Excavations at Barrow Road, Barton-on-Humber, 1999–2000

Jeremy Bradley

With contributions by Jane Cowgill, John A. Giorgi, James Rackham, Lisa M. Wastling, and Jane Young

INTRODUCTION

In October and November 1999, an archaeological evaluation was carried out by Humber Field Archaeology on land at Barrow Road, Barton-on-Humber, North Lincolnshire (Fig.1), on behalf of Mr and Mrs G. R. Hatfield, who proposed construction of a bungalow. Evidence was found for occupation dating from the tenth to twelfth centuries. This included a substantial boundary ditch, possible sunken-floor buildings, and a cobbled track or surface, in the early stages, followed in the eleventh century by the construction of more substantial post-built structures.

In 2000, excavations in advance of construction of the bungalow provided further evidence for occupation and buildings, dating to the same periods, with slag, hammerscale and burnt or fired clay debris present, indicating iron-smithing on site. A building interpreted as a granary was constructed in the first phase. The settlement was abandoned by the mid twelfth century, but there appears to have been limited reoccupation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

There was some residual evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British occupation, in the form of a Neolithic and Mesolithic flint assemblage\(^1\) and a small quantity of Roman pottery and building materials.\(^2\)

The site clearly has the potential to contribute towards the understanding of the nature and status of this part of Barton-on-Humber, particularly in the early medieval period, and reflects the importance of the area should further opportunities for archaeological investigations arise.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Methodology

The initial evaluation involved the excavation of two trenches to pick up traces of the south-eastern entrance to an enclosure thought to have existed to the north of the site, and the linear boundary feature known as Castledyke. In the event, neither of these features were found, but it soon became obvious that the remains of structures and boundary features were preserved below the surface, pertaining to the late Saxon period,\(^3\) which precipitated further more extensive work.

This second phase took the form of a trench conforming to the footprint of the intended bungalow (Fig.1). The resulting L-shaped trench was 23.84m long and 15.34m wide. The present ground level fell gradually towards the north-west corner of the trench from 15.91m OD to 14.57m OD. The stripping of the topsoil and underlying subsoil by mechanical excavator revealed a variable natural that tended toward orange silty sand and brownish orange clay. The majority of archaeological features were sealed below a layer of subsoil which was probably formed as a combination of soil erosion and reworking caused by agricultural activities, and these processes appear to have removed any signs of occupation deposits, such as floor surfaces, and severely truncated the majority of the recorded postholes. The pottery found within the subsoil tends to reflect the date range found on site, including residual Roman material and a small amount of medieval pottery extending to the thirteenth century.

The phasing of the site was problematical to some extent, being hampered by the absence of stratigraphy and a lack of reliable dating evidence. The pottery assemblage was subject to a high degree of breakage and dispersal before final deposition. It was assumed that the pottery was deposited as part of the process of demolition of structures on the site, or during the demise of the settlement,\(^4\) and it is inferred, therefore, that the structures are earlier than the dates provided by the pottery. Although the dating has not been ignored, neither has it been used as the abiding principle in phasing the site.

Generally, the site phasing has been based on spatial layout, taking into consideration the orientation of the features, proximity and typology; this has particular bearing on the possible granary in Phase 1. Another consideration was the projected life spans of timber buildings, based on managed slow-grown oak, giving an estimated life of between thirty and forty years. Also, it was apparent that some — if not the majority — of the ditches were deliberately back-filled and were not, therefore, left open for protracted periods. The phasing has therefore, been based on interpretation as much on the dating evidence, and it would be possible to assign some features to several different phases. It is hoped, however, that the findings presented here are those that give the clearest indication of the site chronology and morphology based on the available evidence.

Results

Despite these problems seven phases have been assigned to the activity found on site, assignable to three chronological phases. Phases 1–3 spanned the late ninth to late tenth century (middle to late Saxon period); here, activity was found throughout the site, but included periods where it was confined within an enclosure. Phase 4, which consists of three sub-phases, covered activity from the mid eleventh to mid twelfth century (Saxo-Norman period) and saw the activity shift westwards. However, for the purposes of this report, Phases 4a–c have been combined. Phase 5 saw the cutting of Castledyke, followed in Phases 6–7 by the eventual abandonment of the settlement, and its subsequent gradual conversion to farmland.

Phase 1 (late ninth to the early tenth century)

Activity within Phase 1 has been assigned to late ninth to the early tenth century on the basis of the pottery evidence, although not all of the features assigned to this phase can be placed within it with any certainty (Fig.3). This is because few of the features were securely dated, and earlier pottery is not represented in the assemblage, such as Maxey-type ware, dating to the eighth century.

The archaeological features from this phase were evenly distributed in groups around the site. In the centre there was a noticeable concentration of features, representing a rectangular
post-built structure, enclosed by what appeared to be a fairly deep curving soakaway ditch [1236]. This has been interpreted as a granary, with large quantities of charred cereal grain (wheat, barley and oats) and some charred found in pit [1375], which was cut by the western terminal of the soakaway. Bean and flax were also present.

Adjacent to, and earlier than, the building were a number of short slots and several postholes representing further structural features. A second triangular group of posts, located to the north-east of the soakaway, may have formed part of a structure, although no coherent plan remained.

The south-west corner of the trench and the southern end of evaluation Trench 1 revealed a more cohesive group of features, which included a possible sunken-floored building [1008] (Fig.7). This structure was set immediately adjacent to a pathway [1035] leading towards three parallel, narrow slots which contained the impressions left by split planks (Fig.2). These can be interpreted as stock pens besides the path.

Various other features were found in the north-west and south-east parts of the trench; these were mainly intercutting slots and gullies, which may have been structural, some with postholes cut into the base. Unfortunately, these were either truncated by later features, or extended beyond the limits of the excavation, and are, therefore, of little or no interpretative value. The environmental evidence from one of these slots [1060] did at least attest to food processing nearby, which would suggest domestic occupation.

There is a strong case for many of the features in Phase 1 sharing a common north-west to south-east alignment with the projected south-east entrance to the middle-Saxon enclosure. This tends to suggest that elements of the enclosure were still extant in the ninth and tenth centuries, and that it may have acted as the focus for settlement in Barton at that period. This occupation site may have been one of several satellite settlements around the margin of the enclosure.

Fig.2. Slot 1089, which appears to preserve the shape of upright timbers, presumably forming a fence or partition (0.5m scale).
Phase 2 (mid tenth century).

By the mid tenth century, the character of the settlement had changed completely. There was no evidence for the survival of the earlier structures, which were now replaced by a rectilinear enclosure [1087-1220], [1349] (Fig.4). The alignment of this feature showed a shift away from that of Phase 1 to a north–south orientation. The southern extent of the enclosure extended to Trench 2 ([2019]), where the fill contained late ninth- to tenth-century pottery.

No structural evidence was found within the enclosure, or at least none that could be assigned to its period of use. However, as little as a third of the enclosure was probably examined, added to which, the cutting of Castledyke subsequently removed at least another third of the interior. A single charred barley grain was the only evidence of domestic occupation.

Phase 3 (mid to late tenth century)

By the end of the tenth century, the settlement had undergone further change (Fig.4). The enclosure ditch had been backfilled, presumably deliberately, and was partially cut by a deep, narrow ditch [1070] aligned north–north-east to south–south-west. This ditch is likely to have acted as a boundary feature. To the east of, and parallel to [1070], was a long beam slot [1234] with two similarly-aligned gullies, [1288] and [1282], beyond, possibly forming the truncated remains of two phases of an eastern wall line, although their southern extent was completely removed by later activity.

Iron smithing took place fairly close to this building, with the fill of 1234 producing slag, hammerscale, and fragments of tuyères (clay tubes used to introduce air from bellows into the furnace). Evidence of the presence of processed cereal grains ready for use in food production was recovered from the fill. The fills of [1070] and [1234] also produced late ninth-to early eleventh-century pottery.

There was limited evidence for structural activity in the form of a short slot and several postholes next to the Phase 2 enclosure ditch in Trench 2.

Phase 4 (late tenth to early eleventh century)

Phase 4 not only saw the focus of activity shift westwards, but the prevailing alignment reverted to the north–south orientation of Phase 2 (Fig.5). The possible boundary ditch was backfilled, probably deliberately. An alignment of posts, several of them substantial, was then erected partially over this feature, and may represent the east wall of a building. To the east of this were several clusters of single and paired postholes, probably part of a granary or some other type of agricultural structure which was repeatedly rebuilt.

Subsequently, a wall line represented by three phases of beam-slots ([1074], [1076] and [1013]) was laid out immediately to the west of the main post alignment. The latest [1013] changed to post construction at the south end. The building would have been at least nine metres long, but in each case, only the eastern wall survived. It was replaced by a further wall, this time represented by beam-slot [1021] to the east of the original post alignment. An east–west slot at
Fig. 4. Plan of the excavated features in Phases 2 (hatched) and 3; context numbers only given for features mentioned in the text.

Fig. 5. Plan of the excavated features in Phase 4; context numbers only given for features mentioned in the text.
the north end ([1225]) may represent the north wall, adjacent to plot boundary ditch [1268–1351].

These features span the mid eleventh to the mid twelfth century, if the chronological sequence based upon the pottery evidence is accepted. What was thought to be a hiatus in the pottery sequence from the late tenth to mid eleventh century — based on the lack of Stamford ware and the low numbers of Torksey-type fabrics — may have been caused by the Viking incursions of that period, which led to difficulties in obtaining these wares. Alternatively it may be entirely due to the low status of the site.

The two remaining buildings and their various rebuilds were constructed using either post-trench or sill beam trench construction, or a mixture of both. Small amounts of slag and hammerscale associated with these features suggest that iron smithing continued into Phase 4, somewhere near to the settlement.

Phase 5 (mid twelfth century)

This phase consists of a single event, but one that may have had a significant effect on the settlement activity previously described. This was the excavation of the large ditch that later became known as Castledyke, probably around the middle of the twelfth century (Fig. 6). By this time settlement had shifted away from the site, perhaps as a direct result of the impending construction of Castledyke, although it is possible that the area was already unoccupied, allowing the excavation to proceed with little disturbance to the local inhabitants.

The section of ditch examined [1301] was aligned northeast to south-west, and extended across the site; it was substantial, with a width of 5.1m and a surviving depth of 1.5m (Figs 7, 8, 9). The ditch had fourteen separately identifiable fills, [1226] and [1317]–[1329]. The bulk of the pottery recovered from the fills was of eleventh- to twelfth-century date. There were a few thirteenth-century sherds, but no later material, although the actual date that it was backfilled is uncertain; the lack of later pottery may simply reflect the corresponding absence of local occupation.

The only other feature attributed to the phase, pit [1015], contained pottery of mid to late eleventh- to mid twelfth-
Fig. 8. General view of the site during excavation, facing north-east. The excavation of Castledyke can be seen in progress (centre right).

Fig. 9. Detail of excavated section across ditch 1301 (Castledyke), facing north-east (1m scales).

century date, including one of only two Stamford ware sherds recovered from the site.

Phase 6 (early to mid thirteenth and fourteenth century)
Limited reoccupation appears to have taken place until the early to mid thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, when a large rectangular pit was excavated [1241] (Fig. 6). The presence of a large assemblage of cockleshells in the fill suggests occupation nearby. Moreover, the environmental evidence suggests that cereals were being processed in the area, presumably for local consumption.

In Trench 2, a north-west to south-east aligned ditch [2003] cut several of the earlier features. This was considered to be a field boundary rather than a settlement feature relating to the occupation of the site. The fact that its orientation was roughly perpendicular to that of Castledyke suggests that later activity was aligned on this feature.

Phase 7 (late medieval to post-medieval)
The final phase of activity on the site (not illustrated) took place after a subsoil layer had built up over the area, and evidence was limited to the extreme northern part of the site, in the west- and south-facing sections. This activity consisted of a layer of dumped burnt clay, which was apparently contained within a pit. Environmental analysis of the clay identified cereal grains and some weed species. The presence of frog or toad bones suggest that the pit remained open for some time. Also present was possible tap slag, connected with ironworking.

The fill was undated; although there is no pottery later than the thirteenth to mid fourteenth century on the site, a significant length of time must have passed to allow subsoil formation. A late medieval or early post-medieval date for Phase 7 is therefore suggested.

THE POTTERY
Jane Young
Lindsey Archaeological Services

Introduction and methodology
A total of eighty sherds of post-Roman pottery (representing a maximum sixty-six vessels) weighing 693 grams was recovered from the site. A smaller group of forty-six sherds of post-Roman material had been recovered from the previous evaluation on the site (BOH99). The post-Roman material in general ranges in date from the Anglo-Saxon to the early modern period, though no pottery post-dating the medieval period was recovered from the excavation phase (BOH2000). Small amounts of residual Roman and possible prehistoric pottery were also present on the site.

Where possible, pottery was identified visually, otherwise fabric identification was undertaken by x20 binocular
microscope, comparing sherds with the existing Lincoln and St Peter’s Church, Barton pottery type series. Initial fabric identifications were used for new pottery types and these may need to be amended after more detailed scientific analysis. Fabric codenames used are those developed during the East Midlands Anglo-Saxon Pottery Project and the St Peter’s Church project.

Condition
The assemblage is in a mixed condition with variable degrees of abrasion. The poor state and small size of most of the material is not consistent with primary deposition. It is probable that much of the material has been disturbed at least once since initial deposition and a small element of the pottery must have been continually reworked through the stratigraphy. It must be noted, however, that no sherds are abraded to the extent that they are obviously plough damaged.

Overall chronology and source
A range of nineteen different identifiable post-Roman pottery types were found on the site during the 2000 excavations; the type and general date range for these fabrics are shown in Table 1.

Early to middle Saxon
A small amount of pottery belonging to the fifth to mid ninth centuries was recovered. Small fragments of four handmade Anglo-Saxon vessels (three sherds from BOH99 and one from BOH2000) in three different ware types were found residually on the site; none of the vessels were decorated, and they may date as late as the eighth century.

Two fragments from a lugged Maxey-type vessel came from a fill of Phase 1 ditch [1302] (Fig. 3); they are probably from a large jar of eighth- to ninth-century date. Sherds from one Northern Maxey-type ware vessel and two Early Fine-shelled ware vessels were recovered from deposits also containing late Saxon pottery. However, although both are traditional middle Saxon ware types, it is possible that these vessels are not in fact residual. Recent work suggests that Maxey-type ware may have continued into the mid ninth century to overlap with the wheel-thrown urban industries, and Early Fine-shelled ware is known to have continued in use at Glotho until possibly the middle of the tenth century. No definite middle Saxon types were found during the BOH99 excavations.

Late Saxon
Late Saxon pottery was recovered from BOH99 and BOH2000; the typology of the small number of rim types present indicates that the earliest vessels predate the early or mid tenth century. The majority of the material is of shell-tempered Lincoln fabrics with a smaller proportion of sand-tempered Torksey and local types (NLTLG). The Torksey-type vessels found on the site are likely to be of late ninth- to early eleventh-century date; they are not typical of the slightly thicker walled vessels mainly produced in the eleventh century.

Saxo-Norman to early medieval
The bulk of the pottery from both BOH99 and BOH2000 dates to the period between the mid eleventh and mid twelfth centuries. Recent work on the St Peter’s Church assemblage has created a framework fabric typology for the Barton area. This work highlighted a possible gap in the ceramic sequence on that site between the early/mid and late eleventh century. Analysis of the BOH99 pottery by Peter Didsbury showed that much of the coarseware pottery from the Barrow Road site did not fit into the St Peter’s fabric type series, and suggested that it may in fact fit into this missing ‘peri-Conquest’ period. Initial analysis of these fabrics has led to the creation of three new ware types; North Lincolnshire Sand-Tempered Coarseware (NLSTCW), North Lincolnshire Grit-Tempered Coarseware (NLGTW) and North Lincolnshire Gritty ware (NLG).

The validity of these types will need to be tested and their chronology determined from well-stratified local assemblages; however, the present evidence suggests that these types fill the gap between the late Saxon greywares and the quartz and chalk-tempered coarsewares of the late eleventh to twelfth century (NLQ).

The most common type of pottery encompassing this period to be found on the Barrow Road site is a quartz and chalk-tempered coarseware (NLQC). This ware type was identified as a major part of the St Peter’s assemblage, where twelfth-century vessels in this fabric are commonly oxidised. Similar vessels found at Barrow Road, however, are more commonly at least partially reduced, possibly suggesting that they are an earlier product. Few diagnostic rims are present, although one vessel from a fill of Phase 4 beam-slot [1021] (Fig. 5) is a collared jar, probably dating to between the mid or late eleventh and mid twelfth centuries. A limited range of other eleventh- to twelfth-century types are present on the site, including North Lincolnshire Fine-shelled ware and Stamford ware.

Medieval and later
Only eleven vessels in total can be shown to post-date the introduction into the area of glazed wares other than Stamford ware. None of the six vessels belonging to the early medieval period are typologically distinct, and they could belong anywhere in the period between the early twelfth and early or mid thirteenth centuries, all are probably locally produced. The two medieval vessels, one a Beverley Orange ware type 2 jug and the other an undiagnostic local coarseware, date to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Three early modern vessels were recovered from the BOH99 excavation.

The site sequence
Most of the pottery recovered from the excavations could be attributed to stratified features. The small size of most groups, however, limits their usefulness. Broad date ranges have been suggested for each context, although it should be noted that these must be used with caution.

Phase 1
A total of eight sherds were recovered from Phase 1 deposits, and with the exception of a small group from sunken-floored building [1008], all were single vessel occurrences from the fills of cut features. The fill of ditch [1314] contained two small fragments from the lug of a Maxey-type ware vessel, probably dating to the eighth century, but possibly dating as late as the mid ninth. Slot [1050] produced a single leached Lincoln Shelly ware jar sherd dating to the late ninth and late tenth centuries. Fill [1272] of linear feature [1231] contained only a single Roman sherd. A wheel-thrown jar base in an unidentified hard fabric, possibly of ninth-century date, was found in the fill of posthole [1379]. A small group of three sherds came from the fill of building [1008]; two are of early to mid Saxon date, the third is the base of a wheel-
thrown jar in a greensand tempered fabric. This jar visually resembles Torksey ware; however, both the tempering and manufacture indicate that the vessel is either Roman or of tenth-to-twelfth-century production. No parallels are known for similar vessels, and the identification will have to remain unresolved until further diagnostic examples are found.

Phase 2

Only two sherds were recovered from features belonging to this phase; both are in Lincoln Shelly ware and date to between the late ninth and late tenth centuries.

Phase 3

A slightly larger group of eleven sherds came from Phase 3 deposits. The material was all recovered from the fills of two features: ditch [1070] and beam-slot [1234]. The group of seven sherds from the fills of [1070] includes vessels in Early Fine-shelled ware, Lincoln Kiln-type, Torksey-type and North Lincolnshire Late Saxon Grey ware. Although the date range for each were type differs and the Early Fine-Shelled ware may represent residual mid-Saxon material, all of the vessels could have been in use together between the late ninth and late tenth centuries.

The fill of beam-slot [1234] contained three small late Saxon sherds and a probable prehistoric sherd. The late Saxon sherds probably date to between the tenth and mid-eleventh centuries, although could date as early as the late ninth.

Phase 4

The initial stage of Phase 4 sees the introduction of pottery types that definitely post-date the late tenth century, represented by a total of sixteen sherds. The fills of three postholes of the eastern structure (1042, 1068 and 1101) produced five sherds representing four jars in different fabrics. The fabrics of three of the vessels, North Lincolnshire Sand-tempered coarseware, North Lincolnshire Grit-tempered coarseware and North Lincolnshire Quartz and Chalk-tempered ware, can only be dated generally to the eleventh to mid-twelfth century. The remaining jar is a Lincoln Kiln-type vessel of ninth- or tenth-century date. A total of eight vessels came from the fills of two postholes (1011) and (1030) from the western building. Five of the vessels are in North Lincolnshire Quartz and Chalk-tempered fabrics (NLQC), one jar is in North Lincolnshire Grit-tempered coarseware and the remaining identifiable vessel is a Wheelthrown Early Medieval Quartz and Shells fabric (WEMS). The high incidence of NLQC and the presence of a WEMS sherd suggest that this group belongs later than the mid-late eleventh century.

A small mixed group of seven vessels came from the fills of slots [1074] and [1013]. The single sherd from [1074] is a tiny (two grams) leached sherd of North Lincolnshire Fine-shelled ware, only broadly datable to between the late tenth and late twelfth centuries. The five vessels from [1013] include one miscellaneous sherd and a residual late Saxon vessel. The remaining three vessels are probably all jars, two are in local fabrics (NLQC and NLSTCW) and one is a Yorkshire Gritty ware. These jars can only be generally dated to the eleventh to twelfth centuries, although the presence of the Yorkshire Gritty ware vessel favours a date later than the mid eleventh century.

Eleven vessels were recovered from two fills of beam-slot [1021]. The group mainly comprises jars in North Lincolnshire Quartz and Chalk fabrics including a good example of a collared jar probably dating to between the mid-late eleventh and mid-twelfth centuries. The first two examples of the newly defined North Lincolnshire Gritty ware came from this group. Also included in the fills of this feature are two possible prehistoric sherds.

The fill of beam-slot [1225] contains a small group of late ninth- to early/mid tenth-century pottery, including the largest sherd (123 grams) to be recovered from the site. This sherd is in a slightly abraded condition and is from a very diagnostic form: a large Lincoln Kiln-type dish with an internal iron-rich coating. The other pottery in the group is only represented by small, mainly leached sherds and the group may represent disturbed material from an earlier deposit. The fills of ditch [1268-1350] contained four vessels of mixed date, the latest sherd is a North Lincolnshire Quartz and Chalk jar of eleventh- to twelfth-century date. A single ninth- or tenth-century Lincoln Kiln-type jar sherd also came from the fill.

Phase 5

The pottery from Phase 5 was mostly recovered from fills of the large ditch known as the Castledyke, [1031]; a small group of four sherds however, came from the fills of pit [1015]. One sherd from [1015] is of Roman date, the other three are probably of mid-late eleventh- to mid-twelfth-century date, and include one of only two Stamford ware sherds recovered from the site.

The small group of pottery found in the fills of the ditch is very mixed and includes a range of material from the mid Saxon, late Saxon and Saxo-Norman to early medieval periods. The latest two sherds are glazed wares of post early/mid twelfth-century date, one vessel is a Beverley-type jug, probably of local manufacture.

Phase 6

A group of thirty-two vessels was recovered from this phase, mainly from the subsoil (1002 and 1005). A single late Saxon sherd came from ditch [2003]. The fills of the rectilinear pit [1241] contained a small mixed group of sherds ranging in date from the Roman to the medieval period. The latest sherd from this feature is a Beverley Type 2 jug dating to between the early/mid thirteenth and early/mid fourteenth centuries. The mixed assemblage of twenty-two vessels came from the subsoil, the latest is from the Roman to early medieval periods and includes Roman, Anglo-Saxon, late Saxon, Saxo-Norman and early medieval types.

Phase 7

A single unglazed early modern earthenware was found in the fill of linear feature [1037].

Discussion

Despite the small size and residual nature of the ceramic assemblage from Barrow Road the material has provided a valuable contribution to the study of the ceramic sequence in the area.

The ceramic material recovered mainly consists of late Saxon to Saxo-Norman pottery. The nature and small size of the assemblage limits its usefulness in answering questions of chronology and function on the site. Nevertheless the pottery from the site provides evidence for intermittent activity in the area from the prehistoric to the early modern period. While it is not possible to determine exactly when the pottery was finally deposited it does seem to follow a chronological sequence through the site phasing.

Phases 1–3 contain pottery types that need not date to later
than the late tenth century. The typology of a small number of vessels shows that at least some of this material dates to the period between the late ninth and early/mid tenth centuries. These groups are dominated by wheel-thrown shell-tempered jars and bowls, which were probably produced in Lincoln. A smaller element is made up of local and regional quartz-tempered fabrics. These vessels mostly have external soot residues suggesting their use in a domestic environment. There is no evidence from the site for the use of finewares at this period.

Phase 4 deposits contain pottery types introduced after the demise of the shell-tempered industries at Lincoln, sometime in the late tenth to early eleventh centuries. Three of the fabric types found at Barrow Road are newly defined for this report. With the exception of two sherds of Stamford ware and a Yorkshire Gritty ware vessel all of the pottery is likely to be of local manufacture. With the possible exception of the two Stamford ware vessels, all the pottery is of a domestic nature. There is an increase in the amount of pottery recovered; however this may simply reflect a longer period of occupation, rather than more intensive activity on the site. Although it is not yet possible to define the absolute chronological progression of fabric types at this period, the absence of tenth- to eleventh-century Stamford ware, and the low numbers of Torksey-type and fine-shelled fabrics, suggest that there may be a gap in the ceramic sequence on the site between the late tenth and mid to late eleventh centuries.

The mixed nature and small size of the assemblage recovered from the fills of the Castledyke suggest that the site was not near a main focus of occupation at the time the ditch was backfilled. With the exception of two vessels, all of the pottery from the fills is representative of pre-Phase 5 activity.

Pottery Catalogue (Fig. 10)

Context: 1169 Phase 4
Rim of large collared jar with exterior soot in NLQC.

Fig. 10. Illustrated pottery vessels.

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<th>Latest date</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>NLQS</td>
<td>North Lincolnshire Quartz and Shell Fabrics</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLSTCW</td>
<td>North Lincolnshire Sand-tempered Coarse</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREH</td>
<td>Prehistoric wares</td>
<td>-4500</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Roman pottery</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TORKT</td>
<td>Torksey-type ware</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Pottery types by fabric, date, and number of vessels
THE METALWORK

Lisa M. Wastling

The excavation produced a small assemblage of metalwork, consisting of eight objects: five of iron, two of copper alloy and one of lead.

Three iron nails were recovered (RFs 3, 42 and 47). All were handmade and bore square or rectangular sectioned shanks. Two were from Phase 5 and one was from a Phase 1 feature.

An iron ring (RF18) was recovered from the fill of Phase 3 ditch [1070] (Fig.11). Iron rings served a number of purposes including suspension loops attached to the end of chains, as handles, tethering rings and components of harness fittings.

The padlock key stem from Phase 4 slot [1021] (RF15; Fig.11) with its S-hooked finial and narrow stem expanding into a handle, is paralleled on many late tenth- to thirteenth-century type A and B forms at Winchester. Pottery with an eleventh- to thirteenth-century date range was also recovered from the ditch, and it is likely that the key is of contemporary date.

Two unidentified iron objects were also recovered from Trench 1.

A single fragment of scrap lead (RF45) from the working or re-cycling of lead sheet was produced by the fill of Phase 3 ditch [1070].

Two post-medieval copper alloy studs or rivets were recovered from the ploughsoil.
THE STONE OBJECTS
Lisa M. Wastling

Twelve stone objects were found, consisting of ten quern fragments, a hone and a rubbing stone. Two querns were recovered from the Phase 1 ditch [1231], four from Phase 2 deposits, single examples from Phase 3 and 4 contexts and two from Phase 5. Eight were of Mayen lava from the Eifel region of Germany whilst two were of the more locally available millstone grit of the Pennine region. Both of the gritstone fragments were retrieved from Phase 2 ditch [1087]. One had been burnt post-breakage and may have been incorporated into a hearth base, a common secondary use for querns that are no longer useful for grinding.

With the exception of lava quern RF29 from ditch [1231] (Fig.12), all consisted of small fragments, lacking indication of form or dimension.

Lava querns were first used in Britain during the Roman period, when they are thought to have been introduced by the Roman army along with the flat quern form. The only other artefacts yielded by the same context as RF29 were another fragment of lava quern and a single small sherd of Roman pottery.

The handle socket on RF29 is at a forty-five degree angle from the outer edge of the quern to the upper surface. This handle type can be seen on Röder’s type 4, which he considered to be a form of oscillating flat quern rather than a fully rotating one. It was operated by a ringed handle of an organic material, such as a rope or thong and was worked with a back and forth movement. This form of use would seem to give rise to the hourglass form of the perforation of RF29, with most wear occurring at the widest points which are marked by the friction of the handle. There is also corresponding wear around the circumference of the hole on the upper surface. That this wear occurs both in front of and behind the hole on the upper surface seems to imply movement in both directions. If the quern were turned in a single direction, wear would be expected to occur preferentially on one side. Type 4 is thought by Röder to date from the late La Tène onwards. Roman examples have been found at Castleford,6 Colchester6 and a residual fragment from Lincoln, Flaxengate, which was recovered from a late Saxon context.15

This form of handle appears to have continued into the early medieval period. Querns with handles of this type were found at Dorestad in the Netherlands,16 and one was recovered from an eleventh- to twelfth-century context at Fishergate, York which was not considered to be residual.17

The Roman examples mentioned above all bear a raised lip around the circumference of the upper surface. This attribute is lacking on both the Barton example and that from Fishergate. This raises the possibility that the quern may be contemporary with the Saxon or later phases of the site rather than earlier, and that the single sherd of Roman pottery from the same feature as RF29 is in fact residual. Residual Roman pottery represented 5% of the total ceramic assemblage for the excavation.

One fragmentary hone (RF14) and one rubbing stone (RF62) were also recovered (Fig.12). The rubbing stone displays a series of long, narrow, pointed sharpening grooves in the centre, the U-shaped profile of which suggests the sharpening of cylindrical objects such as pins or needles, rather than knife points. Both these stones have the same lithology.

The small hone is rather abraded, and bears only a little trace of use. It may have broken off an object similar to RF62, and then had some use as a small bar-shaped hone.
THE FIRED CLAY OBJECTS
Lisa M. Wastling

Introduction
Four fired clay objects were recovered during the BOH2000 excavation, and these have been considered the most significant finds recovered, because of the possibility that they were associated with metalworking, and the presence on site of iron-working debris and slag (see J. Cowgill below). As with many fragmentary objects of this material, they are somewhat enigmatic, and may have performed a variety of functions. All four objects were retrieved from ditch fills.

Description
From Phase 2, a fragment of an object with a rounded ninety degree corner (RF41) and an object of a similar fabric with a small portion of original flat surface extant (RF39) were retrieved. Both were fired at a relatively low temperature, possibly in an open fire (clump firing) or domestic oven. The complete form of both of these objects is unknown, though they bear similarities to the two fired clay objects from the fill of Phase 4 slot [1021].

These are a stand or support of conical form (RF23) and a fragment of a slightly tapered object with a rounded rectangular section (RF49). Both these objects are incomplete (Fig.13), and it is not possible to know whether they were perforated for suspension in any way. Whilst there is a possibility that RF49 may be a fragment of an Iron Age pyramidal loom weight, RF23 is unlikely any known parallels for fired clay loom-weights, and is unlikely to have been used as such.10 This conical object may have been used as a stand or rest for tools or as a spit support during cooking. It is blackened on one side, possibly as a result of direct heat.

This object bears some similarities of form to supports of briquetage, the fired clay associated with the salt-making process. It is, however, more finely made and uniformly constructed than most briquetage supports, and lacks the finger-marks usually seen on these objects. In addition, similar fired clay objects have been used as kiln furniture. A unifying factor of many of the processes which used such fired clay objects is that they are heat-based. One high temperature process for which the site has produced evidence is iron-working. It is possible that stands or supports for tools and objects under construction may have been required in the workshop or smithy and were made on an ad hoc basis, when needed.

The variety of objects that can be made in fired clay is a testament to the ease of use and rapidity of construction that can be achieved in such a material. It can be moulded to almost any shape and quickly fired hard enough to use, even in a domestic fire. If the object is subsequently broken or distorted by heat, a replacement can easily be made.

The clay from which these objects are made is likely to be the closest locally suitable material. Barton-on-Humber is well known for its later clay pits along the Humber foreshore, which spawned a thriving post-medieval brick and tile industry. Thin sectioning by Alan Vince revealed that the fabric of RF23 shared characteristics that can be matched with pottery fabrics thought to have been produced in north-east Lincolnshire.11

Catalogue of illustrated examples (Fig.13)
RF23 Support/stand. Conical, with a smoothed surface and flat base, blackened by heat on one side. Handmade. The top of this object is missing. Oxidised fabric containing occasional rounded pebbles. This object has been thin-sectioned and analysed by Alan Vince, (sample V677).16
Height 97mm Diam 85mm Weight 567g
Context 1169 Phase 4

RF49 Clay firebar/support. Rectangular sectioned tapering object, with smoothed, slightly blacked external surfaces and rounded corners. Oxidised fabric.
Height 53mm W 73mm Th 51mm Weight 192g
Context 1169 Phase 4

THE BIOLOGICAL ASSEMBLAGE
James Rackham and John A. Giorgi
Environmental Archaeology Consultancy

A much more comprehensive report was submitted as part of the original developer report (J. Bradley An Archaeological Evaluation at Barton Road, Barton-upon-Humber, Humber Archaeology Report 97 (2002)); unfortunately due to constraints of space, only an abstract is presented here.

Introduction
Six General Bulk Assessment and Bulk Sample sediment samples17 from the initial evaluation (BOH99) were submitted to the Environmental Archaeology Unit of the University of York for assessment of their bioarchaeological potential. Analysis of these samples had suggested a limited interpretive potential for the environmental remains,18 and no further work was recommended on the samples examined. The samples produced a few poorly preserved charred bread/club wheat (Triticum aestivum-compactum), barley (Hordeum) and oat (cf. Avena) grains as well as small (<2mm) charred legume cotyledons.

Nevertheless during the course of the subsequent excavations, a series of further samples were taken from the excavated deposits, of which five were submitted for study, plus one from the earlier fieldwork, and a small collection of animal bones was collected by hand. The assessment of the hand excavated animal bone from the first phase of fieldwork was conducted by John Buglass and has been re-studied for this report.

The environmental finds from the samples include charcoal, charred cereals, a little chaff and weed seeds, a few small vertebrates and land snails. Two samples produced high densities of charred cereal and are discussed below. The animal bone includes fragments of cattle, piglet, chicken and single small fish vertebrae were recovered from three samples but have not been taken to species. Wild vertebrates are represented by frog/toad and field vole. The only sample (fill of pit [1241]) that produced snails contained only one species, the open country/grassland taxa Pupilla muscorum.

These samples appear to be largely dominated by food and industrial debris. The industrial activity appears to be localised since the evidence is only concentrated in Phase 3 beam-slot [1234]. The food debris occurs in all the samples with evidence of specific dumplings, of charred cereal in Phase 1 pit [1375] and the upper fill of a ditch, and of cokkels in the primary fill of a rectangular feature. Although only 72g of cockle were extracted from the sample of the fill of Phase 6 pit [1241], 151 valves were hand collected during excavation. The charred plant remains are discussed in detail below.
Animal bone

An assemblage of 247 animal bones and fragments was collected during the evaluation and succeeding excavation. This material has been identified and recorded following the procedures of the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy, and an archive catalogue produced (this is held with the site archive). The bulk of this material is eleventh to twelfth century in date with a few contexts producing only late Saxon pottery. In this summary of the assemblage the whole collection is treated together.

Cattle dominate the assemblage in terms of fragment numbers and zone numbers, indicating that they were by far the most important meat source. The cattle assemblage includes mandibles, maxilla and long bones from immature and fully adult animals, but few from juveniles or calves. However a single femur shaft fragment from a small animal and two small cattle size vertebrae may have been from juveniles, and a very small fragment of the diastemal region of a cow mandible was probably a calf. The sheep (and goat — although no goats were specifically identified) show a very similar pattern with immature animals, with the third molar erupted and in the early stages of wear, and adults present. No bones were recorded that might have come from juveniles or lambs. The few bones of pig that gave any indication of age at death were indicative of immature animals.

Fragments of most parts of the skeleton of cattle and sheep are present. A very large ram’s horn was recovered from the fill of Phase 2 boundary ditch [2019], and a number of horse bones indicate that these animals were large, but none were intact enough to estimate their withers height. No examples of pathology were observed during the recording.

This assemblage is really too small to sustain any further discussion or interpretation.

Discussion

The environmental and other evidence from the soil samples indicates that the excavated area of the site includes both domestic and industrial activities. The latter, iron smelting, was associated with tenth- to eleventh-century pottery and concentrated in the terminal of Phase 3 beam-slot [1234]. The evidence includes fired clay, fragments of the hearth lining, tuyeres (see J. Cowgill below), slag and abundant hammerscale. All the samples have produced small assemblages of otherwise domestic debris, although there have been significantly higher concentrations of charred cereals. All of this can be classed as food waste and despite the richness of the charred cereal assemblages there is no evidence that these derive from crop processing activities. The material from Phase 6 pit [1241] indicated a specific dump of cockles in the primary fill of this rectangular pit, presumably waste from the processing of a single catch.

The charred plant remains from Barrow Road show that free-threshing wheat, barley and oat were used on the site, with all three being common finds on late Saxon and early medieval sites. The cleanliness of the cereal assemblages (with almost no crop-processing debris) suggests that the material derived from virtually fully processed crops ready for human consumption. Bean and possibly flax were other food economic plants represented on the site. A small number of the weed seeds could tentatively suggest that a range of soils, including possibly damp areas, may have been exploited for the cultivation of these crops. These samples were significantly richer than those previously assessed from the site, which produced a diminutive, but similar, assemblage. 19

The food remains include free-threshing wheat, barley, oat, celtic bean, cattle, sheep, pig, chicken, probably goose, small fish and cockle. Other animals kept at the site included cats and dogs.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Alison Foster for sample processing.

THE SLAG AND RELATED DEBRIS

Jane Cowgill

Introduction

A total of c.2750g of smelting slags and associated materials (143 pieces) were submitted for recording and the associated materials extracted from the samples were also examined. The slag was identified solely on morphological grounds by visual examination, sometimes with the aid of a x10 binocular microscope.

There were two iron objects amongst the slag, and two pieces of ironstone.

All the slags and probably the related forms of evidence were generated by iron smithing, the fabrication, repair or reuse of iron objects. There is one possible exception in the form of a piece of cinder from the overlying subsoil, but this suggestion is tentative. This is a very heterogeneous collection of slag; there are few similarities between the pieces, even those of the same morphological type. The product of a single smith or workshop is usually recognizable because the smiths working techniques and habits will lead to some level of uniformity in the waste products. An assemblage as diverse and varied as this indicates that it was probably produced by a number of individuals.

A high percentage of the hearth bottoms are abraded probably caused either by weathering if they were initially discarded on the ground surface or by frequent deposition. It is a small assemblage from contexts dated to between the late ninth to mid thirteenth century but even in some of the earliest contexts there are some very abraded pieces.

Due to the heterogeneity within the assemblage the characteristics of each type of slag cannot be discussed independently. The two probable tuyere fragments, however, have very similar characteristics, some of which are unusual and it is not clear what original form they took (both are from Phase 3 slot [1234]). The back of both pieces (the hearth rather than the fireside) is oxidised: normally only the area around the air hole is oxidised and the fabric becomes reduced fired away from this zone. It is unclear why this has occurred. The only surviving air hole is distorted by heat but was probably c.15mm in diameter. The faces have vitrified to a depth of c.5mm and there is no indication of a hearth bottom ever having been attached. Only one hearth bottom has hearth lining incorporated within it and that is on its base.

Hammerscale was recovered from all the environmental samples except that from Phase 1 slot [1060] (sample 14) but only in significant quantities from Phase 3 slot [1234] (sample 15).

Discussion

The slag was recovered from features scattered widely across the site, no noticeable concentrations exist. The quantity of hammerscale from the northern terminal or beam-slot [1234] (fill [1233]) suggests some smelting close to this area. This feature also produced the largest assemblage of slag, the two tuyere fragments and fifty pieces (79g) of fired clay from the sample (15). Although, as discussed above, this does not appear to be a consistent group, it is all the debris from iron smelting. The beam-slot/gully is an isolated feature of mid to late tenth-century date that is at a different alignment to those features that represent both earlier and latter phases of occupation at the site.
DISCUSSION

Character and economy of the settlement

Despite the large number of features, there was little in the way of evidence for craft/industrial processes, and only a little more for agricultural practices. Nevertheless, some general conclusions can be drawn. A mixture of cereals, namely free-threshing wheat, barley and oat were used on the site, with all three being common finds on late Saxon and early medieval sites.

The wild plant remains found with the cereals suggest the exploitation of calcareous soils; a large area of such soils exist almost immediately to the south of the site, the same soils exploited by the medieval farmers of Barton. Other crops that appear to have been grown—both found in Phase 1—were beans and flax. For the latter, it was not possible to deduce whether it was the cultivated variety or wild, but it could be surmised that it was grown for the production of linen cloth for use by the community.

As for the habitat around the site, again little evidence was present. Those plants from wetland habitats may have arrived on the site as part of material destined for roofing or floor covering. Only at the very end of the occupation record was there any indication of habitat, in the form of a snail taxon characteristic of open country, the presence of the latter being corroborated by historical evidence.

Cereal grain was almost certainly stored on site, and this can be suggested from the presence of a structure interpreted as a granary, and the presence of cleaned grains, ready for use. The only evidence for actual processing was a small quantity of chaff, the by-product of winnowing or threshing, which was found in samples from one of the earliest (possibly pre-Saxon) features on the site. Lava quern fragments represent the next processing stage. Charred grains could have originated during drying or malting, or could alternatively have been accidentally burnt.

Animal husbandry was represented by a modest assemblage—of bone; from this it was apparent that cattle predominated, indicating that they were the most important meat source, followed by sheep and a few pigs. Both the cattle and pig showed similar kill patterns, with juvenile and mature animals being favoured, while the pigs—where it was possible to determine age at death—were slaughtered as immature animals.

Although the assemblage was considered too small to sustain much in the way of interpretation, it is worth noting that similar kill patterns were noted at the emerging urban centres of middle Saxon York and Southampton or high status settlements, such as middle and late Saxon Flixborough and Porchester. For these settlements it has been suggested that the bones represent animals arriving on the hoof for slaughter, perhaps after a period of fattening. Certainly, it might be expected that live animals would be driven some distance to the high-status site that was presumably located within the main enclosure; in the case of Barrow Road, the animals are perhaps more likely to have been bred locally.

The only craft represented on the site is iron smithing, evidence of which was found within all phases, except Phase 2, although it was only in Phase 3 that this was found in any quantity to suggest that it took place very close to the excavated features. Both tuyère and hearth fragments were recovered from the same phase 3 feature.

The pottery does provide instances of trade down the River Trent, but the lack of fine wares is perhaps a reflection of the lowly status of the settlement. It has already been suggested that the absence of certain pottery fabrics may represent either an actual break in the settlement sequence or an external factor which hampered trade. Little other evidence for trade was found on the Barrow Road site; the presence of German lava quern fragments suggests trading contacts with the continent, but these are sufficiently common elsewhere to suggest a longstanding pattern of widespread distribution, and they were probably used in a substantial proportion of early medieval households in both urban and rural situations.

The few finds recovered from the site were all of a domestic nature and included a hone and a rubbing stone, the latter object appears to have been used for sharpening needles or pins. A padlock key recovered from a Phase 4 ditch suggests that, despite the relative poverty of the site, the inhabitants of the settlement were concerned enough about what little personal property they possessed to keep it secure.

The settlement in its wider context

No discussion of this settlement could be complete without reference to the possible middle-Saxon enclosure whose southern limit is less than 100m north of the site. It was more than likely that this enclosure had some bearing on the development of the settlement excavated at Barrow Road, at least in the early phase of the site. Barton was undoubtedly an estate centre by the tenth century, and was recorded as being held by Ulf Fenisc in 1066. The seat of this power presumably lay within the enclosure, and therefore the Barrow Road site will have come under its jurisdiction.

The enclosure at Barton is really only visible on aerial photographs and from cartographic evidence. On the ground a faint earthwork exists in the garden to rear of the present site. The course of part of the south-western boundary of the enclosure now forms the footpath from St Peter’s Church to Green Lane, while the northern course is now delineated by East Acridge. It is much more apparent on the enclosure map reproduced in Brown (1906) which presumably formed the basis of the recent topographic analysis of the enclosure.

As, yet, there is no definite chronology relating to the enclosure at Barton, although from the excavations carried out at St Peter’s, when part of the western extent of the ditch surrounding the enclosure was revealed, a middle-Saxon date was ascribed to its construction.

Eventually the site became the focus for the medieval manorial complex of Tywrrthall Hall and also appears to have been fortified during the eleventh or twelfth century. This last assertion came about through further work at St Peter’s in 1983, when another large ditch was excavated.

Place-name evidence suggests the presence of a tree-covered earth bank: ‘Acridge’ is probably derived from the Saxon ac hryeg, ‘oak ridge’ with no hardening of the -cg to the later Scandinavian -ge (from hryegr), probably indicating an origin before the late nth century for the name (cf. Askrigg, N. Yorks).

Late Saxon pottery is found not only within the bounds of the enclosure, but to the south-west at the Bickort’s Garage site, where structural features were also found. How much of the enclosure was still extant in the late Saxon period is not certain; Rodwell seems to be suggesting that much was abandoned by this time, with the exception of the area around St Peter’s church. This may be true, as the later phases at the Barrow Road site are aligned with the road itself, rather than the south-eastern entrance.

Throughout this project it has been difficult to establish a relationship between the enclosure—a seat of thegny power—and what is probably a lower status settlement at Barrow Road. A clue to its function may be found within Domesday Book and the nascent urbanism in Barton. Bryant (1994) makes the point that Barton may have been a polyfocal settlement, divided between agrarian and mercantile groups,
with the market recorded in Domesday Book attesting to the importance of the place at that time. This polyfocalism, he asserts, might have meant an agrarian population was focused near to St Peter’s, while the proto-urban population was centred around Fleetgate to the west, although it is more likely that any focus of the town was around Southgate and Priestgate. Polyfocalism, with separate enclosures maintaining particular functions, was a common feature of early urban growth.

The location of the two centres aside, in terms of the Barrow Road site, the manorial centre and church presumably acted as the hub of the settlement both spatially and from the point of view of administration. The Barrow Road site perhaps formed part of an agrarian focus. It may be worth bearing in mind the results of previous archaeological work at Birketts Garage and Barton Vicarage, where evidence of later Saxon occupation was found. In the case of the former site, beam slots and postholes were found, similar to those at Barrow Road. Their location to the east of the urban centre makes them candidates for agricultural rather than mercantile settlements. Other evidence, more circumstantial, may support this hypothesis: the plots on the east side of Southgate could mark the original extent of the town in that direction, and the occupation evidence for these two sites falls outside that zone. In the eighteenth century, the farms of Barton were still in its urban core, and from there the owners or tenants farmed the surrounding open fields, perhaps indicating that the relationship between farm and town had always been close. Further, the Birketts’ Garage, Barton Vicarage and Barrow Road sites all lie in the ‘Old Enclosure’, perhaps hinting that these areas were enclosed in antiquity.

Abandonment of the site
The final phase of the settlement in the late eleventh or twelfth century offers two possible abandonment scenarios. The first touches on some of the themes mentioned above, that of the growing urbanisation of the town of Barton. Its westward shift away from the old enclosure may have proved such a dynamic pull that the farmsteads, that on the Barrow Road site among them, also shifted. A copy of the 1796 enclosure map for Barton, reproduced in Brown (1906), clearly illustrates the separation between the Barrow Road site and the ‘Old Enclosure’, and the main focus of the town.

A charter from the first part of the twelfth century appears to indicate that the strip of land between South Gate, with Barrow Road to the south and Castledyke to the east, was not entirely devoid of habitation, but if the priest’s house and the dwellings being exchanged are discounted as being close to the church, there is the suggestion that the remaining land was pasture by this time. This is further supported by the environmental evidence, meagre though it is, which suggests that by this period the land was open countryside.

The second supposition is far more intriguing, and concerns an actual event in the twelfth century: the fortification of Barton during the period of unrest in the reign of Stephen and Matilda. It now seems likely that the feature known as Castledyke, at least the section crossing the site, was part of the defences around Barton during this period, and that it cut through the eastern fringes of the settlement. Brown believed the dyke was constructed during the Anglo-Danish period, as a charter of 1115 refers to a ‘Dyke’, and indeed for some sections an early date may be probable, particularly as it extended around three sides of the town. However, more recently several authorities, including Keith Miller of English Heritage, who has worked extensively on Barton, and David Williams who brought the documentary sources cited below to the attention of the excavator, both see Castledyke as a twelfth-century feature.

A charter found in the Bardney Cartulary, dating to 1147, indicates that Barton in this period was classed as Castrum, a fortified town, while a charter of the late 1150s–1160s records the building of the lost castle at Barton as well as other references to a rampart or murum located to the south-east of the town. Although there is nothing that explicitly alludes to the construction of the ditch at this time, there does appear to be enough circumstantial evidence to suggest its appearance during this period. Archaeologically it also appears late in the Barrow Road sequence. Thus, it might be possible to suggest that the outlying farmstead was deliberately cleared of its inhabitants as an emergency measure during the unrest of the 1140s, and that the rampart and dyke was cut through the site. It would be, in conclusion, difficult to prove either way, but the physical presence of Castledyke passing through the site does add weight to this premise.

A ditch found below the chancel of St Peter’s Church during the 1982 excavations may well represent the westerly rampart of a line of inner defences thrown up as part of the town defences during that period. It is now suggested that this ditch, which was open for only a short time, may be part of the castle centred in the old enclosure, or more specifically in the area of Tywrhitt Hall. The nearby section of Castledyke would have acted as the forward defences facing the opposing forces at Barrow. If this is the castle site, then the presence of a settlement so close to the outer defences would have been a hazard.

There are still a few problems with this hypothesis. The evidence, for example, hinges on the presence of the ditch only, and this does appear to curve the wrong way to form a defended enclosure based on the hall; the ditch, moreover, appeared to cut a feature containing thirteenth-century pottery.

CONCLUSIONS
In summary, the 1999 and 2000 excavations produced evidence for later Saxon occupation and several phases of buildings, including a possible granary. The presence of slag, hammer-scale and burnt or fired clay debris, also indicated iron-smithing on site, although no associated structures were found. The environmental evidence pointed to the exploitation of a range of local habitats for sourcing foodstuffs, such as wheat, barley, oats and beans. The cereals found were cleaned of chaff and weed seeds, suggesting that they had already been highly processed for use, probably within the community for home consumption. Economic plants, such as flax, were also grown, almost certainly locally for linen production.

The settlement had been abandoned by the mid twelfth century, but there appears to have been some reoccupation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, after a short hiatus, before reverting to agricultural use.

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The main report, accompanying illustrations and the photographs were the work of Jeremy Bradley, and authors of individual specialist reports are credited as appropriate. The text was compiled and edited by Trevor Bridgman.
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