

SCHEDULE ENTRY COPY

ENTRY IN THE SCHEDULE OF MONUMENTS COMPILED AND MAINTAINED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 1 OF THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979 AS AMENDED.

MONUMENT: Anglo-Saxon cemetery on Hemley Hill

PARISH: BLEDLOW-CUM-SAUNDERTON

DISTRICT: WYCOMBE

COUNTY: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 29435

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SP79940211

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the known extent of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery located on the north side of Hemley Hill, a small eminence which rises from the floor of the Saunderton Valley to the south of Princes Risborough and the Aylesbury Vale.

An iron shield boss, a gilt square head brooch and other artefacts associated with pagan Anglo-Saxon burials were first discovered in the field to the rear of Shootacre Lane in 1976. Geophysical survey in 1977 revealed a pattern of buried grave-like features, pits and ditches interpreted as part of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. These coincided with the area of the artefact discoveries and continued across a slight terrace overlooking the valley floor to the west. Reports also re-emerged at around this time of human burials unearthed in the mid-1930s in two gardens backing onto the field further confirming the cemetery interpretation. Other artefacts have since been discovered in the ploughsoil overlying the cemetery. These include two disc brooches (probably worn as a pair), a gilded strap end and a further shield boss. Together with the earlier discoveries, these artefacts point to a pattern of both male and female burials.

Roman coins recorded in considerable number in adjacent parts of the field are thought to relate to the 'Saunderton Villa', a Romanised farmstead of first to fourth century date, situated a short distance to the west, partly excavated in 1938, and the subject of a separate scheduling.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Beginning in the fifth century AD, there is evidence from distinctive burials and cemeteries, new settlements, and new forms of pottery and metalwork, of the immigration into Britain of settlers from northern Europe, bringing with them new religious beliefs. The Roman towns appear to have gone into rapid decline and the old rural settlement pattern to have been disrupted. Although
(Continued ..)

AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under
batch no: 11077

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE (Continued)

some Roman settlements and cemeteries continued in use, the native Britons rapidly adopted many of the cultural practices of the new settlers and it soon becomes difficult to distinguish them in the archaeological record. So-called Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are dated to the early Anglo-Saxon period, from the fifth to the seventh centuries AD. With the conversion to Christianity during the late sixth and seventh centuries AD, these pagan cemeteries appear to have been abandoned in favour of new sites, some of which have continued in use up to the present day. Burial practices included both inhumation and cremation. Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries consist predominantly of inhumation burials which were placed in rectangular pits in the ground, occasionally within coffins. The bodies were normally accompanied by a range of grave goods, including jewellery and weaponry. The cemeteries vary in size, the largest containing several hundred burials. Around 1000 inhumation cemeteries have been recorded in England. They represent one of our principal sources of archaeological evidence about the Early Anglo-Saxon period, providing information on population, social structure and ideology. All surviving examples, other than those which have been heavily disturbed, are considered worthy of protection.

Despite cultivation, the burials in the Anglo-Saxon cemetery on Hemley Hill are believed to survive well, with disturbance limited to only the upper sections of a limited number of graves. The graves and other buried features, such as the ditches indicated by geophysical survey, will contain archaeological remains relating to the funerary practices of the community which buried its dead here, as well as sealed environmental evidence reflecting the appearance of the surrounding landscape at the time. A matter of particular interest is the proximity of the cemetery to the Roman villa on the valley floor below - a spatial association which may indicate some degree of continuity of settlement between the two periods.

MAP EXTRACT

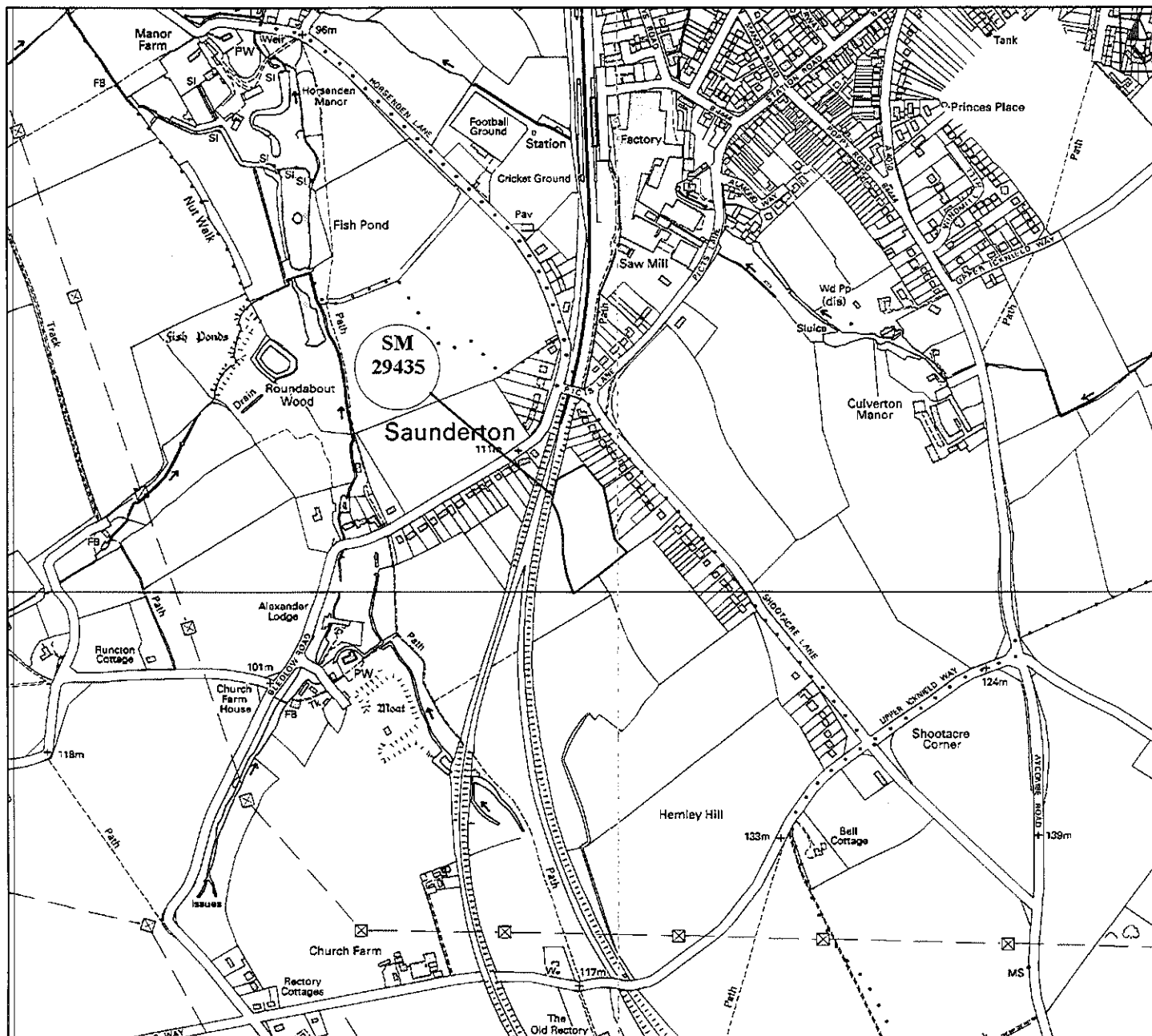
The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 09th May 2001

AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under
batch no: 11077

Scheduled Monument



Name: Anglo-Saxon cemetery on Hemley Hill

Number:

SM29435

County/UA: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

District: WYCOMBE

Parish: BLEDLOW-CUM-SAUNDERTON

Notes:

Monument NGR: SP79940211

For further information on this monument please contact English Heritage.

Map centred on NGR: SP7994602114

Boundary captured at: 10000

Map scale: 1:10,000

Extract from OS sheet(s): SP70SE; SP80SW

Key:



Confirmed

Unverified



Exclusion

Undefined

Sheet 1 of 1

Print date: 21 May 2001

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