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Anglo-Saxon Burials at the 'Three Kings', Haddenham 1990

Ben Robinson & Corinne Duhig

Abstract

During January 1990 a team from Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Section undertook a salvage excavation at the 'Three Kings' Public House, Haddenham. The excavation was carried out in response to the discovery of inhumation burials, made during the digging of foundations for a car park. One intact double burial of the pagan Anglo-Saxon period and several disturbed burials were excavated.¹

Introduction

In December 1989 an area of yard adjacent to the existing car park at the 'Three Kings' Public House was excavated by JCB in order to prepare foundations for a car park extension. The landlord, W. Presnell, allowed a friend who suspected the presence of antiquities on the site to prospect the area with a metal detector. Several artifacts, notably an iron spearhead and shield boss, were recovered. The County Archaeologist, Alison Taylor, was then approached and an inspection of the site was made. A single, seemingly intact, grave was discovered and Mr Presnell agreed to halt further work on the site, to allow time for the salvage excavation of this and any other remains that were likely to be disturbed by the car park construction. In the absence of developer funding, the work was paid for from the Cambridgeshire County

Council Rural Management Division's Vulnerable Sites Fund.

Background

Haddenham village is situated five miles to the southwest of Ely, on the southern edge of the area of high ground which forms the Isle of Ely. This outcrop is comprised of Kimmeridge Clay, capped by Lower Greensand and Gault. The excavation site was in the centre of the village (Fig. 1) at 37 m. O.D.

Excavations undertaken by I. Hodder and C. Evans in Haddenham parish throughout the 1980s have demonstrated the presence of settlement from the Neolithic to the Romano-British period in the area.² However, this settlement seems to have been concentrated on the surrounding fen, or on small gravel islands in the fen, rather than on the higher ground. Consequently there is a lack of occupation evidence prior to medieval times from the village itself. The only recorded finds are a Roman coin, bracelet and potsherds from Linden End, and Romano-British potsherds from Hinton Hall (Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record). The 1969 excavation at Hinton Hall, to the northeast of the village, produced evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation, though unfortunately a high water table prevented examination below tenth-century levels (Cambs. SMR).

One piece of evidence which hints at early Anglo-Saxon settlement at Haddenham is St Ovin's Cross. This is the base of a commemorative stone to St Etheldreda's steward, who died in 676 AD. An inscription on the stone

¹ The following conventions apply throughout this report: the site grid, although orientated on Grid North, has its own coordinate set; all burial orientations are given as 16-point bearings, 'head first' relative to Grid North; context/burial numbers are enclosed in square brackets.

² Christopher Evans and Ian Hodder, 'The Haddenham Project', *Fenland Research* 2 (1985) pp.18-23.

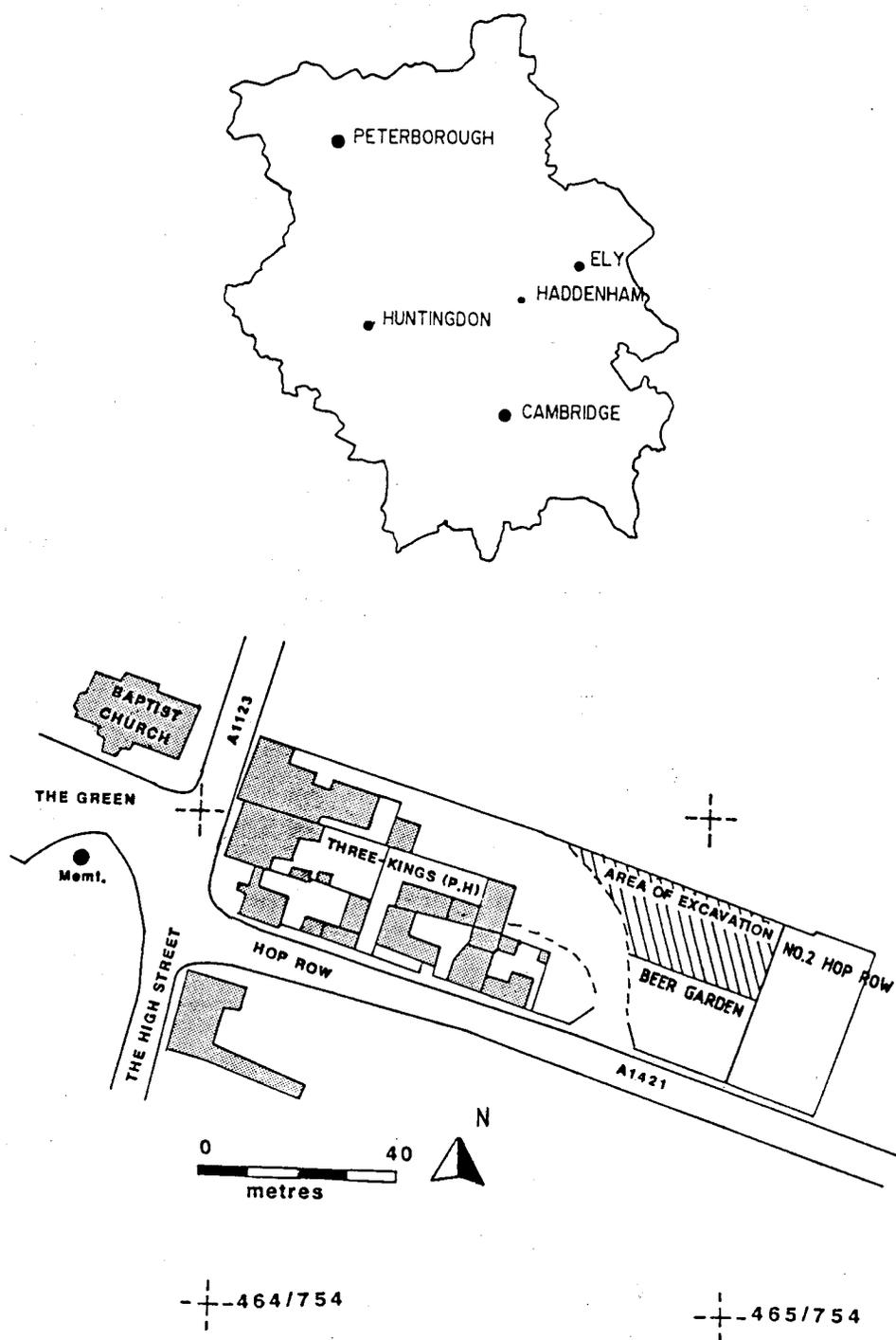


Figure 1. Location plan of the Haddenham 'Three Kings' site.

reads, 'O God grant thy light and rest to Ovin. Amen'. Until the eighteenth century it was situated in the village and used as a mounting block. It is now kept in Ely Cathedral (Cambs.

SMR). It is hard to imagine such a monument being placed away from a settlement and its position could well have originally indicated Ovin's burial or birthplace. Later

Anglo-Saxon settlement is confirmed by the name of the village, the earliest recorded form of which is 'Haeda Ham' (Haeda's homestead) from 970 AD.³ The Domesday Survey records Haddenham together with the separate hamlets of Hill Row and Linden End, which are now incorporated into the village.

The area of the excavation described below was cultivated until recently, producing famed early potatoes.

Excavation Strategy

The site, an area approximately 15 m. x 30 m., was excavated by mechanical digger, down to the level of natural sand, by the developer during December 1989. This involved removing up to one metre of overburden. A ballast of concrete rubble was then dumped across the site in all but a small area which surrounded the previously-located grave. The excavation spoil was examined by the archaeologists when they arrived at the site in January 1990, and a quantity of human bone and a large fragment of Anglo-Saxon pottery (Fig.7, [1000]:2) was recovered. The rubble was removed as it seemed very likely that more burials would be located in the vicinity. Due to the confined space this was achieved in stages, clearing the rubble from a small area at a time with a mechanical digger and then dumping it back when the area had been examined. Each cleared area was shovel scraped and then cleaned by trowelling, the features showing up as darker areas against the natural buff Greensand. It was intended that all features encountered would be sample excavated depending on size and importance, and that all burials would be recovered.

The excavation was carried out by a team of three archaeologists over ten days.

The Features

[1]

This large ditch was heavily truncated by the initial JCB excavation of the site though lower portions survived as a roughly rectangular area (8 m. x 3.5 m.) of mid-brown sandy silt (Fig.2). Excavation of the surviving fill revealed a few fragments of human bone, with a further concentration of human bone at its base [5]. Further to the west, three shallow depressions, one containing a cow's jaw, cut the natural sand, but beyond this the feature was entirely excavated away. Feature [8], with

its similar fill, is probably a continuation of [1]. This feature was visible in the section formed by the site's boundary with a neighbouring property. Its profile was a flattened 'u' shape, 2.5 m. wide at the top and 0.9 m. deep. It was cut by a modern fence post but cut feature [9] and layer [10]. The act of cutting it appears to have caused disturbance to burials [2] and [7], as confirmed by the skeletal analysis (see *Skeletal Material*, below).

[2]

This burial was encountered adjacent to the northern side of pit/ditch [1]. The burial was very disturbed and incomplete, probably mostly due to the developer's excavations, though some disturbance may have resulted from the digging of ditch [1]: bones belonging to this individual, an adult female, were recovered from the assemblage [5] at the base of [1]. Only a portion of the right arm and lower legs remained *in situ* (Fig.5), their orientation suggesting that the burial was extended, supine and orientated ESE-WNW. This burial was accompanied by that of a child, of which only a left femur remained. There was no remaining trace of a grave cut; the grave fill survived in a few places near the bone as a yellowish mid-brown silty sand. There were no associated artifacts.

[3]

Burial [3] was one of two inhumations placed side by side in a single wide grave (Fig.3). It was from here that an iron shield boss and a spearhead were extracted by metal detecting, prompting the initial discovery of the site. The positions of these finds were not recorded though it was thought that the shield boss came from the chest area of the skeleton while the spearhead was situated somewhere near the left shoulder. After the area was cleaned the grave contrasted with the natural sand as an irregular sub-rectangular (1.3 m. x 1.95 m.) patch of yellowish mid-brown silty sand. Careful excavation revealed no sign of a coffin structure or other grave furniture. Initial clearance of the site had severely truncated the grave so that only the lower 20 cm. of fill remained, cut into the Greensand. The cut, visible in section, indicated a grave depth of 50 cm. though the upper part may well have been truncated by layer [10].

The burial was of a large male adult lying supine and extended and orientated

³ P.H. Reaney, *The Place Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely* (Cambridge 1943).

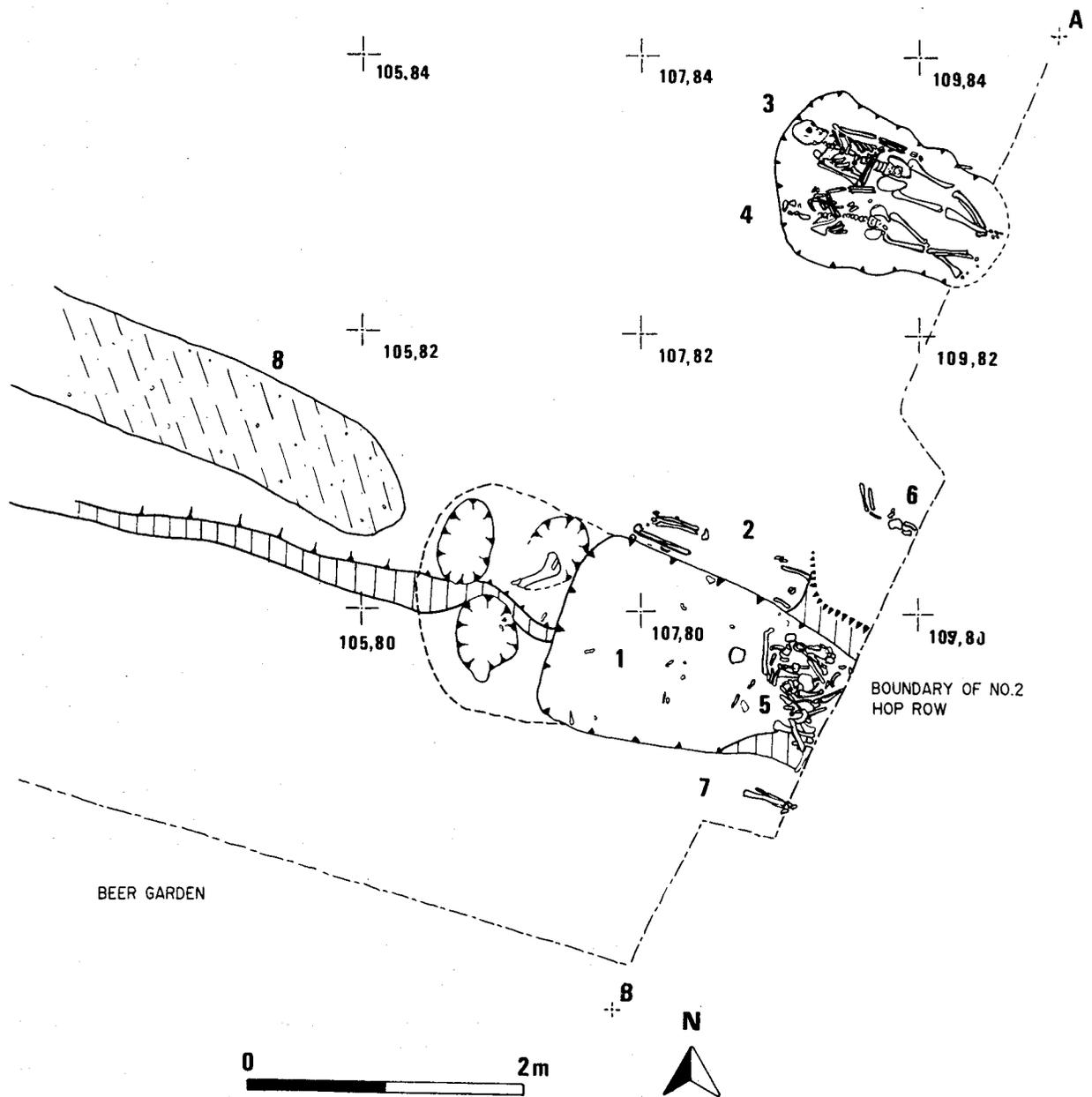


Figure 2. Plan of excavated features in the southeastern corner of the site.

WNW-ESE. The legs were crossed right over left at the ankles, the flexed right arm lay across the stomach, and the left arm was extended by the side. The skull was propped up by a 'pillow' of natural sand left unexcavated by the grave diggers, and was tilted slightly toward the left shoulder. The skeleton rested on a 'bed' of sparsely arranged pebbles which may have been deliberately placed; although such pebbles occurred naturally in the subsoil, here they were especially concentrated. The bone was very well preserved and the skeleton undisturbed and almost complete. Apart from the shield boss and spearhead, a number of other artifacts were associated with this burial: two iron shield studs, a fragment of iron shield grip, a buckle, an iron knife and a spear ferrule. The remains of a chatelaine group were found near the right hip, though the proximity of this to burial [4] casts a doubt over its ownership. The artifacts are discussed further below. Two small, abraded potsherds were found in the grave fill. Both are Anglo-Saxon but cannot be closely dated. One, a body-herd, is of a very similar fabric to [1000]:2 (described below) but the other, a rim-herd, is from a more thinly-walled vessel and is of a hard grey fabric with shell inclusions.

[4]

Burial [4] lay alongside burial [3]. Both rested in the same grave cut, and were sealed in the same fill. The skeleton was that of a female, slighter than [3], and with the bone equally well preserved. The skull had been damaged by the JCB during initial site excavation and was incomplete, though many fragments were subsequently recovered from the spoil. The burial was extended and supine with the right leg crossed over the left at the knee. The right arm was flexed and lay across the chest so that the right hand rested on the midpoint of the left humerus. The left arm was extended at a slight angle to the side so that the hand was beneath the pelvis of burial [3]. Grave goods associated with this burial included 30 amber beads, a bronze small-long brooch, a bone spindle whorl and a fragment of decorated bone, possibly part of a comb. The chatelaine group, mentioned above, may have belonged to this burial.

There was no sign of a re-cut to the grave or of disturbance to one of the burials by the other, indicating that they occurred at the same time. Burial [4] must have been placed in the grave first, since its left hand was beneath the male's pelvis. The grave partly ex-

tended into the neighbouring property and it was necessary to tunnel into the section in order to recover the lower legs of both skeletons.

[5]

A collection of miscellaneous human bones at the base of ditch [1] (Fig.4) was sealed by a thin layer of light-grey silty clay. It was noted at the time of excavation that at least two individuals were represented by the assemblage since there was a duplication of some bones. Post-excavation analysis (see *Skeletal Material* below) revealed bones belonging to burials [2] (with more fragments of a child) and [7], confirming that the cutting of feature [1] had disturbed those burials. There were no articulated bones amongst the scatter, demonstrating that the remains were fully decomposed when deposited; the thin clay covering was obviously an attempt at re-burial. A large polychrome glass bead ([1]:1) was found in the bone scatter (Fig.7) but no other artifacts; if any existed they would almost certainly have been removed by the ditch diggers.

[6]

Another disturbed burial, this inhumation consisted of a few arm bones, pelvis fragments and two vertebrae from a child (Fig.4). The lower legs seemed to be complete and *in situ*, but could not be retrieved since they extended far into the section. Only a hint of grave fill remained and no grave cut survived. The burial had largely been disturbed by the clearance of the site, though it may have suffered earlier disturbance when pit/ditch [9] was cut (Fig.6). The few remaining bones suggest a burial orientation of WNW-ESE.

[7]

This individual, an adult male, was represented only by an articulated lower right leg (Fig.4). Again only a small amount of grave fill remained. As with [6], the disturbance probably resulted from a combination of the cutting of ditch [1] (Fig.6) — more bones belonging to this burial were found amongst the assemblage [5] at the base of ditch [1] — and initial clearance of the site. A burial orientation of WNW-ESE is tentatively suggested.

[8]

This feature was severely truncated during the initial clearance of the site and survived

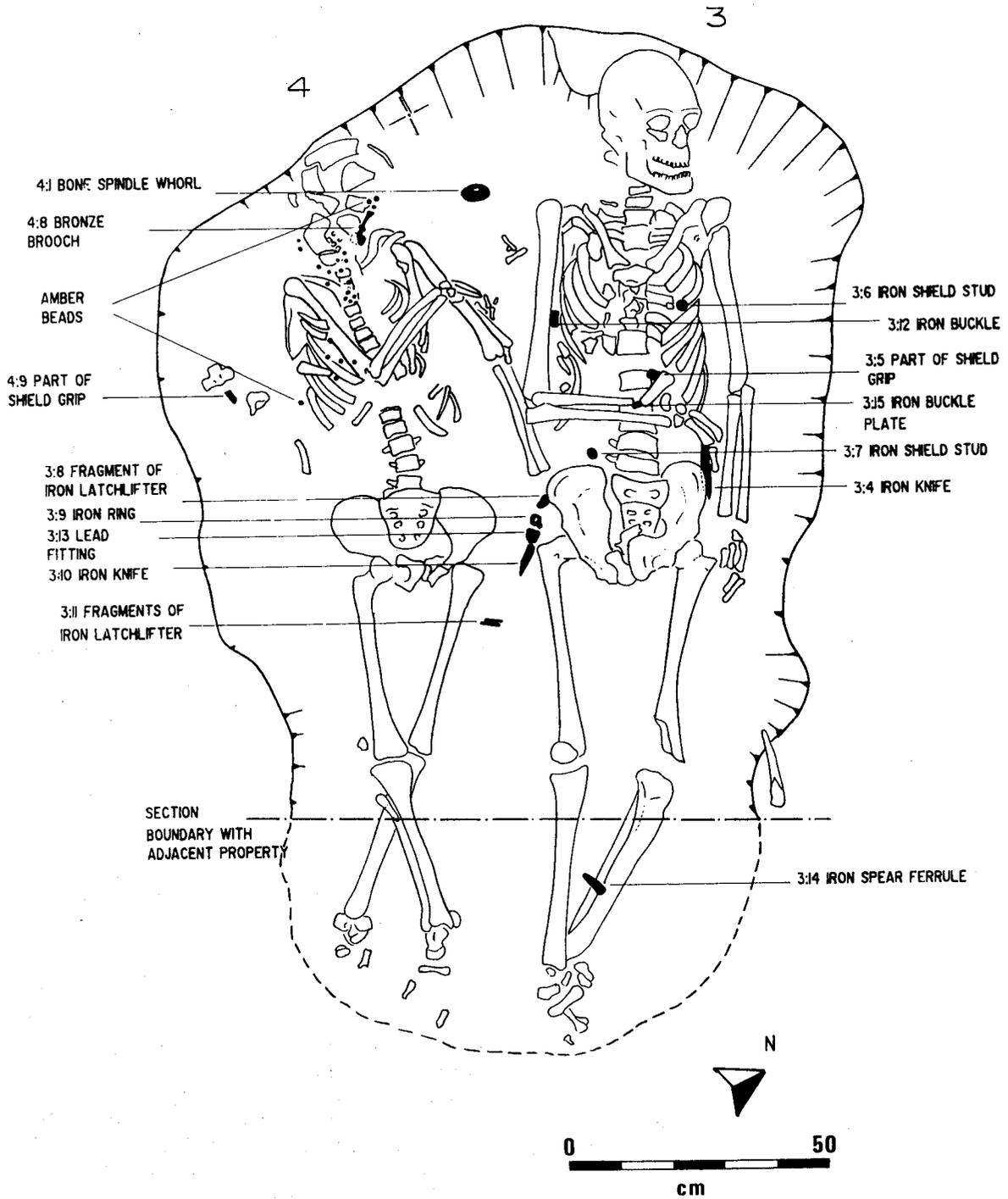


Figure 3. Double burial [3] and [4].

only to a depth of 15 cm.–20 cm. cut into the natural sand. The fill was a dark-brown silty sand bordered on its south side by a narrow, low ridge of pure clay, which may have been the remnants of a lining (Fig.2). The fill contained nothing but a few scattered animal bones. It is likely, due to the similarity of fills and position, that [8] is actually the bottom of ditch [1]. The feature continued northwest across the site before being lost under the existing car park.

[9]

This large ditch or pit (70 cm. deep, 120 cm. wide), though visible in section (Fig.5), did not survive the clearance of the site and therefore it is not known how far it extended to the west. Its fill was a homogenous light-grey clayey silt, overlain by the topsoil. It cut [10], [1] and the natural sand. It may also have accounted for disturbance to burial [6]. No datable material was recovered from this feature.

[10]

A band of mid-brown loose silt, 30 cm. thick, was visible in section. It seems to have truncated burial [3]/[4] and overlies burials [2], [6] and [7], but was cut by features [1] and [9]. It might be either a medieval or post-medieval ploughsoil though unfortunately it was entirely removed across the site and no datable material could be extracted from the section.

Other Features

Three rectangular pits (1.60 m. x 0.75 m.) were found near the centre of the excavated area, each containing a pig skeleton. The fill of the pits, a very loose greyish dark-brown silt, contrasted greatly with the fill of the graves containing human burials, leading us to believe that these features were of a much later date.

The Artifacts ⁴

The artifacts, with only three exceptions, came from the virtually-intact burials [3] and [4] (see Appendix A). The lack of grave goods from the other burials is consistent with the disturbance to them but may not have been entirely due to the recent clearance of the site. The spoil from the site (dumped on farmland two miles west of Haddenham adjacent to the A1123) was combed by a metal de-

tector and although much more human bone was encountered, no artifacts were discovered. This may suggest either an initial dearth of grave goods, or previous grave robbing. The three exceptions are described below.

[1000]:1 A plain flat copper-alloy ring recovered from the spoil remaining on site. Possibly part of an annular brooch (Fig.7).

[1000]:2 A large sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery. Approximately one-quarter of the vessel survived (including a portion of rim, but without a base), showing that it was part of a small, hand-made, carinated bowl with a linear groove decoration (Fig.7). The fabric was black (with some very light brown patches due to differential firing) and hard, with very small inclusions, possibly of feldspar. It cannot be closely dated, but probably accompanied a burial.

[1]:1 A large polychrome bead (yellow swag-and-dot design on red background) found amongst the scatter of bones [5] at the base of feature [1] (Fig.7).

Burial [3] (Figs.3, 8, 9 and 10)

[3]:1 The shield boss (classified Dickinson Group 3) was discovered by metal detector and removed without having its position recorded. It was said to have been situated the correct way up, mid-way between two iron studs ([3]:6, [3]:7), a position confirmed by the presence of a fragment of shield grip. The studs were possibly fastenings for a strengthening or decorative shield strap, or protective (perhaps leather) coating. The position of these artifacts shows that the shield was placed on the chest, rather than on any grave covering. In this case we would expect to see them considerably more scattered than they were found here, losing articulation as they gradually worked their way down through the collapsing grave.

This type of shield boss is commonly found in the southeast of the country and associated with burials of the sixth century, though some occur in the seventh century. Several examples have been found with Swanton H-2 spears,⁵ as in this case.⁶ Three fragments of iron shield grip were found ([3]:5, [3]:15, [4]:9) with attaching studs. The grip was narrow (< 2 cm.) and traces of a covering survived. Z- and S-spun threads

⁴ Artifact identification by A. Taylor. Textile identification by E. Crowfoot.

⁵ M.J. Swanton, *A Corpus of Pagan Anglo-Saxon Spear Types* (Oxford 1974).

⁶ M.G. Welch, *Early Anglo-Saxon Sussex* (Oxford 1983).

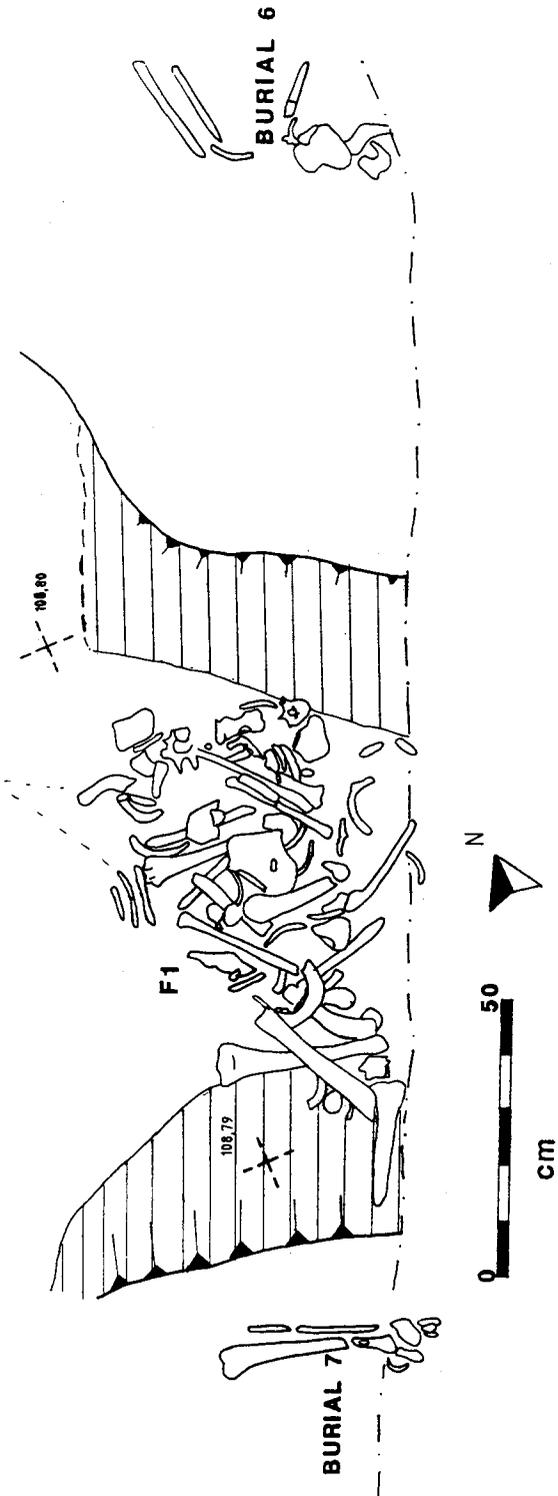


Figure 4. Plan of bone scatter [5] at the base of feature [1]. Burials [6] and [7] also shown.

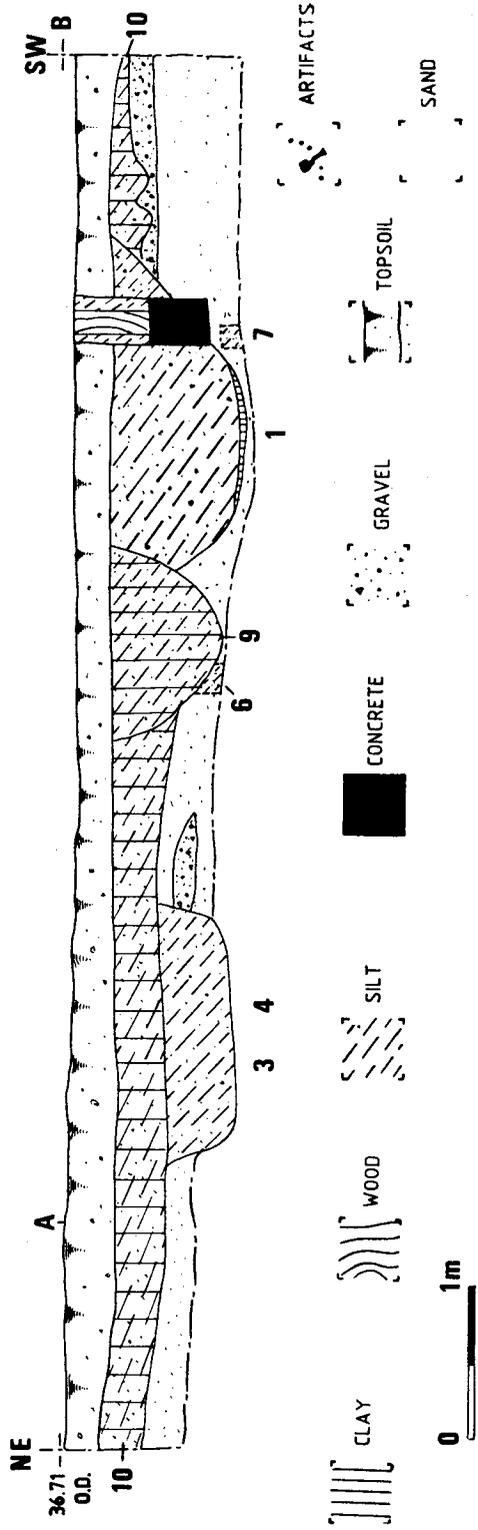


Figure 5. Disturbed burial [2].

were clear though the weave and textile were unidentifiable. The width of the grave suggests that the complete shield must have been no more than 75 cm. in diameter.

[3]:2 The spearhead (classified Swanton H-2) was also removed without recording but might have been located near the left shoulder. The cleft shaft was broken, the lower portion having an intact haft-securing rivet with traces of mineralised wood. The blade was ogival in shape and 14 cm. in length, half the length of the entire spearhead. A conical iron ferrule ([3]:14) was found near the feet, suggesting a spear length of no more than 1.6 m. The spear is of a common type, popular in the early sixth century, although it is also found in slightly later graves.

[3]:3 The tweezers were also extracted from the grave without recording and it is not absolutely clear that they came from the male skeleton at all; however, they are more usually found with male burials and were therefore provisionally assigned to [3]. Only one blade was recovered, with a small arc of attaching ring, both made of copper alloy.

The tweezers were 6.5 cm. in length, decorated near the fulcrum by four parallel lines. A patch of mineralised textile, Z-spun and of unidentified weave, was found on the underside of the ring end. The upper surface of the tweezers had fine Z/Z-spun textile, possibly tabby weave.

[3]:4 The knife was located above the left side of the pelvis, with the blade pointing towards the feet as if hung from a belt. The blade was 10 cm. in length, straight-backed and with a curved, tapering cutting edge. The handle did not survive though its iron core did (3 cm.). The shape of the knife suggests a fifth- or sixth-century date.⁷

[3]:8, [3]:9, [3]:10, [3]:11, [3]:13 These objects were initially all assigned to [3] because they were situated closer to this burial than to burial [4]; however, this might be a false indication of their ownership. The objects did not appear to be arranged in any particular fashion, but it was found later that [3]:11 and [3]:9 fitted together to form an iron implement 14 cm. in length, 0.8 cm. in width and 0.4 cm. in breadth, with an iron attaching ring at one end. This object may be the shaft of a latchlifter (of which the head is missing) or it may join (though the joint is not obvious now) to [3]:8, which is the head of a latchlifter whose shaft is of similar dimensions to those described above. The larger fragments of the above all had traces of mineralised textile.

Coarse Z/S-spun twill (?) and Z/Z tabby medium twist were identified. The remaining objects in this group were an iron knife [3]:10 (smaller than [3]:4, and missing its handle core, though otherwise similar) and a lead fitting. The knife too had very deteriorated mineralised textile remains attached to it: Z/S spun, probably twill weave. The lead fitting, roughly circular (3.7 cm. diameter, 0.4 cm. thick, damaged on one side), with a deep square impression in the centre, has a purpose which is now unknown. One suggestion is that it was a knife pommel, but this is unlikely since its weight would have severely affected the balance of the blade. A similar object (although made of bronze) was found in grave 76 at Burwell,⁸ but again, there were no clues as to its function. Several factors suggest that the whole group, in fact, belongs to burial [4]. It was situated between the left arm and left side of [4], and though closer to [3], was still very much in proximity to [4]. Burial [3] already had a similar iron knife, so the duplication would be unnecessary. Finally, latchlifters are more usually found with female burials.

[3]:12 A 'D'-shaped iron belt buckle with pin which was found on the left side of the chest. It is a common sixth-century form.

Burial [4] (Figs.3 and 11)

[4]:1 A spindle whorl, made of dense bone, 4.5 cm. in diameter, 3 cm. high, with a central hole 1 cm. in diameter.

[4]:8 A bronze, square-headed small-long brooch with a shovel foot. This was found tucked slightly under the left side of the skull, pin-side down, with the head pointing towards the foot of the grave. It is plain apart from a simple decoration of incised parallel lines near the middle of the shaft. Analysis by Scanning Electron Microscope, at the University of London Institute of Archaeology, revealed that the brooch is mainly copper, with tin and a little lead also present.⁹ The pin attachments on the rear of the brooch had traces of an iron pin. This is a poorly-cast example of a form commonly found in sixth-century burials of the Anglian region. Most of the early examples of this type were found in south Cambridgeshire¹⁰ and so it

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ T.C. Lethbridge, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Burwell, Cambs', *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Communications* 30 (1929) pp.97-109.

⁹ Margot Wright, personal communication.

¹⁰ E.T. Leeds, 'The distribution of Angles and Saxons archaeologically considered', *Archaeologia* 91 (1945) pp.1-106.

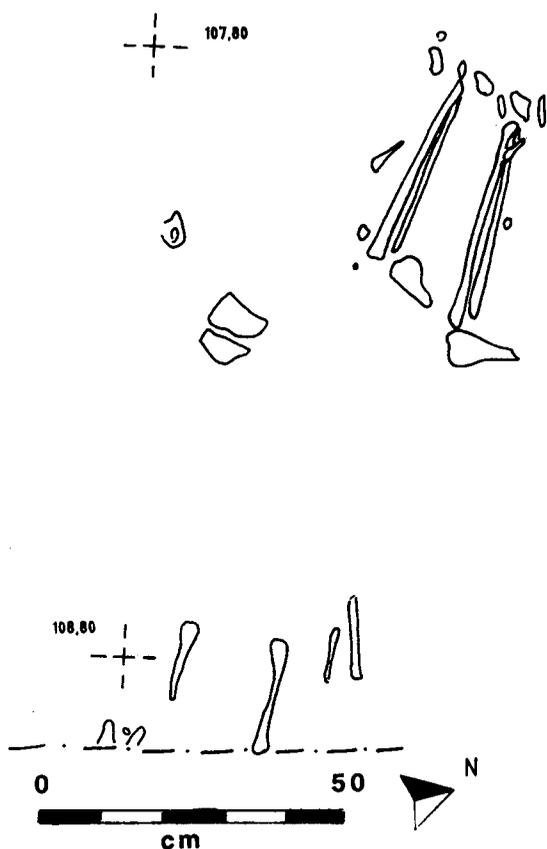


Figure 6. West-facing section at eastern boundary of site (line A-B on Fig.2).

may well date from the earlier part of the sixth century. This date is also suggested by M.G. Welch.¹¹ Remains of mineralised textile were located on the brooch and pin attachment. Z/Z medium twist (2/2 ?) twill were identified.

[4]:32, [4]:31, [4]:19 These comprised a total of 11 segments of silver-in-glass beads. Each segment was barrel-shaped and 0.35 cm. long. They were situated above the left and right clavicle, and it is not known whether they were part of the necklace or some other decoration.

[4]:2, [4]:3, [4]:4 *et al.* In all, 29 amber beads were found, five large (> 1 cm.) and the rest medium-sized (0.5 cm.-1 cm.). No trace of the necklace thread remained and the beads were all slumped on the right side of the chest, with the exception of two which were found close to the brooch. The cluster furthest from the neck was 20 cm. away, perhaps indicating a loop necklace rather than one which was tight around the neck; however,

there seem to be too few beads for a necklace of this type. Only one brooch was present, so the beads could not have been worn in a style commonly encountered, slung between brooches. One end of the necklace may have been stitched onto clothing (or another organic attachment which has not survived) with the other end fastened to the brooch.

The Skeletal Material

Corinne Duhig

This assemblage contained only one undisturbed burial; other graves had been intersected by ditches, the resulting commingling of bones presenting an interesting challenge in analysis (see Appendix B). Some bone was eroded, but most was in very good condition.

The undisturbed grave was a double burial, containing the almost-complete skeletons of a tall middle-aged man, showing the changes of degenerative joint disease and an unusual pathological condition of the spine, and a slight younger woman who was, at least osteologically, in perfect health. From the other graves and pits, nine other individuals can be identified, in varying degrees of preservation. Three are male: one fully adult, one approximately 18 years old, and the third probably between 18 and 22. Of the three adult women, none of whose ages can be estimated, one is very short and gracile, another is a little taller and rather heavier in build, and the third is represented only by two fragments but appears to have been quite small. At least three children are present, the age of one of which can be established as seven years, another being about 12, and the last of an age between these, approximately nine years old.

Signs of pathological conditions are few, with the exception of number 4 (the man from the double burial), and those that can be found are those of arthritic change and some small signs of localised infection. Overall dental health was exceptionally good.

Methods used for ageing are those of Gilbert and McKern, Lovejoy *et al.* and McKern and Stewart;¹² sexing follows the

¹¹ Welch, *op. cit.*

¹² M.B. Gilbert and T.W. McKern, 'A method for ageing the female *os pubis*', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 38 (1973) pp.31-8; C.O. Lovejoy, R.S. Meindl, T.R. Pryzbeck and R. Mensforth, 'Chronological metamorphosis of the auricular surface of the ilium: a new method for the determination of adult skeletal age at death', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 68 (1985) pp.15-28; T.W. McKern and T.D. Stewart, *Skeletal Age Changes in Young American Males: Analysed from the Standpoint of Age Identification* (Natick, Mass.

methods of Phenice and Ubelaker¹³ and height estimation uses the formulae of Trotter and Trotter and Gleser.¹⁴

Feature 1

Diagnostic fragments of three individuals were present in this ditch, although there is insufficient material to suggest that three complete skeletons had ever lain in this area. Individual 1a is a gracile woman, represented by an almost complete femur, all measurements of which are well within the female range, and a badly-preserved frontal bone; height can be estimated, from the length of the femur, as approximately 154 cm. or 5 ft 1/2 in. Number 1b is a portion of the femur of a young adult male, showing the recent fusion of the distal epiphysis, a process occurring between 20 and 22 years of age. The frontal bone and distal femur of another male have been classed as 1c, the frontal sinus development suggesting that this was an older adult than the previous one.

The remaining bone material cannot be allocated to a particular individual, but the three separate sets of ankle and foot bones confirm the minimum number of individuals. Some fragments from this context are heavily eroded, as are some from the spoil heap: although they cannot be definitely associated, it is probable that cranial vault fragments from the spoil heap belong with the 1a frontal bone.

One atlas vertebra was present, and shows double articular facets like those of the man in burial 3; however, although this may be a heritable trait, no familial relationship is necessarily implied.

Some cow and horse bones were also present.

Burial 2

These are the bones of a right arm and a pair of lower legs, measurements of the femur (bicondylar width) indicating a possibly-male individual, but all measurements of the tibiae confirming the subjective impression that this is a female. Slightly more robust than 1a, her height would have been around 161 cm. or 5ft 3 1/2 in. From their position as shown on the excavation plans, it is clear that these bones are the *in situ* portions of a once-complete skeleton; the humerus can be paired with that of 5b, and it is suggested that 2 and 5b are portions of the same individual, whose original grave [2] was disturbed by feature [5].

Also included with this material was an immature left femur which belongs with the child's bones numbered 5c, described below.

Burial 3

In one undisturbed grave were this tall, robust man and the female, number 4. The male skeleton is almost complete, lacking only a few small hand and foot bones and one vertebra, and in good condition: the skull was not crushed, so little repair was needed, and no teeth were lost postmortem. The excavators, commendably, recovered the hyoid bone and an ossified thyroid cartilage.

This man was almost six feet tall (181 cm. or 5 ft 11 1/4 in.), with correspondingly heavily-built bones showing strong muscle markings. His skull is rugged and the jaw is deep. Generally, the condition of the pubic symphysis is considered a more reliable age indicator than other methods available and would, in this case, not have given an age estimate greater than 35 years. However, a number of features point to his having been aged 40 to 50: the extreme and uneven tooth wear, the degenerative changes in the cervical and lumbar spine, the obliteration of the skull sutures, and the state of ossification of the thyroid cartilage.

The pathological features in the spine, often described as 'arthritic' changes but correctly referred to as degenerative joint disease, are extreme. The vertebral surfaces are cavitated, and development of matching nodules and cavities on adjacent surfaces shows that the intervening discs were badly degenerated. Bony spurs between the vertebrae would have curved round the spreading discs. There are related changes in the hip and shoulder joints, with erosion and bony lipping, probably also due to cumulative stresses on these joints over the years. The

1957); J.M. Suchey, D.V. Wiseley and D.Katz, 'Evaluation of the Todd and McKern-Stewart methods for ageing the male *os pubis*', in K.J. Reichs (ed.), *Forensic Osteology* (Springfield, Illinois 1986) pp.33-67.

13 T.W. Phenice, 'A newly developed visual method of sexing the *os pubis*', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 30 (1969) pp.297-301; D.H. Ubelaker, *Human Skeletal Remains: Excavation Analysis, Interpretation* (Washington 1989).

14 M. Trotter, 'Estimation of stature from intact limb bones', in T.D. Stewart (ed.), *Personal Identification in Mass Disasters* (Washington D.C. 1970) pp.71-83; M. Trotter and G.C. Glese, 'Estimation of stature from long bones of American whites and negroes', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 10 (1952) pp.463-514.

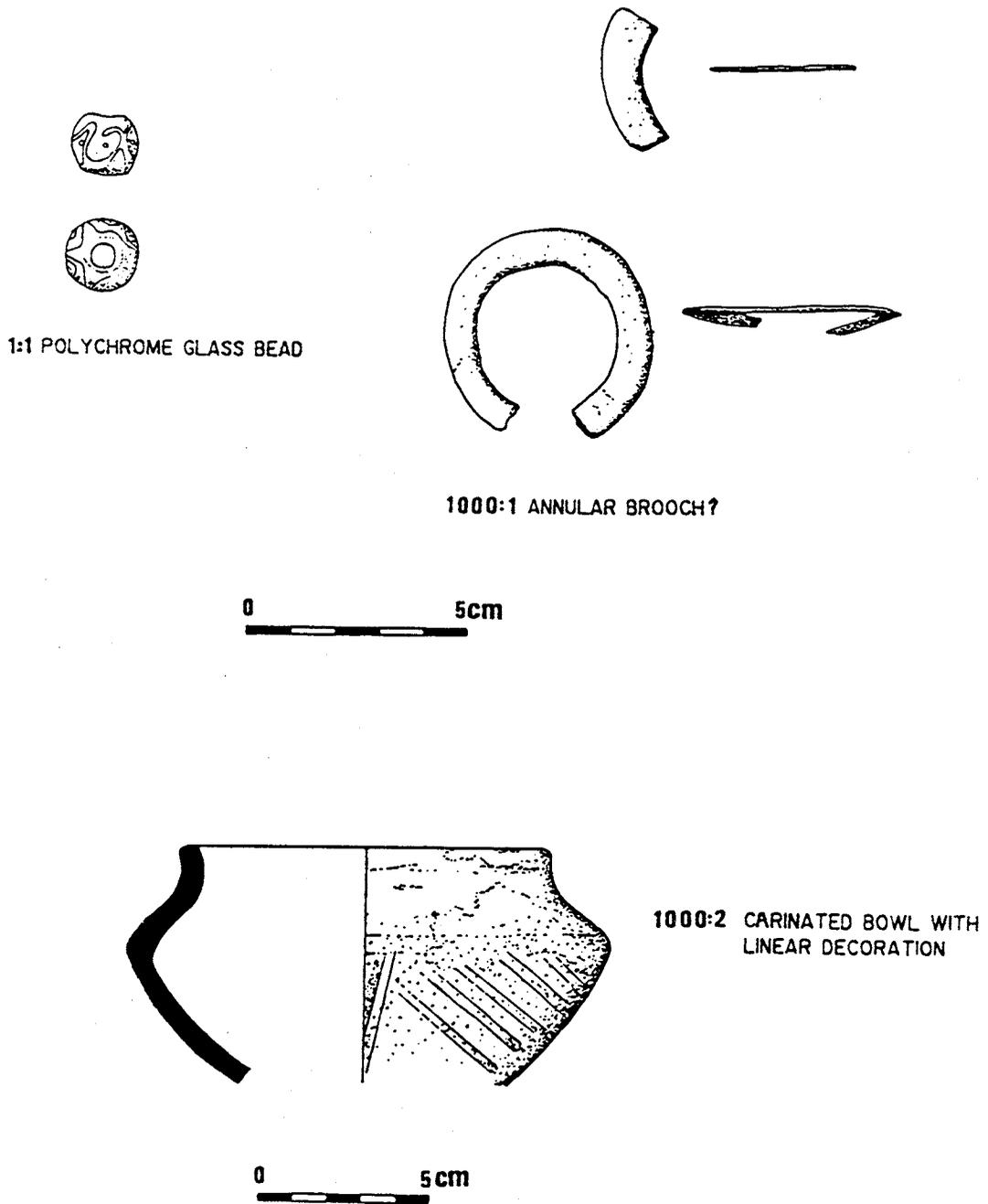


Figure 7. Miscellaneous artifacts.

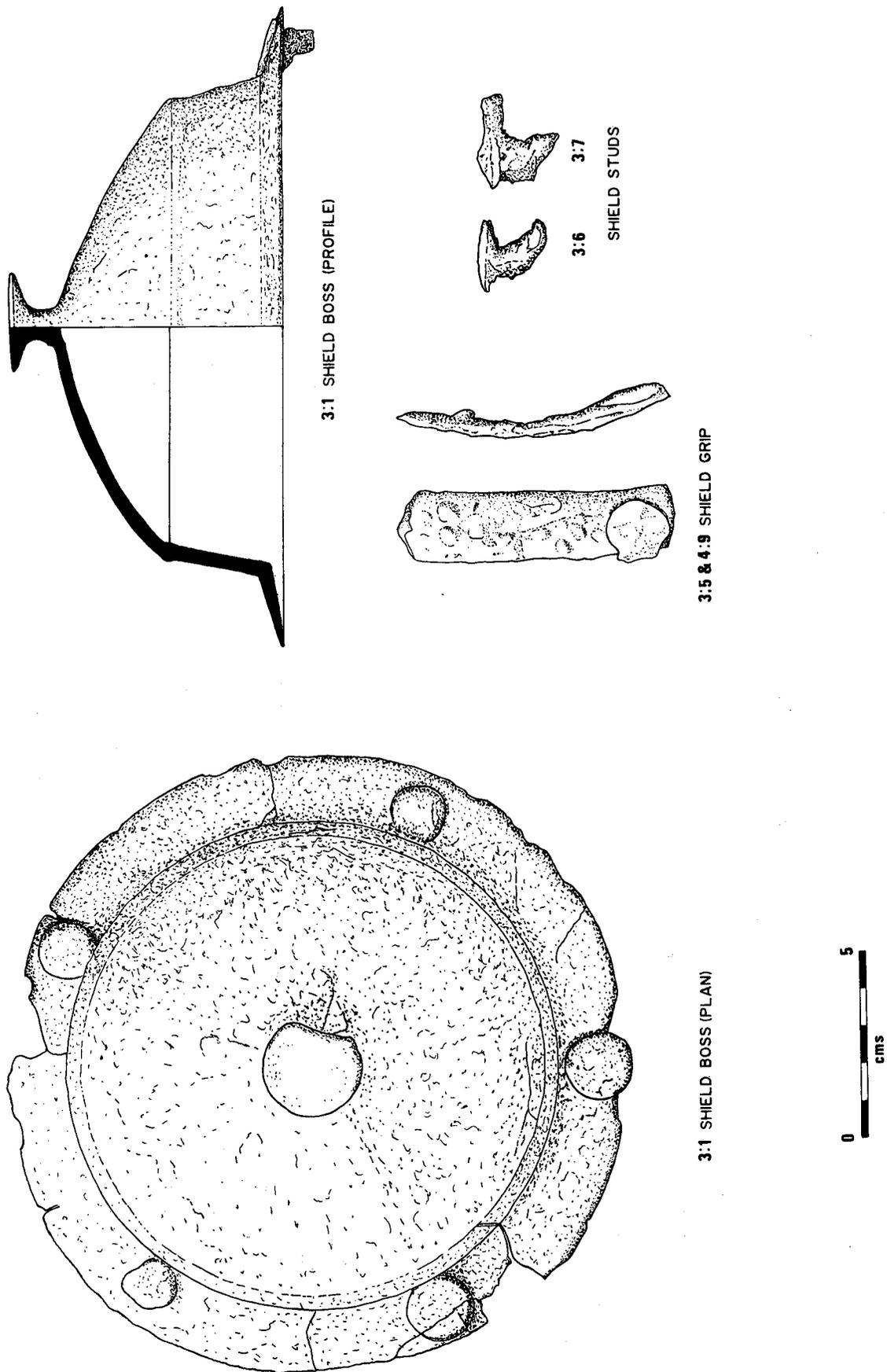


Figure 8. Burial [3] (male) grave goods.

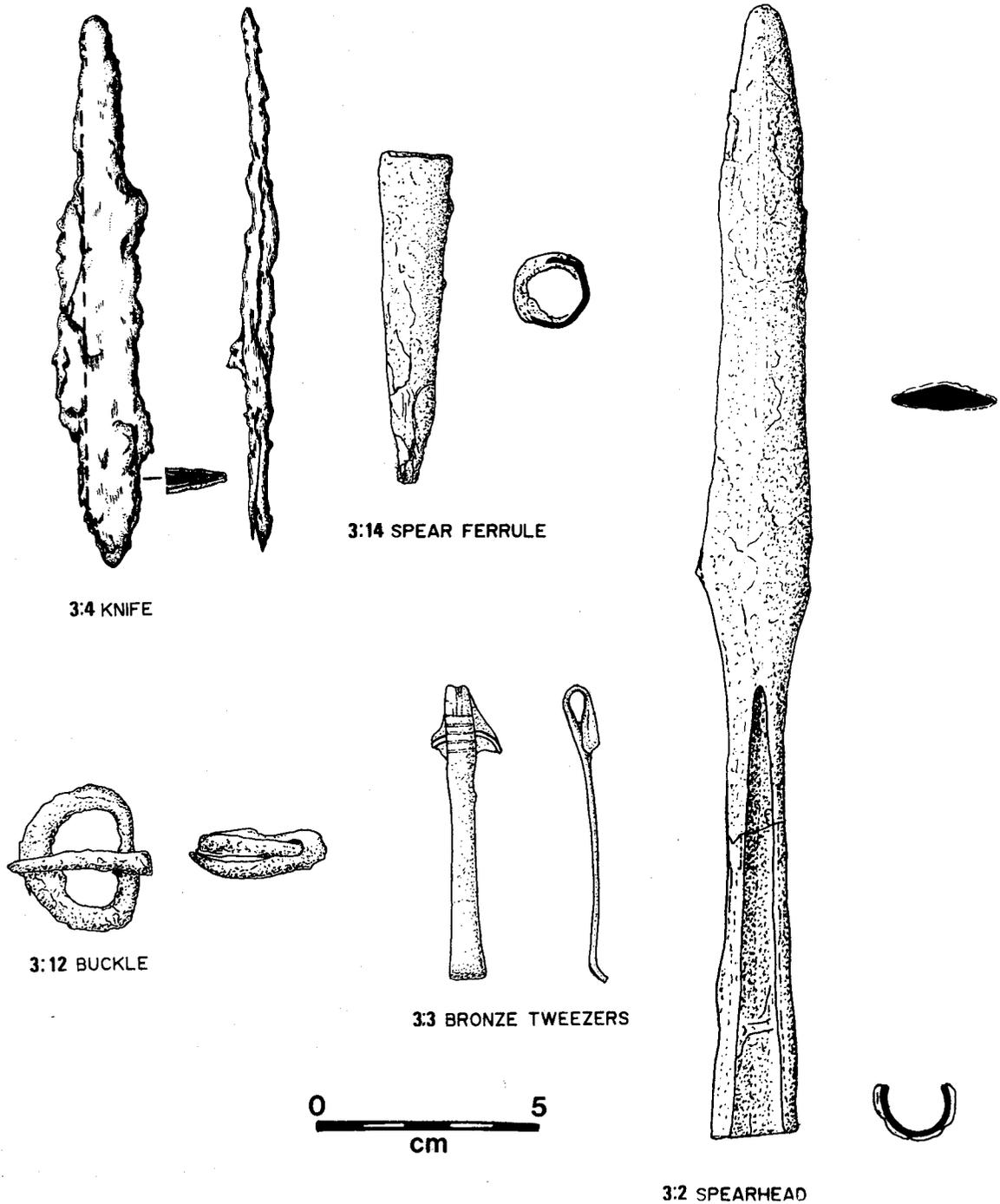


Figure 9. Burial [3] (male) grave goods.

same features of age are found in modern people, but heavy manual work probably accelerated the process in the past.

Unconnected with these changes is another, much less common, change in the spine: a lumbar stenosis. The vertebral arch, through which the spinal cord passes, is unusually narrow and would have caused a neural insufficiency, known as claudication,

during or after exercise, with numbness, tingling and pain down the sciatic nerve. In the present day, these symptoms are more frequently seen in patients with the intermittent claudication resulting from hardening of the arteries.¹⁵ Whilst not disabling, the condition would have given this man discomfort or pain

¹⁵ T.D. Hawkins, personal communication.

if manual work or exercise was required of him.

There are also a number of interesting aspects to the teeth, which were mostly in extremely good condition. Despite the very heavy wear, only two molars had been lost before death, and the socket of only one of these showed signs of an abscess at the root — abscesses tend to develop when infection enters the exposed pulp chamber of a heavily-worn tooth. Some calculus (tartar) was present. The lower right third molar was impacted, being angled against the adjacent tooth, and dental caries had developed on both, due, presumably, to food packing and inadequate cleaning; an unusual pattern of wear on the upper molar was caused by the angled tooth below.

Curiously, although one wisdom tooth was impacted, the rest of the dentition was well spaced, with a gap between the upper front teeth (median upper diastema). In the lower jaw, the lateral incisors were missing, but there was no sign of their having been present, and we must take this as a case of congenital absence of teeth; absence of lateral incisors is second in frequency only to that of wisdom teeth.

As mentioned above (see number 1), there are double articular facets on the occipital condyles of the skull and on the atlas vertebra, another developmental variant of no clinical significance.

Burial 4

The female buried with number 3 was, equally, almost complete. Sadly, the works which had led to the original discovery of these skeletons had broken away part of the right side of the face, which was lying highest in the grave, and portions of the vault, and the skull was shattered. However, the recovery of some of the missing fragments from the spoil heap has enabled the skull to be almost completely reconstructed.

This slightly-built woman was about 5 ft 1 in. to 5 ft 2 in. tall (156 cm. to 158 cm.), and can be aged fairly closely to between 18 — because of the very recent eruption of her wisdom teeth — and 20 — when the basilar suture at the base of the skull closes. Unusually for the time period, she appears to have had perfect dental health, with no tooth loss, no caries or abscesses and minimal tooth wear: for the Saxon period, average tooth loss was 14% and caries 6%.¹⁶ She did not, however,

have perfect dental hygiene, as a medium degree of calculus was present throughout the tooth row. This may be due, in part, to inadequate natural cleaning of the mouth because of overcrowded and misaligned teeth: the anterior dentition is crowded, as is often found in small people, with winging of the upper central incisors. She would have had an overbite, as is common in modern Europeans but unlike the edge-to-edge tooth occlusion more general in past populations.

There is no sign of disease on this skeleton, other than a small infective focus on one vertebra. Considering the possibility of a family relationship between numbers 3 and 4, various characteristics which tend to be inherited were compared (for example, the congenital absence of teeth in number 3), but nothing of significance was found, so it is more likely that this woman was the wife of 3, rather than his daughter or other close blood relation. Furthermore, her skull form is rounded, as most Saxon skulls are, but his is long.

Burial 5

A very large number of bone fragments from ditch [1] could be sorted into groups belonging to three individuals. The first, 5a, contains the pelvis, both arms, upper legs and portions of the skull of a male of approximately 18 years of age, whose wisdom teeth had just erupted and whose growth was just ceasing as the long-bone epiphyses were fusing. It was found that the lower legs of this young man are clearly those marked number 7 (feature [5], as the plans show, cut burial [7]). Measurements of the leg bones show that he was around 165 cm. or 5 ft 5 in. tall.

The bones of 5b, a mandible of female form, left arm bones and a few vertebrae, are now grouped with those of individual 2, described above.

Number 5c is the youngest person found at this site, a child of seven years represented by a mandible, from which the age can be determined by the state of tooth eruption, and some limb bones; one femur was found with skeleton number 2. The size of the limb bones confirms the age estimate.

More fragments of cow bone were found in this area.

¹⁶ D.R. Brothwell, *Digging Up Bones* 2nd ed. (London 1972).

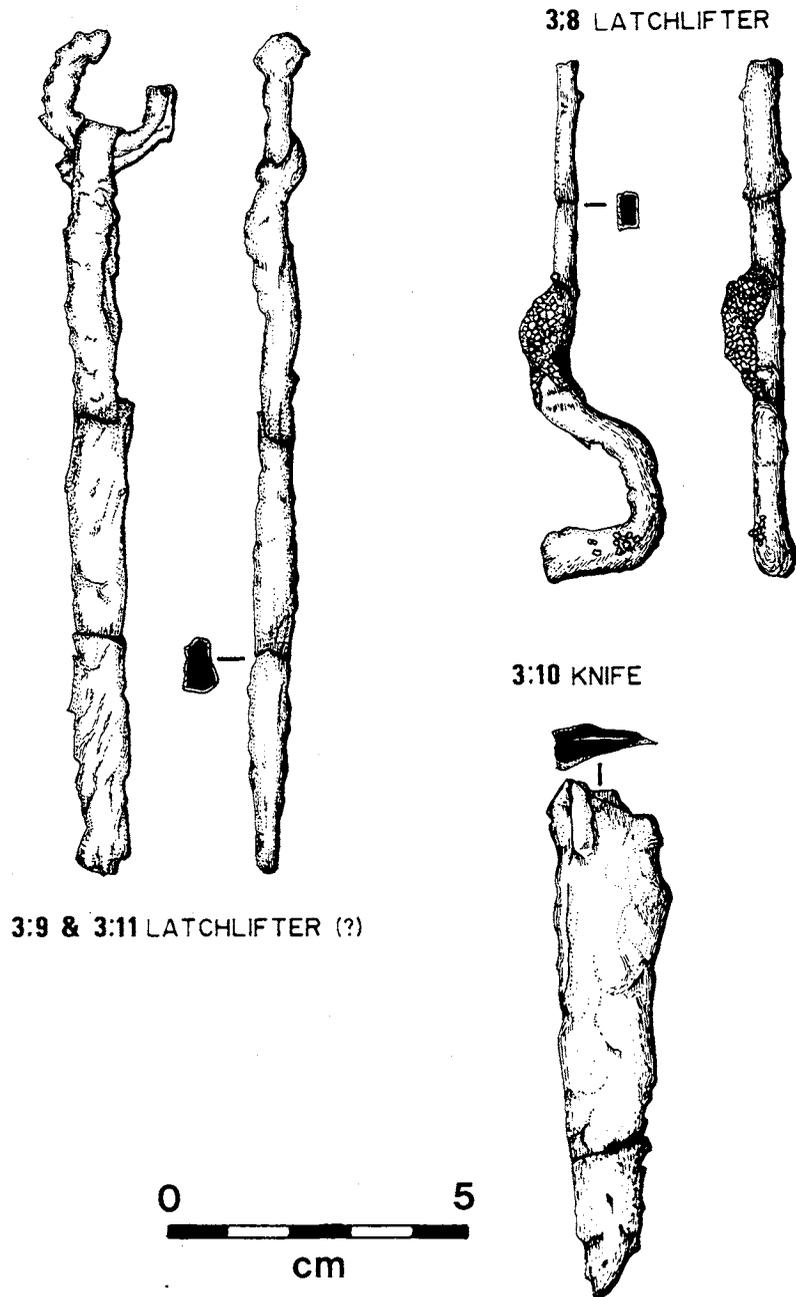


Figure 10. Burial [3] (male) grave goods.

Burial 6

An older child than the previous one was found in burial 6, which contained arm and leg bones, part of a pelvis and two vertebrae. The pelvis and legs show the state of epiphyseal fusion found in late childhood, six to 12 years, and the length of the femur suggests the upper half of this age range. The arm

bones, all very eroded, do not necessarily belong to the same individual.

Spoil heap bones

More than 80 fragments were identifiable from the spoil heap, some of which could be reconstructed into complete or near-complete bones. A few vault fragments could be

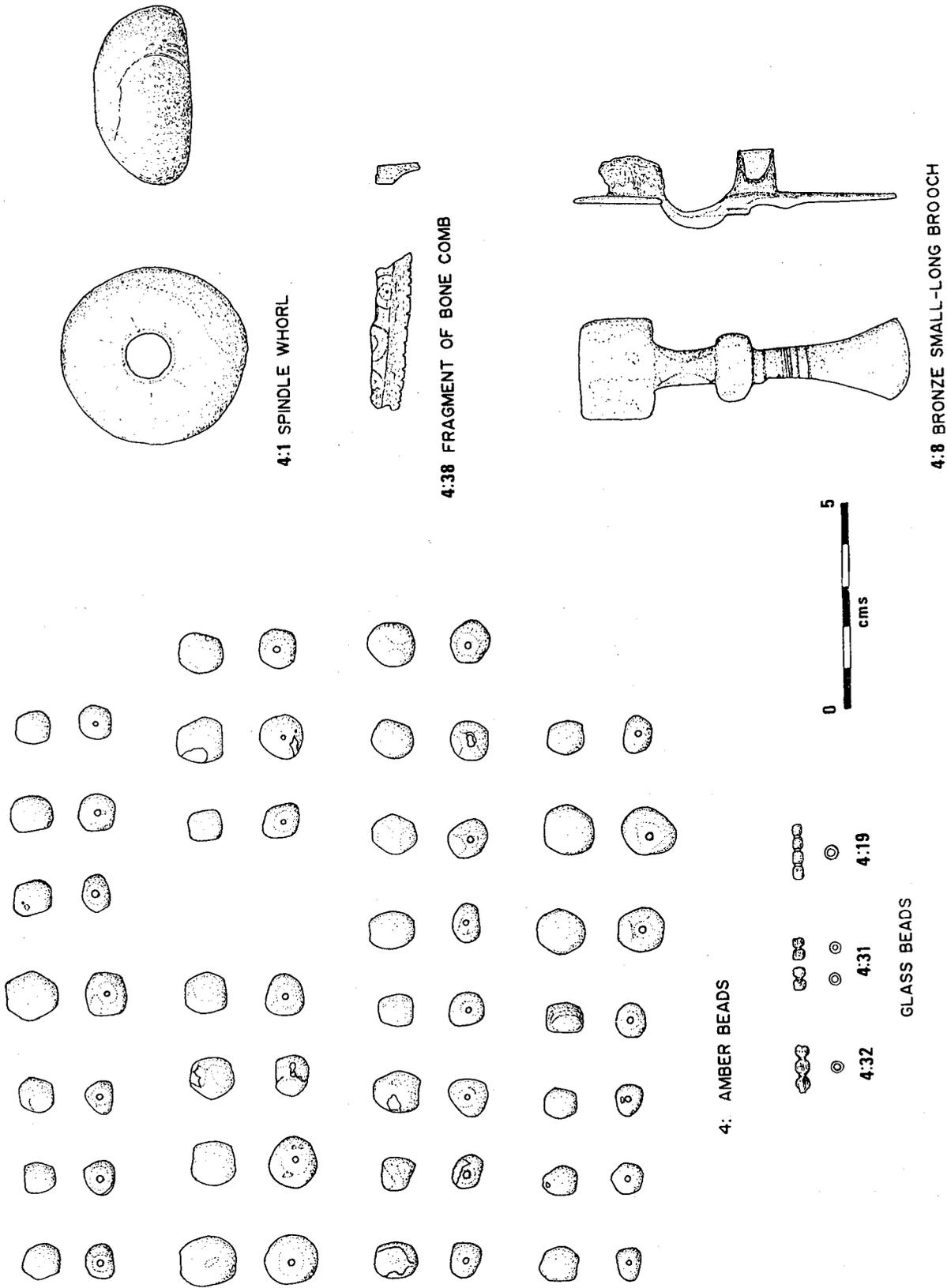


Figure 11. Burial [4] (female) grave goods.

joined to those from feature 5, while others, most usefully, were from the skull of the female in the double burial, and aided the reconstruction.

Seven portions of innominate bones were present, three being female in conformation. Whilst it was not possible to allocate them definitely to any one of the female skeletons from this site, neither could the possibility of their belonging together be excluded, so that the minimum number of individuals remains unchanged. However, amongst the five partial femora were a pair of bones which clearly cannot belong to any other skeleton, so that at least one more individual — another female — was present. An immature humerus represents a child intermediate in age between numbers 5c and 6.

One of the innominates, probably that of a male, has severe arthritic changes to the acetabulum, with bony lipping and eburnation (polishing due to breakdown of the joint and direct bone-to-bone contact). Parallel changes on the head of the femur would be expected in such a case, but no signs of this condition can be seen on any femora from the site. Another innominate, this time of a female, shows slight breakdown of the surface of the pubic symphysis suggestive of advancing age. The striation and new-bone formation on the surface of an isolated fibula indicates infection, which may be localised or systemic — in the absence of related bones, it is impossible to determine.

Discussion

Despite the lack of datable artifacts from burials [2], [6] and [7] it may be safely stated that they are broadly contemporary with burial [3]/[4], that is to say that they all probably date from the first half of the sixth century. The burial ground is situated prominently, at a high point on the Haddenham ridge. The utilisation of ground on hills, knolls and spurs is a characteristic of many other pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of the region (Fig. 12). The grave alignment is similar for each of the burials (where it could be discerned) and they are well spaced. This suggests that the graves had markers of some sort and that the cemetery was not in use over a long period.

A key question posed by the discovery of the burials at Haddenham is the total extent of the cemetery. The burials were all confined to the southeast corner of the area examined and continuation of the cemetery to the west seems unlikely. However, two graves extend

into the neighbouring property to the east, and the beer-garden to the south remains unexplored. It is not surprising that nothing came to light during the recent construction of the neighbouring house to the east (no.2 Hop Row) since it is of a design which requires very slight foundations. The burials encountered may form part (the proportion of which is unknown) of a group or cluster of burials within a larger cemetery. Such groups are often seen in pagan period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and were noted at the recently excavated 'Barrington A' cemetery.¹⁷ Here, a possible explanation of this grouping was thought to be a family connection between individuals. At Haddenham, the examination of the skeletons for visible heritable characteristics could not establish any blood relationships, but this does not automatically exclude the possibility of familial groupings.

The lack of evidence for coffins in this cemetery is consistent with the findings from most other local cemeteries of the period. The exceptions are Shudy Camps¹⁸ and Barrington 'A'¹⁹ where three graves were furnished with a bed-like structure. The theory that graves were sometimes covered by planks, on which were placed objects such as spears and shields, can be discounted in the case of burial [3]/[4]. Here the situation of the artifacts does not indicate the degree of post-depositional disturbance that would result from such an arrangement. Replaced textile remains with differing spinning and weaving patterns suggests that the individuals were buried clothed, and not in shrouds. The presence of a belt-buckle supports this argument.

The discovery of burials confirms that there was a contemporary Anglo-Saxon settlement somewhere in the vicinity, but no traces of such a settlement have been found. The glimpse of the cemetery which we have will not enable us to establish settlement extent or longevity. However, suggestions as to its location can be made based on topographical evidence. The view that pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are always sited well away from their associated settlements has recently been questioned; contemporary settlement within 500 m.–600 m. of the cemeteries (and even burial within the settlement) has been demonstrated in a growing number

¹⁷ Tim Malim, *Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery* (Cambridge 1989 and 1990).

¹⁸ T.C. Lethbridge, *A Cemetery at Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge 1933).

¹⁹ Malim, *op. cit.*

of sites throughout the country.²⁰ The surrounding fen, which would have almost certainly have been waterlogged and uninhabitable during this period,²¹ provides us with the outer limit for an area of potential occupation. We are left with an area which forks into two narrow ridges continuing south-westerly to Aldreth and westerly to North Hill. To the north the ground slopes into the fen at Haddenham End Field and to the east the available land stretches beyond Wilburton (Fig. 13). It is further suggested that any settlement would not have been situated in an exposed position on top of the ridge, but instead would have nestled close to the fen edge where a good range of resources would be available. A situation between the 10 m. and 30 m. contours satisfies both criteria. However, we may not be searching for a single settlement. Nucleation took place gradually throughout the Anglo-Saxon period and an early cemetery such as this may have been used by a number of scattered homesteads in the vicinity.²² It is possible that the scant traces of such homesteads lie undiscovered in various situations across the suggested area.

Disturbance to the burials had undoubtedly occurred during the initial clearance of the site, but evidence of earlier disturbance was also present. The diggers of ditch [1] had obviously encountered graves [2] and [7], feature [5] representing the unceremonious reburial of the remains. It is probable that any grave goods were extracted by the ditch-diggers, as it is unusual for burials of the pagan period to be unaccompanied by grave goods — at the very least an iron knife is often

placed in the grave — and the only artifact found with this assemblage, a bead ([1]:1), could easily have been missed. It is impossible to determine when this disturbance occurred, although it was probably comparatively recently (see Appendix C). Not all discoveries of this kind were followed by a visit from a local antiquarian and a report in local publications.

The small number of burials encountered during this excavation and the lack of knowledge we have about the extent of the cemetery prevents us from making detailed statistical comparisons with other Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the region. However, the information gained from this excavation will enable us to monitor future development in the area, and this may eventually provide us with a more complete view of Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Haddenham.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to acknowledge the help of the following: Cambridgeshire County Council Rural Management Division, Vulnerable Sites Fund, for financing the excavation; Mr W. Presnell, landlord of the 'Three Kings', for reporting the initial finds and for his excellent hospitality; The Institute of Archaeology (London) for artifact conservation; Elizabeth Crowfoot for identification of the textile remains; Alison Taylor for the artifact identification; Tim Malim for supervising the excavation and report; Simon Bray for help with the excavation and report; Audrey Meaney for comment on the report; Erika Guttmann for comment and proof-reading the text; and all the villagers of Haddenham who took such an interest in the progress of the excavation.

²⁰ A. Boddington, 'Models of burial, settlement and worship: the final phase', in E. Southworth (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A Reappraisal* (Liverpool 1990) Chapter 20; H. Godwin, *Fenland: Its Ancient Past and Uncertain Future* (Cambridge 1978).

²¹ Godwin, *op. cit.*

²² Boddington, *op. cit.*

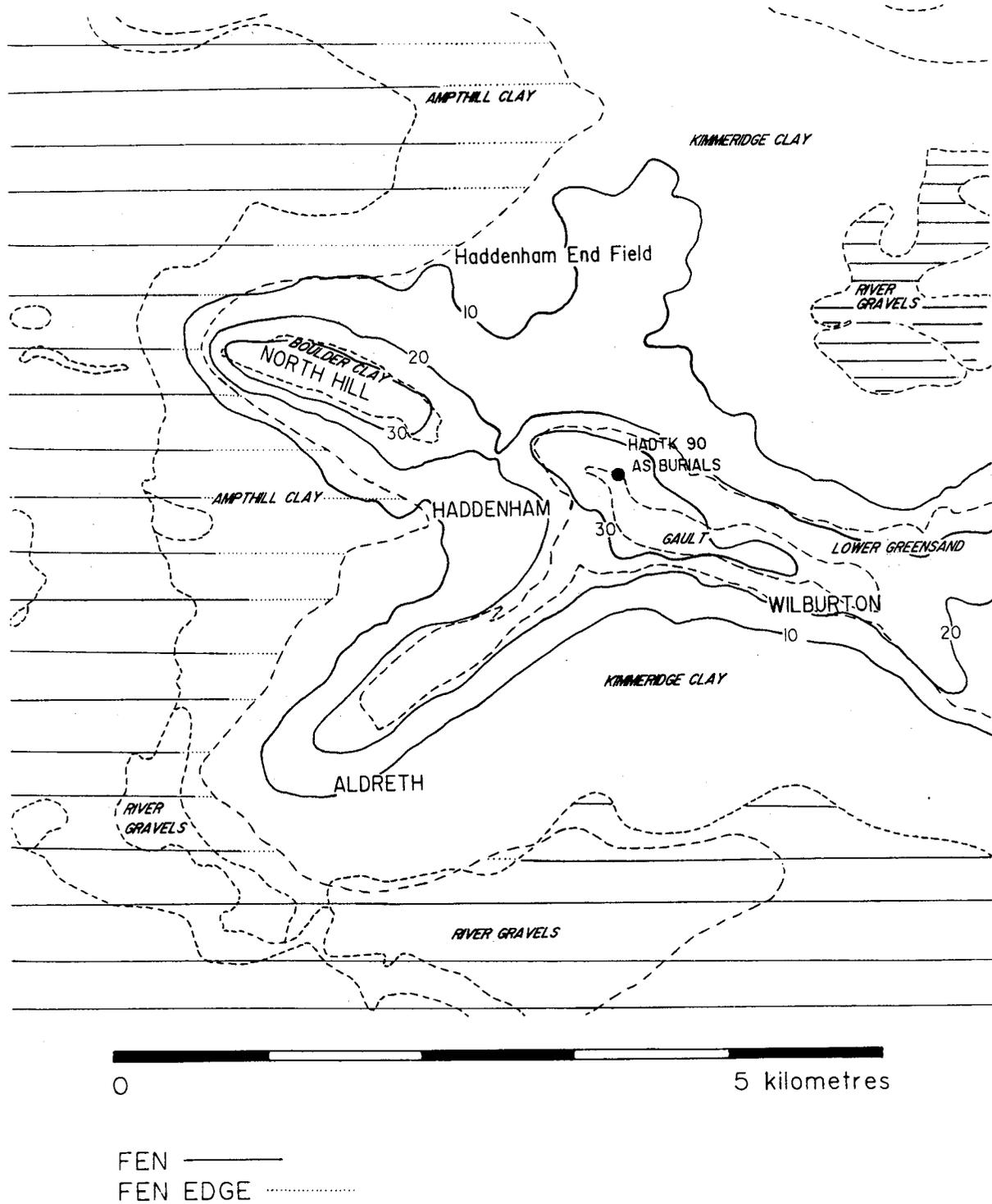


Figure 13. Geological/topographic map of the Haddenham area. Based upon Ordnance Survey map No. 188 Institute of Geological Sciences, with the sanction of HMSO (Licence No. LA 07649 X).

Appendix A
Artifact Catalogue

<u>Find number</u>	<u>Small-find number</u>	<u>Object</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Dimensions (in cm.)</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	Bead	Glass	diam. 1.6, ht 1.5	Polychrome, white swags, dots on red
3	1	Shield boss	Glass	diam. 18, ht 8	Dickinson GP3
3	2	Spears head	Iron	lt 28, blade 14	Swanton H-2. Ogival blade, cleft shaft
3	3	Tweezers	Bronze	lt 6.5	Only one blade. Frag. of ring attached
3	4	Knife	Iron	lt 13, blade 10	Hawkes D, Evison 2
3	5	Shield grip	Iron	lt 4.5, wt 1.7	Fits with 4:9. Attaching studs present
3	6	Shield stud	Iron	diam. 1.8, lt 1.8	For a strap?
3	7	Shield stud	Iron	diam. 1.8, lt 1.9	For a strap?
3	8	Latchlifter	Iron	lt 6, wt .05	Square head
3	9	Unknown	Iron	lt 6.5, wt 0.7	3 frags. Latchlifter shaft? Ring attached. Fits 3:11
3	10	Knife	Iron	lt 8.5	As 3:4. No handle core
3	11	Unknown	Iron	lt 7.5, wt 0.8	2 frags. Fits 3:9
3	12	Buckle	Iron	lt 3, wt 1	D-shape with pin
3	13	Unknown	Lead	diam. 3.7	Square hole at centre
3	14	Ferrule	Iron	lt 7.5	Conical
4	1	Spindle	Bone	diam. 4.5	Central round hole whorl
4	2	Bead	Amber		
4	3	Bead	Amber		
4	4	Bead	Amber		
4	5	Bead	Amber		
4	6	Bead	Amber		
4	7	Bead	Amber		
4	8	Brooch	Bronze	lt 8	Small-long shovel foot
4	9	Shield grip	Iron	lt 2.5, wt 1.7	Fits with 3:5
4	10	Bead	Amber		
4	11	Bead	Amber		
4	12	Bead	Amber		
4	13	Bead	Amber		
4	14	Bead	Amber		
4	15	Bead	Amber		
4	16	Bead	Amber		
4	17	Bead	Amber		
4	18	Bead	Amber		
4	19	Bead	Glass	lt 1.2, diam. 0.35	Silver in glass. 4 segments
4	20	Bead	Amber		
4	21	Bead	Amber		
4	22	Bead	Amber		
4	23	Bead	Amber		
4	24	Bead	Amber		
4	25	Bead	Amber		
4	26	Bead	Amber		

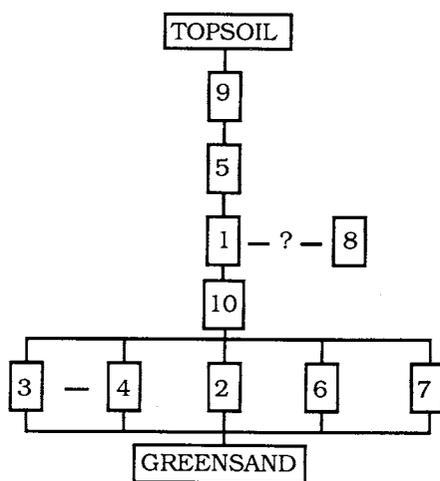
Artifact Catalogue (cont.)

<u>Find number</u>	<u>Small-find number</u>	<u>Object</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Dimensions (in cm.)</u>	<u>Description</u>
4	27	Bead	Amber		
4	28	Bead	Amber		
4	29	Bead	Amber		
4	30	Bead	Amber		
4	31	Bead	Glass	diam. 0.35	Silver in glass. 3 segments
4	31	Bead	Glass	diam. 0.35	Silver in glass. 4 segments
4	32	Bead	Amber		
4	32	Bead	Amber		
4	33	Bead	Amber		
4	34	Bead	Amber		
4	35	Bead	Amber		
4	37	Bead	Amber		
4	38	Bead	Amber		
4	38	Comb?	Bone	lt 3.8	Fragment of comb? Grooves (teeth?), circular stamped design
1000	1	Brooch?	Bronze	diam. 4.7	Part of annular brooch?
1000	2	Potsherd	Pottery	6 x 6	1/4 of AS bowl. Carinated, linear

Appendix B
Burial Catalogue

<u>Burial/feature number</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Completeness</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1a	F	Adult	Frontal, L femur	
1b	M	20-22	R clavicle, R dist femur	
1c	M	Adult	Frontal, R dist femur	
2	F	Adult	R arm and lower legs	Belong with 5b
3	M	40-50	95%	
4	F	18-20	95%	
5a	M	c. 18	30%	Belong with 7
5b	F	Adult	Mandible, R dist clavicle L arm, some verts	Belong with 2
5c	N/A	7	Mandible, some limb bones	L femur found with 2
6	N/A	6-12	L arm, R femur, L innominate, verts	
7	M	c. 18	10%	Belong with 5a
(2/5b)	F	Adult	35%)	
(5a/7)	M	c. 18	40%)	

N.B. Spoil heap contained 80 fragments from which at least two different individuals were identified: adult female and child seven to 12 years

Appendix C
Site Matrix

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

Notes for Contributors

The Editor welcomes the submission of papers which are principally on the history and archaeology of the County. Papers will be sent out to referees.

Typescripts

Typescripts or printouts should be double-spaced, on one side of A4 paper. The number of words the text contains, the names of the authors as they wish to appear and suggested running heads (of not more than 80 letters and spaces) should be stated at the top of the paper.

Notes and References

Notes should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper. The notes themselves should be typed, double-spaced, at the end of the paper.

References should be cited as follows:

Manuscripts: citation should follow conventional styles, abbreviations being explained at the first reference, as: Buckinghamshire Record Office (hereafter *Bucks RO*) Dormer estate, D/93/Box 2, Court roll of Ravensmere manor, Hughenden 1752.

Books: Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Vol.3, ed. by William Smith (London 1862) pp.23-4.

Theses: Mark Campbell, 'The changing residential patterns in Toronto, 1880-1910' (unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Toronto 1971).

Articles: K.R. Dark, 'Archaeological survey at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 1984', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 74 (1985) pp.81-4.

Chapters in books: John Patten, 'Changing occupational structures in the East Anglian countryside, 1500-1700', in H.S.A. Fox and R.A. Butlin (eds), *Change in the Countryside: Essays on Rural England, 1500-1900* (London 1979) pp.103-21.

Subsequent references to previously cited works should use *ibid.*, *op. cit.* or *loc. cit.*, but if more than one work by an author is cited the reference should be given thus: Patten, 'Changing occupational structures', pp.115-17.

Tables

Tables should be typed on a separate sheet, and the approximate position in the text should be marked. All tables must have a heading. Units must be stated for every quantity, usually at the head of each column. Tables should be set out with as few horizontal rules as possible and without vertical rules.

Figures and Illustrations

Glossy black-and-white prints of photographs should be submitted at the size at which authors would ideally wish them to appear. The maximum height for a full-page illustration is 24 cm; the maximum width is 15.5 cm.; the width of a column is 7.5 cm.. Drawings should be in their finished, publishable, form, with adequate keys and scales, and at the size at which they are intended to be printed. Titles must not be lettered on the drawings. Captions for all illustrations should be supplied on a separate typewritten list. When a paper has been accepted, the author must submit the originals of any drawings. All figures (maps, diagrams and photographs) should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals.

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