

Calendar

Saturday, October 9th. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY An Evening with the Nene consort at Northampton Museum, Guildhall Road. Further details and tickets available from Mrs. S. Phillips, 16 Blandford Avenue, Kettering and Mrs. D. E. Friendship-Taylor, Northampton Museum.

Friday, October 15th. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Dr. Ian Stead of the British Museum, "Iron Age Burials in Champagne". The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8 p.m.

Friday, October 29th. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Dr. G. Webster, An Aspect of Roman Rural Archaeology. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8 p.m.

Friday, November 12th. Joint meeting NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY. Mr. G. Jackson-Stops, Architectural Adviser to the National Trust, "Canons Ashby". The Sponne School, Towcester. 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 11th. Upper Nene Archaeological Society Christmas Dinner to be held at the Freemason's Hall, St. George's Avenue, Northampton. Further details from Mrs. D. E. Friendship-Taylor, Northampton Museum.

Friday, January 28th. Joint Meeting NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND PETERBOROUGH MUSEUM SOCIETY. Mr. A. McWhirr, "Roman Cirencester". Peterborough Museum. 8 p.m.

Friday, March 18th. Joint Meeting NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY. Mr. H. Richmond of the Royal Commission, "The Medieval Churches of Northampton". The Humfrey Rooms, Castilian Street, Northampton. 8 p.m.

Please send contributions for the next Northamptonshire Mirror to: Mrs. F. Williams, Plot 306, Froxhill Crescent, Brixworth.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of individual authors as indicated.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



Newsletter and Calendar of the Northamptonshire
Archaeological Society
No. 3 Autumn 1982

Quinton, Site 'E' — 1978-81

R. M. Friendship-Taylor

Excavation at Quinton since Site 'B' was completed has concentrated on a small area to the south, adjoining Site 'A' covering an area 60ft. (13.3m) by 40ft. (12.2m).



Quinton: general view of Site 'E' looking north-west.

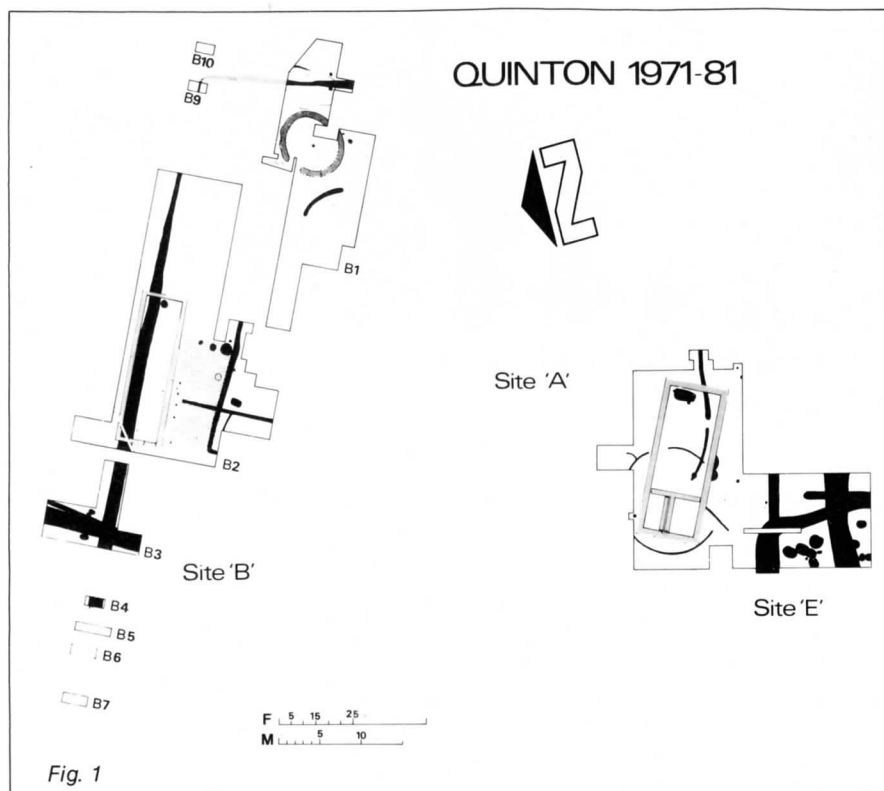


Fig. 1

It was hoped that further buildings or a yard would be located, but only one feature was found which was broadly contemporary with Building ii, dating to the Hadrianic/Antonine period and that was ditch — feature 1. All the remaining features belong to the conquest period or earlier. However, the conquest period features would have been contemporary with the circular building — Building i — Site 'A'.

Phases of occupation — Site 'E'

(The following scheme is designed to fall into line with that published in Friendship-Taylor 79, p.5).

Period OII

BC 50-1

Period OI

AD 1-49

Period I

Claudio/Neronian AD 50-60

Period IV

Hadrianic/Antonine AD 100-170

Four main phases were recognised, although periods OII and OI were virtually one continuous process without any real noticeable gaps in continuity.

One gap recognised was between periods I and IV, but this must be purely fortuitous, as activity does continue through this time gap in other parts of the site. A few residual sherds of Flavian pottery were found in ditch — feature 1 (Fig. 2).

The ditches

The main features on this site were four ditches, the sequence being as follows:

Feature 7a — This ditch must originally have been about 5ft. (1.5m.) wide by just over 2ft. (60mm.) deep and could not have been long cut before it was recut again on virtually the same alignment but slightly to the south which formed Feature 7.

The pottery found from the original cutting and the recut ditch were virtually indistinguishable and must represent only a year or two's gap between the cutting of the two ditches (period OI).

Feature 1a — This was the next ditch to be cut, parallel to F7/7a but then turning abruptly south to cross F7/7a at right angles. When the ditch was partly silted or filled in, many horse and pig jaw bones and

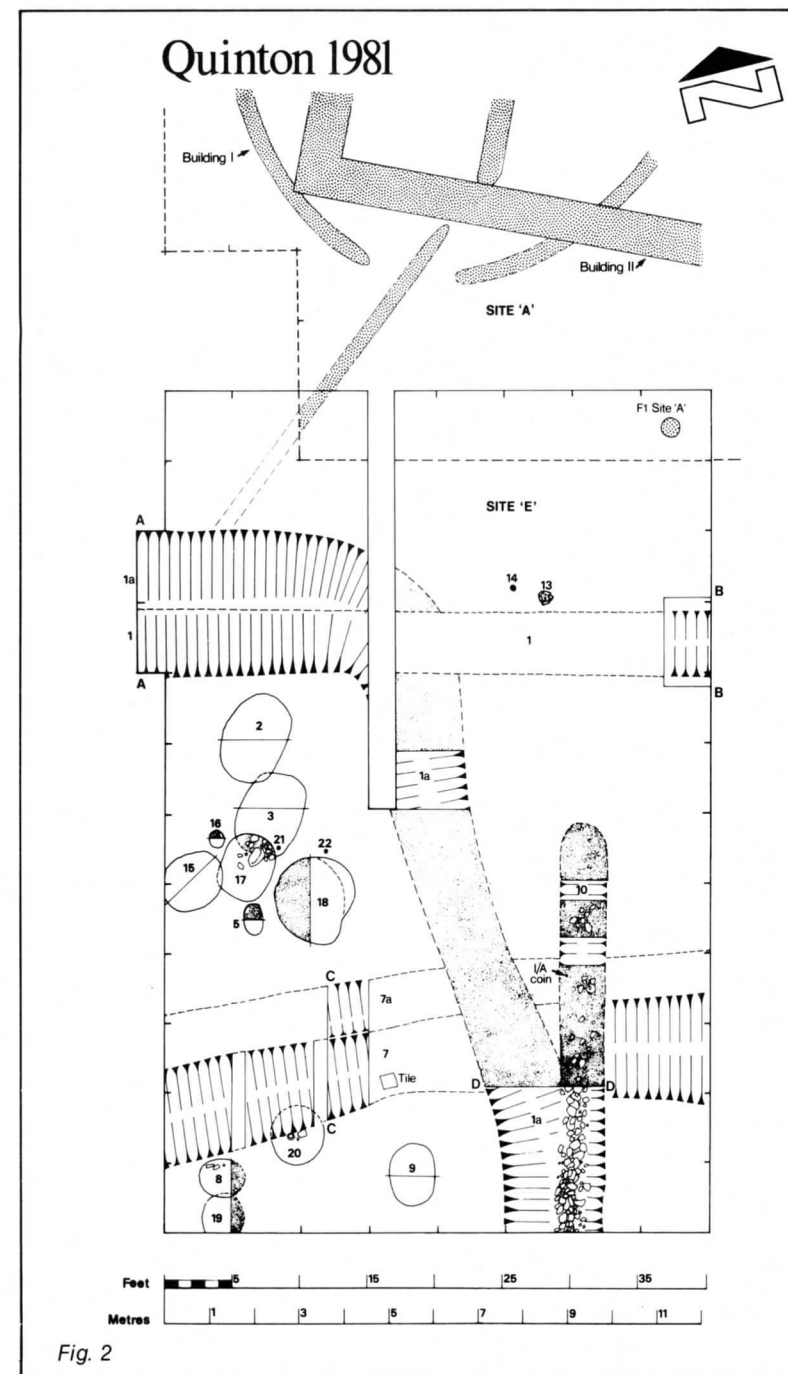


Fig. 2

front incisor teeth were liberally seeded about. These jaws were carefully laid on the black silty fill. This would seem to

represent a ritual deposit, especially as the jaws were so carefully positioned and not just thrown into the ditch (see forthcoming

excavation report). All this is reminiscent of that found on site 'A' (Friendship-Taylor 74, p.14), where jaw bones had been placed at 12 inch (300mm.) intervals against the wall of Building II where it passed over an earlier oven and pit. Also, the deposit of bones (F31) on site B1 (Friendship-Taylor 79) underneath a stone yard surface. All these examples must represent ritual or perhaps 'good luck' deposits.

Again pottery from this feature is very similar to the period OI material, which must also represent a fairly short time span. It could also represent a remodelling of the 'field systems' at this time. Again, as noted in the site 'B' report (Friendship-Taylor 1979) the ditches follow very similar alignments to the present day field boundary which lies only 50 metres to the west of the site (see block plan Fig. 1). Fla must have remained open for some time as two brooches of Claudio/Neronian date were found in the upper filling of the ditch.

Feature 10 — Next, F10 was cut, although this was no more than a gully. The only pottery consisted of small scraps of mid first century AD wares. But, an almost unworn coin of Cunobelin cf Mack 244 — (Mack, 1964) was found in the top half of the feature, which, together with the sherds, should put the gully into the later part of period OI.

Feature 1 — Finally, ditch F1 was cut, which followed F1a for a short distance, until it turned to the south, F1 continued in an easterly direction running roughly parallel with Building II (site 'A'). This ditch contained mainly Hadrianic/Antonine pottery.

The Pits

The pits all seem to be the earliest features on Site 'E' and indeed, earlier than any of the features excavated so far at Quinton (with the exception of P3 and 4 — Site 'A' — (Friendship-Taylor 1974) which are possibly Neolithic or Bronze Age). All the pits would seem to fit into period OII.

The group which mainly lay within ditches F1 and F7/7a all cut into one another with the exception of F18. The pits which do contain pottery all indicate a mid to late first century BC date and represent the earliest Belgic type pottery on the site. (No earlier Iron Age pottery than this has been recognised so far on the site).

These pits, when viewed as a group, do not seem to represent domestic storage or rubbish pits. They are all very similar in

profile, relatively shallow, with flat bottoms, F18 being the exception, although it must have started in a similar way to pits 2, 3, 15 and 17 it was later deepened. It was felt by the excavators that again some sort of ritual use may be associated with these pits.

Pit 2 contained only the completely articulated leg of a sheep and half a pot, otherwise the filling was quite homogeneous.

Pit 15 contained only a few body sherds of pottery but the bottom was lined with bunter pebbles and charcoal. The filling again was quite homogeneous.

Pit 17 contained only fragments of limestone and a few body sherds of pottery but otherwise the general filling was again homogeneous.

Pit 3 only a few body sherds and the odd animal bone; again a homogeneous filling.

The other pits were located to the south of Ditch — F7. One, F20 had been cut into by ditch F7 and contained a complete pot, with what is probably a deliberate hole punched through the base.

Pits 8 & 19 contained only sparse charcoal fragments; again a homogeneous filling.

Pit 9 contained a dense mixture of black greasy soil and charcoal, plus several diagnostic sherds of pottery.

Finds

Finds were few, but one in particular is interesting from ditch 7 could be unique for its date, i.e. early first century AD: the charred fragmentary remains of a fine wooden hair comb, one side containing fine and the other coarse teeth.

Future work

It is hoped one day to return to Quinton to continue with our work there when our current excavation programme at Piddington is complete! The above is only a preliminary assessment of the evidence, views may change when the finds etc. have been properly processed.

References

- Friendship-Taylor, R. M., 1974
The Excavation of the Belgic & Romano-British Settlement at Quinton, Northants. 1971-2. *Journal of the Northampton Museums and Art Gallery*, 11.
Friendship-Taylor, R. M., 1979.
The Excavation of the Belgic & Romano-British Settlement at Quinton, Northants. 1973-7. *Journal of the Northampton Museums and Art Gallery*, 13.
Mack, R. P., 1964.
The Coinage of Ancient Britain.

8th Century Arabian Coin from Harlestone

Brian L. Giggins

Whilst researching the history of a building in Harlestone, near Northampton, I came across a note on what must be the most unusual coin discovery in the county. The information came from a manuscript history on the village of Harlestone which is in Northamptonshire Record Office (ref. Hu (H) 20) and the accompanying description and drawing has been taken directly from this source. Obviously there is the faint possibility that it may have been lost by a collector but if the depth it has been stated it was found is correct then this is doubtful. Speculation on how it got there is beyond the scope of this note and all that can be deduced is that there is probably a story here worthy of Jean Plaidy which unfortunately will never be known.

Northampton Record Office ref: Hu(H) 20

(Collections for the History of the parish of Harlestone)

A most interesting discovery was that of a gold coin in 1888, found in removing soil from the wall of the Rectory Stables, just outside the Churchyard and some twelve feet below, among some large rough stones. The coin is about the size of a half sovereign and in a state of perfect preservation. The inscription much blended reads:

(a.1) Mahomet is the Messenger of God

(a.2) There is no God but Allah

He is the one, He has no companion

(b.1) *He has sent him with the Direction and the true religion*

(around) *Mahomet is the messenger of God*

(b.2) *around: In the name of God this coin was struck in the year 152 (A.D. 768-9)*

This coin was struck by the Khalif El Mansoor, in a period when Arabian commerce was extending to all markets of the world. How it came to be where it was must for ever remain a mystery. It can only be reasonably conjectured that it was buried with some Knight ages ago, who had obtained it in one of the foreign expeditions so frequent in the chivalric times of the Crusades.

Numismatic Note Paul Woodfield

The occurrence of an Abbasid coin at Harlestone raises some interesting numismatic points. What immediately comes to mind is the famous dinar of the same Caliph overstruck by Offa of Mercia in the second half of his reign. This latter coin is a southern French copy of the original, showing that the dinar had established a place in international exchange in the late 8th century. In practice it was the only available form of coined gold bullion, replacing the earlier Merovingian tremisses. This was a period when Britain was, exceptionally, in political and commercial contact with France and the Mediterranean world, and internally when Offa was consolidating his influence and establishing his overlordship in the eastern areas of England. The drawing does not allow speculation whether the Harlestone coin is a trade copy or an original, but in either case its appearance in Northamptonshire is of significance.



Gold coin found at Harlestone Rectory in 1888.

Raunds Excavations

Graham Cadman, Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Unit

In the 1981/2 season of excavations off Brick Kiln Road, Raunds, a considerable area of Saxon and Medieval occupation was revealed. The site has been enlarged to an area of c.8000 sq. metres, most of this area being to the west of the previous season's work. The remains of Saxon buildings have been discovered, associated with a ditched enclosure. During the late 10th century a replanning of the settlement led to the construction of a stone church (excavated 1979-80), adjacent to a series of secular structures, possibly manorial, which are currently under excavation. These were succeeded, probably during the 12th century, by a stone manor house. This manor house predates that erected over the remains of the churches which was excavated by Andy Boddington during 1979.

Although the limits of the Medieval occupation are now fairly well understood, the full nature and extent of the initial Saxon occupation awaits further investigation. The season's excavations are due to close in July 1982, though further excavation will be required in advance of and during housing development in the surrounding area.

On the basis of this season's work, a tentative re-appraisal of the site's development is possible. Dating is provisional and relies on pottery and the stratigraphic sequences. Excavation continues in the central part of the site, and findings here may alter the chronology advanced below. A complete site assessment must await a full study of the site records.

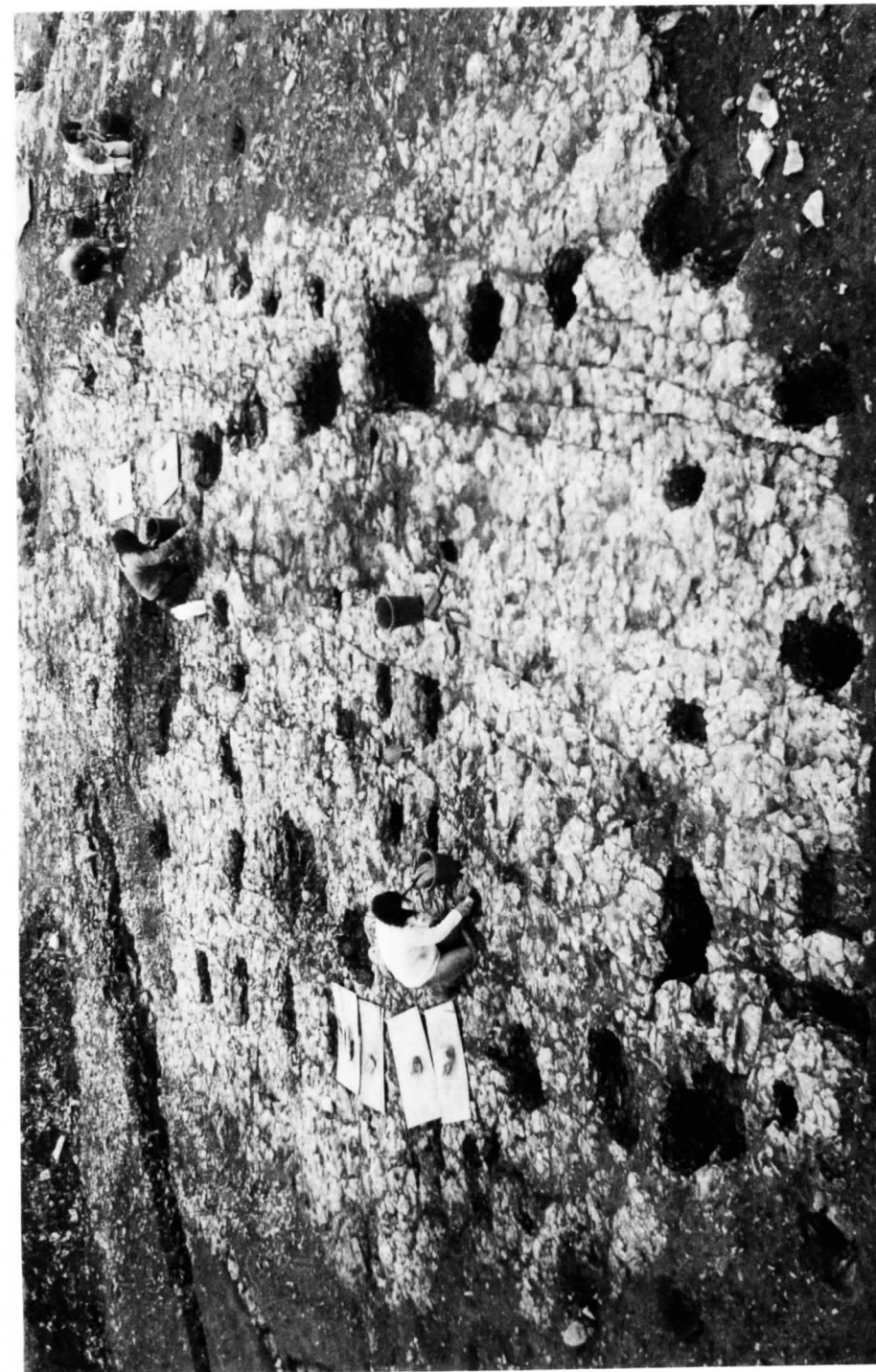
Period I

Three buildings constitute Period IA whilst a ditched enclosure (35m. by 35m.) forms part of Period IB. Period I has been provisionally assigned a 9th and early 10th century date. These features are bounded on all sides by other features. The trench edge to the north and east roughly delimits the extent of this occupation, though to the south and west occupation remains extend well beyond the limits of the present investigation. Not all the features are believed to be contemporary; for convenience they are grouped in one period at present.

Buildings A and B, to the north of the enclosure, were both represented by rock-cut features. Building A (19m. by 6.8m.) was a bow-sided structure, orientated north-south. The walls were set in a series of trenches, within which were stone packings placed at approximately 0.30m. intervals. One possible entrance was defined, off-centre in the eastern side, and there was also evidence of possible external buttress posts. The only internal features were four post-holes.

Building B (12m. by 6m.) was set to the west of 'A' and orientated east-west. Eight regularly spaced sets of double post-holes formed the north and south long sides. Along each side the two central post-holes were considerably larger than their neighbours (over 1m. sq. in area) and must represent the entrances to the structure. The gable ends of the building were represented by three doubled post-holes, with another set of three posts placed on the inside, c.1m. from the west end and 2m. from the east end, suggesting that a hipped roof was in use. The eastern set of internal roof posts also formed the base for a partition. Placed between the two entrances, and mid-way between the partition and the west end of the building, were four doubled post-holes, forming the base for a hearth or fire canopy. The siting of the hearth and the partition serve to break the structure up into three sections. The doubled post-holes are thought to represent an initial strengthening for the upright posts and do not represent evidence of either cruck construction or rebuilding.

Building B would have been an imposing and sturdy structure and was almost certainly a dwelling-house. It is interesting that it differs so greatly in construction from its contemporary, building A. Neither structure appears to have been substantially repaired or rebuilt. It is possible that the different construction technique and the lack of internal features in building A indicate a different function to that of B. The evidence does not suggest a dwelling alone but perhaps dwelling and byre.



Raunds 1981/2: Period I, Building 'B', approximately 12m. by 6m. Note centrally placed entrances (marked by larger post-pits, two covered by boards).

There is evidence of structures to the west of building B but these were small in comparison with A and B. Smaller, though incomplete, post-hole structures N and C, have also been excavated. South of the enclosure were further features, including a pit oven, but the area within the enclosure has so far revealed no contemporary features. This suggests that the enclosure had a stock control function. A multi-phased entrance way has been located on the enclosure's south side and relates to other features yet to be excavated. The eastern side of the enclosure was strengthened by the addition of a second ditch, set to the east.

It is still too early to be sure whether the features described here represent a near complete settlement unit or a part of a large settlement, extending further south and west.

Periods II and III

During the latter half of the 10th century, a replanning took place. Buildings A and B, and the enclosure, were replaced by the construction of a stone church (Period II). During the 11th century, the church was replaced and enlarged. The two churches of Periods II and III have been described elsewhere (Boddington and Cadman 1981) but until 1981 other buildings associated with the churches were unknown.

The Period II settlement, contemporary with the early church, has yet to be firmly located though it is suspected that it underlies the Period IV manor. A substantial building represented by large post-pits and slots is currently under excavation and may be the Period II manor. Structures believed to be contemporary with the Period III church are currently under excavation. Three complete buildings, and one yet to be fully excavated, have been recorded (F, G, H, R). All buildings were constructed with a continuous wall trench, with traces of post-hole impressions in the base, and in some cases set in the trench sides. Entrances were represented by short lengths of deeper set slots associated with post-holes. Internal features were confined to occasional post-holes. The largest structure, F, was 11.5m. by 6m., whilst structures G and R measure 4.64m. by 4.90m., and 5.31m. by 4.33m. respectively. Building G cut the backfill of the earlier enclosure ditch. The apparent confining of these structures within the boundary of the enclosure ditch suggests

that although the ditch was by now back-filled, there was recognition of its previous extent. The same may be true of the north-south orientated ditches set on the western side of the excavation. Whilst these boundaries are largely 12th century and later, they may have been in use during Periods II and III, or possibly earlier.

Period IV

During the latter part of the 12th century there was a further replanning. A stone and timber manor house was erected to the west of the graveyard. The bounds of the manor house of this period appear broadly similar to the Period III occupation. Until its abandonment and demolition in the early 14th century, this manor house went through a series of alterations with parts of the main structure being dismantled or appended. Several ancillary structures were erected both north and immediately west of the main structure, serving a variety of domestic and industrial functions.

In the extreme south-east corner of the site a series of pits and gullies indicate building-sand quarrying and, possibly, an as yet unidentified, industrial process.

It seems likely that the manor house overlies structures of Periods II and III, though these still await excavation. During at least the early life of the manor house, the church of Period III was still in use, but by c. 1200, this had been abandoned. The eastern end of the church was re-used in the construction of a single roomed structure.

With the construction of this manor house there was a consolidation of the line of the ditch and bank, separating the manorial buildings from the field system. To the west, the ditched boundary was moved slightly more to the west to accommodate an expansion of the manorial buildings.

Period V

During the early 14th century there was further re-organisation. The earlier manor house was abandoned and its materials used in the construction of a stone manor house (Boddington 1979), erected on the site once occupied by the two churches. Only one outbuilding, set to the north, has been identified as contemporary with the new manor house. With the building of this manor house over the church remains there was clearly a shift in the centre of the

settlement towards the east. The area to the west, occupied by structures of Periods I-IV, appears to have been largely abandoned. The outer manorial ditched boundary, to the west, was eventually abandoned and its line marked by a small gully or fence.

Period VI

The final period of occupation was marked by the abandonment and decay of the manor house during the early 15th century. A smithy made use of the ruins for a short while and thereafter the whole area

reverted to pasture.

References:

- Boddington A., 1979. Excavations at Raunds 1977-78: An Interim Account, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 14, 1979, 97-100.
Boddington A. and Cadman G., 1981. Raunds an Interim Report on Excavations 1977-80 in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 2, ed. D. Brown, J. Cambell, and S. C. Hawkes, BAR Brit. Ser. 92, 103-121.



Raunds 1981/2: 11th century structures — upright posts stood in the continuous trenches. Earlier enclosure ditch in foreground cuts Building 'G'.

Northampton

John H. Williams, Northampton Development Corporation Archaeological Unit

Excavations have been continuing throughout the spring and summer to the east of St. Peter's Church, Northampton, to the north and east of the areas investigated from 1973 onwards. Because of the exciting discoveries the area under investigation is now three times the size of that originally intended. Three Middle Saxon mortar mixers had been found in 1973/4 and two more were uncovered in 1981/2 and in these latter excavations immediately east of St. Peter's the west end of a Middle Saxon stone building was revealed. The latest excavations were designed to discover the plan and purpose of this building for structures of this date are extremely rare. Indeed the foundations prompting the investigation turned out to be merely those of a small room added on to a massive stone hall 11.5m. wide by at least 26.5m. long set on an east-west axis. The foundations, extremely well laid, were 1.20m. wide by 0.70m. deep. this was truly a very substantial structure. It appears to have been robbed out in the 10th century and if it was constructed with the aid of the mortar mixers as seems likely belongs to the 8th century. In which case it is probably part of the postulated minster complex at

St. Peter's although it could possibly be a royal or lordly hall. It is hoped that the present work on the east end of the building will help to clarify this. Whatever its precise purpose the massive structure clearly marks Northampton out as a site of some importance in the Middle Saxon period.

Underneath the stone structure is a complex of timber buildings of post-in-slot construction. These can only be detected by faint textural and colour changes in the soil and at the time of writing no complete buildings have been identified but the structures probably date to the 7th century possibly earlier.

Excavations have also begun on a small site to the west of St. Peter's. Again amongst the disturbances caused by Medieval pits there appear to be traces of a Middle Saxon timber building.

The work in the area has generated a vast amount of public interest. An open day at the end of April attracted over 3,000 people — guided tours of the site were given and St. Peter's Church was also open. It is most gratifying to see this enthusiastic response.

Making a Mould of a Saxon Mortar Mixer

D. E. Friendship-Taylor, Keeper of Conservation, Northampton Museums

Very early in 1981 the excavations at St. Peter's Street, Northampton, directed by John Williams and Michael Shaw (Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit) produced two further Saxon mortar mixers. It was decided to record one of these by making a mould from which a cast could be made at a later date if required.

There had been some post-construction damage to the mixer, especially to the edge and several holes had been made through it, but the original central post hole and the impressions made by the paddles in the setting mortar were clearly visible. The later disturbances had turned the

originally circular mixer into an irregular square feature, 1.85m. by 1.75m., to a depth of 15cm.

January-February could not be expected to provide the optimum conditions for carrying out such an operation, especially as there was some urgency to complete the mould, but, in the event, the weather was reasonably good and the damp conditions both hindered and assisted respective stages.

The first requirement was to give some strength to the mortar, a very sandy and crumbly mix. This was effected by applying several coats of dilute polyvinyl acetate emulsion. Being an emulsion, it was



A view of the excavation of the large stone building to the east of St. Peter's Church.

absorbed well by the damp mortar mix and it has the advantage of setting reasonably quickly in damp conditions.

A liquid sealer, a solution of cellulose acetate, was then applied, followed by a liquid release agent, a polyvinyl acetate solution to ensure that the mould would part company from the master when completed.

The first layer of the mould itself was the gelcoat, a slightly flexible, water-resistant resin, which faithfully assumed the features of the surface of the mortar mixer.

Once the gelcoat had cured, but was tacky, the final stage was carried out, of laying-up glassfibre in the form of chopped strand mat, with a polyester resin. A liberal amount of resin was brushed over the gelcoat and the glassfibre, cut into convenient-sized pieces, laid on and pressed and moulded to shape, using a brush in a stippling action. The wet resin dissolves the binder that holds the glass strands together, allowing the glassfibre to be shaped easily.

This process was repeated twice, each layer being thoroughly wetted out before

the next application was made. Damp, cool conditions assisted at this stage, because, although the resin was prepared for use in fairly small batches, it was still a race against time to use it before it hardened. On the other hand, progress was retarded in the early stages by the damp atmosphere, which slowed down the drying of the polyvinyl acetate, sealer and release agent.

Separation of the mould from the mortar mixer was effected by cutting it away around the edge and rocking it loose, so that it could be lifted free.

The materials used were chosen because they would create an accurate, strong, long-lasting and portable mould. It was possible to make the mould fairly rigid as there were no appreciable under-cuts and the slight flexibility of the gelcoat was sufficient to compensate for the very slight undercutting in one or two places.

I should like to record the helpful and friendly interest shown by Trylon Ltd., of Wollaston, who gave useful advice and encouragement.



Work progressing with the mould of the mortar mixer.

Letter from the Secretary

Sue Phillips

This year the Annual General Meeting and reports on the county's archaeology was held on a weekday evening, by way of an experiment. It proved a successful alteration and the meeting held at Long Buckby Rugby Club was well attended and enjoyed by all. David Hall and Alan Hannan, both well known in the county, were the main speakers, and a 'surprise' speaker, none other than the very 'Reverend Rose', who last spoke to the Northamptonshire Antiquarian Society in 1868 gave the very same lecture (only somewhat edited) complete with slides illustrating the Northampton of that period. Many thanks to Paul Woodfield for nobly donning very convincing whiskers and costume to achieve a splendid effect. Brian Giggins was the discoverer of this forgotten lecture, and he also kindly provided the slides of many old buildings long since vanished from Northampton. Grateful thanks also to Frances Williams, Lesley Fairey and Liz Friendship-Taylor for providing the sandwiches for this event.

The lecture programme for 1982-3 is extremely varied and includes some distinguished speakers. Thanks are due once again to Frances Williams for handling all the arrangements for these. Any comments on lectures or requests for

particular speakers or subjects are always welcome. The society's aim is to provide a programme that caters for all our members' interests.

The N.A.S. journal has achieved a high academic reputation, for which Tony Brown in his joint role of treasurer/editor is largely responsible. To manage the financial affairs of the society and also edit and arrange for the printing of the journal is no mean feat and is beset with problems and set backs. Tony deserves the highest praise in accomplishing this task and still retaining his sanity.

May I ask you to support us at our next social event. We have been fortunate in obtaining the Nene Consort, led by Dr. Richard Coles. The Consort specialises in playing medieval music on instruments of the period. This will take place by kind permission of Mr. Terry in the Northampton Museum, Guildhall Road, Northampton, on October 9th 1982. Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome, members and friends, a social evening has become a regular feature in our calendar and has the added advantage of providing some extra revenue to our funds.

For further details about the society contact Mrs. S. Phillips, 16 Blandford Avenue, Kettering, Northants.

The Deer Parks of Brigstock: a Long Term Archaeological Survey

P. Foster, B. Bellamy, and G. Johnston, Northamptonshire Field Group.

In the beginning:-

Within the parish of Brigstock were two Royal Medieval deer parks, the Great and Little Parks, which covered an area of 2237 acres. The Great Park is the older of the two being first mentioned in 1228; the Little Park was created in 1348 for Queen Philippa and is sometimes known as the "Queens Park". Because disparking did not begin until 1610 they escaped intensive medieval agriculture. This condition has led to a greater survival of features of the ancient landscape than is normally encountered, with many fields showing

earthworks still standing to some significant height. A notable example is the ring work published by C. Taylor in the Ancient Monuments Survey. This earthwork was ploughed for the first time in many years, in 1978, and Burl Bellamy collected fragments of Iron Age pottery from the plough soil, bringing them to the attention of Dennis Jackson of the Archaeological Unit.

Standing earthworks of Iron Age date in Northamptonshire are rare and valuable, and it was therefore decided by the Unit to excavate part of the monument before

ploughing could do too much damage to the, hopefully, preserved occupation layers. Half of the ring work was excavated by Dennis Jackson with help from members of the Northants Field Group who became interested in the Park area as an important archaeological landscape. It was decided to conduct a field survey in depth within the deer parks and adjoining woodlands. Combined with documentary research and some selected excavation work it was hoped to obtain a landscape history up to the present day. All effort was channelled into helping with the second excavation the ring work in 1981, then the field work began on a regular basis.

The density of sites and the wide range of dates obtained from the surface material was an immediate surprise, and when Glen Foard began to fly over the area regularly it became clear that although the geology

was of boulder clay the sites found on the ground could be pinpointed and given shape by well defined soil marks. In the six months since November 1981 the available arable fields (approximately ⅓ of the Great Park) has been walked thoroughly and has produced material dating from the Mesolithic onwards, in a density comparable with that of local gravel terraces. At present there appears to be an artifact gap from the Middle Saxon period to the 13th century AD which cannot yet be explained. The 13th Century sees the appearance of park lodges and charcoal burning.

It is hoped that evidence of this early landscape can be further traced into the woodlands abutting the parks. already some banks and mounds have been found in this area where survival should be at its maximum.

Book Review

Fengate by Francis Pryor

(Shire Archaeology 20. Series editor James Dyer). 56 Pages, 17 Figures, 16 Plates. Shire Publications 1982. Price £1.95.

The most important and interesting archaeological discoveries are not always the glamorous finds which make headlines. Archaeology is, above all, the study of past societies and their development, and the large scale excavations carried out during the past decade by Francis Pryor at Fengate, Peterborough, while uncovering no spectacular monuments or rich artefacts, have revealed a fascinating prehistoric landscape and provided new and immensely valuable insights into the ways in which the early farmers who peopled it adapted to and exploited a particular, changing environment.

This attractively produced booklet in the Shire Archaeology Series contains a well organised and very readable account of these excavations and their results. It is a case-study which demonstrates vividly for the general reader the ways in which the patterns of prehistoric settlement may be studied and understood in a far wider context. Some understanding of the principles of stratigraphy and stratigraphic excavation is assumed but on the whole it is an admirably straightforward, relatively jargon-free introduction to a complex subject.

The author outlines the background of the excavations, beginning with the discoveries by Wyman Abbott in the early years of this century which made the name of Fengate one of the best known in the field of Neolithic studies, and explains the various methods by which the ploughed-out sites were first identified and defined and then excavated. He describes the origins of the fens and the natural resources of the fen margin and then, weaving the archaeological and environmental evidence into a clear narrative, shows how, at various times from the Neolithic period to the Roman Conquest, man fitted into this ecological niche.

The text is illustrated with numerous plans, photographs and drawings. The photographs are of variable standard but are generally informative and include a series of dramatic aerial views of the excavated field systems which complement the plans excellently. Given the intended readership, more use might have been made of reconstruction drawings — the only example, a view of the Iron Age settlement is rather weak — but this is a minor criticism of a work which succeeds very well in fleshing out the sherds, flints and bones in their proper context.

Dr. Helen Bamford

Newnham

John Rigby

The Northamptonshire village of Newnham is a large ancient settlement in the upper Nene valley not far from the source of the river. The earliest datable documentary reference to Newnham is a charter of King Cnut of 1022 A.D. The name also occurs in the documented perambulation of the Badby, Newnham and Dodford boundaries which has been ascribed to a date between 944 A.D. and 1022 A.D. The currently accepted derivation of the village name is the "New" ham or settlement, following the spelling in the two documents quoted.

At the present day the long river rising above Newnham has two accepted names pronounced "Nen" and "Neen", but written as "Nene". Pre-1930 maps show further variations from today's Nene version in the written form of this river name, e.g. Nen, Nin, Nyn. Because of this phonetic uncertainty in transferring a common river name to the written page, it is suggested that the Anglo-Saxon transcription which has reached us as "Newn" is a 10th century attempt to write the vernacular version of the river name. Thus we have, not the "New" settlement but the "Nene" settlement.

Some 5½km south-west of Newnham is Charwelton, an equally ancient settlement, which is mentioned in a charter of 944 A.D. concerning Badby, Dodford and Everdon. This village is over the watershed in the Cherwell valley, not far from the source of the river Cherwell. Both settlements have a close relationship to the known Anglo-Saxon route from Oxford and Banbury north-eastwards to Watling Street near Bannaventa. The name Charwelton is generally accepted as being the settlement on the river Cherwell. Note also that though the modern pronunciations of Charwell and Cherwell are the same, the accepted spellings of place name and river name are not identical.

The use of river names for two important settlements close together on one presumably major 10th century south-west/north-east route would be a logical means to distinguish these villages in respectively the Cherwell and Nene valleys.

Reference: Brown, Key, Orr in *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 12, 1977, pp.155-176.

Help, Help, Help

Upper Nene Archaeological Society
Volunteer help needed for excavations on Roman villa at Piddington on Sundays.
Contact Mrs. D. E. Friendship-Taylor, Northampton Museum, Guildhall Road.
Northampton Museum
Help required in finds' processing etc.
Contact Mr. Moore, Keeper of Archaeology, Northampton Museum as above.
Northampton Development Corporation
Archaeological Unit
Help required in finds processing. Contact Mr. J. H. Williams, Cliftonville House, Bedford Road, Northampton

Calendar

Saturday, October 9th. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY An Evening with the Nene consort at Northampton Museum, Guildhall Road. Further details and tickets available from Mrs. S. Phillips, 16 Blandford Avenue, Kettering and Mrs. D. E. Friendship-Taylor, Northampton Museum.

Friday, October 15th. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Dr. Ian Stead of the British Museum, "Iron Age Burials in Champagne". The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8 p.m.

Friday, October 29th. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Dr. G. Webster, An Aspect of Roman Rural Archaeology. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8 p.m.

Friday, November 12th. Joint meeting NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Mr. G. Jackson-Stops, Architectural Adviser to the National Trust, "Canons Ashby". The Sponne School, Towcester. 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 11th. Upper Nene Archaeological Society Christmas Dinner to be held at the Freemason's Hall, St. George's Avenue, Northampton. Further details from Mrs. D. E. Friendship-Taylor, Northampton Museum.

Friday, January 28th. Joint Meeting NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND PETERBOROUGH MUSEUM SOCIETY. Mr. A. McWhirr, "Roman Cirencester". Peterborough Museum. 8 p.m.

Friday, March 18th. Joint Meeting NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY. Mr. H. Richmond of the Royal Commission, "The Medieval Churches of Northampton". The Humfrey Rooms, Castilian Street, Northampton. 8 p.m.

Please send contributions for the next Northamptonshire Mirror to: Mrs. F. Williams, Plot 306, Froxhill Crescent, Brixworth.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of individual authors as indicated.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



Newsletter and Calendar of the Northamptonshire
Archaeological Society
No. 3 Autumn 1982

Quinton, Site 'E' — 1978-81

R. M. Friendship-Taylor

Excavation at Quinton since Site 'B' was completed has concentrated on a small area to the south, adjoining Site 'A' covering an area 60ft. (13.3m) by 40ft. (12.2m).



Quinton: general view of Site 'E' looking north-west.