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1989
1992

LAG/23/194

7 DEPTFORD BROADWAY DEPTFORD, LEWISHAM.

AN OUTLINE REPORT ON
RESCUE EXCAVATIONS IN 1989
AND 1992 AT THE BROADWAY

By: BRIAN PHILP and MAURICE CHENERY

- MON: L076306 (PM PIT / QUERN)
L077163 (ROMAN - DITCH, PIT)
L077164 (SAXON - INHUMATIONS)
L077165 (MED - OVEN)
L077166 (MED - WALL)
L077167 (MED - MET SURFACE)
L077168 (MED - PITS)
L077169 (PM SETTLEMENT)

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DATE REC'D 15 FEB 1993
CASE NO. DR/283/5/TP
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SOUTH EAST LONDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

(A branch of the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit; Registered Charity no. 273581)

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NB Many planning authorities now refer to PPG 16 (Archaeology and Planning, DOE, 1990) which is a guideline document offering various options. Planning departments may consider these if they wish and also consult professional bodies, local or national, for advice (PPG 16, Annex 1, No. 8), or even English Heritage. The latter has limited statutory powers only in respect of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the S.E.L.A.U. was notified of a major development on the north side of Deptford Broadway, behind the Dover Castle public-house (NGR.TQ 372.770). Deptford Broadway seems to mark the line of the Roman arterial road, later known as Watling Street, running westwards from its crossing of Deptford Creek. Accordingly, the Unit carried out trial-excavations in July, 1989 for three weeks in the garden area of the Dover Castle, that being the only ground available. This produced significant results in an otherwise unknown area.

Demolition of old warehouses and changes in the development layout caused subsequent delays and it was not until April and May 1992 that the actual development began. The Unit was then able to excavate two lengths of pipe-trench and monitor some of the contractors foundation trenches. Further significant discoveries were then made. This outline Report, deals with the results of both the 1989 and the 1992 excavations.

THE WORK

The 1989 work covered two areas (Fig. 1) immediately behind the Dover Castle, a north area covering about 50 sq. mts. and a south area covering another 12 sq. mts. Some 17 features (F1-17) were then located of which five most significant are described individually and the rest are shown in Table 1. These included features of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date.

The pipeline trenches dug by the Unit in 1992 consisted of a West Trench 34 m. long and an East Trench 16 m. These produced another 43 features of which the five most significant are described individually and the rest again shown in Table 2. In addition to the earlier discoveries this work produced two features of Saxon date. The code for this site is DCPD-89, or DGDL-92.

The area to the north of the excavation was partially cut by foundation-trenches, but revealed few features. The area to the north-east was not seen and a quick examination of the contractors superficial clearance of an area to the east appeared to indicate no features. Although the development may have reduced much of the area of the overall site, it seems likely many of the cut features will still survive beneath the parking and landscape areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Unit gratefully acknowledges Lovell Total Management of Chiswick, London, W4 for readily allowing access to the site and for help with funding the 1992 excavation and this outline Report. Mr. Peter de Leyser, project co-ordinator for Lovell's and Mr. John Philp (cousin of one of the authors) their site agent are to be thanked for their excellent co-operation. In addition Mr. Jan Mondrzejewski of Development Control, of the London Borough of Lewisham, is to be thanked for his interest and support for the work on this site.

The Unit also thanks Mr. D. Garrod and Mr. M. Chenery for supervising the excavations, ably assisted by Pat Crozier, Sue McPherson, Barry Cork and Gerry Geradine who carried out most of the recording. The Unit also thanks several volunteers for joining in the work and also students taking part in annual training-excavation on the site in 1989. This Report and drawings are the work of the authors, carried out at the Unit's East Kent base in Dover.

DISCUSSION

The two excavations produced a total of 60 archaeological features, excluding recent brickfoundations in an area roughly 40 x 20 m., of which less than half was excavated. This is a significant concentration, but perhaps somewhat localised

for few other features were observed outside the excavation on the north and east sides. The areas flanking the excavation on the south and west sides have been substantially removed by the deep cellars of buildings fronting Deptford Broadway and Deptford High Street.

The earliest feature on the site was a small pit (F12) which produced a long fragment of a saddle-quern and a struck flint blade. The saddle-quern is unlikely to be later than the Iron Age and with the pit suggests the existence hereabouts of another important prehistoric site, perhaps an early farmstead.

Roman features were next on the site and these include sections of two ditches (F118 and F141) and four pits (F129, 130, 140 and 143). One ditch runs roughly north-south and the other east-west and probably relates to small enclosures perhaps connected. The fill contained a few fragments of Roman tile and pottery, the latter of 2nd century date. Two pits contained fragments of pottery, the majority 2nd century. These features establish the presence of an otherwise unknown Roman settlement in the vicinity, probably flanking the Roman arterial road and perhaps extending back as far as Deptford Creek.

Two graves (F126 and F137) seem to represent the succeeding Saxon period. One is undoubtedly an adult female burial, accompanied by grave-goods, that seem to be of 6th century date. The other seems to have been an adult male without grave-goods, but contrasting by being much more deeply cut and placed in a substantial nailed wooden coffin. On its merits the latter should be late-Roman, but its close proximity to the Saxon burial and its similar axis more strongly suggests that both burials formed part of a small Saxon inhumation cemetery. Saxon burials flanking Roman roads occur frequently in Kent, for example as recently excavated by the Kent Unit at Eastry (K.A.R. No. 100, p. 229). It strongly suggests the presence of a nearby settlement, perhaps again centred on the Creek.

The medieval period is next represented on the site by a mortared wall (F16), four pits (F1, 10, 117 and 133) and an oven (F13), all dating from the 14th-16th centuries. These probably relate to early structures forming along the north side

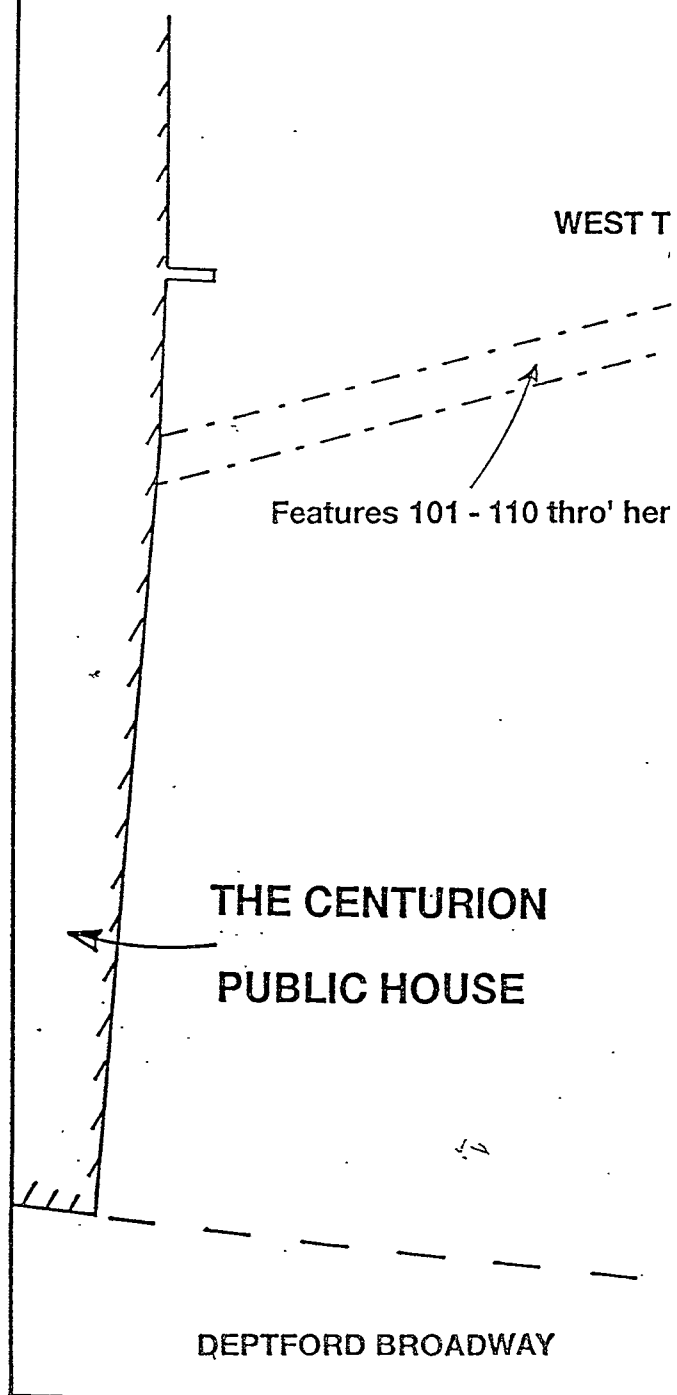
of the Roman road, but subsequently removed by later buildings.

The post-medieval period is predictably the best represented, for it was then that Deptford began to develop and expand. Some 40 pits and other features dating from the 17th-19th centuries were located and then must have related to structures along both Deptford Broadway and Deptford High Street. The "Dover Castle" public-house may have been preceeded by "The Christopher" and the metalling found probably relates to one of these.

It is now clear that part of this development covers a site of considerable archaeological importance, containing clear evidence of settlement spanning more than 2,000 years. Most historic periods are represented and the finds recovered form an important collection of material and should be retained as a group. The excavation, perhaps the most important so far carried out in Deptford, has highlighted the archaeological potential of the area near Deptford Creek. All future developments in this area should be carefully considered and adequate provision made for excavation and recording ahead of development and its subsequent reporting.

DEPTFORD GATEWAY 19

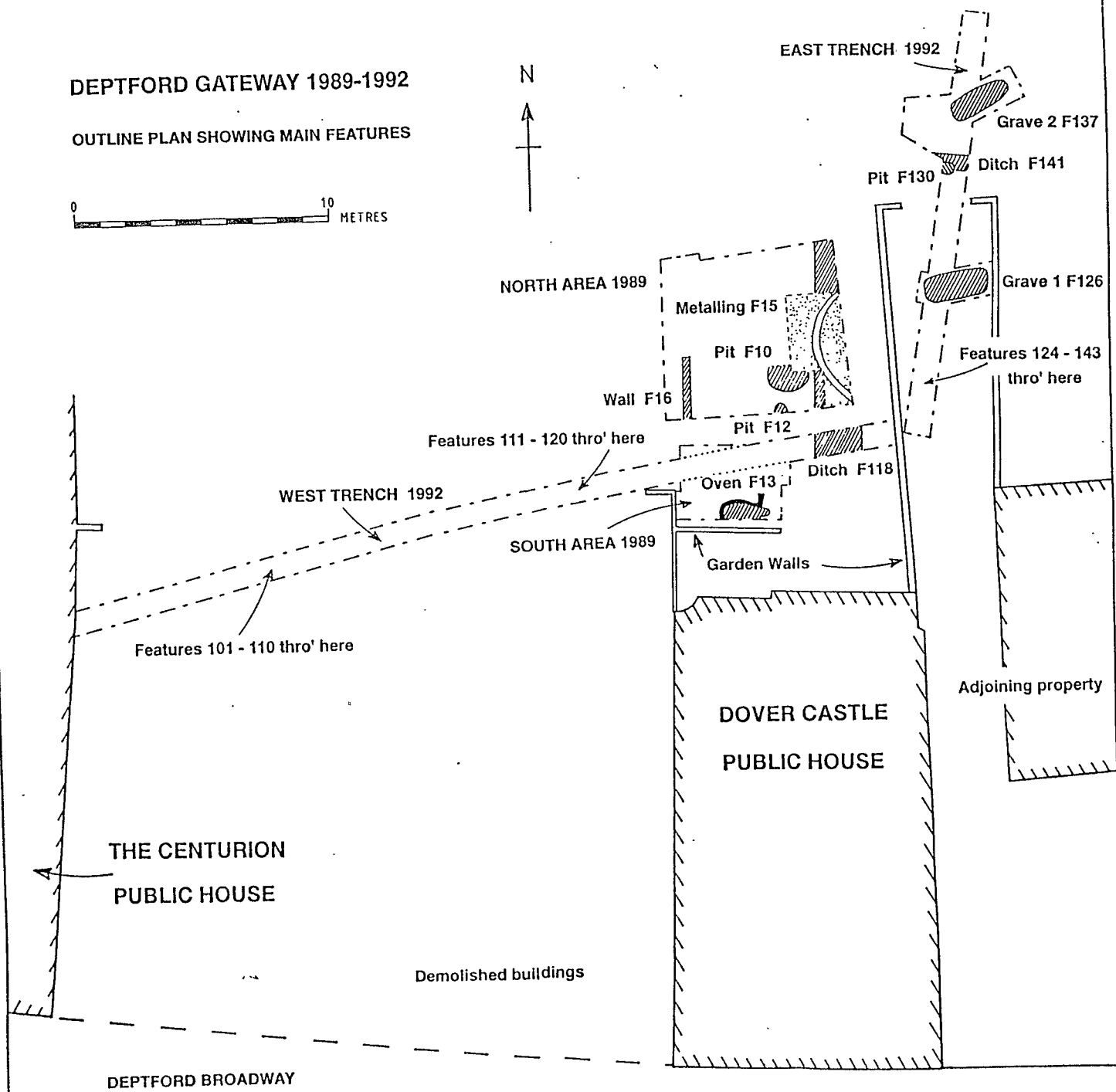
OUTLINE PLAN SHOWING MAIN F



DEPTFORD GATEWAY 1989-1992

OUTLINE PLAN SHOWING MAIN FEATURES

0 10 METRES



Prehistoric Pit (F12)

This was in the North Area of the 1989 excavation and only part of it was seen. It was 62 cms. in minimum length, 50 cms. wide and 51 cms. deep and had a flat base and sloping sides. Its axis was east-west. The fill was a dark brown very sandy loam (Layer 40) which produced a saddle quern and one flint flake. The feature seems to be of prehistoric date and may date from Iron Age times, or even earlier.

Roman Ditch (F118)

This ditch was discovered in 1989 (F3), on the east side of the site. It was traced northward for 6.60 m. More was found in the West Trench in 1992 (see Fig. 2). Its total minimum length was 8.40 m.; it was 2 m. wide and 85 cms. deep, with a rounded base and sloping sides. It had a north-south axis. Its fill showed several layers, mostly variants of sandy loam with some pebbles (Layers 18, 28, 29, 131, 132). A total of 10 potsherds, 2 Roman tiles, 1 decorated bone, 19 flint flakes and 5 fire cracked flints were recovered. The pottery is Roman, probably 2nd century A.D.

Roman Ditch (F141)

This was located in the East Trench in 1992 and was traced for only a minimum of 1.26 m. Its width was 65 cms., its depth 36 cms. and it had sloping sides and a flat base. Its axis was roughly east-west. Its fill was a dark brown sandy clay-loam (Layer 158) and produced 3 potsherds, 1 fire cracked flint. The pottery is probably 2nd century. This ditch was cut by two pits (F130 and F140, Figs. 1 and 3).

KEY TO SECTIONS

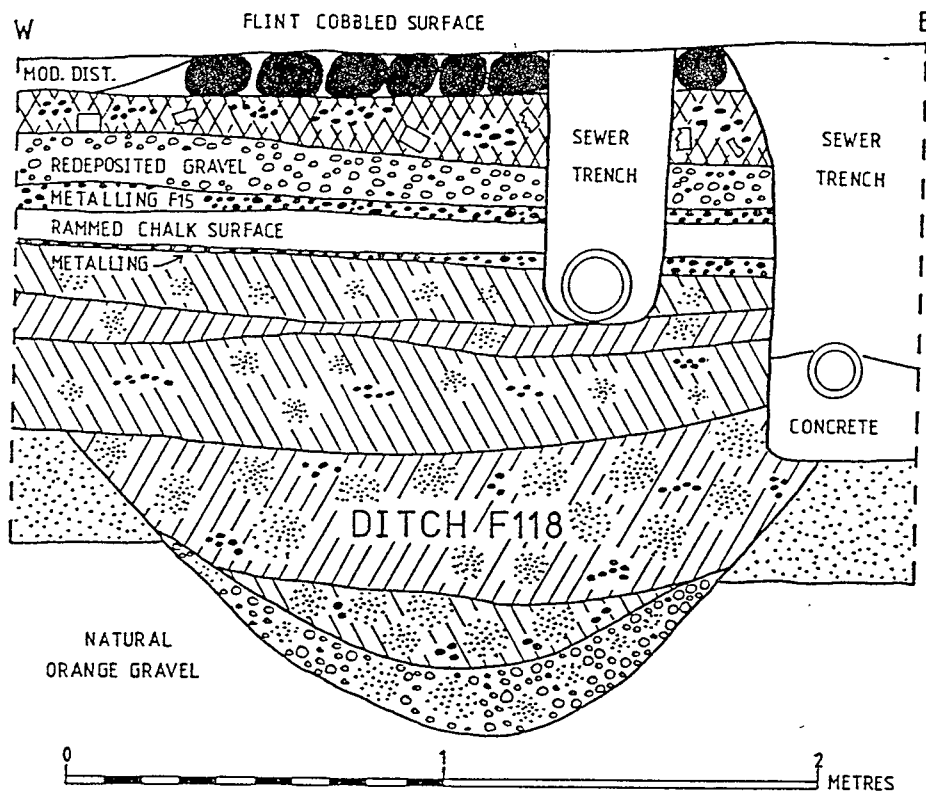
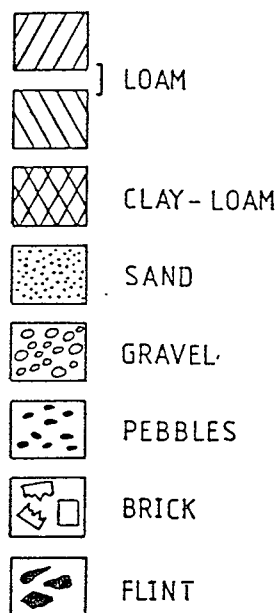


Fig. 2. Roman ditch F118 and metalling F15

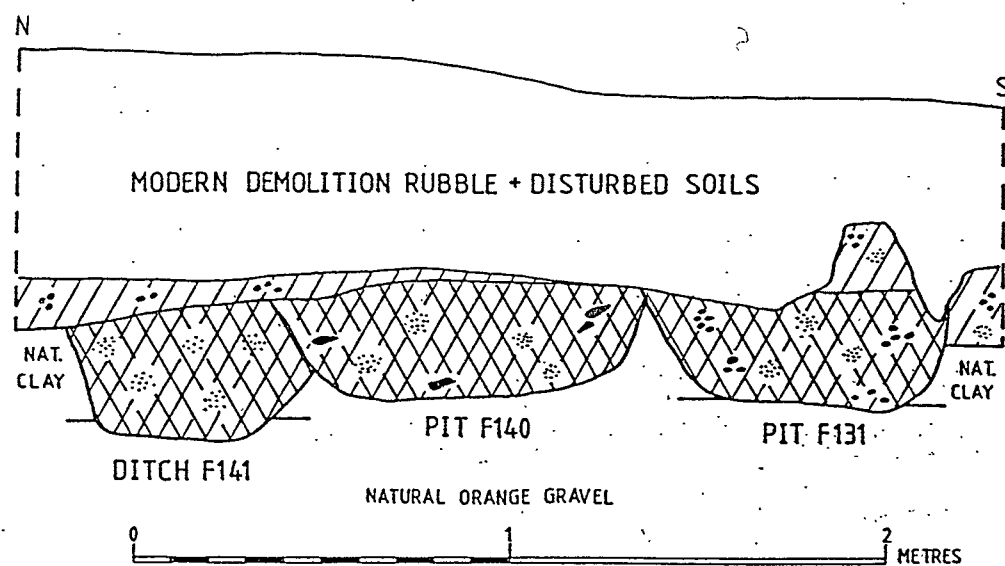


Fig. 3. Roman ditch F141

Roman Pit (F130)

This was located in the East Trench in 1992. It was oval, 69 cms. long, 54 cms. wide and 20 cms. deep. It had a flat base, sloping sides and its axis was north-south. Its fill was a mottled dark grey-black and light brown sandy clay with much carbon (Layer 151). It produced 77 potsherds, mostly of 2nd century date; 22 iron nails and 1 decorated bone. It cuts Ditch F141. (see Fig. 1).

Saxon Grave 1 (F126)

Located in the East Trench in 1992. It was 2.64 m. long, 1.25 m. wide, 1.34 m. deep with steep sides and a flat base. Its axis was north-east/south-west. The fill contained a dark brown sandy loam with frequent pebbles and some flint lumps (Layer 149). This produced 3 small undated potsherds, 2 daub lumps, 8 flint flakes and 8 fire-cracked flints. Evidence for a coffin was shown by a dark outline about 2.17 m. long and between 43 and 63 cms. wide. Two levels of coffin nails were located: the upper of 8 nails, the lower of 13 nails (see Fig. 4). Of the adult skeleton, only part of the left arm and parts of both legs survived.

Saxon Grave 2 (F137)

Located in the East Trench in 1992, it was 2.38 m. long, 1.00 m. wide and a minimum of 36 cms. deep, with sloping sides and a flat base. The axis was north-east/south-west. It was filled with a brown sandy loam with some pebbles (Layer 159). There was no evidence of a coffin. The skeletal material was poorly preserved, only parts of the left arm and parts of both legs, and two other small bones survived. Several objects were found in the grave, see Fig. 5:-

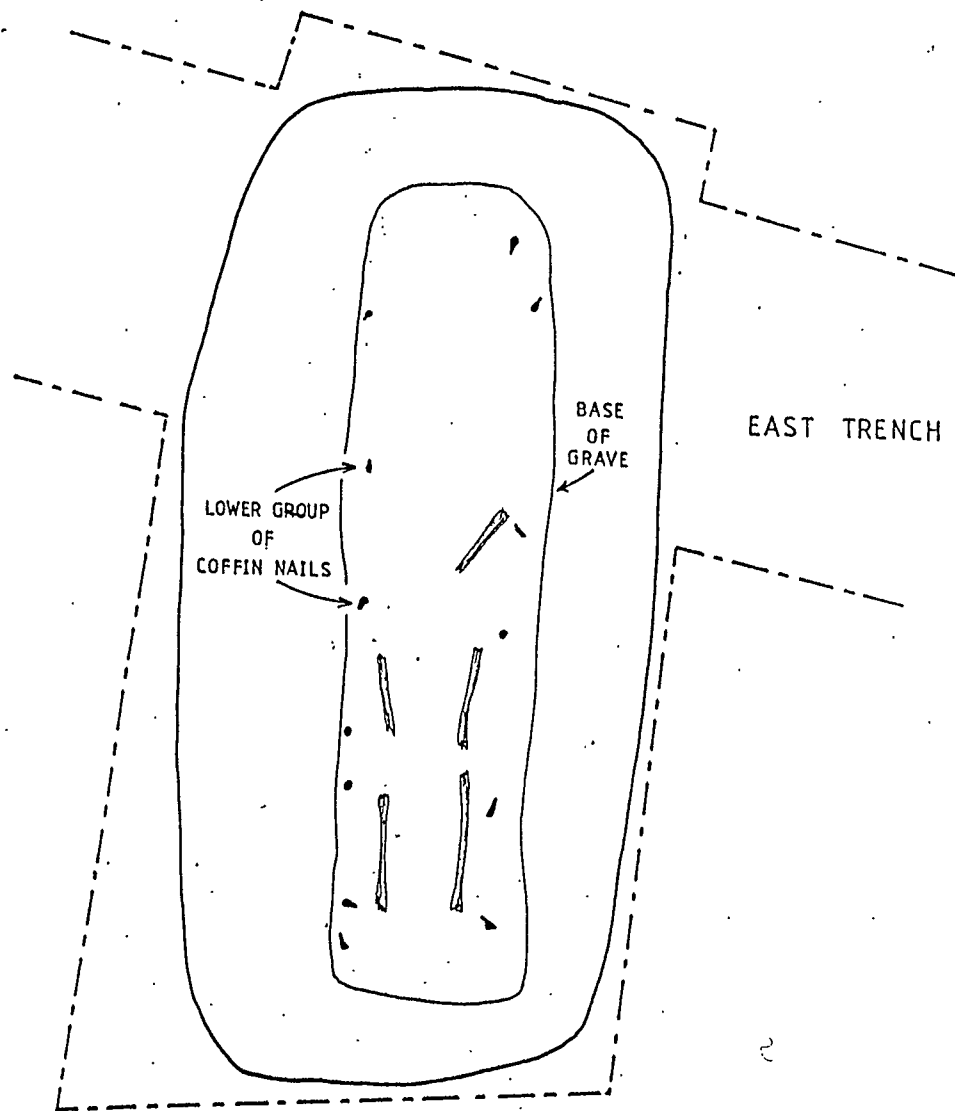


Fig. 4. Saxon grave 1 F126

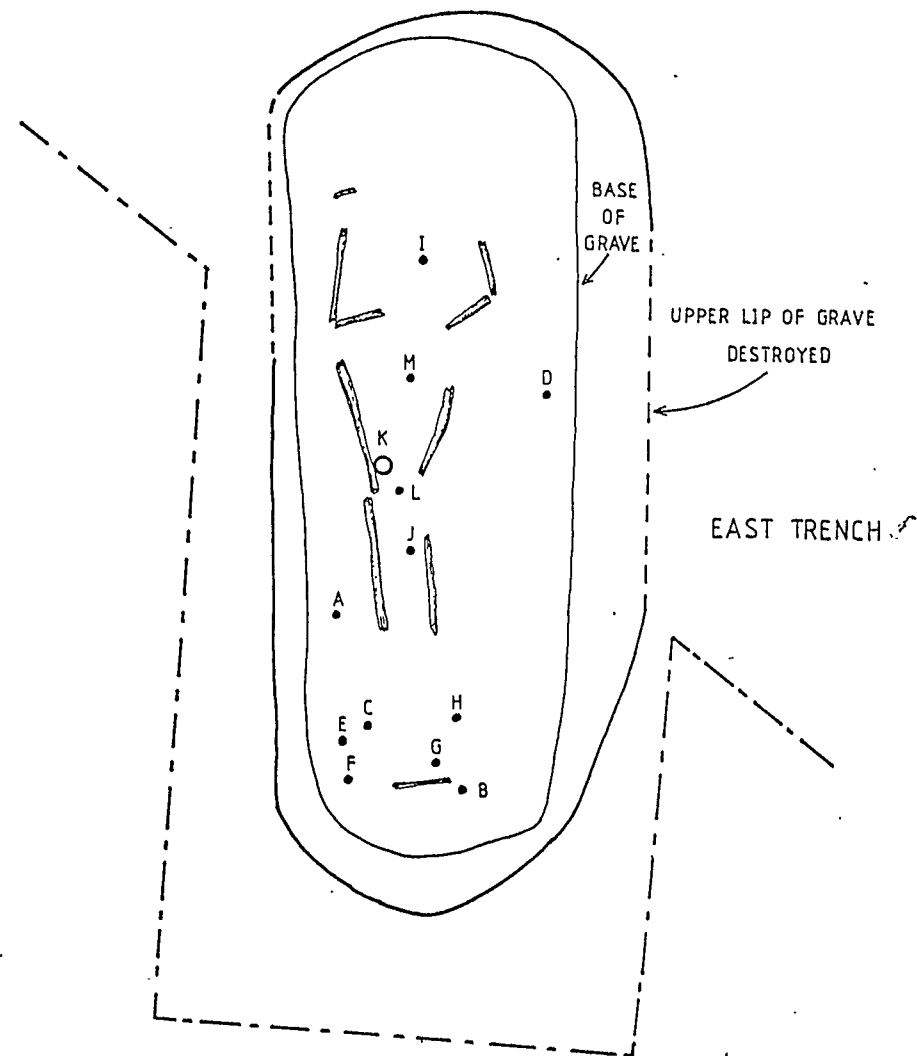


Fig. 5. Saxon grave 2 F137

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (A) Roman window glass | (H) Iron strip |
| (B) Small corroded iron object | (I) 11 glass beads, gold-wire ring |
| (C) Roman vessel glass and iron ring | and pendant |
| (D) Corroded metal | (J) Iron and bronze buckle(?) |
| (E) Perforated shale disc | (K) Twisted bronze bracelet |
| (F) Iron strip | (L) Corroded iron |
| (G) Iron bracket with rivets | (M) Corroded iron |

In spite of the very poor state of the bones, it seems likely that this grave represents an adult female burial. The beads, pendant and ring seem to have been placed on the chest and the arm bracelet near the knees. Several of the other items, mostly beyond the feet, may have been accidental inclusions in the grave fill.

Medieval Oven (F13)

This was located at the extreme south limit of the 1989 excavation, partly under an upstanding garden wall. The oven is roughly horseshoe shaped with a northward projecting wall near the east end (see Fig. 6). The overall length was 2.10 m. with a minimum width of 1.30 m. The oven was built on an east-west axis with walls of broken peg-tiles irregularly laid, and bonded in a yellow sandy burnt clay. These survived to a height of 10 cms. (approximately 2-5 courses of peg-tile). The base of the oven consisted of dozens of peg-tile fragments set on edge and bonded with a yellow burnt clay. The tiles were badly fractured by heat and blackened with carbon. A possible demolition deposit sealing the oven consisted of a mottled yellow and red burnt sandy clay with many peg-tile fragments (layer 33) and produced a single potsherd of 13th century date. It seems likely that the oven was used for baking bread.

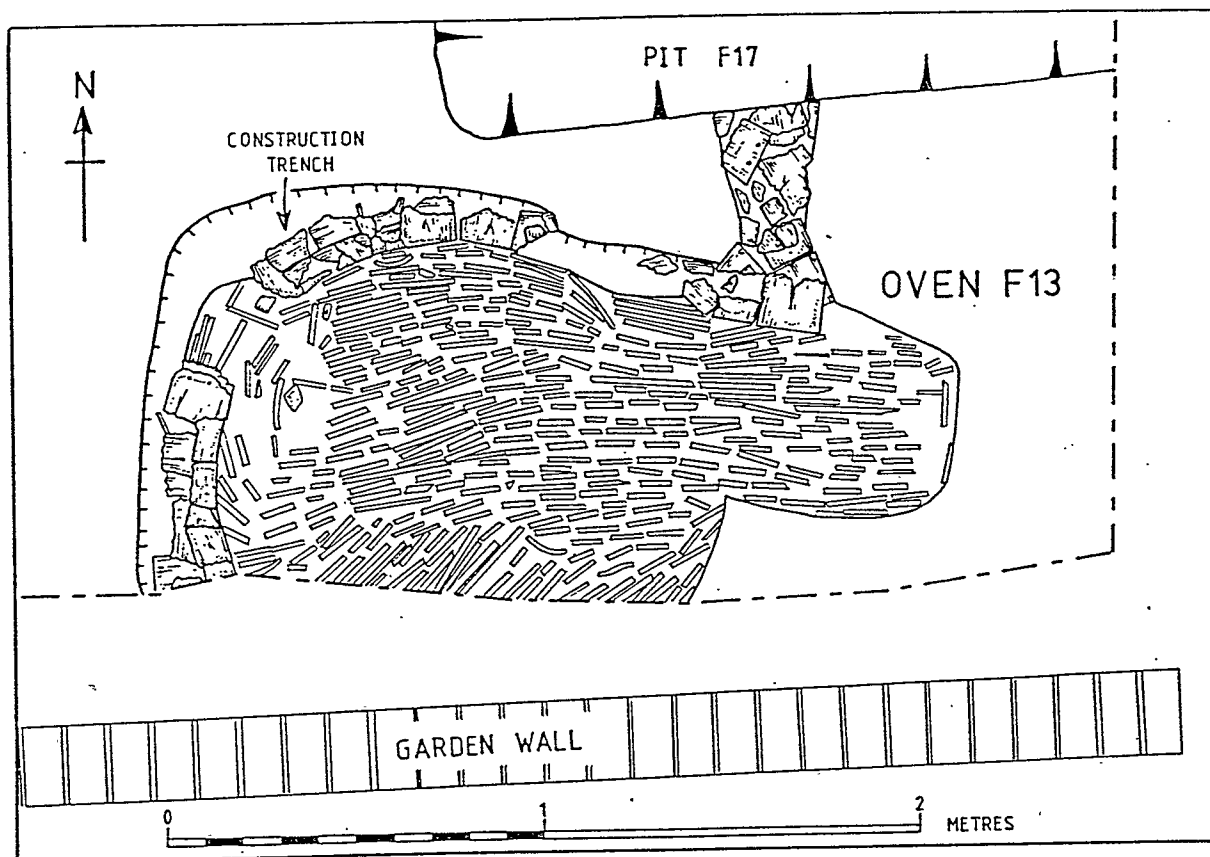


Fig. 6. Medieval oven

Medieval Wall (F16)

Located in the North Area in the 1989 excavations. It was a minimum of 2.40 m. long, 58 cms. wide and 63 cms. high on a north-south axis. It consisted of six irregular courses of roughly shaped sandstone blocks and flint and chalk lumps, set in off-white mortar. It may represent part of the outbuildings or a boundary wall to the rear of the 'St. Christopher' coaching inn. Probably 14th or 15th century (See Fig. 1).

18th Century Metalling (F15)

Located in the North Area in 1989 and again in the 'East Trench' in 1992. It consisted of a rectangular area of small and medium flint pebbles and small flint lumps laid directly onto a rammed chalk base. The metalling was between 3 to 9 cms. thick (see Fig. 2). It was traced for a minimum of 8.40 m. north-south and was a minimum of 4.75 m. wide. It may represent a prepared surface for the yard at the rear of the St. Christopher coaching inn. It was cut by a shallow curved gully which contained 18th century material.

Medieval Pit (F10)

Located in the North Area in 1989. It was a minimum of 1.62 m. long and 1.18 m. wide. It was 82 cms. deep and had a flat base and vertical sides. It had two fills: the upper (Layer 44) was a dark brown clay-loam with chalk and carbon specks. The lower (Layer 45) was a brown sandy loam with chalk specks and flint and chalk lumps. 43 potsherds, including a finely decorated 14th century jug, 1 peg-tile and many animal bones were recovered.

TABLE 1

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (m.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit Nos.
1	Pit	Rect.	1.67 (min.)	1.64 (min.)	0.19	N/S	Dark brown and green sandy clay-loam and green clay patches	Pottery, bone, iron, bronze.	c.1450	11
2	Pit	Rect.	3.52	1.50	1.22	N/S	Upper = dark grey gritty loams and ash and carbon. Middle = mixed sandy loams and gravel. Lower = sandy loams and pebbles	Pottery, clay pipes, cent. peg-tiles, bone, shell, glass, iron.	17/18	6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 36.
3			Same as F118							
4	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.85 (min.)	0.55 (min.)	0.65	N/S	Light brown sandy clay	Peg-tile, bone, iron, slate	16/17 cent.	7
5	Pit	Rect.	0.82 (min.)	0.35 (min.)	1.00	E/W	Light brown sandy clays	None	16/17 cent.	-
6	Pit	Oval	1.16	0.71 (min.)	0.80	E/W	Grey-brown sandy clay-loam	Pottery, peg-tile, iron.	16 cent.	26

[illegible]

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (m.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit Nos.
17	Pit	Sub. Rect.	2.30	1.50	1.30 (min.)	E/W	Dark Grey gritty loam	Stoneware jars, clay pipes, glass	19/20 cent.	12, 23.

TABLE 2

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (m.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit No.	Location
101	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.84 (min.)	0.54 (min.)	0.24	N/S	Dark grey-brown sandy loam	Pottery, clay pipes	17/18 cent.	3	West Trench
102	Gully	Linear	0.52 (min.)	0.24	0.30	NW/ SE	Dark grey-brown clay-loam	Pottery, clay pipes, bronze	18 cent.	4	"
103	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.67 (min.)	0.58 (min.)	0.79	E/W	Brown sandy clay-loam	Pottery, peg-tile.	17/18 cent.	7	"
104	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.82 (min.)	0.44 (min.)	0.37	E/W	Dark brown sandy loam	Pottery, peg-tile, bone.	16 cent.	8	"
105	Ditch	Linear	2.94 (min.)	0.75 (min.)	0.38	E/W	Yellow-brown sandy loam	Pottery, peg-tile.	16 cent.	9	"
106	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.72 (min.)	0.48 (min.)	0.36	N/S	Grey-brown clay-loam	None	17/18 cent.	-	"
107	Pit	Sub. Rect.	2.17	0.84 (min.)	1.30	E/W	Dark grey silty clay-loam	Pottery, clay pipes	18 cent.	15	"
108	Pit	Oval	0.70	0.40 (min.)	0.62	E/W	Dark grey soft clay-loam	Pottery, peg-tile, clay pipes	18 cent.	17	"
109	Pit	Sub. Rect.	0.68	0.37 (min.)	0.96	E/W	Light creamy brown loose gritty loam	Pottery, glass.	1750- 1800	26	"

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (m.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit No.	Location
110	Pit	Pres. Circ.	2.40 (min.)	1.00 (min.)	1.42 (min.)	E/W	Upper = orange- brown clay + grey-black gritty clay loams. Lower = grey, silty clay loams	Pottery, peg-tile, clay pipes,	1650- 1700	21, 22, 23, 24, 25	West Trench "
111	Gully	Linear	1.00 (min.)	0.55	0.27	N/S	Grey-black clay-loam	None	16/17 cent.	-	"
112	Brick Drain	Linear	0.28 (min.)	0.40	0.22	NE/ SW	Grey-black mud silts	None	17/18 cent.	-	"
113	Pit	Sub. Rect.	1.68	1.04 (min.)	1.30 (min.)	E/W	Dark brown and brown sandy loams	Pottery, stoneware, bone, clay- pipes, glass, fuel block?	1750- 1800	27, 28.	"
114	Pit	Oval	0.90 (min.)	0.36 (min.)	0.35	E/W	Dark grey gritty clay-loam	Pottery, bronze.	c.1800	30	"
115	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.61	0.32 (min.)	0.61	N/S	Dark grey gritty clay loam	None	18 cent.	-	"
116	Pit	Pres. Circ.	1.38	0.46 (min.)	0.70	E/W	Mottled grey- brown-black gritty clay- loam	Pottery, peg-tile, iron, daub.	c.1600	11	"
117	Pit	Oval	1.05	0.80 (min.)	0.50	E/W	Orange-brown clay and brown loam.	Pottery, peg-tile.	15 cent.	33	"

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (m.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit No.	Location
118	See Main Text										
119	Post Hole	Oval	0.42 (min.)	0.32	0.20	N/S	Yellow/Buf Clay	None	18 cent.	-	West Trench
120	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.85	0.50 (min.)	0.50	E/W	Dark brown sandy loam with much carbon	Peg-tile	17/18 cent.	35	"
121	Ditch	Linear	7.50 (min.)	1.55 (min.)	0.85	E/W	Brown sandy loam	Peg-tile	17/18 cent.	38	North Area 1992
122	Ditch	Linear	1.20 (min.)	1.43 (min.)	0.48 (min.)	NW/ SE	Orange-brown sandy loam and pebbles	None	Undated-		"
123	Pit	Pres. Circ.	0.70		0.30	E/W	Brown sandy loam	Sugar mould stoneware	c.1750	40	"
124	Pit	Oval	1.10 (min.)	0.54 (min.)	0.55	N/S	Dark grey and cream gritty loam	Pottery	c.1700	43	East Trench
125	Pit	Rect.	0.89	0.47 (min.)	0.43	N/S	Dark brown sandy loam	Peg-tiles, 18 carved stone		44	"
126	See Main Text										
127	Pit	Sub. Rect.	0.70	0.52	0.21	N/S	Dark brown sandy loam	Peg-tiles.	16/17 cent.	47	"
128	Pit	Irreg.	0.70	0.58 (min.)	0.32	E/W	Dark grey sticky silty loam	Pottery, peg-tile.	16 cent.	46	"

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (m.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit No.	Location
129	Pit	Circ.	0.53	-	0.18	-	Brown sandy loam	Pottery, fire cracked flints	Roman	45	East Trench
130		See Main Text									
131	Pit	Oval	0.80	0.30 (min.)	0.31	N/S	Dark brown sandy clay- loam	Peg-tile	Post- med.	53	"
132		Deleted									
133	Pit	Oval	1.70	0.80 (min.)	1.05	E/W	Sandy loams over sand and gravel	Pottery, peg-tile, bone.	14/15 cent.	52	North Area 1992
134	Ditch	Linear	1.20 (min.)	2.00	1.08	N/S	Light brown sandy loam	None	Undated-		"
135	Ditch	Linear	1.20 (min.)	0.84 (min.)	0.35	N/S	Light brown sandy loam	None	Undated-		"
136	Gully	Linear	1.26 (min.)	0.36- 0.60	0.29	E/W	Dark brown clay- loam	Peg-tile, bronze mount.	Post- med.	55	East Trench
137		See Main Text									
138	Pit	Rect.	1.22 (min.)	0.34 (min.)	0.72	N/S	Dark brown sandy loam, many large flint lumps	None	18/19 cent.	-	"

F. No.	Title	Shape	Length (m.)	Width (M.)	Depth (m.)	Axis	Fill	Finds	Date	Deposit No.	Location
139	Pit	Oval	0.64 (min.)	0.30 (min.)	0.30	N/S	Dark brown clay-loam	Peg-tiles, iron nail.	17/18 cent.	56	East Trench
140	Pit	Oval	1.00	0.34 (min.)	0.31	N/S	Dark brown sandy loam	Iron Nail	Roman	57	"
141	See Main Text										
142	Ditch	Linear	4.20 (min.)	3.00	1.10	NW/ SE	Brown sandy clay-loams with much gravel	None	Undated-		North Area
143	Ditch	Linear	1.16 (min.)	1.04	0.57	E/W	Dark brown clay-loam	None	Roman	-	East Trench
144	Gully	Linear	2.30 (min.)	0.44 (min.)	0.18	E/W	Light brown sandy loam	None	16/17 cent.	-	West Trench
145	Brick Tank	Rect.	2.34	1.20	0.70 (min.)	N/S	Grey gritty clay loams	Pottery	c.1750 -1800	60	North Area