Notes

A MESOLITHIC SITE AT COT HILL, ELKINGTON, NORTHANTS

INTRODUCTION

The field at Cot Hill is located on the edge of an area of upland overlooking the Birmingham plateau (Fig 1). It slopes gently from north to south and is located next to a deep gully that drops away towards the plateau forming a bluff at the north west corner of the field.

In January 2001, Northamptonshire Heritage (later known as the Northamptonshire County Council, Historic Environment Team) arranged for the NAS to conduct a fieldwalking survey in a single field at Cot Hill (SP 625770). The field is approximately 1.5 kilometres north west of the known Mesolithic site at Honey Hill from where a large range of flintwork including 326 microliths have been identified (Saville 1981, 1). This material had been collected over a period of 10 years up to 1979, from ploughed fields around the hill top. At Cot Hill a surface scatter of possible Mesolithic flintwork was noted during
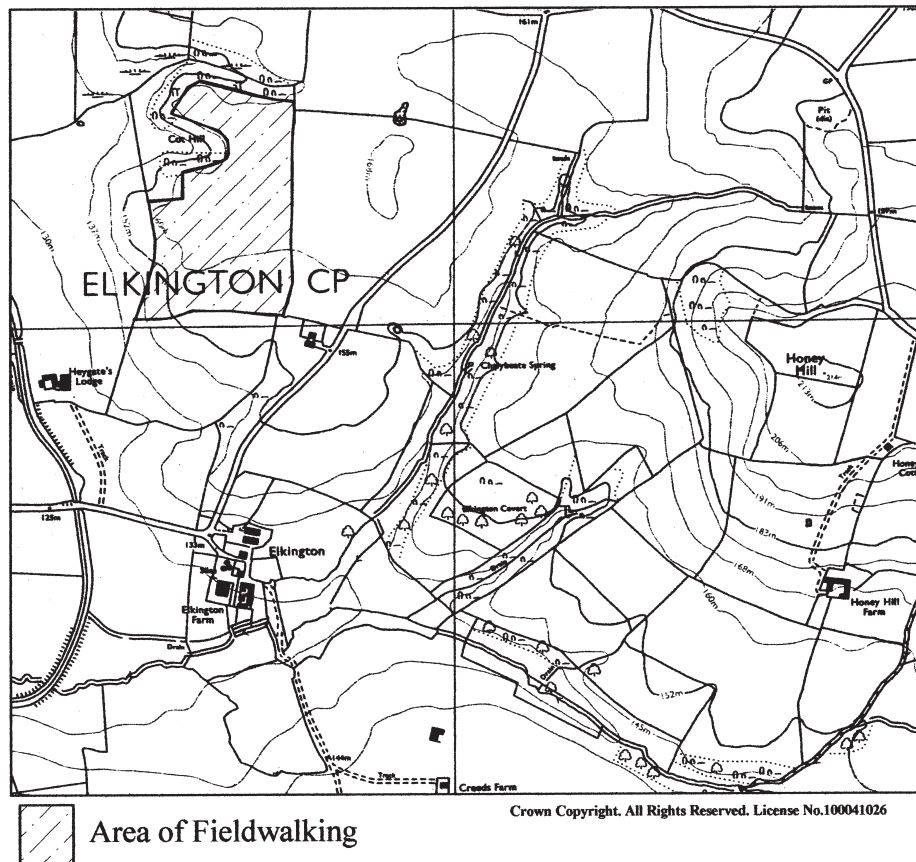

Area of Fieldwalking

Fig 1 Cot Hill Mesolithic Site, Elkington: location map.

fieldwork carried out by A E Brown in 1984 (SMR No.5395/0) which also recovered a small quantity of possible Iron Age pottery (SMR no. 5752). A square ditched enclosure has been located on air photographs in the southern half of the field (SMR No. 5752/0/1).

The 2001 fieldwalking was intended to characterise the nature of the 'flint scatter', in particular its date. Surface collection was based on the Ordnance Survey hectare grid utilising a methodology that was developed for fieldwalking projects in Wessex (Tingle 1998, 37). Collection units were 25 metres long, spaced 25 metres apart and aligned north–south. All classes of pottery, tile and worked stone were collected.

THE FIELDWALKING FINDS

The flint assemblage is composed of 105 pieces weighing 1026.5g, although if burnt but apparently unworked flint is excluded, the worked flint totals 96 pieces weighing 976g. In addition there is a largely intact saddle-quern and a quern fragment made from a coarse grained sandstone as well as 25 worked pebbles. Two sherds of Roman pottery and four sherds of post-medieval pottery were also recovered from the southern half of the field

RAW MATERIALS

Most of the flint with surviving dorsal cortex appears to derive from river gravels with the exception of a single piece of cherty flint. The two querns are made from a coarse grained sandstone while the pebble fragments are of a similar stone. Both the pebble hammerstone and the polished pebble are of a fine grained water rolled stone

DISTRIBUTION, COMPOSITION AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE WORKED STONE

Although the quantity of worked flint is low, it is densely concentrated at the northernmost edge from with 42 pieces recovered from a single 25 metre collection unit (Fig 2). This includes a range of flakes, a core fragment, a multi-platform core, a blade core and a microlith. This indicates limited flint reduction including blade production and certainly the use if not the production of microliths. The blades and microliths appear to concentrate around the top of the gully at the north-western edge of the field.

The worked pebble fragments appear to be the

Table 1: The composition of the assemblage

Find	No.	Weight (g)	Mean weight
Broken Flakes	27	72	2.66
Primary Flake	12	119.5	9.95
Secondary Flake	14	92	8.36
Tertiary Flake	7	22.5	3.21
Blade	2	4	2
Broken blades	6	4.5	0.75
Burnt Flakes	15	82.5	5.5
Burnt Flint	11	50.5	4.59
Core	4	300	75
Core Fragment	6	249	41.5
Scraper	2	30	15
Microliths	2	2	1
Polished pebble	1	130	
Pebble Hammerstone	1	478	
Worked pebble	23	3864	168
Quern Frags	2	3000	1500
Flint Total	105	1026.5	9.77
Lithics Total	131	7590.5	
Roman pottery	2	26	13
Post Med pottery	4	40	10

same stone as the querns and therefore could be the debitage from quern production. They are found throughout the field although most are concentrated in the southern half. Although these are impossible to date it is perhaps significant that saddle querns and Peterborough ware were found in 2001 during the excavation of several pits within a causewayed enclosure at Husbands Bosworth, 6.5 kms north of Cot Hill and in a similar topographic location. At Honey Hill, a Neolithic element was noted within the assemblage in the form of a leaf shaped arrowhead.

The pebble hammerstone is probably prehistoric but whether it was used during the Mesolithic or later is unclear. The broken polished pebble may be of a similar date although it could equally well relate to Roman activity, evidenced by the small quantity of Roman pottery that was collected. Similar polished pebbles have been found during the excavation of the Piddington villa and were thought

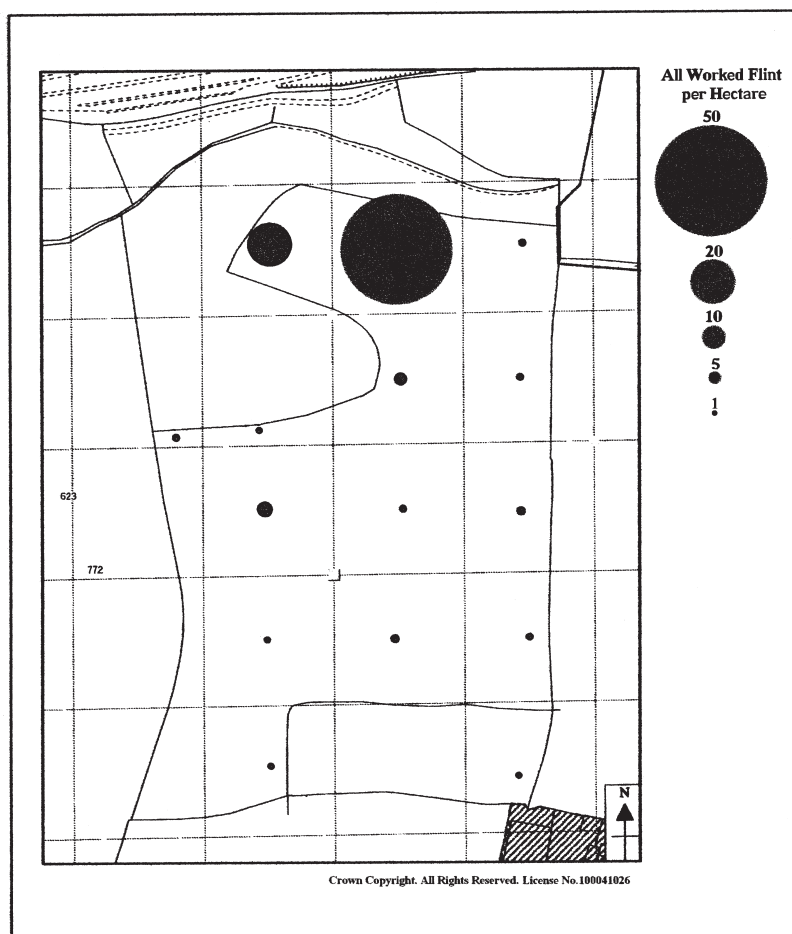Fig 2 Concentrations of flints recovered during fieldwalking.

to have been used for textile processing (Friendship-Taylor pers comm).

DATING

The only datable lithic artefacts are two microliths and one of the scrapers (the other could date from any period in prehistory). The Microliths are similar in appearance to some of the obliquely blunted forms recovered from Honey Hill, suggesting a later Mesolithic date (Saville 1981, 5). Both scrapers are unpatinated with the larger made from a core fragment. The other is of an unusual type since it is small, invasively retouched around its entire edge and almost perfectly circular (Fig 3). It is similar to examples from Honey Hill of which the latter is seen as " a type of micro-scraper not uncommon in Midland Mesolithic assemblages" (Saville 1981, 10 nos 199 & 203: 8)

CONCLUSION

It is possible that the site at Cot Hill represents an outlying element of the larger concentration of material at Honey Hill. Its location at the top of a steep valley overlooking the Birmingham Plateau would certainly be advantageous in the observation and possibly even the directed driving of game.

Fig 3 Flints from Cot Hill, Elkington, including a Mesolithic scraper and microliths.

TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this analysis the term 'cortex' refers to the natural weathered exterior surface of a piece of flint while 'patination' denotes the colouration of the flaked surfaces exposed by human or natural agency. The intact flakes are divided into three categories based on the amount of dorsal cortex they possess. The term primary flake refers to those with cortex covering between 50-100% of the dorsal face while secondary flakes have cortex on between 1 - 50% of the dorsal face. Tertiary flakes have no dorsal cortex.

A blade is defined as an elongated flake whose length is at least twice as great as its breadth. These often have parallel dorsal flake scars, a feature that can assist in the identification of broken blades that, by definition, have an indeterminate length/breadth ratio.

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MARTIN TINGLE

WOLFAGE, BRIXWORTH

INTRODUCTION

The site of Wolfage (SP 73807048) occupies a spur of land overlooking the valley of the northern branch of the river Nene at a height of 95m (312 ft) (Fig.1). It lies on Lias Clay, but immediately to the east are deposits of the Inferior Oolite series, including ironstone; water emerges at the junction of the two strata to produce several small steams. The village of Brixworth lies 1 km away to the north-east. There is clear evidence of early occupation in the vicinity; there is a Roman site some 600m to the south-east and a considerable amount of early-mid Anglo-Saxon pottery has been found in a number of separate concentrations in the fields immediately to the north, south and south-west of the site (RCHME 1981:29, Brixworth 18; Hall and Martin 1979:5). The earthworks were surveyed in 1996 by members
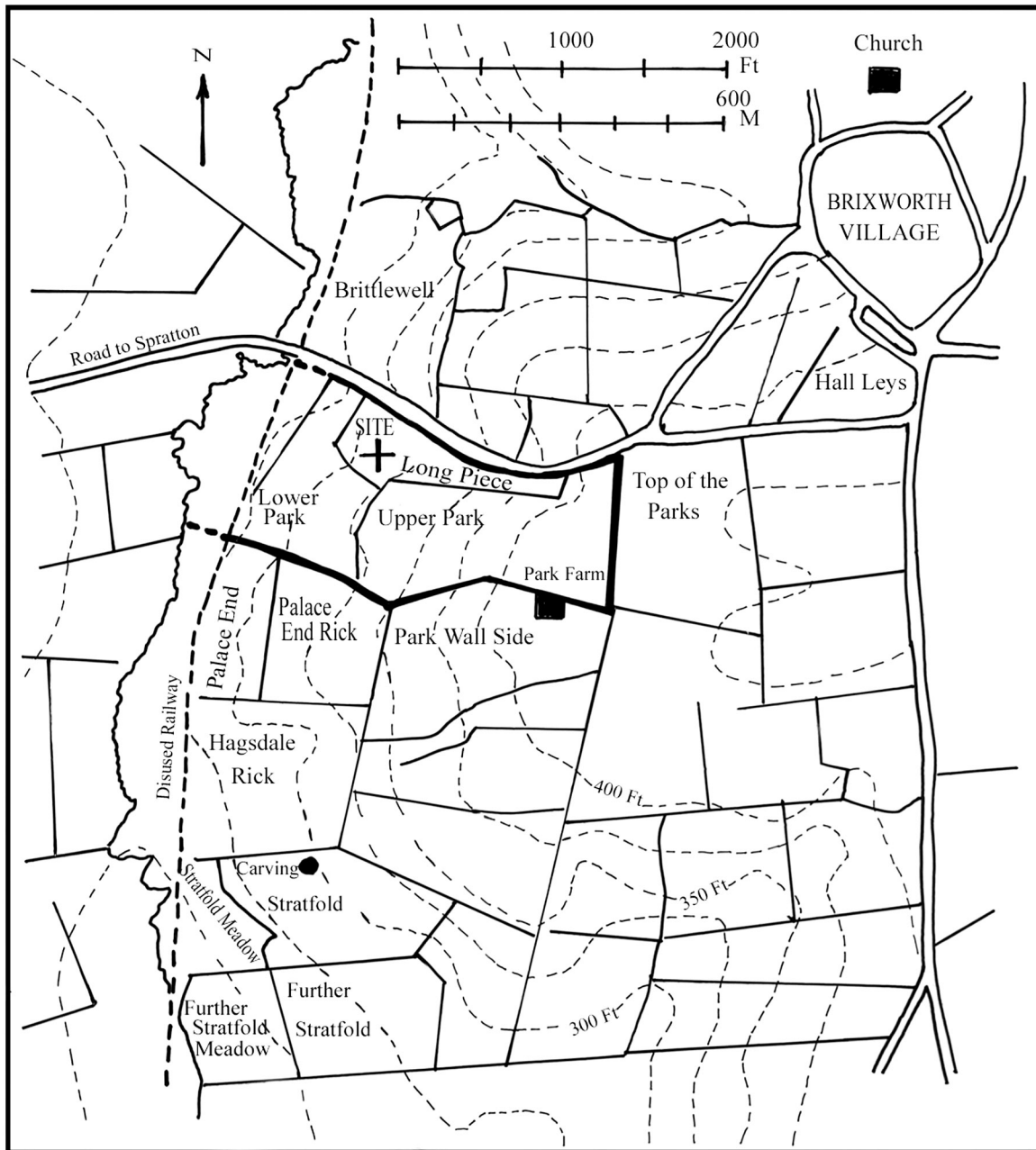
Fig 1 Wolfage: location map, and find-spot of corbel.

of an Archaeological Certificate group organized by the Department of Adult Education of the University of Leicester.

THE SITE (Fig 2 and Pl 1)
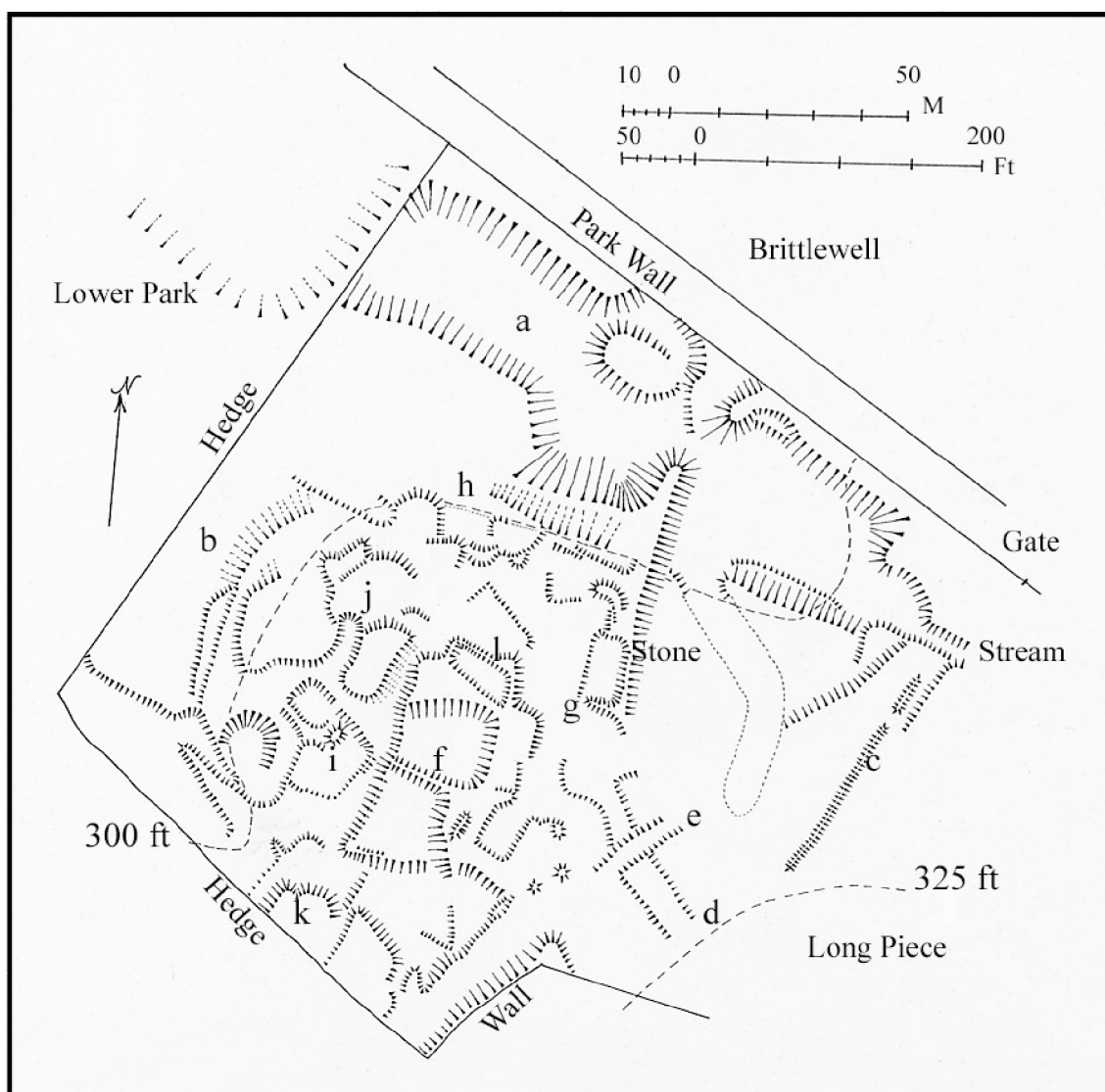
The most prominent earthworks are a pair of large

Fig 2 Wolfage: the earthworks.

fishponds ('a') separated by a dam with an opening in it; the westernmost contains an island. A third fishpond in an arable field to the north-west has been ploughed out and at the time of the survey was represented by a shallow depression. At ('b') is a series of terraces conforming to the curve of the hill and retained by quite substantial scarps, in places over 1m high. At ('c') is a low boundary bank which marks off the site on the east. The site was

approached on this side by an embanked track ('d'), which was cut by another, ('e'), basically a terrace formed in the slope of the hill and which runs at its northern end to a gate in the wall. This relatively late track has been cut by a stream which has gradually worked its way back into the hillside.

On the top of the bluff is a series of banks and scarps which form generally rectangular patterns. The most obvious feature is a garden ('f') of

Plate 1 Aerial photograph of Wolfage; north is to the left of the photograph. Reproduced by permission of the Historic Environment Team, copyright Northamptonshire County Council.

post-medieval date overlooking the valley, with two compartments separated by a median bank; the air photograph (Plate 1) suggests steps or buttresses at the corners. Attached to the garden on its northern and eastern sides are earthworks which may indicate where the robbed foundations of the house and other buildings which went with the garden stood. There was clearly a building at ('g') (with some stonework still visible) on the same alignment as the garden earthworks and quite possibly therefore contemporary with them. At right angles to this alignment and therefore possibly a component of the same set of structures, are the earthworks of a narrow building or buildings ('h') on the edge of the hill. The whole gives the appearance of a yard with a set of buildings around it.

At ('i'), ('j') and ('k') are scarps which appear to represent structures and enclosures, not necessarily contemporary, but on a different and earlier alignment from the post-medieval earthworks.

At ('l') are the banks and scarps of a small structure set askew to the garden, possibly the latest feature identifiable on the site.

The earthworks represent the site of the medieval manor house of Brixworth. The name means 'wolf hedge' and relates to the enclosed park in which it stood (Gover *et al* 1933:123). This name appears in an Assize Roll of 1287 and as the furlong name Wolfheggekyll in the Cartulary of St Andrews Priory, Northampton, in a document of 1424 (BL Cott. Tib. E. v. f 192). The hedge was in due course replaced by palings, on the evidence of the furlong name Pallace, Pallice or Pallas which appears in open-field terriers of 18th century date (NRO SB21,163, X3010, 6187; also Pavey 1906:590); the location of the furlong is fixed immediately to the south of the park on a map of Brixworth parish of 1688 (NRO map 1555; also Parsons 1977:178). By 1424 the palisade had been replaced by a stone wall, since the St Andrews Cartulary has a reference to a half-acre land which lay *apud Perkwall*; this furlong name, as Parke Wall, Near the Park Wall or att Parkwall appears in terriers of the 17th and 18th centuries (NRO X6187, NPL 1212, 1278, SB163).

The general outline of the park, with its wall, is given on the parish map of 1688 – which clearly shows the numerous streams running through it as well as an entrance in the eastern wall which would fit our approach track ('d'). A map of land belonging to the trustees of the estate of H Locock (NRO map 696), based on the Ordnance Survey, also shows the park, with the names of the fields into which it had by then been divided (Fig. 1). This map shows that the park boundaries were represented by walls, and that the internal boundary between Long Piece and Upper Park was also walled, but Long Piece and Lower Park were separated by a hedge. More importantly, the southern boundary of Brittlewell, the field immediately to the north of the park, is shown as hedged. But today much of this boundary is walled, and the type of walling, smallish thin slabs with rough vertical copings, is identical with that around and within the park (an exception to this is the north-eastern section of the external park wall, which consists of larger, neatly squared stones, with many regularly shaped half-round copings). The Locock map also shows the line of the railway from Northampton to Market Harborough, authorized in 1853 and opened in 1859 (Leleux 1976, 54). The map probably belongs to the middle years of the 19th century and the present park wall, which is only *c* 70 cm high and 50-60 cm thick, will be later than this. By this time the area of the park had been reduced on the western side by some 9-10 acres, presumably by the construction of the railway.

THE MANOR OF BRIXWORTH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE SITE

At the time of Domesday (1086) Brixworth was in royal hands. Domesday Book provides a general view of the social structure of Brixworth in the late 11th century. There was said to be land for 35 ploughs. Two were in demesne and fifteen were assigned to 14 villeins, a priest and 15 bordars, amounting therefore to 17, half the ploughland total. It would seem that Brixworth was divided almost exactly into two, a lordly portion with a small demesne to which various people and the church were linked, and a presumably free half, the rents of which were included in the high valuation of £36 the manor had in 1086. These figures can be related to the size of the common fields of Brixworth, as expressed in the number of standard tenurial units or virgates they are known to have contained. At three virgates to the ploughland, within the range of multipliers for this duodecimalised part of Northamptonshire, we get a figure of 51 lordly virgates (only 6 for the demesne), and 105 for the whole system. This is very close to the total of 102 ¾ virgates which the fields of Brixworth are said to have actually contained in a terrier of the rectory of 1671 and the Enclosure Act of 1780 (NRO Photostat 1336, YZ7780).

Brixworth did not remain in royal hands for long. By the second decade of the 12th century the manor, along with land in Norfolk, had been granted to Simon fitz Simon, whose descendants held it until the male line died out in 1280, when it passed to the Verduns, in whose hands it remained until 1436 (Farrer 1923:114-117; VCH 1937: 150-151). The family of Simon fitz Simon were prominent royal servants; Simon fitz Peter was sheriff of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire in the later 12th century, collected fines imposed by the Crown in Rutland and was returned as holding 8 ½ knights' fees belonging to the Honour of Curcy in 1166. Simon fitz Simon III was castellan of Wellington, Shropshire, from 1178 to 1189. Since various members of this family were referred to as 'of Brixworth' in medieval documents they can be presumed to have lived there; the fact that a John de Verdun is similarly so described and that the family seems to have been responsible for the late 13th century chapel attached to the

chancel would suggest that for them it was also their main manor. Between them these families turned Brixworth into a standard medieval seigneurial establishment, with some commercial overtones. The broad outlines of the landholding structure of the common fields discernible in Domesday Book were in general retained, but there was a significant degree of internal reorganization. The demesne was increased in size to 17 virgates on the evidence of an *Inquisitio post Mortem* of 1315 and of a 14th century confirmation charter recording the earlier grant of two of them to Delapre Abbey (PRO C 134/47/12; Dugdale1817: 211); the number of customary or villein virgates responsible for its cultivation was exactly twice this at 34 – the IPM specifies 23, with a farmhouse for each virgate; a single virgate was given to Delapre Abbey by Simon fitz Simon fitz Peter in the 12th century and a rent charge out of 10 more was given to St Andrews Priory by Simon fitz Simon III in the 13th century. This means that the number of seigneurial virgates was 51, the same as the lordly virgates at the time of Domesday – but the ecclesiastical ones had been detached from this 11th century group before 1116, and together with the tithes and advowson, granted to Salisbury Cathedral, from 1240 to be turned into a prebend assigned to the Chancellor (Horn 1962: 38; Greenway 1991: 55). An analysis of the abuttals of the lands or plough ridges belonging to the ten virgates whose rent had been assigned to St Andrews Priory, as they lay in 1424, shows that much of the demesne was scattered generally throughout the common fields of Brixworth, but a survey of *c* 1700 of 2/5 of what had been the manor of Brixworth shows that the demesne also had chunks of consolidated land around the village in such furlongs as Butt Leyes, Lady Hedge Piece and the significantly named Hall Leys (NRO 3702). Some of this could have been the result of relatively late amalgamations, but some could have formed part of an early, quite small, compact demesne.

Simon fitz Simon IV received a grant for a market and fair in 1253, confirmed to John de Verdun in 1329; the small green with its cross will be the topographical expression of this. A gallows was confirmed to Thomas de Verdun in 1301 (VCH 1937: 151). As for the manor house, then it is a reasonable supposition that many of the earlier earthwork field remains belong to this phase; it was described in the early 14th century IPM as a capital messuage with certain closes lying nearby, with a dovehouse;

in 1230-31 Simon fitz Simon obtained a licence to plant a small spinney next to his garden (Bridges 1791:81;the licence was required because Brixworth was technically still within the royal forest, Bazeley 1921).

In the middle of the 15th century the manor of Brixworth passed to Elizabeth Pilkington, wife of Sir Richard Harrington of Westerley, Lancashire. Their son Sir William Harrington succeeded and before 1492 was followed by his son Sir James Harrington. Part of the manor was let out for a time – in 1491 an inquisition found that Roger Salisbury of Grendon had held land in Brixworth of Sir James Harrington – but Sir James founded a chantry within the manor house and presumably therefore lived there; he is referred to as 'of Brixworth' in heraldic pedigrees of 1567 and 1664/5 (Raines 1870:103; 1873:291). The Harringtons were a major landowning family with a distinguished record in the Hundred Years' War. They played an active part in the Wars of the Roses on the Yorkist side, as did the Pilkingtons; two cousins of the Harringtons of Wolfage, Sir James and Sir Robert, fought for Richard III at Bosworth and were attainted. The Harringtons of Wolfage were a junior branch and seem to have escaped most of these serious political entanglements. Sir James (of Wolfage) died in 1497, leaving the manor to his widow Isabel; a pardon issued to her in 1509 describes her as 'of Wolfage and Brixworth', the earliest reference we have to Wolfage as a manor (VCH 1937:151). She continued to live there until her death in 1518, when the Harrington estates passed to her ten daughters, her only son William having drowned in 1490-1 (Finch 1956:68; Horrox 2004: 383-5; Anon 1880: 236-7; 269-72).

The manor of Brixworth was divided up among five of these. The portion of Brixworth containing Wolfage went to Alice, who had married Ralph Standish in 1497; he died in 1538 (Porteous 1927: 136; 1933:no 331). In 1539 she devised Wolfage to her daughter Agnes and her husband Anthony Laton for an annual rent of £18 to be used to pay off the debts of her own husband and her son Alexander (VCH 1937:151). Anthony Laton seems to have been Agnes's second husband; the first had been Thomas Ashton of Croston, Lancashire, who had died by 1535 (Porteous 1933: no 221; for other genealogical references, Raines 1870:102; 1873:291; Langton 1876:103). Anthony Laton and Agnes lived at Wolfage; 'the said Anthony and the said Agnes his wiff or the one of them during the said tenure shall

enhabytt and dwell upon the same lande maynteyne and upholde the edifices buyloynge hedge and diches in and upon the said lande sufficiently in all manner repacione and to make no waste upon the thornes and willowes there but at the end of his terme to leave them suffuyentle and in as good state as he shall fynde them' (PRO C 142/66/40). Just who Anthony Laton was presents a problem, since it is difficult to trace him with complete confidence in the records. There is the possibility that he was a minor representative of the Laton family of Delmayne near Penrith in Cumberland, and maybe the same man as the Anthony Layton or Laton who is found with others purchasing chantry lands in various places in Lancashire in the period 1548-50, and acting as the guardian of the under-age heir of Chingle Hall near Goosnargh at much the same time (Raines 1862 (1): 47: 1862 (2): 193; Denton 1887: 113-4: Fishwick 1871:16,18,209; Hughes 1961:53; VCH Lancs 1912: 197, n89).

Alice died in 1542 and Wolfage went to Ralph, the son of Alexander Standish, who was only eleven years old. After his death in 1546 Wolfage passed to his brother Edward, then only thirteen. The Standish family's landed interests, which were extensive, were almost entirely focused in Lancashire, where they generally lived. But Edward Standish certainly spent some time at Wolfage. He was a recusant and avoided being fined by moving between his Lancashire and Northamptonshire properties to escape the bishop. In 1577 Edmund Scambler, Bishop of Peterborough, wrote: 'There is one Mr Standish supposed to be a man of 500 marks yearly revenue and worth £1000 in substance, that dwelleth sometime at Wolfage, a house in Northamptonshire in the parish of Brixworth; but for the most part he dwelleth in Lancashire as I am informed - where he is said to be ever when I send for him, so that I could never get him to any conference as yet. But I am certified by a very credible report, and do believe, he never came to the church since the queen's majesty's reign.' He was there for example in 1575, when he was involved in setting up a financial agreement, but Wolfage seems mostly to have been let out – a letter of 1588 exists from a relation of the family addressed to Edward's son Alexander, asking for his support in obtaining the tenancy; and the Standish family certainly found the income from Wolfage as a useful source of money for annuities and marriage settlements (Porteous 1927:138; 1933:nos 240, 444, 452, 461). By 1604 Alexander Standish

had acquired another fifth of the former undivided manor of Brixworth. Its sale to Sir Justinian Isham seems to have been contemplated in 1664; in 1671 both shares, known as the manor of Brixworth *alias* Wolfage, were sold to Simon Finch (NRO IC 3187; VCH 1939:151). Clearly Wolfage was still a going proposition as the centre of an estate, and the relatively late earthworks representing the house, garden and other structures are consistent with this.

The Finch family lived at Redheath near Watford and must also have let Wolfage out (Warrand 1970: 10). The list of payers of the Hearth Tax of 1674 shows this; a James Waight of Brixworth is listed, with a house containing seven hearths – but also six more in 'a Wolfage house' (PRO E 179/254/14); so the tenant was now someone who already had a substantial house in Brixworth or nearby. This seems to have been the pattern for the future, with the result that the house at Wolfage would have been unnecessary. It is possible that the Ishams might have contemplated involvement once more, since the Isham collection contains an undated 'survey of Wolfedge land'(i.e.2/5 of the original manor) by Thomas Nunns, who is known to have been active and associated with the Isham family between 1671 and the second decade of the 18th century (NRO IL3702; Bendall 1997:381 and biographical notes in NRO). In the survey the estate consists of The Parke of 57 acres 3 roods, 11 acres of meadow, and three tenants' houses; there were 375 acres 2 roods and 9 perches of land in the open fields, some of it as we have seen in substantial blocks around the village. What appear to be two buildings are shown in Wolfage Parke on the map of 1688, which the (hard to read lettering) seems to indicate were ruinous. No fishponds were shown, which would imply that by then they were dry. On the Eyre map of the third quarter of the 18th century there is a scatter of four buildings at 'Wolfidge', which would agree in general terms with our interpretation of the post-medieval earthworks, but when John Bridges visited Brixworth in 1718 he recorded that the house was in ruins; perhaps some of the buildings had continued in use for agricultural purposes. The Finch family, in the person of 'John Finch of Slyes Hill in the parish of Aldenham in the county of Hertford Esq' still held the Wolfage estate at the time of enclosure in 1780 and received some 324 acres in the Award, but in 1786 it was sold to Christopher Smyth, a Northampton lawyer (NRO YZ 7780; topographical notes, Brixworth; Hatley 1973: 183).

The place of Wolfage as the principal lay building in Brixworth was of course taken by Brixworth Hall. In 1529 William Saunders of Welford obtained one of the fifths into which Brixworth had been divided, and to this was added another fifth about thirty years later (Derbyshire Record Office D3155/WH252; VCH 1937: 152). Edward Saunders, eldest son of Francis Saunders of Welford, seems to have been the first representative of the family to have actually lived at Brixworth. He appears, as 'Edward Saunders esquier' as living there in musters of 1605, and from that date to 1619 figures as a light horseman in the Musters Book of Sir Edward Montagu; he is referred to as 'of Brixworth' in a heraldic visitation pedigree of 1618 (Wake 1926: 114; 1935; Metcalfe 1887:131-132). He died in 1630 and his monument in Brixworth church (of wood according to John Bridges (1791:83), but now brass and moved to a new position) describes him as *dominus hujus manerii*. He could have been responsible for the first Brixworth Hall. In the Hearth Tax list of 1674 the Saunders house was said to have 13 hearths, the largest figure for any Brixworth property. In 1719 the Saunders two-fifths was bought by Sir Justinian Isham of Lamport, but the 'good house here,' for which he had no use, was sold to Sir Edward Nicholls of Faxton, possibly before 1707 if a datestone bearing the initials EN has been correctly attributed to him (Bridges 1791:82; VCH 1937: 150). It seems clear that the Brixworth Hall which stood until 1954 represented an early 18th century refronting of a 17th century house which must have gone back to the time of the Saunders family.

THE SCULPTURED STONE, AND OTHER ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS FROM THE DESERTED SITE OF WOLFAGE, AT PARK FARM, BRIXWORTH (Fig 3)

By Paul Woodfield

STONE 1

Stone 1 was found by Mr Richard Turney in June 1991 whilst chisel ploughing in the field called Stratfold (SP 73656975), approximately 770m SSW of the centre of the medieval site of Wolfage (Fig 1). It had possibly found a use as a hardstanding for cattle using a spring which emerged at the junction of the Lias Clay and ironstone at this point. The stone itself is a Northamptonshire Sand ironstone of the type found around Brixworth, measuring 1000 x 400 x 190mm. Its volume is 0.076m3 and its weight the not inconsiderable 180 kg, or c3.3 cwt.

There is no doubt that it is an element from an external corbel, and its length at 1m confirms it acted as a binder at the wall head. A slight vertical mark, formed by weathering or mortar on the left (sinister) side indicates the point to which it was built in to the wall, leaving c170mm visibly projecting. This line does not extend to the top of the stone. The possibility of it being from an internal corbel supporting a wall post for a roof truss is discounted, as this form of construction is not generally found in Romanesque work. The stone is somewhat eroded, probably from weathering and there is no trace at all of liming although this may not have survived being buried.

The front end of the corbel is carved with a mask, with oval lentoid bulging eyes drilled for the pupils, a flared nose, upturned each side at the bottom to represent the nostrils, and a small, slightly open mouth between slightly protruding lips. The face has fulsome cheeks, nearly filling the stone end, and pronounced eyebrow ridges. Above the brow there is a horizontal coiled feature, which superficially looks like a turban, each fold having a minor intermediate fold. Some 60mm above the 'turban' there is evidence for a small zig-zag feature, slightly cut in with a mason's chisel.

The sinister side of the stone has been damaged. The dexter side is somewhat better preserved then the damaged side. It has two shallow furrows running diagonally across it, which are the result of it being hit by the chisel plough. The mask in profile shows the 'turban' to outline the face as far as the bottom of the stone, and there is further evidence that each fold has a medial minor fold. Another feature, which might be significant is towards the back of this side, where there is a distinct near-vertical line 80mm long, with a downward running limb, both roughly cut. Slight lines from the intersecting node hint at further limbs running down to the right, and up to the left, although it is not clear that these are intentional. This mark is reminiscent of the type of carpenter's marks that occur on medieval structural timbers, and may just be a mason's mark.

It is quite clear that the stone is a corbel from tabling at the wall head, of the type usually found in churches of the Norman period. The human mask, with its full cheeks, lentoid eyes and drilled pupils is characteristic of that date, and the headdress, given the evidence from the side, suggests it may be
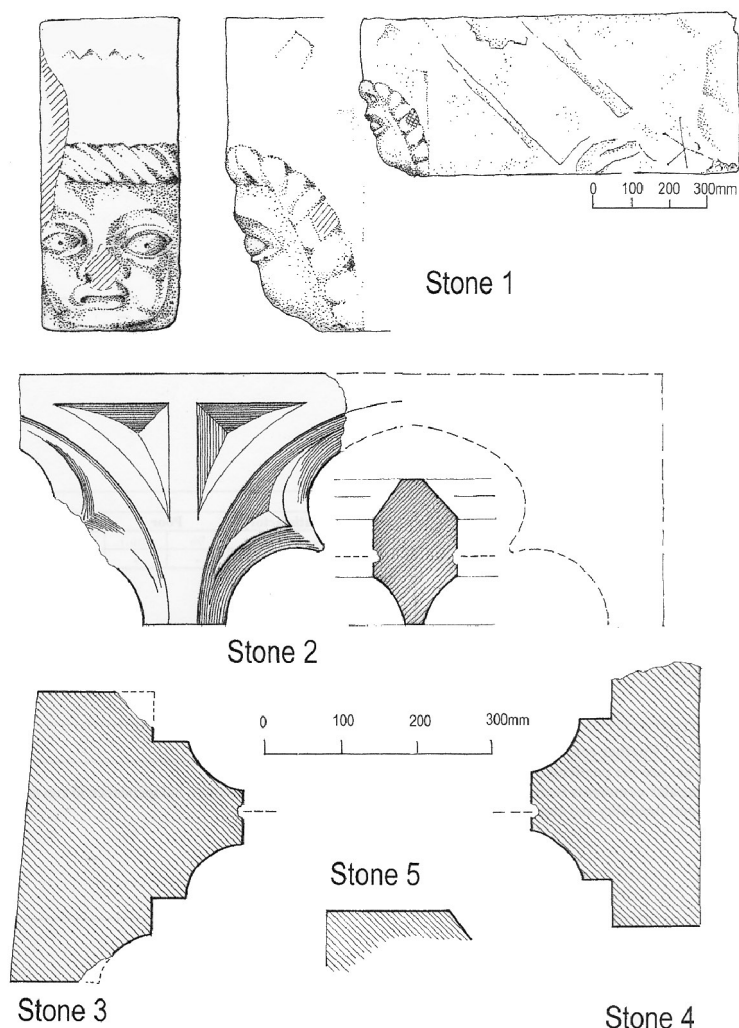
Fig 3 Wolfage: architectural fragments.

representative of a sun-in-splendour where stubby short rays often bifurcate. It is unlikely that this representation had any significance other than being purely decorative.

Corbel arcades and horizontal tables are characteristic of Norman work of the 12th century. The church of St Peter in Northampton has 67 at the head of the external walls, although none identical to the Wolfage stone. There is only one medieval corbel at All Saints, Brixworth, internally, but this is later in date. Similar corbels to the Wolfage

stone occur in the next village of Spratton, where the tabling is slightly arcaded on all sides beneath the tower parapet, and where the carving of some masks is not dissimilar, the mouth similarly looped more open at the ends. Corbel tables are now rare in Northamptonshire, but one occurs around the chancel at Hanslope, Bucks. Neither at Spratton nor at Hanslope is the Norman work closely dated.

As to date of the carved Wolfage stone, I have recently argued (in the draft revised guide book, still awaiting publication), that St Peters, Northampton,

was built between 1130-1150 as a palatine chapel. It has very similar corbels in a horizontal table (though much replaced by the Victorians), and may be taken as the early *terminus* date for Wolfage, and extending to c.1200.

As regards its find spot, this is some 770m SSW of the site of the manorial site of Wolfage. The size of the stone, and its weight (0.076m3 ; 180 kg, or *c*3.3 cwt) means that it would have been a difficult (while not impossible) task to move it easily before modern farm machinery was available, and particularly troublesome for such an apparently humble purpose.

STONE 2

This stone was rescued from the southern park wall, 230 m from the south-eastern corner. It is the head of the mullion of a cusped, horizontally headed window, probably, although not certainly, of two lights. It is of the same Northamptonshire sandstone, now grey with lichen. The mullion is plain chamfered on the inner face and has a hollow chamfer on the outer face, the face fillet developing into arches at the window head, with blind recessed spandrels, and from the outer chamfered face of each arch, slightly set back, trefoil cusping develops, the centre foil wider and slightly pointed in the usual manner. The inner edge of the stone has roughly formed glazing grooves, set not central but nearer the outer chamfer of the outer face, and are now much knocked about. So far it is exactly like many other such horizontal headed windows of the 14th century. However, at the rear of the stone, where the face was much more damaged, rebates for window shutters are still clear. Towards the inside the mullion appears to be have straight chamfers, although subsequent damage makes this less than certain.

A hole has been roughly cut in the inner edge of one of the cusps. This is not central and must be the result of later reuse. Reconstructed, each light would be approximately 512mm (1ft 8in) wide.

One significant factor bears on its interpretation. This is the unmistakable provision for shutters, which is only rarely found in ecclesiastical windows (i.e. for low-side windows), but commonly found in domestic ones. The fact that the rebate extends into the head of each light suggests that it is a window without a transom, for, where there are transoms, it is usual to leave the top light unshuttered.

The evidence then points to it being a two light domestic window of the early 14th century, similar to the ones at Yardley Hastings and Shutlanger (Woodfield 1981).

The drawing, Fig 3, is to some extent a reconstruction of the window head, ignoring the damage the stone has suffered. The mullion section is less sure, and it is still possible that the mullion was hollow chamfered both externally and internally.

STONE 3

The third stone was also found by Mr Turney, again from the southern wall of the park. It is seriously weathered, but it is clear that it is a section of a jamb of a window of similar type, although here it is clear that both window frame chamfers are hollow, as is the first of the outer frame. It appears that the other outer frame did not have a chamfer.

The window frame itself is 210mm front to back (compare the estimated width of the mullion of Stone 2 (194mm), and consists of two hollow chamfers of equal size divided by an angled quirk. The glazing groove is clear, also set slightly forward in the reveal as in the mullion of Stone 2.

STONE 4

This stone still forms a coping on the field wall to the Spratton Road, some 30m from the angle of the wall as the road descends the hill. The window element is almost identical in detailed dimension to Stone 3; a window jamb with a glazing groove. However, in this case, the outer frame does not have hollow chamfers front or back, being square cut at the front. Damage makes it uncertain whether this is repeated at the internal face, but the matrix of the stone would seem to continue beyond a similar square cut allowing for a hollow chamfer to match Stone 3.

It seems likely that both Stones 3 and 4 are from the same window, notwithstanding the slight difference in the width, and it remains possible that they relate directly to the mullion of Stone 2. This could be only if the upper section of a transomed window had a shutter – a rather unusual occurrence.

STONE 5

A further worked stone can be found also built into the field wall approximately 19m from the same corner. It has a worked face approximately 80mm deep, returning as a 45 degree chamfer of indeterminate length.

With such a simple broken piece it is impossible to hazard a guess what it was, but if from the same window as the other stones, given the deeper face, it can be no other than a section of the sill, either internal or external.

CONCLUSIONS

The site of Wolfage sat on an awkward piece of land unsuitable for agriculture, but which did offer one spectacular advantage, namely the way in which it overlooked and provided views of the valley of the Northern Water. Conversely, this also meant that it would have looked impressive when approached from the valley and perhaps more importantly when seen from the road which ran from Northampton to Leicester *via* Welford along the valley's western edge. Although not shown on the late 13th century Gough Map, which marks the road to Market Harborough as the way from Northampton to Leicester, the Welford road remained important; it was the route chosen for example by Edward I in December 1300 and by Edward II, his court and various departments of state many times in the period 1307-1318 (Safford 1976; Hallam 1984). The trackway at (' d ') (Fig 1) seems to have been the way in which the site was approached in the post-medieval period and this may well have been true of the Middle Ages also. From the standpoint of someone wishing to get to the site from the Welford road this might have appeared as a distinct inconvenience, but from the point of view of the lord of Brixworth this arrangement had definite advantages, since the visitor had to make almost a circuit of three sides of the site before getting to the entrance, being thus afforded ample opportunity to appreciate its quality, a variety of views and the status of the owner (for similar indirect approaches to much grander establishments see the castles at Bodiam, East Sussex, and Lavendon, Bucks, Everson 1996; Brown and Everson 2005).

The creation of a manor house some distance from the settlement to which it related and within its own park in open field country such as that which existed around Brixworth was relatively unusual; most manor houses were in their villages, although often set within their own enclosures. A superficially similar site exists in the Nene Valley at Wadenhoe, but this was an ancient lordly site, not a new foundation, around which a park was added in the late 13th century (Brown 1998: 43); the village is separated from the church and manor by the abruptness of the hill on which these features stand. There are rather more examples of the erection of manor houses in parks of various sizes, away from villages, in woodland areas; examples can be found at Lea and Goltho in Lincolnshire (Everson *et al* 1991: 98 118) and, again, at Lavendon in north Buckinghamshire. Domesday Book does indeed record a wood as part of the appurtenances of the royal manor of Brixworth, but in a way which might suggest that it actually lay elsewhere; the statement that 'to this manor belongs a wood which rendered 100 shillings a year' is unique in its phraseology as far as royal woods go, the numerous others simply being listed with no additional language with the manorial assets such as mills and meadowland.

Precisely when the manor house at Wolfage was actually built is not known – it was presumably there in 1287 when the park is mentioned for the first time; the spinney of thirty years before could represent a stage in the landscaping of the site, possibly involving the terraces ('b'). Wolfage can reasonably be identified with the capital messuage of the Inquisition of 1315; this would fit the early 14th century date assigned to the window fragments from the park wall. But there is no direct evidence that Wolfage was brought into being in the early to mid 12th century when the manor of Brixworth was reorganised, only the probability that it was. The situation would be different if it could be shown that the 12th century corbel head came from the Wolfage site and that there had been a manorial chapel there, of some pretensions given the quality of the piece, but there are no references to such a structure in the documents and we cannot be sure that the head came from Wolfage, although this must remain the most likely place of origin for it; the find-spot lies within the land allotted to the owner of Wolfage at the time of Parliamentary Enclosure. There remains the possibility of another ecclesiastical building awaiting discovery as the source.

The garden earthworks at ('f'), consisting of a pair of rectangular compartments, are a modest example of a type of late 16th-17th century date which turn up quite commonly in earthwork surveys, as for example in Northamptonshire at Woodford and Papley and in Leicestershire at Chilcote, Burton Lazars, Thorpe Arnold and other places (RCHME 1975: 110, 113; Hartley 1983:46; 1984: 20; 1987: 24, 45).

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
PRO	Public Record Office
RCHME	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
VCH	Victoria County History Northamptonshire

TONY BROWN AND PAUL WOODFIELD

AN ARCHAEOLGICAL DETECTIVE STORY

In June 1999 Mrs Juliet Wilson, a resident of the historic village of Fotheringhay in rural north-east Northamptonshire, was tidying her rockery (TL0590 9333), 100 metres west of the church, when she unearthed a cube of very abraded stone which had three carved faces, two of which were decorated with Anglo-Saxon interlace pattern.

The famous church of St. Mary's and All Saints stands on a gravel terrace overlooking the River Nene. Excavation of an ossuary below the north porch of the church in 1992 (Johnston 2001), provided evidence of re-use of worked stone from an earlier church which was replaced in the 15th century. Despite a large quantity of 13th century and later pottery, only three sherds of early/middle Saxon date, and eight sherds of late Saxon pot, with a date range of 900–1200 AD were recovered, including the base of a small St. Neots ware lamp. No record of a sacred cross exists in the village and despite intensive searching no other matching pieces have been found.

Dr Phil Sidebottom of Sheffield University suggested that the stone could indeed be an Anglo-Saxon cross fragment of the 10th century. On superficial examination the stone appeared to be igneous, the nearest source of which would be the Charnwood Forest area of Leicestershire. In order to verify this, Dr. Roy Clements and Dr. Diana Sutherland, Geologists, of Leicestershire University, required a thin section, but first Dr Graham Morgan, also of LU, was asked to make a mould and cast and photograph it. Colin Cunningham extracted a small core and prepared a thin section, plugging the hole afterwards. Dr Sutherland reported on the thin section, identifying it as an altered peridotite, of a type uncommon in Britain but comparable with an ultrabasic rock found in two unusual small intrusions in Cornwall – Polyphant near Launceston and Clicker Tor near Menheniot. The Fotheringhay piece compares closely with a variety of Polyphant stone. A full report can be seen below.

The two people who have spent many years researching AS stone crosses in Cornwall, Ann Preston-Jones and Andrew G Langdon, author of many books on Cornish crosses (see bibliography), both expressed doubts about the antiquity of the stone, as one of them (APJ) had previously been fooled by a fragment of a 19th-century replica memorial cross designed by Arthur G. Langdon, author

Face A

Face B

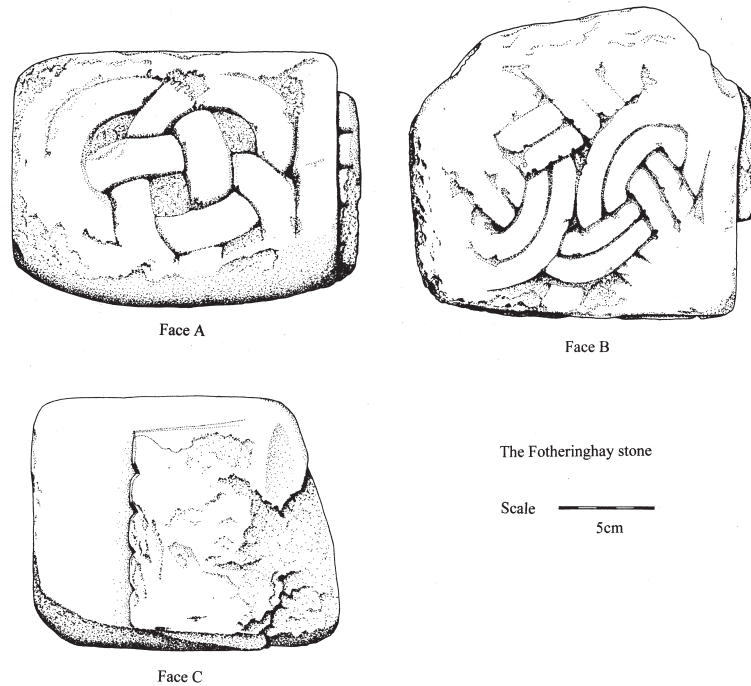The Fotheringhay stone

Scale ——— 5cm

Face C

Fig 1 The Fotheringhay Stone

of *Old Cornish Crosses* (Cornwall Books 1886). This fragment was found amongst miscellaneous material, including medieval floor tiles, in a box at Lawrence House Museum, Launceston, labeled from 'Launceston Priory'. The context was deceptive and at the time it was not known that Arthur Langdon's talent extended to the design of memorial crosses. It was only when Andrew Langdon started researching the life of his namesake for the brief biography that appeared in *An Addendum to Arthur G Langdon's Old Cornish Crosses, 1896-1996,* that the connection was made and the fragment linked to a memorial with missing horizontal arms in the graveyard of St Thomas by Launceston. According to the 1902 report (*The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist*, July 1902, author unknown), Arthur G Langdon designed three different crosses with a variety of designs but his namesake Andrew Langdon has discovered further similar crosses in and around the cemeteries of Launceston. He suggests that the stonemason, a Mr F Nicholls from Lewannick, a neighbouring parish to Launceston,

may have continued to use the design after 1902. Letters also exist, written by Arthur Langdon, which detail additional commissions for cross designs as late as 1909.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STONE
by Ann Preston Jones

The piece appears to be the end of one limb of a ring-headed cross with square arm terminals and interlace decoration. It is the end of one limb from the cross-head, with a short stub of the ring attached. Although individual features of the decoration can be paralleled on sculpture of the pre-Norman period from Cornwall, the sum of features is unusual, not to say unique, making me hesitant to accept it as an early piece, despite its exceptionally worn appearance. To take the various attributes of the cross fragment in turn, starting with the shape:

The shape of the Fotheringhay cross-arm is problematic in that it is square-ended, in strong contrast with the shape of almost all the early Cornish

crosses – illustrated by Langdon in Old Cornish Crosses (1896, 353-422). All the undoubtedly pre-conquest crosses currently known from Cornwall have wedge-shaped arms with rounded ends. The only exception is the cross at St Michael Porhilly (Langdon 1896, 385-6), but even here, though the ends of the cross-arm are stepped out in a way that is reminiscent of the Fotheringhay stone, the terminals are nevertheless wedge-shaped. The shape of the Fotheringhay fragment is more characteristic of early Irish and Scottish crosses of which there are plenty of copies to be seen amongst the Victorian churchyard memorials of Cornwall, and the fragment from Launceston Priory that deceived previously was also of this shape.

The ring is incised to form a quadruple moulding, comparable to the moulding on the Lanherne Cross (Langdon 1896, 357-60) but again, the best parallel is the decoration on the ring of the stone in Launceston Museum.

The decoration on face Fig 1 Face A, is incomplete but can be reconstructed as a simple four-lobed knot. This knot is simply not found on any early Cornish crosses or indeed on Pre-Norman sculpture generally. However, it *can* be seen on the lower arm of a memorial cross designed by A.D. Langdon and now standing on the grave of a stonemason named Stephens, in Lewannick Churchyard, the home parish of the Polyphant Quarries. The spaces between the strands, which despite the overall worn appearance of the stone can be seen on this face to be neatly pecked out, would also be unusual in Cornish sculpture, where all the strands are always very closely squeezed together.

The back-to-back triquetras on Fig 1 face B occur on Cornish cross-shafts at Sancreed and Ludgvan (in the church tower) but never on cross-heads, where the decoration is normally a single triquetra in each cross-arm, bosses or a crucifixion. Again though, this is a motif favoured by AG Langdon for his crosses, examples being at St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Stephen's churchyards, both near Launceston.

To sum up, the Fotheringhay fragment does not really 'fit' as an example of early medieval Cornish sculpture. On the other hand, the use of the back-to-back double-strand triquetras and the beading of the ring, indicate knowledge of Cornish sculpture and so it is certainly possible that this is an example of a cross designed by A.G. Langdon, who, incidentally, also favoured the use of Polyphant Stone.

The only example of an early cross said to be carved from Polyphant Stone is a simple wayside cross of probable 12th or 13th century date on Laneast Down (Plate 1), some 7 miles from the Polyphant quarries (Langdon 1896, 163). However, this stone has not been subjected to modern identification by thin section and I do wonder whether it might not rather be a piece of local greenstone, rather than Polyphant. If however, it is indeed Polyphant, I suppose it does indicate the possibility that there may have been more crosses carved from Polyphant than are now known and perhaps at an earlier date than the 13th century, but that they have not survived in recognizable form because the stone is so soft and easily eroded.

A further piece of evidence that seems to support the fact that this piece is a fake is that there seems to be no carving on three of the faces, where carving should be expected. It is of course possible that the carving has been completely eroded away but if so, the erosion has been remarkable effective in obliterating all trace. In fact, it seems more probable that these faces were never carved and therefore that the cross of which this piece was a part was never completed: in other words, that this stone originated as a piece of waste from a quarry or a stonemason's yard.

CARVED STONE FROM FOTHERINGHAY : REPORT ON PETROLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION
By D.S.Sutherland and R.G. Clements. Geology Department, University of Leicester

The carved stone, believed to be part of a 10th century cross, is mottled, dark greenish-grey and very weathered, defying positive identification with hand-lens or binocular microscope, although grains could be distinguished which suggested an igneous or pyroclastic origin. After advice from archaeologists and permission from the owner, it was proposed to make a thin section for further investigation, but first a mould and cast were made in the Archaeology Department by Dr. Graham Morgan. To reach fresh, unweathered rock a small core (diameter 8mm, length 64mm) was extracted by Colin Cunningham in the Geology Department, and a thin section prepared.

POSSIBLE SOURCE OF THE FOTHERINGHAY STONE

Peridotites are not common in Britain, but examples are known from places as far apart as Shetland, Aberdeenshire, the Hebrides, north Wales, western Ireland and Cornwall. However, the distinctive feature of the Fotheringhay rock is the alteration of the original peridotite to serpentine, talc and carbonate, and this has prompted a comparison with some examples of ultrabasic rocks in Cornwall, not the serpentinites of the Lizard, but two unusual small intrusions in eastern Cornwall: Polyphant near Launceston, and Clicker Tor near Menheniot. Samples of both have been examined, with thin sections, from the Geology Department

collection at the University of Leicester, and additional thin sections of Polyphant Stone were borrowed from the British Geological Survey.

Following microscopic analysis, the conclusion is that the Fotheringhay rock is a distinctive carbonated, talcose, serpentinised peridotite which could have come from some part of the variable Polyphant intrusion.

USE OF POLYPHANT STONE

Watson's entry for Polyphant (1911, p.94) is worth quoting:

At Polyfant near Launceston in Cornwall is a famous quarry of a serpentinous rock, popularly known as 'Polyfant Stone', which has been worked and utilized from very early times. The greater part of the Saxon and Norman arches in the eastern portion of the county are built of this stone. ...The rock, although compact and hard in appearance, is very easily wrought, and can be readily cut with a chisel or even with a knife. This property causes it to be sought after for highly finished decorative work, and it is much used in the county for that purpose, especially in ecclesiastical architecture.

Edmonds *et al* (1969), following Reid *et al* (1911) mention the working of Polyphant Stone from the 11th century; it was used in Launceston Castle and later in Exeter and Truro cathedrals. (The latter was built in the 19th century. Indeed the stone continued to be popular for Victorian and later ecclesiastical architecture, for example the rebuilding of the south arcade at St. Martin¹s, Lewannick in 1890, and almost the whole church building of St. Cuthbert in Launceston in 1911.) H. Dewey (in Reid *et al* 1911) described how the font in this church was made from one of a group of concentric sphaeroidal Œshells occurring naturally in the quarry; and the tomb of Archbishop Temple in Canterbury Cathedral was made of this decorative stone in 1902. More recently, since 1980, a new font was made for Chichester Cathedral. But we are interested in earlier times. The church of St. Mary Magdalene in Launceston has a 14th-century tower of Polyphant Stone blocks, an internal doorcase, and a Norman font beneath the later granite one. Another Norman font is said to be at St. Thomas's Church (it was locked when we visited). Clifton-Taylor (1972, 189) cites the churches of St. Stephen-by-Saltash, Sampford Courtney near Okehampton, and the south arcade at Launcells near Bude as examples of Polyphant from the Tudor period.

Of particular interest, of course, would be the use of Polyphant Stone for any of the numerous Cornish crosses. Unfortunately, they are mostly made of granite, though some are beautifully carved (Langdon 1996). One example was cited by an earlier Langdon in 1896 (p. 163) which 'is remarkable for being made of Polyphant Stone instead of granite'. It stands on Laneast Down [SX 235 856], seven miles west of Launceston. It is two metres high, with a simple Latin cross carved on both sides of the head which is surrounded by a bead, and there are short square projections at the neck. The rock is very much like the Fotheringhay piece in its weathered surface (though much covered in lichen) and is greenish grey, with some visible white grains standing proud and darker spots as hollows. Unlike the Fotheringhay rock, it has a foliated texture: Watson's (1911) specimen too was described as 'schistose', but this is not a consistent feature when the rock is seen in the quarry. The age of this cross is probably not known. 'By the 11th century wayside crosses were being set up all around the county...the majority date

between the 11th and 13th centuries' (Langdon 1996). Langdon (1896) suggested that the ones with neck projections might be later rather than earlier.

CONCLUSION.

Why was the stone in Fotheringhay? It would have been easy to suggest that a Saxon cross used to stand in the famous churchyard but no other pieces have been found despite intensive searching. Fotheringhay derives its fame from a later period and there is scant evidence for a pre-conquest village rich enough to transport stone from Cornwall.

By a strange quirk of fate, a previous occupier of the house in Fotheringhay where the stone was found, and who now runs a bicycle museum in Camelford, Cornwall, recently visited and provided a photograph of himself as a child, standing in front of the *newly built* rockery in 1956. On further questioning, he denied any family connections with Cornwall but remembered that his family had a car and had taken holidays in Cornwall.

Polyphant stone is excellent for internal work where it looks like a greenish marble but outdoors it weathers badly. At Lanteglos by Camelford church, windows replaced in Polyphant stone less than one hundred years ago are crumbling away. The cross at Laneast Down, near Launceston (Plate 1), which is probably 11th or 12th century in date, appears superficially to be very like the Fotheringhay piece, but is rather less worn. As it is unlikely ever to have been under cover, its survival may therefore be due to the variety of stone selected from the Polyphant intrusion (pers com Dr D Sutherland). Efforts to match the cross fragment with anything in Cornwall, ancient or modern, have been unsuccessful. The very abraded appearance of the stone would suggest that it is genuine but on the other hand Polyphant stone is known to be quite soft. The Fotheringhay piece is much more worn than the fragment in Launceston Museum but as we do not know its full history it is difficult to make a sensible comparison. Could the father have picked up this unusual and attractive stone and brought it back both as a souvenir and to embellish his new rockery?

Our stone is unusual, in that in one or two places the carving is very crisp: on face B the individual peck marks of the chisel can be seen between the crossing strands of the knotwork. On the other hand, it is rounded and worn in a way that suggests it may have spent many years half buried in a rockery or

Plate 1 The Laneast Down Stone Cross

AG Langdon, and one with a particularly interesting history! Anyone wishing to see the stone may view it in Oundle Museum, or a copy in Fotheringhay Church.

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on a beach or in a river. My suggestion, perhaps too imaginative, is that this stone may have been broken when being carved and thrown onto the mason's spoil heap, from which it rolled down onto the bed of a nearby river. At Church Cove on the Lizard, water-worn pot lids and other wasters from the serpentine industry can be picked up from the beach after being discarded by local craftsmen. So too, our stone may have been washed over by a stream for many years before being picked up by a holidaymaker from Northamptonshire, keen to acquire an attractive piece of stone to decorate his fine new rockery.

In conclusion, although the Fotheringhay stone may not be Anglo-Saxon, we can still celebrate it as a further possible example of the skilled design of

A. G. JOHNSTON

With contributions by
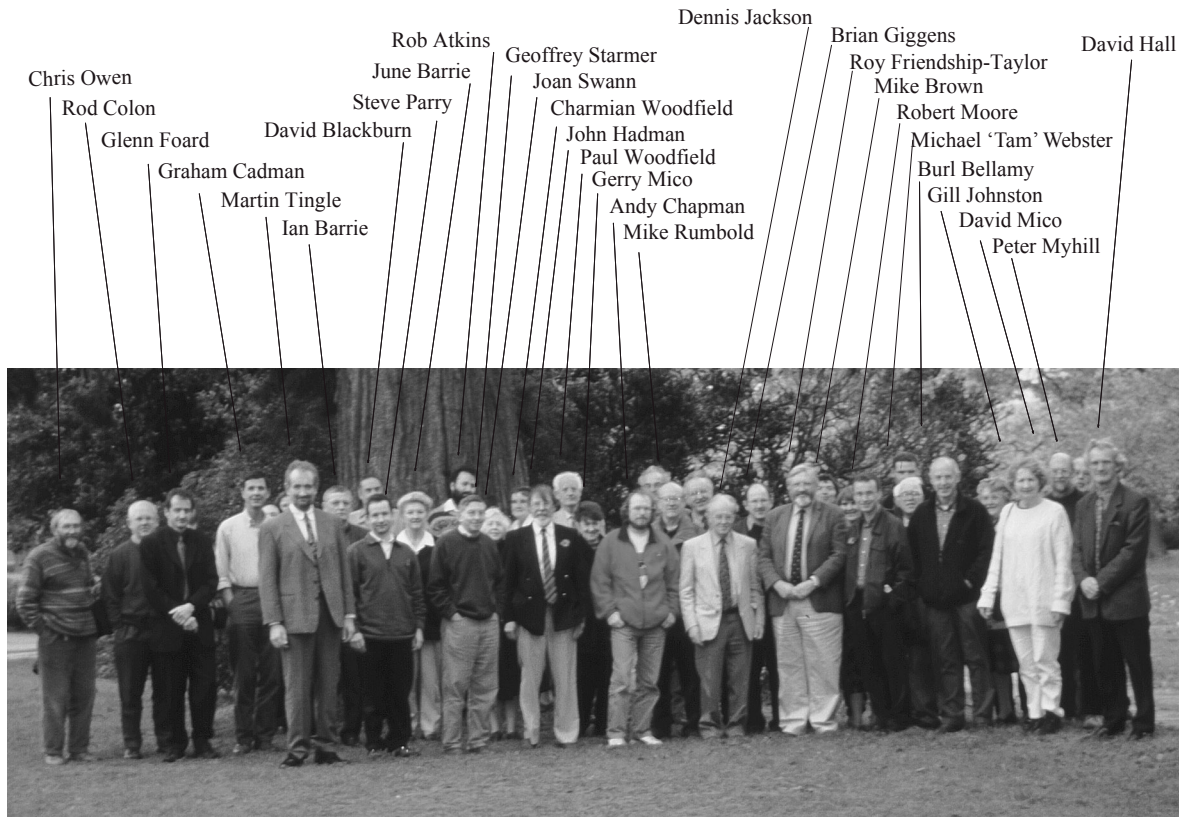
Dr Diana Sutherland, Dr Phillip Sidebottom, Dr Graham Morgan, Ann Preston Jones and Andrew G. Langdon. Drawings by Heather Lovett.

PUTTING A NAME TO A FACE

In 1999 the NAS published a silver jubilee volume of Northamptonshire Archaeology which featured on its cover, a group of NAS members who were attending a day conference at UCN (now Northampton University). Since many of those who appear have contributed to the journal over the years, it was agreed at a recent meeting of the NAS committee that some attempt should be made to identify those on the cover, if only to allow future generations to put a face to a name. Apologies to those we were unable to identify or any we have mis-identified.