

Roman Enclosures

RBI and RBIII

The principal feature in south-west part of the site was a double-ditched enclosure (159) measuring *c.* 80 x 55m (mid inner ditch dimensions). It had a single, western entrance *c.* 3m wide. The inner ditch (159) had a 'v' shaped profile and ranged in width from 3-4m and its original depth ranged from 00 to 00m. On its W, S and E sides a second ditch (153) followed the curve of the inner ditch some 3-3.5m from it. The profile of the inner ditch fill suggested an internal bank of perhaps a similar width. No clear trace of an internal revetment was noted during the excavation and it seems probable that it was of a simple dump construction. The 3m wide berm between the inner and outer ditches may have been used as a second rampart. Again no traces of revetting were observed. The excavators were confident that ditch 153 never extended along the N side of the enclosure and suggested that it was not finished in this section.

The entrance way was *c.* 3m wide. Unlike DD Enc to the north-east (see below) there were no obvious signs of a gate structure, however investigation of this area was limited and a quarry test-hole immediately inside the entrance causeway had removed any evidence which survived in this area. The interruption to the outer ditch (864/17540) was wider, at *c.* 4.9m.

The interior of the enclosure was not wholly investigated. On the inside large parts of the interior were left substantially unexplored and uncleared as the excavation become more of a salvage effort. The eastern half of the enclosure was examined more thoroughly as it contained the bulk of the South Rings interior. Despite the large number of features uncovered in the western enclosure interior, there was a paucity of late Iron Age and Roman features. Most appear to belong to the Bronze Age.

To the west of enclosure 159 (RBI) a number of ditched enclosures were cut and its W side formed their E margins. At the SW end ditch 153 appears to have been extended on the same alignment for a further *c.* 17m before making a turn to the NE to run parallel to the outer ditch of 159. Crop marks indicate it to have extended the length of the W side of enclosure 159. Three subdividing ditches (S-N: Nrs 3683, 888, and 882) divide it into further, smaller sub enclosures. The N end of this area is crossed by a considerable complex of ditches, most if not all of them Roman but their precise relationships with one another and, indeed, with the enclosure 159 remains equivocal.

In the early Roman era the interior of the enclosure was used for kiln 10 (Atlas sheet 3) about 1m E of the inner ditch (159) lip. This styling implies that the inner bank was slighted some time before the kiln was constructed, say *c.* AD 30-50. Some time later, kiln 1 was constructed on the S side of the enclosure entrance. This structure was cut into the side of the kiln. Similarly, Corn-drier 1 was cut into the eastern side of the enclosure ditch 159. Clearly by this time the ditch backfilled inner half of ditch 159 was judged sufficiently compact to permit the construction of a small structure.

Other enclosures

On the south side of 159/153 two further ditches were cut to enlarge the enclosure into part of a field system. The eastern ditch (370) runs from the site margins (it may have terminated against the lane) for a distance of *c.* 34m before terminating on the corner of the outer ditch 153 and leaving a corner entrance *c.* 3m in width between it and the later recut of 159 (530). At this corner another recut of 159 (532) is evident [check this]. *c.* 17m west of 370 is another similar-sized ditch (364). This slightly curvy feature was identified running for a distance of *c.* 20m before it, like 370, is lost in the site margins. Like 370, once again leaving gap *c.* 3-4m wide, perhaps an entrance way. The last few metres of this ditch were dug away by GH12 but its butt end is evident on the N side of the *Grubenhaus*.

The N side of enclosure 159 is less clearly disentangled. Spining from its NW corner is a substantial ditch (4775) which was traced running on a NW heading for some 20m. It is, however, traceable as a distinct crop mark for at least another 110m. This was clearly a considerable landscape feature, running as it does at right angles to the slope and draining into ditch 159. It does not appear to have been used as the spinal

feature of any ditched field system save at its western end where faint traces of an enclosure were noted to its N (see crop mark figure).

Cutting this feature was later Roman ditch 4783. This, like the ditch discussed above, was spining from the NW corner of the enclosure and adopts a parallel course to it for some 15m before making a tight 120° turn to the NE before cranking south eastwards to run down the ridge slope for some 45m before terminating in a squared-off butt.

The precise date when enclosure 159 was laid out is uncertain but is probably datable to the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD. It is clearly an earthwork of considerable potential and its siting is clearly defensive. That said, the absence of data on its initial structures (if any) is frustratingly elusive. The inner rampart may have been of simple dump construction but in the absence of definite information the precise appearance of the crossing earthworks is unknown, as is any information on the nature of the entrance. How long the defences served in their original forms is also an open question. It is not likely that the defences would have been maintained after the invasion and it seems probable that the earthwork was slighted in the post conquest period. Kiln 10 provides the evidence for a possible *terminus ante quem*. The northern part of the ditch may have been recut, however, or kept open. On the N side the ditch formed the boundary of a long enclosure which was sub-divided. It appears, then to have fairly rapidly dwindled into a component of the field system rather than a major earthwork.

RBII

This enclosure comprised a substantial and much recut NE/SW tending ditch (201) which passed just to the south of the Bronze Age enclosure before making a turn downslope, running on a south-west alignment for some 100m and disappearing off the site at its extreme SE corner on an ESE heading. Some 00m to the north of this ditch a second ditch adopts a parallel course, and is sprung from it (201). To the north of this ditch, a second ditch (1226) continues 201's alignment northwards for a further c. 00m before adopting an alignment slightly more easterly in direction and turning sharply eastwards. The precise course of this feature is uncertain – a modern ditch (1072) cuts obliquely across its line and salvage digging in this part of the site makes the elucidation of its precise course difficult. A shallow ditch (1009) to the south is probably its continuation. This runs on the same alignment for some 00m before angling sharply southwards to meet ditch 201 again, and thus delineates an enclosure measuring c. 00 x 00m.

The enclosure itself is subdivided into three strips, within the NW section of which a complex sequence of features was sampled.

Immediately to the SE of enclosure 153/159 is an area of the site which contains some of the more interesting of the Roman features. Parts of this region, however, were excavated under extreme/salvage conditions when funding was short and much had, in consequence, to be yielded up to the dragline unexplored, save in a very rudimentary fashion.

Some time in the early Roman era this area was parcelled up into a series of rectilinear ditched enclosures. The principal enclosures abut one another. That to the S (201) appears to run across the slope for c 00m before making a turn to the E. For a small space its course is unplanned (but shows as a crop mark) before it is resumed as 3008, running off the site to the SE. On its N side it appears to run down, like 3008, to the site margins.

The enclosure adjoining 201/3008 to the N is 1226/1009/3960. All of these ditches have been recut at least once and several, many times, making dating difficult and the elucidation of phases almost impossible.

At the N end of ditch 1226, it changes alignment by some 30°, revealing two small gullies (955, 957) before turning sharply eastwards. This ditch section was not excavated. A little to the east another ditch comes in at a shallow angle and, becoming broader and deeper, continues the suggested alignment of ditch 1226/1069 for a distance of some 30m before making an 80° turn southwards. This ditch then continues on

this cross-slope alignment, apparently cutting (and therefore post dating) ditch 201, continuing thereafter as the E edge of the southern enclosure. This tends to suggest that both parcels were originally longer. E of its intersection with ditch 201 the ditch's course is unclear for it appears to be by now wholly masked by ditch 296.

This last was cut on a converging course and entirely adopts the former's alignment by the time it reaches ditch 201. Thus the new recut may have been the shorter of the two, not ditch 296 being taken across both parcels. S of 210, ditch 296 appears to commence curving gently downslope before excavation ceased and its course is thereafter uncertain. S of this, however, a ditch (3005) may represent the continuation of a recut of ditch 296 (3958), and that it was simply misplotted in the field. The fate of this feature is not certainly known and thus an important morphological detail of this part of the site remains unresolved.

Both land parcels are cut into by ditches. The S enclosure is very poorly recorded, but ditches 1315 and 1318 cut into its N edge. The NW area of the N enclosure is enigmatic. Ditches 283/281 appear to subdivide it. Both are interrupted *c.* 3m S of 1226 and then resume after a gap of *c.* 1m. If this was an entrance it was insufficient to admit wheeled traffic. The feature runs downslope *c.* 00m before the Nmost ditch, 283 terminates under GH62. The S ditch, 281, continues for a little way E of GH62 to end at another gully, 219.

Further S a narrow gully 1233 adopts a course parallel to 281/283. It is, however, not entirely clear if this is a similarly continuous feature, like those, or if it peters out to be resumed by ditch 613 which is continued eastwards by gully 287. The end of this feature was not examined and its relationship with ditch 3960 is not known.

Both ditches appear to have been recut on a number of occasions. Indeed it is not entirely clear whether the doubling of the ditches is not due to recutting. That said, it is clearly easier to slob out a silted up ditch rather than cut another along another course.

It is not clear whether the N side was ever enclosed, but ditch 1886 turns through a right angle at its west end, and further sections were a discontinuous ditch (0000) on the same alignment and which is probably a continuation of it. This small ditch length is cut by the larger ditch 4794 (see below, 000). An interruption on the south side of the enclosure at roughly its mid-point may mark the position of an entrance (as is apparent in the field to its north, see below). There is evidence of a ditch recut on its short (East) side (R 15 824).

A little to the north-east of field one, above, was a second enclosure. This was of broadly similar dimensions (28 x 22m). Its southern ditch (1890) turns NE on its east side as 0000, and then returns to the north as 1444. The south side has a clear entrance: the ditch is interrupted for a distance of *c.* 1.5m. It is flanked by two posts (0000, 0000), and there are two ditch extensions on the exterior which suggest the former presence of post holes. It is possible that the entrance was of two phases. Like the field to its south, the W ditch is not continuous, and there is some doubt that it was ever wholly enclosed. It is possible that this region may have been overscraped.

A possible extension ditch (1448) appears to have continued the enclosure's limit further northwards to ditch 9110. This would have enclosed a land parcel of slightly trapezoidal shape which measured some 00 x 00m.

At a later date these two last two fields 1-2 appear to have been thrown into one by the cutting of a single 'v' shaped ditch (1446: S624). This ran on the same alignment, but *c.* 1-2m to the north (that is, inside) the S enclosure ditch, and across what had previously been a narrow strip of land between fields 1 and 2. The ditch then makes a right-angled turn to the west, uphill, and joins the main north-south ditch 1594. Between it, and the N boundary of field 1 (1886) there was left a narrow strip some 00m wide, by which access into enclosure 1 could be gained from the north-west.

In the north-west corner of this enlarged later field, which measured some 000 x 000m, a small rectangular enclosure with rounded corners was set out in the mid-2nd century AD. It measured 000 x 000m, and had

both east and west entrances, and within it there was constructed a kiln (Nr 00) . Timber post-holes surrounding the kiln and stoke-pit suggest this structure had a permanent cover of some kind (see kiln 000, page 000).

Ditch 1446 seems to have also served as the NW edge of a large, open-ended rectangular land parcel bounded on its N side by ditch 9110, which continues eastwards for some 000m before making a sharp return to the south west for a distance of some 000m. Its eastern edge was delimited by a further ditch, 7231/7254, which ran roughly parallel and to the east of 1446, some 000m from it. There is some topographical evidence which suggests it might be contemporary with 1446, but there is evidence, masked largely by recutting, that it was cut along the line of an earlier ditch, perhaps equivalent to the s ditch of field 2. An east-west ditch (7231/7234) which springs from it is precisely aligned on ditch 1 444, and is arguably a part of the early phase of rectilinear allotment. Less certain is its precise course. The northern portion of 7231/7234 is uncertain. It seems likely that 7234 is the later feature. There is some uncertainty about whether it cuts 9110 or not.

The south edge of this small area of the site was excavated under salvage conditions, and consequently there are problems with its interpretation. Ditch 7231 appears to make a turn towards the SW before making a turn, after some 000m, to the north east. There is some fugitive evidence to suggest that there was a further small enclosure in this region, but the fills of the amorphous features do not appear to have been excavated and it is thus impossible to establish their relationship and date.

The droveway

A short (00m) length of ditch ran a little to the east of ditch 9 110 return, parallel with it. This ditch length is very imperfectly known (again, salvage conditions prevailed in this area), but there is every reason to suppose that it continued, to form, with ditch 9110, a short droveway some 000m in length, by which gentle access downhill aimed obliquely up the slope towards a narrow strip of unenclosed land running at right angles to the hill slope.

The east west ditch 9110 forms the southern edge of a long open space, which was bounded on its uphill side by ditch 9001 (much recut), and on its northern side by the edge of the double ditched enclosure (initially, ditch 6398). No limiting boundary was found on its eastern downslope, and it is presumed that it ran, unenclosed, off the margins of the excavation. It is thus at least 000 x 000m in length (unless the parcel was divided up by a hedgerow, no evidence of which remains). On its north-east side a droveway leads off it along the slope past the southern (entrance) side of the double-ditched enclosure (its eastern ditch 6398, 6380, and the later, outer ditch 15466 forms its W edge), and the ditch alignment is picked up again further to the west, again, like the ditches to the east of the droveway on its southern side, by a series of recut, duplicated and irregular ditches. (6370, 13178, 15567). Here too, irregular lengths of ditch lead off these ditches inwards, to split off a number of irregularly-shaped enclosures (13180, 13186).

Apart from the two droveways, access to the top of the hill was by means of a narrow causeway across the ditch 9001 close to its junction with 9110.

The Double Ditched Enclosure (DDE)

The Double-ditched enclosure appears to have formed the nucleus of the Romano-British settlement on the terrace during the period spanning the Flavian-early third centuries AD. It was regarded as the infield of an enclosure during the course of the excavation, but later thought to be an outlying settlement, the villa itself remaining unlocated; buried perhaps, beneath the *colluvium* at the base of the terrace somewhere in the vicinity of Walton Hall. Whatever the truth of the matter about the putative villa, the enclosure was clearly a farmsteading of considerable importance for the settlement history of the immediate area.

The enclosure is sited on the gently sloping terrace. Prior to the excavation the whole area was stripped, almost certainly with the loss of a considerable amount of archaeological information. No trace of surfaces

survived and this made the interpretation of the myriad discrete features of what was clearly a multi-period site a matter of considerable difficulty.

In its initial phase the site was enclosed by a single ditch cut during the Flavian-Trajanic periods (see below). To the East, on the downslope side of the enclosure, there was a formal entranceway, and there was perhaps a second less impressive entrance to the south of this. The enclosure interior was divided into five parcels of land. The northern two thirds were split into two by a north-south running fence line, and the southern third of the enclosure was divided into three by two ditches. The corner of the westernmost of these three sub-enclosures was partitioned off to form a cemetery (Cemetery II, see Section II, below). Entrances to each of these enclosures were found. Set roughly centrally within the principal enclosure was a well (Well 4), which appears to have formed a focus to the site. The North East sub-enclosure contained clear evidence of three structures; a granary (Building 1), a stake-built rectilinear building immediately to its south (Building 2), while a little to the south, just to the north of Well 4, the post holes of a large aisled building probably formed the domestic range of the settlement. The NW enclosure contained a number of discrete features, but most notably, the eavesdrip gullies of four roundhouses, probably also of Romano-British, rather than Iron Age date.

Phase I: Early Roman

The enclosures

The outer ditch (c 6287). Only on its south east side are there traces of the first phase (15466) of this much recut ditch. Here the feature turns sharply northwards before being lost in a recut of the feature 13694, which gave it a rounded corner. Its original dimensions appear to be 0.00m wide and c 00m deep. The course of this recut is visible for some 55m initially cut fairly straight, but then curving slightly towards the west before petering out. It is doubtful whether the original ditch continued beyond this point. Rather more survives of recut 13794, which gives the ditch a rounded corner. This ditch appears to have been rather larger, its surviving dimensions ranging from c 0.00 to 0.00m in width, and 0.00m in depth. The final recut of the ditch (6287) was restricted to the south side and ended in line with the corner of the inner ditch 6398. This later Roman recut of the feature was substantially larger than any of its predecessors, and in this matches the general size of the later Roman ditches found elsewhere on the site (eg, 9110 to the south). The final recut appears to have been taken along the length of the southern part of the enclosure, and then turns sharply northwards to run parallel to the western side of the inner ditch before eventually adopting the alignment of the (much realigned) prehistoric ditch c15592, which forms the 'spine' of the site. The absence of any return of this feature to the north of the enclosure strongly suggests that the outer ditch never fully surrounded the enclosure. Substantial lengths of the ditch were excavated.

The Inner ditch (6398).

Like the outer ditch this feature appears to have been much recut. It appears to have run parallel to the outer ditch, its outer lip (as far as can be judged) being some 3-5m from the inner lip of the outer ditch. Very little survives of its earliest phase, save for a slight trace of a butt ended entrance at the western corner (4386), of the enclosure where the ditch diverged from the alignment of the older ditch (4366). It probably ran along the south side of the enclosure on the alignment of the later recuts, then turned north to form an enclosure measuring c 000 x 000m, before returning. Traces of a first recut (4384), blocking the entrance at the north west corner are clearly evident at this ditch, too, adopted a rounded profile similar to that of the first recut of the outer ditch. The surviving enclosure proper was created by a second recut (6398), this time with squared off corners. This recut created a single enclosure with square corners, measuring c 000 x 000m, and appears to be continuous, save for an interruption where it peters out on the southern side. It is not certain whether the ditch was interrupted at this point, and it may have been overscraped in this area. However, since the region of the site is covered in brickearth, it is possible that the feature was hard to perceive in the soil.

The principal entrance (structure 1, below), was on the south side of the enclosure, some 34m from its north west corner. The upcast from the enclosure ditch was used to form an internal rampart which was in all some 00m in width – a figure derived from the interruptions to the internal dividing ditches. Nothing can be

said of the details of the superstructure of the earthwork, but it would seem probable that it was provided with some form of stockade.

The sub enclosures

The enclosure was divided into four unequal parts by ditches and fence lines. The principal subdivision was ditch 15052, which ran parallel with the short sides of the enclosure, dividing it into two unequal rectangles. The ditch was *c* 00m wide, and 00m in depth. Close to its mid point a causewayed entrance linked the two halves of the enclosure. The southern enclosure was itself divided into two by a ditch (4441/15194), *c* 00m wide and *c* 00m in depth (SECTION 2454). This ran from sub enclosure ditch (15052) to meet the internal bank of the inner enclosure ditch (6398). Here, too, a single causewayed entrance linked the two sub enclosures. To the east of this ditch, a third (15275/15340) appears to have divided the southern portion into two parts. Excavation here was restricted to a few principal features as the area was not being quarried for gravel. This ditch was rather smaller than the other internal dividing ditches, some 0.00m wide and 0.00m in depth.

The fence lines

The northern sub-enclosure was divided into two parts by a series of much-recut lines. There appear to be two principal alignments, that to the east (MC 15608) comprising a series of widely spaced post holes, apparently aligned on the southern ditch butt of ditch (00000), and traceable as far as the north inner ditch of the enclosure. The evidence is equivocal, but the central part of this line comprises some ten pairs of post holes set at a distance of *c* 2,5m. A recut of this feature, or more likely a replacement fence (mc 15048), was constructed on a converging alignment, a few metres to the north of the earlier? fence line. At some stage the alignment of this feature was changed, probably denoting a replacement of the fence, which adopts a slightly different alignment (00000). It comprises a series of closely-set, staggered? uprights. This line carried on between the entrance between the two sub enclosures to meet a second linear feature. At the eastern end this is marked by a line of post holes, but further to the north the stake holes were clearly set in a continuous trench (15063). The relationship of this feature with the other subdivisions of the enclosure is not certain. Dating evidence is scanty, but at one point burnt bone was found in the trench, which had clearly disturbed a cremation burial, most probably one of the iron age cremations set into the square ditched barrows. It cuts across the square ditches iron age and may represent the later fencing off of the interior of the enclosure into paddocks, probably after occupation had ceased.

At the northern end the fence line makes a right angled turn to the north west, aligned on the north enclosure ditch, and it may be discerned as a continuous line of post holes for some 00m. Running roughly parallel with the western inner ditch of the enclosure is a discontinuous shallow slot like feature, containing stake holes (4200), which may also be a fence line. These fence lines suggest that the northern part of the enclosure was parcelled out into either gardens or paddocks for livestock, but their relationship with the remainder of the enclosure is uncertain.