

# THE INVESTIGATION OF ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENTS FOUND DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEALE TO BRADFIELD PIPELINE

FRANCES RAYMOND

with contributions by S Hamilton-Dyer, J Letts, J McKinley, D Richards, J R Timby and D F Williams

## SUMMARY

*Three settlements were excavated in the valleys of the rivers Kennet and Pang. The earliest site, occupied during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, formed part of a much larger crop mark complex located in the Kennet Valley. The evidence for settlement was associated with a series of small fields or garden plots. These were defined by ditches, which had been re-cut or replaced on several occasions, during a relatively short space of time between c AD 50 and 100. The final phase of boundary redefinition was associated with the cremated remains of a neo-natal infant, placed in a colander. An alternating sequence of occupation and cultivation within different areas seems likely, but cannot be demonstrated unequivocally. The other two settlements were occupied over a relatively short period between the 12th and 13th centuries AD. Both sites were located adjacent to lanes, and indeed, the Kennet Valley settlement seems to have been aligned on an early trackway running parallel to the modern road. The site was fairly long, extending over at least 145m, but as it was not possible to reconstruct any buildings in plan, its precise character remains enigmatic. Rather more information was recovered from the Medieval settlement in the valley of the River Pang. This may have been a small hamlet,*

*forming a satellite settlement of Bradfield which lies only 500m to the south-west. Three buildings, two with tiled hearths, were discovered. These were associated with several gullies on the edge of the excavated area, which may have represented the remains of two further structures.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mike Lang Hall, who devised the project brief, and Juliet Roper of Thames Water Utilities. The fieldwork was managed and directed by Steve Ford and supervised by Jo Pine, assisted by Alan Ford. Thanks must also go to Nicky Clarkson, Mel Costello, Tess Durden, Graham Hull, Ken Lander, John Saunders and Andy Smith, who worked on the site.

## INTRODUCTION

### *The background*

The archaeological work took place in the Autumn of 1995, in advance of the installation of a sewage transfer pipeline by Thames Water Utilities. This was to run from two new pumping stations at Bradfield and Bradfield South End to Theale, over a

distance of approximately 7.2km The construction involved the removal of the topsoil to create an easement strip measuring between 8 and 10m in width. The pipe trench was excavated within this area to a width and depth of 1m. Thames Water Utilities engaged Thames Valley Archaeological Services to carry out a desktop study, watching brief and where necessary, rescue excavation along the route of the pipeline. GeoQuest were commissioned to conduct a geophysical survey prior to the fieldwork. The project brief was drawn up by Mike Lang Hall in consultation with the archaeological consultants to the County Council, Babbie Public Services Division.

#### *Location, geology and topography*

The villages of Bradfield and Theale are located in the western part of Berkshire between Newbury and Reading (Fig 1). The route followed by the pipeline (Fig 1) encompassed a variety of geological strata and topographic settings. It traversed drift deposits in the valleys of the rivers Pang, Bourne and Kennet. These include Valley Gravels adjacent to the Pang and to the north of the Kennet, and Alluvium on the flood plains of both the Pang and the Bourne. On the plateau between Bradfield South End and the Pang Valley, the pipeline crossed the Reading Beds and Upper Chalk at 80m OD. It also traversed the Upper Chalk to the east of Bradfield. There it ran between the 50 and 60m contours on the north facing slope of a hill overlooking the Pang Valley, and then skirted the north-eastern end of the steep ridge between the valleys of the rivers Bourne and Kennet.

#### *Archaeological features adjacent to the pipeline*

The pipeline passed close to a number of archaeological sites, known mostly from aerial photographs (Figs 1 and 2). These concentrate on the gravel terraces of the Kennet Valley to the north of Theale. The most extensive is a series of compounds and

trackways (Gates 1975, map 7; Fig 2, SMR No 1279.01), spreading over an area of approximately 5ha, to the north-west of North Street. Morphologically these compare most closely with settlements occupied during the Iron Age and Roman periods. In fact, rescue excavation of features in the south-western part of this complex, where it was crossed by the pipe trench (Fields 4 and 6), confirmed this interpretation. Sites of this kind are particularly numerous on the gravel (Fulford 1992) and many similar crop marks have been recorded in both the Kennet and the middle Thames valleys (Gates 1975).

A close association exists between this settlement and a small rectangular compound, showing as a crop mark approximately 150m away to the south (Fig 2, SMR No 1279.02). The character of the mark is indicative of a ditched enclosure, rather than the foundations of a building (Palmer pers comm); an interpretation supported by the geophysical survey. The site was under pasture at the time of the fieldwork and consequently there were no surface finds to indicate its date or character. The proposed route of the pipeline would have crossed this feature, but it was diverted in order to avoid unnecessary disturbance.

The remainder of the crop marks in the Kennet Valley near to the pipeline are similarly undated. A small sub-circular enclosure is located approximately 150m to the north-west of the settlement near North Street (Fig 2). Traces of incomplete rectangular enclosures between North Street and Theale (Fig 2, SMR Nos 1276 and 1280), may mark the position of drainage ditches surrounding field plots. These could well be associated with the Medieval settlement discovered during the excavation of the pipe trench (Field 7).

Both of the sites near North Street (Fig 2, 1279.01 and 1279.02) are located immediately to the east of a nineteenth century turnpike road (Fig 1, SMR No 2882.03, the modern A340), which Margary suggested followed the course of the Roman road linking

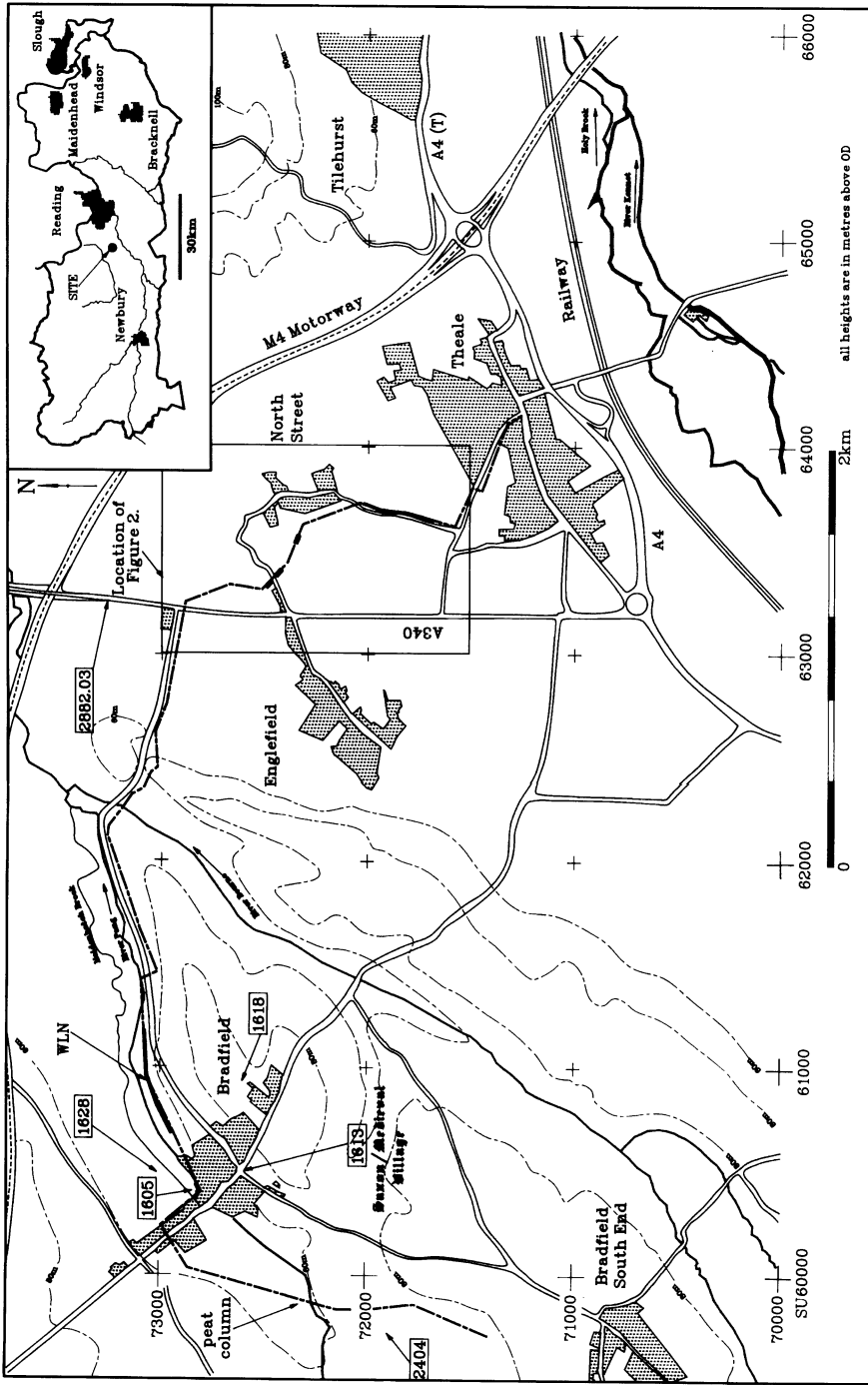


Figure 1 Route of the Theale to Bradfield pipeline showing archaeological sites, location of nearby Sites and Monuments Record entries and the location of the Pang Valley site (WLN)

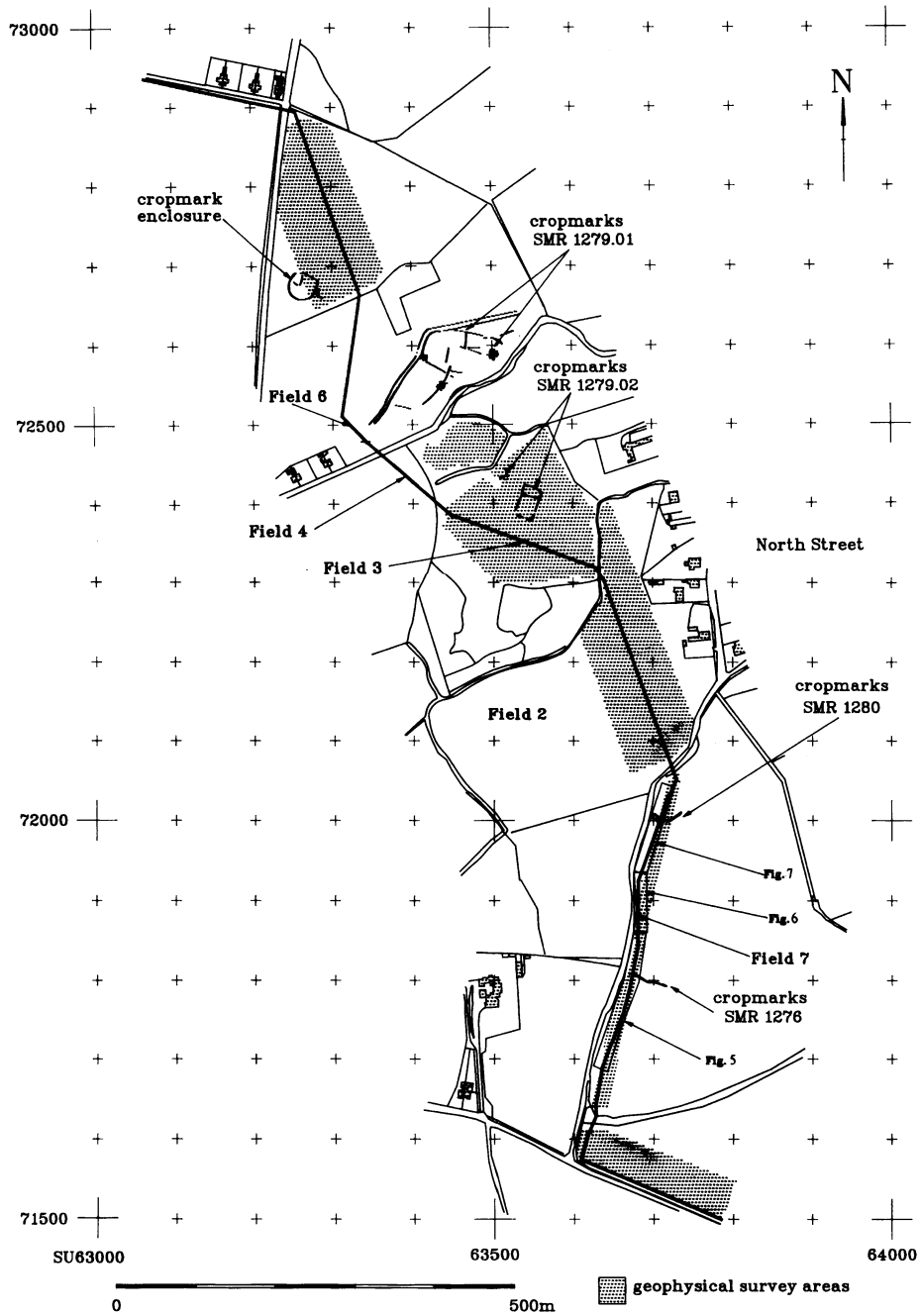


Figure 2 Location of Fields 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7, showing excavated areas, areas of geophysical survey and location of cropmarks

Silchester and Dorchester on Thames (1955, 160c). This route, however, does not appear on the Englefield enclosure map of 1762, perhaps indicating that it is not of any great antiquity. Indeed, doubts about a Roman origin for the Theale route have been raised by Manning (1973), who suggested that the road between Silchester and Dorchester on Thames passed further to the west through Ufton Nervet.

The remaining sites adjacent to the pipeline concentrate in and around the Pang Valley. Two are known to be of Roman date. The first of these is situated on a gravel terrace on the northern edge of the village of Bradfield (Fig 1, SMR No 1605). This site is recorded as a scatter of ceramic building material in the plough soil, but unfortunately little else is known about its character or extent. The second possible settlement is identified by a concentration of Roman pottery, found on the plateau overlooking the Pang Valley to the south-west of Bradfield (Fig 1, SMR No 2404).

The other dated sites in the area belong to the post-Roman period. A 7th century chronicle records a land grant for the foundation of a monastery in the vicinity of Bradfield (Hollings 1923, p 396; Fig 1, SMR 1618). A later chronicle suggests that the building had been completed, but the authenticity of this document has been questioned (*ibid*) and the site itself has not been located. On a more definite note, Bradfield was certainly occupied during the Medieval period and was mentioned in a Saxon Charter of 990–2 (Fig 1, SMR 1613).

As in the Kennet Valley, a series of crop marks have been recorded. These include an undated enclosure to the north of Bradfield (Fig 1, SMR 1628) and features relating to land-use to the east of the village. These appear on an early aerial photograph and seem to define a system of water meadows to the north of the River Pang. Similar earthworks were also observed to the west of Bradfield during a brief survey of the route of the pipeline.

## The Methodology

### *The desktop study*

The fieldwork was preceded by research to identify all recorded features adjacent to and crossed by the proposed route of the pipe trench. This covered an area extending for 200m on either side of the pipeline. The desktop study was supplemented by a cursory field survey to check for the presence of earthworks, and a strategy based on this information was devised to minimise any damage to archaeological deposits.

Apart from the Sites and Monuments Records and the reports of earlier fieldwork in the area, several other sources were consulted. Aerial photographs held by The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), the Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography and Babbie for Berkshire County Council Environment Department were examined. Crop marks in the vicinity of the pipeline were then plotted by hand. In order to ensure that the rectangular compound (Fig 2, SMR No 1279.02) was located accurately, the features were computer rectified by Roger Palmer of Air Photo Services. This corrected errors likely to be caused in manual plotting by the tree canopy, which obscured key junctions between various land boundaries. A number of eighteenth and nineteenth century maps in the Berkshire Record Office were also consulted, but proved to be of limited archaeological significance. These comprised tithe, enclosure and estate maps for the parishes of Bradfield, Englefield and Theale (Tilehurst). An early edition of the 6 inch Ordnance Survey map (1913) was also examined.

### *The geophysical survey*

This work was confined to the gravel terraces of the Kennet Valley, where the crop marks were at their most numerous. Approximately 10ha along the route of the pipeline between Theale and the A340 at Chalkpit Cottages was surveyed (Fig 2). This did not include the south-western part of the Roman settlement

(Field 6), where un-harvested maize prevented access. A fluxgate gradiometer (Geoscan FM36 with ST1 sample trigger) with an integrated data logger was used and the data were recorded at 1 to 0.5m intervals along a series of zig-zag traverses.

The results of the geophysical survey were disappointing. With the exception of the rectangular compound (SMR No 1279.02), there were few anomalies which seemed to be of archaeological origin. There were no traces of the sub-surface features associated with the areas of Medieval (Field 7) or Roman settlement (Field 4), and the undated features in Field 3 went undetected.

### *The fieldwork*

The fieldwork consisted of a watching brief, followed by rescue excavations along the line of the pipe trench. The mechanical removal of the topsoil along the easement strip was observed at all times and the spoil heap was checked for artefacts. In those places where deeper deposits of soil might have masked archaeological features the excavation of the pipe trench was also watched. This kind of approach was adopted in Field 3, where a 2m wide strip was examined during the second phase of machining. Four sites were identified during the watching brief (Figs 1 and 2): one Roman settlement (Fields 4 and 6); two Medieval settlements (Field 7 and WLN); and one undated site, marked by a concentration of truncated features, possibly the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation (Field 3).

The subsoil surface at each of these sites was cleaned by hand and all features were recorded in plan. This included the full width of the easement strip at the Medieval settlement in the Pang Valley (Fig 1, WLN) and the undated site west of North Street (Fig 2, Field 3). The Roman settlement, however, was located in two fields (Fig 2, Field 4 and 6) on either side of The Street, Englefield, where construction traffic required constant access. For that reason the cleaning and recording was confined to the eastern part of the

easement strip in Field 4 and to its western half in Field 6. The pipe trench was re-directed through excavated features in these areas.

A slightly different method was used at the Medieval settlement to the north of the Englefield road (Fig 2, Field 7). This was an extensive site and the usual constraints imposed by rescue excavation necessitated a change of plan. Here the topsoil was only removed from the easement strip at the northern end of the site. Elsewhere the subsoil was exposed in a narrow band, 2m wide, astride the line of the pipe trench. The topsoil along this stretch of the pipeline was excavated under archaeological direction with a JCB. All features in this area were then cleaned by hand and recorded in plan. Apart from complying with the schedule imposed by the urgent requirement for the sewage transfer system, this effectively minimised the disturbance of archaeological deposits along the easement strip. The dry conditions prevailing at the time of this work undoubtedly helped to prevent un-necessary damage to features.

At each of the sites most of the archaeological features in the cleaned areas were sectioned. Discrete features, such as pits and postholes, were half sectioned and at least 10 percent of the deposits in ditches and gullies were excavated. Where possible, rescue excavation concentrated on a 2m wide strip immediately astride the central line of the trench. If this proved impractical, as at the Roman settlement (Fields 4 and 6), the pipeline was re-routed through excavated features.

Again, an alternative strategy was adopted at the Medieval settlement in the Kennet Valley (Field 7). Although all features on this site were recorded in plan, only 70 percent were sectioned. This included most of the ditches, gullies and trackways, but in several cases rather less than 10 percent of the deposits were removed.

The recovery of palaeo-environmental evidence was limited to sampling for

archaeo-botanical remains. Twenty-six bulk soil samples, varying in volume between 8 and 22 litres, were collected from a range of features within each of the settlements (see J Letts, p 0). In addition, Dr M Keith-Lucas of Reading University took a number of samples from a peat deposit (over 3m in depth) which was located to the north of Bradfield, adjacent to the River Pang (Fig 1). These were analysed for pollen and macro-botanical remains (see p 00).

#### THE ROMAN SETTLEMENT (FIELDS 4 AND 6)

##### *Introduction*

The Roman settlement is located on a terrace to the north of the River Kennet, at 46m OD, at a point where the Kennet Valley merges with the valleys of the Rivers Pang and Thames (Fig 1). The site appears on aerial photographs as a series of compounds and trackways extending over approximately 5ha (Fig 2). The route of the pipeline passed through crop marks on the south-western margins of the settled area in Field 6. However, the site proved to be more extensive than the aerial photographs indicated: it also stretched into Field 4 to the south of The Street, Englefield.

Features were recorded within both fields along a narrow strip approximately 5m in width. They extended for 40m in Field 4 and for 25m in Field 6 (Fig 2). In total an area of 325m<sup>2</sup> was investigated.

The site consisted of a series of small fields or garden plots defined by ditches, associated closely with pits, postholes and spreads of occupation material (Fig 3). These features were not necessarily contemporary and may well represent several phases of activity. In fact, two of the pits in Field 4 (Fig 3, F4 and F8), produced pottery which has been assigned tentatively to the early or middle Iron Age, while a third (Fig 3, Field 4, F3) was dated to the 4th century AD. In contrast, most of the boundaries appear to have been constructed and used during the 1st century

AD, and were apparently re-defined on several occasions. Some of the pits excavated in Field 4 may belong to this period, but for the most part they are undated. A spread of tile and pottery found in the northern part of Field 6 may suggest that contemporary occupation focused on an area to the north of the field plots. The quantity of material recovered from features in this area was certainly greater than might be expected in a manuring scatter.

There is limited evidence suggesting that these fields were replaced by a new system on a different alignment during the 2nd century AD, when this area of settlement appears to have been abandoned. It is quite possible that activity, including cultivation, simply shifted away from this particular location, focusing on another part of the crop mark complex. The only evidence for late Roman activity was a single pit in Field 4 (Fig 3, F3), dated to the 4th century AD.

##### *The land divisions*

A number of ditches, varying in width between 1.1 and 1.5m and in depth between 0.15 and 0.5m, defined a series of small plots. These were most coherent in Field 4 (Fig 3, F2, F9 and F16) and in the southern part of Field 6 (Fig 3, F4, F8 and F9), although the layout appeared to extend across the entire cleaned area. It included the unexcavated ditch at the northern end of Field 6 (Fig 3, F23), together with the inter-cutting boundaries in the centre of the same field (Fig 3, F10, F11 and F12). The ditches were set at right angles to one another and appeared to be Roman in origin, dating to the 1st century AD. They shared the same alignment as many of the trackways and compounds visible on the aerial photographs (Fig 2). However, they appeared to define much smaller land units, revealing a degree of sub-division not apparent from an examination of the crop marks.

Each of the ditches was filled with a stony soil resembling a colluvium produced by cultivation. This was consistent with the

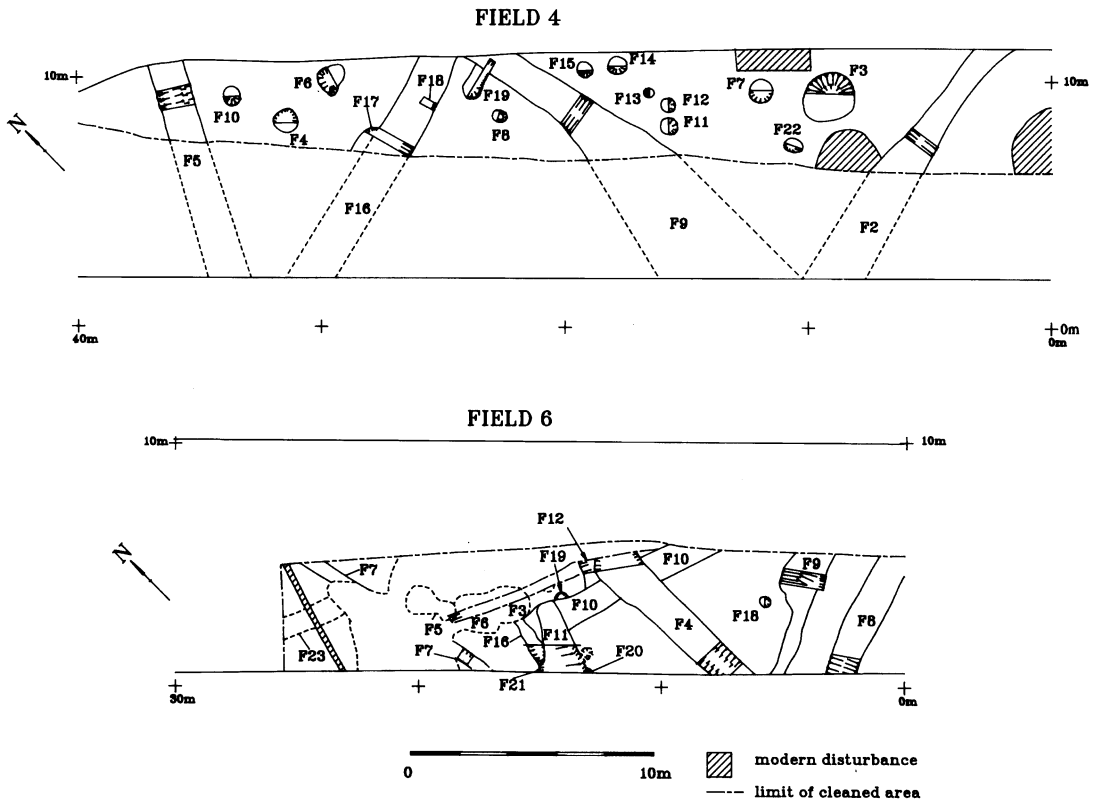


Figure 3 Plans of Fields 4 and 6

condition of the animal bone and some of the pottery recovered from these contexts. In all of the sections the process of colluviation appeared to have been continuous, with no indication of a stable soil profile. This might have been a product partly of poor survival since a number of the ditches, particularly in Field 4, had been truncated by later ploughing and were only between 0.23 and 0.38m in depth. However, even where these boundaries were better preserved there was no indication of an extended interruption in the silting process (eg Fig 3, Field 6). Moreover, the ditches did not appear to have been open for long periods of time before the onset of colluviation. Primary silts typical of natural weathering were confined to three of these

features (F4, F8 and F11 in Field 6). In all cases such deposits were thin and given the nature of the sub-soil probably accumulated quickly.

There were indications that the sequence was rather more extended than this straightforward narrative would suggest. The evidence described above relates to the final phase of activity within each of the plots. In some cases, however, this seems to have taken place at the end of a longer history of use. One of the boundaries in Field 6 (Fig 3, F8) had a narrow slot in its base which may well have resulted from earlier episodes of cleaning. While two other ditches, one in the same field (Fig 3, F4) and one in Field 4 (Fig 3, F16) had been re-cut. Furthermore, in Field 6



two parallel boundaries were separated by only 1.5m (Fig 3, F8 and F9). While these could have been contemporary, perhaps defining a pathway, one might equally have replaced the other.

This redefinition of existing boundaries apparently took place over a relatively short period of time, and it seems to have involved some alteration of established plots. In the centre of the excavated area in Field 6 there were a series of relationships between ditches of a similar scale (Fig 3). Although the layout was unclear, these appeared to define at least

two superimposed field corners. The boundaries of the latest plot comprised F4 and F8 (Fig 3) which both produced pottery dated between AD 75 and 100. The earliest field consisted of F10 and F11, which yielded undiagnostic sherds of post-Conquest origin. Quite apart from this rather more general change, some of the individual ditches appeared to have been recut on at least one occasion.

A colander or sieve made between AD 75 and 100 (Fig 4.7), containing a cremated neonatal infant, had been placed on the base of of

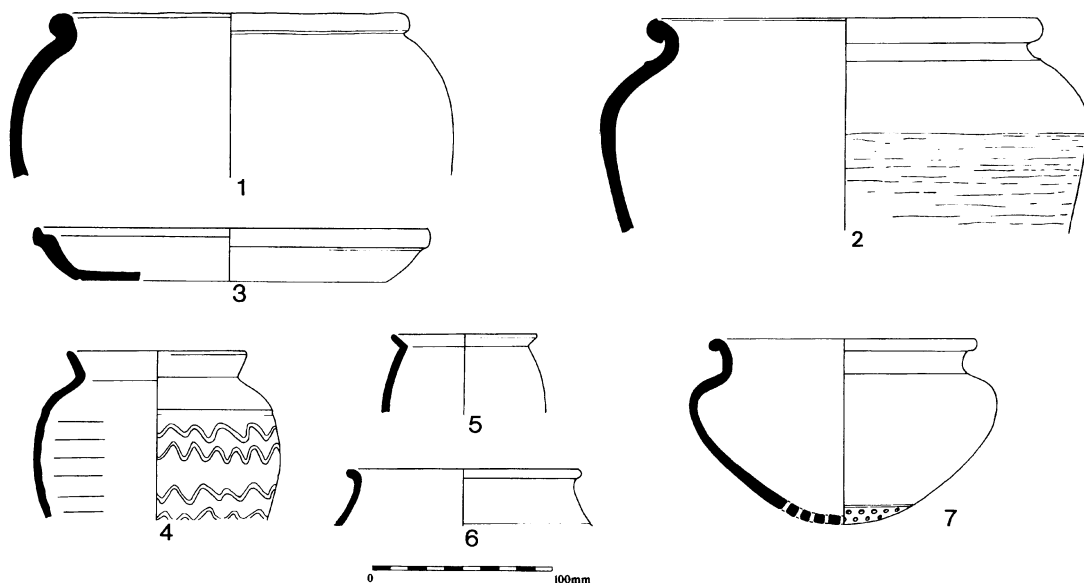


Figure 4 The Roman pottery from F4 in Field 6:

- 9.1 Handmade beaded rim bowl, dark grey-black in colour, grog-tempered. Fabric G3. F4 (context 51)
- 9.2 Light grey wheel-made jar smoothed on the upper exterior body. Unclassified fabric. F4 (context 51)
- 9.3 Platter imitating an imported moulded form; black sandy ware. Fabric S8. F4 (context 51)
- 9.4 Dark grey-brown beaker decorated with incised wavy lines. Fabric SF. F4 (context 51)
- 9.5 Beaker with short everted rim. Fabric GS. F4 (context 51)
- 9.6 Thin-walled necked bowl, hard sandy ware. Fabric S16. F4 (context 51)
- 9.7 Cremation vessel. Black wheel-made colander in a sandy fabric with grog and sparse flint. Unclassified fabric. F4 (lower fill)

F4 (Fig 3). The human remains were accompanied by cremated animal bone, from a pig and a sheep. The boundary evidently filled relatively rapidly following the burial, since pottery also dated to the later 1st century AD was recovered from its upper stratigraphy (Fig 3, F4, context 59).

While it is possible that some of these ditches were first dug before the Conquest, there is no conclusive proof that this was, in fact, the case. Two sherds of Iron Age pottery, accompanied by a single sherd of Silchester Ware, were recovered from F2 in Field 4 (Fig 3). The assemblage is too small, however, to provide a reliable date for the boundary.

On a rather more definite note, there does seem to have been some change to the layout of plots during the 2nd century AD. A new ditch on a different alignment was dug at this time (Fig 3, Field 4, F5), perhaps as part of a more general re-allotment of land. As with the 1st century AD boundaries, this feature appeared to have filled fairly rapidly. Colluviation followed a short period of natural weathering. Once again, an ill-defined slot in the floor of the ditch suggests that this process occurred after earlier episodes of cleaning.

By the end of the 2nd century AD activity in this area seems to have ceased or changed in character. There was no later material within any of the ditches. Indeed, there appears to have been a hiatus of at least a century before practices leading to the deposition of artefacts resumed. Even then the evidence for the subsequent use of the site during the Roman period was very limited (see below).

#### *The settlement evidence*

A number of features, either small pits or postholes (Fig 3), mostly located in Field 4, were associated with the plots. However, the area cleaned was so narrow that it is not possible to reconstruct the plan of any structures which might have existed in this area. All of the features have been truncated,

but in general this appeared to be most severe at the southern end of Field 4 and in Field 6, where the majority varied in depth between 0.07 and 0.20m (Fig 3, Field 4, F7, F11–15 and F22; Field 6, F18–20). Features were better preserved in the northern part of Field 4, where the pits survived to a depth of between 0.25 and 0.35m (Fig 3, F4, F6, F8, F10, F17 and F19). Each of the features was filled with a single undifferentiated sediment and there was no sign of packing or post-pipes in any of the sections.

The chronological relationship between these features and the land divisions is unclear, since most were entirely devoid of artefacts. However, there is sufficient evidence to reconstruct at least a partial sequence. Some of the small pits or postholes may have pre-dated the plots. Early to middle Iron Age pottery was recovered from two features in the northern part of Field 4 (Fig 3, F4 and F8). Unfortunately, the number of sherds is small and the possibility that they were residual cannot be ruled out. A direct stratigraphic relationship existed in Field 6 between one of the ditches (Fig 3, F10) and a posthole (Fig 3, F19) which it cut. Neither feature, however, produced dating evidence. Similar stratigraphic relationships occurred in Field 4, where two of the ditches, containing pottery made during the 1st century AD, cut small pits (Fig 3, F9 cuts F19; F16 cuts F17). This also seems to support the suggestion that the occupation may partly have preceded the division of the area into plots. However, in this case a closer consideration of the evidence reveals its ambiguity. While the pits were certainly cut by the boundaries, they were located on the fringes of the cleaned area and could have been the terminals of earlier ditches which were then re-cut. Thus, once again, the relationship may have been between two events connected with the redefinition of a land allotment.

If some of the features could have been earlier than the plots, at least one was substantially later. The large pit in Field 4 (Fig 3, F3) contained a small ceramic

assemblage deposited during the 4th century AD. This is the only evidence of Roman activity in this area occurring after the 2nd century AD.

Two other features were constructed after the land was divided into plots. A posthole (Fig 3, F18) was inserted into the upper fill of one of the ditches in Field 4 (Fig 3, F16). Another similar feature (Fig 3, Field 6, F20) was dug into one of the silted-up boundaries in Field 6 (Fig 3, F11). The chronology of these events is far from precise, but the pottery from the ditches provides a *terminus post quem* during the 1st century AD for the construction of the two postholes. Some of the other features in Field 6 also seem to have been related to a phase of occupation post-dating the boundaries (Fig 3, F3, F5 and F6). One, which produced a small piece of slag and appeared to be packed with burnt flint (F3), apparently cut an earlier ditch (F16). Roman pottery recovered from the top of these features suggests that occupation continued into the 2nd century AD, when colluviation in the ditches had apparently ceased.

It is unfortunate that the finer details of this sequence no longer survive. We do not know whether the plots were fields or gardens, nor can we determine whether all were cultivated at the same time. Once open the ditches seem to have filled rapidly, but the amount of time which elapsed before they were re-cut or replaced remains uncertain. The soils, which would have formed in the top of these features if some of the plots had fallen into dis-use, had been removed by more recent ploughing. Consequently, although we might suggest a sequence of alternating occupation and cultivation taking place at slightly different times within separate areas, there is no way of demonstrating unequivocally that this was the case.

This uncertainty is redressed, at least partly, by the distribution of artefacts in the various features. In Field 6 the earliest ditches contained relatively little pottery. This contrasts markedly with the pattern of discard

recorded in the boundaries which replaced them. A concentration of sherds, dated to the late 1st century AD, was found in the re-cut ditch (Fig 3, Field 6, F4). Although there was a fall-off in sherd numbers to the south, F8 (Fig 3, Field 6) still contained significantly higher quantities of contemporary pottery than any of the boundaries in Field 4. This may well identify one focus of settlement, occupied for a relatively short time at the end of the 1st century AD. Certainly the number of sherds from F4 is far higher than would normally be the case in manuring scatters. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that the cremation was also placed in this ditch, which may well have formed the border of an occupied area. For the most part the only surviving structural evidence for this particular phase of settlement must lie beyond the course of the pipeline.

#### THE POTTERY by J R Timby

Fields 4 and 6 collectively produced 330 sherds of pottery, weighing c6.6kg. The majority of this dates to the Roman period, with the exception of at least eight sherds of prehistoric date. Field 6 contained a significantly higher proportion of the material, 84% by count; of which 62% came from a single feature. The assemblage was sorted into fabrics following the system established for the excavations at Silchester (Timby 1989; and forthcoming), and quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalence for each excavated context (detailed information available in the archive).

The Roman sherds are in average condition with a mean sherd weight of 14g from Field 4 and 21g from Field 6, perhaps indicative of a history of greater disturbance and re-deposition in the former. Featured sherds were, however, relatively limited and just a few from the group in F4 (Fig 3, Field 6) have been selected for illustration (Fig 4). The assemblage can be split broadly into two

groups: 1st to later 2nd century AD; and early 4th century AD. There is no evidence for continuity between these phases.

Most of the earlier material came from the boundary ditches. F4 (Field 6) produced the largest single group from the site: some 172 sherds, weighing 4543g. A variety of fabrics and forms are present, including flint tempered Silchester ware, Alice Holt wares, other sandy wares, Savernake ware and various grog-tempered vessels. Forms include necked bowls, jars, storage jars and a 'Surrey bowl' (Lyne and Jefferies 1979, form 5). The range of wares suggest a *terminus post quem* in the later 1st century AD.

The cremation in the base of the re-cut ditch F4, was contained in a colander, or sieve, in a wheel-made grog-tempered fabric. The choice of vessel is unusual as a container for a cremation and no parallel is known to the author. A perforated bowl was amongst the vessels recovered from Grave 5 in the small early Roman cremation cemetery in Alton, Hants (Millett 1986). The assemblage from the Alton grave was dated typologically to c AD 75–100 (ibid, 49) and a similar date may be envisaged for the burial here.

F7, F8, and the inter-cutting boundaries FH and F12, in Field 6 also produced pottery. F7 (context 54), with one Iron Age fine flint-tempered rim and one wheel-made Roman sherd, can be dated to the 1st century AD. The assemblage from F8 includes three sherds of Iron Age pottery, together with 37 sherds more typical of the last quarter of the 1st century AD and it is thus contemporary with F4. Only one early Roman sherd was recovered from F11 and eight 1st century AD sherds came from F12.

In Field 4, a few sherds of pottery were recovered from ditches F2, F5, F9 and F16. The material from F2 is potentially the earliest, with just one sherd of Silchester ware (fabric F1) and two finer sparse flint-tempered, thick-walled sherds of Iron Age date. At Silchester, fabric F1 is found in the later 1st century BC continuing into the 1st century AD. The material from F9 is mainly

grog and/or flint tempered which, although probably of 1st century AD date, suggests an earlier *terminus post quem* compared to the ditches in Field 6. Ditch F16 with sherds including Silchester ware, but also oxidised wheel-made sandy ware, suggests a date of abandonment in the second half of the 1st century AD. Ditch F5 (context 54) may be slightly later, with material more typical of the 2nd century AD.

Turning to the individual pits and post-holes in Field 4, F4 produced a single thick-walled fine flint-tempered sherd and F8 contained four thick-walled sandy wares including two rim fragments and a base angle. One rim has a flat top, the second is possibly finger-impressed, although this may be fortuitous. Very provisionally, an early to middle Iron Age date is ascribed to these sherds. The only other feature in Field 4 with pottery was F3 (context 51) which, with Oxfordshire colour-coat and later Alice Holt ware (fabrics S31, S34), can be dated to the 4th century AD.

Only three pits in Field 6 produced pottery (F3, F5 and F6), but none was excavated. The assemblage recovered from the soil overlying these features dates to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. It includes sandy wares, Silchester ware, grog-tempered ware, a worn base sherd from a samian dish, an Oxfordshire whiteware mortarium and a plain-rimmed dish in a fine oxidised ware

### *Summary*

Most of the Roman wares recovered from the pipeline can be paralleled with material from Silchester. In contrast to the assemblage from Silchester there are very few fine wares, particularly amongst the 1st century material. The Iron Age sherds are not paralleled amongst the Silchester material, where the present evidence suggests an origin for the oppida in the last two decades of the 1st century BC. The small size of the group precludes close dating at present, although an early to middle Iron Age date is tentatively proposed in view of the dominance of sandy

fabrics and the two featured sherds. Early to middle Iron Age material is scarce in the area although small groups of the latter have been identified at Binfield, Ufton Nervet and Aldermaston Wharf (cf Booth 1995, 113). Contemporary early Roman assemblages from the general locality include Ufton Nervet (Manning 1973–4), Aldermaston Wharf (Cowell *et al* 1978), Reading Business Park (Timby 1992), Binfield (Roberts 1995) and Risely Farm, Swallowfield (Lobb and Morris 1991–3). All these sites are characterised by an essentially locally made assemblage dominated by jar and bowl forms. The rich array of imports found at Silchester do not appear to have been redistributed into its hinterland.

#### THE METALWORK by D Richards

Only three metal objects were recovered from stratified contexts. One is the terminal of a decorated copper alloy bracelet, which came from the late Roman pit in Field 4 (F3, context 51). The other two objects, both from features in Field 6 (F18, context 47 and F6, context 53), are made of iron. Both are rods of unknown use, although one may be either part of a chisel or a punch.

#### THE STONE by D F Williams

Three pieces of stone were recovered from ditches in Field 6. Two are from the boundary re-cut during the late 1st century AD (F4). Both are small fragments (190 and 41g) of coarse, dark grey glauconitic sandstone. This is similar to the stone quarried for querns at Lodsworth, West Sussex from the late Bronze Age to the Roman period (Peacock 1987). In fact, the larger of the two fragments is part of a quern, with one flat surface showing wear due to grinding. The third piece of stone is from the earliest phase of this same boundary (F12). It is a broken quartzite pebble (100g), probably obtained

from a local stream or river, which may have been used as a whetstone.

#### THE CREMATED BONE by J I McKinley

Cremated bone from a late 1st century AD urned burial was recovered from the re-cut ditch in Field 6 (Fig 3, F4). The burial had been slightly disturbed.

#### Methods

Osteological analysis followed the writer's standard procedure for the examination of cremated bone (McKinley 1989 and 1994), including weighing bone from the 10, 5 and 2mm sieve fractions to assess fragmentation. Pieces of cremated animal bone were extracted and forwarded to the archaeozoologist.

Age was assessed from the stage of ossification (Bass 1987) and epiphyseal fusion (McMinn and Hutchings 1985). Full details of bone identification are presented in the archive report.

#### Results

The bone appears to be in relatively good condition with no visual indications of wear. A total of 14.4g of bone was recovered. This includes 2g (14%) of identifiable human bone, representing a foetus/neonate and 3.3g (23%) of identifiable animal bone, representing a pig and a sheep (see Hamilton-Dyer, below). The bone was well cremated, being uniformly buff-white in colour. The majority of the bone (44%) was recovered from the 5mm sieve fraction and the maximum human bone fragment is 20mm.

Infants of less than one year are absent from some Roman cremation cemeteries, eg East London (McKinley 1995). Elsewhere, however, the remains of foetal/neonatal individuals have been identified, eg St. Stephen's cemetery, St. Albans (McKinley 1992). In this instance, the limited scope of the excavation precludes comment on the nature of the burial.

## THE ANIMAL BONE by S Hamilton-Dyer

*Methods*

Identifications were made using modern comparative collections and where possible fragments were joined and counted as single bones. Undiagnostic fragments were divided into 'cattle sized' and 'sheep sized', with a further group comprising indeterminate mammalian bones. The full details of the analysis, including information on anatomy and butchery, are available in the archive report.

*Results*

A total of only 60 bones were recovered, with most contexts producing less than 10 bones (Table 1). The expected domestic ungulates, cattle, horse, sheep and pig are present, with cattle the most frequently identified. No dog bones were recovered, but six of the cattle and horse bones have been gnawed.

Seven calcined fragments were recovered from the cremation vessel which had been placed in the re-cut ditch (Field 6, F4). They include a sheep or pig rib, limb shaft fragments probably of sheep radius, a pig jaw and a fragment of pig skull. These last two bones are the only evidence of pig from the settlement. Animal bone, including pig, is often found in association with Roman cremations and inhumations.

Table 1 *Species distribution*

Field	Context	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Cow size	Sheep size	Indet	Total
4	F2, 50	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	2
4	F3, 51	1	1	2	—	4	—	1	9
4	F5, 54	—	5	—	—	10	—	—	15
4	F9, 58	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	2
6	surface	—	1	—	—	1	—	4	6
6	58	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
6	F3, 50	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
6	F4	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	3
6	F4, 50	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	3
6	F4, 51	1	2	1	2	2	2	—	10
6	F6, 53	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
6	F8, 55	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	2
6	F11, 57	—	—	—	—	5	—	—	5
Total		4	16	4	2	22	4	8	60

Butchery information is limited to one chopped cattle bone from the 4th century AD pit in Field 4 (F3, context 51). A proximal cattle radius from one of the boundary ditches (Field 4, F2) is the only fragment sufficiently complete for measurement and is of a small animal.

## THE CHARRED PLANT REMAINS by J B Letts

*Methods*

Eight soil samples from contexts in Field 4 and 6 were floated on site, using a 'wash-over' technique that maximised the recovery of waterlogged charred plant tissues. The silt laden flots were re-floated in the laboratory over a 0.3mm sieve, dried and sorted using a binocular microscope at 4–15× magnification.

*Results*

Only three of the samples, from F16 and F20 in Field 4 and from F4 in Field 6, contained charred plant remains. These comprise very small quantities of poorly preserved cereal grain. Unfortunately none of these samples contained sufficient seeds to justify an in-depth interpretation, although the specimens are clearly arable in origin.

## DISCUSSION

The early Roman settlement near North Street compares closely with other sites in the Kennet and Thames Valleys. Indeed the frequency of similar crop marks in the area (Gates 1975) is suggestive of fairly dense occupation within the countryside. An impression which is strengthened when the evidence for rural settlement known to be of Roman date is also taken into account. Excavated examples nearby in the Kennet Valley include Pingewood, c6km to the south-east (Johnston and Bowden 1983–85); Ufton Nervet, c5km to the south (Manning 1973–74); and Aldermaston Wharf, c6km to the south-west (Cowell *et al* 1977–78). In addition, work at Anslow's Cottages, Burghfield, c7km to the east, suggested the likely presence of another similar settlement destroyed by gravel extraction (Butterworth and Lobb 1992; Gates 1975, map 11). The evidence indicates that the occupation of all of these sites overlapped at least partly with the North Street settlement.

As at North Street, an association between small plots and areas of early Roman occupation, has been recorded at Pingewood (Johnston and Bowden 1983–85). It is also documented further afield in other parts of Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Published examples include Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham (Gray, 1970); Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979); and Watkins Farm, Northmore (Allen 1990). As with the North Street settlement, there is no evidence for substantial buildings on these sites; a pattern which seems to be replicated more widely on the gravels in the Midlands and in the south of England (Fulford 1992).

Silchester (*Calleva*) is located only 11km to the south and it seems likely that it exercised an economic influence over the inhabitants of the Kennet Valley. At North Street the presence of Lodsworth stone and coarse pottery, also found at Silchester, suggests the integration of these sites within a common redistribution network.

In the absence of sufficient environmental evidence, the purpose of the North Street enclosures is uncertain. For the most part the ditches were filled with soils indicative of cultivation, although whether this was within gardens or fields is unknown. The charred cereals are likely to have been the by-product of activities concerned with the processing and preparation of food, and were not necessarily grown within the excavated plots. At Farmoor it was suggested that the enclosures alongside the driveway may have been gardens (Lambrick and Robinson 1979). Similarly, at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, the presence of gardens was postulated on the basis of the waterlogged plant remains, which included herbs, opium poppy, plum and apple (Miles 1986). In other contexts, ditched enclosures forming yards around occupied areas have been excavated, as, for example, at Binfield (Roberts 1995). Some of the plots at North Street may originally have served a similar purpose, perhaps only later being cultivated, as occupation moved to an adjacent location.

Settlements with post-Conquest origins are rare on the gravels (Fulford 1992). Although the North Street site might seem to be a Roman foundation, the evidence for this is inconclusive. The pipeline crosses less than one percent of the total area covered by the crop marks and it is quite possible that the focus of occupation shifted through time. Processes of this kind were identified recently at Chisenbury Warren on Salisbury Plain. Here the earthworks, also approximately 5ha in extent, seem to represent a palimpsest of features from various phases of occupation (Entwistle, Fulford and Raymond 1994). This suggests that generalisations based on the excavation of a single trench in a large settlement complex would be extremely misleading. Late Iron Age occupation at North Street may simply have focused on another part of the site.

Similarly the phase of abandonment, between the later 2nd and the early 4th centuries AD, may be more apparent than

real. It is remotely possible that the rectangular compound immediately to the south (Fig 2, SMR No 1279.02) belongs to this period. An analogous enclosure at Barton Court Farm surrounded a small villa of late 3rd to late 4th century date (Miles 1986). Certainly the 4th century pit at North Street is indicative of renewed activity in the excavated area, but in the absence of further evidence the nature of this remains an enigma.

#### THE MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENTS THE KENNET VALLEY SITE (FIELD 7)

##### *Introduction*

This settlement is located approximately 1.2km to the north of the River Kennet. It lies between the villages of Theale and North Street on an extensive plain, where the valleys of the Kennet, Thames and Pang converge (Figs 1 and 2). The site is situated on a gravel terrace, between 45 and 46m OD.

Features were found over a 345m length of the pipeline, which went through a settlement of unknown extent. In total 1,560m<sup>2</sup> of the site were investigated, comprising two contiguous areas of different widths. These included a 145 by 8m length of the easement strip at the northern end of the field and to the south, a much narrower stretch of 200 by 2m, astride the line of the pipe trench.

A variety of features, including pits, post-holes, ditches and gullies, were found throughout these areas (Figs 5–7). However, most of these were located at the northern end of the field, where the cleaned strip was widest. The pottery, mostly of 12th to 13th century date, also concentrated in this part of the site, as did the few animal bones and most of the tile. Almost all of the features to the south were undated and there is no way of determining whether or not they were contemporary with those to the north. This might have been a single relatively large settlement, but equally there could have been a shift in the focus of occupation through time.

The majority of the ditches and gullies were aligned on the lane, which may originally have been located slightly further to the east. A linear feature, interpreted as a trackway, was found running parallel to the present route, along most of the western part of the cleaned area (Figs 5–7, F25/F128/F21).

Although several of the gullies were set at right angles to one another, and there were one or two probable alignments of postholes, it was not possible to identify any structures in plan. Nor is there any way of confirming whether or not some of the larger rectilinear features represented the foundations of buildings.

##### *The trackways*

The remains of two features, thought to have been trackways, were identified within the cleaned area in Field 7 (Figs 5–7, F25/F128/F21; and Fig 5, F123). The first followed a sinuous course, parallel to the modern lane leading from the Englefield Road to North Street and was between 2 and 5m in width. It was partially sectioned at a single point in the centre of Field 7 (Fig 5, F25), where it proved to be a hollow, 0.5m in depth. This had been backfilled with gravel in a sandy matrix, which towards the base was also mixed with high proportions of burnt flint.

There was no direct dating evidence recovered from this trackway (F25). The sequence of events is unclear, since extensive root disturbance meant that the phasing was not apparent in plan. However, at the northern end of the field, the trackway did appear to have been cut by at least two features (Fig 7, F8 and F12). One of these produced post-medieval pottery (F8), while the other contained a single Medieval sherd of 10th to 11th century date (F12).

At the southern end of the field, three postholes (Fig 5, F16, F17 and F32) had been inserted into the trackway, which was also cut by a ditch (Fig 5, F47), but there was no dating evidence from these features. In addition, the trackway crossed an earlier



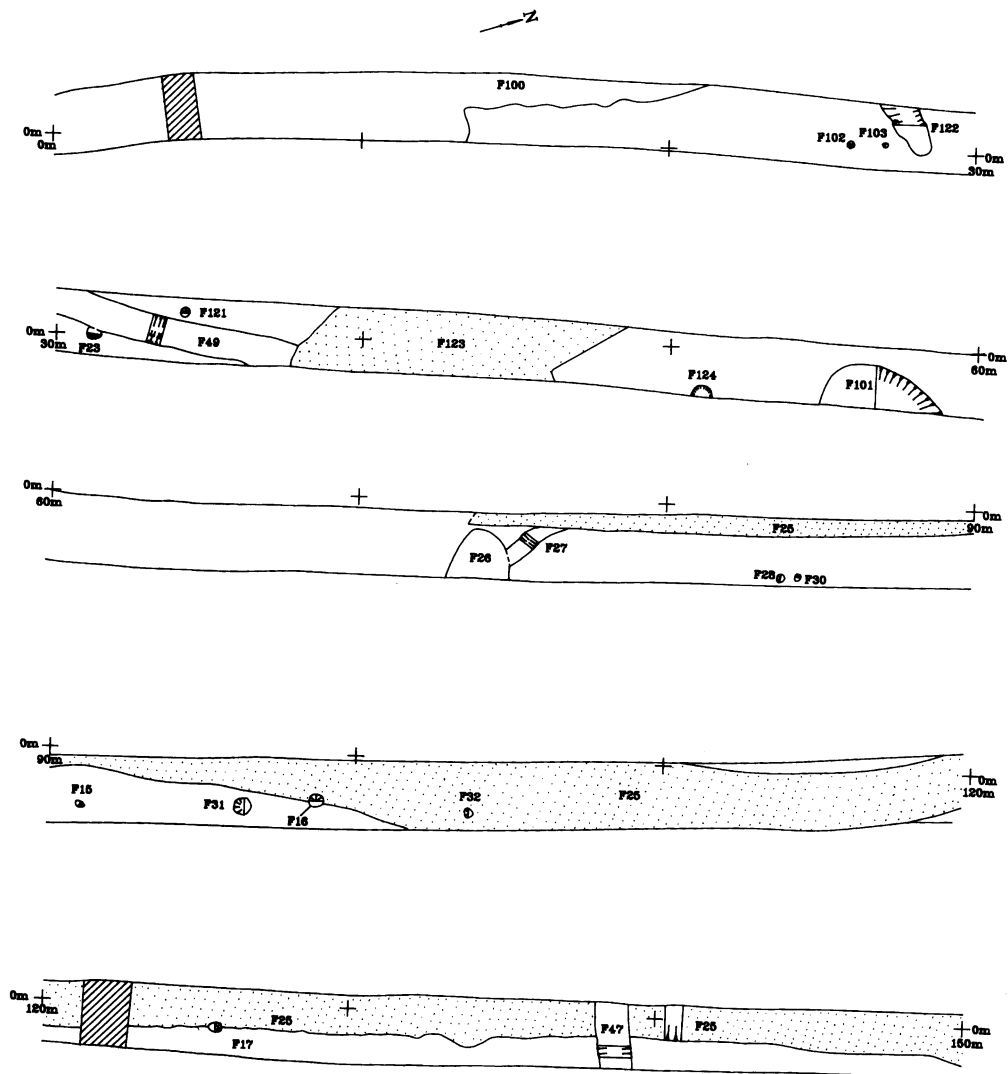


Figure 5 The Medieval settlements; the Kennet Valley site (Field 7)

ditch, also undated, which had been constructed on an entirely different alignment (Fig 5, F27).

The second of the two putative trackways crossed the southern end of the site at an oblique angle (Fig 5, F123). It was 6.5m in width and was also a hollow filled with gravel, but unlike the other trackway it did contain a small number of Medieval sherds

which may indicate a 12th century date. However, the relationship between the two routes is unknown since the junction lay outside the cleaned area.

#### *Ditches and gullies*

Most of the ditches and gullies either followed the same alignment as the present lane and the earlier trackway, or were set

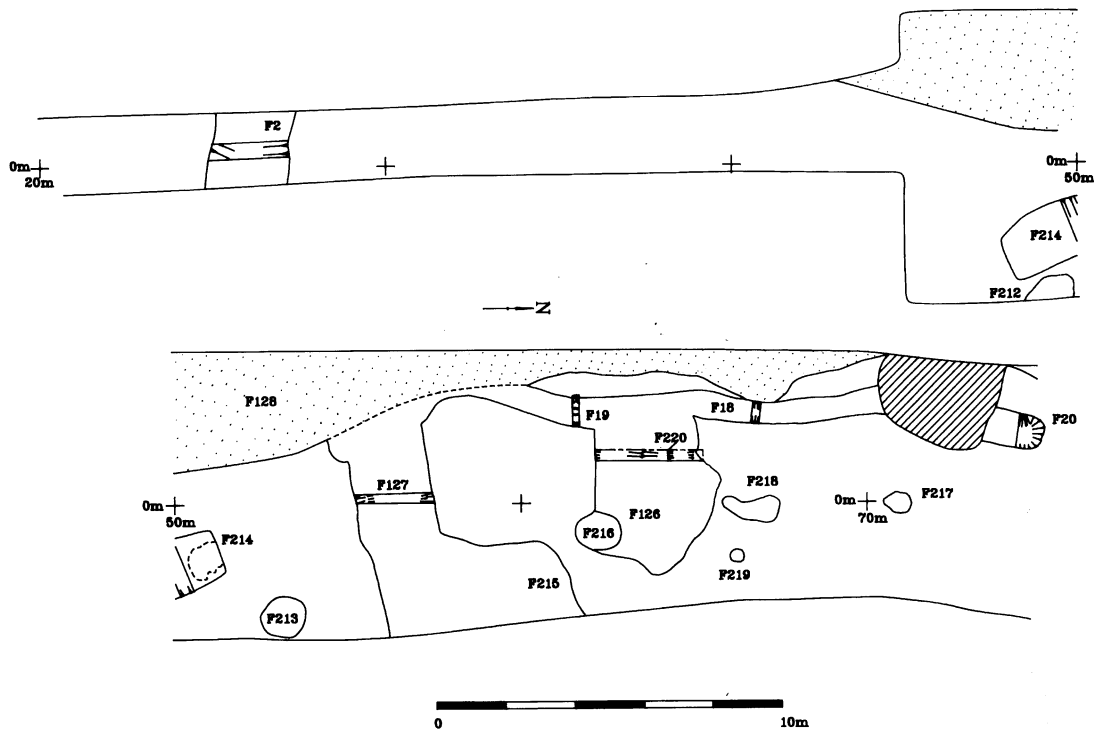


Figure 6 The Medieval settlements; the Kennet Valley site (Field 7)

roughly at right angles to these routes. This is not necessarily an indication of contemporaneity, since the same orientation could have persisted over a long period of time. Indeed, as the lane is still in use, it continues to influence the course of modern features, the pipeline included.

Only three of the ditches, all at the southern end of the field, ran on an entirely different axis (Fig 5, F27, F49 and F122). These were between 0.75 and 1.0m in width, but were only shallow (0.2 and 0.3m) perhaps suggesting that they had been truncated by later cultivation. Each was filled with a similar stony soil and none of these produced dating evidence, but the trackway was certainly later than one of the ditches (Fig 5, F27) which it cut. When the alignment of F27 is projected beyond the confines of the cleaned area, it becomes apparent that it

was set at right angles to the second of the three ditches (Fig 5, F122). This raises the possibility that the two features were part of a single contemporary layout. The third ditch (Fig 5, F49) did not share this orientation and its position in the sequence is unclear.

The remaining ditches in the narrowest part of the cleaned strip were aligned at right angles to the present lane (Fig 5, F22 and F47; and Fig 6, F2) and none produced pottery. F22 had such ill defined edges and was so shallow (0.07m) that there is some doubt about its interpretation. The second of these ditches (Fig 5, F47), which was 1.1m wide and 0.25m deep, cut the trackway and must, therefore, have been Post-Medieval in date. The third ditch was located 66m to the north (Fig 6, F2) and although similar in depth (0.30m) and profile, was twice the width of F47 (2.2m).

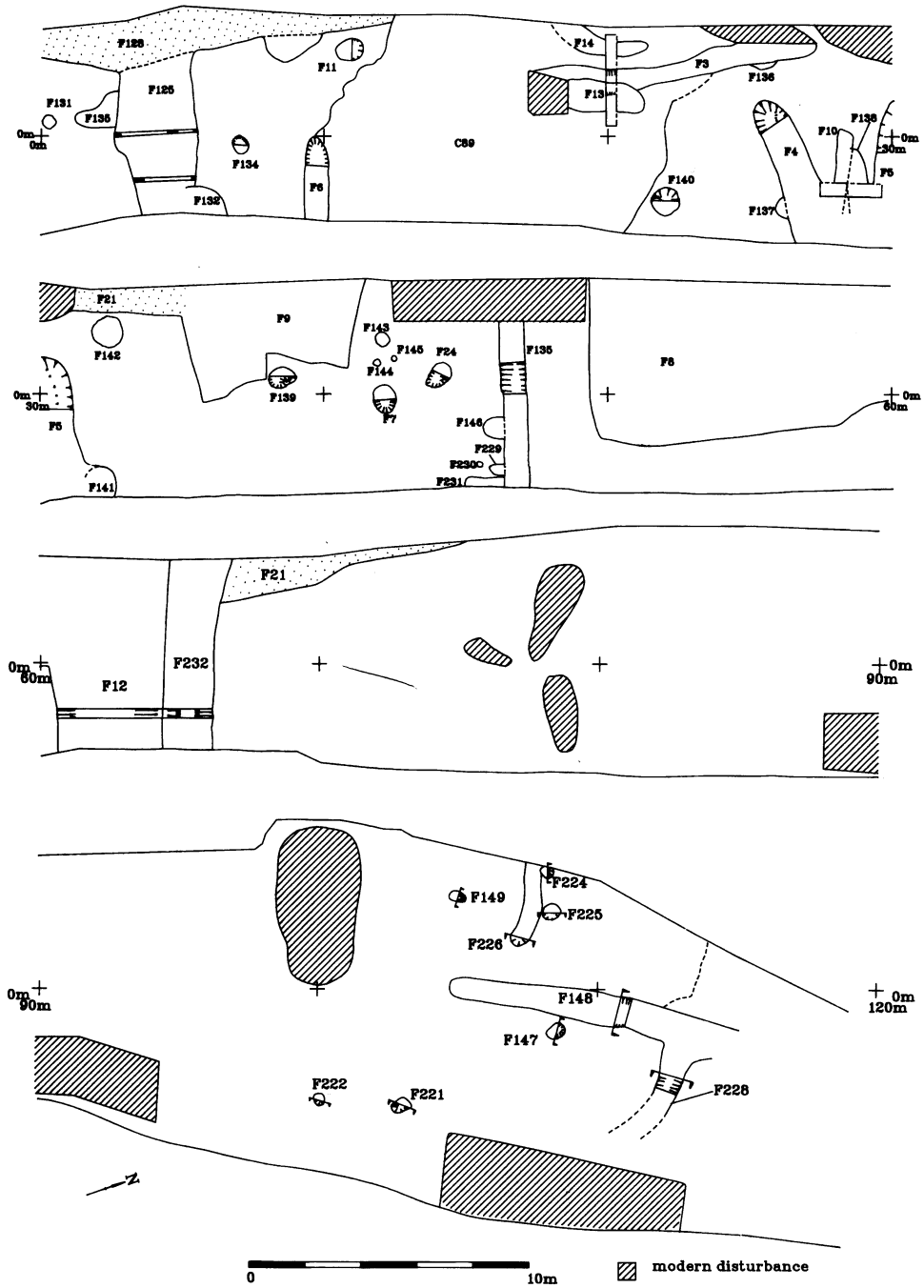


Figure 7 The Medieval settlements; the Kennet Valley site (Field 7)

Eight of the ditches and gullies at the northern end of the field produced Medieval pottery, and apart from a single sherd from F12, this dated to the 12th century AD (Fig 6, F18/19/20; Fig 7, F3, F4, F6, F10, F12, F125 and F135). Five of these (Fig 6, F18/19/20; Fig 7, F3, F6, F10 and F135) were of a similar width (0.64–1.0m) and apart from F18/19/20, which was only 0.12m deep, they ranged in depth between 0.22 and 0.28m. Each of the gullies was filled with a single stony sediment and with the exception of F135, they all terminated in the cleaned area. Three of these features had relatively broad flat bases (F3, F6 and F18/19/20), while two were U-shaped in profile (F10 and F135).

Although rather wider (1.5m), F4 was of a comparable character to these gullies. Indeed, it terminated within the cleaned area immediately adjacent to F10 and two other undated terminals (Fig 7, F5 and F138). The stratigraphic sequence was unclear, but this group of ditches appeared to represent successive phases of activity, for F5 apparently replaced F138.

The remaining three ditches, which contained Medieval pottery, crossed the cleaned strip at right angles (Fig 7, F12, F125 and F232). Two were adjacent to one another (Fig 7, F12 and F232) and although they were similar in depth (0.58 and 0.53m), were of entirely different widths (3.5 and 1.6m). There was no discernible stratigraphic relationship between these features and there is no way of phasing them. Only one sherd, dated to the 10th or 11th century AD, was recovered from an upper fill common to both ditches (context 60) and the possibility that it was residual cannot be ruled out. These ditches merged with a large rectilinear feature (Fig 7, F8), which produced Post-Medieval pottery, but the relationship was not investigated. The last of the dated linear features yielded a small ceramic assemblage, and was fairly irregular in both profile and plan (Fig 7, F125). It may have been cut deliberately, but it could equally have been of natural origin.

The function of the various gullies is uncertain. In two cases examples appeared

to run into one another at right angles and were probably part of a contemporary layout (Fig 6, F18/19/20 and F220; and Fig 7, F148 and F228). However, the junctions were not investigated and apart from F18/19/20, none produced pottery. Some of the gullies merged with features which might have been post-holes or slots. None of these were excavated, and there is no way of knowing whether the various elements were contemporary or successive. It seems highly probable that some of the features were the remains of structures, but the nature and scale of the excavation meant that these could not be reconstructed in plan.

#### *The sub-rectangular features*

Five relatively large sub-rectangular features (c 4 by 2.5m) were recorded at the northern end of the trench (Fig 6, F126, F127 and F215; Fig 7, F8 and F9). Three of these appeared to define a sub-square area (F126, F127 and F215) adjacent to one of the gullies (F18/19/20). It is uncertain whether or not these were part of a contemporary arrangement, since their stratigraphic relationships were not investigated and only two were sectioned (F126 and F127). One of these, a rather amorphous feature with an irregular profile (2.2m wide and 0.24m deep), produced Medieval pottery (F126). This had been cut by a narrow gully of a similar scale to, and perhaps contemporary with, F18/19/20 (Fig 6, F220). The second of the excavated features continued beyond the cleaned area and may have been a ditch (F127). It was slightly deeper than the first (0.33m), but was also fairly irregular in profile.

Excavation of the remaining sub-rectangular features (F8 and F9) was limited to a small sondage to assess the depth and character of the deposit. This demonstrated that both features had almost vertical sides. Post-Medieval pottery was recovered from F8, along with a few fragments of tile (78g), flint nodules and chalk lumps, which may have been building rubble. The scale of this feature was certainly commensurate with the

foundations of a small structure (at least 11m across in one direction), but in the absence of further evidence, this interpretation cannot be confirmed. The purpose of F9, which was smaller (6m across) and very irregular in plan is unknown. The relationship between these features and the trackway was not explored, but in plan F8 appeared to encroach on the line of the trackway.

#### *Pits and postholes*

In total 48 pits and postholes were found in Field 7, and just over half were sectioned. Although some of these were associated with the gullies and ditches, the various junctions were not excavated and the stratigraphic sequence is, therefore, unknown. Since many features were recorded only in plan, they have been separated into categories according to surface diameter. All features between 0.2 and 0.6m across have been grouped together as postholes, while those with diameters in excess of 0.7m have been classified as pits. For the most part the excavated examples support this division, although they do demonstrate that there is likely to be some blurring between the two categories. In one case, for instance, a small posthole was inserted into a wider scoop (Fig 7, F140). Some of the features, including examples in excess of 1m, were in line with one another. However, their interpretation is hindered because few were excavated and their character cannot be assessed.

Twenty pits were recorded and apart from three examples (Fig 5, F26, F101 and F124), all were located at the northern end of the field. With the exception of a single rectangular pit (Fig 6, F214) each of these features was circular or oval in plan and most were fairly small, with diameters measuring between 0.7 and 1.6m. Six of the small curvilinear pits were excavated (Fig 5, F124; and Fig 6, F7, F11, F13, F24 and F139) and all were shallow, with depths varying between 0.07 and 0.3m. One of these produced Post-Medieval pottery (F7) alongside residual Medieval wares. Two produced ceramics of 12th to 13th century date (F11 and F139),

which were also recovered from the surface of a further two unexcavated features (Fig 6, F132 and F146). The rectangular pit (Fig 6, F214), which was greater in size (3.6 by 1.3m across and 0.35 to 0.4m deep), also contained an assemblage of this period. Only 14 percent of the fill was excavated, yet this included the highest number of sherds recovered from any single context on the site.

Both of the unusually large curvilinear pits were located at the southern end of the field, and neither produced dating evidence (Fig 5, F26 and F101). Their overall dimensions are unknown, since they were only partly within the trench and F26 was not excavated. The larger of the two (F101) was 4m across in one direction and 0.3m deep, with a flat base.

Twenty-eight possible postholes were recorded within the cleaned area and 19 were excavated. Just over half were relatively well preserved, with depths varying between 0.2 and 0.35m. These were located in both the southern (Fig 5, F16, F17, F23, F30, F31 and F121) and northern (Fig 7, F134, F140; F149, F224 and F225) parts of the field. Two of the features at the southern end of the field cut the trackway (F16, F17), but neither produced pottery. The rest of the excavated postholes were considerably more truncated (Fig 5, F15, F28, F102, F103 and F105; Fig 7, F147, F221 and F222), and this casts some doubt on their interpretation.

Postholes associated with Medieval pottery were confined to the northern end of the trench and even there, few could be dated securely. Only three of the excavated features produced ceramics and in each case between one and three sherds was recovered (F140, F221 and F224). Small quantities of pottery were also found on the surface of two unexcavated postholes (F131 and F143).

### THE PANG VALLEY SETTLEMENT (WLN)

#### *Introduction*

The site is located 400m to the north-east of the village of Bradfield, on the lower slopes of

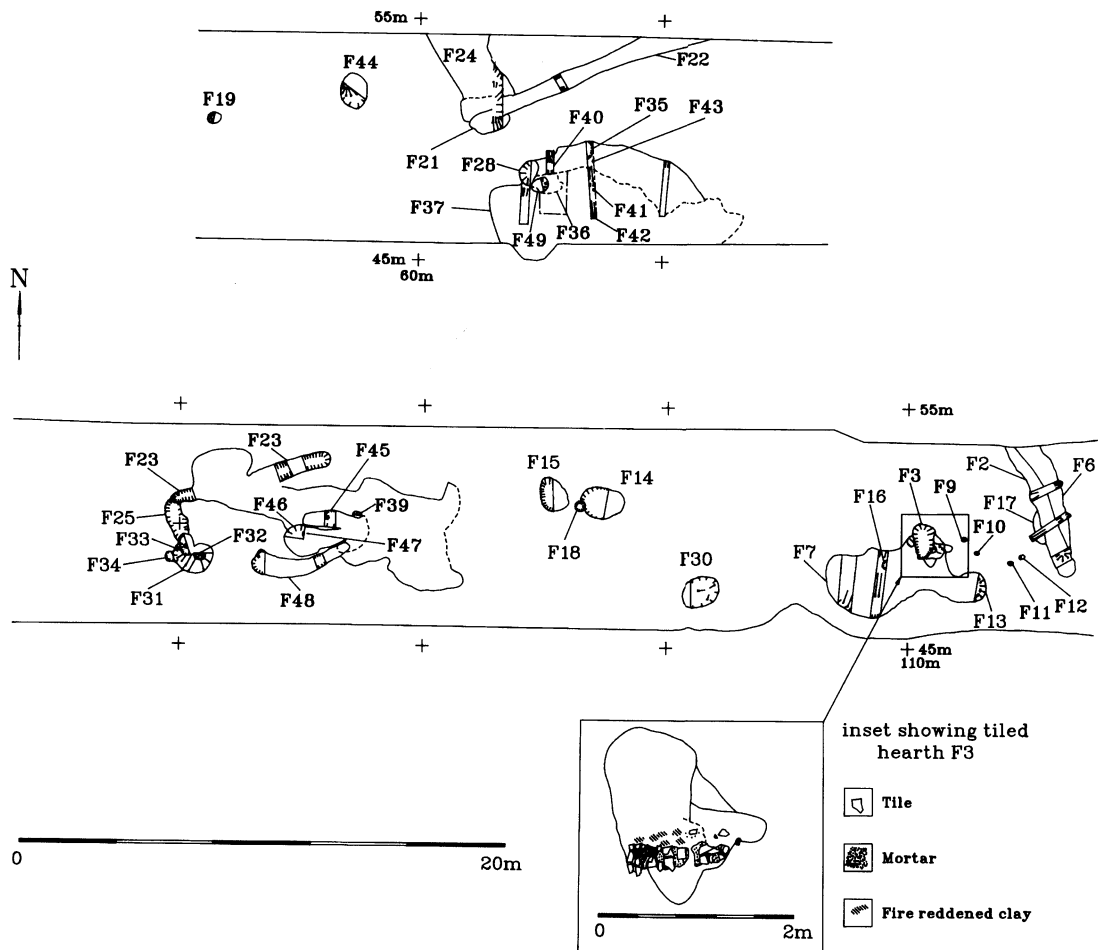


Figure 8 The Medieval settlements; the Pang Valley site (WLN)

a north-facing ridge overlooking the River Pang (Fig 1). It is situated between the 57 and 58 metre contour on soliflucted chalk. With the exception of two isolated ditches of unknown date, the features concentrated in a 70 by 8m strip (560m<sup>2</sup>; Fig 8). This defined the limits of the site along an east-west axis, but its extent in any other direction is unknown.

The remains of three structures were uncovered, two of which seem to have had tiled hearths. A further two buildings may well have been represented by gullies on the

northern edge of the cleaned area. If so, these mostly lay outside the excavation, to the north of the easement strip and could not be identified with any certainty. A few small pits were also located in and around the structural remains. Most of these features contained Medieval pottery, dating between the 12th and 13th centuries AD.

#### *The structures*

Three features sharing the same alignment and interpreted as structures, were identified within the cleaned area (Fig 8). Two were

represented by shallow hollows of irregular profile and outline, filled with silty clay mixed with chalk and flecked with charcoal (Fig 8, F7 and F37). Both were between 0.08 and 0.12m in depth, but were of different sizes. The smaller of these measured 2.2 by 5m (F7) and the larger, which was only partly within the trench, was 10m long by at least 4m wide (F37). The third structure was slightly different in character, although it was also associated with a spread of silty clay flecked with charcoal. However, this proved to be a superficial deposit, partly masking a series of short gullies. Three of these defined a rectangular space with an internal area of approximately 3 by 6m (Fig 8, F23, F25 and F48).

It is unclear whether the fills of the two hollows (F7 and F37) represented deliberately constructed earthen floors, or whether these deposits had accumulated during years of activity. Both contained small assemblages of Medieval pottery of 12th to 13th century date and produced evidence for at least one surface, level with the top of the natural. In each case this was identified by the remains of a tile setting on the northern side of the structure (Fig 8, F3 and F36).

The example in F7 (Fig 8, F3) was sufficiently well preserved to indicate that it was part of a hearth. This had been constructed in a shallow elongated scoop, measuring 1.3 by 0.8m, with the long axis aligned north-south. The tiles, which were arranged in a rectangle (1 by 0.3m in area) and set in mortar laid on sand, formed a border partly within and along its southern edge. The underlying sand and the sandy clay immediately to the north of the tiles in the centre of the scoop had been burnt *in situ*, but there was no sign of burning in the sand which filled the northern end of this hollow. Several small spreads of charcoal and fragments of fire-reddened clay were found in the vicinity of the hearth.

The tiled area in F37 (Fig 8, F36) was associated with a 13th century jug handle. The tiles were so disturbed by subsequent

cultivation that their original function is uncertain, although it seems quite likely that they too were part of a hearth. An adjacent shallow scoop was filled with a deposit of charcoal and fire-reddened clay (Fig 8, F49), but there was no sign of *in situ* burning. Unlike those in F7, the tiles did not appear to have been laid on sand or set in mortar, but seemed to have been placed on the surface of the earthen fill of F37.

The nature of the structures which might have surrounded the two earthen floors is unknown. Only 2 narrow sections were excavated across F7 (Fig 8) and neither produced evidence for timber uprights or any other kind of walling. The feature located at its south-eastern corner was 1m in diameter and 0.35m in depth (Fig 8, F13), but its relationship with F7 was not explored. Although it was interpreted as a small pit, it is remotely possible that it was a posthole.

The excavation of F37 was similarly restricted, but in this case none of the four sections completely crossed the area of the floor. However, they did reveal three small features along the north-western edge of F37, which varied between 1 and 0.6m in diameter and 0.27 and 0.19m in depth (Fig 8, F28, F35 and F40). Again the purpose of these is uncertain and while it is possible that they originally held posts, there was no trace of these in section. The only other associated features were three stakeholes, possibly the remains of an internal sub-division, found cutting the natural at the base of the hollow (Fig 8, F41-F43). These were not noticed at a higher level and their stratigraphic relationship with the fill of F37 was uncertain.

There is rather more information about the character of the third structure, which again produced pottery of 12th to 13th century date. The western side of this was defined by a shallow gully which produced five sherds of pottery and 175g of tile (Fig 8, F25). It was 0.5m wide and 0.12m deep, and was packed with large flint nodules, which may have formed the rubble base for a wall (F25). The southern end of this encroached

on a shallow scoop (Fig 8, F31), 2m in diameter and 0.25m in depth, which contained two postholes (Fig 8, F32 and F33), one 0.4m across and 0.6m deep and the other 0.5m across and 0.35m deep (F33). The shallower of these (F33) had been inserted into the southern end of the flint packing filling the gully (F25). F31 may have cut an earlier posthole (Fig 8, F34), but this was so truncated (0.10m) that it could not be interpreted with any certainty. The northern end of F25 overlay and was set at right angles to the terminal of a second short gully (Fig 8, F23). Unlike F25, this was filled with a silty clay containing a large assemblage of pottery, and was 0.77m wide and 0.29m deep. The third of these gullies, which marked the southern side of the structure (Fig 8, F48), was filled with a similar sediment, but was shallower than F23 and only produced 21 sherds of pottery.

A group of associated features were recorded within the structure, but their original function is unknown. In fact, two of these were so shallow and ill-defined that they may well have been no more than irregularities in the natural (Fig 8, F39 and F46). They were close to a rather amorphous scoop only 0.15m deep (Fig 8, F46), containing a small feature (0.2m in diameter and depth) which might have been a posthole (Fig 8, F47).

#### *The adjacent gullies*

Four other gullies, all terminating in the easement strip, were recorded on the northern edge of the cleaned area (Fig 8, F2, F6, F22 and F24). These were set on a similar alignment to the three structures and it seems likely that at least one originally supported a wall (F6). This gully was 1m across and 0.1m deep and had been packed with flint nodules. A small pit was found adjacent to its southern end (Fig 8, F17), and although the relationship between the two features was unclear, both had been cut by a second gully which ran along the western side of F6. This was 0.7m wide and 0.13m deep and contained a

large quantity of comminuted charcoal. None of these features produced pottery, but 1,585g of tile were recovered from around the flint packing in F6.

The other gullies were set at right angles to one another (Fig 8, F22 and F24) and each contained a few sherds of 12th to 13th century pottery and a number of tile fragments. These features were of a similar depths (0.26–0.28m), but F22 was much narrower (0.6m) than F24 (1.5m). The gullies give the impression of having been part of a single structure, but the evidence is somewhat ambiguous. Aside from the fact that they were only partly within the cleaned area, there is no way of confirming their contemporaneity as the stratigraphic sequence was not particularly clear and the ceramic assemblages were small. The excavator suggested that F24 cut F22, but the section shows a series of silts which could well have been common to both terminals.

A small feature, 1.5m across and 0.27m deep (Fig 8, F21), and interpreted as a pit was associated with these gullies. It contained three sherds of Medieval pottery, 1,396g of tile and a deposit of charcoal and fired clay. It was thought to have been cut by F22, but the plan and section suggest that it may have been the butt end of F24, and in fact, all three features could have filled at the same time.

#### *The associated features*

A few small pits were recorded in the vicinity of the gullies and structures. The two examples located on the western perimeter of the site were undated (Fig 8, F19 and F44). Both were shallow (*c* 0.1m deep) and contained comminuted charcoal, although in the case of F44 this may have accumulated in a natural hollow, since it was fairly irregular in profile and outline.

The remaining three pits were situated close to one another (Fig 8, F14, F15 and F30). F15 and F30 both produced ceramics of late 12th to 13th century date, while F14 may have been slightly later as it contained a relatively large assemblage of 13th century



pottery. Two of the pits (F14 and F15), which were of similar dimensions (1.4m across) and depths (0.36 and 0.30m), also contained a few fragments of tile and most of the charred plant remains (see Letts). F30, which lay 4m to the south-east, was slightly smaller (0.89m across) and shallower (0.13m).

Four other small features, which might have been postholes, were associated with this part of the Medieval settlement (Fig 8, F9–12). However, none produced dating evidence and all were so truncated that their origin was uncertain.

#### *The ditches*

Two undated linear features, constructed on different alignments, were located to the east of the Medieval settlement (F29 and 38). The closest was situated 50m away from F6 and was the most substantial of the two ditches (F29). It was 2.2m wide and 0.75m deep and was filled with a single colluvial sediment. F38 lay a further 25m to the east and was only 0.77m wide and 0.2m deep.

#### THE POTTERY by J R Timby

The pottery recovered from Field 7 and WLN amounted to some 722 sherds, weighing just over 14kg and was almost exclusively of Medieval date. The material was sorted into different fabrics and quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalence for each context. A description of the fabrics can be found below, followed by a discussion of the excavated groups.

#### *Medieval and Post-Medieval Fabrics*

**Z1:** Hard sandy ware, slightly finer texture compared to Z3. Probably from the Camley Garden kilns, Maidenhead. Forms here include cooking pots with applied thumbled strips, tripod pitchers, a curfew and dishes. 12th–14th centuries.

**Z2:** Very hard wheel-made sandy ware. Brownish-orange exterior, orange

interior, blue-grey inner core. The paste contains a moderate to common frequency of well-sorted, rounded quartz sand. Very similar to Oxford fabric OXY (cf Mellor 1994, 63ff), dating from the late 11th to 13th centuries and Faccombe Netherton fabric T, dating to the 12th century (Fairbrother 1990, 298). Featured sherds include the rim of a tripod pitcher decorated with rouletting around the rim (Fig 9, 4). Similar vessels have been found at Faccombe Netherton in contexts dating to the second half of the 12th century, first decade of the 13th century (Fairbrother 1990, 298, Fig 8.17).

**Z3:** A moderately hard, dense, handmade sandy ware. The paste contains a common frequency of well-sorted quartz sand and occasional red iron. The fabric is well documented from the Reading area (K Keevil fabric Q3, pers comm). 11th–13th centuries.

**Z4:** A hard oxidised fabric with a grey core. Sandy fabric with sparse flint. Probably equates with Faccombe fabric P/Newbury fabric A (Fairbrother 1990, 299). 12th century.

**Z5:** A hard, dark grey sandy ware with occasional fine voids, a sparse scatter of fine flint and rounded calcareous inclusions. Handmade. Medieval.

**Z6:** Glazed red earthenware. Post-Medieval.

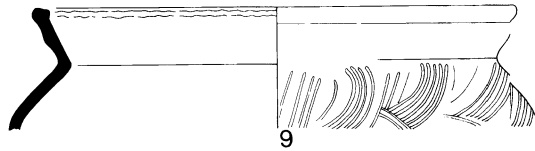
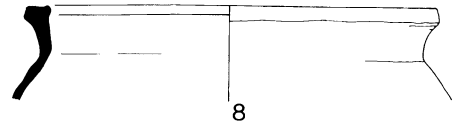
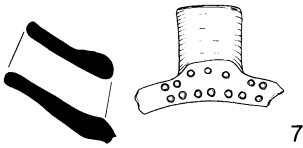
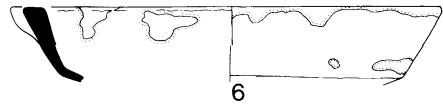
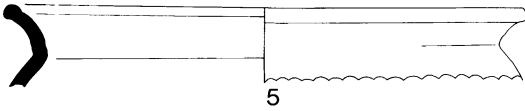
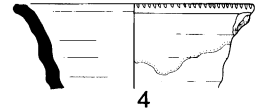
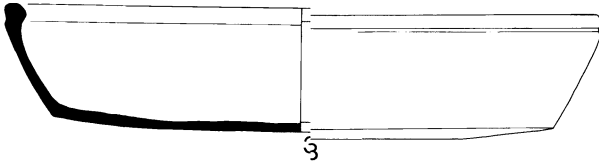
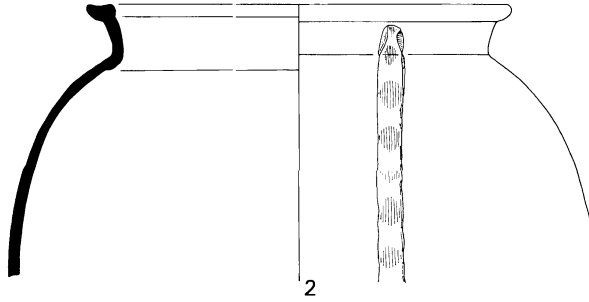
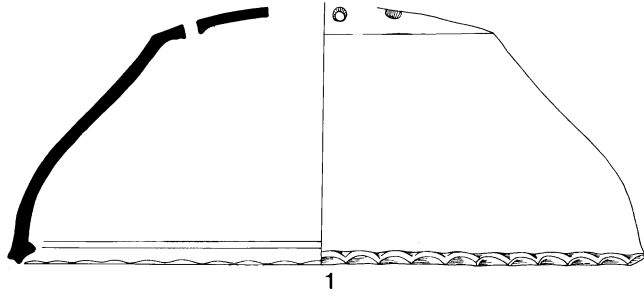
**Z7:** Brown glazed orange kitchen ware. Post-Medieval.

**Z8:** Hard black coarse sandy, handmade ware. The fabric contains a moderate density of ill-sorted rounded quartz, the larger grains up to 3mm across. Probably related to London fabric EMS (early Medieval sandy ware; Vince 1991, 56ff). 10th–11th centuries.

**Z9:** Tin glazed ware. Post-Medieval.

**Z10:** White firing Surrey-Hampshire glazed wares. 13th–15th centuries.

**Z11:** Hard sandy fabric, containing a moderate frequency of ill-sorted rounded



quartz, rare flint and red iron. Harsh feel, easy to rub off grains. Handmade cooking vessels. Medieval.

**Z12:** Hard sandy ware with frequent coarse angular to rounded flint temper up to 3mm across in size. Probably equates with Silchester fabric 11 (Timby 1989, 96). Handmade cooking pots and dishes. Mid 12th–14th centuries.

*The Kennet Valley site (field 7)*

In total 314 sherds, weighing 5.76kg, were recovered from this area. Few features produced in excess of 20 sherds, the exceptions being F6, F20, F135 and F214. The fabric range was markedly conservative, being dominated by fabrics Z1–Z5.

Trackway F123 only yielded eight sherds in fabric Z4, perhaps suggesting a 12th century date. Two of the features cutting the trackway at the northern end of the field (F12 and F8) produced pottery. F12 contained a single

cooking pot sherd of 10th to 11th century date (fabric Z8) and F8 produced Medieval sherds (fabrics Z1 and Z3), but also two Post-Medieval wares (fabric Z6).

Apart from F12, seven of the ditches and gullies at the northern end of the field produced pottery. Sherds of cooking pots, including one with a thumbled rim, came from F3 and F4. These are mainly in fabrics Z3, Z4 and Z5, indicative of a 12th century date. Just a single sherd of fabric Z1 is represented. F6 produced a larger assemblage again dominated by fabrics Z3 and Z4, but with nine sherds of Z1. Similar pottery came from F10. The sherds from F18/19/20 also include fabrics Z4 and Z5, but fabric Z1 accounts for 48% by weight. All 12 sherds from F125 are of fabric Z1 and this same fabric comprises 67% by weight of the pottery from F135. Although all three fabrics (Z1, Z3 and Z4) are likely to be contemporary, fabric Z1 is probably a longer lived ware. It could be

- 
- Figure 9 The Medieval pottery from the Kennet Valley (Field 7) and Pang Valley (WLN) sites:*
- 11.1 *Curfew with a pie-crust rim. Mid-brown surfaces with a red-orange core. Fabric Z1. WLN, F14 (64)*
  - 11.2 *Handmade cooking pot with a wheel-turned rim. Decorated with vertically applied thumbled strips. Mid-brown surfaces with a red-orange core. Fabric Z1 WLN, F14 (64)*
  - 11.3 *Dish. Orange surfaces with a darker orange core. Fabric Z2. WLN, F23 (79)*
  - 11.4 *Rim probably from a tripod pitcher. The rim is decorated on the outside edge with rouletting and the exterior surface is covered in a thin patchy glaze of brownish hue. Fabric Z2. WLN F23 (86)*
  - 11.5 *Cooking pot. Orange exterior and dark grey inner core. The internal rim surface has a thin patchy clear glaze. The vessel has broken along a line of impressed decoration probably in the form of continuous ovals. Fabric Z2 WLN, F23 (86) slot 2*
  - 11.6 *Spouted dish with a slightly patchy internal clear glaze with some splashing over the exterior surface. Dark orange with a grey core. Fabric Z2. WLN, F46 (159)*
  - 11.7 *Hollow socket from a dish or bowl decorated with impressed small rings on the upper rim surface. The dark orange-red sandy fabric is characterised by ill-sorted quartz sand and sparse flint. WLN, F30 (93)*
  - 11.8 *Handmade/wheel-turned plain cooking pot. Fabric Z4. Field 7, F214 (155)*
  - 11.9 *Cooking pot with a lightly finger-impressed rim. Decorated with combing on the exterior surface. Orange-red sandy ware with a grey core. Fabric Z4. Field 7, F214 (155).*

argued, therefore, albeit very tenuously, that where it occurs in greater quantity it might indicate a slightly later date. Using this argument, F3, F4 and F6 may have been earlier than the other linear features on the site; alternatively the proportions of wares might be a quirk of the small samples involved.

Few of the numerous pits and postholes produced pottery. Notable exceptions include the large rectangular pit F214 which contained 77 sherds in fabrics Z1, Z4 and Z11. Forms include cooking pots, one with a combed finish (eg Fig 9, 8–9), a white-slipped green glazed strap handle, and other sherds from a pitcher. Together these are indicative of a 12th to 13th century date. Features F11, F13, and F139 also contained 12th to 13th century sherds. The surfaces of pits F132, F135 and F146 produced comparable Medieval wares. F7 produced Medieval pottery and one brown glazed Post-Medieval sherd.

#### *The Pang Valley Settlement (WLN)*

This settlement produced 458 sherds of pottery, weighing 8.3kg. The fabrics are broadly comparable with those from the Kennet Valley settlement and are indicative of a 12th to 13th century period of occupation. A higher proportion of glazed wares from jugs and tripod pitchers from this settlement may indicate a slightly later period of occupation, or an establishment of relatively higher social status than the Kennet Valley site.

Two of the structures (F7 and F37) produced 30 sherds of pottery in fabrics Z1, Z2, Z3 and Z4. Those from F37 include spouted pitcher sherds, while a round section jug handle (fabric Z2), probably of 13th century date, was associated with the tiled area (F36). The gullies defining the third structure (F23, F25 and F48) all contained pottery. A particularly large assemblage was collected from F23, comprising some 149 sherds, weighing 3kg. The fabrics are dominated by sandy wares (Z1, with fabrics Z2, Z3

and Z4) and the group contains a number of glazed sherds from jugs, tripod pitchers, as well as cooking pots and dishes (eg 9, 3–5). Several sherds also show evidence of decoration, including applied thumb strips, plain and slipped/glazed; incised wavy lines; one glazed sherd with a ring and dot stamp and impressed ovals (Fig 9, 5). F25 contained just five sherds of sandy ware (fabric Z1); whilst F48 produced 21 sherds (fabrics Z1 and Z3). Small numbers of contemporary sherds were recovered from the adjacent gullies, F22 and F24.

The other main groups of pottery from the site came from the three pits F14, F15 and F30. F14 contained 103 sherds, all fabric Z1, with the exception of one sherd of Z4. Vessels include tripod pitchers, the substantial part of a fire cover (curfew, Fig 9, 1) and cooking pots, some with thumb strip decoration (Fig 9, 2). Collectively these suggest a 13th century date. The smaller assemblage from F15 (33 sherds) is more diverse, with fabrics Z1, Z2 and Z4. It also includes several glazed sherds and is likely to be of later 12th to 13th century date. The 52 sherds from F30 would appear to be broadly contemporary. They include a hollow socket from a bowl/dish (Fig 9, 7), a tripod pitcher base and white slipped green glazed wares.

#### THE METALWORK by D Richards

Eight metal objects were recovered from Medieval contexts and with the exception of a small fragment of sheet bronze from the Pang Valley site (F23, context 90), all are made of iron. Two of these, an object which might have been used as a wedge (F101, context 95), and part of a nail (F2, context 50), came from the Kennet Valley settlement. The remaining five iron objects were found at the site in the Pang Valley. These include one broken nail (F15, context 65), two horseshoe nails (F23, context 86 and F30, context 93), a bridle fragment (F14, context 64) and a small piece of cast iron which seems to be marked

with part of an inscription (F37, context 150).

#### THE WORKED STONE by D F Williams

Only one piece of worked stone, a large fragment of Malmstone from the Upper Greensand (weighing 485g), was recovered from a Medieval context. This came from the Kennet Valley settlement (Field 7) and was found in a gully at the northern end of the cleaned area (F127).

#### THE ANIMAL BONE by S Hamilton-Dyer

A total of only 30 animal bones were recovered, the majority of which came from the settlement in the Pang Valley (WLN). The methods applied during the analysis of this assemblage are described above (p 53). The usual domestic ungulates, including horse, cattle, sheep/goat and pig are represented (see Table 2). There are also two bones of swan, probably mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), from the Pang Valley settlement (F14, context 64). Two cattle sized fragments from this same context have been burnt. Another cattle bone, also from the Pang Valley, has been chopped. This is the only evidence for butchery on the site.

#### THE CHARRED PLANT REMAINS by J B Letts

Eighteen soil samples were taken from various Medieval and Post-Medieval contexts (see Table 3), including five from the Kennet Valley settlement (Field 7) and 13 from the site in the Pang Valley (WLN). The methods used to extract and identify the plant remains are described above (p 54). Most of the samples examined include comminuted charcoal, but few contain sufficient large fragments for detailed analysis.

The samples from the Kennet Valley settlement (Field 7) came from features located at the northern end of the field. Most of the plant remains were recovered from a charred deposit in the top of a small oval pit (F7, context 55), which was probably Post-Medieval in date. These include two specimens of cultivated pea (*Pisum sativum*), a single grain of 'free-threshing' wheat (cf *T aestivum*), two specimens of wild vetch (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp) and a single large grain of an unidentified wild grass (fam Gramineae). None of the samples contained sufficient seeds for an in-depth interpretation, although most are clearly arable in origin.

Samples from the Pang Valley settlement (WLN) are richer and typically Medieval in character. Five of the 13 samples examined contained grains of 'free-threshing' wheat, that rarely appears in abundance in pre-Saxon

Table 2 *Species distribution*

Site	Context	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Cow	Sheep	Indet	Bird	Total
Fld 7	F4, 52	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Fld 7	F18, 68	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
WLN	F135, 84	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
WLN	F1, 50	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
WLN	F14, 64	—	2	1	—	5	1	1	2	12
WLN	F14, 73	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
WLN	F15, 65	1	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	4
WLN	F23,86	—	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	4
WLN	F23, 90	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
WLN	F30, 93	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2
WLN	F46, 159	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total		1	8	3	3	6	3	4	2	30

Table 3 Charred plant remains from Field 7 and WLN

Site	Context	Volume	Species	Common Name	No
Fld 7	F3, 51	6	cereal indeterminate	N/A	1
Fld 7	F4, 52	6	cereal indeterminate	N/A	1
Fld 7	F6, 54	6	cereal indeterminate	N/A	1
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (small)	wild vetch	1
Fld 7	F7, 55	6	cf <i>Pisum sativum</i>	pea	–
			cf <i>Pisum sativum</i>	pea	1
			cf <i>T aestivum</i>	bread wheat	–
			<i>Triticum</i> sp	wheat	2
			cereal indeterminate (small)	N/A	9
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (small)	vetchling	1
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (large)	vetch	1
			Graminea (large)	grass	1
			indeterminate	N/A	2
WLN	F2, 52	16	<i>T aestivum</i>	bread wheat	1
			cf <i>Triticum</i> sp hulled	spelt/emmer	1
			cereal indeterminate	N/A	1
			cereal fragments	N/A	2
WLN	F14, 73	16	<i>Triticum</i> sp	wheat	3
			cereal indeterminate	N/A	4
			cereal fragments	N/A	3
WLN	F14, 64	16	cf <i>T aestivum</i>	bread wheat	5
			cf <i>Triticum</i> sp	wheat	8
			cereal indeterminate	N/A	13
			cereal fragments	N/A	12
			cf <i>Vicia sativa</i>	cultivated vetch	1
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (small)	vetchling	2
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (large)	vetch	1
			<i>Corylus avellana</i> (shell)	hazel shell	7
			<i>Bromus/Avena</i> sp	brome/oat	2
			<i>Rosa</i> sp	wild rose	1
			<i>Prunus</i> sp (shell fragment)	sloe/plum	2
WLN	F15, 68	6	cf <i>T aestivum</i> (small)	bread wheat	1
			cereal indeterminate	N/A	2
			cereal fragments	N/A	6
			<i>H vulgare</i> (lateral)	6-row barley	1
			<i>Bromus/Avena</i> sp	brome/oat	2
			<i>Corylus avellana</i>	hazel	1
WLN	F15, 65	14	<i>T aestivum</i>	bread wheat	3
			cf <i>T aestivum</i>	bread wheat	3
			<i>Triticum</i> sp (tail grain)	wheat	6
			cereal indeterminate	N/A	12
			cereal fragments	N/A	16
			<i>H vulgare</i> (lateral)	6-row barley	1
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (small)	vetchling	–
			<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp (large)	vetch	–
			<i>Bromus/Avena</i> sp	brome/oat	1
WLN	F23, 86	6	cereal indeterminate	N/A	4
WLN	F30, 151	6	<i>T aestivum</i>	bread wheat	2
			<i>Triticum</i> sp	wheat	1

assemblages. By contrast the cereal fraction recovered from Roman deposits in southern England is almost always dominated by the grain or chaff of hulled wheat, usually spelt (*T spelta*).

Medieval 'free-threshing' wheat is usually ascribed to the common bread wheat (*T aestivum*), although its charred grains cannot be differentiated from rivet wheat (*T turgidum*), which was introduced to Britain in the Norman period (Letts 1996). The small size of many of the cereal grains recovered suggests the presence of 'tail grain', which was separated from the bulk of the harvest during cleaning. Samples from a small pit (F15, contexts 65 and 68) also contain single small 'lateral grain' specimens of six-row hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare* sp *hexastichum*). The brome grass/oat specimens (*Bromus/Avena* sp) are too poorly preserved to be identified with certainty to either taxon, as is also the case for most of the other weed seeds.

The sample from an adjacent pit (F14, context 64), contains specimens of three wild species that have been gathered for food in England for millennia – hazel (*Corylus avellana*), wild plum/sloe (*Prunus* sp) and wild rose (*Rosa* sp). Although the evidence is limited, the presence of these species in a sample dominated by cereals suggests they were gathered purposely and consumed on site. Large quantities of hazel shells have appeared in plant assemblages from deserted villages in districts that were well-forested in the Medieval period (Letts 1995).

#### DISCUSSION

Both of the Medieval sites are located in an area of Berkshire where there appears to have been a relatively high settlement density. Villages mentioned in the Domesday book in the vicinity of the Kennet and Pang valleys are quite numerous (Darby and Campbell 1962). By the 12th and 13th centuries both Newbury and Reading were thriving towns and there

were also important centres of occupation at Aldermaston and Thatcham (Astill 1978).

Most of the Medieval settlements in the vicinity of the River Kennet are located on sloping ground along the valley fringes (Lobb, Mees and Mephram 1991). The site in Field 7, being situated on the valley floor, is unusual in this respect, although contemporary settlements at Theale and Englefield occupy a similar topographic position. The nearest excavated Medieval site lies approximately 4km to the south-east on the opposite side of the River Kennet, at Meales Farm, Sulhamstead (*ibid*). This too was inhabited between the 12th and 13th centuries, although occupation continued rather longer into the 14th century. Like Field 7, the site at Meales Farm was characterised by numerous gullies, some of which were thought to represent structures (*ibid*). This would seem to indicate shared methods of construction, although the limited scale of the excavations on both sites precludes a comparison of either settlement plan or building type.

The settlement in Field 7 seems to have been fairly large, extending over a distance of at least 145m, on the same axis as the current lane and the earlier trackway. It is possible that it was even longer, but the features at the southern end of the field were undated and may well have been substantially later. Unfortunately, the extent of the site in an east to west direction is unknown. A correspondence between scatters of Medieval pottery and lanes has been noted elsewhere in Berkshire (Ford 1987; and 1990), a pattern which is replicated in other parts of southern England. In Wiltshire, for example, settlements arranged in regular rows along lanes were a common feature of the Medieval landscape (Lewis 1994).

The site in the Pang Valley forms part of a noticeable concentration of settlements, located along the river valleys in the southern part of the Berkshire Downs (Richards 1979). Its situation, towards the foot of a steep hill slope overlooking the valley floor, echoes the pattern of Medieval settlement on the chalk

lands of the neighbouring counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire (Hare 1994).

The site is only 500m to the north-east of the contemporary village of Bradfield and may well have formed a satellite hamlet. The relationship between the two sites is, of course, difficult to reconstruct with any precision. A study in Oxfordshire demonstrated that the organisation of settlement into hamlets, villages and parishes was highly variable even in the same county (Bond 1985). There seems little reason to suppose that the situation was any different in Berkshire. Interpretation is rendered more complex when the fluid nature of earlier Medieval settlement is taken into account. In this particular case the character of the site is open to debate and its full extent is unknown. Three of the buildings were of a size fairly typical of peasant houses, an interpretation apparently supported by the presence of tiled hearths within two of the structures. If this was the case, then the relatively high proportion of glazed wares compared to the assemblage from Field 7, is likely to be indicative of a later date rather than a higher status. It is, of course, also possible that the structures were bake houses associated with a larger building outside the excavated area.

#### *The archive*

A small number of features, mostly isolated field boundaries, were observed and recorded during the watching brief. There were no artefacts recovered from any of these and they are therefore of unknown date. Since they are not associated directly with the settlements, a description of their character and location is confined to the archive. A series of undated features were identified along a 40m x 10m stretch of the easement strip in the centre of Field 3 (Fig 2). Most of these comprised irregular linear hollows, which might have resulted from episodes of cultivation. Details are available in the archive, which also includes records of a palaeo-channel cutting the gravel terrace in the Kennet Valley to the west of North Street. In addition, the archive

contains the details of the geophysical survey and a series of unpublished section drawings of severely truncated features, which make little contribution to the interpretation of any of the sites.

All artefacts recovered from the various sites have been retained, with the exception of the burnt flint and much of the ceramic tile. This was quantified before being discarded and a representative sample of the various types of tile was kept as a reference collection. This material, together with the rest of the archive, is deposited in Newbury Museum (Accession Number NEBYM 1996.38).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, T G, 1990, *An Iron Age and Romano-British enclosed settlement at Watkins Farm, Northmore, Oxon.* Thames Valley Landscapes: the Windrush Valley, Vol 1, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology.
- Astill, G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire: an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeological Committee Publication No 2.
- Aston, M, and Lewis, C, 1994, *The Medieval landscape of Wessex*, Oxbow Monograph 46.
- Bass, W M, *Human osteology*, Missouri Archaeological Society, Columbia.
- Bond, C J, 1985, 'Medieval Oxfordshire villages and their topography: a preliminary discussion', in D Hooke (ed), *Medieval Villages*, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 5, 101-123.
- Booth, P, 1995, 'The pottery', in M R Roberts, 106-7.
- Butterworth, C A, and Lobb, S J, 1992, *Excavations in the Burghfield area, Berkshire: developments in the Bronze Age and Saxon landscapes*, Wessex Archaeology Report 1.
- Cowell, R W, Fulford, M G, and Lobb, S, 1980, 'Excavations of prehistoric and Roman settlement at Aldermaston Wharf 1976-77', *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 69, 1-35.
- Darby, H C, and Campbell, M J (eds), 1962, *The Domesday geography of south-east England*, Cambridge University Press.
- Entwistle, R, Fulford, M, and Raymond, F, 1994, *Salisbury Plain Project 1993-4 interim report*, University of Reading.
- Fairbrother, J, 1990, *Facombe Netherton*, British Museum Occasional Paper 74, Vol II.
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire archaeological survey*, Berkshire County Council Department of Highways and Planning, Occasional Paper 1, Reading.



- , 1990, *Loddon Valley fieldwalking survey, interim report*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading.
- Fulford, M, 1992 'Iron Age to Roman: a period of radical change on the gravels', in M G Fulford and E Nichols (eds), *Developing landscapes of lowland Britain*, Society of Antiquaries of London Occasional Paper 14, 23–38, London.
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Middle Thames Valley: an archaeological survey of the river gravels*, Berkshire Archaeological Committee, publication no. 1, Reading.
- Gray, M, 1970, 'Excavations at Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham, Berks.', *Oxoniensia*, 35, 107–109.
- Hare, J, 1994, 'Agriculture and rural settlement in the chalklands of Wiltshire and Hampshire from c 1200–1500', in M Aston and C Lewis (eds), 159–169.
- Hollings, M, 1923, 'Theale Hundred', *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Berkshire*, Vol 3, 385–496.
- Johnston, J, and Bowden, M (ed), 1983–85, 'Excavations at Pingewood', *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 72, 17–52.
- Lambrick, G, and Robinson, M, 1979, *Iron Age and Roman riverside settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire*, Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit Report 2, CBA Research Report 32.
- Letts, J B, 1995, 'The charred plant remains', in R Ivens et al, *Tattenhoe and Westbury: two deserted Medieval settlements in Milton Keynes*, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series, 8, 444–453.
- , 1996, 'Smoke blackened thatch: a new source of late Medieval plant remains from southern England', *Ancient Monuments Lab. Report*.
- Lewis, C, 1994, 'Patterns and processes in the Medieval settlement of Wiltshire', in M Aston and C Lewis (eds), 171–193.
- Lobb, S J, Mees, G, and Mephram, L, 1991, 'Meales Farm, Sulhamstead: archaeological investigation of Romano-British and Medieval features, 1985–87', *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 73, 54–65.
- Lobb, S J, and Morris, E L, 1991–3, 'Investigations of Bronze Age and Iron Age features at Risely Farm, Swallowfield', *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 74, 37–68.
- Lyne, M A B, and Jefferies, R S, 1979, *The Alice Holt/Farnham Roman pottery industry*, CBA Research Report 30, London.
- Manning, W H, 1973–4, 'Excavations on late Iron Age, Roman and Saxon sites at Ufton Nervet, Berkshire', *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 67, 1–62.
- Margary, I D, 1955, *Roman roads in Britain*, Vol I, Phoenix House, London.
- McKinley, J I, 1989, 'Cremations: expectations, methodologies and realities', in C A Roberts, F Lee and J L Bintliff (eds), *Burial archaeology: current research, methods and developments*, BAR (British Series), 211, 65–76.
- , 1991 (unpublished), 'Cremated bone from the Area 15 cemetery, Baldock', (report for G Burliegh, Letchworth Museum).
- , 1992 (unpublished) 'Cremation and inhumation burials from St. Stephen's cemetery, St. Albans', (report for R Niblett, Verulamium Museum).
- , 1994, *The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham Part VIII: the cremations*, East Anglian Archaeology, 69.
- , 1995 (unpublished), 'The cremated bone from the East London Romano-British cemeteries', (report for MoLAS).
- McMinn, R M H and Hutchings, R T, 1985, *A colour atlas of human anatomy*, Wolfe Medical Publications, London.
- Mellor, M, 1994, 'Oxfordshire pottery', *Oxoniensia*, 59, 1–217.
- Miles, D, 1986, *Archaeology at Barton Court Farm, Abingdon, Oxon*, Oxford Archaeological Unit Report 3, CBA Research Report 50.
- Millett, M, 1986, 'An early Roman cemetery at Alton, Hampshire', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 42, 43–87.
- Moore, J, and Jennings, D, 1992, *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age landscape, Thames Valley landscapes: the Kennet Valley Vol 1*, Oxford.
- Peacock, D P S, 1987, 'Iron Age and Roman quern production at Lodsworth, West Sussex', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 67, 61–85.
- Richards, J C, 1978, *The archaeology of the Berkshire Downs: an introductory survey*, Berkshire Archaeological Committee Publication No 3.
- Roberts, M R, 1995, 'Excavations at Park Farm, Binfield, Berkshire, 1990: an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and two Mesolithic flint scatters', in I Barnes, W A Boismier, R M J Cleal, A P Fitzpatrick, and M R Roberts, *Early settlement in Berkshire: Mesolithic-Roman occupation in the Thames and Kennet Valleys*, Wessex Archaeology Report 6, 93–132.
- Timby, J R, 1989, 'The pottery', in M G Fulford, *The Silchester Amphitheatre excavations of 1979–85*, *Britannia monograph* 10, London, 80–110.
- , 1992, 'The Roman pottery', in J Moore and D Jennings, 82–7.
- , forthcoming, 'The pottery', in M G Fulford, *Excavations on the site of the Forum-Basilica, Silchester*, *Britannia monograph*.
- VCH see Hollings.
- Vince, A (ed), 1991, *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London: II finds and environmental evidence*, LAMAS Spec Pap 12.