

EARLY MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT ON LAND ADJOINING FROMAN'S, COW DROVE HILL, KING'S SOMBORNE, HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

Excavation revealed medieval occupation deposits dated to the 12th and 13th centuries, including insubstantial remains of two buildings, possibly outbuildings, several pits, hearths and a well. One large depression containing three stack-tile hearths may have been a working hollow. A small amount of late Saxon pottery was all residual in later features. The site appears to have been abandoned by the end of the 13th century. Small assemblages of medieval pottery, tile, animal bone and plant remains comprise most of the significant finds. The site may have been residential, or could have been a working area with ancillary structures, hearths and rubbish pits; there was nothing to indicate any specialized function.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission (app. no. TVS 8203/2) had been granted by Test Valley Borough Council for residential development on land adjoining Fromans, Cow Drove Hill, King's Somborne, Hampshire, subject to a condition requiring an archaeological survey. The site comprised a roughly rectangular plot of land of 2400sq m on the western margins of the village, on the west side of Cow Drove Hill (SU 3602 3120) (Fig. 1), on land sloping down from c. 35m above Ordnance Datum to a small stream draining into the Test. The underlying geology is Upper Chalk.

An evaluation carried out in February 2000 by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd (Pine 2000) revealed well-preserved medieval features and as a result, full excavation was required. The excavation in May 2000 was supervised by Jo

Pine and followed a specification approved by Mr Frank Green, the Heritage Officer for Test Valley Borough Council. The project was commissioned by Mr Robert Miles and funded by Bewley Homes, and monitored by Mr Green. The archive will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course. The site code is CDH00/13 and the museum accession number is A.2000.5.

BACKGROUND

An Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building is known from a site at the County Primary School only c. 250m away (Scott 1991, 38). This produced significant environmental evidence (Green 1994). Other Saxon remains, ranging throughout the 6th to 10th centuries, have been encountered at various locations in the village (e.g., Scott 1993, 49). King's Somborne is (so far) unique in the Test Valley in demonstrating continuity through most of the Saxon period (F. Green, pers. comm.).

Work at the County Primary School (Sharma 1998, 38) also yielded 13th–14th-century pottery from various features including a metalled surface and a major ditch, thought to have been the boundary of the Palace (see below). This site, however, with extensive Victorian and modern disturbance, demonstrated high levels of residuality. The church of SS Peter and Paul is 13th-century (Pevsner 1951, 312) and a mound in its grounds may have been an archery butt (VCH iv, 470; Williams-Freeman 1915, 226.) Two deserted medieval villages (Upper Eldon and

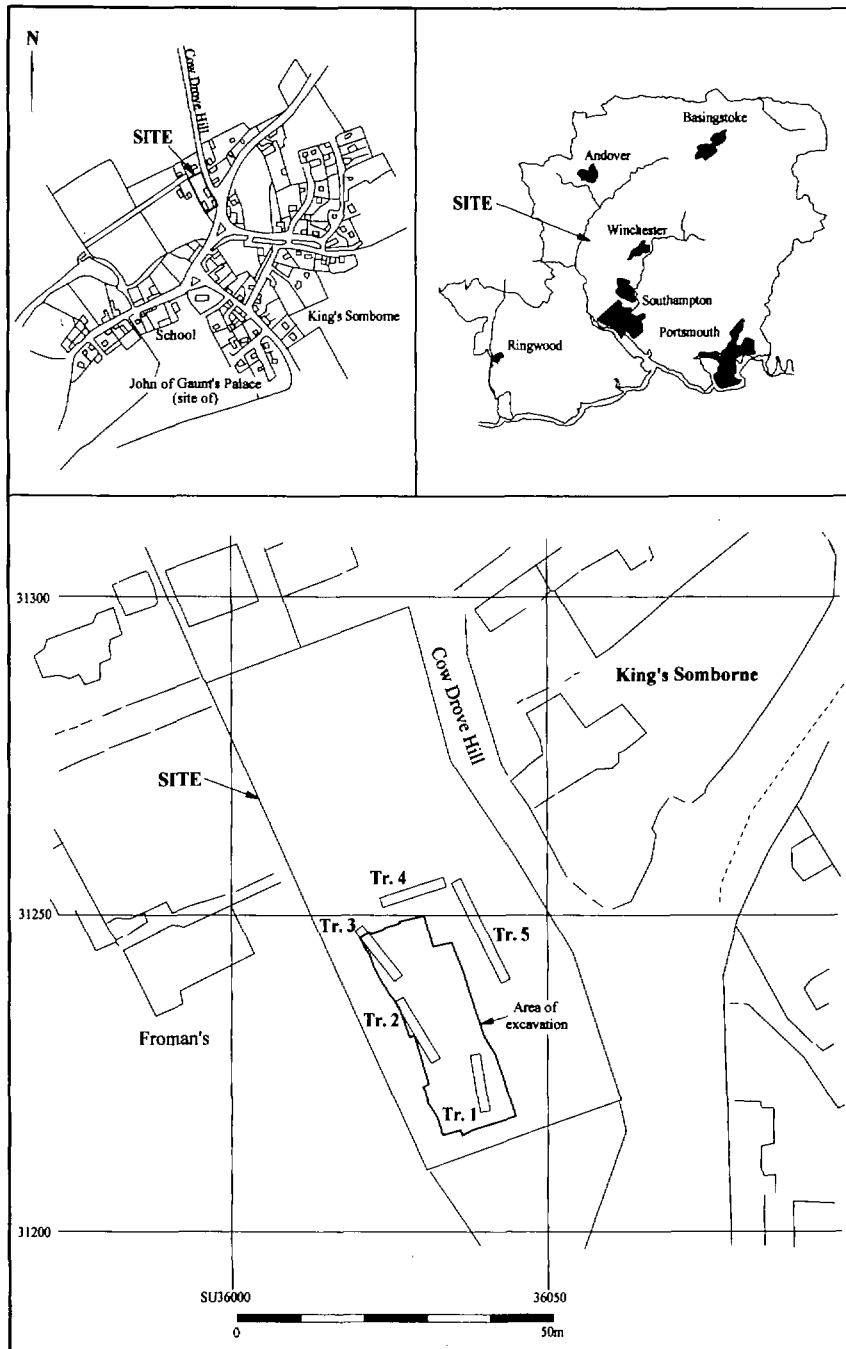


Fig. 1 Cow Drove Hill. Site location

Compton) are known in the modern parish of King's Somborne (Beresford 1954, 352; VCH i, 499; VCH iv, 438–9, 470, 475–80). There are also deserted or shrunken settlements nearby at Lower Eldon, Lower and Upper Brook (F. Green, pers. comm.).

Fromans itself (on the adjacent plot) is a 15th- or 16th-century, two-storey timber-framed building.

The earliest reference to King's Somborne is in *Domesday Book* (1086), although a Swinburnan referred to in 909 may be one of the Sombornes. Three manors are recorded in *Domesday* in Sumborne and Sumborne Regis (Williams and Martin 2002, 93; 113; 117) the chief of which was a royal possession in Saxon times, as in Norman, and remained royal property for several centuries thereafter. The royal demense was extensive, including two churches and three mills with 40 tax-payers. William of Eu and Waleran the huntsman also held land in King's Somborne with a further mill and 35 taxpayers. In all, there was land for 23 ploughs and just over 100 acres of meadow. The king's property here was one of the largest in Somborne Hundred, although the Bishop of Winchester's land at Houghton was considerably more extensive with land for 28 ploughs and 156 acres of meadow (Williams and Martin 2002, 97); with several further listings for Houghton, it seems to have been the more substantial settlement. Compton by comparison seems to have been around half the size.

John of Gaunt's deer park (SAM 254) lay between the River Test and King's Somborne and the park Pale survives in several places as a gravel bank inside a ditch. Another Scheduled Ancient Monument, the site of a manor house known as John of Gaunt's Palace (SAM 290) lies to the south (now Palace Farm), where some of the flint walling is still visible, along with two massive parallel banks.

METHODOLOGY

The excavation opened a single contiguous area of 565sq m. The complete area stripped is shown in Figure 1. Topsoil and overburden were removed by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted

with a toothless bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits.

The archaeological deposits encountered included building foundations, floor layers, buried soils, pits, post holes, gullies, and a large well. All archaeological deposits were cleaned and excavated by hand. All features were half-sectioned as a minimum, with the majority of postholes being fully excavated. The hearths were fully excavated. A minimum of 15% of linear features was excavated in slots, and in some cases closer to 50% was sampled. The well was excavated and fully recorded to a depth of 1.60m at which point the watertable was reached. Excavation was not pursued further: auguring showed the well continued to a depth of at least a further 0.45m. After consultation with the Test Valley Borough Council Heritage Officer, it was decided to preserve this feature *in situ* by capping it over a granular fill.

A range of context types across the site was sampled for environmental evidence; only two samples produced quantities of remains suitable for detailed analysis.

RESULTS

The majority of the features excavated can be dated to the medieval period. These have been assigned to three main phases, although there is a degree of overlap, and the earliest of the medieval phases in particular is not strongly defined. It is entirely possible that only two significant phases of pre-modern activity are represented, and the absolute chronology may be quite compressed (entirely within the 12th–13th centuries). Almost every deposit on the site can be dated relatively and most can be assigned calendar dating (exceptions were mainly tiny stakeholes, and even these can be positioned loosely in the stratigraphic sequence).

Phase 1: Prehistoric

No features from this period were discovered. Three sherds of Iron Age pottery were all residual in later features. These need not be evidence of earlier occupation on the site, as they could have

arrived with imported soil. A single prehistoric struck flint was incorporated in the medieval flint wall footing 102.

Phase 2: Saxon

Features are assigned to this phase only very tentatively, largely on the basis of stratigraphy (i.e., simply being earlier than Phase 3 features). A handful of sherds of Saxon pottery were retrieved, most of these in later features. Only pit 225 produced Saxon pottery (a single rim sherd) without later material and this may have been stratigraphically later (Phase 5) as it appeared to cut pit 304 and hollow 313, although it was also partially overlain by floor layer 298, and the relationship with 304 was not unequivocal. Features assigned to this phase include a pit (2) and post holes (5, 6) from the evaluation trenches. Even if these features really constituted a separate phase, it need not necessarily have been much earlier than the 12th-century date of Phase 3. Overall, the few sherds of Saxon pottery and the small number of features can provide no more than a hint of occupation pre-dating Phase 3 and a suggestion of Saxon activity in the vicinity.

Phase 3: 12th Century (Fig. 2)

Occupation in the 12th century is more evident, although the dating of features to this phase depends as much on what is missing from their pottery assemblages as on any more positive evidence. Beyond this, features can be dated to this phase on stratigraphic grounds (i.e., they must be earlier than Phase 4 features). It is possible that some or all of these features may have belonged to Phase 4. The features of this phase were nearly all pits (1, 106, 107, 110, 111, 113, 119) towards the centre of the site, along with ditches at the southern end (217, 300), and isolated post holes (222, 223). Most of the pits showed simple fill sequences of one or at most two fills, but pit 106 had six separate fills (Fig. 4) and fill 173 produced charred and mineralized plant remains. None, however, produced many finds, with the exception of a moderate animal bone assemblage and a smithing hearth bottom in pit 119. All were relatively large,

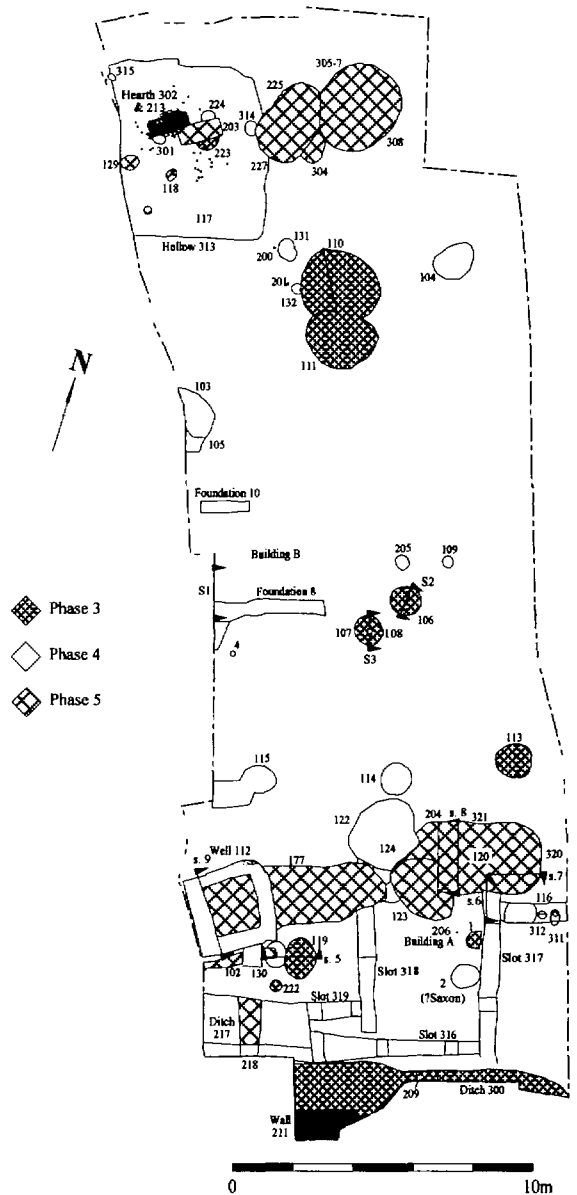


Fig. 2 Cow Drove Hill. Site plan; all features; phased

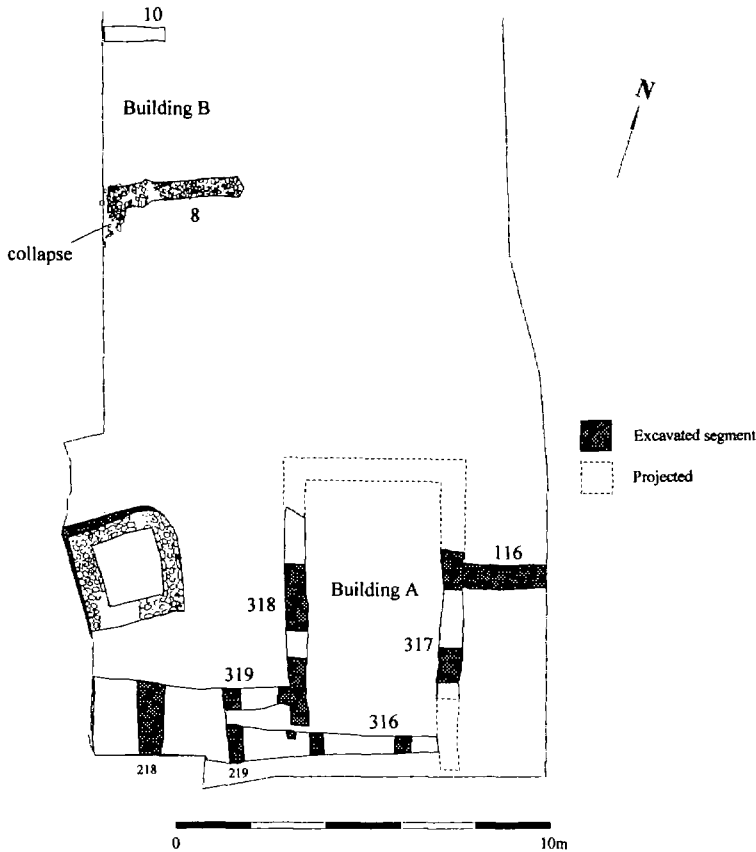


Fig. 3 Cow Drove Hill. Buildings A and B: details

sub-circular cuts (1m to 2m in diameter), usually around 0.5m deep.

The ditches yielded even fewer finds, and are assigned to this phase only on the strength of their being earlier than the beam slots of Building A, and even this relationship was not entirely beyond question. Neither slot across ditch 300 revealed its full width, as it only just intruded into the excavated area. Ditch 217 was 1.54m wide, 0.32m deep and very shallow-sided; it may have been another large shallow pit rather than a ditch.

Thus, none of the features of this phase is conclusively datable; it is entirely possible all should be considered broadly contemporary with Building A.

Phase 4: Late 12th to 13th Century (Fig. 2)

This phase need not necessarily be very much later than Phase 3, and the phases were probably at least partly contemporary. The site was certainly occupied in the 13th century. The most significant structural evidence belongs to Buildings A and B (Fig. 3). Building A comprised linear features 116, 316, 317, 318 and 319 which are probably best interpreted as robbed out beam slot foundation trenches, although it is not ruled out that they held flint footings as in Building B. Another possibility is cob walling, a form of construction with a long local tradition. None of the slots was particularly substantial, and all tended to fade out rather than

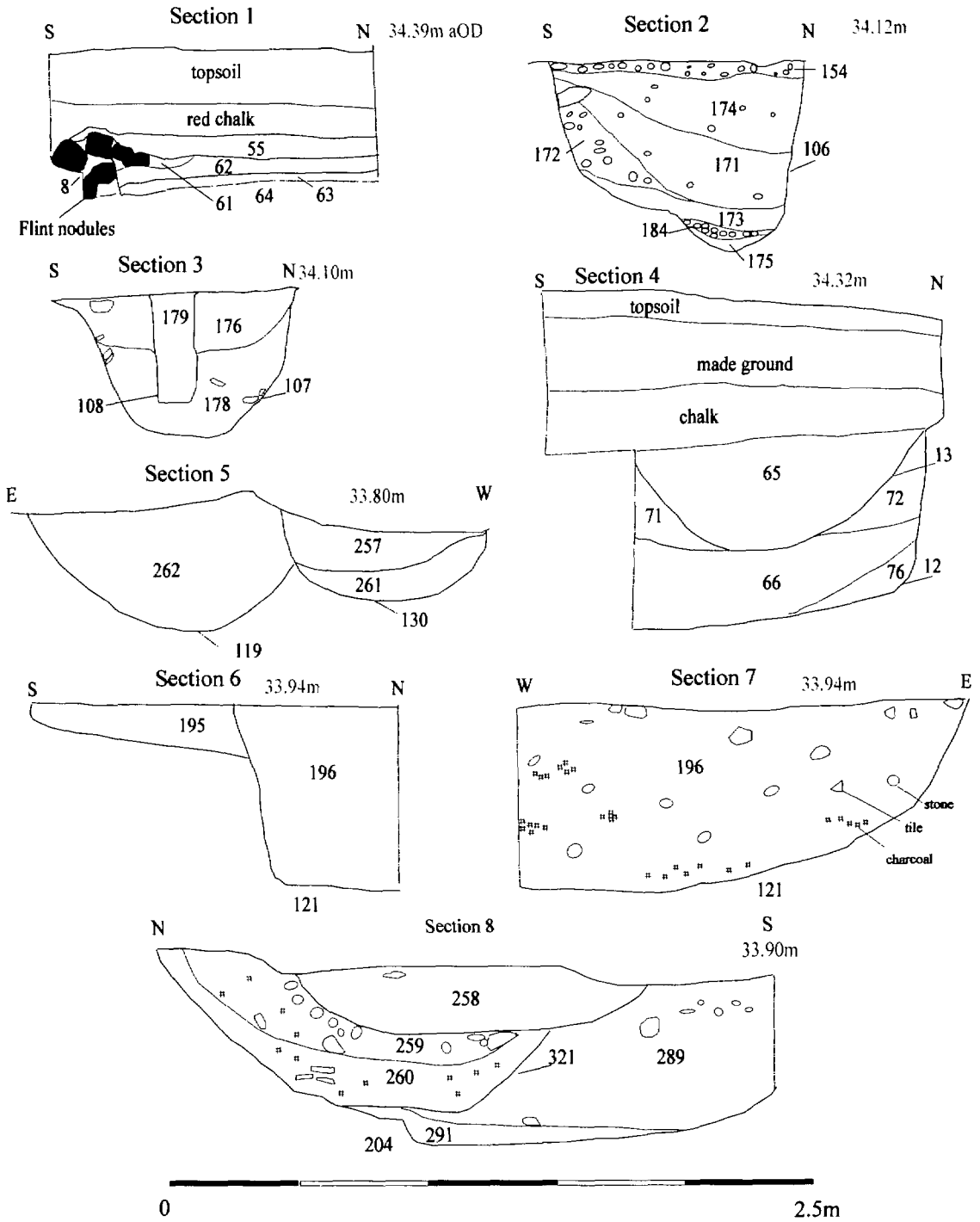


Fig. 4 Cow Drove Hill. Selected sections

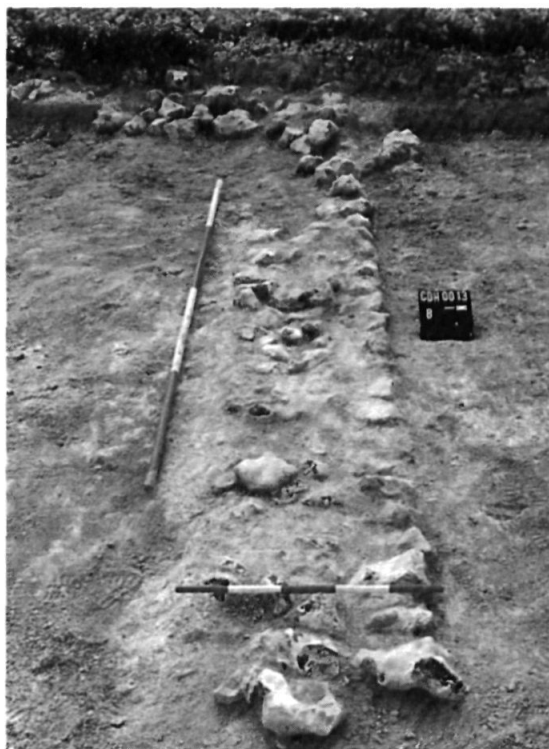


Fig. 5 Cow Drove Hill. Wall footing 8, Building B. Scales 2m, 0.5m

having clearly defined terminals. They defined a rectangular building with a central room roughly 6m by 4m and further walls (presumably side rooms) extending both east and west. The entire north wall has been lost to large pits, dating the demolition to no later than the 13th century. The construction cannot be closely dated, but there is no evidence for its having been substantially earlier. Slot 116 alone, leading off to the east, provided evidence for a different construction technique, as post holes 311 and 312 were cut through its base, indicating a post-in-trench construction rather than a sill beam. It is possible this eastern room was a later addition. The south-west corner is also confused, as other linear features converged here and the stratigraphy was unclear. All the beam slots were at their most ephemeral here, but the plan, at least of one room, is clear enough. The

building would appear likely to have been contemporary with well 112, given their positioning. No evidence of a specific function for the building could be adduced, although several of the slots produced small quantities of iron slag and cinder, and no associated floor layers survived. Although a later firm chalk floor layer (177) overlay beamslot 318 at the north-west corner and was apparently laid up to and respecting well 112, this need not necessarily preclude well 112's being contemporary with Building A, as originally constructed, although it does mean the yard and well continued in use after Building A's demise.

Building B (Fig. 3) is assigned this phase purely on the evidence of six sherds of pottery from floor layer 61, the only dating evidence recovered from any of its elements. It consisted of two parallel foundations, one almost completely robbed out with just a few flint nodules and some bonding material left (10) and one with stone footings surviving (Fig. 5), and several layers of floor and floor make-up (61-4) covering the area between. The lowest of these layers (64) may have been no more than the surface of the natural gravel compacted by use. The footings (8) consisted of large irregular flint nodules with a cob and crushed chalk/clay bonding. Two courses of 8 remained standing in places, with more collapsed over the floor. There was no discernible cut, the nodules simply being set on the natural surface. Building B would have sat approximately at right angles to the alignment of Building A, suggesting they may have been contemporary, creating in effect an open courtyard centred on the well. As with Building A, no specific function can be assigned to Building B, and in this case, nor can any firm date be offered for its abandonment. Overlying layers contained only modern material. It seems likely that Building B was still in use throughout Phase 5.

A large rectangular depression 313 appears to have been a sunken-featured building, although not taking quite the form expected of a typical Saxon Grubenhäuser. It was approximately 5m square, but only some 0.25m deep. Within it, a group of stacked-tile hearths, a number of stake-hole alignments and several post holes (packed with chalk and flint nodules) indicated the interior arrangements, although it is difficult to determine the nature of the construction itself. It is possible it

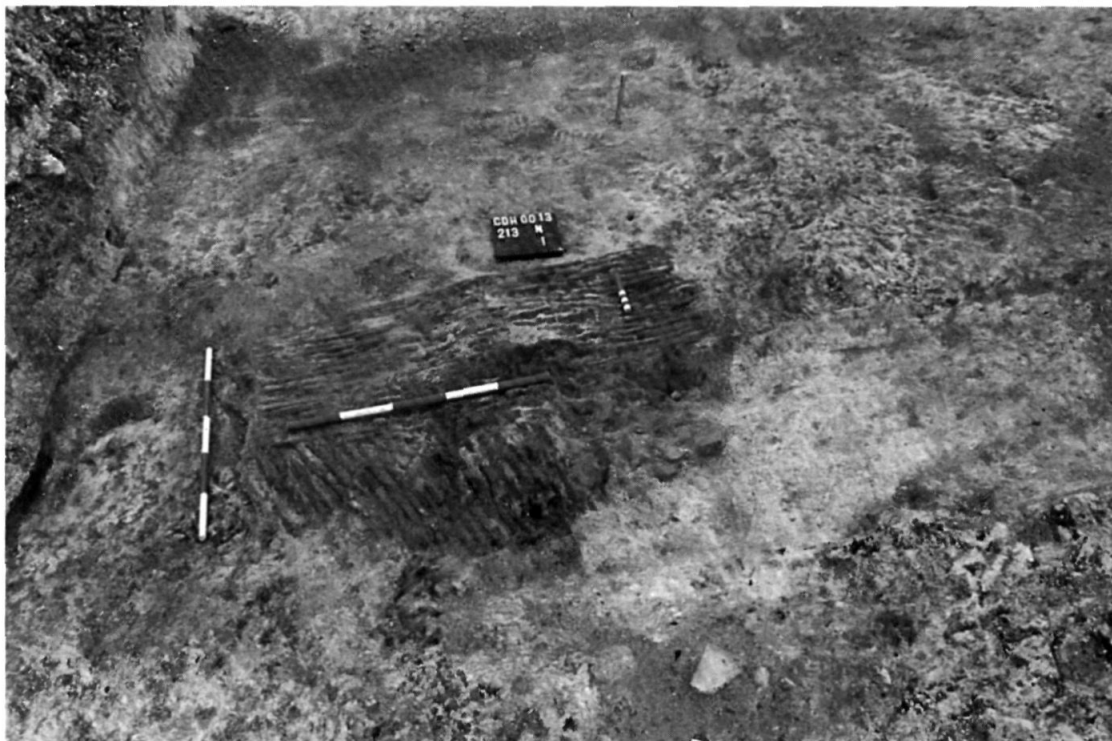


Fig. 6 Cow Drove Hill. Hearth 213 overlying 302. Scales 0.5m, 0.1m

was a working hollow, centred on hearths 302 and 213, but it could equally have been a void below a raised timber floor, a common feature in medieval houses in the area (F. Green, pers. comm.). The existence of secondary structures built of insubstantial stakes rammed through the floor might support the idea that the area was not a sub-floor void, but it is also possible that all of these minor features were later.

The hearths, constructed of medieval roof tiles, certainly exhibited two phases, and could in fact all have been later constructions, so that the hollow may have been in use over a long period. Hearth 302 was a setting of thin tiles on end, later replaced (overlain) in the same spot by an almost identical hearth 213 whose tiles were laid at a different angle (Fig. 6). The entire floor area was covered in several distinct deposits liberally sprinkled with charcoal, presumably the rakings from the use of the hearths. Two of the most dense concentrations of charcoal (352 and 354) also included small

amounts of 13th-century pottery and 352 also contained charred plant remains. Other layers (e.g., 226) which could have been floors within the hollow, consisted of chalky clay, flint nodules, occasionally fragments of tile laid flat, although all these layers were generally patchy, badly degraded and apparently frequently replaced. The end of this phase in this part of the site was marked by the laying of a single layer (298) of chalk and flint nodules (treated in Phase 5 below). No finds other than the tile of the structure itself were directly associated with any of the three hearths, so their functions can only be guessed at; a use for the processing of crops (see Robinson below) is certainly possible, as is a purely domestic role.

Other features included numerous pits (103, 104, 114, 115, 130, 209, 218, 307). The pits scarcely differed from those of earlier phases, either morphologically or in terms of the types and meagre quantity of finds present.

A number of isolated post holes can also be



Fig. 7 Cow Drove Hill. Well 112. Scales 2m, 1m

assigned to this phase; no patterning emerged among them.

The majority of features sampled for environmental evidence dated to Phases 4 and 5. Few from either phase produced significant plant macrofossils, and the remains (see below) comprise a typical medieval consumption assemblage.

Phase 5: 13th Century (Fig. 2)

Well 112 (Fig. 7) was a substantial construction comprising cut 127, some 1.54m square, with a flint and tile lining, typically four courses of flint over two courses of tile throughout, bonded with a pale yellow-grey mortar (Fig. 8). It appeared to have been deliberately backfilled, as the fill was, apart from the occasional lens of bulkier materials, a largely homogeneous sandy silty clay, and over the top was a rough metallised surface 155. As noted above, this feature was not bottomed

but excavated only to the watertable, and, apart from the removed fills, has been preserved *in situ*. Surprisingly few finds, other than a very large quantity of tile, derived from the backfill, and no environmental evidence was recovered, but a medieval date is clearly indicated by the use of peg tile (not locally available until the end of the 13th century; F. Green, pers. comm.) in the bonding, with similar tile in the backfill, while the small pottery assemblage would indicate a 13th- or 14th-century date for the backfilling; pottery from the construction cut indicates an earlier date, in the late 12th or 13th century, but this may of course be redeposited. A single Tudor Green glazed jug sherd of just 2g from the top of the backfill may be intrusive or, perhaps belong to the final stage of what could plausibly have been a slow filling process at the very top levels, and is not believed to affect the dating of the use of this feature to this phase. There is clear

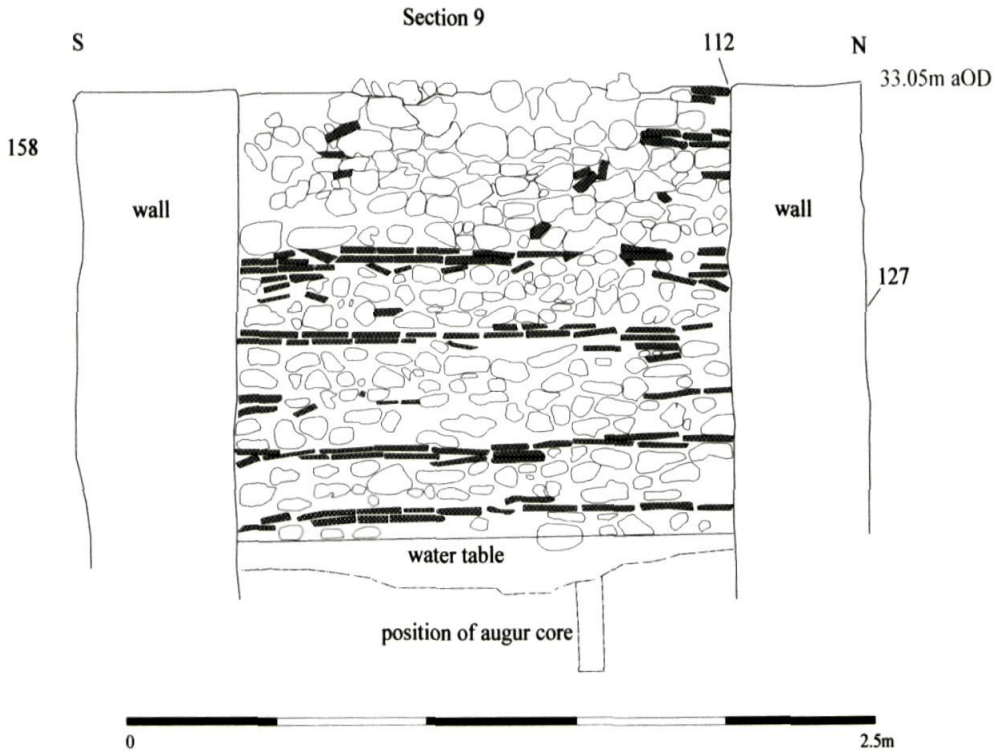


Fig. 8 Cow Drove Hill. Section across well 112

evidence that it at least continued in use after Building A but there is no reason it could not originally have been contemporary with A. A short stretch of mortared flint-nodule wall (102) just south of well 112 and presumably associated with it, resembled the construction used in Building B; this seems to have been no more than a low retaining wall, but also suggests contemporaneity with Building B.

Building A had clearly passed out of use before the end of this phase, as the area occupied by its north wall was now wholly obliterated by pits; the presence of the pits also suggests that some occupation, probably now confined to Building B, continued in the immediate vicinity. The laying of a new chalk yard surface (177) up to well 112, over the top of the foundations of Building A also provides evidence of continuing activity. It is even possible that Building B was a completely new

replacement for A, although they also make sense as a pair.

Above the chalk surface 177, and of almost identical extent, another surface (159) belonged to this phase, and this was covered by a post-medieval dump (163).

A dozen pits dated to this phase, all again large and essentially shallow like those of earlier phases, and clustered in two locations, over the former north wall of Building A and just east of hollow 313, with considerable intercutting in both areas, and truncating phase 4 pits in the southern location. All of the best-dated pottery assemblages (those with 100 sherds or more) dated to the 13th century (from 204, 320 and 321).

In the northern part of the site, a chalk floor layer (298) was laid in the working hollow 313, and slightly beyond it, sealing most of the stakeholes, and hearths 213 and 302, creating a

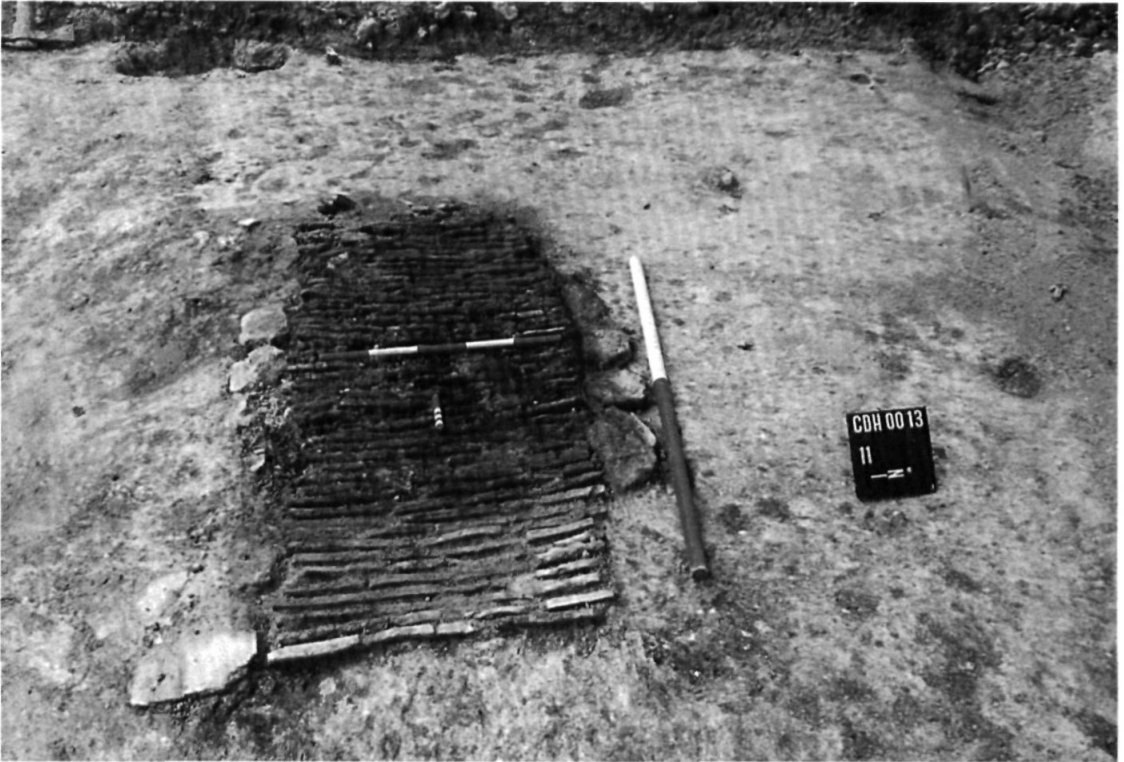


Fig. 9 Cow Drove Hill. Hearth 203 (11). Scales 1m, 0.5m, 0.1m

solid floor and clearly signalling the end of the use of all the Phase 4 features within the hollow. This provided a surface on which to work around hearth 203 which lay on it. Hearth 203 (Fig. 9) was larger and more soot-blackened, but otherwise little different in construction from the earlier examples. Once again, numerous stake holes attest to some ephemeral structure set into floor 298, but any patterning has been lost.

Phase 6: Early Modern and Modern

A number of Victorian and modern building foundations and other features were also recorded. These are not discussed here and have been removed from the plans for clarity; details are in the archive.

Unphased

The few unphased features (two pits and some post holes) are generally likely also to be medieval in date, as their character resembles those of Phases 4 and 5. However, without diagnostic finds or stratigraphy, this cannot be conclusively demonstrated.

FINDS

Pottery by JR Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 929 sherds of pottery weighing 13.6kg, largely dating to the medieval period. In addition there is a small amount of post-medieval material, largely from surface layers or cleaning, eight potential

late Saxon sherds and three later prehistoric pieces.

Pottery was recovered from 68 individual contexts with some additional unstratified material. Quite a high number of contexts proved to be aceramic and many of the groups, particularly from the post-holes comprised just one or two sherds. The largest groups came from a series of pits, in particular pits 121, 204, 206, 320 and 321.

The medieval sherds were relatively well preserved with, large fresh pieces, several joining. At least one complete profile of a West Country cooking vessel was present. The good condition of the material is reflected in overall average sherd weight of 14.6g, fairly typical of discarded rubbish material that has not been subjected to ongoing post-depositional disturbance.

The assemblage was sorted into fabric groups on the basis of the main inclusions present in the clay. Once sorted, the wares were quantified using sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent. A copy of the database is deposited with the site archive. The proportion of fabrics by all three counts is given in Table 1. Detailed quantification by fabric per context is held in archive.

Prehistoric

At least three sherds in handmade, calcined flint-tempered fabrics were present as redeposited finds in pits 106, 122 and well construction cut 127. The fabric is typical of the Iron Age in this area and may indicate some nearby later prehistoric activity. The sherds were quite small and abraded. One piece is from a bead-rimmed jar suggesting a later Iron Age-early Roman date.

Saxon

Eight sherds, potentially of late Saxon date were present in layer 158, ditch 300 (segment 210) and pits 106, 113 and 225, mainly alongside later material. Most of the pieces, with one exception, were small, abraded body-sherds of indeterminate form. Pit 225 produced a single everted rim sherd (Fig. 10.1) unaccompanied by any other ceramic material suggesting that this feature could potentially be one of the earliest on the site. At least four fabrics were present:

- LSX1: A handmade black fine sandy ware with rare fragments of flint.
- LSX2: A handmade medium sandy ware with sparse organic inclusions.
- LSX3: A handmade, thin-walled almost brittle ware with a crumbly texture. The paste contains a sparse to common frequency of coarse angular flint (2–3 mm) and ill-sorted rounded, dark coloured, quartz sand.
- LSX4: A chalk or limestone tempered ware. The finely micaceous paste contains a common frequency of sub-rounded limestone with rare fragments of flint. This fabric may equate with fabric S/N at Netherton (Fairbrother 1990, 290) which is dated to the late Saxon period (9–10th century). The only featured sherds from pit 225 (Fig. 10.1) would typologically fit such a date. Only four sherds were present in total.

Medieval

Most of the sherds, 96% by count, date to the Medieval period, in particular the later 12–13th centuries. A significant proportion of these came from negative features (pits/ditches).

Description of fabrics and associated forms. Laverstock wares (LAVCW) (Musty *et al.* 1969). A coarse, sandy ware, with occasional flint inclusions. Almost exclusively used for jars/ cooking pots (eg. Fig. 10.3, 8, 9; Fig. 11.22) and less commonly for dishes. An almost complete West Country style inturned bowl came from pit 321 (Fig. 10.5). Several of the sherds show evidence of scratch-marking. This fabric accounts for 38% of the total medieval assemblage by sherd count, 40% by weight, 30% by eve. Production dates from the later 12th century.

Laverstock ware (LAVGL) (Musty *et al.* 1969). A finer sandy version used for jugs and tripod pitchers, usually glazed (Fig. 10.17; Fig. 11.7.20, 23). A group of 35 body-sherds from a single vessel, possibly a costrel came from wall 102. This ware accounts for 15% of the assemblage by count, 11% by weight. Several sherds are decorated, in addition to applied strips, one jug has applied pads around the neck (Fig. 10.17) and one sherd from pit 321 (fill 260) is roller stamped.

Newbury type A ware (Vince *et al.* 1997, 46). Flint-tempered sandy ware probably made in the Kennet valley from the 11–12th centuries. A distinction has been made between the standard fabric with a sparse to moderate frequency of flint and a ware with a much coarser grade of flint (A2) which may be comparable with Facombe fabric D (Fairbrother 1990, 284) dated to the late 12–early 13th century. Both fabrics are

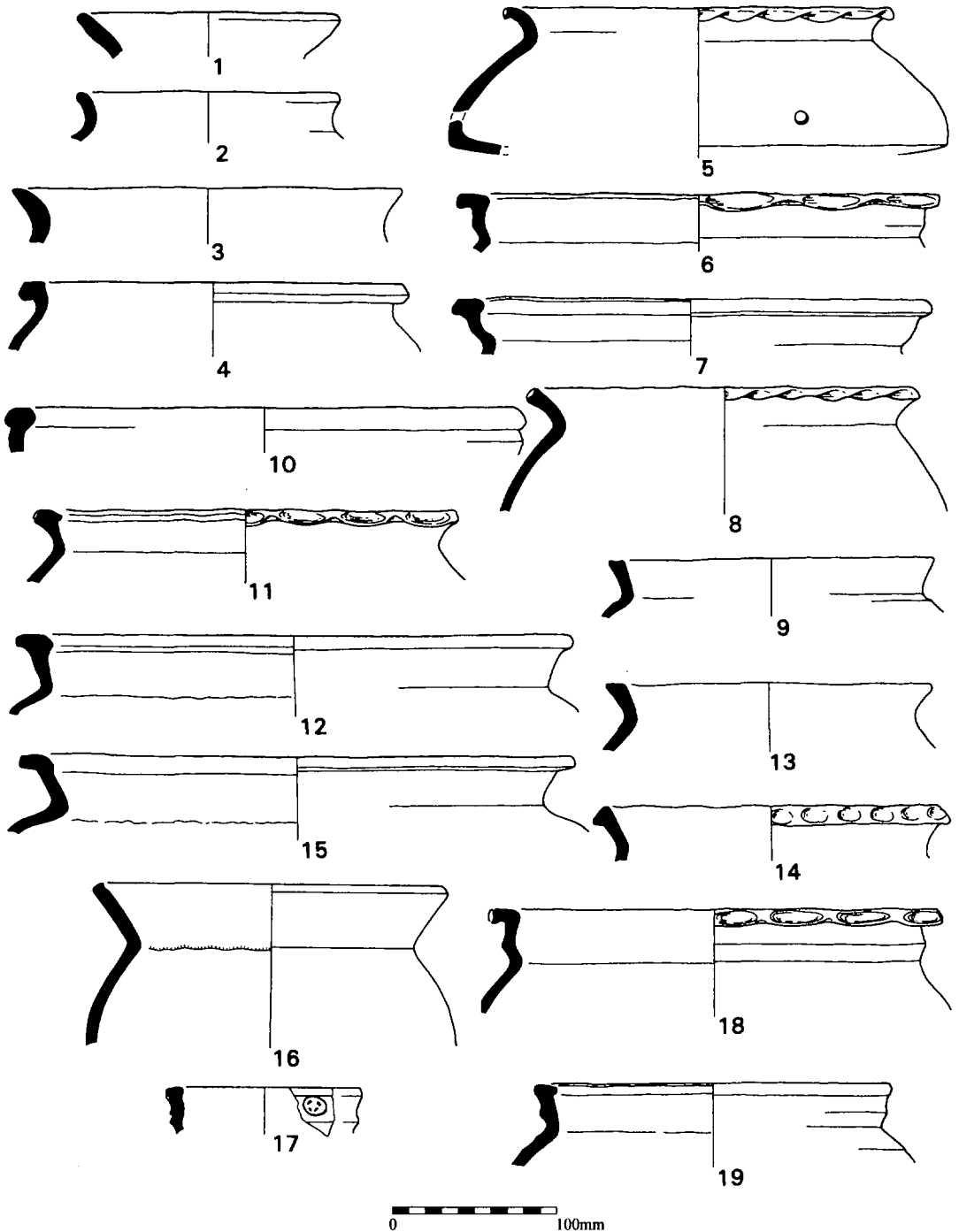


Fig. 10 Cow Drove Hill. Pottery (1)

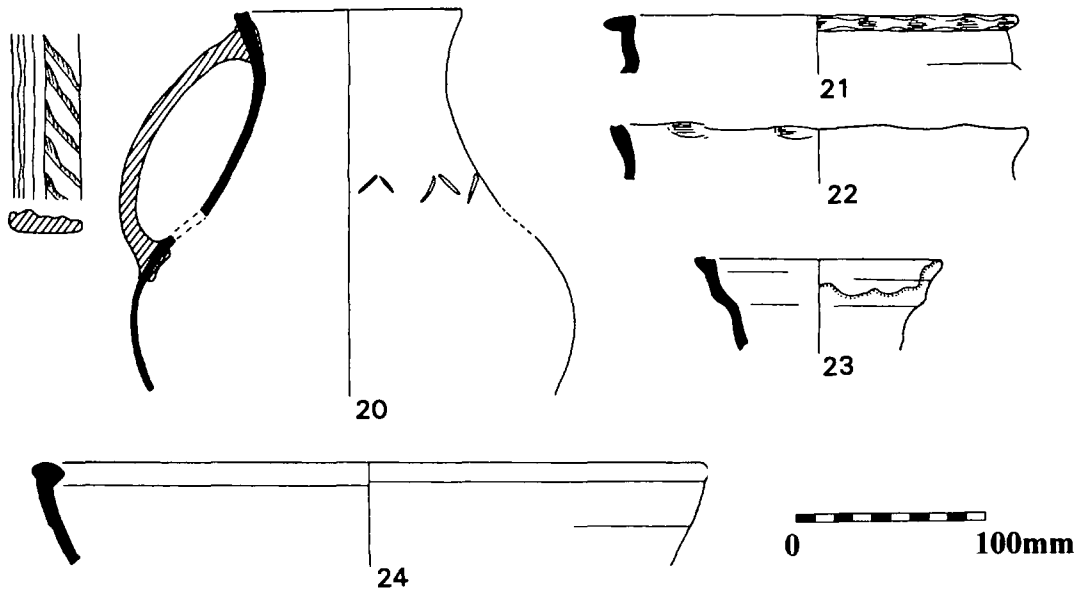


Fig. 11 Cow Drove Hill. Pottery (2)

almost exclusively represented by jars. Some sherds with thumb-pressed decoration are present (Fig. 10 6.6, 11, 13–14, 18–19; Fig. 11.21). Newbury fabric A is well represented in the assemblage accounting for 18.5% by sherd count, 24% by weight. The coarser variant accounts for just 1% of the group.

Newbury type B ware. (Vince *et al.* 1997, 51). Flint and calcareous-tempered ware dating to the later 12th–14th century. This ware overlapping with Newbury A is present in similar amounts accounting for 15% by sherd count, 15.5% by sherd weight. Again it mainly features as jars and to a lesser extent spouted pitchers and dishes (Fig. 10.4, 7, 10, 12, 15; Fig. 11.24). Decoration is restricted to one sherd with an applied thumb-strip and one sherd with finger depressions around the shoulder.

Surrey-Hampshire wares (Pearce and Vince 1988; Pearce 1992): A few sherds of glazed Surrey-Hampshire ware was present, none from featured vessels. Most of the pieces came from surface layers, or unstratified groups.

Tudor Green (Pearce and Vince 1988, 79). A single sherd from a small jug came from the backfill of well 112.

MED1: Medium-fine sandy ware. This group probably falls into Newbury Group C (Vince *et al.* 1997, 52) which includes a number of variants. Forms include spouted pitchers, jars and at least one glazed jug (Fig. 10.2, 16).

MED2: A medium-fine sandy ware with a finely micaceous paste. A small group accounting for just 3% of the assemblage. The only rim is from a jar or spouted pitcher.

MED3: A medium-fine sandy ware with a sparse scatter of angular flint up to 2–3 mm. in size. Possibly a variant of Newbury fabric A. Vessels include jars of which at least one is sooted and a spouted pitcher.

MED4: An oolitic limestone-tempered ware probably from the Cotswolds to the north. Only two body-sherds were present, both from pit 119.

MED5: A fine, hard sandy ware similar in character to material from the Ashampstead kilns, Berkshire (Mephams and Heaton 1995). Only one jar rim was present.

MISC: A small group of mainly sandy wares did not fit into the above groups but did not warrant individual description. One of the more distinctive fabrics contains a moderate to common frequency of fine quartz mixed with similar sized black specks of iron. The glaze is olive green in colour.

Discussion

The small amount of potential late Saxon material present in the assemblage would match evidence

Table 1 Quantification of pottery fabrics

<i>Fabrics</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Eve x100</i>	<i>%</i>
LAVCW	Laverstock coarse sandy	338	38	5327	40	204	30
LAVGL	Laverstock finer glazed	135	15	1470	11	89	13
NEWA	sandy with flint	166	18.5	3243	24	141	21
NEWA2	coarser variant	11	1	154	1	14	2
NEWB	sandy with flint and chalk	135	15	2091	15.5	105	18
MED1	fine sandy	23	2.5	305	2	44	6
MED2	micaceous med-fine sandy	26	3	184	1.5	10	1
MED3	sandy with sparse flint	18	2	212	1.5	35	5
MED4	oolitic-limestone	2	*	33	*	0	0
MED5	fine sandy with iron	17	2	220	1.5	20	3
SHBW	Surrey-Hants border ware	7	*	77	*	0	0
TUDGR	Tudor Green	1	*	2	*	7	1
MISC	Unclassified	10	1	57	*	0	0
<i>TOTAL</i>		889	100	13375	100	669	100

from elsewhere in King's Somborne, where occasional sherds of similar date have been recovered (C. Matthews pers. comm.). Most of the late Saxon sherds here would appear to be redeposited in later contexts with perhaps the possible exception of pit 225.

Most of the remaining pottery recovered from Cow Drove Hill would comfortably fit into the 13th century. Three pits produced in excess of 100 sherds each: namely 121, 320 and 321. Sherds of Laverstock ware both glazed and plain, and Newbury fabric B dominate the assemblage from pit 320, with only small number of other wares. The glazed wares would indicate a mid-late 13th-century date. A variety of forms are present including jars, dishes, spouted pitchers and jugs. Pit 121 contains a broadly similar range of material but with slightly more Newbury A ware possibly intimating a very slightly earlier date. The glazed jugs would again indicate a 13th-century date. Pit 321 contained a more diverse range of material with the additional presence of

fabrics MED3 and MED5 associated with the same wares as the other two pits. Again a 13th-century date is appropriate. Contemporary assemblages were recovered from pits 103, 114, 122, 130, 204, 304 and beam slot 318. Individual sherds from layers 152, 155, 159, 177, 352, 354 and construction cut 212 are also likely to be contemporary with these features. Pits 123 and 206 contained just plain wares but are stratigraphically above contexts with such wares and are thus also likely to date to the 13th century.

The absence of any glazed material from pits 106, 107, 111, 113, 119, beam slots 116, 120, ditch 217 and construction cut 127, might suggest these could be slightly earlier, perhaps later 12th century but the samples are quite small. Ditch 210 is the only feature not to contain any Laverstock ware. This group of only six sherds contains one late Saxon sherd, Newbury fabrics A and B alongside fabrics MED2 and MED3 indicating a later 12th century date at the earliest. Individual sherds from features 1 and 300, beam-slots 316 and 317

and posthole 222 are similarly compatible with a 12th century date.

Wall 102 produced several sherds from one vessel, possibly a costrel in Laverstock ware likely to date to the 13th or 14th century. The backfill of well 112 contained the small sherd of Tudor Green dating the group overall to the later 15–16th centuries although the other sherds are earlier. The construction cut for the well contains one later prehistoric sherd, three sherds of Newbury B and one sherd of Laverstock coarse ware suggesting a date from the later 12–13th century.

There is no evidence of any continuity of use of the site after the 13th century with the next ceramic horizons containing a mixture of medieval wares alongside 18th-century or later sherds.

The assemblage recovered from Cowdrove Hill contains a range of material from relatively local production sites, in particular from kilns in the Salisbury area and from sources in the Kennet valley. King's Somborne appears to fall well within the market area for Laverstock ware which has been found at Netherton, Foxcote and Romsey (Hants) (Fairbrother 1990, 301). The relatively high proportion of glazed jug present possibly points to a relatively well-appointed establishment, but one which essentially obtained most of its supplies from local markets. A higher status assemblage might be expected to contain a more diverse range of wares drawing on a wider range of regional or continental imports.

Catalogue of Illustrated Sherds

1. Everted rim, handmade jar. Dark grey to red-brown in colour. Fabric: LSX4. Pit 225 (367).
2. Handmade jar. Dark grey-black in colour. Fabric: MED1. Pit 119 (262).
3. Handmade jar. Fabric: Laverstock coarse sandy ware. Pit 113 (186).
4. Handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury B. Pit 321 (258).
5. West Country type, deep inturned dish with a single wall perforation towards the base. Pit 321 (260).
6. Handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury A. Pit 321 (260).
7. Handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury B. Pit 321 (260).
8. Handmade jar. Fabric: Laverstock unglazed coarse sandy ware. Pit 321 (260).
9. Handmade jar. Fabric: Laverstock unglazed coarse sandy ware. Pit 321 (260).

10. Dish. Fabric: Newbury B. Surface of pits 204/206/321.
11. Jar with finger-pressed rim. Fabric: Newbury A. Pit 206 (293).
12. Large, handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury B. Pit 206 (293).
13. Handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury A. Pit 320 (66).
14. Handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury A2 with coarser flint. Pit 320 (66).
15. Large, handmade jar. Rim luted to the body. Fabric: Newbury B. Pit 320 (66).
16. Wheelmade jar/ spouted pitcher. The exterior is covered with a clear glaze, which is speckled with green copper on the rim interior. Fabric: MED1. Pit 304 (393).
17. Laverstock glazed jug with an applied, decorated, pad applied just below the rim. The glaze is bright green at the rim changing to yellow below. Layer (159).
18. Jar with a thumb-pressed rim. Fabric: Newbury A. Pit 121 (196).
19. Handmade jar. Fabric: Newbury A. Pit 121 (196).
20. Glazed jug with a decorated strap handle. This has been attached by plugging it through the vessel wall. There are traces of lightly slashed chevrons under the mottled light and dark green glazed. Fabric: Fine sandy, Laverstock glazed ware. Pit 320 (65).
21. Handmade jar with a finger-pressed rim. Fabric: Newbury A. Pit 320 (65).
22. Handmade jar with a slight lip or lid seating. Fabric: Laverstock unglazed sandy ware. Pit 113 (186).
23. Jug in a fine sandy Laverstock ware with an olive green glaze. Pit 320 (65).
24. Dish. Fabric: Newbury B. Pit 320 (65).

Animal Bones by Sheila Hamilton-Dyer

Evaluation and excavation recovered a small assemblage of animal bone, mainly from medieval/late medieval deposits. A few bones were recovered from post-medieval and modern features, and some were recovered from aceramic features. Species identifications were made using the author's modern comparative collections. All fragments were identified to species and element with the following exceptions. Ribs and vertebrae of the ungulates (other than axis, atlas, and sacrum) were identified only to the level of cattle/horse-sized and sheep/pig-sized. Unidentified shaft

Table 2 Animal bone summary by Phase

Phase	horse	cattle	sheep/ goat	pig	roe	fallow	cattle- size	sheep- size	dog	cat	fowl	goose	gurnard	Total
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
3	3	9	12	9	0	0	19	17	0	0	1	0	0	70
4	1	3	1	3	0	0	5	3	0	0	1	0	1	18
5	45	9	19	13	0	1	44	14	2	4	3	0	0	154
6	0	2	1	3	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	10
total	48	23	33	28	1	1	70	39	3	4	5	1	1	257
%	18.7	8.9	12.8	10.9	0.4	0.4	27.2	15.2	1.2	1.6	1.9	0.4	0.4	
% cattle/ sheep/ pig		27.4%	39.3%	33.3%										

and other fragments were similarly divided. Recently broken bones were joined where possible and have been counted as single fragments. The few measurements follow von den Driesch (1976). Withers height calculations of the domestic ungulates are based on factors recommended by von den Driesch and Boessneck (1974). Archive material includes metrical and other data not presented in the text.

A total of 257 individual bones was recorded. The bones are mainly well preserved with little erosion, but some had been broken on excavation. Several bones had been accessible to dogs before final disposal and a few had been burnt. Most of the identified material is of the domestic ungulates; a few bones of roe, fallow, dog, cat, goose, fowl and gurnard are also present. Table 2 presents the species totals by Phase; quantification by context is in the archive.

Numerically, horse is the most frequent taxon but 31 of the 48 bones are from fill 167 in well 112. Cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones are more evenly distributed.

Two deer bones were recovered, one each of roe and fallow from layer 159 and wall 102 respectively. Both are mid-shaft fragments from the metatarsus or cannon bone. As this has little more than a skin covering it is regarded as waste rather than a high quality meat bone.

Dog and cat occur twice each while bones of domestic fowl were recovered from five contexts. The single goose bone recovered from the ?Saxon pit 2 is not from a large (i.e. recent) bird. A single fish bone was also recovered, from the head of a gurnard; a common inshore marine species.

Interestingly, the three features, pits 13, 121 and 321, that contained the majority of the ceramics, offered very little bone. The single cattle bone from 121 is the distal portion of a tibia, this is large for the period and is likely to be from a bull or castrate.

Some of the horse bones were sufficiently complete for measurement and estimation of withers height. Four from well fill 167 are all of 1.2m or just over and may be from the same individual. A larger pony of 1.4m is estimated from the metatarsus from pit 113.

To date no animal bone has been published from King's Somborne for comparison. The species representation is, however, that expected from a small medieval assemblage from a Wessex site, with a predominance of domestic stock, poultry and the occasional remains from wild resources. The anatomical distribution includes most body parts, but also includes many head and foot bones, remains of waste or low meat-value parts. There is little indication – from this small sample at least – of the disposal of high status

rubbish such as might be expected from the Palace to the south.

Human Bone by Sheila Hamilton-Dyer

A single fragment of a human mandible was recovered from modern layer 151, although its dark colour and eroded state suggest a disturbed burial of some age (possibly prehistoric). The bone is from the right side near and behind the last molar. It is substantially built and probably male.

Metalwork by Nicola Powell

Thirty-one pieces of metalwork were recovered. Nails dominate the assemblage, although all are in very poor condition, the soil being very unfriendly to all of the metalwork. This is particularly noticeable in the iron objects from the earliest contexts. Only three horseshoe fragments are certainly from medieval contexts. The assemblage is catalogued in full in archive.

Iron Slag by Lynne Keys

A very small amount of iron slag (194g), was found, all from features associated with or cut through Building A. Owing to the broken nature of the iron slag it was allocated to the undiagnostic category. A fragment from pit 119, however, is probably part of a smithing hearth bottom. The fragments of vitrified hearth lining and cinder from beam slots 116 and 316 could have been produced by any high temperature hearth. The clinker from beam slot 318 is the product of coal burning and similarly cannot be attributed to iron working in this context.

The conclusion from the amount and type of slag found is that a little iron smithing may have taken place on the site, probably in Building A, but the amount is not enough to postulate that the activity was prolonged or intense. One would expect more slag if any smelting had been taking place.

Brick and Tile by Nicola Powell

A total of 1163 pieces of brick and tile weighing 53,355g was recovered during the fieldwork.

All are in fragmentary condition, with some pieces being quite small and abraded. There are no complete examples. The bulk of the assemblage (22kg) derived from the well back-fills, while representative samples taken from various pits accounted for a further 6kg. All the other significant concentrations were in rubble layers.

The fragmentation of the tile assemblage made positive identification difficult. The bulk of the assemblage comprises roof tile and many pieces have peg holes. Three interesting pieces, from well 112 (fills 156, 167) and hearth 213, have at least one curved edge. Some of the fragments are fully glazed or have splashes of glaze on surfaces. None have any design or patterning. The glazed brick and tile was examined and five fabrics were identified:

Fabric 1 was a fine sandy matrix, generally light orange, with rare inclusions of grog and iron-rich lumps.

Fabric 2 had a coarser fabric, with very rare inclusions of grog and a dull red colour.

Fabric 3 also had a coarse matrix with rare inclusions, including iron-rich lumps. The tile was generally orange.

Fabric 4 a coarse orange fabric, with rare inclusions of mixed materials with some medium to large voids

Fabric 5 was a fine red-brown fabric with very small very rare inclusions

Although the brick and tile fragments featured above have no patterned decoration like those found at Romsey Abbey (Scott 1996) and are too fragmentary to provide dating evidence, most came from medieval features.

Only eight fragments of brick came from medieval features. The assemblage included a small piece of glazed brick, from post-medieval layer 163. Three surfaces are covered with a salt glaze. The fabric of the brick is red-brown in colour and has rare inclusions of mixed materials including some large voids.

Evidence for the use of roof tiles for essentially secondary purposes (hearths and well-lining) in the 12th and 13th century phases appears to give a considerably earlier date for the common availability of roof tile than had previously been posited for the region on the basis of documentary evidence (Hare 1991).

Burnt Clay by Nicola Powell

Just five pieces of burnt clay weighing 76g were recovered. No evidence was found that any of it had formed part of a larger object such as a loomweight. All of the fragments have the same fabric, being a light sandy colour with large and medium frequent inclusions of flint. The material may be daub or part of the infill of a cob wall.

Burnt Flint by Nicola Powell

A total of 316 pieces of burnt flint weighing 2081g was collected, most during wet sieving of soil samples. Full quantification by context is held in the archive. There was no evidence of working and none of the material was retained.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

Two struck flints came from medieval features, ditch 217 and wall foundation 102. The first is very fresh and almost certainly related to medieval nodule dressing. The second is prehistoric and heavily patinated, but as it came from the mortar of the wall, may have been imported to the site in the mortar mixture.

Stone by David Williams

Seven pieces of stone were recovered. Most were small fragments of blue-grey Devonian slate which may have been building materials; one retained part of a square fixing hole. One other fragment was of shelly-limestone, also possibly roofing material. Most were from post-medieval contexts, although two came from the well construction cut 127. Use of Devonian slates from Devon and Cornwall as roofing material in southern England in the medieval period is well attested (Jope and Dunning 1954).

Shell by Nicola Powell

Twenty-eight shells and fragments of oyster shell were recovered (including thirteen top and eight bottom valves). The largest concentration (17 fragments) came from well backfills.

Plant Macrofossils by Mark Robinson

Twenty-four samples of the order of 12 litres each (282 litres in all) were taken from a range of contexts from all the main phases. The samples were floated onto a 0.3mm mesh and dried. They were then scanned under a binocular microscope for macroscopic plant remains, which were identified and an estimate made of their abundance. Two samples were selected on the basis of this assessment for full analysis. These flots were sorted in detail and the remains identified. The results are given in Tables 3–4. Charcoal was examined at up to $\times 400$ magnification to establish the range of species on the site.

The majority of the 24 samples contained charred remains, but the concentrations were mostly low. They probably represented a background scatter of remains from the final stages of cereal processing. Sample 5 from pit 106 (Phase 3) and Sample 17 from floor layer 352 (Phase 4), however, had higher concentrations of remains. Cereal grain predominated in Sample 5. The grain was mostly short, free-threshing *Triticum* sp. (rivet or bread wheat) and *Hordeum* sp. including some hulled grain of *Hordeum vulgare* (hulled six-row barley). A little *Avena* sp. (oats) was also present. These cereals were also present in Sample 17 but that sample also contained seeds of a legume crop. The legume seeds most closely resemble *Vicia sativa* ssp. *sativa* (fodder vetch) though their preservation is not sufficiently good to exclude the possibility that some are small examples of *Pisum sativum* (pea). Weed seeds were sparse but included such characteristic weeds of calcareous soils as *Anthemis cotula* (stinking mayweed).

The cereals identified from Samples 5 and 17 were the main cereals on the chalk of Southern England in the medieval period. Fodder vetch was also an important crop, mostly as animal feed although it was sometimes consumed by humans. The absence of chaff and low proportion of weed seeds suggested that these remains too were from the final stages of crop processing.

Some mineralized seeds of *Brassica* or *Sinapis* sp. (mustard etc) and *Bupleurum rotundifolium* (thorow-wax) are present in Sample 5. Calcium phosphate mineralization of seeds is characteristic of cesspits and the remains mineralized are charac-

Table 3 Charred Plant Remains

Sample		5	17	
Context		173	352	
Feature		106		
Sample Vol. (l)		10	28	
		No. of Items		No of Samples with Item
<i>Cereal Grain</i>				
<i>Triticum</i> sp. – short free-threshing grain	bread or rivet wheat	6	2	8
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat	2	2	4
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> – hulled lateral grain	hulled six-row barley	1	–	1
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. – hulled grain	hulled barley	5	2	5
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. – median grain	barley	1	–	1
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	barley	2	2	7
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oats	2	1	6
cereal indet		2	5	11
Total Cereal Grain		21	14	13
Chaff		–	–	
<i>Other Food Plants</i>				
cf. <i>Vicia sativa</i> ssp. sativa	fodder vetch	–	10	2
<i>Weed Seeds</i>				
Chenopodiaceae indet.	fat hen etc	–	2	1
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	dock	–	1	1
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	stinking mayweed	1	1	2
Total Items		22	28	13

teristic of dietary waste. *Brassica* or *Sinapis* sp. seeds would have been consumed for their mustard flavouring while *B. rotundifolium*, although now very rare, was a common cornfield weed in medieval times.

Charcoal only occurred in low concentrations in ten samples. It was mostly Pomoideae (hawthorn, apple etc) and *Quercus* sp. (oak). This

suggested that both hedgerow/scrub and woodland were being used as sources of fuel.

DISCUSSION

The excavations at Cow Drove Hill have provided a valuable addition to knowledge of the

Table 4 Mineralized Plant Remains

	No. of Items
Sample	5
Context	173
Feature	106
Sample Vol. (l)	10
<i>Brassica</i> or <i>Sinapis</i> sp.	mustard etc 9
<i>Bupleurum rotundifolium</i>	thorow-wax 2
Total items	11

occupation of the village during a period which may have spanned the 12th–13th centuries, but may also easily have been confined to the 13th, with earlier elements present only residually and with very little to suggest any continuity into the 14th. While little can be deduced about the range of functions performed on the settlement, the site was occupied by a sequence of structures, a well, ovens and rubbish pits. The structures could have been residential, but may perhaps make more sense as outbuildings, and Building A may have been involved in low-intensity metalworking.

The little Saxon material recovered was all either clearly or probably residual, and adds little to the known Saxon element in the village's development. A period of discontinuity may be suggested, but no more than tentatively. Settlement shift within an existing village is just as likely as a total break in occupation. However, continuity seems to be the exception in the Test Valley in this period.

The late 12th and 13th centuries were a time of almost universal economic growth in England, a boom time for both town expansion and rural prosperity. It would occasion no surprise to see occupation on a previously virgin plot in an existing village at this date. Platt (1994, 38) comments that the 12th century saw 'a physical transformation of the English countryside at least as dramatic as the contemporary transformation of the towns . . .' and Taylor (1983, 128) provides

numerous comparable examples. The proliferation of abandoned or contracted settlements within only a short distance (Upper and Lower Eldon, Upper and Lower Brook, Compton) offers ample opportunity to test whether a model of expansion and contraction of settlement and population, or one of a single population shifting over time, offers the better explanation.

The two buildings recorded here represent distinct building types. Building B, represented by low flint footings, can be closely compared to better-preserved examples from Popham (Fasham 1987), Faccombe Netherton (Fairbrother 1990) and Foxcotte (Russel 1985; Warmington 1989), but too little survived here to add much to knowledge of the type. Building A is more difficult to parallel, although its traces were ephemeral and can be expected not to have survived on many sites. At Popham, the excavator suggested that other building types may have existed alongside the flint-walled buildings but not survived (or not been visible) (Fasham 1985, 122). Both buildings were 4.5m to 5m wide, very much typical of buildings at Popham or Foxcotte and presumably this was the maximum span for cruck construction set on sill beams, themselves resting on the flint footings (as very plausibly suggested for Foxcotte; Warmington 1989). This would be much simpler to construct but also smaller than for example the largest of the 8th-century halls at Cowdery's Down which were not cruck-built (Alcock and Walsh 1994).

The nature of the early medieval village, the changes in settlement and agricultural patterns consequent upon the Norman conquest, and even the basic details of daily life and exchange systems are all current archaeological research priorities. More specifically, the elucidation of the origins of early medieval markets requires much more study of *successful* examples, to set against the understandable preponderance of evidence from *unsuccessful* (i.e., deserted) villages, where excavation has previously tended to concentrate. It might also be instructive to wonder whether desertion of rural settlements necessarily equated to 'failure' at all. Was it not rather a *normal* part of the development process, even at this relatively late date? It is, after all, only the distance of the 'drift' which sepa-

rates continuity from desertion, and often the scale of the investigation may determine which interpretation is favoured.

The idea of 'settlement drift' might apply to individual land tenures within a settlement but also, possibly, to whole villages. Away from the towns with the stability imposed by more formal tenurial arrangements, settlements could still have been relatively mobile in many places, although, of course, there is a considerable body of evidence for regularization of land tenure in the countryside, largely in response to the demands of taxation, long before the 13th century (Ambrose-Raftis 1974). Archaeological data at a regional level seem likely to provide the most promising new lines of enquiry into these questions.

Although the composition of the pottery assemblage included a relatively high proportion of finewares, the site showed no real indication of any great wealth or status, potentially allowing a contrast to be drawn with the palace site to the south. Certainly the range of sources drawn upon is restricted, and the material culture the inhabitants left behind, other than pottery, is very limited. Nonetheless, the inhabitants need not have been altogether among the poorest. The prominence of horse bones, albeit from a small sample, might have been used to hint at either some specialization or some status, but is more probably a result of a single unusual deposit distorting the data. If the buildings were only minor outbuildings, of course, a rich assemblage need not be expected even on a rich property. The effort expended on the construction and lining of the well suggests that some surplus wealth was being invested.

Of the end of the occupation, we can say little other than its approximate date, more likely to be in the late 13th century than far into the 14th. Of course, any abandonment (of a whole settlement, or even of any individual element within it) in the early 14th century is easy to account for, with the combination of Black Death, climatic deterioration and agrarian crisis providing more than sufficient causes. A site abandoned (perhaps) in the late 13th century can simply be extended forwards a little in time to fit the model. Ceramic dates, of course, are always *termini post quos*; furthermore, the dating assigned is usually based on

production rather than consumption and deposition, so is always liable to be revised forwards. This small site cannot be used by itself as evidence of widespread earlier abandonment, and further evidence from the area will be required before we can assess even whether the dating assigned here, based largely on small groups of pottery, stands up. Again, if the structures here were only outbuildings, the evidence may indicate no more than the movement of these within a single plot; only the backfilling of the well might argue for a more drastic discontinuity. But if taken at face value, the evidence does suggest that at least this one land plot, by no means rich, but certainly above the poverty line, suffered an economic reverse, a population contraction, or simply a shift, earlier than the onset of the 14th-century disasters. Whether this need reflect conditions in the rest of the village remains to be seen. It should be noted that the abandonment of one plot might as easily be taken as denoting continuing prosperity, if, for example, the owners moved to a newer, larger property elsewhere in the village, a situation starkly illustrated by the rapid rebuildings (and movements) seen at sites such as the manor house at Wharram Percy in Yorkshire (cf., Rahtz 1979; Andrews and Milne 1979). A choice between these alternatives can only come with more evidence. The variety of development even within northern Hampshire is illustrated by the case of Popham, where the evidence points to a short-lived expansion of settlement in the 14th century with abandonment coming late in that century (Fasham 1985).

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