Proc. Hampshire Field Club Archaeol. Soc. **76**, *2021, 80–95 (Hampshire Studies 2021)*
https://doi.org/10.24202/hs2021005

MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY AT BEECH TREE CLOSE, OAKLEY, HAMPSHIRE

By PIERRE-DAMIEN MANISSE
with contributions by SUE ANDERSON, CERI FALYS, ROSALIND MCKENNA *and* DANIELLE MILBANK

ABSTRACT

An archaeological excavation in advance of a housing development revealed a range of deposits dating from the 11th to 13th centuries. The features do not conform to what would be expected either for the nucleus of an isolated farmstead or as part of a medieval village, but they perhaps indicate an area of activity adjacent to a more densely settled area. The deposits were relatively rich in charred plant remains indicating arable production. The parish church, usually considered to be located close to a village centre, lies several hundred metres to the west and if the deposits here do not relate to an independent farmstead, perhaps they pre-date the formation of the nucleated village. One feature is potentially a Saxon SFB (sunken-featured building). Some early Saxon and Roman pottery sherds were also recovered.

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, between 8 June and 16 July 2018 on land at Beech Tree Close, Oakley, Hampshire (SU 57254981) on behalf of Foreman Homes Group. Planning consent had been granted by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for residential development on the site, subject to a condition which required a programme of archaeological work, as guided by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology.

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site was located on an irregular parcel of land, west of Beech Tree Close and Barn Lane, to the south-east of Oakley and next to the modern development of East Oakley to the west of Basingstoke (Fig. 1). The site encompassed three fields under pasture on relatively level ground, with the southern third on a gentle south-facing slope. The surrounding landscape consists mostly of undulating chalk downland. The underlying geology is clay and gravel capping the higher ground in the north with Seaford chalk (Upper Chalk) at depth (BGS 1981). The site lies between 122 m and 130 m above Ordnance Datum.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological potential of the site was initially highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Lucey 2014). In summary, Iron Age and Roman settlement was recorded 200m to the north with a suggestion that further similar deposits could extend to the south (Norton & Marshall 2008). A watching brief to the north recorded further Roman deposits. In the general area of the site there is a relative wealth of finds of prehistoric and Roman date.

Evaluation of the site in 2018 (Stewart & Mundin 2018) confirmed the presence of deposits of Saxon and early medieval date. The deposits appeared to be low density and dispersed and were considered to represent zones of activity adjacent to settlement areas, rather than a nucleus, although small occupation areas could be present. As a result, excavation was required to satisfy the condition on the planning consent.

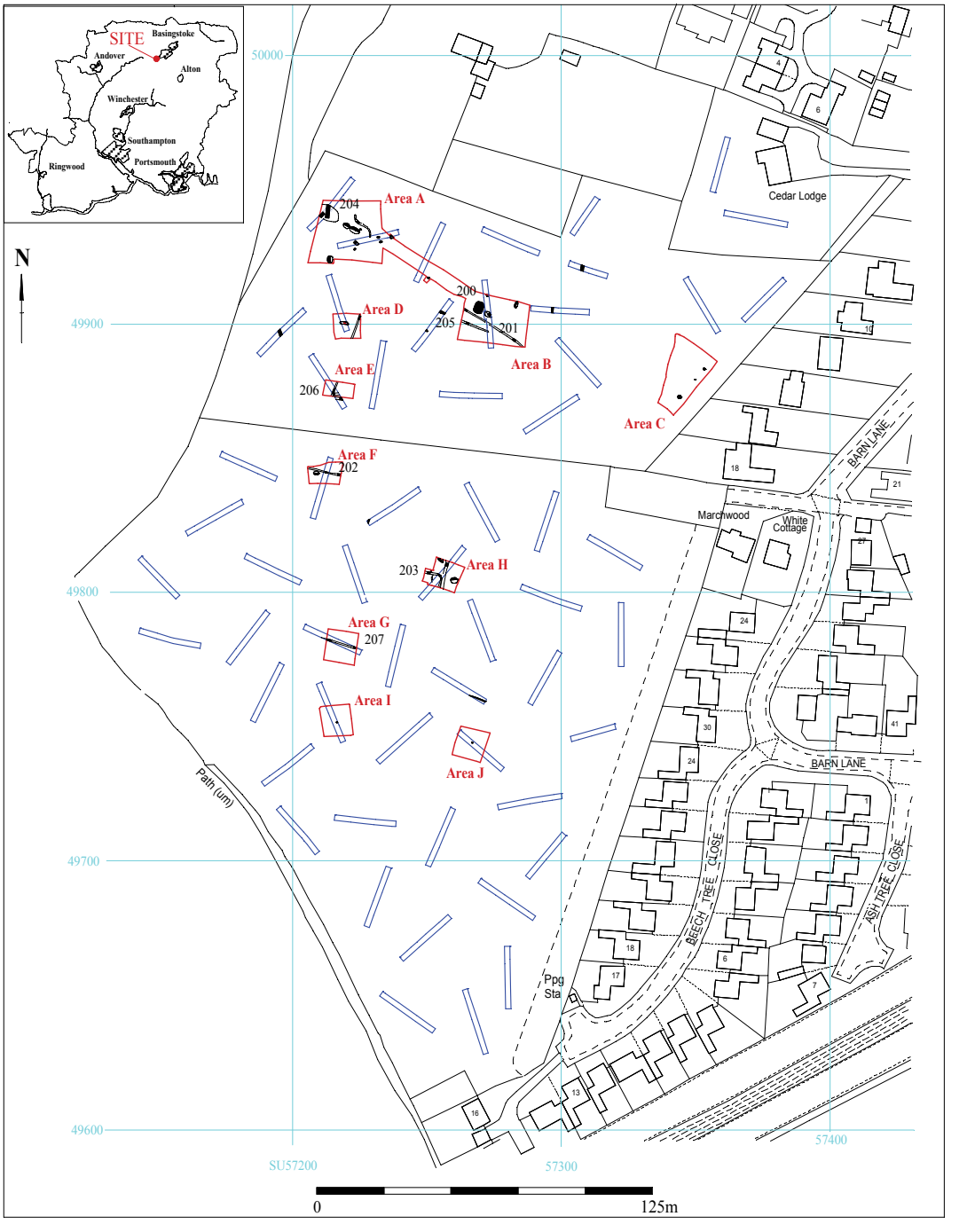

Fig. 1 Location of site, and excavation areas in relation to evaluation trenches

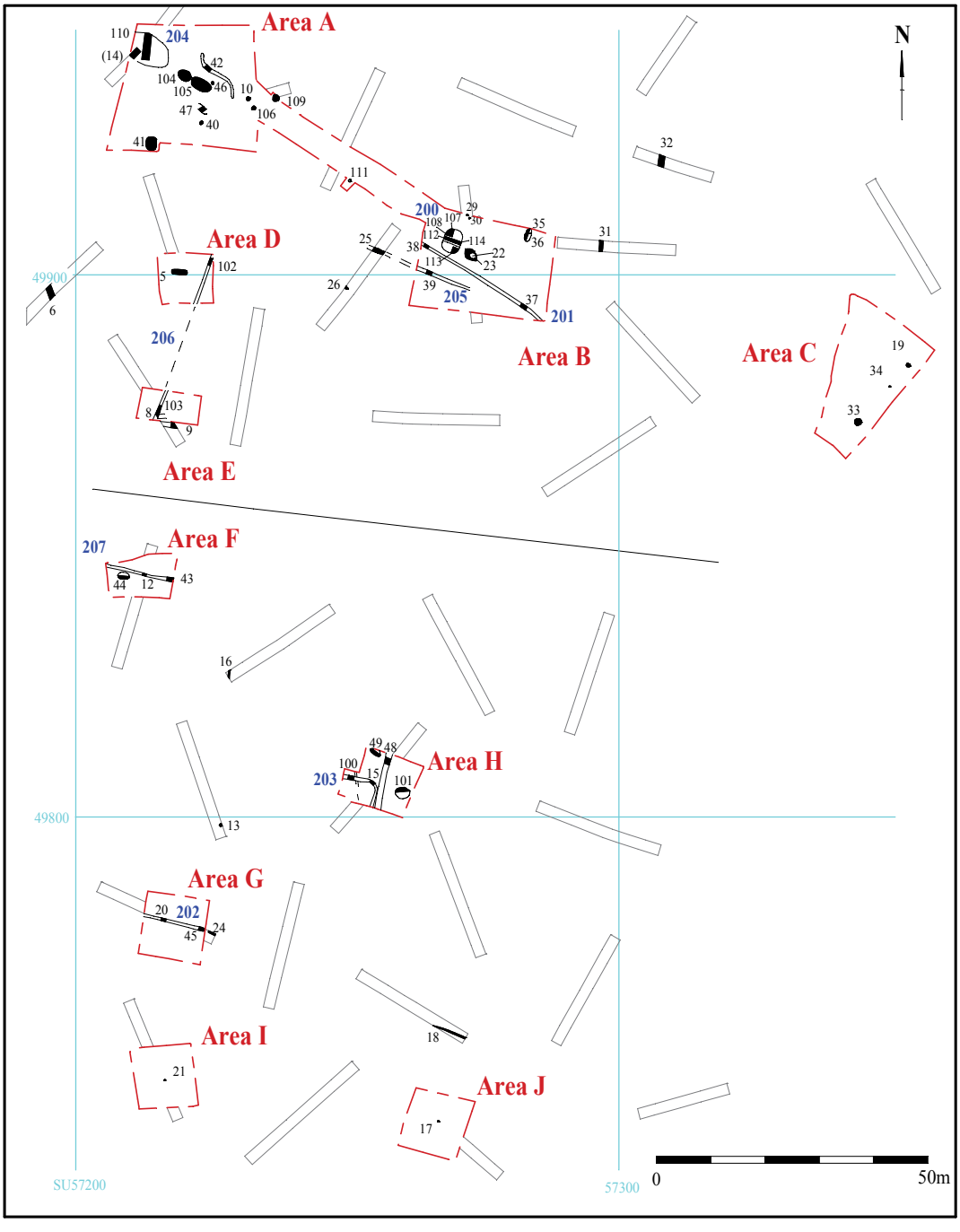

Fig. 2 Plan of all excavated features

Table 1 Summary of pits of Areas A and B

Area	*Cut*	*Fill(s)*	*Diameter or length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Profile*	*Finds*
A	10	61	0.62	-	0.09	Shallow bowl-shaped	Iron fragment
A	40	150	1.02	0.85	0.21	Steep-sided, flat-based	6 Medieval sherds (MAQ, MAV)
A	41	151–9	2.4	2.1	0.9	Bowl-shaped	1 Roman, 2 Saxon, 83 Medieval sherds (MAQ, MAQ2, MAV, MBX, NAB), 2 iron objects, 41 bone fragments (cow, pig)
A	46	166	0.40	0.22	0.11	Posthole	None
A	47	167	0.7	0.35	0.08	Shallow bowl-shaped	1 Roman, 2 Medieval sherds (MAQ, MAV)
A	104	174–6	2.38	1.7	1.4	Steep-sided, flat-based	1 Roman, 1 Saxon? 3 Medieval sherds (ASH, MAQ, NAB), 63 bone fragments
A	105	177–8, 185–9	4.15	2.4	1.75	Steep-sided, flat-based	28 Medieval sherds (MAQ, MAQ2, MAV, NAB), Iron object, 35 bone fragments (cow, sheep), 2 oyster shells
A	106	179	0.6	0.72	0.07	Shallow bowl-shaped	2 Medieval sherds (MAQ)
A	109	184	1.10	0.95	0.74	Steep-sided, flat-based	23 Medieval sherds (MAQ, MAV), struck flint flake, bone fragment
A	204	65–7, 190–1	7+	5.0	0.83	Steep-sided, flat-based	2 Roman, 10 Medieval sherds (MAV, MAQ, MBX, NAB, NAC), Copper alloy seal, Lead scrap
B	22	79–80	1.34	-	0.44	Bowl-shaped	7 Medieval sherds (MAQ)
B	23	81–3	2.0	-	0.63	Steep-sided, flat-based, slightly irregular	No finds; below layer 78 and cut by pit 22
B	36	93–6	1.60	1.50	0.38	Steep-sided, concave-based	None. Cut by pit 35
B	35	92	0.85	0.50	0.08	Shallow	2 Medieval sherds (NAB)

THE EXCAVATION

Ten excavation areas (A to J) were targeted at deposits revealed by the evaluation (Figs 1 & 2). These ranged in area between 100 sq. m and 556 sq. m. Areas A and B were subsequently extended to join up. The areas were stripped mechanically, under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil removed from each area was typically between 0.20–0.25 m thick and overlay a firm light to mid brown silty clay

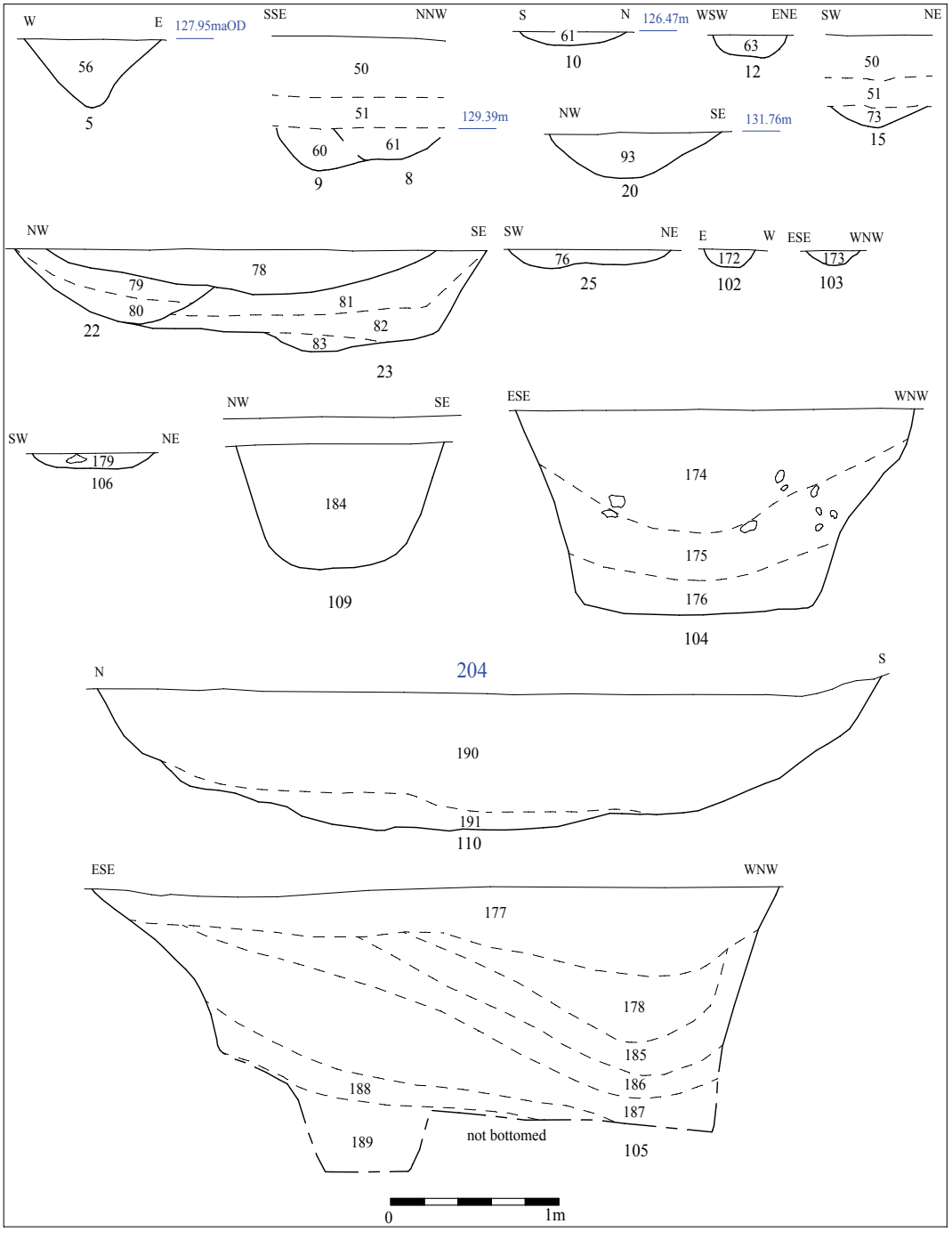

Fig. 3 Selected feature sections

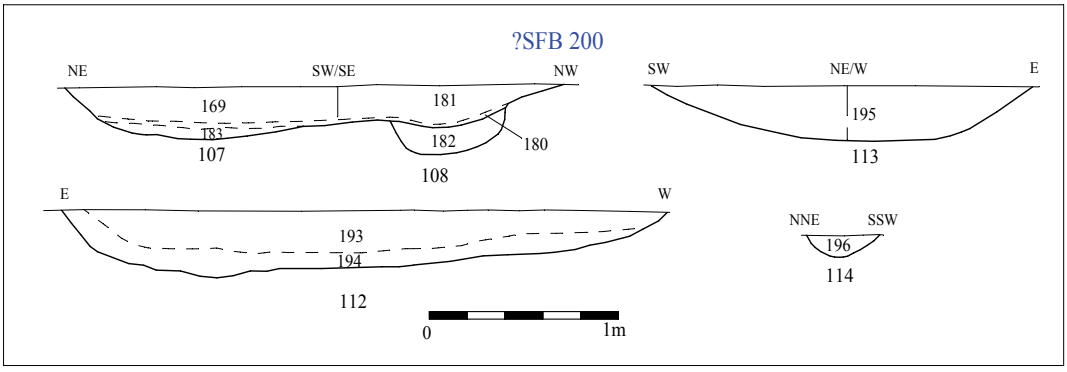

Fig. 4 Sunken-featured building 200 sections

subsoil, also 0.20–0.25 m thick. The natural geology was revealed as a reddish brown silty clay with common flint and pebble inclusions, occasionally with chalk flecks, punctuated by bands of light brown clayey silt with pebbles that are likely to be of periglacial origin. A metal detector was used to recover metal finds both *in-situ* and over spoil heaps. Most of the excavated features were undated and, due to the distances between areas opened, isolated. These undated features are detailed in the archive report and not discussed here.

Area A (Figs 2 & 3)

This was the largest area excavated (556 sq. m) containing nine pits, a posthole and a gully. Extending it towards Area B revealed only one undated, isolated posthole (**111**).

Pits

The nine pits revealed were all of medieval date (Table 1) but several contained residual Roman and Saxon pottery sherds. They were of variable size but pits **105** and **204** (the latter recorded as two cuts, **14** and **110**) were substantial, being greater than 4 m across, though they did not contain more, or markedly different, artefacts than the smaller examples. It is possible that pit **204** was primarily dug as a quarry. Although the pits generally lay near to each other, they did not form a distinctive or deliberate cluster. Pit **41** was notable for its multi-layered fill and repeated use for dumping layers of charcoal.

Meandering gully **42** was very ephemeral and was mostly identified by the line of artefacts found on top of it. Where it was more substantial, slot **42** was 0.60 m wide and 0.18 m deep. It had a flat base with moderately sloping sides. Its single fill (**160**) was a compact mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and flints (<0.10 m). It contained four medieval sherds, one Roman sherd, an early Roman coin, three fragments of animal bone, and three unidentifiable objects, two of iron and one of copper alloy.

Area B (427 sq. m)

This area was targeted at evaluation trench 47 which contained two pits (**22** and **23**) and two undated postholes. The excavation added two further pits (**35** and **36**), two gullies (**201**, **205**) and a possible SFB (**200**). The pits are summarized in Table 1 above. A slump layer (**78**) covered the upper fills of pits **22** and **23** to a depth of 0.23 m and contained seven sherds of medieval pottery (MAQ).

Not evident during the evaluation phase in trench 47 were two small ditches or gullies, aligned NW–SE. Gully **201** was at least 26 m long and was examined by two slots (**37** and **38**). It seemed to curve slightly towards the south-east as it exited area B. Whereas slot **37** possessed a V-shaped profile with a rounded

base 0.23 m deep and 0.60 m wide, slot **38** had a shallow concave profile, a mere 0.13 m deep and 0.52 m wide. The fills (**97** and **98**) were identical compact mid brown or greyish brown silty clay with occasional small stones (<0.05 m). Neither produced any dating evidence.

Gully **205** was roughly parallel to gully **38**. It was 0.52 m wide and 0.13 m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. It could only be traced for 10 m before petering out to the east. It probably continued further west as ditch **25** in trench 44. Its fill (**99**) was compact greyish brown silty clay with some flint. It contained no dating evidence.

*Possible Sunken-featured building **200***

This pit, with rectangular plan and rounded corners, is considered to be a sunken-featured building (SFB) typical of the early Saxon period. It measured about 5 m × 3.20 m and was investigated by three slots (**107**, **112**, **113**). Its maximum depth was 0.37 m with gently sloping sides and a flattish but sloping base (Fig. 4). In slots **107** and **112** a thin layer, containing some charcoal flecks was noted at its base (respectively, **183** and **193**). The main fill (**181**=**194**=**195**), was a firm mid greyish brown silt or clayey silt with occasional flints (<0.15 m) and rare charcoal flecks.

Cut into the base of the feature were two postholes, **108** and **114**. Posthole **108** was 0.60 m × >0.38 m across, 0.16 m deep with steep sides and a flattish bottom. The fill (**182**) was a firm mid brownish grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks and natural flint. Posthole **114** presented similar characteristics, a diameter of 0.39 m and a depth of 0.11 m with slightly more rounded base. Finds comprised a single undiagnostic Roman or prehistoric sherd from slot **113** and a 58 gr fragment of possible Roman *imbrex* from posthole **112**.

The evidence that this was an Early Saxon SFB is not convincing (cf. Rahtz 1976; Tipper 2004), but this may be a result of its shallow preservation. The absence of Saxon artefacts is not especially unusual.

Areas D (93 sq. m) and E (63 sq. m)

A single gully (**206**), which as slot **8** in the evaluation contained a single sherd of medieval pottery, was excavated in both areas, but produced no additional finds (slot **102** in area D, **103** in E). The gully was at least 33 m long and extended beyond the limits of excavation to north and south. Pit **5**, originally thought to be a ditch, did not continue, so it was *c.* 1.7 m × 0.93 m and 0.31 m deep. It contained one Roman, five Late Saxon and five medieval sherds and an unidentified iron object. Just beyond the boundary of Area E an undated ditch, or pit **9**, can be projected as a possible return of gully **206** to the east, though it is also possible that gully **206** continued south, to meet gully **207** in Area F.

Area F (91 sq. m)

This trench revealed a gully (**207**) previously found during the evaluation (slot **12**) and an additional pit (**44**). Gully **207** was aligned NNW–SSE and extended beyond the limits of excavation. It was steep sided with a flat base and was 0.60 m wide and 0.23 m deep. The only artefact recovered was a single fragment of bone.

Pit **44** was oval, 0.98 × 2.00 m, and 0.40 m deep. It had an irregular profile and a flat base. The base fill (**164**) was charcoal-rich. An upper fill (**160**) contained five sherds of medieval pottery along with faunal remains including cattle and sheep and an iron object, perhaps a clasp.

Area G (137 sq. m)

This trench (137 sq. m) re-located a linear feature (**202**) aligned WNW–ESE, which was investigated by two slots, **20** and **45**. The gully had a shallow rounded profile and was 0.74 m wide and 0.15 m deep. It contained a single fill which produced only a single sherd of Roman pottery. However, it may have continued after a short gap as slot **24** which produced a single sherd of Late Saxon/Early medieval date, and as it was parallel to gully **207** in Area F and ditch **203** in Area H, seems likely to belong to the same layout.

Area H (123 sq. m)

Two ditches and two pits were recorded (one undated and not discussed) in a 123 sq. m

Table 2 Pottery summary quantification by fabric

Description	*Fabric*	*Date range*	*No*	*Wt (gr)*	*EVE*
Roman colour-coated ware	RBCC	Roman	1	1	
Roman greyware	RBGW	Roman	6	7	
Samian ware	SAM	Roman	1	1	
Unidentified handmade	UNHM	Iron Age or Early Saxon?	1	2	
Fine sandy greyware	UNGW	Roman or Late 9th-14th century.	3	18	
Anglo-Saxon organic-tempered ware	MGV	5th–8th century	3	3	
Chalk-tempered ware with some flint	MAV	Mid 9th–12th century	65	513	0.68
Chalk-tempered ware	MBX	Mid 9th-Mid 12th century?	13	74	
Coarse sandy ware with flint	MAQ	11th-Mid 13th century.	103	814	0.45
Newbury A/B Ware	NAB	Late 11th–14th century	20	218	0.39
Finer sandy ware with flint	MAQ2	13th-14th century?	31	265	0.28
Unidentified medieval glazed ware	UPG	12th-14th century	1	8	
Ashampstead-type ware	ASH	Late 12th-13th century	1	5	
Newbury C Ware	NAC	Late 12th–Mid 14th century	7	71	
Post-medieval redware	PMRW	16th–19th century	1	29	
Unidentified	UNID		1	5	
Totals			258	2034	1.80

trench. Slot **100** was excavated across a curving ditch (**203**) observed in trench 27 (slot **15**). This linear feature was orientated south–north before bending towards the west. It was quite shallow, not exceeding 0.18 m in depth, for a width of about 1 m. It had moderately sloping sides and a flat bottom. The fill was a firm mid brownish grey silty clay (**170**) with occasional small subangular flint and stones (<0.20 m). The two slots produced five sherds of medieval pottery in fabrics MAQ and NAB (11th–13th centuries).

The other ditch, **48**, was aligned broadly north–south, almost coinciding with the north–south part of ditch **203**. It was also 1 m wide and 0.18 m deep with a flat-based profile. It had a fill (**168**) of brownish grey silty clay with some flint that yielded six sherds of late Saxon /Early medieval pottery fabric MAV (mid 9th–12th centuries).

Oval pit **49** was 2.1 m by at least 1 m across and 0.36 m deep. It had a gently concave shape. Its fill (**169**) was brownish grey silty clay and some flint with the addition of rare charcoal flecks. It produced a single sherd of medieval pottery, fabric MAQ.

Areas C (331 sq. m), I (123 sq. m) and J (125 sq. m)

These three areas revealed no additional features to add to a posthole (**17**) and four undated pits (**19, 21, 33, 34**) found during the evaluation. Posthole **17** was 0.3 m in diameter and 0.1 m deep and contained a single sherd of Early Saxon pottery.

FINDS

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Two-hundred and fifteen sherds of pottery weighing 1684 gr were collected from 29 contexts during the excavation to add to 43 sherds (350 gr) recovered during the evaluation. Table 2 shows a combined summary quantification by fabric (EVE not calculated for the evaluation pottery).

Table 3 Pottery vessel and rim forms

Fabric	*Form*	*sev*	*lsev*	*evbd*	*evhh*	*evint*	*evth*
MAV	jar	4	-	-	-	-	-
MAQ	jar	-	1	-	4	-	2
MAQ	jar/bowl	-	-	1	-	-	-
MAQ2	jar	-	-	1	-	2	-
NAB	jar	4	-	-	-	-	-
NAC	bowl	-	-	-	-	-	1
NAC	jar?	-	-	1	-	-	-

Key: SEV – simple everted, LSEV – lid-seated everted; EVBD – everted beaded; EVHH – everted hammerhead; EVINT – everted, inturned tip; EVTH – everted with thickened end

Fabric codes were assigned from the Winchester type series (Cotter 2011) where possible, although a few sherds did not fit into these fabric groups and have been assigned codes from the author's own fabric series. Methods and form terminology follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001; 1998). More detailed data are in the archive catalogue.

Roman and uncertain

There were eight sherds of Roman date, all small and abraded body fragments, found in all cases in association with later wares.

Several small, abraded silty/sandy sherds were unidentified. A handmade black sherd with orange external surface was found in the top fill of pit **104** and may be of Iron Age or Anglo-Saxon date. A heavily abraded very fine silty oxidized sherd, from pit 113, may be Roman or possibly earlier. Three abraded wheel-made greyware sherds with abundant fine sand inclusions and sparse mica may be Roman, Late Saxon or possibly medieval in date; they were found in subsoil and pit **105**.

Anglo-Saxon (5th–8th century)

Two joining fragments of organic-tempered pottery from pit **41** are likely to be of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon date.

Medieval pottery (11th–14th century)

The majority (201) of sherds in this assemblage were of medieval date. This group was dominated by typical local types containing largely calcareous inclusions (MAV, NAB) or fairly coarse sand and flint (MAQ). The calcareous-tempered wares were generally tempered with abundant calcareous inclusions which had been leached from the fabric to leave rounded voids. These are comparable with Kennet Valley (including Newbury A/B; Mepham 1997) wares, although sherds have only been identified as 'NAB' in this assemblage where limestone inclusions were definitely present (this included grey limestone particles and/or shell). Forms are suggestive of an early medieval date for these groups. A finer variant of 'MAQ' was identified in this assemblage – sherds were generally black or dark brown with moderate flint, but this was only visible in section or as a pimply texture as surfaces had been smoothed; this fabric has been recorded as 'MAQ2', and rim forms present suggest that it is likely to be of broadly 13th/14th-century date (see below). Also of slightly later date were sherds of sand-tempered Newbury C Ware and Ashampstead Ware.

Identifiable forms comprised largely jars. The distribution of forms and rim types is shown in Table 3.

In addition to the sherds identified from rims, there were four body fragments which had external vitrification and a 'blown' vesicular appearance which may indicate use as a crucible.

Eight jars in calcareous-tempered fabrics had simple everted rims of early medieval date. Parallels for these can be found at a number of local sites, including Winchester (Cotter 2011, fig. 1.10–12) and Hannington (Blinkhorn 2012, fig. 3.1–2). Jars and some bowls with everted

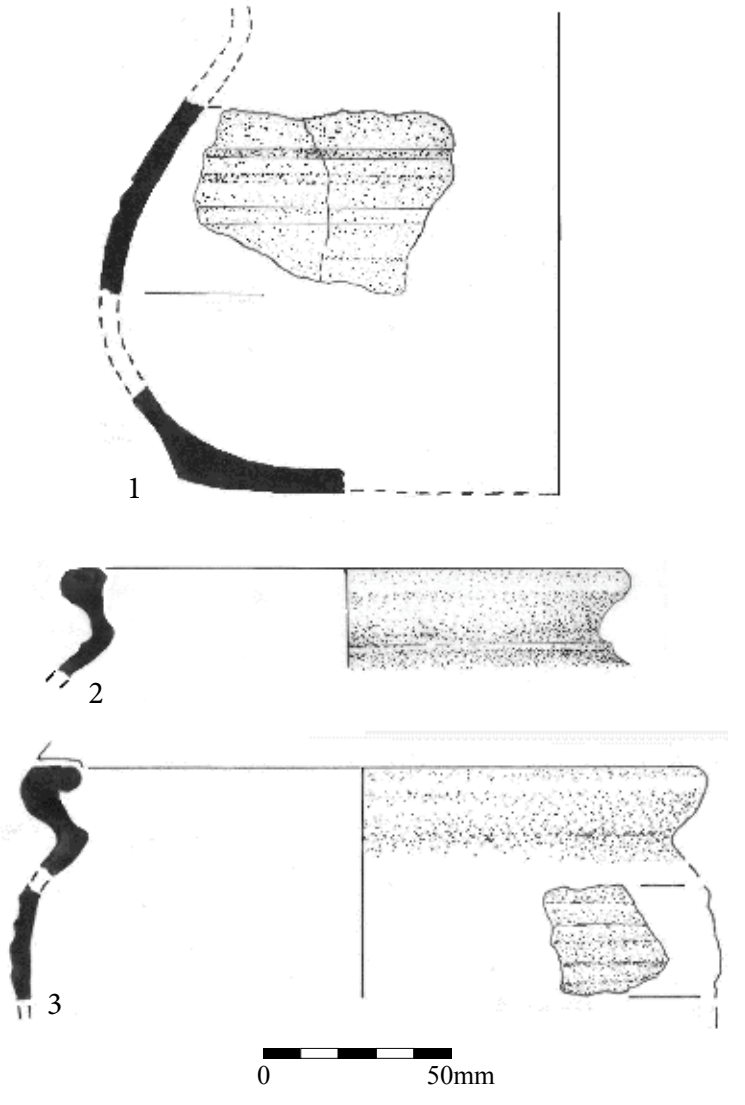

Fig. 5 Late Saxon/Early Medieval pottery from pit 41

beaded/ hammerhead/ thickened rims were more commonly found in the flint-tempered and sandy wares. These can be paralleled at Basing House (e.g. Allen & Anderson 1999, fig. 45.20), Foxcotte (e.g. Matthews 1985, figs 9.6 & 9.14) and Popham (e.g. Hawkes 1987, fig. 27.21). A hammerhead bowl rim was very similar to an example from Winchester (Vince & Steane 2008, fig. 7.1). The everted inturned types, only present in MAQ2 fabric at this site, are comparable with examples from Popham (Hawkes 1987, fig. 27.13) and Foxcotte (Matthews 1985, fig. 9.4).

Decoration was not common, but five of the jar rims had shallow thumbing or fingertipping, and the lid-seated everted rim was decorated with rouletting at the edge. The MAQ2 jars all had pronounced rilling or girth-grooving of

the bodies from the neck down to just above the base (Fig. 5). The pottery from layer 78 is largely from a single vessel and includes a finger-tipped "piecrust" rimsherd from a jar. Such decoration is rare on jars of this type from Winchester (Cotter 2011, 25).

Only two glazed wares were present. One fragment was an oxidized body sherd with a grey core and traces of white slip decoration and ?stabbing or rouletting forming a line of narrow triangular impressions, and a few traces of green glaze visible microscopically in the heavily worn surface. This has been identified as Ashampstead Ware (Mepham & Heaton 1995) and may be a fragment of a pitcher. One other body sherd in a fine sandy pale grey fabric with a thin oxidised external surface also had traces of glaze microscopically in the worn surface.

Most of the pottery was recovered from pits and gullies (information on the distribution by feature is included in the feature descriptions and Table 1 above). The largest single group was 86 sherds from pit **41**, whilst pits **105** and **109** produced 26 and 23 sherds respectively.

All other features which produced pottery contained 12 sherds or fewer.

Discussion

The few sherds of Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery are all small and residual. The medieval wares from this site are generally typical of the Basingstoke area, as discussed by Jervis (2011, 41–2) and identified by others (e.g. Blinkhorn 2012; Brown & Thomson 2010; Hawkes 1987; Mepham 1997). The majority are comparable with wares found along the Kennet Valley, and most date to the early medieval period, with only two glazed ware sherds present. The MAQ2 vessels appear to be relatively unusual in this area, however, with no parallels having been identified for the girth-grooving on these vessels, although the rim forms are not unusual and appear to date to the 13th century. Only one unstratified sherd in post-medieval redware was later than this and it appears that activity on the site had ended before the 14th century.

Coin by Pierre-Damien Manisse

A single bronze coin was found on the surface of gully **42**. It was in poor condition and illegible, but weight (16.5 gr) and diameter (31 mm) are consistent with a 1st or 2nd century Roman *aes* or *dupondius*. Though a Roman potsherd was collected from the same feature, so was later material, and the Roman finds are probably residual amidst medieval occupation debris.

Metal finds by Danielle Milbank

Just ten metal objects were recovered from four pits and one gully, and two surface findspots, all bar one from Area A. The objects were largely iron fragments, including two badly corroded nail fragments from pits **41** and **105**. The only other identifiable objects are as follows:

Pit **41** (52) contained a small iron loop made from wire, circular in section with a diameter of 4 mm, 60 mm long and 29 mm wide, with an oval shape and straight sides. It cannot be closely dated.

From pit **44** (162) a moderately corroded flat iron plate was recovered, which is 3 mm thick, 70 mm long, widest at the centre (13 mm) tapering towards each end, with one end extending to a thin strip (circular in section) which bends back over the top, perhaps to form a loop. The end portion of the loop or tang is broken but it would have joined back onto the plate in the centre, and the piece possible represents a clasp or similar fitting.

A badly corroded lead object, in the form of a flattened oval or lozenge shape, was recovered from pit **110** (190). It is difficult to identify but may have a loop at one end and represent a small weight, or less likely, a pilgrim badge or dress accessory.

This context also contained a near complete, small, slightly corroded copper alloy seal. It is circular, with a suspension loop which is broken. The central motif is difficult to interpret but includes a curved staff and a small dotted area. The lettering again, is difficult to discern, and although the style appears to be 'black letter' (Gothic), suggestive of a 13th or 14th century date: only a 'c' and an 's' could be identified.

Animal bone and shell by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of 343 pieces of animal bone, weighing 2103 gr, was recovered from

Table 4 Charred plant remains

Sample	10	11	16	17	21	27	
Feature	35	36	41	41	44	101	
Context	92	93	151	152	162	171	
Area	B	B	A	A	F	H	
Ranunculus spp.	-	-	1	-	-	-	Buttercups
Corylus avellana	-	-	-	-	1	-	Hazel nut shell
Chenopodium spp./*Atriplex* spp.	3	-	-	-	-	-	Goosefoot / Orache
Rumex L. spp.	1	7	-	-	-	-	Dock
POLYGONACEAE	-	-	5	-	-	-	Dock family
BRASSICACEAE	-	203	2	1	-	1	Cabbage family
FABACEAE	13	9	90	10	-	1	Pea family
Vicia / *Lathyrus* spp.	-	-	2	3	-	-	Vetch / pea
Melilotus/*Medicago*/*Trifolium* spp.	-	-	9	-	-	-	Melilot/Medick/Clover
BORAGINACEAE	-	-	2	-	-	-	Borage family
Galium aparine L.	-	1	-	-	-	-	Bedstraws
Anthemis cotula L.	1	13	13	-	-	-	Stinking chamomile
Chrysanthemum segetum L.	-	1	-	-	-	-	Cornmon marigold
POACEAE	14	53	32	32	-	1	Grass
Avena spp.	-	-	137	12	-	-	Oat
Hordeum spp.	4	17	33	27	-	-	Barley
Triticum spp.	29	10	205	83	-	-	Wheat
Indeterminate Cereal	184	66	1121	542	2	1	
Indet.Cereal sprouted grain	-	-	92	45	-	-	
Indet. Cereal spikelet fork	-	-	5	2	-	-	
Indet. Cereal culm	-	-	2	-	-	-	
Indet. Cereal detached embryo	-	1	-	-	-	-	
Unidentified	-	-	-	1	-	-	

12 medieval contexts (details in archive). The bones from deposits **151, 160, 174, 177**, and **184** were exceptionally poorly preserved, which hindered identification. The rest of the bones demonstrate good surface preservation, although all pieces show some degree of fragmentation. No complete skeletal elements are present.

A minimum of six animals can be identified: at least three cattle, one sheep/goat, one pig, and at least one small-sized animal (indeterminate species). The presence of a minimum of three cows is indicated by three right scapulae (the glenoid cavities – shoulder joint surface on the shoulder blade), two in pit **105** (deposit 188) and a third from pit **162**. There were also cow-sized teeth in three pit fills (**152, 162** and **186**). Evidence of butchery was found on the smaller scapular fragment from pit **105** (188). Five linear transverse cut marks are present on the anterior surface of the scapula near the glenoid cavity. A further two vertical cut marks are present in the same area.

An erosive lesion is located on the medial half of a cow right mandibular condyle from pit **105** (186). The lesion is approximately circular, with a maximum diameter of 6.9 mm and is 4.3 mm deep. The base of the lesion is irregular and porous (macroporosity). It is possible a space-occupying cyst sat within this lesion and it is likely the animal had discomfort or pain while moving its lower jaw, for example, while chewing food.

Table 5 Charcoal

Sample	10	16	17	18	21	31	32	41	43
Feature	35	41	41	41	44	104	105	111	104
Context	92	151	152	158	162	175	177	192	176
Area	B	A	A	A	F	A	A	A	A
No frags	300+	500+	200+	200+	100+	200+	29	100+	500+
Max. size (mm)	12	27	31	34	16	17	13	12	28
Alder / Hazel	-	-	69	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hazel	-	35	-	83	-	-	-	13	-
Willow / Poplar	28	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oak	44	9	-	-	12	100	5	-	100
Indeterminate	28	-	31	17	88	-	24	87	-

The presence of a sheep/goat is indicated by teeth in pit **44** (162) and pit **105** (177). A single pig has also been identified by worn molars *in situ* within a small portion of left mandible in pit **41** (152).

Two deposits contained fragments from small-sized animal(s): gully **43** (161) and pit **44** (162). It has not been possible to suggest the species of origin for these pieces of bone, although the teeth resemble those of cattle and sheep/goats, just at a very small size.

Finally, two poorly preserved fragments of oyster shell (7 gr) came from pit **105** (188).

Charred plant remains by Rosalind McKenna

A programme of soil sampling included the collection of 51 soil samples, mostly of 16L, but some of 8L, from sealed contexts. The samples were processed using standard wet sieving methodologies (details in archive). Results are given in Tables 4 and 5. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Stace (1997) and Schweingruber (1978).

The preservation of the charred remains varied from sample to sample, and where abundant remains were present, also within a sample. Indeterminate cereal grains were recorded in 17 samples (all from medieval features) and were the only identifiable remains in ten of these (omitted from Table 4). Identified cereals were recovered in the form of wheat (*Triticum sp.*), barley (*Hordeum sp.*), and oat (*Avena sp.*) grains. It is probable, based on the general size and remaining identifying morphological characteristics that the species of wheat utilized was bread wheat. Two samples from pit **41** also produced remains of sprouted grains. These may be indicative of malting. They were so warped, however, that identifying the species of the grain was not possible.

Another, more indirect, indicator of cereals being used on site is remains of arable weeds in six samples. These weeds are generally only found in arable fields and would almost certainly have been brought to the site together with harvested cereals. Along with grasses (*Poaceae*), remains of goosefoot/orache (*Chenopodium/ Atriplex*), docks (*Rumex*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*) also fall in this group.

Vetches/peas were present in five samples. However, these legumes have been poorly preserved and there were no surviving testa or hila. Charred legumes can represent only food waste, as they do not require parching in the processing sequence.

The remains of cereals and legumes together may point to the waste of pottage – a dish consumed on a daily basis, by people from all backgrounds, from the medieval period onwards (Black 2003). The actual food grains that were made into pottage varied according to what was available (Dyer 1989).

Two of the samples from Area B pits produced medium-sized suites of remains, both in terms

of quantity and diversity. Samples from pits **36** and **38** were dominated by indeterminate cereal grains due to poor preservation. Wheat and barley were the identifiable cereals. Small amounts of grass and weed seeds were also present, alongside small amounts of chaff fragments. Sample 93, also from pit **36**, contained a large number of seeds from the cabbage family.

Two samples (both from pit **41** in Area A) produced large suites of remains in terms of quantity and diversity. The cereal grains were again dominated by indeterminate cereal due to severe fragmentation. The most abundant identifiable grain was wheat. Barley was also present in both samples in much smaller numbers. Both samples also contained cereal grains with evidence of sprouted embryos, which is indicative of the malting process. However, as they cannot be identified as barley – the species which is normally used – and they were found alongside a larger number of unsprouted grains, it is not possible to ascertain whether this was accidental or intentional. Oats and grass were also present, along with other weeds typical of cultivation such as dock, daisy, bedstraws, and stinking chamomile.

If cereal processing were occurring at the site, it would be expected that cereal chaff would be found (most probably in high numbers). Chaff was present, but in small amounts which cannot confirm crop processing was occurring at the site.

Charcoal fragments were present in all but one of the samples, but preservation was poor, and so only a limited amount of environmental data can be gained. Identifiable remains were present in nine samples (Table 5). Where more than 100 fragments were present, 100 were examined. The total range of taxa comprises oak (*Quercus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), and willow/poplar (*Salix/Populus*). Oak is the most frequently recorded and dominated five of the samples. It is possible that these were the preferred fuel woods obtained from a local environment containing a broader choice of species.

CONCLUSION

The excavations revealed a range of pits, postholes and linear features, almost all appearing to date between the late 11th to 13th centuries AD. Some of the pottery has a slightly longer currency but only the few sherds of fabric MAQ2 are late in the range. Similarly, a few sherds are in fabrics which originated in late Saxon times but again there is no convincing evidence for an extended chronology beginning before the late 11th century. Residual sherds of Roman and earlier Saxon date, a Roman coin and a presumably prehistoric flint flake indicate a low level of farming activity during these periods, but no more than would be expected if manure and its attendant rubbish were spread onto farmland.

A posthole containing a single Early Saxon sherd and a gully with a single Roman sherd are not necessarily of those periods. One feature in Area B (**200**) resembles an Early Saxon sunken-featured building but it cannot be securely dated, and it was situated some 160 m north of the potential Saxon posthole.

The other features are not of a form expected for a typical medieval settlement, be it a village toft or isolated farm. The excavation targeted areas contained what appeared to be higher densities of archaeological features, but some areas revealed no additional information beyond that noted in the evaluation. None of the areas investigated located a settlement area. Unless the combined fieldwork was most unlucky and missed the core area of a habitation (which is possible, but not likely) then the results have documented a component of quite dense settlement-related activity but located at some distance from the home farmstead.

The various linear features may represent small paddocks, typically adjacent to inhabited sites, for the management of stock or even for arable land. They may pre-date the adoption of collective, open field arable farming typical of medieval times, or represent landholding associated with an independent farm. The latter suggestion may be given more credence in that the features are around 600m away from the parish church at Church Oakley which is the presumed location of the original medieval village.

Finally, the various features excavated were not notable for their wealth of artefacts. However, some were relatively rich in charred plant remains, containing evidence for arable

production and processing with wheat, barley and oats well represented, along with peas and brassicas and associated weed seeds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work was commissioned by Ms Jane Carrington, on behalf of Foreman Homes Group which funded the work, including this publication. The excavation was carried out by the author, assisted by Luis Esteves, Anne Huvig, Jamie Williams and David Wallace. Illustrations are by Andrew Mundin. Sue Anderson thanks Duncan H. Brown for helping with identifications and discussing the pottery assemblage. The work was carried out according to a written scheme of investigation approved by David Hopkins, Archaeology Officer with Hampshire County Council, and fieldwork was also monitored by him. The archive will be deposited with the Hampshire Cultural Trust with accession code HMCMS: A2019.25.

REFERENCES

BGS, 1981 *British Geological Survey* 1:50,000, sheet 284 (Basingstoke), Keyworth.

Black, M 2003 *A Taste of History: 10,000 Years of Food in Britain,* London.

Allen, D & Anderson, S 1999 *Basing House, Hampshire. Excavations 1978–1991,* Hampshire Fld Cub Archaeol Soc Monogr 10, Gloucester.

Blinkhorn, P 2012 Pottery, in Oram, R & Blinkhorn, P Early medieval settlement at Far Leys, Hannington, Basingstoke, *Proc Hampshire Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **67** 205–8.

Brown, D H & Thomson, R 2010 the pottery, 57–61, in Allen, D & Stoodley, N Odiham Castle, Hampshire: excavations 1981–85, *Proc Hampshire Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **65** 23–101.

Cotter, J 2011 Medieval pottery, in Ford, B & Teague, S *Winchester. A City in the Making. Archaeological Excavations Between 2002–2007 on the Sites of Northgate House, Staple Gardens and the Former Winchester Library, Jewry Street*, Oxford Archaeology Monogr 12, Oxford, 261–89.

Dyer, C C 1989 *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages. Social Change in England c.1200—1520,* Cambridge.

Hawkes, J L 1987 The pottery, in Fasham, P J The medieval settlement at Popham, excavations 1975 and 1983, *Proc Hants Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **43** 111–19.

Jervis, B 2011 Medieval pottery in East Hampshire. A preliminary study, *Medieval Ceram* **32**, 35–54.

Lucey, D 2014 Land at Beech Tree Close, Oakley, Hampshire: desk-based archaeological assessment, Cotswold Archaeology, unpubl rep 4520, Cirencester.

Matthews, C 1985 Pottery, in Russel, A D Foxcotte: the archaeology and history of a Hampshire hamlet, *Proc Hants Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **41** 166–72.

Mepham, L 1997 Pottery, in Vince, A G, Lobb, S J, Richards, J C & Mepham, L *Excavations in Newbury, Berkshire, 1979–1990*, Wessex Archaeol Rep 13, Salisbury, 45–67.

Mepham, L & Heaton, M J 1995 A medieval pottery kiln at Ashampstead, Berkshire, *Medieval Ceram* **19** 29–43.

MPRG, 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms,* Medieval Pottery Res Grp Occas Pap 1.

MPRG, 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Res Grp Occas Pap 2.

Norton, A & Marshall, A 2008 Iron Age and Roman activity at Rectory Road, Oakley, Hampshire, *Proc Hampshire Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **63** 101–9.

NPPF, 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London.

Rahtz, P 1976 Buildings and rural settlement, in Wilson, D M (ed.) *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge, 49–99.

Schweingruber, F H 1978 *Microscopic Wood Anatomy,* Birmensdorf.

Stace, C 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*, Cambridge.

Stewart, T & Mundin, A 2018 *Land West of Beech Tree Close, Oakley, Basingstoke, Hampshire. An*

Archaeological Evaluation, TVAS unpubl rep 17/231, Reading.

Tipper, J 2004 *The Grubenhaus in Anglo-Saxon England*, Yedingham.

Vince, A & Steane, K 2008 Late Saxon and early medieval occupation at 26–27 Staple Gardens, Winchester, *Proc Hants Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **63** 135–78.

Author: Pierre-Damien Manisse, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR. email: tvas@tvas.co.uk