

Wessex Archæology



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RIXON'S GATE, ASHTON KEYNES

Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. 35104

WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY

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SUMMARY

Wessex Archaeology was invited by English China Clay Quarries Ltd. to undertake an evaluation of an area of c. 99ha at Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire (SU 040940), as part of a planning application for gravel extraction. The application area lies to the north and west of Cleveland Farm, an extensive area of Iron Age and Roman occupation, excavated by Wessex Archaeology in 1987-9. The evaluation area was divided into three, and was investigated using machine trenching and fieldwalking. Known cropmarks were examined, one of which formed part of a possible prehistoric enclosure, others were shown to be natural features. Elsewhere, several in-filled ditches of unknown date were recorded. The main area of activity lay at the northern end of the application area, where earthworks of c. 1ha were revealed to be the remains of a substantial Roman building. Trenches across the earthworks contained large quantities of building rubble and boundary ditches. Waterlogged deposits, recorded in several trenches, offer the potential for palaeo-environmental studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Colin Yelland of English China Clay Quarries Ltd. and Tony Trinder, the local manager, for liaising with the owners and leaseholders of the land, and for organising the earthmoving machinery. We are also grateful for the co-operation of the farmers, Mr Freeth of Rixon's Farm and Mr Rummings of Waterhay Farm.

The fieldwork was directed by Vincent Jenkins and supervised by Andrew Crockett. This report was compiled by Vincent Jenkins and Caron Newman, the finds were analysed by Elaine Morris, the environmental samples were examined by Sarah Wyles and Michael Allen, and the illustrations were prepared by Julian Cross. The project was managed by Caron Newman.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Project

Wessex Archaeology was contracted by English China Clay Quarries, Ltd., to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land, covering c. 99ha, lying immediately to the north and west of their current production units at Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire. The work was carried out according to a brief set by the County Archaeological Officer for Wiltshire, as part of a planning application Section 106 agreement. The application area is divided into three, (fig. 1): Area 1 is centred on SU 063949 and comprises 40ha of land lying north and east of Wheatley's Barn Farm, Area 2 is centred on SU 058943 north of Rixon's Gate, and covers 10ha, Area 3 is centred on SU 057937 and covers 49ha lying south of Rixon Farm.

1.2 Geology and Topography

The evaluation area occupies flat low-lying ground east of the village of Ashton Keynes (SU040940), on the alluvium and first gravel terrace at the headwaters of the River Thames at about 83m OD. Local informants report that flooding is common in the fields alongside the river, which is little more than a brook at this point, and this view is supported by the fact that the road is raised above the level of the surrounding land. Areas 1 and 3 are in permanent pasture, whilst Area 2 is under cultivation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The earliest known archaeological activity lies partly within Area 2, and has been plotted by Richard Hingley (Hingley n.d.). Within an area designated by Hingley as No.4 on a list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Protected Areas of Identified Archaeology, is a series of cropmarks (Hingley n.d., Fig. 2) which is described as "a complex ... of possible Bronze Age date including a broad linear ditch and settlement enclosure." Both these features lie within the evaluation area, the broad linear ditch crosses Area 2 from north to south, and one section of the 'settlement enclosure' lies just within its east side (fig 1).

Previous excavations at Cleveland Farm (centred on SU 068944), which lies immediately to the east of the evaluation area, have revealed extensive evidence of continuous occupation from the middle Iron Age to the fifth century AD (Coe *et al* 1991). Ditch systems, enclosures, round houses, and a wide range of associated artefacts, were revealed in a remarkably good state of preservation. Artefacts included not only pottery and quern stones but also numerous coins and brooches, and a few more unusual items, such as fragments of glass phials, a very small pair of scales and an oculist's stamp.

Area 1 included some cropmarks that appeared to be continuations of features from the Cleveland Farm site, which lay to the south. In the north-west corner of the Area was an area, of about 1ha, of low earthworks of unknown date.

The evidence of archaeological activity in Area 3 was limited to a set of branching curvilinear cropmarks, of unknown date, at the southern end (fig. 1). These cropmarks were irregular in plan, and were thought to be mainly, if not completely, natural in origin.

Evidence for the area in the post-medieval period can be found in a map made by Andrews and Drury in 1773 (Paterson and Ward 1986), which shows Ashton Keynes and its environs. Just within the application area, two or three dwellings are shown on the north side of the stream, which flows through Area 3, and a windmill is

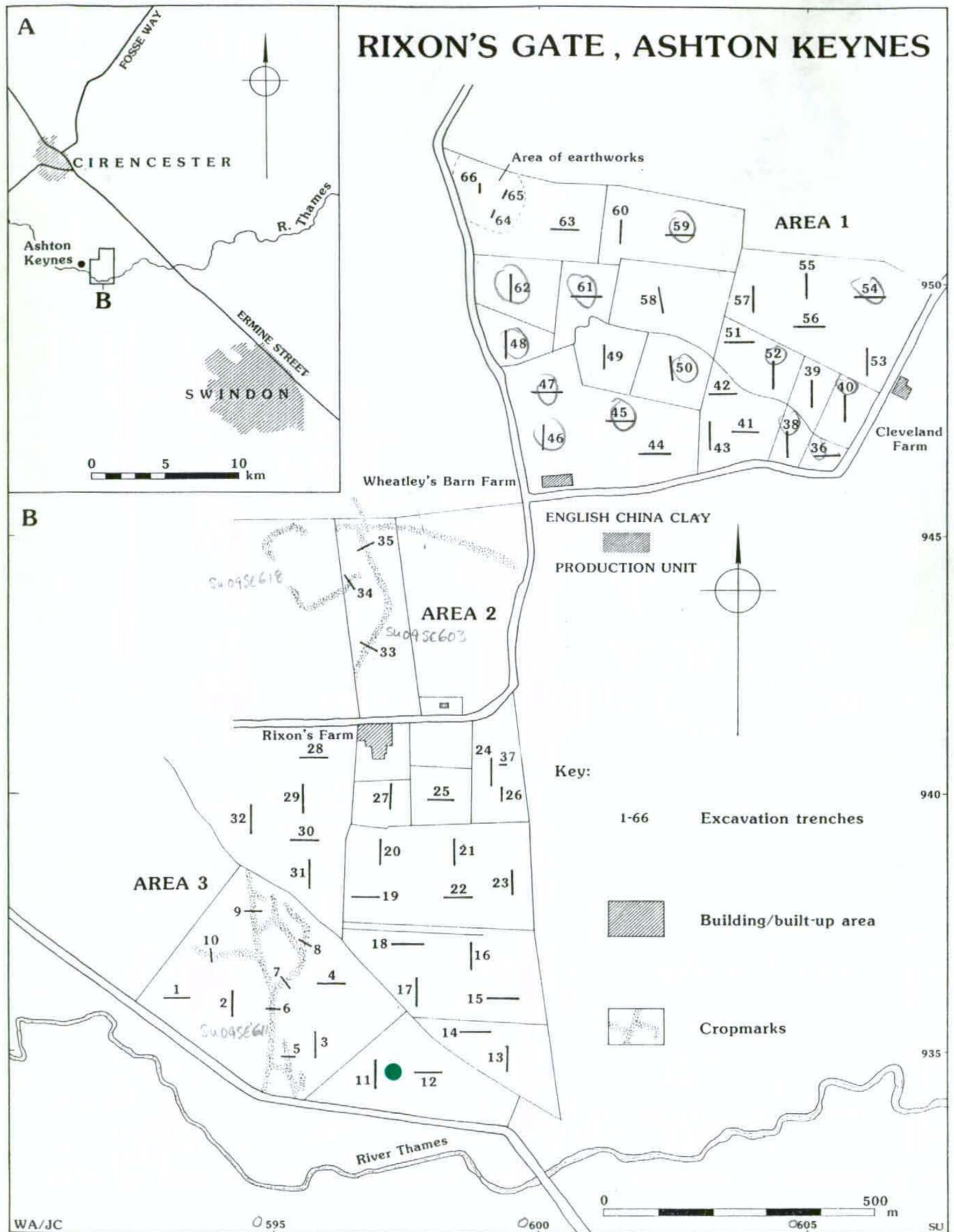


Fig. 1: Location of the evaluation, showing Areas 1, 2 and 3, the earthworks, cropmarks and disposition of the trenches

indicated just outside the area to the west. In general the lanes are fewer and follow a different course, otherwise there appears to be little of archaeological interest.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Survey

The earthworks in the north-west corner of Area 1 had not been previously recorded. The height and location of the more prominent mounds, ridges and hollows were determined by tacheometry and plotted in the field at a scale of 1:500 (fig. 2). A pre-excavation survey was undertaken to record and interpret the earthworks, and to determine the best position for trial trenches. It is proposed that the Royal Commission for the Historic Monuments of England will make a more detailed survey later this year.

2.2 Surface Artefact Collection

Fieldwalking was conducted only in Area 2, which was under winter wheat or a similar crop. All the fields in Areas 1 and 3 were in pasture and unsuitable for fieldwalking.

The fields were walked from south to north with collection units 25m long and 25m apart along the axis of the National Grid. The finds recovered from each 25m unit were bagged separately and labelled with a unique designation that comprised the six-figure map reference of the south-west corner of the hectare and a letter for the location within the hectare (fig. 5). For the purposes of the Sites and Monuments Record, these co-ordinates are also recorded in the archive as 12-figure map references.

2.3 Machine Trenches

Sixty-five trenches (fig. 1) were cut by a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket 1.8m wide. Some of these trenches were targeted to investigate known cropmarks or earthworks; the remainder were distributed to provide a broad coverage of known sample size. The targeted trenches, investigating cropmarks, were each 25m long; those placed across earthworks were 10m long. All other trenches were 50m long. One extra trench, number 37, was excavated. This was 2m by 0.8m and was placed to investigate the nature of a small mound in Area 3, which was found to be modern.

The sample trenches were aligned on the National Grid, either north-south or east-west. A 1% sample was used in the eastern half of Area 1, where it was thought there might be a continuation of settlement evidence from Cleveland Farm. In the western half of Area 1, and in Area 3, a 0.5% sample was used. The purpose of the regular pattern was to intersect with any linear features whatever their orientation.

Topsoil and, where necessary, subsoil was removed by machine, until the underlying gravel beds were exposed, unless archaeological deposits were revealed in the subsoil. Any layers or features thus revealed were then examined in section through the excavation of a hand-dug slot, approximately 0.6m wide either to the base of the feature, or until in-flowing ground water prevented further progress. All artefacts were retained.

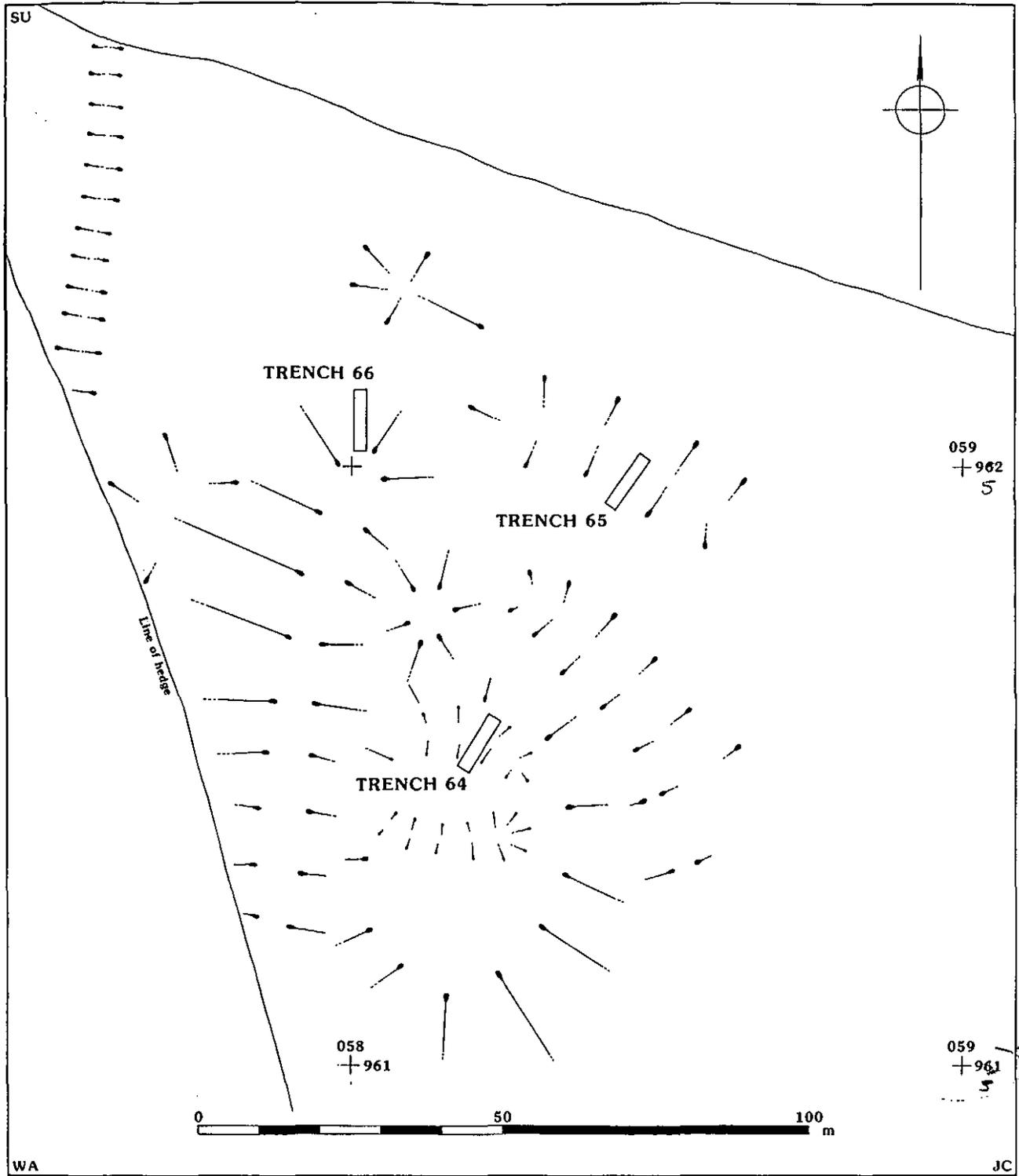


Fig. 2: Plan of earthworks showing location of Trenches 64, 65 and 66

3 RESULTS

3.1 General

The typical soil profile across all three areas was 0.10-0.15m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.15-0.2m of sterile silty clay subsoil. This subsoil contains gravel, the proportion of which increases with depth until, with a slightly undulating interface, it grades into the limestone gravel. Variations from this profile occur either where human activity, such as ploughing, has mixed the topsoil and subsoil producing a single gravely plough soil sharply differentiated from the gravel, or where a flooding regime has produced layers of alluvial clays, peat and other effects of water-logging.

Pockets of pure yellow-grey clay were commonly observed at the gravel surface. They were usually more or less circular and bowl-shaped in profile. Several of those excavated contained some artefacts, although the features appeared to be natural rather than archaeological. They were similar to clay-filled solution hollows which are sometimes encountered in areas of permeable rock, and may well have a similar origin. Bands of the same material were also observed, and on examination were found to have a shallow convex profile and to be generally devoid of other material. These were interpreted as former water courses. They could be distinguished from man-made ditches that had steeper sides, sharper bases, coarser fills, and often evidence for a former bank. In Area 3, Trench 14, a shallow deposit of peat was found at the base of one of these features.

A large proportion of the trenches contained no archaeological features, others contained features that yielded no material or other evidence of their date and function, and others contained features that could not be examined because of the high water table. All of these are summarised in the Gazetteer (Appendix 1). The more significant archaeological results are presented below.

3.2 Area 1

3.2.1 Earthwork Survey (fig. 2)

The earthworks did not present a clear or simple form, but were characterised by numerous subtle rises and falls, all within a vertical range of 0.5m. Two adjacent mounds were identified, one of approximately 50m diameter, the other 20m. Central to the larger mound, were two small curvilinear hollows that ran roughly east-west. The mounds were bordered on the west by a low bank, about 75m in length, on the north and east by a slight bank, with double ditch, which clearly continued for over 50m, but which eventually became very slight to the south-east, before turning south. Only the first 50m of this bank was surveyed. To the north of the complex was an oval hollow, with a long axis of some 20m. A much more sharply defined linear feature, which lay to the north-west of the main earthworks, was taken to be a ditch of probable modern date. At the time of the survey there were no visible indicators of the date, cause or function of the earthworks; such as building rubble or artefacts lying on the surface.

3.2.2 Trenches Through Earthworks

Three trenches were positioned (fig. 2) to investigate the nature, date and function of the earthworks; each was 10m by 1.8m. Trench 64 (fig. 3) was placed across the broader of the two mounds, at a right angle to one of the small curvilinear hollows. The main component of the mound was shown to be an earth and rubble destruction deposit. The rubble, which was excavated in spits (contexts 6401-6405 inclusive), comprised undressed pieces of limestone varying in size up to 0.5m, fragments of brick, pieces of tile and mortar. Both the size and concentration of rubble increased

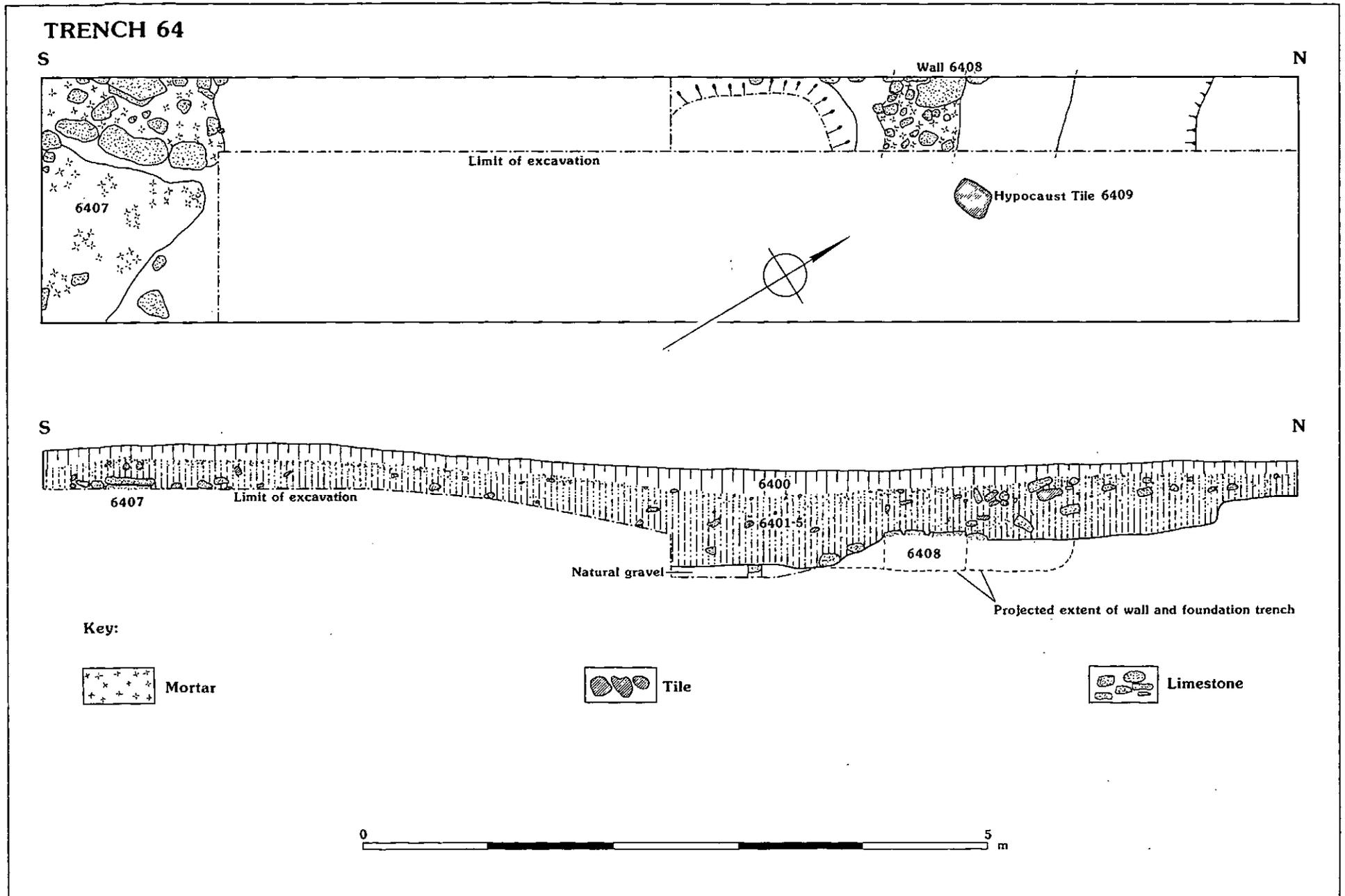


Fig. 3: Plan and section of Trench 64 showing the wall, the overlying rubble and the hypocaust tile

towards the centre of the mound, but distinct layers were not evident. Pottery was not abundant but was all of Romano-British date.

A slit trench was cut through the rubble layer along the northern half of the trench, revealing the foundation courses of a wall (6408), 0.8m thick, built of undressed limestone bonded in orange-yellow sandy mortar. There was no facing of stone or plaster on either side. The wall appeared to be within a trench, the fill of which was observed, but not excavated. The width of this trench suggests that it was a robber, rather than foundation, trench. The wall lay along the north side of the earthwork hollow, and ran across the trench from north-east to south-west. A probable hypocaust tile was observed within the rubble layer (6409), outside the excavated slot and lying just to one side of the wall, but not necessarily integral with that structure.

Immediately south of the wall, presumably within the limits of the building, was a depression in the natural gravel, 1.5m in diameter, filled with rubble material. The water table prevented its full excavation, so its depth remains unknown, its function and origin uncertain. Another concentration of rubble was recorded in the southern half of the trench, but further investigation revealed that it did not comprise another wall. However, it may have related to a wall lying outside the trench.

Trench 65 (fig. 4) was placed across the outermost linear hollow, formed by a pair of closely adjacent ditches, 6505 and 6509, aligned east to west. They were 3.5m across, 1.2m deep and filled mostly with clays, silts and gravel. They both contained black organic waterlogged primary deposits (6507 and 6508 respectively) which contained stone, bone, brick, tile and late Roman pottery. Environmental samples from these fills indicated a high potential for the analysis of organic remains. Within the trench section, it was not possible to define the relationship between the two ditches, but they were possibly part of a boundary to the structure observed in Trench 65. The quantity of building rubble within the ditch fills would imply that both were at least partly open when the building was destroyed. The upper fills (6502 and 6503 respectively) probably resulted from silting, and do not appear to have been backfilled deliberately, and may thus indicate that the site was not occupied following the building's destruction.

Trench 66 was placed at the northern end of the long bank that ran along the eastern side of the mound, and which was found to be constructed only of soil. The trench also revealed a ditch, 6604. Like those in Trench 65, it was filled with sandy gravels (6605) and contained a waterlogged organic primary deposit (6608) in which artefacts and materials of Romano-British date were found. Samples were taken for environmental analysis. This ditch was 1.2m wide and 0.4m deep, and it appeared to curve around the end of the bank. Its relationship to either of the two ditches in Trench 65 could not be ascertained. It may have been a continuation of either ditch, or a distinct feature only relating to the bank. Immediately above the natural gravel was a layer of pebbles (6601/6607), in which were included occasional animal bones, and which underlay a layer of mottled clay, which included only charcoal. This is thought to be one layer, the differentiation resulting from larger and heavier items sinking to the base of a very wet deposit.

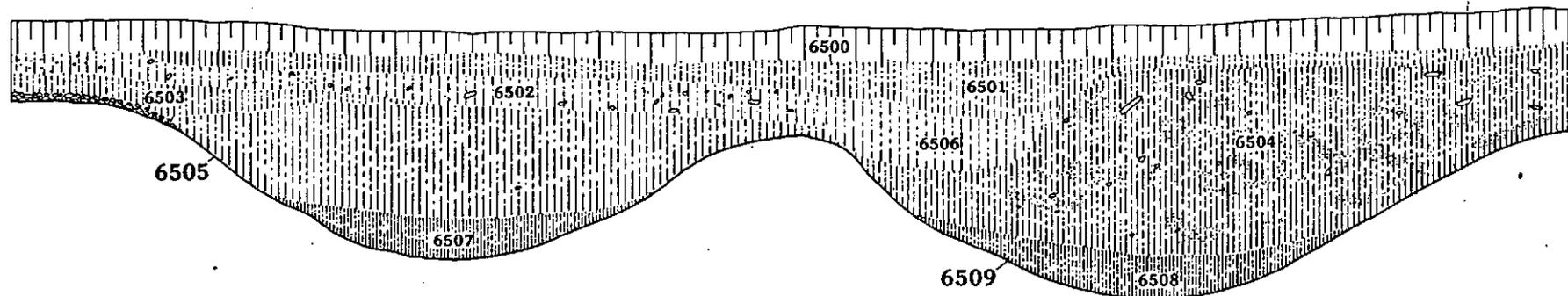
3.2.3 Sample Trenches (fig. 1)

Trench 62 was part of the 0.5% sample of the western side of Area 3. It was aligned north-south and was located about 100m south of the visible earthworks. It contained three pits, which were possibly outlying features related to the earthwork complex. The largest, 6202, was at least 3m long and 0.8m wide, yet only 0.3m deep, with steep sides and a flat, even base. The fill contained animal bones, but no datable artefacts. The second pit, 6204, was rectangular, 2.2m long, 0.8m wide, 0.3m deep and V-shaped

TRENCH 65

N

S



 Turf and topsoil

 Gravel

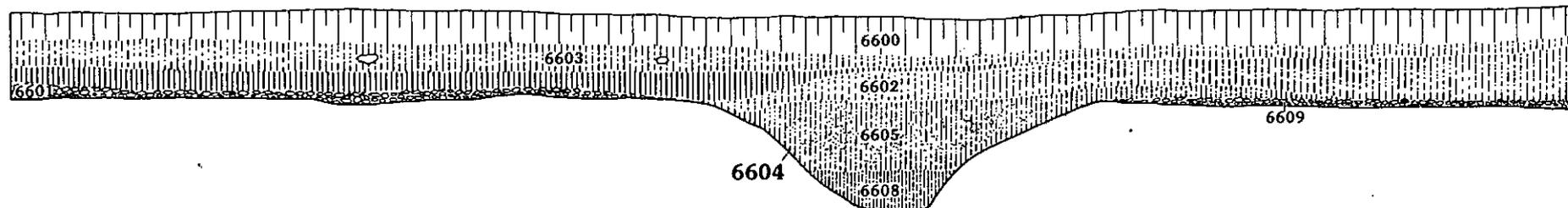
 Silty clay

 Alluvial clay

TRENCH 66

N

S



WA

JC

Fig. 4: West-facing sections of the ditches in Trench 65 and Trench 66

in section. Besides animal bones the fill included Romano-British pottery. The third pit, 6206, was roughly oval in plan, 1.4m long, 0.75m wide and 0.55m deep. The bottom appeared flat, but excavation was hampered by in-flowing ground water. The fill of this pit also contained animal bones, Romano-British pottery and charcoal. An east-west aligned trench, 63, was placed approximately 100m east of the earthworks. It contained no features or artefacts whatsoever, and would therefore imply that the features recorded in Trenches 64, 65 and 66 do not extend much beyond the area of earthworks.

Trench 36 revealed a large ditch, 3610, about 3.3m wide running roughly east-west. It was intersected by three smaller ditches, 3603, 3606 and 3608, running north-south, of which ditch 3606 also had an associated bank (3615). Ground water prevented a full examination of the dating evidence and relationships between these features. The proximity of these features to the Cleveland Farm site, however, suggests that they may be associated, and therefore contemporary with the similar Romano-British ditch system recorded there. The trench also contained two small pits, 3618 and 3622; each contained burnt material and post medieval pottery (fills 3617 and 3619 respectively). Elsewhere in Area 1, features were identified in Trenches 38, 40, 45-48, 50, 52, 54 and 59-61, but most did not contain any datable material. Most of these features were small ditches or gullies, probably the remains of former field boundaries, and there were also two small pits (details of these features can be found in the Gazetteer of features in Appendix 1).

3.3 Area 2

Area 2 was under a low crop during the fieldwork, but was still considered suitable for fieldwalking after consultation with the County Archaeological Officer. In addition to the fieldwalking, three trenches were positioned to investigate known cropmarks in the western half of the area.

3.3.1 Surface Artefact Collection

This is an operation that is best undertaken in freshly ploughed fields after rain when the artefacts stand out clearly against the soil. In this case several months had passed since ploughing and seeding, and the crop was already standing several centimetres high. Consequently the rate of recovery may have been biased by the ground conditions.

No significant concentrations of artefacts were noticed, although there were more finds recovered from the western field, and most of the material recovered was comparatively modern. The distribution of the finds indicated that this material had spread, probably through ploughing, from the south-west corner of the field. As the overall numbers of artefacts were low, this is probably not of archaeological significance. Only one sherd was of possible Roman date, and there were only three medieval sherds, and none of prehistoric date. Thus there was no clear indication of the cause of the cropmarks or of any other ancient activity in the fields studied. The artefact results are presented in Section 4.1 below.

3.3.2 Targeted Trenches

Trenches 33 and 35 were placed to investigate the long sinuous cropmark, running north-south in the western half of the area, identified by Hingley as a ditch (Hingley n.d.). Excavation revealed a broad, shallow feature (3311 and 3505 respectively), 3m wide and 0.3m deep. The bottom was flat and the sides gently sloping. It was filled with grey-brown clayey sands, containing no artefacts and can be interpreted as a former natural water course.

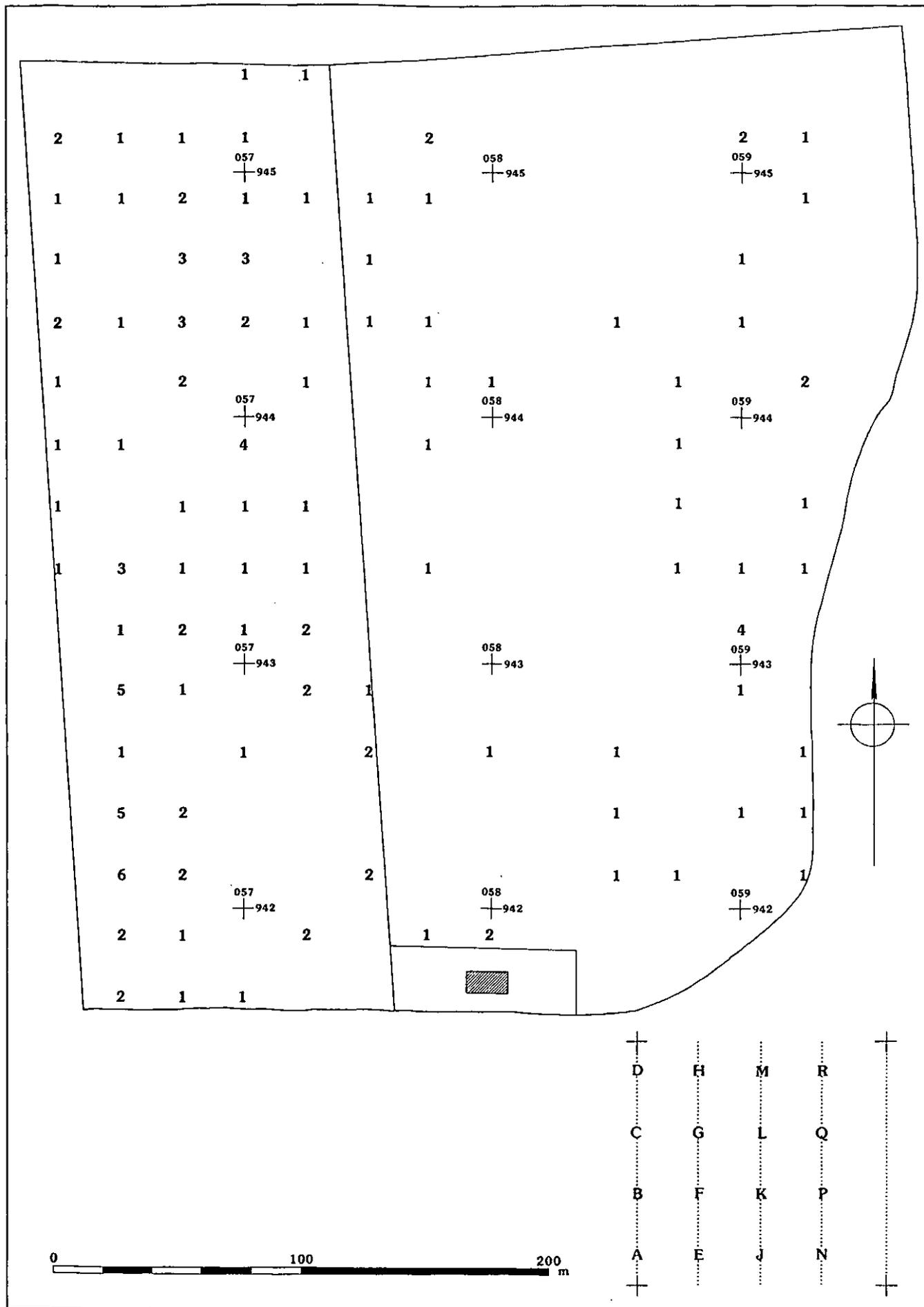


Fig. 5: Combined distribution of pottery and ceramic building material within Area 2. Insert shows units of recording per hectare Limit of excavation

In Trench 33 an oval pit, 3303, was revealed, excavated partly by hand and partly by machine. It measured 2.5m x 1.08m, was almost 2m deep and tapered inwards. The upper fills were gravely and yielded one struck flint flake and a few pieces of bone, but at the base were organic deposits including large pieces of wood. Its form suggests that it was a well, but its date is unknown.

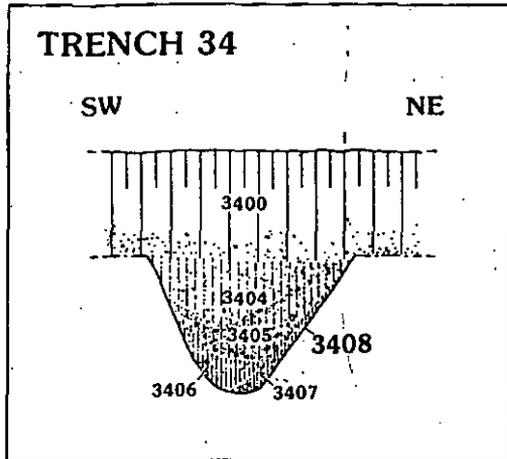


Fig. 6: Section through the cropmark in Trench 34

Trench 34 was placed to reveal the nature of a rectangular cropmark of a type suggestive of a prehistoric enclosure ditch. Since first being recorded (Hingley, n.d.), most of this feature (the western part of which had lain in the adjacent field) has been destroyed by gravel extraction. There was no visible earthwork at the ground surface, but the excavated section (3408) revealed that the ditch had a U-section 0.7m deep and 1.2m broad. The fills of clayey sand and gravel contained a higher proportion of coarser material (3405 and 3407) on the north-west than on the south-east side and may represent material tipped into the ditch, possibly from a bank on this

side. Occasional charcoal flecks were observed in the fills but no cultural material was recovered from this feature. Although undoubtedly man-made, and certainly not of modern construction, its date and function remain unproven. At the north-west end of the trench was a pit, 3402. It was irregular (roughly oval) in shape and measured about 1m across and 0.4m in depth. Its fill, 3401, contained no artefacts.

3.4 Area 3

3.4.1 Targeted trenches

A series of trenches (fig. 1; nos. 5-10) was laid out to investigate a complicated branching cropmark, in the south-western part of the area. Visual inspection of the ground suggested that the cropmark could be identified with a number of shallow watercourses to be found crossing the field. Excavation, which showed them to contain clay and peat, supported this interpretation. The cropmark and the watercourses must therefore be considered to be the same.

3.4.2 Sample Trenches

Trench 11 revealed a pair of parallel ditches, 1108 and 1113, 1.3m wide, 0.3m deep and 3m apart, with some indication of the extracted gravel having been laid between them and thrown up as banks on either side. The fill (1107) of 1108 produced fragments of animal bone, but no datable finds. This complex was barely visible on the ground surface and could not be traced for any distance, or be seen to align with anything other than a nearby field gate. It can nevertheless be interpreted as the former track or lane running south-west from the village and the bridge as portrayed on the map of 1773.

Trench 26 was placed to investigate a visible, but slight, earthwork, which proved to be a shallow ditch, 2603, 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep. An associated bank was not apparent at the surface or in section, but the distribution of gravel in the ditch fill suggests that it may have been on the north side. The fill itself (2602) included post-

medieval pottery, tile, oyster and snail shells, which suggests that the ditch is of no great antiquity.

Trenches 30, 31 and 32 were laid out as part of the sampling strategy, and were laid closest to the brookside dwellings indicated on the map of 1773. None of these trenches produced any strong evidence of occupation. Recovery of artefacts from the topsoil (3000, 3211) was very low, and none at all were seen in Trench 31. Neither was there any structural evidence. In Trench 32 was a pair of parallel curving round-bottomed ditches, 3209 and 3212. These were 1.0m across, 0.4m deep and 2.5m apart and may well indicate a former track, which is not marked on the 1773 map. In addition, a third ditch, 3202, 12m to the south, and an irregular pit, 3206, 1.0m across and 0.35m deep were recorded. Trenches 30 and 31 were devoid of features.

4 FINDS

The assessment of the finds recovered from fieldwalking and from trenches is presented separately. All the material has been washed, marked and recorded by number and weight according to standard Wessex Archaeology procedures (Morris 1991), and curated according to the UKIC guidelines (Walker 1990). All the finds from the trenches have been retained, but only the pottery from fieldwalking has been kept.

4.1 Fieldwalking Finds

The amount of each material is quantified in Table 1 and discussed below. A distribution of pottery and ceramic building material is shown in fig. 5. The two artefact types were combined because of the overall low numbers recovered.

4.1.1 Pottery

The vast majority of pottery recovered from fieldwalking is post-medieval and modern in date and consists of fine, sandy, orange and red earthenwares of the 16th to 17th centuries and later, with one sherd from a whiteware plate bearing green transfer print and two pieces of flowerpot. The only examples of earlier material are a single sherd of possible Romano-British grey coarseware from 057/944B and three base or body sherds of medieval to late medieval, calcareous, coarseware cooking pot or bowl fabric from 056/941M, 056/945N, and 058/944N.

4.1.2 Other Materials

A moderate amount of roofing tile and brick of post-medieval or modern date was found scattered throughout the fields, with no particular concentrations noted (Table 1). A very small amount of vessel or window glass of similar date, a few pieces of iron-working slag and two nails were also recovered.

Table 1: Fieldwalking Finds

Grid ref	Run	CBM		Pottery		Bone		Glass		Metal	Slag		Comments
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	No	Wt	
056941	L			2	25g								17th century pottery
056941	M			2	9 g								med/17th century pottery
056941	Q			1	2 g								17th century pottery
056941	R			1	8g								17th century pottery
056942	J			6	60g								17th century pottery
056942	K	1	7	4	72g								P-med/mod tile, 17th century pottery
056942	L	1	5g			1	12g						P-med/mod. tile
056942	M			5	43g								17th century pottery
056942	N			2	8g								17th century pottery.
056942	P	1	18g	1	13g								P-med/mod CBM, 17th century pottery
056942	R			1	19g								17th century pottery.
056943	F			1	11g								17th century pottery.
056943	G			1	29g								17th century pottery.
056943	H			1	12g								17th century pottery.
056943	J	1	4g										P-med/mod tile
056943	K	1	11g	2	66g								P-med/mod tile, 17th century pottery.
056943	M			1	5g								17th century pottery.
056943	N	2	50g	1	3g								P-med/mod tile, Pottery - mod.
056943	P			1	3g								17th century pottery.
056943	Q			1	12g								17th century pottery.
056943	R								1				P-med/mod nail
056944	E			1	44g								17th century pottery.
056944	F	1	27g	1	29g								P-med/mod brick, 17th century pottery
056944	G			1	18g								17th century pottery.
056944	H	1	13g										P-med/mod tile
056944	K			1	8g								17th century pottery.
056944	M	1	16g										P-med/mod tile
056944	N			2	28g								17th century pottery.
056944	P			3	21g								17th century pottery.
056944	Q	1	18g	2	48g								P-med/mod tile, 17th century pottery.
056944	R	2	63g										P-med/mod tile
056945	E			2	19g								17th century pottery.
056945	J	1	10g										P-med/mod tile
056945	N			1	6g								Med pottery
056945	P			1	7g								17th century pottery.
057941	C	1	12g										P-med/mod tile.
057941	H			2	16g								17th century pottery.
057941	R			1	5g								17th century pottery.
057942	C			1	7g								17th century pottery.
057942	H			2	7g					1	83g		17th century pottery.
057942	J			2	13g								17th century pottery?
057942	L			2	15g								17th century pottery.
057942	M			1	4g								17th century pottery.
057943	A			1	12g								17th century pottery.
057943	B			1	10g								17th century pottery.
057943	C			1	10g								17th century pottery.
057943	D			4	21g								17th century pottery.
057943	E			2	29g								17th century pottery.
057943	F			1	9g								17th century pottery.
057943	G	1	28g										P-med/mod brick
057943	P	1	30g										P-med/mod tile.

Grid ref	Run	CBM		Pottery		Bone		Glass		Metal		Slag		Comments
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	No	Wt		
057943	R	1	7g											P-med/mod tile.
057944	B			2	30g									1 RB / 1 17th century pottery
057944	C	1	47g	2	21g									P-med/mod tile, 17th century pottery
057944	D			1	26g									17th century pottery.
057944	E			1	2g									18th/20th century pottery
057944	F			1	6g									17th century pottery.
057944	H			1	3g									17th century pottery.
057944	K			1	18g									17th century pottery.
057944	L			1	9g									17th century pottery.
057944	M			1	36g									17th century pottery.
057944	N			1	3g									17th century pottery.
057944	P			1	44g									Pottery - 16th century.
057944	R	1	22g											Brick - P/med/mod.
057945	A			1	12g					1	16g			Late med/p-med pottery
057945	B			1	8g									17th century pottery.
057945	N			2	20g									16th/17th century "Cistercian" pottery
058941	M			2	20g									17th century pottery.
058942	C			1	8g									7th century pottery.
058942	J			1	15g									17th century pottery.
058942	K	1	4g											P-med/mod tile.
058942	L			1	7g									17th century pottery.
058942	M							1	15g					P-med Glass
058942	N			1	4g									Med/late med pottery
058942	R			1	3g					1				17th century pottery. Metal - 1 nail.
058943	P			1	3g									16th/17th century pottery
058943	Q	1	12g											CBM/17th century pottery.
058943	R			1	11g									17th century pottery.
058944	A			1	10g									17th century pottery.
058944	H			1	4g									16th/17th century pottery
058944	K	1	2g											P-med/mod tile
058944	M			1	9g									16th/17th century pottery
058944	N			1	7g									Med/late med pottery
059942	B			1	3g									16th/17th century pottery
059942	D			1	2g									17th century pottery.
059942	E	1	8g											P-med/mod tile.
059942	F	1	8g											P-med/mod tile.
059942	G			1	6g									16th/17th century pottery
059943	A	3	33g	1	14g									P-med/mod tile. 7th century pottery
059943	B			1	8g									16th/17th century. pottery
059943	E	1	18g							1	45g			P-med/mod tile.
059943	F	1	12g											P-med/mod tile.
059944	B			1	14g									16th/17th century. pottery
059944	C	1	76g											P-med tile
059944	E	1	5g	1	3g									P-med/mod tile. 17th century pottery
059944	H			1	17g									17th century pottery and tile
059945	A	1	24g	1	3g									Brick, 17th century pottery.
059945	E			1	6g									16th/17th century pottery
TOTALS:		33	590g	110	1201g	1	12g	1	15g	2		3	147g	

Table 2: Finds From Trenches

Feat. No	Cntxt. No	CBM		Pottery		Bone		Op. Sig.		Iron No	Glass		Stone		Flint		Shell		Clay Pipe		Fired Clay		Cu Alloy No
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
901	900			2	18g																		
1108	1105			1	2g																		
1108	1107					3	3g																
	1200									1													
	1600			1	23g																		
	1900			1	8g																		
	2000			3	25g																		
	2100									1													
	2200	2	266g	31	346g	5	11g			1	1	1g						6	16g				
2400	2402	1	9g																				
	2403												1	11g									
	2500									1													
	2600			10	56g	1	7g				1	1g											
2603	2601			8	158g												1	78g					
	2700			3	52g																		
	2701																						
	2800	2	47g	6	59g															1	3g		
	2900	4	260g	10	208g															1	3g		
	3000			4	168g																		
	3211			3	29g																		
	3300			2	4g																		
	3301			2	4g																		
3303	3306					6	98g																
3303	3307																1	3g					
	3400			2	48g																		
	3403			2	18g																		
	3500			1	9g																		
3600	3602					1	74g																
3603	3605					4	9g																
3608	3609					22	32g																
3618	3612			1	96g					3													
3622	3619																						
	3700	4	88g	23	249g	1	20g																
3801	3806			2	3g																		
	3900			4	21g																		
	4100	1	63g	1	80g																		
	4400			4	36g																		
	4500			10	156g																		
	4600			3	61g																		
4602	4601			1	98g																		
4705	4704			2	22g																		
	4802			1	1g																		
	4900			2	3g																		
	5000			3	75g																		
5901	5902					3	48g																
	6000	1	6g		6/46g																		
	6005				4/4g																		
	6200	1	6g																				
6202	6201					39	494g																
6204	6203					5	122g																
6206	6205			5	103g	19	117g																
6204	6208			2	14g																		
6206	6209			29	692g	12	45g																
	6400	96	1741g	26	191g	17	75g	2	38g	5	1	7g											
	6401	300	7735g	19	130g	13	73g	10	295g	2			1	212g									
	6402	17	1018g	20	201	28	619g	5	258g	5													
	6403	18	1072g	6	78g	10	106g																
	6405	35	2538g	10	121g	32	428g																
	6409	6	2917g	1	11g																		
	6500	4	201g	5	25g	14	59g																
	6501	3	22g	5	19g	8	126g																
6505	6502			8	114g	48	448g																
6505	6503			3	34g	5	46g																
6509	6504	13	1140g	41	1032g	68	1064g			1													
6509	6506			2	39g	3	27g																

Feat. No	Cntxt. No	CBM		Pottery		Bone		Op. Sig.		Iron No	Glass		Stone		Flint		Shell		Clay Pipe		Fired Clay		Cu Alloy No
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
	6508	1	346g	8	144g																		
	6600		1/650g																				
	6601			3	12g	28	4249g																
	6602			2	11g	1	3g																
	6603	2	4g	8	33g	3	7g																
	6605	3	390	1	2g	18	58g																
	6607	2	15g	1	4g	20	352g																
6604	6608			2	67g	1	156g																
	7003			1	42g																		
TOTALS:		524	20534g	367	5305g	438	8976g	17	591g	20	5	31g	3	511g	1	3g	1	78g	10	30g	7	121g	1

4.2 Machine Trenches Finds

4.2.1 Pottery

The Roman pottery was in extremely good condition, with large, unabraded sherds for the most part, the exceptions being the softly fired finewares. The range and quality of table, kitchen and storage wares are comparable to that from the late Roman occupation in the market town at Cirencester, 8km to the north. Much of it cannot be closely dated, the pottery occurring in fabrics found throughout the Roman period, and it is typical of many Roman pottery assemblages.

Late Roman pottery was recovered from Trenches 44, 62, 64, 65 and 66. Body sherds of grog-tempered greyware were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 44, but the material from the other trenches was associated with features and structures. Pits 6204 and 6206 in Trench 62 contained sherds of the same large, everted rim, necked storage jar made from a grog-tempered fabric with sparse pieces of quartz or flint and decorated with tooled parallel lines on the body of the vessel. The interior surface of this closed-form jar is considerably abraded from use, such as stirring or scraping. The lower fill of 6206 (context 6209) also contained sherds from two fourth century shell-gritted vessels (cf. Rigby 1982; Keely 1986).

A variety of late Roman coarseware pottery was recovered in association with the structures identified in Trench 64. These included coarse and fine grog-tempered wares, orange and grey coarsewares, Black Burnished-type wares, shell-gritted wares, and micaceous wares. Where rims are present the forms are always of late Roman types similar to ones from Cirencester (Rigby 1982, figs 44-6; Keely 1986). Late Roman finewares were also identified; there were sherds from several third to fourth century Oxfordshire colour-coated wares (Young 1977), including one from a beaker or flagon with circle decoration, sherds from a fine rouletted vessel of unknown source in an orange-grey fabric, and a colour-coated sherd of unknown source. There was also an abraded, footring base from a second to third century Central Gaulish vessel.

The pottery from the ditches in Trench 65 was similar in date to that from Trench 64. Ditch 6505 contained late Roman, softly fired sherds of Oxfordshire colour-coated fabric, as well as other sandy and grog-tempered wares that cannot be closely dated. No pottery was recovered from the primary fill of this ditch. Ditch 6509 contained a large collection of both coarsewares and finewares many of which, including a rim from a Gillam 238/Hartley 2 type mortarium that originated from either Kent or Gaul, occur throughout the Roman period. In addition there was a rim of later third to fourth century date from an Oxfordshire burnt whiteware mortarium (Young

1977), the base from a fourth century shell-tempered vessel (Rigby 1982; Keely 1986, 163), and late Roman Black Burnished ware sherds from a dropped flange bowl and everted rim jars, one of which has obtuse lattice decoration, found in the primary fill (6508). The finewares include both late Roman colour-coated wares and one rim from a Rhenish ware-type fine orange colour-coated beaker of possible Central Gaulish source, possibly dated to the second to third century.

Trench 66 revealed layers of topsoil, subsoil and alluvium containing sandy and grog-tempered sherds of Roman pottery, only some of which could be dated to the late Roman period, and one rim fragment of early Roman South Gaulish samian. These layers sealed the material from ditch 6604 which contained sherds of third to fourth century Oxfordshire white colour-coated, redware mortarium (Young 1977), and grog-tempered sherds.

Post-medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil in Trenches 7, 16, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26-30, 33-35, 37, 39, 41, 45- 50, 60 and 64, as well as the disturbed late Roman context, 6605. In Trench 36, contexts 3612 and 3619, in the small pits 3618 and 3622, also contained post-medieval pottery. The majority of this pottery comprises red coarsewares dated to the seventeenth century and later, with sherds of more recent buffwares and Westerwald-type stoneware from Trench 20 and 37, and whitewares from Trenches 38, 39, 48, 49 and 60. One of the redware sherds is a large bowl or platter rim with sgraffito (incised) combed decoration from Trench 22.

No sherds of prehistoric or medieval pottery were identified amongst the pottery from the trenches.

4.2.2 Ceramic Building Material

Roman period ceramic building material was found in abundance and in good condition in Trenches 64, 65, and 66, while a very small possible fragment of Roman tile was also found in the topsoil of Trench 62. The collection is consistent with the presence of one or more substantial buildings of quality, and may include the presence of a bathhouse. The range comprises roof tiles (*imbrex* and *tegulae*) box tiles, and a variety of thick, flat tiles which are referred to as bricks and may have had many possible functions such as for flooring, facing and creating columns for a hypocaust structure (Brodribb 1987). The original size of these thicker tiles cannot be determined, due to their fragmentary condition, but one very large example is likely to be an example of a *bipedale*, used in the building of hypocaust stacks. Much of the ceramic building material display combed marks and mortar. One slightly curved tile has a cut-out typical of box tiles (Brodribb 1987, figs. 32, 33, 53), and one of the thick tiles has *opus signinum* (see 4.3.3) adhering to it, clearly indicating its function as a floor tile. The majority of fragments were found in association with late Roman pottery.

Post-medieval and later ceramic building materials, comprising brick and roofing tile, were identified in Trenches 22, 28, 29, 37, 41, and 60. The pieces from Trenches 29 and 41 are glazed.

4.2.3 Opus Signinum

A number of pieces of *opus signinum*, a very hard waterproof cement, coloured red by the addition of crushed tile and often used in bathhouses, were found with the late Roman pottery and ceramic building materials from Trench 64 only, and these indicate a structure of some quality in the area.

4.2.4 Metalwork

Ironwork found in association with late Roman pottery was recovered from Trenches 64 and 65, and consists of nails and unidentified objects. One lead object, also found in the topsoil of Trench 64, appears to be a repair plug or similar rivet-like object.

Post-medieval and later ironwork were recovered from Trenches 12, 21, 22, 25, 33 and 36, and consist of a horseshoe (1200), a spanner (2100), a possible latch lifter (2200), part of a hinge (3612) and nails (2500; 3301; 3612). A single copper alloy strip with rivet holes was found in Trench 36 (3612), in association with a piece of iron hinge, nails and post-medieval or later pottery.

4.2.5 Glass

Only post-medieval or modern glass was found. Vessel and window glass were identified from Trenches 22, 26 and 39; all associated with post-medieval or later material.

4.2.6 Clay Tobacco Pipe

Fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from Trenches 22, 27, 28, 32 and 46.

4.2.7 Stone

Two oolitic limestone roofing tiles were identified, one from a subsoil context in the area of Roman activity (6401) which has a nail hole and one from a post-medieval topsoil context (4500). One piece of slate roofing tile, unassociated with any other artefacts, was recovered from Trench 24.

4.2.8 Flint

One piece of worked flint was recovered from context 3307.

4.2.9 Shell

A single complete oyster valve was recovered from subsoil (2601) in Trench 26 associated with post-medieval red earthenware pottery.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

Four bulk samples were taken from waterlogged contexts from the site.

1. Primary fill of ditch 6505 in Trench 65, sample 6510 (context 6507).
2. Primary fill of ditch 6509 in Trench 65, sample 6511 (context 6508). Late Roman, third to fourth century AD.
3. Secondary fill of ditch 6604 in Trench 66, sample 6606 (context 6605). Mixed date.
4. Primary fill of ditch 6604, sample 6609 (context 6608). Late Roman, third to fourth century AD.

These samples were processed following Wessex Archaeology standard procedure and assessed. In all cases 1 litre of moist soil was processed and the flots retained on a 300µm sieve. The residue was processed through a nest of sieves with mesh apertures of 5.6mm, 2mm, 1mm and 500µm. The 5.6mm and 2mm fractions were fully sorted for waterlogged seeds, plant matter, small mammal and amphibian bones and terrestrial and fresh and brackish water molluscs. These sorted fractions were then air dried. The remaining fractions have been stored unsorted in water. The flots were rapidly scanned.

5.2 Assessment

The rapidly assessed material comprised only the flots and material extracted from the 5.6mm and 2mm fractions (see above). This does not, therefore, include any of the finer (<2mm) material retained in archive. The assessment must, therefore, be considered a preliminary indicator of preservation and palaeo- environmental potential. The assessment is biased towards the larger, and better preserved material.

The preliminary results of the scan of the flots and extracted material were:-

Sample	Bone	Seeds	Plant Matter	Mollusca
6510	x	x*	x*	x*
6511	x	x	x	x
6606	-	x	x	x
6609	x	x	x	x

X = present * particularly rich sample.

5.3 Results

Plant Macrofossils

	6510	6511	6606	6609
Cereal grains	X		X	
?cf. <i>Triticum aestivum</i>	X			
Fruit seeds/stones	X			
Weed seeds	X	X	X	X
Plant material	X	X	X	

Mollusca

	6510	6511	6606	6609
Terrestrial				
<i>Trichia hispida</i>	X		X	
Limacidae	X			
<i>Vallonia cf. pulchella</i>	X			
Fresh-brackish water				
<i>Valvata cf. piscinalis</i>	X			
<i>Gyraulus albus</i>	X			
<i>Anisus leucostoma</i>		X		
<i>Planorbis cf. carinatus</i>		X		
Planorbids	X	X		
<i>Bythinia tentaculata</i>		X		
<i>Lymnaea</i> sp.			X	
Mollusc fragments				X

Bone

	6510	6511	6606	6609
Unid. Mammal			X	
<i>Bufo</i> sp./ <i>Rana</i> sp.	X			
cf. Bird				X
Small mammal/bird	X			X

5.4 Preliminary Comments

5.4.1 Plant Macrofossils

Waterlogged material was preserved in all samples. One sample in particular, 6510, produced a diverse array of material together with relatively large quantities.

5.4.2 Mollusca

Molluscs were noted from most samples and both fresh- brackish water and terrestrial species were noted. Only one sample, 6609, was particularly poorly preserved.

5.4.3 Bone

Small mammal (including frog and toad) and possible bird bones were noted.

5.4.4 Potential

All samples have the potential to provide evidence of the economy and floral environment on the basis of the waterlogged plant remains scanned. One sample in particular, 6510, is particularly rich. Further information of the local (water) environments can be provided by mollusc analysis. Small mammal bones seem to confirm the localised watery environments.

The samples contain a variety of well-preserved biological material and their analysis is recommended not only on the basis of preservation, but also due to the comparative rarity of such data in north Wiltshire (Maltby *et al.* forthcoming). This information will not only contribute to this site, but also to our understanding of the Roman landscape and economy of the Thames floodplain.

6 DISCUSSION

The evidence for the earliest activity within the application area probably lies in Area 2, where the rectangular cropmark can be considered to have been a prehistoric enclosure, although dating evidence was lacking. Pits 3303 and 3402, close to the enclosure ditch, also indicate archaeological activity in this area, although they too did not contain any dating evidence. The sinuous cropmark on its east side was almost certainly a natural phenomenon.

The ditches observed throughout the application area may belong to any, if not all, periods. Given the propensity to flooding in the region, one may assume that drainage channels have been dug from time to time since the location was first settled. Being primarily functional they are not likely to differ in style from period to period, and like the hedgerows that they often accompany, may well continue in use for centuries. It is likely, however, that at least some of these features, such as the ditches in Trench 36, are Roman, and probably part of the field system belonging to the settlement at Cleveland Farm, and to the site located in Area 1. Within the ditches, the high water table has preserved a range of flora and fauna in excellent condition. Those water-logged features that also contain datable material promise to provide more information on former ecological conditions, including agricultural practices, if analysed further.

The range and quantity of Roman material recovered from the trenches across the earthworks in Area 1 includes roofing material of both tile and stone, and some of the more sophisticated types of flooring material, i.e. *opus signinum* and hypocaust (underfloor heating system) tiles. Although only a short section of actual stone wall was discovered, there can be no doubt that beneath the earthworks lie the remains of a substantial building, which once belonged to one of the wealthier Romano-Britons of the later imperial period (third to fourth century AD). On the evidence available this building appears to be far more substantial than any found at Cleveland Farm, but from the pottery evidence, possibly of much shorter duration and to have been contemporary only with the last century or two of the occupation of that site. However, the evaluation was aimed at preservation, and used as little intrusive excavation as possible, therefore only the upper destruction deposits were examined. Earlier Roman material and features may have been present elsewhere in the area of earthworks, or below the recorded deposits.

7 ARCHIVE

The archive will be deposited at Thamesdown Museum, Swindon, Wiltshire. It is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under site code W493. It comprises:

1. The trench summary records
2. The context and sample records
3. The fieldwalking and context finds records
4. The site day book
5. The drawings
6. The photographs, monochrome negatives and colour slides
7. The finds
8. The report

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APPENDIX: Summary of Trench Information

In the following table, the data from each trench is summarised. Features are noted where they occur, as are topsoil finds.

Trench No.	Topsoil with Finds	Depth toGravel	Observations
1		0.75	0.5m alluvium and 0.1m peat overlie the gravel
2		0.40	0.2m alluvium overlies gravel
3		0.40	No features
4		0.35	2 shallow clay-filled linear features 1.4m broad, 0.25m deep No artefacts. Probably natural phenomena.
5		0.45	0.15m of alluvium.
6		0.60	0.25m alluvium and 0.25m peat.
7		0.60	0.20m alluvium, 0.10m peat.
8		0.45	0.20m alluvium.
9		0.30	0.10m alluvium. 2 post-medieval pottery recovered from the watercourse 901
10		0.65	0.35m alluvium, 0.16m peat.
11		0.45	0.15m alluvium. 2 ditches 1108 and 1113 - see above.
12	1200	0.55	0.40m alluvium.
13		0.70	0.50m alluvium
14		0.95	0.40m alluvium, 0.05m peat.
15		0.40	No features
16	1600	0.25	Undated small ditch or land drain (without pipe), and undated posthole.
17		0.65	0.10m alluvium. Six bands of clay cross this trench - presumed natural.
18		0.40	0.15-0.25m alluvium
19	1900	0.40	0.10-0.25m alluvium
20	2000	0.35	No features
21	2100	0.35	0-0.20m alluvium
22	2200	0.35	0-0.15m alluvium
23		0.30	0.15m alluvium
24		0.30	Undated flat-bottomed ditch or watercourse, 2400, 0.9m wide and 0.3m deep.
25	2500	0.30	Undated ditch 0.8m wide, 0.3m deep
26	2600	0.35	Known earthwork, see section 3.4.2
27	2701	0.30	No features
28	2800	0.30	No features
29	2900	0.30	No features
30	3000	0.30	No features
31		0.35	No features
32	3211	0.35	An undated irregular pit, 3206, 1.0m across and 0.35m deep. A pair of parallel ditches, 3209 and 3212, 1.0m across and 0.4m deep, 2.5m apart. An undated ditch, 3202, 1.0m wide 0.4m deep.
33	3300	0.40	See section 3.4.1
34	3400/3403	0.30	See section 3.4.1
35	3500	0.25	See section 3.4.1
36		0.60	Ditch 3610 about 3.3m wide running roughly east-west intersected by 3 smaller ditches 3603, 3606, 3608 running north-south. Ground water prevented a full examination of the dating evidence and relationships among these features. Two small pits, 3618 and 3622, each contained burnt material (3617) and (3619) and post medieval pottery. Ditch 3606 has an associated bank (3615) still visible and may likewise be comparatively recent.
37	3700	0.40	A recently dug geological test pit.
38		0.30	Ditch 3801 2.2m wide and 0.7m deep. 17th C potsherds. Parallel undated ditch 3803 6m to the south 1.3m wide and of unknown depth.
39	3900	0.35	No features
40		0.40	2 undated ditches 4001 and 4003 aligned at 90°, 0.8m wide and 0.25m deep. A possible pit was not excavated because of the ground water.

41	4100	0.25	No features
42		0.25	No features
43		0.25	2 pits full of modern refuse, tin cans, bottles, etc.
44	4400	0.55	No features. Late Roman potsherd in the topsoil.
45	4500	0.40	2 overlapping or 1 recut ditch 4502, 4505
46	4600	0.40	Small ditch 4602 obscured by deep ploughmarks.
47		0.40	Shallow depression 3m wide, 4705, with an uneven rutted base and ditch on western side. Aligned with small ditch in Trench 46 and Wheatleys farmhouse and may be a former track or lane. Pair of adjacent small gullies 4701, 4703, 0.7m wide, 0.15m deep and 1m apart, 20m east of the track.
48	4802	0.60	0-0.25m alluvium. Small slightly curved gully, 0.3m wide, 0.08m deep, with snails in the fill but no datable artefacts.
49		0.35	No features
50	5000	0.50	Undated pit 5006, 0.7m wide, 0.3m deep
51		0.30	No features
52		0.55	2 small ditches 5201 and 5203, 0.4m wide, and 1 larger ditch 5205, 1.5m wide. Not excavated because of ground water.
53		0.40	No features.
54		0.60	0.10m alluvium and 2 watercourses. No features.
55		0.40	0.25m alluvium. No features.
56		0.45	.30m alluvium. No features.
57		0.50	0.35m alluvium. No features.
58		0.40	0-0.1m alluvium. No features.
59		0.35	Ditch 5901 1.5m wide, at least 0.35m deep with a visible bank on either side.
60	6000/6005	0.60	0.40m alluvium. Two small (0.5 and 0.7m wide) ditches or watercourses. Unexcavated because of ground water.
61		0.30	Four ditches, 6101, 6103, 6105, 6107 (0.7 to 1.5m wide, 0.5m deep).
62	6200	0.30	Three pits, 6202, 6204, 6206. See above under Earthworks.
63		0.40	No features.
64		0.60	See section 3.2.2
65		0.40	See section 3.2.2
66		0.40	See section 3.2.2



The Trust for Wessex Archaeology Limited, Portway House,
South Portway Estate, Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wilts. SP4 6EB

Telephone : Salisbury (0722) 326867 Facsimile : (0722) 337562

