

EXCAVATIONS AND FIELD SURVEY AT BOROUGH FARM, MICHELDEVER, HANTS.

By JOHN COLLIS AND PETER FASHAM

THE EXCAVATION by John Collis

During 1961–2 ploughing in the field west of Bazeley Copse (SU 505383) revealed a number of finds, apparently mainly of Roman date, and the foundations of a Roman building. The finds were dispersed, but a report reached the City Museum, Winchester. This site was one of two plough-damaged sites which I trenched in the autumn of 1962, but it was the other site, at Owslebury, which received subsequent attention. The work at Micheldever was of limited scope as it was carried out single-handed, mainly during school hours.

My thanks to Mr. Keep who gave me permission to excavate in his fields and also helped me to locate the building; and also to my Headmaster, Mr. J. S. Shields, who allowed me special leave from school duties. The finds have been deposited in the City Museum, Winchester, under the site code number 246, and the site records are in the Museum's History File. Numbers in the text refer to the museum catalogue numbers.

SUMMARY

The site lies on a gentle northward-facing slope a little below the summit of a major east-west ridge, along which ran the medieval droveway, the Lunway. To the north of the site a shallow dry valley slopes to the north to join the valley of the Dever. The settlement lies on a local patch of sandy Clay-with-flints overlying the Upper Chalk, which so far has been largely unresponsive to aerial photography, but on the immediately adjacent chalk areas there is evidence of intensive rural settlement of Iron Age and Roman date, including linear boundaries, trackways, and enclosures (Fig. 1).

Three trenches were dug with the intention of locating and dating the stone building. The first trench, whose exact position was not recorded, measured 0.9 by 4.5 m, but proved completely negative except for a few finds in the plough soil (L4). Trench II, about 30–40 m

to the south, was more successful, and was eventually joined with Trench III to produce a single north-south trench 0.3 by 13 m across the east end of building. The plans and sections are shown on Fig. 2, the sequence on Fig. 3.

The earliest feature excavated, F1, was an east-west ditch. On a clay soil such as this, a ditch may well have been for drainage as well as having the more usual function of livestock control. The few scraps of pottery demonstrate that it belongs to the Late Iron Age. This was in part overlain by a layer of flint cobbling, F2, and similar cobbling was found at the south end of the trench, F10. The cobbling was cut by a small circular pit, F3, containing burnt material and the butchered remains of a lamb. The finds are again typical of an early period in the Late Iron Age, datable to the first century B.C. Adjacent was the grave of a new-born infant, F5.

A second phase of flooring, F6, this time of rammed chalk, overlay the cobbles, filled a shallow gully, F4, and sealed the burial and the pit. Contemporary is a second east-west trench, F7. Generally, finds are of the late first to mid-second century A.D. Other patches of chalk and a post-hole, F12, are probably contemporary. A second gully or pit, F16, at the north end of the trench is probably mid-first century.

The final phase saw the construction of the stone building. Mr. Keep had probed the area with an iron bar, and apparently the building consisted of three rooms, in a linear arrangement east-west, a type of building familiar from a number of sites such as Lockleys and Park Street. The pit F8 contained lumps of flint and mortar, suggesting it was contemporary or later than the building, and this produced second-century finds. A deposit of brown soil, F12–2, overlying the footings of the southern wall, presumably post-dates the

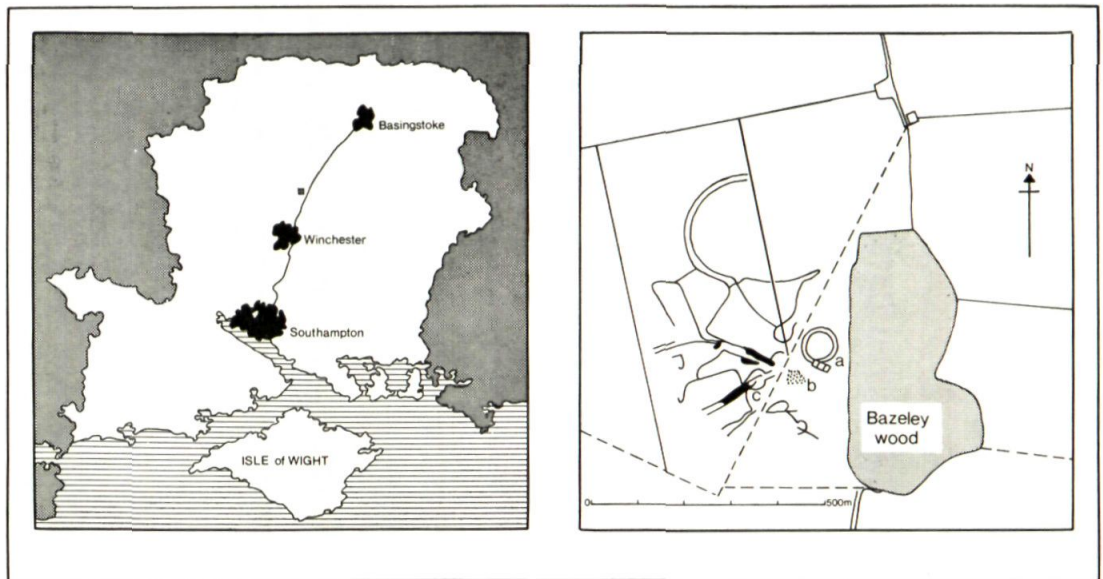


Fig. 1. General location and plan of crop marks at Bazeley Wood, Micheldever, SU 505383. a. double ditched enclosure and three-roomed building; b. concentration of Roman finds from fieldwalking; c. banjo enclosure.

demolition of the building, and this, too, produced second-century finds. There are, however, unworn sherds of fourth-century date in the plough soil (L5 and L6) and the settlement presumably continues right through the Roman period.

Features and Layers

F1 East-west gully.

F1-1. Dirty brown clay with charcoal and some flints. Bottom filling, 246.1.0/1, contains a worn, sand-tempered, Late Iron Age sherd.

F1-2. Clean brown clay, upper fill 246.1.2/. 1. Bowl, light brown fabric with chert and grog temper. Black surface. Probably wheel-turned.

There are 2 grit-tempered sherds and a base in grey soapy ware with grog temper, all Late Iron Age.

F2 Flint cobbling overlying natural and F1.

F2-1. South of F1, not sealed by F6. 246.2.1/1 contains 14 Roman and 2 Late Iron Age sherds, including fragments of vessels 9 and 7. The area of these cobbles was not plotted, but only part of them underlay the chalk, and these finds do not date the period of construction.

F2-2. Sealed by F6. 246.2.2/1. Two Late Iron Age sherds.

F3 Circular pit.

The upper fill is chalk and chalky brown soil, overlying a layer of charcoal. The bottom fill is more clayey and contained most of the bone material. 246.3.0/1.

2. Bead-rim jar. Hard grey fabric with grey-brown surface. Coarse, burnt temper with some grog.

3. Bowl. Grey-brown ware with chert temper. Black surface, burnished on the exterior. The hole was made after firing.

There are several sherds of a black sandy vessel with a burnished zone on the shoulder. This group is typical of the earlier part of the Late Iron Age, belonging to the 1st century B.C.

F4 North-south gully, partially filled with brown clayey soil. 246.4.0/1 contains 3 Roman grey ware sherds.

F5 Infant burial. No finds.

F6 Chalk floor, bounded by F7. 246.6.0/1. Seven Roman sherds.

F7 East-west gully.

F7-1. Brown clayey soil with chalk flecks and lumps. 246.7.1/11.

4. Pie dish. Hard, light grey ware, sand-tempered. Black surface, with internal burnish.

5. Jar. Hard, light brown fabric, with black surface.

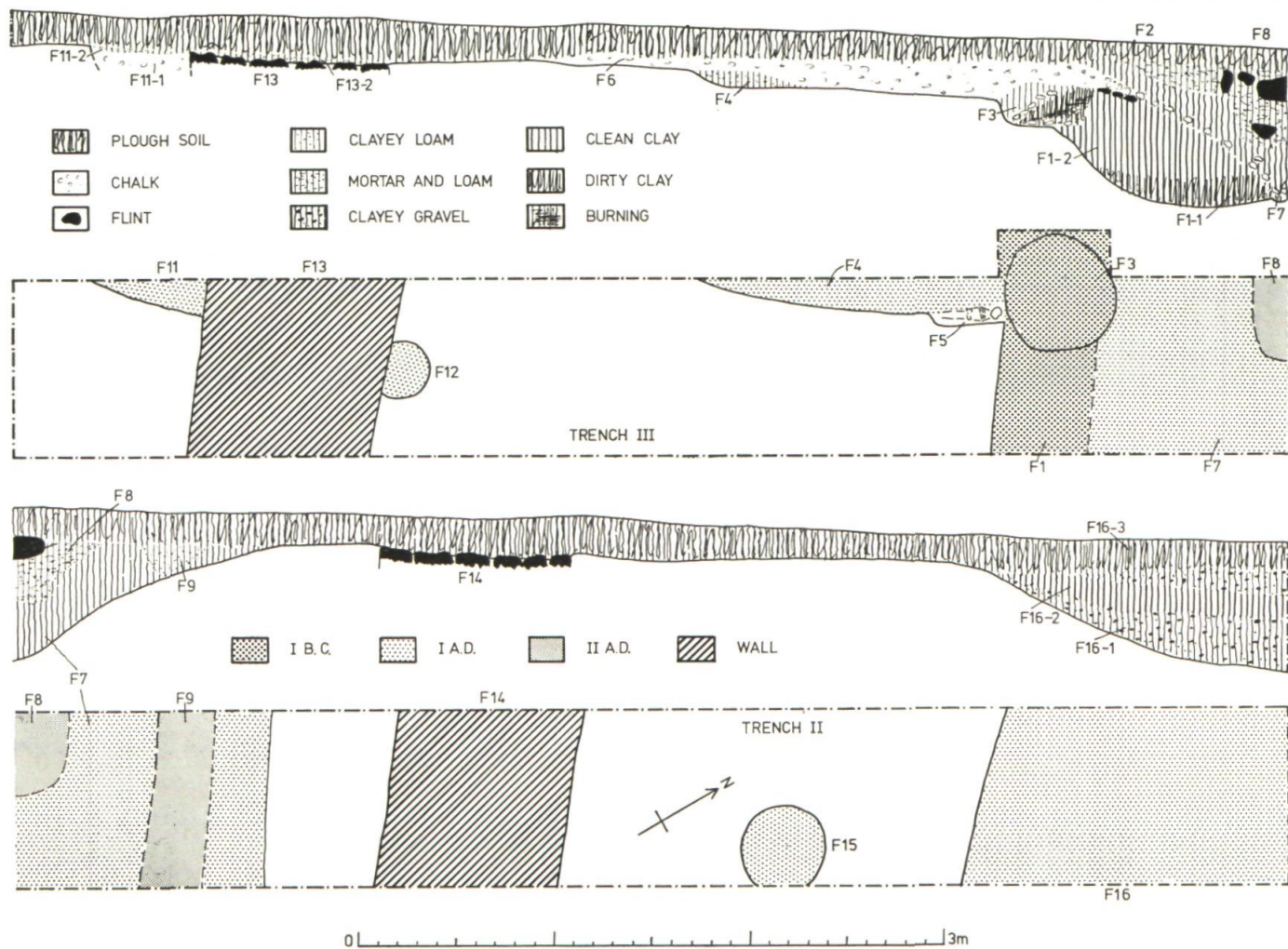


Fig. 2. Plan and section of Trenches II and III.

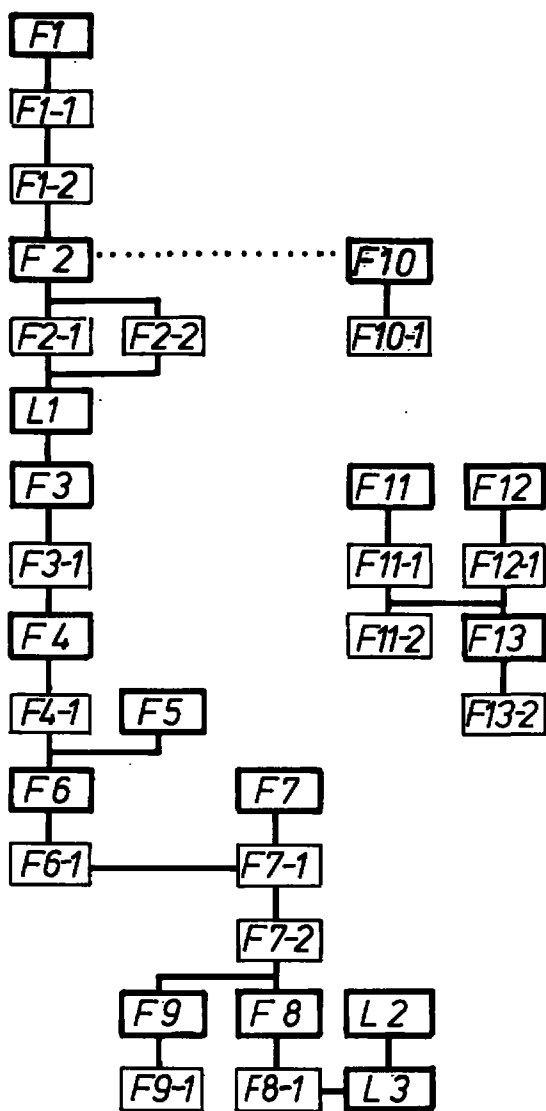


Fig. 3. Stratigraphical sequence of deposits.

6. Jar. Hard, sand-tempered, light grey ware. There are 11 Roman and 3 Late Iron Age sherds.

F7-2. Dirty brown, clayey soil. There is a lens of chalk apparently contemporary with F6. 246.7.2/1.

7. Jar. Light grey fabric with fine sand temper.

8. Bead-rim jar. Light grey with brown surface, with sand and grog temper (also sherds in F2-1 and F9-1).

9. Bead-rim jar. Hard, light grey ware with fine sand grit.

10. Bead-rim storage jar. Hard, light grey ware with coarse sand grit (also sherds in F2-1).

There are fragments of two jars as 5, a pie dish, a straight-necked jar, and a grey-ware flagon. There are 80-90 sherds, all consistent with a late 1st century- mid-2nd century-date, and one sherd of Hadrianic/early Antonine samian.

F8 Pit with large flints and mortary soil, similar to L3. 246.8.0/1 includes 11 Roman and 4 Iron Age sherds.

F9 East-west gully. 246.9.0/1 contains a fragment of vessel 9, and an everted rim jar.

F10 Cobbling on natural, south of F13. 246.10.0/1 contains 10 Late Iron Age or early Roman sherds.

F11 Pit or gully. F11-1. Lower fill of compact chalk, not excavated.

F11-2. Light brown clay soil overlying F11-1. 246.11.2/1.

11. Straight-necked jar. Red-brown, sand-tempered ware with grey core and grey surface. No decoration is visible on the shoulder, but the surface is heavily abraded. Early 2nd century.

F12 Post-hole, filled with brown soil and some chalk. 246.12.0/1 contains a Roman rim sherd.

F13 Roman wall of flints in yellow mortar. F13-2. Fine brown loam overlying the wall. 246.13.2/1.

12. Lid. Red-brown fabric with black surface and sand temper. There is a second, similar lid, and 18 other sherds consistent with a 2nd-century date, and a sherd of Hadrianic- early Antonine samian.

F14 Roman wall, as F13.

F15 Shallow scoop in natural. 246.15.1/1 contains a Late Iron Age/early Roman sherd.

F16 Ditch or pit. F16-1. Lower fill, of black clayey soil and gravel, 246.16.1/1. 2 Iron Age and 3 possibly Roman sherds.

F16-2. Orange clay. No finds.

F16-3. Dirty clay and gravel. 246.16.3/1.

13. Jar. Black sandy ware with burnished rim and shoulder.

14. Jar. Hard, light grey, sand-tempered ware. Vessel 13 is Late Iron Age, 14 is Roman, and the other finds show a similar mixture, suggesting a date around the middle of the 1st century A.D.

L1 Occupation lying on the cobbles F2, sealed

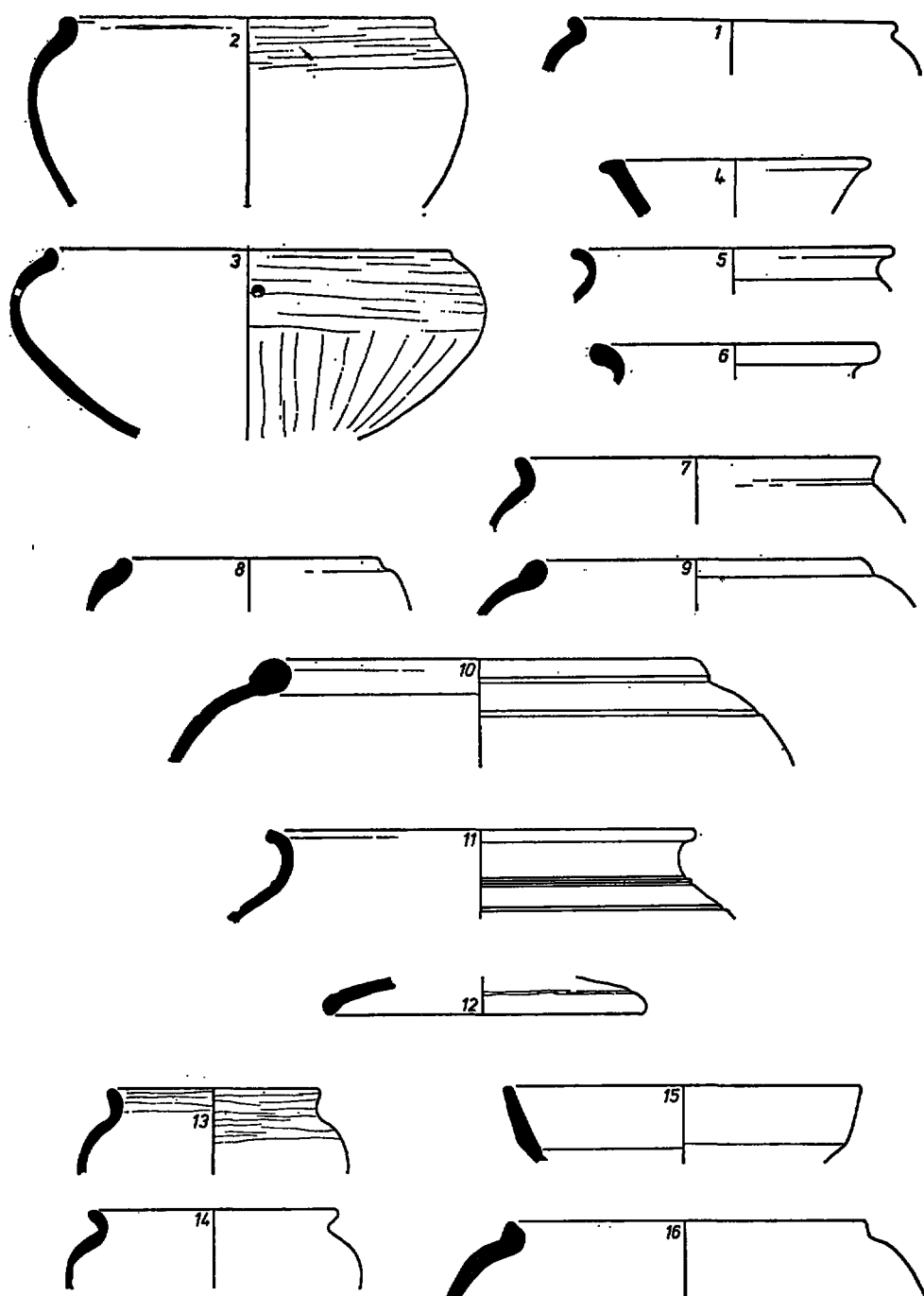


Fig. 4. Pottery from Borough Farm, Micheldever, Scale 1 : 4. F1-2 (1), F3 (2, 3), F7-1 (4-6), F7-2 (7-10), F11-2 (11), F13-2 (12), F16-3 (13, 14), L6 (15), L8 (16).

- by F6.
246.00.1/1 contains 1 Roman and 1 Iron Age sherd.
- L2 Brown clayey soil on natural, below F6.
246.00.2/1 includes 8 Late Iron Age/early Roman sherds.
- L3 Deposit of mortary soil and large flints, similar to F8. This occurs in areas where F6 is not found. One sherd of early to mid-Antonine samian.
- L4 Plough soil, Trench I.
246.00.4/1 contains one Iron Age, 1 late Roman red colour-coat, and an Antonine samian sherd.
- L5 Plough soil in Trench II.
246.00.5/1 contains 2 Iron Age and 3 early Roman sherds, and 1 large fragment of late Roman red colour-coat bowl (Drag. 44).
- L6 Plough soil in Trench III. 246.00.6/1.
15. Dish. Light grey sandy ware with grey-brown surface. Late 1st- early 2nd century. There is also a New Forest indented beaker with white painted herringbone pattern, and a Flavian-Trajanic samian sherd.
- L7 Unstratified, from frost collapse in Trench III.
246.00.7/1 includes an Iron Age bead-rim and a Roman storage jar.
- L8 Field walking. From a pit or ditch c. 30 m south of Trench III. 246.00.8/1.
16. Bead-rim jar. Light brown fabric with coarse, burnt flint, temper.
There is also a sandy ware base, also of Late Iron Age date.
- L9 Field walking. Pit or ditch c. 10 m south of L8.
246.00.9/1 Grey ware Roman sherds including a base.

THE FINDS

THE SAMIAN by Brenda Dickinson

- F7-2 246.7.2/2 Form 18/31 or 31. Central Gaulish. Hadrianic or Early Antonine.
- F13-2 246.13.2/2 Form 18/31 or 31. Central Gaulish. Hadrianic or Early Antonine.
- L3 246.00.3/1 Form 30 or 37 rim. Central Gaulish. Early or mid-Antonine.
- L4 246.00.4/2 Form 31. Central Gaulish. Antonine.
- L6 246.00.6/2 Form 18/31. South Gaulish. Flavian-Trajanic.

QUERN FRAGMENTS by Dr. D. W. Humphries

Fragments 246.2, 3 & 6 are from rotary querns; the others are undiagnostic.

- F2-1 246.1 Glauconite sandstone (greensand) with a clay matrix, partially cemented with iron oxide. Grain size c. 0.2 mm.
- F6-1 246.2 As 246.1. Grain size c. 0.2 mm. Some small patches of clay.
- F7-2 246.3 As 246.1. Grain size c. 0.1 mm.

F10-1 246.4 As 246.1. Grain size c. 0.1 mm.

F16-1 246.5 A coarse-grained sandstone; grain size c. 0.3 mm. There is no glauconite, and it is heavily cemented with limonite (?goethite) which apparently replaces an original clay matrix.

L.6 246.6 As 246.1. Grain size c. 0.2 mm.

In fragments 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 the grain shape is sub-round to sub-angular with a few angular grains. With decreasing grain size there is slightly more matrix. The glauconite indicates a marine origin. It is not possible to suggest an origin for these samples.

THE INFANT BURIAL by Calvin Wells

This burial, from F5, consists of only about three dozen tiny scraps of cranial vault, vertebrae and ribs, with splinters of long bones. They are from a new-born infant but there is no possibility of determining the sex of the child. No abnormalities of a genetic or developmental nature are detectable, nor is there any evidence of disease or injury.

THE ANIMAL BONES by John Collis

F3-1

Ox size	1 rib fragment.
pig	1 metacarpal 3, proximal.
sheep-goat	1 metacarpal, complete.
	1 upper M2, worn.
	1 femur shaft (1.).

sheep (or
sheep/goat)

apparently all from one animal.
Skull - 5 fragments, including orbit and occipital condyle.
1 maxilla fragment (1.) with deciduous P4, and M1 (worn).
2 upper M2 (r. and l.), partial wear.
2 mandibles (r. and l.) deciduous
P2, 3, 4. M1, 2 (all worn except M2 which shows partial wear).
1 incisor, unworn.
Vertebrae: axis, atlas fragment, 4 cervical, 4 thoracic, 1 lumbar.
19 rib fragments.
Scapula - 1 proximal end plus 3 fragments.
Humerus - 2 proximal ends (unfused), 1 distal end.
Ulna - 1 proximal end (r.) unfused.
Radius - (r. and l.) distal ends unfused, 1 distal epiphysis.
2 metacarpals, distal ends unfused.
Pelvis - 5 fragments.
Femur - (r. and l.) distal ends unfused.
Tibia - proximal ends (r. and l.) unfused, 1 epiphysis.
distal ends (r. and l.) unfused, 1 epiphysis.
Metatarsal 1 distal end, 1 complete,

	distal end unfused.
	1 metapodial epiphysis, unfused.
	5 1st phalanges.
F7-1	
Cow	Pelvis: acetabulum fragment (1.).
F7-2	
Cow	Talus.
	Pelvis: acetabulum (1.); Ilium shaft (1.).
	2 skull fragments.
Cow size	
F13-2	
sheep-goat	Tibia (1.) distal end unfused.
F16-1	
sheep-goat	Lower M1, worn.

This sample is clearly too small for much comment. The finds from F3-7 are largely derived from one animal, which was consumed in its entirety on the site, as fragments of almost every part of the body are present. All of the long-bones have been broken, except the metapodials, and one radius, which does, however, show signs of attempted splitting. The pelvis fragments from F7 also are indicative of butchering practice, as they represent certainly two and probably three different animals.

FIELD SURVEY by Peter Fasham

The site has been extensively fieldwalked in the winters of 1974-5 and 1975-6 by students of an evening class based on Micheldever. One swathe, 80 m wide running east-west across the field, was walked, and finds were collected on a 20 m² grid. One hundred and forty-seven pieces of worked flint, including flakes, were recovered; there were a few scrapers, a large number of utilized flakes and some cores, including one blade core of mesolithic type. A dozen Iron Age sherds were collected. Six fragments of quern and one whetstone were among the general finds. Over 500 pieces of Roman building material and over 450 sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. At least three production centres were represented among the pottery, including the New Forest (indented beakers), Alice Holt (eight vessels identified by M. Lyne) and central southern Hampshire, probably around Shedfield. There were a few pieces which might have their origins in the Oxford region. The forms include cooking pots, beakers, storage jars and mortaria. The distribution of these surface finds suggests that the area of Romano-British occupation extends to the south-west of the three-roomed building.

Although the three-roomed structure is itself located on a patch of sandy Clay-with-flints, the immediately adjacent chalk areas have revealed extensive and complex crop and soil marks, covering 26 ha (64 acres). Indeed, for 4 kms east along the ridge, there are contiguous crop and soil marks and earthworks indicative of Iron Age and Romano-British settlement with a density of up to two occupation sites per sq. kilometre. Two of these sites are 'banjo' enclosures preserved as earthworks in Micheldever Wood. One has been excavated by the M3 Archaeological Rescue Committee (MARC3, Site R27, Fasham 1976) and the data recovered suggests that it was not used predominantly for stock control (as has been suggested as a function of this distinctive type of enclosure; Perry 1966), but that it was a unit of settlement involved with mixed farming.

One of the specifically identifiable crop marks west of Bazeley Copse is a 'banjo' enclosure whose entrance is later used as a track running to the area of occupation located by the fieldwalking. Perry (1966, 41; 1972, 43) has already drawn attention to the proximity of 'banjo' enclosures to Roman settlement. Perry has also illustrated (1972, 64, 66) a further relationship which may be relevant to the 'banjo' syndrome, namely the close spatial relationship to the banjo of a sub-circular enclosure approximately twice the size of a banjo. Perry illustrates Warren Farm, which may be one such instance, and others have come to light recently at Popham, Bridget's Farm, Micheldever Wood, (MARC3, Sites R27 and R26) and at Bazeley Copse. So far, there is no clear evidence of date for these enclosures, but the Bazeley Copse one does lie underneath the Roman building, thus allowing it to belong to the Iron Age. It is possible that the east-west ditch, F1, belongs to that enclosure; the ditch is dated to the Late Iron Age, and thus would be contemporary with the later 'banjo' enclosures. This short note is no more than an observation which needs further testing, but does tend to reinforce Perry's (1969, 37) observation that these sites are part of an integrated and organized system of crop and animal husbandry, although

not necessarily designed for the retention of livestock.

In general, the nature of the Iron Age and Romano-British occupation west of Bazeley

Copse is similar to several other examples of apparently continuous occupation from the earlier into the later period known in Central Hampshire.

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Authors: John Collis, Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN.
P J Fasham, M3 Archaeological Rescue Committee, Beaconsfield House, Andover Road, Winchester, Hants SO22 6AT.