

# Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1985

by *Peter Liddle*

## INTERIM REPORTS

An Excavation at Humberstone Farm, Leicester (SK 63000730)

In September 1985, an excavation was carried out at Humberstone Farm by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, directed by John Lucas, with the permission of the landowners, Mr A.J.P. Pochin and the Pochin Estate Trustees, and the co-operation and assistance of the farmer Mr A. Hill. It was undertaken, in conjunction with the University of Leicester, Adult Education Department as a training excavation for the certificate course in archaeology.

The site, which was discovered in 1979, by the Hamilton fieldwork group, lies 5km (3 miles) north-east of Leicester on top of a low hill (91m OD) with a sub-surface of boulder clay. Subsequent years of fieldwalking indicated a sward of mainly Roman material and flint covering an area of roughly 1.2 hectares in the south-west corner of the field and along the edges of the fields immediately to the west. The nature of the material found suggested the presence of a Roman farmstead and possibly also some prehistoric activity.

When the destruction of the site by continued ploughing was accelerated by its inclusion within the area of the proposed Hamilton development, it was decided to undertake a trial excavation to locate and identify the nature and extent of the occupation and assess the damage to the archaeological levels already sustained. Further, excavation would provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between the distribution of the fieldwalked material and the underlying site. Initially, trial trenching, by machine was undertaken, and it became immediately apparent that the archaeological levels had previously been disturbed by medieval ridge and furrow. The difference in preservation was very marked with only the deeper features surviving below the furrows. Although no further traces of prehistoric activity were identified the trial trenching revealed the presence of Roman occupation and indicated approximately its spatial distribution. On the basis of this initial information the site was sampled by the excavation of two small areas.

The most southerly of these areas revealed a succession of drainage channels, that dated from at least the 2nd century through to the 4th century, perhaps forming the south east corner of the settlement, particularly as traces of Roman activity faded to the south and east. The latest ditch fill contained a concentration of slag, suggesting the presence of metal-working in the vicinity. The area examined to the north of these ditches revealed traces of timber buildings, represented by numerous post holes and post pads. The identification of individual structures is difficult due to the limited nature of the investigation and the complexity of the post hole pattern. The latter suggests the possibility that a succession of buildings could be represented. A cobbled surface may have been associated with these for a large concentration of pebble was found, albeit extremely disturbed by later ploughing. A further aspect of the settlement was indicated by a heated structure that consisted of a stoke pit and a stone lined flue. Its function was not identified although the state of the clay in the flue indicated it was not fired to a high temperature. Future analysis of samples taken may reveal some clues to its function.

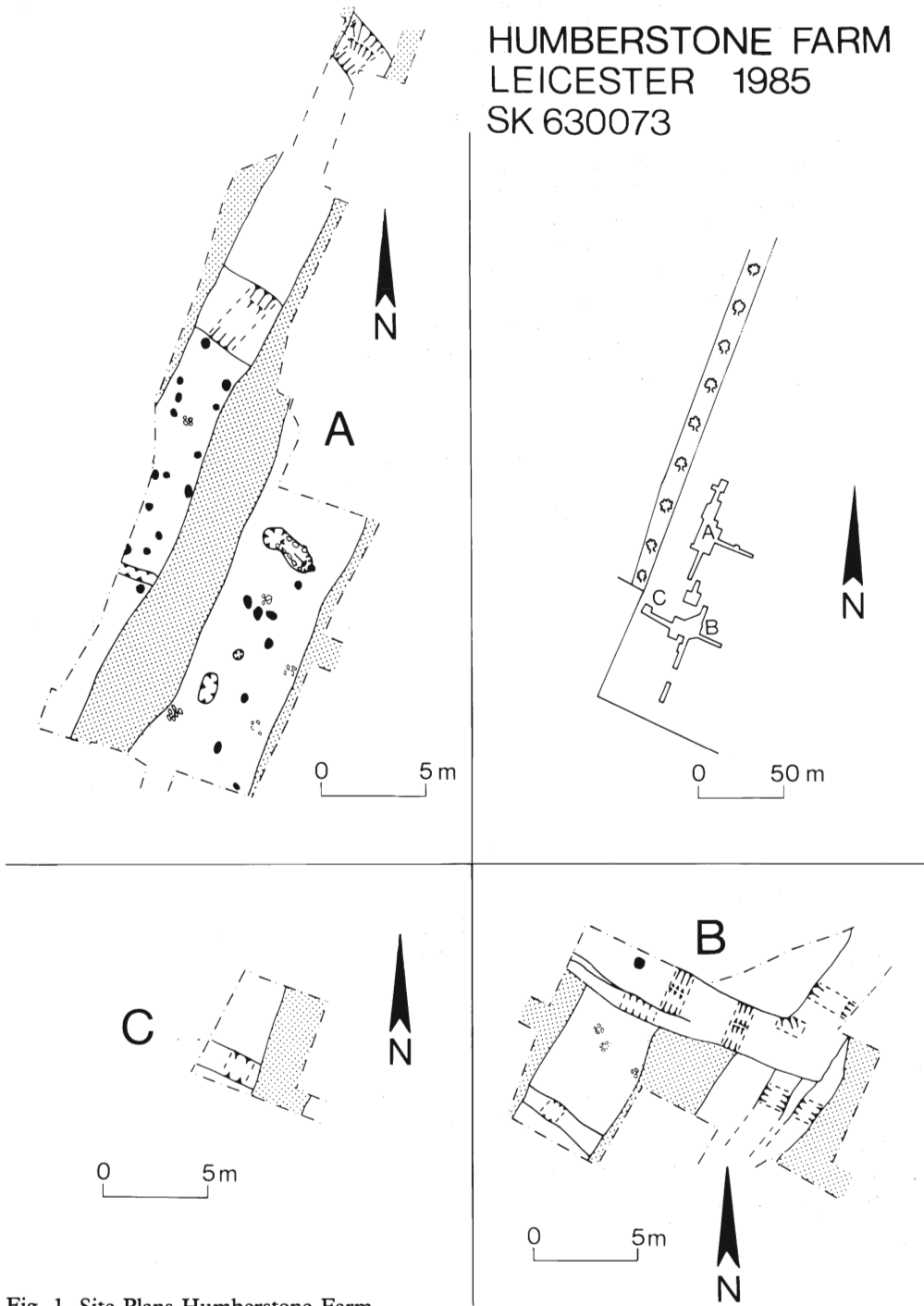


Fig. 1 Site Plans Humberstone Farm

Further north, a large ditch orientated roughly north-west to south-east and backfilled in the late 4th or even early 5th century, could represent the northern edge of the settlement, at least in the later Roman period. Another ditch, on roughly the same alignment but 15m further north, may represent an earlier boundary. Its fill contained both Iron Age and early Roman pottery, suggesting a possible Iron Age origin for the farmstead. Hence this could be an example of a native farmstead whose occupation spanned the Roman Conquest and continued in use until possibly even the early 5th century. If this is the case then the site is of major importance for it offers the opportunity of investigating the impact of Romanisation on an existing native settlement.

Despite the erosion by modern ploughing and variable survival on the ridge and furrow of the medieval cultivation, the excavation has confirmed the existence of a Roman settlement and shown that further work is required if its full potential is to be realised. Fieldwalking particularly on the fields to the west where some Roman material has already been uncovered may help define the extent of the site, as too could geophysical survey, which could also indicate the position of more substantial buildings. The existence of the latter was suggested by the presence of roof and flue tile, though no other indication of domestic comfort such as painted wallplaster or tesserae have yet been found. Perhaps the most likely site for such a dwelling is the south facing slope to the south of the excavation in a field that is under pasture and so has been inaccessible for fieldwalking. Fieldwork in the Hamilton area has already revealed something of the settlement pattern in the Roman period. Within a 3km (2 mile) radius six other possible farmsteads have been identified, from scatters of pottery and building material, whilst a Roman villa has been partially excavated at Hamilton, 1.5km (1 mile) to the east.

An integrated programme of detailed fieldwork survey and excavation in this area could make a major contribution to the study of the development of settlement, land use and economy of this part of the rural landscape during the Roman period, and also to the study of the relationship between the civitas capital, Ratae Corieltavorum, only 5km (3 miles) away, and its immediate hinterland. Further, a comparative study with the extensively excavated villa at Norfolk Street, Leicester which lies just to the west of the Roman town, will be possible.

John Lucas

#### A Watching Brief and Salvage Excavations at Hemington Fields, Castle Donington (SK 457301)

A watching brief and salvage excavation was undertaken jointly between Leicestershire Archaeological Unit and Messrs I. Hind and C. Salisbury following the discovery of a timber structure (by I. Hind) during gravel extraction within the southern floodplain of the River Trent. The salvage excavation examined an area of c120 sq. metres. This revealed two groups of timbers on north east-south west alignments. One of these consisted of 25 birch uprights in two lines c3.25m apart separated at their probable northern extent by a wattle partition. Adjacent to these, two lines of 27 oak uprights c3.0m apart were also located. Packed around the timbers were brushwood, gravel and several stone blocks, including millstone grit unfinished worn and damaged mill stones (c0.5 to 0.8m in diameter). Immediately to the north and parallel to the timber alignments a silt filled channel c3.0m wide × 1.5m deep was discernible. These features appear to be the remains of a mill dam and mill stream.

Two squared oak timbers (c7.5m × 0.3m × 0.25m), were located at 90° and to the north of the mill dam and these may have formed part of a sluice control system. Other timbers of uncertain use included a horizontal timber with rebates and dowel holes, several planks and a shaped oak timber with six dowel holes.

Ten metres to the east of the excavation area further gravel working revealed a large shaped oak structure (3.0m × 1.4m × 0.25m) with a sloping recessed centre and side planking. This appears to be a wheel breast which would have formed the base for a vertical waterwheel in a breast type water mill.

Other timbers recovered during the gravel operations include a mall and a wheel bearing cover. Two other structures, a possible fish weir 50m to the south east of the excavated area and a double line of timbers 30m to the south west were also recorded.

Preliminary dating suggests activity in two periods. A sample from one of the birch timbers submitted to the University of Cambridge has produced a C14 date of 2570 bP ±50. This structure may have been a revetment or fish-weir, of Late Bronze Age origin, which after silting had been covered by the later mill dam. Dendrochronological dating by the University of Nottingham Tree Ring Research Group has produced late 11th century dates for parts of the mill structure. This suggests that it could be the earliest Post-Conquest mill site so far examined in Britain. From its position it appears to have been located along the north bank of an old course of the river Trent and may have been originally within Great Wilne parish, now part of Derbyshire.

Patrick Clay

Fieldwork on a Prehistoric Site at Oakham (See Fig 1)

Detailed fieldwalking was undertaken of a cropmark site at SK 867096 at Oakham by

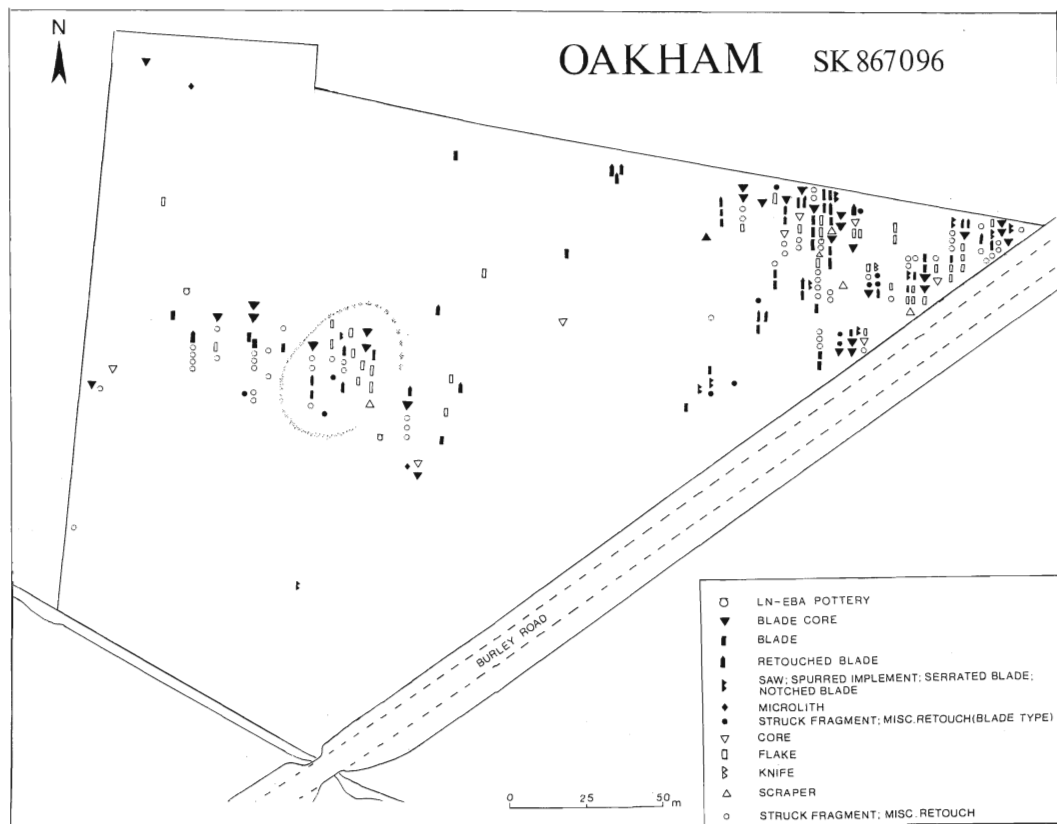


Fig. 1 Prehistoric finds from fieldwalking a cropmark site at Oakham.

Sq. Ldr. F.W. Adams and the Rutland Field Research Group. The crop mark, located from aerial reconnaissance by Mr J. Pickering, appears to be a sub-circular post hole structure, and is threatened by housing development and a road. Fieldwalking of the crop mark and surrounding area has produced flintwork apparently of two periods, an earlier blade industry succeeded by later flake tool types. Sherds of prehistoric pottery were also recovered, from the area of the crop mark. Two separate concentrations of flint were located, suggesting two foci of activity on the site, both in use in each of the two periods. The smaller was in the area of the crop mark, whilst the other, to the east, extends outside the modern field boundaries, and has not yet been fully surveyed.

The main interest of the flint seems to lie in the earlier of the two periods. Knapping was then taking place in the crop mark area, but much more actively in the eastern part of the site. The blade-type implements recovered were also mostly from the eastern area, and include notched and serrated blades, and end scrapers. The flake-type tools reflect the same distribution pattern, and include knives and scrapers. It is hoped to undertake further work on the site in 1986 in advance of development.

Patrick Clay and Anne Graf (formerly Cookson)

## Notes

### A Polished Flint Knife from Frisby on the Wreake

In 1984 a polished flint knife was found in a field south of Kirby Bellars village near the lane to Gaddesby. The knife lay on the field's surface and was found on its own. There are no known archaeological features in the immediate vicinity. The knife was identified by the Leicestershire Museums Service (record number A173.1985).



Fig. 1 Frisby on the Wreake: Polished Flint Knife. The white area within the flint is outlined by dots. Scale 1:1

## DESCRIPTION

The knife is made from dark grey flint and at one end there is a dull off-white patch within the body of the flint. As the patch is centrally placed it is possible that the flint was worked to deliberately include it as a decorative feature.

The knife is rectangular in shape and with rounded corners and slightly convex sides (Fig 1). Its maximum length is 114mm, width 68mm and thickness 15mm. The surface flaking shows large removals in the centre with smaller invasive removals at the edges. Three of the sides taper to a fine polished edge with the fourth left thicker and unpolished. Each polished edge shows a distinct bevel. The polish extends up some flake ridges on both surfaces, and to two large areas of one surface (unshaded on Fig 1). The long polished edge has an asymmetrical profile with the bevel being steeper on one side than the other. This effect reverses half way down the long side. There is slight cortication on both surfaces, which is more pronounced along the polished edges. In general the knife is in very good condition with only two small damage areas.

## MANUFACTURE

It is not clear whether the knife was made on a large flake or is a core tool. However, the large central flake scars probably represent an initial phase of shaping. The smaller invasive flake scars thinned and shaped the edges, which were then polished. The size and quality of the knife would imply that it was made from a large, good quality flint nodule. A source for such flint does not exist in Leicestershire where the flint is derived from boulder clays, but such sources are to be found in the chalkland areas of eastern and southern England.

## CLASSIFICATION

The Frisby knife is of a type generally known as 'discoidal polished knives'. In 1928 Clark classified these knives, defining four groups: Group I circular knives, Group II triangular knives, Group III lozenge shaped knives and Group IV rectangular knives. The Frisby knife is a notably large example of the latter group.

Rectangular knives vary in the extent of polishing. A knife from Bridlington (Evans 1897, 339, Fig.254) shows no edge polish, while other examples have polish extending over all or most of the surface, as in the knives from Overton (Evans 1897, 339, Fig.255) and Arbor Low (Manby 1974, 85, Fig 34.14). The best parallels for the type of surface treatment of the Frisby knife are examples from Clark's other groups as in the Group II Kempston knife (Clark 1928, 42, Fig.3).

## DISTRIBUTION AND AFFINITIES

Although polished knives are found throughout Britain they are not particularly common finds. However, there are marked concentrations in some areas, notably Eastern Yorkshire (Manby 1974, 86), the Peak District (Manby 1974, 86), the Fenland (Clark 1928, 40) and parts of Southern England. There is little information available about contexts and what there is not always very precise. A knife from Pike Hall, Derbyshire was found in a barrow (Howarth 1899, 38) and seven knives are known from Arbor Low, Derbyshire (Manby 1974, 111), but their relationship with the henge monument is not clear. Another example comes from one of three pits at Carnaby Top Site 12, Rudston, Yorkshire (Manby 1974, 29). This knife was associated with other flints including scrapers, transverse arrowheads and a barbed and tanged arrowhead. Pottery was also found including Grooved Ware and beaker sherds. Grooved Ware pottery was also found with a knife at Lawford, Essex (Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 260), while a knife from Ely was found with fragments of beaker pottery (Clark 1928, 46). Less reliable associations are a barbed and tanged

arrowhead found near the Overton knife (Brackstone 1855, 285) and a flint dagger was found in the same field as the Kempston knife (Evans 1897, 340). Although some of these associations are rather tenuous they indicate a Later Neolithic-Earlier Bronze Age date.

#### FUNCTION

Evans (1897, 344) and Clark (1928, 44) suggest that the knives were used for skinning, and both draw parallels with Esqimo knives. Evans (1897, 344) also suggests that they may have had wooden handles; alternatively a handle could have been made from bone, or they could have been gripped in a leather pad. It is also possible that some of the knives may never in fact have been used.

Other indications of possible functions come from the few contexts and associations and may indicate that polished knives were objects of some social and ritual importance. This idea may be supported by the high level of skill needed to make such a knife. In connection with this it is interesting to note that the flint for the knife and even the knife itself may have come from outside the county.

#### CONCLUSION

In view of the contextual information available for other flint knives, the skilled manufacture of the Frisby knife and its fine quality, it could be suggested that the knife was not lost casually, but deliberately deposited for example in a burial, as part of a hoard or as a single item.

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Anne Graf and Victoria Pirie

#### Three Roman Miniature Axes from Leicestershire

The Museum Service recently identified two miniature copper alloy axes, one from the Roman site at Goadby Marwood found by Mr J. Brown and the other from the site of Everards Brewery, Castle Street, Leicester (Clay forthcoming). Also included in this discussion is an axe from Sapcote published in Nichols (1811, 898), unfortunately now lost.

#### FINDSPOTS

The site at Goadby Marwood has been largely destroyed by open cast ironstone quarrying (Liddle, 1982, 35) and the large number of Roman finds made in the area, including the axe, are from redeposited material. Liddle (1982, 31) suggests that the site may have been

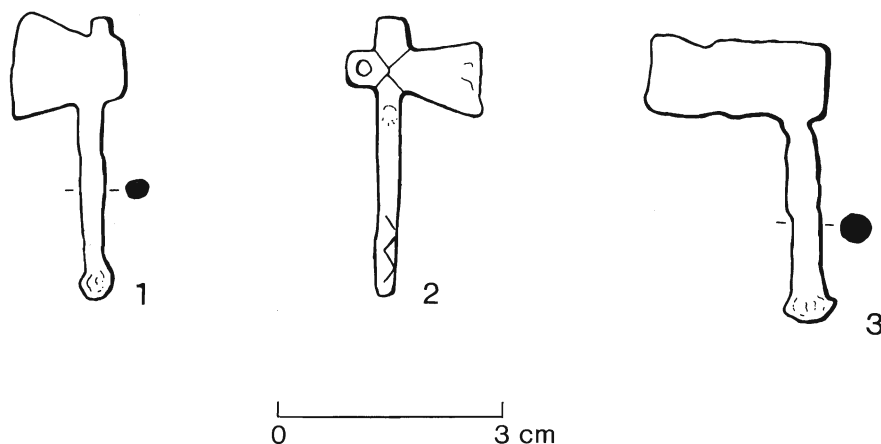


Fig. 1 Miniature Axes. 1) Goadby Marwood; 2) Sapcote (after Nichols 1811); 3) Castle Street (after Clay forthcoming). Scale 1:1.

a local market centre occupied between the late first and fourth centuries AD. The Castle Street axe was found during a watching brief by J.A. Daniell in 1966. The axe was unstratified and found along with a Triton trumpet shell, some early Roman pottery and a pre-Flavian coin. The Sapcote axe was found near some 'ancient buildings' (Nichols 1811, 898), one of which had a tessellated pavement. Today this site is known as Sapcote Villa. Excavations have revealed a possible bath house, other buildings and a substantial wall, possibly forming part of an enclosure (Liddle 1982, 38-9).

#### DESCRIPTION

The Goadby axe is complete and in good condition (Fig. 1.1). It is 38mm long with a blade 15mm long and a maximum blade width of 15mm. The handle is round sectioned and protrudes above the axehead, the bottom of the handle ends in a round knob. The axehead has a splayed blade. The Castle Street axe is complete but in a somewhat corroded condition (Fig 1.3). The axe is 38mm long with a blade 24mm long and 10mm wide. The axe is flag-shaped with a rectangular blade, while the handle is round sectioned and ends in a round knob. Nichols (1811, 898) described the Sapcote axe as 'brazen' and so it also was probably made from copper alloy. From the illustration given by Nichols (1811, 900) it was 38mm long and the blade was 20mm long with a maximum width of 10mm (Fig 1.2). The handle protrudes above the axehead and both it and the axehead are decorated. On one side where the handle passes through the axehead there is a cross, behind which is a small circle. The handle has incised zig-zags at the bottom. The other side appears to have diagonal lines only on the handle. In contrast to the Goadby and Sapcote axes, the Castle Street axe blade is apparently not paralleled amongst full-size axes in use at that time (Manning 1976).

#### MINIATURE AXES

Although of the same basic shape, miniature axes display considerable variation in detail. Green (1976, 316, Plate XXVIII.e) illustrates an unprovenanced axe from Kent which is similar to the Goadby axe. Also similar is an axe from West Stow (West 1985, Fig 60.3), but the blades of both axes are narrower than the Goadby axe. The Castle Street axe is paralleled by two axes from Wood Eaton, Oxfordshire (Green 1975, 68, Fig 30a-b) though

it does not have any decoration on it. Flag-shaped axes are known from other British sites and also on the continent (Faudet 1983, Fig 3). The Sapcote axe is best paralleled by one from Woodeaton, Oxfordshire (Kirk 1949, Fig 8.3), which has a similar cross at the junction of the blade and handle. The circle and zig-zag decoration are also found on other axes (eg Green 1975, 68, Fig 30a-b) as are other motifs of crescents and crosses (eg Faudet 1983, Fig 3). Axes may be made from silver, lead, iron or bone (Green 1975, 63), though copper alloy seems to be the most common material. The axes appear to have been in use throughout the Roman period in Britain and they occasionally occur in post-Roman contexts (West 1985, Fig 60.3).

#### DISTRIBUTION AND AFFINITIES

Miniature axes are not uncommon finds and are widely distributed, although there is an apparent concentration in southern and eastern Britain (Green 1975, 55). They are also found in France, Germany and Switzerland (Green 1975, Faudet 1983).

The axes are part of a range of miniature objects including spears, shields, wheels, stools, ploughs and other tools, which have been discussed by Green (1975; 1981; 1985). However, axes are the most commonly found of these miniature objects. Green (1975) lists the axes known to her and apart from 'stray finds' the majority come from Romano-Celtic temple sites. In this context it is interesting to note that the structural evidence from Sapcote could be interpreted as a rural sanctuary. Apart from Roman contexts a few axes are known from post-Roman contexts as at West Stow (West 1985, Fig 60.3) where an axe was found in an Anglo-Saxon sunken featured building.

The finds associated with miniature axes from Romano-Celtic temple sites include busts of animals and deities, other miniature objects, statuettes, coins, metalwork and animal bones, possibly the remains of votive offerings.

#### DISCUSSION

Due to their contexts and associations it is unlikely that miniature axes are 'toys' and they are almost certainly 'votive' objects (Manning 1966; Green 1985). However, it is difficult to make a precise association with a particular deity, but this is not surprising as temple sites could be associated with several deities. In discussing a group of miniature objects from Sussex including an axe, Manning (1966) suggested an association with Sabazius, an agricultural deity well known on the Rhineland. However, Green (1975) was not convinced of this, but does not discount a local fertility cult. In Britain associated material suggests, amongst others, Mars, Mercury, Minerva and Jupiter. Faudet (1983) proposes that these are mainly technical deities, although they all have other attributes. Green (1985) suggests that some of the decorative markings such as circles, crescents and swastikas might indicate a link with sky symbolism and sky deities. It is quite likely that the axe was a suitable symbol for a number of deities and that they were dedicated to a god or gods as appropriate. Faudet (1983), amongst others, suggests that axes and other miniature objects may have been made on a large scale, possibly at the religious sites.

#### CONCLUSION

The Goadby, Castle Street and Sapcote miniature axes are examples of a fairly common votive object. There are possible associations with a number of deities and the Sapcote axe's decorative markings may indicate sky symbolism and an association with Jupiter.

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Victoria Pirie

#### Leicestershire Archaeological Unit — Annual Report 1985

1985 marked the end of an era for the Unit with the retirement at the end of April of G.A. Chinnery, Deputy Director of the museum. The Unit has come under Mr Chinnery's area of responsibility in the museum organisation since its inception and we have enjoyed his enthusiasm and support in all aspects of our work. While wishing him very well in his retirement we hope to continue to make use of his expertise and experience in the realms of historical and documentary research — a hope which has not so far proved to be ill-founded! In Mr Chinnery's place, at the end of June, we welcomed Tim Schadla-Hall as Deputy Director. Tim is an archaeologist too and we hope to take full advantage of his experience.

Excavation this year was planned for August and September on a site originally located by field-walking and provisionally identified as a Roman farmstead. The site lies within the area of the proposed Hamilton development and its excavation forms part of a wider programme designed to investigate the pattern of settlement in the area during the Roman period and its relationship with the cantonal capital. Detailed field-walking and plotting of the finds was undertaken during the winter of 1984-5 by adult students taking the Certificate course in Archaeology at Vaughan College under A.E. Brown and the summer's excavation, directed by John Lucas, was intended not only to test the archaeological potential of the site but also to provide training in excavation techniques for the students. The material recovered suggests that the farmstead originated in the late Iron Age and that occupation continued well into the 4th, if not the 5th, century. Buildings were indicated by post-holes and post-pads and other features included a small heated structure and a series of ditches, two of which seemed to mark the northern limit of the site, one in the 1st, the other in the late 4th century. For an interim report on the excavation see pp.78-80. Later in the autumn some initial geophysical survey was carried out and further work is planned in the surrounding fields with a view to more extensive excavation before the area is developed.

The most unexpected discovery of the year came from a gravel quarry near the River Trent in Hemington Fields, Castle Donington. Gravel working was being monitored by Ian Hind and the Burleigh Archaeological Fieldwork Group at the request of the survey team.

Their patience was finally rewarded when a series of large timbers was revealed by the dragline. Continued site visits permitted the recording of further timbers, still more or less *in situ* and associated with an old river course, and the recovery of samples for dating by C14 and dendrochronology. A small controlled excavation, directed by Patrick Clay and Chris Salisbury, an expert on Trent riverside structures, was undertaken in June when more details of the structure were revealed and further timbers recovered. However, the purpose of the massive timber construction remained uncertain until a further clue was provided in September, in the form of possibly unique fragments of a timber wheel breast. The results from the different dating methods also gave a clue to the fact that two separate though coincidental structures were represented which, thanks to meticulous recording, it has since been possible to disentangle — a riverside revetment or fish weir of the Late Bronze Age and a watermill of the Post Conquest Domesday period. Site-watching is still continuing on tracing the mill-stream while much background research still remains to be done. Meanwhile Theodore Sturge in the laboratory at Newarke Houses Museum has a major conservation project in hand. This is one of the most exciting discoveries from the county of recent years and has involved professional and amateur archaeologists, the Pontylue Sand and Ballast Company and the expertise and technical abilities of a number of different specialists. For a more detailed report see above pp.80-81.

Another major project this year was also concerned with timber construction and the dating thereof. During large scale repairs to the roof of the Castle hall in Leicester, the opportunity was taken to make detailed measured drawings of the roof construction and to take core samples from the timbers for dendrodating. Additionally Nicholas Klee, the architect who recorded the roof, also made measured drawings of the rest of the building. The results of the dendrochronology show conclusively, at last, that none of the surviving castle roof is the original Norman structure (although some of the columns are of this period) but that it is a major reconstruction dating to the early 16th century. The dendro-dating of the timbers from Leicester castle and the Castle Donington gravel pit was undertaken by Robert Howard of the Nottingham University Tree Ring Research Group.

In addition to organizing and supervising the work on the standing building, Richard Buckley also undertook further watching briefs in Castle Yard and Castle Gardens which have revealed a section of the bailey ditch and fragments of medieval walls in addition to Roman features including the robber trench of a substantial building. For further details of the work on Leicester Castle see above pp.92-3

For some years now the Unit has had the intention of researching the history of the smaller market towns in the County. At last, early in 1985, it was possible to make a start on this project and a pilot survey was carried out by Amanda Goode on behalf of the Unit. This took the form of listing the published sources and the relevant documents held by the Record office for Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Castle Donington, Hallaton, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Bosworth, Market Harborough and Great Bowden, Melton Mowbray, Mountsorrel, Oakham and Uppingham. This is, of course, only the initial stage in a programme of research but, at last, a start has been made.

During the year the report on excavations in the Bath Lane area of Leicester, by Patrick Clay and Jean Mellor made its appearance. This report brings together a number of small excavations and watching briefs (including some records of work done in the last century) and discusses the evidence for the pre-Roman Iron Age settlement, Roman military occupation and the early development of the civitas capital; an assessment of the Blackfriars pavement, one of the finest geometric mosaics in the country, by Dr David Smith, is also included. Writing and revision of the report on the excavations at South Croxton by Terry Pearce and Jean Mellor was also completed during the year and the final preparations for

publication have begun. Richard Buckley and John Lucas have completed the revision of the first draft of the report on the Roman and medieval defences of Leicester. Both of these publications should be in print by the summer of 1986. Post excavation work on other sites and groups of sites continues; work on the West Leicester group has had to be adjusted in order to include several sites excavated in the 1960s by Max Hebditch. This additional material has set back the target completion date by several months but should lead to a more comprehensive result. For a number of sites the study of the Roman and Medieval pottery is further advanced than the excavation reports and the computerisation of records is well up to date. Petrological and thin section analysis of Potters Marston ware by the British Museum and Leicester University Archaeology Department have pin-pointed a clay source for this ware at Croft, less than a mile from the only kiln source known at present. More of this work, which is still in progress, should aid the identification of sources and distribution patterns of the rest of the pottery. Both Richard Pollard and Deborah Sawday have continued to identify field-walked material from the county throughout the year though lack of time prevents a detailed and systematic study of the types and distribution of wares at present. Also during this year Rosemary Woodland has been preparing a report on the medieval pottery and tile from the Central Unit's excavations at Lyddington. Rosemary has now worked on the pottery from a number of sites in Rutland and this work is beginning to complement the study of the material from Leicester and the surrounding area on which Deborah Sawday has concentrated.

Following on from the excavations at Enderby in 1983 and 1984 the Unit has been fortunate in having the services of a volunteer, Angela Monckton, to help in processing the soil samples from this site. Sieving has already revealed some seed and insect remains which should contribute to our understanding of the environment and economy of this Iron Age settlement. Identification is to follow with the co-operation of the Archaeology Department at Leicester University.

Another volunteer, John Harrison, has provided valuable help in the initial processing of the finds from Lockington and also material from excavations at Sapcote which has this year been deposited with the Unit by the excavator Mr S. Smith.

The Unit has been represented by Patrick Clay on the working party on the re-display of the Jewry Wall Museum. This is an exciting project which we are happy to be involved in and those concerned have been exploring a number of new approaches and different ways of presenting the material. Unfortunately, because of severe financial constraints the project seems likely to be a long one and the present enthusiasm must be maintained.

During the year 26 talks/lectures have been given by members of the Unit, ranging from brief accounts of excavations on work in progress to day-schools on broader topics such as the Romans in Leicester or the Roman and Medieval defences of Leicester. The age of the groups enjoying this educational feast has ranged from ten-year-old primary school pupils to members of groups run by Age Concern and the topics covered included Archaeological techniques, Roman pottery, Roman interior decoration, specific sites such as South Croxton, Humberstone Farm and Leicester Castle in addition to those already mentioned. Deborah Sawday, Richard Pollard and John Lucas contributed as usual to the annual training school for fieldwalkers held one Saturday in September at Jewry Wall Museum, and all members of the Unit are contributing to the final year of the Certificate in Archaeology course for adult students on various aspects of aims and methods in archaeology.

Courses and conferences were attended on Archaeology in Schools, the Fenland Project, Artist and Patron in Roman Britain, and members of the Unit continued to attend meetings of the Finds Research Group, the Study Group for Romano-British Pottery (whose annual

conference was held at Leicester in April and organized by Richard Pollard), the East Midlands and East Anglian R-B Pottery Study Group and local meetings of the Medieval Pottery Research Group. Richard Pollard continues as the museum's representative on CBA Group 14 and on the National Council. Also during the year Richard was elected a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

1985 has seen the completion of some projects, steady progress in others and the beginnings of some new lines of research. Once again it is a pleasure to acknowledge the mutual support and encouragement between all members of the Unit and help and interest of colleagues both within and outside the Museum Service.

Jean E. Mellor  
Senior Field Archaeologist

#### Report of the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Survey Team for 1985

The Survey Team continues to be made up of Peter Liddle, Robert (Fred) Hartley and Anne Graf (formerly Cookson), but Bob Jarrett has joined the Team on a temporary basis. He is working on the provision of a computerised index for the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), a project funded by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. By the end of 1985 the index was complete for Blaby District, was at a final checking stage for Charnwood Borough, and had been started for Harborough District. A user manual is in draft form, and already print-outs have been provided for Groups and researchers.

Anne Graf and Victoria Pirie (the Archaeology Section Graduate Trainee) have continued to supervise the accessioning of material (much from the Groups) into the Museum collection, although they have been greatly assisted by volunteers, notably Ken Spencer, Clarissa Newman, Sarah Flanigan, Philip Sharpe and Angela Monckton. Anne's work in archaeological planning advice to the County and nine District Councils continues to develop, and has led to recording, watching briefs and excavations at a number of places. At the Asfordby mine site a display and leaflet has been arranged by Victoria Pirie to encourage the construction workers to record any finds they might make.

Peter Liddle's *Community Archaeology — a fieldworkers handbook of organisation and techniques* has been published as has a new edition of Pevsner's *Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* for which Peter Liddle has written the archaeological essay. Fred Hartley has completed three works — on aerial archaeology, the earthworks of North-East Leicestershire and on Leicestershire fishponds — which should all appear in 1986.

Peter Liddle has continued his Medbourne Area Survey. Work has been concentrated in Nevill Holt and Blaston parishes. It is hoped to complete this in 1986. Rob Bourne, Nicky Ladkin, and Kay Gowland have provided invaluable help.

Fred Hartley's earthwork surveys continue. The sites examined include (with type in brackets): King Lud's Embankments (triple ditch), Ambion (village), Coston (village), Bescaby (village), Edmonthorpe (village), Elmsethorpe (village), Welham (village), Beeby (village), Martinshaw Wood (enclosure), Mapplewell Hall, Little Dalby (village), Bittesby (village), Sproxton (manorial), Ashby Folville (garden), Huncote (garden), Tolethorpe (village), Barkby Thorpe (village), Thurcaston (manorial and village), Belvoir (park), Billesdon (village), Saltby Heath (grange) and Braunstone (village). He has continued his aerial survey with Jim Pickering and has also enlisted the help of Steve Thursfield, the Museum Photographer, as pilot. It was a poor summer for crop marks with little new evidence being recorded, but two flights in snow conditions produced much earthwork evidence.

The Community Archaeology scheme has again generated much interest. Speakers to the meetings have been Ian Evans, Stuart Losco-Bradley, Chris Dyer, Jim Pickering, Fred Hartley and Peter Liddle. The Saturday School on identification, organisation and

techniques was again well attended and seven editions of *The Fieldwalker* have been produced. Victoria Pirie has produced a small display on the work of the Museums' archaeologists.

In general, the year has been one of steady progress rather than dramatic advance, although the computerisation of the SMR is laying the basis for great progress, especially in planning and research work, in future years.

Peter Liddle

Archaeological Survey Officer

## Reports of Fieldwork 1985

### ANSTEY (SK 538093)

M. Kerr and C. Potter have noted a linear earthwork c600ft long, 35ft wide and 1½ft high running north-west to south-east to the north-west of Anstey village. Trial excavations show a stone surface and confirm that this is a road. The excavators believe it to be Roman, but a later date seems quite likely.

### ASFORDBY (SK 716212)

Site clearance for a spoil tip at the new coal mine revealed a set of at least six timber pipes, forming the inlet and outlet through the dam of a former pond. The date is uncertain, but may be post-Medieval. (T24.1985)

### BITTESWELL (SP 544878)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found a scatter of flint which included flakes and cores, blades and blade cores and a knife. (A107.1985)

### BOTTESFORD (SK 807391)

Mr A.E. Shipman reports the discovery during grave digging of a calcite gritted jar (LAU fabric GC3C) on the north side of Bottesford Church. Mr Jack Smith, the grave digger, noted calcined bone associated with the pot which leaves no doubt that it represents a burial. Dr Richard Pollard dates the pot to between the 1st century BC and the Neronian period (A1.1986)

### BRINGHURST (SK 844921)

Great Easton Fieldwork Group have found a Roman villa site indicated by a compact scatter of stone, tile, tesserae, slate and Roman pottery. A full analysis is not yet completed (finds with group).

### CASTLE DONINGTON (SK 457301)

See interim report (above).

### CLAWSON, HOSE AND HARBY (SK 736292)

At St Michael and All Angels Church, Hose, the Survey Team recorded a wall and buttress foundation found in drainage work outside (and parallel to) the line of the north wall, which has been dated to c1310 on architectural grounds. A substantial amount of pottery, mainly 12th and 13th century in date, was recovered from the spoil of an adjacent trench. (A118.1985)

## COSSINGTON (SK 618140)

Roger Gibson reports a scatter of flint flakes and cores with a number of scrapers on a small hilltop. (A10.1986)

## COSSINGTON (SK 618130)

Roger Gibson reports a good scatter of Roman pottery (including colour-coated ware, mortaria, and grey wares) and tile. Flints include blade cores. There is at least one sherd of hand-made pottery. Previous finds (in the 1950s) include Roman, Saxon and Prehistoric material. (A9.1986)

## EATON-GOADBY MARWOOD (C SK 779266)

The Melton and Belvoir Search Society have continued to search the area of the former Goadby Marwood Quarry which is the site of a Roman 'small town' destroyed by ironstone quarrying in the 1950s. (see *Transactions*, vol. XXXII, 17-39). From the replaced top-soil they have recovered over 200 Roman coins (ranging from 1st to 4th centuries), many brooches and a wide range of other artefacts. Finds of other periods include a Corieltauvian coin, Late Saxon strap-ends, a Medieval purse-frame and Medieval coins — (records at Jewry Wall Museum).

## ENDERBY (SK 553000)

During road construction the Survey Team recorded a 7.5m wide gravel spread with cobbles, aligned north-west to south-east. This was almost certainly part of the Fosse Way.

## GREAT EASTON (SP 852934)

Great Easton Fieldwork Group have found Anglo-Saxon pottery in three contiguous fields (earlier finds noted in *Transactions* LIX, 101). Finds cover at least 8 hectares and amount to some 15 sherds and a substantial amount of iron slag (finds with group).

## GROBY (SK 536078)

Groby Archaeological Society have found a small scatter of Roman pottery in an area that has previously produced several 'beehive' querns (finds with group).

## LEICESTER (SK 534038)

E. Tura has found 10 sherds of Roman greyware and a piece of tile in a small area stripped of topsoil for a golf course 'tee-off'. (A166.1985)

## LEICESTER-CASTLE (SK 582041)

Major reconstruction work on the Great Hall, Leicester Castle, in 1985 provided the opportunity to gain access to all parts of the roof structure. Detailed drawings of its construction were produced by Nicholas Klee, and 25 dendrochronological samples were taken and processed by Robert Howard of the Department of Archaeology, Nottingham University. It is now clear that comparatively little timber survives from the roof of the original Norman hall of c1150, the majority being from a reconstruction of the early 16th century.

## LEICESTER-CASTLE (SK 582040, 582042)

Members of the archaeological unit observed the reconstruction of boundary walls in Castle Gardens, and to the south of the castle mound. A number of features were revealed, including the robber trench of a substantial Roman building and evidence for the castle

bailey ditch of *circa* 1068, and the remains of dressed sandstone boundary walls probably belonging to a later phase in the history of the castle. The reconstruction of lavatories in Castle Yard revealed further dressed sandstone walls, possibly the remains of a minor building within the castle precincts. (A9.1984 and A100.1985)

#### LEICESTER — GT HOLME STREET (SK 57950423)

The Survey Team undertook a watching brief on a warehouse development on Great Holme Street, north-east of the excavation reported in *Transactions LI*, 59. Roman occupation layers up to half a metre thick were recorded with a former river channel. A stakehole on the edge of the former river bank may suggest some riverside activity. The river sediments covered the whole area in later periods. (A78.1975)

#### LUTTERWORTH (SP 549844)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found a scatter of flint including cores, blade cores, blades (some retouched), a microburin, a piercer, a knife and scrapers. (A97.1985)

#### MARKET HARBOROUGH (SP 734875)

The Survey Team recorded the sections of the south east sides of an enclosure known as 'King's Head Close' during the construction of an access road. There was no dating evidence. (A124.1985)

#### MARKET HARBOROUGH (SP 740881)

Local residents have collected pottery, coins and metal objects from gardens in the area of 'The Ridgeway', where previous discoveries have been made. The coins are all of 3rd and 4th century date and pottery of this date also predominates, but there is also earlier Roman pottery and some of Late Iron Age date. A copper alloy harness pendant of 2nd or 3rd century date is amongst the finds. The total area of the scatter is about 500m by 300m along a ridge. (A101-6.1985)

#### MEDBOURNE (SP 816953)

The Survey Team have located an Iron Age site revealed by a tight concentration of pottery, including some scratch-decorated sherds, associated with cobbles, some burnt. (A46.1985, A54.1985)

#### MEDBOURNE (SP 798929)

Mr and Mrs Plunkett have collected material from their garden. The earliest sherd is in a grog-tempered fabric and the 'Belgic' tradition and dates to the 1st century AD. Part of the garden was formerly Bentley's Orchard where a mosaic was found in the 19th century and evidence of this building was found in the form of tesserae, tile and pottery (running down to the late 4th century). A sherd of possible early Saxon pottery and an apparently unbroken sequence of Saxo-Norman, Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery was also found. A spindle-whorl, bone pin, slag and burnt daub are also represented in the collection.

#### MEDBOURNE (SP 805922)

The Survey Team have found a scatter of flint including blades, blade cores and scrapers (some end-scrapers). More fieldwork is needed but this may be a Mesolithic or Early Neolithic site. (A113.1985)

## MISTERTON (SP 559845)

The Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found a small group of six blades (four snapped) and two blade cores. (A15.1985)

## MISTERTON (SP 552837)

The Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found a flint scatter including five cores, three scrapers, two blades and two transverse arrowheads close to that reported in *Transactions* LIX, 84-5.

## MISTERTON (SP 581838)

The Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found a group of flints including 20 cores, 12 blade cores, 13 blades (four snapped), 18 scrapers, two knives and a tanged arrowhead. (A83.1985)

## NEVILL HOLT (SP 830933)

The Survey Team have fieldwalked immediately to the North of a Roman villa found by Miss Linford in 1971 (*Transactions* XLVII, 68). The scatter was found to continue into Nevill Holt Parish. (A143.1985)

## NEVILL HOLT (SP 817929)

The Survey Team have found a small but tightly grouped scatter of blade cores that may indicate Mesolithic or Early Neolithic activity. (A158.1985)

## NEWTON LINFORD (SK 521096)

M. Kerr and C. Potter have excavated a bank parallel to and south of the main street of Newtown Linford. A road surface of waterworn pebbles was revealed with several wheel ruts. In the surface were three sherds of Midland Purple and several horseshoes of c1500 AD were also found. This may suggest a Late Medieval or Later date.

## NOSELEY (SP 725997)

J.R. Branson reports the discovery of a scatter of c40 sherds of Roman pottery (including greyware, mortaria, shelly ware and colour-coated ware). No tile or stone was noted. (A63.1985)

## OAKHAM (SK 867096)

See note (above).

## PECKLETON (SK 470008)

The Survey Team has recorded a wall foundation revealed by drainage work approximately 0.6 metres to the south of the south aisle wall of St. Mary's Church. It was uncovered for 10 metres, and butted against the foundations of the 14th century buttress, and clearly predated it. The wall was a little less than 1 metre in width. Finds included a small amount of painted wall plaster, roof tile dating between 1250-1400, small fragments of painted and stained glass, and a piece of re-used tegula.

## RAVENSTONE (SK 401123 and SK 402125)

A.J.K. Hurst has fieldwalked an area being top-soiled prior to open-cast coal working and discovered two flint scatters including flakes, cores and blades. (A20, A24 and A25.1985).

**THURCASTON (SK 553118)**

Roger Gibson has found a scatter of Roman pottery (mainly grey ware, but also colour-coated ware, mortarium, amphora, Derbyshire ware, white ware, oxidised ware and black-burnished ware), and tile (including wall tile, tegula and box tile). A high proportion of the tile is reduced and one sherd of grey ware is warped which may suggest production, but this is very tentative. The pottery appears to be mainly 3rd and 4th century in date, but two sherds are of Iron Age date. (A172.1985)

**THURCASTON (SK 563103)**

Roger Gibson reports a scatter of Roman pottery and tile. There are also kiln-bars and other kiln furniture/structure which make Roman pottery production certain. Hand-made pottery suggests Prehistoric occupation and cores and flakes abound. A fragment of a beehive quern was also found. The material has yet to be fully analysed (A11.1986)

**WANLIP (SK 586113)**

Fieldwork by Roger Gibson revealed a concentrated scatter of flint, charcoal, burnt flint, daub and handmade pottery. The flints include cores, scrapers, knives and other tools, possibly Late Neolithic in date, with five blade cores suggesting an earlier (Mesolithic or Early Neolithic) phase. The hand made pottery closely resembles material dated to the Late Bronze Age at Glenfield, although some could equally be Saxon. (A57.1985)

**WANLIP (SK 583101)**

Roger Gibson reports that Stefan Pratt has found a scatter of flints including two scrapers (one probably Late Neolithic) and several cores.