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(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume LXXXIX
for 2000



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**Proceedings of the
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Editor Alison Taylor

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**This volume is dedicated to Susan Oosthuizen,
Secretary of Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1996–2000**

Editorial

After publication this Spring of the long-awaited report on the excavations of Roman Cambridge the Society is now able to issue its Proceedings within the correct calendar year, and as some celebration of this (and to have some respite from the Romans) we are pleased to have a themed volume, this time on the sort of landscape studies for which Cambridgeshire has become well known. In light of this subject and the contribution she herself has made to it (including co-authorship of one article printed here), this volume is dedicated to Sue Oosthuizen, who has just retired as our very hard-working Secretary after four quite difficult years.

As usual, this year saw a full programme of lectures and outings, and we also enjoyed the launch of Roman Cambridge and an exhibition by the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology on the same theme. As has also become customary, we organised two very different conferences. In November, the Fulbourn Conference, hosted by the County Council's Archaeological Field Unit, was a round-up of excavations that had taken place in the previous year, though the scale of work is now so great this now has to be quite selective (which is all the more reason why the Field Work section in this Proceedings is such an important contribution : it is the only source for those needing to know what is happening each year). As customary, most of the talks were given by those who had excavated the sites, a daunting task for many giving their first public lecture but enabling a lively appraisal of evidence that was still almost literally spattered with mud. The Spring conference is usually more traditional and this year followed our landscape theme. Entitled 'Two thousand years of Fen and Upland' and organised by Sue Oosthuizen it included a keynote speech from Harold Fox and talks by Oliver Rackham and David Hall on ancient woodland, fens and fields, topics which they have made so very much their own.

President's Address

A new millennium brings home the fact that CAS is overdue for some changes and new initiatives. In Spring 1997 Sue Oosthuizen wrote a letter to all members entitled "A Call to Arms". This action was in response to a decline in the level of heritage services from local authorities to which CAS and the general public had become accustomed. A very supportive response was given by members, which has succeeded in helping reverse this trend. Further issues have developed since then, however, in provision of expertise and facilities within both local authorities and the University, such as a reduction in research space at the Cambridgeshire Collection and a threatened closure of the Committee for Aerial Photography, to which CAS strongly objected. At present we are concerned about the way in which public consultation has been eroded and how interested parties such as CAS can become involved in ensuring, for example, that a proper record of archaeology is made prior to its destruction by development, and that such work is undertaken to the highest possible quality within an intellectual process which helps answer research questions. To tackle emerging areas of alarm CAS approved a Heritage Policy in 1998, and a strategy to deliver that policy has been adopted.

Membership is another area which we are concerned about. All societies need to attract new and younger members and so a number of initiatives are under way. A web page will be produced to publicize the society, and to keep people up to date with events and information. We hope to run workshops on specific topics so that areas of current research can be discussed in detail, and to have some meetings in other towns to provide better opportunities for those members who live outside Cambridge and cannot easily come to the evening lecture programme. I would also like to encourage active fieldwork so that some investigation is pursued that is not tied to the needs of development. Opportunities for amateur involvement in archaeology have become all too rare over the past decade and a lead from CAS in this area might help to encourage fresh membership, as well as giving a chance for many current members to get more involved. There are many ways in which we can give CAS added dimensions and with those I have suggested here I hope that we will see the Society continuing to flourish in the years to come.

Tim Malim

Village Development and Ceramic Sequence: The Middle to Late Saxon village at Lordship Lane, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire

Richard Mortimer
with a contribution by David Hall

With a background of later Mesolithic activity and a few Bronze Age and Iron Age features, the principal area of excavation is essentially of Middle to Late Saxon date. No Romano-British features were recorded though there is a general scatter of abraded, residual Roman pottery across the site. The primary Early or Middle Saxon phase consists of an extensive ditch system with rectangular post buildings and a single grubenhaus set within ditched and fenced compounds. In Phase II radial-pattern growth took place around an unseen core to the southeast of the site. At this stage both the focus of the settlement and the pattern of development changed while respecting and incorporating the earlier settlement enclosure. This may represent the genesis of the nucleated village, forming out of a broader, scattered hamlet. It is dated to the 8th or early 9th century. The pattern was continued into the 11th century until the abandonment of the area.

Introduction

Excavations by Cambridge Archaeological Unit took place during 1996/97 in advance of housing development around Lordship Lane, Cottenham, Cambridgeshire. Extending over ten hectares, the site lies immediately to the northwest of the village centre alongside Crowlands Moat, a scheduled ancient monument (SAM 11549, TL 449/681). Two earlier trench assessments (Butler & Wait 1993 and 1994) had indicated the presence of a Mid-Late Saxon site in the area around Lordship Lane, between the moated site and the High Street (see Fig. 3). The site developers, Beazer Homes, funded an initial excavation which revealed a complexity of archaeological features far beyond that anticipated. The quality of the archaeology offered a rare opportunity for detailed study of the origins and development of an historic village on a broad scale, and application was made to English Heritage for further funding, permitting a second phase of excavation in 1997.

Against a background of later Mesolithic activity and a scatter of Bronze Age and Iron Age features, the principal area of excavation is essentially of Middle to Late Saxon date. Crossed by a dense network of ditches, the chaotic appearance of the site-plan reveals continuity of settlement from the Early/Middle Saxon through to the area's abandonment around the time of

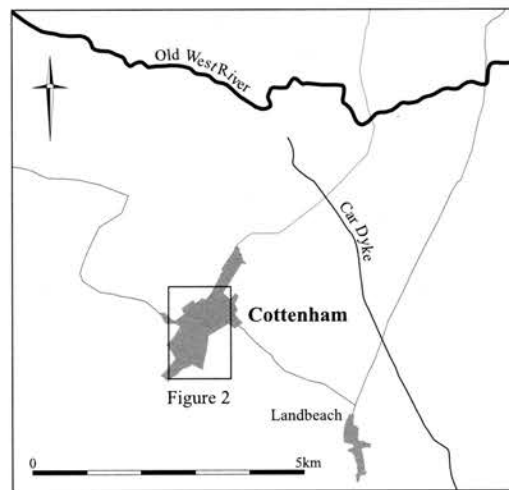


Figure 1. Location within Cambridgeshire.

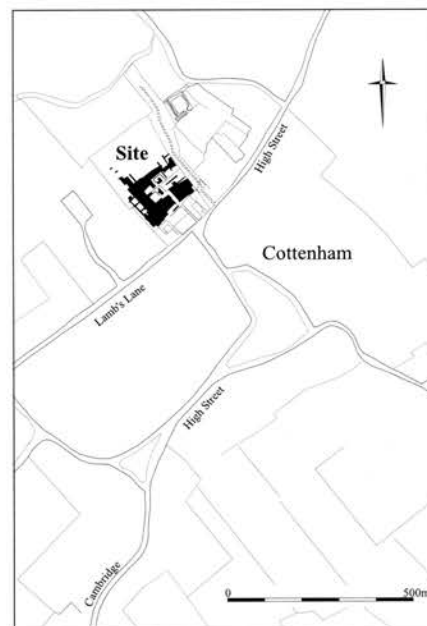


Figure 2. Site location.

the Norman Conquest. The site lies above the ten metre contour at the northeastern tip of a ridge of Lower Greensand, which overlies Kimmeridge clay.

Historical & Archaeological background

The main foci of later prehistoric and Roman occupation lie to the south at Cambridge and to the east and north along the gravel terraces of the Rivers Cam and Ouse. Cottenham village itself had no known Roman find spots but the Roman town of Bullocks Haste lies only 2.5km to the northeast and the area seems likely to have been open farmland or rough pasture throughout the period.

Cottenham is known to have been one of the largest villages in Cambridgeshire since the 11th century. Six medieval manors held land within the village, of these five (Lisles, Burdeleys, Pelhams, Sames and the Rectory manor) derived from Ely Abbey's Cottenham estate which was built up in the late 10th/early 11th century. The sixth and largest, the manor of Crowland, was part of the estate of Crowlands Abbey in Lincolnshire. Traditions recorded in the early 12th century state that Crowlands manor (along with the neighbouring manor of Oakington) was given to the Abbey by Thurcytel before he became abbot in AD 971 (VCH).

During the early years of the 11th century the campaigns of the Danes are said to have wrought havoc in many parts of East Anglia. Ingulph's *History of the Abbey of Croyland* (Riley's Edition, p. 113) records that around the year 1010 'The Danes, making incursions throughout the provinces, stripping the inhabitants of all that was moveable, and burning all that could not be carried away, pillaged Drayton, Cottenham, and Oakington, manors belonging to Croyland, and ravaged them, together with the whole county of Cambridge, with flames.' While tales such as these may be exaggerated to a degree (the three mentioned manors are just the ones owned by Crowland Abbey) it seems likely that considerable destruction was taking place. The manors of Oakington and Cottenham were subsequently rebuilt under Abbot Brihtmer between 1017 and 1032, with the new Crowland manor house supposedly erected in 1032. The earliest known site of the manor house is within the moat, dating perhaps to the 13th century ([A] on Fig. 3). There are two areas within the moat, that for the house and a larger rectangular area of out-buildings. The hall is first mentioned in 1267–8 and may refer to this site. The house is known to have been extensively rebuilt in the mid 1450s and to have been moved uphill (probably due to rising water levels) to a site just back from the High Street [B]. Lordship House, on Lordship Lane, [C], was built in the 1570s and became the principal residence. It was demolished in 1937.

The full length of the High Street is thought to have been built up by the late 13th century and was known locally as Wrongstreet because of its two sharp right-angled turns. Ravensdale in his study of the village (1974) suggests that the High Street is following the western and northern boundaries of the early town core. A watching brief carried out by the CAU (Alexander 1997) on the line of this boundary, at the junction of the High Street and Telegraph Street, [D], found no evidence of activity before the 12th century, and in view of the current excavations Ravensdale's

interpretation begins to look less likely. A recent assessment off Denmark Road (Heawood 1997) covered 3ha to the southeast of the village, [E], an area corresponding to that of the Lordship Lane site at the northwest. The results showed very little activity in the area either before or after the period 1200–1500. A small excavation has also been carried out to the northeast of the moated site at Broad Lane (Hatton 1997) but no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

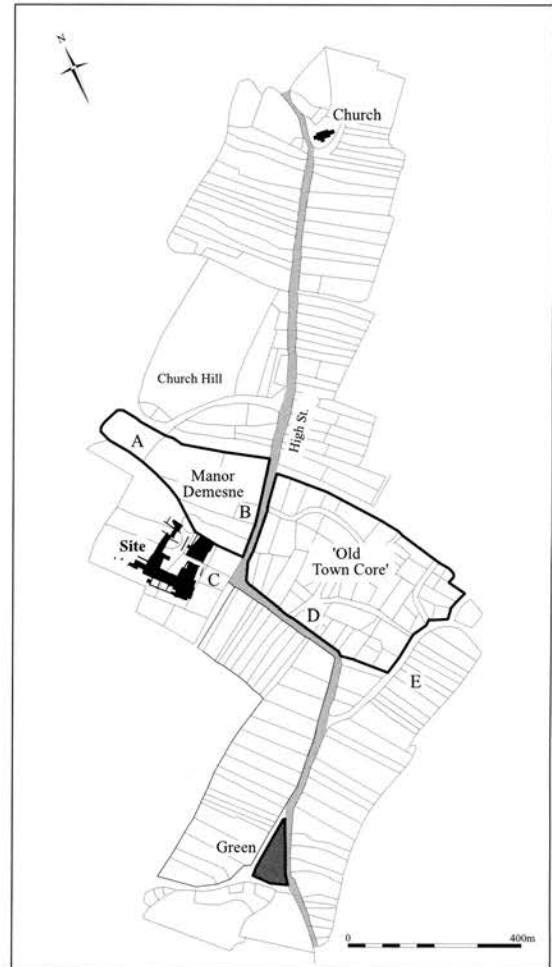


Figure 3. The layout of the village (after Ravensdale, 1974).

The Excavation Results

The site divides into three areas, corresponding roughly to the order in which it was excavated, Areas A, B and C (Fig. 4). These also conform to the broad chronology of the site's formation, with the majority of the features within each area belonging to the early, middle and late phases of the site (respectively Areas C, A and B). This division, while arbitrary to an extent, enables a more coherent discussion of the site by Area, both across and within individual phases. Area D refers to the trench-based excavations in the area of the manor demesne (Fig. 16). Certain major ditch lines

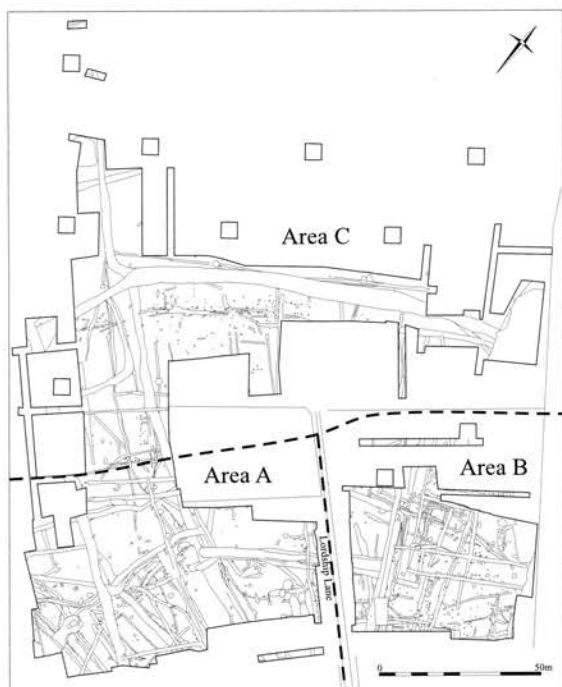


Figure 4. Excavation areas.

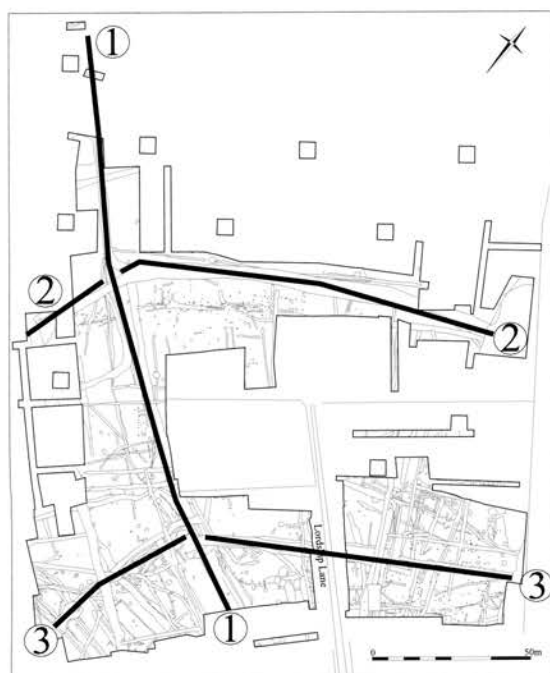


Figure 5. Major ditch lines.

or alignments have been recut or reused over several phases and are thus referred to frequently in the text. To avoid repetition of stratigraphic and geographic information, the three principal alignments have been designated as Ditch Lines 1, 2 and 3 throughout the discussion and are reproduced above (Fig. 5).

There are five main phases to the development of the site: Phase I covers the initial Early-Middle Saxon

settlement enclosures, Phase II the shift to a radial, nucleated settlement pattern, and Phases III and IV the continuation and consolidation of this pattern through to the 11th century. Phase V describes the abandonment of the main site and the location of the manor house in the moated complex. The minor Phase VI covers subsequent later medieval and post-medieval activity. Phases I to V are combined on the site Phase Plan, Fig. 6. Only broad date ranges can be ascribed to the phases, relying solely upon dating from the pottery; no coins were recovered from secure contexts and no radiocarbon dating has been carried out. The period of occupation covers approximately 500 years, from the 7th to the 11th centuries, and within this range the four main phases are dated as follows: Phase I: 7th–8th century; Phase II: 8th–9th; Phase III: 9th–10th and Phase IV: 10th–11th. There is some activity in the easternmost part of the site (Area B) through the 12th and perhaps into the 13th century but this consists mainly of infilling the tops of deeper earlier features and the digging of a few small pits. There are two ditches at the far southeast which contain assemblages of 12th century pottery.

Some 1200 pottery sherds were recovered, of which 70% is attributable to features within the main area of the site. In keeping with the ratio of assemblages of the period, the bone assemblage is far larger at c. 8000 pieces. While no definite evidence of industry was found in the excavation, the recovery of quantities of iron slag attests to metalworking during the site's occupation. Of importance is the site's rich assemblage of charred plant remains, which is diverse and has potential to inform on agricultural practice through the period.

This article is designed to present an overview of the excavation results and is not intended as a full archive report. The discussion that follows and the accompanying phased plans only include contextual or stratigraphic details where appropriate, and feature numbers have not been included. Individual feature and context descriptions, along with the full specialist reports, are available in the archive report held at the CAU and at the SMR office, Shire Hall, Cambridge (Mortimer 1998).

The Excavation

Phase I: 7th–8th century

The initial settlement of the site appears to lie within the early Middle Saxon period, perhaps the 7th century. While there is no clearly Early Saxon material (e.g. stamped wares) there are sherds of grass and flint tempered pottery that could push the dating back slightly. These occur chiefly at the far west of the area in assemblages which are also devoid of definite Middle Saxon pottery (i.e. Ipswich ware).

The primary settlement consists of a large open enclosure (Fig. 7). It appears more piecemeal than planned, and is organic in its development. There are known limits at the north, west and south and its maximum (known) diameter is 170m from west to east. At the north the boundary lies on the divide

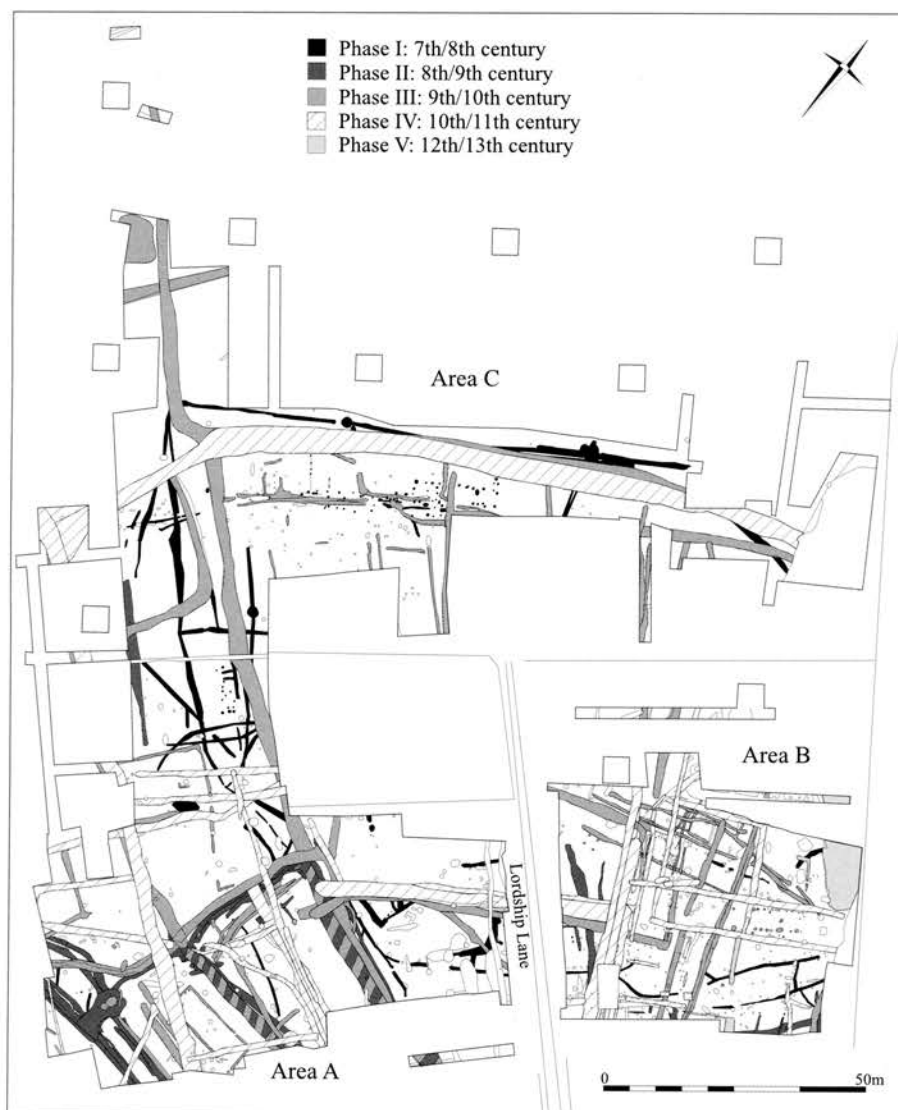


Figure 6. Phase plan.

between the Greensand ridge and the lower-lying clay, and to the east and southeast it is likely that the system continues. Recuts along ditch lines are frequent and all are of roughly the same depth, width and form, shallow U to V shapes, the majority less than a metre wide and no more than 50cm deep. Representative sections of these ditches are reproduced in Fig. 10 (section nos. 1–4). On all the drawn sections feature and context information has been omitted and ditch cuts are simply marked with the relevant phase numbers I to VI.

These boundaries and divisions are not fence lines but ditches, perhaps with hedges planted along their banks. While there are clearly different stages or sub-phases it is neither necessary nor particularly simple to produce a definitive phased sequence for the activity within Phase I. The ditches have been recut on the same or similar lines, and the shape and size of individual paddocks/enclosures alters, not to an obviously coherent plan but organically and over a relatively

broad time period. A few pits are scattered around the enclosure and a small well lies in a gap in the northern boundary (Ditch Line 2). This boundary, lying just inside the sand/clay divide, is the only one that does not change throughout the phase. The core of this phase of the settlement lay beneath two standing buildings at the centre of the site.

Two post-built structures with fence lines attached lie close to the northwestern edge of the enclosure amid a wide scatter of posts and post trenches (Structures 1 and 2; Fig. 8). A third structure barely survives within a small internal ditched enclosure to the south. A single *grubenhäus* lies outside the enclosure to the south.

Structure 1 is the largest of the post-built structures at 15m in length (though it is possible that the main building is just 11m with a 4m extension at the west). The structure is slightly trapezoidal with an internal division at the western end. There was a small four-post structure just to the south of the building. This,

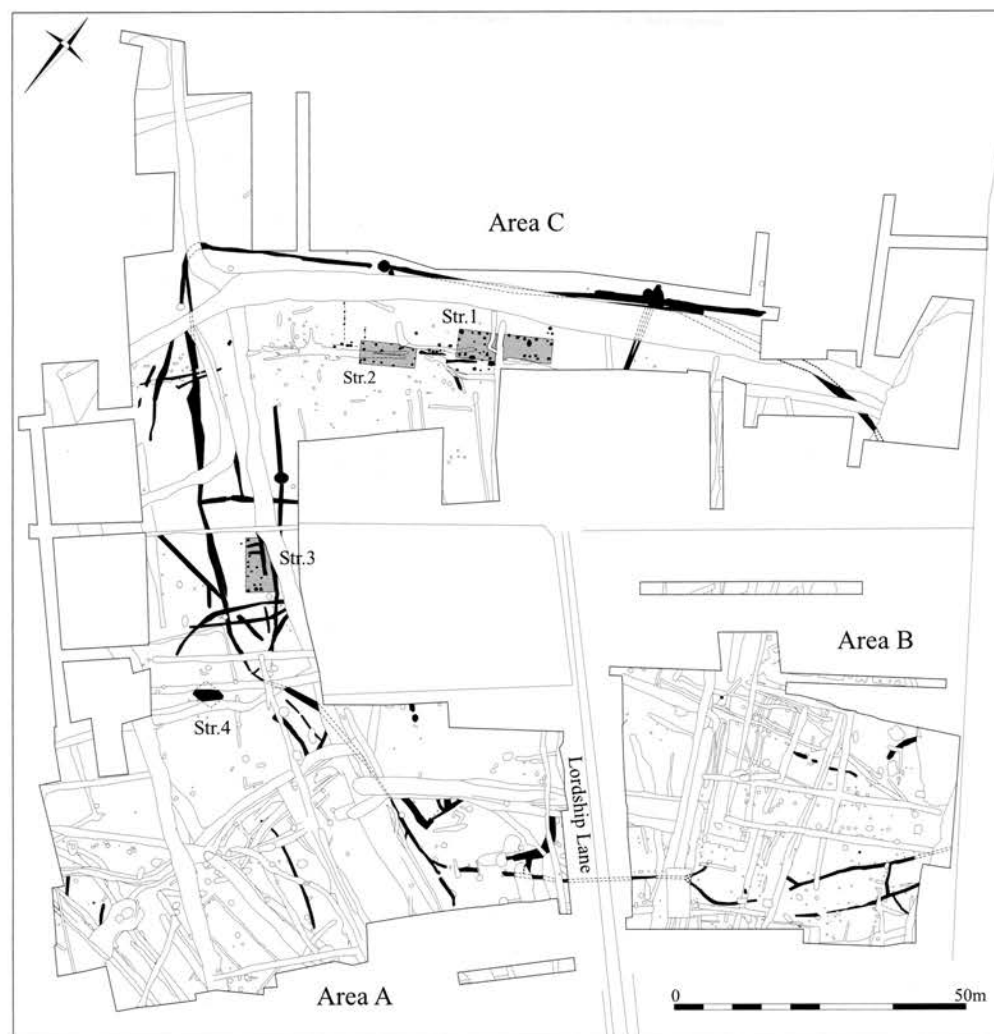


Figure 7. Phase I features: 7th–8th century.

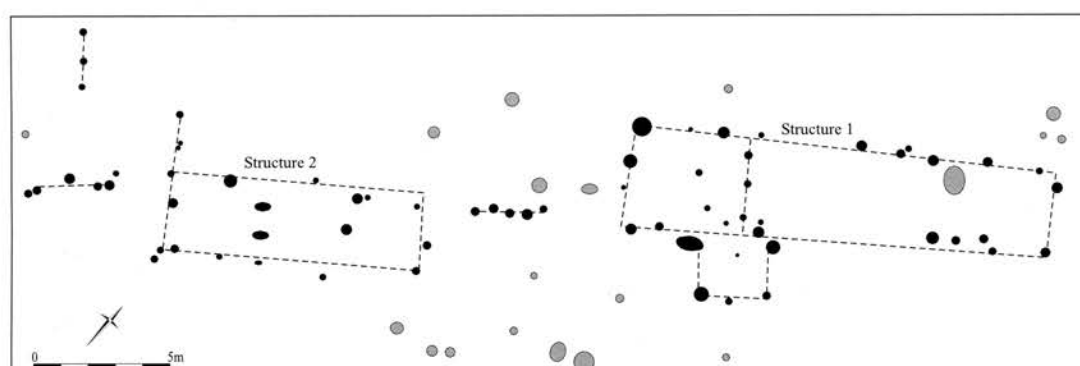


Figure 8. Structures 1 and 2.

while perhaps a separate structure, may have formed part of the main building. Four sherds of pottery were recovered from postholes within the main building; three Early-Middle Saxon and one undated. There was a short fence line, with a gap of approximately two metres at either end, linking the building to Structure 2 to the west. This may have been an ancil-

lary building to Structure 1 within the same farm complex. It is smaller, at c. 8.7m by 3m. At its south-west corner fence posts continue the line of the short wall and a further fence line continues the line of the main buildings axis, again after a gap of two metres. One sherd of Early/Middle Saxon pottery was recovered from this latter fence line. Both these buildings

are oriented northeast/southwest.

A close parallel to this arrangement, though on a larger scale, can be seen at Church Down, Chalton, Hampshire (Welch 1992). Fifty-seven post-hole buildings were excavated, separated within fence line enclosures. Two main types of buildings were recognised, larger buildings up to 11 x 6.3m, interpreted as halls or domestic buildings, and smaller ones averaging 8.5 x 5.3m. Each (of 3) complete settlement units had a large hall set east/west with a fenced square or rectangle attached to its east wall. Each enclosure contained two or three of the smaller buildings. These were interpreted as individual farm (family) units with living accommodation in the large building, or hall, with the smaller as storage and work units. *Grubenhäuser* were rare on the site; only four were recorded within the area excavated.

The Cottenham *grubenhäuser*, Structure 4, is set outside the main enclosure boundary. It is relatively large at 4.25m x 2.5m and, unusually, has a split-level base, with a lowered floor on the northern side. There were three post settings down the middle of the long axis. The large finds assemblage (principally animal bone and quern stone) included three sherds of Middle Saxon pottery and one piece of Roman mortarium.

The large part of Phase I falls within Area C where it remains relatively uncluttered by the subsequent

activity to the south. However, the area remains a part of the main settlement site throughout its development: in Phase IV the final cutting of Ditch Line 2 (the main fenward boundary at the northwest) follows exactly the line of the earliest Phase I boundary. Use of the area may change, from that of direct, structural, occupation to 'back-fields' or paddocks behind the main, later settlement, but the area is not abandoned any earlier than the rest of the site. This continuity is attested by the recovery within the area of sherds of later Thetford and St Neots pottery, albeit in small numbers: only 3 and 5% respectively, of these pottery types are found within Area C.

Phase II: 8th–9th century

Phase II marks the point at which the focus of settlement changes, with a relocation to the southeast around an unseen core. Even when seen as organic growth out of the Phase I features, it is a clear-cut change. The main ditch line of the earlier enclosure, Ditch Line 1, is taken as the axis for expansion to the south with the addition of two ditched compounds (a and b on Fig. 9). The ditches throughout this phase are deeper, wider, and more permanent than those that preceded them. Representative sections are reproduced in Fig. 10 (section nos. 5–7). Both sections 5 and 6 show the recutting of Phase II ditches, getting



Figure 9. Phase II features: 8th–9th century.

progressively deeper and presumably with each cut further out from the hedge bank. The final, much larger, ditch on section 6 is of a subsequent phase. On section 7 the original ditch has been recut in a later phase but can still be seen beneath it. These three sections show the variations in the types of boundary present. Section 5 is one side of a double-ditched hedge bank, the ditches on the other side also recut progressively outwards from the centre, section 6 is a single-ditched bank with the hedge internal to the enclosure, and section 7, with a much broader, deeper ditch, may represent a purely ditched boundary.

Four small structures are included in this phase. In Area A Structure 6 had only two earth-fast sides, a combination of beam foundations and upright timbers, its orientation northwest/southeast and approximately 4 x 3m. One sherd of Ipswich ware was recovered from the fill. If it represents a closed building then it has to be assumed that the opposite sides were constructed on timber or stone base-plates at or just below ground surface. It is equally possible that it represents the base for a frame of some sort, perhaps a rack, and was constructed as a two-sided structure. The latter interpretation is perhaps supported by the presence of a second (possible) such feature immediately to its south. Though heavily truncated by later ditches, the alignment, angle and form of the second feature appears identical. In Area B two sides of a similar structure were seen, the southern side lying beneath Lordship Lane (Structure 5). It showed beam slot construction with possible internal and external postholes and its known width or length was 4.5m. A third beam-slot building, 4m wide, lay at the far east of Area B (Structure 7). The beam slots were evidently dug to take a timber base beam, being straight-sided and flat-based with no sign of sunken postholes. Both had a posthole just beyond the terminal and placed slightly to the outside, and it would be possible to see these as gate or door posts, with 'barn doors' barring the four-metre gap between. One sherd of Middle Saxon pottery was recovered from the fill. It is unlikely that any of these structures are domestic buildings, and must represent outbuildings at the backs of properties separated by the ditched boundaries. Two enclosures can clearly be seen (a and b) and it is likely that structures 5 and 7 lay within two more. These compounds have the appearance of regularly laid out enclosures centred on a core; the beginnings of the toft system of individual tenement plots within a village. The houses must lie to the southeast of these enclosures and the radial pattern already seen here would suggest that they formed a broad semi-circular arrangement no more than 50m beyond the site.

The stratified pottery within this phase is almost exclusively Early/Middle Saxon, with Ipswich wares in the minority. A clear stratigraphic sequence in the southwestern corner of compound (b) sees the enclosure ditches truncated by a large pit which is in turn truncated by two smaller pits and by a recutting of the southern ditch line. Both the ditches and the larger pit contained exclusively Early-Middle Saxon pottery assemblages while the two later pits above held an

assemblage of pre-Conquest Thetford and St Neots wares. It is this sequence that places the beginnings of the nucleated settlement within the Middle Saxon period (pre-850 AD). Within compounds a & b the make-up of the pottery assemblage differs significantly, while there is an even spread of the general Saxon wares across the two, compound (b) contains only two sherds of Ipswich ware, one of them residual. Compound (a) contains, either within features of this phase or of subsequent phases, 24 sherds; half the total assemblage of Ipswich ware from the site. This concentration is very marked (see pottery distribution plan, Fig. 21) and may suggest that the two compounds were initially set out before the appearance of Ipswich ware on the site; compound (a) sees far more activity later in the sequence and it may be then that the Ipswich wares are introduced into the features. Both recent research and excavation evidence suggest the first quarter of the 8th century as the earliest date for the introduction of Ipswich wares and thus it is possible that the compounds were first laid out in the earlier part of the century.

One intriguing element within Phase II is the large feature shown on section 7 (Fig. 10). It is a slot or trench, 4.6m long, 1m wide and 1m deep, vertical at both the sides and ends and with a flat base. The base at the two ends was slightly lowered, almost as though worn. The slot had cut across the original enclosure ditch at a slightly oblique angle, had infilled rapidly, and the recut had then re-established the line of the ditch. The fill contained a few pieces of bone and six pieces of Middle Saxon pottery. No interpretation of the feature is offered though it would appear to have been deliberately sited on the ditch line, used for a short period and then abandoned, with the ditch recut across it. Around the slot, and broadly contemporary with it, were a group of features - three narrow beam slots, and two pits. Between two of the beam slots lay an oval 'boat-shaped' pit, 1.7 x 1.1m wide, flat-based with a broad, steep back end and a tapering, shallow 'front'. These pits appear to be a common feature of Early/Middle Saxon settlement sites, near-identical features having been found at Waterbeach and Ely in Cambridgeshire and Bloodmoor Hill in Suffolk (Mortimer 1996; 2000; forthcoming). Their particular function is as yet unknown.

Phase III: 9th–10th century

The radial pattern beginning in Phase II continues and there are numerous stages of the development throughout the later phases. Ditches that were first cut at an early stage are recut on the same or similar lines. The main criterion for separating Phases III and IV is stratigraphic but through this a significant difference in the pottery assemblages is seen which may have consequences for the dating of similar sites in the region.

There are two main elements of the development in Phase III, the major extension/recutting of the main Ditch Line 1 and the fenward boundary of Ditch Line 2, and the laying out of the rectilinear, radial ditches across Area B. In Area A there is purely organic

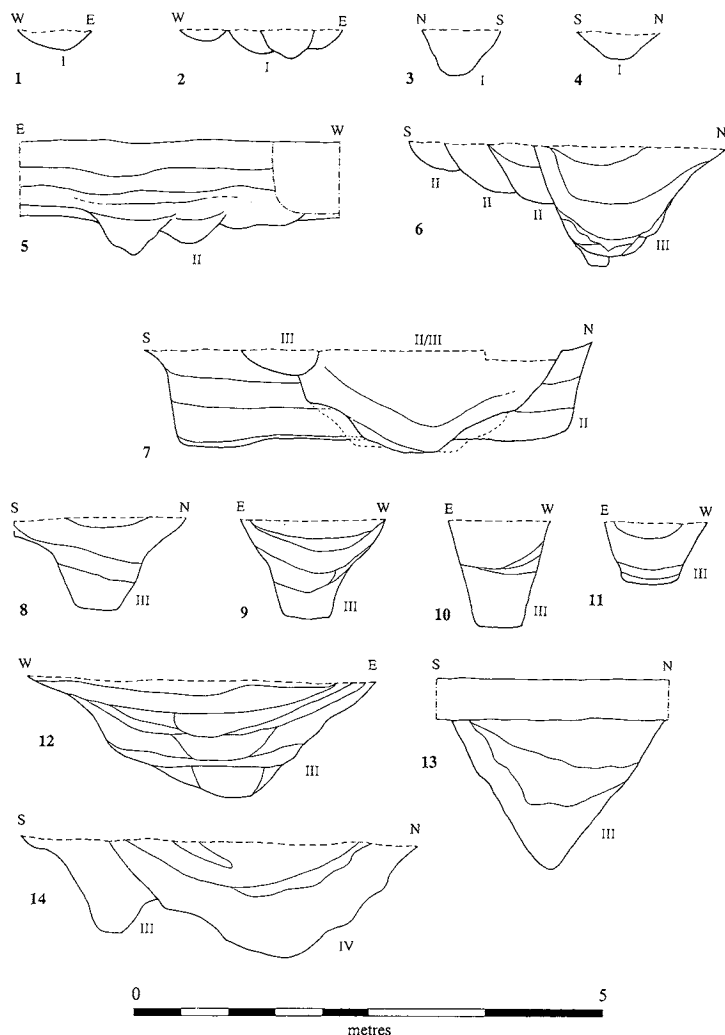


Figure 10. Sections 1-14.

change within the system set out in Phase II. Ditch Line 1, (a on Fig. 11), recuts the northern boundary of the Phase II compounds and reaffirms the original Phase I enclosure boundary. Also, for the first time, it extends this boundary beyond the settlement zone and down toward the fen. This ditch, with others broadly parallel to both sides, in extending the enclosures back out from the settlement may be establishing or reinstating the crofts which lie behind the tenement plots.

It is also during this phase that the northwestern fen-side boundary is strengthened and deepened (Ditch Line 2). There are two ditches cut parallel along this line with probably the inner (b) being the earlier, its course being continued at the west by fence lines. It is the larger cut (c) that becomes the major boundary, being further recut in Phase IV. All these ditches are broad and deep, both the internal division on the radial axis (section 12 on Fig. 10) and those which form the fenward boundary (section 13 on Fig. 10 and 18 on Fig. 15), they range from 2.3m to 3.6m wide and from 1.1m to 1.6m deep.

This phase contains a shift in emphasis in the

direction and the depth of the ditched features. Some are deep and V-shaped, and cut across the radial ditches along Ditch Line 3, the internal enclosure boundary (d on Fig. 11). Sections 6, 8, 9 and 10 on Fig. 10 show these ditches in Area A. They are comparable in size and form, steep sided and flat bottomed and between 1m and 1.3m deep and 1.6m to 2m wide. The emphasis here appears to be on enclosing the core settlement area to the south and east. In previous phases the deeper ditches have been the divisions on the radial lines and it is tempting to see an element of defensive enclosure in this. In Area B the deeper ditches appear to be cut on the radial axis (sections 10 and 11 on Fig. 10). However, there are larger ditches at the northern limit of the area which remained unexcavated (one seen only along an assessment trench and one on the geophysical survey further north) and it is possible that this is where the deeper-ditched enclosure line ran.

In Area B there appears to be no attempt to follow the organic growth pattern seen in Area A, and the ditches disregard the earlier enclosures to conform directly with the radial system formed in Area A.

Four structures are placed within this phase, three major ones (Structures 8, 9 and 10) and a small four-poster (Structure 11). It is possible that some of the buildings may have originated in Phase II, particularly Structure 10 which does not share the alignment of the Phase III features.

Structure 8, within the earlier compound b, is a rectangular beam-slot construction with possible posthole replacements (Fig. 12). It is oriented approximately west-east

and is 17 m long by 5.5 m wide. There is an entrance-way at the southeast and no recognisable internal features. The pottery assemblage from Structure 8, at fourteen sherds, while the largest from any of the structures, is still remarkably small considering that the building was completely excavated. The assemblage comprises 6 Thetford, 4 St Neots, 1 Middle Saxon and 1 unknown sherd, most of which will represent infilling of the beam slots after demolition or decay and may therefore provide dating only for the end of the buildings life. The structure has either been constructed within the space formed for it by the surrounding ditches or, more probably, it has been placed within the enclosure at a later date.

Structures 9, 10 and 11 all lie in Area B (Figs. 11 and 12). Structure 9 is a small rectangular posthole construction oriented broadly east-west and 6m long by 4m wide. It had been cut into a slight terrace at the northwest and had internal wattle divisions at the southwest and possible external wattling at the northeast. Very little pottery was recovered from secure contexts within the structure, three postholes contained one sherd apiece, Roman, Thetford and St



Figure 11. Phase III features: 9th–10th century.

Neuts ware. Structure 10 is a larger rectangular post-hole building, oriented southwest/northeast and 12.5m long by 4m wide. There are possible entrance-ways at both the north and south of the western end, a large posthole off-centre towards the east and a possible external feature, a porch or extension, at the centre of the southern side. Three sherds of pottery were recovered from the postholes, one Roman and two St Neuts ware. Some of the postholes are cut by the Phase IV field ditch to the northwest, and this is the only stratigraphic relationship available. The alignment of the building suggests either a relationship with the narrow gullies of Phase I to the east or that it belongs in Phase II, the pottery, however, does not. If the Late Saxon sherds were within the robbed-out or rotten post-pipes, the building could, at the earliest, have been constructed in the late 8th or early 9th century, thus placing it in Phase II. Generally, post-built structures are seen as earlier than beam slot structures, however, without supporting evidence it lies

loosely in the earlier stages of Phase III. The third structure in Area B is a small, square posthole construction (Structure 11) 2m by 2.3m. No pottery was recovered from the postholes but the alignment of the structure, set against the ditch to the north suggests a Phase III date. Small four-post structures such as this are usually interpreted as grain stores, a platform raised above ground level to protect the stored crop from damp and rodents.

Phase IV: 10th–11th century

This phase sees further change and growth across all the areas. That in Area A is still organic but with a realignment and extension of the tenements, while in Area B the changes adhere to the rectilinear pattern with a slight shift in alignment (Fig. 13). The Phase III episode of deep, cross-dug ditches along Ditch Line 3 at the back of the tenement plots seems to have been short lived with all but the central part of this line infilled. This section however has been recut, deeper

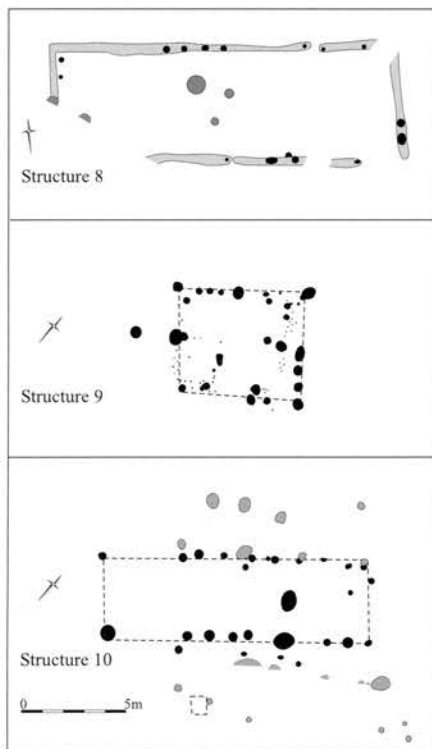


Figure 12. Structures 8, 9 and 10.

and broader than before (section 14, Fig. 10). It is only at this stage, the final stage in the area's development, that the main axial Ditch Line 1 is disregarded, with a larger, deeper ditch being cut parallel to it some 30m to the southwest (section 15, Fig. 15, shows this ditch with recut). This axial ditch is linked to a recutting of the main northwestern boundary ditch (Ditch Line 2) which in parts is up to 4.5m wide (sections 16, 17 and 18 on Fig. 15). The phase generally sees some amalgamation of the enclosures on the radial pattern. The majority of the ditched features in Phase IV conform to the radial pattern and there is no evidence that any continued in use beyond the abandonment of the area at the end of this phase.

Fig. 14 shows all the features in Phases III and IV and the contrast in the formation of Areas A & B. Area B shows a well-planned, though much altered, grid pattern: all the ditched features conform, with some slight variation between Phases III and IV, to a north-west/southeast or northeast/southwest alignment. Area A, on the contrary, is organic. It initially grew out of the original enclosures (at Phase II), and all the subsequent alterations are based around this initial expansion. Area B conforms to the radial pattern initiated in Area A.

The layout of Area C remains close to its original shape, the northwestern boundary, Ditch Line 2, cut

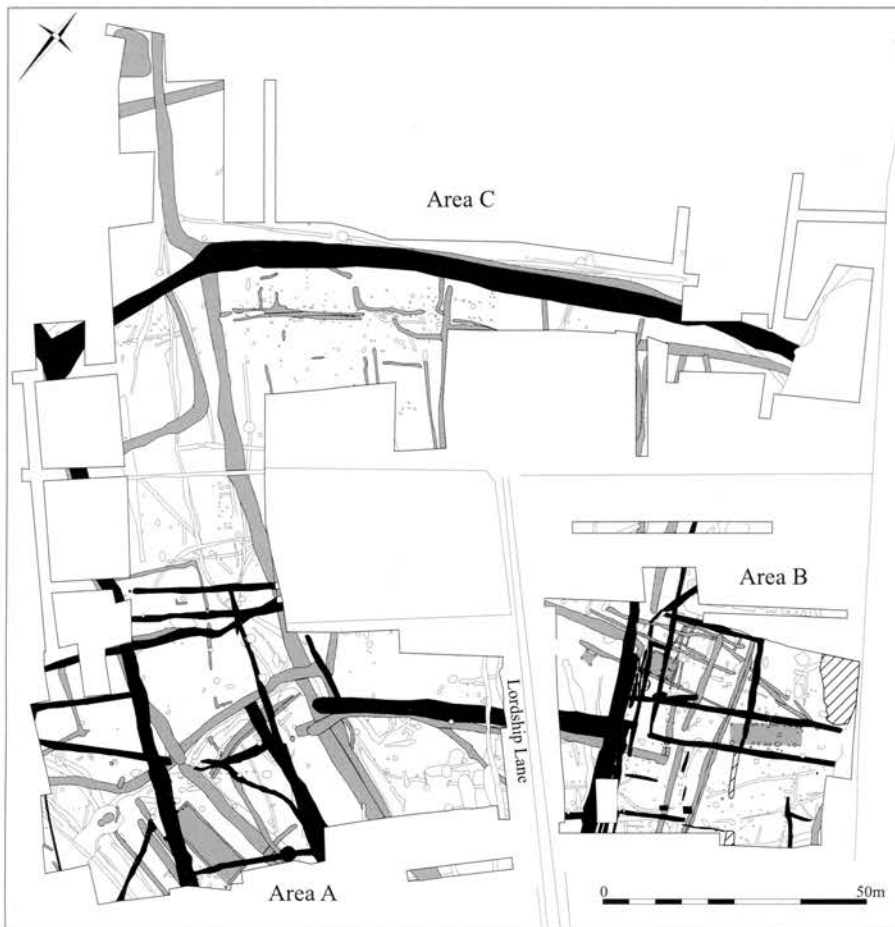


Figure 13. Phase IV features: 10th–11th century.

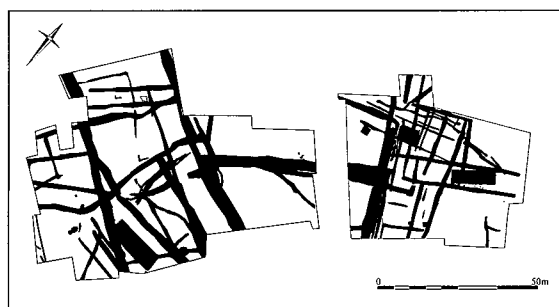


Figure 14. Phase III and IV features across Areas A and B.

and recut, stays on roughly the same line. While there is possibly an element of continuity-through-choice in this – the back boundary of the settlement remains on the same line from inception in the 7th/8th century to abandonment of this part of the village – the greater reason may be that the line marks the watershed, the edge of the higher, dryer Greensand, which from here falls gradually away into the lower, wetter clay lands.

Phase V: Abandonment

The features within this phase are shown on the Phase IV plan (Fig. 13) with a striped infill. There are two ditches at the east of Area B which contain significant later pottery assemblages (12th–13th century) and appear to form the corner of an enclosure with one of the Phase IV ditches. There is also the possibility of some infilling of the upper levels of both later and deeper features across Area B and the eastern part of Area A. Any deliberate infilling of the deeper ditches could be difficult to separate from the general, gradual infill of a ditch. However, certain features across this area did contain, as their upper fill, about 10cm of dark, slightly organic soil. Generally this fill contained, relative to the rest of the site, large quantities of finds material, both pottery and bone. The area may have lain derelict for some time and it is possible that what we see is the remains of a ploughed-out midden heap built up on the area after abandonment. The faunal make-up and to an extent the environmental assemblage are notably different from Phases III and IV. However, the make-up of the pottery assemblage does not differ greatly to that in Phase IV, although the majority of the Stamford ware lies within it, and with the exception of the two definitely later ditches the material has been included within Phase IV, as the final stage of that phase.

At the northeast corner of Area B was a large, almost canal-like ditch cut. The ditch was *c.* 4.5m wide and over a metre deep, with near-vertical sides and a flat base (section 19, Fig. 15). There are no stratigraphic relationships to provide definite phasing and two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from its upper fill, however, by its size and depth these could be seen either as later infilling or as intrusions. The ditch appears to have formed the western boundary of the later manor demesne but its continuation to the northwest had been removed by a large post-medieval pond at the point where it would have turned

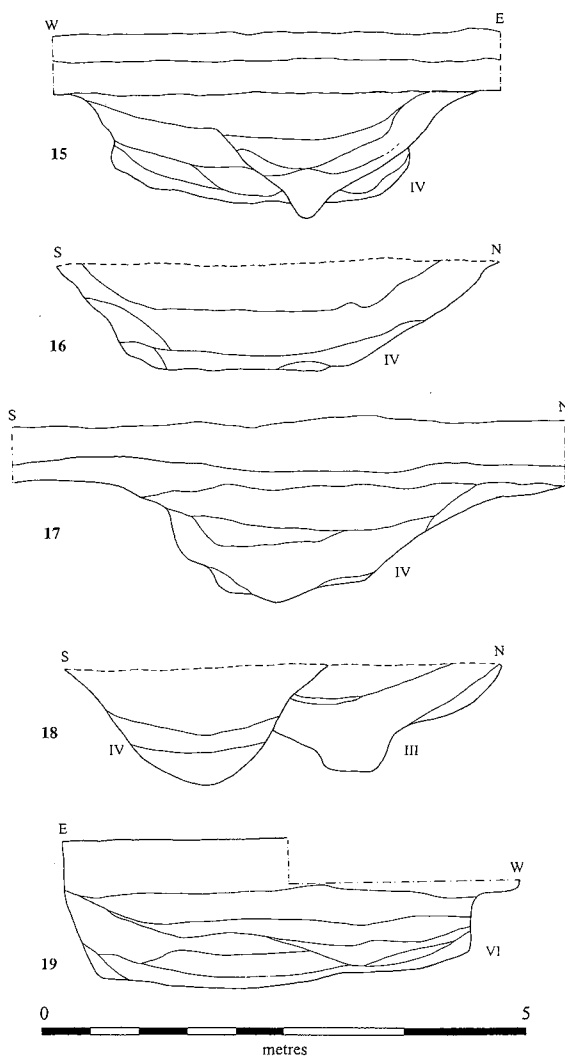


Figure 15. Sections 15–19.

towards the moat. An attempt was made to locate the ditch nearer to the moat but in the only areas where there was access large modern sewer pipes made excavation impossible. The feature butt-ended just south of the excavated section at the point where the Greensand gives way to the underlying clay and on the downside of the ten metre contour. Fig. 18 shows the contour indenting into the site at this point as though marking the line of a small stream. The size and form of the ditch and this precise positioning could suggest that it was the deliberate canalisation of a stream which would then link directly, to the north, with the moat system – the line followed would be that of the manor boundary.

The moated site itself is a scheduled monument and was therefore not included in the assessment. However, the development all but surrounds it and trench-based excavations were possible relatively close to it (Area D). Very little archaeology was encountered. There are two parts to the moated area. The medieval manor house stood within the smaller moat to the south (A on Fig. 3) and the larger, rectangular moated area to the north would have held the

outbuildings. This second area was levelled in the 1960s for construction of a sewage plant. It was originally planned to undertake a small amount of work within this area but due to the limited prospect of archaeological survival, and the expansion of the main area of excavation, the funds were diverted. The little pottery recovered from this area spans the 12th to 15th centuries. Two phases were identified. The earliest ditches lay in parallel pairs aligned northwest/southeast at the centre of the area. The southernmost pair (a on Fig. 16) contained, respectively, 23 sherds of 11th–12th century pottery and 1 sherd of 12th–13th. The second pair (b) contained no datable material. To the north of these were two large, parallel ditches marking the northeastern boundary to the demesne block (c). The fills of the ditches were sterile clay and very few finds were recovered, the only datable pottery being two 14th century sherds. Neither features nor finds (other than prehistoric) were recovered to suggest any activity before this date. The Ordnance Survey shows a large pond at the centre of this area (d) marked 'Human remains found AD 1872', presumably on digging the pond. Trenches were excavated across the area and while the pond was located no further remains were found. The moated site lies, by necessity, on the lower clay ground, and it is only at this point in the sites' development that the area becomes one of direct occupation. The two sets of parallel, earlier ditches may represent the back end of further enclosure plots running along the High Street to the northeast. (Fig. 16)

Phase VI: Later Medieval to Post medieval

There is no evidence for activity on the main area of the site between the 12th and 16th centuries. The 16th century brought the amalgamation of the Crowlands and Lises Manors and with it the construction of a new manor house, Lordship House. Set back from the northern corner in the High Street, the house lay just outside the southern limit of the site. The lane at the centre of the site, Lordship Lane, may have been laid out at this time. The area to the northeast of Lordship Lane (Area B) was extensively pitted with the post-holes and robbed-out foundations of post-medieval farm buildings, some perhaps ancillary to the manor. Some of these, including the manor house itself, survived with alterations into the early part of this century. A large sub-circular 18th–19th century pond was uncovered at the east of Area C, extending down into an assessment trench at the north of Area B. The pond is recorded on the 1845 Enclosure map of the village, along with a second to the south at the corner of the High Street and Lamb's Lane. Two further ponds were recorded southeast of the moat in Area D. A group of large pits, with 19th–20th century surface finds, lay to the southwest of Lordship Lane beneath and between the structural remains of small cottages and outbuildings that sat behind the manor house. Scattered across the whole site area were occasional late sheep/pig burials, tree planting pits, small rubbish pits and horticultural features.

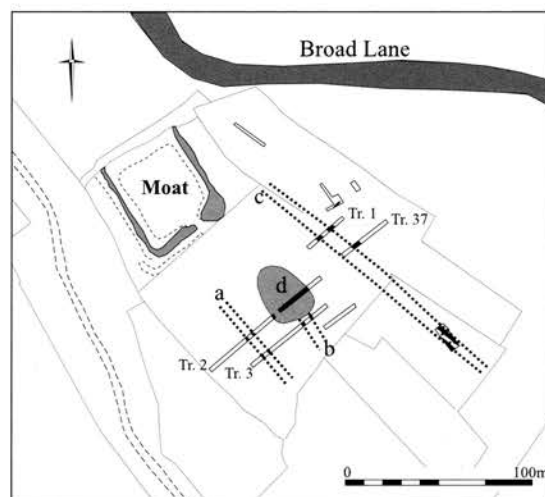


Figure 16. Trenches south of the moated site.

Since the establishment of the new manor house little appears to have altered in the layout of the area around the site. The current field boundaries, based on those extant pre-Enclosure, were probably formalised at around this time. The land has for much of the past two centuries been given over to orchards and small market gardens.

Economic and Environmental Evidence

While the site contains a broad range of artefacts and good assemblages of both plant and faunal remains, these are not seen as of particular relevance to the main thrust of the report. Larger and more informative assemblages have been retrieved elsewhere and studied in greater depth. However, a brief overview of the material is necessary to gain a more comprehensive picture of the activities taking place on or near the site. Full specialist reports are available in the main Site Report (Mortimer 1998) and are referenced where applicable.

Fauna

For this analysis the phases have been combined to make Middle Saxon and Late Saxon categories, i.e. Phases I and II and Phases III and IV (see Higbee in Mortimer 1998). The number of bones identifiable to species is relatively high, sufficient to make some meaningful comparison between the periods (361 and 676 pieces respectively). In Phases I & II only a handful of species were represented; apart from the common domestic animals only a few bones of dog, roe deer and domestic fowl were identified. There was wider representation in Phases III and IV with human (one finger bone), dog, roe deer, goat, three species of domestic fowl and five of wild birds. In both phase groups cattle was by far the most common species of the large domesticates, followed by sheep/goat.

While the overall percentage of both sheep/goat and horse remains much the same across the phases, a change occurs in the number of cattle and pig bones.

From the Middle to Late Saxon Phases there is a decrease in the percentage of cattle bone, though cattle is still dominant, and a corresponding increase in that of pig bone. The increase in the number of pig bones is fairly dramatic, from 9% (in Phases I and II) to 22%. The percentage figures for the two periods are listed in Table 1 below and compared with other principally Early to Middle Saxon sites within the region.

	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Horse
Bloodmoor Hill, Suffolk	51%	20%	24%	5%
West Stow, Suffolk	34-36%	44-50%	13-19%	--
Willingham, Cambs.	54%	36%	4%	6%
Cottenham Total	50%	25%	17%	8%
Cottenham Middle Saxon	57%	24%	9%	10%
Cottenham Late Saxon	46%	25%	22%	7%

Table 1.

The broad similarity across all the sites is notable, the only real differences coming from West Stow, where the dominance of cattle over sheep is reversed and at Willingham where pig is under-represented. Considering the varying size of the assemblages and the possibilities of different retrieval and assessment methods or priorities, it is remarkable how similar the figures appear to be.

Flora

There is evidence for the cultivation of a variety of crops across all phases (see Stevens in Mortimer 1998). Of the cereals, free-threshing wheats predominate with barley an important secondary crop. Rye and oats were grown and there is some possibility that glume wheats (probably spelt) were also cultivated. Glume wheats are known from Early Anglo-Saxon settlements at both West Stow and Yarnton, but would not appear to have been grown to any great extent from the 5th to 7th centuries onwards. While frequently seen in the samples, they rarely occur in great quantities and it is possible that they could be residual from the earlier prehistoric or Roman occupation.

Of the pulse crops the remains of broad bean, pea and lentil were present in small quantities. Given that the processing of such crops involves little wastage compared to that of cereals the low quantity of finds is unsurprising. The presence of lentil is of particular importance in providing further evidence for its cultivation in the later Saxon period. Few changes occur in respect to crop types through the phases.

In terms of soil type, wetland species and species associated with clay soils are reasonably common indicating the cultivation of the lower-lying clay land at an early date. Seeds of species associated with sandy or gravel soils do appear but infrequently and in low numbers. This picture appears relatively unchanged through the periods.

Pollen cores were taken from within a large Phase III well and the sparse assemblage in the central fill suggests that the local landscape was devoid of trees and shrubs, or that they were excessively managed. In the lower levels the assemblage suggests open, weedy,

acid grassland and contained relatively abundant cereal-type pollen. Mayweed, black bindweed and other weed species suggestive of cornfields or field margins were also found.

Artefacts

A small assemblage of metalwork was recovered including a range of personal and domestic items, horse furniture and a possible woodworking tool. Personal items of copper alloy included a dress pin, broken pins or needle stems and a fragment from a pair of wide-armed tweezers. Domestic items of iron included a range of small knives, a non-ferrous plated hasp, a nailed binding (probably a small hinge from a box) and a fragmentary handle. Transport was represented by a cheek-piece of a bridle bit, a bit link and cheek piece ring and a branch of a horseshoe, to which may be added a spirally-twisted stem which may be a bit link, and a fragmentary iron ring which could also be a simple cheek piece. Textile-working tools were represented by a small iron needle and broken fragments of needle stem, and a possible heckle tooth. Structural ironwork included a U-shaped staple and a small number of timber nails. In total 28 objects of iron and 8 of copper alloy were recovered from the excavations (see Mould in Mortimer 1998). A full quantification of the material by functional category found within each phase is given in Tables 2 and 3, with the post-medieval and unphased objects removed (three pieces in total):

Copper	Phase I	Phases III&IV
Tweezers		1
Dress pin		1
Stem		1
Pin stem		2
Sheet fragments	2	

Table 2.

Iron	Phase I	Phase II	Phases III&IV
Horseshoe			1
Bit Link	1		
Cheek piece			1
Ring	2		
Knife	3		2
Hasp			1
Nailed binding	1		
Handle			1
Needle		1	
Stem	2		2
Stem, twisted			1
Strap, U-shaped	1		
Staple			1
Nail	1		3

Table 3.

The metalwork assemblage recovered, though small, is of local importance, providing dating evidence to complement that from the ceramics for activities undertaken on the site. In addition, the recovery of

metalwork from settlement sites of this date is still sufficiently rare to make the Cottenham assemblage of wider interest. Items within the general assemblage, such as the knives, are comparable with others from Thetford and from Coppergate and Fishergate, York. Individual objects are of importance in adding to our knowledge of national distributions of artefact types. The plated, double-slotted cheek piece is similar to another found on a complete snaffle bit from Coppergate (Waterman 1959, Fig. 8 no.1). Other bits of this type have been found at London and Winchester and also in southern Norway where associated finds indicate a 9th to 10th century date. The fragmentary stapled hasp can also be paralleled by an example from Coppergate (Ottoway 1992, Fig. 271 no. 3498).

Although iron slag was found associated with the Saxon occupation, no other evidence or ironworking in the way of smithing scrap, bar iron etc was identified amongst the metalwork assemblage. This accords with the report on the small amount of slag and other kiln waste recovered from the site (see Keys in Mortimer 1998) which concludes that iron smithing was probably taking place in the settlement though not within the excavated area.

A small assemblage (1.7kg) of fired clay was recovered, mostly undiagnostic but including a spindle whorl, part of a circular loomweight, fragments of daub, hearth material and probable kiln cladding. The assemblage of Niedermendig lava quern was more significant, though fragmentary, weighing over 10 kg. A large part of the assemblage was recovered from the *grubenhäuser* and the ditches that cut across it. Only 5% of the lava was found in Area B and 10% in Area C with the remainder (including the *grubenhäuser*) in Area A. These figures are broadly comparable to those for the smaller fired clay and slag assemblages with only 5–10% of the material being recovered from Area B. However, 46% of the pottery assemblage came from Area B, indicating that it is not a lack of excavation that is skewing the figures. It seems possible that different activities were taking place either in different enclosures or in different periods of the occupation.

For a densely occupied and long-lived site the quantity of finds material of all types seems remarkably small. This apparent dearth of artefacts is explained in the earlier Saxon Phase I by the lack of sizeable subsurface features – a single *grubenhäuser* and a handful of small pits – or of surface deposits. The majority of the features were shallow ditches that would have become naturally infilled within a short time. Early Saxon settlement sites which produce large finds assemblages are generally those which contain significant numbers of *grubenhäuser* and/or surviving surface deposits such as those at Mucking, West Stow and Bloodmoor Hill (Hamerow 1993, West 1985, Mortimer forthcoming).

For the later phases of settlement it seems likely that the parts of the enclosures excavated lie at the back of the occupied area. A few pits and small structures are present but the domestic buildings must lie outside the site. It may be that waste materials are being transported to the fields, either directly or via

middening or that the cess and rubbish pits that do exist are situated closer to the houses and thus beyond the limit of excavation.

Discussion

The principal issue raised by the excavations at Cottenham is that of village formation: how and when this has occurred. One of the problems in providing more precise dating for the formation of villages has been that the pottery sequence for this period is not exact, only loose dates can be given for the principal Middle-Late Saxon wares. While, as is usual, the phases of the Cottenham site have been dated by the available pottery it may also be possible to suggest ways in which the pottery dating can be refined by the site itself. The discussion that follows is in three parts. The first, *Site Dynamics*, summarises the site phasing and offers interpretations with reference to the topography and historical background and to other relevant sites. Part two – *The Ceramic Sequence* – looks at the pottery assemblage, at the fabrics and forms and their conventional dating, and part three at their distributions within the site: *Pottery Distribution*.

Site Dynamics

The recent development through infilling and expansion of Cambridge's commuter villages has provided the opportunity for relatively large-scale excavation within or adjacent to their early cores. Willingham, Swavesey, Fordham, Cottenham and most recently Ely have all come under investigation and each has informed upon different aspects of village or town development. The excavations at Cottenham have produced perhaps the most complete picture so far of early village formation.

Three of these excavations, Cottenham, Willingham (Connor and Robinson 1997) and Fordham (Mould 1998) reveal the same basic pattern of settlement relocation. The Willingham and Fordham sites were at or near the core of the modern village and show Early Saxon settlements of hall buildings and *grubenhäuser* that shift their focus in the Middle-Late Saxon period. This repositioning has left much of the excavated areas untouched from the later Middle Saxon period until the recent development. The areas have remained as paddocks or market gardens within the village centre. The principal difference in the Cottenham excavations is that we see an unbroken sequence of occupation and settlement development from the Early-Middle Saxon through to the Conquest. The area was not abandoned as part of the initial settlement shift, but at a much later period.

Occupation began with an 'open' settlement; halls and outbuildings are set within fenced and ditched compounds with occasional *grubenhäuser* set apart from the domestic areas. Only one such unit was recorded, though the core of the site is not seen and at the south the density of later activity may effectively mask them. If the settlement pattern at Cottenham were to follow that seen at other excavated Middle Saxon sites, the settlement may have been of no more

than 4 or 5 such units. That at Cowdery's Down in Hampshire (Millet & James, 1978-81) showed three phases of timber buildings with fence line enclosures attached. A second excavated hamlet, at Catholme in Staffordshire, again showed post and trench-based rectangular structures and a few *grubenhäuser*. Neither site produced a large pottery assemblage or many datable artefacts but both have been carbon-dated to the 7th-8th century. Despite the scale of the excavations at Cottenham it is difficult to establish the size of this early settlement zone – was it discrete or do compound yards continue still further south into the area of the later village? No definite limits are seen except that at the northern side where the boundary ditch roughly corresponds to the division between the Lower Greensand and the heavier clay. This boundary remained a major divide during the subsequent phase of enclosure and effectively represents the fenward limits of settlement. There is a main axis or boundary to this early settlement (Ditch Line 1) and it is from this that the radial pattern develops. The development grows out and away from this line, leaving much of the earlier systems interior to continue in use. The dating of this development, and thus for the origin of the nucleated village, can be no later than the 8th or early 9th century.

This pattern of settlement remained essentially unchanged through to the 11th century. The ditched boundaries fluctuate, being recut many times, and the layout alters slightly while the focus does not. The same four or five enclosures remain effectively unchanged through Phases II and III with some reorganisation and perhaps amalgamation in Phase IV. The settlement pattern seen in the excavation is radial, with its focus to the southeast. This focal point must lie at or close to the core of the village but it is not suggested that the radial pattern will continue to form a circular settlement. Excavations in other parts of the village would almost certainly reveal different alignments and patterns of settlement, with both topographic and political elements contributing to development.

Figure 17 shows the site in relation to a simplified plan of the town, with the manor demesne and main roads shaded. The alignments of the principal ditches and structures have been extended and an attempt made to plot the focal points, or areas, through the three phases of the nucleated settlement. Phases II and III appear to share the same focus, an area immediately to the west of the second turn in the High Street. At Phase IV there is a broadening of this focus to encompass a stretch of Lamb's Lane to the west. Whatever lay to the southeast of the site had become the focus for this part of the settlement and in all probability for the village as a whole. This could have been the principal manor, the church, pond, village green, the crossroads on the main access road or a combination of these elements.

If we take the enclosures that form the radial pattern to represent individual tofts or tenements, their frontages cannot have been at the road junction itself as there would not be sufficient room and the ditches

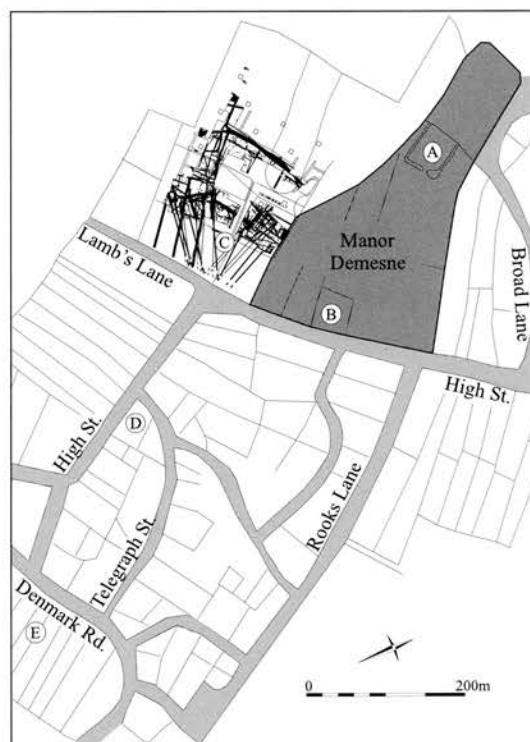


Figure 17. The alignments of the features.

would converge. The domestic buildings must therefore have been arranged around an open space, perhaps a green. Fig. 18 shows a possible reconstruction of these tofts, extended and with frontages of roughly twenty metres apiece. On the 1845 Enclosure map of the village a pond is recorded at the corner of the High Street and Lambs Lane, at the bottom of Lordship Lane. While the pond may not have been an original feature within the village, it may mark the source of a spring or well at the centre of the village green. The topography of the area shows both the ten metre contour and the greensand/clay divide indented towards this point and forming a small valley. It also shows the positions of the moat, two other post-medieval ponds, an earlier pond and the two wells on the site. The large pond at the northeast of the site sits across the line of the manor boundary and truncates the large ditch/canal which follows it along the valley bottom. It is feasible that the pond on the High Street marks the source of the stream that has created this valley and has subsequently fed both the later ponds and moat. This spring or well may present us with both the reason for the initial Saxon settlement of the site and the focus of the subsequent development.

What lay at the focus of the settlement will only finally become clear if further excavation is carried out closer to the frontage of the High Street. However, the chief candidate must be the village centre, i.e. the green and pond/well combined with the major access roads. Other elements to consider are the principal dwelling – the Saxon manor house – and the church. The position of the manor house is known only from the 13th century through to its demolition in the early

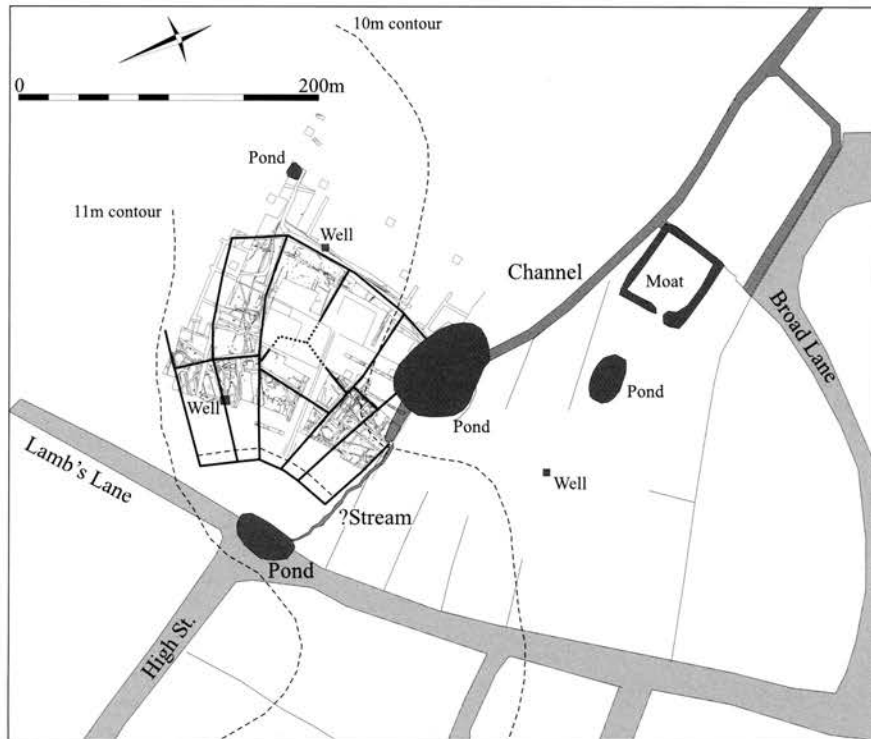


Figure 18.

part of the 20th century, the church from even later in the medieval period.

Cottenham parish church lies at the far north end of the High Street (see Fig. 3) and tradition has it that when it was being built the inhabitants tried to move it to the more central site at Church Hill, just to the north of the moated manor, but were thwarted by the return of the stones each night to the current site (either by the devil or the little people). The current site would not have been the original, at a kilometre distant from both the principal manor and the Saxon settlement. Church Hill is nowhere near the current church and if its name signifies anything it may be that the folk tale is recording the site of an earlier church. It is possible that it was either the original site of the Saxon church or the site of a church belonging to Crowlands Manor. No Saxon burials have been recorded at Cottenham, but the original church and its cemetery must lie somewhere. If situated on Church Hill it may have been relocated to the present site as part of a 12th/13th century reorganisation of the village. The current church is later medieval but contains reused 12th century masonry.

The part of the village seen on site was essentially abandoned in the 11th century, with only two ditches of certain 12th century date. The abandonment of the area is therefore unlikely to be linked directly to the relocation of the manor house into the moated site. Moated manors are principally a 13th and early 14th century phenomenon, though 12th century examples are not unknown (Clarke 1984). It is not known where the pre-moated manor stood but it would be unlikely to have stood on the moat site – it is low-lying and wet

and what little excavation there has been shows up nothing earlier than the 12th/13th century. Once the manor had been moved to the moated site one could see the land immediately adjacent to the grounds being cleared, but this does not fit with the pottery evidence, which puts the abandonment before or around the time of the Conquest. The manors of Oakington and Cottenham were both supposedly destroyed by a Danish army in the early years of the 11th century and rebuilt under Abbot Brihtmer between 1017 and 1032. The timing corresponds to the pottery dates perfectly and it is perhaps here that we should look for the instrument of change, a major rebuilding programme prior to the Norman Conquest, whether or not brought about by Danish destruction. The rebuilding, and the abandonment of this part of the settlement, could have coincided with a major re-planning of the village, or this may have been the only part of the village affected, perhaps because of its proximity to the manor. Fig. 17 shows the three known sites of Crowlands manor house in the 13th (A), 15th (B) and 16th centuries (C) and it seems likely that the earlier buildings would have been somewhere within this broad area.

Ravensdale, in *Liable to Floods* proposes that the core of the Saxon village lay in the block of land immediately southeast of the moated site, bordered by the High Street, Rooks Lane and Denmark Road. However, where excavations have taken place on or just beyond the limits of this area, little if any evidence has been found that predates the 12th century. Sites have recently been investigated on the High Street and to the south of Denmark Road (D and E on Fig.

17). Neither of these sites has produced evidence for pre-Conquest occupation and it seems likely that the core of the early town is in fact to the west, at the junction of the High Street and Lamb's Lane. It is possible that changes in the alignment and position of the village took place over a prolonged period of time, with that part of the village seen here being the first, or only part of the early core to be abandoned. What evidence there is of the medieval and later development of the town suggests large scale expansion and redevelopment in the 12th and 13th centuries. The Norman church was built at the far end of the High Street and the moated manor constructed with, no doubt, major boundary changes involved. The stretches of the High Street north to the church and south to the green and the length of Denmark Road, (see Fig. 3) were also built up over this period. The lanes in what is now the village centre developed in the 17th to 19th centuries (VCH).

Conclusions

The principal question addressed by these excavations is that of early village formation, how and when an open hamlet-style Early to Middle Saxon settlement became a nucleated village. 'Why' is the fundamental question – the change is likely to have been inextricably linked to the introduction of the open field system of agriculture, it may have been driven by economic or social forces, and could have been either an imposition from above or a movement from below. It is likely that many factors combined to force the change. The growing influence of organised Christianity, the need for co-operation in farming, perhaps an expanding population and the desire of the overlords for control and increased production through centralisation and collectivisation. This report cannot attempt to answer these questions, but can perhaps add to our knowledge of how, physically, and *when* this major development was taking place. It is suggested here that the date of this nucleation lies within the early part of the 8th century. This would appear to be a fairly radical suggestion. While there has been much debate on the beginnings of both the open-field farming system and the nucleated village, received opinion has put both within the Late Saxon period or at the Middle/Late Saxon crossover. This is summed up by Martin Welch (1992) thus: *'As the change from hamlets and single farms to nucleated villages is intricately linked to the development of open fields, the date of the changeover from Middle Saxon pottery types to the Late Saxon forms becomes a matter of some importance. It seems to occur within the 9th century, but it is difficult to be precise.'*

The indications are that the nucleation of the settlement at Cottenham occurred at or *before* the arrival of Middle Saxon Ipswich ware pottery on the site (see above: *Excavation results, Phase II*). Both recent research and excavation evidence suggest the first quarter of the 8th century as the earliest date for the likely introduction of Ipswich ware, and perhaps as late as 740 AD (Blinkhorn pers comm). If we look at other, dated, Early-Middle Saxon settlements – for the most

part small hamlets similar to the early phase at Cottenham – a picture is built up of major, and widespread, settlement shift or abandonment at precisely this time. There are three major sites within the region where it is perhaps safest to look for parallels. The date of West Stow is published as lying between the 5th and 7th centuries (West 1985). However, the final, and smallest phase, contains a considerable quantity of Ipswich ware and can therefore now be extended to the 8th century. The date range of the larger settlement at Mucking is also from the 5th to early 8th century (Hamerow 1991). The recent excavations at Bloodmoor Hill in Suffolk have produced a large, open settlement similar to that at West Stow (Mortimer forthcoming). The pottery assemblage of c. 7000 sherds does not contain a single piece of Ipswich ware but coin evidence shows the site in occupation until the early part of the 8th century. To look further afield, the settlement at Cowdery's Down in Hampshire, though not well dated, is broadly 7th century (Millet and James 1978–81). That at Chalton (also Hampshire) probably runs into the early 8th century and pottery evidence at Bishopstone (Sussex) suggests that its final phase is also of the 7th or 8th century.

While there would appear to be enough evidence for the abandonment of hamlet-style settlements at or around this period it proves more difficult to show where, if anywhere, the occupants of these settlements moved to – the majority of these successor sites probably lying beneath our modern towns and villages. The Cottenham site shows one possible model, of a village forming out of one of these smaller hamlets, presumably with the abandonment of a number of others in the area. Elsewhere the site of the new village may have been on virgin ground; this may be the case at Ely where a large, and possibly planned, settlement of the 8th century has recently been uncovered (Mortimer 2000). The Ely site may cover an area of up to 40ha, similar in size to Middle Saxon wic sites such as Hamwic, also a foundation of the early 8th century. A variety of economic, social and topographic factors would have combined to determine the site for the new settlements and it is perhaps in looking at the sites chosen that further indications of the reasons behind the move can be sought.

The Ceramic Sequence

David Hall

Pottery comes from the two assessments of 1993 and 1994 and from the large-scale excavations of 1996 and 1997. The former produced relatively little pottery and this was analysed separately. Of the 1053 sherds recovered from the main excavation nearly two-thirds were Middle and Late Saxon.

For each context, every sherd was examined and the fabric identified. Saxon sherds were studied using a x10 magnifying hand-lens to observe igneous or other temper more readily. A database table was compiled of the sherd numbers for each context, and a free-text section recorded the presence of rims, bases, decoration, glazes etc and any other significant aspect

of the fabric and form. All rims, a few bases, handles, decorated sherds and unusual fabrics were separated for detailed study and for making literature comparisons. After assembling fitting sherds a selection was made for drawing and publication. The database allows ready manipulation of information to give totals of any particular item, identify the contents of any particular context and allow examination of related associations.

The Earlier Assessments: 93/94

The material from the first assessment amounted to 68 sherds of which 33 (48%), were post-medieval; most are likely to be 19th century. There were few medieval sherds consisting of large pieces from one large pot of probable early 13th century date. The remaining Saxon and Saxo-Norman wares gave a fairly accurate sample of the material collected during the main excavations. The Saxo-Norman is probably all early, (i.e. before the Conquest). A single St Neots Ware bowl rim came from a very small vessel, a characteristic of the early phase. Hand-made gritty Saxon amounted to 18% of the total and provided a large rim sherd and a body sherd with a band of decoration. There was one Ipswich Ware sherd and two residual Roman (RB) sherds.

The second assessment made in 1994 produced 98 sherds, 67 % of which (66 sherds) were late post-medieval. The medieval sherds dated from the 13th and 14th centuries. Among them were Fen Wares (probably from Ely, one a complete side of a bowl), Grimston sherds and one Essex red ware with a white slip, possibly part of a sgraffito jug. Only 10 Saxo-Norman sherds were recovered, including a St Neots Ware rim from a small bowl, a piece of a large Thetford Ware storage jar and one Stamford Ware body sherd. No Middle Saxon material was present.

The Excavated Groups of 1996 and 1997

The excavations both yielded hand-made Middle Saxon fabrics, Ipswich wares of the same date and Saxo-Norman wares, with a few early medieval sherds of the 12th and possibly 13th centuries. The details of the analysis are given in a full table held in the archive. The overall composition is as shown in Table 4.

The Roman sherds (45; 4%) were residual, there being no identified features of that date. The post-medieval were intrusive and are of no significance (32 sherds; 3%). Not counted in the table are items in the 'notes' where there is reference to a Bronze Age pot and various pieces of Iron Age fabric. All these are eliminated from any further analysis, the total of Saxon and Saxo-Norman sherds is 976 and the per-

centages of each fabric are given in the bottom row of the table.

Six principal pottery forms have been identified within the assemblage and a brief introduction to the fabrics and the way they have been divided is necessary before any discussion of what they may imply can proceed.

Saxon Fabrics

The Middle Saxon category contains a variety of hand-made fabrics dated broadly to c. 650–850. The majority cannot be either provenanced or dated with any degree of accuracy; rough gritty, sandy and grass-tempered fabrics, some of which may lie earlier within the date range and could extend back to the 6th century. Two main fabrics have been identified:

Vegetable tempered

75 sherds total (8%; 30 contexts): 1 rim.

The material is hand-made, commonly very light weight with cavities left by vegetable tempering. Sherds from 11 contexts contained white flint grits, about 1mm diameter and occasionally larger. Colours are generally light, but some are black. Because of the friable nature of the fabric, most sherds are very small and only one rim survived (Fig. 26; No. 1).

Gritty

147 sherds total (15%; 96 contexts): 11 rims.

This fabric is commonly found in the East Midlands and East Anglia. Most sherds are dark, with a few of lighter colour. The fabric is very hard and gritty, containing grit from igneous rocks. Generally grits are small, but larger grits of brown material (felspar) up to 1.5mm diameter can be found. Most sherds contain very small glistening particles (mica). All sherds are hand-made, often with a rough finish, but fine textured sherds occur, with a smooth finish, only a few grits, and are occasionally burnished. Sherd thickness is about 6 mm, with a few as much as 10–12mm. A very few sherds have additional white flint tempering and occasionally a little vegetable tempering.

Ipswich wares

There is a little Maxey-type pottery within the above category but the only clearly defined Middle Saxon pottery type is the wheel-turned Ipswich ware which makes up nearly 20% of the Middle Saxon assemblage. Its date range is only thought to cover the 8th and early 9th centuries and it is the precursor of the finer Thetford ware. Two fabrics have been identified within this category:

Grey

22 sherds total (2%; 17 contexts): 1 rim.

Ipswich Ware, a hard thick ware, usually grey in colour, was made on a slow wheel and fired in a kiln to a high temperature. Most vessels are thick walled and have uneven rills, about 1cm apart. The material has been

	RB	Veg. temp.	Saxon Gritty	Ipswich Gritty	Ipswich Grey	Thetford	St Neots	Stamford	Sandy wares	Other wares	GRE	Post 1740	Total
Total	45	75	147	27	22	233	317	13	96	46	6	26	1053
% of 1053	4	7	14	3	2	22	30	1	9	4	1	2	100
% of 976			8	15	3	2	24	32	1	10	5		100

Table 4. Summary of fabrics found in 1996 and 1997.

described by Hurst (1957, 1976) and West (1963, 1985). Two bases and only one rim were recovered, all in grey or dark grey wares, without grits, corresponding to types 'a' and 'b' of Hurst's 1959 classification. There is a dark grey, simple everted cooking pot rim, (form A of the West's 1963 classification), similar to a Norwich example (Jennings 1981, 13, fig. 2, no. 59).

Gritty

27 sherds total (3%; 20 contexts): 2 rims.

Gritty Ipswich Ware is made in the same or similar fabric as the Gritty Saxon type, described above with brown igneous grits as large as 1.5mm. Sherds are often thick and commonly have uneven rills, or girth grooves, about 1 cm apart, resulting from the production of vessels using a slow wheel. Colours are most commonly dark, but a few are greyish, similar to Ipswich Ware, except for the gritty fabric.

Thetford

233 sherds total (24%; 114 contexts): 19 rims.

Thetford ware is the commonest pottery type for the Late Saxon/Saxo-Norman period in the east of the region. Its date range lies between c. AD 850 and 1150. It is a wheel-made hard grey reduced ware, with thin sherds except for large storage vessels. Jar rims tend to be smaller and more finely made than St Neots Ware, the hardness making it possible to craft smaller forms. Thetford ware and similar fabrics were produced in Ipswich, Norwich and Thetford itself along with country sites such as Langhale and Grimston. Within the broader date range it is possible to separate some of the sherds into pre- and post-Conquest forms. All of the recognisable sherds within the assemblage are thought to be pre-Conquest.

Primary sources for Thetford type wares are the Cambridge studies of Hurst (1957). Material has since been described from Norwich (Jennings 1981, 14–22) and many other places. While it was made at places other than Thetford, it is quite possibly the source of the Cottenham material.

St Neots

317 sherds total (32%; 140 contexts): 42 rims, being 25 jars or cooking pots and 17 bowls.

The most widespread pottery types for the western part of the region are the St Neots wares. This well known Saxo-Norman material has been fully described by Hurst (1956) in his primary study of material in the Cambridge region. Much more material has come to light since 1956. The ware is well-made on a wheel, in a fabric full of white shells, and often coloured dark purple with a soapy feel to the surface. They have a smooth fabric, are low-fired, and vary in colour from pale brown to purple. The date range coincides with that of both Thetford and Stamford, however, there is less of a clear end-date to its production as it gradually merged with Medieval forms and fabrics in the 12th century. Within the broader date range it is possible to separate some of the sherds into pre- and post-Conquest forms. All of the recognisable sherds within the assemblage are thought to be pre-Conquest.

The Cottenham material differs slightly in that nearly all vessels are small, have thick walls in proportion to their size, up to 10mm thick. There are nearly always very small shell particles in the grog. Most of them have a corky surface where the shells have been leached out because of the acid soils occurring on the site.

Stamford

14 sherds total (1%; 12 contexts): no rims.

The least common of the Late Saxon wares. A fine, almost untempered, white, pinkish or off-white fabric, often with a pale yellow, sometimes green or orange glaze. There is no definitive start-date for its production, again c. 850, but by the later 12th century developed Stamford ware, with a mottled green glaze, becomes the norm. None of the sherds recovered from the site is of the developed form. The primary accounts for Stamford Ware are the Cambridge studies of Hurst (1958), with updated work by Kilmurry (1980). Only a few body sherds of jugs were found, with one glazed handle.

Sandy wares

96 sherds total (9%).

Thetford, St Neots and Stamford all fall into the date range of c. 850–1150, and thus well into the 12th century, and their developed forms merge into the Early Medieval wares. However, none of these wares at Cottenham are definitely of the later forms. The unequivocally 12th century assemblage (a few sherds are possibly 13th) is made up of hard fine sandy wares, successors to the Thetford types. Of the 96 late sherds recovered, 79 are from a single context, a large, square ditch butt at the southeast of Area B, unrelated to any other later features. The sherds are decorated, with cross hatching (basket-work) and wavy lines. It would be possible to exclude this context from calculations of pottery distributions on the basis that the ditch is of a later, separate, phase of activity off to the southeast of the site.

Fabrics and forms

The forms of the Gritty Saxon pots are typical, with a globular shape and simple rims. Grey gritty sherds might be thought of as hand-made Gritty Ipswich. An unusual vessel was found which has large and small sherds from a sagging base about 12cm in diameter. The vessel is black, the fabric contains grits & mica but has a smooth finish and is wheel made. Unfortunately there is no rim, but the vessel is presumably to be interpreted as a Saxo-Norman prototype in a gritty 'Middle Saxon' fabric.

One handmade rim sherd (Fig. 26; No.5) appears to be copying, or is a prototype, of a Saxo-Norman bowl hammer-head rim. It is in a fine black ware with extremely fine grits. In a similar fabric and finish is a decorated sherd (Fig. 26; No.6) which has three deep incisions to make two decorative cordons. This is the only decorated Gritty Saxon sherd recovered.

The composition of igneous rocks in hand-made Saxon pottery has recently been studied in some detail (Williams and Vince 1997). The view is that most of the granite derives from the Charnwood Forest area of Leicestershire. This seems a bit difficult to relate to Cottenham. Why were Middle Saxon people concerned about trading granite (or pots) so far when their more sophisticated descendants in the Late Saxon period did not bother to acquire Stamford Ware pottery (a better material than St Neots Ware), the source of which was much nearer than Leicestershire?

A possible source of the igneous rock is Till drift. It is now easy to underestimate the amount of drift that used to be available. Excavation of Iron Age and

Roman sites located on Till yields large quantities of pebbles collected for use as yards and floors, some of them igneous. The footings of churches in stoneless boulder-clay regions are often made of pebbles (Thurleigh; Ravensden). Also in the Middle Ages and later, stones were picked off open fields to improve the tilth. In 1617, stone gathering was done for 6 days annually at Wollaston, Northants (Hall, pers comm). Analysis of the igneous content of the Cottenham pottery has yet to be done; it is worth investigation, along with similar material from recent excavations at Willingham and Waterbeach.

The Gritty Ipswich fabric is a variant of normal Ipswich Ware. A gritty fabric 'd' has previously been described by Hurst (1959). The Cottenham fabric is so like the Gritty Saxon hand-made material that it is likely to have been produced locally and is considered as a distinct fabric type in this analysis. Two rims recovered correspond in form, but probably not fabric, to material from Norwich. They both derive from cooking pots with everted rims.

The 42 rim sherds of St Neots fabric were from 25 jars or cooking pots and 17 bowls. The jars were nearly all simple everted forms, most of them have hollowed upper surfaces. Of 11 jars described as 'small' the measured diameters, measured to the outside of the everted edges, varied from 10 to 20cm; there were fragments from even smaller vessels. Of the 17 bowl rims 10 had their diameters measured and the range was 15-32cm. The forms were simple upright, hammerhead, and inturned, with the simple upright being the less common. A few sherds are coarse with large shells (up to 2mm) and may be hand made. There is a lid and a looped handle, fixed to the vessel horizontally.

Hurst has previously commented on pre-Conquest vessels being small, and this was the case with an early group found by Tebbutt at St Neots in 1932 (Hurst 1956, 67, Fig. 8). It is a marked feature of the Cottenham group.

Most of the Thetford vessels are small. Only one bowl rim was recovered and all other rims appear to be from globular jars, except for a simple rounded rim. Twelve jar rims of the 'small' form ranged between 12-16cm diameter, with one at 34cm. There was also part of a pitcher spout and two storage jar fragments with applied thumbled strip decoration (as Hurst 1957, 39, Fig. 4, no 2 and 5). One sherd had a band of rouletting decoration and another part of a curved incision that is paralleled at Norwich as part of a curve single-line of decoration (Jennings 1981, 18, Fig. 5, no 120). Some flat bases occurred, 6-10cm diameter, probably of jugs, but flat-based jars are known. A few sherds had igneous grits.

Dating

Hand-made Early and Middle Saxon pottery in the region cannot be dated very well. There is a tendency for early sherds to be very thick, as was found at Waterbeach with sherds mixed with late Roman contexts. Decoration also occurs on a small percentage of early sherds. At Cottenham most hand-made sherds

were thin and there was no decoration, which accords with a Middle Saxon date. This is the more readily acceptable because of the association with Middle Saxon Ipswich Wares.

The second main phase at Cottenham contains only Saxo-Norman material and the features lie on a different alignment. In view of the early dating of the Saxo-Norman wares, based on smallness of vessel sizes and the thickness of the vessel walls, the second phase is still pre-Conquest and is presumably of 10th century date. The site is therefore relevant to the subject of village replanning. It lies near the centre of Cottenham, but does not continue into the Middle Ages on exactly the same location. Similar relocation of settlement has been found at nearby Willingham (Connor & Robinson 1997) and at Raunds, Northants (Blinkhorn forthcoming).

The site plan was assigned phasing based partly on stratigraphy and partly on relative dating indicated by pottery fabrics. Each fabric find-spot was plotted on an overlay for study of relationships. It was then evident that Vegetable Tempered, Gritty Saxon and Ipswich Wares were located principally in Areas A and C, and related to the features within Phases I & II (see *Distribution* below). Saxo-Norman fabrics have a marked shift in pottery distribution. Thetford Wares are absent from the Phase I features and have greatest concentration in Area A. St Neots Wares occur in both A and B but there is a noticeable shift of density to Area B. Stamford Ware occurs only in Area B.

It is likely that there is a chronological component to this distribution. Middle Saxon Phase I features in Area C were abandoned as Areas A and B became dominant. Thetford Ware seems to be the earliest of the three later fabrics on this site, with St Neots next and Stamford Ware the latest. It is interesting to find date differences in these three wares, usually put together chronologically.

Vegetable tempering is often associated with Early Saxon material, however on this site it is only a small component and is likely to be Middle Saxon. The Gritty Wares are without decoration and are mostly thin, consistent with a Middle Saxon date. The accepted date for Ipswich Ware is c. 650-850, and all three Cottenham Saxon fabrics are likely to be in this date range (the Ipswich Gritty fabric being treated as a variant of Ipswich Ware).

The St Neots, Thetford and Stamford wares are early in their date range (850-1150). Early vessels are characterised by being small in size, which is a marked feature of the Cottenham forms. Thetford fabric was often dark or gritty and not quite the 'normal' material found in 12th-century levels. Likewise St Neots vessels are often thick-walled and some have large pieces of shell grog. There is no break of occupation on the site, and the Saxo-Norman wares are likely to continue on from the Middle Saxon fabrics, dating to the 9th and 10th centuries. There are no large post-Conquest forms of these fabrics and the site had been substantially abandoned before the last half of the 11th century, or earlier.

There are no contexts that clearly have both Middle



Figure 19. Excavated features.

Saxon and Saxo-Norman sherds mixed in an unambiguous way, and could therefore be assigned a 9th century date. Many contexts do have the two types of sherds mixed, but they come from complex areas where there had been recutting, and interpretation is difficult, there being no certainty that the Middle Saxon material is not residual.

Pottery Distribution

Due to the problem of residuality in such heavily ditched areas the pottery distribution plots which follow (Figs. 20–23) have been produced by plotting the location of each sherd across the site by type rather than within individual phases. This gives a better impression as to where the sherds ended up geographically as opposed to chronologically. The majority of the sherds, even if redeposited more than once by subsequent ditch cuts, would not move substantially from their original point of deposition. Fig. 19 shows the location of the principal excavated sections to enable comparison to be made as to the density of excavation both across and within the areas.

Within the main excavation (Areas A, B & C) a total of 861 sherds of feature-related pottery were recovered. Features within the trenches around the moated site (Area D) produced 29 sherds of principally 12th to 13th century pottery and as these cannot be related directly to the main area of site they have been left out of the following discussion. Table 5 below shows the raw data – the quantity of sherds of each type collected within each Area. Both fabric types for the Saxon material (vegetable tempered and gritty) and the Ipswich ware (grey and gritty) have been combined for this analysis.

Figure 24 presents this information in two different ways. Fig. 24a shows the amount of each pottery type recovered from the three areas, thus 26% of the Saxon pot was within Area C. Fig. 24b shows the make-up of the assemblage of each area, thus 62% of the pottery in Area C was Saxon. The Area graphs reinforce the shifting pattern of activity across the site inherent but not immediately apparent in the phased plans. The immediate impression conveyed by both is of movement through time from Area C, through A, to Area B. Fig. 24b shows the pottery assemblage from Area C

Area	Saxon	Ipswich	Thetford	St Neots	Stamford	Sandy	Total
A	109	30	126	111	-	6	382
B	38	9	78	174	14	84	396
C	51	9	7	15	-	-	82
Total	198	48	211	300	14	90	861

Table 5.

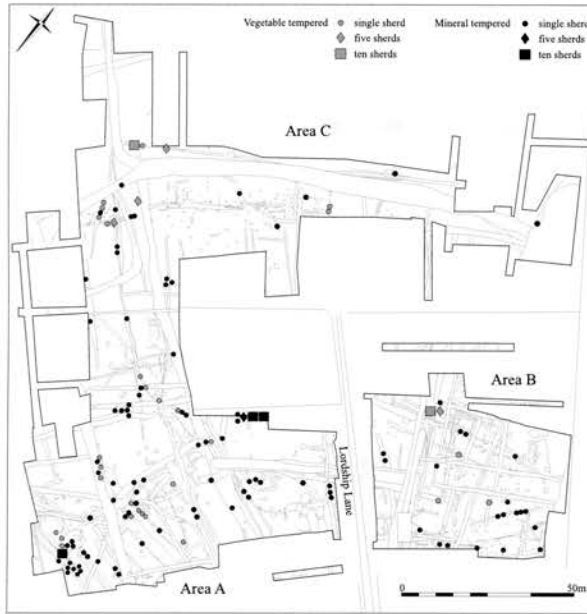


Figure 20. Distribution of Early-Middle Saxon Pottery.

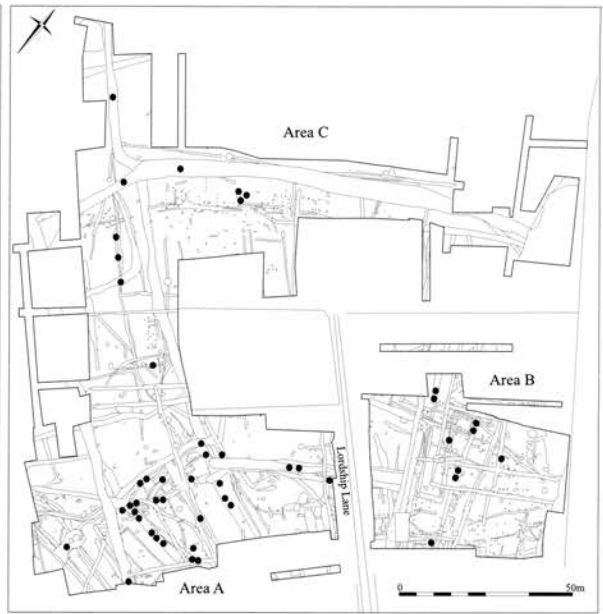


Figure 21. Distribution of Ipswich ware (single sherds).



Figure 22. Distribution of Thetford ware.

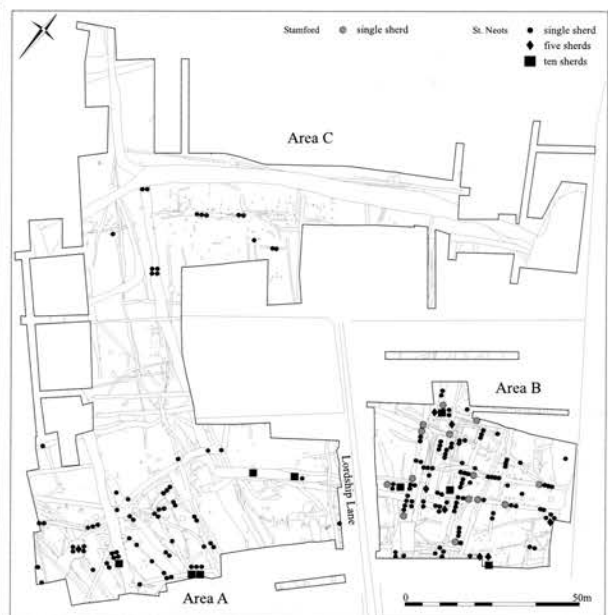


Figure 23. Distribution of St. Neots and Stamford wares.

Phase	Saxon	Ipswich	Thetford	St Neots	Stamford	Sandy	Total
I	113	5	4	1	-	-	123
II	43	7	5	1	-	-	56
III	24	25	153	86	-	-	288
IV	18	11	48	195	14	6	292
V	-	-	1	17	-	84	102
Total	198	48	211	300	14	90	861

Table 6.

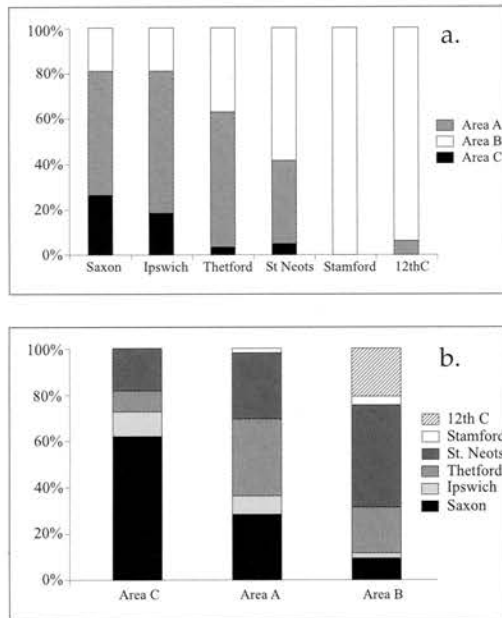


Figure 24.

dominated by Middle Saxon wares (73%), with a small percentage of Thetford and St Neots but neither Stamford nor 12th century material. Area A contains a three-way split between Middle Saxon, Thetford and St Neots wares, while Area B is dominated by St Neots, Stamford and the 12th century wares (69%).

Table 6 shows the numbers of each pottery type in relation to the five Phases of site development.

The graphs that follow present this information in the same way as those above. Fig. 25a shows the amount of each pottery type recovered within each phase, thus 57% of the Saxon pot was within Phase I features. Fig. 25b shows the make-up of the assemblage of each phase, thus 92% of the pottery in Phase I was Saxon. In Figs. 24 & 25a the pottery types are arranged chronologically from left to right and in Figs. 24 & 25b from bottom to top. To an extent this order has been determined by the content of the graphs themselves. Received opinion states that Thetford, St Neots and Stamford wares all occupy the same broad time-span, however, both the phasing and the shift in the focal points of occupation across the Areas imply a definite order within this.

Of the Phase graphs, 25b clearly shows the make-up of each phase. Both Phases I & II are dominated by the hand-made Saxon sherds, but Phase II also includes a significant percentage of Ipswich wares. While the small number of Thetford and St Neots sherds in Phase I features are almost certainly intrusive, the slightly higher percentage of Thetford wares in Phase II features could be early introductions along with later Ipswich wares. The most striking thing about the Phase III & IV assemblages is the apparent reversal of the Thetford and St Neots components, in Phase III the assemblages are 53% Thetford to 30% St Neots while in Phase IV the Figs. are 16% to 67%. The same pattern shows up in the Area graphs (24a) even

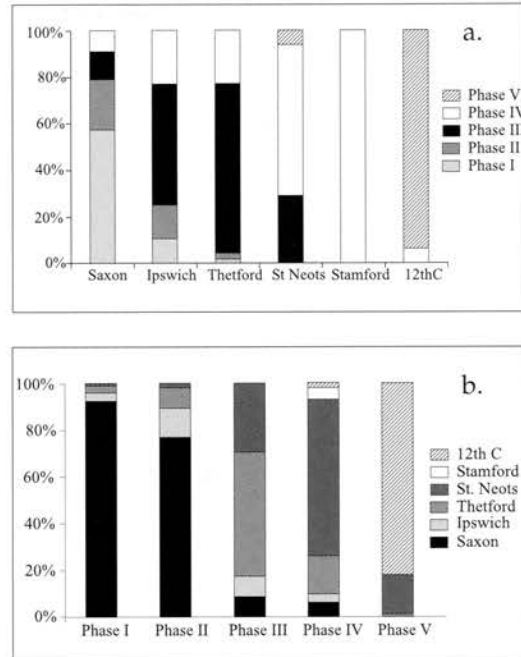


Figure 25.

though the division by Area is an imposition rather than a stratified reality. There is an almost total reversal with 60% of the Thetford and 37% of St Neots being recovered from Area A as opposed to 37% and 58% from Area B. Both Areas A & B contain similar quantities of the two pottery types combined and in quantities large enough to be statistically relevant, 237 & 252 sherds respectively. The two phases also contain a near identical number of sherds; Phase III, 239 and Phase IV, 243.

Area A contains the slightly earlier element of the radial pattern settlement (Phase II) and Area B the later, though both Areas continue in occupation until broadly the same date. The clear division between the two pottery types both across the Areas and Phases implies that, by whatever mechanism, Thetford wares were in use on the settlement in larger quantities at a significantly earlier date than the St Neots wares. It is not possible to ascribe a distinctly earlier date to either the manufacture or importation of the Thetford wares when the majority of contexts contain both types of pottery. However, it could be inferred that the acquisition of Thetford wares in the earlier period (9th/10th century) was either easier or in some way preferred, and that this was reversed in the later period. Possible explanations for this could be sought but here is not the place to do so, however it is possible that these observations could be used to inform upon the dating of similar sites within the region. The recent excavations at West Fen Road, Ely, only a few miles north of Cottenham (Mortimer 2000) have produced in the region of eight to ten thousand sherds of Thetford and St Neots wares, providing an unparalleled opportunity to test this hypothesis.

The drawn sherds

Saxon Vegetable Tempered

1. <1286> [1275]. Rim in soft porous fabric with a few brown grits, rough finish.

Saxon Gritty

2. <1372>, unstratified. Rim of simple globular vessel; hard black gritty fabric with a rough finish.
3. <271> [359] F210. Everted rim, hard, black fabric with coarse grits, c. 20cm diameter.
4. <1193> [1135]. Rim of probable globular vessel in sandy gritty fabric containing shiny mica, pink exterior, and grey inside.
5. <603> F341. Fine black fabric; almost a hammerhead rim with some external burnishing.
6. <605> F341. Fine black fabric, external burnishing, two bands of decorative incision to form a cordon.
7. <1188> [1125], F673. Spindle whorl in dark gritty fabric.

Ipswich, gritty

8. <1001> [844] F410. Jar rim with a gritty surface of igneous grog similar to Saxon Gritty, dark grey-black outside, and pink and grey inside. Everted and rilled, with a square top, 14 cm diameter. Similar to a Norwich example (Jennings 1981, 13, fig. 2, no. 42).
9. <1029> [881] F 526. Jar rim in gritty fabric, dark grey-black outside, pink and grey inside. Everted and slightly hollowed, 14 cm diameter, similar to a Norwich sherd (Jennings 1981, 13, fig. 2, no. 39).

St Neots

10. <74> [161], F116. Nearly complete jar, broken into several large pieces, 14 cm diameter rim. Fine shells in the grog mostly leached away on outer surface; sherds 0.5 cm thick & greater. Everted rim with slight hollowing, resembles an example given by Hurst 1956, 59, fig. 4 no. 12, but much smaller.
11. <063>. Hollowed rim of small jar; Hurst 1956, 59, fig. 4, nos. 4, 35; medium fine shells, with a band of rouletting on the outside.
12. <762> [102], spoil. Small jar rim, everted and hollowed, 14 cm diameter, blackened on the outside.
13. <516>. Small bowl with inturned rim in standard ware. No precise parallel; outer part of rim 30 cm diameter.
14. <546> F319 surface. Hammerhead bowl rim with fine shells, standard soapy fabric, 32 cm diameter.
15. <106> [132e], F124. Small leached bowl rim, with fine shells, buff surfaces, 28 cm diameter. Similar to early St Neots example (Hurst 1956, 67, fig. 8, no. 13).
16. <480> [514] F300. Small bowl rim, slightly inturned, fairly large shells up to 2mm, buff inside, dark outside.
17. [492] F300. Bowl with dark fabric, hammerhead rim
18. [492] F300. Dark bowl with inturned rim.
19. <074> [161]. Rim of large bowl with shells leached out.
20. <1249> [1214], F274. Simple upright rim, rather rough, thick with large shells up to 2mm.
21. <469> [492] F300. Buff pitcher spout.
22. <469> [492] F30. Large, rather coarse handle, looped horizontally from the rim.

Thetford

23. <128> [183] F128. Jar rim, dark grey outside, blackened.
24. <1297> [1300] F753. Light grey jar rim.
25. <427>. Light grey jar rim.
26. <1252> [1216] F324. Simple slightly everted upright rim of a jar 14cm diameter.
27. <033> F 109. Bowl, light grey outside, darker inside.
28. <309>. Body sherd in buff fabric with incised lattice pattern; 12th century?
29. <427>. Body sherds in buff fabric with band of incised decoration; 12th century?

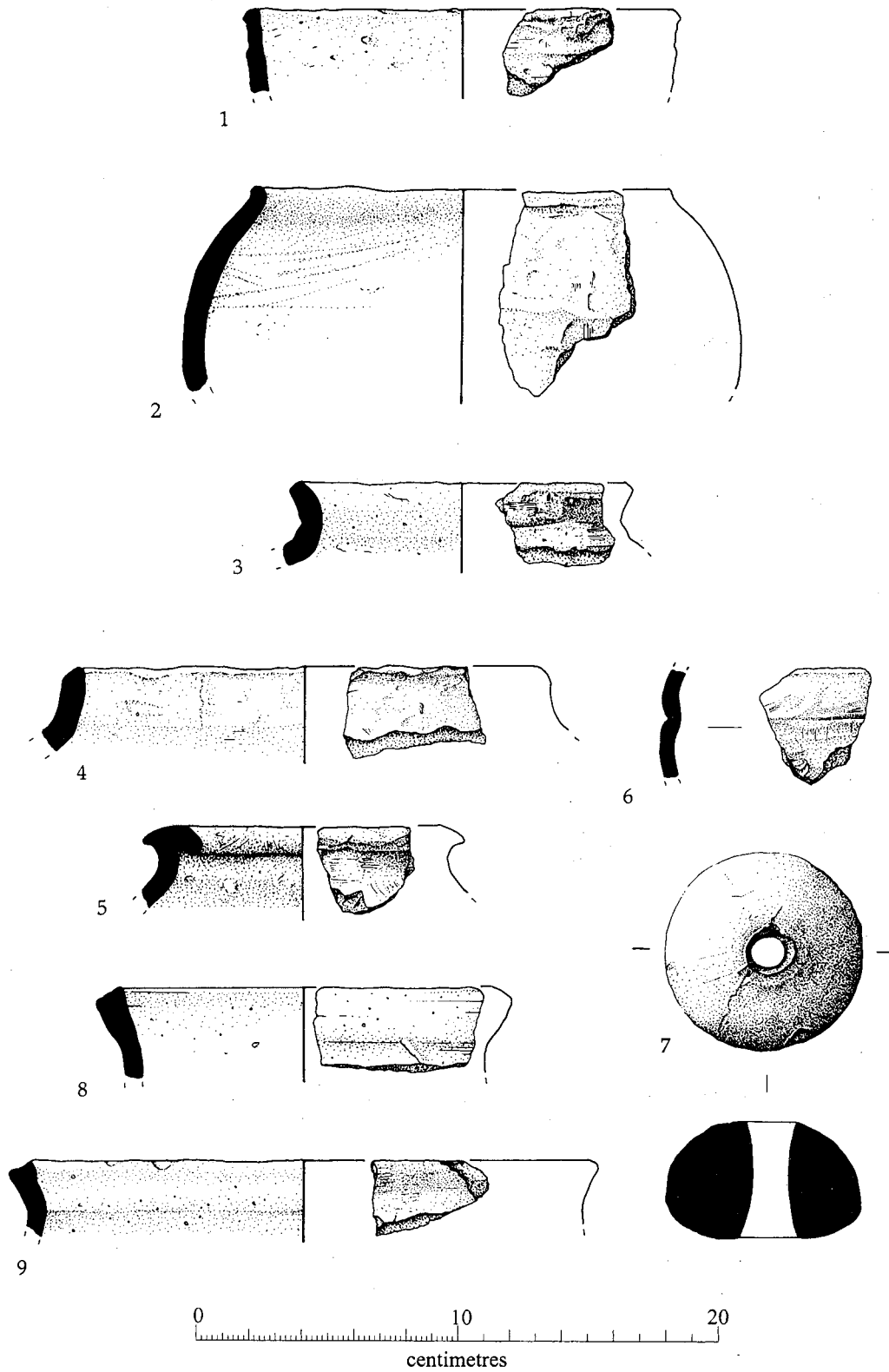


Figure 26. Saxon Vegetable Tempered (1), Saxon Gritty (2-7) and Ipswich (8-9) rim sherds.

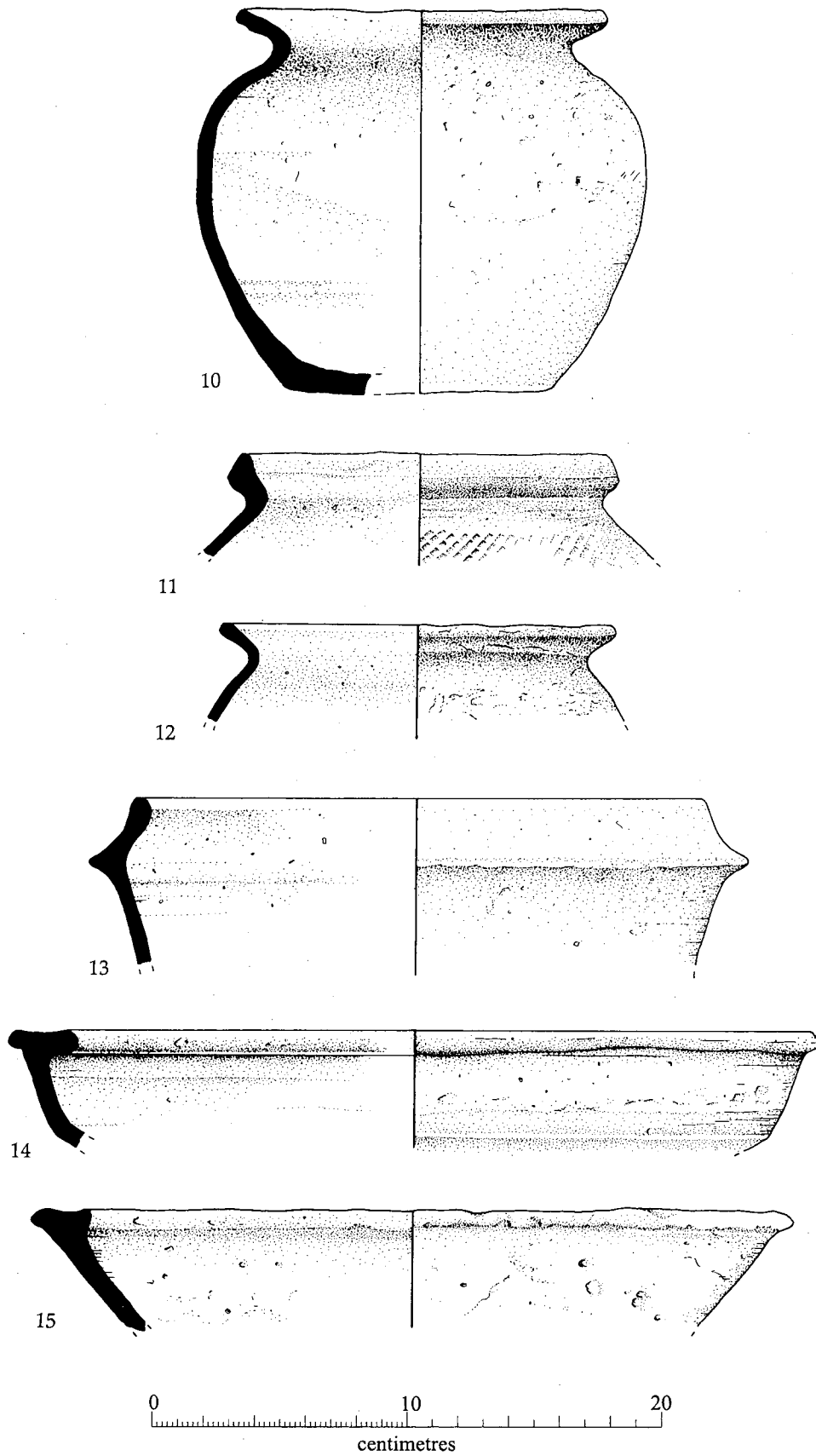


Figure 27. St. Neots rim sherds.

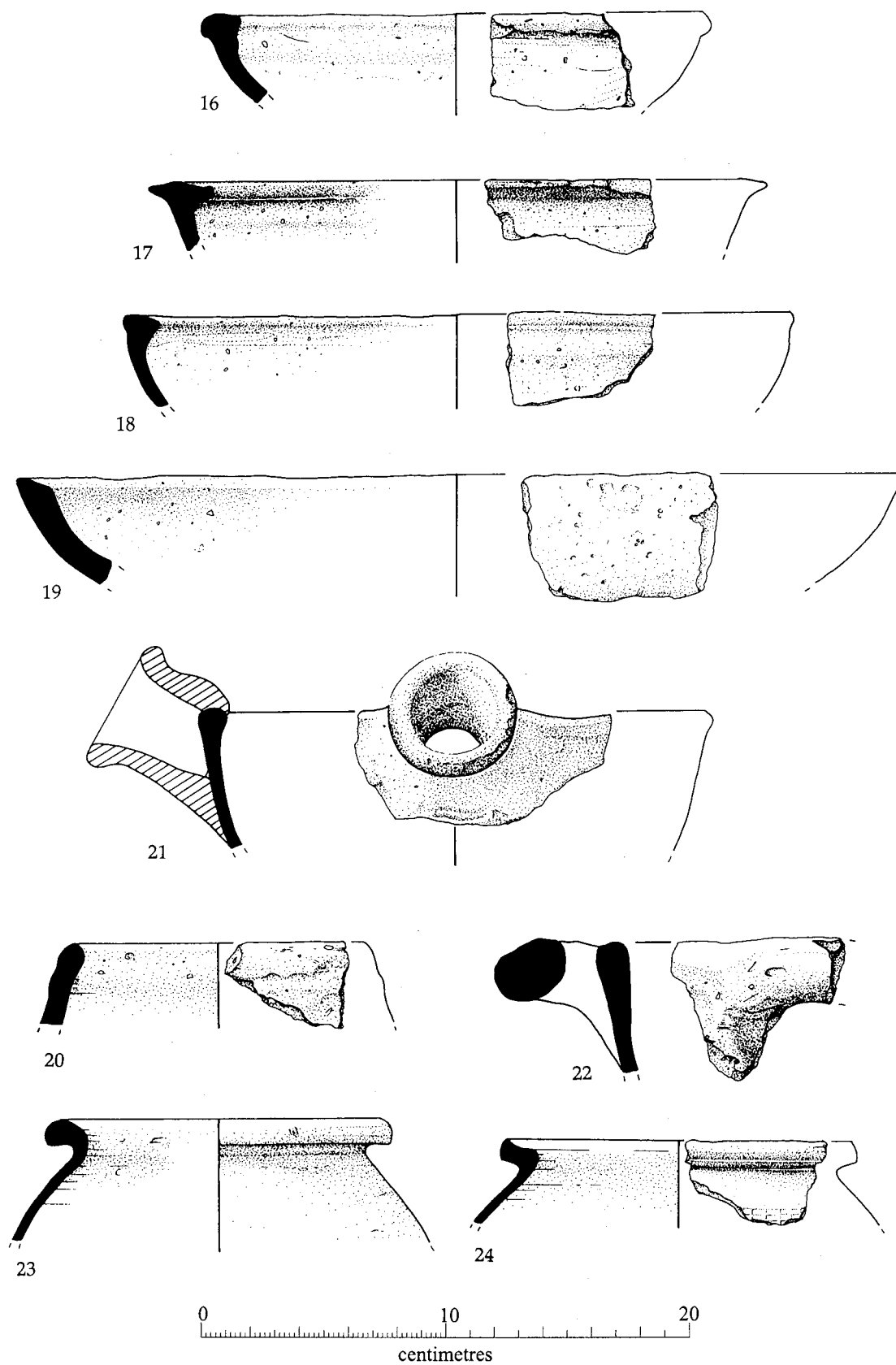


Figure 28. St. Neots (16–22) and Thetford (23–24) rim sherds.

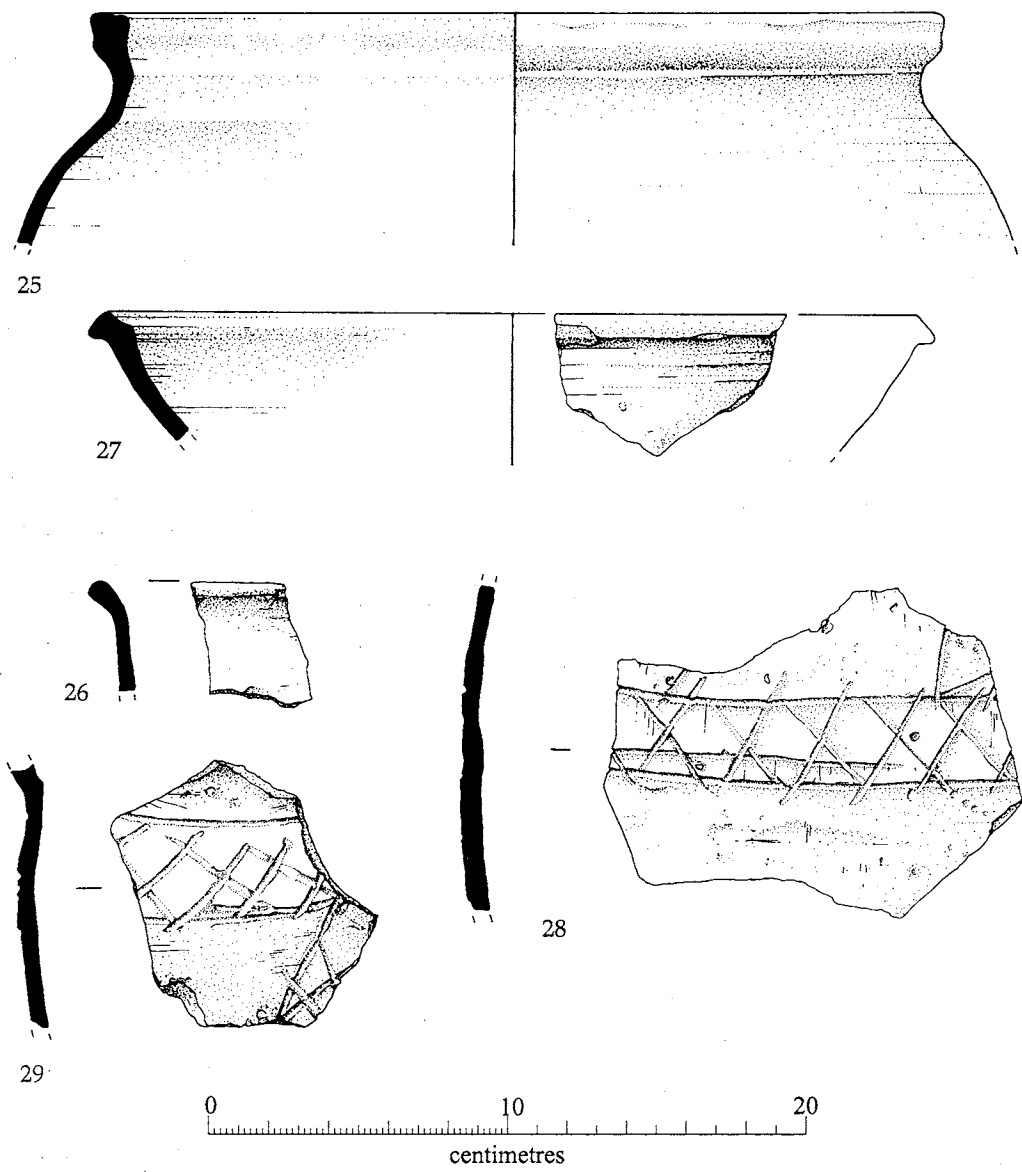


Figure 29. Thetford rim sherds (25–27) and 12th century sandy wares (28–29).

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