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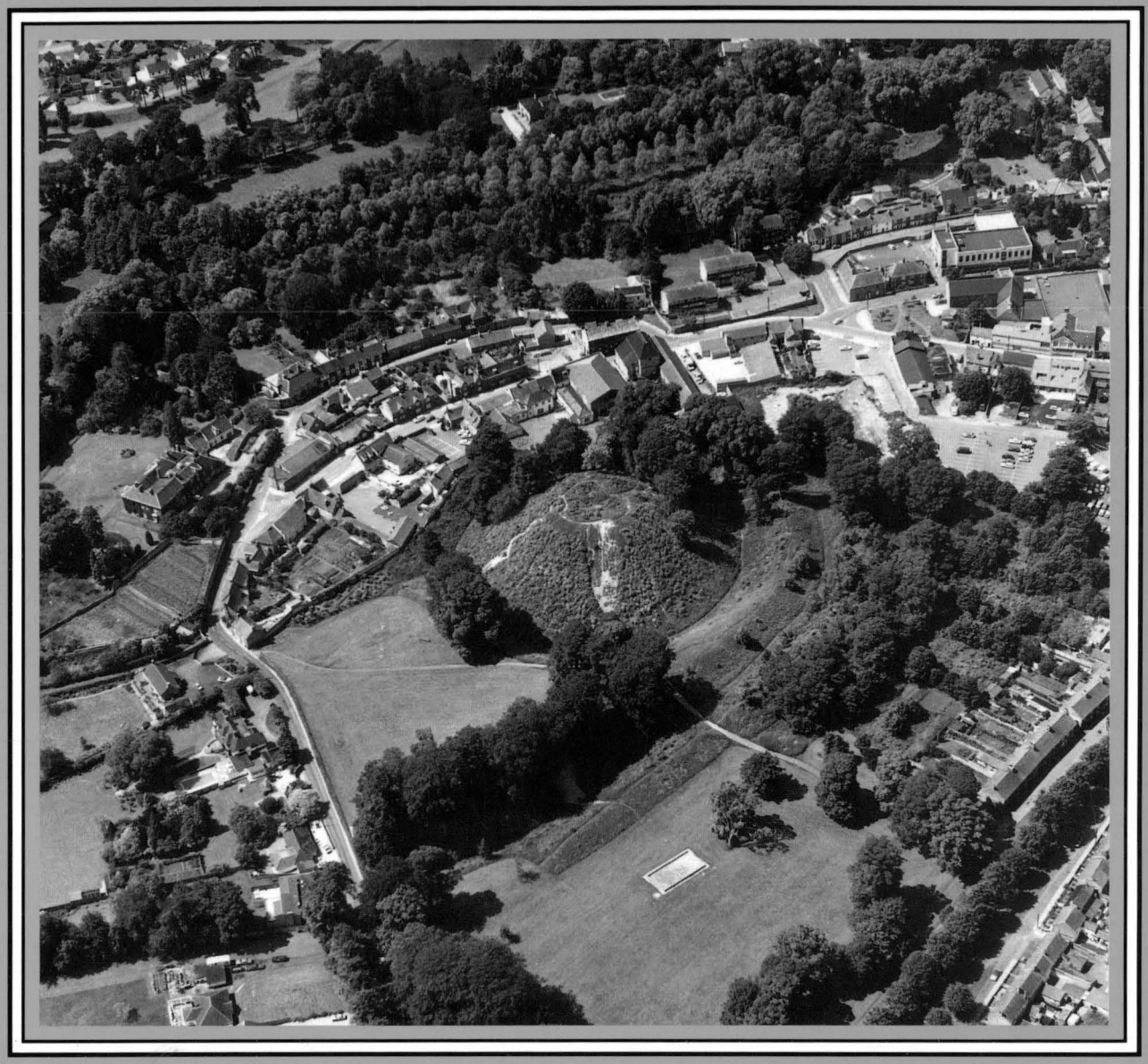

THE IRON AGE FORTS OF NORFOLK

East Anglian Archaeology

Norfolk Field Archaeology Division 1992

EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

The Iron Age Forts of Norfolk

by John A. Davies, Tony Gregory, Andrew J. Lawson, Robert Rickett and Andrew Rogerson

with contributions from
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Thetford, 30th June 1982
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Abbreviations employed for pottery descriptions

IA = Iron Age
EM = Early Medieval
EPM = Early post-Medieval
GRE = Glazed Red Earthenware
LM = Late Medieval
LMT = Late Medieval and Transitional
M = Medieval
TGE = Tin Glazed Earthenware
Thet. = Thetford Ware
gl. = glazed
ungl. = unglazed

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Thetford Castle
The excavations of 1962 were the work of the Norfolk Research Committee: it was the enthusiasm and energy of the committee's members that enabled so much to be achieved in only two weeks. They deserve the thanks of the present writer, Tony Gregory, on behalf of the late Rainbird Clarke. That this part of the report has at last appeared is due to the kind support, encouragement and advice of Barbara Green, whose memory has provided an invaluable link with the excavation itself. The greatest thanks are due to the excavator himself, and the fact that this report could be written at all is a tribute to his work.

Ford Place
The trial excavation of 1985 at Ford Place was supervised by Colin Boyer for the Norfolk Archaeological Unit. The main excavation of 1985–6, which was undertaken during some severe winter conditions, was supervised by Michael Heaton and Piers Millington-Wallace again for the Unit. The report has been written by John Davies, who is particularly grateful to Michael Heaton for his initial interpretation of the site and for his subsequent perceptive comments and help. However, the writer must take full responsibility for the final version and for the interpretation and opinions presented. Special thanks must also be given to John Wymer, Peter Wade-Martins, Carolyn Dallas, Jacqueline McKinley and Paul Budd, whose discussion and comments at various stages have been invaluable.

Figures 1–5, 14–24 and 26–7 were drawn by John Davies and Figures 11, 12, 25 and 51 by Tony Gregory. Figure 6 is the joint work of Suzanne Bradley and Sue White. Figure 8 was drawn by Suzanne Bradley and 7, 10 and 13 by Sue White. Figure 9 was by John Wymer. Plates III and IV were by Peter Wade-Martins.

Tasburgh
The authors are grateful to the Diocese of Norwich and the Tasburgh Parish Council for permission to excavate. The excavation was greatly aided by the generous hospitality of Rev. and Mrs O. Glass. Thanks are due to Mr Tom Riches who kindly offered the services of his mechanical excavator for Trench 1 and who restored the ground afterwards; to Alison Locker who identified the animal bone; to Andrew K.G. Jones who extracted the botanical remains. The excavation of Trench 1 was only made possible by local volunteer labour and by members of Norfolk Archaeological Rescue Group whose enthusiasm endured a very hot summer. We also wish to thank the Manpower Services Commission, and the members of the Special Temporary Employment Programme who excavated Trenches 2–5. Finally we are grateful for support, encouragement and hospitality from the late David and Silvia, and Mary Addington on whose land the greater part of the monument lies.

Frances Healy is grateful to Tony Gregory for identifying the Iron Age pottery, to Hoste Spalding for producing excellent pottery and flint illustrations, to the late Silvia Addington for help and advice over the archaeology of Tasburgh, to Hugh de las Casas for showing her Site *9983* and the material from it, and to Barbara Green and Bill Milligan for facilitating examination of material in Norwich Castle Museum. Julie Gardiner, Daryl Garton and John Wymer have kindly commented on and induced some improvement in the text.

Figures 28–37 were drawn by Philip Williams, 38–9 were by Frances Healy, 40–1 were by Hoste Spalding and 42 was by Carolyn Dallas. Plate XI was by J.K. St Joseph, XII, XIV and XVI were by Andrew Lawson and XIII, XV and XVII were by S. Rollo-Smith.

The Other Norfolk Forts
Figure 47 was drawn by John Wymer, Figures 43, 45, 46 and 48 were by John Davies (45 and 46 taken from originals by Andrew Lawson), and Figures 49 and 50 by Robert Rickett. Tony Gregory drew Fig. 51. Thanks are extended to the Society of Antiquaries who have given permission for the use of Figure 44. Photographs are all by Derek A. Edwards.

The volume has been assembled by John Davies.

General Introduction

by John A. Davies and Tony Gregory

The six sites described in this volume are the known Iron Age forts in the county of Norfolk. These defended earthwork enclosures belong to the hillfort class of monument which were constructed at locations across Britain in the Bronze Age and Iron Age. Some 2000 hillforts are known in Britain. They occur in greatest numbers in the south west of England and in Wales, with less in the east of England and very few in East Anglia, in particular. Hillforts were often positioned in naturally defensible locations, making use of cliffs, hills and plateaux. In Norfolk, the flatter terrain did not provide the more spectacular natural locations adopted in areas such as Wessex but there was still a choice of naturally defensible sites. The recognition of this regional group of sites can be attributed to Rainbird Clarke.

In 1939, in his 'Iron Age in Norfolk and Suffolk' Rainbird Clarke reviewed the evidence for 'camps', fortified sites which could be ascribed, no matter how tentatively, to the Iron Age (1939, 49–52). For Norfolk he considered Narborough, Tasburgh, Warham and Holkham, to which in later years he was to add the earthworks at Thetford Castle. We can now add the levelled site of South Creake to this list. In the series of excavations which the Norfolk Research Committee undertook under his direction, one of the aims was the elucidation of the problems of Iron Age occupation in Norfolk and to examine some of these defended sites in order to test their dates. His work at Warham has already been published (Gregory, 1986) and the results of the Thetford Castle excavations are contained in this volume, which again serves to demonstrate the debt which the archaeology of Norfolk continues to owe to his energy and perceptiveness.

In the intervening years the responsibility for excavation in the county has fallen on the shoulders of professional archaeologists and the excavation programme is now largely a response to the threat of site destruction rather than part of an overall programme of research. At Tasburgh, a progressive encroachment of the graveyard and the building of a new vicarage posed a threat to the undisturbed archaeological deposits within the enclosure. At Thetford, plans to develop Ford Place Home for the Elderly affected the area thought to overlie the southern defences of the Iron Age enclosure.

In addition to excavation at Thetford Castle and Tasburgh, the Norfolk Archaeological Unit has undertaken surveys of the defended enclosures of Holkham, Narborough and South Creake. Aerial photography has also made a major contribution to the study and interpretation of these monuments. Thus, much new information has been assembled for this category of site in Norfolk. It is appropriate to publish this information together, incorporating a review of the Norfolk Iron Age forts.

Presented in this volume is the current state of knowledge of a regional group of hillforts in its entirety. The volume combines the results of rescue and research excavations, by professionals and amateurs, compiled over a period of almost forty years.

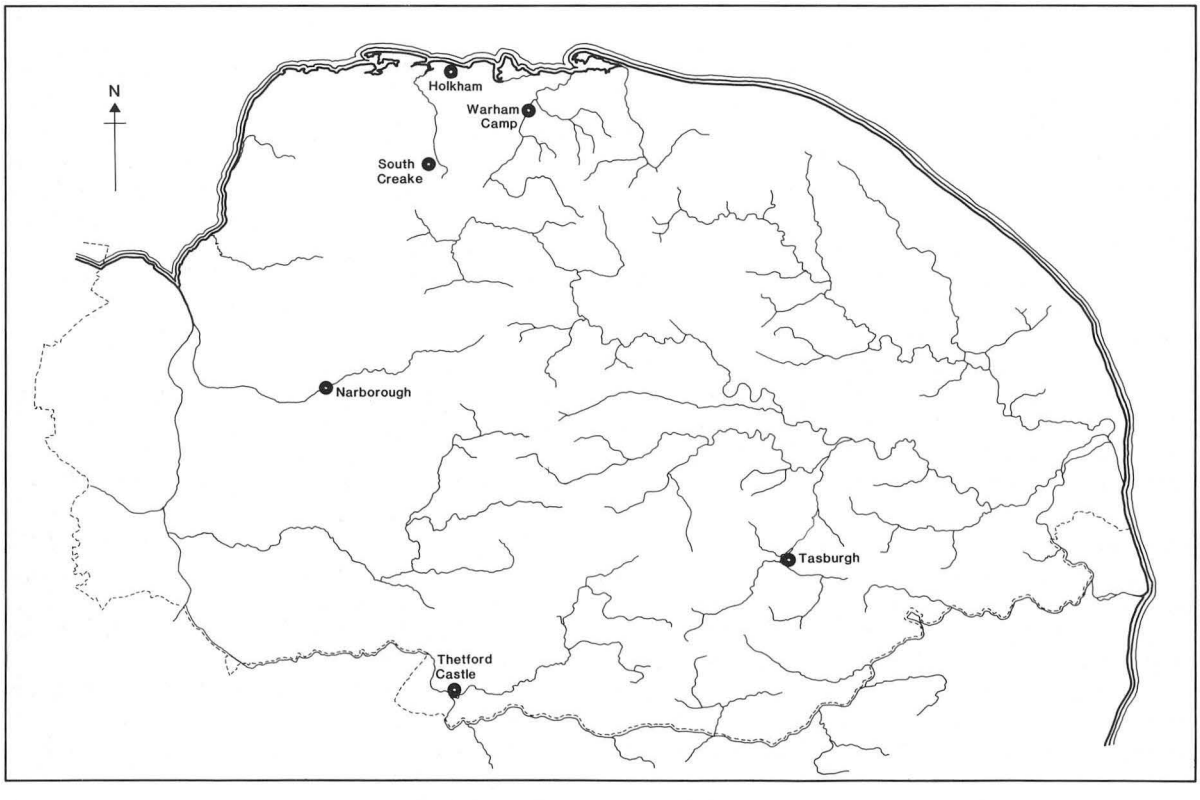

Fig. 1 Sites in this volume

Chapter 1. Excavations at Thetford Castle, 1962 and 1985–6,

by John A. Davies and Tony Gregory

Summary

Excavations were undertaken at Thetford Castle in 1962 and 1985–6 in order to examine the origins and the course of the double ramparts and ditches, part of which survive to the north and north-east of Castle Hill, and to investigate the nature of occupation within the defended area.

The 1962 excavations set out to test the hypothesis that the ramparts and ditches were part of an Iron Age enclosure later utilised by the builders of the medieval castle. Evidence for Iron Age occupation was revealed and the initial phase of the defensive earthworks might also be dated to the Iron Age. The earthworks had subsequently been remodelled in the Norman period to form the defences of the castle bailey.

Speculation, based on the evidence of the Thetford street plan, suggested that the earthworks had originally continued in a loop, to the south of the motte. Excavation in 1985–6, however, showed that no such earthworks had been constructed on the southern side. The Iron Age enclosure and Norman castle apparently made use of the meander loop in the River Thet for its defences on the south and east sides.

The excavations provided evidence for a sequence of occupation from the Neolithic to the present, with a high point in the Iron Age when the defended enclosure was of strategic importance in the region.

Introduction

In 1962 the late R. Rainbird Clark directed two weeks of excavations at Thetford Castle, Norfolk (Site *5747*; TL 8734 8276) on behalf of the Norfolk Research Committee. The aim was to test the hypothesis that the ramparts and ditches were part of an Iron Age enclosure later utilised by the builders of the medieval castle. The results were never formally published. In 1985 plans to develop the walled garden area of Ford Place Home for the Elderly provided the Norfolk Archaeological Unit with an opportunity, with the support of HBMC and the Manpower Services Commission, to excavate in order to establish the course of the southern defences (Site *5940*).

The results of both excavations provide a picture of the site and its defences. The report of the 1962 excavation has been written by Tony Gregory. The account of the 1985–6 excavation has been written by John A. Davies. The excavation archive, including the finds, is deposited in Norwich Castle Museum.

Background

Thetford Castle is situated within a meander of the River Thet, on a chalk rise, overlooking adjacent fords across the Thet and Little Ouse (Nuns' Bridges). This was a carefully-chosen location of great strategic importance within the region, dominating both land and river routes (Dunmore with Carr 1976, 8). This location is a possible crossing point of the Icknield Way, which is thought to have followed the chalk ridge between fen and forest (Margary 1973, 263; Dunmore with Carr 1976, 8; Rogerson and Dallas 1984, 197). The importance of the crossing is reflected in the name of *Theodford*, recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of AD 870. The name means 'chief ford' or 'the people's ford' (Ekwall 1960, 465), which may refer to this precise crossing point. A plan of Thetford Castle and its immediate environs is provided in Fig. 2.

Castle Hill, together with its outworks, comprises the largest earthworks in East Anglia. The medieval castle was of motte and bailey construction with the motte of chalk, standing an impressive twenty-five metres above the surrounding bailey. The motte is approximately thirty metres in diameter at the summit, which is flat-topped with a bank around the edge. At its base it is surrounded by a ditch. Defensive earthworks comprising double ramparts and ditches survive only to the north and north-east where they run for a length of 256 metres. Through them is a narrow causeway, and the ramparts are different on either side of the causeway; they appear less substantial around the motte and higher to the east.

There is no recorded evidence for the levelling of any earthworks between the motte and the River Thet, in the vicinity of Old Market Street or Ford Street. A rampart in Friars' Close, to the south-east of Castle Lane, was destroyed in 1772 (Martin 1779, 11).

The castle was not a royal one, and it was presumably constructed by the Earl who, according to the *Domesday* survey, held one third of the land on the north side of the river. In 1086 this was Roger Bigod, although it may have been held by Ralph Guader before his revolt in 1075 and transferred to Bigod after the rising had been crushed. Either of the two nobles may have built the castle, the former as defence against the king, or the latter to overawe a recently-subdued town. That Thetford took part in the revolt is suggested by the reduction in the number of burgesses from 943 in AD 1066 to 725 in AD 1086, at which date 224 messuages were vacant. The Pipe Roll of 1172–3 records the destruction of a castle at Thetford. This could refer to Red Castle, across the river, although that is a less likely option.

There have been sporadic finds of Iron Age material at Thetford Castle since the eighteenth century. In 1748 two bone combs (Fig. 12 and p. 00) were discovered 'in removing a ridge of land 50 yards in length and 25 in height at a place called Castle Hill in pure sand' (minutes of the Society of Antiquaries, 19th June 1760), during work to raise the surface of adjacent meadows (Clarke 1939, 34–5). The possible course of the Icknield Way at this point fuelled speculation that an oval Iron Age enclosure lay beneath the Norman motte and bailey, the early earthworks having been incorporated in the defences of the Norman castle.

There is further evidence for Iron Age occupation in and around Thetford. The cropmark enclosure near the new Fison Way industrial estate (Grid Ref. TL 866 849) to the north, was excavated between 1980 and 1982 (Gregory, 1991). The 1964–6 excavations at Brandon Road

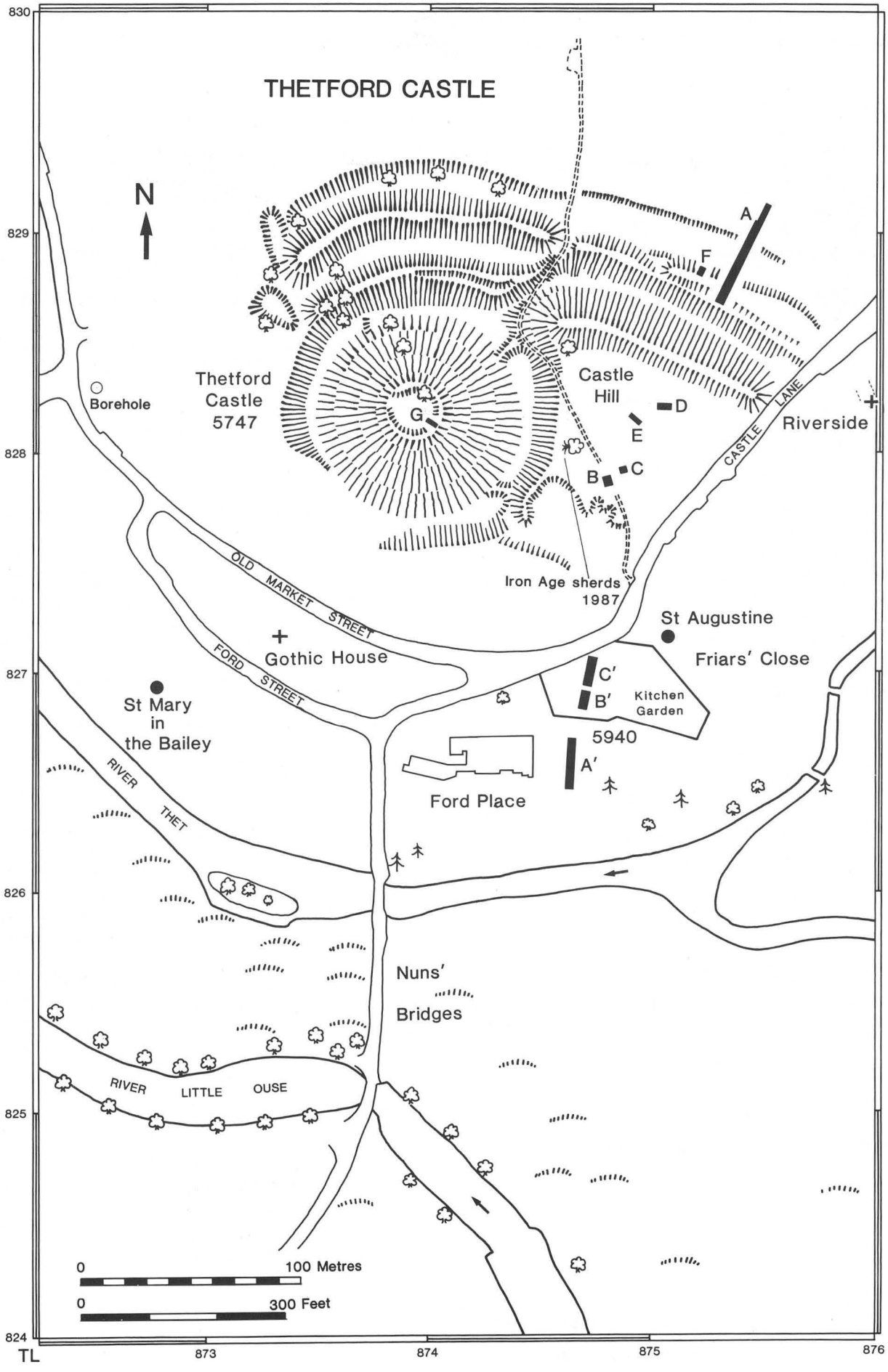

Fig. 2 Plan of Thetford Castle. Scale 1:2250

(Site *5756*) revealed round houses, although these were not datable (Dallas, forthcoming). Pottery from Red Castle, further west, includes sherds of possible Iron Age date.

Excavations at Thetford Castle, 1962

by Tony Gregory

I. Introduction

In the summer of 1962, the late R. Rainbird Clarke directed two weeks of excavations by the Norfolk Research Committee to test the hypothesis that the bailey earthworks of the Norman castle were Iron Age in origin, to investigate the interior of the bailey for remains of occupation, and to investigate the 3m deep hollow on the top of the motte, which had been suggested as evidence for a shell keep or a collapsed masonry structure.

The quality of the excavation records far exceeds those of many other excavations of the day. However, there are problems, particularly in the certain allocation of finds to layers and features, and where such allocation is in doubt, the finds in question have been ignored in the interpretation. There are instances where the recorded evidence seems to be at odds with the excavator's interpretation; in the absence of detailed written reasoning by the excavator, it is difficult to reconcile such problems.

II. The defences

(Figs. 3, 4, Pls I–IV)

Two cuttings were excavated through the outer part of the defensive earthworks, north-east of the motte. A small trench, F, was cut through the outer face of the outer rampart, at a point where it stands to its maximum height. The chalk rubble and loam layers of the rampart were exposed, but the trench was too small to allow any detailed interpretation. The rampart survived at this point to a height of 2.7m above the old ground surface, but its full height was not investigated.

The main trench, Cutting A, was excavated at a point where the outer rampart had been substantially reduced in size by the insertion of a water pipe in the 1930s (Pls I and II, and Fig. 3). Besides the remains of the outer rampart and the outer ditch, it laid bare a 17m long strip north-east of the ditch. Unfortunately there survives no section drawing for this latter north-eastern end of the cutting. The stratigraphy suggested by the end of the drawn section of the ditch (Fig. 4) is a layer of loam with chalk (*20*) above a layer of sand-loam (*21*) which in turn overlies the outer ditch. This is at odds with the notes and sketches in the site records which show a layer of chalk rubble over a thin layer of white chalk, together 0.3–0.4m thick, immediately below the turf, and overlying 0.05–0.08m of old ground surface. There were no datable finds in the chalk layers, and only Iron Age sherds were found in the old ground surface. The old ground surface and the overlying chalk layers appear in Pl. V, and a feature can be seen in section cutting into the chalk rubble just to the left of the ranging pole. Apart from an incidental reference to this in the site book as a 'robber trench', no details are known.

At the north-east end of the cutting three large 'foundations' (so-called in the excavation notes) were uncovered, rectangular masses of chalk rubble each roughly 4m x 1.5 with rounded ends and straight, vertical sides, running in a staggered line south-west to north-east (Pl. V and Fig. 3). They were clearly dug into the old ground surface and the underlying natural sand, but their relationship to the chalk layers is uncertain. A medieval or later date is likely, but cannot be proven.

Cutting A was actually a series of ten-foot squares, separated by balks three feet wide, which were later removed. The result was a complicated series of layer numbers, square by square. For the purpose of the present report these have been amalgamated and renumbered, and the new layer numbers are used here. A concordance of new and old numbers is to be found in the site archive.

The defence sequence begins with the remains of an outer rampart of chalk and loam (*16* and *18*) resting on an

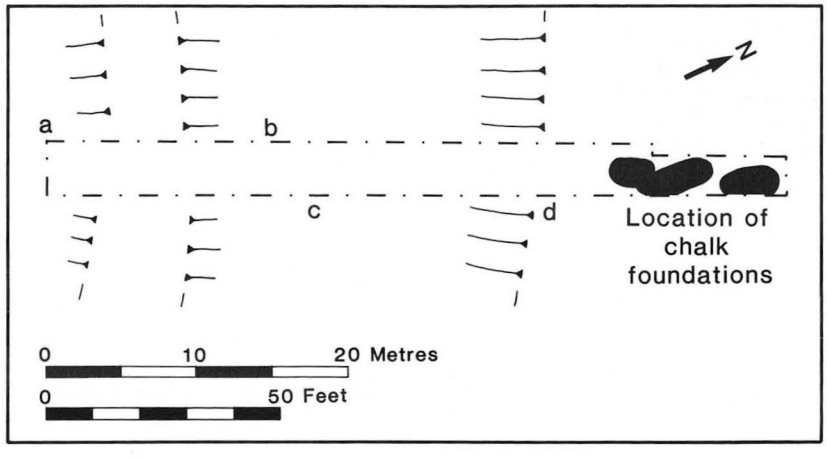

Fig. 3 Thetford Castle: plan of cutting A. Scale 1:500

Plate I Thetford Castle: outer rampart from the north-east before excavation. Cutting A was excavated across the ends of the rampart, to the left of the ranging pole.

Plate II Thetford Castle: general view of Cutting A from the south-west.

old ground surface (*19*) (Pl. IV). None of the original dimensions of the rampart could be determined since it was truncated at the rear by a ditch, at the front either by ditch digging or weathering, and on top by erosion. The only dating evidence is a sherd of Beaker pottery in the old ground surface. The back of the rampart was clearly cut away (Pl. IV) by a ditch of U-section, 1.5m deep and 3.5m or 7m wide, depending on which level the width is measured at. There is a break in slope on the north-east side of the ditch, which might allow the truncation of the rampart to be later than the digging of the ditch. This would imply that a U-shaped ditch, 3.5m wide and 1.5m deep was originally dug behind a rampart which extended some way further south than its present truncated, rear face. At a later date the upper slope of the outer edge of the ditch and the back of the rampart were cut back, presumably to achieve an angle of rest which would prevent slippage of rampart material into the ditch. This must certainly have happened before the deposition of layer *12*, a layer of relatively clean loam which suggests a period of rest in the filling of the ditch (Pl. IV). Beside Iron Age sherds, this layer contained one Early Medieval sherd, from that part of the layer within the main part of the ditch, and medieval or post-medieval brick. The underlying ditch fills (*13–15*) contained only a single Iron Age sherd, so although the truncation of the rear of the rampart must have taken place in or after the Early Medieval period, the original digging of the ditch could have been earlier. The profile of the bottom layer *12* suggests that this truncation was accompanied by a recutting of the ditch.

The remains of the rampart were then considerably extended by the addition of layers of chalk rubble and chalky loam (*4–10*) which created the present outer rampart (Pl. III). Fragments of Post-medieval glass and medieval or Post-medieval brick in layer *4*, are the only dating evidence. However, the finds from layer *12* would suggest that the extension of the rampart must be medieval or later. Within this extended rampart, three phases might be seen. Initially the rear of the original rampart was cut back and the ditch recut. After a period of time long enough for layer *12* to accumulate, the recut ditch

Plate III Thetford Castle: Cutting A, south-west end, looking north-west, showing the fill of the Phase I inner ditch.

was filled with rubble (layers *6*, *9* and *10*) (Pl. III), which in its turn was truncated in a third phase by a landscaping which, the line suggests, might also have cut back the ground surface behind the ditch, and the rampart brought to its final dimensions by the addition of layers *4*, *5*, *7* and *8*. Insufficient was seen of layers *2* and *3* to determine whether they belong to this final heightening of the rampart. The truncation in this third phase would also explain the absence of a rampart behind the ditch.

The outer ditch presents some difficulties because the north-west section, continuing the drawn rampart sections, collapsed, and it has been necessary to use an inversion of the opposite section (Fig. 4). The ditch was of considerable size, 3.3m deep from the surface of the natural chalk, with straight, almost vertical sides, and a flat bottom 4.5m wide. The lips were widely dished in what appear to be the normal weathering profile of a chalk-cut ditch. The lowest fills were, on the north-east, a layer of sand with small chalk rubble (*24*), weathered in from the outer lip, and layers of larger rubble and loam (*23* and *25*) presumably the result of the weathering of the front of the rampart (Pl. VI). Layer *24* produced part of an Iron Age jar (Fig. 11 No. 3). Otherwise the only dating evidence came from the principal fill, layer *22*, a largely homogeneous sand-loam, becoming sandier toward the base. However it appears to have been a gradual accumulation rather than a single dump, with Iron Age

Plate IV Thetford Castle: Cutting A, looking north-west, showing the outer rampart and the old ground surface.

sherds and a small part of an early Roman cordoned bowl low down, Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware at a higher level, and medieval and Post-medieval sherds towards the top. Eleven fragments of red deer antler, all showing signs of working, were found in the lowest part of this layer, with Iron Age rather than later pottery. On the inner lip of the

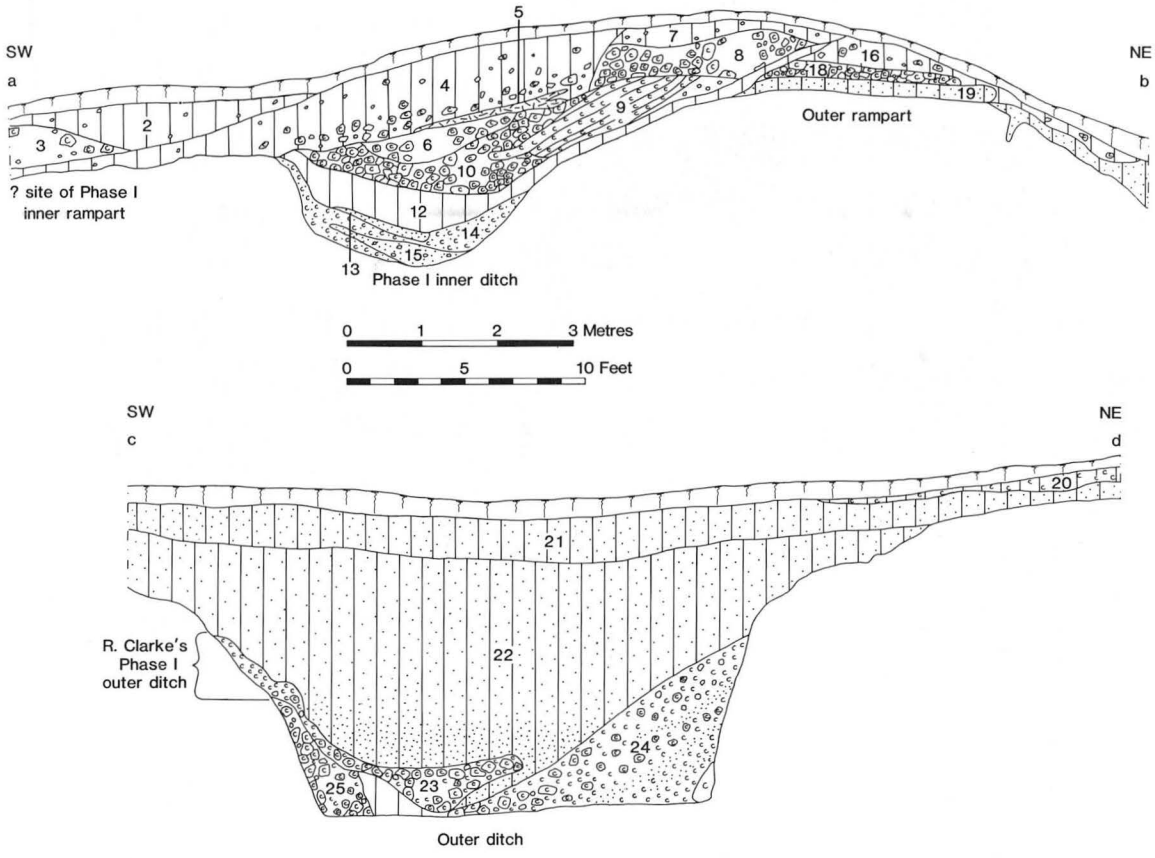

Fig. 4 Thetford Castle: section of outer defences, cutting A (c d reversed). Scale 1:100

ditch, a stakehole was seen in each section face, both angled so that the stakes would have pointed outwards. No intervening stakeholes were seen, and while it is tempting to see these as part of a defensive obstacle, the interval between them seems too large. Rainbird Clarke's own interpretation of the defensive sequence was portrayed in a duplicated interim report issued soon after the end of the excavation:

Phase 1.
Bivallate Iron Age defences, represented in Cutting A by the original rampart (*16* and *18*), a wide, shallow outer ditch, which survives only as the change in slope halfway down the inner face of the excavated ditch, the Phase I inner ditch behind the outer rampart, and an inner rampart which was destroyed by later constructions.

Phase 2.
Enlarged bivallate Iron Age defences: a considerably larger outer ditch was constructed, removing almost all traces of the Phase I outer ditch and a new outer rampart (probably *7* and *8*) constructed by backfilling the old inner ditch (*6–10*). This would have been accompanied by an inner ditch and rampart, which survive as the present inner earthworks, and which destroyed the inner rampart of the earlier phase.

Phase 3.
Norman modifications consisting of the heightening of the outer rampart (not specified, but presumably layers *2, 3* and *4*), and a hypothetical recutting of the inner ditch of Phase II and the heightening of the inner rampart.

One aspect of this is difficult to sustain in view of the re-examination of the excavation records, namely the Iron Age date of Phase 2. The presence of Early Medieval and later material in layer *12*, a recut of the earliest inner ditch, would suggest that there was only a single Iron Age phase. The earliest phase of the outer ditch also seems a little tenuous, based on an angle of the ditch face which could equally be explained by weathering. It is difficult to see why Clarke attributed his Phase II to the Iron Age, since it overlay the later material in layer *12*, unless he was discounting this material as intrusive.

In view of layer *12*, and of the second truncation suggested above, an alternative interpretation is suggested.

I. Bivallate Iron Age defences as suggested by Clarke, except that the Phase I outer ditch may have been the large flat-bottomed ditch excavated, since the evidence for a smaller ditch seems quite flimsy. This has the disadvantage of a considerable disparity in size and profile between the inner and outer ditches of this phase.

II. Bivallate medieval defences consisting of the partially-filled Phase I outer ditch, a shallower recut of the inner ditch (immediately below layer *12*), and the Phase I outer rampart, now truncated at the rear. The hypothetical inner rampart of Phase I should have continued in use.

IIIa. After the elapse of some time the inner ditch was backfilled and the outer rampart extended over it backwards (Layer *4–10*). The construction of the present inner rampart and ditch would fit at this point.

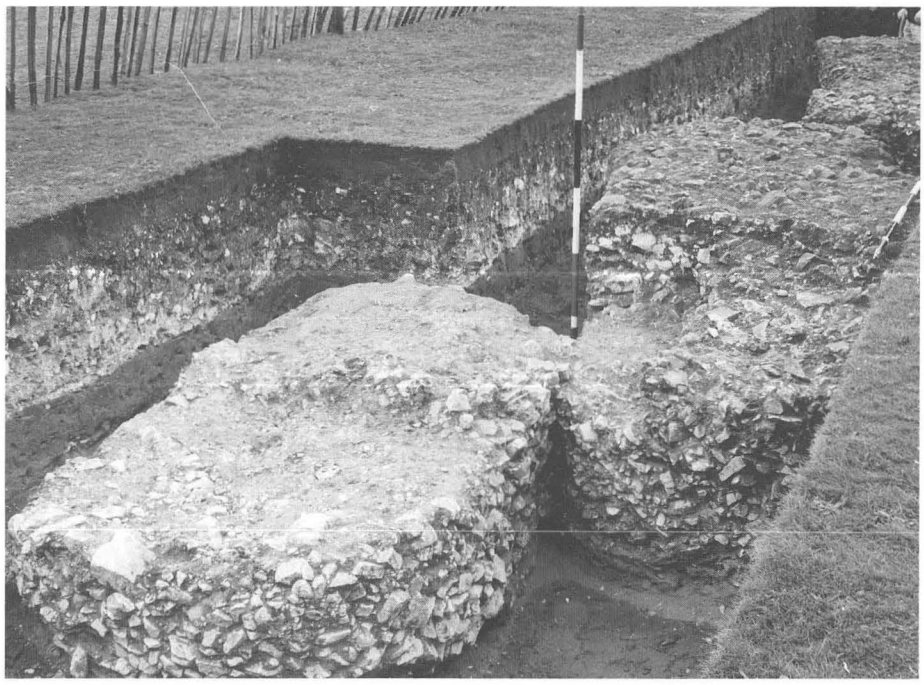

Plate V Thetford Castle: Cutting A, north-east end looking north, showing the chalk foundations.

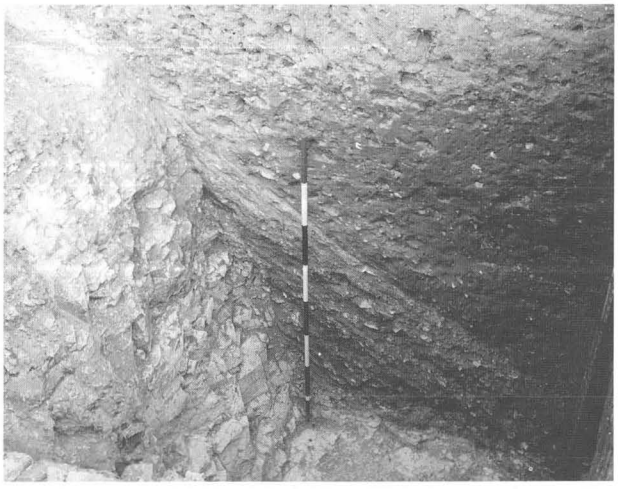

Plate VI Thetford Castle: Cutting A, south-west side of outer ditch, looking west.

IIIb. A further rearward extension of the inner rampart; this is probably best regarded as a minor modification, or possibly as an episode of collapse and weathering.

It is difficult to imagine why such a major modification of the medieval defences as Phase IIIa should have taken place, much more so than if the defences had been remodelled at the beginning of the medieval phases. This is perhaps why Clarke preferred to see the medieval material in layer *12* as intrusive. The choice between these alternatives can only be decided by further excavation of a more representative portion the outer rampart, and only a major excavation of both the inner and outer defences could clarify the sequence.

III. The interior

(Fig. 5, Pls V–VIII)

Four small cuttings were excavated in the area enclosed by the defences, between the motte and Castle Lane. Cuttings B and C, in the southern part of the area both encountered layers of chalk rubble immediately below the turf, overlying features and layers containing both Iron Age and medieval material. Both cuttings were small by present standards, 4.5m x 3m, and 3m square respectively, and not large enough to allow the plan and stratigraphy to be interpreted properly. It does appear, however, that there are intact Iron Age and medieval features sealed by rubble in that part of the interior.

Cutting D, 6m x 3m was dug to the north east of B and C; two layers, *2* and *3*, were recorded below the turf, but no section drawings are available, nor any detailed descriptions of them. A number of features (Pl. VII and Fig. 5) were revealed, dug into the natural chalk, but a note suggests that at least some of these were visible in layer *3*, which they must therefore have cut. Both *2* and *3* produced Early Medieval and Iron Age pottery, with Stamford Ware and Grimston-Thetford Ware also found in layer *2*. The features consist of a pit, feature 1, a gully, feature 2, and four oval or circular post-holes. Again, no section drawings survive, so that their depths and profiles are uncertain; the fills were recorded as 'dark soil'. Good groups of Iron Age pottery were found in features 1 and 2, and a single sherd in 5, and there is every reason to suppose that the two former are of that date. The dates of the post-holes 3, 4, 5 and 6 are uncertain.

The pit, feature 1, contained small, non-joining sherds, which may be no more than contemporary topsoil material, but ten fragments of burnt daub, some with wattle impressions, suggests a structure nearby. In contrast, the pottery from the gully, feature 2, includes substantial portions of three vessels (Fig. 11), and suggests a contemporary rubbish group.

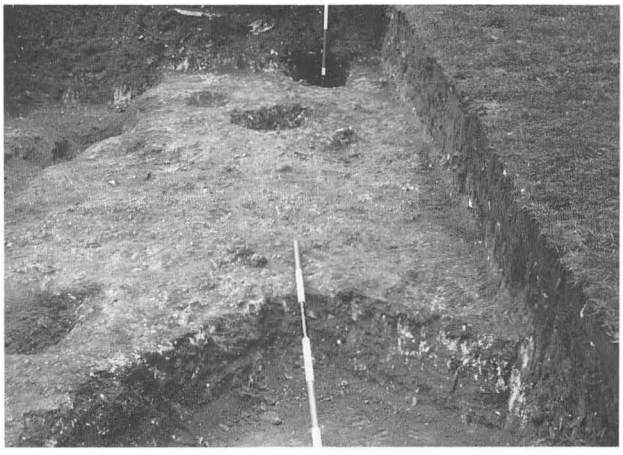

Plate VII Thetford Castle: Cutting D, general view looking west.

Plate VIII Thetford Castle: motte, looking north-east.

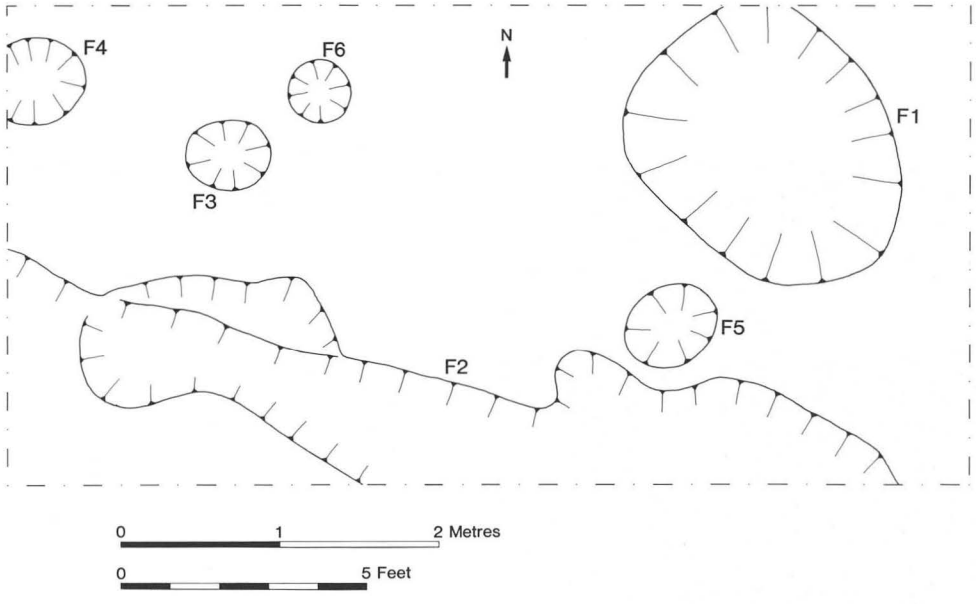

Fig. 5 Thetford Castle: plan of cutting D. Scale 1:50

Cutting E, south-west of D, was excavated to investigate parch-marks in the grass. Apart from two large chalk blocks immediately below the turf, it revealed only a layer of loam over the natural sand and chalk; medieval sherds occurred in the loam.

This evidence for Iron Age occupation within the defences can now be supplemented by observations by Andrew Rogerson, on October 22 1987, immediately after severe winds. Six sherds of Iron Age pottery, one Early Medieval, animal bones, and small quantities of Post-medieval pottery and animal bone were discovered in the loose soil of a pit left by a blown-down tree.

IV. The motte

(Pls IX–X)

The top of the Thetford motte is markedly dished, with a rim around its lip, some 3m above the bottom of the hollow (Pl. IX). A radial trench was dug from the edge towards the centre of the motte top to investigate the possibility of a shell keep. The lip was found to consist of chalk rubble (Pl. X) and the central hollow was filled with loam containing Stamford ware, Early Medieval and Post-medieval pottery. The only other evidence for any structure on top of the motte were small fragments of burnt oolite. It is still entirely uncertain what sort of structure, if any, existed on top of the motte.

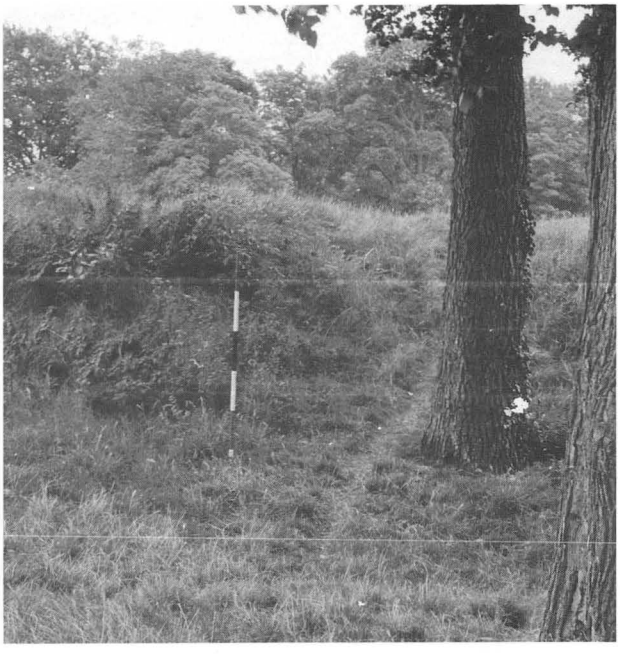

Plate IX Thetford Castle: top of the motte, looking north-east.

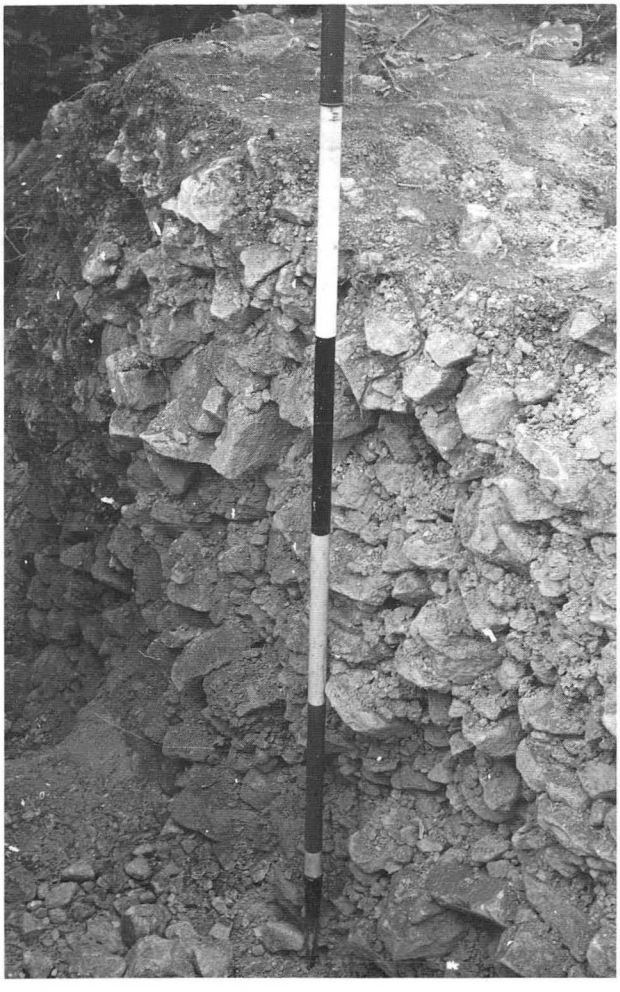

Plate X Thetford Castle: Cutting G on top of the motte, looking north-west, showing the lip of rubble around the edge.

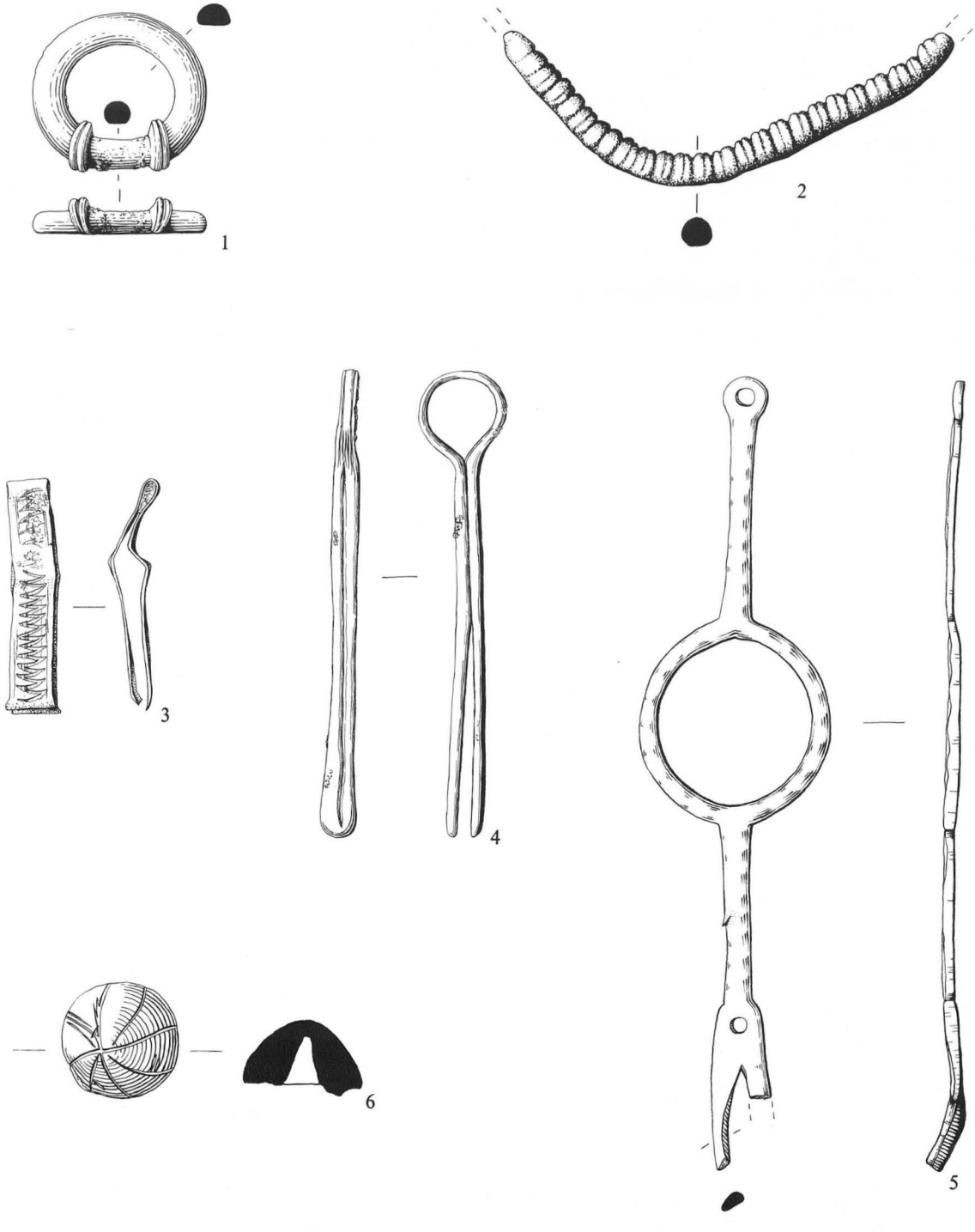

Fig. 6 Copper alloy objects from Thetford Castle. Scale 1:1

Fig. 7 Copper alloy plate from a Saxon nummular brooch, from Riverside. Scale 1:1

V. The artefacts

The Metalwork

Copper alloy finds
(Figs 6 and 7)

1. **A miniature terret** of Late Iron Age type. Both the ring and the attachment bar are of D-shaped section, separated by discs with double mouldings. The back of the ring is flat throughout, unlike the larger terrets, where the discs usually appear on both faces.

   Terrets of this size are well known from the Iron Age of Norfolk, with other examples recorded, but all unpublished, from Swanton Morley, Ditchingham and Wymondham. These three are all in private collections, but details are held in the Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record. *Cutting D, layer 3.*
2. Part of a **bracelet** with cast transverse ribs, each with a central groove. The ribs fade out at what is now the back of the curve, but if the identification as a bracelet is correct, it is probable that the curve was originally reversed and the flat side was the interior. Slightly burnt.

   Although difficult to parallel in detail, there seems little doubt that this is of Iron Age type. Bracelets of circular section, with transverse ribs or *godrons* are a well-attested type in the Iron Age (Stead 1979, fig. 28 nos 2 and 3 and Savory 1976, fig. 35 no. 20) and this example belongs with that general group. *Cutting B, layer 4*, with Iron Age pottery and Post-medieval brick.

3–6 by Sue Margeson

3. **Tweezers**, made of folded copper alloy sheet cut to shape and decorated with rocker-arm ornament. Late medieval. *Cutting D, layer 2* with Iron Age, Late Saxon, Medieval and early Post Medieval pottery.
4. **Tweezers**, cast copper alloy, with central engraved groove on each arm and rounded terminals. There is a circular loop at the apex, with engraved double contours. Medieval. Provenance and associations as No. 3 above.
5. **Copper alloy gilded strip** with pierced circular terminal for attachment, and decorative annular ring in the centre. There is a second rivet hole and below this, the strip branches. It is broken just below the branch. The strip is decorated with ribbing, giving a 'rope-twist' effect.

   Strips like this, thought to be casket mounts, were found at Castle Acre Castle (Goodall, A.R. 1982, fig. 43, 1–17, fig. 44, 19–22). One example (fig. 43, 1) has a similar annular ring, and branches, though the terminal is more elaborate than the Thetford Castle example. The Castle Acre Castle strips were all deposited in the second half of the twelfth century. Comparable pieces are known from twelfth and thirteenth century contexts, usually on sites of high status such as castles (Goodall, A.R. 1982, 235). Provenance and associations as No. 3 above.
6. **Hemispherical boss**, made of lead core with copper alloy covering, crudely incised with a star pattern. The lead core has a deep drilled hole for attachment over a shank. Function unknown. Possibly late medieval. *Cutting C, layer 3.*

Unillustrated

Copper alloy sheet (?vessel) fragments and rivets, partially melted, ?for re-use. *Cutting B, layer 9*, with Iron Age pottery and Post Medieval brick.

Fragments of stout copper alloy plate, 2mm thick and originally at least 150mm square. It appears to have been slightly curved, but its function is uncertain. *Cutting D, feature 2*, with Iron Age pottery.

The nummular brooch(Fig. 7)

Metal-detecting in the front garden of 'Riverside' (Fig. 3) led to the discovery in November 1987 of a copper alloy plate with repousse ornament, in the form of a right-facing head and a garbled inscription. This was presumably applied to a disc brooch, and is one of a number of coin-brooches and related objects of Middle and Late Saxon date which have been found in recent years. It is hoped that these will be published fully in the future (private possession).

Iron objects
(Fig.8)
by Sue Margeson

1. Iron **tweezers** with circular loop at apex. The heavy-duty quality of these tweezers suggests they may have been used in metal-working. *Cutting D, feature 1*, associated with Iron Age pottery.
2. Iron **whittle tang knife** with cutler's mark (possibly a crown) on blade, and bolster. The whittle tang (unlike the riveted scale tang) would have been inserted into a socketed handle: the bolster, a slight swelling between the blade and the tang, is characteristic of early post-medieval knives. *Cutting A, layer 4*, with post-medieval brick and glass.
3. Iron **padlock key** with ring in expanded terminal and a swollen stem inlaid with a spiral of non-ferrous wire. Elaborate bit set in line with the stem.

   This type of padlock key is known from post-Conquest contexts at Thetford (Goodall, I.H. 1984, fig. 132, no. 179), and Castle Acre Castle (Goodall, I.H. 1982, fig. 40, nos 81–88). *Cutting C, layer 3*, with Late Saxon and post-medieval pottery.
4. Iron **padlock key** with ring in expanded terminal and a swollen stem. Elaborate bit set in line with the stem. This is the same type as No. 3. *Cutting C, layer 3*, with Late Saxon and post-medieval pottery.
5. Iron **ring**, probably suspension ring for key. *Cutting C, layer 5*, with Iron Age, Roman and Early Medieval pottery.
6. Iron **key** with solid stem and semicircular bow. Post-medieval. *Cutting A, layer 4*, with post-medieval brick and glass.
7. Iron **needle** with expanded wedge-shaped head. Grooved down one side. For leather-working? Probably Medieval. *Cutting B, layer 4*, with Iron Age pottery and post-medieval brick.
8. Iron **socketed arrowhead** with triangular blade. Medieval. Arrowheads such as these are known from Castle Acre Castle (Goodall, I.H. 1982, fig. 42, nos 145–149). *Cutting C, layer 3*, with Iron Age, Early Medieval and post-medieval finds.
9. Iron **spatulate-shaped object**, with socketed handle. *Cutting B, layer 2*, with Iron Age, Medieval and post-medieval finds.

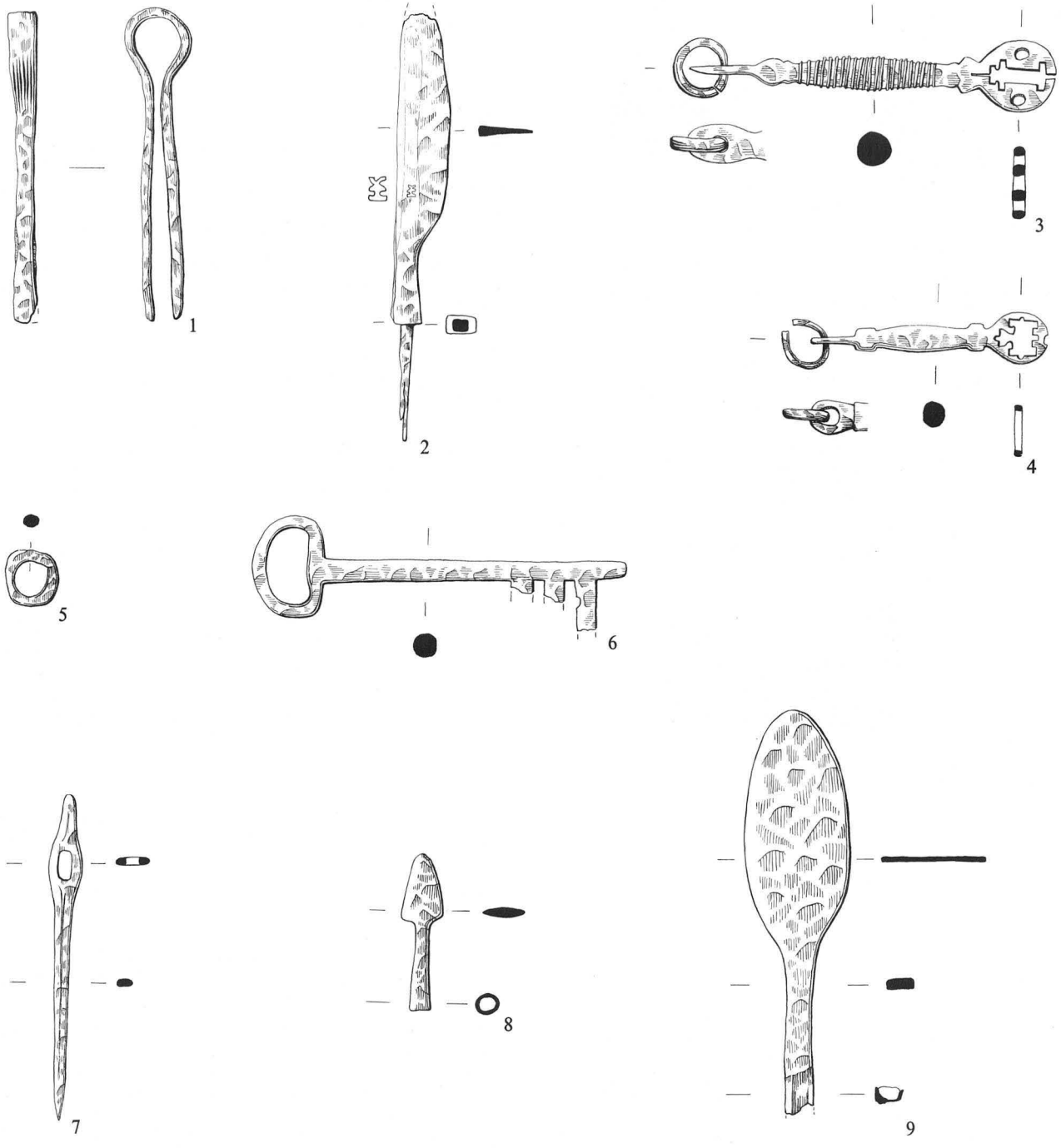

Fig. 8 Iron objects from Thetford Castle. Scale 1:2

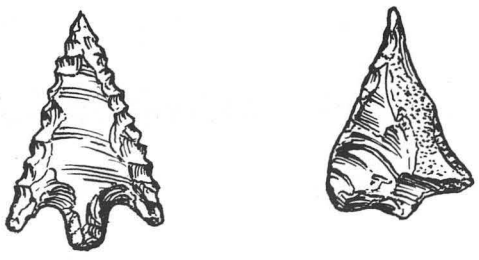

Fig. 9 Prehistoric flint from Thetford Castle. Scale 1:1

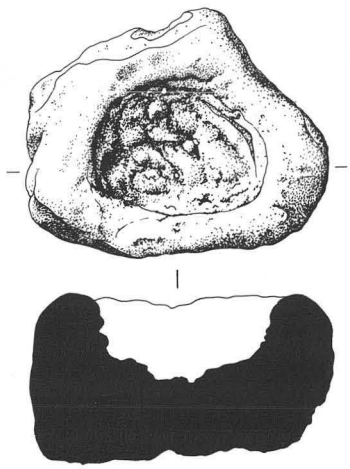

Fig. 10 Chalk object from Thetford Castle. Scale 1:2

Objects of stone

Prehistoric Flints
(Fig. 9)
by John Wymer

Arrowheads

Barbed and tanged arrowhead with serrated edges. Flake surfaces of blank remain on both sides. Faintly patinated. Sutton c type of Green (1980) which, as he notes, are frequently serrated (Fig. 9, No. 1). *Cutting B, Layer 4.*

Oblique arrowhead, crudely made on bulbous flake of black flint. British oblique type f of Green (1980). *Cutting A, Layer 4.*

Small tanged arrowhead very crudely made on a flake with cortex. No invasive flaking. Sutton type a of Green (1980) (Fig. 9, No. 2). *Cutting D, Layer 2.*

Scraper

Crude, rounded end **scraper** on unpatinated flake of black flint. *Cutting D, Layer 9.*

Flakes and spalls

Cutting A, Layer 1: 1.
Cutting A, Layer 12: 1.
Cutting A, Layer 2: 17.
Cutting D, Layer 3: 4, plus 3 very burnt natural flints and a shatter-piece from a flint hammerstone or quern.

Discussion

The three arrowhead are characteristic of Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age contexts. The remainder of the material is prehistoric and could be of the same period, earlier or later. It is all in fresh condition. Only the flake from *Cutting D, Layer 3* bcars any sign of use or retouch.

The chalk object

(Fig. 10)

An irregular **block of chalk** with a flat base, roughly trimmed sides, and a central pecked hollow. There are no signs of burning. *Cutting G*, on top of the motte.

Early Prehistoric pottery

(not illustrated)

A small number of sherds of pre-Iron Age pottery were found in the excavation, which with the struck flints, suggest the sort of small-scale occupation found in many places in East Anglia; there is no evidence for anything more substantial.

Cutting A, Layer 18, at the base of the outer rampart. **LANEBA base sherd** in sand- and grog-tempered fabric.
Cutting A, Layer 19, in the old ground surface below the outer rampart. **Beaker sherd** in sand- and grog-tempered fabric with comb-impressed ornament.
Cutting A, Layer 21, **Early Prehistoric body sherd** in sand- and flint-tempered fabric.
Cutting C, Layer 5. **LANEBA body sherd** in sand- and grog-tempered ware with slight grooves.
Cutting C, Layer 3, **Four LANEBA/Bronze Age body sherds** in sand- and grog-tempered fabrics.
Cutting D, feature 2. **Six body sherds of ?Bronze Age**, thick coarse grog- and sand-gritted fabrics.

Iron Age pottery

(Fig. 11)

All rims, and the diagnostic base and body sherds are illustrated here. The fabrics all fall within a relatively restricted range, dark grey or grey-brown in colour, with surfaces occasionally mottled with buff or orange-brown; all sherds are relatively fine and medium or hard, and the only sharp distinctions to be drawn between them are in terms of inclusions.

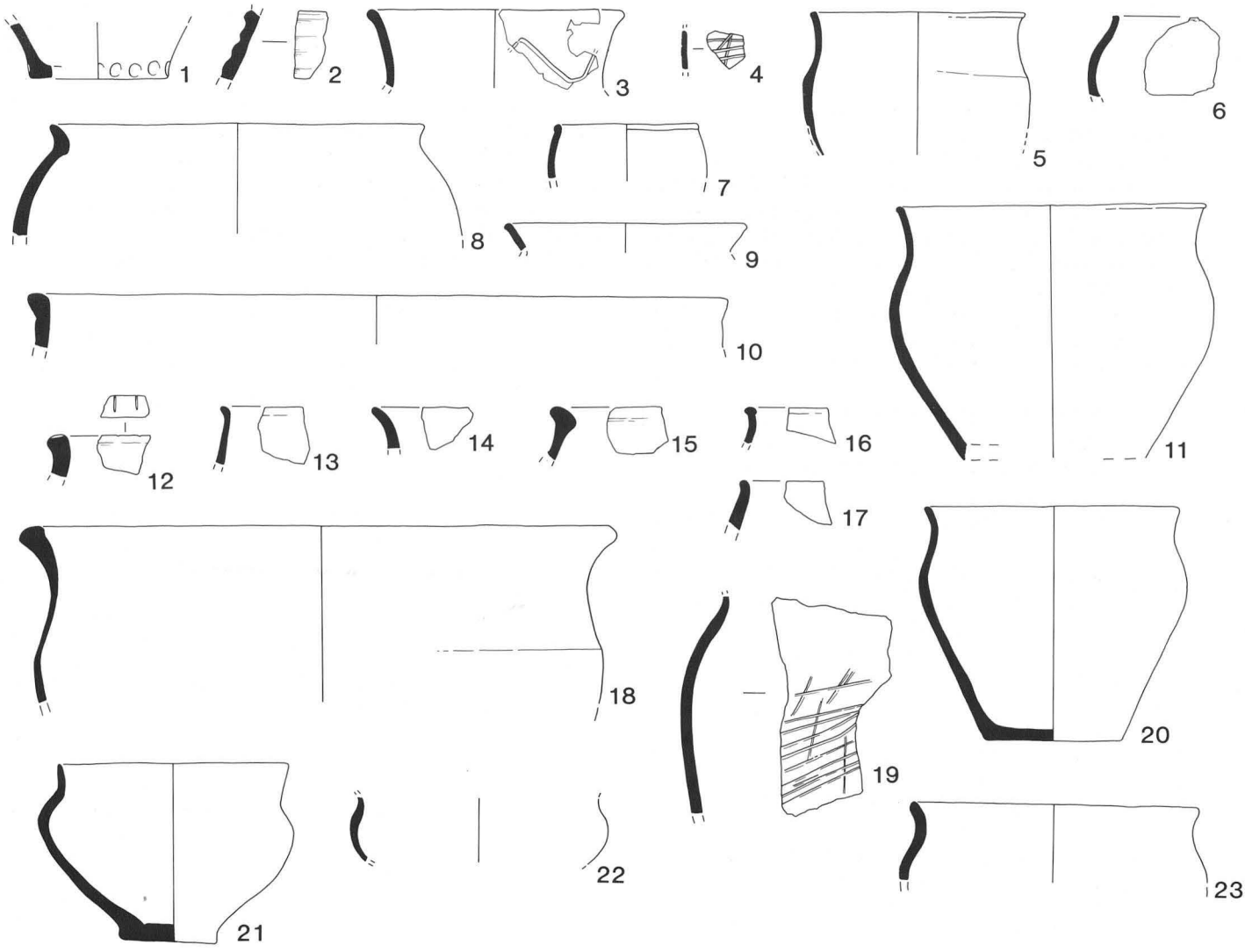

Fig. 11 Iron Age pottery from Thetford Castle. Scale 1:4

On this basis three fabrics have been distinguished:
Sandy; with dense small rounded translucent quartz grains. This fabric is often burnished.
Gritty; with dense subangular or subrounded medium-sized opaque white quartzite. Sometimes burnished.
Chalky; with sparse small subangular fragments of chalk. Known only from a single example.

These fabric descriptions have also been used in the report on the Ford Place material (p. 00), and in both reports detailed fabric descriptions are given only when these deviate sharply from the norm.

A detailed catalogue, layer by layer and feature by feature is to be found in the microfiche supplement.

Illustrated vessels

1–2. From *Cutting A, Layer 22*, the main fill of the outer ditch.
1. **Jar base** in sandy fabric, with closely-spaced finger-tip ornament.
2. **Jar or bowl** with grooved neck, in sandy fabric. The precise pitch of the sherd and the vessel diameter are uncertain.
3. From *Cutting A, Layer 24*, the lowest fill of the north-east side of the outer ditch.
Bowl or jar in sandy fabric with a light horizontal burnish on the exterior and shallow-grooved chevron ornament on the neck.
4. *Cutting B, Layer 4*, **Small body sherd** in sandy fabric in gritty fabric, with a brown core, light grey interior and dark grey exterior, which is deeply grooved in two directions. The pitch and diameter are uncertain.
5. *Cutting B, Layer 9*, **Jar** in sandy fabric.
6. *Cutting B, Layer 10*, **Jar or bowl** in a very hard sandy fabric. The diameter is uncertain and the pitch less so.
7. *Cutting C, Layer 3*, **Small jar** in sandy fabric.
8–10. *Cutting C, Layer 5*
8. **Jar** in gritty fabric with high horizontal burnish on the exterior. A similar jar, with the distinctive, internally thickened rim, comes from Fakenham, Suffolk (Cunliffe 1968, fig. 5, no. 72).
9. **Sharply everted rim** from a jar in sandy fabric.
10. Wide-mouthed **jar or bowl** in sandy fabric.
11–14. *Cutting D, Layer 2*
11. **Jar** in sandy fabric with horizontal burnish on the exterior of the shoulder with vertical burnish below.
12. **Rim** in gritty fabric with slashed ornament on top of the rim.
13. **Rim** in sandy fabric.
14. **Rim** in sandy fabric with horizontal burnish on the exterior.
15. *Cutting D, Layer 3*, **Rim** in sandy fabric.
16–17. *Cutting D, feature 1*
16. **Rim** in sandy fabric.
17. **Rim** in sandy fabric.
18–23. *Cutting D, feature 2*
18. **Bowl** in sandy fabric with lightly smoothed exterior.
19. **Jar** in gritty fabric with deeply scored exterior.
20. **Jar** in sandy fabric with horizontal burnish on the exterior of rim and shoulder and vertical knife trimming on the lower part of the body.
21–23. **Bowls** in sandy fabric. No. 21 is similar to Little Waltham No. 267 (Drury 1978, fig. 51).

Discussion

Only the pottery from *Cutting D, feature 2* (Fig. 11, 18–23) can be regarded as a useful group, where sufficiently large proportions of vessels are represented to suggest a deposit of rubbish over a short period. The rest of the material, however, both from the Thetford Castle excavations of

1962 and from Ford Place of 1985/6, can be regarded as a loosely associated group, since both characteristically early and late forms are absent.

The two associated groups (Fig. 11, 18–23 and Fig. 11, 1–7) are too small to allow useful comparisons between them. It is therefore appropriate to deal with both them, and the other Iron Age material from both sites as a single, loose, assemblage.

Some of the vessels can be individually parallelled, and these comparisons are made in the published descriptions. Such parallels can be drawn with sites in Suffolk and Essex, and with others in areas such as West Norfolk and Cambridgeshire which are in the same Icknield Way zone as Thetford itself. However, there are not enough close comparisons to suggest any particular geographical affinities for the assemblage.

The dating of Iron Age pottery, particularly in Eastern England is fraught with problems. The best, even now, that can be hoped for, is a rather subjective comparison, assemblage by assemblage, with perhaps a rough division of the Iron Age into early, middle and late. In East Anglia the early Iron Age is best represented by West Harling, spilling over from the Late Bronze Age, and its descendants of Cunliffe's Darmsden-Linton style-zone (1968); the late Iron Age can be defined in the southern part of the area by the presence of Aylesford-Swarling styles, and the middle receives all those groups which do not fit comfortably into either early or late. In Norfolk and North Suffolk, where Aylesford-Swarling material is very sparse, there is little chance of distinguishing between middle and late.

The Thetford Castle assemblage is not closely related to any of the distinctively early or late groups. Some, rather marginal, similarities can be seen with Darmsden, where the angular jars (Cunliffe 1968, fig. 3, nos 35 and 45) can be compared generally with Thetford Castle Fig. 11, nos 5, 11 and 20, but the distinctive shallow angular bowls of the Darmsden-Linton group are absent here. Again, individual vessels can be compared with the later material from Little Waltham, Essex, of the third and second centuries BC, where the S-shaped bowl is the dominant bowl form, occurring at Thetford Castle only as Fig. 11, nos 22 and 23. The material from the hill fort at Wandlebury provides the best assemblage for comparison with Thetford, but that site cannot be dated with any confidence. The scoring on the jar (Fig. 11, no. 19) can be linked with the general middle Iron Age style of the south and east Midlands, from Lincolnshire to Hertfordshire, but this is rather too widespread a trait, both spatially, and, apparently, chronologically, to be of much use.

It is tempting, given these tenuous links, to place the Thetford Castle material between Darmsden and Little Waltham, securely in the middle Iron Age, perhaps in the third century BC.

Such a temptation should be resisted since it is entirely uncertain how great the range of variation between assemblages is due to spatial, functional and stylistic factors, rather than chronological. The absence of the Darmsden-Linton bowls could easily be a functional element, if they were used for a specific purpose which was not associated with the Thetford Castle site. The globular vessels from Thetford (Fig. 11, no. 8, Fig. 25, nos 8 and 9) are not well parallelled elsewhere, and this might also be a functional element. Equally, if there is a strong chronological element determining the composition of Iron Age pottery assemblages, then the comparisons with Darmsden and Little Waltham could suggest a relatively long life for the occupation, from perhaps the fifth to the second centuries BC. Equally, the elements which link the assemblages together could be particularly long-lived, and the Thetford Castle pottery might come from a short period of occupation at the point where those elements overlap.

Such are the problems of dating; it is perhaps most realistic to suggest a date somewhere in the middle of the Iron Age, for an occupation of unknown duration, but not likely to exceed three or four centuries.

Post-Roman Pottery

(not illustrated)
by Carolyn Dallas

Some 378 post-Roman sherds were found in the excavations (Table A microfiche supplement A). They can be roughly classified into the following period groups.

Middle Saxon — Ipswich-type Ware (IW) from A4/5 layer *22*, the fill of the other ditch and *Cutting C, Layer 4*, all with later material. Two small **jar rim** fragments (fine sandy and coarse sandy), two **sagging bases** (fine sandy, not certainly Middle Saxon), five **bodysherds** (one intermediate pimply, four fine sandy). These seem to be from different vessels but are small, often abraded fragments.

Saxo-Norman — a few **bodysherds** of local Thetford Ware (TH); one abraded St Neots-type (SN) **inturned bowl**; three late eleventh-twelfth century Grimston Thetford-type Ware (GMT) **storage jar** fragments. The Stamford Ware (ST) comprises Kilmurry fabrics (Kilmurry 1980) A (one example *c.* 900–1150), B or G (three examples *c.* 1020–1250), and 'Developed' B3 (one with combed strip decoration *c.* 1140–1250).

Early Medieval (EM) — Some 169 sherds fall into this category, often from the same vessels. Large groups were found in *Cutting C* and *Cutting D, Layer 2*, but Early Medieval wares occurred in all excavated areas. The fabrics are generically typed as in other recent Thetford reports (Rogerson and Dallas 1984, 123) into three categories. No Fabric C, with calcite, was found in these excavations. There are seventy-six sherds of sandy Fabric A, mostly in brownish colours although some are dark grey, and of late eleventh-century type. A further thirteen sherds (Early Medieval/Medieval EM/M) relate to Fabric A, but resemble the local unglazed Medieval wares in rim form, vessel size, or in having a more greyish colour. The largest quantity of EM sherds are in Fabric B, a sandy fabric with many rounded quartz grains, usually grey in colour and difficult to distinguish from Middle Saxon Ipswich-type ware.

The twenty-eight EM **rim sherds**, from approximately twenty-four vessels, include one bowl and one ginger jar, both in Fabric B. The rest are large jars or 'cooking pots'. Rim variations are:

a) inturned *cf.* Jennings 1981, fig. 14, no. 299, one A;
b) plain flared *cf.* Knocker 1967, fig. 11, nos. 17, 22, three A;
c) flared with frilled top *cf.* Knocker 1967, fig. 11, nos 3, 20, two A;
d) flared with flat top and internal hollow *cf.* Rogerson and Dallas 1984, fig. 185, no. 465, one B?
e) everted, short triangular rim profile *cf.* Rogerson and Dallas 1984, fig. 185, no. 466, one EM/M sandy;
f) everted, long thin triangular rim profile, one A, two B;
g) everted, squarish rim profile *cf.* Knocker 1967, fig. 11, nos 14, 24, two late A, three B, one B with horizontal thumbed strip on shoulder, one B with finger impressions on neck.
h) everted at sharp angle or right angle, long rectangular rim profile *cf.* Jennings 1981, fig. 14, no. 290, one EM/M sandy, one B, one B with incised wavy line on rim top; Unclassified — one small fragment B. Thirteen sagging base sherds were found.

Medieval and Late Medieval (M, LM) — sixty-four Medieval sherds, mostly from different vessels, were found. Eight of these seem to be late fourteenth-fifteenth century. Of the Medieval sherds, one third are unglazed wares and two thirds glazed wares. The unglazed vessels are nearly all cooking pots but the one **rim fragment** appears to be from a bowl. The glazed wares are **jugs** where identifiable and there is one piece from a Grimston-type 'face' jug (Jennings 1981, 51) and five handle fragments. Grimston wares are only some 9% of the Medieval total, a

lower percentage than other Thetford sites, and similarly sherds from Sible Hedingham in Essex, are only 3% of the total.

Early Post-Medieval (EPM). The twenty-seven sherds, from about as many vessels, of late fifteenth-sixteenth century pottery include 29% Late Medieval Transitional wares. These are in sandy micaceous fabrics with green glaze (Jennings 1981, 61). There is also one bichrome sherd with green glaze on one surface and yellow on the other, a **rim fragment** from a bowl, and two **base fragments** with internal green glaze, probably also from bowls.

Post Medieval (PM) — A few sherds of seventeenth and eighteenth century date were found, mostly of Glazed Red Earthenware common at this period.

Discussion

It is debatable whether the few Middle Saxon sherds can be interpreted as representing occupation on this spot, particularly as most of them come from the outer ditch fill, *Cutting A layer 22*, but the scarcity of Saxo-Norman material indicates that there was no occupation of the tenth and early eleventh century.

The Early Medieval wares lack early eleventh century types and the site sequence begins with the Norman refurbishment of the site. Wares datable to the late eleventh to early thirteenth century account for some 68% of the site pottery. It is not clear whether the absence of Fabric C and the prevalence of B is chronological or whether it relates to the source from which the vessels were obtained.

The pottery continues in an unbroken but diminished sequence, with thirteenth to mid-fifteenth century pottery accounting for some 16% of the total and fifteenth to seventeenth century pottery about 8%. As most of the material is not from features which were filled quickly, but from the ditch filling, topsoil or other unstratified soils, it is not clear whether occupation on this site could have continued beyond the end of the twelfth century. The pottery unfortunately cannot be dated intrinsically in sufficient detail to determine whether the demolition of 'Thetford Castle' in 1172–3 does indeed apply to this castle or Red Castle. The greatest quantities of pottery came from *Cutting A*, *C* and *D*. *Cutting C* apparently contained Early Medieval features and the pottery groups can be related to layers, but the layers cannot be understood as features from the site records. Pottery groups of only Early Medieval sherds are rare, and Medieval pottery was found within the defended area.

Antler and Bone

Worked antler

Eleven fragments of red deer antler were found on the site, all worked, and all from the lower part of layer *22* in the main fill of the outer ditch, with Iron Age pottery; they are likely to be the products of an antler-working industry on the site in the Iron Age. They consist of: four tines, sawn off at their bases, ranging from 140 to 210mm in length; one length of split beam, 70mm long with a small tine attached; one plate sawn lengthwise from a beam, and sawn off at each end, 55mm long; and five lengths of beam between 95mm and 160mm in length, sawn from boughs, with the remains of sawn-off tines, and sawn lengthwise from the bough so that they are about 70mm wide.

The weaving combs

In 1760, Stukeley reported to the Society of Antiquaries the discovery of two weaving combs, either of bone or antler, found in 1748 probably during the demolition of a length of rampart (above p. 00). Since the ramparts in Friars Close, south-east of the motte are recorded as having been demolished in 1772 (Martin 1779, 11), the rampart in question here was probably in the Pike Lane area, west of the motte. Drawings were communicated to the Society by Stukeley, and slightly different drawings were published in 1781 (Armstrong 1781, viii, 155), where they were said to have been found in 1760); the drawings published in the present paper (Fig. 12) are taken from Armstrong's.

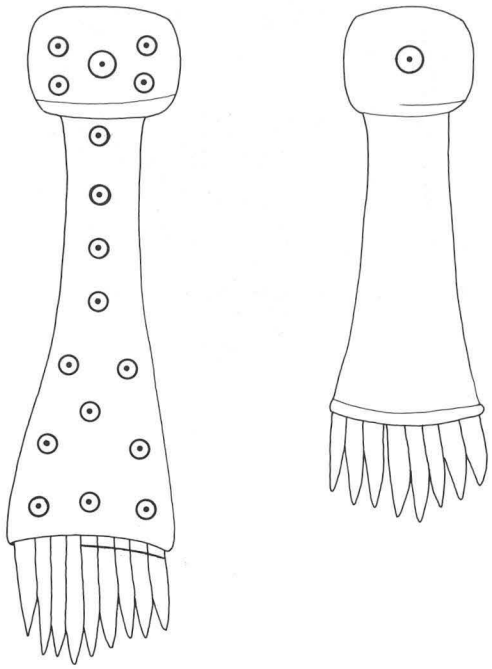

Fig. 12 Stukeley's weaving combs, from Thetford Castle, after Armstrong (1781, viii, 155). Not to a known scale

Worked bone
(Fig. 13)
by Sue Margeson

Bone double-sided simple **comb fragment**. Made of long bone of large animal. Early Post-medieval.

Combs of this type are commonly found in sixteenth and seventeenth century contexts (compare examples from Amsterdam, Baart *et al.* 1977, cat. nos 110–113). They are shown in use in Dutch and Flemish paintings, presumably combing out lice as well as tousles.

Cutting A, topsoil over the rampart.

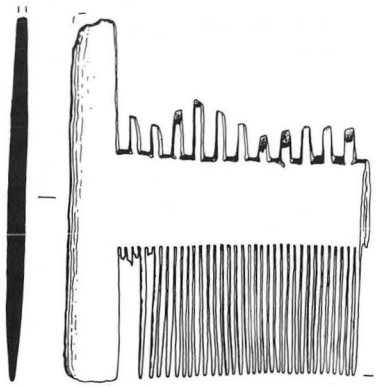

Fig. 13 Bone object from Thetford Castle. Scale 1:1

Faunal remains

Animal bones and mollusc shells were recovered from many of the deposits excavated. However, the number which could be confidently associated with well-dated layers is small, and therefore they have not been the subject of a report.

Excavations at Ford Place, 1985–6

by John A. Davies

I. Introduction

The 1962 excavations at Thetford Castle had established the presence of an Iron Age enclosure on the site and that the Norman defences to the north of Castle Hill had been aligned and remodelled over the bivallate Iron Age earthworks. It can be seen from the town street plan that subsequent medieval building, to the south of the motte, followed a course around Castle Hill that was symmetrical with that of the defences to the north (Fig. 2). R.R. Clarke had suggested that the southern line of the enclosure defences had been preserved in the plan of Ford Street and Old Market Street, forming a symmetrical enclosure of approximately 6 hectares (Clarke 1960, 169). However, occasional watching briefs along the present street frontages failed to produce any evidence of either ditches or banks.

In October 1983, planning permission was granted for building development within the grounds of Ford Place Home for the Elderly which encompassed the eastern end of these possible southern earthworks. This presented an opportunity to test the hypothesis for these defences in advance of the re-development. Permission to excavate within the grounds of Ford Place was given by Norfolk County Council. Excavations were laid out to determine whether or not the ramparts and ditches of the enclosure and castle were continued in a loop to the south of Castle Hill as envisaged by Clarke.

In 1984 a resistivity survey was carried out by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, in advance of excavation. Readings were taken at one metre intervals along a series of traverses within the walled garden of Ford Place and across the grounds to the south. The survey indicated anomalies in the north part of the walled garden and some fifteen metres to the south, which were tentatively identified as the two hypothetical defensive ditches. The full resistivity survey report has been included in the microfiche supplement.

Excavations by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit began in March 1985, with the machining of topsoil from trenches A, B and C (Fig. 2). The northern end of trench C lay adjacent to the eastern end of Old Market Street, on the line of Clarke's suggested inner ditch. The southern end of trench A was located just forty metres from the River Thet. The entire north-to-south trench alignment spanned 55 metres and it was considered that if earthworks of a comparable size to those on the north of the Castle existed, they would be found within these trenches.

The removal of medieval overburden in A revealed the presence of major features. In trenches B and C, deep gardening disturbance had damaged earlier features protruding above the level of the natural chalk. Preservation was more complete in trench A. Full-scale hand excavation began in December 1985.

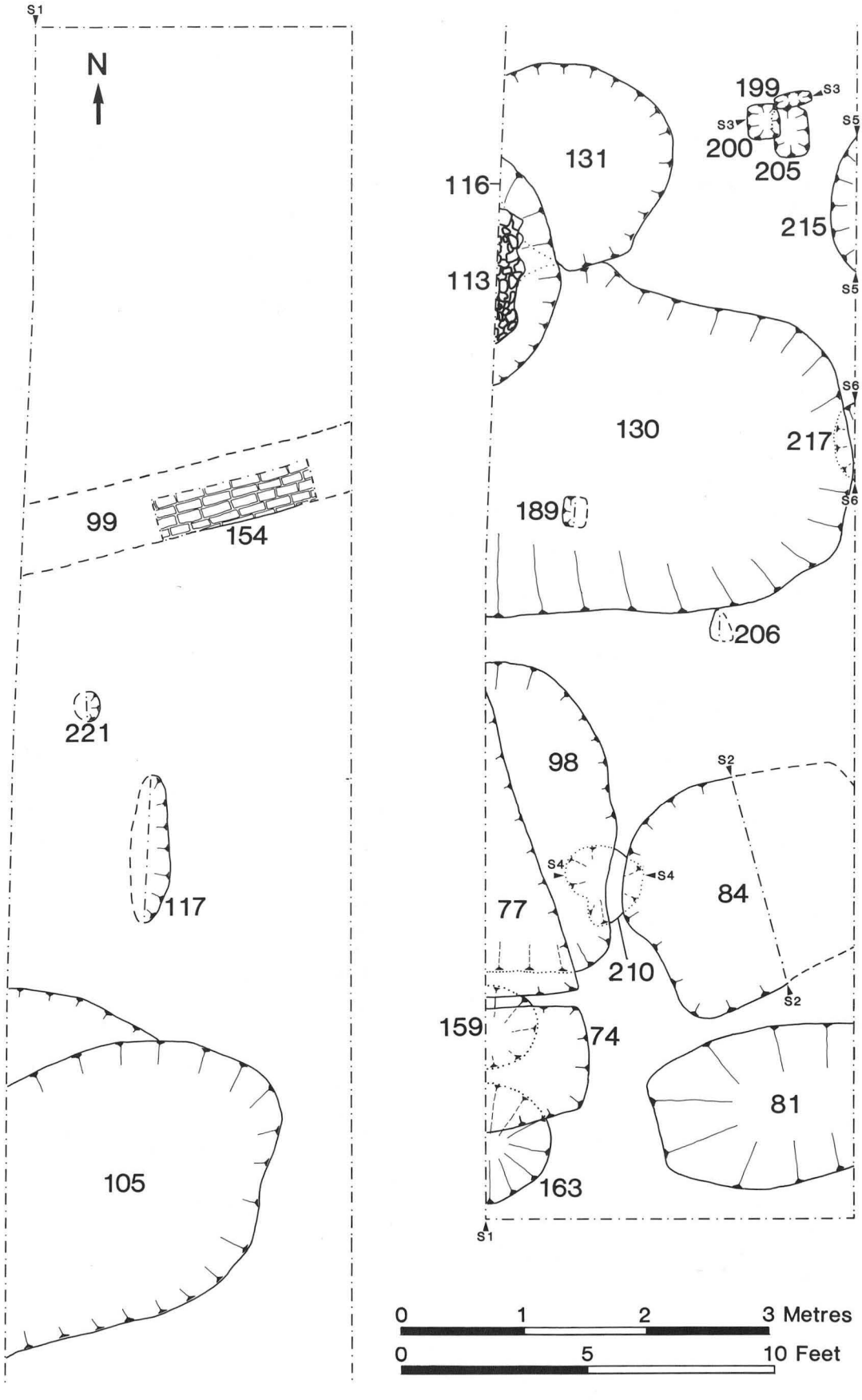

Fig. 14 Ford Place: plan of trench A. Scale 1:50

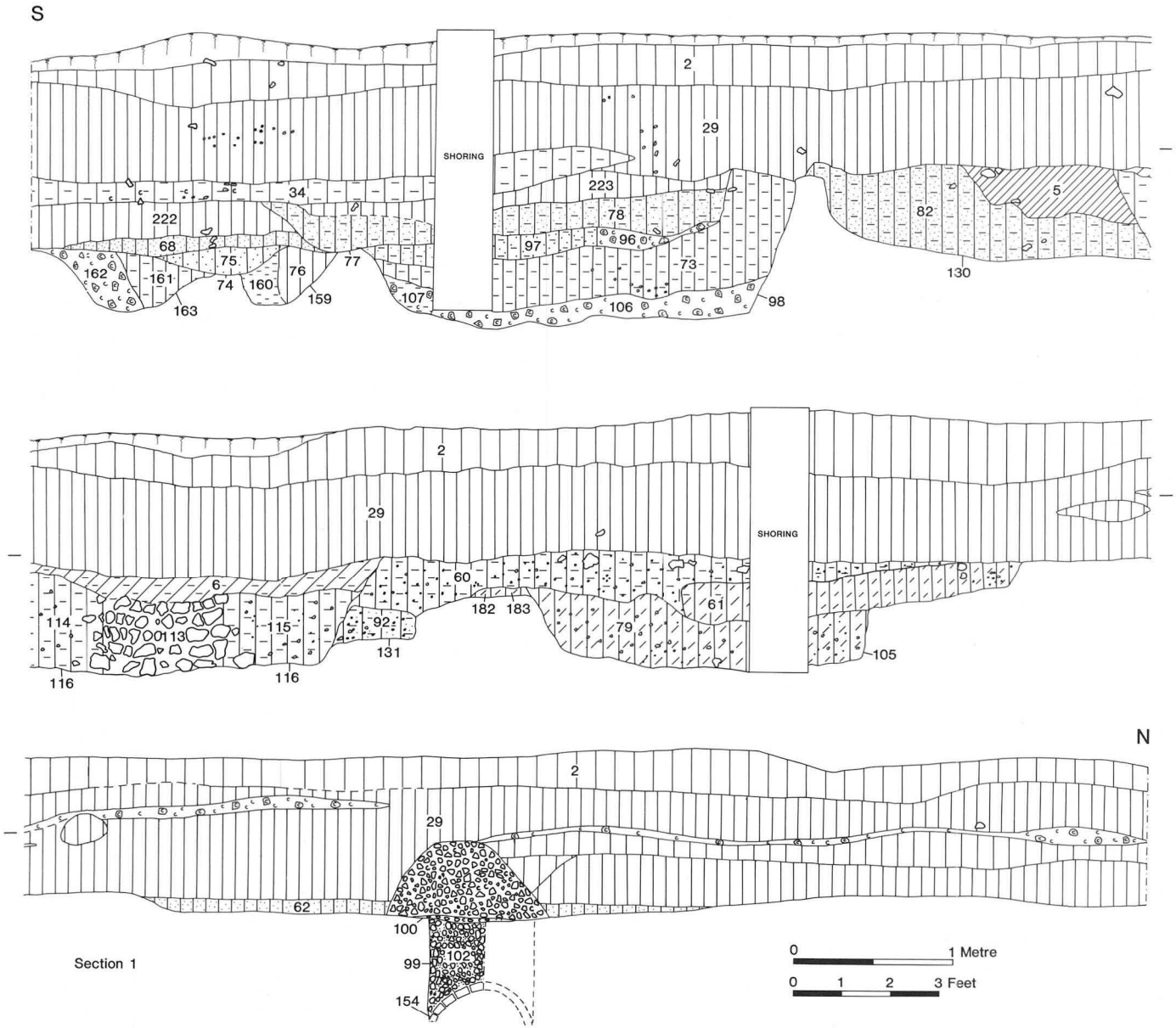

Fig. 15 Ford Place: trench A, section 1. Scale 1:40

II. Trench A

(Fig. 14, plan; Figs 15–16, sections 1–6)

Trench A was situated to the south of the heavily cultivated walled garden which contained trenches B and C (Fig. 2). It measured 21m x 3m, being the longest of the three trenches and was aligned north to south.

The upper topsoil (layers *2*, *29* and *34*), removed by machine, contained building material associated with the construction of Ford Place as well as medieval refuse (Fig. 15, section 1). Pottery of late medieval and modern date was recovered, together with fragments of clay pipe and large quantities of animal bone, including those of cattle, sheep, pig, deer and birds. Some showed butchering marks and oyster shells were present. Numerous small lumps of iron slag (total weight 1.2kg) could not be dated. Machine clearance was continued down to the level of natural chalk, in which a heavy concentration of features was identified. These were subsequently excavated by hand.

A steep-sided linear feature was found in the north of the trench (*99*), running east to west (Fig. 14). It contained an eighteenth-or nineteenth-century brick built drain (*154*), possibly associated with the building at Ford Place. This showed that the machined layers *2*, *29* and also *62* must be of eighteenth century, or later, date. In the centre of the trench a solidly constructed but unfaced wall of chalk block and flint protruded from the section (*113*) (Fig. 14 and Fig. 15, section 1). This had cut earlier pits *130* and *131*. The construction trench (*116*) did not extend more than 0.5m into the trench, showing this to be the end of the wall. In the south of trench A, two rectangular features, *74* and *77*, were the latest features present (Fig. 14). *77* was sealed by medieval/modern topsoil layers. This feature cut a late-sixteenth to seventeenth-century layer (*68*), which in turn sealed feature *74*. It was initially thought that features *74* and *77* might be truncated graves, although neither contained skeletal material.

The rectangular features *74* and *77* cut the fills of a concentration of pits in the south of the trench. Pit *84* contained numerous Iron Age sherds and a chalk weight, probably of the same date, in its primary fill (Fig. 14 and Fig. 16, section 2). Human skeletal material was found in the base of the pit which belonged to a younger mature adult aged between 25-30. The associated concentration of Iron Age pottery sherds strongly suggests a similar date for the pit and human bone, although a single sherd of medieval Grimston Ware had penetrated the lower pitfill, possibly through known tree root disturbance.

The other pits in trench A were shallower and were all much later. Pits *81*, *98* and *105* share a similar thirteenth/fourteenth-century date, while the wider and shallower pits *130* and *131* were dated between the late-fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (Fig. 15, section 1). Pit *105* cut through the original ground surface (*182*, *183*), remaining above the natural chalk. A small vitrified crucible fragment, of probable twelfth to fifteenth-century date, was recorded from pit *130*, indicating local metalworking activity. Pits *84*, *98* and *130* overlay three of seven post-holes, which relate to an earlier phase of occupation (features *189*, *199*, *200*, *205*, *210*, *217*, *221*) (Fig. 16 sections 3, 4 and 6). It is not possible to date these features, although two sherds of locally made thirteenth/fourteenth-century pottery were recorded within the shallow post-hole *205*. However, an Iron Age origin cannot be ruled out for most of them.

Trench A contained no evidence for the presence of rampart construction or ditches relating to the defences of the Iron Age enclosure or the castle. Iron Age finds were restricted to pit *84*, but it is possible that the area also contained structures of that date. The other pits were of medieval date, with most belonging to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is known that the church of the Austin Friars, St Augustine's, dating between 1387 and 1538 was situated to the east of the present Ford Place Home, (Cox, 1906; see also Fig. 2). The boundaries of the Austin Friars are not known but it is likely that the excavation was situated within the grounds of the church of St Augustine. The dramatic fall-off in the ceramic sequence from the late-fourteenth century until the sixteenth century appears to confirm this. Pits *130* and *131* belong to that period, possibly together with feature *74*. If feature *74* is correctly interpreted as a grave, it could indicate that the graveyard extended this far westwards. The wall *113*, which just intrudes into the trench, belongs to a substantial structure which lay immediately beyond the west section, post-dating pits *130* and *131*. Apart from the late drain (*99*) there is an absence of other post-Dissolution features in trench A, although pottery and refuse

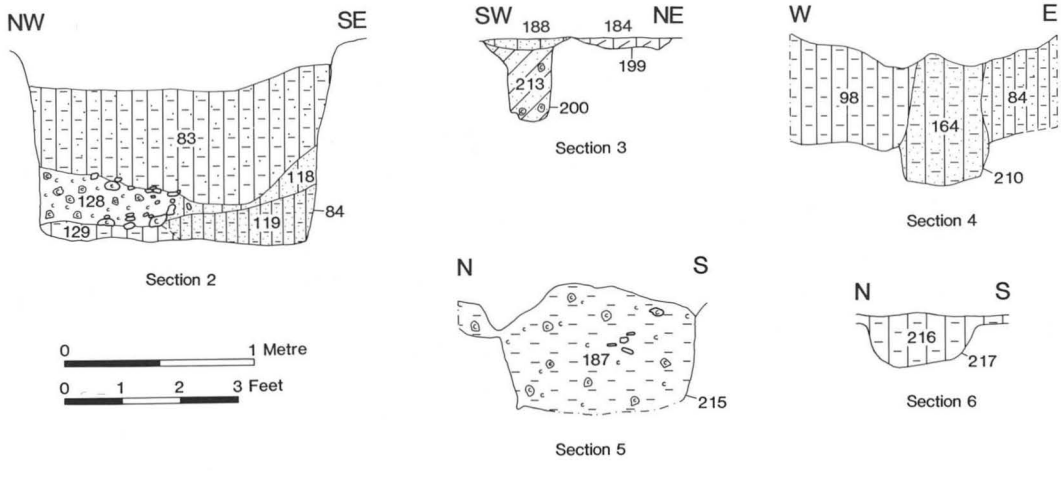

Fig. 16 Ford Place: trench A, sections 2–6. Scale 1:40

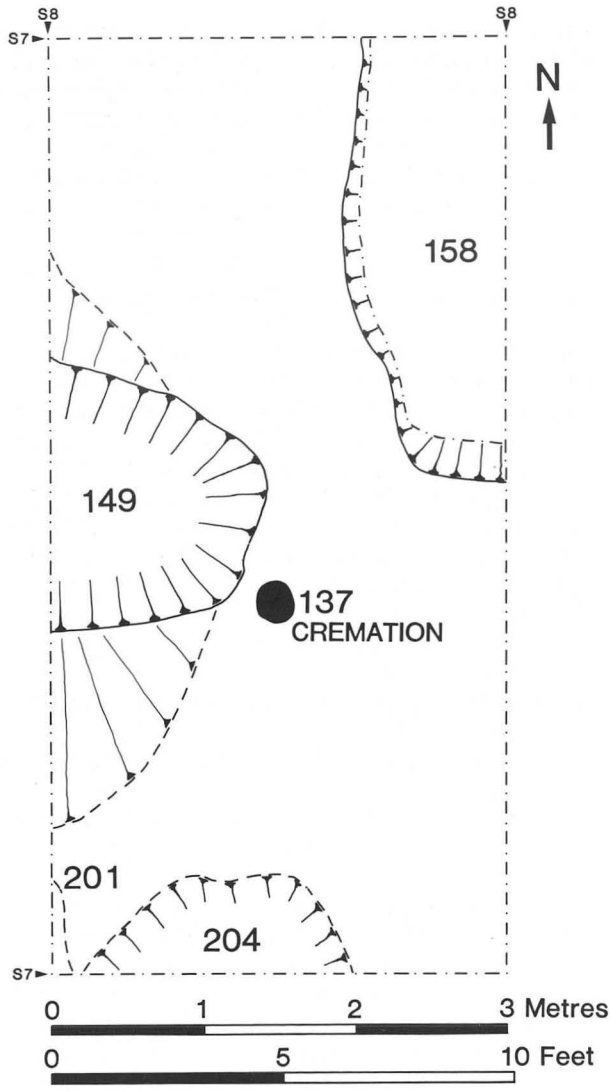

Fig. 17 Ford Place: plan of trench B. Scale 1:50

of sixteenth-century date, through to modern, were present in upper layers.

III. Trench B

(Fig. 17, plan; Figs 18 and 19, sections 7 and 8)

Trench B was the smallest of the three trenches, measuring 6.25m x 3.0m. The garden top soil (*40*, *41* and *42*) was removed by machine down to the level of a chalk and mortar floor *38* (Figs 18 and 19, sections 7 and 8), which covered the length of the trench on the west side. The machined soils contained a large quantity of animal bone, predominantly of cattle and sheep, some showing butchering cuts. Oyster shell was also present in quantity. A chalk block and flint wall (*36*) ran north to south through the trench (Fig. 19 section 8) and its continuation was located in trench C, to the north. The wall represented a post-medieval garden division and appeared to have been contemporary with the floor, which may have been an adjacent yard surface. Layer *39* butted the wall and its foundation (*46*) and contained pottery of thirteenth-to fourteenth-century date. This layer may have originally been cut away when the wall and floor were laid; or it may have been brought in specifically to form a retaining bed for the wall, in the post-medieval period. A deep, steep-sided pit (*158*) in the north-east of the trench, cutting through soil layer *87*, was a medieval feature, containing pottery and building materials of the fourteenth century (Fig. 19, section 8).

Lower layers and features were less disturbed than in trench C, protected from more recent disturbance by the mortar floor. Excavation was continued by hand through layer *87*, which extended right across the trench. This largely undisturbed layer appears to be of Iron Age date, with Iron Age sherds present and no material of later date. Layer *87* contained a cremation, excavated just to the east of pit *149* (Fig. 17). The cremation had been buried without a container. The probable Iron Age date of the cremation is of particular importance because of the rarity of evidence for the disposal of the dead at that time in East Anglia. This layer also contained three human skull fragments, also of probable Iron Age date, belonging to a young adult. Layer *87* sealed an earlier ground surface (*136*) and the fills of pits *149*, *201* and *204* in the south-west of the trench. The pits were Iron Age, all containing Iron Age pottery sherds.

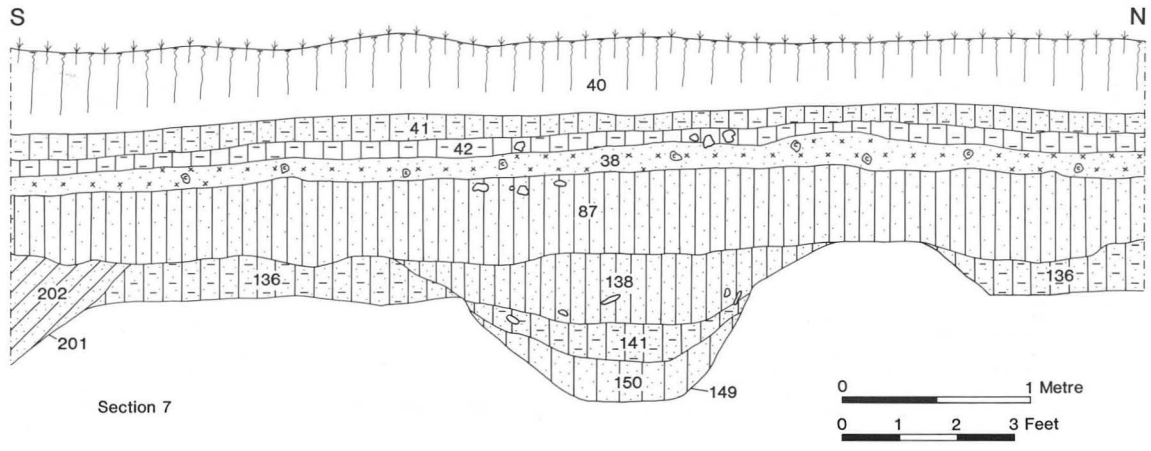

Fig. 18 Ford Place: trench B, section 7. Scale 1:40

The excavation of trench B showed no evidence of rampart construction or ditches relating to the southern defences of the enclosure. However, it did produce further evidence relating to Iron Age occupation of the site. Pitting activity was less intense than in the other two trenches. Only pit *158* was of thirteenth and fourteenth century date. The quantity of refuse in upper layers attests to medieval and later activity in the near vicinity.

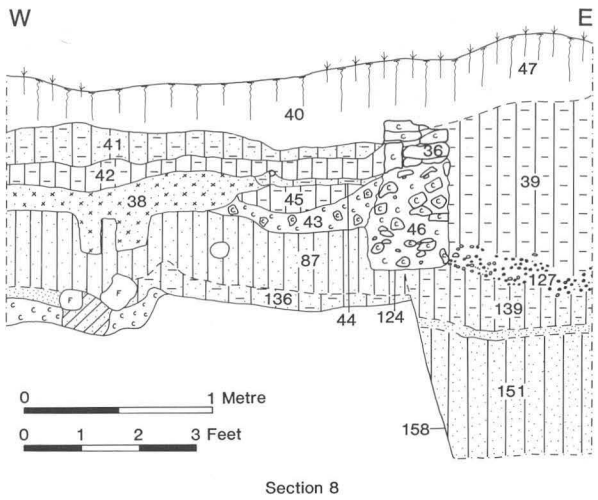

Fig. 19 Ford Place: trench B, section 8. Scale 1:40

IV. Trench C

(Fig. 20, plan; Figs 21–23, sections 9–14)

Trench C was also situated inside the walled garden area (Fig. 2). It measured approximately 12m x 3m. The top layers of the trench (*47*, *48*, *49* and *50*) contained large quantities of animal bone, mainly of cattle and sheep, and oyster shell (Fig. 20 and Fig. 21, section 9). Following initial machine clearance, the shapes of two large scoops could be seen stretching across the site. These were part of earlier garden clearance. That clearance had almost completely removed a north-to-south wall (*53*), leaving just its chalk foundations *54*, *120* and *170*. This wall was a northern extension of wall *36* in trench B. In the centre of the trench, partly beneath the eastern baulk, a well of chalk block construction was revealed (*146*). Its narrow vertical shaft was lined with dressed chalk. The upper well lining had been robbed and the shaft capped by bricks and limestone slabs (Fig. 20, 145). The use of the well appears to have been contemporary with wall *53*, both of which were levelled by a subsequent phase of gardening. The capping of the well and its backfilling can be dated to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.

The machine clearance was stopped at layer *85*, leaving just some 25cm above the natural chalk. Hand excavation was continued below this level. In the south of the trench five pits were revealed, which had been badly disturbed by garden sub-soiling. The largest two (*155* and *157*) were deeply cut into the natural chalk (Figs 21 and 22, sections 9 and 10). They both contained Iron Age sherds and some residual Neolithic flint flakes and blades, but no later material. Three smaller, very shallow, pits (*224*, *225* and *226*) lay adjacent to *155* and *157*. *225* and *226* were cut by the Iron Age pits *155* and *157*.

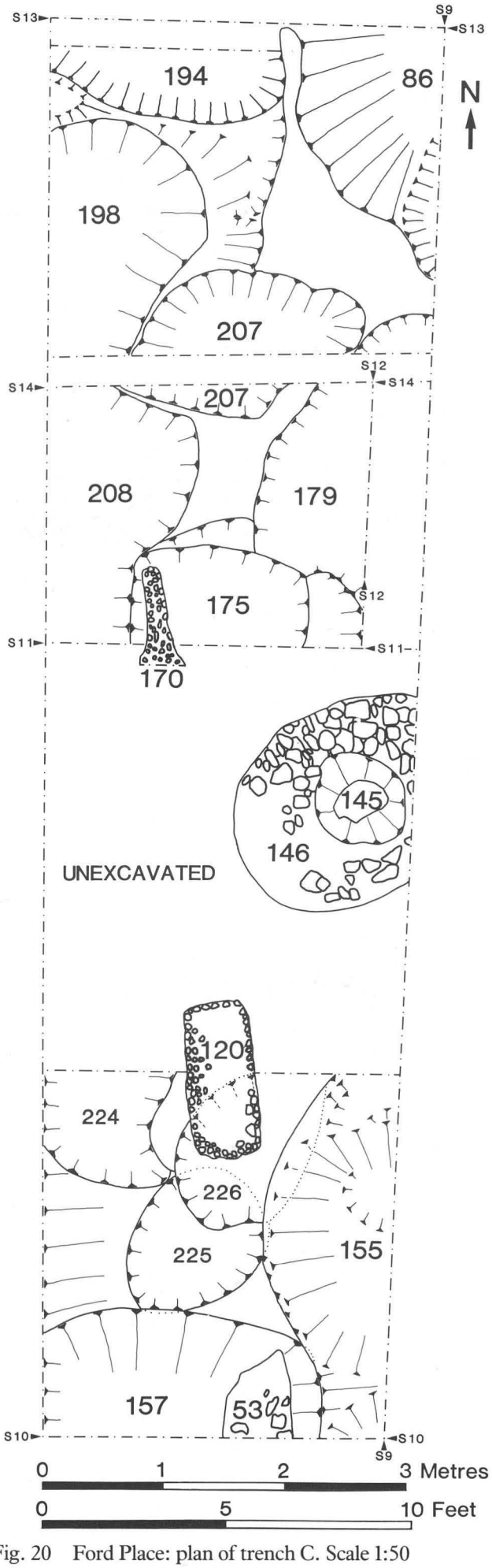

Fig. 20 Ford Place: plan of trench C. Scale 1:50

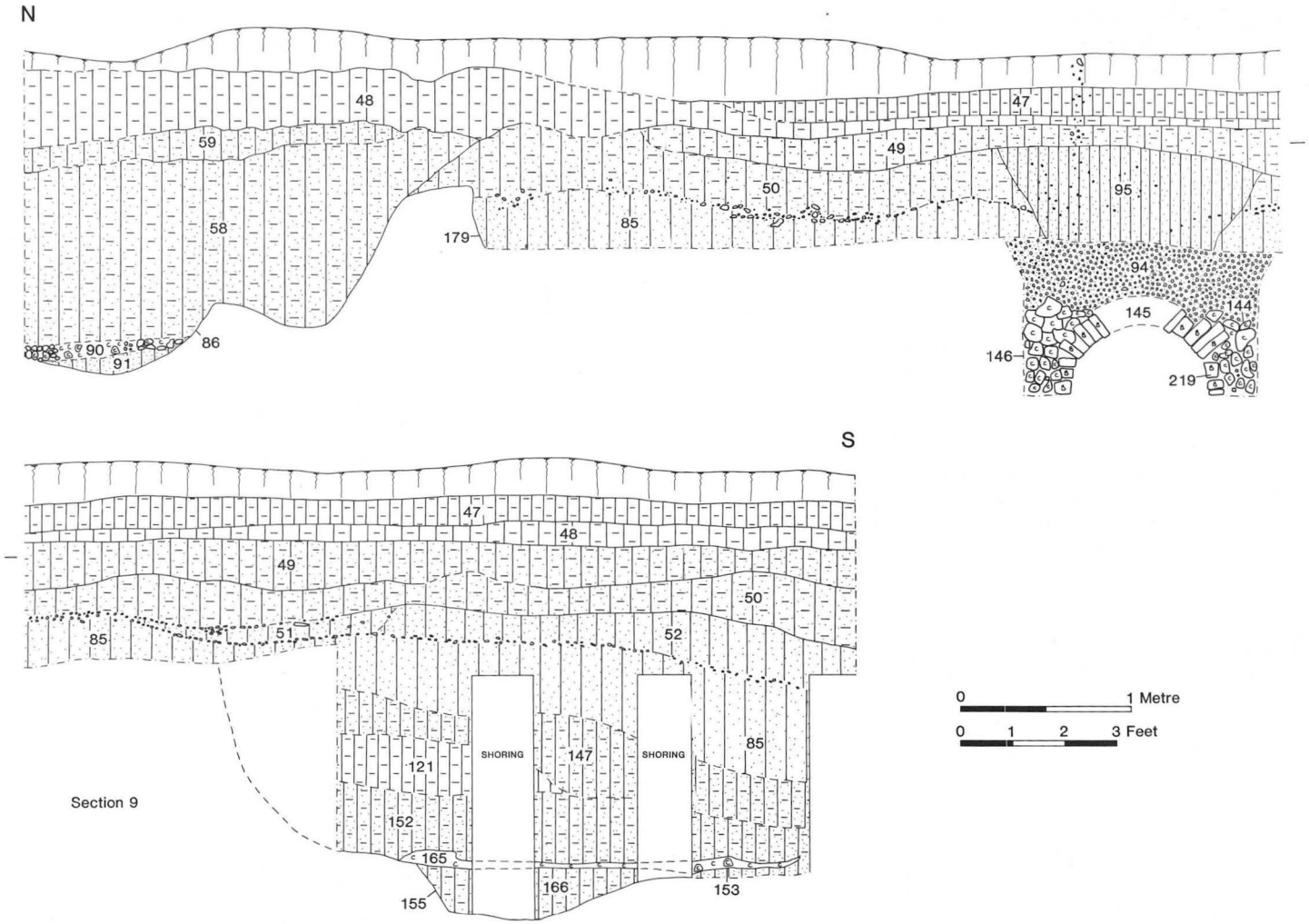

Fig. 21 Ford Place: trench C, section 9. Scale 1:40

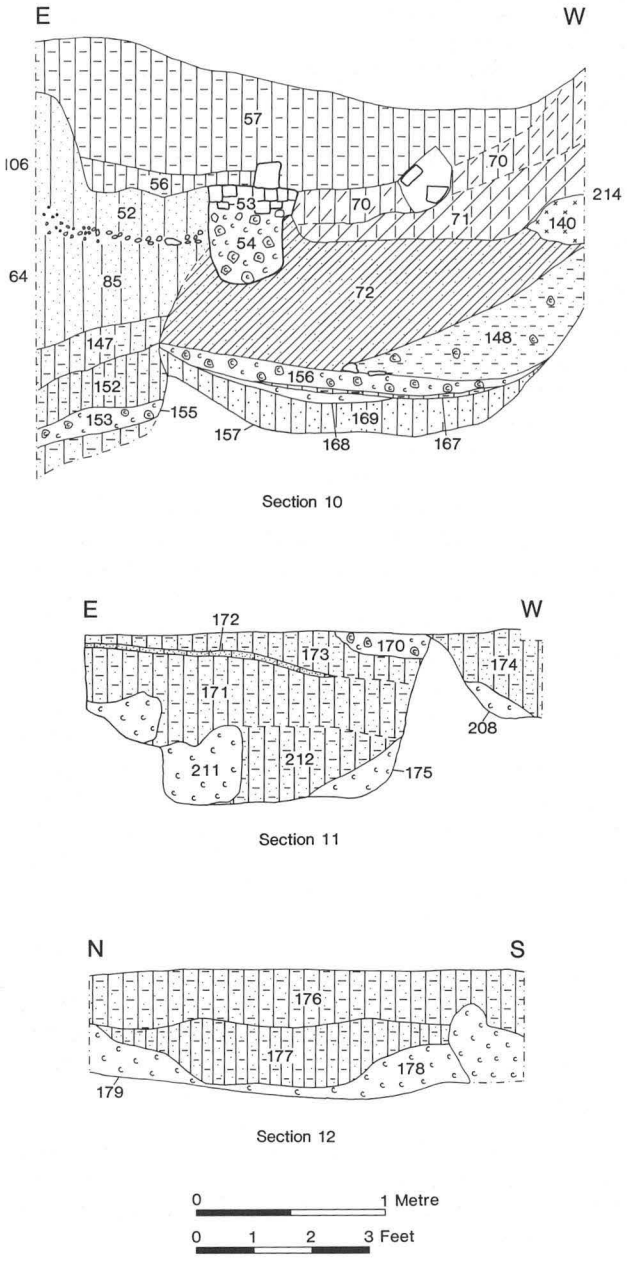

Fig. 22 Ford Place: trench C, sections 10–12. Scale 1:40

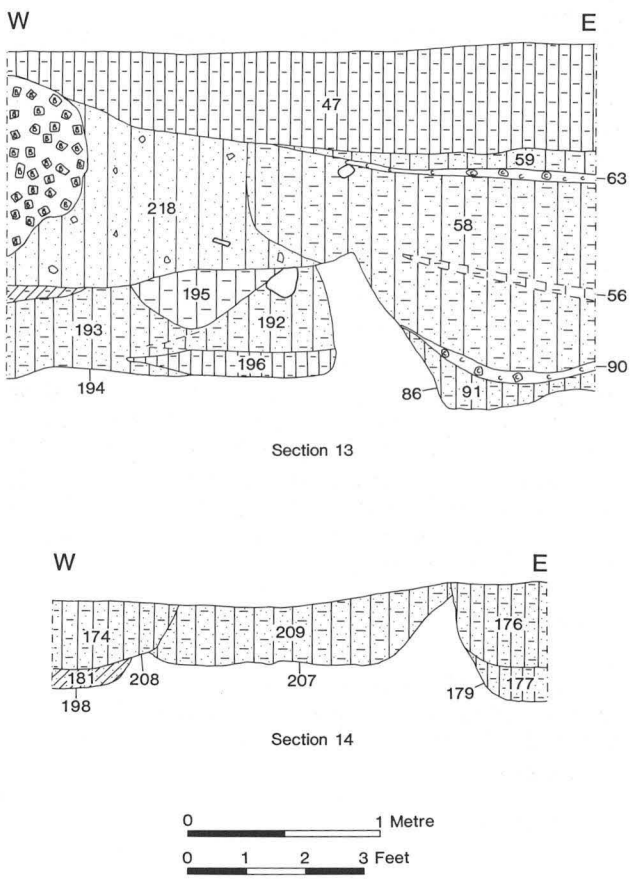

Fig. 23 Ford Place: trench C, sections 13–14. Scale 1:40

Smaller and shallower pits clustered in the north of trench C. This complex of features had again been disturbed by garden sub-soiling. At the north end, pits *86* and *194* contained Iron Age sherds in primary and lower fills (Figs 21 and 23, sections 9 and 13). Medieval sherds were present in upper fills but are intrusive, apparently relating to gardening disturbance. Pits *198* and *208*, in the west, both contained Iron Age sherds, but were very shallow (Fig. 23, section 14). They also contained medieval sherds, redeposited by deep gardening disturbance.

The deeper pits, *86*, *194*, *155* and *157*, were all of Iron Age origin; as were *225* and *226*, which they cut. Disturbance to the shallower pits in the north has disguised the overall picture. Pits *198* and *208* may also have been Iron Age but both also contained pottery of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries and cannot be dated with certainty.

The medieval sherds and profuse domestic refuse in upper layers again reflects the medieval activity in the vicinity, although there was a higher proportion of post-Dissolution pottery than further south. There was again no evidence for the construction of ramparts or cutting of ditches relating to enclosure defences.

V. The Artefacts

Objects of Stone

Prehistoric flints
(not illustrated)
by John Wymer

During the course of the excavations a small number of worked flints were found in a variety of contexts, as listed below:

Context No.		
2	9	**primary flakes**
22	1	**primary flake**
	1	**thermal flake** with crude retouch
30	1	**primary flake**
39	1	**core**, single platform, presumably rejected as the flakes from it failed to run successfully
83	1	**primary flake**
87	1	**blade**
147	3	**primary flakes**
	3	**blades**
148	1	**primary flake**
115	1	**large primary flake** struck from a thermally fractured nodule of fresh chalk clint, retouched at distal end and also across the butt
171	1	**primary flake**
177	1	**primary flake** with later retouch or damage

Discussion
The majority of these artefacts are likely to be prehistoric, although some could be more recent. However, the flakes and blades from Contexts *87* and *147* have been methodically struck and are consistent with a Neolithic industry. With one exception they are all patinated to some degree, which tends to corroborate this conclusion. Both contexts also produced Iron Age pottery, showing that they were residual in later contexts. Similarly, patinated flakes from the top soil (Context *30*) and pit fills (Context *83, 148* and *171*) probably represent earlier material that became incorporated at a later date.

One of the blades from Context *147* was burnt in antiquity, and a few pot-boilers were found. All that can be concluded is that there was some activity during the Neolithic and perhaps later pre-Iron Age period. This would not be surprising in view of the proximity of the river, the slight rise of the Chalk above the Flood Plain at this point, and the richness of prehistoric settlement in this area of the Breckland.

Whetstone
(not illustrated)
One end of a whetstone, of uncertain date. This had been used as a sharpening stone and contained knife cuts in its flat end. A very coarse sandstone. From trench A, unstratified.

The chalk object
(Fig. 24)
Half of a circular chalk object, perforated in the centre. It has been broken across its diameter. It is widest at one edge, which is flat, and into which grooves have been worn by repeated rubbing. This object was probably used as a suspended weight; possibly a loom weight. It was found associated with numerous Iron Age sherds but also with an intrusive medieval sherd. It is therefore of probable Iron Age date, but a medieval date cannot be discounted. From trench A, at the base of pit *84*.

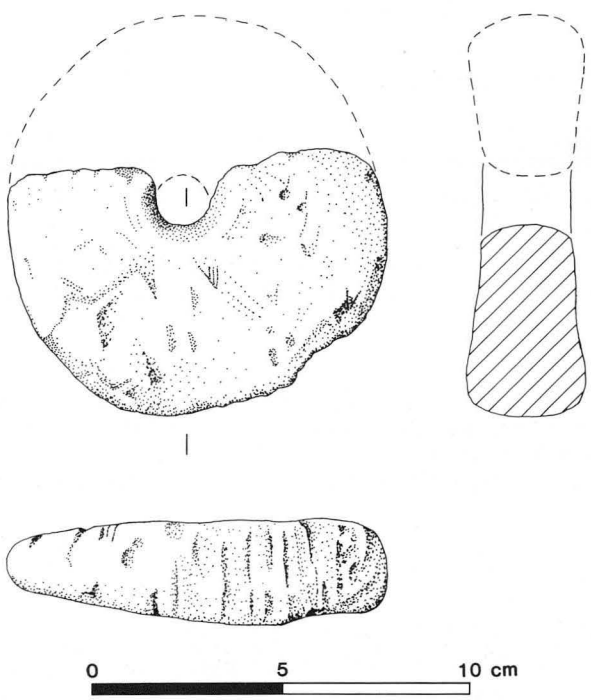

Fig. 24 Ford Place: the chalk object. Scale 1:2

Early Prehistoric pottery
by Tony Gregory
Two sherds in a sand- and grog-tempered fabric of LAN-EBA or Bronze Age date were found. From Pit *130* in trench A (*130*) came a sherd with two parallel lines of rather amorphous impressed ornament, and from Pit *149* in trench B (*141*) there was an undecorated sherd.

Iron Age pottery
by Tony Gregory
(Fig. 25)
In this part of the report, the Iron Age sherds from the Ford Place excavation are described and illustrated. A fuller discussion of the material is included in the report on the pottery from the 1962 excavations (p. 13).

The associations of individual sherds, and their provenances, are not completely reliable. In two cases a number of sherds join to give a substantial portion of a vessel, and in each case all but one sherd come from the same context: No. 2 is made up of four sherds from pit *84* in Trench A, and a single sherd from layer *17* in Trench B, actually joining via an unweathered but old break. The two supposed findspots are at least 40m apart and are separated by the southern wall of the garden. Similarly, No. 8 is made up of eight joining sherds, seven from layer *87* and one from Pit *84*, and it is possible that there has been some confusion in the post-excavation finds processing. Two other, unillustrated, sherds, from Pits *201* and *204*, also join. This is even more suspect because the break between them is fresh and must have occurred during or after excavation. While the two pits are adjacent, they do not intercut, and so the only explanation for this can be a confusion on site or in subsequent processing.

That there should be three such instances involving fourteen sherds out of a total of only forty-nine from the site reduces the confidence that one can place in the entire group. There is only a single case of more than one vessel associated in a feature, this same Pit *84* (Fig. 25, Nos 1–7) and while there is little doubt that most of the fourteen sherds really were found in the pit, the suspicious joins discussed above throw doubt on the integrity of each individual association.

Descriptions
A detailed catalogue, context by context, is to be found in the microfiche supplement. The fabric definitions employed on the finds from the 1962 excavations (p. 14) are used here. Fabric descriptions for individual vessels are unnecessary.

Nos 1–7 are all from Pit *84*, trench A.

1. **Wide-mouthed jar** in sandy fabric; the exterior surface is slightly burnished, apparently by knife trimming, the impression being of horizontal trimming on the upper 6cm, and vertical below. (*83*)
2. **Bowl** in sandy fabric; the exterior surface and the interior of the rim are horizontally burnished, and irregular indentations on the outside of the rim may be intentional. As discussed above, one sherd of this vessel purports to have come from layer *87* in trench B. (*119*)
3. Thin-walled **jar or bowl** in sandy fabric. The exterior is horizontally burnished, except for a 4mm deep matt zone below the rim. (*83*)
4. Internally-grooved **rim** in sandy fabric. (*83*)
5. Internally-thickened **rim** in sandy fabric. (*119*)
6. Base of jar with vertical wiping or scoring on the girth, in sandy fabric. (*83*)
7. Shoulder and neck of **jar or bowl** in sandy fabric, with horizontal burnish on the exterior. The pitch of the sherd is in a little doubt. (*83*)

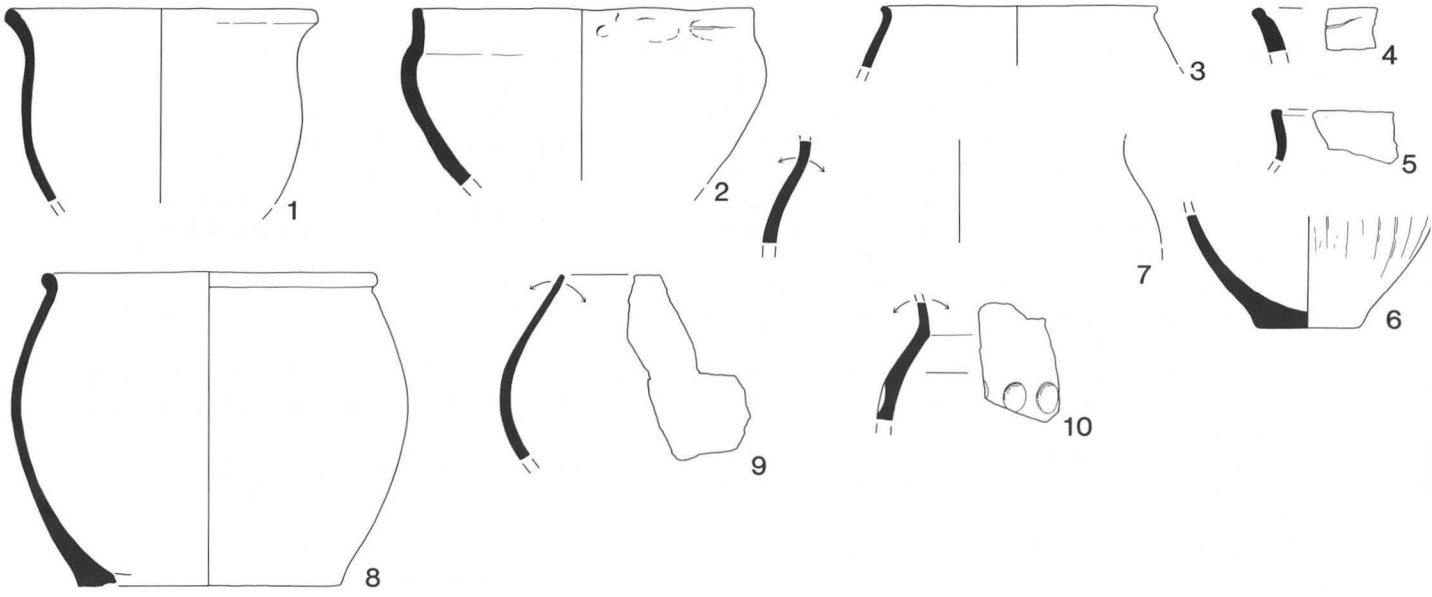

Fig. 25 Ford Place: Iron Age pottery. Scale 1:4

8–9, from layer *87* in trench B, from the same layer as, but not known to have been associated with, a deposit of cremated human bone.

8. Squat **jar** in sandy fabric. As discussed above, a single sherd from this vessel purports to have been found in Pit *84* in trench A. (*87*)
9. Rim of a low-bellied bowl in sandy fabric, with a light horizontal burnish on the exterior. The pitch is in some doubt. (*87*)
10. From the machined topsoil of trench C. Shoulder and neck of a jar in gritty fabric with a horizontally-smoothed, rather than burnished, exterior, and finger tip ornament on the shoulder. Again, the pitch is in some doubt. (*50*)

Post-Roman pottery

(not illustrated)

by Carolyn Dallas

Some 233 post-Roman sherds were found from the Ford Place excavations, of which twenty are modern and a further thirteen are eighteenth-nineteenth century, occurring in the topsoil and well capping (trench C). Some twenty-eight sherds of late sixteenth-seventeenth century Glazed Red Earthenware were found (Jennings 1981, 157–86) and some twelve other sherds of seventeenth-century date. These were found in the layer beneath the topsoil in trench A, sealing feature *74*. Forms include a handle fragment, a tripod leg and rims of a storage jar, two bowls and two pipkins. There were four unstratified sherds of imported German stonewares (Frechen and Langerwehe/Raeren).

The late-fourteenth to late-sixteenth century material only seem to be represented by twenty-one sherds at most; all from different vessels and scattered throughout the excavations. A few sherds seem to have been associated with pit *130*. The largest quantity of site pottery is medieval dating from the late twelfth to fourteenth centuries, with a total of 114 sherds. Of these, more than half are local unglazed jars, some of which have combed or wavy line decoration. Fabrics are sandy and at least four sherds may be twelfth century Grimston products. Of the forty-one glazed sherds, twenty-seven (65.8%) are from Grimston. These are green-glazed jugs and include one 'face' jug (Jennings 1981, 51-2); several sherds are decorated with brown ironwash bands, sometimes over applied clay strips. Other medieval sherds include a jug of Hedingham Ware from Sible Hedingham in Essex and 'Developed' Stamford Ware.

Seventeen sherds were found which have been classed as Early Medieval (eleventh-twelfth century). Most are in sandy fabrics but two contain calcitic particles and four have the high quartz content typical of late-twelfth century vessels. It seems likely that all could date to the second half of the twelfth century.

One sherd was found from a Saxo-Norman Stamford Ware bowl and three of Thetford Ware. One of these was a small sherd in a typical tenth or eleventh century fabric but the others are all eleventh century types.

Discussion

There are just four sherds dating from the eleventh century from Ford Place. This is not surprising as the site lies to the east of the areas of Thetford which might be expected to produce Saxo-Norman occupation. Although the Nun's Bridges river crossing was probably in use, this was a fringe area of the Saxon settlement.

Occupation on this site is evidenced from the late-twelfth century, and the ceramics provide a continuous, if meagre, sequence into the fourteenth century. Vessel estimates have not been attempted as there are so few discrete contexts, but it is conspicuous that where vessels are represented by several sherds these vessels seem all to be of medieval (or seventeenth century) date. The medieval pottery forms 44.8% of the total site pottery and 56.2% of the post-Roman wares. This, therefore, forms the main occupation period of this site in the post-Roman sequence and several pits would seem to be of this date (*81, 98, 105*). The pottery is all of types found at Thetford before, with the Grimston kilns and local unglazed ware predominating, as well as a few vessels from Stamford and Sible Hedingham in Essex. The assemblage can be described as 'ordinary' or 'typical'.

The possibility of this property being one of those acquired by the Austin Friars in 1387 is very strong, as a change in the ceramics occurs at this point. Only 9.0% of the pottery could be placed in an appropriate date-range and only a few sherds seem associated with features. Pit *130* may have been of this date, although this is enigmatic, as it contained large sherds from vessels of thirteenth century date, each vessel represented by more than one sherd: as this feature contained clay pipe it might be post-

Dissolution. Activity of the late sixteenth-eighteenth century accounts for some 24.4% of the site pottery, so that the 1387–1538 period accounts for the lowest pottery percentage in the sequence. It seems probable therefore that this area may have been incorporated into the friary grounds, thereby terminating the medieval properties on this site but not involving activities leaving much archaeological trace. If the medieval properties had continued undisturbed, more archaeological and ceramic evidence might be expected and some change of use throughout the fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries might be argued from the ceramics. Enclosure within the friary area seems a likely explanation. Activity on the site was renewed after the Dissolution.

The crucible fragment

(Fig. 26)
by Paul Budd

The crucible fragment is a rim sherd from a quite steep-walled vessel, with an internal diameter of approximately 9cm and a wall thickness of 6–9mm. It is made from a fairly refractory fabric, with a moderate quartz temper, and is reduced fired to a grey colour. The outer part of the sherd has been partly modified by high temperature and has become somewhat vesicular. An outer layer of less refractory clay has been added to the crucible (a fairly common practice from the Roman period onward) and has become deeply vitrified.

Both the inner and outer surfaces of the sherd were analysed qualitatively by energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence, for traces of non-ferrous metals. Significant levels of copper and zinc were detected suggesting the crucible was probably used to melt a copper alloy, possibly a brass.

The crucible is certainly not Iron Age and is probably medieval, but closer dating is difficult. Early Medieval (*i.e.* up to the twelfth century) crucibles tend to have round-bottomed 'bag shaped' or biconical forms and are usually a good deal smaller than the Thetford example. Later medieval (fifteenth to sixteenth century) crucibles are often larger but tend to be flat-bottomed and have their maximum diameter at the rim. They also tend to have straight sides. The Thetford crucible certainly does not have its greatest diameter at the rim and this might suggest a rounded rather than a flat bottom. However, it is too steep-walled to have been bag shaped. This example may be transitional between the two types. Unfortunately, thirteenth and fourteenth century examples, to which comparison might be made, are rare. On balance, the crucible is most likely to date from between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. However, a date based on the morphology of just one sherd must remain speculative. From trench A, pit *130*.

Fig. 26 Ford Place: the crucible fragment. Scale 1:4

The cremation and human bone

by Jacqueline I. McKinley
(Full details are presented on microfiche.)

Cremation 137. From trench B, layer 87

Total weight = 211.2g. Max. skull 37mm. Max. l. bone 81mm.
Total identifiable material weight = 104.6g (49.5% total weight).

Well cremated. The collection was dirty and stained by charcoal, several grams of which were recovered with the cremation. All areas of the skeleton were represented. A single individual adult. Older mature/old (30 years +). Cannot be sexed. Age related degenerative osteophytosis was noted on vertebra and finger phalanges.

Bone from trench B, layer 87

Right parietal bone; upper sutures fully open. Probably from a younger adult.

Bone from trench A, context 119 (fill of pit 84)

a) Mandibular body, left posterior portion missing. All teeth mild-heavy lingual tartar deposits. No caries.
b) Fragments of two lumbar vertebrae.
c) Right humerus, head missing. A younger mature adult, of 25–30 years, is represented. Cannot be sexed.

VI. Note on a borehole to the west of Thetford Castle, March 1987

On the 19th March 1987 a borehole was drilled at a position adjoining 9 Old Market Street (TL 8725 8383), by May Gurney Ltd, in order to investigate subsidence there. The position is marked in Fig. 2.

The results of the drilling showed that the present ground surface represents made-up ground to a depth of 2.5m above the natural chalk. This depth of make-up is probably ditch fill and suggests that the borehole was over the line of the defences. The location of a ditch some 80m due west of the motte, together with the absence of defences beneath the grounds of Ford Place, strongly suggests that the northern Castle defences were continued south-westwards towards the river. These earthworks would have joined the meander loop in the River Thet and would not have formed an oval circuit around Castle Hill as Clarke thought. The suggested line of the defences is shown in Fig. 27 and this will be discussed further in the site conclusions.

VII. Notes on building work in the vicinity of Thetford Castle, 1987 and 1988

(Fig. 2)
by John Wymer

'Gothic House', Old Market Street

In August 1987 footings were dug behind Gothic House, No. 12 Old Market Street for the erection of two bungalows. This was in the original garden of the house, between Old Market Street and Ford Street. The developers, Messrs M. and R. Crisp, gave every facility for the Norfolk Archaeological Unit to watch the work, and several visits were made by John Wymer and Andrew Rogerson. The footings were dug by J.C.B. and loose, made ground was revealed in all the trenches, to a depth of about 1.50m, with one deeper pit containing nineteenth-to-twentieth century rubbish descending to just over 2m. Three trenches were observed at right angles to one parallel with Ford Street and 5m to the north of it. Solid chalk was visible in the deepest part of the latter trench; elsewhere bed-rock was clean sand and gravel. Sparse sherds ranged from sixteenth century to modern, together with eighteenth-century and later glass bottle

fragments and numerous animal bones. There was one possible Iron Age sherd.

The depth of the made ground was surprising and may have been the result of early gravel digging and later back-filling. However, if any ditches had existed comparable to those remaining associated with the Castle defences, the bottoms of them would have been seen.

'Riverside', Castle Lane

Footing trenches were dug in August 1987 for the building of a house, in the grounds of an existing property known as 'Riverside', between that house and the adjacent one on the west known as 'Driftwood'. Permission to examine these trenches was given by Mr Plesko. They were sited at the foot of the slope on to the flood plain of the River Thet. No artefacts of any age were seen, although most of the spoil from the digging of these trenches had already been removed. However, the south-west to north-east trench for the front wall of the new house revealed the lip of a wide ditch that had been cut through natural, dark, organic sand. The fill of this ditch was only exposed to a depth of 0.75m from the surface but was a uniform light brown, chalky silt with flints, resembling the make-up of the Castle ramparts seen exposed earlier in the year when gales uprooted several trees growing upon them. This ditch is in line with the outer ditch of the castle and it is suggested that it is the continuation of it, deliberately back-filled with material from a destroyed rampart. The same ditch lip was seen in the trench for the rear of the house.

In November 1987 a Saxon nummular brooch plate was found in the same property, immediately north-west of these trenches. The brooch has been described above, on p. 11[1], and illustrated in Fig. 7.

'Friars Close', Castle Lane

An opportunity to inspect the ground in Castle Lane between the two properties known as 'Friars Close' and 'The Summer House' occurred in June, 1988, when work commenced on a new house within the garden of the former. Footing trenches exposed made ground, *c.* 1.00m at the road end and up to 1.50m at the other. Brickbats and nineteenth century sherds suggested the ground was all nineteenth century disturbance, although the following were also found on the spoil heaps:

1 rim sherd of Ipswich ware
1 body sherd of unglazed medieval pottery
1 sherd of salt-glazed stoneware
1 flint flake

The made ground lay on an irregularly truncated surface of solid chalk. No pit fillings or other features were seen. If any wide ditch connected with the castle defences had traversed this area it would have been clearly visible. These footings covered a distance of 25m from the edge of Castle Lane to the south-east. The lack of any such features adds further support to the defences continuing beyond their surviving length to the west of Castle Lane in a slight curve towards the flood plain of the River Thet.

Conclusions

by John A. Davies and Tony Gregory

The excavations in 1962 and 1985 were undertaken with four specific aims:

1) To test the suggested Iron Age date for the defences and their medieval modification (1962).
2) To examine the top of the motte for structural remains (1962).
3) To investigate the possibility of remains of Iron Age and later occupation within the defended areas (1962 and 1985–6).
4) To test the hypothesis that the Iron Age defences continued south of the motte, along the line of Old Market Street and Ford Street, which had been given some measure of support by the results of a resistivity survey carried out earlier in 1985 (p. 17).

These aims were fulfilled to varied extents, and the occupation sequence of the site as a whole can be summarised as follows.

The earliest evidence for occupation takes the form of Neolithic flints from Ford Place, Neolithic and Beaker flints from the Castle, and a small number of sherds of LANEBA/Bronze Age, Beaker, and possibly Bronze Age forms and fabrics, all in residual contexts. Prehistoric occupation at such a location, the first area of slightly higher land above a potential river crossing, on chalk with, in places, a capping of sand, is no surprise — prime locations of this sort in Norfolk are often occupied at this period.

The first structural evidence for occupation comes in the Iron Age, with features of definite Iron Age date found within the defences in 1962 and at Ford Place. The Iron Age occupation revealed in Cuttings B and C at the Castle was too badly disturbed and those cuttings too small for the features to be interpreted, but Cutting D, with its gully, pit and post-holes, indicates a structure of some sort. The quantity of Iron Age pottery from that Cutting also suggests quite an intense occupation. All three trenches at Ford Place revealed features, mostly pits, which produced only Iron Age material, albeit in sometimes very small quantities, and it is clear that the occupation extended south of Castle Lane. The quantity of Iron Age finds appears to diminish to the south, so that trench A, close to the edge of the flood plain contained only one Iron Age pit, with human bones. Some of the undated post-holes in that trench may also be of this period.

The cremation from trench B is also of probable Iron Age date. It was not obviously associated with a burial urn, although Iron Age sherds did come from the same layer. Neither were there any grave-goods. Evidence for burials in Iron Age Britain has for many years appeared to be sparse. Although the material from recent researches has supplemented previous data and enabled the isolation of a series of well-defined ritual practices (Cunliffe 1978, 311; Whimster 1981) there is still very little evidence available from some parts of the country. If this cremation is indeed given an Iron Age date, the apparent absence of a container and of associated artefacts here goes some way to explaining why such burials may often be archaeologically undetected. Urned cremation was re-introduced into south-east England in the first century BC (Whimster 1977, 323). The rite of cremation indicates some regard for the dead, involving greater time and effort than inhumation. Other flat grave cremations of broadly similar date from the same part of East Anglia come from Creeting St Mary, Lakenheath and Elveden, all in Suffolk (Clarke 1939, 19 and 54). All of those burials were contained in urns.

This Iron Age use of the site is considered to be

Middle Iron Age in date, a vague term wholly appropriate to the shadowy nature of Iron Age chronology in East Anglia. The nature of the settlement is unknown, because of the small scale of the excavations, and only a few partial sights of its economy can be gained, from the weaving combs found in the eighteenth century and from the worked antler in the outer ditch.

The first phase of the defences, a hypothetical inner rampart, the early inner ditch, the truncated outer rampart, and the outer ditch in some form, presumably belong to the same period as the occupation within the ramparts. Clarke's Phase 2 (p. 6), an Iron Age reconstruction of the defences on a larger scale, attributed to the late Iron Age, was suggested as an Icenian response to Catuvellaunian expansionism in the late first century BC and early first century AD. As has been discussed above, there is some doubt as to the Iron Age date of this second phase. It should also be stressed that the evidence for the Iron Age date of the defences as a whole is less than incontrovertible; the old ground surface below the outer rampart provides a *terminus post quem* around the end of the third millennium BC, and the evidence for an Iron Age date of the lower fills of the inner ditch of Phase I rests on a single sherd. The best dating evidence is the sequence of filling of the outer ditch, where post-Roman material only appears relatively high in layer *22*, after a considerable amount of fill had already accumulated. However, the quantity of sherds involved is small, and it is the presence of Iron Age occupation within the line of the defences, more than anything else, which is taken to imply their Iron Age date.

The importance of the site in the Iron Age, one of the few surviving defended sites of the period in East Anglia, must be due in part to its strategic location. It is at Thetford that the Little Ouse cuts through the chalk ridge, along which ran the Icknield Way. Detailed arguments about the exact route of the Icknield Way through the Thetford area need not be rehearsed here: suffice it to say that the later Nuns Bridges, immediately south of the Castle, and the location of the Iron Age settlement, combine to suggest an Iron Age crossing. The importance of the river route must not be underestimated. Although no longer navigable, the Little Ouse was a major transport route in the Saxon period, contributing to Thetford's wealth at the time (Dunmore with Carr 1976, 8). The site's role in the Iron Age, controlling north-to-south traffic by land along the Icknield Way, and east-to-west traffic along the Little Ouse, must have been one of regional importance.

A small number of Roman sherds from the 1962 excavations do not necessarily imply a major occuption of the site, but the seven sherds of Ipswich Ware from the fill of the outer ditch and the nummular brooch plate from Riverside imply a Middle Saxon use of some sort. Saxo-Norman pottery is absent from Ford Place, and rare at Thetford Castle, and there is no reason to assume any use of the site in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, until the construction of the motte and bailey castle. That there was some Norman remodelling of the Iron Age earthworks, to form the defences of the bailey, is not in question, but precisely which elements of the defences represent this work is uncertain (above, p.7). Equally uncertain is the nature of any structure on top of the motte, and whether the burnt oolite found there represents a demolished masonry structure. The quantities would suggest not. The documentary evidence suggests a life for the castle from perhaps the 1070s or 1080s until 1172–3, when this may have been the castle whose demolition is recorded in the Pipe Rolls. The archaeological evidence from the 1962 Castle excavation and the 1985–6 work at Ford Place presents a more complex picture.

Medieval use of both areas is represented by pottery, in pits at Ford Place, and in less well-defined layers and features on the castle site. But the two pottery sequences are almost complementary. On the Castle site the pottery sequence recommences in the late eleventh century and runs into the twelfth or early thirteenth, tailing off, to pick up again in the fourteenth and to run to the sixteenth century AD. By contrast, the pottery from Ford Place begins in the late twelfth century AD, probably overlapping with the end of the first major group from the castle, tails off in the fourteenth, when the Castle material picks up again, and recommences in the late sixteenth, at the end of the main Castle sequence. The early material might suggest that the area of the 1962 excavations was more intimately bound up with the history of the medieval castle itself than was Ford Place. Thus, the northern part of the bailey, immediately east of the motte, was occupied during the military use of the castle, and the continuation of the pottery into the early thirteenth century implies either that the area continued in use for a little while after the 1172-3 demolition, or that the castle referred to in the Pipe Roll was Red Castle on the other side of the river, and that Thetford Castle itself did not go out of use for another half century or so.

Meanwhile, the Ford Place area was apparently unoccupied, either because it was an empty part of the bailey or because it lay outside it. Occupation there begins again in the late twelfth century, lasting into the fourteenth, with half of the pottery from the site belonging to those years. The bulk of the pits cut into the natural chalk in trench A belong to that period although there is no evidence for medieval buildings, which might have been sited farther away, along the town streets. The quantity of pottery declined in the late fourteenth century, and the previously vigorous medieval activity on the site was terminated. This coincides with the establishment of the Austin Friars in Thetford; in 1387 the Friary of St Augustine was founded, and in 1389 land was granted for the building of a church to the east of Ford Place, at the entrance to the town (Cox, 1906). The activity at Ford Place suggests that the area was then incorporated within the Friary and that secular occupation ceased. A few features, including pits *130, 131* and possibly the grave-like feature *74*, belong to this period. In 1408 the Austin Friars were licensed to demolish a house to make way for extensions to the church and cloister (Crosby 1986, 39), and the reduction of occupation at Ford Place may well be connected with this.

A renewal of activity on the Castle site from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries may then be the result of occupation displaced from the neighbourhood of the Austin Friary moving into the open space further north. The intensification of activity at Ford Place in the late sixteenth century, with a profusion of animal bone, oyster shells, domestic and industrial refuse in the upper layers, might suggest a re-occupation after the suppression of the Friary in 1538. A diminution of activity on the castle site at the same time could reflect another shift of activity. The substantial chalk and flint wall foundation *113*, which just intruded into trench A at Ford Place, post-dated pits *130* and *131* of the Friary period. Unfor-

tunately, the structure lay to the west of the excavated area.

The complementary nature of the periods of occupation of the two parts of the site seems too good to be true. Only a full knowledge of the sequence on other parts of the immediate neighbourhood of the Castle would allow these hypotheses to be tested.

Finally, in the eighteenth century the Ford Place site saw initial gardening activity, together with the construction of a well and a north-to-south wall. These constructions were subsequently demolished during later phases of gardening development.

The most important result of the Ford Place excavation was that light was shed on the southern part of the Iron Age site and the Norman bailey. Clarke had suggested that the Iron Age earthworks continued to the south, immediately west of the motte, curving around the line of Market Street and Ford Street, through the grounds of Ford Place and Friars' Close, to form an oval enclosure of a familiar 'hill fort' type. The resistivity survey carried out in 1985 appeared to have picked out two ditches but these were not located by excavation. The findings of that survey were not unambiguous and the anomalies referred to must have resulted from the intense pitting activity encountered in trench A and in the north of trench C. It can be seen in Fig. 2 that the street plan to the south of Castle Hill, involving Ford Street and Old Market Street, and continuing through Castle Lane eastwards, also runs parallel with the course of the River Thet, running just 60–100m to the south. It appears possible that the medieval streets were aligned with the river frontage and its flood plain, rather than the line of earlier earthworks. The river may also have shifted its course slightly southwards, to its present position. It is clear from the excavations that no southern earthworks were constructed along the Old Market Street/Ford Street line, and it can be concluded that both the Iron Age enclosure and Norman Castle made use of the meander loop in the River Thet as a natural defensive line on the southern side. The area enclosed was thus greater than had been originally envisaged.

The most likely line of the Iron Age and Norman defences is shown in Fig. 27, the north-western side running across the south-eastern ends of Pike Lane and Guildhall Street (Fig. 2), Raymond Street and Nether Row, and thus partly explaining the shape of the 'Medieval planned suburb' further west (Crosby 1986, 47–8). The eighty-metre gap between the south-eastern end of the planned suburb and the north-western end of the market place, which covers the area to the south and west of the Castle, then represents the width of the defences and corresponds well to their width on the north side. Fig. 27 also shows the strategic importance of Thetford Castle on a slight rise above the flood plain in relation to the main bridging point, over the Thet and Little Ouse, of Nun's Bridges.

It is apparent from a map of this area that there was originally a second course in the River Thet to the east of Castle Hill which may have flowed simultaneously with the existing outer meander. It is possible that this inner course may have been an artificial cut, dug specifically to restrict the size of the enclosure. John Wymer's observation at 'Riverside' to the east of the Castle, (p.28) revealed a ditch interpreted as a continuation of the outer defensive ditch. Observations at the 'Summer House' (p.28) showed that the defences did not swing south at that point, but would have continued towards the River Thet on this side, as has been suggested for the eastern side, from borehole evidence (p.27). Thus, the earthworks were designed to join up with the meander loop of the River Thet, to form a symmetrical plan and a part naturally defensive site. Since the southern end of the earthworks on either side were about to enter the flood plain, it is assumed that they stopped just short of the River, beyond which point their construction would have been both superfluous and very difficult.

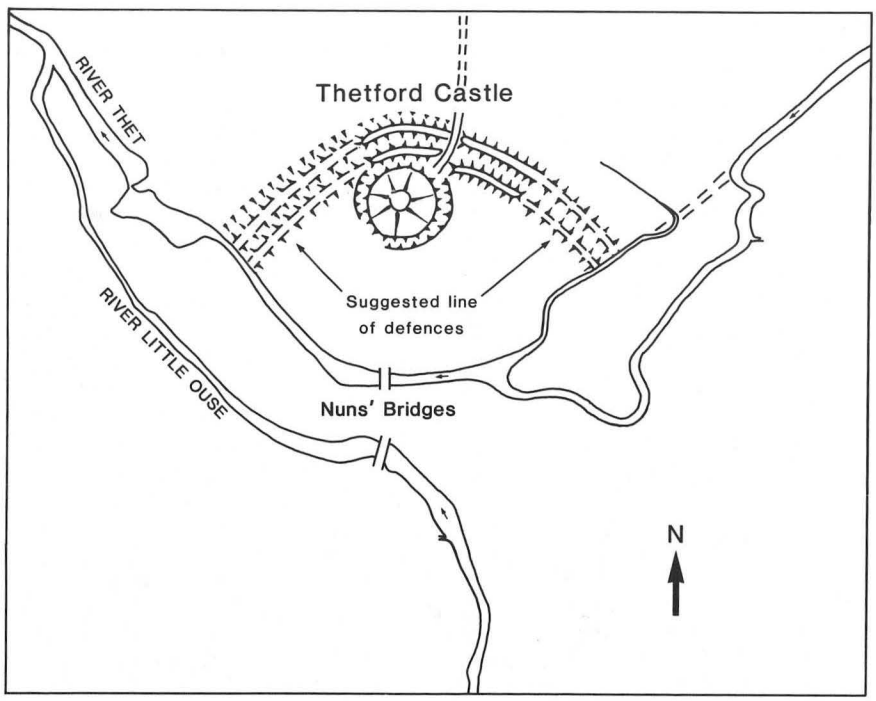

Fig. 27 The situation of Thetford Castle and suggested line of defences. Scale 1:10,560

Chapter 2. The Earthwork Enclosure at Tasburgh

by Andrew Rogerson and Andrew J. Lawson

Summary

The roughly oval univallate enclosure at Tasburgh remains undated after limited excavation in the southern part of the site in 1975 and 1979/80. Incomplete evidence from an unpublished section across the defences in 1948 is also presented. The site was sporadically occupied between the Mesolithic and the Iron Age, but the bulk of evidence from excavation and fieldwork points to occupation of Middle Saxon to early medieval date close to the parish church in the south-west corner of the enclosed area.

I. Site Location and Description

(Fig. 28, Pl. XI)

The parish of Tasburgh lies 12km south of Norwich on a spur of land at the confluence of several streams. On the west and north the spur is bounded by the River Tas and on the south-west by a stream flowing westward from Hempnall, joining the Tas below the village. A third stream flows south-eastward from Wreningham to join the Tas on the north-east side of the spur. These streams are flanked by low-lying water meadows. Geologically the spur is of chalk capped with boulder clay and flanked with sand and gravel which is frequently found in the valleys of the streams that drain this boulder clay plateau of central Norfolk. The late eleventh-century church of St Mary stands at 35m OD within a large earthwork enclosure consisting of a single bank and ditch which occupies the flat summit of the western end of the spur. The majority of the enclosure is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Norfolk no. *211*).

The enclosure (site *2258*) is roughly oval although its original outline has been modified, in part by quarrying, so that the northern part now appears square. Camden described this enclosure as square (Camden 1607, 347) as did Blomefield (1806, V, 210). The earthworks enclose *c.* 6.2 hectares (15.3 acres).[1]

The earthwork is best seen on the west where a ploughed remnant of the bank crosses an open field along the break of slope in a broad arc until the north-west corner where there is an abrupt change of direction. The north side is almost straight, and although a bank (1.5m high) now covered in trees and bushes exists, it is possible that here the rampart has been partially demolished and straightened while the outer ditch (of which no trace exists) has been backfilled. Observation in 1980 of a tree-hole in the northern hedge showed that the bank consisted of tip-lines sloping gently down to the north. This may indicate that the rampart has not been straigthened but must have been constructed (or reconstructed) as a straight feature. The field to the north is some 2m lower than the general level of the interior. Aerial photographs (Plate XI) show a light soil-mark outside the ditch on the west suggesting a counter-scarp bank which continues slightly beyond the north-west corner.

On the east the ditch has been enlarged by quarrying. Only at the north-east corner is the original profile

Plate XI Tasburgh: air photograph from the north-west.
4th July 1989. Copyright Field Arch. Divn., Norfolk, ref. TM 1996/D

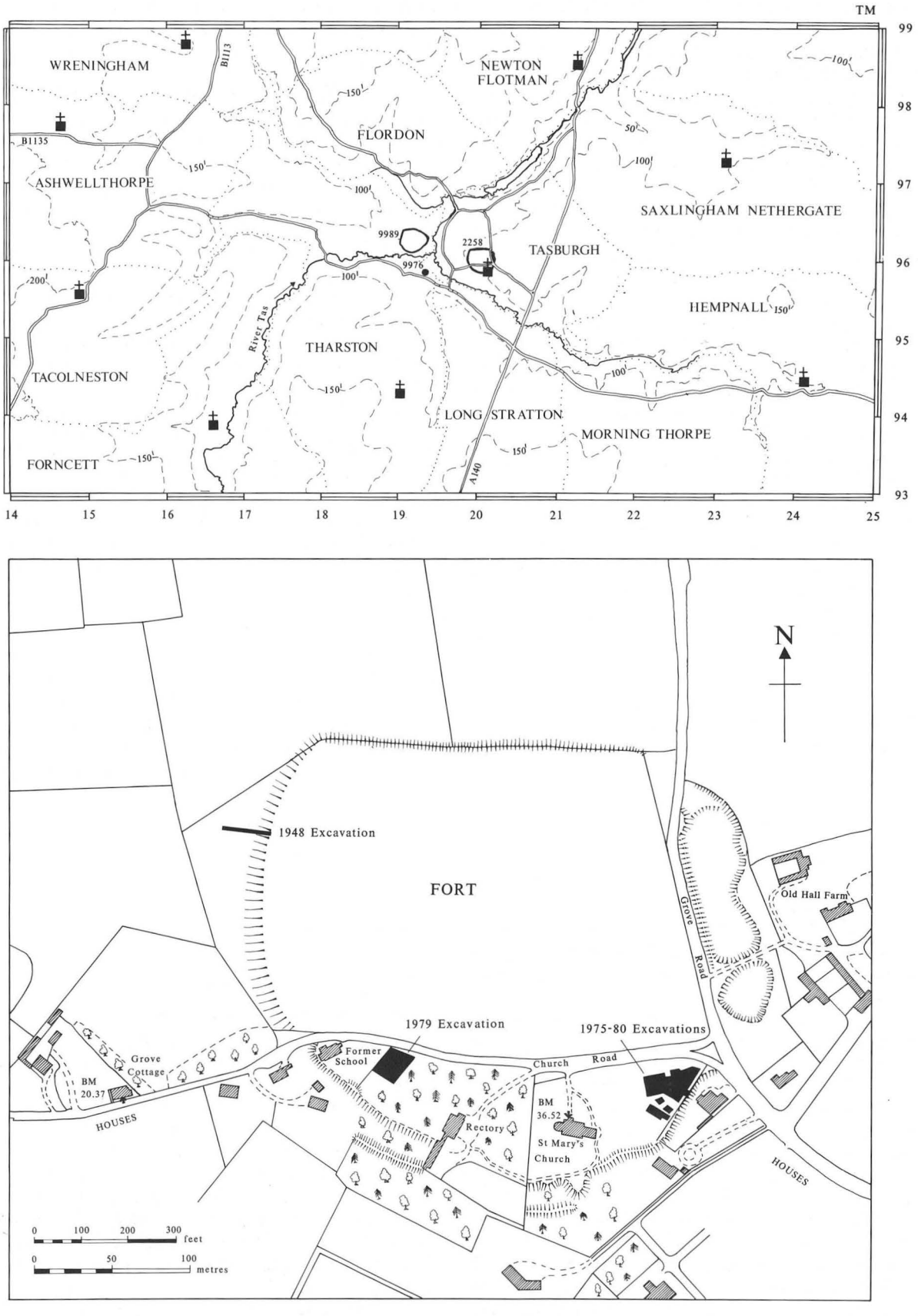

Fig. 28 Site location maps. Scales 1:75,000 and 1:3750

perhaps preserved where the road from inside the camp (Grove Road) emerges. Here the ditch line can be seen crossing the road obliquely, and the outer edge of the ditch is visible in the pasture to the north-east. The road is separated from the east ditch by a narrow bank (1.5m high) covered in bushes. It is possible that Grove Road lies on the inner tail of the bank, and that the wooded bank to the east is the remnant of the rampart.

On the south-east and south sides the bank and ditch have been removed by quarrying, so that now there is a steep direct descent from the churchyard to the river floodplain *c.* 15m (50ft) below. Two post-war houses occupy the site of the ditch on the south-east.

South of the rectory on the south-west side a possible small counter-scarp bank survives, although above, in the rectory garden, there is no trace of a rampart, except perhaps in the extreme westerly corner. Next to the former school, the east-to-west road (Church Road) which crosses the interior emerges dropping steeply. Below the nineteenth-century school the scarp has been faced with brickwork. Beyond, on the site of the ditch, if such existed on this side, are two houses.

Most of the interior is ploughed while that part south of Church Road is either beneath the surfaced former school playground, the rectory garden or the church graveyard. There is no indication of the original entrance. However, it seems likely on topographical grounds that the road which joins the village to the main road on the south-east, and which divides once inside the enclosure enters through an original entrance facing along the spur.

The main road (A140) 700m east of the enclosure is on the line of the Roman road from Scole (and *Camulodunum*) to Caister St Edmund (*Venta Icenorum*) 7km north.

Background

Formerly it was thought that the fortifications at Tasburgh were the remains of a pre-Boudican hillfort (*e.g.* Clarke 1960, 99) although earlier antiquaries had referred to the earthworks as Roman (*e.g.* Allcroft 1908, 324). Three Norfolk hill forts (Warham St Mary, Holkham and South Creake) lie in the north, one (Narborough) in the west, and one (Thetford) in the south-west. Tasburgh is the only strongly defended enclosure of this type in the eastern half of the county.

Except for the morphology of the defences, the evidence for an Iron Age date for the Tasburgh enclosure is slight. Forty-three potsherds of probable Iron Age date were found in the 1975 and 1980 excavations, but they were all in residual contexts. No certainly Iron Age surface finds have been made to date within the enclosure. A trace of evidence comes from the early eighteenth-century report (Gale 1709, 109) of the finding of silver coins inscribed IC.DVRO.T. In his review of Icenian coins Allen (1970) makes no mention of this find. Apparently no other coin has such an inscription. However, late silver Boar-Horse type coins bear the double inscription CANS DVRO, presumably giving the beginnings of two personal names (Allen 1970, 8, ft. nt. 27). It might be suggested that the two DVRO inscriptions are related. Alternatively the eighteenth-century finds may have been related to Coritanian coins inscribed DVRO TIGIR SENO.

Clarke (1960, 103) was aware of sub-divisions of the Iceni, but was perhaps incorrect in suggesting 'that the headquarters of the eastern group was Tasburgh Camp'. With the exception of the coins the archaeological remains of this period in the region are so scant that it is almost impossible to identify the pre-Roman Iceni, let alone their sub-divisions.

The inaccuracies and incompleteness of the existing copy of the Peutinger Table (Rivet 1970, fig.5) had led early scholars (*e.g.* Gale 1709, 109)[2] to ascribe the place-name *Ad Taum* to Tasburgh. On maps this name has frequently been placed at Tasburgh (*e.g.* Faden 1797; OS 2nd. ed. 25 inch 1906). Subsequent scrutiny of the evidence has shown that this place-name is a truncation of 'Ad (Ven)ta (Icenor)um' *i.e.* Caistor St Edmund which lies *c.* 7km north-north-east (Wheeler 1920, 377–82) and consequently has no connection with the earthworks under consideration here.

Clarke (1939, 49) speculated that 'Tasburgh . . . is not above suspicion of being a Roman temporary marching camp alongside the Roman road from Colchester to Caistor-by-Norwich.' For this there is little evidence. The irregularity of the earthwork circuit and the profile of the defences argue against such a Roman military origin, although the paucity of Roman finds does not. The only finds of this period are a coin of an Antonine emperor found in the vicarage garden (Fox 1889, 364) along with fifty-three sherds predominantly of the second to fourth centuries, and a scatter of fragments of tile all from the 1975 and 1980 excavations.

The place-name Tasburgh, recorded as *Taseburc* in the *Domesday Book*, appears to be formed from two words. The first may be derived from a personal name *Taese*, while the second is a common derivative of the Old English *burh* meaning 'a defended place' (Gelling 1978, 143). In 1959 the late O.K. Schram wrote that Taese 'contains (a) very rare and archaic O.E. personal name', which 'may be as old as the earliest stratum of Anglian names in Norfolk'. (Correspondence with R.R. Clarke 25th April 1959, Norwich Castle Museum). Ekwall (1960, 61) hypothetically suggests that the personal name would be derived from OE *getaese*, 'convenient, pleasant'. The river name Tas is a back formation.

The place-name evidence might thus suggest that the fortifications were in existence before the ninth century AD.

The Environs

In Tharston parish about 800m west-north-west of the Tasburgh enclosure, within a sharp bendof the River Tas and to its west, lies a near-polygonally shaped former field (the western boundary has been removed) of 8.3 hectares. The field (site *9989*) is situated at the east end of a spur surrounded by marsh on three sides. On the north, north-east and south sides the land slopes evenly downhill, broken by a hedge and track, while to the south-east there is a vertical drop of 2m to the marsh. Within the field no cropmarks have been recorded and no finds reported, but there remains a possibility that its unusual shape may indicate the former existence of an earthwork enclosure.

About 800m due west of Tasburgh church and in the parish of Tharston lies a prominent steep sided knoll, Chapel Hill (Site *9976*), which stands proud of the water meadows of the Tas floodplain. The road from Tasburgh to Ashwellthorpe (B1135) separates the knoll from a spur which forms an interfluve between two streams and leads to the higher plateau to the south-east. Surmounting the knoll is a stone monument inscribed,

'AD 1897. In this Jubilee Year of H.M. Queen Victoria. About 100 skeletons were discovered on this hill together with some Roman pottery — P. Berney Ficklin.'

The age of these burials is uncertain despite the ascription of 'Roman' to the ceramic finds. Further records indicate that skulls were found 'in heaps on gravel' with sherds, worked flints, traces of burning and an 'ornamental bronze fibula'. These finds do not survive and it is generally thought that the burials are of medieval date and should be associated with St Michael's Chapel. Blomefield (1806, V, 214) records that the chapel of St Michael was a free-chapel belonging to the Manor of Uphall and Boyland. The chapel has been placed, perhaps erroneously, on this hill, or (as by the OS) within the small rectangular moat immediately east of the hill (Site *9977*). Although the sixteenth-century site of Boyland Hall was 3km east-south-east, in the neighbouring parish of Morning Thorpe, the former site of the manor was 1km south-east of Chapel Hill. Here the parish boundary is realigned to include the manor site.

This is not the place to discuss the date of the finds on Chapel Hill. However, in 1923 Mr R.F. Newman found whilst digging a ditch 35m south-west of the hill several complete and fragmentary amphorae. The little that is known of these finds suggests that the amphorae were early in form (*cf.* Dressel I) and hence point to activity within the area in the late Iron Age.

Endnotes

1. Many authors have followed Camden (1607, 347) who misquotes the enclosed area; '...quadratum at Taiesborough quod continet acras XXIIII'. Earlier editions of Camden's Britannia do not refer to Tasburgh.
2. *Venta Icenorum*, nunc Caster, ad *Wentfar* fluvium, quem *Taum* videntur dixisse Britanni; nam numismata his locis effocca praeferunt IC.DVRO.T; et in Tabulis Peutingerianis habes ad Taum stationem, forte ubi nunc Taiesborough.' (Gale 1709, 109) *Venta Icenorum*, now Caster, on the River Wentfer which the Britons appear to have called the Taum; for coins dug up in the locality carry the legend IC.DVRO.T; and in the Peutinger Table the station *ad Taum* is entered, perhaps where Tasburgh is now.

II. Previous Work

(Figs. 28, 29)

With the exception of earlier references to the earthworks (above) the first detailed description was by J.F. Williams-Freeman (Ms, NCM) dated July 18th 1930. His description is little different from that of today except for the record of the section of gravel pits on the south side of the edge of the early graveyard.

'There are three or more gravel pits in this side of the bank and in one of them the original ground line can be seen six feet below the top...' This would suggest that a rampart was being removed at that time on the south side. Further, ' . . . to the East of the churchyard the bank and the remains of the ditch are sufficiently perfect to give a measurement. Here the O.D. Vert is now 10' (3m) though the ditch is nearly completely silted up and the overall horizontal is 90' (27.4m).' (Authors' conversions in brackets.) Houses have subsequently been built in this area of the ditch and little now remains of the bank. However, the ground in this area seems little changed from the OS plot of 1906 and consequently any rampart had probably been removed and become grassed by 1930. A surface water drain trench, *c.* 3m deep, cut in July 1974 did not reveal a ditch beneath the road on the south-east side of these houses. Williams-Freeman also adds that 'There are slight indications of a second bank on this east side where the combe leading down to the marshes must also have added to the strength of the position.' Modern houses now obscure this position.

In 1948 G.W.T. Barnett cut a section *c.* 100ft (30m) long through the best preserved length of bank and ditch on the west side of the camp (Fig. 28). The section (redrawn Fig. 29) is the only record that survives of this excavation. The section suggests that the bank, surviving to a height of 3ft (1m) consisted of light sandy clay loam. It was *c.* 41ft (12.5m) wide and sealed an ancient soil. This bank, perhaps originally revetted at the rear with rammed chalk, may have been deliberately removed to fill the surrounding ditch above the 'top of old filling'. The section is clearly schematic when representing the

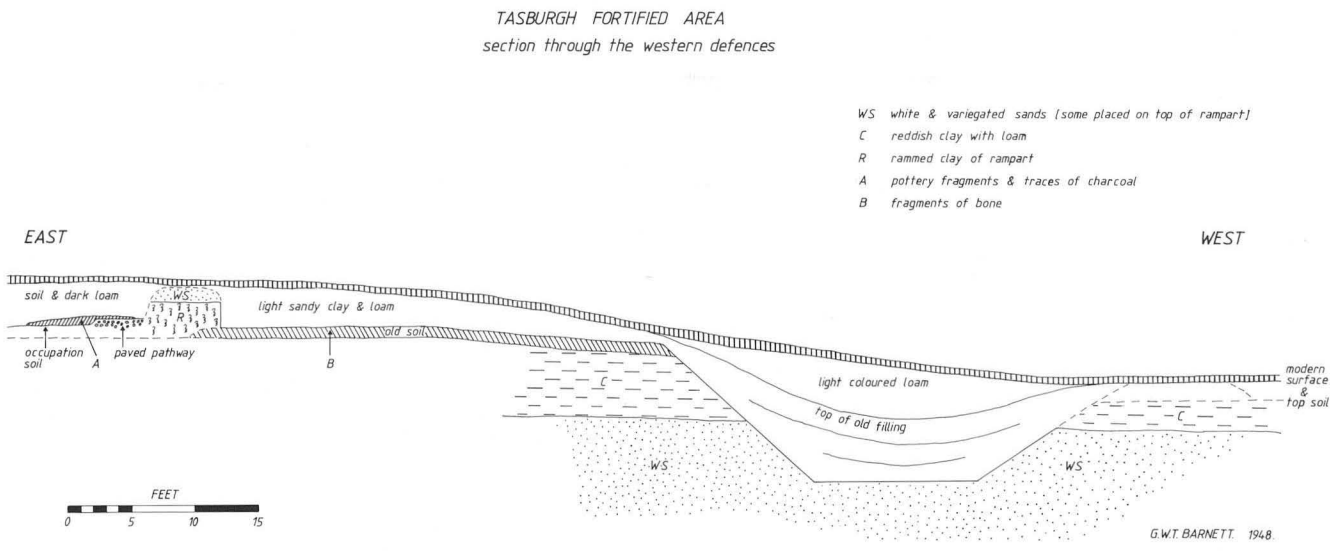

Fig. 29 Section through the western defences, 1948. Scale 1:180

ditch but this was presumably *c.* 10ft (3m) deep and *c.* 35ft (11m) wide with a flat bottom. The section also hints at the low counterscarp bank suggested from aerial photographs. Within the bank a 'paved pathway' is suggested. Although located on a 6 in OS map the exact location of the trench is in doubt as the recorded profile does not match the modern contours. Today the ditch appears better defined in the area of the trench than the record suggests.

Three small sherds survive from the excavation (NCM not registered) presumably 'A' (Fig. 29). They are of indeterminate age, but, if not residual, may have offered a *t.a.q.* for the paved pathway and rammed chalk due to their stratigraphical position.

Hedgerows

The environs of the earthworks and indeed the parish as a whole have been subjected to the scrutiny of the late Silvia Addington who has done invaluable work in the recording of hedgerows and artefact scatters (Addington 1978 and 1984). The late Silvia Addington has shown that the hedge on the north side of the camp is among the oldest in the parish. Although hedge counting can offer no firm date for the hedge, especially as those concerned with this aspect of the landscape do not agree on the accuracy of dating using the number of species present, the large number (more than seven) of species found in sections of this hedge suggest an early medieval, if not earlier date for the hedge. This would suggest that the rampart was already disused by the twelfth century, unless the hedge had been deliberately planted as a defence.

III. The Geophysical Survey, 1983

by A. David with A. Barlett and P. Simmons
(Figs. 30, 31)

A 30m grid was laid out to the north of the 1975–80 excavations in an arable field within the perimeter of the existing earthwork (Fig. 30) and this was surveyed with the fluxgate magnetometer and recording system. Fig. 31 shows the magnetometer traces superimposed on the site grid with significant anomalies outlined.

Results

Large expanses of the survey area contain no reliable magnetic evidence for buried features. What evidence there is concentrates in the southern half of the area, and here there are several linear anomalies of varying strength, representing ditches, some of which apparently form subsidiary enclosures themselves containing features such as pits or hearths. The stronger anomalies in square *33* may result from kilns.

With the exception of the two strongly magnetic pits in square *10*, features marked in the northern half of the area are weak and tenuous and may represent soil noise rather than significant magnetic anomalies.

Conclusions

Archaeological activity, as located by magnetometer survey, is with few exceptions concentrated in the southern part of the field, where enclosures and evidence of possible occupation, probably also extending to the south of School Lane, have been detected.

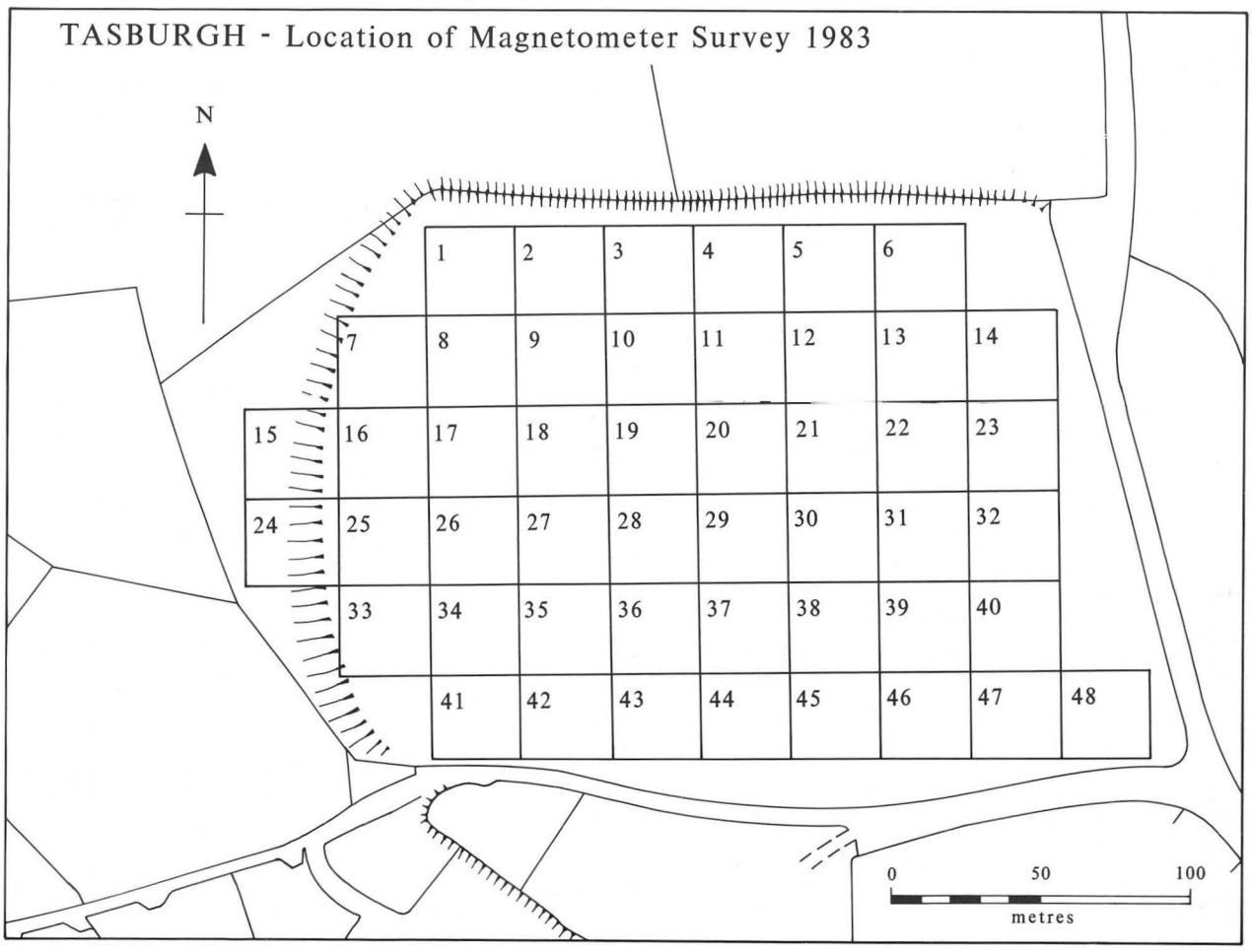

Fig. 30 Location of magnetometer survey, 1983. Scale 1:2500

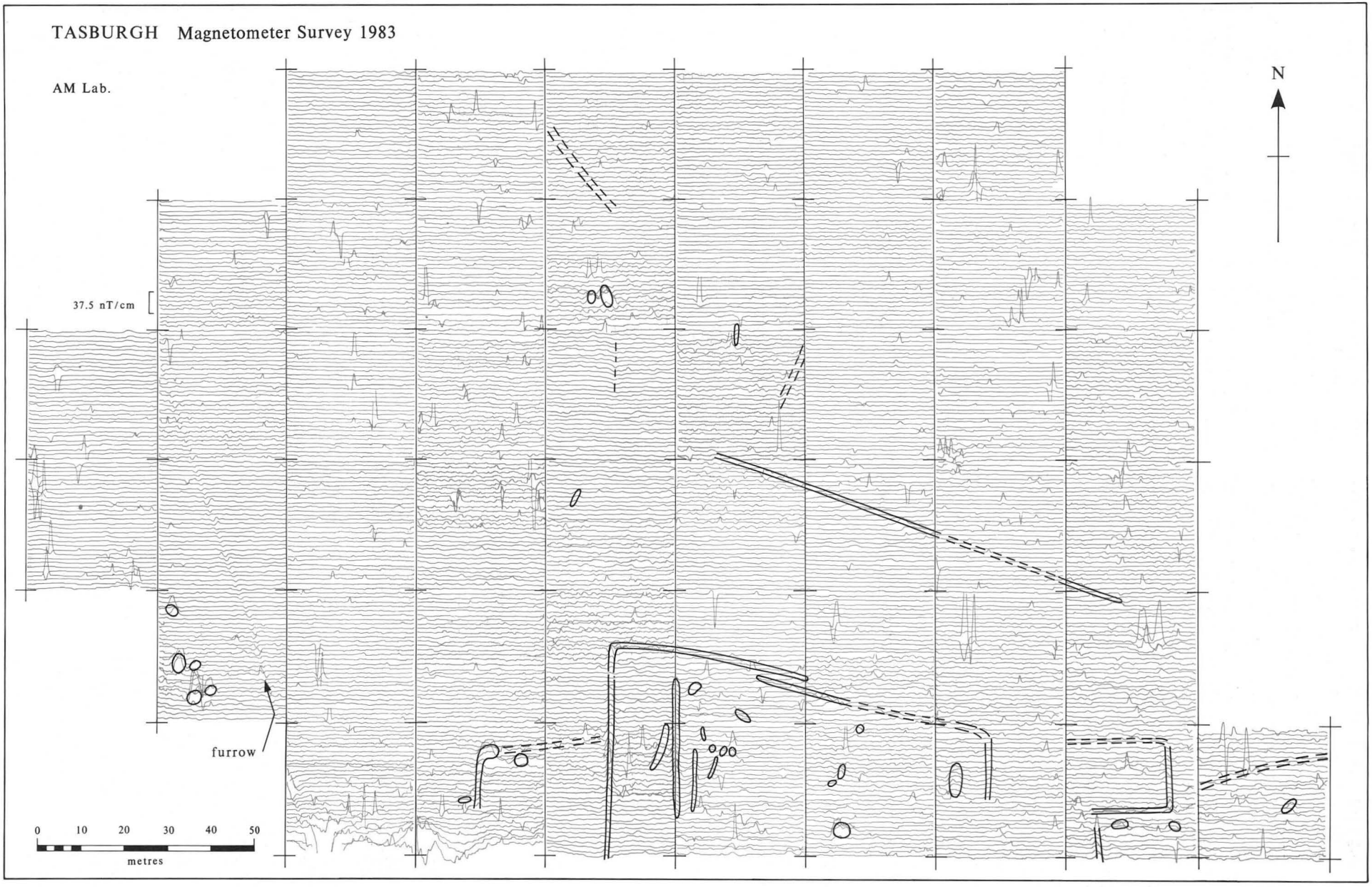

Fig. 31 Magnetometer survey with significant anomolies outlined. Scale 1:1250

Large parts of the earthwork interior are magnetically blank, however, suggesting:

a) no features exist in these areas. Topsoil magnetic susceptibility values (with a range of 27 -34 x 10^{-8} SI Units/Kg) should be adequate for detecting most substantial features if they are present;

or, b) plough-damage has been severe in these areas and only a remnant remains to be detected. It is perhaps unlikely that plough-damage could have removed evidence selectively within the field.

or, c) features exist, but are too small or damaged to be clearly detectable against background soil noise.

The magnetic evidence alone is not sufficient to determine with confidence the factors behind the distribution of anomalies although the magnetic susceptibility values support the probability that features are truly absent from large parts of the site. It is also a possibility that most of those features detected, lying as they do near the parish church, may not be contemporary with the earthwork which defines the site. A late Saxon to post-medieval pottery scatter in the southern part of the enclosure (Addington 1984, fig. 2) roughly coincides with these features.

IV. Circumstances of Excavation

Trench 1

(Figs 32 and 34)

Until the 1960's the eastern boundary of the churchyard of St Mary's lay 35m east of the chancel. Due to overcrowding of the graves it was found necessary to enlarge the graveyard to take in a small triangular plot of land between Church Road and the quarried edge of the enclosure, which until that time had been pasture. Once the intervening hedge had been removed, the progressive expansion of the graveyard threatened the previously undisturbed archaeological deposits within the enclosure. In order to test these archaeological deposits in this unscheduled area of the enclosure a small trench was opened in August 1975. This trench could only ascertain if a stratigraphical sequence existed and if dateable finds could be retrieved. The results could then determine whether a more extensive excavation might solve the problems of the date and purpose of the enclosure. The trench was situated at right-angles to the south-east boundary fence and 38m from the eastern corner of the new graveyard, so situated as to be at the highest point of the apparent bank that capped the scarp of the edge of the enclosure.

Initially, a 2m wide strip running along the north-east side of the trench was hand dug. In the remainder the overburden was mechanically removed with a Whitlock back-actor. Work was carried out by voluntary labour under the direction of Andrew J. Lawson, then a field officer in the Norfolk Archaeological Unit.

Plate XII Tasburgh: Trench 1 during excavation, viewed from the church tower.

Trenches 2–5, 6

(Figs 28, 32–5)

The 1979 and 1980 work was carried out by a Special Temporary Employment Programme team under the direction of S. Rollo-Smith.

Trench 2 was begun as three hand-dug sections at the beginning of 1980. Topsoil, up to 80cm deep, was then mechanically stripped by a Hymac over the whole area of excavation. Soil was dumped in the space between Trenches 1 and 2, and after the backfilling of Trench 2, Trenches 3 and 4 were mechanically excavated to follow the lines of Ditches B and C. Unfortunately, Trench 1 was not joined by excavation to the 1980 work.

Trench 5 was dug by the S.T.E.P. team in late 1979, in advance of the building of a new vicarage.

Trench 6 (Fig 28) was excavated by Heather Wallis for the Norfolk Archaeological Unit in December 1990 ahead of the construction of a footpath running north/south within the monument, and parallel to Grove Road. The trench, 1.0 m wide and 21 m in length, was initially excavated by machine.

The Excavated Features in Trenches 1–4

(Fig. 32)

Prehistoric features and bank 20

The natural subsoil was a yellow sand over most of Trenches 2–4, but in Trench 1 it was a yellow sandy gravel, the division between the two roughly coinciding with the line of Ditch C.

Five features (*1117, 1126, 1128, 1301–2*) were cut into the natural and apparently sealed by a deposit of brown sand (*1080, 1119*) which may have been a truncated buried soil. Some or all of these features may have been prehistoric (Sects. S3–S5, Fig. 35), and all except *1117* lay beneath or close to the flint rampart *20*. In Trench 1 no features were found beneath the brown sand *50* (Sects. S1 and S2, Fig. 34). A possible post-hole (*48*) was sealed by bank make-up *22* but cut through layer *50*. Within bank *20* in Trench 1 were two post-sockets (*23* and *46*). The former was set into the underlying soil (*50*) but it appeared that the cobbles (*22*) of the bank had been set around the post rather than the socket cut through the bank. The filling of *46* was stony and less distinct.

Over much of Trench 2 soil (*1032, 1103, 1108, 1118–9*) immediately above the natural was thought to be a rodent/root disturbed continuation of the soil sealed by the bank. Often called by the excavator a 'B Horizon', it

Plate XIII Tasburgh: Trench 2 during excavation, viewed from the church tower.

Plate XIV Tasburgh: the northern edge of Trench 1, showing make-up of bank *20*. See section *S2*.

was rarely recorded in section (*1119*, Sect. S5, Fig. 35) but was intensively excavated in a separate monitor area in 1m² and 2cm spits to assess the distribution of flint artefacts (*1124–5*, *1129–37*, and *1139–59*). The results are discussed by Frances Healy on p. 00 (Fig. 40).

The brown sand (*1080*, Sect. S3 and Fig. 8) certainly sealed beneath bank *20* was apparently undisturbed, and in Trench 2 it yielded one sherd of Thetford-type Ware. The underlying natural (*1081*) is ascribed a further six sherds of Thetford-type ware, but this may be a post-excavational error.

Bank *20* consisted of dumps of flint cobbles of varying sizes set in a matrix of sandy gravel. The stratification within the bank changed over comparatively short distances as can be seen in the adjacent sections S3 and S6 (Fig. 35). At the north-eastern end of Trench 2 little of the bank survived. Layer *1114* in Sect. S3 (Fig. 35) is variously described in the archive as a sand layer below the rampart and as a sandy, less stony, layer within the rampart. Two small features (*1115-6*) were cut into layer *1114* and sealed below flint cobbles (*1097*), forming the bank make-up at this point.

From the various contexts (*20*, *1026*, *1029*, *1078*, *1097*, *1100*, *1213–4*) which made up the flint dumps of rampart *20*, the latest finds are four sherds of Roman coarseware. However, in context *1071*, a layer of sand beneath flints at the northern end of the site and considered as bank make-up, were found two sherds each of Ipswich and Thetford-type Wares. The pre-bank or bank phase layer *1114* produced fourteen sherds of Thetford-type Ware.

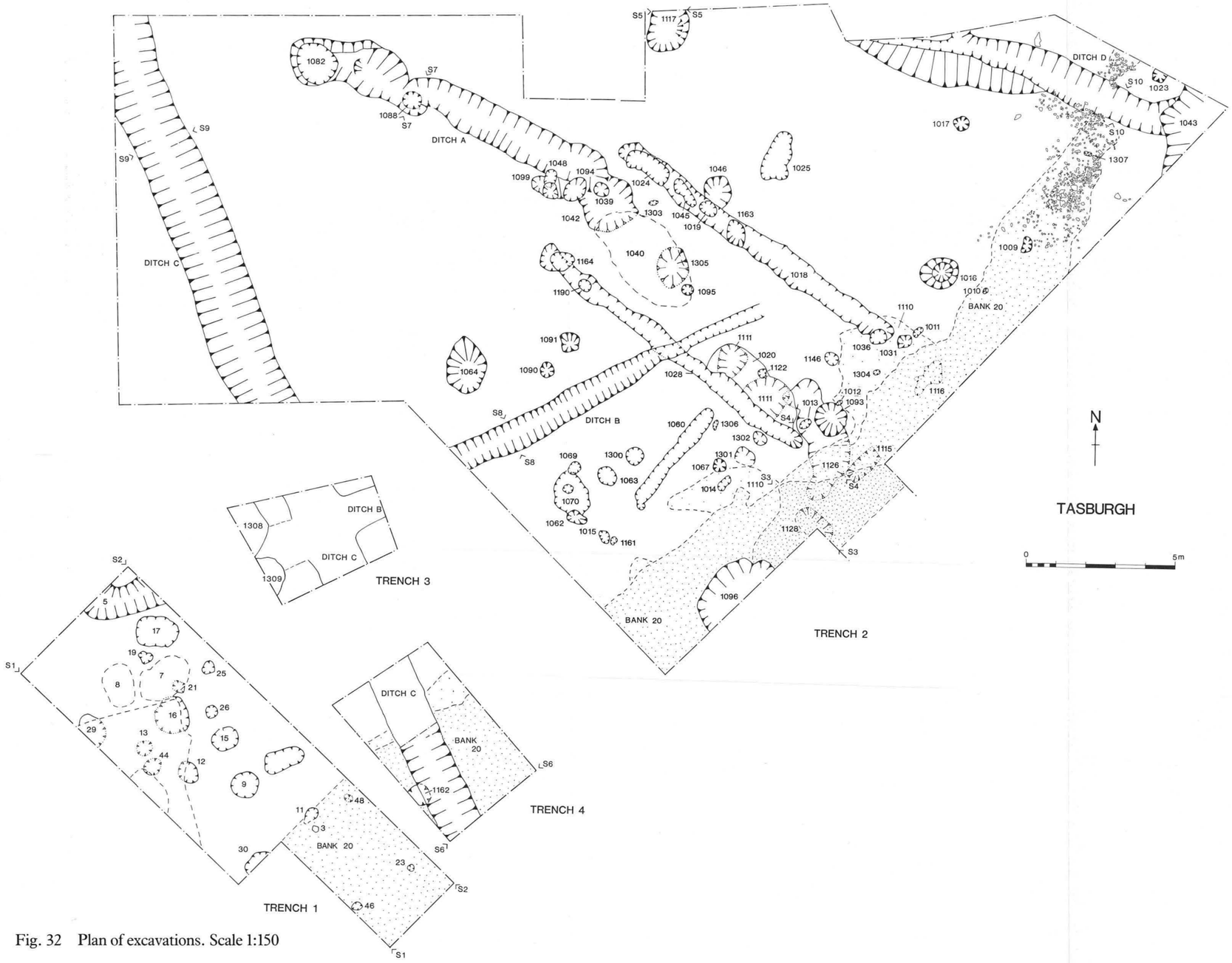

Fig. 32 Plan of excavations. Scale 1:150

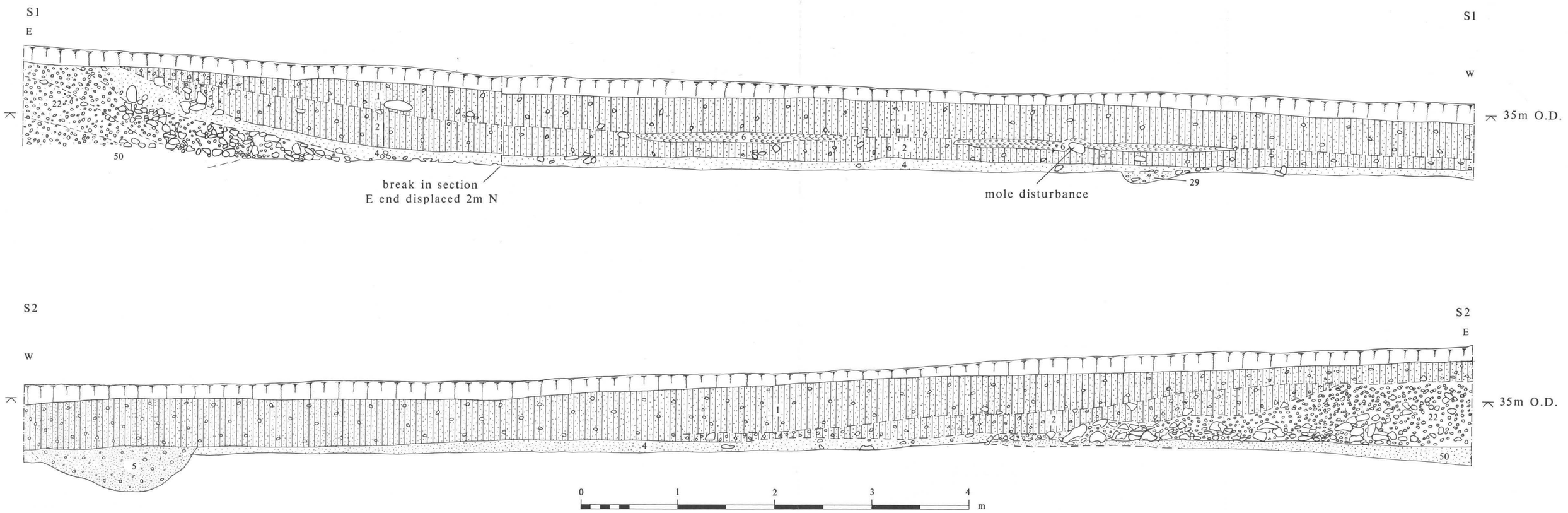

Fig. 34 Section S1 and S2. Scale 1:40

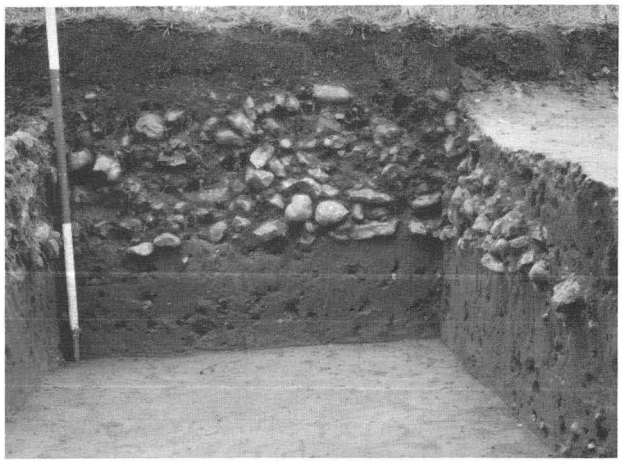

Plate XV Tasburgh: Trench 2. Partial section into bank *20* south-east of building slot *1018*.

Trench 1. The post-bank 20 sequence
(Fig. 32)
West of bank *20* the natural gravel was cut by a series of small features, pits, post-holes and hollows (*11–17, 19, 21, 25–6, 29, 30 and 44*). The natural was covered by a layer of mottled dark yellowish-brown sand with flints (*4*, Sects. S1 and S2, Fig. 7). This layer extended across the entire trench including the tail of the bank, but was possibly cut by the above features. However, as their fillings and layer *4* were so similar, they were not visible until *4* had been removed. Within this layer were two concentrations of flint cobbles (*7* and *8*). Layer *4* was certainly cut by a curving gully (*5*), and a post-hole (*9*) which, to judge from its upper filling of greenish clay, may have formed part of the fence-line represented in Trench 2 by post-holes *1009–14* and *1031*.

In features detected below layer *4*, sixty-five Thetford-type sherds were found, with only ten of Early Medieval Ware (in *15–17*). This suggests a predominantly tenth-century date for the bulk of the features, with layer *4*, which contained over 30% Early Medieval Ware, accumulating in the eleventh century. Gully *5* (Sect. S2, Fig. 34) produced over 70% Early Medieval Ware and was perhaps filled in the late eleventh or twelfth century.

Layer *4* was partly sealed by dark brown sandy loam (*2*) within which was a small area of burning (*3*) above the tail of bank *20*. In the southern part of the trench and above *2* lay a horizontal spread, up to *10*cm thick, of pale yellowish brown rotted chalk with some brown sand (*6*). Where this layer was absent in the northern part of the trench there was no clear distinction between layer *2* and an overlying slightly less dark sand loam (*1*) which lay beneath a humic topsoil. Layer *2* produced a mixture of Thetford type and Early Medieval Wares. The latest pottery in layer *1* was modern.

Trench 2–4. The post-bank 20 sequence
(Fig. 32)
In the southern corner of Trench 2 an ill-defined area of soil (*1030/1050*), containing much burnt and unburnt

Plate XVI Tasburgh: Trench 1. The excavated features from the north-west, with gully *5* in the left foreground.

clay, iron slag and charcoal, overlay the brown sand layer which covered the natural sand. In loose association with this area were a series of features, many of which had fillings with clay and slag inclusions and most of which produced Thetford-type Ware with small quantities of Early Medieval Ware. Post-hole *1015* was packed with Roman tiles and *1067* with flints. Other nearby features (*1062–3*, *1069–70* and *1300*) were shallow hollows. Similar amorphous features lay to the west (*1064*, *1090–1*) and to the north (*1016*, *1025* and *1046*). At the north end of the trench in an ill-defined area of discoloured soil (*1035*) lay a solitary flint-packed post-hole (*1017*). Two shallow depressions (*1111*) filled with burnt sand and clay and iron slag were cut by a clay-packed ?post-hole (*1122*) and sealed by a roughly rectangular hearth (*1020*) constructed of burnt clay with lumps of burnt chalk and blocks of unburnt clay. *1020* was partly sealed by a spread of ash and charcoal (*1021*) and cut by slot *1028*.

Slot *1028* (Fig. 33) marked the southern wall of a rectangular building measuring *c.* 11m by 5.2m externally, the north wall being represented by slot *1018*. The east end of *1018* was cut through a stony layer (*1110*) apparently slip from the tail of bank *20*. A possible adjunct on the south-east side of the building may be indicated by a short length of north-to-south slot (*1060*). Slots *1018* and *1028* averaged 20–25cm in depth and were apparently recut, the lower fillings (*1061* and *1068* in *1018*, and *1059* and *1075–6* in *1028*) containing more charcoal than the upper. These secondary fillings (*1051* and *1055* in *1018*, and *1085* in *1028*) were cut by seven post-holes (*1019*, *1024*, *1036*, *1045*, *1163–4* and *1190*) which may indicate further reconstruction. Evidence for other post-settings had probably been obscured by root and rodent activity. Although the majority of pottery found in the building's constructional features was of Thetford-type, a few sherds of Early Medieval Ware were also recovered including one from context *1059*, the lower filling of slot *1028*. Two Early Medieval sherds were found in feature *1046* which was cut by slot *1018*. Slot *1060* was 9–18cm deep, and had vague evidence for a post-setting at the northern end and a shallow possible post-hole to the south. Within the structure in the western half an oval scoop (*1305*) was cut by a shallow depression filled with compacted soil with flint pebbles and charcoal (*1040*). The depression was cut by a post-hole (*1095*) to the east, and to the west it overlay *1042*, the east end of segmented ditch A.

Ditch A was of a most unusual form, having apparently been dug out in four short connecting stretches and having silted up homogeneously along its length. It contained twelve Thetford-type and one Early Medieval Ware sherds. The lower filling (*1086*) consisted of sandy silt with iron slag and burnt clay while the upper (*1053*) contained much charcoal with iron slag, burnt clay, pottery and animal bone. The west end of ditch A cut a circular pit (*1082*) and further east the ditch cut a large post-pit (*1088*, Sect. S7, Fig. 35). At its east end ditch A was cut by post-holes *1039*, *1048*, *1094* and *1099*.

Ditch B (Sect. S8, Fig. 35) aligned south-west to north-east, cut through the south wall trench *1028*, but faded out before reaching the northern trench. It produced only Thetford-type Ware. Excavation in Trench 3 was insufficient to establish the relationship between ditches B and C. It is possible that B was a continuation of gully 5 in Trench 1.

Ditch C (Sect. S9, Fig. 35) aligned north-west to

Fig. 33 Plan of Late Saxon timber building. Scale 1:100

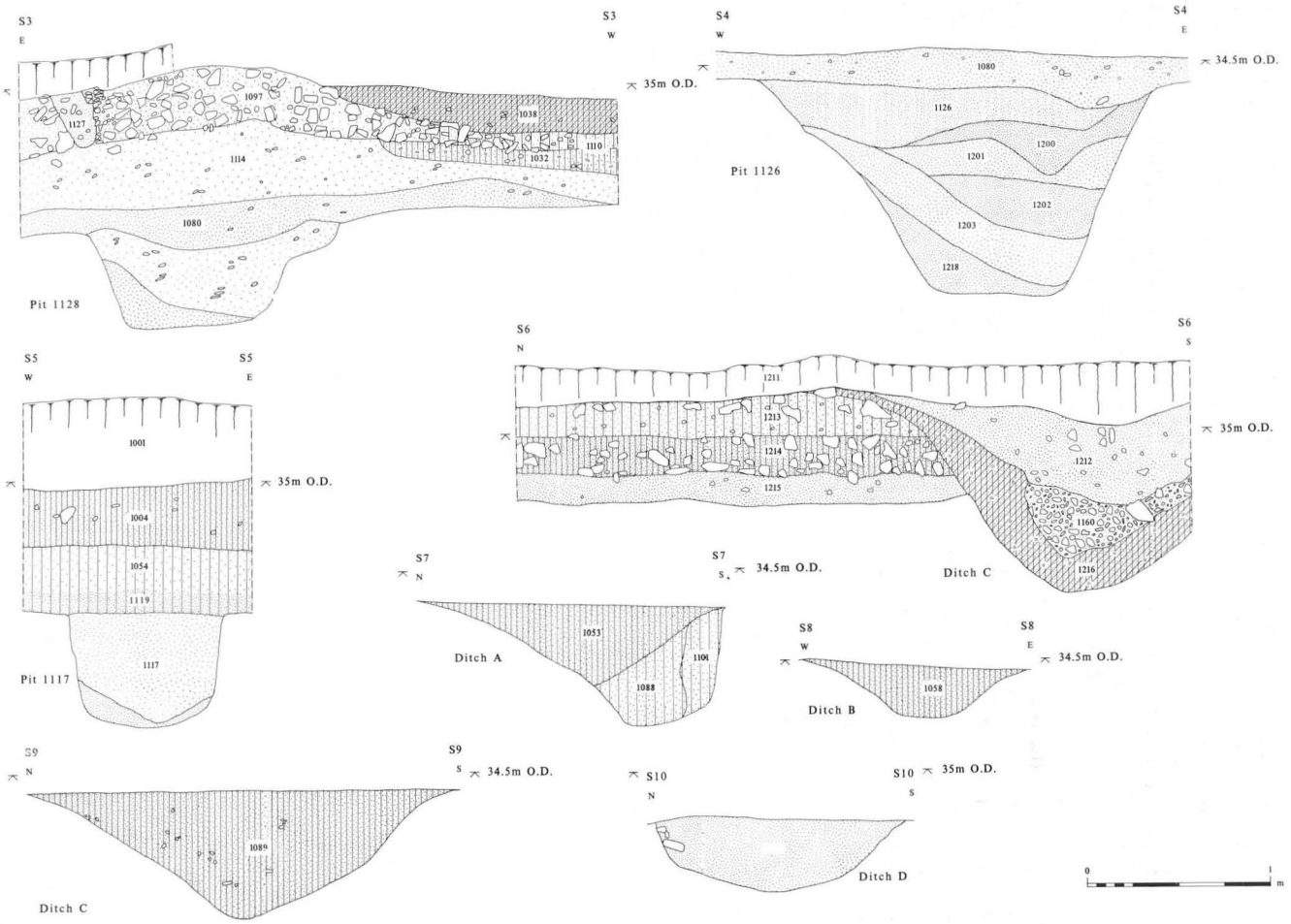

Fig. 35 Section S3–S5. Scale 1:40 Section S6–S10. Scale 1:40

Plate XVII Tasburgh: Trench 2. The eleventh century building as excavated, from the north-west. Ditch A in the foreground.

south-east, contained a fairly uniform filling to the north-west (*1089* and *1098*). In Trench 4, however, where it cut through post-hole *1162* and bank *20* (Sect. S6, Fig. 35), there were three distinct fillings. This ditch produced a total of sixty-eight sherds of Thetford-type and nine of Early Medieval Ware.

A probably recut ditch, D (Sect. S10, Fig. 35) bordered the northern end of the site and was cut through the badly damaged remains of bank *20*. Ditch D, which contained one late medieval and one post-medieval sherd, was probably cut by *1043*, a large pit or butt-end of a ditch in which was found a late medieval or post-medieval sherd.

A large pit (*1096*) was cut through bank *20* near the south end of Trench 2. It contained a post-medieval sherd and a copper alloy pin (Fig. 36).

A series of post-holes filled with a distinctive olive clay, very roughly followed the line of bank *20*. They were cut into its upper surface at the northern end of the trench and further south into soil to the west of the bank. They are numbered, from north to south, *1307*, *1009–1011*, *1031*, *1304*, *1012–14* and *1161*. Post-hole *1013* contained two post-medieval sherds.

Trench 5

An area of *c.* 20 by 15m was mechanically stripped to the north-west of the Rectory (Fig. 28) within the defended enclosure. The surface of natural was cleared by hand but no features at all were found. Although it is recorded that a scatter of Ipswich-type and Thetford-type Ware sherds were collected from the topsoil, they do not survive.

Trench 6

(Fig 28)

by Heather Wallis

This was excavated by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit in December 1990 ahead of the construction of a footpath running north/south within the monument, and parallel to Grove Road.

The trench, 1.0 m wide and 21 m in length, was initially excavated by machine to a yellow/brown sand deposit (*101*) at 35.10 m OD (the 'B' Horizon). A depth of 0.8 m of soils were removed at the south end of the trench while only 0.3 m were removed at the north, indicating a build up of soils towards the area of the rampart.

Two pits (*104*, *106*) containing flint flakes were cut into deposit 101 and were sealed by a brown sand deposit (*131*). The pits are possibly of a neolithic date.

Deposit *131* contained a retouched polished flint axe. Seven pits (*102*, *113*, *119*, *121*, *123*, *125*, *127*) were cut into this deposit of which only 3 contained any finds. Between them *102* and *123* contained 3 sherds of medieval unglazed ware and 5 flint flakes, while *121* contained 1 jar-rim of Early Medieval ware and 9 fragments of part fired chalky clay.

Two ditches (*108*, *111*) crossed the trench east to west. *108* contained 3 flint flakes, 2 sherds of medieval unglazed ware and 3 bone fragments.

All these features were sealed by a deposit of brown sand/loam *129*.

The unstratified finds comprised of 25 worked flints, 1 jar-rim of Middle/Late Saxon Transitional Ware (cf. Fig. 42, Nos. 4–6), 1 jar-rim of Early Medieval ware and 7 medieval unglazed sherds.

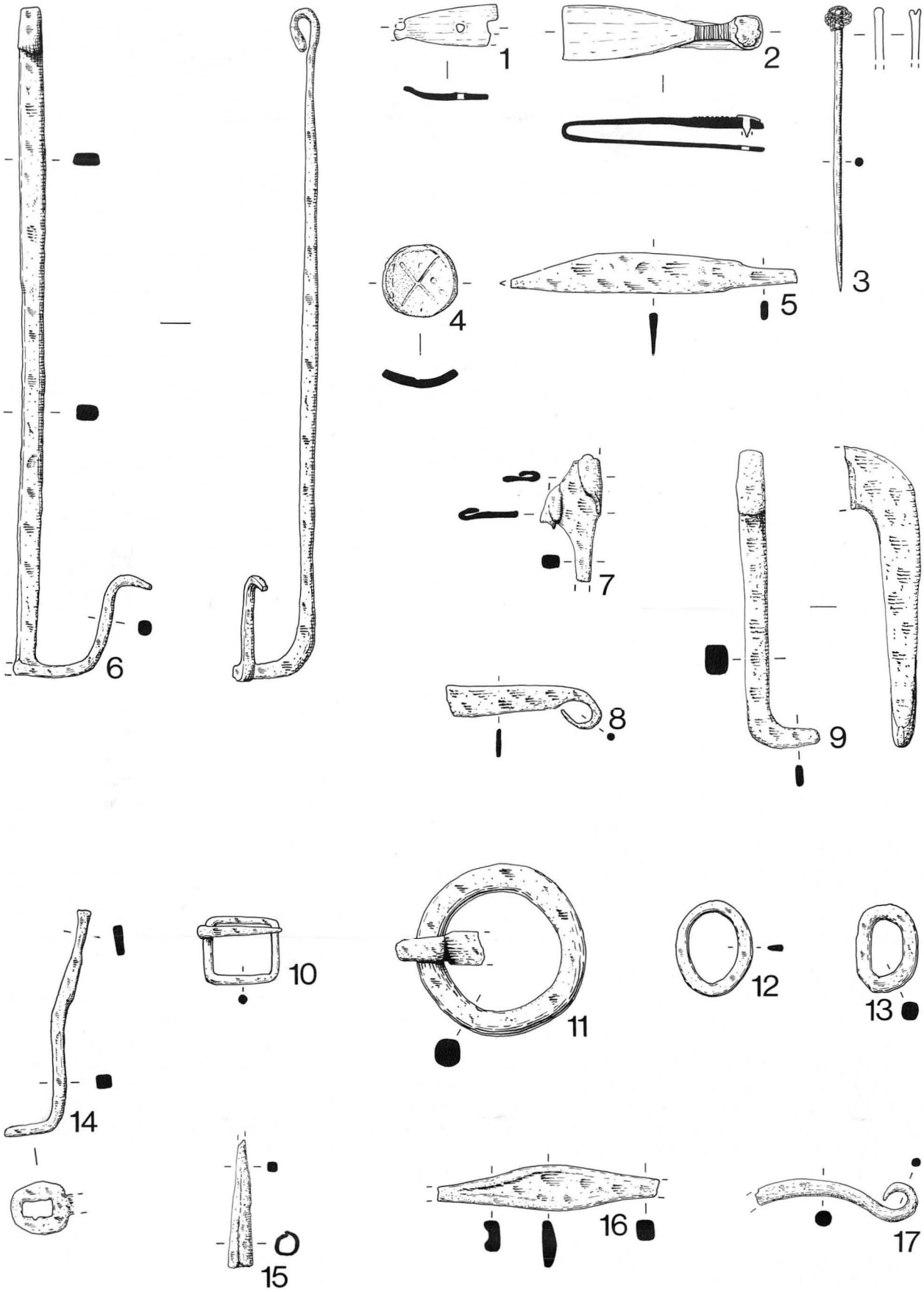

Fig. 36 Nos 1–3, copper alloy objects. Scale 1:4 No. 4, lead object. Scale 1:1 Nos 5–17, iron objects. Scale 1:2

V. The Artefacts

Small finds

by Val Williams

Introduction

The catalogue is ordered by material and within that by function (where appropriate groups can be identified). Each object is followed by its context number, but small finds numbers have been omitted. Where the catalogue number is suffixed by a small-case letter, this indicates that the object is not illustrated.

Non-ferrous metal objects

(Fig. 36)

1. Copper alloy **strap fitting**. Probably eleventh century. Top of Layer *2*, Trench 1.
2. Copper alloy **strap-end** with remains of iron rivet. Simple decoration of transverse grooves on neck. Back very crudely finished. From an eleventh-century context. Layer *18*, filling of pit *17*, Trench 1.
3. Copper alloy **pin** with wire-work head. The use of wire-work probably dates this to the late medieval to early post-medieval period (Margeson and Williams 1985). Filling of post-medieval pit *1096*, Trench 2.
4. Lead disc, probably a **token** or **weight** weighing approximately 1/2oz (14gm). Incised cross motif. A similar example from Northampton is dated to the late eleventh to thirteenth century (Oakley 1979, fig. 115, no. 12). Soil in area of building, layer *1027*, Trench 2.

Iron objects

(Fig. 36)

Tools and utensils

5. **Knife** with whittle tang. Tenth to eleventh century. Layer *2*, Trench 1.
6. **Flesh hook**. The interior of the loop terminal has traces of iron-impregnated wood suggesting a wooden handle. Layer with burnt material *1030*, Trench 2.
7. Possible **socketed candle holder**, with flattened flanges. Richardson (1959, 100, no. 6) states that these were in common use during the later Middle Ages, while a similar example from North Elmham (Goodall 1980, fig. 267, no. 94) is tentatively dated to the sixteenth to seventeenth century. Presumably intrusive into layer with burnt material *1034* (as *1030/1050*) Trench 2.

7a. **Heckle tooth**. 92mm long. Layer *4*, Trench 1.

8. **?Strike-a-light**. Layer *10*, filling of post-hole *9*, Trench 1.

8a-b. **Awls**. Found together in association with a pierced iron plate 117mm long. Context *1006*, below topsoil, Trench 2. 8a. Tapering evenly from a central expansion. Rectangular section. 160mm long. 8b. Tapering to either end; rounded point, tapering rectangular section tang. A similar example was recovered from Northampton (Goodall 1979, fig. 119, no. 56). 160mm long.

Fittings

9. **Clamp or staple**. Part of a clamp was recovered from North Elmham (Goodall 1980, fig. 266, no. 82), while a staple from King's Lynn (Goodall 1977, fig. 135, no. 50) was noted as unusual having up-turned arms. Soil above bank *20* (*1041*), Trench 2.

9a. Pierced **strap** fragment with rounded end and two to three holes. Possibly part of a strap hinge. 72mm long. Filling of ditch C (*1098*), Trench 2.

Buckles

Nine buckles and possible buckle fragments were recovered; one complete (No. 10), two frames (Nos 12 and 13) and six pins (Nos 10a, 10b, 10c, 11a, 11b and 12a).

No. 11 is either a large annular buckle or brooch.

10. Layer *2*, Trench 1.

10a. ?Incomplete **pin**. 42mm long. Top of layer *4*, Trench 1.

10b. Incomplete **pin**. 41mm long. Base of layer *4*, Trench 1.

10c. ?Incomplete **pin**. 26mm long. Soil in area of building, layer *1027*, Trench 2.

11. Soil above bank *20* (*1038*). Trench 2.

11a. Complete **pin**. 42mm long. Layer *1*, Trench 1.

11b. Incomplete **pin**. 20mm long. Context *1071*, below, or part of make-up of, bank *20*, Trench 2.

12. Traces of iron impregnated **fibrous organic material**, possibly textile, on one side. Filling of ditch C (*1098*), Trench 2.

12a. Incomplete **pin**. 18mm long. Soil below bank *20* (*1080*), Trench 2.

13. Soil above natural (*1145*), Trench 2.

Miscellaneous

14. **Padlock key**. Incomplete expanded terminal. Post-Conquest type. Layer *2*, Trench 1.

14a. Complete **ring**. 35mm diameter. Soil above bank *20* (*1007*), Trench 2.

15. Socketed **arrow head** with pointed blade. Similar examples were recovered from Thetford (Goodall 1984, fig. 144, nos 299 and 301) where they dated to the tenth to eleventh centuries. Layer *18*, filling of post-hole *17*, Trench 1.

16. Identification uncertain. Make-up of bank *20* (*1029*), Trench 2.

17. **Mouthpiece link** from bridle bit. Make-up of bank *20* (*1097*), Trench 2.

17a. Incomplete pair of **scissors** comprising pivot and parts of blades and handles. Late medieval to post-medieval. 51mm long. Layer *1*, Trench 1.

Fired clay objects

(Fig. 37)

18. Bun-shaped **loom weight**. Soft buff/pink fabric with inclusions of chalk, charcoal, brick/tile and medium to coarse grits, including flint, up to 8mm. Suspension hole slightly waisted. Layer *2*, Trench 1.

19. Fragment of ?conical **loom weight**. Hard buff/grey fabric with inclusions of chalk and medium to coarse grits, including flint, up to 8mm. Also organic impressions within fabric. Finger drawing marks on exterior. Unstratified (*1104*), Trench 2.

Bone objects

19a. Fragment of circular section pin shaft. 28mm long. Soil above bank *20* (*1038*), Trench 2.

The slags

by Justine Bayley

The excavations produced a total of 7.5kg of slag of three main types. The distribution of the various types can be seen from Table 1, in microfiche.

The most frequently found type was smithing slag which occurred both as small amorphous pieces and as fragmentary and complete hearth bottoms, plano-convex 'buns' of slag that collected at the bottom of the blacksmith's hearth (marked 'B' in Table 1). The hearth bottoms were up to 14cm in diameter and up to 4cm deep.

Many of the same contexts also produced fuel ash slags. These are silicate-rich materials such as clay or sand which have been fluxed by the ash in a fire at high temperatures and turned into a vitreous slag. Most of the examples here contained moderate amounts of iron and so were probably formed in the iron-working hearths. In addition, two contexts produced fragments of hearth lining, the clay surface of a hearth that has been vitrified on the side in contact with the fire.

The final slag type identified is described as dense iron slag. Like the smithing slag it is a fayalite slag but its structure is quite different, being far denser and less vesicular. The fragments found appear to be parts of slag blocks which are larger than the smithing buns although one fairly complete one had a diameter of about 13cm and a depth of about 8cm. This sort of slag could be the product of a larger scale smithing industry where hearth temperatures were higher than normal but it is probably

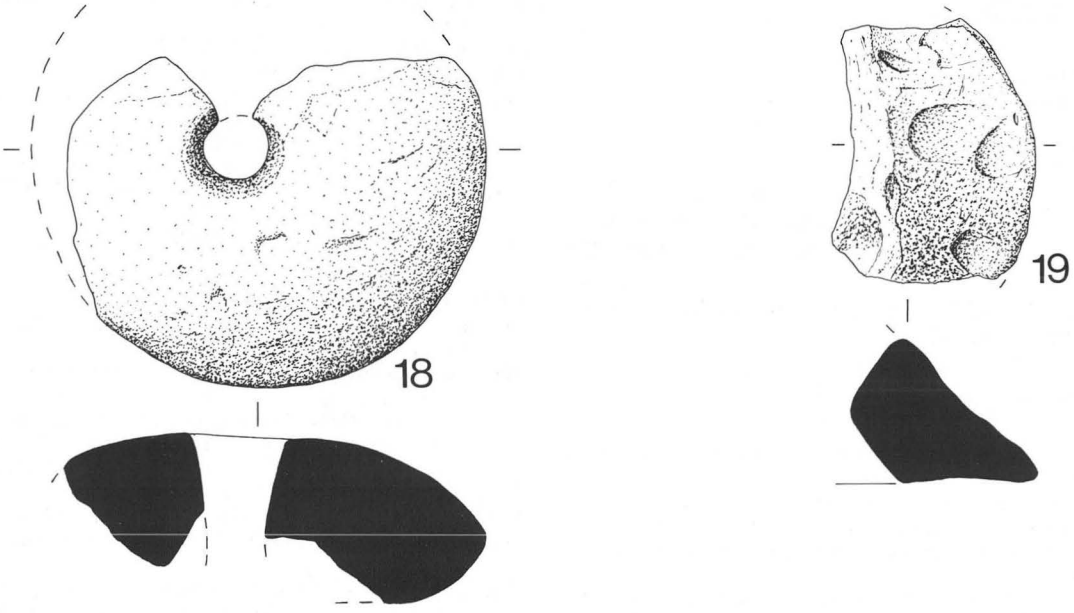

Fig. 37 Fired clay loomweights. Scale 1:2

the result of small scale iron smelting using a non-tapping furnace of some sort. A Middle or Late Saxon date would be acceptable for this level of technology.

Prehistoric Material

by Frances Healy
(Figs. 38–40, Table 2)

Lithic Material

Introduction

An unexpectedly large amount of struck flint (1066 pieces) was found during the 1980 excavation, especially in the east of trench 2 (Fig. 38), where one Later Neolithic sherd and a few indeterminate prehistoric sherds were also found, and where possibly prehistoric pits may have been sealed by a truncated soil formed before the rampart was built. This prompted the closer examination of a restricted area, including parts of both the area sealed by the rampart and the horizon immediately above the natural sand to the west of it, which was trowelled by 2cm spits in 1m squares (Fig. 39). Two of the possibly prehistoric features (contexts *1116* and *1126*) yielded small quantities of struck flint, the overwhelming majority of the lithic material being residual or unstratified. Its composition and incidence are summarized in Table 2, and selected pieces are illustrated in Fig. 40 and described in Table 3.

Description

1. Raw material

All the struck flint appears to have been made on the gravels of the hill itself. These are weathered and frost-fractured (thermally-fractured surfaces remain, for example, on Fig. 40, Nos 1 and 10), but include pebbles of substantial size, evidenced by a mean weight of 143.6g for the four complete cores (Table 4, microfiche). Pebbles and fragments weighing up to 235g each were collected from the ploughed surface of the interior in 1984.

2. Condition

A few pieces, including those from contexts *1116* and *1126*, are relatively fresh. The condition of Fig. 40, No. 9, on which edge-gloss is visible to the naked eye, is exceptional. Most of the material is edge-damaged or otherwise abraded, so that finely-retouched edges, like those of serrated pieces, may not all have been recognised. Varying degrees of cortication are common.

3. Composition (Table 2)

The collection consists almost entirely of unretouched flakes and blades, which make up 97.3% of the total. 32% of them are blades, in the visual sense of relatively narrow, parallel-sided flakes (*e.g.* Fig. 40, Nos 2, 6, 9). Correspondingly, four of the nine cores have at least some blade scars (*e.g.* Fig. 40, Nos 4, 5). The cores are described in greater detail in Table 4 (microfiche). Although there are no complete hammerstones, the unillustrated face of Fig. 40, No. 4 has undoubtedly been used as such, and three flakes (from contexts *1097*, *1021*, and *1047*) have been struck from flint hammerstones. Notable among the retouched pieces are an edge-retouched leaf-shaped arrowhead (Fig. 40, No. 10) and a blade, the distal end of which has been notched and snapped (Fig. 40, No. 12). Although not a microburin *sensu stricto*, this is most easily seen as a by-product of microlith manufacture.

4. Distribution (Figs 38 and 39)

Fig. 38 shows the distribution of struck flint from those contexts in trench 2 which could be attributed to 5m squares, a context not falling in a single square being attributed to the square in which its greater or greatest part lay. A crude impression of overall density and of the incidence of blades within it was thus obtained for approximately 90% of the lithic material from the 1980 excavation. Blades are relatively infrequent in the east, in the maximum concentration of struck flint, more frequent away from it, to the south and west (Fig. 38). The area trowelled in 1m squares (Fig. 39) shows small-scale variation in density and composition. Cores and irregular waste are confined to the northwest of it, where they coincide with a concentration of unretouched flakes and blades; retouched pieces are more frequent to the south and east of it, where debitage is rarer; and unretouched flakes again become frequent in the south.

Discussion

1. The excavated area

The concentration of material in the east of trench 2 (Fig. 38) may have been exaggerated by greater intensity and completeness of excavation there, and by less radical machining-off of the topsoil in the area of the rampart. The greater frequency of blades in the south and west of trench 2 must, however, be real. Numbers are indeed lower here than to the east, but 5m squares *1130 940* and *1140 930*, which have the highest percentages of blades, together yielded seventy-four flakes and blades, so that

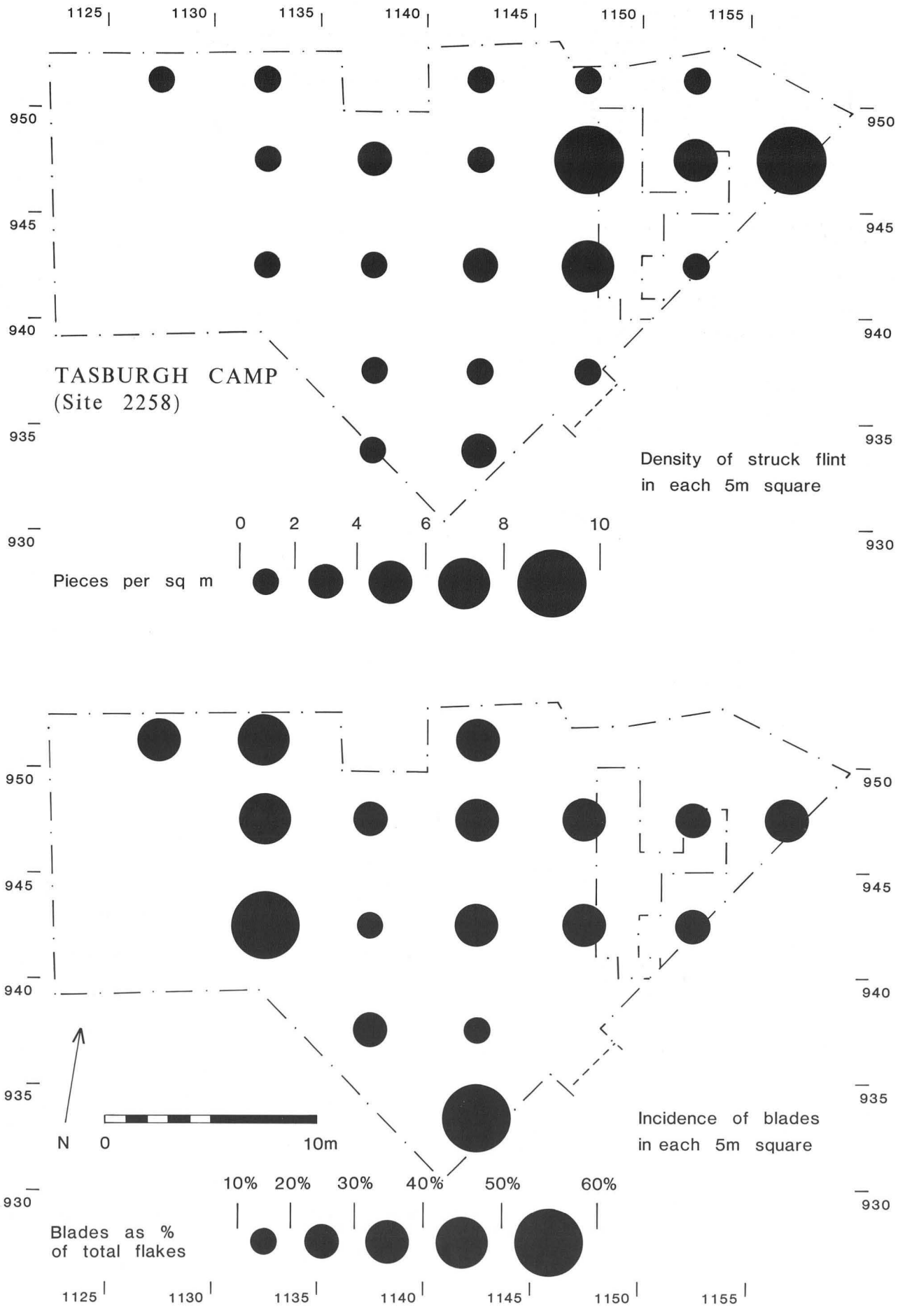

Fig. 38 Plans of Trench 2, showing density of struck flint, incidence of blades and area of Fig. 40. Scale 1:250

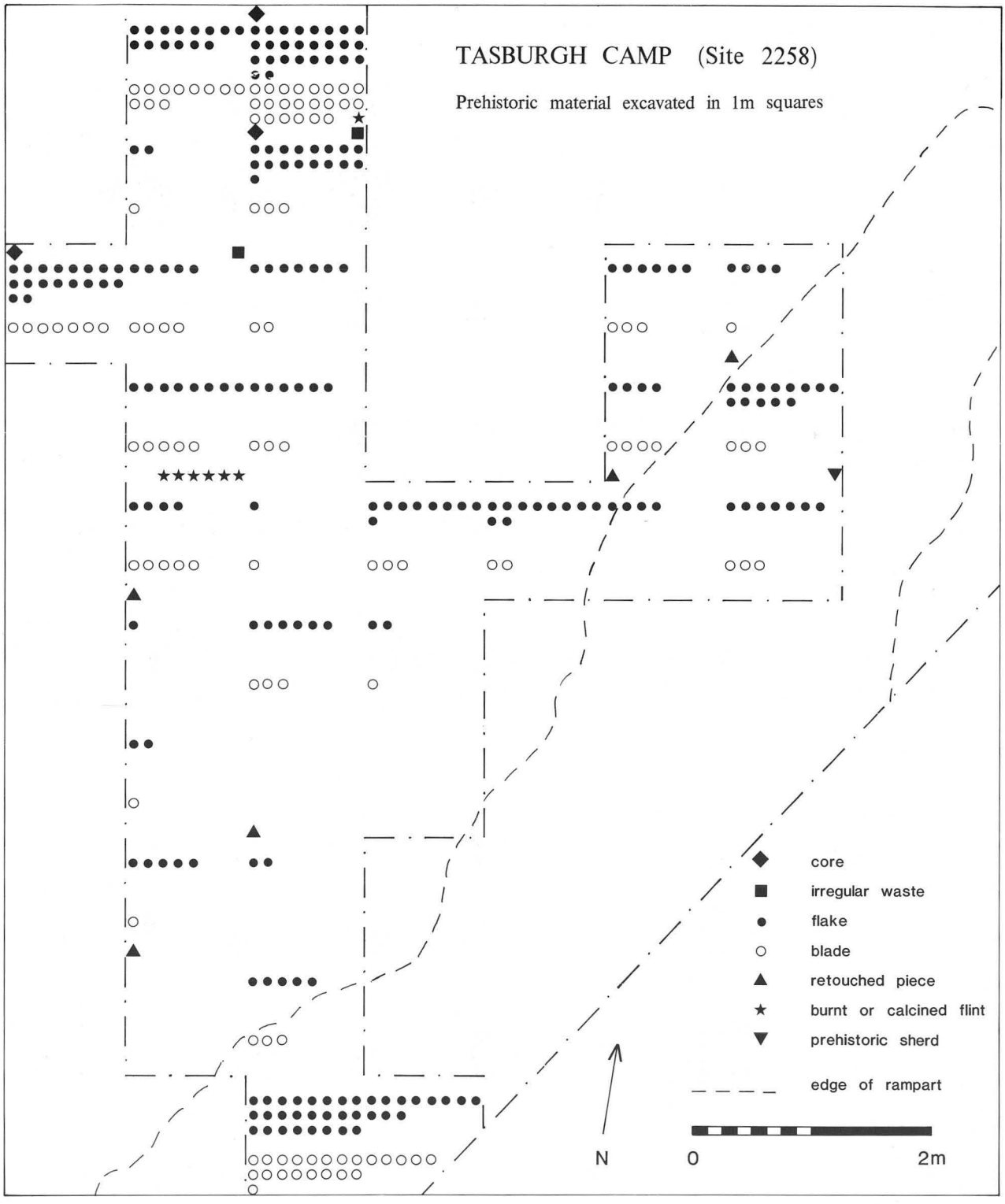

Fig. 39 Plan of area within Trench 2 excavation in 1m squares. Scale 1:50

	Cores	Irregular waste	Flakes	Blades	Leaf-shaped arrowhead	Scrapers	Borer	Backed knife	Serrated pieces	Misc. retouched pieces	Total struck flint	'pot-boilers'	Burnt flint	Drawings (Fig. 40)
1975														
All contexts			21	8							29	3		
1980														
Pits below rampart	1		9	6						16				
Surface below rampart	2		110	47		1				2	162		1	1–3
Area excavated in 1m squares, excluding squares below rampart	3	2	172	88		1	1		1	2	270	3	4	4–8
Rampart		1	22	9							32			
Other contexts	3	1	391	182	1			1	2	5	586	5	1	9–12
Totals	9	4	725	340	1	2	1	1	3	9	1095	11	6	
Drawings (Fig. c)	1			2	11	3	7	12	8	9				
	4			6						13				
	5			10										
Overall composition:	cores 9 (0.8%)	irregular waste 4 (0.4%)	flakes + blades 1065 (97.3%)		retouched pieces 17 (1.5%)									

Table 2. Composition and incidence of lithic material

high percentages of the latter are unlikely to result simply from small sample size.

The collection undoubtedly accumulated over many hundreds of years. Individual pieces attest activity at various times in prehistory. If Fig. 40, No. 12 was indeed produced during microlith manufacture it is Mesolithic in date. The leaf-shaped arrowhead (Fig. 40, No. 10) is likely to be of Earlier Neolithic or subsequent date (Green 1980, 92–7). A high overall frequency of blades (Table 2) strongly suggests that a large part of the collection is Mesolithic and Earlier Neolithic (Pitts 1978). Lower frequencies of blades in the east of the excavated area, where a sherd of Later Neolithic Peterborough Ware (Fig. 41, No. 1) was found, may reflect the presence there of contemporary debitage. If much of the material in this area is indeed of Later Neolithic date, the detailed distribution recorded in a part of it (Fig. 39) may just possibly preserve parts of a flint-working area (to the north-west) and a flint-using area (to the south and east), rather than the accidental product of multi-period discard.

2. The results of field-walking

The excavated area is only a small part of the monument (Fig. 28). Field-walking over the ploughed surface of the rest of the interior, mainly by the late Mrs Silvia Addington, has shown that struck flint is present, although not abundant, over most of it. In these collections and in others from the fields to the north blades attain only approximately half their frequency in the excavated collection (Table 5, microfiche), although they are likely to have been collected preferentially during field-walking because of their greater visibility. The excavated collection may be unrepresentative of both the rest of the interior and the immediate area.

Prehistoric and ?Prehistoric Pottery

(Fig. 41, Tables 6–7)

The composition and incidence of prehistoric pottery from the excavations are set out in Table 6. Selected sherds are illustrated in Fig. 41 and described in Table 7. The sherds are generally small and abraded, with the exception of Fig. 41, Nos 1 and 2, which were protected by the rampart.

Indeterminate

These are plain flint- or flint- and sand-tempered body sherds. The coarse, buff fabrics of three of them, from contexts *1037*, *1080*, and *1146*, suggest a Neolithic or Bronze Age date. Like the Peterborough Ware sherd discussed below (Fig. 41, No. 1), these were found in the east of the excavated area, under or close to the rampart. One (from context *1146*) is represented in Fig. 39.

Neolithic

Fig. 41 No. 1, found under the rampart in 5m square *1150 940*, seems most likely to have formed part of a shouldered Peterborough ware bowl. Flint-tempered fabrics, often coarse and laminated, as here, and horizontal rows of simple oblique impressions or slashes below the shoulder, are found in several Mortlake or developed Ebbsfleet-style bowls from Norfolk, including examples from Grime's Graves (Site *5640*; Longworth, Ellison, Rigby 1988, fig. 3), Eaton Heath, Norwich (Site *9544*, Wainwright 1973, fig. 15: P11–12), Bawburgh (Site *9288*; Healy 1984, fig. 5.9: P36), Wayford Bridge on the Smallburgh/Stalham boundary (Site *8259*; Healy 1984, fig. 5.9: P45), Edingthorpe, Bacton (Site *6899*), and Spong Hill, North Elmham (Site *1012*, Healy 1988, fig. 79 P199). If the attribution is correct, a third millennium cal. BC date is likely (Smith 1974, 112). The sherd might also have formed part of a Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age collared vessel, but both fabric and decoration make the first attribution more probable.

Iron Age and ?Iron Age

Tony Gregory has identified the remainder of the prehistoric pottery as of Iron Age or, in the case of two sherds, Iron Age or early Romano-

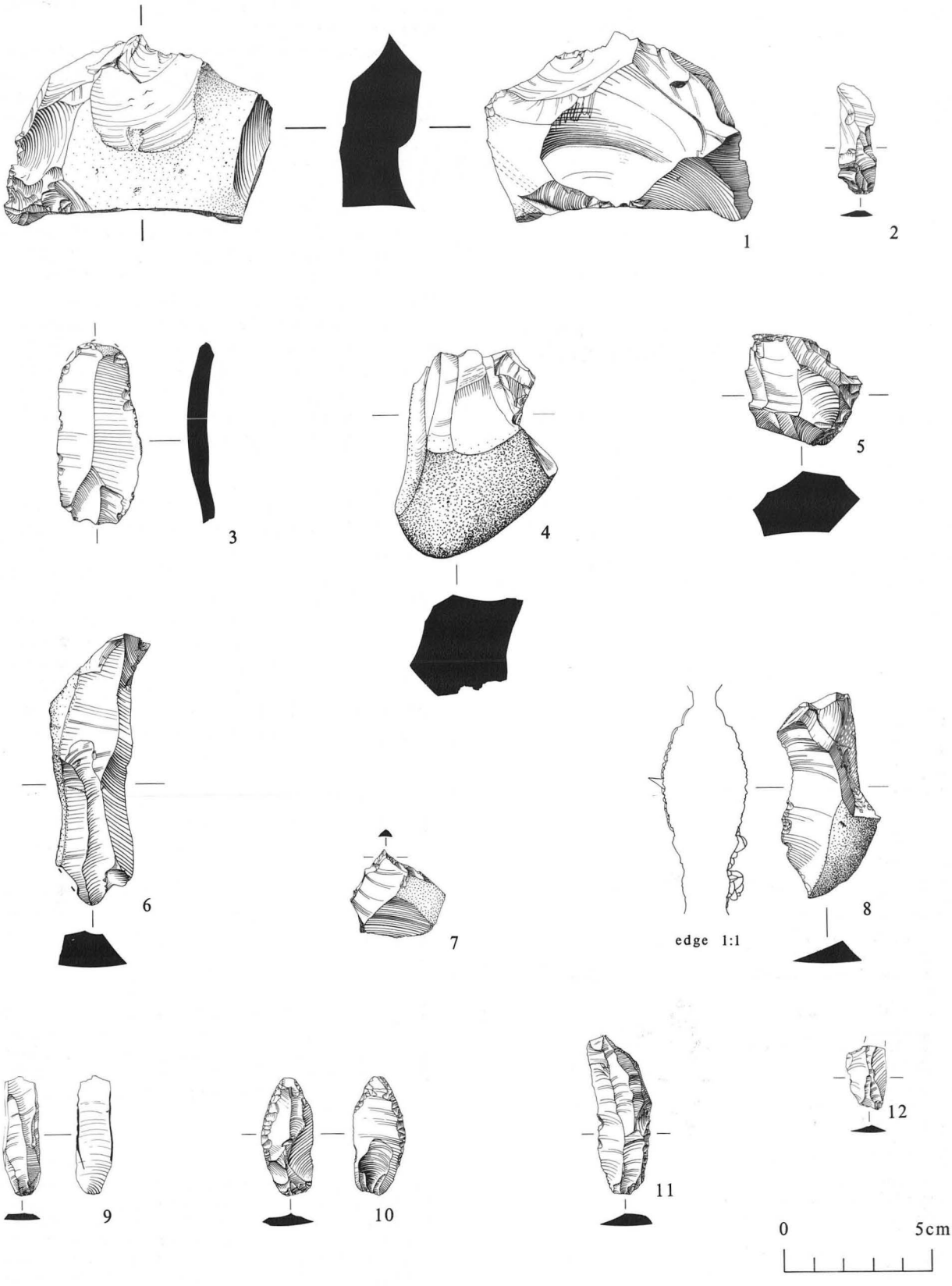

Fig. 40 Struck flint from the 1980 excavation. 1–3 from surface below rampart, 4–8 from area excavated in 1m squares, 9–12 from other contexts. Particulars in Table 3. Scale 1:2. Drawn by Hoste Spalding

No.	Context	Co-ordinates	Description and comments	
1	1080	in 5 m sq. 1150 940	Class E core, retaining thermally-fractured surface on second of two illustrated faces	
2	1081	in 5 m sq. 1150 940	Patinated blade	surface below rampart
3	1114	in 5 m sq. 1145 935	End scraper, with later damage to distal and lateral edges cutting slight patina	
4	1136	1 m sq. 1149 948	Class B1 core, battered on unillustrated face as if used as hammerstone	
5	1120	1 m sq. 1147 947	Class B2 core, retaining some cortext on unillustrated face	
6	1124	1 m sq. 1149 949	Blade, damaged at butt	area excavated in 1 m squares, excluding squares below rampart
7	1150	1 m sq. 1147 942	Piercer, made by unifacial retouch on a flake fragment fragment	
8	1156	1 m sq. 1152 946	Serrated flake. Dorsal and ventral faces of serrated edge drawn 1:1	
9	1045	1142 941	Blade retaining macroscopically-visible polish, apparently from use, on both lateral edges of ventral face	
10	1119	in 5 m sq. 1140 950	Edge-retouched leaf-shaped arrowhead, made on a blade retaining a thermally-fractured area on its dorsal face. *Cf.* examples from Hurst Fen, Mildenhall, Suffolk (Clark 1960, fig. 13)	other contexts
11	1030	in west of 1980 area	Backed knife made on a blade, retaining short length of cortex towards distal end of retouched edge	
12	1004	—	Blade abruptly retouched and snapped at distal end, unlikely to have been modified by recent damage, since all surfaces are in uniform condition.	

Table 3. Catalogue of illustrated struck flint (Fig. 40)

Context	Indet. Prehist.	Neolithic	Iron Age	?Iron Age ?Romano-British	Totals	Drawings (Fig. 41)
Layer 2, Trench 1			3	1	4	6
Layer 4, Trench 1	1				1	
Layer 27, post-hole 14, Trench 1			1		1	
Layer 1002/1003, topsoil						
Layer 1006, base of topsoil, SW area			2		2	
Layer 1007, base of topsoil, SW area			1		1	
Layer 1022, filling of ditch B			1		1	
Post-hole 1024, cutting building slot 1018			1		1	
Area of burning 1030			2		2	
Layer 1037, filling of ditch D	1		1		2	
Layer 1038 above bank 20			3		3	
Depression 1040 within building			1		1	
Area of burning 1050			2		2	
Layer 1052, upper filling of ditch A			1		1	
Layer 1056, upper filling of building slot 1028			1		1	
Layer 1059, filling of building slot 1028			1	1	2	
Possible building slot 1060			1		1	
Pit 1064			2		2	
Layer 1071, below or make-up of bank 20			2		2	
Layer 1080, soil beneath bank 20	1		6		7	2
'Natural' 1081		4			4	1
Pit 1091			1		1	3
Layer 1103, soil above natural S of ditch A			1		1	
Depressions 1111			1		1	
Soil above natural, partly sealed by bank 20			3		3	
Layer 1119, soil above natural around pit 1117			1		1	
Soil above natural, 1m², 1130			1		1	
Soil above natural, 1 m², 1134			2		2	4, 5
Soil above natural, 1 m², 1146	1				1	
Totals	4	4	43	2	53	
Drawings		1	2–5	6		

Table 6. Composition and incidence of prehistoric and ?prehistoric pottery in Trenches 1 and 2

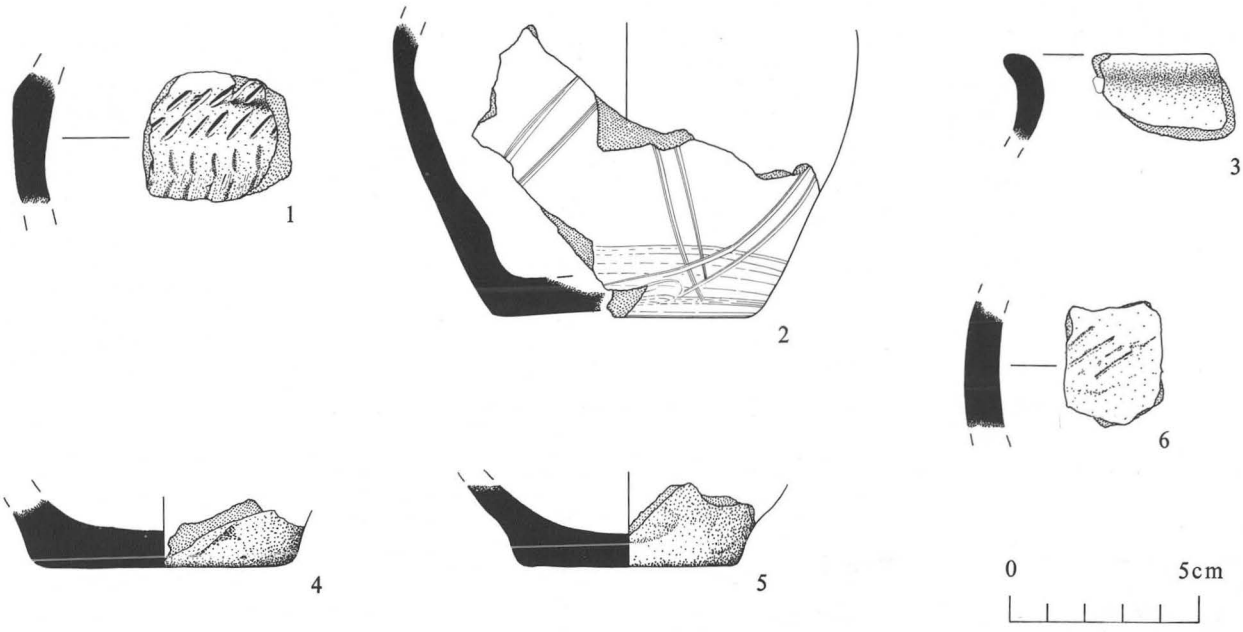

Fig. 41 Prehistoric and ?prehistoric pottery the 1980 excavation. 1 Neolithic, 2–5 Iron Age, 6 Iron Age or Romano-British. Particulars in Table 7. Scale 1:2. Drawn by Hoste Spalding

No.	Context	Texture	Hardness	Filler(s)	Colour int.	ext.	core	Decorative technique(s)	Date
1	'natural' 1081	coarse, laminated	medium	medium to large flint	5YR 3/4 to 4/1 grey to brown	5YR 4/2 brown	5YR 4/2 brown	incision (oblique strokes) impression (vertical strokes)	Neolithic
— found with 3 plain body sherds of identical fabric, almost certainly from same pot									
2	Layer 1080 soil beneath bank 20 s.f.52	medium	medium	grog with sub-angular quartz grains, mica flecks and iron ore.	7.5YR 4/2 grey-brown	5YR 3/1 to 5/3 dk.grey to buff	7.5YR 4/2 grey-brown	all-over horizontal burnish at base, giving way to burnished decoration on reserved ground	Mid to late Iron Age
3	Pit 1091	fine	hard	micaceous sand with some flint	5YR 4/1 grey-brown	5YR 2.5/1 black	5YR 4/3 brown		Iron Age
4	Soil above natural, 1 msq. 1134	medium, laminated	hard	micaceous sand with some flint	5YR 3/1 dk. grey	5YR 5/1 grey	5YR 4/1 dk. grey		Iron Age
6	Layer 2, Trench 1	medium	hard	micaceous sand with some flint	5YR 5/4 orange-buff	5YR 5/2 grey-buff	5YR 4/1 grey	incision	Iron Age or Romano-British

Table 7. Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Fig. 41)

British, date. It must be emphasised that the identification is in many cases tentative, since most of the sherds are small and featureless and, while their fabrics are consistent with those of local Iron Age wares, a Pagan Saxon date cannot be completely excluded.

Fig. 41, No. 2, the only pot which is even partly reconstructable, is distinguished from the rest of the material by its black grog temper and by its burnished decoration. Its fabric has been examined by David Williams (Appendix I: microfiche). The remaining sherds are hard and densely sand-tempered, with the addition in most cases of smaller or larger quantities of flint, as in Fig. 41, Nos 3–6 (Table 7). Three sherds, all without flint, contain flecks of what appears to be haematite.

Surviving morphological features consist of one out-turned rim (Fig. 41, No. 3), one rounded shoulder, two simple base angles (*e.g.* Fig. 41, No. 4), one concave base angle (Fig. 41, No. 5), and two fragments which may be shoulders or base angles. Decoration is confined to incised oblique strokes on Fig. 41, No. 6 and to an incised line on an unillustrated sherd.

Discussion of the Prehistoric Occupation

The evidence for prehistoric activity within the camp may be summarized as follows. A few probably prehistoric features were cut into the subsoil; sporadic activity occured in Mesolithic, probably Earlier Neolithic, and certainly Later Neolithic and Iron Age times; substantial quantities of excavated lithic material show both small- and larger-scale spatial patterning; and small flint collections made during field-walking over the rest of the interior suggest that the excavated collection may not be representative of the enclosure as a whole. Local prehistoric occupation is, however, seen more realistically in terms of the whole promontory defined by the river Tas and its tributary, on the highest part of which the camp was eventually built.

Finds from the rest of the promontory include several small flint collections from fields to the north of the camp, most of them of similar character to those from the interior, but including one microlith from a field immediately outside the camp to the north (Site *19006*; Table 5: microfiche). Mesolithic activity is also evidenced by at least one microlith and many blades found close to the Tas 350m west of the camp (Site *9983*/c1, c2). A Late Beaker, intact when discovered and hence probably from a grave, was found 100m east of the camp and adds the possibility of Early Bronze Age burial to the local record (Site *1135*/c1; Lawson 1975). The same period is represented by two ungrouped sandstone axe-hammers, unfortunately located only to the parish (Sites *9972, 9974*; petrology nos N97, N98; Clough and Green 1972, 149).

This catalogue of finds emphasises the concentration of prehistoric activity on the sands and gravels of river valleys which obtains throughout the boulder clay of central East Anglia. The sequence suggested for Tasburgh, of intermittent activity from Mesolithic to Later Neolithic, Early Bronze Age burial and, after an interval of centuries, Iron Age occupation, recurs in several locally-elevated areas overlooking river valleys. It is evidenced more substantially on a hillock overlooking a tributary of the river Wensum at Spong Hill, North Elmham (Site *1012*; Healy 1988), and on a promontory in a bend of the river Yare at Eaton Heath, Norwich (Sites *9544, 9549*; Wainwright 1973; Healy 1986). Fragmentary evidence, much of it salvaged during sand-and gravel-extraction, from a promontory in a bend of the river Wensum at Sparham represents Mesolithic activity, Earlier Neolithic occupation, indeterminate post-Mesolithic (perhaps Later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age) activity, and Early Bronze Age burial (Sites *3028, 3020, 3021, 3022, 3023*; Sainty 1916, 203–208; Healy 1984, 89, 97, 128, fig. 5.2).

In the circumstances, further investigation of the Tasburgh promontory might well produce more substantial evidence for prehistoric occupation. The probability is enhanced by the promontory's location only 13km south of, and linked by the Tas with, a focus of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age settlement and burial, including the Arminghall henge (Site *6100*), in the present area of Norwich (Clark 1936, 2–5; Healy 1982, 2–5).

Roman Pottery
by Tony Gregory
Forty-nine sherds are of local greywares, with only three oxidised probable flagon sherds. There is one basal sherd of fourth-century Oxfordshire ware (imitation Form 38). The coarse ware ranges in date from the first to the fourth centuries with a majority being of the second century or later.

Post-Roman Pottery
by Carolyn Dallas
(Fig. 42)

Introduction
A total of 1654 sherds was found and can be divided as follows: Ipswich-type (135 sherds, 8.2% of total); Middle Saxon/Late Saxon Transitional (nine sherds, 0.5%); Thetford-type (1020 sherds, 61.7%); Early Medieval (340 sherds, 20.6%); Post-Medieval (ninety-two sherds, 5.5%); uncertain date (fifty-eight sherds, 3.5%).

Ipswich-type Ware (seventh-ninth century AD) (135 sherds, 8.2%)
This ware is normally grey and thick-walled. There are four basic fabric groups: (a) fine sandy (thirty-three, 24%), (b) coarse sandy (eighteen, 14%), (c) 'intermediate' pimply with some rounded quartz grains (twenty-six, 19%), (d) 'pimply' with many rounded quartz grains (fifty-eight, 43%). The rims are all jars commonly called cooking pots. There is one probable West Group IIF rim (West 1963). Otherwise, there are five plain rims with a square top (Fig. 42, No. 1); eight everted rims with an internal hollow and a squared top (Fig. 15, No. 2); three everted rims with a slight internal hollow and an expanded squared top (Fig. 15, No. 3). All bases are sagging. Many sherds are sooted.

Middle Saxon/Late Saxon Transitional (?ninth-century AD) (nine sherds, 0.5%)
There are nine rims which may be transitional between the Ipswich-type and Thetford-type Wares. These are small (12–15cm diameter) roughly-made jars, usually with upright rims. The fabrics are sandy and grey and can be quite coarse (Fig. 16, Nos 4–6).

Thetford-type Ware (tenth-eleventh century AD) (1020 sherds, 61.7%)
This ware is tempered with varying amounts of sand and is normally grey although some black, red, or orange sherds occur. One hundred and four rims were found, of which four are bowls and 100 are jars or cooking pots, many of which are sooted. Of the cooking pots, sixty-two rims are of the most common Thetford type — everted with ends expanded to a wedge shape (Fig. 15, No. 7). Nine are everted with sides parallel, and thirteen are everted with sides slightly expanded (Fig. 15, Nos 8 and 9). A further nine are everted and expanded on the innermost or uppermost side only (Fig. 15, No. 10). There are sixty-six flat bases. Of five sagging bases which might be Thetford-type Ware, only one seems likely to be so. There are no handles or spouts, and only four sherds with diamond pattern rouletting.

Early Medieval (eleventh-early thirteenth century AD) (340 sherds, 20.6%)
The fabrics are all sandy and can be fine if later in the series. Colours range from red and black, black or grey, to light grey and off-white in later sherds. There are twenty-six rims, comprising six bowls (Fig. 42, No. 12) and seventeen jars, one of which has a handle (Fig. 42, No. 11). All ten bases are sagging.

Discussion
Most of the pottery consists of small pieces from different vessels, although there are some exceptions, such as the Early Medieval material from gully *5*. The Ipswich-type Ware consists of larger sherds but this is probably due to the thickness of the vessels rather than an immediacy of disposal, especially as 97% is demonstrably residual. Only four sherds of Ipswich-type ware occur on their own (context *1035* and post-hole *1093* and post-medieval post-hole *1011*). The possible ninth-century transitional ware (type 4) is only recognisable in rim forms, and the suggested date is based on the rim form, fabric, size, and general character of the pots. A possible alternative, as seven out of nine examples are very similar, might be that this is the work of one local potter of later date. The

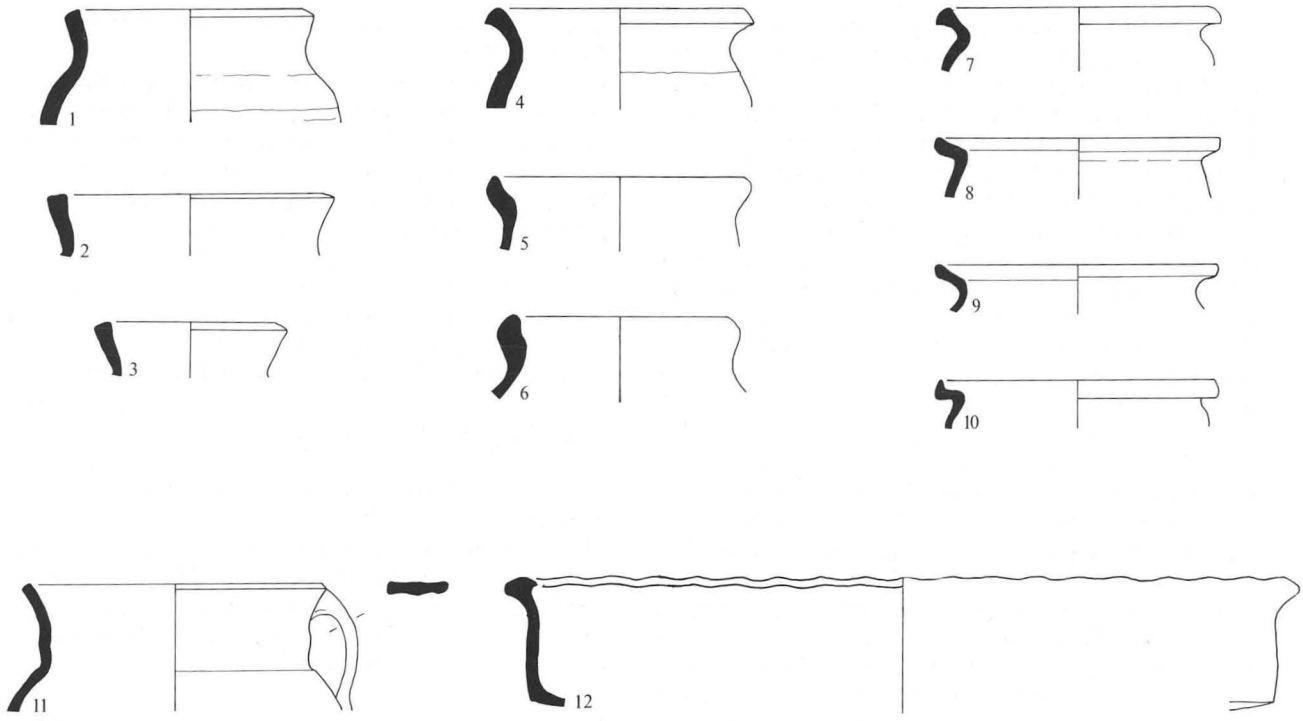

Fig. 42 Post-Roman pottery. Scale 1:4

greater quantity of pottery on the site is Thetford-type Ware. The sherds do no seem attributable to any of the known kiln sources. The scarcity of sagging bases (1.5%) is similar to the situation in Norwich where only 1.4% of vessels on pottery production sites have sagging bases (Atkin 1983, Table 19), and that at Langhale where only 1.7% of cooking pot bases were sagging (Wade 1976, 110–11). The Early Medieval Ware is also of probable local origin. A continuous sequence can be argued for the site from the seventh or eighth century to *c.* 1200. There is no material from the High Medieval period.

Pottery Catalogue

(Fig. 42)

1. **Ipswich-type.** Fine sandy with some fine silver mica. Light grey core and interior, medium grey exterior. Layer *1054*, soil above natural, Trench 2 north area.
2. **Ipswich-type.** Pimply. Reddish brown core centre, rest dark grey. Traces of external soot. Layer *1071*, below or make-up of bank *20*, Trench 2.
3. **Ipswich-type.** Pimply with fine silver mica. Greyish-brown with medium grey interior. Patches of soot on rim and exterior. Layer *1007*, base of topsoil south-west area of Trench 2.
4. **Middle Saxon/Late Saxon.** Tempered with quartz sand, maximum particle size *c.* 1mm. Medium grey with some external soot. Layer *1006*, base of topsoil, south-west area of Trench 2.
5. **Middle Saxon/Late Saxon.** Coarse sandy fabric with many small particles. Dark grey with brown interior margin. Some soot on rim. Rough exterior. Layer *2*, Trench 1.
6. **Middle Saxon/Late Saxon.** Coarse sandy fabric with some particles of 2–4mm. Medium/dark grey with brown interior margin. Layer *2*, Trench 1.
7. **Thetford-type.** Medium sandy fabric. Light grey with lighter core. Layer *1059*, filling of building slot *1028*.
8. **Thetford-type.** Medium sandy fabric. Light brownish grey with soot on rim and exterior. Layer *1004*, base of topsoil, Trench 2.
9. **Thetford-type.** Medium sandy fabric. Medium grey with lighter grey margins. Layer *1*, Trench 1.
10. **Thetford-type.** Medium sandy fabric. Medium-light grey. Soot on rim. Layer of *1004*, base of topsoil, Trench 2.
11. **Early Medieval.** Coarse sandy fabric with particles up to 3mm. Dark grey with dull red margins, most of exterior worn off. Similar vessels have been found at Norwich (Early Medieval Sandwich ware, Jennings 1981, fig. 8, no. 196). Layer *35*, filling of gully *5*, Trench 1.
12. **Early Medieval.** Fine sandy fabric. Light grey with medium grey exterior. Traces of interior and exterior soot. Layer *35*, filling of gully *5*, Trench 1.

Roman tile

15.7kg of Roman tile, including *imbrices* and *tegulae*, were found in the excavations. Only 50g were recovered from beneath bank *20* and 35g from the bank make-up. Many fragments were found in the constructional features of the Late Saxon timber building. Two post-holes (*1015* and *1095*) contained pieces of tile used as packing, and many other contexts of Late Saxon date produced fragments. 51% of the total weight was found in topsoil.

VI. Zoological Remains

Animal bone

The 1975 excavation of Trench 1 produced *c.* 7kg of animal bone, and Trenches 2–4 excavated in 1980 *c.* 24kg. The latter remain unexamined. The 1975 material was identified by Alison Locker of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory and her report forms the basis of the following comments.

The quantity of bone recovered is fairly large considering the size of the excavation. However, most of the recovered pieces are from the upper layers. The bone is in good condition for a site whose sub-soil is of sand and gravel. The numbers of bones collected from the upper layers (*1, 2, 4*) are meaningless for comparative study as recovery was not total; part of *1* was mechanically removed, while *2* was only recognised in the southern half of the trench. However, the bones indicate a range of

Context	BOS sp	Ovis sp	Sus sp	Canis sp	Equus sp	Meles sp	Anser sp	Gallus sp	Lagopus sp
1	15	10	15	2	1	1	1	—	—
2	49	28	79	2	—		—	5	—
4	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—

The number of species represented in the features is extremely small, as is the number of diagnostic fragments recovered. These, however, show a preference for *Bos* in both tenth century and later contexts.

Table 8. Diagnostic animal bone fragments from contexts 1, 2 and 4, Trench 1

Feature	Filling	Bos sp	Ovis sp	Sus sp	Canis sp	Dama sp	Avies
5	*35*	6	1	—	—	—	1
9	*10*	2	—	2	—	—	—
11	*36*	—	—	1	—	—	—
15	*37*	1	—	?1	—	—	—
13	*42*	—	1	—	—	—	—
14	*27*	6	2	—	—	—	—
16	*28*	1	—	—	—	—	—
17	*18*	—	—	—		1	—
20	*22*	—	2	—	—	—	—
29	*32*	1	—	—	—	—	
30	*33*	2	1	—	?1	—	—
44	*45*	2	—	—	—	—	—
48	*49*	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 9. Diagnostic animal bone fragments from features, Trench 1

Abbreviations: ca: caryopsis cn: culmnode cy: cypsela		fb: floret base indet: indeterminate nu: nutlet			s: seed sj: siliqua joint				
Filling number		10	10	18	27	27	28	33	35
Feature number		9	9	17	14	14	16	30	5
		(upper)	(lower)		(upper)	(lower)			
Feature type		post-hole	post-hole	post-hole	post-hole	post-hole	pit	pit	gully
% Flot examined		50%	25%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	12.5%
Cereal indet. (approx)	ca	98	160	20	122	63	15	76	240
Secale cereale L.	ca	62	102	1	60	32	—	154	653
Hordeum sp.	ca	96	170	1	153	81	4	50	94
Avena sp.	*ca*	50	94	1	50	25	2	39	145
Triticum aestivum s.l.	ca	5	7	3	6	2	2	2	7
Avena sativa L.	fb	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
Cereal indet.	cn	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Brassica/Sinapis sp.	s	2	—	—	2	—	—	1	1
Raphanus raphanistrum L.	sj	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	2
Agrostemma githago L.	s	9	11	—	11	6	—	23	128
Spergula arvensis L.	s	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Chenopodium album L.	s	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Vicia hirsuta (L) S. F. Gray	s	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5
Vicia sativa L.	s	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lathyrus sp.	s	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Leguminosae indet.	s	4	—	—	9	—	1	2	19
Polygonum aviculare agg.	nu	1	11	—	—	—	—	—	1
Polygonum c.f. *persicaria* L.	nu	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rumex sp.	nu	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Anthemis cotula L.	cy	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—
Centaurea c.f. *cyanus* L	cy	4	7	—	4	—	—	5	17
Lapsana communis L.	cy	—	1	—	2	1	—	1	2
Bromus mollis/secalinus	ca	2	5	—	4	2	—	4	11
Gramineae indet.	ca	18	13	—	38	24	2	17	16
Indet.		11	10	—	3	13	3	—	11

Table 10. Carbonised fruits, seeds etc.

species with a predominance of domestic animals, especially pig in these eleventh century and later layers.

No particular selection of limb bones was noted. A quantity of butchered bone was present, but a greater amount of broken material.

Only one piece of bone was worked (a shaped and polished bone from a large bird; context *2*).

Mollusca

No sampling was undertaken to retrieve small snail shells as the soil conditions were thought to be too acidic for preservation. However, a few oyster (*Ostrea sp*) shells were recovered from layers *2*, *4* and *6*, and a whelk (*Buccinum undatum*) from *1*. Several large terrestrial snails, principally *Helix aspersa* were also recovered from layers *4* and *6*, and pit fills *31* and *33*. All these could represent food debris.

Botanical Remains

Peter Murphy's report (below) indicates the similarity between the assemblages of charred grain recovered from the limited number of pit-fills sampled. It seems possible that these assemblages are contemporary although the sampled features were stratigraphically separated. Features *9*, *30* and *35* cut layer *4*, while *14*, *16* and *17* were sealed by it. However, two of the latter (*16*, *17*) contained Early Medieval pottery. The admixture of different crops in the samples suggests a grain processing area in the vicinity. It is therefore of some interest that many small fragments of Rhineland lava querns have been found in the overlying layer, *2*, and two features (*5* and *14*).

Carbonised cereals and crop weeds

by Peter Murphy

Eight samples containing carbonised fruits and seeds were recovered by Andrew Lawson during the course of the excavations in 1975. Plant remains were extracted from 15-litre soil samples by Andrew Jones using a simple flotation machine similar to that described by Williams (1973). The flot was collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and consequently seeds smaller than 1mm were incompletely recovered. The dried flot proved to contain large amounts of cereals and other seeds and in several cases it was not necessary to sort through all the material recovered; the proportion of the flot examined is recorded in Table 10.

Further samples were collected during the excavation of Trenches 2–4, but these were from deposits extensively disturbed by burrowing animals and modern roots and consequently were not thought to be suitable for analysis.

Discussion

Arable farming in this area of Norfolk during the Saxon and early medieval periods is well-represented by pollen from Old Buckenham Mere, some 15km from Tasburgh. Pollen grains of cereals, including *Secale* (rye), of the fibre crops *Linum* (flax) and *Cannabis* (hemp) and of a range of arable weeds occur commonly in the lake sediments of this date (Godwin 1968).

In these samples of charred plant remains from Tasburgh, rye, barley and oats are the most important cereals, together with small quantities of wheat. Many of the segetal species represented by charred seeds also appear in the pollen record. These samples appear to represent 'cleaned' fully-processed crops, since they contain very little cereal chaff and straw. Since seeds smaller than 1mm were not fully recovered during flotation it is impossible completely to assess the efficiency of early medieval crop-cleaning methods at this site, but obviously many of the larger weed seeds had not been separated from the cereals. In sample *35*, for example, seeds of *Agrostemma githago* are abundant. These contain toxins known as saponins which have haemolytic properties (Forsyth 1968, 47). Weed seed contamination of cereals may well have had an effect on the health of the population, besides its detrimental effects on flour quality.

The samples contain cereals which are unlikely to have been grown together, and which probably became mixed after harvesting and 'cleaning'. Such large deposits of carbonised cereals are probably the result of an accidental fire in a grain store rather than small-scale losses during cooking or drying. However, it is possible, particularly in the case of sample *35*, that the cereals were so badly contaminated with *Agrostemma* seeds that they were deliberately burnt.

VII. Discussion

The 1975–80 excavations have not given a certain date to the construction of Tasburgh Camp, but the excavated evidence indicates that the bank (*20*), composed of dumped flints and sand, was constructed after the introduction of Thetford-type Ware in the later ninth century. This does not necessarily push the building of the enclosure into the Late Saxon period because bank *20* may not necessarily be a remnant of the rampart itself, which could have lain to the south-east and have been completely destroyed by quarrying or other agencies. It is even possible that *20* was a larger version of the 'paved pathway' found in the 1948 trench through the western rampart (Fig. 29), or a secondary addition to the rear of the rampart.

If a construction date in or after the later ninth century for the monument as a whole is assumed, then the Camp must have been the work of Danish invaders or of the Edwardian reconquest. No other earthworks in the region are known to have been constructed at this period, apart from the great urban defences at Norwich, Ipswich, Thetford, and perhaps Bungay. Such dating would be of the greatest historical importance and therefore must remain only a possibility until such time as larger-scale excavation is permitted to take place on better preserved parts of the monument.

Rainbird Clarke (1960, 103) suggested that the site might belong to the pre-Roman Iron Age. Some sort of activity is indicated by forty-three potsherds, six of which were recovered from beneath bank *20*. With the exception of a flint-gritted potsherd found on the surface close to the tail of the northern rampart, no possibly Iron Age material has been recorded from the remainder of the enclosure.

No Romano-British occupation was encountered in the area of excavation. No features were recorded and the finds of Roman pottery and tile were probably the result of manuring from nearby farms in the Roman period, or of importation in the Saxon period, or both.

No Early Saxon finds were made in the excavations although a single sherd decorated with grooves was recovered by Silvia Addington from a builder's trench during the construction of the southern extension to the church in 1978.

With the Middle Saxon period, occupation on or near the excavated site becomes certain. 135 sherds of Ipswich-type Ware were found. This is a high total for such a small area of investigation. However, no definitely Middle Saxon features were recorded. Occupation of this date in the vicinity of a parish church is now a common but not invariable circumstance (Wade-Martins 1980). No Ipswich-type Ware has been found in the rest of the enclosure and Middle Saxon finds are yet to be made elsewhere in the parish.

Over 61% of the post-Roman pottery was Thetford-type Ware, dateable to between the later ninth-and twelfth-century, and a link between the Middle and Later Saxon period is perhaps represented by a small group of sherds in a fabric and form transitional between Ipswich and Thetford-type Ware. The majority of contexts, including the foundation trenches and post-holes of the timber building, produced small quantities of Early Medieval Ware. This suggests that the greater part of the occupation belongs to the eleventh century because of the traditional starting date of Early Medieval Ware in *c.* 1000 (Hurst 1963, 155–6). However, there is no clear evidence that such a date need be rigidly adhered to, and there are hints, such as that from North Elmham (Wade 1980, 441) that this type of pottery may have been current in the tenth century. If this was the case at Tasburgh there is no reason to assume a tenth century *lacuna* between a Middle Saxon phase and an eleventh century re-occupation. Fully medieval pottery is absent from the excavated assemblage and this argues that occupation had ceased by the early thirteenth century or perhaps a little earlier.

From an assessment of the documentary, archaeological and topographical evidence Silvia Addington (1984) argued that the excavated site lay in an area of Late Saxon-medieval occupation bordered on the north by the road to Forncett (School Hill) and on the south by a green whose northern edge following the line of the earthwork defences. The area of excavation was not occupied after *c.* 1200 and by the eighteenth century was glebe land, as was the triangle of land to the west of the church (glebe terriers, inf. Silvia Addington). It is quite likely that both areas belonged to the church at a very much earlier date. North of the small area of green on the north side of School Hill and west towards the south western corner of the enclosure, occupation begun in the tenth or eleventh centuries and continued into the medieval period, as evidence by Silvia Addington's fieldwork. Anomalies recorded during the 1983 magnetometer survey (p. 35 , Fig. 31) are probably the result of this occupation. Surface finds of Thetford-type Ware in the remainder of the parish are few and always in association with later material. From a discrete nucleation near the site of the parish church in the Middle and Late Saxon period in the southern part of a substantial earthwork enclosure of uncertain date, settlement shifted in the eleventh/twelfth centuries to a series of 'separated small scattered' (Addington 1984) green-edge sites throughout the parish. This shift left the excavated site unoccupied for the remainder of the medieval period until its life began as a graveyard extension in the 1980s.

Chapter 3. The Other Forts of Norfolk
by Robert Rickett

Introduction
by John A. Davies

The excavations at the sites of Thetford Castle and Tasburgh have been described separately in chapters 1 and 2. In this chapter, the current state of knowledge of the remaining four Iron Age forts in Norfolk, at Warham, South Creake, Holkham and Narborough, is reviewed. Outline plans of all six sites are shown together for comparison, at a common scale, in Fig. 43. These outlines have been reconstructed combining information from the plans and photographs presented below. All four of the remaining sites are smaller in area than the reconstructed enclosures of Thetford Castle and Tasburgh. Warham Camp, South Creake and Narborough are all approximately circular in shape, whilst Holkham is more irregular, by virtue of its situation, at the end of a curving sandspit.

The descriptions of each of the four sites considered in this chapter have been written by Robert Rickett and they are followed by an up-to-date bibliography, in each case. There is a plan and aerial photograph of each site. The detailed contour plan of Warham Camp (Fig. 44) is that prepared by St George Gray in 1933, which is still a most useful guide to the site. The plan of South Creake (Fig. 45) is from a previously unpublished contour survey by Andrew Lawson, undertaken in 1973. The plan of Holkham (Fig. 46) is another previously unpublished survey, by Tony Gregory and Andrew Lawson, undertaken in 1976. The plan of Narborough (Fig. 47) is from a very recent survey of the site by Derek Edwards and John Wymer, in January 1988. Ten profiles across the Narborough earthworks were also drawn and are shown here in Fig. 48 and on microfiche.

Aerial photography has made a particularly valuable contribution to our knowledge of the hillforts of Britain. The four sites described in this chapter are all accompanied by aerial photographs by Derek Edwards. In the cases of Warham and Holkham, their dramatic earthworks are clearly defined and the two photographs of South Creake are an essential complement to the contour survey of that site (Fig. 45).

The information presented in this chapter will complete the review of current knowledge of the Norfolk Iron Age forts. This information, together with the conclusions from chapters 1 and 2, is considered in a general discussion of the Norfolk forts, in chapter 4 below.

The Other Hillforts
by Robert Rickett

Warham
Co. No. 1828, TF 943 408
(Figs 44, 49, and Pl. XVIII)
This fort is on sloping ground next to the River Stiffkey, on its east side. It is on the 15m contour, and is overlooked by higher ground to the east. However, the banks are higher on this side, and the view from the top of the timber defences would probably have been more than adequate. To the west, the river and the marsh provided reasonable defence, and to the north and south marsh and natural vegetation would have been sufficient to make the approach difficult. The earthworks and the field around are now under pasture and the site is a Nature Conservancy 'Site of Special Scientific Interest'.

The fort was surveyed in 1914 and 1929, and small-scale excavations took place in 1914 (Gray 1933, 399–413). Further excavations were carried out by R.R.

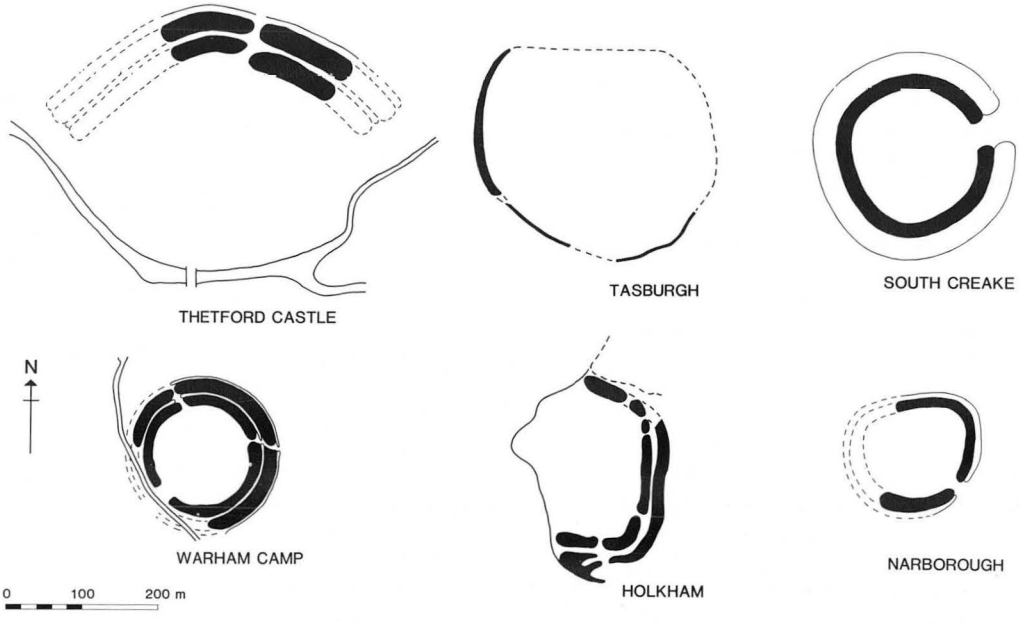

Fig. 43 Comparative plans of the Norfolk forts. Scale 1:10,000

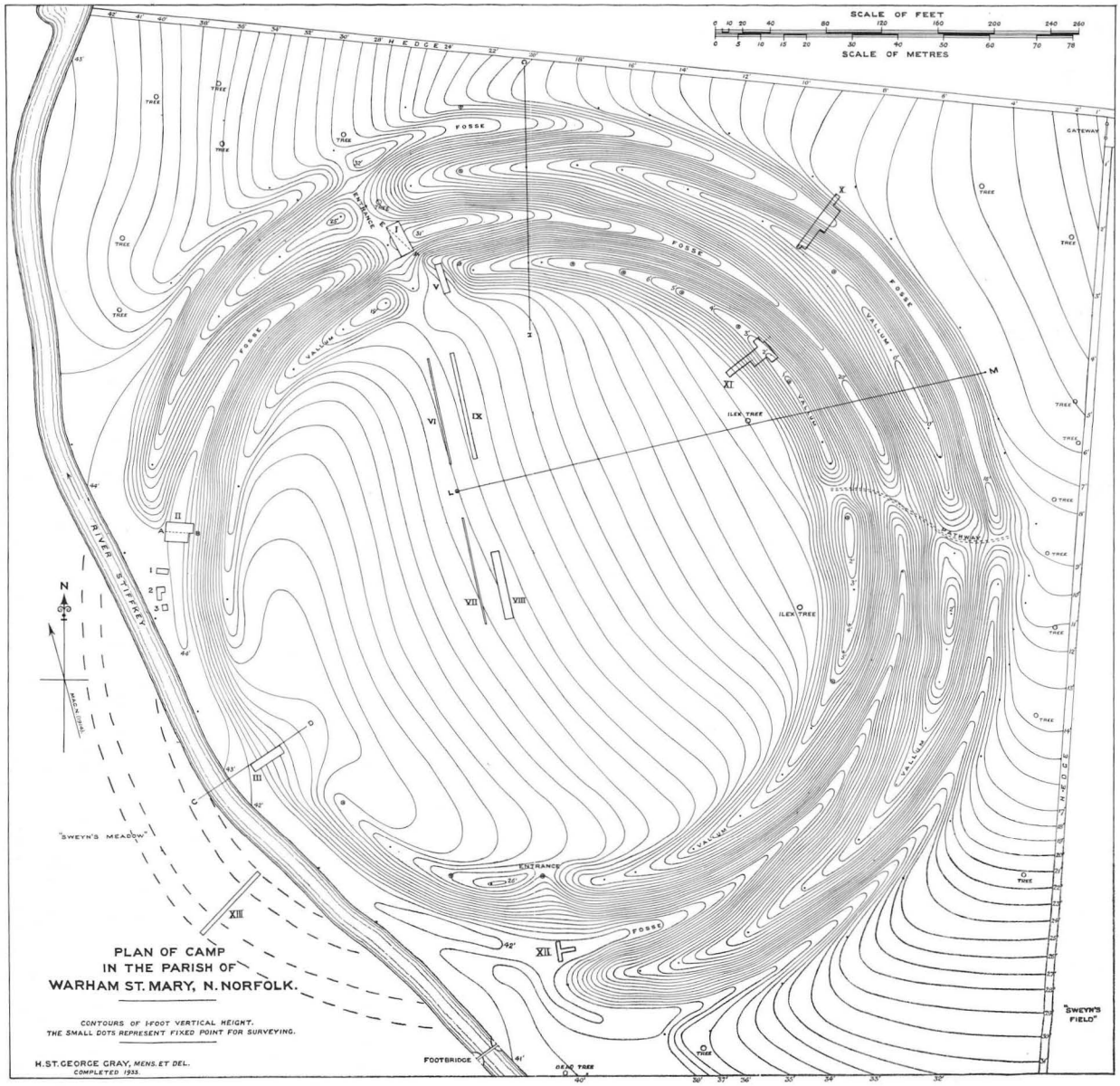

Fig. 44 Warham Camp. St George Gray's plan. Scale 1:1500

Clarke in 1959 (Gregory 1986, 22–26). The position of these trenches are shown on Fig. 44, I to IX (H. St George Gray), and X–XIII (R.R. Clarke).

The fort is roughly circular, with two banks and ditches, probably originally with an entrance on the south-west side. The earthworks on that side were levelled in the eighteenth century, to improve the view from Warham Grove House, and straighten the course of the river. Two maps in the Holkham Estate Office depict the fort, a map of 1712 shows the defences complete, whereas Biedermann's map of 1783 shows the earthwork incomplete and the river on its present course. The original line of the two ditches was discovered by excavation in 1959 (Gregory 1986, 25), within trench XIII (Fig. 44).

All the present entrances through the earthworks are modern, some of which were made in the nineteenth century, when there was a plantation inside (Gray 1933, 402). Excavation has shown that the causeways of the entrances on the north and south sides are not original (Gray 1933, 405–407; Gregory 1986, 22).

The inner bank encloses an area of some 1.5 hectares, 140m in diameter (from crest to crest). The outer bank is about 193m in diameter. The earthworks are most impressive in the north-east sector, where various sections and profiles have produced the following measurements (Gray 1933, Pl. LXXVII; Gregory 1986, Fig. 19). The vertical distance between the top of the outer bank and the top of the silting in the outer ditch is 4.30m. Clarke's cutting X showed that the depth of silting in the outer ditch is about 2.00m. The distance between the top of the inner bank and the top of the silting in the inner ditch is 6.00m. Clarke's cutting XI showed that the inner bank, built of chalk, is about 3.00m high. Two slots, 1.40m apart, were cut into the top of the bank, and are interpreted as the base of a wooden platform with a palisade at the front. The bank also had a rear revetment (Gregory 1986, 24–25).

The fort was probably built in the Iron Age. Excavations have produced eleven sherds of Iron Age pottery, dating to any time between 200 BC and the first century

AD. Far more Romano-British pottery has been found, along with tegulae, a flue tile, and a copper alloy brooch, indicating occupation in the Roman period, and possibly a building within the fort.

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Plate XVIII Warham: air photograph from the north-east.

4th April 1984. Copyright Field Arch. Divn., Norfok, ref. TF 9440/AP/AUZ6

South Creake
Co. No. 1910, TF 848 352
(Figs 45, 49 and Pls XIX and XX)
This fort was on Bloodgate Hill, on the west side of the Burn Valley, 1.2km from the river, on the 61m contour. Bloodgate Hill is almost the highest point on the valley edge, and from it there are excellent views of the surrounding landscape.

The earthworks were levelled at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Gray 1933, 400). The east side was marked on Faden's map of 1797, on which it was called Burrow Dykes. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1824), surveyed between 1812 and 1818, shows the complete circuit of the earthworks. In the Marriages Register of the Church of St Mary, South Creake, the Rev. Bowman recorded several events within the Parish, which included 'Bank of Burdyke encampment removed and set on land, 1827–28'. (I am indebted to Graham Pooley for this information). The site has been used as arable land ever since, and the north side of the fort is cut by a field boundary. On the south and south-east sides, the hedgelines follow the shape of the earthwork.

Originally the fort had consisted of a single bank and ditch, roughly circular, with an entrance on the north-east side. The internal diameter (from ditch to ditch) was about 210m, enclosing about 3.50 hectares. Aerial photographs show the patchy remains of the ploughed-out flint bank (Pl. XIX), and the dark mark of the infilled ditch (Pl. XX). On the ground, there is a slight rise where the bank used to be, which is most marked on the west and east sides. On the east side there is a gap in the bank where the entrance used to be. Aerial photographs also show a ring-ditch on the highest point, the centre of the fort.

A contour survey was undertaken by Andrew Lawson in 1973 (Fig. 45). From this it can be seen that the interior of the fort is higher than the land outside. The depth of the ditch on the west side is about 0.80m and on the east side, about 1.40m. This survey shows the position of the north-east entrance clearly.

A geophysical survey was conducted in 1973, by the University of Oxford (Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art). This covered an area across the western ditch and bank, as well as a small area inside the fort (Edwards 1976, 267, fig. 74). The results were inconclusive (Lawson 1978, 20), and are kept with the archive at the Norfolk Archaeological Unit.

Only two Iron Age sherds have been discovered, from ploughsoil within the fort.

Plate XIX South Creake: air photograph from the east, showing the ploughed-out flint bank.
13th July 1980. Copyright Field Arch. Divn., Norfolk, ref. TF 8435/AM/APT14

Plate XX South Creake: air photograph from the east, showing the dark, infilled, ditch.
21st July 1975. Copyright Field Arch. Divn., Norfolk, ref. TF 8435/AB/ADR4

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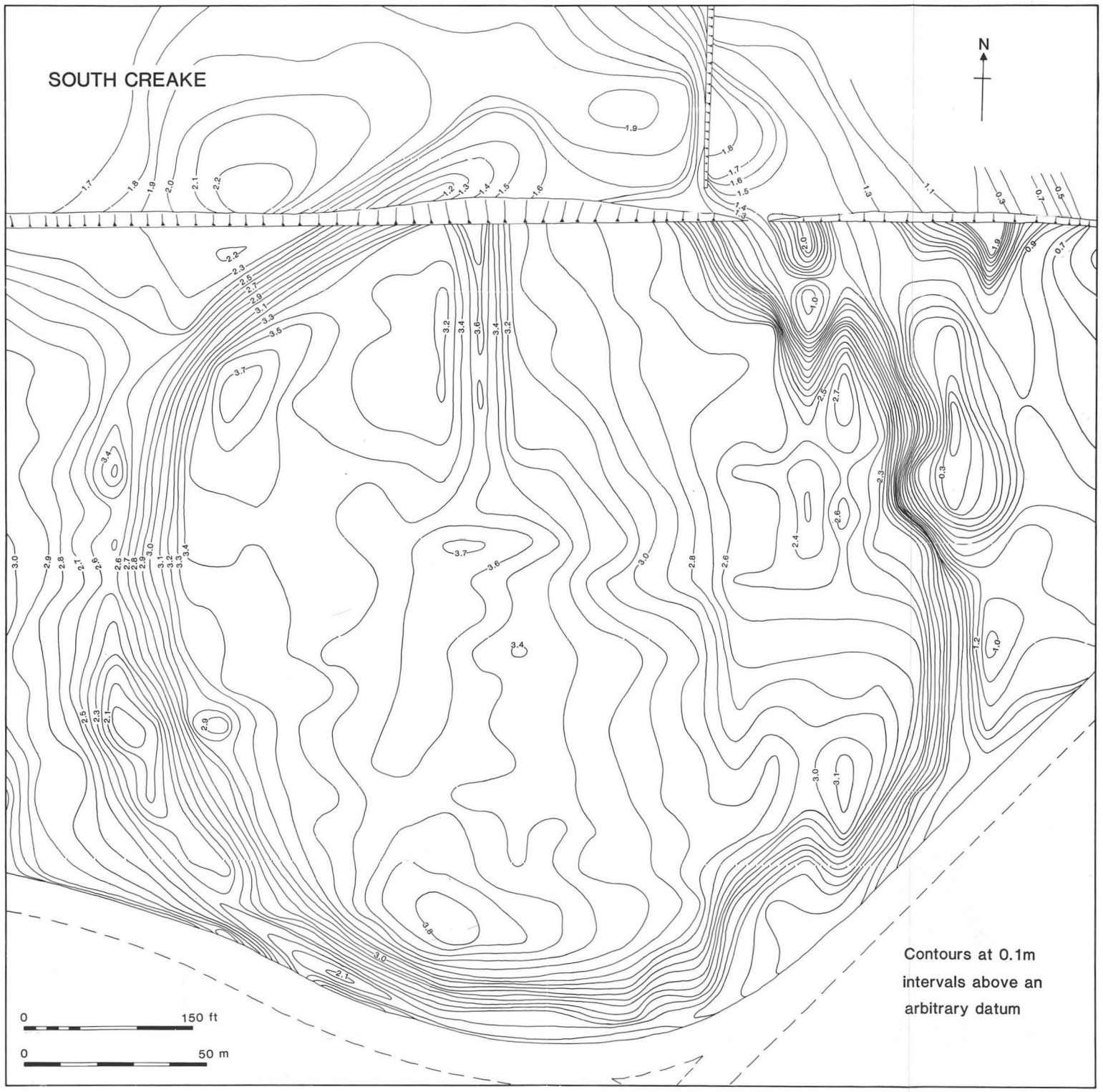

Fig. 45 South Creake. Contour survey by A.J.Lawson, 1973. Scale 1:1500

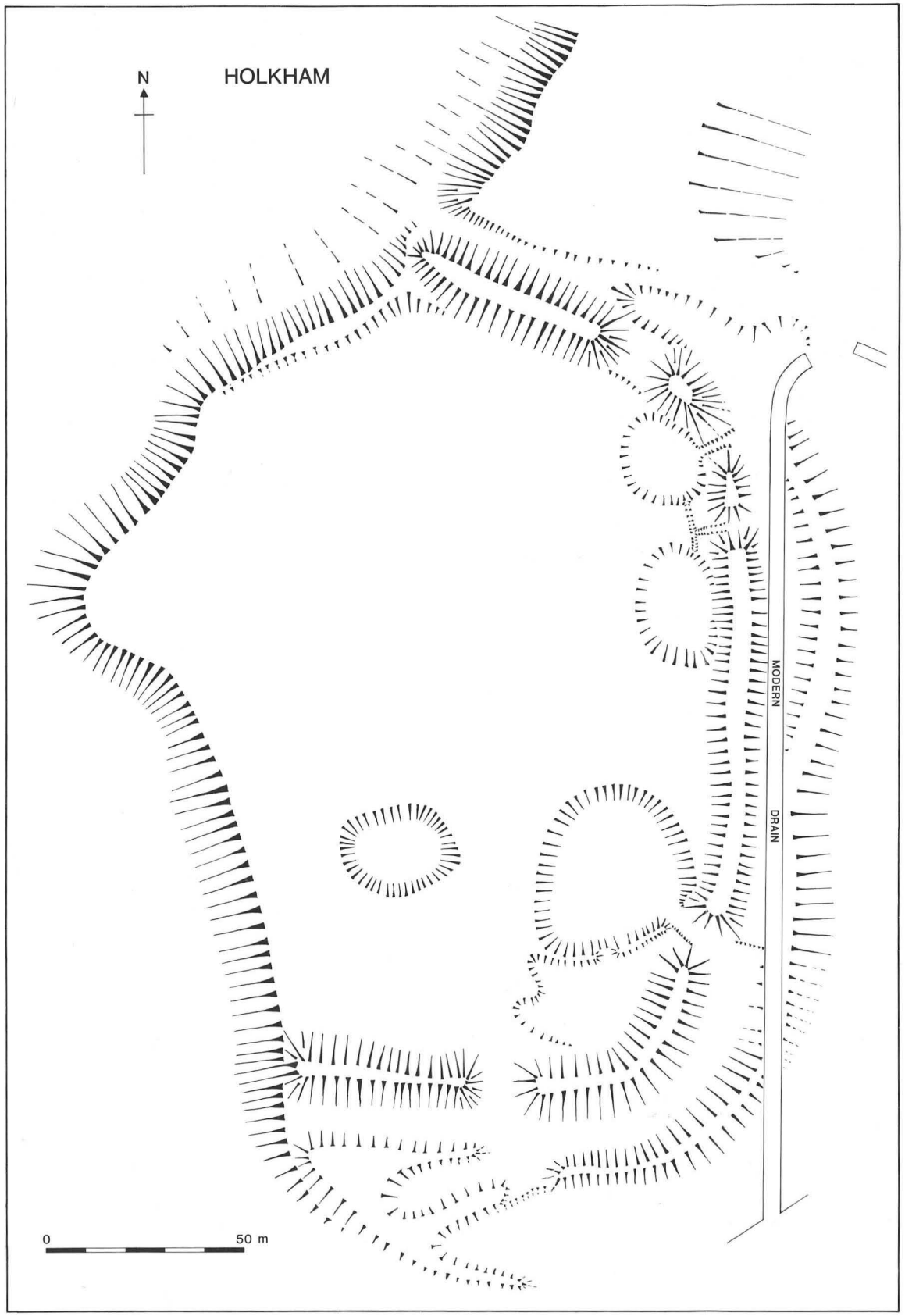

Fig. 46 Holkham. Survey by T. Gregory and A.J. Lawson, 1976. Scale 1:1500

Holkham

Co. No. 1776, TF 874 443

(Figs. 46, 50 and Pl. XXI)

This fort is in Holkham Marshes, about 1km from the sea, and about 0.65km from the coast road, which runs along the old coastline. The earthworks stand proud of the surrounding marshes, and have been used for grazing for many years.

The fort was built on the south end of a curving sandspit, most of which lies below the pinewoods to the north-east, known as Holkham Meals. Access to the fort was along this sandspit, which formed a narrow causeway on its north side. On the west, south and east sides the site was surrounded by open water, mud, and tidal creeks. An old creek still exists on the west and south sides, within Decoy Wood. The building of a sea bank in the early eighteenth century enabled the reclamation of part of the marshes, which continued after the construction of the Wells sea bank in the mid-nineteenth century.

On the west side of the site, erosion at the end of the sandspit has probably destroyed part of the defences. On the north-west side there is now a steep drop from the interior to the pasture below. Further south, where the interior is much lower, there is a drop of 2.60m to the edge of the water in Decoy Wood.

On the north, east, and south sides there is a prominent inner bank and ditch, with a possible, less prominent, outer bank on the east and south sides. Taking the inner circuit first, on the north side, the vertical distance between the top of the bank and the bottom of the ditch is 2.60m, on the east side 2.30m, at the south-east corner 2.70m, and on the south side 3.35m (west of the gap in the bank).

The inner bank is irregular in width and height, and it is broken in several places by overflow channels from the dewponds inside the fort. These are probably of post-medieval date. Two gaps in the defences are not obviously related to these dewponds, one on the north side, and one on the south side. They could be original, and the one on the south side also has a corresponding gap in the outer bank. However, the grazing of cattle on the site might have necessitated entrances through the earthworks if they did not already exist.

On the south side the outer bank has a shallow profile on the south side, and a steeper profile next to the ditch. At the south-east corner of the earthworks the vertical distance between the top of the outer bank and the bottom of the ditch is 1.2m, and west of the possible entrance it is 1.0m.

The outer bank on the south side seems to continue around the east side, although it has been blurred by the later drainage ditch. Although this could be a deliberate defensive bank, it is possible that it is a result of ditch cleaning. This would have accentuated the natural slope of the edge of the sandspit.

The few finds from the site include Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints, calcined flints, two possible Iron Age sherds, and one medieval sherd.

In 1976 the earthworks were planned by Tony Gregory and Andrew Lawson (Fig. 46).

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Wade-Martins, P. (ed.), 1987 *Norfolk from the Air*

Plate XXI Holkham: air photograph from the south.
25th May 1978. Copyright Aerial Archaeology Publications, photo: Eileen A. Horne, ref. 161/18

Narborough
Co. No. 3975, TF 751 130
(Figs 47, 50 and Pl. XXII)

This fort is on the south side of the Nar Valley, 0.2km from the river, on the 15m contour. It is strategically placed on a low plateau, close to the crossing of the Nar by the Icknield Way. This ran along the west side of the chalk ridge which overlooked the Fen edge. Westwards, the Nar valley opens up into the Fens. It is covered by trees, shrubs and other vegetation, and known as 'Camphill Plantation'. Just to the west is Narborough Hall, with its park and lake.

It consists of a single bank and ditch, forming an irregular oval shape, measuring about 150m (north-east to south-west) by 132m (north-west to south-east) (measurements taken from the top of the bank on each side). It encloses about 1.56 hectares. About one-quarter of the earthwork has been levelled, on the west side. It is not known exactly when this was done, but it was probably at some time between 1810/1820 and 1832. On the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1824), surveyed between 1810 and 1820, the earthworks seem to be complete, with parkland to the west, and a small moat close to Narborough Hall. However, on the Tithe Map (1837), surveyed in 1832, the irregular shape of the plantation suggests that the earthworks below had been levelled on the west side. By that time the lake had been enlarged to its present size, reaching up to the west side of the earthworks. It seems fairly certain that the enlargement of the lake was the occasion for levelling part of the earthworks, so that access around the lake was unimpeded.

On the south-east side of the fort is an entrance, probably original, about 10m to 15m wide, with a causeway across the ditch. The bank and ditch are most impressive on the north and north-east sides. Here the vertical distance between the top of the bank and the bottom of the ditch is between 3.90m to 4.90m. On the south side the ditch is not so well defined, and the distance here is 2.50m. Either side of the entrance it is 4.40m.

The banks are constructed of chalk rubble and have been severely eroded, so that in places there is no soil cover. The inside edges of the banks have a much shallower gradient than the outer edges. The interior of the fort is higher than the land around, suggesting that it was built on a natural knoll. Inside, a few fallen trees have revealed a soil profile, showing that the depth of topsoil is about 0.40m.

Very few finds have come from this fort. They include an Iron Age rim, a possible Iron Age sherd, some Romano-British sherds, a medieval sherd, and some indeterminate sherds, as well as some worked flint flakes and burnt flint.

The fort was surveyed by John Wymer and Derek Edwards, in January 1988, to produce a plan and profiles of the earthworks (Fig. 47). Ten profiles across the earthworks were also prepared and their positions are indicated by arrows, on Fig. 47. Four of the profiles (numbers 1, 2, 6 and 7) are shown in Fig. 48 and the rest are in microfiche, at the end of this volume.

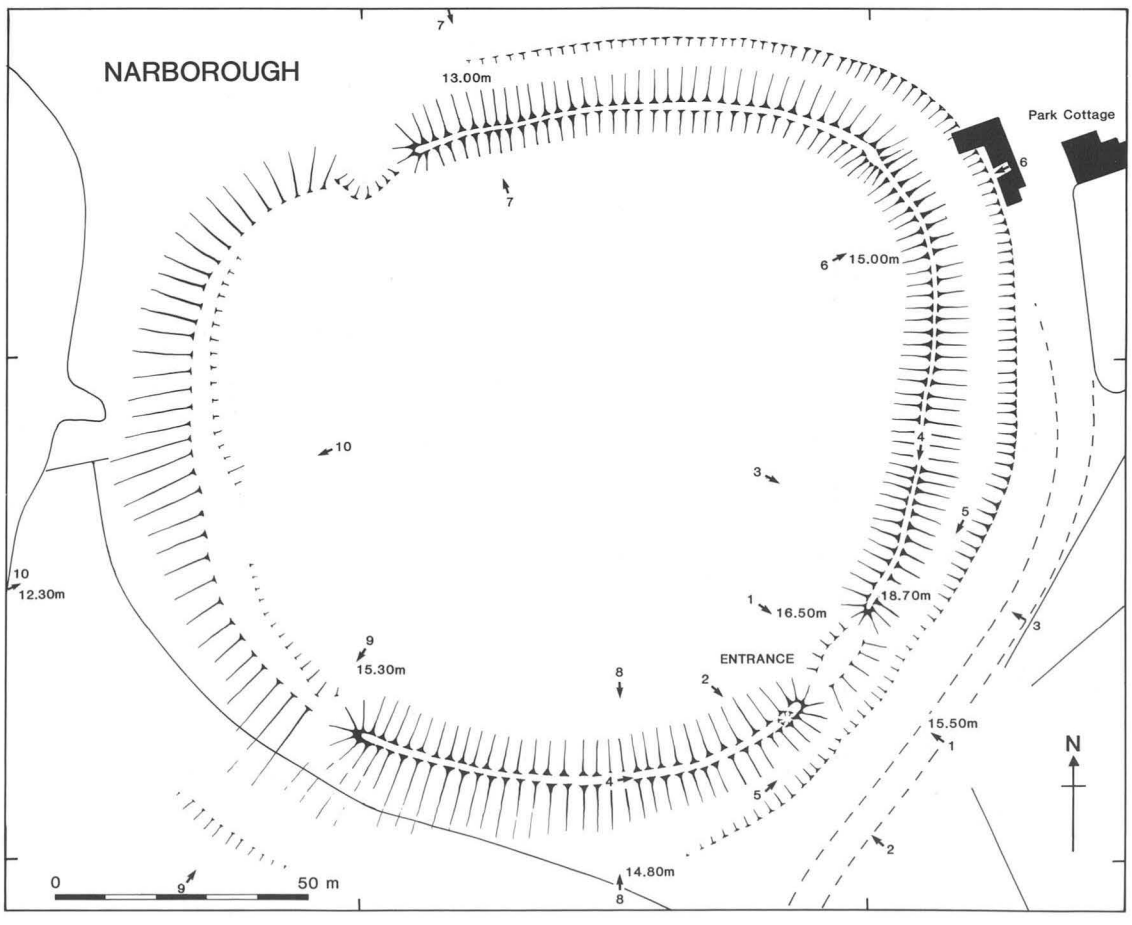

Fig. 47 Narborough. Survey by D.A. Edwards and J.J. Wymer, 1988. Scale 1:1500

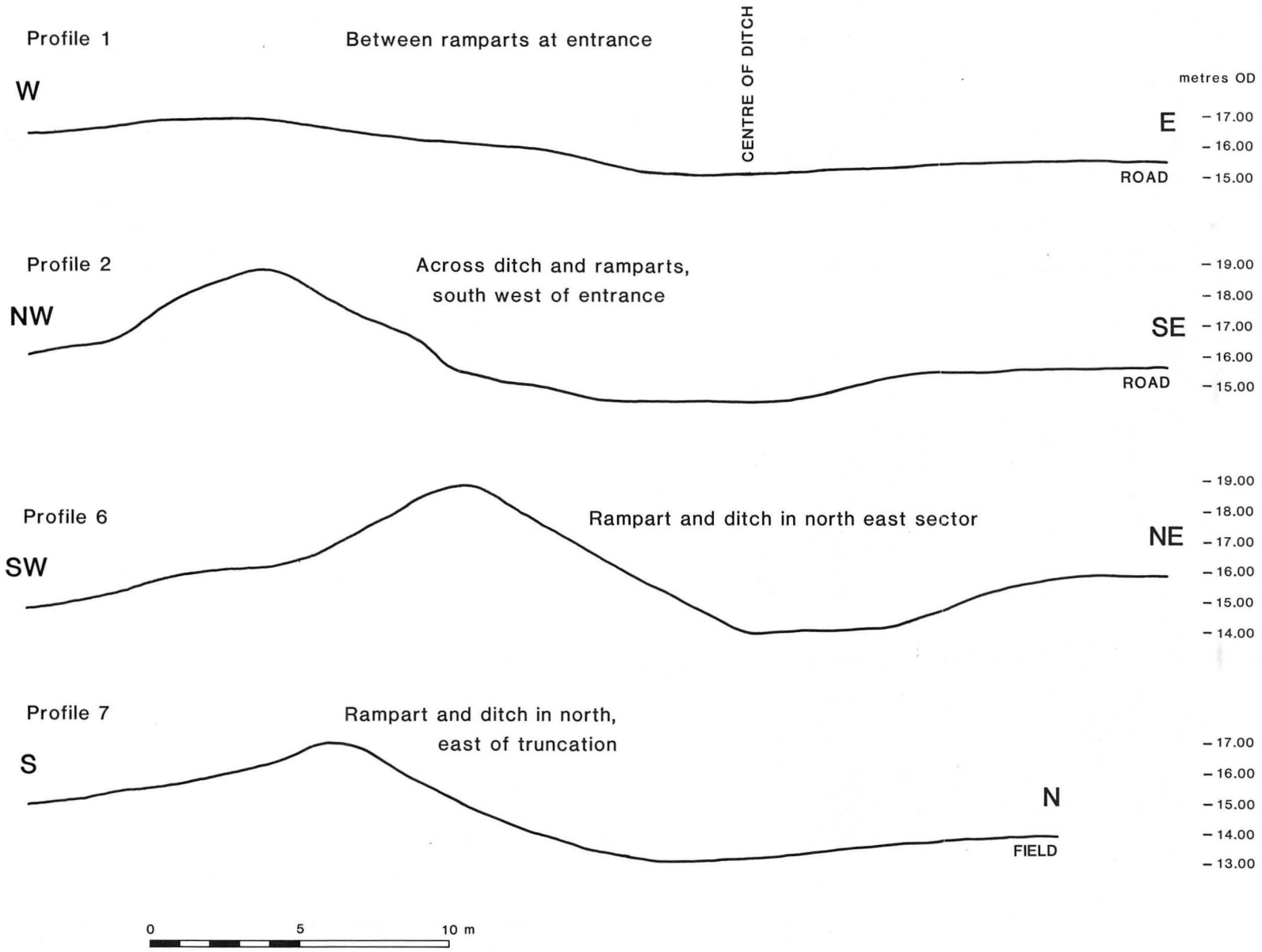

Fig. 48 Narborough. Sections. Scale 1:200

Plate XXII Narborough: air photograph from the north-west.

15th April 1983. Copyright Field Arch. Divn., Norfolk, ref. TF 7513/E/AST19

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Chapter 4. General Conclusions

by Tony Gregory and Andrew Rogerson

The excavations and observations described in this volume go a regrettably small way towards resolving the greatest problems of the Norfolk 'hill-forts' — were they all constructed to serve a similar purpose at a similar date, and was that date in the Iron Age?

The work at Thetford indicates that there was Iron Age occupation within the area enclosed by the defences, and that those defences, at least in their earlier form, might well be of Iron Age date. At Tasburgh, on the other hand, evidence for Iron Age occupation within the enclosure is small, and the only dating evidence for any of the enclosing features suggests that the surviving bank along the south-east side of the graveyard extension was not constructed before the late ninth century. The evidence for occupation behind that bank is overwhelmingly of Middle Saxon to Early Medieval date, and there is perhaps a balance of evidence towards Thetford Castle and Tasburgh Camp being of different dates, with construction dates in the Iron Age and Late Saxon periods respectively.

Against this we must set the dating evidence for the other Norfolk 'hill-forts'. Only Warham Camp has been investigated on any scale (Gray 1933 and Gregory 1986) and here, as at Thetford Castle, there is perhaps a balance of probability in favour of an Iron Age construction date, and certainly Iron Age occupation, but no more than that.

It is nevertheless still reasonable to consider the Norfolk 'hill-forts' as a group: Tasburgh, on the balance of probability, should be excluded from this consideration, but the remaining three, Holkham, South Creake and Narborough, until excavation proves otherwise, are best considered as of Iron Age date.

There are few features which these five all share: Warham Camp is circular, bivallate and covers about 1.5 ha, Holkham is subrectangular, at least partially bivallate and 2.5ha in area, South Creake subcircular, univallate and 3.4ha, Narborough a univallate irregular oval of 1.5ha, and Thetford Castle bivallate, approximately oval and up to 6ha in extent. The surviving strength of the defences is less varied, with the height of the highest surviving bank above the top of the filling of the ditch varying between 3m and 4.5m — with the exception of South Creake, where the bank has been largely removed.

The sites have rather more in common by reason of their locations: with the removal of Tasburgh, all lie in the western part of the county, and apart from Thetford Castle, in the north-west corner at that. The locations are also topographically similar (Figs 49, 50), with the exception of South Creake, which lies on the high chalky plateau at 200ft OD, 1.2km from the nearest river. The others are all in valley edge, valley bottom or analogous locations. Thus Warham Camp lies on the slope into a shallow valley, adjacent to the original river course at 25ft OD, Holkham virtually at sea level, and probably at the end of a coastal sand spit, Narborough at 50ft OD, on a low plateau 200m from the crossing of the Icknield Way over the Nar, and Thetford Castle on the valley edge at 50ft OD, overlooking the crossing of the Thet and Little Ouse.

This preference for river valley locations sets the Norfolk 'hill-forts' apart from the great hill-top fortifications of the south, west and north of Britain, but it should not be assumed automatically that this indicates a different function. The hill-top location of the classic hill-fort is a means of amplifying the artificial defences: the valley and coastal locations here may do the same, by substituting a difficult approach across the river valley for a difficult approach uphill, a local solution to Norfolk's lack of imposing eminences. The effect of controlling a crossing may then be secondary to the original intention of defending the enclosed area by earthworks, assisted by topography.

Something of the same tendency can perhaps be seen in other East Anglian hill-forts, those of Essex (Morris and Buckley 1978). These are of a wide range of form and size, predominantly irregular ovals, from 2 to 20ha in area located on plateaux or on low-lying gravels, thus combining the small sizes and valley locations of the Norfolk examples with the larger areas and more elevated locations of the hill-forts of the south of England, a reaction in part to greater availability of high ground in that county.

The majority of the Essex hill-forts are to be found along the line of the Lea — Stort — Cam river system, in a zone which also includes Wandlebury, Cambs., which Morris and Buckley (1978, 27) suggested was principally because of conflict between the Trinovantes and the Catuvellauni, whose territories might have met in this zone in the first century BC.

Looking further north, however, the Norfolk sites complicate this picture: the River Cam runs out into the Fens, across which the hill-forts could hardly have extended; but topographically and strategically the Norfolk Fen edge, and the north-west and north coasts of Norfolk can be seen as a logical extension of this line, thus giving a zone of hillforts from the Thames to the North Sea. If this zone is taken as a political or social boundary it does not match the known, or inferred, political boundaries of the late Iron Age so well, since the islands of the central Fenland have produced considerable numbers of Icenian coins, well to the west of the hill-fort zone. Are we then to see this line as a continuous west-facing boundary of the Iceni and Trinovantes in the early part of the first century BC and earlier, which was overrun in the south by Catuvellaunian expansion in the late first century BC and by Iceni expansion at a similar date into the Fens at a date nearer to the Roman conquest?

It is by no means certain that hill-forts should be seen as frontier defences or as the manifestations of the authority and prestige gained by individual nobles or communities by their position in a marcher area. They might equally be seen as expressions of prestige gained by other means and displayed in a way analogous to the civic town walls of Medieval England. It is dangerous to read political, military or social factors into such distributions, when the real reason for any such phenomenon is likely to have been far more complex and the result of a large number of interlocking factors, most of which are virtually lost to archaeology. It is striking to compare East

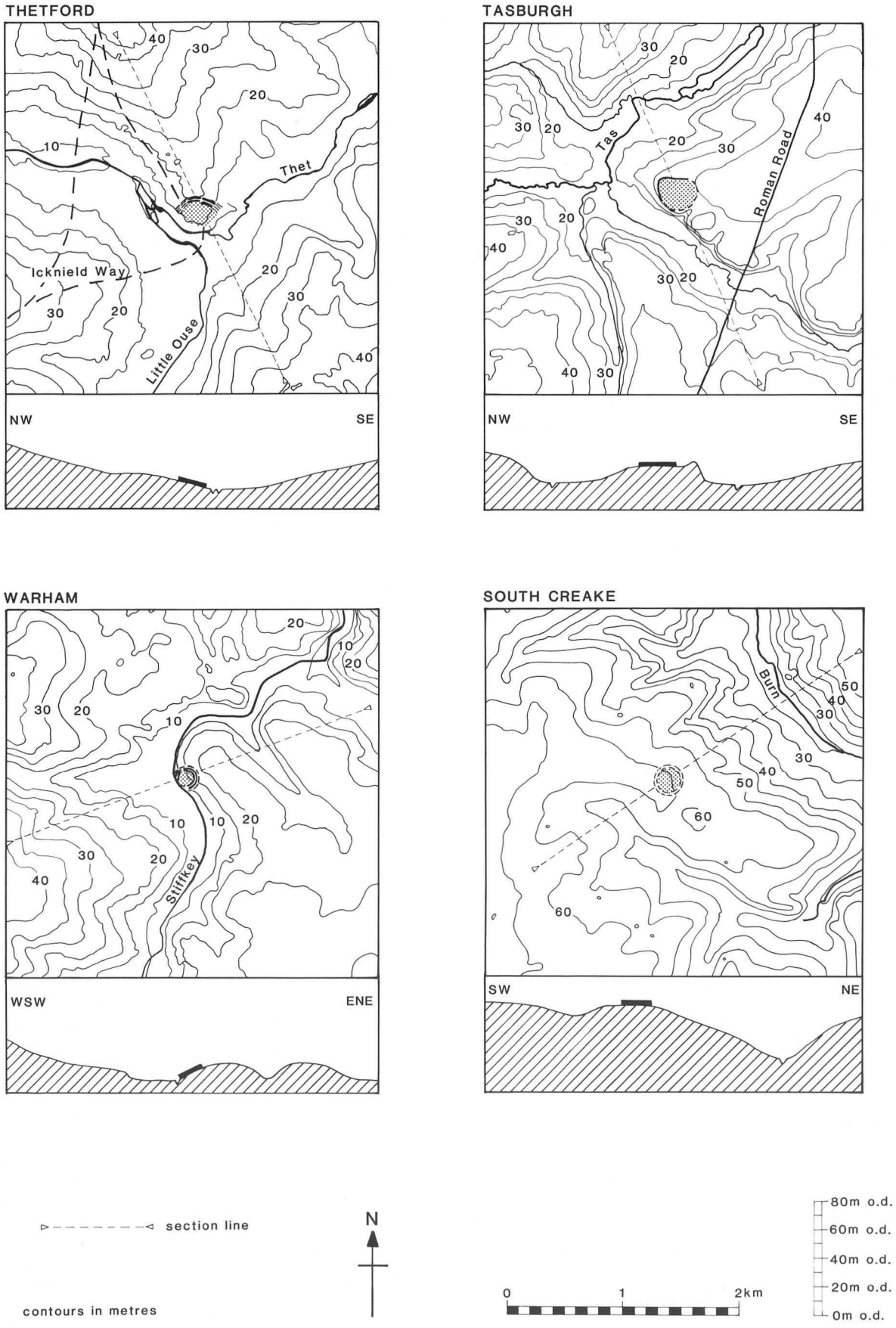

Fig. 49 Forts in their topographical settings. Scale 1:50,000

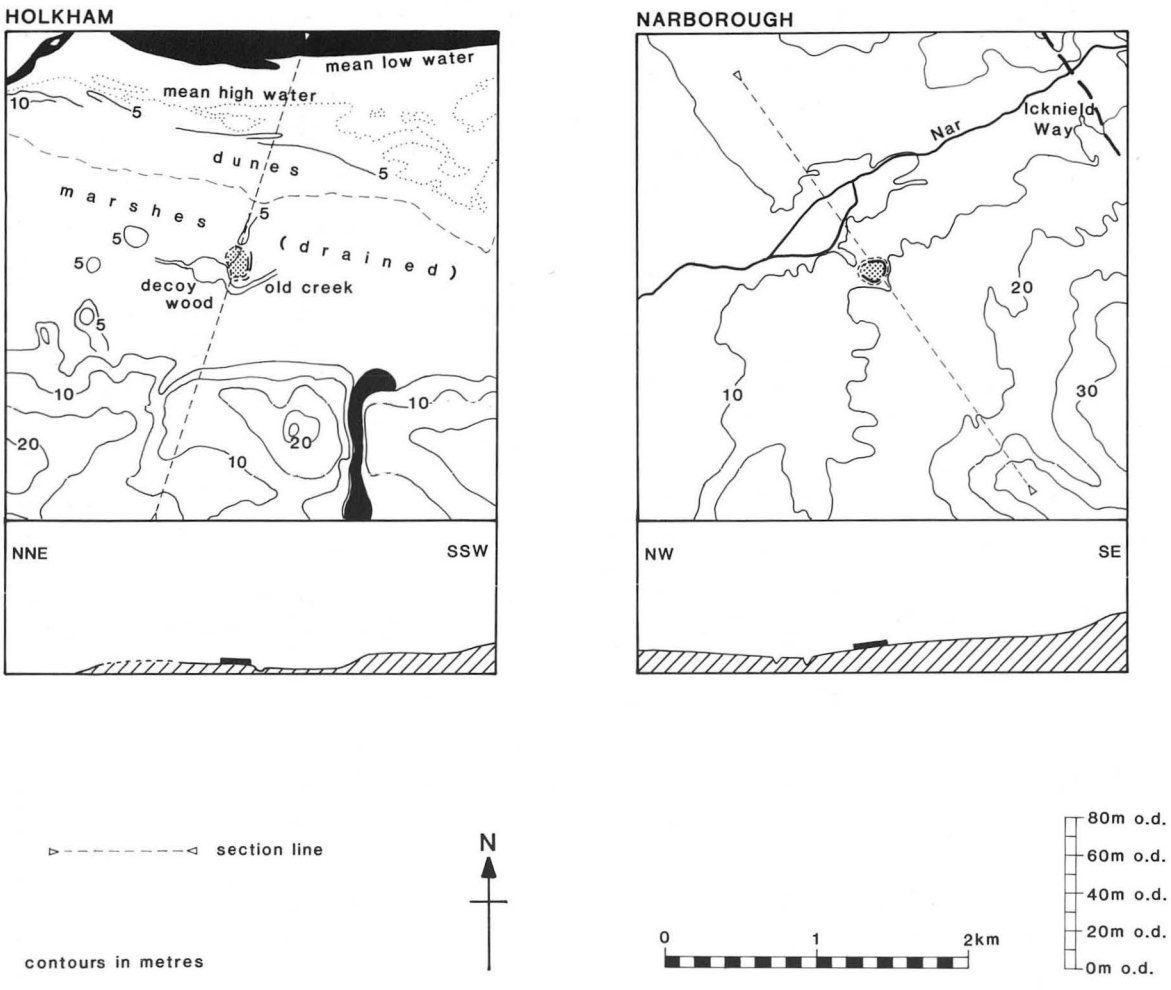

Fig. 50 Forts in their topographical settings. Scale 1:50,000

Anglia with Lincolnshire, where good hill-top sites are much more common but only four possible Iron Age hill-forts are known (May 1976, 141–3).

Such arguments are made even more insecure by the paucity of dating in Norfolk and by the wide range of dating within the Iron Age secured from excavations on Essex sites. It is likely that neither group forms a single system but rather developed over a considerable period, with a varying number in use at any particular time.

It will not have escaped notice that the area between Norfolk and Essex has not figured in this discussion so far. This is because, if the evidence for Iron Age forts in Norfolk is not plentiful, then that for Suffolk is scarce indeed. Only three sites can be considered, the undated bivallate enclosure at Clare, on the Suffolk/Essex border, the large double ditched rectangular enclosure at Burgh, near Woodbridge (Martin 1988) and the much smaller enclosure at Barnham in the north-west corner of the county (Martin 1988, 68). Barnham can be discounted from this discussion and grouped rather with the small enclosures of Thornham type in Norfolk (Gregory 1986). This leaves Clare, undated but in the same general area as the Essex forts, and Burgh, an outlier but occupying a valley side location analogous with those observed above for Norfolk.

If the Norfolk sites are to be regarded as an isolated group, separated as they are by the 50km interval between Wandlebury and Thetford then some significance could be seen in the location of Narborough and the Creake — Warham — Holkham cluster, separated by the high, bare chalk of north-west Norfolk. These four hill-forts, and the rectangular enclosures discussed by one of the present authors (Gregory 1986, 32–35 and fig. 25) occupy the area from which Icenian coins are absent and define the east limit of the great concentration of electrum torcs in north-west Norfolk in the late first century BC, at Snettisham, Sedgeford, Bawsey, Middleton and North Creake. In the absence of any reliable dating for the hill-forts as a group no explanation is offered for this — instead attention is simply drawn to the existence of this remarkable group of earthworks.

The enclosure at Tasburgh has been intentionally excluded from this discussion so far, since the arguments, particularly the locational arguments, are far neater without it. However, there are eastern outliers to the Essex hill-fort zone (Morris and Buckley 1978, fig. 8) and Tasburgh may be in a similar situation in Norfolk. The large enclosure at Clare, Suffolk, on the Essex boundary, occupies a similarly uncomfortable position, and there are considerable doubts whether it too should be considered as Iron Age. The occupation of Tasburgh in the Middle and Late Saxon period, whether the fortifications were constructed at that time or not, or modified from an earlier form by the construction of the bank which was excavated in 1980, is of considerable interest.

This stems largely from the possible parallel to be

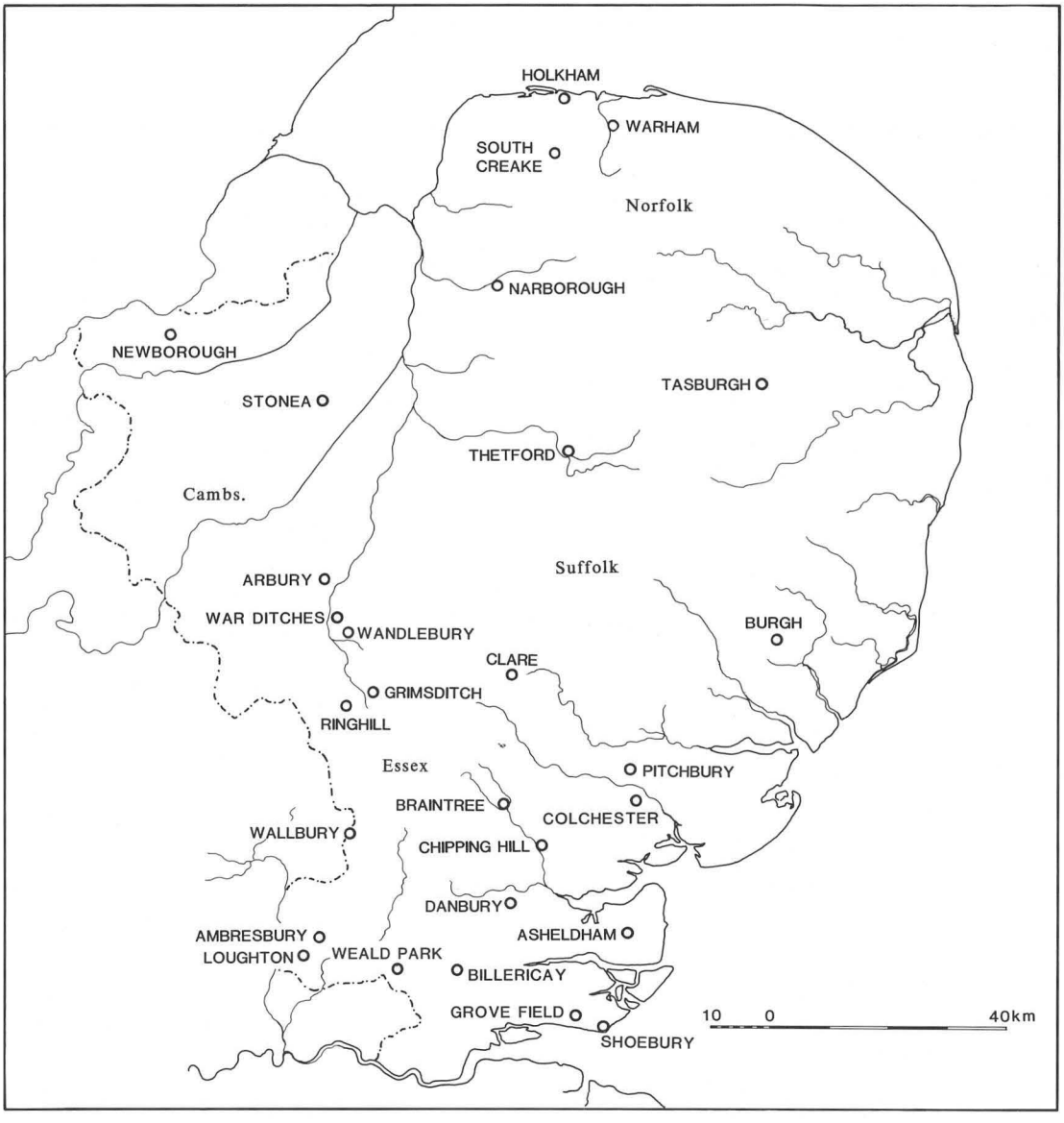

Fig. 51 Iron Age and possible Iron Age forts in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex.

seen, again in Essex, between Tasburgh and the Late Saxon defended enclosures at Witham and Maldon, which were part of the Edwardian reconquest of Danelaw in the second decade of the tenth century. All three appear to have been univallate and placed on low eminences close to rivers (Morris and Buckley 1978, 23 and P. Brown pers. comm.). These similarities on their own are of little significance, but, taken with the archaeological or literary evidence for the occupation of the sites at this time suggest a possible context for the construction of the Tasburgh defences after the Iron Age. However a slightly earlier date, within the period of Danish rule, need not be ruled out.

It is clear that certainties about the Norfolk 'hill-forts' are in short supply. The limited nature of the evidence from the sites themselves is matched by the limited and highly selective nature of our knowledge of the Iron Age and the Middle and Late Saxon periods of the county. This volume, in its review of the present state of knowledge, has drawn attention to the need for more work, and the comparisons within greater East Anglia might suggest that this could profitably be undertaken on a regional basis. The results of the limited work here described at Tasburgh and Thetford suggest that the rewards of further research on the 'hill-forts' could be considerable.

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