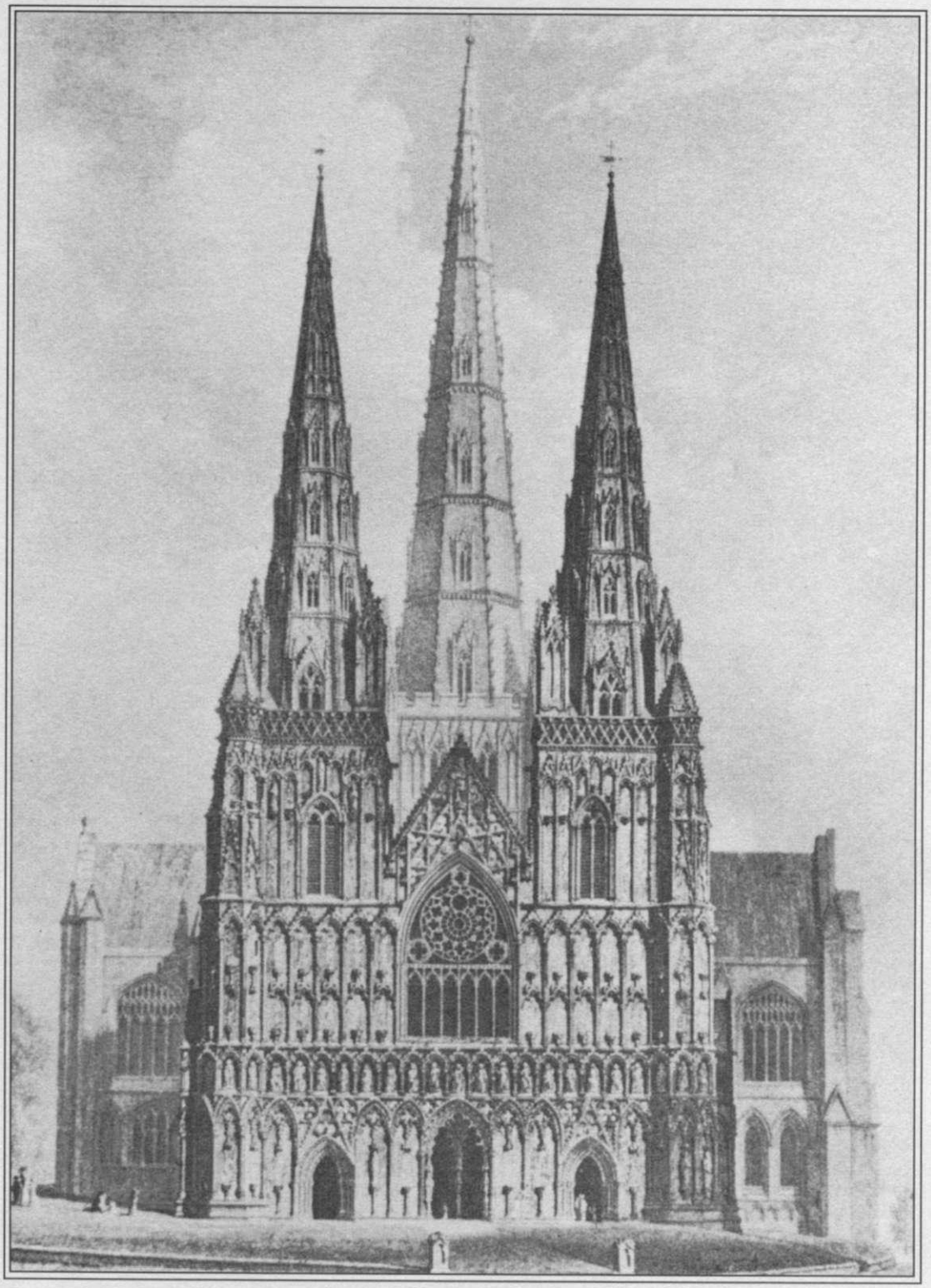

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TEMPLAR CHURCH

TAMWORTH, 1572-1760

EXCAVATIONS ON THE A5 WEEFORD TO FAZELEY ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, STAFFORDSHIRE

KATE CRAMP AND RICHARD BROWN

with contributions by Paul Booth and Emma-Jayne Evans

SUMMARY

The A5 Weeford to Fazeley trunk road in South Staffordshire forms part of a strategic route from London to Holyhead and runs approximately parallel to Watling Street, the principal Roman road from London to the west Midlands and north Wales. The road improvement scheme comprised the upgrading of the A5 to a dual two-lane carriageway between its junction with the A38 at Weeford Island (SK 134049) and Bonehill Junction at Mile Oak (SK 171030), some 5 km to the east. This required the construction of a 5 km off-line section to the north of the existing road.

Following archaeological evaluation by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU), Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned to carry out further archaeological investigation at eight sites along the route and a scheme-wide watching brief during the earthworks programme (fig. 1). The results of the archaeological work revealed prehistoric, Roman, medieval, and post-medieval remains. While scant evidence has survived of the earlier prehistoric periods, an Iron Age ring gully and associated features were identified at the eastern end of the route (Site 27). Roman enclosures were examined at the western end of the route at Site 8. The remains of field systems dating to the Roman, medieval, and post-medieval periods were also revealed during excavation, along with pits, postholes, tree-throw holes, and other related features that contribute to an emerging picture of rural landscape use from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period.

INTRODUCTION

Location and geology

The route passes through a gently undulating landscape with the exception of an area of relatively steep, south-easterly sloping land between Hints Hill and south of Hints Quarry. There are two distinct solid geologies, which are divided by a sandstone promontory at Hints Hill: the western half lies on Kidderminster and Bromsgrove sandstones, while the eastern is principally on Mercia Mudstone. Superficial alluvium and glacial deposits overlie much of the area (Highways Agency 2002b, 5; Interserve JV 2004, 16).

Previous work

The impact of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley road improvement scheme on known and potential archaeological remains was evaluated by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) as part of a staged cultural heritage assessment (Highways Agency 2002a, 2002b). The assessment included a preliminary walk-over survey and a desk-based assessment drawing on information from the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, now the Historic Environment Record (Highways Agency 2002a, Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2.A).

An aerial photographic survey identified nine areas of archaeological interest, of which seven appeared to be directly affected by the proposed development (ibid., Appendix 2.13). A programme of fieldwalking was undertaken in 2001-2, although the artefacts recovered were few in number and no significant concentrations were recorded (Williams and Hancocks 2002; Highways Agency 2002b, Part 2.1 and Appendix A).

Approximately 65% of the preferred route was examined using geophysical techniques (Highways Agency 2002a, Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2.C). Three sites were identified as potentially containing features of archaeological significance; two of these had already been identified during the aerial photographic assessment.

A programme of trial trench evaluation was implemented by BUFAU in 2002, comprising 24 trenches (Trenches 1-24) and eight sample transects (Trenches 25-32) (Highways Agency 2002b, Part 2.2 and Appendix B). No archaeological remains or deposits were revealed in Trenches 25, 28-9, and 31-2.

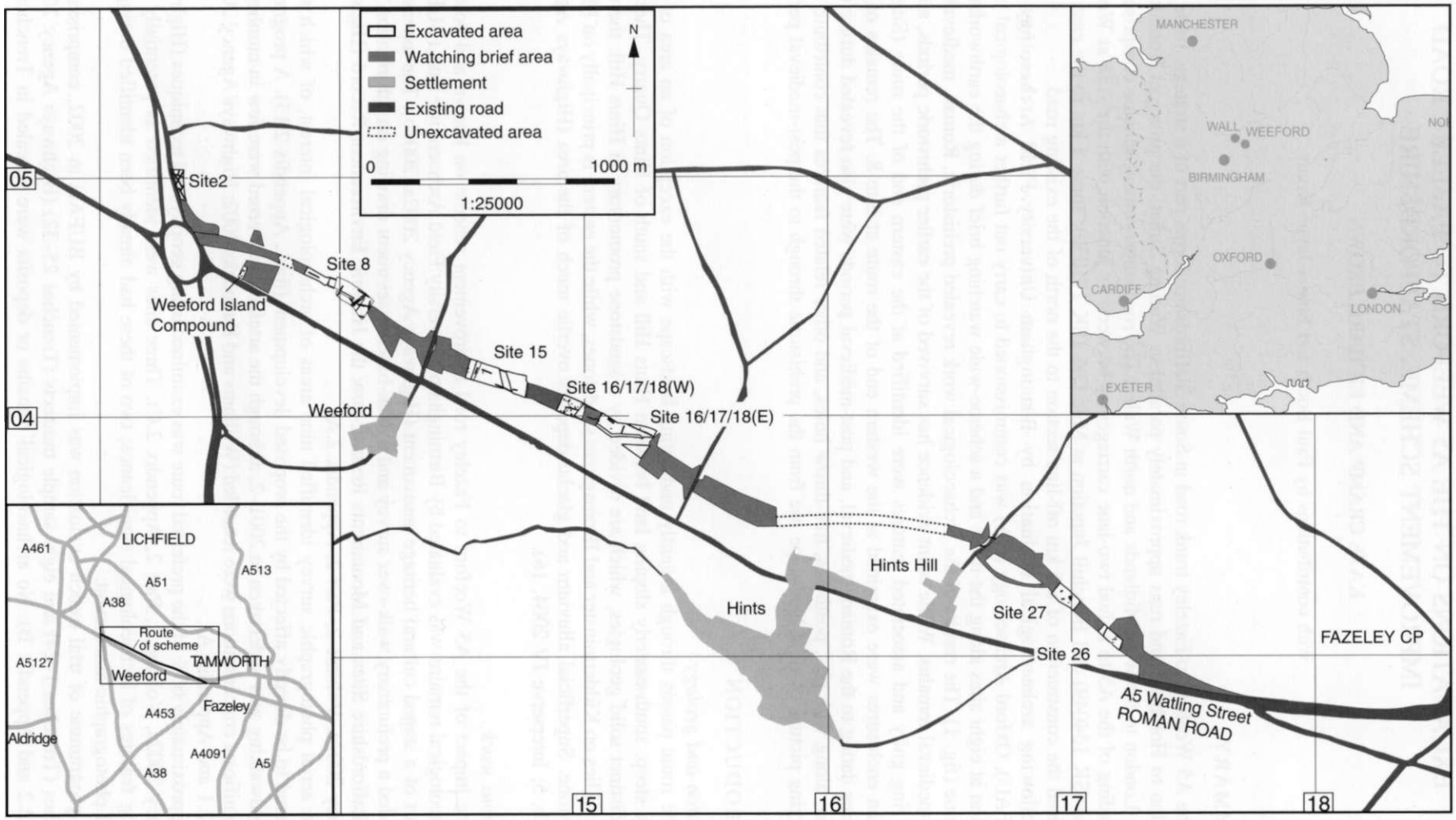

Fig. 1 Scheme-wide plan showing location of sites

The western end of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley route is coincident with part of the route of the M6 Toll, and the (provisional) results of recent archaeological work on that scheme are directly relevant to understanding the archaeology of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley (OWA 2003; see Booth *et al.* 2008). Oxford Archaeology (OA) has also carried out a desk-based assessment and field-walking to the north-west of Tamworth in connection with the proposed West Coast Main Line modernisation programme (OA forthcoming).

The Roman fortified town of *Letocetum* (Wall), located some 5 km west of the route's western end, puts into focus the Roman-period archaeology recovered from the route. The discovery at the town of bathhouses, roadside enclosures, and a *mansio* (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 276) is a reminder of the varied traffic and lives that passed along Watling Street so close to the rural settlements uncovered in part along the A5 route.

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The results of the evaluation undertaken by BUFAU in 2002 informed the mitigation strategy, which defined different levels of archaeological examination dependent upon the perceived significance of the features that each area was thought to contain (Interserve 2004). These measures included the following:

Geotechnical test-pit monitoring

During October and November 2003, Oxford Archaeology monitored the mechanical excavation of 122 geotechnical inspection pits along the route of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley road improvement scheme on behalf of Interserve JV. The test pits were excavated by Soil Mechanics. No potential archaeological features or remains were recorded in any of the test pits (OA 2003h, 1).

Identified watching brief

Identified watching briefs were undertaken at Site 2, Site 16/17/18 (west) and Site 26/27'. These involved the removal of the topsoil/subsoil to a depth of around 0.5 m below present ground level. Archaeological features were investigated and recorded with further archaeological work undertaken where significant remains were encountered (Interserve 2004, 21-2).

Strip, map, and sample

Site 8, Site 15, Site 16/17/18 (east) and Site 26 were investigated using a programme of strip, map and sample. At these sites, a base plan of archaeological features was produced after machine stripping. Up to 20 interventions per hectare were made in order to date and otherwise characterise any revealed remains, with provision made for further archaeological works if appropriate (ibid., 23).

Excavation

Site 27 was subject to excavation. The area was stripped to the Mercian mudstone/clay natural horizon, and a number of features identified during the evaluation were marked and mapped. The full extent of a ring gully feature was not clear after the initial machine clearance so further hand cleaning of the area was undertaken and a number of the BUFAU interventions were re-excavated in order to establish the plan of the original feature (OA 2003g, 1; Interserve 2004, 23-7).

Scheme-wide watching brief

The scheme-wide watching brief was carried out on all intrusive earthworks associated with the A5 construction - except an area of infilled quarrying at Hints Hill - where archaeological deposits might be revealed and had not been investigated within identified sites (OA 2004b, 1).

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The following offers a description of any significant features and finds that were encountered during the archaeological investigations. The sites are presented in order of their location from Site 2 at the western end of the route alongside the Weeford Island junction, to Site 26 some 5 km to the east (fig. 1).

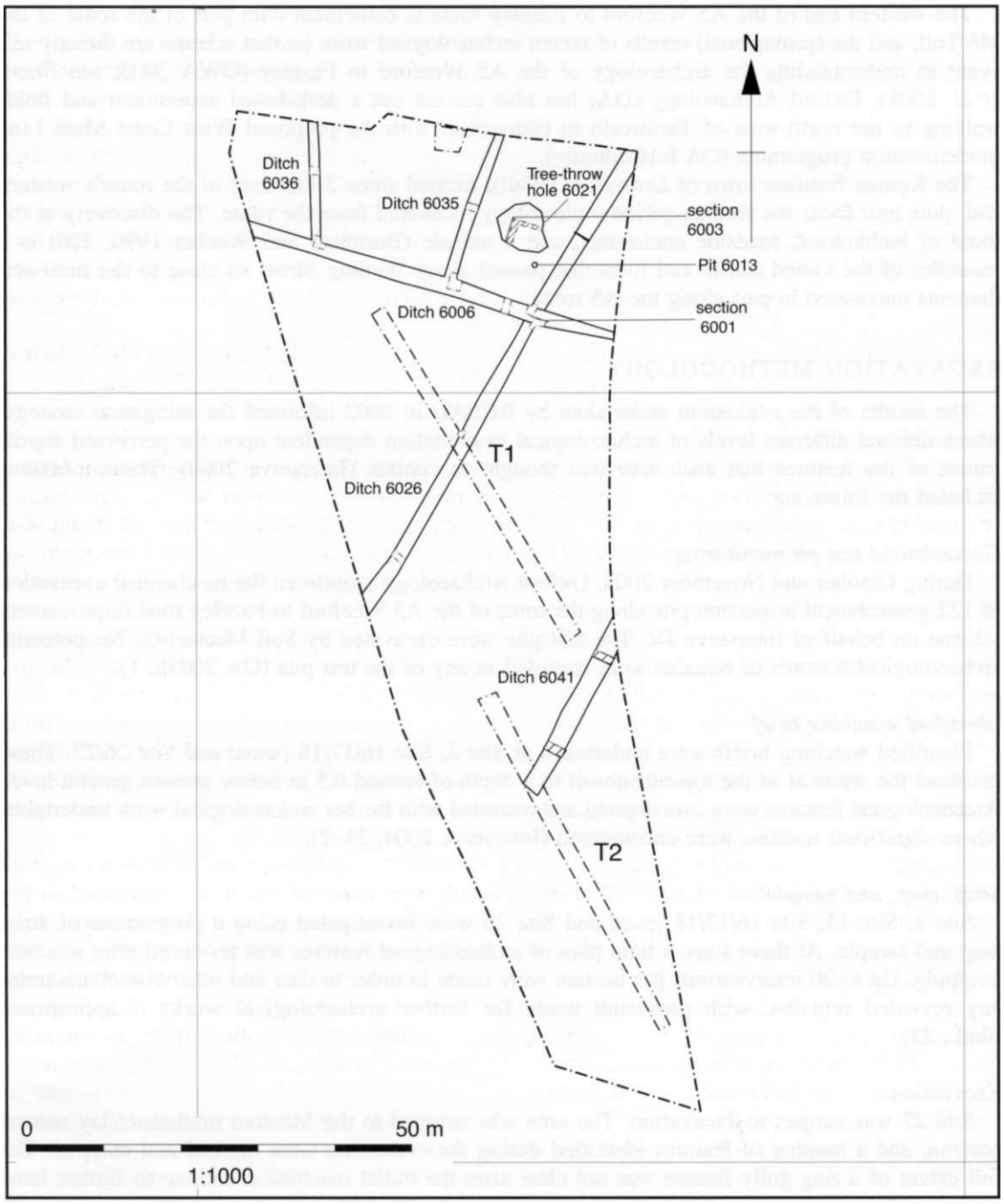

Fig. 2 Site **2**

Site 2 (figs. 1 and 2)

Site 2 lies immediately to the north-east of the A5/A38 junction (Weeford Island) at NGR SK 134049 (fig. 1). The site covered an area of 0.65 ha and incorporated Trenches 1 and 2 of the BUFAU evaluation (fig. 2), neither of which was particularly prolific in terms of archaeological features or finds (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 1-2).

A series of ditches forming rectangular enclosures were identified during the watching brief (OA 2003a). These were mainly Roman in date, although there is evidence that ditch group 6026 had its origins in the late Iron Age, while others (e.g. 6041) may have been cut in the medieval period. The site produced the only significant assemblage of Roman pottery from the project, a total of 314 sherds (5131 g).

Prehistoric and Roman

Ditch 6026 was aligned northeast-southwest and was examined in five sections: 6002, 6022, 6029, 6032, and 6039. It measured 70 m in length and between 1.8 m and 2 m in width; the depth ranged from 0.15 m to 0.5 m. The feature contained numerous rounded pebbles and cobbles, which may have been removed from the adjacent fields and deposited in the ditch. The small quantities of pottery that were recovered from the ditch were found to concentrate in the northern slots; a single sherd (4 g) of Roman pottery was recovered from 6032, while two sherds (7 g) came from 6029. The ditch, which probably formed part of a field or paddock boundary, lay at an oblique angle to Watling Street. In intervention 6002, it appeared to be cut by northwest-southeast aligned ditch 6006 (fig. 9, S. 6001, showing intervention 6001); it is therefore possible that ditch 6026 belonged to an earlier, perhaps prehistoric, field system and was superseded by later ditched enclosures that respected the alignment of the Roman road.

Ditch 6006 was investigated in five interventions (6000, 6001, 6009, 6015, and 6027), four of which were positioned to clarify the relationship with ditches 6036, 6035, and 6026 (e.g. fig. 9, S. 6001). Approximately 47 m of the ditch was exposed in the stripped area. It measured 2 m wide and varied in depth from 0.52 m in the western section to 0.77 m in the east. A fairly substantial quantity of mid-late 2nd century pottery (159 sherds weighing 3822 g) was recovered from 6001 in the eastern part of the ditch and towards its intersection with 6026. Section 6027 also produced a reasonable quantity of pottery, a total of 26 sherds weighing 399 g, while sections 6000 and 6015 further to the west produced much smaller amounts. The eight fragments of cattle bone recovered from the fill may relate to nearby settlement activity although, given the generally poor survival of animal bone from the site, they may well be intrusive.

An approximately 20 m length of north-south aligned ditch 6035 was exposed. The ditch was examined in two interventions, 6017 and 6033, and was shown to intersect with ditch 6006 from the north. The feature measured 1.5 m in width and between 0.23 m and 0.3 m in depth. A single sherd (24 g) of pottery datable to the 1st or 2nd century was recovered from the silty sand fill of 6033. The exact relationship with ditch 6006 is unclear in section, but it is most likely that the two ditches were broadly contemporary and formed one coiner of a larger rectangular enclosure. The absence of later 2nd century pottery might, however, indicate that ditch 6035 was in use slightly earlier than the adjacent ditches.

A shallow ditch (feature 6036) ran approximately parallel to ditch 6035 and intersected with the western end of ditch 6006. Around 15 m of its length were exposed and it was examined in two interventions: 6011 and 6038. It measured 1.25 m in width and was between 0.08 m and 0.12 m deep. The single deposit of silty sand contained an abraded sherd of Roman pottery.

With features 6006 and 6035, this ditch probably formed part of a wider system of small, rectangular enclosures. East-west aligned ditch 6006 seems to represent the southernmost boundary of this system, as its north-south aligned companions all lie to the north. The concentration of ceramic material in the eastern interventions compared with the insignificant quantities recovered from the western interventions suggests that the farmstead associated with the field system lay to the east or north-east. The pottery from the fills provides a date in the mid to late 2nd century for the use of these boundaries, which may have superseded late Iron Age precursors (e.g. ditch 6026).

A shallow but expansive feature, possible tree-throw hole 6021, was located to the north of pit 6013 and within the boundary of ditches 6006 and 6035. It measured between 6 and 7 m in diameter and 0.52 m in depth (fig. 9, S. 6003). Its sizeable pottery assemblage, a total of 109 sherds (809 g) or approximately one third of the site assemblage, provides a probable date in the mid to late 2nd century for its infill. Three small fragments of abraded and undiagnostic ceramic building material were also recovered. The primary fill, a dark brown-black silty sand containing substantial quantities of charcoal, produced 57 pieces (321 g) of Roman pottery. The layer was overlain by a mid-brown silty sand containing a large piece of undressed sandstone, a single corroded iron nail and a further 52 sherds (488 g) of Roman pottery. Given its position, it is not unlikely that the tree - or group of trees - was removed prior to the construction of the boundary ditches. The stump and root bole may have been burnt *in situ* as the final stage of the tree clearance process.

A small, circular pit or posthole (feature 6013) lay ***c*** 1 m to the south-east of tree-throw hole 6021. Measuring 0.7 m in diameter, it was filled with a silty sand to a depth of 0.3 m and contained a single sherd (8 g) of Roman pottery.

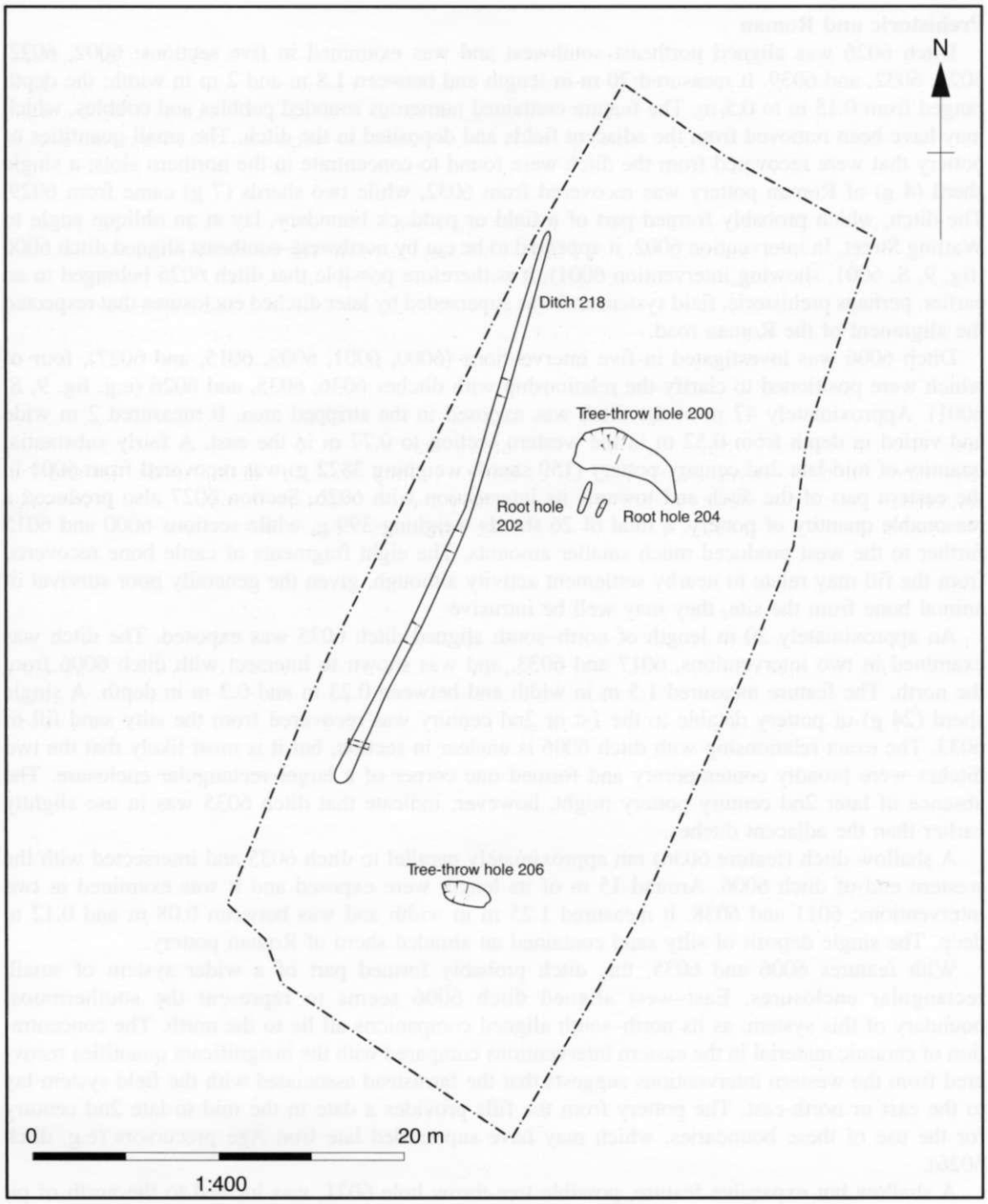

Fig. 3 Weeford Island Compound

Medieval

Ditch 6041 extended for 38 m across the exposed site on a northeast-southwest trajectory and was examined in two sections: 6042 and 6047. The ditch contained five sherds (102 g) of medieval pottery of the 13th to 14th century, which indicates a medieval date for its use. Its correspondence with the alignment of ditch 6026, however, means that a late prehistoric or Roman origin cannot be entirely discounted.

Weeford Island compound (figs. 1 and 3)

The site of the Weeford Island compound is located *c* 150 m to the south-east of the A5/A38 junction at NGR SK 413304 (figs. 1 and 3). An area at least 5 m beyond any features exposed during the watching brief was cleaned to establish the extent of the potential archaeological activity (OA 2003e).

Roman

Ditch 218 was orientated roughly northeast-southwest, perpendicular to Watling Street, and was examined in five interventions: 208, 210, 212, 214, and 216. The ditch was 32 m long, varying in width from 0.56 m to 0.76 m and reaching depths of up to 0.28 m. A single sherd (2 g) of Roman pottery was recovered from intervention 210. The ditch shared the alignment of some of the ditches in Site 8, and probably functioned as a field or property boundary as part of a wider enclosure system.

Immediately to the east lay a shallow, crescent-shaped tree-throw hole (200), measuring 6 m in length, 2.6 m in width and 0.18 m in depth. Its silty sand deposit was composed of 15% charcoal, suggesting that - as in tree-throw hole 6021 on Site 2 - the stump and root were burnt *in situ.* Eight sherds (44 g) of Roman pottery, probably dating to the later 1st or 2nd centuries, were recovered from the tree-throw hole, along with a single sherd (42 g) of middle Iron Age pottery. Root holes 202 and 204, located directly to the south of tree-throw hole 200, both contained charcoal-rich deposits and were probably related to this episode of tree-clearance.

Tree-throw hole 206 was a shallow, ovoid feature located approximately 23 m from tree-throw hole 200. It measured 2.78 m in length and 1.2 m in width, and was filled with a dark brown-black silty sand containing seven sherds (121 g) of Roman pottery, probably dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries. Given the similarity of their fills and pottery content, this feature may belong to the same phase of tree-clearance as that represented by nearby tree-throw hole 200.

Site 8 (figs. 1 and 4)

Site 8 is located *c* 150 m to the north of Watling Street at NGR SK 139044 (figs. 1 and 4). The site was excavated in two parts, which were separated by the line of a field boundary. The total area (c 2 ha) incorporated Trenches 3-7, 9, and 24 of the BUFAU evaluation, which contained a series of scattered postholes, stakeholes, pits, and ditches but very few datable artefacts (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 2-13); Trenches 8 and 10 lay outside the excavated area. Following

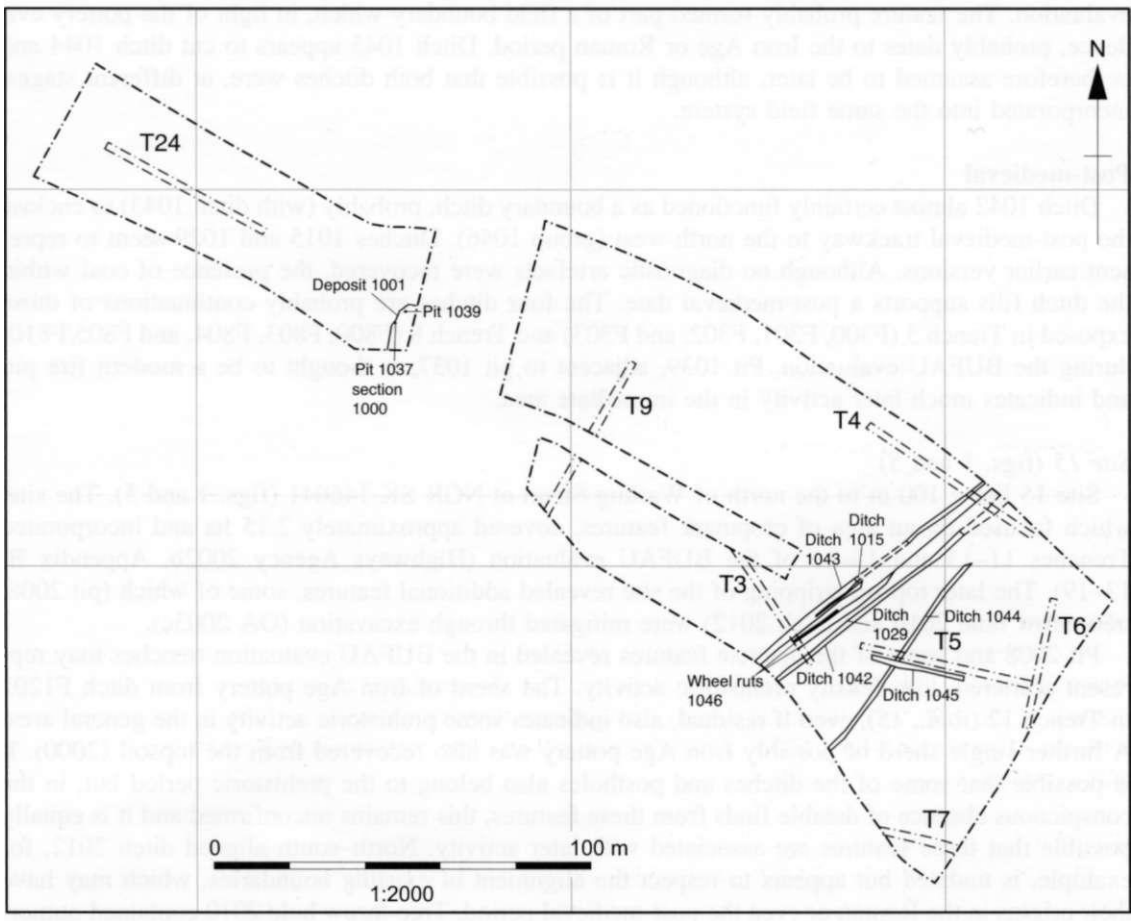

Fig. 4 Site 8

the evaluation, the area was stripped to reveal the extent of the features exposed in Trenches 6 and 24 (OA 2003b, 1).

The earliest evidence for activity comes from pit 1037, which was overlain by a buried soil horizon (deposit 1001) and contained an assemblage of Iron Age pottery. Most of the features probably date to the Iron Age, Roman, or post-medieval periods. Many of the ditches were aligned either parallel or perpendicular to Watling Street, which supports a Roman or post-Roman date for the majority.

Iron Age and Roman

A shallow, oval-shaped pit (feature 1037) was revealed in the eastern area of the site. The pit measured 0.28 m in width and 0.32 m in length (fig. 9, S. 1000). It was filled by a dark brown silty sand containing 38 sherds (525 g) of handmade, quartz-tempered Iron Age pottery, one piece of tile, one iron nail, a number of burnt stones, and several pieces of modem burnt clay. The stratigraphic integrity of the pit is therefore in doubt, although the pottery itself forms a coherent assemblage. It is possible, particularly given its position below a buried soil layer (1001) containing a further six sherds (59 g) of the same fabric, that the pit has prehistoric origins. Given the mixed date of the finds, however, it seems that the fill has, at least in part, been more recently disturbed.

Ditch 1044 extended for **c** 60 m on a northeast-southwest trajectory across the site, perpendicular to the alignment of Watling Street. It was examined in three 1 m slots: 1007, 1018, and 1033. The ditch, without doubt a continuation of the unexcavated ditch F508 in BUFAU evaluation Trench 5, ranged in width from 0.44 m to 0.9 m and in depth from 0.18 m to 0.2 m. It contained a single deposit of an orange-brown sand throughout, apparently cut by the darker fills of ditch 1045 (below), which supports an Iron Age or Roman date for the feature. No finds were recovered.

Ditch 1045, an east-west aligned linear feature, corresponds with ditch F600 in Trench 6 of the BUFAU evaluation. An additional 30 m of the ditch was exposed during the later stripping of the site and subsequently examined in three 1 m interventions: 1005, 1031, and 1035. Finds from the ditch include one sherd (3 g) of possibly Iron Age pottery from the fill of 1035, to which can be added another three pieces of Iron Age pottery and two pieces of Roman pottery retrieved in the evaluation. The feature probably formed part of a field boundary which, in light of the pottery evidence, probably dates to the Iron Age or Roman period. Ditch 1045 appears to cut ditch 1044 and is therefore assumed to be later, although it is possible that both ditches were, at different stages, incorporated into the same field system.

Post-medieval

Ditch 1042 almost certainly functioned as a boundary ditch, probably (with ditch 1043) to enclose the post-medieval trackway to the north-west (group 1046). Ditches 1015 and 1029 seem to represent earlier versions. Although no diagnostic artefacts were recovered, the presence of coal within the ditch fills supports a post-medieval date. The four ditches are probably continuations of those exposed in Trench 3 (F300, F301, F302, and F303) and Trench 8 (F800, F803, F804, and F805/F810) during the BUFAU evaluation. Pit 1039, adjacent to pit 1037, is thought to be a modem fire pit, and indicates much later activity in the immediate area.

Site 15 (figs. 1 and 5)

Site 15 lies *c* 100 m to the north of Watling Street at NGR SK 146041 (figs. 1 and 5). The site, which focused on an area of cropmark features, covered approximately 2.15 ha and incorporated Trenches 11-13 and 15-16 of the BUFAU evaluation (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 13-19). The later topsoil stripping of the site revealed additional features, some of which (pit 2008, tree-throw hole 2010 and ditch 2012) were mitigated through excavation (OA 2003c).

Pit 2008 and some of the discrete features revealed in the BUFAU evaluation trenches may represent scattered, low-density prehistoric activity. The sherd of Iron Age pottery from ditch F1203 in Trench 12 (ibid., 15), even if residual, also indicates some prehistoric activity in the general area. A further single sherd of possibly Iron Age pottery was also recovered from the topsoil (2000). It is possible that some of the ditches and postholes also belong to the prehistoric period but, in the conspicuous absence of datable finds from these features, this remains unconfirmed and it is equally possible that these features are associated with later activity. North-south aligned ditch 2012, for example, is undated but appears to respect the alignment of existing boundaries, which may have their origins in the Roman or even the post-medieval period. Tree-throw hole 2010 contained numerous fragments of coal and is thought to be a modern feature.

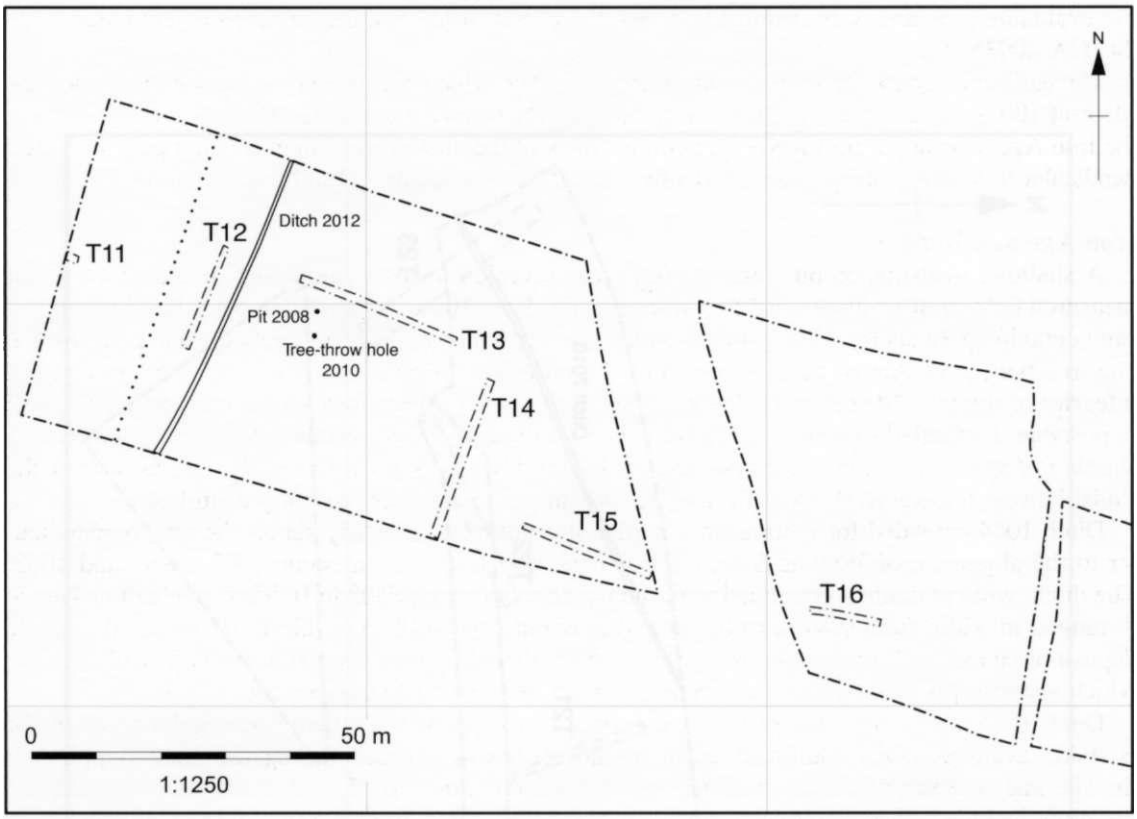

Fig. 5 Site 15

Roman

Ditch 2012 was orientated northeast-southwest and ran across the length of the site (c 80 m) and was examined in three interventions: 2003, 2005 and 2007. The ditch runs perpendicular to Watling Street and may represent a field or property boundary. While the feature cannot be securely dated in the absence of informative stratigraphic relationships or datable finds, the similarity of its fill to those of demonstrably Roman features on Site 8 (c 550 m to the west) provides slim evidence in favour of a Roman date.

Medieval

Pit 2008 consisted of a shallow, sub-circular scoop in the natural sand, measuring between 0.72 m and 0.84 m in diameter and containing fire-cracked stone, burnt flint, and charcoal. A small sherd (1 g) of pottery, dated to the medieval period, was recovered from the fill. The feature has been interpreted as a fire pit and may be contemporaneous with the associated pottery although such a small sherd could easily be intrusive.

Site 16117118 (figs. 1 and 6)

Site 16/17/18 lies to the north of Watling Street at NGR SK 151038 (fig. 1). The site, which targeted an extensive cropmark complex, was investigated in two parts with a combined area of *c* 3.07 ha. The western area (0.67 ha), which incorporated Trenches 17-19 of the BUFAU evaluation, was examined as part of an identified watching brief (OA 2004a); the eastern area (2.4 ha) incorporated BUFAU Trenches 20-23 and was stripped down to the natural sandy-gravel horizons, mapped, and sampled (fig. 6; OA 2003d).

No archaeological deposits or finds were present in evaluation Trenches 17 and 18 in the westem area (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 19). Trench 19 was found to contain three pits (F1900, F1902, and F1905), two postholes (F1902 and F1904), and one ditch (F1906), none of which produced any dating evidence (ibid., 20). The features were re-examined in more detail during the watching brief and shown to be either modem or natural features.

Several pits and ditches were revealed in evaluation Trenches 20-23 following the stripping of the eastern area (ibid., 21-23). These included ditch 7010 (F2301), ditch F2002 and pits F2000,

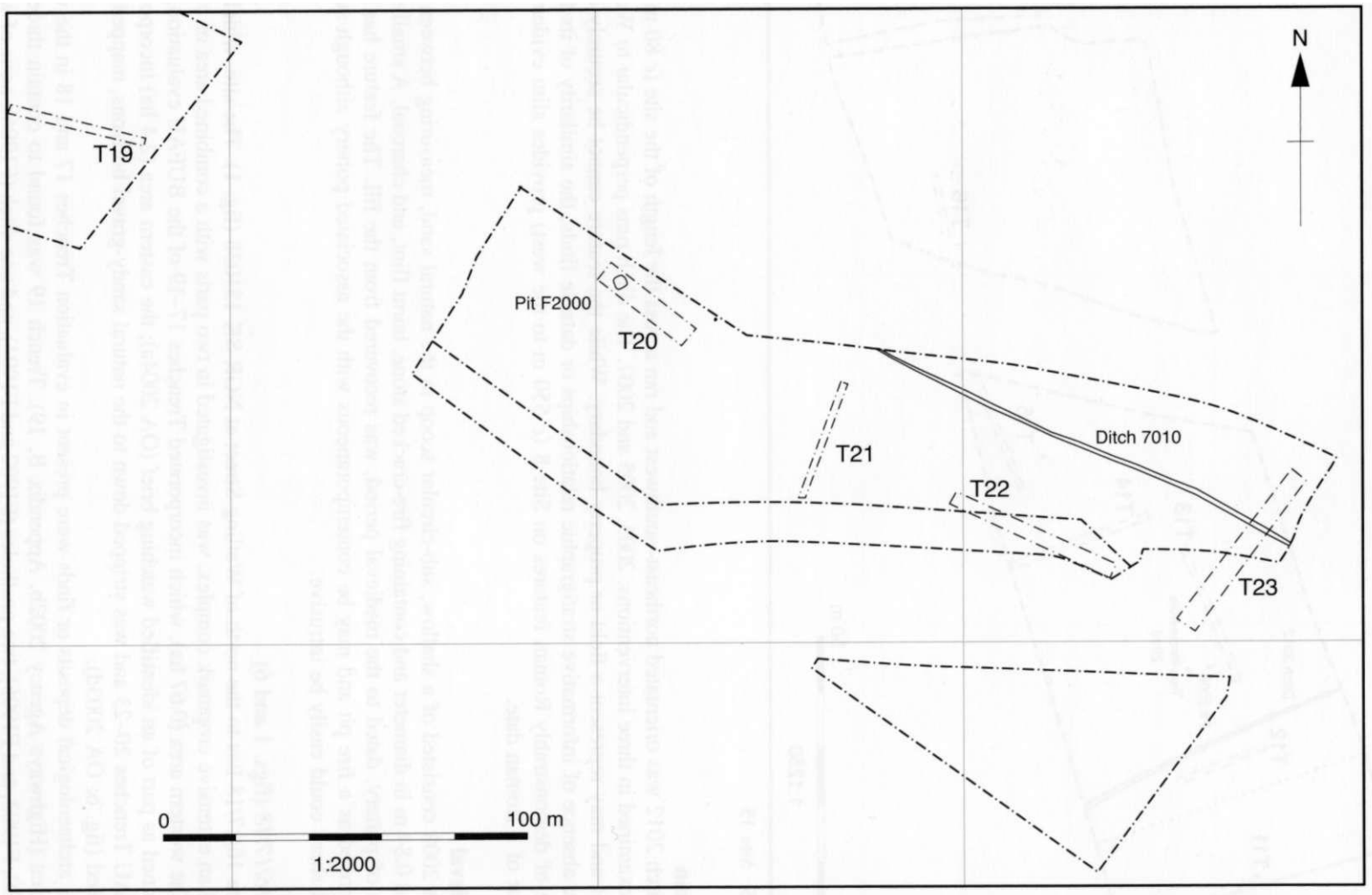

Fig. 6 Site 16/17/18 (eastern area)

F2001, and F2101. Other cuts noted in the evaluation (e.g. ditch F2100, pits F2200 and F2201) were confirmed as natural features. Dating evidence from Trench 20 includes three sherds (8 g) of later prehistoric pottery from pit F2000 and two sherds of unstratified Roman pottery.

Prehistoric

Pit F2000, located in the western half of Trench 20, was sub-circular in plan and contained three small sherds (8 g) of later prehistoric pottery; these cannot be closely dated.

Post-medieval

Ditch 7010 was originally identified in evaluation Trench 23 (F2301) and later re-investigated by means of three interventions: 7004, 7007, and 7008. The ditch extends on a northwest-southeast alignment parallel to Watling Street, about 250 m away, and is thought to have been part of a post-medieval field boundary. The exposed length of ditch measured *c* 125 m and varied in width from 0.90 m to 1.36 m with a depth of 0.25 m to 0.39 m. Two sherds (3 g) of glazed pottery, one piece of iron slag and several fragments of degraded animal bone were recovered from the fill of 7007, while a single piece of ceramic building material, probably roofing tile, came from the fill of 7004. These finds support a post-medieval date.

Site 27 (figs. 1 and 7)

Site 27 measures *c* 0.57 ha in area and lies approximately 250 m to north of Watling Street at NGR SK 169031 (figs. 1 and 7). The site was located in order to identify and further define any archaeological remains surviving in association with a circular ditched feature, group 5010 (OA 2003g). This feature, which was first revealed in Trench 27 of the BUFAU evaluation in 2002 (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 26-28), was a well-preserved ring gully or hut circle and can be dated to the Iron Age on pottery evidence. The small number of pits and postholes recorded within the evaluation trench were probably related to this circular feature, while the internal curvilinear features (5020, 5022, F2711, F2712, and F2716) possibly predate the ring gully within which they are located.

Iron Age

Ring gully 5010 (F2701, F2702, F2705, F2718, and F2724 in Trench 27) measured *c* 13 m in external diameter and was somewhat elongated along its north-south axis. The assumed entrance to the enclosure lay to the east and was *c* 5 m wide, with the northern terminus slightly extended to the east. The width of the ditch varied considerably and inconsistently along its circumference, from 0.52 m to 1.05 m. The depth was similarly variable, ranging from 0.24 m to 0.54 m. The base of the ditch appeared more rounded in the western sections (e.g. fig. 9, S. 5004), approaching a more V-shaped profile as it neared the termini to the east (e.g. fig. 9, S. 5000). With the exception of an additional sandy fill within cut 5017, the gully contained a single deposit throughout, comprising a tenacious mid-brown clay with charcoal flecking.

Finds from the ditch include one sherd (7 g) of pottery, probably Iron Age, from 5012. A further five sherds (17 g) of pottery were recovered from F2718 during the BUFAU evaluation, along with two pieces (29 g) of fired clay from the northern terminus F2701. Numerous fragments of animal bone in varying states of preservation were also recovered from several interventions. Fragments identifiable to species include two sheep/goat bones, one pig bone, and four cattle bones, one of which is a mandibular ramus displaying dismemberment cut marks. Most of the animal bone (by fragment count and weight) came from the north-eastern area of the ditch (interventions 5002 and 5017).

The fill of 5002 (fig. 9, S. 5000) contained an unusually high percentage of stones, some burnt, compared with the clean fills recorded in other interventions. Similar deposits of burnt stone were noted in the northern ditch segments (F2701 and F2705) during the BUFAU evaluation, and may be related to the clearance of a Bronze Age burnt mound (Highways Agency 2002, Appendix B, 27-8). Recent work in the area (e.g. on the M6 Toll) suggests that such deposits are not restricted to the Bronze Age, however, but occur on sites of various dates.

The ring gully has been interpreted as a house site with associated features and deposits of domestic refuse. The absence of internal postholes or other structural elements within the gully would argue against a particularly substantial hut-structure, while the possibility of significant truncation can be largely discounted in view of the survival of other, more ephemeral, features within the central area.

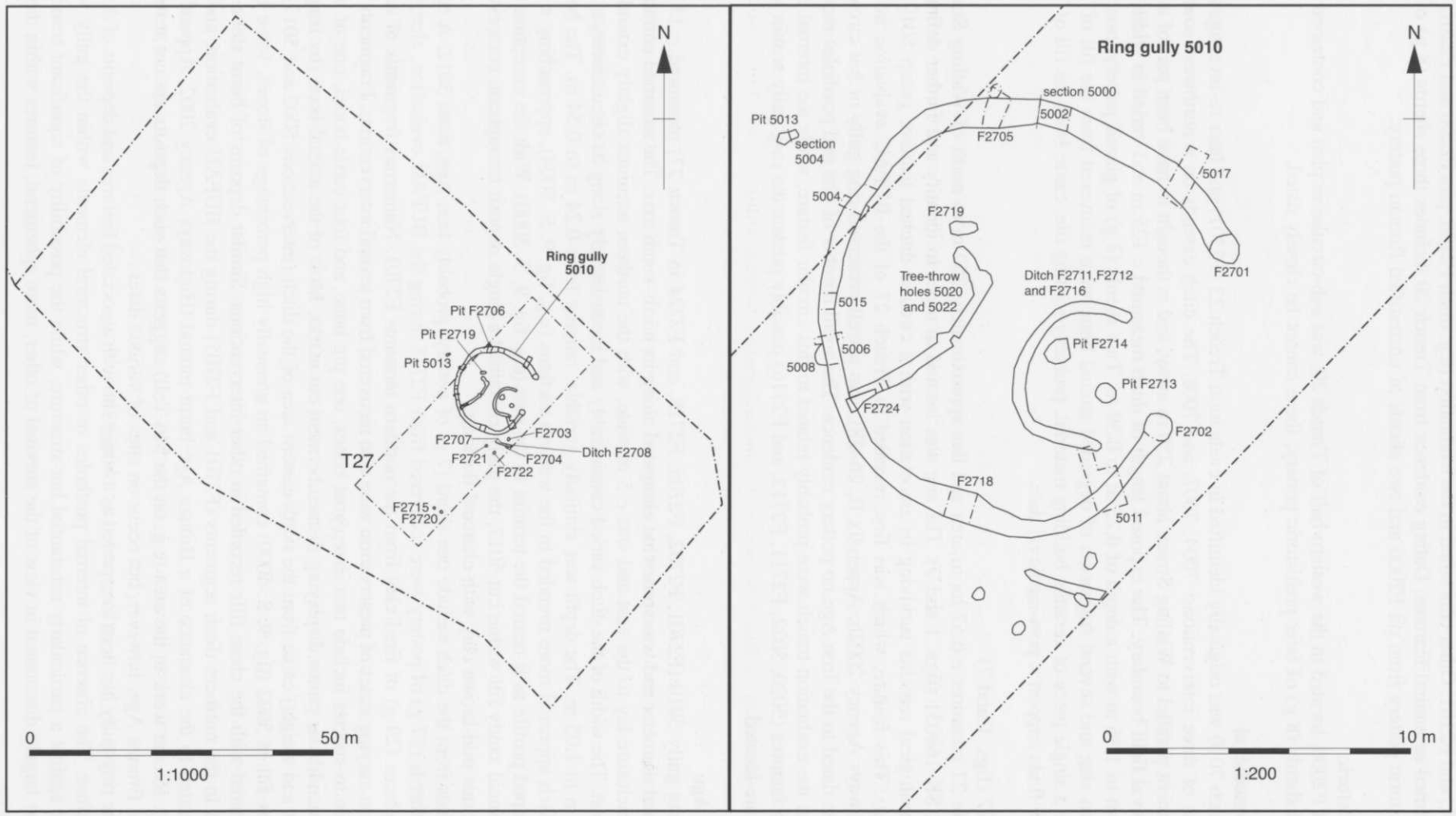
N
Ring gully
5010
Pit F2706
Pit F2719
Pit 5013
F2703
F2707
Ditch F2708
F2721
F2704
F2722
T27
F2715
F2720
0
50 m
1:1000
Ring gully 5010
N
section 5000
5002
Pit 5013
section
5004
F2705
5017
5004
F2719
F2701
Tree-throw
holes 5020
and 5022
Ditch F2711,F2712
and F2716
5015
5006
Pit F2714
5008
Pit F2713
F2724
F2702
F2718
5011
0
10 m
1:200

Fig. 7 Site 27

Pit 5008, which adjoined the outer western edge of the ring gully, is thought to have been a small pit or posthole (fig. 9, S. 5004). Its relationship with the fill of 5006 remains uncertain as the two deposits could not be distinguished during excavation and no finds were recovered. Northern ring gully segment F2705 was shown in the evaluation to be cut by feature F2706, a small oval-shaped pit containing some fire-cracked stone and charcoal (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 27).

Tree-throw hole 5020 (F2700 and F2723 in Trench 27) was cut by ring gully 5010 and is probably of tree-root origin. Along with quantities of charcoal and fire-cracked stones, two sherds (12 g) of Iron Age pottery were recovered during the BUFAU evaluation (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 31).

Tree-throw hole 5022 (F 2700 and F2723 in Trench 27) probably represents the terminal of tree-throw hole 5020, identified in the evaluation as part of a linear feature F2700. The fill contained fire-cracked stones and some charcoal; a few unidentifiable fragments of animal bone were retrieved during the BUFAU evaluation (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 33). Along with tree-throw hole 5020, this feature may belong to an episode of Iron Age tree-clearance anticipating the later construction of the ring gully.

Feature F2719 was an oval-shaped pit, located less than 1 m from the northern terminal of 5020 (F2700) that was excavated during the evaluation. Its single fill contained burnt stone, charcoal, and animal bone (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 26).

A horseshoe-shaped enclosure (F2711, F2712, and F2716 in Trench 27), excavated during the BUFAU evaluation, lay within ring gully 5010 with its open side to the east in approximate alignment with the entrance to the latter. The gully had a U-shaped profile and measured an average of 0.6 m in width and 0.2 m in depth (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 27). One sherd (10 g) of possibly Iron Age pottery, along with quantities of fire-cracked stone and charcoal, were recovered from one of the termini (F2716). The gully encircled two pits, F2713 and F2714, both of which contained deposits of burnt stone; pit F2713 also contained several fragments (4 g) of pottery, all from the same sherd and probably Iron Age in date (ibid., 31).

The BUFAU evaluation detected another section of ditch, F2798, aligned approximately north-west-southeast, lying to the south-east of the ring gully and terminating *c* 1 m from its southern edge. The ditch had been cut by two small postholes (F2707 and F2722), both of which contained high concentrations of charcoal. A small sub-oval pit (F2703) lay to the north of the pit and two shallow, sub-circular postholes (F2704 and F2721) lay to the south. Further to the south, and probably unrelated, were two circular postholes (F2715 and F2720) containing substantial quantities of fire-cracked stone (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 27). Pit 5013, located during excavation *c* 3 m to the north-west of ring gully 5010, was a shallow, sub-circular feature containing small quantities of fragmentary and unidentifiable bone.

Site 26 (figs. 1 and 8)

Site 26 covers an area of approximately 0.55 ha and is located *c* 100 m to the north of Watling Street at NGR SK 171030 (figs. 1 and 8). The area was stripped to the Mercian mudstone/clay natural horizon. A number of the features excavated during the evaluation were identified, marked, and mapped (OA 2003f).

The site incorporates Trench 26 of the BUFAU evaluation (Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix B, 24-25), an area that contained a pit of dubious prehistoric date (F2602). An abraded sherd of samian ware was recovered during topsoil stripping. A re-cut ditch (F2600 and F2601) was tentatively dated to the post-medieval period on the presence of coal in its upper fills. A second ditch (8004), also dated to the post-medieval period on pottery evidence, was revealed during the identified watching brief at Site 26/27.

Other identified features included a scatter of small pits (F2602-3, F2605-9 and F2613-14) and an animal burrow (F2615). A number of these pits may result from tree clearance activity, perhaps associated with the construction of Watling Street or with the agricultural use of the landscape. The more ephemeral examples are now better understood to be the result of non-anthropogenic processes, such as tree-root action; one particularly strong possibility is that the 'pits' are in fact the voids from stones pulled up by ploughing and later filled with subsoil.

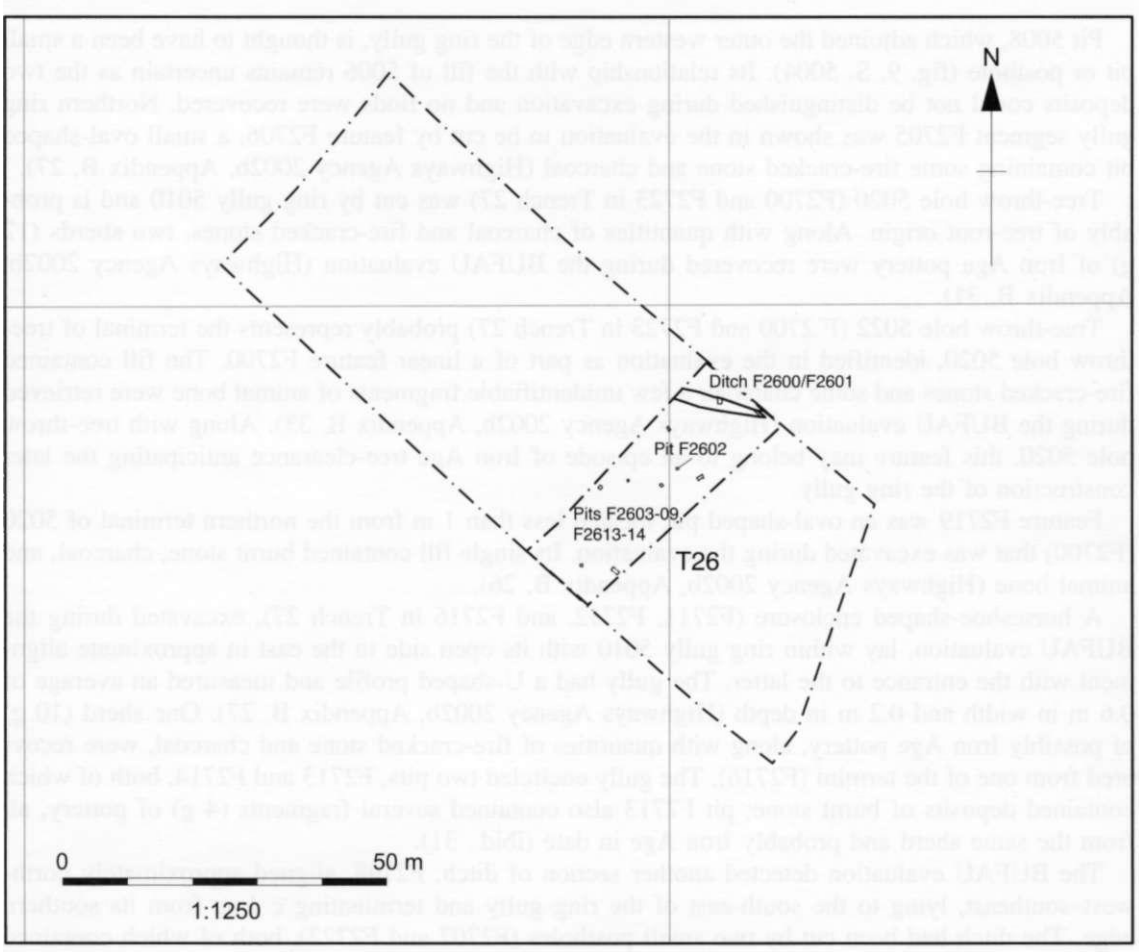

Fig. 8 Site 26

Prehistoric

Pit F2602

A single sherd (18 g) of coarse quartz and clay pellet-tempered pottery was recovered from the upper fill of pit F2602. This was dated to the Neolithic in the evaluation report (ibid., 31), but in view of the similarity of the fabric to those of probable later prehistoric date from elsewhere in the region the Neolithic date should be treated with caution. An Iron Age date is most likely. Further evidence of prehistoric activity in the area is indicated by a single struck flint - a blade - which was recovered during the topsoil stripping of the site.

THE FINDS

FLINT *by Kate Cramp*

A total of three struck flints was recovered during archaeological excavation along the route of the A5 road improvement scheme (Table 1); these came from Site 8, Site 26 and from one of the geotechnical test pits.

The flintwork is generally in poor condition with post-depositional edge damage showing on most pieces. The only datable piece is the thumbnail scraper, which was recovered from ploughsoil within test pit 5/154 (context 1541) during the geotechnical monitoring programme. This piece has been abruptly retouched on a secondary flake and can be dated with reasonable confidence to the Beaker period. The flake and blade are chronologically undiagnostic and, given their condition, have probably been redeposited.

Archaeological evaluation by BUFAU in 2002 was similarly unproductive in terms of flint. Two undiagnostic flakes were recovered from Field 10 and Field 15 during the fieldwalking programme

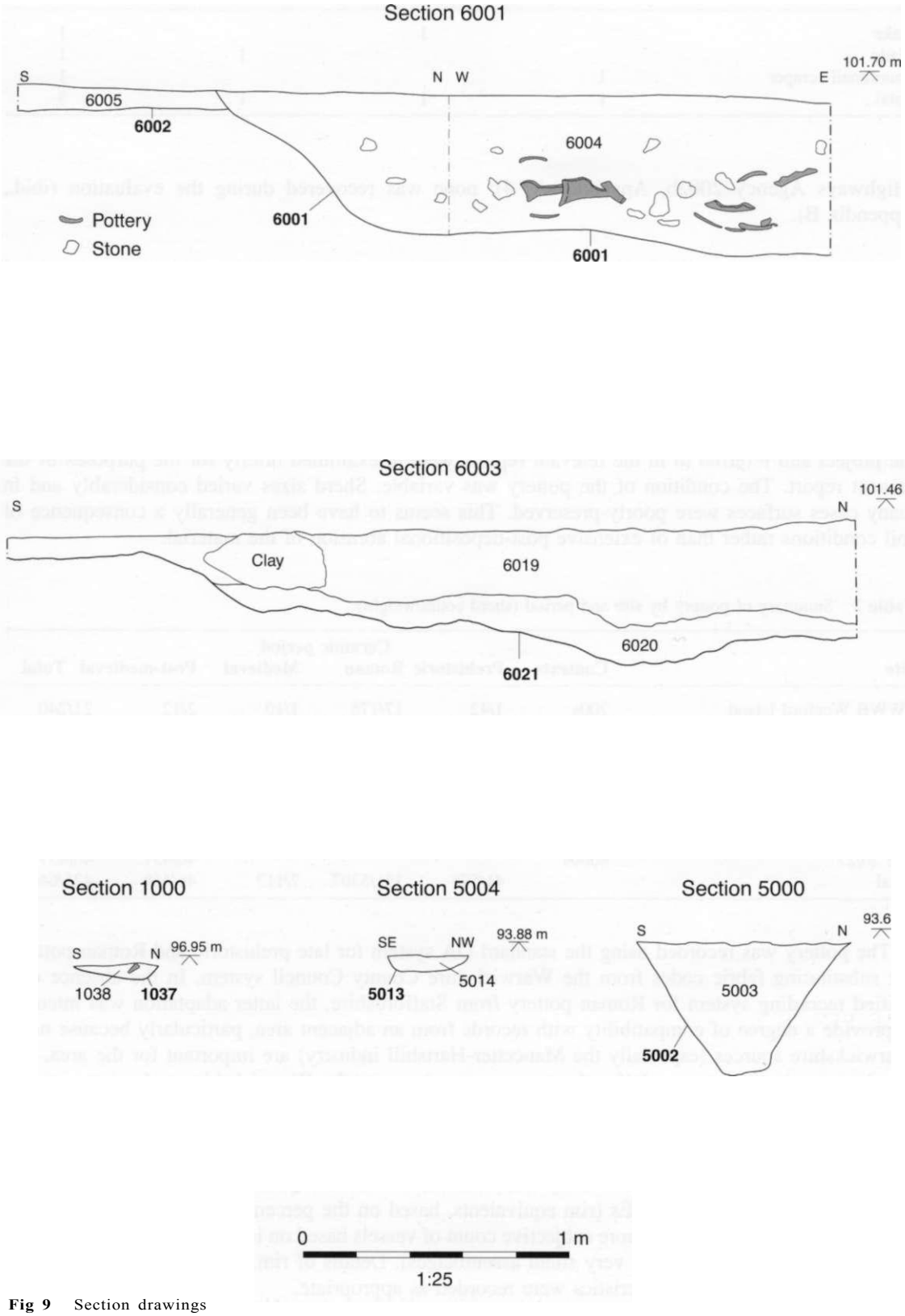

Fig 9 Section drawings

Table 1 Flint by type from the A5 Weeford to Fazeley road improvement scheme

Category	Test pit 5/154	Site 8 1001	Site 26 4000	Total
Flake		1		1
Blade			1	1
Thumbnail scraper	1			1
Total	1	1	1	3

(Highways Agency 2002b, Appendix A, 4); none was recovered during the evaluation (ibid., Appendix B).

POTTERY *by Paul Booth*

INTRODUCTION

The post-evaluation phases of the project produced a relatively small amount of pottery ranging in date probably from the Iron Age to the post-medieval period (for a summary of quantities of pottery by site and period see Table 2). Only the prehistoric and Roman material is treated in any detail here. Some 13 sherds (78 g) of prehistoric pottery recovered by BUFAU in the evaluation phase of the project and referred to in the relevant reports were re-examined briefly for the purposes of the present report. The condition of the pottery was variable. Sherd sizes varied considerably and in many cases surfaces were poorly-preserved. This seems to have been generally a consequence of soil conditions rather than of extensive post-depositional abrasion of the material.

Table 2 Summary of pottery by site and period (sherd count/weight)

Site	Contexts	Ceramic period				
		Prehistoric	Roman	Medieval	Post-medieval	Total
SWWB Weeford Island	200s	1/42	17/176	1/10	2/12	21/240
Site 2	6000s		314/5131	5/102		319/5233
Site 8	1000s	38/525			1/10	39/535
Site 15	2000s	1/4		1/1		2/5
Site 16/17/18	7000s				2/3	2/3
Site 26	4000s				1/4	1/4
Site 27	5000s	1/7				1/7
Site 26/27	8000s				40/437	40/437
Total		41/578	331/5307	7/113	46/466	425/6464

The pottery was recorded using the standard OA system for late prehistoric and Roman pottery, but substituting fabric codes from the Warwickshire County Council system. In the absence of a unified recording system for Roman pottery from Staffordshire, the latter adaptation was intended to provide a degree of compatibility with records from an adjacent area, particularly because north Warwickshire sources (especially the Mancetter-Hartshill industry) are important for the area, and also because it was proposed (for the same reasons) to use the Warwickshire codes in recording pottery from the closely adjacent M6 Toll sites (Booth *et al.* 2008).

There were only two significant assemblages: a very small group of Iron Age pottery from Site 8 and a larger Roman group from Site 2. General characteristics of all the material are treated first, on a period by period basis, followed by brief site-based accounts. Quantification of the pottery was by sherd count, weight, and REs (rim equivalents, based on the percentage of rim circumferences surviving), with an additional more subjective count of vessels based on individual rim sherds (sometimes more useful than REs in very small assemblages). Details of rim, base, handle, spout, decorative types, and other characteristics were recorded as appropriate.

Prehistoric

Fabrics

Prehistoric hand-made fabrics were defined in terms (usually) of their two most common inclusion types (identified by alphabetic codes) and a numeric indicator of fineness, on a scale from 1 (very fine) to 5 (very coarse). The definition of fabrics using this system does not necessarily serve to identify production sources, since these are unknown for prehistoric material within the region. Nor does it automatically follow that identically coded sherds were from the same (unknown) source, merely that their makers exploited very similar clay and tempering resources, indicating a uniformity of potting tradition. Nevertheless the restricted nature of the prehistoric material here strongly suggests that similar fabrics did derive from the same source, and that this was probably quite local. The inclusion types present, and their identifying letters, are as follows:

A quartz sand
M mica
N none present
P clay pellets
Q large angular quartz
v vegetable/organic (sometimes voids)
z indeterminate voids

In effect probably only three distinct fabrics were present across the whole project area. Two of these, AN3 and PA3 (coded P1l and P31 in the Warwickshire system) are paralleled at Coleshill (Booth forthcoming). Single sherds of these occurred at the Weeford Island Compound and at Site 27 respectively. A further 6 sherds (46 g) from the BUFAU evaluation of Site 27 were all in a fabric very similar to PA3 and two further fragments (2 g) came from the evaluation Trench 20. All the remaining prehistoric pottery, mostly from Site 8, may be considered to represent variants on a single theme. This fabric (typically recorded as QPA5) was characterised by large, angular quartz inclusions up to 5 mm, combined with clay pellets, quartz sand, large flakes of gold mica, and occasional organic inclusions and/or voids. The subsidiary inclusions occur in almost any combination, and only some are evident in most sherds. Despite this variation, however, there is enough consistency in the principal characteristics to suggest that only one fabric is represented here. This fabric is not paralleled in the Warwickshire series. Further examples of this fabric were recovered from the BUFAU evaluations of Trench 20 (3 sherds, 8 g) and Trench 26 (1 sherd, 18 g). A Neolithic date was initially assigned to this sherd on the basis of its very coarse fabric and unusual thickness (21 mm), but in view of the other evidence from the area (see Site 8 below) an Iron Age date is considered likely.

None of the prehistoric pottery showed any evidence of surface treatment such as burnishing or other decoration. Three small rim sherds and four base sherds were present amongst the Site 8 material. None of these was particularly diagnostic, but the rims are consistent with simple, roughly barrel or bucket shaped jar forms. These general characteristics, and the associations seen in local sites (particularly on the M6 Toll) with very closely comparable material, indicate an Iron Age date. On the basis of the Coleshill parallels a middle to late Iron Age date is certain for fabrics AN3 and PA3.

Roman

Fabrics

The fabrics are placed in a number of major ware groups, defined on the basis of significant common characteristics. The ware groups can be combined to constitute two main classes of material, fine and specialist wares on the one hand, and on the other the rest of the coarse wares (cf. Booth 1991). The fine and specialist ware groups present here (identified by the initial letter of the fabric code) are:

S samian ware
F fine wares - colour-coated, lead glazed, mica coated etc.
A amphorae
M mortaria

The remaining coarse ware groups are:

O 'Romanised' oxidised coarse wares
R 'Romanised' reduced coarse wares
B black-burnished ware
C calcareous (particularly shell) tempered wares

These classes contain hierarchically arranged subgroups, usually defined on the basis of common inclusion type, and individual fabrics/wares are then indicated at a third level of precision, both levels of subdivision being expressed by numeric codes. Thus R20 is a general code for sandy reduced coarse wares, while R21, for example, is a specific sandy reduced fabric typical of a kiln at Tiddington (not represented in this assemblage). In the present assemblage some fabric identification was at the intermediate level of precision.

Initial sorting of fabrics was done by eye, with subsequent use of a binocular microscope at x20 magnification to assist identification or define the inclusion types of individual sherds. Only summary fabric descriptions are given here (in Table 3), in the ware group sequence set out above, with cross-reference to the National Roman pottery fabric reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998) where appropriate. More complete descriptions are contained within the pottery archive.

The date ranges given in Table 3 represent the best estimate of the likely period of use of fabrics in this region, drawing on unpublished Warwickshire data as well as other information. These ranges, however, do not necessarily indicate the chronology of the present sites.

Table 3 Summary of Roman pottery fabric descriptions

Code	Summary description	National fabric ref coll. code	Approximate date range
S10	South Gaulish samian ware	incl LGF SA	45–100
S20	Central Gaulish samian ware	incl LEZ SA 2	100–200
F34	?Mancetter-Hartshill oxidised colour-coated ware		?2C
A11	South Spanish Dressel 20 amphorae	BAT AM 1 & BAT AM 2	1C-3C
M22	Mancetter-Hartshill white mortarium	MAH WH	early 2C-late 4C
O11	Mancetter-Hartshill fine sandy oxidised fabric		?mid 1C-3C
O14	?Mancetter-Hartshill coarse sandy oxidised fabric		?late 1C-3C
O60	Oxidised coarse tempered fabrics		?2C
O61	Red buff coarse ?grog-tempered		?2C
R11	Mancetter-Hartshill fine sandy reduced fabric		mid 1–4C
R15	?Mancetter-Hartshill sandy reduced fabric		1–2C
R18	Mancetter-Hartshill black-surfaced fine sandy fabric		?late 1–3C
R19	?Mancetter-Hartshill black-surfaced coarse sandy fabric		?late 1–3C
R20	Moderately sandy reduced fabrics		late 1–4C
R23	Derbyshire type ware	cf DER CO	2–4C
R44	Fine reduced fabric with iron and ?limestone inclusions		2–4C
R64	Moderately sandy reduced fabric with sparse organic inclusions		late 1–3C
B11	Black-burnished ware (BB1)	incl CLI BB2 & COO BB2	120–370
C41	Red-brown vesicular (?shell-tempered) fabric		1–2C

The attribution of some of the fabrics should be treated with caution. While the table indicates known sources of particular fabrics, these were not necessarily exclusive. In addition to Mancetter-Hartshill, a major industry which lies roughly 20 km distant to the east, a number of individual pottery kilns are known in the area, of which the two closest, those at Sherifoot Lane (Sutton Coldfield) and at M6 Toll Site 15 (Shenstone) almost certainly supplied pottery to sites in the Weeford-Fazeley area. None of these sites is published, although the Mancetter-Hartshill material has been examined in some detail. It is likely that many of the sherds assigned here to the uncertain R20 category are from the Shenstone kiln (OWA 2003, 132-3), only 3 km distant, while the Sherifoot Lane kiln (Booth 1991, 2), some 6 km south of Weeford, produced fabrics

comparable to Ol 1, Rl 1 and R18 (cf. Booth forthcoming) and may therefore have been the source of some of the sherds in these fabrics from the present project, although this cannot be demonstrated at present.

The significance of the Mancetter-Hartshill industry is clear, however, in terms of the supply of specialist products like mortaria (fabric M22), although sherds of Mancetter-Hartshill white ware flagons, curiously, are totally absent. A single sherd was tentatively identified as fabric F34, from a relatively short-lived phase of colour-coated ware production at Mancetter-Hartshill in the 2nd century. This industry may also have been the source of the Derbyshire type ware from the present project. A Derbyshire ware 'clone', often fired to a yellowish or off-white colour, was probably produced at Mancetter-Hartshill and appears very similar to the Weeford sherds. The area lies close to the southern limit of the distribution of true Derbyshire ware, although occasional examples are known in Warwickshire, as at Coleshill, some 15 km south of Weeford (Booth forthcoming).

Overall, the sources of pottery supplied to the area can be characterised as certainly or probably local, with the exception of the tiny quantities of imported samian ware and amphora, and the much more important exception of Dorset black-burnished ware, which formed a major component of the Weeford assemblages (see below).

Vessel types

Roman vessel types were recorded using a simple system of alphabetic codes defining major vessel classes (C jars; G tankards; H bowls; I uncertain bowls/dishes; J dishes; K mortaria) with further subdivision into typological subgroups and more precise definition of forms using detailed numeric rim description codes where necessary. Types are discussed further below in the context of Site 2.

THE SITE ASSEMBLAGES

Site 2

Fabrics

This was the only significant Roman pottery assemblage from the project, although it was small in absolute terms (see general discussion below). In addition to the Roman sherds there were five sherds (102 g, one a green glazed incised jug handle) in medieval sandy white wares, probably of south Staffordshire origin and datable to the 13th to 14th centuries. The Roman assemblage had a relatively high mean sherd weight of 16.3 g. The range of fabrics was unremarkable (Table 4). Fine

Table 4 Site 2: pottery fabric quantification

Fabric	Sherd count	% Sherds	Weight (g)	% Weight	Rim count	% Rims	RE	% RE
S10	1	0.3	5	0.1				
S20	2	0.6	6	0.1	1	3.0	0.02	0.4
F34	1	0.3	6	0.1				
A11	1	0.3	21	0.4				
M22	7	2.2	748	14.6	2	6.1	0.18	3.4
Oi1	21	6.7	357	7.0	5	15.2	0.66	12.4
014	1	0.3	6	0.1				
O60	3	1.0	23	0.4				
R11	20	6.4	250	4.9	2	6.1	0.44	8.3
R15	4	1.3	52	1.0	1	3.0	0.13	2.4
R18	28	8.9	83	1.6	2	6.1	1.05	19.7
R19	6	1.9	81	1.6				
R20	58	18.5	960	18.7	5	15.2	0.66	12.4
R23	32	10.2	350	6.8	5			
R44	6	1.9	869	16.9		15.2	0.80	15.0
R64	25	8.0	497	9.7				
B11	97	30.9	793	15.5	10			
C41	1	0.3	24	0.5		30.3	1.38	25.9
TOTAL	314		5131		33		5.32	

and specialist wares comprised only 3.8% of the total sherds from the site, and two thirds of these were derived from the Mancetter-Hartshill industry. The presence of a few substantial mortarium sherds (fabric M22) meant that these comprised 14.6% of the assemblage weight, an inflated figure.

The importance of Mancetter-Hartshill for the supply of coarse wares is less certain (see above). A relatively high representation of the probable Mancetter-Hartshill product R23 was notable, and sherds in the probably very local fabric R20 were also quite common. In terms of sherd count, however, black-burnished ware (B11) was the most significant component of the assemblage (30.9%), although its representation by weight was less than half this figure, reflecting the tendency of cooking pots, in particular, to fragment very readily. Nevertheless, despite the fact that fabrics R20 and R44 were both more significant than B11 in terms of weight as a consequence of this characteristic, B11 was also the most important fabric in terms of rim count and RE measurements. Overall, therefore, its significance is clear.

Vessel types

The correlation of fabric with vessel types is summarised in Table 5, based on data for RE measurements. These figures, rather than those based on rim count, give the best impression of the character of the assemblage. The RE data are skewed only in respect of the narrow mouthed jar (type CC) in fabric R18, of which an entire rim was present, tending to overemphasise slightly the importance of jars (which totalled 60.6% of vessels by rim count). An overall high representation of jars would be expected, however, although the comparable figure for the much larger assemblage at Coleshill is only 52.9% (but based on rim count rather than REs). The high levels of type CK ('cooking pot type') jars in the Site 2 assemblage reflect the popularity of specialist vessels of this type in fabrics B11 and R23.

Table 5 Site 2 vessel types by fabric, quantification by REs

						Fabric					
Type	**S20**	**M22**	**O11**	**R11**	**R15**	**R18**	**R20**	**R23**	**B11**	**Total**	**%**
C Jars											
CC						1.00				1.00	18.8
CK								0.80	1.29	2.09	39.3
CM			0.08	0.21			0.27			0.56	10.5
C Total			0.08	0.44		1.00	0.44	0.80	1.29	4.05	76.1
G Tankards											
GA Total			0.22							0.22	4.1
H Bowls											
H Total	0.02		0.08							0.10	1.9
I Bowls/Dishes											
IA			0.04						0.09	0.13	2.4
I Total			0.04			0.05	0.07		0.09	0.25	4.7
J Dishes											
JA			0.24		0.13					0.37	7.0
JB							0.15			0.15	2.8
J Total			0.24		0.13		0.15			0.52	9.8
K Mortaria											
KA Total		0.18								0.18	3.4
Total	0.02	0.18	0.66	0.44	0.13	1.05	0.66	0.80	1.38	5.32	
%	0.4	3.4	12.4	8.3	2.4	19.7	12.4	15.0	25.9		

Note: some vessel class totals include data for vessels not assigned to subtypes and may therefore exceed the sum of the subtypes listed above the totals

Apart from a single tankard and two mortaria the remaining vessels were all open bowls and dishes, including a very small samian ware upright rim fragment from a form such as Drag 30, 37, or 38. Even in a small assemblage the absence of flagons, beakers, cups, and lids is notable and suggests an assemblage of quite limited range. The tankard is most likely a product of the Mancetter-Hartshill industry, where the form is well known. Alternatively it may have come from the Perry Barr kiln (Hughes 1959, e.g. fig. 3, nos 1 and 2) where tankards were also produced. This site has been considered an outlier of the potteries of the Severn Valley industry, on the basis of the presence of distinctive vessel forms such as the tankard, but the full repertoire of its products can be matched in the Mancetter-Hartshill industry and a link with central rather than west

midlands pottery traditions seems more likely (Booth 1986, 31-2). No Severn Valley ware was identified at Site 2, although it does occur in the vicinity of Wall, the site of the Roman town of *Letocetum* some 5 km from the study area.

There was limited evidence for vessel use in the form of soot deposits on a number of sherds, particularly in fabrics R23 and B11, consistent with their use for vessels of cooking pot form, but sooting was also present on some bowl and dish forms (eg nos 8 and 9). It is not clear if this relates to the use of these vessels or derives from the matrix in which they were eventually buried. The only other example of post-manufacture activity was in fabric R64, a jar shoulder sherd of which had a roughly incised graffito, reading VIII (no. 12). The context suggests a mid to late 2nd century date for this piece.

Context and chronology

The pottery derived from a limited number of contexts, mostly ditch fills and a large shallow pit (feature 6021), perhaps a tree-throw hole. This feature produced 109 sherds (809 g) of pottery - i.e. one third of the total sherds from the site - dated to the mid or late 2nd century. The bulk of the pottery came from component cuts (6000, 6001, 6015, and 6027) of ditch 6006, together comprising 63.7% of all sherds and 84% by weight of the total site assemblage, the majority of this material deriving from a single ditch fill, 6004. The pottery from these fills was very consistent in character, and joining sherds of one vessel (no. 7 below) occurred in distinct fills in two separate cuts. The plentiful black-bumished ware, consisting of cooking pot jars with acute angle lattice and in some cases a wavy burnished line under the rim, and smaller quantities of flat flanged bowls or dishes, provided a reasonable indication of date. This was supported by the other material as far as could be judged. For example the mortarium (no. 11) is paralleled at Mancetter (e.g. Hemsley *et al.* 1959, fig. 7, nos 43 and 44) in groups associated with stamped mortaria of Maurus and Sennius and dated after AD 160. These ditch fills, like the fills of feature 6021, can be assigned to the mid or late 2nd century AD.

None of the other features from the site produced groups large enough for it to be possible to determine if they are of different date from the well-dated later 2nd century features. Fill 6034 of ditch 6033 produced a single sherd of fabric C41. This is quite common in north Warwickshire at sites such as Coleshill and is dated to the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. The absence of this fabric in the later 2nd century groups might just indicate that feature 6033 represents activity of a slightly earlier phase than the bulk of the pottery, but this can be no more than a very tentative suggestion.

Although the date range of many of the fabrics present extends well into the later part of the Roman period, there is nothing in the larger and better dated groups to suggest activity beyond the end of the 2nd century or the early 3rd century at the latest. A single feature (ditch 6047) produced a small group (5 sherds, 102 g) of medieval pottery of 13th- or 14th-century date.

Illustrated vessels (fig. 10)

Ditch 6006

1. Fabric R18. Type CC narrow mouthed jar with burnished shoulder, neck and upper rim. 6004.

2. Fabric B11. Type CK 'cooking pot' jar with burnish on shoulder and rim and acute angle burnished lattice. Sooted on exterior and on top of rim. 6004.

3. Fabric B11. Type CK 'cooking pot' jar with burnish on shoulder and rim and zigzag burnished line under rim. Some sooting on shoulder. 6004.

4. Fabric R23. Type CK 'cooking pot' jar with hollowed rim for lid-seating. Sooted on exterior and on top of rim. 6004.

5. Fabric Rl 1. Type CM wide mouthed jar with slight cordon at base of neck. Horizontal burnished lines on body, neck and rim. 6004

6. Fabric Oi1. Type CM, similar form with vestigial cordon. Horizontal burnishing on body, neck and rim. 6004

7. Fabric Oi1. Type GA tankard with slightly thickened, everted rim and two-ribbed handle. Burnished overall except in handle and rim. 6004 and 6028.

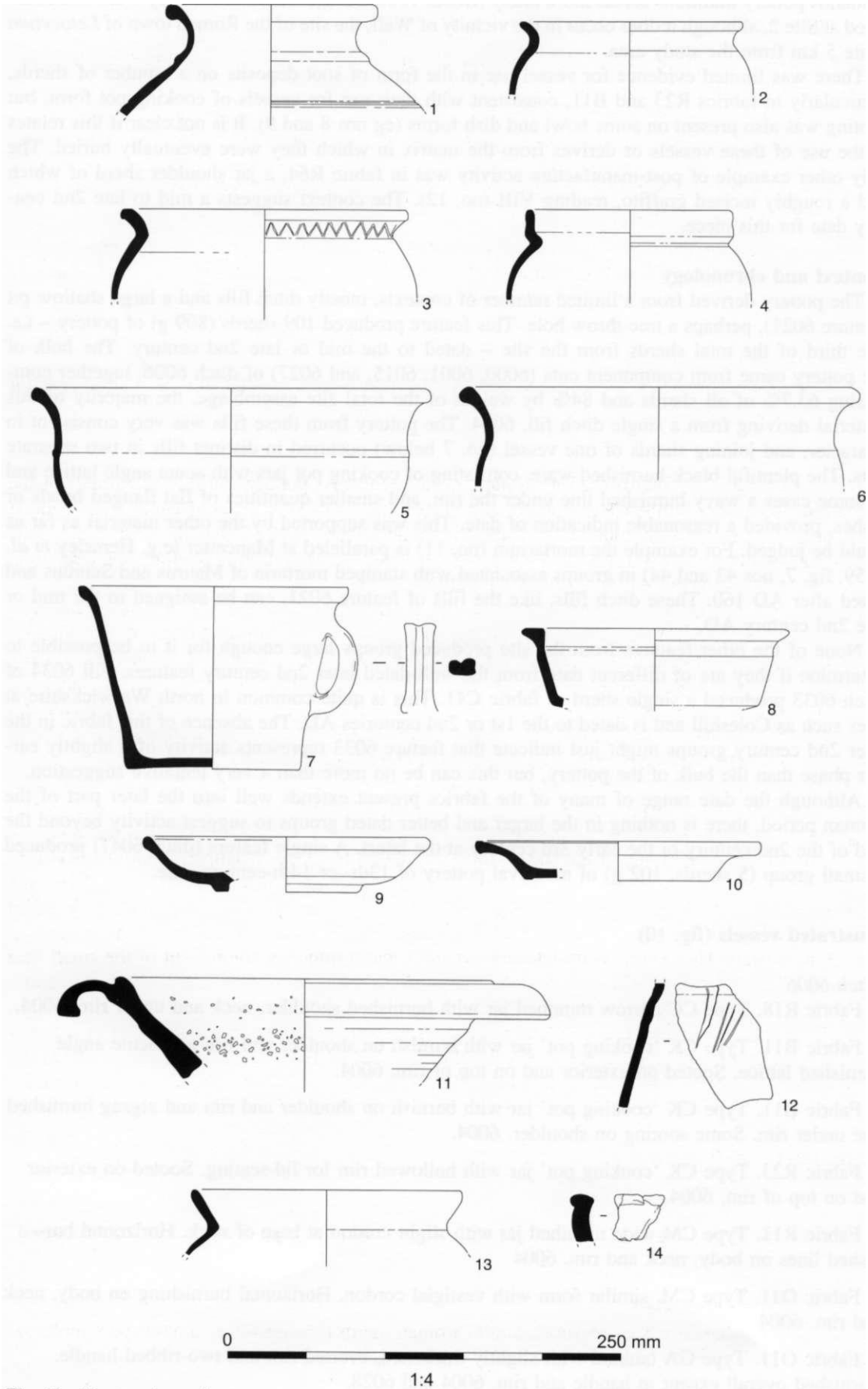

Fig. 10 Illustrated vessels

8. Fabric R15. Type JA straight sided dish with flat topped rim. Horizontal burnished lines ion lower and upper body and interior. External sooting. 6004.

9. Fabric Oi1. Type JA straight sided dish with slightly expanded rim and footring base, loosely based on samian form Drag 18. Sooting on top of rim. 6004.

10. Fabric R20. Type JB curving sided dish with grooves on upper surface of rim and beneath flat base. Burnished overall on interior. 6004.

11. Fabric M22. Type KA mortarium with moderate bead and sharply hooked flange. Black angular trituration grits. 6004.

12. Fabric R64. Shoulder of jar with patchy burnishing and roughly drawn horizontal burnished line perhaps beneath a cordon. Post-firing graffito of long oblique strokes, ?reading VIII, probably a unit of measurement of the contents of the vessel. 6028.

Possible tree-throw hole 6021

13. 4. Fabric R23. Type CK 'cooking pot' jar with straight angled everted rim. Sooted on exterior and on top of rim. 6020.

***Site** 8*

The site produced 38 sherds (525 g) of hand made prehistoric pottery, entirely in variants of the quartz-tempered fabric QPA5 (see above). Six sherds (59 g) of this material came from context 1001, one sherd (3 g) from context 1036 and the remainder from 1038, the fill of pit 1037. This deposit also contained an iron nail and a fragment of coal, but despite this obvious contamination there is no question about the integrity of the pottery.

Three small rim sherds and four base sherds were present in the assemblage. Two of the rims were very simple, one upright and another slightly insloping. The third (no. 14 below) was slightly everted and expanded, particularly on the interior side of the top of the rim. The rims are broadly consistent with the simple, roughly barrel or bucket shaped jar forms characteristic of the area (cf. e.g. Banks and Morris 1979, 45). Two joining base sherds had dense crushed quartz fragments (up to *c 2* mm) on the underside, a characteristic sometimes noted on later prehistoric pottery in south-eastern England, particularly in late Bronze Age and early Iron Age contexts.

The assemblage is too small for precise dating to be possible. The coarse tempering and relatively thick walls of some of the sherds might be chronological indicators (and in southern England might be indicative of a middle Bronze Age date for the material, see also above), but this does not necessarily follow here. Some of the sherds from M6 Toll Site 13, for example, in an identical fabric, are thinner walled and burnished, with an appearance consistent with that of middle Iron Age material from Coleshill and other sites in Warwickshire. The same fabric is also present on M6 Toll Sites 14 and 15 (all three sites are in the Wall/Shenstone area) as well as slightly further south at Site 19, at Wishaw Hall Farm, Warwickshire, where it was a minority component of the small Iron Age assemblage. The latter site may have lain towards the limit of distribution of this fabric and a spatial factor may thus explain its absence from the rather larger Iron Age assemblage at Coleshill - i.e. that this site was supplied with pottery from more nearly local sources - but it is also possible that a chronological factor is at work, with the Coleshill material perhaps to be assigned to the later part of the middle Iron Age, while fabric QPA5 (etc.) may be mainly of early and earlier middle Iron Age date. Independent dating evidence, however, would be needed to test this hypothesis.

Illustrated vessel (fig. 10)

Pit 1037

14. Fabric QAP4. Slightly expanded outsloping rim, probably from jar form. Irregular/unoxidised firing. 1038, SF1016.

Weeford Island Compound

This site produced only one prehistoric and 17 Roman sherds (one medieval and two post-medieval sherds are not considered here), listed by fabric in Table 6.

Table 6 Weeford Island Compound: prehistoric and Roman pottery

Fabric	No. sherds	Weight (g)
P11	1	42
S10	1	10
O14	1	1
O61	3	104
R20	5	21
R64	1	15
B11	6	25
TOTAL	18	218

The fabric of the single prehistoric sherd (from topsoil) is comparable to one of the commonest fabrics recorded at Coleshill. Although there are no diagnostic features a middle Iron Age date is likely. This piece came from fill 201 of a tree-throw hole 200, along with Roman sherds. The Roman pottery occurs in the same fabrics as at Site 2, *c* 400 m to the north-east, with the exception of fabric 061, a coarse-tempered oxidised fabric of uncertain origin not present at Site 2. A single sherd of South Gaulish samian was the only imported piece. There were no rim sherds in the present assemblage, but body and two base sherds indicated that both 'cooking pot type' jars and bowls/dishes were present amongst the black-burnished ware. The lack of diagnostic pieces makes close dating of this assemblage very difficult, but it may be confined entirely to the later 1st to 2nd centuries.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The limited quantities of Iron Age pottery recovered at Site 8 and elsewhere are from ceramic traditions increasingly recognised in the region but still not well-dated or understood. General parallels can be drawn with sites in north Warwickshire, in the Wall/Shenstone area and also in the Tame Valley, particularly at Fisherwick (Banks and Morris 1979). Repeated reference has been made to Coleshill because this is one of the largest such assemblages known in the region. It is apparent from work on the M6 Toll, however, that there are significant differences between the numbers of artefacts recovered from sites (such as Coleshill) closer to the Avon valley and those a little further north. All the latter sites, including the M6 Toll sites in the Wall/Shenstone area already referred to, are characterised by very low levels of artefact recovery. This is precisely what is seen on the A5 sites, and is not just explained by the fact that these sites did not sample key areas of later prehistoric settlement. The M6 Toll sites demonstrate that substantial settlements display the same characteristics.

Moreover, this pattern continues to prevail in the Roman period. The picture hinted at by the A5 material is again borne out by the larger sample from the M6 Toll sites in the area. Those sites in the immediate vicinity of the Roman town at Wall *(Letocetum)* tended to produce rather larger quantities of pottery, presumably because they had very ready access to local markets, but significant settlements, such as that at Langley Mill Farm (M6 Toll Site 29), *c* 8 km south of Weeford and covering some 3 ha, produced only 552 sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery (OWA 2003). In these terms the relative quantitative 'wealth' of the Site 2 assemblage may be explained by its proximity to Watling Street. This factor may also explain characteristics of the assemblage such as the strikingly high proportion of black-burnished ware, for which a restricted and often road-based distribution network is likely (Allen and Fulford 1996). The black-burnished ware figure (31% of sherds, 15% weight) for Site 2 contrasts for example with those for Rocester (12.8% of sherds, 7.7% of weight; Bevan 2000, 16) and for Coleshill, where black-bumished ware totalled 9.6% of sherds. One characteristic of the Coleshill assemblage, however, was an emphasis on late 2nd or early 3rd century forms in the black-burnished ware repertoire. If this was a particular peak period in black-burnished ware supply to the region, for whatever reason, it is possible that the importance of the ware at Site 2 was exaggerated as a consequence of the apparent coincidence of occupation there with the peak.

With the exception of black-bumished ware, pottery supply was drawn almost entirely from sources within a 20 km radius of the area, the most distant of these, the major Mancetter-Hartshill industry, being readily accessible along Watling Street. The full significance of the more local kilns remains to be established, but if the sherds assigned to fabric R20 were all from the Shenstone kiln, as seems likely, this provided almost a fifth of the Site 2 assemblage.

Imported pottery was very rare at Site 2 and elsewhere, making only a minimal contribution to the fine and specialist ware component of the assemblage. The latter figure, at 3.8% of Site 2 sherds, is very much at the bottom end of the range seen in a sample of Warwickshire sites studied previously (Booth 1991). Superficially the comparisons are with low-status rural settlements in the Avon valley, such as Wasperton. The rather different location of the present sites means that this comparison should not perhaps be pressed too far in the absence of data from closer at hand, but the interpretation of site character suggested by this approach is at least consistent with other indications of lack of diversity in the assemblage (see above) in suggesting that the Site 2 assemblage derived from a settlement of quite low status.

ANIMAL BONE *by Emma-Jayne Evans*

A total of 126 fragments of bone (336 g) were recovered from the site. The fresh breaks were refitted, reducing the total fragment count to twenty eight, fifteen of which could be identified to species (Table 7). These identifiable fragments all came from the Iron Age ring gully 5010 on Site 27 and Roman ditch 6006 on Site 2.

The majority of the cattle remains (eight pieces) comprise fragmented molars, along with a mandibular ramus with dismemberment cut marks, a humerus, 1st phalanx, and a metatarsal. The sheep/goat remains comprise a molar and a mandible which has been aged at 10-20 months, and the single identifiable pig bone is a mandible aged as adult (Halstead 1985; Grant 1982). While the cattle metatarsal has carnivore gnawing on the proximal articulation, no pathologies, evidence of burning, or articulations were noted. No further information is available from this small sample of animal bones.

Table 7 Total number of bones identifiable to species

Cut	Deposit	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Unidentified	Total
5002	5003	4	1		6	11
5011	5012		1			1
5013	5014				1	1
5017	5018				6	6
5017	5019			1		1
6001	6004	3				3
6015	6016	3				3
6027	6028	2				2
TOTAL		12	2	1	13	28

DISCUSSION

Prior to the M6 Toll works (OWA 2003; Booth *et al.* 2008) and the fieldwork undertaken directly in relation to the A5 Weeford to Fazeley improvement, archaeological knowledge of the immediate area was confined almost entirely to a few stray finds and documentary and aerial photographic evidence. This may be due, in large part, to one particular archaeological characteristic of the region: that is, a generally low-level incidence of artefactual material for most periods, including the normally finds-rich Roman period.

The dearth of artefactual evidence from the A5 excavations is consistent with this more widely-observed picture and is suggestive of a long-established regional tradition marked by an impoverished material culture. With this in mind, the assemblages from the A5 represent an important addition to the archaeological resource of the area and, while their ability to date and characterise individual sites may be inhibited, their contribution to the characterisation of a more general regional trend is of particular interpretative value.

Earlier prehistoric

There is little archaeological trace of earlier prehistoric settlement along the route of the road scheme. In particular, any Mesolithic flint scatters that may have been identified in fieldwalking or excavation were not encountered, while a single sherd (18 g) of pottery from a pit in evaluation Trench 26 (Site 26), originally considered to be Neolithic in date (Highways Agency 2002b, 31), has since been re-dated as Iron Age (see above, section 4.2.5).

Bronze Age

This near total absence of evidence continues into the Bronze Age period. Well-defined cropmark features in aerial photographs are scarce and potentially misleading. A feature at Shenstone to the west of the A5, for example, identified on the basis of aerial photographs as a ring ditch, proved on excavation to be an Iron Age settlement enclosure (M6 Toll Site 16, OWA 2003, 17). Similar features to the north of the A5 may also be prone to misinterpretation (Highways Agency, Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2B).

Evidence from the A5 itself is limited to a single thumbnail scraper from one of the geotechnical testpits (5/154). A sherd (4 g) of pottery from a ditch in evaluation Trench 12 (Site 15) is now thought more likely to date to the Iron Age than earlier. Three additional sherds (8 g) of pottery from Trench 20 (Site 16/17/18), broadly attributed to the later prehistoric, are not closely datable but again seem more likely to belong to the Iron Age given the similarity of their fabric to that of sherds from pit 1037 in Site 8.

The deposits of burnt flint and stone on Site 27, perhaps the scattered remnants of a burnt mound, may also belong to the Bronze Age. Burnt mound features are widely known in the region (e.g. Barfield and Hodder 1989) and, while their function is uncertain, probably relate to nearby settlement. No other concentrations of burnt stone were identified on the route, however, and the A5 does not pass through the type of streamside location usually favoured for these deposits. Furthermore, it has been shown that such features are not confined to the Bronze Age, with similar deposits reported from a range of contexts in sites of various date in the region (e.g. the M6 Toll). The A5 example may, therefore, be more convincingly associated with the Iron Age activity on Site 27.

Iron Age

The evidence from the route indicates an expansion of settlement and related activity in the Iron Age. Settlement was usually in small units, occupying both enclosed and (less commonly) open sites. The pattern of Iron Age settlement locally is best understood from work in the Tame Valley at Fisherwick, only 5 km north of the eastern end of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley route (OA 2004a, 5; Smith 1979). The region also contains a thin scatter of hillforts.

Evidence from aerial photography is slight, but includes a small rectilinear feature to the north of the route (part of AP 06) and a further possible example in site AP 07 (Highways Agency, Volume 2, Part 2, Appendix 2B). Both of these enclosures incorporate pit alignments, which have long been recognised as a distinctive feature of the archaeology of the area east of Wall (e.g. Whitehouse 1964; Gould 1972). There remains little precision in their dating in the region (cf. Hingley 1996, 12), although a recently-excavated example from Wishaw Hall Farm, some 8 km to the south, is dated to the middle Iron Age but its alignment was perpetuated in the late Iron Age and Roman period by ditches (OWA 2003, 20). While it seems unlikely that the construction of these features persisted beyond the Iron Age, the continuity of landscape patterning is clear.

The most coherent and confidently dated Iron Age features were identified at Site 27, at the eastem end of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley route. The circular ditched feature (group 5010), first revealed in Trench 27 of the BUFAU evaluation, probably relates to domestic settlement and is associated with a small number of pits and postholes. The principal penannular ditch has an approximately east-facing opening, consistent with a common orientation for roundhouses, and could have enclosed and provided drainage for a structure at least 10 m in diameter. In character and dimensions it is closely comparable to gullies excavated within an enclosed Iron Age settlement at Langley Mill, Sutton Coldfield (OWA 2003, 24). The absence of structural features has been noted above, but any building within the gully could have been of mass wall construction that left no surface traces. Finds include several sherds of pottery and two pieces of fired clay that may derive from a wattle-and-daub superstructure. A single spelt grain from the evaluation provides the only economic species indicator from the period, while the fragments of animal bone from the penannular ditch, which include cattle, sheep/goat, and pig, may represent the remains of a fairly typical Iron Age diet.

Further west along the route, the evidence is more disparate and consists of linear ditches and discrete pits and postholes with little apparent patterning. It is likely that these scattered features are at some distance from the main areas of settlement. Some, such as Ditch 6026 on Site 2, may represent the remains of prehistoric field systems. Several undated features may also have had Iron Age origins but cannot be dated confidently either stratigraphically or through their material associations.

Roman

The most visible feature in the Roman landscape is Watling Street, which was in origin a strategic military road and the principal route from London to the west Midlands and north Wales. The line of Roman Watling Street is followed by the present route of the A5 and lies between *c* 100 m and *c* 400 m to the south of the proposed route, where it traversed a rural landscape organised into fields and smallholdings by means of ditched enclosures, such as those revealed on Site 2.

The pottery evidence suggests a date in the 2nd century AD for the use of these enclosure ditches, although some may have superseded late Iron Age precursors (e.g. ditch 6026). At Site 2 the pottery indicates infilling of at least some features by the late 2nd century. The absence of any obviously later finds suggests a contraction in settlement from this time, with no clear indication of activity through the later Roman period.

The features examined seem to have been some distance from the foci of settlement, the proximity of which is implied by occasional large deposits of pottery such as that from feature 6021 in Site 2. Only here, at the western end of the A5, is it likely that the excavated enclosures lay close to such a focus, which may have lain just to the north or north-east of the excavated area. Well-defined ditched enclosures lay to the north and south of the western half of the project area (e.g. Gould 1972, Sites E, F, and G), but in the absence of excavation their chronology is unknown. Site E, however, is aligned directly upon Watling Street and must be Roman (or later) in date. Sites F and G are both over 0.5 km north of the new road line and therefore the significance of their alignments is unclear, although Site F is perpendicular to the alignment of Watling Street. The relationship of Site G to a possible pit alignment might indicate an Iron Age date for this site. The function of these sites is equally unclear, but all could have been farmstead enclosures.

The occurrence of ditch alignments approximately perpendicular to the line of Watling Street has been noted at several sites (Sites 2, 8, and 15), although the fact that some later boundaries also followed this alignment means that each instance must be assessed carefully. These alignments may suggest that a programme of land division post-dated the establishment of the road and superseded hitherto prevailing Iron Age boundaries, but the evidence is insufficient to allow this suggestion to be demonstrated with confidence. Even if this were the case, the new layout was not necessarily imposed as a single operation, nor did it involve rigid planning, as slight variations in the alignments on these three sites indicate. At Shenstone, c 2 km west of Site 2, a system of major boundaries and enclosures (M6 Toll Site 15, OWA 2003, 18) was laid out with no relation either to the line of Watling Street or to an adjacent double-ditched enclosure perhaps containing a modest villa, which on current evidence was the highest status of Roman rural settlement in the immediate area (Hodgkinson and Chatwin 1944; Gould 1972, Site A).

The principal nucleated centre during the period was *Letocetum* (modem Wall), some 5 km to the west of the western end of the A5 Weeford to Fazeley section. Here, at least, occupation extended through much of the Roman period. The development of Wall initially as a military base and then as a local centre may have encouraged an expansion of agricultural production in its hinterland, as can be seen quite clearly in the construction of a large timber aisled building some 3 km west of the town and only some 300 m from the line of Watling Street, probably in the early 2nd century (M6 Toll Site 34, OWA 2003, 26-7). The limited chronological evidence suggests that this site had a date range comparable to that of A5 Weeford to Fazeley Site 2, with little if any evidence for activity beyond the early 3rd century. Both sites also demonstrate the fact that although Watling Street probably provided an important route for the movement of pottery to and from Wall and beyond, and the over-representation of BB1 at Site 2 at the western end of the A5 may reflect this, the economic impact of the development of Wall on the occupants of the excavated smallholdings may have been less than would be expected.

In general, the artefactual traces of Roman activity on the A5 route are slight, a characteristic of even the more substantial settlement sites in the area. The multiple enclosure site on the M6 Toll Site 29 at Langley Mill Farm, for example, produced only 530 sherds of Roman pottery compared with the 314 sherds from Site 8 (OWA 2003, 31). Environmental evidence is similarly limited, with the slightly acidic soils of the area inhibiting the preservation of animal bone. Few non-intrusive charred plant remains were recovered, resulting in a shortage of evidence on which to base economic and environmental reconstructions. If taken at face value, however, the evidence from M6 Toll Site 34 might imply an increased emphasis on arable production, though whether or not this was at the expense of pasture is unknown.

Several tree-throw holes dated to the Roman period suggest a once-wooded environment, which may have been cleared for agricultural purposes or (less likely) in advance of road building. There is evidence to suggest that the tree boles were burnt *in situ,* although it is uncertain whether this occurred by anthropogenic or natural means.

Medieval and post-medieval

A total absence of evidence characterises the Anglo-Saxon period, after which the medieval and post-medieval periods see a continuation of the agricultural use of the landscape encountered in the Roman period. Features include ditches, pits, and trackways, several of which produced small quantities of pottery that may have been dispersed through processes such as manuring. The ditches are characteristically aligned with reference to the position of Watling Street, indicating the ongoing influence of this Roman feature over the organisation of the landscape.

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LETOCETUM: THE DEFENCES

JIM GOULD

Two problems confront anyone investigating the Roman settlement at Wall *(Letocetum;* SK 0906). Firstly, the town defences to the south, as published after excavation (Webster 1959, 24, fig. 1), do not agree with the northern defences as published also after excavation (Gould 1964, 3). Secondly, although there is evidence for an early vexillation fort at Wall (Gould 1997, 350-52), no trace of its defences has yet been discovered. This brief note is an attempt to solve both problems, which are intertwined, and to refute the suggestion that the first problem is due to the town defences being built by different gangs, working at different times; such an explanation is unconvincing, as surely there would have been but one overall authority.

On 27 June 1948, Dr J. K. St Joseph took several photographs (Plate 1) of crop-marks made by three apparently curving ditches which indicated the south-east comer of an enclosure at Wall (SK 101064), and repeated photographs of the same crop-marks were taken on a number of occasions during the following years. In 1955 Dr Graham Webster, believing that the crop-marks might indicate a Roman fort, cut a trench across them at right angles, and the resulting section was published in the *Journal for Roman Studies* (Webster 1956, 129, fig. 31). Unfortunately, collapsing trench sides meant that the outline of the lower part of the outer ditch, which was 26ft. X 8ft., had to be drawn from memory and its relationship to the other two ditches, each 13ft. x 7ft., is not indicated on the drawn section. Webster claimed that these were not military ditches, but were part of the town defences. In the following year (1956) Webster extended his trench into the adjoining field to the north, hoping to locate a rampart and possibly a wall. In this, he was successful and he published the two trenches as one long section showing a very wide berm of 18ft. between the wall and the innermost ditch (Webster 1959, 25, fig. 2).

In 1961 the present writer identified and sectioned the town defences to the north (Gould 1964, 3, fig. 2), but the defences there were very different from those in Webster's section. The three northern ditches were separated from a wall by a berm of only 6ft., similar to the berm later found to the west (Ibid. 4, fig. 3), and the three northern ditches (each 14ft. wide) were all similar in size and shape to Webster's two innermost ditches. When one compares the two sections, if the southem defences had been similar to the northern ones, then the innermost ditch would have been under the hedge that divided Webster's two trenches (Webster 1959, 25, fig. 2), but Webster's long section does not show this and surely he did not did up the hedge. The town defences were similar on all sides.

This leaves Webster's large outer ditch as not being part of the town defences at all, and necessitates a close re-examination of the crop-marks on the many photographs that have been taken. On all the photographs that the present writer has been able to examine, the two inner ditches do indeed turn north as indicated on Webster's 'trial trench' number 2 on his plan (Webster 1959, 24, fig.l), which unfortunately he did not describe or discuss. On no photograph does the crop-mark of the large outer ditch clearly turn north, and on most the eastern end is just a dark blur. Moreover, had it turned north the ditch would have been revealed in the area that Greenfield excavated in 1962 and 1964 (Jones 1988, 1-57). On some photographs the blur is partly explained by a crop-mark of an apparently small ditch running diagonally across the field into the blur (Plate 2), and this may have been connected with the Roman camp known to have been in this field (Welfare and Swan 1995, 177, fig. 145). If the large ditch did not turn, then it must have carried on to the east, and so must have been cut by the north-south road (Ashcroft Lane) that runs there. It should have been found when that road was widened during the construction of the Wall Bypass, and in a watching brief Mr Adrian Oswald did indeed record a ditch (6ft. x 4ft.), filled with stones and containing 2nd-century pottery (Oswald 1968, 40, item F). Oswald recorded its position only vaguely and did not line it up with Webster's ditch, but he may be excused, given the difficulty of maintaining a watching brief when several machines are working simultaneously in different places and he not holding authority over the workmen.

What then was Webster's large outer ditch? It was not part of the town defences and was much too big to be associated with a Roman camp. Perhaps it was part of the defences of the proposed early vexillation fortress, for it is hard to think of any other possibility. Should the land there ever again become available, a modem excavation is highly desirable.

Plate 1 Wall facing north-west, 17 July 1948 (Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs, Unit for Landscape Modelling)

Plate 2 Wall facing north, 25 July 1956 (as Plate 1)

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A MEDIEVAL HOSPITAL GRAVEYARD? EXCAVATIONS AT STOKE CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL, 2001

MARY DUNCAN

with contributions from Megan Brickley, Rob Ixer, Kirsty Nichol, and Stephanie Ratkai

SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological investigations was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (now Birmingham Archaeology) at the City General Hospital in Stoke-on-Trent between June and December 2001. The work was commissioned by the North Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust with advice from Wardell Armstrong. Excavations revealed the footings of a building, possibly associated with a medieval hospital previously documented in the area. Other features included a series of ditches, partly defining the limits of a graveyard containing a total of 22 human burials. Although little dating evidence was retrieved, it is believed that these features belong to the 13th and 14th centuries AD.

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation, subsequent excavations and watching brief were undertaken in 2001 at Stoke-on-Trent City General Hospital (centred on NGR: SJ 857 459, Figs 1 and 2). Undertaken in advance of the construction of a new undergraduate medical school for North Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust, the archaeological work was commissioned by the Trust with advice from Wardell Armstrong, and was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (now Birmingham Archaeology). The site proposed for development covered an area measuring approximately 34m x 32m (Fig. 2, Plate 1), bordered to the north-east and south-east by existing hospital buildings, and to the south-west by the A34 London Road. The site was situated in an area which had been previously made-up and landscaped during development of the hospital in the 1980s.

The solid geology of the development area is defined by the Geological Survey of Great Britain (Sheet 123) as Newcastle Formation, which includes coals, mudstones, and sandstone, overlain by glacial drift comprising till or glacial outflow deposits of clay, sands or gravels (Marsden and Courtney 1998, 2).

The proposed development was situated within the supposed area of a documented medieval hospital and associated burial ground. In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 16, an archaeological evaluation and appropriate programme of mitigation fieldwork was required in advance of development. Overburden clearance and archaeological evaluation were undertaken in June 2001 and the excavation in July and August, followed by a watching brief in December 2001.

The objective of the evaluation was to identify, characterize, and record any archaeological deposits present within the proposed development area, in accordance with a specification prepared by Wardell Armstrong (2001). In particular, it was intended to locate a possible medieval structure and associated burials, first exposed during salvage recording in 1984 (Marsden and Courtney 1998, 2). Having successfully located the structure within evaluation trenches 4 and 5 (Fig. 2), the subsequent area excavation was designed to further investigate this building, and to record details of its layout, dating, and use.

This report integrates the results from all three stages of work. The archive has been deposited with the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Although isolated finds of prehistoric and Roman date are recorded within the area, the first firm documentary evidence for activity on the development site is from the medieval period. A hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist, lying outside the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, is first recorded in 1266 (VCH 1970, 289). Its later history is somewhat uncertain, but a hospital with a dedication to St. John was again recorded in 1409. During the later 15th and early 16th centuries, several alternative dedications are recorded, to St. Eloy, St. Louis and St. Leo. The hospital was

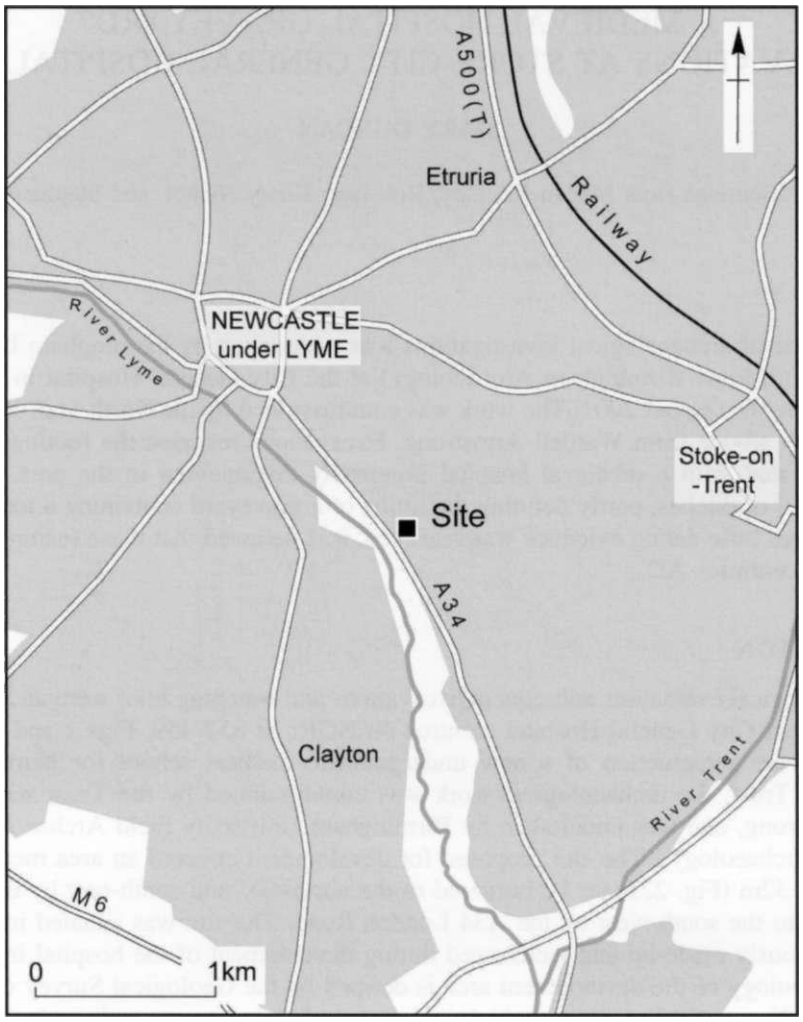

Fig. 1 Location of excavation

suppressed as an institution in the later 16th century, though its former presence was reflected down to the 19th century in a concentration of field names in the area containing the element 'Spittles' (VCH 1963, 188).

During the construction of a car park for an extension to Stoke City General Hospital in 1984, the remains of a sandstone structure and two related burials of medieval date were recorded under rescue conditions (Marsden and Courtney, 1998, 2). These remains were interpreted at the time as forming part of a medieval hospital.

METHODOLOGY

Initial evaluation work comprised the excavation of total of six trenches (Fig. 2), each measuring 10m x 1.8m. Trenches were excavated by machine, working under archaeological supervision, after which features were cleaned and excavated by hand.

During area excavation, modem overburden was again removed by machine, under archaeological supervision, to expose the archaeological horizon. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-cleaned and selectively hand-excavated. Written documentation used *pro-forma* context sheets, supplemented by scaled plans and section drawings and a full photographic record.

Following the excavation, all development groundwork was monitored as an archaeological watching brief (Fig. 2). This phase of fieldwork was intended to identify and record any archaeological features beyond the original excavation area, particularly where the depth of surrounding overburden had prevented earlier archaeological investigation. In the event, only disarticulated human bone fragments were identified.

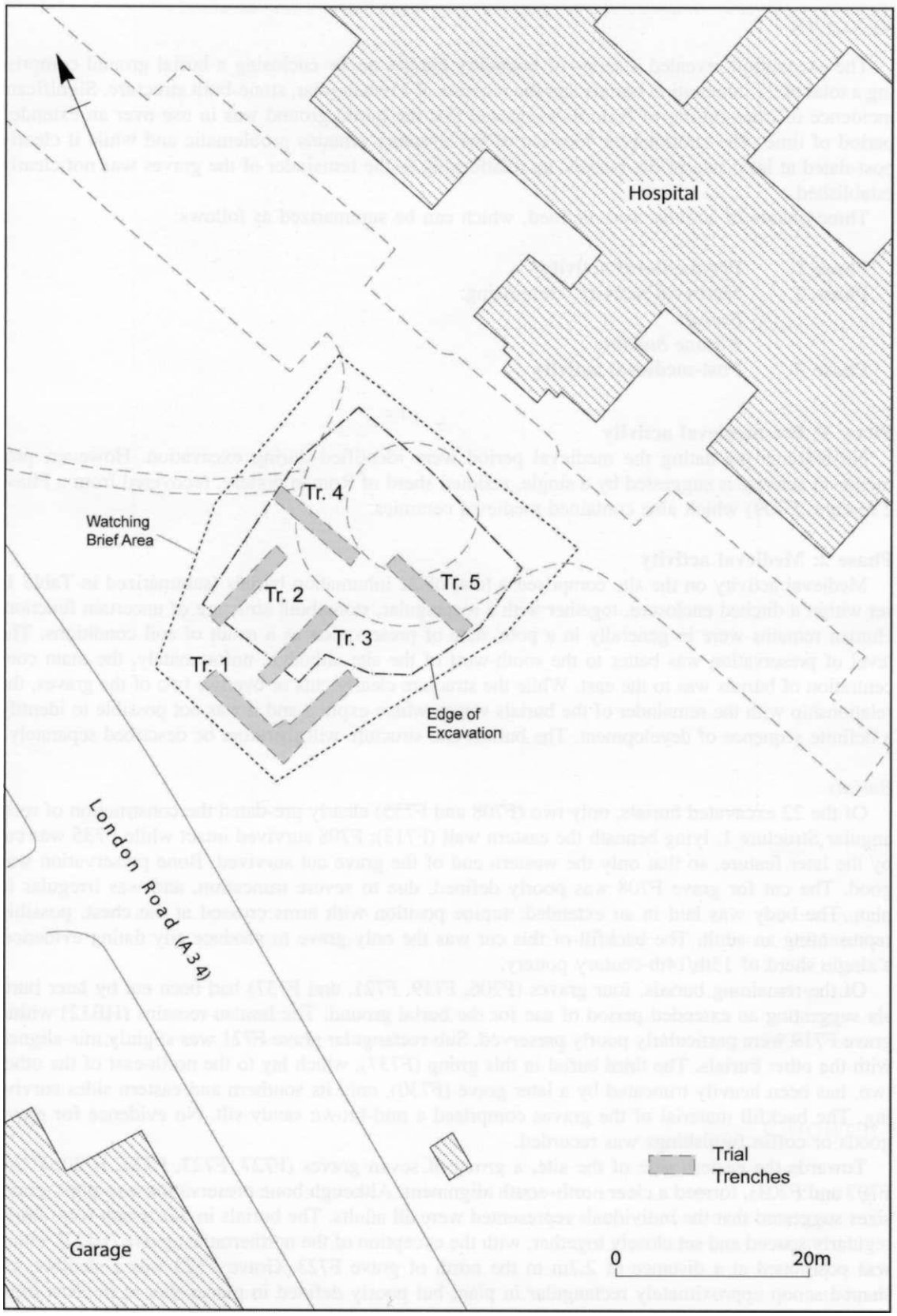

Fig. 2 Location of excavation in relation to existing hospital and London Road

RESULTS

The excavation revealed a series of boundary ditches partly enclosing a burial ground comprising a total of 22 inhumation burials and the remains of a rectangular, stone-built structure. Significant incidence of inter-cutting of features suggested that the burial ground was in use over an extended period of time. The stratigraphic location of the structure remains problematic and while it clearly post-dated at least two of the burials, its relationship to the remainder of the graves was not clearly established.

Three phases of activity were defined, which can be summarized as follows:

Phase 1 **Pre-medieval activity**
Phase 2 **Medieval activity,** comprising:
Burials
A stone building
Phase 3 **Post-medieval activity**

Phase 1: Pre-medieval activity

No features pre-dating the medieval period were identified during excavation. However, pre-medieval activity is suggested by a single, residual sherd of Roman pottery, recovered from a Phase 2 feature (F709) which also contained medieval ceramics.

Phase 2: Medieval activity

Medieval activity on the site comprised a total of 22 inhumation burials (summarized in Table 1) set within a ditched enclosure, together with a rectangular, stone-built structure of uncertain function. Human remains were in generally in a poor state of preservation as a result of soil conditions. The level of preservation was better to the south-west of the site although, unfortunately, the main concentration of burials was to the east. While the structure clearly cuts or overlies two of the graves, the relationship with the remainder of the burials was nowhere explicit and it was not possible to identify a definite sequence of development. The burials and structure will therefore be described separately.

Burials

Of the 22 excavated burials, only two (F708 and F735) clearly pre-dated the construction of rectangular Structure 1, lying beneath the eastern wall (F713); F708 survived intact while F735 was cut by the later feature, so that only the western end of the grave cut survived. Bone preservation was good. The cut for grave F708 was poorly defined, due to severe truncation, and was irregular in plan. The body was laid in an extended, supine position with arms crossed at the chest, possibly representing an adult. The backfill of this cut was the only grave to produce any dating evidence, a single sherd of 13th/14th-century pottery.

Of the remaining burials, four graves (F706, F719, F721, and F737) had been cut by later burials suggesting an extended period of use for the burial ground. The human remains (HB12) within grave F719 were particularly poorly preserved. Sub-rectangular grave F721 was slightly mis-aligned with the other burials. The third burial in this group (F737), which lay to the north-east of the other two, has been heavily truncated by a later grave (F730), only its southern and eastern sides surviving. The backfill material of the graves comprised a mid-brown sandy silt. No evidence for grave goods or coffin furnishings was recorded.

Towards the eastern side of the site, a group of seven graves (F727, F723, F722, F720, F724, F707 and F703), formed a clear north-south alignment. Although bone preservation was poor, grave sizes suggested that the individuals represented were all adults. The burials in this group were fairly regularly spaced and set closely together, with the exception of the northernmost grave ***(¥121)*** which was positioned at a distance of 2.7m to the north of grave F723. Grave F723 was a shallow, U-shaped scoop approximately rectangular in plan, but poorly defined in places due to modem truncation. Grave F722 was cut to an irregular, roughly rectangular shape. Graves F727, F723 and F722, cut on an east-west alignment, were somewhat out of alignment with the other graves in this group. Grave F720 further to the south was cut to a well-defined, roughly ovoid shape in plan, as was the adjoining grave F724. The shape of grave F707 was irregular, probably the result of modem truncation. Grave F703 was the most southerly of the group. A further grave (F730) was located to the east of this group.

Table 1 Details of burials

Grave	L	W	D	HB	Details
F700	1.8m	0.45m	0.05m	1	Partial remains of the back of the cranium, shaft fragments of humeri, femora and tibiae, 1 rib fragment.
F701	2.0m	0.4m	0.1m	—	No human bone in grave.
F703	1.7m	0.5m	0.1m	6	Back of cranium, part of shaft of R. humerus, both femora and R. tibia.
F705	1.6m	0.4m	0.25m	2	Most of skeleton present, except hands and feet.
F706	1.8m	0.5m	0.3m	3	Skull, at the W end of cut. Legs also present, represented by fragments of femora and tibiae.
F707	1.3m	0.3m	0.04m	4	Pair of femurs, particularly degraded at distal ends.
F708	2.0m	0.8m	0.1m	—	Majority of skeleton survived, but only as 'shadow'.
F712	1.68m	0.48m	0.18m	7	Poorly preserved. Skull to W end of cut. Shaft fragment of R. humerus shafts of L. humerus, ulna and radius, shafts of both femora and tibiae.
F715	1.76m	0.5m	0.12m		
F716				9	Poorly preserved, probably adult.
F717				10	Poorly preserved, probably adult.
F718	1.45m	0.5m	0.02m	11	Fragments of femoras and tibiae.
F719	2.0m	0.5m	0.15m	12	Present only in eastern half of grave. Partial fragments of L. pelvis both femurs and tibiae.
F720	1.7m	0.5m	0.07m	13	Small cranium fragment resting on large stone.
F721	1.45m	0.45m	0.1m	19	Small cranial fragments at W end of cut, other unidentified fragments.
F722	1.5m	0.45m	0.15m	14,15,16	Three probable skulls at W end of cut, three femur fragments towards W end.
F723	1.56m	0.45m	0.02m	17	Fragments of cranium at W end of cut, two long bones, presumed to be part of the shafts of femurs. Very poor preservation.
F724	1.9m	0.5m	0.1m	18	Very degraded, possibly left arm and leg.
F727	1.7m	0.5m	0.1m	—	Only small fragments of bone surviving.
F730	1.9m	0.36m	0.2m	20	Parts of cranium and mandible, collection of unidentifiable degraded bone.
F735	0.6m	0.6m	0.15m	21	Upper body, no skull, both humeri, both clavicle, R. scapula several ribs.
F737	1.24m	0.45m	0.06m	22	Fragments of back of cranium, R. humerus.

A further five graves (F701, F700, F705, F712, and F718) formed a second approximately north-south alignment, 7.5m to the west of, and slightly skewed relative to the eastern group. Feature F701 was sub-rectangular in plan, resembling a grave cut, though no human bone was identified from within its fill, possibly the result of adverse soil conditions. Grave F718 was poorly defined. Grave F705, which cut by grave F706, was located within the footprint of Structure 1 and contained a sub-adult individual laid in an extended, supine position with the arms crossed at the chest (Plate 4). Further, intermediate burials related to this alignment may have been destroyed by the building of Structure 1.

Further to the west again, were two graves (F716 and F717), which adjoined each other. Both were heavily truncated, particularly at their western ends. In the northern grave, the head was facing north (HB9), whilst in the southern grave, the head faced south (HB10). Bone preservation was again poor, though the individuals were identified as probable adults.

A single grave (F715, Plate 5) was cut on a north-west/south-east alignment adjacent to buttress F709, whose alignment it appeared to respect. The grave cut was 1.76m long and 0.5m wide and survived to a depth of 0.12m. The remains were of a large adult, laid in an extended, supine position with the arms crossed at waist level, the left forearm overlying the right. Most elements of the skeleton were represented, though bone preservation was poor. The unusual alignment of F715, relative to the other burials recorded, suggests it may have been laid out relative to, and thus have post-dated, the erection of Structure 1.

The limit of the burial ground appears to have been defined by two small ditches. Part of the north boundary may have been formed by the roughly east-west aligned ditch F736, which contained 14th-century pottery; the western continuation of this feature had probably been truncated by modern activity. Part of the south-eastern boundary may have been formed by the north-east/south-west aligned ditch F739 (Fig. 4, S. 1 and 2). This ditch measured 0.8m wide and 0.6m deep and was U-shaped in profile. It was backfilled with clean, friable, brown sand and silt.

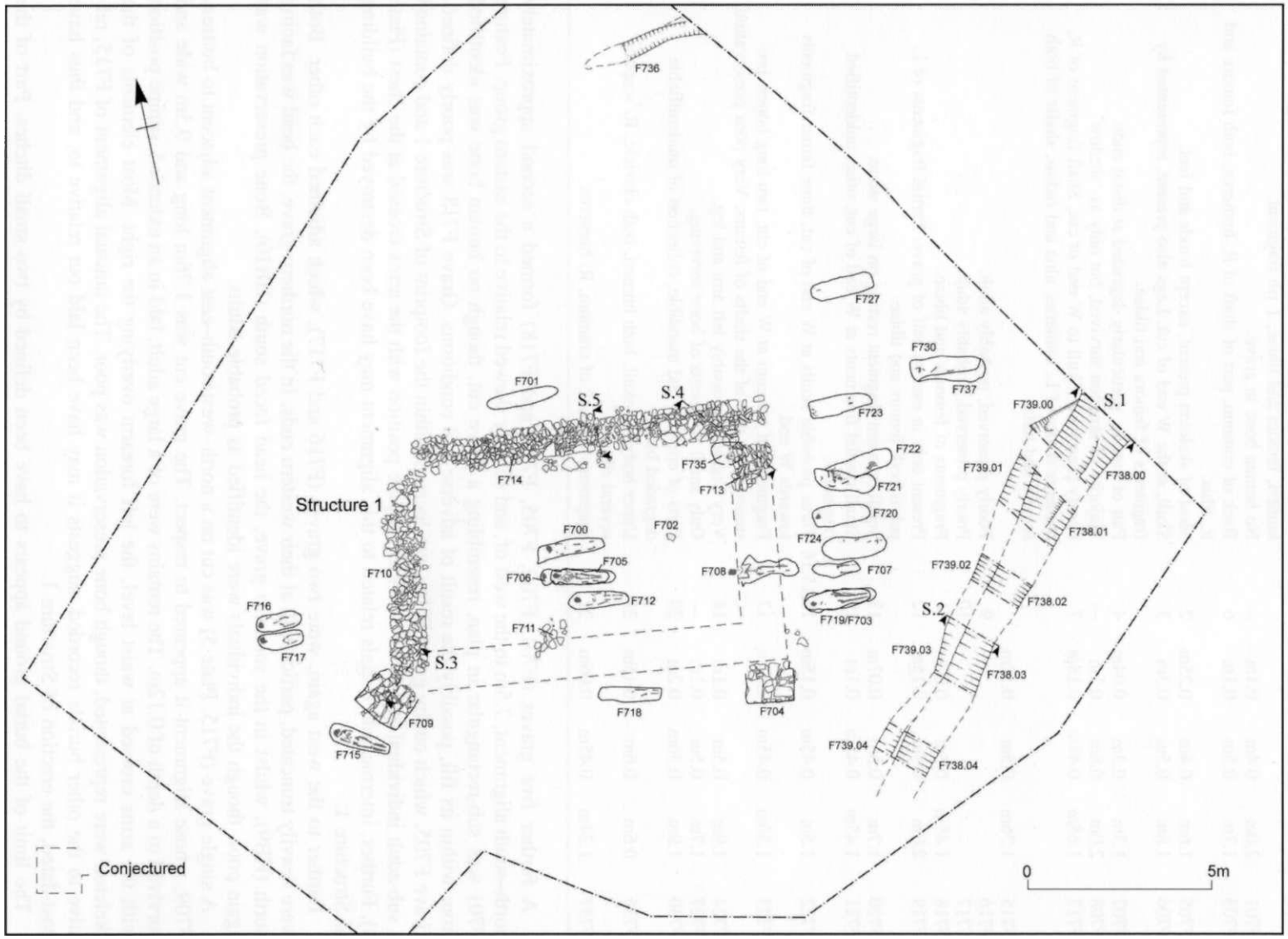

Fig. 3 Simplified plan of Phase 2-3 features

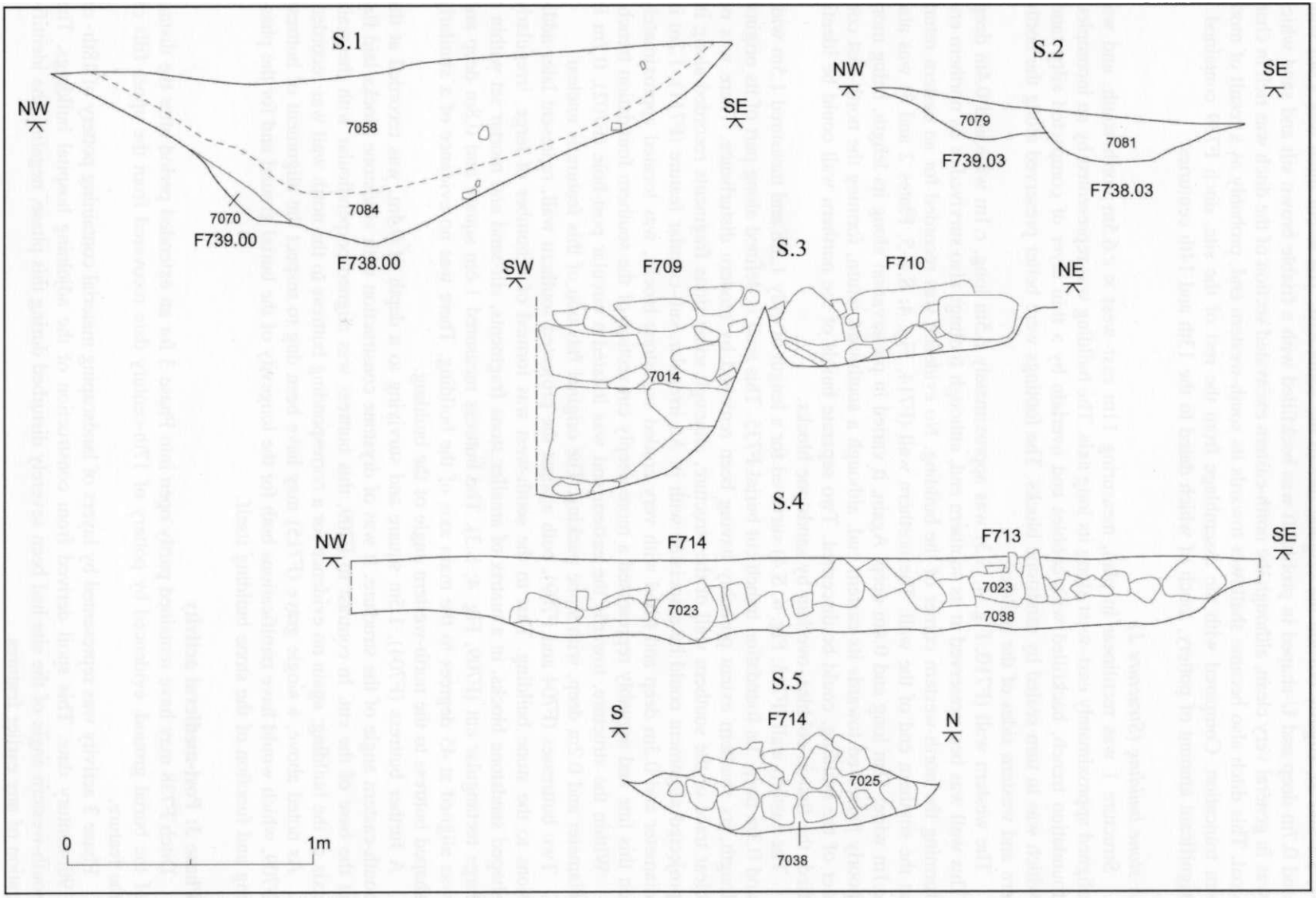

Fig. 4 Selected sections

The ditch became substantially shallower towards the south-west, probably the result of modem truncation, and no dating evidence was recovered. Ditch F739 displayed a clear re-cut (F738; Fig. 4; S.l and 2), slightly outside the original line to the south-east. The re-cut ditch was 1.9m wide and 0.7m deep and U-shaped in profile. It was backfilled with a friable brown silt and sand which was in general very clean, although the north-eastern excavated section of the ditch was rich in charcoal. This ditch also became shallower towards its south-western end, probably as a result of modem truncation. Compared with the assemblage from the rest of the site, ditch F739 contained a significant amount of pottery, much of which dated to the 13th and 14th centuries.

A stone building (Structure 1)

Structure 1 was rectilinear in plan, measuring 11m east-west x c.6.5m north-south, and was aligned approximately east-west along its long axis. The building was represented by an incomplete foundation trench, backfilled with cobbles and overlain by a thin layer of compacted silty sand, which was in turn sealed by sandstone blocks. The footings were better preserved along the northem and western sides of the building.

The western wall (F710, Fig. 4; S.3) was approximately 6.5m long, e1m wide and 0.4m deep. This wall was best preserved at its southern end, although footings also survived at its northern end forming the north-western comer of the building. No evidence was recorded for an eastern return at the southern end of the wall. The northern wall (F714, Fig. 4; S.4—5, Plates 2 and 3) was also e1m wide, 11m long and 0.4m deep. Again, it varied in preservation along its length, being more poorly preserved towards its eastern end, although a southward return, forming the north-east corner of the building, could be discerned. Two separate builds of the northern wall could be identified; the first in cobbles, overlain by sandstone blocks.

The eastern wall (F713, Fig. 4, S.4) survived for a length of only 1.5m and measured 1.5m wide and 0.3m deep. Its foundation trench cut burial F735. This wall is defined along part of its original length, its southern extent probably having been removed by modem disturbance. There was no clear trace of the southern wall of the structure, although some stone fragments recorded along its projected alignment could be associated with it. An irregular, sub-circular feature (F711), 1.2m in diameter and 0.3m deep and filled with very eroded sandstone blocks, was located approximately on this line and arguably represented a more deeply cut section of the southern foundation trench.

Within the structure, towards the eastern end was located a circular post-hole (F702), 0.7m in diameter and 0.2m deep, with stone packing. The original function of this feature is unclear.

Two buttresses (F704 and F709), both against the projected southern wall, represent later additions to the stone building. That to the south-west was formed of a number of large, irregularly shaped sandstone blocks, in a matrix of smaller stone fragments, silt-sand and mortar set within a large rectangular cut (F709, Fig. 4; S.3). The buttress measured 1.6m square and 0.8m deep and was aligned at 45 degrees to the main axis of the building. There was no evidence of a similarly shaped buttress to the north-western angle of the building.

A further buttress (F704), 1.5m square and surviving to a depth of 0.4m, was recorded at the south-eastern angle of the structure. It was of drystone construction with sandstone blocks laid flat at the base of the cut. In contrast to F709, this buttress was aligned perpendicular with the main axis of the building; again no evidence for a corresponding buttress to the north wall was recorded.

As noted above, a single grave (F715) may have been dug to respect the alignment of buttress F709, which would have ramifications both for the longevity of the burial ground and for the phasing and function of the stone building itself.

Phase 3: Post-medieval activity

Ditch F738 may have remained partly open into Phase 3 for an extended period after the disuse of the burial ground, evidenced by pottery of 17th-century date recovered from the upper fills of the feature.

Phase 3 activity was represented by layers of landscaping material containing pottery of 18th- or 19th-century date. This spoil derived from construction of the adjoining hospital buildings. The south-western angle of the site had been severely disturbed during this phase, negating the identification of any earlier features.

FINDS

Given the size and poor preservation of the respective assemblages, it was not considered worthwhile to undertake detailed analysis of the finds and human remains recovered during the project. A summary of materials is given below.

STONE MATERIALS *by Rob Ixer*

A representative sample of the stone footings of Structure 1 was collected to identify the presence of any worked surfaces and to possible origin of the stone. The stone was a coarse pink sandstone, from a local source, and displayed no signs of working.

POTTERY *by Stephanie Rdtkai* (Table 2)

All the pottery was examined macroscopically and divided into broad ware groups following Ford (1995), with the addition of a second iron-poor category (ip). Post-medieval pottery was ascribed to ware group where possible. A total of 33 sherds were recovered, quantified by sherd and rim count.

The earliest pottery from the site consisted of a jar rim sherd, tempered with Malvemian rock. The form and fabric are Roman, although the fabric is a continuation of a late Iron Age tradition. It is not possible to date the Stoke sherd more closely than Roman, although more recent work on pottery from The Magistrates' Court, Worcester (Evans and Ratkai, forthcoming) suggests that this fabric may become more common (in Worcester at least) in the later Roman period. The presence of Malvemian ware in Stoke is striking, as it is well outside its normal distribution area.

The medieval pottery dates from the 13th and 14th centuries, and there were no late medieval or early post-medieval transitional wares represented. Many of the sherds were very small and often abraded, negating form identification. The iron-rich sandy cooking pots were not confined to a single fabric and some sherds contained rounded mudstone fragments. The whitewares were wheel-thrown but very poorly finished with pale orange surfaces. Two bottles were present in layers 7078 and 7069 (F738), of roughly cylindrical type (cf MPRG 1998, form 3.2, type d). In addition, an unusual small diameter (c.7.5cm) pedestal base was found in layer 7078, possibly from a small baluster jug or another bottle.

The post-medieval pottery was generally in poor condition and badly abraded. A possible stoneware waster came from the surface of feature F738. It was a rim-neck sherd, similar in form to 17th century Bartmann type jugs. The body was buff and the glaze was off-white with some brown flecking, thick and pitted.

HUMAN BONE *by Megan Brickley*

The human bone was very poorly preserved. Only 21 individuals were represented, together with a small quantity of disarticulated material.

There are two aspects of preservation that should be considered. The first is that of completeness (what proportion of the skeleton is present) and the second is that of surface preservation (how well

Table 2: Pottery quantification

Context	Feature / Trench	Roman	irswu	irswt	ww	ip	pm	mod	Total
2000	Trench 2		1						1
3002	Trench 3						1		1
7000	Machine Layer						1		1
7001	Cleaning Layer							2	2
7014	F709	1	1	1					3
7016	F708		1						1
7058	F738		4	2	5		2		13
7064	F735				1				1
7066	F729		2			2			4
7069	F738				2				2
7078	F738		2		2				4
Total		1	11	3	10	2	4		33

Fabric codes: irswu: iron rich sandy utilitarian ware
irsw-t: iron-rich sandy table ware
ww: Midlands whiteware
ip: iron-poor sandy wares
pm: post-medieval coarseware
mod.: modern

preserved are the bone surfaces). Examination of the human bone demonstrated that over 95% of the individuals recovered from the site had less than 25% of the skeleton present. In particular, areas required for assessment of age and sex, such as the skull, pelvis and the ends of long-bones, were extremely fragmentary or often missing completely. In the majority of cases, it would not be possible to determine if an individual was adolescent or adult from a visual examination of the remains, or to determine the sex of the individual with any degree of certainty. An assessment of the quality of the bone surface for each individual demonstrated that this aspect of preservation was very poor. All bone examined was scored as Stage 4 or 5 according to Behrensmayer's classification (1978). None of the original bone surface survived, negating the identification of any pathological changes that can affect the skeleton.

Teeth, the most highly mineralized tissue in the body, normally survive well, even in adverse conditions. However, assessment of the skeletal material demonstrated that very few teeth were present and those examined were very poorly preserved.

Because the human remains recovered from the site were so badly degraded that all evidence of bone pathology has been lost, it has not been possible to undertake comparative studies using material from other excavated sites, for example St. Mary Spital, London (Thomas *et al.,* 1997), or around Norwich (Rawcliffe, 1995).

DISCUSSION *by Mary Duncan and Kir sty Nichol*

There may have been a settlement at Newcastle-under-Lyme (under another name) during the Anglo-Saxon period, but it is only after the erection of a royal castle, probably in the early 12th century, that signs of urban growth can be detected. Newcastle received its first charter for a market and the foundation of a 'borough' in 1173 (Studd, 1991; VCH 1963, 24-5). Granted to Ranulph, earl of Chester, in 1146, the town prospered under the earl's patronage, especially in the first half of the 13th century: it received a second charter in 1235 making it a free borough, and the burgesses acquired the power to have a guild merchant and the right to hold the town at fee-farm (Studd 1991, 4-5, 8-11; VCH 1963, 25, 44-5). Significantly, the charter allowed merchants to trade freely, whilst allowing the town to retain all revenues collected from tolls and market taxes rather than paying them into the royal exchequer, thus encouraging rapid development (VCH 1963, 44-5). The lordship of the borough and manor of Newcastle passed to the Crown in 1254, when the earldom of Chester was conferred on Henry Ill's son, the Lord Edward; it was held briefly by Simon de Montfort in 1264 and 1265, but was again in royal hands in 1266, when the first reference to a hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist is recorded in a documentary source (Studd 1991, 4; VCH 1970, 289). On the balance of evidence, it seems likely that the original foundation of the hospital was under this period of patronage of the earls of Chester, thus dating to the early years of the 13th century.

Considerable uncertainty surrounds the later dedication of the hospital, with references to the hospital of St. John in 1409, St. Louis in 1437, and alternate dedications to both of the above in 1454, 1459 and 1460 (VCH 1970, 289). Subsequent references are to a hospital of St. John the Baptist and St. Eloy in 1479, then solely St. Eloy in 1485 and 1546, with documents referring to the hospital of St. Leo dated 1485, 1516, and 1551 *(ibid.).* Eloy and Louis, however, are standard variations on the name of St. Elegius, a saint who enjoyed considerable popularity in the 15th century, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the 13th-century hospital of St. John simply acquired a supplementary dedication during the course of the 15th century.

What does seem clear from the documentation is that the hospitals of St. John the Baptist (1266) and St. John (1409) were associated with endowments related to the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1409 Thomas Chamberlayn was appointed warden of the hospital for life by the Crown, and it is clear that a certain amount of charitable relief was being afforded by the institution at this date. It is evident that the hospital failed to develop, however, and by the 15th century it had been appropriated as a private rest-home for retired Crown servants. Records show that Chamberlayn was succeeded by a John Ryder (a retired servant of the royal household) who was followed by two further, unnamed, members of the royal household. In 1485, the hospital was granted to John Badeley (son of Henry Badeley) in consideration of his father's 'good and faithful service' to King Henry VII, and lastly, in 1551, a Richard Smith received an endowment through the same institution from King Edward VI. By the end of the 16th century, the hospital had evidently been suppressed, forming part of a large royal grant of former ecclesiastical property to William Tipper and Robert Dawe in 1590 *(ibid.).*

The word hospital derives from the Latin *hospes* meaning stranger, foreigner, or guest, and medieval hospitals developed out of the monastic charitable tradition of providing shelter for travellers, and care for the poor and infirm. Thus, the core elements of a fully endowed complex, commonly ranged around a courtyard, comprised a chapel, an open hall used as a dormitory with separate accommodation for the warden or nurses, and a burial ground. The medieval hospital generally occupied a marginal location on the outskirts or just beyond the town boundary, where it was easily accessible to travellers, as well as keeping the sick at a distance from the healthy (Markham 1997). The current site adjoins the modem A34 which follows the line of a much older, pre-turnpike route between London and Chester, passing through Lichfield and Coventry (Wright 1992, 4). Both Lichfield, with the tomb of St. Chad, and Coventry, one of the principle cities in medieval England holding many important religious relics, were prominent and popular pilgrim destinations. It is therefore entirely plausible that the hospital was sited on the outskirts of the burgeoning town of Newcastle so as to give aid to those passing through on route to the pilgrimage centres of Lichfield and Coventry or, indeed, to those further afield, in addition to providing succour for the sick of the district.

The predominant burial tradition in the medieval and early post-medieval periods was of interment within relatively shallow and irregularly placed cuts within churchyards, usually without any form of permanent marker (Parker Pearson 1999). Christian burials were usually aligned east-west, with the head to the west, although exact orientation and alignment could be effected by pre-existing structures, boundaries, paths or the natural topography (Daniell 1997). An example from this site is grave F715, which appears to respect the alignment of the Phase 2 buttress at the south-west corner of Structure 1. In the absence of such restrictions, graves were normally arranged in rows, with the most important graves being located within the body of a church building *(ibid.).*

Graveyards in the medieval period were prone to periodic disruption due to the rebuilding and extension of churches, and early graves were often disturbed by later burials. Disturbed bone may have been simply discarded, although there is evidence from several sites for the reburial of disturbed bones within chamel pits (Hadley 2001). Thus, an unknown number of burials at this site could have been lost due to subsequent truncation. However, the relatively small number of burials recovered during the excavation would seem to indicate a restricted development, even during the 13th century, and with no certainty that the excavated remains represent inmates of the institution, it is questionable even that a sizeable, settled community existed. It is possible that, even in its early years, the hospital's principal function was as a 'stopping off point for pilgrims on their way from London to Chester.

Where preservation was sufficient to indicate arm position, they were crossed which may suggest shroud burial, particularly since no coffin fittings were recovered, though the absence of any evidence for shroud pins should be noted in this respect. The burials recovered seem, in general, to respect the ditched boundaries as might be expected, while some inter-cutting between the burials was recorded.

A number of the excavated burials are worthy of note. One of the graves (F722) within the alignment to the east of Structure 1, is unusual in that it appeared to contain the remains of multiple individuals, as opposed to the other excavated graves which all contained single inhumations. The remains were so fragmentary as to obscure the relationship between bodies, but there were fragments of three distinct skulls at the western end of the cut, and some unidentifiable long-bones at the eastern end. Although the distribution of bones approximated to *in situ* burials, the possibility remains that this feature represents a discrete chamel pit. A second burial, F720, had evidence for a large 'pillow' stone being placed below the skull. There is evidence in the Christian tradition for pillow burials, which involved resting the head on a stone platform, though the significance of the right remains unclear (Daniell 1997). The practice seems to have been current from the early 11th century until the late 12th century, while a late example from the 14th century has been recorded. This latter example is unusual in that the stone pillow was used for practical as opposed to ritual reasons, to support the decapitated head of an interred body (Daniell 1997; Hadley 2001). The poor preservation of the burial under discussion here precludes any judgment on the use of the custom in this case, and while the general dating of the site, which post-dates the known period for pillow burial, may suggest that it represents a late survival of the ritual tradition, it may simply be another example of its use for an unknown, more practical reason.

Two burials (F716 and F717), lying to the west of the building, are of interest. Their close proximity to each other may suggest that the individuals were related to one another personally, or that they were buried at about the same time. The graves were also set at some distance from the

majority of the other burials which may indicate a different relationship between them and the community in which they lived, or may alternatively be an accident of preservation.

The date and original function of the stone structure itself are difficult to define. Pottery dating to the 13th and 14th centuries was recovered from the two graves cut by the structure, which would appear to establish a *terminus post quern* for its construction, though it should be noted that the pottery was probably intrusive. Given the general lack of ceramic dating evidence from the site, it is possible to propose only a tentative foundation date of the early 13th century. The buttresses of the south wall appear to have been later additions and it is unclear whether they were originally reflected in the north wall.

The east-west alignment of the structure, in combination with its location within a burial ground most probably related to a medieval hospital, has lead to speculation that it may represent the remains of an hospital chapel. However, the stratigraphic relationship between the building and the burials was nowhere clearly established, the only direct relationships being with burials F735 and F708, which the structure post-dated. Burial F715 is interesting in that it appears to be aligned to respect the south-western buttress, slightly skewed relative to the other burials, and may therefore imply that burial was continuing after the construction of Structure 1, thus strengthening the argument for an early origin and a non-secular function. The lack of any finds of an ecclesiastical nature such as tiles, glass, or dressed stone serves to undermine such an interpretation, however, and it is possible that Structure 1 represents a later construction, erected after the suppression of the hospital and the disuse of the burial ground. The unusual alignment of burial F715 would thus be purely coincidental.

Price and Ponsford note (1998, 217) that the layout of hospitals is often difficult to assess as they are so diverse, being dependant upon a combination of many different factors. Courtenay (2003), however, observes that one of the major features of hospital complexes was the union of a multi-purpose aisled hall (commonly based on the same basic plan as the guildhall) with the chapel. She also describes how these two structures were intrinsically linked, both conceptually and physically, to tend to both the spiritual and the physical needs of the carers and those that they were caring for.

The care afforded by hospitals during this period was more spiritual than medical, and what medical care there was, was fairly rudimentary (Price and Ponsford 1998). Their main functions fell into four categories: housing the poor, caring for the sick, secluding lepers, and providing accommodation for travellers *(ibid.).* The chapel formed the principle focus for the community within the hospital, with a major part of the inmates' routines being to pray for the souls and wellbeing of their benefactors. Unfortunately, the excavated material sheds little light on the function or the status of this particular hospital as there was no surviving evidence for any associated living quarters and therefore the physical aspect of the care on offer. Indeed, as noted above, the low number of graves does not appear to support the argument for a settled community of any great size, although it should be stressed that the full extent of the burial ground has not been properly defined.

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Plate 1 General view of excavation

Plate 2 Structure 1: north wall F714, before excavation (from east)

Plate 3 Structure 1: north wall F714, after emptying of foundation trench (from east)

Plate 4 Grave F705 (from south)

Plate 5 Grave F715 (from north)

BEYOND THE PALE? A REINTERPRETATION OF TUTBURY 'PARK PALE' BASED ON A NON-INVASIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EARTHWORK SURVEY

MARK KINCEY

ABSTRACT

This article relates to recent archaeological fieldwork carried out at Tutbury, Staffordshire, as part of an ongoing collaborative research project between Birmingham Archaeology, the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity at the University of Birmingham, and the British Museum. As part of the project a non-invasive topographic survey was carried out, focussing on a series of linear earthworks known traditionally as the 'Park Pale'. The results of the survey, combined with cartographic and documentary research, strongly suggest that the earthworks do not actually relate to the medieval deer park associated with Tutbury Castle, but may instead have a far more complex, multi-phase history of construction, use, and adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

The town of Tutbury is located in east Staffordshire, approximately seven kilometres north-west of Burton-upon-Trent (Fig. 1). The town is situated on the south bank of the River Dove, which here also forms the boundary between the counties of Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The history of Tutbury prior to the Norman Conquest and the construction of the castle is largely unclear, despite several suggestions of earlier activity. Tentative claims for both Iron Age (Wardle 2000, 4; Waller 1986, 14) and Anglo-Saxon (Palliser 1976, 146) occupation of the area have been made but without conclusive supporting evidence. The construction of the castle at Tutbury is thought to have taken place in 1069-1070, following the Norman pacification of this area of the country (Tringham 2007, 10). By the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, there was already a borough around the castle with 42 traders in the market place (Hawkins and Rumble 1976, 10,1). The castle was held by

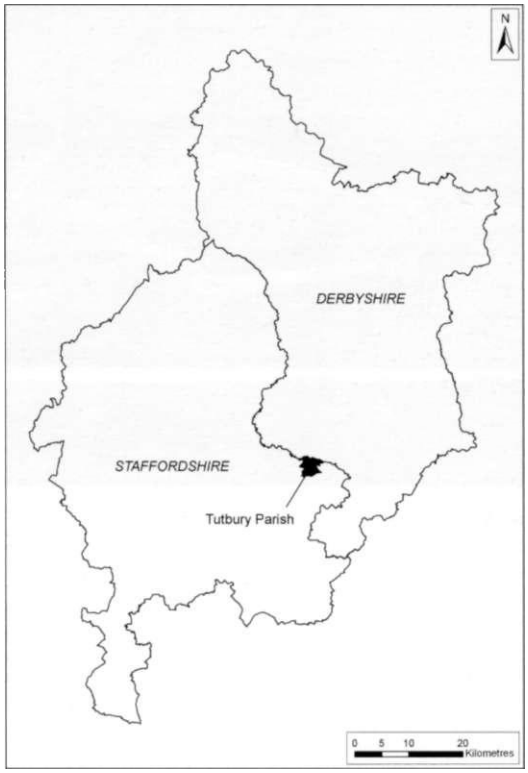


Fig. 1 Location map of Tutbury parish. Base map: © Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

the Ferrers family from 1071 until the 1260s, when control passed to the earldom, and later duchy, of Lancaster following the Barons' Revolt. Charles I garrisoned the castle in 1642 before it was successfully besieged by the Parliamentarians in 1646 and slighted in 1647^-8, in order to prevent its reoccupation as a defensive position. The castle has remained in the hands of the Duchy of Lancaster since that date, although with several periods of further demolition and renewed construction (Tringham 2007, 29-31).

The 'Park Pale' earthworks at Tutbury survive as an interrupted series of banks and ditches forming an incomplete circuit, stretching from the foot of Castle Hill at its northwestern end, nearly to the line of Burton Street on the east (Fig. 2). The traditional interpretation of the earthworks is as the remains of a boundary for a medieval deer park and it is as this that the monument has been both designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM nos. 22, 238a, and 238b) and listed by the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record office (PRN no. 00219) and the National Monuments Record office (NMR no. 649581). This paper employs the results of a non-invasive archaeological survey of the earthworks, carried out by the author, as a basis to question and reinterpret the traditional understanding of the 'Park Pale' monument (Kincey 2005).

THE 'PARK PALE' SURVEY

METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork was carried out over two seasons, in June 2004 and June 2005. For the western section of the 'Park Pale', a Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) was set to record in kinematic mode, automatically logging readings every two seconds as the earthworks were traversed. Ranging rods were used to direct the surveyor and separate the earthworks into transects approximately 5 metres apart, with the spacing being reduced where the topography became more varied and a higher resolution was required (Barratt *et al* 2000). The results of this survey were used to create a Digital Terrain Model (DTM), providing a realistic and representative three-dimensional computer model of this section of the earthworks (Fig. 4). The central and eastern sections of the monument extended through the town of Tutbury itself and access problems here meant that the GPS could be used only to record strings of points along the main topographic changes present on the earthworks, notably the top of banks, base of ditches, and any other clear breaks of slope. An optical survey using a Total Station was conducted in areas where the GPS system proved unsuitable due to loss of satellite lock. During the survey both written and photographic records of the preservation condition of the earthworks were taken and any surface artefacts positioned using GPS and collected for examination (Fig. 3).

Fieldwork data was incorporated into a project Geographical Information System (GIS) for display and further analysis. The GIS also allowed the integration of other spatial data which were employed to provide alternative forms of evidence regarding the history of the area. Digital scans of all the Ordnance Survey (OS) County Series maps (1843-1939) and National Grid maps (1945-present) were analysed, along with four early 19th-century estate and tithe maps obtained from the Staffordshire Record Office. In addition, five sorties of aerial photographs from the last six decades were collated and georeferenced to the modem OS mapping. All this data, combined with documentary research, provided considerable background information about the origins and development of the 'Park Pale', and supports and informs the results of the survey.

EARTHWORK DESCRIPTION

The field-based survey recorded the 'Park Pale' as an interrupted circuit comprising an internal earthwork bank and external ditch. The most substantial extant section of the monument is situated to the west of the town, stretching southwest from the base of Castle Hill for approximately 300 metres before taking a significant turn to the east. At this location the earthworks consist of an internal bank with an average width of approximately 16 metres, rising over 2 metres above the base of an outer ditch which itself measures over 8 metres in width. The exact route of the earthworks as they extend from this point through the town is, however, less apparent. A modem, sunken northwest-southeast alleyway between Park Lane and Wakefield Avenue possibly marks the continuation of the monument as far as the well-preserved east-west aligned bank and ditch between Ferrers Avenue and Ludgate Street (SAM no. 238b). At this location the earthworks can be clearly seen stretching for a distance of over 185 metres, with the internal bank measuring over 10 metres in

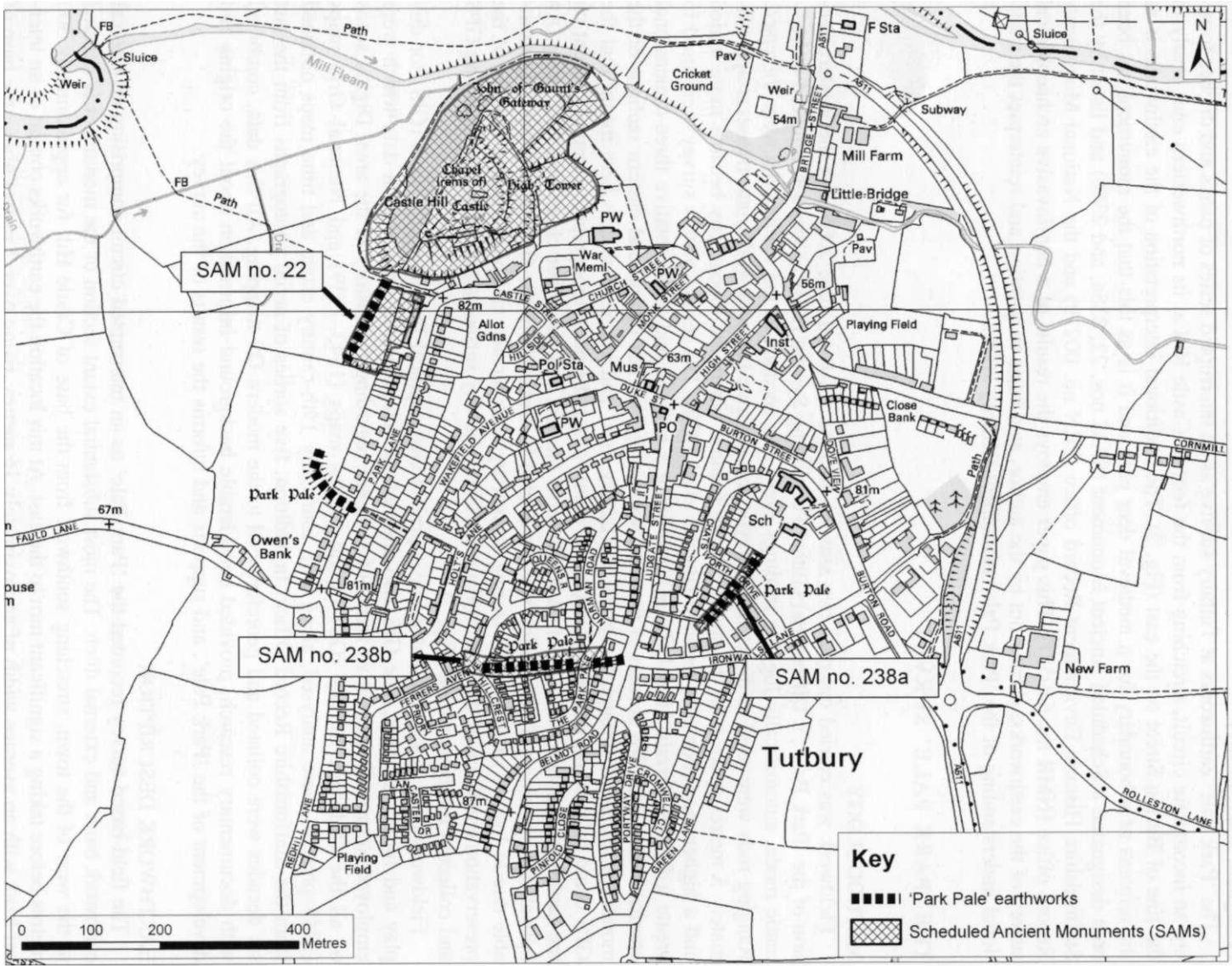


Fig. 2 Map of Tutbury showing the location of the 'Park Pale' earthworks. Base map: © Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

Fig. 3 Ground photograph showing internal bank and external ditch of earthworks at SAM no. 238b.

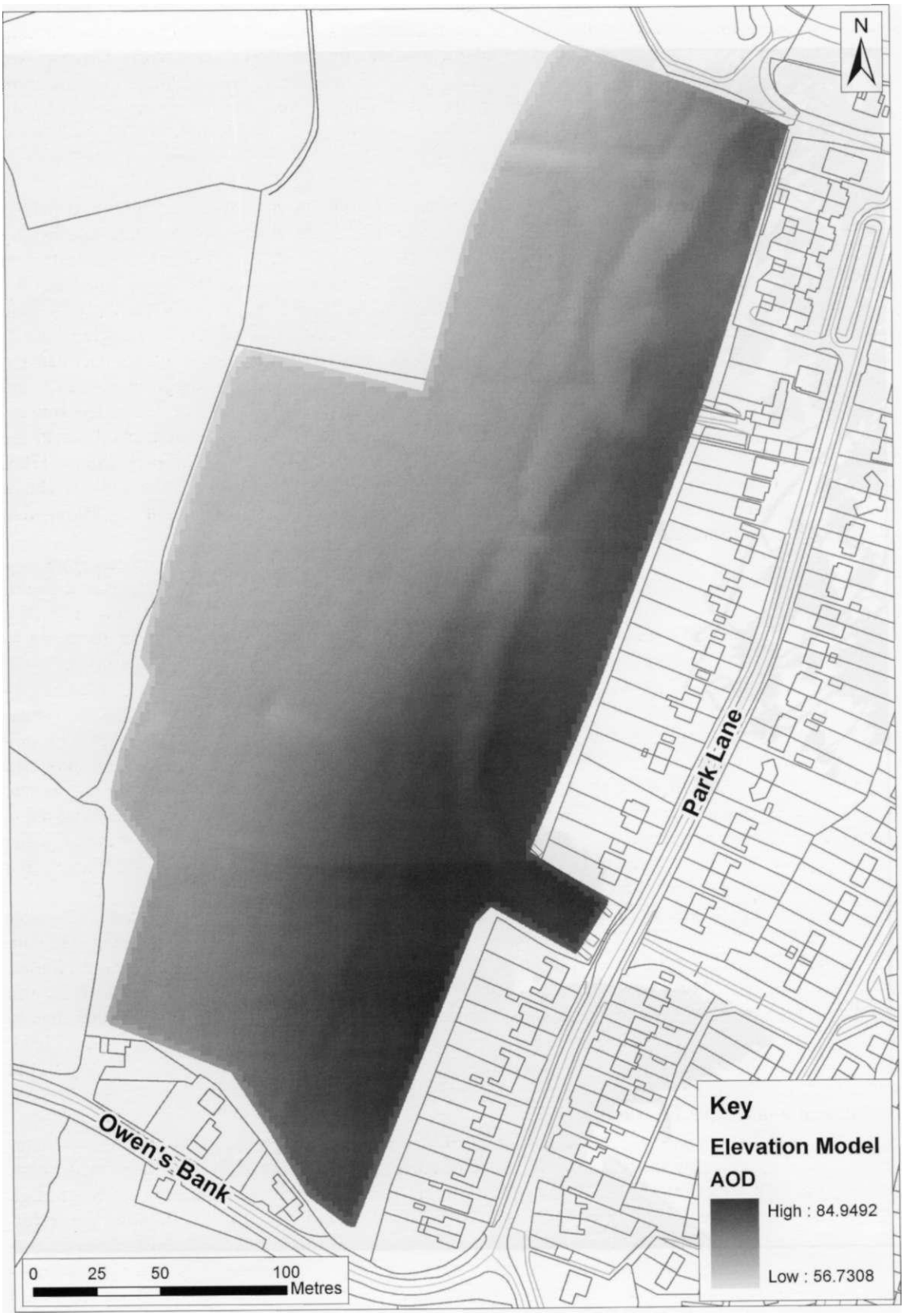


Fig. 4 Digital terrain model of the western stretch of earthworks. Base map: © Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

width and the parallel external ditch ranging between 13-16 metres wide. Although partially affected by modern landscaping, the bank still stands over 0.75 metres above the modern ground-level, with the adjacent ditch approaching 1.5 metres in depth, creating an overall elevation change between the top of the bank and base of the ditch in the region of 2.25 metres. The earthworks then continue northeast along the line of a modem alleyway, extending as far as Chatsworth Drive (SAM no. 238a). A series of low mounds in the playing fields of Richard Wakefield Primary School probably represent the northernmost surviving remains of the monument, with no further evidence for the earthworks beyond Burton Street.

THE PARK PALE INTERPRETATION

The well-established tradition that the earthworks mark the remains of a medieval park pale is not without some basis. Tutbury is listed as one of the five medieval wards into which the nearby Forest of Needwood was divided, and the parish contained five of the ten parks that were attached to the forest (Mosley 1832, 69). Of these parks, four were situated some distance away from the town of Tutbury itself, although the fifth, termed either 'Little Park', 'Tutbury Park', or 'Castle Park' at different stages of its existence, was located close to the castle walls (Tringham 2007, 39^-0; Kettle 1967, 350). The date of the original establishment of this park differs between the various documentary sources that refer to it, with Tringham (2007, 39) suggesting by 1313 and Kettle (1967, 350) stating 1329 but Mosley (1832, 75) arguing for a later date of 1374. The sources do, however, appear to agree on the approximate location of the park. A survey carried out in the reign of Elizabeth I asserts that Tutbury Castle stood within the grounds of the park (Shaw 1798, 61; Jackson 1796, 25), and Mosley (1832, 75) describes the park laid out by Duke John of Gaunt in the later 14th century as having been formed under the castle walls', again suggesting that the castle stood within the park grounds.

The 'Park Pale' earthworks are of a suitable size, form, and circumference to have been employed as the boundary for a deer park. The overall circuit appears to create a roughly circular/oval enclosure, forming the characteristic outline shape for a medieval park (Taigel and Williamson 1993, 33). In addition, the probable length of the full circuit of the earthworks, if extrapolated to return to Castle Hill, is closely comparable to the distance quoted in surveys of the park undertaken in the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I. These 16th-century surveys both state that the Castle Park at Tutbury had a circuit of approximately one mile (Mosley 1832, 139-155), compared with a measured circuit of 1.235 miles if the extant earthworks are presumed to have turned northwest along Burton Street to Castle Hill, or 1.364 miles if the boundary crossed Burton Street, as the property boundaries imply, and enclosed the High Street. The interpretation of the earthworks as a medieval deer park boundary also receives considerable further credence from the local place- and road-name evidence. There are numerous examples of 'park' related road- or farm-names in the vicinity of the earthworks on the historic mapping of the area and the modem Ordnance Survey map labels the extant stretches of earthwork as the 'Park Pale'.

Nevertheless, there are a number of problems associated with the interpretation of the earthworks as a medieval park pale. The typical arrangement of the earthworks for a park boundary was with an internal ditch and external bank, in order to prevent deer from escaping the enclosure (Cantor 1982, 73). The earthworks at Tutbury display the opposite arrangement, with an internal bank and external ditch, and therefore appear designed more to obstruct entry to the enclosure rather than to prevent escape from within. Examples of deer parks with boundaries marked by an internal bank and external ditch do exist, for example at King's Sombome in Hampshire (Hoskins 1975, 94), but this arrangement was rare and it appears more likely that the Tutbury earthworks represent a monument with a defensive function.

A more significant challenge to the park pale interpretation is the location of the earthworks themselves with respect to the medieval town. The post-conquest settlement at Tutbury was focussed on a grid pattern of streets to the northeast of the present town, comprising High Street, Lower High Street, and Monk Street (Tringham 2007, 81-2). By the early 14th century there were also references to Gutter Street (modem Ludgate Street) and Newbigging Street (modem Burton Street) further to the west. If the park at Tutbury was laid out in the early 14th century, as some of the sources suggest, then it would have been contemporary with all of these roads. This settlement pattern would mean that even if the 'Park Pale' earthworks turned northwest along the western side of Burton Street, rather than the more likely route northeast across Burton Street, the route of Ludgate Street would still bisect the enclosed area. If the earthworks originally continued northeast beyond Burton

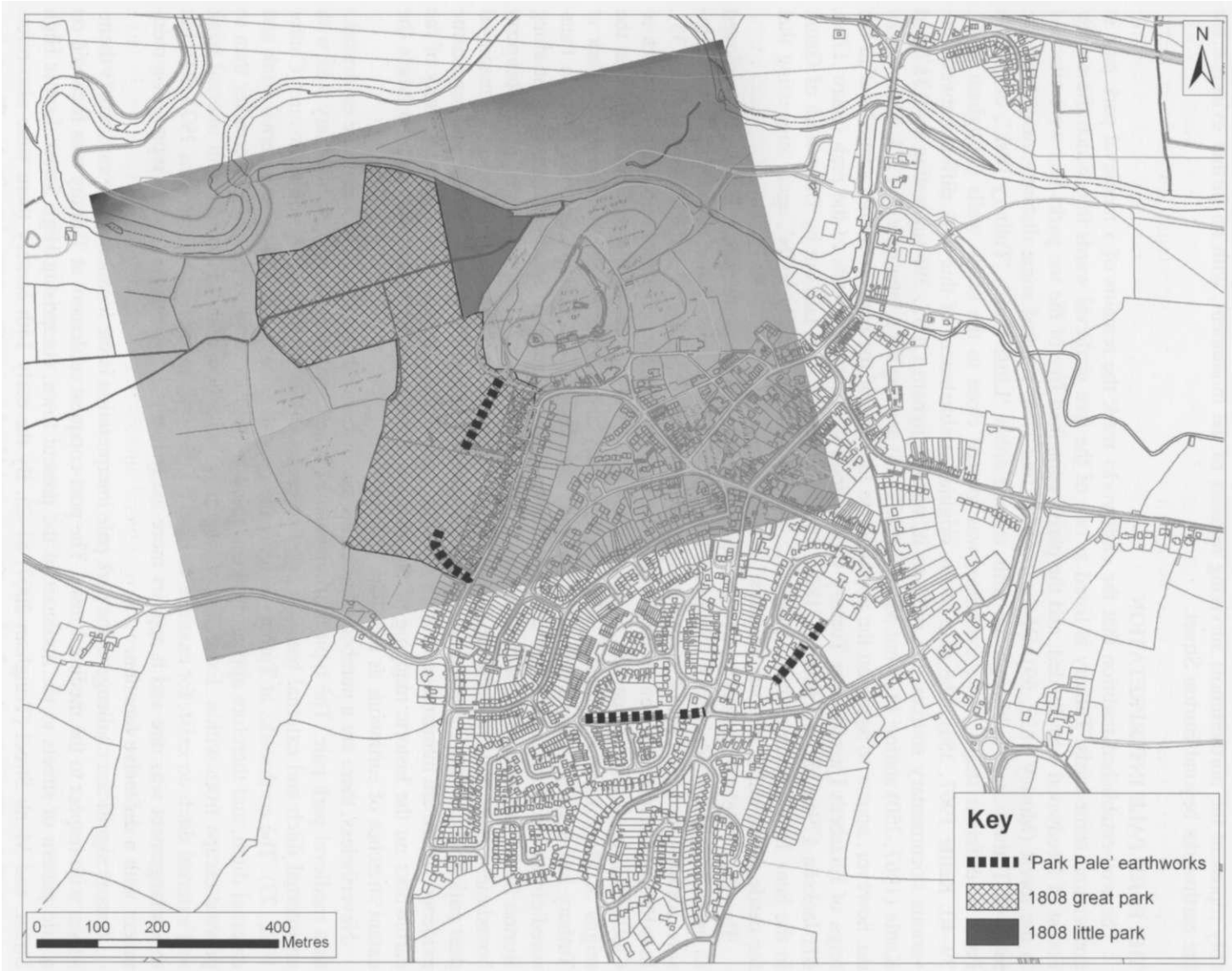


Fig. 5 Georeferenced 1808 Tutbury Estate Map with fields 'Great Park' and 'Little Park' highlighted. Base map: © Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

Street, then they would enclose High Street and Monk Street, the very heart of the medieval settlement. To have a spatial arrangement whereby part of the settlement was within the bounds of the functioning park would have been extremely impractical for the purposes of both the town population and the parkers themselves.

A possible solution to this problem is that the park at Tutbury was actually located elsewhere in the locality and that the earthworks traditionally designated as the park pale relate to a different use. This hypothesis receives significant support from the early cartographic evidence for the area, most notably the 1808 Tutbury Park estate map which displays the lands belonging to Tutbury Park, including the field-names 'Great Park' and 'Little Park' (Fig. 5). Importantly, these fields, along with all of the other land belonging to Tutbury Park, are located to the northwest of the town and outside the circuit of the 'Park Pale' earthworks. Although the map was produced centuries after the creation and use of the deer park, it does strongly suggest that the original location of the park was to the west of the town, rather than within it (Field 1993, 25-28). In addition, a recent examination of the field boundaries enclosing this area noted the presence of an extant earthwork bank following the route of the modern hedgerow, possibly indicating the location of a pale defining the extent of the deer park.

In support of this, a more in-depth consideration of the place- and road-name evidence shows that the titles relating to 'park' from the 19th-century maps are all located along the western edge of the town, with the 'park' names in the centre of the town only relating to late 20th-century housing developments. The original focus of place-name evidence, therefore, could easily be referring to the area to the west of the town, i.e. the location of Tutbury Park on the 1808 estate map, rather than the 'Park Pale' earthworks. Of a more circumstantial nature, although supportive of the same conclusion, is a survey of 1585 which records that a 'wet low-lying' portion of Tutbury Park was deemed unsuitable for horses or cattle (Boyd 1913, 581). The area enclosed by the 'Park Pale' earthworks appears from the contour data to be too high to be troubled by flooding. The area marked on the 1808 estate map is, however, on almost the same contour level as the River Dove itself and would clearly therefore have been prone to at least limited periodic inundation.

If the area marked on the 1808 estate map does record the original location of the Tutbury deer park then the pale would have enclosed a circuit of 1.292 miles, again remarkably similar to the one-mile quoted in the 16th-century surveys. The boundary would have extended from the outer, southwestern comer of the 'Park Pale' earthworks along a large curvilinear route until it met the well-defined meander of the Dove immediately to the west of Castle Hill. From here, the boundary appears to have extended east, following the line of a diversion channel of the main trunk system of the river called the 'Little Dove'. Since the 'Little Dove' is known to have been in existence probably by Domesday (Tringham 2007, 91-2), this boundary may well reflect the original northem limit of the park. Watercourses such as this are known to have been incorporated into medieval park enclosures as they could provide as effective a boundary to the deer as a substantial bank and ditch (Cantor 1982, 75). The 'Little Dove' then extends east around Castle Hill, with the ridge on which the 'Park Pale' earthworks are situated forming the eastern boundary to the park.

ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

IRON AGE HILLFORT

If the 'Park Pale' monument does not actually relate to a park boundary, then questions are therefore raised about what the substantial earthworks do relate to, and from what period they originally date. It has been tentatively suggested by several authors that the earthworks may in origin have been the defences of an Iron Age hillfort, prior to being utilised as a medieval park boundary (Wardle 2000, 4; Waller 1986, 14). Such re-use of pre-existing Iron Age defences in the Saxon and medieval periods is not unknown elsewhere in Britain (Muir 2000, 233), and although the West Midlands contains relatively few hillforts in comparison to the southern counties, those that are known are clustered along the fertile river valleys of the region, such as the Dove (Cunliffe 1991). The recovery of unstratified pre-conquest Roman pottery and two 'Celtic type' statuettes close to the castle (Neal 1988:1) are at least supportive of Iron Age activity in the area, even if they do not provide conclusive evidence of a settlement. Equally, the topographic situation of the site is characteristic of an Iron Age hillfort, being a relatively isolated point of high ground, close to a major river and with naturally steep and easily defensible slopes (Waller 1986, 2). The bank and ditch themselves

are of a suitable size and area to be the remains of a hillfort, especially the western section, and follow the upper contour of the ridge surrounding the modem town, a typical position for hillfort defences in order to maximise the defensive qualities of the natural topography (Cunliffe 2000, 34; 1991, 340).

However, the only further evidence to suggest that the origins of the 'Park Pale' monument lie in the Iron Age are a series of poorly-documented excavations carried out in 1974-1976 preceding a housing development close to the earthworks, which hint at the presence of a late prehistoric settlement. The exact location of the excavations is unknown but an analysis of the differences between the 1971 and 1982 aerial photographs for the town shows that the main areas of development were around the east-west aligned southern stretch of the monument, suggesting that the excavations were probably in this vicinity. The excavations were never formally published and the site archive has since been lost but contemporary newspaper articles provide hints as to the results. The articles record that a machine trench was dug through the 'Park Pale' earthworks, revealing two phases of construction: an original Early Iron Age defensive ditch and rampart with large stone revetments, followed by a subsequent Middle Iron Age repair and secondary construction phase (Burton Daily Mail 1976; Waller 1986, 16). This trench was then followed by the stripping of a large area within the interior of the enclosure, which unearthed numerous prehistoric stmck flints and Iron Age potsherds. No further information is available as to the results of the excavations or the whereabouts of the site archive. The interpretation of the 'Park Pale' as an Iron Age hillfort, therefore, must remain a tantalizing possibility without conclusive documented proof.

ANGLO-SAXON *BURH*

Tamworth and Stafford are the only Staffordshire boroughs recorded prior to 1086, but Palliser (1976, 146) suggests that at Tutbury, 'the bank and ditch which protect the town centre on the south may well have formed the defences of a third *burh,* unrecorded by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. Although not stated explicitly, it can be assumed that this statement refers to the 'Park Pale', since no other suitable sizeable linear earthworks are located directly south of the town itself. In support of this hypothesis, Palliser (1976, 146) argues that for there to have already been 42 traders in the Tutbury market place by 1086, as recorded in Domesday, there must have been some form of pre-existing community at the site before the Conquest. Jones and Bond (1987, 92) also suggest that Tutbury was originally an Anglo-Saxon settlement with an earthen defensive circuit that ceased to be used by the post-Conquest period, although they acknowledge that there are no further historical references or published archaeological work to confirm this. In terms of their size, morphology, and location, the 'Park Pale' earthworks could conceivably relate to the defences of an Anglo-Saxon *burh.* Saxon defences often consisted of substantial external ditches and internal ramparts, maximising the natural local topography by following the upper contours of the high ground (Hill 1987, 50-51; Piatt 1976, 19). However, the form and arrangement of the earthworks could also relate to a number of other monument types from different time periods and is alone not enough to provide a conclusive date.

Traditionally, the other main supporting evidence for Saxon occupation at Tutbury has come from the place-name itself. The terminal element of the name is derived from the Old English *burh,* usually meaning 'fortified place' or 'manor house' (Horovitz 2005, 548). Various spellings of the first element of the name have existed since Domesday, making further inferences based on place-name evidence problematic. The first element may relate to two Old English personal names, *'Tutta'* and *'Stuf,* therefore implying 'the fortified place or manor house belonging to Tutta/Stut', although it is uncertain whether these were different names for the same site or whether they record the names of two places which later merged (Horovitz 2005, 548). Nevertheless, other interpretations of the place -name also exist. Horovitz (2005, 548) argues that the name could equally derive from the Old English *'Stuf* meaning 'a hill, a stumpy hillock', or 'for' meaning 'a look-out'. Either of these names would suit the topography of Tutbury since the castle is situated on a prominent hill commanding strategic views across the Dove valley. However, the interpretation of the name is complicated even further by the fact that on sites earlier than 750 the terminal element *burh* also often referred to ecclesiastical settlements rather than defended forts or manor houses, as at Tilbury and Glastonbury (Blair 2005, 250).

Despite the differences in the specific meanings, these interpretations do all imply that there was at least some form of occupation at Tutbury during the Anglo-Saxon period. However, the *burh* element of a name can also be an Old English reference to a prehistoric defensive earthwork (Gelling

1988, 143-146), as at Maugersbury in Gloucestershire. Therefore, although the name itself is derived from Old English, it is not necessarily a reliable indicator of a Saxon settlement.

MEDIEVAL TOWN BOUNDARY

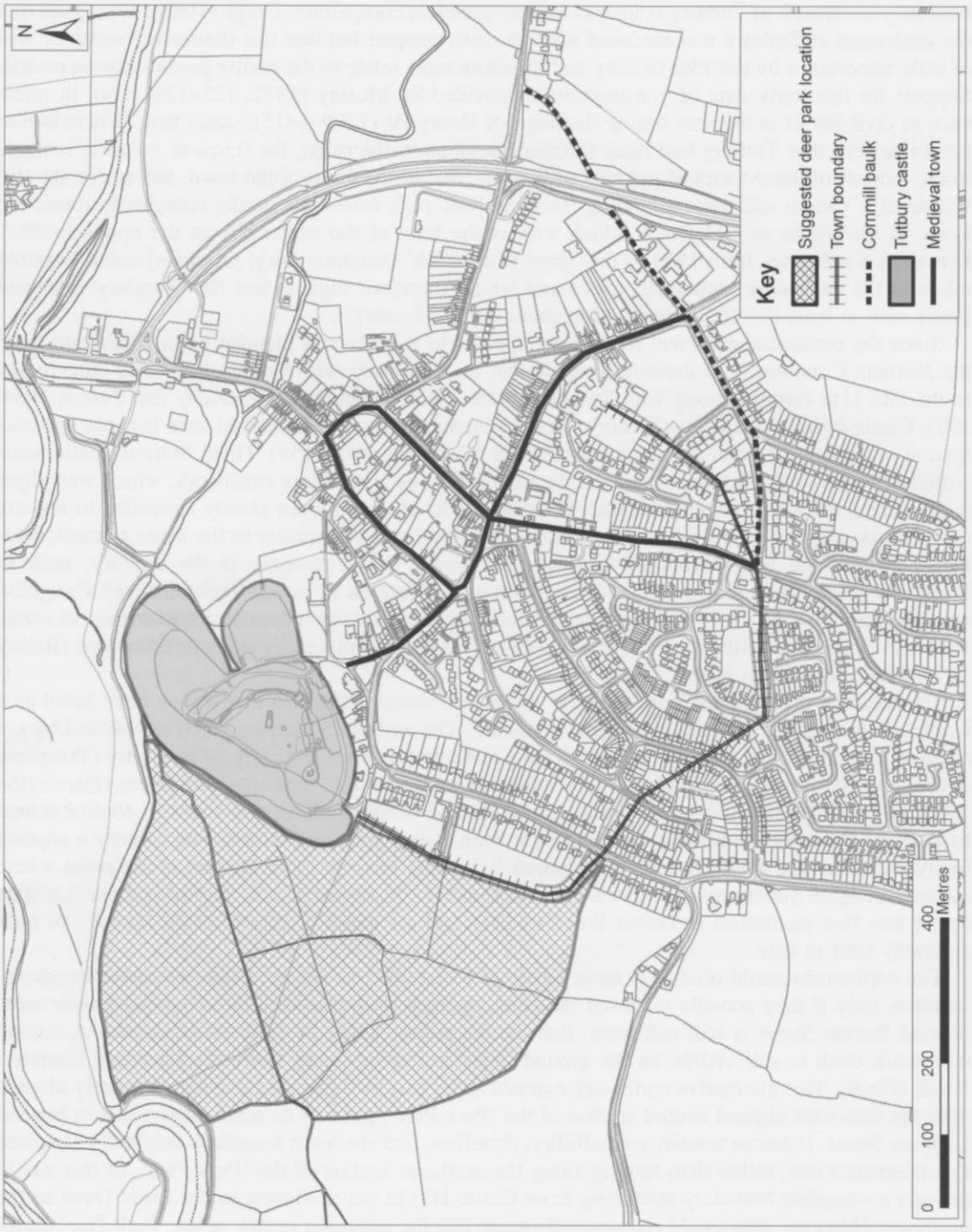
Although the 'Park Pale' earthworks do not appear to reflect the remains of a medieval deer park boundary, they may still relate to the medieval occupation of Tutbury. Evidence for a medieval town boundary earthwork at Tutbury is inexact but nevertheless compelling. Drage (1987:129) argues that the settlement at Tutbury was enclosed with an earth rampart but that this defensive boundary was of little importance by the 13th century and therefore must relate to the earlier post-Conquest period. Support for this early date of construction is provided by Mosley (1832, 125-126) who, in reference to civil unrest in the area during the reign of Henry IV (1399-1413), states that: 'There is reason to believe that Tutbury had been fortified previous to the reign; for frequent mention is made in the records of those times of the bars or barriers, and of the gates of the town, and traces are still visible of a vallum and foss, extending from the little park below the castle, completely round the town, to the Fleam or Old Dove, which washes the base of the castle hill on the opposite side'. However, a reference from 1559 to the 'great town ditch' *(magnum burgi fossatum)* could possibly relate to the earthwork mentioned above and would therefore suggest that the boundary remained intact until at least the 16th century (Tringham 2007, 81 note).

Since the medieval settlement of Tutbury appears to have been a planned town originating with the Norman Conquest, it is entirely possible that the boundary earthwork was actually constructed in the late 11th century, along with Tutbury Castle itself (Welch 1992, 4; Darby and Terrett 1954, 207). Castle-boroughs, such as Tutbury, would frequently have an embanked area laid out in anticipation of the full extent of the nascent settlement (Creighton 2005, 159). These 'burgus' settlements would often be semi-circular in plan and be surrounded by a boundary earthwork, which was physically connected to the seigneurial site. The earthworks at Tutbury are clearly appended to the site of the castle at their northwestern extent and their arrangement is similar to the plans of motte-and-bailey castles and their associated settlement defences seen elsewhere in the country, such as Richard's Castle in Herefordshire and Laughton-en-le-Morthen in South Yorkshire (see Creighton and Higham 2004, fig.1). It is also not uncommon for medieval town boundaries to remain as earthworks, as appears to be the case at Tutbury, rather than being replaced by stone fortifications (Barley 1975, 60; Turner 1971, 54).

The location of the 'Park Pale' to some extent corroborates the idea that it may have acted as a medieval town defence or administrative boundary. The earthworks appear to be intersected by the route of Ludgate Street, a road known to at least partially date from the early 14th century (Tringham 2007, 82). The road-name 'Ludgate' is a reference to the postern gate of a settlement (Harrington 1984, 82) and therefore suggests that a gate existed somewhere along this street to control access to Tutbury. Since the earthworks appear to have been in existence by the early 14th century it appears likely that this gate would have been required for access through the boundary at the point where modem Ludgate Street crosses Ironwalls Lane. However, it should also be considered that Ludgate Street was first mentioned as Gutter Street in 1314 and the name 'Ludgate' could actually be considerably later in date.

The earthworks could obviously have functioned as a town boundary, either defensive or administrative, only if they actually enclosed the contemporary medieval settlement but since their route beyond Burton Street is still unknown, that interpretation cannot be fully substantiated. A second earthwork ditch is still visible on the ground today extending along Ironwalls Lane and Commill Baulk (Fig.6). This alternative earthwork extends as far east as Commill Lane and is exactly aligned with the east-west aligned central section of the 'Park Pale', prior to its north-eastward turn beyond Ludgate Street. It has to remain a possibility, therefore, that the town boundary originally followed this alternate route, rather than turning along the northeast section of the 'Park Pale', as this would provide a complete boundary stretching from Castle Hill in the northwest to the Little Dove to the northeast. However, this would consequently mean that the northeast stretch of the 'Park Pale' earthworks would not relate to the same overall feature as the other sections, at least at the time when the town boundary was in use.

Several possibilities exist to explain this situation, although they all require further work to be carried out to ascertain which is correct. The 'Park Pale' earthworks could all relate to an earlier period, prior to the medieval occupation of the site, but with the western and southern stretches later incorporated into the medieval town boundary, when that was constructed. It is also possible that


N
Key
Suggested deer park location
Town boundary
Commill baulk
Tutbury castle
Medieval town
0
100
200
400
Metres

both the 'Park Pale' and the earthwork along Cornmill Baulk are contemporary but formed two separate boundaries. In support of this hypothesis is the name 'Cornmill Baulk' itself. 'Baulk' was the term used to describe a grassed-over boundary between furlongs in open fields, which was often created to provide either access tracks through agricultural land or extended grazing areas (Muir 2004, 8,13). Commill Baulk, therefore, could be a reference to an earthwork bank used to provide access across the ploughlands between the southern entrance to the medieval settlement and the com mill located around a kilometre to the east.

A third possibility is that the two enclosures actually represent different phases of the same town boundary, a suggestion supported somewhat by the documentary evidence for the town which records several periods of fluctuating economic and political success (Mosley 1832, 126). From the 14th century onwards the settlement at Tutbury is believed to have gradually decreased in importance and size, until by 1798 it was 'only worthy of the name of a pleasant village' (Palliser 1976, 154). This could also help to explain why there is such a large amount of open space within the interior of the 'Park Pale' earthworks on all of the maps and aerial photographs until as late as the 1970s. Although town defences could often include extensive open areas within their boundary, in order to maximise the natural topographic qualities of the land (Jones and Bond 1987, 107), it should not be assumed that the settlement has not shifted location or contracted since the boundary was initially set. Equally, the area laid out for the settlement at the time of the foundation of the castle may have been simply an overestimation of the size to which the town would develop. The line of town defences, or even administrative boundaries, did not always remain static throughout the history of a settlement, and the two sets of earthworks may therefore be a reflection of the changing fortunes of Tutbury since its foundation.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the most important questions when attempting to record and interpret a monument such as the Tutbury 'Park Pale' has to be whether the various stretches of earthwork all relate to a single phase or function. Extant earthworks may appear homogenous in form and layout today, but could plausibly reflect a long history of use and re-use (Bowden 2003, 2). Although superficially the 'Park Pale' earthworks form a single continuous circuit, there is compelling evidence to suggest that they also represent a series of distinct phases of construction and adaptation. The westernmost section of earthwork, which extends south from Castle Hill before turning east into the town, is appreciably more massive than the other stretches throughout the town. This difference in scale could of course simply reflect the differential preservation of the earthworks in a location outside of the main development area. However, this section of earthwork is not directly aligned with the next extant stretch in the circuit. The 1st edition OS mapping of the area shows that, although the earthwork was continuous in the mid 19th century, there was a pronounced change of direction between Park Lane and Ferrers Avenue. There is no obvious topographic variation present on the ground to account for such a shift in alignment and one plausible explanation may therefore be that this represents the location where two earthworks of differing phases joined together. The more massive area to the west follows the clearest contour line in the area and could represent the partial outline of the possible Iron Age defences described above. The area to the east appears to be the remains of an earthwork constructed to mark the boundary of the medieval settlement associated with the foundation of the castle. It would have been a relatively simple task to have adapted the pre-existing Iron Age earthworks to form the western edge of the settlement boundary and this modification of use may help to explain the complexity of the 'Park Pale' monument and the misinterpretations over its origins.

Although the fieldwork and research based on the 'Park Pale' earthworks at Tutbury has not proved able to assign a definite date or function to the monument, the undertaking has provided the rather unexpected result of largely dismissing the traditional hypothesis that it reflects the remains of a medieval park boundary. The form of the earthworks is far more suited to a defensive function and the location of the boundary, apparently extending around the heart of the medieval town, does not appear to be at all appropriate for a castle park. The fields located to the west of the castle and town, as marked on the Tutbury Park estate map of 1808, instead provide a far more suitable setting for the original park.

The 'Park Pale' monument, therefore, appears to represent a more complex, multiphase earthwork boundary. The more massive section to the west of the town may well mark the location of

suggested Iron Age defences, which were later adapted and incorporated into the line of the medieval town boundary. The form, location, and size of the earthworks would imply that this boundary was primarily defensive in nature, although it would also have clearly carried important legal and administrative connotations. With the medieval settlement boundary lying to the southeast of the castle, and the deer park to the west, the spatial arrangement of castle, town, and park would correspond with a fairly common medieval layout. The castle would essentially be bracketed by the town to one side and the park to the other, creating a manufactured landscape whereby the lord kept his private environment separate from the general population, whilst still being able to maintain control over both (Fig. 6) (Creighton 2005, 193). The town boundary, known from documentary sources to have been probably contemporary with or constructed soon after the foundation of the castle, may itself have also possessed different phases of creation and use. The earthwork along Commill Baulk aligns well with the central section of the 'Park Pale' and could demonstrate evidence for an alternative boundary or the fluctuation in size of the post-Conquest settlement, requiring different boundary lines at differing periods. Further, ideally invasive, archaeological work is now necessary to substantiate the findings of this survey and to provide a fuller understanding of the history and varying functions of the 'Park Pale' earthworks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Keith Challis and Dr Steven Bassett commented on earlier drafts of this paper and provided valuable additions. Dr Gareth Williams provided important information regarding the documentary sources relating to the history of Tutbury and Mrs Lesley Smith, the castle's curator, kindly permitted access to the castle grounds during the fieldwork. Thanks also to Tim Evans for assisting with the topographic survey and to Glynn Barratt for initially suggesting the earthworks as a suitable focus of study.

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A TEMPLAR CHAPEL AT ONNELEY

MICHAEL FRADLEY

A chapel at Onneley, in Madeley parish in north-west Staffordshire, for which documentary references occur between the late 14th century and the early 17th century, belonged to the medieval military orders of the Knights Templar and subsequently the Knights Hospitaller. It fell into decay following the Reformation in the 16th century, but a well-preserved earthwork platform has been identified at SJ 7507 4410 as the probable site, and an argument will be put forward in this paper that it may have originated in the 13th century when the Knights Templar were resident at their preceptory in Keele.

ONNELEY CHAPEL

The Staffordshire manor of Onneley was probably included in the late Saxon royal grant of an estate at Madeley to the bishop of Worcester in AD975, although it was not mentioned explicitly (Hooke 1983, 106-9). Hooke suggests that the boundaries described in this charter include a meeting place of 'councillors' at the junction of the county borders of Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire (SJ 747 445), near to the site discussed below which implies that this location may have been of some importance in the pre-Conquest landscape. In the Domesday survey of 1086 the manor was recorded as part of Shropshire amongst a block of manors held by the Malbank family, although by the time it was next mentioned in the 12th century it had been transferred to Staffordshire *(Domesday Book* 1986, 257c).

The involvement of the Knights Templar in Onneley probably began prior to 1185, by which date they had been granted land worth 2s in the manor by Henry II (VCH 1970, 267). Land in Onneley was also granted by William Dodde to the Templars when they were established at Keele; a Thomas son of William Dodd is named in a local document in 1310, so the grant to Keele may date to the later 13th century (Wrottesley 1888, 20; Studd 1986, 7). It is unclear what use the Templars would have made of this property until the early 13th century, as Keele itself was leased out for a decade from 1206 and the preceptory itself not organised until 1216 at the earliest; it would seem most likely, therefore, that the Templars also leased their outlying lands at this early date (ibid.). After the suppression of the Knights Templar in 1308, the Keele estate passed through royal hands to Thomas, earl of Lancaster and lord of Newcastle-under-Lyme, until finally reaching the Hospitallers in 1324. They held it as a remote estate from their commandery at Halston in Shropshire (VCH 1970, 268).

Documentary reference to a chapel in Onneley does not occur until the Keele estate, with its appurtenances in Onneley and elsewhere, had come into the hands of the Hospitallers. In the late 14th century the Keele estate was run by a manorial reeve and staffed by a group of chaplains numbering up to three or four at any one time, and one of whose roles was the maintenance of the Chapel of the Virgin at Onneley (Studd 1986, 13). Specific documentation for this chapel is otherwise limited; although an inventory of the chapel holdings was recorded in the mid-16th century, referring to a silver chalice and bells (TNA, E 177/8/24, f. 3).

It would seem that this was the same church as that shown at Onneley on the maps of Saxton and Speed in the 16th century and early 17th century respectively. However, after its appearance in those maps Onneley chapel appears to have become redundant, finally having lost its purpose in the post-Reformation landscape. The reappearance of the title 'Onneley Chapel' on the Old Series 1" edition of the Ordnance Survey in the 1830s may be the last vestiges of the surviving place-name, when it appears to identify Yewtree Farm (SJ 7514 4392) as Onneley Chapel, as it is otherwise absent from the post-17th century historical record. The 1838 Madeley tithe award map, however, depicts a number of fields in Onneley listed as 'Chapel Field' and 'Chapel Meadow', while a small enclosure opposite these fields is listed as 'Garden Piece' and today survives as a raised earthwork which is the suggested site of the chapel (SRO, D. 3412/1/81).

Located in the south-east comer of a pasture field off School Lane opposite Cherry Tree Cottage, the earthwork consists of a sub-rectangular platform measuring c.20m by c.25m and raised c.0.5m above the surrounding field. The slope on the south side of the mound is barely perceptible, and was probably levelled out when the field boundary on the south side was established in the early

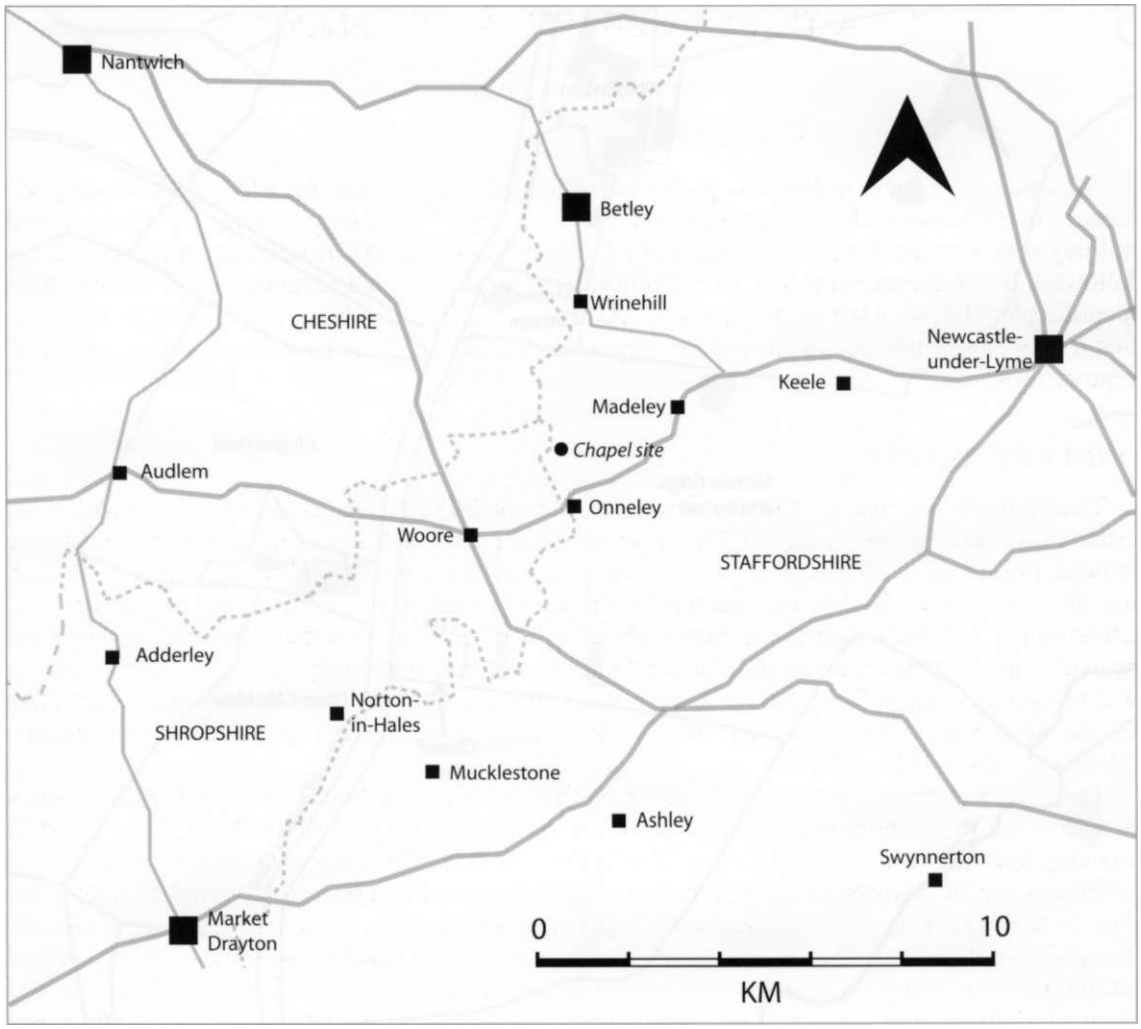

Fig. 1 Location map

20th century. The platform is aligned east-west and is the only notable feature in a field otherwise covered by post-medieval ridge and furrow which skirts the northern side of the platform and could have potentially eroded the original shape of the earthwork. Whether there were still upstanding remains when the field was cultivated, or whether the earthwork was enclosed or simply too inconvenient to plough, this situation has meant that the chapel site itself has survived remarkably well with only minor erosion caused by livestock and agricultural land management. The chapel itself may have been built in stone or timber-framed; the latter would be interesting as the surviving chapel at the Hospitaller's preceptory at Halston which has been dated to 1437-8 is also a timber-framed structure (Newman and Pevsner 2006, 280).

On the eastern side of the chapel are the remnants of a former water channel running from south to north. The slight meander of this dry water course defines the eastern side of the earthwork, and it seems likely that any erosion that it has caused may post-date the abandonment of the chapel. The slight cut-away of the north-western comer of the earthwork may have been an original feature extenuated by the ridge and furrow ploughing which pulls in across this face. The earthwork's location immediately adjacent to School Lane suggests that the road may itself be of medieval date, joining Onneley with the small medieval market settlement at Betley. The road to Betley has been relegated in importance within the local infrastructure since the latter settlement lost its role as a market settlement in the early post-medieval period.

A TEMPLAR CHAPEL?

It is the contention of this paper that the chapel is likely to date back originally to the 13th century when land at Onneley was still under the tenure of the Knights Templar. There are several reasons

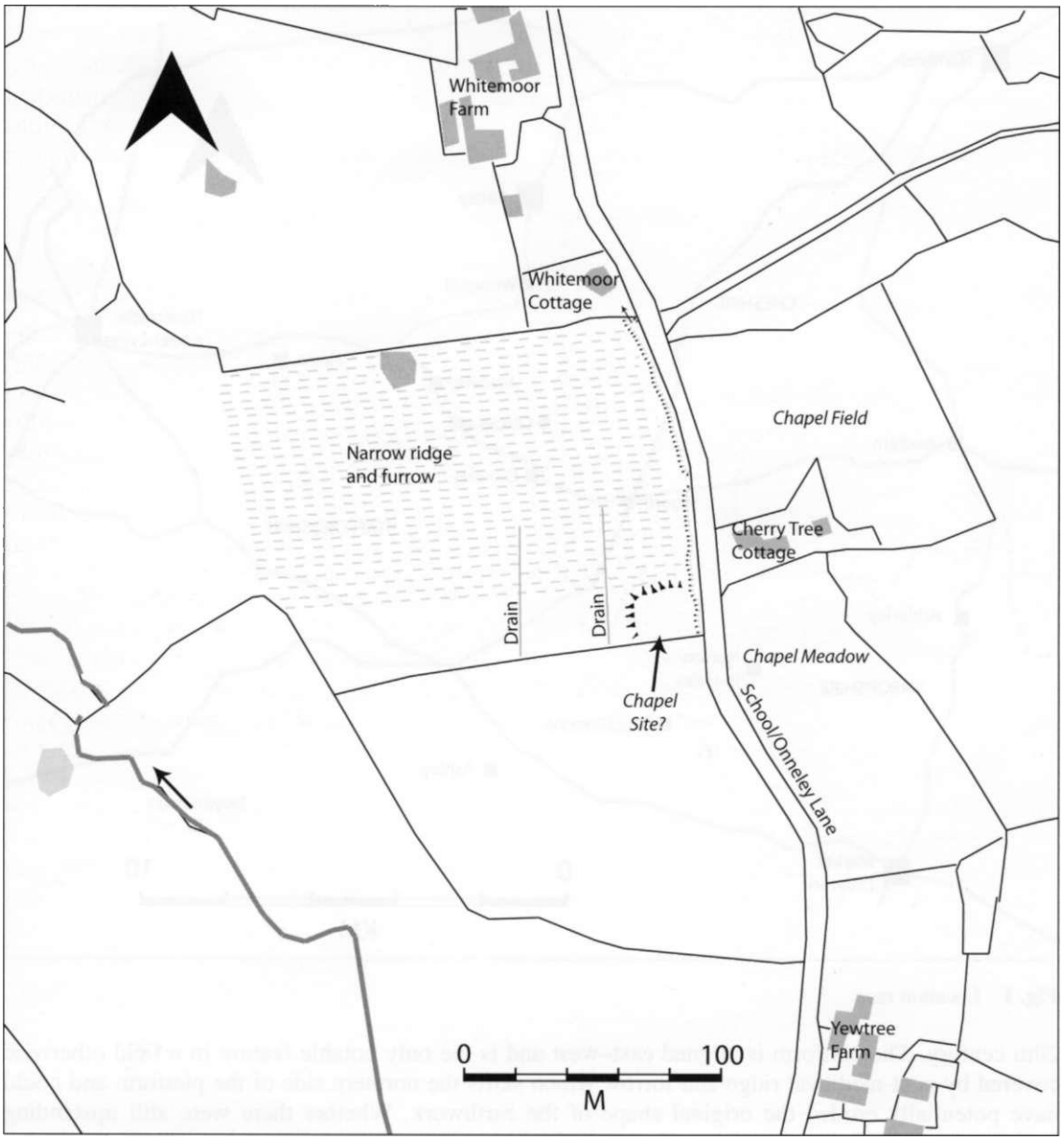

Fig. 2 Suspected chapel earthwork site

behind this assumption. Firstly, when the Knights Hospitaller finally took over the Keele estate in 1324, it was administered remotely from Halston and was provided with minimal staff and investment. By the 1370s the Hosptallers abandoned the task of farming Keele directly and the estate was transferred to the mother house at Clerkenwell, and this can be taken as further evidence of a lack of interest or involvement in Keele (Studd 1986, 13). The crusading zeal was also very much in decline by the 14th century, and it is such zeal (and the donations and charity that it created) that would have stimulated and maintained chapels like Onneley, which were linked solely to the military orders rather than the system of parochial care. It would appear more likely that Onneley was a Templar foundation, possibly on the land derived from the royal grant by Henry II, and it would seem equally likely that the chapel was built in the 13th century when the Templar estate centre of Keele was finally established (Studd 1986, p. 7).

The evidence would also suggest that the chapel, despite lacking the support and tithes of the parochial system, continued to be a viable foundation throughout the medieval period and so it was still identified on maps in the post-Reformation period. It is presumed that the Hospitallers continued to maintain this establishment, although it is not impossible that it may have come into the hands of another, undocumented party. The long-term survival of the chapel would appear

surprising given its remote location, as well as the low density of population and relative poverty in this corner of Staffordshire and its adjacent counties. An unqualified documentary reference also records the existence of a chapel at Onneley in 1549 and that this was a pilgrimage chapel unattached to the parochial church at Madeley (NMR number: SJ 74 SE 2. Staffordshire Historical Collections 1915, 184). If this reference is genuine then it may imply that a dedicated function as a pilgrimage site at the chapel may too have sustained this establishment through the medieval period.

CONCLUSION

The earthwork platform at Onneley is almost certainly the rare and well-preserved site of the documented Chapel of the Virgin, and although we have evidence only that it was staffed by the Hospitallers from the 14th century, it has been argued in this paper that it was probably a 13th-century foundation of the Knights Templar at Keele, with the aims of providing spiritual aid and bringing in funds from the dispersed settlements of the surrounding countryside, as well as market settlements like Betley. The site formed part of the dispersed pattern of local settlement, and its solitary appearance is unlikely to have changed since the chapel was first built. The chapel probably fell out of use by the end of the 16th century after which the built fabric decayed or was dismantled, although the site itself was avoided by subsequent ploughing episodes. As such it is likely to be remarkably well-preserved archaeologically despite the lack of any standing remains.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

TNA: The National Archives, Kew
NMR: National Monument Record, Swindon
SRO: Staffordshire Record Office, Stafford

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS CONSULTED

F22.540.RAF.992. Frame 0088 (20 Jan 1953). Held at the NMRC, Swindon.

MAPS

C. Saxton, *Map of Staffordshire* (1577)
J. Speed, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611)
Ordnance Survey 1" 1st Edition. LXXIII, sheet 33: Market Drayton (1833)

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CIVIC IMPROVEMENT AND USE OF BRICK: A CASE STUDY OF TAMWORTH, 1572-1760

MIKE KINGMAN

In many towns and cities in England urban redevelopment after 1660 is closely linked to the replacement of timber and thatch by brick and tile. Traditional explanations for the adoption of brick are essentially pragmatic: for Jones and Falkus the substitution of brick for timber was a sensible reaction to the dangers inherent in closely packed timber-framed houses with thatched roofs standing along narrow twisting streets with clusters of outhouses, bams, and workshops behind them, and the same authors have suggested that the numerous urban fires in the 17th and 18th centuries provided positive opportunities for rebuilding in a material which they regarded as both cheaper than timber and also considerably more fireproof.[1] For some historians, however, the apparent coincidence, after 1660, of the increased use of brick and reduced building in timber has suggested a direct relationship. They have claimed that the change to brick was inspired by a 'timber famine' and a consequent rise in the price of building timber and at the same time a fall in the price of bricks.[2] It is certainly likely that in many areas small brick houses were cheaper than the equivalent timber-framed buildings,[3] but in Staffordshire there is little evidence of a shortage of building timber and timber buildings continued to be erected well after 1660. At Edingale, for example, Church Farm House is dated 1664 and is built in the common timber vernacular.[4] In Seighford the Holly Bush Inn is convincingly dated 1675, and Walton Grange in Gnosall bears the date 1695. Institute Farm, Church Eaton, has been described as 'a good surviving example of a low status domestic building of the later 17th or 18th century',[5] whilst at Rolleston on Dove there is a row of three cottages which were built as such in the early 18th century and which are timber-framed. Doxey Wood Cottage at Dunston is an early 18th-century timber-framed cottage and 25**A** Newport Street, Brewood, is also late 17th- or early 18th-century date.[6] A carpenter's contract at Sandon in 1709 describes the rebuilding of a detached kitchen with new cruck blades: 'one pair of blades 12**'/2** foot long 11 inches broad at the foot 8 inches at the head'.[7] Even later, the Cross Keys Inn at Hednesford is dated to 1746.[8]

The essentially pragmatic explanations for the adoption of brick noted above have been supplemented by the concept of an 'urban renaissance' in provincial towns. In 1989 Peter Borsay published his influential study, *The English Urban Renaissance,* in which he attempted to identify the special characteristics of late 17th- and 18th-century urban communities.[9] He investigated the pursuit of status, improvements to townscapes, and the increasing provision of cultural facilities, 'specifically designed, in their organisation and ethos, to promote sociability.'[10] He defined the 'urban renaissance' in terms of a 'leisure revolution' in which agricultural surpluses, commercial and industrial profits, inherited legacies, and marriage settlements supported an increasing desire for sophisticated facilities, luxury consumer products, and improved town amenities.

There is some disagreement about the quality and intensity of the provision of leisure. Angus Mclnnes, for example, has criticised Borsay's concept of an 'urban renaissance', arguing that it implies a wider diffusion of the 'leisure revolution' within the urban system than was in practice

1 E. L. Jones and M. E. Falkus, 'Urban Impovement and the English Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in P. Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century Town, A Reader in English Urban History* (London, 1990), 120-121.

2 For example, A. Clifton-Taylor, *The Pattern of English Building* (London, 1962), 215; R. J. Brown, *English Farmhouses* (London, 1985). 231. A recently composed price index for Staffordshire bricks contains no evidence for a decline in brick prices between 1660 and 1760: M. J. Kingman, 'Brickmaking and brick building in Staffordshire, 1500-1760' (unpublished University of Keele Ph.D. thesis, 2006), 130.

3 R. Lucas, 'When did Norfolk cross the brick threshold?', *Vernacular Architecture,* 28 (1997), 75; P. M. Hunneyball, *Architecture and Image-Building in Seventeenth-century Hertfordshire* (Oxford, 2004), 14; P. Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London, 2004), 70.

4 N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Staffordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1974, reprinted 1996), 127. At Windle Hill, Thurvaston, Derbyshire, a large timber-framed manor house was built in the 1660s: M. Craven and M. Stanley, *The Lost Houses of Derbyshire* (Ashbourne, 2002), 93.

5 J. Shryane, *Buildings of Staffordshire, Timber-Framed Buildings of Stafford District* (Staffordshire County Planning and Development Department, n.d. but 21985), 46.

6 South Staffordshire District Council, List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (1986-992), 32.

7 Staffordshire Record Office [SRO], D. 1798/664/231.

8 Pevsner, *Staffordshire,* 145.

9 P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town* (Oxford, 1989).

10 Ibid. 268.

the case. Based on his study of Shrewsbury, Mclnnes has argued that the impact of the growth in leisure was concentrated on a particular type of town, and that the sweeping theory of an urban renaissance 'spreads the jam too thinly'. For him 'this cannot hide the fact that the majority of towns seem to have been largely unaffected by the leisure revolution.' His tentative conclusion is that 'the century from 1660 to 1760 saw not the urban renaissance but rather the emergence of the leisure town':" 'An early eighteenth century assembly room here and a scatter of classical houses there do not necessarily constitute an urban renaissance.'[12]

Despite their argument both Borsay and Mclnnes are agreed that the crucial visual introduction, whether to an 'urban renaissance' or to a 'leisure revolution' was that of brick. For Borsay, 'to contemporary observers brick became a powerful symbol of a community's status and economic prosperity and that where stone was easily available brick could acquire a social kudos of its own.'[13] For Mclnnes in his analysis of Shrewsbury, 'in many ways the critical feature of this building transformation was the change in constructional materials. There was a decisive move away from timber and thatch and an increasingly heavy deployment of brick and tile.' He continues, 'the brick revolution was inseparably linked with the leisure revolution' and that 'where tenants of new houses can be identified they are gentry, professional people or wealthy traders [and] brick houses ... signal the arrival of the leisure town.'[14] Both writers emphasise the significance of brick as an indication of status, social prestige, the cultural outlook of the builder, and his/her financial standing. Social identity, however, was created not only through material culture and consumer behaviour but also by the builder's withdrawal from a body of traditional shared values and cultural forms. In withdrawing from popular culture patrons of brick embraced a second force, that of cultural centralisation, through the adoption of national, "polite" architecture as opposed to regional, "traditional" or "vernacular" forms of culture. This is reflected in the shift from common building materials and the craft tradition to building materials and architectural styles shared only by members of the upper and middling social groups. The choice of brick was not necessarily a pragmatic decision based on availability, price, and local geology but often reflected a personal or socio-economic collective view about the message implicit in such a choice.

In 1660 there were approximately sixty brick-built buildings in Staffordshire.[15] They ranged from churches, institutional buildings, and farmhouses to major aristocratic houses such as Beaudesert and Ingestre Halls. The majority were substantial, expensive, and reflected the cultural aspirations of a privileged minority of the county population. With the exception of about eight early brick buildings inspired by Lichfield Cathedral clergy,[16] the Great Hall in Wolverhampton, and the 'Brick House' at Burton-upon-Trent, brick buildings were located almost exclusively in the rural areas of the county. Brick was therefore a relatively late arrival in urban Staffordshire and it is doubtful whether there was even one brick building in the county town of Stafford before 1667.[17] Other than the Great Hall the first brick house recorded in Wolverhampton was in 1675,[18] and in Dudley the earliest surviving brick house is one of 1703, built for Hugo and Joyce Diron in Priory Street.[19]

Tamworth in the mid 17th century possessed few of those qualities which would suggest that it had the potential to develop into an attractive and prosperous market town. Its position, straddling the county boundaries of Staffordshire and Warwickshire, denied it any regional administrative functions, and there is little evidence of any substantial industry: the northern end of the adjacent East Warwickshire Coalfield was exploited on only a small scale and the town stood remote from any navigable river. Its population was small at below 1,000 and its major building, the Castle, which might have served as a centre of consumption, was ignored and neglected by its two successive owners between 1688 and 1754. Yet by 1760 this unprepossessing little community, so typical of

11 A. Mclnnes, "The emergence of a leisure town: Shrewsbury. 1660-1760', *Past & Present,* 120 (1988), 84.

12 A. Mclnnes , 'Reply' in P. Borsay and A. Mclnnes, 'The emergence of a leisure town: or an urban renaissance? [Debate] *Past & Present,* 126 (1990), 197.

13 Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance,* 55.

14 Mclnnes, 'The emergence of a leisure town', 74—5.

15 Kingman, 'Brickmaking and brick building in Staffordshire', 25^-0.

16 St John's almshouses and Dr Milley's almshouses were in the city. The other buildings including the Cathedral library were situated in the Close itself.

17 F. W. B. Charles, *The Swan Hotel, Greengate St. Stafford* (1966; copy in William Salt Library, Stafford). The 230 Stafford wills proved between 1660 and 1709 included only one bricklayer (1674) and two masons (1698) and (1700): M. Rowlands, 'Houses and People in Stafford at the end of the Seventeenth Century', *The Stafford Historical and Civic Society* (1965-67), 46-67.

18 G. P. Mander, *A History of Wolverhampton,* ed. N. W. Tildesley (Wolverhampton, 1960), 117.

19 J. S. Roper, *Dudley: The Town in the Eighteenth Century* (Dudley, 1968), 6.

what Dyer has called 'the smaller and more nondescript inland settlements',[20] had through improvements, refurbishments, new welfare institutions and civic buildings significantly enhanced its physical image. The chief element of this urban redevelopment was the improvement in the environment as building styles were translated quite deliberately from the vernacular to the classical. The most obvious feature of this change of emphasis was the replacement of timber-framing and thatch by brick and tile. The overall aim was to attract a larger number of wealthy visitors and residents who would stimulate demand for goods and services and invest in the community.

There is little evidence of the use of brick in Tamworth before 1660 other than in the Moat House of 1572,[21] whilst a limited rebuilding in the Castle (the inventory of Sir Henry Ferrers' goods taken at his death in 1608) included 'brick, tile lime and lathe' valued at 10s.[22] A deed of October 1668 included a bam called 'Brickbarne near Motehall' and being so identified it would suggest that the use of brick made it a distinctive and unusual building.[23] Yet in 1698 when Celia Fiennes visited Tamworth, she described it approvingly as 'a neate town built of brick and mostly new' which iook'd like Litchfield but not a quarter so big a market town.'[24] Her comments suggest that noticeable building and rebuilding had already taken place, but the portrayal of the town as 'built of brick' and 'mostly new' is almost certainly an exaggeration, for the town's Common Hall minutes contain many references to 'old' and 'decayed' houses still standing in the years following her visit and as late as 1829 Hamel's lithograph of Cole Hill shows a mixture of timber and brick houses.[25] (Fig. 1)

Michael Reed has recently suggested that a useful approach to an understanding of the topography of a town is to consider it in terms of the three components of private space (mainly houses and gardens), public space (streets, lanes, and open places such as market squares), and institutional space (this includes not just space but also the buildings which were the responsibility of administrative, business, and cultural organisations such as the town hall, schools, and almshouses).[26] Although the distinctions are not always sharp, this tripartite categorisation provides a useful framework for the analysis of the redevelopment of Tamworth as its municipal leaders were aware that all three elements needed to be improved to increase the town's wealth and prosperity. Between 1667 and 1760 investments in social and commercial amenities such as Market Street, the Town Hall, centrally placed shops, schools, and an almshouse and also in private and communally owned housing significantly transformed the appearance of the town. Much of the evidence for these alterations to the town's fabric is contained in 'The Book of Common Hall', a manuscript record of decisions taken by the Corporation on matters concerning property held by it and on applications by townsfolk for alterations to their property and property boundaries.[27] The briefly-recorded decisions of the Common Hall were then legally expanded into formal leases, a few of which survive in the town's archives.

It is difficult to date specifically the start of this policy. In 1664 the Common Hall noted that a lease soon to be issued required the tenant to 'build a good and sufficient fabricke' but contained no reference to the size of the building or to the use of brick.[28] It may, however, be significant that a fire was recorded in the town in that year,[29] and perhaps this was an incentive to promote brick building. In 1667 the meeting agreed to the building of a malt mill, 'a substantial fabrike ... containing a bay and a halfe of building in Lichfeild street'.[30] (The reference to a 'bay' may indicate a timber building.[31]) The earliest unambiguous reference to the use of brick is that of 1682: 'Whereas

20 A. Dyer, 'Small Market Towns, 1540-1700', in P. Clark (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* II, 1540-1840 (Cambridge, 2000), 425.

21 Pevsner, *Staffordshire,* 279.

22 Lichfield Record Office [LRO], B/C/11, Sir Henry Ferrers (1607/8).

23 SRO, D. 260/M/T/2/9.

24 C. Fiennes, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes,* ed. C. Morris (London, 1947), 146.

25 E. B. Hamel, *Illustrations of Old Tamworth,* 1829 (reprinted Tamworth Corporation, 1980), no pagination. (This book is also the source for Figs 1, 3, and 4.)

26 M. Reed 'The Urban Landscape', in P. Clark (ed.) *Cambridge Urban History,* II (2000), 293-309.

27 Tamworth Borough Records [TBRJ, XII 1, 'The Minute Book of the Common Hall'.

28 TBR, XII 1, 2.

29 E. L. Jones, S. Porter, and M. Turner, 'A Gazetteer of English Urban Fire Disasters 1500-1900', *Historical Geography Research Series,* no. 13 (Norwich, 1984), 27.

30 TBR, XII 1, 10.

31 The word 'bay', however, was commonly used throughout the 18th century to describe brick houses. At Lichfield in 1728 the bay, in a brick house, was defined as 'fifteen foot square': LRO, D77/9/39.

Mr William Ashley is about to pull down his dwelling house in Church Street and a Tenement late belonging to John Shemonds deceased in the same street adjoining and intends to rebuild it with brick which will be an Ornam(ent) to the towne, that he shall have free and full liberty and licence to lay his foundation for better raising of this building soe fair as is needed'.[32] The willingness of the Common Hall to support the demolition of its properties and their replacement by a single brick house is important evidence of its opinion that brick added status to the community.[33] The idea of new brick houses as an 'ornament' to the town is repeated in Thomas Guy's lease of 1704 with 'three good substantial!, messuages, burgages, dwelling houses or Tenements with Tymbre Brick Stone and Tiles' being described as 'for the Ornament and grace of the said Towne of Tamworth'.[34] The Common Hall was consistently aware of the rental value of good quality, new brick houses, and in 1701 it noted that 'three new houses in Gunngate and one in Church lane being designed to put such persons in as to the Towne pay the greatest Rent and that such shall be removed to those new houses and pay this sum & rent.'[35]

The Corporation also attempted, wherever possible, to impose planning controls on the new houses in order to achieve a uniform facade or front onto the street. As early as 1668 Robert Woodcocke was encouraged 'to build the said house and stables proportionable to the building of Robert Harthills house neare thereunto and as good.'[36] Unfortunately the materials are not specified but the requirement for similar size and quality does indicate an awareness of the importance of uniformity: in 1704 Jonathan Backhouse was required 'not to build as ... farre in any ground that is prejudicial to any highway & that he take care that these be a good foot away from the side.'[37] Moreover in 1696 a proposed lease had sought to control the height of buildings by including a restrictive covenant 'not suffering the Houses to grow to high'.[38] Maintaining an imposing, even height was obviously an important element of town policy: in 1700 Richard Russell was allowed to 'build and erect a brick house in the kind full as high as Mr Weamans & as well',[39] and in 1708 John Wallis was to build his new house 'hansomily with Timber and brick three storeys high to the satisfaction of the Burgesses and Corporation'.[40] The latter's formal lease moreover required him to build a 'sufficient, hansome, uniform substantial building'.[41] The policy of uniformity applied equally to lesser buildings, and in 1716 William Fair was allowed to erect some barns in the town, 'what he build to be built with brick & all his buildings be sufficiently Tiled & not thatched ... (they) must be built to form of Common pound and make sufficient form to the Common pound'.[42]

Although there was a degree of inconsistency in the policy of the Common Hall, as indeed might be expected from a body some of whose members benefited from lengthy leases of timber-framed houses and shops,[43] there is, however, little doubt that within its membership there was a modernising lobby which encouraged redevelopment, sought to impose uniform, high-quality buildings, and laid down restrictions on their materials, size, height, and the maintenance of their facades. Other members, more pragmatically, encouraged partial rebuilding using timber and reclaimed materials or even the complete re-erection of old buildings. In 1701 it was 'Ordered that *[illegible word]* the old houses and buildings that are now to be taken down that stand between the ground where the old Towne Hall stood and William Alcocks have (for making roome for planting the new hall) been set upp & placed in Gunngate between the Cottages now in tenancy'.[44] In 1713 Henry Sketchley

32 TBR, XII 1, 34.

33 Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance,* 66, cites two Warwickshire references, at Henley-in-Arden and Warwick, for the use of the term 'ornament' as a motive for civic improvement. At Newcastle-under-Lyme the Corporation recorded in 1728 '...Mr Taylors new house. And as hee hath layd out a considerable of money in building thereof which is not only a service to the Corporation in general but alsoe an ornament to the town': Newcastle Museum, 'Corporation Order Book' [COB], 1712-1769, 71.

34 TBR, 10/22. (One of a collection of borough leases which are numbered but are not indexed.)

35 TBR, XII 1, 125.

36 TBR, XII 1, 33.

37 TBR, XII 1, 153.

38 TBR, XII 1, 66.

39 TBR, XII 1, 108.

40 TBR, XII 1, 176.

41 TBR, 10/23.

42 TBR, XII 1, 221. At Bridgnorth in 1691 a new house in Bridge Street was to be 'built as high as the howse wherein the said John Bankes doth now dwell': Shropshire Archives |SA], 796/100.

43 TBR, XII 1, 133. Edward Symmons 'present Bailiff was granted a lease 'to continue tenant' John Meacham a later Bailiff of the town was also granted very generous terms: TBR, XII 1, 267, 273.

44 TBR. XII 1, 119.

was given permission 'to pull the old house down & ... to erect & build two good substantial bays of building to be with Timber brick and Tile.'[45] The reference to 'bays' and to 'Timber' could imply the building of a timber-framed house with brick nogging at what, stylistically, would be a very late date, but more likely refers to the use of timber for roofing or for internal walls. The timber could also have been employed in a brick-fronted house to stiffen its side walls. A detailed archaeological investigation of No 6 Market Street revealed just such a house with its brick facade dated to 1695 but with side walls of timber which contained re-used timbers of the 14th and 15th centuries as well as new ones.[46] Similarly in 1714, Henry Heewood was permitted 'to build two little bayes of building for a dwelling house to be built of Tymber, bricks and Tile' at *2s* extra rent[47] and in the same year Thomas Onyon was allowed 'to build two bays of brick, Tymber and Tile', again for the payment of *2s* extra rent.[48]

The Corporation and individual developers were very aware of the value of reclaimed building materials. In 1700 Richard Russell was permitted 'to pull down the house and all the buildings' on his leased property and the agreement also allowed him 'to have all the old materials'.[49] Thomas Guy, 'our incomparable benefactor', may have personally paid for the costs of the new Town Hall, but the agreement of 1700 for the demolition of several shops and houses on its site allowed him Tibertie to dispose of the materials of the old hall at his pleasure'.[50] In 1703 it was agreed that 'William Ashley pay forty shillings for the materials of a house in Eldergate Lane'.[51] In 1743 Lord Weymouth was granted the materials from 'pulled down cottages' on the site of the proposed workhouse.[52] Possibly one way in which building costs could be reduced was through the use of recycled materials, particularly employing them in parts of the building where they would not be noticeable. By allowing developers to retain the old materials the Corporation was essentially subsidising the new replacement buildings. Such evidence also suggests that, at least for Tamworth, the quality of its brick-built houses needs to be qualified by the presence of re-used medieval timbers.

Amongst the references to the use of brick in Tamworth in both public and private spaces are those approvals granted for the building of brick walls. In 1693 Thomas Guy was given permission to build a brick wall in Gungate,[53] Philipp Cooke, a 'taylour', was given the right 'to put upp a brick wall' in 1699[54] and in 1704 Viscount Weymouth was allowed to build a brick wall in Lichfield Street.[55] It is possible that urban tenement boundaries, previously based on ditches and light fencing and frequently a source of dispute, were better defined by permanent and immovable walling.

Between 1680 and 1740 the civic records include many references to building activity within the town. Such references are specific, as in 1691 when the tenant was given 'liberty to build from her house by Church Stile xxi foot down towards Leichgate'[56] or in 1708 when the tenant was admitted to a 'decayed house' upon condition he rebuilt it with brick and tile.[57] Other examples refer to an agreed increase in rent, as in the case of Thomas Fair for a 'little house he has lately built in

45 TBR, XII 1, 207.

46 R. A. Meeson and A. Kirkham, '6 Market Street, Tamworth: a timber-framed building of 1695 and its context', *TSSAHS,* XXXIII (1993), 42^18. Where settlement and subsidence were problems builders tried to solve this by inserting bonding timbers, but these usually replaced a single brick course: J. W. P. Campbell, and A. Sant, 'The Manufacture and Dating of English Brickwork 1600-1720', *Archaeological Journal,* 159 (2002), 185. At Bridgnorth a lease of 1720 specifically describes this process of combining timber with brick, Richard Goolden was to have 'liberty of fixing any timber in the 'sheire' end of the house-with sound well-burnt brick and tile': SA, 796/101.

47 TBR, XII 1, 209b.

48 TBR, XII 1, 209b.

49 TBR, XII 1, 108.

50 TBR, XII 1, 106, Daniel Defoe, in the context of Thomas Guy's donations to Guy's Hospital, was much engaged by the source of his wealth, 'having been himself in no publick employment or office of trust or profit and only carrying on the trade of bookseller', his explanation being that that Guy was 'a thriving, frugal man.' The retaining of the old building materials is perhaps evidence of Guy's careful frugality: D. Defoe, *A Tour Through England and Wales* 1724—1727, ed. G. D. H. Cole, vol. I (London, 1927), 371. A more likely explanation for his enormous wealth is his fortunate investment (and disengagement) in the South Sea Bubble: J. A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England* (London, 2003), 305.

51 TBR, XII 1, 144.

52 TBR, XII 1, 352.

53 TBR, XII 1, 57.

54 TBR, XII 1, 97.

55 TBR, XII 1, 152. Strong and secure brick walls may have been seen as a potential danger during a fire. Elizabeth Mousley, whilst rebuilding her Tamworth house in 1729-36 obtained from her neighbours the 'right of safe drop over the wall she is now building': LRO, D. 187/493.

56 TBR, XII 1, 53.

57 TBR, XII 1, 182.

Gunngate',[58] or that of John Marston who had 'built [an] extension'.[59] In 1703 'a parcell of waste ground in Gunngate of 37 yards long and 5 yards broad' was leased to a tenant 'to build several houses',[60] the dimensions suggesting development along the line of a burgage plot. A lease to John Mainwaring in 1711 provides evidence of the considerable rebuilding of the centre of the town. It refers to a Tate erected house or tenement where a little house or tenement formerly stood which contained a lower room and a Chamber over it'. Its position was defined in terms of '[an]other lately erected house & shop' and buildings 'erected in the place where formerly two decayed shoppes and Chambers over them stood', and also 'another two late erected houses and shoppes' which 'contain in length fforty two foot in front'.[61] Other evidence is implicit and often is derived from fines for encroachments of town centre properties over the building line something that was subject to the consent of the Common Hall for whom they were a source of revenue. In 1701 the Corporation recorded the encroachment which Thomas Eggington 'hath made in the bricke end of a building he hath built in Church street', the encroachment 'is about a brick breadth into the street'.[62] It is probable that such a narrow and precise measurement reflects a thin brick skin added to the front of the house, and a similar interpretation is possible for the agreement which allowed John Marston 'to build on a small parcell of ground adjoining to his stone wall ... containing about eighteen foot in length & about one foot & half in breadth in which the said John Marston intends to build part of the front of a house'.[63] A false front may also have been intended by Thomas Underhill 'for an improvement he hath made to his house in Bow (Bole) Bridge in the front of his house'.[64] An archaeological investigation in 1971 of a building at the comer of Market Street and King Street revealed such a house. It was a 14th-century building with an 'early 18th-century brick facade of two storeys with sash windows at first floor level and dormers in the roof'[65]

The municipal records support the view that the chief burgesses of Tamworth actively encouraged the redevelopment of the Corporation's properties, the incentive for such support being the overall increase in rents and profits available from new and larger houses and shops. The success of this policy is reflected in the Corporation's accounts. In 1729-30 receipts were £99 *2s 2Vid* with a surplus of £2 *2s,* whereas by 1758-59 the receipts were £146 16s *Id* with a surplus of £43 Is *Id.* These increased receipts were obtained from about thirty houses and market stalls,[66] but because the total number of Corporation properties had actually declined as a result of rationalisation, demolition, and improvement, rents, fees, and fines must have risen substantially. A good example of the process of improvement and sale was the house (now No 30) in Market Street. Right in the heart of the town, it was converted from a timber-framed house by the lessee Mr Meacham, a surgeon, into a very high quality brick house.[67] (Fig. 2) The actual design of the house required the approval of the Common Hall (of which Meacham was a member) before it could be built: 'Mr Meacham to build a house according to a draught showed to this Hall'.[68] It was leased for 99 years in April 1726 and was purchased in August 1727 by Meacham for £100 with the support of the Corporation.[69]

The reference to a lease of 99 years is important evidence of the mechanism by which municipal landlords and charities, bodies usually with only limited amounts of capital, were able to persuade tenants to invest in improvements to rented property. In the years immediately following the Restoration most Tamworth leases were for either 21 or 31 years for houses and less for shops.[70] But from the 1690s onwards there were a significant number of leases for 99 years, almost all of which were to tenants who had committed themselves to the rebuilding of the Corporation's properties. A typical example was that of Thomas Pears who in 1727 was offered a lease of 99 years

58 TBR, XII 1, 281.
59 TBR, XII 1, 137.
60 TBR, XII 1, 143.
61 TBR, 10/24.
62 TBR, XII 1, 131.
63 TBR, XII 1, 137.
64 Ibid.
65 B. Meeson, and K. Sheridan, 'Eighth Report of Excavations at Tamworth, Staffs., 1971- A Timber-Framed Building in Market Street', *TSSAHS,* XV (1974), 5-12.
66 SRO, D. 4452/1/16/13/1, 'The Account Book of the Chamberlains of Tamworth, 1711-1768'.
67 TBR, XII 1, 268; TBR 10/27.
68 TBR, XII 1, 267.
69 TBR, XII 1, 277. The policy of selling Corporation houses parallels that of encouraging the use of brick, as early as 1688 the corporation sold three properties for £80 to Arthur Owen of Pembroke: TBR, 10/17.
70 TBR, XII 1, 33, 67, 69, and 72.

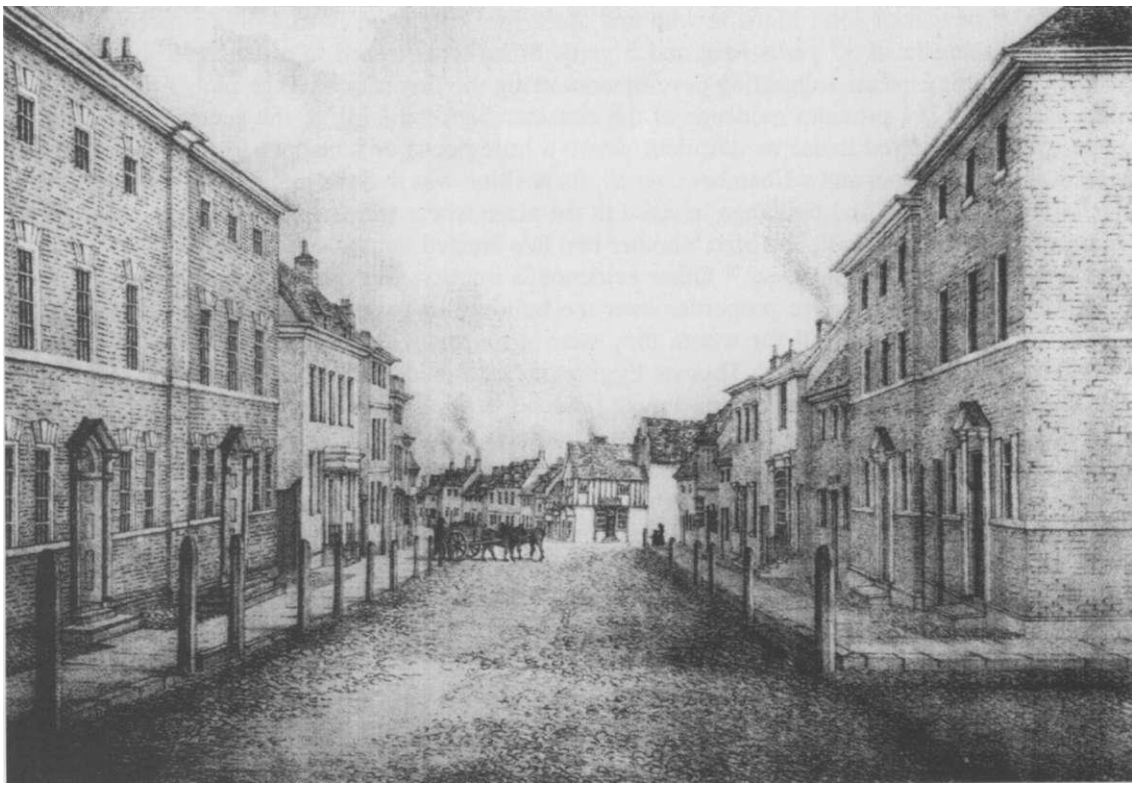

Fig. 1 Cole-Hill in 1829

Fig. 2 No. 30 Market Street: the house of 'Mr Meacham', built c. 1726 (Photograph: M. Kingman).

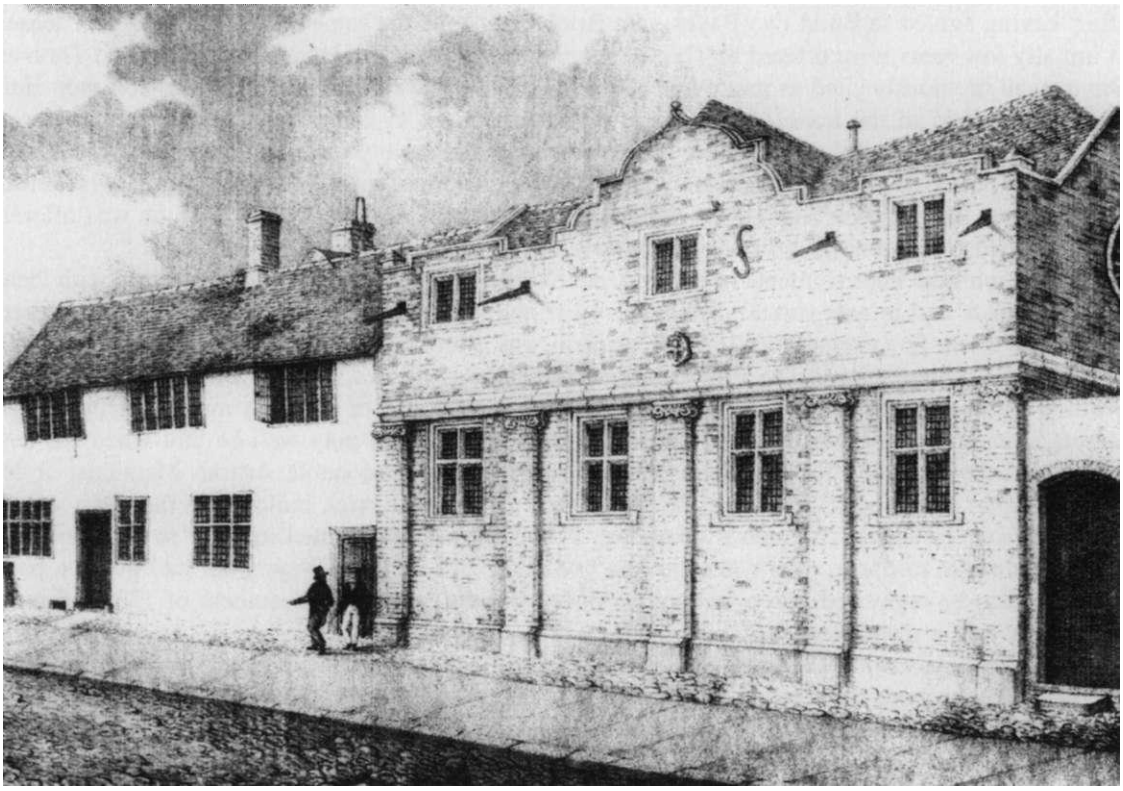

Fig. 3 The Free Grammar School of 1677

Fig. 4 The Market Place and Town Hall of 1701

after 'having agreed to Build two Bayes with Brick and to tile the same'.[71] Similarly 99 year leases at initially low rents were offered to Thomas Underhill, John Wallis, Henry Sketchley, and Thomas Onyons, all previously cited as improvers of their houses.[72] The specific policy of the Common Hall is well described in the lease of a property in Market Street to John Wallis in 1708. It required Wallis to 'take down all the building & on sd premises within two years next ... at his own expense and charge build, erect & set up a sufficient, hansome, uniforme, substantial building ... with brick, stone, timber three stories high all the breadth & length of the building'.[73] In return he was offered a 99-year lease at a rent of only 35s per annum.[74]

Parallel with the improvements in housing, the Corporation of Tamworth in partnership with local philanthropists and private capital also encouraged investment in the public and institutional space within the town. For example in 1674 permission was granted for another bay of buildings to be added to the schoolhouse.[75] The Free Grammar School was opened in 1677 and demonstrated the positive preference which the council members had for the use of brick in municipal buildings, although there is a certain provincial naivety in its proportions. It may well be that when the bay was added the whole building was refronted in brick in the fashionable Artisan Mannerist style. (Fig. 3) Apart from the Moat House the school was the earliest brick building in the town which can be positively dated. The men's almshouse was built on land granted in 1692 to Thomas Guy on land adjacent to the women's almshouses.[76] Slightly earlier, Lord Weymouth had given a bam and a yard to be converted into a 'school for poor children',[77] whilst a document of 1739 refers to the presence of a workhouse.[78]

At the physical centre of this policy of urban regeneration was the redevelopment of the old Market Place by both the Corporation and private investors. In 1700 Guy, agreed to erect 'at his own charge' a new Town Hall 'most for the advantage of the towne'.[79] Several 'old houses and buildings' had to be taken down 'making room for planting the new hall' and 'we do agree that Mr Guy hath libertie to dispose of the materials of the old hall at his pleasure'.[80] The extremely attractive brick and stone Town Hall became the focus of the enlarged and high status Market Place, a symbol of prestige and dignity for the incorporated town. (Fig. 4) The civic records do not contain any references to its designer or builder but stylistically its cupola, wooden balustrade (now removed), and the deep set pediment are typical of baroque buildings of this period. Aristocratic support was sought to add prestige to the development and Viscount Weymouth, the High Steward of Tamworth, was persuaded by the Common Hall to purchase a shop in this area.[81] In 1724 Lord Compton agreed to lease two shops[82] and in 1765 Weymouth's successor leased thirteen 'stalls or bulks before (in

71 TBR, XII 1, 281.
72 TBR, XII 1, 137, 176, 207; TBR, 10/25.
73 TBR, 10/23.
74 In Birmingham, the Governors of the King Edward VI School adopted an identical policy of deliberately extending the terms of leases provided that the tenants invested in improvements. Between 1686 and 1699 the majority of their buildings were leased for 21 years but more than 21 leases were based on 99 years and included such provisos as a minimum amount of money, usually £100, be invested in either 'new building' or in the requirement that the tenant was 'to build 3 storeys', or insisted that the tenant was 'to build all the front like and agreeable to the houses ... thereto next adjoining'. The basis of their policy is revealed in a minute of 1695, 'Whereas an ord'r was made at a meeting the 10th day of July 95 that Samuel Banner should have a lease of the White Lyon Inn in Birmingham for 50 yeares at 8li per Ann rent with a coven't to lay out 3011 in improveing since which order (noe lease being yet sealed) the sayd Samuel banner finding that 301i would not doe what he designed to doe in improveing therefore he hath layd out 160li in rebuilding the same or great part thereof; for which reason the sayd Governors doe ord'r a lease to be made to the sayd Samuel Banner for 99 yeares'.

The Minute Book of the School's governors does include reference to houses let for 99 years for which no investment was required. It may well be that these buildings had already been improved and that one way in which rented brick houses can be identified in towns is by the length of the lease. That brick was the required building material is implicit in the demand for a uniform facade and for three storey buildings. The Minute Book confirms its use, in 1686 the governors agreed a lease 'to George Fentham (mercer) for the terme of 89 yeares At the yearly rent of 32s in consideracon of lOOli pounds to be laid out in building.. .the sd george Fentham being at Liberty to dig clay therein for the making of Brickes to be used in the sd Buildings & not otherwise'. There are also references in 1696 to a 'hovel there built in order to make bricks' and in 1698 to a 'brickiln'. W. F. Carter, 'The Records of King Edward School, Birmingham', Vol. II, *The Dugdale Society,* (1928), 110, 124, 127-133.
75 TBR, XII 1, 17.
76 TBR, XII 1, 56.
77 TBR, XII 1, 37.
78 TBR, XII 1, 331.
79 TBR, XII 1, 106
80 Ibid.
81 TBR, XII 1, 120.
82 TBR, XII 1, 259.

front of) the dwelling houses' of several of the inhabitants who lived in Market Place.[83] The advantages arising from the Town Hall were such that the Corporation even accepted Guy's alteration of the building regulations: it was agreed in 1703 'That Mr Guy alter the Lease sent upp to him relating to the manner of building.'[84] Later that year it was agreed that 'it is found more convenient for Mr Guy to build Woodcocks & Onyons houses in a as straight a lyne as the front may be, therefore he shall have liberty to build in a straight lyne from the comer of George Harvils house down to Thomas Eggingtons Cellar post'.[85]

Such restrictions and other fines for encroachments onto the streets suggest that redevelopment and improvement, although they may have involved the demolition of several houses and shops, did not dramatically alter the medieval street-plan. It would be wrong, therefore, to conclude that there was systematic planning in Tamworth, for no new streets were laid out and there was little extension to the built-up area, although the ends of the burgage plots may have been developed. Compromise between the new fashionable brick buildings or facades and the traditional and familiar medieval topography was thus maintained. The redevelopment of towns was rarely based on anything other than the most minimal planning controls and Christopher Chalklin has argued that the fragmented pattern of landholding, the diffuse nature of the construction business, and the vested interests of investors and entrepreneurs all suggest that even where planning seems to have occurred it was deceptive.[86] Penelope Corfield agrees with this viewpoint, and in her opinion 'townscape design and urban improvement did not amount to a full planning tradition ... this was minimum regulation of individual building standards' in communities which lacked the administrative structures to impose standards on large areas. She suggests that where uniformity was achieved it was created by social pressures and a desire for conformity, a process she describes as 'the ad hoc tradition of urban building'.[87] In general, there was no legal machinery to enable towns to interfere in private development and Corporations such as Tamworth had to content themselves with improvements in areas over which they already exercised jurisdiction.

Only in those towns where there was considerable destruction by fire was wholesale redevelopment possible. Although no such large-scale conflagration occurred in Tamworth, there was a very real awareness of the dangers of fire and the leases were insistent on the need for all new buildings to be tiled.[88] The lease to John Wallis in 1708, for example, required 'all the said building to be well roofed tiled & covered with Tile & not with thatch or straw',[89] and in 1716 William Fair's bams were ordered to be 'sufficiently Tiled & not thatched'. More dramatically, a lease to Thomas Guy in 1704 describes his building of 'three good substantiall ... dwelling houses ... in the Market Place there in the place where two old houses stood ... the one of which said old houses was a dangerous Thatched house'.[90] (Although whether it was dangerous because of its condition or the possibility of fire is not clear.)

The wider policy was to make the town more attractive for investors, renters, and visitors, and the success of this policy in attracting the gentry was a matter of great interest to the community. John Willington, the steward to Viscount Townshend, for example, reported in an undated letter to his master 'that Mr Thurlow has purchased the large sashed house in Church St and intends making it the place of his residence in the Vacations'.[91]Also of significance may be the frequent use of the adjective 'old', as in the example of the redevelopment of Market Street where 'old buildings' were taken down and re-erected. The Corporation records include several references to the

83 TBR, 10/28. By 1780 Weymouth paid an annual rent of £34 *Is 6d* for rent of houses and 'stalls in the market': SRO, D. 4452/1/16/13/1.

84 TBR, XII 1,145.

85 TBR, XII 1, 146.

86 C. Chalklin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England, a Study of the Building Process, 1740-1820* (London, 1974), 122.

87 P. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns* (Oxford, 1982), 178-9.

88 Jones, Porter, and Turner, 'Gazetteer of English Urban Fire Disasters', 26, include a reference to a fire in Tamworth in 1664 but no details are available. This would have been just at the commencement of the policy of brick building. A previously unlisted fire was recorded in the Chamberlain's accounts for 1780-81. In May 1781 there was 'Pd 6 Labourers for taking down the Remains of the Houses in Gungate after the Fire', and the next entry is a payment for 'Sweeping 3 Chimneys'. This would suggest the cause of the fire: SRO, D. 4452/1/16/13/1.

89 TBR, 10/23.

90 TBR, 10/22.

91 LRO, D. 187/2/10. The fact that the house could be distinguished as 'sashed' might suggest that such fashionable features were relatively rare in Tamworth.

demolition of 'old houses', as in 1713 when Henry Sketchley was permitted 'to pull the old house down'.[92] Implicit in this word are the concepts of decay, ruin, or of generally poor-quality buildings. Were the houses whose demolition the Corporation actively encouraged actually of this poor quality? Certainly they may have been two or three hundred years old, but if they had survived for that length of time then they may well have been of a reasonable standard. The re-erection of a few buildings previously standing in the old Market Place and the sale of the 'old materials' after the demolition of others would support this interpretation. On the other hand analysis of the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation accounts suggests that specific timbers were almost constantly in need of repair. On its properties, amongst the most commonly decayed timbers were rafters and laths which needed replacing at times of tiling, 'joysts', and the 'summer' (bresummer), but the most frequent of particular repairs were those to the sills. Between 1566 and 1586 there are seven specific references to the need for new timber sills.[93] Elsewhere there are other references to the precarious nature of some timbers. In a diary entry in 1748 Dr Richard Wilkes of Willenhall noted: 'This day I set out the Foundations of a new Church in this Town of Willenhall; for the old one being half Timber, the Sills, Pillars etc were so decayed that the Inhabitants ... were in great danger of being killed.'[94] Because they stood on the ground or rested on stone foundations sills were the structural timbers most liable to decay. Another possible incentive for the demolition of old houses, particularly in the refurbished heart of the town, was that they were generally too small and cramped for the tenants to whom the Tamworth Corporation wished to appeal. A lease of 1711 refers to 'a little house ... which contained a lower room and a Chamber over it' and where 'two decayed shoppes and Chambers over them stood',[95] and a lease of 1702 describes 'a small parcel of ground or place where a small shop stood in the Market Place ... about fourteen foote in length and twelve foote in breadth'.[96] Such buildings were unlikely to attract the wealthy leisured classes to Tamworth.

Although the aesthetic benefits of rebuilding were widely appreciated, one result of building in brick for a uniform and classical facade was to emphasise the social stratification of the town: 'Those who could not comply with the requirements to use brick-and-tile and who were too poor to choose to do so were likely to be edged into older, poorer cottages outside the best streets, perhaps outside the borough bounds.'[97] Spatial differentiation was emphasised by rebuilding in brick in a cultural idiom that was not easily understood by the uneducated. Brick building added a cultural dimension to age-old inequalities and gave a sharper edge to patterns of social stratification. Such social engineering is difficult to identify readily in the small towns of Staffordshire, but it may perhaps be represented by the Corporation policy in Tamworth which in 1701 dismantled old and decayed timber-framed houses and re-erected them in the Gunngate, well away from the prestigious Market Place in which they had stood. In Newcastle-under-Lyme old timber-framed cottages were similarly removed from the town centre and rebuilt in the suburbs.[98] A more extreme expression of this policy may have been the order in 1740 by Tamworth Common Hall 'to turn out all those paupers who live in Corporation Houses.'[99]

Christopher Currie has modelled the attrition of old houses and identifies 'fire, fungus and fashion' as the major causes of their destruction. His statistical analysis of differential rates of attrition suggests that, 'It may well be that the change in building materials was caused not by prosperity but an equalisation of prices of the organic and inorganic materials.'[100] He concluded that, 'If the change to inorganic materials is permanent, builders and clients will be permanently prejudiced, long after the initial change, against the earlier materials. In addition, the skills needed to understand how timber buildings stay up, and to repair them, are likely to be lost, so it may be more practical to demolish than to repair.'[101] In terms of attrition by fashion, Currie suggests that, 'On the whole, the

92 TBR, XII 1, 207.

93 R. Savage and E. Fripp (eds), 'Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-Upon-Avon, 1553-1620', *The Dugdale Society,* Vol. II, 1566-1574 (London, 1924); Vol. Ill, 1577-1586 (London, 1926).

94 N. W. Tildesley, 'Dr. Richard Wilkes of Willenhall, Staffs., an Eighteenth-Century County Doctor', *TSSAHS,* VII (1967), 4.

95 TBR, 10/24.

96 TBR, 10/21.

97 Jones, Porter and Turner, 'Gazetteer' of English Urban Fire Disasters, 62.

98 Newcastle Museum, 'Corporation Order Book' [COB], 1669-1712, 116 (for 1702): 'The house lately Mr Haddocks now leased to Mr Lawton the present mayor was to be viewed and reported on what charge there might be to pull it down and rebuild it.' Ibid. 33: 'Hugh Fosters house to be removed to a convenient place and a garden affixed'.

99 TBR, XII I, 386.

100 C. R. J. Currie, 'Time and Chance: Modelling the Attrition of Old Houses', *Vernacular Architecture,* 19 (1988), 3.

101 Ibid.

richer the area, the higher the attrition rate should be' and that partial alteration to meet the demands of fashion 'is more likely to predominate in poor areas than rich ones'.[102] In terms of Currie's analysis the survival of a mixture of timber and brick houses would suggest that Tamworth was a 'poor area'. There was, however, an obvious degree of prejudice against timber-framed buildings in the centre of the town.

Is there a distinction to be made between an 'old house' and a 'decayed house'? The evidence is not conclusive but there is a possibility that some houses were demolished precisely because they were old and representative of another era and that the Corporation was actively promoting the fashionable policy of 'improvement'. In her *Journeys* Celia Fiennes hints at the contemporary viewpoint that buildings which were timber-framed reflected a community which was staid, lacking imagination, uninspiring, and not moving with the times. She is generally, although not consistently, condemnatory of timber-framed towns and complimentary about brick-built towns: thus, Sandwich is 'a sad old town, all timber building', whilst Newcastle-upon-Tyne is 'a noble town ... its buildings ... of brick mostly'.[103] Similarly, Defoe found in Coventry that 'the buildings are very old and in some places much decayed;' whilst Warwick was 'rebuilt in so noble and beautiful a manner'.[104] William Hutton, the 18th-century historian of Birmingham, was perhaps aware of this contemporary opinion when he defended old houses: 'It may be objected that "the buildings are ancient". But there is no more disgrace in an old house, than in an old man; they may both be dressed in character, and look well.'[105]

The Common Hall minutes are a valuable source of information on the rebuilding of Tamworth but unfortunately they contain little information on the prices of houses, the source of bricks, or on wage rates. There are scattered references such as that of 1683 to John Vernam, a member of one of the town's leading families, whose inventory includes 'bricks and other things, 0-10- 0'.[106] But no sources exist which would reveal the overall pattern of expenditure and investment. The impact of brick building on the structure of employment is equally difficult to describe as the sources are of limited value: for example, the parish registers for the period 1635-1690 include eight masons but contain no specific references to a specialisation in brick.[107] The Poll Book of 1761 does, however, list five brickmakers who were presumably responding to the new opportunities afforded by large-scale redevelopment.[108]

There is little evidence in Tamworth for the presence of all those elements which Borsay has listed as typical of a 'renaissance'. There are no references to the provision of formal parades, theatres, walks, or to a purpose-built assembly room, although there was a race- course where meetings began in 1738.[109] The Town Hall, the result of a partnership between a speculator and the Corporation, did however represent a significant investment. For Borsay, 'Public buildings, because they were understood to represent the civic community in toto were the final step in a broad process aimed at enhancing the physical coherence and image of the town.'[110] Among the most important elements in the 'urban renaissance' were town improvements, which peripherally included the provision of paving, scavenging, street-lighting, and piped-water supplies. But more importantly for the resident gentry and (in Alan Everitt's phrase) 'the pseudo-gentry' was the building and rebuilding of urban housing in a classical style which sought its inspiration abroad and in London. Colin Piatt has argued for a second 'Great Rebuilding' after the Civil War influenced by the opening up of Europe to travellers: 'what was new was the uniformity of the English street facade ... lacking in individuality ... but meeting the demand for exclusive private spaces ... designed for family needs ... suited to genteel entertainment'.[111]

Borsay has suggested within the context of the 'urban renaissance' that 'decisions about the civic use of brick were not decided by individual patrons but reflected the common will of the

102 Ibid. 2.
103 Fiennes, *Journeys,* 129, 209.
104 Defoe, *Tour Through England and Wales,* Vol. II, 83—4.
105 W. Hutton, *An History of Birmingham* (2nd edn, Birmingham, 1783), 298.
106 LRO, B/C/11, John Vernam (1683).
107 Meeson, and Kirkham, 'A Timber -Framed Building of 1695', 46. In a house lease of 1688 between Nathaniel Rice the elder and Nathaniel Rice the younger both are described as 'masons': SRO, D. 948/2/1/14.
108 TBR, 7/ 37. They were William Brittan, Thos. Bates (senior), John Patrick (senior), Joseph Patrick, and David Patrick. The field name 'Patrick's Brickkiln Close' was recorded at Wilnecote in 1805: Coventry Record Office, PA/101/10/19.
109 Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance,* 364. The Town Hall had an upper room which could be used for public meetings.
110 Ibid. 112.
111 C. Piatt, *The Great Rebuilding of Tudor and Stuart England. A Revolution in Architectural Taste* (London, 1994), 70.

community as expressed in the Corporation or Town Hall. The culture of brick ... thus became not an individual decision based on wealth or an understanding of London style but a community decision to impose wherever possible its own understanding of fashion'."[2] In Tamworth, based on the recognition of the commercial and financial benefits arising from such investments, there was a deliberate policy of physical improvement which aimed to create a new and fashionable townscape. The use of brick was an important feature in that policy and its success is reflected in Defoe's view that by 1724 Tamworth was 'a fine pleasant trading town, eminent for good ale and good company of the middling sort.'"[3]

112 Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance,* 55-7.

113 Defoe, *Tour Through England and Wales,* Vol. II, 82.

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