

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH EXCAVATIONS

at

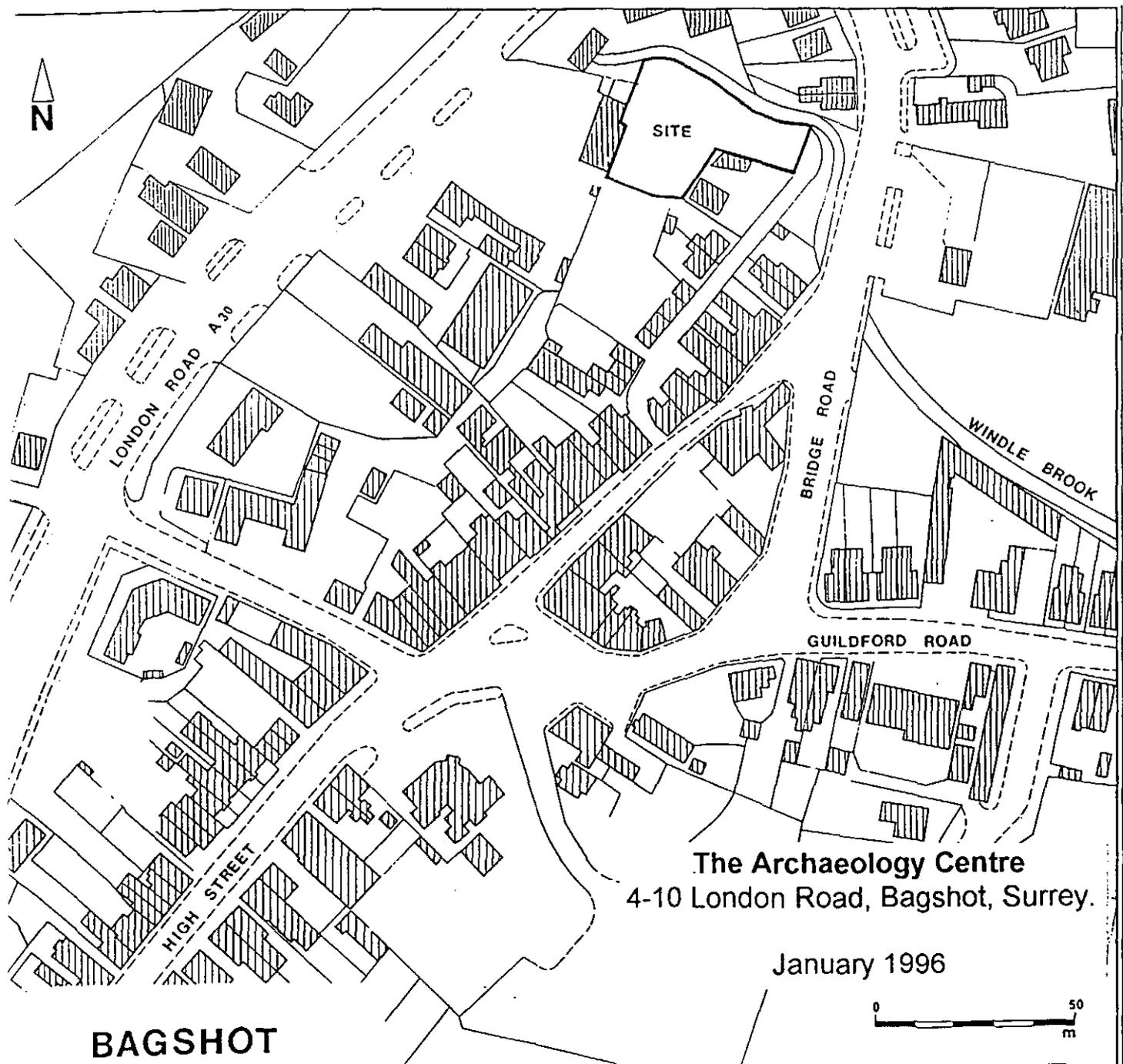
42. LONDON ROAD, BAGSHOT, SURREY

1992 to 1995

491160, 163430

**THE PREHISTORIC AND ROMANO-BRITISH PERIODS**

Geoffrey H. Cole, MIFA



## INTRODUCTION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The general pattern of the rivers and of the landscape which we see in southern England today largely resulted from the melting ice cap at the end of the Anglian Glaciation period 400,000 years ago. This ice cap had covered the whole of the areas of northern and midland Britain and East Anglia extending as far south as north London. Further Ice Ages affected Europe, the most recent of which ended about 10,000 years ago having had a duration of 70,000 years. The end of this Ice Age and the consequential rising of temperatures resulted in a change from a semi-arctic landscape in the south to one of forest growth.

In the area of Bagshot, the valley of the Windle Brook had probably been formed at the end of the Anglian Glaciation of 400,000 years ago when the water course may have been considerably larger than it is today. However, by about 8500 years ago, it had reduced its flow to that of a trickling stream which flowed through a full mixed oak forest dominated by elm, oak and lime as was common throughout northern Europe.

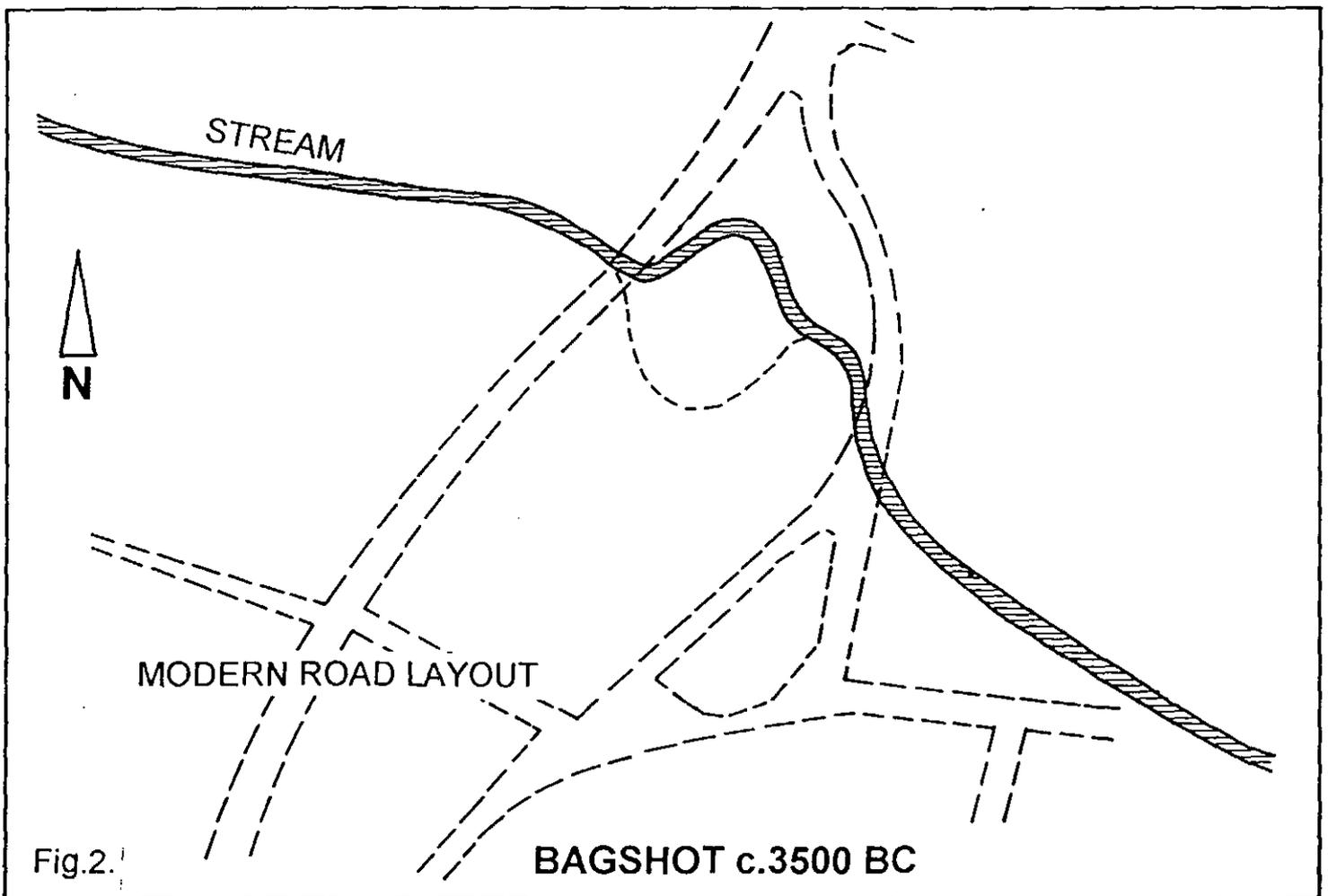
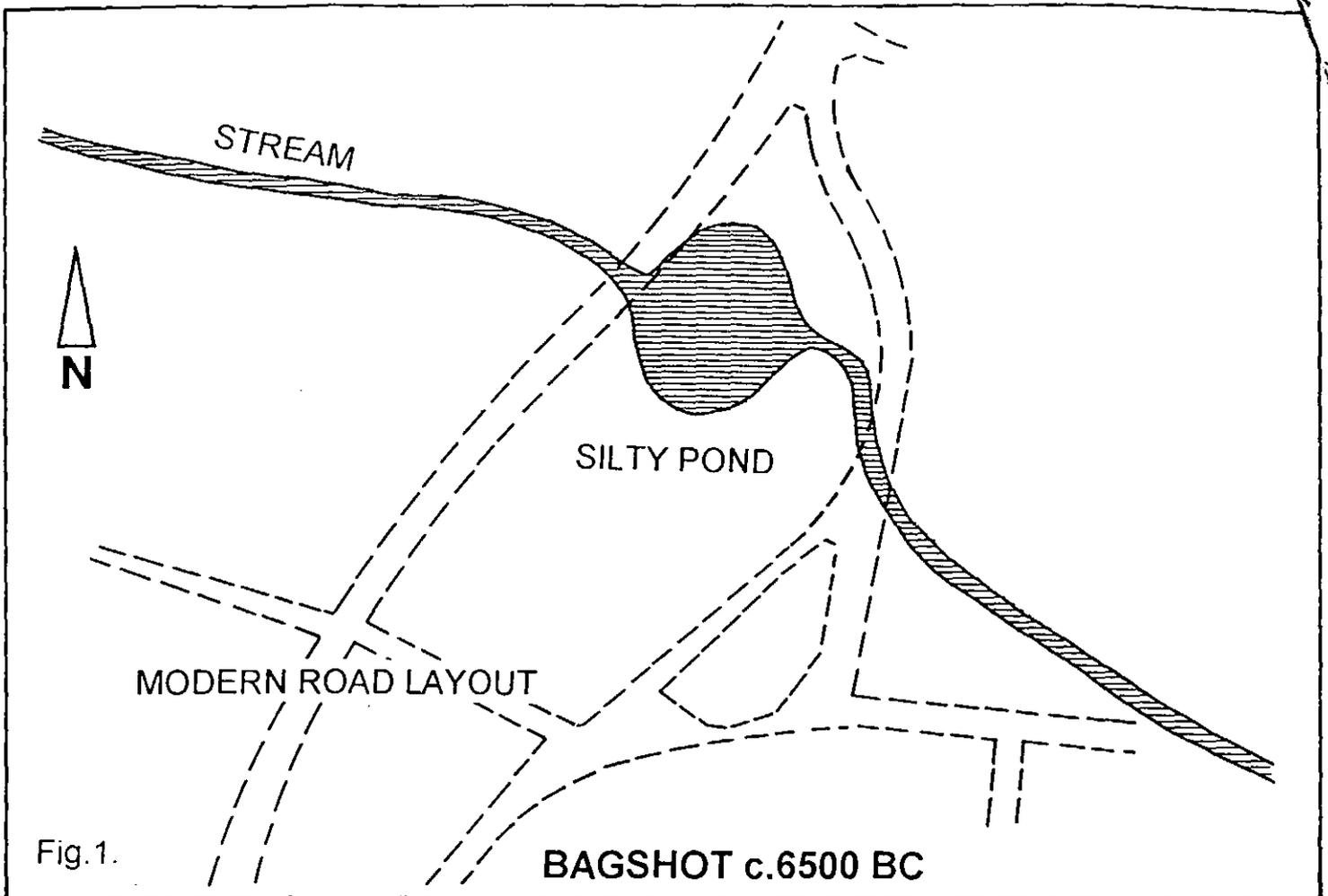
The saturation of the valley floor, due to the one time presence of a larger water course, combined with its topography, resulted in the area of Bagshot being rather waterlogged, as it still is today, and the formation of one or more silty ponds along the course of the trickling stream. (Fig.1) Thus, at about 6500 BC we can view the area of Bagshot as being a well forested, shallow valley, bisected by a stream flowing in and out of a silty pond and probably supporting a woodland animal population including red and roe deer, wild oxen and wild boar.

Archaeological excavations of rescue and research types have been undertaken in Bagshot village at times during the last 12 years, the most recent being a research project at 42 London Road by the most kind permission of the owner Mr George Burrows. This site lies alongside the Windle Brook and thus, by excavation, we have been able to view a part of Bagshot prior to the arrival of any settlers. We have been able to sample part of the silty pond, referred to earlier, examining its grey, clayey fill which had a general distribution of root growth together with the remains of ancient trees. In one case, one of the tree trunks had a diameter in excess of 3.000 metres although only fragile remains of the sapwood and bark had survived and by virtue of the excavations over the last 12 years we are able to roughly estimate the extent of this silty pond.

Over a period of several thousand years, the pond silted up to the point where the stream circuited it and deposited layers of gravel and riverine silty sands over the grey clayey fill to finally seal those layers. Thus the landscape slightly changed to one where the course of the stream was through a large loop cutting through a sandy gravel geology overlain with rich riverine silt. (Fig.2)

## THE NEOLITHIC PERIOD

Our first tangible evidence of human activity alongside the Windle Brook in Bagshot village comes in the Neolithic period of between 3500 to 1500 BC. Sometime during that period, Neolithic man visited the valley and fashioned tools from the flint pebbles found in the surface gravels. This has been evidenced by the numbers of waste flint flakes, all stylistically of the Neolithic tradition, recovered, during excavations, from the surface gravels and riverine silty sands. Isolated, roughly circular hollows were also recorded along the gravel banks of the stream, each one filled with burnt and fire-cracked flint and in one instance including a burnt flint struck flake. It therefore seems likely that during this period, men came to hunt small game by the stream and probably cooked and ate their kills on the spot. Whilst there is no evidence for any Neolithic settlement in this area, it should not be entirely ruled out for such locations and environments were sometimes favoured for the period.



We have no evidence for any activity in Bagshot during the Bronze Age and our next encounter with occupation comes in the Later Iron Age, probably during the last two centuries of the first millennium BC, ie: 200 BC and later. Excavations at 42 London Road produced a considerable quantity of iron working iron slag, oven and furnace linings and lesser quantities of bronze working slag, together with small assemblages of Later Iron Age pottery, typically of vessel body sherds and coarse fabric, bead rim, storage jars. No evidence was recorded for any structures or rubbish pits of this period and thus any working or living sites are seen as probably being further away from the Windle Brook.

## ROMANO-BRITISH OCCUPATION

Before viewing the evidence for Romano-British occupation in Bagshot, it is necessary to place the village in its regional setting. Excavations at Windlesham Arboretum from 1985 to 1991 revealed a reasonably extensive Later Iron Age iron working industry and overlying Roman occupation site dating from at least the second half of the 1st century AD to beyond the second half of the 4th century AD. This site, located in the valley of the Windle Brook, is also positioned on a straight line projection of a branch Roman road off Stane Street. (Fig.3). The extension of this road, in a north-west direction has long been held to be a possibility and has now almost certainly been proven by virtue of having been uncovered and sectioned at the Arboretum site. Further projection, on a straight line, takes the road to the east of Bagshot village to join or cross the Devils Highway (the Roman road from London to Silchester and beyond) just to the east of that roads change of alignment. This was probably a wise move on behalf of the constructors of the road in avoiding the wet grounds of the Bagshot area.

### PHASE.1.

During the 1st century AD, in either a Celtic or Celtic-Roman influenced environment, a large, circular ditched enclosure was constructed in the loop of the Windle Brook. (Fig.5). The ditches were up to 2.500 metres wide, 40 centimetres deep, flat bottomed and were arranged in discontinuous lengths to create an interrupted ditch system. Entrances into the enclosure, between the terminal ends of the ditches, were paved with flint cobbles. The area available for excavation enabled examination of about one quarter of the enclosure and if the general arrangement of the interrupted ditch system were to be projected for the remaining three quarters, which presumably lie beneath the building at 42 London Road, the front car park and adjacent petrol filling station, it would suggest an external diameter of about 50 metres with up to eight entrances. At the time of construction the material excavated from the ditches had been placed in the enclosures interior to marginally increase the level of the land. No evidence was recorded of any internal or external bank and thus, by its general design it cannot have served a defensive or stock enclosure purpose. Several structural features were recorded in the interior including a substantial wall trench for a timber building.

Little else can be added, at this preliminary stage of analysis, regarding the interior of the enclosure in Phase.1. as it was partially damaged by the construction of an inner, interrupted ditch system probably in the late 1st century AD.

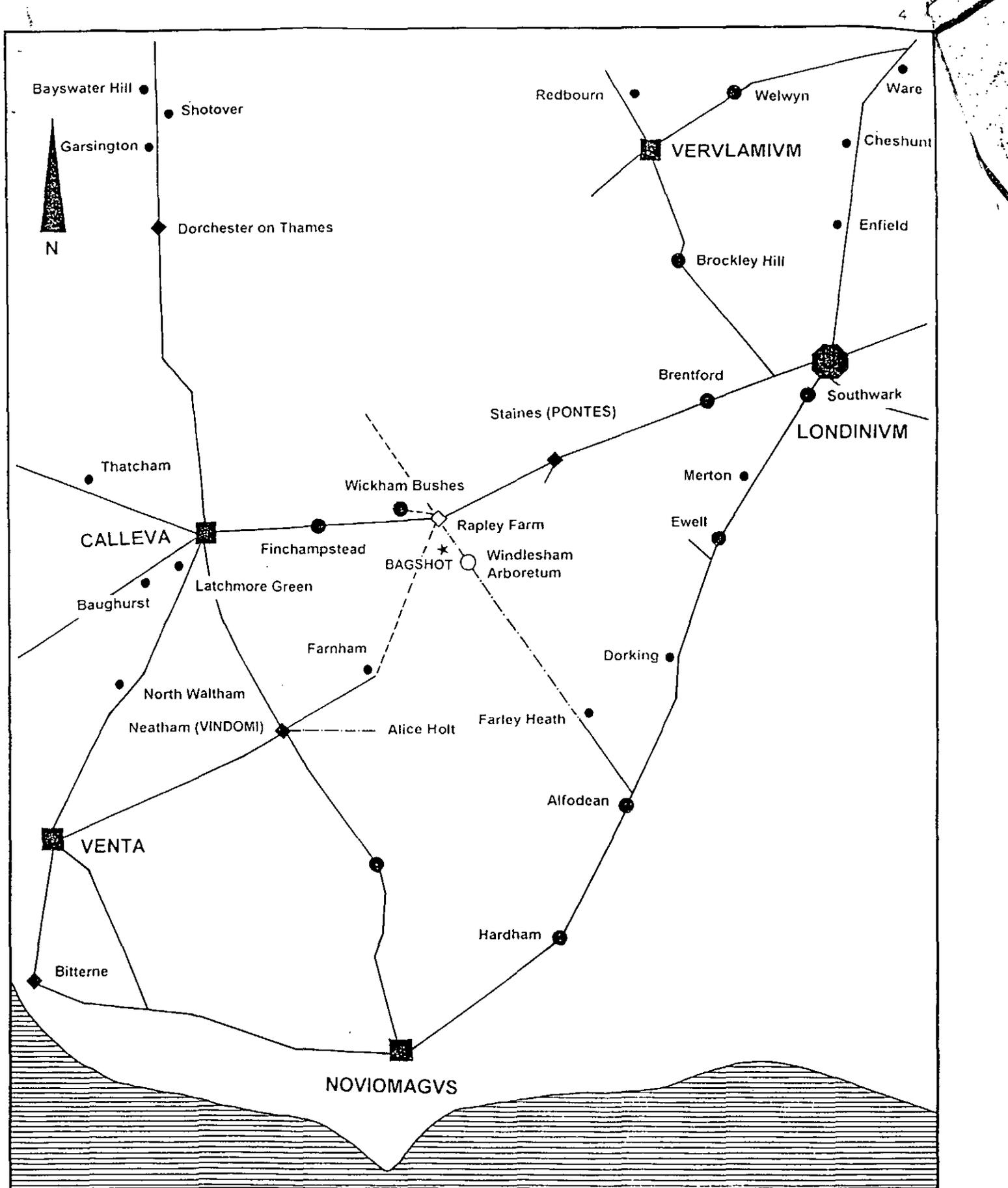


Fig.3.



## PHASE.2.

-Whilst the construction of an inner interrupted ditch system may be seen as a method of restoring a monument where the ditches had become silted up, it can also be viewed as a way of enhancing its appearance, once again with the excavated soil being placed inside the enclosure to add more height. In Phase.2. the ditches were narrower at about 1.600 metres and deeper, up to 80 centimetres with the entrance ways between the ditch terminals respecting the entrances in the Phase.1. enclosure which thus must have been visible at the time. In Phase.2. the edges of the internal low mound, adjacent to the ditch system, had been capped with large flint pebbles perhaps in an attempt to prevent the rapid weathering of the mound and its collapse into the ditch. It is not clear if this capping extended to cover the whole of the mound.

The enclosed area contained a fairly large post hole structure building (Fig.6) where posts had been packed around with pieces of iron slag - this being the locally available *rock* material from earlier events and most suitable for the purpose. From the area of this building which was available for sampling, it appeared to be of an 'aisled' construction having at least one internal row of posts but was generally of a simple construction with a trampled sand floor and probably a thatched roof. It was rectangular in shape and from the limited cultural material recovered from the trampled sand floor did not seem to have had an intensive domestic use. Pottery vessels included wine flagons and storage jars but no cooking pots or bowls. Equally there were no typically domestic small finds as would have been expected and no survival, at all, of any organic material such as bone and shell.

One pit was excavated which was external to this building and which contained only one object. This was about one quarter of an early Farnham ware bowl, c. 60 - 120 AD, which had been placed centrally on the floor of the pit, lying on its external face. Scratched markings on the interior of the bowl are yet to be fully analysed but preliminary examination may suggest some attempt at lettering.

A rectangular pit was recorded and excavated which had been inserted into the terminal end of one of the Phase.2. ditches. It was 1.300 metres square and 55 centimetres deep and had originally been lined with timber planks of which traces remained. The feature was filled with dirty grey sand mixed with small quantities of organic material, which may have been derived from the partial collapse of the timber lining. It was capped with a large, flat sandstone boulder placed in the centre of the feature. Traces of a square vertical post were also recorded towards one corner of the pit which, together with the flat stone, maybe seen as 'markers'. No cultural material was recovered from the filling of the pit but two fossils, one piece of non-local sandstone and a few burnt flints were recorded during wet sieving.

Despite the flint pebble capping to the edge of the mound, the ditches did silt up over a period of time and in areas the flint pebbles collapsed onto the upper surface of these siltings. A few pieces of iron slag were excavated from these ditches together with a coarse grey early Farnham ware cup of c. 60 -120 AD. Elsewhere a single vessel cremation grave had been cut into the ditch siltings which comprised an early Farnham ware jar containing cremated bone, ash and a burnt, fragmentary bronze object. This grave had been seriously damaged by later occupations and part of its contents were distributed over a reasonably large area.

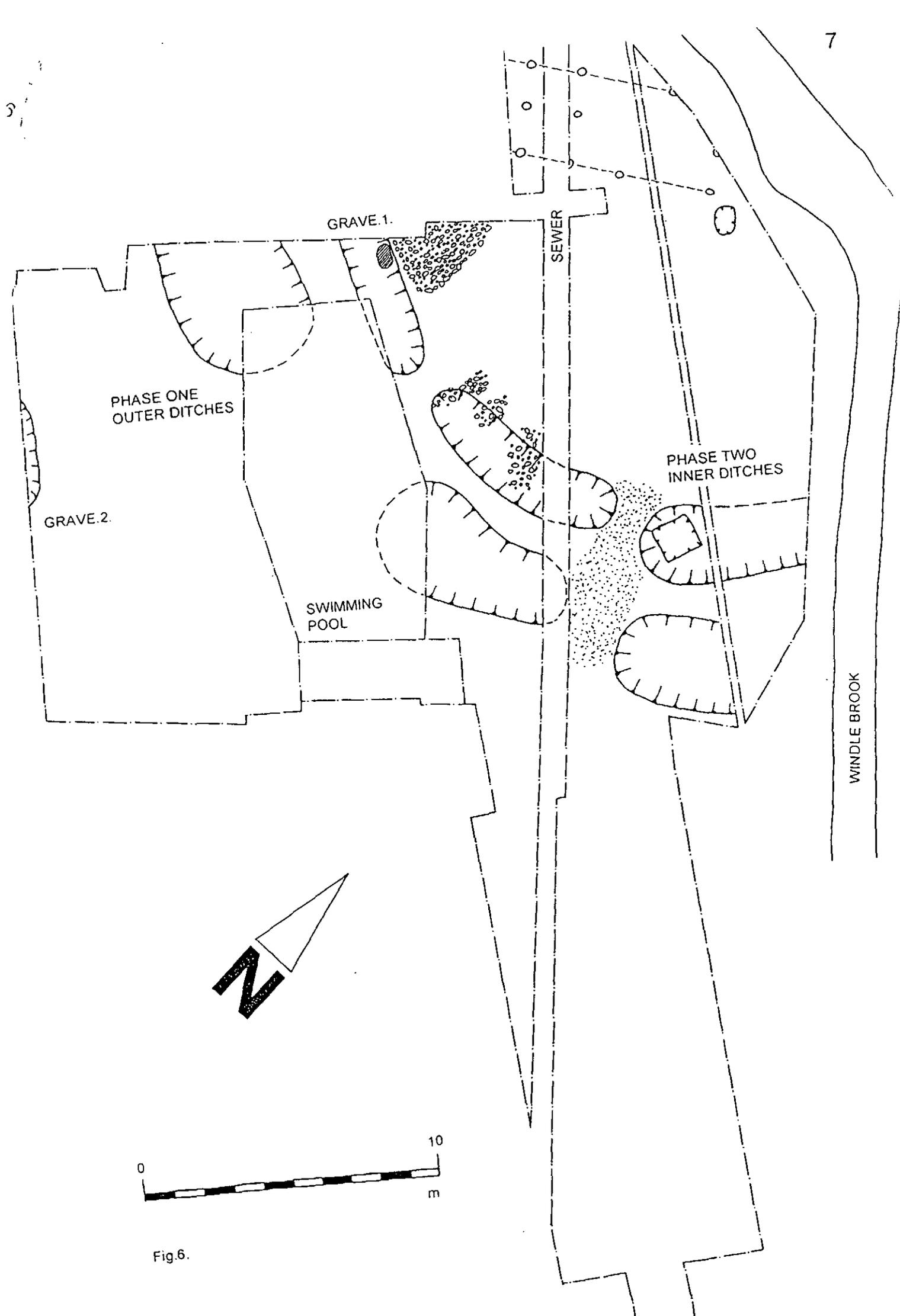


Fig.6.

Another cremation grave, of similar date, was located to the west of the ditched enclosure and from the extent available for excavation a complete flagon neck in a soft orange fabric was excavated together with a quantity of cremated bone.

The latest pottery excavated from the trampled sand floor levels of the Phase.2. post hole structure indicates that the building was no longer used after c. 120 to 150 AD and with that date applying generally within the Phase.2. enclosure it identifies the period at which the circular double ditched enclosure was last used in that configuration.

### **PHASE.3.**

Sometime after c.150 AD, a well constructed and compacted flint cobbled path or platform was laid on an approximate north to south alignment which partially overlay both the Phase 1 and 2 ditches and the Phase.2 timber lined pit. The cobbling had a minimum width of 6.500 metres and the lack of cart ruts or shattered flints combined with the good quality of the small laid flint pebbles suggests it to have had more of a pedestrian use than vehicular. It did not extend to fully cross the projected diameter of the whole circular enclosure but stopped at the approximate mid point. Its northern edge was marked by a linear scatter of large flint pebbles which had originally formed a seating for a timber walled structure. Post holes within these large pebble scatters together with a return corner identified a not insubstantial building to which the cobbled pathway led or formed a forecourt to. This building had been extended at a later date, possibly with the addition of a porch at which time the well laid cobbles had been disturbed and appear not to have been repaired or, if repaired had been latterly worn away by foot traffic. Pottery from the trampled dark grey sandy floor suggests a latest use date of the middle of the 3rd century AD and the presence of several sandstone cubes and fragments of a material similar to opus signinum may suggest a more substantial floor had originally existed.

Parts of other buildings were found on the site which are not included within this introduction. The latest occupation dates, in Phase.2. which are able to be ascribed are around c. 300 AD.

After c. 300 AD the site was subjected to a series of serious floodings which resulted in the deposition of layers of riverine gravels and thick layers of clayey silt. These deposits covered, buried and sealed all earlier occupation layers and features except for the upper levels of the mound in the double ditched enclosure. At this time this must still have been a prominent feature in the landscape being within a loop of the Windle Brook.

### **PHASE.4.**

During the late 4th or early 5th century AD c. 380 to 450 AD part of the site had been used as a burying ground. Three graves were located and excavated, each of which had been cut through the riverine gravels and silts into the underlying greensand with flints which overlay the grey clay siltings of the marshy pond. Each grave was aligned east to west, this being a typical arrangement for graves of the Christian period although such alignments are also known from earlier Roman periods.

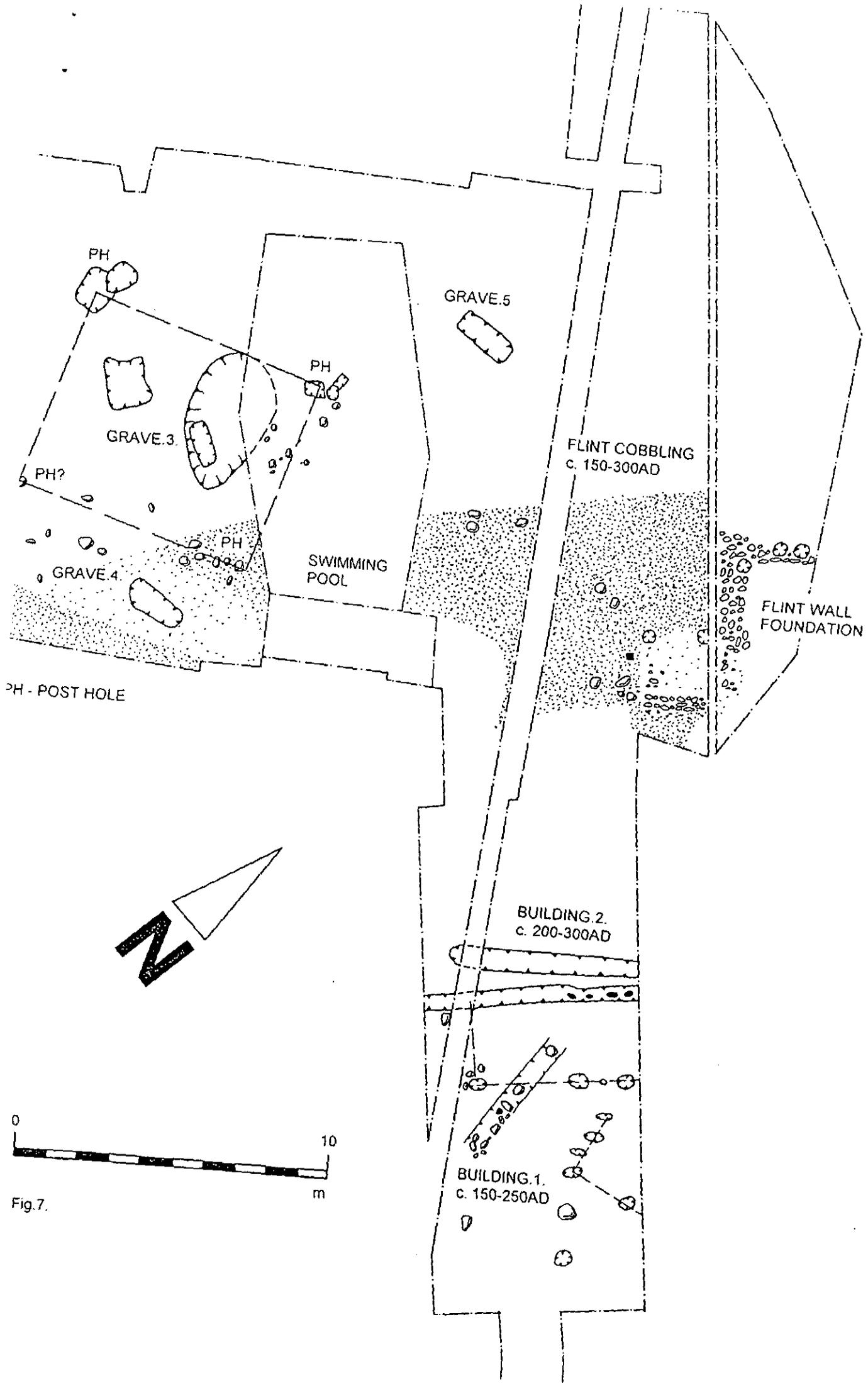


Fig.7.

Grave.3 was located along one edge of a large pit and whilst no faunal remains had survived the acidity of the silty sands and ground water, traces of timber existed around the edges of the grave pit sufficient to suggest a timber plank lining. Within the filling of the grave pit, grey / brown sandy and organic lenses suggested the original presence of faunal remains. The upper backfilling of the grave, with riverine gravels and silts produced several accompanying grave goods including a hone (sharpening) stone, perforated pebbles, fossils, late Farnham ware pottery, five small rounded flint pebbles each with markings suggesting faces which could have been a gaming set and part of a finger ring, fashioned from Jet and bearing a monogrammatic CHI-RHO on its bezel (Plate.1). The style of the CHI-RHO is not known in Britain before c. 380 AD and the likelihood is that it dates to c. 380 to 450 AD. A possible mortuary building surrounded Grave.3 evidenced by a four post structure, the post packings being scattered and in part located on the surface of the earlier flint cobbled pathway.

Respecting the alignment of the timber structure over Grave.3, the flint cobbles had been partially removed to enable the construction of Grave.4. This was of a similar detail to Grave.3, with evidence of timber linings, no faunal remains and a few grave goods including a hone stone and fossils.

Grave.5 was located within the area of the earlier double ditched enclosure. It was a rectangular pit 1.900 metres long, 63 centimetres wide and 54 centimetres deep and was filled with grey sand containing areas of organic staining. A timber stain again survived along part of one side and one end. No faunal remains or grave goods were recorded from this feature.

With the exception of these three graves, the probable four post structure over Grave.3 and the general stratigraphic relationships of these features, there was no further evidence for activities during this period and none other on the site until the 13th century AD and that period and the later events on the site are beyond the intended scope of this introductory note.

## DISCUSSION

Having briefly reviewed the evidence from the research excavations, it is now relevant to discuss the various phases of activity and the possible identification for the circular enclosure.

It is the Romano-British period which is seen as most significant.

The Phase.1 construction of a circular ditched enclosure, within a natural loop on the Windle Brook, is the starting point. In both the Bronze Age and Iron Age, wet places such as streams, lakes and bogs were held in high ritual or religious regard they being considered as possibly the dwelling places of Gods or Dieties and it is not uncommon for Celtic Temples to be located close to such natural features.

The evidence for the construction of the Phase.1 enclosure dates to the 1st century AD, a period in which, in 43 AD witnessed the full Roman invasion of Britain. We have no evidence in this area of Surrey of any violent effect that this may have had on the Later Iron Age community and it is well conceivable that it had little or no effect until at least a generation later.

It is thus likely that the enclosure was constructed by and for the purpose of the native community, latterly to be used by Romanized Britons.

The Phase.2 construction of an inner ditch system may be seen as an improvement to the enclosure and its multiple entrances can only suggest the requirement for it to be entered and exited in a prescribed and possibly ceremonial manner. Given these multiple entrances and the distinct lack of any internal bank it cannot be regarded as a defended enclosure. Internally there were timber structures, in each phase, neither of which can be ascribed to a particular use and two pits - one timber lined and the other containing about one quarter of a pot. All of the pottery recovered seems to have been for uses largely restricted to drinking and possibly eating - broadly described as *feasting* as distinct from food preparation and lastly there was a cremation grave inserted into one of the ditches.

All of these aspects of the enclosure's archaeology tend to suggest non-domestic, non-agricultural and non-industrial uses and point towards its development for religious or ritual purposes. The internal structural features and the enclosures arrangement do not provide identification as a Temple but more as a sacred enclosure or possibly a shrine. Its plan, as a *wheel* configuration may be relevant to the local *wheel god* traditions of Late Celtic Surrey and may be an area for future consideration.

In Phase.3 the site seems to have continued in a non-domestic manner possibly with a more Roman style building constructed to one side of the earlier timber building, maybe signifying respect for the earlier traditions of the site but not wishing to wholly endorse the same by rebuilding directly within the enclosure. This could be seen as a method of retaining ancestral respect and at the same time Romanizing the religious beliefs. Several periods of severe floodings seem to have ended the ritualistic use of the site about c. 300 AD.

It does however appear that the earlier significance of the site was known in the late 4th or early 5th centuries when, in Phase.4 it was used as a burying ground. Grave.3 appears to have been the most important not only because one of its accompanying grave goods was the Christian ring but also its surrounding four post structure. All of the graves in Phase.4 appear to have been constructed prior to the arrival or dominance of the early pagan Anglo-Saxon settlers in Surrey and thus probably in a community which held Christian beliefs. The finger ring with the CHI-RHO monogram is a fragile object, being manufactured from jet, and would not have been a personal ornament to have been worn in everyday life by an ordinary member of the community. It is more likely to have either been worn on special occasions or by a special individual and by virtue of the burial within a four- post structure, I think the latter is more appropriate. If this preliminary analysis is correct, the questions must be asked was there a Christian community or were there merely private households for whom Christianity was the accepted religion.

Finally it may be relevant to look at the route of Bridge Road in Bagshot which has a rather sharp bend. As this road probably dates from the Medieval period in the village, was the bend created to avoid the *monument* in the loop of the Windle Brook? Today the loop is not apparent, the Brook having been straightened sometime after 1934 AD to run approximately through the centre of the original enclosure.

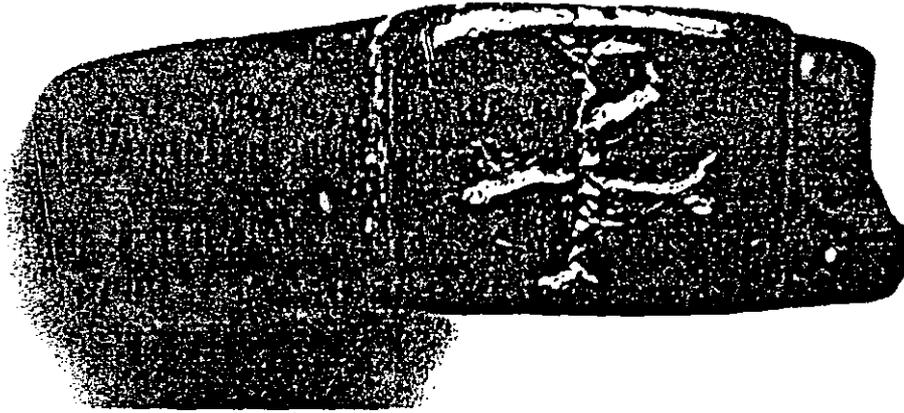


Photo: J.H.Jillings

Plate.1

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank everyone who helped to make these research excavations possible and successful, especially Mr George Burrows for his generosity in making the site available through several years and for his interest and continuing encouragement, Mr Michael Wright of Building Services (Bagshot) Ltd for his help and loan of equipment, Mrs Daphne Tarbox, Mr Miles Thompson, Mr Paul Stokes and the members of the Young Archaeologists Club, Mr Ken Gumby, members of British Archaeology Students and the Surrey Heath Archaeological and Heritage Trust, Mr and Mrs Paul Hopkins and Professor Martin Millett for his help and support throughout.

Windlesham Parish Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, the Royal Archaeological Institute and the Roman Research Trust generously provided financial assistance towards enabling the research to be undertaken.

My greatest thanks must go to drs Marijne Magnee-Nentjes and Mr Douglas Speirs the site supervisors, the senior excavation team including Patrick Andersson, Richard Holden, Robert Runacres, Barry Taylor, Muria Roberts, Sarah Dixon and all of the many students who, hopefully, benefited from the training and experience provided.

The preliminary interpretations provided in the Introductory Note are mine alone and may be revised following the completion of the research project and final analysis of results.

Geoffrey H. Cole, MIFA  
The Archaeology Centre, Bagshot, Surrey, England.

January 1996

Antiquity Number	4344	County	SURREY	On District Map		Card No	1
OS 1:10000 Map Ref.	SU 96 SW	District	SURREY HEATH	Scheduled	N	Cont'd	Y
		Parish	WINDLESHAM	NAR Number			

Latest Correct Description

ROMANO-BRITISH OCCUPATION

Latest Correct NGR

SU 9118063440

Ref Pt CENTRED

## Information

Excavation to the rear of 42 London Road, Bagshot, by the Surrey Heath Archaeological and Heritage Trust, directed by G.Cole, produced evidence for Romano-British occupation: a stone wall, pits, querns, samian, coarse grey wares c.100 - 300 AD.

Further work at this site in July 1993, carried out by SHAHT, recorded a Romano-British timber building with drip gully, part of a Romano-British kiln with adjacent cobbled yard. Also recorded are a probable 5th century cemetery, producing two grave? pits with upper filling deposits, including a "chi rho" monogrammatic jet finger ring.

Work at 42 London Road, Bagshot in 1993 produced features recorded as part of a late Roman/early Christian cemetery: two "graves", both on east-west alignments, were excavated; no human remains were recovered. Each feature contained deposits in their upper fills suggestive of deliberate deposition: fossils and a hone from one; hammer stones, hone, sherds of Coarse Grey Farnham Ware pottery and half of a finger ring from the other. The finger ring, of jet, had a Chi-Rho cross on the bezel which would date it to the late 4th to 5th century. A through-draught kiln with cobbled "yard" of Roman date was found to overlie a post constructed building with external drip gully of c.AD 150-250 and adjacent stone foundationed

## References

1. G.Cole SHAHT: SMR Report Form 1-5-92.

2. G.Cole SHAHT: SMR Report Form 23-9-93.

3. G.Cole Nov/Dec 1993 "Excavations at 42 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey" Sy.Arch.Soc.Bulletin 279.

Antiquity No.	4344	Name	ROMANO-BRITISH OCCUPATION	Card No	2
---------------	------	------	---------------------------	---------	---

## Information

structure.

Continuing excavation by SHAHT in Aug. & Sept. 1994 produced no features similar to the "graves" found in the previous season. Additional areas of flint cobbling of the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD were recorded, partly overlaying a 1.5m wide shallow ditch found to contain a scattered cremation burial associated with mid-1st century pottery.

Interim report of the 1992-4 seasons of excavations by SHAHT summarises the Romano-British evidence as: ditch surrounding a raised area capped with flint pebbles (the ditch containing the truncated remains of one cremation burial and possibly a second c.50-100AD; timber and stone founded structures and extensive flint cobbled areas c.150-300AD; late Roman/early Medieval "graves" including a Chi-Rho monogrammed jet finger ring c.380-450AD. No mention is made of the kiln identified during the 1993 season.

The interim report includes a photograph of the monogrammed jet ring. In discussion with Catherine Johns of the BM it was established that the symbol on the bezel was a monogrammed cross, a transitional form between the chi-rho and a simple cross, which came into use by the end of the 4th century AD.

Further work in 1995 produced evidence for two timber structures and several pits within the raised area, subsequently replaced by a flint foundationed timber building with a flint cobbled forecourt.

## References

4. G.Cole Feb.95 "42 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey" Sy.Arch.Soc.Bulletin 290.

5. G.Cole "Archaeological Research Excavations at No. 42 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey" interim report undated c.1995

6. File Note by D.G.Bird 6-4-95.

7. G.Cole May 1996 "Excavations at 42 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey" Sy.Arch.Soc. Bulletin 301.

D.Salch SMRO 23-5-96

HER: 4344

EVENT: 1836

SOURCE: 4447

~~5/13/24~~

Archaeological Research Excavations

at

**No. 42 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey**

**INTERIM REPORT**

Geoffrey H. Cole, MIFA

Designed and Produced by  
SURREY HEATH ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HERITAGE TRUST  
A Registered Charity No. 299409

## INTRODUCTION

The research of the site at No. 42 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey (SU 91206345), in the Parish of Windlesham, was undertaken as part of an ongoing investigation into the origins of Bagshot, in a location beyond the designated area of high archaeological potential and prior to inevitable redevelopments to the North Western extents of the known Medieval village. Similar programmes of research are intended to continue for the foreseeable future in accessible and available areas.

During the 16th to early 19th century, Bagshot Town was an important coaching stop on the road from London to the west. Facilities in the town serving the coaching industry included Inns, Taverns, Breweries and Leather Workers, the latter being important for the repair of horse harness etc.

Related to the leather working there was a requirement for a Tan Yard where skins and hides, direct from butchers, could be cleaned and immersed in various solutions prior to being suitable for leather working. Tan Yards, notorious for their smells, were usually located on the edge of the urban settlement in an area served by essential supplies of water.

References in "A History of Bagshot and Windlesham" (Eedle 1977) and on a sketch map attached to the deeds of a Bagshot property made prior to 1834AD identified Bagshot's Tan Yard as being located by the Windle Brook, near Bagshot Bridge, during the late 16th century and suggested such industry may have existed in the Medieval period. Part of that location was occupied by the rear garden of No. 42 London Road, Bagshot and the research design for the fieldwork project was structured to investigate part of the available area to sample, by excavation, the Tan Yard, if located and establish its nature and chronology.

The excavations were organised by the Surrey Heath Archaeological and Heritage Trust under the direction of the author and commenced in April 1992 as an evaluation project. Further work was undertaken during the summers of 1993 and 1994 where, in addition to research, the excavations provided essential Technical Training, as formal programmes, for several hundred students. The excavations during 1994 were severely damaged, in the latter stages, by total site flooding, following a burst water main in the London Road (A.30). Attempts were made to salvage evidence and areas to enable the final graphic recording of features. Due to these devastations the research is intended to continue in 1995 to completion.

The purpose of this Interim Report is to provide a summary of the results of fieldwork during the last three years. It is not the intention to provide detailed interpretations or to discuss problems at this stage. These will be available in the Final Report which hopefully will be produced within a reasonable period following the completion of the 1995 excavation.

The research archives are currently housed at The Archaeology Centre, 4-10 London Road, Bagshot, Surrey and further information may be available by contacting the author at that address.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank all those who helped to make these research excavations possible and successful and especially Mr George Burrows for his generosity in making the site available, his interest and continuing encouragement. My thanks are also extended to Mr Michael Wright of Building Services (Bagshot) Ltd for his help and loan of equipment, Mrs Daphne Tarbox, Mr Miles Thompson and members of the Young Archaeologists Club, members of British Archaeology Students and the Surrey Heath Archaeological and Heritage Trust, the Governor, Officers and *workforces* from the Young Offenders Institute and Remand Centre, Feltham, Mr and Mrs Paul Hopkins and Dr Martin Millett for his help and support throughout.

Mr Ken Gumby of Toad Plant Hire, Bagshot generously provided heavy equipment when required and came to the rescue in times of the devastating flood of 1994.

Windlesham Parish Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council and the Royal Archaeological Institute provided financial assistance towards enabling the research to be undertaken.

My greatest thanks must go to drs Marijne Magnee-Nentjes who acted as Site Supervisor, the senior excavation team including Messrs. P. Andersson, R. Holden, R. Runacres, D. Speirs and B. Taylor and all of the many students who hopefully benefited from the experience and training provided.

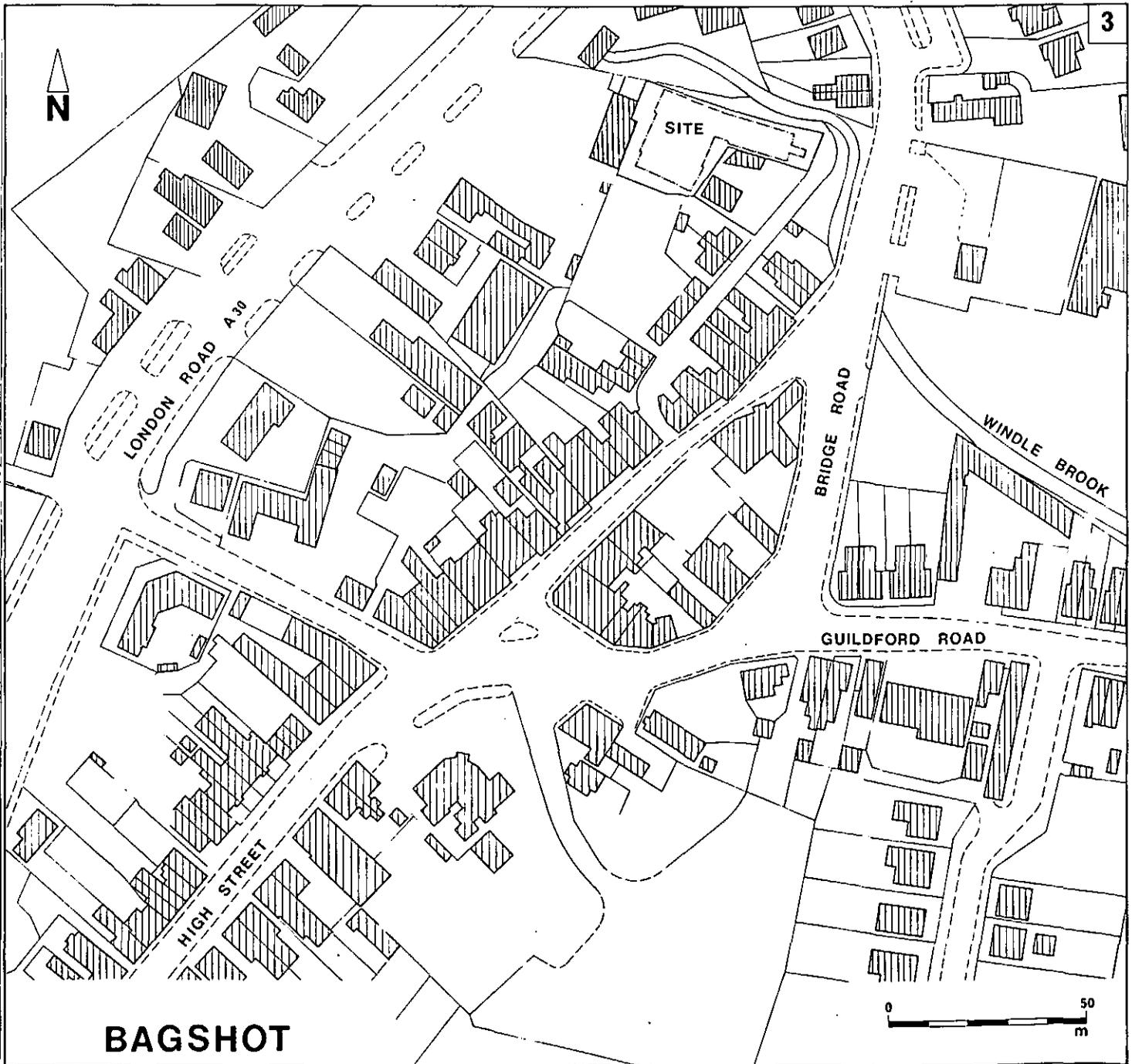
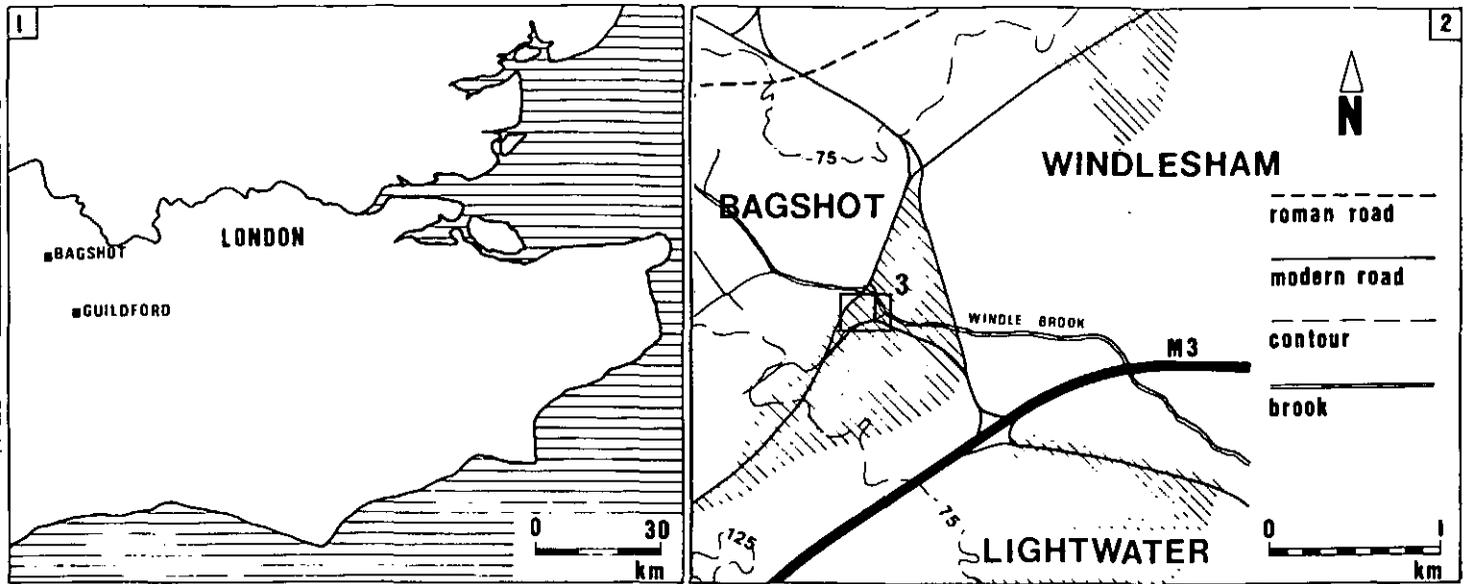


Fig.1

## SUMMARY

The research excavations sampled an area of 430 square metres and revealed a sequence of occupation, the main features of which were:

### NEOLITHIC

A sparse lithic assemblage evenly distributed throughout the area and probably dating to c. 3500 - 2000BC.

### LATER IRON AGE

Iron working residues and pottery c. 100BC - 40AD.

### ROMANO-BRITISH

- i. Flint pebble capped, possibly circular, earthwork with surrounding ditch. Truncated cremation burial from ditch and part of another possible cremation grave c. 50 - 100AD.
- ii. Timber and stone foundation structures and extensive flint cobbled areas c. 150 - 300AD
- iii. Late Roman / Early Medieval graves without preserved faunal remains but with *grave goods* including a CHI-RHO monogrammed jet finger ring c. 380-450AD.

### LATE MEDIEVAL

Pottery scatters c. 1200 - 1350AD.

### POST-MEDIEVAL

- i. Timber construction buildings c. 1550 - 1680AD.
- ii. Tan Yard tanning pit with complete timber paddle c. 1680 - 1720AD.
- iii. Tanning pit, tanning vat base and occupation debris c. 1750 - 1850AD.

### MODERN

- i. Formal garden layout around central swimming pool c. 1925 - 1935AD.
- ii. Evidence of war time occupation c. 1936 - 1945AD.

The following report will provide an outline to the principal sequences of occupation, the earlier phases having been seriously damaged by later events.

## NEOLITHIC

During the 1992 and 1993 fieldwork seasons, but not in 1994 for reasons of the severe site floodings, a sparse lithic assemblage was recovered with few diagnostic specimens.

Several small, roughly circular, burnt hollows, identified as hearths, were recorded cutting into the surface gravels alongside the Windle Brook. Each hearth contained quantities of burnt and fire cracked flint and from one hearth a burnt flint blade was recovered. By the typology of the few diagnostic specimens from the surface gravels, a date in the Neolithic period (c. 3500 - 2000BC) would appear probable.

With the evidence of *debitage* represented by core fragments and flakes combined with the hearths it would seem likely that Neolithic activity was confined to one or more 'camping' episodes with the casual fabrication of flint tools or weapons.

## LATER IRON AGE

Evidence for occupation during the Later Iron Age was provided by a reasonable quantity of iron-working, iron residues and several sherds of pottery.

The pottery, by fabric analysis, tends to support a date in the Later Iron Age of c. 100BC - 40AD.

The iron-working residues including furnace linings and iron slags, by their characteristics, compare favourably with specimens from the occupation site at South Farm, Lightwater, Surrey, some 2 kms south east and also located alongside the Windle Brook.

At South Farm the iron-working industry is dated to the Later Iron Age and by the recently recorded incidences of similar iron slags along the course of the Windle Brook, it seems likely that a linear industry existed in the century before the Roman conquest. The site in Bagshot may represent one of several where the iron industry was operational but unlike the site at South Farm no structural features, positively dated to the Later Iron Age, have yet been identified.

## ROMANO-BRITISH

The early Romano-British occupation (Fig.2) may represent a continuum from the Later Iron Age and it is hoped that the finalisation of research in 1995 will clarify this.

The earliest feature recorded was the entrance into a possible double ring ditch enclosure. One terminal end and possibly part of another of the outer ditch and two terminal ends of the narrower internal ditch were excavated. In all cases the ditches had been cut into the natural greensand-with-flints and the excavated material had been placed inside the enclosure to form a reasonably level, raised platform which had been surfaced capped with large flint pebbles. Beneath all of these layers and cutting into the natural land surface a large feature filled with layers of white and orange sand, containing fragments of iron slag, was surface recorded. Cultural material from the ditches was sparse and limited to iron slag, furnace linings and several sherds of coarse grey 1st century AD Farnham Ware pottery. To the north western extent of the internal ditch, the badly disturbed remains of a cremation grave (Grave.1) were excavated. Cremated bone had been located in many contexts of later dates across the site and undoubtedly Grave.1 had been the source of these scatters. The contents of the grave comprised small fragments of cremated bone, charcoal and burnt flint in a discrete area, lying on top of the body sherds of a coarse grey Farnham Ware vessel. This represented a single urned cremation probably of a secondary nature to the purpose of the ring ditch enclosure.

Grave.2 was identified by the presence of cremated bone in the small area accessible and a complete flagon neck in a soft orange fabric of 1st century AD type.

Building.1 (Fig.2) was a timber post structure with one of its external walls constructed off an unmortared rubble stonework foundation. One post seating was identified within the length of the structure recorded, suggesting that the foundation had been utilised as the support for a timber sole plate. An 'internal' arrangement of post holes suggests this building to have been of aisled construction. Floor levels were of gravel and from the pottery associated with the structure a date of c. 150 - 250AD can provisionally be ascribed.

A well constructed and compacted flint cobbled feature traversed the area which partially overlay the internal ditch of the ring ditch enclosure. The western edge of the feature was clearly defined with little flint scatter beyond that extent. Lack of cart ruts or shattered flints combined with the good quality of the small laid flint pebbles suggests its use to have been more pedestrian than vehicular.

Building.2 (Fig.2) was a timber post structure with a wall trench and external drip gully and being approximately parallel to the western edge of the flint cobbled feature, may have originally fronted the same. The area between the eastern extent of the cobbles and Building.2 had been destroyed by later events. Pottery from within this structure indicated an occupation date of c. 200 - 300AD.

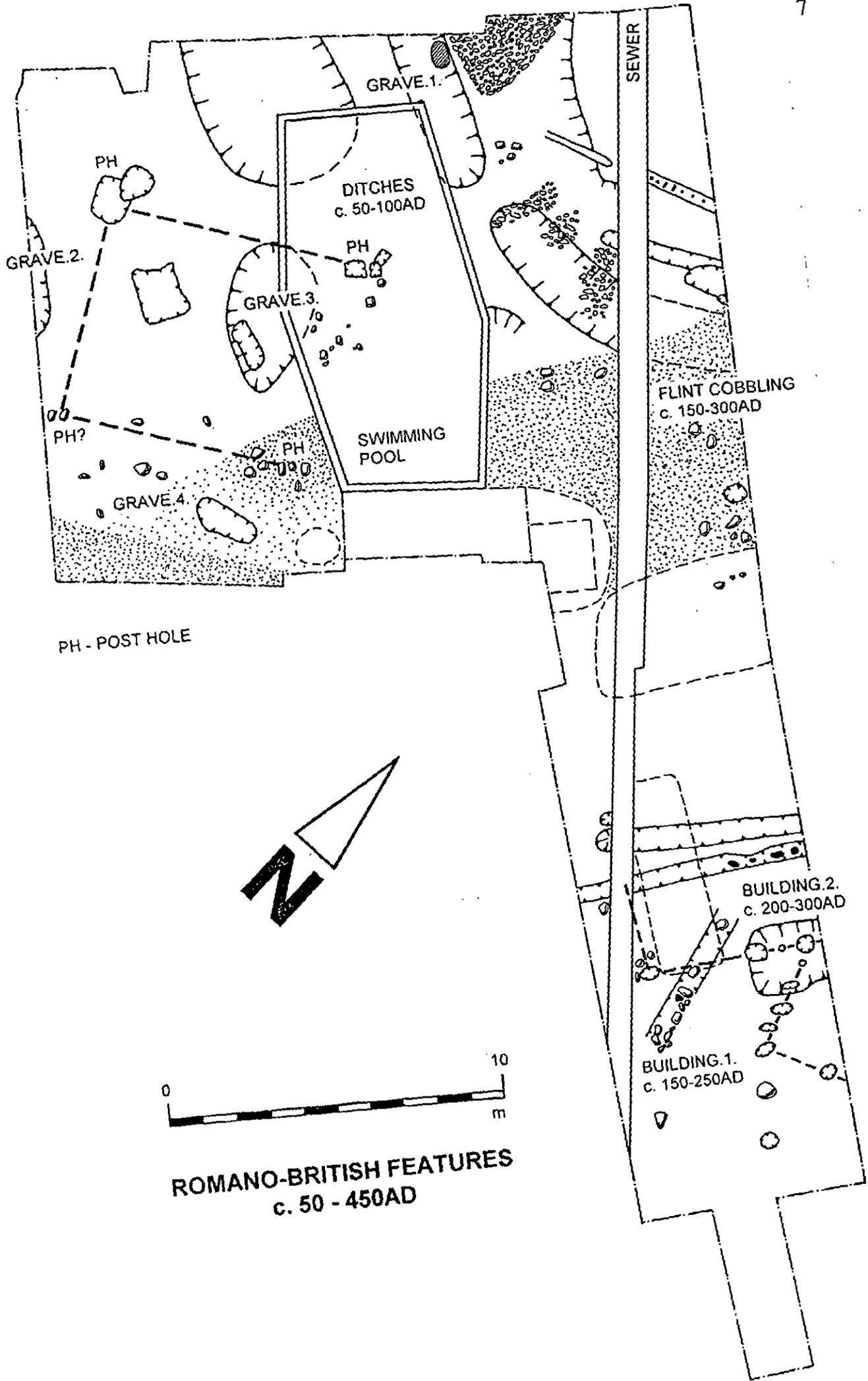


Fig.2

After c. 300AD, the site was subjected to a series of serious floodings which resulted in the deposition of layers of riverine gravels and thick layers of clayey silt. These deposits covered and buried all earlier occupation levels except for the upper levels of the flint pebble capping in the double ring ditch enclosure.

During the late 4th to early 5th century AD, the area was again used as a burial ground. Graves 3 and 4 (Fig.2) were excavated through the riverine gravels and into the natural greensand-with-flints, both on approximate east to west alignments.

Grave.3 was located along one edge of a large pit and whilst no faunal remains had survived the acidity of the ground water, traces of timber existed around the edges of the grave pit sufficient to suggest a timber plank lining. Within the filling of the grave pit, grey/brown sandy and organic lenses suggested the original presence of faunal remains. The redeposited, riverine gravel, upper filling of the grave produced several accompanying grave goods including a hone stone, perforated pebbles, fossils, late Farnham Ware pottery and part of a finger ring, fashioned from Jet and bearing a monogrammatic CHI-RHO on its bezel (Plate.1). The style of the CHI-RHO is not known in Britain before c. 380AD and the likelihood is that it dates to c. 380 - 450AD. A possible Mortuary building surrounded Grave.3 evidenced by a four post structure, the post packings being scattered and in part located on the surface of the earlier flint cobbled feature.

Respecting the alignment of the timber structure over Grave.3, the flint cobbles had been partially removed to enable the construction of Grave.4. This was of a similar detail to Grave.3, with evidence of timber linings, no faunal remains and a few grave goods including a hone stone and fossils.

It is possible that the four post structure represented part of a larger feature on an approximate east to west alignment and it was seen as significant that this 4th to 5th century AD burial ground should be so closely associated with a 1st century AD or earlier possible ring ditch enclosure maybe suggesting a continuity of ritual respect.



Plate.1

Photo: J.H.Jillings

## LATE MEDIEVAL

Despite the sites close proximity to the known Late Medieval village (c. 1150 - 1450AD), no evidence was recorded of any occupation during this period. A small quantity of abraded ceramics were recovered but all are considered appropriate to a general debris scatter. The only significant specimen was a bung hole from a Coarse Border Ware Cistern of c. 1150 - 1250AD. Lack of occupation evidence, in the Later Medieval period, significantly advances knowledge for the extents of the Bagshot settlement at that time.

## POST-MEDIEVAL

Building.1 (Fig.3) was the earliest feature of the Post-Medieval period to be located on the site and by its stratified occupation deposits dated to c. 1550 - 1620 AD. It was of timber post construction with squared posts having been well seated into plugs of clay. Infill wall panels were probably of a wattle and daub nature, although no traces survived and sparse scatters of roof tile were insufficient to suggest this material as a roof covering, which is more likely to have been of thatch. The building had been constructed directly upon the surface of the 4th century AD river silt deposits and subsequent re-floorings were evidenced by the use of trampled silts. No internal features were noted from the small part of this building which had survived. Cultural material from within Building.1 included Germanic import stonewares, Border wares, iron objects and several very early clay tobacco pipes, the whole assemblage indicative of a purely domestic use.

An area of roughly laid flint cobbling to the east of Building.1 probably represented a paved forecourt or pathway leading to the same.

Building.2, again of timber post construction but without clay plug post seatings, may represent a re-build of Building.1. The floor was constructed of trampled silts partially overlying the flint cobblings of the earlier phase. Cultural assemblages within this building indicated an occupation date of c. 1620 - 1680 AD, again of a domestic nature.

The fence line, to the west of the area, probably related to the phases of occupation during the periods of Buildings 1 and 2.

Thus from the evidence available it seems likely that prior to c.1680 AD, the site was occupied for domestic purposes. As mentioned in the Introduction to this paper, documentary research suggests Bagshot's Tan Yard as being located by the Windle Brook, near Bagshot Bridge, during the late 16th century AD and whilst there was no evidence for this period of the industry in the area sampled, it is seen likely that increases in the coaching industry in Bagshot during the late 17th century AD resulted in the expansion of the Tan Yards to in part occupy the site.

The earliest feature which can positively be identified related to the Tan Yard was a Tanning Pit (Fig.3) of c. 1680 - 1720 AD. The pit was a rectangular structure, cut into the ground through the earlier Post-Medieval cobbles and lined with horizontal timber planks which had been secured to vertical intermediate posts, the slots and sole plate plankings for two such having been recorded. It did not have a timber floor but bottomed onto gravel and features of the Romano-British period. At the date of cessation of use, the side plankings had been removed and loose backfillings, behind the plankings, had collapsed into the pit sealing organic contexts of its last use period. These contexts comprised leaves, twigs and bark mixed with flecks of chalk or lime, probably representing the remains of the last 'solution' used for the process of the final tanning of hides. Various items of carpentry were recovered from the lowest contexts of the pit filling together with an intact 2.000 metre long 'paddle' originally used for turning the hides and agitating the solution.

Building.3, located alongside the Tanning Pit was a timber post construction structure with no surviving occupation levels. It was probably one of several shelters used in connection with the industry.

Two other features were recorded relating to the 18th and 19th century AD Tan Yard use. A rectangular Tanning Pit with vertical sides, which was out of use by c.1850 AD and where any pit linings had been removed prior to the feature being used as a rubbish pit and part of a Tanning Tank base. This structure, dated to c. 1750 - 1850 AD, comprised a series of halved trees which had been laid on the ground surface and firmly packed around with yellow sand to form a secure base but also to permit a degree of flexibility. It is assumed that this formed a level supporting base for a timber tank. Contemporary with these two features of the later Tanning industry were a series of rubbish pits to the north western extent of the area from which assemblages of ceramics and complete bottles were recovered.

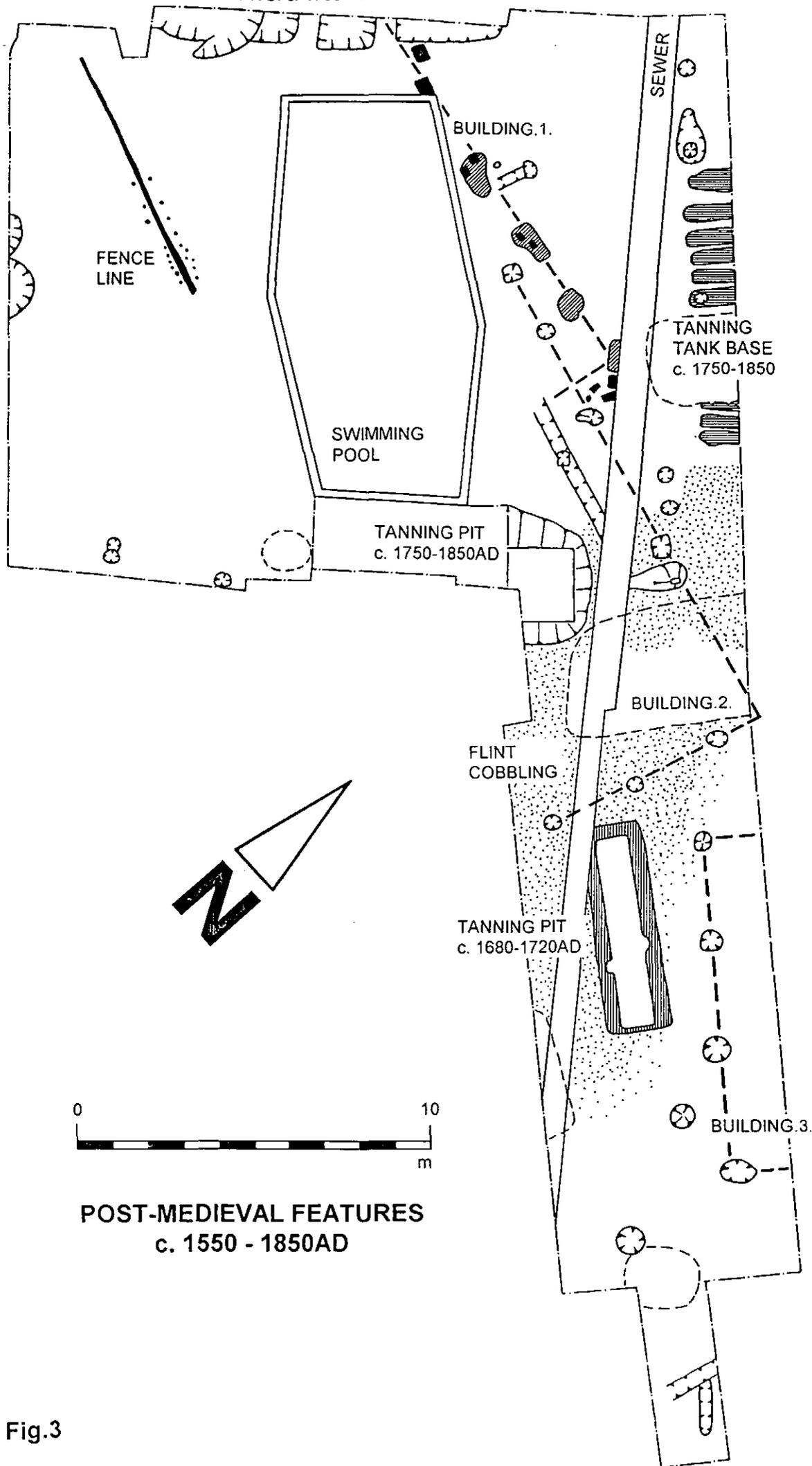


Fig.3

## MODERN

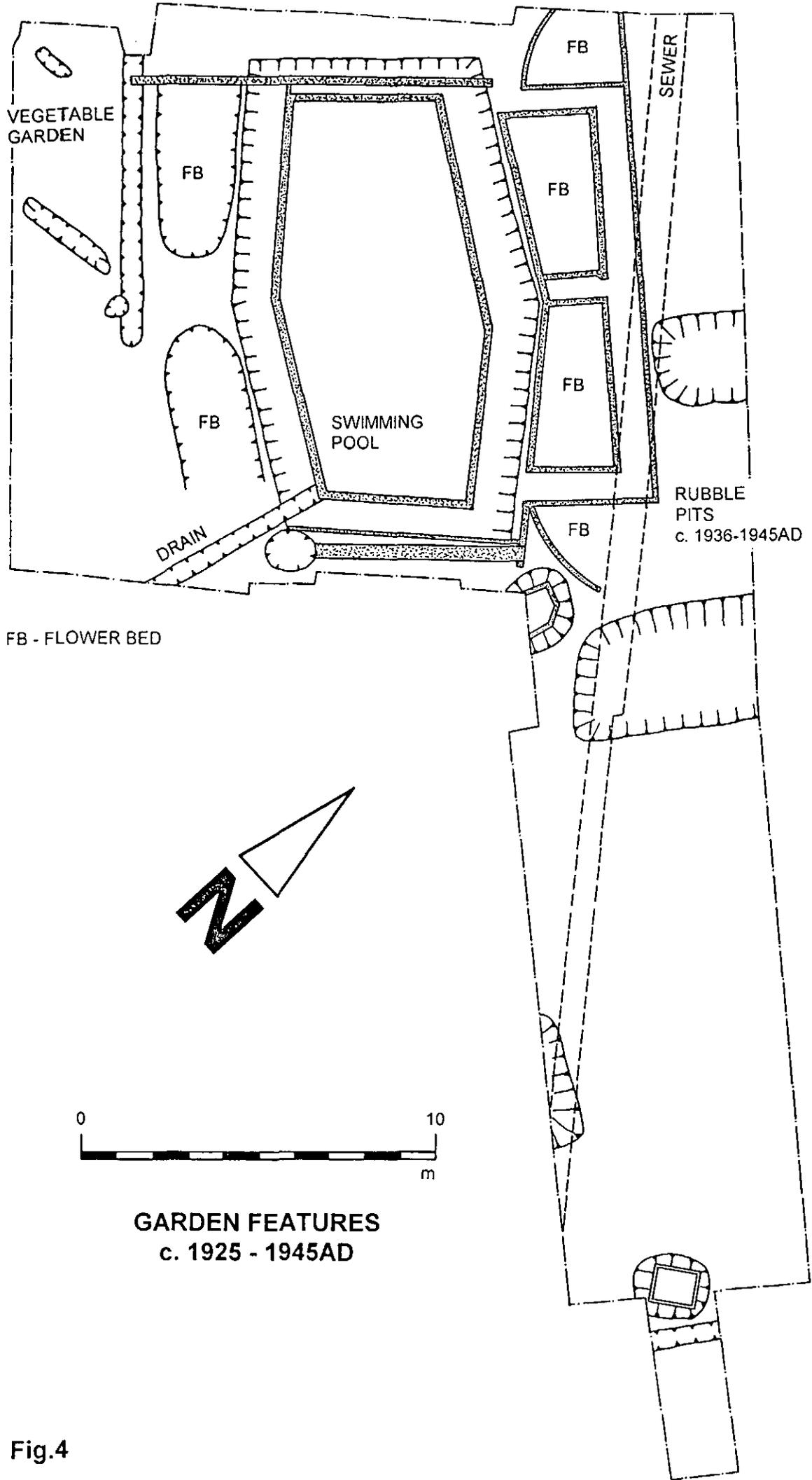
Prior to 1925AD, the main road from the West to London was routed along the historic coaching way through the centre of Bagshot village. In 1925AD, the Bagshot by-pass road (modern A.30 London Road) (Fig.1.) was opened and at the same time the village was first connected to a main sewerage system. Subsequently the Bagshot Bridge access, in the village centre, was widened and the old brick bridge was demolished to be replaced with the presently existing concrete structure.

The single storey dwelling at 42 London Road, was built about this time, fronting onto the new by-pass road and connected to the new sewer which had been routed across the rear garden. The building was constructed in a slightly elevated position, in relation to the contemporary rear garden surface level, which was probably a prudent measure in view of its nearness to the Windle Brook. No evidence was recorded for its construction upon the demolition rubble of an earlier phase.

The extensive excavation that had been required for the construction of the swimming pool and surrounding formal gardens (Fig.4.) c. 1925 - 1935AD resulted in the almost total destruction of the earlier archaeological stratigraphy and the spread of excavated soil, containing cultural material, across the whole area, thus raised the rear garden surface level. To the eastern garden, the flower bed walls were of mortared brickwork construction with cinder-bed paths between but in the western garden, the brickwork construction had not been repeated and the flower beds, without edgings, had apsidal ends. The space between the terminals respected the central path layout of the eastern garden and thus maintained the design symmetry. Beyond the western flower beds a hedging trench was identified which defined the extent of the formal arrangement and west of this feature, bedding trenches, eccentric to the formality of elsewhere, were identified as part of a vegetable garden.

Slightly before and during the period of World War Two c. 1936 - 1945AD, the swimming pool walls were rebuilt and heightened and the flower bed walls were substantially demolished, the rubble being buried in two large and deep pits. The soil excavated in connection with these pits and the new construction trench around the swimming pool was spread over the garden thoroughly burying the earlier layout. The new construction trench was used for the disposal of rubbish, including significant parts from a Morris 8 motor car c. 1936AD, and was ultimately backfilled with clean sand.

A variety of World War Two rifle ammunition and components from the defused timing mechanisms of other devices were excavated in the upper layers of the western garden.



FB - FLOWER BED

**GARDEN FEATURES**  
c. 1925 - 1945AD

**Fig.4**

In later years the swimming pool was utilised for fish breeding and a variety of other containers were built for such purposes. The building is now the offices of a Building Contractor and the rear garden, the subject of this research, is destined to become a car park until such time as the whole area is redeveloped.

Sometime after 1934AD, the Windle Brook's course was altered and 'straightened' to be located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site at 42 London Road, probably to enable the release of land for the development of a Petrol Filling Station. The consequences of this alteration and its potential damage to archaeological features may become clear during the culmination of research in 1995.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Eedle, M. de G. 1977      A History of Bagshot and Windlesham.  
*Phillimore & Co Ltd*