Whittlebury, Northants

The Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland Hillfort survey (v2 October 2013)

Important information:
This form must be used with the accompanying Notes for Guidance which are downloadable from the Project website (http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/hillforts-atlas.html**). Please read the notes before attempting to fill in this form.**
Once completed this form can be either posted or emailed to us, alternatively you can transcribe the information into the web-based form and submit electronically – see the Notes for details.

Access to sites and Health and Safety:
The project and its host Institutions bear no responsibility for any access or health and safety issues that may arise during your participation in this project.

Disclaimer:
The Co-directors of this project and their institutions are not responsible for issues of access to sites and health and safety of participants in the survey. By taking part in this survey you are acknowledging that access and health and safety are your responsibility.

Section 1.

Introductory comments
Thank you for taking part in this survey, by doing so you are agreeing that all information provided can be used and published by the project. You will remain anonymous unless you indicate here that you want to be named on the project website:

1.1. YES – Name to be used: C.L.A.S.P.
(this site surveyed by G.W. Hatton and D. Hayward)

Basic information about you

1.2. Your name: Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP)

1.3. Contact phone number: c/o G.W. Hatton, 01788 822411

1.4. email address: c/o ghatton@toucansurf.com

1.5. Did you visit this site as part of an archaeological society/group, if so which one:
See answers to 1.1 and 1.2 above

Section 2.

Basic information about the site

2.1. Name of the site:	Whittlebury hillfort
2.2. Alternative name of the site:	.
2.3. National Grid Reference:	SP 6898 4426
2.4. Any known reference numbers:	MNN3683
2.5. Current county/Unitary authority:	Northamptonshire County Council
2.6. When did you visit the site (month/year):	20 Nov 2014.

Landscape setting of the site

2.7. Altitude (metres): 157m OD

2.8. Topographic position: [you can tick more than 1]

HILL TOP	X
COASTAL PROMONTORY	.
INLAND PROMONTORY	.
VALLEY BOTTOM	.
KNOLL/HILLOCK	.
OUTCROP	.
RIDGE	.
PLATEAU/CLIFF-EDGE	X
HILLSLOPE	.
LOWLAND (E.G. MARSH)	.
OTHER	.
Comments on topographic position:	On a level small plateau, with good all-round long-distance views. Very close (2.5km) to a further IA hillfort site at Old Tun Copse, near Paulerspury. Both these sites may also relate to long-distance communication routes, see further comments in Section 5.
ASPECT (if slope)	.

2.9. Maximum visibility/view:

NE: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	X
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.
SE: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	X
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.
SW: [tick 1 only]	
LONG	X
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.
NW: [tick 1 only]	

LONG	X
MEDIUM	.
SHORT	.
Comments:	See also 8-point viewshed diagram in Appendices

2.10. Water source inside: [you can tick more than 1]

SPRING	.
STREAM	.
POOL	.
CISTERN	.
OTHER (details):	.

2.11. Water source nearby: Tributaries of the R. Tove rise to the west, north and east of the site, though none of them flow especially close to the hillfort, which perhaps have relied on wells as a water supply?

2.12. Current land category (over whole site footprint) (you can tick more than 1)

WOODLAND	
COMMERCIAL FORESTRY PLANTATION	.
PARKLAND	.
PASTURE (GRAZED)	X
ARABLE	.
SCRUB/BRACKEN	X
ROCKY OUTCROPS	.
HEATHER/MOORLAND	.
HEATH	.
BUILT-UP	X
Comments:	A church now stands near to the centre of the hillfort. Part of the circuit of the ramparts has been followed by a modern road, and other parts lie concealed among a tangle of churchyard hedges and neighbouring built-up farmyard. The clearest area lies to the south, in pasture fields, though traces of the ramparts here appear to have been levelled by former ploughing.

2.13. Pre-hillfort activity: None recorded.

2.14. Post-hillfort activity: Early to Middle Saxon handmade wares (AD 400-850) have only been found within the perimeters of the enclosure suggesting that this feature survived into the early medieval period. The use of the western hillfort ramparts as a medieval headland, positively proves that the feature survived into the medieval period, and is almost certainly the burh referred to in the place-name Whittlebury (probably a corruption of "*witlanbyrig*" – the shelter and protection offered by the hillfort defences also point to its use in the tenth century as the location for the royal witan, although little ceramic evidence can added to support this).

Surface morphology of the site

Note (see the Notes for guidance document): from this section onwards we are assuming that you are working with a plan of the site. If it is a published plan then we do not expect you to record every item, only those which are different/additional to the plan you are working with. If you are drawing your own plan you can annotate details on it.

2.15. Which plan are you using:

OS 6" map, 1883, augmented by and archaeological survey carried out within the churchyard in 2003 by the University of Leicester, and subsequent archaeological investigations as part of the Whittlewood Project led by the University of Leicester Dept of Archaeology.

2.16. Have you used any other sources of information (tick any that apply):

HER	X
NMR	.
PUBLISHED SOURCE (details):	Reports by Leics University Dept of Archaeology
OTHER (details):	Map-based studies of Roman road networks

2.17. Is there an annex (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

YES	.
NO	X

Note: Sections 3 and 5 are for every site, section 4 only applies to sites with an annex.

Section 3. Enclosed area

3.1 General overall shape of enclosed area: [you can tick more than 1]

CIRCULAR	.
SUB-CIRCULAR/OVAL	X
RECTANGULAR	.
SUB-RECTANGULAR	.
POLYGONAL	X
IRREGULAR	.
COMPLEX (MORE THAN ONE ENCLOSURE)	.

Comments: The original rampart circuit may perhaps have been rather more polygonal than sub-circular

3.2. Maximum dimensions of internal area (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

1. 173m.
2. 176m.

Comments: Difficult to measure with any precision.

3.3. Maximum dimensions of whole site footprint (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

1. 178m.
2. 180m.

Comments: The ditched and banked site encompasses roughly 2.6 hectares

Entrances

3.4. Number of breaks/entrances through the rampart by position: [give a number for each]

N .
NE .
E .
SE Possible entrance?
S .
SW .
W .
NW .
Comments: Difficult to assess, due to the degraded nature of the banks and ditches. The surmised entrance to the SE is postulated from a consideration of the alignment of long-distance Roman (and possibly pre-Roman) roads and trackways (see further comments in Section 5).

3.5. How many are apparently secondary breaks: [give a number for each]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .
NW .
Comments: .

3.6. (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):
For each entrance that is not a simple gap, is it most like any of the following (e.g. in-turned), if so record which position it is in:
IN-TURNED: [you can tick more than 1]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .
NW .

OUT-TURNED: [you can tick more than 1]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .

NW .

BOTH (IN- AND OUT-TURNED): [you can tick more than 1]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .
NW .

HORNWORK: [you can tick more than 1]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .
NW .

OVER-LAPPING: [you can tick more than 1]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .
NW .

OUTWORKS: [you can tick more than 1]

N .
NE .
E .
SE .
S .
SW .
W .
NW .

Comments: .

OTHER FORMS:

Comments: .

Enclosing works - ramparts/banks/walls and ditches

3.7. Number of ramparts/banks/walls per quadrant:

NE: .
SE: .
SW: .
NW: .
Comments: Appears to be univallate.

3.8. Number of DITCHES per quadrant:

NE: .
SE: .
SW: .
NW: .
Comments: Appears to have only one ditch, though a very wide one.

3.9. Form of rampart/bank/wall

Same all the way around:

Y X (probably – little evidence now remains)
N .

If yes: [tick one only]

EARTHEN BANK	X
STONE WALL	.
BOTH	.
PALISADING	.
VITRIFICATION	.
OTHER BURNING	.
Comments:	.

If NO then by quadrant:

NE: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK	.
STONE WALL	.
BOTH	.
PALISADING	.
VITRIFICATION	.
OTHER BURNING	.
Comments:	.

SE: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK	.
STONE WALL	.
BOTH	.
PALISADING	.
VITRIFICATION	.
OTHER BURNING	.
Comments:	.

SW: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK	.
STONE WALL	.

BOTH .
PALISADING .
VITRIFICATION .
OTHER BURNING .
Comments: .

NW: [you can tick more than 1]

EARTHEN BANK .
STONE WALL .
BOTH .
PALISADING .
VITRIFICATION .
OTHER BURNING .
Comments: .

3.10. For each quadrant how many of each of the bank/wall/ditch combinations are there (see diagram in Notes for Guidance):

NE:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH) X.
BANK/DITCH .
BANK/DITCH/BANK .
OTHER .
Comments: Now taken up by a modern road; difficult to assess whether the steep bank here (2m) is original or due to relatively modern construction work. No trace remains of a ditch, due to the road.

SE:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH) .
BANK/DITCH X
BANK/DITCH/BANK .
OTHER .
Comments: Only slight trace of bank or ditch remains, on a short section.

SW:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH) (x)
BANK/DITCH (x)
BANK/DITCH/BANK .
OTHER .
Comments: Although the ground falls away downslope from the edge of the inner bank, little of the bank itself is now visible, probably due to former ploughing. Remains of the ditch appear abnormally wide (about 6-8m), and the outer bank is merely a slightly raised surface in the field.

NW:

BANK/WALL (NO DITCH) .
BANK/DITCH .
BANK/DITCH/BANK .
OTHER .
Comments: Impossible to survey due to modern built-up enclosures.

3.11. Chevaux de Frise (tick if YES, you can tick more than 1]

NE .

SE .
SW .
NW .
Comments: .

Interior features

3.12. Tick all that are present, mark where on the plan and send to us: [you can tick more than 1]

NO APPARENT FEATURES	.
STONE STRUCTURES	.
PLATFORMS	.
QUARRY HOLLOWS	.
PITS	4.
OTHER	8.

Comments: Eight roundhouses and four grain storage pits, for details see the 2003 archaeological report included in the Appendices.

Section 4.

If the site has an annex (see notes for definition of an annex), continue here with information about the annex, otherwise go to section 5 below:

4.1. Shape of the annex [tick only 1]

LOBATE	.
CONCENTRIC	.
CIRCULAR	.
SUB-CIRCULAR	.
RECTANGULAR	.
SUB-RECTANGULAR	.
POLYGONAL	.
IRREGULAR	.
OTHER	.

4.2. Number of annex ramparts: .

4.3. Number of annex ditches: .

4.4. Number of annex entrances: .

4.5. Comments on the annex:

Section 5

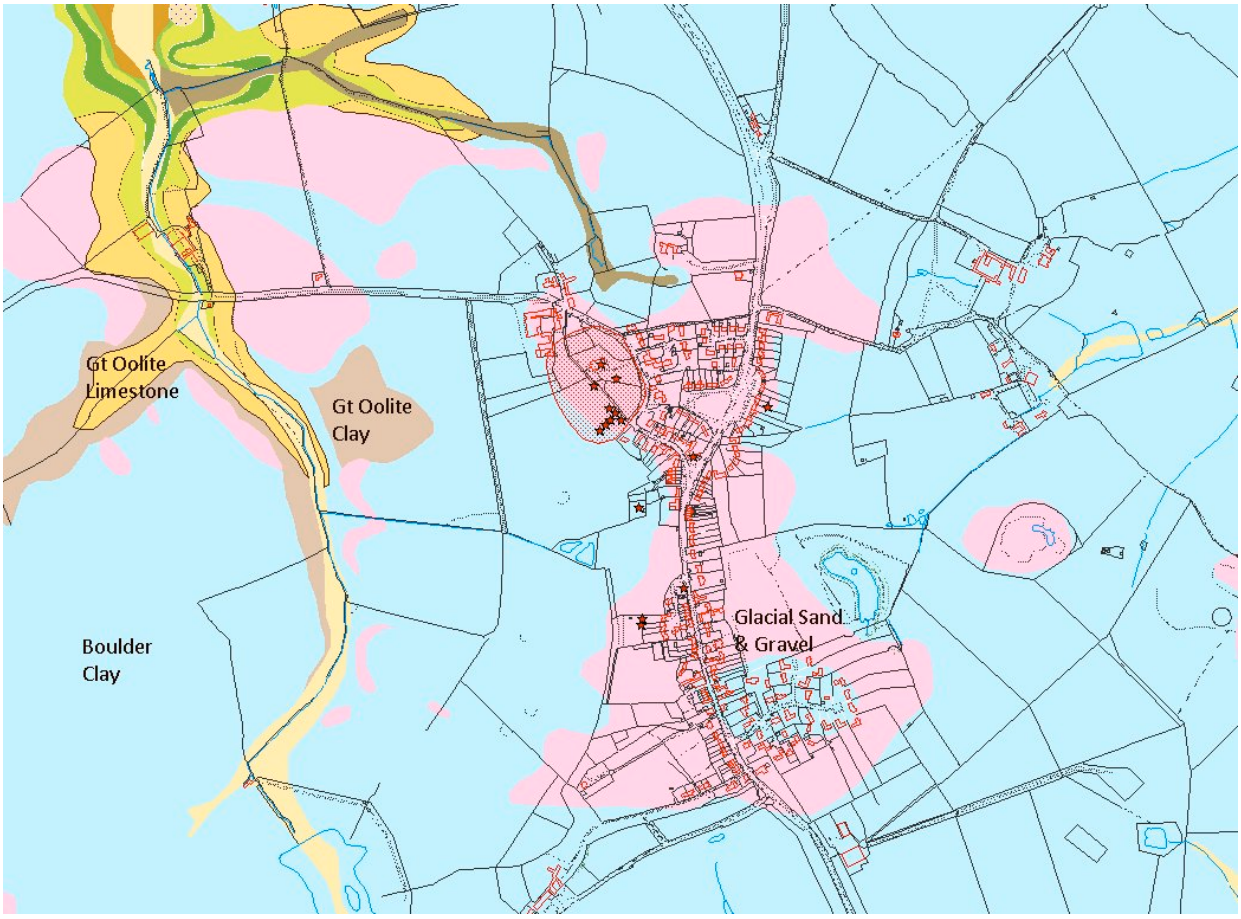
5.1. Any general comments (including comments on erosion/damage, especially if recent):

The visible remains are degraded by former ploughing, which probably explains why this site was only identified as an Iron Age hillfort quite recently. Most of the available archaeological facts are covered in the 2003 report by Leicester University, included in the Appendices; the findings of the report may be summarised as follows:

- Significant quantities of Iron Age material recovered from immediately southeast of the church, coupled with the curious loop in the Silverstone road, itself mirrored by severely degraded earthworks in the pasture fields south of the church, define the former existence of a late prehistoric enclosure occupying this topographically strong location (the site affords extensive 360^{o} views). This enclosure may have remained the focus of activity into the Roman period since coins and pottery have been found here, whilst low levels of pottery from other test pits indicate an open ploughed landscape, and a second concentration of pottery west of the village points to the presence of other small pre-village settlement foci. Early to Middle Saxon handmade wares (AD 400-850) have also only been found within the perimeters of the enclosure suggesting that this feature survived into the early medieval period.
- The identification of the western extent of a large oval enclosure, defined by a massive bank and ditch sequence, coupled with the location of at least eight round houses, four grain pits within the northern churchyard, one of which containing a structured deposit, and quantities of Iron Age pottery from many of the test pits and other excavations, locates the church of St Mary's within an Iron Age hillfort. The roundhouses suggest permanent occupation, whilst the charred grain from the pits points to arable cultivation in the vicinity.
- Finds of Romano-British date, including a coin and pottery, albeit in small quantities suggests that activity here extended beyond the natural life of the hillfort, although the nature of this activity is unclear. The use of the western hillfort ramparts as a medieval headland positively proves that the feature survived into the medieval period, and is almost certainly the burh referred to in the place-name Whittlebury (*witlanbyrig*). The shelter and protection offered by the hillfort defences also point to its use in the tenth century as the location for the royal witan; although little ceramic evidence can be added to support this, "The Ordinance of the bishops and reeves of the London District (VI Athelstan {930AD}) Para 12.1" (Referred to in English Historical Documents 500-1042AD, edited by Dorothy Whitelock), mentions an instruction made by King Athelstan at Whittlebury in what must have been the same year. Whilst it does not mention that the Witan was actually held in the hill-fort, by typical activity at the time it would have been a virtual certainty that it was. The surveyors do not think that the absence of contemporary Saxon ceramics is any justification to exclude it – we believe that it is extremely likely that King Athelstan held a Witan here in AD 930.

5.2 Geology

The fort sits on a small high plain of Glacial Sand and Gravel. The surrounding lower land is chiefly Boulder Clay, with a small outcrop of Great Oolite Clay to the west of the site. Nearby tributaries of the R. Tove cut into the underlying Great Oolite Limestone. The tributary of the Tove that runs closest to the site is now relatively silted (shown in green on the geological map, just north of the hillfort site), but it may have been a more reliable source in the Iron Age.



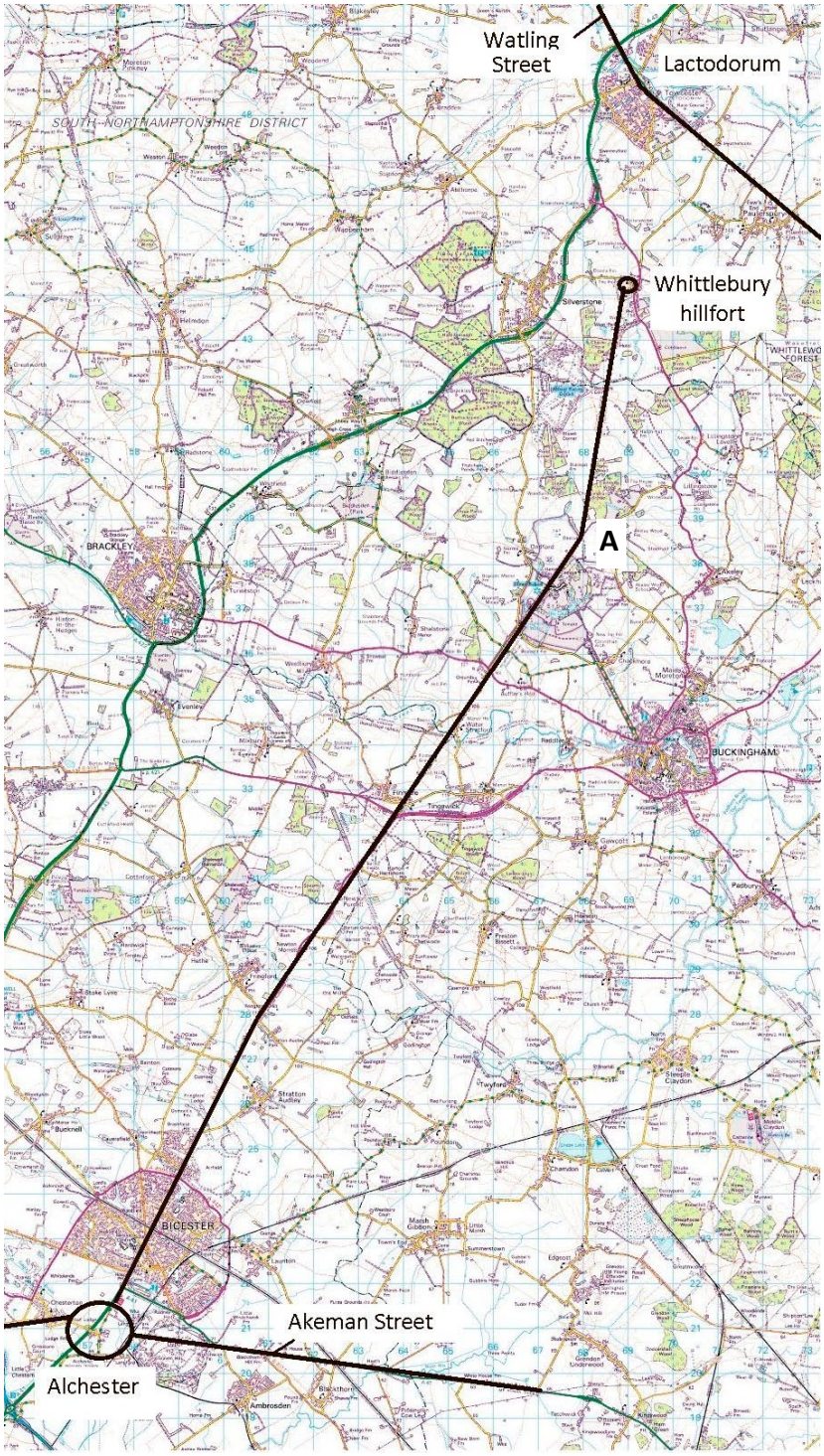
MapInfo details; geological data by courtesy of NCC

5.3 Communication routes

In order to assess the function and significance of communication routes in this area, it is necessary firstly to examine the wider area, from Alchester (the Roman town just south of modern Bicester) to Lactodorum (Towcester), as shown in the figure below.

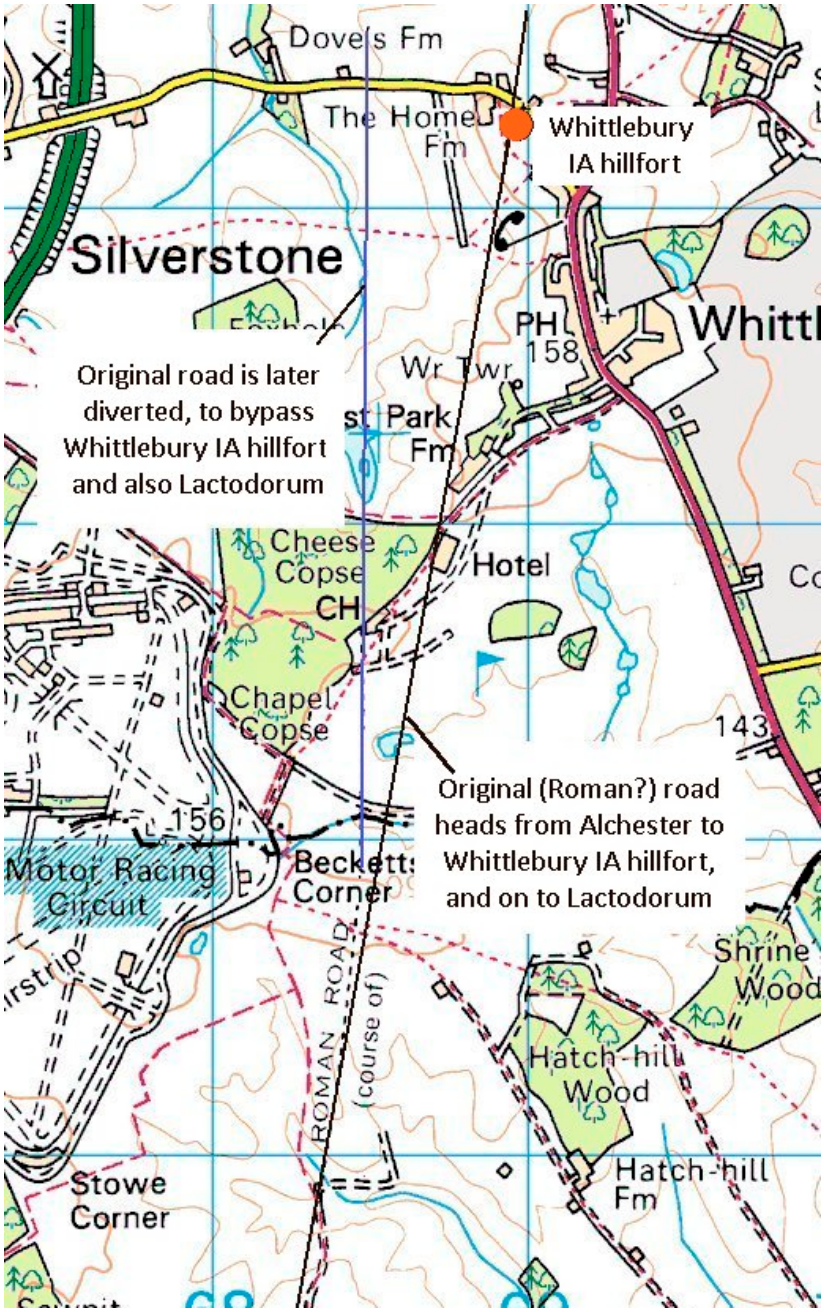
From Alchester, the Roman road runs in linear sections. The road appears to be heading at first toward Paulerspury (NB: a continuation of its alignment would pass directly through the Iron Age hillfort site at Old Tun Copse); but there is a marked detour at point "A", and the new alignment heads directly toward Lactodorum, passing en route directly through the hillfort site at Whittlebury. As a coincidence, this seems unlikely.

Closer examination of the area around Whittlebury (see map on next page) suggests that the Roman road was probably detoured subsequently, to pass to the west of both Whittlebury and Towcester, heading to a new meeting-point with the Watling Street precisely at its main crossing point over the R. Tove.



It seems legitimate to question this apparent detour. One possibility, perhaps, is that the final route would have enabled more rapid transit for military convoys en route from Akeman Street to Watling Street, thus avoiding the delays in passing through the centres of Whittlebury and Lactodorum. However, such comments are no more than speculation.

The main purpose of these comments is merely to draw attention to the initial alignment of the Roman road with Whittlebury hillfort and Lactodorum. It seems possible to the surveyors that the Roman engineers may well have made use of pre-existing Iron Age roads and trackways.



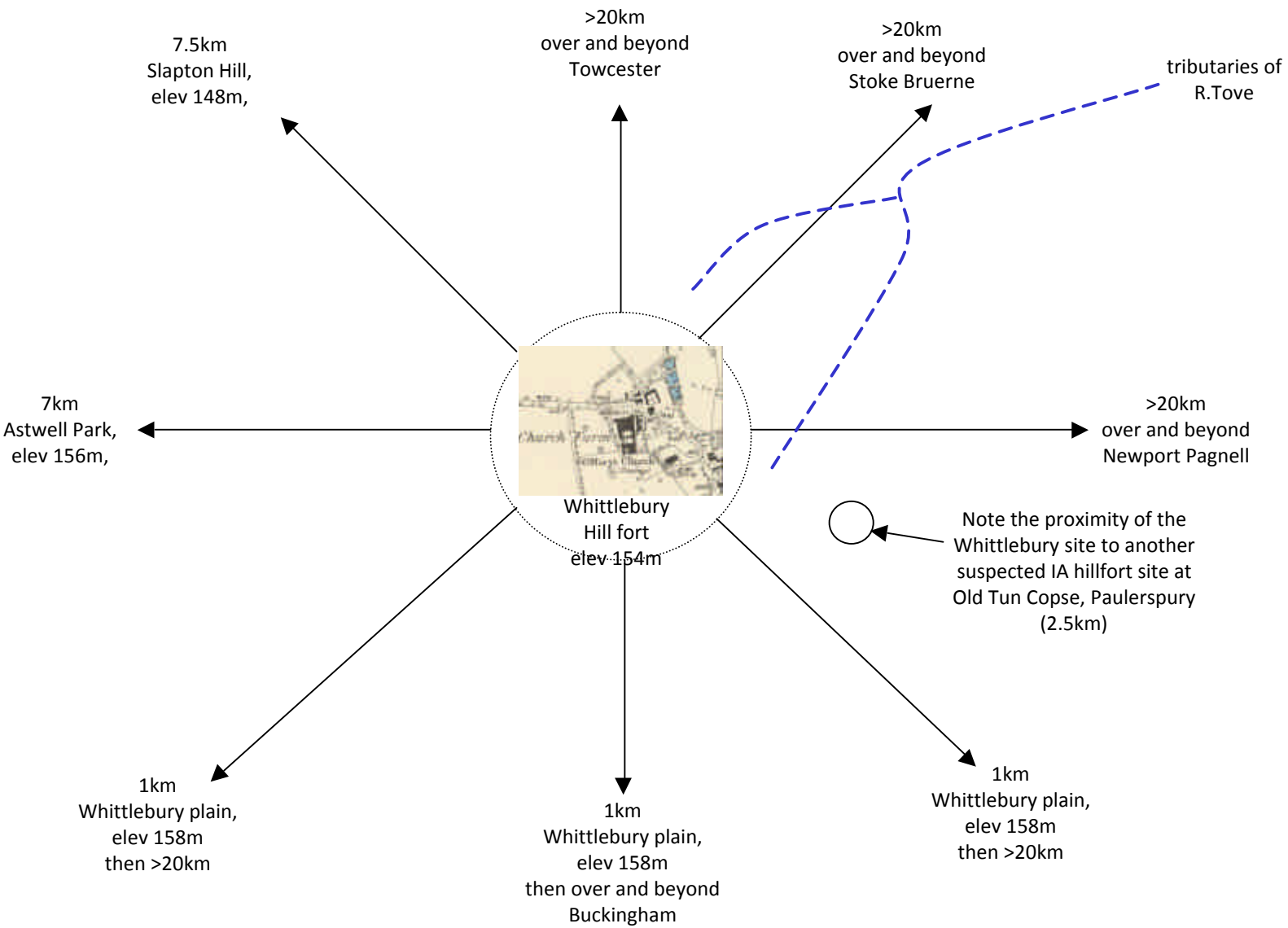
5.4 Possible political factors

In their summary to the 2003 archaeological report, the authors state that "The [pottery] evidence would therefore suggest that there was a major phase of activity at this site from around the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD". It will be noted that this period encompasses both the advance into Northamptonshire of the Catuvellauni in the 1st century BC, and the Boudiccan rebellion of 60-61AD, and that this region was therefore in a degree of unrest during the Whittlebury hillfort's main period of occupation. This may perhaps account for the apparent changes in communication routes as discussed above. The apparent continuity of occupation on the site, however, suggests that it was an important site and vested with significance.

6. Appendices:

Viewshed diagram
Interim report on excavations at Whittlebury Church, 2003, University of Leicester
Site photographs

Viewshed diagram for Whittlebury hill fort



Excavation and Geophysical Survey at St Mary's Church, Whittlebury, Northamptonshire in advance of the laying of pipes and the sinking of a septic tank within the churchyard

Interim Report

For and on behalf of the Diocese of Peterborough

R.L.C. Jones and B. Pears

With contributions by P. Blinkhorn and N. Sykes

University of Leicester
October 2003

Contents

Location and Background Research	3
Background and Methodology to work at St Mary's	5
Test Pits	6
Glebe Field	6
The churchyard	7
The northern churchyard	8
General Deposits	8
Burials	9
Iron Age Features	9
Geophysical Survey	10
Preliminary Conclusions	11
Further Work	12
Animal Bone Report	13
Pottery Report	14
Bibliography	28

Location and Background Research

The village of Whittlebury is located in the southwest corner of Northamptonshire (SP 692 442), 4km south of Towcester and 10km north of Buckingham. It lies on the watershed of the rivers Great Ouse and Tove, between 150 and 160m OD, covering and extending slightly beyond a small pocket of fluvio-glacial sand and gravel. The surrounding parish, in the western half of which the village lies, is large in comparison with its neighbours, covering some 1000 ha, and geologically is dominated by deep deposits of glacial boulder clay.

In terms of both secular and ecclesiastical administrative divisions, the parish is liminal, bounded to the south by modern Buckinghamshire, although historically Oxfordshire too, since Lillingstone Lovell was formerly a detached part of this county before integration in 1844 (Page 1905-28). The county boundaries are also followed by modern diocesan arrangements, Whittlebury lying in the diocese of Peterborough, Lillingstone Lovell and Stowe in the diocese of Oxford.

Whittlebury (*Witlanbyrig*) is first recorded in the documentary record in *c.* 930 (surviving in a twelfth-century copy) as the location of a royal witan held by King Aethelstan (Gover, Mawer & Stenton 1975: 45). After this early reference, however, Whittlebury disappears from view in the historical sources, not appearing in the Domesday survey, its entry almost certainly subsumed within an entry for Greens Norton (Thorn and Thorn 1979), only re-emerging in the mid-twelfth century (e.g. Elvey 1968 and 1975). These later documents show that Whittlebury, like its western neighbour Silverstone with which it shared fields, was a chapelry of Greens Norton throughout the medieval period. This ecclesiastical dependency and field sharing are in all probability the last survivals of other close administrative and tenurial ties between these three settlements, the echo of the former existence of a larger and more complex pre-parochial multiple estate structure. Whittlebury and its fields are first depicted on a *c.* 1608 map of Whittlewood Forest (surviving in a copy made in 1725), providing the first morphological evidence for the village, and showing that despite modern accretions to the north and south, the village retains its early modern plan (NRO Map 4210).

Whittlebury is one of twelve contiguous parishes, forming a block of *c.* 100 km^2 which is currently the subject of multi-disciplinary research, research which is focussing on the origins and development of medieval rural settlements and concomitant landscape change. The work, which began in May 2000 and will conclude in July 2005, is being undertaken by staff based at the University of Leicester. Whittlebury village and surrounding landscape components have been the target of detailed archaeological research since 2001. This has included extensive fieldwalking, particularly in the northern part of the parish, the recording of earthworks both on the ground and from aerial photographs, and within the village itself two campaigns of test pitting (Page and Jones 2000; Jones and Page 2001).

From this work it has been possible to propose a hypothetical model for the development of the village and identify probable pre-village foci. The modern village stands at the junction of the A413 Buckingham to Towcester road with the road that leads to Silverstone. Today, and historically, it would appear that the main centre of occupation lay north of this junction with ribbon development extending south along both sides of the Buckingham to Towcester road over a distance of some 800m. The church of St Mary's stands at the highest point in the village, in a semi-detached position at the northwest edge of the village, immediately south of the Silverstone road. Forty two test pits, measuring 1 x 1m, have been excavated across the village, providing datable ceramic evidence and other cultural artefacts which reveal a clear phased and staged development leading to the plan shown in *c.* 1608. Significant quantities of Iron Age material recovered from immediately southeast of the church, coupled with the curious loop in the Silverstone road, itself mirrored by severely degraded earthworks in the pasture fields south of the church, define the former existence of a late prehistoric enclosure occupying this topographically strong location (the site affords extensive 360^{o} views). This enclosure may have remained the focus of activity into the Roman period since coins and pottery have been found here, whilst low levels of pottery from other test pits indicate an open ploughed landscape, and a second concentration of pottery west of the village points to the presence of other small pre-village settlement foci. Early to Middle Saxon handmade wares (AD 400-850) have also only been found within the perimeters of the enclosure suggesting that this feature survived into the early medieval period.

By the end of the first millennium, however, it would appear from the recovery of St Neots wares that a nascent community was growing up immediately outside the enclosure to the east. This might be seen as the first sign of a village proper developing at Whittlebury. Nothing of this date was recovered from the southern part of the village. Indeed the southern extension of the village appears to have occurred at a late date, certainly post-1250 on the ceramic evidence (Potterspury wares). The regularity of the crofts indicated on the *c.* 1608 map, and which are preserved in the modern garden layouts, indicate that this was a planned and single phase expansion, in all probability exploiting the economic potential of the early village's location along an increasingly busy route between the market centres of Buckingham and Towcester. By *c.* 1300, therefore, Whittlebury's plan as depicted three hundred years later, had already been established, and was to undergo few radical alterations until the second half of the twentieth century.

The village of Whittlebury, however, was just one of a number of settlement foci to be found in the parish during the medieval period. 1 km north-west of the village (SP 684 449), earthworks preserved the site of a small hamlet, named Lady Nether End in *c.* 1608, of whose origins and abandonment nothing is currently known. 800m north at Lords Field Farm (SP 688 450), a small moat may be the site of the manor, although the manor of Whittlebury was subject to absentee landlords throughout the period. The hunting lodge of Sholebroke lying

500m east of the village (SP 696 444) may also be of medieval origin. The early thirteenth-century origins and subsequent development of a monastic grange at Monksbarn (SP 701 452), 1.5 km north-east of the village, can be traced with accuracy through the documentary and archaeological records (Jones forthcoming 2003).

Background and Methodology to work at St Mary's

Archaeological excavation and geophysical survey was undertaken at St Mary's church in advance of the inserting of a toilet and kitchen facilities into the church, requiring the laying of a mains water pipe, foul drains linking to a septic tank into the north graveyard, and soakaways. An archaeological condition was placed on these works by the Diocese of Peterborough and, following a brief prepared by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, the work was undertaken by the University of Leicester during a six-week period between July and August 2003.

All intrusive examination both within the churchyard and without fell within the areas of disturbance indicated on architects' plans. In only one location, and following consultation with the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, was the excavation extended beyond these limits. The lines of the proposed mains water link, the foul drain and soakaways were assessed by excavating 1 x 0.5m test pits located at 5m intervals along their complete line. Outside the churchyard these test pits were excavated to natural. Within the churchyard, the test pits were fully excavated to a depth of 500mm, removing all human remains and other cultural artefacts and recording any definable features. Excavation below 500mm terminated if articulated human remains were present, leaving these in situ. If no, or non-articulated remains were present, excavation was continued to natural or to a depth which precluded excavation (*c.* 900mm). A 3 x 3m trench was located at the site of the septic tank (2.7m wide) and fully excavated to natural, including the removal of all human remains including articulated individuals. No human remains were removed from the churchyard and have been stored on site awaiting re-interment, with the exception of a frontal bone and mandible found in two different pre-Christian contexts. This intrusive investigation was complemented by a more extensive resistivity survey at 1m intervals and a magnetometry survey at 1 x 05m intervals of Glebe Field, immediately to the northeast of the track leading to the church, and in the field immediately to the southwest.

Both the paper archive and artefacts are currently at the University of Leicester and will be integrated into the project archive of the Whittlewood Project. These will be deposited in the relevant repositories at the conclusion of the project in 2005. A copy of this interim report and any subsequent report will be sent to Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Test Pits

Glebe Field

A total of thirty-three test pits were fully or partially excavated along the line of the mains water pipe, foul drain and soakaways. There is a clear differentiation, both stratigraphically and artefactually between those located outside the churchyard (TPs 1-16) and those within it (TP i-iv, 17-22, A-G). Outside the churchyard, a fairly uniform and simple stratigraphy was encountered in most of the test pits: natural was encountered between 450-900mm below the modern ground surface although in eleven out of the sixteen test pits this lay between 650-850mm. The stratigraphy was made up of four made deposits, modern topsoil, below which 150-200mm of subsoil, below which 200-300mm of stonier darker subsoil, below which was a layer of sandy clay loam lying above natural. Whilst a number of test pits included possible features, many of these proved illusory in excavation. Only three features were defined:

TP1 Feature 1:
Mortar and rubble make up with modern ceramic building materials. 170mm thick. Probably structural foundation probably associated with building shown on map of *c.* 1608. Ceramic period 8 (1600-1700).

TP12 Feature 1:
Steep banked (around 35-50 ^{o}) ?pit feature with a flat to 'U' shaped bottom cut into the natural. Dark brown to black silty loam fill. Possible medieval boundary ditch although the presence of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery in significant quantities in the overlying layers might suggest earlier origins.

TP16 Feature 2:
Possible mortar floor containing bone and mortar inclusions extending over the whole base of test pit. 120mm thick. Contained 12 sherds of Potterspury ware. Ceramic period 4 (*c.* 1250-*c.* 1350).

The Churchyard

The sequence of test pits at 5m intervals was continued into the churchyard, following the line of the gravel path to the south porch, whence the series continued around the western tower and into the northern churchyard. Three test pits were located between the tower and the septic tower, while the northerly and southerly seepage channels were sampled by a further three test pits respectively.

Three of the four test pits (TP i-iii) located south of the porch produced significant quantities of 1250-1350 pottery. Disarticulated human bones suggests that this area had been used and

reused for burials and the general distribution of the pottery throughout the stratigraphy suggests that this material predated these burials and had been disturbed in their cutting. In terms of quantity the amount of pottery found in test pits i-iii corresponds with occupation rather than any other activity and might suggest that the southern churchyard was only created in the late medieval period. Test pit iii also included a couple of sherds of early to middle Saxon handmade wares, again redeposited within a later grave fill.

Of the test pits around the west tower, test pits 17 and 22 were badly disturbed by modern drainage pipes. Test pits 18 to 21 all contained disarticulated human remains and had been severely disturbed by grave cutting. The residual pottery, however, was both sparse by comparison with that found south of the church, and relatively early, largely ceramic phase 2 and 3 (twelfth-mid-thirteenth century).

Similar grave disturbance was observed throughout the northern churchyard test pits. Test pit A contained a significant small assemblage of Romano-British and Iron Age pottery but this was all contained in a later grave cut. Test pits B, C, D and E all contained graves but any articulated human bones lay below the greatest depth of excavation (generally around 800mm). The seven sherds of Iron Age pottery from test pit F were equally disturbed, but indicate that the late medieval burial for which the cut was observed at 870mm had cut through a late prehistoric layer or feature. Such a feature survived in part in test pit G. Although truncated by a grave dated ceramically to the twelfth century, the cut of a negative feature was found, containing a dark organic humic material, capped by a layer of large limestone and flint nodules. The similarity between the stratigraphic relationship within this feature and that observed in pit 132 (see *infra*) is striking.

The results from test pitting within the churchyard are thus clearly informative: they attest to the density of medieval burial to the west of the west tower and in the northern churchyard; they point to an extension of the churchyard to the south of the church in the later medieval period; and they suggest that whilst evidence for pre-church activity on this site is forthcoming, this has been severely disturbed by later burials, with only fragmentary features surviving in tact.

The northern churchyard

General Deposits

Excavation within the northern churchyard was limited to areas to be disturbed by pipe laying and the sinking of a septic tank. Accordingly, a 3 x 3m trench was excavated 30m north of the west tower with a western extension measuring 11 x 0.5m. This open area was complemented by a further eight test pits.

The modern graveyard north of the church contains a small number of late Victorian monumental tombs and a number of headstones which have been removed from their original position. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that any burials were located in this part of the churchyard during the entirety of the twentieth century and no marked graves lay within the excavated area.

Initial stripping of the humic topsoil revealed a series of general deposits. These were made up of a number of different matrices: D103 and D104 contained 25-30% angular flint within a silty clay loam; D111 a layer of mortar and chalk extending over the north-eastern corner of the trench; and D112, an extensive 'cobbled' surface made up of mixed geology extending over most of the rest of the excavated area. The stratigraphic sequence and limited ceramic evidence – D111 for example lacked datable artefacts – suggests that these were all laid down between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries. They may be associated with the rebuilding of the church, dated on architectural grounds to the thirteenth century (Pevsner 1973: 460-1).

Burials

This dating is further corroborated by pottery found within graves 102 and 105 which cut through these general spreads which again appear no later than this period. The dating of all the graves is, however, problematic. There remains a strong possibility that pottery found within individual graves may derive from deposits disturbed in their cutting rather than having been deposited contemporaneously. The ceramic dating can therefore only at best be used as a *terminus post quem* rather than as absolute dating evidence. Only where the ceramic evidence fits within a sealed stratigraphic sequence can the dating be more secure. This relationship was observable within graves 114 and 143 containing pottery dated to ceramic phase 3 (early-mid thirteenth century) and graves 133, 152 and 175 dated to ceramic phase 2 (twelfth century) all of which lay below D112 (ceramic phase 4). Other graves too contained exclusively twelfth-century pottery – graves 115, 168, 177, and 193 – and all lying below various general deposits. Many contained no dating evidence, but their stratigraphic relationship, again with the positively dated D122, point to the fact that these had been dug before the mid-thirteenth century and most probably between 1100 and 1250. Grave 180 which was truncated by both grave 168 and 172, and grave 195 which lay below 168, both contained only eleventh-century pottery and probably represent the earliest burials within the excavated area. Twelve graves contained pottery of mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century date. Of these only graves 102 which cut D111 and grave 105 which cut through D112 might post-date this phase. The others might be best dated by the pottery within. These graves were 113, 118, 119, 120, 150, 157, 160, 164, 172, and 179. Thus of the thirty-one complete

and truncated graves excavated, thirty are dated to the medieval period or shortly thereafter. Only one, grave 173, contained early modern pottery (late seventeenth - late eighteenth century).

Excavation thus revealed a sizeable medieval assemblage of human bone, the majority of which date from twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Analysis of the ratio of male to female, or adult to adolescent/child has yet to be undertaken. Whilst the sample size remains low, analysis of the assemblage may reveal insights into the population structure, origins and relationships between these individuals.

Iron Age Features

Evidence for pre-church activity on the site were limited to the four Iron Age pits, all cut or truncated by late grave cuts. Pit 151, sectioned by grave 114, measured 560mm in diameter, although this probably represents an arc rather than a true half-section. Surviving to a depth of 250mm, the pit contained a very soft dark and highly organic sediment with fragments of animal bone, daub and charcoal, with four sherds of pottery. Immediately north-east of this pit, a second larger pit, cut by grave 173 to the south and sectioned by the baulk to the north and east, containing burnt material and a thick deposit of burnt grain. The undisturbed deposits contained seven sherds of Iron Age pottery, but to this might be added a further ten sherds found in grave 173 which must have derived from this earlier feature. On the edge of the grave cut, but clearly within the pit fill was part of a human lower mandible, located above approximately 100mm above the base of the pit. Immediately to the west of this pit, a third was identified, truncated by grave 114 and section by the baulk to the north and west, precluding any accurate measurement of its original dimensions. This contained a very soft black silt with seven sherds of Iron age pottery, which appeared to lie below a distinctive small flint and limestone fill.

The best preserved on these pits, however, lay at the extreme western end of the extension. Again, due to its location the actual extent of the pit was not defined, however, it appears to have survived below D112 to a depth of 650mm. The stratigraphy within the pit was highly complex. At the base of the pit were the substantial remains of four or five vessels which appear to have been deposited complete. There was evidence for burning at the base of the pit. The base was covered by 130mm of silty soil, above which was a lens, approximately 50mm in depth of charcoal, burnt grain and daub. This was again covered by a silty deposit, approximately 200mm in depth, but containing a complete human frontal skull bone, laid so that it formed a shallow bowl shape. Above this silt was a shallow deposit of animal bones (see animal bone report), which itself was capped by a layer of large limestone and flint nodules, up to 150mm in diameter. The careful and structured deposition of objects and bone within Iron Age pits has been observed on numerous sites (Hill 1995). Whilst pit 132 shares

many similarities with examples from Wessex, an initial survey of the available literature suggests that the actual sequence of deposit found at Whittlebury is not exactly paralleled elsewhere. More work, however, needs to be undertaken to establish the true significance of this discovery.

Geophysical Survey

Two resistivity surveys, using an RM15, were undertaken on the fields east and west of the track running to the church from the village. Readings were taken every 1m. This was complemented by two magnetometry surveys over the same areas at 1m intervals along lines set 0.5m apart. In the western field the magnetometry was affected by the proximity of a metal fence to the east and the presence of a metal pipe running north-south through the field. To the south, reading appear to have been affected by the demolition of a building resulting in the spread of demolition material over a large area. Despite this, the western extent of an enclosure, marked by a bank and broad ditch, approximately 6m in width, but of unknown depth, was clearly defined, turning east and mirroring the loop in the Silverstone road to the east. Within this enclosure, at least five circular features were clearly visible, almost certainly the gullies around round houses. Three similar features were also detected in the eastern field (although only one shows clearly on the plots). In the western field resistivity failed to locate other features, but in the eastern field, it revealed the presence of four substantial building footprints lying parallel to, and 10m from, the track.

Preliminary Conclusions

The identification of the western extent of a large oval enclosure, defined by a massive bank and ditch sequence, coupled with the location of at least eight round houses, four grain pits within the northern churchyard, one of which containing a structured deposit, and quantities of Iron Age pottery from many of the test pits and other excavations, locates the church of St Mary's within an Iron Age hillfort. This is only the fifth hillfort to be found in Northamptonshire and will lead to a reassessment of the area in late prehistory. The roundhouses suggest permanent occupation, whilst the charred grain from the pits points to arable cultivation in the vicinity.

Finds of Romano-British date, including a coin and pottery, albeit in small quantities suggests that activity here extended beyond the natural life of the hillfort, although it remains unclear what the nature of this activity was. The use of the western hillfort ramparts as a medieval headland, positively proves that the feature survived into the medieval period, and is almost certainly the *burh* referred to in the place-name Whittlebury. The shelter and protection offered by the hillfort defences also point to its use in the tenth century as the location for the royal witan, although little ceramic evidence can added to support this notion.

By the eleventh century, Christian burials were taking place in the northern churchyard, the first evidence for the existence of a church or chapel on this site at this period. At the same time, at least three of the buildings to the east of the track running to the church were already in occupation. A fourth building was raised in the twelfth century close to the modern road, whilst its two nearest neighbours fell into disuse. By the first half of the thirteenth century, however, it had fallen out of use whilst one of the other vacated plots had been reoccupied. Throughout, the building now located closest to the churchyard remained the most important and consumed the most pottery. Finally, this building fell out of use in the late sixteenth century, as had the others, but the plot closest to the road was re-occupied a situation recorded on the first map of Whittlebury made in *c.* 1608.

General deposits within the northern churchyard might be associated with the rebuilding of the church in the mid to late thirteenth century, consistent with the surviving fabric of the church. To the south of the church, large quantities of pottery, consistent with occupation, might point to the fact that further as yet unidentified buildings lay even closer to the church through to the late fourteenth century. The graveyard may, therefore, have been restricted to the north side of the church until this date, accounting for the number of burials in this area. The absence of pottery postdating 1250-1350 to the south of the church argues for to an extension of the churchyard associated with the rebuilding of the church onto a line identified as an earthwork within the current churchyard, the location of which is again shown on the *c.* 1608 survey. With this increased area, pressure on the northern churchyard was relieved, accounting for the lack of burials in this location thereafter.

Further Work

The following work is envisaged before for the final report:

- Metal work report
- Flotation of environmental samples and identification of macrofloral remains
- Preparation of plans and sections
- Illustration of artefacts

Desired work:

- Analysis of human remains

Animal Bone Report
Naomi Sykes

A total of 35 specimens was recovered from pit 132 including D162 (Table 1). Whilst cow, pig, sheep/goat and horse were all represented, as the feature could not be completely excavated there remains the strong probability that further specimens remain unrecovered. The assemblage was recorded by the Centre for Applied Archaeological Analyses, University of Southampton using Serjeantson's (1996) 'zones' system. Where possible specimens were identified to species, with undiagnostic skull fragments , ribs and vertebrae being placed in the sheep size and cow size groups. Bones that showed signs of surface modification (butchery and gnawing) were noted and quantified. Caprines were sexed on the morphology of their pelves (Grigson 1982). For the main domesticates, dental wear was recorded using Grant's (1982) system. This was undertaken for mandibles (with two or more ageable teeth), single deciduous premolars and third molars. Mandibles were placed into age groups following Payne (1973) for sheep/goat and Legge (1992) for cattle.

Although small, the assemblage is not without interest since the range of species (including human and horse) and body-parts (the dominance of foot and head bones, including an articulated horse foot) are indicative of associated bone groups recognised on Iron Age sites across the country (Grant 1984; Grant 1991, Hill 1995). Should further material be excavated, these should be integrated into the study, but in its current form, few conclusions can be drawn from the assemblage with confidence.

Pottery from Whittlebury Church (Site WH+)
Paul Blinkhorn

Introduction

The pottery assemblage from the test-pits and excavations comprised 2,016 sherds with a total weight of 15,489g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 7.81. The test pits produced 1,436 sherds (8,750g, EVE = 4.32), with the rest coming from the full excavation.

A wide range of pottery was present, suggesting that there was activity at the site from the later Iron Age to the early Roman period, then low-level settlement during the Saxon period, followed by intensive medieval occupation, mainly during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Analytical Methodology

The pottery was initially bulk-sorted and recorded on a computer using DBase IV software. The material from each context was recorded by number and weight of sherds per fabric type, with featureless body sherds of the same fabric counted, weighed and recorded as one database entry. Feature sherds such as rims, bases and lugs were individually recorded, with individual codes used for the various types. Decorated sherds were similarly treated. In the case of the rimsherds, the form, diameter in mm and the percentage remaining of the original complete circumference was all recorded. This figure was summed for each fabric type to obtain the estimated vessel equivalent (EVE).

The terminology used is that defined by the Medieval Pottery Research Group's Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms (MPRG 1998) and to the minimum standards laid out in the Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-roman Ceramics (MPRG2001). All the statistical analyses were carried out using a Dbase package written by the author, which interrogated the original or subsidiary databases, with some of the final calculations made with an electronic calculator. All statistical analyses were carried out to the minimum standards suggested by Orton (1998-9, 135-7).

Iron Age and Early Roman

The following Iron Age fabrics were noted:

F1002: Sparse to moderate shell up to 10mm, sparse sub-round clear quartz up to 0.5m, sparse chaff voids up to 5mm. 185 sherds, 3320g, EVE = 2.28.

F1003: Fine shell. Sparse to moderate fine shell up to 3mm. 23 sherds, 156g, EVE = 0.10.

The fabric and forms of this small assemblage are typical of the Iron Age pottery of the region, and can be paralleled at sites such as Pennyland, Milton Keynes (Knight, 1993).

The majority of the assemblage came from a single feature, 132, which produced several partially complete vessels (Figs WH1- 6). The reconstructed pots were simple ovoid forms typical of Knight's 'Earlier La Tène' style, and broadly dateable to the 5th – 1st centuries BC (ibid. 2002, Fig. 12.3 and 131-5). The decorated pottery supports this; the sherds from at least two vessels with scored decoration are typical of the period, as are those with fingernail impressions on the rim (Figs WH1 and WH8, cf. ibid. 134). Further support for this comes from the presence of two joining sherds from contexts 114 and 151 a vessel with curvilinear decoration (Fig. WH7). These are also typical of the Early La Tène style, and are found in relatively large quantities in Northamptonshire (ibid. 131). There is some disagreement as to the exact chronology of the decorative techniques present on the vessels in this group (see ibid. for the full argument), but a date of the 2nd – 1st centuries BC seems the most likely.

There is also evidence of continuity of occupation at the site through the late Iron Age period and into the early Roman. A further sherd from context 132 is wheel-thrown, with a slashed rim and incised cordons at the neck (Fig. WH5). wheel-throwing is a 1st century BC introduction (ibid. 136), and this sherd appears typical of that tradition (see ibid. Fig. 12.3). In addition, a number of small Iron Age sherds from both the test-pits and the excavation are wheel-thrown.

The Romano-British assemblage comprises entirely wheel-thrown grog tempered wares, dateable to the 1st century AD (Marney 1989, 190) and sand tempered wares of a similar date (ibid. 70). Some of the more abraded shell-tempered sherds which have been dated to the Iron age could conceivably be of early Roman date, as such pottery was fairly common in the region a that time (ibid. 58). The Romano-British assemblage comprised entirely small sherds, most of them featureless, and so none are form-diagnostic or worthy of illustration.

The evidence would therefore suggest that there was a major phase of activity at this site from around the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD.

Illustrations

Fig. WH1: Context 132, F1002. Fragmented but near-complete jar with a fingernail-impressed rim. Dark grey fabric with light brown surfaces. Inner surface of base and lower body burnt black.

Fig. WH2: Context 132, F1002. Full profile of jar, dark grey fabric with light brown surfaces.. Large blackened area on inner surface on one side.

Fig. WH3: Context 132, F1002. Fragmented full profile of a small jar. Black fabric with light brown outer surface.

Fig. WH4: Context 132, F1002. Base of scored vessel. Black fabric with light brown outer surface.

Fig. WH5: Context 132, F1002. Decorated rim from wheel-thrown jar. Uniform dark brownish-grey fabric.

Fig. WH6: Context 132, F1002. Jar rim, light vertical scoring/wiping. Dark grey fabric with a light brown outer surface.

Fig. WH7: Contexts 114 and 151, F1003. Bodysherd from curvilinear decorated vessel. Dark grey-brown fabric with black-burnished outer surface.

Fig. WH8: Contexts 173 and 178, F1002. Upper part of small jar with fingernail-impressed rim. Dark grey fabric with buff surfaces.

Early/Middle Saxon

A total of 5 sherds (38g, EVE = 0.02) of hand-built early/middle Saxon pottery was noted. The fabrics are as follows:

F1: Chaff tempered. Dense voids up to 10mm, wet-hand finished surfaces. 1 sherd, 6g, EVE = 0.

F2: Sparse rounded quartz up to 1mm, moderate sub-rounded quartz up to 0.5mm, sparse sub-rounded limestone up to 2mm, rare mica platelets up to 1mm. 4 sherds, 32g, EVE = 0.02.

Two small and somewhat abraded sherds in F2 were decorated, one with overlapping grid stamps and the other with an incised line. This would suggest that there was activity at the site during the 6th century. The other sherds of this type from the site were undecorated, and thus can only be dated to the broad early – middle Saxon period.

Middle Saxon

A single sherd of middle Saxon Ipswich ware was noted, from spit 4 in test-pit 14. It was somewhat abraded. It may be evidence of high-status occupation at the site in the 8th and/or 9th centuries, as such pottery tends to be found at such sites outside the East Anglian kingdom (eg Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire; Blinkhorn 2003), but is also known from lower status sites in the area, such as Pennyland (Blinkhorn 1993). The sherd appears to be from a large jar, a vessel type, along with pitchers, which generally makes up a greater proportion of assemblages outside the kingdom, presumably as they travelled as containers for traded goods (Blinkhorn forthcoming).

Ipswich Ware: Middle Saxon, slow-wheel made ware, manufactured exclusively in the eponymous Suffolk *wic*. AD 725x740 - mid 9th century at sites outside East Anglia. There are two main fabric types, although individual vessels which do not conform to these groups also occur. The sherd from this site is typical of fabric Group 1: Hard and slightly sandy to the touch, with visible small quartz grains and some shreds of mica. Frequent fairly well-sorted angular to sub-angular grains of quartz, generally measuring below 0.3 mm in size but with some larger grains, including a number which are polycrystalline in appearance. 1 sherd, 6g, EVE = 0.

Late Saxon to Post-Medieval

The late Saxon and medieval pottery was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994).

SNC1: *St. Neots Ware*. *c* AD900-1100. 2 sherds, 11g, EVE = 0.
MC1: *Shelly Coarseware.* 1100-1400. 143 sherds, 1069g, EVE = 0.84.
MS2: *Medieval Sandy wares*, 1100-1400. 291 sherds, 2182g, EVE = 0.59.
MS3: *Medieval Grey Sandy Wares.* Mid 11th – late 14th century. 37 sherds, 121g, EVE = 0.
MC6: *Potterspury Ware*. AD1250/75-?1600. 1063 sherds, 6915g, EVE = 3.76.
MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. AD1200-?1600. 22 sherds, 21g, EVE = 0.
MSC1: *Sandy and shelly ware*, late 11th – mid 13th century. 20 sherds, 143g, EVE = 0.08.
MSC4: *Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware*, 13th – 14th century. 1 sherd, 8g, EVE = 0.
TLMS10: *Red Earthenware*. 16th – 19th century. 34 sherds, 334g.
PM2: *Buff-bodied Staffordshire Slipware* , late 17th – 18th century. 1 sherd, 13g.
PM15: *Cistercian ware*, AD1470-1550. 7 sherds, 25g.
PM22: *Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware.* 1720-1780. 1 sherd, 1g.
PM25: *White Earthenware.* Late 18th – 20th century. 110 sherds, 351g.
PM56: *Staffordshire Manganese Glazed Ware.* Late 17th – 18th century. 6 sherds, 74g.

In addition, the following wares, not covered by the type-series, were also noted:

Oxford ware. Oxfordshire fabric OXY (Mellor 1994). *c* late 11th – 14th century. Abundant sub-angular quartz with some rounded clay pellets and occasional polycrystalline quartz. Handmade and wheel-thrown vessels. 16 sherds, 177g, EVE = 0.09.

Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware (McCarthy 1979). c. AD1150-?1400. Handmade/Wheel finished. Moderate to dense, ill-sorted shelly limestone platelets up to 3mm, sparse to moderate red ironstone up to 10mm, occasional quartz, ooliths, black ironstone. Produced at numerous kilns in the villages of Lyveden and Stanion in north-east Northants. Fabric usually grey with blue-grey or brown surfaces, although other surface colours, such as buff, red, purple or orange not uncommon. Not possible to relate fabrics to either village or to individual kilns, as most waster groups have not been analysed or published. Vessels most usually jars with moulded and/or thumbed rims, but bowls also common, and jugs, storage jars and curfews occur. Rouletting occasionally occurs on large bowls/curfews, and thumbed applied strips on large jars. 1 sherd, 39g, EVE = 0.05.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds by fabric type is shown in Appendices 1 and 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

The range of fabric types is typical of rural sites in Buckinghamshire (cf Mynard and Zeepvat 1992), although a notable absence from the range of wares is Milton Keynes fabric TLMS3, Late Medieval Reduced Ware, dated to the late 14th – mid 16th century. Such pottery is very common on later medieval sites in the region, with many production sources known (ibid.), and the fact that none was noted at this site is a strong indication that there was little or no medieval activity at the site after the middle of the 14th century.

Chronology

In the following analyses, only the material from the excavation stage is examined, as the material from the test-pits was excavated in spits, and thus cannot be regarded as reliably stratified.

Each pottery assemblage was given a seriated Ceramic Phase (CP) date, based on the range of wares present, and adjusted according to the evidence from the stratigraphic matrix. The scheme is shown in Table1.

Table 1: Ceramic Phase dating scheme

Ceramic Phase	Defining Wares	Chronology
CP1	SNC1, MS3, MSC1	11th C
CP2	MC1, MS2	12th C
CP3	MC9, MSC4	Early – mid 13th C
CP4	MC6	Mid 13th – mid 14th C
CP5	TLMS3	Mid 14th – late 15th C
CP6	PM15	Late 15th - M16th C

Ceramic Phase	Defining Wares	Chronology
CP7	TLMS10	M16th C – 17th C
CP8	PM16	17th C
CP9	PM2, PM56	Late 17th – late 18th C
CP10	PM25	Late 18th C +

Table 2 shows the pottery occurrence per ceramic phase. The most striking result is the preponderance of features dated to the mid 13th – mid 14th century. There seems little doubt that there was only low-level activity in the area of the excavations during the earlier medieval period, and none at all from after the mid-14th century.

The mean sherd weight is quite low, and this is reflected in the general nature of the medieval assemblage, which is fairly fragmented, with few large sherds or reconstructable vessels.

Table 2: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, all fabrics

Phase	No sherds	Wt sherds	EVE	Mean wt (g)
CP1	5	41	0.02	8.2g
CP2	27	240	0.07	8.9g
CP3	6	34	0	5.7g
CP4	382	3282	1.16	8.6g
CP5	0	0	0	0
CP6	0	0	0	0
CP7	0	0	0	0
CP8	0	0	0	0
CP9	13	146	0.09	11.2g
CP10	26	233	0.20	9.0g
Total	459	3976	1.54	

The data in Table 3 confirms this. The current wares have mean sherd weights which are similar to that of the whole assemblage, showing that residuality is not a factor in the values.

Table 3: Mean sherd weight per medieval ceramic phase, major fabrics, (in g)

Phase	MC1	MS2	MC6
CP2	8.4g	8.9g	-
CP3	6.3g	6.5g	-
CP4	8.0g	9.0g	8.8g

Vessel Use

The data in Table 4 shows the range of medieval vessel types which were consumed at the site. The assemblage comprises almost entirely jars, bowls and jugs, with the only other vessel types evidenced being a skillet or dripping dish in fabric MSC1, which is represented by a single handle (Fig. TP11), and a small fragment of a Potterspury ware bunghole cistern which was redeposited in a post-medieval context (101). Such a range of vessel types, with the exception of the cistern, is typical of pottery assemblages dating to before the mid-14th century; it was only after that time that the wide range of vessels which are associated with

food preparation and formal dining was introduced into the medieval potter's repertoire. Such pottery is admittedly rare at rural sites in the region, and more associated with towns or high-status sites such as monasteries, but there absence at this site is purely due to chronological factors.

The total number of vessels (by EVE) is so small as to render any analysis meaningless in all the medieval phases except CP4. For that phase, jars represent 52.8% of the assemblage (EVE = 0.57), bowls 39.8% (EVE = 0.43) and jugs = 7.4% (EVE = 0.08). Such a pattern of consumption is fairly typical of sites in the region at that time, although it could be argued that jugs are a little under-represented.

Cross-fits

The entire assemblage was examined for cross-fits, with the following noted:

114 (IA) = 151 (IA), La Tène curvilinear vessel, Iron Age.
173 (CP9) = 178 (IA), Iron Age jar

The Assemblage

As perhaps would be expected with an assemblage which is dominated by a single pottery type, it is the Potterspury ware which is mainly worthy of comment. The mere fact that the material is so dominant is not in itself unusual; there are many sites in the region where this was the case (Jope and Ivens 1995, 146).

What is worthy of note is the range of decorative techniques which are in evidence on the glazed jugs. Usually, Potterspury glazed wares show little evidence of any other form of decoration, other than slashing on the handles. For example, the Great Linford Potterspury ware assemblage comprised 42% of the site assemblage of 50,000 sherds (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 245 and 262), but consisted of almost entirely plain wares apart from a few sherds with incised wavy lines, rouletting, or a single highly decorated vessel, perhaps a knight jug (ibid. 264).

The assemblage from this site produced two sherds from two highly decorated sherds, each from a different vessel (Figs PT2 and PT3), and 41 sherds (370g) with rouletting, including one with applied strips in a brown-firing clay. A selection of these are illustrated (Figs PT3 - 9). A small number of sherds were noted with painted brown slip decoration, an extremely unusual technique for Potterspury ware, common on later Oxford ware or earlier Brill Boarstall ware, but the sherds from this site are in fabrics which were undeniably of Potterspury type. As the Potterspury ware assemblage from the entire site (including test-pits) comprised 1063

sherds (6915g), this means that around 4% of the all the ware comprised rouletted glazed jug sherds, an extraordinarily high proportion. It is also notable that the inclusions and colour of both the fabric and glaze of many of the rouletted sherds are very similar, to the extent that the pots may be largely part of the same firing batch, and perhaps evidence of specialist production for the medieval inhabitants of this site.

This may have implications for the nature and status of the site, and suggests an usually high consumption of tablewares during CP4. However, the vessel use data (above) suggests that jugs may be generally a little under-represented at the site at that time. This is an intriguing dichotomy, and perhaps one which will only be solved by further excavations at the site.

The assemblage is otherwise as would be expected from a medieval village in the region. The only other sherd worthy of note, other than those discussed above, is an unusual sherd of OXY with geometric rouletting (Fig. PT10).

Illustrations

Fig. PT1: TP10, spit 2, MC6. Rouletted jug rim. Grey fabric with orange surfaces. Dull green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT2: Context 107, MC6. Sherd from neck of highly decorated jug. Uniform grey fabric with applied dots, scales and stripes on the outer surface in a white –firing clay. Glossy green glaze overall, with the decoration appearing yellowish-green under the glaze.

Fig. PT3: TP14, spit 6, MC6. Sherd from body of highly decorated jug, grey fabric with orange inner surface. Applied scales and rouletted applied strips of body clay, dull green glaze over all.

Fig. PT4: TPi, spit 2, MC6. Sherd from upper body of jug with rouletted decoration. Buff fabric with grey core, dull olive green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT5: TP15, spit 4, MC6. Sherd from body of jug with rouletted decoration. Orange-buff fabric with grey core, dull olive green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT6: TP16, spit 4, MC6. Sherd from upper body of jug with rouletted applied strips. Orange-buff fabric with grey core, dull olive green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT7: TP16, spit 4, MC6. Sherd from upper body of jug with rouletted applied strips in a brown-firing clay. Orange fabric with grey core, dull olive green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT8: TP15, spit 5, MC6. Sherd from upper body of jug with rouletted decoration. Orange fabric with grey core, dull olive green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT9: TP15, spit 5, MC6. Sherd from upper body of jug with rouletted applied strips. Orange-buff fabric with grey core, dull olive green glaze on outer surface.

Fig. PT10: TPi, spit2, Oxford ware. Bodysherd with geometric rouletting. Pale grey fabric with an orange patch on the outer surface.

Fig. PT11: Context 173, MSC1. Fragment of skillet handle. Grey fabric with brown surfaces, underside smoke-blackened.

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

	IA		RB		ESax		SNC 1		MSC 1		Oxford		MS2		MC1		Lyv A		MSC 4		MC9		MC6		PMed		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
101	1	5											5	70	2	21							9	73	19	64	CP10
102	9	77											1	2									4	18			CP4
103									1	12													3	29			CP4
104	5	30	2	22									9	61									4	11			CP4
105			5	35									1	8	2	7							10	60			CP4
107													2	10	4	37	1	39					11	99			CP4
108			1	11									1	4	1	7											CP2
112	10	55	5	30					2	27	1	9	64	547	21	201					1	6	24	154			CP4
113													2	7	1	5							6	64			CP4
114	1	27	2	29	1	11							10	52	9	92					4	26	9	76			CP3
115													10	105	3	21											CP2
117																							6	35			CP4
118	1	4																					8	130			CP4
119	4	29							1	5			2	12	1	5			1	8			3	16			CP4
120	1	6													3	60							2	13			CP4
123	1	4	4	26																							RB?
124	1	15									1	14															CP2?
131																							1	11			CP4
132	74	2409																									MIA?
133	1	1							1	2																	CP2
138													4	18									1	3			CP4
139			1	33							6	83			10	66							14	143			CP4
143													3	19	2	13					1	2					CP3
145	1	2									2	12	2	39	1	8							6	91			CP4
150	1	10																					1	7			CP4
151	4	44																									IA
152													1	25													CP2
157			2	7																			1	20			CP4
162	14	101																									IA
163			1	6									3	42	2	19					2	11	4	35			CP4
168													1	7	1	13											CP2
170	2	6									1	18	15	123	8	58							5	70			CP4
172	1	10																			1	19	1	4			CP4
173	10	92											1	44									1	8	1	2	CP9
175													2	4	2	18											CP2
177													1	6													CP2
178	7	50																									IA
180							1	9																			CP1
184	7	129																									IA
193													3	19													CP2
Total	156	3106	23	199	1	11	1	9	5	46	11	136	143	1224	73	651	1	39	1	8	9	64	134	1170	20	66	

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per test pit

			IA	RB	ESax	IPS	SNC 1	MS3	MSC1	Oxfrd	MS2	MC1	MC9	MC6	PM15	T

TP	Spit	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No
1	0	1																																					
1	1	0																									1	9											
1	1	0																																					
1	2	0																																					
1	3	0																																					3
2	1	0																									2	13											2
2	2	0																									1	5											
3	0	0																																					
3	1	0																																					6
3	2	0	1	3																	1	10							2	3	6								
3	3	0	1	15																							1	6											2
3	4	0																									1	6											
4	1	0																																					
4	2	0																			1	41																	
4	3	0																	3	10																			
4	4	0			2	19																																	
4	5	0	1	3																																			
5	1	0																																					5
5	2	0																									9	35											
5	5	0																									6	53											
5	7	0																									1	7											
6	1	0			1	5																					1	2											
6	2	0																	1	9							1	2											
6	3	0																																					
6	4	0													2	5											6	13											
6	5	0	1	6																							3	16											
6	6	0																			1	6					1	6											
7	0	1			4	9																																	
7	1	0																									2	4											
7	2	0																									4	14											
7	3	0																			1	2					2	33											
7	4	0	1	2																							1	5											
7	6	0													1	5											1	4											
7	9	0													1	3																							
8	2	0																									2	4											
8	3	0																									22	163											
8	5	0																									9	81											
8	6	0																									3	30											
9	2	0			1	57																																	
9	5	0																									1	8											
10	1	0																																					
10	2	0																									2	21											
10	4	0	1	11																							1	8											
10	5	0	1	11															1	8																			
10	6	0			1	7																			1	1	2	14											
11	1	0			2	8																																	
11	2	0																									2	4											
11	3	0																									1	3											
11	4	0																							1	5	22	101											
11	5	0											3	13											1	16	15	121											
12	1	0																									4	32											
12	2	0																									4	13											
12	3	0																									1	8											

			IA		RB		ESax		IPS		SNC 1		MS3		MSC1		Oxfrd		MS2		MC1		MC9		MC6		PM15		T
TP	Spit	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No
12	4	0	1	1																									
12	5	0																							2	39			
12	6	0			1	21																			8	48			
12	7	0	1	2											1	7			1	1					2	5			
13	1	0																							3	21			
13	2	0																											
13	3	0																							2	7			
13	4	0							1	6			2	4											49	191			
13	5	0			1	3																			34	161			
13	6	0					1	12											1	4	2	3	1	5	12	60			
13	7	0	1	7																					9	36			
14	1	0																											
14	2	0											10	22											16	57			
14	3	0																	37	119	6	35	3	16	44	234			
14	4	0	1	3															1	17	1	17			38	187			
14	5	0											3	16							3	16			30	110			
14	6	0																							1	5			
15	1	0																											
15	2	0																	1	7					2	15			1
15	3	0																	8	71			1	2	45	213			
15	4	0																	26	110					52	335			
15	5	0	11	113									7	22							3	27			32	266			
15	6	0											1	2															
16	0	2													3	8					2	14			33	236			
16	1	0											2	5											5	38			
16	2	0																							12	45			
16	3	0													2	8							1	1	62	364			
16	3	0																			6	17							
16	4	0											4	22					1	16	2	3			84	985			
16	5	0																							12	46			
18	1	0																							4	12			
18	3	0																			1	2							
18	5	0																	1	2									
18	6	0																	1	5									
18	7	0			3	18																							
19	1	0																			1	11							
19	2	0																	1	19									
19	3	0																	1	12			1	2					
19	5	0			1	4									2	6									1	2			
19	7	0													1	2									2	4			
20	4	0	1	2											1	5													
20	9	0					1	6															1	4					
21	7	0													1	15									2	3			
22	0	1									1	2													2	10			
22	0	3																											1
22	1	0																	1	37									
A	4	3																			2	12							
A	6	0																			1	3			1	3			
A	7	0	1	1																	1	4			2	11			
A	9	0			1	5																							
B	0	2																	6	34									

			IA		RB		ESax		IPS		SNC 1		MS3		MSC1		Oxfrd		MS2		MC1		MC9		MC6		PM15		T
TP	Spit	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	
B	1	0																	1	3									
B	2	0																	3	6	1	12			1	2			
B	3	0															1	6	4	28	7	21	1	2					
B	5	5											1	2	4	46													
B	6	0																							6	72			
C	1	0																	1	14									
C	2	0																							1	12			
C	5	0																							1	11			
C	6	0																			1	7							
C	7	0																			1	10			3	22			
D	1	0	1	23																					3	9			
D	2	0			1	3															1	14							
D	3	0	1	12																					5	44			
D	4	0	1	2															5	105									
D	5	0																	2	57	1	5							
D	8	0																			1	3							
E	0	2	3	14																					7	42			
E	3	0																			3	10			2	6			
E	4	0	1	7																			1	3					
E	5	0			2	5															1	16			1	12			
F	1	0																	1	11									
F	2	0																											
F	3	0																							1	15			
F	5	0	3	4															1	15									
F	6	0	2	28																					3	35			
F	7	0																	2	27					2	3			
F	8	0	1	34																									
F	9	0	1	2																	1	19							
G	0	2																	3	58	1	6							
G	0	3	7	23																									
G	0	4	1	5																									
G	1	0																							1	3			
G	2	0																											
G	4	0																							2	7			
G	5	0																	2	24					3	5			
i	2	0															2	21	21	74	7	42			55	296			
i	3	0																	4	13					6	14			
i	4	0	2	17															1	14	1	3			11	50			
i	5	0	2	9																					2	13			
ii	1	0																							2	30	1	10	
ii	2	0																			1	2			3	9	2	4	12
ii	4	0			1	6													2	15	3	12			15	65			
ii	5	0															1	6							14	99			
ii	7	0																							28	176			
ii	7	0			1	11																							
iii	3	0			1	4																			10	58			
iii	4	0																							1	29			
iii	5	0																							1	5			
iii	6	0					2	10																					
iv	2	0																									1	6	
iv	5	0																							1	8			

			IA		RB		ESax		IPS		SNC 1		MS3		MSC1		Oxfrd		MS2		MC1		MC9		MC6		PM15		T
TP	Spit	Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No
		Total	50	360	24	185	4	28	1	6	1	2	33	108	19	110	5	41	144	937	66	405	13	57	929	5745	7	25	38

Bibliography

Blinkhorn, PW, forthcoming *The Ipswich Ware Project: Ceramics, Trade and Society in Middle Saxon England* Medieval Pottery Res Group Monog

Blinkhorn, PW, 2003 The Pottery in A Hardy, A Dodd and GD Keevil *Aelfric's Abbey. Excavations at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 1989-92* Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes **16**

Blinkhorn, PW, 1993 Early and Middle Saxon Pottery from Pennyland and Hartigans in R. J. Williams, *Pennyland and Hartigans. Two Iron Age and Saxon Sites in Milton Keynes* Bucks Archaeol Soc Mono Ser **4**

Elvey, C.R. 1968 'Luffield Priory Charters, Part 1', *Northamptonshire Records Society* **22**

Elvey, C.R. 1975 'Luffield Priory Charters, Part 2', *Northamptonshire Records Society* **26**

Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A., & Stenton, F.M. 1975 'The Place-Names of Northamptonshire' *English Place-Name Society* **10**.

Grant, A. 1982 'The use of tooth wear as a guide to the age of domestic ungulates', Wilson, B., Grigson, C. and Payne, S. (eds.) *Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* British Archaeological Reports, British Series **109**, 91-108.

Grant, A. 1984

Grant A. 1991

Grigson, C. 1982 'Sex and age determination in some bones and teeth of domestic cattle: a review of the literature', in Wilson, B., Grigson, C. and Payne, S. (eds.) *Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* British Archaeological Reports, British Series **109**, 7-23.

Hill, J.D.

Hill J.D. 1995 *Ritual or Rubbish in the Iron Age of Wessex* BAR British Series **242**.

Jones R. and Page, M., 2001 'Medieval Settlements and Landscapes in the Whittlewood Area: Interim Report 2001-2', *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report* **16**

Jones, R. forthcoming 2003 'The Luffield Priory Grange at Monksbarn, Whittlebury, Northants', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*

Jope, EM and Ivens, RJ, 1995 A Later Medieval Pottery Kiln at Potterspury, Northamptonshire *Northamptonshire Archaeol* **26**, 141-8

Knight, D, 2002 A Regional Ceramic Sequence: Pottery of the First Millennium BC between the Humber and the Nene in A Woodward and JD Hill, eds *Prehistoric Britain. The Ceramic Basis* Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group Occasional Publication **3**, 119-142

Knight, D, 1993 Early and Middle Late and Bronze Age and Iron Age Pottery from Pennyland and Hartigans in R. J. Williams, *Pennyland and Hartigans. Two Iron Age and Saxon Sites in Milton Keynes* Bucks Archaeol Soc Mono Ser **4**

Legge, A.J. 1992 'Excavations at Grimes Graves, Norfolk 1972-1976', Fascicule 4 *Animals, Environment and the Bronze Age Economy* (British Museum Press, London).

Marney, PT, 1989 *Roman and Belgic Pottery from Excavations in Milton Keynes, 1972-82* Buckinghamshire Archaeol Soc Monog Ser **2**

McCarthy, M, 1979 The Pottery in JH Williams St Peter's St, Northampton. Excavations 1973-76 Northampton Development Corporation Monog Ser 2, 151-242

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217

MPRG, 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-roman Ceramics* Medieval Pottery Res Group Occ Paper **2**

MPRG, 1998 *Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms* MPRG Occasional Paper **1**

Mynard, DC and Zeepvat RJ, 1992 *Great Linford* Bucks Archaeol Soc Monog Ser **3**

Orton, C, 1998-99 Minimum Standards in Statistics and Sampling *Medieval Ceramics* **22-23**, 135-8

Page, M. and Jones, R. 2000, 'The Whittlewood Project Interim Report 2000-1', *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report* **15**, 10-18.

Page W. (ed.) 1905-28 *The Victoria history of the counties of England. A history of the county of Buckinghamshire* (Constable, London)

Payne, S. 1973 'Kill-off patterns in sheep and goats: the mandibles from Asvan Kale', *Anatolian Studies* **23**, 139-47.

Pevsner N. 1973 *Northamptonshire* The Buildings of England (Penguin, London)

Serjeantson, D. 1996 'The Animal Bones', in Needham, S.R. and Spence, A. (eds.) *Refuse and Disposal at Area 16 East Runnymede*, Runnymede Bridge Research Excavations, vol. **2**, 194-223 (British Museum Press, London)

Thorn F., and Thorn, C. 1979 'Northamptonshire', *Domesday Book* (Phillimore, Chichester)

Zeepvat, RJ, Roberts, JS and King, NA, 1994 *Caldecotte, Milton Keynes. Excavation and Fieldwork 1966-91* Bucks Archaeol Soc Monog Ser **9**

Site Photographs:

1-2: The eastern rampart, viewed from the modern road that follows its course.

3-5: The hillfort platform viewed from slightly below on the south-eastern slope.

6-7: The hillfort platform viewed from slightly below on the south-western slope. The bank and ditch are barely perceptible.

8: View to the west of the site, indicating the route of the Roman road as it bypasses the hillfort.