W. G. Hoskins

Local history in ENGLAND

SECOND EDITION

Longman

3 *The Old Community*

There is no necessity for local historians to start their studies of places at the beginning, especially as this usually involves wrestling with the relevant entry in Domesday Book which is by no means an easy document to understand. Further, it means that one then goes on immediately into the obscure and difficult period of the medieval centuries. One may become bogged down in more or less unrelated detail and discouraged in the early stages. There is a great deal to be said for studying the history of a place backwards, that is, beginning with the most recent period. I need hardly say that one would not write the finished history in this way.

In one of his books Eric Gill says:

> The men and women of the nineteenth century witnessed the destruction of a world, a material world as old as man himself. Up to the nineteenth century . . . men had depended on their own exertions to win a living from the earth. . . . This world, a world dependent upon human muscular power, the muscular power of draught animals, was a product of many thousands of years of development. It was not a primitive world, it was not an uncivilised world, above all it was not an uncultured world. All the primary needs of humanity, material and spiritual, were met and met adequately . . . it was a hand-made world throughout, a slow world, a world without power, a world in which all things were made one by one.

It is this largely self-contained world, in which local communities were still mainly self-sufficient, that the local historian might well begin by reconstructing.

In other words, he should concern himself with recreating a community which in most places has largely disintegrated. This is

not true, of course, of big towns, but it is largely true of the majority of country towns and villages throughout England. There is a simple test of the truth of this statement: if one looks at the census figures for 1851 and those for 1951 one will generally find—away from the neighbourhood of large towns—that the population of most country towns and parishes has fallen during the century, sometimes by as much as half. At the best they may be stagnating.

In this old community, which takes us back perhaps a hundred years, there was a sense of place, of belonging somewhere. There was also a much greater sense of the family as an institution. 'For a family to maintain itself,' says Lewis Mumford, 'it must have a permanent headquarters, a permanent gathering place.' This is what most families still had in England up to the early nineteenth century, and it is this kind of world that the local historian might well seek to re-create as a start.

Local directories

I shall suppose that he or she is concerned with the village, the parish, or the small town, that is, an area of manageable size. In order to obtain the first picture of such a chosen place, one should go to the old directories of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth. Most local libraries will contain a set of these directories. One should also consult *The Guide to Directories (Excluding London) Published before 1856*, which was published by the Royal Historical Society in 1950. These directories generally give a useful introductory note about the size and site of the place, followed by a list of the principal inhabitants and tradesmen and craftsmen. So we get a partial picture at least of the social and occupational structure of the place throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Some of the most valuable directories of this kind are those published by William White, beginning with Yorkshire in 1831, Nottinghamshire in 1832, Sheffield in 1833, and so on. There will not be anything like an annual series of directories for most places, but this is not necessary for the local historian's purposes. Thus in Devon we have White's Directories for 1850, 1878, and 1890, after which Kelly's Directories took over, the last of these being issued in 1939. From these directories one not only gets a static picture of a place in certain years, but it is also possible to draw some preliminary conclusions about the way the place has changed in the last hundred years or so: for example,

whether its population has declined or risen, or remained more or less stagnant, and whether certain old trades and crafts have died out and when. Directories, then, give us a good start for reconstructing the kind of community which existed over a period of about a hundred years from the 1830s to the 1930s. But it is only a start. In chapter 11 I show how small a sample the earlier directories at least give of the total population, even in truly rural parishes.

Census Schedules

The directories do not give anything like a complete list of the inhabitants of a place. To obtain this one must go to the Public Record Office in London, where are preserved the original census schedules for 1841 and 1851. These are the enumerators' books, compiled as they went from house to house. They list every household, the head of the household and the names of all the others, their relationship to him, their ages, and their occupations. The 1851 schedule also gives the place where everyone was born. Here then we have a complete record of the inhabitants of a place a hundred or so years ago and of all their occupations, and one could almost write a chapter on the conclusions to be drawn from the census schedules and the directory. If one is unable to visit the Public Record Office in person, a letter stating the name of the parish and the county one is interested in will produce an estimate for photographing one or other of these schedules, so that the historian can work upon the photographic copy at home. This is generally not an expensive item, and is certainly cheaper than going to London to copy the original oneself. If it is a matter of choosing between the 1841 or the 1851 schedule, the latter is more desirable as the information it gives about birthplaces is of the greatest value in various ways.

The 1861 enumerators' schedules are now available to public inspection under the hundred-year rule as to secrecy, but their physical condition is much inferior to those for 1841 and 1851. Many volumes are too damaged to be produced for readers. Others, says Professor Beresford, seem to be missing altogether. Somerset House has a lamentable reputation as a custodian of public records.*

* M. W. Beresford, *The Unprinted Census Returns of 1841, 1851, 1861 for England and Wales* (Phillimores Handbooks, 1966). Beresford also shows how one can write the social history of a road or a street, or a whole area, even in a large town like Leeds, from these records.

Census reports, 1801–1971

One should obtain from the printed census reports the population figures for the parish or town for every census from 1801, when these figures begin.† The trend of population exposed by these ten-yearly figures may well reveal to the local historian one of the basic problems he should be concerned with for that period. If, for example, he finds that the population of his chosen place has halved since 1851 he must seek to find out what has happened to bring about this dramatic fall in population and then to trace the consequences of this fall.

These three classes of record alone will give the local historian a great deal to go on with. In considering the 1851 census schedule, for example, he might well work out how many of the families who were living in the place in that year are still living there today. He might also work out how many of the heads of families in 1851 were born in that parish or in an adjoining parish. This is not just an antiquarian detail, but may be a fact of considerable sociological significance. A village in which the great majority of people have been born and have married within the parish will be an infinitely more closely knit society, and much more difficult to disintegrate, than a place in which the majority of people have come in from some distance away. In other words, the proportion of people born in the place in which they are living is a measure of the strength of the social cement that holds the community together. One might also study, though this is rather more tedious, the interrelationships of village families with the aid of these records and of the parish registers. Some communities are much more strongly interrelated than others. I remember a Leicestershire woman some thirty years ago telling me that when she got married she immediately became related to every other family in the village. This close interrelationship has its personal disadvantages, but it is certainly also a powerful cement which binds together the local society.

To pursue the same theme, though it takes us well back before the nineteenth century, one ought also to study the longevity of families in a parish—how many families last for a hundred years, two hundred years, three hundred years, and so on, and what is the rate at which families tend to disappear? One could do this with the aid of the parish registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials, and

† Here the local historian will find useful *A Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain in the Years 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831*, published as a parliamentary paper in 1831.

of the fuller taxation returns, and of certain manorial records where they exist. It is a popular delusion that families in the past tended to stay rooted in the same spot for centuries on end. A few did, especially if they were small freeholders, but the majority of families seem to have moved about from century to century to a much greater degree than we generally believe. They did not move far, mostly within a radius of ten miles perhaps, but they rarely lasted more than a hundred years in one place. It is not always easy to trace the movements of these lesser families who have no records of their own, but I have given some suggestions about the kind of records one should use for this purpose in Chapter 11, on The Homes of Family Names.

Old newspapers

Another valuable source for the reconstruction of the old community is that provided by newspapers. These are obviously more likely to exist in the larger towns, but sometimes quite small places possessed their own newspapers in the early nineteenth century and these should be sought out as an invaluable mine of local material. Many people will know *News of a Country Town*, compiled by James Townsend and published in 1914. This gives a picture of a little Berkshire town (Abingdon) drawn from Jackson's *Oxford Journal* over the period 1753–1835. It should be said that there is a great deal more to be got from local newspapers than would appear even in this excellent little book. The advertisements, above all, are particularly valuable for a detailed picture of the life of a small town during the period covered by the newspaper. In general the very early newspapers devoted themselves to news of national importance and rarely gave local news except in the form of a few advertisements. In my experience, purely local news begins to appear in the newspapers in the closing years of the eighteenth century and not much before, though there may be local advertisements from a much earlier period.

For catalogues or lists of early newspapers one should consult *The Times Handlist of English and Welsh Newspapers 1620–1920*. Other sources for tracing old newspapers are referred to in the select bibliography at the end of this book. Local newspapers will be found preserved in various places. For example, there is a complete set of the *Northampton Mercury*, one of the oldest newspapers in England, in the public library at Northampton, running from 1720 to the present day. Where these early newspapers still survive today, the offices of the newspaper may have more or less complete files in its possession. The British Museum also possesses a vast number of files of local newspapers for the whole of England. The pre-nineteenth-century collection is available in the Reading Room, and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century collection is preserved at Colindale, near Hendon. The Bodleian Library at Oxford also has a considerable collection of English newspapers for the period 1622–1800 (see Additional References).

Newspapers are of the greatest value for a variety of local history. One cannot write the political and parliamentary history of a town without using systematically the files of the local newspapers. A first-class example of this kind of history is *Radical Leicester* by A. Temple Patterson (Simpkin Marshall, 1954), which was based to a very considerable extent on the close reading of four sets of local newspapers. Another excellent example is Robert Newton's *Victorian Exeter* (Leicester University Press, 1968), which covers the period 1837 to 1914. The extensive bibliography of this book shows the wide range of sources, in addition to local newspapers, which are available to students writing a town history over a limited period.

Newspapers are also invaluable for the study of the topography of towns, the development of new streets, and of important new buildings. We learn the names of the men who built the new Georgian terraces and crescents, for example, and the way in which the town came to look as it does. For towns which were ports we frequently have weekly sailing lists giving the names of the ships, their destinations or ports of origin, and their principal cargoes. We also learn a great deal about the social and cultural history of a town from the columns of the newspapers, and about the administration of the poor law or the vicissitudes of public health. There is hardly any limit to the value of newspapers as a source for the local historian. The chief danger is that he will be side-tracked into reading a great deal of interesting material which is not really relevant to his immediate purpose.*

Reminiscences

Nor must one overlook the reminiscences of old people, either printed or verbal, in the reconstruction of the former local society. These reminiscences obviously require checking at every possible

* For the range of subjects covered by a typical local newspaper, see Chapter 12 also.

point. People's memories, and especially the memories of old people, are notoriously faulty. But such evidence of past history is not to be dismissed altogether merely because it is difficult to check its complete authenticity. A well-informed, elderly professional man can often give one a view of the inner social history and business history of the town which one would never get from any printed or written records. Women's Institutes can similarly collect together personal reminiscences of rural areas, as has been done recently in Norfolk (see p. 8).

Local records: printed and manuscript

In a town of any size, there is likely to be a considerable mass of both printed and manuscript material relating to various aspects of borough affairs. One should find a complete series of the annual borough accounts from 1836 onwards and the annual reports of the medical officer. At Leicester this latter series is complete from 1855. It is invaluable for the study of the physical growth of the town, and of its public health, and of the incidence of epidemics, etc. It is impossible to discuss here the full range of printed materials available for research during the nineteenth century, but the historian who is working in this field may ascertain from the borough librarian what is available in his own locality.

There will, of course, be a great range of manuscript records in the nineteenth century for both towns and country parishes. The records available for a town cannot be described in detail here, but the local librarian or local archivist, as the case may be, will be able to say what is available in any given place. In many rural parishes it is possible that not much manuscript material will be available. When I wrote the history of a Leicestershire village, as *The Midland Peasant* (Macmillan, 1957), I made the surprising discovery that there was almost no surviving manuscript material for the nineteenth century, anywhere in the parish, until the year 1894, when the urban district council was set up. With the breakdown of parish government in the early nineteenth century it seems that most of the work of administration was carried on by a few ill-paid part-time officers, if one can call them that, who when they left office carried away their meagre records with them. At Wigston Magna, therefore, I found the nineteenth century was the leanest century since the fifteenth for manuscript records, for this and other reasons. Other local historians may have this unfortunate experience. Most of what

survives should be in the parish chest and the parson will know where this is to be found. There should, of course, be churchwardens' accounts, the accounts and other records of overseers of the poor, perhaps vestry minutes, and other miscellaneous documents.* Many parishes have now transferred their records to the greater safety of their county record offices, where they have been listed and made much more accessible. Every county in England has now set up a record office, and many have published full guides to their contents. These cover infinitely more than parish records, as an inspection of a good guide will soon show. For example, the *Guide to the Kent County Archives Office* (1958) is especially detailed and wide ranging. Kent has also published a series of inexpensive books on a variety of subjects based on its own record sources. The publications of the Essex Record Office have long been a byword of enterprise along these lines: but one must not become too invidious in these matters. A list of *Record Repositories in Great Britain* has been published (HMSO, 1968), giving addresses, hours of opening and other basic information.

Parliamentary papers

Parliamentary Papers are a valuable source of information for the local historian. The bigger the place he is interested in, the more is he likely to find in this source; but in certain reports there may be much purely parochial material, above all in the minutes of evidence that are usually printed as appendices to the reports. Thus the Report of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture (1843) contains a great number of what would be called today 'case studies' relating to various parishes in south-western England, eastern and south-eastern England, Yorkshire, and Northumberland. Reports on emigration, education, public health, housing, agriculture, and the working of the poor law, should all be examined, and, of course, reports upon any purely local industries or social problems. It is impossible to list all the headings under which a search should be made for relevant material: the local historian must be guided by the general history of his own area.

The Parliamentary Papers cover an enormous range of subjects

* The indispensable guide to parish records in the nineteenth century, as well as for earlier periods, is W. E. Tate, *The Parish Chest* (Cambridge University Press, 1946; new edition 1969).

and it is not always easy to track down material for a particular place. The preliminary and indispensable guide for such a search is the *Select List of British Parliamentary Papers 1833–1899*, compiled by Professor and Mrs Percy Ford (Blackwell, 1953). The earlier period is covered by *Hansard's Catalogue and Breviate of Parliamentary Papers, 1696–1834* (Blackwell, 1953). Before embarking upon this vast field of exploration, the reader who is unaccustomed to their use might well study *A Guide to Parliamentary Papers: What they are: How to find them: How to use them* (Blackwell, 1955) by the same writers. *A General Index to Bills, Reports and Papers . . .* for the period 1900–49 was published in 1960 (HMSO) but contains little to concern the local historian.*

Maps

Old maps are a most valuable source for the local historian, especially in towns where changes have been relatively rapid. It may be difficult to find a parish map before the first edition of the 6-inch sheets of the Ordnance Survey. As regards maps or plans of towns, the local library should possess a complete set of whatever has been published. The historian of a town might well make a composite map for himself from a number of old maps showing the topographical growth of the town during, for example, the nineteenth century and the early twentieth.† The 6-inch and 25-inch maps of the Ordnance Survey will be familiar to all students of local history. It is advisable to use the first edition of these maps since they often give information that has since been obscured or has perished.

There is one town plan, however, which seems to be almost unknown to local historians and is of the greatest value as a document. A great number of English towns, even comparatively small ones, were surveyed on the very large scale of 1/500. Some early plans were done on a scale of 1/1056 and 1/528, but from 1855 onwards the scale of 1/500 was settled on. These maps, which were published between 1855 and 1895, show an immense amount of detail, down to every lamp-post and every pillar-box, even paths in people's gardens, and one could almost write an essay on the town

* The period 1917–39 has been covered by Professor and Mrs Ford.

† For an example of what can be done in this respect, see the maps showing the physical expansion of Leicester in *V. C. H. Leicestershire*, vol. iv, pp. 196, 252, 261, 275, 292.

at a given date from this plan alone. A great number of now vanished features are shown, such as cab stands, horse-tram tracks, numerous public houses and inns, and so forth. For those who are particularly interested in the minutiae of topographical research in a town, the 1/500 plan is essential. The towns covered by these large-scale plans are given in the *Historian's Guide to Ordnance Survey Maps*, already mentioned, on pp. 29–30. Let me say again that this booklet is quite indispensable to the local historian, both in town and country.

For some towns there may be a tithe map in existence which will give a picture of the town as it was in the 1840s. There are also, of course, some thousands of tithe maps for rural parishes made at about the same period. The Tithe Commutation Act was passed in 1836 and resulted in the first accurate survey we have for thousands of parishes, in order to achieve the commutation of tithe in kind into money charges on land.

The tithe map, where it exists, gives the names of all owners and occupiers of land in a parish. It gives the names of the farms and of every field and piece of land contained in them, the acreage of every separate piece of land, and the use to which it is put. This is the most complete picture of a parish since Domesday Book and is infinitely more detailed than that record. There should be three copies of every tithe map and award: one copy should be in the possesssion of the parish (probably in the vestry or parsonage), another copy in the diocesan records,* and a third copy in the central records. The Tithe Redemption Office, formerly in Finsbury Square, E.C.4, and now transferred to Worthing, Sussex, possesses a copy of all the tithe maps and awards that were ever made and should be resorted to if the local maps cannot be found. For most people, however, it would be easier to use the parish copy or the diocesan copy.

Not all parishes possess a tithe map and award. There may be a complete set for a particular county, or you may find that in your county only about one-third of the parishes appear to have been surveyed in this way (for example, Leicestershire). The coverage in Cornwall, Devon, Kent and Shropshire is practically 100 per cent, but in Northamptonshire it is less than one-quarter. The reason for this is that in those counties where the parliamentary enclosure movement was prominent the opportunity was taken at the enclosure of the open fields to extinguish the great and small tithes at the same

* Most of the diocesan copies have now been transferred to county record offices, where they are much easier to use.

time. Tithes in kind were converted into an equivalent allotment of land. In such parishes, therefore, the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 would not apply and therefore there is no map and no award. The enclosure map and award usually belong to an earlier period, generally speaking between about 1750 and 1820, though some enclosure awards are earlier and some are later than this. These are considered more fully in the next chapter.

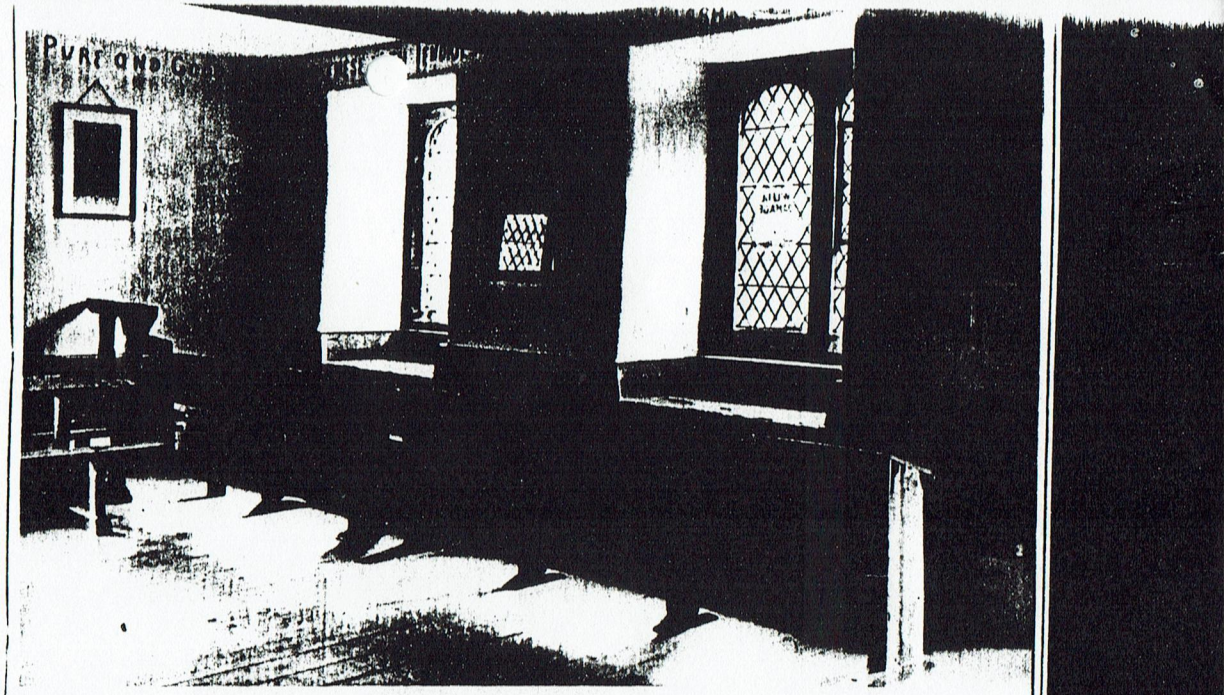
Land tax assessments

Another fruitful class of records which enable us to construct our picture of the parish as it was, are the land tax assessments. These will be found among the county records. Although the land tax was established in its present form by the act of 1692, detailed parochial assessments are rarely found before 1773. Most counties possess a complete series of such annual assessments from 1780 to 1832.* They usually give the owners and occupiers of all the land in the parish, with the names of farms where these are scattered about the parish, and the amount of tax chargeable on each farm or holding, house or cottage. One cannot use these assessments in order to arrive at the acreages of land owned or occupied by particular people any more than one can use the poor-rate or church-rate assessments for this purpose. Nevertheless, the land tax assessments give essential information about the distribution of land in the parish in the last generation of the eighteenth century and the first generation of the nineteenth. By relating the assessment for 1832 with the householders listed in the census schedule for 1841, one can also arrive at some idea of the number of families in the parish who neither owned nor occupied any land. It is true that these two dates do not exactly coincide, but they are the nearest one can get for the purpose of this particular information.

Illustrations

The local historian in town or village should obviously collect or at least have access to all old photographs, drawings, or engravings

* Some county record offices possess a few earlier assessments and some have gathered in many of a later date from solicitors' offices. Thus Devon now possesses a fairly complete coverage down to 1939, though the more recent ones may not be available for public search.



4. The Village School at Hawkshead, Lancashire

of his chosen place. These will often reveal information which is not otherwise recorded. The local library of the town, or the county library, will probably possess collections of illustrations and these should be consulted. Many old photographs and drawings may still be in the possession of private persons. Even old picture-postcards have become a valuable record of village scenes or town-streets which have long since disappeared. It is regrettable that so much material of this kind seems to have perished completely. This is particularly true of old towns in which ancient streets were swept away in slum clearance orders in the 1930s without any record being made, other than occasional picture-postcards which are no longer in print.

For most counties, too, there are important collections of drawings in the British Museum, notably the Buckler drawings.* These often show buildings and street scenes, many of which have since disappeared. The local historian should therefore consult the

* There are important collections of Buckler drawings in various places, such as the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in the Hertfordshire County Record Office, at Taunton Castle, and elsewhere.

Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Mus..m to see whether it possesses any drawings (or maps) relating to his own place.

A little-known but valuable collection of drawings, plans, and notes for nearly every county in England exists in the public library at Northampton. This is the Dryden Collection, of which a catalogue was issued in 1912. The Dryden Collection covers every county in England, some counties much more fully than others. Thus for Cornwall there are only thirteen parishes for which Sir Henry Dryden left material, and the material itself varies considerably in usefulness today. The collection is naturally very full for Northamptonshire and the counties adjoining it, but the catalogue should be consulted by local historians in whatever part of the country they may be working. Another magnificent special collection of photographs, prints, and drawings is that housed in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. This is of particular interest to local historians concerned with old ports and, above all, perhaps, with shipbuilding, and it is essential for such historians to consult this collection in some way, either by a personal visit or by correspondence.

Miss Joan Wake, in her admirable guide *How to Compile the History and Present Day Record of Village Life* (Northampton, 1935), makes the point also that old photographs are bound to fade and in the end to become valueless. They should, therefore, be rephotographed before it is too late, and carbon prints made.

Diaries, letters, and account books

The value of old diaries and letters for the nineteenth-century historian cannot be over-estimated, though the deficiencies of such material from the historical point of view will be obvious enough. They represent a record made at the time and, being unofficial, they probably reflect more of the truth of the event than an official and edited version is likely to do. On the other hand, the diarist or letter writer is likely to be giving a highly subjective impression of an event or a person and such a record should be treated with the proper caution and reservations. There are a great number of diaries deposited in the British Museum. It is always possible that the local historian will make what amounts to a brilliant and original discovery of a local diary which no one has hitherto thought of looking at. Such was Dr A. L. Rowse's discovery of the diary of

William Carnsew, a C..nish gentleman, for 1576–77, which he used with great effect in his book *Tudor Cornwall*. There must also be a vast number of diaries lying around in private houses which might well be tracked down by an assiduous searcher. They would throw much light upon town, and village, and parish life in the nineteenth century. Parsons' diaries are particularly valuable in this respect and occasionally one finds good diaries kept by farmers, such as that of Cornelius Stovin, a Lincolnshire Wold farmer in the early 1870s.* Old account books give one a vast amount of information about the prices, materials, and housekeeping of past generations. Much valuable material of this kind still lies unknown or disregarded in private houses.

Auctioneers' catalogues and sales notices

The catalogues of sales of land, with maps and plans, which have been issued by auctioneers for the last hundred and fifty years would, if they had been systematically collected, have formed a mass of useful material for the agrarian historian of the period since 1800. A few libraries and record offices possess collections of such records but it is rare to find anything like completeness. Such records are particularly valuable for the period in which great estates were being broken up and sold off. This was going on all through the nineteenth century as well as in our own time, and the parish historian will be fortunate if he can find an auctioneer's catalogue and maps for the break-up of some large estate in his own territory in Victorian days. Many record offices and public libraries are now making a collection of all such catalogues and sales notices. So much of this material has been destroyed in the past as ephemeral but it has now become of considerable historical interest.

As an example of how valuable and comprehensive such business records may be, the Devon county record office recently acquired several hundred files from an old-established auctioneer's business, covering the period 1880 to 1925. These relate to a very wide range of farms and house property in north-east Devon. The records include inventories of household goods, of factory stock, of farm goods and stock, and also detailed surveyors' notes on hundreds of farms, field by field. One need hardly stress the importance of such a collection for many kinds of historian.

* See J. Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming* (Routledge, 1957), pp. 323–33.

BELL BARROW
WARREN LODGE

UNCERTAIN

Mound at Warren Lodge, Finchampstead (SU 792646)

Readers will recall that the large mound with surrounding ditch at Warren Lodge was examined in 1966 by a party of students from Bulmershe College, when five sections dug to ground level revealed profiles proving the artificial character of the mound and demonstrating the method of its construction. Apart from one small medieval sherd, however, the trenches were sterile of artifacts. (See Bulletin 5, January 1967).

In the succeeding season the same party of students, by kind permission of the owner, Miss E. Vaughan-Morgan, again cut sections to ground level. On this occasion two opposite quadrants were explored at the centre of the mound and later extended by the removal of an 8 ft. cube. The resulting profiles confirmed previous findings about the method of construction but nothing was found apart from a few flints showing evidence of burning. The site is enmeshed in the roots of large trees and liberally tunnelled by badger and fox so that interpretation is of some difficulty.

In spite of these initial disappointments it is proposed to recommence examination of the berm and ditch in 1969. A full account of the whole excavation will be published in due course.

We are indebted to Dr. Slade, Mr. Rutland and other members of the Berkshire Archaeological Society for help and advice and to Miss Vaughan-Morgan for her warm hospitality.

T. S. Turner.

UNCERTAIN

Warren Lodge, Finchampstead - SU 792646

An enigmatic mound was investigated for a week in July by students of Bulmershe College, with the permission and encouragement of the owner Miss Vaughan-Morgan. The surrounding ditch was found to be c. 3 ft. 9 in deep and 11 ft. across, but was sterile. The mound itself was shown to be artifical and it had very clear stratification. The only sherd found was mediaeval, probably 13th/14th century, but the mound has the characteristics of a Bronze Age barrow. This appraisal is tentative in the extreme, but it is hoped that further excavation in 1967 will give a more definite conclusion.

T. S. TURNER

--o-oOo-o--

Branch	Discount	BKS	ISBN	No.
30,0				

AUTHOR

BERKSHIRE FIELD

TITLE RESEARCH BULLETIN NO 5 1967 article by TURNER.

Publisher	Date	Price	Class

Source ~~EXISS~~

Buy
Request ✓
Report

BERKSHIRE C.L. | Branch Wokingham | Date 14/10/74

Branch	Discount	BKS	ISBN	No.
30,0				

AUTHOR

BERKSHIRE FIELD

TITLE RESEARCH BULLETIN NO 6 1968. ARTICLE by TURNER.

Publisher	Date	Price	Class

Source

Buy
Request ✓
Report

BERKSHIRE C.L. | Branch Wokingham | Date 14/10/74

To Parish Magazine Dec. 1977

Re: Bell Barrow, Warren Lane.

~~Bell Barrow Warren Lane~~

as licence to further their own personal ends we neither respect them nor, when young, do anything but try and go one better. Each one of us in Finchampstead can surely show that we can be trusted with liberty and show it by our acts, not words.

Thus we can show that we are trying to make this an even better parish than it is at present and I think it is pretty good!

So a very happy Christmas to you all.

Your old Editor,

Maud Travers.

Lindridge
124 Nine Mile Ride
Finchampstead
19th November 1975

Treacy Dalby

To the Editor:

Dear Sir,

Miss Travers has enquired about "our far off ancestors", the people of the Bronze Age, who may have been responsible for Bell Barrow, Warren Lane, which we still have, as well as the smaller one in the field to the South, which has been flattened.

As far as I can discover, working backwards, it goes like this:

Bell Barrows are so called because, having dug a circular ditch in order to raise a mound in the centre (when did you last make a sand castle?) the transverse section, sometimes dug by archeologists, is the same shape as the transverse section of a bell.

A barrow is a burial mound raised over a grave to give it more importance. It is sometimes given a good start by the chieftain, or whoever is buried, being covered initially by an inverted wagon, with his horse trappings, weapons, ornaments, etc., arrayed beneath. Sometimes this was burned. This was the custom of the celts who replaced the earlier use of bronze with the later use of iron.

These people were the bulk of the population of Britain when the Romans arrived, though there had been waves of Belgic tribes, also Celts, like the Atrebates of Silchester, coming in from the continent, in the hope of avoiding the Roman conquerors who were taking possession there, but of course some Quislings came with them.

A LIST OF BARROWS AROUND THE BERKSHIRE-SURREY-HAMPSHIRE BOUNDARY

H. W. COPSEY

THE EOCENE sands of south east Berkshire support a flora of heath, gorse and birch. Bronze Age man has left few signs of occupation here although the round barrows which were almost certainly his work form a group which extends into Surrey and Hampshire. Other groups at Mortimer, Brimpton and Wash Common form an extension towards the west of Berkshire.

Examples of bell and bowl barrows are represented and the majority are sited on ridges. A number are unrecorded and the only known finds from the whole group are the 25 cremations found in the rescue excavation by O. A. Shrubsole in 1901 of a mound being levelled during work on Sunningdale Golf Course. The craters visible in the tops of most of the mounds suggest central shaft excavation of the 18th and 19th centuries, but in some cases could be subsidence of the material of the mound.

The recent discovery of a large mound in Swinley Park suggests that more may await discovery in this area which was part of Windsor Forest and is still strongly enclosed after 900 years. All the sites listed below were visited during 1963 by the writer.

Berkshire

1. *FINCHAMPSTEAD Warren Lodge* SU 792646

Bagshot Beds

A large bell barrow in woodland with the mound c. 100 ft. diameter and 8 ft. high. The berm is 40 ft. wide and the ditch is 20 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep. There are traces of an outer bank and the ditch to the south has been levelled by farming. Digging for sand, badgers or foxes has mutilated parts of the mound.

This is the largest bell barrow in the county and, although the existence of the mound has been marked on the 6" O.S. maps held at Reading Museum, it has not hitherto been published.

2. *FINCHAMPSTEAD Warren Lodge* SU 793645

Bagshot Beds

Under plough when found by the Ordnance Survey Archaeological Division during their survey of the county in 1963 and described by Mr. Geary as the possible remains of a small (c. 25 ft. diameter) barrow with a ditch just visible. Nothing could be discerned of this mound when the site was visited in the autumn of 1963 and it was under grass.

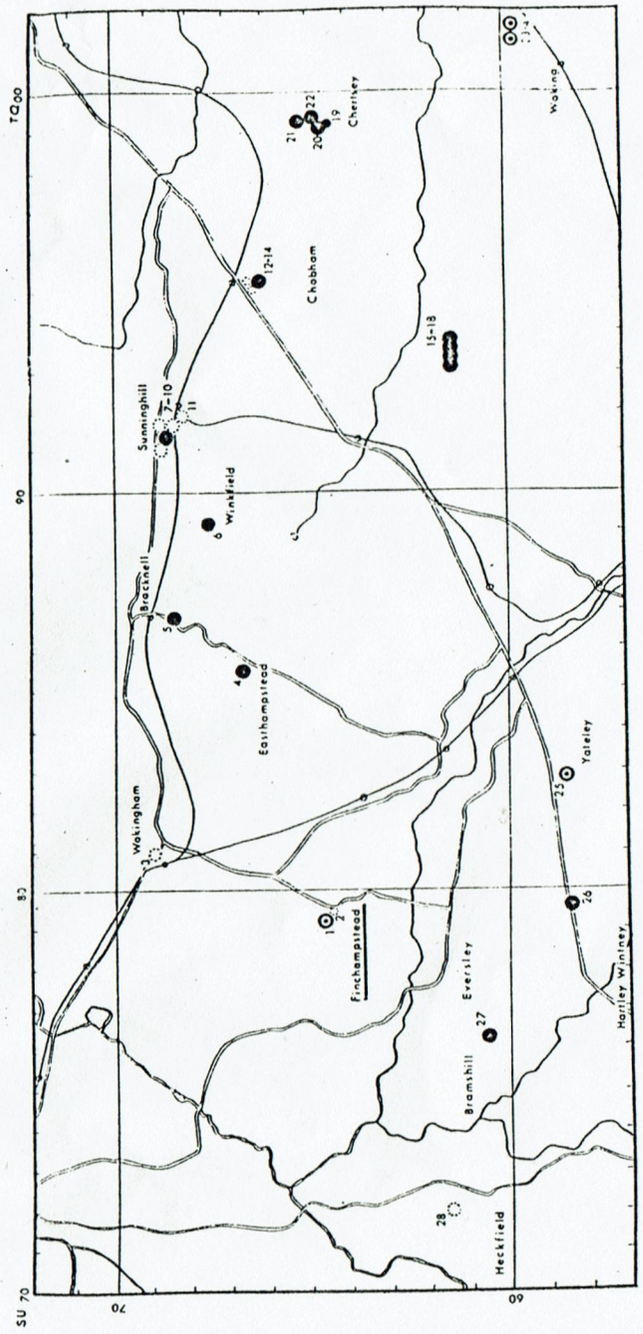


Fig. 1. Map of existing, doubtful and destroyed barrows around the Berkshire-Surrey-Hampshire boundary. The numbers refer to those in the text. Superimposed on 10 kilometre squares of the National Grid.

Now the question arises is the bell shaped mound off Warren Lane a burial barrow? It is marked on the maps as one and generally accepted as such, but when the mound was quartered down to ground level, only mediaeval pottery was found, but then grave robbing is a very old trade. The fact that the two barrows were so close together makes them more likely to be burial ones.

I cannot presume to judge whether the method of excavation is conclusive, of quartering and going to ground level is exhaustive, having no knowledge or experience in this field, but it has been suggested that this was a much later mound, built to get a better view of the quarry, when the area was part of Windsor Forest.

I, myself, think it likely that it was both.

Were these Celts our ancestors? Unfortunately few of us who read this article are natives of Finchampstead, but the next generation will be.

Most Celts in Britain were pushed by succeeding waves of Saxon, Danish and Norman settlers (the Romans imposed their Pax Romana but not their population) into the extremities of Cornwall, Wales and Scotland, where traces of their language, skin colouring and traditions in food are found. Next time you make pikelets or scotch pancakes for tea, give the Celts a thought, though these tea-cakes are no longer cooked on hot stones as they have been for hundreds of years, but on electric griddles now made especially for them.

No doubt the ancestors of the wild animals still left to us- fox, badger, stoat, weazel, hedgehog, slow-worm and grass-snake - knew the Celts, and there would also have been wolf, deer and wild boar roaming the indigenous woodlands such as those at East Court, Fisher's Copse, Fleet Copse and Warren Lane.

Some of our old tracks are probably Celtic, especially those leading to river fords like Wick Hill down to Dell Road, Larch path to the Church from Eversley Bridge and Longwater Lane. All these are still marked with ancient hollies - the great great grand daughters of the originals, no doubt - to guide the traveller and shelter his path.

Perhaps there was a Celtic church on the site of the present one, though I always suspect the little pillar under the piscina to be of Roman origin, but probably only Romanesque.

However, modern Finchampstead follows many of the pursuits for which the fanciful, bardic, impulsive design-loving Celts were famed

They were great horse-breeders and that is now one of our most pleasing industries, great hound breeders and who can equal us for the breeding of badger hounds (dachshunds to us) or gundogs, great workers in metal of intricate designs with fine interlacing swirls (so different to the boxed up patterns of Rome) and these we now work out, when we can remember our left from our right, at our Scottish Country dancing club.

What of the story telling, when all were huddled round the fire, which handed down the epics of earlier days?

Why, the magazine, of course!

Yours faithfully,

Freda Dalby.

SMR. 1005

Bell Barrow
Warren Lodge

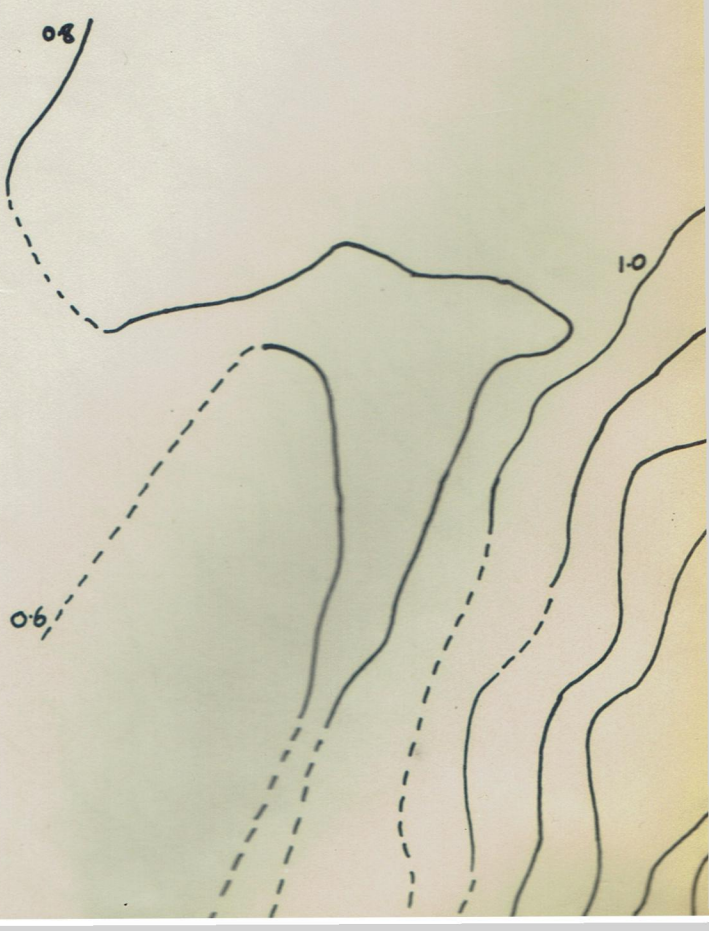
Contour Surve

Finchampstea

June 1985

S.M.R. No. 1005

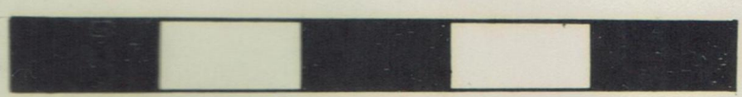
A.M. No. 156



Bell Barrow
Warren Lodge

FINCHAMPSTEAD.
EBAS JUNE '85
SMR 1005
AM 156

scale 1cm:1m



10m

N

Royal County of Berkshire

Department of Planning

Shire Hall Shinfield Park Reading RG2 9XG
Telephone Reading (0734) 875444

Your reference

My reference PRC/CT

When calling ask for Mr P. Chadwick
Ext. 4938

22nd July 1985

Dear Madam

East Berkshire Archaeological Survey

Thank you for your enquiry about our survey of the mound in Warren Lane Wood, Finchampstead. The work was undertaken simply to make a detailed plan of the monument and I enclose a copy of the final plan.

Our work has not helped to decide whether the mound is a large round barrow (Bronze Age burial mound?) or an early Norman Castle made of timber and earth (a motte).

I hope this has answered your queries.

Yours faithfully

Steve Ford.

Steve Ford

Freda Dalby
Lindridge
124 Nine Mile Ride
Finchampstead
WOKINGHAM RG11 4JA
Berks

Royal County of Berkshire

Department of Planning

Shire Hall Shinfield Park Reading RG2 9XG
Telephone Reading (0734) 875444
Facsimile Reading (0734) 873521

Your reference

My reference SMR 1005.01 PRC/GD

When calling ask for Mr P R Chadwick
Ext 4938

Copies of both letters to Dr David Stafford. (Archaeological Sec, History Group)
& Mrs Jan Hodge, (Sec: WWPA)

29 September 1986

Dear Mr Gosling

SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT BERKS 156 BARROW TO THE NORTH WEST OF WARREN LODGE FINCHAMPSTEAD

I regret to have to inform you that the above monument has recently been damaged.

The monument, a substantial earthwork bell barrow stands in unmanaged woodland owned by a Miss I Vaughan Morgan. The area formed the subject of a planning application in 1983 which proposed to incorporate the SAM within a residential development. This application was refused and a subsequent appeal dismissed. The area is used for informal recreation and the local residents and the Finchampstead Society usually keep an effective guardian eye on the area.

On the afternoon of 24 September, Mrs S Hughes of 142 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead telephoned to report that a large hole had been dug into the mound. She was fairly certain this had taken place in the late afternoon of 23 September. The soil from the hole had been used to form several small mounds which, with the monument had been used as the basis for a BMX bike circuit. I requested that should she see anyone digging on the monument, she should get them to stop, get their name and address, get them to reinstate the soil, etc and if necessary call the Police.

Mrs Hughes rang again (5.15 pm 24 September) to report that three youths (aged about 16) had just arrived at the monument and started digging. She reported that she had got them to stop digging and to reinstate some/much of the soil.

I was able to visit the site early on Thursday 25, two areas of recent damage were evident -

1 a small area c.1.2 m x 0.5 m on the top of the mound in an area already damaged by past digging (? some archaeological), rabbits and erosion.

2

29 September 1986

Mr P Gosling

2 a large area c.1.5 m wide x approx 4 m in the southern part of the barrow mound. This had been reinstated with loose soil incorporating much leaf litter, small branches, etc.

Perhaps the Ancient Monument Warden could visit and assess the site, and recommend on the 'firstaid' and future management requirements of the site.

I feel a sign(s) either informative or more formal may prevent casual damage of this sort in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Chadwick

for County Planning Officer

Mr P Gosling
HBMC
Fortress House
23 Savile Row
LONDON
W1X 2HE

Royal County of Berkshire

Department of Planning

Shire Hall Shinfield Park Reading RG2 9XG
Telephone Reading (0734) 875444
Facsimile Reading (0734) 873521

Mrs F. Dalby

For information

Paul Chadwick

With Compliments
County Planning Officer R S Stoddart ARIBA MRTPI

DALBY
LINDRIDGE, 124 NINE MILE RIDE
FINCHAMPSTEAD, WOKINGHAM
BERKS. RG11 4JA
Tel 0734 730106

~~Sep~~ Oct 2nd 1986.

Dear Mr Chadwick,

Thank you so much for this morning's letter. There are one or two points I think I should make.

"Unmanaged woodland". Since the woodland has been the subject of T.P.O. coverage ~~coverage~~ & twice this has been refused, the last time because it was going to be the subject of a management agreement.

You were kind enough to attend the hearing of the appeal in 1983. You will remember that the owner kindly undertook to have the site protected if the proposed housing scheme were carried out. No doubt your views this morning points to the possible advantage of this. My experience is that young persons on a housing estate will force their way in to anything if it is obvious that authority wishes to keep them out.

The area is at the moment left as it is & is privately owned by Miss Vaughan-Morgan. It is used quite widely for walkers & their dogs but we are all trespassing.

Another reason for digging occurs to me: the media does a lot of good, but also brings to publicity ideas which normally would only emulate among the specialists. In this case Conservationists & Badger digging. You will remember that the oldest & largest holes are badger sets. Other 'activities' that have taken place there are the burial of stolen property. I have no faith in notices. That again publicises troubles. It just needs eyes & time.

You were kind enough to send us a copy of the survey of the barrow, carried out earlier this year by four young N.S.E. archeologists. I am ashamed to say that it disappeared between being put in the letter box of our architect on one side & being taken out the other.

I would be happy to pay for a duplicate if it were possible to have one but this time I suggest it goes straight to the archeologists:—

Mrs Mary Jackson,
Moonrakers, 17 Church Lane,
Finchampstead, WOKINGHAM.

All praise to Mrs Hughes!

Thank you for letting us know.

Yours sincerely,
Freda Dalby

Facelift for bronze age burial chamber

▶ Tony Carter gets to work on clearing the

By Charles Nelson

THE site of what is thought to be a bronze age burial chamber at Finchampstead's Warren Wood is being given a facelift.

Last week contractors moved in to fell about a dozen oak trees and scrub around the site which six months ago came into Wokingham District Council ownership.

The aim is to improve light levels and to encourage grass and flowers to grow on the mound, explained district council countryside ranger Adam Curtis.

Little is known about the history of the mound on the site, discovered in 1963, as archaeological work has been limited, and it has not yet been proved conclusively that it is in fact a barrow, or ancient burial chamber.

Although there is no right of way through Warren Wood it has long been popular with local dog walkers and horse riders.

"I have closely consulted local people to make sure that they are aware of what we propose. We want to encourage continued informal recreation by local people but I would appeal to horse riders to stay on the bridal way," Mr Curtis explained.

Keen to reassure them that there was no intention to exclude the public from the wood or to dramatically change the character of the area, he hopes local people will join other Berkshire conservation volunteers working in the wood.

National heritage groups and County Archaeologist Anne Upson have been closely involved in planning protective work on the site and approval has been given for tree felling in the wood.

Soil on the mound is gradually being worn away by walkers and mountain bikers, so, to protect it, and encourage people to go round rather than over it, countryside volunteers are surrounding the ancient burial chamber with a natural hedge.

Warren Lane barrow, as it is known, could date back as far as 2000 BC which would make it the largest bronze age burial chamber in Berkshire, and it is already listed as such by English Heritage.

However, the only physical evidence of its ancient past is a piece of mediaeval pottery discovered on a dig in 1967 led by Dr C Slade of Reading University.

Dr Slade speculated that the mound could in fact have been created as a gun emplacement in the post-mediaeval area and a pollen analysis by another team again suggested a post-Roman date of construction for the mound.

Likewise, a survey carried out in 1990 concluded that the mound could have been built immediately following the Norman conquest or during the anarchy period of Stephen and Matilda.

BELL BARROW IN ADJACENT FIELD

15-16 JULY 2008

BELL BARROW WARREN LANE SEARCH FOR SMALLER BARROW

Warren Close

Surgeries

Garage

St John's Church (C of E)

Drain

FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD

SOUTH

+69.5m

+67.7m

B M 70.02m

B M 73.32m

+72.8m

B M 72.78m

Warren Lodge

Marravale Farm

Kennel Farm

Warren Cottages

El Sub Sta

Tumulus

NINE MILE RIDE

WARREN LANE

Aspen Tree Plantation

New Fence

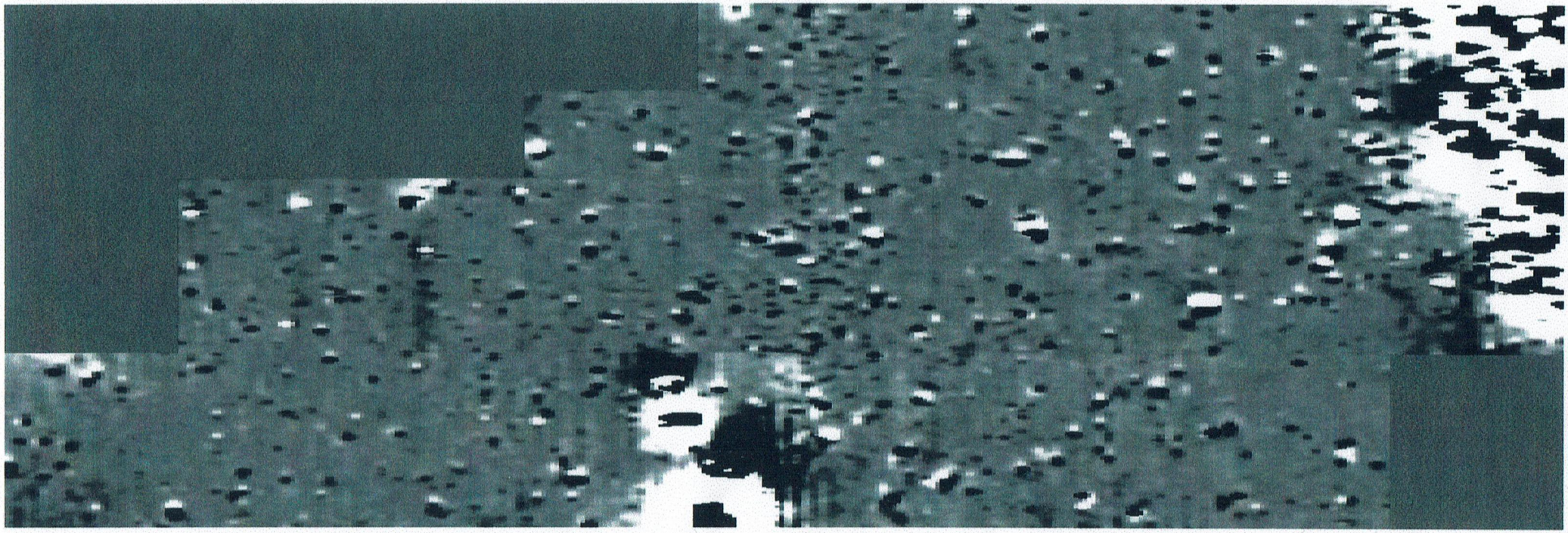
STUMPS

FIELD SURVEYED 15-16 JULY 2008 USING MAGNETOMETRY & RESISTIVITY BY WOKINGHAM HISTORY & RESEARCH GROUP, BERKS. ARCH. HISTORY & HERITAGE GROUP & FINCHAMPSTEAD SOC. GROUP.

Magnetometry.

Bell Barrow field, Warren Lane, Finchampstead

N



S

d.n.salter July 2008

From: Steve Clark [sc_barg@hotmail.com]
Sent: 19 July 2008 00:32
To: boothai@waitrose.com; graham.johnson1@homecall.co.uk; d.n.salter@btinternet.com; ernest.grayston@virgin.net; janehill80@yahoo.co.uk; britaw@ntlworld.com
Subject: Results from Warren Lane geophysical survey
Attachments: Warren mag results.png; warren lane resis results.png

Dear all

Thanks to everyone who helped with the survey at Warren Lane earlier this week. The basic results of the magnetometry and resistivity surveys are attached to this email. Unfortunately despite all the hard work and the promising signs from air photos and reports in the 1960s our results do not, as far as I can see, show anything resembling a ring ditch.

I wont be able to place these onto a scaled map of the site until next week, so what you have attached are just the images of the survey areas.

1) Magnetomtery: North on this image is to the right. If you decide to print this out you will probably need to tell your software to fit it to one side of A4. The image shows results after clipping to 90% of readings, despiking, destriping and interpolating. The two most obvious features are what is likely to be the remains of a pylon base in the south of the field (many of the readings here are + or - 3000nT), whilst to the far east (bottom) of the survey area is another area of what appears to be significant modern disturbance, possibly related to anothjer pylon, or alternatively to a modern pipeline of some sort. The dark ring visible on the air photo would have been to the right (north) of the pylon base in the south of the field.

2) Resistivity results: North is to the top of this image which covers the squares to the north of the pylon site, where the air photo showed a dark ring. Again there is nothing which jumps out at one, and no obvious ring ditch. The results are again clipped to 90% of readings and interpolated.

It's clear that our results have been affected by considerable modern disturbance to this field, although I would not have expected this to have prevented us from finding some trace of a ring dich.

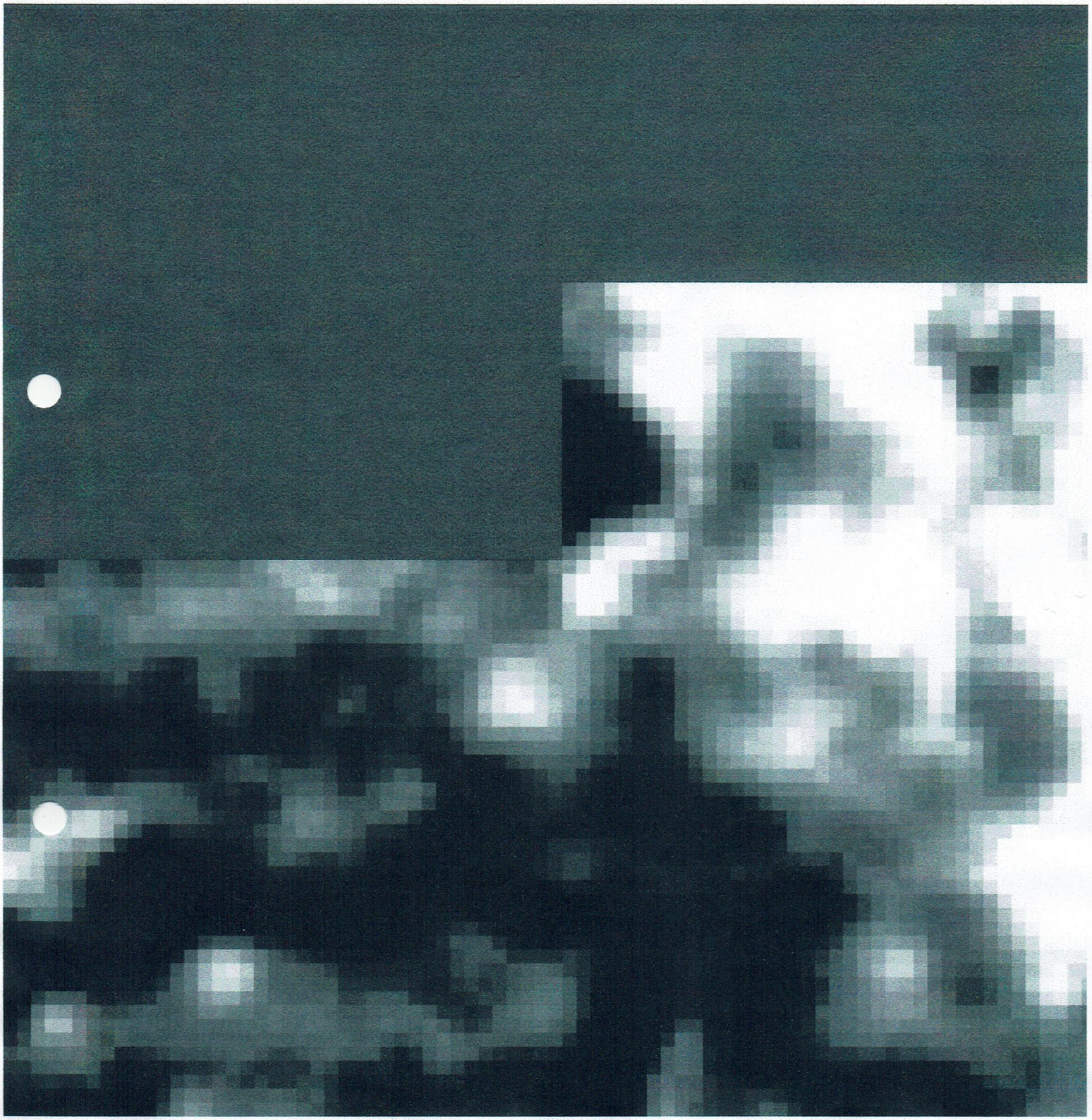
I'll email again with a more detailed set of results next week when I have more time to examine the results.

regards

Steve

Get Messenger on your Mobile! Get it now!
No virus found in this incoming message.
Checked by AVG - http://www.avg.com
Version: 8.0.138 / Virus Database: 270.5.1/1559 - Release Date: 7/17/2008 6:08 PM

N. RESISTIVITY Bell Barrow 19.7.2008



Resistivity

Ancient Momument of great historic interest (infact it is ~~as tounding~~ surprising that it was not on the Council List for Survey by the Minister of Town and Country Planning in 1961), and one would hope that, in the not too distant future, it might be possible for the whole copse to be handed over to the National Trust – to join our other great treasure 'The Ridges' – so that the general public may have free access from Finchampstead Road to walk around and study this important feature in our national heritage. The barrow is believed to date from the Bronze Age 2,000 B.C. but when its centre was excavated a few years ago none of the burial remains that might have been expected from this period were found and it seems quite possible that the barrow was not a Bronze Age funerary tomb but a very ancient Iron Age British Camp of a later period as used from about 300 B.C. up to Roman times. The craft of iron smelting came with the celts from northern Europe who settled wherever iron ore and timber for charcoal were available, as at Finchampstead, and several of their old smelting grounds have been located in the parish. These people cremated their dead and their barrows were to protect their huts and livestock at night time from marauders and the wild animals of the forest – rather than as fortresses – and at this period there would probably have been a log palisade inside the outer ditch.

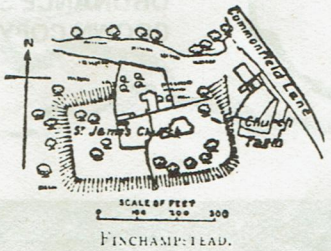
The Archeological Division of the Ordnance Survey also recorded a second smaller barrow 25 feet in diameter (lettered C3) with a surrounding ditch just visible in between the large barrow and the electricity pylon when they visited the site in the Spring of 1963, the land at that time being under plough: when the site was visited later in the year by Mr H.W. Copsey it was under grass and he could detect no trace of the smaller barrow.

At the end of Warren Lane turn left up the footpath and you move from the Iron Age into the Romano-British period. As you pass under the overhead power lines look westwards to the corner of the field to the site E3 where the Sherd of a Roman storage jar and fragments of Roman Tile were found and when you come off the footpath into White Horse Lane (formerly Commonfield Lane) turn right down the Lane for a hundred yards and then left into a drive (which was formerly a road up to the Church) and 75 yards along you will see a stile on your right to a footpath down the side of the field. Take this path to down to the far side of the field but before turning left into the footpath running south to Old Rectory Farm look diagonally across the two fields to the west and you can see the spot E5 where some trial diggings were undertaken to ascertain the exact position of the Devil's (Divil on the old maps) Highway: so far the exact line has not been established and it is now thought to be about 20 yards south of the line shown on the map. A little further westwards is the site E2 where the old Roman Milestone was dug up and taken for safety to Bannisters where it now stands in the garden.

As you walk south to Old Rectory Farm you will see Finchampstead House which is marked on your map as the Old Rectory. This Rectory was built by the famous Rector Edward St. John, Lord of the Manor of West Court, when instructed by the Bishop of Oxford to live nearer his Church. He built this delightful house in its commanding position on the site of a much older house which , before that, was believed to be the site of the Villa of the Centurion who commanded the Roman Legionaries stationed at Ceasar's Camp. Indications of Roman remains have been found in recent years but much more will undoubtedly come to light as the work of the Finchampstead Society progresses.

After you pass through the farm turn left up the footpath to the Church – treading the path the Rectors must have trod for several hundred years for , if you look south, you will see on the other side of the Lane south of Finchampstead House the black and white half-timbered Rectory of the Tudor Rectory but 1,000 years earlier still this was Holy ground. A little further down the Lane was the Holy Well blessed by St. Oswald, King of Northumbria in A.D. 634 when after securing the support of St. Birinus at Dorchester (near Oxford), he journeyed into Hampshire to wed the daughter of Kynegils, King of the West Saxons, whom he and St. Birinus had converted to Christianity.

The oldest parts of the beautiful church on the hill are Norman but undoubtedly there must have been a Saxon Church on this site and its dedication to St. James is a reminder that the wealth of Reading Abbey, founded by Henry I, was largely built on its most famous Relic, the hand of St. James, given to them by the King: but even before the Saxon Church there must have been a Church, possibly no more than a rock in the open air, from the time of St. Oswald's visit onwards. In the old history of Berkshire the site of the Church is described as a Roman Camp, which it may well have been, but the probability is that it was, even earlier, an Ancient British Camp.



FINCHAMPSTEAD.

From the Church take the road down Church Lane and halfway along you will cross over the line of the 'Divils' Highway and at the bottom of the Lane turn right and carry on in the same direction when the road turns righthanded into Jubilee Hill. (A new section of road made at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee to cut the corner off the track you will be taking). Follow your track right through to Heath Pond and you will be walking upon a mile of the Devil's Highway which must have been tramped by thousands of Legionaries on their way to and from London and Silchester. The Heath Pond itself is, of course, entirely Roman in origin and was caused by the damming of the rivulet when they built their new road. Just to the north of the Heath Pond is the site of the find of the Neolithic Hammerstone with which we started this walk.

Finally turn right after you have past the pond and continue your walk through the National Trust property back to the Car Park in Wellingtonia Avenue. We hope you have enjoyed your walk through our beautiful countryside which is so full of history and one of the great joys of Berkshire.

A.B.S

The portions of this walk indicated by small crosses are at present not available to the general public as the result of litigation since the last War.

This old Roman Highway was - in the great days of Windsor Forest from Hastings to the Civil War – the direct road from Windsor through the King's Lodge at Easthampstead to his Keepers at the East and West Courts of Finchampstead. At the final enclosure of Windsor Forest the tracks were divided into Public Roads, Drift Roads and Private Carriage Ways the carriageways of the latter being maintained at private expense but we do not believe the right of access to foot travellers was ever restricted. About twenty years later all this area was incorporated into the great John Walter Estate and when this was sold up in 1913 the Estate Map incorporated in the catalogue showed five private roads meeting at this point to which all the surrounding lots had access and within living memory it is quite clear that humble pedestrian workers on the estate used these roads for getting to and from their work and to Church.

It is very much hoped that goodwill and generosity will find a way of reopening this section of the Devils Highway to walkers interested in our ancient history as it is so fundamental to the preservation of Finchampstead as an amenity area.

Until this can be arranged it is suggested that walkers take the footpath route from the Church (shown dotted) to Barkham Ride and turn right at B2 to join the Devil's Highway at Heath Pond where a one mile length to right and left is maintained by the Parish Council as a Public Footpath.

The area of the National Trust Property to which access is completely free and unrestricted (within the bounds of good taste) is shown hatched.

THESE MAPS ARE BASED UPON, AND REPRODUCED FROM, ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS. CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.

The Finchampstead Road end of the largest Bell Barrow in Berkshire.

The outer ditch seen running into the garden of 146 Nine Mile Ride.

The Crown of the Barrow seen in the centre of the Copse.

The outer ditch running out of the garden of 142 Nine Mile Ride.

WALKS AROUND FINCHAMPSTEAD by Major Brian Shone

2. The Ancient Finchampstead Walk — 8½ Miles. Park your car in the National Trust Car Park in Wellingtonia Avenue.

All the ages have contributed to the Finchampstead we know today. The sites where some of the most interesting objects which have been found are marked on the map with prefix letters to denote their probable age.

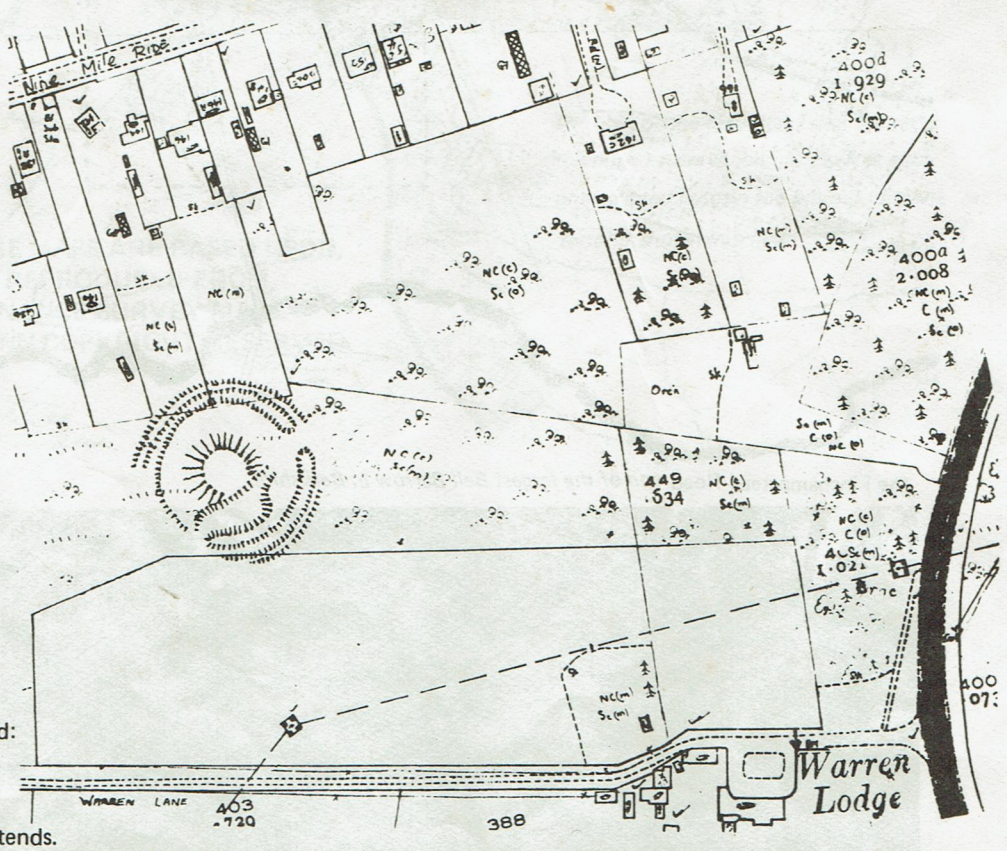
A	Paliolithic	—	between 10,000 and 500,000 years B.C.
AB	Mesolithic	—	10,000 B.C.
B	Neolithic	—	4,000 B.C.
C	Bronze Age	—	2,000 B.C. see back page X
D	Iron Age	—	700 B.C. up to Roman period
E	Roman occupation	—	43 A.D. to 410 A.D.

One of the oldest implements dug up in this area is a Mesolithic Tranchet Axe found at the eastern tip of the parish and given the reference AB1 but as you walk up Wellingtonia Avenue and over the Ridges and see the fine view over the vale and Blackwater Valley you are looking at our earliest history.

With the final gradual recession of the last ice cap over Britain between 10,000 and 4,000 B.C. the breakaway glaciers carved the riverbeds and brought down with them gravel and stones from higher regions many miles away which now cover a substantial portion of the Blackwater Valley. (Among the stone found by gravel diggers have been pieces from the Cotswolds and Bath areas). As the ice slid down the bed of the valley the portions of higher ground which were warmed by the sun reflected from the ice, would be almost tropical by day and freezing by night and the Tranchet Axe found at AB1 must date from this period. The Neolithic flint module dug up at B2 just north of the Heath pond dates from the period when the ice had completely receded. It was probably used as a hammerstone for gouging out and cleaning the ground to form the first primitive agricultural land.

After walking along the top of the Ridges, walk down the private road past Ridge Farm and rejoin the Wokingham Road at the Old Police Station and follow it along to Warren Lane.

As you walk down Warren Lane stop under the overhead power cables and look north over Miss Vaughan-Morgan's field and at the edge of the copse you will see the southern rim of the largest Bell Barrow in Berkshire lettered C2 on the map. It is 100 feet in diameter and 8 feet high. The berm is 40 feet wide and 3 feet deep. There are traces of an outer bank and ditch which have unfortunately been leveled by farming on the southern edge seen from Warren Lane. To see the Barrow at its best — and it is most impressive — a short detour to Nine Mile Ride will be amply repaid: it can be seen from the gardens of No. 142 and No. 146 into who's grounds the outer rim extends.



Mr and Mrs Tandy at the former, and Mr and Mrs Hand at the latter will, we feel sure, be very happy, on application to let you see this fine barrow from their gardens. There is a very strong case for registering this Bell Barrow as an

HEDGE COUNTS
1991 & 1992

Manor Farm
Hedge court - Sept. 1992

Ann Hewitt
&
Dallyn Salter

Bullaways
Hedge count - August 1991.

Nora
&
Dalleyn Salter

Rockhy Farm

Rectory Farm - 1996

Meeting with District Footpath Officer.

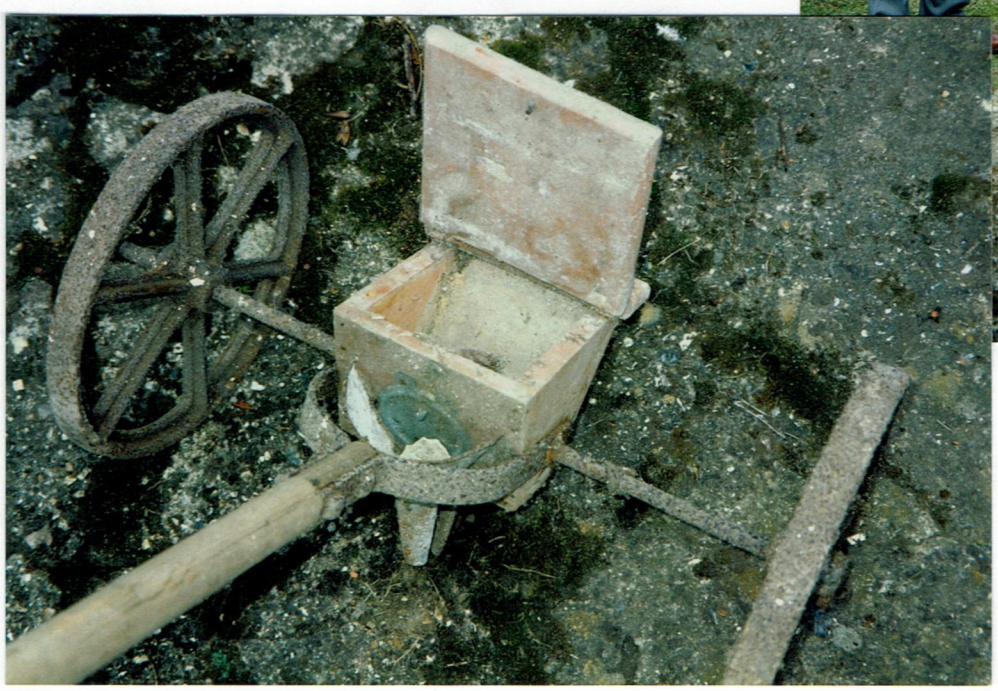
Path to be diverted

Alignment of proposed path.

Dick Morris's bungalow close to proposed new path

NORTH COURT
FARM

? Victorian cowshed.



Dolly's Salter with seed drill

North Court Farm - 1998.

L-R: Michael Curling, Joan Betts, Vicki Sanderlin-McLaughlin, Wally Chapman, Shirley Burroughs, Ann Howitt.

Staddle barn

MANOR FARM
(SOUTH - EAST)

FIELD WALKING

It has been said that it is impossible to walk any field in Britain without finding evidence of the past in the soil.

At the simplest and most visible it can be horseshoes and horse nails. Evidence of how the land has been cultivated in the very recent past. Thin scatters of pottery, building materials or even small pieces of iron slag can be evidence of either farmyard middens being used to manure the land, or the use of modified slag spread on the land as an 'improver' in the 19th century.

Concentrations of one particular find in one area of a field can suggest that that area had been used for non- arable purposes at some time in the past. Concentrations of building rubble could be the site of a building, barn or cottage demolished in living memory. A concentration of pottery from a single period may indicate the site of a long disappeared farm or hamlet – or a pottery site. It will depend on what other evidence is available. Finds of iron ore, especially when large pieces are found can indicate an industrial site or industrial settlement.

HOW IS FIELDWALKING DONE?

Field walking is the process of walking across a ploughed field in a systematic manner to collect a sample of all the man-made materials visible in the soil.

More precisely, walkers are stationed along a field boundary at predetermined distances, usually ten metres. They then walk slowly across the field in a straight line picking up and putting in a bag everything man-made that they see within a metre either side of their **traverse.**

To make the sample more precise markers or poles are placed down the field at thirty metre intervals. When each walker draws level with these poles they mark the bag of finds they have with a number and letter that says which station they are walking and which marker they have reached and collect material from the next thirty yards in a separate bag. This is repeated for each thirty-yard **stint** down the field.

A map of the field can then have a grid drawn on it showing the traverses and stints walked (Table 1). The contents of the individual bags of material are then sorted, washed and analysed and the numbers of different materials collected can then be marked on the map (Table 2)

If, as shown in Table 2, there is clearly a concentration of finds of one period in one area of a field it is usual to go back to the field and re-walk just that area in a smaller grid, 10 metres by 10 metres for example.

WHAT MATERIAL CAN YOU EXPECT TO FIND?

Pottery. This can vary from small pieces of highly glazed modern pottery to small earth coloured sherds of early Saxon or prehistoric pottery. Always, always, always pick up pieces of unglazed pottery no matter how small.

Flints Worked flint will usually be in the form of small flakes that have had small flakes chipped off all along a cutting edge. Sometimes they can be shaped as arrowheads. Occasionally large lumps of flint will be shaped like an ovoid axe head,

Metalwork Horse shoes, nails, undefined pieces of corroded metal, coins, etc

Building materials, brick, tile, slate, worked stone, glass, tesserae (small square bits of stone or glass used in mosaic floors

Iron slag, burnt clay

IN THE FIELD

1) When we get to the field to be walked. Poles will be placed at thirty metre intervals down the side of the field. The one nearest to the start is pole **A**, the second pole **B** and so on down the field.

2) Walkers will be given a supply of small bags for pottery, flint and other small finds and a carrier bag for iron slag, burnt pottery and building materials

3) Field walkers will then be spaced at 10 metre intervals along the field and given a number.

4) PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR NUMBER

5) At a given signal start to walk slowly across the field picking up everything man-made that you can see within one metre either side of your traverse.

6) TAKE YOUR TIME. The walk is the equivalent of a slow bicycle race NOT a sprint.

7) When you are level with the first marker, **STOP**.

8) Mark your bag with: Parish name (Finchampstead)
Field name
Date
Traverse (your number)
Stint (Pole letter)
Your initials

9) Get out two new bags.

10) Start walking until you reach the next marker

11) Repeat instructions 7-9

12) Repeat instructions 7-10 until you reach the end of the field.

AT THE END OF THE TRAVERSE THE LAST PERSON IN THE LINE SHOULD STAND STILL AS THE END MARKER TO MEASURE OFF THE NEXT SET OF TRAVERSES.

13) You will be given a NEW **NUMBER** for the next traverse, forget the first number and remember the second.

14) Repeat instructions 5 – 12

15) **REMEMBER THE POLES WILL BE IN REVERSE ORDER DCBA NOT ABCD**

16) If you do not find materials in every square, do not worry and do not bother to mark an empty bag

REPORT ON A FIELD-WALKING EXERCISE

ON A FIELD AT THE JUNCTION OF

DELL ROAD AND LOWER SANDHURST ROAD

FINCHAMPSTEAD BERKSHIRE IN MARCH 1999

FINCHAMPSTEAD SOCIETY

MARCH 2000

Sallyn Salter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction		1
Fieldwalking – the background		3
Fieldwalking in Finchampstead		3
What material did we find?		4
What does this material tell us		4
	Building materials	4
	Pottery	4
	Iron-slag	4
	Other	6
Conclusions		6
What of the future?		7
Acknowledgements		7
References		8
Appendices		
I	How fieldwalking is done	9
II	Early Ironworking	10
III	Fieldwalkers	11

FIGURES

Figure 1	Location of fields	1
Figure 2	Photograph of two iron slag concentrations	2
Figure 3	Location of field	3
Figure 4	Distribution of finds	5
	a: Building materials	
	b: Pottery	
	c: Iron slag (by number of pieces)	
	d: Iron slag (by weight)	
Figure 5	Distribution of iron slag heaps in South East Berkshire	6
Figure 6	Pattern of Traverse and Stint fieldwalking	9

INTRODUCTION

For many years walkers and gardeners in Finchampstead have been picking up pieces of iron slag in gardens and fields along the Blackwater valley. Until recently nobody has had any real idea where this iron slag came from or how it got on to the fields of Finchampstead. It has now been suggested that this slag dates to the Iron Age or Roman period (1st-5th centuries AD) when deposits of bog iron in the Blackwater valley may have been the basis of an iron-making industry. However, although much slag has been found, there is, as yet, no conclusive evidence for smelting hearths..

In 1994, the History and Heritage Group of the Finchampstead Society mounted a display at an exhibition held to commemorate the centenary of the establishment of Parish Councils. Among the many people who visited it, was a retired man who had been farm foreman at Manor Farm. He told Group members that, in the 1970's, when a field at the junction of Dell Road and Lower Sandhurst Road (SU 803630) (Figure 1) had been ploughed, several very clear black patches could be seen in the field and that the soil in these areas contained large quantities of slag. These black marks are illustrated in the photographs taken in Autumn 1997.(Figure 2)

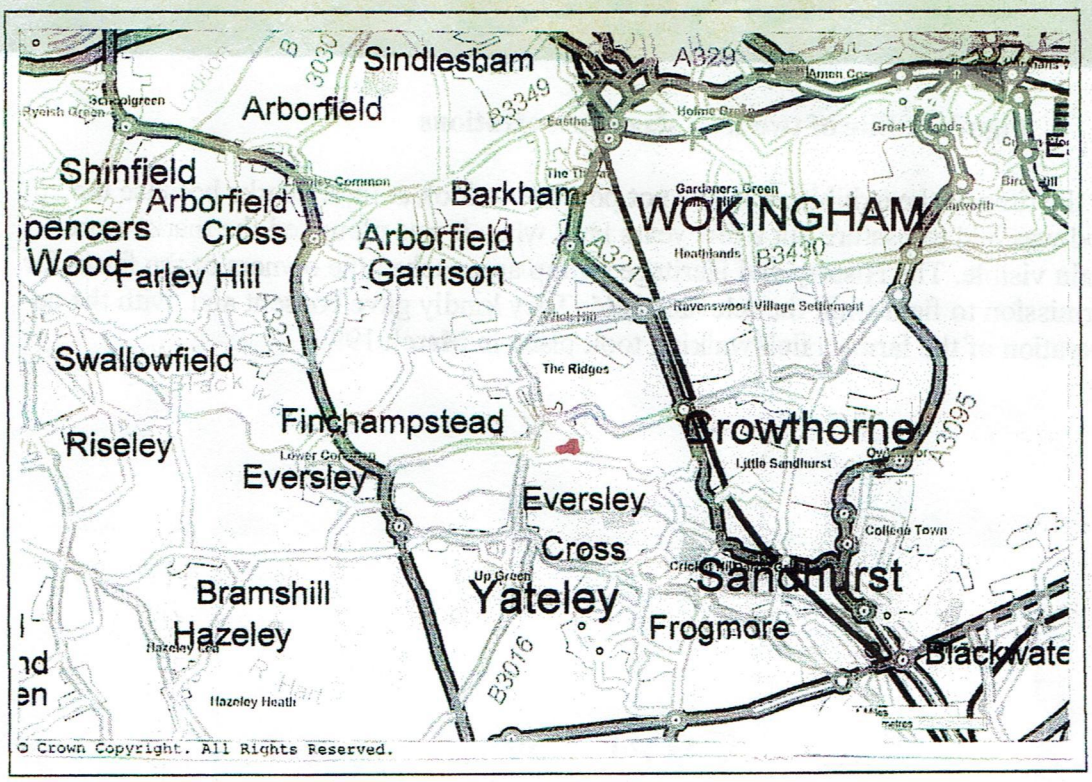


Figure 1: Location of fields

Figure 2: Site of two iron slag concentrations

At the time of the exhibition it was not possible to look at these marks because the land was laid to pasture but a few years later when it was ploughed the marks were again visible. The History and Heritage Group approached the owners of the farm, for permission to field walk the relevant field. They kindly gave consent and, with the co-operation of the farmer, fieldwalking took place in March 1999

The land has a gentle north-south slope and the geology is valley gravel with the topsoil not more than a few inches deep. The field had recently been deep ploughed and in some areas the valley gravel had been pulled to the surface. This also brought to the surface the ferrugenous soil pan that provided the ore for smelting.

FINDS

Iron slag, burnt clay. ***Large quantities in the area of the black marks***
Building materials. brick, tile and stone
Pottery. This varied from small pieces of highly glazed modern pottery to small sherds of possible 16th and 17th century pottery. Nothing earlier was found.
Metalwork. Undefined pieces of corroded metal.

The distribution of finds is plotted in Figures 4a-d

ANALYSIS OF FINDS

BUILDING MATERIALS (Figure 4a)
The concentration of building materials is not easy to interpret. The concentration in the north east corner could indicate that there had been a building there but it could also have been a dump of building material to firm up, a now unused, field entrance. There is also a concentration of building material around the current field entrance in the south east corner

In the past fields were manured with farm waste, animal and vegetable, domestic and agricultural. This means that the manure could contain pieces of pottery or other domestic rubbish and building material gathered up in the farmyard with the manure. These were then spread on the field with the manure and could explain the distribution of small quantities of brick and tile all over the field.

POTTERY (Figure 4b)
Much of the pottery found was small pieces of highly glazed modern pottery or rough terracotta and could probably be interpreted as manure scatter. However a concentration of possible 16th/17th century pottery in the same area as the north east concentration of building material suggests that this is the site of a building rather than a field entrance.

IRON SLAG(Figures 4c, 4d)
Large quantities of iron slag were found in the area of the dark patches in the field. Hardly any iron slag was found elsewhere in the field. This suggests that the areas of dark soil are associated with ironworking, but we cannot tell whether the areas are the sites of the iron working hearths or simply slag heaps. The hearths, which would have been made of baked clay, were unlikely to leave much evidence for their presence after they broke up and after the soil had been ploughed for some years. A few pieces of pottery, all of it modern glazed ware, were picked up within these dark areas but the distribution of pottery in this area was no different from that in other places in the field and is unlikely to be associated with the finds of iron-slag.

FIELDWALKING

The Background

It has been said that it is impossible to walk any field in Britain without finding evidence of the past in the soil. At the simplest and most visible it can be horseshoes and horse nails. Thin scatters of pottery, building materials or even small pieces of iron slag can indicate that the contents of farm middens were being used to manure the land. On occasions the slag is the result of the use of modified slag as a land 'improver' in the 19th century.

Concentrations of one particular find can also suggest that the area had been used for another purpose at some time in the past. An area of building rubble could be the site of a building, perhaps demolished in living memory. A concentration of pottery from a single period may indicate the site of a long disappeared farm or hamlet – or a pottery. It will depend on what other evidence is available. Finds of iron ore, especially when large pieces are found, can indicate an industrial site or industrial settlement.

Field walking is the process of walking across a ploughed field in a systematic manner to collect a sample of all the man-made materials visible in the soil. Precisely how this is done is explained in Appendix I

FIELDWALKING IN FINCHAMPSTEAD

The field walked is sited at the junction of Dell Road and Lower Sandhurst Road (SU 803630). It is one of a group of five fields lying on the side of the river valley about 200 yards from the river (Figure 3). The two areas of dark soil are located at SU 8037 6300 and 8040 6297

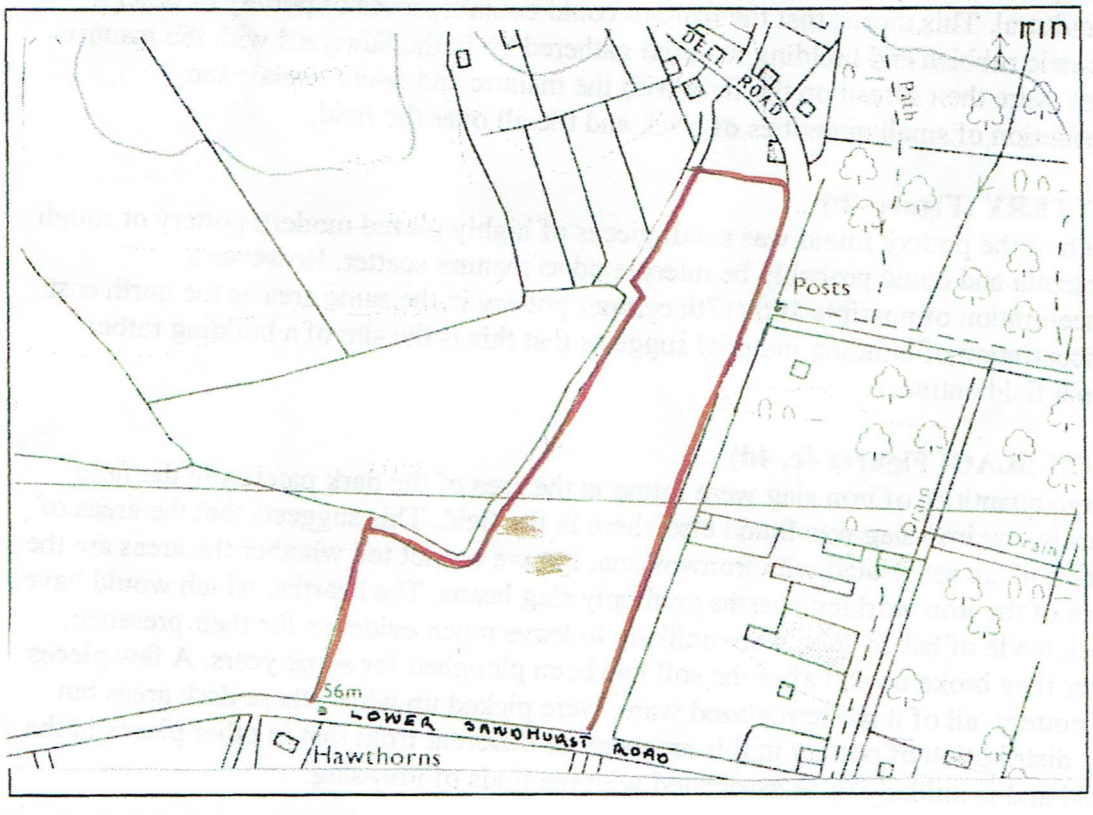


Figure 3: Location of field

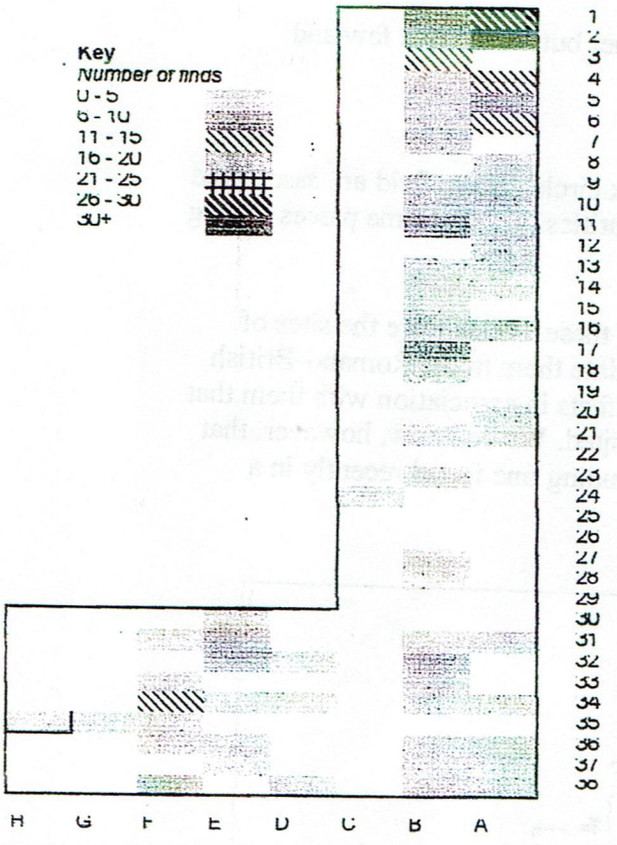


Figure 4a: Distribution of building materials

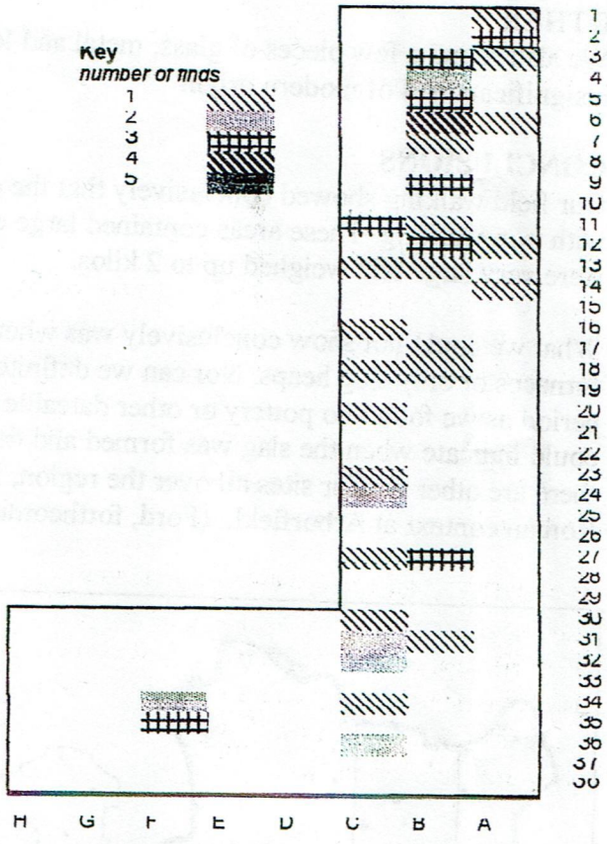
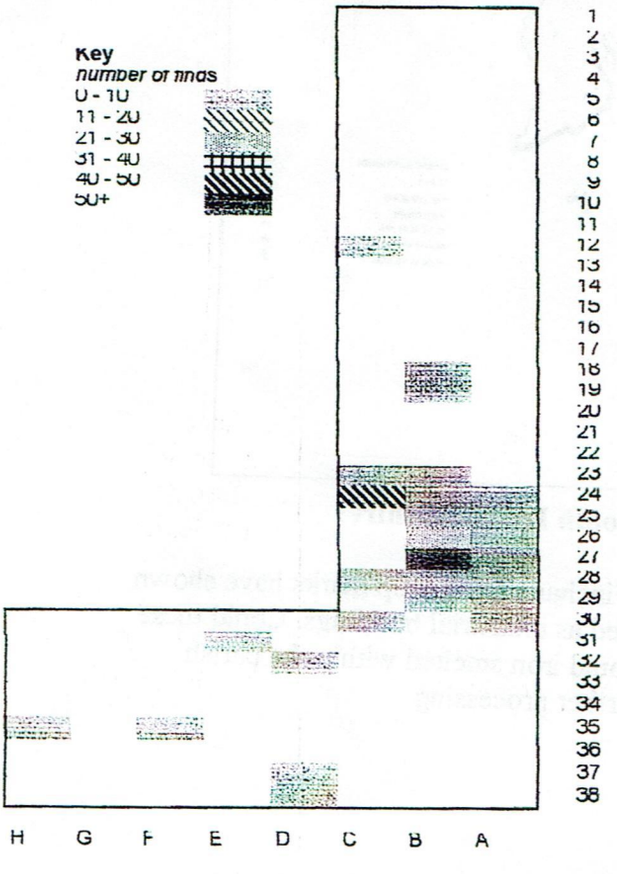


Figure 4b: Distribution of pottery



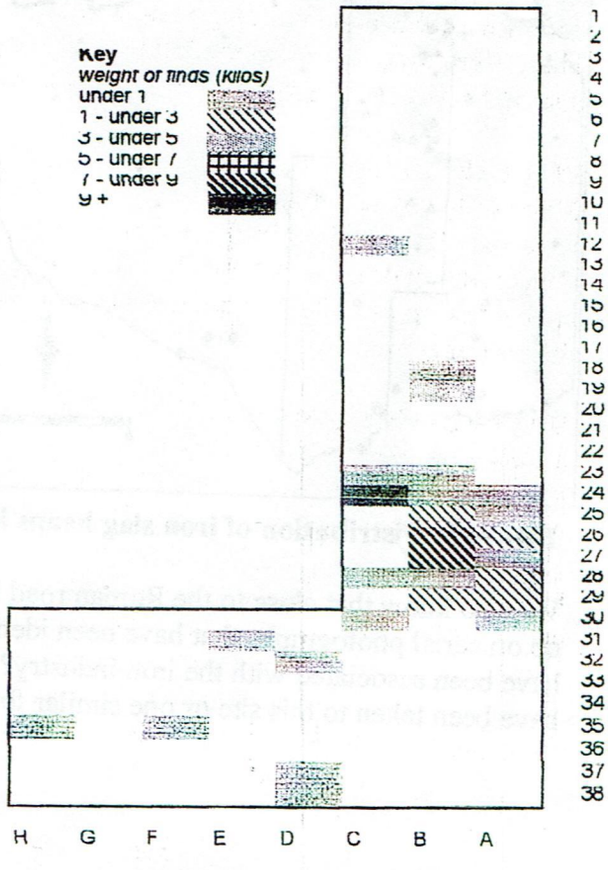


Figure 4d: Distribution of slag (by weight)

OTHER

We also found a few pieces of glass, metal and leather but these were few and insignificant and of modern origin

CONCLUSIONS

Our field walking showed conclusively that the dark circles in the field are associated with iron working. These areas contained large quantities of slag. Some pieces of slag were very large and weighed up to 2 kilos.

What we could not show conclusively was whether these circles were the sites of furnaces or only slag heaps. Nor can we definitely date them to the Romano-British period as we found no pottery or other dateable artifacts in association with them that could indicate when the slag was formed and deposited. We do know, however, that there are other similar sites all over the region, including one found recently in a Roman context at Arborfield. (Ford, forthcoming)

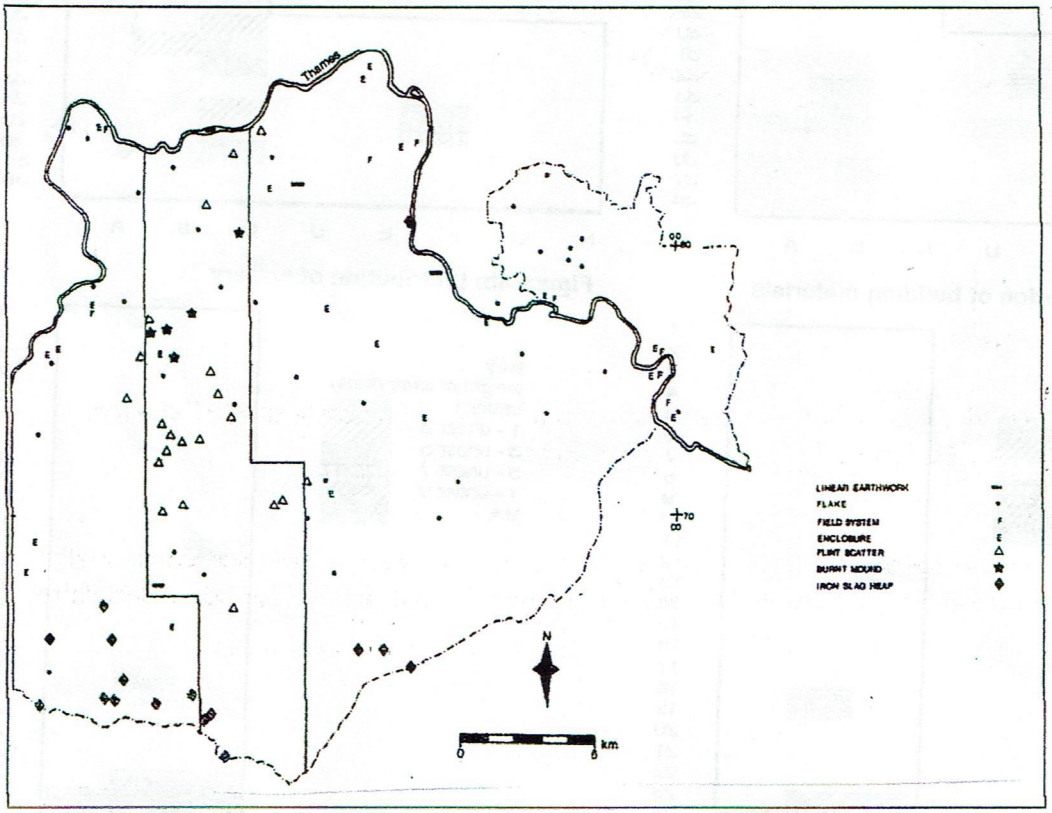


Figure 5: Distribution of iron slag heaps in South East Berkshire

We also know that close to the Roman road in Finchampstead crop marks have shown up on aerial photographs that have been identified as industrial buildings. Could these have been associated with the iron industry? Could iron smelted within the parish have been taken to this site or one similar for further processing

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

During this episode of field walking opportunity was taken to look at the other fields in the block. Two more dark patches were identified in one of the adjacent fields and,it is hoped, farmers consent and cultivation programmes permitting, to walk more of these fields.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mr Peter Rickett and the Trustees of Manor Farm, Finchampstead for permission to carry out this survey on their land, also Mr Geoffrey White of Simmons & Sons, Chartered Surveyors for his help and co-operation.

We are grateful to Drs Len and Marie Goodwin, of Shepperlands Farm, for providing facilities for washing and processing the finds, as well as much needed refreshments.

Catherine Petts
Dallyn Salter

March 2000

REFERENCES

FORD, S (1987) *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*. Department of Highways and Planning, Berkshire County Council, Reading

FORD, S (Forthcoming) The Excavation of a Late Iron Age/Roman Settlement and iron Production Site at Whitehall Brick and Tileworks, Arborfield Garrison, Berkshire

APPENDIX 3

FIELDWALKERS

Roger Black
Wally Chapman
Sue Cridland
Molly Harle
Catherine Petts
Dallyn Salter

APPENDIX 1

HOW FIELDWALKING IS DONE

Field walkers are stationed along a field boundary at regular intervals, usually ten metres. They then walk slowly across the field in a straight line picking up and putting in a bag everything man-made that they see within a metre either side of their path. This is called a **traverse**. Each traverse is given a sequential number. Poles are also placed at thirty metre intervals down each traverse. These subdivisions of each **traverse** are called **stints.** These are lettered in alphabetical order. When each walker draws level with these poles they mark the bag of finds they have with a number and letter that says which traverse and stint they are walking. They then put material collected from the next thirty yards in a separate bag. This is repeated for each thirty-yard stint down the field (see diagram). This grid of traverses and stints is then traced onto a map of the field. The contents of the individual bags of material are then sorted, washed and analysed and the numbers of different materials collected can then be marked on the map

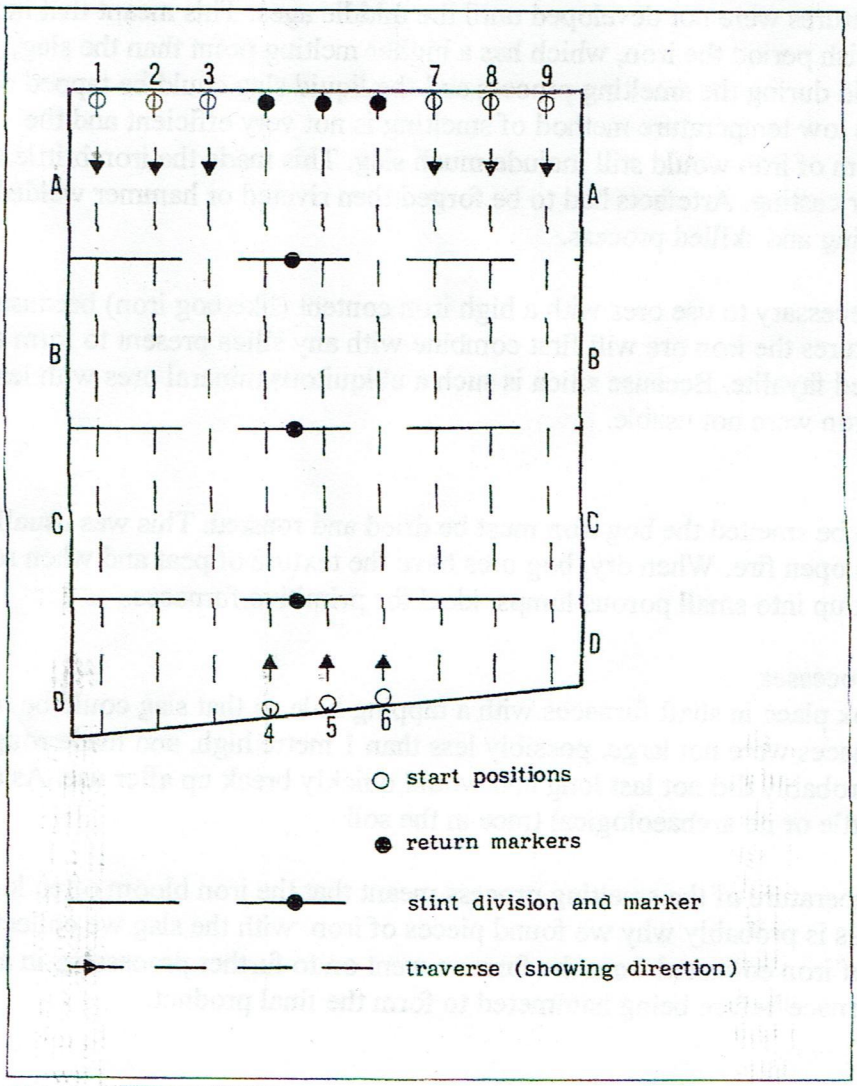


Figure 6: Pattern of Traverse and Stint fieldwalking

APPENDIX 2

EARLY IRONWORKING

Raw Materials

Walk along Longwater Lane where it becomes a footpath and look at the little stream that runs alongside. Its floor and sides are red, giving it the name of 'Redwater' . This red material is bog iron. The main source of iron in the SE Berkshire/N Hampshire area is the sands that make up much of the underlying geology. Although the sands often have a high iron content, it is not high enough for smelting. However, the chemical action of ground water may lead to the iron becoming concentrated in waterlogged areas. These concentrated ores are known as hard pan or bog ores.

The field walked had been deep ploughed, in some areas bringing the underlying gravel and bog iron to the surface

Technology

Iron has a melting temperature of over 1500C and furnaces able to heat the ore to these temperatures were not developed until the middle ages. This meant that in the Romano-British period the iron, which has a higher melting point than the slag, remained solid during the smelting process and the liquid slag could be tapped off. However this low temperature method of smelting is not very efficient and the finished bloom of iron would still include much slag. This made the iron brittle and unsuitable for casting. Artefacts had to be forged then riveted or hammer welded, a time consuming and skilled process.

It was also necessary to use ores with a high iron content (like bog iron) because at low temperatures the iron ore will first combine with any silica present to form a slag material called fayalite. Because silica is such a ubiquitous mineral ores with less than 40 per cent iron were not usable.

Processing

Before it can be smelted the bog iron must be dried and roasted. This was usually done over an open fire. When dry, bog ores have the texture of peat and when roasted tend to break up into small porous lumps, ideal for primitive furnaces.

Smelting Processes

Smelting took place in shaft furnaces with a tapping hole so that slag could be tapped off. The furnaces were not large, possibly less than 1 metre high, and made roughly of clay. They probably did not last long and would quickly break up after use. As a result they leave little or no archaeological trace in the soil

The low temperature of the smelting process meant that the iron bloom often looked like slag. This is probably why we found pieces of iron with the slag we collected. The bloom of iron collected from the furnace went on to further processing in a bloomery furnace before being hammered to form the final product.

Manor Farm - 1992

? Remains of a sunken lane

Field walking - 1999
Field adjacent to Dell Road & lower Sandhurst Road.

Dallyn Salter, Roger Black & Catherine Pelts.

Washing & sorting Manor Farm finds at Shoppenlands Farm

Marie Goodwin, Dallyn Salter, Catherine Potts & Roger Black

Washing large pieces

Roger Black,
Dallyn Salter
& Wally Chapman

Catherine
Petto
sorting
fleeces

Washing & drying small pieces

Ken & Marie Goodwin (residents of Sheppetlands Farm) weighing pieces

NEW PLACE

Visit to 'New Place' by members of The Finchampstead Society History & Heritage Group.

'New Place' (formerly 'Ridge Cottage') was situated on The Ridges to the east side of Dell Road. It was refurbished & extended from three original cottages. It was completely demolished in 2008 & replaced by 'Dell House'.

Index to photographs, all taken by Joan Betts & Dallyn Salter

65/1	North façade – portico over front entrance
65/2	North façade looking south. Garage & Cottage on right
65/3	North façade with portico
65/4	Old part of house taken from portico
65/5	West façade
65/6	South façade – new kitchen extension in foreground
65/7	South façade looking west
65/8	South façade looking east
65/9	South façade door
65/10	Change in brick walling
65/11	Old door re-used
65/12	Porch with entrance to old part of house
65/13	Fireplace
65/14	Roger Black at entrance to cellar under Cottage
65/15	Cottage wall with dated stone inset – 1874
65/16	Dated stone inset – 1874
65/17	Pump on Cottage wall
65/18	Roger Black & Rosemary Hall examining pump
65/19	Well cover below swimming pool
65/20	Opening well
65/21	Well open – Roger Black, Joan Betts, Rosemary Hall, Sharon Taberer (Owner)
65/22	Preparing to inspect well
65/23	Inspecting well – Dallyn Salter, Rosemary Hall & Roger Black
65/24	Preparing to take photographs
65/25	Taking photographs of interior of well
65/26	Remains of old pumping machinery & pipework
65/27	Original pipework in well
65/28	Interior of well
65/29	Brickwork detail in well
65/30	Bucket being lowered. Water is quite clear.
65/31	Dallyn, Rosemary & Roger with Sharon Taberer, owner of 'New Place'.
65/32	North-east garden
65/33	North-east garden
65/34	View south from terrace
65/35	View south from terrace
65/36	View south
65/37 – 40	Tomb of Bell family, once owners of 'New Place', in St. James' Churchyard. Inscriptions: - John Robert Bell, 1813 – 1882 & Thomas Bell, 1815 - 1899


65/1


65/2
M27 MCF


65/3


65/4


65/5


6516


6517


65/8


65/9


65/10


65/11


65/12


65/13


65/14


65/15


65/16


65/17


65/18


65/19


65/20


65/21


65/22


65/23


65/24

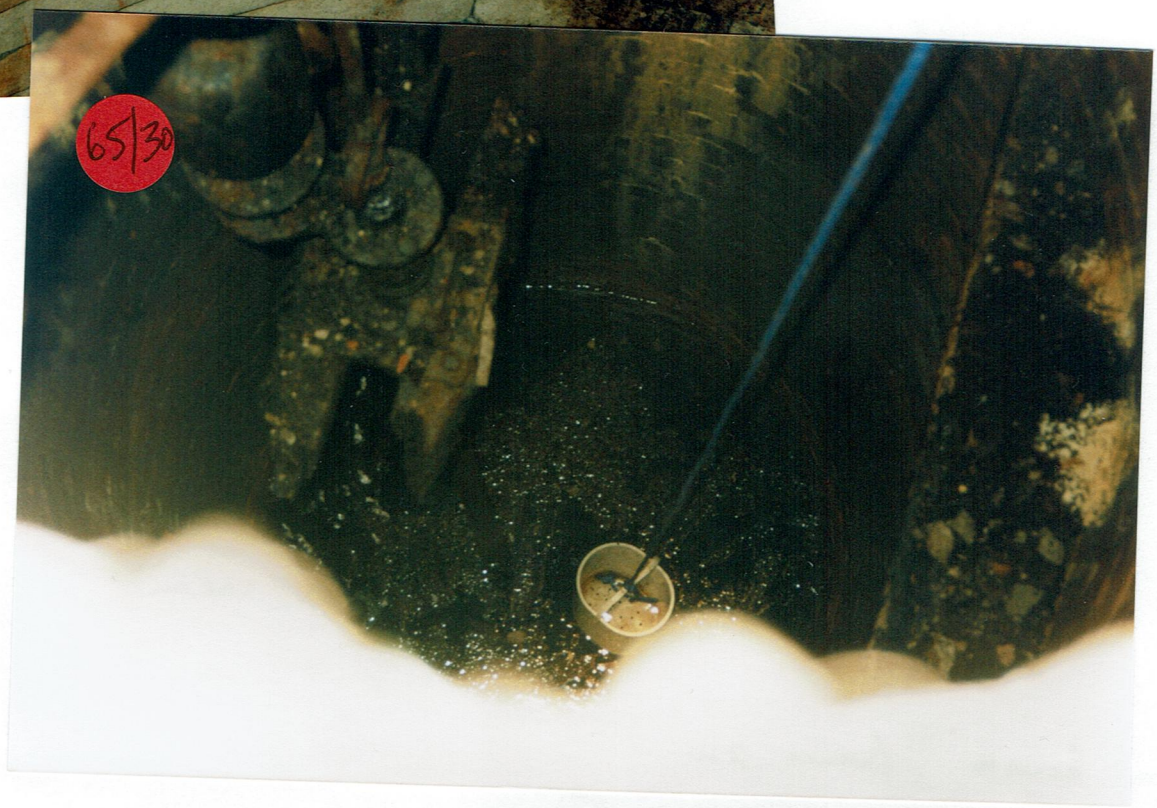

65/25


65/26


65/27


65/28


65/29


65/30


65/31


65/32


65/33


65/34


65/35


65/36


65/37
IN MEMORY
JOHN ROBERT BELL
DIED 1882


65/38
IN MEMORY OF
THOMAS BELL
DIED 7TH JAN


65/39


65/40

BANISTERS

History & Heritage Group
Visit to 'Baristers' – 2002.

3rd from L - John Bailey,
owner of 'Baristers'

Exposed fireplace

Rosemary Hossack & Diane Bailey