

Romano-British Cemetery IV

(with contributions by L Biek, Paul Barford, Joanna Bird, Caroline Crook, Brenda Dickinson, Chris Going and M W C Hassall)

This was the last cemetery to be excavated, in 1978. Its location was revealed after the disturbance of the stone coffin burial Grave 1086, at the quarry margins during reinstatement of the surface for return to ploughland. It therefore lay somewhat to the west of the others (Fig 00), and slightly further down the Boyn terrace. Like cemeteries I-III, its date-span is comparatively wide, for it contained burials ranging in date from the mid-late Antonine period (c. AD 160/90), to the later 4th century (1086) – some two or more centuries. It is clear from this that cemeteries I-IV were all in sporadic use for interments – particularly inhumations, in the later Roman era. This may well strengthen the hypothesis that the cemeteries were the family plots of neighbouring social groups, raises questions of their kinship, and confusion about the land use of the region.

Cremation 1069. (564N/740E) Adult

Notebook 361.39

Grave pit: Unclear, roughly circular. 0.33m diameter and c. 0.48m deep.

Pit fill: Light brown clayey loam with medium pebbles.

Grave goods:

1069.1 Grey ware dish, burnished outside and inside, groove below rim (Rim diam 230mm; height 46mm; base diam 194mm). Mucking product. Placed upside down over 1069.2.

1069.2 Grey ware storage jar; narrow necked with six bands; cordon at base of neck; groove below larger cordon; bands of burnishing (Ht. 337mm; Rim diam 182mm; Max girth 315mm; base diam 137mm); Mucking product. Filled most of the pit and was used as the cremation urn.

Bone: Found inside 1069.2.

Cremation 1070. (559N/739E) Adult

Notebook 361.38

Grave pit: No real pit, the cremation was within a pot (1070.1) buried in a hole just big enough to take it. 0.60m diameter and c. 0.53m deep.

Pit fill: Medium brown loam with medium pebbles.

Grave goods:

1070.1 Large coarse grey ware storage jar with cordons on the shoulder and a small base, removed complete except for missing rim (lost in antiquity). Grafitto on shoulder and burnished zone around max girth (Ht 298mm; Max girth 310mm; Base diam 120mm). Mucking product.

1070.2 Small grey ware flask with horizontal rough and burnished banded decoration; groove on shoulder, zone of white slip, burnished inside (Ht 133mm; Rim diam 45mm; Max girth 131mm; Base diam 43mm). Mucking product. Found inside 1070.1.

1070.3 Complete Terra sigilata Ludowici SA pie dish (diameter 180mm). Antonine AAD139-192, placed right way up in the mouth of 1070.1, acting as a lid. Stamped by Minutus of Trier. Stamp **MINUTUS.F.** This stamp appears on forms 31R and 32 etc. and has been noted from Niederbieber. Late second or early third century. Worn foot and lip.

Bone: No data.

Remarks: Found after scraping.

Cremation 1071-2. (565N/736E) Adult

Notebook 361.38

Grave pit: Unclear, but appears oval, with steep sides and flat base, measuring 0.96m x 0.61m wide and c. 0.66m deep.

Pit fill: Light brown clayey loam with medium pebbles. Tightly placed inside the pit were the main cremation urn (1071.1) with another vessel (1071.2) used as a lid. Next to it, and touching, was another cremation urn (1071.3), again with an inverted vessel (1071.4) as a lid. Vessels 1071.5-6 were placed inside 1071.1, with a fragment of 1071.1 found next to its base (possibly residual).

Grave goods:

1071.1 Large grey ware storage jar, with two grooves below neck (Ht 295mm; Rim diam 260mm; Max girth 318mm; Base diam 120mm). Mucking product.

1071.2 Shallow burnished grey ware dish BB72 with 3 lines or grooves decorating it inside (Ht. 45mm; Rim diam. 235mm). Mucking product. Used as a lid for 1071.1

1071.3 Grey ware flask with single cordon at the neck, and four burnished bands (Ht. 152mm; Rim diam 55mm; Max girth 130mm; Base diam 57mm). Mucking product.

1071.4 Grey ware undercut rim jar with no base (removed by ploughing/stripping). Groove at neck (Ht. c. 150mm; Rim diam 124mm; Max girth 146mm). Mucking product. Used upside down as lid for 1071.3.

1071.5 Small grey ware bowl, burnished on neck, small distorted pedestal (Ht 63mm; Rim diam 90mm; Max girth 90mm; Base diam 37mm). Mucking product. Found inside 1071.1.

1071.6 Small, roughly made, shallow grey ware dish (Ht. 35mm; Rim diam 90mm; Max girth 80mm; Base diam 65mm). Mucking product. Found inside 1071.1.

1071.7 Part of footring of terra sigilata vessel found next to the base of 1071.1.

Bone: Cremated bone found in bottom of 1071.1. Also a patch of cremated bone found outside of the pots.

Remarks: Some confusion in notebook entries as to number of pots with this cremation – may be up to six, with the last three having been mistaken for a second cremation (1072) adjacent to 1071.

Cremation 1073. (567N/735E) Child (*Infans II*)

Notebook 361.37

Grave pit: Disturbed on one side, but roughly circular and just large enough to take the pot. c. 0.25m diameter and 0.13m deep.

Pit fill: Light brown clayey loam with few medium pebbles.

Grave goods:

1073.1 Grey ware vessel base and body sherds (shoulder), with a ridge inside the base. 8.3cm diameter. Used as cinerary urn.

Bone: Cremated bones found inside 1073.1.

Remarks: The sections suggest that the top of the cremation urn was lost through ploughing or scraping.

Cremation 1074. (566N/735E) Adult

Notebook 361.37

Grave pit: Shape unclear due to truncation by a lorry track and other disturbance, but appeared to be just large enough to contain cremation urn 1074.1, with steep sides and flat base; c. 0.46m diameter and c. 0.38m deep.

Pit fill: Light brown loam. Other sherds recovered may indicate accessory vessels, or residual material.

Grave goods:

1074.1 Grey ware storage jar with shoulder cordon decorated with incised? herringbone pattern (Ht. 250mm; Rim diam 210mm; Max girth 290mm; Base diam 102mm). Mucking product.

1074.2 Fine grey ware pottery flake, thought to perhaps be residual?

1074.3 Small fine grey ware beaker, folded? with roundels, and double grooves round the top of the shoulders. TDR Romano-Saxon?

Bone: Cremated bone from base of 1074.1.

Cremation 1075. (557N/730E) Adult

Notebook 361.37

Grave pit: No pit visible. Very little data preserved. Just the cinerary urn found (c. 0.38m diameter and c. 0.26m deep).

Pit fill: No data available.

Grave goods:

1075.1 Base (upper part ploughed off), of a large, coarse, grey ware storage jar with coarsely ringed and fettled surfaces, used as a cinerary urn (Base diam 116mm). Mucking product.

Bone: Poor preservation (270g); 13mm.

Cremation 1076. (562N/730E) Adult Male

Notebook 361.36

Grave pit: Same size as large jar (*i.e.* cinerary urn), 0.91m diameter and *c.* 0.31m deep.

Pit fill: Medium brown pebbly clay loam.

Grave goods:

A. Pottery (1076.1-3)

1076.1 Base of a large coarse grey storage jar, with the upper part ploughed off (Ht. 500mm; Base diam 232mm). Mucking product. This vessel used as a cinerary urn.

1076.2 Terra sigillata closed form with 'cut glass' decoration. (*cf.* Dickinson, below, p. 00-00). Ludowici VS class (diameter 75mm). The incised decoration consists of an eight-armed star of narrow palmettes alternating with a narrow vertical palmette; each is repeated four times. Rheinzabern, late second-mid third century. Abraded and distorted. Found with vessel 3, below, inside cinerary urn.

1076.3 Terra sigillata flagon, found with vessel 2 inside the cinerary urn (1076.1). Body and base. Rheinzabern, late second-mid third century.

From area near stone coffin 538 x 471 came a flagon rim, probably from the same vessel.

B. Other (1076.4)

1076.4 Fragmentary *balsamarium* in colourless glass, 102mm high. Unusual form; related to Isings (1957), ff's 6-9 or 84.

Bone: No data. 920g; 32mm; male.

Cremation 1077. (544N/724E) Adult

Notebook 361.36

Grave pit: Oval, 0.97m x 0.61m x *c.* 0.30m.

Pit fill: Lower fill (B): Charcoally loam with fragments of burnt bone. Upper fill (A): Light brown medium loam with pebbles. There are signs of scorching on the edge of the grave pit.

Grave goods: None.

Bone: No data available. Poor, 3g, 5mm, adult.

Remarks: Was the cremation put in the pit whilst still hot or is this a cremating pit? Very similar to Cremation 1078.

Cremation 1078. (538N/729E) Adult

Notebook 361.35

Grave pit: Oval, 1.52m long by 0.91m wide by *c.* 0.38m deep. The edges scorched red.

Pit fill: Lower fill (B) Charcoal, and cremated bones.

Upper fill (A) Redeposited brick earth with medium pebbles.

Finds in fill: Unspecified sherds of pottery.

Grave goods:

1078.1 Sherds of very coarse grey ware jar. Mucking product. Not cinerary urn, but within the feature, which was extremely disturbed.

Bone: No data preserved. Poor, 132g; 28mm; adult.

Remarks: Most of the bottom of this pit was burnt red, suggesting that this was the location of the cremation. Some of the pottery is also burnt.

Cremation 1079. (562N/730E) Adult

Notebook 361.33-34

Grave pit: Oval, with steep sides and rounded base, measuring 0.94m x 0.86m wide and *c.* 0.46m deep.

Pit fill: Light brown clayey fill. Main cremation vessel (1079.1) placed upright in centre of pit with another vessel (largely lost; 1079.3) used as a lid, with accessory vessel (1079.2) placed horizontally high up in pit fill outside.

Grave goods:

1079.1 Narrow-necked grey ware jar with stabbed decoration on the shoulder. Used as cinerary urn.

1079.2 Narrow-necked grey ware beaker. Oxfordshire?

1079.3 Rim of a vessel used to cover the mouth of 1079.1.

Bone: Cremated bones within the cinerary urn. 770g, poor pres.; 39mm; adult.

Cremation 1080. (566N/750E) a) Adult Female, b) Adult Female

Notebook 361.33

Grave pit: Irregular oval, 0.91m x 0.70m x c. 0.31m deep.

Pit fill: Medium brown loam, with some pebbles.

Grave goods:

Pottery (1080.1-2)

1080.1 High-shouldered jar with a rolled rim and a shoulder groove. Upper part ploughed off (rim fell into vessel interior). Mucking product. Used as the cremation urn.

1080.2 Narrow-necked, globular bodied flask. No further details (stolen from excavation). Mucking product.

Bone: No data. 780g. 82mm. Poor preservation; female; adult.

Cremation 1081. (554N/744E) Adult Male

Notebook 361

Grave pit: Irregular, sub-rounded, with steep sides and sloping floor. 0.91m x 0.82m x c. 0.33m deep.

Pit fill: Medium brown sub-soil with some pebbles. Main cremation urn (1081.1) placed centrally in pit, with one accessory vessel inside (1081.2) and one outside in the pit fill (1081.3).

Grave goods:

Pottery (1081.1-3)

1081.1 Base of a large storage jar (upper part ploughed off), used as a cinerary urn. Mucking product.

1081.2 Small, narrow-necked jar. Mucking product.

1081.3 Accessory vessel (small grey beaker?) in outer fill. Mucking product.

Bone: No data. 1350g, 83mm; male; adult.

Cremation 1082. (560N/758E) Adult Male

Notebook 361

Grave pit: Irregular, sub-rounded shape, with steep sides and flat base, measuring 1.10m x 0.91m wide and c. 0.48m deep.

Pit fill: Medium brown clayey loam. Cremation urn (1082.1) placed near centrally in pit, with accessory vessel 1082.2 resting higher up in the pit fill against the side of the pit and the outside of the cremation urn.

Grave goods:

Pottery (1082.1-2)

1082.1 Large oval bodied jar (top ploughed off), used as a cinerary urn. Undecorated save for wavy-line burnish on mid-wall exterior. Mucking product.

1082.2 Small, globular narrow-necked jar, with sets of deep grooving on the body. Mucking product.

Bone: No data. 980. 72mm; male; adult; poor preservation.

Cremation 1083. (556N/749E) a) Adult Male, b) Adult Female

Notebook 361

Grave pit: Sub-rounded, with near-vertical sides and flat base, measuring 0.76m x 0.61m wide and c. 0.62m deep.

Pit fill: Medium brown clayey loam. Cremation urn 1083.1 placed centrally in pit, with platter 1083.3 used inverted as a lid, and accessory vessel 1083.2 placed inside, halfway down in fill.

Grave goods:

1083.1 Large storage jar used as cinerary urn. Mucking product.

1083.2 Small grey ware flask with 3 bands of decoration; Mucking product. Found inside 1083.1.

1083.3 Grey ware platter found upside down over mouth of 1083.1; Mucking product. Decorated on the inside with incised? concentric circles.

Bone: Poor, 1300g, 70mm, m. adult.

Cremation 1084. (555N/761E) Adult

Notebook 361

Grave pit: Roughly oval, with sloping sides and rounded base; heavily truncated, measuring 0.76m x 0.41m wide and c. 0.18m deep.

Pit fill: Light brown loam with a central patch of dark charcoally loam and cremated bone.

Grave goods:

1084.1 Fragments of a pottery jar; Mucking product.

Bone: No data.

Cremation 1085. (558N/760E) a) Adult Male, b) Adult Female

Notebook 361

Grave pit: Roughly circular, with steep sides and flat base, measuring 0.79m x 0.68m wide and c. 0.51m deep.

Pit fill: Grey brown loam with few pebbles. Main cremation urn placed upright on base of pit, with two accessory vessels placed in fill between it and the pit cut, and a possible fourth vessel used as a lid.

Finds in fill: Sherds of a grey ware platter.

Grave goods:

1085.1 Large grey ware storage jar, used as cinerary urn. Mucking product.

1085.2 Small grey ware beaker. Mucking product. Placed upright in pit fill next to 1085.1.

1085.3 Small grey ware beaker with groove around shoulder. Mucking product. Placed upright in pit fill next to 1085.1.

1085.4. Fragments of grey ware platter, found in fill of 1085.1, which probably represents a vessel used as a lid, but disturbed. Mucking product.

Bone: No data.

Grave 1086. (532N/730E) Adult Male c. 25-35 years

Notebook 103.1-5, 11-13, 15, 26, 30

Grave pit: No data available, since discovered by drag line operator and not immediately recognised as archaeological, although the pit was seen to extend beyond the south end of the coffin by 0.3m, and the grave was aligned approximately NW-SE.

Pit fill: The inhumation (for the human bone report, see below) was placed on a layer of 'dirty plaster' (gypsum; NB 103/4-5 sketch), and was then covered with a further layer of gypsum (called 'clean plaster'; *ibid*), above which was a thin layer of brick earth which had entered, but had not entirely filled, the coffin at some subsequent date.

Grave furniture: This burial was in a stone coffin, the only one from Mucking. Unfortunately, the drag line operator, a recent recruit with no archaeological experience, thought he had hit a block of concrete, and gave the coffin repeated blows with the dragline bucket, only reporting the find when he spotted human bones. The coffin was in two parts, a lid and base. These were well cut both externally and internally, and the surfaces were very smooth where they survived in their original state (dragline damage consisted of the breakage and removal of the coffin lid and the breakage of the north end of the coffin). The east side of the coffin had broken in antiquity. The bottom of the coffin (inside and outside) was left rough and is of uneven thickness, 0.05-0.09m thick. The dimensions of the lid were 2.06m by 0.68m x 0.18m, and the main body of the coffin 2.03m x 0.66m x 0.43m deep. Its total weight was calculated as just under one ton. A fragment of the coffin was taken by L Biek of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory and analysed (AML Rep 785442). It is '*a Jurassic oolitic limestone, probably Lincolnshire Limestone, but could be one of the Jurassic limestones from Normandy*' (F W Anderson in litt, August 29th, 1980). A further report by M Wilkinson identifies the specimen more precisely to Lincolnshire. Visible on three sides of the interior of the coffin were stains suggesting that an inner lining of wood existed (1.83m x 0.53m). This was nailed at the corners, at least some of the nails surviving *in situ*. Together with the stain, these show the wood to have been 0.05m thick. There is no data on the analysis of the wood fragments, but in line with the data from the coffined burials from Romano-British cemetery I (see above), it is assumed that the wood was oak or, less likely, poplar. Margaret Jones argued that this was a bier, rather than an inner coffin, as the toe bones of the skeleton overlapped the wood stain and the nails, which all lay in the wood stain itself.

Grave goods: These fell into two groups: material from within the coffin (1086.1) and the material placed outside the coffin and at its foot (1086.2-4).

1086.1 Glass beaker. Fragments only found, packed in the gypsum near the left foot. Base and part of the lower side wall of a vessel in an almost clear glass, 45mm in diameter, with a slight tinge of green and a pontil mark. The form is probably Isings 102, which is dated 3rd-4th century AD. [Check if Harden specialist report exists on this material; illus in Cem IV file]

1086.2 Small flask. Pieces of this vessel were placed along the W side of the coffin, and at the SW corner (*i.e.* the coffin foot). Some sherds were recovered from under the coffin. Mucking product.

1086.3 Large grey ware jar of Mucking type M. Decorated with burnished curvilinear designs. Not complete. Scratched on the exterior wall of the vessel was a graffito, IIIVX. Details of this were submitted to Dr M W Hassall, who reported (in litt, November 4th 1978) that it was probably a '*numeral, presumably an indication of weight or capacity written retrograde*'. Pot 1086.3 was placed on its side at the foot at the coffin.

1086.4 Samian vessel?

Human bone (from notes made by C. Crooks): The human bone was well preserved, due to the calcareous conditions afforded by the gypsum and the coffin itself. Almost all of the bones were present, although only the leg bones below the knee survived in situ following the discovery of the burial. These, however, indicated a supine, extended burial with head to the north. The skull was complete, with male characteristics and closed sutures. All teeth had erupted, and three third molars were present. Age, estimated from tooth wear, was 25-35 years. All epiphyses were fused, and the muscle and tendon attachments were fairly pronounced. There were no observed bone diseases or arthritis, and the pelvis had a narrow sciatic notch, again suggesting a male. The estimated stature from the femur was 176.9cm and from the tibia 165.4cm.

Animal bone: Found in the fill of the grave pit with the pot were some non-human bones. These clustered around the foot end of the burial, and it was thought possible that they could have been from inside pot 1086.3. They consisted of fragments of piglet skull and mandible, and fragmentary bones from all parts of a goose skeleton, perhaps indicating that the whole bird had been interred.

Remarks: From the grave goods it is suggested that this grave is fourth century.

Cremation 1087. (536N/742E)

Notebook 103.17, 19

Grave pit: No pit found – the cremation remains were found in the earth moved by the dragline, but it must have been situated in the RB IV cemetery area.

Pit fill: No data.

Grave goods:

1087.1 Lower part of a pottery vessel used as a cinerary urn. No details.

1087.2 Fragments of a prismatic bottle, in green glass. The vessel was squarish in shape and probably two-handled. It is perhaps Isings f 90 (2nd century AD).

1087.3 Parts of the rim and base of a vessel in very thin translucent blue green glass. Probably a cup. The base has a pushed-out base ring, and a pontil mark is visible; everted rim (Illus of this in RB Cem IV file).

Bone: No data.