

MEDIEVAL FEATURES AT THE BUNGALOW, ICKFORD ROAD, SHABBINGTON

SARAH COLES AND STEVE PRESTON

with contributions by

PAUL BLINKHORN, LUCY CRAMP, STEVE FORD,
CLAIRE INGREM AND JENNIFER LOWE

A small area excavation on the edge of Shabbington revealed a succession of ditches, dating mainly from the 12th and 13th centuries. The main ditches may be marking an early road line heading west, further north than the modern road. The site was not occupied but appears to have been on the very edge of the village in this period, which probably saw its greatest westwards extent, with late 13th- or early 14th-century contraction following. Small assemblages of pottery and animal bone form the main finds from the site.

INTRODUCTION

Thames Valley Archaeological Services carried out an excavation at The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington, Buckinghamshire over the exceptionally wet winter of 2004/5. The excavation was required to fulfil a planning condition, as a previous evaluation by Oxford Archaeology had shown that medieval features survived on the site (OA 2004).

The site was a roughly rectangular plot of land on the north side of Ickford Road at the western edge of the village of Shabbington (SP 6650 0695), near the river Thame which forms the boundary between Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The site covers approximately 0.25 hectares and lies at 68m AOD. Geological maps (BGS 1994) indicate that the underlying geology of the low spur on which Shabbington sits is Kimmeridge Clay exposed through a deposit of 3rd terrace gravel, in a broad loop of the Thame; the geology observed on site was a grey clay.

Occasional Roman pottery finds are reported from the village, but there is no record of any Saxon material. The medieval manor house may have been located south of the church. The site is on the fringe of the medieval village. Earthworks representing elements of the medieval village survive in a number of places, notably in the now-empty space between the church and the river, while the site itself backs onto medieval ridge and

furrow, regarded as being among the county's more significant survivals of this type.

'Shabbington' is an Old English (Anglo-Saxon) place-name, based on the otherwise unrecorded personal name *Scebba* or *Scoebba*. It is first recorded in Domesday Book (AD 1086), when it had become *Sobintone* and was one of the extensive holdings of Miles Crispin. Nineteen taxpayers and six slaves are registered, there was a mill, meadow, fishery and extensive woodland for pigs. This suggests a prosperous medium-sized manor by comparison with others in the area (Williams and Martin 2002, 412). The manor was controlled for some time by the Knights of the Hospital of St John at Jerusalem, but little is known in detail of the early history of the village and its apparently simple layout may mask underlying complexity (D. Radford pers. comm.).

THE EXCAVATION

The excavation comprised a machine-stripped area of 1110 sq m around three sides of the demolished bungalow (Fig. 2). The site was crossed by modern field drains. For clarity, these are not shown on Figure 2, except where they obscured stratigraphic relationships. Almost all of the features excavated were ditches, with just a few pits; all date to a fairly short span between the late 11th and 13th or 14th centuries AD.

Almost all the archaeological features had silted

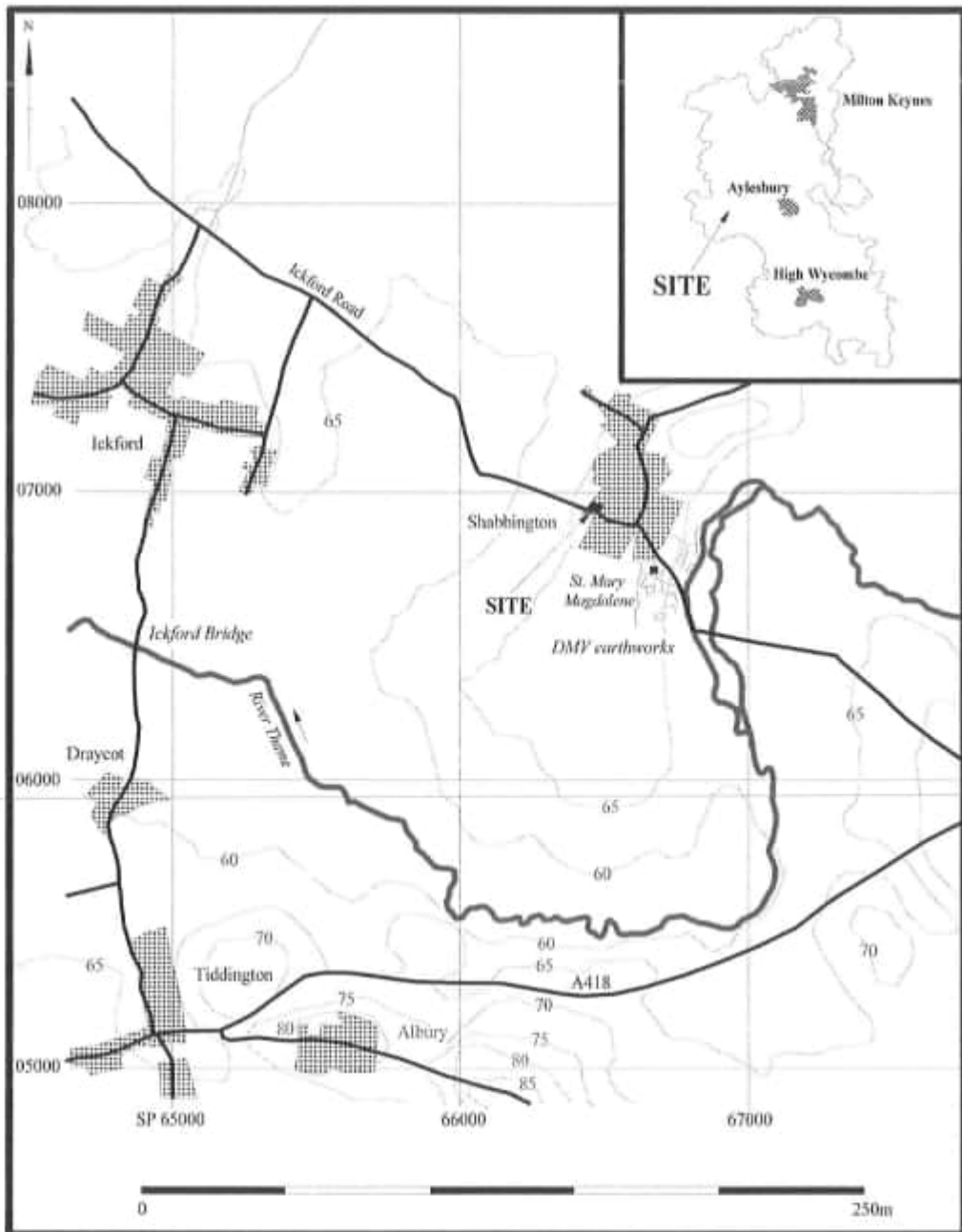


FIGURE 1 Location of The Bungalow, Shabbington

Medieval features at The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington

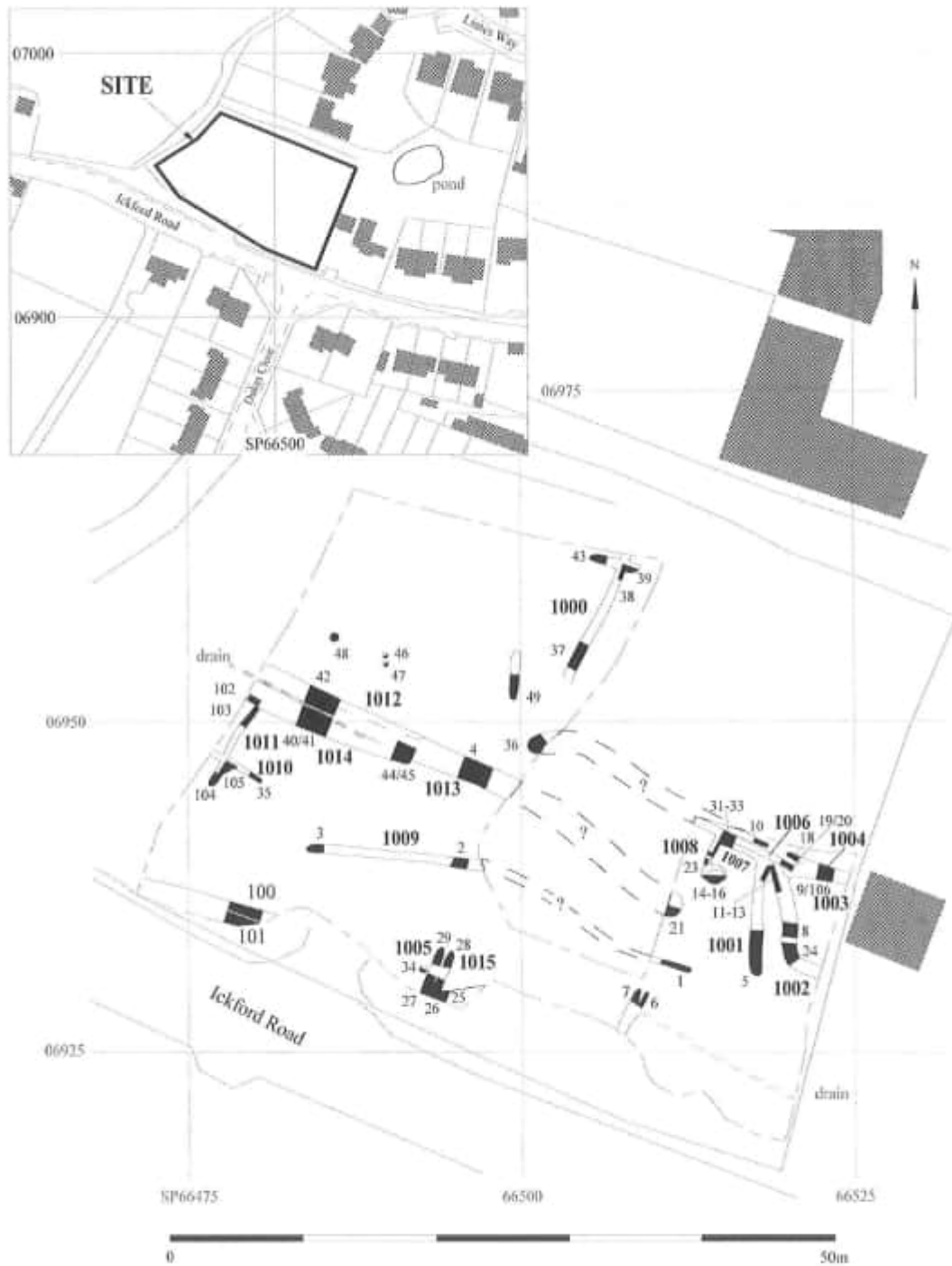


FIGURE 2 Detailed location of site on Ickford Road and plan of excavated area. Excavated segments blocked in

up naturally with grey-brown silty clay almost indistinguishable, both from one another and from the natural clays. Compounded with wet weather, and frequent flooding of cut features, defining features and relationships was difficult. Unless otherwise noted, fills were variations on grey-brown or grey-green silty clay or clay silt. Features show some discontinuity either side of the unexcavated portion on the footprint of the demolished bungalow, but it is possible that the linear features would have joined up.

Three phases can be distinguished on ceramic grounds. Ceramic phase 1 (CP1) dates to the 11th century. No features are certainly of this date. Ceramic phase 2 (CP2) providing the bulk of the pottery and of the site features dates from the late 11th to the 12th century. The latest pottery reaching the site dates to the 13th or 14th centuries (CP3).

Dimensions of the main linear features are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Dimensions of linear features

Gully/Ditch	Depth (m)	Width (m)
6	0.13	0.38
7	0.08	0.60
10	0.10	0.40
25	0.18	1.25
100	0.45	0.67
101	0.60	0.99
1000	0.19	0.37
1002	0.44	1.14
1002	0.44	1.14
1003	0.45–0.63	1.00
1004	0.22	0.44–0.66
1005	0.18	0.70
1009	0.33	0.80
1012	0.20	0.80
1013	0.34	1.51
1014	0.48	0.80
1015	0.25	0.70

Phase 1: 11th century AD

Amorphous natural feature 49 contained just two sherds of pottery which could place it in this phase. Gully 7 also contained Phase 1 pottery, although it was recut (6) in Phase 2. Along the southern edge of the site, ditch 100 contained three sherds of CP1 pottery and no later finds, but this feature is considered on other grounds to belong in Phase 2 (below).

Phase 2: late 11th to 12th century AD

Ditch 1003 was the first in a series of features marking and remarking a boundary, roughly 23m north of the present Ickford Road, and broadly parallel to it, which continued out of the site to the east. Only 5.6m of 1003 was exposed, aligned ESE–WNW, and it terminated at the point where it was later cut by ditches 1006, 1007 and 1002. Thirty-one sherds of pottery were retrieved from the fill of excavated segment 9. Ditch 1003 had here been recut (1004). Where it terminated (20) it was slightly deeper and here the fill incorporated a number of large unworked sub-angular fragments of limestone but no other finds. Its recut (1004) terminated (18) marginally north of 20 on the same line. From the excavated segment 106 came over 60 pottery sherds, a small amount of bone and two struck flints, while the terminus (18) produced just three sherds of pottery but substantially more bone. The pottery from ditches 1003 and 1004 places their filling in the 11th century, although 1004 also contained some earlier material, suggesting it may have redefined an earlier feature on the same line.

Gully 10 continued the line of 1004 west into the unexcavated area. Although the features here were shallow enough that it is possible that these two were once continuous, the gap of 1.4m between them appears to have been an entrance, corresponding to the possible terminus of ditch 1013 (21). The (relative) density of finds at this proposed entrance suggests the termini were indeed real. A sieved sample from the fill of gully 10 contained 16 tiny crumbs of pottery, two flints and some tiny unidentifiable animal bone. It is just possible that a similarly shallow feature to the west (36) could be the terminus of one or other of the gullies or ditches on this alignment.

Ditch 1000 perpendicular to the road, entered the site from the north edge aligned NE–SW and petered out some 11m in. The fill at excavated segment 37 contained a worked flint and 4 sherds of pottery, the latest of which suggest a CP2 date for its filling. No terminus was visible. It could be the west side of an enclosure whose south side was formed by 1004, or its successors.

Along the southern edge of the site ditch 100 and its recut (101) were roughly parallel to 1013 to the north: 1013 was probably first cut in this phase, although its fills belong to CP3. If they were contemporary, these could mark the opposite sides of either a small enclosure (17m across) or a broad

Medieval features at The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington

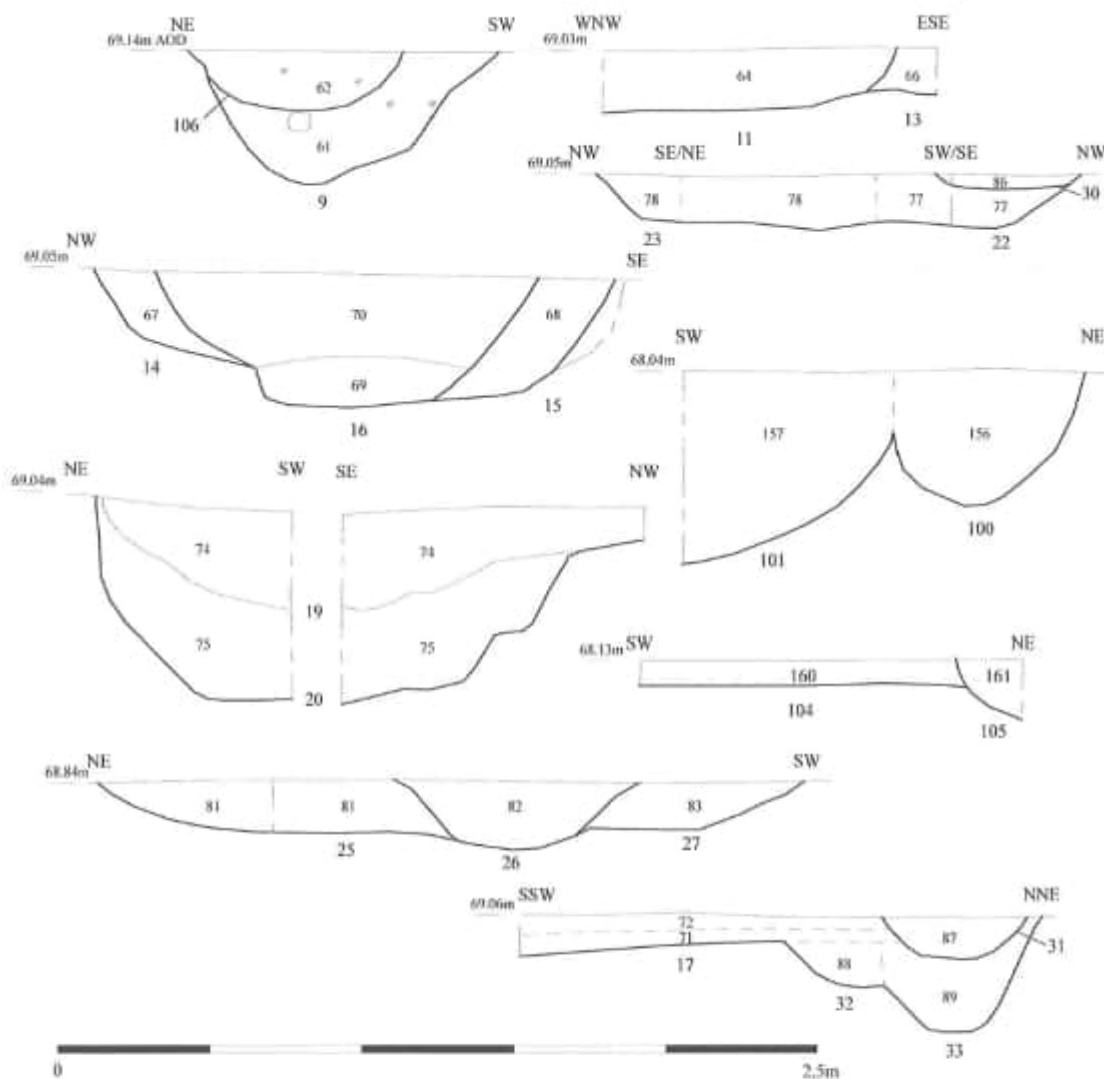


FIGURE 3 Selected sections

droveway. In this case, the three CP1 sherds in 100 would be residual. It is unlikely that 100 or 101 joined ditch 25 further east (see below) but both could have been ditches on the north side of Ickford Road, implying that its course was already in place at this time. However, the preferred explanation of ditches 100 and 101 is as defining the south of the original road, with ditch 1013 along the north side, placing the 12th-century road line further north than the modern route.

At the south of the site, and extending further south, gully 1005 and its recut (1015) were both shallow and just 2.50m of each was visible in the excavated area. Each produced a handful of pottery sherds and a few bone fragments, but 1015 also contained an iron nail and an unidentified iron lump and some fragments of unworked sandstone. Two very similar gullies (6 and 7) parallel to this line 13m to the east were. Their relationship was unclear but gully 6 produced over thirty sherds of

CP2 pottery and gully 7 just two, of CP1. These four small features could predate the road and they could even have been deliberately filled to make way for it.

Gully 1015 also cut through a feature (25) of which 3.10m lay within the excavation. Its fill contained a few sherds of pottery, 3 struck flints and 50 fragments of animal bone (many tiny).

Gully 1009 bore no close relationship to the alignments of the other main ditches. It was 13m long in the western portion of the site, and may have joined a 2m gully (1) in the eastern portion. Segment 2 contained small quantities of pottery and animal bone and while its terminal (3) had more, much of this is accounted for by tiny scraps from the sieved sample.

Pits 14, 15, 16, 23 and 30 were all intercut in roughly the same position, pit 16 at 0.45m being the deepest and latest. All contained pottery of CP2 but little bone and no other finds. A feature recorded as pit 21, just south of this intercut complex, was only partially revealed against the baulk; it was 1.6m by 1.00m and 0.54m deep with two fills, containing pottery and some bone. It is possible that it was a terminus of ditch 1013 but it was much deeper, and its limited dating evidence seems to be earlier than ditch 1013. Pit 48, isolated to the west side of the site, was 0.70m in diameter and 0.20m deep. It yielded just three sherds of pottery and one flint.

Phase 3: 13th or 14th century AD

The major features on the site were ditches 1012, 1013 and 1014, crossing the western half of the site roughly east to west, and continuing to the west. As noted above, these seem to have been cut along the north side of a road, and ditch 1013 was the original line. No relationship was determined between 1012 and 1014, these two could have been contemporary, but successive recutting seems more likely. Unfortunately, a modern field drain followed almost exactly the line of the edge between 1013 and 1014. All of these ditches contained some struck flint, animal bone and pottery. The pottery consisted mainly of CP2 material but with a few relatively large CP3 sherds in segments 4, 40 and 42. It is likely that the ditch was originally defined in Phase 2 but had an extended life before finally filling up in Phase 3. This would allow it to be contemporary with more or less all the other ditches, which are all laid out around it.

Ditch 1002 marked a z-shaped line at the extreme east of the site, continuing further east, essentially redefining the line of ditch 1003, but a little further south. A 15m length was exposed and forty sherds of pottery and a small amount of bone came from two excavated segments. This line was re-marked a number of times, but the final definition of the boundary (1006) did not include the eastwards extension. All of the ditches along this line yielded animal bone, pottery, and the terminal of 1001 contained the site's only oyster shell. The latest pottery in ditches 1001 and 1002 belongs in CP3 but most of the material in all these ditches would be counted as CP2 were it not for the stratigraphic sequence. As with many of the ditches, it is likely that this boundary had a long life, spanning Phases 2 and 3, the latest pottery only representing the date of its final filling.

Gullies 1010 and 1011 crossed each other at right angles at the western edge of the site, 1010 clearly cutting 1011. Both produced small quantities of pottery and bone; terminus 35 of gully 1010 also had a tiny lump of iron, and 1011 produced three struck flints. These shallow features may be no more than wheel ruts.

Unphased

Post holes 46 and 47 formed a pair, both 0.28m in diameter, but it is unclear what structure they may have supported. A number of possible features investigated were probably tree throw holes.

THE FINDS

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 650 sherds with a total weight of 6,662g (Table 2 and Fig. 4). The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 5.08. The majority of the material dates from *c.* AD1075–1400, and appears to be dumps of domestic refuse from the nearby village. The range of fabrics and vessels is typical of sites of the period, apart from a single sherd of Thetford ware, a rare import from East Anglia. The bulk of the assemblage was from relatively local sources such as Oxford and Brill, although material from Northamptonshire, Newbury and the Cotswolds region were also noted. These are not unusual in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Three residual sherds (13g) of Roman pottery were present.

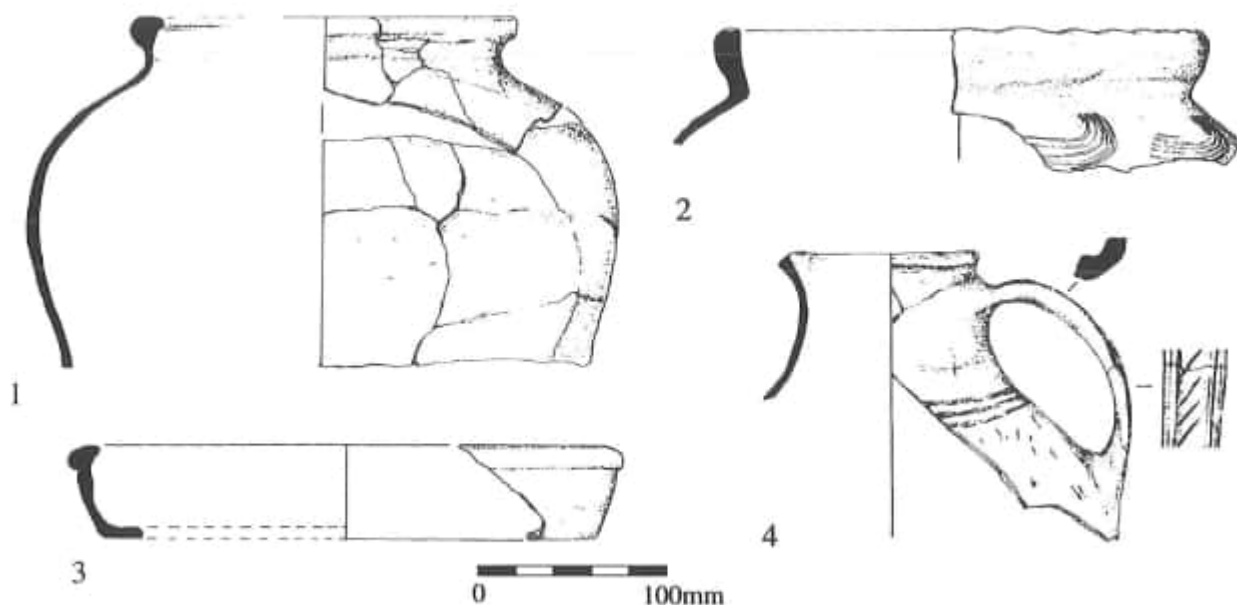


FIGURE 4 Medieval pottery (details in text)

Fabrics

The medieval assemblage comprised some types which are well-known in Buckinghamshire and others which are common finds in Oxfordshire. Consequently, the Buckinghamshire types were recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat *et al.* 1994), here prefixed with 'MK', whereas the Oxfordshire types utilized the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994), prefixed with 'OX'.

MS19: *Stamford Ware*. c AD 900-1200. 4 sherds, 21g, EVE = 0.

SNC1: *St. Neots Ware*. c AD 900-1200. 16 sherds, 100g, EVE = 0.08.

MS3: *Medieval Grey Sandy Wares*. Mid 11th – late 14th century. 23 sherds, 210g, EVE = 0.29.

MC3: *Medieval Shelly ware*, AD 1100–1400. 4 sherds, 112g, EVE = 0.19.

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. c. AD 1200–?1600. 40 sherds, 660, EVE = 1.08.

OXAC: *Cotswolds-type ware*. c. AD 975–1150.

107 sherds, 1,159g, EVE = 0.73.

OXBF: *Newbury-type ware*, AD 1050–1400. 52 sherds, 838g, EVE = 0.28.

OXY: *Oxford ware*. Late 11th – 14th century. 400 sherds, 3,519g, EVE = 2.31.

Also present was:

Thetford-type ware, 10th – 12th century (Rogerson and Dallas 1984) Range of reduced, wheel-thrown and hand-finished fabrics mainly comprising quartz sand up to 1mm. Produced at many centres in eastern England (e.g. Hurst 1976), although most appear to be products of the eponymous Norfolk centre.

The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites on the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border. It comprises pottery types which are well known in Oxfordshire, such as Cotswolds-type ware, Newbury ware and Oxford ware, and others which are common in Buckinghamshire, particularly Medieval Grey Sandy ware, Medieval Shelly ware and Stamford ware. Other wares, such as

TABLE 2: Pottery catalogue

F Context	SNC1		THET		OXAC		MS19		ONBF		MS3		OXY		MC3		MC9		RB		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
0	U/s	2	37		3	18			2	19			9	97			3	31			U/S
2													3	14							CP2
3		1	2						1	61			9	37							CP2
4					5	55			1	5	6	40	15	122			1	35			CP3
5		1	25		3	43			7	374	1	62	43	255	1	21	9	156			CP3
6					26	565							9	76							CP2
7					2	13															CP1
8					2	6					1	5	6	53			3	9			CP3
9					6	34					3	19	22	189							CP2
11													1	14							CP2
12									1	6			2	21							CP2
13													2	48							CP2
14					3	12			3	27			13	89							CP2
15					1	13							7	130	1	56					CP2
16					3	38							5	36							CP2
16		1	2	1	18	15	108		9	90	4	46	71	674	1	13					CP2
17					3	51															CP1
17					1	2															CP1
18									1	11			2	10							CP2
19							2	5					19	213							CP2
21					7	66			6	59			15	149							CP2
21					7	38							2	9							CP2
22													2	63							CP2
23					1	7							1	5							CP2
24									5	27			20	194			5	46			CP3
25													2	11							CP2
26													4	18							CP2
27													1	1							CP2
28											1	10	7	77							CP2
31					1	3					2	13	6	11			1	2			CP3
32					4	14			2	6	2	6	7	39			2	5			CP3
33																	2	225			CP3
34													1	3			1	8			CP2
35					4	8			3	45			9	69							CP2
36													2	5							CP2
37		1	5										3	14							CP2
38					1	3															CP1
40					1	5							11	135			1	21	1	4	CP3
42		1	2		1	5			3	19			19	140	1	22	3	40	1	7	CP3
44													3	16							CP2
45									2	20			2	8					1	2	CP2
48									1	12			2	16							CP2
49		1	8						1	3											CP1a
100		1	1		2	22															CP1
103					1	12							1	11			7	51			CP3
105													1	16			2	31			CP3
106		7	18		4	18	2	16	4	54	3	9	42	445							CP2
Total		16	100	1	31	107	1159	4	21	52	838	23	210	400	3519	4	112	40	660	3	13

Brill/Boarstall ware, are well-known in both. The sherd of Thetford ware is a rare find in either county.

The St. Neots and Stamford wares all appear to be types that date to after AD 1000. The former is mainly Denham's (1985) type T1(2), dateable to

AD 1000–1200, and the latter comprised entirely glazed sherds, typical of the products of the industry after the late 10th century (Kilmurry 1980).

It would appear that there was very little significant activity at the site before the last quarter of the 11th century. Just twelve sherds of pottery can be

TABLE 3 Ceramic Phase dating scheme and pottery occurrence per phase

Phase	Date Range	Defining Wares	No	Wt (g)	EVE	Mean Sherd Wt
CP1	1000-1075*	MS19, SNC1, OXAC	10	92	—	9.2g
CP1a	1050-1075	OXBF, MS3	2	11	—	5.5g
CP2	1075-1200	OXY	399	3970	2.90	9.9g
CP3	1200-1400	MC9	219	2378	2.18	9.2g

TABLE 4 Vessel occurrence per ceramic phase, in EVE

CP	Jars	Bowls	Jugs	Other*	Total EVE
CP2	87.9%	12.1%	—	lamp	2.90
CP3	40.4%	5.0%	54.6%	—	2.18
Total	3.43	0.46	1.19	—	

*represented by non-rimsherds

dated to the period AD 1000–1075, and the pottery from that period is all ware types that were manufactured until the later years of the 12th century. No pottery can be confidently dated later than the 14th century. All the Brill/Boarstall wares are typical of the earlier rather than the later life of the industry, and later medieval wares of other types are entirely absent.

Vessel Use

The assemblage was limited to jars, bowls and jugs, with the exception of a single fragment of a spike lamp in fabric OXBF. Table 3 shows the vessel occurrence data for the two main phases. The pattern is fairly typical of medieval sites; jars dominate the earlier phase, with small quantities of bowls present, but during the 13th and 14th centuries, jugs become much more common. Jug rimsherds were absent from CP2, but a few fragments of handles and glazed body sherds from OXY tripod pitchers were noted. The data for CP3 are probably a little distorted by the presence of a large fragment of a Brill/Boarstall jug with a complete rim.

There is no reason to believe that this group originated at anything other than a domestic site of no great status. Certainly, the pottery was in generally good condition, and the bulk of the sherds fresh with little evidence of redeposition, other than some of the residual material. Residuality was generally low, and there were no cross-fits between contexts, suggesting little disturbance of deposits.

It is likely that most, if not all the pottery represents dumps of material from the clearance of domestic middens from the nearby village.

Ceramic Phase 1 (c. AD 1000–1075)

It is possible that all the contexts given this date are later, but lack contemporary wares, as there are no more than four sherds in any one context. It mainly comprises bodysherds of Cotswolds ware, Stamford ware and St. Neots ware, with one extremely small sherd of Newbury ware.

Ceramic Phase 2 (c. AD 1075–1200)

This phase produced the largest assemblage, dominated by Oxford ware, which made up 61.6% of the phase group by weight, with Cotswolds ware (22.8%) and Newbury ware (9.7%) making up most of the rest, along with small quantities of Medieval Grey Sandy ware (2.1%), Shelly ware (1.7%), Stamford ware (0.5%), St. Neots ware (0.7%) and Thetford ware (0.8%). Only jars and bowls were represented by rims, but a handle and glazed bodysherds from Oxford ware tripod pitchers were also noted. A single small sherd from a probable spike lamp in Newbury ware was also present.

The mean sherd weight for the phase group, 9.9g is fairly average, although a few vessels were represented by large fragments. These include a full profile of a shallow Cotswolds ware bowl, a jar in the same fabric with combed decoration, and a near-complete profile of an Oxford ware jar.

Ceramic Phase 3 (c. AD 1200–1400)

The mean sherd weight was again not particularly high. The phase sees the introduction of Brill/Boarstall ware, which makes up 26.1% of the phase group, but Oxford ware is still the dominant fabric (41.0%). The minor wares of the previous phase are still well represented, with Newbury ware comprising 18.1% and Cotswolds ware 6.0%, Medieval Sandy Grey 5.3% and Shelly wares 1.1%. The increase in the use of Newbury ware is almost certainly due to the fact that Cotswolds ware had fallen from use by this time. Some residual wares were also present: St. Neots ware (1.2%), and Roman wares (0.5%).

Vessels were limited to jars, bowls and jugs, with jugs the dominant type from the rimsherd evidence, although this is weighted by the presence of a large fragment of the upper half of a Brill/Boarstall jug with a complete rim. Glazed sherds of Oxford ware jugs were also noted. Otherwise, the assemblage comprised plain bodysherds.

Illustrated medieval pottery (Fig. 4)

1: Gully 1004, segment 106, fill 62, OXY. Near full profile of a jar. Pale grey fabric, outer surface extensively sooted below the shoulder and on the outer rim bead. 2: Gully 6, fill 58, OXAC. Rim and shoulder of decorated jar. Grey fabric with browner outer surface. Patches of sooting on the rim. 3: Gully 6, fill 58, OXAC. Full profile of a bowl. Grey fabric with brown surfaces. 4: Ditch 1002, segment 33, fill 89, MC9. Large fragment of upper part of jug. Buff fabric with darker surfaces. Glossy, apple green glaze with green and brown copper-streaking.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

Two flint flakes and five spalls (pieces less than 20x20mm) were recovered, all in medieval deposits. The flakes are likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date: the spalls may be of the same date, but could be accidental by-products of the digging of ditches in medieval times. These few flints point to some prehistoric use of the area which is relatively significant, as flint is not abundantly available.

Metalwork by Jennifer Lowe

Six iron objects were retrieved: three nails, two unidentified lumps and one knife blade fragment from gully 49.

Animal Remains by Claire Ingre

Animal bone was recovered from a variety of features including ditches, gullies and pits from all three phases. The bones were identified in the Laboratory for Zooarchaeological Research at the University of Southampton using the CAAA standard methodology (nd). A total of 445 fragments was recovered by hand collection of which 58% are identifiable; a further 34 identifiable fragments derive from sieved samples (Table 5). Overall the assemblage is dominated by cattle and caprines with pig also well represented; other domestic animals – horse, dog and galliform (probably domestic fowl) – are present in small numbers. Evidence for the exploitation of wild animals consist of only two fish bones. The amphibian bones most probably represent natural fatalities of animals that fell into pits and became trapped. The archive contains the (very limited) metrical, anatomical, ageing and other data not presented here.

Phase 2 (AD 1075–1200)

Half of the identifiable assemblage came from Phase 2. The major domesticated food animals – cattle, caprines and pig – are almost equally represented, although fragments in the large size mammal category are much more numerous than those of the medium size category.

The cattle assemblage, from a variety of contexts and features, is comprised almost entirely of cranial elements. The caprine and pig remains also came from a variety of feature types but, in contrast, are represented by a wider range of elements. Most of the sheep/goat bones derive from the lower limbs whilst pig is also represented by major meat-bearing bones such as the scapula and pelvis. Most of the horse remains came from gully 1004 (73). These include a maxilla, loose maxillary teeth, and proximal and distal tibiae.

An adult cattle mandible provides an estimated age at death of 6–8 years, and two third mandibular molars belong to cattle estimated to have been slaughtered at 2–3 years of age. Unfused proximal and distal epiphyses on the horse tibiae provide evidence that at least one animal died before reaching two years of age. Similarly, an unfused distal cattle tibia indicates the slaughter of one cow/steer at less than three years of age whilst a proximally fused first phalanx attests to the presence of cattle older than twenty months. The only evidence for the age of caprines comes from a distally fused metacarpal,

TABLE 5 Animal bone species representation by phase (NISP)

a) hand collected material

<i>Ceramic phase</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1a</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Unphased</i>	<i>Total</i>
Horse	1		7	1	1	10
Cattle	3	1	17	12	7	40
Sheep	1		1		1	3
Sheep/goat	1	1	11	13	7	33
Pig	2		12	6	5	25
Dog				10		10
Galliform			1			1
Bird			1			1
Rana sp.			1		1	2
Amphibian			11		10	21
Large size mammal	1		52	28	3	84
Medium size mammal			16	8	5	29
Unidentifiable	10	3	107	26	40	186
Total	19	5	237	104	80	445
Total identifiable	9	2	130	78	40	259
% identifiable	47	40	55	75	50	58

b) sieved samples

<i>Ceramic phase</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Unphased</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cattle	1		1	1	3
Sheep/goat		1	4	2	7
Pig		1	2		3
Dog		1			1
Galliform		1			1
Fish	1	1			2
Amphibian			1		1
Medium size mammal		8	2		10
Large size mammal		4		2	6
Unidentifiable	28	84	105	59	276
Total	30	101	115	64	310
Total identifiable	2	17	10	5	34
% identifiable	7	17	9	8	11

an element that fuses between twenty and twenty-four months. That pigs were killed both before and after reaching two years of age is also evidenced by the presence of a fused and an unfused distal pig tibia.

The only specimen in the assemblage to display evidence for butchery is a pig scapula from this phase, that has transverse cuts on its lateral edge.

Phase 3 (AD1200-1400)

Eighty-eight identifiable fragments of animal bone were recovered from Phase 3 deposits. The remains of caprines slightly outnumber those of cattle whilst pig is less frequent. The cattle assemblage contains a more even representation of body parts than is evident for Phase 2, with both head and major limb bones present. A variety of body parts are similarly present amongst the remains of

caprines and pig. Dog bones recovered from the ditch comprise a metapodial, a first phalanx and a second phalanx; those from the gully include two metapodials, a first phalanx and a second phalanx, all paw bones.

Discussion and interpretation

The samples of animal bone assigned to individual phases are too small to provide definitive information regarding animal husbandry. In particular, the Phase 1 assemblage is only able to provide an indication of the types of species present at the site. However, as most of the specimens derive from the extremities (head and foot bones) and were recovered from a ditch, it is tempting to speculate that these indicate primary butchery waste (Maltby 1985). There is evidence for immature horse and cattle and given the rural location of the site it is likely that these animals were raised locally. No dog bones were recovered from this phase but their presence is attested by gnaw marks. Dogs preferentially destroy the least dense elements (Brain 1967) and consequently, least dense bones such as those possessing late fusing epiphyses and those belonging to smaller mammals such as caprines are likely

to be under-represented in all phases. A solitary fish vertebra may represent the remains of a salmon or trout, perhaps caught in the nearby River Thame.

Whilst the major food animals are almost equally represented in the somewhat larger assemblage from Phase 2 there is some variation in terms of body part representation in Phase 3. Cattle are represented mainly by skull fragments suggestive of primary butchery waste whilst most of the caprine bones derive from the lower limbs which are not particularly meaty. The few major meat bones present belong to pig. Evidence for immature horse, cattle and pig suggests that livestock continued to be raised in the vicinity of the site.

In the later medieval phase, the proportion of sheep/goat remains increases slightly which, despite the small sample size, is interesting because it reflects a nationwide trend related to the increasing importance of wool production (Grant 1988). At urban sites such as Exeter (Maltby 1979) and Lincoln (O'Connor 1982) there is evidence for a marked increase in the frequency of caprines compared to cattle and pig, at the end of the 13th century. By this time, there is also evidence to suggest

TABLE 6 Carbonized plant remains (number of items).

Sample		1	9	10	15	18	2	4	8	13	19
Feature type		Ditch	Gully	Pit	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch	Gully	Ditch	Gully
Group		1009	1003		1014	1004	1013	1001	1002	1007	
Cut		3	17	21	44	100	4	5	17	25	103
Deposit		55	72	79	97	156	56	57	71	81	159
Sample vol. (litres)		30	10	30	25	40	40	20	20	30	30
Phase		2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Cereal grains											
<i>Triticum dicoccum</i> or <i>spelta</i>	emmer or spelt wheat						1				
Free-threshing <i>Triticum</i> sp. (<i>aestivum</i> or <i>turgidum</i>)	Free-threshing bread or rivet wheat	47	2	11	5	13	15	2	4	58	6
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	barley	3					1	1		1	1
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oats	18		1	2	2	2	1		11	2
Cf. <i>Secale cereale</i>	cf. rye					1					
Cereal indet.		13	1	1	3	5			1	14	2
Legumes											
<i>Vicia sativa</i> , <i>Vicia faba</i> or <i>Pisum sativum</i>	cultivated vetch, bean or pea	6	2					1	1		
<i>Vicia</i> or <i>Lathyrus</i> sp.	vetch or tare	5	3	1			6			7	1

that the age at which caprines were slaughtered had increased and at Kings Lynn, Norfolk (Noddle 1977) the majority of sheep were mature. If most sheep were kept into adulthood in order to increase the wool yield this may account for the lack of evidence for immature caprines at Shabbington. The scarcity of evidence for juvenile sheep/goat might have been a reflection of preservational bias and/or small sample size, but these factors have not prohibited the recovery of immature cattle or pig remains. The presence of major limb bones belonging to all three major domestic animals suggests that in addition to the disposal of primary butchery waste, good quality meat may have been occasionally consumed and the waste mixed with the coarse refuse. The recovery of several canid foot bones from two separate contexts implies the disposal of isolated dog paws, perhaps as a result of their having remained attached to the pelt(s).

Charred Plant Remains by Lucy Cramp

Fourteen samples of sediment were analysed, four of these contained no material of significance. The remainder were all very similar, containing moderate or low concentrations of charred cereal grains and legumes (Table 6). There were no weed seeds, no cereal chaff, and no identifiable charcoal. Overall, the samples are consistent with a rural medieval agricultural site. The absence of weed seeds or chaff suggests that the cereal grains were already cleaned and their presence may have resulted from accidental burning during cooking or from heating prior to grinding. Cultivated legumes were also present and may have been consumed by animals or humans.

CONCLUSIONS

The site was probably first brought into use in the late 11th or early 12th century. Residual prehistoric flints and Roman pottery sherds only reflect casual loss in the broader landscape, or material dispersed from elsewhere. By some point in the 13th or 14th centuries, the site had been abandoned. Even for the short span of its use, it was probably on the edge of the agricultural land, just beyond the village. No building was present, and the small quantities of finds probably came from a combination of clearance of domestic middens, and dumps of primary butchery waste. The linear features, aligned broadly parallel to the modern road, appear to be

defining areas too small to be occupation plot boundaries or even small enclosures or paddocks.

It is considered that the lines of ditches 100 and 1013 flank an early road to Ickford and Worminghall, a few metres north of the modern line. Further work would be necessary to confirm if this really was a slightly different road line, rather than the marking of some other boundary parallel to it. It is possible the shallow gullies at the south end of the site mark another road or driveway heading south, although the role of this in the village plan is unclear; possibly it would have led to Ickford Bridge, as a footpath does today. The stratigraphy indicates the use, reuse and remodelling of the area several times, but all broadly within the same basic layout.

The proliferation of ditches cut in the north-east corner of the area examined suggests that occupation, perhaps the very edge of the village, lay just off site to the east. The distribution of the finds within the site also suggests that the edge of the medieval village lay just to the east. Features in the smaller eastern portion of the site produced 4.8kg of pottery at an average of 220g per pottery-bearing context; the larger western portion produced 1.3kg of pottery at just 63g per context with pottery. The animal bone was more evenly distributed, but also showed a slight bias towards the eastern part of the site (2.8kg from 25 contexts in the east, to 1.8kg from 22 contexts in the west) and this is accentuated if the furthest north-eastern corner is examined separately, the various recut ditches here account for 2.2kg of animal bone from 11 contexts, almost as much as the rest of the site combined.

Quite when all these ditches were dug is problematical; it is likely the earliest lines would have been formed in Phase 2 and they remained in use, redefined, into Phase 3. Although the ceramics suggest pottery deposition over a long period, from the late 11th to perhaps the 14th century, a narrower window is likely, with all the main features probably belonging in the 12th to 13th century. If this is so, then the relatively short timespan suggests the site represents the westernmost limits of the village at its largest extent, with contraction back to the east following. It is not necessary to invoke the Black Death to account for all fluctuations in village extent, although, as is often the case, the timescale here makes it tempting to do so. Other local factors must frequently also have come into play (cf., Jones and Page 2006). It is worth pointing

out that a settlement's margins, as much as its core, can hold clues to its development and prosperity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was supervised by Sarah Coles with the assistance of Simon Cass, Danielle Colls, Ceri Falys and Pamela Jenkins. The project was fully funded by Banner Homes Ltd. The excavation followed a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services, the archaeological adviser to Aylesbury Vale District Council, and monitored by him. We are especially grateful for his comments on the post-excavation assessment. We are also grateful to Steve Ford and Mike Farley for helpful comments on earlier drafts. The TVAS site code is IRS04/125. The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum with accession code AYBCM:2004.183. The evaluation by Oxford Archaeology will be accessioned as AYBCM:2004.16

REFERENCES

- BGS 1994, *British Geological Survey sheet 237*, 1:50,000 series Solid and Drift Edition, London
- Brain, C K 1967, 'Hottentot food remains and their bearing on the interpretation of fossil bone assemblages', *Scientific papers of the Namib Desert Research Institute* 32, 1-11
- CAAA nd, <http://www.arch.soton.ac.uk/Centres/LSZ/Facilities/Methodology.htm>
- Denham, V 1985, 'The Pottery' in J H Williams, M Shaw and V Denham, *Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton*, Northampton Development Corp Monogr Ser 4, 46-64
- Grant, A 1988, 'Animal Resources', in G Astill and A Grant (eds) *The Countryside of Medieval England*, Oxford, 149-87
- Hurst, J G 1976, 'The Pottery' in D M Wilson (ed.) *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge, 283-348
- Jones, R and Page, M 2006, *Medieval villages in the English landscape*, London
- Kilmurry, K 1980, *The Pottery Industry of Stamford, Lincs c. AD850-1250*, Brit Archaeol Rep (Brit Ser) 84, Oxford
- Maltby, M 1979, *The Animal Bones from Exeter*, Sheffield
- Maltby, M 1985, 'Patterns in faunal assemblage variability', in G Barker and C Gamble (eds) *Beyond Domestication in Prehistoric Europe*, London, 33-74
- Mellor, M 1994, 'Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, 59, 17-217
- Mynard, D C and Zeepvat, R J 1992, *Great Linford*, Bucks Archaeol Soc Monogr Ser 3, Aylesbury
- Noddle, B 1977, 'Mammal bone', in H Clarke and A Carter (eds), *Kings Lynn excavations, 1963-1970*, Soc Medieval Archaeol Monogr 7, London, 378-99
- OA 2004, 'The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington, Buckinghamshire; archaeological evaluation report', Oxford Archaeology rep 2170, Oxford
- O'Connor, T 1982, *Animal Bones from Flaxengate, Lincoln c. 870-1500*, Archaeology of Lincoln, 18/1, London
- Rogerson, A and Dallas, C 1984, *Excavations in Thetford 1948-59 and 1973-80*, E Anglian Archaeol 22, Gressenhall
- Williams, A and Martin, G H 2002, *Domesday Book, A Complete Translation*, London
- Zeepvat, R J, Roberts, J S and King, N A 1994, *Caldecotte, Milton Keynes. Excavation and Fieldwork 1966-91*, Bucks Archaeol Soc Monogr 9, Aylesbury