

# Sandye Lane, Swineshead, Bedfordshire

Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording and Analysis



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*Between the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 an archaeological monitoring, recording and sample excavation was undertaken by the CAU on the line of the perimeter footings for a new single-storey dwelling to the rear of Sale Cottage, Sandye Lane, Swineshead, Bedfordshire. Here some 78 sq m of trenching revealed at least seven shallow and sinuous NE-SW and SE-NW intersecting ditches from which small amounts of locally manufactured 12<sup>th</sup> century coarseware pottery were recovered. This included most of one shallow dish identified as a probable flour measure; both this and some environmental remains which included carbonised cereal grain suggested breadmaking and milling, thus providing indications of domestic activity and dwellings nearby. The presence of three re-established boundary ditches parallel to the edge of the current churchyard supports the idea of an earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century church on this site prior to the present 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century construction. These finds represent the very earliest archaeological evidence for the Medieval village of Swineshead.*

## Introduction

Between the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 an archaeological monitoring, recording and sample excavation was undertaken by the CAU on the line of the perimeter footings for a new single-storey dwelling located on a building plot (previously a tennis court) immediately to the north-east of the graveyard of St. Nicholas' Church, Swineshead, and to the rear of Sale Cottage on Sandye Lane (TL 05819 65869) [Figures 1 & 2]. The area of proposed development amounted to just 0.08ha; with the area of trenching amounting to some c.78 sq metres. The 0.5m-wide and 1.2m-wide trenches were dug to a depth of between 0.5 – 0.7 m (Trenches nos.1-11) [Figure 2].

### *Site location and topography*

The building plot (previously the tennis court/ garden of School House, High Street, Swineshead) lay within a hedge-bordered rectangular area (30m x c.18m) of lawn set back some 10m from the east side of Sandye Lane behind a former garage and the garden of Sale Cottage [Figure 2]; the ground here being relatively level, at a height of approximately 48.2m (48.06m – 48.32m) AOD.

### *Geology*

The underlying geology in this area consists of Boulder Clay with thin deposits of Glacial Gravel and Terrace Gravels in the river valleys overlying the Oxford Clay (BGS 1975). At Swineshead a thin stony gravel overlies a diamicton consisting of mixed Boulder Clay and Gravel.

### *Archaeological background*

Prehistoric activity has been identified to the south of the village in the form of a ring ditch (HER 1501); with potential prehistoric enclosures to the north (HER 16625), north-west (HER 15021) and west (HER 15071).

Romano-British settlement here has also been identified to the north of the village where an enclosure (HER 344) has yielded pottery, tile and slag.

Most significant perhaps for the location of this development within the centre of the village was the discovery of 'upright' Anglo-Saxon burials (HER 8979) within the adjacent St. Nicholas' Parish Churchyard; the site of these finds lying just a matter of 20m or so to the south or south-west of the area of investigation at approximately TL 057658 (see SBD10543 - *Bedfordshire Magazine*, p304).

The oldest part of St.Nicholas's Church dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (there is mention of an earlier church on this spot during the 12<sup>th</sup> century), whilst the earliest mentioned incumbent (priest in charge of the church and parish), William de Leye was here prior to 1272. A number of alterations and additions to the church were made in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and this is more or less how we see it today (ref. *St. Nicholas's Church, Swineshead* J.Brookshaw 2012). Features include a porch dating to 1330, an octagonal 14<sup>th</sup> century font and tomb (the grave slab of Richard Aytrop), north and south aisles built around 1340 (the latter with remains of medieval wall paintings), a 15<sup>th</sup> century vestry, wooden chancel screen and chest, 16<sup>th</sup> century windows, and an

intact 17<sup>th</sup> century tower clock. Pevsner states that the existing tower started in the 'Decorative period' (c.1290-1400 AD), although he also points out a bellstage with a 'recessed spire rising behind an openwork frieze of the Perpendicular style' (c.1320-1500 AD). In addition there are a series of well-marked east-facing early Postmedieval – Modern graves within the churchyard surrounding the exterior of the church, some of these graves lying less than 10m from the hedge line border with the current development plot, a number lying close to two old walnut trees which overhang the present monitored area.

A number of Medieval earthworks are also recorded within a 200m radius of the site; one to the south-east of here appears to be associated with a Medieval farmhouse, enclosures, ridge and furrow cultivation and a hollow way (HER 5081). Yet other ridge and furrow has been identified both to the south (HER 8232) and to the north (HER 5492) of the village. A number of Postmedieval 16th-18th century brick and timber frame buildings are to be found nearby, several of these located along the High Street (i.e. The Five Bells, Manor Farmhouse, Lower Farmhouse, Close Cottage, Moat Farm etc). The nearest timber framed building is to be found at Moat Farmhouse (HER 5365) on Sandye Lane, just opposite St. Nicholas' Church.

In January 2012 the CAU archaeologically monitored the groundworks for the planned (14 sq m) extension to the Village Hall which lay just 30m to the east of the current development area. The footprint for this extension was excavated down to the interface between the subsoil layers and natural, but no archaeological features were found. However, two sherds of 12th-13th and 13th-15th century AD pottery were recovered from the upper subsoil layer, the significance of these being that they provided one of the very few bits of material evidence for Medieval settlement within the area of the High Street and the centre of the village. Furthermore, at the base of the sub-soil here some truncated patches of a palaeosoil appeared to have survived, the latter containing some traces of strewn and perhaps redeposited burnt stone and charcoal, an indication perhaps of still earlier settlement (Saunders 2010; Timberlake 2012).

### *Aims and Objectives*

The current archaeological investigation was undertaken with the aims of determining the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains exposed by the footprint for the building.

The objectives were to undertake detailed recording, and if necessary sample excavation of any archaeological features revealed, with particular attention to the evidence for Anglo-Saxon or Medieval occupation, or other relevant research issues highlighted for Bedfordshire archaeology in the regional research framework (Oake et al. 2007). Recording was to include an assessment of the presence and degree of truncation of buried deposits, as well as the presence or absence of a palaeosol horizon, and the sampling of deposits within any buried (negative) features. The proximity of the churchyard and burial ground of this Early Medieval church increased the likelihood of finding buried human remains.

## Methodology

Only the perimeter of the footprint where foundations were to be dug to a depth of more than 0.3m was trenched for the purposes of archaeological investigation. This consisted of approx. 65m of adjoining sections of 1.2m wide trench (Trenches 1-11). These were stripped of the topsoil and subsoil layers down to the natural under close archaeological supervision. Machining was carried out using a 4-ton 360° excavator fitted with a 1.2m wide ditching bucket; in the course of this these soil layers were removed down to a maximum depth of about 0.6m. Both topsoil and sub-soil layers were deposited on either side of the trench and were examined visually for the presence of finds. An overall plan of these trenches was produced by GPS total station, whilst individual sections of trench containing archaeological features were drawn by hand at a scale of 1:50, whilst sections through archaeological features were recorded at a scale of 1:10, the layers being recorded using an amended version of the Museum of London context system. A scaled photographic (digital colour) record was also undertaken following the cleaning of the trench base and section. Finds were bagged and labelled, then washed and re-bagged within the CAU Finds Department, before being examined by an in-house specialist. The Medieval pottery was sent away for examination.

## Results

A topsoil (typically 0.3m deep) and subsoil horizon (0.3 to 0.4-0.5m) were present across the site, except where the turf had been cut by modern services (i.e a land drain and electric cable). However, in places (such as in Trench 4) both an upper and lower subsoil could be detected.

Archaeology was encountered in Trench 2 (F.1), Trench 4 (F.4, F.5 and F.7), Trench 5 (F.4), Trench 6 (F.2-3), Trench 7 (F.6, F.8-9) and Trench 9 (F.6, F.8 & F.10); all of these being sampled in a series of 0.5m wide slots [see Figure 2]. Pottery was recovered in small amounts from most of these features, except for F.9 (Trench 7) from which came >1 kg of re-fitting sherds (part of a large dish or bowl) from a single excavated slot. An environmental sample was taken from the base of F.7 (a NNE-SSW trending ditch).

**F.1** (Trench 2). A WNW-ESE 0.5-0.7m wide ditch; most probably sectioned here close to its eastern terminal. Shallow (0.3 m deep) and flat-bottomed, possibly truncated, and slightly asymmetric in x-section, with a more convex northern side ([03]). This contained two fills; an upper main fill (01) consisting of a light brown-grey clayey silt containing angular broken flint, occasional burnt stone and rare charcoal, and some rare pieces of animal bone. This gully-like and slightly sinuous linear may well be the continuation of ditch F.4 in Trench 4, the latter lying in approximately the same orientation and position. Possibly part of an Early Medieval plot boundary ditch?

**F.2** (Trench 6) [Figure 3]. A NE-SW oriented 1.07m wide linear, 0.25m deep with gentle-moderately steep slightly concave sides and a rounded bottom ([06]). Within this trench this feature cuts, or is cut by another feature (F.3), which is a shallow scoop, there being an uncertain relationship between the two. The ditch has two fills; a shallow (0.14m deep) upper fill consisting of a grey-brown silty clay with occasional small to medium rounded and sub-angular flints and rare flecks of charcoal (04), and a slightly more substantial (0.25m deep) basal fill (05) consisting of a pale grey slightly silty clay with rare small to medium sized rounded flints. This may be the same ditch as F.7, encountered in Trench 4, some 3m+ to the north of this. Several sherds of Early Medieval (12<sup>th</sup> century) pot were recovered from the basal fill.

**F.3** (Trench 6) [Figure 3]. A possible NE-SW oriented 'scoop-like' feature (1.17m wide and 0.11m deep) which abuts and is then cut, or cut by the linear F.2. The sides of this are very gradually sloping and concave, as is the gently rounded base ([08]). The single fill consists of a mid to dark grey-brown silty clay with occasional small to medium rounded flints. There were no finds to suggest a date, yet the apparently close relationship with F.2 suggests that this feature might also be Medieval.

**F.4** (Trenches 4 & 5) [Figure 4i]. A NW-SE oriented and slightly sinuous linear, probably a shallow ditch or gully. The north side of this is exposed for over 10m, and lies parallel to the southern edge of this trench, terminating at its western end in Trench 5. The feature was slotted (sectioned) in five different places, and was shown to be moderately variable in nature. At its eastern end (Slot 1) this was a shallow flat-bottomed ditch (0.2m deep) with moderately steep convex sides and an upper fill consisting of grey-brown silt with few stones and angular (<20mm) flint, rare charcoal plus a few pieces of fairly abraded pot and bone (09), overlying a thin yellow-brown clay-rich and pebbly basal fill (10). However, some 3m to the west of this at the point where this feature cut an earlier NE-SW ditch (F.5), Slot 2 through F.4 revealed a much more rounded 0.28m deep ditch ([14]) filled with a similar mid to dark grey-brown silty upper fill (12) overlying a mid grey-brown silty clay with larger stones on its base (13), yet with no dateable finds. Just another few metres to the west of this Slot 3 revealed a much shallower (0.12m deep) rounded to flat-bottomed asymmetric-shaped cut ([19]) with a single fill of light brown clayey silt (18) containing mollusc shells, limestone fragments, a fine gravelly base, and some rare pot and bone. Slot 4 (4a) at the junction of this with F.7, an earlier ditch cut by F.4, revealed a rather similar shallow flat-bottomed profile ([27]) with a more or less identical clay silt fill (26) to that in Slot 3, yet from this was recovered some further sherds of pot (x2 different sorts of coarseware) alongside a number of fragments of animal bone. A final slot (Slot 5) was excavated within the 0.61m wide (and 0.22m deep) elongate and rounded shaped terminus of this linear ([22]) at the northern end of Trench 5, at the point where this turned ever so slightly to the south-west. The two fills of this ((20) + (21)) were similar to those examined within the other sections, but produced no finds. Medieval?

**F.5** (Trench 4). A NE-SW oriented 0.51m wide and 0.19m deep linear with slightly stepped and gradually sloping concave sides and a fairly narrow rounded base ([17]), containing two fills, the upper one consisting of an upper mid-dark grey brown silty clay with occasional small flints and rare charcoal (15), and the lower of a yellow-grey slightly silty clay with occasional small-medium sized and rarely large angular-round flint clasts (16). Sampled at its truncated junction with F4 (Slot 2).

**F.6** (Trenches 7 & 9) [Figure 3]. A SE-NW oriented 0.71m wide and 0.38m deep linear with steep flat-sloping to slightly rounded symmetrical sides and a narrow rounded base ([25]); one of three sub-parallel and closely spaced ditches cut by Trench 7. Infilling this was a much thicker upper fill consisting of a mid-greyish brown silty clay with occasional small-medium rounded and sub-angular flints (23), and a thin lower fill (24) of yellowish-grey sandy gravel with small-medium flints and rare charcoal flecks. The few sherds of pot suggest an Early Medieval (12<sup>th</sup> century) date. This same ditch was also encountered further east in Trench 9 ([41]). Here the bottom of the ditch was flatter, and the top truncated, although it was evidently wider at this point (1m wide and 0.2m deep) with an upper fill consisting of light brown-yellow silty clay (39), and a lower fill consisting of a yellow-orange gravelled clay-silt containing flecks of charcoal.

**F.7** (Trench 4) [Figure 4i]. Another NE-SW oriented ditch which is approximately parallel to F.5, and which has a similar junction relationship, truncated by the later NW-SE aligned linear F.4. Sectioned in Slots 4a and 4b. At this point the ditch cut ([31]) with its moderately sloping concave sides and flattish-concave base undergoes a slight 'S-shaped' turn to the north, emphasizing the sinuosity of these (in general) linear features. The fills were composed of an upper fill (28) consisting of a mixed gravel and mottled yellow sand in amongst a darker grey-brown silt containing some burnt stone, and much more rarely pot, and beneath this an intermediate fill (29) consisting of a predominantly clay-rich silt with some organic content (mid-dark grey silt), a layer which became a lot more stony towards the truncated junction with (26) (i.e. cut (27) of F.4). Small animal bone fragments were in general common alongside v. small amounts of two different sorts of Early Medieval pot. Charcoal was ubiquitous, particularly towards the base of this fill, some of the pieces being large (>10mm diameter), together with burnt stone and ash. The basal layer (30) consisted of a brown to brown-yellow and grey silt with some burnt rock and also occasional-moderate round to sub-angular rock and flint inclusions. Finely gritty matrix with almost no charcoal, and also no bone, flint or pot. Medieval.

**F.8** (Trenches 7 & 9) [Figure 3]. A SE-NW oriented ditch with sub-parallel and rounded steeply concave sides, sections of which have been identified in both Trenches 7 and 9 (by far the clearest section is to be found in Trench 7). One of three closely spaced parallel ditches, perhaps part of a periodically re-established Early Medieval boundary plot? The uppermost fill (32) of this moderately wide (0.95m wide and 0.35m deep) ditch consisted of a light brownish-grey firm silty clay with moderate amounts of rounded and angular pebbles. Within Trench 9 this same ditch was 0.6m wide, but only 0.15m deep ([43]), the truncated section consisting of only a single fill (42) composed of a mixed mottled grey-orange clay with frequent gravel inclusions and flecks of charcoal. No finds were recovered from either of the slots.

**F.9** (Trench 7) [Figure 3]. A SE-NW oriented ditch with concave sides and a rounded base which was 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep ([36]), containing a single fill of light brown-yellow firm silty clay with occasional pebbles, frequent charcoal, and frequent pottery sherds (35). Many of the latter were re-fitting and came from a single large shallow coarseware dish or bowl [see Figure 5] made from a shelly fabric, which was oxidised on the exterior. Given that this was from a quite significant vessel (> 1.2 kg of pottery sherds), the remaining slot of this ditch which crossed the trench was then removed in order to recover further material. This vessel has since been identified as being 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> C in date and made from locally manufactured Medieval Shelly Ware.

**F.10** (Trench 9). The northerly-pointing terminus of a SE-NW oriented ditch, one which might be generically related to the similarly aligned/ spaced linear F.9 within Trench 7, yet which is not obviously the same. The shallow cut ([38]) which forms this terminus (0.75m wide and 0.13m deep) contains a single fill (37), consisting of a light brown-yellow firm clayey silt with flecks of charcoal and a number of small angular pebbles, yet no finds such as pottery or bone. It seems feasible that this might represent the presence of an opening or entrance to one of the earliest plot boundaries.

## Discussion

The recovery of pottery from *in situ*. settlement features and contexts at this site, when compared to the evidence from the nearby Village Hall, has been useful in that it has provided us with a tight and fairly unequivocal date range for the establishment of Early Medieval settlement around the church, the probable historic core of the early village. The occurrence of locally manufactured Medieval Shelly Ware and Sandy Ware type fabrics (see Blinkhorn *this report*), in conjunction with the jar and bowl vessel forms, would appear to indicate a 12<sup>th</sup> century date.

The interpretation of settlement features (mostly intercutting NE-SW and SE-NW ditches) has been difficult to assess based just on the size and configuration of the trenches dug. What seems most likely is that these linears probably represent narrow, sinuous and shallow plot boundaries, perhaps as hedge lines, with another three sub-parallel NW-SE ditches on the west side closest to the church (i.e. F.6-F.9); the latter representing the re-establishment over time of a slightly more substantial property boundary, perhaps the edge of the churchyard. Quite possibly therefore these changes represent slight area reductions or perhaps even increases (enroachments) into church land over time. In fact, the complete absence of any features to the west of this line (F.9) suggests that the churchyard (i.e. the area of the graveyard or additional church land) was once larger than it is now, perhaps anticipating the growth of the village at a fairly prosperous time early in its history, something which never then materialised.

Evidence for domestic activity in the form of coarseware pottery, in particular the large and finely made 12<sup>th</sup>-century dish used as a flour measure and linked with breadmaking, provides a picture of dwellings lying close to the boundary with the



churchyard, much as we find the village today. Whilst the concentration of pottery and other midden-type finds from these ditches seems low, suggesting either a low intensity of habitation here, or else control of maddening activity within refuse pits, the environmental evidence in the form of charred cereal grain recovered from F.7 (see A.de Vareilles *this report*) supports the picture of local domestic activity that most likely includes milling and breadmaking.

Most interestingly the 12<sup>th</sup> century date of this activity and the alignment and correspondence of these ditches parallel to the present churchyard boundary provides some good evidence for the existence of a 12<sup>th</sup>-century church at Swineshead prior to the construction of the present 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century building. We know from the previous investigation of the Village Hall that the Early Medieval settlement probably extended southwards in that direction, although the incidence there of 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century pottery alongside 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century pottery seems to suggest that we might be looking at a 12<sup>th</sup> century core to the village around the church, with evidence of continued expansion over the next few centuries. In fact, the various different phases of church building may well reflect the changing fortunes of this village during its probably most prosperous period between the 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

## **Conclusion**

The current investigation indicates the likely presence of a 12<sup>th</sup> century settlement centred upon an original (and most probably) 12<sup>th</sup>-century church located within the existing but somewhat extended churchyard area. Some evidence of domestic activity was recovered from the fills of several NW-SE and SW-NE ditches which may have been dug in order to define the boundaries of dwelling or garden plots as well as that of a periodically re-established boundary with church land. Finds from here included most of a large dish probably once used as a measure for flour, along with other pottery and traces of charred wheat and seeds suggestive of breadmaking and milling. Currently this forms the very earliest evidence of the Medieval village of Swineshead.

## **Acknowledgements**

This archaeological investigation and monitoring work was carried out at the behest of John Willcock of John Willcock Architects. Machine excavation on site was undertaken by Lee Farrer of E.Farrer & Son Building Contractors, the work being supervised by Simon Timberlake (CAU). Emma Rees, Mark Jones and Lizzie Middleton all assisted in the work. Emma Beadsmoore was CAU Project Manager, whilst the illustration, section and other graphics work was undertaken by Bryan Crossan and Vicki Herring. The pot reconstruction was photographed by Dave Webb (CAU), whilst pottery identifications were undertaken by Paul Blinkhorn. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Geoff Saunders, the Archaeological Officer for Bedford Borough Council.

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## Specialist reports

### Pottery *Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 49 sherds with a total weight of 1,438g. It was recorded using the codings and chronology of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series (eg Baker and Hassall 1977), as follows:

B07: Medieval Shelly Ware, AD1100-1400. 41 sherds, 1,284g.

C59a: Coarse sandy ware, 12-13<sup>th</sup> C. 3 sherds, 29g.

C59b: Sandy ware, 12-13<sup>th</sup> C. 5 sherds, 125g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. All the wares are types which are well-known in the region.

Trench	Feature	Context	B07		C59a		C59b		Date
			No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
		1			2	10	1	6	U/S
4	4	9			1	19			12thC
4	4	18	1	3					12thC
4	4	26	1	12			1	27	12thC
4	7	28	1	7					12thC
6	2	5	2	25					12thC
6	6	23	3	26					12thC
7	8	32	2	34					12thC
7	9	35	31	1177			3	92	12thC
		Total	41	1284	3	29	5	125	

**Table 1:** Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

The assemblage consisted entirely of unglazed coarsewares, as is dominated by Shelly Wares from the nearby manufacturing centres at Harrold and Olney Hyde (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 290, 297). The range of fabric types suggests that activity at the site was short-lived, and confined to, at most, the 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Certainly, 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> century glazed wares such as Brill/Boarstall Ware, Potterspury Ware and Lyveden/Stanion Wares are entirely absent, despite being common finds at sites in and around Raunds in Northamptonshire (Blinkhorn 2010), c 10km to the north-west of these excavations, and at Tempsford, 15km to the south-east (ibid. 2005)

The bulk of the assemblage consisted of sherds from a single vessel, a large Shelly Ware (fabric B07) bowl. It has a rim diameter of 440mm and the rim is 56% complete. A fairly large number of bowls of this type occurred at West Cotton, Northants (ibid. 2010, Fig. 10.14), with many of them occurring in middens associated with a bake-house. The ranges of sizes present suggested that they were used as flour-measures during the baking process, although it is very likely that they were used for other functions elsewhere, as they are very common finds amongst 12<sup>th</sup> century assemblages in the region generally (eg. ibid. 2005, Fig. 5.2).

The rest of the assemblage comprised entirely fragments from jars and bowls, which is typical of the 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery traditions of the region; jugs were quite rare until the 13<sup>th</sup> century and later, when the glazed ware industries became established (eg. *ibid.*, Table 7).

### **Building stone** Simon Timberlake

The majority of the stone finds from here (c.1.2 kg) consisted of roof tile fragments, most from dispersed and sometimes redeposited contexts. These were composed of a number of different lithologies which could not be equated directly with identifiable local sources (such as Collyweston Slate etc), yet all of these stones could have been of regional provenance. It seems likely they were derived from Early Medieval buildings, perhaps even from the adjacent St. Michael's Church. Some of these stones have been subsequently burnt, perhaps from their re-use in hearths.

#### Stone tiles

<022> Tr.7 F.9 (035) 95mm x 17mm x 15mm (thick); weight 252g. A possible fragment of stone roof(?) tile composed of a shelly micritic limestone (i.e. Great oolite, Corallian or Portlandian/ Purbeck?)

<019> Tr. F.5 Slot 2 (016) 150mm x 130mm x 17mm (thick); weight 676g. A roof tile of fissile yellow quartzitic sandstone (possibly Middle Jurassic).

<004> Tr.2 F.subsoil. Fragment of stone tile or walling material, with evidence of burning at one end. Composed of a fine grained bioclastic oolite. Weight 296g.

#### Stone

<003> Tr.4 subsoil. 120mm x 90mm x 30mm; weight 538g. A burnt fragment of stone, possibly a broken fragment of local building stone, possibly of Ellsworth Rock (Oxford Clay/ Corallian)

<016> Tr.4 F.4 Slot 4 (026) 120mm x 90mm x 55mm (thick); weight 554g. A weathered fragment from part of a crudely faced ashlar block composed of fine grained bioclastic oolite (Middle Jurassic) limestone.

### **Tile and brick** Simon Timberlake

A very small amount (294g) of flat terracotta tile and handmade brick was recovered from the excavations. The largest piece (<002>) was found close to the surface during trenching, and is probably Postmedieval – Modern in date, whilst a small fragment of tile and the crudely made brick from Trench 4 (F.4 (26)) may be Medieval.

### **Assessment of bulk environmental sample** *Anne de Vareilles*

#### Methodology

The single bulk soil sample taken on site was processed using an Ankara-type flotation machine. The flot was collected in a 300µm aperture mesh and the remaining heavy residue washed over a 1mm mesh. The flot was dried indoors prior to analysis. Plant-macro remains were identified under a low power binocular microscope (6x-40x

magnification). Nomenclature follows Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals and Stace (1997) for all other flora. All environmental remains are listed in Table 2.

## Results and Conclusion

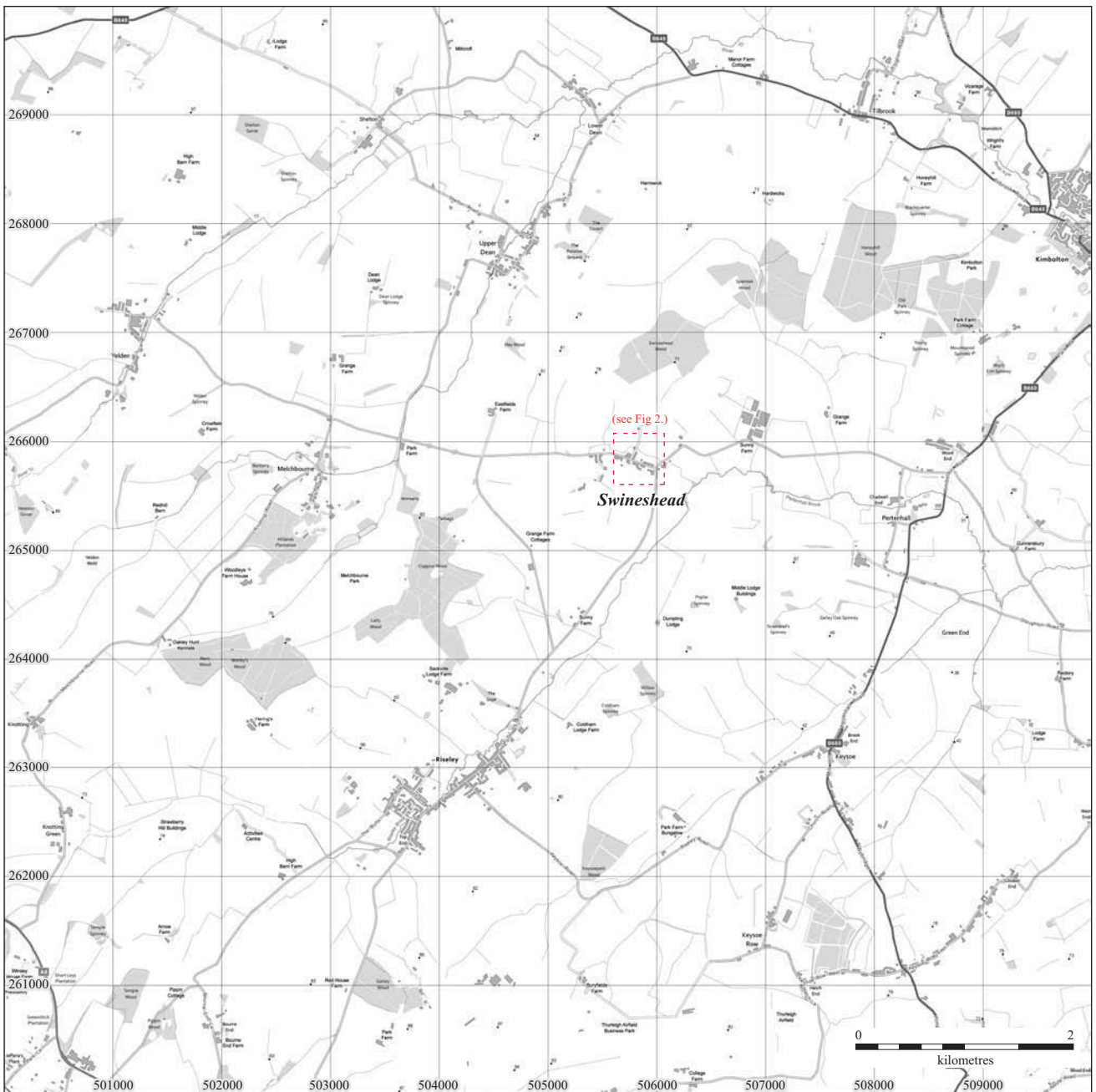
### *12<sup>th</sup> Century Ditch, F.7 [29] Sample <1>*

The flot contained very little charcoal and a few grains/seeds that must have randomly fallen into the ditch (see table?). Despite the low concentrations of plant remains, they are in good physical condition. Free-threshing wheat is a typical cereal for that period, and stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) a common arable weed indicative of heavy, clay-rich soils. All of the seeds were charred.

**Table 2:** Plant Macro-Remains from the Bulk Soil Sample <1>

<b>Sample number</b>	<b>1</b>
Context	29
Feature	7
Feature description	Ditch
Date	12th C.
Sample volume - litres	5 L.
Flot fraction examined -%	100%
large charcoal, incl. from heavy residue (>4mm)	
med. charcoal (2-4mm)	+
small charcoal (<2mm)	++
vitrified	-
estimated charcoal volume - millilitres	<1 ml.
<b>Cereal and wild plant remains</b>	
Triticum <i>eastivum sensu lato</i>	free-threshing wheat
	3
Indeterminate cereal grain fragment	1
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	Stinking mayweed
	1
Large Poaceae	>4mm long wild grass
	1
Indet. Poaceae fragments	wild/cultivated grass
	2

Key: '-' 1 or 2 items, '+' <10 items, '++' 10-50 items, '+++>' >50 items.



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Figure 1. Location map

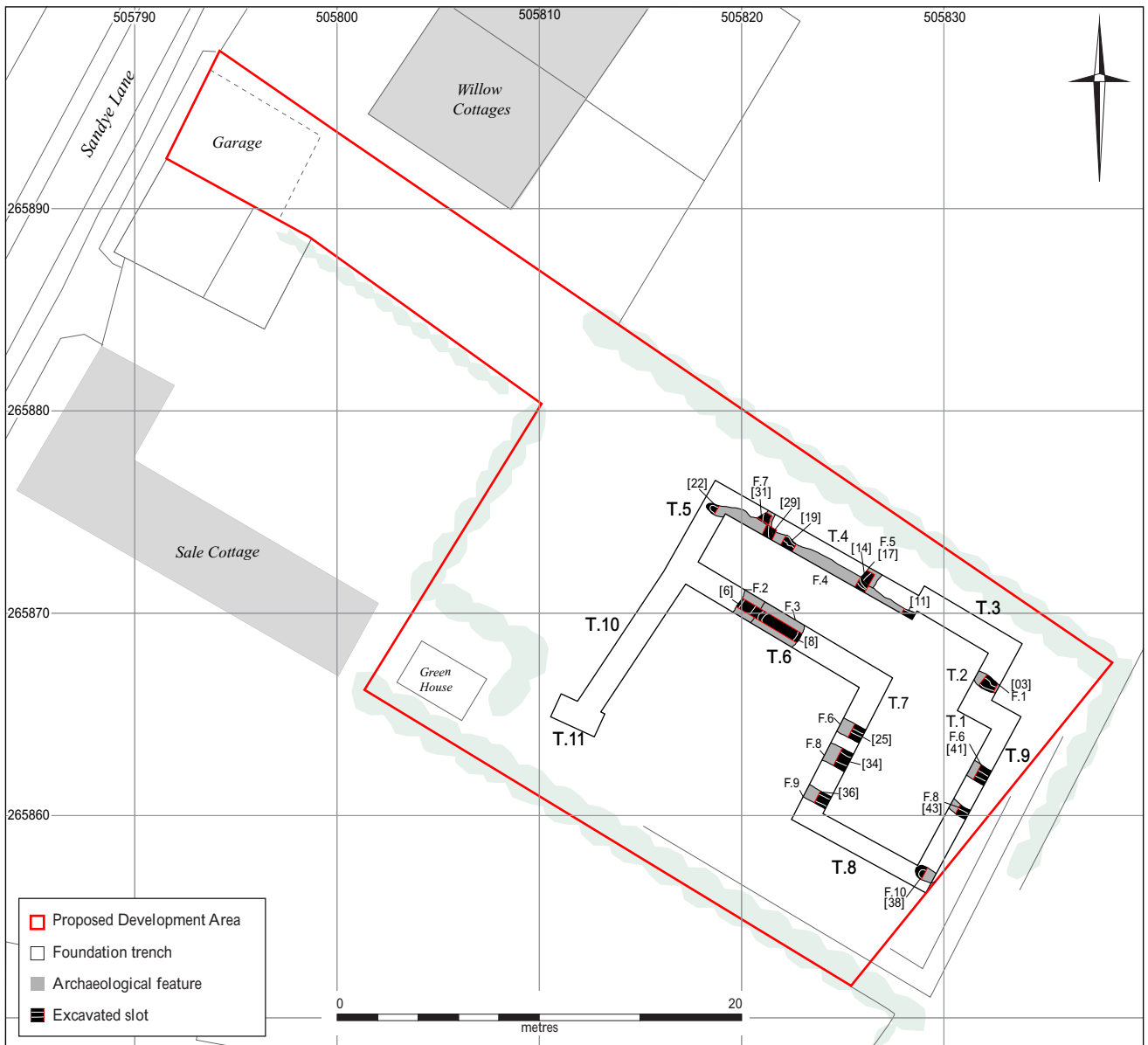
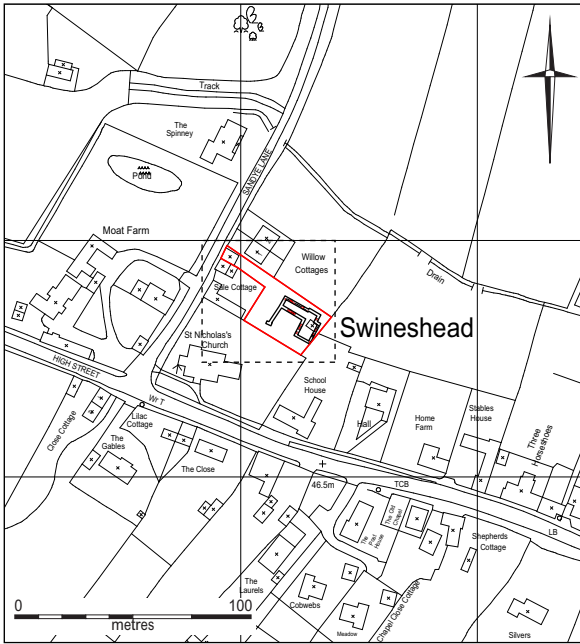


Figure 2. Trench plan

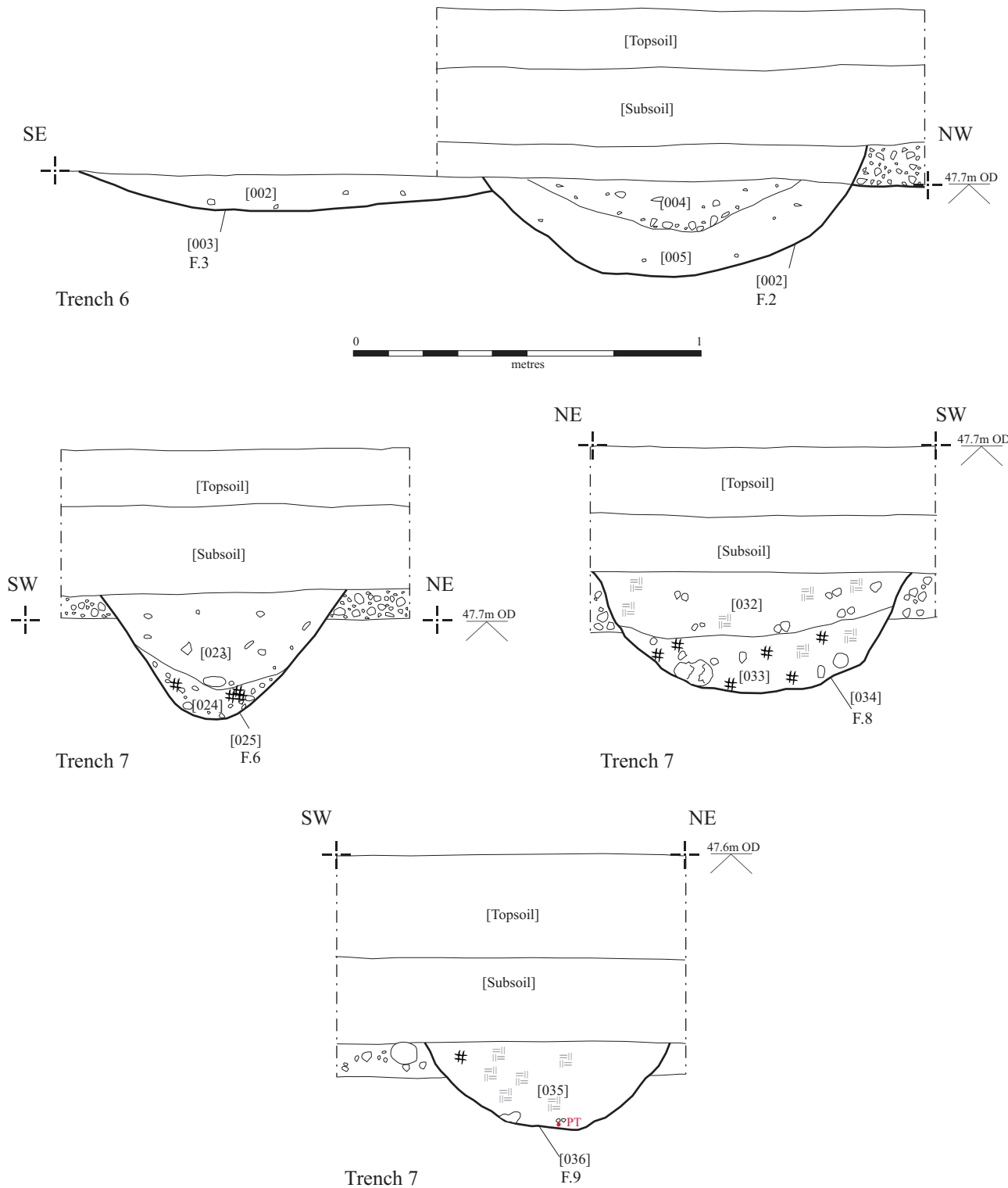


Figure 3. Sections of ditches F.2, F.6, F.8 and F.9





Figure 4. F.4 and F.7 i (left) and F.6 and F.8 (right)



Figure 5. Excavation (above) and reconstruction (below at 1:4 size) of pottery vessel within F.9 (035)

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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: cambridg3-150882**

### Project details

Project name	Sandye Lane, Swineshead
Short description of the project	Between the 15th-18th April 2013 an archaeological monitoring, recording and sample excavation was undertaken by the CAU on the line of the perimeter footings for a new single-storey dwelling to the rear of Sale Cottage, Sandye Lane, Swineshead, Bedfordshire. Here some 78 sq m of trenching revealed at least seven shallow and sinuous NE-SW and SE-NW intersecting ditches from which small amounts of locally manufactured 12th century coarseware pottery were recovered. This included most of one shallow dish identified as a probable flour measure; both this and some environmental remains which included carbonised cereal grain suggested breadmaking and milling, thus providing indications of domestic activity and dwellings nearby. The presence of three re-established boundary ditches parallel to the edge of the current churchyard supports the idea of an earlier 12th century church on this site prior to the present 13th-14th century construction. These finds represent the very earliest archaeological evidence for the Medieval village of Swineshead.
Project dates	Start: 15-04-2013 End: 18-04-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BEDFM.2013.16 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	BOUNDARY DITCH Medieval
Monument type	GULLY Medieval
Significant Finds	SHALLOW POTTERY DISH Medieval
Significant Finds	COARSEWARE POTTERY Medieval

Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Medieval
Significant Finds	STONE ROOF TILE Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE BEDFORD SWINESHEAD Sandye Lane, Swineshead
Postcode	MK442AE
Study area	78.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 5823 65858 52 0 52 16 49 N 000 26 55 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 48.00m Max: 48.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Simon Timberlake
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	John Willcock Architects

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Bedford Borough Council
Physical Archive ID	BEDFM.2013.16
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","other"
Digital Archive recipient	Bedford Borough Council
Digital Archive ID	BEDFM.2013.16
Digital Contents	"Ceramics","Environmental","other"
Digital Media available	"GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Borough Council
Paper Archive ID	BEDFM.2013.16
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Environmental"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Map","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

## Project bibliography

**1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Sandy Lane, Swineshead, Bedfordshire: Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Timberlake, S.
Other bibliographic details	Report no. 1165
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Place of issue or publication	University of Cambridge
Description	10 pages + 5 figures incl. map, trench plan, drawn sectins, pot reconstruction and colour photos of excavation. Digital (pdf) as well as printed and ring bound copies

Entered by Dr S.Timberlake (st410@cam.ac.uk)

Entered on 16 May 2013

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