

THE MILTON KEYNES PROJECT

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Between 1971 and 1991, the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit carried out the most intensive archaeological investigation yet undertaken of part of the East Midlands countryside. This paper summarises the archaeological landscapes that can be constructed from the results of this work, and assesses the methods employed to obtain them.

Introduction

The new city of Milton Keynes covers an area of some ninety square kilometres, straddling the narrowest part of north Buckinghamshire, with the counties of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire to the south-east and north respectively (Fig. 1). Part of the reasoning behind the choice of this location can be seen in its situation on the principal natural 'corridor' linking the south-east to the Midlands and north, a route followed by all the major forms of surface transport, ancient and modern.

Until the designation of Milton Keynes, the area was devoted almost entirely to agriculture. Settlement consisted mainly of small villages, isolated farms, and the market towns of Bletchley, Stony Stratford, and Newport Pagnell. The more recent establishment of Wolverton, and the large-scale expansion of Bletchley, provided a more modern industrialised environment, the former being a nineteenth-century railway creation, and the latter a post-war development, sponsored in part by the Greater London Council.

In geological terms, the area forms a part of the Oxford Clay vale of the east Midlands, bounded to the south-east by the Lower Greensand escarpment (Fig. 2). The underlying geological sequence is represented by mudstones and limestones of the Upper Lias, outcropping on the edges of the floodplain of the river Ouse, which forms the north boundary of the city. Moving southwards, much of the high ground forming the central part of

Milton Keynes is underlain by beds of Oxford Clay, which outcrop extensively on the west side of the Ouzel floodplain, which forms the east side of the city. Much of this central area is covered by glacial deposits of Boulder Clay, whilst both glacial and alluvial deposits of gravel are found in the Ouse and Ouzel valleys. Rocky outcrops are mainly confined to areas bordering the Ouse valley. Soils in the area are heavy, though lighter soils are found in areas of gravel subsoil, and drainage is generally poor, even in the river valleys, which were prone to flooding until recent years.

Despite its situation on a major communications corridor, the Milton Keynes area remained largely ignored by antiquaries and archaeologists until the 1950s, with the growth of two local archaeological societies. A large amount of fieldwork, as well as several small excavations, were undertaken by these groups in the area, particularly after the designation of Milton Keynes in 1967. The result was a total change in the historical map of the area, showing that the Ouse valley and its hinterland had been densely settled since at least the Roman period.

As a result of this work, and campaigning by the societies, the Milton Keynes Development Corporation appointed two full-time archaeologists in 1971 to carry out excavation of sites in the new city area in advance of development. From this grew the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit, which has been funded principally by the Development Corporation,

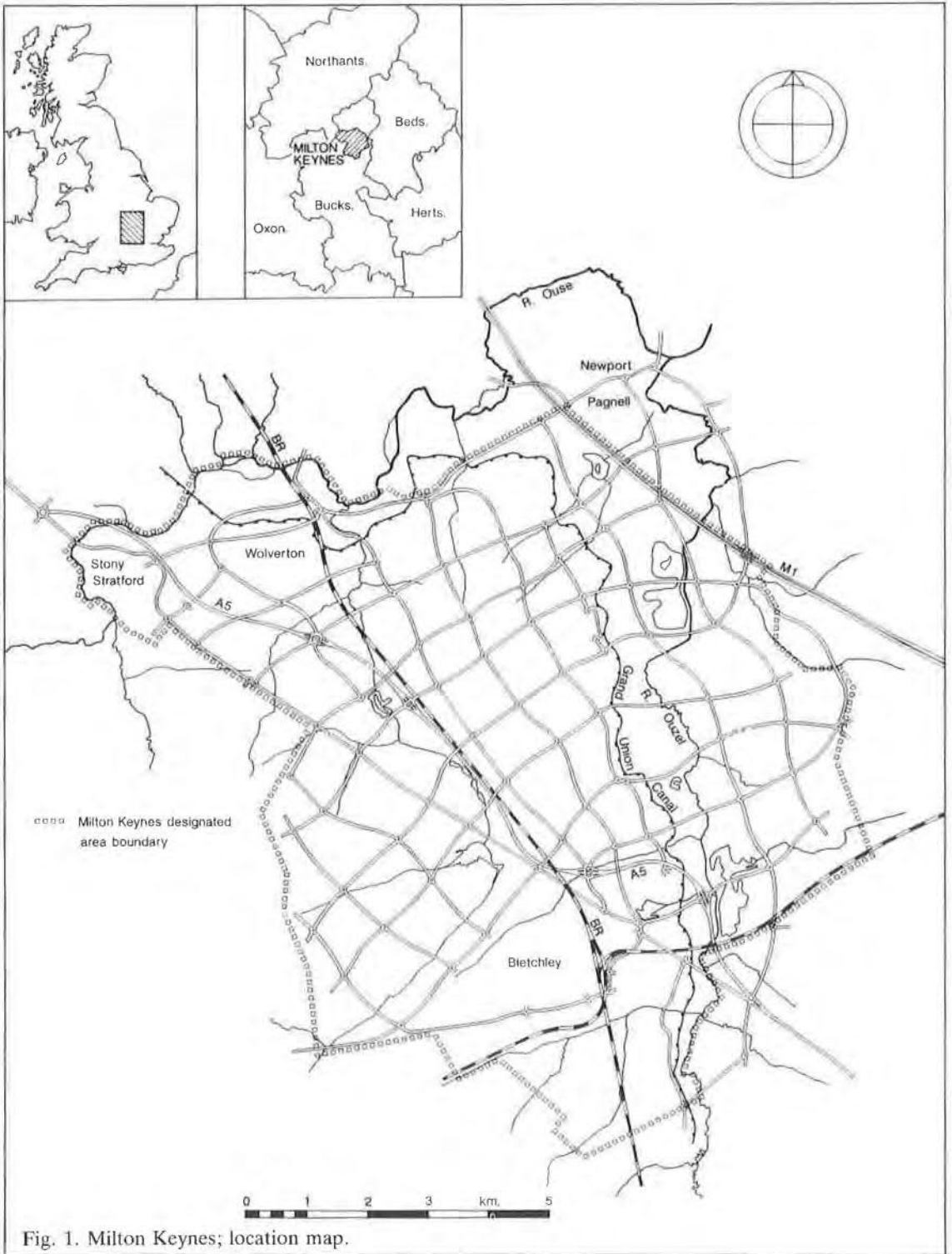
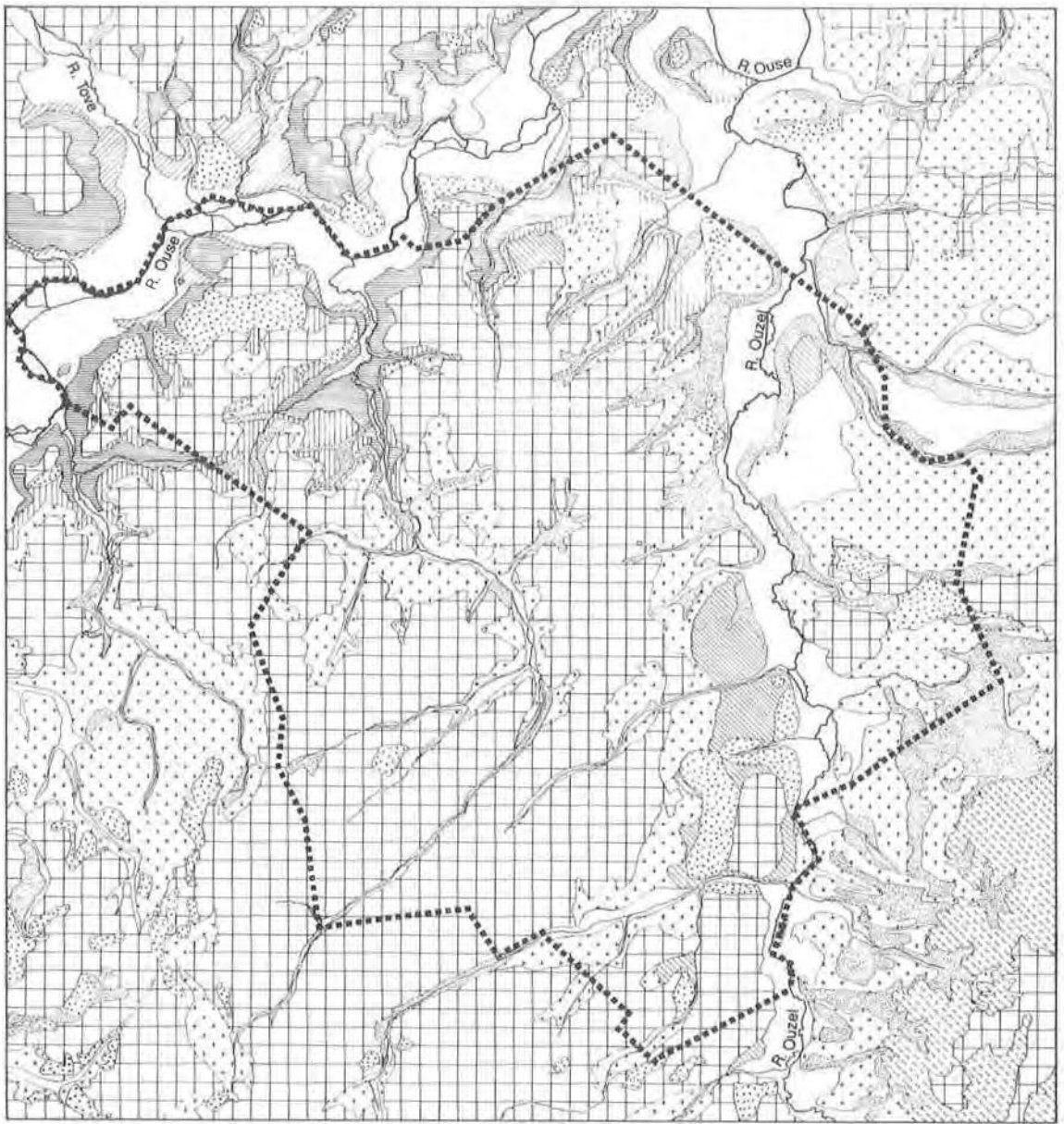


Fig. 1. Milton Keynes; location map.



MILTON KEYNES

Surface geology & drainage

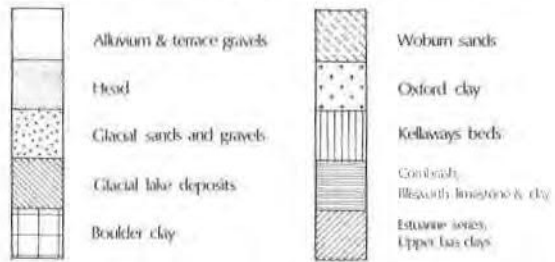


Fig. 2. Milton Keynes; geology and drainage.

with only small contributions from the Department of the Environment and the Manpower Services Commission.

Since its inception, the Unit's brief has been to undertake excavation of sites threatened by development within the Milton Keynes designated area, taking as a starting point sites identified by fieldwork carried out by local societies, as well as to advise on the retention and management of selected sites. Over the years, this approach has been modified with the discovery of additional sites by fieldwork during the course of development, or, more recently, by local metal detectorists, working in co-operation with the Unit. However, the emphasis always has been on examining at least a representative selection of types of sites of all periods throughout the city area, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of changes in land use and settlement pattern since the end of the last Glacial period. This approach has met with varying degrees of success, largely depending on the archaeological period concerned. The Unit's involvement with fieldwork ceased in 1991, prior to the winding-up of the Development Corporation, and Unit staff are engaged presently on completing post-excavation work before the Unit itself is closed down in 1994.

This article was prepared following a conference on landscape archaeology projects, held in Leicester in 1989. Its aim was to describe the aims of and methods employed on the Milton Keynes project, and to assess their success or failure. With the completion of fieldwork by the Unit in the new city area, this paper has been amended to include a more detailed look at the results of the Unit's work over the last twenty years, and the picture it presents of the changing landscape of this part of the county since the Palaeolithic era.

Prehistoric

Turning first to the hunter/gatherer cultures, it is evident that the area of Milton Keynes is too small and its geology and topography insufficiently diverse to allow any meaningful observations to be made from the results of the Unit's work (Fig. 3). Furthermore, few sites

have produced suitable samples of environmental material to allow detailed reconstruction of the palaeoenvironment for periods prior to the Iron Age.

Palaeolithic occupation is represented only by five hand-axes, no 'in situ' occupation sites having been discovered. Gravel pits in the Ouse and Ouzel valleys have proved difficult to monitor constantly. In contrast, Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork and artefacts have been found throughout the city, mainly sealed in riverine deposits in the Ouzel and Loughton Brook valleys, though the discovery of a tranchet axe at Pennyland, 2 km. from the Ouzel on heavy clayland suggests that tree-felling may have been under way in the Mesolithic period on what is assumed to have been a heavily wooded area. Only three occupation sites, all late Neolithic in date, have so far been identified and excavated, at Stacey Bushes, Heelands, and Secklow.

The Stacey Bushes site (Green and Sofranoff 1985) was located on a Cornbrash limestone area to the west of Loughton Brook, surrounded by intractable clays. It consisted of a group of pits and other features containing occupation debris, including Grimston style and Grooved Ware pottery. Environmental evidence from the site suggests that the area was wooded, but that substantial clearance had taken place around the site. At Heelands, a group of pits similar to those at Stacey Bushes were found on a south-facing slope on the Boulder Clay plateau which covers the central part of Milton Keynes. Also on the plateau, about one kilometre to the south-east, a single Neolithic pit was located beneath a Saxon mound at Secklow.

All the evidence from these and other contemporary finds in the city suggests extensive clearance, even of the heavier wooded clay areas, by the late Neolithic period. It is unfortunate that with the principal direction of the Unit's programmes being dictated by the pressures of development, it has not been possible to organise or fund the type of intensive fieldwork and sampling programme necessary to identify sites of this period. Both Stacey

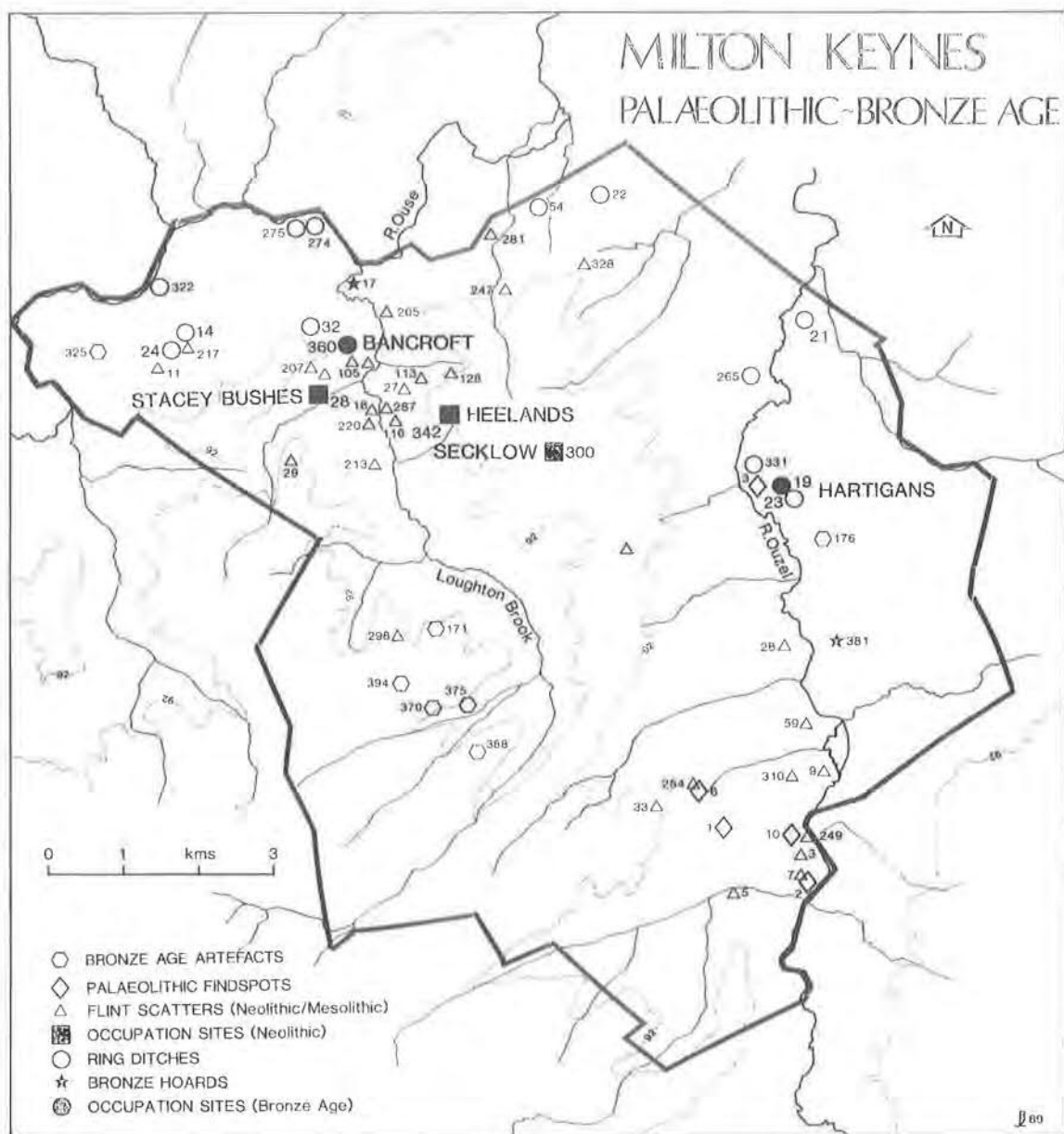


Fig. 3. Milton Keynes; Prehistoric sites (Palaeolithic to Bronze Age).

Bushes and Heelands were brought to light during construction work, which invariably imposes severe restrictions on any archaeological investigation.

Turning to the Bronze Age, much of the available evidence has come from Stephen

Green's excavations of 'ring ditches' in the Ouse and Ouzel valleys, which provided the basis for his pioneering study relating burial, territories, and population (Green 1974). Green's hypothesis of an essentially pastoral economy in this period, with ranch-like estates or units covering the Ouse and Ouzel valleys,

requires further confirmation from excavation and fieldwork.

In recent years, an increasing number of Bronze Age artefacts have been reported to the Unit by local detectorists. However, it has proved difficult to locate settlements, a problem which is not limited to Milton Keynes alone. There is one exception to this, the massive late Bronze Age roundhouse, discovered beneath an Iron Age settlement at Bancroft. This structure, 18.5 m. in diameter, with three concentric rings of posts, remains a unique find for the area, and was associated with an equally rare type of pottery, for which the only parallels have come from excavations at Hartigan's gravel pit, near Milton Keynes village, and from a field scatter at Weston Underwood, to the north of the city.

Iron Age

In contrast, evidence for Iron Age occupation in Milton Keynes provides the most complete example of prehistoric settlement distribution in the city (Fig. 4). As with earlier periods, this is still riverine, but with some notable exceptions. Five major settlements have been excavated; Hartigans, Pennyland (Williams, forthcoming), Furzton (Williams and Hart, forthcoming), Bancroft (Zeevat and Williams, forthcoming), and Wavendon Gate (Williams *et al.*, forthcoming), while several smaller sites have been partially excavated, for example Walton and Kiln Farm, and a number of others have been identified during watching briefs on construction sites. Fieldwork for both Iron Age and Roman periods has been particularly thorough, probably because sites of these periods are easy to identify, and there is good evidence for the Iron Age-Roman transitional period.

Of the major excavations of this period, the Hartigans site (Williams, *op. cit.*) on the east side of the Ouzel valley is the only example situated on a gravel terrace. Occupation evidence related only to the early to middle Iron Age, though evidence from evaluation work carried out in 1989 on fields to the north suggests that a shift of settlement took place in the late Iron Age. At Pennyland, three kilometres

to the north-west, situated on a gravel spur overlooking the Ouzel valley, cultivation of the surrounding clay soils was clearly taking place. Wavendon Gate, the largest site so far examined, was located on a 'head' deposit overlooking a tributary of the Ouzel, while Bancroft and Furzton were both on the west side of the Loughton Brook valley, the latter on very intracable clay soils. At Furzton in particular the evidence points to a cattle-based economy, perhaps seasonal in nature, with few traces of the introduction of new cereal crops or deeper ploughing methods. It seems in general that the central clay plateau was not settled until the late Iron Age. Bancroft is so far the only site that has produced evidence of continuity with both the Bronze Age and the Roman period.

Because of the emphasis placed on individual sites, little attention has been given to locating and identifying pre-Roman field systems in the area. This omission has to a small extent been rectified in recent years by the discovery of a pattern of Iron Age and early Roman field boundary ditches beneath the medieval settlement at Westbury-by-Shenley (Ivens *et al.*, forthcoming).

Environmental evidence recovered from the five major sites mentioned above suggests that by the late Iron Age much of the city area had been cleared of woodland, although a variety of trees remained in the landscape, presumably in copses that were managed to provide the types and sizes of timber needed for construction and fuel. The overall picture is of open grassland, on which mixed farming was practised, though it is difficult to assess the relative importance of cereal cultivation as opposed to stock rearing.

Roman

Much of our knowledge of the distribution of Roman sites in Milton Keynes has come from the pioneering work of local archaeological societies prior to the start of the new city. The results of the Unit's work on sites of this period up to 1982 and detailed discussions of the evidence from Milton Keynes and the surrounding area have been published (Mynard 1987;

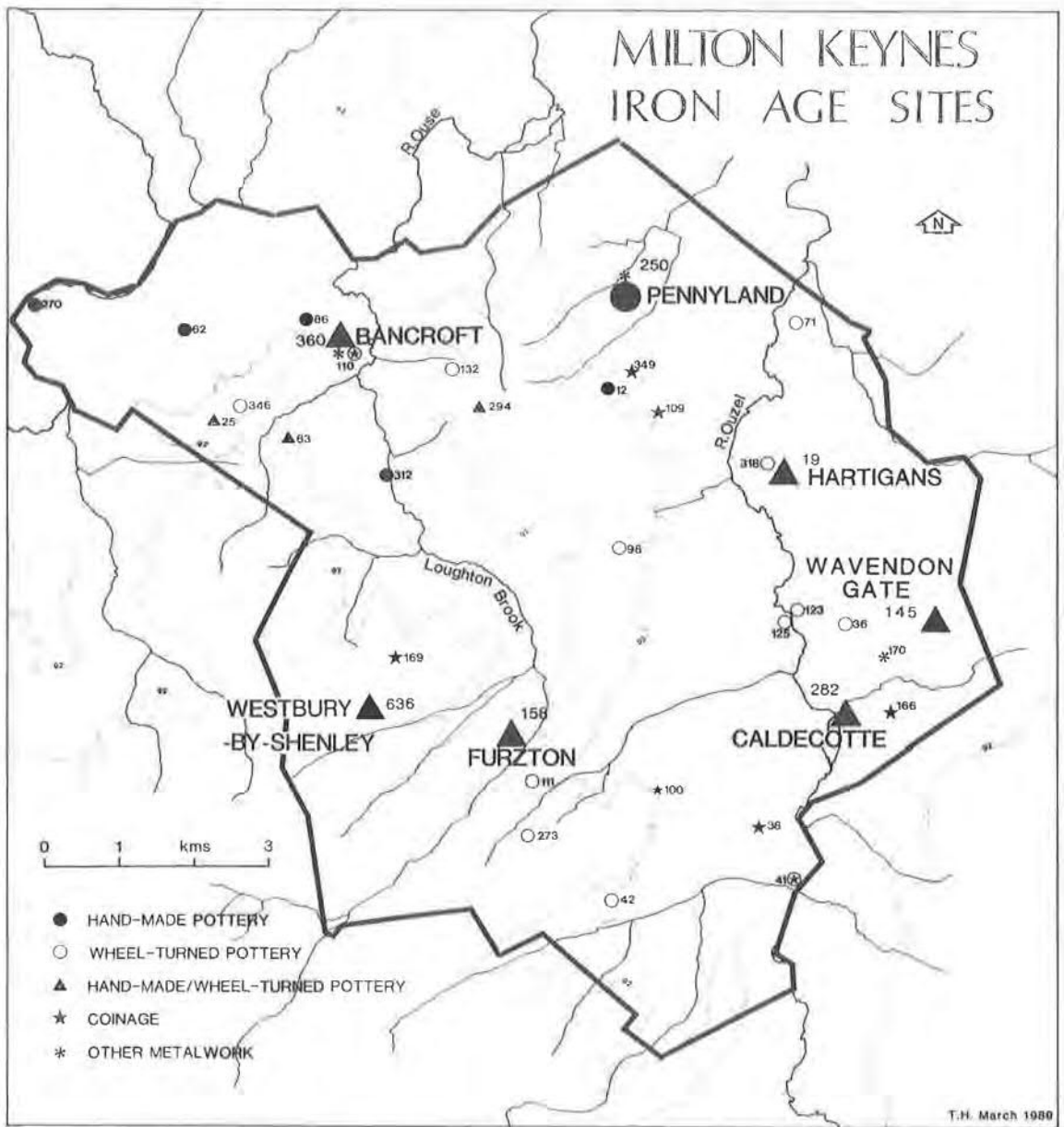


Fig. 4. Milton Keynes; Iron Age sites.

Zeepvat 1991), and whilst work has been undertaken more recently on major sites at Bancroft and Wavendon Gate, the results do not appear to suggest any great changes are necessary to our understanding of the period (Fig. 5).

The transition from the late Iron Age to the

Roman period cannot be discerned readily in the archaeological record in Milton Keynes. A few sites, such as Furzton, appear to have been deserted in the mid first century AD, but others, including Westbury-by-Shenley, Caldecotte and Wavendon Gate remained in use beyond the Conquest, while at Bancroft

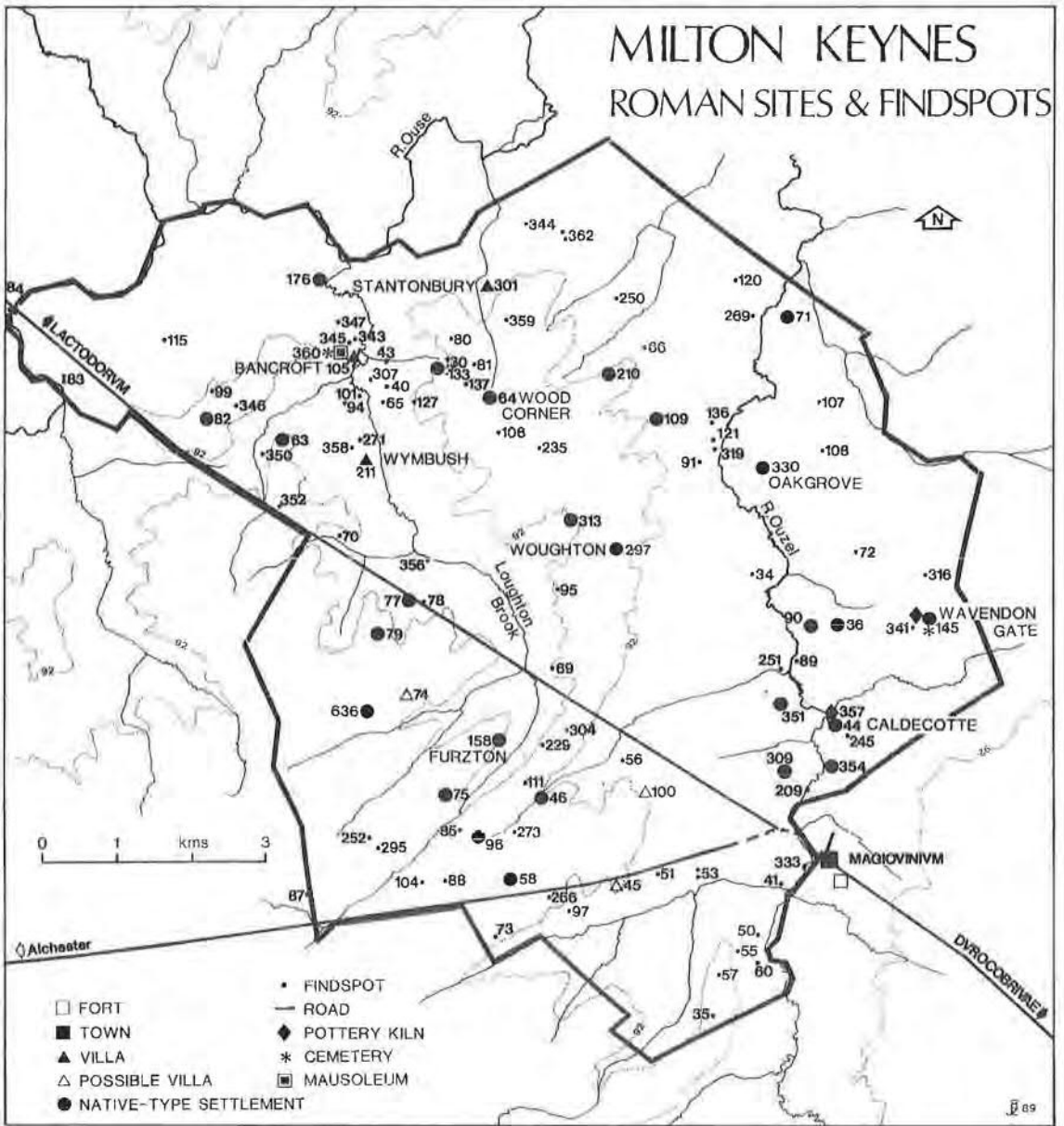


Fig. 5. Milton Keynes; Roman sites.

the Iron Age farmstead metamorphosed, albeit with a slight shift in location (c. 300m.), into a Roman villa. Similar shifts in position, but not in character, have also been noted at Hartigans and Wavendon Gate.

One major change to the landscape and the

economy during the Roman period was the establishment of towns, which provided a focal point for the community in the surrounding area, as a social and administrative centre, as well as a market for local produce. The local centre for the Milton Keynes area was *Magiovinium*, a small town covering some 7.5

hectares, close to the Watling Street crossing of the Ouzel, south-east of Fenny Stratford. As with many other Roman towns, *Magiovinium* was established close to the local tribal centre, next to a fort dating from the Conquest (Woodfield 1977), and served both the local area and travellers on Watling Street. Little is known of the town's history, and the site is a scheduled ancient monument, but extensive suburbs have been excavated to the south-east along Watling Street (Neal 1987).

The other noticeable change to the landscape following the Conquest was the construction of a comprehensive major road network, initially for military and administrative purposes. One of these major routes, Watling Street (the modern A5) crosses Milton Keynes on a north-west to south-east alignment. Other known Roman routes of a lesser nature in the area include the Fenny Stratford-Thornborough road (B4034) and a road leading northwards from *Magiovinium* to the Roman town at Ichester, Northants. In addition there must have been a network of trackways serving the many villas and farmsteads in the area. One such was excavated at Bancroft, probably linking the villa with Watling Street.

The pattern of rural settlement during the Roman period is of a mixed agrarian economy, exploiting the available resources by means of a variety of different-sized units. These varied from small farmsteads of 'native' type, such as Woughton and Wood Corner, through small farms with Roman-style buildings, such as Wymbush, to small but substantial 'villa' establishments, as excavated at Bancroft and Stantonbury. It is interesting to note that sites of the latter category did not reach the same standards of wealth as villas in the Chilterns, to the south, or in Northamptonshire, to the north of the Ouse. This probably reflects the lack of growth of *Magiovinium*, which remained a small town, albeit with linear suburbs extending to the south-east along Watling Street, throughout the Roman period.

From the available environmental evidence it can be seen that agriculture in the area was mixed. Cattle or oxen were the most common

animals kept, followed by sheep (and goats), pigs, horses and domesticated fowl. In cereal cultivation spelt wheat predominated, while free threshing and emmer wheats and barley were also grown, the latter being a Roman introduction. Vegetables too made their debut at this time, including cabbage, carrot, celery and coriander, parsnips, summer savory and turnips. In favourable areas fruit trees were grown, including apple, pear, plum and damson, cherry, mulberry, chestnut and walnut.

Given the lack of raw materials and fuel supplies, it comes as no surprise that few traces of Roman industrial activity have come to light in Milton Keynes. The major industrial activity in the area was the production of pottery and tile. Pottery kilns have been excavated at Caldecotte and Wavendon Gate, while pottery production on a much larger scale was carried out at Emberton, Warrington, Harrold, Bromham and Bozeat in the Ouse valley, and at Great Houghton on the Nene, taking advantage of the easily obtainable clays in the river valleys. A detailed study of the Roman pottery from sites excavated by the Unit has been published (Marney 1989).

The only other industrial activity of which traces have been found in the area is metalworking. Evidence of smithing was recovered from *Magiovinium*, probably catering for travellers on Watling Street as well as local demand. From the villa establishments at Bancroft and Stanton Low, on the Ouse (Woodfield 1989), sufficient quantities of slag and scrap iron, and in the latter case an anvil, were recovered to suggest a permanent smithy. The discovery at Caldecotte of a hearth and crucibles suggested the existence of a bronze-working industry, probably producing a variety of toilet instruments (Zeepvat *et al*, forthcoming).

It is possible for the first time in this period to make some assessment of the population in the Milton Keynes area. Using the generally accepted estimates based on heads per square kilometre (Jones 1979) and settlement size and density (Taylor 1975), the rural Roman population of the area now occupied by Milton

Keynes would have been between 900 and 1350, with a further 750–1500 people living in *Magiovinium*.

From the mid fourth century onwards, the picture of occupation becomes less easy to interpret. At Wymbush and Wood Corner, human activity ceases on site by about 360; a similar trend has been noted in other sites in the upper Ouse valley. However, there is good evidence at Bancroft and *Magiovinium* for continued occupation into the fifth century. Some attempt has been made to seek possible correlations between Saxon/medieval land boundaries and the possible boundaries of Roman 'estates', after the manner of similar studies in other areas, notably Northamptonshire (Bonney, 1979; Brown and Taylor, 1978). The results of this are also discussed in Zeepvat (1987).

Saxon

In the Saxon period, the lack of known sites in the area relative to those in the Iron Age and Roman periods may be partly because many Saxon settlements developed into villages which have survived up to the present day (Fig. 6). There has been little opportunity for work in this area, as in the development of Milton Keynes a conscious effort has been made to preserve all the village settlements contained in its boundaries, though the discovery of middle/late Saxon pottery beneath Great Linford church (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992) seems to point in this direction. However, in some cases there is evidence to suggest that surviving villages in the area developed in the late Saxon period (ie tenth to eleventh century), and that early to middle Saxon settlements were in slightly different locations. Examples of this have been noted at Milton Keynes village and Wolverton, the earlier settlements being at Hartigans and Wolverton Turn respectively.

Only two Saxon settlements have so far been excavated; the extensive early to middle Saxon site at Pennyland, with its two post-built halls, eleven sunken-featured buildings, timber-lined well, and three unusual four-post structures; and the smaller settlement at Hartigan's gravel pit. Excavation of a possible Saxon hundred

meeting mound at Secklow showed only that the mound was post-Roman in date (Adkins and Petchey 1984). During recent excavations at Westbury-by-Shenley, two Saxon wells, a flax-retting pit and a number of Saxon burials were located at the west end of the medieval village. The most recent discovery, during roadworks in south-west corner of the city, has been a Saxon cemetery alongside the Buckingham Road. The presence of Saxon features at Bancroft, Wavendon Gate, and Caldecotte suggests that continuity of occupation into the Saxon period is perhaps more widespread than previously thought. In recent years, increasing finds of Saxon metalwork, amounting to perhaps 95% of the Unit's collection, have been reported to the Unit by local detectorists. One major problem which has yet to be resolved is the 'middle Saxon shuffle', the transition from early to late Saxon occupation, a problem not limited to the Milton Keynes area (Taylor 1982).

The earliest Saxon settlers in the Milton Keynes area would have doubtless found a highly organised and well-managed agrarian landscape. However, it is evident from place-names of Saxon origin such as Shenley (Bright clearing) and Bletchley (Bleacc's clearing) that at least some of the area reverted to woodland or scrubland after the end of the Roman period (Gelling, forthcoming). Mixed farming continued to be practised, but on a subsistence level, in contrast to the Roman period.

Medieval

The medieval period in Milton Keynes is richly represented archaeologically, with deserted villages at Old Wolverton, Caldecotte, Tattenhoe and Westbury-by-Shenley, many village earthworks suggesting a shift or shrinkage of extant settlement, three motte-and-bailey castles, and a number of fishponds and moated sites. Most of these sites are scheduled ancient monuments, and are being preserved as open space in the new city. There are also two medieval planned towns, at Fenny and Stony Stratford, and one principal religious house, Bradwell Priory (Fig. 7).

All of the earthwork sites in the city have



Fig. 6. Milton Keynes; Saxon sites.

been surveyed in detail by the Unit, and a comprehensive picture of the medieval field systems, as represented by surviving ridge and furrow in the city has been built up, using both field survey and aerial photography. Because of the intention to preserve many of the city's medieval sites, the Unit's strategy has been to

carry out major excavations on two villages, Great Linford and Westbury-by-Shenley (Ivens *et al*, forthcoming), with smaller scale 'sampling' of other village sites as they came up for development, as at Walton, Willen, Woughton and an important manor site at Bradwell (Mynard, forthcoming). Limited ex-

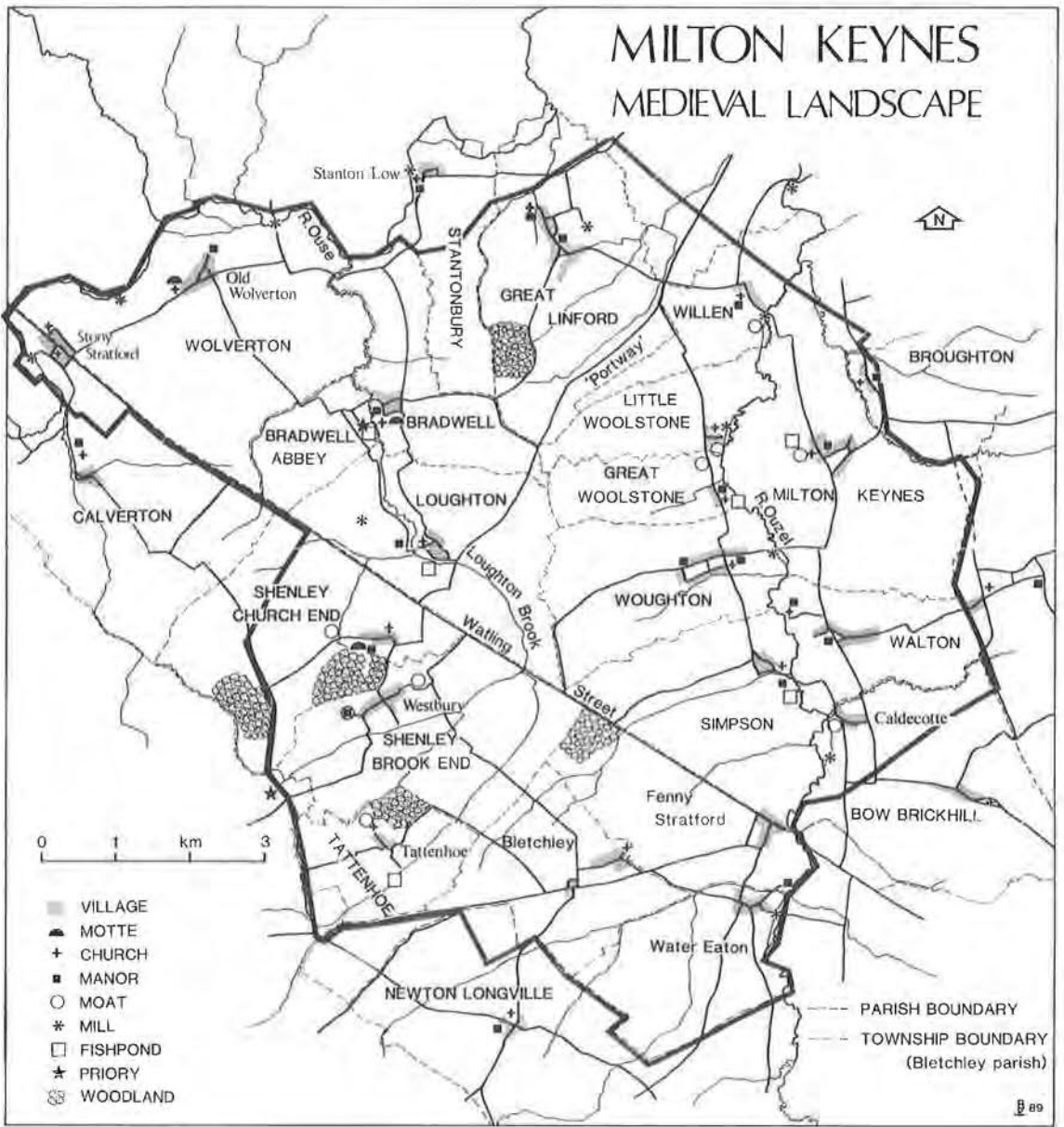


Fig. 7. Milton Keynes; the medieval landscape.

cavation has also taken place at Bradwell Priory (Mynard 1974, Croft 1982, 1983). Additionally, excavation has been undertaken as a condition of scheduled monument consent for development at Tattenhoe (Ivens, *op. cit.*) and Caldecotte (Zeepvat *et al*, *op. cit.*).

Excavations at Great Linford, on earthworks to the south and east of the present village, have concentrated on eleven crofts, those to the east being late tenth century in date, while those to the south, around the village green, represented late twelfth-century

expansion onto ridge and furrow. The sites of a medieval post-mill (Zeepvat 1980) and manor house have also been examined, and limited excavation was carried out in the church during renovation work. Excavations at Westbury-by-Shenley have produced mainly thirteenth to fourteenth-century occupation evidence, with some traces of middle to late Saxon, Roman and Iron Age material.

In addition to field survey and excavation of medieval sites, the Unit has undertaken historical research into the available documentary sources for all of the eighteen parishes within the city. In many cases it has been possible to relate early documentary and cartographic evidence to the results of excavation and fieldwork (Croft and Mynard, forthcoming), particularly with reference to Great Linford, which has recently been published. As a result, our knowledge of the development of the village, and of changes in land use in the parish, is more comprehensive than would be the case if only one of these sources of information were used.

Environmental sampling has not, as a rule, been carried out on medieval sites in Milton Keynes. As can be seen in Fig. 7, the medieval landscape was largely open farmland, with five well-defined areas of woodland; Linford wood, Rickley wood (Bletchley parish), Oakhill and Shenley woods (Shenley Church End) and Howe Park wood (Shenley Brook End), all located on clay soils. The ridge and furrow surveys show that nearly all the available land in the city was at one time under cultivation, but documentary and cartographic evidence indicates that areas were increasingly given over to grazing. For example, the southern part of Great Linford parish, shown as "Great Linford Common, called Lay Field" on the 1641 estate map of the parish (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, fig. 5) was found to be almost entirely covered by ridge and furrow (*ibid.*, fig. 4). This change in land use was probably an early, small-scale example of the process of enclosure which by the eighteenth century had changed the landscape in the area to the form which survived until the building of Milton Keynes. Large-scale enclosure by agreement

came late to this part of Buckinghamshire; the earliest was in Great Linford in 1658, the latest in Bow Brickhill in 1790.

Methods

Having looked briefly at the results of the Unit's work over the last twenty years, it is evident that there are many lessons to be learnt from the success or failure of the methods and strategies employed. First and foremost, it must be remembered that archaeology in Milton Keynes is, and has always been, developer-funded, and that the Corporation's prime directive has been to excavate sites *in advance of development*. With the pace of development that has existed since the mid 1970's, this has meant that most of the Unit's financial and labour resources have been directed towards the excavation of threatened sites. As a result, many non-excavation activities, such as intensive fieldwork and survey, have had to be funded out of other projects, or financed by outside agencies, such as the Manpower Services Commission, which can limit the scope of the work. The inevitable problem of post-excavation backlogs has also built up, and is only now being resolved.

Despite these limitations, the Unit has attempted to examine as broad a spectrum of sites of different periods and types as possible in the city, and in this aspect has proved quite successful. One advantage of the continued emphasis on excavation is that it has allowed the Unit to excavate some small sites, particularly of Iron Age and Roman date, that would otherwise have escaped detailed examination.

With hindsight, it could be argued that the main element lacking in the Unit's strategy has been a concerted programme of fieldwalking and other non-destructive types of survey, particularly in the early years, to build on and complete the work begun by the local societies, and to give a better basis for planning future excavation. Whilst there is much truth in this, such arguments in the 'rescue'-oriented 1970's met with little favour from any of the funding bodies. However, some fieldwork has been done, albeit sporadically, resulting in the addition of many new sites to the city's archaeological record. Much of this has been

systematic fieldwalking, generally on the basis of ten metre transects, followed up by geophysical survey and/or machine trial trenching. Survey by geophysical and aerial techniques have both proved of limited use, because of the diversity of local subsoils. Even fieldwalking has its limitations, as experience at Pennyland and Wavendon Gate has shown. These sites, unnoticed during fieldwalking, were sealed by unusually deep topsoil, and came to light during construction work, which imposed limitations of time on their excavation. Only selective trial trenching of 'negative' areas shown up by fieldwalking would have pinpointed them sooner.

Many of the sites discovered in Milton Keynes since the Unit was formed have appeared during construction projects involving large-scale earth-moving, such as the construction of the city's balancing lakes, and the large rental housing estates built in the 1970's. With the change to smaller privately-sponsored housing and industrial estates, it has become increasingly difficult to monitor sites and to assess the results. This problem also could have been avoided by more intensive fieldwalking.

Perhaps it would be useful at this point to look at some statistics relating to the archaeological work undertaken in Milton Keynes, and to its future direction. In 1989, about 1637 hectares (18%) of the total area of the city (about 9000 hectares) remained undeveloped on the east and west flanks. Prior to 1971, fifty sites of prehistoric to Saxon date were known in the city, a density of one site per 180 hectares. By 1982, this number had risen to 104 in the developed part of the city – one site per forty-nine hectares – with a total number of sites for the whole city of 136. The developed land at this point totalled 5130 hectares – 57% of the city. Of the 104 sites, forty-one (39%) were prehistoric, fifty (48%) were Roman, and thirteen (13%) were Saxon. In 1989 the situation on the east and west flanks was as follows:

1637 hectares, containing:	
Prehistoric	3 sites
Roman	7 sites
Saxon	4 sites
TOTAL	14 sites

giving a density of one site per 122 hectares. However, on the basis of discoveries in the developed part of the city, a minimum of thirty-three sites should exist. Therefore, nineteen more sites should be awaiting discovery in this area; ten Prehistoric, nine Roman, and no more Saxon. No account is taken of medieval sites in these figures, as these are all earthwork sites, or are recorded in historical sources.

Since these figures were calculated, at the time this article was originally prepared, it has not been possible to revise the figures, as the undeveloped areas mentioned are now under development. However, it is worth noting that new Roman sites have been found at Westbury Farm (Shenley Brook End) and Monkston Park, Saxon sites at Westbury-by-Shenley, Tattenhoe, and Tattenhoe Park, in the south-west corner of the city, and a medieval tile kiln at Shenley Wood. Contrary to the above predictions only one prehistoric site has been located, at Westbury-by-Shenley, but this is probably because no fieldwork is being carried out in the city area. However, prehistoric metal objects have been reported as a result of metal detecting. The Roman and Saxon sites mentioned above have all been discovered either in the course of excavations, or by detectorists.

Conclusion

Finally, how successful has the Milton Keynes project been in terms of landscape archaeology? Firstly, the limitations imposed by the Unit's developer-funded and development-led situation on efforts to undertake a study of this kind cannot be too strongly stressed. Also, the small size of the area available for sampling has made an in-depth examination of all prehistoric landscapes except that of the Iron Age impractical. However, it has been possible to construct a comprehensive and useful model of the Roman landscape, and the same will probably be true of the medieval period when the evidence has been fully analyzed. The Saxon period, like the prehistoric, is problematical, though mainly through lack of evidence and continuing uncertainties in the dating of middle Saxon pottery. With hindsight, greater emphasis could have been placed on systematic

fieldwork, followed up as necessary by evaluation before embarking on major excavations. However, the results of the Unit's work suggest that the 'opportunist' approach taken has, in fact, been quite successful.

The results of the Unit's work are being published in monograph series under the auspices of Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, whilst some smaller sites will be submitted to *Records*. Responsibility for the finds and archive material from Milton Keynes has been handed over to the County Museum, and it is hoped that the collection will one day be

transferred to a new museum in Milton Keynes.

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