

Anglo-Saxon settlement at Stanford Road, Shefford Bedfordshire April-May 2012

BEDFM:2011.73

Report No. 14/14

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No. Molanort	1-169263							
Project title	Anglo-Saxon settlem Bedfordshire	ent at Stanford Road, Shefford,							
Archaeological excavations	s were carried out by N	orthamptonshire Archaeology on land at							
Stanford Road, Shefford, E	Bedfordshire during April	and May 2012 in advance of residential							
development. The excav	ation revealed a smal	l Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement							
comprising three sunken-i	reatured buildings which	n produced finds associated with textile							
manufacture. Medieval and	post-medieval ditches v	vere also identified.							
Project type	Excavation								
Sile Status		Coophysical autropy (Fisher 2011) Trial							
Previous work	Trenching (Morris 2007), 0)							
Current land use	Arabla)							
Future work	No								
Monument type									
and period	Early/Middle Anglo-Sax	kon settlement							
Significant finds	Anglo-Saxon pottery, Ic	oomweights and spindlewhorl							
PROJECT LOCATION	,								
County	Bedfordshire								
Site address	Shefford Mill, Stanford	Road, Shefford							
Post code	Unknown								
OS co-ordinates	514629/239464								
Area (sq m/ha)	0.61ha								
Height aOD	Height aOD 38m-41.5m								
PROJECT CREATORS									
Organisation	Northamptonshire Arch	aeology (NA)							
Project brief originator	Central Bedfordshire C	ouncil							
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Arch	aeology							
Project Supervisor	Ed Taylor								
Project Manager	Adam Yates								
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes								
PROJECT DATE									
Start date	18/4/12								
End date	10/5/12								
	Location	Contents							
	(Accession no.)	Contents							
Physical		Pottery and small finds (1 box)							
Paper	BEDFM:2011.73	Site records (1 small archive box)							
Digital		Client report PDF; digital images							
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, pu client report (NA report	ublished or forthcoming, or unpublished)							
Title	Anglo-Saxon settlem Bedfordshire	ent at Stanford Road, Shefford,							
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Anglo-Saxon settlement at Stanford Road, Shefford, Bedfordshire April-May 2012

Abstract

Archaeological excavations were carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Stanford Road, Shefford, Bedfordshire during April and May 2012 in advance of residential development. The excavation revealed a small Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement comprising three sunken-featured buildings, which produced finds associated with textile manufacture. Medieval and post-medieval ditches were also identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Bloor Homes to undertake archaeological excavation of land at Stanford Road, Shefford, Bedfordshire, in advance of residential development (Fig 1, NGR TL 14703940). The work was carried out in accordance with section 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and in response to a Brief issued by the Archaeology Team of Central Bedfordshire Council (Oake 2012). It formed part of the requirements of the Central Bedfordshire Local Validation Checklist.

The investigation followed an approved specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012) and adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The site is located on cultivated farmland to the north-east side of Shefford (Fig 1). To the north the site fronts onto Stanford Road, to the west it is bounded by residential properties and gardens. The eastern side was formerly the site of the mill, now occupied by two residences and a small industrial/business park. To the south side of the site is a small area of rough scrubland, formerly a reservoir/leat for the mill, which now lies adjacent to the River Ivel. The site lies between *c* 38-41.5m above Ordnance Datum on a gentle downward slope from Stanford Road.

2.2 The geology by Steve Critchley

The solid geology of the excavation area consisted of rocks belonging to the Lower Cretaceous Woburn Sands Formation. These are composed of fine grained often glauconitic marine sandstones or loose sands. When fresh these beds are typically greenish-grey, but readily weather to a series of ferruginous yellow to orange-brown poorly cemented often pebbly sands with inter-bedded competent ferruginous sandstones. According to the British Geological Survey published 1:50000 scale geological map, these beds are mapped as being overlain by periglacial Head deposits. This material, often consisting of a structureless mixture of clay, rock fragments, sands and gravel, accumulated at the base of south facing slopes, deposited during repeated seasonal freeze thaw cycles in the permafrost dominated landscape which existed in this area towards the end of the Devensian Glaciation.





Scale 1:10,000

Field observation would suggest that the actual geology is a little different to that mapped with Head being confined to a minor portion of the evaluation area.

Substantial exposures of the Woburn Sands were exposed beneath a limited soil profile, much of which consisted of resistant ferruginous sandstone beds forming a natural break in the slope, interbedded with layers of soft poorly cemented yellow - brown sands. The dip on these beds was approximately 15 degrees to the south and may represent stratigraphic disturbance due to past slope failure. Some of the more competent sandstone beds displayed periglacial thermal cracks now infilled with stoney clays. The petrology of the well rounded clast observed within these fills indicated a derivation from local deposits of older glacial sands and gravels.

The lower portion of the excavation exposed a series of coarse flint rich fluvial sands and gravels deposited by the late Pleistocene predecessor of the River Ivel as Terrace Gravels. These overlaid the Woburn Sands and were in turn overlain by thin layers the late Holocene alluvial sandy silts deposited by the Ivel (BGS 2001).

2.3 Historical and archaeological background

Previous archaeological work comprises desk-based assessment (Walker 2007), geophysical survey (Fisher 2011) and trial trench evaluation (Morris 2011).

Significant Roman finds have been found to the west of Shefford on the Ampthill Road indicating the presence of a settlement, the size of which has not yet been determined. The course of a possible Roman road may also run close to the south-western perimeter of the site. The presence of Roman activity on site is therefore a possibility, but probably unlikely, although one Roman pot sherd was found close to its south-western corner. More generally speaking, there are a number of sites of prehistoric and Roman date within the wider vicinity of Shefford (Walker 2007).

Shefford probably originates in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Although there is no mention of Shefford in the Domesday Book there is a record of a 'Sheep-ford', by which the crossing was known in the early 11th century. It only appears to become a place in its own right, rather than just a river-crossing, in the 12th century. Although no settlement is mentioned here at Domesday it is thought that there was at least one, if not several, mills in the area at that time, including a watermill belonging to Walter Gifford, lord of the manor of Campton. This may have been located either on the River Hit at Campton or possibly at Shefford (VCH 1908). It is probable that the proximity of the Gilbertine Priory at Chicksands, 2km to the west, influenced the development of the settlement (Steadman and MacQueen 2003). By 1225, the right to a market was granted. The population of the town, however, remained small until the middle of the 19th century.

Shefford Mill to the immediate east of the site is thought to have been the site of milling since the medieval period. Mills in Southill and in Clifton are known to have been in the possession of Chicksands Priory in 1535 and were known as Tythe Mills. In 1606 they were granted to Sir Francis Ventris for forty years at £61 6s 6d annual rent. By 1611, the mills were granted to Felix Wilson and Robert Morgan and their heirs for the same (Bedfordshire and Luton Record and Archives Service (BLRAS): BS 858). Richard Welby was in possession in 1698 and 1702. By 1724, the mills were part of a settlement in the marriage of Pattee Byns and Lady Charlotte Montagu. The earliest entries in the set of deeds for Shefford Mills are from 1806 and detail the estate holdings.

In 1835 the windmill to the east was constructed by Henry Haynes. It may have been around this time that a steam-powered mill was added to Shefford Mill to augment its power. By 1848 the mill was owned by Richard Bodger, subsequently passing into the hands of his son Edward Bodger. The estate was sold in 1869 (BLRAS: X215/20). The

watermill appears to have been partially destroyed by floods and was finally demolished in 1967.

The geophysical survey revealed an area of possible archaeological significance: four likely ditches and several pits were identified along with a former footpath. The survey also identified associated features from the former Shefford Mill that was located on the site. These include a former canal (Ivel Navigation) and palaeochannels (Fisher 2011).

Trial trench evaluation found evidence of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon activity including a sunken-featured building and several possible contemporary ditches, perhaps representing the remains of a small, dispersed settlement of a type that appears to be typical of this period (Morris 2011).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The programme of works was designed to mitigate the impact of the development upon the archaeological resource. This will fulfil conditions on the planning consent and enable development to proceed. The objectives set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation addressed the national framework for research (English Heritage 1997) and regional research frameworks set out by Brown and Glazebrook (2000) with revisions by Medlycott (2011) and Oake *et al* (2007).

The specific aims of the project were to:

- determine the date, phasing and nature of the archaeological activity on the site;
- establish the relationship of any remains to surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- to contribute to the understanding of origins, development and character of Anglo-Saxon settlement and settlement patterns;
- to determine what forms of building were present and what functions could be attributed to them;
- to determine what the agricultural regimes being practised were and how this may relate to any fields present;
- to place the remains in their local and regional context;
- recover evidence for the paleo-environment and paleo-ecology of the site.

4 METHODOLOGY

The excavation areas were positioned using a Leica System 1200 GPS and were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothless bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately and adjacent to the edge of excavation. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Where necessary archaeological remains were cleaned by hand. Each feature or deposit was given a unique context number and details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. The site was planned (scale 1:100 and 1:20) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20).





The excavation areas Fig Levels were taken across the site at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features and related to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative and colour slide film, supplemented by digital images.

The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI prepared by NA (2012), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 1985, revised 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2001, revised 2008).

All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

Initially the investigation comprised two excavation areas. Area 1, a 10x10m square to further investigate a large ditch encountered during the trial trench evaluation (Morris 2011) and Area 2, an area of 0.61ha targeted Anglo-Saxon features identified by the trial trench evaluation and possible Anglo-Saxon features identified by the geophysical survey (Fisher 2011). At the request of Central Bedfordshire Council's Archaeologist, two further areas, Areas 3 and 4 were opened to confirm the continuation or otherwise of linear features towards the northern edge of the development area.

The natural substrate comprised limestone and sand which has been discussed above (see paragraph 2.2). This was overlain by mid-brown sandy loam subsoil, (1501), which was up to 0.40m thick. It was absent in the north-eastern part of the site and generally increased in depth with the topographical slope to the south. The topsoil comprised a dark brown sandy loam between 0.30m and 0.40m thick.

5.2 Mesolithic to early Neolithic

The earliest evidence of human activity at the site was a small assemblage of residual worked flints comprising a blade, cores, waste flakes and micro debitage dating from later features, the subsoil and topsoil (see paragraph 6.1).

5.3 Later prehistoric and Roman

Evidence for activity during this period consisted of a single sherd of residual prehistoric pottery from the fill of the Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building, SFB1, two sherds of residual Romano-British pottery from the post-medieval ditch [1534] and a sherd of Roman roof tile from the sunken-featured building SFB3.

5.4 Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon (6th to 7th centuries)

A small Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement comprising three sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) a gully and a pit was identified in the Area 2 excavation. From the ceramic dating evidence it appeared to have been occupied from the mid 6th to early 7th centuries.





Scales 1:25 & 1:50 (A4)

Sunken-featured building 1 (SFB1) Fig 3

Sunken-featured buildings

SFB1

A sub-rectangular pit 3.30m long, 2.80m wide by 0.30m-0.40m deep (Fig 3). Aligned north-west to south-east it had generally gradual sloping sides and a flat base. The primary fill comprised a dark greyish-brown silty sand, 0.13m-0.20m thick, which produced sherds of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery. This was overlain by mid brown silty sand which produced sherds of similarly dated pottery and fragments of ceramic loomweight.

There were opposing postholes at the north-west and south-east ends of the pit, 2.40m apart. These were sub-circular in plan, 0.30m-0.40m in diameter and 0.20m-0.40m deep. The sides sloped steeply to a flat or concave base. The fills comprised a midbrown silty sand.

SFB2

A sub-rectangular pit, 2.80m long by 2.20m wide and 0.25m-0.30m deep, aligned westnorth-west to east-south-east with gradual sloping sides and a slightly concave base (Fig 4). The fill comprised a mid-brown silty sand, 0.15m-0.25m thick which produced seven sherds of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery. There were opposing postholes at the north-west and south-east ends of the pit, 2.40m apart. These were sub-circular in plan, 0.30m-0.40m in diameter and 0.20m-0.40m deep. The sides sloped steeply to a flat or concave base. The fills comprised a mid-brown silty sand.

The building had previously been investigated during the trial trench evaluation (Morris 2011)

The fill of the pit had been cut by a second pit, [1562], which was oval-shaped in plan, 2.0m long, 1.50m wide and 0.20m-0.25m deep. The profile varied from gradual to steep sloping sides with a broad concave to convex base. The fill produced an abundance of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, small fragments of burnt clay and charcoal.

SFB3

A sub-oval pit, 3.70m long by 2.60m wide and 0.20m-0.35m deep, aligned north-east to south-west with gradually sloping sides and an uneven base (Fig 5). In the base, within the natural sandstone, there was an irregular hollow. This may have been the result of a natural pocket of fragmentary limestone being removed during the initial digging out of the pit. The resulting hollow which was 0.90m long, 0.70m wide by 0.30m deep, had been levelled up with a mix of pinkish orange sand and sandstone fragments (1544). This deposit appeared to have been heat affected but the surrounding stone showed no evidence of scorching, suggesting it had not been burnt *in situ*.

The fill of the pit, (1543), which produced finds of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, animal and a shale spindlewhorl (discussed below), comprised a dark brown clayey sand with frequent sandstone fragments and charcoal flecking.

There were opposing postholes at the south-west and north-east ends of the pit, 3.40m apart. These were sub-circular in plan, 0.20m-0.30m in diameter with steep, almost vertical sides and slightly concave bases. The fills comprised mid to dark brown silty sand with occasional limestone fragments which may have been used as packing. The north-eastern posthole, [1547] appeared to cut the fill of the pit but this is likely to be the effect of the wooden post decaying *in situ* after the deposition of (1543).





Scales 1:25 & 1:50 (A4)





Scales, Plan 1:50, Section 1:25 (A4)

Ditches and gullies

Gully [1594]

A gully recorded in Trench 7 of the trial trench evaluation (feature [707], Morris 2011) was found to extend only a few centimetres at either end beyond the edges of the trench. Since the vast majority of the gully had been previously excavated it was not investigated further. It was 2.25m long and 1.0m wide and produced sherds of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery.

Pit [1585]

A sub-circular pit which was at least 1m in diameter, 0.60m deep with steep sloping edges and a broad flat base. The fill comprised a charcoal flecked, dark grey/black silty sand which produced sherds of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery

5.5 Medieval activity (mid 12th century)

Ditches

Enclosure ditch [1521]

In the south-eastern part of Area 2 there was the corner of a probable rectilinear enclosure. Not enough of the ditch was revealed to ascertain its orientation and the north-east to south-west arm was mostly truncated by a post-medieval ditch, [1534]. The enclosure was at least 45m long by 20m wide and had two possible internal divisions, [1591] and [1532] (Fig 2).

The ditch was 3.0m-4.50m wide, 0.80m to 0.90m wide with profiles varying from steep and stepped at the north-west end to gradual and concave at the south-east. The fills also varied from north to south. At the north-west corner a single homogeneous fill of sterile, mid brown silty sand was identified. At the mid point this overlay a thin layer of presumably edge derived, gravels whilst at the south-east end, up to four layers of silty sand were identified. These were between 0.10m and 0.40m thick and had a gleyed appearance with grey and orange-red mottling.

Ditch [1591]

This north-east to south-west aligned ditch was at approximate right angles to the enclosure ditch [1521]. It was 1.50m wide by 0.60m with steep sloping, slightly concave sides and a broad flat base. The fills comprised mid yellow-brown to grey silty sands which produced no finds. Only a short section of the ditch (c 0.70m) survived as it was largely removed by a later recut, [1586] (described below). Its relationship with the enclosure ditch was lost due to the presence of pit [1582] (described below).

Ditch [1586]

A recut of ditch [1591], this was 1.40m-1.60m wide by 0.30m-0.50m deep and at least 10m long. It terminated 1.50m from the north-eastern side of the enclosure ditch [1521]. The steep straight edges sloped to a broad flat base and the fill comprised mid yellow to dark grey silty sands which produced a single sherd of 12th century pottery.

Ditch [1532]

Located 10m to the south of ditch [1591] and similarly aligned, this was 1m-1.10m wide, 0.60m deep and at least 8m long. It had a narrow V-shaped profile and the fills, which produced a single sherd of residual Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, comprised light to dark yellow-brown silty sand. The south-west end of the ditch was cut by the enclosure ditch [1521].

5.6 Post-medieval activity

Ditch [1534]

A ditch aligned south-west to north-east which was at least 25m long and varied greatly in width and depth from north-east (4m wide and 0.90m deep) to south-west (1.4m wide and 0.25m deep). At the shallow part of the ditch the sides were concave and sloped gradually to a broad flat base whilst at the deeper part the sides were steep, straight or stepped and the base was irregular. The fill comprised an homogeneous mid-brown silty sand which produced finds of medieval or post-medieval roof tile; a late 17th century clay tobacco pipe bowl; residual Roman pottery and fragments of a possible Roman or Anglo-Saxon lava quern.



The junction of ditches 1521 and 1534, looking north-east Fig 6

Ditch [1508]

A ditch, aligned north-west to south-east which was at least 15m long, 0.80m-1.10m wide and 0.15m-0.30m deep. It had steep sloping sides, a flat base and the mid brown silty sand fill produced sherds of medieval or post-medieval roof tile. It terminated 7.5m from the north-west side of ditch [1534].

5.7 Undated features

Pit [1516]

A sub-oval pit, 1.56m long, 0.73m-0.92m wide and 0.14m deep. It had steep sloping sides, a broad flat base and the fill comprised mid brown silty sand.

Posthole [1512]

An oval posthole, 0.90m long, 0.70m wide and 0.28m deep. It had steep sloping sides, a narrow concave base and the fill comprised dark brown silty sand.



Posthole [1510]

A circular posthole, 0.45m in diameter and 0.15m deep which had a bowl-shaped profile and the fill comprised dark brown silty sand.

Gullies [1538] and [1560]

Situated at the western end of Area 2 these two gullies, aligned north-west to southeast were 22m apart. They were 0.45m-0.65m wide, 0.18m-0.21m deep with steep sloping sides and a concave base. The fills comprised mid to dark orange-brown silty sand. The westernmost gully, [1560], terminated 1m from the northern edge of the post-medieval boundary ditch [1534] but the relationship between [1538] and the boundary ditch was lost due to the presence of a geotechnical test pit.

Area 1

This area targeted a large ditch terminal, [1574], which was identified during the trial trench evaluation (Morris 2011). This was found to be more pit-like in character given its absence in the Area 3 trench 5m to the north. It cut an earlier possible ditch [1556] which in turn was cut by a ditch terminal [1552] which may have been the northwestern extremity of ditch [1508] seen to the south-east in Area 2. It is possible that pit [1556] and perhaps ditch [1556] represent small scale sand extraction, their ditch-like profiles and linear appearance being a result of the exploitation of sand-filled fissures within the natural sandstone.

Pit [1574]]

A sub-oval shaped pit 4.5m wide, 5m-10m long, 1m deep and aligned north-west to south-east. The sides sloped $c45^{\circ}$ to a narrow flat base and the fill comprised a dark greyish-brown silty clay sand.

Ditch [1556]

A linear feature, aligned north-west to south-east, at least 5m long, 2.20m wide by 0.80m deep. It had steep sloping, straight sides and a narrow concave base. The fills comprised light to mid yellow-orange silty sands.

Ditch[1552]

A linear ditch, aligned north-west to south-east, was at least 3m long, 1.20m wide, 0.55m deep. The fill comprised a mid-grey silty clay.

6 THE FINDS

6.1 The worked flint by Andy Chapman

Forty-one pieces of flint were recovered from the topsoil, the subsoil, from a posthole, a ditch and three Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings (Table 1).

The raw material is typically a dark grey vitreous flint, with a brown cortex, but a couple of pieces from the fills of cut features are in a light grey, mottled opaque flint. Two of the pieces from the topsoil and subsoil have a light blue-grey surface patination, perhaps suggesting that they have been in these soil horizons for some time.

Context	Flakes & spalls	Blades	Cores	Microlith	Retouched & miscellaneous	Totals
U/S, topsoil and subsoil	1 flake (utilised)	1	1	0	Serrated blade Flake from large implement	5
Posthole 1512 (1511)	1 flake	0	0	0	0	1
Ditches 1550 & 1556 (1548 & 1554)	1 flake	0	0	0	Flake from large implement	2
SFB 1 (1524)	2 flake 6 spalls	0	0	0	Shattered piece Flake with retouch	10
SFB 2 (1561 & 63)	7 spalls	0	0	0	Shattered pebble	8
SFB 3 (1543 & 44)	5 Flakes 6 spalls	0	1	1	2 burnt flints	15
Totals	10 flakes 19 spalls	1	2	1	8	41

Table 1: Quantification of worked flint

Although of small size, the group contains several pieces of interest. There are flakes and shattered pieces of considerable size, 50-60mm long, but sieving of soil samples from the three sunken-featured buildings also produced small quantities of flint spalls, some 5-15mm long. This group of small material from soil samples also includes a fine blade, from SFB 3, only 9mm long (but broken) and 4mm wide, with fine retouch along one edge, which can be classified as a microlithic blade of the later Mesolithic. From the subsoil there is a small core, with two platforms at 180°, which is only 25mm high by 24mm wide, from which small flakes and blades had been struck. Another small pebble core from SFB 3 is 40mm high by 25mm in diameter with small blades and flakes struck from a single platform. Both of these small cores could also be of late Mesolithic date.

From the subsoil there is a large blade, 55mm long by 28mm wide, and a finer blade with a triangular section, 22mm long (broken) by 17mm wide, has much edge damage but may originally have been a serrated blade. These pieces would be most appropriate in an Early Neolithic context.

From the topsoil and from ditch 1556, there are large flakes, 44mm wide and 59mm long, that have been struck larger implements with edge retouch, which may suggest that the flakes have come from large scrapers, but this is uncertain.

In conclusion, the flint assemblage appears to largely derive from the late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic, with the spalls perhaps indicating that there had been on site knapping with some of the fine debitage redeposited in the Anglo-Saxon sunkenfeatured buildings.

6.2 **The pottery** by Paul Blinkhorn

Analytical methodology

The pottery was initially bulk-sorted and recorded on a computer using DBase IV software. The material from each context was recorded by number and weight of sherds per fabric type, with featureless body sherds of the same fabric counted, weighed and recorded as one database entry. Feature sherds such as rims, bases and lugs were individually recorded, with individual codes used for the various types. Decorated sherds were similarly treated. In the case of the rimsherds, the form, diameter in mm and the percentage remaining of the original complete circumference was all recorded. This figure was summed for each fabric type to obtain the estimated vessel equivalent (EVE).

The terminology used is that defined by the Medieval Pottery Research Group's Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms (MPRG 1998) and to the minimum standards laid out in the Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG 2001). All the statistical analyses were carried out using a DBase package written by the author, which interrogated the original or subsidiary databases, with some of the final calculations made with an electronic calculator. Any statistical analyses were carried out to the minimum standards suggested by Orton (1998-9, 135-7).

Quantification

The pottery assemblage comprised 197 sherds with a total weight of 4,109g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 2.30. It was all Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon, apart from three medieval sherds, two Roman (28g) and one prehistoric flint-tempered sherd (2g). Where appropriate, it was recorded using the codings and chronology of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series (eg Baker and Hassall 1977):

A01: Chaff-tempered, 7 sherds, 62g, EVE = 0.05 A02: Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon Coarse Sandy ware, 115 sherds, 2,614g, EVE = 1.08 A07: Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon Fine Quartz, 64 sherds, 909g, EVE = 0.47 A19: Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon Quartz and Organic, 5 sherds, 407g, EVE = 0 C60: Hertfordshire-type Greyware (mid/late 12th – mid 14th century), 3 sherds, 87g, EVE = 0

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabrics is typical of the hand-made Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon tradition of Bedfordshire, and can be paralleled at a number of sites in the region (eg Blinkhorn 2005). In addition, the evaluation excavation yielded 23 sherds with a total weight of 813g, most of which was from what became SFB 2, context 1561 in this tranche of work.

Chronology

All the pottery from the main phase of excavation was undecorated, other than a single sherd from SFB 3 with one complete and two fragments of stamp impressions (Fig 10,), suggesting a date of the mid 6th – earlier 7th centuries (Myres 1977, 54). Two decorated sherds were noted amongst the assemblage recovered by the evaluation excavations, including a small sherd from the rim of a jar with fragments of two stamp impressions on the shoulder (Fig 10). It is almost certainly of a similar date. Otherwise, it is difficult to give any of the assemblages a refined chronology, other than to within the broad Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon period (*c* AD 450-850). The dating of Early Anglo-Saxon hand-built pottery is almost entirely reliant on the presence of decorated sherds. It seems that the Anglo-Saxon generally stopped decorating hand-built pottery during the 7th century (Myres 1977, 1), so any pottery with decoration is likely to date to before that time.

Few of the jars are well-enough preserved to allow identification of their original shape, but most appear to be simple globular forms. None of the bodysherds had evidence of the carinations or shoulders which are more typical of vessels of the 5th–earlier 6th century. Globular pots are known throughout the early and middle Anglo-Saxon periods, particularly from the 6th century onwards. One vessel, from SFB2, has a longitudinal pierced lug mounted on the shoulder (Fig 8,4). Such vessels are fairly well-known, and a number are listed in the Myres Corpus (ibid 1977, fig 77). Myres has suggested that most are of sixth or perhaps 7th century date (*ibid* 10). Given the range of forms noted here, coupled with the paucity of decorated sherds other than the stamped sherds, it seems likely that the assemblage is of mid 6th–earlier 7th century date.

The pottery

The majority of the pottery assemblage came from three sunken-featured buildings and a pit (context 1581), as follows:

SFB 1

(78 sherds, 1148g, EVE = 0.48)

The pottery occurrence by context and fabric type for SFB 1 is shown in Table 2. The two fills produced assemblages of broadly the same size and fragmentation:

1524: 39 sherds, 518g, EVE = 0.25 (Mean sherd weight = 13.3g) 1525: 39 sherds, 620g, EVE = 0.23 (Mean sherd weight = 15.9g)

Both assemblages appear to be the products of entirely secondary deposition, with no joining sherds and a relatively low mean sherd weight (14.7g) suggesting that it is very likely that the SFB hollow was backfilled with midden material. Nine rimsherds are present, of which eight are from jars (total EVE = 0.41) and one from an small open bowl or cup form (EVE = 0.08). The jars are mostly fairly large, with rim diameters in the 200-260mm range (eg Fig 8, 1), although two are smaller, with rim diameters of 140mm (eg Fig 8, 2). The cup (Fig 8, 3) has a rim diameter of 120mm.

The pottery showed a fairly even distribution throughout the fills, other than the southeast quadrant of context 1524, which was aceramic, and the north-west quadrant of context 1525, which produced just five sherds. This suggests that the two fills were introduced to the SFB hollow from opposite directions, and hence different sources.



Scale 1:4

The Early / Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery Fig 8

Table 2: Pottery occurrence b	y number and weight of sl	herds per context by fabric type,
SFB 1		

Fabric/	A01		A02		A07		A19		Date
Context	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
1524	1	11	9	126	28	379			E/MS
1525			28	365	9	242	2	13	E/MS
Total	1	11	37	491	37	621	2	13	

Illustrated pottery from SFB1 (Fig 8)

- 1: Jar rim, uniform black fabric, fabric A07, SFB1, NE quadrant, context 1524
- 2: Jar rim, uniform grey fabric, fabric A02, SFB1, SE quadrant, context 1525
- 3: Cup rim, dark reddish-brown fabric with dark grey outer surface, fabric A02, SFB1, SW quadrant, context 1524

SFB 2

(62 sherds, 2170g, EVE = 1.52)

The pottery occurrence by fabric type is shown in Table 3. Most of the assemblage occurred in the upper fill, 1561. A single small sherd came from the structural posthole, 1565. This SFB was sampled during the evaluation excavations, at which point nineteen sherds weighing 487g were recovered. These are not included in the total given above or Table 3. The evaluation assemblage context (805) included a small rimsherd with fragments of two stamp impressions (Fig 10). There is no indication of any linear decoration on the sherd, which suggests a date of the mid 6th to early 7th century (Myres 1977, 54).

Table 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type, SFB 2

Fabric/		A01		402		A07		A19	Date
Context	No	Wt (g)							
1561	6	51	48	1646			3	394	E/MS
1563			4	76					E/MS
1565					1	3			E/MS
Total	6	51	52	1722	1	3	3	394	

This SFB produced the largest and best-preserved feature-specific assemblage from the site, with the largest mean sherd weight (35.0g). A number of vessels were partially reconstructable, although none are complete, and there are also vessels which are represented by a number of non-joining sherds. One sherd is from the body of a very large jar which must originally have had a waist diameter in excess of 500mm, with a heavily degraded inner surface. This indicates that it originally contained ale, as the acids in such liquid can partially dissolve the surface of low-fired pottery. The base of another vessel is also well-represented (Fig 8, 7).

The entire assemblage again appears to be the product of secondary deposition, although the larger sherd size and the number of refitting sherds gives the impression that it is a somewhat 'fresher' assemblage than that from SFBs 1 and 3. Nine rimsherds were noted, eight of which are from jars, with five from large vessels with diameters in the 200-260mm range (eg Fig 8, 5), and the other four much smaller, in the 100-160mm range. One has a longitudinal pierced lug mounted on the shoulder (Fig 8, 4). Three further rimsherds were recovered during the evaluation. One is from a fairly large bowl (Fig 8, 10) with a rim diameter of c 220mm, another is from a jar with

a fragment of an upright lug on the rim (Fig 8, 9), and the third from a small jar (rim diameter = c 140mm).

The other vessel was a tiny thumb-pot with an open form, with a diameter of 40mm (Fig 9). It is an exceptionally small vessel, and could have had a number of functions, with a child's toy being the most obvious. It could have functioned as a crucible, but there is no sign of great heat ever having been applied, nor of residues consistent with such a function. There are a number of finger-tip impressions left from the manufacture which suggest that it was made by an adult rather than a child. Miniature pottery such as this is rare in the domestic context, and most of those examples known tend to be 'egg-cup' shaped, such as the example from Hartigan's, Milton Keynes (Blinkhorn 1993, fig 107, no 109). Myres listed a small number of miniature vessels (Myres 1977 figs 46, 47, 74, and 75), but very few are as small as this example, and many have lugs or handles, which this pot lacks.

Illustrated pottery from SFB2 (Fig 8)

- 4: Lugged jar, dark grey fabric with buff-grey outer surface, fabric A02, SFB2, fill 1561
- 5: Jar rim, dark grey fabric with browner patches on the outer surface, fabric A02, SFB2, fill 1561
- 6: Jar rim, uniform dark grey fabric, some sooting on outer and lower inner surfaces, fabric A02, SFB2, fill 1561
- 7: Base sherd, dark grey fabric with brown patches on the outer surface, fabric A02. outer base scorched and slightly sooted, SFB2, fill 1561
- 8: Rim from jar with upright lug, light grey fabric with darker surfaces, fabric A02, orange-brown patches on the lug, SFB2, fill 805 (evaluation)



Miniature thumb-pot from SFB2 (Scale 20mm) Fig 9

SFB 3

(45 sherds, 558g, EVE = 0.30)

The pottery occurrence by fabric type is shown in Table 4. The structure had a single fill, 1543, and two postholes, 1541 and 1546. The assemblage is of a similar nature to that from SFB1, with most of the sherds fairly small (mean weight = 12.4g). Despite this, a few cross-fits were made, and a few non-joining sherds from the same vessels were noted. Again, it appears to be the product of secondary deposition. Four rimsherds were noted, one from a large jar (Fig. 8, 10), two from small jars (eg Fig 8, 8) and one from a small bowl, from posthole 1546. This SFB also produced decorated pottery, a small sherd with a stamp impression and fragments of two others. As with the sherd from SFB2, there is no indication of any linear decoration on the sherd, which suggests a similar date of the mid 6th – early 7th century.

Table 4: Pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type, SFB 3

Fabric		A01		A02		A07		A19	Date
Context	No	Wt (g)							
1541					1	6			E/MS
1543			22	368	20	174			ES
1546		-	2	10					E/MS
Total	0	0	24	378	21	180	0	0	



Body sherd with stamped decoration from SFB3 Fig 10

Illustrated pottery from SFB3 (Fig 8)

- 8: Jar rim, uniform black fabric, fabric A07, small, thick patches of sooting on the outer surface, SFB3, NW quadrant, context 1543
- 10: Jar rim, uniform black fabric, fabric A07, SFB3, NE quadrant, context 1543

Pit 1581

(6 sherds, 119g, EVE = 0)

The pottery occurrence by fabric type is shown in Table 5. This small group comprised entirely plain bodysherds, all from different vessels, other than a fragment of an upright, pierced, rim-mounted lug from what was probably a very large vessel.

Table 5:	Pottery	occurrence	by	number	and	weight	of	sherds	per	context	by	fabric
type, Pit	1581											

Fabric	Fabric A01		A02		A07		A19		Date
Context	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
1581			1	14	5	105			E/MS

Ditch 705

This was sampled during the evaluation, and produced a single small sherd (3g) with slashed decoration (Fig 11). It is therefore likely to be early Anglo-Saxon, but can only be dated to the broad 5th – 7th century.



Small sherd with slashed decoration, from ditch 705 (Scale 10mm)

Fig 11

6.3 Ceramic building materials by Pat Chapman

Roman tile

One residual *tegula* tile sherd, weighing 277g, comes from fill (1543) of sunkenfeatured building SFB3. It is 23mm thick and made in a hard fine sandy orange-brown fabric, with one smoothed surface.

Medieval/post-medieval ceramic roof tile

Three sherds and four fragments from fill (1513) of gully [1508] and one sherd from fill (1533) of post-medieval ditch [1534], together weigh 400g. They are 10-12mm thick and made with a hard sandy orange-brown fabric with occasional small gravel. One sherd from (1513) has a peghole 17mm in diameter, and the sherd from (1533) has a possible remnant square peghole. The sherd from fill (1519) of ditch [1521], 17mm thick, is made from a hard coarse sandy buff coloured fabric with some grog and stone inclusions up to 8mm. These could date from the medieval to post-medieval periods.

Fired clay

One triangular wedge-shaped fragment, 50mm long and up to 30m thick, comes from (1581) fill of pit [1582]. It is soft and silty, very pale orange with a white surface. Thirteen small fragments, weighing 52g, come from fill (1561) of sunken-featured building SFB2. Six of these have the same fabric as that from (1581), the other seven are hard, sandy, friable brown fragments.

6.4 The lava quern by Andy Chapman

From the fill (1557) of a post-medieval ditch [1534], there are seven rounded and abraded fragments, weighing 404g, with the largest piece 63mm in diameter, of what appears to be lava, as used particularly in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods for the production of rotary querns. The highly vesicular grey stone was imported from the Eifel region of Germany.

6.5 The slag by Andy Chapman

The sunken-featured buildings produced small quantities of slag derived from hightemperature processes. From the fill (1525) of the SFB 1 there are two lumps, weighing 70g, of dense but vesicular slag that may derive from iron working. From the fill (1561) of SFB 2 there is a small piece, weighing 2g, of vesicular slag with a glassy surface and from the fill (1544) of SFB 3 there are further small piece, weighing 2g, of denser slag.

These small quantities may relate to contemporary ironworking or they may be residual from earlier activity.

6.6 The human tooth by Andy Chapman

From the fill (1524) of sunken-featured building SFB1, there is the crown of a human molar, heavily worn and with the root resorbed, indicating that it was from the primary dentition. This would suggest that it has come from a child of about 10 years old (Schaefer *et al*, 2009, 94-95).

6.7 Other finds by Tora Hylton

The Anglo-Saxon spindlewhorl and loomweights

Finds relating to the manufacture of textiles were recovered from three sunken featured buildings (SFB 1, 2 and 3) and pit [1582], they include a spindlewhorl for the hand activity of spinning and fragments from annular clay loomweights for weaving textiles on a warp weighted loom; the weights would have been suspended from the warp threads to ensure that they were vertically taut.



The shale spindlewhorl from SFB 1 (Scale 10mm) F

Fig 12

The lathe-turned spindlewhorl, made from shale (Fig 12), was recovered from SFB 1 together with four loomweight fragments. The spindle-whorl is bi-conical in shape and

slightly flattened at the poles, similar to an example from Abingdon (Brown 1972, fig 5, 6). The perforation is centrally placed and waisted, the latter feature indicating that the hole was fashioned from both sides. Of interest is the hexagonal outline of the perforation (one side is more defined than the other), possibly indicating that the distaff had a hexagonal cross-section instead of a circular one, which generally appears to be the norm. Shale is a clayey sedimentary rock and is therefore subject to wear, it is possible that a hexagonal distaff would prevent rotation during use and therefore excessive wear. A similar feature has been recorded on a bone example from Thetford (Rogerson and Dallas 1984, fig 194, 77).

Eighteen fragments from loomweights were recovered. SFB 1 produced the most complete examples, while SFB 2, 3 and pit [1582] contained mainly small fragments. The loomweights are made from poorly-fired fine clay, with few inclusions, just the occasional small stone. The exterior surfaces are fired and oxidised to a buff/pale orange colour and the core is grey/black. Organic impressions in the form of straw, chaff and the odd seed are visible on the surface. They have been made by forming a ring and smoothing it with fingers. Where the cross-section is apparent, all have circular/sub-circular cross-sections and only one fragment is complete enough to determine its diameter (*c* 130mm). Stylistically these loomweights display similarities to Dunnings 'annular' loomweight (Type 1), where the central hole is as wide as or wider than the ring of clay around it (*Dunning et al*, 1959, 23-24). Loomweights of this type date to the 5th/6th centuries.

Other Anglo-Saxon finds

Other finds recovered from the sampling of soil deposits recovered from the SFBs include, a glass bead and three metal fragments. The glass bead was recovered from SFB 1 together with tapered copper alloy strip (undiagnostic) and a possible nail shank. The bead is complete and it is covered in a pale brown weathering crust. It is 'coiled' and was manufactured by winding molten glass around a metal rod, the aperture left by the rod was utilised as a perforation. The bead displays similarities to Brugmann's miniature dark bead (Brugmann 2004, fig 71), which dates to the late Roman/early Anglo-Saxon period.

A small rectangular-shaped lead strip, measuring 18mm by 5mm, with two circular perforations was recovered from the fill of SFB 2.

Medieval/post-medieval finds

Later finds include a copper alloy thimble with hand punched indentations which dates to the c 15/16th century. A conical lead weight with integral suspension loop, lead shot, 14mm diameter, probably for use with a pistol, and a fragment of an iron blade are post-medieval in date.

7 THE FAUNAL AND EVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 **The animal bone** by Lazlo Lichtenstein

Introduction

A total of 168 (NISP) animal bone elements and fragments was hand-collected from a range of features during the excavation, weighing 772g. Following cleaning and drying all fragments of animal bone were analysed and recorded, using standard zooarchaeological methods. This material was analysed to determine the taxa present, state of preservation and it is potential to provide evidence on the function and ecomomy of the site.

Method

The animal bone was identified using Northamptonshire Archaeology's and the author's vertebrate reference collection, and further guidelines from Schmid (1972), Driesch (1979), Sisson & Grossman (1953) and Feher (1990). Due to anatomical similarities between sheep and goat the criteria set out by J. Boessneck (1969) were used to separate the two species. Ageing data and tooth eruption and wear were categorised according to Bull and Payne (1982), Grant (1982), Hillson (2005), Schmid (1972) with the identification of juvenilis after Amorosi (1989) and Schmid (1972).

All the animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible identified to species, anatomical element, fragmentation, side, zone, fusion, cut- or animal teeth marks, age and sex.

Bones that could not be identified to species were, where possible, categorised according to the relative size of the animal represented (large ungulate size: cattle or horse sized, small ungulate size: pig or sheep/goat). The presence of large and medium vertebrae and ribs was recorded for each context.

The minimum number of individuals (MNI) was calculated on the most frequently occurring bone for each species and taking into account left and right sides, as well as epiphyseal fusion and tooth wear stage. For the calculation of the number of identified fragments per species (NISP) all identifiable fragments were counted.

All teeth and a restricted suite of parts of the postcranial skeleton were recorded and used in counts. All fragments were recorded.

Results

Employing standard zooarchaeological methodological procedures 65 specimens (38.7% of the total NISP) were identified to taxa and parts of anatomy, representing three mammalian Bos(cattle), Sus(pig), Ovicaprid(sheep or goat) species (Table 6). The majority of bones came from cattle (17.9%) and lower number of sheep/goat (11.3%). Pig was represented in relatively high numbers at the site (9.5%). No avian, fish or amphibian bones were recovered.

Species/taxa	No	Percentage
Bos taurus L. (Linne 1758)	30	17.9%
Sus scrofa domesticus B. (Brisson 1762)	16	9.5%
Ovicaprid (Ovis aries L. and Capra hircus L. (Linne 1758)	19	11.3%
Large ungulate size	56	33.3%
Small ungulate size	17	10.1%
Unidentifiable	30	17.9%
Total	168	100%

Table 6: Species present in the animal bone assemblage by fragment count (including teeth)

Taphonomy

The bones were generally in good condition, but the fragmentation was very high (Table 7), with the majority (78.7%) being less than 50mm in size. The surface abrasion was at low level. No complete long bones recorded, because the proximal and the distal ends were damaged. Taphonomic factors affecting the material were recorded including gnawed and recently broken bones. Some bones were broken in antiquity signifying a chosen method of disposal and more than 50 % showed signs of fresh breaks.

A single bone fragment from the assemblage had been affected by butchery. Knife marks was seen on a fragment of ovicaprid maxilla from the pit (1561)/[1562], which was cut into SFB2.

Canid gnawing was noted on a single, small ungulate size animal diaphysis fragment of radius from (1561)/[1562] SFB2.

Evidence for burning was seen on 3.5% of bone, which is relatively moderate. Evidence of burning was observed on a large ungulate size animal maxilla fragment from (1561)/[1562] SFB2; some small unidentified bone fragments from (1541)/[1542] SFB3, and from pit (1581)/[1582]. No evidence of bone working was observed.

Table 7: Size of the animal bon	e assemblage	(excluding teeth)
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Size (mm)	No	Percentage
<20	31	20%
20-50	91	58.7%
50-100	26	16.8%
100-150	5	3.2%
150-200	2	1.3%
Total	155	100%

Ageing

Some ageing data was available from pig and sheep/goat tooth wear evidence and cattle bone fusion (Table 8).

Context	Species	Age
(1543)/[1545] SFB3	cattle	Juvenilis, 2-2.5 years
	pig	12-18 months
	sheep/goat	Adultus (TWS E, 2-3 years)
(1561)/[1562[SFB2	pig	Juvenilis, younger than 12 months
	sheep/goat	Older than 12 months

Tooth wear evidence of pig premolars and molars indicated a 12-18 months age beast (1543)/[1545] and a deciduous incisor indicated an another juvenilis animal (1561)/[1562]. Sheep/goat premolars and molars indicated an adult beast in context (1543) and an at least 12 months old beast in context (1561) on the site.

Epiphysial fusion evidence

Nonfused distal epiphysis was recorded on a cattle metatarsus (1543)/[1545], this animal was young individual.

Discussion

The state of preservation on the site was generally good, but the fragmentation was very high. A large number of large- and small ungulate size, as well as unidentifiable bone fragments were also recorded. Many bones were smashed recently, for this reason more than 60% of the assemblage could not be identified to species. The assemblage is dominated by cattle 17.9%, followed by lower numbers of sheep/goat 11.3% and pig 9.5%. The dominance of cattle is not unusual for this period (Table 9). Its presence is the result of domestic waste disposal.

Table 9: Minimum number of individuals identified

Common name	MNI
Cattle	2
Pig	2
Sheep/Goat	2

Dog gnawing was of low frequency (only one bone). The presence of canid gnawing on bones suggests that food waste was present above ground for some time before being buried. This is an indicator that dogs were present on the site despite none of their bones being recorded in the faunal assemblage.

Evidence for burning was seen on some small bone fragments, suggesting that this was the preferred method of disposal. The assemblage appears to represent kitchen waste.

None of the hand-collected from the contexts shown evidence of pathological condition.

Conclusion

The range of species present is not unusual for Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon contexts. Cattle was the most important species in terms of food value on account of the much greater carcass weight in this period. There are anatomical similarities between sheep and goats, but in this case the ovicaprid remains almost certainly came from sheep. All of the pigs in the assemblage appear to have been domestic.

The species present and their relative proportions appear to be usual for this period.

7.2 The charcoal and charred plant remains by Mike Allen and A J Clapham

Seven samples were supplied from a range of Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon features. Bulk samples were processed by Northamptonshire Archaeology by standard flotation methods where flots and residues were retained on an appropriate sized sieve mesh. Unsorted flots fromm first, and second flotation (where undertaken) were provided (Table 10). No residues or material recovered from the coarse reside (ie >4mm) were assessed. Following assessment of the flots, three samples were selected for analysis.

Sample	Context	Feature no	Description	Sample volume (litres)	Plants analysed	Charcoal analysed
2	1524	SFB 1	Upper fill		×	×
3	1525	SFB 1	Primary fill	40	\checkmark	\checkmark
4	1543	SFB 3	Upper fill	40	×	×
5	1561	SFB 2	Upper fill	40	\checkmark	\checkmark
6	1563	SFB 2	Lower fill	40	×	×
7	1581	Pit 1582	Pit fill	40	\checkmark	\checkmark
8	1544	SFB1	fill in hollow in SFB	10	×	×

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Analysis

The aims of the analysis were to determine the agricultural activity of the area and to deduce any crop processing activity on the site from the charred plant remains. The analysis of the charcoal may help to determine the composition of the local woodland, to detect any evidence for woodland management, any selection of wood for fuel and for building construction.

Methods

The analysed flots were fully sorted using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and a seed identification manual (Cappers *et al* 2006). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010). The cell structure of all the non-oak identification samples was examined in three planes under a high power microscope and identifications were carried out using Hather (2000) and reference slides housed at the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service.

Results

Three samples were selected for charred plant remains and charcoal analysis. Two samples were from sunken-featured buildings SFB1 and SFB2 (contexts 1525 and 1561) whilst the third (1581) was from pit [1582]. The results of the charred plant remains and charcoal analysis are shown in Appendices A and B respectively

SFB 1 (1525)

Context (1525) was the primary fill of SFB 1 and charred plant remains were recorded in small numbers. Cereals were present in the form of grains of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.), most likely bread wheat (*Triticum* aestivum), hulled barley (*Hordeum* vulgare), rye (Secale cereale) and oat (*Avena* sp.). Barley grains were more common than those of wheat and oat. The presence of a wild oat (*Avena* fatua) floret base suggests that the oat was a weed although the possibility of the oat being a crop cannot be ruled out. Other crops recorded were peas (*Pisum* sativum).

Weed seeds recorded from this context included vetch/pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*), black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), dock (*Rumex* sp.), fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), wild oat and small grained grasses and grass stems. Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell fragments were also recorded and may represent a wild food resource.

The charcoal identified from this context consisted of Maloideae (apple/pear/whitebeam/hawthorn), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), oak (*Quercus* sp.) heartwood fragments, lime (*Tilia* sp.) roundwood fragments and privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*). Oak was the dominant taxon identified.

SFB 2 (1561)

Context (1561) was the upper fill of SFB2 and charred plant remains and charcoal was recorded from this context. The charred plant remains in terms of numbers and the range of taxa present was similar to (1525).

Cereal remains included free-threshing wheat, hulled barley (the dominant cereal), rye and oat. The lack of the characteristic oat floret bases makes it difficult to determine the oat was present as a crop or a weed. Other crops identified included peas.

Weed seeds included vetch/pea, a sloe stone fragment (*Prunus spinosa*), black bindweed, onion couch grass tubers (*Arrhenatherum elatius* var *bulbosum*), and an unidentified thorn which is most likely to be sloe. Hazel nutshell fragments were present perhaps representing a wild food resource. Mineralised plant remains were also present in small quantities and included vetch/pea and pea.

Charcoal identified from this context included Maloideae, buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), hazel roundwood, maple (*Acer* sp.) and roundwood and heartwood of lime. Maloideae was the dominant taxon.

Pit [1582], fill (1581)

Pit fill (1581) produced a similar range of taxa as the previous two samples. Cereals included free-threshing wheat and hulled barley. Barley was the dominant cereal. Oat was present and the identification of wild oat floret base (*Avena fatua*) suggests that these remains may represent a weed but the possibility of an oat crop being present as well cannot be ruled out. Other crops were represented by peas. Weed seeds included vetch/pea, black bindweed, fat hen and small grasses.

Charcoal from this context included Maloideae, elm, oak heartwood, lime heartwood and ash. Both Maloideae and ash were the dominant taxa.

Discussion

The presence of charred plant remains in all of the contexts allows the reconstruction of the agricultural activity of the area. The lack of cereal chaff suggests that crop processing took place either elsewhere on the site or off-site perhaps at the field edge. Field edge temporary corn driers have been identified at other sites, including Buttington Cross, Welshpool, Powys (Mann and Hurst 2009) which were rich in charred plant remains and chaff. The presence of grains of free-threshing wheat (most likely bread wheat), hulled barley, rye and possibly oats demonstrates that crops were most likely grown locally, as were the peas. The weed seeds present in the assemblages are most likely to be associated with the cereal crops and may indicate that the cereals were stored semi-clean and then the weed seeds were picked out prior to consumption. The cereals identified from this site are typical of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The presence of hazel nutshell fragments in the features may suggest that the local diet was supplemented by wild food resources. This may also explain the presence of sloe stone fragments.

The charcoal identified from Stanford Road, Shefford consisted of a wide range of taxa and suggests that mixed woodland was present in the vicinity of the site. The presence of heartwood of elm, oak, ash and lime may suggest that they were originally used for the buildings which then burnt down. The possibility that they also used as fuel wood cannot be ruled out. The presence of hazel, and lime roundwood in SFBs 1 and 2 (contexts 1525 and 1561) may indicate some woodland management, possibly coppicing for the hazel and pollarding for the lime. Lime leaves can also be used as an animal fodder crop and the presence of the lime roundwood may show that the branches cut off in the process of pollarding of the limes may have been brought back to the site where after the leaves were consumed by the livestock the bare branches would have been used as fire wood.

Therefore, both cereal and non-cereal crops were grown locally but, it is most likely that they were processed either elsewhere on the site or off-site. The crops were most likely brought onto and stored on site as a semi-cleaned product with the final cleaning of weed seeds by handpicking being done as and when the crop was required for consumption. The presence of hazel nutshell and sloe stone fragments suggests that the diet was supplemented by wild foods.

The charcoal indicates that there was species rich mixed woodland locally, which provided timbers for the buildings as well as fire wood. The presence of roundwood suggests that woodland management was practiced with the hazel being coppiced and the lime most likely being pollarded.

Summary

Charred plant remains were present in all of the samples but not in large quantities. Cereals, especially free-threshing wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains predominated, although hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), rye (*Secale cereale*), and oat (*Avena* sp.) were also identified. No cereal chaff was recorded from the samples. Other crops identified

included peas (*Pisum sativum*). Moderate amounts of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell fragments were found in the samples and probably represent a wild food resource. Weeds were represented by a small number of taxa. The majority of the remains were preserved by charring but some mineralised material was present in one of the sunkenfeatured buildings

Charcoal was identified from all three samples and mostly consisted of heartwood, although some roundwood was present. Taxa identified included Maloideae, buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), oak (*Quercus* sp.), hazel, maple (*Acer* sp.), lime (*Tilia* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*). The presence of elm, oak, ash and lime may represent structural timbers, especially the heartwood fragments with the remainder possibly being fuel wood. The presence of these taxa suggests that mixed woodland was present in the area and the presence of roundwood suggests that woodland management was practiced at a local scale.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Early/Middle-Saxon activity

Chronology

The ceramic and other finds suggests that the Anglo-Saxon occupation at the site was relatively short lived with its origin in the mid 6th century and abandonment in the early 7th-century. The sunken-featured buildings displayed no evidence of maintenance in the form of post replacement to suggest that they were standing for an extended period of time. However, there is the possibility that the SFBs represent a single structure, rebuilt and resited over time, rather than three structures standing together.

The sunken-featured buildings: form and function

The sunken-featured building, also known as a *Grubenhaus*, is the most common type of structure found on Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon settlements and those at Stanford Road are typical of their type. All were sub-rectangular to oval pits; within the average size of 4m by 3m with opposing postholes at the short ends of the pit. These postholes are likely to have supported a ridge pole, spanning the length of the pit, upon which a tent-like pitched roof would have been constructed.

There was no evidence to suggest the location of an entrance to any of the SFBs nor that the base of the pit had been used as the floor of the structures during their lifetimes. The lack of cut features (other than a possible shallow scoop in the base of SFB3); hearths, remnants of trampled clay or other prepared floor surface or wear to the natural surface in the base of the pit would suggest they had suspended plank floors. The uneven, stony natural surface at the base of SFB3 and the soft sandy natural in SFBs 1 and 2 would have been equally unsuitable as floor surfaces and gives further credence to the argument for suspended floors.

The function of SFBs is a subject of much discussion which includes dwellings; storage areas, particularly for grain and, most commonly, huts for textile manufacture. The association of finds of loomweights, spindlewhorls, pin beaters and other artefacts related to textile manufacture is well documented (Tipper 2004), although rarely have these finds been considered *in-situ*, usually coming from deposits accumulated following disuse. The presence of a spindlewhorl and loomweight fragments within the SFBs at Stanford Road could suggest their function as weaving or spinning sheds but loom weight fragments from a broadly contemporary pit, 45m to the south-east of SFB3, could indicate that this material is redeposited and does not necessarily have any functional association with the buildings.

Site morphology

Little can be said of the SFBs location within the wider settlement arrangement since so few other demonstrably Anglo-Saxon features were identified. They appear to be an isolated group of three structures but as Tipper (*ibid*) points out this is generally not the case. It is almost certain that the SFBs would have existed alongside ground level postbuilt structures, the remains of which have not survived or they lie outside of the area of excavation.

Economy and environment

As with many sites of this period, textile production appears to have played an important part of their economy. At Stanford Road the evidence for textile manufacture came from settlement debris deposited within the SFBs and a pit some distance from them following their abandonment. While it is likely that textile manufacture was taking place in the immediate vicinity it cannot be said with any certainty that it was happening within the structures on the site.

Cattle, sheep/goats and to a lesser extent pigs were all present at the site for their meat. There was only a single example of butchery marks on the bone but this may have been due to the highly fragmented nature of the assemblage. Wheat and pea crops were grown and processed locally and brought to the site for consumption. Hazel nutshell and sloe stones suggest the diet of the inhabitants was supplemented by wild food stuffs.

The charcoal evidence suggests that timber for fuel and for construction was sourced from nearby mixed woodland. Coppiced oak and pollarded lime suggest that woodland management was practised to a certain degree.

8.2 Medieval and post-medieval activity

No environmental evidence was collected from the sterile fills of the enclosure ditch [1521] or the internal division [1591]. Only the north-west corner of the enclosure was revealed by the excavation so little can be said of its form or function. The northern part of the enclosure was filled with a homogeneous silty sand whilst the southern extremity of the ditch had a slightly more complex depositional sequence which may suggest the presence of standing water or episodes of over-bank flooding from the nearby River Ivel.

The post-medieval ditch [1534] followed the alignment of the north-east to south-west return of the medieval enclosure and extended south-west towards Stanford Road. The ditch produced Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval finds which could suggest that it was a long-lived landscape feature. However, given its extremely shallow profile, singular cut and homogeneous fill at its south-western end it would seem that these residual finds made their way into the ditch during manuring.

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Poaceae sp indet stem fragsgrassesABCD5unidentified thorn-3-Mineralised-3-Vicia/Lathyrus spvetch/peaABCD-3-Pisum sativumgarden peaAF-1-	Poaceae sp indet grain (small)	grass	AF	1	-	1
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MineralisedVicia/Lathyrus spvetch/peaABCD-3-Pisum sativumgarden peaAF-1-	unidentified thorn			-	3	-
Vicia/Lathyrus spvetch/peaABCD-3-Pisum sativumgarden peaAF-1-	Mineralised					
Pisum sativum garden pea AF - 1 -	Vicia/Lathyrus sp	vetch/pea	ABCD	-	- 3	-
	Pisum sativum	garden pea	AF	-	- 1	-

APPENDIX A: CHARRED PLANT REMAINS BY SPECIES AND CONTEXT

	Feature	SFB 1	SFB 2	Pit 1582
	Context	1525	1561	1581
	Sample	3	5	7
Latin name	Common name			
Maloideae	apple/ pear/whitebeam/			
	hawthorn	3	10	10
Rhamnus cathartica	buckthorn	-	3	-
<i>Ulmus</i> sp	elm	1	-	1
Quercus sp	oak	15hw	-	3hw
Corylus avellana	hazel	-	1rw	-
<i>Acer</i> sp	maple	-	1	-
<i>Tilia</i> sp	lime	3rw	5rw, 5hw	10hw
<i>Fraxinus</i> sp	ash	-	-	1
Ligustrum vulgare	privet	3	-	-

APPENDIX B: CHARCOAL BY SPECIES AND CONTEXT

MOLA 24 January 2014







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