An Archaeological Resource Assessment of Anglo-Saxon Northamptonshire (400 - 1066)

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Note: For copyright reasons the figures are currently omitted from the web version of this paper. It is hoped to include them in future versions.

1.0   BACKGROUND

1.1   Definition of period
The period as defined from political changes runs from c.450 to 1066. The earlier 5th century should ideally be dealt with together with the Roman period but is considered here because the only significant evidence presently available is from comparison of the pattern revealed in the early Saxon period with that found in the Roman period. Even more importantly, there is such a distinct break in the 10th century, marking a clear origin for the medieval landscape, that it would be far more useful to divide Saxon from Medieval at 900. For consistency with other county papers the 400-1066 range has been used here but the period 900-1066 is dealt with in a quite separate late Saxon section and many themes will be picked up from that section in the medieval paper.

1.2   Information base for the paper
This paper has been based largely on a trawl of the SMR. This inevitably imposes various limitations on the quality and completeness of the data due to input backlogs and the lack of specialist period related interpretation at the input stage. Where possible, dubious sites have been omitted from statistics and mapping. Various specific monument and historic landscape maps have been compiled from a range of other data collected in specific projects such as the Extensive Urban Survey. No attempt has been made here to conduct a detailed analysis of the evidence or to review in detail the dating evidence from all the excavated sites, though it is clear that such as study is now appropriate.

A draft of this paper was presented to a Northamptonshire seminar held on the 2nd September. Where integrated, specific comments resulting from this meeting and subsequent written responses to the paper are normally identified where appropriate with pers.com. references.[1]

1.3   Sources of the data for the Saxon period
Due to the relative paucity of large cut features comparable to those seen in the Iron Age and Roman periods, aerial photography has contributed little to the early-middle Saxon period, with just a handful of exceptions such as the

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[1] Seminar participants: Andy Chapman & Steve Parry(Northamptonshire Archaeology), Paul Blinkhorn, Paul Courtney, Paul Woodfield, Robert Moore (Northampton Museum), Brian Giggins (Milton Keynes Council), Martin Tingle (Northamptonshire Archaeological Society), Nick Cooper (Leicester University), Gill Johnson, Jane Laughton (Birmingham University), Sandy Kidd (Buckinghamshire County Council), Tony Fleming (English Heritage), Dennis Jackson, Richard Ivens. From Northamptonshire Heritage: G Cadman, S Freebury, M Flitcroft, J Ballinger, C Addison, G Phillips; others circulated with the papers: David Hall, Carenza Lewis, Jacqui Mulville (English Heritage), Tony Brown (Leicester University).

identification of the large oval enclosure of early Saxon date associated with the high status settlement at Higham Ferrers. It is however possible that more cases may come to light once the National Mapping Programme work is complete for the county. For similar reasons geophysics has an almost equally poor record of identifying or elucidating early-middle Saxon sites. In contrast, fieldwalking has made the single most important major contribution to our knowledge of the scale of settlement in the period. However a significant proportion of sites are from survey by small number of people and hence a far more biased and restricted distribution than Iron Age or Roman sites. Metal detecting results have yet to be adequately reported but with the new portable antiquities post in the county we may expect that metal detecting finds may significantly improve our understanding. Major modern excavation has taken place on a number of rural and urban sites, on an increasingly extensive scale, but this still represents a very small sample. The majority of this work has been as part of the Raunds Area Project and in burh at Northampton. There have been a significant number of small scale evaluations and salvage recording actions.

1.4   Chronology

There are substantial difficulties with chronology in the Saxon period in the county. For most purposes as crude chronological division is all that is possible, based on the broad dating possible for the ceramics: early-middle Saxon pottery (450-850); more specific dating in some situations can be achieved where Ipswich Ware and Maxey Ware are present giving an Middle Saxon date (650-850) but these are relatively rare imports to the county and do not appear in all Middle Saxon assemblages, probably having a significant functional/status bias. At present there is no evidence for a hiatus in pottery use in the county comparable to that seen in Oxford in the 8th century, though the potential for this in parts of the county must be borne in mind (P Blinkhorn, pers. com.). There are an increasing number of C^{14} dates but still too few to have a significant overall impact. What is needed is the definition of a clear countywide strategy of absolute dating to address major chronological issues.

1.5   Overviews

The most recent overview of the evolution of the Northamptonshire landscape in the Saxon period is : Brown, A E, and Foard, G, 1998, >The Saxon Landscape : A Regional Perspective=, in Everson, P, and Williamson, T, (eds), *The Archaeology of Landscape*, 67-94.

A wider regional overview of settlement including Northants is provided in Lewis, C, Michell-Fox, P, and Dyer, C, 1997, *Village, Hamlet and Field : Changing medieval settlements in central England* while a more comprehensive but somewhat older review of the regional is provided by Stafford, P, 1985, The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages.

For the major Saxon project in the Raunds Area there is a draft monograph ......reference?

A brief overview of ceramics in the county for the Saxon period is to be found in : Blinkhorn, P, 1996, *Policy Report on Saxon and Medieval Ceramics in Northamptonshire,* unpublished report for Northamptonshire Heritage.

2.   CONTEXT

2.1   Physical Geography of Northamptonshire

The pre modern county was a coherent and sensible unit in topographical terms, particularly the inclusion of the Soke of Peterborough, right up until the draining of the fens in the post medieval period.
(1)General location within the region
(2)Relief & Drainage :
(3)Catchments
(4)Geology

2.2   Historical Geography of Land Use

(5)Historic Land use   - Woodland(Wood & Wold etc), Heathland, Meadow, Open field zones

2.3   Historic Landscape Survival

(6)Quarried/Built up, High Arable, Permanent pasture R&F, Ancient Woodland and permanent pasture former Ancient Woodland/Alluvial

Enormous variations in preservation potential exist as a result of variations in land use over the last millennium and especially in the later 19th and 20th century.

Saxon monuments: Little chance of early-middle Saxon on the largely boulder clay woodland areas but there may be

exceptions close to streams on the small limestone areas of woodland in NE of county. A slight potential in the former heathland but this covers very restricted areas (Harlestone Heath mainly, now woodland). A slight chance on alluvial areas where buried by the extensive late Saxon and medieval alluviation. Otherwise best preservation likely under ridge and furrow or under villages, especially deserted villages that have escaped post medieval and modern development.

2.4   Overview of Cultural Development
(7)Graph/model :
(8)Population graph :
Major phases and themes for the Saxon and Medieval relative to Iron Age through to the Industrial Period. Relate these to population levels.

Comparison of the thresholds of complexity and the trajectory through them in the late Iron Age / early Roman and in the late Saxon and 18th-19th century to enable underlying processes related to cultural development to be distinguished from factors specific to period. This means that it is not simply the periods of continuity whic have the high priority for investigation, it is the detailed evidence for comparison of the processes under way.

3.   LATE / SUB ROMAN (400-450 OR LATER) AND EARLY SAXON(450-650)

3.1   Summary of evidence
270 monuments on SMR from early-middle Saxon period[2]
122 from fieldwalking evidence
62 excavations producing some evidence

major excavations:
Raunds - settlement
Brixworth - settlement
Higham Ferrers - settlement
Wakerley - cemetery
Northampton - settlement
Courteenhall - four surface scatters associated with Iron Age settlement

Wider Context

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[2] This figure may rise significantly once the remaining parts of David Hall=s countywide fieldwalking survey are integrated into the SMR.

The break from European economy underlay the massive economic recession and political fragmentation in the >sub Roman= phase. There may not have been significant population decline in the earlier 5th century in parallel with this. However the degree of displacement which followed from the mid 5th century has not been determined, nor has the relative impact of immigration on population levels. In considering population decline account also needs to be taken of the potential for a quite separate major loss in the mid 6th century due to a climatic event and possible major plague.[3] After this a period of recovery may be sought running into the Middle Saxon period. The size of our sample and the inadequacies of dating currently preclude the identification or testing of such separate processes.

The question of chronology of conquest has not been addressed in Northamptonshire despite the existence of a relatively substantial quantity of cemetery and other evidence. (Is there any national or regional study of relevance here?). There is perhaps the potential for the area on the south west of the main watershed, in the upper Cherwell valley to be as late as the 6th century and it more properly belongs to a study of adjacent counties. There is the need for study of material culture to assess whether there is a chronological difference.
Catchments illustration

Continuity or discontinuity
What was the nature of the Roman economic integration? ie. what existed to be lost and what would the wider impact have been on land use and settlement?

Settlement continuity, administrative continuity and population continuity need not be directly associated.

Settlement change may be related primarily to changed economic conditions, just as occurred but on a far more modest scale in the 14th and 15th centuries in a period of plague induced recession.

There is a clear discontinuity of two forms
- loss of Roman towns, villas and nucleated settlements, largely in the permeable geology areas
- retraction of settlement if not land use from the clayland

This may represent just a restructuring of the economy rather than massive depopulation. It also must be largely over by the mid 5th century as the clear indicator of change is that early Saxon pottery is absent from the settlements in question.

61 (23%) of the 270 early middle Saxon sites known countywide are associated with Roman activity.[4] A similar figure of 25% was produced by the Raunds Survey (Parry forthcoming).
Though a small proportion might be argued to be coincidental, in general this probably represents several types of continuity:
- burial on former settlements
- continued occupation
- intensive agricultural re-use
There is the need to further explore the chronology of late Roman settlements. This requires advances in the understanding of the ceramics. Excavation on sites spanning the 5th century is a high priority. Metal detecting for late coinage on late Roman settlements, although little success was achieved in this in the Raunds Area Survey (Parry, forthcoming).

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[3] Baillie, M, 1999, *Exodus to Arthur*

[4] It is not reliable to consider the proportion of Roman sites with Saxon activity as Roman site, especially in the past, have been far more easily identified than Saxon sites giving a potentially highly biased picture.

Administrative continuity

Irchester Roman Town : early 5th century hoard associated with Roman cemetery.
Duston & Kettering : wider association of Saxon cemeteries including 5th century burials with Roman small towns. It also appears that Roman burials were found within the area of the Saxon cemetery at Duston but this evidence is very poor. As it came from observation of late 19th centruy mineral extraction. There is a high priority for investigation of the hinterlands of other Roman small towns for early Saxon cemeteries which might provide similar evidence of continuity.
(Duston : RCHM, 1985, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northampton*, 40.)

There is also the apparent association of a wic name (Weekley) with the Roman small town at Kettering, which may further indicate a degree of continuity.[5] The significance of the various wal names recorded in medieval documents as Walcot at Kettering and Walton at Kings Sutton may not be related to Walh or welsh. This has however been suggested as the derivation for Walcot at Fotheringhay.[6]

Only extensive excavation such as that at Stanwick, supported by fieldwalking survey of the adjacent areas, can effectively address this issue by examining the whole settlement and its immediate environs to determine when and how the settlement declined and was deserted.

A significant proportion of associations between sites may prove to be no more than use of the Roman settlement for burial, as seen at villas, at Stanwick, Piddington and elsewhere and at lesser rural Roman settlements such as Oundle. In most cases such associations might not produce significant surface scatter evidence and so may not be significantly distorting our statistics. Some excavated sites certainly demonstrate association of occupation, as at Wollaston and Brixworth villas and at Redlands Farm, Stanwick. However the nature of these associations is far from clear as in most cases the investigations have been on a relatively small scale. No excavated site has given a clear picture of large scale continuity of occupation.

Nether Heyford villa - finds of pot sherds and several 6th century metal objects
Brixworth villa - apparent association of early-middle Saxon post holes with one room (Woods, P J, 1970, *Excavations at Brixworth, Northants, 1965-1970*, J of Northampton Museums & Art Gallery, 8; The results of this potentially significant excavation, other than the Roman ceramics, have never been fully published).
Borough Hill, Daventry - early Saxon burial in villa or ?temple.
Stanwick villa settlement - burials; early-middle Saxon fieldwalking evidence at the north east end of the settlement (was this not accompanied by some excavated features?)
Stanwick - Redlands Farm - 3 sfbs adjacent
Aynho - villa
Rainsborough - hillfort

The origin of some medieval townships has been argued to lie in Roman estates. Roman villas or large, nucleated Roman settlements, some of which are centred on villas, as at Stanwick, have been suggested as the centres of large land units comprising one or more later townships. For example Brown notes the presence of the Marston Trussel villa at the centre of Marston and Hothorpe and a Roman nucelated settlement with large stone building at the centre of the Stanford on Avon township (Brown, pers. com.). The Cotterstock villa also lies in an intriguing central position within the complex intermixed townships of Cotterstock and Glapthorn (Foard, G, 1988, A Framework for

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[5] Gelling, M, 1978, *Signposts to the Past*, 67-74.

[6] Cameron, K, 1979, >The meaning and significance of Old English Walh in English Placenames=, *Journal of English Placenames Society*, 12, 1-53.

Saxon Evidence from Northamptonshire, in Jones, RFJ, et al, First Millennium Papers, BAR International Series 401, 259-271). The only clear methodology to test the hypothesis is the wide scale study of the relationship between township boundaries and the layout of Iron Age and Roman field systems recorded from survey and excavation. In Northamptonshire the township boundaries have been reconstructed, mainly from post medieval sources and when the NMP is complete then this can be compared countywide to the evidence for pre Saxon field systems to seek evidence of coincidence or conflict in the two systems. Wherever a township boundary is affected by extensive development then it should be examined archaeologically to seek detailed evidence for its relationship to any pre medieval boundaries.

Defended sites: Re-fortification/reoccupation of hillforts
The political fragmentation and warfare of the 5th century is apparently associated with the reoccupation and Re-fortification of hillforts in various parts of the country. Excavation at Irthlingborough hillfort indicates both reoccupation and Re-fortification.

It is possible that re-occupation at Rainsborough in the early 5th century may represent Re-fortification of some kind prior to the appearance of early Saxon ceramics. At Desborough, if the enclosure reported in the 19th century was a hillfort, may also fall into this group. There is however the potential for confusion over the nature of re-use of sites. At Borough Hill the only evidence is at present for burial within the Roman villa or temple in the hillfort. However the application of placenames clearly relating to hillforts, as at Irthlingborough, Badby and Guilsborough to apparent major estate centres may point to a wider number of sites which were refortified as the centre of early Saxon territories.

There is no evidence of Saxon linear defensive (bank and ditch) systems seen in some other regions. However fragmentary cropmark evidence which might prove to be part of linear ditch systems may be present amongst existing cropmark data and this should be considered as part of the NMP analysis, though all may prove to be of Iron Age date. The presence of the placenames Astone le Walls, Wallow Bank and Walton may also be significant in this context, though the earthworks previously linked with this are probably all medieval (Gover et al, 1995, 32).

Rainsborough : Avery, M, 1967, Rainsborough, Northants, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 33. The late 4th and 5th century evidence has yet to be adequately reviewed.
Irthlingborough : Parry (forthcoming), *The Raunds Survey*.

De-intensification
Was there a shift from a substantially arable to an agricultural economy dominated by pastoral activity? If so then was this central to the early 5th century changes or was this further developed in the later 5th and 6th centuries? A basic model could be defined on the limited parallels in the far more modest recession of the 14th- 15th century : loss of markets; loss of villas as commercial farms; reversion to less intensive exploitation based on pastoralism.

If there was a substantial change from arable in the Roman period to pastoral in the Saxon period then this should be reflected in major reductions in colluviation and especially of alluvivation in the river valleys. Paleochannels should also contain pollen evidence. What are the Raunds Area Project palaeo-environmental results. What evidence from the excavated settlements for the agricultural economy? However the fieldwalking evidence from the Raunds Area has been interpreted as representing manuring around the early-middle Saxon settlements (Parry, forthcoming).

Settlement shift from boulder claylands
Settlement in the Iron Age and Roman periods expanded onto the boulder clay plateau, though never reached the density seen on the permeable geologies. In the late Roman or sub Roman period settlement retracted almost completely from the boulder clay (Table 1).[7] The correlation would be considerably more distinct if the survey was

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[7] This data is the result of rapid digital mapping and trawl of the SMR. Boulder clay / non Boulder Clay data is based on the BGS generalisation of geology mapping at 1:500,000 (?)scale. Permeable / impermeable geology is based on a crude generalisation of geology from the BGS 1:50,000 scale mapping. Roman and Early-Middle Saxon monument data is based on a review of element records on the SMR for both periods, edited to create more accurate monument records and to remove clearly non settlement records such as Roman roads, from data on the SMR in June 1999.

completed with the 1:10,000 scale mapping to distinguish the small areas of permeable geology, though the broadest pattern is the most significant of absence from extensive areas of clayland.

The pattern is repeated in the Raunds Survey showing that other clays near streams might be chosen in the absence of permeable geology (Parry forthcoming). But Raunds Survey did recover small numbers of sherds from the boulder clay. Similar evidence from intensive fieldwalking in the Brigstock Survey also indicates some early-middle Saxon activity on the boulder clay (Gill Johnson, pers com). This is a reflection of the wider distribution of small numbers of early-middle Saxon sherds revealed by intensive fieldwalking that do not generally seem to refelct settlement, though in less intensive survey might be mistaken for settlement evidence, but are more akin to earlier Roman and medieval manuring scatters and have been interpreted as this in the Raunds survey.

The shift from the boulder clay had been completed by the time of the appearance of the early Saxon pottery. Some loss of settlements on the boulder clay had begun in the 3rd and 4th centuries but settlements remained there later in the Roman period. It may have been under way in the late Roman period or be related specifically to the economic recession in the early 5th century. This may have been part of a wider reorganisation of settlement and land use, because a discontinuity of settlement is seen in the major landscape study at Wollaston/Grendon where only a single early Saxon settlement has been found in the whole of a 3 km length of Nene valley gravel terrace subject to study over the last 20 years.

To refine the chronology of the reorganisation it will be important to know when the first Saxon pottery appears on rural settlements and to what degree this varies across the county. Also intensive metal detecting on Roman sites on clayland to provide coin evidence.

There is evidence from extensive excavation projects at Wollaston and the Courteenhall of a major restructuring of the landscape, probably in the 4th century, represented by the abandonment of some settlements in various geological and topographical locations, but the Raunds Survey has shown that although some settlements on the boulder clay were probably abandonned in the 4th century that there were others on the same geology which continued in occupation through the 4th century (Parry, forthcoming; Courteenhall excavations, pers. com. Simon Buteau).

What was the agricultural basis of the shift from the boulder clay. Did it represent the abandonment of agriculture on the clayland or was there a shift from arable to lower intensity pastoral exploitation? The best opportunities to address this issue of the nature of the early saxon activity may be provided by the forest areas which have escaped medieval and later cultivation and hence where there is the best potential for the survival of ephemeral features which have may have been plouhged out in other places. However a methodology must be defined which will enable such sites to be indetified in in such situations where fieldwalking is not possible. Also there is the need to identify any opportunities for palaeoenvironmental deposits in the clayland area, as suggested by Hall at Bozeat, which might provide evidence of late Roman to early Saxon land use change (Hall, pers. com.). Such changes in settlement and land use will need to be interpreted in the context of a wider land use pattern which extends from permeable river valley to clayland watershed as the boulder clays were presumably, as later, an integral part of a wider estate system.The ephemeral activity there in the early-middle Saxon period may represent some form of short distance >transhumance= linked to valley settlements. Any study therefore need time depth from the Roman into the middle Saxon.

		Boulder Clay	*Non Boulder Clay*	*Impermeable*	*Permeable*	*Total*
Early-Middle Saxon	number	46	221	116	151	267
	percent	17%	83%	43%	57%	100%
Roman	number	118	931	701	648	1349
	percent	31%	69%	52%	48%	100%
County	km^2	894	1466	1569	791	2360

total area	percent	38%	62%	66%	34%	100%

Settlement pattern and change

Northants, except for a tiny area in Whittlewood Forest, lies in Roberts zone of nucleated settlement, based on the 19th century 1" mapping . This is in general terms a true reflection of the medieval settlement pattern. In contrast the early-middle Saxon settlement is typically dispersed. The transition to the nucleated settlement pattern occurred during the Saxon and early medieval period through a process of desertion and of settlement expansion and replanning.

The dispersed pattern of settlement was first identified and discussed in the mid 1970s through fieldwalking.[8] This has since been pursued in the 1970s and 1980s in similar fashion in several other areas of the county (Geddington area; Marston St Lawrence; Brigstock) confirming the retraction from the clayland, except for the association with iron production in Rockingham forest. The apparently anomalous evidence recovered from Brigstock can now be seen as part of a wider distribution of small quantities of sherds from boulder clay areas which appear not to represent permanent settlement.[9] An intensive systematic fieldwalking study was designed in the early 1980s, combined with a programme of excavation, in the Raunds Area Project to explore in more detail the nature of the dispersed settlement pattern and its transformation into the medieval nucleated pattern.[10]

The Raunds Project shows a shift from the Roman to a Saxon pattern of stream focussed occupation typically though not always of twinned sites forming what must surely be considered single settlements across small stream valleys. These settlements may comprise no more than one or two farms each. The less intensively or less systematically recovered or recorded data from most earlier surveys, may in many cases be unable to distinguish the subtlety of the patterning recognised by the Raunds survey and lead to more settlements being identified than actually existed, and even in some cases confusing what appear possibly to be manuring scatters at Raunds with settlement evidence. For example this may have been done in one or two cases in the earlier work at Great Doddington and perhaps also at Brixworth. However until there are a number of such lower density scatters peripheral to a main scatter that have been examined extensively by excavation it will not be determined with certainty that there are not some features scattered across the wider area rather than it representing manuring.

122 of 270 early-middle Saxon sites on the SMR are from fieldwalking. The Raunds area (40 km^2) With c.14 early-middle Saxon settlements this gives a ratio of 1 settlement per 2.9 km^2. The whole county, comprising 2360 km^2, this

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[8] Foard, G, 1978, >Systematic Fieldwalking and the Investigation of Saxon Settlement in Northamptonshire=, *World Archaeology*, 9, 357-374. Hall, D, & Martin, P, 1979, >Brixworth, Northamptonshire : an intensive field survey=, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 132, 1-6.

[9] Work by Barrett around Marston St Lawrence, RCHME III....; Bellamy .... Geddington and Newton.

[10] Parry, forthcoming, *The Raunds Survey*.

would more than 800 early-middle Saxon settlements. The actual number of currently known sites may need to be revised down slightly if the data was subject to the same rigour as the Raunds Survey data.

Simply recovering more and more locations with early-middle Saxon pottery is not a priority except in those parts of the county with permeable geology where there is currently a low density, to determine if there is genuinely a lower density. Research should concentrate more on the study of settlement sin a wider landscape, as at Raunds, with samples being chosen which represent different regions and topographical zones, and to explore patterns associated with high status settlements, as a Brixworth and in a later dispersed settlement zone, as in the Whittlewood area (which may be the subject of a major MSRG research project). The choice of such areas needs to take account of wider hierarchical patterns suggested from documentary research and from Roman and Saxon archaeological evidence for central places.

Interpretation of surface scatter evidence is a major research issue as part of the analysis on settlement patterns and land use. The detailed character of surface scatters has been demonstrated through the Raunds survey and application of consistent recovery methodology as used in the survey is being applied countywide to ensure compatible data. The interpretation of the scatters and interpretations based on sherd distribution and density have been proposed from the Raunds Survey and testing such interpretations is a major research priority for the understanding of both settlement patterns and potentially for land use. Excavations such as Higham Ferrers, Brixworth and Upton have confirmed a close correlation of some surface scatters with settlement features (Shaw, 199?). However the quantities of fieldwalking sherds recovered from proven settlement sites varies enormously. The Brixworth site yielded 34 sherds from several re-walkings. However other sites with higher numbers and densities of sherds have failed to yield any Saxon features. Examples are at Brigstock, Mears Ashby and in the Raunds Survey. Whereas the failures in those cases could be put down to the small scale of excavation, the extensive excavation work at Grange Park, Courteenhall, on four separate surface scatters has provided interim conclusions that some scatters are not associated with any surviving cut features. This suggests that a proportion of the surface scatters may not relate to permanent occupation sites. Given the survival of Iron Age features at Courteenhall, it seems unlikely that the more typical Saxon occupation evidence would have been totally destroyed by subsequent cultivation. The correlation in several cases seems to be with Iron Age enclosures or enclosure groups, an association previously noted with a proportion of Saxon surface scatters countywide. It is possible that the scatters, numbering up to c.70 sherds, represent manuring in a cultivated field still in use from the Roman period and at a distance from any contemporary settlement or perhaps that there was temporary occupation related to pastoral activity from a nearby settlement. The association with Iron Age activity in each case at Courteenhall may provide significant common feature, for the same was also true at Brigstock. A research priority should be to examine a Saxon site on an Iron Age site, extensively in the same fashion as at Courteenhall, in the former woodland areas where there has not been medieval or intensive modern cultivation and where Iron Age earthworks survive. This might enable confirmation as to exactly where the ceramics are coming from and whether even the most ephemeral features can be recovered. Are there sherds within the upper fill of Iron Age ditches and does this assist in any way in the interpretation of the activity taking place.

Settlement character
There has been a general failure of cropmark and geophysical survey to recover evidence of early-middle Saxon settlement form, because settlements are generally characterised by a low density of features often scattered over a wide area, are mainly postholes but with some sunken floored buildings and a few pits and rarely the sort of substantial ditches which have made Iron Age and Roman sites so easily recognised. Similarly there is an apparent lack of significant variation in the surface scatter evidence. As a result at present the character and status of settlements cannot normally be determined from survey evidence. It is possible, once recording is taking place consistently, that metal detecting finds when associated with pottery surface scatters may occasionally provide some evidence of varying status of settlements. There are occasional exceptions to this, such as the large timber halls like those seen at Northampton which elsewhere in the country have been occasionally revealed by cropmarks while sunken floored buildings may occasionally be identified from cropmarks. However the only clear exception in Northamptonshire has been at Higham Ferrers where the surface scatter respected an oval enclosure recorded from cropmarks and geophysics. Settlement character is typically only revealed by excavation and there have been very few extensively excavated settlement sites in the county.

The only aspect of settlement form revealed by fieldwalking in the Raunds survey was apparent pairing of foci across small streams. A systematic study of the topographical (and geological) location of all known early middle Saxon settlements in the county needs to be undertaken to see how typical the Raunds pattern may be. It is possible that access to water resources and/or to pastoral areas associated with streams was the main factor in siting of

settlements. The pattern then needs comparison with the Roman pattern.

In north Raunds extensive excavation of one paired settlement, showed activity extending over some 16 hectares, with two foci and a degree of settlement drift within the western component and with a small cemetery in close proximity to the eastern component. This pattern may have been repeated at West Cotton though here excavation only covered a small peripheral part of the early-middle Saxon settlement. In considering North Raunds however it must always be recognised that it was the central settlement of a small grouping of medieval townships comprising Ringstead and parts of Hargrave and Stanwick as well as the Cottons and hence may be of a higher status than some other settlements.[11] Extensively excavated settlements show a combination of timber post halls and sunken floored buildings. Some sites have only produced sunken floored buildings but this is likely to result from the limited extent of investigation, as at Upton, or due to the difficulties of recovery in a salvage situation, as at Grendon. In others, such as Redlands Farm, Stanwick (OAU, unpublished), where there was an extensive excavation and watching brief, this may be a genuine reflection of the character of occupation. In some cases, for example Warmington, extensive numbers of post holes and other minor features have been recovered but largely without stratified dating evidence and although associated with a surface scatter of early-middle Saxon date the presence of later activity renders interpretation difficult.

There are insufficient extensive excavations to begin to define differences in character of settlement according to status. Even the high status middle Saxon site at Northampton has been described as being no different to other early-middle Saxon sites in the early Saxon period. The only exception is that the small quantities of Ipswich Ware found on various sites is apparently associated mainly, though not exclusively with later Saxon estate centres or middle Saxon monastic sites.

Given the current paucity of excavated evidence, a high priority is for the extensive excavation of a number of early-middle Saxon settlements, wherever they may be located, to establish a wider range of evidence of settlement character, although they will yield greater long term results where there is the potential for them to be made part of a wider landcape study as at Raunds. Research is also needed on both settlement density and on variation in the size and character of settlements over time to attempt to identify changes in overall population density from the 5th to the 10th century. Where early-middle Saxon sites are identified which are under threat then intensive and specialist geophysical techniques should be applied, as on Saxon surface scatters at Courteenhall, to establish if any method can reveal the character of the settlement, with the results being validated by large scale excavation (at Courteenhall this showed the failure of geophysics was simply due the absence of features).

Brixworth : near complete excavation of small settlement of timber buildings and sfbs : Shaw, M, 1993, >The Discovery of Saxon Sites Below Fieldwalking Scatters: settlement evidence at Brixworth and Upton, Northants, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 77-92. Ford, S, 1995, The Excavation of a Saxon Settlement and a Mesolithic Flint Scatter at Northampton Road, Brixworth, Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 79-108.
Grendon : 6th - 7th century; sfbs and pits but only a few post holes recognised but the nature of the salvage excavation means that timber post buildings could well have been lost : Jackson, D, 1995, Archaeology at Grendon Quarry, Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 3-32.
Upton : Saxon estate centre : Jackson, D, 1969, The Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon site at Upton, Northants, *Antiquaries Journal*, 49, 303-221. Shaw, M, 1993, The Discovery of Saxon Sites Below Fieldwalking Scatters: settlement evidence at Brixworth and Upton, Northants, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 77-92.
West Cotton : Sfb and other features probable outliers from activity immediately to east. No middle Saxon : Chapman, A, forthcoming, *West Cotton*.
Warmington: NA interim report
Higham Ferrers : OAU interim reports

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[11] Cadman, G, and Foard, G., Raunds : Medieval and Village Origins, in Faul, M (ed), Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Settlement, 81-100. The significance of this grouping has been questioned by Courtney (forthcoming).

Wollaston: probably two foci along a low spur: timber post buildings and sfb *1998 evaluation*; sfb and extensive adjacent scatter of undated post holes; associated with villa : Chapman, A, and Jackson, D, 1922, >Wollaston Bypass, Northamptonshire. Salvage Excavations 1984', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 24, 67-75.
Northampton : RCHM, 1985, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northampton*, 40.
Raunds village : Audouy, M (forthcoming), *North Raunds*.
Oundle: Johnston, G., 1993, Excavations in Oundle, Northants, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 95-117.

Land Use
In contrast to the extensive patterns of ditch systems recovered for the Iron Age and Roman landscape there is no distinctively early-middle Saxon land division known. It is possible that Roman field systems continued in use in some area, but the retraction of activity from the clayland and the withdrawal from some areas of terrace field system, as apparent at Wollaston, might indicate that at least part of the Roman systems went out of use. There is certainly a high level of discontinuity between the Roman system and the late Saxon open field system across substantial parts of the county but detailed study needs to take place one the NMP process is complete but this requires the digital mapping of David Halls survey of medieval field systems. There are also extensive areas of Roman field system underlying medieval woodland, for example as demonstrated in the Brigstock survey, hence woodland regeneration clearly occurred on clayland watersheds, though Foxs questioning of the character of land use in the wold areas requires further investigation to establish the degree of regeneration in these areas compared to the heart of the medieval forests. The appearance of floodplain meadow in the late Saxon period has also been suggested from work in the Raunds area, as an integral component of the open field system. Early-middle Saxon settlement, like Iron Age and Roman, is also known from some areas of medieval and later heathland, notably at Chapel Brampton heath and Dallington Heath suggesting that this medieval land use may also not have existed in the same form in the Saxon period.

Apparent manuring scatters associated with early-middle Saxon sites in the Raunds Survey may identify areas of infield associated with settlements which can even extend in more limited extent onto the boulder clay, though there is need for a methodology to be defined for the further investigation of this hypothesis. Apparently comparable data has also been recovered from Warmington. However the extent of the low density evidence from Brigstock boulder clay may pose difficulties for the arable manuring scatter hypothesis unless very extensive cultivation is to be suggested at a considerable distance from settlements. Identical survey methods to those applied at Raunds need to be applied in the forest context, like Brigstock, to determine if the patterns actually differ in character from the patterns seen at Raunds. If the sherds represent manuring, the pattern of intensive arable cultivation has shifted by the late Saxon when different, medieval related areas were being manured at Raunds. Future evaluations must intensively cover sufficient area to identify such manuring scatters while follow up recording action should address the intensive sampling of the areas covered by such scatters.

The agricultural economy which accompanies the major change in settlement pattern and character needs to be tested with both palaeoenvironmental data for the wider land use from paleochannels and with site based data for the agricultural economy from the settlements. Limited evidence from the Raunds excavations provides some indication of a shift to increased pasture with an increase inthe proportion of sheep bones (Andy Chapman, pers.com.).

Cemeteries
57 early Saxon burial sites are recorded on the SMR. The distribution is countywide but there is inadequate information on date range for most sites to determine any pattern in the distribution. Further work on the large number of vessels and grave goods may yield some evidence on the relative progressive conquest. The distribution shows a high association with permeable geologies and some distinct gaps, correlating well with the general distribution of early-middle Saxon sites. However there may be major biases in the distribution because a large number were identified during 19th century mineral extraction and urban development. Judging from experience in Norfolk where a long term project has been running, it is possible that when a far large proportion of metal detecting finds have been reported, as a result of the Northamptonshire Portable Antiquities post, there may be a substantial increase in the number of potential cemetery sites identified.[12] However the experience of Paul Woodfield (pers.

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[12] Paper by Dr Helen Geake, Norfolk Museums Service at the IFA conference . Occasional finds by metal detectorist of cemetery sites are known, as at Weston Favell in 1987 on a development site: *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 23 1991, 112; and at Towcester in 1993 : *South Midlands Archaeology*, 23, 42. In the initial 6 months of the Portable Antiquities project

com.), who has been examining a proportion of metal detecting finds from the region over the last decade, is that the number of Saxon objects likely to be from cemteries is a very small proportion of metal detecting finds being made and so the impact of the evidence may be limited.

Because of the presence of grave goods the cemeteries were a very visible type of site and so easily identified and frequently reported, in contrast to contemporary settlement remains which would be far less visible and so were rarely reported from quarrying. It is therefore impossible to determine any association with contemporary settlement. There are however several sites where close associations between cemeteries and settlements have been identified, notably at Raunds and at Wakerley, although in the latter case the scale of the cemetery may indicate that it was serving more than the single small adjacent early-middle Saxon settlement.

The apparent avoidance of medieval settlement sites noted by Taylor (RCHME, 1980, *Northamptonshire : An Archaeological Atlas*, 7) may be in part a reflection of the difficulty of recovery from village sites. Where extensive work has been undertaken at Raunds one early Saxon cemetery has been found associated with early Saxon occupation at the heart of the medieval village (Audouy, forthcoming). The cemetery at Desborough was also immediately adjacent to the medieval village, within the area of old enclosures (Foard, 1985).

At least 7 cemeteries are associated with Roman settlements, of which a number are villas (Borough Hill, Brixworth, Piddington, Stanwick). 5 are associated with Roman roads, though this could in fact represent simply an association with boundaries. Apart from this association with Roman roads, there is no obvious general association with township or other later administrative boundaries. Some cemeteries such as Wakerley lie on township boundaries but this may be a random association. Two Saxon charters do refer to heathen burials on the charter bounds, at Badby and at Oundle, though Brown has suggested that the Fawsley example may represent confusion of natural features as burial mounds. The potentially most significant association is with the high status Wollaston burial which lies very close to Wollaston township boundary, which may have been the boundary of the eight hundreds of Oundle.

At least 7 sites are single or small numbers of burials associated with prehistoric barrows as at
Lyman=s Hill long barrow, Pitsford, and at Tansor.

Although there are potentially important associations, as at Desborough with the relationship of a major cemetery to a burh placename and at Kettering and Duston with Roman small towns, the distribution of cemeteries is probably too distorted by their method of discover to yield a coherent pattern.

A major problem is that most cemeteries were 19th century chance discoveries or antiquarian excavations and although many vessels and metal grave goods survive a large number do not, there is often no accurate record of the number of burials and there is little or no record of the context of the finds.

There is however a substantial assemblage of artefact and detailed analysis of the date and cultural relationships of the cemeteries of the county is still needed (RCHME, 1980, *Northamptonshire : An Archaeological Atlas*, 7), placing it in its national context. Can any British / Saxon distinction be identified within the cemeteries, either through their content, positioning or through the scientific analysis of the bodies themselves. Particular attention should be paid to the presence of any variation across the watersheds between the Nene, Ouse, Welland, Avon and Cherwell (Thames), as this may enable the territorial boundaries and hence the tribal areas suggested for the river catchments to be tested by chronological or cultural variation between catchments. However with regard to the Thames/Ouse/Nene watershed the potential must be explored that this may have formed a distinct territory in its own right. Certainly in the late Saxon and medieval period there limited documentary evidence for a significant linkage of the Upper Ouse and upper Cherwell as a single territory based on Kings Sutton (Foard, 1985). Such studies must cross the county

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there have only been 3 Anglo-Saxon brooches reported, but it is anticipated that a significantly larger number will be revealed as contacts with metal detectorists improve and in September 1999 alone 3 separate Saxon brooches were reported to the scheme.

boundary, especially westward to incorporate the evidence such as the major recent cemetery excavation at Wasperton in the Avon valley in Warwickshire.

Only 9 modern excavations have yielded Saxon burials:
Wakerley - two discrete cemeteries, one small 7th century; the other major 6th to early 7th century with extensive grave goods.
Wollaston - high status single burial
Tansor - several burials
Oundle - small cemetery
North Raunds - small part of cremation cemetery
Aldwincle - several burials
Hardingstone - burials
Stanwick villa settlement - several burials
Piddington - burial

Wakerley: Jackson, D, and Adams, B, 1998, The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Wakerley, Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology,* 22, 69-183.
Wollaston : Meadows, I, 1996, The Pioneer Helmet, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 192.
Tansor : Chapman, A, The Excavation of Neolithic and Medieval Mounds at Tansor Crossroads, Northamptonshire, 1995', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 3-50.

Pagan religious sites
There are two other types of site which may have significant pagan associations which have never been subject to intensive investigation, these are the holy wells and the single known turf cut maze. Although recorded in the medieval period or later it is possible that at least some holy wells have a pagan Saxon origin. Two wells, at Brackley and at Kings Sutton are associated with a 7th century Saxon saint, an association which might represent an integration of pagan sites into Christian myth. A number of other holy wells exist such as Weedon Lois and at Boughton Green, to the north east of Northampton. The Boughton well is closely associated with an isolated church, a turf cut maze recorded in the 19th century and the large Boughton Green which was the site of a major fair and on which some Roman coins are said to have been found by metal detectorists (R Moore, pers.com.).

There are also a number of places with names indicative of pagan religious sites. The exact location of Harrowden has not been established, given two separate medieval settlements, but Harrow Hill, Brington, the site of a medieval Hundred moot is known. The other two places are Weedon Lois, where one of our holy wells is sited, and Weedon Bec where a middle Saxon monastery was established.

A systematic mapping of holy wells and of relevant placenames is required and a strategy of archaeological assessment defined to establish if there are any associations with early Saxon activity. Given the intensive ploughing and metal detecting which has and continues to take place on Boughton Green it would appear to be a high priority to conduct systematic fieldwalking survey on the site and to attempt to collect information from metal detectorists as to finds that have been made there, in an attempt to define the time span, extent and significance of the site.

2.3   **Middle Saxon (650-850)**
There are 24 monuments specifically identified on the SMR as having certain middle Saxon activity but of these only four have substantial excavations with two other minor excavations. However several other excavated sites such as Grendon have occupation which extends into the Middle Saxon period and it is likely that a significant number of early-middle Saxon surface scatters will indeed prove to continue into the later 7th and 8th century.

Major Excavations:
Northampton palace and associated activity
Raunds (Langham Road)
Brixworth - monastery
Higham Ferrers - high status settlement
Wider context
The Mercian conquest of Middle Anglia, which is thought to have incorporated most if not all of Northamptonshire, took place in 653. Under the new sub-king, Peada, the Middle Angles were converted to Christianity. Presumably as

a result of this independent territories became provinces of Mercia and their central places were converted to provincial administrative centres.

Administrative hierarchy
Following principles applied in other parts of the country, a framework to guide the identification of central places for archaeological investigation in Northamptonshire has been proposed in Foard, G., 1985, The Administrative Organisation of Northamptonshire in the Saxon Period, in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 4, 185-222. This is primarily based on documentary evidence supported by limited placename and archaeological evidence. As a result of this a number of settlements, suggested as central places, have been targeted archaeological investigation. The methodology is open to various challenges and it must be recognised that such estates are unlikely to have been static but may have been subject to processes of accretion and reorganisation throughout the Saxon period and not just in the 10th century fragmentation. However in this context it should be recognised the high level of stability that existed from the 10th to the 19th century in the hundredal organisation of the county. Hence the interpretations may be subject to changes at least in detail, but already archaeological investigations have yielded some supporting evidence.

Three levels of a hierarchy of administrative and tenurial centres were proposed in addition to the ordinary agricultural settlement with its associated agricultural land: the province, villa regalis and lesser estates.

X   The province : three possible centres at Oundle, Northampton and Kings Sutton, with conjectural areas of provinces suggested, relating documentary linkages such as the eight hundred of Oundle, to topographical and historic land use patterns based on river catchments:

X   The villa regalis, as identified partly from soke and manorial dependency relationships in 1086 and later and supported by evidence of ecclesiastical groupings.

X   A more localised groupings within the sokes was also suggested, notably at Raunds. This has been challenged by Courtney (Parry, forthcoming). However it may be that the presence of significant quantities of Ipswich Wares on the North Raunds sites indicates that the settlement was indeed a central place of some kind, irrespective of any subsidiary relationship to the higher level estate based on Higham Ferrers.

Provincial centres:

Extensive excavation has identified early and middle Saxon occupation at Northampton within the western part of the late Saxon burh. Whereas the early Saxon activity was apparently undistinguished from other rural settlement, the middle Saxon activity is clearly of high status. In particular a middle Saxon palace complex was identified characterised by a large timber hall, comparable to buildings from Yeavering and other major Saxon sites. This was replaced later by a stone building, with continental parallels, with associated mortar mixers and other features. There is also contemporary cemetery and other activity within the area. Williams identified this as probably a secular administrative centre and provincial capital. Blair has challenged this interpretation suggesting the whole burh represents a middle Saxon minster. Although Northampton is quite likely to have had minster functions this need not preclude secular administrative functions while the activity is concentrated in the western part of the burh and there is at present no supporting archaeological evidence for the wider area suggested by Blair.

Blair, J, 1996, Palaces or Minsters? Northampton and Cheddar reconsidered, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 25.
Williams, J H, Shaw, M, and Denham, V, 1985, *Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton.*

The archaeological evidence from Oundle is at present minimal but there has been only very small scale archaeological investigation within the manorial and ecclesiastical core of the settlement where high status late Saxon activity and small quantities of early-middle Saxon pottery have been recovered.

Courtney, P, 1979, *The Early History of the Eight Hundreds of Oundle*, Univ of Leicester MA dissertation.
Hart, C, 1989, Oundle : Its Province and Eight Hundreds, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 8, 3-23.
Johnson, A G, 1993, Excavations in Oundle, Northants: work carried out at Stoke Doyle Road, 1979, Black Pot Lane 1985 and St Peters Church 1991', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 99-118.

There has been no archaeological investigation at Kings Sutton to test the hypothesis.

Villa Regalis and other estates:

A listing of central places is suggested in Foard 1985. Multiple foci are suggested for a number if not all of the estate centres. Such pairing seems to occur in a number of cases across river courses in a similar but larger scale way to that seen in lesser settlements of the early-middle Saxon period as revealed in the Raunds Area. These foci may comprise burh (residence), demesne farm, minster and moot. For example the Irthlingborough royal estate documented in the 8th century is was named after the refortified Iron Age hillfort, suggested as the royal residence – the 'burh'; the royal estate centre in 1086 was Finedon, the meeting place of the moot while the other linked hundredal manor and estate centre was Higham Ferrers, may be the >demesne farm= of the royal estate, with the placename element 'ham' perhaps being significant here, for it has recently produced evidence of high status middle Saxon occupation with substantial structures, an as yet regionally unique large oval early Saxon ditched enclosure and Ipswich ware and continental imported pottery. It is thus essential that estate centres are not dealt with in isolation but that a series of foci are expected which may be contemporary or sequential. The early Saxon origins and the late Saxon demise or development of these sites will be essential.

Northamptonshire has few Saxon charters to assist in the definition of these estates and all are from the late Saxon period at the time of or following the fragmentation of the estates as the medieval social and economic system was being developed in place of the middle Saxon. In the absence of good documentation it must be conceded that processes of acretion to as well as subdivision of sokes will have taken place, somewhat confusing the picture which we are able to reconstruct. In the few places where the estates can be defined with some accuracy then extensive study of the development of manor, church and village should probably be a high research priority, subject to the quality of archaeological survival. By far the best example is Badby, the royal estate centred in 1086 on Fawsley (Brown, A E, 1991, *Early Daventry*.) and here it is a priority to schedule the various features, detailed by Brown et al, marking the charter boundary to ensure that they survive for future research. Other studies are suggested at Oundle and Braunston. The historic landscape at Kettering is far too severely damaged. However the documented bounds are in most cases just of the later township of a similar area and probably reflects the end of a period of fragmentation, only clearly seen in progress at Badby. Hence the later documentary sources are needed to suggest the wider extent of the original estate.

It is important to recognise the way in which estates or territories covered a balance of resources, from river valley through high arable potential permeable geologies to woodland resources of the boulder clay watersheds. Woodland resources in particular appear to be a good indicator through later manorial dependency and of layout or detached portions of townships of Saxon estate associations, as with the Yardley Hastings estate (Foard, 1985). The study of settlement and land use variation between core and periphery within sample estates has a high priority.

Saxon estate bounds:
Badby and associated townships - complex and extensive but worked out in detail: Brown, A E, Key, T R & Orr, C, 1977, Some Anglo Saxon Estates and their Boundaries in South West Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 12, 155-176 and Brown, A E, Gelling, M, and Orr, C, 1990, The Details of the Anglo-Saxon Landscape : Badby revisited, *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, 8, 95-104.
Stowe nine Churches : Brown, A E, Key, T R, Orr, C, Woodfield, C T P, 1981, The Stowe Charter - a revision and some implications, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 16, 136-147.
Oundle : Foard, G, 1991, The Saxon Bounds of Oundle, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 8, 179-189.
Twywell : Gover, J E B, Mawer, A, Stenton, F M, 1975, *The Placenames of Northamptonshire*, 188)
Braunston : Beresford, M W, *History on the Ground*.
Kettering : Gover et al, 184 and Foard, forthcoming, *Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey : Kettering*.

The examination of central places on the estates has generally so far been of too small a scale to yield significant results

The major results have come from:

Higham Ferrers :
This site has produced extensive evidence of early, middle and late Saxon activity, as discussed above (Bob Williams, pers. com.). It may have been the focus for renders from the Irthlingborough middle Saxon royal estate.

Far more limited results have come from the following:

Nassington:
Largely late Saxon evidence relating to the development of the royal manor house. This work emphasises the major archaeological research potential of early houses, which may frequently not currently be being dealt with through the planning process adequately. They represent a major research resource and need to be identified.

Passenham:
Kings army based on this royal estate centre in campaigns against the Danes . High archaeological potential given limited post medieval and modern development and survival of some earthworks. Small quantities of middle Saxon pottery indicate possible high status activity.

Brigstock:
Minor excavation. Late Saxon church.

Yardley Hastings:
Some middle Saxon activity succeeded by late Saxon buildings and major medieval manor.
Jackson, D, & Foard, G, 1993, >Anglo-Saxon Occupation at Yardley Hastings, Northants=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 93-98.

Townships
The lowest level of administrative organisation recognised in the medieval period is the township. These clearly existed in the late Saxon period as the fragmentation of the Saxon estates (see below) according to such units. The common use of the placename element tun, after a possible devolution from and early useage for major estate, would seem to place the origins of the township to at least the Middle Saxon period and this may coincide with the an apparent phase of nucleation of settlement (but see below). In the medieval period the township is typically almost coincident with the area of the common field system and that this is normally associated with nucleated settlement.

The appearance of nucleated settlements, or at least the fixing of the settlement pattern before 850, the application of >tun= to many settlements and the creation of the at least some common field systems may be associated and have taken place in the Middle Saxon period. The distribution of the >tun= settlements needs careful analysis but appears to focus on the best agricultural land and may represent the definition of the first common field systems as specialist grain producing units within estates while other areas remained pastoral. The archaeological investigation of the character and agricultural economy of early and >new= >tuns= (see below) is needed to identify where the medieval settlement and field system had its earliest origins.

Ecclesiastical
The pattern of ecclesiastical provision, in the form of minsters serving wide parochiae, dating from the 7th century conversion onwards, is believed to be associated with the secular settlement hierarchy. These minsters may be at the secular central place or be one of the multiple foci of these putative Saxon estates. Three monastic sites have middle Saxon documentary record: Brixworth, Oundle and Weedon Bec. The sites of other minsters have been suggested from medieval records (Franklin, 1982, *Minsters and Parishes : Northamptonshire Studies*, Phd thesis, University of Cambridge).

The failure to yet identify any middle Saxon cemeteries and churches outside the medieval settlements may be very significant as regards the character of the deserted settlements and perhaps the general chronology of desertion. But the rarity of middle Saxon compared to early Saxon burial is partly a result of the absence of grave goods. Any undated cemeteries should be subject to C^{14} dating. The problem probably results mainly from a very high level of continuity between middle and late Saxon / medieval churches and cemeteries. There is the need for systematic investigation of cemeteries of presumed minsters and their immediate environs, with the use of C14 dating on the earlier stratified levels of burials. Comparative evidence, as a control, is needed from churches of dependent status likely to be of later foundation. Similarly the earliest phases of the church buildings themselves need to be established. The spatial patterning of cemeteries may be important in understanding the transition from pagan to Christian burial.

Brixworth is the only site which has receive extensive archaeological investigation, both of the major middle Saxon standing structure and also of the buried archaeology of church and cemetery. The probable precinct boundary and extensive cemetery well beyond the medieval churchyard has been located.

The work of the Brixworth Archaeological research Committee has yet to be finally published.
Audouy, M, >Excavations at the church of All Saints, Brixworth, Northamptonshire 1981-2=, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 137, 1-44.
Parsons, D, 1977, >Brixworth and its Monastery Church=, *Mercian Studies*, 173-189.
Everson, P, >Excavations in the Vicarage Garden at Brixworth=, 1972, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 130, 55-122.

Evaluation trenching has located a focus of middle Saxon activity with Ipswich ware ceramics at Weedon to the west of the church, suggesting the location of the monastery. Excavations of limited depth inside the church at Oundle have yielded indications of late but not middle Saxon construction (Johnson, 1993). The only other cemetery identified in the county is in Northampton, adjacent to the later St Gregory=s church, which is in significant association with the >palace= site. At Passenham undated unarticulated human remains have been found within the medieval area at considerable distance from the churchyard and as at Brixworth this might indicate a larger middle Saxon cemetery.

The church and churchyards and immediate environs of all potential minster churches need to be evaluated to determine state of preservation and to identify early burial and structural remains. Where a high potential is revealed, and especially if there is a good documentary context for the dependent parochia then the dependent churches should be similarly examined to explore the chronology of devolution of ecclesiastical provision. Where this can be associated with the study of the devolution of manorial authority then the research potential will be especially high. Any abandoned churches, such as Clopton and Catesby, could be of highest potential in such a study due to the more limited degree of later disturbance. A clear priority is the presumed Fawsley parochia but a systematic assessment of the churches of the county and their related manorial sites is needed.

Settlement
Compared to the 61 (23%) early-middle Saxon monuments associated with Roman there are just 31 (11%) early-middle Saxon monuments associated with medieval settlements. This might be taken to indicate a high degree of discontinuity. However in the Raunds survey and other intensive studies such as Warmington, there is clear association of some early-middle Saxon occupation with medieval settlement. The apparently low figure is due in part to the to the difficulty of recovery of data due to the high degree of continuity to the present and hence inaccessibility to most survey techniques. There is also a problem of the dating of settlements to the middle Saxon period, relatively few settlements containing dateable middle Saxon fabrics which are a tiny proportion of any assemblage and likley to be status or functionally related and hence largely or wholly absent from some sites. Sites which have produced Ispwich Ware are often sites which high staus in the middle Saxon, late Saxon or medieval periods (eg: Weedon Bec, Brixworth, Passenham, Higham Ferrers)*.*

The pattern at Raunds is suggestive of a model of shift of settlement by the mid 5th century to the type of locations where medieval villages would exist. However there were many more settlements and in the period 450-850 there were new foundations of similar settlements together with a shake out of some 7 or 8 settlements from the total of about 14 to 16 to give perhaps 8 late Saxon settlements (reduced to 7 in the medieval by integration of Raunds and Thorpe) and of which possibly only one was a new late Saxon settlement (Mill Cotton). On this basis the loss rate may only be of the order of 50%, much lower than that previously suggested by evidence from Gt Doddington, Brixworth and elsewhere (Foard, 1978; Hall & Martin, 1979).

Late Saxon (St Neots ware) pottery, introduced after c850 and in large quantity from c900 is relatively rare outside medieval settlement areas but is found in manuring quantities associated with medieval manuring scatters in the Raunds Survey. Such late Saxon pottery is not found in association with early-middle Saxon sites either in Raunds or elsewhere, confirming that the medieval settlements were established before 850.
Though presence of decorated sherds may assist in the earliest date evidence for settlements the abandonment date is

difficult unless Ipswich or Maxey wares are present, and these may not exist on lower status sites and certainly not in sufficient quantity to be recoverable from relatively small assemblages. The determination of the end date of settlements is a high priority as only this will enable us to establish if there was a continuous process of settlement flux which was only halted by the establishment of the open field systems or whether there was a specific period of settlement loss. Occupation may have continued on a number of Roman sites into the middle Saxon period. For example at Blackgrounds, Chipping Warden, a former Roman villa and nucleated settlement, both a sceatta and Ipswich Ware sherd have been found. Various other settlements not on late Saxon and medieval villages extend into the middle Saxon period, hence the settlement loss cannot be associated simply with the mid 6th century climatic and plague event.

The relatively small scale of middle Saxon occupation in North Raunds, perhaps no more than two >farms=, would support a model of low density of occupation until a massive the late Saxon and medieval expansion. This is also the pattern suggested by systematic fieldwalking on the heavily shrunken and partly ploughed settlement at Grafton Regis fieldwalking survey. In this context one may begin to consider a model settlement development whereby all settlements that survive into the late Saxon period, as single farms or small hamlets become villages simply by internal expansion rather than a middle Saxon nucleation process. Hence the sort of nucleation process involving desertion of settlements and shift to the sites of later medieval villages of a number of farms, previously conceived for the Middle Saxon period on the basis of work in the 1970s (eg: Foard, 1978), now looks far less likely. However far more settlements showing continuity into the medieval need to be examined to confirm the alternative interpretation and there is still a need to compare through excavation more early-middle Saxon settlements sites which were and were not lost before the late Saxon period to determine if the surviving sites already had a different character in the early-middle Saxon period.

In North Raunds, which should probably be treated as a single settlement in the Saxon period, there is continuity of occupation in the settlement even if the exact focus shifts slightly over time between the early, middle and late Saxon. At West Cotton there is again a wider settlement set across the small stream and only a very small and apparently peripheral part has been excavated. It cannot therefore be argued with any certainty that there is discontinuity between early/middle and late Saxon activity there, especially as an 8th century C14 date has been recovered from industrial activity in the adjacent river channel. There is clearly a great deal more work to be done to explore the nature of settlement development and that even excavations of as large a scale as West Cotton and North Raunds has not provided a complete answer. The only other settlement in the county where there is so far sufficient information to begin to address the same questions is Warmington, which has been targeted for this purpose. Other example villages need to be similarly examined, taking a representative sample of plan form types, Warmington being an example of a green based settlement compared to the more regular row pattern of the Raunds settlements.

Some settlements seem to show a degree of regular planning with rectilinear ditched enclosures appearing already in the Middle Saxon period, as at Pennylands, MiltonKeynes (Williams, R, 1993, *Pennylands and Hartigans*). No clear evidence has been found of such character in Middle Saxon Northamptonshire settlements although ditches were present in the small scale evaluation at Upton but the site could only be generally date to the early-middle Saxon period. It is possible that this represents the first stages of regular planning on some settlements and this might even be associated with the establishment of hide or virgate tenements, but none have the regularity of tenement rows which typify late Saxon replanning of settlements which generates the medieval settlement plan form. The enclosures are far closer in plan form to the late Saxon Furnells manor. Such settlements would probably be amenable to geophysical survey, given the presence of ditches and there is thus the need for a programme of geophysical survey on early-middle Saxon sites to establish if ditched enclosures can be located. If such sites can be recognised then it will be important to determine if the planned settlements differ from the unplanned chronologically, being a later phase of settlement development, or whether they have a particular spatial distribution. Could they perhaps represent a localised first stage of the replanning which typifies the 10th century and be associated with some central places and refelcting the early stages of transition to intensive mixed farming and the origins of hide and virgate holdings. Where such sites lie away from medieval settlements then the relationship of the open field furlong pattern to the settlement layout needs to be determined to see if they are related. Equally the medieval settlements within the same townships need to be examined to see when they acquired their regular plan form of tenements.

Based at present purely on very limited placename evidence one can suggest that there may have been a fundamental divergence in the economic basis of settlements between the settlements in the areas of predominantly permeable geology, best suited to arable, compared to predominantly boulder clay areas in the Middle Saxon to late Saxon

period, at least until conversion to intensive mixed farming open field systems was completed in the late Saxon period. There may have been differential patterning of settlements and land use with >tuns= (now no longer an estate centre description) in the extensive areas of permeable geology focussing to a degree on arable production, while in the zones of more extensive clayland the settlements may have been pastoral settlements, exemplified by >wic= placenames. (Such wic sites may even have been found in the floodplain situation in some cases for at West Cotton the name associated with the area of the intensive Saxon surface scatter is also possibly >wic=). It may be that many such pastoral farms or hamlets acquired new names, typically Danish names ending in >by= but also occasionally >new tun= names, when new township and open field systems were established in the late Saxon period as part of a massive restructuring of the landscape possibly as late as the 10th century. This hypothesis raises the need for studies of sample site and landscapes in the two zones to establish if differential a character of settlements and of agricultural production can be recognised archaeologically.

If such a pattern was revealed then it may be that the process of village formation and open field development originated in the middle Saxon period with the development of intensive mixed farming in the core of major estates. Hence the study of the development of settlement in the immediate hinterland of central places, both secular and ecclesiastical, has to be a high priority as there may have been a different impact upon the character of settlement and land use compared to other parts of the dependent territories. Despite the problems of destruction of much of the historic landscape at Brixworth there is a high priority and potential to explore the development of the settlement in relation to the monastery through the middle Saxon to late Saxon period. It will be important that the context of the monastery is examined in relation to the extensive scatter of settlement sites mainly on the land to the west of the village. Wider investigation encompassing the core to the periphery of estates have a high potential at Fawsley and Oundle. Such study is impossible at Northampton due to the extent of urban development but the linked focus of Upton offers significant potential, not least because of its potential association with Duston Roman town. There is here the potential to see how the landscape in immediate environs of a small town developed into the early Saxon. But again there is far higher potential for linkage understanding at Oundle and Kings Sutton if they are really of same status as Northampton.

2.0   The Great Replanning (900?-1000?)

2.4   LATE SAXON (850-1066)

Of 56 monuments on the SMR of late Saxon date, 22 are excavations.

major excavations:
Nassington manor
Sulgrave manor
West Cotton manor and mill
Raunds manor, church and village
Warmington village
Northampton burh

Wider context
In many respects the Late Saxon period is the critical first stage in the formation of the medieval landscape, can only be fully explored through that as an integrated study and actually should not be separated from it arbitrarily by the political change of 1066. The beginning of the period coincides with the Danish conquest and incorporates the reconquest by the kings of Wessex in 920. There is uncertainty as to whether the Danish conquest with the strengthening of North Sea trading links or the English reconquest and the integration of a single kingdom were catalysts in the major social and economic changes of the period. The best chronological evidence so far would place the major elements of replanning of the landscape into the mid 10th century and hence associated with the reconquest, but this may be subject to re-interpretation. However even if this is true it must be remembered that Northamptonshire east of Watling Street remained part of the Danelaw with its distinctive legal and cultural character into the medieval period.

There appears little potential to explore the military action of this period and indeed only one or two examples of

certain or possible Viking artefact collections have been recorded, notably at Finedon. However again the Portable Antiquities initiative may yield a few significant results in this theme.

The Danelaw boundary appear to be largely though not completely respected by Danish placenames and there may be an important potential here to compare the relative impact of the Danish conquest on the development of settlement and the economy by comparative study of settlement development on either side of the boundary. Ideas need to be developed to test the antiquity of this boundary to determine if a pre 9th century political boundary was simply being re-used, or if this represented a new division.

The period was dominated by an interlinked process of capital investment in agriculture and urban development which forged the medieval market economy and landscape of villages and open fields, the county being geared up in the tenth century as a massive, efficient grain producing region which underpinned the major succeeding urbanisation process. There is the need here for a detailed comparison with the comparable stage of economic and landscape development in the Roman period in the same general areas. The appearance of significant topographical as well as settlement names may indicate a significant immigrant population in the Danish period, but any such population remains indistinguishable archaeologically.

Administrative reorganisation
The pre-existing system of provinces and of the villa regalis with dependent territory, recognised in some cases in Northamptonshire as >sokes= or areas of jurisdiction, was fundamentally reorganised following the English reconquest. The shire was created integrating the provinces of Oundle and Northampton and adding part of the putative province of Kings Sutton. This was subdivided into hundreds, which can be seen to represent subdivisions of sokes into two or three parts, as at Towcester. In turn the hundreds were subdivided into townships which were largely established around pre existing settlements.

The division of sokes into hundreds appears to have been matched by tenurial subdivision of the territory of the villa regalis into two or in the case of Irthlingborough three components. The hundredal manors may have been established at the multiple foci of the villa regalis. There should be the potential to study this process archaeologically through the comparison of the late Saxon foci of the hundredal manors, such as Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough to see how each changed across this critical period, if paired sites can be identified and are survive in sufficiently good condition. The origins of the hundred moots should also be considered archaeologically, if there are significant archaeological remains associated with them. Certainly a number are associated with earlier religious or burial sites, as with Harrow Hill at Newbottle in Brington (Newbottle Grove Hundred) and the Bronze Age barrow of Anfordeshoe near Earls Barton (Anfordeshoe Hundred).
OHP : Domesday hundreds and later recorded moots

Although earlier origins have been argued for townships (see above), many townships may have been redefined and subdivided at this time. However if many townships, largely on the permeable geologies at the core of the estates, were already in existence as a result of developments in the Middle Saxon period then there may have been a distinct restructuring based on the creation of many new townships in the clayland areas. Such possible new townships were probably established around pre-existing farms or hamlets early-middle Saxon origin which were then developed as villages. The new tuns are probably the best example of these new townships and possible example of this process has been described at Newton near Geddington (Bellamy, B., 1996, *Little Newton : A Central Northamptonshire Deserted Village*, Northamptonshire Archaeology, 27, 200-210). However the many other dependent named townships, particularly those in 'by' and 'wic', may also have a similar origin, with the Danish placename element perhaps indicating the chronology of foundation, to the later 9th or 10th century. Most if not all were certainly in existence by 1086.

The Great Replanning

 Settlement
As we have seen when considering Middle Saxon settlement, where intensive studies have taken place, notably at Raunds and Higham Ferrers, there is good evidence for continuity of occupation in settlements between the middle and late Saxon periods, even if there is a fundamental reorganisation in the character of those settlements and their immediately adjacent agricultural land. The small number of sites demonstrating such continuity is almost certainly a result of the difficulty of dating for Middle Saxon activity and the small number of villages subject to intensive

investigation. Because of the high level of continuity between late Saxon and medieval settlement, in a period of major expansion of population and settlement, investigations will be almost exclusively on medieval settlements. A priority is to identify foci within medieval settlements where well preserved evidence of the early-middle Saxon to late Saxon transition. The apparently relatively small size of the 9th to 10th century settlement areas compared to the medieval villages means that very extensive investigation may be needed to identify such core areas. As a result the absence of early-middle Saxon activity within a medieval settlement even after quite extensive trenching, as for example at Faxton, cannot be taken as evidence of absence. The recognition of good evidence of 10th century boundary systems should be far easier and the apparent absence of such evidence at Faxton suggests a different history to Raunds and other 10th century planned settlements, though whether this is a matter of chronology or simply of extent of planning is not clear. Also questions must be raised about the evaluation methodology applied which may need to be designed carefully to identify late Saxon enclosure systems, many of which may be unoccupied, within later intensively occupied medieval tenements.

There is a clear need for comparative large scale studies of settlements on either side of the Danelaw boundary, from different topographical zones and with different plan forms to determine if there is variation in the chronology of village planning as seen at Raunds and to establish if any such variation correlates with particular locations or types of medieval settlement. Such investigations should apply the Raunds trial trenching methodology. Sites should be targeted which sites are substantially or wholly deserted and ploughed and there the fieldwalking approach should be applied as at Grafton Regis together with appropriate trial trenching. A regional study of the chronology is required as suggestions have been made in Lincolnshire that such planning is beginning in the late 9th century, giving a very different political context for the process, though a 10th century date is seen for similar reorganisation in northern France (Paul Courtney, pers. com.).

What does seem clear is that the 10th century replanning as recognised at Raunds is quite different to the medieval addition of planned tenement rows to settlements, as they appear to have been complete rows of occupied tenements of restricted extent whereas the late Saxon process created many plots which were unoccupied and which in some cases were never occupied. However the Warmington evidence for desertion of a partially occupied 10th(?) century row in the early medieval period (I Meadows, pers. com.) does imply that the dynamic character of medieval and post medieval settlement so clearly identified in Northamptonshire by Taylor (eg: RCHME, 1981, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in North West Northamptonshire*, xlii-xliv) has its origins in the 10th to 12th century. In other words when the settlement pattern was largely fixed, except for post plague desertions, by the imposition of the regularly organised common field systems, an internal dynamic continued within the settlements themselves. It will be important to study these 10th to 12th century phases of shift within villages to determine if they reflect sub-periods of population decline, whether general or specific to the settlement in question, or if they are a reflection of wider dynamics-based random factors.

The distribution of settlement countywide is an important area of research which may shed light on the nature of the nucleation process and its relationship to the creation of common fields. Such analysis will range from the geological composition and hence land use capability of the land within the township through to matters such as settlement avoidance of major roads, notably Watling Street.

A great deal of evidence has been collected in the last 15 years on the character and especially the origins of the plan form of medieval settlements. Excavations in Raunds and West Cotton, more recently being supported by other excavations at Warmington, Daventry and Stanwick and lesser investigations in some other villages (Higham Ferrers, Rothwell, Yardley Hastings, Naseby, Culworth), demonstrate a 10th century replanning of existing settlements to create the pattern of manors and regular tenement rows which dominated the medieval landscape.[13] Raunds Furnells manor origin in the period 850-950. The alignment of boundaries may indicate that wider landscape planning began at this time. However when rebuilt c.950 comes the first clear evidence of extensive laying out of the

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[13] Soden, I, 1996, >Saxon and Medieval Settlement Remains at St John=s Square, Daventry, Northamptonshire=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 51-100. Minor examples include: Mudd, A, 1995, >Late Saxon ditches at Brookfield, Nutcote, Naseby=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 149-152. Audouy, M, 1993, >Excavations at Berry Hill Close, Culworth, Northamptonshire, 1992=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 47-62.

tenement rows throughout most of the later area of the village. West Cotton similar dating for layout of ditch system - contemporary mill established. The suggestion of a much later replanning in the 12th century at Faxton has not been convincingly demonstrated by the small scale work undertaken there.[14]

The driving force behind the replanning may have been manorial. At Raunds excavated evidence suggests that the establishment of the local manors begins in the Danish period. The establishment of possibly new manors at Raunds and perhaps at West Cotton might be suggested as relating to a division of land amongst the army, but it may just relate to a more general fragmentation of large Saxon estates. Other excavated examples of late Saxon manors are at the Saxon royal manor at Nassington and at Sulgrave. The best interpretation of the village planning as a whole is that it is following the English reconquest and thus that a significant influx of population with the Danish armies was not linked to the initial growth of the villages, it probably being a case of internally generated population expansion.

Intensive survey throughout the county has confirmed that Late Saxon settlement evidence is only normally found beneath or on the very edge of medieval settlement. Only in one area, the Lyveden valley, where an atypical dispersed medieval settlement pattern is seen, have three isolated late Saxon settlements been identified. This again confirms the high level of continuity between late Saxon and medieval patterns. A small number of other late Saxon settlements abandoned by the medieval period may be identified, as at Brigstock where a settlement with early-middle and late Saxon material lay in the south eastern extension of the township. The latter might represent a small land unit integrated into Brigstock in the late Saxon period. However extensive manuring scatters of late Saxon pottery have been recovered in the Raunds study which broadly correlate with medieval manuring scatters and similar evidence is seen at Warmington. This provides a potential for confusion with settlement evidence and the identification of isolated late Saxon settlements away from medieval occupation therefore needs to be treated with care.

If Late Saxon settlement begins with relatively small settlements, even where later villages develop then some of the medieval hamlets may have similar origins to the villages but the ability of a settlement to grow to village size may be a reflection of the size of the attached land unit and the degree to which it provides the opportunity for expansion to village size. Medieval hamlets such as Perio have very small land units which might prove to represent surviving small late Saxon land units which are remnants of the small land units implied at Raunds for the early-middle Saxon by the manuring scatters.

Deserted or heavily shrunken medieval settlements which are wholly or largely ploughed have a high potential for rapid research of settlement development. The potential of such sites has been clearly demonstrated at Grafton Regis which appears to support the model of very small late Saxon settlements developing into villages in the late Saxon and early medieval. However these sites generally tend to be marginal or dependent settlements, such as Newbold in Catesby; Downton in Stanford and Thorpe in Earls Barton, and hence represent a biased sample. Intensive investigation is therefore needed in some living villages, as with Raunds, Stanwick and Warmington. This is also demanded because it is important to examine interrelated sites in a landscape with different status, size and function. The identification of these samples needs to take into account evidence on estate patterns and other aspects of character as well as documentary potential all based on the analysis of medieval documentary sources. Much of the evidence so far is from the eastern part of the county in the Nene valley. There is the need for samples from other parts of the county. This should be to the west of Watling Street, beyond the Danelaw boundary and in the far south west across the watersheds to see if the pattern of settlement development is different in the non Danelaw area; also it is needed in more marginal areas within the forested zones to determine what variations occurred in the chronology of such settlement creation in the areas of latest agricultural clearance.

Manorial origins
The origins and development of the manor, particularly through the apparent process of fragmentation of large estates but also under the influence of other forces such as perhaps the plantation of the Danish army and the restructuring of administration following the re-conquest, is a major research theme.

The development of the medieval manor house (and of the complex of buildings accompanying it which are related

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[14] RCHM 1980, 7.

in part to the developments of the demesne far) out of the late Saxon developments is a particular component of this process. Excavations at West Cotton and especially at Raunds Furnells and at Nassington would suggest that the medieval manor house can be traced back in many cases to the 10th century, both in many specific examples and more broadly in tradition. Do methods of construction as well as layout change in the 10th century?

The Raunds evidence might suggest that the creation of the manor site was the primary phase in the process of re-planning, the manor preceding both tenement layout and church foundation. This sequence needs to be tested in other examples. Also is this a very short term process of countywide re-planning or is it more akin to the Inclosure of the 18th and 19th century where a single process took place at very different times in different townships within a prescribed framework but according to locally determined chronology.

Cotes, thorpes and other subsidiary settlements clearly have association in some cases with free people, as recorded in 1086, and some of the settlements are seen to acquire manorial status, as is clearly seen from excavated evidence at West Cotton. Another example, and very significantly where the placename appears actually to change as a result, is Chelverdescote which by 1086 was manorialised and where the settlement name was changed to Everdon (Brown, pers.com.). The way in which subsidiary settlements gained or did not gain manorial status will probably be a significant component of any research into manorial and village origins. However the complexity of the processes of settlement development and manorialisation is such that a coherent research strategy for archaeological investigation cannot be defined, if at all, until there is a systematic, detailed analysis of all rural settlement combining documentary evidence on tenurial character and placename evidence with plan form analysis.

Open field origins
The regularity of village planning is repeated in the field system, though the dating of the laying out of this is more difficult. Where such systems of furlongs and strips overlie deserted early- middle Saxon settlements then no correlation has been found between the layout of the fields and the underlying settlement, demonstrating that the field system post dates the settlement. With various of the settlements continuing into the 8th century the field system must have been laid out in the 9th or 10th century. The close integration of field system and settlement layout demonstrated in 13th to 15th century documentary sources might indicate that the two systems were planned together and hence that the field system also was laid out in the 10th century.
This remains a major research question and opportunities to date the layout by stratigraphic relationship to middle Saxon settlement or other dateable features should be pursued. It may however be necessary to seek the origin of the system in arable demesnes of the Middle Saxon period associated with major estate centres and focussed on the permeable geologies.

The presumed process of massive arable intensification, including the integral process of conversion of the river floodplains to hay meadow, and especially its chronology should be pursued by detailed study of the process of alluviation in the river valleys for the whole catchment and in the lesser valleys for specific smaller scale study area. The potential of Paleochannels to yield pollen data indicative of the same process should also be pursued.

It is suggested that the process led to the conversion of substantial areas of clayland from predominantly pastoral agriculture to intensive mixed farming of the open field system. This process being extended in the succeeding centuries by large scale clearance of woodland to extend the field systems in the woodland core areas. What is unclear at present is the degree to which clearance began in the late Saxon period. The extent of woodland in the late Saxon is defined in just a couple of area in charters but it can also be interpreted from furlong evidence of clearance names (eg: Stibbings) and from wold names, but what clearance if any occurred before the 12th century is unclear.

There are major issues surrounding the modification of the field system from long to short furlongs. The potential has been demonstrated at Raunds for the comparison of the manuring patterns of late Saxon with those of the middle Saxon and especially with that of the medieval. Can this be sued in any way to study the expansion of agriculture or of intensity of exploitation between the 10th and the 13th century?

In studying the great replanning a major objective should be to identify what features in a settlement and an open field context come through from the earlier landscape, providing any basic framework around which replanning took place. Road patterns, greens and other features need to be examined in this context. In Brackley Old Town for example a straight Roman ditch appears to have formed the boundary against which the late Saxon properties were laid out, but such features have so far rarely been identified.

The process of village and landscape replanning in the 10th century with the establishment of water mills and other typical components of the medieval rural landscape, represents as major an investment in agricultural production as the inclosure movement of the 18th century and it appears to have had as fundamental an impact on urbanisation as the latter had on industrialisation.

Ecclesiastical

Architectural evidence identifies ? Saxon churches; finds of late Saxon carved stones, most discovered in 19th century restoration can more than double this number. (ACTION: NEED UP TO DATE CATALOGUE OF ALL ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS, CARVED STONE ETC IN CHURCHES – REVIEW RCHME CHURCHES NOTES; GET INFO THROUGH DAC PROCESSES) Further evidence is provided by the record of priests in Domesday. Although there has been very limited excavation in the county to examine the origin of churches, three levels of ecclesiastical provision are represented in the late Saxon churches investigated archaeologically in the county.

Re-establishing of the monasteries. Oundle as initial precursor to Peterborough in the later 10th century. Oundle, the latter at a major monastic site and possibly indicating that the church originated is a large late Saxon building.
Johnson, A G, 1993, >Excavations in Oundle, Northants: work carried out at Stoke Doyle Road, 1979, Black Pot Lane 1985 and St Peter=s Church 1991', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 99-118.

Earls Barton appended to a small late Saxon estate centre with defensive earthwork.
Earls Barton: Audouy, M, 1981, >Excavations at All Saints Church, Earls Barton=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 16, 73-86.

It is suggested that the ecclesiastical provision developed in the same way, and very closely linked to the secular development of the manor in the late Saxon period. As population levels increased this appears to have involved the fragmentation of the earlier large parochiae of the old minster churches, which had been built originally around the territories of the main administrative centres. This was probably a long process continuing into the post medieval period in a few cases and which never reached a simple situation where each village and township was also a single parish, though this is the most common situation by the 13th century.

The one major excavated church is the deserted site of Raunds Furnells seems to exemplify this process. Perhaps as much as a century after the foundation of the manor a church was added (c.975-1040). The scale of burial (c.360) indicates that it was for the whole manor and was not just a demesne chapel. This was presumably the second church in the village, the other, the present St Peter=s being associated with the Burystead manor, which was not securely located by excavation.
Boddington, A, 1996, *Raunds Furnells: The Anglo Saxon Church and Churchyard*.

Richmond, H, 1986, >Outlines of church development in Northamptonshire=, in Butler, L A S, and Morris, R K (eds), *The Anglo- Saxon Church*, CBA Research Report 60, 176-187.

Urban origins

Whereas the origins of commerce in the middle Saxon period have not been identified, it seems likely that it was only in the late Saxon period that formal weekly markets began to develop, at least in the form which typified the medieval county (What national documentary evidence actually exists for weekly markets anywhere prior to the 10th century?). The appearance of weekly markets may have been a development associated with the growth of the market economy in the late Saxon period with the foundation of true urban settlements. The origins of the markets in the towns of the county is thus a high research priority. However it has been suggested that the laying out of formal markets was a late phenomenon and that they were not the forum for late Saxon and early medieval marketing (Courtney, P, 1996, >The Origins of Leicester=s Market Place : an archaeological perspective=, *Leicestershire Historian*, 4, 5-15). This needs to be tested. If correct then other indicators of commercial activity will be essential to identify. (But does the reference to a market place as distinct from the streets at Worcester in the late 9th century still stand? Stenton, F M, 1947, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 521.)

The majority of medieval market towns and market villages were medieval foundations. Only a handful appear to originate in the late Saxon period. This being the first stages of the penetration of the market economy which led to urban development first in the emporia involved in international trade. The second stage was probably the

development of burhs and other major centres like Northampton to urban status in the 9th or 10th century. In the late Saxon period a few other places acquired formal markets. It is perhaps significant that of the three markets recorded in 1086 in the county, other than the borough at Northampton, all three were important manors and estate centres: Higham Ferrers, Oundle, Kings Sutton. It is possible that other markets existed but were not recorded in 1086, including Towcester the only burh other than Northampton, though this is no certain indicator of urban status in the 10th century. Very little work has been done within the medieval core of any of the market villages certain or likely to have late Saxon marketing origins.

Towcester :

The burh at Towcester is also poorly understood. This Roman town was refortified in 921 by Edward the Elder during the reconquest of the Danelaw. The defences have been identified in several excavations and observations, Alexander=s excavation revealing the ditch and observation by Woodfield locating a herringbone wall construction fronting the Roman wall, but the defences are still not clearly characterised and secure dating evidence is still lacking. There is also late Saxon evidence from the church (a cross fragment) and from within the town in the form of a few mid 10th century ditches. There has not however been any significant work on the medieval frontages or on the market place.

Brown, A E, and Alexander, J A, 1982, >Excavations at Towcester 1954', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 17, 24-59.

Woodfield, C, 1992, >The Defences of Towcester, Northamptonshire=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 24, 13-66.

Northampton:

Northampton in contrast has been extensively explored with several areas to adjacent and to the north west of the >palace= having been intensively excavated revealing an important sequence of development. Other work within the burh more recently at Woolmonger Street is providing a wider picture of the layout, extent and character of the late Saxon town. The layout of the core of the medieval town appears to have been established at this time. The development of the defences has now been elucidated with two excavations on the south west circuit, though there is still only limited evidence, from Alexander=s excavation by the castle in the 1960s to confirm the conjectural northern alignment and none for the east and south east parts of the circuit.

The origins and development of the late Saxon town at Northampton were extensively studied, particularly by Williams, in the 1970s and 1980s. A brief overview of the subject as known in the early 1980s is in William, J H, 1982, *Saxon and Medieval Northampton*. The town is also to be subject to the preparation of an Urban Assessment and Strategy which will incorporate a major review of the research framework for the town and hence this is complex issue is not further explored here.

Williams, J H, Shaw, M, and Denham, V, 1985, *Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton*, Northampton Development Corporation Archaeological Monograph 4.

Williams, J H, 1984, >From Palace to Town : Northampton and Urban Origins=, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 13, 113-136.

Williams, J, 1981, >Excavations in Chalk Lane, Northampton=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 16, 87-135.

Williams, J H & Farwell, D, 1983, >Excavations of a Saxon site in St James= Square, Northampton=, 1981, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 18, 141-152.

Williams, J H, >The Early Development of the Town of Northampton=, *Mercian Studies*, 131-152.

Soden, I, forthcoming, >Woolmonger Street Excavation=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology.*

Foard, G, 1995, >The Early Topography of Northampton and its Suburbs=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 109-122.

Welsh, T, 1996, >Northampton Alternatives : Conjecture and Counter-Conjecture=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 166-176.

Communications

While substantial elements of the Roman road network apparently continued in use in the late Saxon and medieval period, there appears to have been a major new communications network created to underpin the urbanisation process of the late Saxon period. If correct, this would match the Roman and the 18th-19th century developments in communications which accompanied major urban development. These putative late Saxon roads are the >portways= recorded as placenames in various medieval sources. They appear to represent a refocusing of the existing road

network onto the burh and >port= of Northampton, just as the medieval period saw a refocussing of the road network onto the major new town at Coventry, diverting the major national route from Watling Street. The portways are very poorly identified but, based on the evidence of much later but pre turnpike mapping, the routes appear in places to cut across pre-existing local route ways. These roads are in addition to the various pre-existing roads: the Roman roads, sometimes identified as still functioning in the medieval period by >street way= names, as well as the various >saltways= and >here paths= recorded in late Saxon charters and later sources. Other routes are suggested by the presence of pre conquest >ford= placenames which in some cases, most notably Barford and Lilford, suggest a late Saxon origin for major routes first mapped in the later 17th century. The development of the communications network from its Roman origins, through any early-middle Saxon developments and the putative late Saxon phase of formal planned routeways, is a major area of research which needs to be tackled as part of the investigation of the origins of the medieval road system. A methodology must be defined which enables the reconstruction of a more comprehensive pattern of routeways and then tests this through archaeological excavation. The latter may be best carried out where rivers are crossed and hence major structural remains may be found as well as where routes pass through settlements or are associated with other monuments which offer the potential for the recovery of stratigraphic relationships and artefacts for dating.

The issue of navigation of the Nene is regularly raised in discussion of various periods. All other rivers are clearly too small to have been navigable. It is certain that navigation on the Nene was not possible in the medieval period above Wansford due to the construction of bridges and mills. However there is no clear evidence relating to the Saxon period, before the construction of most if not all of the bridges. The possibility of navigation therefore must be considered, but no archaeological evidence has been forthcoming for this and it remains a low probability that river navigation had any significant role in Northamptonshire prior to the canalisation of the Nene to Northampton in the 18th century.

SAXON COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

The limited nature of the archaeological evidence so far available for Northamptonshire makes it most practical at present to deal with these issues for the period as a whole, although the greater part of the limited evidence so far available relates to the late Saxon period.

A major research objective must be to establish the relative importance of various Northamptonshire goods in regional and national trade networks. The most probable dominant item is iron. However there may be other goods far less easily identifiable and traceable than the >hard= evidence of iron and ceramics, which will require a much more sophisticated strategy to reveal. While systematic research is just beginning to provide results on the Saxon iron industry, there has been a complete failure to tackle other industries and commerce which were to become important in the medieval period, notably grain, wool and cloth. The one exception is Northampton where evidence of a number of industries have been recovered (ELABORATE). The Saxon origins of a number of Northamptonshire=s medieval industries needs to be explored, however as the medieval evidence itself for most, other than pottery and to a lesser extent iron, has not been examined archaeologically there is a very poor base upon which to built until the medieval problem is adequately addressed. Though it could be argued that there was no significant production of goods from the raw materials produced in the county and that they were simply exported as raw materials, this needs to be tested.

The development of commerce, at least in luxury goods, may be indicated from the late 7th century development of coinage, with sceattas appearing in small numbers in Northamptonshire. This trade will presumably have focussed on London, which was the Mercian >wic= involved in international trade. The presence of sceattas in Northamptonshire from at east 5 locations is likely to be a gross under representation of actual discoveries as data is not consistently recorded on SMR especially from excavations. Moreover the pattern is likely to be substantially altered when metal detecting finds are more consistently recorded as a single detecting meeting at Hargrave produced 2 sceattas in 1999 (R Harte, pers com). In the late Saxon period there was the presence for a short period of a mint at Northampton.

Ipswich Ware, suggested as an indicator of trade, has been recovered from an increasing number of central places in the county. Several sherds of what may be continental imports have also been recovered from Higham Ferrers (Blinkhorn, pers.com.). There is no evidence at present to indicate the context of such commerce, if formally located

to sites within the county, but periodic fairs rather than the regular markets which accompanied late Saxon and medieval commerce is probably more likely given the relatively low volume of trade expected. It is possible that this activity was focussed on central places and it has been suggested as a possible functon for the large, empty early Saxon oval enclosure at Higham Ferrers (Blinkhorn, pers.com.). Alternatively and perhaps more likely, trade may have taken place at important religious foci, such as Boughton Green, where later major fairs were held (see above). A methodology for the identification of such sites needs to be defined.

Although there were no urban settlements before 900 there is the potential for industrial activity associated with some of the middle Saxon central places, both at the provincial capital or the villa regalis (comparable to Flixborough, north Lincolnshire) and at minsters. No significant archaeological evidence for industrial activity has yet been found on such sites in the county outside Northampton.

Pottery:
Pottery production is suggested at Daventry by the presence of a 6th century stamp used by a pottery. Soden, I, 1996, >Saxon and Medieval Settlement Remains at St John=s Square, Daventry, Northamptonshire=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 51-100. Wasters have been found with pottery from a site in the Hunsbury area. Jackson, D, 1993, >Iron Age and Anglo- Saxon Settlement and Activity Around the Hunsbury Hillfort, Northampton=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 35-46. The only other pottery production known is in late Saxon Northampton.

A summary of ceramics in the county is provided in : Blinkhorn, P., 1996, *Policy Report on Saxon and Medieval Ceramics in Northamptonshire*, unpublished report for Northamptonshire Heritage.

Iron Industry
The most important work is being undertaken by Bellamy & Johnson on the identification and dating of isolated iron bloomeries, with a programme of fieldwalking, trial trenching and C^{14} dating. This has already yielded important results. 10 ironworking sites are recorded on the SMR for early-middle Saxon period: most are in Rockingham forest and identified by association of early-middle Saxon sherds with iron slag, mainly at Geddington and Stanion. Other sites have been investigated: Bulwick : large slag heap C^{14} dated to the 8th century; Easton Hornstocks : many small slag heaps/furnaces of which one has produced a C^{14} date of the 6th century. Late Saxon or early medieval dates have been forthcoming from Fineshade and Oundle Wood. Another middle Saxon furnace has been found just outside the county at Wittering. Outside the forest a minor excavation near Hunsbury hillfort in Wootton has yielded a well preserved iron smelting furnace, while another was noted during mineral extraction at Grendon, both early-middle Saxon. While the Hunsbury area also produced Iron Age smelting, this would appear a minor production area compared to Rockingham Forest and possibly Whittlewood-Salcey, where late Saxon and medieval ironworking was concentrated (Foard, G, forthcoming, >Settlement, Land Use and Industry in medieval Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire=, *Medieval Archaeology*). The clearance of substantial areas of woodland in the late Saxon and medieval period should show a retraction of the iron industry between the early Saxon and medieval, at least in peripheral area and this may be what is seen in the Hunsbury area.

There is as yet no significant evidence as to whether any significant proportion of the iron and other metal object in use in the county in the Saxon period were produced in the county, though as regards iron it seem highly likely that the raw material was reprocessed to some degree within the county of not on a large scale for export elsewhere.

Jackson, D, 1993, >Iron Age and Anglo- Saxon Settlement and Activity Around the Hunsbury Hillfort, Northampton=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 35-46.

Charcoal burning
In the medieval period a large scale charcoal industry accompanied the iron industry. A similar association is to be expected in the Saxon period. Several of the hundreds of charcoal burning clamps identified by aerial survey have been dated to the medieval period, but a range of sites need to be tested to establish if any are of Saxon date.

Wool and cloth
The sunken floored building at Upton was clearly a weaving shed. However very limited investigation has been focussed on the overall balance of the agricultural economy of the early and middle Saxon period to determine the relative importance of sheep in the economy. Given the high importance of sheep in the county following the late medieval recession there is a good probability that a similar focus may have occurred following the massive

recession of the 5th century. Such an agricultural focus may have supported a significant production of cloth in the Saxon period, with export of cloth and especially of wool being a major component of the medieval economy of the county.

Grain
The importance of grain in the medieval economy of the county is clear, the central province of England being a major grain producing region underpinning the urbanisation elsewhere. It will be important to determine the degree to which similar production occurred in the Roman period but was lost in the Saxon. The chronology and location of the transition in the middle and especially late Saxon period will be a high priority

Stone
Though timber was the main material in use in the period for construction purposes, there are at least three excavations which have yielded stone buildings: from the Middle Saxon there is Brixworth church, while the second phase of the >palace= at Northampton could date from the Middle or Late Saxon, though the use of reclaimed rather than newly quarried stone is suggested and this may have continued to be dominant into the Late Saxon (Sutherland, 1990). The >palace= site also yielded evidence of the mortar mixers associated with the construction of the building. From the Late Saxon there are a range of Saxon churches still standing while the excavated church at Raunds Furnells would suggest a large number of other stone churches, though mainly on the site of surviving churches, await recognition from archaeological evidence.

The other major recorded use is in the production of stone crosses, grave markers and other sculpture, some of which may derive from the county. (NEED TO REVIEW LITERATURE ON SAXON SCULPTURED STONE - CRAMP etc)

Other industries
Flax retting has been identified at West Cotton and has been C^{14} dated to mid C8th.
?Bone and horn working?