

Notes

Edited by

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AN EARLY IRON AGE ENCLOSURE AT THRAPSTON

A roughly circular enclosure located to the east of Thrapston has been dated to the early or early-middle Iron Age. The enclosure, which averages 50 m in diameter, was first recorded by aerial photography (RCHM 1975), but has recently been evaluated prior to possible development (FIG 1). Trial trenches were excavated on the north side of the enclosure by the writer in 1991, and previously to the south-west by Graham Cadman for the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit (*South Midlands Archaeology*, 21, 72).

The enclosure is situated some 200 m west of the Huntingdon Road and immediately north-east of the new service station and roundabout at the junction of the A45 and A14 roadways (SP TL 002 782). It lies on a west facing spur (OD 60 m), with views across the broad valley of the river Nene to the north-west.

Iron Age features were noted in drainage ditches during the construction of the new A14 road in 1989, some 300 m south-east of the site (*South Midlands Archaeology*, 20, 40) but prior to this, no sites of Iron Age date were known in the immediate vicinity. Sites of early Iron Age date have not been previously located in the Thrapston area, although there are references in early literature to a circular earthwork in the parish (George 1904). The location of this site is unknown, but it seems unlikely to be the enclosure in question as the north side underlies ridge and furrow.

Three sections were cut across the enclosure ditch which was on average 2 m deep, below the modern surface, and 3.5 m wide. A deposit of dark occupation soil found in the ditch in Trench 4 (FIG 2, layer 3) contained a quantity of pottery, including sherds from carinated vessels. Pottery of this type did not occur on the middle Iron Age site at Twyell, some three miles to the north (Harding

1975), and has not been found locally in deposits later than the early 4th century BC.

Enclosures that can be dated to the early Iron Age period are rare in the county, and with the exception of hillforts there are no known examples

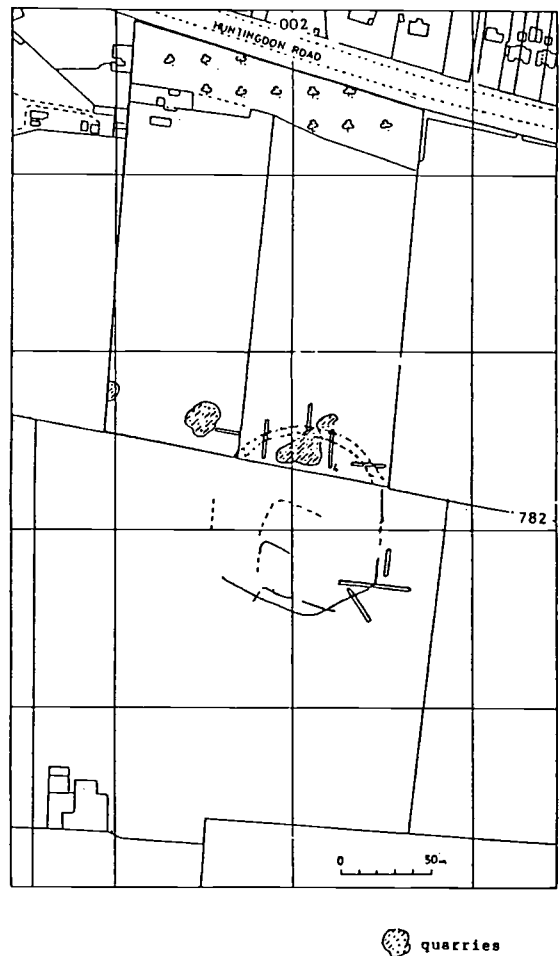


Fig 1 Thrapston – Plan showing the enclosure.

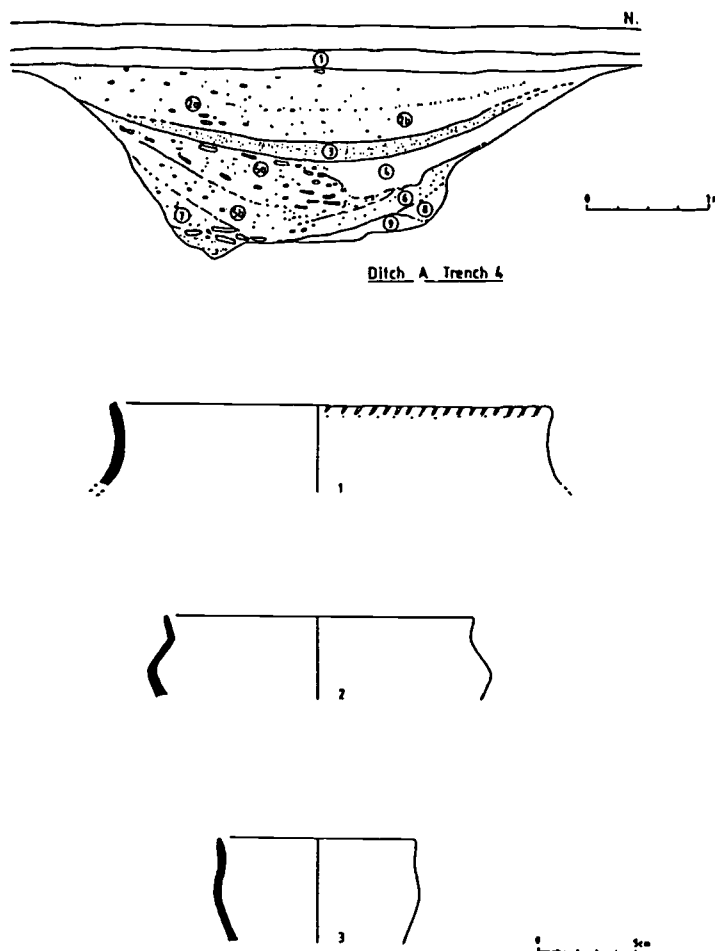


Fig 2 Thrapston - Ditch section and selection of pottery.

that are enclosed by a relatively deep ditch. The plan, if circular, is also unusual in the Iron Age period and it is possible that the enclosure had a defensive function. The position of the entrance is unclear.

The bedrock in the area of the enclosure consists of marl or limestone and despite the vague ditch lines showing on aerial photographs (FIG 1), there is evidence that much of the interior may have been disturbed by quarrying. The quarry pits revealed on the north side both pre-date and post-date the ridge and furrow system, and it is possible that a number may date from the Roman period. Roman coins

have been found in the vicinity of the enclosure and this led to it being described previously as a possible temple site (RCHM 1975).

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D.A. JACKSON

A LATE IRON AGE SITE AT HEMMINGWELL LODGE, WELLINGBOROUGH

The development of Wellingborough, begun in the 1960's by the London Development Corporation, entailed the construction of a number of large housing estates of which Hemmingwell Lodge was one. By 1971 this estate was already established when an extension to Nest Farm Lane was begun to allow further growth onto green field areas to the north. Road grading began in July of that year and was watched by Richard Harper, a member of the Northants. Field Group, who noted archaeological features being revealed on 13th July. The road bed at this point, between pedestrian bridges (GR: SP 89306940), was lowered several metres, gradually erasing most of the archaeological features. Approaching this point from Nest Lane to the south the road curves gently to the north west and runs almost parallel to the edge of an old infilled quarry and an existing fragment of field hedge (FIG 1). All of the observed archaeological features, numbers 1-14, were seen in this 80 m stretch of road bed.

The site was recorded and excavated by the authors from the 14th to the 24th of July when the grading was finished and this part of the site was erased.

The subsoil geology of the immediate area is a mixture of limestone, Northampton sand and ironstone. Most of the archaeological features were filled with a redeposited combination of these materials plus a brown clayey soil.

THE SITE (FIG 1)

Two curving ditches (nos 1 and 3), approximately 2 m in depth and 15 m apart, were initially thought to be part of a circular enclosure within which the other features were concentrated. A continued watch along the full length of the road-scraping did not find their expected return. On the south-west side of the road the ditches would have been destroyed by ironstone quarrying, but on the opposite side they ran into undisturbed farmland. As the housing development progressed it was expected that they would be revealed again in foundation trenches and that there would be

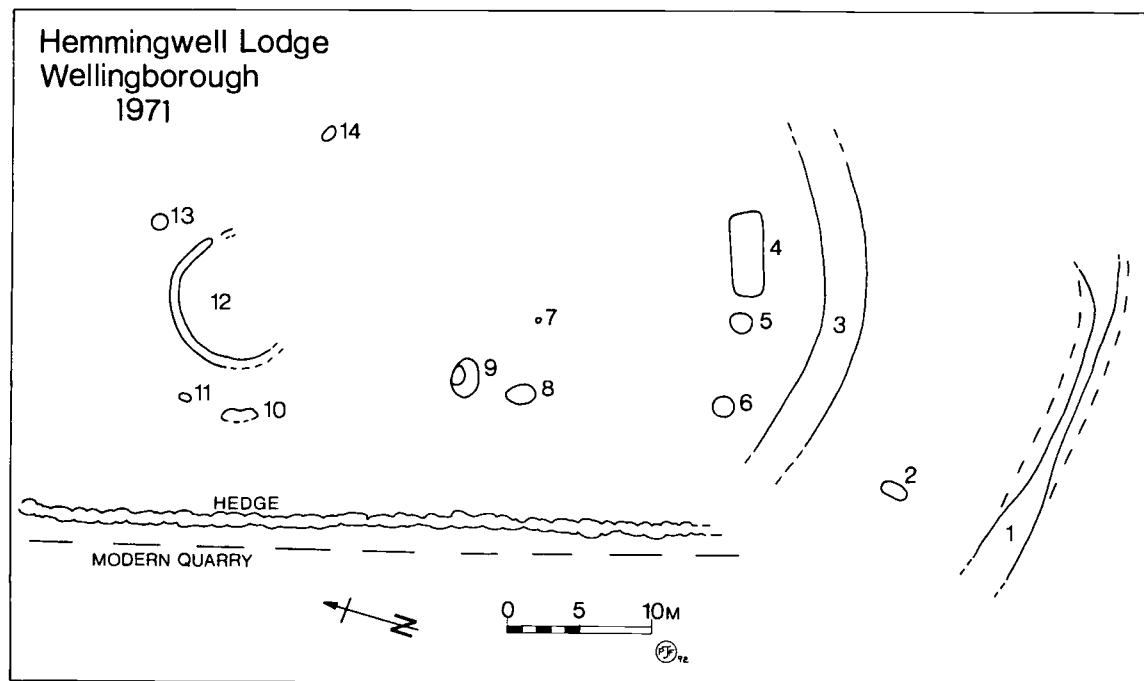


Fig 1 Hemmingwell Lodge – The location of the features.

opportunity and space to section them at leisure. Uncharacteristically, the green area on either side of the road at this point remained undeveloped.

Within the curve of the ditches were a number of pits (4–11 and 13–14), a briefly seen roundhouse gully (12) and in between the ditches, a single pit (2). The rapidity of the downgrading allowed little time for sensible excavation, but it was judged that unless anything of great importance was revealed, no halt to the work should be demanded. This decision was reached in consideration that more of the site should be surviving in the field to the north and further archaeological work should be possible. Since building has not taken place there this situation still applies.

DATING (FIG 2)

The dating of the site is by ceramic comparison. Sherds of pottery were recovered from all of the features and when compared with material from other local sites, the Hemmingwell Lodge material matches pottery dated to the Late Iron Age. The globular form of vessels 1 to 3 is a distinctive type particular to the Late Iron Age and is commonly found throughout Britain in contexts dating to the last century of the period. In Northamptonshire this form of vessel ceases to be produced with the advent of Belgic-style pottery in the area, some time close to the date of the Roman conquest. The decorated sherd (4), from pit 8, can be dated to the end of this globular phase, a life span tentatively put in the last 50 years pre-conquest. Its decoration is of a distinctive curvilinear style found only in Northamptonshire, executed in burnished tooled

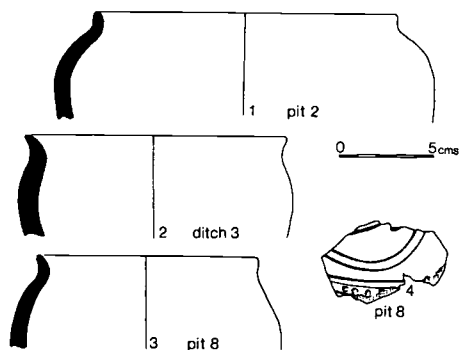


Fig 2 Hemmingwell Lodge - Dateable pottery.

lines and dimples in the form of a running scroll, and is compared with classic examples from Hunsbury (Fell 1936). This ceramic sequence can be compared with a number of local sites especially Aldwincle (Jackson 1977), Weekley (Jackson and Dix 1986/7), Moulton Park and Blackthorn (Williams 1974). On all of the sites quoted above, a common feature of their pottery is the presence or vessels decorated with randomly scratched sides. The Hemmingwell material is unusually lacking in this scored ware, but this may be due to the limited quantity of sherds recovered.

DISCUSSION

Hemmingwell Lodge is one of an apparent concentration of Iron Age sites in the Wellingborough area. Others are at Finedon Rd. Industrial Estate (Foster and Harper 1972), Ruskin Ave. and Weavers Rd. (Foster and Harper 1975), Hardwick Park (Foster, Harper and Watkins 1977), Stanwell Spinney (Jackson and Dix 1989), and a site observed by Richard Harper at the far north-east edge of the Finedon Rd Industrial Estate (Unpub). This group of sites is due to the concentrated field work of the authors in the Wellingborough area rather than an atypical conglomeration of farmsteads of the period. Concentrated fieldwork in other parts of the county has produced a comparable site density, which is not restricted to the main river valleys (Hollowell 1971), (Hall and Hutchings 1972) and (Bellamy, Foster and Johnston 1983).

The form of the Hemmingwell site is common to many Pre-Belgic sites with roundhouses and storage pits. Both enclosed and unenclosed sites are known, although the latter are uncommon. Perhaps Twywell may be classed as one such site (Jackson 1975), but the Hemmingwell site poses problems here. The two ditches (1 and 3) could be enclosure ditches since even though their return was not observed, it cannot be ruled out, given the conditions that prevailed. If they are not enclosure ditches then they may be compared to the long distance boundary ditches that have been observed in many parts of the country and which are often double, or even triple. Unfortunately they are not well dated at present and the only example excavated in Northamptonshire proved to be Early Iron Age in date (Jackson, 1975).

Our knowledge of this site may be extended if

the green area left undisturbed to the north of the road is developed, especially if any such development carries an archaeological brief.

The site records and materials recovered are deposited in the county archive.

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PIDDINGTON LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND ROMANO-BRITISH VILLA (FIG 1).

Excavation has continued at the site of Piddington on a regular basis since 1979. For a resume of work up to 1989, see Friendship-Taylor, R.M. & D.E. 1989; Frere, S.S. 1989, 290, FIG 18; Frere, S.S. 1990, 332–3.

200 prehistoric flints have come from both the

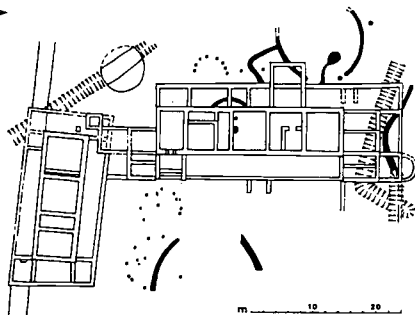
area of the late Iron Age and Roman period excavations and from fieldwalking in the surrounding area. They include, two microliths, and examples of tanged, hollow based and barbed and tanged arrow heads as well as blades, scrapers, cores and flakes. They cannot be associated with any prehistoric structures or features and no significant pattern can be ascribed to the scatter.

The first late Iron Age phase (phase 1) is represented by the post-holes of a circular building, approximately 8 m in diameter. A small amount of pottery of the mid 1st century BC was found within two of the post-holes. A second adjacent smaller circular building, approximately 6 m in diameter, may be contemporary (in the area of the later courtyard). The four circular buildings were occupied from c. 50 BC until c. 80 AD.

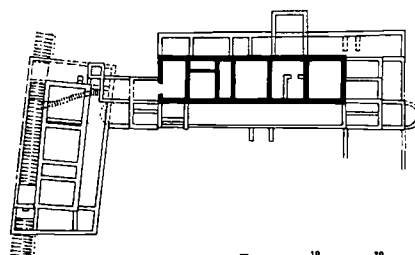
The first stone building (phase 2) was complemented by a smaller, detached east–west building, added at a slightly obtuse angle, during the first half of the 2nd century AD (phase 3). The two buildings retained their separate identities when a corridor was added to the east side of the main range, with room divisions and an apse at each end, giving an external impression of symmetry (phase 4). A second room was probably added to the cellar beneath the south end of the north–south range, lit by two splayed windows, just below its ceiling level internally and just above ground level externally. The windows have internal tile sills and, externally, slots in the stonework indicate the insertion of wooden sills. Holes in the internal splays provided for shutter bolts.

The end of the 2nd century saw the linking of the two buildings and the development of the whole into a true winged corridor villa (phase 5). The simple east–west structure became the core of a wing with front and rear corridors. By now, the south apse had disappeared and additions to the north end of the remaining apse a less conspicuous feature. A rubble-filled soak-away pit was cut outside the east cellar wall windows, with a stone-filled drain curving away downhill to the east, avoiding the earlier fence defining the ‘garden’ area in the central courtyard.

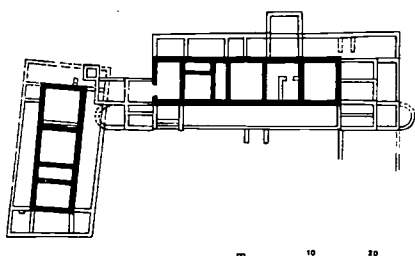
Phase 5 was brought to an end by a serious fire, in the late 2nd century. This may have started in the bath-house between the two ranges and destroyed much of the villa. It is evidenced by the fire-damaged external plaster along the walls fronting the courtyard and similar indications on the south



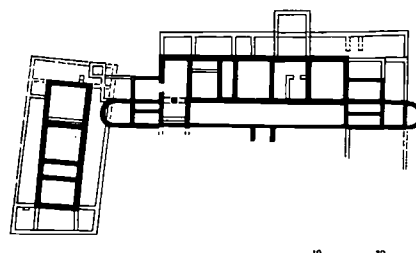
Phase 1 c AD 10-80



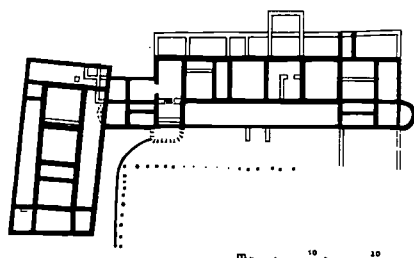
Phase 2 c AD 80-100



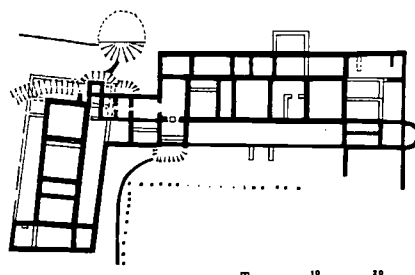
Phase 3 c AD 100-150



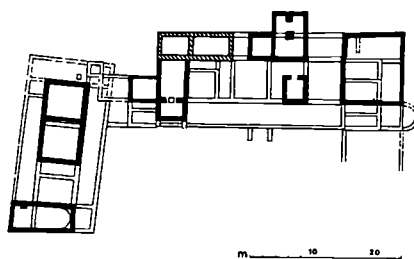
Phase 4 c AD 150-180



Phase 5 c AD 180-200



Phase 6 c AD 200-280



Phase 7 c AD 310-380+

Fig 1 The villa, phases 1-7.

side of the east-west wing, with burnt plaster, timber and nails.

Following the fire, a major rebuilding took place, not only to refurbish the main range, but to add a back range of rooms (phase 6). The bath-house was completely reconstructed, extending over what had been the north-west corner of the east-west wing with its drainage ditch cut through the former west end of this wing. The east-west range was now reduced back to the core building with a corridor fronting the courtyard and two rooms at its east end.

Changes also took place within the cellar. The opening between the two rooms, which originally consisted of a square pillar on a stone and tile stylobate (from phase 4), set centrally within the opening, was converted to a single doorway. This featured the addition of stub walls on each side, with recesses for door posts which then splayed inwards to illuminate the inner cellar room, by means of the windows in the east wall of the front cellar.

To the west of the bath-house a large pit, 8 m in diameter and 3.5 m deep was dug, perhaps initially to obtain clay for tilemaking. It was later employed as a water storage tank, receiving its supply via a timber pipeline, joined by iron collars, approaching from the south-west. The tank would have been ideally placed to provide water for the bath house. An over-flow channel had been cut to release excess water into the bath-house drain.

In the last quarter of the 3rd century, it appears that a major refurbishment was underway when villa life came to an abrupt end. This is indicated by two large heaps of unused limestone and brick tesserae, one of which measured 14 by 4 m by 25–30 cm deep and quantities of unpainted wallplaster in the bath-house. There is no evidence that any activity took place on the site for approximately thirty years. A gully in the courtyard was levelled with rubbish, which included two mint coins of Constantine I as Caesar (306–7 AD) from the London mint. This is interpreted as the clearing of the site at reoccupation. Parts of the former villa building which were dismantled to just above the footings, had been worn smooth, while other parts were extended to form at least six separate buildings. These produced evidence of intensive occupation.

In one room, which boasted a large central hearth and two ovens, there was 0.5 cm of

accumulated ash and vast quantities of oyster shells and other domestic detritus. This produced good groups of late pottery and many coins which gave the date range for this activity of c. 330–380 AD. The romanised trappings of life were still in evidence, such as Oxford, Much Hadham and Nene valley fine wares, but the living and working accommodation had every appearance of utter squalor!

The eastern-most room of the east-west wing was retained and traces of an internal, possibly timber, apse constructed, within the rectangular external stone-built walls at its north end. The fine mortar floor showed traces of horizontal grooving, caused by tamping the wet mortar with a board. Also associated were *tegulae*, in a fabric not found elsewhere on the site at any period. fourteen of these tile bore a unique stamp, (PRO). In the south-west corner of the room was a stone step that led out into the former corridor of this range, which may perhaps have been constructed in timber at this time.

Perhaps the most significant development has been the discovery of 2nd century tiles, known to have been made on site, stamped 'TCV' and 'TIB CL. SEVERI' respectively. 'SE', appears to have been added to the latter stamp. If this is interpreted as meaning 'of the estate tileries of Tiberius Claudius Severus', succeeding an earlier reference to that of Tiberius Claudius Verus, it is conceivable that Piddington has produced a unique record of the name of two successive owners of the villa. This strongly indicates that Roman citizenship was granted to a conquest period predecessor who, perhaps, smoothed the path of the conquest in the area.

The impressive pre-conquest connections of the site, together with a study of the native and imported pottery in the Nene and Welland valleys and associated artifacts, strongly suggest that the Iron Age occupation in the area of the Nene and the Ouse represents the focus of a small, but definable, minor Iron Age tribe.

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R. M. & D. E. FRIENDSHIP-TAYLOR

AN ANGLO-SAXON STONE FROM THE CHURCH OF ST LAWRENCE, TOWCESTER

In the spring of 1990, during the removal of a few internal facing stones within the bell chamber to provide bearings for steel work to support a new cage, Mr Brian Grosse noticed that one stone close to the window reveal on the north wall of the tower, had carving on the face that had been set into the core of the wall. This was drawn to the notice of the Vicar, the Revd James Atwell, who arranged for the stone to be set aside.

THE STONE (FIG 1 and PLATE 1)

The material from which the stone is cut is of a type readily available in the south Northamptonshire area. It is a fine grained, semi-oolitic iron rich limestone from the local Lias beds, with no well defined bedding, but has frequent planes of weakness which historically has made this material of only local value as a building stone.

The stone is carved in one face with a simple interlace. The other faces have been worked to a fine finish, without being rubbed. The top face has diagonal chisel tooling, while the right face, as drawn, is roughly finished, the working stopping at a line approximately 44 mm from the top of the plane of the carved face. The back face, which was the exposed face as it had been built in to the tower, has by contrast been highly finished and rubbed, and bears areas of untinted limewash. This back face, and at least the working of one end is secondary to the carving of the interlace. Lime mortar adheres to both sides and a small piece on the limewashed back face.

The carved pattern, as far as can be seen, is in the form of a simple 2-cord, tightly-woven single beaded chain plait of unit measure of 65 mm, although the incompleteness may disguise the possibility that it will develop into a knot pattern. The carving technique is humped as type A defined in (G. Adcock 1974). The only anomaly visible is what appears to be a central boss, possibly a vertical link, seen at the top as drawn, which might suggest a change in pattern at this point. This is more probably the point of junction with a mirror repeat of a half pattern F as described in Corpus XXXIX F (Cramp, R.S. 1984, FIG 21) developing as a figure-of-eight chain. The width of the pattern is apparently confined to the chain itself, estimated

at 17.4 cm. The stopping back of the finishing on the right-angled face on the left side may indicate that a staff or cable margin had once been present, but removed on the occasion of a secondary working on this side.

The interlace is clearly of Anglo-Saxon type although the pattern is remarkable simple, such that the stylistic affinities cannot be other than very broadly defined. Tight woven interlace appears for example at St Denys, York (No. 1A: Cramp, R.S. III, 81, FIG 206) and in Northamptonshire on the edge of the Moulton cross shaft, (Allen, J.R. 1888, FIG 3a) and on stone 6 at Stowe-Nine-Churches (Woodfield, P., 1981). The rather crude quality of the weave indicates a date probably in the late 10th or early 11th centuries AD. These simple forms are feature of East Midland (Lindsey) or Mercian work, as Lincoln (Gilmour et al., 1986).

The original purpose for the stone is not at all clear, as its dimensions have been adjusted by one or more phases of secondary working. The thickness of approximately 170 mm is greater than the majority of grave slabs, although some eg Lowther (Cramp, R.S. II, 132) are thicker. If it were the edge, where a simple pattern of this type might be employed, then a top or bottom return face related to the pattern might be identifiable. The fact that this is not so of course does not prove it is not a fragment of a funerary slab. If, on the other hand, the carving was the edge ornamentation of a free standing cross, where again a simple narrow linear pattern would be appropriate, a return face should again be identified, but generally this would bear some ornamentation. If the slight ridge on the right hand face is in fact the last vestigial evidence of an arris moulding, then despite the lack of face carving, this is the more likely explanation.

THE CONTEXT

The parish church sits within the south-east corner of the Roman town of Lactodorum, overlying what appears to be a substantial masonry building with a heating system and *opus spicatum* tiled floors, probably of 2nd century date. Excavations under and around the south porch of the church by Sir Henry Dryden in 1883 revealed not only Roman floors but undated walls earlier than the church building cut through the levels associated with later menial use of the Roman building. Some 100 m to

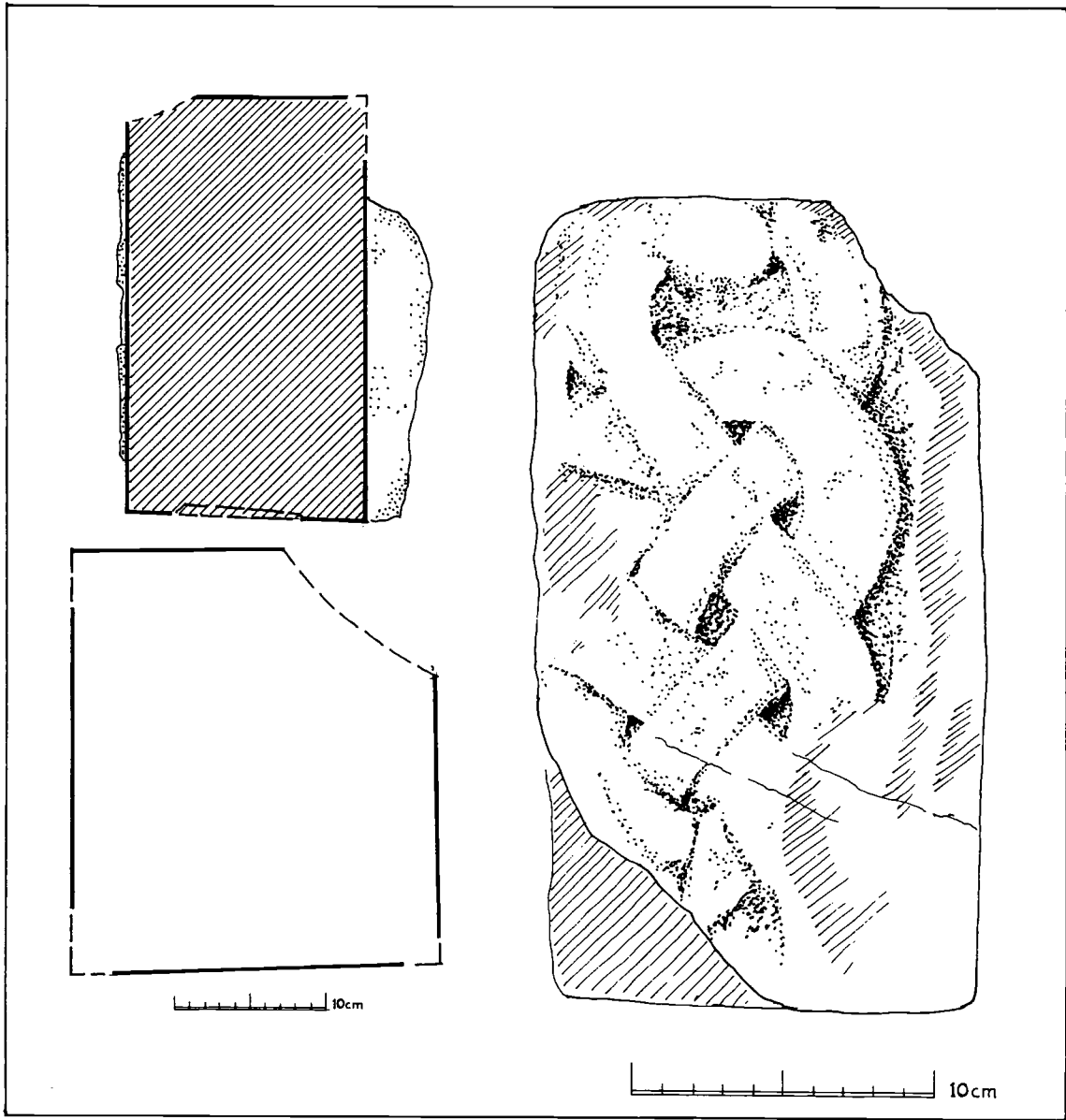


Fig 1 Towcester – An Anglo-Saxon stone from St Lawrence's church.

the north-west of the church, an historically unrecorded but presumably 11th–12th century motte is situated straddling the projected line of the Roman defences. This position offers control over the line of the ford where the former Northampton to Oxford road crosses the river Tove. The proximity of the church and the motte is sufficient for a significance

to be inferred (Morris, R.D. 1989, 250 ff). The present church contains some late 12th century Norman work of high quality, all reset; carved nook shafts and nave columns, drums and capitals. One nook shaft remounted on the south side of the chancel arch is set on a bun-shaped base of what might just be pre-Conquest work.



Plate 1 Towcester – An Anglo-Saxon stone from St Lawrence's Church

For the period between the 4th and 12th centuries, the presence of a pre-Conquest church at Towcester has been postulated on the basis of a reference in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to the existence of an established settlement there at least by the early 10th century. This was apparently of sufficient significance to be worthy of Edward the Elder's not inconsiderable effort to fortify it with a stone wall after it had held out in a siege by the Danes of Northampton. However, before the discovery of this stone, there was little material evidence of later Anglo-Saxon date other than some pottery recovered from Allen's Yard, immediately south-west of Watling Street in the town centre (Parry, S. & Woodfield, C, forthcoming).

A final interesting point is that the stone had been set back to front within the present tower, built of a totally different dark brown ironstone in c. 1480–1485. Permission to extract this stone from the royal forest of Whittlebury was granted by Edward IV and later confirmed by Richard III. This suggests that the Anglo-Saxon stone was either lying around in the 15th century, or more interestingly, was built into an earlier tower about which nothing is known, which was demolished in the later 15th century to build the new tower. Without more evidence it is of course not possible to suggest that the earlier tower was Anglo-Saxon in origin. The stone may have been incorporated in any earlier construction, or may have simply been unearthed whilst digging for the more substantial foundations needed for the new tower.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer thanks the Revd James Atwell for bringing the stone to his attention, and to Professor Richard Bailey for assistance in preparing this note.

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PAUL WOODFIELD

EXCAVATIONS AT THE PREBENDAL MANOR HOUSE, NASSINGTON

During the period between November 1992 and February 1993, one of the out-buildings at The Prebendal Manor House, Nassington, known as the Lodgings, was refurbished, with the installation of a damp-proof course. This involved the removal of a cobbled floor and the excavation of at least 0.3 m of the subsoil. In advance of the building work, approximately half of the floor area was hand excavated to a depth of approximately 0.6 m, to determine the nature of any surviving stratigraphy that might relate to the construction and use of the building or any features that might predate it.

The removal of the cobbled surface revealed numerous substantial packed post-holes together with pipe trenches and a large drain-like feature that had been backfilled with considerable quantities of bone. All of these features were modern. They may well account for the absence of any stratigraphy relating to the construction or early use of the building.

Having removed all the modern features, a dark grey, silty deposit was found throughout, apparently extending beneath the walls of the building in every direction. It was similar to a deposit that had been encountered during previous excavations at the site and contained numerous sherds of Stamford Ware. One feature was recorded, although its dimensions were impossible to determine since it had been cut by a modern pipe trench. The feature contained a single sherd of Stamford Ware and an intact tanged Iron knife blade measuring 102 mm. It most closely resembles a type 2761 from the Winchester series which dates from the mid 13th century onwards (Goodhall, I.A. 1990, 848).

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J. BAILLE and M. TINGLE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AT ST BOTOLPH'S CHURCH, BARTON SEAGRAVE, KETTERING, NORTHANTS IN 1987

The re-ordering in 1987 of the interior of St Botolph's Church, Barton Seagrave, Kettering (NGR SP 888 771) provided the opportunity for limited archaeological investigation of its early fabric. The alterations, being made for lowering the floor levels of the congregational seating area and the chancel, were observed between 3–7 August by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Unit on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. Medieval work was exposed and subsequently preserved in both areas, but the depth of modern excavation scarcely penetrated such earlier floor levels as had survived extensive Victorian remodelling.

In 1878 the church was enlarged by the construction of a new nave and chancel over the demolished 14th-century south aisle and chapel. Parts of the original 12th-century structure were

also restored and the floors were apparently re-laid throughout in a sequence of eight levels. Apart from the greater disturbance caused by the installation of heating ducts and related vents, much of the interior appears to have been excavated to depths of between 0.23 m and 0.4 m prior to the construction of wooden floors suspended on brick sleeper walls. The spaces between the individual walls were backfilled with loose earth, containing pieces of brick and other rubbish, to leave a void above, but stone-flagged alleyways and other margins were laid on an additional bed of yellow mortar and limestone chippings, which varied in thickness according to the height of the intended floor.

Since the depth of excavation for the modern reflooring was largely confined within the levels of Victorian disturbance, the work did not prejudice the survival of any interior surfaces which had not been exposed previously. Whilst small scale investigation undertaken towards the south-west corner of the original nave and in the former south

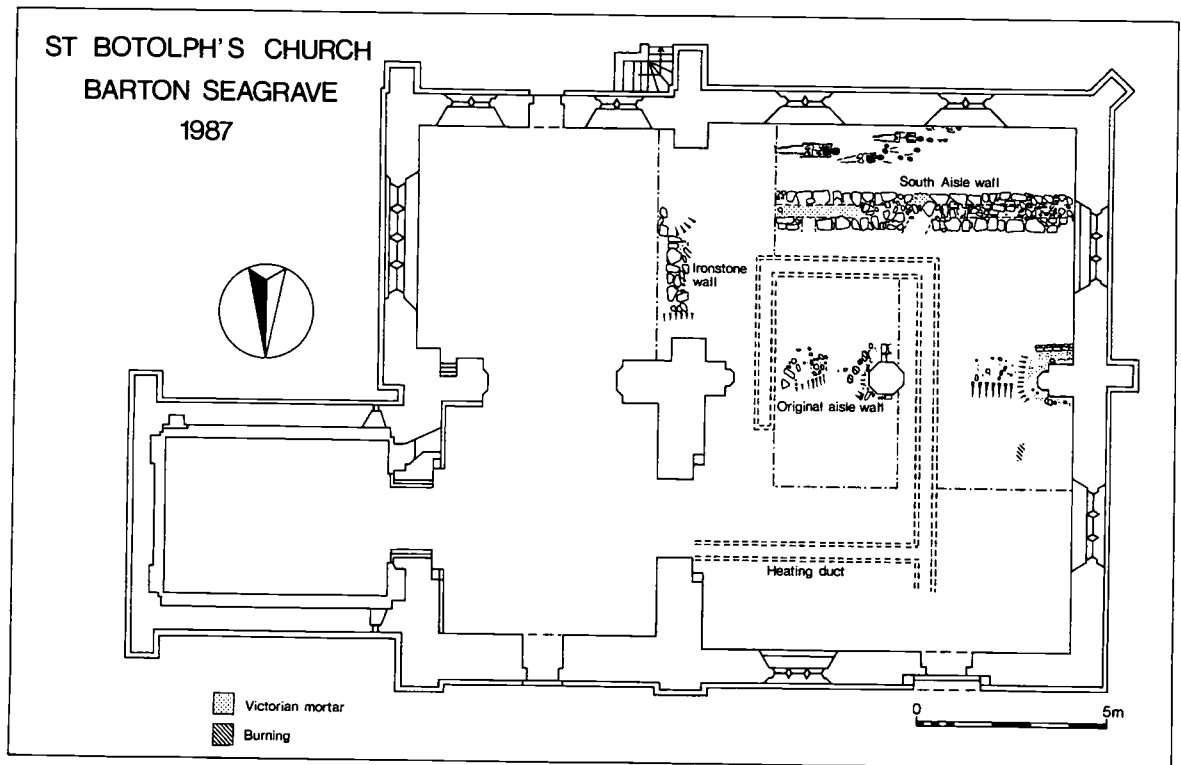


Fig 1 St Botolph's Church, Barton Seagrave, Kettering – features exposed during reflooring, August 1987.

aisle confirmed that earlier levels lay immediately below the 19th-century deposits, no attempt was made to ascertain their thickness above undisturbed natural. The building contractor's work, however, re-exposed parts of the south wall of the 12th-century nave. The bases of the central pier and of the responds to the subsequent arcade had been opened up previously and were variously restored. The foundation of the underlying wall had also been exposed on an earlier occasion, when its inner edge was damaged by the building of a sleeper wall nearby. Slightly over half of its original width of c. 1.25 m survived, but its rubble construction, incorporating burnt stones, had been consolidated with the yellow mortar characteristic of Victorian work in the church.

At a distance of approximately 4 m to the south of the centre of the arcade, a broad limestone foundation defined the extent of the 14th-century aisle. The footing was c. 1.1 m wide and was exposed over a length of almost 8 m. Its west end was truncated 0.2 m from the end wall of the Victorian church, which had therefore been built anew and was indeed supported on a brick foundation. At a point 10.5 m to the east, an area of disturbance indicated the position of the cross-wall which had extended to the south-east corner of the nave to form a partition with the chantry chapel. This further junction had also been destroyed by Victorian refurbishment, so that only an isolated central stretch of walling, c. 2 m long by 0.6 m wide, survived at a depth of c. 0.42 m beneath the entrance to the subsequent chancel. Its construction of large ironstone blocks, laid without mortar but partly bedded with green clay, suggests a different date from the aisle wall. While it might represent an early feature it could equally denote a late insertion, perhaps blocking the small arch which is known to have connected the two compartments (cf. Parker, J.H. 1849, 151). In contrast, the foundation of the aisle wall was formed by large, roughly dressed blocks of limestone at either side of a rubble core. The individual facing stones were up to 0.5 m long by 0.35 m wide and 70 mm thick, and all were flat-laid without mortar. Although a lower course of stonework was visible in places, the original depth of the foundation was nowhere exposed. The centre of the wall had been used to support a later floor and some stones had been reset in yellow mortar.

The efficiency of the Victorian demolition of the

wall had been such that it was impossible to determine its original width above ground and, since no evidence survived of the steps which had led into the aisle from the south door, it must be assumed that the previous floor level was also totally destroyed. The existence of the south door within 4 m of the west end may, however, be reflected by the occurrence of a series of burials which extended eastwards from that point at a distance of c. 0.75 m beside the wall. Originally outside the building, they had become incorporated into the enlarged Victorian church where they lay immediately beneath the floor make-up and in at least one instance had been cut into by the foundations of its south wall. Individual grave-cuts could not be discerned in the shallow depth of burial earth removed for the modern reflooring and only eleven inhumations required to be reinterred. The intercutting and superimposition of several of the bodies indicated that they were not all contemporary, but there was otherwise a lack of dating evidence. A few Medieval pottery sherds were present in the surrounding soil and elsewhere a single rim of Roman pottery was also found. Apart from three adults (one male, another possibly female, and the third of indeterminate sex), the remains were those of younger persons, ranging from an infant of 0–6 months to an adolescent of 15–20 years.

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BRIAN DIX

A SHERD OF MEDIEVAL POTTERY WITH A ROLLER-STAMPED INSCRIPTION FROM FLORE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Finds of medieval pottery with inscribed lettering are extremely rare. Until recently, only two examples of ceramic vessels with roller-stamped inscriptions were known, both from the south Midlands and comprising a jug handle from Abthorpe, near Towcester, Northamptonshire and a complete ?early 15th-century jug from Hertford Street, Coventry (Dunning 1967, cf. FIG 1). In November 1992 a sherd of a third vessel was

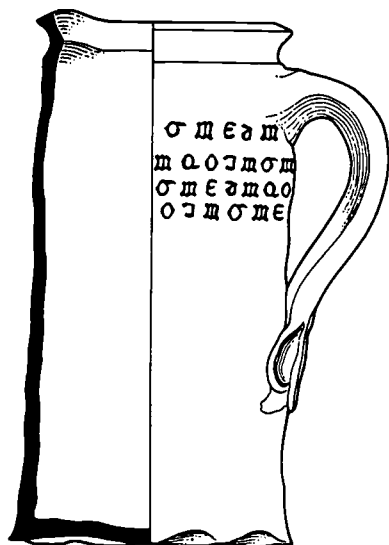


Fig 1 Jug with roller-stamped inscription from Hertford St, Coventry, scale 1/3. Redrawn by Melanie Connell after Dunning 1967, fig 68.

discovered in Northamptonshire during fieldwalking of land belonging to E.M. Rogers (Transport) Ltd at NGR SP64156115 near the village of Flore. The sherd occurred as part of a widespread and thin scatter of medieval and later material which had presumably been introduced by previous manuring. It does not appear to be associated directly with any adjacent settlement. The discovery was made by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Unit during an archaeological evaluation which had been commissioned by Ove Arup & Partners for the Secretary of State for Transport. The work was carried out as part of a wider series of studies required for the production of an Environmental Statement in relation to options to improve the traffic capacity of the M1 motorway from Junctions 15 to 19.

The lettered sherd, like the Coventry jug, is of Chilvers Coton ware, which was made in the Nuneaton area (Mayes and Scott 1984), and preserves four complete letters in Lombardic script (FIG 2). Parts of two rows are present. The upper row consists of an inverted Q and M, with another M and A in the lower. There is no doubt that the inscription was made with the same roller-stamp as the Coventry jug, since both the characters and their order are identical (Dunning 1967, 235, fig 68). The complete inscription from Coventry reads MEAMQODMQ and is repeated in five rows around the circumference

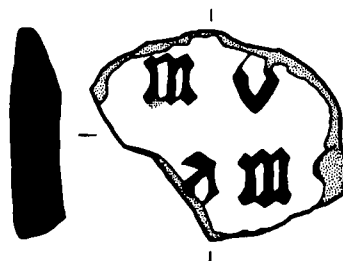


Fig 2 Sherd of roller-stamped vessel from Flore, Northamptonshire. Actual size. Drawn by Melanie Connell.

of the vessel. In reporting it, the late Gerald Dunning did not attempt an interpretation beyond suggesting that the lettering may have had a protective or religious meaning (*ibid*, 237–41). In fact, the inscription may more simply be a misspelling or a phonetic use of the Latin words *meam quod*, with the ensuing MQ either denoting a repeat or being an abbreviation of *mihi quod*. The spirit of its message would seem to be ‘What’s mine is mine’. This could signify ownership or, perhaps more subtly, that the contents of the jug were the reward of the drinker, perhaps for a hard day’s work which had been well done. In addition to the ‘vulgar’ spelling, the occasional inversion of the characters indicates that the person who made the roller-stamp was not too bothered by accuracy and may not have been very familiar with writing. This is not surprising given the low social standing and relative poverty of medieval potters (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 76–9).

Whatever the true meaning of its inscription, this latest sherd is an interesting addition to the small corpus of inscribed medieval pottery vessels and gives an insight into the mechanisms of the contemporary industry, wherein the rarity of the MEAMQOD jugs suggests that they were probably a one-off batch produced in a single firing.

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PAUL BLINKHORN and BRIAN DIX

THE SIBBERTOFT CIVIL WAR COIN HOARD

In mid December 1991 Mr J. Ellis discovered 43 silver coins buried in a pasture at Lowe Farm near Sibbertoft. Mr Ellis recovered a further coin on 25th January 1992 producing a total of 44. The find, having first been reported to the Central Museum, Northampton, was declared Treasure Trove on 31st July 1992. Despite further searches by the finder, the tenant farmer and later by Mr R. Kings of the Midland Archaeological Research Society (acting on behalf of the County Archaeology Unit per Graham Cadman) no other coins were located.

The coins were found in an area approximately 10 m by 5 m in extent. The majority of the recovered coins (35) came from a depth of c. 4 to 6 inches (the ploughsoil goes down to c. 6 to 8 inches and some subsoiling has taken place). Some larger holes were then dug by Mr A. Nightingale, the tenant. A group of four coins were found touching at a depth of c. 20 inches, while another four were found in close association at c. 12 inches. Although most of the coins were scattered throughout the ploughsoil the eight from below seem to be more closely grouped. It is likely that the coins originally formed one discrete group, probably enclosed in an undiscovered container. The idea that the coins were hoarded is substantiated by the numismatic information given below.

It can be assumed that the date of deposition would be shortly after the hoard was closed. The latest identified coins are three shillings of Charles I with the privy mark (R). This privy mark was issued from around May 1644 and was pyxed 12th May 1645. The coins are unworn and are of their proper weight. This would suggest a burial date of 1645.

It is important to note that the Civil War battlefield of Naseby (14th June 1645) is only a short distance (c. 1500 yards) to the south of where the hoard was found. The position of the find spot could be seen as a likely location for the Royalist baggage, being north of Dust Hill and a similar distance to the north of the battle lines as the Parliamentarian baggage was recorded to the south (G. Foard, pers. comm.). It is highly unlikely that either side had time to stop to bury a hoard following the battle when the remnants of the King's army were routed and rapidly pursued by the New Model Army.

If the hoard can be attributed to the period of the battle, extra weight can be lent to the argument for the hoard having Royalist connections, apart from the find spot. The hoard contains an obviously Royalist halfcrown of Charles I minted in the King's name in Oxford, 1642. Such coins are quite different in design from those issued by the Tower mint.

Another possible Civil War period coin hoard was found near Sibbertoft, before 1866, containing gold coins of James and Charles I (Besly 1987, 107) but neither the exact find spot nor details of the coins are known.

The unrest caused by the Civil War produced a very large increase in hoarding; in fact hoards dating to this period are more numerous than any other period since Roman times. It has been noted (Casey 1986, 61) that, with the exception of Newark, hoards tend to be found away from battlefield sites, coming from the areas where rival factions are known to have recruited their armies. The recovery of the two hoards near Sibbertoft does not conform to this pattern. It conforms to the traditional idea that hoards can be associated with areas of unrest but in this case specifically coming from the proximity of a battlefield. Perhaps other battlefield hoards exist but remain undiscovered.

Summary List of the Coins (English)

	Halfcrown	Shilling	Sixpence	%Total
Elizabeth I		2	14	39.0
James I		1	1	4.9
Charles I	5	15	3	56.1

There is also a 30/- piece of James VI of Scotland (current as a halfcrown in England) and two Irish shillings of James I (current as 9d each in England). The face value of the collection is then £2-3-6. This amounts to 65 pay days for a foot soldier or 17 pay days for a cavalryman (Firth 1902, 184 and Besly 1987, 55).

Scots and Irish coins are often found in hoards of the mid 17th century, turning up in nearly a third of recorded hoards. The intermingling of Scots coin after the Union Treaty was facilitated by an exact equivalence ratio of 12:1. Besly (1987, 63) has stated that there is no direct evidence to connect the Irish coin with the arrival of Charles 'Irish' troops in 1643.

The rulers represented by the hoard coins, the proportions of each and of their corresponding

denominations, follows the pattern seen in most Civil War period hoards. This pattern reflects coin issue trends during the period covered by the coins. As a result of Mary Tudor's Spanish marriage and through trade and organised piracy under Elizabeth I, much more silver became available for coining. Firstly there was the great recoinage of 1560–61 which restored the silver standard. The recoinage produced mostly shillings but from 1561 the mint concentrated on sixpences. Hence the large number of Elizabethan sixpences. Shillings were not coined again until 1683 and thereafter in quantity. On the other hand very little silver coinage was produced during the reign of James I and in the early years of the reign of Charles I so such coins would form a smaller part of the Civil War period currency pool. The silver increased again due to an arrangement with Spain during the European War and from

1632 there was an artificially high silver coin output. The halfcrown, for the first time, became important circulating denomination for this reason the hoard contains several halfcrowns of Charles I with numerous shillings.

The clipping of coins was commonplace. By 1640 nearly all Elizabethan coins had been clipped and the Civil War period was seen as a heyday for clippers. An analysis of the weights of the coins shows that overall the coins are of good weight and only a little below the average weight standard. This would indicate that the pieces had been carefully selected with clipped coins being avoided. Such a situation is normal in the hoarding of coins. That the coins are irregular in shape is not to do with pieces having been cut off but is due to their manufacturing process with little effort being put into the production of a smoothly round flan.

LIST OF HOARD COINS

ENGLAND

1	Elizabeth I	Shilling	N.2014	A	1583–5	5.71 g
2	"	"	"	Tun	1591–4	5.93 g
3	"	Sixpence	N.1997	Pheon	1561	2.69 g
4	"	"	"	"	1562	2.27 g
5	"	"	"	Portcullis	1566	2.84 g
6	"	"	"	Lion	1566	2.23 g
7	"	"	"	Coronet	1567	2.84 g
8	"	"	"	Ermine	1572	2.60 g
9	"	"	"	Acorn	1573	2.85 g
10	"	"	"	"	1573	2.72 g
11	"	"	"	Eglantine	1575	2.81 g
12	"	"	"	"	1576	2.73 g
13	"	"	"	"	1576	2.74 g
14	"	"	"	Plain cross	1578	2.65 g
15	"	"	"	"	1579	2.47 g
16	James I	Shilling	N.2100	Escallop	1606–7	5.53 g
17	"	Sixpence	N.2102	Rose	1605	2.11 g
18	Charles I	Halfcrown	N.2209	–	1634–8	12.45 g
19	"	"	N.2214	Star	1640–1	15.31 g
20	"	"	"	Triangle-in-circle	1641–3	14.70 g
21	"	"	"	"	1640–4	14.88 g
22	"	" (Oxford)	N.2411	Plume	1642	14.45 g
23	"	Shilling	N.2225	Crown	1635–6	5.92 g
24	"	"	"	"	1635–6	5.91 g
25	"	"	N.2229	Tun	1636–8	6.01 g
26	"	"	N.2231	Star	1640–1	5.55 g
27	"	"	"	"	1640–1	6.00 g
28	"	"	"	Triangle-in-circle	1641–3	6.01 g
29	"	"	"	"	1641–3	5.32 g
30	"	"	"	"	1641–3	6.03 g
31	"	"	"	"	1641–3	6.24 g

NOTES

32	Charles I	Shilling	N.2231	(P)	1643-4	6.16 g
33	"	"	"	"	1643-4	6.34 g
34	"	"	"	(R)	1644-5	5.98 g
35	"	"	"	"	1644-5	5.95 g
36	"	"	"	"	1644-5	6.04 g
37	"	"	"	-	1639-45	5.67 g
38	"	Sixpence	N.2241	Tun	1636-8	3.06 g
39	"	"	N.2244	Triangle	1639-40	3.01 g
40	"	"	N.2246	Star	1640-1	2.89 g

SCOTLAND

41	James VI	30/-		Thistle	1610-25	12.98 g
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IRELAND

42	James I	Shilling		Martlet	1604-13	3.39 g
43	James I			Bell	1603	3.79 g

Coin found 25 January 1992

44	Elizabeth I	Sixpence	N.1997	Castle	1571	2.92 g
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Weight Summary and Percentage of Ideal Weight

		Sixpences	Shillings	Halfcrowns
Elizabeth I	1561-82	2.65 (14) 88.70	-	-
	1583-1603	-	5.82 (2) 96.7	-
James I		2.11 (1) 70.1	5.53 (1) 91.9	-
Charles I	Lys-Tun	3.06 (1) 101.7	5.95 (3) 98.8	12.45 (1) 82.7
	Anchor-Star	2.95 (2) 98.0	5.78 (2) 95.9	15.31 (1) 101.2
	Triangle-in circle	-	5.90 (4) 98.0	14.70 (1) 97.7
	(P) - (R)	-	6.09 (5) 99.8	
	All Types 2.99 (3) 99.2	5.94 (15) 98.7	14.34 (5) 95.2	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 Northampton Museums
 December 1992