Lilley

The parish of Lilley lies on the western edge of North Hertfordshire, mostly north of the A505. Its northern boundary follows the early medieval line of the Icknield Way, and it abuts Bedfordshire to the west. Part of the parish once included Mangrove Green, now in Offley. Three areas now in Lilley, one stretching from the eastern edge of Ward's Wood in the west to Kingshill Plantation in the east, the second from west of Lilleypark Wood to the boundary wall of Putteridge Bury and a third to the east of Dogkennel Farm, were formerly part of Offley (Figure 1 and Figure 7). How this complex arrangement came into being is unclear and will be explored later.
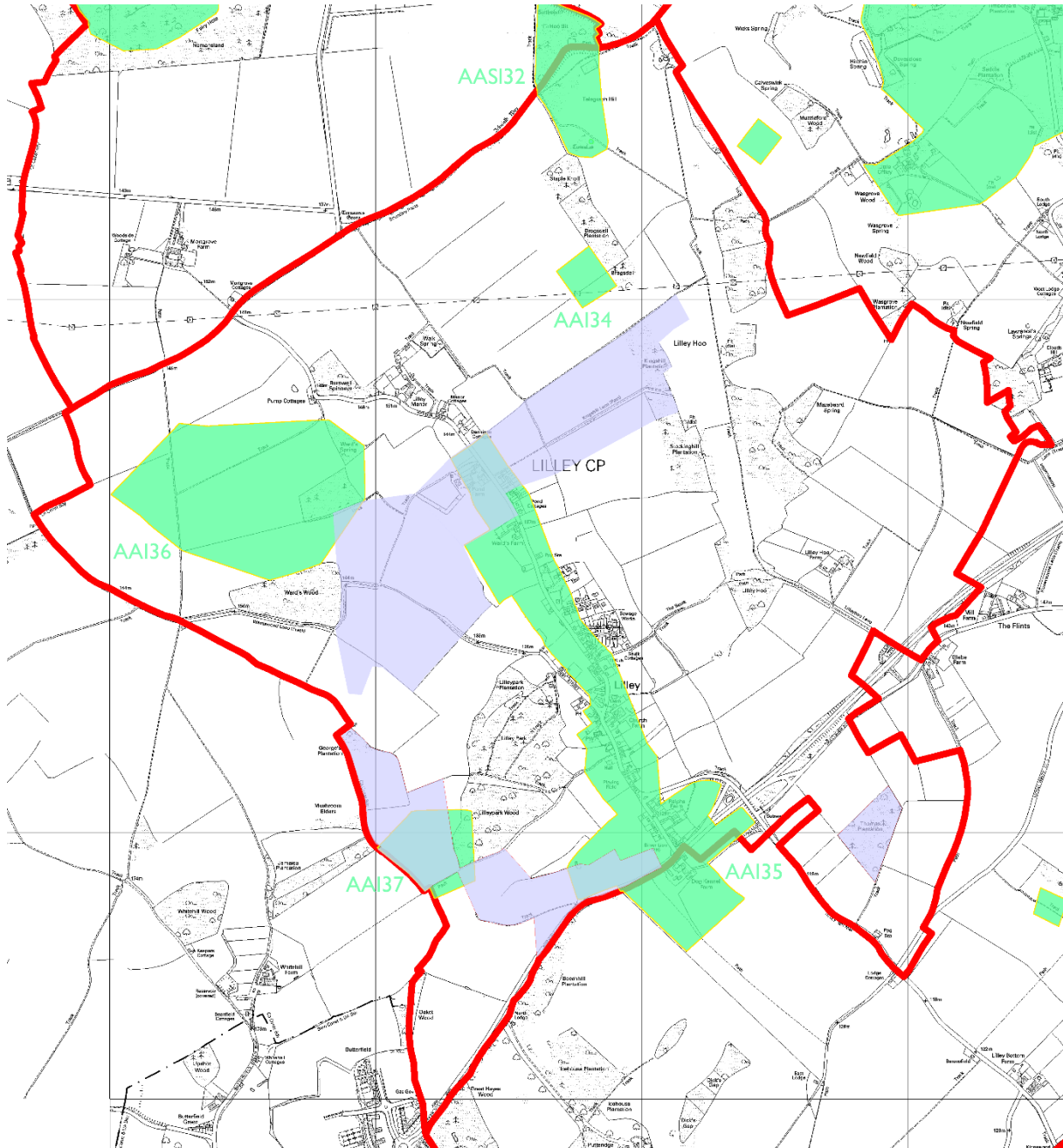

Figure 1: the parish of Lilley: areas shaded lilac were formerly in Offley (© The Ordnance Survey)

Placenames

Lilley is first recorded in Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, like so many places in North Hertfordshire. There, it is called *Linleia*, and forms with initial *Lin-* or *Lyn-* are recorded up to the sixteenth century. The current spelling was first recorded in 1275 and was dominant by the fifteenth

century. The most obvious derivation is from Old English *līn*, 'flax', and *lēah*, 'a woodland clearing' or 'meadow'. However, the English Place-Name Society believed that the parish is too exposed for flax growing to be possible. The Society suggested as an alternative that the first element might be *lind*, 'a lime tree' (*Tilia sp.*), but no early spellings beginning *Lind-* are known. Nonetheless, The National Biodiversity Network Atlas shows that flax currently grows wild in the parish and especially to its north and west (Figure 2). The meaning 'meadow where flax grows' is therefore plausible.
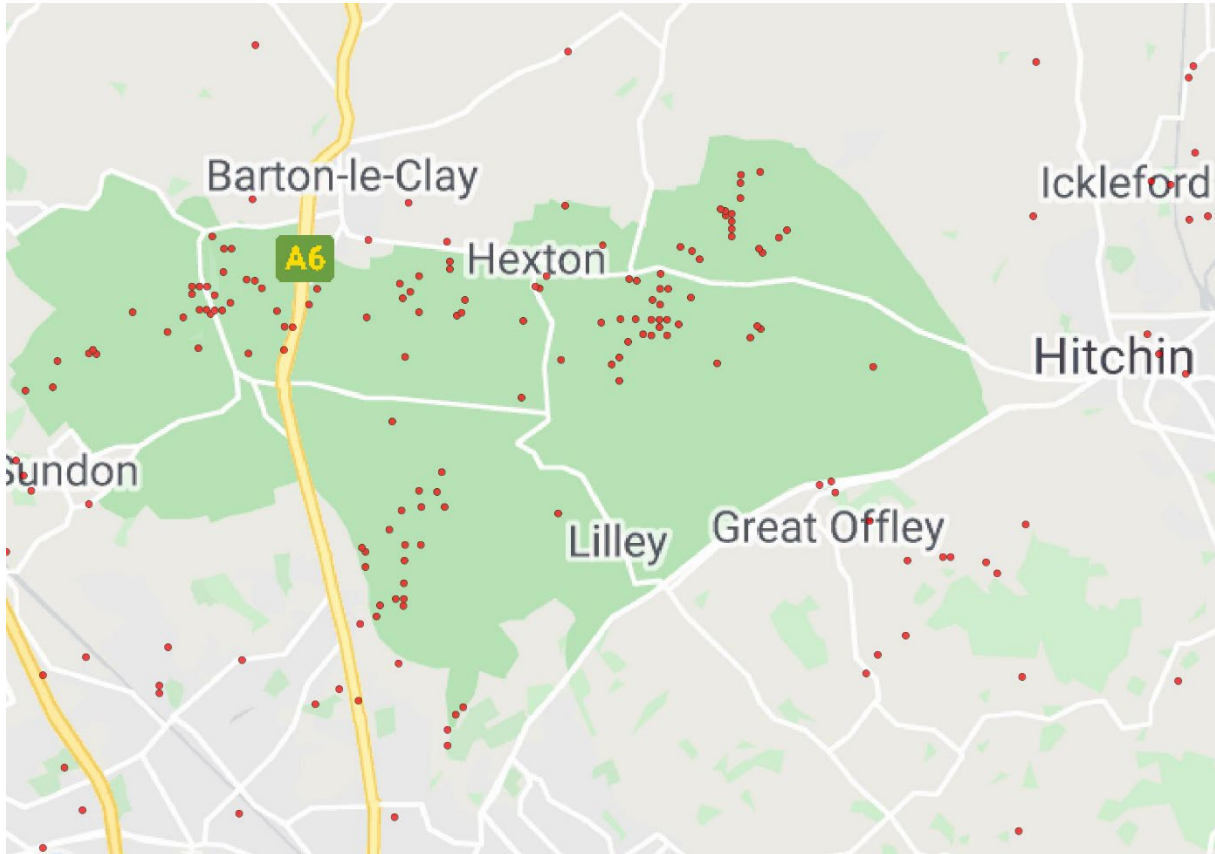

Figure 2: the present distibution of wild flax around Lilley according to the National Biodiversity Network
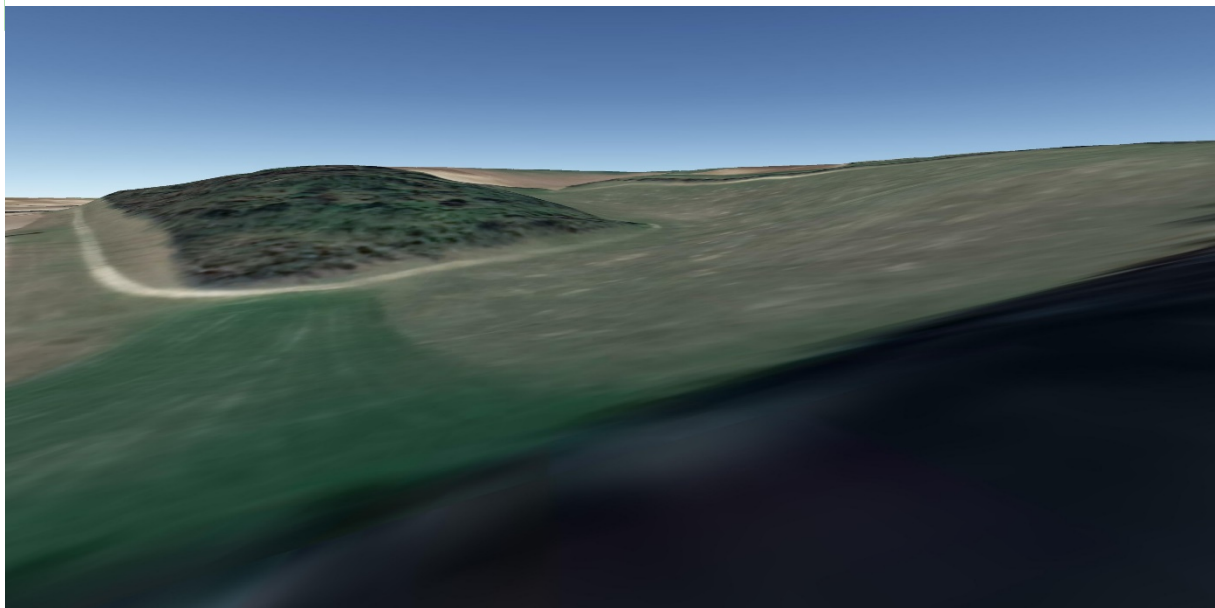

Figure 3: the Brogsdell valley, cutting into Lilley Hoo (looking north); image from Google Earth Pro

The name of Brogsdell Plantation must be connected with *Brogsden* recorded in 1641 and the *Brogsdale hole* in the Church Terrier of 22 July 1674. The plantation takes its name from a curving valley at its southeastern end, Brogsdell (Figure 3). In the absence of earlier forms, it is difficult to be sure about

the etymology. The first element may be Old English *brōc*, 'a brook', or its Middle and Modern English descendant, in which case the name may be compared with Brogdale in Kent or Brogden in Yorkshire. The second element is less clear. The earliest form suggests Old English *denu*, 'a valley', but all other records indicate *dæl*, 'a pit, a hollow', later 'a valley', or *dell*, 'a valley, an artificial hollow'. The last element is most frequent in Hertfordshire, which may indicate that this is the correct word. However, the plantation is on a steep hillside, where there cannot have been a brook. If the first element was Old English *brocc*, Middle English *brok*, 'a badger', the objection is removed.

Burnwell Spinneys is recorded as *Bunwell* in 1641. It lies to the north-northwest and downslope of Wards Spring and uphill from Floodhole Plantation. These three names show that a watercourse once flowed from a now-dry spring on the top of the hill to Floodhole Plantation. There, it turned to the north-northeast to join the valley that runs north-northwest to south-southeast. The name is unrelated to Bur Well, from *burh welle* ('fortress spring'), in Hexton, less than 2 km to the north. Instead, the stream likely turned to the south-southeast and flowed to the east of the village into Lilley Bottom; this long valley, the Lilley Gap, is one of five such gaps through the Hertfordshire Chilterns. It follows the line of a Late Cretaceous fault in the chalk that runs from Barton-le-Clay to Whitwell. A now lost chalk river, like the lost River Kyme in Kimpton, flowed through it to emerge as the River Mimram between Kings Walden and Whitwell. The name can probably be analysed as *burna*, 'a stream', and *welle*, 'a spring'. The English Place Name Society believed that *burna* '*is specially associated with intermittent streams*' in Hertfordshire.

Floodhole Plantation is connected with the *Floodpond* and *Floodway* recorded in 1641, while the field name Flood Field is found in the Tithe Award of 1840. The name probably refers to a spot where the seasonal stream flowing from Wards Spring and Burnwell was liable to flood.

Lilley Hoo was recorded as such in 1641 when it was also called *Þe Hooe*. The name refers to a *hoh*, a heel-shaped hill-spur with a concave slope and the southern end of the ridge has this shape precisely (Figure 4). The placename lies amid the densest concentrations of such names in England.
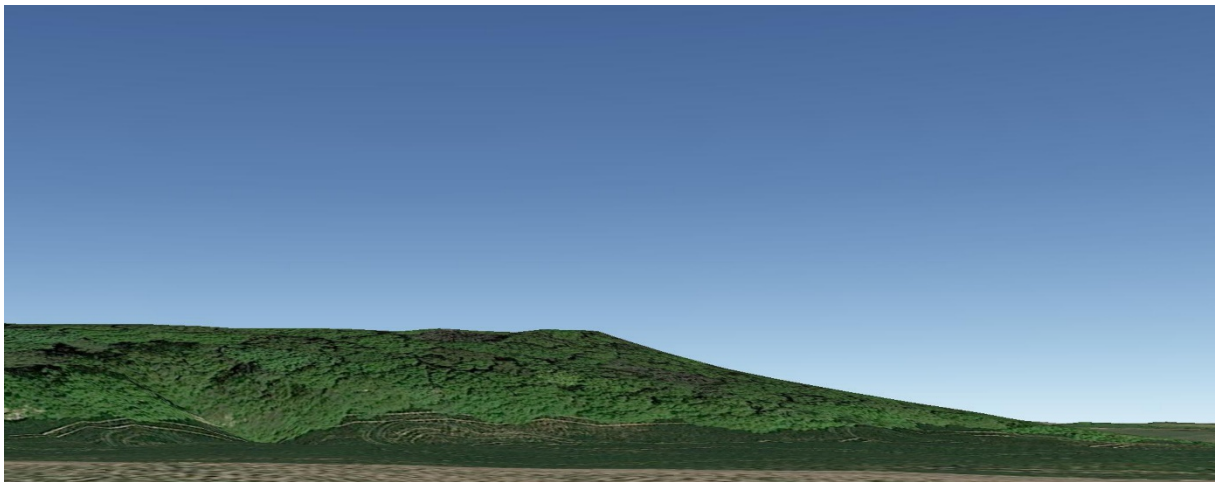

Figure 4: Lilley Hoo, looking east, showing the characteristic concave slope; from Google Earth Pro

Mangrove Green (now in Offley) was first recorded in 1240, as *Manegrave*. It probably derives from Old English *gemǣne*, 'common', applied to land held communally, and *græfe*, 'a grove, a copse, a thicket'. Perhaps this was an area of woodland held in common between two parishes because it provided a resource not found in the principal part of Lilley.

Slipe Spring derives from Middle English *slipe*, 'a long narrow strip'. The name was recorded as the Slipe in the Tithe Award in 1840. It lies to the southwest of Mangrove Green, in the detached part of Lilley that now forms part of Offley.

Staple Knoll was *Steeple Knowl* in the Tithe Award in 1840. It is from Old English *stiepel*, 'a steep place', not connected with church architecture, and *cnoll*, 'a knoll'. The profile shows the typical rounded top associated with this type of hill (Figure 5).
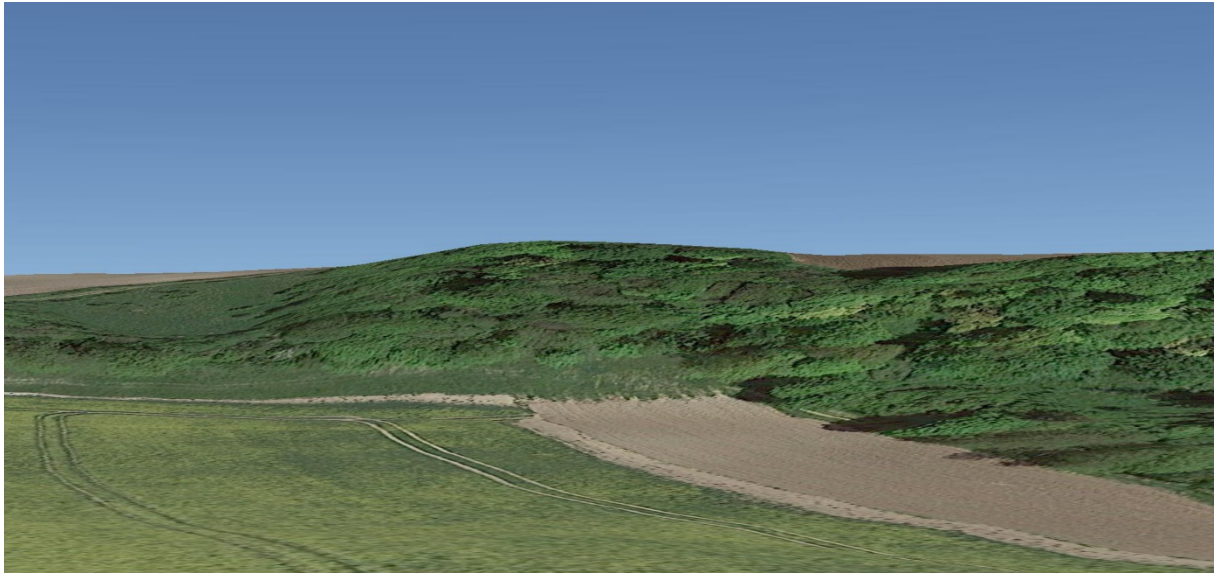

Figure 5: Staple Knoll, looking south-east; from Google Earth Pro

Stockinghill Plantation was named in the Church Terrier of 10 April 1638; a field known as *Edeway feild* lay to its north. Old English *stocking*, Middle English *stocking*, refers to 'a clearing of stumps, a piece of ground cleared of stumps'. It lies on the west-facing slope of Lilley Hoo and may be evidence for the clearance of woodland from the ridge during the Middle Ages.

Figure 6: the possible site of the Admiralty telegraph station, highlighted in the oval left of centre; from Google Earth Pro

Telegraph Hill is the highest hill hereabouts and was previously known as Lilley Hill, where a beacon once existed. The present name refers to an Admiralty telegraph station established on its summit in 1807-8 as part of the London to Great Yarmouth system. The wooden telegraph houses generally had two rooms – one for operations, the other for accommodation – and a timber shutter frame about 6 m (20 feet) tall. They were used for rapid warning of invasion during the Napoleonic wars and fell out

of use when the peace treaty was signed in May 1814. Their functioning was limited by weather conditions, being inoperable during foggy and rainy weather. They were sold off by the government shortly afterwards. There seems to be no trace on the ground of the former buildings, although a square mark with sides of about 7 m is visible on some aerial photographs (Figure 6).

Figure 7: Dury and Andrews's map of 1766 shows that the village has changed little in over 250 years

Ward's Farm is associated with the family of William de la Warde, attested in 1302, and John le Ward, recorded in 1320. The name Wardwood is found in the Church Terrier of 10 April 1638 and is now Ward's Wood, while Wards Spring to the north shows a considerable area associated with the family. The present farmhouse was built in the middle of the eighteenth century, with an east wing added early in the nineteenth.

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History

Domesday Book

In 1086, King William I's commissioners recorded that *Linlei* was held by Geoffrey de Bec, who also held land in *Hegestanestone* (Hexton), to the north. It was assessed fro 100s (£5) in tax, although it had been worth £7 in the reign of Edward the Confessor. There were 19 villeins, six *bordars*, four *cottars*, six slaves and a priest. A villein was an ordinary villager who farmed strips in the community's field; a *bordar* was another villager who had use of less land than a villein, while a *cottar* was someone who lived in a cottage, usually farming someone else's property. These 36 people were all men, most of whom will have had families (including the priest at this date, as celibacy was enforced only from 1139). This figure indicates a population of about 180 in all.

The villeins and the priest shared five ploughlands, with room for a sixth; three more ploughlands formed the lord's demesne. The total taxable land was five hides (conventionally reckoned to be about 243 ha (600 acres)), of which two were demesne land. Domesday Book records that there was pasture as well as sufficient woodland to provide pannage for six pigs. Although it is impossible to know how much woodland was considered enough for a pig to forage in 1086, the historian G H Fowler suggested in 1922 that one pig would need about 1½ acres (0.6 ha). For Lilley, this would be the equivalent of 3.6 ha (9 acres) of woodland, smaller than the area of Lilleypark Wood today.

The manor

The village had only one manor, although how it descended from Geoffrey de Bec, who died shortly after the Domesday Survey, is unknown. He had a son, also called Geoffrey, but it is not known if Lilley remained a possession of the family. It had a complicated history in the early thirteenth century. After it was forfeit by William Malet, who stayed in Normandy following the separation of the Duchy from the Kingdom of England, it was escheated to King John. He granted it to Matthew de Lilley in 1204, but it was soon afterwards a possession of Pain de Chaworth. He forfeited it between 1223 and 1227 to Richard de Argentein, who had it on condition that it would be restored to the heirs of William Malet should the king decide to do so. In 1233, the manor was restored to Pain de Chaworth, who died in 1237. By 1238 it was in the hands of John, Earl of Lincoln, who granted it to his nephews Roger and Geoffrey de Pavilly. In 1241, Roger cited his grandmother Theofania, a sister of William Malet as evidence for his hereditary claim; the king countered that as William Malet had descendants, this claim was not relevant.

The king granted the manor to Paul de Peyvre in 1243. It remained in the family until Paul's great-great-grandson Nicholas conveyed it in 1359 to Henry Green. It then continued under the Green family until the death of Sir Thomas Green in 1506 with no male heirs. His two daughters, Anne and Matilda, were co-heirs, but in 1512, the manor was settled on Anne's husband, Nicholas Lord Vaux. Their son Thomas conveyed it in 1556 to Thomas Docwra of Temple Dinsley. Thomas's great-grandson, another Thomas, settled it on his grandson Sir George Warburton in 1710; he then sold it in 1729×30 to Sir Charles Cavendish, who sold it on in 1738 to Sir Benjamin Rawling. During his ownership of the manor, the parish was enclosed by an Act of Parliament in 1768. It was divided between his relatives after he died in 1775; they sold it as a unity in 1788 to John Sowerby, a wealthy merchant of Hatton Garden. Sowerby also bought the manors of Putteridge Bury and Horwellbury.

Figure 9: the Sowerby family crest on a property in the village

The Sowerby family rebuilt many of the properties in the village as estate cottages. They display the family crest (a lion rampant (Figure 8)). The parish church, dedicated to St Peter, is a nineteenth-century rebuild of the medieval church. The architect was Thomas Jeckyll (1827-1881), a member of

Figure 8: Lilley School (photograph © Betty Offer, from Roy Pinnock's Between the Hills: the Story of Lilley, a Chiltern Village *(1993)*

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the Aesthetic Movement, influenced by Japanese design. Emily Sowerby laid the foundation stone on 29 June 1870 (St Peter's Day); her daughter Annie laid the foundation stone of the Sowerby Chapel at the same time. Jeckyll also designed the Rectory (demolished in the 1960s) and Lilley School in 1872 (Figure 9), now converted into flats. Emily's husband George was gored by one of his Egyptian stags at Putteridge Park on 2 August 1888.

After George's tragic death, the family let out Putteridge Bury, which had been their home, and moved in the 1890s to Lilley Manor. They continued to be the landowners into the 1960s when the estate was sold to the Crown.

Horse racing

The village had a racecourse (Figure 10), first recorded in *The London Gazette* in September 1693, which appears to have announced the first event. It was a success, as an inn called The Running Horse is mentioned in 1694. The event was brought forward to the first Wednesday in September in 1697. A spring meeting first took place in 1699, but was not successful and folded after a few years. Stables were built in the village and are mentioned in 1710. Nathaniel Salmon's *History of Hertfordshire*, published in 1728, recorded that there was a four-mile track of two rounds on Lilley Hoo, with good turf but turns that were too tight.

Figure 10: the racecourse on Lilley Hoo, with details taken from the Enclosure Map of 1868 (base map © The Ordnance Survey)

The Hoo was not enclosed in 1768 as it was common land; the race meeting had grown to last for three days by then. The Enclosure Map recorded the position of the starting gate, two sets of hurdles and two named 'corners' (Figure 10). A meeting held over three days, 8 to 10 August, in 1775 consisted of nine races, with prizes worth a total of £615.

The last meeting may have taken place in 1798, as it appears to have been transferred to Brocket Hall, where the first race was held in 1799. There may have been an attempt to revive horse racing in Lilley: Thomas Sowerby brought a case against a Mr Sworder in 1863 for trespass with other persons in Lilley Hoo. The trespassers had held races there on 11 December 1862 and Mr Sworder settled out of court, paying damages of just one shilling (5p).

A silver-gilt cup, presented to William Hale of King's Walden on 8 August 1775, was still in existence in 1921; it is not known if it survives. Emilius Henry Delmé Radcliffe (c 1770-1832) and the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) are said to have ridden at Lilley when staying at Highdown in Pirton in the 1780s or 90s. The history of the course is obscure, yet it seems to have been famous in its day.

Johann Kellerman: 'the last alchemist'

Johann (or John) Kellerman, said to have been the son of a Prussian father and Creole or Cree mother, arrived in the village before 1810. He was a man of some means, who lived in a large house facing the Green and stabled his racehorses at the back of a bakehouse in West Street. Perhaps the reputation of the races on Lilley Hoo had first attracted him here. There was little in his behaviour to arouse suspicion at first, although his height of six feet was uncommon at the time and made him a notable figure. He rescued some gipsies who had fallen into a snow-filled hole and helped recover items from Putteridge Bury when the house caught fire in 1808.

The vestry books record him paying £50 for an illegitimate child in 1818, possibly William Taylor, christened on 30 November 1818, with only his mother's name Mary registered. No other children baptised in Lilley in 1817 or 1818 were to a single mother. Kellerman developed a reputation as an alchemist, and Sir Richard Phillips went to investigate the matter in 1828, during a visit to Luton. Phillips recorded that the alchemist was living as a hermit in fear for his life and that he employed eight men to undertake his operations. Kellerman claimed to have discovered the secrets of making gold and of eternal life but refused to show anything other than his alchemical equipment to Phillips. He said that he had been the target of several assassination attempts, including being shot at twice in one day, and three attempted poisonings, attributing these to European governments that had refused his gold-making services.

Kellerman had a furnace built in his cellar, powered by bellows operated 24 hours a day by his workmen. Two also watched his crucibles at all times, changing shift every six hours. He allowed visitors into only one room in the house, securing all the others by blocking their keyholes and attaching padlocks. The windows were kept shuttered, while the garden was booby-trapped with spring guns and hurdles. The story that his cellar was connected by a tunnel to the Lilley Arms is a common trope of folklore: tales of such underground passages are widespread and turn out to be based on misidentifications of old drains, access chutes and so on.

One day, Kellerman was gone. The house was empty, the workmen unemployed and there were no signs of how or why he had left the village. There was a rumour that he had moved on the Paris, where he was being looked after by a nephew, a Captain William Roebuck, but it is impossible to know if this was true. Most of the story is unverifiable: the only contemporary sources are the parish vestry book and Sir Richard Phillips's *A Personal Tour through the United Kingdom*, published in 1828. Accounts differ over the date he arrived, his origins, his wealth and even his name. All we can say with any confidence is that he was living in Lilley between 1808 and 1828, that he spent a great deal of money on his experiments and paying labourers, and that he left the village without letting anyone know where he had gone.

Archaeology

No-one has previously written an account of the's archaeology, nor have there been any archaeological excavations. The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record and the Portable Antiquities Scheme Database both contain records of individual sites and finds, but this seems to be the first attempt to
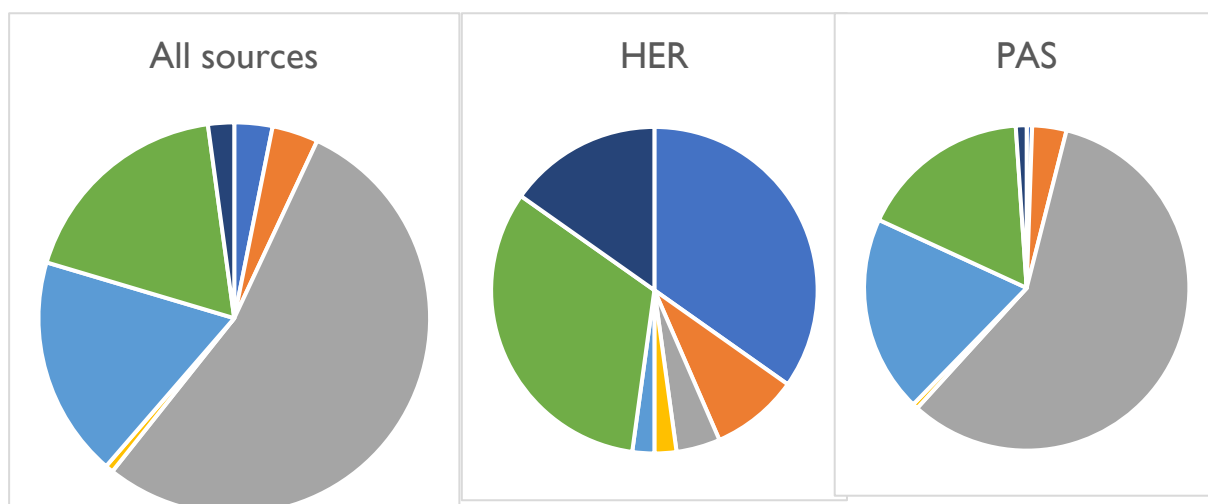
| All sources | HER | PAS |

Figure 11: existing information about the archaeology of the parish

Key: ■ *Bronze Age,* ■ *Iron Age,* ■ *Roman,* ■ *Early medieval,* ■ *High and late medieval,* ■ *Post-medieval,* ■ *Undated*

synthesise a large mass of data. The Historic Environment data is dominated by records of Bronze Age and post-medieval (after about 1540) sites and finds. The PAS database is dominated by Roman finds.

The pie charts (Figure 11) show existing sources of information about the archaeology of the parish by period. The earliest known finds belong to the Bronze Age (about 2500-850 BC). There are few Iron Age finds (from about 850 BC to AD 43). The Roman period (AD 43-411) is dominated by metal detector finds, which pinpoint several areas of ancient activity, one of which can be classified as probably a villa. Early medieval (AD 411-900) finds are rare throughout Hertfordshire, although there are some intriguing discoveries. The high and late medieval (900-1540) period is again dominated by detectorists' finds and include an unusually high number of coins. The post-medieval period (since-1540) includes standing buildings.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the archaeology of the village is the significant number of ancient (Iron Age and Roman) coins found by metal-detectorists and as casual finds: 13 pre-Roman British and 288 Roman. Many of them come from five concentrations, one of which alone contains 252 coins, and the numbers are large enough to allow analysis.

Although archaeological data is usually anonymous – we can only rarely name the people who created monuments or artefacts – it is more democratic than much history. Instead of focusing on the deeds of the wealthy and powerful, the random selection of material it deals with gives a cross-section of society. It can also deal with periods for which no written records survive. In the case of a Hertfordshire village, this usually means before Domesday Book, compiled in 1086; this is true of Lilley. Much as we may be tempted to bring characters like Julius Caesar, Boudica or Alfred the Great into our local histories, there is no justification for doing so.

Prehistory

The earliest finds from the parish are flints, found by Owen Williamson in the 1940s. We do not know precisely where he recovered them, although he recorded them as coming from Lilley Hoo. He thought that they were Neolithic in date, but their forms, which include scrapers, are more typical of the Bronze Age (after about 2500 BC).

Large numbers of ring ditches – the quarries for round barrows, prehistoric burial mounds – have been recognised in Lilley. They are common in rural North Hertfordshire and, typically, there is no trace of where the people buried beneath them had lived. One, on the north end of Lilley Hoo, had the curious name of Miss-my-nap, according to records in Hitchin Museum. This one remains standing to a height of almost two metres and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. None of them has been excavated, and most have had their mounds ploughed away.

Figure 12: Bronze Age sites and finds in the parish
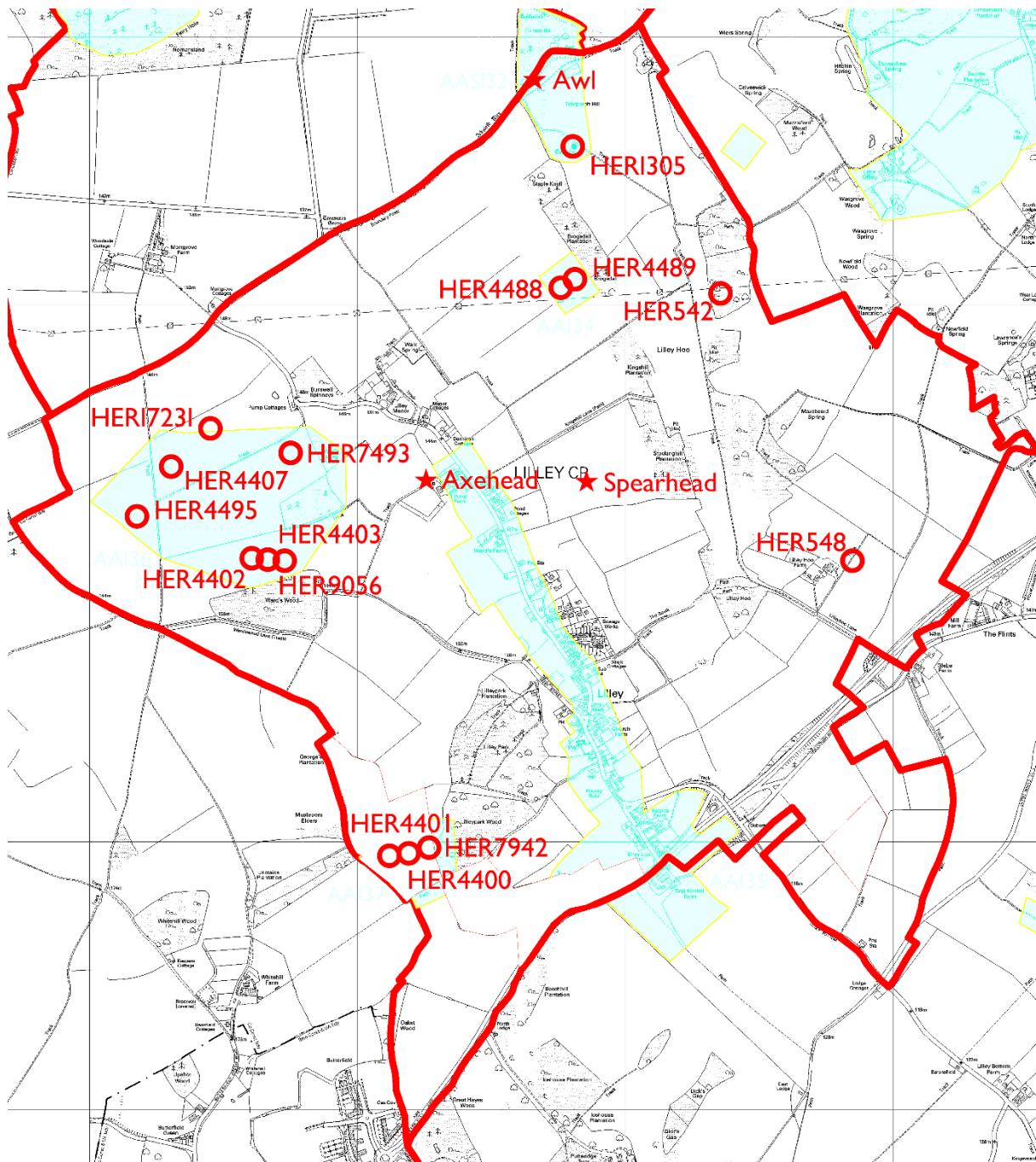
A map shows four main groups of these mounds (Figure 12): two south of Brogsdell Plantation in Archaeological Area 134 with two on Lilley Hoo, the northernmost in Archaeological Area 132; a large group north of Wards Wood in Archaeological Area 136 (Figure 13); a group to the west of Lilleypark Wood in Archaeological Area 137 (Figure 15); and an outlier at Lilley Hoo Farm (Figure 16). It is typical for these monuments to cluster in this way. They were usually sited in prominent positions, generally below the crest of a hill or ridge, although they are also found in valley bottoms.

Prehistorians believe that Bronze Age round barrows were usually sited on the edge of territories, places where they would be visible to neighbouring groups and travellers. When first built, the gleaming white of their chalk contrasted with the surrounding land. They were sometimes placed on land that had previously been farmed, but they were also constructed in areas of grassland, probably pasture. Most round barrows cover the grave of a single individual. At first, they were buried whole, often with expensive items like bronze daggers, Beaker pottery and barbed-and-tanged arrowheads. Later burials were cremated, with the bone ash often put inside a collared urn. Burial mounds often attracted

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secondary burials, usually of cremated remains; perhaps these were members of the community whose families were not powerful enough to persuade others to build a mound for their relative.
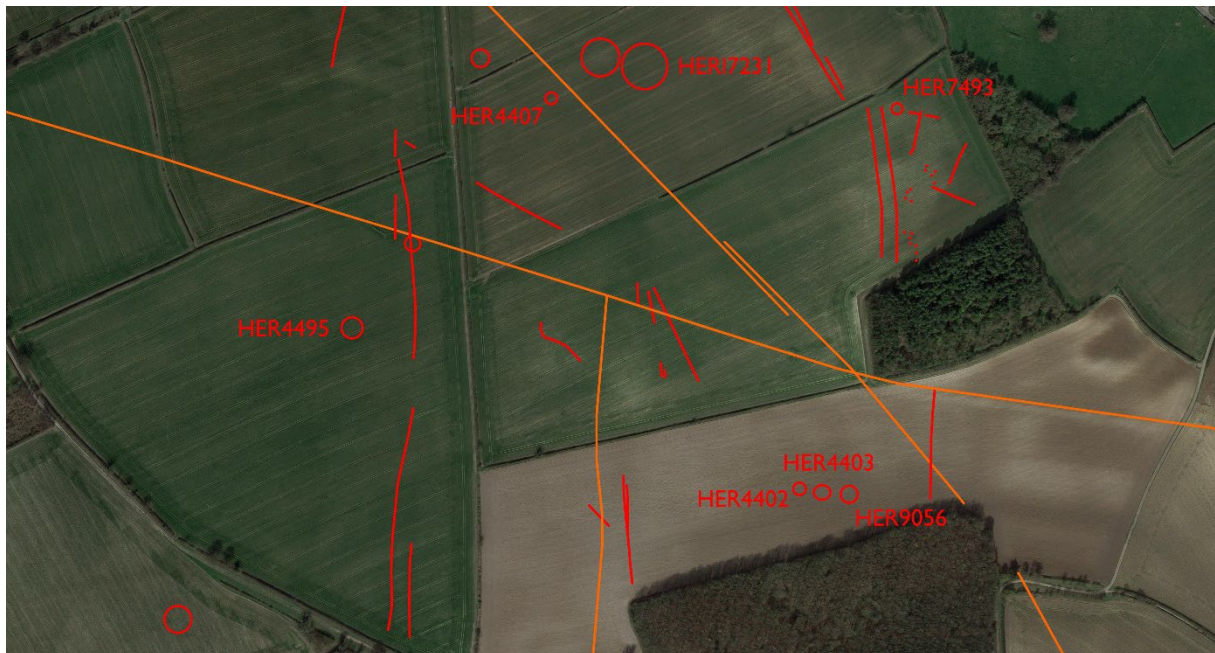

Figure 14: Archaeological Area 136; anomalies of probably archaeological origin are marked in red, while orange marks those of 20th-century services

Their locations may suggest that contemporary settlements were located in the valley bottom, just as the present village is. The discovery of an axehead and a spearhead close to Pond Farm and Ward's Farm (Figure 14) may show where one of them lay. Bronze Age settlements were farms, sometimes in small hamlet-like groups, and are rarely found. The awl may indicate that there was a hilltop settlement on Telegraph Hill or, a little further north on Noon Hill in Pegsdon.

Axehead PAS5509AE06001B96

Spearhead PAS53760C0200130D

Awl 0013F968652019FB

Figure 13: metal detected Bronze Age finds from Lilley (© Partable Antiquities Scheme, reproduced under a Creative Commons Licence)

These monuments and finds are associated with an incoming group of settlers, usually known as the Beaker People. Originating in what is now Portugal, where they probably developed their proto-Celtic language, they migrated through Italy, north to the North Sea Coast. They were a warrior people, who referred to themselves as *Brittanī* once they had settled in Britain. The name probably means 'the

human beings', which may show their contempt for the people already living here. Their descendants – the Britons – include the Welsh and Cornish.

There are certainly more ring ditches than have hitherto been recognised by the Historic Environment Record. There are at least three unregistered in Archaeological Area 136 (Figure 13) and two in Archaeological Area 137 (Figure 15). The outlier at Lilley Hoo Farm has a near neighbour to the southwest, almost on the parish boundary (Figure 16).
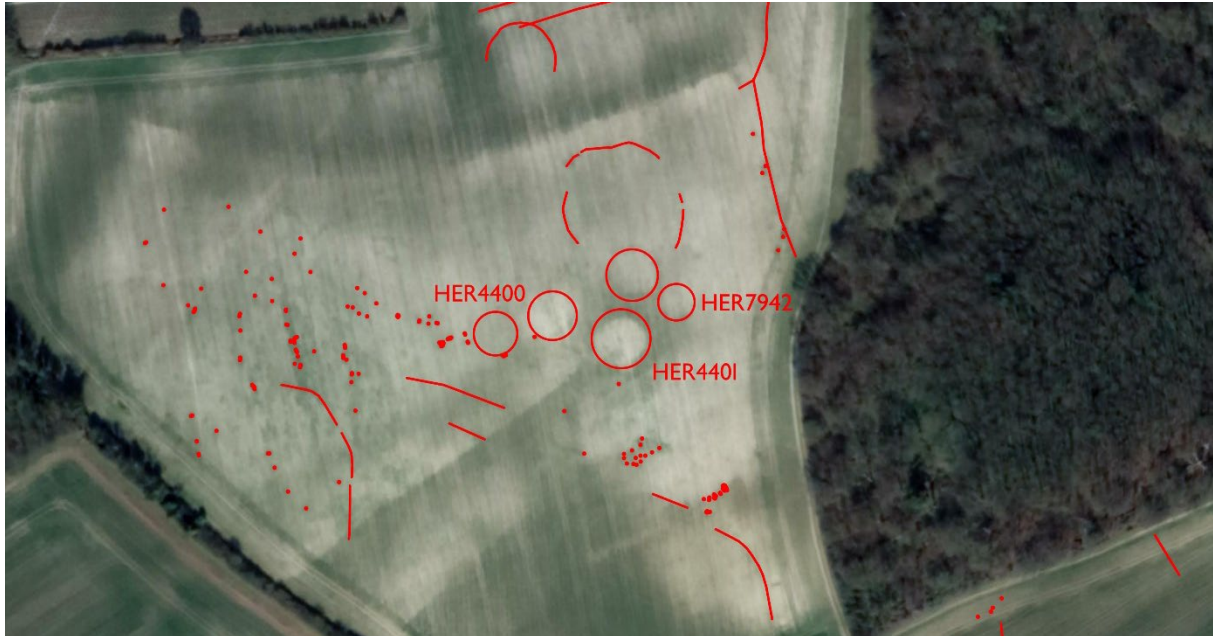

Figure 16: Archaeological Area 137

Figure 15: east of Lilley Hoo Farm

Aerial photographs show an oval ring of chalk measuring 51.5 × 38.6 m to the north of Mazebeard Spring, its long axis pointing toward the spring (Figure 17). It sits on a slope on the east side of the valley between Lilley Hoo and Little Offley and is not a likely location for an eroding sub-surface outcrop of chalk. It is probably therefore of archaeological rather than geological origin. This feature has shown up since the December 1945 RAF vertical survey of Britain and is clearest on a Google Earth Pro image using NASA data from March 2012. Some photographs show hints of gaps in the
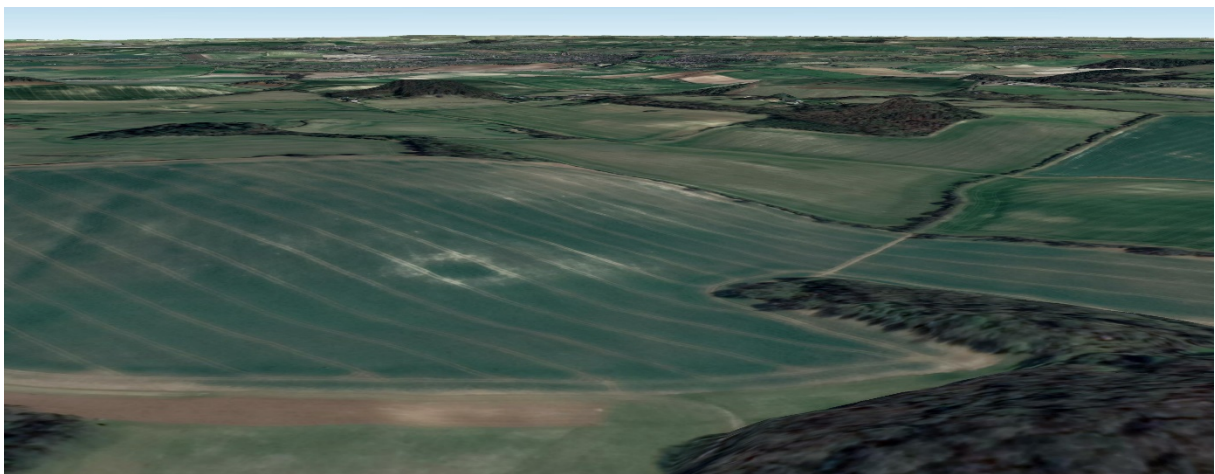
Figure 17: a possible henge to the north of Mazebeard Spring

spread of chalk at four points: two on the long axis and two on the short. The form of the chalk looks like a Class III henge, a Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age religious monument.

Several henges have been recognised in North Hertfordshire in recent years, including at Ashwell, Norton, Timore Green and the Weston Hills. All but the last are situated on hillslopes, with an entrance facing a spring. The position is very similar here, and an oblique aerial view (Figure 18) shows it to be in a comparable topographical position to the Ashwell and Norton henges, both of which have been confirmed as such by excavation.

Figure 18: oblique aerial view of the possible henge north of Mazebeard Spring, from Google Earth Pro

The Late Bronze Age, after about 1140 BC, was a time of climate change and social change. Great fortified hilltop sites, like Ravensburgh Castle in Hexton, became centres for warrior chieftains, where they could store the agricultural produce of their territories. Although Ravensburgh Castle was the

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largest of these places in the Chilterns, which perhaps shows that it was the base for the most powerful of the local rulers, there are no contemporary finds from Lilley, just a few kilometres south.

However, clusters of anomalies that probably represent buried pits can be seen to the south and west of the ring ditches at Archaeological Area 137 (Figure 15). There is also a broken sub-circular enclosure to their north and other buried ditches, HER 17230. These groups of pits are typical of earlier Iron Age lowland settlements in Hertfordshire, such as Aldwick in Barley. The site in Lilley is on a north-facing hillside, overlooking the valley to the north of Lilleypark Wood, a similar topographical position to Aldwick. A group of pits north of Lilley Hoo Farm may be from a site of the same type, but they are perhaps more likely associated with activities involving the farm. Another possible location of Middle Iron Age activity, north-east of Ralphs Farm, may be indicated by the discovery of a Middle Iron Age La Tène Ib brooch, dated *c* 400-270 BC (Figure 21, no 1).

Late Iron Age and Roman

Past communities become more visible from the first century BC through into the Roman period. There are cropmarks of a ditched subrectangular enclosure east from Wasgrove Plantation (HER 17236; Figure 19), which was probably a farmstead. There are traces of pits both inside and outside as well as ditched trackways. Use of the site probably spanned the very late Iron Age and the Roman period. The farmstead would have been at the centre of a complex of fields, lanes, burial grounds and possibly other farms forming a village or hamlet.

Figure 19: Late Iron Age or Romano-British enclosure east of Wasgrove Plantation; red marks are likely ancient features, orange a 20th century service pipe

Fourteen Iron Age ('Celtic') coins have been found in Lilley, some during the nineteenth century and others more recently by metal detectorists (Table 1; Figure 20). They show a broad spread from the first century BC through to the time of the Roman conquest of AD 43. The first coins were gold types imported to Britain shortly before 100 BC, and the production of local issues probably began in the 80s BC. New imports around the time of Julius Caesar's campaigns in Gaul influenced the development of designs. Many of these can be assigned to specific kingdoms: 'south of the Thames', developing into the currency of the Regini and Atrebates; 'eastern', evolving into the dynastic coinage of Tasciouanos (the 'badger-slayer'). The emerging kingdoms in the second half of the first century BC were probably a result of a reorganisation by Caesar, creating clients obedient to Rome.

The earliest coins from Lilley belong to the time of Caesar's campaigns. Some numismatists have linked these coins to payments made to warriors in the service of the kings who fought him. Curiously, there is only one (number 5) that can be attributed to a local ruler of this period. So-called 'Whaddon Chase'

Figure 20: Iron Age coins from Lilley, scale 2:1; there is no currently available image of number 12 (© Portable Antiquities Scheme and The Trustees of the British Museum, reproduced under a Creative Commons Licence)

coins may have been struck by Cassiuȩllaunos, Caesar's opponent north of the Thames. The others earlier than 20 BC include a continental tin (number 1), a low-value type that would have circulated as currency, and coins of the southern kingdom (divided into the Atrebates and Regini at the time of the Roman conquest). The gold coins (numbers 2-5) perhaps do represent payments to warriors from the eastern kingdom in the service of Commiọs, ruler of the southern kingdom. If so one of them was cheated, as number 4 is an ancient forgery, bronze plated to resemble gold. Coins 7 to 14 were issued by the local dynasty, rulers of the Catuuȩllauni and Trinouȧntes. The named individuals are often thought to have been father and son. They are relatively common finds locally.

Numismatist Mark Curteis has suggested that as many Iron Age coins appear to have been deposited deliberately rather than lost accidentally, concentrations may be significant. He has linked them with ritual activity at shrines and on boundaries, as seen at Baldock and Ashwell. Lilley may have lain towards the western edge of the territory of the developing settlement at Baldock, the earliest such place in the region. However, the range of coins is quite different from that found at the shrine of Senuna, Ashwell, which must form the basis for discussion of such sites in Hertfordshire. The assemblage at Ashwell was dominated by coins of local manufacture, the only gold examples being of Tasciou̯anos.

No	Description	Date	Reference
1	Continental tin	*c* 200-50 BC	BM 1919,0213.776
2	Coin of the Regini and Atrebates	*c* 60-50 BC	BH-68503E
3	Coin of the Regini and Atrebates	*c* 60-50 BC	BH-676251
4	Coin, Westerham Type Atrebates, ancient forgery	*c* 60-50 BC	BM 1919,0213.693
5	Gold quarter stater, Lx type	*c* 50-20 BC	BH-9A437A
6	'Whaddon Chase' silver unit	*c* 50-20 BC	BH-97002F
7	Coin of Tasciou̯anos	*c* 20 BC-AD 10	BH-446D8F
8	Coin of Tasciou̯anos	*c* 20 BC-AD 10	BH-0433EI
9	Coin of Tasciou̯anos	*c* 20 BC-AD 10	BH-FADE60
10	Coin of Tasciou̯anos	*c* 20 BC-AD 10	BH 6E9216
11	Coin of Cunobelinos	*c* AD 9-41	BH-E2C798
12	Coin of Cunobelinos	*c* AD 9-41	BM 1919,0213.363
13	Coin of Cunobelinos	*c* AD 9-41	BH-6E89A7
14	Coin of Cunobelinos	*c* AD 9-41	BH-3301F6

Table 1: Iron Age coins from Lilley

Coins are not the only metal detected finds from the village. There are also six brooches (often known as *fibulae*) spanning the Late Iron Age and early conquest periods as well as part of a bull's-head escutcheon from a tripod 'bucket' (Figure 15; Table 2). Brooches were everyday dress items, used to fasten clothing. 'Buckets' were serving vessels for wine or beer, consisting of a wooden stave-built vessel, often decorated with bronze strips and three integral wooden feet. An example excavated at Baldock in 1981 had evidence for a straw or rush lid.

No	Description	Date	Reference
1	La Tène Ib brooch	*c* 400-270 BC	BH-BB8C94
2	*Knotenfibeln* brooch	*c* 100-50 BC	BH-DA7391
3	Colchester one-piece brooch	*c* AD 25-60	BH-81F383
4	Nauheim brooch	*c* 100 BC-AD 100	BH-8F1D53
5	Colchester one-piece brooch	*c* AD 25-60	BH-3C4E97
6	Colchester one-piece brooch	*c* AD 25-60	BH-45159C
7	Langton Down type brooch	*c* AD 25-60	BH-1CBA25

Table 2: Iron Age metalwork (excluding coins) from Lilley

The overlap in date between the Late Iron Age and Roman periods is an excellent example of the dangers inherent in dividing the past into periods. Everyday life did not change instantly following the invasion of AD 43, and Britain was not settled by large numbers of toge-wearing, Latin-speaking 'Romans'. In rural communities like those of Lilley in the first century AD, the conquest had little immediate effect. Life carried on as before, although people now paid taxes to the Roman-approved administration based in U̯erolami̯um (St Albans) instead of tribute to a local warlord.

Figure 21: Iron Age brooches and escutcheon from Lilley, scale 1:1 (© Portable Antiquities Scheme, reproduced under a Creative Commons Licence)

The countryside changed slowly. Although some roads were consolidated on old lines and a few new routes constructed, the old pattern of fields and lanes connecting them with farms and communities with each other remained in use. Former warrior chieftains often became the new landowning elite, rebuilding their properties in Roman style. If they were wealthy enough, they might redevelop their farms as villas, some of which were large estate centres comparable with Putteridge Bury.

Reece period	Rulers	Date	Number
Period 4	Flavian dynasty	69-96	2
Period 5	Nerva and Trajan	96-117	1
Period 6	Hadrianic	117-138	3
Period 7	Antonine I	138-161	0.33
Period 8	Antonine II	161-180	4.33
Period 9	Antonine III	180-193	4.33
Period 10	Severan I	193-222	3
Period 11	Severan II	222-238	2
Period 13	Gallienus to Aurelian	260-275	39.5
Period 14	Tacitus to Allectus	275-296	46.5
Period 15	The Tetrarchy	296-317	5
Period 16	Constantinian I	317-330	11
Period 17	Constantinian II	330-348	34
Period 18	Constantinian III	348-364	18
Period 19	Valentinianic	364-378	23
		260-402	40
Not securely datable		275-402	3
		300-402	5

Table 3: Roman coins from the site near Pump Cottages

There is a hint that a villa of this sort may have existed near Pump Cottages. Some 245 Roman coins (as well as Iron Age examples) have been recorded by metal detectorists (Table 3 details the range of
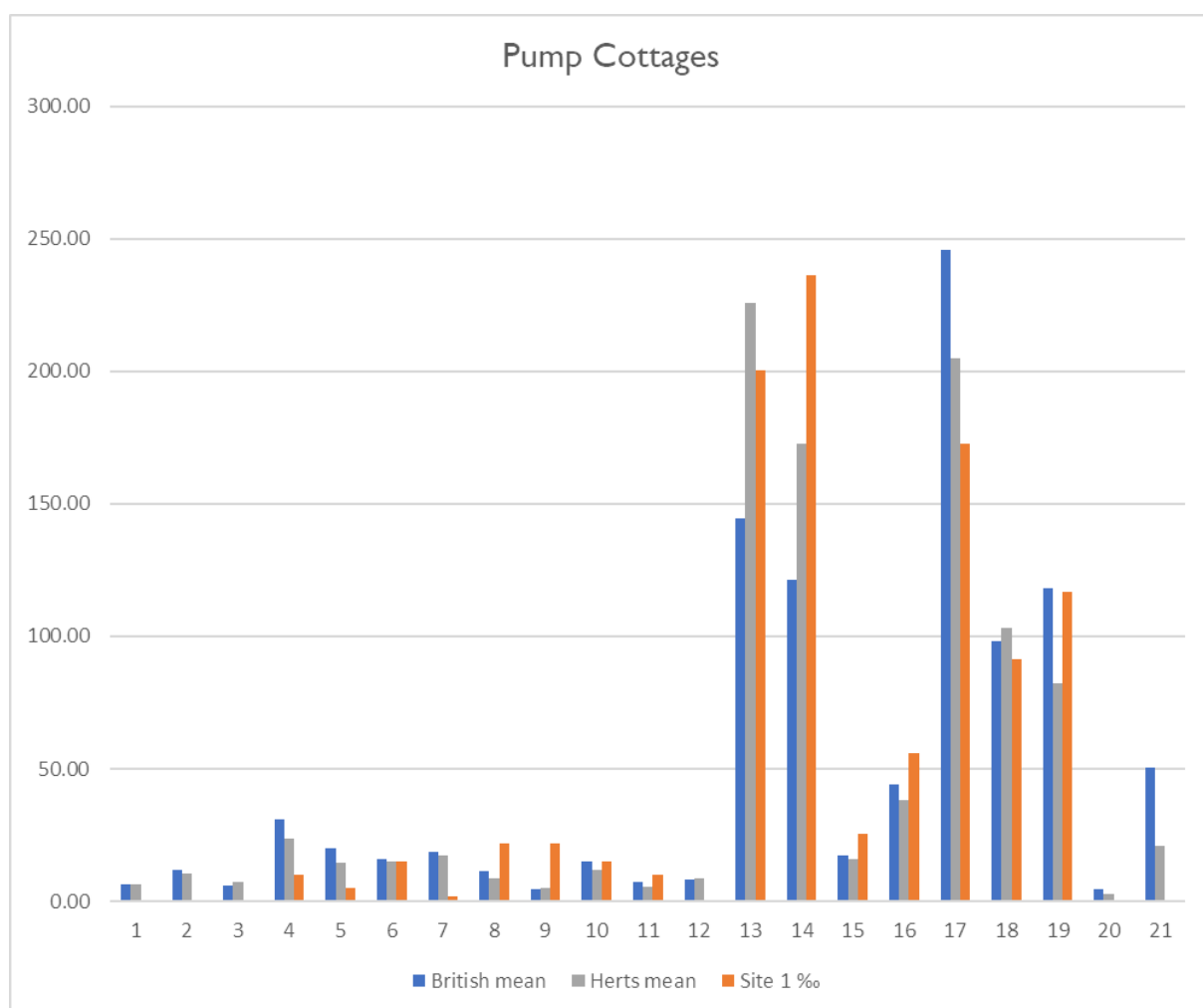

Figure 22: per thosand coin loss at Pump Cottages compared with the British and Hertfordshire means

Roman coins) spanning the period from the reign of Vespasian (AD 69-79) to the House of Valentinian (up to 378). There are no later coins, although some of the 48 coins not securely identified may have been Theodosian (378-402). The division into periods was proposed by Richard Reece to allow comparisons between sites.

Reece's analytical technique involves converting the absolute numbers of coin finds to a per thousand (‰) figure. By showing the proportions from different periods, it is possible to make comparisons between sites with varying quantities of coin finds. The profiles can be compared against a national profile, a local profile and different classes of site (Figure 22). It can be seen that the site at Pump Cottages has a coin loss higher than the national mean from 161 to 238 and from 260 to 330 (Figure 23). This sort of profile is typical of a villa site.
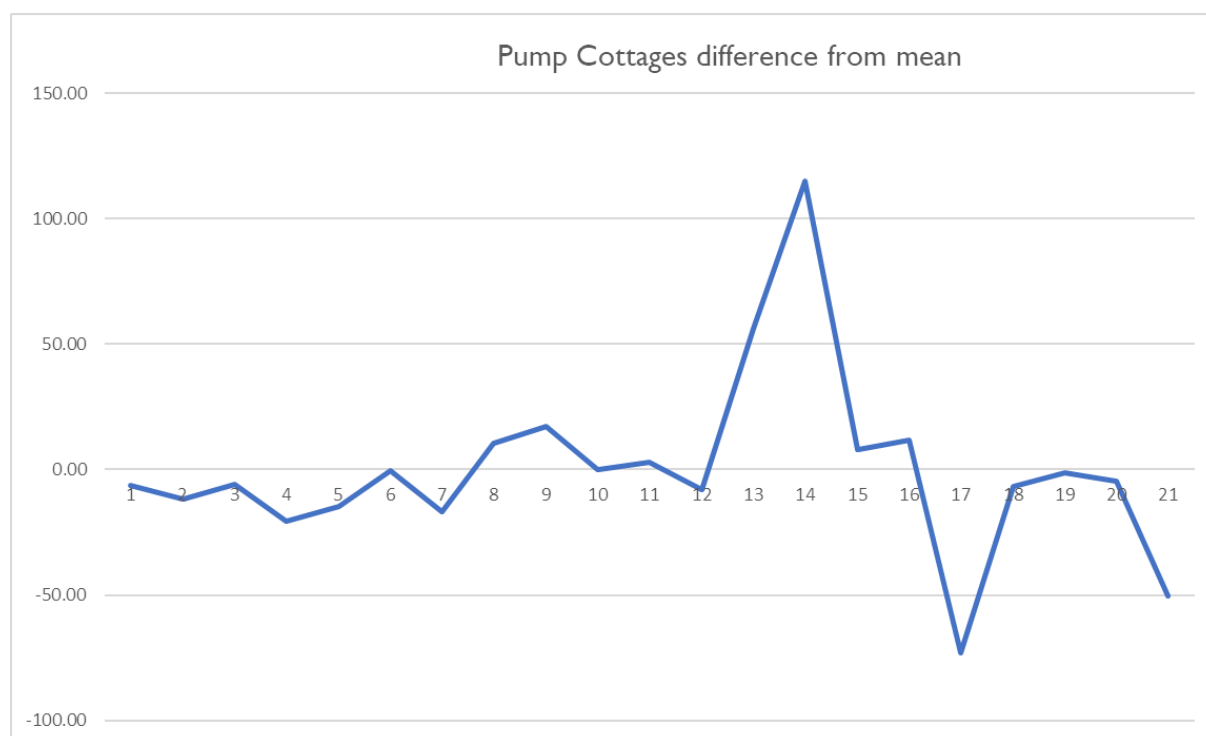

Figure 23: coin loss difference at Pump Cottages from the Hertfordshire mean

A thorough search of aerial photographs for this area has failed to reveal any trace of cropmarks that might indicate the presence of buried masonry. Some linear ditches appear to mark trackways, one of which close to Pump Cottages may have developed into a hollow way as it climbed the hill south towards Wards Spring. Others may show the presence of field ditches, a possible enclosure and a ring ditch. There is also a possible cluster of pits in the north side of the hill at Wards Spring. However, nothing resembles the typical arrangements for a Roman villa – rectilinear foundations, large rectangular enclosures, approach roads.

The interpretation of aerial photographs is fraught with difficulties, not least of which is the ephemeral nature of cropmarks. They may appear for just a few days before vanishing, and without regular flights over an area, they may never be seen. The nature of the crop under cultivation also affects the types of cropmarks visible. Some crop types never produce them at all. Cereals are often the most productive, but in extreme circumstances, even crops such as potatoes have been known to yield parch marks. Google Earth's historical imagery has alleviated this only to a limited extent, as its coverage, taken from NASA satellites, includes views taken at the wrong times of the year from crop marks. The site would benefit from a geophysical survey, which ought to reveal whether or not the interpretation offered here is plausible.

Other Roman evidence from the parish includes further metalwork found detectorists and a scatter of pottery near Pond Farm discovered during fieldwalking in 1991 (HHER 9476). There are 17

brooches, spanning the entire Roman period, several finger rings, a bracelet, a buckle, studs from furniture, steelyard weights and other items. There are distinct concentrations of findspots, corresponding to those noted for coin finds. These groups of objects are indications of where communities were living during the first four centuries AD.
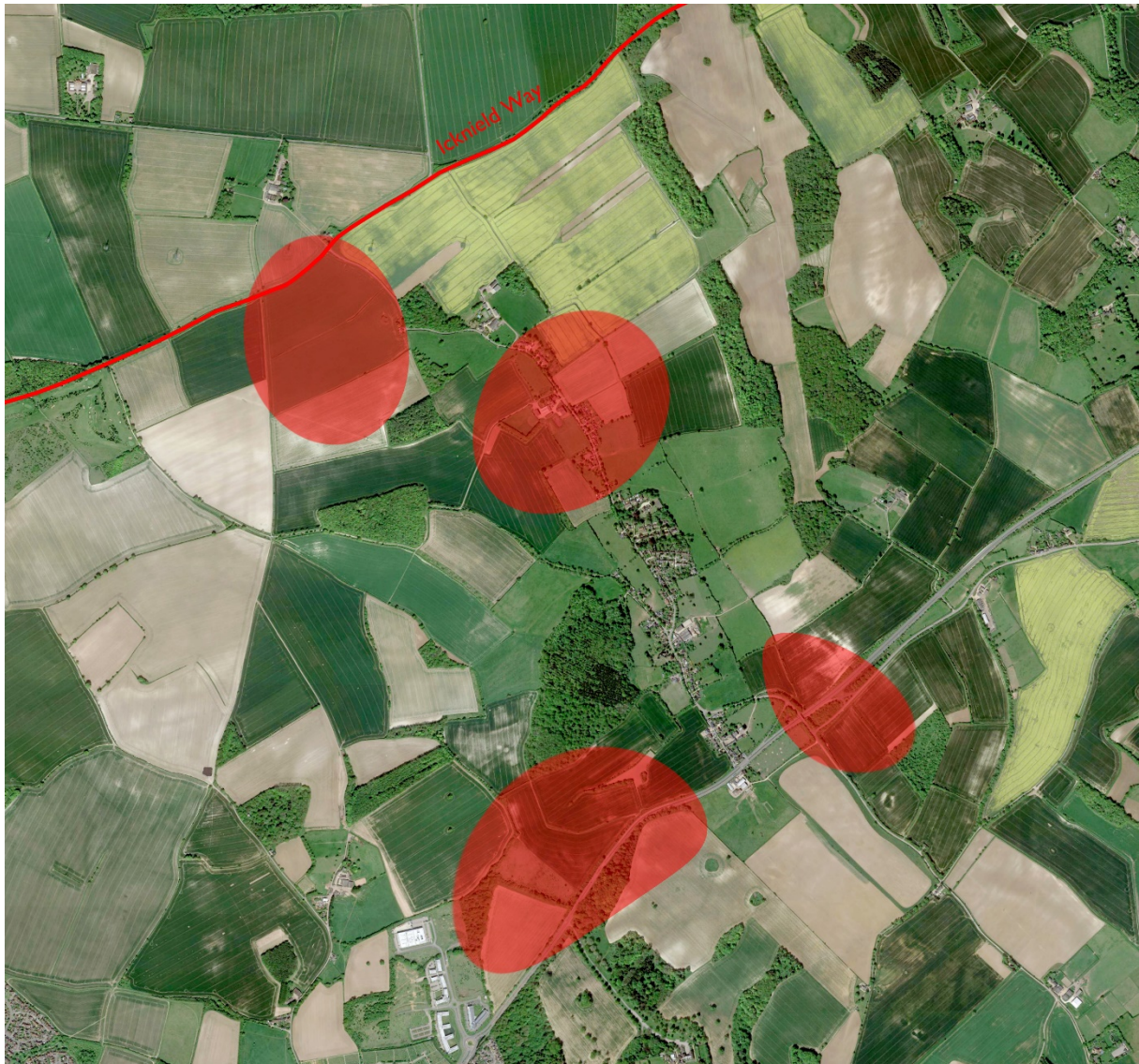

Figure 24: concentrations of Roman period finds in Lilley

There are four main concentrations of finds (Figure 24): that already noted by Pump Cottages, another around Pond Farm and Ward's Farm, the third south of Lilleypark Wood that extends into the grounds of Putteridge Bury, and a fourth by the A505 junction. Four possible settlement sites is an impressive number, which may be an indication that this was an especially favoured location. It is also possible that if the area around Pump Cottages were the site of a villa, this would have been an estate centre and the other groups of finds indicate subsidiary settlements, perhaps villages of farmworkers and slaves serving the main house.

The traditional line Icknield Way, the northern boundary of the parish, is usually thought to have been converted into a Romanised road in this area. There is no real evidence for this. Excavations at Blackhorse Road in Letchworth Garden City found evidence for its use in the Roman period, and it can be traced as far as Oughtonhead on the edge of Hitchin. Its course west beyond that is unproven by aerial photography or excavation and involves an implausibly steep descent from Telegraph Hill. A more plausible local route would be along Lilley Bottom, through the valley to the east of the village

at the foot of Lilley Hoo, but there is again no evidence. We cannot say with any confidence how the Roman communities of Lilley were connected with the rest of the world.

The end of the Roman period is obscure. As already pointed out, there are no Theodosian coins whatsoever. This lack may indicate that whatever types of settlements there were in the parish, they had stopped using coins by the 380s. It is improbably that no people were living here or that they had 'gone home': 'home' had always been in Lilley for the people of its Roman communities, except for any slaves who may have been bought at nearby markets. The supply of bronze coins ended for the western provinces in 402 and of higher value silver and gold coinage in 406; by the time it resumed, in the 410s, Britain was no longer part of the empire.

Early medieval

The disappearance of long-established communities from the archaeological record in the fifth century is found across Britain. It is unsurprising to see the same phenomenon here. Archaeologists have traditionally divided Roman Britain from 'Anglo-Saxon England' in 410. This division hides the fact that settlement by Saxons did not begin immediately after the ending of imperial rule and the continuation of Roman culture by the Britons for some time. We can document this survival of Roman civilisation in North Hertfordshire, where the town of Baldock struggled on for more than a century, its population dwindling. At Hitchin, there is evidence for a hybrid culture developing, with the locals absorbing new ideas introduced by settlers from North Germany and Scandinavia.

Spotting the newcomers as a distinct group is not easy. Although they arrived in large numbers in some places, such as Norfolk of Lincolnshire, there seem to have been few in Hertfordshire. Even if we find objects in Germanic styles, there is no guarantee that the people who used them were settlers and their descendants, or the descendants of the Britons who had lived here for centuries. A good example is the 'small long' brooch found near Pump Cottages (Figure 25 no 1). The date range of these brooches appears to be about 430-530, based on a recent assessment of the finds from Spong Hill (Norfolk), the largest known Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

Figure 25: early medieval finds from the village, scale 1:1 (© Portable Antiquities Scheme, reproduced under a Creative Commons Licence)

The 'small long' brooch is not the only find from this area: the two other discoveries earlier than 900 are also from this north-western corner of the parish (Figure 25 nos 2 and 3). One is a spoon dated roughly 600-800, the other a broken copper alloy pin dated 650-850. The pin is a type found most

commonly in East Anglia and neighbouring areas. Both the brooch and the pin are associated with female burials when found in graves, so they were probably items of women's dress.

Why were these items – the only artefacts dated between the fifth and ninth centuries from the village – were found on a site that may earlier have been and estate centre? We are usually told that Saxon settlers avoided Roman sites, seeing the ruined buildings as the frightening 'works of giants'. Two possible scenarios can be suggested. Firstly, a Saxon warrior either made the villa owner an offer he couldn't refuse or killed him and his family before stealing the land. Secondly, the people using these artefacts were descendants of the Roman family that had lived here for centuries. Unless we discover their skeletons and perform various analyses on them, we will never know.

Either way, it suggests that the centre of fifth- to ninth-century Lilley lay in the north-western corner of the parish, where it had been for several hundred years. It may have been the home of just one family, a warrior and his entourage, or it may have been a settlement composed of neighbouring farmsteads. This place was perhaps the original *Linleah*, in a part of the parish where flax still grows wild.

Medieval and later

England became a unified kingdom early in the tenth century, following a series of wars against the Danes, better known as Vikings, who had been attacking Britain since the 790s. In an attempt to organise the future defence of the land, new territorial units were created, the shires or counties. Hertfordshire was an artificial creation: its northern boundary is especially complicated. The north edge of Lilley also follows part of the county boundary, with Pegsdon, a part of Bedfordshire. The border is next with Hexton, a parish once again in Hertfordshire, while the western is back with Bedfordshire.

On the boundary with Pegsdon, a substantial earthwork survives in an area known as Hoo Bit. It consists of a bank with a ditch to the north, on the north side of Telegraph Hill, looking out to the Bedfordshire plain. The bank stands up to two metres high, while the ditch is two to three metres deep. The date of the earthwork has not been tested by excavation, and some have thought it to be prehistoric. However, its position precisely on the line of a boundary not established until the tenth century, suggests that it also dates from this period.

The parish system that still forms the basis for the lowest tier of local government was established piecemeal between the tenth and twelfth centuries. The creation of shires belongs to the start of this period of administrative change. A network of market towns developed rapidly after 900 as trade and the economy flourished, while many parish churches were first established at this time.

The church

Although Domesday Book records a priest in the manor, there is no trace of his church. The building that survived until the rebuilding of 1870 included elements from the mid-twelfth and the fifteenth centuries. The chancel arch, which was of twelfth-century date, was reset in the north chancel wall in Jeckyll's new structure, while a fifteenth-century octagonal clunch font and a piscina were reused. Some of the early monuments were also re-sited in the new church. It seems likely that the church was built about 1150, with replacement windows added during the fifteenth century.

The structure was in poor condition in 1823, although the attempts to remedy it were mostly cosmetic. New benches were installed, with kneelers, hat-pegs and matting for the floor, while the gallery on the south side of the nave was repaired. The chimney visible on a photograph of 1870 was possibly added at this time. The rector was provided with a new surplice and a choir for singing psalms instituted. Reglazing in 1824 removed much of the fifteenth-century stained glass.

A description of the building as it existed in 1870 was made by Matthew Feakes, the rector's gardener, and published in the *Transactions of the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society* in 1910. Feakes's paper includes a heavily retouched photograph dating from 1870 (Figure 26). The structure consisted of a

nave and chancel with a wooden tower carrying a wooden and lead 'Hertfordshire spike' spire at the west end and a south porch. The nave had four windows: a large and a small on each side. The larger window on the north side contained some stained glass.

Figure 26: the Norman Church of St Peter's, photographed before demolition in 1870 (after Matthew Feakes)

An open-fronted gallery serving as support for the belfry and the bell-ringers' platform stood at the west end of the nave, under the tower. There was a singers' gallery on the south side of the nave, which Feakes thought more recent than that at the west end. Beneath the gallery was the Houghton memorial tablet, with dates of 1636 and 1672. The oak roof had three principal trusses, with an angel at the end of each. There was a high pulpit north of the chancel arch, with a prayer-desk in front of it and a large sounding-board suspended above to amplify the vicar's voice. The squire's square box pew stood opposite on the south side, fitted with curtains and an open fireplace: its chimney can be seen on the photograph of 1870. The floor was uneven, composed of stone, brick and tile rubble. There was no step up into the chancel, which continued on the same level as the nave. The Docwra memorial of 1602 was set into the north wall, while floor slabs commemorated Sir George Warburton, who died in 1743, and Sir Benjamin Rawling, who died in 1770. There was a small raised area beneath the fifteenth-century east window but no fixed altar. Panels with the Ten Commandments and The Creed combined with The Lord's Prayer stood either side of the window.

By 1868, the old church was dilapidated. The angels on the roof trusses in the nave had lost parts, the walls were leaning to the north, and timbers were rotten. Arthur Coates Haviland, who was appointed rector in 1868, approached Thomas Jeckyll to carry out repairs, but the architect advised a complete rebuild. The last service to be held in the building was on Easter Day in 1870 and demolition began the following week. The three bells, dated 1580, 1703 and 1827, were re-hung and the four principal memorials retained. The first service was held on 29 June 1871 (St Peter's Day), but the tower was not finished until 1872. A new pulpit was made from oak taken from the chapel of St John's College, Cambridge. The cost of the work, just over £3000, was raised from donations by the parishioners.

Jeckyll reused much of the material from the walls of the medieval church as rubble for his replacement. The outside flint walls are contrasted by the chequered tower parapet. There is now a step into the

chancel, which has a vividly decorated ceiling. It also once had stencilled walls, but they have been whitewashed. The stained glass is late Victorian and early twentieth century.

Figure 27: the Norman chancel arch, re-used by Thomas Jeckyll above the new organ

Medieval coins

The metal-detecting rallies held in the village uncovered 47 medieval coins (Table 4). The analysis of what medieval coins could tell us has not reached the level achieved by numismatists for Roman coins. The most remarkable aspect of this group of coins is the high number of late twelfth- to early fourteenth-century coins. It is not surprising that there are few coins earlier than 1200, as they tended to circulate mostly in towns. The sharp decline in coin loss after the outbreaks of Black Death in 1349 and 1361 suggests that the community was severely hit by the plague.

The village appears to have shifted its focus during the Middle Ages. As already seen, the first millennium AD estate centre lay in the north of the parish, around Burnwell. The Norman church lay on a site 1.5 km (almost a mile) to the south-southeast of Burnwell. It lay next to a road that became known as West Street. This route is now a dead end but probably continued previously northwards across the hill at Ward's Spring to join Hexton Road at Pump Cottages and to Mortgrove in Hexton. It was perhaps at the time that the church was founded that East Street came into existence, meeting the earlier track by the church. The road through Lilley Bottom once continued north to the Icknield Way. It now stops on the line of the present A505. The closure took place some time between Dury and Andrews's map of 1766 (Figure 7) and that of Bryant in 1822 (Figure 32). A line of field boundaries follows much of its former course. This line may have been one of the earliest communications routes, and its loss was a result of the village developing on a parallel road on the ridge above the valley bottom. It may have originated deep in prehistory as a route linking the Iron Age settlement at Ravesburgh Castle to the north with the Thames valley.

Whether the Norman church replaced the church existing in 1086 on the same site or was moved from an original location at Burnwell is unknowable on present evidence. It is equally impossible to

determine why this spot was chosen for a church, away from the principal focus of the early settlement. Where this occurs in other villages, it is usually so that the church can be sited close to the manor house; however, the manor house in Lilley is in the early northern focus. Again, the answer to the question is unclear.

No	Description	Date
1	Silver penny fragment	979-1241
2	Silver penny of Henry II, Richard I, John or Henry III	1180-1247
3	Silver penny of Richard I	1190-1194
4	Silver penny of Richard I or John	1190-1204
5	Irish silver penny of John	1204-1211
6	Silver cut halfpenny of John	1205
7	Silver penny of John	1205-1207
8	Silver penny of John or Henry III	1207-1222
9	Silver cut halfpenny of John or Henry III	1210-1222
10	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1218-1222
11	Silver penny of Henry III	1222-1236
12	Silver penny of Alexander II	1230-1240
13	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1247
14	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1247-1250
15	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1247-1256
16	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1248-1250
17	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1248-1250
18	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1250-1256
19	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1250-1275
20	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1250-1275
21	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry III	1258-1265
22	Silver penny of Edward I	1279
23	Silver penny of Edward I	1279
24	Silver penny fragment of Edward I	1280-1289
25	Silver penny of Edward I	1280-1282
26	Silver farthing of Edward I	1280-1282
27	Silver penny of Alexander III	1280-1286
28	Silver penny of Edward I	1282-1283
29	Silver penny of Edward I	1299-1305
30	Silver penny of Edward I	1300
31	Silver penny of Edward I, Edward II or Edward III	1300-1344
32	Incomplete silver penny of Edward I, Edward II or Edward III	1300-1344
33	Silver farthing of Edward I, Edward II or Edward III	1300-1344
34	Silver farthing of Edward I, Edward II or Edward III	1300-1344
35	Silver farthing of Edward I, Edward II or Edward III	1300-1344
36	Silver penny of Edward I or Edward II	1305-1310
37	Silver penny of Edward I	1307-1309
38	Silver halfpenny of Edward III	1335-1343
39	A contemporary copy of a penny of Edward III	1344-1351
40	Silver halfgroat of Edward III	1351-1352
41	Silver halfgroat of Edward III	1351-1361
42	Clipped late medieval penny	1351-1509
43	Silver penny of Richard II	1380-1389
44	Incomplete silver double petard of Charles the Bold	1467-1477
45	Silver cut halfpenny of Henry VII	1485-1503
46	Unstruck penny?	?
47	Silver denga of Novgorod	1400-1600

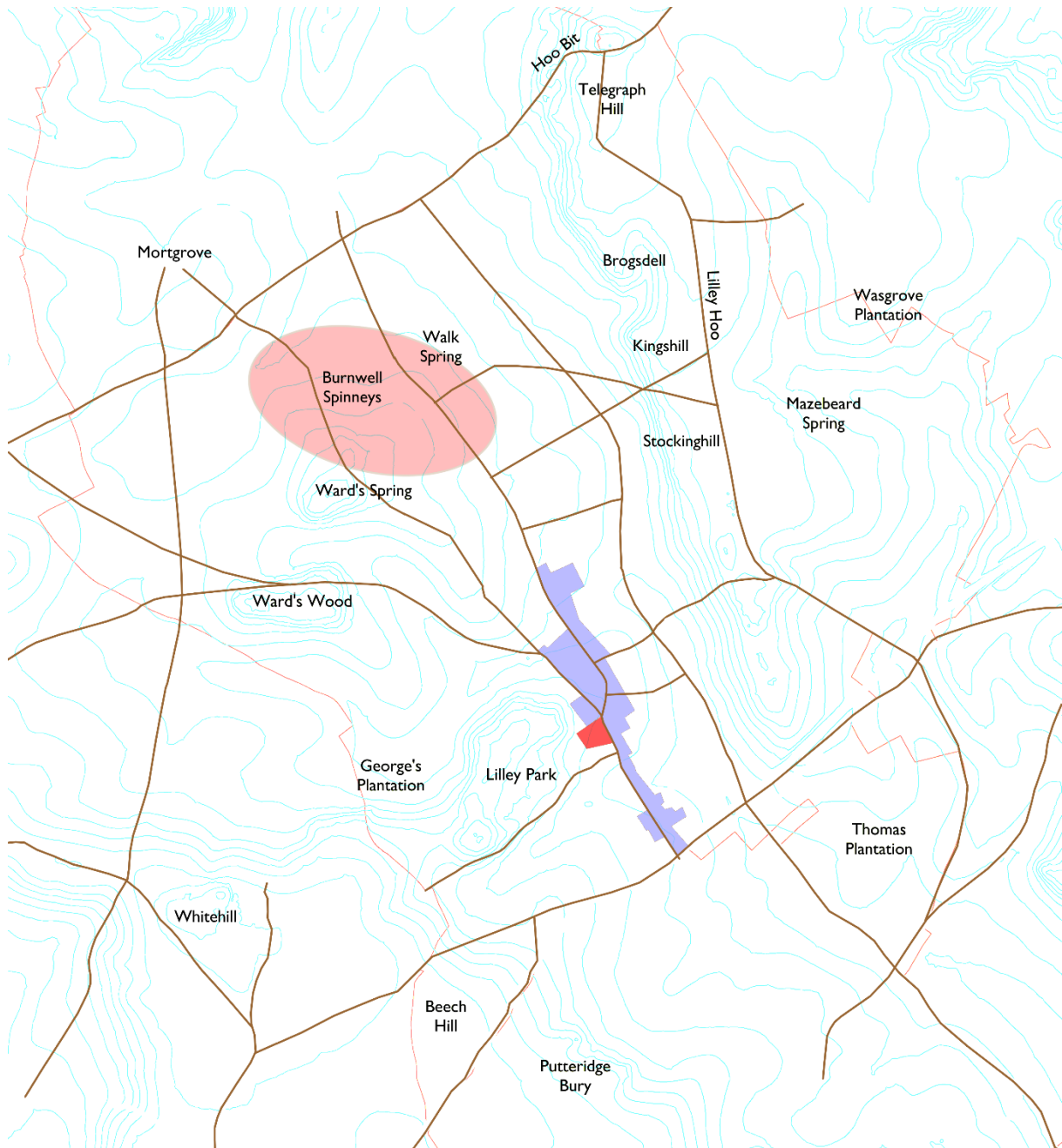*Table 4: medieval coins from Lilley*

Figure 28: pre-modern communications (brown), the early settlement (pale red), Norman churchyard (red) and historic village (lilac)

The location of the church was perhaps determined by the complex arrangement of parish boundaries, lying to the south of the enclave of Offley around Kingshill Lane, which included both Pond Farm and Ward's Farm. The church lies about 2.3 km (1.5 miles) from the detached part of Lilley at Mangrove Green. It is closer to the estate centre at Burnwell and may have been chosen for the convenience of the parishioners.

Post-medieval

The current main focus of the village, in the south, was established by the time of Dury and Andrews's map, published in 1766. The farmhouse at Church Farm, on West Street, is the oldest building to survive in the village, having a seventeenth-century core, which is probably timber-framed. It was perhaps the earliest building apart from the church in this part of Lilley. Property boundaries on East Street follow sinuous lines, showing that they were removed from strips in the open fields.

Figure 30: HER 17229, north of Beech Hill

The Historic Environment Record (17229) includes a note about a possible track north of Beech Hill, in the southwestern corner of the parish (Figure 29). It marks the former parish boundary between Offley to the east and one of the detached parts of Lilley to the west. On early maps, it is shown as forming a T-junction with the previous line of the road climbing Beech Hill. It originally carried straight past the present corner of the A505 on the north side of Putteridge Bury to Whitehill in Stopsley; it

Figure 29: a 1930s postcard showing the chalk pit and lime kiln (partly hidden by undergrowth) on the east side of Lilley Hoo

now survives as a footpath. Another double-ditched trackway parallel with the A505 matches none shown on historical maps and may be earlier in date.

The other features visible on aerial photographs of this area are extensive and amorphous. They could be infilled quarry pits. A chalk pit is shown east of the village, at the south end of Lilley Hoo, on early Ordnance Survey maps, with a small building to its west; two further abandoned chalk pits are shown on top of the Hoo, one of which seems to have been filled in over the past decade. The building was a lime kiln, shown in a postcard from the 1930s (Figures 30 and 31). Extracted chalk was usually burned for lime, to use in mortar, plaster or to remove impurities in steel production; it is less likely to have been used as the stone, which is too soft for most building purposes. Although Roman chalk quarries are known, most are of post-medieval date, when building with bricks and mortar became widespread.
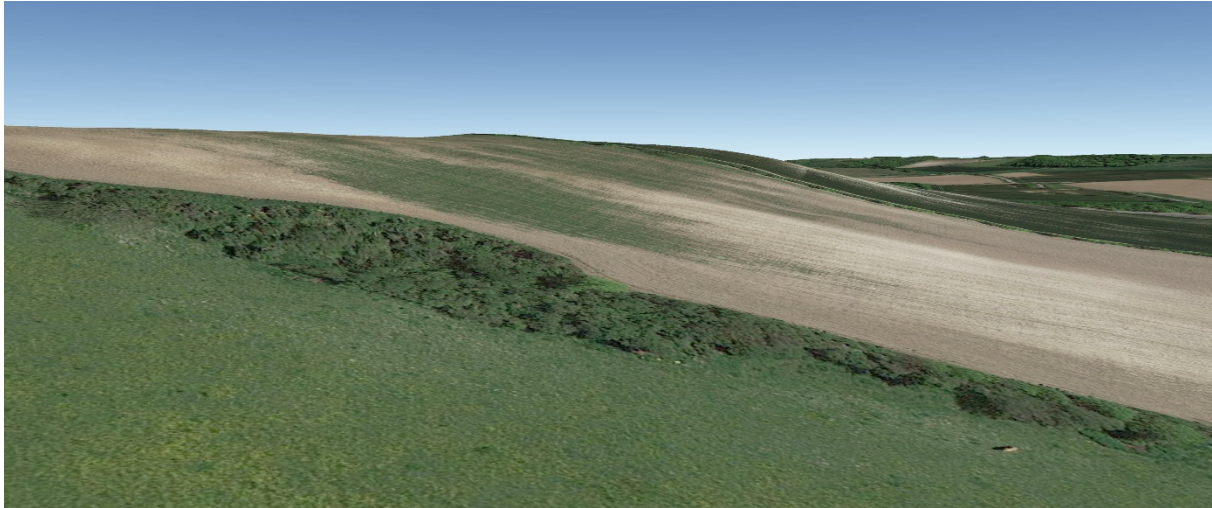

Figure 31: the chalk pit in 2018 (view from Google Earth Pro)

Farmers have spread quicklime (calcium oxide) on Hertfordshire fields since the eighteenth century. The practice improves acidic soils, reducing their acidity and promoting nutrient uptake. Church records show that two or three bushels of lime were bought in Lilley every year during the nineteenth century, most of which was used in agriculture rather than for mortar. The kiln went out of use before the First World War. The pit has been overgrown for many years and is unfortunately now used as an unofficial dump.

Boundaries and detached parts of parishes

The interlocking parts of Lilley and neighbouring Offley suggests that they had a partly shared history, the two modern parishes evolving from an earlier system of landholdings. Beating the bounds – the procession of parishioners learning the boundaries by hitting the ground with sticks – must have been a challenging procedure. The origins of the ceremony are obscure. Its roots lie in the Middle Ages, when the term Gang-days was applied to the three Rogation Days (the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday following Rogation Sunday, the fifth after Easter), and were the time for beating the bounds.

Many sources state that the ceremony is mentioned in the Laws of Alfred the Great and Athelstan without citing the precise law. It seems to be based on a misunderstanding of Law XIII in Athelsatn's code, part of which reads *And þe cƿeðað þæt ælc burh sy gebet .xiiii. niht ofer gang-dagas* ('and we declare that all fortified towns be repaired for 14 days over the Gang-days'). A description of the ceremony is found in British Library Cotton MS Julius D IX, a collection of Middle English verse compiled in the early fifteenth century. One poem on the Festival of the Church includes the lines *Suþþe þe lasse Letani þe Gang Daȝes iclepeþ bi | Whan me aboute þe felþes go wᵗ baneres as ȝe iseþ* ('Next, the lesser Litany that is called the Gang Days | When I go about the fields with banners as you see'). The banners perhaps carried images of the patron saint of the local church, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Christ.

A church rate book for 1862 suggests that the detached parts of Offley that lay inside Lilley were treated as part of the latter parish. Although Mangrove Green was surrounded by Offley, it was in Lilley parish, and its residents would be expected to attend services at St Peter's Church.

The general view of the origins of parishes is that they developed piecemeal between about 950 and 1150. They were formed by communities whose local taxes supported a priest; payment of tithes was mandated in a statute that Eadmund I (939-946) passed in his law code. The earliest list of parishes in England is found in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae* ('the Ecclesiastical Taxation of England and Wales') ordered by Pope Nicholas IV in 1291. Most of those that existed in 1800 were named in the *Taxatio*. It was not until the massive population growth after that date that many new parishes were formed.

Most communities in England had been served by minster churches before the tenth century. These institutions catered for extensive territories and had a staff of

Figure 32: Bryant's map of 1822, showing the detached parts of Offley and Lilley: he has omitted the detached part of Lilley north of Putteridge Bury in error

priests that would travel across the *parochia* for which they were responsible. From the middle of the tenth century, the tithes used to support the minster were often turned by local lords into setting up and maintaining local churches. Tithing also encouraged the formalisation of boundaries between ecclesiastical boundaries, which would necessarily coincide with the territories of the lord who paid for the church.

It is important to remember that the places listed in Domesday Book do not designate the names of parishes – although they often correspond them – but were manors, legally defined units of land ownership. We might think of them as 'estates' belonging to individuals or institutions (such as abbeys and priories), although a manor need not comprise contiguous parcel of land. However, with the Norman Conquest, most existing estates were taken from their English owners and redistributed among William I's followers. Under the feudal system imposed by the new Norman administration, the lords of each manor did not own it – everything belonged to the Crown – but held it in return for specific services or payments in lieu.

Domesday Book does not show the complexity of the arrangement for Lilley, which has a single entry. Great Offley was split between two tenants-in-chief, and Little Offley was a unity. Part of Great Offley and Little Offley were Crown lands, comprising a two hide taxable portion in the former and one hide
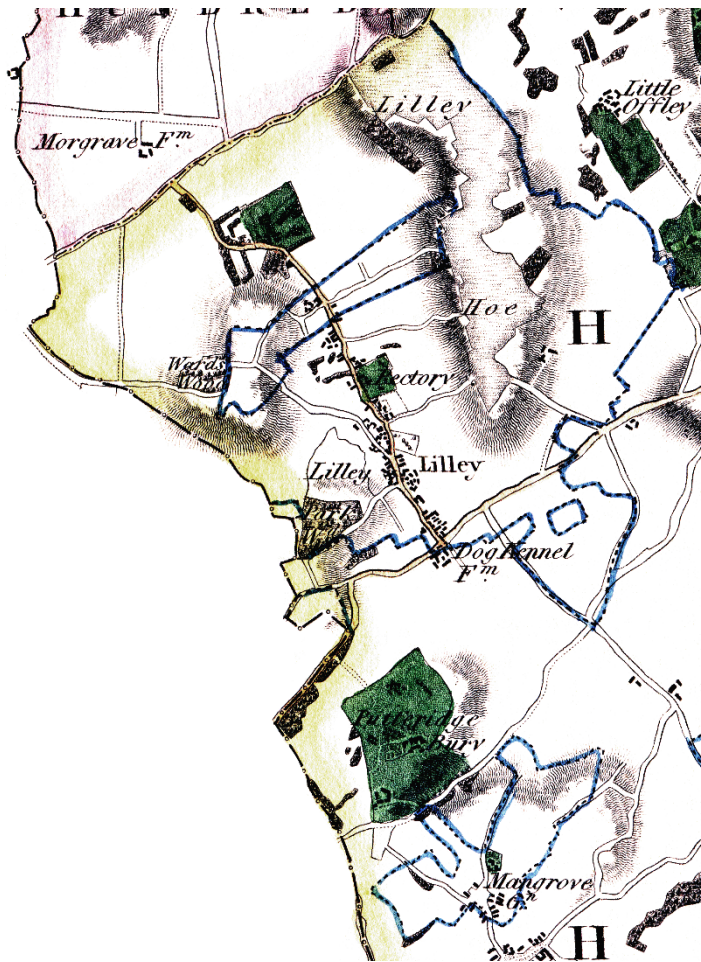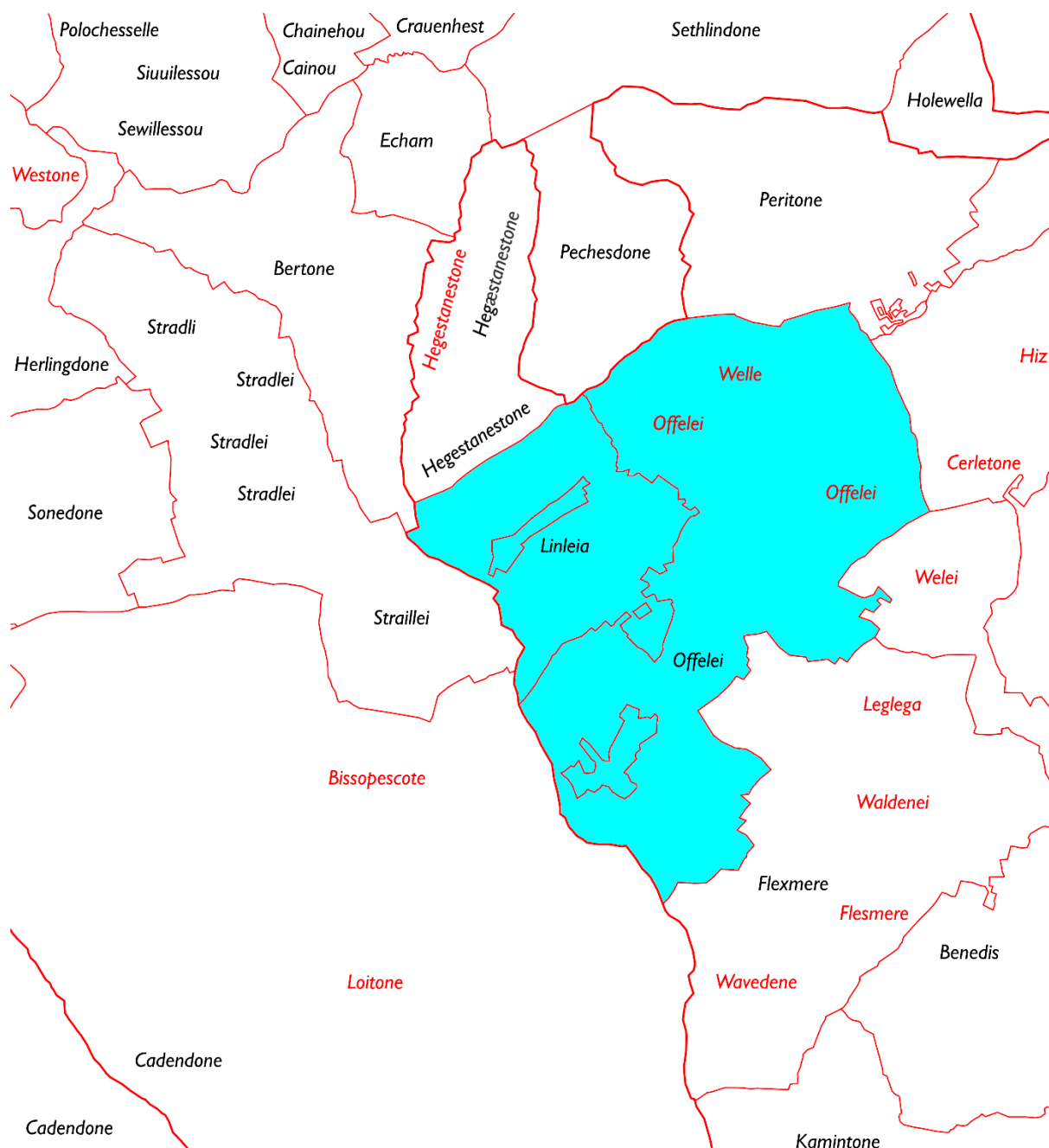
Figure 33: Domesday Book entries for vills around Lilley: a hypotheical 'Greater Offley' is shaded pale blue

in the latter; Little Offley was sublet to an Englishman. The most substantial part of Great Offley was held by William Delamere from William of Eu, with eight hides and eight acres of arable, which became the medieval manor of Delamers. Before the Norman Conquest, the king's part of Great Offley had been held by Alwin, a retainer of Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had half a hide, and Abo, a retainer of Harold II, who had one virgate. Little Offley retained its pre-Conquest tenant. The more significant part of Great Offley had belonged to Alstan of Boscombe, a retainer of Edward the Confessor. Lilley was held by Leofeva, but 3½ virgates of it were held by a freeman, a retainer of Harold Godwineson: might this have been Mangrove Green?

The evidence of Domesday Book may be taken to indicate that the scattered detached parts of the parishes were a later development in the manorial histories of the communities. The manor of Putteridge was formed from Delamers, perhaps in 1240, while Cockernhoe split from Offley St Ledgers after 1326. The origins of St Ledgers are obscure, but it is thought to have formed from part of Delamers before 1238, when its earliest recorded family member, Geoffrey de St Ledger, had

involvement in the parish church. His son William stated in 1238 that he was heir and great-grandson of Amice Delamare.

In some cases, it can be shown that detached parts of parishes originated when a formerly large area was split between a principal and a subsidiary church. While there was a priest in Lilley in 1086, none is recorded in any of the entries for Offley. However, Offley was the more important and extensive of the two places, so if there were a split, it would have been Lilley that was separated. When we look at their boundaries, a coherent unit can be formed by combining the two parishes. The assessment amounts to 17 hides 8 acres, an odd total when early estates seem to have been arranged in multiples of five hides. The sum is thus almost three hides short of what might be expected. Is it possible that these were part of the detached portions of Offley inside Lilley, omitted in error?

Rather than a post-conquest development, then, the origins of detached parts of Offley within Lilley points to the retention to tenurial control, including the collection of tithes. They suggest that was a time when the two places shared a parish church, which was more likely to have been the precursor of St Mary Magdalene's church in Great Offley, even though Domesday Book did not record a priest living in the vill in 1086.

Summary

Although the first record of Lilley is in 1086, when Domesday Book was compiled, the community has a much longer history. It is possible that the settlement initially lay in the northern part of the parish and developed from the estate of an undiscovered Roman villa. Its move south to East Street and West Street perhaps happened when the parish church was founded, before the Norman Conquest. Archaeological remains take the story back to earlier periods when there were farmsteads and valleys across the landscape.

Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews
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