

## Area I - LPRIA and Roman Pottery Summary By Anne Thompson

### Introduction

A total of      contexts were recorded, of which 3339 contained pottery. The total sherd count was      weighing 509.039 kg. The area was located on the west side of Area A1, bounded by Road 1 to the east, Road 2 to the south, the edge of the excavation to the west and grid line 8025 to the north. Originally excavated as part of Area J, it was separated off later, partly in view of its perceived different character. The main feature types were (i) post/stake-holes of about ten possible circular buildings, (ii) one large monumental post-hole, (iii) several fencelines, including a major land division I3, (iv) a large ditch/latrline trench, (v) some pitting, (vi) hearths and (vii) a well. Chronologically, the area had evidence of some unspecific activity in the LIA but most activity in the early Roman period in the form of settlement and rubbish deposits. This was followed by a decline in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and occasional rubbish deposits in the tops of earlier features in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century+. The material is here considered in chronological order.

### Earliest features pre-dating the metallised surface.

The very sparse evidence from contexts 13678, 18228 and 21050 (I1) shows the features were LIA or earlier but the pottery does not aid dating further. A gravel surface I2 was laid over most of Area I, involving removal of features to the natural; the small pottery groups from contexts 13553, 18834 and 18892 have Roman (c.p. 15) dating only.

### Transitional period features post-date the metallised surface I2.

The hut circles appear to have two stratigraphic phases but the coarse pottery evidence adds little to the chronology. **Hut circle I26** is LIA (c.p. 10) from its outer circle post-hole 13936. **Hut circle I25** had early to mid-1<sup>st</sup> century pottery in the middle post-hole (13854) but no other useful material. **Hut circle I30** had a single Roman sherd from stake-hole 13912. There was no dating evidence from hut circles I27 and I28 despite plausible stake-holes, and **huts I30 to I34** were not excavated. A **fenceline I8** was aligned N-S along the road above surface I2 and under dump deposits I3; the narrow gullies making this up are dated by the pottery to mid-1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD (gullies 13029 and 18802). Less specific pottery gives a Roman date for disuse of the gullies 18803, 18811 and 18891. **Internal fencelines** probably of this period produced no pottery evidence. Further uninterpreted post-and stake-hole group **I44** had pottery only in features 13712 and 18054 giving a general Roman (c.p. 15) date.

An extensive series of **silty dump deposits, group I3** were excavated in spits. The abundant pottery is mainly useful collectively as evidence of domestic refuse deposits, and mostly confirms the suggested dates with some refining:-

- mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD: 5987, 13498
- mid- to late 1<sup>st</sup> century: 13223, 13468, 13491, 13557
- mid-1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries: 5877, 5880, 13199, 13576, 13851
- late 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries: 5709, 5951
- early 2<sup>nd</sup> century: 5907, 13687
- mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century: 5883, 13213, 13354
- mid- to late 2<sup>nd</sup> century: 5693
- mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century: 13568
- mid-3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century: 13445

### **Occupation and roads following I3 dumping.**

Intercutting **gullies** were confirmed by the pottery as being in-filled in the early Roman period: gullies 18258 (**I6**) and 18204 and 13886 (**I8**) had mid-1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery groups. Pottery evidence also pointed to several **large circular pits (I4)** as being disused by the same date (pits 13460, 13717, 13771, 13883), except for pit 13845 which had mid-2nd century pottery. Some of the group **I 9 hearths** may belong to this phase.

In the mid-2nd century a **major fenceline** of post-hole **I13** was in evidence, running NW-SE and aligned with Road 2. Pottery from features 5190, 5672, 136616, 13658, 13660, 13464 and 13707 contributed to this chronology.

### **Middle Roman features.**

Trench **I14** is thought to have had some structure above it. Its three segments, 13901, 13756 and 18155, were in use or first being in-filled in the mid-2nd century, with fairly good pottery evidence. An **enclosure I19** (13739) was also shown to be in-filled in the mid-2nd to early 3rd centuries. A wooden **rectilinear building I22**, in the east of the Area, fronted onto Road 2 which had continued re-surfacing; the pottery evidence tightens the chronology, the small groups in beamslots 13249 and 13271 being reasonably well dated to the late 2nd century with intrusive late 4th century material. The building is cut by Pit 5829 which has early 3rd century pottery. The single **monumental post-hole I37** (context 13433) stood isolated from features of the same date. It was probably cut in this period and in-filled later (as shown by pottery from context 13825) with material from the early 3rd century (**I38**).

From the late 2nd to 4th centuries there is an apparent decline of occupation, with few structural features.

A series of **pits** and middens alongside the road have 3d century pottery:- early 3rd century (group **E5** pits 5829, 13158 and 13469);

early to mid-3rd century (**E5** 13158);

early to late 3rd century (**E5** 13138).

Pit 13358 in the same group is seen as part of this phase though the pottery could have dated from as early as mid-2nd century.

The **well 5806 (I23)** cuts pit 5829 and its pottery sequence is well dated to the mid-3rd to mid-4th centuries, comprising some of the best pottery evidence. After this, there is some late evidence of structural features in **beamslot 13242 (I17)**, whose pottery suggests an early to mid-4th century date (rather than 3rd century as suggested).

**A final stage of disuse** dates from the late 4th century+ in which deposits (group **I24**) were inserted into the tops of the earlier roadside pits, a rubbish deposit was made into well 5806, and there were silty deposits along the road (group **I49**).

### **The character of the pottery in Area I.**

Overall there is a preponderance of fairly broken pottery and the largest groups are layers spread over the surface and rubbish dumps. Whilst there was LIA pottery, this was not so much in evidence as in Area K. The only Gallo-Belgic sherds came from the gravel surface **I 3**, presumably from underlying features (a TR platter in 13498, TR bowl and TN(M) in 13576, TN in 13360); and NGWF from **Hearth 13609 (I10)**. The overwhelming amount of pottery was from the early Roman period. Of interest here are the LESTA and LOND bowls in **prepared surface 13148 (I12)**, the

Highgate Wood H1 beaker in **layer 13445 (I3)**, and the single Lyon ware beaker base (rare on this site) in the top fill of **pit 13824 (I4)**.

The second period of interest is the later pottery, particularly of **well 5806**: the well produced an triple vase base, an unguentarium and a miniature vessel in association with an interesting number of Oxfordshire vessels (fabrics OXRC, OXW, OXSW, OXP and OXRCM. Elsewhere, Area I had some evidence of Oxfordshire wares of an earlier form than hitherto appeared in the region, in the form of an OXW mortarium of late 3rd century form in **Prepared surface 5731 (I49)**.

Eight contexts have to date been examined as key groups, on the basis of being well dated and of intrinsic interest, and it is possible that a small number of other groups could usefully be added.

**Conclusion.** After some evidence of LIA unspecific activity, sealed by the dumping of the layers of **I3**, the Area was one of extensive occupation in the transitional LIA/early Roman period. The main features were house structures, fencelines and some pits. The early Roman period saw the greatest volume of pottery produced. Thereafter a decline in both pottery and features in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century was followed by rubbish deposition in the late Roman period.