

**Land adjacent to Grooms Cottage, Main Street,
Dadford, Buckinghamshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Kendal Bird

by Sian Anthony and Sarah Coles

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MSD01/58

August 2001

Summary

Site name: Land adjacent to Grooms Cottage, Main Street, Dadford, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 6680 3830

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th August 2001

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sarah Coles

Site code: MSD 01/58

Area of site: c. 460 sq m

Summary of results: Three late post-medieval pits and one gully were found with some residual 17th-century and later pottery. A single sherd of medieval pottery (13–16th century date) was also found.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 4.9.01 Steve Preston✓ 05.09.01
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Report 01/58b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land next to Grooms Cottage on Main Street in the village of Dadford, Buckinghamshire (SP 6680 3830) (Fig. 1). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Kendal Bird of Main Street, Dadford.

A planning consent (app. no. 2000/02976) has been granted by Aylesbury Vale District Council for construction of a new house on the south side of Main Street, next to Grooms Cottage. A field evaluation and (if necessary) excavation have been requested, in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr A Kidd, Senior Archaeological Officer, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Coles and Pam Jenkins on 20th August 2001 and the site code is MSD 01/58. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of Dadford which is to the north-west of both Stowe and Buckingham (Fig. 1). The area affected by the development is c. 460 sq m, on land sloping slightly down from the north-east from a height above Ordnance Datum at 50.84m in the north-east corner to 49.99m at the south-west corner. Underlying geology was observed to be a mid orange yellow sandy silt with occasional small gravel inclusions.

Archaeological background

Dadford village's Anglo-Saxon origins are first apparent in the Domesday Book (1086). It expanded into a 'dispersed' medieval settlement, a type common to the Buckinghamshire/Northamptonshire border area. The site itself has no archaeological settlement evidence visible from aerial photographs, but an 18th-century map shows buildings along the south side of the High Street. The north side of the street shows a sequence of regular closes that may be part of a tenement pattern. The site was therefore believed to have a high chance of revealing medieval occupation and a possibility of Saxon material.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. Specific aims were to determine if any Saxon or medieval deposits relating to the development of Dadford were present.

Three trenches were proposed, two 15m long and one of 10m, each 1.5m in wide. They were to be located at the footprints of the foundations of the new house and garage. All were to be excavated by a JCB-type machine using a ditching bucket, and examined in such a way as to minimize impact on any extant archaeology. Work was supervised at all times by an archaeologist and all spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds. Archaeological deposits were to be hand-cleaned and excavated.

Results

The three trenches were dug as intended. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil onto 0.25m of grey-brown sandy silt subsoil. This contained occasional brick, pottery, bone and charcoal. Natural geology was encountered at a depth of 0.55m and consisted of orange/yellow sandy gravel. The trench depth was 0.89m at the western end. One rectangular feature (4) was found under the baulk. On investigation, this feature proved to contain an unbattered brick, late post-medieval pottery and animal bone. Other 20th-century disturbance was observed in the trench, along with two tree boles.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

The trench was 1.05m deep at the south-west end and 0.8m at the north-east corner. Topsoil went to a depth of 0.5m onto subsoil of 0.3m depth consisting of brown sandy soil with finds of ore, brick, post-medieval pottery, bone and charcoal. Natural yellow sandy gravel was observed from a depth of 0.8m. A modern drainage channel filled with modern brick rubble was oriented west-east across the trench, and a 20th-century pit had been cut into the subsoil and natural geology from just beneath the topsoil. A gully terminus (1) was also found. The fill (50) was a loose grey sandy silt which contained bone, flint (burnt and unburnt), tile and iron objects and is of late post-medieval date.

Trench 3 (Plate 3)

Trench 3 was excavated to 8m in length and to a depth of 1.28m at the north end. Made ground went to a depth of 0.4m at the north end and 0.5m at the south end. This overlay a buried topsoil of depth varying between 0.4

and 0.5m. Subsoil was absent from the north end but appeared at 4m from the south end, gradually deepening towards the south. Natural geology occurred from 0.8m deep at the north end to 1.15m at the south end, and consisted of the same yellow sandy gravel. A modern drainage channel cut across the natural of the trench from north-west to south-east.

Two post-medieval pits were sealed by the buried topsoil: ovoid Pit 2 was situated at the south end and was 0.5m deep. A date for the feature is given by the 19th and 20th century pottery found in the dark brown firm silt fill (51). Similarly, Pit 3 contained modern brick but no other finds.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 23 sherds with a total weight of 232g. All the material is post-medieval or modern in date, with the exception of a single re-deposited medieval sherd.

The pottery was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g., Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat *et al.* 1994), as follows:

Potterspurry Ware (MK MC6). ?AD1250/75–?1600.

Trailed slip-ware (MK PM5). 17th century.

Red Earthenware (MK PM8). 17th century.

Midland Purple ware (MK PM14). 17th century.

Creamware: (MK PM23). 1740–1880.

White Earthenware (MK PM25). Late 18th–20th century

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>MC6</i>		<i>PM14</i>		<i>PM8</i>		<i>PM5</i>		<i>PM23</i>		<i>PM25</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
1	U/S							1	3				
2	subsoil	1	31			1	21						
2	10-15m											3	10
3	0-5m			1	3					1	3	4	7
3	2 (51)											11	154
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>171</i>

Conclusion

This small programme of evaluation has revealed no significant archaeological features that can help to elucidate the Saxon or medieval settlement of Dadford village. Despite the documentary evidence for the origins of the village, there were no indications of any activity represented by subsoil deposits on the site area earlier than the 19th or 20th century. The only subsoil evidence comprised late post-medieval activity from three pits located in Trenches 1 and 3. Residual and spoil heap finds of pottery of medieval (1sherds) and 17th-century dates (3 sherds) do indicate a low level of activity on or close to the site, which need be no more than the manuring of arable fields or allotments.

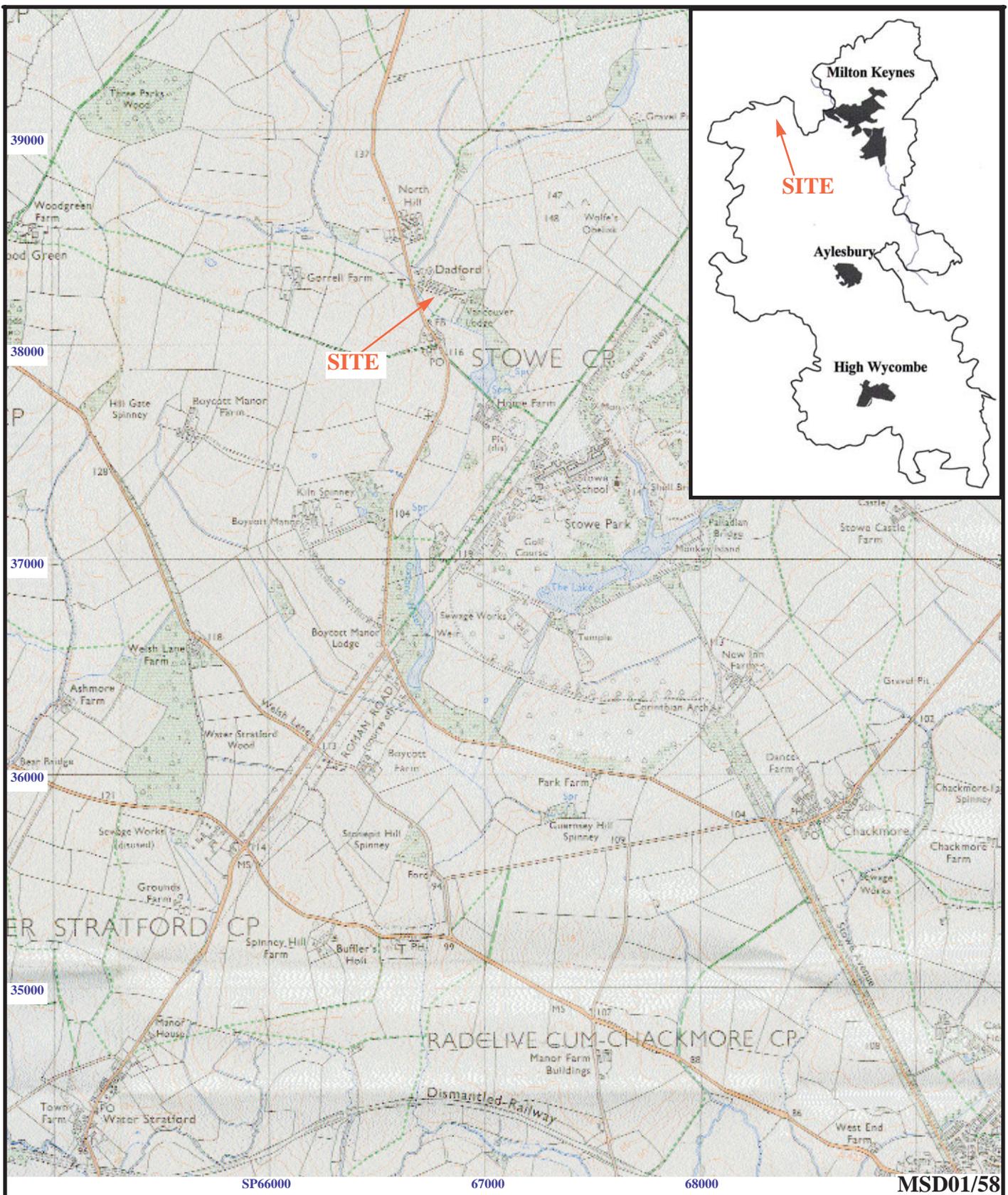
On this basis therefore, the site does not appear to have any archaeological potential.

References

- Kidd, A, 2001, 'Brief for an Archaeological Excavation', Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, Aylesbury
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Mynard, D C and Zeepvat R J, 1992, *Great Linford* Buckinghamshire Archaeol Soc Monogr Ser **3**, Aylesbury
- Zeepvat, R J, Roberts, J S and King, N A, 1994, *Caldecotte, Milton Keynes. Excavation and Fieldwork 1966-91* Buckinghamshire Archaeol Soc Monogr Ser **9**, Aylesbury

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at south or west end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	15.5	1.7	0.89	0.3m of topsoil onto 0.25m of mid brown sandy silt subsoil onto mid orange yellow sandy gravel. Modern disturbance of tree boles and pylon foundations. Post-medieval pit (4)
2	14.7	1.6	1.05	0.5m of topsoil onto 0.3m of mid brown grey sandy subsoil onto natural. Gully terminus (1) of unknown but probably modern date. Modern pit cuts from the topsoil and modern drainage channel cuts into natural.
3	8	1.7	1.28	Made ground of 0.5m onto a buried topsoil of up to 0.5m. This goes straight onto natural at the north end but onto subsoil of 0.25m at the south end, then onto natural. Modern drainage channel cuts into natural. Two post-medieval pits (2 and 3) are sealed by the buried topsoil.



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Figure 1. Location of site within Dadford and Buckinghamshire.

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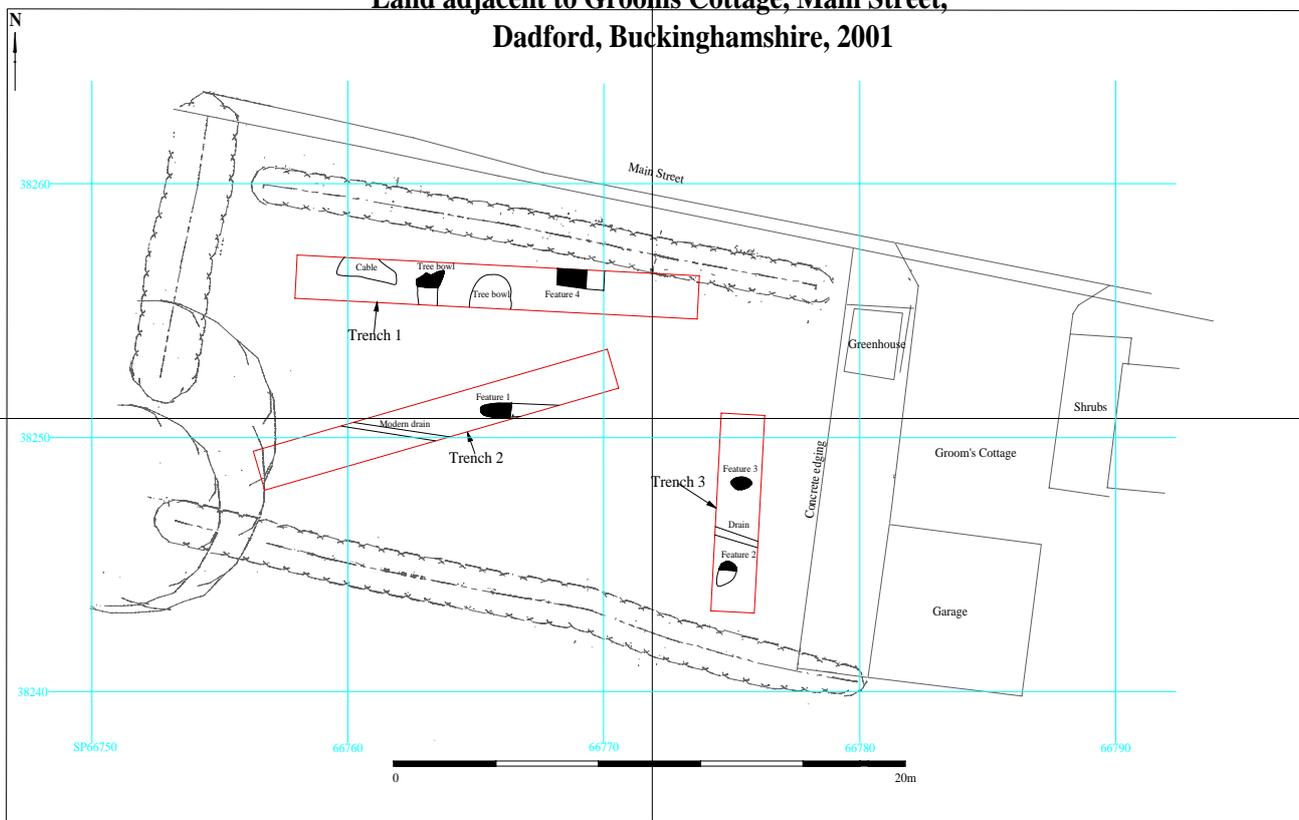


Figure 2. Location of trenches excavated and features investigated during evaluation