



Bridge Farm 2011-16

Nr. Barcombe Mills, Sussex

(March 2017 edition)

**The excavation of a
Romano-British riverside
settlement**

An interim report by

David Millum, CAP Deputy Director

Website: www.culverproject.co.uk

Cover illustration © Andy Gammon

**An interim summary of the excavation and interpretation
of the Romano-British settlement at
Bridge Farm, Wellingham, Lewes, East Sussex**

From 2011 – 2016 (revised March 2017)

**By David Millum, ACIfA, MA, BA Hons.
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ABSTRACT

This interim report added to at the end of 2016 is aimed more at the general reader than the archaeological specialist. Those wanting more detail for 2013 should go to Rob Wallace's full post-excavation report for the BRF13 excavations which can be found on our website www.culverproject.co.uk. This paper is a broad overview of the highlights of results to date from the excavation and the survey work undertaken during CAP's investigations of the incredible site at Bridge Farm.

It also includes a brief summary of the specialist reports from the 2013 season and some unstructured thoughts about the wider context of the settlement. Being compiled in sections and added to on an annual basis as events unfold it may be prone to some inconsistencies and repetitions, but trust this will not detract from the content too much.

Any interpretation of the results or passages of speculation are entirely mine and may not necessarily reflect fully the views of my CAP colleagues or fellow director. I am a firm believer in open discussion leading to a more balanced view and will therefore be quite happy when some of my ruminations are subsequently improved or even disproved by more considered argument generating amendment and additions to future editions.

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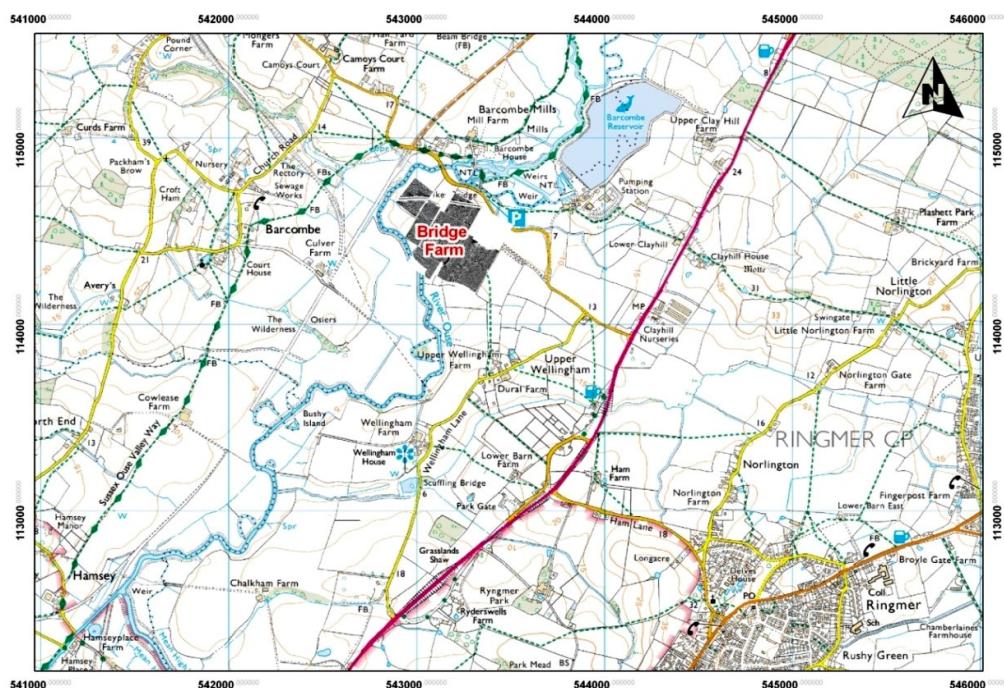
1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1: THE PROJECT

The Culver Archaeological Project involves the local community, students and volunteers in the investigation of the historic environment under the supervision of the directors, Rob Wallace PCIfA and David Millum ACIfA. In late 2012 CAP received a grant from the National Lottery via the Heritage Lottery Fund which enabled the appointment of a commercial contractor, AOC Archaeology, for the 2013 season to assist CAP in excavation, tuition and public relations. In 2014 it was back to the more usual 'CAP-in-hand' state of affairs with the excavation funded by a modest charge made to volunteers, students and campers plus donations from visiting groups, winter talks circuit and any specifically targeted grants. Future funding was made more secure in 2015 by an agreement to provide a fieldwork training course for Canterbury Christ Church University undergraduates, which could also be offered generally at a set fee.

1.2: SITE LOCATION

The site comprises of agricultural land situated in the bend of the River Ouse in the fields forming Bridge Farm, Wellingham, Nr. Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 5BX, centred on National Grid Reference 543200 114400, map reference TQ432144.



1.1: Location map of the Bridge Farm project site

1.3: PROJECT CONTEXT

The investigation of the Romano-British settlement at Bridge Farm forms part of the wider research project of the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP) founded by Robert Wallace in 2005 to investigate the historical environment of the alluvial plain of the Upper Ouse Valley in the parishes of Barcombe and Ringmer. CAP has always endeavoured to conform to a high standard of archaeological research whilst seeking to actively involve the local community in the discovery and interpretation of their landscape heritage and archaeological remains. As well as open area archaeological excavation of targeted areas, the project includes magnetometer and resistivity surveys of the wider area and supervised metal detecting,

The preparatory magnetometer surveys undertaken in 2011 at Bridge Farm indicated a substantial amount of below ground archaeology, showing a large double-ditched enclosure seemingly overlaying a grid of road and boundary ditches. The initial interpretation as a potential Romano-British settlement, surmounted by a later enclosure of possible official origin, was supported by the results from the 2013 excavations. The settlement site is situated on the projected junction of three major Roman roads, which met at a point on the River Ouse where it was still tidal and navigable; making it an attractive site for a trading, and/or administrative, centre. The evidence from the site and surrounding landscape suggests that the archaeology within this previously unknown settlement dates from the early period of Roman occupation in the late 1st century AD through to the start of its collapse in the late 4th.

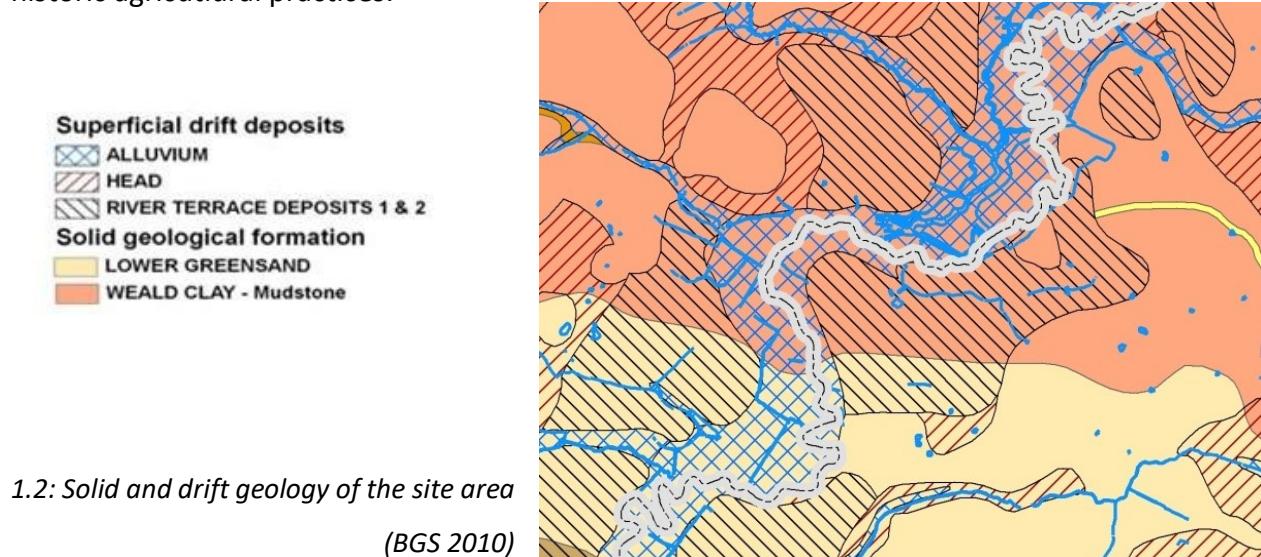
This settlement forms an important part of a wider Romano-British landscape which includes a villa complex, detached bathhouse, industrial sites and road system; all of which has yet to be fully interpreted. The evidence from Bridge Farm will aid the understanding of the development of Roman activity in this area as within this single site, there is the potential for uncovering both the beginning and end of the domestic Roman era in rural East Sussex whilst also offering indications on how this activity affected the native British community.

Currently part of the site comprises intensively farmed arable land subject to regular ploughing using soil compaction avoidance techniques. The site lies across the 5m O.D. contour and is within the River Ouse flood plain. Regular flooding has the potential for damaging and/or altering the archaeology and this combined with a real danger of 'night-hawking' puts the archaeology on this site at risk. The potential risk to the site and the regional, if not national,

importance of the archaeology, especially if evidencing how British people lived under Roman authority, supports the use of the intrusive techniques used in this investigation.

1.4: GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

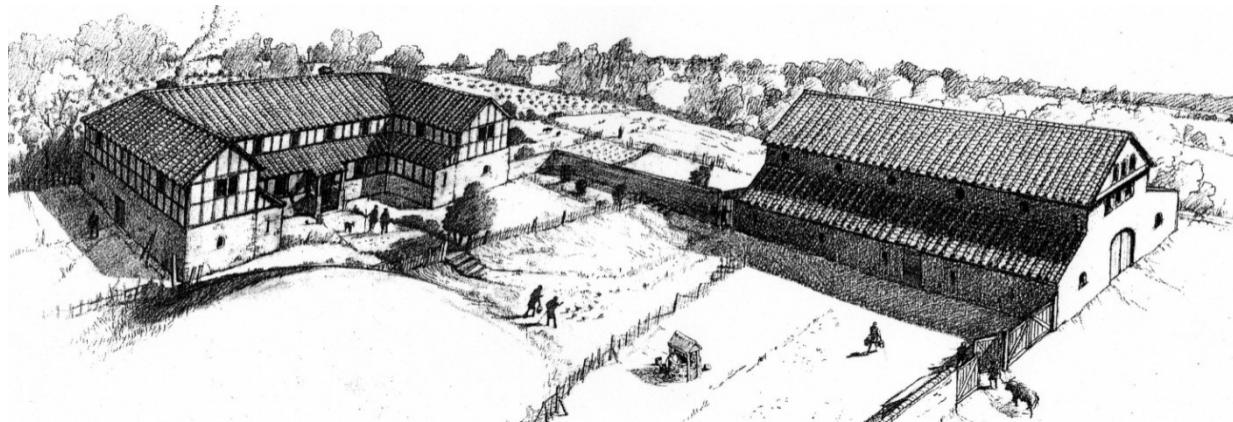
The underlying geological structure of the site is sedimentary with the Ouse valley cutting through east-west bands of Lower Greensand and Weald Clay which are heavily mantled with Head and River Terrace deposits. The site lies on the eastern bank of the Ouse floodplain, north of Lewes, with the soil comprising deep alluvium flanked by margins of first and second terrace valley gravels. The area supports gleyic argillic brown earths of the Waterstock Association soils on the floodplain, with pelo-alluvial gley Fladbury 3 Association soils adjacent to the river. Dr Mike Allen reporting on the soil structure in 2013 highlighted the perniciousity of the localised geology for rapid pedogenesis (soil generation) and also the effects that post depositional gleying and annual flooding are having on the archaeology. This has resulted in a loss of the upper levels of the archaeological record and a blurring of some of the more ephemeral deeper features. This may account for why features clear in the geophysics were often hard to trace in the ground and these conditions also hamper a COSMIC type analysis of historic agricultural practices.



1.5: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the late 1990s a 3rd century, wing corridor villa was discovered in Dunstalls Field on Culver Farm, Barcombe with other casual finds indicating much wider Roman-period activity and possible settlement. This led to the discovery of an adjacent aisled building and a further T-shaped building forming a reasonably sized villa complex. Subsequently a detached bath house

as discovered in the adjacent field. Excavation of these buildings was undertaken at first by the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), and continued by the Mid Sussex Field Archaeology Team (MSFAT) and the Centre for Community Engagement (CCE) at the University of Sussex, until 2012 under the joint directorship of David Rudling, MCIfA and Chris Butler, MCIfA.



1.3: A conjectural reconstruction of the villa complex by Andy Gammon

Concurrently from 2006 the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP), under director Robert Wallace, was investigating the wider historical landscape around the villa complex; discovering a substantial Roman road and instigating an extensive programme of geophysical surveys, systematic field walking, evaluation trenching and open area excavation along the road's corridor, to the west of the River Ouse at Culver and Cowlease Farms, Barcombe (Millum & Wallace 2012; Millum 2014). This work has identified several new sites of roadside activity, including industrial sites and potential ritual sites. Research by CAP has also revealed activity from the Prehistoric period within the surrounding area, including several instances of Middle Bronze Age activity, one of which in an area known as The Wilderness produced a MBA stake indicating one of the earliest waterlogged sites discovered in Sussex (Allen 2010).

2. 2011-2012: INITIAL SURVEY & DESK-BASED ASSESSMENTS

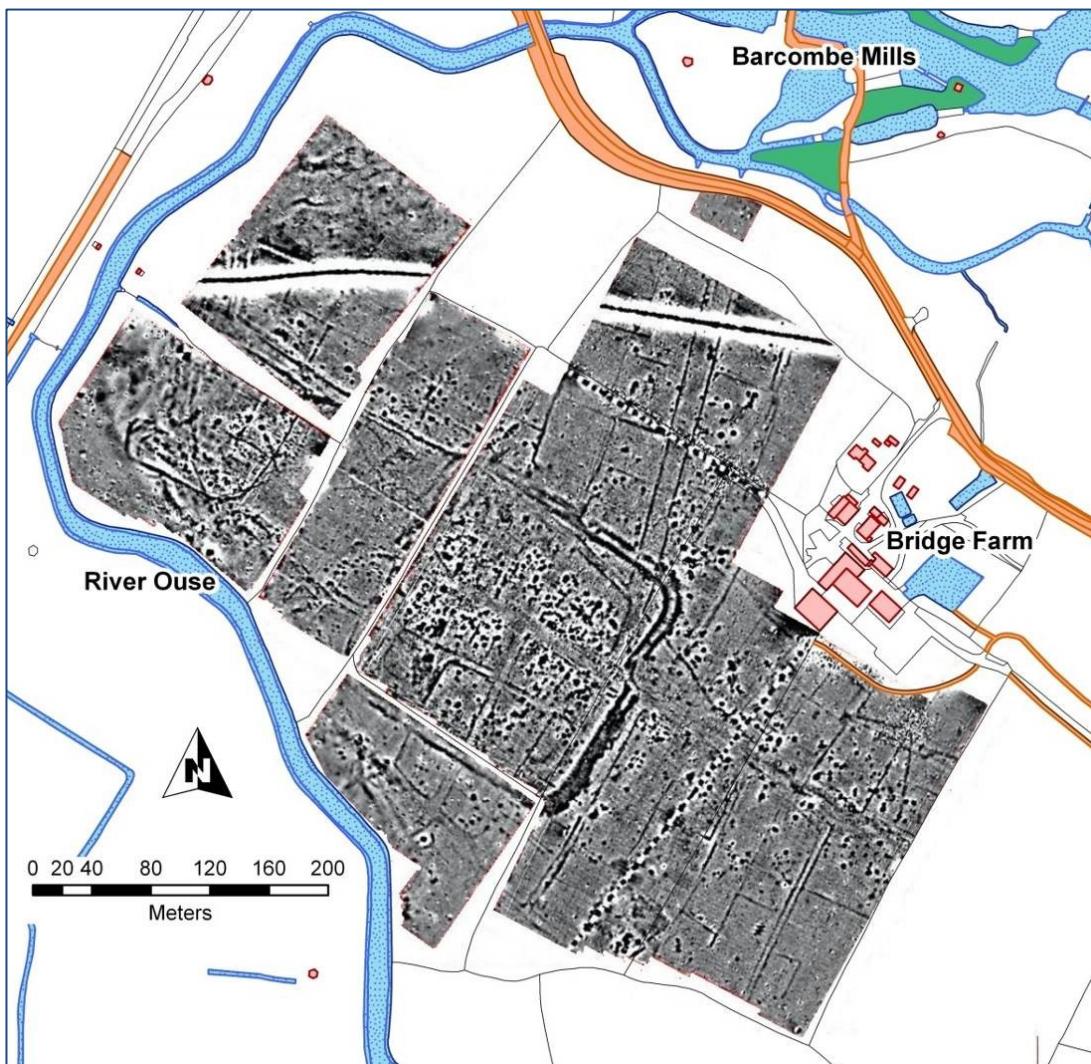
2.1: THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

In early 2011 the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP) gained permission to investigate several fields at Bridge Farm at Upper Wellingham, Nr Lewes (TQ 433144). Bridge Farm was formerly part of Upper Wellingham Farm and one interpretation of the element *hamm* of the Saxon place-name Wellingham is ‘the land in the river bend’ (Dodgson, 1978, p. 84) which in this case is evidently borne out on the ground. Historical research has suggested that there was a settlement in this general area known as Walecote, which could derive from the Saxon word *wealh*, meaning Briton or serf, prefixing *cote*, a small settlement, although thought to be much further south (Bleach, 1986). It is also tempting to see the first syllable ‘*Well*’ of Wellingham as another possible derivative of *wealh* and wonder whether one of these names could be a Saxon reference to the Romano-British settlement at Bridge Farm?

Documentary research revealed that a north-south Roman road in this location had been suggested by William Stukeley as early as the 18th century (Horsfield, 1835, p. 38) and that Ivan Margary (1948, p. 125) had undertaken a small excavation (Section 14) in the large, somewhat characterless, field to the south of the Bridge Farm buildings when investigating the location for the London to Lewes road (Margary No. 14). His records show that he exposed a very compact flint surface 6.4m wide and approaching 400mm thick at a depth of 300mm and metalled ‘*of flint, from large lumps to small chips, mixed with gravel, and a very small amount of iron slag*’ (Margary 1948, p. 162). Roman pottery described as 1st or very early 2nd century overlaid the edges of the road which led to a proposed construction date of around AD.100 (Margary 1948, p. 150).

2.2: SOME UNEXPECTED RESULTS

CAP’s investigations commenced with a magnetometer survey of this field by David Staveley, a well-known local geophysicist, to see if this modern technology could accurately trace the route and prominent features of Margary’s road. The initial results were so outstanding and unexpected that the survey area was extended and over the next two years a clear picture emerged not only of the road heading to the north but of the framework of a substantial settlement adjacent to the River Ouse (2.1).



2.1: Geophysical survey results (D. Staveley 2012)

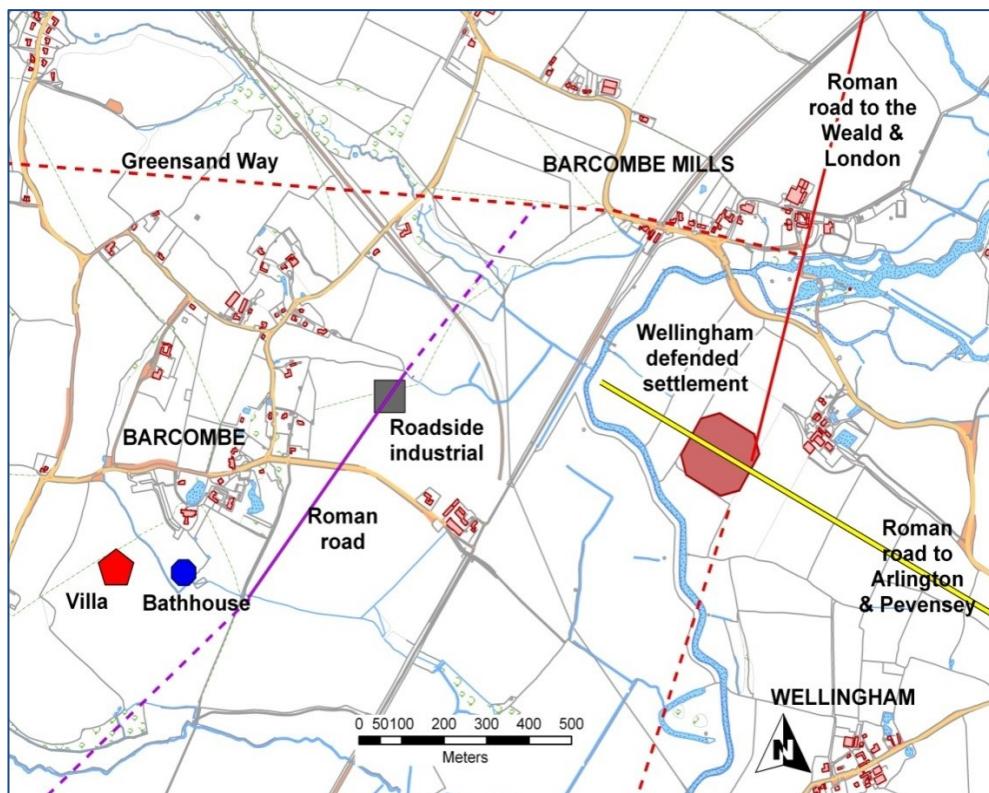
(Ordnance Survey data from EDINA digimap service. Crown copyright/database 2010. All rights reserved)

In the survey image the settlement pattern is clearly interrupted by a double-ditched enclosure confirming that this was a site of more than one phase of activity. Whilst the enclosure ditches appear to overlay and truncate the roadside ditches the chronology could not be determined from the magnetometer results and CAP's co-directors decided that this was a crucially important question that could only be resolved by targeted excavation. Progressive geophysical surveys revealed roads heading to the east and possibly west, with smaller trackways and boundary ditches in the areas surrounding the main settlement.

Further work undertaken by David Staveley with the Ringmer Roman Studies Group from 2012 onward has produced strong evidence, from just east of More Lane and south of Laughton Road at Ringmer (TQ 472123), for the eastern road continuing on an alignment heading for the Roman settlement at Arlington and thence to Pevensey (Chuter, 2008). With Barcombe Mills as

the accepted eastern end of the Greensand Way this puts the Wellingham settlement in a pivotal location at the junction of the road from London and the Wealden iron works, with roads to Pevensey and Chichester, and on a navigable stretch of the River Ouse giving access to the coast. The potential importance of the site is further enhanced by the proximity to the 2nd-3rd century, Barcombe villa complex and detached bathhouse, recently excavated by the University of Sussex and the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team, at just over a kilometre to the west (2.2). It is also situated midway between the known Roman settlements of Hassocks and Arlington, approximately 13k west and east respectively, making it an ideal staging post for trade and travel across the district as well as from the Weald to the coast.

The interpretation of the buried features as Roman was supported by the pottery and tile collected by systematic 40m transect field-walking in March 2011, when CAP volunteers were joined by members of the Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society and Lewes Archaeological Group. It was noticeable that a very small amount of CBM was collected despite the indications from the geophysics of a substantial settlement. A summary of the field-walking finds is shown in table 2.1 below.



2.2 Relationship of the settlement to the villa, bathhouse and other Roman features

(Ordnance Survey data from EDINA digimap service. Crown copyright/database 2010. All rights reserved)

Material	No.	Weight	Remarks
Pottery	800	5,426g	Mainly small abraded sherds of local Romano-British coarse wares with some fine wares including black colour-coated beaker sherds possibly from Wickham Barn at Chiltington and amphora. Most date from AD180-350 although some East Sussex Ware body sherds could be earlier. There were a few later to modern sherds thought to be the result of marling.
CBM Tile/brick	612	13,282g	Mainly post-medieval with only 76 pieces recognised as Roman tile by fabric and/or shape, mainly tegula but some imbrex and box flue.
Burnt flint	589	13,994g	Distributed too evenly over the site to be diagnostic.
Prehistoric worked flakes Cores	121 11	728g 511g	More prevalent in the northern half of the field with the largest numbers of flakes generally found adjacent to cores. Assemblage appeared to be mainly of Mesolithic to Early Neolithic character.r
Iron slag	128	4,903g	Mainly collected to north of the main settlement but there were concerns over the possible uneven collection of this material by the field walkers.
Glass	5	505g	Mainly post-medieval to modern.
Animal bone	3	7g	Too small a sample to be diagnostic but thought to be modern.
Clay pipe	5	12g	Post-medieval stem pieces.

Table 2.1. Summary of items collected from the 2011 field-walk (Millum, 2012)

2.3: AN EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF COINS & METAL ARTEFACTS

In November 2012 Robin Hodgkinson, of the Independent Historical Research Group (IHRG), introduced a local metal detectorist who had collected metal objects from the site over several years. The collection, which he had kept intact, proved quite extensive and ratified the longevity of the settlement as it included a series of over 50 Roman coins with identifiable examples from the Republican era right through to the Emperor Gratian in the late 4th century AD (2.3). Whilst it is likely that the republican coins, being well worn, were still in use in the 1st or even 2nd century AD (Dr David Rudling, pers. comm.), the coin sequence still indicates a time span of around 300 years. The collection also possibly extended the evidence of activity in the more general area into the Saxon period with artefacts including circular and axe-shaped mounts and a Merovingian tremissis, a rare gold coin, possibly from Neustria (Northern France) and dating from the late 6th to 7th century AD (Dr John Naylor, National Finds Director for Medieval and Post-Medieval Coinage, pers. comm.)(2.4). The assemblage also included a number of biconical-shaped lead weights with the vestiges of the iron hooks by which they could have been suspended from a steelyard scales or *statera*, several bow brooch fragments, a bronze writing stylus and a Roman ring key (2.5).

In early December 2012 CAP organised a thorough and systematic metal detecting survey of the site by the Eastbourne, West Kent and Ringmer groups, where a further 18 Roman coins were found; the majority being over the main settlement area (2.6). This varied slightly from

the finds detailed above which were far more dispersed with many coming from the area to the SE of the enclosure. The field walking assemblage, comprising 237 iron, 248 lead and 203 other metal objects also included two of the biconical lead weights as well as eleven others of various shapes (2.6).



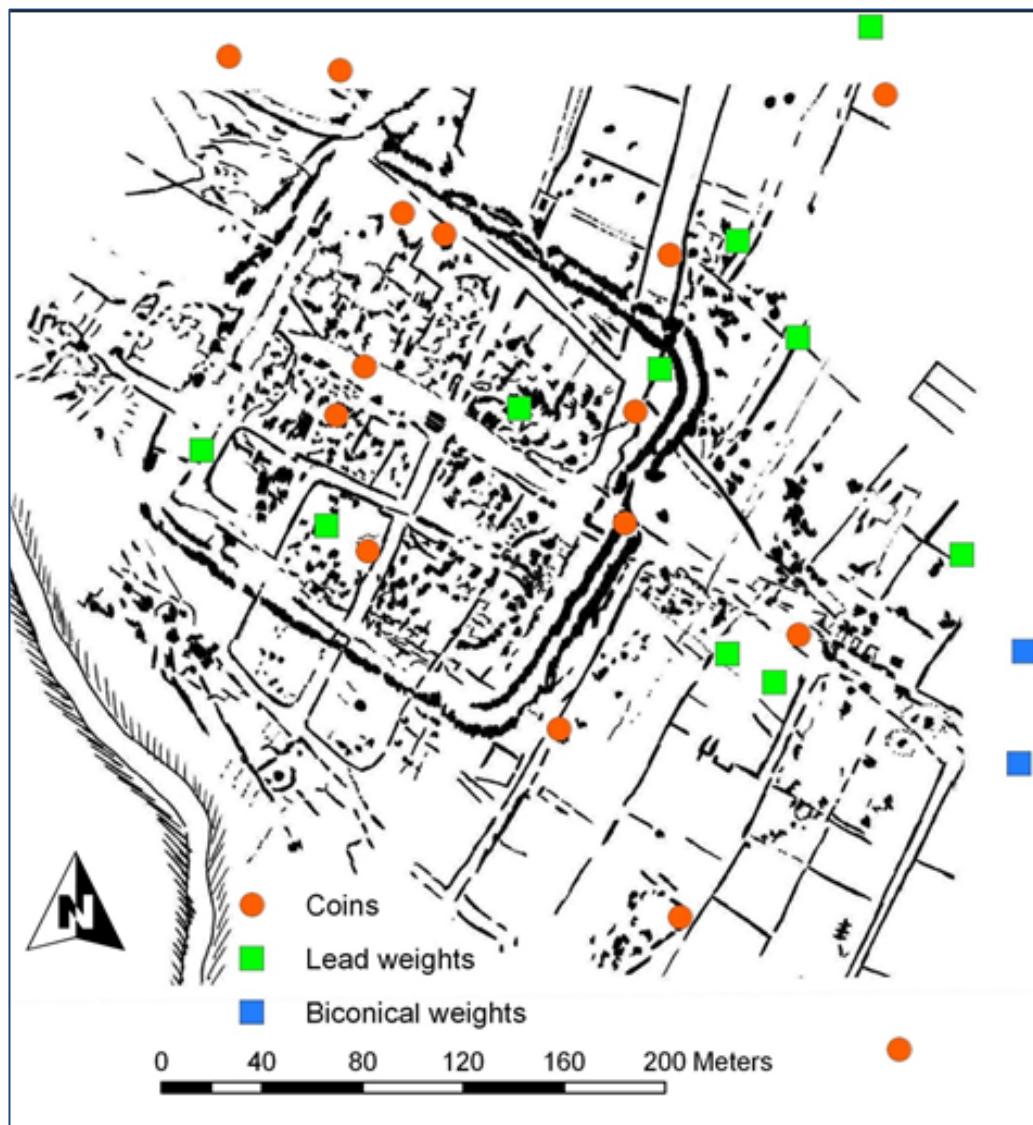
2.3. A small selection of the detected coins (photographs by D. Millum 2013):

a] Titia 1 (Q. Titius) denarius, c.90 BC; b] Aemilia 8 (M. Aemilius Scaurus and Pub. Plautius Hypsaeus) denarius, c.58 BC; c] Galba denarius AD 68-9; d] Trajan denarius c.AD 114-7; e] Julia Maesa (died AD 225) denarius; f] Gratian siliqua AD 375-8 (mint of Thessalonica).



2.4. The Merovingian tremissis; 11.4mm diameter, 1.33mm thick, 1.23g weight.

2.5. A Roman ring key



2.6. Location of the Roman coins and lead weights collected in December 2012

3: 2013: A NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDED YEAR

3.1: SUMMARY OF THE 2013 PROJECT

During 2012 the Culver Archaeological Project gained a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which enabled a programme of surveys and excavations during July and August 2013 and allowed CAP to involve the local community and the local primary and secondary schools. The excavations, with the approval of the County Archaeologist, targeted the intersection of the double ditch enclosure with features from the open settlement to aid interpretation of the archaeological sequence and add to the general chronological and archaeological evidence for the site. The four trenches, totalling approximately 1200 sq.m, were located to minimise the effects on the busy working farm whilst also aiming to show any difference in archaeological preservation between the grassed meadows and those fields used for arable production since at least the mid-18th century (3.1)



3.1. Location of the trenches in the 2013 summer excavation



3.2: An aerial photograph of the site under excavation in July 2013 (S. McGregor)

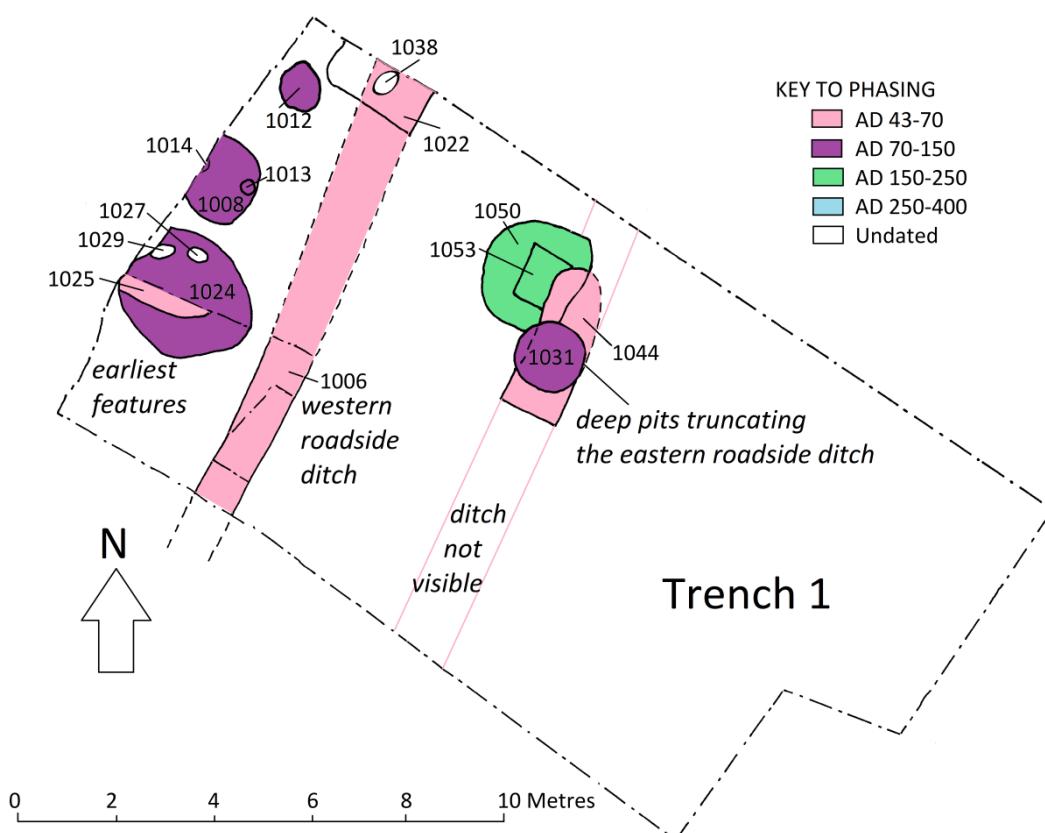
This latter question, which at the request of the County Archaeologist's department was due to be the subject of a COSMIC (Conservation of Scheduled Monuments in Cultivation) style record, proved impractical due to the nature of the soil. This was analysed by Dr Mike Allen as having a soft sandy and silty nature allowing deep and rapid pedogenesis and bioturbation, essentially obliterating the upper profiles of the archaeology and earlier agricultural evidence (Allen, 2013a). The soil makeup led to some difficulty in defining feature edges in excavation despite their strong signal in the geophysical results, particularly in Trench 1 in the arable field.

However, the first year of excavations at Bridge Farm proved to be truly memorable not only for the archaeology revealed but also for the terrific response from the 180 volunteers of all ages and experience who signed up for a total of over a thousand days' work (3.3). During the 6 weeks of excavation an estimated 400 visitors had tours of the site and the five organised local school fieldtrips attracted 150 pupils. The wide range of workshops gave 120 people the opportunity to share the knowledge of six specialists in subjects as diverse as handling human bones to recording pillboxes.



3.3: A typical turnout during the 6 weeks of excavations

The partnership between the Culver Archaeological Project (CAP) and their appointed contractor, AOC Archaeology Group, was an overriding success made possible by the generous grant that CAP received from the National Lottery via the Heritage Lottery Fund. This grant not only funded the dig, workshops and visits, all of which were free to participants, but also the crucial post-excavation work including conservation and specialist reporting. So it can be justifiably claimed that as a community project Bridge Farm 2013 was a resounding success.

3.2. 2013 EXCAVATION RESULTS

3.4: Plan of Trench 1 (after AOC Archaeology)

Trench 1 (c.20 x 10m) (3.4), was dug just into the edge of the sweet corn crop inside the double ditched enclosure and over the central N/S roadway of the open settlement. This proved to be the most difficult trench to interpret with the roadside ditches proving very difficult to distinguish from the surrounding soil. The task was not helped by the series of deep pits that had been cut into the ditches although some distinctive sherds of pottery from the basal deposits proved crucial for dating some features in this trench to the 1st century, as detailed in the summary of artefacts below.

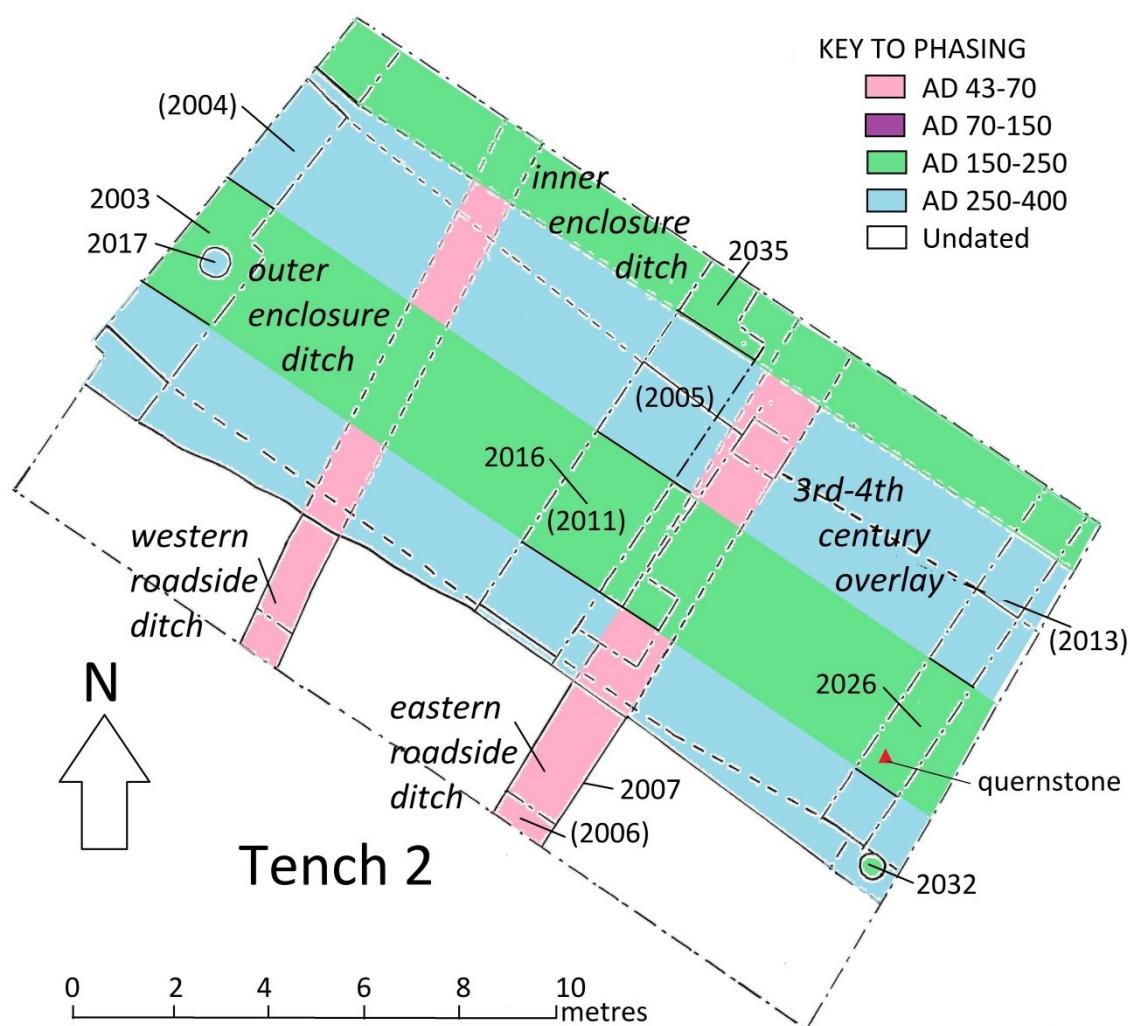
Trench 2, (c.20 x 12m) (3.5), was positioned wholly in the meadow, *Little Park Brook*, and was placed over the intersection of the same road ditches as Trench 1 with the outer enclosure ditch to resolve the phasing of these two crucial elements. It became clear, after both stratigraphic excavation and box sectioning at the intersection, that the enclosure ditch did cut, and was therefore later than, the more ephemeral roadside ditches.

This was supported by subsequent dating of pottery sherds which suggested a late 1st century AD origin for the roadside ditch and late 2nd for the enclosure ditch. Two finds of note from

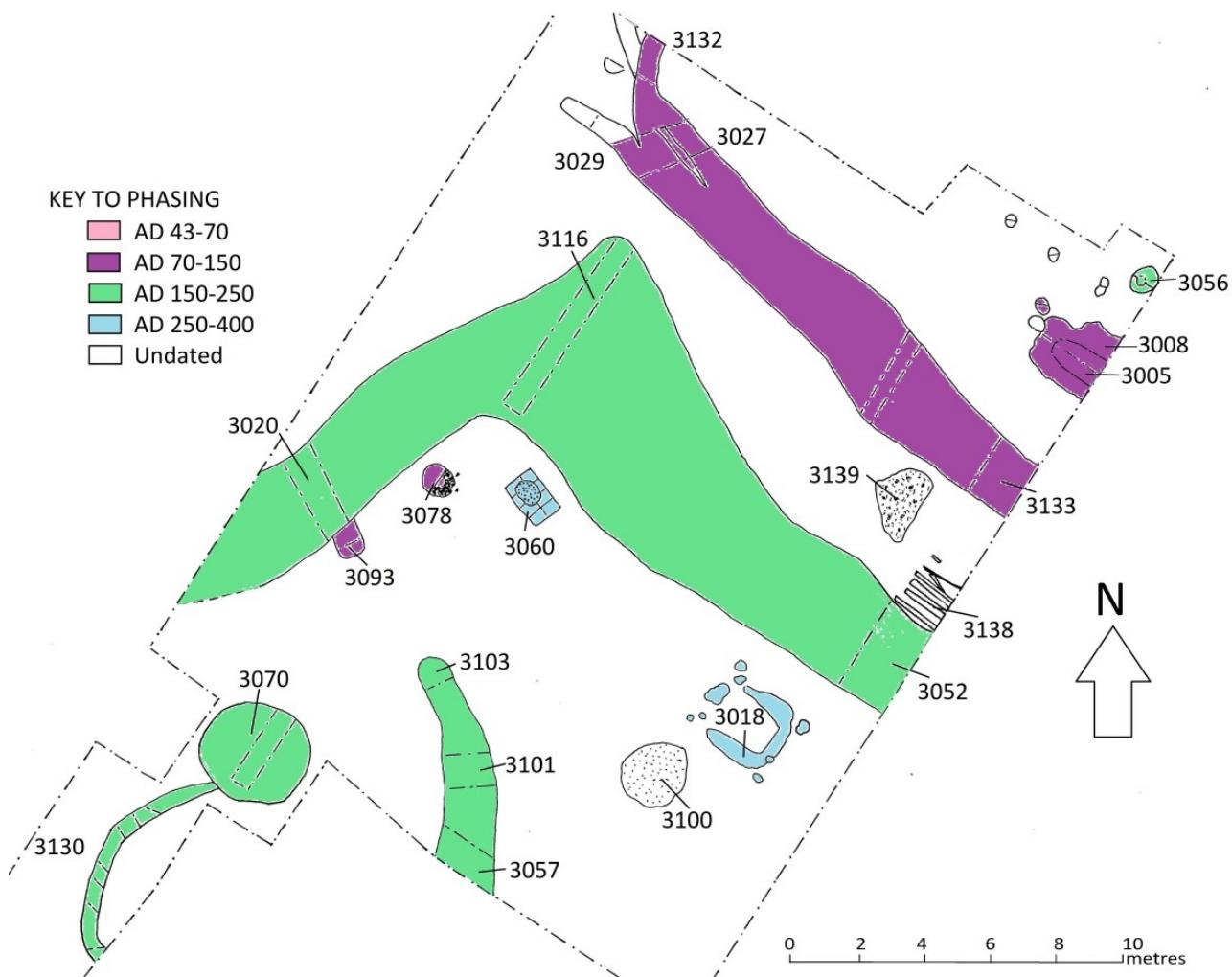
Trench 2 were a quern stone made from West Sussex greensand (3.6) and a Samian platter base Dr 18/31 (SF 46) found in Ditch [2013] (Context 2012). The base was indistinctly stamped either Cinnamvs II, a maker from Lezoux in Central Gaul in the late 2nd century, or CIII---RAIM, being Martres de Veyre Samian of c.AD.90-130. This item was later laser scanned by the University of Brighton but name still remained unclear.



3.6: The 330mm diameter quern stone



3.5: Plan of Trench 2 (after AOC Archaeology)

Trench 3 (c.20 x 25m plus SE extension) (3.7)

Trench 3 targeted a series of anomalies clustered around a crossroads to the southern edge of the settlement. This was arguably the most successful trench exposing the remains of a possible tile kiln (3.8), a rectangular pit lined with tegula roof tiles (3.9), postholes of a small rectangular structure, roadside ditches containing fragments of water-logged timbers, patches of flint road metalling, flint-packed pits/postholes, and charcoal and ash filled pits; all suggesting a busy working area close to the river. In the centre of the possible kiln was a strange greasy fill from which a sample was taken by the geoarchaeologist, Dr Mike Allen, for further analysis (see Summary of Artefact Reports).



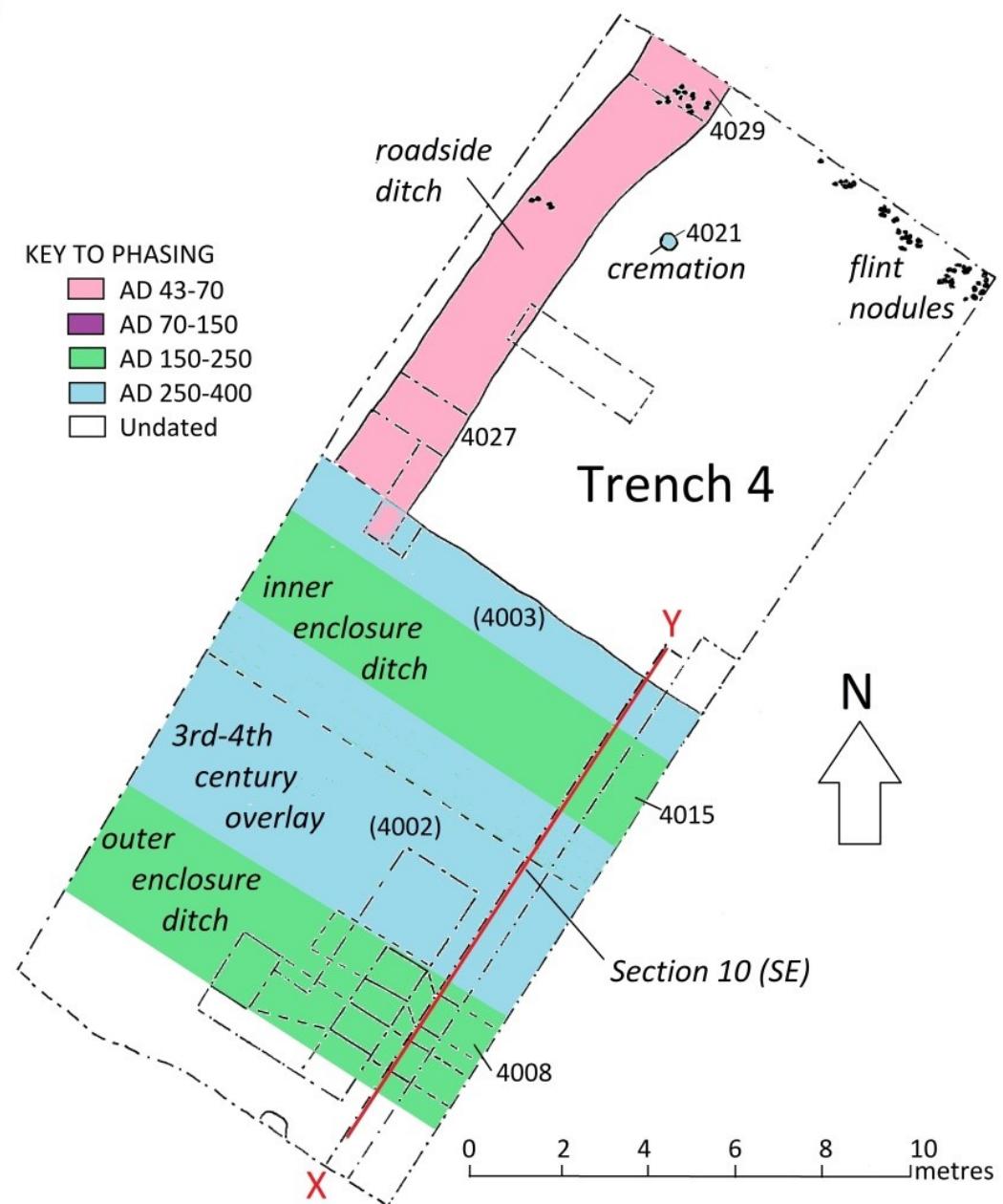
3.8: The half-sectioned possible kiln showing the intense burning

3.9: Tegula tile-lined basin with mortar

Trench 4, c.25 x 10m (3.11), offered the only chance to examine both enclosure ditches as it was placed across the boundary between the meadow and the arable field. It produced further valuable evidence for dating and also brought us our most intriguing find, a human cremation in a nearly complete urn (3.10). This was lifted whole and taken back to AOC's headquarters where Dr Rachel Ives, an osteoarchaeologist, excavated the contents finding 652g of burnt human bone. With no duplications in the larger fragments, which included elbow, wrist, vertebrae and several teeth, this appears to be the remains of a single adult (Ives, 2013). No firm date has been attributed to the cremation although the urn appears to date from the 3rd century. Given the Roma proscription on postnatal burials inside settlements, its location within an upper context inside the enclosure could imply that this southeast corner had been abandoned at that time.

3.10: Catherine Edwards
(AOC) and Sarah Foster
(CAP) wrap the cremation
urn prior to lifting.





3.11 Plan of Trench 4 (after AOC Archaeology)

During the 2013 dig everyone was kept up to date with the results by the Excavation Diary on CAP's website, www.culverproject.co.uk, posted by Clara Gonzalez-Hernandez.

3.3: A SUMMARY OF THE ARTEFACT REPORTS

3.3.1: POTTERY (Lyne 2013)

As always one of the reports most anticipated, especially for dating purposes, was that on the pottery, particularly when undertaken by Dr Malcolm Lyne. The first thing apparent from his report was the wide range of the dating evidence from mid-1st century right through to late 4th, as well as the variety of wares which included Samian, Gallo-Belgic Terra Nigra, Moselkeramik, and Cologne Whiteware, with New Forest and Oxford wares, as well as many from local sources. A significant find was seven fresh pieces from a reeded-rim bowl of Fishbourne type 89 dating to c.AD 50-80 from fill (1020), feature [1025], in the SW corner of Trench 1, just north of the inner enclosure ditch. Together with other sherds this suggests a very early date for this feature and the 'Fishbourne-type' bowl raises the possibility of a connection between the early settlement and the client kingdom of Togidubnus.



3.12 Reeded rim Fishbourne type 89

Virtually all of the pottery sherds recovered from the features in Trench 1 were of possible 1st to mid-2nd century date and the absence of early East Sussex Ware jars with 'eyebrow' motifs and of Gallo-Belgic imports supports a late 1st century date of between AD 70-100 for most of the features in this area (Lyne, 2013, p.2). This crucially includes the NS 'roadside' ditches of the open settlement. As discovered in excavations in Trench 2 these were cut by, and therefore earlier than, the much larger double enclosure ditches which, from Malcolm's analysis from Trench 4, date from the late 2nd century at the earliest. This is somewhat earlier than the hypothetical mid-3rd century date put forward in the precursor of this paper published in the Sussex Archaeological Collections 151 (Millum 2013a) which was somewhat impetuously suggested by the writer prior to any excavation. Rubbish dumping over these ditches would appear to have taken place from the late 3rd and well into the 4th century which initially had led to dating these features to a somewhat later period than now seems probable.

Some features from Trench 3 proved hard to tie down to specific periods. However, the ditch in the NW corner that forms the southern end of the roadside ditch (3127 & 3129) from Trench 2 confirmed the 1st century origin of this feature. From the pottery from the SW-NE ditch [3140] that heads to the SW corner of the trench and possibly runs round the suggested 'kiln' feature [3057] Lyne suggests a date around the beginning of the 3rd century. However, the

upper fill of this ditch (3020) produced an assemblage of 193 sherds of 3rd-4th century date which included a fragment of a horizontally-rilled jar of Overwey/Portchester D fabric which although appearing in AD330 tend to be most common in post AD 370 assemblages. The general occupation layer (3088) would appear to have started to accumulate from around AD 200 and continued to build up until the mid-4th century. The tile-lined pit (3060) yielded only pottery of a post AD 270 date, most of which was abraded indicating that the feature was in use after this date (Lyne, 2013, p.3). Sadly the suggested kiln did not have any datable pottery.

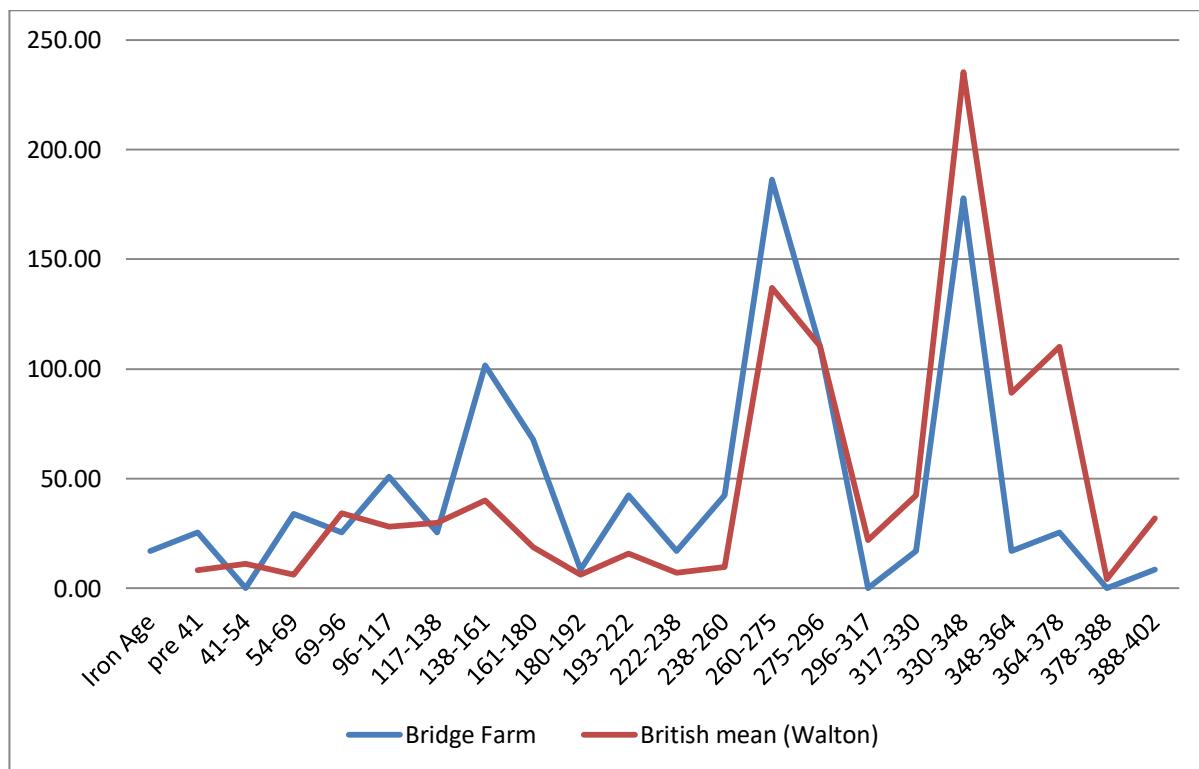
Evidence was found for half a dozen mortaria. In the early pit [1024] in Trench 1 six cream sherds date to AD 43-80; an Oxford red colour-coated sherd (AD 240-400) was found in the upper fill (2013) of the outer enclosure ditch in Trench 2; a sherd of Wickham Barn coarseware (AD 300-370) came from the occupation layer (3088) of Trench 3; and sherds of white Rhenish fabric and Oxfordshire white-ware, both of the 3rd century, came from fills of the inner enclosure ditch in Trench 4 [4008].

Only 36 sherds of amphora were found, 27 of which were from Dressel 20 types with 3 sherds from Gauloise 4 designs. The former are associated with olive oil and olives whilst the latter are regarded as wine carriers. The scarcity of both amphora and mortarium sherds in the assemblage may reflect the non-residential location of the 2013 excavations.

3.3.2: COINS (Rudling 2013a/b)

The coin analysis undertaken by Dr David Rudling included the 77 coins collected by David Cunningham from earlier metal detecting, including 54 of Roman and Late Iron Age period, and the 35, including 18 Roman, collected by the metal detecting groups in December 2012, plus the further 21 Roman coins collected from the excavations (Rudling, 2013a; 2013b). The total assemblage includes 3 possible Late Iron Age coins including a silver issue of Verica and 4 Republican coins from a Titia 1 type of 90 BC to one issued in 42-40 BC bearing a posthumous image of Pompey the Great (Pompey died in 48 BC). Among the coins identified are a bronze As of Nero (AD 54-68), 2 *Denarii* of Galba (AD 68-9), a single coin of both Vespasian (AD 69-79) and Nerva (AD 96-8); all of which support the pottery evidence for a settlement being on this site by the second half of the first century. The remaining coins span the next three centuries with the last in series being a wreath type silver siliqua of Gratian (AD 375-383) although there are some definite gaps in the coin series collected to date e.g. the lack of very early 4th century coins. These gaps and troughs, seen in 2013 appear to be consistent with later excavation

results in other areas of the site (i.e. 2014, 2015) and suggest that occupation and/or coin loss or supply may not have been continuous, either in parts of the site or on the site in general. If judged against a British mean, such as Walton's (2011, 72-3) most of the variations can be seen as following the national trend although the peak in the second half of the 2nd century and the rapid fall off in the later 4th suggest changes that are more individual to this settlement (3.13).



3.13: Graph showing the variation of coin numbers per Reece period as a percentage of the 118 identifiable coins collected from Bridge Farm up to 2015; set against a recognised British mean prepared by Walton (2011, 73) to show any individual characteristics.

3.3.3: CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL (Barber, 2013a)

Luke Barber analysed the 6847 pieces of CBM from the excavations of which he assigned all but 7 to the Romano-British period. The CBM ranged generally across the site and through the 1st to 4th century. This material included tegula, imbrex, box flue, brick and hearth/kiln lining; the latter forming the majority of the over-fired material. It had appeared that there was a lot of sub-standard building material in the SW corner of Trench 3, suggesting wasters from a tile kiln, and Barber's analysis does comment on the considerable variability of firing in the assemblage. However with such circumstantial evidence the final verdict on whether the burning pit was a tile kiln must remain unresolved for the time being. In this regard the presence of box flue tiles in an area where no high status building is expected may be an

indication of either tile production or at least transportation. The most unexpected of the tile finds was an ‘armchair’ voussoir (3.14) which came from the pit/posthole [2032] on the edge of the outer enclosure ditch in Trench 2 which was packed with 1st to 2nd century ceramic building material. This nearly whole, T-shaped solid voussoir (265mm wide and 65-70mm thick, length incomplete) resembles a Brodribb type 1 (Brodribb 1987, Fig. 19), normally only used in fairly prestigious buildings to form the ribs for arched ceilings.



3.14: The solid ‘armchair’ voussoir

A complete tegula was removed from the tile-lined pit [3060] measuring 467 x 330 x 22mm thick. A spindle whorl also comes under this heading having been fashioned from reused tile.

3.3.4: GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL (Barber, 2013b)

Most of the stone collected came from the local Wealden district to the north and mainly comprised clay ironstone with some sandstone. Whilst little Downland material was in the assemblage analysed, this was due to the collection policy rather than its absence on site with a good quantity of flint nodules being observed and recorded. This latter stone could only have reached the site by man’s intervention as the site is upstream of the Downs. Whilst some of the Wealden stone could have arrived naturally via the river the amount, size, and in some cases evidence of working, suggest that it was mainly transported to the site intentionally.

Other items of note in this section were the 46 fragments of quernstone material both Wealden greensand and German lava-stone including a nearly whole quern stone in Lodsworth lower greensand (3.6), all of which are evidence of on-site cereal processing. There was also a fragment of a Kimmeridge shale, bracelet; this item suggesting a possible link via the river to the coastal trade with Dorset (Barber, 2013b).

3.3.5: METALURGICAL MATTER (Barber, 2013c)

The 264 pieces of slag recovered included fuel ash slag, furnace lining, smelting slag and smithing slag, suggesting either small-scale industrial activity on site or material being brought down from the iron working sites in the Weald for such uses as road surfacing. Future excavation within the main settlement area may resolve which of these possible sources was

dominant but whilst some local crafting is likely a connection with the Wealden iron trade would also not be unlikely given the settlement's location at the junction of the 'Iron Way' (Margary's London-Lewes road) with the tidal reach of the Ouse.

3.3.6: METAL (Barber, 2013d)

The metalwork collected is dominated by iron being mostly nails ranging from small hobs to large carpentry nails with one joiner's dog (a large staple for joining timbers). The finds came from all areas of the site and from throughout the Romano-British period with the majority being from the general occupation layers. Other iron objects included part of a key and a 115mm long stylus although other items may well be hidden in the collection of corroded miscellany. Twenty four items of lead were collected from the later Roman deposits including a further biconical weight with the residual iron hooks suggesting statera or possibly plum-bob use (3.15). The amount of amorphous lead lumps on site suggests that lead was being re-melted on site and possibly indicates use as fishing weights. Four bow brooch fragments were found, all from the Roman period, of which one was designated as early-Roman with the others being later. There was also a 2nd century disk brooch.



3.15: Biconical lead weight (19.5 maximum diameter)

3.3.7: GLASS (Barber, 2013e)

The 73 pieces of glass collected were all judged to be of Roman date. Most were of uncertain form but there were 3 beads (3.16), 11 bottle shards, 4 bowl fragments, and 11 pieces of window glass. The range of forms and colours was varied which is not unusual for a Romano-British site. The beads may indicate the presence of women with the window glass either suggesting a higher class building nearby or possibly a collection and/or shipping point for cullet (waste glass) for recycling.



3.16: 16mm diameter Glass 'melon' bead

3.3.8: HUMAN CREMATION (Ives 2013)

A vessel containing flecks of charcoal and burnt bone was found in Trench 4 during the excavation. A total of 652g of burnt bone was recovered and sufficient fragments were identified as human to suggest that this was the burial of a single adult. Six iron fragments

suggest the remains of a buckle or other clothing fixtures worn by the deceased on the funeral pyre.

3.3.9: ANIMAL BONE (Robertson, 2013a)

The animal bone analysis was undertaken by AOC Archaeology in Edinburgh. It was a fairly small assemblage and adjudged to be domestic rubbish derived from activities such as food preparation and cooking, even though none of the fragments showed any obvious signs of butchery.

3.3.10: WATERLOGGED & CHARRED WOOD (Robertson, 2013b)

The waterlogged and charred wood was also analysed by Jackaline Robertson and comprised birch, hazel and alder round-wood with oak timber offcuts. A large quantity of charcoal from the kiln feature was found to be mostly fragments of oak with some small birch round-wood.

3.3.11: GEOARCHAEOLOGY (Allen, 2013a)

An on-site geoarchaeological and palaeo-environmental survey was undertaken by Dr Mike Allen in July 2013 with a detailed report written in August. Whilst this summary is primarily concerned with the artefacts discovered on site Dr Allen's conclusions with regard to the propensity of the soil to deep and rapid soil formation may help explain why many of the archaeological features were so difficult to define given the clear results from the geophysics. His analysis suggests that some finds may be in their primary location even though the feature in which they lie is no longer detectable having been truncated or indeed obliterated by pedogenesis (Allen, 2013a, p. 11). An important and positive point in considering the pottery fills from the ditches is his conclusion that the primary ditch fills on the site could have taken place within the first 30 years of use (Allen, 2013a, p. 18).

3.3.12: CHARRED PLANT & CHARCOAL REMAINS (Allen, 2013b)

Dr Allen also carried out an analysis of the environmental samples taken from the excavation. He noted charred grain in only 2 samples from pits [3003] (fill 3007) and [3008] (fill 3006) in Trench 3. These samples also contained charred weed seeds as did 3 other contexts (1025, 3010 and 4004). However they were all in low quantities and '*some of them questionable*'. Charcoal was noted in most samples but was significantly missing in the samples from the 'kiln' suggesting that this feature was thoroughly cleaned out after last use. Appreciable concentrations of charcoal were noted in the 2 samples containing charred grain. Dr Allen

highlights the lack of cereal caryopses in the samples as a whole suggesting that if domestic and crop processing activities were present, they did not occur within, or adjacent to, the excavated areas which may indicate a non-domestic function to this area of the site (Allen, 2013b, pp.2&7). This should be borne in mind when assessing the quernstone fragments described above. Further analysis undertaken on the charcoal, pollen and water-logged plant remains could provide information about the local lived-in environment.

3.3.13: GREASY DEPOSIT FROM 'KILN' PIT

We still await a definitive answer on the 'greasy' deposit (3067) found in the 'kiln' feature which we took to be a residue from later reuse of the existing pit. Whilst we initially thought this might be an extract of animal fat, such as tallow, Dr Allen kindly arranged for Dr Oliver Criag, of the University of York, to analyse the substance for us. It was dissolved in DCM/Methanol with sonication and analysed by gas chromatography (CG). The analysis revealed no peaks on the GC other than the internal standard and Dr Craig is therefore confident that the substance is not tallow or that it contained organic compounds that are verifiable by GC analysis. So, still no definitive answer for this substance that Dr Allen considered out of the ordinary when compared with the other deposits excavated.

3.3.14: PREHISTORIC FLINT (Butler, 2013)

An assemblage of 728 flints was examined by Chris Butler comprising mostly hard and soft hammer-struck flakes of Downland flint, plus some blades, scrapers and 2 arrowheads (3.17).

The majority was Mesolithic to Early Neolithic although the larger hard struck flakes were deemed Later Neolithic to Bronze Age. Implements were rare making up only 3% of the assemblage which is of a similar 'derived/residual' nature as that found by CAP in their nearby Culver Farm excavations.



3.17: Late-Neolithic/Early Bronze Age tanged and barbed arrow head

3.4: SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2013 EVIDENCE

The pottery and coin reports have further confirmed the longevity of this Romano-British roadside settlement with the pottery report providing a basis for dating some features, including crucially the intersecting ditches of the open settlement and bivallate enclosure. It has also allowed some chronological grouping of other less determinable materials.

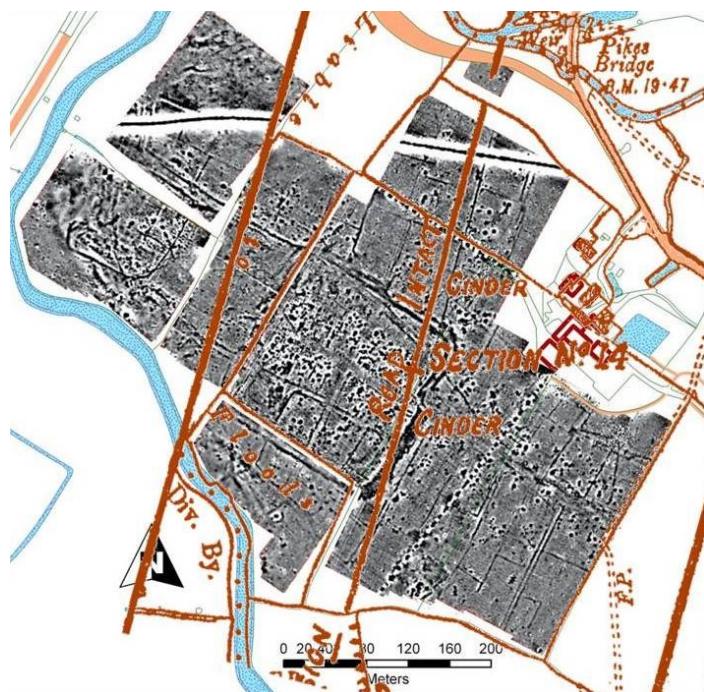
It would appear from the small area of the main site excavated in Trench 1 that the open settlement was founded in the second half of the 1st century and developed its formal infrastructure during the late 1st to early 2nd centuries. Late in the 2nd century the settlement was enclosed by a double ditch that could indicate a change in relationship with the wider environment, with less traffic arriving specifically from the Weald iron workings and an increase in communication to the east, to Arlington and Anderida (Pevensey). The industrial area uncovered in Trench 3 appears to date mainly from the early 3rd century continuing in use through to the mid-4th. No further resolution has been possible on the use of the large circular burning pit with some basic form of tile kiln still being the currently favoured interpretation. Whilst we have an indication that the tile-lined pit was in use after AD 270, what that use was still remains a mystery. Many theories abound and one can imagine that such a structure could have been utilised in a wide variety of procedures.

Some of the materials analysed have indicated potential activities in the settlement as well as possible trading and even administrative connections. This includes possible links to the iron industry with some on-site smelting and smithing, albeit possibly only on a local craft scale. Not unexpectedly processing of agricultural products has also been indicated by the fragments of quernstones although whether commercial or just domestic is not clear and the absence of cereal remains in the environmental samples suggests that processing was not occurring in the specific areas excavated. The pivotal location of the site is strengthened by its possible connections with Fishbourne, the Weald and its access by the River Ouse to coastal trade.

Recent findings (2015) have cast doubt on the origin/date of the road heading north from the NE corner of the settlement, which is shown by the image of two ditches 16m apart; the same distance observed between the boundary ditches of the Roman Greensand Way excavated at Plumpton (Millum, 2011). Whilst, it was originally thought that the northern alignment may result from the requirements of the intense early period of iron production in the Weald, this now appears to be contrary to the roads stratigraphic position overlying the filled-in enclosure

ditches (see 2015 results). Overlaying Margary's strip map over the 2011 geophysics (3.18) shows that this is the road sectioned by Margary which he gave a 1st to early 2nd century AD origin (Margary, 1948, p. 150) from adjacent pottery, not realising that he was digging in the centre of a settlement lasting for 350 years.

3.18 Margary's map (brown lines) overlaid on the 2011 geophysical survey image



The outer enclosure ditches are approximately 185m long enclosing an area of ground internally approaching 2.4ha; this compares to under 1ha for the *mansio* enclosures at Alfoldean and Iping and equates more closely to the double-ditched enclosed area of 2.5ha of the settlement at Neatham, Hampshire (Millett & Graham, 1986, p. 157). It appears to have its main access midway along the eastern side with the entrance off set, rather than in line as is more usual in early military forts and *mansiones*. This entrance is adjacent to a triangular 'open area' immediately to the east of the defended area at the junction of the northern and eastern roads. Ernest Black has suggested this as a possible location for a 'market place' either before and/or after the circumvallation; if proved by excavation it could indicate an economic shift in the settlement. The geophysical images do not show any clear access to the north implying that when the earthwork defences were erected the main focus may have been east-west. The late 2nd century date for the enclosure seems too early for a major decline in relevance to the settlement of the Wealden iron industry but could herald the rise in importance of the port and subsequent Saxon shore fort of *Anderita* (Pevensey). The late 2nd century date does correspond with the widespread provision of earthwork defences of both towns and settlements across the south east of the country at this time (Black, 1995, p. 61). Woodfield (1995) suggests this might be due to a '*contagion spreading from the south-east*' possibly linked to either '*an incursion by the Chauci as a preliminary to their attack on north-east Gaul in the early 170s*' or '*a purely internal revolt, perhaps by the peasantry, which threatened the security of the roads and the official traffic they carried*'. Rudling & Russell (2015) in researching reasons for the degrading of Bignor Villa during the late 2nd century look

towards the Antonine Plague as a possible cause of rural disruption. They reason that this long lasting plague had a devastating impact on the Empire potentially affecting large numbers of the peasantry, draining the rural economy and leading to desperate attacks on richer villas and market settlements. They give several examples of destruction at villa sites, including Bignor, during this period which may have led to some settlements being protected by defensive enclosures. But can ditches really be deemed defensive if no evidence of military occupation is discovered? Should we alternatively see these enclosures as an extension of state control of those settlements with an official function and/or a potentially strategic location?

3.5: SOME COMPARISONS WITH WESTHAWK & ALFOLDEAN

The longevity of occupation suggested by the coin data encourages comparisons with settlements such as Westhawk Farm, near Ashford, established on an important road junction from the Weald to Canterbury and Lympne just after the conquest and showing coin evidence for activity to the mid-4th century (Booth, et al., 2008). This complex, nucleated settlement, stretching over 15ha, has been categorized as a small town or market village, despite the rural character of some marginal areas. It comprised timber buildings in both round and rectilinear forms located side by side throughout the period, but with the latter becoming slightly more prevalent from the 2nd century. A shrine set in a small rectangular enclosure in an open space was the only obvious public building discovered within the settlement with the cemetery being outside the north-west boundary. Evidence of iron working, in the form of both smelting and smithing, was found although seemingly indicating local craft production rather than a major industrial site. Another similarity between the sites is the presence of a quantity of lead, biconical, steelyard weights at both locations. The presence of such weights at Westhawk was taken as an urban characteristic (Booth, et al., 2008, p. 154 & 392) and, together with the styli found at Bridge Farm, indicates probable commercial and/or administrative activity. The economic emphasis of Westhawk was interpreted by Booth *et al* (2008, p. xix) as based on agriculture and local market services, with a possible administrative role in the iron trade, and given the parallels in location and artefacts it is tempting to predict a similar pattern for the Wellingham settlement. With some areas outside the enclosure still to be surveyed the open settlement at Bridge Farm may well stretch over an area approaching that found at Westhawk and a similar predominance of timber buildings might explain the modest amount of Roman tile collected in the field walking survey in 2011 (Table 2.1).

The coin assemblage noted by Winbolt at Alfoldean shows a period from Nero to Valentinian, AD 54-375 (Luke & Wells, 2000, p. 94), similar to that at Wellingham if we ignore the coins from the Republican era which may have still been in circulation in the late 1st century AD. The Westhawk excavation had only 10 coins post-dating AD 235 out of the 237 collected, with only one Republican and a single 4th century coin, although a slightly wider range was collected by metal detecting over a larger area (Booth, et al., 2008, p. 135). The coin evidence so far gained from Wellingham would seem to indicate the settlement being in existence at least as early as Westhawk and Alfoldean with the possibility of a longer continuation of activity, either despite, or because of, the changes to its form and possibly its function with the building and subsequent infilling of the enclosure ditches.

Whilst Westhawk, being under imminent threat of a housing development, was the subject of a large, developer funded, open area excavation, the Wellingham site is in a rural location under mixed farmland, with the main settlement area being subjected to an arable rotation. Investigation of the site will therefore be on a much more targeted basis, likely to last over a number of years, as and when the acquisition of funding allows and specific objectives demand. The possibility that the settlement may be constructed of mainly timber buildings, as was the case at Westhawk, may mean that larger open area excavation may, however, need to be considered in future project designs.

An interesting result from Westhawk was the survey into how the various non-ferrous artefacts were collected which showed that a significant majority of the heavier solid pieces were found by metal detecting in the plough soil, whereas the lighter finer and flatter pieces were discovered during excavation. This is particularly relevant with regard the steelyard weights where 8 of the 9 Westhawk examples were found from unstratified collection and suggests that the assemblage of lead weights at Bridge Farm should not be taken as an indication that there will be a lot more awaiting discovery during excavation. Encouragingly the scarcity of light jewellery and cosmetic items in the unstratified finds does not signify a potential dearth of such items on the site, as these were mainly found in excavation at Westhawk (Booth, et al., 2008, pp. 158-9).

3.6: VICUS, MUTATIO OR MANSIO?

Ernest Black (1995 pp. 12-15) in his researches into the infrastructure of government in Roman Britain compares the intervals of facilities provided for official travellers. He identifies varying levels with *mansiones* supplying a full range of overnight accommodation, bathing and stabling in a range of qualities dependant on the status of the officials. In examining *Stane Street*, in comparison to routes that appear in the *Antonine Itinerary*, he concludes that a *mansio* was built at Alfoldean, being the midway stop at 52k (35.5 Roman miles) from London and 40k (27 Roman miles) from Chichester. The intermediate settlements at Dorking and Ewell, being 17k and then a further 14k to the north, and Hardham, being 17.5k to the south, he suggests were also *vici* but unlikely to have had purpose-built *mansio*-type accommodation. These intermediate staging posts would have been more regularly used as a *mutatio* for acquiring fresh transport and offering a safe overnight resting place for cargo vehicles such as ox carts.

It would seem likely that Upper Wellingham would have been such a *vicus* providing more basic *mutatio* assistance rather than being equipped with a *mansio*. This role would still have required some provision of facilities and staffing raising the possibility of state encouragement for the foundling settlement. Less formal accommodation was often made available either within the general settlement or at other nearby establishments and Black (1995, p. 89) mentions that detached bathhouses provided for the use of official travellers were often in peripheral locations. Although he warns that such a use should not be assumed without other supporting evidence it is tempting to see this as a possible explanation for the size and location of the large detached bathhouse adjacent to the Barcombe villa complex.

The *Cursus Publicus* not only required facilities for fast travelling officials but also for the slower moving foot travellers and goods vehicles that would require more frequent overnight stops and a secure environment for their consignments. The need for such a facility at the junction of two major roads and a navigable river could well have encouraged the formation of the original settlement which at that time was possibly an undertaking in the remit of the client kingdom of Cogidubnus. Could such an official function and the protection of animals, wagons and cargo against theft and pilfering be sufficient cause for the subsequent provision of earthwork defences? Such ditched defences were widely provided in the late 2nd century to towns, *vici* and *mansiones* attesting to the importance given by the authorities to the security of a range of settlements (Black, 1995, pp.61 & 89).

3.7: GEOPHYSIC – BRIDGE FARM AND BEYOND

From the autumn of 2013 CAP continued with geophysical investigations east of Bridge Farm (3.19) which extended the known route of the road and its roadside activity. The Ringmer Roman Studies Group with David Staveley picked this road up again just to east of Ringmer village and traced it past Laughton Place further confirming the route of the road towards Arlington to join with the road exposed by Greg Chuter at Wilbees Farm.



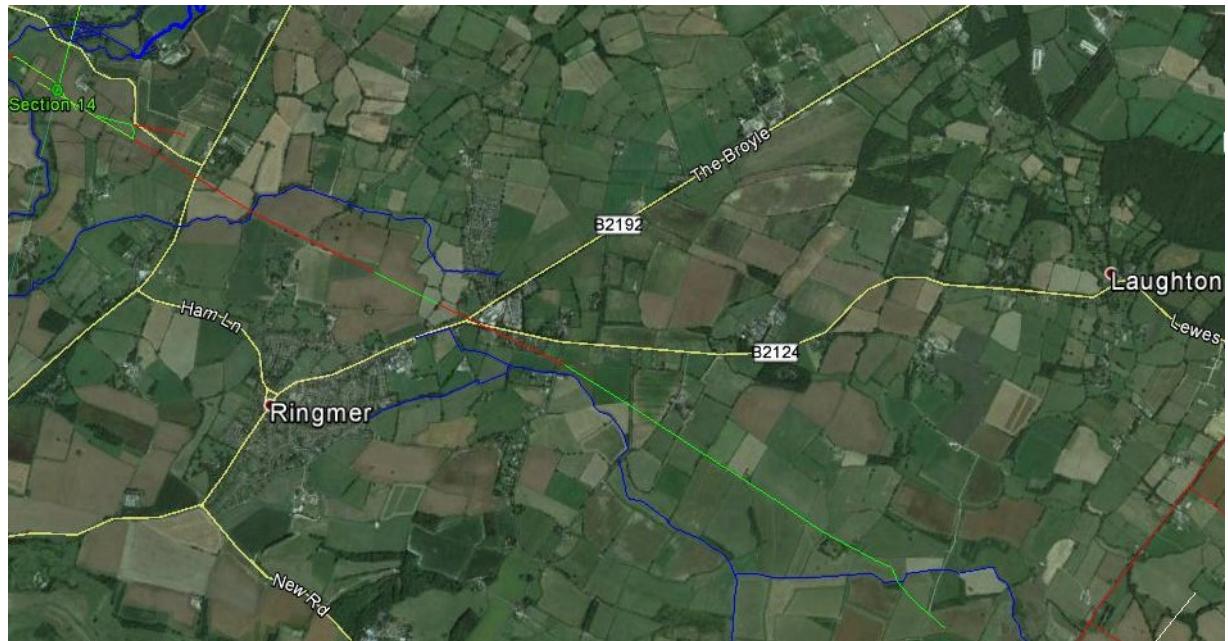
3.19: Magnetometer results from the fields east of Bridge Farm showing the road heading towards Arlington (D. Staveley, 2014)

CAP also carried out a ‘mag’ survey along ‘Stroude Street’, the N-S Culver Farm Roman road, to the south of the villa, as it heads towards either Offham bostall or Landport Bottom and a possible land route over the South Downs to the coast. This road excavated at Culver Farm in 2006-10 proved to be a substantial structure of Downland flint, 5-6m wide and still 400mm deep in places (3.20), topped with gravel and sand as evidenced from the fills of the roadside ditches.



3.20: The substantial Roman road exposed in Court House Field, Culver Farm in 2009

The surveying of the general area around Bridge Farm and the Barcombe Villa complex, involving both volunteers and students, is very much an ongoing project as well as a current and future aim of CAP (3.21).



3.21: Google Earth image with route of eastern road (D. Staveley, 2015)

4. 2014: NO GRANTS BUT INCREDIBLE FINDS

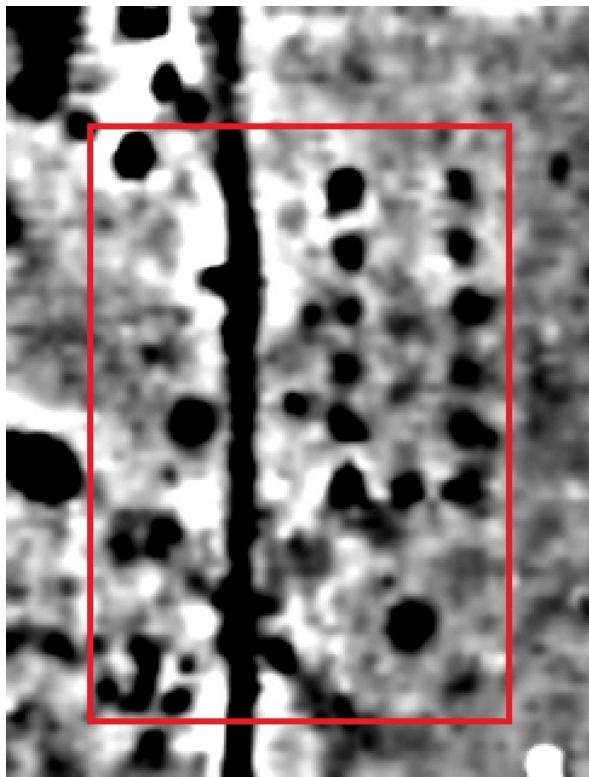
4.1: SUMMER EXCAVATION: TRENCH 5

In the summer of 2014 CAP excavated an area to the east of the enclosed settlement in a field of permanent grassland known as Five Acre Brook (4.1). A recent magnetometer survey conducted by David Staveley showed 13 round anomalies forming an 18 by 6 metre rectangle (4.2) which the CAP directors believed represented a pattern of postholes for a substantial building and would be the first substantial building to be excavated at Bridge Farm.

The dig, which as usual was open to volunteers and students, ran through July and into early August with over 60 people turning out to help during the 6 week period despite a modest charge to defray excavation costs. The only other funding for this year was a small grant from the University Of Sussex Archaeology Society (USAS) towards the excavation insurance premium. The success of this year's dig once more validates CAP's aim of encouraging community interest in the discovery and appreciation of the local historic environment.



4.1: Geophysical survey image with location of Trench 5 in relation to 2013 trenches and the enclosed settlement (geophysical survey image by D. Staveley)



4.2: Geophys plot of excavation area



4.3: Drone shot showing the completed excavation

The site duly revealed a variety of ditches, pits, hearths, and post holes, including the 13, one metre wide, holes that formed the rectangular feature in the geophys (4.2 & 4.3). In the first 3 weeks the team concentrated on the western half of the site, tracing three major ditches and numerous small post and stake holes, as well as two hearths. Whilst the hearths still require further analysis, initial interpretation favours one (Features 2), containing pottery dating to AD 70-250, being a smelting hearth and/or oven. It abuts the ditch running down the centre of the site (Feature 1) which contained pottery mainly from c. AD 70 – 150. The other (Feature 7), which contained several lumps of iron slag and pottery dated to the 4th or even early 5th centuries, may be a secondary forging hearth. As discussed in Section 3, local small scale ironworking would not be unexpected adjacent to a large settlement, especially one so accessible to the Weald.

Two large pits (Features 9 & 10) were also excavated and have been interpreted as shallow wells for gathering surface water from the high water table; both needed constant bailing and/or pumping during excavation as seemingly clear water rushed in from the sides (4.4).



4.4: David Lea (volunteer), Rob Wallace (director) and John Kane (CAP committee) excavating pit F9

One of the pits (F9) was particularly interesting as towards its base was a layer of large stones, mainly foreign to the site, comprising chalk (42%), Paludina limestone (27%), various Wealden sandstones (14%) and Downland flint (12%). This layer had blackened animal bones beneath it (probably cattle) and waterlogged roundwood above, the latter possibly representing the remains of a wattle super-structure or pit lining. Just above this layer was found a single piece of waterlogged timber (4.4). The fills surrounding this layer were 100% sampled and floated with some success. Not only was a Roman coin found (Emperor yet to be identified) but a plain, brass, wrap-around, finger ring and a fine turned disk/spindle whorl. Then a rather unpromising lump of earth turned out to be the back half of a leather shoe/sandal complete with hobnails (4.5). The unexpected wealth of artefacts in this pit together with the need for constant pumping of the fast inflowing water meant that this feature took all 6 weeks and a bit beyond to fully excavate and record. Pottery recovered from the lowest fill of this feature has been dated to the 4th century.

4.2: A VARIETY OF SPECIAL FINDS

All features brought forth a wealth of Roman pottery (7184 sherds in all) including some pieces of Samian and some fine beaker fragments, including a rusticated example from the Nene Valley (4.6). Seventeen Roman coins were found both from excavation and metal detecting including two of Diva Faustina from after her death in AD 141, and two of Lucius Verus c. AD

169, being from around the time just prior to the likely enclosure by defensive ditches of the main settlement. The most recent Roman coin found was of the House of Constantine issued between AD 330 and 335. Previous surface detecting of this area had revealed coins from Galba AD 68 to Gratian c. AD 380. During the excavation CAP's metal detecting team found a zoomorphic enamel brooch (4.7a) and a small square of silver inscribed with (V)TER(E) (F)ELIX (utere felix i.e. use with good luck) which is thought to be the bezel attachment to a 4th century ring (4.7b). But unknown to the excavators the real archaeological treasures were yet to be discovered!



a)



b)



c)

4.5: Artefacts from the well:

a)the heel of the 'Roman shoe':

b) wrap-around ring:

c) the turned disk



4.6: Globular Nene Valley beaker



4.7: Metal detecting finds

a) (V)TER(E) (F)ELIX inscribed ring fragment

b) Zoomorphic enamelled brooch

4.3: THE THIRTEEN POSTHOLES REVEALED

The final three weeks were allocated to the excavation of the 13 large postholes (4.8) and a series of smaller adjacent postholes interpreted as being from a building of a different phase. At first it was thought that the metre wide post holes were disappointingly shallow but then it was remembered that in 2013 many features had a hardpan layer above their lowest fill and it was decided to test a couple of the holes to see if this also applied here. With the hardpan removed a series of 400-500mm diameter post-pipes were revealed.

These were half sectioned with some difficulty as they were discovered to average over a metre in depth and partially below the water-table. Then, at the bottom of one was discovered the *in situ* remains of a waterlogged post. A busy period ensued during the last few days of the dig as all 13 post holes subsequently revealed *in-situ* post-bases (4.9).



4.8: Locating the 13 larger postholes with ranging poles

4.9: A bailed out post base

These, whilst exciting in themselves, being the rotted remains of the bases of probably every main post of this large timber frame building, turned out to be just the entrée as when trying to feel under one of the post to record its depth another timber was felt to be lying flat beneath it and this one felt as if it was carved! A decision was made to remove the fragmented post base to inspect the timber below which was verified as being a sawn timber with some form of carving and appeared quite robust. Careful excavation of the surrounding soils and river gravels was undertaken, mainly by bare hands at full arm stretch (4.10), until the timber could be lifted out safely without risk to its integrity.



4.10: Excavating the posts by hand; the head first technique!

The revealed artefact, which came from a sealed Roman-British context was indeed a prepared timber with an ogee-shaped end and a possible lap joint for another timber (4.11). Later another ogival-carved piece and a short section from a heavy beam were also found whilst carrying out the total excavation of this posthole (PH9).



4.11: The rare carved Roman timbers used as pads for the post in posthole number 9

Whilst the team knew that any site with waterlogged timbers is of great importance and that carved timbers from Roman sites are rare, particularly in Sussex, they were not fully aware of how important these items were until being put in touch with Damian Goodburn, an archaeological woodwork specialist, by the Museum of London. He confirmed the scarcity of architectural moulded timbers of the Roman period and from a photograph observed that one face had an odd sloping housing cut into it and that the overall form and apparent scale of the timber suggested it came from a relatively



high status structure; but he was unable to define what type of element it was. What we do know is that it became a pad for a post at some time probably during the 3rd to early 4th century, with the building possibly lasting the last years of the 4th century (Lyne 2016, 2). Was it just spolia, the reuse of recycled building material, or was there some more significant meaning in its use in providing closure for a previous structure and/or continuity with the new build? We shall never know but we can research its previous use providing we can find some relevant *comparanda*.

4.4: SOME STRUCTURAL SPECULATION

But that doesn't mean we can't speculate on what the 13 post holes might represent, for instance, by firstly imagining them set out with large upright timbers rather than thin red and white ranging poles (4.12).



4.12: Photograph of site with 13 computer-generated 'posts' added

Can we go a little further without totally losing credibility? The footprint of the 13 postholes at around 15 by 6 metres and the size of the posts at c.450mm diameter suggest that we are looking at a substantial building. The building would have been the same size and of a similar configuration (minus one end post) to the 0.80m deep range of foundation holes for the temple building at Springhead, Kent, (Andrews, 2008, p.52: Andrews et al, 2011, p.61). Whilst Springhead is interpreted as a religious centre, the Bridge Farm building, with its location on the outskirts of the settlement close to river, seems more likely to have been either domestic or

storage. Whilst evidence seems scarce in East Sussex, Kent can supply several closely comparable 14 post buildings e.g. Westhawk, (building D) 14 x 7m, Thurnham, 15 x 7m, and Keston, 14.6 x 6.8m (Booth, 2008, p. 377), all of which, with the exception of Keston, which is more likely mid-1st to 2nd, have been dated loosely to mid/late 2nd century. These *comparanda* appear to be earlier than the Bridge Farm building but such buildings are likely to be ubiquitous for the entire Romano-British period.

We know the building was timber-framed and apparently without a central post in the north east elevation, suggesting that this was possibly the main access point. This contrasts to a barn which would more commonly be accessed mid-way up the long side elevations. The site yielded virtually no Roman tile, suggesting that any structure probably had a thatch or shingle roof; unless we postulate that a tiled roof was carefully removed for reuse elsewhere when the building was decommissioned. The probability of this ground close to the river to flood may suggest that any building would have likely needed a raised floor, although such construction usually involved a mass of closely packed posts which is clearly not indicated in the archaeology here. Putting all this speculation together you might arrive at a building that looked something like that in figure 4.13, or many other equally viable reconstructions including the possibility of the posts providing support for an aisled structure.



4.13: A sketch of how the 13-post building could have appeared if made of plank walls and shingle roof (Millum after a warehouse at Lunt by Alan Sorrell)

Six smaller post holes, all devoid of timbers, seem to form a smaller rectangle crossing the northern end of the thirteen-posts and possibly continuing beyond the SE trench edge. These were interpreted as representing a building of a different phase and the absence of any

timbers suggested that this building predated the erecting of the 13 large posts; the construction of which would have necessitated the complete removal of any earlier timbers on the site. The pottery evidence from the fill of these postholes was not conclusive though suggesting a 3rd century date would not be unreasonable. This poses the intriguing possibility that the earlier building could be the source of the ogival-carved beams although a more nautical source as has also been proposed by some?

As always 2014's excavation left a demand for post excavation analysis of the artefacts and features, as well as a mountain of flotation residues awaiting attention. The information gained from this work will hopefully aid the initial interpretation and phasing of the possible activities on this part of the settlement which will be recorded in the practical report. However due to the unexpected discovery of the waterlogged timbers our post excavation budget had to go towards their immediate conservation with the specialist finds analysis awaiting the results of grant applications from various specialist societies. In the meantime the directors embarked on their now regular round of presentations to local societies whilst developing plans for next year's excavation on this large and potentially nationally important site.

4.5: A GENEROUS GRANT AND A POTTERY REPORT

In 2016 we were awarded a £2000 grant by the Roman Research Trust to fund the post-excavation assessment on the pottery assemblage of 7184 sherds from 130 contexts from the 2014 excavations. The pottery assessment was undertaken by Dr Malcolm Lyne who is an acknowledged expert in this field and has produced reports for our previous assemblages from 2013 and from Pond Field and Court House Field on Culver Farm as well as the nearby Barcombe villa and bathhouse sites. This was considered to be the specialist report of prime importance in establishing a means of dating and phasing the various features discovered in the excavation. The report, as well as detailing the various fabrics, type of vessel and manufacturer, also gave date ranges to various features where the evidence rendered this possible. This has allowed for the initial phasing of the archaeology as well as suggesting various periods of activity.

Dr Lyne's conclusions support the following phases:

1. Absence of prehistoric and Gallo-Belgic imports suggest no pre-Flavian occupation of this area of the site.

2. Main ditch (F001): eastern division assemblage includes nothing that need be later than AD150 whilst the western division and single southern ditch is similar but with some material from AD150-250.
3. Furnace (F002) which abuts main ditch: c. AD70-250
4. Large pit cut by ditch (F003): 3rd century.
5. 13 post structure (F004): erected late 3rd century and survived until end of 4th century.
6. 2 large pits (possible shallow surface water wells) (F009 & F010): 4th century and probably not backfilled until late 4th early 5th.
7. 2 ditches joining at right angles but obliquely orientated to the other features (F003 & F008): late 4th to early 5th century and into the sub-Roman period with transitional wares of coarse crushed-flint and ironstone filler.
8. Possible secondary forging hearth (F007): contained pottery from AD350-420 suggesting this feature was also of the later phase.

Unfortunately there was only a small amount of pottery evidence from the postholes of the rectangular 13 post building, which was the main target of the excavation, but CAP has also been fortunate in being awarded a Margary Grant of £820 from the Sussex Archaeological Society to enable dendro-dating of some of the waterlogged timbers which should assist with Dr Lyne's provisional phasing. This is dependent on the timbers having sufficient rings to allow an assessment to take place. We have also obtained spot-dates for the identifiable coins from Dr David Rudling, which he very kindly undertook without charge, but a full commissioned report is still outstanding. We shall be seeking further funds in 2017 to cover the analysis of the other artefact assemblages including cbm, metal working debris and environmental samples as these are vital for the full interpretation of the excavation and the activities that occurred in this area. However the grant received from the Trust did meet the minimum sum required to make this project viable as the pottery assessment will enable us to start preparing an interim 'grey literature' report on the excavation even if further specialist reports are not forthcoming in the foreseeable future.

5. 2015: ROADS, DITCHES & CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH



5.1: a typical day on site excavating the roadside ditches

5.1: SECURING THE FUTURE

In 2015 Rob Wallace secured a five year contract with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) to provide a four week practical training course each summer for all their archaeology undergraduates at a set fee per student. This resulted in a vigorous period of building by the CAP committee members to provide an administration and facilities block capable of taking 20-30 students for lectures, meals and the other ‘luxuries’ of camping on a dig site i.e. flushing loos, hot showers and a fully equipped kitchen (5.2).

5.2 The new Bridge Farm HQ and facilities block under construction by CAP members (May 2015)



Work started on Good Friday to provide a general purpose room with kitchen facilities and separate male and female shower/toilet areas and went down to the wire with the hot water system and the showers being finished as the students arrived. There are still a few improvements to be implemented during 2016 but the building proved to be a brilliant success and coped well with the demands of two dozen students plus various other campers,

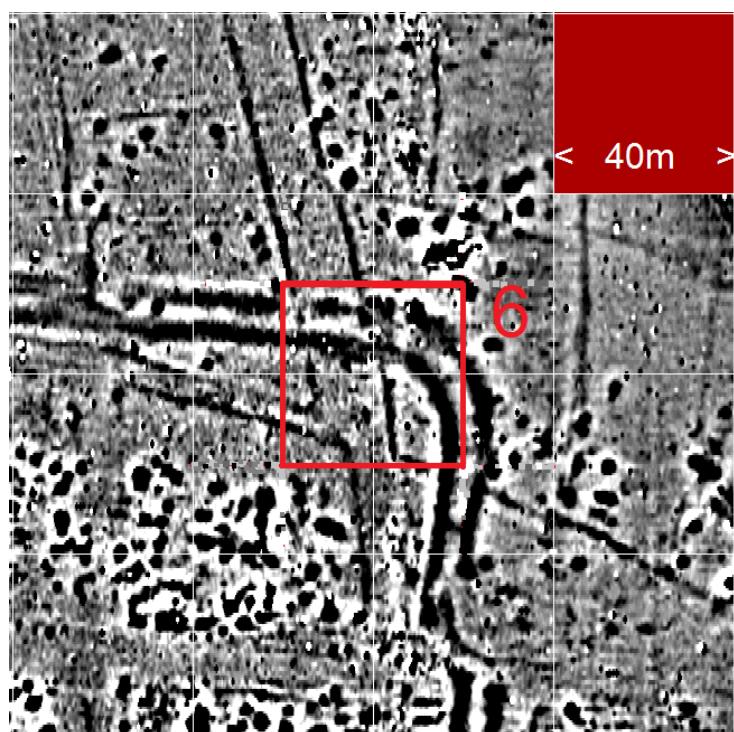
volunteers and visitors. Certainly no regrets were heard from those returning about the demise of the 2014 structure and portaloos; what a difference a year makes (5.3).



5.3: The make-shift 'refectory' and other facilities of 2014, housed in the open shed that was the basis of the new Bridge Farm HQ built in 2015

5.2: THE 2015 EXCAVATION

In 2015 it was decided to target the intersection of the double ditch enclosure with the north running roadside ditches in the NE corner of the settlement (5.4); a crucial area to the



understanding of the site. We opened a 40m square area, Trench 6, at the end of June ready for the six week dig from 29th June to 8th August. The area was targeted to answer questions on phasing between the London road and the enclosure ditches and confirm the provisional dates provided by the 2013 trenches.

5.4: Geophysical image showing the location of Trench 6

The open area gave us plenty of room for both students and volunteers, some from as far afield as Australia and the USA. We appointed two returning students as supervisors, Max Zeronian-Dalley (Bangor University) on site and Molly Lockeyear (Durham University) on finds, both of whom stayed and worked for seven continuous weeks.

As in previous years we found that the upper surface of the remaining archaeology was immediately below the plough soil. This upper layer represented a late phase of the settlement which will hopefully be dated from subsequent analysis of the pottery from the trench surface. Coins from a layer immediately below suggested a peak of coin loss in the mid-4th century AD.

5.3: THE ROAD AND THE ENCLOSURE DITCHES

In the southern half of the trench the surface included a discrete area that included a high inclusion of slag and clinker above flint and river gravels lying on a thin silt base. Being between the two main roadside ditches this was presumed to be the remains of Margary's London road (No.14). Between the slag and flint layers a group of animal bones were excavated and it is hoped that these may provide a carbon ¹⁴ date for this context. The possible road surface was very thin and probably comprising only the lower base of the road but certainly contrasted greatly to the 400mm deep flint structure seen on the road running south from Culver Farm in 2009. It has therefore been suggested that it may have been suitable for only very light traffic which raises some interesting questions about the purpose of the road, its longevity, and the sort of traffic it was designed to carry. This in turn raises questions on the type of activity being undertaken in the settlement during this later phase. However since adjacent sections show no sign of this structure it is also possible that a more substantial road surface has been robbed or ploughed out during later periods or that this discrete area represents some other later activity on the redundant road area, possibly connected to the local iron industry.

One of the major results from the season was the discovery of a layer of flint metalling at the centre of the northern end of the trench, which we have interpreted as the remains of the north road (Margary 14), overlaying the fill of the enclosure ditches (5.5). This was discovered beneath a dark activity, or possibly demolition, layer (6050), which in the northeast of the trench has a layer of quite highly burnt/fired clay at its base.



5.5: Layer of flint metalling overlying the refilled enclosure ditches

With no evidence of a lower, i.e. earlier, road surface in this area it would appear that this section of road was constructed after the enclosure ditches were refilled. Coins, including antoniniani of, Gallienus (5.6), Tetricus I, and Claudius II, obtained from the overlying dark layer (6050) suggest that this layer may have formed in the later 3rd century. Care must be exercised in relying on this particular range of coins for precise dating as it has been suggested that they may have been used for a longer period than historical documents suggest and not discarded until as late as the end of the first quarter of the 4th century (Reece 2002, 47). In 2013 the enclosure ditches were dated as late 2nd century from Malcolm Lyne's pottery analysis. So this evidence for the layer above the road could suggest a relatively short life for the enclosure ditches, at least in this area, before being filled in and subsequently having the road laid over the top. A 3rd century date for this section of road might explain why it enters the settlement at the NE corner at an angle out of alignment with the main axis of the earlier road pattern. It would also seem to favour direct access to the eastern road to Arlington and Pevensey, suggesting the increased importance in communications to the east at this later phase. This raises the question as to where the northern route from the 1st to 2nd century open settlement is located. Logic would suggest that it might have left the settlement in a position more in line with the centre of the internal road grid and presents another area that needs further investigation by excavation.



5.6: Gallienus 'radiate' coin

Another aim fulfilled was to excavate a single slot across a better preserved section of both enclosure ditches than that excavated in 2013 (Trench 4). This revealed the close similarity of the two ditches, suggesting some precision in their excavation which was replicated at other sections across the site (5.7). These sections emphasise the massive undertaking that the provision of two substantial ditches around all four sides of the 180m square enclosure represented and once again raised the question of official or even military involvement. Evidence from the excavation suggests another peak of coin loss in the mid-late 2nd century which although compelling was not linked stratigraphically to the digging of the ditches.



5.7: The northern half of the slot across the two enclosure ditches

5.4: A SELECTION OF INTERESTING FINDS

Within the dark deposit over the NE corner of the outer enclosure ditch (6025) was found one our most exciting artefacts of the year; an oval red jasper intaglio from a ring (SF4). It shows a draped bust of either a female or a youthful male deity, crisply carved in reverse (5.8). Professor Martin Henig has suggested it could be of Apollo and 2nd century in origin from its form and material. However as a treasured item it would not be out of place in the much later deposit where it was found.



5.8: Red Jasper intaglio

Two copper alloy intaglii were also found but not being in as fine condition their designs were not discernible. Other copper alloy items included a long fibula brooch (5.9) and a fragmented ring key.



5.9 Bronze fibula brooch



5.10 Siliqua of Honorius

During the winter our metal detecting team, had found a Honorius siliqua (5.10) from the plough soil over the main settlement area, extending the period of possible activity on the site to the beginning of the 5th century.



The 10,000 sherds of pottery collected, washed and marked from this area included a selection of Samian ware, of which two sherds had the maker's marks of *Cippiomo* and *Flavianus*, amongst the more usual black burnished and East Sussex wares. There were also a good number of larger 'rustic' indented beakers, some of quite coarse manufacture, rather than the finer colour coated beakers found in other areas of the site. These suggesting fairly local manufacture e.g. Wickham Barn or possibly the settlement itself. They included several sherds from a larger example in a sandy grey fabric (5.11),

5.11: Large sandy grey-ware beaker

Amongst the usual collection of nails and other iron objects were a possible blade, a delicately shaped stylus and a curved object that, whilst suspiciously the right size and shape for a strigil, proved under x-ray to consist of a length of chain and a bar.

Beneath a small area of chalk fragments in the SE corner of the trench was discovered a small complete pot set upright but with no obvious cut or other context. The chalk layer, which contained some animal bone, is now thought to have nothing to do with this object being inadvertently laid over the top at a much later period. The results of metal detecting being negative the pot was carefully removed having been wrapped in bandages and individually boxed ready for transportation off site, intact for later controlled internal investigation.

This was undertaken by David Millum in early 2016, who removed the fill 10mm at a time using a plastic spatula and soft brush. The first layer caused a slight pause as a piece of bone was found but on inspection it was obviously not human and so the investigation could continue without contacting the coroner. As the layers were removed it became clear that the pot was full of the typical sandy silt with 1% grit. Within the fill were 4 sherds of a coarse handmade platter, including a rim to base sherd, an unrelated rim sherd, a solid pot handle and 3 small animal bone fragments. It became clear from the start of this investigation that this was not a cremation and therefore could be excavated without licence. The extracted silt was wet sieved through a fine 300µm sieve and the residue bagged and kept although it appeared on initial inspection to be purely natural grits. The small blackened cooking pot is 90% complete but badly cracked on



5.12: The pot being excavated by two CCCU students prior to wrapping and removal.



5.13: The pot and contents after the silt and gravels were carefully extracted

all surfaces and was held together by the soil so has been left wrapped in the bandages pending reconstruction. Like many of the more interesting finds on Bridge Farm the explanation behind the pots location and contents remains obscure.

5.5: A HUNDRED MORE COINS TO ADD TO THE DATA

Over 50 Roman coins were collected during the 2015 excavation ranging in date from a single denarius of Hadrian (early 1st century) to a bronze A3 of Valens (AD364-375). Whilst this assemblage still awaits a full analysis, Dr David Rudling has undertaken a quick spot dating to enable us to start some interpretation of this area. The two mentioned above together with a denarius of Elagabalus (AD220-2) and three considered not dateable are the exceptions as all the other coins fit loosely into 3 main periods with 11 being attributed to the later 2nd century, 13 to the late 3rd and 18 to the 2nd quarter of the 4th (5.14).



5.14: Coins collected in 2015 had 3 distinct peaks possibly suggesting peaks of activity

This broadly concurs with the findings from coins metal-detected or excavated up to the end of 2013 although that assemblage had another peak during the late 1st and early 2nd centuries whilst the NE area shows a much higher proportion of 4th century coinage. Further to these figures are those coins found in recent free-range metal detecting, which include 26 from the

main settlement area alone, plus the 17 coins found in the 2014 excavations to the SW of the settlement. The former appear biased towards the turn of the first century and later 2nd century and it is noticeable that metal detecting the surface curiously seems to locate a higher proportion of early coins. The 2014 assemblage has yet to be fully assessed having been away for conservation but includes some easily identifiable Antonine coins i.e. sestertii of Faustina Diva and Lucius Verus as well as some 4th century House of Constantine issues. It has been agreed with David Rudling that he will undertake a deeper coin analysis at a point in the excavations when a fuller report becomes expedient. Albeit unproven it is tempting in the meantime to see these four main assemblages linked to significant phases of the settlement; i.e. founding in late 1st century; enclosure in the late 2nd; changes in orientation/trade/economy in the early-mid 3rd; and a late flourish in the mid-4th before final decline (see 3.13). However we must take into account that the volume of coins may say as much about their depreciation and supply as it does trade and activity on the site. For example the high proportion of 3rd century ‘silver’ coins may be due to their becoming increasingly debased until reforms undertaken at the beginning of the fourth quarter made the previous issues all but worthless and therefore potentially more subject to loss or even discard. When more thoroughly investigated and supported by pottery analysis it would then be imperative to contrast these periods of potential increased activity with the phases of the adjacent villa complex and settlements within the SE generally.

5.6: CURRENT WORKS AND PLANS FOR 2016

The north eastern area of the site proved very complicated with many phases of ditches, pits and postholes appearing and areas of flint surfacing which could be manmade roads and/or floors or the result of slumping from the road during heavy flooding. The unexpected complexity of this area and the quick onset of heavy rain at the end of the 2015 season led to the decision to return to Trench 6 in 2016 as many features had to be left unresolved.

6. 2016: GETTING BENEATH & BEYOND THE ROAD

6.1: RETURNING TO TRENCH 6

Following on from the hurried closure of the 2015 season it was both inevitable and desirable that we would return to the roads and ditches of Trench 6 in 2016 and in order to try and get this complicated area of the site fully investigated the digging season was extended from six to eight weeks. The start of the four week undergraduate training course was set back to Week 2 in order to allow everything to be fully functioning before the students arrived and mitigate the effects of the extra pressures, numbers and scheduling inherent in running the course.

Without having to work on building a HQ, plumbing loos and showers and equipping a kitchen, as per 2015, we had a bit more time to prepare and enlisted the help of a CAP veteran, Ivo Fox-Cooper, and a returning trainee, Dave Ladds, to act as site supervisors, thus doubling the manpower on the previous year. We also had a PhD student from CCCU, Nick Hannon, who also assisted with both supervision and a couple of the training days. Having a group of returning CCCU students who could get straight on site having already completed the training course was another boon and one that should now be repeated in future years. We were also able to arrange with two of our most able and dedicated finds volunteers, Nancy Wiginton and Ann Best, to take over the coordination of the finds unit which was to be moved off-site into a building adjacent to the HQ (6.1). This proved a great success with all finds being processed and recorded during the season and not requiring the extended sessions through autumn and winter that was inflicted on a few hardy stalwarts after the 2015 dig.

6.1: A well-organized (and cheerful) finds unit was established thanks to Nancy and Ann
(Ann is standing at the back)





6.2: Rob in full weed destroying mode

The return to this area gave the opportunity to dig below the shallower features and expand some of the areas opened last year. This included some cleaning, re-sectioning and recording of the main slots across the enclosure ditches and opening further slots over the ditches of the smaller side road to the west. The uncovered area of road surface at the centre of the northern area of the trench was also extended together with cutting back the north baulk to give a better section across the eastern roadside ditch and the possible intersection of another road surface running obliquely off to the southeast (6.4 & 6.17).

The first job of the year on site was to cut back and clear the weed infestation and reveal an area looking something like an archaeological excavation site (6.2 & 6.3)



6.3: One day on and we already have our site back



6.4: Work underway on cutting back the north baulk to try to resolve the eastern roadside ditch

Further work was also undertaken on exposing a red layer of fired clay that lay beneath the dark upper layer to the east of road at the northern end of the trench (6.5 & 6.17). At times it was tempting to see some structure in this context but it appears more likely that this was material spread over this area to form a hard surface. The burnt clay represented a material more highly fired than daub from a burnt building yet not as hard as fully fired brick or tile. The area covered by this material suggested an industrial process rather than a domestic one, possibly the demolished superstructure of some form of kiln or enclosed hearth.



6.5: Exposing part of the red fired-clay layer to the east of the flint road surface

Revealing this area had an unexpected bonus in the form of a second hobnail shoe pattern; the first had been exposed on cleaning back part of the flint road surface (6.6). Both these features were carefully excavated with fine-tools and then encased in plaster-of-Paris so that they could be removed intact for subsequent fine cleaning and storage.

Another area returned to was the 2016 sections of the enclosure ditches (6.17). The long slot across both enclosure ditches provided an excellent opportunity for CCCU students to really come to grips with



6.6: Hobnail shoe patterns 1 & 2

excavating a feature down to the natural following the edge of the ditch cut, cleaning back the section face, recognising the various contexts and recording them by adding to the written records and completing new section drawings.

A slot across the outer enclosure ditch in the extreme NE corner of the circumvallation, just as the ditch starts to turn to the south, was also revisited as this had been difficult to interpret in 2016 due to the original section being cut by a deep pit (now known to be a well – see 6.8). Cutting the face back 500mm in a box section took it away from the pit and produced a much better section of the ditch and its stratigraphic contexts for considered interpretation, drawing, photographing and revised context recording (6.7).



6.7: Roger, CCCU first year and Ted, a CAP regular, contemplate the contexts of the outer enclosure ditch before completing the sheaf of context forms

6.2: A YEAR OF DEEP PITS

But it was a series of deep pits that became the new focus of the season and in particular the one in the NE corner that cut the outside edge of the backfilled outer enclosure ditch (6.17). At first this feature was thought to be just a deep pit with sloping sides but nearly 2m below trench level a quadrant of large lumps of sandstone and tap slag were revealed forming the lining of a well. This feature, whilst cutting the refilled enclosure ditch, has the red fired clay layer overlying which slumps down towards its centre (6.8). This offers excellent stratigraphic phasing for this area of the site. The depth of this excavation and its exposure during the last days of the season precluded any further excavation of the wells lower interior beyond the first 4 courses of the walling (6.9) and the need to further investigate this area more thoroughly and safely is one of the reasons for the decision to return to Trench 6 in 2017.



6.8: The, quarter sectioned, well (scales 1 & 2m) 6.9: The interior of wall forming the well

Another deep pit in the SE corner (6.17) had also been excavated in half section to 2m deep by Lindsay Banfield of UCL; box stepping the sides of the excavation for safety (6.10). Whilst this did not have any lining or construction within it, it did yield an 'Oldbury type' glass bead (6.10), probably dating to the 1st century, either BC or AD. As potentially a conserved item this interesting find could not be used to definitively date the feature without other evidence.



6.10: The pit, half sectioned, in the SE corner of Trench 6 & the Oldbury type glass bead

6.3: ANOTHER 10,000 SHERDS PLUS OTHER FINDS

Other interesting finds included a bronze ‘terret’ ring (6.11), i.e. part of the harness of a draught animal, which came from the flint surface adjacent to the eastern slot across the outer enclosure ditch. Amongst other copper-alloy finds were a small bronze fibular brooch complete with pin (6.12), 2 hair/clothes pins (6.13) and most of the 59 coins that were found. The latter have yet to be fully assessed having gone away for conservation. A further 10,000 sherds of pottery, to add to last year’s 10,000, were recovered, cleaned, marked and recorded by the hard working finds team including a nearly complete, delightfully decorated, thin-necked jar (6.14) in a sandy grey fabric probably from the Alice Holt or Farnham group of kilns.



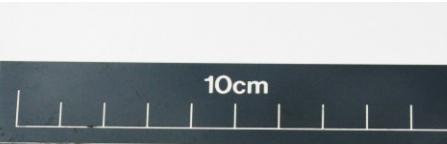
6.11: Bronze terret ring



6.14: Grey-ware thin-necked jar



6.12: Fibular brooch



6.13: Two copper alloy pins

6.4: A 3RD SEASON IN TRENCH 6 BECOMES ESSENTIAL

Towards the end of the season we started to go through the disturbed flint surface in the central section of the exposed London road to the south of the inner enclosure ditch as this appeared much more disturbed than the northern area. A series of pits and gullies was revealed (6.17) although due to the disturbed surface it was difficult to decide whether these features were under the road and therefore earlier or had been dug through the road and therefore later. With these features only appearing and being excavated and recorded in the final days of the season, despite the traditional over-run, this area still held much to excavate record and hopefully interpret (6.15), once more heralding a return in 2017.



6.15: One of the pits discovered below or possibly cutting through the disturbed road surface

A further area of flint metalling to the east of the road was revealed but was also not fully investigated also due to a lack of time. It became apparent that there was potentially a lot more archaeology at this lower level than previously anticipated and agreement was therefore reached with the landowner, Mark Stroud, to leave the majority of this trench open for one further year so this level could be investigated fully. A strip to the south and west of the trench was backfilled with the rest of the trench being provided with a temporary cover for ease of access in 2017 (6.16).



6.16: The site ‘put to bed’ by a small but dedicated CAP crew

As you will have seen from the brief comments above, we already had a large assemblage of finds from Trench 6 needing analysis before we can start to understand the phasing and activities that took place in this part of the settlement, and these will undoubtedly be added to in 2017. This fairly large open area trench with its range of complex features (6.17) still represents only a small fraction of the whole site and a true perspective of the settlement as a whole will only be achievable after several more years' investigation. 'Hopefully' 2017 will see the end of our investigation in this trench and allow us to proceed with commissioning the required specialist finds reports that will facilitate writing a practical report on this intriguing and important area of the site.



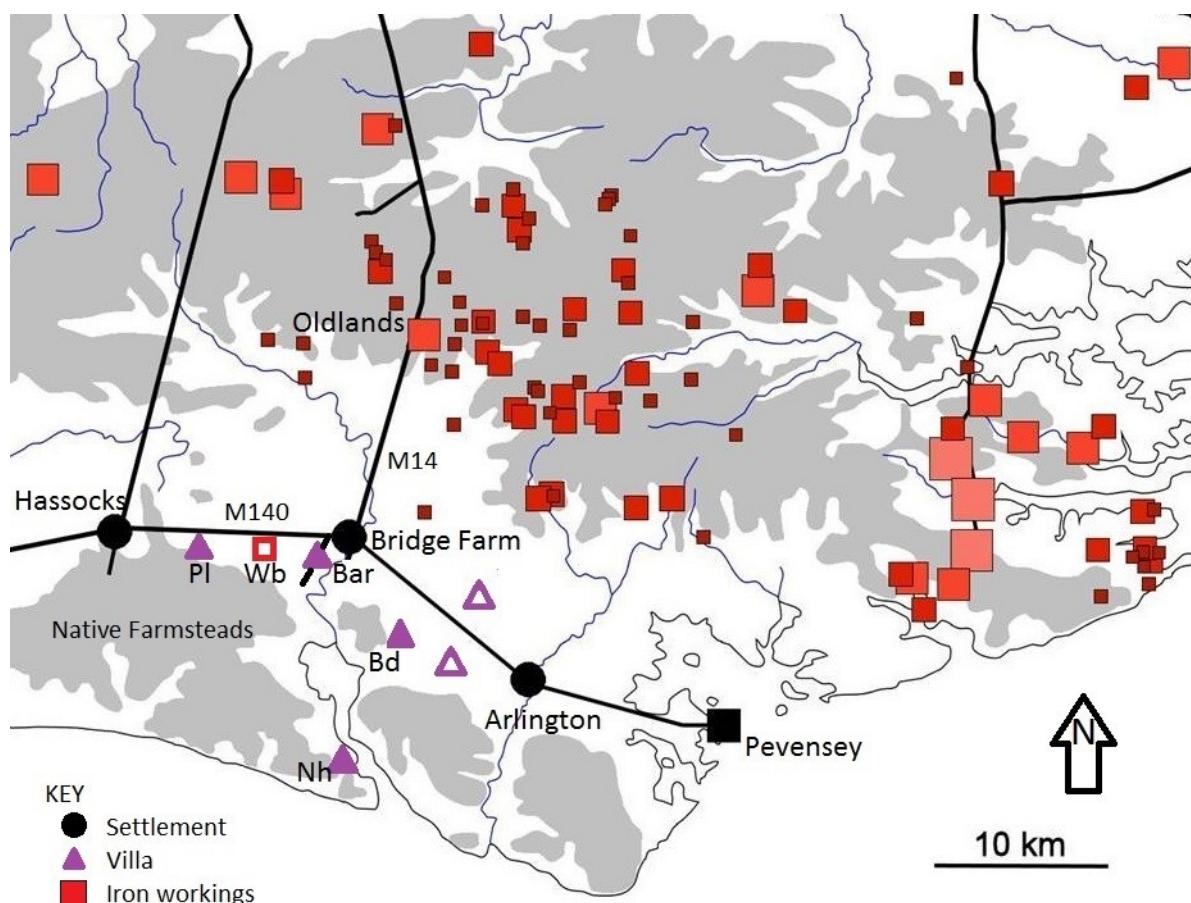
6.17: An aerial drone shot with the main features from 2016 added as CG shapes

6.5: SPREADING THE WORD & POSING TRANSPORT QUESTIONS

Two exciting extramural events of 2016 were CAP's participation in two important conferences that marked the beginning and end of our year on site. The first was at the Sussex Archaeological Society conference in April on '*Roman roadside settlements in Britain and Beyond*' which was specifically arranged by Dr John Manley and Dr David Rudling to offer a wider context to the Bridge Farm settlement. It included speakers from across the country and from the Netherlands with the presentation on Bridge Farm given the last spot of the day. It was a tough ask to encapsulate the discoveries at Bridge Farm into just thirty minutes but we must have succeeded as our 'performance' led to our being invited to speak at the Roman Roads Research Association's conference in Portsmouth in September which commemorated the work of Ivan Margary. In putting together a specific presentation for this event it became increasingly obvious how much the discoveries made by CAP from 2005 to the present day owe to the pioneering work of Margary in the early part of the 20th century.

These two conferences also highlighted the importance of transport links to the location of Bridge Farm. The Margary conference obviously concentrated on the Roman road network and the increasing finds of tap-slag on the site stress the importance of the connection that the London road gave to the western iron production areas in the Weald (6.18).

However the importance of the riverside location should not be overlooked as bulky relatively cheap cargos, such as iron, could be transported by boat or barge at a fifth or sixth of the cost by road (Greene 1986, 40) . Jones (2012, 86) suggests that it took 10 wagon loads to fill a barge with 10 tons of cargo and that a coastal/river boat could take up to 6 barge loads. It therefore becomes clear that whilst the London road runs close to some major iron works, including Oldlands and Great Cansiron, it would have been expedient to get heavy cargos onto flat bottomed barges as high up the river as possible even if that meant waiting for a high tide or even the correct season. This raises the question of whether the Bridge Farm settlement was the head of navigation on the Ouse or the point where a coastal boat could approach on the flow-tide to be loaded from both barges from upstream and carts from the surrounding area with bulky iron-based and agricultural cargos. This might suggest that one use of the 13 posted building excavated in 2014 to the west of the settlement was for storage of goods awaiting transport (see Section 4). It also raises the question of whether any evidence of riverside wharf structures might have survived the canalisation works of the 18th-19th century and the more recent and extensive flood defence works by the Environment Agency.



Margary road numbers: M14 London-Lewes(?), M140 Greensand Way

Abbreviations: Pl Plumpton, Wb Wickham Barn, Bar Barcombe, Bd Beddingham, Nh Newhaven

6.18: Location map putting Bridge Farm in the wider Roman landscape including the Wealden iron works, roads, villas and other settlements (after Hodkinson 2008, figure 6 & Rudling 2016, figure 8.1)

One thing has become very clear from the research undertaken for these conference presentations; Bridge Farm was not a roadside settlement, i.e a straggling unplanned development that grew haphazardly beside an existing road. The street grid seen in the geophysics, its location in the bend of the river, its access to roads in each direction and the provision of the earthwork defences, all strongly suggest an official hand in its planned foundation and careful siting.

The importance of Bridge Farm is reflected in the words of Shepherd Frere writing in the foreword to the report on the excavations at Neatham, Hampshire (Millet & Graham 1986):

(The settlement) '*would seem to belong to a small but growing number of minor sites with short-lived earthwork defences erected in the late second century, ... It is legitimate to deduce that some special feature of an official character ... was being protected. ... This in turn implies government action ... the result of a central decision rather than as a series of*

spontaneous constructions by local people. ... These facts are sufficient to indicate the local importance of the settlement and to show that it belongs to a class of Romano-British site of which we know very little, ...'

In the thirty year that have passed since Frere made these comments much work has been undertaken but sites such as Bridge Farm, particularly when unspoilt by subsequent development, are still rare and by no means fully understood. The excavations at Bridge Farm are producing further material which will assist the understanding of these important and under-represented sites.

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