EXCAVATIONS AT THE HAMLET IN BEDGROVE, AYLESBURY 1964–6

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Excavation of a house platform and part of a hollow way yielded information on a medieval settlement. Bedgrove is situated about 1.5 miles from the centre of Aylesbury and lay, until 1958, in the parish of Weston Turville (Fig. 1). Three seasons of work from 1964–6 revealed an extensive area of flint cobbling, traces of three buildings and an oven. An earlier medieval phase of occupation was represented by a pit sealed by the cobbling, containing twelfth-century pottery. The majority of sherds from the layer of cobbles and above, however, can be dated from the late twelfth century to early fourteenth century. Documentary evidence confirms that this was the time when the settlement was flourishing. Pottery from the site also showed a Roman presence in the area, and indicated the Late Saxon origins of the settlement.

Introduction

The site of the hamlet (NGR SP 839127) was identified on the ground by earthworks and a scatter of stones in the area north of Bedgrove Farm (Fig. 2). A house platform, represented by a rectangular mound measuring 6m×8.5m, was the most distinct feature to be seen, and it was here that the excavation took place. The platform was situated on the east side of a hollow way running north–south. A field boundary continued the line of this roadway up to and beyond Bedgrove Farm. Aerial photographs clearly show these features, along with earthworks, extending to the east. Traces of possible tofts (house sites) and closes could be seen here. The whole settlement lay within former common fields, indicated by ridge and furrow.

A photograph in the Buckinghamshire County Museum collection shows Bedgrove Farm with a late Georgian front. A view of the farm as it was in 1965 (taken from a position north-east of the building) can be seen on Plate V. Part of trenches 65 I and 65 IV are visible in the bottom left-hand corner. The extent of the excavation in that year, and the cobble spread, are shown on Plate VI. The long trench across the

hollow way (65 VIII) can be seen stretching westwards from the main house platform.

Subsequent to the extension of Bedgrove Housing Estate, pottery was found in a private garden south-west of the excavation (Museum reference CAS 4435). The sherds were similar to those found during the excavation and show settlement to have been present in this area too. A mesolithic flint blade found in the vicinity indicated local prehistoric activity (CAS 5684) (Fig. 3).

The Medieval Village Research Group noted the settlement on the ground in 1953 and, as documentary evidence indicates the existence of a medieval hamlet known as Caldecote 'juxta Bibbegrove' (next to Bedgrove), it was decided to call the site Caldecote. It is now clear, however, that what was excavated was not Caldecote but Bedgrove. The site of Caldecote is yet to be identified for certain. A grant to Missenden Abbey in the early thirteenth century describes a meadow there as adjacent to the watercourse that runs from Broughton to Caldecote (Jenkins 1962, 31). This may have been the stream that turned the mill at Broughton and ran down to Aylesbury, and possibly the hamlet

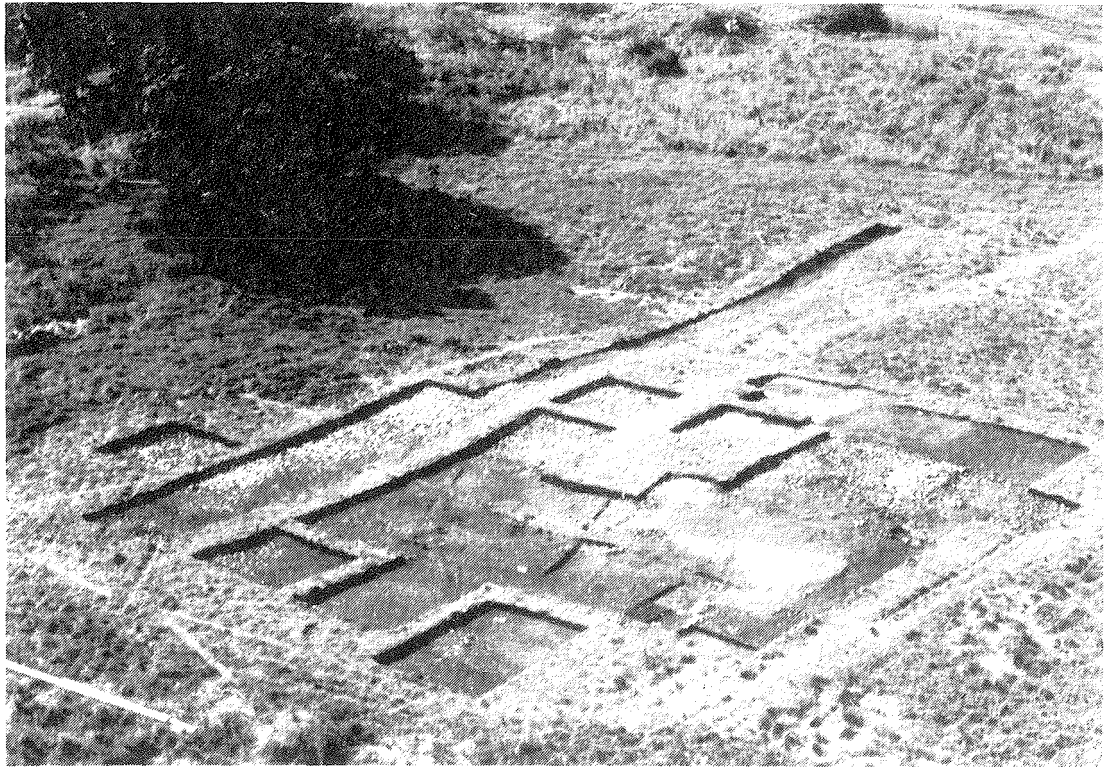Plate V. Bedgrove Farm, 1965.

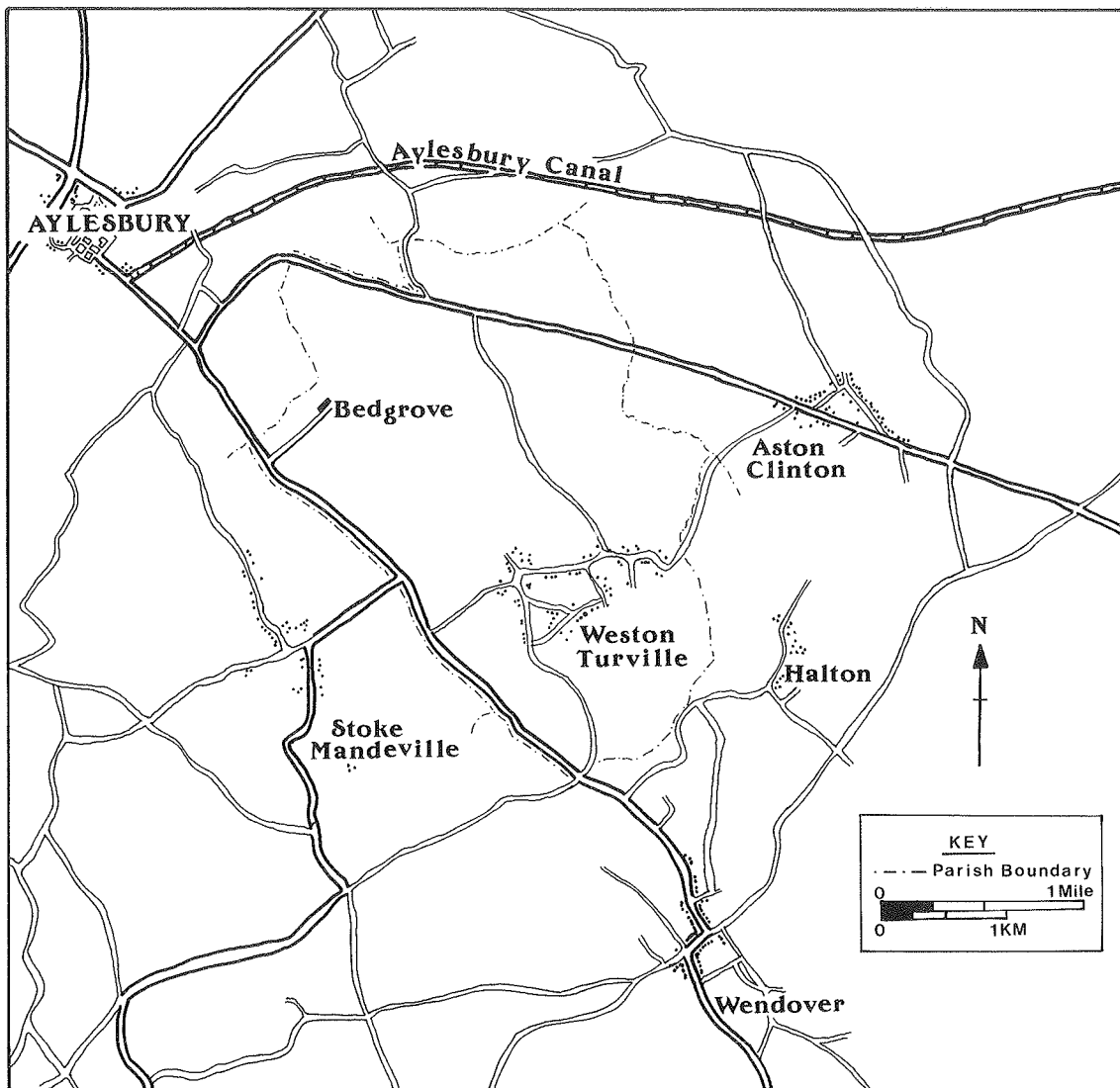Plate VI. The excavation at Bedgrove 1965.

Fig. 1. Location of Bedgrove, taken from Bryant's Map of 1825.

lay between this stream and the Roman road, in the area now Broughton Pastures.

The clay soil on which the hamlet was situated is generally subject to waterlogging and there is no obvious topographical reason why a settlement became located here. As the site was threatened by the extension of Bedgrove Housing Estate, Buckinghamshire County Museum carried out a survey and preliminary excavation in 1964. The project was directed by Christopher Gowing with Louise Millard, who together were assisted by a large group of volunteers. The encouraging results led to two more seasons of excavation in 1965 and 1966. A watching brief was undertaken in 1967 shortly before the area was levelled.

The method of excavation was to dig ten-foot square trenches separated by two-foot wide
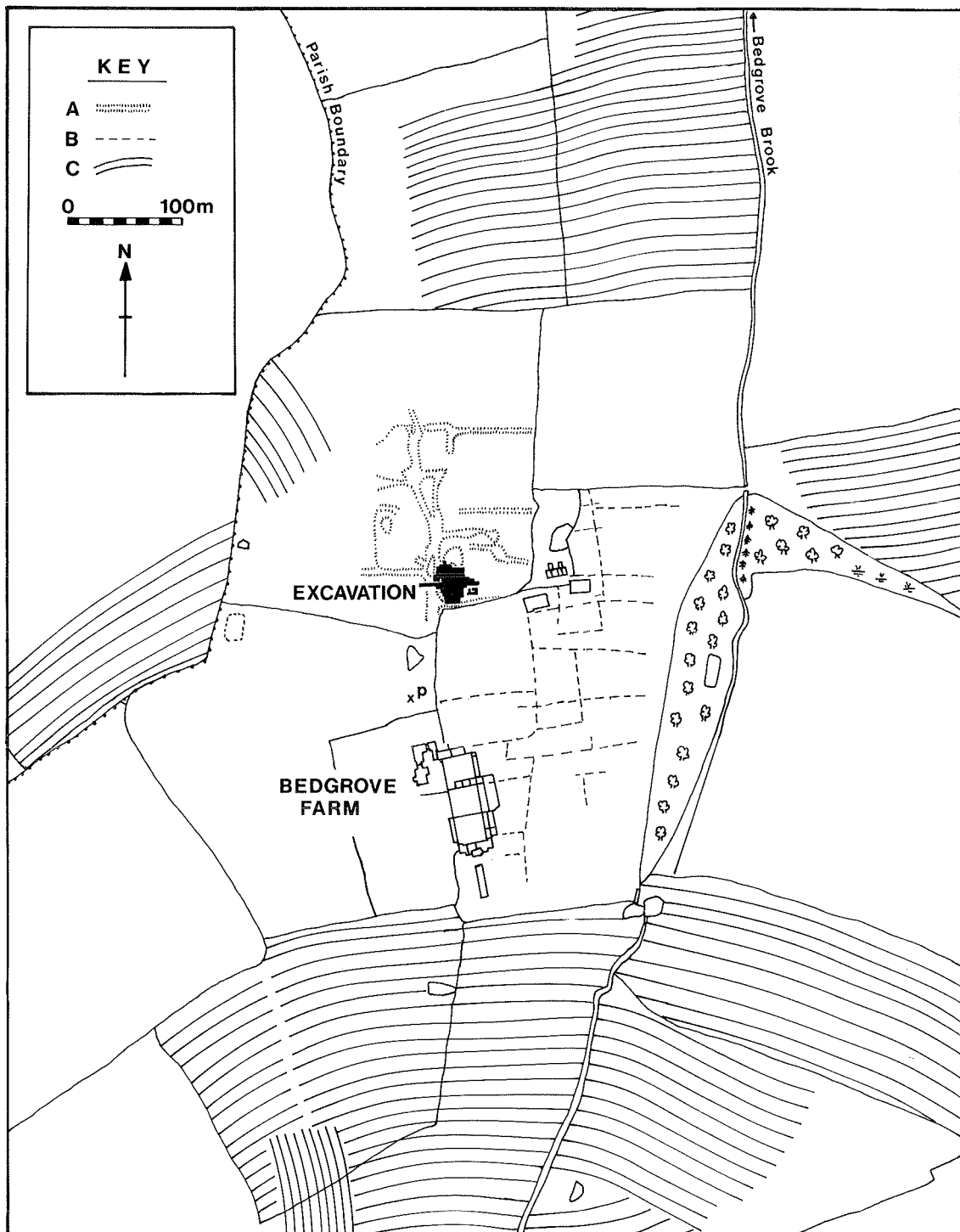
Fig. 2. Map showing earthworks and excavation. A – Earthworks surveyed from ground. B – Earthworks plotted from aerial photographs. C – Ridge and furrow. XP – Pottery findspot.
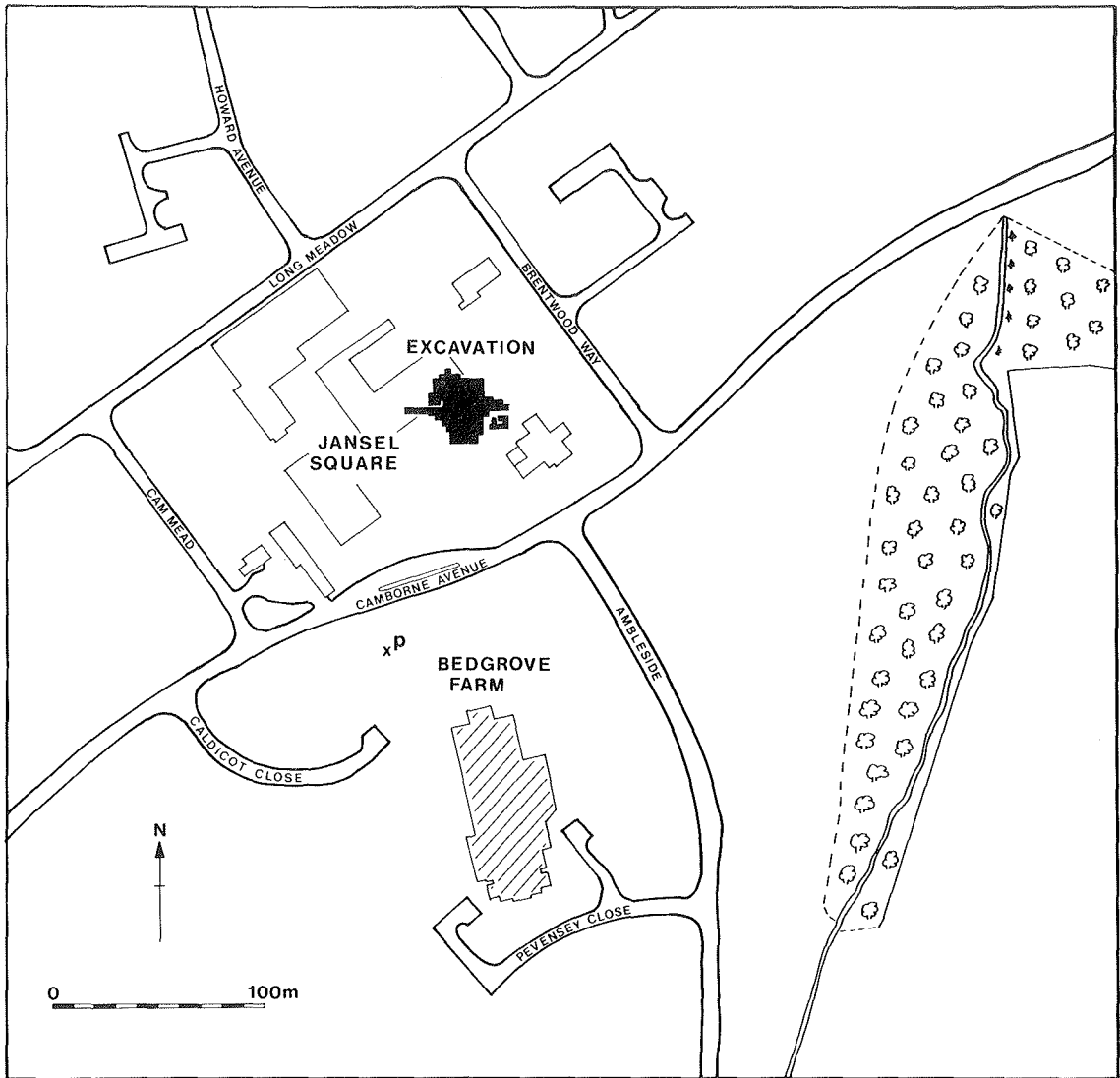
Fig. 3. Map showing excavation and modern features. XP – Pottery findspot.

baulks (Fig. 4). Trenches were extended if a noteworthy feature was revealed, and some baulks were removed. Roman numerals were given to each trench in order of excavation, and layers within each trench numbered and described in the site notebooks along with sketches. Plans of trenches and some trench-side sections were drawn.

The report has been prepared by the first author with funding from the Hardings Trust,

on the basis of the excavator's records and discussions with the second author. The site records and finds are stored at the Buckinghamshire County Museum CAS 0312, finds accessioned 502.67.

123
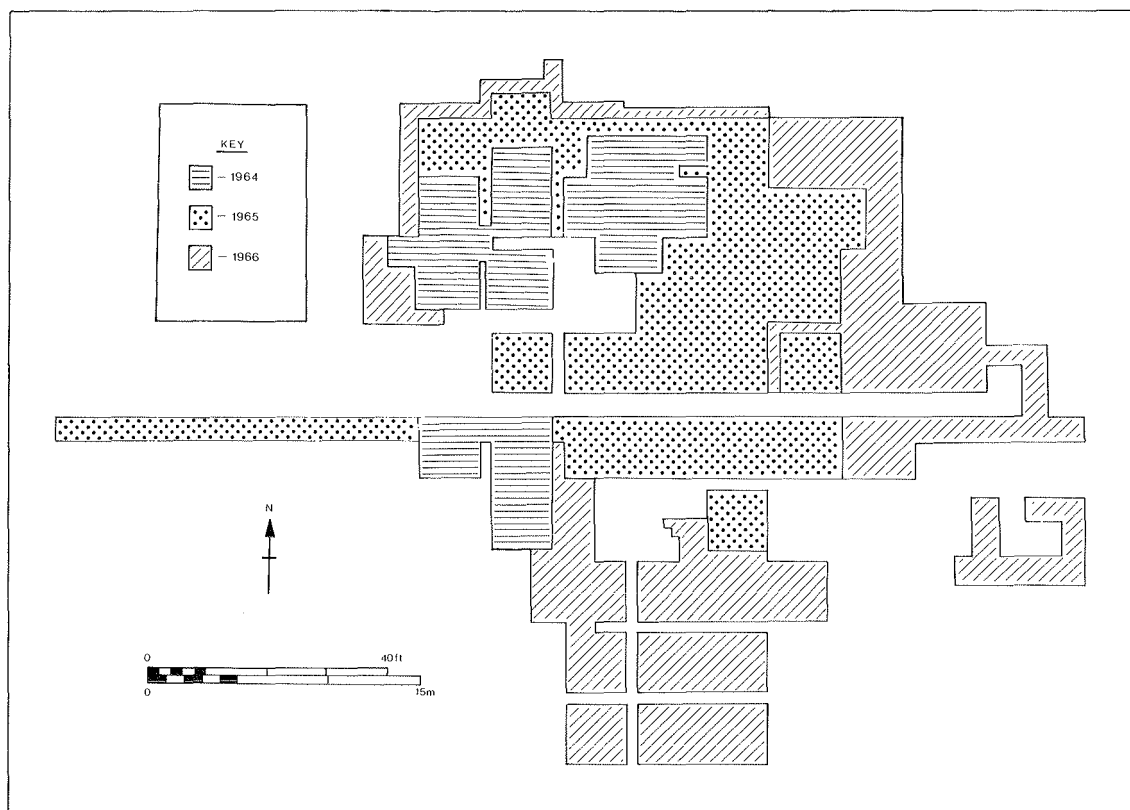
Fig. 4. Plan showing the three phases of excavation 1964–6.

Evidence of the Excavation

During the first season part of the house platform was excavated (Figs. 5 and 6). A large area of flint cobbling (1a, Fig. 6) was found and the positions of two buildings, contemporary with it, were located. One of these (A1) was approximately 6.25m×3.80m and had foundations made of limestone in a chalk-mortar mix. A single entrance was located in the south wall, marked by two entrance slabs of worked limestone. The building was partly floored with rammed chalk. A rectangular gap in the cobbling, a sparse chalk scatter (possibly the remains of a chalk floor), and a few limestone blocks marked the second building (B1).

In 1965 traces of walls of a second room to the rammed chalk floor building were discovered
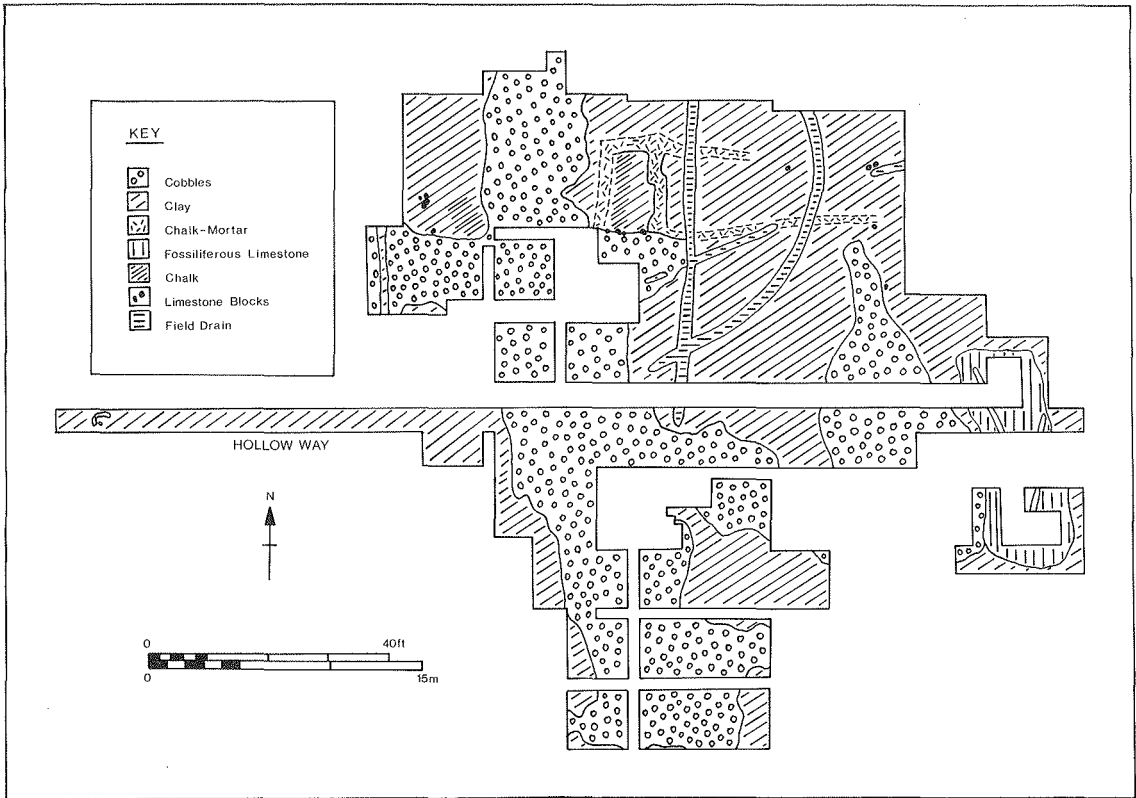
124

Fig. 5. Plan showing excavated features.

(A2). Further flint cobbling was found, and in some areas (particularly area 1b), the main cobble layer was covered by a second layer of cobbles. The original layer of cobbles seemed to be better laid than the upper layer and appeared to be of superior quality. The surface of the cobbles was uneven and it was suggested that cobbles had been dumped in this area. The fact that this had occurred near the supposed main entrance to building A1 could be significant. A long clay-filled 'ditch' (2a) was also revealed, along with two similar 'ditches' (2b and 2c) that ran across it. At first interpreted as clay walls, it later became clear that these features were field drains laid probably in the nineteenth century, long after the abandonment of the site. A trench was cut across the hollow way, stretching westwards from the main house platform to another much less distinct platform on the opposite side. Remains of the surface of the medieval street

were not distinct and in places the ground had been badly disturbed by tree roots. On the opposite house platform part of an oven was found (3a). It was constructed from roof tiles placed on top of each other, making one side of an elongated semi-circular form. The presence of the oven indicates occupation on this platform, although no other features were examined here.

A further expanse of flint cobbling was found in 1966 when the southern area of the site was excavated. A pit sealed by the cobbling (1c) provided evidence for activity at the site prior to the laying of the cobbles. The pit was present in trenches 66 II, 66 XXI and 66 XXI extension, and in the baulk between 66 II and 66 XXI. It was first visible at Level 4, and in the south-west corner of trench 66 II a further level was present (Level 5). Due to wet weather and a high water

125
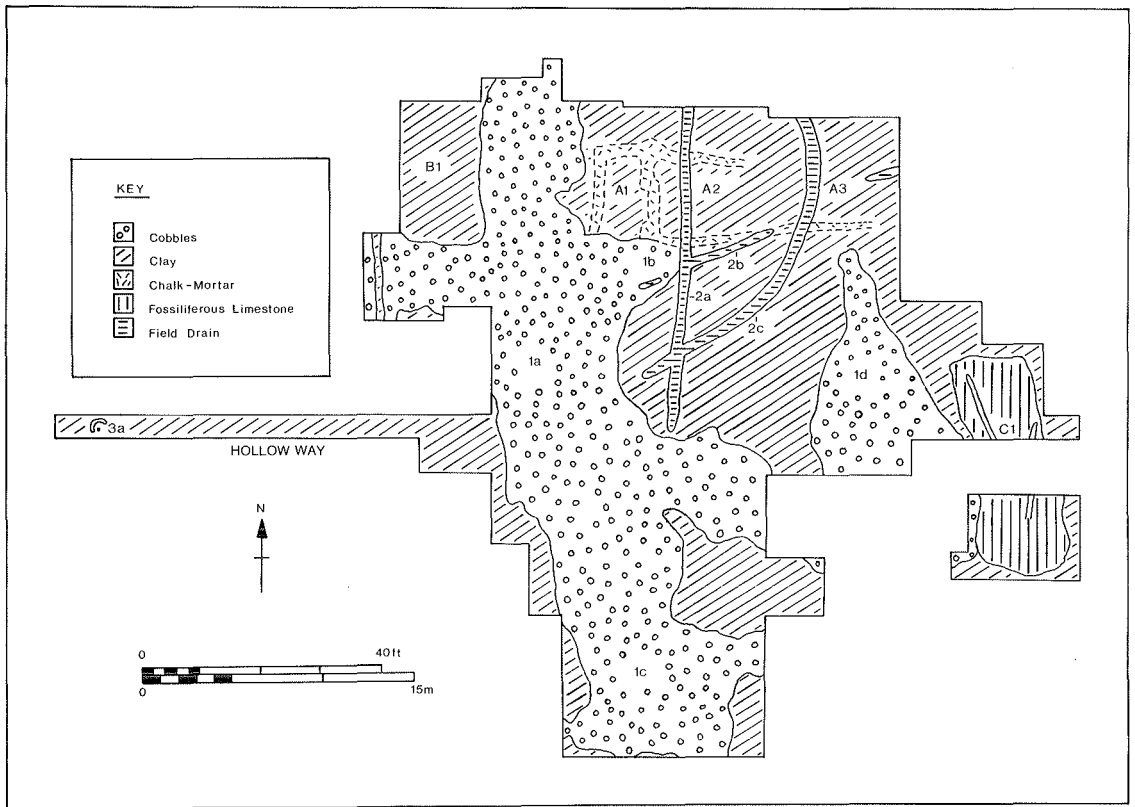
Fig. 6. An interpretative plan showing main excavated features.

table, a detailed section drawing of the pit could not be made. Included in the fill was black earth and charcoal. Pottery found in the pit can be dated to the twelfth century. The presence of charcoal along with relatively large sherds may indicate the proximity of a kitchen area.

Slight traces of wall foundations (A3), including limestone blocks, were located immediately east of room A2, but it is not clear whether they were part of building A1-A2 or a separate structure.

A crushed, decomposed fossiliferous limestone floor, in which narrow shallow gullies were visible, was also found (C1). It has been suggested that this was a barn. As a stretch of cobbling (1d) linked this building with building A3, it is probable that the two were contemporary.

A watching brief was undertaken for a few days in 1967 but no records have survived.

The Finds

The finds included a large amount of pottery, bone, tile, brick, iron work, glass, a number of clay pipe fragments and several miscellaneous artefacts (a few of which are described below). The great majority of this material, unfortunately, came from layers not securely stratified.

The Pottery

The principal finds were pottery; in all 3907 sherds were recovered. Post-medieval sherds accounted for 12% of the total, and once counted these were not examined further. The majority of the remaining 3452 sherds are medieval (just over 94%); a little under 1% were Saxo-Norman, almost 4% are Roman and just over 1% are of unknown date.

126

The sherds were examined using a ×20 microscope and tested with dilute hydrochloric acid. They were then grouped by the three principal inclusions: sand, shell or flint. A little over 91% of the sherds were in sandy fabric, with shelly-fabric sherds accounting for almost 9%, and under 0.5% flint. Diagnostic sherds were also counted: 9% of the total were rims, 5% were bases and 1% handles. Body sherds accounted for 85%.

During the excavation, six layers were distinguished. Layer 0 (topsoil), layers 1 and 2 beneath this, layer 3 (the cobbling) and layers 4–6 in the hollow way and in the area of the rammed chalk floor building (A1, A2, Fig. 6) and the fossiliferous limestone area (C1, Fig. 6). Some of these apparent layers were likely to have been caused by factors such as vertical movement of material through worm action, by coloration caused by ground water and other factors not strictly archaeological in character. In studying the ceramic evidence it was therefore decided to treat the finds as two groups; Group A, sherds retrieved from the cobbles or above, and Group B, those from the pit sealed by the cobbles and hence clearly pre-dating them. Group A contained 57% of the total number of sherds and Group B contained the remaining 43%. The pit therefore contributed a comparatively large proportion of the total assemblage and forms a significant local group. Table 1 shows the groups of pottery present in the 'layers' of Group A and B. The percentages of fabrics and datable types within each group are shown.

A large proportion of the Belgic and Romano-British pottery can be classed as coarse ware, being mostly jar and cooking-pot sherds in a grey or black fabric. Some of the more distinctive rim forms are illustrated (Fig. 7).

The first post-Roman evidence is represented by the several St Neots type sherds recovered (Fig. 7). This pottery was common in the Midlands west of the Wash, particularly during the tenth and into the eleventh century. In total 27 Saxo-Norman sherds were found; all of which were St Neots types, apart from 2 sherds that

can probably be dated to the eleventh century. Tripod pitcher sherds were also collected, and although some of these may date to the late tenth century, most are later.

The majority of sherds from the pit (Group B) were earlier medieval in date (Fig. 8); in total there were 1489 early medieval sherds. The remainder was made up of 6 Roman sherds (including a samian body sherd: form 45), 3 Saxo-Norman sherds and 1 of unknown date. Early medieval sherds in sandy fabric made up almost 90% of the group, 10% were shelly and under 0.5% were flint fabric. There was a small number of glazed tripod pitcher sherds in the deposit. Two of the illustrated bases (Fig. 8, nos. 14–15) appear to be later than the rest of the assemblage and could be intrusive. The contents of the pit as a whole probably date to the later twelfth century and it is suggested that the pottery in the pit was sealed by the cobbles at approximately the end of that century.

In Group A, the cobble layer and above, 90.5% of the sherds were medieval, the remainder being made up of 1% Saxo-Norman sherds, 6.5% Roman and Belgic, and 2% of unknown date. Within the medieval group 93% had a sandy fabric, and the remaining 7% were shelly. Examples of the range of medieval pottery found, including some Brill ware rims, are illustrated (Fig. 9).

Parallels can be drawn between the pottery from the excavation and sherds found by Dr R. Hagerty in 1978 and 1980 in his garden at 65 Camborne Avenue, Bedgrove (Fig. 3, CAS 4435). Dr Hagerty recovered over 336 sherds, including 1 Belgic, 18 Romano-British (5%), 16 St Neots type (5%), 42 dating between the eleventh and twelfth century (13%), and over 259 from the late twelfth to fourteenth century (77%), of which 10 were Brill type. Medieval pottery accounts for 90% of the total, a proportion comparable to that from the excavation. A relatively high number of St Neots type ware sherds were found in Dr Hagerty's garden, emphasizing the Saxon origins of the hamlet.

The Belgic and Romano-British sherds found on the site represent residual material, and re-

Table 1. Pottery from Group A and Group B.

	SAND	SHELL	FLINT	TOTAL
Group A				
Layer 0				
Medieval	116 (97.5%)	3 (2.5%)	0	119 (87%)
Saxo-Norman	0	5 (100%)	0	5 (3.5%)
Roman	9 (100%)	0	0	9 (6.5%)
Unknown	4 (100%)	0	0	4 (3%)
Total	129 (94%)	8 (6%)	0	137 (7%)
Layer 1				
Medieval	763 (94.5%)	45 (5.5%)	0	808 (94%)
Saxo-Norman	0	7 (100%)	0	7 (1%)
Roman	28 (100%)	0	0	28 (3%)
Unknown	17 (100%)	0	0	17 (2%)
Total	808 (94%)	52 (6%)	0	860 (44%)
Layer 2				
Medieval	367 (92%)	33 (8%)	0	400 (89%)
Saxo-Norman	0	7 (100%)	0	7 (2%)
Roman	31 (100%)	0	0	31 (7%)
Unknown	11 (100%)	0	0	11 (2%)
Total	409 (91%)	40 (9%)	0	449 (23%)
Layer 3				
Medieval	272 (89%)	34 (11%)	0	306 (94%)
Saxo-Norman	0	4 (100%)	0	4 (1%)
Roman	14 (100%)	0	0	14 (4%)
Unknown	3 (100%)	0	0	3 (1%)
Total	289 (88%)	38 (12%)	0	327 (17%)
Layer 4/5/6				
Medieval	34 (87%)	5 (13%)	0	39 (91%)
Saxo-Norman	0	0	0	0
Roman	4 (100%)	0	0	4 (9%)
Unknown	0	0	0	0
Total	38 (88%)	5 (12%)	0	43 (2%)
Unstratified				
Medieval	87 (93%)	7 (7%)	0	94 (68%)
Saxo-Norman	0	1 (100%)	0	1 (1%)
Roman	38 (100%)	0	0	38 (28%)
Unknown	3 (75%)	0	1 (25%)	4 (3%)
Total	128 (93%)	8 (6%)	1 (1%)	137 (7%)
Group A Total	1801 (91.95%)	151 (8%)	1 (0.05%)	1953 (57%)

	SAND	SHELL	FLINT	TOTAL
Group B (pit)				
Layer 4				
Medieval	1080 (88%)	143 (11.5%)	6 (0.5%)	1229 (99.3%)
Saxo-Norman	0	3 (100%)	0	3 (0.2%)
Roman	5 (100%)	0	0	5 (0.4%)
Unknown	1 (100%)	0	0	1 (0.1%)
Total	1086 (87.75%)	146 (11.75%)	6 (0.5%)	1238 (83%)
Layer 5				
Medieval	257 (99%)	3 (1%)	0	260 (99.5%)
Saxo-Norman	0	0	0	0
Roman	1 (100%)	0	0	1 (0.5%)
Unknown	0	0	0	0
Total	258 (99%)	3 (1%)	0	261 (17%)
Group B Total	1344 (89.5%)	149 (10%)	6 (0.5%)	1499 (43%)
SUMMARY				
Group A Total				
Medieval	1639 (93%)	127 (7%)	0	1766 (90.5%)
Saxo-Norman	0	24 (100%)	0	24 (1%)
Roman	124 (100%)	0	0	124 (6.5%)
Unknown	38 (97%)	0	1 (3%)	39 (2%)
Total	1801 (92%)	151 (7.95%)	1 (0.05%)	1953 (57%)
Group B Total				
Medieval	1337 (89.8%)	146 (9.8%)	6 (0.4%)	1489 (99.3%)
Saxo-Norman	0	3 (100%)	0	3 (0.2%)
Roman	6 (100%)	0	0	6 (0.4%)
Unknown	1 (100%)	0	0	1 (0.1%)
Total	1344 (89.6%)	149 (10%)	6 (0.4%)	1499 (43%)
Group A and B Total				
Medieval	2976 (91.4%)	273 (8.4%)	6 (0.2%)	3255 (94.3%)
Saxo-Norman	0	27 (100%)	0	27 (0.8%)
Roman	130 (100%)	0	0	130 (3.7%)
Unknown	39 (97.5%)	0	1 (2.5%)	40 (1.2%)
GROUP A & B TOTAL	3145 (91.1%)	300 (8.7%)	7 (0.2%)	3452 (100%)

flect general activity in the area during the Late Iron Age and the early centuries AD.

Evidence of early Saxon occupation has been uncovered locally at Walton, Aylesbury, about one mile from the Bedgrove site (Farley 1976, 191) where pottery dating from the early fifth century to at least the sixth century was found. No similar sherds were present at Bedgrove, and it is probable that settlement had not taken place here by that time. In contrast, St Neots type ware was found at both sites. As the ware was common at the time of the Domesday Survey, its presence at Bedgrove is to be expected. After 1100 the use of sand as temper became more widespread and gradually the production of St Neots type ware went into decline. This change is apparent at Walton where a late eleventh-century pottery assemblage was found. The vessels were made without the use of a wheel and thin-walled with a slightly lumpy calcareous filler, but quite distinct from St Neots type ware (Farley 1976, 23). Evidence from excavations at Bourbon Street, Aylesbury also demonstrate this change (Farley 1976, 441). In a late twelfth-century pit no St Neots type ware was found, and the predominant pottery type had a gritty fabric. This deposit seems to have been made at a similar time to that in the pit at Bedgrove. As the sherds from the pit at Bourbon Street were substantial in size and closely grouped it is likely that they represent pots in use by a single household over a short space of time. Although some large sherds and one almost complete pot (made up from a number of sherds) were found in the pit at Bedgrove, the nature of this deposit cannot be so clearly defined.

Medieval pottery from the late twelfth to fourteenth century was abundant on the site, most of it coarse ware in the form of jars and cooking pots. Apart from the tripod pitcher sherds, and a partially assembled jug with yellow glaze and red striped bands, few had any trace of a glaze. During the late thirteenth to fourteenth century the Brill–Boarstall pottery industry was distributing its products widely in the area of the Vale of Aylesbury (Ivens 1981, 102–6; 1982, 144–70) and examples of distinctive jars and bowls were found in Group A (Fig.

9). No example of Brill type jugs, however, was found. This may be of social significance as marketing mechanisms to supply the area clearly existed. The apparent lack of sherds at Bedgrove from the fifteenth century seems to confirm that by late medieval times the hamlet had become deserted.

Catalogue of Pottery
Description of sherds is in the following sequence: colour of exterior, interior and core, nature of decoration (if applicable), principal inclusions (sand, shell or flint), year of excavation (1964=64, 1965=65, 1966=66), trench number and layer number.

Fig. 7: Pottery from Group A

Romano-British Pottery
1. Dark grey ext., light grey int., brown core, sand. 65 XVII(3).
2. Dark grey ext/int., brown core, wide incised lines, fine sand. 66 surface find.
3. Light grey ext/int/core, 'powdery' texture, fine sand. 66 XVII(3).
4. Cream ext/int., grey core, very fine sand. 66 surface find.

Saxo-Norman Pottery
5. St Neots type ware, dark brown/black ext., brown/dark brown int., black core, 'soapy' texture, coarse shell. 66 II(3c).
6. St Neots type ware dark brown/black ext., brown int., brown and black core, 'soapy' texture, coarse shell. 66 IV(3).
7. Black ext/int., dark grey core, coarse shell. 64 V/VI(0).
8. St Neots type ware dark grey/brown ext., black core, coarse shell. 65 XI(3).
9. St Neots type ware, brown ext., light brown int., grey core, coarse/very coarse shell. 64 surface find.

Fig. 8: Pottery from Group B
1. Grey ext/int/core, uneven surface, medium sand, 66 II/XXI(4).
2. Black ext., dark grey int., brown core, sparse sand. 66 II/XXI(4).
3. Grey/brown ext., brown int., grey core, fine sand. 66 XXI(4).
4. Dark grey/brown ext/int., dark grey core, sparse, coarse sand. 66 II(5).
5. Black ext/int., black/brown core, medium sand. 66 XXI(4).
6. Black ext., dark grey int., grey core, medium sand. 66 XXI(4).
7. Light grey ext., black int., light grey core, fine sand. 66 XXI(4).
8. Brown/dark brown ext., grey core, wide groove down the centre, stabbed decoration, coarse shell. 66 XXI(4).
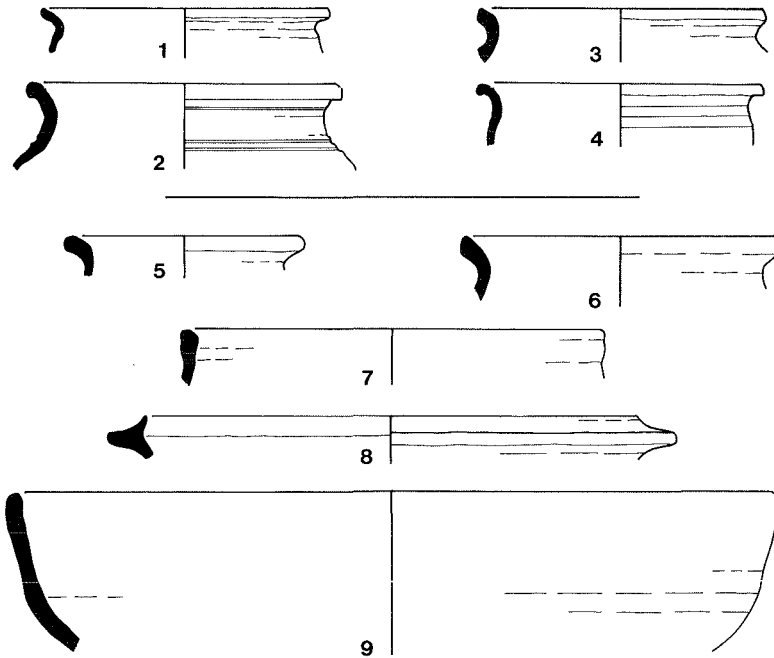
129

Fig. 7. Roman (1–4) and Saxo-Norman (5–9) pottery (scale 1:4).

9. Brown ext., dark grey core, deep groove down the centre, coarse shell. 66 II(5).
10. Black ext., grey core, slanting slash decoration, medium sand. 66 II/XXI(4).
11. Grey ext/int/core slash decoration, part of rim included, medium sand. 66 II/XXI(4).
12. Tripod pitcher sherd, red/brown ext., partly covered with green glaze, red/brown int., grey core, wavy incised line decoration, fine sand. 66 II(4).
13. Brown/grey ext/int., grey core, stubby base, fine sand. II/XXI(4).
14. Light orange ext., partly covered with green glaze (glaze also on underside of base), light orange int., orange and grey core, medium sand. 66 XXI(4).
15. Black ext., partly covered with green glaze, dark grey int/core, thumb marks around bottom of base, medium sand. 66 XXI(4).
16. St Neots type ware brown/grey ext/int., grey core, coarse shell. 66 XXI(4).
17. Black ext/int., dark brown/red core, medium/coarse sand. 66 II(5).
18. Black ext., dark grey int., brown core, medium sand. 66 II/XXI(4).
19. Black ext/int., very dark brown core, fine sand. 66 XXI(4).
20. Black ext/int., brown/grey core, medium sand.
21. Black ext/int., brown/red core, medium sand.
22. Dark grey ext., dark grey/brown int., grey core, coarse shell. 66 XXI(4).

23. Dark grey ext., brown int., brown/grey core, coarse shelly. 66 XXI(4).
24. Black/brown/red ext., brown/red int., brown/red core, sparse, coarse shelly. 66 XXI(4).
25. Black ext., brown/red int., brown and grey core, medium/ coarse shell. 66 II/XXI(4).
26. Black ext., brown/red int., brown and grey core, medium/coarse shell. 66 XXI(4).

Fig. 9: Pottery from Group A

Medieval

1. Orange/red ext/int/core, roughly vertical orange/red glaze stripes, very fine sand. 66 X(0).
2. Orange/red ext/int., orange core, patch of brown/orange glaze, very fine sand. 65 XI(3).
3. Brill ware, cream ext/int., cream and grey core, fine sand. 66 XXIII(1).
4. Buff ext/int., buff and light grey core, Brill ware rim form, Potterspury type fabric, incised line decoration, fine sand with several coarse calcareous (chalk). 65 XV(1).
5. Light grey ext/int/core, medium sand. 66 XXIII(1).
6. Brill ware, grey ext., light orange int., grey core, fine sand. 65 XX(1).
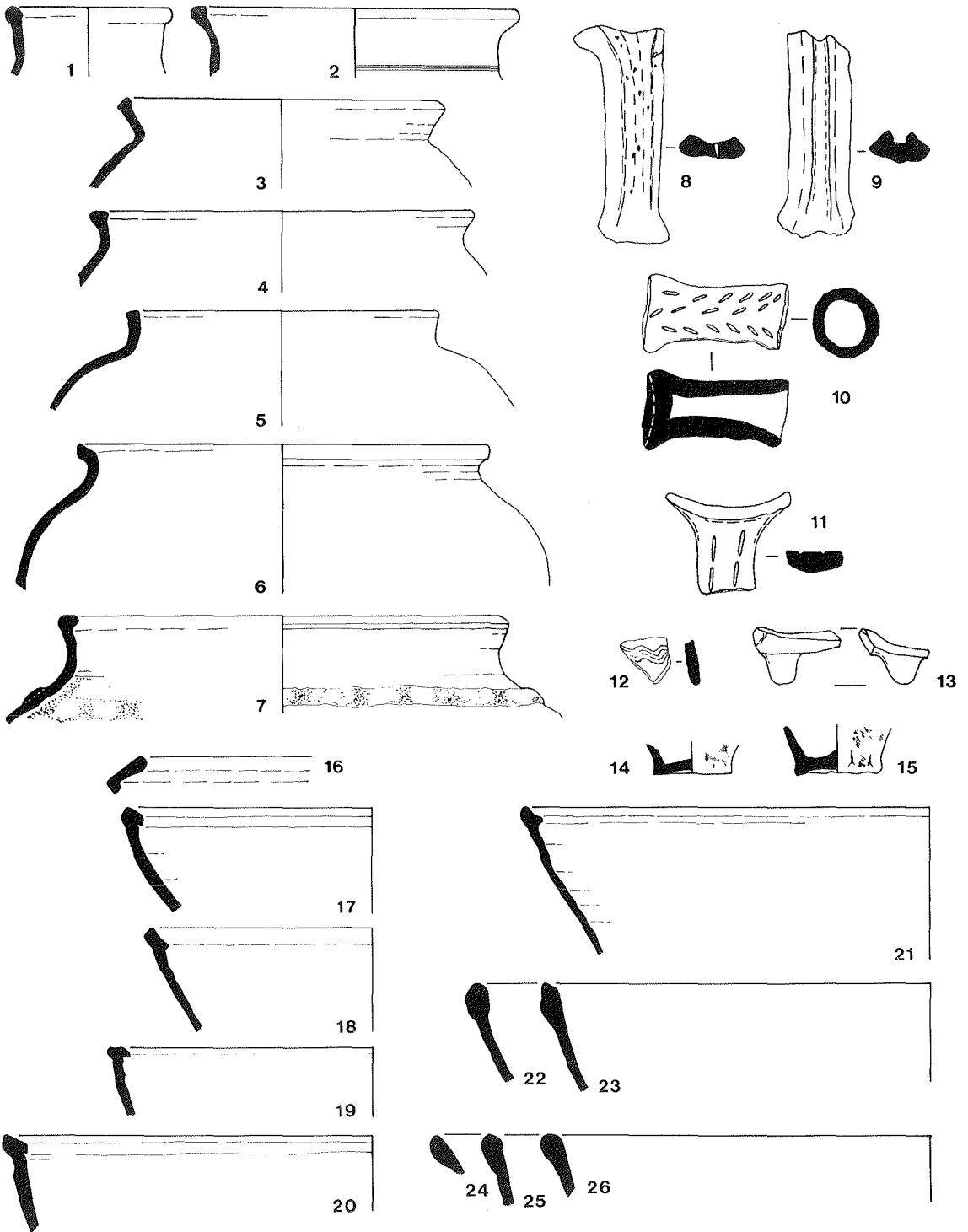7. Brill ware, cream/light orange ext/int/core, fine incised line decoration, fine sand. 65 VIII(3).

130

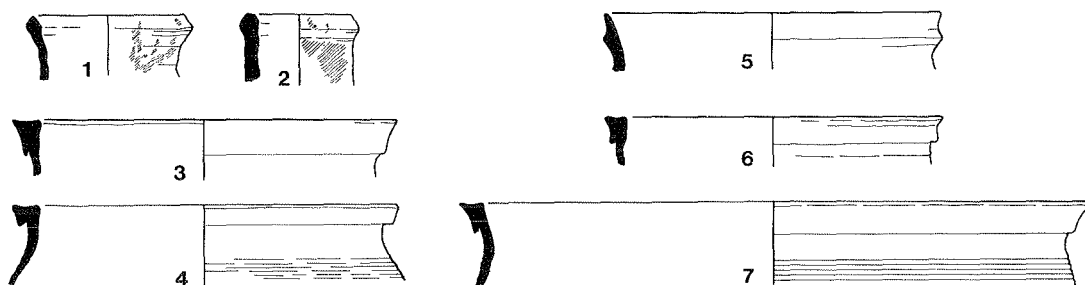Fig. 8. Pottery from pit (scale 1:4).

Fig. 9. Medieval pottery (scale 1:4).

Bone and Tile/Brick

The bone collected from each layer was weighed but has not been further studied. The tile and brick found was also weighed (see Appendix).

Small Finds

The only firmly stratified finds come from the pit which was probably sealed at the end of the twelfth century. They include two schist hones (Fig. 10, 6–7), some lumps of daub, a fragment of a highly glossed bone, a fragment of antler and three unidentifiable iron objects. Unstratified finds include an iron sickle blade, a door staple, an iron wedge, a buckle and a spindle whorl (Fig. 10, 5). Other finds include a farthing trade token issued in 1666 by Richard Butler, an innkeeper of the Crown Inn, Aylesbury, and two Nüremburg jettons, one made by Hans Schultes some time between c.1550 and 1574, the other probably made by Hans Krauwinckel between 1580 and 1610. Two keys, an iron knife blade, a lump of slag, a bronze pin and a bead were also recovered.

The presence of daub in the pit may indicate the existence of a building with daub in its construction, at a time before the cobbles were laid. The high gloss on the bone found in the pit was caused by a manufacturing process with which the item was connected, perhaps spinning or leather work. The slag found above the cobble layer in area 1c (Fig. 6) seems to be the type produced during smithing.

Catalogue of Small Finds (Fig. 10)

The accompanying measurements are in the following sequence: length, width, thickness.

Minimum and maximum dimensions are stated where appropriate:

1. Sickle. Iron, rectangular tang, 105mm×3mm to 7mm, 175mm×17mm curved blade, broken at end. 66 VII(1).
2. Door hinge pivot. Iron, max. length 70mm, tapering rectangular section on longest side, round section on other. 66 II(3B).
3. Wedge. Iron, one side curved, max. length 80mm×26mm. 66 XIV(1).
4. Buckle. Copper alloy, 36mm×21mm max. 66 XIII(1).
5. Spindle whorl. Lead, round, sloping sides and hole in middle, whorl diameter 26mm, hole diameter 8mm, thickness 12mm. 66 XXI extension (1).
6. Hone. This was examined in the 1960s by Dr S. E. Ellis who wrote: 'This is a typical "schist hone"; it is broken at both ends (at one through a perforation), but the stone is unusually well preserved. A slice shows the tessellate texture characteristic of transverse actions of mullions and lineated quartzschists. It consists of quartz somewhat in excess of muscovite mica, the latter being orientated parallel to the length of the hone (i.e. to the lineation). The grain-size is rather below 0.1mm. Other minerals include a little feldspar (oligoclase), brown mica (biotite), calcite, a chlorite found in typical "schist hones", tourmaline, zircon and ? monazite. The rock is a lineated mica-quartz-schist, probably a mullion, probably (like other "schist hones") from the E. Highlands of Scotland.' 83mm×15mm×7mm. 66 II(5).
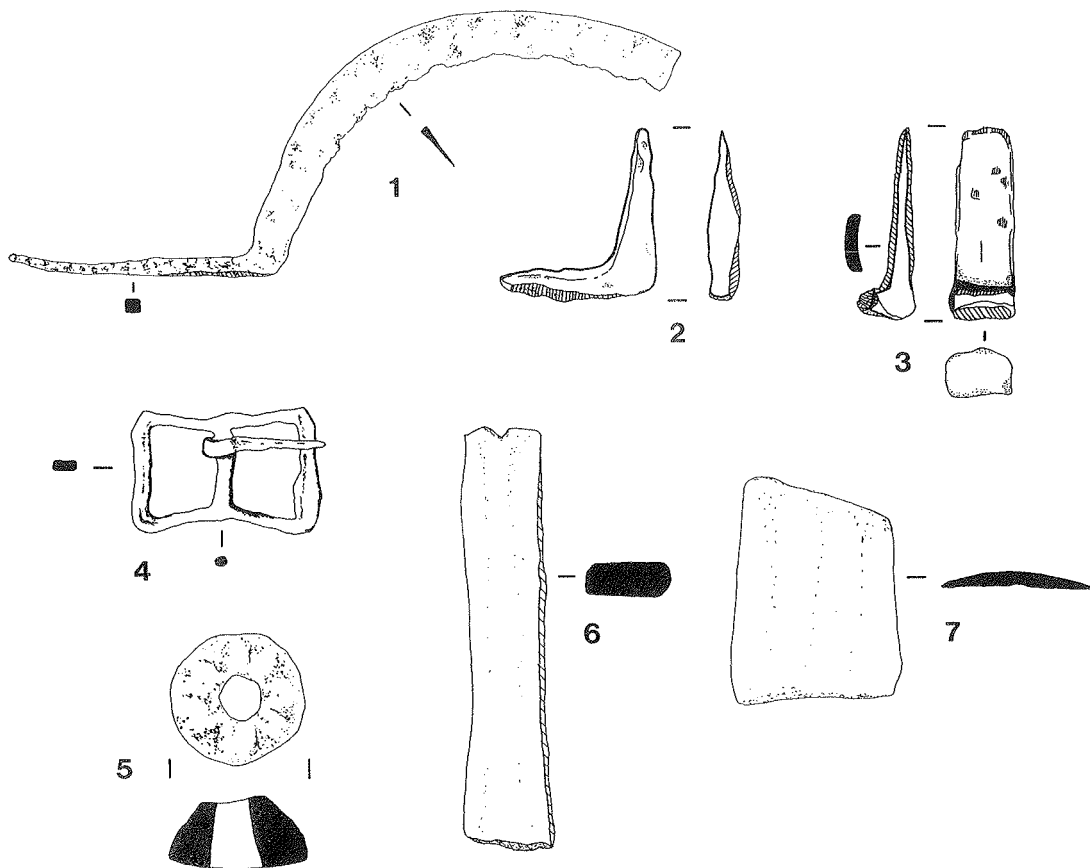7. Hone. Similar to above, but not examined by Dr Ellis. 44mm×31mm×4mm. 66 Baulk II/XXI (4).

132

Fig. 10. Small finds. Iron (1–3, scale 1:3), copper alloy, lead, stone (4–7, scale 2:3).

Historical Background

The first documentary reference to Bedgrove is in the Domesday Book (Morris 1978, Entry 4.6) where 'Begrave' is recorded as answering for two hides (rated for tax at two units of land). Before the Norman Conquest it had been held as a manor by Suen, who was a man of Alwin Varus and could sell. In King Edward's time it was worth forty shillings.

Post-Conquest, it was held, apparently in chief, by Roger, who also held Weston and lands in Bierton and other places, usually from the Bishop of Bayeux. When acquired the value had been reduced to ten shillings, while at the time of Domesday the value had increased to thirty shillings. There was land for three ploughs. In the demesne there was one plough (and team) and another two went with the five villagers and five smallholders. There was meadow sufficient for one plough team.

The next mention is of a case in 1185 (Jenkins 1962, No. 863) between John de la Baretere and Walter de Camera and his wife Emma, daughter of William de Pollicott, concerning a half knight's fee in Broughton and Bedgrove, claimed by Emma by right and inheritance. William and Emma quitclaimed to John and surrendered charters to him, against payment by John of 6 marks and 4 measures of corn.

133

During the following centuries, there are records of grants, sales, exchanges and, of course, disputes over land in Bedgrove. A charter of William Malet, dated between 1232 and 1243 (Jenkins 1962, No. 571) confirms, as lord, the grant made by William de Horwood to Missenden Abbey of 19 ac, 3 roods in Bedgrove. This is particularly interesting in detailing the locations of the various parcels in relation to the named ways, fields and furlongs, and to the parcels held by other people named.

A writ of 1285 in the name of Edward I directs his brother Edmund that he shall do right, as lord, to Richard de Paskedene de Wurton in respect of two messuages, 11 acres and 5½ virgates of land in Weston, Bedgrove and Broughton which Walter de Gayton and his wife Amice retain by force and which Richard claims to hold of Edmund by free service of 6d per annum (Jenkins 1962, No. 864).

Later, the impression is that Bedgrove lost its manorial identity. This is not contradicted by the excavations which indicated substantial desertion of the settlement site after the 14th century. The lands, of course, continued to be held and worked by a variety of tenants, some of whom were probably resident on their parcels. In 1659 there were still common fields in Bedgrove but references to closes indicate that inclosures had already taken place (Jenkins 1943, 69).

There is no record of a chapel in Bedgrove. A papal bull of 1181 confirms possession by Missenden Abbey of, among others, the church of Weston with chapels at Broughton and the Lee. Since the Broughton chapel was nearer than the parish church in Weston Turville, it is likely that people from Bedgrove preferred to attend at the chapel. However, another bull of 1230 mentions the chapel at the Lee among the churches belonging to the Abbey but not the church at Weston or the chapel at Broughton (Jenkins 1962, Nos 893 and 895).

The members of Weston Turville were not assessed separately in the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1327 (Chibnall 1966, 131–3) nor are they listed in the Certificate of Musters of 1522 (Chibnall 1973).

Bedgrove appears as part of the estate of Henry Colet, Knight, in an Inquisition Post-mortem dated 1505–6 (Cal of Inq P-m 2nd Ser, Vol. III, 20–24 Henry VII, No. 63). The estate consisted in all of 4 messuages, 4 tofts, 390 acres of land, 22 acres of meadow and 15 acres of pasture in Weston Turville, Bedgrove, Bierton and Aylesbury.

In 1544, Sir John Baldwin and his daughter Alice purchased from John Stavely the manor of Broughton with messuages, lands, premises and appurtenances in Broughton, Aylesbury, Bedgrove, Weston Turville and Bierton (Cal Hampton Manuscripts, 362). Sir John's heirs, the Pakingtons, continued to hold the manor of Aylesbury and lands in the area until 1802 when the holdings were sold to the Marquess of Buckingham. Some of the Pakington lands had been bought around 1714 on behalf of the Aylesbury Free School with a bequest left by Henry Phillips (VCH 1925, 7 and Jenkins 1943, 9).

A probate of 1680 records the death of Christopher Webb, gentleman of Bedgrove Farm (Reed 1988, 155). Local transactions by his sons, the eldest and heir John (a gentleman) and his younger brother Joseph (a grocer in London) are on record (Jenkins 1943, 69).

The inclosure map of 1790 (BRO IR/8AR) shows that the farm was then the property of John Newman of Wendover and a list of fields belonging to the farm is given. From the map, it is possible to trace the boundary of two fields, Angel Close and New Close, that ran through the area where the excavation took place. The farm, which in 1827 consisted of 280 acres of pasture and arable land, was purchased from John Newman Esq by John Hulbert Esq of Stokes Hill, near Portsmouth (Lipscomb 1847, 497, Sheahan 1861, 215, VCH 1908, 370). In 1862 it belonged to Mr G. A. Hulbert and was occupied by Mr Thomas Morris.

The last occupier of Bedgrove Farm was Mr

G. H. Salmon who was the farm manager from 1945 to shortly after 1958. Before the closure of the farm he tended 100 head of beef cattle and grew 20 acres of oats and barley. When the farm was pulled down the housing estate was extended to include the whole of Bedgrove. Today the houses of Pevensey Close cover the area of Bedgrove Farmhouse, the name of Caldecote reappears in the neighbouring Caldicott Close, and the area that was excavated is now covered by Jansel Square (Fig. 3).

Discussion

The excavation at Bedgrove, which concentrated mainly on a single house platform, covered a relatively small area, but confirmed the presence of a medieval settlement with Saxon origins. The result of the excavation, along with evidence from aerial photographs, and the later discovery of pottery in a nearby garden, demonstrate that the settlement with its closes probably covered an area of about 450m × 300m.

As the Saxo-Norman pottery was found over a wide area, it is likely that the settlement was firmly established by the tenth century, or earlier, and was flourishing by the mid eleventh century. The abundance of medieval pottery suggests that the settlement was thriving over the following two hundred years. Information in the historical sources can partly reveal the character of Bedgrove during this time.

Apart from the traces of foundations and floors, there is little clear information concerning the structure of the buildings on the site. The absence of structural flint, however, suggests that the buildings were timber-framed. Tile was used in the construction of the oven, but elsewhere the amount of tile recovered is insufficient to state conclusively whether any of the buildings had tiled roofs.

Evidence from both the excavation and the historical sources suggests that during the fourteenth century the settlement began to decline and probably by the following century its abandonment was virtually complete, only a small complex of buildings remaining which later came to be known as Bedgrove Farm.

APPENDIX: BEDGROVE EXCAVATION ARCHIVE MATERIAL HELD
AT BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM.

Site Notebooks
BGF64 Site Notebook I
BGF65 Site Notebook I
BGF65 Site Notebook II
BGF66 Site Notebook I

Plans
1 BGF64 Trenches VIII, IX, X. BGF65 Trench VIII.
2 BGF64 Trenches IV, V, VI, VII. BGF Trenches V, VI, VII, I, II, III, XVI.
3 BGF64 Trenches VI, VII, VIII, IX, X. BGF Trenches XVII, XI, IV, XV, IX, XIII.
4 BGF64 Trench X. BGF65 Trenches XV, IX, VII, XVII, XIV, I, II, III, IV, XVI, VIII.
5 BGF66 Trenches II, III, IV, I, VI, V, IX, XV ext. XII, VII, XIV, XVIII.
6 BGF66 Trenches IV, XXII, XXIV, XXIII, IV, X II, XIV.
7 BGF66 Trenches X, XVII, XIV, XXI, XV, XI, IV.
8 BGF66 Trenches II, X, XIX, XX, IV.
9 BGF66 Trenches XV, XI ext.

Aerial Photographs
BCM Run No. 147 Aylesbury 5001–5009.
BCM Run No. 163 Aylesbury (Walton)/Weston
            Turville/Halton/Hastoe 3001–
            3018.
BCM Run No. 364 Aston Clinton/Southcourt
            (Aylesbury)/Stone 3124–3137.

Oblique Photographs
SP 83/12 No. B1/38 (1, 2)
            Source: RAF (Air Ministry)
            Caldecote/Bedgrove
SP 83/12 No. B1/38 91,, 2)
            Source:C. Stanley
            Caldecote/Bedgrove
SP 83/12 Source: *The Bucks Herald*
            Jansel Square, Bedgrove.
SP 84/12 Caldecote/Bedgrove

Photographs
AYL/991 Bedgrove Farm House.

Negatives

File A9/3–12 Negatives of excavations in progress.
E69   Plan of excavated Medieval Village area.

The following quantities of bone and of tile/brick are also in the Museum.

		Tile/Bone	Brick
Group A	'Layer' 0	365g	3105g
	'Layer' 1	5810g	7810g
	'Layer' 2	1360g	2695g
	'Layer' 3	1960g	4600g
	'Layer' 4	75g	1225g
	'Layer' 5	40g	0g
	'Layer' 6	5g	75g
	Unstrat.	195g	1150g
Group B (pit)	'Layer' 4	1095g	265g
	'Layer' 5	385g	35g
Total		11290g	20960g

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