

# COLDHARBOUR FARM, AYLESBURY, AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION 1990

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with contributions by

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*In 1987, fieldwalking at Coldharbour Farm, Aylesbury produced a quantity of Saxon grass-tempered ware. A subsequent evaluation excavation in 1990, in the area of the original discovery, failed to locate any further evidence for Saxon occupation but instead revealed an Iron Age settlement of mid Iron Age date, 120m to the south east of the original find, beside the Southcourt Brook. Traces of Romano-British occupation were also recovered along with a second century AD copper alloy appliqué.*

## *Introduction*

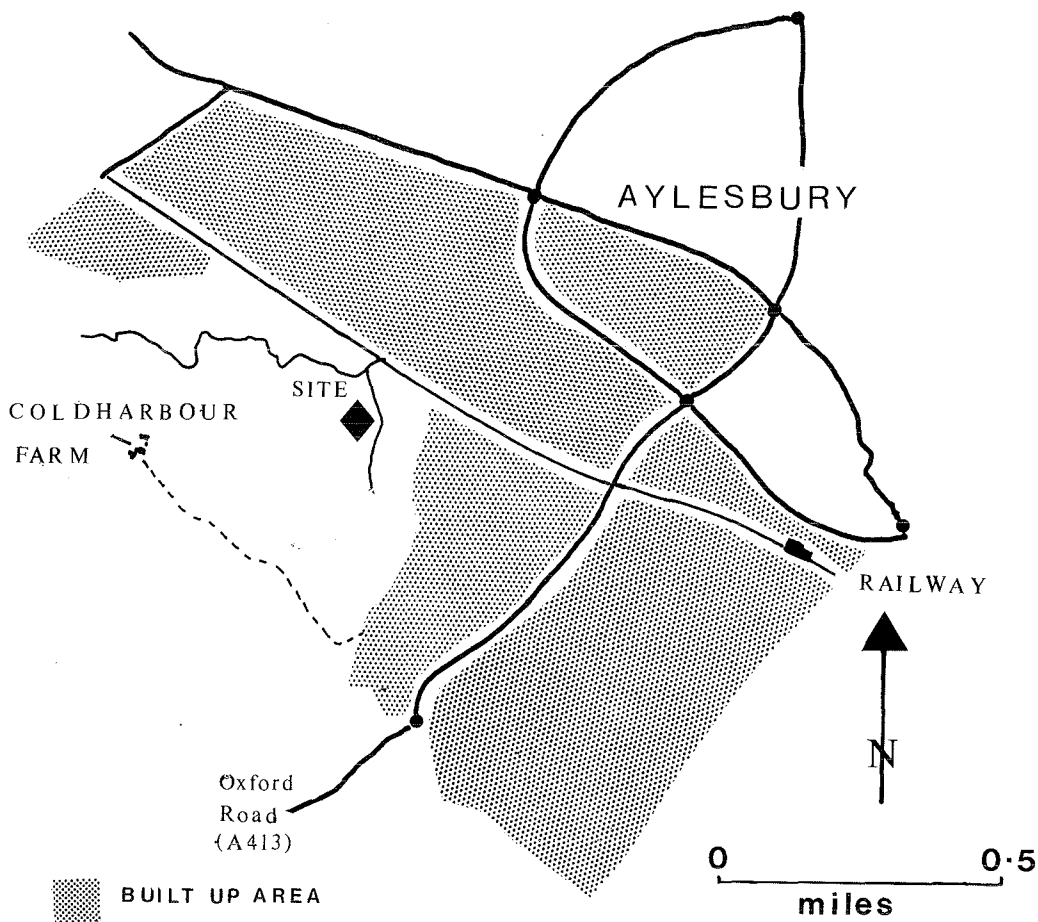
In November 1987 fieldwalking at Coldharbour Farm, on the southern outskirts of Aylesbury (Fig. 1), in a field known as 'Ditchingham field' (NGR SP 80501360) revealed a large quantity of Saxon grass-tempered pottery in the NE corner of the field. The survey was carried out by Hal Dalwood for Buckinghamshire County Museum with an MSC team under the auspices of the Aylesbury Past Project (Appendix 2). Subsequently, prior to development, the Ernest Cook Trust, the owners of the property, provided funds for a three-week trial excavation the results of which are summarised below. This took place in November 1990. Both fieldwalking and excavation records are stored in Buckinghamshire County Museum at CAS 5625. The finds from the fieldwalking and the excavation are accessioned as 306.1987 and 1991.47 respectively. The Museum is grateful to the Ernest Cook Trust for donating the finds. It is intended to accommodate the site of the Iron Age settlement within open land on the new housing estate.

## *The Site*

The site is relatively low lying at the 73m contour above sea level and, apart from a barely perceptible rise in the north east corner

of the field caused by an additional layer of alluvial clay, is otherwise flat. Land drainage has been significantly improved since 1975 by the addition of ditches around the edges of the field and the partial canalization of Southcourt Brook which forms the eastern boundary of the site.

Although the field has for many years been farmed as arable, earlier land use as indicated by snail shell fragments, *Succina* or *Oxyloma* and the *Trichia hispida* group, kindly identified by Dr. M. Robinson, suggests former use as hay meadow (see Appendix 1). An aerial photograph taken in 1950 (BCM ref. 351/4133) indicates faint traces of relict ridge and furrow but nothing else. Between the world wars the field was briefly used as a temporary airfield. In the past 20 years the field has undergone intensive crop rotation of wheat, bean, barley and rape, the most recent crop being wheat. Underneath a layer of topsoil c.0.3m thick, the surface geology, from south west to north east consists of a calcareous boulder clay/mixed drift, the surface of which was heavily scarred by plough marks and mole drains generally aligned NNW – SSE. The chief component of the boulder clay was a sandy clay-with-flints, grading into a chalky clay.



1. Location of Coldharbour Farm site in relation to Aylesbury.

### *The Excavation*

#### *Methodology*

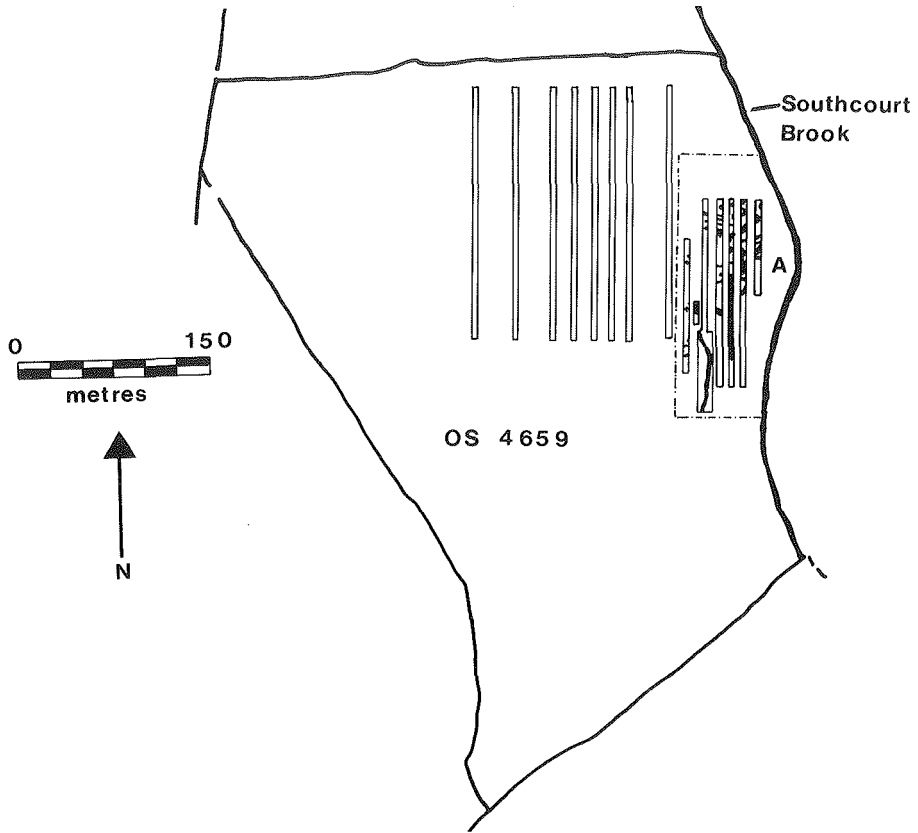
Topsoil was removed by a hydraulic tracked excavator with a 1.37m (4' 6") ditching bucket. Over 2000m of trenching, a single bucket width, was carried out. The trenches, whose co-ordinates were tied into the national grid, were placed either 30m or 15 metres apart (Fig. 2). The first eight, 200m long, were aligned north-south across the area where the original Saxon sherds were recovered (Fig. 7). After the discovery of an Iron Age site in Area A, (Fig. 3) further trenches were arranged to uncover as many outlines of archaeological features as possible in this area, within the limitations of time and resources. Only one feature, a ditch, was subsequently investigated in any detail (context 007, Fig. 4).

All of the excavated topsoil and exposed surfaces were examined by metal detector and these finds recorded under archaeological supervision.

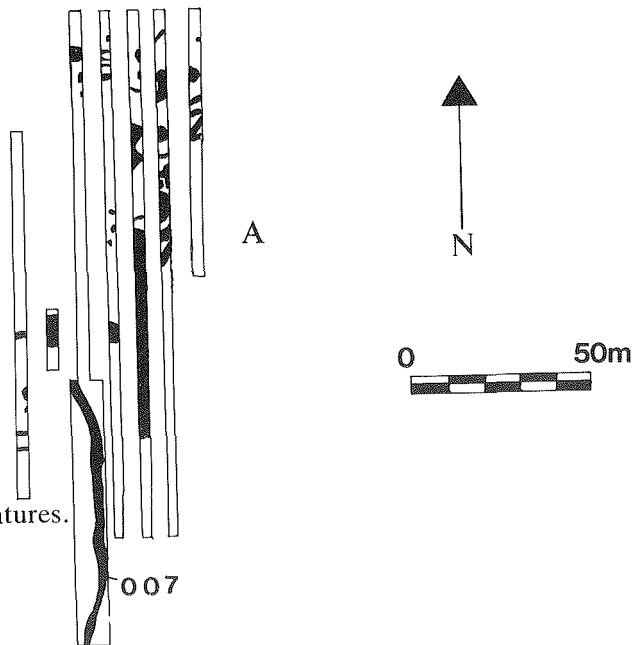
#### *Description of Archaeological features*

The initial results of the first eight trenches (outside area A, Fig. 2) proved disappointing despite the trenches crossing the area of the Saxon pottery scatter (Fig. 7). Only one archaeological feature was observed, a small patch of burnt, oxidised clay – probably the remains of a hearth, measuring 0.30m × 0.30m (context 004, not illustrated). Pottery recovered from this feature was dated to the first century A.D.

In contrast trenching in Area A (Figs. 2 and 3)



2. Location of evaluation trenches in 'Ditchingham' field, Coldharbour Farm, Aylesbury.

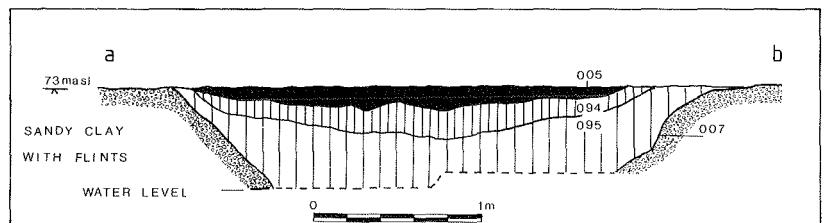
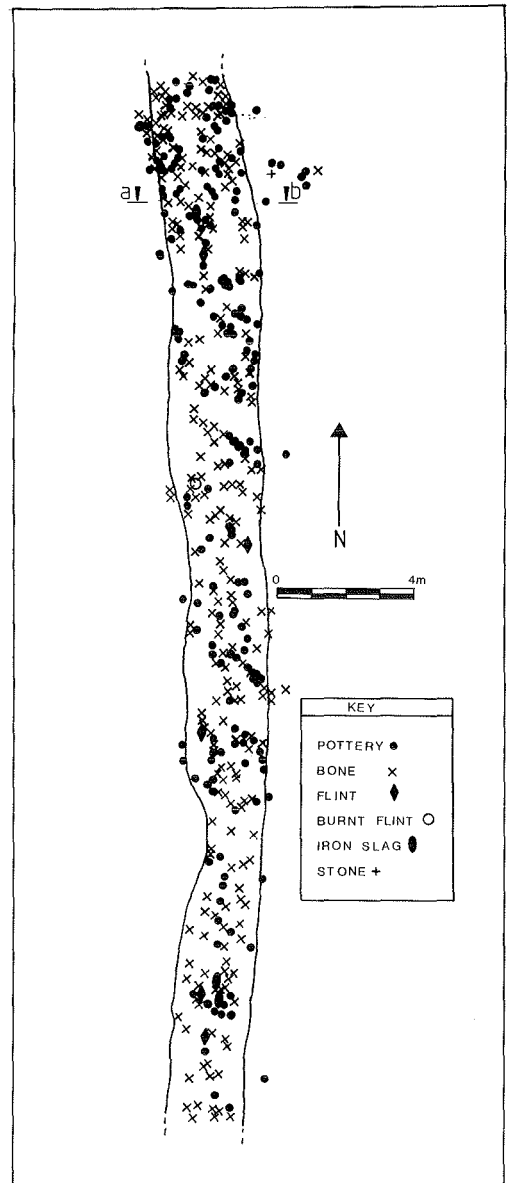


3. Detail of Area A showing main archaeological features.

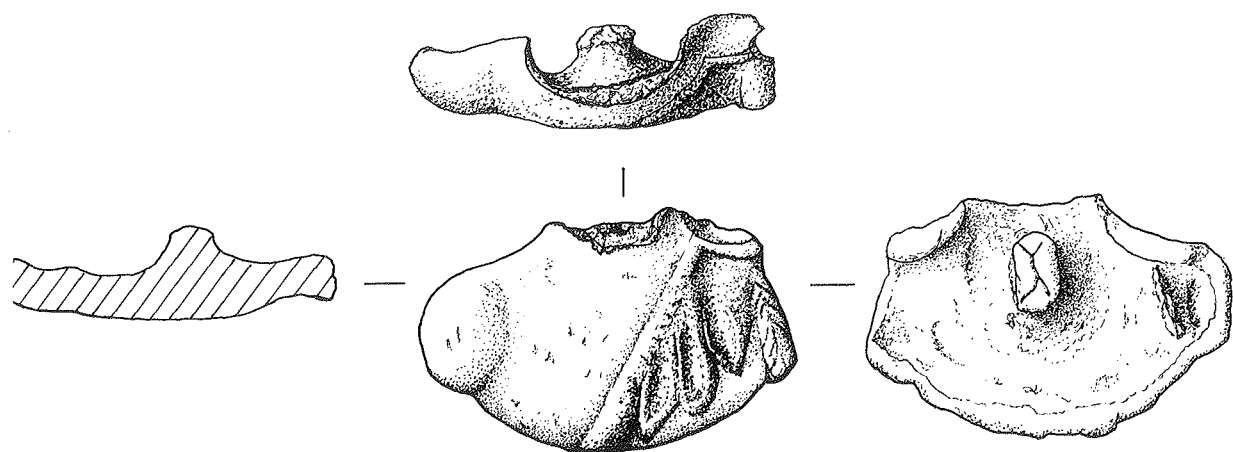
proved more successful. The main feature was a large ditch of unknown length described below. The majority of the remaining features, which received only a brief examination, were distinguished by a dark 'occupation' fill usually containing flecks of charcoal. It was these fills that contained the bulk of the finds, consisting primarily of pottery and bone. There were also occasional fragments of burnt limestone. In some areas this occupation material spread over several features, obscuring the edges. Many of the features within Area A, which included ditches, gulleys, pits and possible post holes dug into a chalky calcareous boulder clay near the Southcourt brook, were in their turn partly covered by a thin layer of alluvial clay 0.2m thick (context 006). It was this layer which caused the NE corner to be slightly raised above an otherwise flat and uniform topography.

Owing to the limitations of trial trenching it was difficult to interpret the arrangement of the features exposed but it appears that not all were in use at the same time, as many cut each other. It is also probable that owing to the varied nature of the underlying geology not all were detected in the limited investigations carried out. The surfaces of many features had been disturbed by ploughing and mole drains. The extent of the damage had however been partly reduced by the overlying thin layer of alluvial clay. The junction between this alluvial clay and the topsoil was lost due to the machining.

The only feature investigated in any detail was a large ditch, probably a boundary ditch aligned N - S, (007) with associated fills 005, 094, 095 (Figs. 3 and 4). A 75m length of this ditch was exposed. All of the surface finds from its uppermost fill were planned to see if any specific distribution patterns emerged. The plotted finds, including animal bones and pottery showed up as a series of clusters indicating the possibility of midden dumps within the ditch (see Fig. 4a). Where sectioned (Fig. 4b) it was 2.70m wide and approximately



4. Plan of part of Iron Age ditch (007) showing surface finds, and section.



### 5. Romano-British copper-alloy appliqué (scale 1:1).

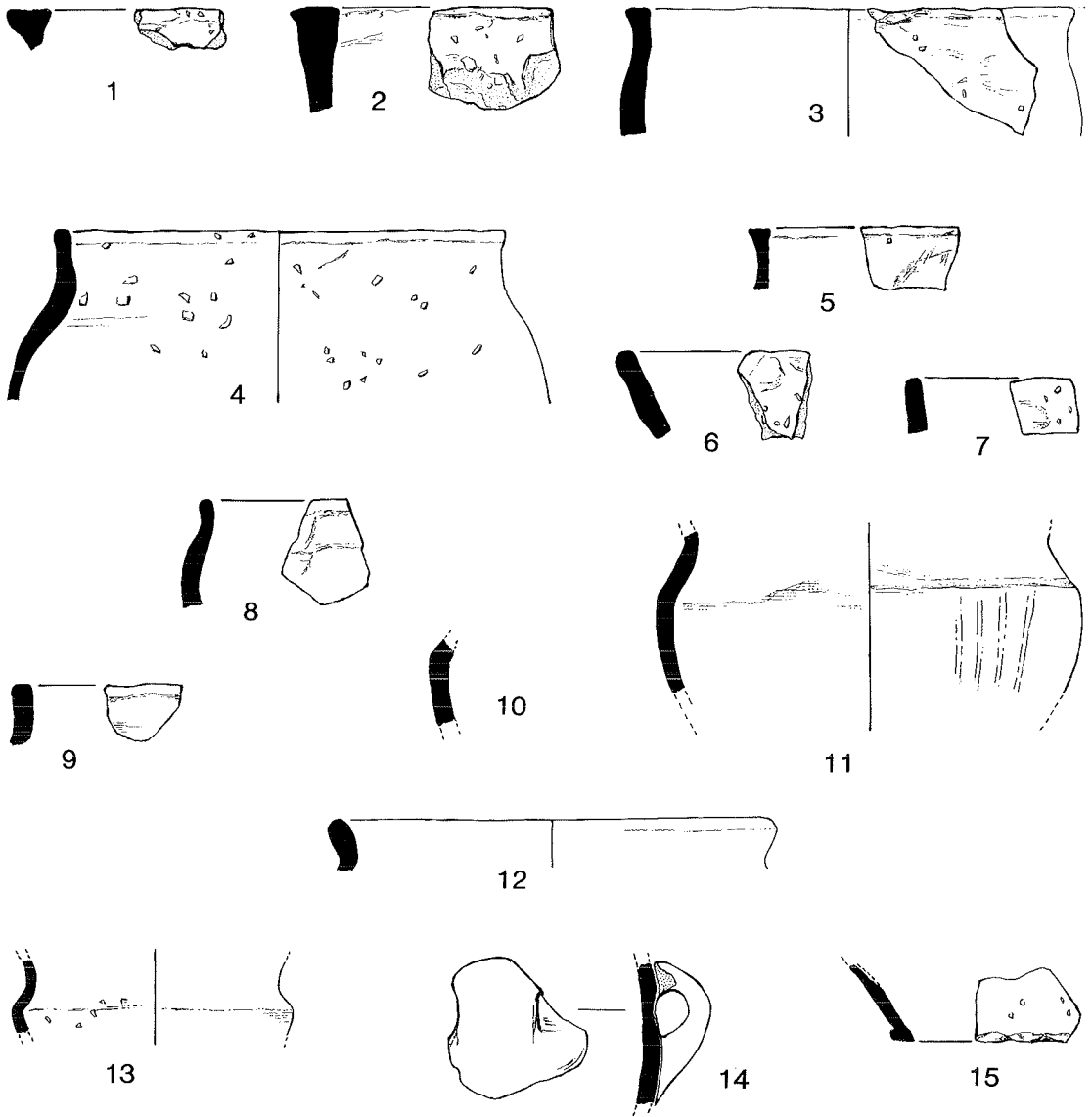
1.60m deep. It probably had a 'V' shaped profile. A high water level prevented more accurate measurements of its depth. The bulk of the finds, consisting mainly of Iron Age pottery and animal bone, were concentrated in its uppermost fill. One small section was excavated. The fills are described below, in descending order. The uppermost fill (005) consisted of a dark occupation deposit reaching a maximum width of 2.60m wide in places and 0.15m thick. The surface of this deposit was heavily scarred by ploughing and mole drains, resulting in some of the pottery and bone contained within it being displaced outside the ditch area (Fig. 4a). According to Dr. M. Robinson (pers. comm.), the upper fill consisted of a reworked boulder clay with charcoal flecking. It contained large quantities of midden material dumped perhaps with the deliberate aim of backfilling it. Finds consisted of mid Iron Age sherds including a lug handle (Fig. 6, no. 14), and animal bone. The latter included bones of cattle, horse, sheep and pig. Other finds included worked flint, iron slag, fragments of a ?loom weight, a piece of ?quernstone, and a piece of burnt flint. The layer beneath the midden material (094) consisted of a grey/brown silty clay approximately 0.2m thick with charcoal flecks and traces of rootlets. This deposit also contained sherds of mid Iron Age pottery and animal bone, including a bovine jaw. The lowest deposit examined consisted of a sterile light grey sandy

clay with gravel lenses and iron oxide staining (095), but this was not fully excavated owing to the high water level.

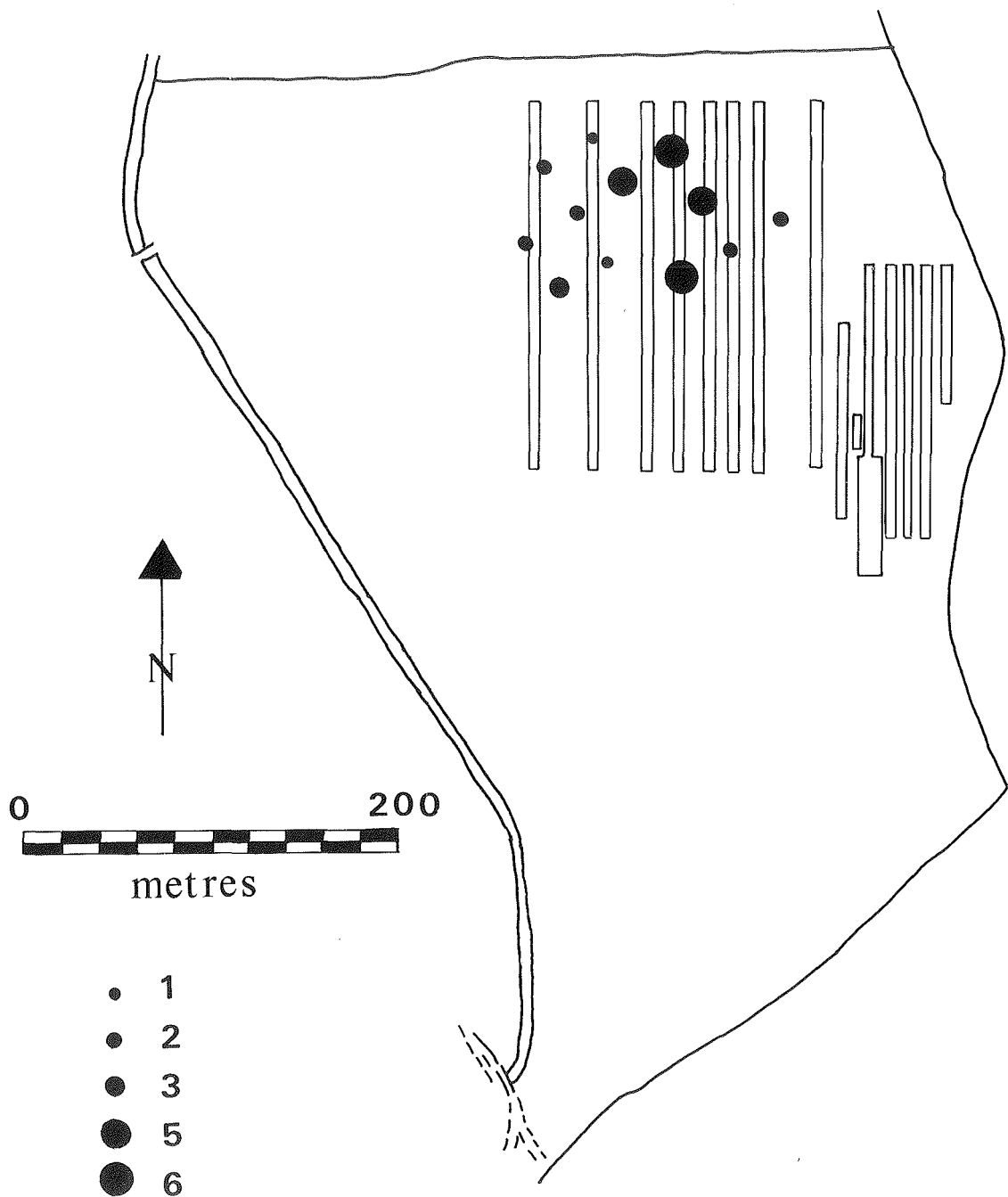
#### *Discussion*

The archaeological excavation yielded quite different results to those achieved by the previous field walking survey (see Appendix 2). The discovery of 37 sherds of seventh-century Saxon pottery in the NE corner of the field raised expectations that structural evidence for a Saxon site of some nature might be present. The evaluation however yielded no trace of structures of this period, although a further seven sherds of Saxon grass-tempered pottery were discovered during topsoil stripping. The character of the Saxon activity therefore remains unclear. A single Romano-British feature, a hearth, was revealed and, although not associated, a Romano-British bronze appliqué. Unexpectedly, a substantial Iron Age site was discovered approximately 120m SE of the initial find.

The bulk of the evidence from the Iron Age site consisted of ditches, pits and possible post holes, many of which contained a midden-like material consisting of quantities of pottery and animal bone. Other finds of the period included a possible loom weight and quernstone fragment. A possible boundary ditch (007), contained waterborne sediments indicating that it had free flowing water in the bottom at



6. Iron Age Pottery (scale 1:3).



7. Location of Saxon grass-tempered pottery recovered during fieldwalking at Coldharbour Farm in relation to assessment trenches. Density of sherds indicated.

least during the early stages of use. The evidence indicates a mid Iron Age settlement based on an agricultural economy as suggested by the presence of horse, cattle, pig and sheep. Other activities present may include weaving and grain milling.

The location of the settlement was probably influenced by the adjacent brook to the east. It is possible that flooding may well have caused the eventual abandonment but not before many of the features had been filled in with midden deposits. Since the site lies on a clay subsoil it may have operated a different agricultural economy to that of the more fully studied sites in the region based on the sand/gravel deposit of the Thames. The good preservation of animal bones and the presence of a high water table promises good preservation of organic material and makes it a site with considerable potential for further investigation.

#### *The Finds*

Finds are listed below according to material. Only the Iron Age pottery, animal bone and a copper alloy appliqué of Romano-British date have been studied in detail. The metalwork came from topsoil and was recovered by metal detectors, under archaeological supervision.

##### *Iron* (not illustrated)

Five horseshoes, one medieval, various bolts/pins from possible agricultural machinery fittings, five nails.

##### *Copper Alloy* (unillustrated apart from no 1)

1. Copper alloy fitting (Fig. 5). *Dr. Martin Henig writes as follows:*

'This is the lower part of a heavily leaded bronze appliqué originally affixed by means of an iron rivet to a casket or piece of furniture. Dimensions 47mm × 33mm × 5mm, Weight 42.8g. It portrays the shoulders and chest of a youthful male figure, wearing an animal pelt over his left shoulder. Though the head is missing, (possibly broken off in antiquity), this *nebris* identifies him as a satyr or possibly as Bacchus himself.

Comparison may be made with three similar but complete bronzes respectively from Tar-

rant Hinton, Dorset (information from the excavator, Mr. A.G. Giles), from Gloucester (Corinium Museum inv. B.760, publication forthcoming) and from Littlecote, Wilts (Henig in Walters 1988, 409-10, Fig. 5) which portray Bacchic figures wearing *nebrides*. I interpret the first two as satyrs and the last, by virtue of his elaborate head-dress, with the wine-god, Bacchus, himself. Also note another youthful bust with both shoulders bare, from the Grantham area in Lincolnshire, published as Venus but also clearly Bacchus or a satyr (Ambrose 1980). A date in the second century AD is probable.'

##### Other copper-alloy finds included:

Fragment of a decorated strap, possibly a fitting, decorated with a central row of ring and dot ornament within a border of paired parallel lines. Very worn, date uncertain, perhaps Iron Age; a coin, badly corroded, possibly ?Roman; a post-medieval buckle, good condition, c. seventeenth century; a large dome-headed stud. c. nineteenth – twentieth century; a gas mantle cover/hood. c. nineteenth – twentieth century; three ?tokens (illegible).

##### *Lead*

Miscellaneous scraps of sheet lead and two musket balls. Surface marks on the musket balls indicate that they had been fired.

##### *Flint*

All of the flintwork recorded below was from context 005 – the dark occupation fill of the boundary ditch 007. Retouched flake, ?Neolithic (SF no. 610); retouched flake, ?Neolithic (SF no. 679); worked flake, ?Neolithic. (SF no. 985). One fragment of burnt flint (SF no. 759).

##### *Stone*

One small fragment of non-local stone, possibly a quernstone fragment, of ironstone conglomerate; there are no measurable edges (503 SF 853). Possibly from the Lower Greensand Series of the Jurassic. From context 005, dark occupation deposit, upper fill of boundary ditch 007. (Material kindly identified by Ms K.M. Rowland, Keeper of Biology and Geology, Buckinghamshire County Museum).



### Slag

Three fragments of ?iron slag and one fragment of green-coloured slag. From context 005, upper fill of boundary ditch 007

### Ceramic objects: other than pottery

Possible loom weight fragment (triangular type) with traces of hole, contains macroscopic burnt flint fragments (SF No. 787). From context 005, upper fill of boundary ditch 007. No measurable edges, not illustrated.

### Ceramics: Pottery

#### 1. Prehistoric:

#### The Iron Age Pottery

by Michael Farley

Some 230 sherds of Iron Age date were recovered from the site, mainly from surface cleaning of features. The upper layer (005) of the main ditch (007) produced the bulk of this material. Its distribution is plotted on Fig. 4. In general the pottery was fragmentary and consisted principally of body sherds. Rims of eleven vessels were present from contexts 007 (upper fill 005), 094 and 111.

The sherds, excluding a few from topsoil deposits, were grouped by fabric after examination under  $\times 10$  magnification, and classified according to the principal inclusions as follows:

Fabric	No. of Sherds	%
Quartz	115	50
Shell	85	39
Other	14	5
Unidentified	16	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	230	100

Half of the sherds had a quartz temper, the remainder were mainly shell tempered. Other fabrics present included quartz/shell (one sherd), quartz/grog (one sherd), quartz/sandstone (one sherd), quartz/feldspar (one sherd), feldspar (three sherds), feldspar/flint (two sherds), flint (two sherds), vegetable (two sherds), grog/sandstone (one sherd). The quartz grits were mainly small and rounded, often abundant, varying from clear to opaque to iron stained. One sherd amongst the shell

tempered wares contained a fragment of a fossil serpulid worm tube colony of a type that has been found in the Mesozoic clays of the Vale of Aylesbury (information kindly supplied by Dr. M.J. Oates) The presence of calcite worm tubes in the pottery indicates that no great temperature was achieved during the firing of the pottery and suggests that the shell was derived from fossil rather than fresh material.

All of the illustratable sherds are shown on Fig. 6, grouped by fabric. The majority are in a reduced fabric. The only decoration present is a small oval depression on one sherd in shelly fabric (not illustrated), and another with vertical striations (Fig. 6, 11). There is a broad consistency between vessel and fabric although the range of types present is limited.

In view of the presence of Saxon material elsewhere on the site and the limitations of comparative local material, there was initial uncertainty over the dating of the material. However that the sherds are Iron Age rather than early Saxon is demonstrated by the lug handle, by the vertical striations on Fig. 6, 11, and by the substantial presence of shelly fabrics not apparent on local Saxon sites (e.g. Dalwood *et al.* 1989; Farley 1976).

Closer definition of date is difficult. Small assemblages of Iron Age pottery have been recorded locally at Walton; the Prebendal, Aylesbury; George Street, Aylesbury; Bier-ton; Walton Court, Aylesbury; and Woodham. Perhaps the most notable feature of the Coldharbour material is the absence of substantial quantities of the flint gritted fabrics dominant on early Chiltern sites such as Ivinghoe Beacon (Cotton and Frere 1968) and Ellesborough (Cocks 1909). That flint gritted material is also present among assemblages in the immediate locality can be seen at the Prebendal and at George Street in Aylesbury, both of which are thought to be earlier Iron Age. Flint gritted fabrics were not present at Woodham, a Vale of Aylesbury site thought to be middle Iron Age, where quartz fabrics were dominant, provisionally dated to around the fourth century BC, (Farley *et al.* in Catherall *et al.* 1984). The Coldharbour shell tempered 'horizon' may therefore indicate an unrecognised ceramic

tradition occupying a horizon post-flint-grit, but pre-dating the late Iron Age 'grog-tempered' wares represented for example at Berton, and perhaps like Woodham may be of mid-Iron Age date.

#### *Catalogue of Illustrated Sherds (Fig.6)*

All are rims unless stated, and all from feature 007, the ditch, except no. 4.

SF = small find number, other numbers = context numbers.

#### *1. Iron Age*

##### *Shelly Fabric:*

1. Flattened, squared, mid grey fab., orange/buff surface. SF968.
2. Slightly flattened, squared, mid/dark grey fab., slightly oxidised surface. SF410.
3. Everted with shoulder. There is a suggestion of fingering on top. Mid to dark grey fab. SF638.
4. Upright form and shouldered, mid to dark grey fab. SF413, 110/111.
5. Upright with a flattened, squared, dark grey fab. with ?oxidised interior and exterior surface. 110/111.
6. Simple upright, mid/dark grey fab. with oxidised surface. Layer 094 within 007.
7. Upright simple, dark reddish brown fab. SF523.

##### *Quartz:*

8. Upright stubby with shoulder, dark grey fab. SF594.
9. Upright stubby, dark reddish brown fab. with reduced surface. SF409.
10. Shoulder of same? Smoother finish near the top, on the turn of the vessel, dark grey fab., interior surface oxidised. SF818.
11. Shoulder of similar vessel with vertical striations, dark/mid grey fab. 005.
12. Everted beaded, dark/mid grey fab. with partially oxidised surfaces. SF766.
13. Sherd of ?shouldered bowl, possibly burnished, light/mid grey fab. SF935.
14. Lug handle, mid/dark grey fab., some oxidation on the exterior surface. 005.
15. Base, mid/dark grey fab., some iron staining on exterior surface. SF802.

#### *2. Roman:*

Two fragments of rouletted jar, grey fabric and one fragment of mortarium base, first century AD (SF No. 408), from small hearth? Context 004.

#### *3. Saxon:*

Seven sherds of seventh-century 'grass tempered'

pottery similar to the thirty-seven sherds recovered by fieldwalking in 1988 (see Appendix 2). Topsoil.

#### *4. Medieval:*

One handle, three body sherds of a late medieval, Brill type jug. Topsoil

#### *Miscellaneous*

Other finds, mostly post-medieval, included bottle glass, nineteenth-century glazed ceramics, and a clay pipe bowl c. mid eighteenth century, oyster shell and animal bone. All were recovered from topsoil.

#### *The Animal Bone from the Iron Age Ditch by Peta Sadler*

Three hundred and fifty-one bone fragments from the Iron Age ditch (context 007) were examined, of which 155 were identified. The 81 unidentified cattle-sized fragments included 18 rib and vertebra fragments, the 92 sheep-sized unidentified fragments included 6 rib and vertebra fragments and there were 8 small-sized ribs and 15 fragments.

Much of the bone had etching on the surface, probably caused by plant roots. This made the identification of gnawing difficult in many cases, but it was not severe enough to obliterate other signs such as cut marks. Apart from this, the bone was in very good condition and even foetal bone had survived both burial and retrieval. Contributory factors may be the general non-acidic nature of the soils plus the presence of a clay sub-surface geology which has acted as a 'cushion' for the more fragile bone.

Table 1 shows that 46% of the total identified bone is from sheep, 41% from cattle, 8% from horse and 5% is pig.

#### *Cattle*

All parts of the skeleton are represented, as would be expected on a site of this period. Using both the dental evidence and the fusion data from the long bones, a minimum number of five animals can be identified. The ages given are only an estimate as the rate at which animals from this period matured is not known. There is one foetal animal, one less than 1.5 years old, one of about 2 - 2.5 years

Table 1 The identified fragments

	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Pig</i>
Horn core	1			
Cranium	1	1		
Maxilla	1	1		
Mandible	6	5	1	
Hyoid	1	1		
Upper Teeth	8	41		
Lower Teeth	2		41	
Atlas	1			
Axis			1	
Cerv. vert.	2	1		
Lumb. vert.		1		
Scapula	5	2		1
Humerus	3	7	2	1
Radius	4	10	2	1
Ulna	2	2		
Pelvis	3	2		
Sacrum	1			
Femur	1	6		
Tibia	5	15	1	
Astragalus	1		1	1
Calcaneus	6		1	
Tarsal	1			
Metacarpal	3	3		
Metatarsal	2	8		
Metapodial		2		
Phalanx 1	2	2		
Phalanx 2	1			
<i>Total</i>	63	72	13	7

old, one more than 2.5 years and a fifth of about 5 years old.

The only horn core found is not complete and therefore provides little information.

Six examples of butchery marks were observed, two of which were caused by the removal of the lower edge of the mandible. Three parallel lines on the flat surface of a scapula may have been made when the meat was removed. A metatarsal has been chopped or broken in half vertically and there are knife marks across one of these cut edges. There are nine light cut marks on the lower edge of an astragalus most likely made when the animal was skinned.

Only five of the identified bones show signs of gnawing as do two of the unidentified cattle-sized fragments.

An upper  $M^3$  is unevenly worn as though the lower  $M_3$  had been bicuspid. One mandible has a foramen on the lingual surface and there is a circular depression 6mm in diameter in the sulcrus of a radius.

#### *Sheep*

A minimum number of eight animals are represented if both the dental and fusion evidence are taken into account. These are one foetal animal, one of about 6 months, two about 1 year old, one 1.5 years old and three more than 2 years old. Again, these ages are given only as a guide.

Seven of the identified bones had been chewed, as had three of the unidentified fragments. One of these fragments is pathological but is not complete enough to be identified.

One lumbar vertebra had been chopped in half and only the unfused caudal half was found.

*Measurements*

<i>Cattle</i>	M <sub>3</sub>	Length	Width					
		33.1	13.4					
	Radius	BFd						
		57.4						
	Ulna	DPA						
		53.4						
	Tibia	SD	Bd					
		32.2	52.0					
	Astragalus	GL1	GLm	D1	Bd			
		55.6	51.2	31.1	33.3			
<i>Sheep</i>	Calcaneus	GB						
		39.0						
	Tcentral +4	GB						
		47.8						
	Phalanx 2.	GL	Bp	Bd				
		35.9	25.5	20.4				
	Scapula	SLC						
		17.8						
		Humerus	BT	HT	HTC			
		22.6	14.2	11.5				
	24.9	17.0	12.3					
Pelvis	SHPu							
	3.2							
Tibia	SDmin	Bd	Dd					
		10.3	23.4	18.3				
		24.7	18.0					
		22.2	17.1					
		23.5	16.9					
Metatarsal	GL	SD	BFd	Dim	Dil			
	123.8	9.9	20.8	11.5	11.8			
<i>Horse</i>	Axis	LCDe	LAPa	BFcr	BPacd	SBV	BFcd	H
		133.9	108.8	78.2	61.9	44.4	37.0	91.0
	Humerus	Bd						
		74.0						
Astragalus	GH	GB	BFd	LmT				
	51.0	43.0	46.2	50.6				
Calcaneus	GB							
	45.0							
<i>Pig</i>	M <sup>3</sup>	Length	Width					
		34.3	19.9					
	M <sub>3</sub>	Length	Width					
		31.8	14.2					
	Radius	Bp						
25.9								
Astragalus	GL1							
	39.1							

*Horse*

A minimum number of two animals were recognised, one of which could be aged by incisors to between 4.5 and 6.5 years old.

*Pig*

From the seven bones found, the three teeth and the fused proximal radius suggest a minimum number of one animal, a male of more than 1 year old but probably not more than 2.5 years old.

## Conclusion

Preliminary examination of the animal bone from the Iron Age features has yielded the following information. Only two of the minimum number of five cattle may have possibly reached maturity and three of the eight sheep may have been mature. This suggests that the settlement was rich enough in resources to slaughter the animals when young

enough to supply the best quality meat. The proportion of immature sheep would seem to indicate that the sheep were not being kept for a surplus of wool. There is plenty of evidence for mature horse. There were no wild animals present in this sample but because it was so small it would be unwise to draw any firm conclusions.

## APPENDICES

### *Appendix 1 : The Site Environment* by Dr. Mark Robinson

The Iron Age occupation lies on a calcareous boulder clay/mixed drift which ranged from sandy clay with flints to chalky clay. The variable nature of the superficial geology means that it can be difficult to detect man-made features. However it was realised that, unlike the boulder clay, many of the archaeological features contained numerous terrestrial or freshwater Mollusca shell. Some of the archaeological features were observed as a dark occupation deposit comprising reworked boulder clay with fine charcoal fragments. On part of the site the Iron Age features were sealed by a layer of alluvial clay which contained shells of *Succinea/Oxyloma* sp. and *Lymnaea palustris*. The modern plough soil over the alluvium contained shells of *Succinea/Oxyloma* sp. and *Trichia hispida* grp. which would suggest a period of use as a hay meadow prior to cultivation.

Bone survives in a good condition on the site and it can be anticipated that carbonised plant remains are present. The preservation of mollusca shell is good although they will probably only give limited information. The low lying nature of the site means that it is possible that deeper features will prove to be waterlogged, but none has yet been examined.

The significance of this site in terms of its environmental archaeology is that it provides the first opportunity to compare the Iron Age agricultural economy of the Aylesbury Vale with that of the upper Thames gravels, which have already been studied in detail. The importance of this site would be enhanced if waterlogged remains are present.\*

\*Since the site visit by Dr. Mark Robinson on November 7th, the ditch (007) was sectioned (Fig. 4, a/b). It was not possible to reach the bottom of the ditch at this time owing to a rising water level. In response to Dr. Robinson's comment on the possibility of waterlogged deposits the writer would suggest that if the results from the section through the ditch are anything to go by then it may indeed be anticipated that waterlogged remains would be present in some of the deeper features of ditch, pits, etc. (Ian J Stewart, April 1991)

### *Appendix 2 : Results of fieldwalking at Coldharbour Farm Saxon Site.* by Hal Dalwood

The Saxon site at Coldharbour Farm was initially located by the recovery of just three sherds of Saxon grass tempered pottery during the course of a non-probabilistic field survey in 1986-8 (Dalwood *et al.* 1988). It has been found elsewhere that even such a low density can indicate presence of a Saxon site (Foard 1978, 364) and therefore part of the field was reworked in a 10m<sup>2</sup> grid, with each square walked by four people. Recovery was much greater, 25× the total quantity of finds from the same area. This was partly due to more intensive walking of the surface during the second fieldwalk, but also the field team were aware of the significance of the second fieldwalk and their perception probably had an influence on the quantity of material recovered. A total of 37 sherds of Saxon pottery were found, mostly distributed in two broad scatters (c. 120m × 30m) aligned in an E-W direction (Fig. 7). In addition 120 sherds of medieval pottery were found in a similarly aligned band (not shown). The Saxon and medieval scatter did not coincide, and their distribution could not readily be interpreted as due to the medieval ridge and furrow recorded on aerial photographs.

It was suggested that the Saxon pottery scatter might coincide with subsoil geological features such as a gravel terrace islet associated with the nearby Southcourt Brook (*ibid*). It was uncertain however that the Saxon pottery distribution related to underlying Saxon features. At Odell (Beds) Saxon pottery scatters recovered by fieldwalking were subsequently excavated (Dix 1980) but although pottery did occur in the vicinity, there was no direct connection between the pottery distribution in the ploughsoil and the underlying features (B. Dix pers. comm.).

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