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The Early Medieval Origins of Shrivenham, Oxfordshire

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A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for a BA
(Hons) degree in Archaeological Studies

I declare that this is entirely my own work and that it does not contain
any plagiarised material

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Cover Illustration: St Andrews Church Shrivenham, photographed by the author.

Abstract

This desk based study uses a range of non-invasive techniques to investigate and assess the origins of the village of Shrivenham, currently located in Oxfordshire but historically part of Berkshire. To date, little archaeological research has been done in Shrivenham.

The village shows signs of occupation during the late Roman period, after which the focus shifts to the eastern part of the village and the site of a late Anglo-Saxon minster. The village shows remarkable similarity in layout to the market-town of Bampton, around twelve miles to the north east.

This research attempts to evaluate what is known and can be ascertained about Shrivenham in the early medieval period, and to identify possible areas of investigation in the future.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	8
1.1 Introduction	8
1.2 Modern Shrivenham.....	8
1.4 Research Aims	11
1.5 Methodology	11
Chapter 2 The Landscape	12
2.1 The Nature of Archaeological Evidence from the Early Medieval Period in the western Vale of White Horse.....	12
2.2 Geology	13
2.3 Shrivenham in the Late Roman Landscape.....	15
2.4 The Political Landscape of the Early Medieval period	19
2.5 The Landscape of the Vale of White Horse in the Early Medieval period ...	20
Chapter 3 Documentary Evidence	22
3.1 Domesday Book Evidence	22
3.2 Charter Boundary Clause Evidence	23
3.2.1 Shrivenham Hundred.....	23
3.2.2 The Watchfield Estate	25
3.2.3 Boundary features and evidence from the charters	26
3.3 Map Regression Evidence	27
Chapter 4 Discussion	31
4.1 St Andrews Church.....	31
4.1.1 Burial Rights	33
4.1.2 The Dedication	34
4.1.3 Place Name Evidence	35
4.1.4 The Site of St Andrews Church.....	36
4.1.5 Domesday Land Holding	37

4.1.6	The Precinct	37
4.2	Hundredal Centre.....	44
4.3	Settlement.....	45
4.4	Agriculture.....	56
4.4.1	Meadow and cattle	56
4.4.2	Pigs and Woodland	57
4.4.3	Arable Farming.....	58
4.4.4	Mills.....	60
Chapter 5	Conclusion.....	62
5.1	Conclusion.....	62
5.2	Recommendations	63
	Bibliography.....	64
	Appendices	68
Appendix A	Area of Study (map courtesy of Edina).....	68
Appendix B	Detail of Shrivenham (map courtesy of Edina)	69
Appendix C	Detail of Shrivenham with LiDAR (map courtesy of Edina, LiDAR supplied by Geomatics)	70
Appendix D	First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (map courtesy of Edina)	70
Appendix E	Domesday Book Entries.....	72

Table of Figures

Figure 1: The Location of Shrivenham – Map courtesy of Edina	9
Figure 2: Market place from the west, photographed by the author.	10
Figure 3: Scales and a pattern-welded sword found at Watchfield in 1983 (Photographs from the British Museum).....	12
Figure 4: Map of the western Vale of White Horse showing the Corallian Ridge containing the major settlement areas around Shrivenham (taken from Bond & Over 1988).	13
Figure 5: Figure Cross section of the geology of the Vale of White Horse (taken from Tingle, 1991).....	14
Figure 6: Relative position of Shrivenham in the Roman Landscape – red circle indicates Shrivenham (taken from Ordnance Survey, 2010)	15
Figure 7: Map showing Stallpits Roman building site and associated find spots (Ordnance Survey Map courtesy of Edina, LiDAR supplied by Geomatics).....	17
Figure 8: Roman ‘cursive tablets’ found at the site of the Stallpits Roman building. Photos Courtesy of Dr M. Andrews.	17
Figure 9: Roman Pottery found close to the site of the Stallpits Roman building in Field P. Photos Courtesy of Dr M. Andrews.	18
Figure 10: Possible Roman Glass and coins found in garden in Stallpits Road. Photos Courtesy of Dr M. Andrews.	18
Figure 11: Woodland recorded in Berkshire in 1086, (taken from Darby and Campbell, 1962, 263).....	21
Figure 12: Hundred and early parish Boundaries showing the estate of Watchfield	23
Figure 13: Shrivenham Hundred prior to amalgamation with Wyfold and Hildeslæw (Taken from Hooke, 1998, 74)	25
Figure 14: Modern OS Master Map overlaid with 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, both supplied by Edina.....	27
Figure 15: OS Master Map (Source: Edina) Overlaid with 1844 Tythe Map (Source: Shrivenham Heritage Centre)	29
Figure 16: Shrivenham 1722 (Taken from, Dils & Schwartz, 2004)	30
Figure 17: St Andrews Church, the tower showing evidence of an earlier cruciform configuration, photographed by the author.....	31

Figure 18: Phases of the Current Church of St Andrew, taken from Page & Ditchfield, 1924, 540.....	32
Figure 19: 12th Century Font, photographed by the author.	33
Figure 20: the raised profile of the churchyard, photographed by the author.	34
Figure 21: Rocque’s Map of Berkshire 1761	36
Figure 22: The Minster at Bampton (taken from Blair, 1998, 124)	38
Figure 23: Possible Minster enclosure (OS Map supplied by Edina overlaid by LiDAR supplied by Geomatics)	39
Figure 24: Other Minster Enclosures (Taken from Blair, in Hooke, 1988, 49)	41
Figure 25: LiDAR of St Andrews Church, LiDAR courtesy of Geomatics.....	42
Figure 26: St Andrews Church on 1844 Tythe Map, supplied by Shrivenham Heritage Centre.....	43
Figure 27: Similarity of road layout in Shrivenham, right (OS Map supplied by Edina overlaid by LiDAR supplied by Geomatics) and Bampton, left (taken from Blair, 1998, 124).	43
Figure 28: Early marketplace at Bampton (taken from Blair, 1998, 124).....	46
Figure 29: Possible early marketplace at Shrivenham (taken from 1844 Tithe Map) Supplied by Shrivenham Heritage Centre.	47
Figure 30: Alignment of Manor Lane, Claypits Lane and Beckett DMV, map courtesy of Edina.	48
Figure 31: Alignment of Townsend Road & Manor Lane with the southern boundary of the Churchyard and the corner of Claypits Lane, map courtesy of Edina.	49
Figure 32: Manor Lane – potential Hollow way, photographed by the author.	50
Figure 33: Alignment of potential Hollow-way joining corner of Faringdon Road with site of Roman activity, Map courtesy of Edina, LiDAR Supplied by Geomatics.	51
Figure 34: LiDAR showing potential hollow-way in the Slade, LiDAR Supplied by Geomatics.....	52
Figure 35: The Slade, photographed by the author.	53
Figure 36: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map showing Abbot's Hill, map supplied by Edina	53
Figure 37: LiDAR of Abbot's Hill, supplied by Geomatics overlain by First Edition Ordnance Survey Map courtesy of Edina.....	54

Figure 38: Possible early settlement evidence in Shrivenham, photograph google Maps.....	55
Figure 39: Detail of John Rocque’s 1761 map of Berkshire showing arable farming on the higher ground around Shrivenham and Watchfield and meadow on the lower lying land	57
Figure 40: Ridge and furrow to the South West of Shrivenham, photograph supplied by the National Monuments Record.	59
Figure 41: Ridge and furrow to the South East of Shrivenham, photograph supplied by the National Monuments Record.	60
Figure 42: “Map of the County of Berkshire” by John Rocque (dated 1761) showing location of the three post medieval mills in Shrivenham and Watchfield.....	61

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background to Shrivenham and describes the aims and methods used in this dissertation as well as previous archaeological work carried out.

The village and parish of Shrivenham lie at the western end of the Vale of White Horse (Figure 1), a shallow clay valley stretching, approximately, from Swindon in the west to Oxford and Abingdon in the east. It is defined in the south by the chalk uplands of the Berkshire Downs and in the north, by the Corallian limestone ridge that borders the upper Thames Valley.

Shrivenham is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and appears in 1086 to have been a well established settlement with a sizeable population and a wealthy church.

Shrivenham was a Royal Manor until 1200 when it was granted by King John to Count Geoffrey of Perche who died fighting for the French at the Battle of Lincoln. The manor returned to the crown and was eventually purchased by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke and William Longespée, Earl of Salisbury and the manor divided in two. In 1257, The Earl of Pembroke was granted a market on a Thursday and a fair on the vigil, feast and morrow of St. Mary Magdalene, the long cigar-shaped marketplace provides a central focus for the village today.

1.2 Modern Shrivenham

Since the 1974 county boundary changes, Shrivenham has been part of Oxfordshire but is historically part of the county of Berkshire.

The village today is relatively large, with a historic core and modern residential areas to the west, south and east. Immediately to the east of the village is the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC) a major employer and key factor in the economy of modern Shrivenham. Many of the residents today are employed in Swindon or Oxford.

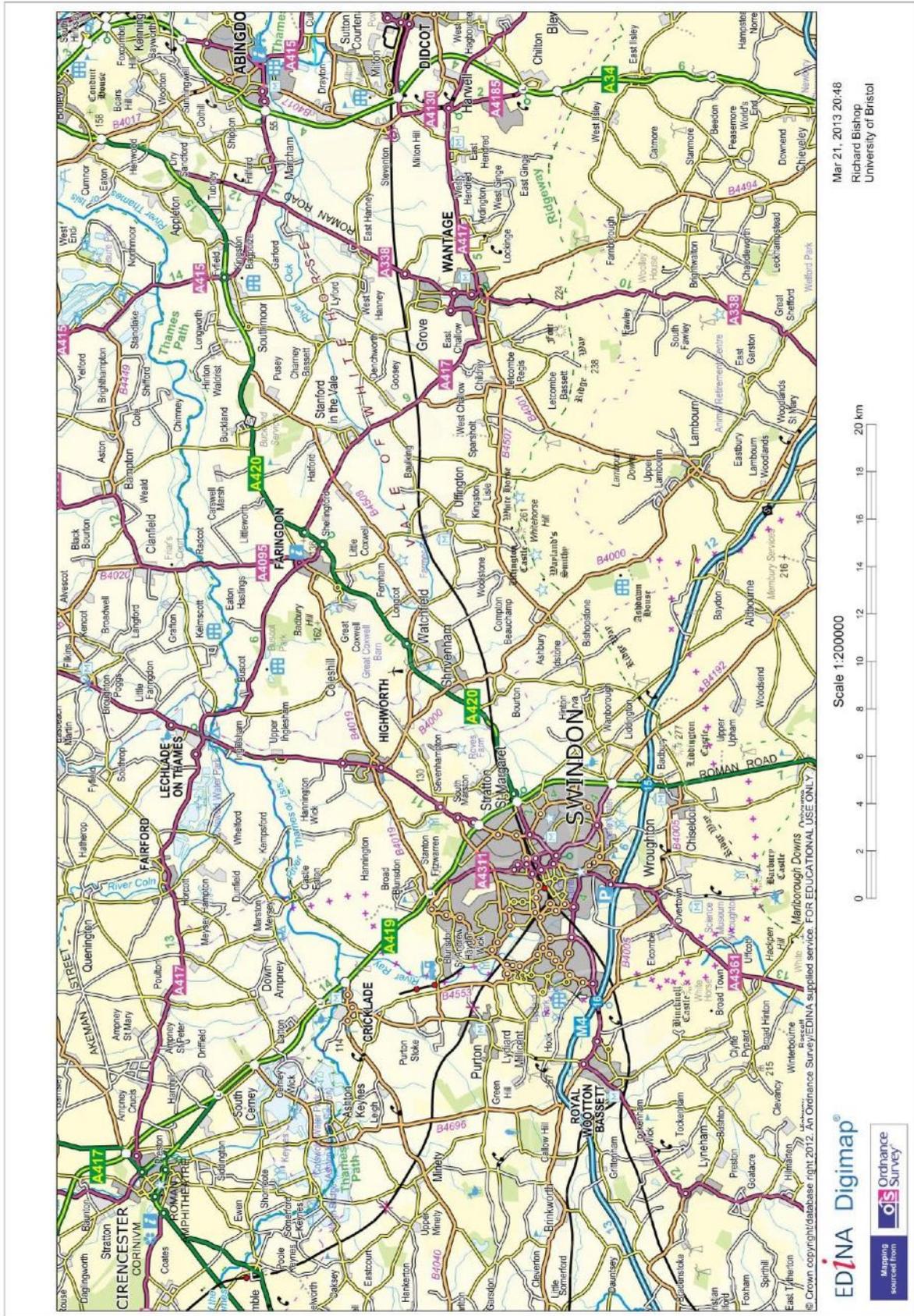


Figure 1: The Location of Shrevenham – Map courtesy of Edina

The High Street is a wide marketplace (Figure 2) and was part the main A420 Swindon to Oxford road before bypassing in the early 1980s. There are many thatched cottages in the village dating from the 17th or 18th centuries.

Shrivenham has an unusual parish church rebuilt in the 17th century, notable for its classical design and construction during a period when church building was rare.



Figure 2: Market place from the west, photographed by the author.

1.3 Previous Archaeological Work

Little archaeological, work has been done in Shrivenham. Traditionally, the Vale of White Horse has been thought to contain very few archaeological deposits. What work has been done has been carried out during construction of the A420 bypass in the early 1980's.

In 1983, a Roman building was discovered to the north west of the village centre. An early Anglo-Saxon cemetery was excavated on the line of the A420 bypass, west of the roundabout at Watchfield and further work was carried out between 1983 and 1992.

Tingle has carried out a field survey of a section across in the Vale of White Horse finding evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval occupation.

1.4 Research Aims

The aim of this dissertation is to examine available evidence in a desk-based survey to establish the nature of the settlement in the early medieval period.

Central to this is the modern church of St Andrew which is suspected to have been a minster church during the early medieval period.

A minster could have provided an important economic stimulus for the settlement at Shrivenham to develop.

From the research it is hoped that recommendations can be made for areas of future research in the community.

1.5 Methodology

The approach focused on a desk-based survey to elicit evidence of the nature of the early settlement and to identify areas of potential future investigation.

The methodology used to achieve these research aims utilised a number of sources and techniques.

The following sources and techniques were used: documentary evidence, place names, public archives, previous archaeological work, map regression, LiDAR analysis and academic research work on related subjects. Map, LiDAR and aerial photographs were analysed using QGIS 1.8.0 software.

Techniques such as excavation, test pitting and field walking were out of scope of the project.

Chapter 2 The Landscape

2.1 The Nature of Archaeological Evidence from the Early Medieval Period in the western Vale of White Horse

Evidence of early medieval occupation in the Vale of White Horse, like much of the country is largely confined to burials. Human remains have survived, with grave goods, at Watchfield (Figure 3) including swords, shield bosses, spearheads, seaxes, brooches, necklaces, beads and pins. Coins are rarely found and were not thought to be in circulation prior to the middle Saxon period (Clarke, 2007, 2).

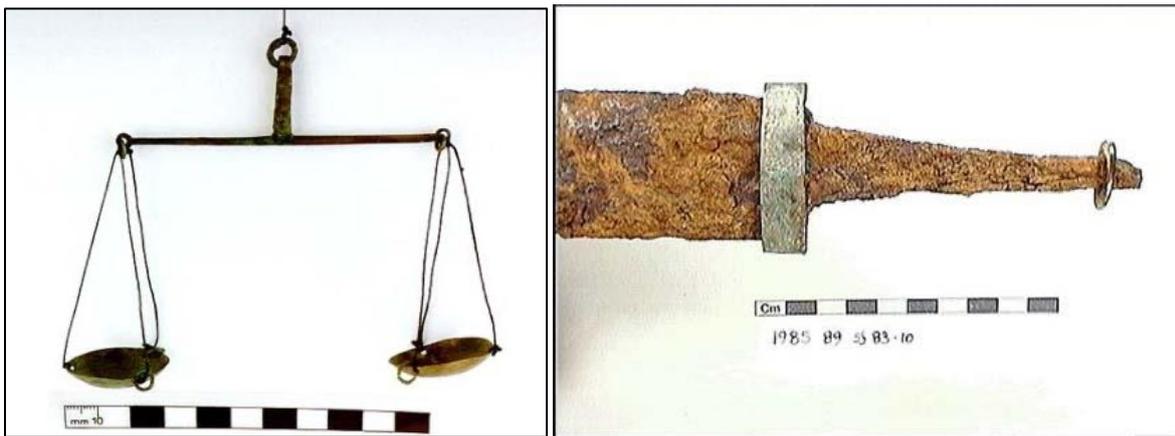


Figure 3: Scales and a pattern-welded sword found at Watchfield in 1983 (Photographs from the British Museum)

Pottery from the Anglo Saxon period is also rarely found probably because it was hand-made, grass tempered and fired at low temperature, susceptible to breaking up in the soil (Clarke, 2007, 1). Large scale field walking in Berkshire has found a dearth of Anglo Saxon pottery (Clark, 2007, 3), however, around forty-five shards of this type of pottery have been found in the Tingles survey area to the east of Shrivenham (Tingle, 1991, 73).

Buildings of the early medieval period were largely of wood, wattle and daub construction and generally post holes or beam slots are all that survive and none have been in the western Vale of White Horse to date.

This lack of archaeological evidence from the Vale of White Horse does not mean that the evidence is not there. The neighbouring Thames Valley, where more evidence of this period has been found, has been subject to large scale gravel

extraction and experienced more building development in recent years leading to the discovery sites such as Butlers Field in Lechlade.

The Vale of White Horse is well served by documentary evidence with many surviving charters, many including boundary clauses which have been well researched by the English Place Name Society.

2.2 Geology

The settlement pattern in and around the Vale of White horse appears to be determined by its geology and topography.

Shrivenham itself is situated on the western end of a ridge of a Corallian limestone ridge (Figure 4) which stretches along the northern edge of the Vale of White Horse. To the north of the ridge is a band of Oxford Clay. To the south lie bands of Kimmeridge Clay and Gault Clay on the Vale floor, with Upper Greensand lying on the lower slopes of the Chalk downs (Figure 5) (Bond & Over, 1988, 29).



Figure 4: Map of the western Vale of White Horse showing the Corallian Ridge containing the major settlement areas around Shrivenham (taken from Bond & Over 1988).

The main drainage for the Vale of White Horse is provided by the River Ock and its tributaries which drain eastwards, but because of its relatively wide catchment area and low fall, the Ock creates a high water table in the Vale. It has been estimated that up to 90% of the soils in the Vale of White Horse and the Oxford Clay to the north present drainage problems for modern agriculture (Jarvis, 1973 cited in Tingle, 1991, 9). Land to the west of Compton Beauchamp, including Shrivenham, is also drained by the river Cole to the west of the village and its tributary, Tuckmill Brook, to the north East (Stamp, 1936, 15).

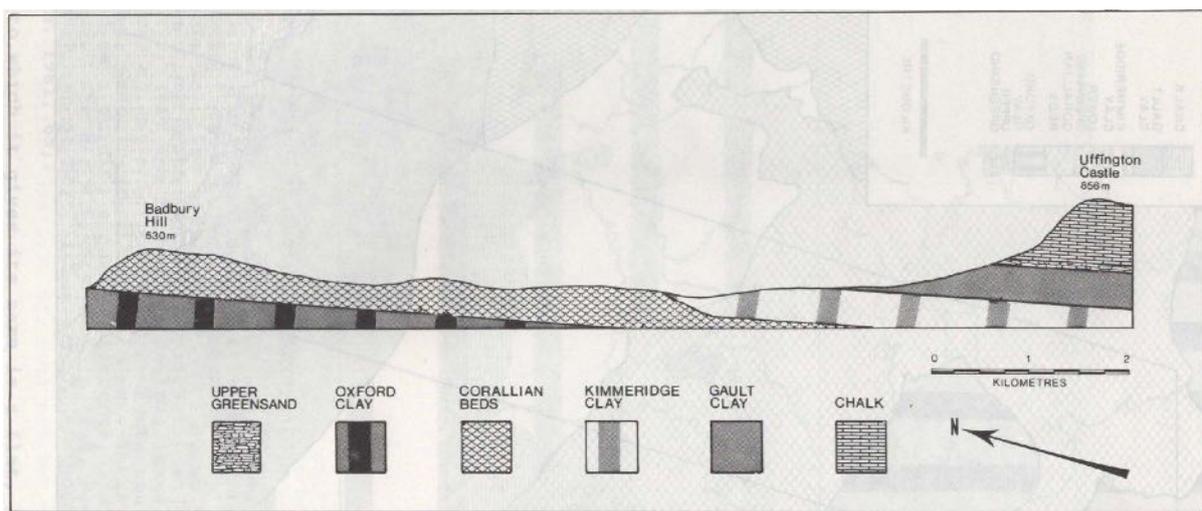


Figure 5: Figure Cross section of the geology of the Vale of White Horse (taken from Tingle, 1991)

The Corallian ridge has been important for arable farming offering good drainage, fertile, cultivatable land and offers sources of building stone. There are clearly defined lines of communication which favour the ridge connecting Oxford and Abingdon in the east, to Swindon, and to Cirencester in the west via Faringdon.

It is on this ridge where most of the settlement in the northern side of the Vale of White Horse is situated, whilst in the south it is situated on the greensand terrace below the Berkshire Downs. The bulk of the land (around 70%) on the Corallian ridge is under the plough and permanent grass is of minor importance according to the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain undertaken in the 1930's (Stamp, 1936, 15, 71 & 78).

The floor of Vale of White Horse, with its Kimmeridge/Gault Clay has not been widely settled and in the area to the west of Denchworth 87% of the land was under

permanent grass according to the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain. There is a narrow band of Greensand between Bourton and Fernham, with better soil and drainage which is where the arable farming was located at the time of the survey. Farming here was generally cattle, chiefly dairy with large numbers of pigs and some sheep. Most of the arable land was used for growing fodder. East of Denchworth, the land quality improves and allows mixed agriculture (Stamp, 1936, 71).

Place name evidence testifies to the poor drainage of the Vale further to the east of Shrivenham, which suggests that the site of the settlement is one of the more attractive sites in the Vale of White Horse.

2.3 Shrivenham in the Late Roman Landscape

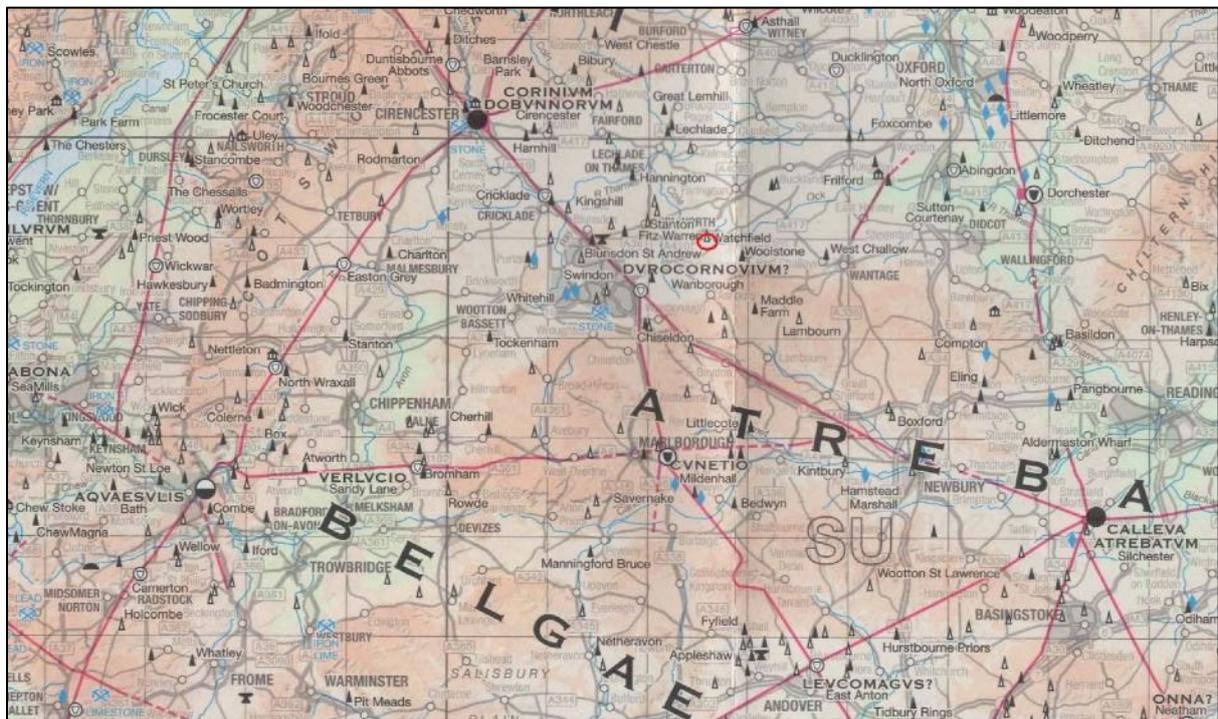


Figure 6: Relative position of Shrivenham in the Roman Landscape – red circle indicates Shrivenham (taken from Ordnance Survey, 2010)

Shrivenham lies in a landscape heavily utilised in the Roman period (Figure 6) and well connected by the Roman road network. Less than 6 km to the west, lies Ermine Street, connecting to Gloucester and Cirencester to the north west; to Silchester to the south east. Shrivenham is at its closest to Ermine Street at the junction close to Wanborough where Ermine Street forks toward Mildenhall, Andover, Winchester and eventually Portchester.

Around 17km to the north, lies Akeman Street which connected Cirencester to Bicester (and the north), St Albans and eventually London. The Roman Road from Bicester to Mildenhall passes through the Vale of White Horse and crosses the River Ock at Frillford around 20 kilometres to the east.

In the Vale of White Horse there appears to have been considerable occupation in the Roman period evidenced by the Romano British temple complex, with a town and possible amphitheatre at Frillford, excavated between 2001-11 by Lock and Gosden (Lock & Gosden, online, consulted 05/08/2012). There is evidence for villas at Woolstone, Challow, Frillford, Barton Court Farm near Abingdon and possibly at Watchfield (Tingle, 1991, 52-56).

Tingle concluded that the Vale of White Horse, at the end of the Roman period was 'a cleared, ordered and intensively exploited landscape' (Tingle, 1991, 67), however it was not settled on the same scale as the Berkshire Downs to the south (Tingle, 1991, 81).

In the immediate vicinity of Shrivenham, what have been interpreted as Roman ovens and a water tank have been found at Watchfield Triangle by Oxford Archaeology (Heawood, 2004, 317).

In Shrivenham itself (Figure 7), in 1982, a cobbled floor surface which has been interpreted as a late Roman building was discovered with Roman pottery and what are believed to be possible cursive tablets (Figure 8). One of the tablets was unrolled by Dr Bowman at Oxford University but found to be blank. Further Roman pottery (Figure 9) has been found by local people close by, in the field across Highworth Road from the floor surface (Figure 7) (Dr M. Andrews, 2012, Pers. Comm.).



Figure 7: Map showing Stallpits Roman building site and associated find spots (Ordnance Survey Map courtesy of Edina, LiDAR supplied by Geomatics).



Figure 8: Roman 'cursive tablets' found at the site of the Stallpits Roman building. Photos Courtesy of Dr M. Andrews.



Figure 9: Roman Pottery found close to the site of the Stallpits Roman building in Field P. Photos Courtesy of Dr M. Andrews.

An area on the south side of Stallpits Road (Figure 7) in Shrivenham yields numerous pieces of Roman pottery and also Roman coins (Figure 10) dating from the 4th century have been found in this area (Dr M. Andrews, 2012, Pers.Comm)

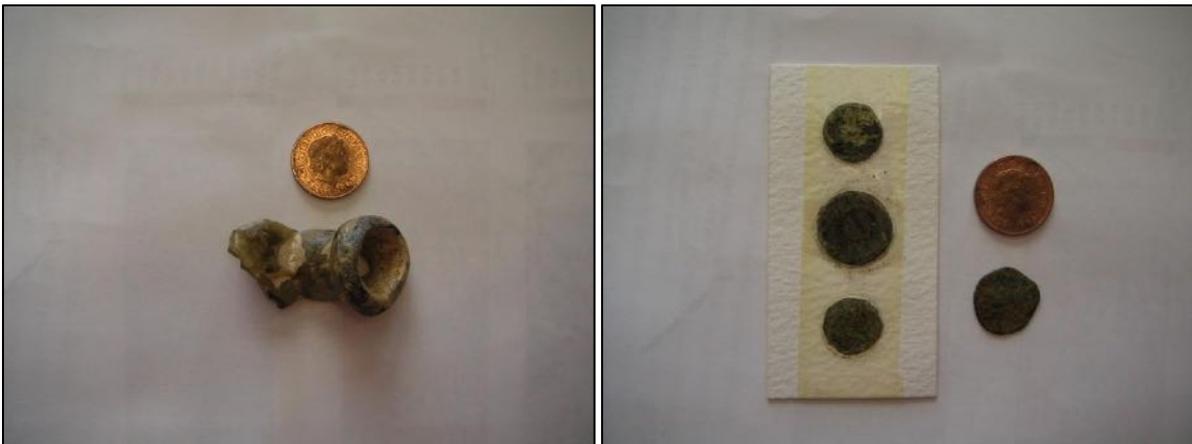


Figure 10: Possible Roman Glass and coins found in garden in Stallpits Road. Photos Courtesy of Dr M. Andrews.

2.4 The Political Landscape of the Early Medieval period

During the early medieval period, Shrivenham was in a frontier area, disputed by Wessex and Mercia, and fought over by Wessex and the Danes. Battles took place at Ashdown, against the Danes in 870 and, against Mercia at Ellendun, south of Swindon in 825.

Charters of Æthelbald (Gelling, 1979, 24) and Cenwulf (Gelling, 1979, 26) suggest that Shrivenham and Watchfield were controlled by Mercia in the eighth and early ninth century.

However, in 648 according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, land at Ashdown in the parish of Ashbury was granted by Cenwealh to one of his kinsmen and Æthelwulf, gave 10 cassati in Ashbury to his minister Duda (Gelling, 1979, 27). suggesting that in the mid 7th and 9th centuries, the area immediately to the south of Shrivenham at least, was controlled by Wessex (Savage, 1983, 44).

2.5 The Landscape of the Vale of White Horse in the Early Medieval period

The environment of the western Vale of White Horse in the past appears to have been wet. The main routes of access and settlement areas are located on the high ground of the Corallian ridge to the north and the greensand terrace to the south. Around Shrivenham today, there is little settlement in the Vale floor apart from at Bourton, which is situated on an outcrop of Greensand.

From the evidence of early medieval burials, although not large in number, it appears that the pattern of settlement in the western Vale echoed that of today, with known burials being found on higher ground on the northern and southern edges of the Vale. To the north, burials have been recorded at Watchfield, Coleshill and Longcot and to the south at Fox Hill and Callas Hill (Wanborough), Woolstone, White Horse Hill, Uffington and Sparsholt (Scull, 1992, 265). This appears to mirror the Roman bias toward the southern edge of the Vale over the northern edge.

The names of existing farms and settlements around Shrivenham suggest a marshy environment in the past; Hinton Marsh Farm, South Marston, Horpit (from the old English meaning 'muddy hollow') to the west. To the south; Compton Marsh Farm, Odstone Marsh Farm (Arkell, 1942, 5) and to the east; Marsh Way (near Woolstone) all suggest a wet environment.

Further to the east in the Vale of White Horse, increased settlement appears on the vale floor. These settlements appear to be located close to fords; Hatford, Stanford in the Vale, Shellingford, Frillford, Lyford or close to 'islands in the marsh'; East and West Hanney, Goosey, Charney Basset, Pusey and Tubney, these place names being characteristic of raised ground in a wet area. These 'ēg' place names often overlap with 'ham' names (Gelling and Cole, 2000, 37) such as Shrivenham. The names of the settlements in the Vale of White Horse would suggest that they were named by 670-730 although 'ēg' names may date back to the earliest English speaking period (Gelling and Cole, 2000,36). However the name 'Shrivenham' must date to the Christian period, the 7th century or later..

The county of Berkshire, derives its name from the British word '*Berroc*', meaning 'hilly', which probably refers to the Berkshire Downs. In popular Old English

etymology however, it probably means 'Box wood' (Gelling 1973, 2). Despite this, Berkshire does not appear to have been a heavily wooded county (Bond and Over, 1988, 28). In the Domesday Book, woodland in Berkshire is generally recorded by the amount of swine paid in rent for the right of pannage (Darby and Campbell, 1962, 262). Whilst it is not clear what the relationship between swine rendered and the total number of swine feeding in woodland was, Shrevenham with its 20 recorded swine is one of the smaller rents in the county and one of the only ones in northern Berkshire. The larger rents appear in the south and east of the county, in the north-west, there are very few swine rendered and few woodland areas recorded in 1086. However there has been suspicion in the past, that Domesday records of woodland in northern Berkshire were incomplete, based on evidence contained in 11th and 12th century charters (Darby and Campbell, 1962, 264).

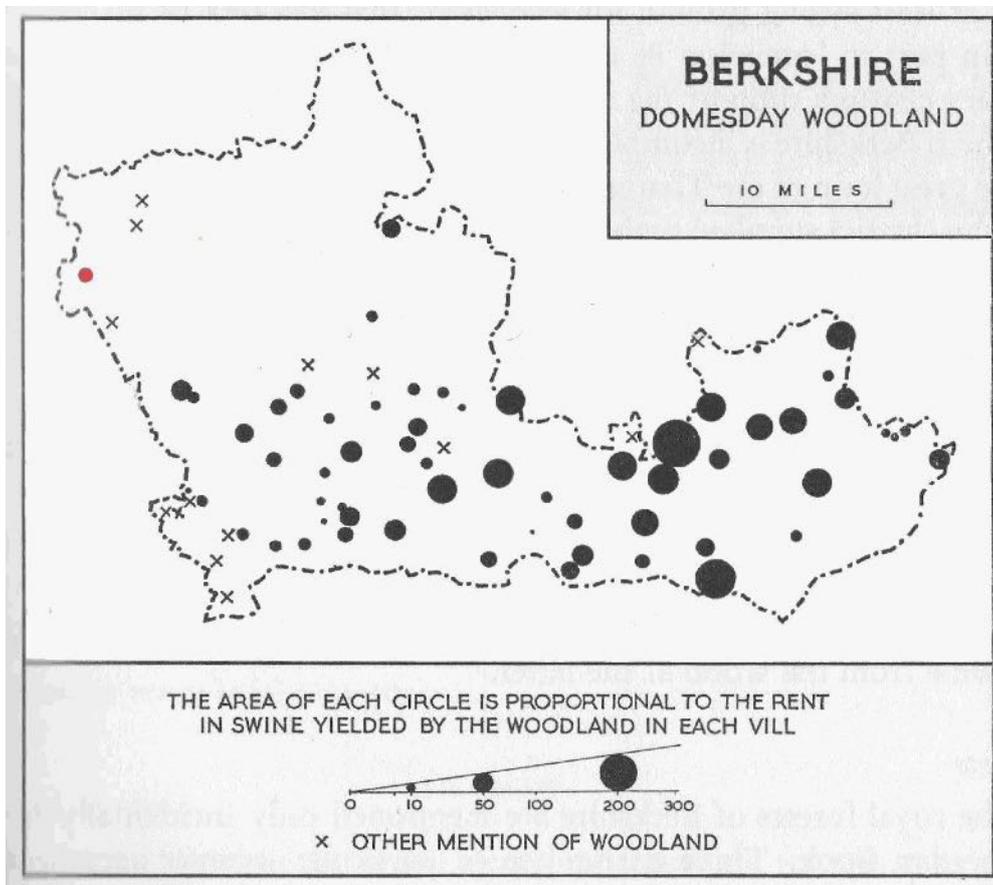


Figure 11: Woodland recorded in Berkshire in 1086, (taken from Darby and Campbell, 1962, 263). Shrevenham is indicated in red

Chapter 3 Documentary Evidence

3.1 Domesday Book Evidence

'The King holds Shrevenham in demesne. King Edward held it. There are 46 hides. There is land for 33 ploughs. In demesne are 4 ploughs and 80 villans and 17 bordars with 30 ploughs. There is a church with 5 hides of the same land and there is 1 plough, and 4 villans and 5 bordars with 2 ploughs. In the manor are 2 mills rendering 20S and 240 acres of meadow. [There is] woodland for 20 pigs. TRE it was worth £35 and afterwards £20; now £45. What the priest has [is worth] £4'

(Williams, 2002, 139)

The Shrevenham entry in the Domesday Book, demonstrates that it was an established estate in 1086. It had a relatively large population, numerous plough teams and the two mills suggest that arable farming was being practised.

Fernham Longcot and Bourton are not mentioned in the Domesday Book, which points to Shrevenham, Beckett and Watchfield, which are mentioned, being the important settlements or estate centres by 1086 (Appendix E).

The church is recorded as having 5 hides of land which the Victoria county history equates to the Rectory manor, consisting of the hamlet of Longcot and land in Watchfield, Bourton and Fernham, suggesting there would have been estate settlements at these places in 1086. (Page & Ditchfield, 1924, 538-9).

Stamp notes that in the early 20th century, arable farming was confined to the Corallian ridge and also the strip of Greensand between Bourton and Fernham. However, a high percentage of the total land available was under permanent grass, and that the arable land was mainly used for production of fodder (Stamp, 1936, 80). Stamp states that there were considerable herds of cattle and that dairy cattle were more numerous than beef cattle (Stamp, 1936, 80).

From Domesday, it can be concluded that livestock must also have been an important factor in the medieval economy by 1086. Shrevenham appears to have had a large amount of meadowland (240 acres) and it appears that the Vale of White Horse was a centre for cheese-making (Darby and Campbell, 1962, 282) which was certainly being practiced at Buckland, Shellingford and Sparsholt (Darby and Campbell, 1962, 280) although there is no specific mention of cheese production in Shrevenham.

Shrivenham, Watchfield and Beckett are mentioned in the Domesday Book as being in Shrivenham Hundred. In 1086, the hundred (and the parish) of Shrivenham equated the modern parishes of Shrivenham & Watchfield with Bourton and the parish of Longcot with Fernham (Figure 12) (Page & Ditchfield, 1924, 500).

The hundreds of Wyfold to the north of Shrivenham, and Hildeslæw to the south were originally separate hundreds but amalgamated into Shrivenham Hundred in the early 14th century (Page & Ditchfield, 1924, 501).

3.2 Charter Boundary Clause Evidence

3.2.1 Shrivenham Hundred

The parish of Shrivenham does not have its own charter, however, the surrounding parishes are well served with charters which contain boundary clauses and have been researched and published by the English Place Name Society. Therefore it is possible to trace most of these parish boundaries on the map.

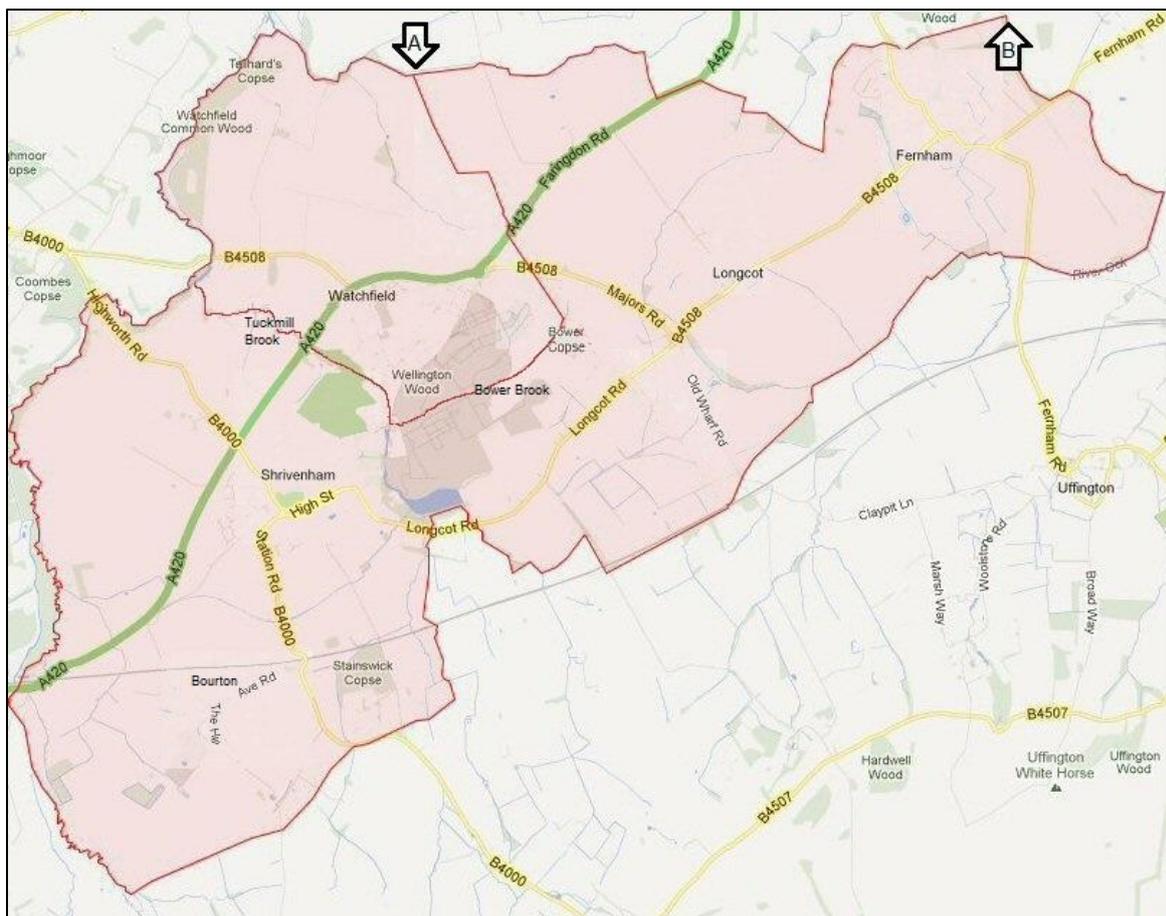


Figure 12: Hundred and early parish Boundaries showing the estate of Watchfield

Figure 12 shows the area which made up the parish and hundred of Shrivenham in 1086 (Page & Ditchfield, 1924, 500), the modern civil parishes of Shrivenham, Watchfield, Bourton, Longcot and Fernham. The boundaries marked in Figure 12 are from modern boundaries which appear to reflect closely, those in the boundary clauses for the 10th century charters of Ashbury, Compton Beauchamp, Hardwell, Woolstone, Uffington, and Shellingford (Gelling, 1976, 680-698) and Baulking (Hooke, 1998, 74 & Hooke, 1987, 140) to the south and east.

In Figure 12, the modern boundary to the south of Longcot Road appears to follow the straight railway line for a distance, which is clearly modern. The corresponding section of the Compton Beauchamp boundary clause mentions a pool, rushes, and a black pit as well as Hildeslæw – the meeting place of Hildeslæw hundred in this section. This section of the boundary was a marshy area which has since been drained, altering the features which are no longer easily identifiable.

Hooke argues that these linear parishes to the south (in Hildeslæw Hundred) (Figure 13) have been in existence since the pre-Christian period based on pagan burials located on the boundaries between them; Hodes Hlæw between Uffington & Kingston Lisle, Hundes Hlæw and Hafeces Hlæw between Uffington & Woolstone (Hooke, 1987, 133). Also Hildeslæw itself occurs in the Compton Beauchamp boundary clause as being on or close to the boundary between Compton Beauchamp and Shrivenham.

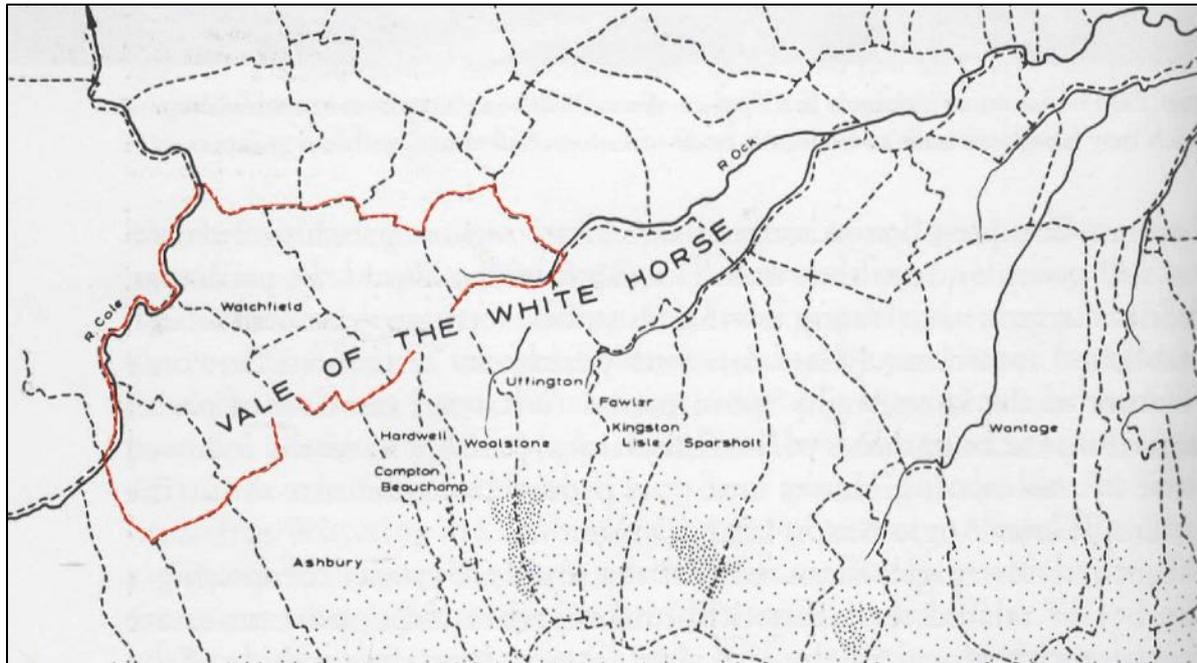


Figure 13: Shrevenham Hundred prior to amalgamation with Wyfold and Hildeslæw (Taken from Hooke, 1998, 74)

The western boundary of Shrevenham Hundred is the River Cole or '*Lenta*', the boundary between the counties of Berkshire and Wiltshire and which is mentioned in the Watchfield Charter in 931 (Gelling, 1971, 697).

There is no charter evidence for the northern boundary between points A and B in Figure 12. Today however, it follows topographical features such as watercourses, spurs and valleys and the A420 which suggest that it could follow the course of an early boundary. It is possible that where the modern northern boundary runs along the A420, it is using the herepath referred to in the Watchfield Charter as a boundary feature further west.

3.2.2 The Watchfield Estate

Within the parish of Shrevenham, the estate of Watchfield had been granted to Abingdon Abbey before 821, when it was mentioned in a charter from Coenwulf of Mercia granting privileges to the Abbey (Hudson, 2007, 19).

The Watchfield charter boundary clause, dated 931, follows mainly watercourses; the '*cobrōc*' (wild bird stream - the modern Bower Brook), the '*mylen brōc*' (Tuckmill Brook) and the river Cole (Gelling, 1976, 697-698).

The Watchfield charter refers to its eastern boundary running along the 'army path for 57 yards' (Gelling, 1976, 697), the modern Watchfield boundary runs along the A420 for about this distance suggesting that the old A420, connecting Shrivenham and Watchfield to Faringdon was this herepath.

On the eastern boundary, the charter mentions a heathen burial place in the area where it crosses the B4508 (Figure 12) – now probably beneath a housing estate, suggesting that this boundary pre-dated Christianity. The Watchfield cemetery, located 500m to the west, suggests Anglo-Saxon culture had arrived in the area by the late 5th or early 6th centuries.

3.2.3 Boundary features and evidence from the charters

Many of the features described in the boundary clauses of the neighbouring parishes which define the extent of Shrivenham in the 10th century are topographical and in particular, water related, such as the rivers Ock and Cole.

The modern Tuckmill Brook (*'mylen brōc'* or 'Mill Brook' in the Watchfield Charter) (Gelling, 1976, 698) identifies that there was likely to have been a mill on this stream by 931. The *'bēan brōc'* (Bean Brook) feature on the northern boundary of Watchfield (Gelling, 1976, 698) is the only evidence of agriculture apart from the 'Mill' Brook. The 'Wild Bird Stream' in the Watchfield Charter (the modern Bower Brook) and the 'Island of Snipe' and 'Fish stream' on the Shellingford charter suggests that game and fishing were important in subsistence.

The small section of herepath, followed in the Watchfield Boundary for 57 yards (Gelling, 1976, 698), suggests that the modern A420 east of Watchfield was a routeway by 931. The A420 is used in the modern boundary further to the east (north of Longcot - Figure 12) where there is no charter evidence but it is possible that this section of road was also part of the herepath and dates to the late Saxon period at the latest.

The heathen burial place mentioned in the Watchfield charter (Gelling, 1976, 698) suggests that this boundary or section of it is from an early Anglo Saxon date. Gelling suggests that the land of Watchfield parish may have been, at an early date

at least, used as communal pasture of people of the surrounding villages (Gelling, 1984, 237) – presumably Shrivenham to the west and Longcot to the east.

3.3 Map Regression Evidence

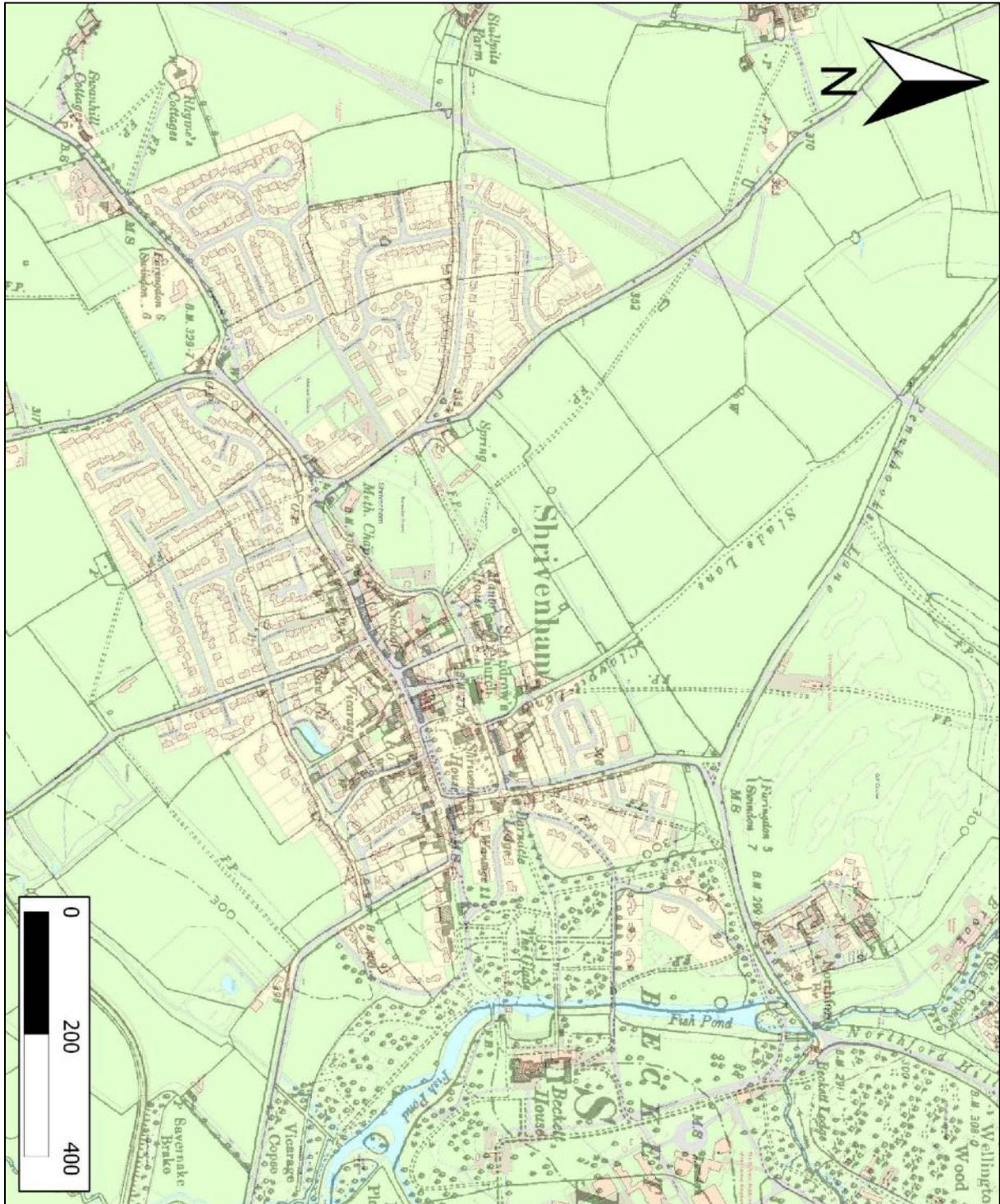


Figure 14: Modern OS Master Map overlaid with 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, both supplied by Edina

Figure 14 demonstrates that the village of Shrivenham has changed little since the late 19th century. The layout of the roads and buildings remains very similar except for the modern housing developments in the south, west and north-east of the village. Additionally, a modern bypass runs to the north of the village and, Slade Lane and Pennyhooks Lane are no longer through roads, however still accessible as bridleways/byways.

Figure 15, demonstrates that in 1844, the village layout was still almost identical to the present day, but with a change in the course of Stainswick Lane - marked in red. Additionally on the tithe Map, it can be seen that the corner of Manor Lane, west of St Andrews Church appears to have a more triangular shape. If the boundaries on the tithe map are traced east back to the church boundary this gives a larger (possibly in filled) triangular area (marked in red) consistent with that identified by Blair outside the churchyard of St Marys in Bampton (Blair, 1998, 127).

In Figure 16, the map of 1722 shows the layout as being very similar again to the modern village excluding the modern housing developments.

The church and manor lane are not shown, however the map is not detailed and certainly the church was there at this date and cottages in Manor Lane are listed as being 17th century by Oxfordshire HER. Many of the road names have changed. Claypits Lane/Slade Lane are known as Abbots Way and lead to Abbots Hill.

Breach Lane, now non-existent, ran parallel to the south of the High Street, possibly defining burgage plots labelled 'Home Closes'. Breach Lane, however appears very different in Rocque's Map of 1761 (Figure 21) which, given the impressive detail, is probably more accurate. Figure 16 refers to the land to the north of the modern Claypits Lane (Abbots Way in 1722) as 'Cath Close' in 1722, sounding almost like an abbreviated form of *Cathedral Close*. Claypits Lane contains 17th Century almshouses.



Figure 15: OS Master Map (Source: Edina) Overlaid with 1844 Tithe Map (Source: Shrivvenham Heritage Centre)

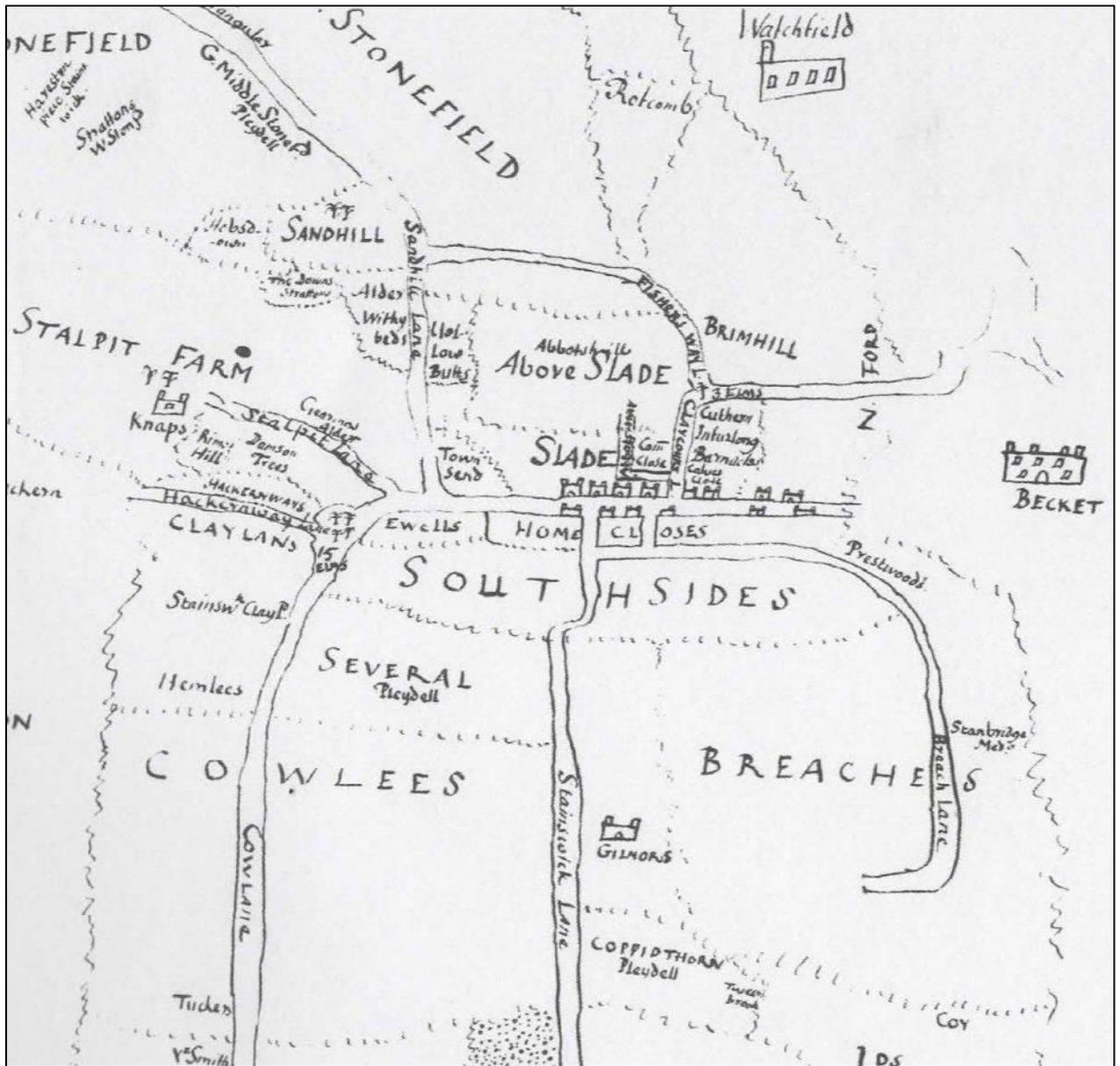


Figure 16: Shrevenham 1722 (Taken from, Dils & Schwartz, 2004)

Chapter 4 Discussion

4.1 St Andrews Church

Saint Andrews church in Shrivenham is 'reputed' locally to have been a minster in the pre-conquest period. A minster could have provided the economic stimulus for a settlement to develop at Shrivenham as trade often centred on minster and abbey sites in the pre-conquest period. At Abingdon Abbey, Domesday records ten merchants paying rent to dwell before the Abbey gate (Williams, 2002, 142) and Blair has suggested that an early market grew outside the precinct of the minster at Bampton (Blair, 1998, 127).



Figure 17: St Andrews Church, the tower showing evidence of an earlier cruciform configuration, photographed by the author.

St Andrews is a large church for what prior to the Second World War was a small village. The church today dates from the 17th century but is built around a 15th century tower (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 539). This tower still bears external evidence of the roof of the previous 15th century church which was cruciform in

design (Figure 17). This cruciform shape suggests a former minster church, local examples of cruciform minster churches include Ashbury, Bampton, Highworth and Faringdon.

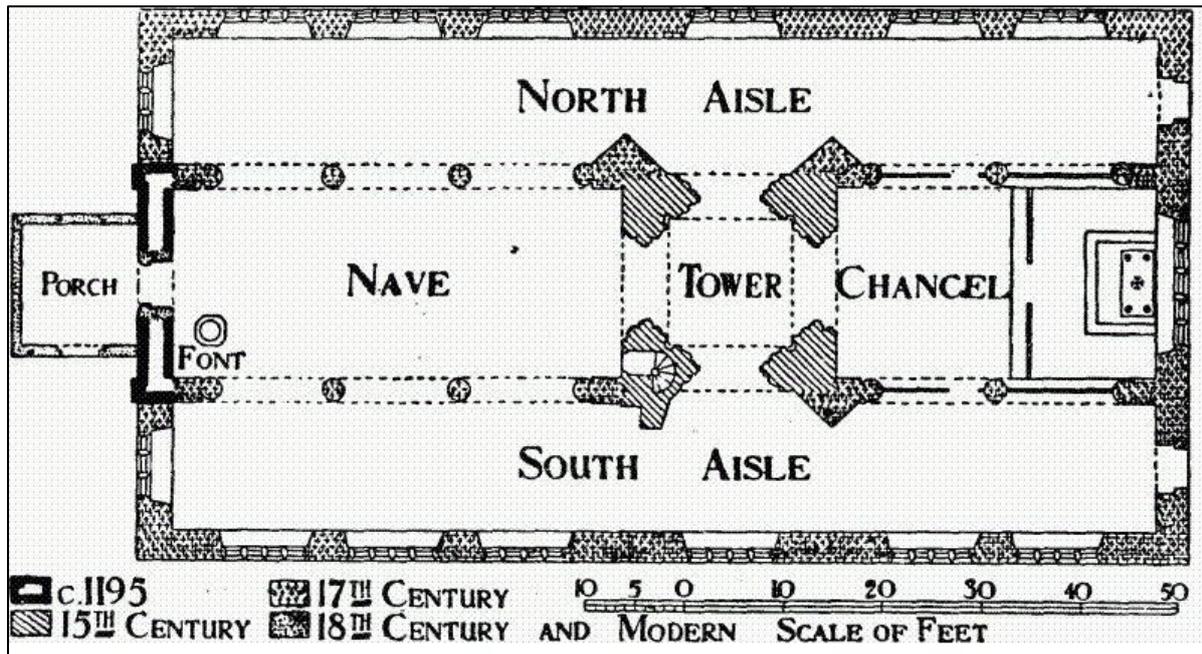


Figure 18: Phases of the Current Church of St Andrew, taken from Page & Ditchfield, 1924, 540

Evidence of an earlier church exists in the late 12th century masonry in the west wall of the Church (Figure 18). The purbeck marble font (Figure 19) in St Andrews Church also dates to the late 12th century (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 539) although whether this has always been in situ is unknown. Evidence for the existence of a church in Shrivenham appears in the form of a grant of the 'the possessions of Regenbald', these being the church, its chapels, tithes, the hamlet of Longcot and land in Watchfield, Bourton and Beckett, by Henry I to Cirencester Abbey in 1133 (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 538-539) (Page, 1907, 80). A church at Shrivenham owning five hides is mentioned in the Domesday Book (Williams 2002, 139).

Watchfield and Longcot are listed as being chapelries of Shrivenham in the medieval period (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 502). There is no mention of a church or priest at Watchfield in Domesday and the settlements of Bourton, Longcot and Fernham are not mentioned at all. St Thomas' in Watchfield was built in the 19th century, however the Victoria County History records a previous church being demolished in 1788 (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 542) presumably built after 1086 as it is not mentioned in the Domesday entry. St John the Evangelist at Fernham was built in the 19th century

and St Mary the Virgin at Longcot, in the 13th century (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 541).



Figure 19: 12th Century Font, photographed by the author.

4.1.1 Burial Rights

In the will of Wynflæd, around the year 950, bequests are made to number of local religious communities including one at Shrivenham (Blair, 2005, 301-2) in soul-scot, which according to Finberg, could only be made to church with a graveyard (Finberg, 1976, 219).

This suggests that in the mid 10th century, burial rights were held by the church in Shrivenham and the raised ground level of St Andrews churchyard supports burials having taken place for a long period, possibly with a monopoly on burials as Longcot had no recorded church prior to the 14th century and Fernham and Bourton prior to the 19th century. Longcot however had burial rights by the 16th century (Dills & Schwartz, 2004, 3).

The fact that Shrivenham has a 'mounded' graveyard (Figure 20) and Longcot, Watchfield, Fernham and Bourton do not, suggests that Shrivenham was the church in the parish which held the burial rights and would explain its' wealth.



Figure 20: the raised profile of the churchyard, photographed by the author.

4.1.2 The Dedication

The dedication to St Andrew could be a clue to Shrivenham being the site of an early church. Many churches in England dating from the early medieval period were dedicated to Roman Saints, such as St Andrew (Dr M. Costen, 2012 , Pers. Comm.), assuming that this is the original dedication.

Clayton identifies St Andrew as being a potentially early dedication; of the eight examples of houses dedicated to St Andrew he lists, four date from the 7th century and one each date from the 8th, 9th 10th and 11th centuries (Clayton, 1990,125-129).

The will of Walter Burton dated 1417 requested his body be buried at the Church of St Andrew in Shrivenham. However an entry in a church register of 1336 refers to

the Church being dedicated to St Mary Magdalene (Boobyer, 2005, 59), St Mary Magdalene being a popular church dedication in the first half of the 12th century (Orme, 1991, 27).

St Andrew was not a popular dedication by around 1150 (Orme, 199, 27). So it is unlikely that the church would have been rededicated to St Andrew in the 14th or early 15th century and therefore likely that St Andrew was the original dedication dating back to the 11th or early 12th century at least, and possibly much earlier.

There is there, however, an apparent long-standing association with the cult of St Mary Magdalene, dating to the mid 13th century. The village fair, granted in 1257 was held on the Feast and morrow of St Mary Magdalene (Boobyer, 2005, 59). The reference to the church dedication being to Mary Magdalene most likely refers to the chantry founded at the altar of St. Mary in 1336 by John de Bourton (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 542). The south aisle chapel, completed in 1928, is also dedicated to St Mary Magdalene (Child, 2007, 1).

4.1.3 Place Name Evidence

The place name '*Shrivenham*' could be significant as the name means 'river meadow, given to the church in penance (Gelling, 1984, 43 & 50) or in satisfaction of an ecclesiastical claim' (Gelling & Cole, 2000, 55) indicating that the estate at Shrivenham was in ecclesiastical ownership at the time it was named.

Alternatively it could be suggested that the '*Shriven-*' element in the villages name referred to the act of shriving and that Shrivenham was in fact a central-place where this was done, again suggesting a minster or early Christian site.

If there was a settlement at Shrivenham prior to the estate being 'given to the church' or providing these Christian services and rites, or during the pagan period, then it is certain have had a different name.

The parish of Shrivenham was once significantly larger (coinciding with the early hundred as shown in Figure 12) (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 501) and has shrunk with Watchfield, Fernham, Longcot and Bourton becoming separate ecclesiastical parishes in the 19th century. This large parish is another indicator of a minster.

4.1.4 The Site of St Andrews Church

The site of St Andrews church shows features consistent with what Blair suggests are common in the positioning of minsters (Blair, 2005, 193-5). That is, it is set in a commanding, elevated position, on a peninsular not far from the confluence of two rivers.

To the west and north of the church, the modern parish is defined by the River Cole, and to the east by Tuckmill Brook, effectively forming a large island or peninsular with the church on overlooking the Vale of White Horse to the South. Tuckmill Brook flows into the River Cole with the confluence to the north as can be seen in Rocque's map of Berkshire 1761 (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Rocques Map of Berkshire 1761

The church occupies the prime geographical zone for farming and settlement, lying on the Corallian ridge offering good drainage for arable farming and building. Whilst settlement would be dispersed in the early medieval period, this topographical advantage would prove important as Shrivenham grew into a village in the medieval period regardless of the status of the church.

The church and churchyard are set back from the modern High Street which suggests that the church was pre-existing when the planned settlement was laid out (Aston & Rowley, 1974, 123), probably in the 13th century at the time of the market charter.

4.1.5 Domesday Land Holding

Minsters churches usually had large land holdings in the Domesday Book. The Domesday entry for Shrivenham notes that “*There is a church with 5 hides*” (Williams, 2002, 139), a large land holding for a church indicating a wealthy and important establishment.

Royal ownership is common in minster parishes. The Domesday Book records that in 1086, “*The King [William] holds Shrivenham in demesne. King Edward held it*”.

However, Shrivenham must have changed hands prior to 1066 when it was owned by Edward the Confessor. A charter from Cenwulf of Mercia dated 821 granting privileges to Abingdon Abbey in relationship to their estates at Shrivenham, Bourton and Watchfield amongst other places (Gelling, 1979, 26), suggests that in the early 9th century, the estate at Shrivenham was in ecclesiastical hands.

4.1.6 The Precinct

The evidence so far suggests that the church in Shrivenham was an important establishment and is a likely candidate to have been a minster in the 10th century and possibly earlier. The site of the church shows similarity with that of the church site at Bampton, around 12 miles to the north east.

Blair identified the site of the church at Bampton as a Bronze Age barrow cemetery on which a Christian cemetery developed. By the tenth century or probably earlier, the site formed the nucleus of a religious community with a near oval enclosure and

by the time of the Norman Conquest, had attracted a lay settlement with a potential extra mural marketplace. By the 13th century a flourishing town had developed and the focus had moved from close to the church, to a new market-place (Blair, 1998, 130).

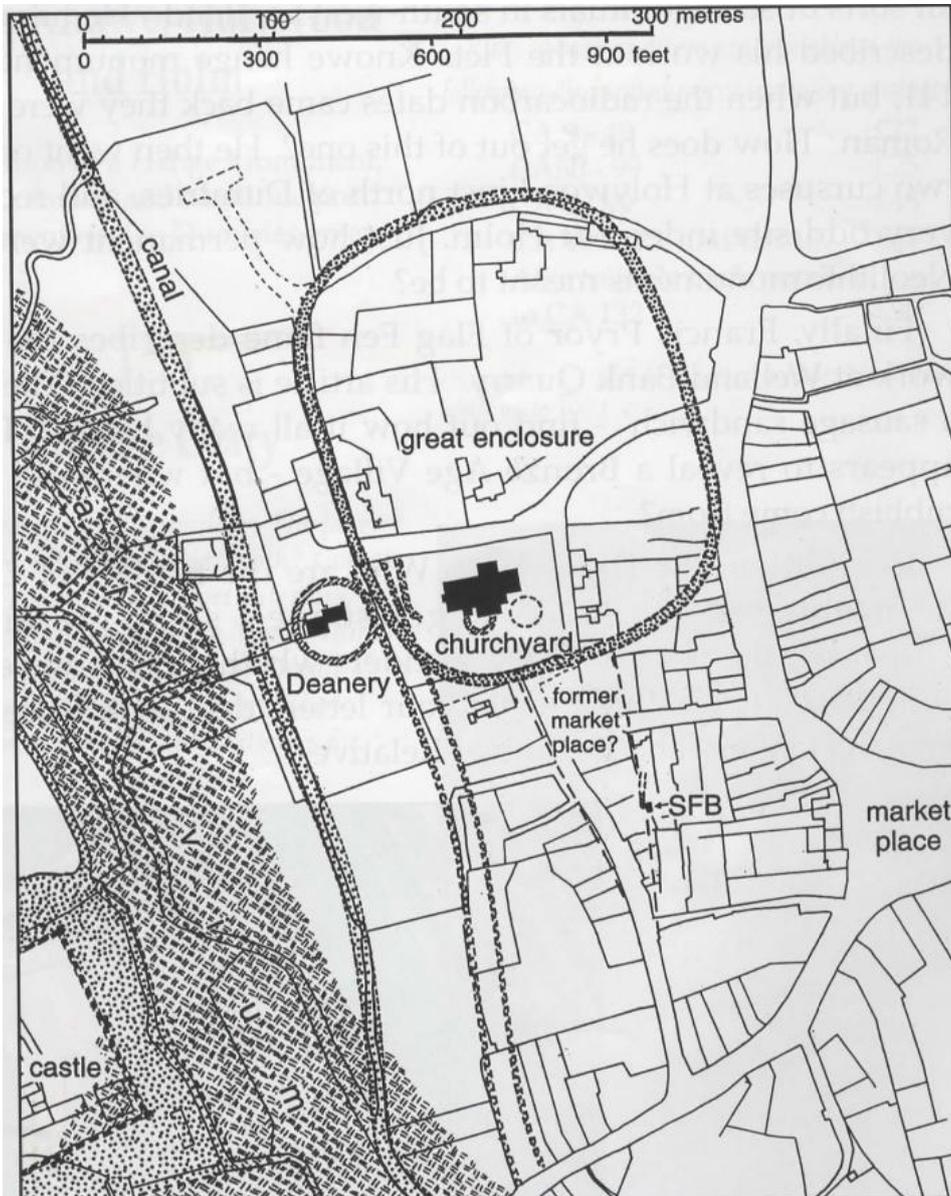


Figure 22: The Minster at Bampton (taken from Blair, 1998, 124)

The Similarity of Bampton to Shrivenham is interesting in that according to Blair, the minster at Bampton has a rectangular/oval enclosure adjoining a later road and market place (Blair, 1998, 127). This precinct has shrunk and been redeveloped leaving the church today with an unusual shaped site in the corner of its former

enclosure. He has suggested the presence of an earlier extra-mural marketplace outside the minster precinct.

In Shrivenham, the roads surrounding the church are highly rectilinear, possibly respecting earlier boundaries. A roughly rectangular area is formed by the high street to the south, Manor Lane to the west, Faringdon road to the east and the line of the current churchyard to the north projecting along property boundaries of Common Close (Figure 23).

Claypits Lane enters the area from the east appearing to lead directly between the church and the deserted village of Beckett (Figure 30), located in what is now the Defence Academy. Directly opposite to Claypits Lane, across the Churchyard on the same alignment is Manor lane, separated by a row of cottages apparently respecting a thoroughfare to the Church.

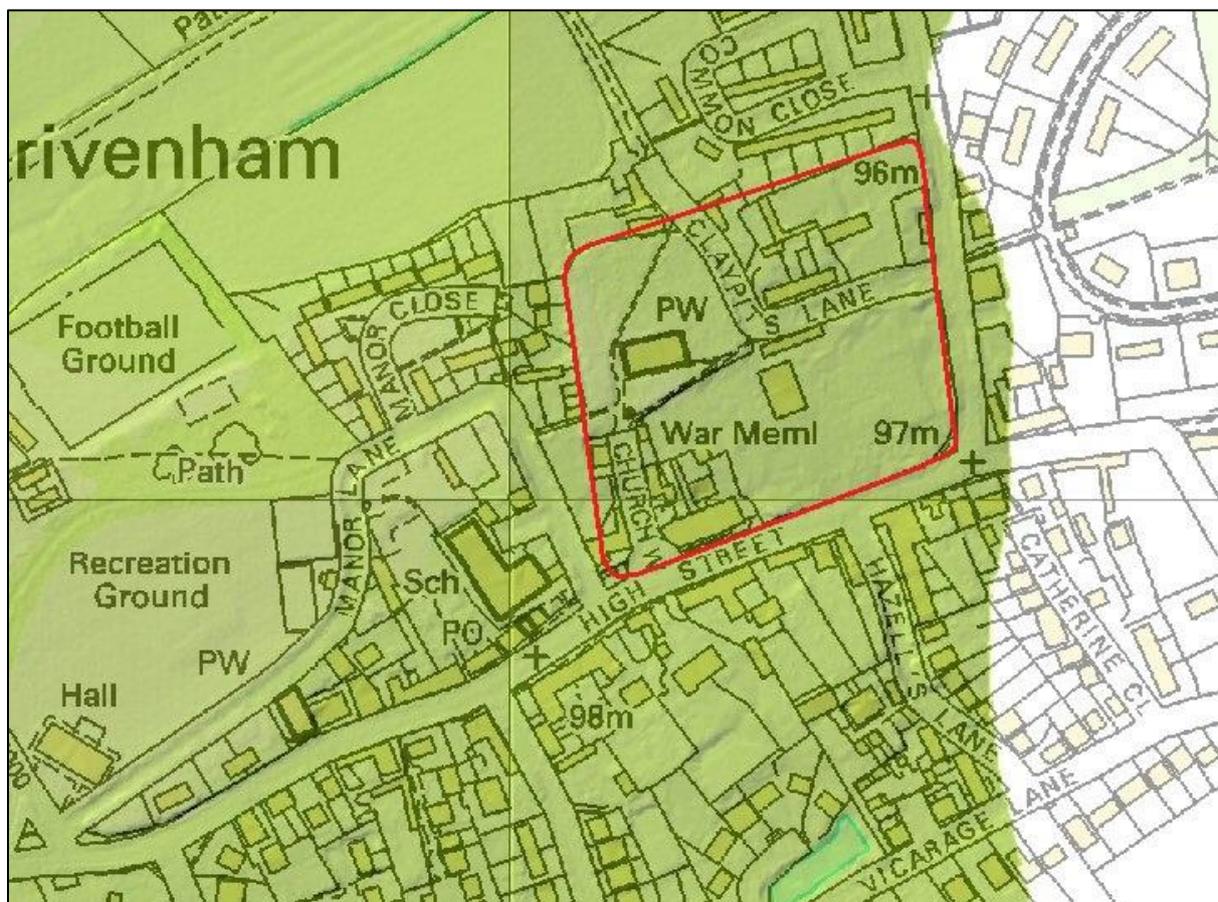


Figure 23: Possible Minster enclosure (OS Map supplied by Edina overlaid by LiDAR supplied by Geomatics)

The typical size of an ecclesiastical enclosure of the early medieval period would be between 150 and 300 metres (Blair, 2005, 198). The enclosure described above measures slightly under 200 metres in width so is in the correct range.

At Shrivenham, St Andrews churchyard is a very similar irregular 'segment' shape to that at St Mary the Virgin in Bampton, suggesting that this too may once have been part of a larger enclosure. Former minsters at Wimborne, Thame, Lambourne and Charlebury are other examples of sites which have developed whilst losing parts of their precincts` to urban development in later centuries (Figure 24). However it can be seen from LiDAR that the current churchyard is probably the only area where large scale burials have taken place due to its raised profile.

A key feature of minsters between the 7th and 9th centuries would be a 'vallum monasterii'; a physical boundary feature separating the lay and religious worlds (Blair, 205, 196). As this would not be achieved topographically at Shrivenham, a boundary feature would be expected if there was a minster on the site at this date.

The area around the church appears to have been redeveloped in the 17th century with the construction of Shrivenham House (17th Century, Oxfordshire HER PRN 22062), Elm tree House (circa 1700, Oxfordshire HER PRN 17026), the almshouses in Claypits Lane (or Abbots Way in 1722 - Figure 16) (1641, Oxfordshire HER PRN 7167) on land known as Cath Close in 1722 (Figure 16) and the rebuilding of the church itself (1638, Oxfordshire HER PRN 7165) at this time.

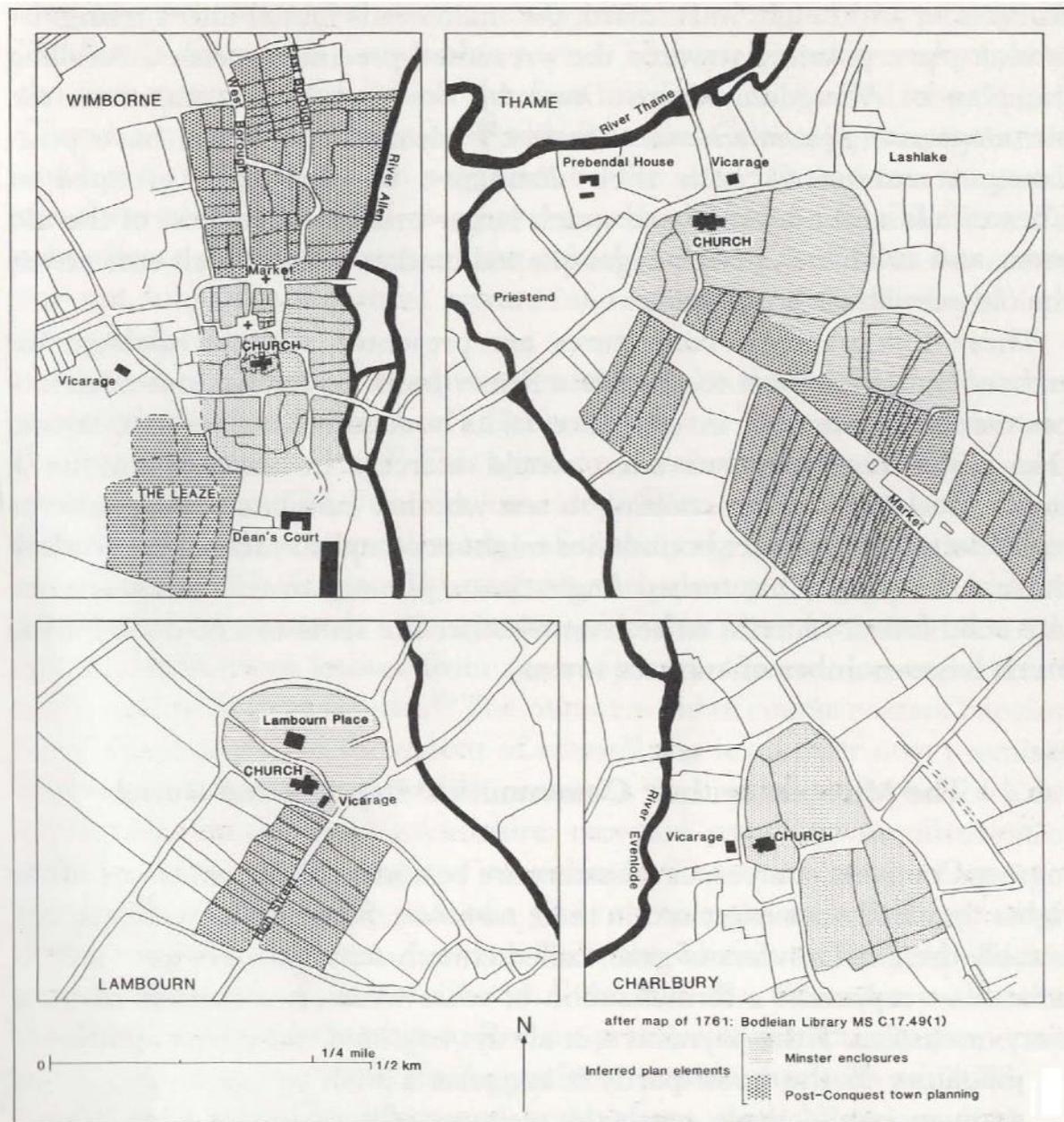


Figure 24: Other Minster Enclosures (Taken from Blair, in Hooke, 1988, 49)

The minster at Bampton shows a continuation of use according to Blair, being built on a site containing Bronze Age barrows (Blair, 1998, 128). He states that early Anglo-Saxon churches are often associated with prehistoric sites, stone circles, barrows, pagan shrines or Roman villas or churches (Blair, 2005, 184). From the LiDAR (Figure 25), there do not appear to be any prehistoric earthworks or barrows on the site of St Andrews churchyard. There does not appear to be any re-used Roman building material in the fabric of the building. The nearest evidence for Anglo-Saxon pagan sites is the late 5th/6th century cemetery at on the A420 at

Watchfield, excavated in the 1980s, and a now lost 'heathen burial ground', probably one or more barrows in the area of Barrington Close in Watchfield referenced in the Watchfield charter boundary clause which dates to 931AD (Gelling, 1976, 697-8).



Figure 25: LiDAR of St Andrews Church, LiDAR courtesy of Geomatics.

Figure 27, shows the similarity of the road layout in Shrivensham and Bampton. The roads marked in blue are laid out in a similar fashion. Yellow marks the later medieval high streets and market places, orange marks Blair's projected market place in Bampton and an area which may be equivalent in Shrivensham, noting the triangular area west of the church in Shrivensham in 1844 (Figure 26).

The modern churchyard appears possibly to be a segment of a former larger site as at Bampton, marked in red on Figure 27 . However this needs investigating further to provide evidence.

Hall suggests that in Dorset, infilling of the church precinct is a process which started as early as the pre-conquest period (Hall, 2000, 76). However, with the redevelopment in the 17th century around the church, perhaps this land became available for redevelopment after the reformation in the 1530s.

To prove where the boundaries of the church precinct lay, if the church did ever have a larger enclosure, it would be useful to carry out a geophysical survey of the gardens lying along its projected path to the north and west of the church. Possibly excavation may identify boundary features such as ditch, bank or hedges and dating evidence establish if the rectilinearity reflected in surrounding road and property boundaries are ‘fixation lines’ respected by later features.

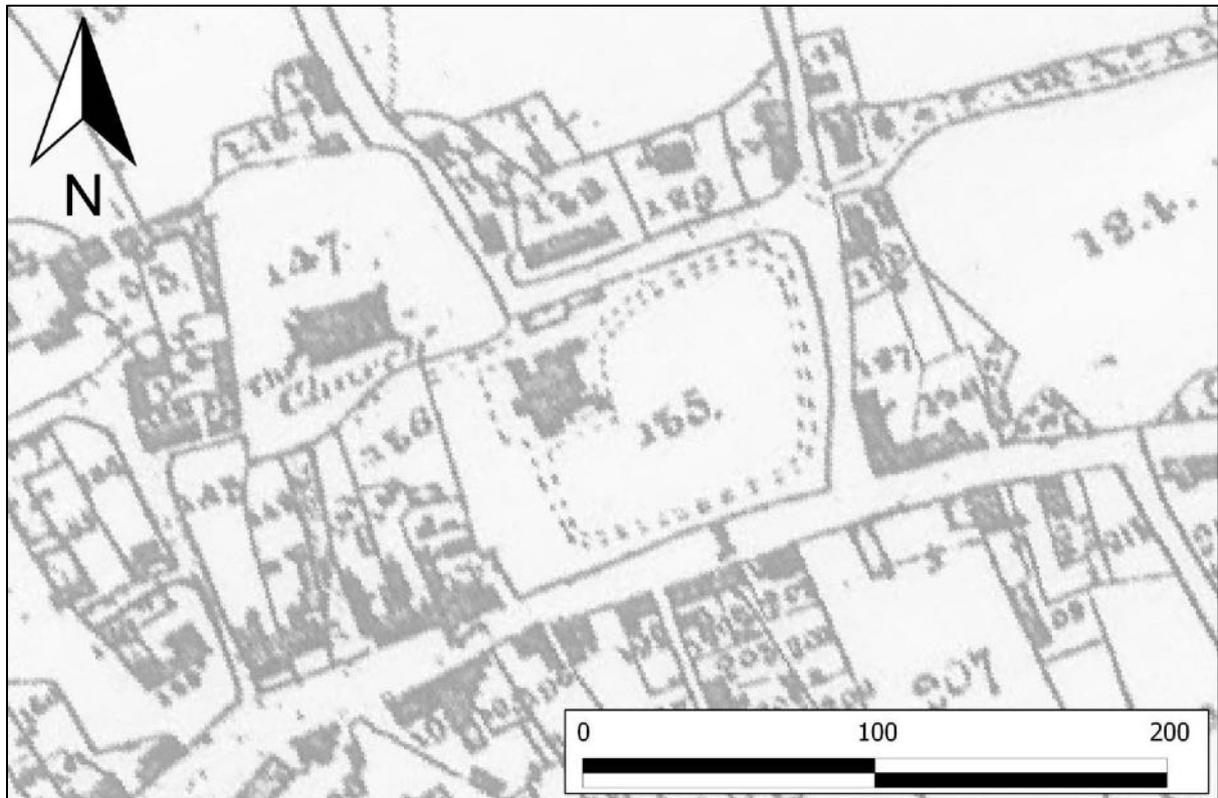


Figure 26: St Andrews Church on 1844 Tithe Map, supplied by Shrivvenham Heritage Centre.

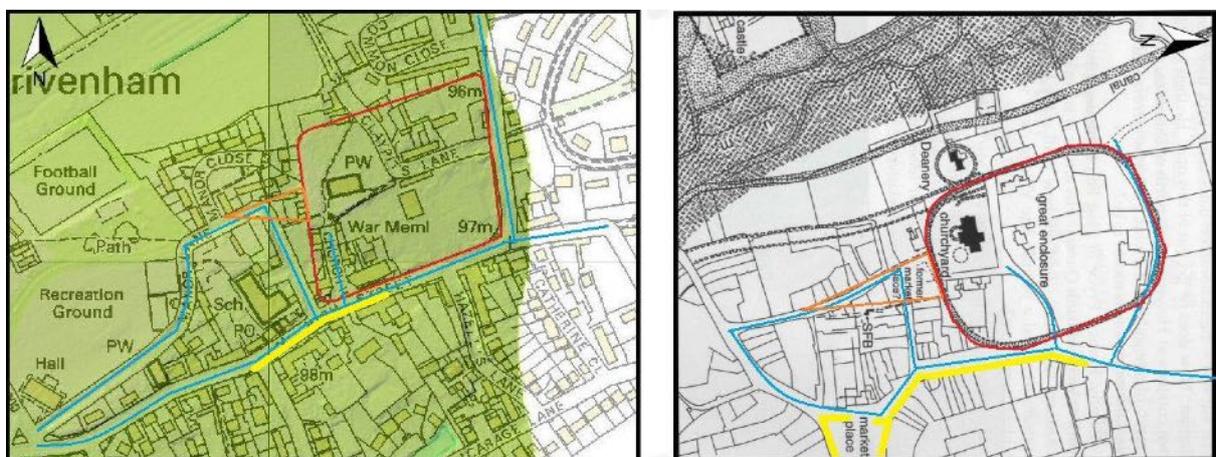


Figure 27: Similarity of road layout in Shrivvenham, right (OS Map supplied by Edina overlaid by LiDAR supplied by Geomatics) and Bampton, left (taken from Blair, 1998, 124).

4.2 Hundredal Centre

Whilst the dedication to St Andrew and documentary evidence may point to an earlier minster site, the fact that the parish of Shrivenham was congruent with the hundred of Shrivenham may point to a re-organisation by Alfred the Great, Edward the Elder or Æthelred which produced a new generation of mother-churches based on the hundred system (Blair, 1988, 3) However the surviving boundary clauses related to charters post-date this period so offer no evidence.

Hall argues that from the end of the 7th century, a system of mother-churches had been established, which corresponded closely with areas of estate and judicial administration (Hall, 2000, 1) and notes suggested links between minster parochiae and the hundreds made by Page and also by Hase and Blair in counties such as Hampshire, Surrey and Devon (Hall, 2000, 41).

Clearly Shrivenham was a central place, as a hundredal centre and the probable site of a late minster church, apparently in the hands of the king, certainly before and after 1086. However, charter evidence of Cenwulf records land at Shrivenham belonging to Abingdon Abbey in 821 (Gelling, 1979, 26).

The Domesday Book demonstrates the importance of the hundred in the 11th century, being organised by hundreds in the south on England. During this period, the hundred was the basic unit for financial, military, judicial and political matters, centred on the hundred court (Jones & Page, 2006 76).

Boundaries of minster parochiae in Dorset follow natural features such as rivers and watersheds (Hall, 2000, 35), much as the boundaries of the estate and hundred of Shrivenham do, to a large extent, in the boundary clauses of surrounding parishes in the 10th century.

In the 13th century Shrivenham hundred absorbed the hundreds of Wyfold to the north and Hildeslæw to the south (Anderson, 1939, 210) (Page & Ditchfield, 1924 500-502). In 1276, the hundred court of Hildeslæw had been moved to a place inside the boundary of Shrivenham Hundred (Anderson, 1939, 210). This increase in the

area of the hundred is doubtless the key to why Shrivenham has remained such an important centre in the western Vale of White Horse to the present day.

4.3 Settlement

Clearly there was a Roman presence in the north-west of the village from the archaeological evidence in areas marked by A, B and C on Figure 38 although this is not currently understood. From the lead tablets found at A, this could possibly be interpreted as a temple or shrine however there is no further evidence to date of any ritual site.

The influx of Anglo-Saxon culture in the region appears to have been early and spread rapidly using the Thames and its tributaries such as the River Ock, evidenced locally by the Anglo-Saxon cemetery close by at Watchfield. Early Anglo-Saxon occupation is often associated with Roman sites which were often subsequently abandoned although there is often evidence that the land around them continued to be cultivated (Tingle, 1991, 71).

Whilst evidence of such Roman settlement appears in the north west of Shrivenham, it is in the Anglo-Saxon period that hamlets and villages first appeared in the Vale of White Horse and the Berkshire Downs became to the south became marginalised (Tingle, 1991, 81). The early and middle Saxon period saw dispersed settlement of hamlets and farmsteads (Taylor in Hoskins, 1988, 41).

Burial evidence, particularly from Watchfield, suggests that 'Anglo-Saxon Communities' had been established at the western end of the Vale of White Horse by the early sixth century at the latest and probably the late fifth century (Scull, 1992, 265).

Certainly by 1086, Shrivenham, Watchfield and Beckett were the most important settlements in Shrivenham Hundred being mentioned in the Domesday Book. Shrivenham, existing as an estate centre, a hundredal centre and a possible minster site, Watchfield as an estate belonging to Abingdon Abbey and Beckett being held as a manor after the conquest.

This however does not mean that these were the only settlements, rather that they were the estate centres. Late Saxon settlement occurred at Longcot evidenced by

10th and 11th century pottery concentrations to the north of the present day settlement (Tingle, 1991, 73-4), although Longcot itself does not appear in the Domesday Book. Similarly Fernham and Bourton are not mentioned in the Domesday Book.

Trade often centred on minsters and monasteries, the Domesday Book records ten merchants dwelling before the gates of Abingdon Abbey. Blair has suggested an early market place outside the precinct of the minster at Bampton with a sunken-featured building excavated respecting its boundary (Blair, 1998, 127).

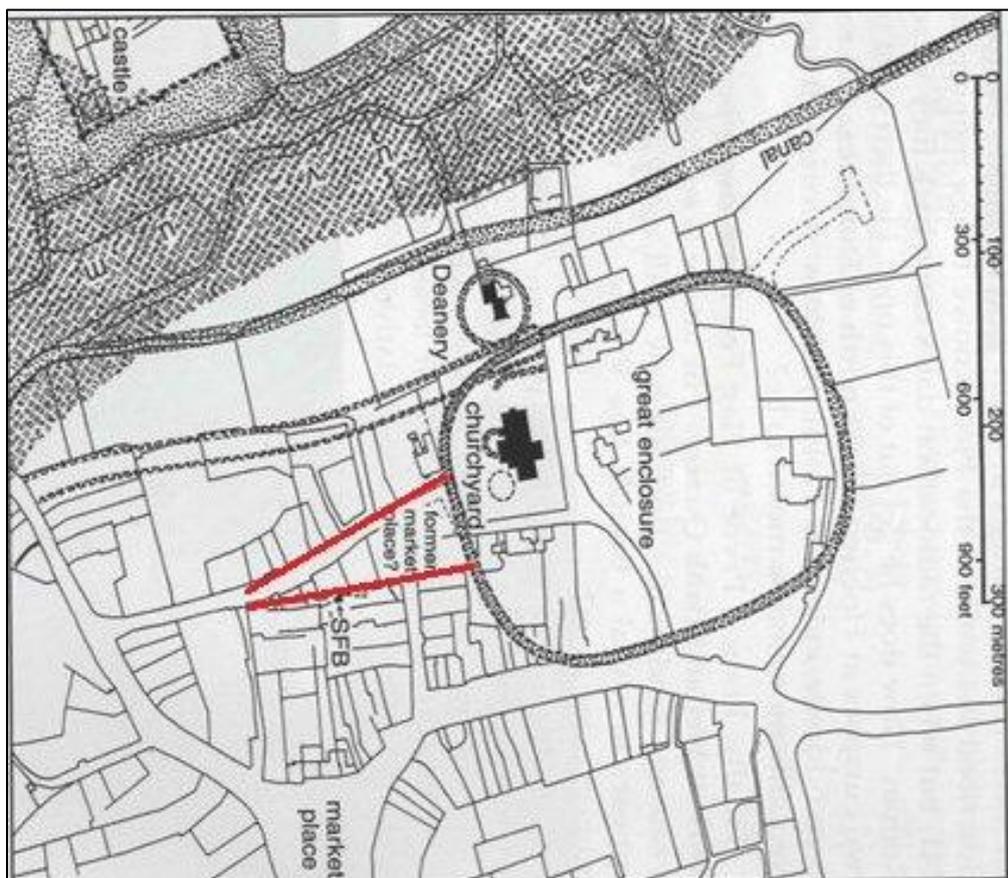


Figure 28: Early marketplace at Bampton (taken from Blair, 1998, 124)

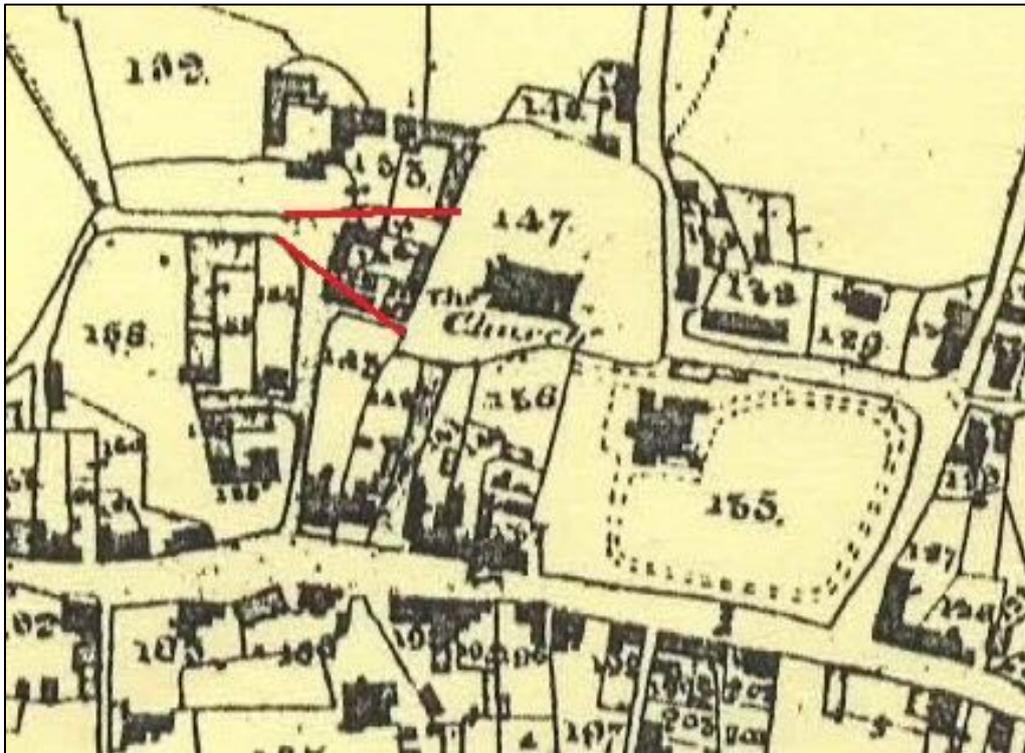


Figure 29: Possible early marketplace at Shrevenham (taken from 1844 Tithe Map) Supplied by Shrevenham Heritage Centre.

If the hypothesis that Shrevenham was a minster church in the middle or late Saxon period is accepted, then it is likely that this status acted as an economic catalyst in the growth of a settlement as did St Marys at Bampton and Abingdon Abbey.

Blair suggested three stages of development for minster towns. Firstly a rectilinear or concentric minster precinct, depending the whether the site is based on the Roman or 'Celtic' model. Secondly, organic late Anglo-Saxon growth around the perimeter possibly including a market place. Thirdly 12th or 13th century burgage plots peripheral to the earlier core (Blair, 1988a, 48).

In Shrevenham, the corner of Manor lane to the west of the church (Figure 29) appears triangular on the 1844 tithe map suggesting that a similar early market could be feasible, similar to Blair's projected Market at Bampton (Figure 28). Certainly other Minsters such as Thame, Wimborne, Lambourne and Charlebury, appear to have an early marketplace in close proximity to the minster church (Figure 24) and according to Blair, this association is widespread (Blair, 2005, 335).

Shrivenham was not granted a market until 1257 (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 531) however according to Aston, a market was often present before being 'legitimised' by a charter (Prof M. Aston, 2012, Pers. Comm.). Certainly the potential minster enclosure, possible early marketplace and 13th century high street and burgage plots would fit with Blair's three stages of development.

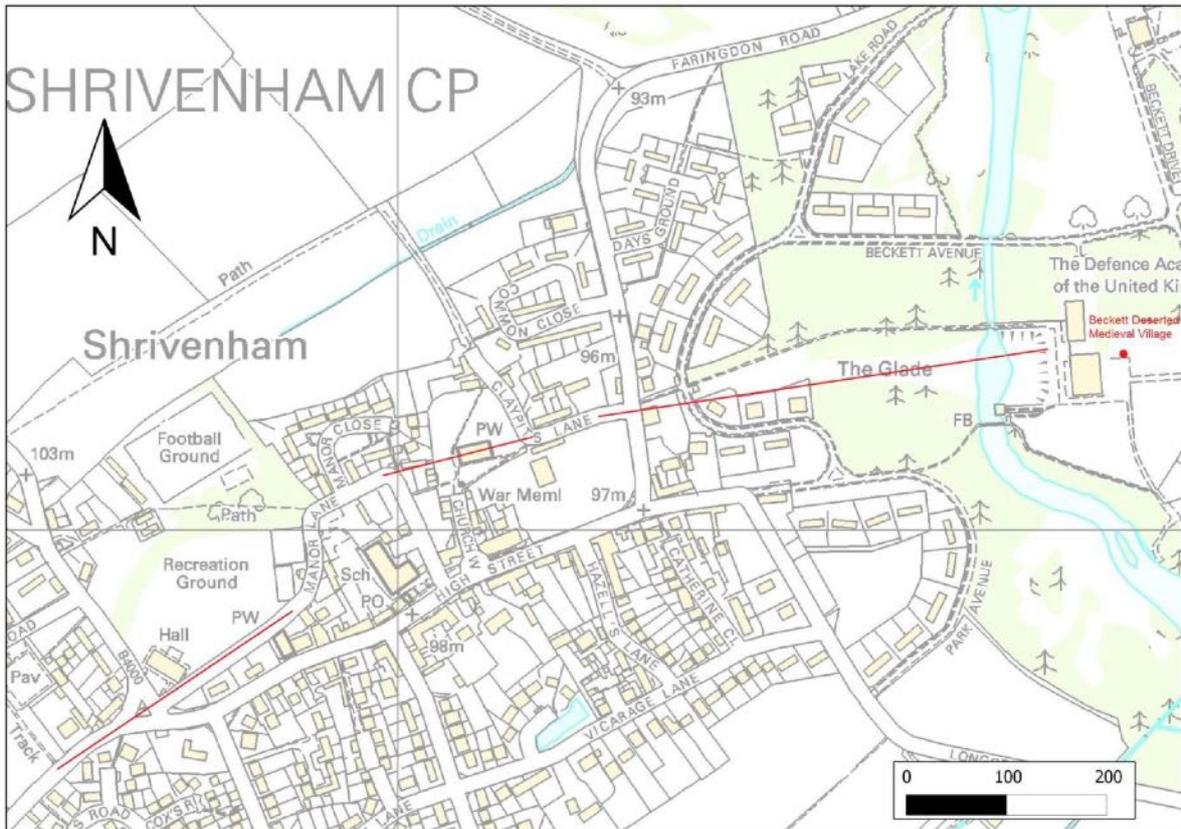


Figure 30: Alignment of Manor Lane, Claypits Lane and Beckett DMV, map courtesy of Edina.

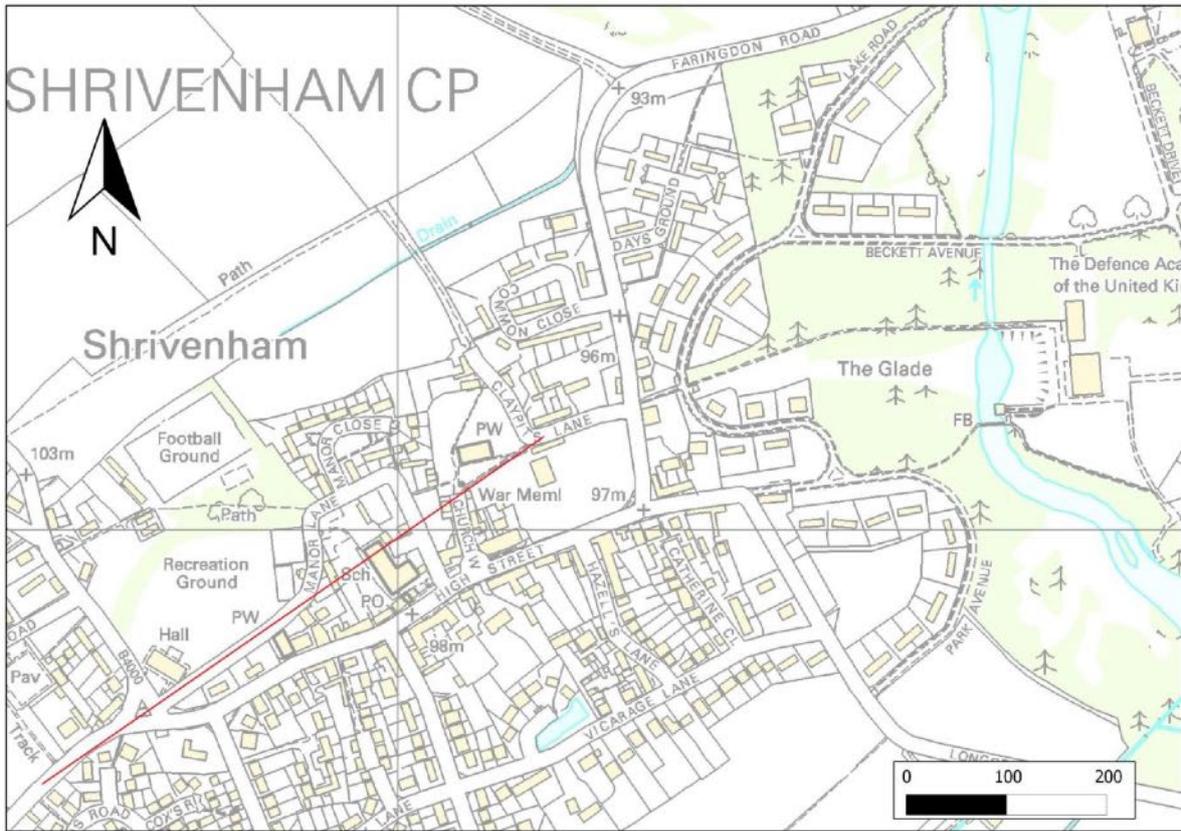


Figure 31: Alignment of Townsend Road & Manor Lane with the southern boundary of the Churchyard and the corner of Claypits Lane, map courtesy of Edina.

Manor Lane exhibits features of a hollow-way (Figure 32). Its line appears as a continuation of Townsend Road to the west and runs toward the area suggested as the site as a potential early marketplace directly to the west of St Andrews Church (Figure 30). In addition, the westernmost section of manor lane appears to be on an alignment with the southern boundary of the modern churchyard and the corner of Claypits Lane (Figure 31).



Figure 32: Manor Lane – potential Hollow way, photographed by the author.

The section of Claypits Lane which runs east from the church appears to be aligned with Manor Lane to the west of the church and in the east is aligned with the deserted medieval village of Beckett, mentioned in the Domesday Book and destroyed with the emparkation of Beckett House in the 17th and 18th Century (PRN 9250) (Figure 30).

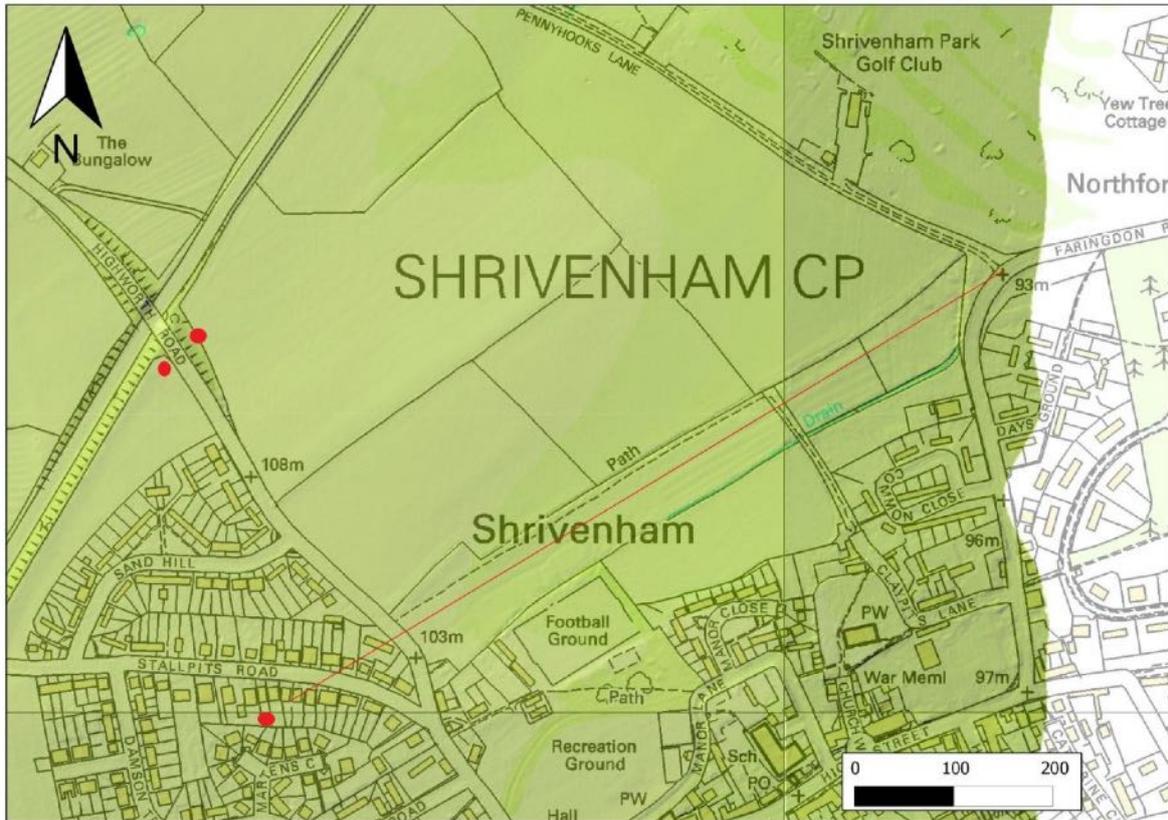


Figure 33: Alignment of potential Hollow-way joining corner of Faringdon Road with site of Roman activity, Map courtesy of Edina, LiDAR Supplied by Geomatics.

A hollow-way and house platforms were reported in the 1960's in the field to the north of the football ground (PRN13749), identified at the time from aerial photography (Figure 33). This is particularly interesting as it appears to run on an alignment between an area of Roman activity and the corner of Faringdon Road. Faringdon Road (part of the main Oxford-Swindon road prior to bypassing) appears in Rocque's Map of 1761 and further to the east, a stretch of the road further east is identified as a herepath in the 931 in the Charter of Watchfield (Gelling, 1976, 698).

The LiDAR of this feature is shown in Figure 34 and appears to show interesting features however on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, a spring is shown in the south-west end of the field. A clue is in the field name, 'the Slade' meaning a shallow valley or depression in the field, too marshy to cultivate. It is therefore likely that this feature has been a seasonal, natural watercourse draining water from the spring.

Despite its name, this field is used for arable farming today and regularly ploughed and little can be seen on the ground (Figure 35).

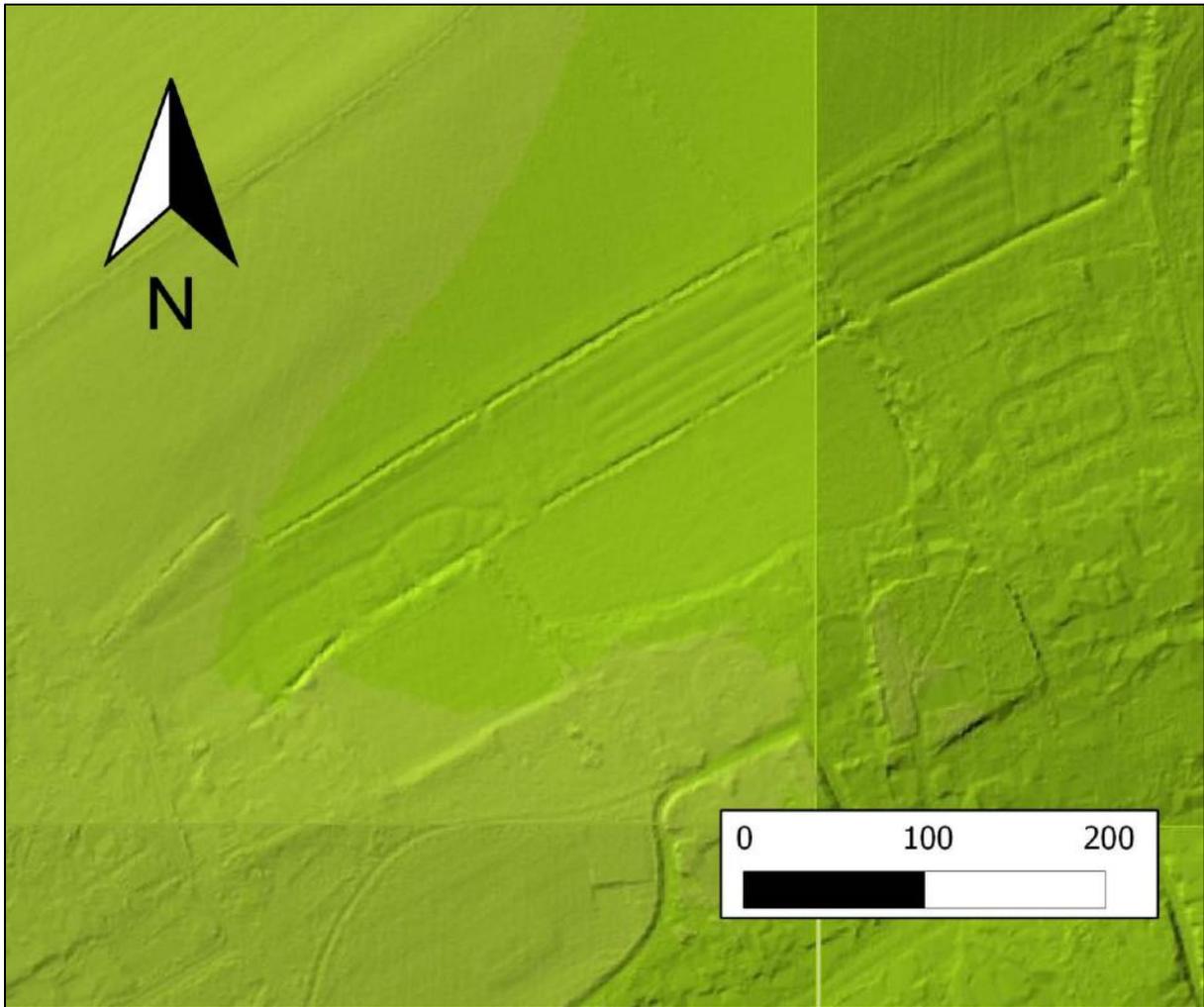


Figure 34: LiDAR showing potential hollow-way in the Slade, LiDAR Supplied by Geomatics.

The field named Abbot's Hill (

Figure 36), located to the north of the core of the village, was likely part of the lands owned by Cirencester Abbey, given by Henry I in 1133 (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 538-539) or later by grants. By 1346, the Abbot had a house in Shrivenham (Page and Ditchfield, 1924, 538-539). The field is located in the key arable area according to Rocque's map (Figure 39) and as such has been heavily ploughed, however if this name refers to the Abbots residence rather than agricultural land, this could support early settlement being to the north of the modern village. Abbots hill was adjoined by a road, Slade Lane, which connected directly to the Church in the 19th century according to the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey. Slade Lane is now largely gone apart from existing as a public footpath at the southern end (Figure 36). LiDAR of Abbots field however offers no evidence of surviving earthworks (Figure 37).



Figure 35: The Slade, photographed by the author.

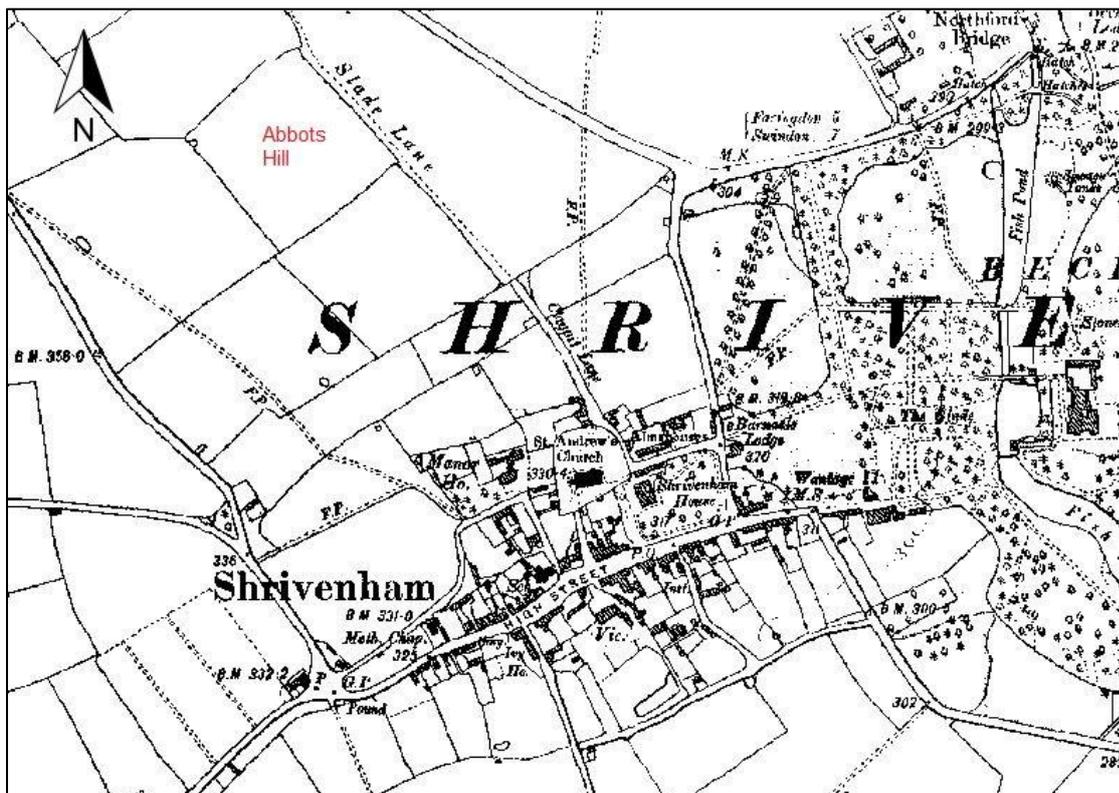


Figure 36: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map showing Abbot's Hill, map supplied by Edina



Figure 37: LiDAR of Abbot's Hill, supplied by Geomatics overlain by First Edition Ordnance Survey Map courtesy of Edina.

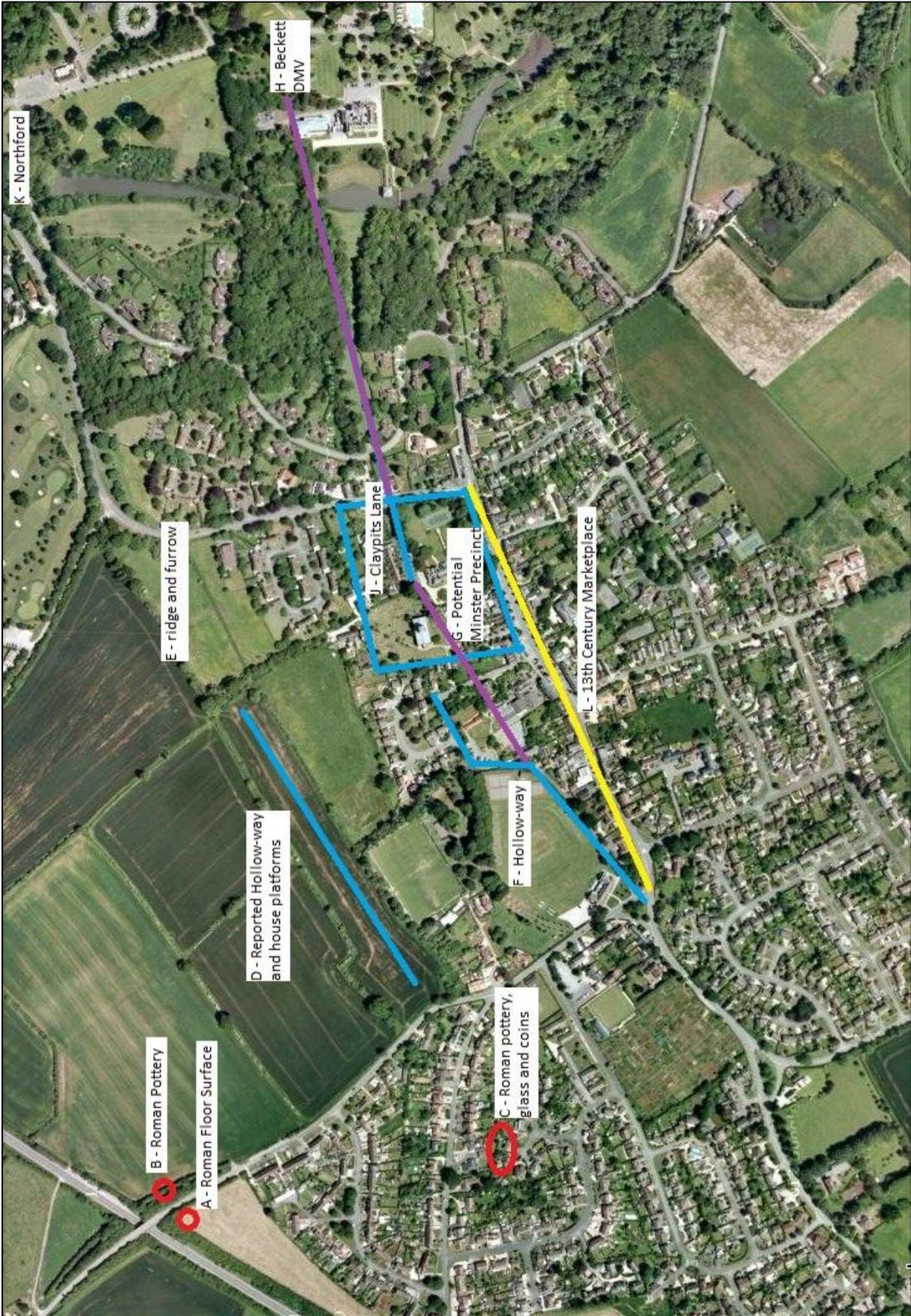


Figure 38: Possible early settlement evidence in Shrevenham, photograph Google Maps.

4.4 Agriculture

Dyer suggests that boundary features referred to in the charters of the Vale of White horse demonstrate a concentration in arable farming. (Dyer, 2002, 15). This may be true in the estates along the southern edge of the Vale on the scarp of the Berkshire Downs and the estates further to the east but in the Shrivenham area this may not be the case. Boundary clauses of the parishes adjacent to Shrivenham mention rivers, streams, springs, ditches, barrows and subsistence resources such as fish and snipe rather than agricultural features in defining its boundaries. It must be noted that most of these features relate to water

Hooke concludes from charter evidence that in the Anglo-Saxon period, large areas of the Vale floor with Gault clay and heavy soils, were undrained marshland, with meres and rush-beds recorded on a charter for Uffington (Hooke. 1987, 139).

4.4.1 Meadow and cattle

The Domesday Book records 240 acres of meadow at Shrivenham (Williams, 2002, 139) 150 acres at Watchfield (Williams, 2002, 144) and 93 acres (100 less 7) at Beckett (Williams, 2002, 146). Meadow was a valuable commodity often comprising land bordering rivers and streams used for hay and also for grazing. This large area of meadow, suggests that the keeping of livestock was on a considerable scale by the time of the Norman conquest.

The importance of meadowland in the local economy in the past is reflected in the name of farms today and visible on the modern Ordnance Survey Map. Farms to the south and to the east of Shrivenham on the low lying vale floor bear names such as Cowleaze (two examples), Homeleaze, Broadleaze, Oxleaze and Henleaze Farms and Broadleaze Barn close to Great Coxwell. This is supported by Rocque's Map of Berkshire in 1761 (Figure 39).

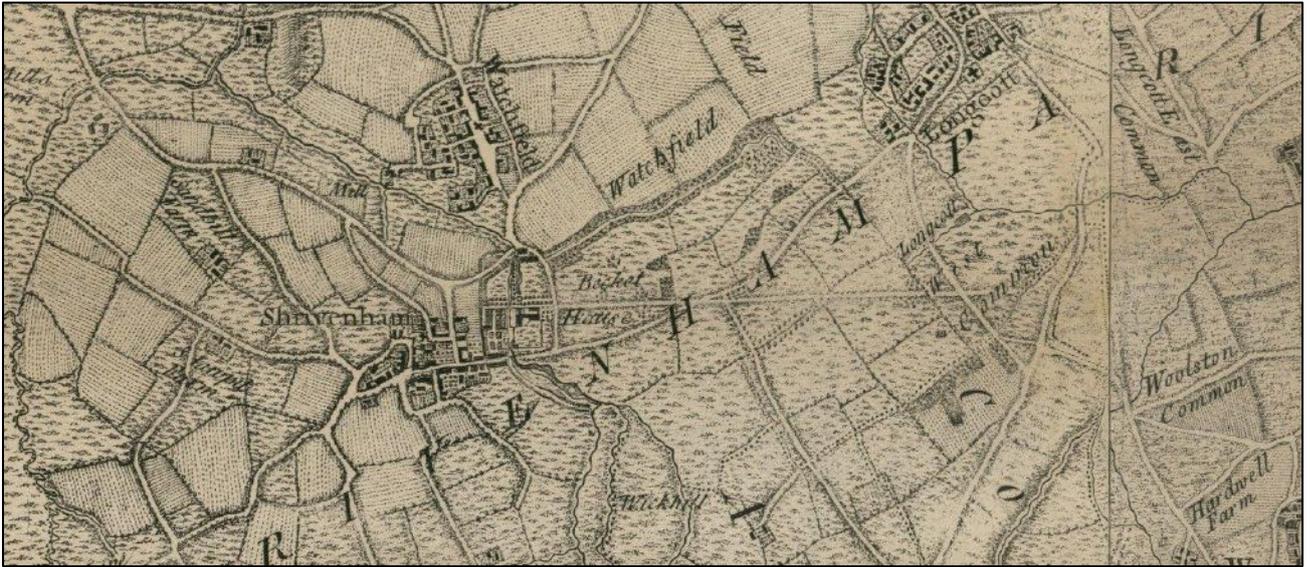


Figure 39: Detail of John Rocque's 1761 map of Berkshire showing arable farming on the higher ground around Shrevenham and Watchfield and meadow on the lower lying land

Domesday entries for Buckland, Shellingford and Sparsholt record dairies yielding cheese and Campbell suggests that the Vale of White Horse was emerging as a dairying area by the time of the Domesday Book (Darby and Campbell, 1962, 280). The Vale of White Horse was known for dairy produce into the 20th century. However there is no evidence that cheese production was practiced at Shrevenham at this time.

4.4.2 Pigs and Woodland

Domesday suggests also that there is pannage required to render 20 swine in tax at Shrevenham (Williams, 2002, 139). There is a 'Swine brook' mentioned in the boundary clauses for charters of Compton Beauchamp (955 AD) (Gelling, 1976, 693) and Woolstone (856 AD) (Gelling, 1976, 681) close to their northern edge suggesting that there was certainly pig keeping in the area of the Vale floor in the late Anglo-Saxon period although whether this relates to the estate of Shrevenham is unknown. However whilst this is on the Southern edge of the parish where woodland would be expected, however, woodland in northern Berkshire is rare in the Domesday Book and this area appears to have been marsh.

4.4.3 Arable Farming

The Domesday Book records the number of plough teams for Shrevenham as 33 (Williams, 2002, 139), Watchfield as 12 (Williams, 2002, 144) and for Beckett as 4 (Williams, 2002, 146). This suggests that there was in fact substantial arable farming in Shrevenham parish in by 1086. This is further evidenced by Shrevenham having two mills (Williams, 2002, 139) and Watchfield 1 mill (Williams, 2002, 146).

Rocque's map shows arable farming located on the higher areas of the Corallian limestone ridge around the villages of Shrevenham and Watchfield and east toward Longcot (Figure 39).

Evidence of a *bēan brōc* or bean brook from the boundary clause of the Watchfield Charter (Gelling, 1976, 697-8), suggesting the cultivation of beans to the north of the area of study on the higher ground.

There is however evidence of ridge and furrow on the lower lying land on the Vale floor which was visible in aerial photographs dating from 1946 (Figure 40 & Figure 41) and also on the higher land to the north along the Corallian ridge. The age of these however is indeterminate as so far no program of field walking to obtain dating evidence has been undertaken. Much of this ridge and furrow has now disappeared due to ploughing and housing development.



Figure 40: Ridge and furrow to the South West of Shrivenham, photograph supplied by the National Monuments Record.



Figure 41: Ridge and furrow to the South East of Shrevenham, photograph supplied by the National Monuments Record.

4.4.4 Mills

The Domesday Book records 2 mills at Shrevenham worth 20 shillings and one at Watchfield worth 25 shillings (Williams, 2002, 139 & 146). It is not clear where these would have been located however there are two sites, one in Watchfield (West Mill) and one in Shrevenham (Friars Mill) where mills have been sited in the post medieval

period at. Both lie on parish or estate boundaries, close to roads existing prior to enclosure. Friars Mill and West Mill (Figure 42) were both located on the river Cole which appears to be the best source of water-power for a mill in the parish. These sites would seem likely sites for a water mill in the early-medieval period as in the post medieval-period.

More convincing evidence of a third mill location (marked 'mill' in Figure 42) can be seen in the charter for Watchfield dated 931. The boundary of Watchfield and Shrevenham runs along the *myln brōc* or mill brook before joining the Lenta or River Cole (Gelling, 1976, 697-8) to the north-west. This refers to what is now called Tuckmill brook which was the location in more recent times of a fulling mill.



Figure 42: "Map of the County of Berkshire" by John Rocque (dated 1761) showing location of the three post medieval mills in Shrevenham and Watchfield.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

The settlement of Shrivenham appears to be related to the geology and topography of the western Vale of White Horse. Old English place names show the area to be wet in the early medieval period and the distribution of arable/meadow land in Rocque's 1761 map suggest this was also the case in the 18th century.

There appears to have been a Roman occupation of two sites in the north west of the village. The blank lead tablets discovered hint at a possible ritual site however there is no further proof of a shrine or temple site.

Focus appears to have shifted east in the post Roman period to the area around the modern day church of St Andrew, north of the High Street. Documentary evidence suggests St Andrews was probably a minster in the mid 10th century. The dedication to St Andrew suggests the site may be much earlier, possibly even as early as 7th century however there is no further evidence of this early date. A hollow-way with flanking house platforms may have connected Faringdon Road with the area of one of the Roman sites to the west however whether this is actually a hollow-way or a natural feature is debateable and requires further investigation.

The layout of the modern village is remarkably similar to Bampton, including a 10th century minster church. The layout of the village around St Andrews church suggests a once much larger rectangular/oval or 'playing card' shaped precinct, as is also the case at Bampton. Blair has suggested an early marketplace at Bampton which may possibly be seen at Shrivenham in Manor Lane and property boundaries through map regression. To the east of St Andrews, Claypits Lane appears to be aligned with the deserted medieval village of Beckett, deserted in the 17th and 18th centuries but flourishing by 1086.

Shrivenham High Street is likely to be 13th century, displaying the classic 'cigar' shape of a medieval market place, flanked by burgage plots and probably dates from around 1257 when the village was granted a charter for a market and a fair.

From the Domesday Book, agriculture in Shrivenham appears to be mixed. Despite the wet environment, the relatively large population were taking part in arable farming, likely clustered around the high ground of the village and to the north (from land use pattern shown in Rocque's Map of Berkshire) and production was large enough to support two mills. Shrivenham held a large area of meadowland in 1086 (240 acres) demonstrating that cattle were an important part of economy of the pre and post conquest period and certain areas of the Vale (Sparsholt, Buckland and Shellingford) appear to be centres for cheesemaking in 1086. From the Swine render in the Domesday Book entry, pig keeping was on a small scale in Shrivenham and woodland in 1086 was rare as it is today.

The original parish/hundred boundary, the majority of which can be traced in boundary clauses of charters for neighbouring parishes, offers little evidence of farming following mainly rivers, streams and ditches but also indicating features such as barrows and a herepath. These boundary clauses, as well as that of the estate at Watchfield have been well researched by Margaret Gelling and map very closely to the area of Shrivenham parish before it was split in the 19th century.

5.2 Recommendations

As little archaeological research has been done so far in Shrivenham it would be beneficial address a number of areas to aid defining early settlement of the village.

To test the hypothesis of the larger minster enclosure through excavation and geophysics, aiming to identify a boundary feature consistent with a minster and dating evidence.

To use a test pitting strategy to identify the dates and dynamics of settlement in the village, particularly to identify any early medieval settlement to the west of the church

To carry out field walking surveys of the fields surrounding Shrivenham, in order to identify and date activity. This is particularly urgent in areas which are soon to be developed.

To carry out a ridge and furrow survey identifying fields where ridge and furrow can be identified and also what can be identified on LiDAR and aerial photography as it is clear that much of this has been lost since the RAF surveys of the 1940's.

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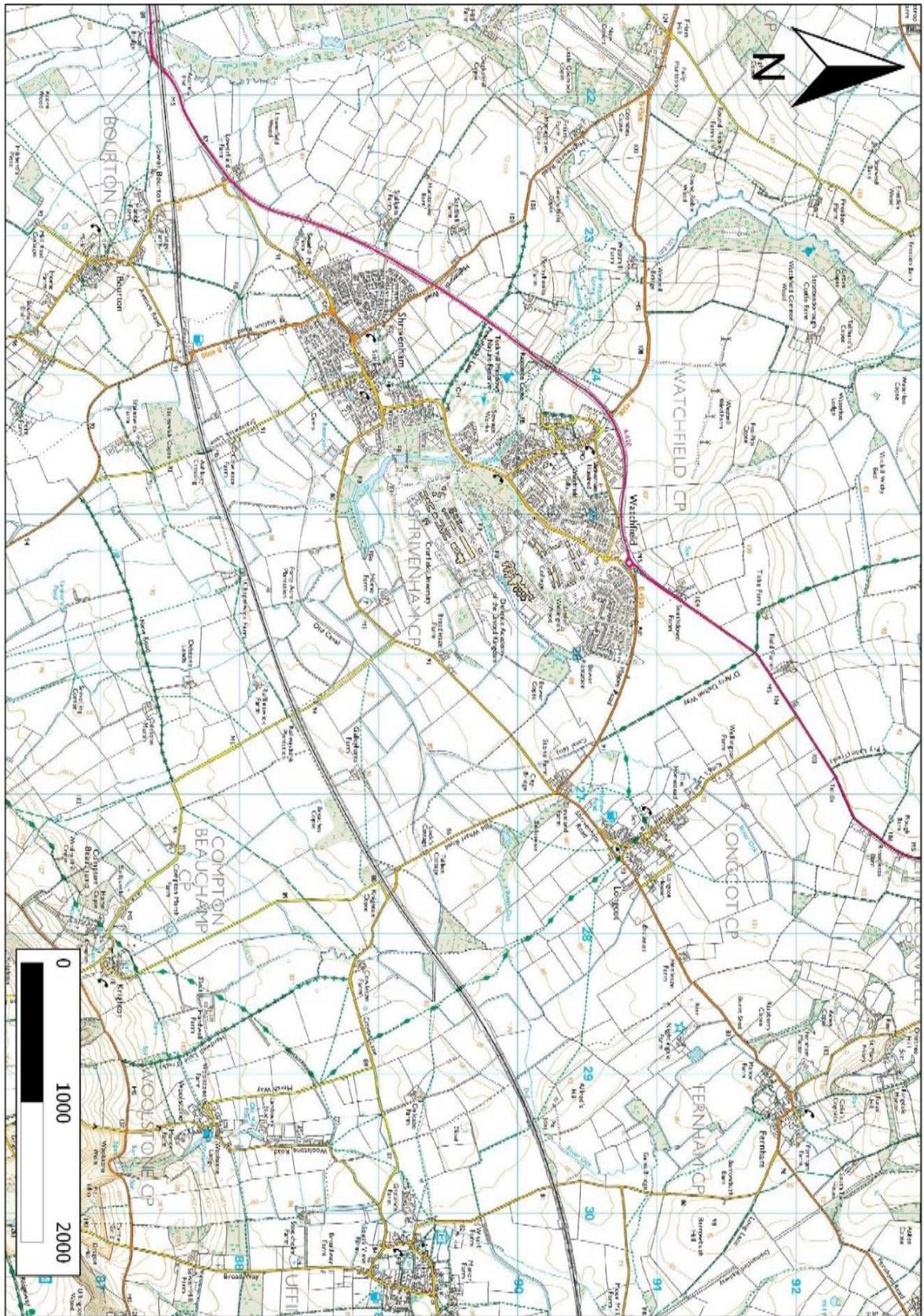
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Appendices

Appendix A Area of Study (map courtesy of Edina)



Appendix B Detail of Shrivenham (map courtesy of Edina)



Appendix D First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (map courtesy of Edina)



Appendix E Domesday Book Entries

Shrivenham

'The King holds Shrivenham in demesne. King Edward held it. There are 46 hides. There is land for 33 ploughs. In demesne are 4 ploughs and 80 villans and 17 bordars with 30 ploughs. There is a church with 5 hides of the same land and there is 1 plough, and 4 villans and 5 bordars with 2 ploughs. In the manor are 2 mills rendering 20S and 240 acres of meadow. [There is] woodland for 20 pigs. TRE it was worth £35 and afterwards £20; now £45. What the priest has [is worth] £4'

(Williams, 2002, 139)

Watchfield

'The Abbey itself [Abingdon] holds Watchfield, and held it TRE. It was then assessed at 20 hides; now at 10hides. There is land for 12 ploughs. In demesne are three ploughs and 14 villans and 10 bordars with 6 ploughs. There are 8 slaves, and a mill rendering 25S and 150 acres of meadow. Of this land Gilbert holds 3 hides and 1 virgate of the abbot, and Wimund 1 hide. There is in demesne 1 plough a two villans and 7 bordars. The whole TRE, was worth £15; and afterwards £10; now what the abbot has [is worth] £12; what the men [have] 50S.'

(Williams, 2002, 144)

Beckett

'The Count [of Evreux] himself holds Beckett. 2 free men held it of King Edward in alod as 2 manors. It was then assessed as 5 hides; now at 2 hides and 4 acres. There is land for 4 ploughs. In demesne are 2 ploughs; and 2 villans and 13 bordars with 1 ½ ploughs and 100 acres of meadow less 7. It was worth £4 and now the same'

(Williams, 2002, 146)