

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXXIII

for 1984

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY**

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXXIII

for 1984

Published by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

ISSN 0309-3606

CONTENTS

Officers and Council of the Society, 1983-84

Obituary: Joan Liversidge, 1914-1984 MARY CRA'STER, TIMOTHY POTTER and others	1
Antler Cheekpieces from Edmundsoles, Haslingfield, Cambs. WILLIAM J. BRITNELL	5
Rescue Excavations at Cow Lane, Godmanchester, Cambs. during 1984 DAVID HAIGH	7
A Roman Stone Coffin from Stuntney and Gazetteer of Similar Coffins in Cambridgeshire ALISON TAYLOR	15
Three Anglo-Saxon Cremations from Girton, Cambridgeshire C. J. ARNOLD and J. L. WILKINSON	23
The Churches of Ashley and Silverley ROBERT HALLIDAY	29
Excavation of the Town Ditch at Swavesey, 1984 DAVID HAIGH and others	45
Excavation of a Medieval Bridge and Twelfth-century Cross Shaft at Kings Ripton, Cambridgeshire, 1983. DAVID HAIGH	55
Excavations at Cromwell House, Huntingdon, 1984 DAVID HAIGH	65
The Tomb of Bishop William de Luda: an Architectural Model at Ely Cathedral P. G. LINDLEY	75
<i>Index</i>	88

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS AT COW LANE, GODMANCHESTER, CAMBS.

DURING 1984

DAVID HAIGH

Rescue excavation and survey work were undertaken during the destruction of a Roman and Iron Age cropmark site at Cow Lane, Godmanchester by gravel extraction during 1983-4. It formed part of a larger field system associated with the Roman farmstead and Iron Age settlement at Rectory farm (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 133), which was itself associated with a possible villa lost during the earlier gravel extraction here, when apparently stray finds of worked masonry were recovered (P. Carter, pers. comm.). This part of the site was threatened in December 1983 and a watching brief was arranged on what seemed to be the most important surviving part of the site by Miss Alison Taylor, the County Archaeologist (Fig. 1).

The excavations

During the next four months a series of small excavations funded by the Manpower Services Commission took place, and we would like to record our gratitude to Mr P. Carter the area manager for Redlands Quarries, and his foreman. Without their full co-operation and continued assistance we

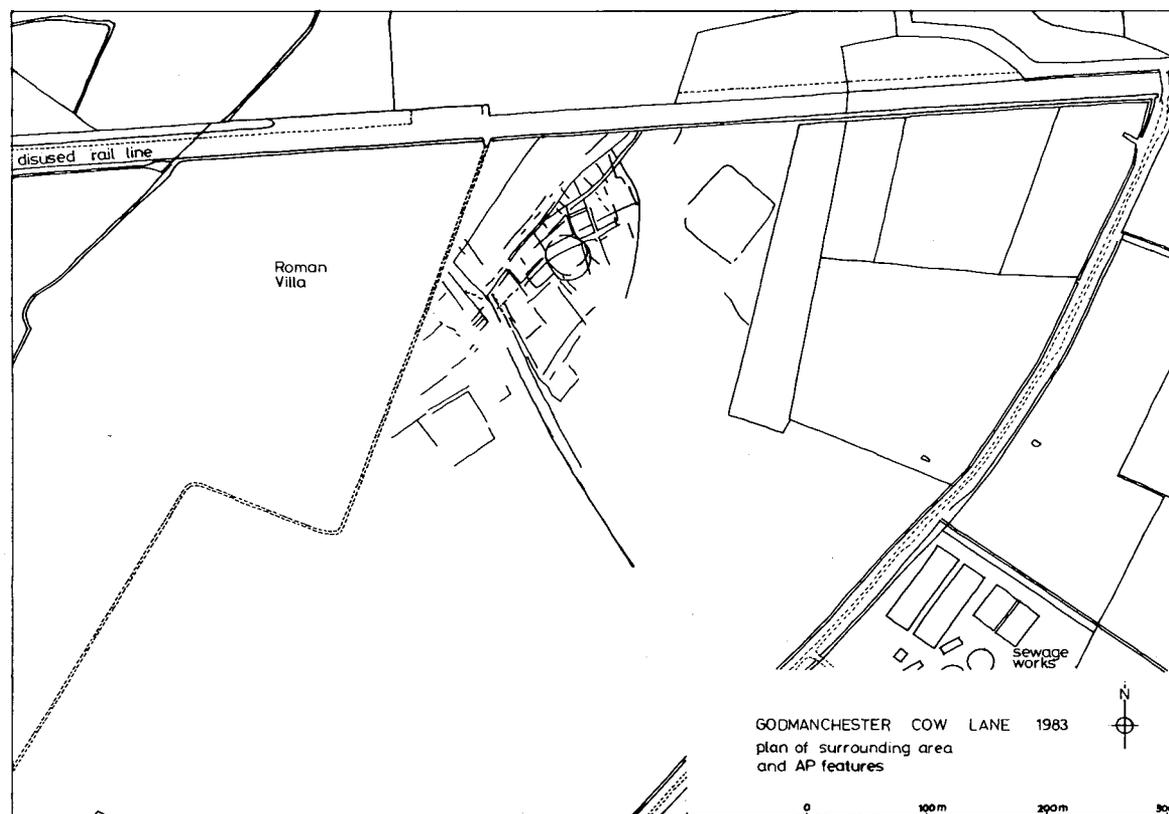


Figure 1. Location plan showing destroyed area and adjacent villa.

would not have had access to those areas where topsoil had already been removed, or been able to control the depth to which the topsoil was stripped from the areas that we had time to examine.

Initial work was carried out by Mr P. Croft. He also arranged for computer-corrected plots to be made from air photographs of the cropmarks produced by the Cambridge University Department of Air Photography. These plots at a scale of 1:10,000 were accurate to within about two metres. During December and January 1983-4 he excavated two small trenches within the cropmark area in order to locate and obtain dating evidence from some of the features shown on the photographs. In April 1984 quarrying recommenced, and at the request of Mr P. Carter a second attempt was made at recording the site by a small team working under Mr D. Haigh (Figs 2 and 3).

It was agreed that the quarry staff should strip the ploughsoil from each area a few days in advance of the rest of the overburden. This enabled planning and selective excavation of part of the site to take place during the next two weeks. Initially a basic grid was laid out, and then the features that showed up after the initial removal of topsoil were recorded by triangulation, and by limited sectioning where time permitted. In this way a basic record was made of some of the features within a 30 × 270 m area in the midst of what appeared to be the main cluster of the cropmarks. Owing to the inclement weather it was not possible to record the positions of all the features that were initially observed before they became obscured by a thin layer of mud (Fig. 4).

During this time a series of ditches were recorded that corresponded with some of the features recorded on the air photographs, as well as a number of both circular and rectangular pits which had not been picked up. Three stone-lined kilns which were almost certainly used for corn drying were also observed, although it was only possible to examine one in detail. This was shown to have been rebuilt at least twice. It was clear however from the surface remains that several other kilns had existed in this area, but without additional time it was not possible to record the remaining 300 × 70 m area as the Manpower Services Commission scheme responsible for supplying the manpower finished. In October 1984 Mr Mark Alexander was able to plot the approximate position of a number of the deeper features that were clearly showing, cut into the top of the underlying gravel. The shallower features had already been lost during the removal of the rest of the overburden. His additions have been incorporated into the published excavation plan.

It must be emphasised that the plans accompanying this report record only those features that were clearly showing at the time that the planning took place. It was clear from Mr Croft's report and from my own work that the apparent absence of cropmarks on the air photographs between the area where we were working and the Scheduled Monument to the north was due to the increase of overburden rather than the absence of archaeological features. The increased depth of the overburden meant that the archaeological features were not cut into the gravel and therefore did not show as anomalies in the drainage of the area.

Conclusions

The results of the excavation can be briefly summarised in the light of the earlier excavations carried out on the adjacent Scheduled Monument by Professor W. H. C. Frend during 1966-9. He discovered evidence for the existence of a Roman aisled barn of second/third-century date with at least five corn drying kilns and a number of other pits and ditches. He also revealed earlier Iron Age occupation on the site as well as Mesolithic and Neolithic activity, but was unable to define these phases of occupation clearly.

Our own excavations clearly showed that we were working in an adjacent part of the same settlement complex with both Early and Late Iron Age occupation preceding Roman cultivation systems which dated from the early second to the late third centuries A.D. We were unable to define which of the many cropmarks clearly belonged to which phase of settlement due to the lack of excavation time, but it was clear that the field system was relaid out on several occasions. As with Professor Frend's excavations, we also noted that there appeared to be a break in activity in the site during the first century A.D., and that activity appeared to have ceased at about the end of the third century. We also noted the presence of Neolithic flints and recovered a fine polished stone axe, although no attempt could be made to record these finds systematically.

It seems likely that we revealed a further part of a large and successful agricultural settlement with the emphasis on corn production. The numerous corn-drying kilns and the possible grain stores

identified from their sunken rectangular foundation trenches go well with the results of Professor Friend's excavations, where he revealed an aisled barn, a type for which there are many other parallels.

Only a summary of the features found on the site is given here, first those found by Mr Croft and then the ones which were recorded by Mr Alexander and myself.

STRATIGRAPHY

The features are listed under three separate site codes. Mr Croft's work was carried out in two small trenches GCL/83/1/1- and GCL/84/2/1-. The other features were recorded under site code GCL/84/1/1- and then numbered consecutively to GCL/84/1/28.

Trench 1 (GCL/83/1/1-) (Figure 2)

This trench revealed the remains of a flat-bottomed steep-sided gully 0.8 m wide and preserved to a depth of 0.4 m (1), as well as two possible postholes (7) and (8). The other features initially identified by him proved on excavation to be areas of root disturbance.

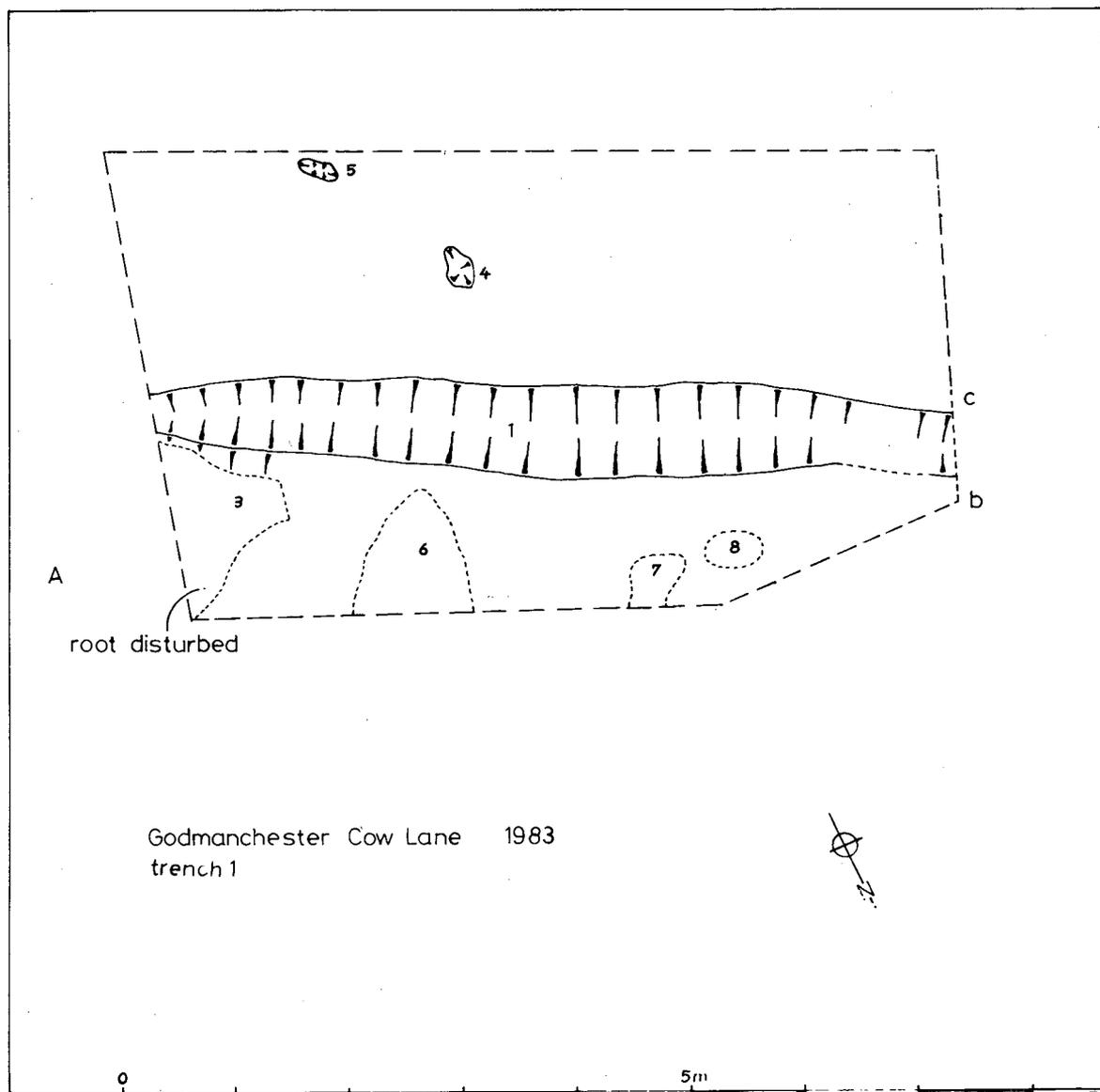


Figure 2. Plan of 1983 excavation by Paul Croft (principal features).

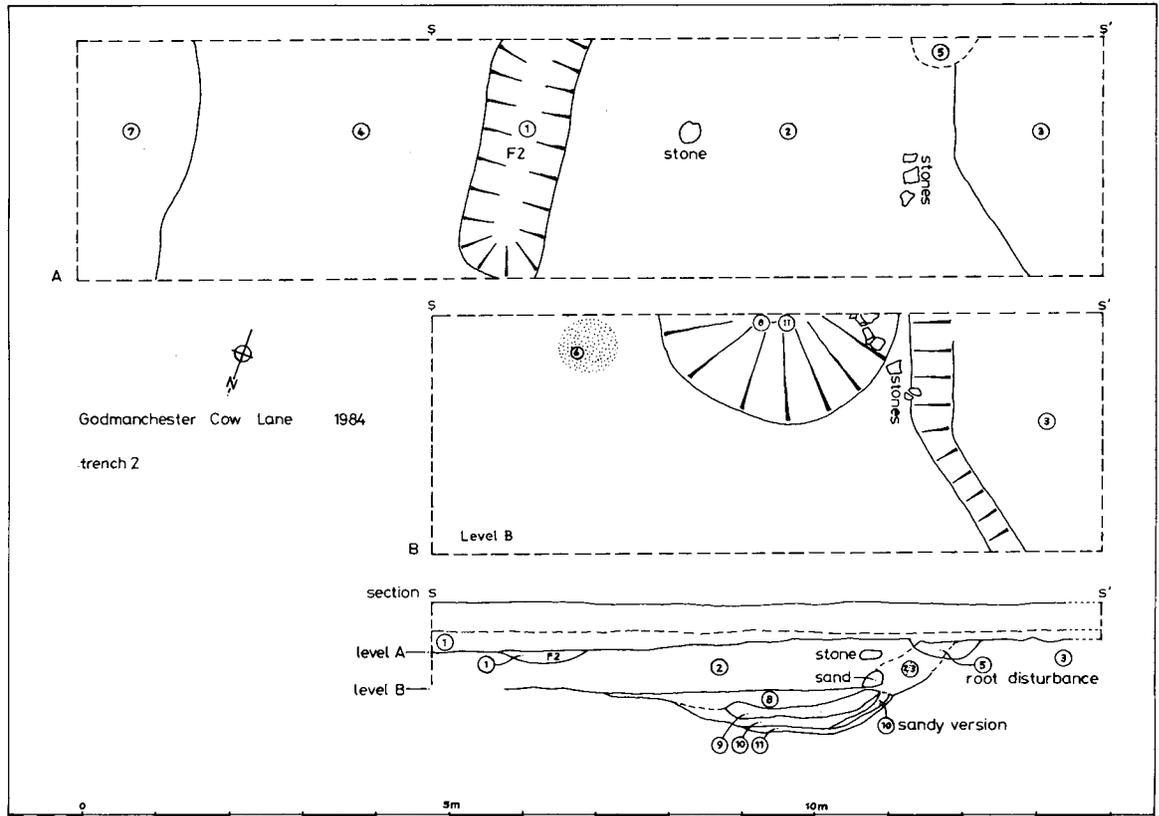


Figure 3. Plan of 1984 excavation by Paul Croft (principal features).

Trench 2 (GCL/84/2/1-) (Figure 3)

This trench contained two separate layers of features, first a large pit-like feature containing a series of charcoal-rich layers (8–11). This was revealed in the section and its full extent is unknown. Adjacent to this was a thin spread of charcoal and burnt daub (6) cut into the disturbed subsoil (3). This layer was covered by a build-up of fine sandy silt deposits (2, 4 and 7) to a depth of c. 0.15 m. Into this was cut a narrow V-shaped ditch which would have originally been 1.2 m deep. Adjacent to this was a scatter of stone fragments.

GCL/84/1/1-28 (Figure 4)

(1) V-shaped ditch running N–S across the site and surviving to a depth of c. 1.00 m. Filled with a dark brown sandy loam 10YR 3/2 over slightly more silty darker deposits which in turn rested on an initial silting which reflected more closely the gravelly subsoil into which the feature was cut at the point where we sectioned it. This feature, like the others excavated here, seemed to have been filled with material washed into them from the adjacent ground surfaces. This means that the fill of the excavated features gave some idea of which areas had a build-up of organic and domestic rubbish around them.

(2) V-shaped ditch running parallel to (1); both features were only exposed during cleaning of this area by hand, as the upper fills were virtually identical to the surrounding subsoil. This meant that only a short length of each of these two features was clearly visible. This feature seemed to be shallower than (1) and may well have had a more U-shaped profile. It was not however fully excavated. Both these ditches seemed to have been following a slightly curved course. Both these features would have been approximately 2 m deep, allowing for the depth of soil removed from this area by machine. It is tempting to suggest that this ditch is the same feature that shows clearly on the air photograph plot of the site, and that it is the same as the ditch which was unexcavated but recorded lying between features (10) and (15).

(3) The shallow remains of a ditch-like feature that was c. 1 m deep and survived the scraping of the site only in short stretches. This was however clearly distinguished where it survived, because it was filled with a darker sandy clay silt (10YR 3/4) rather than the lighter soils of the majority of the other features. It was not possible to be certain of its shape due to the poor state of survival of the feature; however, it seemed to have a U-shaped profile and was approximately 0.5 m wide.

(4) Shallow V-shaped ditch which would have been c. 1.5 m deep. Filled with a sandy silt loam (7.5YR 3/4) with slightly coarser sandy initial silting where it cut into the gravel.

(5, 5a) Substantial V-shaped ditch, apparently recut on a slightly different alignment from (9). This survived

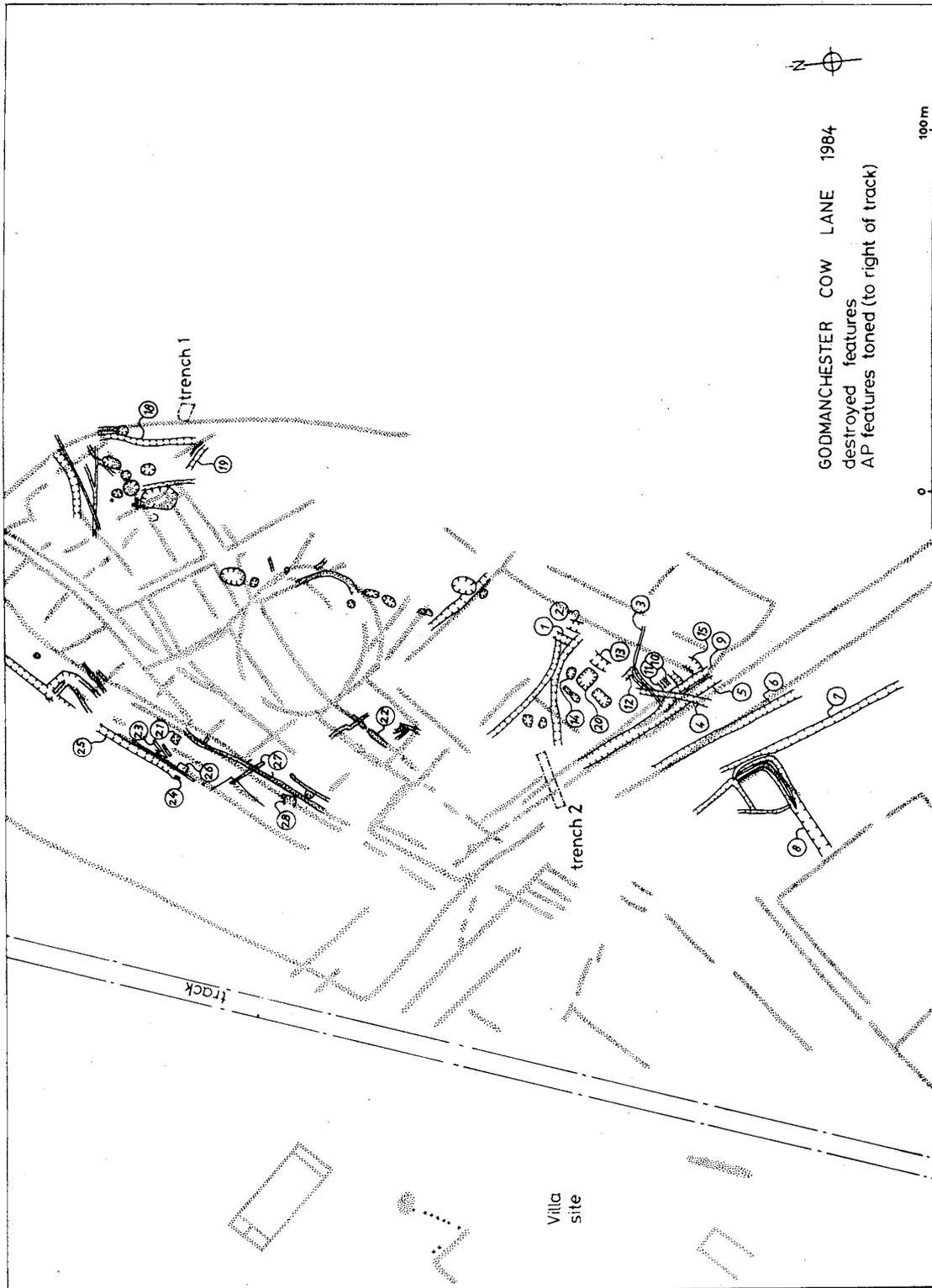


Figure 4. Cropmarks and excavated features in 1984.

to a depth of 1.2 m and was almost 2 m wide for the whole of the exposed length. The fill within this feature was similar to that found in the other ditches, with the exception of the upper fill which was a fine sandy silt loam. After the removal of this upper fill the lower levels were renumbered (5*a*). The initial silting here was almost pure gravel washed from the sides of the ditch to reduce the V- to a shallower U-shaped feature and reducing its depth by almost 0.3 m. This feature could be traced to the very edge of the quarried area and is shown clearly on the air photograph plot, as is feature (6).

(6) V-shaped ditch of similar size to (5) and running parallel to it. This feature too was cut sufficiently deeply into the underlying gravel for it to be preserved after the other features had been lost at the edge of the quarry.

(7) V-shaped ditch of similar size to (5) and (6) and running parallel to them. This was not fully sectioned due to a lack of time, but appeared to be similar to the others. It is strange that this feature does not seem to show as a crop mark whilst the others which are so close stand out so clearly. It is probable that the explanation for this lies in the shape of the slight gravel outcrop, which correlated with the clearest distribution of the cropmarks here.

(8) This at first sight appeared as a small rectangular area, defined by several phases of recut shallow ditches filled with a coarse sandy clay loam with a high content of charcoal, although there was no sign of burning having taken place in or near any of the excavated areas. Closer investigation of this area showed that the ditches were all part of a series of recuts of a right-angled corner of a larger enclosure which was partially recorded on the air photographs. It was hoped that the reason for the mass of charcoal in these ditches would become clear if the area was partially excavated. Sections cut through these ditches showed that they were all shallow, with none of them being more than 1 m deep, given the estimated depth of the removed topsoil. The charcoal fragments were regrettably too decomposed to retain any clear structure. After cutting a couple of sections and cleaning the area for recording, it was decided not to concentrate on the area. It was hoped to return to it during the course of the summer, but this proved impossible and the opportunity to investigate this area in detail was lost.

(9) This appeared to be a recutting of ditch (5); if correctly correlated with the air photograph, this appears to form part of a rectangular enclosure 18 × 27 m. The profile of this feature and its fill were similar to that of (5); however, it was slightly narrower and cut less deeply at the point where it was sectioned.

(10) Short length of a shallow ditch exposed when the area around the junction of ditches (4), (5) and (9) was being cleaned. This was a flat-bottomed feature *c.* 1 m wide which would have been approximately 1–1.25 m deep before the removal of the topsoil. It was filled with a fine sandy silt.

(11) A short length of ditch similar in almost every aspect to (10), which ran parallel to it. It is possible that these two were performing a similar function and that one replaced the other.

(12) The remnant of a ditch running parallel to (10) and (11) which continued further eastwards before turning to form the second side of a rectangular enclosure. Again the feature was obviously a fairly shallow one, being no more than *c.* 1 m deep before loss of the topsoil here.

(13) Possible continuation of ditch (1), although it is wider and is more likely to be another rectangular shallow pit similar in shape to (20) and its unnumbered neighbour. It was not possible to define the north and south edges of this feature clearly, nor to excavate it.

(14) Partly excavated rectangular pit similar to (20) but apparently smaller.

(15) Partly excavated V-shaped ditch.

(16) V-shaped ditch at north end of the site.

(17) Shallow U-shaped curving ditch that appears to be part of the circular cropmark recorded on the air photographs. This feature had a coarse sandy silty clay fill with flecks of charcoal in it. The finds suggest that it was part of the Iron Age settlement, although not enough of the feature was excavated to be certain of this.

(18) Unexcavated ditch recorded as a soilmark only. This appeared to have a darker fill than the other features in this area, which appeared on initial inspection to be a fine sandy silt loam.

(19) Unexcavated ditch.

(20) Two rectangular flat-bottomed pits with straight sides and rounded corners which were cut 0.75 m into the subsoil. Given that approximately 1 m of topsoil had been removed from this area it is suggested that originally these were between 1.5 and 2 m deep. Only one of these (20) was partly excavated, but the neighbouring feature was only cleaned and photographed, and partial excavation was abandoned due to lack of time.

All these rectangular pit-like features seem to have had a much more uniform fill, showing that they were not exposed long – or weathering would have taken place – and that they were all filled with domestic rubbish. It is probable that these features were cellars or hollowed areas below slight storage barns or small huts within a field system rather than just rubbish pits.

The following features were observed but not excavated by Mr M. Alexander. The observations were made during the removal of the lower levels of overburden, so only the traces of the deepest features in this area were recorded.

(21) Oval pit.

(22) Series of intersecting ditches of which only traces remained.

(23) Two intersecting ditches.

(24) Ditch.

(25) Ditch.

(26) Rectangular pit.

(27) Ditch.

(28) Rectangular pit.

The other unexcavated features included at least three and possibly up to six corn-drying kilns. These showed as oval or circular spreads of charcoal with scatters of burnt stone and fragments of tile. Only one of these was cleaned and photographed; this consisted of an oval setting of tile and sandstone blocks on a cement base, with sandstone blocks forming a kerb round the outside and defining the stokehole. The upper levels had been destroyed, but there was evidence that the kiln sides had been rebuilt at least once, as a row of blocks survived on a slightly different alignment adjacent to one of the kiln sides.

THE POTTERY

Mrs J. Pullinger

The pottery recovered from this area of the Cow Lane site suggests that the area was occupied during the Iron Age, and from the second half of the second century to the late third century in the Roman period. There is apparently a break in the occupation that coincides with the start of the Roman occupation. Early Iron Age sherds were found in ditch (6) and in ditches (1, 4 and 5a) where they occurred with Romano-British sherds. Feature (3) in GCL/83/1 (root disturbance), contained Late Iron Age sherds (Belgic) and four other sherds of Iron Age 'A' type. All the early sherds were black or buff, some showing signs of burnishing, with one exception, a fragment of shell- and grog-tempered ware.

Iron Age sherds also came from features (22), (25) and (26), which were observed during the final stages of stripping. These deposits were not excavated, but were recorded as traces cut into the underlying gravel. The finds were recovered at this level as they lay on the newly exposed surface. There were only seven finds in all from these three features.

All the ditches with the exception of ditch (6) contained Romano-British sherds. These included imported Samian ware, one with a potter's stamp (?AESTIVI) from Central Gaul, one Rhenish ware base, Nene Valley colour-coated wares, black-burnished Dorset type ware, and locally made coarse grey, black and shell-tempered wares. Features (1), (23), (24) and (27) all produced Romano-British sherds, but again in insufficient quantity to provide a firm date for the features.

Surface finds also collected by Mr Alexander included a fragment of a stamped Samian base from a large bowl and a fragment of a decorated Samian vessel, possibly of Form 37. These pieces are probably of second-century date. A piece of red-polished ware, probably a bowl with a wide-flanged rim dating from the mid to late third century, was also found.

The excavated area (Trench I) produced similar sherds with the addition of one amphora fragment and six mortaria fragments. The finds in this area may well have been dumped from the neighbouring villa.

The presence of Nene Valley colour-coated ware (mostly from the third century) and the absence of late third- and fourth-century red-polished Oxford type ware indicate a date range of mid to late second century to the second half of the third century.

Samian

Most of the fragments were of plain bowls or cups, but there were three sherds of Dr. Form 37 decorated bowls and one profile of Dr. Form 32 with part of a potter's stamp, FLO – probably FLORI from Central Gaul, which came from feature (13).

Ditch (1) contained the base of a bowl with a potter's stamp, ?AESTIVI, from Central Gaul and a fragment of an incised decorated vessel which is not commonly found in Britain and probably comes from Eastern Gaul. These sherds appear to range in date from the mid second to early third century.

This report by D. Haigh summarises work carried out at Cow Lane during 1984 by various members of a Manpower Services Commission-funded team working for the County Archaeologist Miss Alison Taylor. There were three main phases of work organised by Mr Paul Croft, myself and Mr Mark Alexander, the findings of which are included here together with a report on the finds provided by Mrs J. Pullinger, whose assistance is much appreciated. The finds and original excavation notes are all deposited at the Norris Museum, St Ives.

