

A ROMAN AND ANGLO-SAXON SITE AT NORTHBROOK, MICHELDEVER, HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

Air photographs, fieldwalking and geophysical survey identified a site near Micheldever, Hampshire, which on excavation proved to have both Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon features. Coin finds in the area indicate that the latter was probably part of a complex in use in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. Two sunken-featured buildings are dated on the basis of decorated pottery to the 6th century, but a scatter of material found by metal-detectorists suggests that there is a cemetery in the vicinity that contains 5th- as well as 6th-century material. The area may exemplify the increasingly recognised phenomenon of long-term settlement shift.

INTRODUCTION

As one part of 'The Northbrook Project', a comprehensive study of a large area to the north of the village of Micheldever undertaken by the Micheldever and The Worthys Local History Groups under the direction of the author, a known site (centred at NGR SU 515 396) was excavated with the permission of the land-owners, Eagle Star Ltd, between 21 August and 1 September 1995, to clarify its nature and evaluate the extent of plough-damage. Excavation was preceded by documentary study, air photography, fieldwalking and geophysical survey. It is intended to deposit the archive (written, drawn and photographic) and the excavated finds at the Winchester Museums Service.¹ Conservation was undertaken by the Winchester Archaeology Service, who monitored the excavation. Further finds from metal-detecting are included in this report, since they raise the possibility of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery associated with the settlement.

THE SITE

Description

The site lies immediately to the north of the upper waters of the River Dever, which separates Northbrook from the medieval and modern village of Micheldever (Fig. 1). The ground rises steadily northwards from the flood plain and former watercress beds to a slope of the Upper Chalk from which the capping of clay-with-flints is largely eroded. Air photographs indicate an unrecorded ploughed-out barrow group just below the crest, and concentrations of calcined flints suggest the sites of at least two ploughed-out prehistoric 'boiling mounds'. The site is bisected roughly east-west by an ancient field boundary and fence with trees (oak and ash) marking a faint lynchet. To the north of this boundary the land has been intensively ploughed since at least medieval times; to the south, the meadow has remained undisturbed, having been ploughed only once in living memory. This part is not available for excavation, only for non-intrusive geophysical survey, and it is assumed that the features in it are in good condition. By contrast, excavation showed that features in the cultivated portion have been virtually eradicated by cultivation.

The air-photographic cover extends over the last forty years or so,² different conditions providing a range of crop- and soil-marks that are difficult to reconcile. They appear to represent a complex of subrectangular ditched enclosures of more than one phase with outliers that may represent boundaries of a different kind. The impression is of a compact nucleus of enclosed cultivated fields with more loosely defined pasture and grazing to the north. The whole seems to be

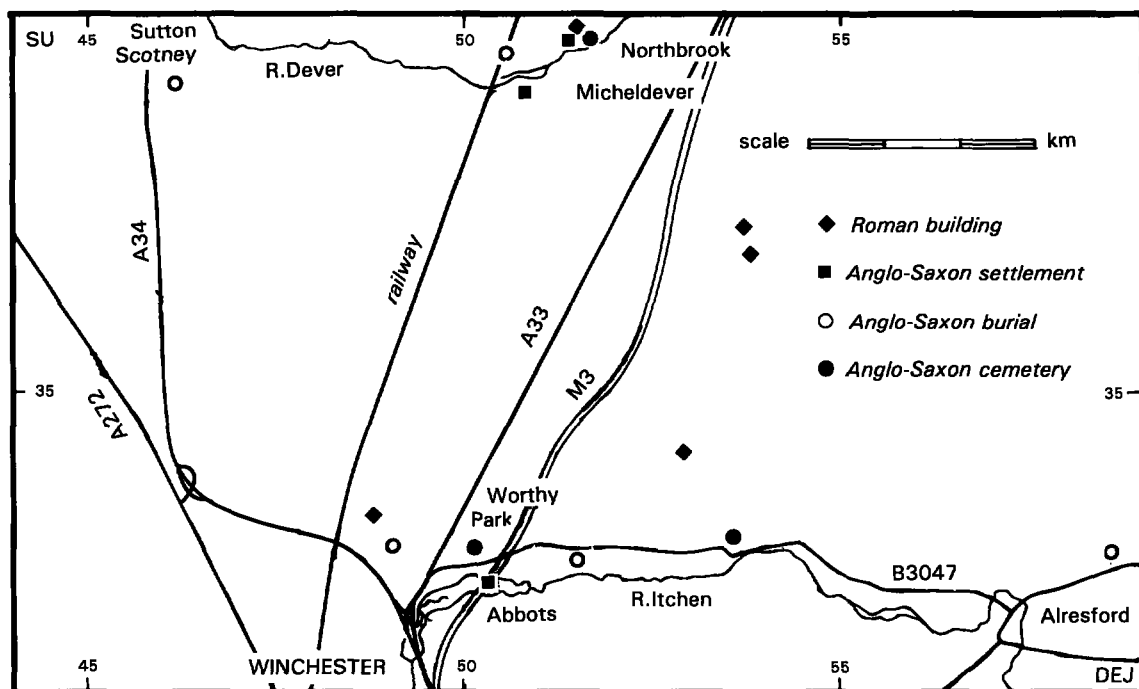


Fig. 1 Location plan, showing Roman and Anglo-Saxon sites mentioned in the text

enclosed by a broad linear feature sweeping north and east in an arc that ends abruptly at a former field boundary; from here the line either continues eastwards along an existing field boundary or – purely conjecturally – once formed a roughly semicircular enclosure based upon the river. At one point a ploughed-out inner bank might be detectable. Before excavation this was thought to be either a massive (and presumably prehistoric) earthwork or a medieval hollow way (e.g. 'Bilberry Lane' shown in roughly this position by Milner (1924, end map)). The results of excavation are discussed below. Interestingly, the Open Fields as recorded by Milner have left no identifiable traces – probably because only light ploughing, not deep ridge and furrow, was desirable.

The meadow showed no features until photographs taken in the exceptionally dry conditions of c. 1958 revealed a similar complex as parch-marks in the grass. A sketch of these has survived, but the air photographs are now untraceable. A fresh

series (Fig. 2) taken under similar conditions in 1995, shortly before the harvest, revealed them again, so clearly that some could be accurately surveyed. The tentative plan in Fig. 3 incorporates this latest evidence. Before excavation, it was assumed confusingly that parch-marks must represent walls. Excavation, however, confirmed that one at least was a ditch and it is now understood that the rare phenomenon of 'reversal' has occurred. This was common elsewhere in the exceptional conditions of 1995.³ Geophysical survey indicated at least one building invisible to air photography in the meadow, and another in the ploughed field was investigated by excavation (below). The two Anglo-Saxon houses were located by geophysical means and are invisible on the air photographs.

Fieldwalking

Fieldwalking in the northern field took place in January 1995 and two methods were adopted: random walking of most of the 25 m set-aside strip



Fig. 2 The site in 1995. above: from the west, below: from the east. The set-aside strip shows no features, and the ditches are represented by parch-marks

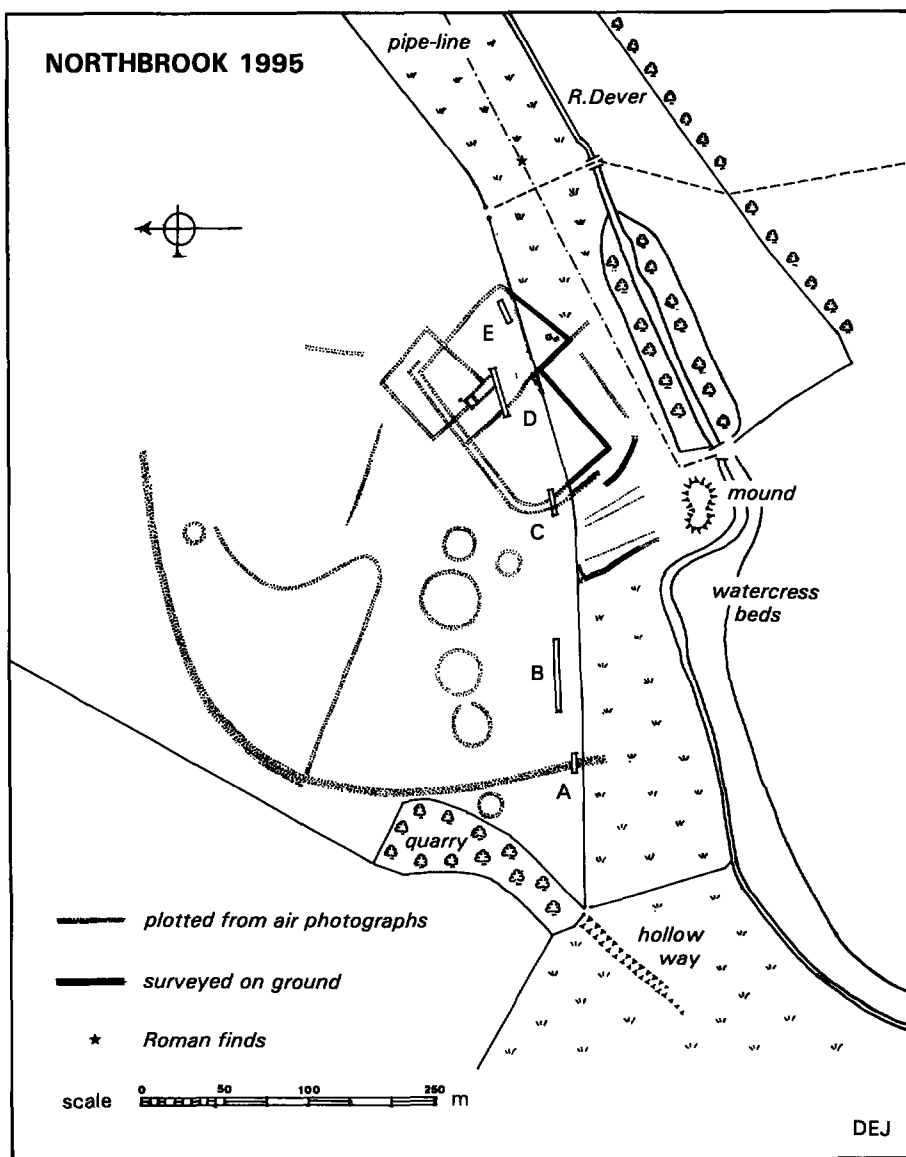


Fig. 3 The site (excluding geophysical survey)

(stubble and weed) and intensive search in two sample areas. The larger 30×30 m quadrat (subdivided for recording purposes) overlapped the recently ploughed field, in which the recovery rate proved to be identical. In summary, the larger area produced significant quantities of Roman

building materials – brick, roofing (*tegula*, *imbrex* and limestone roof-slate) and box-flue tile: better material, in fact, than that from the subsequent excavation and evidence of the almost total obliteration of building(s) by the plough. The scatter of building materials extended further east, suggest-

ing perhaps two buildings in the cultivated field. The more easterly was subsequently confirmed by air photography and excavation, while the first remains conjectural. The greatest intensity of Roman pottery was in the smaller, more westerly quadrat, suggesting an area of rubbish disposal to the west of the site. Other abraded sherds were thought at the time, like some of the cropmarks, to be Iron Age in date, though three organic-tempered sherds suggested an Anglo-Saxon phase; re-examination has identified more Anglo-Saxon sherds, with nothing of unequivocally Iron-Age date.

Supposedly prehistoric activity was represented by flintwork of poor quality⁴ and large quantities of calcined flints. The intensity of the latter was greater in the western quadrat, and random walking of the set-aside strip suggested a general spread with greater concentrations in the centre and west of the strip. These might be the ploughed-out remains of 'boiling-mounds' of unknown date; and with this possibility in mind, a shapeless low mound in the meadow at the water's edge (from which calcined flints and burnt material had been reported) was also examined. Disturbance by moles and rabbits yielded no burnt material and insufficient calcined flints for a firm diagnosis. Local tradition that this is dredged mud and gravel from the creation of the watercress beds is almost certainly correct.

Subsequent metal-detecting over the entire site⁵ has produced further finds from Roman to post-medieval dates; Roman and Anglo-Saxon items are recorded as unstratified site finds below. They were examined in Winchester City Museum and remain in private hands. The records, detailed analysis and selected finds from the fieldwalking have been deposited with the excavation archive and finds.

Geophysical survey by Joyce Young

During the late spring and early summer of 1995 a resistivity survey was carried out in the fields on both sides of the field boundary which bisects the site. Figure 4 shows the survey area in relation to the approximate positions of trenches B, C and D.

The survey area was laid out in grids of 20 m squares and the reading interval was 1 x 1 m. The

Twin Probe configuration, a mobile probe spacing of 0.5 m giving a depth penetration of c. 1 m, was used. Fifty-five grids were surveyed. Approximately 3 m on each side of the field boundary could not be surveyed because of root interference to the readings.

The part of the site under pasture revealed a series of linear features, some of which extended northwards into the set-aside (Fig. 4, 2). One particular grouping (1) was laid out at right-angles, creating a rectangular shape of c. 20 x 40 m which had internal features running parallel to each other (Fig. 4, 1). As these features gave high resistant readings, of the kind normally associated with walls or masonry, this anomaly was interpreted as a structure. There was a further series of similar linear features giving high resistant readings to the south and west of the rectangular anomaly and running in the same alignment to it; these were also interpreted as structures.

Both in the set-aside and pasture land there was a series of linear features (2) with a reading of low resistance which were interpreted as ditches or field boundaries. In the pasture they correspond to the parch-marks, and one was confirmed by excavation as a ditch in Trench C.

In the NW section of the set-aside three circular areas of low resistance were shown, suggesting three pits. Two were located from the survey and subsequently excavated (SFB1, SFB2).

THE EXCAVATION

Methodology

Excavation was by hand, after unsupervised topsoil-stripping by machine. The bulldozer-action of the machine and the exceptionally hot weather resulted in a compact, almost impenetrable surface that completely masked the features and made finding them difficult and labour-intensive. It proved impossible to identify the most westerly of the three major anomalies seen on the geophysical scan in (or close to) Trench B, and a few scattered post-holes and pits may well have been missed. However, the features described below were meticulously excavated to a high standard. The five trenches were set out partly on the basis

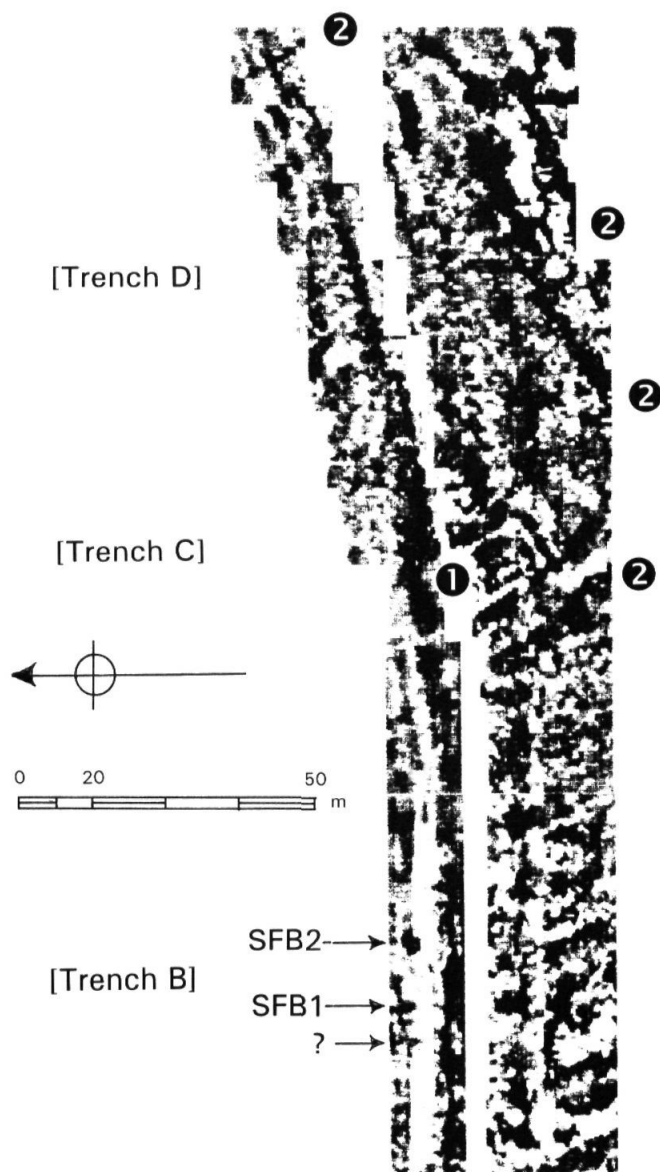


Fig. 4 The geophysical survey. 1: possible building; 2,2: enclosure ditches

of the geophysical survey and partly by eye, using the air photographs and the few recognisable landmarks. There is little doubt, despite its negative results, that Trench A was accurately placed; Trench E, on the other hand, proved to be mis-

placed. The site survey, before and during the excavation, used a baseline (in which two numbered wooden pegs were set permanently in concrete) and a temporary site grid of wooden pegs.

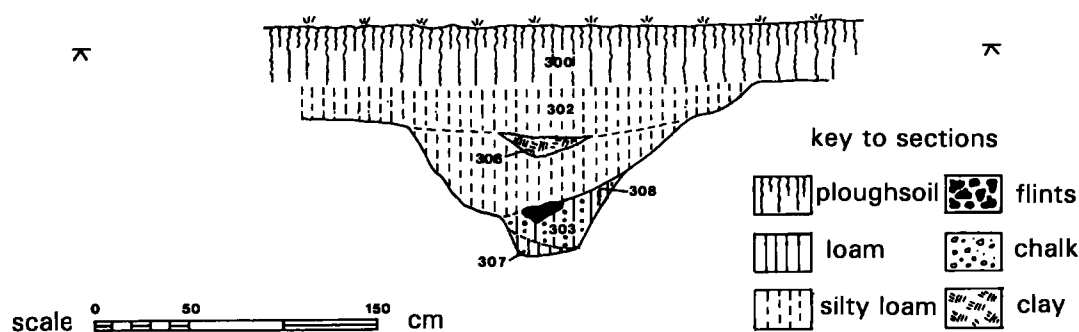


Fig. 5 Roman ditch section

Features excavated

Roman ditch(es). Trench C accurately intercepted two parallel ditches visible as parch-marks in the meadow, confirming the 'reversal' effect noted above. The more easterly was badly disturbed during the machining, and its profile could not be established; it appeared to be wider than its neighbour. Two good sections of the latter were recorded (Fig. 5); its fill was generally of medium brown loam with weathered chalk fragments and a few flints (only one of them large). The layers were not sharply demarcated, but the profile and an indistinct cut-line (306) indicated two phases, both of them Roman to judge from the few weathered and not closely datable sherds. The primary silt contained a few dark patches with small weathered chalk, and its sharp profile suggested that the recut followed shortly after its creation. In neither case could signs of a weathered bank be identified in the fill.

Roman structural remains. Trench D was laid out to intercept two parallel crop-marks believed to represent a simple strip-building whose building materials were abundant in the ploughsoil. Neither crop-mark was easily detectable, each surviving merely as a band *c.* 0.35 m wide of chalk and broken flints of differing sizes, directly upon the chalk surface and with no foundation trench. Fig. 6 illustrates the ephemeral nature of the more westerly of these features, before and after its removal by hand. There is little doubt that these were lightly built walls, their foundations originally set in shallow trenches in the topsoil that did not penetrate the underlying chalk. Such founda-

tions, resting on solid chalk, could have supported a framed timber superstructure, whatever masonry or other materials there were being subsequently removed by thorough robbing and intensive cultivation.

The more easterly feature was confused by an accompanying patch of puddled chalk (402) lying directly upon the natural. It could not be phased either structurally or by any finds, but it might conceivably be the vestiges of a floor. A probable floor of packed gravelly sand was encountered at the very eastern end of the trench, with insufficient time to explore it further. This could represent a further room, or vestigial 'wing', at the SE end of the strip building. It does not appear on the air photographs, since it lies in the set-aside portion of the field.

It seems that we identified the last surviving traces of a simple Romanised building whose full plan can only be conjectured. A small circular cropmark outside the NE corner might represent a shallow well, and the survival of brick and box flue-tile fragments in the ploughsoil argues at least one lost room with a hypocaust. No mosaic tesserae, either coarse or fine, were found.

The sunken-featured buildings (SFB1 and SFB2).

Two major geophysical anomalies in Trench B proved to be well-preserved *grubenhäuser* (SFBs). A stratigraphic relationship between them could not be established.

SFB1 (Figs 7 and 8) This was a shallow feature, much eroded by cultivation, 0.30 m below the excavated chalk surface at its deepest. Its floor, in

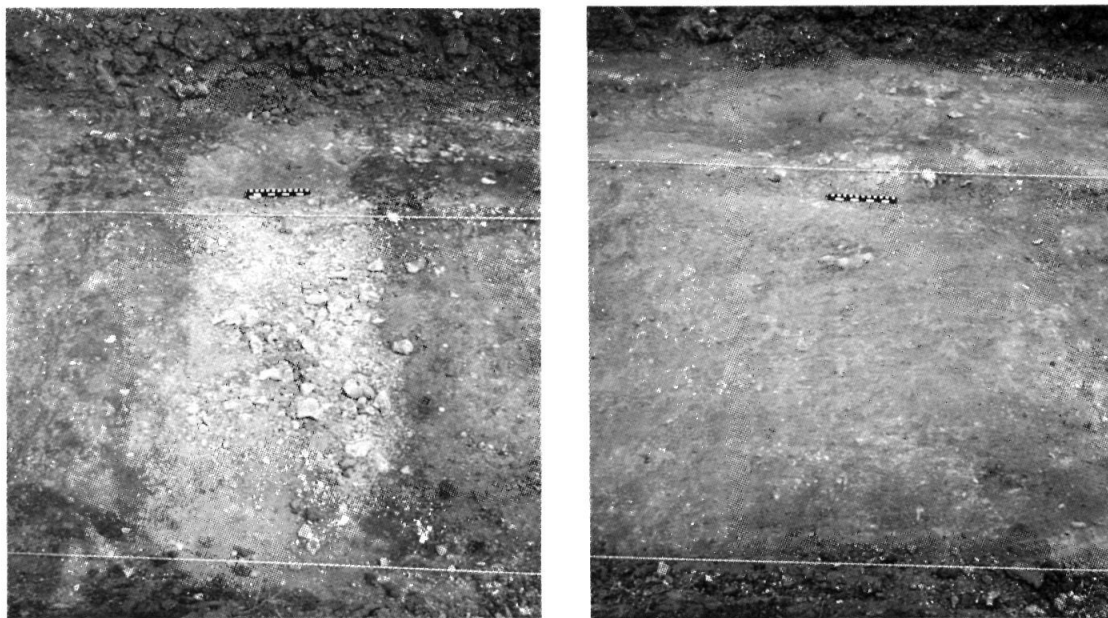


Fig. 6 Roman wall footings, before and after removal by excavation

fact, sloped gently upwards to the east. The main axis lay east-west and was 3.03 m long; pear-shaped in plan, its maximum width is estimated at 2.2 m. At each end was the setting of a large post; that to the west (212) was circular in section, 0.25 m in diameter, 0.6 m deep with a flat bottom. The funnel-shaped hole and slightly expanded bottom suggested that the post might have been removed by rocking; evidently neither it nor its counterpart to the east (220) had decayed *in situ*. The latter was elliptical in plan, its dimensions being 0.60×0.30 m, the hole being vertical-sided and round-bottomed. There was no evidence for a wall. The SE corner of the pit was not very distinct, but seemed to have a sinuous line of four unequally spaced stake-holes along its edge, with four other stake-holes outside and two inside (233). At the SW corner, outside the building, was a single larger and shallower post-hole (208).

Inside the building, fourteen stake-holes (232) of varying size, in groups of four and ten respectively, occupied the NW sector. There may have been others in the unexcavated area.

The stratigraphy was straightforward and uni-

form; below the ploughsoil (201) some 0.2 – 0.3 m of disturbed soil (207) represented disturbance by cultivation, and below that the feature was filled with organically richer fill (204) showing one chalky tip-line and containing most of the pottery, animal bones and an iron knife-blade (Fig. 14, no 7). This represented the final use of the house as a rubbish-pit.

There were two outlying post-holes to the west of this building (203, 205).

SFB2 (Figs 9–12) was far better preserved, due to its greater depth. Approximately three-quarters of it was excavated, and it proved to be roughly oblong with steep sides that were, in two places, distinctly undercut. As with *SFB1*, its axis was east-west, being 3.8 m long and an estimated 2.2 m wide. It had a smooth, roughly level floor 0.8 m below the chalk surface. No tool-marks were visible in the pit sides. Since the S side was outside the excavation trench, the east-west axis of the building can only be conjectured; of the two presumably ridge-bearing posts, that to the west (223) was centrally placed, while the easternmost

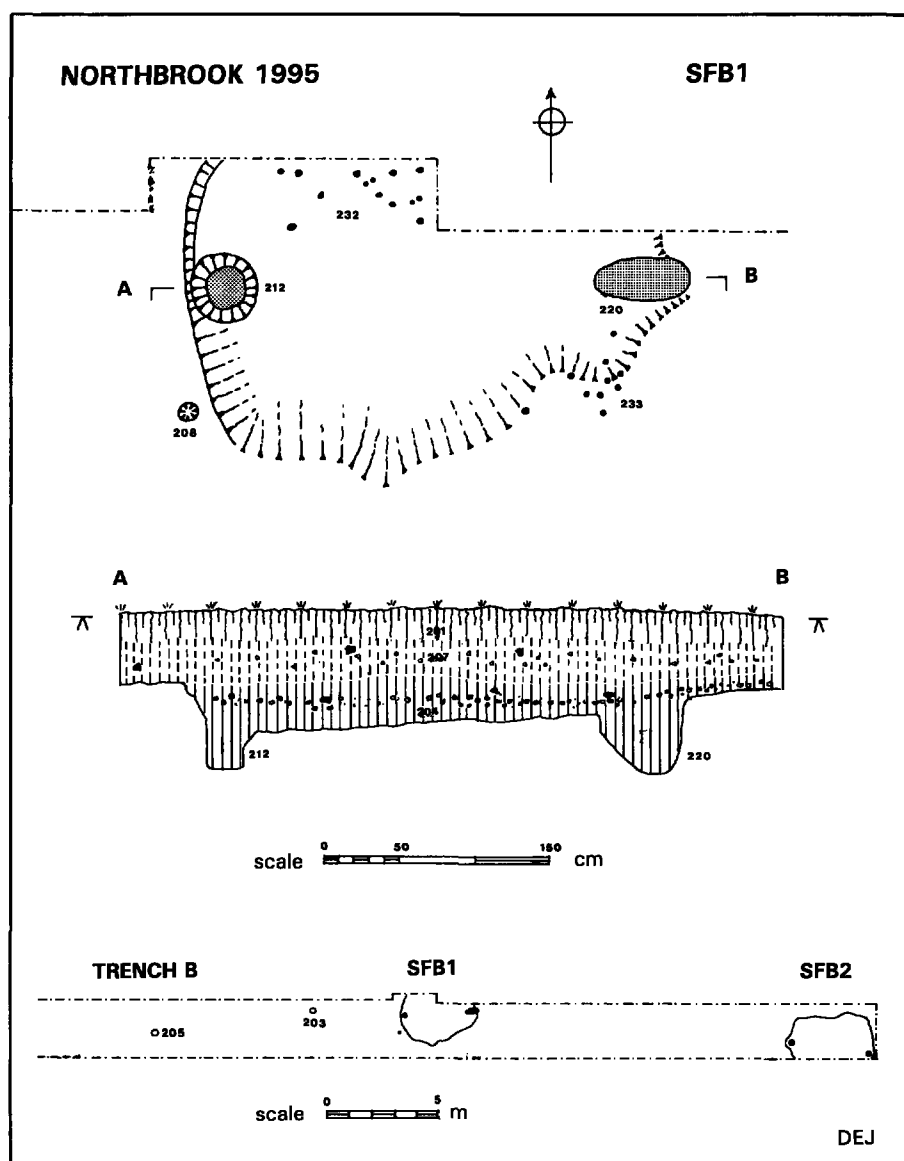


Fig. 7 Sunken-featured Building no 1

(224) was some 0.5 m south of its predicted position. The implications of this anomaly are discussed below. 223 was roughly circular, some 0.2 m in diameter and 0.75 m below the chalk surface, the outline of the pit enclosing it in a kind of 'niche' (221). 224 was circular, 0.22 m in diame-

ter, its roughly flat bottom being 0.87 m below the chalk surface. As in SFB1 (above) the profile suggests that the post had been extracted before backfilling.

Internally, each end of the pit had a wide, level step or ledge cut into the chalk (227, 228), into



Fig. 8 SFB1, from the north. One post-hole has been half-sectioned

which both the major posts were set. Assuming that the unexcavated S side matched that on the N, this feature occurred only at the ends. There were two elongated and symmetrically placed hollows in it at the W end (225, 226). The N side of the pit had another peculiarity (229) where the ledge turned the corner before disappearing. The impression here on excavation was of two shallow steps for access (discussed below). In the floor, thirty-four stake-holes (230) of varying sizes were found. As in SFB1, no pattern could be discerned, though it is clear that they were totally absent from a rectangular area in the NE part of the house.

The stratigraphy comprised two distinct phases of fill below the ploughsoil (201). A fairly homogeneous fill (206) of light brown chalky loam with some large flints and a more organic lens (209) is probably comparable to 204 in SFB1. This layer contained large quantities of pottery, animal bones and two iron objects, a chisel and a knife blade

(Fig. 14, nos 8 and 6). This upper fill, which also contained bone comb fragments (Fig. 13), presumably represents the deposition of domestic rubbish. The lower fill (210, 211) contained many more small chalk lumps and showed recognisable tip-lines, 211 having more humic content. There was a little pottery that will have been derived from the Anglo-Saxon ground surface. In other words, this earlier phase could represent the up-cast from digging a pit or *grubenhaus* nearby: spoil not freshly dug but having stood for a while as a heap.

Discussion of the SFBs

Strictly speaking, the two SFBs cannot be dated by the finds made in their fill, since such finds were derived from elsewhere and provide only a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the cavity they were dumped into. Nevertheless, the lack of primary silt and weathering of the pit sides indicate that backfilling began as soon as the houses be-

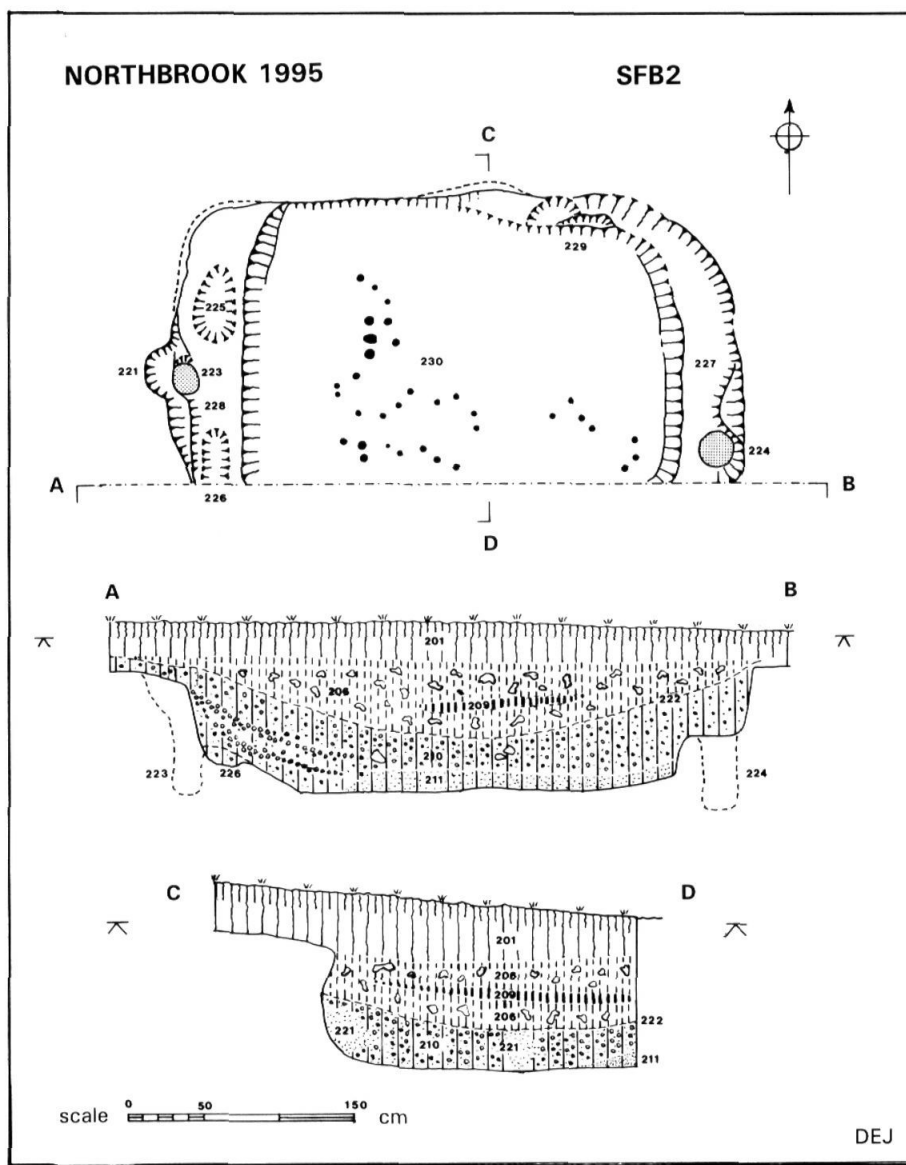


Fig. 9 Sunken-featured Building no 2

came derelict or had their roofs removed, depositing pottery and artifacts that may themselves have been of some age. Since the main posts in both were evidently not replaced, but even probably withdrawn for reuse elsewhere, neither house had a long life. The pottery, therefore, is probably in

fact a not unreasonable guide to the date of the use and demolition of the houses. The fabrics and range of forms are closely paralleled by the material from the Abbots Worthy *grubenhäuser* (Fasham & Whinney 1991b, 56–60) and some of the unpublished pottery from the Worthy Park cemetery



Fig. 10 SFB2, from the east

that is said to be of the sixth century AD (S C Hawkes, pers. comm.). This date is confirmed by the two stamped vessels (Fig. 18), although they were only loosely associated with the houses.

The structural interpretation of excavated SFBs in general is fraught with major problems (e.g. Welch 1992), especially in respect of walls, entrances and floors (or lack of them), and the function(s) of such structures. Our two houses do not advance the discussion materially, and actually introduce further uncertainties. They are clearly not of the 'bivouac-style' of building, in which a pitched roof without supporting gable posts rests directly upon the ground. It has been argued (Dixon 1993, 1995; Barfoot 1995) that gable posts imply walls (of wattle and daub or comparable material) outside the pit. If this was the case at Northbrook, we shall never know; the chalk sur-

face has been eroded by cultivation, and the supposed light posts would have had to penetrate turf and topsoil before leaving any trace in the chalk subsoil.

It is unlikely that the shelf or ledge in SFB2 supported a plank-built wall. Assuming that the unexcavated S side matched that on the N, this feature occurred only at the ends. If it was for seating, it was too low for comfort – a judgement confirmed by the two hollows in it at the W end (225, 226). Moreover, the need for headroom strengthens the argument for walls. Its narrowness at each end and the presence of gable posts would make both ledges impossible to sleep on. The possibility that they supported a floor is discussed below.

A further unexplained peculiarity of SFB2 is the two shallow 'steps' (209). This account follows the general understanding that a *grubenhaus* was entered at one end only (pace Dixon 1993 esp. fig. 14 where a side-entrance is shown). To postulate an off-centre side-entrance at this point would have structural implications (e.g. a porch or wall with doorway). A reappraisal suggests that one step, at least, could be a counterpart to the hollows at the W end.

It is reasonable to postulate rectangular buildings, the ridge of each supported on the pairs of load-bearing gable posts. SFB2, however, seems disconcertingly skewed, though admittedly the incomplete plan merely suggests this. Had the ridge correctly followed the main axis of the building, its plan would have been distinctly wedge-shaped – a shape so far unparalleled in a *grubenhaus*. The displacement of post 224 by c. 0.5 m seems too small to have been caused by a central door, as was apparently the case at Portchester. There, in *Grubenhaus* S2, the eastern post and its pair (or replacement) had been displaced 0.75m to the south to allow for a central entrance passage sloping down from the Roman street beside it (Cunliffe 1976, 17 and fig. 11)

The question of floors for SFB1 and SFB2 remains unanswered. The accommodation of one post of SFB2 in a 'niche' is seen at Abbots Worthy, and at Mucking, where the 'slight ledge ... continues like a collar around the post-holes' (Jones 1974, huts 84 and 105). At Mucking, this ledge was only a few inches high, and was interpreted by

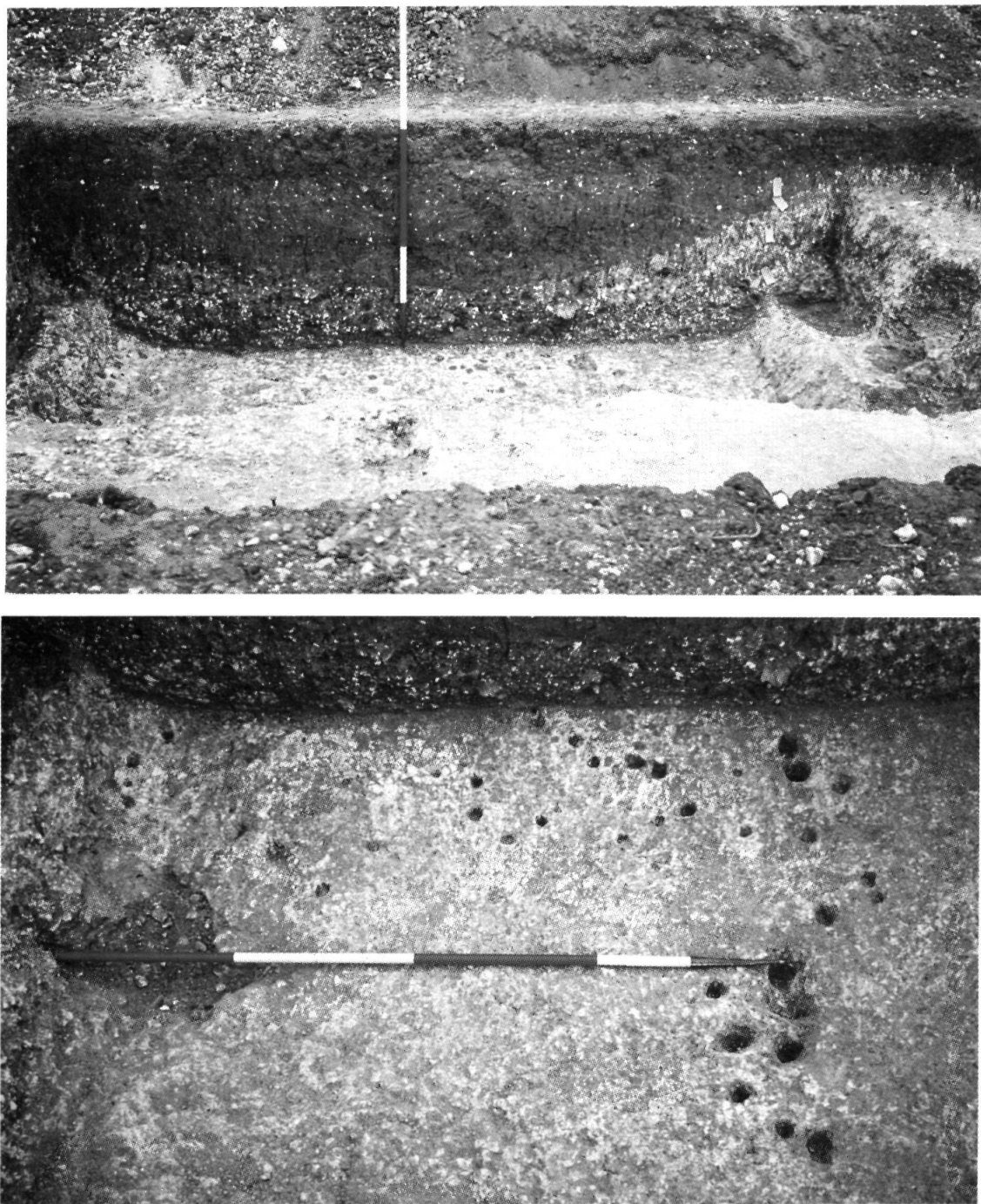


Fig. 11 SFB2. above: S section as excavated; below: stake-holes, from the north

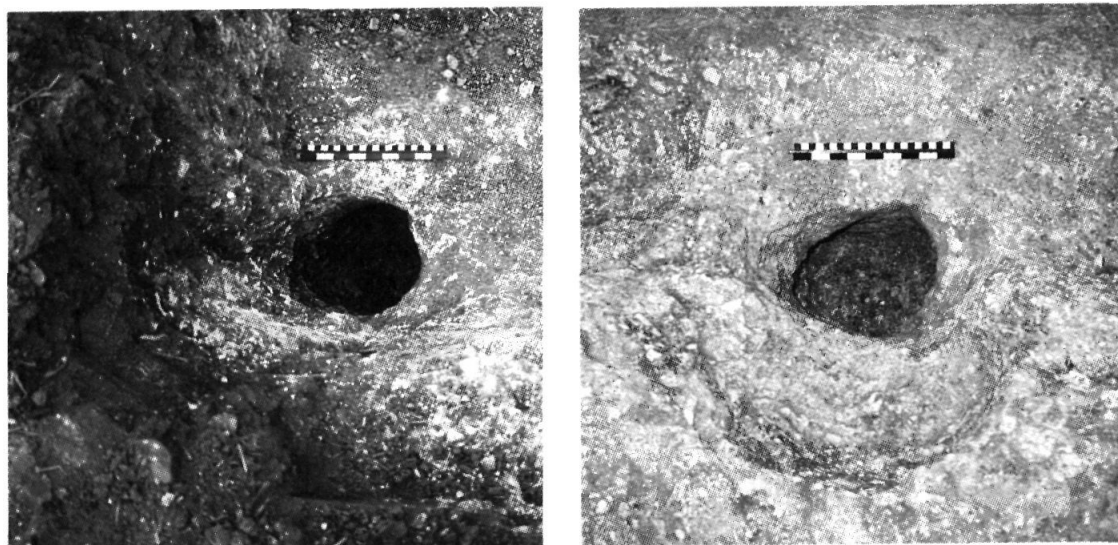


Fig. 12 SFB2 post-holes. a: no 224 from the east; b: no 223 from the west

its excavator as an uneroded vestige of the original soft earthen floor which had been lowered by trampling. This is clearly not so at Northbrook, where the ledge is *c.* 0.3 m above the hard chalk surface. Did it, then, support a planked floor? Supported only at the ends, without joists, the planks would have had to be thick, to avoid springiness and perhaps weakness as they decayed. The otherwise unexplained stakes might represent attempts at support. At Portchester, *Grubenhaus* S3 had such ledges apparently at the E and W ends only (Cunliffe 1976, 19 and fig. 12). At West Stow, where wooden floors are claimed, it is suggested that reinforced floors were laid on the surrounding ground surface, not on ledges (West 1985, 121 and fig. 289). By contrast, the Northbrook floor would have been at least 0.7m or more below ground level, compared to Hamwic SOU36 Pit 12 where a similar ledge was 0.6m below the top of the feature (Morton 1992, 198 and fig. 80). A floor half-way down the pit would of course have provided more headroom and avoided the need for wooden steps or a ladder to reach the very bottom.

Finally, there is no need to follow Fasham and

Whinney (1991b, 76) in surprise that domestic waste was dumped in convenient holes and not spread on the fields at once. It is perfectly good agricultural practice to leave organic waste to rot down thoroughly for a year or more before use. In such a small sample of the large settlement area at Northbrook no purpose-dug rubbish-pits were identified, though geophysical anomalies nearby might suggest a few.

Modern Pit. In Trench D (Fig. 3) a patch of puddled chalk (401) was carefully excavated since it appeared to resemble 402 (above) which is tentatively interpreted as the remains of a floor of the Roman phase. 401 was found to seal a pit containing fragments of wood and steelwork identical to that in position on the nearby overhead power lines. Clearly, at some date the power lines have been renewed, and this is either a new pit to bury the debris of the old post, or the site of the earlier post. This has some bearing on the interpretation of the air photographs, where the power lines are prominent and their posts are useful landmarks.

Undated features. In Trench A, a ragged, roughly oval pit (*c.* 0.65 × 0.35 m and 0.17 m deep; not on plan) was cut into the natural. The primary fill was

of fine chalky humus and the upper fill was severely disturbed by animal burrows. It contained no finds.

Nearby, a shallow gully crossed the excavation trench in a roughly north-south direction. Its outline was ragged, but averaged 0.20 m in width and 0.8 m in depth. There were no finds.

THE FINDS

This section records finds from the entire site, including those from metal-detecting, described as 'surface' finds,⁵ but is restricted to those of Roman and Anglo-Saxon date. Descriptions of finds from the excavation are by the author, as are all drawings (unless otherwise indicated); contributed text is initialled (BM: Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum; CH: Catherine Haith, Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum; RI: Robin Iles, Winchester City Museum; DFW: David F Williams, University of Southampton). The ID numbers are those of identifications by the Winchester Museums Service.

Stone objects (Fig. 13)

1. Part of a tapered whetstone, broken at one end, of Norwegian Ragstone of the silvery-grey 'Blaustein' variety, originating from Eidsborg, Telemark, in central southern Norway (32 g weight). L: 68 mm; W: 17-13 mm; Th: 15-13 mm. This type of honestone was imported into England from the late Saxon period to the late medieval (Moore 1978; 1983; Crosby & Mitchell 1987). Topsoil. (DFW)
2. (not illustrated) Two small fragments of stone from the Greensand series (251 g weight). The larger piece has one flattish surface and so might possibly have come from a rotary quern. Topsoil. (DFW)

Bone objects (Fig. 13)

3. Tooth segment of a composite, probably single-sided bone comb with parts of six coarse teeth surviving and parts of two rivet-holes with iron staining. Lost, drawn from a photograph. (For

classification and terminology, see Galloway 1976.) From SFB2, unstratified.

4. Twenty-four fragments of a double-sided composite bone comb with fine teeth, several intact. L: 0.79 m (estimated). Five iron rivets survive. Combs of this type are not infrequently found on early (and later) Anglo-Saxon sites, e.g. Worthy Park (S C Hawkes, pers. comm., forthcoming report, fig.10, no 1, 85 no 1, C 5.2 and C 11.3), Portway (Cook & Dacre 1985, fig.55, no 5), and Old Down Farm (Davies 1979, fig.9). SFB 2, unstratified.
5. Four fragments of a large composite triangular bone comb with decoration of incised lines and ring-and-dot motif. L: 0.15 m (estimated). One fragment shows the return of one line of the incised linear frame, and the lowest fragment the traces of five coarse saw-cut teeth. Triangular combs are not common, and this very large example is at present unparalleled in Hampshire (a triangular comb from Winchester is late Roman rather than Anglo-Saxon: Biddle 1970, 313 and pl.XLVIIIb). SFB2, unstratified.

Iron objects (Fig. 14)

6. Section of ?knife-blade with straight, parallel back and cutting edge. L: 84 mm; Th: 3.0 mm. SFB2, context 206.
7. Tanged knife-blade, with straight back and cutting-edge, both curving towards the point. L: 114 mm; Th: 3.0 mm. SFB1, context 204.
8. Tanged chisel with sharply splayed cutting-edge. L: 102 mm. Most of the tang is in fresh, uncorroded condition, suggesting that the handle had been of oak (which inhibits corrosion). SFB2, context 206.

Objects in other metals (Figs 15 & 16)

All objects in this section are surface finds.⁵ Roman brooch types are those in Collingwood and Richmond (1976).

9. Hinge and part of the bow of a copper-alloy flat Roman bow brooch, ribbed longitudinally. The corroded iron hinge-pin survives within the cylindrical head. The type is one of the 'Langton Down' group (Group K, cf. especially no 22). Of Gallic origin, the type appears as an object of pre-conquest trade, but was brought over in quantity by the army of conquest. It died out in the

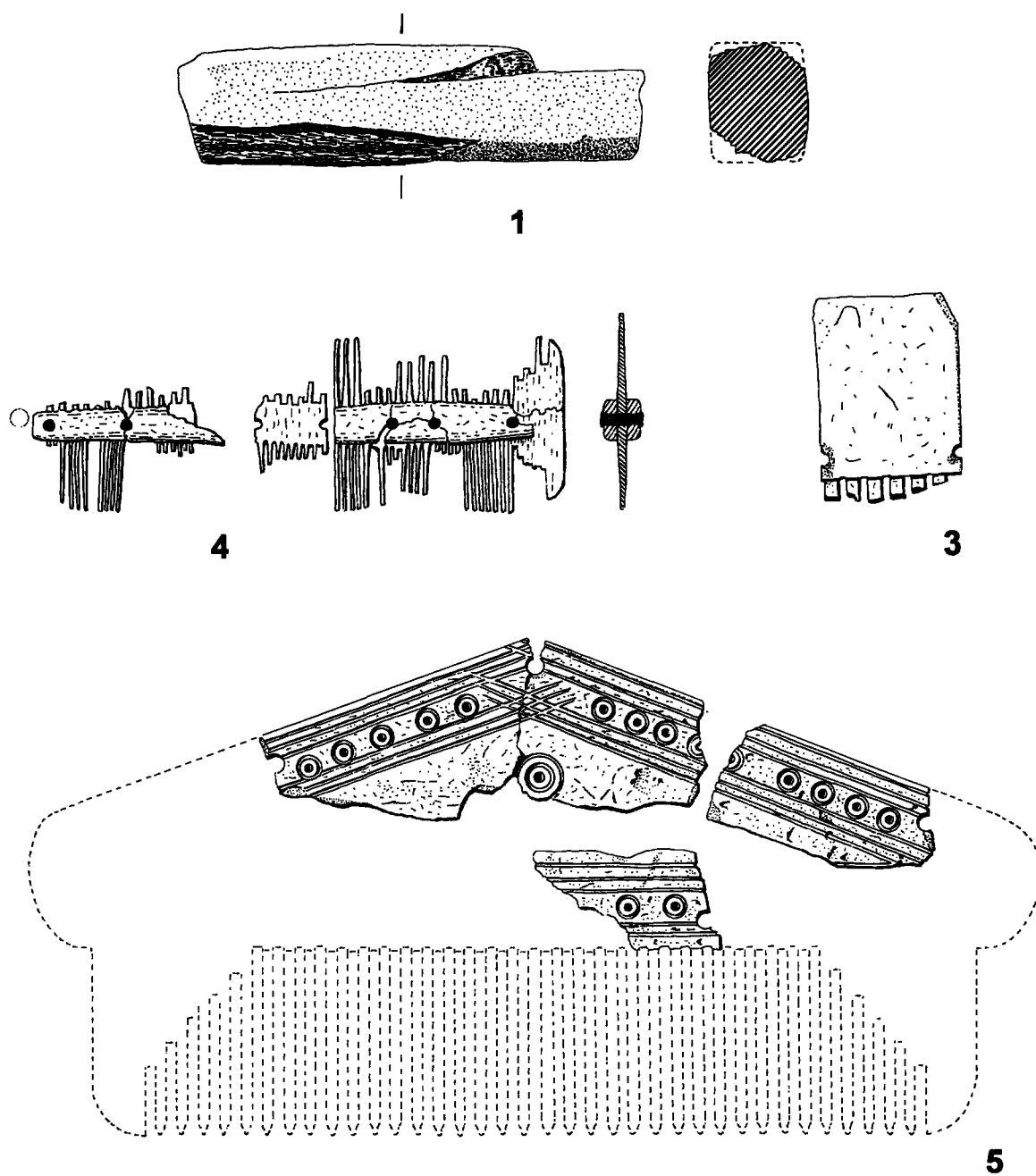


Fig. 13 Objects in stone and bone. Nos 1 and 3, 1:1; no 4, 1:2; no 5, 1:1

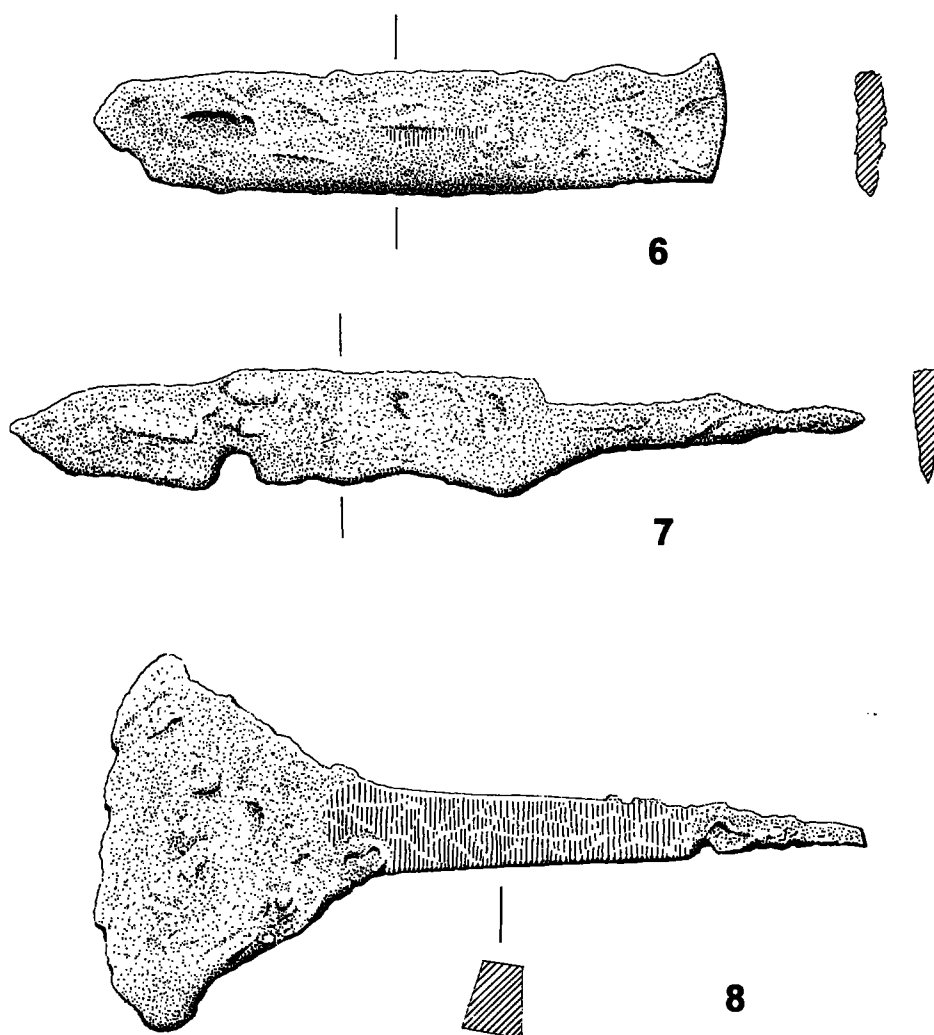


Fig. 14 Objects of iron. All 1:1

- Flavian period. Date: pre-AD 43–c. 80. ID 5'1996/9 (RI)
10. Copper-alloy Roman brooch with hinged pin. The pin is missing, except for a small section at the hinge. The bow is decorated with longitudinal ribs. It appears to be a contemporary derivative of the 'Aucissa' type (Group C) lacking a terminal knob and name-plate. This type of brooch appeared with the Roman conquest, is well known from military sites and lasted just into the Flavian period. Date: c. AD 50–70. ID 5'1996/8 (RI)
 11. Copper-alloy Roman bow-brooch, corresponding to Group H, the 'dolphin' type. the bow tapers to a small unperforated catch-plate, and is ornamented with a beaded keel along the fore-edge. The arms, which normally cover the spring in this type, are short – 11 mm wide. The pin is missing, but part of the coiled spring remains. L: 39 mm (max.). This type was current from Neronian times until the middle of the 2nd century. Date: c. AD 60–150. ID 24'1996/9 (RI)
 12. (not illustrated) Catch-plate fragment of a Roman brooch. The bow tapers to a point and is

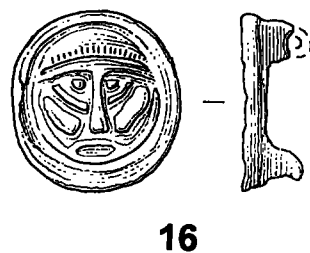
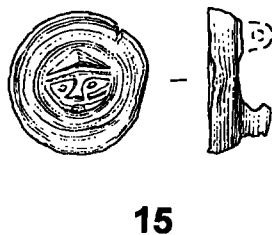
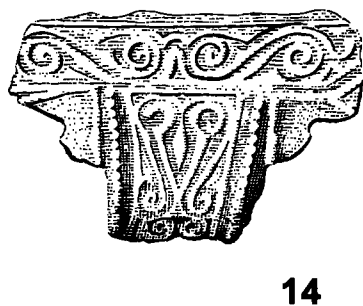
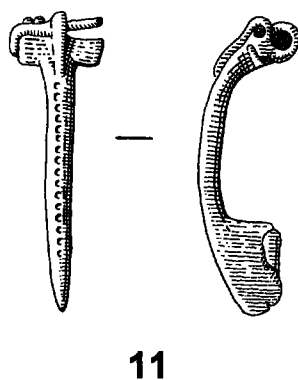
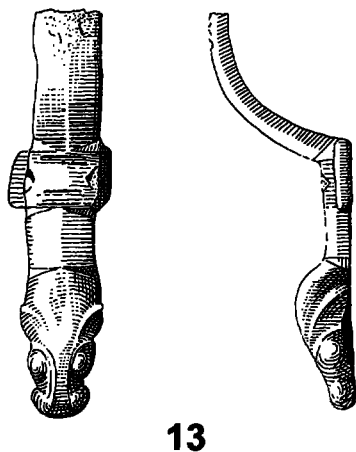
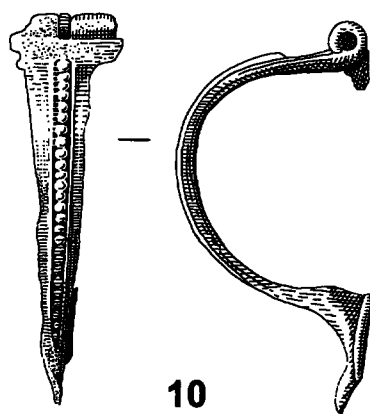
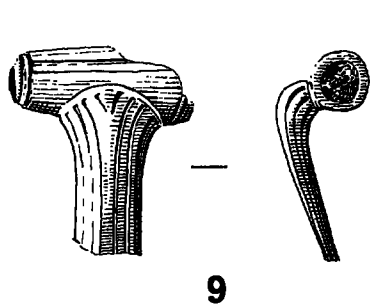


Fig. 15 Brooches. All 1:1. (Nos 15 and 16 drawn by N. Griffiths.)

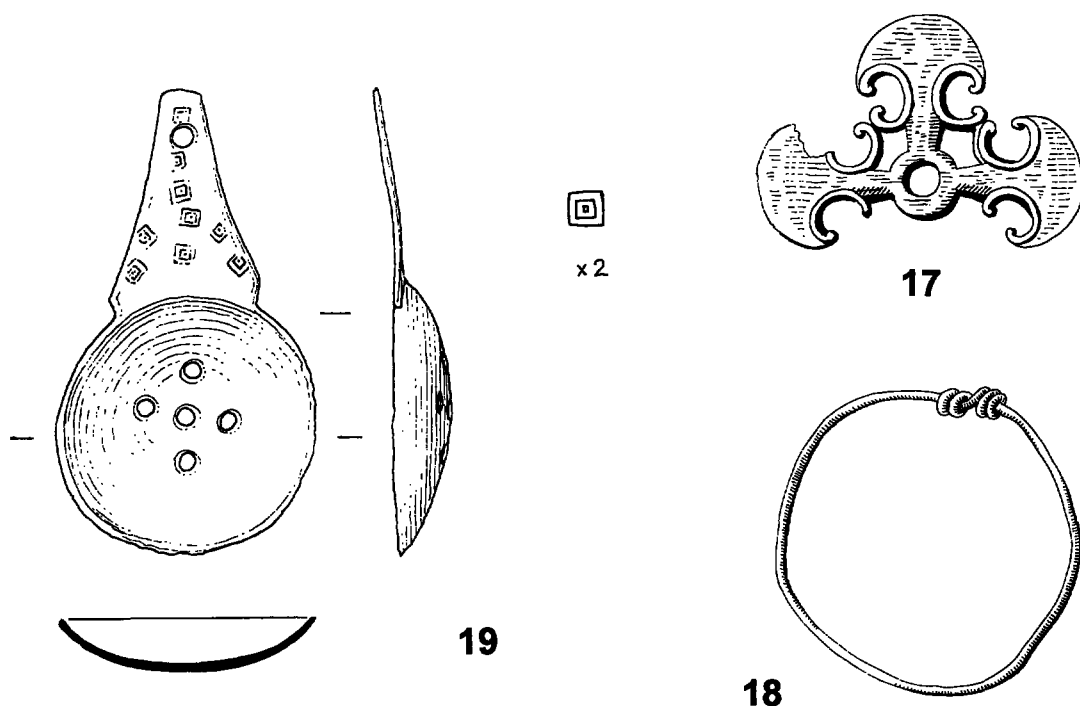


Fig. 16 Objects in other materials. All 1:1. (No 19 drawn by N. Griffiths.)

undecorated along the fore-edge. The catch-plate most resembles Collingwood & Richmond type H, a simple brooch type such as fig.102, no 13, but the rest of the bow and hinge are missing. Type H was current from Neronian times until the middle of the 2nd century. ID 29'1996/1 (RI)

13. Terminal and part of the bow of a copper-alloy 'Jutish' cruciform brooch. In brooches of this type the zoomorphic terminal is thought to represent a horse. This specimen had no catch-plate, but at the back of the terminal is a longitudinal groove where the pin rested. The two small arms at the base of the bow are unusual. The missing head will have been rectangular, or roughly so, possibly decorated and certainly bearing three knobs, either full-round or half-round. The complete form and its variants are illustrated by Baldwin Brown (1915) and Leeds (1945). This discovery falls outside the area in which the early forms are normally found, which is the Cambridge region, S Midlands, the early Saxon region of the upper

Thames and Kent east of the Medway (Hawkes 1956, 97; Leeds 1945, 69-71 and map fig.37). The type originated in Jutland and in the Anglian, Saxon and Frisian lands of the continent, and may have been copied in England. Åberg (1926) treats the knobs as a dating feature; without them, we can only tentatively assign our specimen to his Group I or II, ie mid- to late 5th century. ID 5'1996/7 (RI)

14. Upper portion of an equal-armed brooch in cast copper alloy, consisting of a roughly rectangular head plate and a curved bow section. There is a single eyelet behind the head plate with iron traces. The front is decorated with running scroll ornament. Severe corrosion in places makes some of the detail and workmanship unclear, especially on either side of the bow, where there are signs of an openwork design (cf. an example from Collingbourne Ducis: Gingell 1978, 76, 97-8 and fig.15). This piece has not yet been paralleled in Hampshire or the Isle of Wight, and may not have been made in England but in the Elbe-Weser area

where the type originated. Date: probably c. 450–500. ID 5'1996/6 (RI)

15. Anglo-Saxon button brooch, cast in copper alloy and then gilded. The main area of the design consists of a representation of a full-face human mask (Avent & Evison Class Bii, dated to 450–500: 1982, 81 and 99). The gilding is in good condition, but is missing from some of the raised surfaces and around the edge of the rim, which is slightly buckled at 45°. On the back, the pin is missing, but the catch-plate survives at 180° (i.e. at the bottom end of the brooch). As is common, the catch section of the catch-plate is bent to the right. Diameter 19 mm, rim height 3.5 mm. Similar Class Bii button brooches are known from Alfriston and High Down in Sussex, and from Dover in Kent (Avent & Evison 1982); one reported from Worthy Park has been reclassified (S C Hawkes, pers. comm.). Classes Bi and Class B Miscellaneous are known from Droxford (Aldsworth 1978, 136 and fig.31), and Chessel Down on the Isle of Wight (Avent & Evison 1982, 81). ID 14'1996/1 (RI)
16. Anglo-Saxon button brooch, cast in copper alloy and then gilded. Full-face human mask, Class Ii (Avent & Evison 1982, 86 and 99, dated 425–75). Condition of gilding as no 15. Rim slightly buckled at 270°. Pin missing, but extant hinge-lug and catch-plate (at 180°). Catch section bent to right. Diameter 23 mm, rim height 2.5 mm. A fairly close parallel is brooch 20.2 from Long Wittenham, Berkshire, with others from Mucking, Essex (Avent & Evison 1982). ID 24'1996/1 (RI)

Button brooches are found throughout southern England from Kent to Somerset, often as grave-goods. The dating proposed by Avent and Evison (1982) has been questioned by Welch, who would place them in the late fifth and early sixth centuries (1985). They were worn singly or in pairs, apparently in various ways, such as fastening the front and back of a tubular garment, sometimes holding a necklace, sometimes as clasps; they are also found in purses. The meaning of the mask is unknown, though it may have been a representation of a deity, to protect the wearer from outside evils.

Hampshire examples are from cemeteries at Alton (Evison 1988, 10–11), Worthy Park (S C Hawkes, pers. comm.), and Droxford (Aldsworth 1978, 136). Class B types are found in southern Wiltshire, southern Hampshire, Sussex and Kent, whereas

the larger Class I concentrate in northern Wiltshire and the Thames Valley. The finding of both classes at Northbrook lends weight to the suggestion that southern Hampshire was an area of culturally mixed communities (Welch 1996, 35). (RI)

17. Part of a brooch or pin in copper alloy, c. 3 mm thick, with three pelta-shaped arms partly outlined with a single cast rib and a central perforation (with no sign of wear or of a rivet for attachment). If a fourth arm or shaft existed, there is no sign of a break; this may have been filed off, and the object reused. No exact parallel has been traced, but it resembles a type of Anglo-Saxon brooch illustrated by Baldwin Brown (1915, pl. xxxvii). It is also reminiscent of a group of three Roman harness mounts from Gorhambury, St Albans (Neal 1990, 126 and fig.125 nos 168, 171–2). (ID 14'1996/6)
18. Ring in silver wire, 40 mm diameter, with the ends permanently clasped by winding. If it is a bracelet, it would fit only a very small child. It is probably a *chatelaine*, from which cosmetic or toilet implements would have hung, but might be either Roman or Anglo-Saxon. ID 14'1996/4
19. Part of a tinned copper-alloy sieve-spoon or skimmer, with a shallow, circular bowl, pierced slightly off-centre by five holes drilled in a cruciform arrangement. The edge of the bowl is slightly worn and chipped. The base of the stem is sub-triangular, of flat section, and decorated with stamped ornament in the form of double-outline squares. The rest of the stem is missing, and appears to have been broken off in antiquity, for the edge has been smoothed down, and a secondary hole for suspension has been cut, partially destroying the stamped motif furthest from the bowl. Diam. of bowl: 34 mm; L: (surviving) 60 mm. ID 5'1996/10

Perforated spoons of Anglo-Saxon date are quite rare finds in England, and their distribution is mainly confined to Kent, at such sites as Stodmarsh, Lyminge, Sarre, Chatham Lines, Mill Hill Deal, Bifrons and Bekesbourne (Meaney 1981), with further examples known from Alfriston and Bishopstone in Sussex (Welch 1983), Chessel Down on the Isle of Wight (Arnold 1981) and Winterbourne Gunner in Wiltshire (Musty & Stratton 1964). They occur in richly-furnished female graves of the late 5th and 6th centuries, where they are often found associated

with rock-crystal balls in metal slings between the knees, as if they had been worn suspended from a girdle.

It has been suggested that the sieve-spoons may have been used for straining wine, and that the rock-crystal balls which accompany them were somehow connected with this process, although a magical or amuletic function seems equally likely. It is also possible that they were not actually functional objects, but buried in high-status Anglo-Saxon graves to symbolise the household duties of women. They are usually made of silver, decorated with niello and inlaid with garnet, but several are more modest versions in tinned copper alloy, and it is to this group that the new find from Northbrook belongs.

The closest parallel to the Northbrook example is a complete tinned copper-alloy sieve-spoon from Grave 6 at Bifrons (Baldwin Brown 1915, pl.xciv no 2), which has a wire slip-knot ring at the top for suspension. It is one of the earliest graves in the cemetery, dating to the late 5th century. Two other sieve-spoons from the site, unfortunately both unassociated, are cited by Musty and Stratton (1964, 97) as similar to the sieve-spoon from Winterbourne Gunner, Grave 7, which is also of tinned copper alloy and decorated with crescentic punch-marks. An example from Bishopstone, Sussex, remains unpublished. (CH)

Perforated Roman coins (not illustrated)

The mint marks of a-d are illegible. ID numbers are those of Winchester Museums Service

- a) *Æ* coin of the House of Constantine minted 337–40, the reverse showing the personification of Pax and the legend PAX PUBLICA, the obverse the bust (r) of Helena – an issue to commemorate Helena (d.328/9). The coin is pierced to the right of the bust. (RIC VIII, 143–4) ID 20'1996/1 (RI)
- b) follis of Constantine I, of the *Beata Tranquillitas* type (the reverse showing a globe on an altar with VOT I.), minted c. 321–4. ID 24'1996/4 (RI)
- c) follis of Constantine I, of the *Gloria Exercitus* type (two soldiers with standards on the reverse) minted c. 331–5. ID 24'1996/5 (RI)
- d) a worn and illegible later Roman *Æ* issue, pierced to the left of the bust. ID 24'1996/2 (RI)
- e) follis, in fairly good condition, the obverse show-

ing a laureate bust r. and inscription 'C.N...N TINVS AVG'. The reverse has a wreath inscribed within 'VOT/XX' and the inscription 'DN CONSTAN TINVS MAX' with mint mark '[P]TR' (Trier). The coin is pierced through the 'P' of PTR. The closest match is *RIC* vol.VII no 439, p.202, dating to the reign of Constantine AD 323–4. However, no 439 also has 'AVG' at the end of the reverse inscription, unlike this example. *RIC* 409 variant. ID 29'1996/2

Perforated coins are not uncommonly found in pagan Anglo-Saxon contexts, used as jewellery (pendants, charms or amulets). These are all of bronze, and in one case worn and possibly illegible when reused. They were therefore probably (but not certainly) picked up on the site as curiosities; their late date accords with the generally late date of the other coins from the Roman phases.

Unperforated Roman coins (not illustrated)

- a) ? Faustina II, wife of Marcus Aurelius (161–180), *Æ* denarius, incomplete and illegible. ID 5'1996/4 (RI)
- b) two *Æ minimi*, one radiate, the other illegible. c. 250–300 (RI)
- c) Gallienus (253–268). Radiate *Æ* coin, with reverse Jove or Apollo. ID 5'1996/5 (RI)
- d) barbarous radiate, probably contemporary imitation of Claudius II (268–70), late third century (BM)
- e) Maximian (284–307). Follis, with rev. Genius GENIO POPVLI ROMANI. ? London mint, c. 305–7. *RIC* 42. ID 24'1996/1 (RI)
- f) Constantine I (306–337). Follis, with reverse Mars, MARTI PATRI PROPVG. London mint, c. 307–310. *RIC* 108. ID 5'1996/3 (RI)
- g) Constantine I (306–337) *Æ* coin, with reverse 'VO TIS XX', rest of inscription illegible. Trier mint c. AD 321–2. ID 14'1996/2 (RI)
- h) illegible, late Roman (BM)

POTTERY

Roman

Few of the Roman sherds show any diagnostic features, apart from one sherd of samian (from the fieldwalking) and one sherd of a lustrous New Forest folded beaker (topsoil). The few everted

rims look late in date, matching the late Roman date of the coin series. On the other hand, there were no identifiable specimens of the grog-tempered handmade pots regularly found on late Roman sites in central and southern Hampshire.

Saxon

All the sherds recognized as Saxon are derived from SFB1 and SFB2.¹ The nearness and contemporaneity of the Abbots Worthy site invite comparison with its sophisticated published analysis (Fasham & Whinney 1991b, 52–60). That typology is followed below, but for lack of funding only a visual identification of fabric (by the author) has been possible. However, Dr D F Williams generously offered a petrological analysis of sherds from context 209, a representative sample of fabrics encountered throughout the collection.

In general, the pottery from SFB1 was the same as that from SFB2, and the two probably contemporary phases of fill in SFB2 were identical in ceramic terms. Taken as a group, the Northbrook pottery is in the same ceramic tradition as that of Abbots Worthy (and other Hampshire sites where comparison is possible); possibly significant differences are noted and discussed below.

Form

No bases or footrings were identified, and in only four cases did the lower profile survive. Most of the regular Abbots Worthy type series were represented, being essentially variants on the theme of the globular (and presumably round-bottomed) 'storage jar or cooking pot'. Carbonised material (food?) was found adhering to the inside (only) of 206.1, a vessel of type 4, suggesting perhaps that its contents had caught fire accidentally. Rims were mostly very uneven, showing little interest in a stylish finish, or in the distinction of neck and shoulder. A faint facet (external or internal) was noted on a few examples. Pots were generally smaller than at Abbots Worthy, with a preference for a more boldly inturned rim. Of the two bowls, no 201.7 might have served as a lid, though its small size and the rarity of suitably everted rims might make this questionable.

Fabric

General comment

Visual examination by the author of every excavated sherd confirmed Dr Williams's conclusions from the smaller sample, and his comparison with the Abbots Worthy fabric series. In addition to chaff or grass, small seeds and husks were also suspected in the organic content of the main collection; the rare calcite (rather than crushed shell) was very tentatively identified (by the author) in two sherds (not from context 209), in one case combined with crushed flint. A slight micaceous sparkle observed in several specimens is confirmed by Dr Williams's recognition of mica in one sherd from 209. The descriptions of sherds illustrated in Fig. 17 are by the author.

The potting technique can only be conjectured. There are no characteristics of coil- or ring-building, nor of 'beating' the surface to consolidate it. The generally lumpy feel reflects a piecemeal technique. Some pots were smoothed with a wet slurry, lumps and all; others were scraped with a rough-edged tool, while many were wiped smooth and finished with a bone or similar implement to give a finish that ranged from a light polish to a true burnish. It is unlikely that a slow wheel or *tournette* was employed.

The consistent and even dark grey and black reduction indicates considerable experience in clamp firing (successful and consistent reduction being more difficult than oxidation). Variations in colour are noted below, oxidation possibly being reserved for more special items; patchy results are rare on the whole. Hardness and softness, however, vary considerably, even in the same pot, while a few hard grey and orange pieces must have reached temperatures comparable to those of a Roman kiln.

Context 209 by D F Williams

A group of some twenty-four coarse plain body-sherds and two small sections of rim was examined, firstly in the hand under a binocular microscope (×20) and then a representative selection was thin-sectioned and studied under the petrological microscope.

All but one of the sherds show clear evidence of organic tempering, possibly grass or chaff, which

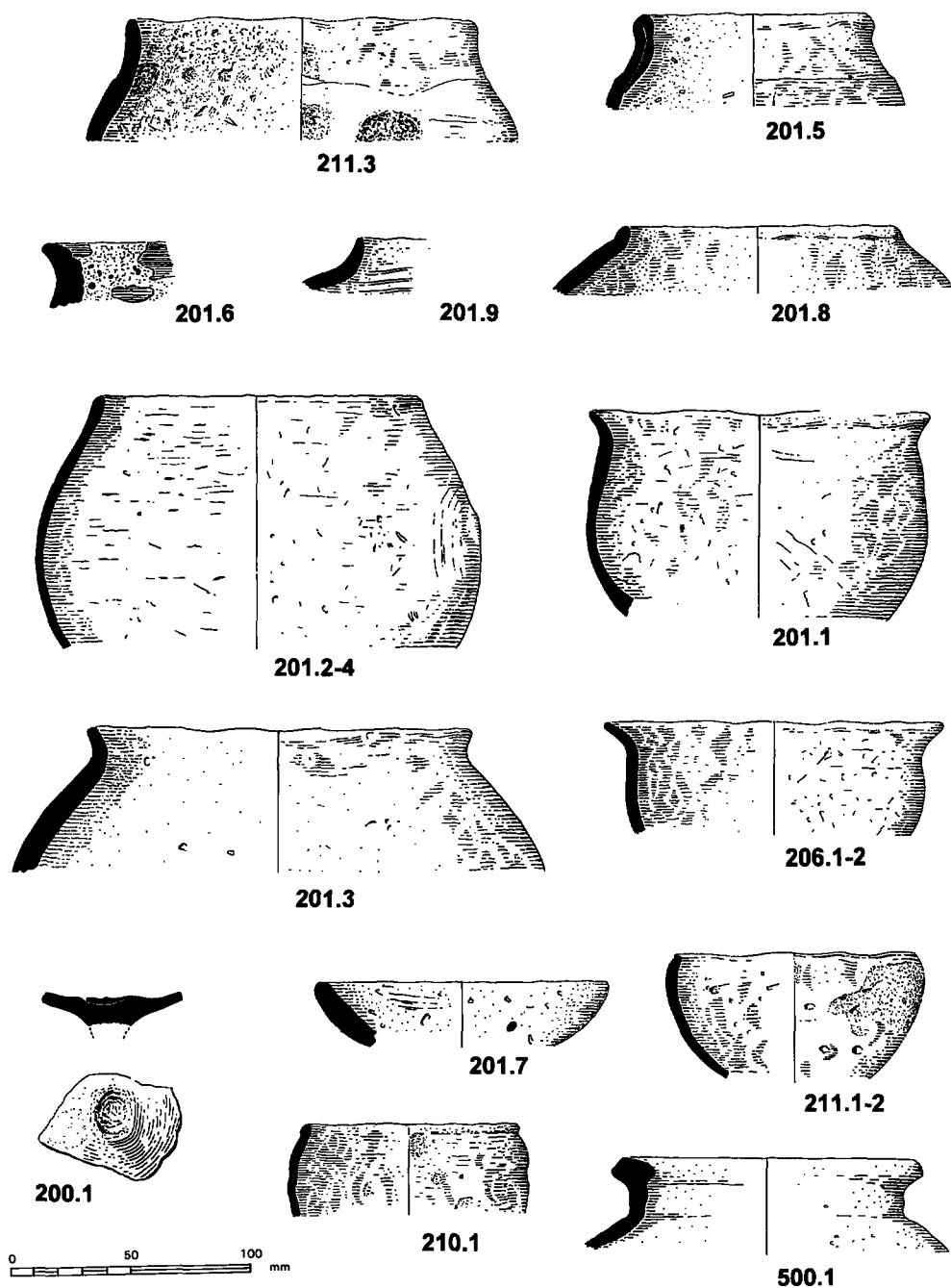


Fig. 17 Pottery. All 1:3

has burned out during firing leaving plentiful elongated voids, some of which bear impressions of small parallel channels. These vegetable voids are present not only in the paste of the sherds but can also be seen on both of the outer surfaces. There are also a number of cases where thin carbonised fragments are still visible in fresh fracture. The large quantity of vesicles present in all of these sherds points to the deliberate addition of organic material to the clay by the potter.

Also present in the clay matrix of the sherds are silt-sized grains of quartz, together with a few slightly larger grains and some flecks of mica. Occasional rounded argillaceous inclusions, probably clay pellets, and rare well-rounded pellets of glauconite were noted in some of the sherds.

The only exception to this organic-tempered material is a small reduced bodysherd which is heavily packed with well-sorted quartz grains in the size-range 0.20–40 mm, together with a little mica.

A comparison between the Northbrook sample and the fabric of the early Saxon pottery from Abbots Worthy shows a strong degree of similarity (Williams 1991). Of the 551 early Saxon sherds recovered at Abbots Worthy, organic-tempered pottery easily forms the largest fabric group, accounting for some 78% of the sherd count, with sandy wares being the next most common fabric grouping at 10% (*ibid* fig.7). There are no signs in the Northbrook sample of the smaller Abbots Worthy fabric groups which contain flint and limestone/chalk (including the imported calcite and oolitic tempered sherds), although given the rather small sample examined above this may not necessarily be surprising.

Examples illustrated

- 211.3 cooking pot or jar, type 2, as 201.5 but with upright rim and neck and faint (and uneven) shoulder, tempered with fine sand and much grog giving it a heavily pitted finish internally, with some flaking. Although lumpy and unevenly made, the exterior has been carefully smoothed above the shoulder and burnished below it. SFB2
- 201.5 cooking pot or jar, crudely made, rim thickened with clay and slightly faceted, sloping neck and

faint shoulder. Fine to medium quartz sand and organic temper. SFB2

- 201.6 cooking pot or jar with exceptionally thick rim, under-fired and friable, especially on the inner surface. Exterior wiped and smoothed. SFB2
- 201.9 globular cooking pot or jar, type 6, exterior smoothed and lightly burnished, interior rough with marks of scraping below neck. SFB2
- 201.8 as 201.2–4, globular cooking pot or jar with weak bead-rim in fine sandy fabric. Exterior smoothed, interior lightly burnished. SFB2.
- 201.2–4: two joining sherds of a globular cooking pot or jar. Irregular rim profile, variously incurving or upright, with slight facet, rather thin-walled for its size. Much organic temper. Interior wiped horizontally, exterior smoothed and lightly burnished overall. At the break, possibly the edge of a lost bulge or boss with vigorously burnished outline. SFB1. cf 201.8
- 201.1 small cooking pot or jar with irregular everted rim, type 5, fine sand with a little organic matter, smoothed and partly burnished exterior. SFB1
- 201.3 globular jar, type 6, tempered with very fine sand, organic matter and a little grog. SFB1
- 206.1–2 two adjacent but not fitting rim-sherds of a cooking pot or jar of type 5 with strongly everted rim and weak neck. Fine sandy and organic temper, well fired, interior smooth and lumpy, exterior smooth and wiped horizontally. Clear traces of carbonised material on the interior below neck. SFB2
- 200.1 sherd of a pointed base, possibly of type 18, in hard, sandy orange fabric with grey core and fired brown outside. The curvature of the body is too shallow to represent the base of a conical lamp (cf. a later example in Dunning 1959, fig.16, no 7), which the Abbots Worthy example may have been. A second possibility is the attachment for a handle; there is, however no sign of the finger pressure that would be expected inside the vessel at this point. The workmanship, moreover, is rather crude internally here to represent the wall of an otherwise carefully finished vessel. Topsoil
- 201.7 small shallow bowl (or lid) in hard fine sandy fabric, deeply pitted by burnt-out organic inclusions, two larger pebbles in the paste, grey-buff exterior. SFB2
- 211.1–2 small cup or bowl, as type 12 but deeper, rim faceted and marked externally by a rough, narrow strip of clay pressed out when finishing the rim. Uneven, soft oxidised firing in shades of brown causing part of the surface to flake off. Fabric sandy with some larger quartz grains and some organic temper. SFB2

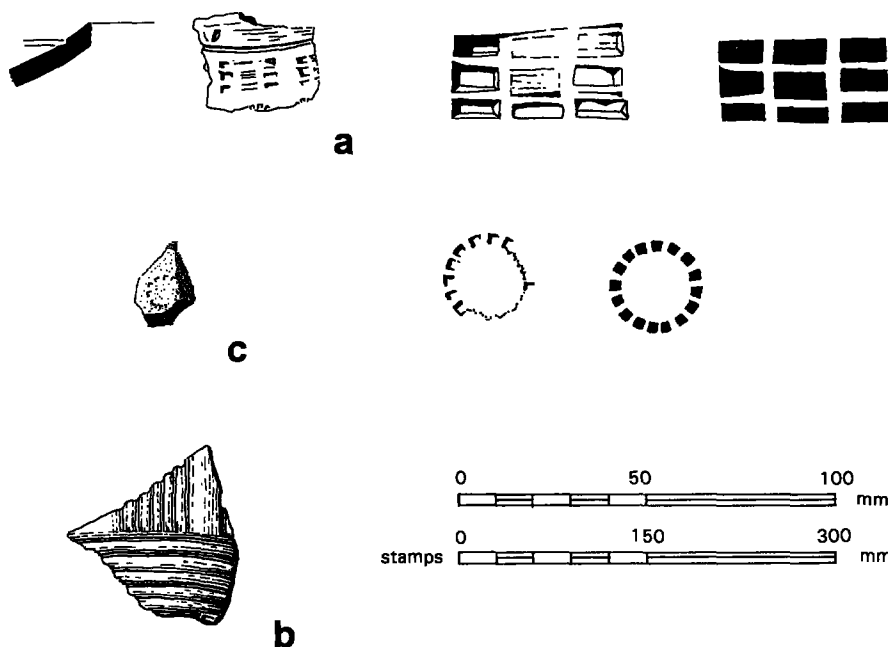


Fig. 18 Decorated pottery

210.1 small cooking pot or jar, type 1, with uneven profile and weak bead rim, in fine sandy fabric with some organic temper. The interior has been well burnished, the exterior smoothed leaving small hollows rough. Unstratified

Decoration (Fig. 18)

Only three pots bore any decoration, none of it elaborate. Only one showed any serious attempt at systematic grooved decoration, one was marked with a damaged stamp, another with 'segmented circle' impressions. In Fig. 18 the sherds are illustrated at the same scale as the pots, the dies shown both as found and in restored form, as recommended in her catalogue by Lady Briscoe (1981, 29).

Fig. 18a, in hard, grey-buff organically tempered ware, shows two impressions of a die of Briscoe type C2a, the 'grid motif'. Four teeth of the stamp are broken off, showing wood grain in the impression (wood, rather than bone or antler, is normal for dies in this group, either sawn or knife-cut as in this case). Teeth are sometimes found broken, either in the original cutting or subsequent clean-

ing. Stamps of the grid motif are normally square, and the pronounced oblong shape here is very unusual. Not found (in either shape) at Abbots Worthy, this oblong form is paralleled at the Portway, Andover, cemetery (Cook & Dacre 1985, fig. 74, nos. 15 and 26 – two dies apparently used by the same potter). The Portway and Northbrook stamps are unusually large, at 17 mm and 30 mm respectively, the average for this group being 8–10 mm. Briscoe notes that stamps of this group 'are more often found on the Continent than in Britain'. The Portway cemetery example is dated to the early 6th century.

Fig. 18c is the surviving chip of a biconical vessel in hard grey organic-tempered fabric fired buff outside. The two principal, fitting sherds have been lost since the excavation, but are known from an indistinct photograph. Described as 'rim-sherds' they appear to represent the body of a biconical bowl with a wobbly groove just above or below the carination, a boss and a row of seven stamps. A second line of stamps, each resembling three dots between brackets, but too indistinct to illustrate, can possibly be made out. The die shown is an unrecorded example of Briscoe type A5d, the 'segmented circle' in which the central area (posi-

tive on the stamp) is wider than the (negative) segments – a unique version on a common group of stamps.

Fig. 18b is also lost, but illustrated from the same photograph (the scale is approximate). It is dark grey, carefully grooved, and at present without parallel.

True decorative bosses are absent from the Northbrook assemblage, although a hint of one might be present on no 201.2–4, while the projection on the lost biconical bowl seems to be pierced, possibly for suspension or a spout. False spouts (if this is one) are rare, but occasionally found on biconical urns (Myres 1977, 10–11, fig.86) but not associated with such stamps, and not so pointed. It is probably a damaged boss – not circular but elongated and oblique (cf. Worthy Park, Myres 1977, no 1202).

Discussion

The relatively small sample from Northbrook makes comparison with the large Abbots Worthy series difficult, but a few significant differences can be tentatively noted. The apparent preference for smaller pots may be an illusion, since numerous thick body-sherds suggested that some larger vessels existed. There also appears to be a preference for grog in the temper, and certainly a greater use of burnishing. The slight, sometimes very slight, faceting of the rim may represent an idiosyncrasy. Personal ideas in decoration cannot be discerned from such a small sample, but it should be noted that the stamps are not matched at Abbots Worthy. Numbers 202.2–4, 206.1–2 and 201.7 are not paralleled exactly there either, and may represent the work of a separate potter, family or group at Northbrook. These differences apart, the two assemblages are strikingly similar overall, and only extensive petrological analysis will indicate the extent to which the two settlements might have shared a common source of pottery. The rare oblong grid motif stamp might suggest a link with Portway, and the continental affinities of this group should be noted.

Undated

One striking rim (500.1) is illustrated since it is without parallel on the site. Hand-made and un-

glazed, it has a crisp, carefully made profile without sharp angles, probably finished on a slow wheel. Exceptionally, the fabric is tempered with crushed flint. It is without doubt an import to the site, perhaps in the late Saxon or early medieval period. Possibly Portchester ware type 3 (i.e. without the rilling), roughly comparable to Cunliffe 1976, no 500 (late Saxon).

500.1 A crisp, carefully hand-made rim of a cooking pot or jar, tempered with crushed flint and possibly a little organic material. Hard and very well fired, with pale grey core and a thin slip or slurry fired buff outside and grey-buff inside and on rim. Topsoil.

FAUNAL REMAINS

by I Taylor and M Christmas

A total of 1034 fragments of bone was recovered from trenches B,C and D. Most were so small or so damaged as to make identification difficult, if not impossible. Identifiable fragments are detailed in Table 1. The greatest concentration was in context 201, the upper fill of SFB2; this showed human activity in the area, with indications of butchering, cooking and working the bone. None of the animal bone showed any pathological feature. Oyster shell was found in context 202. Sieving on site was beyond the resources of the excavation, and very small bones (e.g. rodents, fish etc.) were not recovered; the (lost) soil samples were expected to preserve a sample of the smaller species with other environmental material for future analysis. The detailed, context by context, report on the material submitted for examination is filed with the excavation archive. It is condensed here, and the contexts amalgamated to form two assemblages (explained below).

In view of the relatively small sample, the results of analysis are presented as two assemblages, believed to be contemporary. That in group 1 represents a single activity, the upper fill of SFB2 identified above as a discrete rubbish deposit. It consists of contexts 206, 209 and the plough-disturbed context 201. These contained the greatest concentration of bone and pottery (as well as several important artifacts), and supplied all the

Table 1 Animal Bone

	<i>cow</i>	<i>sheep/goat</i>	<i>pig</i>	<i>chicken</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. (201, 206, 209)	25	47	4	7	83
2. (other contexts)	18	20	0	0	38

evidence for butchery and cooking. Group 2 represents the rest of the site.

In context 206 an almost complete bovine skull was found. This and the associated bones are included in Table 1. The measurements (in cm) of the skull are: length of skull 40; width between horn cores 15; width between orbits 18; horn circumference at base 14; length of horn, inside 8, outside 11; frontal bone length 19; nasal bone length 14; premaxilla bone 14. Taken together, the skull and associated bones indicate one or more small mature animals about the size of a present-day Dexter.

Butchery and burning marks (all from context 201)

1. Bovine r. metatarsus. Burnt at inner proximal end. Slight burning marks on outer surface of shaft. Slight burning at distal end on condyle ridges.
2. Bovine r. metacarpus, distal end (1/3). Shaft severed by chopping. Shaft cracked diagonally from outer (right) surface, 35 mm above condyles to the inter-condyle space.
3. Sheep r. metacarpus. Scratch marks, left proximal end.
4. Sheep l. metatarsus, condyles missing. Burn marks 30 mm below proximal end, both inner and outer sides.
5. Sheep, young. r. and l. metatarsus and metacarpus. Burn marks on shaft.
6. Sheep metatarsus fragments (two). Cut-marks mid-shaft.
7. Sheep r. radius, distal end of shaft. Bone severed by slice from heavy instrument. Distal end of shaft severed about 2 cm above condyles. Signs of burning on right side of shaft. Deep cut marks above condyle.
8. Sheep horn core. Core cut at base and also sliced vertically.
9. Sheep l. scapula fragment. Blade broken 3 cm above distal end. Deep cut-marks (five) on inner side of blade.
10. Sheep ulna, three fragments. Two worked to needle-like points, bone split and shaft cut.
11. Sheep molar tooth. Root burnt. Dentine broken and covers only half of tooth.
12. Sheep radius. Cut at distal end. Mid-shaft cut to point.
13. Pig ulna, 40 mm of distal end. Cut through shaft.
14. Pig 1st phalanges (two). One well burnt, one with burn marks.

Discussion

These butchered and burnt bones, all from the same context, shed some useful light on human activity on the site. To judge from the state of the bones, domestic animals were used for cooking and, to a lesser extent, for the manufacture of household implements (Nos 8–10; see also Fig. 13, nos 3–5). No antler or bones of wild animals were found, and this is in accord with the findings of Coy (1991, 65) at Abbots Worthy, where red deer antler was used only for working. Evidence for the exploitation of wild species is uncommon on Saxon settlements in Hampshire.

The methods of butchering could have been analogous to those used today by some nomadic tribes in Africa (pers. obs.). The usual practice is to lay the animal on its side and, holding the leg at its extreme end, to sever the leg at the carpal-metacarpal or tarsal-metatarsal joint. The method is to strike towards the body using a heavy long-bladed knife or a small axe. It should be noted that the main purpose of this is to enable the hide to be removed with the minimum damage. Cattle hides have many uses in a primitive society and are valued accordingly. The metatarsal bones, together with the rest of the foot, are generally discarded and may be gnawed by dogs or discarded directly into the rubbish-pit.

At Northbrook, the methods of butchering var-

ied from a crude chopping with a knife or blade to a more skilled performance leaving little trace on the bones (cf. Coy 1991, 65). The large number of bone fragments suggests that the main masses of muscle were removed first, possibly for roasting, and that the remainder was boiled. Boiling causes the bone to become friable and would account for the large number of fragments. Subsequent trampling might explain much of the fragmentation.

Associated with the bones used for cooking were other bones which had been worked to produce articles for household use. The horn core no 8 had been split vertically, and this splinter from it could have been ground down to produce an awl, needle or pin-beater (cf. Riddler 1991, fig.36, 31-4). The scapula is the bone most favoured for comb-making and no 9 may have been intended for this purpose. With no 10 the bone was split and two fragments ground down to give needle-like points. As these fragments of bone seem to be unfinished artifacts it is not possible to be certain what the finished article was intended to be.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A 6th-century date for the SFBs has been proposed above. Unstratified and surface finds from the area in general show a longer sequence, from the middle of the 5th century until mid- or late Saxon times. Unbroken continuity from the Roman phases is indeed possible, the two excavated SFBs representing one part of that continuity.

On the other hand, there is no clear evidence for occupation through the first half, at least, of the 5th century. Either there was a gap in occupation then, or the evidence to fill it has not been found. Since SFBs of this basic form can be regarded as buildings of first instance on a new site, to be succeeded (as at Mucking) by more sophisticated post-built structures, Northbrook may represent 'the shifting site phenomenon'. In this scenario, people move away from a settled site, move back in again and perhaps even desert the site once more. The Roman site at Mucking, for instance, was apparently abandoned in the 3rd century, the site cultivated or used for pasture into the fourth and then left derelict for some 50-75 years before

reoccupation by incoming Saxons who even reused some of the previous field boundaries (Hamerow 1993, 19-20, 71, 94-7). The Anglo-Saxon phases at Abbots Worthy can also be interpreted as intermittent occupation in this way.

Surface finds published here probably represent only a fraction of what has been found on the site in recent years by intensive metal-detecting.⁵ They are all of high or middle-ranking status, characteristic of personal items normally found in graves. Copious, and often unusual, finds of medieval and later date have also been reported and recorded, but these are more varied in character and probably represent accidental losses by passing travellers and agricultural workers. Their distribution, moreover, is more widespread than the Roman and Anglo-Saxon items considered here. The latter seem to be scattered to the east and south-east of the excavated settlement, with no clear focus or hint of a cemetery on the air photographs. Intensive cultivation might account for this. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that the settlement was accompanied by a cemetery (as was the case at Abbots Worthy and Worthy Park). We do not know if this notional cemetery had Roman origins; the Roman items (brooches and coins) are not associated with known graves, though the discovery of Roman artifacts in Anglo-Saxon graves (and settlements) is a familiar occurrence.

Early Saxon settlement and cemetery evidence for the upper Itchen valley is currently under review (S C Hawkes, pers. comm.) and is already showing a regularly spaced pattern along the valley. A comparable riverine pattern may now be emerging in the Dever Valley (Meaney 1964, 98-101; cf. Fig. 1).

The three objects with continental and Scandinavian affinities (the whetstone from Norway, the equal-armed brooch with its connections in the Elbe-Weser region, the cruciform, possibly Jutish, brooch) can be considered in the light of a comment by Welch (1996, 35) written shortly before the excavation took place: 'So far the Jutish (Kentish) élite which ruled this region have proved elusive and it may be that most of them resided on the Isle of Wight rather than on the mainland, but the discovery of a new cemetery or an isolated barrow burial could change the picture overnight.'

It seems unlikely though that, in the immediate future, we can expect to be able to distinguish 'Jutish' southern and western Hampshire from 'Saxon' northern Hampshire. Three new items do not identify a 'Jutish' enclave here, the term strictly referring to the leadership rather than to the lesser ranks (of general 'Anglo-Saxon' stock) who are presumably buried in our supposed cemetery at Northbrook; nor do they change the picture materially. But they do remind us that we are at or near the northern fringe of Bede's *Iutarum natio* comprising southern Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The Dever valley could be, in effect, the interface between Welch's north and south, and if a physical boundary is sought between two spheres of authority and culture in the 6th century, the River Dever might have formed part of it.

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dedicated hard work made the excavation such a success.

NOTES

1. Immediately after the excavation the finds, soil samples and some of the archive passed into private hands to be confused, dispersed, damaged and lost. This report is based on what was preserved and subsequently recovered; it is thought unlikely that the remainder will become available in the foreseeable future.
2. The most useful photographs (in the National Monuments Record at Swindon) are: NMR: SF 410 frame 237 (3 August 1972), NMR: SF 922 frame 326 (29 April 1976), NMR: SF 1102 frame 42 (27 September 1976) and NMR 1746 frame 54 (21 April 1980).
3. Vegetation over a ditch or pit is more dependent on moisture than that surrounding it; when the feature itself dries out completely its vegetation is more susceptible to parching.
4. This flintwork was recovered before the excavation and is believed to be genuine; at the end of the excavation it was discovered that the site had been subsequently contaminated by unauthorised flint-knapping. Similar contamination of the excavated finds (by the inclusion of spurious flakes) is believed to have occurred in storage. Statistical analysis has therefore not been attempted.
5. In recent years, well over a dozen treasure-hunters (operating from London, Shaftesbury and local addresses) have been systematically working this site with metal-detectors; only one responsible detectorist (Mr Philip Cook) has allowed his finds to be examined by the Winchester Museums Service and published here. His finds are recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record and noted in *Archaeology in Hampshire*.

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