

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LIX

JANUARY 1966 TO DECEMBER 1966

CAMBRIDGE
DEIGHTON BELL

1966

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LIX

JANUARY 1966 TO DECEMBER 1966

CAMBRIDGE
DEIGHTON BELL

1966

*Published for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (incorporating the Cambs and Hunts
Archaeological Society) by Deighton Bell, 13 Trinity Street, Cambridge*

Printed in Great Britain at the University Printing House, Cambridge

CONTENTS

<i>Officers and Council of the Society, 1965-66</i>	<i>page iv</i>
The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Little Eriswell, Suffolk <i>By</i> PATRICIA HUTCHINSON	I
St Neots Priory <i>By</i> C. F. TEBBUTT, F.S.A.	33
Waterbeach Abbey <i>By</i> M. D. CRA'STER, F.S.A.	75
A Medieval Windmill, Honey Hill, Dogsthorpe <i>By</i> S. V. PEARCE	95
The Church of St Mary, Huntingdon <i>By</i> CYRIL HART	105
Some Twelfth-century Documents Concerning St Peter's Church, Babraham <i>By</i> EDWARD MILLER	113
Notes on the Early Career of Thomas Thirlby, Tudor Bishop of Ely <i>By</i> SIR JOHN GRAY	125
The Street and Ditch Ways in South-East Cambridgeshire <i>By</i> MARGARET SPUFFORD	129
Review Note: <i>A Cambridgeshire Community: Chippenham from Settlement to Enclosure</i> , by Margaret Spufford <i>By</i> M. D. CRA'STER	133
Archaeological Notes <i>By</i> A. R. EDWARDSON, W. LILLER, C. F. TEBBUTT and G. RUDD	135
<i>Index</i>	

A MEDIEVAL WINDMILL, HONEY HILL, DOGSTHORPE

S. V. PEARCE

AN emergency excavation was undertaken in October and November 1960 on a small mound which was threatened by the growth of the new Bluebell Housing Estate at Dogsthorpe, Peterborough (TF 193018). This mound was marked on the Ordnance Survey map as a tumulus, but it was also thought to be a small motte¹ or a windmill mound. It was marked as Honey Hill, though known locally as Bluebell Hill and occasionally as the Nab. Until recently it lay in open country between the villages of Paston and Dogsthorpe on an ancient right of way between them, known as Nab Lane (Fig. 1). This position is most easily explained by supposing the mound to have been built for a windmill set in open country to catch the wind and serving both the communities of Paston and Dogsthorpe.

The mound was about 7 ft. high with an overall diameter of 80 ft. and a diameter on top of 30-40 ft. On three sides there was a ditch in its present condition about 3-4 ft. deep and about 20 ft. wide. The approach to the mound from Nab Lane is now interrupted by a modern ditch, but presumably the mound abutted straight on to the lane before this was made. The mound was covered with trees and undergrowth and where these were lacking the numerous children of the new housing estate had delighted in the opportunity to make mud-slides and perilous bicycle tracks, so that the slopes of the mound were very uneven and the top of the mound pitted with holes. In addition a recent trench was found in excavating, which was probably the result of Home Guard exercises in the last World War.² (Fig. 2).

¹ In the Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus, trans. C. Mellows and W. T. Mellows 1941, there is a description of the Fees held by the Abbey of Peterborough. The editors have put a note under the passage on the fee of Ralph Tot of Paston that 'the remains of the moated mound between Dogsthorpe and Paston known as Honey Hill or the Nab probably belonged to one of these knights' (see p. 59, n. 2).

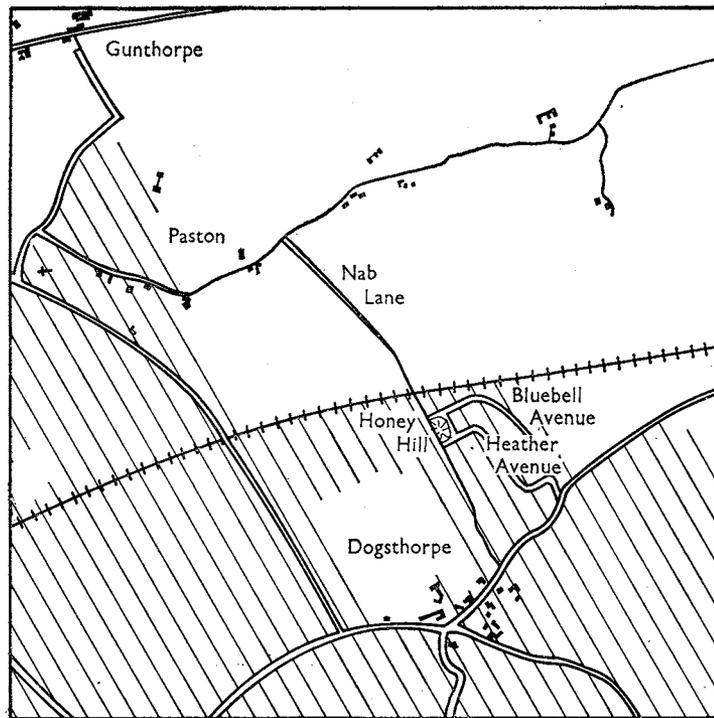
² It was impossible to obtain any exact information to prove that this recent trench was in fact dug by the Home Guard, since the people who had worked in this area had either died or left the district. Colonel Crowden, who had been the local commander of the Home Guard could only say that there had been Headquarters of the Home Guard at the Manor House nearby and exercises would have been carried out in this area. This trench would probably have been made as a slit-trench for bomb practice.

Alternatively the trench could have been made by a party of local schoolboys who spent part of a day digging some years ago and are said to have found nothing.

THE EXCAVATION

Ditch

A section through the trench (Fig. 3a) was first made, to obtain dating evidence and some hint of the function of the mound. Two main periods were discovered; a modern filling and a medieval one. The modern filling consisted of the surface humus, layer III and a thick black earth filling, layer V. Fragments of recent glass and clay pipes were found at the bottom of this. The glass cannot be older than the late nineteenth century and this suggests that the mound was only planted with undergrowth and trees at this late date.



Area plan showing old network of roads



Modern housing estates

0

0.5 mile

Fig. 1. Plan showing position of site.

Before this the mound must have lain almost completely deserted for many centuries since immediately below layer V thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pottery was found in quantity in very hard compact clay, layers VI and VII. On the outside, layer VI, the clay was blue-brown, showing that it must have had turf mixed with it, presumably from ploughing. On the inner side, layer VII, the clay was much more yellow and must have been material derived from the mound. Below this at a depth of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. the natural blue clay was reached and on this lay a scatter of pebbles in-

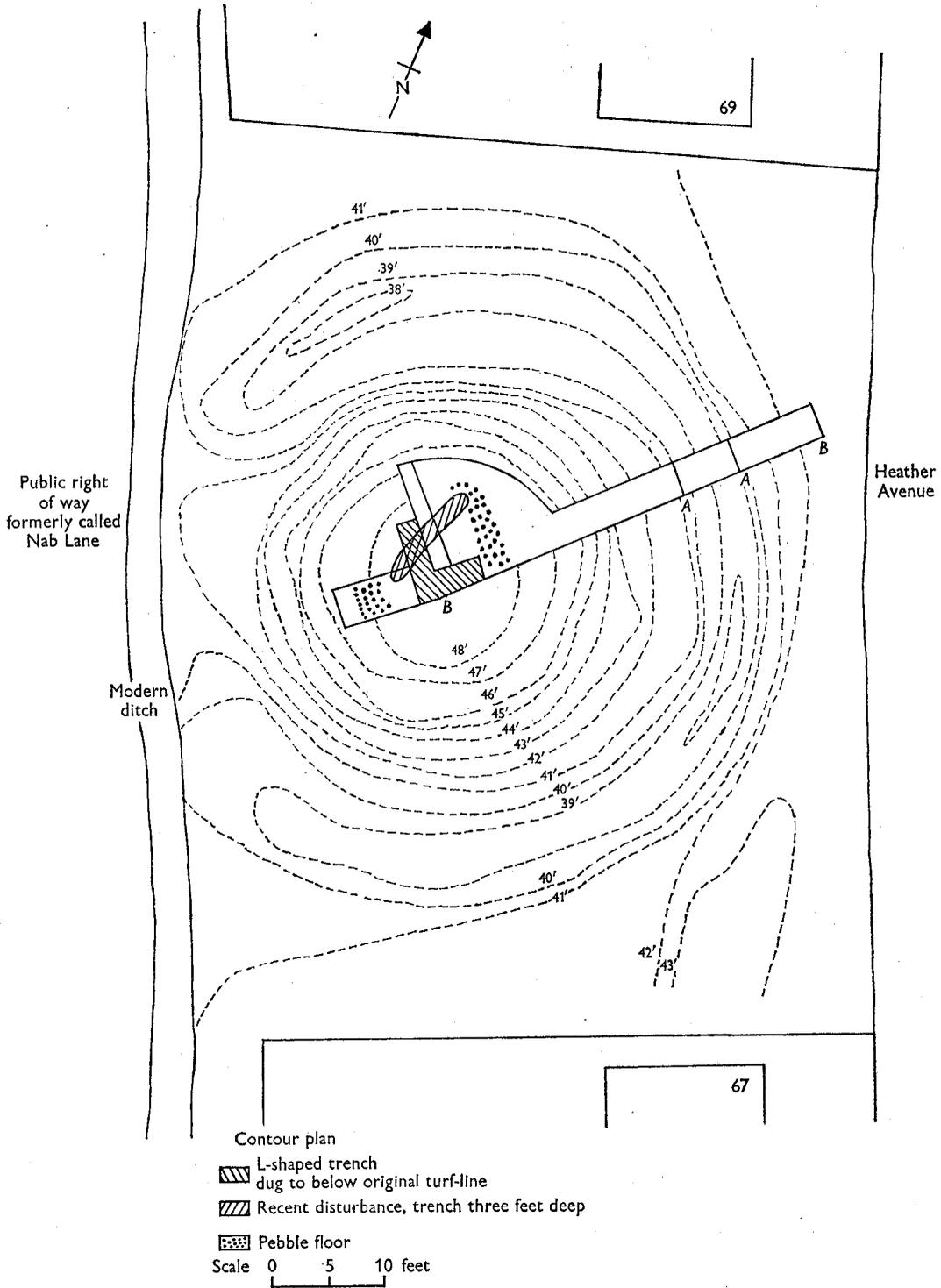


Fig. 2. Contour plan of mound.

cluding a fragment of millstone, probably fallen into the ditch when the pebble floor was laid on top of the mound.

The excavation of the ditch was unsatisfactory for although 'natural' was reached the ditch was never thoroughly cleaned out since the water-table rose above the modern surface (to 38.7 ft. above sea-level) and remained at this high level for the remainder of the excavation. The water had to be pumped out and two men kept on the job while the section was drawn.

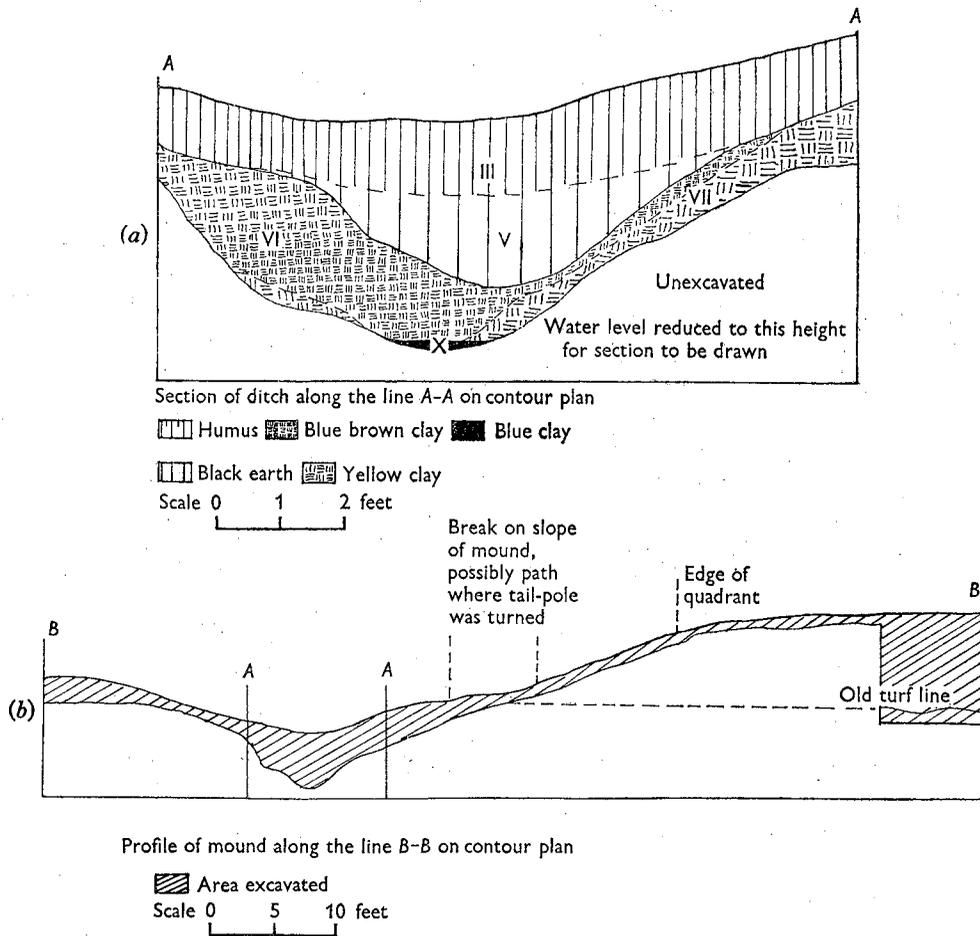


Fig. 3. (a) Section of ditch along the line A-A on contour plan.
 (b) Profile of mound along the line B-B on counter plan.

Quadrant

A quadrant was opened on top of the mound, and almost immediately below the surface a 'clay covering' was revealed, immediately suggesting the possibility of a clay-covered motte. However, none of the possible post-holes proved to be substantial, most of them being obvious root-holes and there was certainly no sign of a palisade round the edge. The most distinct layer of clay proved to cover a recent

trench, so that the 'clay covering' is best explained as the natural part of a mound made from heavy clay soil. This recent trench contained a coin probably dropped in the late seventeenth century but unfortunately it also contained twentieth-century glass and other modern débris throughout its depth.

The one distinct feature was a pebble floor over part of the mound less than 6 in. below the surface making what seemed to be a straight line, though recent disturbances might well have obscured the original extent of it. Among smooth water-worn pebbles, lumps of flint and local red sandstone were numerous fragments of millstone, similar to that found in the ditch. On one of the pebbles an early fourteenth century coin was found. Fragments of medieval pottery, recent pottery, clay pipes, many nails, a horseshoe (Fig. 4.10) and a whetstone were found over the surface.

A trench was opened up on the other side of the mound and a similar pebble layer was found, again with numerous fragments of millstone. At one point the pebbles were missing where a sheep's skeleton had been inserted very superficially.

From this evidence it became clear that the mound must have been used from sometime before the early fourteenth century.

Trenches

No structural remains of the windmill had been found so that deep trenches were cut through the centre of the mound to try and discover the cross-trees. These could either have been built up on stone walls as at Lamport¹ or placed at the bottom of the mound on the original surface of the ground as at Sandon Mount.² Neither type was found, though medieval pottery of the late thirteenth century (a fragment of a sagging base glazed on the inside) occurred on the turf line, showing that the mound can have had no earlier use. Nails were also found at all depths suggesting that an earlier building stood nearby before the mound was erected. This is also corroborated by the use of broken millstones in the pebble-floor, suggesting that some millstones had been used and broken before the pebble floor was laid.

Since no structure was found, the windmill cannot have been a sunk postmill, but rather one erected on top of the mound—the mound being used to gain extra height, since the earliest postmills were only about 20 ft. high.³ The cross-trees would have been raised from the ground by stone blocks to prevent the wood rotting and these would be the first thing to be stolen when the mill was dismantled, so that the only possible thing to find would have been the depression where these stones stood. The very disturbed condition of the top of the mound made this impossible.

¹ M. Posnansky, 'The Lamport Postmill', *Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club*. (1956), 33 (239), pp. 66-79.

² W. Percival Westell, 'Sandon Mount, Hertfordshire: Its Site, Excavation and Problems', *St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Trans.* (1934), pp. 173-83.

³ I am grateful to Mr Rex Wailes for coming to examine the site, and for sending me the following report. 'There is no evidence at all of a sunk postmill and in view of the broken pieces of millstone found at the top, I am of the opinion that the site is a normal postmill mound. These mounds were raised to give the small medieval postmills a greater elevation above the surrounding countryside and enable them to catch the wind better.'

LITERARY EVIDENCE

Two references to a mill in this area were found by searching for references to the word Nab or its variants.¹ The Nab seems to have been quite a large area of land in this district often owned by several people.

In a 'List of free land held by the villeins of the soke of Boroughbury (Peterborough) of which an inquisition was made in 1341-1342 by Brother J(ohn) of Achurch, warden of the manors',² a reference is made to Paston mill, but this is very vague and could easily be some other mill in the same area.

Far more explicit is the reference in 'A description of the boundaries of the parish of Peterborough in about 1404'³ to a 'Russell Mill' lying near 'le Nabbe'. In 'The Book of Fees of Henry of Pytchley'⁴ a family of Russells are referred to as owning land in this area in the second half of the thirteenth century. Together with the evidence from the pottery this suggests that the family of Russells built a windmill in the late thirteenth century which remained in use at least till the beginning of the fifteenth century, though none of the pottery seems to be as late as this.

There are continual references to land in the Nab but no specific references to a windmill or the mound until the eighteenth century when, in 'A Perambulation of the bounds of St John's Parish' in 1753, Honey Hill is mentioned.⁵

In an enclosure map of 1815, the field in which the mound is, is marked Nabb's, though the mound itself is not marked.

THE FINDS

Pottery: Medieval, thirteenth to fourteenth century, 1250-1350

(a) *Cooking pots.* All the pots were made of a grey sandy fabric with a brown surface. The rims ranged from a simple everted rim (Fig. 4.1) (Fig. 4.2 is a similar everted rim but moulded outside) to a flattened flange (Figs. 4.3 and 4.4), a typically fourteenth-century type, which was common throughout South-east England. There were 14 other similar rim fragments too small to draw.

About 27 fragments of sagging bases were found, two of them with green glaze on the inside. One fragment of a base, glazed inside, was found about seven feet down in the centre of the mound on the old turf line. Bases were rarely glazed inside until the second half of the thirteenth century.

Many fragments were blackened outside, confirming their use as cooking pots.

(b) *Jugs.* There were a number of fragments of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century glazed jugs, both green and orange. The patterns on these jugs were mainly vertical ribs, but combed waves

¹ J. E. B. Gower, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-names of Northamptonshire* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 241, give references under NAB LANE to some variations of the word NAB from the thirteenth century.

² *Northampton Record Society*, 20, p. 216, no. 554 of 'Carte Nativorum', ed. C. N. L. Brooke and M. M. Postan.

³ W. T. Mellows, 'Peterborough Local Administration', *Northampton Record Society*, 9, pp. 216-17.

⁴ 'Et abhunc usque ad pratium de Dodesthorpe per medium cuius se extendit quedam Semita usque ad petram et quandam divisam ex parte altera prati que Balk nuncupatur et alla divisa se extendit usque ad Pastonegate. Et abhunc se extendit alia talis divisa iuxta molendinum [fo. 164d]. Sacriste quod vocatur Russell mylne usque ad le Nabbe per capita terre.'

⁴ *Northampton Record Society*, 2, pp. 108-9.

⁵ *Fenland Notes and Queries*, 2.

and rouletted patterns also occurred. One green glazed jug had horizontal grooves on the shoulder (Fig. 4.6), and another (Fig. 4.7) a horizontal combed pattern. Fig. 4.5 shows the rim of a small jug with flanged rim and cordon on the neck. All these jugs are of similar ware to the cooking pots described above.

There were six fragments of strap handles, four stabbed down the centre, two with a patchy brown glaze on the outside and one with a central groove. There were fragments of typical thumbed bases.

Besides these jug fragments, which are all of local manufacture, there are a few thumb-nail size fragments of jugs in very much finer buff ware with orange or bright green glaze.

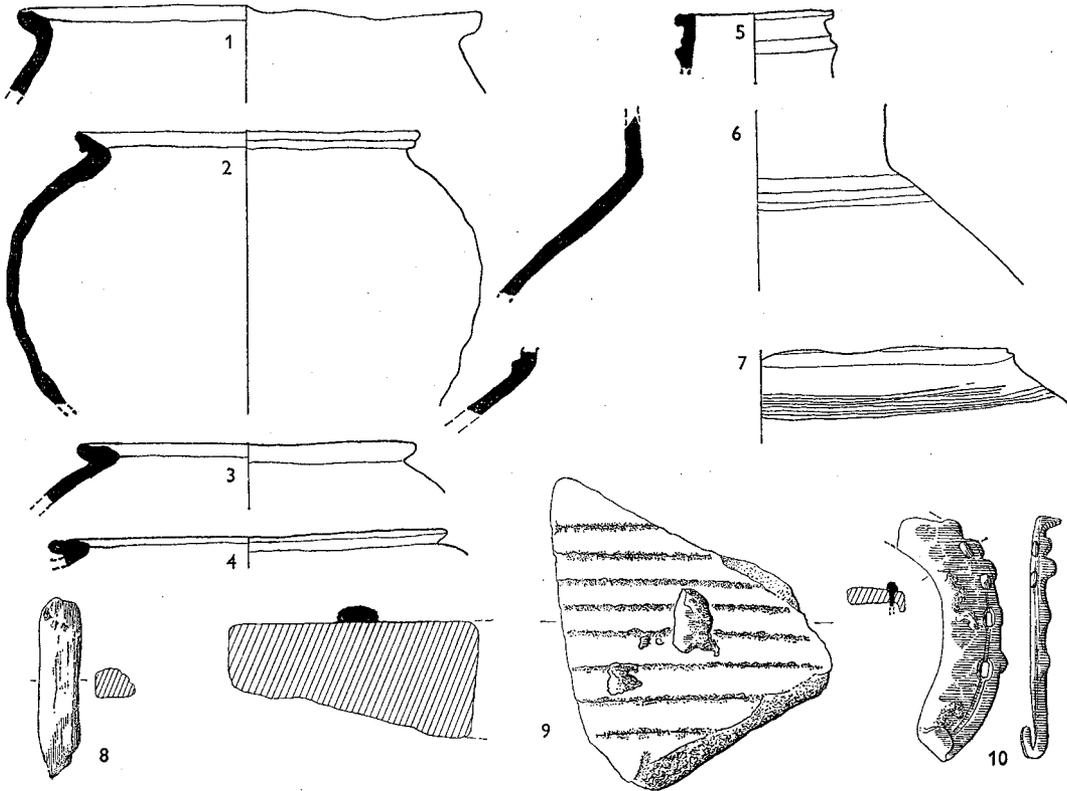


Fig. 4. Pottery and small finds. All at $\frac{1}{4}$. 1 and 2, simple everted rims; 3 and 4, rims with flattened flange; 5, 6 and 7, fragments of jugs; 8, whetstone; 9, millstone, found in ditch; 10, horseshoe.

Later pottery

Pottery with a dark rich brown glaze and a plain red flat plate were dateable to the seventeenth century. There were also a few nineteenth- and twentieth-century fragments.

Weathered Roman pottery

Heavily weathered blue-coated Nene Valley ware was discovered as well as one red tile.

Clay pipes

Stem fragments were found scattered all over the top of the mound. Of the three bowls found, two were late seventeenth century and one early eighteenth.

Iron

(a) *Nails*. Approximately 100 medieval nails were found and well over half of these came from immediately above the pebble layer on top of the mound. One was found in the early silting of the ditch and others were found in the body of the mound at quite low depths. The latter imply that an earlier building stood nearby before the mound was erected. These nails were about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long and, where preserved, had a head about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in diameter.

(b) *Horseshoe*. A horseshoe (Fig. 4.10) was found on the pebble layer of the mound and is probably late medieval.

Glass

In the 'black earth', layer V, of the ditch, early twentieth-century glass was found and identified by the Glass Manufacturers Federation:

(1) Part of a Codd's bottle. This was a ball-stoppered bottle used to hold aerated drinks invented by Hiram Codd, in use from 1879 till the 1930s, but most widely used between 1890 and 1914.

(2) Part of an early type of Kilner jar in use till 1925 made by J. Kilner and Sons, Wakefield.

Coins

(a) A farthing of Edward I was found in very fragile condition. This is of a type believed to have been struck during the last five years of his reign, and so should be dated *c.* 1302-7. They had a short life, so that this coin was probably lost in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. It was found lying on one of the pebbles that made up the pebble floor on top of the mound.

(b) A badly clipped silver sixpence of Elizabeth I, dated 1568, was found in the disturbed material in the recent trench. Though a sixteenth-century coin, it was probably not clipped before the second half of the seventeenth century and would have been lost sometime within this half-century, since these coins were demonetized in 1697.

Both coins were identified and commented on by the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum.

Miscellany

Fifteen fragments of millstone were found, one lying on the blue clay in the ditch (Fig. 4.9), the rest forming part of the pebble floor. These have parallel grooves about $\frac{6}{10}$ in. apart and $\frac{2}{10}$ in. deep. None were sufficiently large to allow the shape of the millstone to be reconstructed. They can be dated by the fragment in the ditch to the fourteenth century.

A fragment of a hearthstone, burnt flints and a roofing tile in the pebble-floor indicated a previous building. A whetstone (Fig. 4.8) and a lump of Niedermendig lava were also found.

CONCLUSIONS

Both the pottery and the literary evidence suggest that a mound was thrown up in the late thirteenth century to support a small postmill. It is possible that an attempt was first made to work a windmill on the site without a mound, since nails and pottery were found in the body of the mound, and the broken millstones at the bottom of the ditch and on the mound suggest that millstones had been used and broken in the vicinity before the mill was erected and the pebble floor laid.

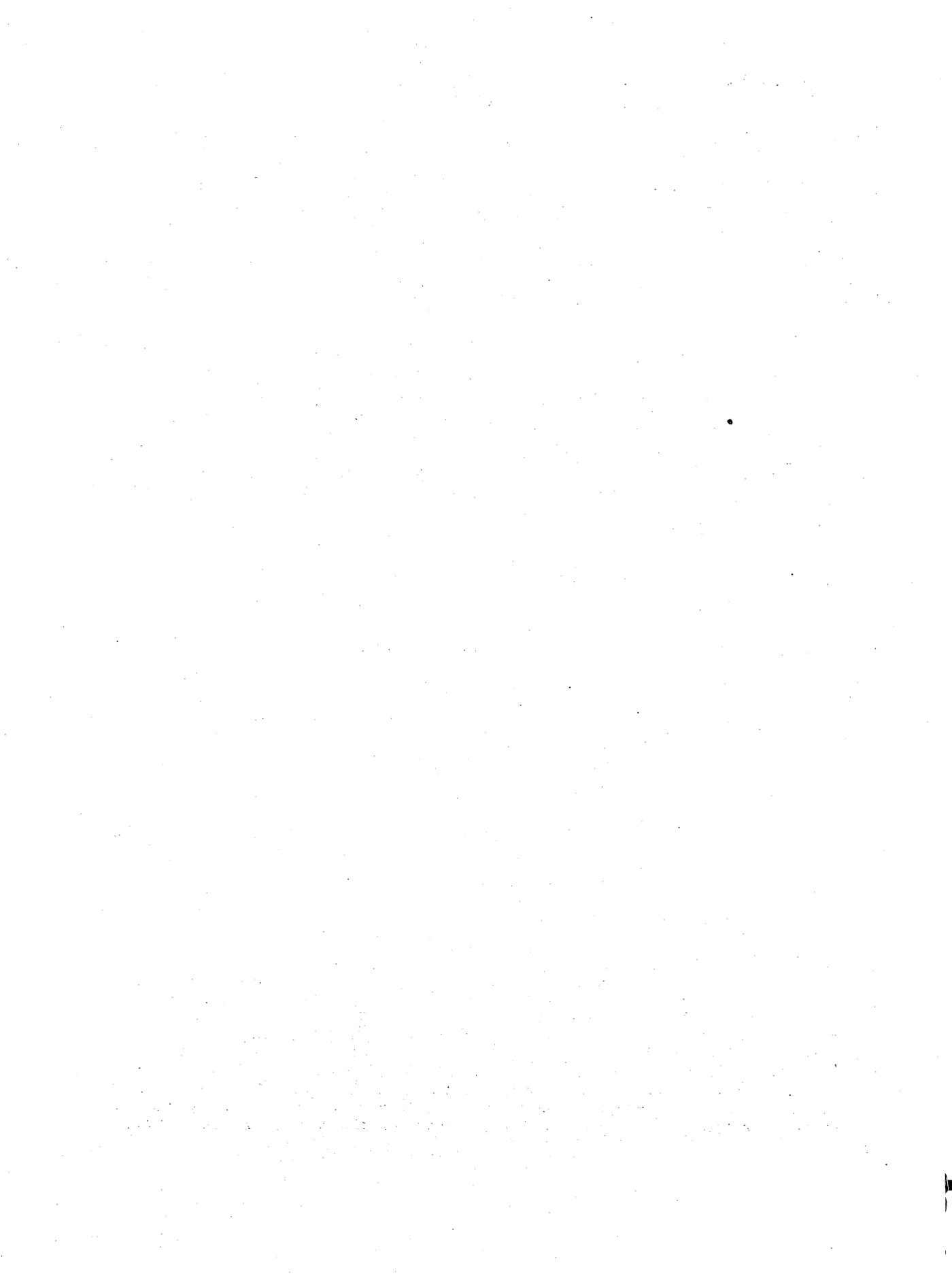
Fourteenth-century pottery, the early fourteenth-century coin and the possible mid-fourteenth-century reference to a mill testify to its use in the next century. In

1404 it is referred to, but it was probably dismantled or blown over (since there are many nails and scarcely any evidence of burning) soon after, since there is little pottery later than the fourteenth century.

The mound then lay deserted from sometime in the fifteenth century, for although there is seventeenth-century pottery, a late seventeenth-century coin and clay pipes, there is not sufficient material to suggest occupation. In the eighteenth century it is referred to as Honey Hill. In the nineteenth century the area round the mound was enclosed and it is probably sometime after this that trees were planted on the mound, bluebells grew in their shade and the mound gained its modern name of Bluebell Hill.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This excavation was done by the Ministry of Public Building and Works with considerable help from the Peterborough Town Council, who provided labour, a great deal of equipment and a garage as headquarters. The Peterborough Museum Field Club also provided equipment and very willing, hard-working week-end volunteers. In particular I should like to thank Mr G. F. Dakin and Mr Standen for help in organization and transport, Mr Challands and Mr Briggs for photographic work and Mr G. Clark for surveying. Mr J. G. Hurst of the Ministry of Public Building and Works examined the pottery and provided help and advice at every stage. Miss Liquorish of the Peterborough Public Reference Library and Mr P. King of the Northamptonshire Archives Committee helped with the literary evidence.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

VOLUME LIX
JANUARY 1966 TO DECEMBER 1966

40s. net.

CONTENTS

<i>Officers and Council of the Society, 1965-66</i>	<i>page iv</i>
The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Little Eriswell, Suffolk By PATRICIA HUTCHINSON	i
St Neots Priory By C. F. TEBBUTT, F.S.A.	33
Waterbeach Abbey By M. D. CRA'STER, F.S.A.	75
A Medieval Windmill, Honey Hill, Dogsthorpe By S. V. PEARCE	95
The Church of St Mary, Huntingdon By CYRIL HART	105
Some Twelfth-century Documents Concerning St Peter's Church, Babraham By EDWARD MILLAR	113
Notes on the Early Career of Thomas Thirlby, Tudor Bishop of Ely By SIR JOHN GRAY	125
The Street and Ditch Ways in South-East Cambridgeshire By MARGARET SPUFFORD	129
Review Note: <i>A Cambridgeshire Community: Chippenham from Settlement to Enclosure</i> , by Margaret Spufford By M. D. CRA'STER	133
Archaeological Notes By A. R. EDWARDS, W. LILLER, C. F. TEBBUTT and G. RUDD	135