An Anglo-Saxon Enclosure at Copsehill Road, Lower Slaughter: excavations in 1999

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INTRODUCTION

During October and November 1999 Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT), now Cotswold Archaeology (CA), carried out an archaeological excavation of land adjacent to Church View, Copsehill Road, Lower Slaughter, prior to the redevelopment of the site for housing. The site, centred on O.S. Nat. Grid SP 16502267 (Fig. 1), lies at a height of c.138 m above O.D. close to the centre of the village of Lower Slaughter, on a gravel terrace 100 m to the north of the Slaughter Brook (Fig. 2). To the south, Church Farm House dates from the 17th century and the surrounding farm complex includes 18th-century and later buildings. The farmyard was used as a builders’ yard until 1994, after which a number of buildings on the site were demolished and a quantity of topsoil was imported.

The excavation followed an earlier field evaluation (OAU 1994) requested by the local planning authority as the site lay close to the parish church and at the centre of the historic village, a location where archaeological remains might be expected to survive. The evaluation identified a series of ditches crossing the northern part of the site and containing Roman and later medieval pottery, and part of a cobbled surface, possibly later medieval in date, in the southern part of the development area. The results warranted further investigation prior to redevelopment, and a programme of archaeological excavation was subsequently carried out by CAT in 1999, commissioned by the landowner, Mr. A.T. Wheeler. The excavation was secured as a condition of planning permission granted by Cotswold District Council, and undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by Gloucestershire County Council.

Within this report the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ is used to describe the early medieval period from A.D. 410 to 1066, and is subdivided into the Early Saxon (A.D. 410 to 650),
Middle Saxon (A.D. 650 to 850) and Late Saxon (A.D. 850 to 1066) periods. The term 'later medieval' refers to the post-Norman Conquest period. In the pottery descriptions, ‘Saxon’ is synonymous with ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘medieval’ refers to the post-Conquest period. In view of the important Anglo-Saxon remains that were revealed during the course of the excavations, details of the known early documents relating to Lower Slaughter are discussed to provide a historical context.

Archaeological Background

The excavation area lies in the historic core of the village of Lower Slaughter. The locality is well known for its archaeological remains, which have been summarised recently by Timby (1998, 384-9). Evidence of Iron-Age and Roman activity is particularly apparent, including the Iron-Age enclosure at Salmorsby Camp and the Roman settlement on the Fosse Way at Bourton-on-the-Water, both about 2 km to the south of Lower Slaughter (Fig. 1). The village lies close to the line of three Roman roads. Ryknild Street passes less than 500 m to the east and Buckle Street lies just over 1 km to the south-west. Both meet the Fosse Way, which passes about 1 km to the south-east of the village. A substantial Iron-Age and Roman settlement, including a possible religious site, was uncovered in 1954 at the Chessels, 1 km to the east of the village. A number of Roman burials and a Roman building have also been discovered nearby, and two enclosures of probable Iron-Age or Roman date have been identified from cropmarks within a kilometre of the village (Fig. 1).

Prior to 1999, no Anglo-Saxon remains had been discovered in the immediate vicinity of the site, although evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity had been recorded close to the Fosse Way (Fig. 1). This evidence includes a single sunken-featured building (SFB) excavated in 1931 and containing Anglo-Saxon potsherds and pieces of clay loomweights (Timby 1998, 359; Dunning 1932), eight burials with associated finds excavated in 1958 (Timby 1998, 376), and a coin dating to the reign of King Ecgberht of Wessex (A.D. 802-39) found at Slaughter Bridge in 1957 (Blunt 1957, 467).

The only known medieval building in the village is the church of St. Mary, which stands less than 100 m to the south-east of the site (Fig. 2). Although substantially rebuilt in the 19th century, the church retains one arcade of transitional Norman columns (Verey and Brooks 1999, 461).
Historical Background

Pre-Conquest and Domesday by Michael Hare

The historical record shows that the medieval settlement at Lower Slaughter was of considerable importance in the local landscape. Domesday Book records two manors by the name of Slaughter. Firstly, there was a manor assessed at 7 hides which belonged to the king both in 1066 and 1086 and which can be identified as Lower Slaughter. Secondly, there was a manor of 3 hides, identifiable as Upper Slaughter, which was held in 1086 by Roger de Lacy. Before the Conquest there were two manors in Upper Slaughter, held by Offa and by Leofwine (Moore 1982, 1:10, 39:20; Elrington 1965, 129-30, 136-7; Moore 1990, 120). The place-name evidence and the assessment at a total of 10 hides suggest the existence of a single earlier estate of Slaughter. Later evidence, such as the intercommoning between the two Slaughters, points in the same direction (Elrington 1965, 130-1, 137-8).

The most significant evidence relating to Slaughter in the pre-Conquest period is found in a source from Ely, the *Libellus quorundam insignium operum beati Æthelwoldi episcopi*. This text is an account of the acquisition of the endowment of Ely Abbey at the time of its refoundation by Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester in A.D. 970, and of the defence of that endowment in the troubles which followed the death of King Edgar in A.D. 975. In its present form the *Libellus* is an early 12th-century translation into Latin of Old English material composed c. A.D. 990 (Kennedy 1995, 131-4). The reference to Slaughter occurs in the report of a dispute concerning 40 hides of land at Hatfield (Hertfordshire) between the abbey of Ely, and Ealdorman Æthelwine of East Anglia and his brothers (Blake 1962, 79-80; translation: Fairweather 2005, 103-4). The details of the case are complex and not relevant for present purposes; what is important is that the forum for the resolution of the dispute was an assembly held at Slaughter. The relevant part of the report reads:

‘Acta sunt hec in loco qui dicitur Slothre coram Alfero alderman et Edelwino ac Æ lurico cyld ... et coram tota gente que cum eis erat.’

‘These matters were enacted in the place which is called Slaughter before Ealdorman Ælfhere and Æthelwine and Ælfric cild...and before the whole people present with them.’

The proceedings can be dated between Edgar’s death in A.D. 975 and Ealdorman Ælfhere’s death in A.D. 983. The identification of the Gloucestershire Slaughter as the site of the
assembly seems assured; there are no other suitable places with the same name, while Gloucestershire was within the ealdordom of Ælfhere who presided over the meeting.

The proceedings at Slaughter have properly been seen as a ‘national’ assembly, a meeting of the great and the good of the English kingdom (Kennedy 1995, 135). Two of the participants, Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia and Ealdorman Æthelwine of East Anglia, were among the most powerful men in England during the period when Edgar’s young sons succeeded him, first Edward the Martyr (A.D. 975-8) and then Æthelred II (A.D. 978-1016). The rivalry between Ælfhere and Æthelwine was a dominant factor in the politics of these years. Ælfric cild was Ælfhere’s brother-in-law and was to succeed him as ealdorman of Mercia in A.D. 983. The Æthelwine (to be distinguished from the ealdorman of the same name) who is listed as presiding along with Ælfhere and Ælfric is unidentified, but may have been the son of Ealdorman Æthelmær of Wessex (Williams 1981, 165). It is unlikely that the Slaughter assembly was solely concerned with the Hatfield dispute, but there is no indication as to what other business may have been on its agenda. It is also uncertain whether other assemblies of similar character ever took place at Slaughter.

Further information about pre-Conquest Slaughter can be gleaned from the records of Evesham Abbey, which at the time of Domesday Book had extensive landholdings in Salmonsbury Hundred, including the manor of Bourton-on-the-Water, adjoining Slaughter to the south-east (Moore 1982, 12:3). From the Evesham archive there are two charters, both generally accepted as authentic, with boundary clauses of Bourton. The first charter is of King Offa dated A.D. 779, granting land at Salmonsbury to a certain Dudda (Sawyer 1968, no. 114). The second is a charter of King Eadred dated A.D. 949, granting land at Bourton to one Wulfric miles (ibid. no. 550). Both boundary clauses mention Slaughter Ford at the north-west corner of Bourton: slohtranford in the earlier charter, wið slohterford in the later charter (Birch 1885-93, no. 230; Kemble 1839-48, no. 1360). The spot is marked today by Slaughter Bridge. In all likelihood the ford took its name from the nearby settlement, which by A.D. 779 was probably already known as Slaughter.

In the post-Conquest period Evesham Abbey apparently believed that it had some claim to at least part of the Slaughters dating back to the pre-Conquest period. The early 13th-century History of the Abbey of Evesham includes a list of benefactions, in which King Berhtwulf of Mercia is recorded to have given Pebworth, Quinton and Slaughter to the abbey in A.D. 774 (Sayers and Watkiss 2003, 134). In fact Berhtwulf was king of Mercia from A.D. 840 to c.A.D. 852, and a 12th-century Evesham cartulary contains a charter dated A.D. 840 by which Berhtwulf gave land to Evesham at Quinton, Pebworth and Mappleborough (but not Slaughter).
There are many suspicious features to this charter and it is likely that it is spurious (Sawyer 1968, no. 191; Birch 1885-93, no. 453). The same cartulary preserves a list, compiled c.1097, of lands that Evesham lost around 1078 due to the actions of Bishop Odo of Bayeux. The list includes Quinton and Upper Slaughter, noting them as held by Hugh de Lacy (Darlington 1993, 186-90). The Evesham scribes presumably had some documentation mentioning Slaughter in their possession, but the surviving evidence is insufficient to make any accurate assessment of Evesham’s claims.

The issue of Evesham’s interest in the Slaughters is also relevant to the status of Lower Slaughter’s church, which was a chapel-of-ease to the parish church of Bourton-on-the-Water (Elrington 1965, 132-3). There was a priest at Bourton in 1086, and Evesham was in possession of Bourton by 1066 (Moore 1982, 12:3). Evesham claimed that Bourton was part of its foundation endowment, but it is unlikely that the abbey was in possession of Bourton before the second half of the 10th century (Dumville 1992, 41). It is uncertain whether the subsidiary status of the chapel at Lower Slaughter vis-à-vis Bourton should be attributed to a time when both were royal estates or to a time when both were Evesham estates, or whether indeed some other scenario should be considered.

Mention should be made of the place-name Slaughter, which it is generally agreed derives from an unrecorded Old English word slōhtre. The first element is slōh, ‘slough’ or ‘muddy place’ (as in Slough, Buckinghamshire), and the meaning ‘muddy place’ has indeed been proposed for the Gloucestershire Slaughter (Ekwall 1960, 426). The precise meaning of the name is uncertain. ‘Ditch, ravine, deep channel’ have all been suggested as being ‘topographically appropriate to the stream valley near the villages of Upper and Lower Slaughter’ (Gelling and Cole 2000, 62), but the Slaughter Brook (not its ancient name) does not run in a deep channel and its valley only acquires something of the character of a ravine above Upper Slaughter. It may not be fanciful to suggest that the name refers specifically to the ditched enclosure identified during excavation.

Later Medieval

The settlement at Lower Slaughter continued as a royal manor well into the post-Conquest period. It is known to have provided pensions for servants of the king from the mid 12th century, although rival claimants to the estate made this a far from secure income during the reign of King John in the early years of the 13th century (Warmington 1986). Importantly, a ‘king’s hall’ is recorded in 1237, when the sheriff was ordered to have it repaired; the location
of this building is believed to have been on the site of the present 17th-century Church Farm House (VCH 1965, 129).

Domesday Book records that Slaughter lay within the hundred of Salmonsbury (Moore 1982, 10) but by 1189 it was part of a larger hundred of Slaughter. It seems likely that the Iron-Age hillfort of Salmonsbury Camp in Bourton-on-the-Water (Fig. 1) once served as the hundredal meeting place, although Slaughter was clearly of importance as the site of later hundred courts (Elrington 1965, 2-6).

Excavation Methodology

The excavation areas (North Area and South Area: Fig. 3) corresponded with those areas of archaeological potential (identified from the evaluation) that would be disturbed during development. Much of the remainder of the property, although of potential archaeological interest, was either occupied by standing buildings or, in the case of the garden, did not suffer any disturbance.

Fieldwork commenced with the mechanical removal of the modern topsoil, subsoil, and modern demolition debris to a depth at which in-situ archaeological deposits could be identified. Between 0.3 and 0.5 m of overburden was removed, after which the excavation areas were hand-cleaned and recorded. Features cut into the natural gravel were then excavated by hand, and a number of transects, each up to 1.5 m wide, were dug across a series of ditches exposed in the North Area (Figs. 3 and 4). Deposits and ditches exposed in each of these transects were individually numbered and recorded. The ditches were then traced across transects, where possible, and were given generic letter codes, which form the basis of the following description. The North Area had been considerably affected by intrusive modern features (see Fig. 3), which were not excavated except where the intrusions were very small and easily removed or where they obscured important features or relationships.
EXCAVATION RESULTS

It was apparent during excavation that the quality of stratigraphic information available from the site was relatively poor. Nearly all significant features were ditches, many of which were intercutting and with similar profiles and infilling deposits. Chronological separation and phasing of these features on the basis of stratigraphy were therefore limited, as was the use of datable artefacts due to their scarcity and similarity of character. The identification of ditches continuing from transect to transect was also sometimes uncertain. Additionally, modern disturbance had truncated all but the lower parts of most ditches and in some areas had removed them altogether. However, slight differences of alignment between groups of ditches, in conjunction with the limited stratigraphic evidence, has allowed a chronological sequence for the ditches to be postulated.

Radiocarbon dating, in conjunction with the limited dating evidence, indicates that these phases of ditch construction were undertaken during the Anglo-Saxon period. In the South Area, a series of later medieval features were also identified, forming a separate phase of activity. The dating of the site and the likely residuality of much of the pottery are discussed in more detail later, and further information is presented in the appendices regarding the pottery (Appendix 1), the radiocarbon dating (Appendix 2), the metalwork (Appendix 3), the metallurgical residues (Appendix 4), the worked stone artefacts (Appendix 5), the flint (Appendix 6), the animal bone (Appendix 7) and the charred plant remains (Appendix 8).

Period 0: residual prehistoric material

Evidence of prehistoric activity was limited to four small pieces of worked flint (none more than 5 g in weight) found as residual material in later features. It is not likely that these pieces reflect significant prehistoric activity on the site.

Period 1: possible Roman

A number of heavily truncated (and therefore relatively shallow) features were observed in the North Area. By their direct truncation or their location and orientation they appeared to pre-date all later activity on site (Fig. 5). In the west, two narrow gullies (144 and 224) ran perpendicular to the later ditches. Gully 127, which was similar in character and also undated, may also belong to this period. To the north-east, a number of shallow features (147, 246, 248 and 356) were excavated, which together appeared to represent the southern
end of a rectangular enclosure or structure, about 8 m wide. The irregular profile of these features, which included possible postholes along their length, suggested that these may have been construction trenches for a building. No dating was recovered from these features, but it is likely that they were all associated with the Roman activity evident from the pottery assemblage recovered from the site as a whole.

**Period 2: Anglo-Saxon**

The principal discovery from the excavation was a complex sequence of shallow intercutting ditches (Fig. 6), mostly of a ‘U’-shaped profile between 0.5 and 1.0 m in depth (Fig. 8) and containing both Late Roman and Saxon pottery. Twenty-three of these ditches were identified in the North Area and were given the generic code letters A to W. The majority of them ran from north-west to south-east and most appeared to curve southwards at the eastern and western edges of excavation. The ditches delineated the northern end of an enclosure that had been subjected to periodic recutting and occasional realignment. Four similar ditches were identified running along the western edge of the South Area. These appeared to represent the continuation of the ditches from the western side of the North Area, although it was not possible to identify individual ditches continuing from one area to the other. A separate series of generic code letters, SA to SD, was allocated to these southern ditches.

Five phases of ditches were identified based on the limited stratigraphy, dating evidence and spatial relationships.

**Phase 2.1**

The earliest phase appeared to be represented by eight ditches (G to N) in the North Area. The four South Area ditches (SA to SD) were interpreted as continuations of these features. Stratigraphically, the earliest ditch was N, followed by L, M, K, J and I. Ditch H superseded both J and G, but the relationships between ditches H and I, and between G and the other six ditches, could not be established. A total of 56 sherds of pottery was recovered from these ditches. Of these, 48 were Roman, with only seven Saxon sherds (and one intrusive post-medieval sherd) present. The Saxon sherds were evenly distributed within the ditches of this phase. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained from samples of bone recovered from ditches H (twice) and N, all of which produced dates of between 650 and 960 cal. A.D. Despite the quantity of Roman pottery recovered, the radiocarbon dates indicated that this primary episode of enclosure construction and recutting dated from the Middle to Late Saxon period or, allowing for residuality of the bone, possibly sometime later. Other finds from the
Phase 2.1 ditches included part of a Roman quernstone, an iron nail shaft and several fragments of burnt stone.

**Phase 2.2**
To the north of the Phase 2.1 ditches was a pair of ditches, E and F. These followed a similar alignment to the Phase 2.1 group and appeared to continue westwards as ditches S and T, which cut across the Phase 2.1 ditches at the western edge of the North Area. Stratigraphically, ditches E and T preceded ditches F and S respectively. No chronological separation between Phases 2.1 and 2.2 was discernible from the artefactual material. Ten sherds of pottery were recovered from Phase 2.2 contexts; nine Roman and one Saxon. Evidence suggesting possible metal working was also recovered from these ditches, including a small piece of slag from S and a fragment of vitrified furnace lining from F, although like most of the pottery this could also have been residual.

**Phase 2.3**
All of the Phase 2.1 and 2.2 ditches were interrupted by two ditches (Q and R) lying on a different orientation (Fig. 6). Aside from their alignment, these ditches were very similar to the other Period 2 ditches. Excavation yielded a similar pottery assemblage to that from the preceding phases; ten sherds of pottery, of which eight were Roman and two Saxon. Radiocarbon dating obtained from bone recovered from ditch Q produced a date range of 610–880 cal. A.D., also indicating a Middle Saxon date or, if the bone was residual, sometime later.

**Phase 2.4**
Ditches Q and R appeared to have been crossed by two later ditches, O and P, which resumed the alignment of Phases 2.1 and 2.2, but lay a little further to the south. Ditch O preceded ditch P. At the western end of the trench, both were replaced by a broad ditch, W. Another small pottery assemblage of nine sherds was recovered from these ditches, of which one sherd was Saxon and the remainder Roman. A single fragment of worked building stone was also found in ditch W and an iron nail was recovered from ditch O, although this may have been intrusive (or residual).

**Phase 2.5**
Other ditches were exposed along the northern edge of the North Area. Ditches A to D were uncovered in the east, while on the western side ditches U and V extended beyond the excavation area with no evidence of a southward turn. No stratigraphic relationships were apparent between these ditches, and their location and alignment appeared to represent a
separate phase of activity. A copper-alloy hooked tag, probably dating to between A.D. 850 and 1000, was recovered from Ditch V, suggesting that these ditches were of Late Saxon date. A number of irregular features were uncovered to either side of ditch V, possibly associated postholes, one of which (?posthole 036) yielded a sherd of Saxon pottery.

Enclosure interior and use
Although much of the interior of the area enclosed by (i.e. to the south of) the Period 2 ditches was disturbed by modern intrusions, two shallow oval pits (110 and 171) were identified. Both have been interpreted as Anglo-Saxon (Period 2) features, although the only dating evidence retrieved was a single sherd of 4th-century pottery from pit 110.

An assemblage of 755 bone fragments was recovered from the Period 2 ditches. The bone represents a range of domestic animals and birds commonly associated with sites from both the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, although the assemblage was too small for significant conclusions to be drawn from it. Environmental samples were taken from the deposits within several of the ditches, but while these produced amounts of preserved grain and small mammal and amphibian bones, the assemblages were too small to merit further study.

Period 3: later medieval/post-medieval
A number of later medieval or post-medieval features were exposed in the South Area. A 4-m length of limestone wall (1005) in the section on the south-western side of the excavation (Fig. 7; Fig. 9, section 4) survived up to three courses high and had sherds of both Late Roman and later medieval pottery built into it. The best preserved section of this wall sealed ditches SA and SB, perhaps the result of subsidence into the ditches below. On the eastern side of the South Area a compacted crushed stone surface (1047) was laid directly over the natural gravel. Cut through this surface was a shallow pit (1070), which in turn was sealed by a surface of small rounded cobbles (1046). It is likely that this surface formed part of the cobbled area (2/7) revealed in evaluation trench 2, beyond the eastern limit of excavation. Just to the north of these surfaces a stone-lined well (1092) was identified. Excavation of the uppermost 1.5 m of the well infill (1091) yielded 17th- or early 18th-century pottery. The relationship between well 1092 and surface 1034 was obscured by a modern pipe trench.
Period 4: modern

A substantial portion of the North Area was truncated by modern intrusions, mostly a result of the builders’ yard which occupied the site until 1994. The South Area was generally less badly affected, although a service trench and a series of modern postholes were apparent from the modern ceramic, broken glass and other modern debris contained in their fills.

INTERPRETATION

The principal features of Period 2 clearly represented a ditched enclosure of some longevity, reflected in both the number of episodes of recutting of the ditches and in changes of alignment. Radiocarbon dating indicates that the enclosure was constructed in the Middle Saxon period at the earliest, but the vast majority of the pottery recovered from the ditches was Late Roman, and most of the few Saxon potsherds recovered could also pre-date the Middle Saxon period. There are, however, additional reasons why the enclosure must be regarded as Anglo-Saxon, rather than as a Late Roman enclosure with Saxon material coming from the upper deposits of redundant ditches.

Period 2: phasing and dating

The similarity of fills and degree of intercutting between the Period 2 ditches introduced a level of uncertainty both in the allocation of some artefactual material to particular features and, by extension, in the stratigraphic sequence. It is unlikely, however, that this has had a significant effect on the overall phasing of the Period 2 ditches. Table 1 presents the degree of certainty associated with the allocation of each dated Period 2 context to the Period 2 ditches and phases. It shows that, although it was unclear from which ditch many of the dated contexts had come, there was rarely uncertainty over which Phase.

Significantly, all samples of bone used for radiocarbon dating came from securely stratified contexts, one of which (079 from ditch Q) also yielded Saxon pottery. Although Roman material was recovered from most of the ditches, Saxon pottery was well distributed through the stratigraphic sequence, usually alongside this earlier material and mostly from securely phased contexts. Saxon potsherds and metal artefacts, and animal bone, were retrieved from the primary deposits of three of the five phases identified, including ditch N, the earliest ditch identified in Phase 2.1.
Period 2 must therefore be considered to be of Anglo-Saxon date, and all the Roman potsherds recovered from these ditches were therefore residual. This is supported by the relatively small average size of the Roman sherds, which is indicative of material from disturbed (and hence non-primary) deposits. Furthermore, the overall quantity of pottery from the ditches is smaller than might be expected if these really were Roman features.

Some Period 2 contexts contained only Roman material. This is accounted for by the generally extremely small quantity of pottery produced by the site as a whole. Only 199 sherds were recovered from the excavation and evaluation combined. Typically, individual contexts contained no pottery at all, a minority one or two sherds, and a few a larger number. Against this background the fact that Saxon material, which forms less than 9% of the assemblage (17 out of 199 sherds) is not represented in some Period 2 deposits where Roman material is present should not be considered diagnostic. Indeed, two of the radiocarbon samples came from deposits which yielded only Roman pottery. In the three cases where post-medieval material was apparently recovered from ditches ascribed to Period 2 (ditches SA, O and C), this was later attributed to contamination by recognised intrusive features.

**Site Development**

The enclosure may be Anglo-Saxon but the presence of a significant quantity of residual Roman pottery indicates that activity took place on or in the vicinity of the site during this earlier period. Although no Roman features were definitively identified, it is possible that the undated shallow gullies assigned to Period 1 may be Roman in origin. It is also possible that a large proportion of the Roman pottery found reflects the active curation and use of these vessels in the Saxon period, a phenomenon noted at other sites of this period (Timby 1995, 64-70).

By combining the radiocarbon dates with the stratigraphic evidence, the earliest date for the construction of the ditched enclosure is 660 cal. A.D. (the beginning of the range for ditch N, the earliest). Given the degree of residuality present, caution must be exercised in interpreting the radiocarbon dates further. The similarity between all four determinations is striking: all commence between 610 and 680 cal. A.D., and all end between 880 and 960 cal. A.D.; the end date can probably be narrowed to between 880 and 900 cal A.D. (see Table 4). This similarity suggests that none of the animal bone used was residual and therefore that the enclosure dates to sometime between the mid 7th century and the end of the 9th century. The absence of Late Saxon ceramic traditions, particularly those from Oxfordshire,
also suggests a terminal date before the beginning of the 10th century. A period of use of sometime between 660 and 900 cal. A.D. is therefore suggested.

Given the evidence of some 14 separate episodes of recutting of the enclosure ditch, it is tempting to suggest that the enclosure was in use for almost all of this period. This would imply an average re-establishment of the enclosure boundary every 17 years or so. Of course, the recutting of the ditches may have been undertaken more frequently over a shorter period, although it is reasonable to suppose that the site was occupied for at least a century, and that it was quite possibly established during the second half of the 7th century.

Unlike the earlier enclosure ditches, none of the Phase 2.5 ditches appeared to turn southwards, suggesting that these represent a different kind of activity, perhaps agricultural, beyond the northern limit of the enclosure. This is supported by the presence of possible postholes to either side of ditch V. Phase 2.5 also produced later dating evidence: the hooked tag dating to between A.D. 850 and 1000, i.e. the Late Saxon period. The recovery of two sherds of 10th-century St. Neot’s type ware, albeit both residual, also indicates Late Saxon activity in the vicinity of the site.

The nature of any activity within the enclosure is uncertain. Modern intrusions obscured much of the enclosure interior in the North Area, and no significant features were identified in either Area other than two pits of possible Anglo-Saxon date. Archaeological interpretation of the site is therefore limited to inference from the artefactual and ecofactual assemblages. The limited quantity of both animal bone (Appendix 7) and environmental data (Appendix 8) recovered only admit the general conclusion that settlement activity was taking place on the site. Iron-smithing waste was also present in small quantities (Appendix 4), although whether this may be considered a commonplace activity or whether it is indicative of special status is not clear. The dearth of pottery may indicate that this was a site of special status, although it may simply be indicative of a regionally aceramic Middle to Late Saxon period.

Later medieval and post-medieval features were limited to the South Area, although one sherd of later medieval pottery was recovered from the uppermost fill of ditch O (Phase 2.4) during the evaluation, indicating that at least that phase of enclosure ditch survived into the later medieval period as an earthwork. The presence of a wall, a surface and a well in the South Area indicates the continued use of this part of the site into the post-medieval period. Wall 1005 may have been a former boundary wall at the southern end of the site.
DISCUSSION by Martin Watts

The excavation provided a rare opportunity to investigate, on a relatively large scale, the historic core of a Cotswold village and resulted in the discovery of the remains of a substantial enclosure of Middle Saxon date. While the existence of many Cotswold settlements during the Anglo-Saxon period can be inferred from Domesday, physical evidence of them has seldom been uncovered. Evidence of such an enclosure at the heart of Lower Slaughter is therefore unusual, but what is its significance and what effect (if any) did it have on the later development of the village?

Although only part of the northern end of the Anglo-Saxon enclosure was investigated, it is tempting to see the whole enclosure fossilised in the modern landscape of the village (Fig. 2). The western boundary of the site closely parallels the alignment of the excavated ditches, and the curving nature of the northern end of the enclosure seems to be reflected in the course of Copsehill Road to the north and east. To the south, the curving outline of the modern property boundary from Church Farm House westwards along the northern side of The Square to Ivy Cottage neatly defines the projected extent of the southern edge of the enclosure. It is only in the vicinity of Ivy Cottage that the line of the enclosure seems to have been disrupted. Lying next to the Slaughter Brook, such an enclosure would have measured c.110 by 75 m. The fossilisation of similar Saxon enclosures in village plans has been identified elsewhere, for example the former Minster enclosures at Bampton and Charlbury in Oxfordshire (Blair 1994, 63).

Early maps of Lower Slaughter show the risks in making such assumptions. Plans such as Samuel Collett’s parish plan of 1769 (Fig. 10) and others of the first half of the 19th century show that the change of alignment in Copsehill Road to the north-east of the enclosure was once far more acute that it is today (compare with Fig. 2). Up to the mid 19th century (at least), the northern part of the enclosure would only have been reflected very broadly in the layout of the village. However, these early maps also show that the southern half of the enclosure was a distinct feature of the post-medieval landscape (Fig. 10), its northern boundary coinciding with the southern limit of the excavation site (again, compare with Fig. 2). The relocation of the northern part of the enclosure ditch to just south of the excavation site would suggest shrinkage of the enclosure in the Late Saxon period rather than total abandonment. It is worth noting that Church Farm House lies within this part of this smaller enclosure, which went on to become part of the village landscape.
The 13th-century ‘king’s hall’ probably stood on the site of the present Church Farm House, and therefore also within the projected extent (even in its reduced form) of the Anglo-Saxon enclosure. Assuming that the location of the ‘king’s hall’ had not radically altered since Domesday, it would probably also have been the central place of the Anglo-Saxon manor held by Edward the Confessor in the mid 11th century. It was presumably the residence of an aristocratic Anglo-Saxon family which served as the king’s representative within the hundred, collecting taxes and hosting hundredal courts. It is not unreasonable to suggest, by extrapolating ‘continuity of use’ further back, that this was also the site of the royal manor at Slaughter where the ‘national assembly’ was held in the late 10th century. The function of the enclosure, at least in the Late Saxon and post-Conquest periods, may therefore be interpreted as defining the extent of the principal manorial residence of the king’s representative (the thegn or reeve) at Lower Slaughter.

The form of the enclosure fits well into a pattern of Late Anglo-Saxon manorial or thegny residences known from an increasing number of sites. These are typically found within ditched enclosures that measure between 60 and 100 m across, often with associated settlement outside the principal enclosure (Reynolds 2003, 115). Close parallels include that at Faccombe Netherton, Hampshire, with dimensions of 90 by 55 m and dating from the late 10th century (Fairbrother 1990) and a suggested manorial enclosure at Trowbridge, Wiltshire, with dimensions of 70 by 55 m and dating to the 10th to 12th centuries (Graham and Davies 1993). Two phases of manorial enclosure at Goltho, Lincolnshire, the first measuring 48 by 48 m and the second 97 by 81 m, were recorded (Beresford 1987, 30), both of which probably date from the 10th to 11th centuries (Reynolds 1999, 129-30). Another example comes from Yatesbury, Wiltshire, where excavation has identified a large Anglo-Saxon ditched enclosure, partly fossilised in the village landscape and interpreted as the defensible residence of a Late Saxon thegn (Reynolds 2000, 116).

The excavated evidence at Lower Slaughter indicates that the original enclosure was established in the late 7th or 8th century and that its northern part was abandoned around the end of the 9th century. Documentary evidence, in the form of the late 8th-century charter reference to Slaughter Ford, would seem to confirm the presence of a Middle Saxon settlement at Slaughter. However, in the absence of any excavated structural remains within the enclosure ditches, the nature of the Middle Saxon settlement remains unclear.

It is possible that a royal manor or villa regalis was established at Slaughter as early as the late 7th century. Saxon royal manors are known from the late 7th century onwards in the Cotswolds, and seem to have been a focus for the beginnings of settlement nucleation
(Prosser and Holbrook 1995, 94-5). The pottery of Saxon Gloucestershire is not well understood, but the assemblage recovered from the Lower Slaughter excavation could indicate that this was not ‘a typical domestic site’ but perhaps one with a special role or function (see Appendix 1).

It is equally possible that the Middle Saxon settlement at Lower Slaughter was simply an enclosed farm, a form of settlement that by the 8th century had become widespread and which persisted into the later medieval period (Reynolds 2003, 110). Rather than indicate special status, the pottery assemblage could as easily reflect a local aceramic tradition (see Appendix 1). Furthermore, although the form of the enclosure appears typical of a Saxon defensible manorial residence, the apparent date of its establishment is considerably earlier than the other examples above, none of which pre-dates the 10th century. Indeed, it is the date of abandonment of the northern part of the enclosure at Lower Slaughter that concurs better with the establishment of enclosed manorial residences elsewhere. Thus it may be suggested that the northern half of an enclosed farm was abandoned when a defensible manorial residence was established within the southern half at the beginning of the 10th century. With overall dimensions of c.75 by 70 m, the size of this Late Saxon enclosure would still compare well with other 10th-century settlements of this type. The use of an existing settlement as the site for a Late Saxon manorial enclosure is also paralleled at Faccombe Netherton, where the 10th-century enclosure was constructed around pre-existing buildings (Fairbrother 1990). There are numerous parallels that may be drawn for an 8th-century enclosed farmstead at Lower Slaughter. Perhaps one of the closest is at West Stow, Suffolk, where a frequently recut series of boundary ditches appear to describe the south-eastern part of an enclosure of similar dimensions to the Middle Saxon enclosure at Lower Slaughter (West 1985; Reynolds 2003, 110).

The recovery of almost 200 sherds of Roman pottery from the excavation indicates the presence of earlier Roman activity in the vicinity, assuming that this material had not all been deliberately collected from elsewhere. It is possible that the Saxon enclosure was constructed over a pre-existing Roman site located in the southern part of the ditched enclosure, and that the few excavated features pre-dating the enclosure in its northern part were Roman. However, the main focus of Roman activity in the vicinity was at the large rural settlements at the Chells, on the far side of Ryknild Street close to Slaughter Bridge, and at Bourton Bridge to the south. Although these Roman settlements may have served a similar function to the manor at Slaughter, i.e. the collection of taxes and the holding of local courts, it is very unlikely that the presence of either influenced the siting of the manorial residence several centuries later.
In summary, the excavations revealed the northern part of an Anglo-Saxon enclosure, dating to the Middle Saxon period, which was abandoned towards the end of the 9th century. The southern part of this enclosure appears to have continued in use and its outline partly survives in current property boundaries within the village. Lower Slaughter is known to have been a royal manor of considerable importance in the Late Saxon period, and it continued as a royal manor into the later medieval period. The site of the 13th-century king’s hall is believed to lie within the southern part of the enclosure, which therefore may also be the site of the Late Saxon manorial residence. The function of the original Middle Saxon enclosure is unclear; it may have been an early enclosed manorial settlement, or it may have been an enclosed farm, the northern part of which was abandoned when the southern part was converted into an enclosed manorial settlement in the Late Saxon period.

Whatever its original status, the Anglo-Saxon enclosure clearly acted as a focus for later settlement. A detailed consideration of precisely how the village developed around the enclosure is beyond the scope of this report, but there are clues from both historic maps and the modern landscape that warrant mention. A possible second enclosure lying within the bend of the brook has been identified (Andrew Reynolds, pers. comm.); its scale, location and form raises the possibility that this too may have been of Saxon origin, possibly another part of the Late Saxon manorial complex (Fig. 10). Comparisons with similar-sized enclosures lying adjacent to one another at West Stow can again be made (Reynolds 2003, Fig. 6). The juxtaposition of the village church with the manorial enclosure may be highly significant (Fig. 2), at this and at other enclosed Late Saxon manorial sites such as Faccombe Netherton, Trowbridge and Goltho (ibid. fig. 8). Colett’s plan (Fig. 10) also shows a distinct ‘ladder’ pattern extending south-eastwards from the site, which is reminiscent of 12th- and 13th-century medieval development elsewhere and is also paralleled at Yatesbury (Reynolds 2000, 115). The excavations have established the Anglo-Saxon origins to this historic Cotswold village; further fieldwork may well be able to shed more light on its subsequent development.
Appendix 1: the pottery by Jane Timby

Introduction

The excavation resulted in the recovery of 172 sherds of pottery to which can be added a further 27 sherds from the preceding evaluation (Bown 1994); a total weight of 2.847 kg. The pottery is of mixed date with Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval sherds present. The post-medieval material is not discussed in detail except where it provides dating evidence.

Methodology

The assemblage was sorted into fabrics based on macroscopic examination aided by a binocular microscope. Each fabric was counted and weighed by excavated context. Most of the Roman and medieval fabrics are well-known types, the details of which can be found elsewhere. Table 2 summarises the fabrics present with relevant references. Fabric descriptions are only provided for those sherds which are not described elsewhere.

Roman

Roman sherds, some 98, account for c. 49% of the assemblage by count, 39% by weight. The range of wares is quite limited but fairly typical of the later Roman period. The overall average sherd size of 11 g is quite low, but not excessively so, denoting non-primary rubbish material that has been subjected to some disturbance. Whilst the highest number of Roman sherds are associated with Phase 2.1 contexts (see Table 3), sherds occur throughout the phased sequence. Its association with later material in many cases suggests that all the Roman sherds have been redeposited in later features.

Regional imports to the site include various vessels from the Oxfordshire industries, mainly colour-coated wares but also white-slipped mortaria and probably some of the grey wares, Nene Valley colour-coated ware and Midlands shelly ware. Other wares present include a single sherd of Severn Valley ware and a variety of grey wares, some of which are likely to be Oxfordshire or Wiltshire products. Featured sherds are noticeably sparse throughout, most of the rimsherds occurring in the grey ware range. Amongst the Oxfordshire colour-coated wares are sherds from beakers and a bowl with comb-impressed decoration. The majority of the grey ware rims come from jars, with a single example of a handled jug and a bowl/dish.
Midlands shelly ware is traditionally dated to the last quarter of the 4th century A.D. in Gloucestershire. It is the second commonest Roman ware present, accounting for 18% by weight of the Roman assemblage; grey wares account for the bulk of the group at 65%. This is perhaps an unusually high percentage of shelly ware for such a small assemblage, but comparable to some of the late Roman assemblages analysed from Cirencester (see Cooper 1998, table 29).

**Description of Roman fabrics**

**Grey sandy wares**

**GREY1:** a hard, fine, dark grey, sandy fabric with a lighter grey core. Typical of the later Roman period. Possibly from the Oxfordshire kilns. Forms include handled jugs, bowls and thickened rounded rim necked jars.

**GREY2:** a hard, light grey ware with a sandy texture. Very finely micaceous. The paste contains a scatter of well-sorted, fine, quartz sand. Probably a North Wiltshire product.

**GREY3:** a hard, grey-brown sandy ware containing a sparse to common scatter of ill-sorted, fine, rounded, quartz sand, the larger grains of which are macroscopically visible. Micaceous clay.

**GREY4:** a very hard, slightly granular, sandy ware with mid grey surfaces and a distinct orange-red core. Single sherd with combed wavy-line decoration.

**GREY5:** A finely micaceous, black ware with a red-brown core. The paste contains a sparse scatter of fine, rounded, quartz sand and occasional red iron. Single small loop handle possibly imitating a Dorset black burnished ware handled dish or small jar.

**Local colour-coated ware**

**LOCCC:** hard, very well-fired, fine buff ware with a dark ‘chocolate’ brown colour-coated surface. Includes a beaker sherd with rouletted decoration. Source unknown.

**Saxon**

At least 15 (and possibly 17) sherds of Saxon pottery are present in the assemblage. Most sherds occur in isolation and most are bodysherds from hand-made vessels. Looking at the occurrence by phase, seven pieces occur in Phase 2.1, single sherds feature in Phases 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and Period 4, and two sherds feature in Phase 2.4, as unstratified finds and from the evaluation (Table 3). There is considerable diversity of fabric within such a small group and seven types have been identified. Six of these are described below; one, St. Neot's-type ware, is documented elsewhere (Mellor 1994, 54). Two sherds of this Late Saxon ware are present, one from Period 4, the other, a rimsherd from a deep bowl (see Mellor 1994, 3, Fig. 15), from the evaluation. Occurrences of St. Neot's-type ware in Gloucestershire are likely to date from the 10th century. The industry was in decline by the mid 11th century and was supplanted by Cotswold oolitic wares by the 12th century.
Description of Saxon fabrics

**SXORG**: a black, very fine, micaceous ware with a brown interior surface. The mica is mainly of the muscovite variety. The paste contains a common frequency of chaff/organic matter.

A single hand-made bodysherd from ditch Q (079). This ware, traditionally regarded as characteristic of the Early Saxon period, has been now been documented in a number of sites with Middle Saxon occupation in both west Oxfordshire and the Thames Valley (Vince and Jenner 1991, 48; Mellor 1994, 36), potentially extending its use up to the later 9th century or 10th century. The type is well documented from the Cotswold area, in particular from the 6th to 7th centuries at Lechlade and from recent work at Bishop’s Cleeve in potentially Mid-Late Saxon contexts (Timby 2002). Similar wares are known from both the Thames Valley and Wiltshire. The petrology is not distinctive enough to pinpoint the source(s) of such wares and any close dating can only be achieved by independent evidence.

**SXCALC**: a dark grey, finely micaceous clay containing a sparse scatter of sub-angular to angular fragments of sparry calcite, up to 2 mm in size, with occasional fragments of more rounded limestone. Rare grains of rounded, highly polished quartz and occasional chaff.

A total of five sherds from ditches J (295), K (276, 370), M (299) and R (398). None of the pieces join but they could conceivably come from a single vessel. The pieces, all hand-made, have a relatively fresh fracture with a smoothed or lightly burnished exterior. The interior surfaces are leached indicating that the vessel(s) once contained liquid.

A very small split sherd from ditch K (370) could also broadly belong to this group, if of Saxon date, but is not from the same vessel. It has a particularly high density of calcite fragments.

**SXLIME**: an orange-brown exterior with a black core and interior surface. The paste contains sparse shell and limestone, fragments 1 mm and less in size, sparse rounded quartz sand and some chaff.

Represented by a single hand-made sherd from ditch SA (1089) with a possible second very small abraded sherd from posthole 036. The larger sherd is from a closed form and has a leached interior surface from use.

**SXSAND**: a dark grey ware with a granular texture. The paste contains a common frequency of moderately well-sorted, rounded, quartz (up to 1 mm in size), some of which is iron stained. The quartz crystals are characteristically overgrown. Rare fragments of quartz sandstone are also present.

Represented by two hand-made bodysherds from ditch M (213) and ditch S/T (128/130). The fabric is typical of the Early Saxon period in the Midlands and is comparable to material from Grove Lane, Cirencester, and Burn Ground, Hampnett (Grimes 1960). A source to the north of the Cotswolds, perhaps in the Warwickshire area, has been postulated for the fabric (Vince 1984, 240). The ware could well continue into the Middle Saxon period.
SXSST: a hard, dark grey to brown ware containing a mixed temper including a sparse density of ill-sorted, rounded, iron-stained quartz, rare brachiopod shell, occasional cretaceous sandstone and iron. Occasional quartz grains are up to 3-4 mm in size, but mostly finer. The iron-stained quartz and iron are typical of the Lower Greensand series suggesting a non-local source for this ware.

Three sherds belong to this fabric group, a shoulder sherd from ditch K (297) with traces of a cursory external burnish, a sherd from ditch M (213) and a sherd from the evaluation with a well-burnished finish.

SXSHELL: a reddish-brown ware with a darker red-brown core. A very finely micaceous clay, with a fine, sandy, texture containing a sparse density of voids suggesting leached fragments of shell and limestone.

A single, hand-made, bodysherd from ditch O (272). The sherd is quite abraded.

Medieval

Medieval wares account for 20% by count, 12% by weight, of the total assemblage. Sherds only appear in the archaeological record from Period 3 on and from the evaluation. The average sherd size at 8.5 g is very much on the low side, suggesting this is material that has been much disturbed or has been lying around on surfaces. Several wares are present (see Table 2) perhaps suggesting quite a long timespan. Although dominated by unglazed coarsewares, including some sooted cooking-pot sherds, a few glazed tablewares are amongst the group, in particular Brill-Boarstall and glazed Minety ware. Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered ware and Brill-Boarstall types occur most frequently but the numbers overall are small. Other non-local types include sand, flint and limestone-tempered Kennet Valley ware, Herefordshire/Worcestershire sandy ware and two sherds of later medieval Herefordshire border ware.

Post-medieval

Post-medieval wares account for 21.5% by count of the assemblage, 39% by weight. Not surprisingly this material, with an average sherd size of 26 g, is better preserved. Again a number of types are present (see Table 2) suggesting a timespan from the 17th or 18th century through to modern times. Post-medieval sherds are noted in Phases 2.1, 2.3, 2.5 and Period 3 and clearly represent intrusive material. Most of the pieces occur in Period 4.

Discussion

Although a moderately small group, the assemblage recovered here is of particular chronological diversity and is difficult to explain adequately. Given the number of features
identified on the site the assemblage is surprisingly small. Possible reasons for this are discussed above.

The earliest material that can be dated with confidence is the later Roman material with wares of 4th-century currency and with particular emphasis on material current after c. A.D. 360/70. Most of the pottery comes from Phase 2.1 ditches. However, alongside this material are seven hand-made Saxon sherds, suggesting that all of the Roman material is residual. Although the considerable amount of Roman activity documented from the locality could account for a general background scatter of Roman wares, no evidence has been found close to the site and the sherds here are chronologically quite tight. The presence of Late Roman material in Saxon contexts is quite a common phenomenon and is difficult to explain (e.g. in Wiltshire at Collingbourne Ducis (Timby 2001) and Market Lavington (Mepham 1991), and in Oxfordshire at Benson (Timby 2003b). In some cases it could be argued that the non-availability of new pottery meant that some Roman wares, particularly the more specialist forms such as mortaria, were curated for long periods. Alternatively, Roman material might have been deliberately collected decades or centuries after it had been discarded.

The radiocarbon evidence provides a Middle Saxon date for Period 2 and thus, by inference, this pottery assemblage is the first to be unequivocally dated to this period in Gloucestershire. Few sites in the region have been conventionally dated to the Middle Saxon period because of the absence of recognisable cultural material; the transition from Early Saxon to Late Saxon ceramic traditions is poorly understood because of the paucity of material and the apparent conservatism of the pottery traditions. Chaff- or organic-tempered wares, traditionally considered to be Early Saxon, have been dated as late as the late 9th century from sites within the Thames Valley (Vince and Jenner 1991, 48). The association of organic-tempered material with the late Gloucester oolitic limestone jar (Vince 1979, 171-4, fabric TF41A) at Bishop's Cleeve further supports the longevity of this tradition (Timby 2002). In Wiltshire, organic-tempered wares have been found in Middle Saxon contexts at Ramsbury (Haslam 1980) and Collingbourne Ducis (Timby 2001). In Oxfordshire, one of the larger Middle Saxon assemblages to be recovered is that from Eynsham Abbey, where the pottery (mainly organic and calcitic wares) is dated by its association with 8th-century sceattas and the presence of Ipswich ware (Blinkhorn 2002, 164). It has also been suggested that Early Saxon traditions continued in Oxfordshire until the Late Saxon period (Mellor 1994, 36) and that there may have been a hiatus in local ceramic traditions in the later 8th and 9th centuries (Blinkhorn 2002, 172). Fabric SXSAND has been documented locally at sites dating to the Early Saxon period, but could equally well continue into the
Middle Saxon period. The presence of such wares can, therefore, no longer be regarded as chronologically diagnostic without accompanying evidence.

Of all the Saxon sherds, those of fabric SXCALC are amongst the best preserved. This ware has not been identified amongst Early Saxon assemblages from the area such as that recently excavated at Sherborne House, Lechlade (Timby 2003a).

Irrespective of the radiocarbon dating, a number of factors could argue for the material here being of Middle Saxon date. Most of the Early Saxon domestic sites excavated in the Gloucestershire/Oxfordshire/Wiltshire region tend to be quite prolific in terms of ceramic material. If there was Early Saxon occupation at Lower Slaughter, much more material would be expected. The other factor of interest here is that most, if not all, of the vessels, on the basis of the petrology in the fabrics, are non-local, and could come from several different directions. The only clearly identifiable pottery belonging to a Middle Saxon tradition known from the Cotswolds is a single sherd of imported Ipswich ware from Winchcombe (Ellis 1986, Table 2), although other examples of Ipswich ware have also been identified at Eynsham Abbey (Blinkhorn 2002) and Yarnton (Mellor 1994, 36) in Oxfordshire. It may be that there was in effect no Middle Saxon potting tradition in the Cotswolds and that these few sites, attracting regional imports, were of a particular status.

Mellor (1994, 37) in her discussion of Mid to Late Saxon pottery traditions in Oxfordshire identifies three major Late Saxon ceramic traditions clearly evident by the late 9th century. None of these is present in the Lower Slaughter assemblage, although two sherds of a fourth industry (St. Neot's-type ware, Oxford fabric OXR), which manifests itself from the early 10th century, are present, hinting at some Late Saxon activity at the site.

In conclusion, as radiocarbon dating (see below) indicates that the Period 2 features date from the Middle Saxon period, this is, therefore, the first independently dated Middle Saxon group identified in Gloucestershire, although others are suspected. However, given the chronological diversity of the assemblage, most if not all the pottery retrieved from Period 2 features could be residual. The presence of Roman pottery indicates late 4th-century activity in the vicinity or perhaps the deliberate recovery of Roman wares from elsewhere at a later date. The Saxon assemblage is too small and non-distinctive to tell if it should be regarded as entirely Middle Saxon or if there are residual Early Saxon elements present. The composition of the Saxon wares suggests that most if not all of the vessels are regional imports. This, with the general paucity of Saxon ceramic material, suggests that this was not
a typical domestic site. The scatter of medieval and later material reflects a general span of non-intensive activity from the 12th century through to modern times.

Appendix 2: the radiocarbon dating by Emma Harrison

Four samples of animal bone were sent to the University of Waikato, New Zealand, for radiocarbon dating. The material was all from ditches and was selected using the following criteria: position in the stratigraphic sequence, stratigraphically isolated sections, the presence of at least 100 g of animal bone and the presence of datable pottery. Details are listed in Table 4. Calibrated age ranges were determined from the programme OxCal v3.4 (Bronk Ramsey 2000).

Appendix 3: the metalwork by Nina Crummy

Six nails or nail shaft fragments, one iron blade and a copper-alloy hooked tag were recovered from the excavations. The form of the iron blade suggests a post-medieval date, as does that of the nails. A shaft tip fragment from Period 3 well 1092 has an unusual form, and may be the pin from a penannular brooch or a buckle tongue.

The copper-alloy hooked tag, recovered from the fill of ditch V (051) is of some interest (Fig. 9). It is heart-shaped with a decoratively cut upper edge and a perforation for attachment at the top of each lobe. The outer face (away from the hook) is smooth, the inner slightly burred along the edges. The perforations are burred on the outer side and must have been punched through from the inside. Length 25 mm, width 15 mm.

Hooked tags were sewn onto textile and used as fasteners, effectively the forerunner of the hook-and-eye, but with the point forced directly through the fabric. They are found in copper alloy, iron and silver, and were usually wrought from sheet metal, though a few higher quality tags were cast. A lead tag from Coddenham, Suffolk, is thought to be a model for a mould (West 1998, 25, fig. 22). Such tags first occur in the archaeological record in the 7th century A.D. and continue to the mid 14th century, though their use at each end of this wide date range appears to have been very limited and their recovery is only ‘predictable’ in Late Saxon contexts. In the early post-medieval period the form was revived, but in a much more elaborate style and invariably cast (Goodall 1985, 25, fig. 27; Margeson 1993, 17). The Lower Slaughter tag belongs within the Late Saxon *floruit*, c. A.D. 850–1000. Evidence for
the manufacture of tags in the Late Saxon period has come from Thetford, Norfolk (Goodall 1984, 34-6, Fig. 111), Coddenham, Suffolk (West 1998, 25, Fig. 22), Lincoln (Ottaway 1992, 697), and Worcester (Crummy 2004, 433). It is most likely that the majority were locally made, particularly when of simple form and style.

Appendix 4: the metallurgical residues by Tim Young

A small quantity of material was recovered including unabraded residues that suggest metallurgical activity nearby. Fragments of a dark, crystalline vesicular slag were recovered from Ditch S (Phase 2.2). They are suggestive of hearth slag from an iron-working (probably smithing) hearth. Another fragment of dark glassy slag was recovered from Ditch O (Phase 2.4).

A single fragment of heavily vitrified siliceous ceramic material was recovered from Ditch F (Phase 2.2). The oxidised fabric, extremely quartz-rich unvitrified material, and the highly irregular glazed surface indicate that it is a fragment of hearth/furnace lining. The degree of vitrification probably indicates an origin close to the blowhole or tuyère.

Appendix 5: the worked stone by Fiona Roe

Ten pieces of worked stone were recovered from the excavations; two stone objects and eight pieces of building stone. The two objects are a fragment of a Roman quern from ditch H (Phase 2.1) and a larger piece from a millstone (unstratified from evaluation). Both were made from stone imported some distance.

The quern fragment is made of Niedermendig lava from the Rhineland. It is of Roman disc type, probably an upper stone, of diameter c.400 mm. The upper surface has been finely pecked, while the grinding surface has traces of grooved tooling. It has been worn down to a thickness of 25 mm before breaking. Finds of Roman lava querns in Gloucestershire are more common than one might expect for a material that was transported so far from the source area. Precise dating is not usually possible, but Niedermendig lava has now been recorded from Gloucester, Cirencester, and at least another ten Roman sites in the county. Recent finds include quern fragments from excavations at Home Farm, Bishop’s Cleeve (Roe 1998, 128), and Birdlip Quarry, Cowley (Roe 1999, 416).
The millstone is made from Upper Old Red Sandstone quartz conglomerate, a corn-grinding material that was used extensively over several thousand years, being obtained in or around the Forest of Dean. Known Roman examples of Old Red Sandstone millstones include two found at Woolaston (McWhirr 1986, 103), while the same material was still being used for millstones in the later medieval and post-medieval periods, as at Latton, Wiltshire (Roe 1999, 419). The millstone is between 650 and 700 mm in diameter, with a thickness of between 135 and 145 mm, suggesting that it had been little used before breakage. The wide central hole suggests an upper stone, but there are no other diagnostic features. It lacks both the grooved grinding surface typical of Roman millstones and the raised collar round the central hole often found on Saxon querns or millstones. It is a little smaller than most Roman millstones, which can reach one metre in diameter. Its size suggests that it could be Saxon; there were two mills in Lower Slaughter at the time of the Domesday survey (Moore 1982, 10).

Three of the pieces of building stone were recovered from ditches J and W, and one from pit 171 (all Period 2). All are of Jurassic limestone but with differing lithology, serving to demonstrate the variety of suitable building stone obtainable from the Inferior Oolite in the immediate vicinity of the site (Richardson 1929, 58-9). The fragment from pit 171 may have been used as paving, while two shaped fragments from ditch W are more likely to have been used for structural purposes. The remaining four fragments of building stone are from the post-medieval fill of well 1092. These larger pieces of Jurassic limestone are fresher in general appearance, and retain a golden colour, suggesting ‘Yellow Guiting Stone’. This variety of the local Inferior Oolite was much used as a building stone in the area from the later medieval period onwards (Richardson 1929, 143).

Appendix 6: the flint by Martin Tingle

Four pieces of residual prehistoric struck flint were recovered from ditches J, S/T, and SA. They include one retouched flake and one flake with multiple dorsal flake scars. As these were not recovered from primary contexts and the assemblage is so small, little further comment can be made.
Appendix 7: the animal bone by Ellen Hambleton

A total of 971 fragments of animal bone was recovered, and approximately 46% of the large mammal and bird bones were identified to species. The mammals identified were, in order of frequency; sheep/goat, cattle, pig, horse, dog, cat, red deer, and rabbit. Bird species present include domestic fowl, goose (probably domestic), duck (two species: a mallard-sized and a much smaller species), and a wader (cf. golden/grey plover). Additional species recovered from environmental samples include frog/toad and small mammal species.

Species representation

The majority of fragments (755) came from the Anglo-Saxon features (Period 2), particularly Phase 2.1 ditches, and recording of additional toothwear, butchery and metrical data was limited to this sample. Relative abundance of the main domestic species varied little between the Period 2 phases and within the sample (Table 5) only sheep/goat (41%), cattle (30%) and pig (18%) were represented in any numbers. Assemblages dominated by sheep/goat and cattle with moderate percentages of pig are not unusual from Anglo-Saxon rural settlements. The relative abundance of the main domestic species in Period 2 of this assemblage are broadly similar to those seen in the Anglo-Saxon assemblages from West Stow, Norfolk (Crabtree 1994).

Ageing

Very limited information concerning mortality patterns was available, the majority of which came from Phases 2.1 and 2.2. Toothwear evidence for cattle is was limited to two complete and five incomplete mandibles. Four cattle died between 1½ and 3 years and the remaining three died as young adult or adult individuals. This is a small sample, but from the available ageing evidence, it may be tentatively suggested that cattle were primarily exploited for beef, with very little emphasis on keeping older animals for secondary products.

Only six mandibles were sufficiently complete to provide a reliable estimate of age from sheep/goat. Four were aged between 6 and 12 months, whilst the remaining two were aged c.2-3 years and 4-6 years respectively. Age estimations from the incomplete mandibles and loose teeth also suggest quite a high incidence of individuals dying during their first year, as well as some older individuals of between 1 and 4 years. There is little evidence to suggest sheep/goat survived much beyond their sixth year at this site. Similarly high rates of first year slaughter of lambs between six and twelve months old have been noted for Anglo-
Saxon assemblages from West Stow (Crabtree 1990, 83-95); Harrold, Bedfordshire (Maltby 1999); and Sherborne House, Lechlade (Maltby 2003). While, any conclusions based on such a small sample must be treated with caution, it is possible that, as suggested for West Stow (Crabtree 1994, 45) and Lechlade (Maltby 2003), the Lower Slaughter mortality profile reflects culling of excess stock, probably in the autumn and winter of their first year, with older animals representing mainly breeding stock. There is no evidence for particular importance being placed on wool production at Lower Slaughter.

Butchery

A small number of cattle (5), sheep/goat (4) and pig (2) fragments showed evidence of butchery in the form of knife cuts and chop marks. All but one butchered fragment came from Phase 2.1 contexts. The butchery marks on these fragments comprise mainly small knife cuts of chop marks around the epiphyses of long bones and around the glenoid and acetabulum, which are indicative of carcass dismemberment. Superficial knife marks are also associated with filleting of meat from the bone. There is no evidence of specialist butchery of the type observed for Romano-British urban settlements (Maltby 1989). However, a single butchered cattle fragment from the Phase 2.5 deposits was a metacarpal, split axially by a chop between the distal condyles in keeping with known Anglo-Saxon and later medieval butchery practices.

Measurements

A small amount of metrical data was available to add to the growing regional dataset, although the sample was not large enough for any conclusions to be drawn concerning the size, or change in size, of the animals from the Period 2 deposits. The most common measurement from the Lower Slaughter assemblage is the distal breadth of sheep/goat tibia, which has a range of c. 24-28 mm. These measurements fall within the size ranges of sheep and goats observed in other assemblages of either late Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon date (Maltby 1981).

Conclusions

Only limited information concerning the exploitation of animals may be drawn from such a small assemblage. The remains of domestic species, particularly sheep/goat, cattle and to a lesser extent pig, dominated the assemblage and there does not appear to have been any
importance placed on the exploitation of wild species. The available ageing data suggests that the cattle, sheep/goat, and pig remains recovered represent animals primarily utilised as a meat resource. Although slightly less abundant than sheep remains, cattle undoubtedly provided the bulk of the meat consumed at the site. The faunal assemblage shares characteristics in keeping with Anglo-Saxon rural settlements.

**Appendix 8: the charred plant remains** by Julie Jones

Eight samples were collected from the Saxon ditch deposits and one from a pit fill of later medieval/early post-medieval date. A 10-litre subsample of each was processed, and the flot collected with a 250 µm mesh.

**Results**

The charred plant remains were sparse with mostly cereal grains preserved, although there was some chaff and a limited weed flora. The full results are shown on Table 6. Habitat information and plant nomenclature is based on Stace (1991). All of the samples contained charcoal, and an estimate was made of the number of fragments present which had dimensions over approximately 2 mm, a size which would allow identification if required. This information is also shown on Table 6.

**Conclusions**

The assessment of the charred plant macrofossils from the Period 2 ditches has shown that only low concentrations of cereal remains were present in the sampled deposits. The ditch fills all produced charcoal fragments and low numbers of predominantly wheat grains, with occasional barley and oat. The state of preservation of much of the grain was variable, with some grains from most of the samples being too poorly preserved to identify other than 'cereal indeterminate'. Although both recorded as *Triticum* sp. in Table 6, it was possible to suggest from morphological variations between some of the better preserved grains that spelt wheat (an oval parallel-sided grain) and bread wheat (which has a shorter more rounded appearance) were both present. Preservation of remains of the cereal chaff, which are normally required to confirm species identification, was very sparse, although one spelt wheat glume base (*Triticum spelta*) was recorded in ditch U (Phase 2.5).
The cultivation of spelt wheat was particularly prominent during the Roman period, but appears to have become rarer by the Saxon period when bread wheat becomes more common as a free-threshing wheat, apparently largely replacing hulled wheats such as spelt. At Lower Slaughter both forms of grain occur together within the same deposit (e.g. sample 3, where the spelt glume base occurred). Therefore it is not possible to suggest chronological variation between ditch phases from the cereal remains present. The sparse remains of barley and oats can only be used to confirm the presence of these cereals on the site. It is therefore not possible to make any statement on, for example, whether they represent local cultivation or the import of processed cereals. Indeed it is uncertain whether the oats would have been a cultivated crop, or occurred as a crop weed without the presence of the characteristic oat floret bases. The few pea/vetch (Lathyrus/Vicia) present in five of the deposits could represent an additional field crop, although the seeds were too fragmented to indicate if it was cultivated vetch (Vicia sativa). These may simply have been one of the few crop weeds recorded.

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Table Captions

Table 1  Dating evidence and contextual certainty, Period 2 ditches
Table 2  Lower Slaughter: summary of pottery fabrics
Table 3  Lower Slaughter: fabrics by period and phase
Table 4  Details of radiocarbon determinations
Table 5  Animal bone from Period 2 ditches
Table 6  Analysis of charred plant remains

Figure Captions

Fig. 1  Site location plan, with other sites of significance (after Timby 1998; 1:25,000)
Fig. 2  Location of the site, with the projected extent of the Anglo-Saxon enclosure (1:2500)
Fig. 3  Plan of excavated areas (1:350)
Fig. 4  The enclosure ditches, looking south-east towards St Mary’s church, scales both 2m
Fig. 5  Period 1: possible Roman features (1:350)
Fig. 6  Period 2: Anglo-Saxon features (1:350)
Fig. 7  Period 3: late medieval and post-medieval features (1:350)
Fig. 8  Sections 1-3 (1:50)
Fig. 9  Sections 4-6 (1:50), and the hooked tag (1:1)
Fig. 10 Detail from Samuel Collett’s 1769 map of Lower Slaughter (Gloucestershire Record Office, D46/P 3), annotated to show the projected extent of the Anglo-Saxon enclosure and other possible components of the village landscape
Site

Fig. 1  All feature site plan showing postulated early enclosure boundary
Fig. 2 Site plan; phase 1
Fig. 3  Site plan; phase 2
Fig. 4 Site plan; phase 3

North Trench

South Trench
Fig. 5  Site plan; phase 4
Fig. 6  Site plan; phase 5
Fig. 7  Site plan; phase 6
Fig. 8  Site plan; phase 7
Fig. 9  Site plan; phase 8 (Post-Medieval)