

# THE EXCAVATION OF LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL FEATURES AT KINTBURY SQUARE, KINTBURY, BERKSHIRE, 1995

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with contributions by Tess Durden, Sheila Hamilton-Dyer, John Letts, Jenny Mitcham,  
Andrew Smith, Jane Timby and David Williams

## SUMMARY

*Excavations at Kintbury, in advance of house construction in 1995, located a number of features of Late Saxon and Medieval date. One of the pits found contained a deposit of human bone, some of which had been traumatised and may be the deposition of the remains of executed criminals. The finding of the Saxon deposits provides some detailed information on the nature and location of Late Saxon Kintbury as previously our limited knowledge of Late Saxon Kintbury was only known from documentary sources.*

## INTRODUCTION

An excavation and watching brief were carried out in advance of groundworks for a new housing development close to the centre of Kintbury (Fig 1) (SU 3839 6690). The development site is located on the southern side of the Kennet Valley at a height of approximately 100m above OD on ground that slopes gently towards the east. The underlying geology is Upper Chalk crossed by periglacial stripes filled with coombe rock (BGS 1947).

An evaluation carried out in 1988 had located a number of deposits of Medieval date with some Late Saxon/Early Medieval pottery (WA 1988). On the basis of this

evidence an excavation was carried out on a large plot fronting Station Road (WA 1991). Unfortunately, a disappointing number of features and finds of archaeological significance were revealed and most were located away from the street frontage. However, alterations to the layout of the proposed new housing meant that additional excavations were required in areas nearby. These investigations were carried out as a requirement of the planning process, in accordance with the Department of the Environment's guidance paper **Archaeology and Planning** (PPG16 1990) and to a specification provided by Babbie Public Services Division, archaeological advisors to the County Council. Fieldwork took place during January and March 1995 and the site code was KS95. The archive is to be deposited with Newbury Museum (Accession number NEBYM1996.31).

## THE EXCAVATION

The topsoil was removed by machine from two areas of approximately 250sq m and 160sq m respectively (Trenches 1 and 2) located in former back gardens; a watching brief was carried out on a similar sized area (see Figs 2 and 3). The topsoil, which directly overlay archaeological deposits, was unusually deep, up to 1m in places. The removal of the topsoil

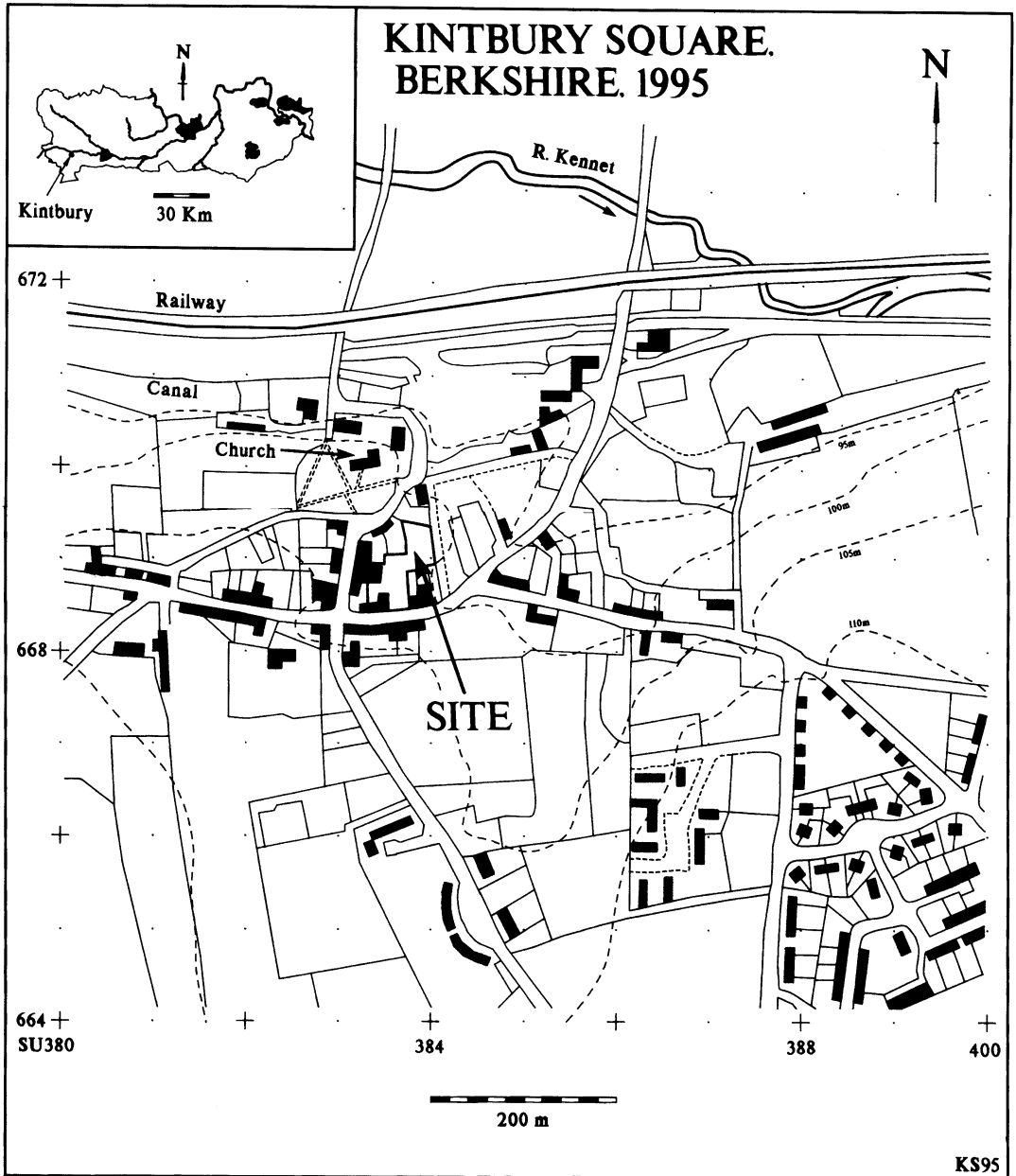


Figure 1 Location of site within Kintbury

# KINTBURY SQUARE, BERKSHIRE, 1995



Figure 2 Location of evaluation trenches and excavated areas

## KINTBURY SQUARE. BERKSHIRE. 1995

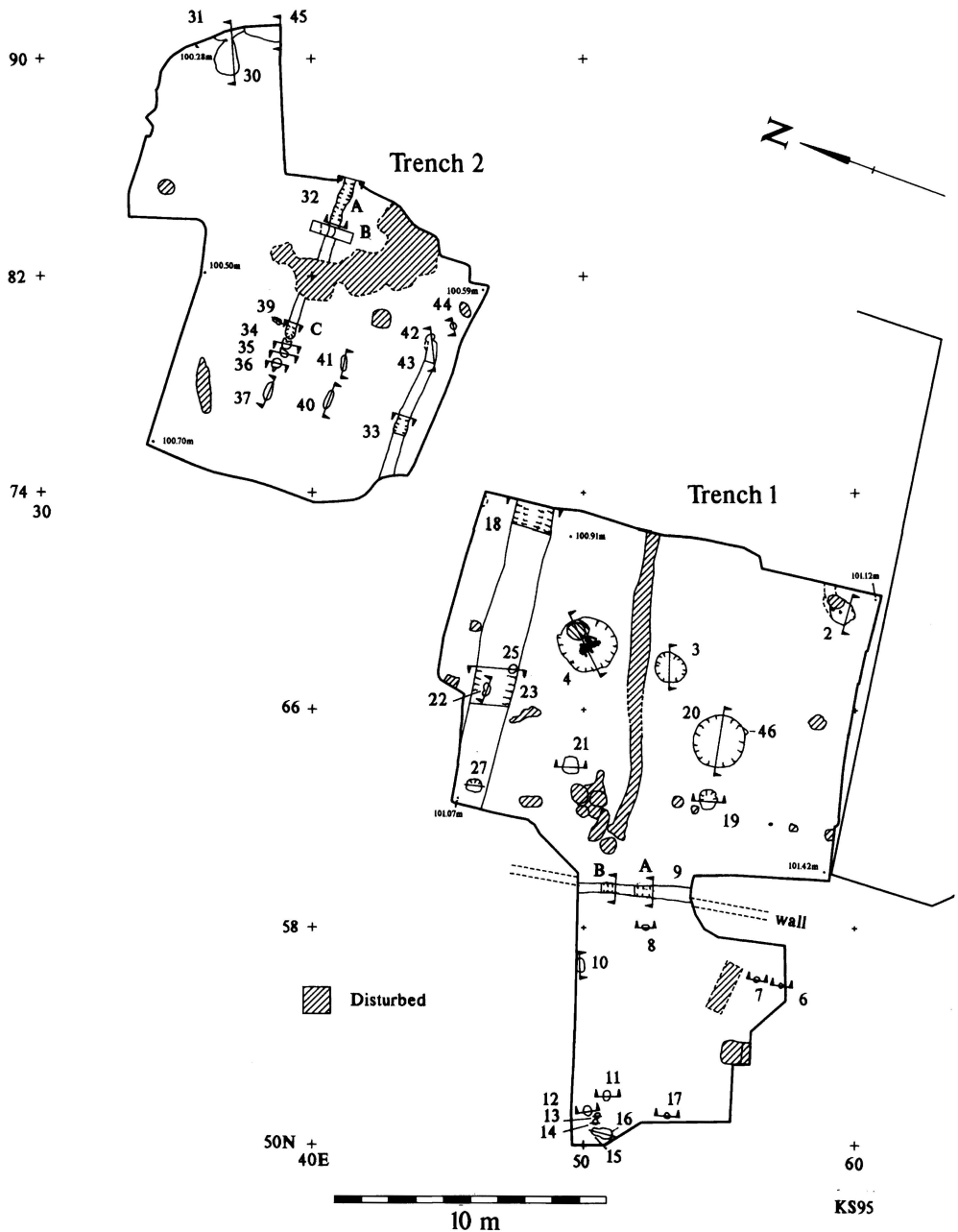


Figure 3 Plan of all excavated features

took place under archaeological supervision using a 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The stripped surfaces of Trenches 1 and 2 were cleaned by hand. This revealed 38 subsoil features including two ditches, three gullies and seven pits; the remainder comprised shallow scoops or posthole-sized features. (Features of post-Medieval or modern date have been excluded from this figure and from the following discussion.)

### DESCRIPTION OF FEATURES

#### *Ditch*

Ditch 24 was aligned east–west and was observed for 12m of its length in Trench 1 (Fig 3). No accompanying bank was seen. Two slots through the ditch showed it to be V-shaped in profile, 1.6m across at the top and 0.9m deep (Fig 4, sections 18 and 23). The fills produced a number of Prehistoric struck flints and animal bone but no pottery. Two features of uncertain date (F25 and F27) were cut into its uppermost fill. Although evidence for the date of the ditch is limited it is possible that it is Prehistoric.

#### *Gullies*

Three gullies were revealed, two aligned east–west (F32 and F33/43) and a third (F9) aligned north-south (Fig 3). F9 contained ten sherds of Medieval pottery spanning in date from the 10th to 15th centuries. It was the only gully to contain dating evidence. Gully F9 is on a similar alignment to an upstanding flint wall, which suggests that this boundary may have originated in Medieval times.

The other two gullies terminated within Trench 2 but the line of one (F32) continued to the west as a series of shallow postholes (F34–37). A fourth gully on the same east–west alignment (in Trench 1) was shown to contain post-Medieval material and it is possible that all three east–west gullies were post-Medieval property divisions.

#### *Postholes*

Eighteen features of posthole dimensions were located, one (F17) during the evaluation. The latter is one of a cluster of seven postholes at the western end of the site (Fig 3) but, unfortunately, these do not form a pattern which can be interpreted as structural. Only one of this group (F12) produced dating evidence: a single sherd of possible late Saxon pottery. No other postholes contained dating evidence.

#### *Pits*

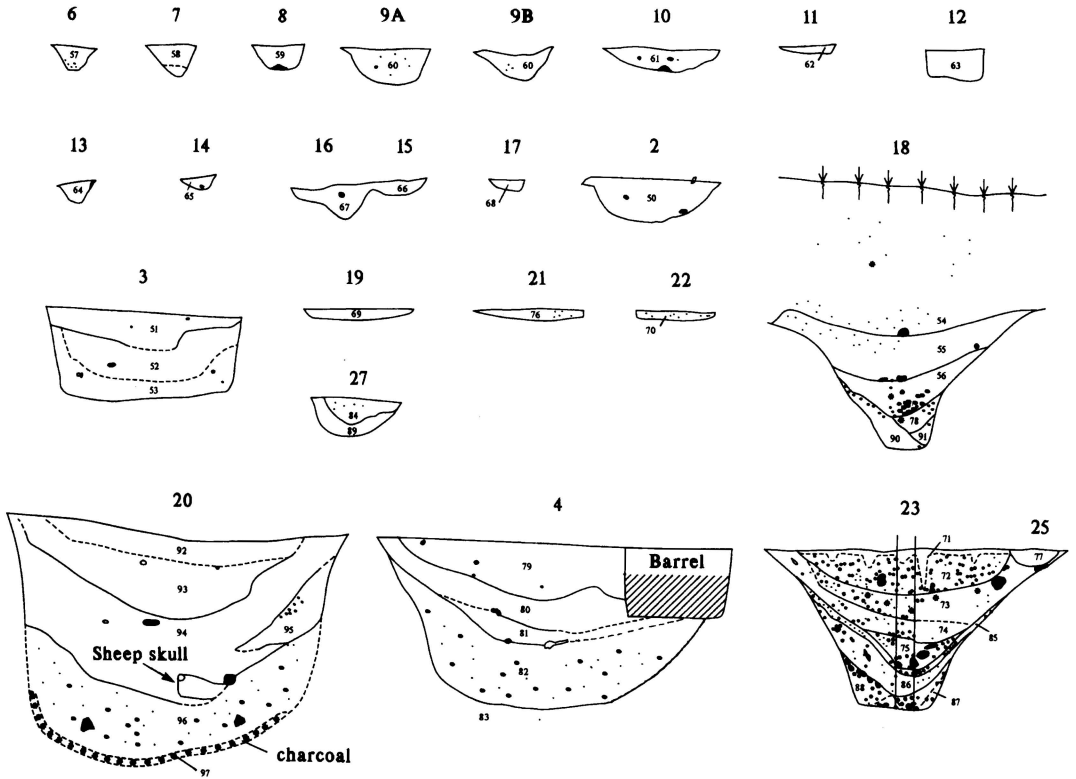
Four medium to large pits were located and fully excavated (F2, 3, 4 and 20). Pit F20 was 1.6m in diameter and 1.35m deep, it had straight sides, a rounded base and five main fills (Fig 4 section 20). The initial fill was a charcoal layer c 10–20mm thick (97) which had been deliberately buried with relatively clean chalk (96); above this the fills contained a range of occupation debris (94 and 95). The artefacts from this pit included a composite bone comb (Fig 6.4) and a Mayen lava quern fragment in addition to animal bone, pottery and brick/tile. With the exception of a few Medieval sherds from the upper layers (92, 93), the pottery appears to date to late Saxon times.

The small pit (F2) in the north eastern corner of Trench 1 was 0.7m across and 0.25m deep. It produced five sherds of pottery, including material dating to the 12th–14th century, and animal bone. Pit F3 was 1m in diameter and 0.5m deep, with straight sides and a flat base. It only contained two sherds of pottery, one of which is of 10th–12th century date, and a range of animal bone.

Unfortunately, the most interesting feature on the site is also one of the most poorly dated. F4 was a large bowl-shaped pit 1.9m in diameter and 0.95m deep (Figs 3 and 4). The top of the feature on the east side was cut into by a Victorian pit containing a barrel (Fig 5). Only three pottery sherds were found: a poorly dated Saxon sherd and a worn sherd of Medieval date came from the uppermost

KINTBURY SQUARE, BERKSHIRE, 1995

Trench 1



Trench 2

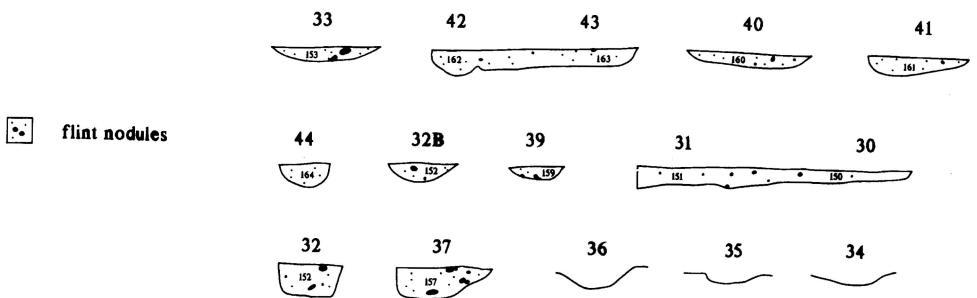


Figure 4 Sections of features

## KINTBURY SQUARE, BERKSHIRE, 1995

69+

+

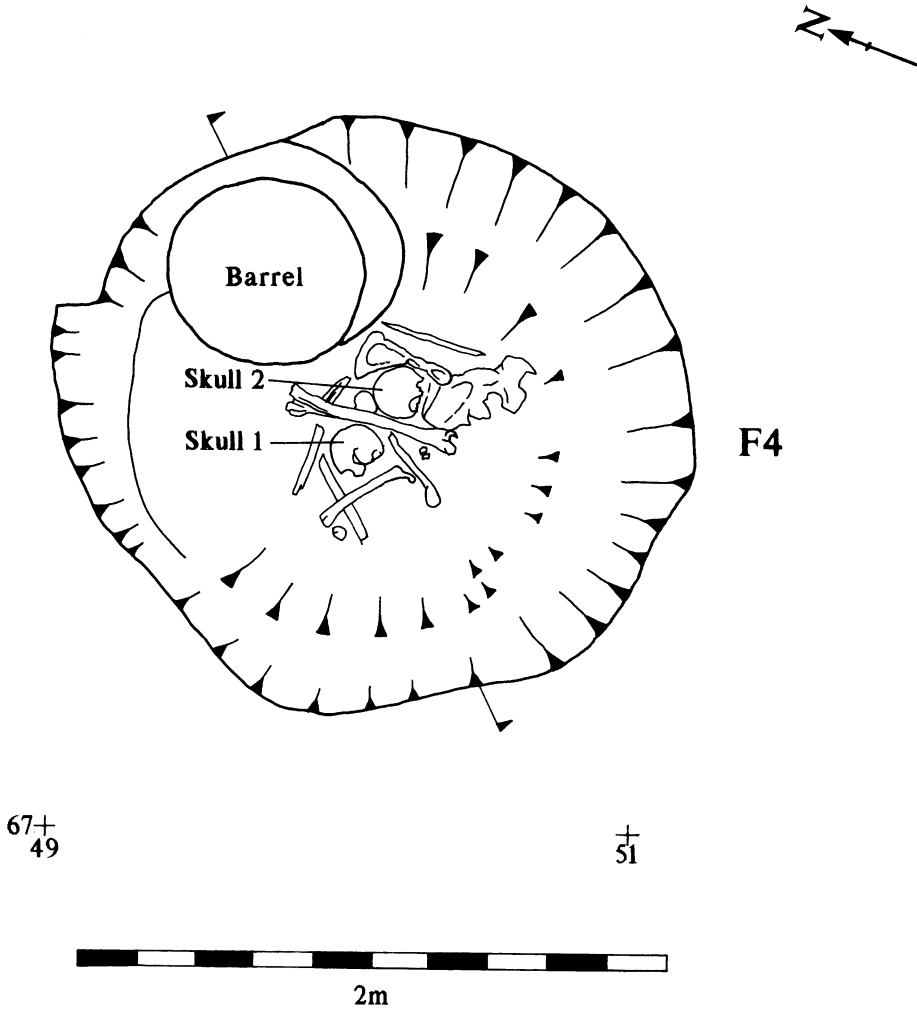


Figure 5 Plan of human bone deposits in pit F4

layer (79) and a poorly dated Saxon sherd came from one of the middle fills (80). The lowest fill (82) comprised clean chalk/coombe rock, possibly a deliberate backfill, but, unlike the lower fill of F20 (96), this did not appear to be sealing specific deposits. Above

this, the middle fills (80 and 81) contained a deposit of human bone. These bones were disarticulated and mainly comprised limb bones, pelves and the skulls of at least three individuals (see below for details). Where sex and age could be determined the bones

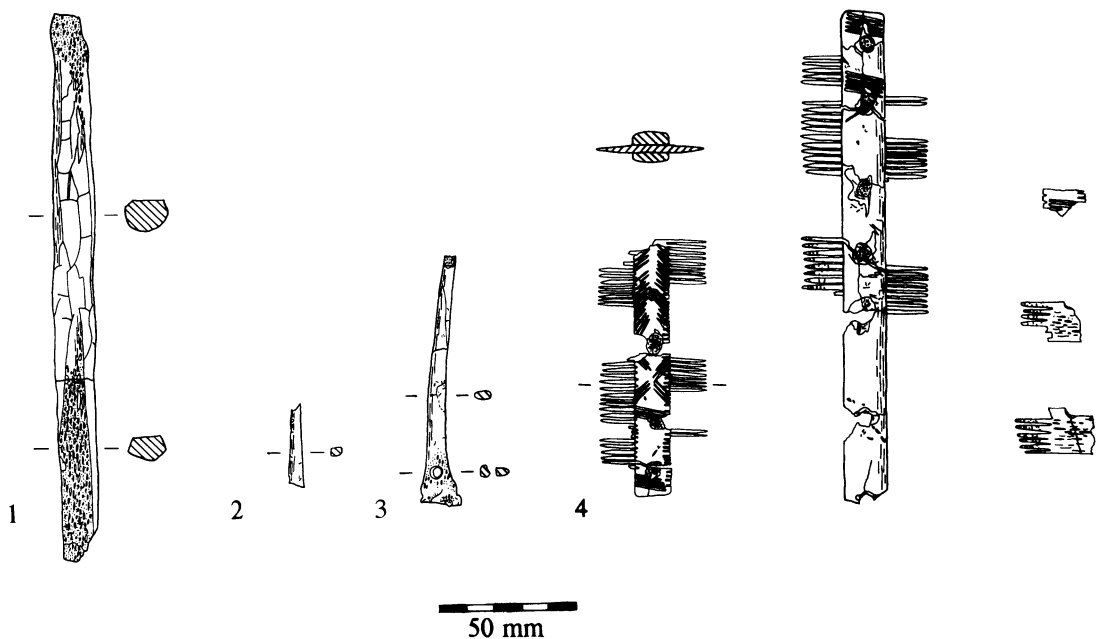


Figure 6 Bone tools: 6.1 whittled bone F20 (93), 6.2 fragmentary bone point F20 (93), 6.3 bone needle F20 (93), 6.4 composite bone comb F20 (93)

appeared to come from males aged  $c > 15$  years, possibly 30–44 years. The bones were not apparently placed in an ordered manner, but one might have expected the two skulls to roll and touch each other if they had been thrown in individually. It is possible that they were deposited together in a sack or sheet.

Four shallow pits/scoops (F19, 21, 40 and 41) were also excavated. Of these only F19 produced dating evidence in the form of a single sherd of possibly late Saxon pottery.

### THE FINDS

#### Pottery by Jane Timby

The pottery from the excavation comprised some 68 sherds mainly dating to the later Saxon/early Medieval to Medieval periods (9th/11th to ?14th centuries) (Table 1). The

pottery showed a wide diversity of fabrics for such a small group, many as single sherds, with most of the material being handmade. Such diversity is typical of handmade material prior to the more standardised range found with wheelmade products from the 12/13th century. The dating provided here is very provisional in the absence of any detailed published stratigraphic sequences from the area against which to compare material. The number of featured sherds was also relatively low, preventing typological comparisons.

The majority of the material appeared to be typical coarse kitchen wares of a domestic nature. However, of particular note was a very hard fired rimsherd from F9 (60) slot B, probably from a jar analogous in form to examples of ginger jars published from Norwich (Jennings 1981, fig 8) (Fig 7). The type was current in the 11th–12th centuries, although the character of the fabric might



Table 1 Pottery by fabric and context

Fabric (M):	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	?Rom	?Med
Feature/Fill																	
2 (50)	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 (51)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 (52)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 (79)	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
4 (80)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
9 (60)	6	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12 (63)	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19 (69)	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20 (92) top	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	1
20 (92)	-	1	1	14	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
20 (93)	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
29 (93/4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
31 (151)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 (165)	2	-	5	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U/S	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1
Total	11	3	9	18	1	3	1	1	1	1	8	3	2	2	2	1	1

suggest this is an import; an unusual find, if correctly identified, in such an assemblage.

The soft, chalk-tempered fabric (M4) (see below) corresponds with material described in previous work at Kintbury considered to date

to the 9th/10th century, based on similar material from Netherton, Hampshire (WA 1991). Three featured sherds from F20 show these to come from simple, everted rim cooking-pots, two of which have internal sooting from use. Features which appear to contain exclusively Saxon material include F12 (63), F19 (69) and F20 (excepting perhaps one or two later sherds from the tops of features).

The Medieval material proper was represented by the usual flint and sand tempered fabrics found in this area and examples of

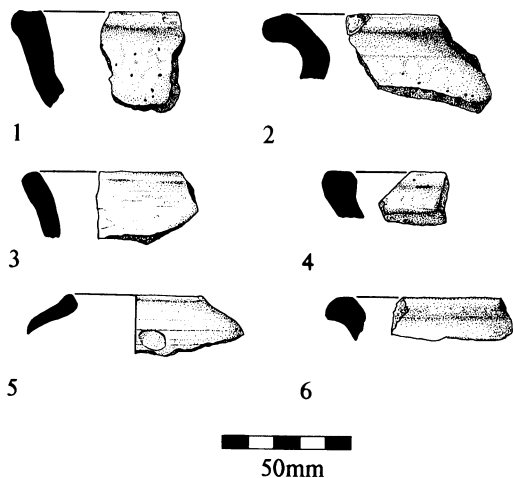


Figure 7 Pottery: 7.1 F9A (60), 7.2 and 7.3 F20 (92), 7.4 F45 (165), 7.5 F9B (60), 7.6 F20 (92)

Table 2 Tile, brick and fired clay

Feature/Fill	Number and description
F16 (67)	5 fragments fired clay
F18 (top)	1 Roman flat tile
F20 (93/94)	1 roof tile post-Roman; 1 fragment tile/brick
F20 (93)	1 tile fragment ?Roman; 1 thick flat tile Roman
F23 (72)	1 roof tile post-Roman
F25 (77)	1 irregular fragment brick/tile
F27 (84)	2 roof tile ?post-Roman
F29 (99)	1 fragment ?daub
F45 (165)	3 irregular fragments tile/brick

fabrics correspond to both Newbury fabrics A (M1, 10th–12th century) and Newbury B, containing additional calcareous material (M3, 12th–14th century). Features which contain the earlier material include F3. Those with slightly later material include F9 (60, slots A and B), although this also contained some earlier sherds such as the ginger jar, F45 (165) and F2 (50).

A single possible Roman sherd was found on the surface of the cleaned area and a few of the tiles also appear to be of Roman date (Table 2). Finds from post-Medieval and modern features were not retained.

*Pottery fabric descriptions:*

- M1** coarse angular flint with sand, handmade, (Newbury A). Date: 10th–12th century.
- M2** fine sandy with sparse limestone (?oolites), handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M3** dense sandy with sparse flint and chalk/limestone, handmade. (Newbury B) Date: 12th–14th century.
- M4** chalk tempered with red ferruginous pellets, handmade. Date: late Saxon.
- M5** hard fired cream sandy ware, wheelmade. Date: 13–15th century.
- M6** finely micaceous with sparse-moderate limestone, handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M7** very hard fired greyish ware ?import, wheelmade. Date: 11th–12th century.
- M8** pinkish medium sandy, external brown-green glaze, wheelmade. Date: 13–15th century.
- M9** fine flint, some quartz sand, handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M10** dense quartz sand (red), handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M11** sand and oolitic limestone, handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M12** fine fabric with fine limestone/chalk, handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M13** sparse shell. Date: Saxon.
- M14** flint gravel-tempered, handmade. Date: Saxon.
- M15** thin black sandy ware with sparse limestone and rounded flint. Date: Saxon.

**Struck flint** by Tess Durden

A small number of struck flints were recovered from both trenches, comprising 35 flakes, two intact narrow flakes, four cores, two bashed lumps and one core fragment. Almost all of the pieces were heavily patinated and eighteen pieces came from ditch F23. There are no closely diagnostic items for the collection, although the lack of blades/narrow flakes and blade cores, apart from a single intact narrow flake, and the general crudeness of manufacture may indicate a later Prehistoric date (later Bronze Age/early Iron Age).

A small quantity of burnt flint was also recorded (see archive).

**Stone** by David Williams

Eight samples of stone were submitted for examination but only the more interesting pieces are described below. Details of the remaining samples are in the archive.

A large slab of dark grey, fairly coarse, vesicular lava came from the pit F20 (93) (weight 650gms). This was Mayen-Niedermendig lava from the Eifel Hills of Germany, a region well known for quernstone production in the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods. This piece almost certainly comes from a quernstone. From the same context came a small slither of dark grey, medium-grained, Pennant Sandstone probably from the area around Clevedon in Avon (weight 6gms). This piece also probably comes from a quernstone.

The large pit (F4) which contained the human remains also contained a large carved piece of fine-grained oolitic limestone, perhaps Ketton stone from Rutland, which was widely used as a building stone in the Medieval period (weight 1029gms). This was unfortunately not stratified within the pit.

**Bone tools** by Jenny Mitcham

Three pieces of worked bone and an antler comb were found during the excavation, all from fill 93 of pit F20 (Fig 6).

The antler comb is a double sided, composite comb, secured with iron rivets

(Fig 6, 4). It was recovered in 37 fragments and it is not complete. The condition of the antler is good, though corrosion and expansion of the iron has forced the side plates to fracture, thus some of the pieces no longer fit together perfectly. One of the connecting plates is decorated with three different types of linear ornament; bands of transverse parallel lines, a herringbone pattern and a saltire cross. This side also has pronounced grooves along both edges where the teeth were cut. The other connecting plate is relatively plain with just two zones of transverse parallel lines at the end. Both connecting plates have a flattened profile.

A large percentage of the comb teeth are missing; on the more complete side of the comb there are six teeth per 10mm – a typical number for combs of this period, whereas the other side has 7–8 slightly finer teeth per 10mm. The comb has very regular proportions; it is at least 150mm in length and has a width of 39mm. The connecting plates are 13mm wide, and in a sample of eight measurements each tooth segment has a length of about 13mm. Despite the regularity in the lengths of the tooth segments, they were not fastened in a regular fashion. Similar to comb 40 from Pennyland, Milton Keynes, the tooth segments were secured in three different ways: through the centre, or along one or both edges (Riddler and Waller 1993, 109). The iron rivets have a square cross-section and there are traces of seven of them on the surviving length of comb situated at intervals of between 20mm and 30mm.

There are some signs that the comb had been used; the teeth appear slightly worn and there is evidence of beading. This beading has occurred on only one side of one of the tooth plates and it is not known whether it also appeared on the finer teeth on the opposite end of this segment, as they do not survive. It may be that this tooth segment was manufactured from a piece of antler more susceptible to wear.

From the same fill (93) came three pieces of worked bone. The first is an incomplete

example of a modified pig fibula in two pieces (Fig 6, 3). The head of the artefact is cut from the distal part of the bone and has been perforated. The proximal end has not been recovered but it is probable that it was tapered into a point. The shaft has an oval cross-section and the overall length of the two pieces is 91mm. Modified pig fibulae are commonly found on all Anglo-Saxon sites, particularly early settlements. They have also been found in Medieval contexts in Schleswig (Riddler and Waller 1993). However, the precise function of these artefacts is unclear. It is unlikely that they are associated with dress as there are only two known examples of modified pig fibulae from Anglo-Saxon graves. It seems more feasible that they functioned as a small tool used in weaving, basketry or textile production (*ibid.*, 114).

Also from the same fill (93) came a small, slightly pointed fragment of worked bone with a rounded cross-section but one flattened side (30mm in length) (Fig 6, 2). It is not possible to ascertain the function of this piece, although it may be a fragment of a modified pig fibulae (as above) or some sort of awl or pin. Lastly, a whittled bone was found in two pieces, one end of which is present but blunt and slightly tapered and the other end missing (Fig 6, 1). The working of the bone is concentrated mainly on one face whilst the rest of the bone remains relatively smooth and rounded. It has a very slight curve and its length is 200mm. This object may have served as a peg or burnishing stick, though it is possible that it was either unfinished or was used for practice, as only one side has been fashioned.

#### **Human bone** by Andrew Smith

A number of disarticulated bones were exposed in the secondary fill (81) of pit F4 (Fig 5). These consist of a number of animal fragments and 43 pieces of human bone including 13 long bone fragments, three pelves and two crania.

The 13 long bones consist of the following: a right Humerus, a left Radius, a right shaft

Radius, a left Ulna, two right and three left Femurs, two right and one left Tibia and one right Fibula. All epiphyses had fused, which indicates a minimum age of fifteen years. The metrical analysis of the measurable long bones indicates that they were all male and the estimated height of individuals calculated using the long bones give a range of between 1.75m and 1.80m.

Three pelvis (two left and one right) were recovered. Analysis to determine the sex of these individuals could only be carried out on the two complete examples (one of the left pelvis had been badly damaged post-mortem). The results showed that both pelvis were male (based on a narrow *Sciatic Notch*, small *Sub-pubic angle* and oval *Obturator Foramen*). Examination of the *Pubic Symphysis* suggested an age of between 30 and 39 for the left pelvis and 39–44 for the right, using Todds methodology (Todd 1920).

Two crania were also recovered; one near complete apart from missing facial bones and the other fragmentary. Analysis to determine sex showed the former to be male, based on the pronounced *Supra-Orbital Ridge* (brow ridge), roughened *Occipital* (rear of the head) and the *Supra-meatal crest* running beyond the *External Auditory Meatus* (above the ear). The cranial index showed that it was hyper-brachycephalic ie extremely wide headed. The second skull, on reconstruction, also shows a pronounced brow ridge and extended *Supra-Meatal Crest*, also suggesting a male. The fragment of the latter possessed a fragment of left Maxilla which suggests this was an adult. Also, analysis of the teeth showed that I<sup>1</sup>-P<sup>2</sup> had been lost post-mortem and M<sup>1</sup>-M<sup>3</sup> were absent, presumably lost prior to death. The presence of permanent teeth would suggest the age of this individual at death was at least 17 years.

#### *Pathology*

Although usually rough, the lateral side of the proximal Radius on the *Radial Tuberosity* (a point of articulation with the Ulna), is extremely coarse and pronounced which

suggests a minor enthesopathy. This indicates trauma due to repeated extensive use of the tendons in the upper arm causing heavy abrasion which in turn creates reactive bone growth (Rogers and Waldron 1995).

A single left Zygomatic bone, possibly belonging to the near complete skull, showed evidence of trauma. There is a clean polished break right across the bone, below the eye socket. On the Cranium there are two polished cuts severing the right *Mastoid Process* (the small lump to the rear of the base of the head) and a break at the *Pterygoid Process* of the Sphenoid (within the neck). Polished breaks in bone are associated with cuts. A magnified photograph of the Zygomatic injury shows transverse parallel striations perpendicular to the edge of the bone. This is indicative of a cut by a weapon. The striations in the polished surface are caused by particles of metal on the weapons surface scoring into the bone. This indicates that the man had been struck across the cheek by an edged weapon, probably a sword, severing his lower jaw, crossing his neck and severing both the carotid and jugular arteries, before clipping the base of the skull on its axis. This blow was the most probable the cause of death as a result of shock and mass haemorrhaging.

On the same skull there is an oval perforation in the left Parietal (towards the top left of the skull). On the medial side the hole has cut clean through the inner table forming a rounded triangular shape. On the lateral side a semi-circular incised line that joins onto the perforation on both anterior and posterior sides cuts into the outer table. On the medial edge of the perforation, the sides of the inner/outer table are smooth, whereas the lateral edge is jagged and the inner table is near non-existent or slopes inferio-laterally. The smooth sides of the perforation show that this was caused very soon after death. A lack of nutrients would mean that the edges of any damage caused even a short time after death would have a jagged appearance.

One interpretation of this perforation is that it is a trephination ie a scored hole in the cranium thought to be of some surgical or supernatural worth (Ackernecht 1967; Wakely 1997). This is the scraping type of trephination caused by circular pressure from a sharp implement (Parker 1989). The smoothness of one side of the perforation could also indicate a weapon blow. However, there were no distinct striations on the inner and outer tables. Another interpretation is that the head may have been rammed onto a pole. However, if this was the cause, one would expect the endosteum (outer skin of bone) to be chipped and frayed around the outer edge and this is not the case (even in fresh bone a severe cut may fray edges). The head itself shows no sign of total decapitation usually observed on the condyles which connect the head to the spine. Unfortunately, there is no way of telling whether the neck had been severed lower down as the assemblage contains no vertebrae.

#### *Discussion*

The deposit of disarticulated bones in pit F4 suggests secondary deposition (ie the exhumation and reburial of remains) which would explain the predominance of larger bones such as limbs, crania and pelvis. It is quite possible that none of the bones belong to the same individual.

However, if we assume that the long bones and pelvis belong to the crania, the analysis would suggest a minimum of three individuals, all male and with an average height of 1.79m, which is above average for the Saxon period (the average being approximately 1.71m) (Marlow 1992). The pelvis suggest that two individuals were of the 30 to 45 age bracket and the long bones indicate individuals of at least 15 years.

The cut to the left side of the face indicates the most likely cause of death for one of the individuals and for the second, the Subdural Haemotoma would probably have caused a long-term deterioration in health as a result of the depressed fracture in the temple region.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to speculate further with regard to the causes of death of these individuals. However, the manner in which the bones have been deposited at Kintbury is unusual as the burial of singular human bones in Anglo Saxon England is rare. The majority of decapitated bodies are given formal burial with the head placed in the anatomically correct position, as at Lankhills (Marsh and West 1981). The practice of showing the decapitated heads of the enemy or the criminal upon the town walls is well known in art and literature but such remains are scarcely identified archaeologically. An 8th century perforated skull was found at Cottam, Yorkshire and it has been suggested (Richards, newspaper article) that this individual had been judicially executed, the head exhibited on a pole and then discarded into a pond, which subsequently silted up and was later reused as a rubbish pit. A further example of severe cranial trauma was found on a skull from Eccles, Kent which showed that the individual suffered three blows to the rear of the head, interpreted as an attempt at decapitation. There was also evidence of a stab to the left eye and the rest of the body had suffered harsh treatment from an edged weapon (Manchester 1991).

#### **Animal bone** by Sheila Hamilton-Dyer

A total of 554 bones have been recorded. The archive contains full details of all the fragments from each context and includes information on species, anatomy, size, ageing, butchery, and pathology. Measurements are in millimetres. In general these follow the methods of von den Driesch (1976) and withers heights are based on factors recommended by von den Driesch and Boessneck (1974). Most of the bones were recovered from contexts provisionally dated as late Saxon. The species identified are, in order of frequency, sheep/goat, cattle, pig, fowl, horse, deer, fish, goose and amphibian. Other fragments could not be identified to species; the majority of these are probably of sheep and cattle. A summary of the distribution of the

Table 3 *Animal bone species by feature*

Feature No.	Horse	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Deer	Cattle sized	Sheep/goat sized	Mammal	Fowl	Goose	Bird	Fish	Amphibian	Total
2	—	2	2	1	—	4	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	13
3	1	9	10	5	—	4	16	13	13	1	2	—	—	74
4	—	9	25	9	1	14	26	13	1	—	—	—	1	99
9	—	2	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
10	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
12	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
17	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
18	2	8	5	4	1	4	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	34
20	2	30	55	22	2	21	82	38	—	—	1	2	—	255
23	—	5	2	5	—	5	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	26
27	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
28	—	3	2	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
29	—	—	—	—	—	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
30	—	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
31	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
32	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
33	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
37	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
42	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
45	—	3	1	2	—	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	17
Total	5	75	105	49	4	67	159	69	14	1	3	2	1	554
%	0.9	13.5	19	8.8	0.7	12.1	28.7	12.5	2.5	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.2	

species in each feature is given in Table 3. In addition to the species identified from their remains it can be deduced that dogs were also present from the number of bones which had been gnawed, some severely.

Fragments from Trench 2 are few (29 from the seven features) and are restricted to the main domestic species: sheep, cattle and pig, and unidentified fragments. None of the bones were measurable.

Bones from the main excavation group are mainly well preserved and include several measurable elements. These measurements compare very well with the large corpus of data from Saxon Southampton (Bourdillon & Coy 1980). In addition to sheep, cattle and pig the species list includes horse, deer, several bones of domestic fowl, one of goose (greylag or domestic), two fish bones and an amphibian leg bone.

The deer bones consist of an antler, scapula and radius of roe, together with a small piece of worked antler, probably of red

deer. The number of fowl bones is exaggerated by the group of 13 in F3, which are likely to be from one individual. The two fish bones were undiagnostic elements and were not identified to species but were from a large fish such as cod or pike.

Amongst the fragments a small number of worked bones were recovered (see above). These include a fragment of antler from a double-sided composite comb, and a pig fibula pin, both of typical Saxon type (contexts 94 and 93, F20).

In contrast with the large Saxon town in Southampton, the Kintbury material contains a lower percentage of cattle and more deer. At the nearby middle Saxon iron smelting site at Ramsbury (Coy 1980) the amount of horse is higher. The proportions at Kintbury fall between these two but with a higher amount of sheep, despite relatively little sieving (some of the smaller sheep bones may be missed in hand retrieved material). These findings should be treated with caution

Table 4 Charred plant remains

Species and common name	F2 50	F3 51	F3 53	F4 82	F4 83	F20 92	F20 94
<i>Cereals</i>							
Triticum aestivum L (bread wheat)	3	2	—	2	—	2	3
Triticum cf spelta dicocum (hulled wheat)	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Triticum sp (wheat)	1	1	—	2	1	3	3
Hordeum vulgare L (barley)	1	—	—	1	—	—	2
cf H vulgare (barley)	—	—	1	1	—	—	2
cf secale cereale (rye)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
cereal indeterminate	4	4	3	6	7	1	11
cereal indeterminate (fragments)	x	x	x	x	x	xx	xx
cereal indeterminate (sprout)	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
<i>Weed seeds</i>							
Galium sp (cleavers)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Avena sp (oat)	—	1	—	2	—	—	3
Bromus sp (chess)	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Avena/Bromus sp (oat/chess)	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Gramineae small seeded (grass)	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
<i>Charcoal</i>	x	x	x	x	x	xx	xx
Volume (L)	7	6	8	11	5	8	10

as the sample size from Kintbury is very small in comparison with the thousands of bones recovered from the other two sites.

#### Charred plant remains by John Letts

Eight flotation samples containing charred seeds were submitted for analysis. The samples were refloatated in the laboratory over a 500µm mesh sieve and cereal and weed specimens were identified by comparison with modern reference material. The results of the analysis are listed in Table 4.

Most of the grain in the assemblage is derived from free-threshing wheat – presumably bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*). Only four possible grains of hulled wheat appear in the top fill of pit F20, but no hulled wheat chaff is present to confirm the identifications and they must remain tentative. The samples also contain a few poorly preserved specimens of barley and one possible grain of rye. Most of the grain in the samples is too poorly preserved to be identified beyond a general category of ‘cereal indet.’ (unidentified). The weed seeds present are not unusual; wild

grasses and cleavers have long been common arable crop weeds and their meagre presence cannot support further interpretation. All of the samples contain comminuted charcoal, and several contain larger identifiable fragments.

Overall, the assemblage has an early Saxon character, although the possible presence of hulled wheat might suggest residuality from Roman times.

#### DISCUSSION

The excavations at Kintbury Square have provided a small but useful contribution to our knowledge of the development of Kintbury in Late Saxon and Medieval times. The early history of Kintbury is mostly known only from documentary sources. A settlement is recorded at Kintbury in an Anglo-Saxon charter of c 935 AD with the name *Cynetanbyrig*, possibly meaning ‘a fortified site on the River Kennet’ (Gelling 1974, 313). It possessed a minster church and was partly a

royal manor. By the time of the Domesday Survey it was recorded as the centre of a hundred and it was granted a market charter in 1267. Astill (1978, 6) has suggested, based on these attributes, that Kintbury, like a number of other settlements in the county, was potentially urban in character in Late Saxon times but did not develop into a town in the Medieval period.

Unfortunately, archaeological evidence for the village is rare and can shed no light on the economic status of the settlement. Undated inhumation burials, possibly of Saxon date, were found near to the church and a burial discovered in 1762 was accompanied by some 50 coins dating between 925 and 960 AD. A watching brief carried out in the churchyard during the laying of a pipeline did not reveal any deposits of archaeological significance (Ford 1989) and an evaluation at Sycamore Farm to the west of the village also failed to reveal archaeological deposits (Pine and Smith 1996).

#### *Prehistoric?*

The excavation revealed the presence of a ditch aligned east–west down the slope. It contained no pottery or other closely diagnostic finds but did produce sufficient struck flints to indicate that it was probably of Prehistoric date. With such a short length exposed, there are various interpretations as to its function. It may represent a settlement enclosure or a field system. The lack of other Prehistoric features elsewhere in the excavated areas and the paucity of occupation debris argues against it being a settlement enclosure. Similarly, Prehistoric field systems on the chalklands are not often ditched, especially using sizeable features such as the ditch here (Bowden *et al* 1991–3) although ditched field systems are prevalent on low-lying ground (Pryor, 1984, Moore and Jennings 1992). A more plausible explanation is that this ditch is a boundary feature similar to the linear earthworks of later Bronze Age date frequently recorded on the Berkshire and north Hampshire Downs (Ford 1981–2).

#### *Late Saxon*

The evidence for late Saxon deposits consisted of four pits, a possible post hole and several unstratified sherds of pottery found during the Wessex Archaeology excavation (WA 1991) at the former garage to the south of our site (Fig 2). No evidence for other components of a Saxon settlement such as hall houses or other structures were found and it is unclear where these habitations were located. In a typical Medieval urban setting properties are frequently arranged with the domestic or commercial structures on the street frontage with the rear of the plots comprising open space used for rubbish disposal, etc. (Schofield and Vince, 1994). If this model is applicable to late Saxon times in Kintbury, it is possible that the excavated deposits are located to the rear of properties that either fronted Church Road, or a track (now a footpath) to the east. The Wessex Archaeology excavation (WA 1991) examined part of the street frontage of Station Road (Fig 2) but failed to reveal any deposits of Saxon or Medieval date, suggesting no structural use of this street frontage in these times. An alternative view is that the deposits found represent part of a self-contained farmstead, the position of which is coincidental to the later street plan. Even if in late Saxon times properties in Kintbury were laid out relative to a street plan which is still in use to the present day, structural remains would not necessarily front the street, as evidenced at sites in London (Horsman *et al.* 1988, 26). The lack of evidence from other locations in the village limits further discussion but it is clear that in late Saxon times occupation was located close to the centre of the modern village and relatively close to the church.

The most interesting discovery on the site was the deposit of human bone from at least three individuals in pit 4. The bones were disarticulated and their orientation in the base of the pit suggests that they had been dumped in a sack or sheet. Some of the bones show evidence of trauma, with a deep cut mark on a cheek bone of one probably



reflecting the cause of death. There is no evidence to suggest that these bones are a specifically ceremonial deposit which may be indicated by careful placement or by the addition of special objects. Neither are they typical of burial in these times. One interpretation is that they are the deposition of the remains of executed criminals who would not have received good Christian burial like the rest of the population.

### *Medieval*

Features of Medieval date were few and comprised a gully and a pit (Fig 3). A number of gullies and postholes were found which were undated but may be of Medieval or post-Medieval date. The Wessex Archaeology excavation (WA 1991) also revealed six pits/postholes of Medieval date. The gully F9 is on almost the same line as the flint-built wall (Fig 3) suggesting that this boundary dates from Medieval times and that deposits to the east relate to properties fronting Station Road, or the trackway to the east of the site. The Wessex Archaeology excavation examined an area including part of the frontage of Station Road but did not find any structural evidence. However, the portion of street frontage on Station Road, relevant to the excavated area east of the wall, was not examined and Medieval deposits could be present here. Deposits elsewhere within the excavated area are likely to represent a relatively low level of activity to the rear of plots fronting Church Street. The deposits here, although few, suggest that elements of the Medieval settlement were present in this area.

The excavations described above, in the absence of information from similar projects elsewhere in the village, were not able to provide sufficient detail with which to address the important question of economic status in late Saxon and Medieval times. However, they were able to provide information on the topography and chronology of the development of the village and provide a basis upon which the results of future investigations can be assessed.

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