

Notes

LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: A STUDY IN THE USE OF CERAMIC ANALYSIS TO INVESTIGATE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND LANDSCAPE CHANGES.

In the two decades between 1965 and 1985 Northamptonshire was transformed from a delightful rural county into a relocation dormitory for over-spill populations out of metropolitan centres using, almost exclusively, new green field housing developments to urbanise the landscape. This artificial and unnatural increase in local populations immediately required an intensification of the communications network which took the form of upgrading existing roads and building entirely new express and motorways to service the region (Williams. 1972). It may be noted that the rail network was not enhanced, not even to the extent of replacing those lines destroyed by Beeching. This in turn encouraged an influx of light, i.e. mainly service, industries, concerned with distribution and sales, that took advantage of the road network to operate away from the more expensive city centres. These "industrial" estates were also almost always located on green field sites and demanded, in many cases, further localised road networks to service them. This period of development also saw a nation-wide increase in the demand for basic construction materials that resulted in the mass destruction of the river valleys of the Midlands in the pursuit of sand and gravel (R.C.H.M. 1960). This included a greater part of the Nene valley resulting in a landscape which could earn the county the title of "Lake District of the Midlands" and which is today not altogether displeasing. Also at this time the British steel industry, which had not quite been totally destroyed, still operated out of Corby steelworks, supplied with iron ore from three large open cast quarries in the central north region of the county. The open cast mining is now minimal, but the other development horrors continue unabated, possibly at an even greater tempo.

A depressing scenario; quarries; industrial estates; housing estates; expressways; and motorways, and yet with hind sight it may surprisingly be considered

an archaeological golden age with almost unlimited opportunities to investigate complete land and townscapes. During this period Dennis Jackson became responsible for a greater part of the excavated archaeology in Northamptonshire outside the Northampton urban area, excavating and publishing an enviable number of "quality" sites covering a wide chronological range, most of which can be found in the pages of the county journal "Northamptonshire Archaeology" (see below). The story concerning this paper, although leaning heavily upon the work of Dennis Jackson, however, begins much earlier.

During the 19th century the hill-fort of Hunsbury (Fig 2, No. 1), located on the southern edge of modern Northampton, became an open cast iron ore quarry which resulted in the destruction of almost all of its interior. A local antiquarian, Mr Phipps, offered cash rewards to encourage the quarrymen to gather any interesting objects. In this manner a fine collection of Iron Age iron tools, quern stones and the more distinctive decorated pottery fragments was made (Dryden 1885, George 1916, 1917). The fact that occupation in the fort did not continue into the Roman period was also noted at quite an early date (Scott 1931). Naturally highly decorated pottery fragments and complete vessels were gathered in preference to plain wares and small pieces, and so the collection cannot be considered a representative sample. The decoration on many of the fragments uses a recurring motif of a running scroll with a rosette of dots to each lobe of the scroll. The form is of a globular bowl with a bead rim which is almost always highly burnished inside and out. The globular form of the vessels is common for the period in most parts of Britain during the late Iron Age, but the motif of running scroll and rosette appears to be restricted to central Northamptonshire only. This style inevitably became known as Hunsbury ware (Fell 1936) (Fig. 1B after Dunning in Fell 1936).

Little further material was found until the 1960's apart from a single fragment at Draughton (Fig 2, No. 6), with running scroll but with only single dimples to each lobe (Grimes 1946, 1961) and at Desborough (Fig 2, No. 7) a similarly decorated, complete bowl (Fig. 1A), possibly part of a grave deposit judging by its association with the well known Desborough

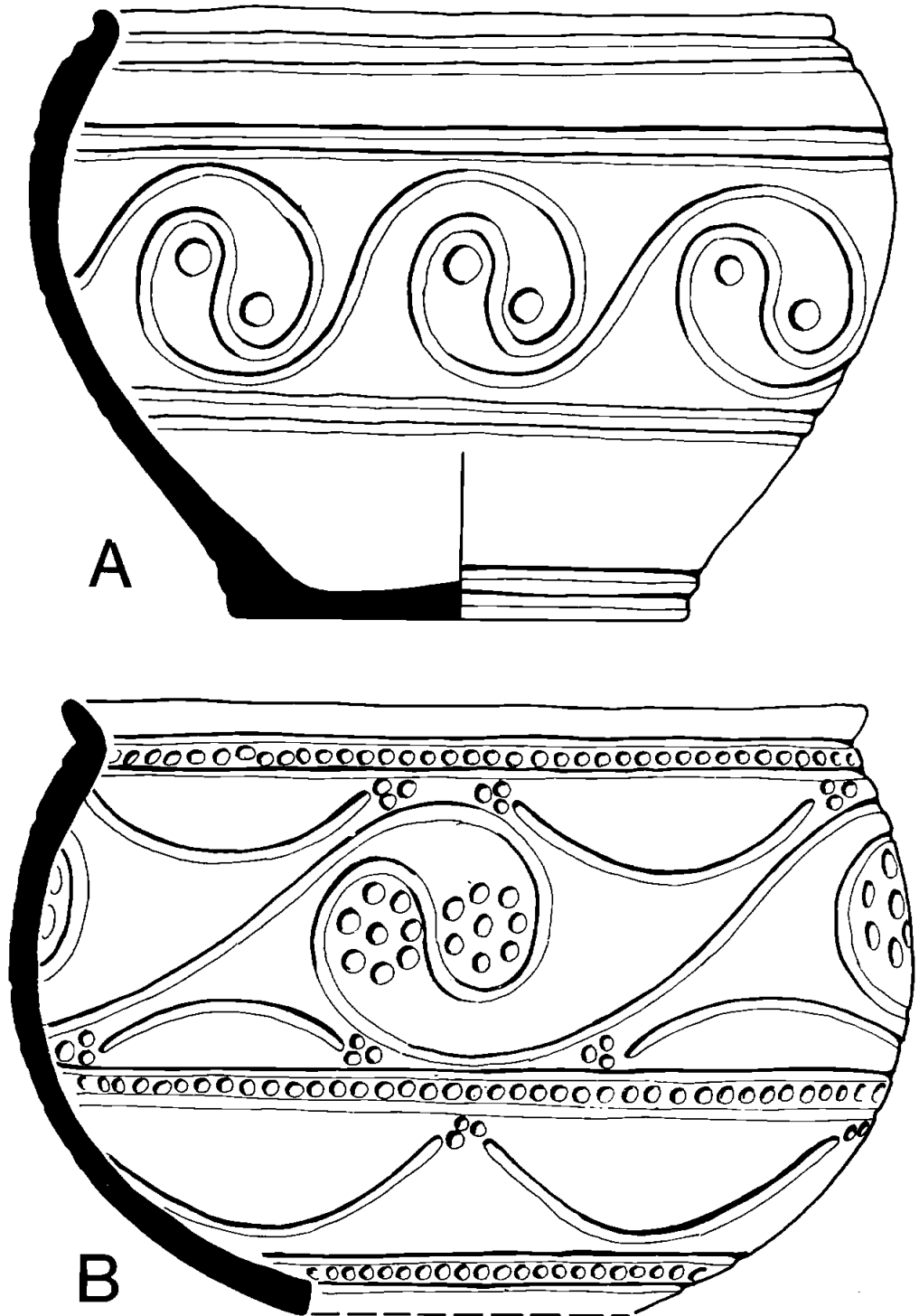


Fig 1 The Hunsbury/Weekley style of Decorated late Iron Age pottery. A) The Desborough Bowl: single dot running scroll
B) The Hunsbury type: multiple dot or rosette with running scroll

mirror and a bronze fibula of pre-conquest type (George 1904, Smith 1908). The more recent development of Northamptonshire brought a number of new examples of both multiple and single dimple types; Hardingstone (Fig 2, No. 2) (Woods 1969); Moulton Park (Fig 2, No. 4), and Blackthorn (Fig 2, No. 3) (Williams 1974); Briar Hill (Fig 2, No. 5) (Denham 1985) are all from the Northampton area and have multiple and rosette dimples. From Twywell (Fig 2, No. 12) (Jackson 1975); Ringstead (Fig 2, No. 13) (Jackson 1980); Brigstock (Fig 2, No. 10) (Jackson 1983); Brigstock (Fig 2, No. 11) (Foster forthcoming); Hemmingwell Lodge, Wellingborough (Fig 2, No. 14) (Harper, Foster and Jackson 1992); Ashley (Fig 2, No. 8) (Taylor and Dix 1985) came examples of only the single dimple type. However, it was not until the excavations at Weekly (Fig 2, No 9) (Jackson and Dix 1987) that enough material was available (366 decorated sherds, of which 12 are of the single dimple type, out of an overall total of 2520), not only to challenge the type site designation, but to formulate some conclusions regarding the spatial patterning of the distribution (Foster 1977, 1987).

The distribution pattern shows a distinct geographical region for each of the two types of running scroll decorative motif. The multiple dimple style motif is centred on Northampton and its satellite villages which include the type site of Hunsbury although the 21 decorated sherds found at the nearby village of Hardingstone (Fig 2, No. 2) (Woods 1969) is numerically superior to the designated type site. The single dimple motif group is concentrated in the central area of the county between the Rivers Nene and Welland mainly on sites located on or near tributaries of the middle reaches of the Nene. Only a single site, Ashley (Fig 2, No. 8) is actually located on the River Welland and it represents the furthest northern outlier of the group. This site is also notable for a beehive quern stone fragment with a pecked scroll and single dimple motif decorating the external surface. Sheila Elsdon's work has shown (Elsdon 1975) that the distinctiveness and consistent use of the running scroll pattern is outside the normal decorative repertoire of contemporary potters in the adjacent regions. If decorative patterns can be used as a symbol of identification between peoples, then it is possible that the running scroll may identify a small independent tribal unit located in the central Northamptonshire area. By the same criteria the different use of the dots within the repertoire may indicate minor internal tribal distinctions.

That a small independent community could survive between two large and powerful neighbours, the Catuvellauni and the Corieltauvi, is quite feasible and not without precedent. The area has excellent agricultural land and the important advantage of rich iron ore deposits, which, as numerous iron smelting furnaces indicate, were increasingly being taken advantage of at the close of the Iron Age. In the excavations at Weekly, sherds of gabbro tempered pottery, distinctive of the Southwest of Britain, decorated with a curvilinear design similar to that used specifically on pottery from Castle Dore in Cornwall give some indication of possible long distance trade connections into the area, possibly via the "Jurassic Way".

Ceramic assemblages of this period are usually composed of a small percentage of the decorated globular fine wares and a larger proportion of undecorated examples. The bulk of the assemblage is of coarse ware bowls, beakers and jars of which a good proportion, 31% at Weekly for example (Jackson and Dix 1987), are embellished, vigorously with random scoring or scratch marks. These scored wares have a wide distribution and can be found on most Middle and Late Iron Age sites throughout the Midlands. Although in many groups of pottery from this period some larger vessels can be identified, very large storage jars are generally absent.

Analysis of the excavated ceramic material from across the county consistently shows that this complete ceramic repertoire was abruptly terminated at some time in the first half of the first century AD and replaced with a whole new set of pottery types of the so called Belgic style. Not only were the forms different, but different potting techniques and technology was being used in their manufacture. The Belgic style pottery comprises of high fired, sometimes handmade in the early versions, but commonly wheel-turned vessels, often formed with cordons and pedestal foot-rings. The early coarse wares are handmade barrel shaped jars that rapidly become replaced by the more Romanized form of channel rimmed "cooking pot". There are also, for the first time, large hook or roll rimmed storage jars. Whereas the earlier hand made globular vessels were almost entirely black or dark brown in colour, the new Belgic style pottery was commonly in oxidised colours, relating more to Roman -Mediterranean traditions.

Not only was there a radical change in form, decoration, potting techniques and technology, but as more sites were excavated the evidence repeatedly

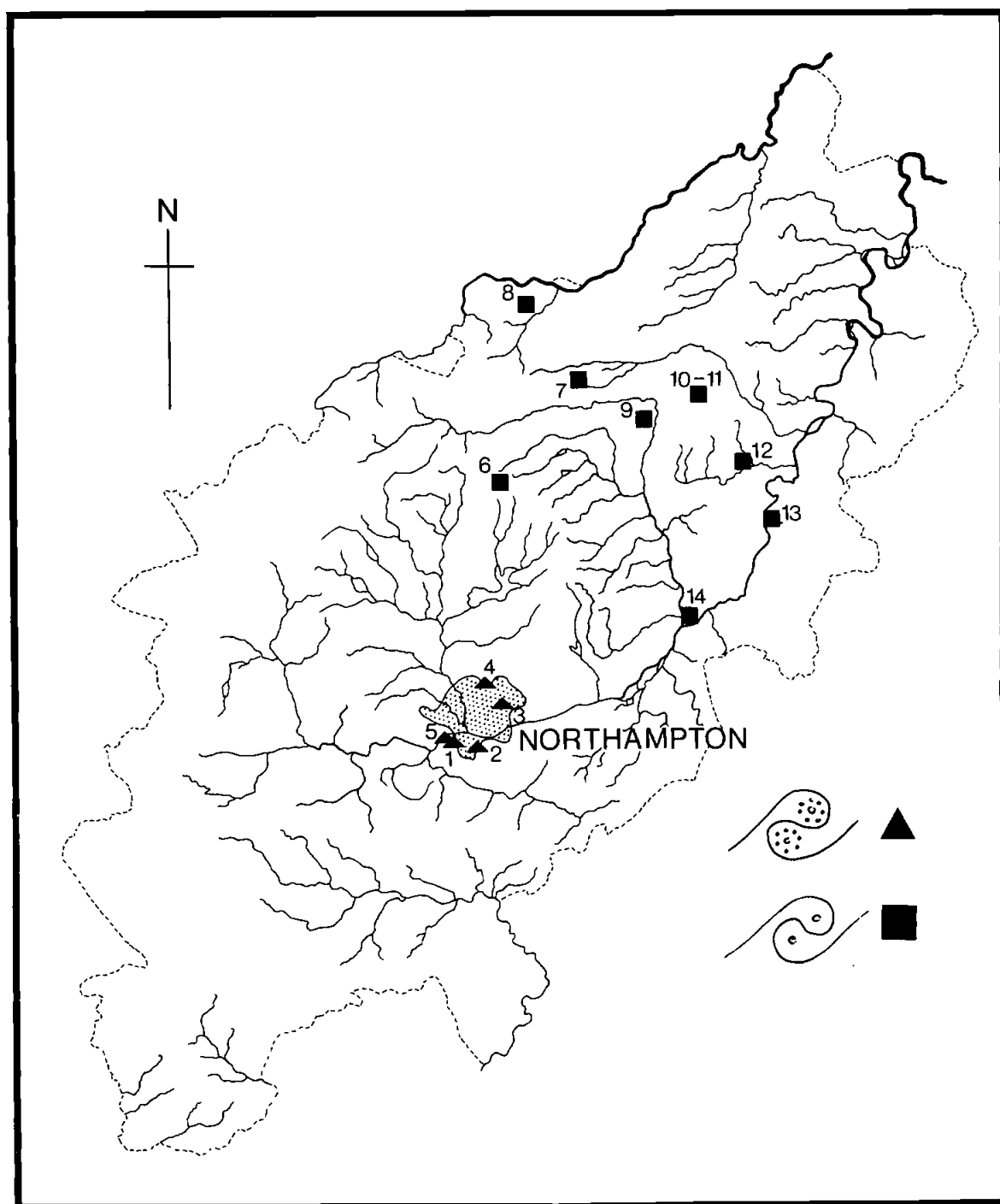


Fig 2 Pottery find sites in Northamptonshire

indicated that this was not a gradual evolution with the old lingering on with the new. This was an abrupt revolution with apparently no remnants of the old order allowed to survive and commonly appear in the archaeological record. This situation is in marked contrast to the next change in ceramic tradition that occurs with the full Romanization of the region after the conquest. In those years around AD 50 the excavated evidence shows a gradual change from the Belgic style of pottery, which was already Romanized, to the full Roman tradition.

There is considerable and not unexpected ceramic evidence from the excavation of individual sites indicating some sort of changes taking place at around the time of the Roman conquest. Ideally supporting evidence from some other perspective would be advantageous. Fortunately, in 1980, the excavation of a LIA homestead at Brigstock (Jackson 1983) revealed the remarkable preservation of past landscapes within the medieval deer park in which the site was located. This is almost entirely due to the lack of medieval ploughing and, since disparking in 1610, this hilly landscape of clay soils has until recently received the minimum of modern ploughing being generally kept under pasture. As a consequence, in 1981, the Brigstock landscape survey was initiated with the aim of recovering as much of the surviving information as possible (Foster 1994). Over a period of three years some 2,000 acres were intensively field-walked by a small team of three walking transects at no more than 2 metres apart. Every find was individually bagged and plotted. Intensive aerial photographic coverage by the county archaeological service prior to walking provided a remarkable set of prints showing extensive soil and crop marks which was essential as a control for the find location system. A small number of excavations and a limited amount of test pitting gave added information. A set of maps combining many aspects of this work is one of the results. The maps covering the Iron Age and Roman periods (Fig. 3) provide valuable addition information concerning this area of the Northamptonshire landscape during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods.

The Iron Age landscape maps illustrate the close relationship between pottery sherd concentrations and soil/crop-marks. Excavations and aerial photographs have shown that the pottery concentrations are associated with a dispersed, but quite dense settlement pattern of individual roundhouse homesteads. There is of course an exception, a complex of soil-marks in the

centre of the park, which excavation has shown to be an unusual cluster of roundhouses each with a shared circular enclosure ditch ultimately forming a ground plan similar in pattern to that of a bunch of grapes. Ceramic evidence from the field-walking indicates that the main period of occupation for these homesteads is during the globular pre-Belgic ceramic phase of the late Iron Age. Belgic style pottery is either completely absent or present as very small percentage of the total, for example, at Jackson's completely excavated site Belgic style pottery is represented by only 5 out of a total 830 sherds (Jackson 1983). The Roman maps appear to show a decisive change in the settlement pattern and a reorganisation of the landscape into a system of farmsteads with associated small rectangular infields defined by ditch and banks soil marks and areas of dispersed pottery fragments presumably dumped on farmyard manure heaps which were later spread out on the fields. The fieldwalking material indicates that these new settlements or ceramic foci commonly begin with the occurrence of Belgic style pottery and often appear to remain occupied or in use into the 3rd and sometimes 4th centuries AD. The Roman landscape therefore clearly comes into existence at a time when Belgic style pottery is first introduced into the region.

Obviously these changes need to be accurately dated before any attempt can be made to explain them with anything more than tentative ideas. The change to Belgic style pottery appears to be clean and abrupt. Such a rapid and total change suggests that it may have been achieved through drastic and painful events, and therefore could conceivably have happened virtually overnight. Unfortunately both methods that are currently used for such dating, C14 and TL techniques, are not yet sufficiently refined to accurately pin-point such narrow time frames. The change from Belgic to full Roman style is gradual suggesting a much more harmonious transition with the native potter maintaining local traditions for a number of years before converting completely. However even this longer transition time is still too narrow for the current dating methods and one still cannot be certain whether the Belgic style is introduced before, on or after the conquest date.

The problems with our chronology technology should not deter us from proposing a possible scenario or two. If one accepts the possibility for the existence of a small independent tribal unit in the Northamptonshire region its sudden disappearance and the consequent abrupt change in potting tradition is prob-

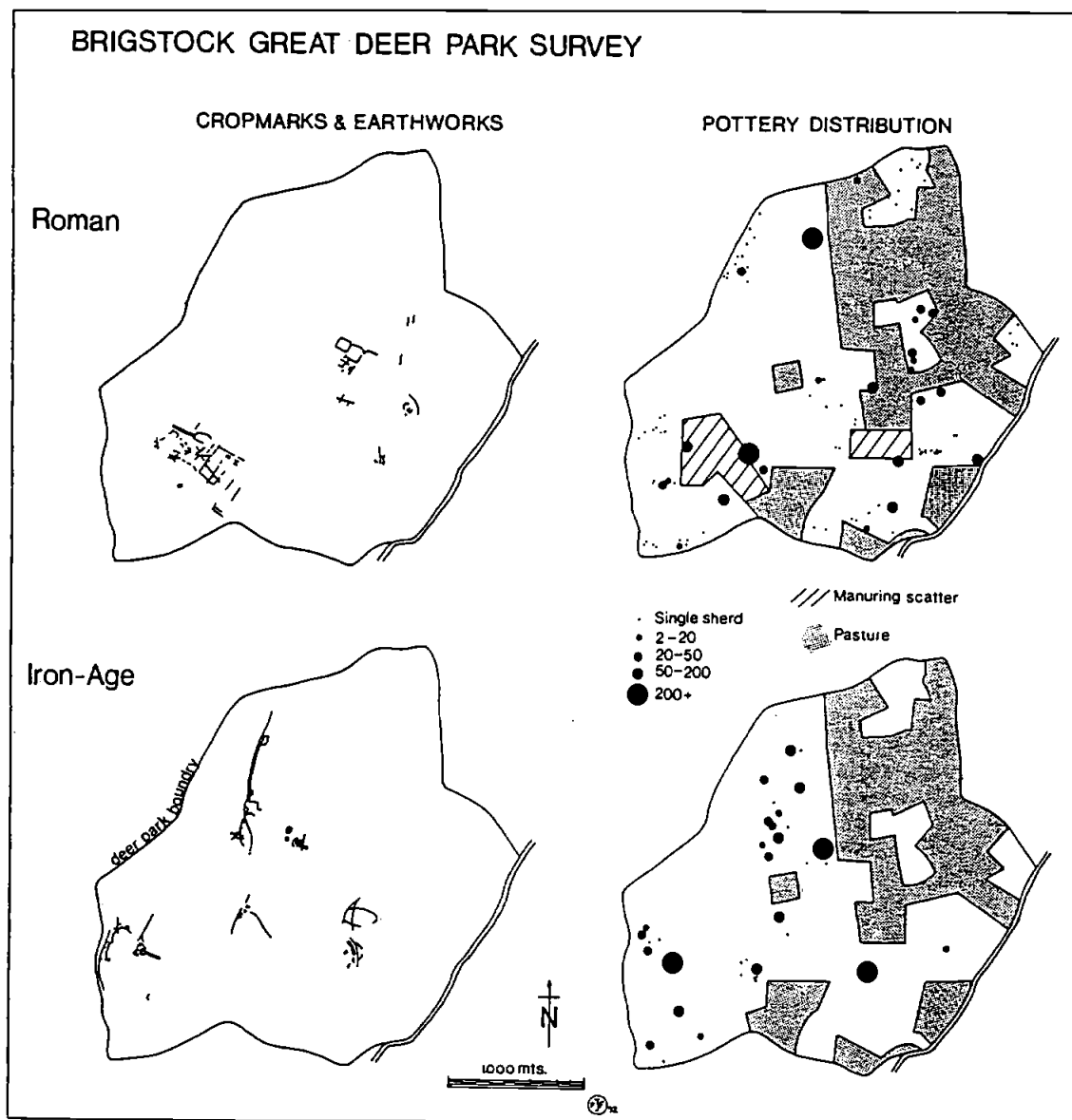


Fig 3 Possible changes to the late Iron Age to Roman landscape based upon fieldwalking ceramic finds against the visible crop and soilmarks in the former Medieval deer park at Brigstock, Northants.

ably due to its falling victim to Catuvallaunian expansion in the early 1st century AD when the expected Roman invasion became less certain as Augustus was preoccupied with military reversals on the Rhine. A more colourful suggestion is that the change takes place immediately after the invasion

when, if the tribe was part of the resisting force defeated by the Roman army in the opening years of the conquest, the tribal area may have become a target for carpet-baggers taking advantage of the situation to asset strip and occupy the land of the dispossessed.

One further aspect of the situation in the area is the

occurrence a number of sites characterised by deeply cut enclosure ditches and massively constructed defensive gateway (Jackson and Dix 1989). The defensive gateway excavated at the Weekley site, for example, was so massive and Roman in character that for some time the excavators considered the enclosure as possible candidate for being a Roman military camp. This new development in the landscape, which at present applies only to Northamptonshire (*op cit*), appears either to be the response of a people with a security problem or with a need for power posturing. In general the dating of this phase of activity would indicate that they are the work of pre-Roman, Belgic style pottery users and if they are to be regarded as newcomers who have dispossessed the locals then such structures are understandable.

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P. J. FOSTER

A STYLISTED CHESS PIECE FROM THE PREBENDAL MANOR HOUSE NASSINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

The village of Nassington lies in the valley of the River

Nene to the south-west of Peterborough. The Prebendal Manor is a well documented site, and parts of the fabric of the present house date back to the 13th century.

Its origin was as a royal manor of King Cnut, and it remained in royal hands until 1123 when Henry I gave the manor and some lands to the bishop of Lincoln to provide a prebend for the canons of Lincoln. The status of the manor was maintained through the

medieval period, and at least some of the income from the tithes went into rebuilding and renovations. The manor declined in importance in the 16th century, when for a time it was rented to a yeoman farmer, and in the 17th century the prebendary estates were managed by the Earl of Westmorland, who owned much of Nassington. In the late 19th century the Ecclesiastical Commission finally sold the manor, which was then rented out to tenant farmers.

By 1968 the whole property had become derelict when the present owner began a programme of restoration and research. This included archaeological excavation, which has taken place both around and beneath the present house. It has revealed details of the development of the site and its buildings, including the presence of a late Saxon aisled hall beneath the medieval manor house.

Among the many finds recovered during the excavations is the chess piece described in this paper. It was recovered from a pit, dated by the associated pottery to the late 12th/ early 13th century (Area 5, Context 745, SF 210).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The chess piece was kindly loaned to the author by Jane Baile, who has had to wait a number of years for this promised report to be produced. Pat Foster and Gill Johnston must also be acknowledged for their involvement in the excavations at the manor (Foster *et al* 1989). The summary of the manorial history is based on the visitors guide book to the house. The illustrations are by the author; the sources of those based on published illustrations are acknowledged in the text.

MEDIEVAL CHESS PIECES

The game of chess had certainly been introduced into Europe by the late 10th century and it was widely played by the wealthy and educated throughout the medieval period. Medieval chess pieces were manufactured in bone, antler, ivory and wood and there are two distinct and contrasting styles. There are figurative pieces, often highly elaborate, of which the best known early pieces are the famous Lewis Chessmen, displayed in the British Museum (Taylor 1978 and Stratford 1997). At the other extreme, and originating in the Moslem prohibition on figurative art, there are highly stylised pieces where a simple set of standard forms define the character of the individual pieces (Stratford 1997, fig 38). The modern standard set, the Staunton chess pieces, are a descendant of this form of stylisation.

The Nassington piece is one of only six stylised chess pieces recovered from the county, while nationally just over fifty pieces have been recovered in the past 150 years. Chess pieces are therefore uncommon, but not rare, finds. They also provide an immediate indication of the status of the site from which they come, as only the wealthy and educated would have played chess.

THE NASSINGTON CHESS PIECE

From its small size and simple domed form the Nassington chess piece can be readily identified as a pawn (Fig 1).

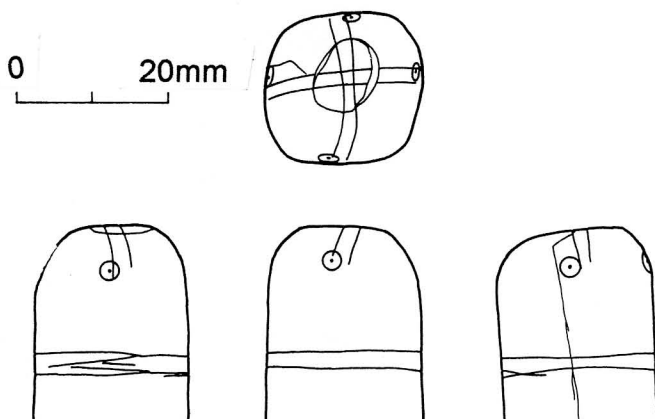


Fig 1 The Nassington chess piece

It has been worked from a section of long bone, and separate bone plugs fill the top and bottom of the hollow centre. It stands 26mm high and is 20.5mm in diameter, with a sub-square section. The domed top stands higher adjacent to what is presumably the front face. This effect is also emphasised by the slightly angled base, which makes the piece lean backward. It is complete, although the bone is split from top to bottom on one side and there are two superficial cracks on the opposing face.

The surface is smooth and highly polished through use, but some faint linear cut marks survive on the base. It is simply decorated; two pairs of parallel incised lines run across the top and terminate on the shoulder, where they meet or intersect single ring-and-dot motifs centred on each of the four faces. The lower body is encircled by a pair of roughly parallel incised lines, but on the rear face these degenerate into multiple incisions.

COMPARATIVE PIECES

Only a small number of bone pawns have been recovered, but the majority of these exhibit variations on the same decorative scheme as the Nassington piece. Schemes comprising incised lines running across the domed top and terminating at ring-and-dot motifs, and incised lines encircling the lower body therefore represent the most common decorative style.

The Nassington pawn is almost identical in size, shape and decoration to a pawn from London (Egan 1998, fig 222, no. 960), which also has double incised lines across the top, terminating at ring-and-dot motifs, and double incised lines encircling the body. The only difference is the oval, as opposed to sub-square, section of the London piece. A pawn from the Gloucester area, recovered from a lorry load of gravel, presents a more complex version of the same decorative scheme. It possesses ten incised lines running from the crown to the shoulder, each ending in a ring-and-dot motif, and three incised lines encircling the lower body (Sue Byrne pers com). A pawn from Winchester has a simpler scheme, with no lines across the top but five ring-and-dot motifs spaced around the shoulder, and double incised lines encircling the body (Biddle 1990, 705, fig 196, no. 2237).

At the most complex extreme, there is an eight sided pawn from Winchester with four alternate

sides decorated with one double ring-and dot and one single ring-and-dot, while the other four have a double ring-and-dot surrounded by five single ring-and-dot motifs. At the other extreme, a pawn from Ludgershall (MacGregor 1985, fig 71r) is decorated only with incised lines, while the large whale bone pawns from Witchampton Manor, Dorset are undecorated (Stratford 1997, fig 46 & Dalton, 1927, plate VI, fig 3).

In terms of size, the Nassington piece, at 26mm high, belongs with all the stylistically similar pieces from London, Winchester and elsewhere within a narrow height range of 25-29mm. The Ludgershall pawn is significantly shorter, at only 21mm high, while the whale bone pawns from Witchampton stand 70mm high, and are in proportion to the exceptional size of the other pieces from this collection.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHESS PIECES

The Nassington piece is the only pawn recovered from the county, but it joins a small group of other chess pieces from Northamptonshire sites. Most notably there is a fine bishop from the 19th century excavations at Northampton Castle. It has the characteristic projecting horns and is decorated with clusters of ring-and-dot motifs and with triple incised lines across the top and around the middle and base of the body (Fig 2a: Dryden 1882, 421-422, plate 5; Sharp 1882, 248, plate 5; and on display at Northampton Museum). There is an even more elaborately decorated knight from the village of Helpston, near Peterborough, although this is now part of Cambridgeshire. This piece is also decorated with ring-and-dot motifs, incised lines and has crossed incised lines forming lattice work panels across the top and encircling the lower body. The body of the piece has been perforated at some later date (Fig 2b: Dalton 1909, 85, no. 233; MacGregor 1985, fig 73a, and on display at the British Museum).

In contrast to these finely finished pieces, there is a more crudely made knight from excavations at the medieval village of Lyveden (Fig 2d: Bryant & Steane 1971, 67-68, fig 19a, plate 18). It is hollow, worked on a length of long bone, and there is no indication that it had ever been plugged. It is decorated with triangular groups of three ring-and-dot motifs, and with ring-and-dot motifs as eyes on the stylised triangular head.

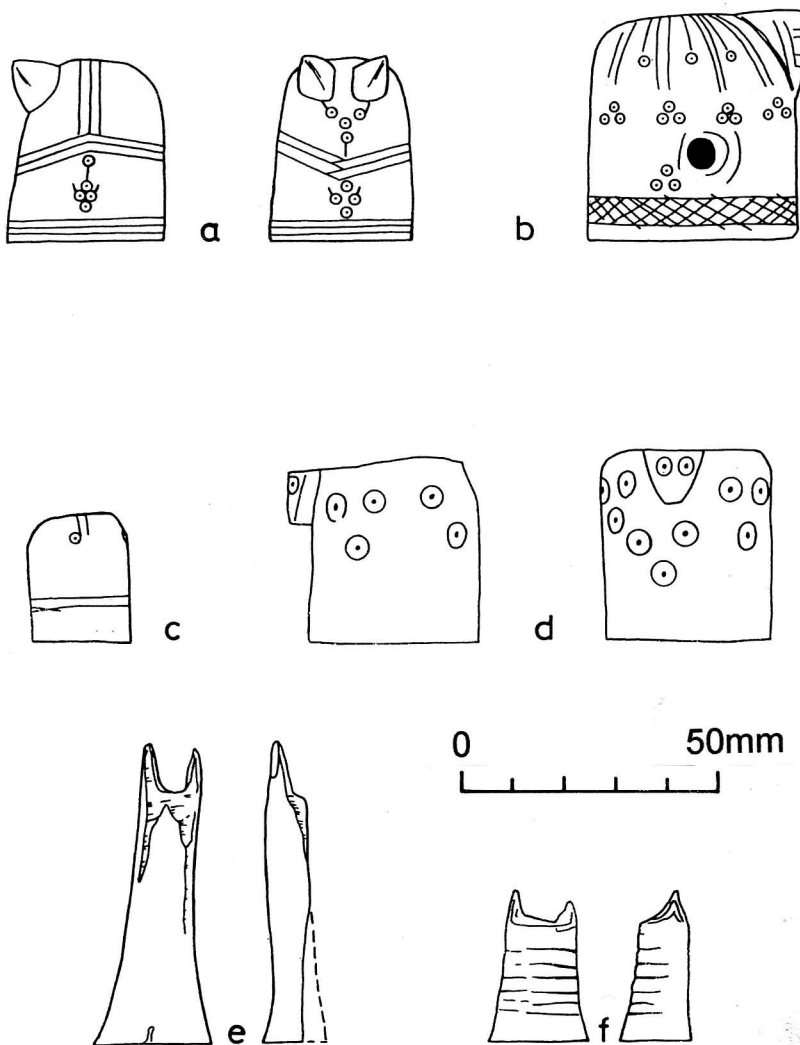


Fig 2 Northamptonshire Chess pieces: a) Bishop; Northampton Castle b) Knight; Helpston
c) Pawn; Nassington d) Knight; Lyveden e) Bishop; West Cotton, Raunds
f) Rook; West Cotton, Raunds

At an even simpler level, there are two pieces worked respectively from a sheep/goat metacarpal and a sheep tibia from the deserted medieval village of West Cotton, Raunds. One piece is undecorated, but the damaged back and the fresh knife trimming scars suggest that it had been broken during manufacture (Fig 2e). The body of the other is simply decorated with irregular incised lines (Fig 2f). On the

larger piece a pair of horns set at the front indicate that it is a bishop, while the horns at the rear of the smaller piece suggest that it is probably a rook (Windell et al 1990, fig 18-5 & 6).

The finely made pieces from Nassington, Northampton Castle and Helpston can all be seen as craftsman-made items, presumably acquired by trade or purchase. At both Northampton Castle and Nass-

ington they are pieces of appropriate quality for the known status and importance of these sites, with their Royal connections. The more simply fashioned pieces from Lyveden and West Cotton appear to belong to home-made chess sets. These again can be seen to reflect the status of the sites from which they come. The small 12th-13th century manor house at West Cotton clearly lay towards the bottom of the manorial ladder in terms of wealth and status, and apparently the residents could only afford a home-made chess set.

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ANDY CHAPMAN

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BOMBING DECOYS

During 1998/99 records of redundant 20th century military sites continued to be added to the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) utilising reports compiled by volunteers as part of the national Defence of Britain Project. This project, along with complementary work being undertaken by English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme (MPP), has the broad objectives of recording and understanding recent military remains and thereby providing for their future management (Schofield nd). English Heritage (1998) and Dobinson et al (1997) have provided review of the MPPs work in this field. One type of military site subject to MPP documentary assessment (from which much of the following detail is drawn), and present in Northamptonshire is that of bombing decoys, part of the elaborate system of air

defence established across Britain during WWII (Dobinson 1996).

Though Northamptonshire did not attract any heavy or sustained raids during WWII, most airfields suffered some aerial attack, as did the main towns. Decoys were designed to counter the aerial threat to Britain with potential targets being shadowed by a variety of arrangements, mainly utilising light and/or fire displays - designed to lure enemy aircraft to false targets. At least eleven decoy sites were reportedly located in Northamptonshire, some for potential County targets being located in bordering counties, and vice versa.

The first decoys were developed for protection of airfields, the main purpose being to simulate the flarepath lighting of airfields as a lure to night bombers and intruder aircraft. One was established at Warmington for King's Cliffe airfield, with out of county sites being used for the airfields at Polebrooke and Chelveston. The important military target

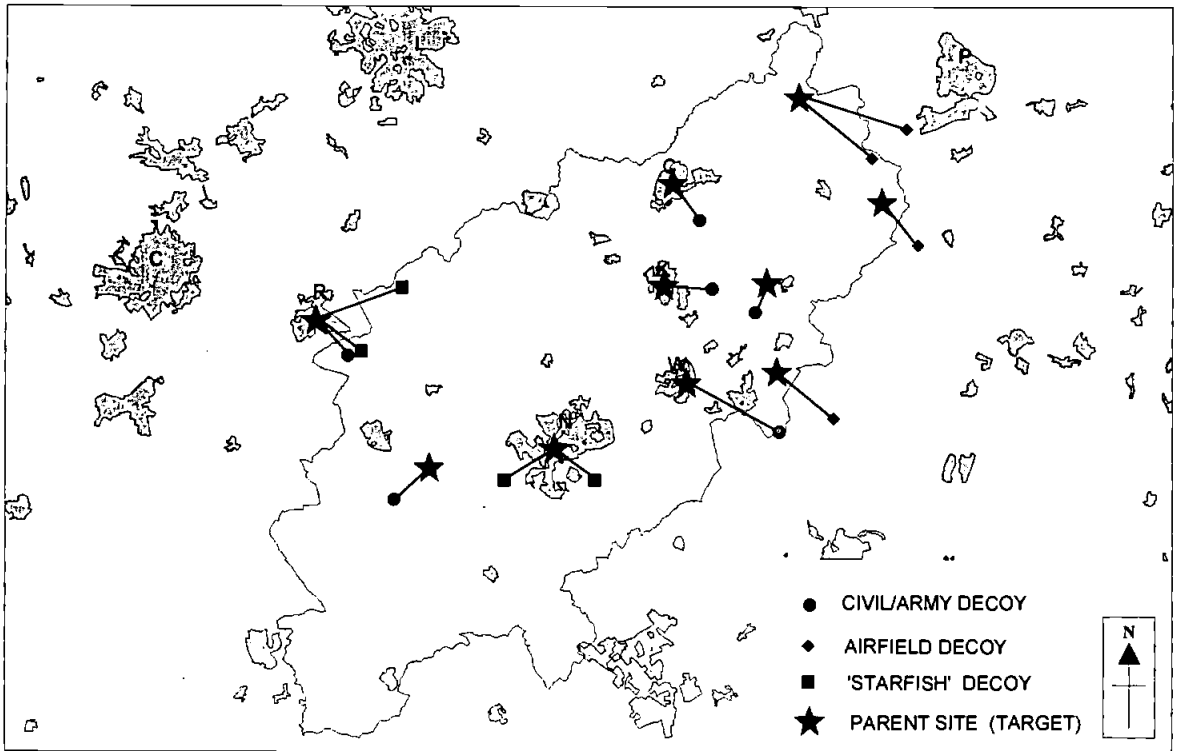


Fig 1 Distribution map of Northamptonshire WWII decoys and parents

of Weedon Depot had a decoy at Preston Capes. The devastating raid on Coventry in November 1940 prompted development of great fire decoys (often called Starfish or Special Fire Sites) provided mainly for industrial towns. Two such decoys, located in fields at Little Houghton and Kislingbury served Northampton with others at Barby and Clay Coton for Rugby. The intention was to draw in successive waves of aircraft and the need was to replicate a similar range of fire effects that an aircrew would expect to see when their target was successfully attacked. Starfish mainly comprised groups of controlled fires sometimes with added devices to simulate explosions and oil fires. Devices to represent a variety of colour, intensity, duration and rapid ignition fire types were devised sometimes arranged in groups surrounded by firebreak trenches and with a network of metallised access roads. Techniques included the use of 'boiler fires' utilising gravity fed steel trays - oil/water mixes to produce violent and

explosive bursts of flame; coal and oil troughs and basket fires. The latter, the most numerous installations, used baskets full of oil or creosote soaked wood and other combustible material ignited by detonators to replicate buildings hit and ablaze. Lights were used to simulate poor blackout or 'permitted lighting' of towns and cities.

Smaller decoys, utilising both fires and lights, were provided to protect specific industrial targets in Wellingborough (decoy at Knotting, Beds), Corby (Stanion), Kettering (Cranford & Woodford) and Rugby (Barby). The main lighting groups evolved covered marshalling yard (MY) lights, dock lights, locomotive glows, tram flashes and furnace glows. These effects were used in combination to imitate specific aspects of uncontrolled and permitted lighting found, during aerial observation, to disclose the positions of genuine targets. Success, as with all decoys, rested in their being able to mimic the behaviour of 'real' sites.

NOTES

Parent Site & SMR No	Decoy; NGR	Decoy - SMR Monument No	Decoy Type*	Chronology
King's Cliffe airfield 1294	Warmington TL08159189 (shelter)	6731	Airfield Decoy (Q site)	12.8.42 - date by which abandoned (db)
King's Cliffe Airfield 1294	Alwalton (Cambs)	-	Airfield Decoy (Q site)	-
Polebrook airfield 1295	Lt Gidding (Cambs) TL116817	-	Airfield Decoy (Q site)	12.8.42 (db)
Chelveston airfield 1296	Swineshead (Cambs) TL062635	-	Airfield Decoy (Q site)	12.8.42 (db)
Weedon Depot 86	Preston Capes SP585559	-	Army Decoy (QF site)	1.8.41 - 1.8.42
Kettering	Cranford SP914784	8133	Civil Decoy (QL/QF site) QL target - Kettering Station; MY lights & factory lights	QL: 2.10.42 - 1.5.43 QF: 1.5.43
Kettering - Islip	Woodford SP962761	7113/1/1	Civil Decoy (QL site) Islip factory (?furnaces): as above + loco glows	2.10.42 - 1.5.43
Corby	Stanion SP911854	7108	Civil Decoy (QL/QF site) Stewart & Lloyds Corby: MY lights, factory lights & furnace glows	QL: 2.10.42 - 1.5.43 QF: 1.5.43
Rugby	Barby SP536712	8104	Civil Decoy (QL - co-located with Barby Starfish) QL target: Rugby marshalling yard; MY lights; loco glows	2.10.42 - 1.5.43
Rugby	Barby SP536712	8104	Rugby Starfish (Co-located with Barby QL)	1.8.41 - 8.4.43
Rugby	Clay Coton (Stanford parish) SP600783	7106/1/1	Rugby Starfish	1.8.41 - 8.4.43
Northampton	Kislingbury SP708586 (Upton parish)	7111/1/1	Northampton Starfish	1.8.41 - 8.4.43
Northampton	Hardingstone SP802581 (Lt Houghton parish)	7104/1	Northampton Starfish	1.8.41 - 8.4.43
Wellingborough	Knotting, Beds (but site within Newton Bromswold Parish, Northants?) SP990633	7105/1/1	Civil Decoy (QL - not co-located) W'boro marshalling yards; MY lights & loco glows.	2.10.42 - 1.5.43

Table 1: Summary of Bombing Decoys & Parent Sites in Northamptonshire (Source: Dobinson 1996 and SMR Records).

*There were two main types of decoy; codenamed K sites, dummy landing grounds intended for daylight use; Q sites for night use. The latter used patterns of lights (QL) or fires (QF). No K sites are currently confirmed to have operated in Northamptonshire. Starfish were originally designated as SF (Special Fire) sites.

Decoys were often sited at some distance from the real target - up to 5-6 miles in the direction of the enemy's anticipated line of approach. Poorer land and grass may have been preferred in order to minimise the impact on food production. There was also a need to avoid inhabited areas and hospitals and other vulnerable sites but be close enough to encourage raiders into believing they were bombing their intended targets. The larger sites could cover up to 30 acres with construction shared between service and civilian contractors and were run and maintained by a handful of service personnel. Operational control was exercised from small remote earth embanked shelters of brick or concrete, some housing generators used to power the different controlling circuits.

Responsibility for dummy airfields and decoys rested with Colonel (later Sir John) Turner, an HQ being set up under Air Ministry auspices at the Sound City film studios in Shepperton (Fairhead 1999). Operational control was vested with No.80 (Signals) Wing RAF, close liaison with Fighter Command and the Ministry for Home Security being essential for successful operation of the largely RAF manned, Starfish sites in particular (Brettingham 1997). Control of other decoys may have involved a higher degree of local initiative (*pers com* B Lowry).

The decoy programme was largely wound up by the end of WW2 and was totally abandoned soon after as Soviet blind bombing techniques rendered the principle of visual decoys ineffective. Opinions have varied as to the efficiency of the decoy programme (Brettingham *op cit*). Undoubtedly they saved lives though details of the exact extent and operation of those in Northamptonshire and the frequency that they experienced attack, remains sketchy. Also unresolved is the extent to which, if at all, Northamptonshire participated in Operation Fortitude when in the run up to D-Day, a series of deceptions were mounted in eastern and southern counties, involving dummy tanks, vehicle convoys and other supposedly invasion ready equipment (Fairhead 1996).

At the end of the war decoys were dismantled and stripped of mechanical and electrical equipment the intention being to return land to owners. The ephemeral nature of decoys will have left little or no trace apart from possibly some ground disturbance earthworks or the presence of wiring occasionally turned up during ploughing. In some instances firebreak trenches may be recognisable as crop or soil

marks. Only one control shelter, at Warmington, is known to survive (on private land). Table 1 summarises the current SMR record for decoys and parent sites in Northamptonshire. Additional material would be welcomed for inclusion in the SMR, especially that on the operation and extent of sites together with details of the nature and condition of any surviving remains. It is such information, taken together with documented evidence, that will provide the basis for future research, assessment of rates of survival and recommendations for long term management of this and other classes of recent military sites, at a time when it has been claimed, there is an increased awareness and interest in this aspect of our past. It also presents challenges, being not only at the very frontier of archaeology but also facing us, as has been recognised by English Heritage (Dobinson *et al*, *op cit*) with "new, and potentially difficult, issues of interpretation for remains that are hard to assess dispassionately by virtue of both their recent date and their original purpose".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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GRAHAM CADMAN

DEFENDING THE HEART OF ENGLAND: NORTHAMPTON 1940-44

INTRODUCTION

This article does not seek to present a concise history of the Home Guard in Northampton since L.E. Barnes, the last Battalion Commander at Northampton and who is mentioned below, performed this task when the events were still fresh in his mind (Barnes 1946). Nor is it an account of the civil defence of Northampton even though the work of the ARP, WVS (later the WRVS) and others made an immeasurable contribution to maintaining the morale of the local population. It is, though, an attempt to investigate the defensive strategy for this town at the heart of England at a time when an invasion of the country seemed imminent. Particular reference is made to some of the defensive structures which were erected at the time but of which, very little evidence survives today. To understand the rationale of the local strategies, it is essential to see them within the context of a national defence plan, such as one existed in the dark days of 1940.

After the fall of France in May and June 1940 and the chaotic withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force from the beaches of Dunkirk, Britain lay virtually helpless with only the Navy and the young pilots of Fighter Command and Coastal Command to offer defence against a hitherto victorious foe. In Northampton, as in other parts of the country, many felt that the invasion of these shores was inevitable and the most common conversation piece, on street corners and newspaper correspondence columns alike, was that concerning sightings of enemy paratroops.¹

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

Britain desperately needed to play for time while the regular army was rebuilt and made fit for action again. On 14th May, Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War, broadcast a now famous request for volunteers to come forward and form a new defensive force. The idea took service chiefs by surprise and the lack of a co-ordinated plan, let alone terms of reference for the new force, led to the scenes of chaos in police stations across the land portrayed

so well in the film, *Dads Army*. Eden himself could never have foreseen the numbers of old soldiers, men employed in reserved occupations and teenagers too young for the full-time regulars who came forward to serve their country.

There were no uniforms, weapons or command structure. In Northamptonshire, the new force, called the Local Defence Volunteers or LDV was headed by local business men, landowners, farmers and other leading employers many of whom had served in the Great War and so were experienced soldiers. Discipline and respect between the officers and other ranks did not have to be won, it already existed because often, the men were employed during the day by their commanding officer in his civilian capacity.

The Northampton LDV, which was divided into four groups according to electoral wards rather than strategical zones, had one advantage over the regular forces — even over that other great part time force, the Territorial Army. The LDV was formed from local men who knew their own patch. Every alley, every green lane, ditch or barn was their stamping ground and their local knowledge was better than that of any full time unit from another part of the country — let alone an invading army.

The number of volunteers in Northampton soon reached four figures and within a few days of Eden's call to arms, nearly 2,000 Northampton men had inundated the old police station in Dychurch Lane to offer their services (Barnes 1946, 17). Apart from the four groups — North, East, South and West, there were other, detached companies formed directly by some of the major employers in the town. Among these were the Northampton Electric Light Company, the Northampton Gas Company, Northampton Borough Transport, Northampton Borough Water Department, the Express Lift Company, the GPO, LMS Railway and the United Counties Bus Company. In the early days, because of the lack of a national plan for the LDV, organisation was at a local level.

Because an invasion seemed imminent, the LDV's first official task was as unarmed look-outs. Throughout Britain, LDV units took over church towers and other vantage points. Around Northampton, observation posts were established (see Table 1). The total number of observation posts varied throughout the war but the principal ones are listed in the table. These posts were quite separate to the Royal Observer Corp observation posts installed

before the outbreak of war or to the fire watch posts manned by the air raid wardens (although later, the Home Guard at Northampton did help out with the latter duties in time of need). The observation posts, some of which were no more than wooden sheds built by LDV members, were only manned from approximately 1 hour before nightfall until 6.00 am the following day. Those on look-out were allowed the use of police telephone boxes, which were situated on the borough boundaries and so each night, a guard was placed nearby. At the sighting of enemy troops, it was decided to use church bells as a warning rather than the sirens. Thirteen churches across the town were designated for this task and official ringers were appointed for each (Barnes 1946, 21-22).

Of all the defensive structures erected in Great Britain during the Second World War, the most numerous then, but non-extant today, were the thousands of road-blocks set up to hamper the advance of the German armed forces. The early road-blocks were Heath Robinson affairs. Barnes tells us that practically the first instruction issued by Sir Hereward Wake after his appointment as County Commander of the LDV was to construct road-blocks out of logs, gates, iron railings, farm carts,

wagons, lorries, old cars, wire or pig netting (Barnes 1946, 69).

Further, Sir Hereward seems to have engaged the County Council and some of the borough and district councils to construct road blocks on behalf of the military authorities. Forming a barrier across the verges, none of these encroached on to the metalled carriageway but it is clear that by mid-July 1940, road-block construction was getting out of hand.² These indiscriminate installations were stopped as the Senior Regional Officer for the Civil Defence admitted that, "... the zeal of the LDV does on occasion outrun the policy of the Army..."³ Some of the councils who had constructed road blocks for Sir Hereward were still chasing for their money in November of that year.⁴

In a secret circular from Southern Command (in whose area Northampton was, initially), the Senior Commanding Officer had already acknowledged that the policy towards road-blocks had originally been *uncontrolled*, as he put it.⁵ It was decided that a co-ordinated approach was needed and throughout the latter part of June 1940, the beginnings of a coherent defence plan were developing. First were Stop Lines. These were designed to counter two problems. One was the possibility that German

Location	Approx. NGR
Windmill Inn, Welford Road (A50)	SP 74106400
Boughton Green Reservoir (Boughton Green Road)	SP 75706425
Kingsthorpe Lodge (golf course)	SP 76456385
Buttocks Booth Lane (off the A43)	SP 77986389
Buttocks Booth Lane	SP 78516394
Weston Favell (east of the Headlands)	SP 78506300
Abington Mill water tower	SP 78356050
Top of Rushmere Road	SP 77916060
Electric light works*	SP 76255980
Hunsbury Hill 1	SP 73715845
Hunsbury Hill 2	SP 73995845
Weedon Road (now Sixfields)	SP 73106055
Hopping Hill (A428)	SP 72596238
Abington Park (Ab. Pk Cresc./ Pk Ave Sth.)	SP 77756128
South Bridge	SP 75515980
Dallington Allotments	SP 74146551

Table 1 Northampton LDV Observation Posts: 1940

*The power station was situated adjacent to Hardingsstone Junction off Nunn Mills Road. There were O.P.s at each corner of the site of which the remains of two brick pill boxes are extant on the river (south) side.

Source: Barnes, L.E. *History of the 12th Northamptonshire Battalion Home Guard 1940-44*, (Northampton, c. 1946), p. 20, LDV/Home Guard map HG (a) 2, NRO.

forces might break through the coastal defences and succeed in advancing a considerable distance in land. Second was the threat of a large-scale airborne invasion.⁶

Mostly running approximately parallel to the south coast, the Stop Lines used natural features and contours wherever possible to form five to ten large enclosures (depending on the route taken), between Northampton and the coast.⁷ The aim was to confine the movements of invasion forces which had broken into these enclosures which were termed, Anti-tank Enclosures. This was to be done by scattering within these enclosures, Anti-tank Islands based on built-up areas through which the enemy could neither pass nor by-pass without difficulty. The plan had a strangely agricultural flavour to it. The circular explained that;

"The immediate object is to divide England into several small 'fields' surrounded by a hedge of [anti-tank] obstacles which are also strong defensively... Should ... airborne attacks break into the enclosure, the policy will be to close the gates by blocking the crossings... and to let in the 'dogs', in the shape of armoured formations, or other troops, to round up the 'cattle'."

Southern Command were developing this plan by sub-dividing their area into smaller fields or enclosures. Although Northamptonshire did not contain any Stop Lines, Northampton and Kettering were designated Anti-tank Islands and so, in the event of the enemy breaking into the enclosure, which consisted principally of Northamptonshire, it would have been up to those two towns to keep the Germans out until the 'dogs' arrived.



The way in which the Anti-tank Islands were to be made secure, was by way of road-blocks and a revised policy was agreed. It was evident that the English road system was too well developed to allow it to be put completely out of action. Instead only the major roads could be blocked. It was hoped that the enemy, not knowing the country well, would avoid the minor roads.⁸ The road-blocks themselves were to be constructed up to the edge of the carriageway and then materials kept on site so that a complete temporary blocking could be effected while a more permanent and complete block could be erected. Road-blocks were also to be erected within two miles either side of the Stop Lines. The local highway authorities were to be consulted on the roadblock sites and it appears that in Northamptonshire, most of the major road-blocks were constructed by the

councils on behalf of the military command.⁹ Within days of these plans being issued, Northamptonshire was transferred from Southern to Northern Command leading to another review of the county's defences.¹⁰ Little more was heard of Anti-tank Islands but, as will be seen, the idea was to re-surface later under a different guise.

LOCAL CHANGES

Within two months of the formation of the LDV, the new force was re-named, the Home Guard and the first of a number of major overhauls began. The Northampton LDV became the 12th Battalion, (Northampton Borough) Northamptonshire Home Guard. The battalion consisted initially of 5 companies between them having a total of 17 platoons. A Company covered the old North Group area centred on Kingsthorpe, B Company was based in the south around the Far Cotton area, C Company replaced the East Group and defended an area from the Bedford Road round to Weston Favell and D Company took up position on the western approaches to the town. The old 'private' LDV companies such as the Electric Light and Gas Companies were re-designated platoons and merged into the 12th battalion companies. E Company was the railway company whose 500 members' primary responsibility was to guard railway property. In all, they identified 48 VPs (Vital Points) for protection. They included Castle Station and Bridge Street Station, signal boxes, sidings, bridges, coal depots, sections of line and workshops.¹¹ When the number and location of roadblocks was under review in January, 1941, four railblocks were also suggested. The first was on the loop line north of Castle Station at Kingsthorpe Railway Bridge, adjacent to the road block there (SP 74286265). The second was at Duston Junction West, by the canal bridge (SP 74405960). The third was to be located on Victoria Promenade where the old Midland line crossed over to St John's Street Station (SP 75696014) which strangely, was not on the list of VPs to be guarded. Finally, there was to be a rail block or blocks south of the Northampton power station (SP 76105925). Two railway lines passed through Hardingstone Junction at this point, the Blisworth to Peterborough line and the Northampton to Bedford line.¹² They would also have been responsible for erecting rail blocks to prevent enemy tanks using the track. Later in the

NOTES

-  Inner ring of road blocks
-  Outer ring of road blocks

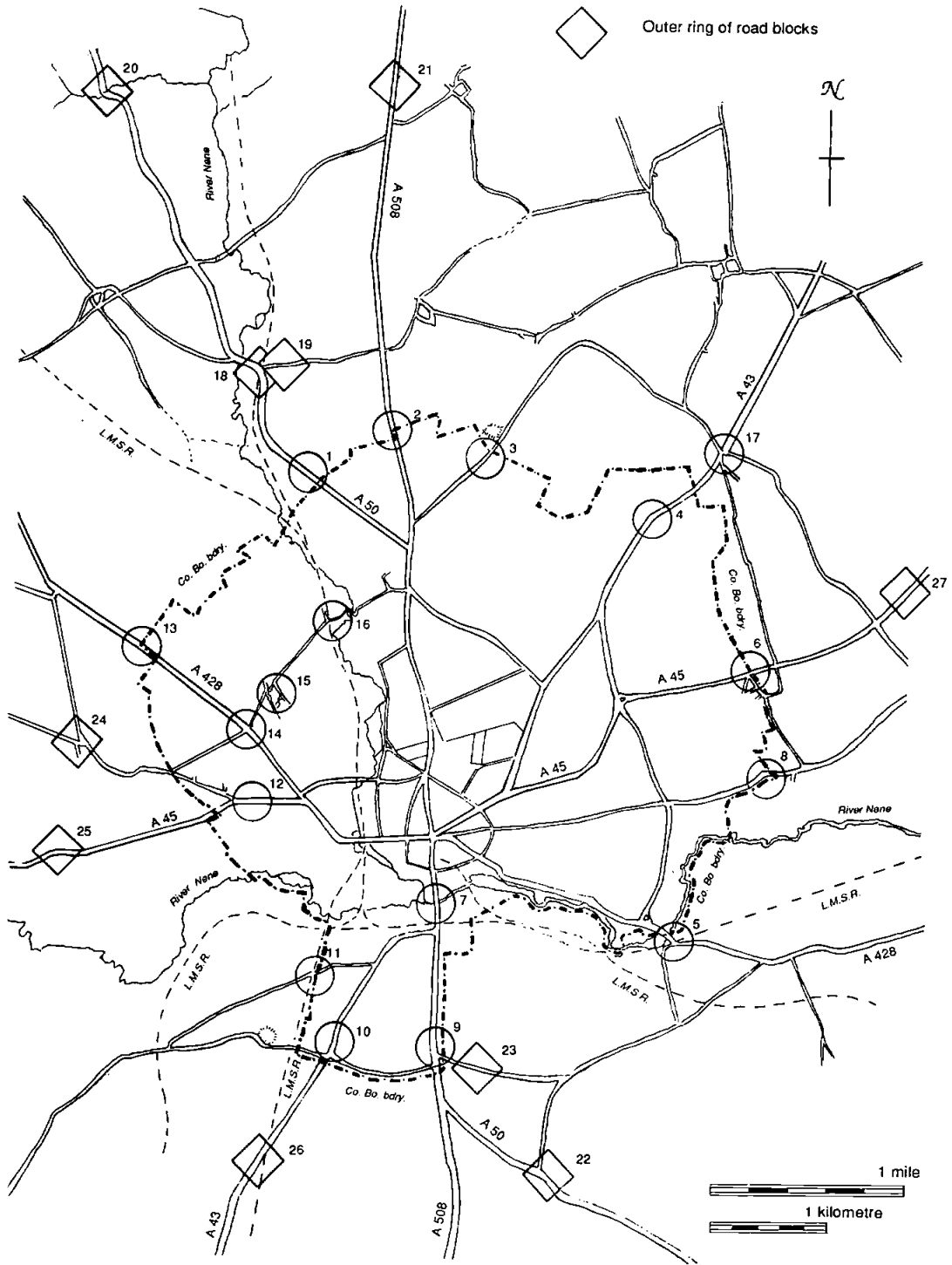


Fig 1 Northampton defences, August 1940

NOTES

Location	NGR	No. on Fig. 1
Welford Road (A50; Windmill p.h.)	SP 74486390	1
Harborough Road (A508 near the cemetery)	SP 74866447	2
Boughton Green Road (near the Reservoir)	SP 76106445	3
Kettering Road (A43, Manfield Hospital)	SP 77706378	4
St Peters Bridge (A428, Britannia Inn)	SP 78155940	5
Wellingborough Road (Trumpet Inn)	SP 78676215	6
South Bridge	SP 75485974	7
Billing Road	SP 78806115	8
Hardingstone Tum (A508)	SP 75455813	9
Towcester Road (near the cemetery)	SP 74255815	10
Rothersthorpe Road	SP 74135903	11
Weedon Road (A45 near Malcolm Drive)	SP 73606085	12
Hopping Hill (A428)	SP 72506236	13
Harlestone Road	SP 73606155	14
(3 road blocks around junction with Bants Lane and dallington Park Road)	SP 73586155	14
	SP 73606158	14
Dallington Village ²	SP 73756190	15
Kingsthorpe Railway Bridge	SP 74286265	16
(2 roadblocks, one across adjacent lane, classed as 1)	SP 74286265	16
Buttocks Booth	SP 78346434	17
(4 road-blocks around A43 junctions but classed by the Home Guard as one road-block)	SP 78406438	17
	SP 78356442	17
	SP 78376421	17

Table 2. Northampton road-blocks manned by the 12th Battalion Northamptonshire Home Guard: August 1940

1. Road block numbered 14 was situated at the cross-roads of Harlestone Road, Dallington Park Road and Bants Lane. It appears to have been in the form of three separate road blocks across all three roads.
2. The Dallington Village road-block represents a mystery. It clearly did not fit in with the defensive strategy of Northampton but prominent members of the Home Guard may have lived locally.

Source: Barnes, L.E. *History of the 12th Northamptonshire Battalion Home Guard 1940-44*, (Northampton, c. 1946), LDV/Home Guard map HG (a) 2, NRO.

War, E Company was transferred to the neighbouring 15th Battalion (Barnes 1946, 116).

By the summer of 1940, the 12th Battalion were manning 17 of the major road-blocks around the town (technically 20 because one of them, the Buttocks Booth road-block was at a cross roads and consisted of 4 separate blocks) see Table 2. Perhaps still influenced by local government considerations rather than by military strategy, these first road-blocks were positioned on the borough boundary on all of the major routes into the town. See Figure 1.

By comparison to the first road-blocks, the Northampton Borough road-blocks were quite sophisticated, being principally reliant on steel rails which, in an emergency, could be fitted into slots in the surface of the road. The blocks were supported by rifle pits surrounded by barbed wire, more to keep

farm animals out than Germans. The Borough Surveyor, R.A. Winfield, who was responsible for the installation of most of the road-blocks, also installed a sand bag filling plant at the Council depot at Westbridge. During the war years, many thousands of sand bags were produced by his men.¹³ As well as the ring of road-blocks around the Borough boundary, there was a second, outer ring constructed by the County Council on behalf of the military authorities and these were manned by neighbouring Home Guard Battalions.¹⁴ See Table 3.

There were still many other road-block set up by individual Home Guard platoons in their own villages as well as others installed by the regular armed forces such as those built by the RAF around Sywell Aerodrome. Not only were civilians often stopped at road-blocks by over-zealous Home Guard sentries, in the event of an invasion, there was a

NOTES

Location	NGR	No. on Fig. 1
Boughton Crossing (A50)	SP 73656527	18
Boughton Cold Store (Off A50)	SP 73756525	19
Spratton Bridge (A50)	SP 71976822	20
Springhill Farm (A508)	SP 75016820	21
Newport Pagnell Road (was A50, near Hardingstone junction)	SP 76695725	22
Hardingstone Lane (village, probably as much to defend 11th Batt. H.Q.)	SP 76105788	23
Duston—New Duston road	SP 71936130	24
Upton (A45)	SP 71656028	25
Towcester Road (A43, north of Ladybridge)	SP 73835730	26
Wellingborough Road (Old A45, east of Pearce's gate)	SP 80106280	27

Table 3. Northampton road-blocks Outer Ring manned by neighbouring Home Guard battalions: mainly the 11th (Hardingstone) battalion: August 1940

Sources: Letter and Schedule from the County Surveyor, 16th July, 1940, NRO X1889. Holloway, B.G. (Ed) and Banks, H. (Collaborator) *The Northamptonshire Home Guard* (Northampton, 1949).

serious danger that they would hamper the home forces as well as those of the invaders. After the tragic deaths of a number of civilians in other parts of the country, after August 1940, the Home Guard were no longer required to stop people at road-blocks (Barnes 1946, 93).

There were other local defences on either side of the borough boundary. Further down the A428 Bedford Road at Brafield-On-The-Green, a new section of straight concrete road was being completed just as war broke out (SP 817589). Here, the fear of enemy aircraft landing troops, resulted in the construction of a simple device. A length of steel chain was strung across the road between two old ash trees just above the height of a double decker bus. One of the trees is still extant.¹⁵ Closer to the town, several defensive measures were focussed on the River Nene. There was a Home Guard post at Abington Mill and a Spigot Mortar mounted in what is now the eastern-most corner of the Britannia car park just off the old Bedford Road. There are still two pill boxes adjacent to the old power station opposite Midsummer Meadows, possibly constructed by members of the Electricity platoon of the Northampton Home Guard. While this latter measure may have been to prevent sabotage on a vital point, put together, these indicate that the defenders were concerned about the enemy using the river, in some way, as a means of attack.

When Germany had invaded France, no measures had been put in place to prevent the invaders

re-fuelling their tanks and other armour at wayside filling stations (Barnes 1946, 69). The Northamptonshire Home Guard was determined that this would not happen here. This was especially important because Northampton had 2 inland oil distributing depots — one at Cotton End and the other on St Andrews Road (Barnes 1946, 71-72). By 1942, there were combined stocks of 250,000 gallons of oil and petrol in these depots. Apart from the road-blocks into the town, a new Home Guard platoon was formed from employees of these depots whose primary aim was the destruction of their works and stocks should the town be invaded (Barnes 1946, 117).

In early 1941, the Home Guard adopted the regular army system of ranks and in April of that year, they were instructed to wear the badge of their county regiment — in this case, the Northamptonshire Regiment. In August, the regular army units handed over the defence of Northampton to the 12th Battalion and various small detachments of regulars. The Home Guard, with its new HQ at the Clare Street Drill Hall in the centre of Northampton were now effectively in sole charge of the defence of the town and remained so until the threat of invasion had been lifted (Barnes 1946, 22).

At this point, the ubiquitous, anti-tank, concrete cylinders arrived in Northamptonshire. They were 3 feet long by 2 feet in diameter with a hole through the middle to receive a barbed wire picket post (Brown 1996, 86). Later, it was also found that the hole could

serve to take an iron bar to make their movement easier. They were delivered to each major road-block to supplement the steel rails and prevent the enemy tanks having a clear run at them. By the beginning of August 1941, 276 cylinders had been delivered to Northampton. A trial closing of all the road-blocks around Northampton was held on 31st August and the time taken for each recorded. The results were disappointing, ranging from 15 minutes at Boughton Green Road — a narrow carriageway — to 72 minutes on South Bridge (where the cylinders had to be rolled up hill). The Buttocks Booth road-blocks took 90 minutes. Apart from the delay in completing effective road-blocks, many of those out on the Borough boundaries were too dispersed. It must have been realised that enemy tanks could have taken to open countryside in order to skirt the defended blocks.

This coincided with Northampton being declared a Nodal Point, the main purpose of which was to deny road communications to the enemy.¹⁶ By forcing the invaders to either go around the town or to have to fight their way through it, valuable time could be gained. Northampton was also an important centre because of the oil distribution depots and its designation as a Nodal Point required drastic alterations to its defences. Each Nodal Point was divided into Defended Localities, which had to be held at all costs (Barnes 1946, 71). As one secret War Office circular put it, "Even if a town or village is penetrated by the enemy, the garrisons in the localities which control the road system must fight and fight and fight..."¹⁷

Even when a Defended Locality had been overrun, the survivors were expected to rally at a pre-arranged meeting point to "... lick their wounds...", recover and resort to guerilla warfare, harassing and sniping at the enemy wherever possible and seeking out enemy tanks and transport by night. The same circular required that, "Only dead men should remain inactive".¹⁸

Of the original 20 road-blocks, 18 were dismantled and moved closer in to the town. Only St Peters Bridge on the Bedford Road and South Bridge on the London Road were retained and strengthened as Defended Localities (see Figure 2). These defended areas were sited either on main river bridges or on important cross-roads in built up areas where enemy armour would find it less easy to circumvent them.

The 1941 Northamptonshire cylinders today represent, quite literally, one of the few concrete reminders of that period. No surviving cylinders

have been found in Northampton but at a plant hire company's yard at Wollaston, 16 of them perform various duties; at Wellingborough, no less than 127 form a retaining bank along London Road with two more laying idle on The Embankment, alongside the entrance to the children's paddling pool. At the entrance to Brafield Racing Stadium, four cylinders painted white and acting as gate guards remind us of one of the defenders' dilemmas back in the 1940s. Should the cylinders be painted white to prevent traffic colliding with them in the black-out or should they be painted camouflage colours in readiness for the invasion?

Apart from concrete cylinders (the total around Northampton had risen to 750 by mid-1941), steel rails and barbed wire, the Defended Localities also received spigot mortars as well as support in time of need from Northovers, Smith Guns and anti-tank two-pounders. Spigot Mortars, or more properly, 29mm Blacker Bombs, were usually mounted on concrete 'thimbles' approximately 4 feet high by 3 feet in diameter. The top was slightly domed with a steel spigot or pin protruding from the centre, which located the mortar. The device had a range of approximately 400 yards and was intended for use against tanks or infantry. No surviving bases have been found in Northampton but since they were erected in deep pits with only the steel pin protruding above ground level, they may have been buried below post-war debris.

The Northover was a portable weapon resembling a drainpipe mounted on a tripod. The Smith Gun appeared to be a scaled down field gun and was fitted with two, solid artillery wheels, but with the gun barrel mounted on its side. Being pulled into position by hand, it was up-ended on to one wheel upon which the barrel could then be swivelled to take aim, the gunners being protected from shrapnel overhead by the other wheel. All of these weapons were intended for use as light artillery against enemy tanks. Small arms included Sten guns and American-made rifles, which could only fire American ammunition. They were therefore marked with red warning paint.

Because of the change of tactics, much time was spent in training for street fighting. The local education authority made available two empty houses in Crispin Street where the Home Guard practised wall-climbing and house clearing operations. B Company used Manor House in Main Road, Far Cotton for practising house to house battles. By

1944, little was apparently left standing of Manor House — what did remain was finally demolished in 1946 (Barnes 1946, 104).

The Defended Locations were manned by a larger garrison than the earlier road-blocks and were intended to be able to hold out for longer until relief arrived. They were not though very popular amongst many of the Northampton Home Guard members who found that their homes and families were now outside the defended part of the town (Barnes 1946, 13). There were seven known Defended Localities in Northampton, see Table 4.

Part of the Defended Locality system of defence relied on a Keep. Like the donjon in a medieval castle, the idea of the Keep was that it should be the central rallying point and the last ditch for the defenders. So, in early 1942, a new company, F Company was formed to man the Keep. Based on No. 9 Platoon of C Company, it continued in the Home Guard tradition of making its headquarters at a public house — in this case, the Lord Raglan.

However, it was felt that a single Keep would be too large and so three were settled on. The Drill Hall in Clare Street was also the Battalion HQ. The new police station in The Mounts was also, amongst other war-time functions, a fire-watch observation post and the old barracks that gave their name to Barrack Road was also the home of the Northamptonshire Regiment.

THE TIDE TURNS

By 1943, the threat of invasion was receding but the

12th Battalion kept up a steady programme of training and exercises. In July of that year, D Company was transferred out of the Battalion to the new, 15th Battalion. However, in December of that year, the 12th Battalion, along with many other inland Home Guard battalions, were ordered to form a coastal reinforcement company. By this time, planning for the D Day invasions was already underway but it was feared that when the allies landed in France, Germany might make a retaliatory strike against the east coast. In this event, the new D Company was to give support in the Great Yarmouth area. The new, self-contained company was based at Kingsthorpe and a number of visits were made to their 'patch' in Norfolk to plan its defence. At Easter, 1944, the entire Company boarded 6 United Counties buses driven by members of 2001 Motor Transport Company (formerly the United Counties Home Guard platoon) and spent the bank holiday in training and patrolling their defensive area. In the event, the counter attack was not made and their services were not called on (Barnes 1946, 113-5).

The Northampton Borough Home Guard were keen and efficient, unlike some of their counterparts at Wellingborough who, following an air raid; first held up a civil defence dispatch rider, ordering him to dismount from his machine; caused a disturbance in the Civil Defence Control Centre and then; stopped a suspicious character in Sheep Street who they interrogated at the point of a gun to discover that he was in fact the Chief Constable.¹⁹

By the end of 1944, the threat of invasion had been completely lifted and so the 12th Battalion, with the

Location	NGR	No. on Fig. 2
<i>Defended Localities</i>		
St Peters Bridge (was A428, Britannia Inn)	SP 78155940	1
South Bridge (was A508)	SP 75485974	2
Kingsthorpe (A50/A508 junction)	SP 75166331	3
Kettering Road (A43, Kingsley Park Hotel/White Elephant)	SP 76556199	4
West Bridge	SP 74606039	5
Spencer Bridge (bottom of Grafton Street)	SP 74706008	6
Abington Park (exact location unconfirmed but on old A45)	SP 77456189	7
<i>The Keep</i>		
Drill Hall, Clare Street	SP 75906125	8
Mounts Police Station	SP 75556100	9
Barracks, Barrack Road	SP 75256132	10

Table 4. Northampton: known defended localities and the Keep, after late 1941.
Source: Barnes, L.E. *History of the 12th Northamptonshire Battalion Home Guard 1940—44*, (Northampton, c. 1946).

NOTES

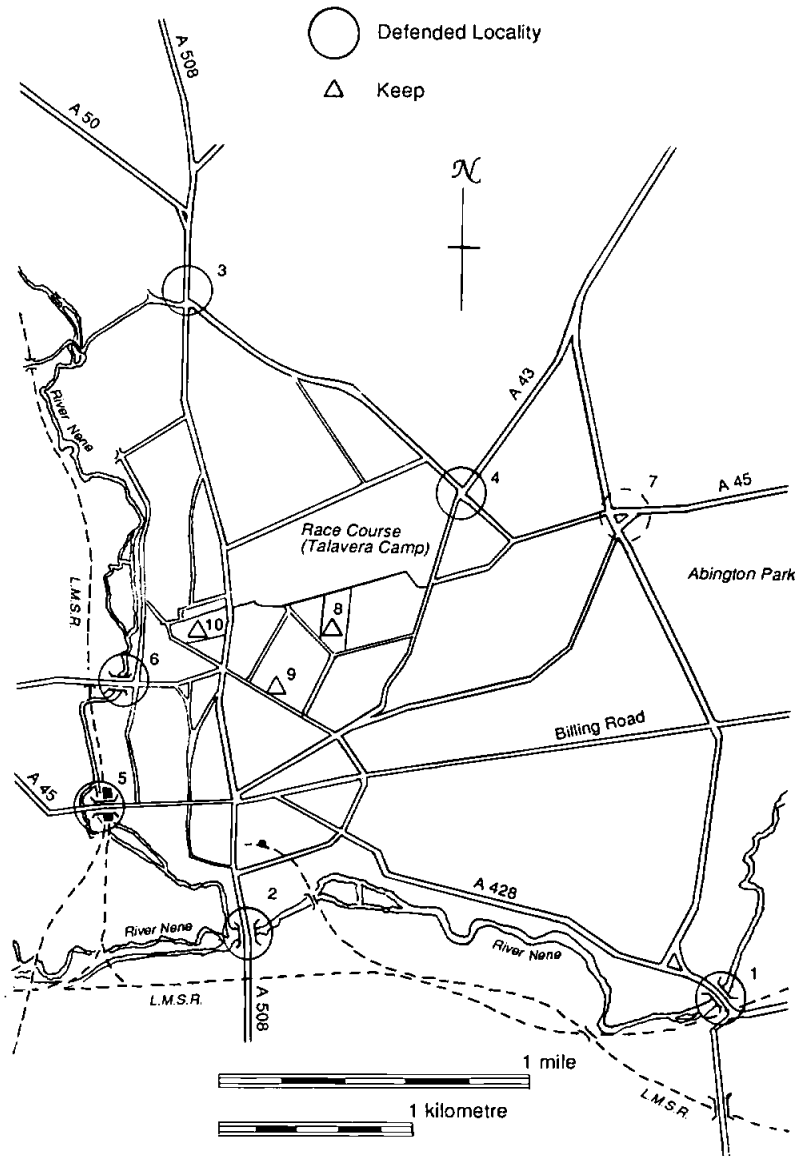


Fig 2 Northampton defences c. 1943

rest of the Home Guard, was officially stood down. By that time, the 12th Battalion consisted of 8 Companies, a vast array of light artillery and equipment, its own section of dispatch riders and its own Intelligence Branch based in Great Russell Street. As in other towns, the Battalion paraded

through Northampton on Stand Down Day, 5th December, 1944 and as Barnes put it; "Thus ended the existence of the greatest unpaid army that this Country has ever seen" (Barnes 1946, 126).

It is clear from the evidence, that following Dunkirk, there was a period of confusion and the

lack of a coherent plan of defence for this country. The regular forces quickly addressed this problem and devised a defensive strategy based on available resources. A national call to arms was immediately responded to and what the volunteers lacked in uniforms, equipment and weapons was compensated for by their enthusiasm, ingenuity and passionate desire to prevent an enemy from occupying their country.

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S.R. HOLLOWELL

DENNIS JACKSON: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dennis was educated at a village school during the last war, leaving at the age of 14 to work in the building trade. In 1965 he received a small grant from Oxford University to excavate an Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon site near Upton and in 1967, he gave up his job as a brickwork contractor to direct an excavation at Upwell for the Ministry of Works. Since 1974, when Northamptonshire Archaeology was first published in its current format, Dennis has contributed articles to virtually every edition, a total of 22 pieces in 20 volumes. In 1999, having retired from full time field work, he became a vice president of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society. A full list of his publications including those in national journals appears below.

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FINDS FROM REDEVELOPMENT OF PART OF THE OLD NORTHAMPTON GOLF CLUB COURSE, KETTERING ROAD, NORTHAMPTON, 1994-1995

INTRODUCTION

During 1994-95 a substantial portion of the old Northampton Golf Club course alongside Kettering Road (SP 771630) was cleared and redeveloped to accommodate a Safeway superstore, car parking and associated service facilities.

The author was employed, in a part-time capacity,

to monitor the entire process from initial stripping, through ground excavation, to construction and landscaping, because of the presence of protected wildlife species in the immediate vicinity of the site. As the scheme progressed, there was an opportunity thus, to also observe other items of environmental interest or features of concern. Initially, it was anticipated that evidence might thereby be acquired from temporary sections, to assist in the resolution of a longstanding question: - the dating and determination of specific purpose of the prominent 'hills and hollows' landscape (Thompson, 1930).

Preliminary site works revealed quantities of post-medieval material suggesting that, prior to incorpor-

ation into the golf course, this quarried ground had been used for the disposal of domestic refuse, but also, a few artefacts clearly of much earlier date. Scrutiny of aerial photographs (Air Ministry, 1947) then indicated that in fact, somewhat less than half the development site bore signs of having been profoundly disturbed by past quarrying activity. The greater part of the flat land adjoining Kettering Road was evidently still essentially the 'natural' land surface. As work extended onto this ground, the recovery of more artefacts of Roman and prehistoric date prompted specific attention to this additional dimension to the contracted watching brief.

In advance of construction, the entire site was comprehensively remodelled in order to provide new levels to better accommodate the new land uses. Given that this involved removal of all the superficial topography and uppermost bedded strata, temporary mounded storage of excavated material and its subsequent redeposition and compaction elsewhere within the site, the prospect was for complete destruction of any potential archaeological remains.

Effective monitoring on behalf of the badgers, required visits to the site several times each week. Places where active removal and downcutting were taking place were inspected, together with repeated forays upon the spoil heaps and previously cleared surfaces, in search of structures, artefacts and any other palaeoenvironmental features.

Such was the pace and scale of development that the majority of finds were disassociated, and it became increasingly difficult to ascertain their precise original provenance. Unfavourable conditions, when the site was under water or covered by snow, coupled with inevitable reconfiguration of the site between visits, further constrained finds recovery. Whilst it is conceivable that slight features were destroyed without the opportunity of observation, the frequency of visits meant it unlikely that any well-founded structures would have entirely escaped notice, and there were no reports of such events from the various subcontractors and machine operators. At no stage was anything seen that might have warranted a halt to the development to allow systematic recording of major features of archaeological significance.

All items of obvious or possible pre-modern origin were collected, although it was only after the discovery of a finely-worked flint tool that appropriate attention was also directed towards the recovery of lithic remains. Photographs were taken when

circumstances suggested that such record was desirable for future reference, i.e. the sequence of transient sections and general contexts from which tangible objects had been gathered. Following completion of the project, a sample of the cleaned, sorted assemblage of accumulated finds was conveyed to Northampton Museum, for expert corroboration and additional interpretation. All finds and associated photographs remain in possession of the author. Whilst not claimed to be at all complete, the resultant array of finds is believed to be representative of the erstwhile contents of the site.

THE FINDS

THE HILLS AND HOLLOW

The tract of 'hills' within the redevelopment site were unsurprisingly revealed to be spoil heaps, composed of numerous pieces of thin, angular, fissile sandy limestone. There were limited finds of good quality, cream-coloured flagstone slabs amongst the upcast that would appear to represent the kind of material originally quarried. A few, massive, nodular blocks of hard, dense, blue-hearted, partly-crystalline limestone, were also noted.

POTTERY

The largest element of recovered material, the greater proportion of which - more than four-hundred finds, including rim, base and body sherds of various fabrics and forms - can be attributed to the Roman period. Coarse shelly wares and grey wares predominate, with just a few pieces of colour-coated ware, from the Nene Valley and Oxford, and only four small sherds of Samian ware. Some at least of the grey ware appears to be from the kilns at Ecton. Also represented are massive rims; channel-rim; sherds with rouletted decoration; poppy-head beaker; burnished, dark, mica-gritted ware; an early, shallow platter, and, a large piece of hard, black, burnished 'Belgic' ware - with a hole drilled through it. Several fragments of mortaria, including a spout, all probably from Oxford kilns, and a few small fragments of roofing tile were found too.

The much smaller amount of medieval material consists of eighteen quite badly weathered, partly-glazed sherds - two bearing grid stamp decoration - of 13th/14th century date, probably from Lyveden or

Stanion, some other rather nondescript body sherds, and five pieces of 14th/15th century jug handles - four of strap, one of rod pattern, plus a single fragment of roof tile.

BONE AND OTHER ORGANIC MATTER

Consists of a single, adult human femur, recently damaged, a quantity of animal bone, much of which also appears to be of antiquity, including teeth of sheep/goat, cow, horse and pig, and a number of marine oyster shells - one valve of which is centrally pierced. A single, roughly-worked, animal-bone point tool, similar in appearance to that featured from a site at Weekley (Jackson & Dix, 1986-7), was also found.

FLINTS

A small quantity of struck/worked flint was recovered, comprising about forty waste flakes, six cores, broken cores and core preparation waste, and seven recognisable artefacts. Patination is largely absent. Most of the core material is dark-coloured, translucent, high quality flint, but the pebbles from which derived were evidently comparatively small and they have been worked to the limit. One possible core, larger, but of opaque grey flint, appears to have been discarded once its poor quality became apparent, and other waste pieces display flaws. Several worthwhile small flakes are of light-brown coloured, translucent flint of good quality. Finely retouched edges along one face of both long sides, are evident on several blade-like flakes, and the single edge of a cortical flake, which might be described as serrated. Three discoidal scrapers were found, two fine specimens c. 30 mm in diameter, were picked up less than one metre apart, the other is smaller, and of lighter-coloured, poorer quality flint. Nine small, heat-crazed, totally opaque, burned flint pieces or 'potboilers' - at least two of which appear to have been previously worked as cores - and a single leaf-shaped arrowhead (tip missing), of pale grey-brown flint, with invasive retouch on both faces, complete the assemblage.

OTHER FINDS

A small, irregularly shaped, solidified mass of lead, a few pieces of red-stained, burned limestone, several small pieces of very thin, micaceous sandstone, and a

considerable quantity of large fragments of heavy, iron slag, the latter apparently associated with dark grey ash and broken brick - some displaying a vitrified surface. The iron slag seemed to be derived from several small, irregular patches situated upon/within a fragmented limestone stratum, more-or-less at original ground level, within the area from which the hills and hollows had been cleared.

INTERPRETATION

THE HILLS AND HOLLOWES

Whilst the temporary sections confirmed the presence of shallow, opencast workings, regrettably there were no *in situ* finds that could resolve questions as to either their date of origin or purpose.

The ground evidently not affected by quarrying, was seen to be underlain by non-calcareous, or decalcified, ferruginous sandstones and brightly coloured sands of the 'Variable Beds', \pm at depth, ironstone proper (Taylor, 1949).

If a source of iron ore was the stimulus for the quarries it is surprising that there is no evidence of working this part of the site. Rather, the exposures within the Hills and Hollows support the view of Beeby Thompson that the workings were directed towards the calcareous 'Pendle Beds' facies, for some other use (Thompson, 1930). The stone waste heaps removed in course of redevelopment appeared to be more calcareous/less ferruginous, than the material visible in the surviving (and greater extent) of Hills and Hollows now within the Bradlaugh Fields Local Nature Reserve (LNR). A vertical aerial photograph (Air Ministry, 1947) indicates a parallel alignment of the superficial topography throughout. This appears to coincide with the strike of the outcrop, and could reflect the selective pursuit of preferred stone horizons, although the lateral, as well as vertical disposition of lithologies within this part of the Northampton Sand is notoriously 'variable' (Thompson, 1928).

But what of the stone obtained? One possibility is that it was destined for use in the making or repair of roads - an important use of 'Pendle' from other pits in the locality during the first part of the twentieth century 'and probably earlier too' (Thompson, 1930). Unfortunately, little is known about the development of the adjacent Kettering Road before it was turnpiked - which was as late as 1819 - but it is conceivable that local routeways then or before,

might have obtained suitable hardcore from the Hills and Hollows resource.

The first map evidence for quarry activity at this site dates only from the 1924 revision of the Ordnance Survey six inches to the mile sheet (Ordnance Survey, 1927), but by then the Hills and Hollows had been part of the golf course for more than a quarter of a century (Sibley, 1992). It is curious that so prominent a landscape feature, in either active or disused condition, was not depicted on the First Edition of 1885, but one cannot tell whether the ground really had not been dug at the time of the field surveys of 1883, or was simply omitted in error by the cartographers.

The site is comparatively remote from the then town, and there were plenty of other, more suitably endowed quarries to supply the building stone needs of Northampton until the end of the nineteenth century, when pendle was first brought into use there (Thompson, 1930). It is distant too, from established villages, and there were surely few dispersed farmsteads hereabouts prior to Enclosure.

A segment of a stone wall, progressively removed during the development of the golf course (Sibley, 1992) is marked on the Second Edition map. The same (entire) feature, or another kind of field boundary, was plotted on the earlier map. What is of interest is that this boundary cut across the area of the Hills and Hollows. From this evidence, it must surely be the case that the workings had gone out of use before Enclosure, which in this case (Kingsthorpe) followed an Act of 1766. Perhaps local availability of an alternative material to quickset thorn, resulted in renewed interest in exploitation of the Hills and Hollows as a source of walling material, but the evident superimposition of this boundary across the site would then be difficult to account for.

The relict flora upon the Hills and Hollows supports the view of the land having been under grass well before its acquisition and development as a golf course a century ago, but cannot be employed as a more precise dating tool (Best, 1993). The Hills and Hollows occupied a large area of ground, but whether this is due to the scale of operation during a short time span, modest or intermittent working over a longer time, or the wasteful working of patchily distributed, useful rock, is not clear. If, as suggested here, the pits had gone out of use by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, both the reason and date of their creation remains obscure.

In confronting this question, Beeby Thompson was

forced to speculate that stone from the Hills and Hollows was used in the building 'of some houses and the church in Moulton, and the wall around Moulton Park' (Thompson, 1930). It is well known that this royal deer park was unusual in being enclosed by a stone wall rather than conventional wooden pale, and the echoes of feudal obligations required a number of villages to contribute to the cost of its upkeep well into the sixteenth century (Glover, 1883, Leach, 1908). There is the problem though, of closer sources of stone (including pendle), but the magnitude of the original construction task and/or the status of the enterprise, could have subordinated such considerations during the middle ages. Thereafter, the Hills and Hollows would have represented at least a feasible source for satisfying periodic demand for stone to effect subsequent repairs. The first documented reference to existence of the park wall is c. 1300, it is known that there was major restoration in 1393, but by 1560 it was much degraded, requiring another major rebuild in 1577 and again in the seventeenth century (Steane, 1974, R.C.H.M., 1985). What remains of the old park perimeter wall today is largely of recent rebuild, but fragmentary sections of older walling, now incorporated into garden boundaries, that have been seen (Best, 1979) include pendle, but this could equally have come from other known quarry sites - later extensively reworked as a source of roadstone - in the vicinity of Buttocks Booth (Thompson, 1928).

Nobody has suggested that the Hills and Hollows might be of Roman origin, but re-examination of the stone from excavated settlement sites might be worthwhile, if only to disallow this possibility.

POTTERY

There is obvious need for more detailed evaluation in order to properly compare with other local groups, and the unstratified disposition of the finds precludes sensible consideration of detailed chronology. Nonetheless, there are enough diagnostic finds to venture the following points.

The most prominent group spans the first to fourth centuries A.D., including some early Roman or pre-Roman material. Persistence of an undisturbed land surface, away from the Hills and Hollows, has been confirmed by the redevelopment sections through soil profile and strata beneath that portion alongside the Kettering Road. Some of the Roman sherds were

undoubtedly emanating from the lower part of the red/purple/brown sandy loam *in situ* soil there, but what proportion of the total it is impossible to tell.

Overall, the quantity of material is comparatively small, given the time span involved. When coupled with the absence of evidence for any contemporary built structures, foundations, ditches, rubbish pits or other below-ground features, it does not seem likely that the site was directly occupied. The finds probably represent the spreading of domestic wastes, from a farmstead in the vicinity, upon what was then cultivated ground. The soils developed upon the Variable Beds are of good texture and drainage, but would certainly have benefited from supplementary manuring of this sort.

It is not known how spatially extensive is the residual scatter, but it would seem to have once extended beyond the redevelopment site. A few sherds have been collected from surface scrapes upon the Hills and Hollows within the neighbouring Bradlaugh Fields Local Nature Reserve. It is perhaps surprising though, that such material has not been reported from the adjacent allotments. Thereafter, the 13th to 15th centuries are represented, albeit on the basis of comparatively few finds. One possible explanation for this apparent paucity could be that the site was under grass rather than cultivation, or, indeed, actively exploited for stone during that time.

BONE AND OTHER ORGANIC MATERIAL

Also requires further study. More than one phase of deposition would seem to be represented, but a large proportion of the find material would not be out of place in a roman context.

The single find of a human bone is odd, in which regard there is an intriguing observation concerning the Hills and Hollows, from the *Northampton Independent* 'of the 1920's', cited in the centenary history of the Golf Club, "That buried there are the slain of the Danes and Saxons who struggled for mastery of the area many years ago" (Sibley, 1992). Now, were there to have been a cemetery of any sort or age present, one might have expected rather more in the way of characteristic finds, and had such a feature been disturbed when the site was quarried, there would surely have been some contemporary record of such discoveries. However, the site is situated in a remote corner of the parish of Kingsthorpe, so it is not inconceivable that a Saxon cemetery is/was close by.

FLINTS

Taken as a group, these are broadly consistent with what is presently understood to be a late Neolithic/early bronze age assemblage, typical of this part of the County, as reported for example, from Cosgrove (Quinnell, 1991) and closer to hand, Overstone (Williams, 1976).

OTHER FINDS

Density of the iron slag and character of associated brick suggests that neither are of significant age. The slag would appear to be very different in character to that recorded from the Roman site at Parklands (Hunter & Mynard, 1977). It would seem to represent comparatively recent furnace waste, introduced to the site for some purpose, or dumped there. As revealed by directory entries (Kelly, 1924) late nineteenth/early twentieth century ironworks in the County supplied slag for use as road metal, ballast and concrete manufacture (Sanders, 1994).

CONCLUSIONS

With the exception of coin finds, there is an apparent dearth of previously reported evidence for activity in the immediate vicinity of the site during Iron Age and roman times. On the basis of information mapped by the R.C.H.M., the County Sites and Monuments Register, and reported finds to date in this journal, the mean distance to the six nearest, previously recorded settlement sites is 2.3 kms, the closest being 1.8 km away. Pottery has been reported from two other sites approximately 1.75 kms distant. There is however, a coin find from the adjoining allotments.

The mean distance to the six nearest worked flint/unspecified finds of prehistoric age, is 1.25 kms, but including no less than five sites not far to the west.

The finds from the old golf course could suggest the possibility of a hitherto unknown Roman settlement site somewhere nearby. That such a feature has not been found is not perhaps surprising, because so much of the immediate environs was built upon earlier this century, before there was much interest in such matters, and subsequent records have depended upon casual finds in garden soil or service trench works. However, deliberate scrutiny of the then countryside to the north and east, in advance of

impending expansion of Northampton during the recent past, has revealed dispersed rural settlements of Roman date (e.g. Williams, 1974) and the suggestion of extensive Roman activity throughout the vicinity (Hunter & Mynard, 1977), with sites perhaps less than one kilometre apart (R.C.H.M., 1985). The findings from the golf course redevelopment site would appear to reinforce this notion. Similarly, with regard to the flint assemblage, which further adds to the idea of localised 'intensity' of prehistoric activity upon the outcrop of the Northampton Sand.

In future, it is recommended that rather more explicit attention should be directed towards the recovery of additional information of this sort, as the few remaining, longstanding 'open spaces' within the expanded townscape, in turn, become available for examination via redevelopment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful thanks are due to David Keyse of J.J. Gallagher Ltd., John Watts of Northampton Borough Council, Tom Pettifer Ltd., and Safeway plc., for permitting access and tolerating my extended presence on the site from start to finish of the redevelopment project. Also, to the Northamptonshire County Archaeology Unit, for furnishing print-out of the relevant section of the S.M.R., and Robert Moore of Northampton Museum, for his assistance with evaluation of the finds and comments upon draft version of this paper.

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JEFFREY BEST

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT GRANGE FARM, STANWICK, NORTHANTS.

The village of Stanwick lies to the south west of Raunds and within the Raunds Archaeological Priority area. As such it has been subject to extensive archaeological investigations as part of the Raunds

Area Project. The proposed development at Grange Farm Stanwick prompted an archaeological investigation of the site carried out under the guidance of Northamptonshire Heritage. The 0.5 hectare development area is situated on the south side of Grange Road within the former farmyard (NGR SP9816-7113). The investigation took the form of four trenches and was carried out in October and November 1997.

The work carried out during the Raunds Area

Project has suggested that the village originated in the late Saxon period and had two distinct foci centred on the two main streets, both of which had an east-west axis. The more southerly of these is thought to run along Grange Road, the High Street and as a green lane, through Hall Farm. The Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record includes a number of entries relating to the late Saxon and medieval periods for this area. Fieldwalking some 200 metres to the east of the site has revealed distributions of pottery from both periods suggestive of an early street frontage. A number of postholes, pits and ditches associated with late Saxon pottery were previously discovered immediately to the west in the area now occupied by Grange-wick Farmhouse. Although a few sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil in this area, it has been suggested that this part of the street frontage was already unoccupied by the 12th century.

Three of the trenches were 1.6m wide and varied from 25m to 45m in length: the fourth measured 14m by 6.5m. They revealed that the majority of the site had been truncated by previous constructions. Despite this, one trench contained two shallow,

undated features: a pit and a gully. It is likely that these had been truncated by levelling associated with the concreting of the farmyard. The eastern part of the development area was not as truncated and contained four well-preserved archaeological features comprising a pair of postholes and two gullies. Unfortunately only the most easterly of the gullies contained pottery and is tentatively dated to the 12th century. This gully may have been a property boundary in the backlands of dwellings fronting the south side of Grange Road. If so, its presence may indicate continued occupation of half of this part of the street into the 12th century. A single sherd of 14th century pottery was recovered from the spoil in this area. The other gully was in almost direct alignment with one of the present boundaries immediately to the north, which separates the rear plots of a row of cottages fronting Grange Road. A full report of the investigation has been lodged with the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

M. JOHN SAUNDERS

ROMAN IRONWORKING AT LAXTON

Further evidence of the scale of Roman iron smelting was revealed in November 1998 at a site on the A43 between Bulwick and Duddington. The site was first revealed when a bend in the A 43 was straightened in 1985. At this time, a row of exceptionally large Roman iron smelting furnaces were recorded crossing the new carriageway as well as the foundations of buildings and a cemetery made up of approximately 100 graves. In 1985 there was only time to excavate two furnaces. A third, eventually incorporated into the restored verge, was the subject of the recent excavations. The furnaces were around 1.5m in diameter, which is far larger than similar structures of this period found in this country. They were built in a pit and almost certainly had a tall shaft or chimney built above ground level. The row of furnaces was situated on the side of a small valley and the scale of the work was such

that the whole of the valley below was filled with slag and furnace debris. Because of the huge quantity present, experts who first saw the slag suggested it must have come from the modern iron-workings at Corby.

The 1998 excavation was chiefly carried out by members of the county archaeological societies and organised by Dennis Jackson, who undertook the 1985 excavation. Peter Crew who is the archaeologist for Snowdonia National Park and an internationally known specialist on early iron production directed it. Mr Crew identified the site as being of national, if not international importance and stated that it can only be compared to a handful of European sites. Help for the excavation was given by Northamptonshire Archaeology and especially Anglian Water Services Ltd, who were carrying out pipeline work in the area.

DENNIS JACKSON

A FURTHER MID SIXTEENTH CENTURY POTTERY KILN AT POTTERSPURY, NORTHANTS.

A further well preserved sixteenth century pottery kiln was excavated in May-June 1998 by P & C Woodfield and R Ivens, at Woods Lane, Potterspury (NGR SP 7604 4322). The site was first identified during an archaeological evaluation prior to the granting of planning permission for two houses; both the evaluation and excavation were sponsored by Simon Hill of Armitage Homes, the developer.

The kiln was stone-built, roughly 3.3m in diameter, with a central pedestal, the front of the kiln consisting of an unusual coursed stone façade wall, and, significantly, it had a low set flue behind a thin clay wall at the rear, probably foreshadowing the development of down-draught kilns. A total of approximately 6000 sherds were recovered. Its products, recovered from the primary fill, consisted of a limited range of late medieval-early post medieval type of wares, predominantly wide mouthed panchcons and small squat handled jugs in a red ware with bibe of thin yellow-brown glazes. With the exception of stabbed handles all vessels were virtually without decoration. There had, as usual, been a large number of firings from the single stokehole. Geomagnetic dating of 19 samples, undertaken by M J Noel of GeoQuest, Co. Durham, all provided an exceptionally well-grouped series of dates for the last firing, of c.1550-1570, unexpectedly some 70 years later than might have been determined by a simple pottery typology alone. Lye appears to have been a significant by-product. After completion, the following watching brief during the digging of foundations revealed an adjacent kiln fired from a stokehole in approximately the same position. Stratigraphically this was slightly earlier, and probably partly provided the explanation for the unusual stone façade wall to the first kiln, which had clearly been constructed within the earlier stokehole pit. As the second kiln was not immediately threatened it was only cleaned back to the top of the stone walls in order to establish the plan.

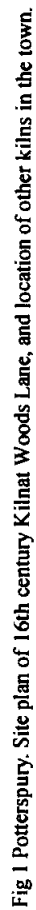
Woods Lane was originally a narrow lane in the village affording access to back land between houses

fronting the High Street. The kilns thus lay at the far bottom of what had been the medieval strips, at the point the land drops away to the stream. One known clay source is on the further bank of the stream. In 1995 the presence of two or more kilns were revealed during housing development on what may be the same ownership plot, but nearer the street. One of these kilns was excavated, probably of late mediaeval date, producing a rather wider range of wares including green-glazed footed costrels and ridge tiles with extruded corners (perhaps also used as saggars). This is to be reported on in *Medieval Archaeology*. Both these sites were close to the medieval kiln excavated by Professor Martyn Jope in 1949, itself even closer to the rear of the street frontage houses. Thus, in this part of Potterspury, a sequence of pottery production can be identified from the medieval into the post-medieval period, ending with the kiln excavated by P Mayes in 1965 producing slip wares and fine wares. The present kiln fills the C16 gap in the pottery production sequence from this important Midland centre, and graphically illustrates an increasingly narrow range of more and more utilitarian wares speedily produced, in fact the birth of an industrial production. It also heralds one future course for the development of kiln structures, with a façade wall similar to contemporary German stoneware kilns, and the suggestion of experimentation with down-draught arrangements. Funding for the academic study and publication of this regionally important industry in the Age of Transition is still awaited.

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PAUL WOODFIELD & RICHARD IVENS





ANOTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN TANK/ FONT FROM NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

This is a preliminary report into the finding of an early 4th century font/tank. A full study is to follow in due course.

The Isle Archaeological Research Society is currently investigating a Romano-British bath house situated near Rushden. In September 1999, whilst excavating a ditch closely associated with the bath house, an early 4th century lead font/tank was found. It was located on the eastern side of the ditch, sealed by building tumble consisting of diamond shaped Swithland (Leicestershire) slate roofing tiles and local limestone building blocks.

The font/tank with a visible face of c. 47x27cms and weighing c.25kg and has an approximate diameter of 48cms. There are a series of holes in the body of the font/tank that may have been made by a heated implement. They appear to be randomly placed and may be unrelated to its possible function but

could alternatively have been used to assist suspension. There is a vertical lead strip on the back of the font/tank suggesting that it may have been repaired albeit crudely, at least once in its lifetime. This may however indicate a suspension/carrying lug similar to that seen on the Ashton font/tank (Guy 1977, 10). The bottom of the tank has been cut off, probably with shears and discarded. The main body of the tank/font has been cut vertically and then folded three times. This may have been done to make it easier to transport, perhaps as a portable icon but equally this might represent deliberate damage or even desecration.

Around the rim is a single broad cable/rope design similar to that on the font /tank found at Walesby (Lincolnshire) under which is a series adjoining rings (Thomas 1981, 221). Below this is a series of open square panels, again edged with the same cabling design. At the bottom of these panels there are single rings similar in design to those located above. Within each of the three visible panels, which are again edged with the same cabling motif there, is a single

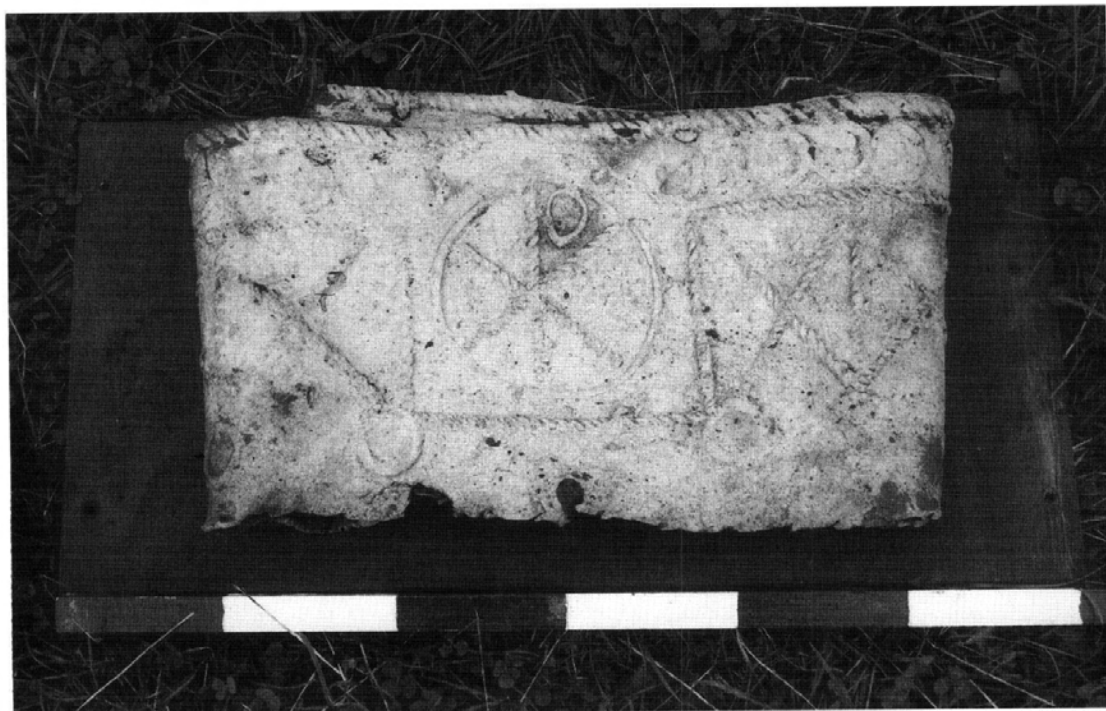


Plate 1 Early Christian Tank/Font found near Rushden

St Andrew's type cross. On the right hand panel a possible 'D' shaped design appears to the right of the cross. In the central panel, the cross has had a single line added through its centre at the top of which there is also an ellipse. The whole of this is enclosed within a circle creating a simple *Chi-Rho* motif. The design of the *Chi-Rho* would suggest a date after 339 AD (Thomas 1981, 86). It is difficult to determine the relationship of the font/tank to the neighbouring bath house. It may be that the font/tank was brought to the site for re-working since there is some evidence for lead working in the area of the bath house.

Only five other examples of *Chi Rho* monogrammed tanks/fonts are known in this country and their distribution is predominantly in the south and east (Woodward 1992, 99). In 1977, a complete lead tank/font with a *Chi-Rho* monogramme was found

20 kilometres to the north east during excavations at Ashton (Hadman and Upex 1977).

After conservation the font/tank will be donated to Kettering Museum, where it will be placed on display.

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JAMES LOOKER

TITCHMARSH LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN SETTLEMENT

INTRODUCTION

An Iron Age and Roman settlement has been recognised in and around Springfield, Titchmarsh (fig. 1), since the 18th century when part of a cemetery was discovered. Fieldwork by D. Jackson and others during the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated the date and significance of the site. Aerial photographs have indicated that the site appears to centre on a Roman road junction near a bridging point on the river Nene. Over the last ten years the settlement has been systematically explored by metal detectorists who have found and reported to Northampton Museum a considerable quantity of archaeological material. This paper will set out the results of previous fieldwork before making a detailed examination of the small finds and interpreting aerial photographs to try to elucidate the chronology, extent and nature of the site.

LOCATION

The core of the Roman settlement at Titchmarsh lies between the A605 Thrapston to Oundle road and the old LMS railway line between Northampton and Peterborough (fig. 2). The boundary to the settlement to the north is uncertain because of a pasture field, but it may lie where a change in direction of the ridge and furrow pattern occurs. It is possible that there are no firm boundaries to the settlement, however, with unplanned settlement activity extending along some of major and perhaps minor Roman roads that converge in the area. To the north-east further extensive Roman settlement, or activity, occurs along the road running from Titchmarsh village towards the Nene valley (RCHM 1975).

The Roman settlement or small town at Titchmarsh is sited just north of the medieval town of Thrapston. The close proximity of a Roman and modern town can be paralleled some eight miles to the north-east at Oundle, where the small Roman town at Ashton is similarly sited. Both the Roman towns near Thrapston and Oundle, as well as the extensive settlements to the south-west at Stanwick, and the walled town at Ircchester are sited in or adjacent to the Nene valley.

NOTES

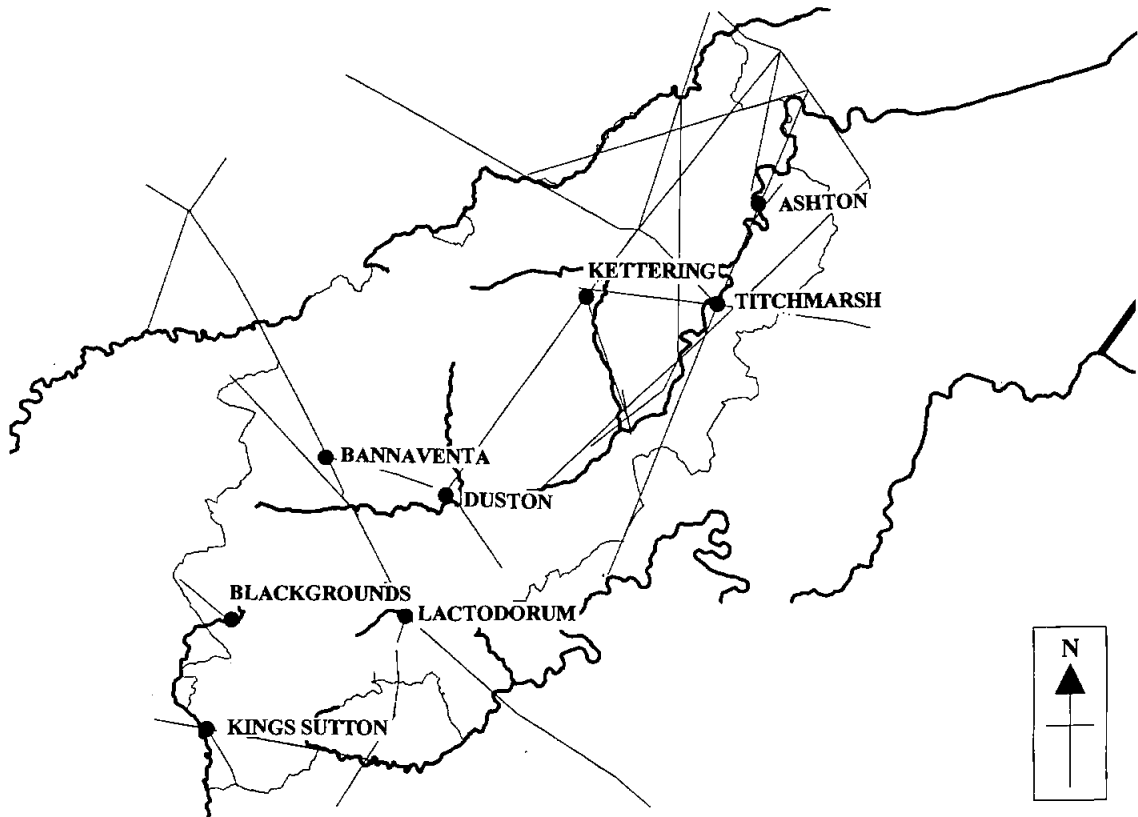


Fig 1 Location of Titchmarsh

HISTORY

The site was first brought into modern prominence in 1961 when the arable fields were deep ploughed and a cemetery was revealed to the west of the railway by gravel quarrying (fig. 3). The presence of major buildings at the core of the settlement was suggested when large pieces of pottery, tesserae, painted wall plaster, and a stone capital were brought to the surface by ploughing. An inscribed stone was also found in 1965 when a brook was cleaned out just north-west of the settlement (BNFAS 1966, 13). The stone is inscribed PP or PR and is interpreted as boundary stone (*terminus publice positus*).

No major excavation or recording work was carried out in the area of the Roman cemetery, but limited work was undertaken at the time by Norma Whitcombe and helpers from Northampton Museum. The number of burials in the cemetery is uncertain but it was noted that they were aligned east-west, and

that coffin or boot nails were recovered from some graves. After the quarrying finished burials continued to be exposed by erosion in the quarry face by the railway until 1975. Some of the graves overlay ditches containing late Iron Age pottery and it is therefore possible that there was a settlement in the area before the Roman conquest. A number of deep Roman ditches and pits were also exposed in the quarry face and a metalled area, or stone track, was exposed on the north side of the cemetery.

EXCAVATION

The only excavation to have taken place between the modern road (A605) and the railway was in 1988 when trial trenches were dug in the grass field to the north of the road ahead of levelling operations. Although a scatter of Roman features were located at the north-east end of the field nothing substantial

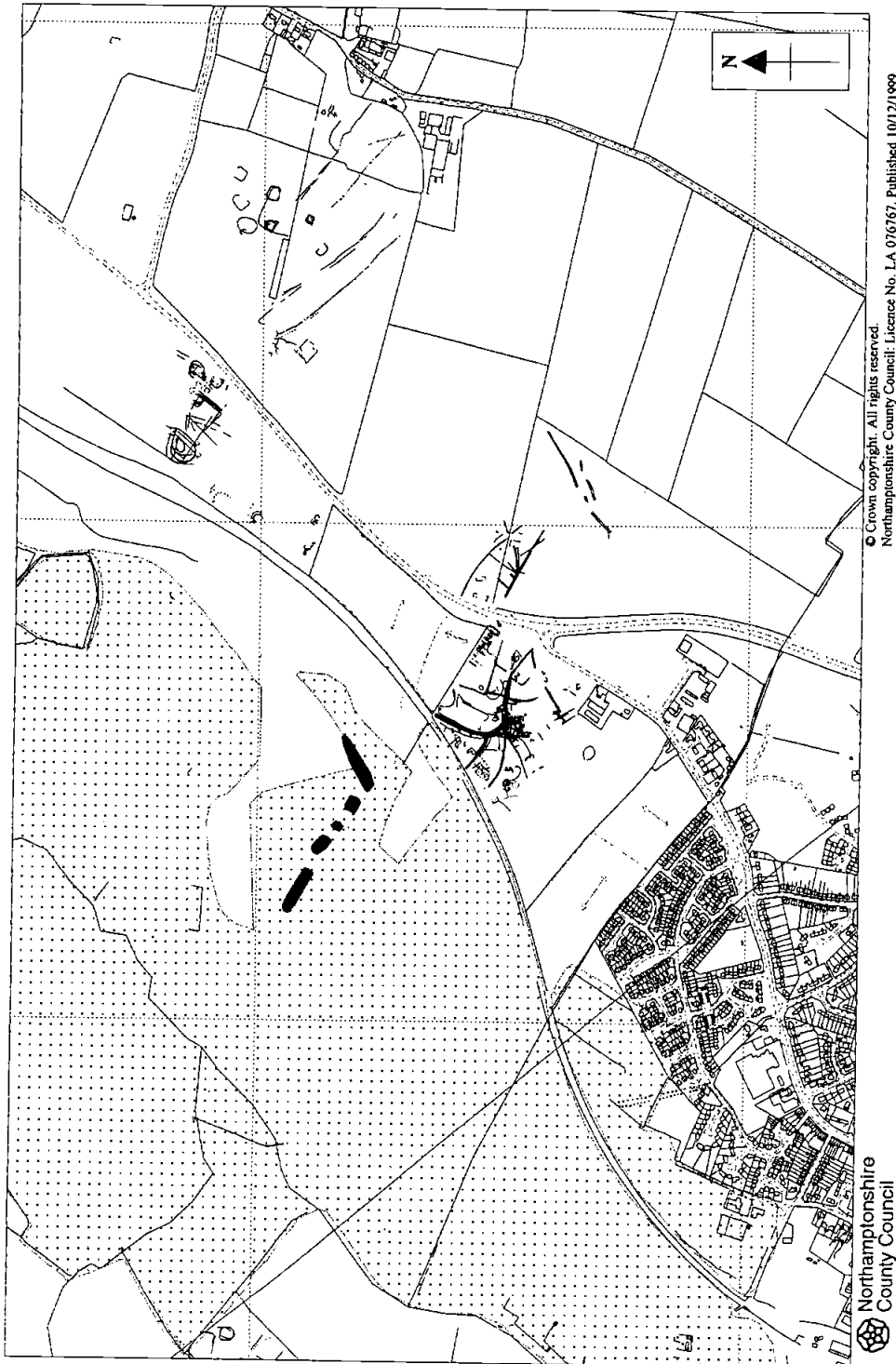


Fig 2

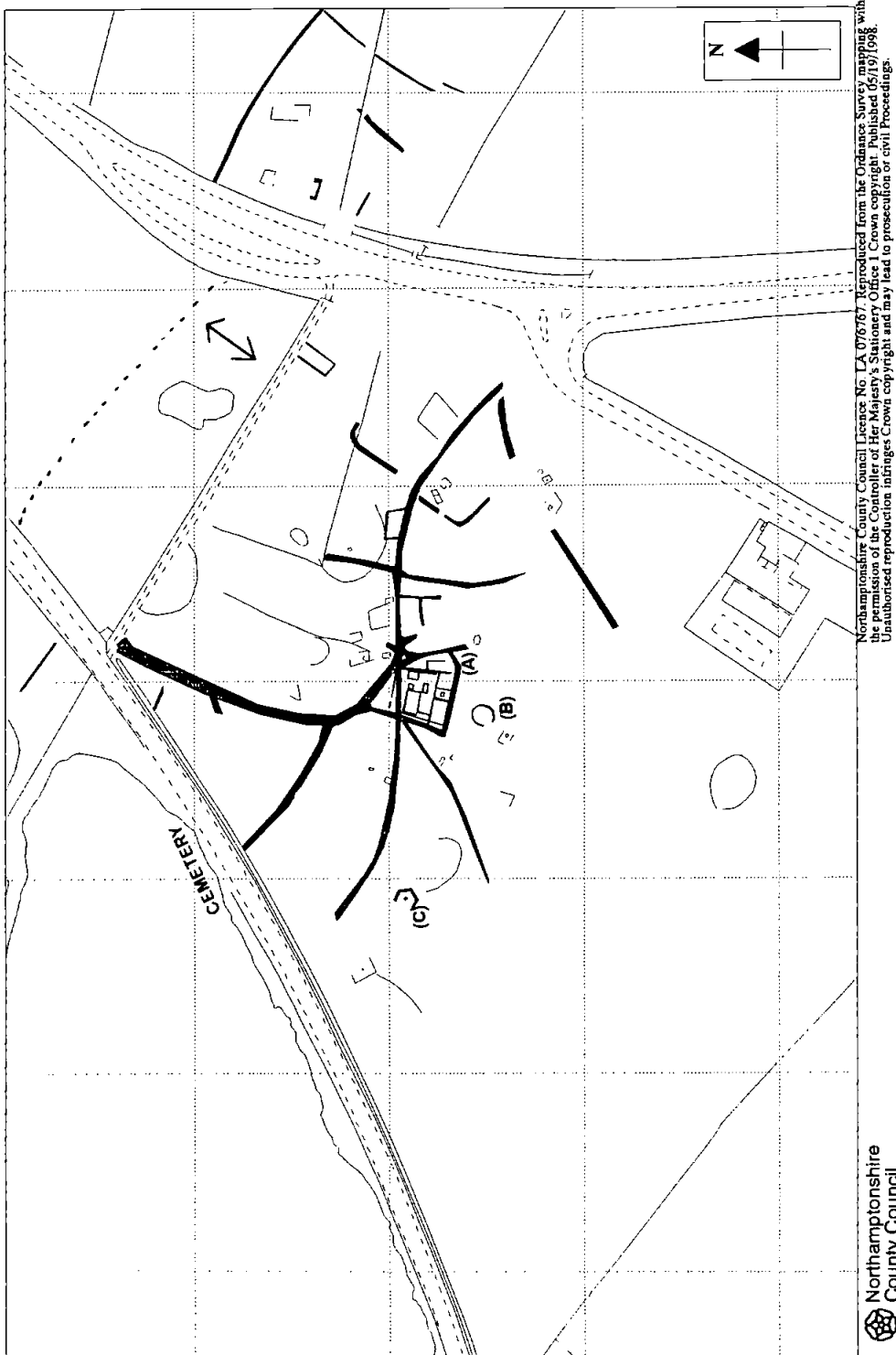


Fig 3 Titchmarsh Roman Town

was revealed (Cadman 1988). A more major excavation had taken place in 1986, to the east of the A605, ahead of road improvements (Boyce 1986). This revealed the stone foundations of a rectangular building and many pits, post holes, and ditches, as well as road metalling. The roadside ditches that were revealed suggest there were several phases of road in the excavated area (running northeast to southwest) with pits and ditches both overlying and underlying sections of the roadway. Pottery, coins, and brooches from the area date from the mid 1st century AD to the 4th century.

In 1965 a limited excavation had been undertaken by local societies immediately north-west of this area when a bend in the road was straightened. Ditches and post alignments were revealed but no stone foundations (BNFAS 1966, 13).

A small excavation took place on the flood plain in 1963, to record the Godmanchester to Leicester Roman road. More extensive trial trenching and watching briefs were undertaken in 1983/4 on the same road alignment. The latter work was undertaken close to the railway and settlement, ahead of further gravel quarrying (Windell 1984).

THE ROAD SYSTEM

The major Roman road running from Godmanchester to Leicester (the Gartree road) crosses the settlement at Titchmarsh, whilst a further road from Water Newton (Durobrivae), to the north-east, intersects or crosses this road in the vicinity of the town. The line of the Gartree road is known to the west where it crosses both the modern course of the River Nene, and Harpers Brook (the Roman course of the Nene). The remains of a timber bridge were found in 1968 where the road crossed Harpers Brook (Jackson and Ambrose 1976).

In 1963 limestone metalling was revealed where the road crossed the alluvial flood plain, and limited excavation ahead of quarrying showed the line of the road had moved over time, and that extra-mural activity in the form of ditches or pits had occurred along the roadway (note in *Britannia* 19). The later work in 1983/4 showed that the roadway near the settlement was 7m wide and was constructed of rammed gravel and limestone (Windell 1984).

The alignment of the Gartree road changes in the vicinity of the town and the excavations in 1986 indicate that this change took place to the east of the

A605 (Thrapston to Oundle) road. Pottery dating to the mid 1st century AD was found during the excavation. The intersection with the road from Durobrivae could also be east of the A605.

CHRONOLOGY

The Late Iron Age pottery found in ditches underlying the Roman cemetery may suggest a settlement predating the Roman conquest was sited in the area, and that its position in relation to the Gartree road may not be coincidental. The coin evidence supports a break in occupation in the 1st half of the 1st century AD. If the main junction of Roman roads lay to the east of the A605 there seems little doubt that the later centre of the settlement and main buildings were sited to the west. The finds suggest the site was of some importance throughout the Roman period.

THE SMALL FINDS

All finds found as the results of excavation, field walking, chance finds and metal detecting are brought together here for the first time for detailed analysis. It is hoped that such a study will enable more light to be thrown on the status and chronology of the Titchmarsh settlement and demonstrate the importance of unstratified assemblages as a powerful archaeological tool.

By far the greatest proportion of the total assemblage was recovered and reported by the metal detectors who have surveyed the area for over a decade. Without their assistance there would not be a sufficient body of material available to make this study possible.

An assemblage of twenty seven Iron Age coins is large for a LPRIA site, particularly in Northamptonshire, and suggests that the site was of particular importance. Only the suspected temple at Evenly has produced more (Curteis 1996a).

Although it could be argued that the coins were introduced to the site after the Roman invasion the fact that many of the coins are fairly early (phase 7; c. 20 BC-AD 10) issues, seen together with the quantity of LPRIA pottery from the site, would argue against this. Indeed the proportion of phase 7 types to later types (phase 8 early (8E); c. AD 10-20 and phase 8 late (8L); c. AD 20-40) is considerably higher than the norm seen on most other large coin producing

THE IRON AGE COINS

Tribe/Issue	Issuer	Denom	Van Arsdell ref.	Phase
British KA		AE stater	VA.829-3	NE 6
British LX22	?Addedomaros	AE unit	VA.1615-1	SE 7 x4
British LX21	?Addedomaros	AE unit	VA.1646-1	SE 7 x4
British LX23	Dubnovellaunus	AE unit	VA.1669-1	SE 7 x2
Catuvellauni	Tasciovanus	AE unit	VA.1705-1	E 7
Catuvellauni	Tasciovanus	AE unit	VA.1707-1	E 7
Catuvellauni	Tasciovanus	AR unit	VA.1800-1	E 7
Catuvellauni	Tasciovanus	AE unit	VA.1808-1	E 7 x2
Catuvellauni	Tasciovanus	AE unit	VA.1812-1	E 7
Catuvellauni	Tasciovanus/Dias	AR unit		E 7
Catuvellauni	Andoco	AE unit	VA.1868-1	E 7 x2
Catuvellauni	Rues	AE unit	VA.1892-1	E 7
Catuvellauni	Cunobelin	AE unit	VA.1971-1	E 8E x3
Catuvellauni	Cunobelin	AV¼ stater	VA.2015-1	E 8L
Catuvellauni	Cunobelin	AE unit	VA.2089	E 8L

late Iron Age sites in the south midlands. At virtually all of these sites the number of phase 8 late (8L) issues is comparable in number to the phase 7 issues. This would suggest a foundation of the settlement by the late first century BC. For a full explanation and details of phasing see Haselgrove 1987.

Most of the coins are conventionally attributed to the Catuvellauni or the Trinovantes, although they are better termed as forming part of the Eastern (E) or South Eastern (SE) series (after Hazelgrove 1987). The only exception is the British KA plated stater attributed to the Corieltavi, or North Eastern series. Issues of this series circulated predominantly in the East Midlands and particularly in Lindsey (May 1994). The coin from Springfield is at the edge of the primary circulation.

The uninscribed issues ascribed to the ruler Addedomaros on typological grounds, and those of Dubnovellaunus are rare in the county. No other finds of issues of Dubnovellaunus have been recorded from the county. In fact only 33 issues of Dubnovellaunus are known from Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire together; of these 13 are type VA.1669.

The four VA.1646 issues ascribed to Addeomaros are only represented in the county by four examples from Evenley, two from the Stanwick villa site and single finds from Bannaventa and Higham Ferrers. Another 55 have been reported from the counties described above. The VA.1615 issues are even rarer with 33 examples recorded from the given counties. Single finds have been recorded elsewhere in North-

amptonshire at Little Houghton, Bannaventa, Weekley and Flore.

The presence of multiple finds of these rare and early issues at Titchmarsh points to its importance towards the end of the Iron Age.

Distribution studies show the issues of both rulers to be at the very edge of their distributions. The issues of Addedomaros are focused on the sites of Braughing/Puckeridge and Baldock in north Hertfordshire. The issues of Dubnovellaunus also have a geographical focus to the east of the site with other known multiple find spots in south Cambridgeshire: Cambridge area (4 examples), Soham (3 examples), and north Hertfordshire (Baldock (3 examples) and Braughing/Puckeridge (13 examples).

Of the coins belonging to the Eastern series, 47 issues of Andoco are known from the six counties described above, the main concentration being in Hertfordshire. Another six examples are known from Northamptonshire including two from Duston. The issues of Rues are more widely spread across the South Midlands than those of Andoco and 72 examples have been recorded from the given counties with seven others known from Northamptonshire including three from Evenley.

The issues of Tasciovanus and Cunobelin although not rare in their area of circulation are of note since, as with the other coins of Eastern and South-Eastern series, Titchmarsh lies right at the limit of their circulation area. The comparatively low number of, usually more numerous, late phase 8 issues, may suggest a decline in the site towards the end of the Iron Age.

Research has shown that, in general, Iron Age coins are found only on high status sites, particularly those of a ritual/religious nature. Analyses of the contexts of the coins recovered by excavation, has shown them to have frequently entered the archaeological record as a deliberate act i.e. they were not simply lost but ritually placed. Coins were most often used to symbolically mark sanctuary, burial or elite enclosure boundaries. Frequently the sanctuaries were sited near to springs, rivers or other watery places reflecting the religious importance of water to the people of the late Iron Age.

The volume of coins at Springfield suggests that during the late Iron Age, the site was an important sanctuary or shrine, in a location that may have signified an area that was at the periphery of tribal authority. Titchmarsh may therefore lie on or near the boundary between the Catuvellauni and the Corieltauvi

THE ROMAN COINS

The Roman coin assemblage from the Titchmarsh site forms three distinct groups. The first, group (a), comprises 455 coins that have been recovered by metal detector users from Springfield, Titchmarsh, and reported to Northampton Museum for identification and recording. The name Springfield is the field name for the area often referred to as "Titchmarsh Roman town" and from the interpretation plan (fig. 3) can certainly be seen as a large open settlement centred around a confluence of roads. The second assemblage, group (b) comprises 308 coins that were recovered as part of a controlled excavation at Springfield in 1986 (TM86) by Northants County Council Archaeology Unit (Boyce 1986). The third assemblage, group (c), comprises 63 coins that were recovered by metal detectorists from Hankin's Grass, a field immediately to the east of Springfield across the A605.

The coins from each assemblage have been divided in to 27 issue periods. The resulting coin counts have been calculated as annual coin losses per 1,000 coins and plotted on a histogram, one for each assemblage (for full details of the methodology used in constructing the histograms see Casey 1980, 28). This validates comparisons from site to site and takes account of issue periods of varying length. The coin periods have been defined as:

<i>Period</i>		<i>Date Range</i>
1	Claudian	43-54
2	Neronian	54-68
3	Flavian I	68-81
4	Flavian II	81-96
5	Trajanic	96-117
6	Hadrianic	117-38
7	Antonine I	38-61
8	Antonine II	61-80
9	Antonine III	180-92
10	Severan I	93-217
11	Severan II	217-22
12-17	Mid 3rd century	222-58
18	Gallic Empire	258-73
19	Aurelianic	273-86
20	Carausian	286-96
21	Diocletianic	296-318
22	Constantinian	318-30
23	Constantinian II	330-48
24	Constantinian III	348-64
25	Valentinian	364-78
26	Theodosian I	378-88
27	Theodosian II	388-402

The histograms need careful interpretation and must not be read at face value. The peaks and troughs tend to show changes in the nature of the currency and in the general availability and supply of coinage at various times. By examining histograms from other sites we can get a province-wide picture of the coins that should be present in a given issue period and in their proportions to each other. Once the Provincial background has been identified we can proceed with our interpretation.

Group (a), the metal detecting group from Springfield (fig. 4). The earliest Roman coin in this assemblage is a copy of an *as* of Claudius I. It is widely believed that such copies were produced by the Roman army in order to pay its troops and for supplies in a period when the Roman mints were not in operation. The copies circulated until the mid 60s when the official Roman mints resumed production and copies were withdrawn from circulation. As such the presence of a Claudian copy on a site infers early Roman contact either directly (a military presence), or indirectly (a trader who has dealt with the Roman army). A very early Roman presence at Titchmarsh is highly likely when we consider the several late Iron Age coins that have been found indicating pre-conquest activity.

A couple of Antonine issues indicate continuing settlement through the second and into the third

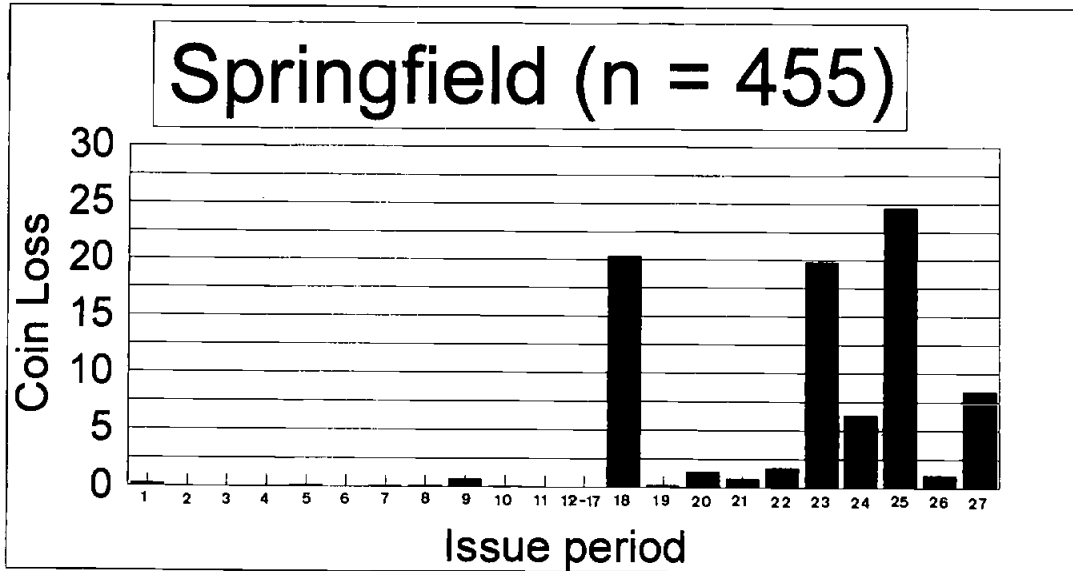


Fig 4

century. Coins of these years are usually rare on non military sites and the low coin counts are as expected.

The following peaks and troughs also match the provincial picture for a continuously occupied and stable settlement. For example, the large peak of coin losses coinciding with the period of the Gallic Empire (c.258-73), period 18, saw a period of extreme debasement and devaluation of the silver currency in response to rapid inflation. The silver *antoninianus* (or double *denarius*) dropping to as little as 2% silver. The Roman state's response to this was to produce more and more coinage as the real value of the coin plummeted. A reformation of the monetary system under Aurelian (c.275) rendered such coins, already of little intrinsic value, probably worthless. Due to both these factors they are common as site finds.

The only differences in comparison to the provincial picture begins to appear around the middle of the fourth century. Period 24, coinciding with the Magnesian revolt, is a little higher than the provincial norm suggesting prosperity and growth in the settlement at this time. The picture of prosperity continues through the Valentinianic period (25) and the final issue period (27) is very strongly featured compared to the provincial norm. Issues of the emperors in this period (Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius) form the last bulk issues of Roman coinage to reach

Britain and the presence of these issues in the proportion seen at Springfield would strongly suggest that the settlement was flourishing well into the early 5th century.

A coin loss graph constructed for the excavated coins (fig. 5) shows a similar picture. The earliest issue is a Claudian copy, again suggesting some sort of military contact. A group of coins down to 268 indicates continuing settlement and activity. The expected peak of period 18 is as expected. The peaks and troughs follow those of other continuously occupied sites up to period 24 which, again, is strongly represented indicating increased activity. The following peak, period 25, corresponding to the reign of Valentinian, is closer to the provincial picture suggesting that not all the settlement had significantly increased activity during this period; but the peak is still slightly higher in comparison with period 24 than at most major town sites suggesting some degree of heightened activity. The quantity of period 27 finds infers distinct late activity.

The neighbouring site at Hankin's Grass, across the modern road to Springfield, strongly parallels the TM86 excavation finds although the early issues are not represented. This may be either due to this part of the site not becoming occupied until the 2nd century (the earliest coins represented are Antonine in date)

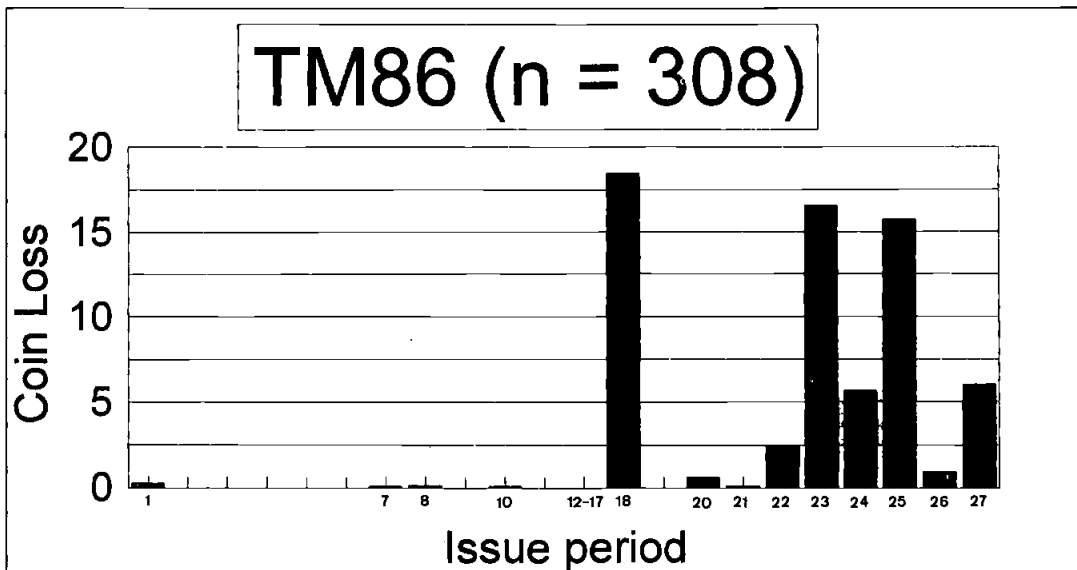


Fig 5

or perhaps because of the smaller total assemblage recovered coins from the site. The detectorists claim that they do not seem able to recover as many coins from Hankin's Grass as they do from Springfield

which may suggest that activity here was at a lower level than the centre of the settlement, in Springfield itself, and could also support a hypothesis for a later start of occupation in the field.

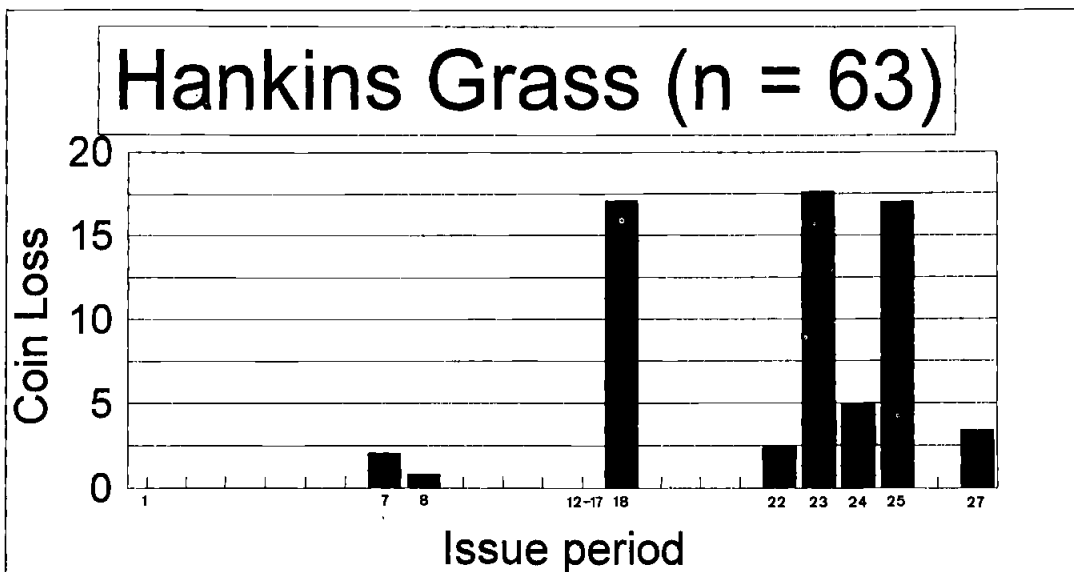


Fig 6

THE BROOCHES

i) Brooches from Springfield

- Colchester brooches: 3
- Colchester derivative brooches: 4
- Hod Hill brooches: 4
- Plate brooches: 1 (flat disc brooch with two peripheral lugs)

ii) Brooches from the excavations TM86

- Colchester brooches: 3
- Colchester derivative brooches: 2 (Polden Hill and P-shaped)
- Hod Hill brooches: 2
- Plate brooches: 3 (boar, multi lobed disc brooch with raised boss, circular brooch with six small lugs and raised boss)

iii) Brooches from Hankins Grass

- Colchester derivative brooch: 1
- Plate brooch: 1 (small enamelled disc brooch with side lugs).

All three brooch assemblages are unusual in that they contain only a limited number of types. But as Colchester, Colchester derivatives and Hod Hill brooches are all common types this is not unexpected and the assemblage is also likely to be a chronological function. Both Colchester derivatives and Hod Hill brooches were at their most popular in the post conquest and Flavian periods and plate brooches are certainly late 1st century AD or later. The only likely preconquest brooch, the Colchester, had its heyday in the Augusto-Tiberian period. The brooch assemblage would appear, therefore, to have a late LPRIA and post conquest emphasis. The same chronological picture appears to be present in all three groups.

It is interesting to note that of the five plate brooches four are circular and lugged. Not an uncommon type but unusual when no other common types are present suggesting a preference for this particular type. The lugged disc may have been seen by Romano-British peoples as a sun symbol which they often associated with Jupiter in a warrior role but could also be seen as a talisman promoting life, fertility and healing. The other type of plate brooch present is in the form of a boar. Brooches in this form are rare but the boar was an important Celtic zoomorphic symbol and with its dorsal bristles raised, as they are depicted on this brooch, would indicate a talisman for war. Both sun symbols, pig bones, pig representations and decorative brooches are frequently recovered from shrines and sanctuaries were they seem to have fulfilled a votive function.

JEWELLRY FROM SPRINGFIELD

Segment of a broad strip bracelet.

Oval copper alloy intaglio with bustshaped impression originally for inlay.

Half of a plain silver finger ring with empty bezel.

A small copper alloy finger ring (x2).

A small copper alloy finger ring with empty bezel

A bulbous copper alloy hair pin head.

OTHER SMALL FINDS FROM SPRINGFIELD

Uncertain copper alloy rod socketed at one end pointed at the other. Perhaps a ferule.

Irregular lead dice.

Copper alloy stud with a large broad head.

Copper alloy nail with a decorated head.

Oval copper alloy stud.

Crude copper alloy rings (x3)

Pyramidal steelyard weight.

Perforated flat lead weights (2).

Steelyard weights (x2).

Small lead weights (x4).

Oval piece of lead.

Lead sheet.

Domes shaped piece of lead (no suspension loop).

Lead sheet, c. 10cm x 5cm, with punched rivet holes.

Small circular lead attachment with large central boss and smaller marginal satellite bosses.

Lead alloy bar, c. 5cm x 1.5cm x 1cm, with axial raised herringbone pattern.

Lead strip with raised boss in middle and raised bands leading from it.

Lead alloy coneshaped terminal.

Copper alloy furniture terminal.

Copper alloy stylus.

Pair of tweezers.

Copper alloy disc (diameter 2cm).

Hexagonal copper alloy disc.

Fragment of copper alloy sheet with attachment holes.

Copper alloy terminals for iron objects (?keys) (x2).

Small tinned copper alloy attachment with crudely engraved '**' design.

Copper alloy sheet.

Part of a silver cylindrical socket, slightly tapering with external fluting and internal flange (c. 4cm x 2.5cm). Presumably a kind of decorative terminal for pole or furniture.

Late Roman tinned bronze highly decorative strapend (62mm long) depicting a peacock.

Decorated Samian sherd with mould makers stamp.

Sandstone pillar (15 inches wide, 29 inches high, 5 inches thick) inscribed PP (or possibly RP or BP) found in 1965 and interpreted as a boundary stone.

Stone base or capital.

Quantity of pottery dating from LPRIA 'Belgic' forms (e.g. carinated bowls) to the late fourth century.

Stone walls have been revealed by deep ploughing. Stone and tile in the ploughsoil indicate the presence of substantial Roman buildings.

SMALL FINDS FROM HANKINS GRASS

Copper alloy nail cleaner.

Lead steelyard weight.

Copper alloy weight.

Copper alloy belt mount.

Foot of copper alloy horse statuette. The foot is of similar size and style to those on the Brigstock temple horse and rider figurines. Hair pin head with acorn terminal.

COMMENTS ON THE SMALLFINDS

The wealth of the small finds would indicate a settlement of significance, which is also reflected in the quantity of Iron Age and Roman coinage. Pieces of jewellery, hair pins and toilet instruments indicate refinement while a stylus, not a common site find, would suggest a degree of literacy amongst the community.

The site has produced an unusually high number of lead weights suggesting a relatively high degree of trading involving weighing. Roman religious sites are often associated with numerous weights. Most Romano-Celtic temples are associated with Mercury who oversaw trading and as such temples and market places would often have been closely associated. It is also possible that merchant's weights may have been seen as appropriate votive objects for Mercury.

A copper alloy model horse's hoof from Hankin's Grass is almost identical in style to the hooves of the horse and rider statuettes associated with the Romano-Celtic temple complex at Brigstock. At Brigstock over seven such statuettes have been recovered probably connected to Mars and a hunting or martial cult.

THE CEMETERY

The bones have been subject to a detailed analysis by J. Odell for a BSc undergraduate dissertation (Odell 1996) and it is from her report that the following data is drawn. Approximately 50 Romano-British inhumations were recovered from the cemetery. Of these 18 individuals were intact enough to be studied and although many of the bones were fragmentary it was possible to draw a number of conclusions from the collection. The study identified a considerable bias towards adult males of which there were seven, compared to only two adult females. There was also a lack of pre-adult and infant remains. Odell (1996, 63) takes this to suggest that it may be due to infanticide or warfare. However, although there is evidence of a large cut across one skull caused at the time of death or very shortly before, it may be unwise to draw precise conclusions from the fragmentary and incomplete assemblage.

THE AIRPHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

METHOD

The air photographic evidence was obtained from the Northamptonshire Sites And Monuments Record (SMR), the National Monuments Record Centre Swindon (RCHME) and those held by the Cambridge University Committee For Air Photography (CUCAP). These all favour the use of high wing Cessna light aircraft and hand held medium format cameras. The photography is usually black and white because of its greater clarity and longevity. Interpreted archaeological features are rectified using the Bradford University Aerial 4.2 program. These rectifications are then imported into the Mapinfo (GIS) geographic information system. These basic interpretations are then refined in Mapinfo to Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments England's (RCHME) National Mapping conventions; which intends to map all of the air photography in England. Due to scaling and reproduction difficulties the conventions here are slightly modified from the RCHME ones. The stipple/grey areas indicate foundations and the black lines indicate ditches; however some of the detail is too fine to represent as stipple and these are left as black lines. The plan (Fig 3) is to 1:2500 scale and indicates a basic map of the observable settlement. Not all of the features depicted are necessarily of the same date or period. The plan includes all of the detail that can be readily obtained from the available photography. The area is geologically and pedologically complex with the geology recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record as being alluvium, sand and ironstone, estuarine clays and limestone. This affects the responsiveness of the crops and therefore the quality of the archaeological evidence.

EVIDENCE

The plan indicates a number of major roads meeting with smaller side roads joining usually at or near right angles. To the south of the main junction, which has an unusual morphology, is the presumed central area (A) that has a rectilinear enclosure containing building foundations. The enclosure itself appears as foundations. There is probably some confusion between minor roads and building foundations in this area due to the sites longevity. Other buildings and robber trenches can also be made out on the plan. To the south of this 'central area' is a sub circular enclosure (B) appearing as foundations. To the west is a more

disturbed area but the photography indicates a multi sided building which may be a temple (C). Possible road ways and buildings also appear across the A605 to the east but details here are less distinct.

CONCLUSIONS

The above analysis would show that there was an important settlement at Titchmarsh, centred around the modern Springfield. The settlement had certainly commenced by the late 1st century BC and was of some importance as shown by the quantity of Iron Age coins. The issuing authorities of the coins would point to the settlement lying at the extreme north-west corner of the territory under their control. The Roman coins indicate transition through into the Roman period with some evidence of military contact. The numismatic evidence shows continuing activity into the middle of the 3rd century when the site flourishes and occupation would appear to extend at least into the early 5th century.

The small finds would suggest a site of some status, while the unusual nature of a number of the finds would suggest that they are of a votive nature and may point to the site having a degree of religious activity. At least one possible Roman temple has been recognised from the aerial photographs. Shrines, temples and other types of votive site are known to have been concentrated along boundaries in the late Iron Age and Roman periods. It may be

possible to see Titchmarsh in this light; as a site of ceremonial importance that stood on a tribal boundary in the late Iron Age and on a *civitas* boundary in the Roman period. It is possible that this tribal boundary ran along the river Nene and up the river Ise (Curteis 1996b, 22).

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M. CURTEIS, D. JACKSON and P. MARKHAM

A CLASSICAL COLUMN BASE DISCOVERED IN TOWCESTER, NORTHANTS

Mr Andrew Keech of 182 Watling Street East, Towcester has drawn attention to a stone in the garden of No 182 which has been used for some years as a support to a garden ornament. It is in the form of an Attic base, of a size to support a column of 625mm [2ft 1¼in] diameter, the whole monolithic piece having a straight cut on a chord of 440mm at the column base (883mm on the torus). It is formed from a well-developed oolitic limestone, of the type found at

Ketton, Rutland, but of a pinkish tinge. On the top face is a 100mm deep lewis hole, 70 x 22mm, undercut in the usual way at the ends, and the underside of the base torus is quite plain. Its origin, and how long it has lain in the garden are totally unknown.

The question raised is from what building did it come, for surely it must be from a building of handsome classical pretensions. According to the normal canon it should have carried a column of approximately 5.3m high (over 17ft) to the entablature, whether of the Ionic, Corinthian or Composite order. This indicates a building in the league of a Classical period country house, where it might have served as a portico, a Georgian or Beaux Arts style civic build-

NOTES

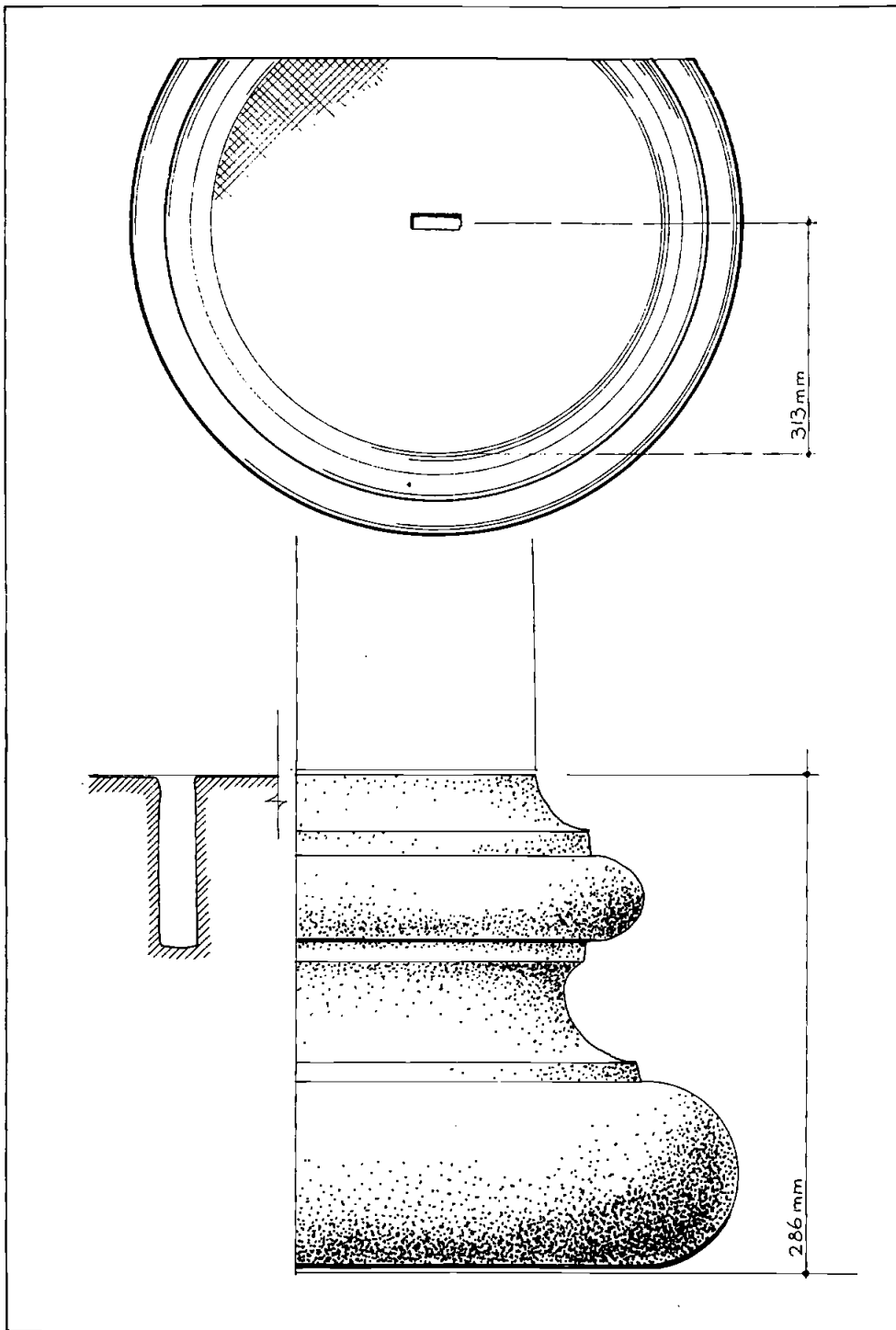


Fig 1 The Column base

ing, or, interestingly, a Roman public building. The material, a Ketton type limestone, has indeed been seen before in the Roman period stonework from the Towcester area, in the rinceau frieze found in the St Lawrence Road excavations, now in the vicarage store, and the famous Romano-Celtic head now splendidly displayed in the British Museum.¹ Other bases from the area are few; the so-called villa at Gayton (RCAHM 1982, p 59 and fig 58), excavated during gravel extraction in 1840, had a row of four enormous (2m diameter) columns very closely spaced at 4m centres along a 20m wall, - if this is what the circular bases represent, and there is no record of the size of the Roman bases found many years ago at Whittlebury or at Moulton.² There are few possibilities among local seventeenth and eighteenth century houses. It is not clear how far Wren's design for Easton Neston house itself was executed before the design was remodelled to its present form, but the indications are that Nicholas Hawksmoor took over the designing at a fairly early stage and probably before any decorative architectural elements had been completed (Colvin 1970; Downes 1987). Another possibility is that it formed the base for a piece of Classical sculpture in the Arundel collection, which was for some years displayed in the gardens and house of Easton Neston until it was given to the Ashmolean Museum. This collection was however almost entirely of marble sculptures, and where excavated examples were without plinths, the Earl was in the habit of having plinths and bases made in a matching marble. A review of the illustrations of the collection, which also included 'innumerable altars, pedestals and bases', prepared and drawn for Lord Lemster by Vertue³ in 1734 did not produce any base remotely like the one under discussion.

Against a Roman origin are three factors. The lewis hole at the centre of the shaft emplacement is quite unlike any others in the area of known Roman date, which usually, but not always, have a square recess for the dowel securing the shaft in place. However those bases, and indeed capitals, that do survive, such as that from Wood Burcote, are very much smaller, and would not require any such mechanical lifting devices as a lewis hole. These small columns, not having any great weight, would be more likely to shift and thus require some mechanical fixing more than a solid and heavy shaft 5m in height would require. Certainly the principle of lifting by lewis and wedges was well known to the

Roman engineer, as is seen at, for instance, Willowford Bridge on Hadrian's Wall. The second factor against the new base being Roman is the shape and classical accuracy of the mouldings. The fillets are almost square, i.e. near vertically cut, whereas most known Roman fillets flanking the cavetto tend to be at a slight angle, and the succession of mouldings, including the shape of the cavetto at Towcester, are absolutely correct to the classical rule such as is not normally seen in Britain except in major buildings. Interestingly, at Wroxeter, the two columns flanking the entrance to the forum colonnade (Atkinson 1992) are 63.3cm in diameter, the diameter over the torii being 83 and 84 cm, and the intermediate bases, at 3.9m centres, carried columns of 45-48cm diameter. The entrance columns are therefore only slightly larger than the new Towcester base. Other column bases displaying some form of the standard succession of mouldings in Britain are of course not rare; they appear, for instance, at York, Nettleton Shrub, Cirencester, and Chesterton (Peterborough), but in Britain the upper cavetto is often replaced by a cyma, and the torii are often of nearly equal depth and diameter, separated by a simple hollow between fillets. Also, they often have a medial girth inscribed line, which is absent on the Towcester base, although such a slight feature could well have been lost through weathering as it is on some of the Wroxeter bases. The third argument against a Roman date is equally tentative. Both shaft and base of the Watling Street piece have not been free standing, but set close up against another structure; i.e. three-quarters engaged; moreover the cut is accurate and does not appear to be a later mutilation. Three-quarter attached shafts are well known at later periods when they form the major decorative elements of a façade, but Roman parallels are more difficult to find, and are more a feature of monumental gateways. One such example is the three-quarter attached Corinthian columns of the monumental gate at the end of the *Via Flaminia* at Rimini⁴, and, later in date, pilaster half-shafts appear on Hadrian's Arch on the southern gate to Jerash [Gerasa] dating to 129-130AD, and on the southern gate in the ramparts of Hadriana Palmyra (268AD), both in the PROVINCIA ARABIA.

No 182 Watling Street is a terrace house of the later seventeenth century located immediately outside the estimated position of the Chester gate of the Roman town where massive foundations were noted many years ago (Woodfield 1992-3). That the town had

buildings in the Roman period on a monumental scale has already been alluded to by the decorated frieze found by A E Brown in 1973 (Brown and Woodfield 1983), significantly cut in the same type of limestone. The present base weighs approximately 206kg [437lb or say 4 cwt] and thus is unlikely to have been moved far without good reason, so the possibility remains that it has survived, remarkably as it may seem, from a decorative element articulating the northern approach side of the Watling Street Gate at the entrance to the town. If so then it is likely to be of earlier second century date, the classicising period when most buildings of civic scale known in this country were being erected.

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NOTES

1. Identification of the stone was undertaken by the late F Dimes of the Institute of Geological Science, London.
2. A survey of the known pieces of architecture in the county was undertaken by P Woodfield, *Northants Archaeology*, 13, 1978, pp 67-86.
3. Vertue R, Description of Easton Neston, 1734.
4. The road from Rome to Rimini [Ariminum]. The arch of Augustus was erected in 29BC. Dio Cassius.