

The Raunds Area Project: Second Interim Report

ed BRIAN DIX

INTRODUCTION

The present report summarises the results from archaeological rescue excavation and related fieldwork undertaken to the end of 1986 as part of the programme of investigation into the evolution of the Raunds Area landscape (cf Foard and Pearson 1985, 3-9). The information is arranged chronologically and incorporates

appropriate evidence from preliminary environmental and faunal studies co-ordinated by Mark Robinson in addition to contributions from field survey which is examining the wider patterns of land-use.

The overall project is funded and managed jointly by English Heritage (HBMCE) and the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Unit and is supported by the County

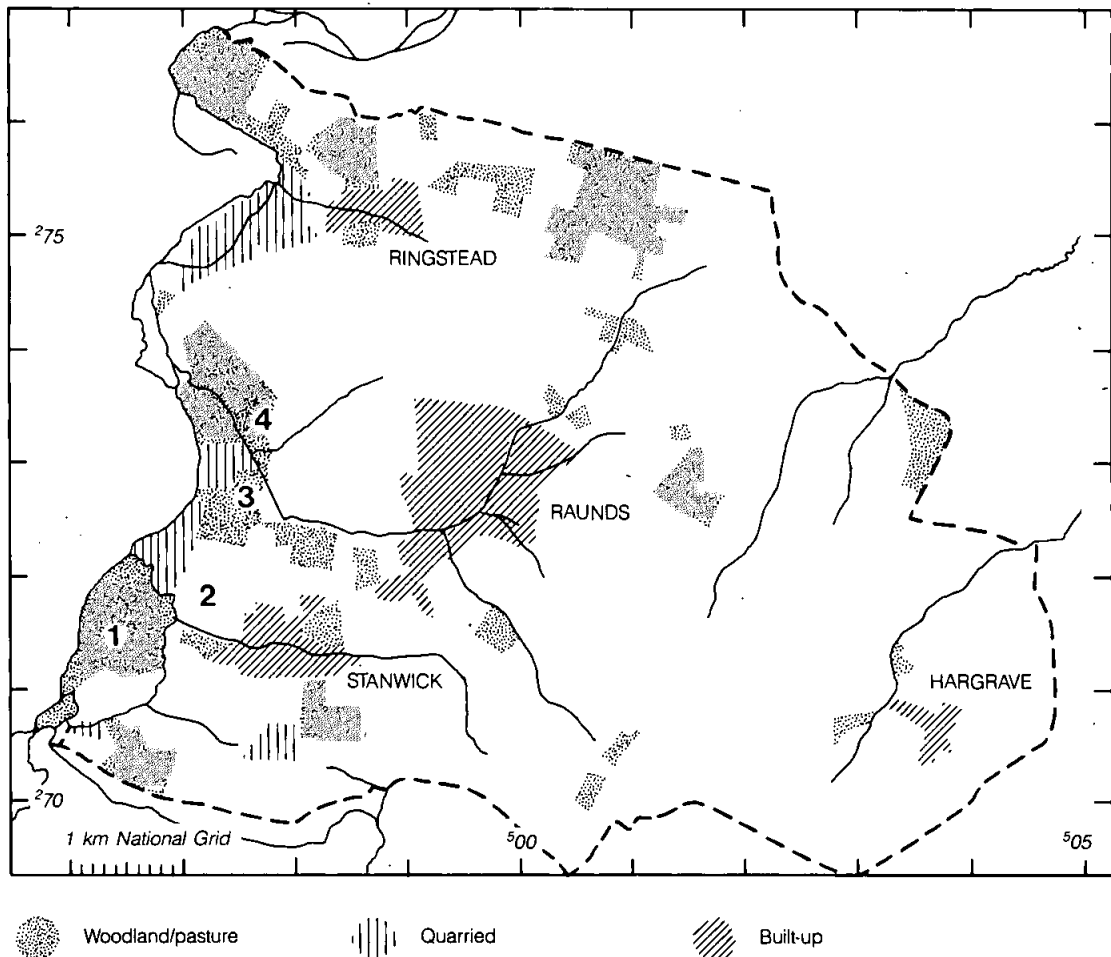


Fig 1 The Raunds Area, principal sites and constraints to fieldwalking (1, Irthlingborough barrows; 2, Stanwick villa; 3, West Cotton; 4, Mallows Cotton)

Director of Planning and Transportation, the Manpower Services Commission, and the Amey Roadstone Corporation. The Archaeology Unit is grateful to the many landowners in the Raunds area who have allowed access for fieldwalking and excavation, in particular Mr How, Scalley Farm; Ideal Homes (Thames) Ltd; P J Developments (Rushden) Ltd; and Smiths Containers Ltd. The Unit also acknowledges the support of the East Northamptonshire District Council, and wishes to thank Cecily Marshall for the preparation of the line drawings which accompany this report.

GENERAL

FIELD SURVEY *by S Parry*

A six-year programme of field survey, involving fieldwalking with associated trial-trenching, development-observation and geophysical prospection, was initiated in November 1985 to investigate settlement and land-use of all periods in the Medieval parishes of Hargrave, Raunds, Ringstead, and Stanwick. A survey of the Medieval field systems and related documentary analysis is being completed by D N Hall and aerial survey is being carried out by G Foad.

Agricultural land within the project area chiefly comprises arable and temporary pasture which permit systematic coverage by fieldwalking. In the valley bottom, however, a restricted area of mostly post-Roman alluvium is covered by permanent pasture which precludes all but trial-trenching (cf FIG 1). The opportunities for salvage recording afforded by extensive gravel extraction partly redress the imbalance, and features so far observed in Stanwick Quarry include a ring ditch and an Iron Age house in addition to a Roman road.

Through fieldwalking the survey seeks to study intra-site variation, the relationship between settlements and the immediate hinterland, and inter-site variation. At the same time, the background distribution of artefacts throughout the landscape may provide an indication of former land-use. The first season's results include the recognition of sites of all periods together with distinct 'non-site' patterning, but consideration of their significance

must await continued collection of data and will be discussed in a later report.

Method

The collection strategy is based upon a number of stages of increasing detail which seek to balance the quantity and quality of information with available resources. A reconnaissance of all available land in the area is carried out using traverses at 15m spacing across each field irrespective of geology. Each traverse is divided into 20m 'stints' in order to locate artefacts close to their findspot. Due to topographical constraints, no attempt has been made to arrange the traverses into the National Grid.

During 1985-6 the survey normally involved three experienced persons. In autumn 1986 the numbers were increased by eight part-time members who had previously worked on excavations within the Project and were thus familiar with the range of artefacts likely to be encountered. Initial assessment suggests that inter-walker variation has produced only minor biases in recovery rates.

Soil conditions greatly affect the recovery of material, but the survey area is sufficiently small to identify the optimum time for walking each field. This and other variables, such as light conditions, are noted on record sheets which are completed for each field walked in any year.

The next stage of survey will involve collection of material at key areas defined by reconnaissance, supplemented by a sampling strategy of other areas to validate the results. The final selection of areas for detailed study has yet to be determined. The intensive fieldwalking will mostly be undertaken in collection units of 5m squares, although other methods including the plotting of individual objects and closely spaced traverses may also be used. Test-pits will be excavated in order to assess the relationship between surface scatters and the total population of artefacts in topsoil.

SITES EXAMINED

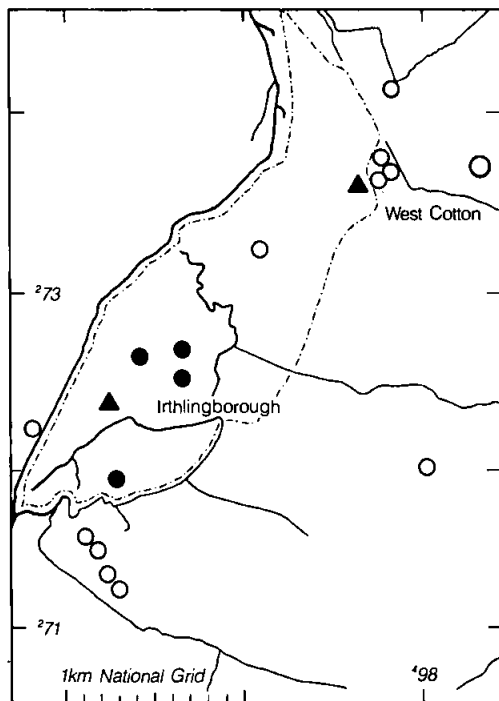
EARLY PREHISTORIC

A dispersed group of barrows at Irthlingborough and a more discrete complex of ritual monuments at West Cotton are being investigated ahead of destruction on the valley floor close to the River Nene (FIG 2). The individual barrows so far excavated at each site had much in common. Both contained a primary Beaker burial with a similar range of grave goods (PL 1) and each monument was enlarged in an almost identical fashion. Close parallels between the burials and those from Aldwinckle, c 10km downstream (Jackson 1976: barrows 1 and 2), may be significant for the identification of regional burial rites, in which the respect shown for earlier monuments at West Cotton could also have played a part (cf, for example,

Grendon some 12km to the south-west: Gibson and McCormick 1985).

**IRTHLINGBOROUGH BRONZE AGE BARROW
EXCAVATION** by Claire Halpin

Of five upstanding barrows threatened by gravel extraction, four are on an island created by two arms of the River Nene and an outlying example occurs to the south (cf FIG 2). The island comprises an area of low gravel terrace surrounded by floodplain. Environmental studies indicate that its northern end was extensive wetland or reedswamp in the Bronze Age, when the river channels were broader than at present and were probably fringed by reedswamp or marsh. Barrows 1-3 are sited on the spurs and ridges of the gravel terrace and Barrow 4 is in the floodplain.



- Barrow
- ▲ Excavated barrow
- Ring ditch
- ⋯ Gravel extraction area

Fig 2 Barrows and ring ditches in the Nene valley between Irtlingborough and West Cotton

Ploughing of the gravel terrace, probably during the later Iron Age and Roman periods, damaged the mounds of Barrows 1-3 and disturbed the Bronze Age land surface which now survives only beneath the mounds. The ploughing did not however extend very far on to the floodplain where a buried soil is preserved beneath up to 0.50m of later alluvium which has partly buried Barrow 4.

Following evaluation of the archaeology of the gravel island by Paul Garwood in 1985, further survey and sampling work was carried out by the Central Excavation Unit in 1986 when Barrow 1 (NGR SP 96237126) was also excavated. Three main structural phases denote successive enlargements of a monument around a primary Beaker burial which was accompanied by a large number of grave goods, representing a craftsman's tool kit and archer-equipment. The body had been interred in a 'coffin' or similar timber structure which was covered by a stone cairn containing over 100 cattle skulls. Other burials cannot be directly related to individual phases, but included an urned cremation associated with a metal dagger.

The barrow sequence

Sampling of the topsoil over the barrow produced only a low density of struck flint flakes and the layer was consequently removed by machine. Conversely, since trial-trenching had shown that the eroded mound contained flintwork, it was excavated entirely by hand resulting in the recovery of several thousand artefacts. Seven barbed and tanged arrowheads were found and some may represent deliberate deposits. About 40% of the fill of the ditches was excavated by hand, the remainder being removed by machine. The excavation trench which encompassed the barrow was 2500m².

The periphery of the ploughed mound overlay the outer ditch. Ploughing had truncated all layers above the old ground surface together with the uppermost fill of the outer ditch. In addition, the barrow was disturbed by animal burrowing. A large modern pit cut through the mound, just south of the centre, and penetrated the natural gravel.

Less than 0.30m of the mound was preserved. Its core consisted of a virtually pebble-free, sandy loam which overlay the primary burial. Both edges of the inner ditch were overlain by bands of gravel which represent upcast associated with Phases I and ?II. The original barrow probably consisted of an earthen mound of topsoil and possibly turves overlain by a gravel capping, or with gravel around the perimeter.

The three ring ditches denote successive enlargements of the monument (FIG 3). Their irregular outline resulted from accommodation to changes in the subsoil and the use of

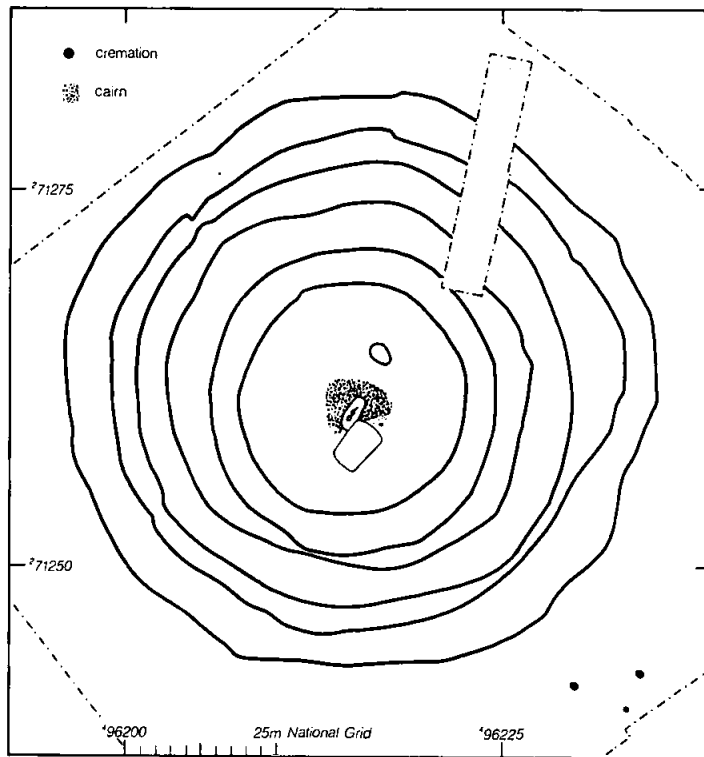


Fig 3 Irthlingborough, Barrow 1

'task-segments'. The inner ring ditch (diameter 15m, depth 0.90m), whose edges were much weathered, had initially silted naturally from both sides, but thereafter a gravelly layer slumped into the ditch from the interior. The gravel upcast indicates that stratigraphically the inner ditch is contemporary with the primary burial. The formation of a soil in the top of the inner ditch suggests that a considerable time elapsed before the next ditch was dug.

The middle ring ditch (diameter 24m, depth 1.05m) was slightly eccentric to the inner ditch. A band of gravel which overlay the outer edge of the infilled inner ditch may represent upcast associated with this phase (or possibly Phase III). At first this ditch silted naturally from both sides.

The outer ring ditch (diameter 32m, average depth 0.90m) was concentric to the middle ditch. A clayey subsoil in the north-east had caused this segment of the ditch to be narrowed and dug less deep: the line of the outer edge of the ditch was maintained while the inside edge was reduced. The edges were much weathered and the ditch had silted naturally, mostly from the inside. Gravel from the digging of this ditch was used to infill the middle ditch. A lens of relatively stone-free sandy loam, 0.10m thick, subdividing this layer of gravel upcast indicates the formation of a soil followed by a cleaning out of the outer ditch.

Though ploughing had truncated layers, it appears that the area between the two ditches was embanked. As the bank eroded, the inside edge of the middle ditch was

preserved as a slight hollow. On the north-west side flint-knapping debris, consisting of spalls, small flakes and heavily-worked cores, was preserved within this hollow. The flint was mixed with a fine stone-free soil suggesting that it had slipped into the hollow of the middle ditch by a process of erosion, not of direct deposition. The site of knapping must therefore have been nearby and several thousand struck flints were dispersed throughout the mound. Although this material could have been imported in soil used to construct the mound, the recovery of a concentration of knapping debris suggests that it may represent flint working on the mound itself. The source of the flint could be the underlying gravel and its quality contrasts markedly with that from the primary burial. Stratigraphically it is later than Phase III.

Burials

Of the eight burials found, only the primary burial was securely stratified, being beneath the Phase I mound. The other burials cannot be directly related to structural phases.

Despite the denudation of the barrow mound, an almost intact, circular, limestone cairn overlay the primary burial. A large, deep modern pit clipped its southern side and cut eleven carbonised wood fragments which lay nearby. No structure was apparent. The wood, identified as mature oak, overlay upcast from the central grave pit and may have been contemporary with it. The cairn (diameter

c 4.50m, maximum height 0.25m) was mostly constructed using slabs of local limestone. A few burnt pieces of limestone occurred throughout the cairn. Cow skull fragments both overlay the cairn and formed an integral part of its structure. Soil from the underlying grave pit was also used to make up the cairn. Although the stones of the upper layer were rounded and eroded, it is uncertain if the cairn was exposed prior to construction of the earth mound. The centre of the cairn had collapsed into the underlying grave pit (FIG 4).

About 1000 fragments of animal bone, mostly cattle skulls in poor condition and extremely friable, were recovered during excavation of the cairn; a small number also occurred in the backfill of the grave and in the grave itself. A brief examination of the bone by Alison Locker shows that, on a count of maxillae, a minimum of 109 cattle are represented. The eruption and wear sequences show that the majority of jaws were from adult animals, tentatively identified as at least three years old. Apart from a few bones of pig and one dog maxilla all the bone came from cattle, with scapulae occurring most frequently after bones associated with the skull. The bones of aurochs (*Bos primigenius*) were also observed.

It is hoped that spatial analysis and detailed examination of the bone, in conjunction with consideration of the archaeological evidence, may determine whether the cattle skulls represent a single deposit from a large-scale slaughter or were offerings added gradually to the cairn. The value of the collection, despite its fragmentary condition, lies in its direct association with a primary Beaker burial, for which there are no close parallels.

Directly beneath the cairn was a large grave pit. 2.65m x 2.10m and 0.80-0.90m deep (cf FIG 4). A burial with grave goods was laid centrally on the floor of the pit and a 'coffin' or timber structure was preserved as carbonised remains. c 2.00m x c 0.70m and c 0.65m deep. It may originally

have been a mortuary consisting of a (?) lined pit 'roofed' by timber beams. When the roof decayed, stone and bone from the cairn collapsed into the grave.

The partially disarticulated skeleton of an adult lay in a crouched position on its left side with head to the south-west (PL 1). The ribs and vertebrae were scattered across the upper half of the body, the long bones were not fully articulated, and the mandible was missing. The bone was not well preserved. It is unclear whether the burial was originally disarticulated or subsequently disturbed as might happen if the 'coffin' was left open for a period. It should be noted, however, that the grave goods were intact.

A large number and variety of grave goods at the feet comprised: three spatulae of animal rib bones, up to 0.40m long; five conical jet/shale buttons with V-perforations; a finely flaked flint dagger, 165mm long; a bifacially flaked triangular arrowhead (? a blank for a barbed and tanged arrowhead); nine flint flakes in fresh condition, some retouched as knives and scrapers; a long necked beaker; an amber ring, inner diameter c 17mm; a D-sectioned rod (? sponge finger stone) of uncertain material; a whetstone; a re-used wristguard, worn and rounded at one end; and a boar's tusk. The tight grouping of the grave goods, suggesting that they may have been wrapped, compares with the burial at West Cotton. The objects represent a craftsman's kit and archer-equipment, and suggest a male burial. Two pig bones had also been deposited in the grave.

The well preserved skeleton of an adult, possibly contemporary with the primary burial, was found 4.5m NNE of the centre in a deep, steep-sided, pear-shaped grave, 1.63m x 1.15m (max) and 0.85m deep. It, too, lay in a crouched position on its left side, but the head was at the north-west overlying the hands. A bone pin (length 88mm, tip damaged) was found close by the hands. Beneath the upper half of the skeleton a thin layer of clayey material was observed and sampled.

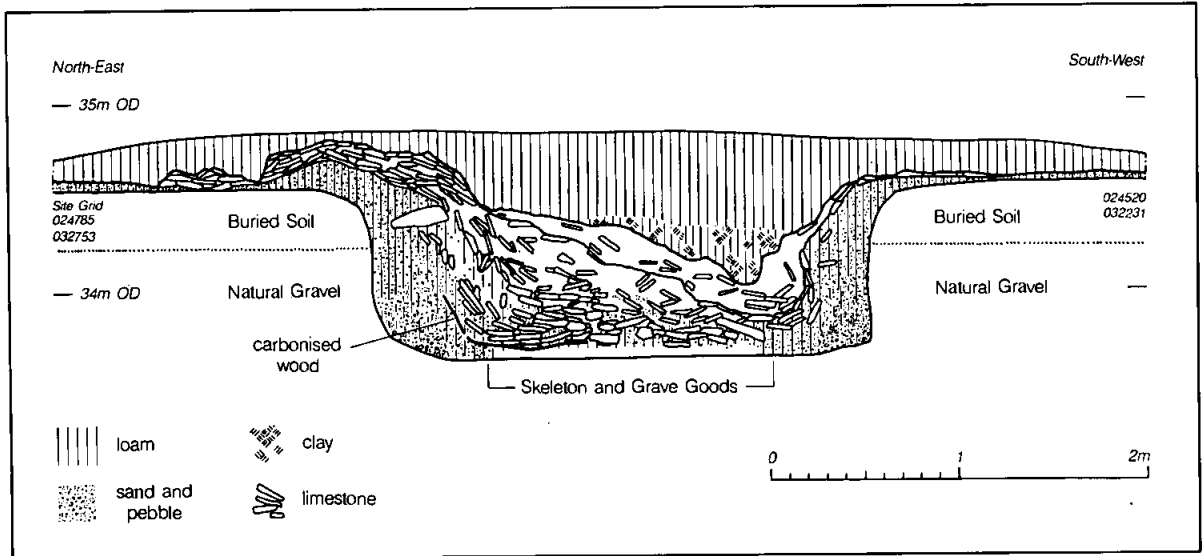


Fig 4 Irthlingborough, cross-section of central grave-pit beneath Barrow 1

The remains of an inverted urned cremation represented by the rim of a possible enlarged food vessel were found at the centre of the barrow and may be associated with Phases II or III. No cut for the deposit was visible and it was first observed where fragments of the pot had been dispersed by animal burrowing within the eroded mound. Very little cremated bone was recovered. The rim directly overlay the cairn of the primary burial but did not appear to have disturbed it.

A fragmentary and undiagnostic vessel containing cremated bone lay 6.5m south of the barrow centre. It was found at the base of the disturbed mound and overlay the gravel upcast attributed to Phase I. A well preserved, plain

metal dagger (length *c* 130mm) with two square rivets was securely deposited within the area of bone.

Cremated bone, charcoal, and burnt flint flakes were found in a small pit (diameter *c* 0.60m) dug between the middle and outer ditches on the south-west side of the barrow. Though not obviously disturbed, little bone was recovered and the cremation seemed incomplete.

On the south-east side of the barrow a group of three cremations occurred in small shallow pits cut into the natural gravel (diameters *c* 0.40-0.48m; depths 0.16-0.18m). Two appeared to be the cremations of children. Charcoal and an unidentified material (? decayed pot) were also recovered.

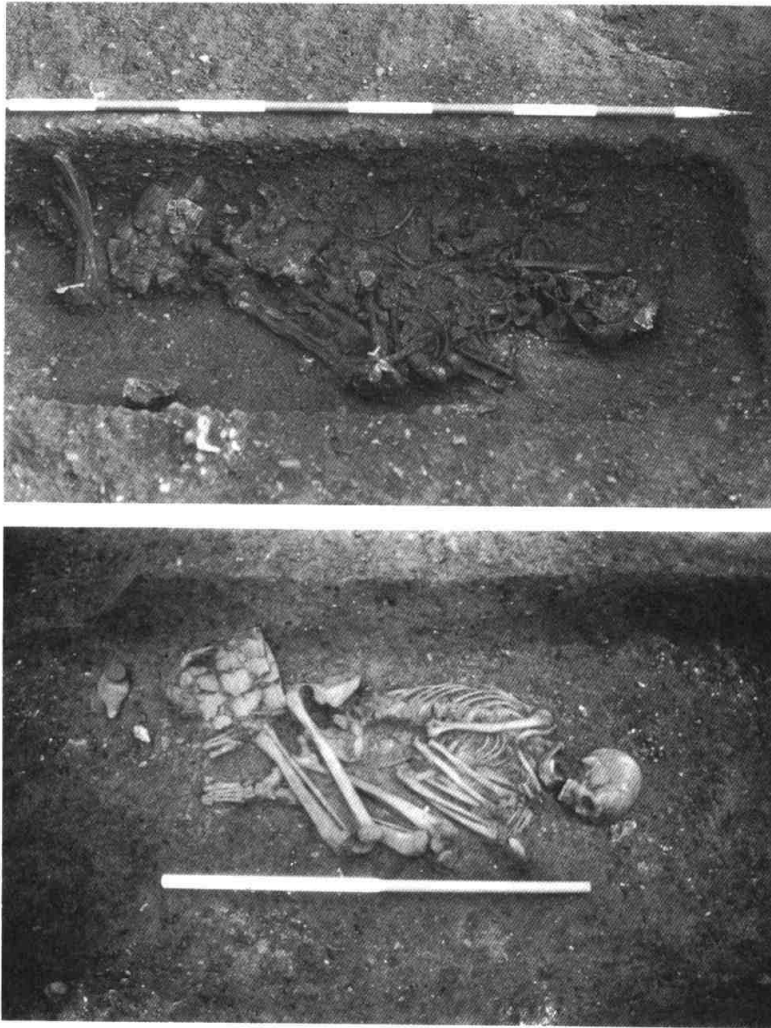


Plate 1 Beaker burials at Irthlingborough (top) and West Cotton

WEST COTTON *by* D Windell

Part of a complex prehistoric ritual landscape has been revealed beneath the remains of the Saxon and Medieval hamlet of West Cotton, where excavation was undertaken in 1985-6 prior to the construction of the A45/A605 New Road (see further, p25). Total stripping of an area of *c* 5,200m² revealed the northern terminus of a possible Neolithic 'long enclosure' and

part of a smaller sub-rectangular enclosure, centred respectively at NGRs SP 97577248 and SP 97637255. These monuments appear to have provided a focus for later burials which included the construction of a round barrow (FIGS 5 and 6). As at Irthlingborough, the barrow covered a Beaker grave and had been enlarged by the subsequent excavation of encircling ditches. A series of secondary cremation burials was also present.

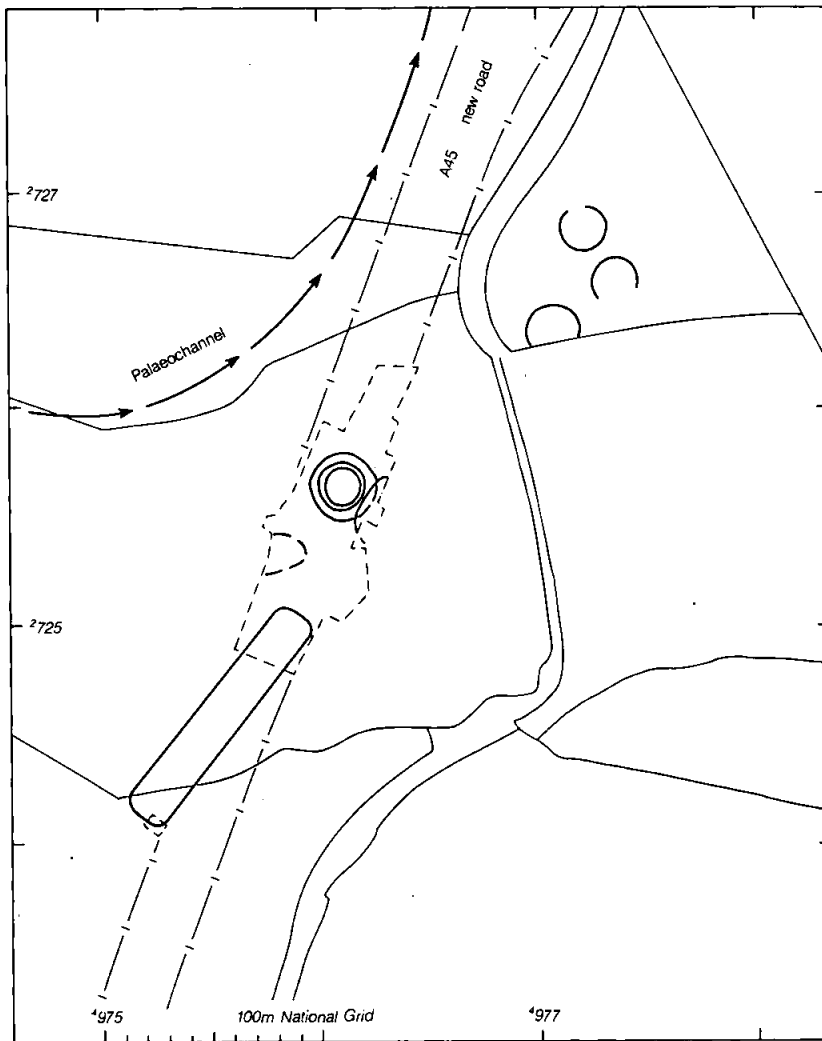
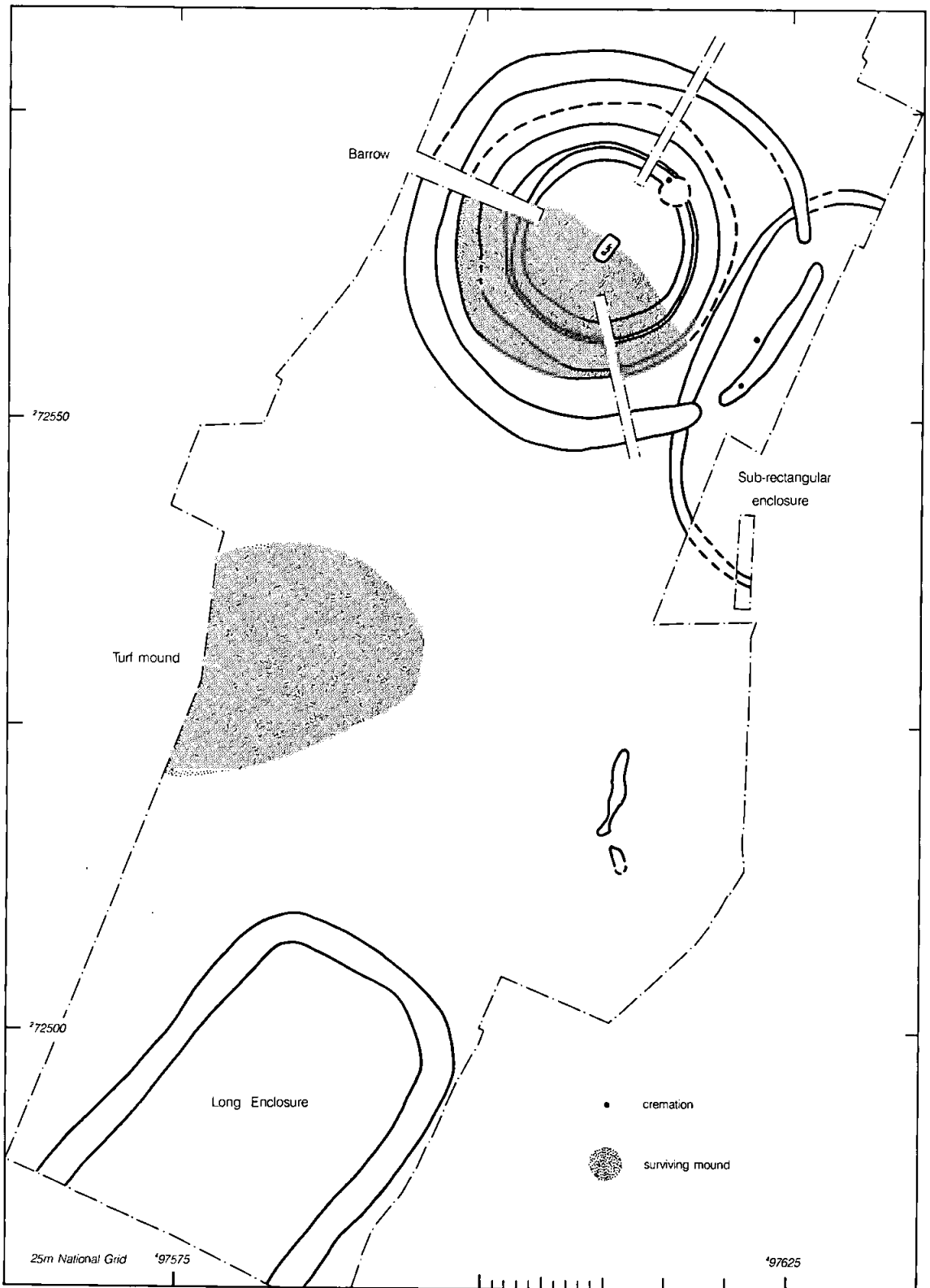


Fig 5 West Cotton, prehistoric monuments



The 'long enclosure'

The northern terminus of this feature lay within the proposed road corridor and its continuation was defined by trial-trenching through a 2m depth of alluvium. The monument was 120m long and 20m wide with its principal axis running south-west to north-east, and was defined by a single ditch 2.50m wide and 0.90m deep. Although there were no standing remains beneath the alluvium, the former presence of internal banks can be inferred from stratigraphical evidence on the long sides but were not apparent along the shorter sides.

Approximately 80 flint flakes were recovered but none was diagnostic of date and there was no pottery. However, a red deer antler-pick or rake and two pieces of animal bone have been submitted for radiocarbon measurement. The presence of residual Neolithic flints in the adjacent turf mound and nearby barrow suggests that the long enclosure could be later Neolithic.

The sub-rectangular enclosure

A separate enclosure was situated 45m to the north-east, where it pre-dated the latest ditch of the round barrow. It was represented by a V-shaped ditch, 1.20-1.60m wide and up to 0.60m deep. No dating evidence was recovered and excavation of the available interior yielded no evidence of function. If it was symmetrical, the enclosure would have been c 33m x 20-22m and probably of the type identified previously from cropmarks of oblong ditches (cf Loveday and Petchey 1982). Its position and shared alignment with the 'long enclosure' suggest that the two were associated.

The barrow

In the northern part of the excavated area a multi-phase, ditched barrow had been constructed over a Beaker burial.

Phase I

Initially a small V-shaped ditch or slot, 1.30m wide and 0.80m deep, enclosed a roughly circular area 14.5m in diameter. The west side was noticeably straight and the slot smaller there. A central grave, 2.50m x 1.15m and 0.20m deep, contained the well-preserved burial of an adult male laid in a strongly flexed position on his left side with head to the south-west (PL 1). A group of grave goods at the feet comprised a long-necked beaker, a conical, V-perforated, shale button, a tanged and notched flint dagger, 170mm long, a large flint flake, and a small lump of chalk with incised (?natural) lines. A separate, small flint knife may originally have been held in the hands.

Beneath the burial a small pit, 0.87m x 0.50m and 0.15m deep, contained the disarticulated remains of a separate individual. The Phase I slot also enclosed a large, partially worked, flint nodule which had been placed in a shallow pit, a small grouping of ironstone fragments, and a further shallow pit containing charcoal. All of these deposits had been covered by a turf mound which extended to the lip of the ditch; although not surviving in the northern half of the area, it was otherwise represented to a maximum height of 0.30m (FIG 6). Some 200 struck flints were recovered from the mound, with c 350 more from the infilling of the Phase I ditch.

Opposite: Fig 6 West Cotton, major prehistoric features

Phase II

The erosion or collapse of the turf mound into the slot occurred quite rapidly and a new, U-shaped ditch was dug immediately outside, being 2.60m wide and up to 1m deep. Its gravel upcast was added to the turf mound to extend the barrow to the inner lip of the new ditch. The insertion of a ?food-vessel into the fill of the original slot probably occurred at this time.

Phase III

After an unknown interval, in which the Phase II ditch had silted almost completely, a new outer ditch was dug to form a circle 30m in diameter. It had a V-shaped profile and was 2.40-2.80m wide and 1.20m deep. The upcast was again used to enlarge the mound, but on this occasion leaving a berm of at least 0.80m along the ditch-edge. Although cutting through the sub-rectangular enclosure, the ditch was interrupted by causeways adjacent to the intersections.

A cremation covered by a miniature urn was subsequently inserted into the secondary fills of the Phase III ditch. Probably at the same time, a further cremation accompanied by a small ceramic button was placed in a collared urn within a shallow depression in the surrounding berm.

The turf mound and other features

An unditched turf mound, surviving up to 0.80m high, was partly exposed beneath an extensive denudation and plough deposit. It contained at least 1800 struck flints, including a plano-convex knife, and two segments of plank which have been submitted for radiocarbon dating. Prehistoric pottery was also recovered, both from the mound and from the denudation deposit, but comprises very small, undiagnostic sherds. No burial or other features were revealed beneath the mound.

A series of features immediately north of the 'long enclosure' comprised an unaccompanied human cremation in a small pit, a short length of shallow gully, and two small pits. Whilst no dating evidence was recovered, the nature of their soil infillings suggests that they are prehistoric.

LATER IRON AGE AND ROMAN

The recognition through air photography that previous discoveries of Iron Age pottery from Crow Hill, Irthlingborough were related to a hillfort, some 3ha in extent, has important implications for understanding the contemporary political and social organisation. Whilst details of the local pattern of later prehistoric settlement have yet to emerge, it may already appear significant that the extensive Roman settlement and villa at Stanwick should have developed in the valley below the hillfort. There, on the 'opposite side of the river, Iron Age occupation has been noted beneath the remains of later settlement which continued



Plate 2 Crow Hill, Irthlingborough, aerial view of cropmarks looking south. NCC photograph (neg NMR 3058/13), taken 18 July 1986

until at least the end of the Roman period. Succeeding events in the area, however, remain poorly understood, despite the partial investigation of a site at Mallows Cotton where early Saxon pottery was located on and around a large Roman settlement.

CROW HILL, IRTHLINGBOROUGH *by* G Foard and S Parry

The existence of a large, rectangular, earthwork enclosure which had been substantially levelled by ploughing at NGR SP 958715 was first identified by David Hall, but whilst the site has produced Iron Age, Roman and Saxon surface scatters, the earthworks have been dismissed as merely Medieval headlands (RCHM 1975, 57: Irthlingborough (7)). In 1986, however, the site produced good cropmark evidence indicating that it was probably an Iron Age hillfort (PL 2). A possible defensive ditch, *c* 5m wide, with an internal palisade-trench, corresponds with the earthwork feature and encloses an area of *c* 3ha. The eastern side lies immediately above a steep scarp which falls towards the River Nene, while on the north side a similar scarp falls into a small tributary valley. An entrance lies near the south-east corner of the enclosure and the interior contains at least five ring ditches, presumably hut circles, together with two rectangular enclosures and various pits. Other indistinct features are also visible.

Trial-excavation has confirmed the likely Iron Age origin of the defences and the site thus appears to be the second largest hillfort in the county, being exceeded in size only by Borough Hill, Daventry. The pottery scatters suggest that the site continued to be occupied in the Roman period and, most significantly, also in the Saxon period. It is therefore probable that it was the original 'Irthlingborough'.

Trial-excavation

A single trench cut across the southern side of the enclosure in September 1986 revealed a substantial ditch over 3.40m deep and at least 4m wide. A layer of ironstone metallurgy 7m inside the ditch may have formed the base of a rampart. Small quantities of pottery indicate that both features were early-middle Iron Age. The ditch was subsequently recut five times and in the 1st century AD a V-shaped trench was dug along its inner edge, possibly for a palisade. Pottery of the 6th century AD from the upper fills of the ditch may indicate re-occupation in the early Saxon period. Subse-

quent fieldwalking has shown a high concentration of Iron Age, Roman and Saxon pottery within the enclosed area.

STANWICK *by* David S Neal

The site of the Roman villa at Stanwick, known previously by the record of mosaic pavements in Meadow Furlong (Bridges 1791, 194), was rediscovered in the 1960s within an extensive spread of contemporary settlement occupying the east bank of the River Nene. Following evaluation by the NCC Archaeology Unit, larger scale trial-work was undertaken by the Central Excavation Unit in 1984 prior to the commencement of a programme of annual excavation in advance of gravel quarrying.

Late Iron Age occupation, attested by several huts and a palimpsest of pits and drainage gullies, appears to have been confined to high points on the first terrace river-gravels above a level of potential flooding, but assessment of its extent and character awaits future work. Its relationship with the succeeding Roman settlement and villa has also to be demonstrated, although at present the two episodes appear to be separated by up to 0.30m of disturbed soil.

A major phase of Roman activity began in the 2nd century AD with the establishment of a planned series of ditched enclosures linked by trackways, possibly at the junction of more substantial roads (FIG 7). Geophysical survey and cropmark evidence indicate their distribution over at least 28ha in a radial pattern to the north and east of the villa. At present, only the latest phases of the villa have been explored, showing that it had a 'winged corridor' plan and was furnished with mosaics in the 4th century. A series of circular and rectangular stone buildings of the 2nd-4th centuries lay immediately to the north and other masonry structures were located at the west where there was also a cemetery. Further groups of stone buildings have been identified 250m away in some of the enclosures which extended uphill towards the northern limit of settlement. Several of the original circular structures, which are characterised by central post-pads, were eventually replaced by rectangular buildings and other alterations included the construction of walled yards.

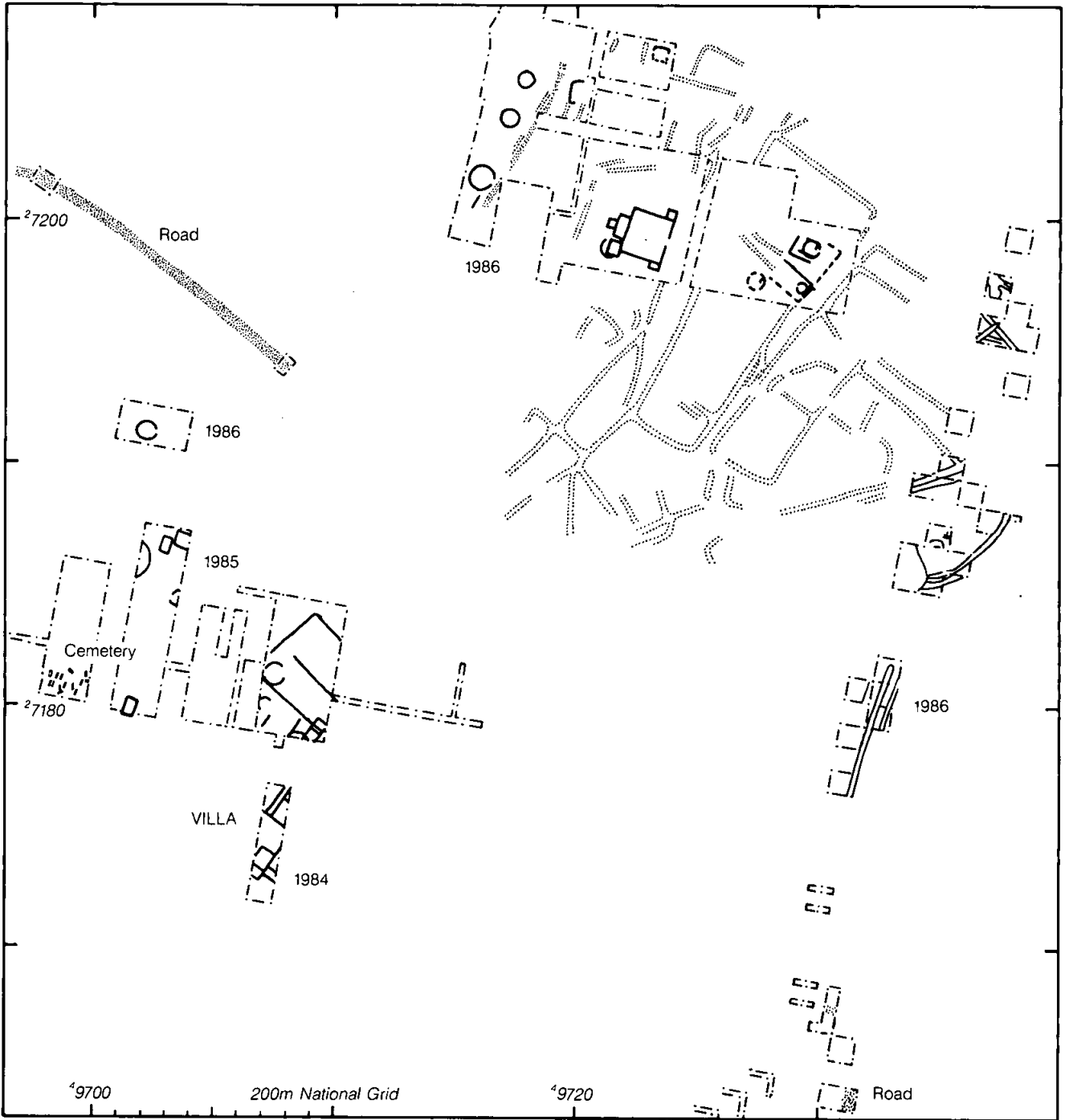


Fig 7 Stanwick, Roman villa and settlement

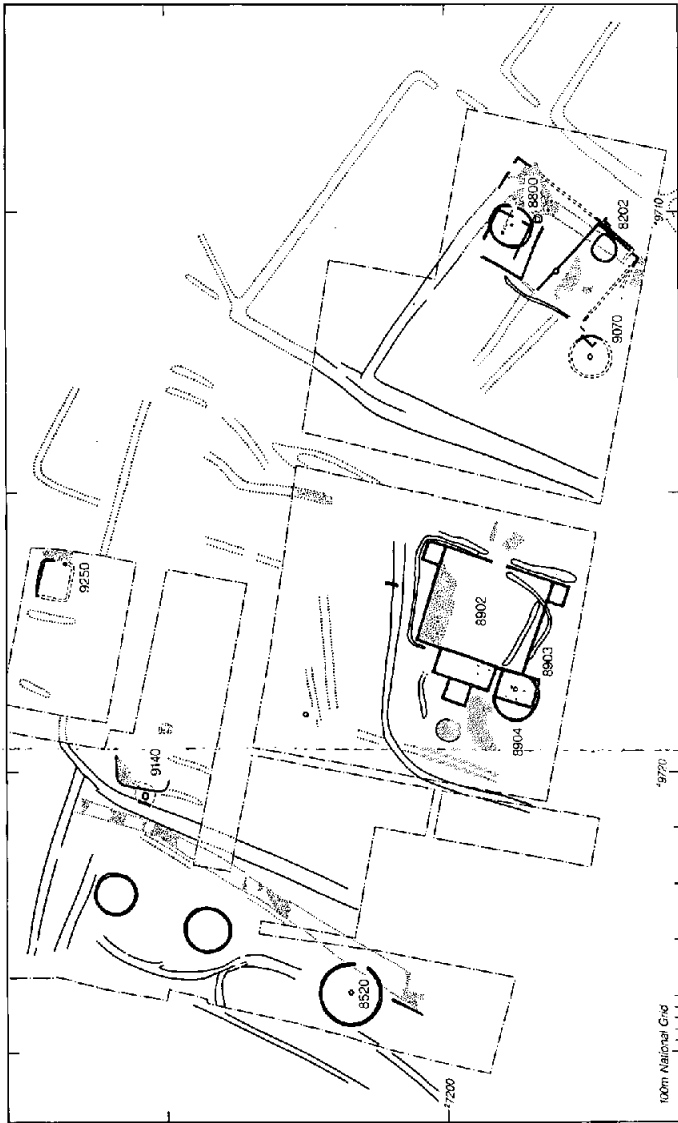


Fig 9 Stanwick, excavations in 1986

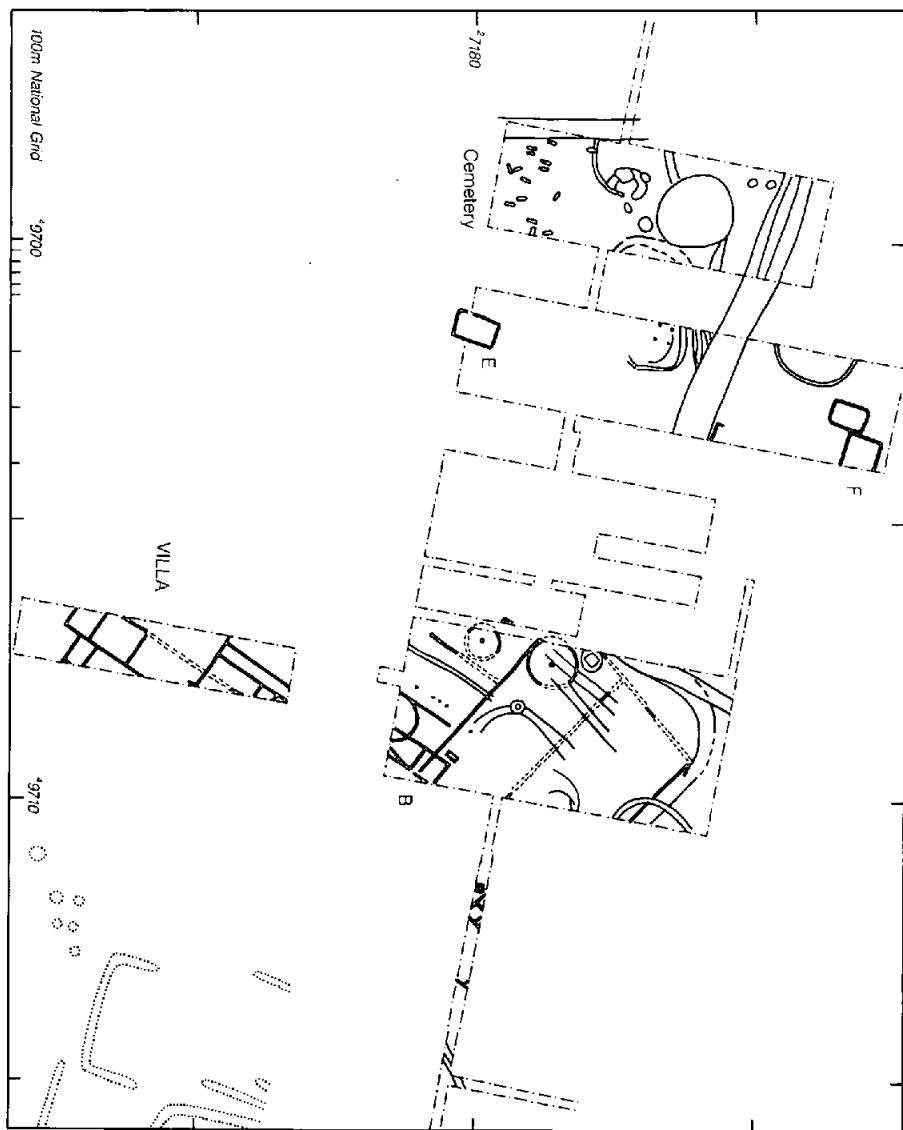


Fig 8 Starwick excavations in 1984-5

The villa and its immediate environs (FIG 8)

Trial-excavation at the site of the villa in 1984 showed that it was probably of 'winged corridor' plan with a south-east aspect. At least two of its southern rooms and the corridor had been paved with polychrome geometric mosaics in the mid-4th century, and the most complete example comprised a grid of squares tangent to smaller tilted squares with eight lozenge star patterns filling the interspaces (PL 3). Several column-drums had been reused from an earlier structure and a posthole cutting one of the mosaics incorporated part of an inscription in its packing (cf *Britannia*, 16 (1985), 324).

To the north, larger scale excavation in 1985 revealed the remains of a 2nd-century circular building containing a central post-pad. It had been replaced by a rectangular structure with a possible corridor on the east side (B). Although subsequently extended to the north, the later building apparently had been demolished by the 4th century when its site was crossed by a wall which may have formed a yard. A stone-lined inhumation grave occurred to the

north, with an adjacent cist which contained the skeleton of a miniature dog of a shoulder height no greater than 180mm.

Other masonry structures lay to the north-west and closer to the river. One was later provided with a wing-room and a south-facing corridor (F). It was maintained into the 4th century, unlike a separate building to the south (E) which may have been abandoned owing to the creation of a cemetery nearby. The current total of 17 inhumations in the cemetery includes one burial with the skull between the legs. The graves may be of 3rd-century date, but lack evidence of coffins and grave-goods.

Other settlement (FIG 9)

The 1986 season involved the excavation of settlement 250m north of the villa in addition to trial-work at the east and investigation of a circular hut, 9m wide, which was threatened by quarrying directly to the north of the 1985 excavations (cf FIG 7). Chiefly, however, several groups of

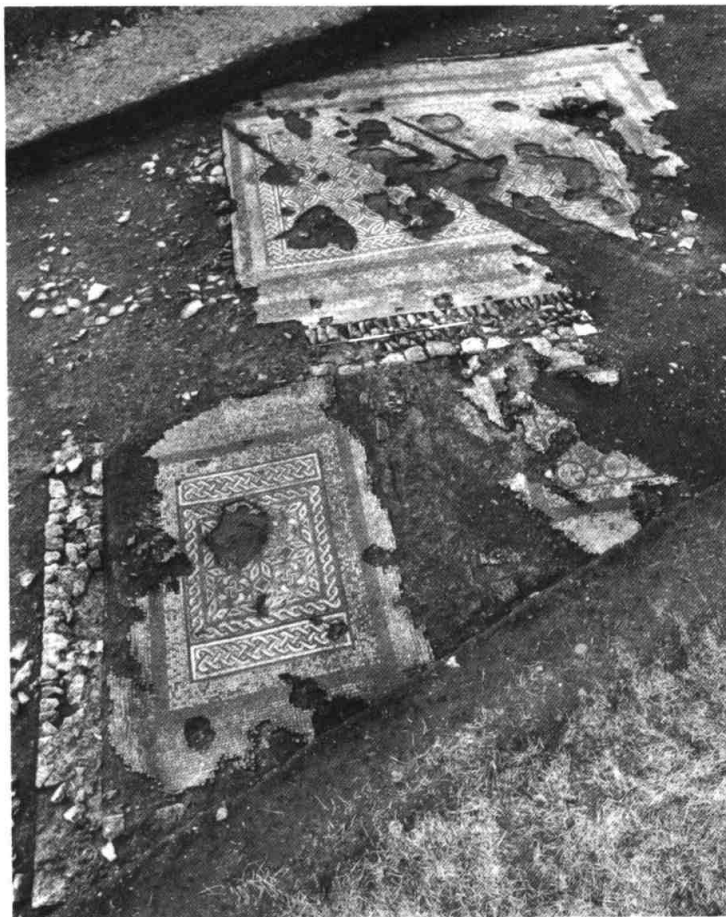


Plate 3 Stanwick Roman villa, 4th-century mosaics

stone buildings were examined within the series of enclosures located by geophysical survey towards the edges of the settlement.

At the west, a row of three circular buildings had been erected above a 2nd-century deposit and lay beside a curving trackway. Although of different sizes, the structures were all east-facing and each had a central post-pad. At the north end of the trackway, the fragmentary remains of a sub-rectangular building (9140) overlay a drain which concealed a hoard of ironwork. The building contained a stone hearth and a quern near the south side, in addition to two small pots which had been sunk into its floor. A rectangular stone tank on the west side emptied into an external ditch which ran over the site of an earlier well; a group of cess-pits to the north contained leather off-cuts and a service of four pewter dishes. In the 4th century a more substantial building, with rounded corners and an east-facing entrance, existed 25m to the north (9250).

Elsewhere, the courtyard complex 8902 was preceded by a 2nd-century circular hut (8904) which was replaced at an intermediate stage by a rectangular structure with two post-pads along the central axis and an east-facing threshold (8903). A palisade defined an adjacent enclosure. Major redevelopment involved the construction of a walled yard with square rooms projecting outwards at either side of the eastern facade. The yard was entered through a central opening in that side, directly opposite a rectangular structure, 10m x 5m, with a square room at the west. Building 8903 to the south remained in use but was slightly enlarged.

A separate complex further to the east had also originated in a circular structure which lay centrally within an enclosure (9070). Later development involved an easterly, uphill shift where buildings were associated with two rectangular walled yards which preserved the alignments of earlier boundaries. The northern yard was metalled and contained an east-facing circular building (8800) and a 'lean-to' structure along one side. The main building was replaced by one of rectangular form with a central door in the east side and a circular clay-lined tank outside. There is no evidence that the southern yard originally contained buildings and in the 4th century the two enclosures appear to have been amalgamated. A well at the centre of the enlarged yard cut one of the demolished walls and was possibly contemporary with the construction of a small circular hut (8202). The building was 5m wide, with an entrance at the west. It appears to have fallen into disrepair and was rebuilt in a D-shaped plan with its north side straightened; a fireplace existed against the south wall. A miniature bronze axe and fragments of a pipe-clay figurine discovered outside the building could denote that the structure had a religious function, and its axial relationship with the layout of the courtyard complex 8902 may therefore be significant. Other finds included many small iron tools—chisels, a drill-bit, shears, and a wool-comb—which, combined with a number of lead weights, suggest woodworking and weaving.

Communications (cf FIG 7)

In addition to the network of trackways which connected individual elements of the settlement, traces of more substantial roads have been discovered at either side of the

main area of excavation. At the east, trial-excavation along the proposed line of the new A45 road revealed the wheel-rutted surface of a north-south route with a track leading from it towards the villa. A separate road heading towards a river-crossing was exposed during gravel-quarrying in 1985 further to the west, where a strongly cambered limestone causeway crossed a former stream-bed. It was sealed beneath later alluvium and contained over 80 horseshoes on its rutted surface, including ripple-edged types. Its route was confirmed by excavation beside the river bank at SP 96777207 where a further spread of metalling presumably led to a bridge abutment.

MALLOWS COTTON ROMAN SETTLEMENT by P Voice and D Windell

Field survey in 1985 revealed an area of Roman settlement in two fields at either side of a deep valley close to the deserted Medieval village of Mallows Cotton. The finds suggested that occupation in the northern field had lasted from the 1st–4th centuries AD, while settlement in the southern field was restricted to the late 3rd and 4th centuries. A scatter of early Saxon sherds of the 6th–7th centuries indicated the possibility of some form of continuity of occupation (cf FIG 10).

Since part of the southern field was threatened by the construction of the A45/A605 New Road, a series of six trenches was excavated in 1986 within the proposed corridor. Among them, only Trench 1 revealed significant archaeological features and elsewhere the subsoil had been badly disturbed by modern agriculture. No direct evidence was obtained for occupation after the late 4th or early 5th centuries.

The investigated area appears to have been peripheral to the main focus of settlement in the northern field and was used for ironstone quarrying and crop-processing until the later 3rd or 4th centuries. Subsequently, two small stone buildings occupied a rectangular enclosure with a small cemetery outside.

Industrial activity

A series of deep, irregular pits up to 4.50m wide and 2m deep had been dug as ironstone quarries. They were cut through small ironstone rubble to reach an underlying stratum of tabular ironstone, c 1m thick. Each pit had been backfilled with the upcast from the next and layers of burnt debris and refuse had been thrown into the tops of the exhausted quarries. It is probable that the ironstone was used for smelting iron, although no direct evidence of the process was recovered.

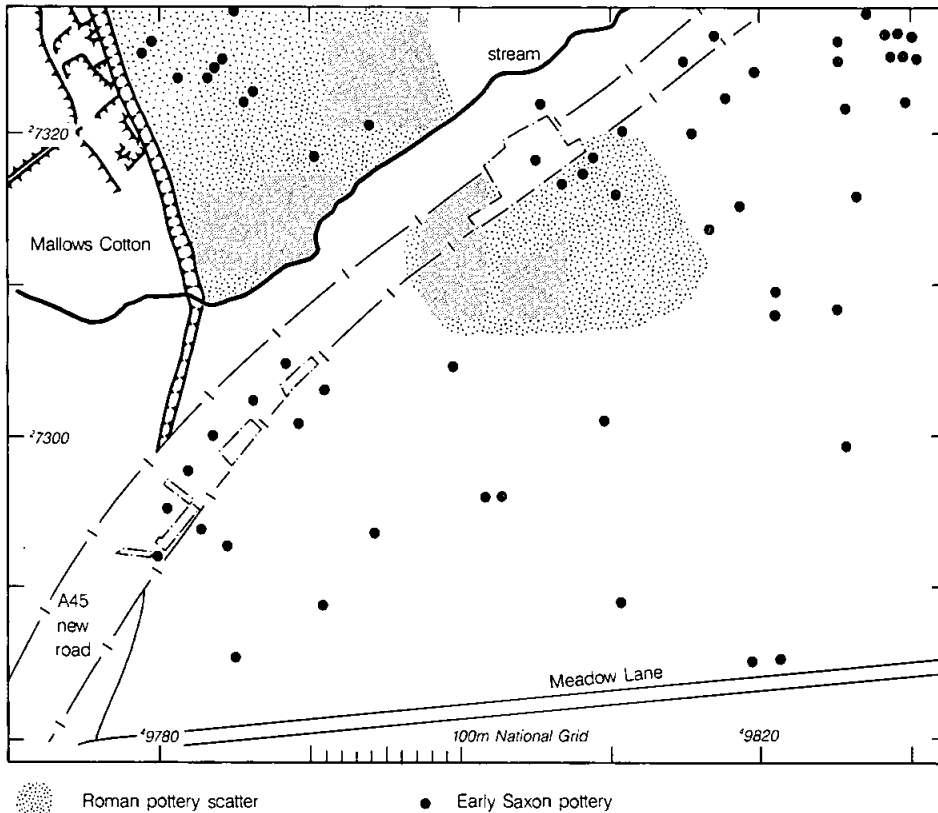


Fig 10 Mallows Cotton, Roman and Saxon evidence. Finds plotted from fieldwalking by 15m traverses

Agricultural activity

Evidence of crop-processing included two corn-driers together with fragments of rotary querns. Corn-drier 1 was apparently unenclosed and free-standing. It was of T-shaped design, with the cross-arm returned parallel to and halfway down the main flue. It was built of small ironstone blocks in alternate pitched and horizontal courses and the construction only varied where a repair had been effected. The entire structure had been set into a pre-excavated hollow and the flues were unfloored, except at the mouth of the main flue where a large limestone block formed a fire-base. No trace of a stokehole was found.

Corn-drier 2 was sealed beneath the floor of a later building. It was Y-shaped with the side-arms connected around a central, free-standing, triangular arrangement of limestone blocks. The walls of the flue were of limestone laid in horizontal courses. The stokehole had been destroyed in modern times.

Buildings

At around the turn of the 3rd into the 4th centuries, two adjacent, rectangular, stone buildings were erected on a south-east to north-west alignment within a rectangular enclosure formed by irregular, shallow gullies. The buildings lay at the base of a natural scarp beside a small

stream.

Structure 1 underwent three phases of use during the later 3rd and 4th centuries, throughout which it was divided into two main rooms. Structure 2 was represented by a rectangular spread of limestone flags which overlay the rakings of corn-drier 2. Although interpreted as the floor of a building, it could possibly have formed an area of hard-standing beside Structure 1.

Graves

Of five graves recorded, only four contained intact burials and the fifth had been largely ploughed away. Separate skull fragments were also present in plough-deposits some 30m to the west.

Among the intact inhumations, one had been cut deeply into a backfilled ironstone quarry and lay in a prone position: a hob-nailed shoe lay beneath the neck. The remaining burials occupied shallow graves in the natural ironstone. The individual bodies were aligned north-east to south-west and had been laid in supine positions. One preserved evidence of a wooden coffin and was accompanied by a small colour-coated jar. Another had been decapitated, with the head placed beside the ankles.

All of the burials were late Roman and appeared to have been located outside the building enclosure.

SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

Apart from the identification of early Saxon pottery, occurring either in surface scatters on Roman sites or residually among later material (cf Foard and Pearson 1985, 6–7 and 10–11), the evidence for the development of individual settlements between the later 4th–6th centuries remains elusive. The earliest sites so far excavated are located in north Raunds where a long running series of rescue excavations is examining the processes of village formation. Although occupied from the mid-6th century, the settlement sites did not however assume a classic village form until at least the later 9th century. The principal tenement boundaries in the dependent hamlet of West Cotton probably originate at about the same time and the examination of their functions and later history is an important adjunct to the investigation of the manorial centres.

NORTH RAUNDS *by* Michel Audouy and Graham Cadman

Excavations carried out in Raunds since 1977 have focused on its Saxon origins and subsequent village development. Investigation has been mainly in the northern part of the village, where several sites have been excavated ahead of redevelopment at either side of a small but steep-sided tributary valley of the River Nene (FIG 11).

The area to the west of the valley has been the most intensively investigated, principally through excavations at *Furnells* (NGR SP 999733) between 1977–82, and at *Langham Road* (NGR SP 998732) and the smaller *Orchard* site (NGR SP 998730) during 1984–6. All three sites attested the presence of an extensive spread of early Saxon settlement which contained timber-post buildings, three sunken featured buildings, and a possible midden. Continuity of occupation was maintained only at *Furnells* where two successive phases of carefully planned buildings originated in the second half of the 7th century. The area ultimately became the site of a late Saxon church and cemetery and a succession of manor houses before its abandonment to pasture in the

15th century (Cadman 1983; see also Boddington and Cadman 1981 and Boddington forthcoming).

The *Langham Road* and *Orchard* sites were apparently not resettled until the later 9–10th centuries, when a series of rectilinear enclosures was laid out. They ultimately became a row of peasant tenements called *Rotton Row* and were separated by a headland from the open fields to the west. Numerous buildings have been recorded in and around these tenements, and other features include stone quarries, clay-extraction pits, and a track or roadway which ran between the tenements and the *Furnells* manorial complex to the north.

At the eastern side of the valley work continues on the possible site of the *Burystead* manor (NGR TL 00707326 : cf Cadman and Foard 1984), immediately north of *St Peter's Church*. Full scale excavation began in 1986. A series of stone buildings, including a dovecote and a malting house, has already been exposed, together with a scatter of earlier postholes, pits, and ditches. Further to the north, excavations during 1985–6 at *Midland Road* (NGR TL 00707320) exposed parts of a row of Medieval tenements which appear to have been laid out during the later 9–10th centuries. Several buildings were recorded in addition to numerous smaller features, the pattern of which suggests late Saxon to post-Medieval occupation at the frontage with a longer sequence of activity commencing in the 6th century at the rear.

A small plot of land at *Brook Street* (NGR SP 998728), some 300m south of *Burystead* was trial-trenched in 1986 by S Parry ahead of development. Ditches of the second half of the 10th century were set at right-angles to the present street, where they may represent tenement boundaries. A few postholes and small slots of the same date were also found towards the front of these possible tenements. A small group of 12th-century pits was present but there was no evidence of later occupation.

The pattern emerging from the different sites can be summarised as comprising four, broad, chronological stages of development. The initial occupation in the 6–7th centuries is denoted by an extensive, loosely agglomerated form of

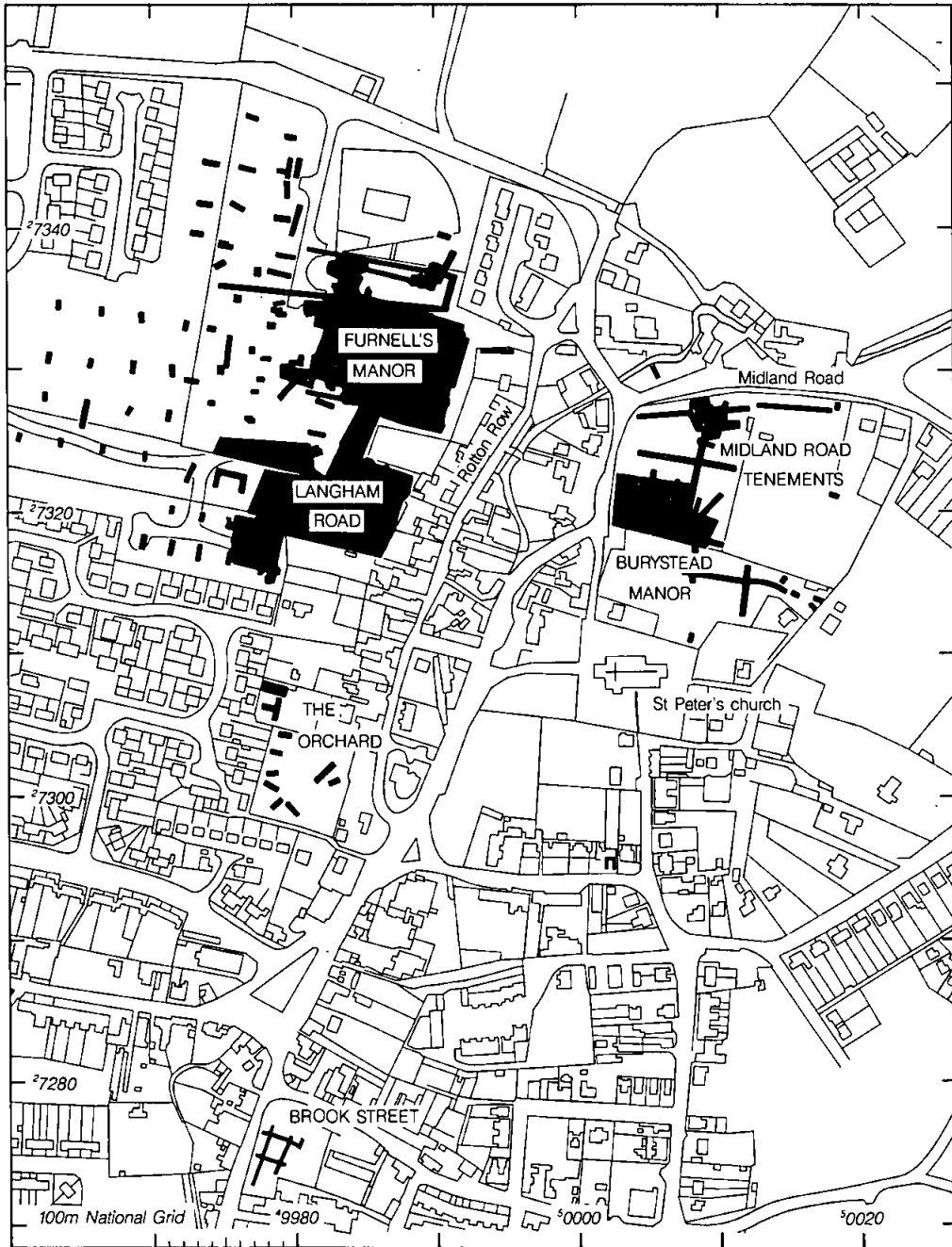


Fig 11 Raunds, extent of archaeological excavation

settlement. During the late 7th century contraction occurred, at least on the west side of the valley where activity was confined either within or immediately adjacent to a ditched enclosure on the Furnells site. A phase of settlement expansion and remodelling appears to have been initiated in the late 9–10th centuries with the emergence of the manor, church, and tenement components of the Medieval village. The new pattern was consolidated over the following centuries.

Early Saxon: 6th–7th centuries (FIG 12)

The earliest occupation appears to have been extended over at least 10ha of the high ground at either side of the valley, forming a loosely agglomerated settlement.

On the west side of the valley, rectangular timber-post buildings predominated at Langham Road, but were only sparsely represented at Furnells where three sunken featured buildings and a possible midden were located. No boundaries were present, although occupation did not extend beyond c 30m north of Furnells and continued at least 20m to the west beneath later ridge and furrow. Traces of contemporary Saxon activity have been found 150m south of Langham Road at the Orchard site, but not as far as Brook Street, a distance of c 500m. To the east the settlement reached at least as far as the scarp edge, but it is uncertain if it spread into the valley. Features were loosely centred around two broad outcrops of limestone separated by a zone of clay, some 20–30m wide, which contained very little trace of structural activity.

Widespread occupation is also indicated on the east side of the valley, although survival is relatively poor. Part of a rectangular timber-post building has been found at the rear of the Midland Road tenements and other structures may be revealed as excavation continues.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the early Saxon occupation in north Raunds has been the vast amount of pottery recovered; metalwork in comparison being poorly represented. The ceramic assemblage amounts to over 10,000 sherds, the largest domestic group yet excavated in the region. Both locally produced and regionally imported wares, including those from Ipswich, are well represented. The wide variety of early Saxon pottery has led to the suggestion that Furnells was associated with a wide trading area (Foard and Pearson 1985, 12).

Middle Saxon: later 7th–early 9th centuries (FIG 13)

Major settlement reorganisation in north Raunds in the later 7th century is most clearly evident on the west side of the valley where the wide extent of settlement was replaced by a much smaller and carefully planned focus at Furnells. This comprised a ditched enclosure containing four substantial timber buildings arranged around a central open space. Access to the enclosure may have been via a building which lay within the eastern entrance. The building is the only example of post-in-trench construction at this date, and its location may betoken a specialist role, irrespective of whether the settlement represents a middle Saxon farm

or was a 'centre' with interests exceeding the merely agrarian.

Although an additional enclosure and four replacement structures represent a second phase of development of the middle Saxon Furnells complex in the 8th century, the overall settlement form was unaltered. Apart from a scatter of adjacent features, the rest of this side of the valley remained unoccupied during the period and there was no indication of specific agricultural use.

Comparable contraction of settlement has yet to be identified on the valley's eastern side. One rectangular timber building, less substantial than those at the west, has been identified within the southern area of the Midland Road tenements and is dated to the 8th century. Other postholes in the surrounding area suggest the presence of additional structures.

Later Saxon: late 9th–11th centuries (FIG 14)

The late Saxon period represents a watershed in the evolution of Raunds village. During the later 9th and early 10th centuries four identifiable, if in some cases embryonic, landscape components emerged. The appearance of a manor, church, and tenements allows the description 'village' to be applied with confidence to the settlement for the first time.

At Furnells, a narrow timber building was constructed c 875 and ultimately developed into a timber aisled hall, which is probably the manor of thegn Burgred referred to in the Domesday Book. To the east of the hall a small stone church or chapel was erected c 900. Within 30 years it had acquired both a chancel and a cemetery enclosed by ditches linked to those around the hall and its ancillary structures.

Other signs of vigorous growth occurred beyond the ditched enclosures of the expanded Furnells complex. For the first time since the late 7th century the area to the south was intensively occupied by timber buildings set within and outside rectilinear ditched enclosures which ran parallel to those of the manor and fronted the later Rotton Row. Whilst these new enclosures were of varying width (12–22m) and did not exactly match the patterning of their more developed successors, they could indicate the establishment of peasant tenements. To the west traces of other ditched boundaries indicate further subdivision.

A similar pattern of tenements is evident on the east side of the valley, fronting what became Midland Road. They also contained buildings as well as a series of quarries, some of which were set in discrete groups and were up to 3m deep.

The evidence from the small Brook Street excavation 500m to the south suggests that tenements were also being constructed in that part of the valley by the late 10th century, although it is unresolved why occupation apparently ceased in the 12th century.

Medieval: 12th century onwards (FIG 15)

The centuries after the Norman Conquest can be seen as a period of consolidation, when the preceding changes were formalised into the village which can be recognised today.

During the 12th century the Furnells manor was rebuilt and that at Burystead may have come into existence, having originally been a sokeland centre (Foard 1986). Ancillary

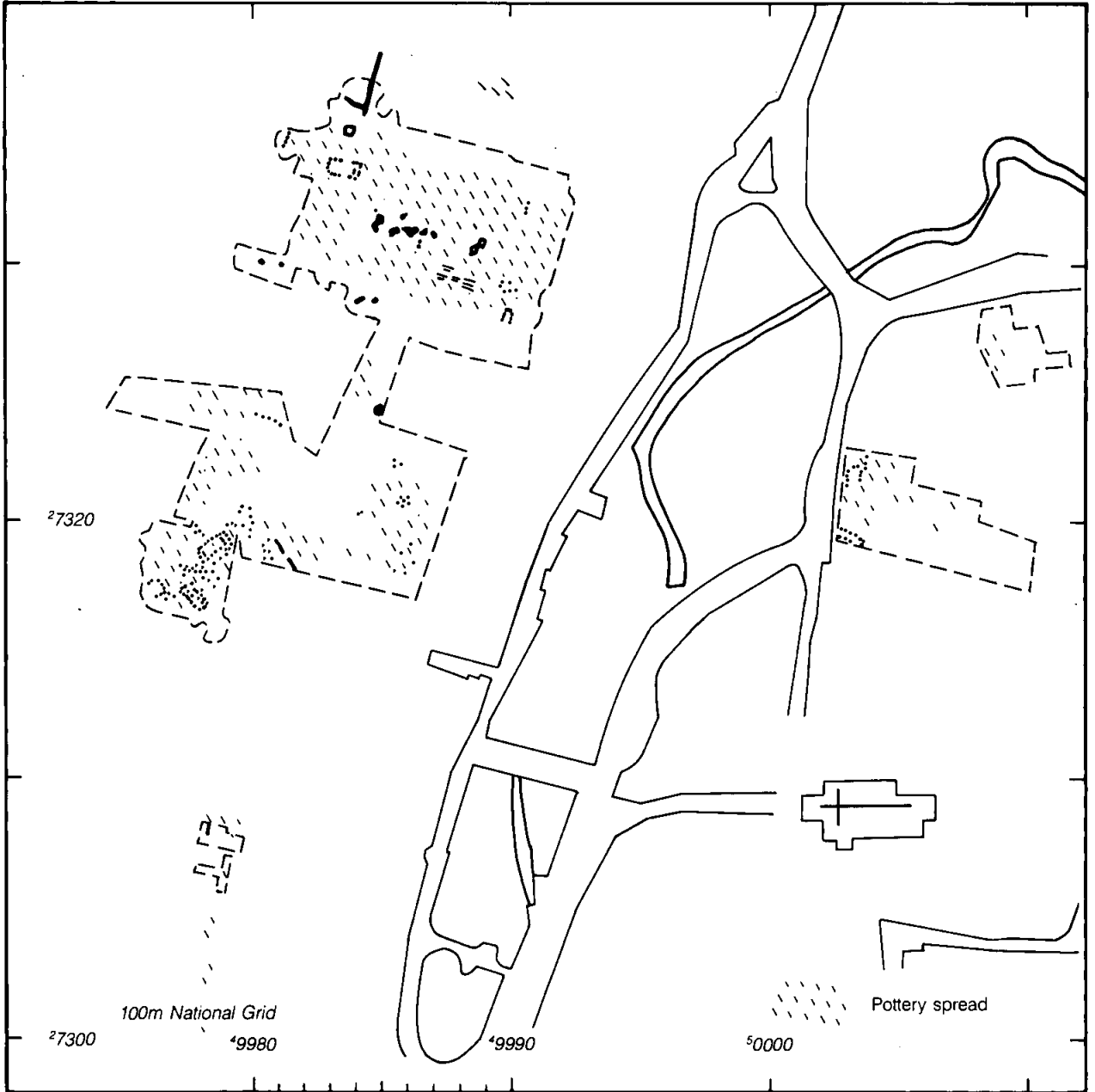


Fig 12 Raunds, early Saxon, 6th-7th centuries

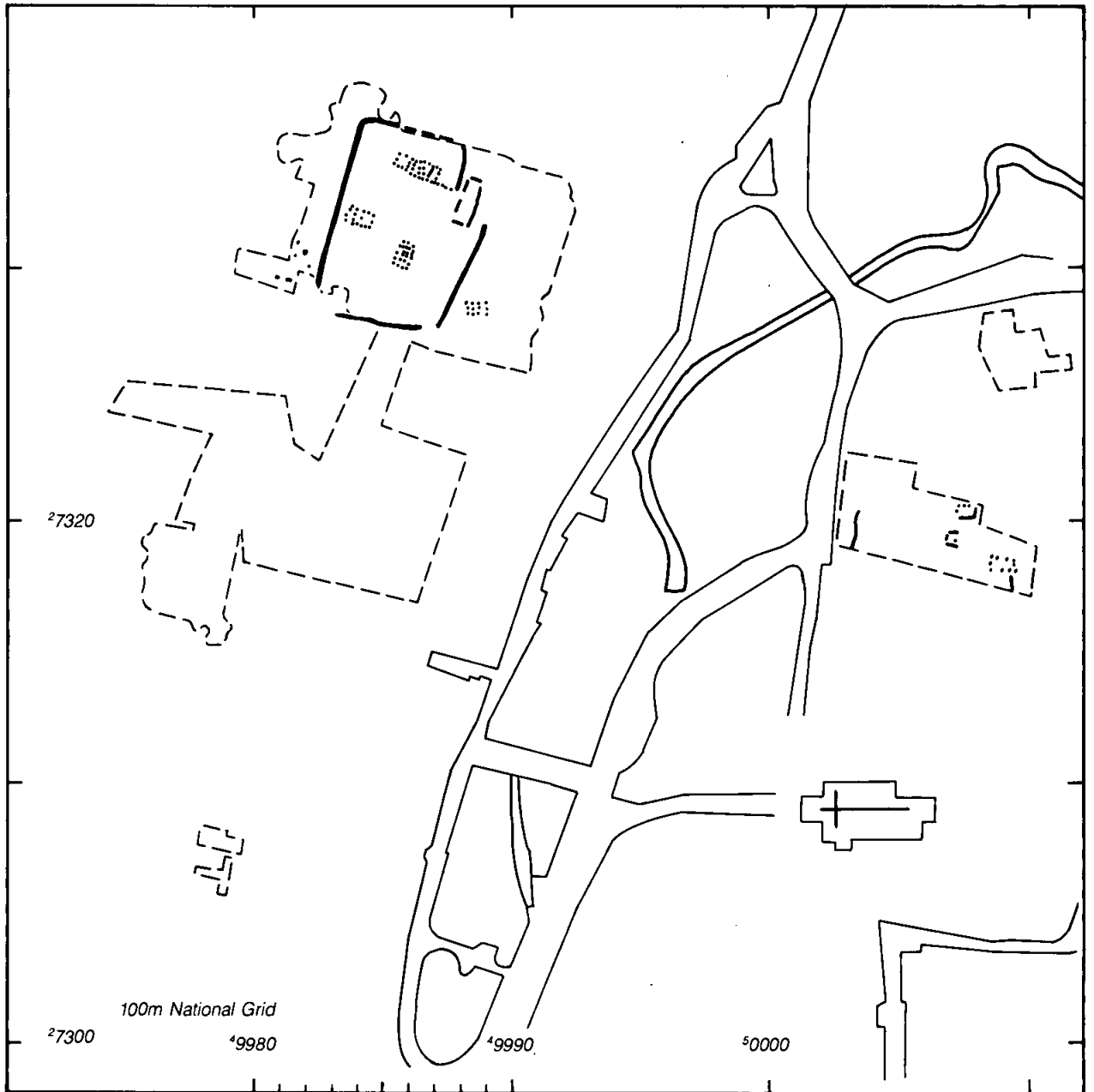


Fig 13 Raunds, middle Saxon, later 7th-early 9th centuries

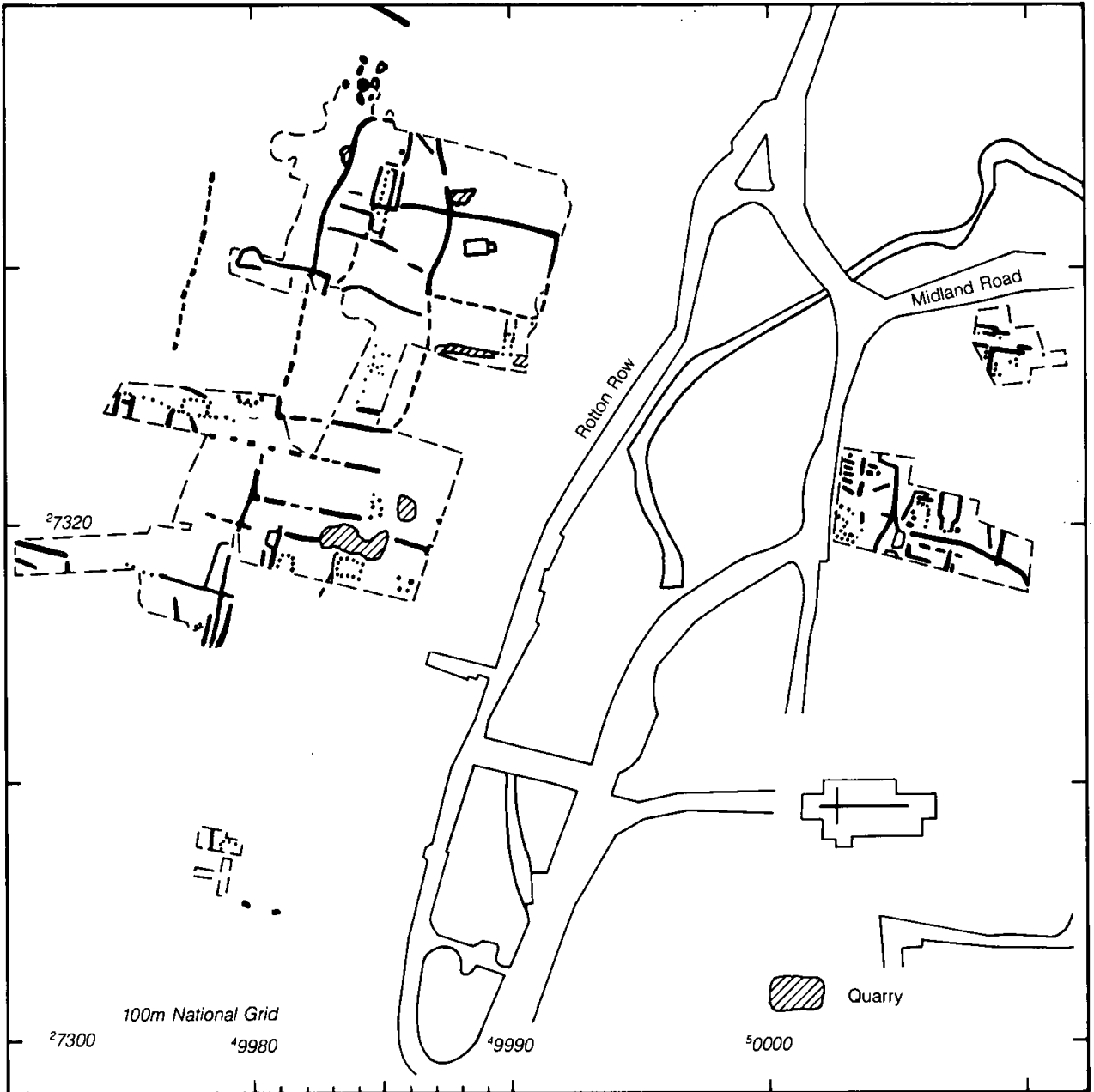


Fig 14 Raunds, late Saxon, late 9th-11th centuries

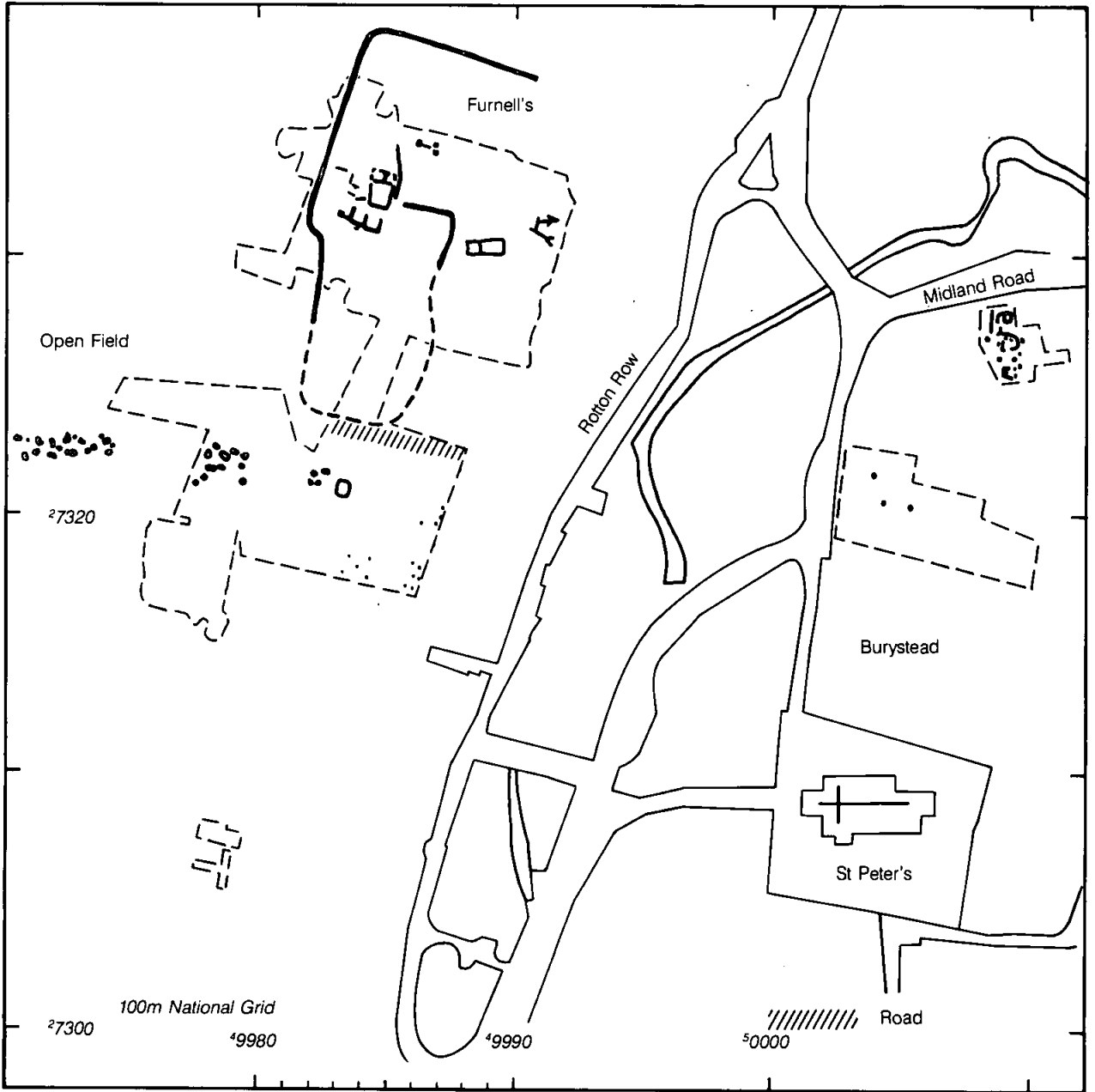


Fig 15 Raunds, Medieval

buildings multiplied, with stone being employed on a wide scale. To the south of Burystead the parish church of St Peter may have replaced the church at Furnells, which was perhaps abandoned at about this time in response to the processes of manorial subinfeudation.

Within the surrounding peasant tenements some boundaries were retained while others were abandoned. There is the suggestion that their buildings, rather than being set towards the back of the tenements, were now erected at the frontages.

The open fields were well established by the end of the 12th century. This is particularly evident to the west of the plots at Rotton Row where several strips of ridge and furrow were enclosed for other use during the later 12th or 13th centuries.

The latest history of settlement in Raunds saw the coalescence of several nuclei of settlement, both around the two principal manors and around the later, Medieval dependent manors. This produced a single, straggling settlement united by its valley location, in contrast to the earlier foci which were apparently separated by the same valley.

WEST COTTON *by D Windell*

The site of the Medieval hamlet of West Cotton (NGR SP 976725) survived in earthwork until 1985 when archaeological excavation began in advance of construction of the A45/A605 New Road. The visible remains comprised a group of up to five tenements clustered around an open space, or green, with an outlying tenement and other earthworks occurring beside the Higham Ferrers-Thrapston Medieval road.

The excavated corridor, involving almost one-third of the area of the earthworks, was cleared of topsoil partly by machine and partly by hand in order to assess the relative loss of information from machine-stripping. All further excavation was undertaken by hand since the site contained a complicated stratigraphy of Medieval stone buildings superimposed upon Saxon deposits, which in turn overlay prehistoric remains (FIG 16; cf p9).

The layout of the Medieval settlement largely followed an existing, regular pattern of tenements or other enclosures which had been established in the later 9th or 10th centuries. Whilst occupation had ceased by the end of the 15th century, the site continued to be used for agricultural purposes and the alignments of some late Saxon boundaries were still being maintained in the 18th century.

Although primarily constrained by the line of the road corridor, the limits of excavation were

extended to obtain complete building plans and also to examine as large an area as possible of the individual tenements indicated by the earthworks. It is hoped that spatial analysis of the recorded patterns of rubbish disposal will eventually isolate different functional areas. Environmental studies augment the evidence and sampling for carbonised plant remains has been undertaken both within the excavation and from adjacent palaeochannels which trial-cores indicate were used for flax-retting (M Robinson, pers comm). The range of crops recovered from Medieval contexts includes bread-type wheat, rivet wheat, six-row hulled barley, peas, and beans. The discovery of rivet-wheat (*Triticum turgidum*) is particularly important and provides some of the first evidence of its cultivation in Medieval England.

Later Saxon and Saxo-Norman (FIG 17)

In the late 9th or 10th centuries the area was divided by a complex of ditches and gullies which at the west may initially have formed a row of plots or tenements aligned roughly east-west with a consistent width of c 4 rods. A later series of gullies ran north-south between the area which became the Medieval green and the tenements to the south and west. Although initially perpendicular to the original boundaries, the individual ditches gradually encroached outwards to a position coincident with that of subsequent building frontages. The pattern of division to the north of the Medieval green is less clear, although a large number of gullies beneath the Medieval wall-lines appear to have formed significant boundaries.

The excavated late Saxon and Saxo-Norman tenements did not contain any major buildings and, apart from a small entrance-way structure in one example, most postholes related to fences. Substantial quantities of domestic refuse, pottery, animal bones, coins and metal objects, however, strongly suggest the proximity of buildings. It is therefore possible that structures were disturbed towards the back of the tenements, being only later brought forward to form frontages on the green. Alternatively, the tenements may not have held buildings but could have functioned as cultivation plots.

Medieval occupation (FIG 18)

Between c 1200–50 the hamlet was reorganised into a layout of stone buildings fronting the village green. The earliest phase of stone buildings was badly disturbed and is therefore difficult to interpret. The layout foreshadowed that of subsequent phases and the walls lay directly beneath those of later buildings. Some of the early walls were maintained into the late periods however, and there is evidence to suggest that they were always of full height and not dwarf walls. Internally, the earliest buildings were characterised by small ovens and stone-lined pits, but the functions of individual structures remain uncertain.

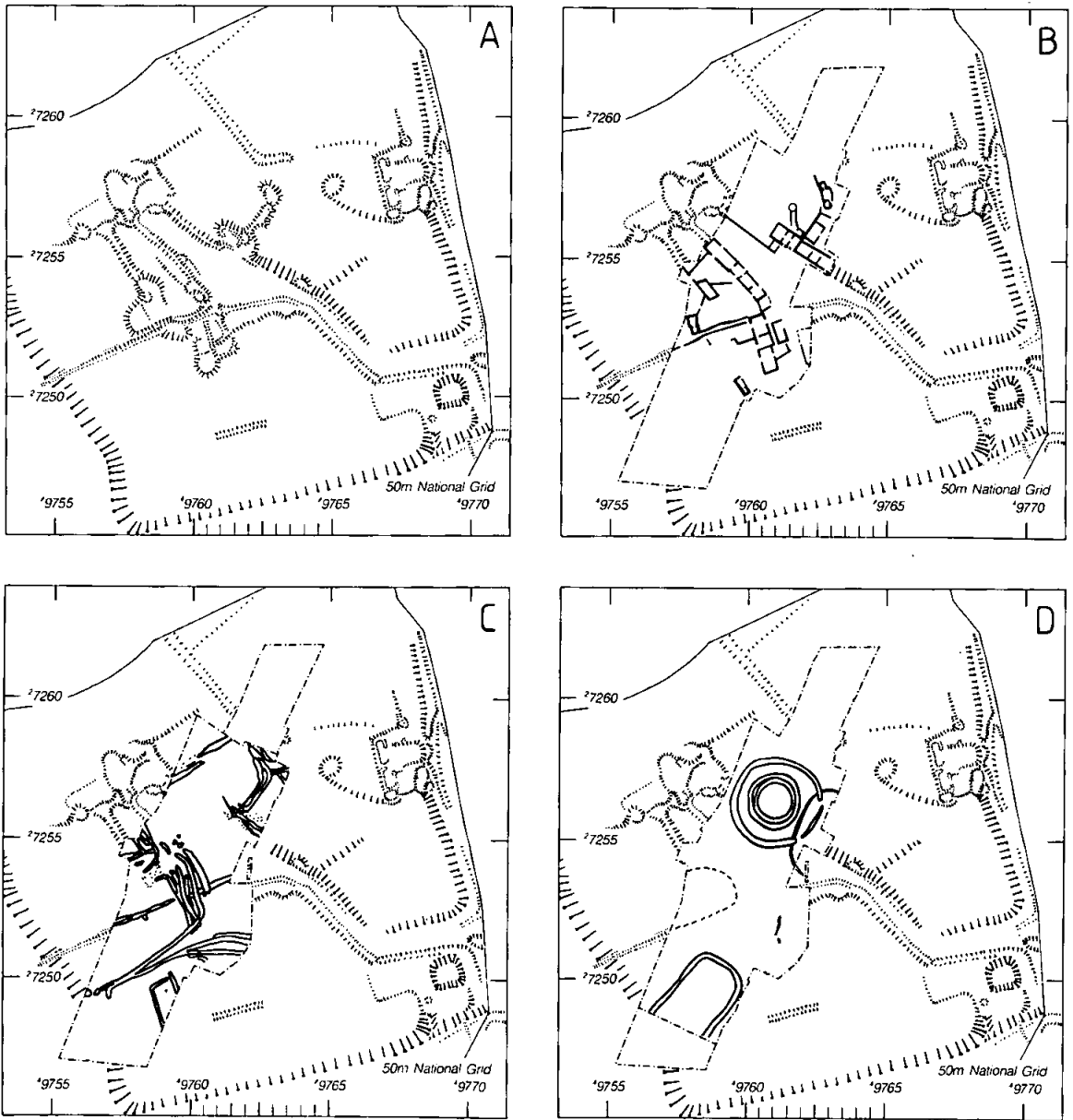
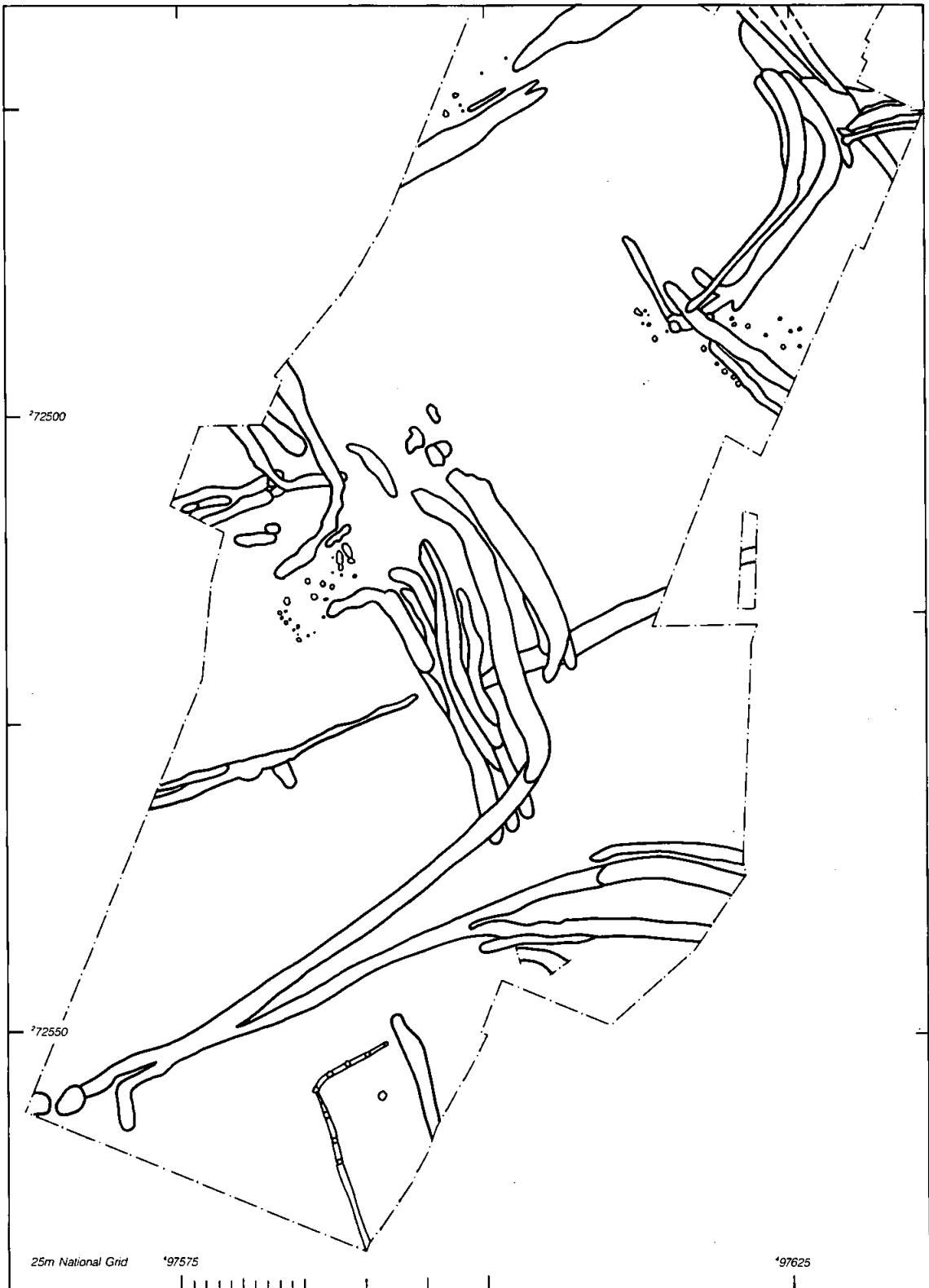
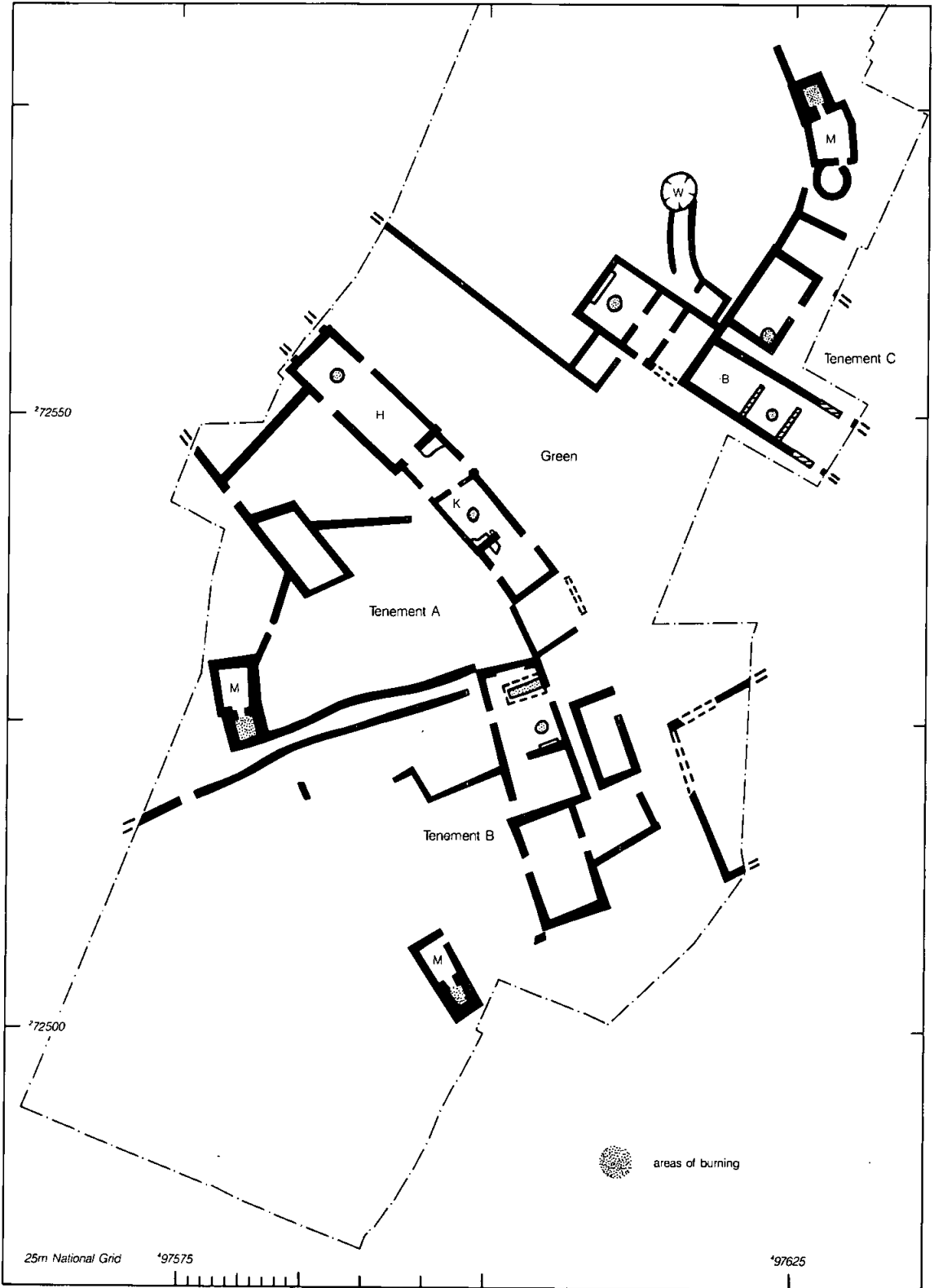


Fig 16 West Cotton, periods of development: (a) earthworks; (b) medieval buildings; (c) late Saxon features; (d) prehistoric features

Opposite: Fig 17 West Cotton, major Saxon features

Overleaf: Fig 18 West Cotton, major Medieval features





The main period of stone buildings dated from c 1250/1300 to c 1400/1450. The buildings were exceptionally well preserved, with many walls standing up to 1m high and all internal floors, hearths and other structures intact.

Tenement A comprised a long range of domestic buildings fronting the green. Its length of 26m was formed by a hall 11m long, a cross-passage room, a kitchen, and an ancillary room which contained a possible stairway. Behind the frontage a slightly trapezoidal room, 6.50m x 3m, was represented by robber trenches and floors, and a small malting house was set further back. Each of the excavated tenements contained a malthouse of similar design and all are closely paralleled by examples from Furnell's Manor in Raunds, Brixworth, Northants and Stamford, Lincs. Tenement A was divided from Tenement B to the south-east by two boundary walls which formed a narrow passage leading to the back of the plots.

Tenement B contained two main buildings each of cross-passage design. The easternmost structure, 8m x 4.40m, yielded no evidence of function, but the other, of 7m x 4.50m, had a large hearth and stone-lined pit with clear scorch-marks, possibly caused by its use as a smoke-chamber. The two buildings were later joined, with a small room between. In front of them a separate building, 6m x 2.50m, enclosed a baking oven in the earliest phase. Clear evidence of encroachment on to the green was revealed by the way in which the final boundary had progressed c 5m beyond the early Medieval frontage. The rear of the tenement contained a malthouse of similar design to that in Tenement A.

The village green to the north of the tenements was represented by a badly eroded and worn limestone-rubble surface. After occupation had ceased, it became covered by up to 1m of clay, probably through flooding but also possibly by deliberate pondment.

Tenement C, on the north side of the green, consisted of a very large barn of which only half lay within the area of excavation. If originally symmetrical about a central door, it would have been c 24m long x 4m wide. In the later Medieval period the door had been blocked to form a standard 3ft doorway and the interior was subdivided into small domestic rooms. A yard at the rear connected with other buildings which were probably associated with cereal processing and led to a large malthouse with a circular wall at one end.

An additional group of buildings fronted the green to the west of the barn, where they overlay a series of earlier plot-boundaries and may have formed a separate tenement. Following early use as a single, large room containing a baking and other ovens, the main building was divided into

three compartments with a small domestic room of 5m x 4m at the west end and a byre with pitched stone floor at the east. An additional chamber at the front with a doorway opening on to the green is of unknown function. A further, small, sunken chamber at the rear, with dimensions of 1.80m x 2m and a flagged floor, connected with a large well by means of a walled passageway.

Although the individual buildings of each tenement underwent several phases of rebuilding and reflooring, the layout remained essentially static. Occupation appears to have ceased between 1400-50 and despite evidence for some secondary reuse of the partially demolished buildings, final desuetude had certainly occurred by the end of the 15th century. Subsequently, the boundaries between the tenements and the green and between Tenements A and B were maintained by gullies and banks into the 17th century and finally by a wall into the 18th century. By then, however, the entire area had reverted to pasture.

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