire

ABINGDON/RADLEY: Barton Court Farm.

The ants from the Roman wells at the villa were identified. Amongst them was *Formica rufa* (the wood) ant, which no longer occurs in this area, and *Tetramorium caespitum*, a species which now has a coastal distribution but has been identified from several archaeological contexts in the Oxford region.

CHALGROVE: Harding's Field.

A small waterlogged sample and much charcoal was examined from this moated Medieval manor house (see above). Two interesting species were identified from the waterlogged sample, *Xestobium rufovillosum* (the death watch beetle) and nutshell fragments of *Juglans regia*, (the walnut). The charcoal was almost all beech branchwood, from slowly growing trees, which was probably used as firewood. It provides a useful piece of dating evidence for the beechwoods of the Chilterns.

HARDWICK WITH YELFORD: Mingies Ditch.

Further Iron Age seed and insect identifications were made in finishing work on this site. The most interesting addition to the list of plants was a tentative identification of *Peucedanum ostruthium* (master-wort), a species formerly cultivated as a pot-herb and persisting as a naturalized plant in northern Britain. The insects included *Onthophagus nutans*, a dung-beetle which is now extinct in the British Isles. See above.

HARDWICK WITH YELFORD: Smith's Pit.

What proved to be an early Post Glacial peat deposit was examined from an old stream bed. The stream itself seems to have been overgrown with *M. trifoliata* (bog bean) and *Schoenoplectus lacustris* (bullrush). The seeds and insects suggested the presence of both grassland and stands of willow and birch trees. See above.

MIDDLETON STONEY: the Castle.

A sample from the 12th century latrine shaft contained a diverse range of biological material including plant remains and insects which had been preserved by calcium phosphate mineralization. The high status of the site was reflected by the presence of seeds of grape, fig and black mulberry. Other items included semi-digested bone splinters and possible gall stones. Abundant sewage flies (Sphaeroceridae) lived in the contents of the shaft while a water shrew was amongst the creatures which accidentally fell in and were unable to escape.

OXFORD: Churchill Hospital.

Examination of rather poorly preserved seeds from a well bottom on this Roman kiln site produced a flora characteristic of neglected areas around settlements such as *Chelidonium majus* (greater celandine), *Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle) and *Sambucus nigra* (elder). There was also yet another Roman example of *Papaver somniferum* (opium poppy). Carbonised chaff of spelt wheat and other threshing debris was abundant in the sample. See above - Oxford, Churchill Hospital.

OXFORD: New Inn Court and 14-18 Queen's Street.

Bread wheat, hulled barley and rye were identified from a mid to late Saxon floor layer at 11 Queen's Street, all probably ordinary domestic debris.

The usual range of mineralized items were recovered from a late Saxon cess pit at New Inn Court: fruit pips (apple or pear) and sewage/latrine fly puparia (Sphaeroceridae and *Fannia* sp). See above - 11-18 Queen's Street.

STANTON HARCOURT: Blackditch.

Work has begun on examining a waterlogged sample from an Iron Age ditch exposed by the construction of the Blackditch By-pass. The site was close to the edge of the second gravel terrace, which is so thin that the water table is not far below the ground surface. The macroscopic plant remains suggest hazel woodland while the beetles suggest pasture, dung beetles being well represented. Perhaps the ditch surrounded a small hazel coppice on the terrrace edge while the general landscape was open. *O. nutans* has also been identified from this site. (See above).

SUTTON COURTENAY: Drayton Cursus.

The samples mentioned last year of alluvium from this site (see above) were sieved and the molluscs identified. The lower part of the alluvium had been decalcified but molluscs were very abundant in the upper part. These assemblages were dominated by *Anisus leucastoma* and *Lymnaea truncatula*, which tend to be regarded as slum aquatic species. Investigations on Port Meadow, however, showed that they are the predominant species in that part of the pasture which is under water for several months but is reasonably dry in the Summer. It is possible that the closely grazed pasture suffers from too much insolation in the summer for the usual marsh fauna to be present. See above.

WALLINGFORD: River Bank.

A column of samples was taken from the bank of the Thames where the river is eroding away a late Bronze Age site. At the bottom of the column were coarse channel deposits, dominated by aquatic species. Above them were overbank deposits, initially dominated by damp open-country terrestrial species. Dry, short-turfed grassland was indicated for the late Bronze Age horizon by *Pupilla muscorum* and *Vallonia excentrica*. Covering the Bronze Age level, however, was alluvium dominated by aquatic species. Towards the modern ground surface, the proportion of terrestrial species increased until the present turf, which had a fauna very similar to that from the bronze Age levels. Modern river management means that the site is dry for most of the year, and probably does not flood very often. See above - Thames Floodplain Survey.

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY - Mark Robinson and Bob Wilson

The Department of the Environment has commissioned a survey of the archaeology of CBA Group 9 Region (Beds, Bucks, Northants and Oxon). It is hoped that the results of the survey will be published at the end of 1983. Bob Wilson's preliminary review of animal and human bones (and marine molluscs among dietary debris) is given here.

There were some difficulties in reviewing the bone reports. The first was the large amount of information available - much time was spent re-examining the known literature and discovering further material. The second was that the quality of the data varied greatly. These two aspects suggested that a detailed site by site presentation of data, as in some of the other surveys, would have been lengthy, repetitive, partly unstandardised, and not informative enough.

A general consideration only confirmed the view that there are fundamental differences between the analysis of bones and of other environmental material. Bones are intimately associated with many cultural and ecological processes so that indications of the literal physical environment of man ought to be derived during the last stages of analysis. For writing individual site reports there is no great problem: interpretation is taken as far as the specialist decides, and the lack of an explicit means of comparative analysis usually restricts this part. For regional studies better methods require invention. However the review of the animal bone material is largely discursive, because there was not time to develop a method of analysis, even supposing that this had been the aim of the survey.

A related difficulty was that often environmentalists, eg. pollen specialists, have a simple over-view of the surroundings of man. Humans are almost irrelevant. But domestic animals and people are so closely associated that they collectively characterise what a culture is. If 'environment' is used more strictly it should be applied to what is external to each cultural complex.

It is tempting to call such a complex an ecoculture because this word makes the orientation of the archaeologist or specialist much clearer. The use of 'ecosystem' is not sufficient because it tends to be applied to smaller natural or managed communities several of which could comprise an ecoculture, and because social phenomena are involved and clearly lie outside the scope of biological organisations. Further, each culture and its subsistence pattern could be defined usefully in terms of its ecological trophic level not merely as, for example, pastoralist or hunter gatherer but as part of a more coherent ecological rationale.

A decent paradigm would allow general analysis of bones to proceed more rapidly than at present because it should clarify how regional information (chronological, spatial, and cultural) would be used in examining bones for evidence of social structure before detailed evaluation of minor contexts occurred. At least the regional survey was written with this problem in mind. It also tried to heed that there are a number of competently written, if out-dated, volumes on the same of similar themes, for example, *The Oxford Region*, ed. A F Martin and R W Steel. Results so far are helpful for bringing together material which shows marked contrasts between others, eg medieval - post medieval periods.

Perhaps the Neolithic period is of most interest. Still meagre site records (Abingdon; Puddle Hill, Bucks; Fengate) indicate that the aurochs is the most frequently hunted species and it is not until the mid or late Neolithic that red deer bones become more prolific among the bones of domesticated animals. This suggests that hunting centred on the largest species until these became less common. It also implies that small game resources were less necessary to supplement the normal diet and Neolithic subsistence was at a relatively high level of meat production. There was a considerable emphasis on management of cattle and pig but not of sheep. Consequently secondary products appear less important and therefore arable farming may have been a much smaller part of the economy than in later cultural periods.

Clearance of forest appears limited in some parts of the region, for example, Late Neolithic Puddlehill sites on the Chilterns or at Fengate over the

border at Peterborough.

In the Thames valley, faunal samples indicate slow clearance of forest around Buscot and Lechlade, but the Abingdon and Dorchester areas is moderately open at an early date.

Overall the regional survey is worthwhile if slow, because it gives a perspective to our work which probably was lacking previously. A small example was the decision to include and utilise information from human skeletons as a part of reviewing what animal bones will tell us.