

A1 STIBBINGTON JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT

Archaeological Watching Brief

prepared by

NETWORK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

for

HIGHWAYS AGENCY

Report no 501

April 2005

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during January to March 2003 on improvements and landscaping at the junction of the A1, Stibbington in Cambridgeshire. The watching brief comprised the monitoring of topsoil removal and other ground disturbing activities over an area measuring approximately 600m by 300m.

Previous research found that a Roman industrial site was located to the north west, and there was thought to be a high potential for further Roman findings. However, a subsequent trench evaluation found only three ditches a gully and a pit. One of the ditches was interpreted as pre-medieval and possibly relating to crop marks of an enclosure. The other features were thought to pertain to medieval or post-medieval agriculture.

The watching brief focused on three main areas. Within Area 1, there was a series of linear features arranged on two main orientations, with associated pits and postholes. Early to middle Iron Age pottery was retrieved from these features, along with animal bone, bone awls, a fragment of antler comb, residual worked flints of the Neolithic to late Bronze Age periods, and a single sherd of abraded and intrusive Roman pottery. The flints represent episodic, transient activity, whilst the other remains are indicative of a moderately high status early to middle Iron Age farm reliant on stock rearing, particularly sheep for wool. No evidence was found for arable agriculture, but it is likely that this also took place at the site. Evidence of contact and communication with other groups in the Midlands and the South East was suggested by pottery forms and decoration. The single sherd of Roman pottery indicated that the site was either under pasture or had been abandoned by this period.

Areas 2 and 3 encountered tree throws and root activity. Pottery retrieved from the topsoil in these areas indicated medieval and post-medieval manuring practices.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report represents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during improvements and landscaping at the junction of the A1 at Stibbington, Cambridgeshire (Figures 1 & 2)

1.1 Commissioning Bodies

The project was commissioned by the Highways Agency. The principal contractor was May Gurney Ltd. The archaeological contractor was Network Archaeology Ltd, a professional archaeological organisation which provides consultancy advice and undertakes field services. Mouchel Parkman Services Ltd liaised with Network Archaeology Ltd during the post-excavation stage of work.

1.2 The Development

Improvements to the junction (TL 0860 9845) involved the stripping of topsoil and subsoil, the creation and landscaping of an earth mound to the north east of the site, extension to the Old Great North Road to the south east and construction of a bridge spanning the A1 at the centre of the development.

1.2.1 Topsoil stripping

Topsoil was stripped to subsoil level, across the development area by tracked 360° back-actor excavators fitted with toothless ditching buckets.

1.3 Legislation, Regulations and Guidance

The Highways Agency submitted a Stage 2 Environmental Assessment in 1998. Permission for the development was granted by Cambridgeshire County Council subject to a number of specified conditions including archaeological monitoring under clause 177AR.

May Gurney Ltd produced a Project Specification setting out the methodologies for the evaluation, excavation and archaeological watching brief and Network Archaeology Ltd produced a Written Scheme of Investigation in response to the Project Specification.

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

A trench evaluation (Wotherspoon & Kier 2002) was conducted by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (now known as Archaeological Solutions) on behalf of the Highways Agency during August 2002. The work revealed only three ditches, a gully and a pit containing a quarried limestone block. All of these findings were in the south western part of the development area. Dating evidence suggested that the findings ranged from the pre-medieval period to the post-medieval period.

1.5 Archaeological Background

The development was in an area previously thought to have been of high archaeological potential, with settlement and agrarian activity assisted by the fertile soils derived from the River Nene floodplain.

Evidence of prehistoric activity within the local environs of Stibbington is apparent from Mesolithic flint flakes (SMR 130) at a site at Swanshill Nursery to the north west of the development area. Neolithic find-spots in the vicinity, including a flint arrowhead (SMR 166) indicate a presence on the river valley terraces. Crop marks of a number of prehistoric ring ditches to the north east and enclosures to the south of the village have also been identified. The Iron Age is poorly represented suggesting low level activity in the area at this time.

The Roman period is well documented with a possible fort site (SMR 178a) at Stibbington and a number of structures and kilns found within 500m of the south of Stibbington. This activity, both residential and commercial, appears to owe its existence to the Roman town of Durobrivae (Water Newton), located approximately 3.5km to the east of Stibbington at a point where Ermine Street (the line now taken by the present A1) crossed the River Nene. A Roman industrial complex was excavated to the north west of the development site. Undated crop marks (SMR 4474, 5647 & 218) and an undated earth mound (SMR 5648) within the development area were thought to be Romano-British.

The Saxon period is under-represented in the locality, but pre-conquest churches existed in Stibbington, Sibson and Wansford.

During the medieval period, settlement spread out from the crossing point of the Great North Road and the River Nene. The majority of the medieval settlement appeared to the east of Stibbington. Upstanding medieval structures include Stibbington Church, Stibbington Hall and the Rectory. Considerable impact was also made on the local environs by agrarian activity.

Post-medieval activity was also prominent, with the Nene valley railway orientated east-west along the valley to the south of Stibbington. Other activity and settlement followed the medieval alignment along the River Nene and upstanding buildings include a gateway and house.

1.6 Aims

1.6.1 Watching brief

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- identify the location, extent and condition of any archaeological remains exposed by the works;
- ensure that suitable measures were taken with regard to the preservation or recording of any such remains, as appropriate; and
- inform on the likely nature and condition of archaeological evidence in the area for the reference of future development or research projects.

1.6.2 Client report

The aims of the client report are to:

- synthesise site data with data available from other sites locally and throughout the region;
- investigate how settlements, monuments and agricultural remains are integrated into the landscape within each period; and
- carry out research into patterns of discard.

1.7 Terms of Reference

This report is intended for the clients; May Gurney Ltd, the Highways Agency and Mouchel Parkman Services Ltd. Copies will also be given to the curator of the archaeology section, Cambridgeshire County Council, and subsequently to the Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record for public access.

1.8 Resourcing

The A1 improvements were constructed between January and May 2003.

The whole archaeological project was overseen by one project manager. The first phase required a watching brief, which was undertaken over a period of three months by one project supervisor. The second phase consisted of the post excavation work, which was conducted during 2004 and early 2005.

1.9 Limitations

1.9.1 Field work

Visibility of archaeological remains during a watching brief is dependent on many factors including machine type, depth of topsoil removal and other construction methods, weather and geology.

The topsoil stripping provided the best opportunity to see archaeological deposits in plan. The area stripped by the 360° back-acting excavators was fairly clean and surface visibility was generally good. Nevertheless, as the depth of stripping was not under the direct control of the archaeologist, remnant topsoil and occasional patches of alluvium and/or colluvium obscured the natural substrate across parts of the construction area. In areas where the topsoil was stripped in two layers, confidence in the presence or absence of archaeological remains was low until the topsoil had been fully stripped down to the natural substrate. Re-examination of stripped areas that had been allowed to weather greatly increased the degree of confidence in both the positive and negative evidence.

1.9.2 Post excavation

Interpretation of the sites was based on incomplete and arbitrary views of the remains. This was because the width of the area revealed was restricted to a window of 45m by 78m.

1.10 Report Structure

The report has been divided into four main parts.

Introductory section: explaining the background to the project and this stage of investigation;

Results and discussions: in one section headed watching brief. The sites are discussed in order of their location along the development from west to east;

Conclusions: a synthesis of the sites and how they fit within the wider context of the landscape in which the development was constructed

Appendices: three appendices (A – C) comprise a context summary table, specialist reports and figures.

1.11 Field Records

1.11.1 Project Code

The project code for the A1 Stibbington Junction Improvement watching brief is AST03.

1.11.2 Allocation of Numbers

Context numbers were allocated number blocks of one thousand starting with the construction area where archaeology was discovered. For example, all archaeological features in Area 1 were allocated the numbers 1000 to 1999.

Three number blocks were assigned to the following Areas

- Area 1: 1000 Numbers
- Area 2: 2000 Numbers
- Area 3: 3000 Numbers

Stratified finds were assigned the context number of the context in which they were found

Unstratified finds were allocated a numbers from the assigned block of numbers for the appropriate area

The registered finds numbering system started at 1, and they were also referenced by the number of the context from which they had been retrieved.

No environmental samples were taken and no numbers were allocated for this.

1.11.3 Written Records

A system of *pro forma* record sheets was used for on-site recording. This system, developed by Network Archaeology Ltd, is in a format acceptable to the IFA. Multi-context recording was used for all archaeological deposits and any significant natural deposits located during surface and / or trench inspection

1.11.4 Drawn Records

The drawing number numbering system began at 1. Sections and plans were listed together on an overall drawing register. Each sheet containing sections or plans was also allocated a sheet number from a sequence starting at 1.

The drawn records included:

- Contractor's 1:1000 development maps and Ordnance Survey background mapping (at 1:50 000 scale) showing the location of excavated areas.
- Excavation area plans (at 1:100 or 1:20 scale or as appropriate), detailing all natural and archaeological features.
- Section drawings at 1:10 or 1:20 scale (as appropriate) of all excavated features and deposits

1.11.5 Photographic Records

Monochrome and colour slide photographs were taken in 35mm format. These included pre-excavation shots, shots of excavated features in section, general plan shots of the site and working shots of staff and plant engaged in excavation. A full written record was made of all photographs taken. The feature context number, appropriate scales, and a north arrow (if appropriate) appeared in all photographs whenever possible.

1.12 Post-excavation

1.12.1 Consolidation of Archive

The archive has been consolidated in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP 2, Stage 2).

1.12.2 Finds Processing

All finds were cleaned, marked, conserved and packaged as appropriate to IFA guidelines (1999).

Once the finds had been processed, they were sent to appropriate specialists (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of artefact specialists

Specialist	Material
N. J. Lavender	Prehistoric Pottery
A. Vince	Roman and later Pottery
J. Kitch	Animal Bone
F. Pryor	Worked Bone
L. Bevan	Worked Flint

1.13 Client report

1.13.1 Artefact and Context Tables

Context data is summarised in Appendix A. The table is in context order with appropriate descriptions

1.13.2 Figures

Three figures are presented. These comprise one overall A4 location plan, showing the development in its geographical context (Figure 1), a A3 plan of the development and site (Figure 2) and an A4 plan of the archaeological site (Figure 3)

1.13.3 Publication

Dissemination of the results will be the final stage of work. This will be in the form of a note in the Cambridge Antiquarian Society Publications.

1.13.4 Archive and Archive Deposition

The project archive has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Management of Archaeological Projects, (English Heritage 1991, Appendix 3). It is currently housed at the Lincolnshire office of Network Archaeology Ltd. Cambridgeshire County Sites and Monuments Record will receive the document archive. The finds archive will be deposited at the County Archaeology Office at Cambridgeshire County Council. A microfilm or microfiche copy of the complete archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

2 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT AREA

2.1 Location and Topography

The development site is located to the south of the village of Stibbington in Cambridgeshire (TL 0855 9846), approximately 4km to the north west of Peterborough. The development site is situated on a terrace bounded to the north, west and east by the River Nene. The land rises from c. 19m AOD next to the A1, to c 25m AOD at the south western extreme of the site at a height of between 19m AOD and 25m AOD (Figure 1).

2.2 Composition of the Development Area

The development area consists of arable land to the north-east and south-west of the A1 situated between extensive built up areas to the north and less concentrated development to the south and south-east. Archaeological watching briefs were undertaken in three main areas (Areas 1, 2 & 3; see Figure 1).

2.3 Geology (Solid and Drift)

The dominant solid geology is Oolitic limestone and Upper Lias, sealed by deposits of Alluvium, River Terrace gravels and Head (www.bgs.ac.uk/magazine/geology/home.html)

2.4 Soils and Land Use

Soils in the south western part of the development area belong to the Sherbourne Association and are well drained, brashy, calcareous and clayey over limestone. Soils in the north eastern part of the development area belong to the Sutton 1 Association and are well drained, fine and coarse, loamy soils, locally calcareous and sometimes shallow over limestone gravel (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

The present land use is mainly arable with established woodland to the south-east.

3 RESULTS

Archaeological remains were only present within Area 1 (see Figure 2). Five periods were represented by the artefact assemblage recovered during the watching brief at Stibbington.

- Period 1 *Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age (c. 2,700 to 1,400 BC)*
- Period 2 *Early to Middle Iron Age (c. 650 to 300BC)*
- Period 3 *Roman (1st to 5th Century AD)*
- Period 4 *Medieval (1150 to 1500 AD)*
- Period 5 *Post-Medieval (1500 to 1750 AD)*

Only early to middle Iron Age material was found in-situ within stratified contexts. The remaining material was either residual or unstratified. The Iron Age features included a rectilinear arrangement of gullies and some pits; evidently part of a field system (Figure 3).

3.1 Period 1 (Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age)

This period is represented by a small assemblage of residual flint artefacts, including cores, a scraper and several waste flakes dating from the Neolithic to the late Bronze Age, with some possibly dating to the early Iron Age. The artefacts themselves were all struck from small flint pebbles, probably sourced locally from gravels in the River Nene. Resource stress was evident by the way the cores had been worked well beyond the point of apparent usefulness. This is typical of flint assemblages in the Midlands, but the degree of exhaustion noted among the core and core fragments here was exceptional.

3.2 Period 2 (Middle Iron Age)

3.2.1 Overview

This period comprised several pits and a rectilinear arrangement of ditches. Dating evidence was only sufficiently diagnostic to provide an overall early to middle Iron Age date for the features. Stratigraphic relationships between some of the features indicated that various phases of development had taken place, but it was not possible to fully phase and relate the development of the field system and pits. Undated and/or unphased ditches have been included in this phase due to their similar morphology and spatial relationships with dated features.

The field system was made up of narrow gullies (0.40m to 0.90m wide) on two main orientations (roughly north to south by east to west). Some of the gullies were quite short (as little as 4m long) but lined up with other gullies to create much longer boundaries (up to 34m long).

Most of the features contained a single fill. The exceptions were ditch (1011) and ditch segment (1071) which contained two and three fills respectively. All the gullies and ditches had steep sides and flat bases. In the main, they ranged between 0.15m and 0.50m deep, whilst the exception, ditch 1011, reached a depth of 1.30m.

Four groups of features displayed stratigraphic relationships, but it was not possible to relate the phases of one group to another.

3.2.2 Group 1

Group 1 was located at the north end of the site and comprised ditch 1011, seven gullies (1063, 1065, 1025=1023, 1007/1019=1017, 1003, 1073 & 1027), three pit-like features (1077, 1081 & 1083) and a soil layer (1074). These formed five stratigraphic phases.

Group 1, Phase 1

(Gully 1063)

Gully 1063 was the earliest feature in the sequence. This poorly defined gully was oriented east to west and cut by gullies 1025 and 1007. Other than a residual flint flake, no artefacts were recovered from gully 1063. A *terminus ante quem* was provided by stratigraphically later features of middle Iron Age date.

Group 1, Phase 2

(Gullies 1007/1019=1017, 1023=1025 & 1065).

Gullies 1007/1019, 1017, 1023 and 1025 were in a cruciform arrangement. At their intersection, there were no clear relationships. The north to south oriented gullies (1007 & 1017) could have been a continuation of each other. Likewise for the east to west oriented gullies (1023 & 1025). Gully 1065 to the west, appeared to belong with these features, as it lined up with 1023 and 1025 after an interval of approximately 7.5m. All the gullies shared a similar morphology and all except terminus 1019 contained only a single mid brown, friable, clayey silt. Stones within terminus 1019 appeared to be packing for a post. The similarities between these ditches, the lack of distinction between the fills at their intersection, and their spatial relationships suggested that they were contemporary with each other. Four middle Iron Age pottery sherds retrieved from these gullies were insufficient evidence to date the features with confidence. Again, a *terminus ante quem* was provided by stratigraphically later features containing middle Iron Age pottery. Small amounts of domesticated animal bone, including a fragment from an animal aged less than 6 months (gully 1025) were recovered from this group of ditches.

Group 1, Phase 3

(Gullies 1003 & 1073, and pits 1077, 1083 & 1081)

An east to west oriented gully (1003) cut one of the phase 2 gullies (1007), and was subsequently cut by a phase 4 ditch (1011) and gully (1027). Gully 1003 contained a single fill similar to that of the earlier gullies, and yielded nine coarse body sherds of pottery, with external scoring, and a small amount of animal bone. Although not a large assemblage, the pottery does suggest a middle Iron Age date for the gully.

A *terminus ante quem* is provided for a north to south oriented gully (1073) and two pits (1077 & 1083). They were apparently cut by a phase 4 gully (1027) and could actually have been earlier than phase 3. The relationship between a third pit (1081) and gully 1073 could not be clarified, but the pit has been included in this phase due to its proximity and similarities with the two other pits (1077 & 1083). All of these pits contained mid brown, fine, sandy silt with

coarse yellow sand, similar to the earlier features, and were between 0.45m and 1.50m long by 0.15m to 0.40m deep. It is conjectured that the three pits were for small-scale extraction of perhaps limestone or gravel. Six pottery sherds from pit 1083 and a single sherd from pit 1081 suggested a middle Iron Age date. Ditch 1073 yielded a very small quantity of cattle sized and sheep/goat bone.

Group 1, Phase 4

(Ditch 1011 & gully 1027)

Ditch 1011 and gully 1027, parallel, oriented north to south and cut phase 3 gullies 1003 and 1073. Ditch 1011 was over 30m long, continuing beyond the northern limits of the site. The ditch contained two fills. No artefacts were retrieved from the primary fill, indicating that at the beginning of the ditch's life, there was no settlement in the immediate vicinity. In contrast, the uppermost fill contained larger and more angular stones than the primary fill, and exhibited evidence of possible tip lines. The uppermost fill also yielded fourteen middle Iron Age pottery sherds, a bone awl, an antler comb for weaving and 700g of animal bone including sheep, cattle, pig, horse and bird. Gully 1027 contained a single fill that yielded eight sherds of middle Iron Age pottery and a small quantity of animal bone. The pottery was in generally good condition and appeared to have been deposited soon after breakage. Its forms were domestic, comprising jar rims, some with external scored decoration. Some of the bone exhibited signs of butchering. These findings suggest that settlement activities had taken place in the vicinity whilst the ditch and gully were in use.

Group 1, Phase 5

(Layer 1074)

A layer of greyish brown clayey silt, similar to the fill of gully 1027, spread beyond the limits of the gully (see above). The layer contained fifteen sherds of middle Iron Age pottery, including a burnished rim; one small and abraded sherd Roman grey ware pottery, which was probably intrusive; animal bone including a cattle mandible from an animal aged 8-18 months; a fragment of human adult right tibia, and some fire cracked cobbles. The layer is unlikely to be the remains of an occupation layer as there is no other direct evidence of occupation to support this, and the quantity of artefacts recovered is quite small. The presence of human bone may signify the ploughing out of a nearby burial, indicating that the layer was the remains of a plough soil.

3.2.3 Group 2

This group comprised two phases; a rectilinear gully (1009) cut by an elongated pit or gully segment (1071).

Group 2, phase 1

(Gully 1009)

Gully 1009 was similar, in form, alignment and fill to the group 1, phase 2 gullies (see above). Three sherds of middle Iron Age pottery, including an everted jar form, and 407g of animal bone were recovered from gully 1009. The animal bone comprised cattle, sheep/goat and one fragment of horse. Butchery was evident on one fragment of cattle bone.

Group 2 phase 2

(Pit/gully segment 1071)

This feature was oriented north to south and truncated the east end of gully 1009 at right angles. The fill of 1071 was homogeneous, but it was apparent from the stepped profile of the cut that it probably comprised two parallel pits or gully segments, one longer than the other. The fill was excavated in three spits, all of which contained pottery dating to the middle Iron Age, with the greatest density (37 sherds) in the uppermost spit. Jar rims were identified, including two large storage vessels, and external scoring was evident on some of the sherds. A bone awl was also recovered from the uppermost spit. Animal bone was present within all three fills, with the greatest density (377g) present in the second spit. The majority of the combined assemblage comprised cattle and sheep/goat remains, and there were also pig, lagomorph and horse bones. There was some evidence of cattle and sheep butchery, and burning was evident on two long bones from a medium sized animal.

3.2.4 Group 3

(Pit 1045, gullies 1029, 1043 & 1035)

This group was located towards the eastern side of the site. Two phases were clearly discerned; pit 1045 was cut by a gully (1043) which was part of a rectilinear gully system.

Group 3, phase 1

(Pit 1045)

Pit 1045 was a sub-rectangular feature, 1.9m long, with steep sides and a slightly concave base. It contained a single fill which produced no datable artefacts or any other finds. This absence suggested that the pit had silted naturally, although the occasional presence of large, angular stones indicates some anthropogenic activity. The function of the pit is unknown.

Group 3, phase 2

(Gullies 1029, 1035 & 1043)

The group was made up of a north to south oriented gully (1029) over 34m long, and two east to west oriented gullies (1035 & 1043). Gully 1043 formed a return on gully 1029, disappearing westwards beyond the edge of the excavation, and also projected eastwards, beyond the meeting point with gully 1029, giving the impression of individual gullies. However, only one cut was found by investigation of the relationship between the two gullies, suggesting that the gullies were one and the same, and therefore contemporary. Gully 1035 was not stratigraphically related to any other feature, but its alignment with gully 1043 suggested a continuation of this gully to the east, just beyond an outcrop of bedrock. All three gullies were morphologically similar ranging from 0.50m to 0.70m wide and containing a single, mid brown clayey silt. A small quantity of animal bone was recovered from gullies 1035 and 1043 (9g in total), but no other artefacts or dating evidence were recovered.

3.2.5 Group 4

(Pits 1055 & 1059, gullies 1049=1037, 1051, 1053 & 1057)

Three phases of development were evident within this group of features located at the south east end of the site.

Group 4, phase 1

(Pit 1059)

The remnants of a small, circular pit (1059) measured 0.45m in diameter and 0.15m deep. No archaeological finds were recovered from its sole fill.

Group 4, phase 2

(Gullies 1037=1049 & 1053 & Pit 1055)

The two gullies were oriented roughly north to south, forming a visible alignment approximately 23m long, interrupted by a gap of about 0.5m. The gullies ranged from 0.20m to 0.48m deep by 0.55m to 1.20m wide. Gully 1037=1049 cut pit 1059.

The larger of the two gullies (1037=1049) was approximately 20m long with a slight dog-leg. Five slots excavated across the gully revealed a single mid brown silty fill. Two of the cross sections yielded artefacts, including thirty-five early to late Iron Age pottery sherds. Thirty-four of the sherds were retrieved from one cross section and included a fragment of everted rim decorated with light diagonal slashes. The single sherd recovered from another cross section was very abraded and unlikely to be in its primary depositional context. A small amount of animal bone, two flint flakes and a flint core fragment were retrieved from the same contexts. Much of the bone was unidentifiable, but a cattle tooth, a fragment of sheep or goat bone, and a fragment of pig bone were discerned. The flint core was made from of poor quality material and was exhausted, whilst the flint flakes were waste. The flints possibly dated to the late Neolithic/Bronze Age, but could have been contemporary with the early to mid Iron Age.

Gully 1053 was the shorter of the two gully segments (4m). Two slots excavated across this gully revealed a single fill containing a small amount of animal bone. A possible post hole (1055) was located in the northern terminus of the gully though no relationship could be properly ascertained.

Group 4, phase 3

(Gullies 1051 & 1057)

Gullies 1051 and 1057 were on roughly the same north to south alignment as gullies 1037=1049 & 1053 and formed an alignment visible for approximately 20m and interrupted by a c. 2m gap. Gullies 1051 and 1057 were 0.50m and 0.65m wide by 0.35m and 0.26m deep respectively. Five cross sections excavated across these gullies revealed a single fill in each. A small assemblage of animal bone, comprising medium to large bones was retrieved from the smaller gully (1057). Those bones which were identifiable were mainly cattle, but sheep/goat was also represented. Some of the bone displayed evidence of burning.

There was no dating evidence, but gully 1051 cut gullies 1037=1049 & 1053, bridging the gap between them, and gully 1057 cut gully 1037=1049. These relationships provide a middle Iron Age *terminus post quem*.

3.2.6 Unphased

Pit 1013

Pit 1013 was located towards the west side of the site. The pit was 1.5m in diameter and 0.75m deep. It contained a single fill which yielded a residual waste flint flake dated to the Neolithic-Bronze age, two sherds of middle Iron Age pottery and a small quantity of animal bone including pig and cattle.

Pit 1015

Located 1.5m east of pit 1013, pit 1015 was 0.50m in diameter and 0.20m deep. It contained two fills. The sides and base of the pit were lined with blue clay (1078), whilst the secondary deposit (1016) contained a large quantity of pebbles and rocks indicating that the pit had been backfilled. Many of the rocks were fire cracked. The evidence suggests that the clay lining was used to retain water, which was heated by dropping in hot rocks.

Gully 1031

This curvilinear gully extended north-eastwards from the edge of the site for c. 3.5m before heading north for a further c. 6m. Two cross sections excavated across the gully revealed a single fill, which yielded nine sherds of probable middle Iron Age pottery and a small amount of animal bone. The pottery comprised abraded, shell tempered body sherds with some exterior scoring. The bone was mainly medium sized including a fragment of sheep/goat, but there was also horse bone.

Gully 1041

Located at the north-east end of the site, gully 1041 was oriented roughly east to west and was visible over a length of approximately 8m. Its single fill yielded thirty-four sherds of middle Iron Age pottery including rim and base fragments of a jar, some with external scoring. A small quantity of medium sized animal bone including pig was also present.

Pit / ditch terminal 1087, Gullies 1091 & Layer 1085

This group of inter-cutting features towards the west side of the site was not fully excavated. Feature 1087 may be a ditch terminus opposing the terminus of ditch 1011 (see above). A single sherd of middle Iron Age pottery in the form of shell tempered ware with external scoring was retrieved from the surface of this feature along with a small amount of animal bone. The relationship of this feature with four gullies and a rectangular feature allocated the group number 1091 was not ascertained. Overlying and obscuring these remains were patches of mid brown sandy silt (1085), thought to be an old plough soil or subsoil remains. A cross section was excavated through this layer, from which a small quantity of animal bone was recovered. Excavation revealed that the layer was a similar material to that contained by the features beneath.

Post holes (Group 1092)

Four postholes were located at the northern end of the site were. Their spatial relationships provided no insight regarding function and date, and they were not excavated.

Pit 1067

An irregular shaped pit at the northern end of the site, contained a single stony fill. Eleven middle Iron Age pottery sherds, including a flat base and some externally scored decoration, and a very small amount of animal bone were retrieved from the fill.

Post hole 1080

A possible post hole was located towards the centre of the excavation area. This steep sided feature had a flat base and contained a single fill which yielded nine sherds of middle Iron Age shell tempered pottery and a very small quantity of animal bone.

3.3 Period 3 (Roman)

This period is represented by a single sherd of wheel-thrown grey ware pottery, intrusive within a possible plough soil (1074) dating to the middle Iron Age. The sherd dated to the late 1st to 4th century, and its abraded condition suggested that had been introduced to the plough soil by Romano-British manuring practices.

3.4 Period 4 (Medieval)

Five sherds of medieval pottery were retrieved from subsoil 1002 and probably represent occupational debris brought onto fields as part of manure.

3.5 Phase 5 (Post-Medieval)

No evidence of post-medieval activity was found within Area 1, but Areas 2 and 3 yielded two sherds of 17th century and four sherds of late 17th-18th century pottery. The presence of spalls and abrasions on some of the sherds and their moderate size were consistent with the practice of manuring.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Period 1 (Late Neolithic to Bronze Age)

The low density of flint material and its presence within later features (gullies 1019, 1025, 1063, 1037 and Pit 1013 - see below), points to low level activity within the area, probably episodic and transient.

4.2 Period 2 (Middle Iron Age)

During the middle Iron Age, the site appears to have had an economy based upon livestock production, and associated hide and weaving industries. Although no structures relating to habitation were found, the presence of a significant amount of animal bone and pottery indicate that a settlement must have been situated within the immediate vicinity.

4.2.1 The gullies

The most salient features on the site were the gullies and ditch. Pottery from a number of these features indicated that they dated from the early to middle Iron Age. The gullies and ditch were oriented on two main alignments suggesting they were elements of one field system. Stratigraphic relationships suggested at least four phases of changes, but it is likely that the field system grew organically, and was subject to many small modifications throughout its life span.

The purpose of the gullies and ditch is uncertain. The area is low lying but fairly well drained. Most of the gullies were quite shallow and were made up of short, interrupted segments. They don't seem to represent a serious or practicable effort to drain the land, although they must have had some impact on drainage. Although the gullies were generally small and insubstantial, they certainly would have been visible land delineators. Stock management is suggested by the spatial arrangement of the gullies, including possible narrow 'ways' and larger spaces, and the presence of domesticated animal bone (see below). However, unless there were hedges or fences within or beside the gullies, they would not have provided barriers that were capable of confining or excluding livestock.

4.2.2 The pits

A number of pits were noted. Some were found in small clusters, some were found cutting or within the termini of gullies, and others were isolated. It was apparent from the small quantity of artefacts and charcoal found in the pits, that they were not for the disposal of rubbish. Perhaps they were for small scale extraction of lime or limestone. This is substantiated by the fact that a small pit found during the trench evaluations of the development area (Wotherspoon 2002) contained a quarried limestone block. Those pits which had a physical relationship with gully termini must have been integral to the field system, although their purpose is not clear.

4.2.3 Settlement

Although no settlement features were found, the quantity, condition, good quality and domestic nature of the pottery found on the site suggest that the field system was immediately adjacent to a small settlement of moderately high status.

Many of the ditches yielded pottery and animal bone similar to assemblages from excavations at Campsell Quarry, South Yorkshire (Adams 1993:56) The location of such material within the confines of a ditch terminus or immediate change in alignment indicates that in the majority of cases such deposition was thought out practice rather than random dumping of occupational rubbish.

4.2.4 Economy

Domesticated animal bone found on site provided further evidence of stock management. The presence of neonatal sheep/goat, cattle and pig bone suggests that these animals were bred and born at or near the site. The slaughter of these animals for meat is attested to by butchery marks consistent with disarticulation and meat removal practices on twelve bone fragments, and by the presence of young individuals. The animals were probably also used for leather, sheep/goats and cattle for milk and manure, and the cattle for traction.

Sheep/goat were by far the most dominant taxa present with the majority of bones present representing mature adults indicating that wool production was a mainstay of the site's economy. This is substantiated by the recovery of a fragment of (?red) deer antler carding comb and a two awls manufactured from sheep bone, from the main north-south boundary ditch (1011) and from an adjacent short gully (1071). Awls and combs are often associated with the weaving process as at Danebury and All Cannings Cross (cf Cunliffe 1991, 444-7).

Other taxa present included horses, probably used for riding and traction, and wild species such as hare, hunted perhaps to supplement a diet that was mainly dependent on livestock.

4.2.5 Trade and Exchange

There is little indication of trade exchange other than a possible exchange of ideas regarding pottery forms and style of decoration. Of the 267 sherds recovered, the majority of fragments were consistent with forms (everted & upright jars) found at Little Waltham in Essex, although the pottery fabric differed to that at Little Waltham as it was tempered with shell rather than flint. Similarities can also be seen between scratched wares from the site and scored wares from Breedon on The Hill (Kenyon 1950; Wachter 1964).

4.2.6 Environment

The presence of certain wild fauna is indicative of woodland, grassland, marshland and waterways.

4.3 Period 3 (Roman)

The only evidence of Roman activity at the site was a single sherd of intrusive and abraded wheel-thrown grey ware pottery. This would suggest that disturbance of the site at this time was minimal despite the proximity of the Roman road and other Roman sites. Perhaps the site had been allowed to revert to waste, or was entirely under pasture.

4.4 Periods 4 and 5 (Medieval and Post-Medieval)

These two final periods represent the medieval and post-medieval deposition of pottery fragments consistent with the practice of manuring.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The middle Iron Age field system found in Area 1 during the watching brief possibly relates to crop marks (SMR 5649 & 5653) which were seen on aerial photographs of the south west of the development area. It is also likely that findings of earlier trench evaluations (Wotherspoon 2002), including a pit, three ditches and a gully, were not medieval as hypothesised in the evaluation report, but part of the early to middle Iron Age field system.

The dating of the field system to the early to middle Iron Age is regionally very significant, as many remains of this type are presently undated. Also, very little is known about early to middle Iron Age agriculture within East Anglia. The field system is believed to be closely associated with a small settlement of moderately high status, the remains of which were not found. The location of the site, on light soils within the Nene Valley, corresponds well with current theories whereby, during the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age, settlement is believed to have clustered on lighter soils along principal river valleys (Glazebrook 1997, 23-24). Carrying this precept through; it is therefore likely that further Iron Age settlement sites are located in this area of the Nene Valley. Studies of settlement morphology suggest that few settlements in the region were enclosed during the early to middle Iron Age (Glazebrook 1997, 25-26).

It appears that the inhabitants of the site specialised in stock rearing, particularly sheep/goats for their wool and meat. This emphasis on sheep/goat rearing tends to be a later Iron Age trend although it may have been affected by environment and site function (Cunliffe 1991, 380). It is likely that stock was reared as part of a mixed farming economy, where animal manure was used to fertilize arable fields for growing grain. Unfortunately, due to the conditions of the watching brief and the types of deposits available, it was not possible to obtain environmental samples which might have enhanced our understanding of the Iron Age environment, crops and other activities which may have taken place at the site.

In summary; the findings represent an early to middle Iron Age farm reliant on stock rearing. Although no evidence was found for arable agriculture, it is likely that this also took place at the site. Pottery forms and decoration also provide evidence of contact and communication with other groups in the Midlands and the south east, perhaps engendered by trade in commodities from the farmstead, such as wool and hide.

Despite the proximity of a Roman industrial complex (SMR 170) to the north west and the Roman road now replaced by the A1, there was no evidence of Roman occupation taking place at or near the site. The pottery evidence suggests that the early to middle Iron Age settlement must have been abandoned by the late Iron Age, and there is certainly no settlement continuity into the late Iron Age or Roman periods.

No significant archaeological activity took place at the site in the post-Roman periods.

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7 STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1001	Layer	Mid yellow/brown coarse sharp sand, loose, with occasional pockets of clay and angular stones.	Natural deposit	/	/		Flint core
Area 1	1002	Layer	Mid grey/brown silty clay, friable, with frequent pebbles and angular stones. 0.30m deep.	Topsoil.	/	/	Post-medieval.	Flint flake, medieval pot sherd, post-medieval pot sherd, 34 x Prehistoric pot sherds.
Area 1	1003	Cut	E-W linear, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 13m long x 0.70m wide x 0.50m deep.	Cut of gully.	1004	/		
Area 1	1004	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, friable, with lenses of sharp yellow sand and occasional rounded stones. 13m long x 0.70m wide x 0.50m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1003	Middle Iron Age	9 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 44 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1005	Cut	E-W ?linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a narrow flat base. c.2m long x 0.90m wide x 0.50m deep.	Cut of natural feature?	1006	/		
Area 1	1006	Fill	Pale to mid red/brown silty clay, soft, with occasional stones. More yellow clay towards base. c.2m long x 0.90m wide x 0.50m deep.	Fill of natural feature?	/	1005		
Area 1	1007	Cut	N-S linear with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. c.4m long x 0.90m wide x 0.40m deep.	Cut of gully.	1008	/		
Area 1	1008	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, friable, with occasional rounded cobbles and angular stones, and occasional blobs and flecks of pale yellow clay. c.4m long x 0.90m wide x 0.40m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1007	Middle Iron Age	1 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 71 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1009	Cut	E-W and N-S linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 24m+ long x 1m wide x 0.45m deep.	Cut of ditch.	1010	/		
Area 1	1010	Fill	Mid brown silty clay, friable, with occasional small pebbles and frequent angular stones. 24m+ long x 1m wide x 0.45m deep.	Fill of ditch.	/	1009	Middle Iron Age	3 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 407 gms animal bone.

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1011	Cut	N-S linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 30m+ long x 2.5m wide x 1.3m deep.	Cut of ditch.	1012, 1034, 1061.	/		
Area 1	1012	Fill	Mid to dark grey/brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with yellow sand and frequent angular stones. 30m+ long x 2m wide x 1.2m deep.	Upper fill of ditch.	/	1011	Middle Iron Age	Bone awl, antler weaving comb, 12 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 697 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1013	Cut	Circular cut, with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. 1.5m diameter x 0.75m deep.	Cut of pit.	1014	/		
Area 1	1014	Fill	Mid to dark brown clayey silt, friably soft, with frequent angular stones and moderate rounded pebbles. Also lenses of dirty yellow clay and yellow sand. 1.5m diameter x 0.75m deep.	Fill of pit.	/	1013	Middle Iron Age	flint flake, 2 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 58 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1015	Cut	Circular cut, with almost vertical sides and a flat base. 0.5m diameter x 0.20m deep.	Cut of 'boiling' hole.	1016, 1078	/		
Area 1	1016	Fill	Mid to dark brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with very frequent angular fire-cracked stones. 0.5m diameter x 0.18m deep.	Upper fill of 'boiling' hole.	/	1015		
Area 1	1017	Cut	N-S linear, with gently sloping sides becoming steeply sloping to a concave base. ? long x 0.40m wide x 0.30m deep.	Cut of ditch.	1018, 1048	/	Middle Iron Age	Prehistoric pot sherd.
Area 1	1018	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, friable, with frequent angular stones and occasional fire-cracked river cobbles. ? long x 0.40m wide x 0.30m deep.	Fill of ditch.	/	1017		
Area 1	1019	Cut	N-S linear, with steeply sloping sides and an uneven base. 1.7m long x 1.15m wide x 0.20m deep.	Cut of gully.	1020, 1021, 1022.	/		
Area 1	1020	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional angular stones and rounded cobbles. 1.7m long x 1.15m wide x 0.20m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1019	Middle Iron Age	Flint core, flint scraper, Prehistoric pot sherd, 18 gms animal bone.

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1021	Fill	Brown/yellow clay, firm, with angular stones and dirty dark brown clay patches. 0.30m long x 0.60m wide x 0.50m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1019		
Area 1	1022	Fill	Cornbrash+D2 stones apparently set within fill to accommodate post.	Possible post setting in fill of gully.	/	1019		
Area 1	1023	Cut	E-W linear, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. 4m long x 0.80m wide x 0.35m deep.	Cut of gully.	1024	/		
Area 1	1024	Fill	Mid grey/brown clayey silt, friable, with occasional pebbles and coarse yellow sand. 4m long x 0.80m wide x 0.35m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1023		17 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1025	Cut	E-W linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 12m long x 0.70m wide x 0.35m deep.	Cut of gully.	1026	/		
Area 1	1026	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional fire-cracked cobbles and coarse yellow sand. 12m long x 0.70m wide x 0.35m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1025		Flint flake, 33 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1027	Cut	N-S linear, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 12m+ long x 0.80m wide x 0.30m deep.	Cut of gully.	1028, 1075.	/		
Area 1	1028	Fill	Dark grey/brown silty clay, soft, with frequent angular stones and rounded pebbles. Also dark grey lenses with coarse yellow sand throughout. 0.30m deep. 12m+ long x 0.80m wide x 0.30m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1027	Middle Iron Age	8 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 62 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1029	Cut	N-S linear, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 35m+ long x 0.70m wide x 0.40m deep.	Cut of gully.	1030	/		
Area 1	1030	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt, soft and friable, with very frequent small gravelly stones and pebbles. 35m+ long x 0.70m wide x 0.40m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1029		
Area 1	1031	Cut	E-W +N-S curvilinear, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 9m+ long x 0.40m wide x 0.18m deep.	Cut of gully.	1032, 1047	/		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1032	Fill	Mid to dark grey/brown clayey silt, friable, with yellow sand and occasional small stones and flecks of clay. 9m+ long x 0.40m wide x 0.18m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1031	Middle Iron Age	6 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 38 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1033	Cut and fill	Mid brown slightly silty clay, firm and friable, with angular stones and patches of yellow clay. 2.5m long x 1.5m wide x 0.15m deep.	Cut and fill of treebole.	1033	1033		
Area 1	1034	Fill	Mid brown silty clay, friable, with occasional small pebbles and yellow sand. 1.2m+ long x 0.5m wide x 0.1m deep.	Primary fill of ditch.	/	1011		
Area 1	1035	Cut	E-W linear, with moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. 7m long x 0.50m wide x 0.20m deep.	Cut of gully.	1036	/		
Area 1	1036	Fill	Mid to dark brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with frequent small angular stones and gritty pebbles, and coarse yellow sand. 7m long x 0.50m wide x 0.20m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1035		7 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1037	Cut	N-S linear, with fair-moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. 12m+ long x 1m wide x 0.25m deep.	Cut of gully.	1038, 1042.	/		
Area 1	1038	Fill	Mid to dark grey/brown silty clay, soft and friable, with angular stones and pebbles and coarse yellow sand. 12m+ long x 1m wide x 0.25m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1037	Middle Iron Age	Flint flake, Prehistoric pot sherd.
Area 1	1039	Cut and fill	Slightly red/brown clay, soft, with patches of sandy soil and green/yellow clay and occasional small angular stones. 2.8m long x 1.2m wide x 0.33m deep.	Cut and fill of treebole.	1039	1039		
Area 1	1040	Fill	Mid to dark grey/brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with yellow sand and frequent angular stones. 5m+ long x 0.50m wide x 0.30m deep.	Cut of gully.	/	1041	Middle Iron Age	34 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 11 gms animal bone.

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1041	Cut	NW-SE linear, with steeply sloping sides and an irregular base. 5m+ long x 0.50m wide x 0.30m deep.	Fill of gully.	1040	/		
Area 1	1042	Fill	Mid grey/brown silty clay, friable, with pebbles, pea gravel, coarse yellow sand and angular stones. 0.30m deep. 2m+ long x 1.2m wide x 0.48m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1037	Middle Iron Age	Flint core fragment, flint flake, 40 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 85 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1043	Cut	E-W linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 3m+ long x 0.60m wide x 0.25m deep.	Cut of gully.	1044	/		
Area 1	1044	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, friable, with occasional small stones and yellow sand. 3m+ long x 0.60m wide x 0.25m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1043		2 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1045	Cut	N-S sub-rectangular/oval cut, with steeply sloping sides to the S., less steeply sloping to the N., with a concave base. 1.9m long x 0.80m wide x 0.36m deep.	Cut of gully.	1046	/		
Area 1	1046	Fill	Mid brown silty clay, friable and soft, with larger occasional angular stones, pebbles and coarse sand. 1.9m long x 0.80m wide x 0.36m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1045		
Area 1	1047	Fill	Mid grey/brown silty clay, with occasional small stones and pebbles and coarse yellow sand. 1.6m long x 0.40m wide x 0.15m deep.	Fill of gully terminus.	/	1031	Middle Iron Age	3 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 3 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1048	Fill	Mid grey/brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with frequent angular stones, very occasional small rounded pebbles and patches of coarse yellow sand. 2m long x 0.80m wide x 0.45m deep.	Fill of gully terminus.	/	1017	Middle Iron Age	Prehistoric pot sherd, 137 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1049	Cut	N-S linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flat base. 3m+ long x 0.55m wide x 0.25m deep.	Cut of gully.	1050	/		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1050	Fill	Mid to dark brown silty clay, soft and friable, with frequent small rounded and sub-rounded stones, pea gravel and yellow sand. 3m+ long x 0.55m wide x 0.25m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1049		
Area 1	1051	Cut	N-S linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flat base. 8m+ long x 0.50m wide x 0.35m deep.	Cut of gully.	1052	/		
Area 1	1052	Fill	Mid brown silty clay, soft and friable, with frequent rounded and sub-rounded stones, coarse yellow sand and pea gravel at base. 8m+ long x 0.50m wide x 0.35m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1051		
Area 1	1053	Cut	N-S linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 4m long x 0.60m wide x 0.20m deep.	Cut of gully.	1054	/		
Area 1	1054	Fill	Mid to dark brown silty clay, soft, with frequent stones, pea gravel around the edges, coarse yellow sand and occasional fire-cracked stones. 8m+ long x 0.50m wide x 0.35m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1053		55 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1055	Cut	E-W sub-rectangular cut, with vertical sides. Base not seen. 0.26m long x 0.13m wide x 0.20m+ deep.	Cut of posthole.	1056	/		
Area 1	1056	Fill	Mid yellow/brown sandy silt, with very occasional stones. 0.26m long x 0.13m wide x 0.20m+ deep.	Fill of posthole.	/	1055		
Area 1	1057	Cut	N-S linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a concave base. 1.5m long x 0.65m wide x 0.26m deep.	Cut of gully.	1058	/		
Area 1	1058	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, soft, with very occasional stones. 1.5m long x 0.65m wide x 0.26m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1057		6 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1059	Cut	Circular cut, with gently sloping sides and a concave irregular base. 0.45m diameter x 0.15m deep.	Cut of posthole.	1060	/		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1060	Fill	Mid to dark brown silty clay, with very occasional large stones, gravel at base and coarse yellow sand. 0.45m diameter x 0.15m deep.	Fill of posthole.	/	1059		
Area 1	1061	Fill	Mid grey/brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with frequent small stones and frequent large angular stones, coarse yellow sand. 1m long x 0.5m wide x 0.5m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1011	Middle Iron Age	2 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 3 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1062	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, friable, with occasional small stones and fire-cracked cobbles, and coarse yellow sand.	Fill of gully.	/	1063		flint flake
Area 1	1063	Cut	E-W linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flat, but disturbed, base. 5m long x 0.55m wide x 0.18m deep. 1m long x 0.5m wide x 0.5m deep.	Cut of gully.	1062	/		
Area 1	1064	Fill	Mid brown slightly clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional small pebbles and large angular stones, and coarse yellow sand. 22.30m long x 0.50m wide x 0.15m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1065		
Area 1	1065	Cut	E-W linear, with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 22.30m long x 0.50m wide x 0.15m deep.	Cut of gully.	1064	/		
Area 1	1066	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt, friable, with coarse yellow sand, frequent angular stones, occasional small stones and fire-cracked pebbles, and occasional blobs of yellow clay. 1.5m long x 1.25m wide x 0.12m deep.	Fill of treebole/pit.	/	1067	Middle Iron Age	11 x prehistoric pot sherds, 2 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1067	Cut	E-W sub-oval cut, with irregular sides and a flattish irregular base. 1.5m long x 1.25m wide x 0.12m deep.	Cut of treebole/pit.	1066	/		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1068	Fill	Dark brown grey silty clay, soft, with occasional fire-cracked pebbles and large and small stones, occasional flecks of red clay/burnt daub and blobs of yellow clay, and coarse yellow sand. 4m long x 1.5m wide x 0.10m deep.	Uppermost spit of ditch.	/	1071	Middle Iron Age	Bone awl, 37 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 189 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1069	Fill	Dark brown grey silty clay, soft, with occasional fire-cracked pebbles and large and small stones, occasional flecks of red clay/burnt daub and blobs of yellow clay, and coarse yellow sand. 1.6m long x 1.4m wide x 0.14m deep.	Second spit of ditch.	/	1071	Middle Iron Age	3 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 377 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1070	Fill	Dark brown/grey silty clay, soft, with occasional fire-cracked pebbles and large and small stones, coarse yellow sand concentrated towards the base and blobs of yellow clay. 2m long x 1.3m wide x 0.32m deep.	Lowest spit of ditch.	/	1071	Middle Iron Age	14 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 82 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1071	Cut	N-S linear, with steeply sloping sides, and a stepped flat base. 4m long x 1.5m wide x 0.56m deep.	Cut of ditch.	1068, 1069, 1070.	/		
Area 1	1072	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional small stones and pebbles, and coarse yellow sand. 3.6m long x 0.60m wide x 0.33m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1073		113 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1073	Cut	N-S linear, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 3.6m long x 0.60m wide x 0.33m deep.	Cut of gully.	1072	/		
Area 1	1074	Layer	Mid grey/brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional fire-cracked cobbles and coarse yellow sand. 2.2m long x 1.15m wide x 0.07m deep.	Agricultural layer?	/	/	Roman	Roman greyware sherd, 15 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 103 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1075	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional rounded stones and coarse yellow sand. 1.75m long x 0.25m wide x 0.25m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1027		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1076	Fill	Mid brown fine sandy silt, friable, with coarse yellow sand. 0.45m long x 0.40m wide x 0.15m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1077		
Area 1	1077	Cut	Semi-circular in plan, with fairly gradually sloping sides and a flat base. 0.45m long x 0.40m wide x 0.15m deep.	Cut of gully.	1076	/		
Area 1	1078	Fill	Pale to mid blue/grey clay, plastic, with occasional patches of dark brown silt. 0.5m diameter x 0.02m deep.	Primary fill of 'boiling' hole.	/	1015		
Area 1	1079	Fill	Mid grey/brown clay silt, friable, very frequent fire cracked cobbles, frequent gravel, pebbles and angular stones. 0.65m wide x 0.25m deep.	Fill of posthole.	/	1080	Middle Iron Age	9 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 8 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1080	Cut	Circular in plan, with near vertical sides descending to a flat base. 0.65m diameter x 0.25m deep.	Posthole.	1079	/		
Area 1	1081	Cut	Sub-circular in plan, steeply sloping eastern edge, western edge stepped, descending to a concave base. 0.80m wide x 0.40m deep.	Posthole/pit.	1082	/		
Area 1	1082	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt, soft and friable, with occasional small stones and pebbles, and coarse yellow sand. 3.6m long x 0.60m wide x 0.33m deep.	Fill of posthole/pit.	/	1081	Middle Iron Age	prehistoric pot sherd.
Area 1	1083	Cut	N-S linear, irregular steep sides, descending to a flat base. Length 1.50m x 0.50m wide x 0.20m deep.	Gully.	1084	/		
Area 1	1084	Fill	Mid brown fine clay silt, soft and friable with patches of yellow sand, occasional small stones. 1.05m long x 0.50m wide x 0.20m deep.	Fill of gully.	/	1083	Middle Iron Age	6 x Prehistoric pot sherds.
Area 1	1085	Layer	Mid brown sand silt, friable, with coarse grains of yellow sand and frequent small stones. 4m long x 3.40m wide x 0.20m deep.	Old plough soil/subsoil remains.	/	/		181 gms animal bone.

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 1	1086	Fill	Mid brown coarse clay silt, friable, frequent angular small stones. 2m long x 3.5m wide x 0.40m deep (Not fully excavated).	Fill of possible ditch.	/	1087	Middle Iron Age	Prehistoric pot sherd, 41 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1087	Cut	Semi-circular in plan, N-S orientated, 2m long x 3.5m wide x 0.40m deep (Not fully excavated).	Possible ditch terminus.	1086	/		
Area 1	1088	Fill	Mid grey/brown, clay silt, soft with large flat stones and cobbles, some burnt. 1m long x 0.80m wide x 0.25m deep.	Fill of gully, same as 1010.	/	1009	Middle Iron Age	Prehistoric pot sherd, 79 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1089	Fill	Dark brown grey, clay silt, soft with occasional angular fire cracked stones, occasional small stones/gravel. 0.70m long x 0.85m wide x 0.20m deep.	Upper spit of gully.	/	1071	Middle Iron Age	6 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 15 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1090	Fill	Dark brown grey, silt clay, plastic/soft with occasional small stones. 0.70m long x 0.35m wide x 0.20m deep.	Lower spit of gully.			Middle Iron Age	5 x Prehistoric pot sherds, 60 gms animal bone.
Area 1	1091	Cut	4 x linear features, orientated north to south and one east to west. 0.50m deep (Not fully excavated) containing mid-brown sand silt.	Number assigned to unexcavated gully features.	/	/		
Area 1	1092	Cut	4 x postholes, unexcavated, 0.50m wide and 0.70m wide containing a dark grey fill.	Number assigned to unexcavated postholes.	/	/		
Area 1	1093	Group	Number assigned to group of gullies 1019, 1007 and 1017.	Group Number	/	/		
Area 1	1094	Group	Number assigned to group of gullies 1051, 1059 and 1057.	Group Number	/	/		
Area 2	2001	Layer	Mid to dark grey/brown coarse clayey silt, friable, with frequent small gravelly stones. 0.25-0.30m deep.	Topsoil.	/	/	Post-medieval.	2 x flint core fragments, flint flake, 3 x medieval pot sherds, 5 x post-medieval pot sherds, 6 gms animal bone.
Area 2	2002	Layer	Mid to dark orange/brown sandy silt, friable, with frequent pebble and flint gravel, becoming very frequent in places.	Natural.	/	/		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 2	2003	Layer	Mid grey/brown sandy silt, friable, with occasional rounded pebbles and gravel. 0.1m deep.	Buried ploughsoil/subsoil.	/	/		
Area 2	2004	Layer	Mid brown/grey silty sand, friable, with occasional to frequent gravel inclusions. 0.3m deep.	Buried ploughsoil.	/	/		
Area 3	3001	Layer	Dark grey/brown silty clay, friable, with frequent angular stones and pebbles. 0.30m deep.	Topsoil.	/	/	Post-medieval.	Flint flake, medieval pot sherd, post-medieval pot sherd.
Area 3	3002	Layer	Broen/yellow sandy silt, with frequent pebbles and angular stones.	Natural.	/	/		
Area 3	3003	Cut	Semi-circular in plan, with steeply sloping sides and a pointed base. 0.30m diameter x 0.45m deep.	Cut of posthole.	3004	/		
Area 3	3004	Fill	Dark orange/brown silty clay, firm, with blobs of yellow clay and dark silt. 0.30m diameter x 0.45m deep.	Fill of posthole.	/	3003		
Area 3	3005	Cut	Sub-circular in plan, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. 0.80m diameter x 0.40m deep.	Cut of treebole/pit.	3006	/		
Area 3	3006	Fill	Mid brown/grey sandy silt, friable, with gravel concentrated towards the base and frequent small pebbles. 0.80m diameter x 0.40m deep.	Fill of treebole/pit.	/	3005		
Area 3	3007	Cut	Sub-circular(?) in plan, with steeply sloping sides and an irregular base. i.00m diameter x 0.40m deep.	Cut of treebole/pit.	3008, 3009	/		
Area 3	3008	Fill	Dark orange/brownclayey silt, friable, with occasional small angular pebbles 1.00m diameter x 0.30m deep.	Upper fill of treebole/pit.	/	3007		
Area 3	3009	Fill	Mid brown/grey sand, friable, with frequent pea gravel and small rounded pebbles. 0.5m diameter x 0.15m deep.	Lower fill of treebole/pit.	/	3007		
Area 3	3010	Cut	E-W linear(?), with steeply sloping sides. The base was not seen. 0.75m wide x 0.30m deep (as excavated).	Cut of ditch.	3011	/		

Area	Context	Context Type	Description	Interpretation	Contains	Fill of	Pottery Date	Findings
Area 3	3011	Fill	Slightly orange mid brown silty clay, friable, with very occasional small stones. 0.75m wide x 0.30m deep (as excavated).	Fill of ditch.	/	3010		

APPENDIX B: SPECIALIST REPORTS

CONTENTS

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PREHISTORIC POTTERY

N J. Lavender

Introduction

The excavation produced a small quantity of prehistoric pottery (267 sherds; 3061g) from 28 contexts. The pottery was recorded using a system originally devised for prehistoric pottery in Essex (Brown 1988) and subsequently revised and expanded to cover a wider geographical area (details in archive)

Table 1: Fabrics present

Fabric	Description	% No	%Weight (g)
p	Largely temperless. May have sparse very fine sand, occasional M-L flint or sparse irregular voids.	2.25	>1
R	Shell, M-L 2	91	85
T1	Chalk and shell	>1	2
Z1	Shell and flint	6	12.5

Where:

S= less than 1mm diameter

M= 1-2mm diameter

L= more than 2mm diameter

1= fewer than 6 per cm²

2= 6-10 per cm²

3= more than 10 per cm²

Description

Generally the pottery is well preserved. Abraded sherds were noted only in contexts 1028, 1032, 1038, 1066 and 1089 (the material from the last may not actually be pottery). Most of these contexts are in areas of disturbance, which seems likely to account for the condition of the sherds. The remaining material appears to have been deposited in its present locations very soon after being broken.

The assemblage contains rimsherds from 16 vessels; 10 rounded, 4 flat-topped and 2 expanded or externally thickened. Generally the rims are too small to give a full description, and only 5 are large enough to estimate the diameter. Three of these (from contexts 1068 and 1090) are greater than 30mm in diameter and belong to large, coarse vessels, probably situlate storage jars with rounded shoulders and short necks, rims being either everted or upright. Other, finer, vessels represented comprise either jars or round-bodied bowls.

Bases also occur frequently throughout the assemblage, and are all flat apart from a pedestal fragment from context 1002. The presence in many cases of a large part of the vessel wall rising from the base suggests a predominance of straight-sided jars, probably Drury's (1978) Little Waltham Forms 1 and 2, over bowls.

Twenty contexts contain sherds that have heavy scoring on the exterior surface. Decoration is rare and generally comprises incised lines which describe geometric designs based on chevrons and filled triangles. A large, heavily scored jar from context 1028 has a double wavy line cut through the scoring. One everted rimsherd from 1042 carries a series of light, diagonal slashes on its concave neck; another, from a large storage jar, is decorated with a finger impressed 'cable' motif. Only one sherd (context 1074) is definitely burnished.

Date and affinities

The assemblage is highly consistent, both in fabric and surface treatment. These traits, alongside the presence of large situlate jars, place it within the earlier Iron Age. Furthermore, there is an absence of the more angular vessel forms that mark the Early Iron Age, and a preference for everted rims is typical of middle Iron Age assemblages throughout East Anglia, South East England and much of the Midlands (Drury 1978, 127-128)

The frequency of exterior scoring, however, may indicate affinities with the scratched wares of the Early Iron Age in the Midlands (eg Breedon-on-the-Hill, Kenyon 1950; Wachter 1964), and a date shortly after c.300 BC, rather than later in the middle Iron Age, seems probable.

The quantity of material precludes detailed conclusions, but the assemblage appears to be domestic and of good quality, suggesting a small settlement of reasonable status, a likelihood supported by finds of worked bone and an antler implement (possibly associated with leather working) from ditch 1011

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ASSESSMENT OF THE ROMAN AND LATER POTTERY

Alan Vince

Introduction

Thirteen sherds of pottery from the A1 Stibbington Junction Improvement Works, Leicestershire, were submitted for identification and assessment.

They range in date from a single, small abraded sherd of Roman grey ware to a 19th-century transfer-printed chamber pot rim

Description

Roman pottery

A small sherd of wheel-thrown grey ware, with a fine sandy fabric was recovered from context 1074. It cannot be dated more closely than late 1st to 4th century and the abraded condition of the sherd suggests that it was present in ploughsoil and is evidence for Romano-British manuring rather than being dislodged from an occupation deposit

Medieval pottery

Five sherds of medieval pottery (MEDLOC) were recovered. Four are from externally glazed jugs and the fifth is an unglazed vessel, probably a jar or a partially-glazed jug.

The fabrics are in the main not recognised by the author although two handmade vessels, from contexts 1002 and 2001, have the same distinctive fabric, containing moderate angular calcareous inclusions (i.e. not ooliths) in a micaceous groundmass. The appearance is similar to that of Lyveden/Stanion glazed ware although the details are quite different. A sherd from context 2001 might be Nottingham green-glazed ware and one from context 3001 is from a wheelthrown, oxidized vessel with a plain lead glaze over a partial white slip. It contains few large inclusions apart from sparse calcareous inclusions and similar-sized voids. This is similar to Bourne D ware, which is of late medieval and early post-medieval date.

The sherds are all of moderate size and condition and are consistent with being brought onto fields with manure.

Post-medieval pottery

A sherd from a blackware (BL) cup was recovered from context 2001. The form suggests a 17th-century date. A sherd of high-fired Staffordshire coarseware (SIBU) was recovered from the same context and is also likely to be of 17th-century date.

A base sherd from a glazed red earthenware (GRE) bowl from context 2001 appears to be of later 17th or 18th-century date. Three sherds of Staffordshire Coarseware (STCOAR) bowls and pancheons were recovered, from contexts 2001 and 3001. These might also date to the later 17th or 18th centuries.

The sherds are all of moderate size and include spalled and abraded sherds consistent with their presence through manuring.

Early Modern pottery

A single sherd of transfer-printed ware (TPW) was recovered from context 1002. It is large and fresh and is probably the rim of a chamber pot. As such it is probably present as a result of the spreading of night soil.

Assessment

The pottery is all explicable in terms of plough scatter, being brought onto ploughed fields with farmyard manure or night soil. The wide range of date, from the late 12th/13th to the 19th centuries is probably consistent with this interpretation.

The Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery should be retained for future study (for example, of the distribution patterns of various wares) whilst the transfer printed ware vessel could be discarded

No further work on the collection is recommended.

Table 1: Catalogue of Roman and later pottery

Context	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Use	Condition
2001	MEDLOC	CALC AND VOIDS; RED/BLACK FE-RICH <2.0MM; MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS	JUG	BS	EXT CUGL; CF LYVEDEN	1	1	11		
2001	MEDLOC	INCLUSIONLESS SALMON PINK	JAR	BS		1	1	3		
2001	MEDLOC	LOWISH FE BODY; REDUCED; FINE SAND TEMPER	JUG	BS	CF NOTG	1	1	5		
1002	MEDLOC	CALC AND VOIDS; RED/BLACK FE-RICH <2.0MM; MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS	JUG	BS	EXT PLAIN GL	1	1	3		
3001	MEDLOC		JUG	BS	CF BOUD; EXT PLAIN GL OVER PARTIAL WHITE SLIP	1	1	11		
3001	STCOAR			BS		1	1	7		
1074	RPOT	FINE QUARTZ SAND	JAR	BS	WHEELTHROWN GREYWARE	1	1	2		ABR
2001	GRE		BOWL	B		1	1	29		
2001	STCOAR		JAR	R	INT PLAIN GL	1	1	10		ABR
2001	STCOAR		BOWL	BS	MOTTLED BROWN GL INT	1	1	6		SPALLED
2001	BL		CUP	R	BLACK GL INT AND EXT	1	1	3		
2001	STBU		JAR	BS		1	1	7		
1002	TPW		CHP?	R	PURPLE INK	1	1	53		

THE ANIMAL BONE

By Jennifer Kitch

Introduction

A total of 483 refitted fragments of animal bone (2584g) were recovered by hand during watching brief work undertaken by Network Archaeology Ltd in January 2003

Methodology

Identification of the bone was undertaken at PreConstruct Archeology (Lincoln) with access to the reference collection and published guides. All of the animal remains were counted and weighed and, where possible, were identified to species, element, side and zone (Serjeantson 1996). Also, fusion data, butchery marks (Binford 1981), gnawing, burning and pathological changes were noted where present. Ribs and vertebrae were only recorded to species when they were substantially complete and could be accurately identified. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as micro (rodent size), small (rabbit size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size). The separation of sheep and goat bones was done using the criteria of Boessneck (1969) and Prummel and Frisch (1986). Where distinctions could not be made, the bone was recorded as sheep/goat (S/G).

The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996): grade 0 being the best preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable.

The quantification of species was carried out using the total fragment count, in which the total number of fragments of bone and teeth was calculated for each taxon. Where fresh breaks were noted, fragments were refitted and counted as one.

Tooth eruption and wear stages were measured using a combination of Halstead (1985), Grant (1982) and Levine (1982), and fusion data was analysed according to Silver (1969). Measurements of adult, that is fully fused, bones were taken according to the methods of von den Driesch (1976), with asterisked (*) measurements indicating bones that were reconstructed or had slight abrasion of the surface.

Results

Condition

The condition of the bone is variable, ranging through grades 1-5 on the Lyman criteria (1996). The majority of the assemblage falls within grades 2-3, giving an overall condition of good – moderate.

Given the relatively good condition of the bone it was possible to make measurements and identify butchery and gnawing marks. This preservation has also allowed the survival of juvenile/neonatal remains.

Butchery

A total of 12 fragments of bone were observed to display butchery marks. All of the butchery is consistent with disarticulation and meat removal practices. A cattle radius from boundary ditch [1011] had been chopped longitudinally, possibly for marrow extraction or as preparation for working.

Two sheep/goat tibiae recovered from a boundary ditch [1011] and from ditch [1071] have been chopped midshaft, worked and polished to a point to form a gouge.

Burning

A total of three fragments recovered from ditch [1071] and gully [1057] displayed evidence of burning

Gnawing

A total of 8 fragments of bone displayed evidence of carnivore and/omnivore gnawing. These remains were predominantly recovered from ditches [1011] and [1071]. The evidence of gnawing may suggest carnivore scavenging as part of, or after, the deposition process.

Skeletal Representation

Most skeletal elements for the main domestic species were represented within the assemblage, suggesting that the entire carcass was present and utilised on site.

Species Representation

Table 1 summarises the identified taxa within the assemblage.

Table 1. Summary of Identified Taxa

Taxon	Total Number of Fragments
Human	1
Horse	6
Cattle	44
Sheep/Goat	74
Sheep	1
Pig	13
Hare (<i>Lepus capensis</i>)	2
Lagomorpha (Rabbit/Hare family)	2
Song Bird	1
Water Vole (<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>)	1
Large Mammal	109
Medium Mammal	148
Small Mammal	3
Unidentified	78

Sheep/goat are the most abundant species within the assemblage, followed by cattle then pig and horse. Hare, human, songbird and water vole are represented in small numbers.

Human

A single fragment of an adult right tibia was recovered from the occupation spread (1074).

Sheep/Goat

Sheep/goat is the most abundant species within the assemblage. A single tooth from ditch [1009] was positively identified as sheep, no differentiation was made within the remaining assemblage

The majority of the sheep/goat remains were from skeletally mature individuals. Three mandibles were able to provide tooth wear age data. Two mandibles from ditch [1011] were from animals aged 10-20 months and 3-5 years. A mandible from ditch [1071] was from an animal aged over 8 years. The epiphyseal fusion data suggests that juvenile animals were also present on site. Three neonatal bones were recovered from the assemblage, suggesting that lambing was taking place within the locality.

The age ranges for sheep/goat suggest a mixed husbandry. Sheep/goat were bred and utilised on site; the presence of older individuals suggest that the animals were retained for wool production as well as utilised for meat and milk.

Cattle

Cattle remains are less abundant within the assemblage than sheep/goat. Most of the identifiable remains appear from skeletally mature individuals. A single mandible from an animal aged 8-18 months was recovered from the occupation spread (1074). A scapula from an animal aged below 7 months and a femur from an animal aged below 42 months was recovered from ditch [1071]. An innominate from an animal aged below 6 months was recovered from gully [1025]. The presence of fairly young individuals within the assemblage may suggest the breeding of animals at or near the site. Cattle from the assemblage were obviously used to provide meat from the butchery evidence. The presence of the young individuals within the assemblage suggests an emphasis on milk and meat production. Cattle were probably also used for traction, manure and leather.

Pig

Pig remains are represented in relatively smaller numbers than sheep/goat or cattle.

The majority of the skeletal remains appear to be from young individuals. Two mandibles from immature individuals were recovered from ditch [1011] and gully [1037]. A neonatal femur was recovered from ditch [1071] suggesting the animals were being bred within the locality. As pigs are generally retained for meat, the animals are often slaughtered at a young age.

Horse

Horse remains are present in very small numbers, scattered throughout several features across the site. No differentiation has been made between horse, donkey and mule. A withers height of 1.32m could be calculated from a metacarpal from ditch [1071], suggesting a pony-sized animal. A mandible from an animal aged 10-14 years, was recovered from boundary ditch [1011]. No evidence of butchery was noted. The remains are too fragmentary and scattered for further interpretation. Horses would probably be used for traction and/or riding.

Wild Species

An adult and a juvenile hare humeri were recovered from ditch along with two bones that could not be identified beyond Lagomorpha, were recovered from ditch [1071]. Additionally a single water vole mandible was recovered from the same ditch.

The presence of these species within the assemblage suggest that there were suitable dwelling environments nearby such as open woodland, grassland, marshland and waterways.

Birds

A single humerus from a blackbird-sized bird was recovered from boundary ditch [1011]

Interpretation

The presence of the main domesticates within the assemblage suggests a mixed farming strategy of a small producer site. The animals were bred and utilised on site. The limited ageing evidence suggests that meat and milk was important for cattle management and wool for sheep; meat, hides, horn and other carcass products would also be important. In contrast, pigs were managed primarily for meat. Butchery evidence shows that cattle and sheep/goat contributed considerably to the meat diet. Horses would have been present as working animals, used for riding and traction. Animals such as hares would have been occasionally hunted for meat and fur.

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THE WORKED BONE

Francis Pryor

Catalogue

001 Fragment of an undecorated (red deer?) antler weaving comb with square or rectangular proximal end, which originally measured about 27 x 23 mm and was 8 mm thick, at the top. The top has been worn smooth by wear and there are very slight indications for teeth at the distal end, although there has been so much damage here, that it is difficult to be certain. The fragment is 152 mm long and 39 mm at its widest point; maximum thickness is 10mm. Context 1012

002 Awl, made from sheep metatarsal (??). The articular end has been damaged and shows signs of gnawing. The shaft has been broken when the bone was still green, giving a characteristic 'spiral fracture' which shows much evidence for wear and burnish. This was undoubtedly used as a tool. Length 124mm, max width 22mm. Context 1012

004 A fragment of (?) sheep bone, showing worn spiral fracture, similar to 002 (above). This might be an awl tip.

Discussion

The bone is generally in good, fresh condition and the evidence for wear and abrasion is particularly clear. The tools are all associated with the preparation of wool and hide. The comb would have been used for carding, a process which aligns the fibres and removes seeds etc prior to spinning and weaving. The weaving comb (001) is of a well known Iron Age type with a square or rectangular head, which Cunliffe considered at Danebury generally dated to his ceramic phases 7-8 (100 BC – AD 50) (Cunliffe and Poole, 357). This dating would accord with the large assemblage from Maiden Castle, which was slightly earlier and did not include many combs with square or rectangular ends (Wheeler 1943, 300-303). Similarly, bone awls were often associated with weaving combs at sites such as Danebury and All Cannings Cross (cf. Cunliffe 1991, 444-7). In sum, the evidence suggests there was an in situ, and probably small-scale, hide and weaving industry, dating to the last two, or so, centuries BC.

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THE WORKED FLINT

by Lynne Bevan

A total of 14 items of humanly-struck flint, weighing *c* 115 grams, was recovered. These comprised a core (Cat. No. 1), four core fragments (Cat Nos 2-5), a scraper (Cat. No. 6) and eight waste flakes (Archive Catalogue). All of the items were struck from very small flint pebbles of a generally unpredictable quality. When present, remnant cortex was thin and compacted and characteristic of pebble flint from secondary deposits, the most probable source being local river gravels. Despite being of a generally poor quality, which has resulted in a high incidence of hinge fractures, the appearance of the flint was glossy and fresh, with little evidence for post-depositional edge-abrasion being noted. Flint colours ranged from light brown to medium and darker brown and grey, with the majority of pieces being translucent rather than opaque, although some partial white recortication was apparent.

The cores had been worked well beyond the point of apparent usefulness, an indication of resource stress, that good quality flint was at a premium. Although this is typical of flint assemblages in the Midlands, where all flint sources are secondary and tend to be of questionable quality, the degree of exhaustion noted among the core and core fragments was exceptional.

The core was a multi-platform flake core and only one of the core fragments exhibited blade detachments implying a Neolithic rather than Bronze Age date. The only tool was a scraper made from a split pebble which exhibited extensive use-wear around its working edge. A Neolithic to Bronze Age date is likely for this tool, since scrapers are not generally chronologically-diagnostic artefacts. While the assemblage was too small for metrical analysis of length-breadth ratios, the generally broad, squat shape of the waste flakes suggested a later date, of the Later Neolithic to Bronze Age periods, for the assemblage (Pitts 1978). However, the possibility of an even later date cannot be ruled out, since some of the flint was recovered from contexts also containing Iron Age pottery. The possibility of Iron Age flint working has been widely discussed in recent years (e.g. Humphrey and Young 2003), although Late Bronze Age and Iron Age flint debitage remains as yet typologically indivisible. Later flint assemblages do, however, appear to be restricted to the domestic sphere when flint was being used for utilitarian, rather than symbolic, purposes (Herne 1992, 67; Edmunds 1995, 184-6; Bevan forthcoming).

While the cores attest to flintworking being carried out on the site and scrapers are usually accepted as being indicative of settlement foci within an area (Schofield 1987) this small assemblage, among which contemporaneity of all flints cannot be assumed, does not denote settlement of any intensity or duration. Instead, site usage is envisaged as being perhaps low density and episodic, with the majority of it occurring during various phases of the Later Bronze Age, or even perhaps extending into the Early Iron Age. From the lithic remains, this site represents only a small, enigmatic and chronologically indistinct portion of what is essentially an intensively used prehistoric landscape.

Catalogue

Core Multiple platform flake core, exhausted. Dark grey translucent flint. Length: 24mm, width: 25mm, thickness: 19mm, weight: 10 grams. Context 1020. Not illustrated.

Core fragment with flake detachments, exhausted. Light brown translucent flint, with some white recortication. Length: 40mm, width: 30mm, thickness: 16mm, weight: 24 grams. Context 1001. Not illustrated.

Core fragment/chunk Very coarse, poor quality dark brown translucent flint. Length: 42mm, width: 34mm, thickness: 22mm, weight: 34 grams Context 1042 Not illustrated

Core fragment with some blade detachments. Medium brown translucent flint. Length: 33mm, width: 15mm, thickness: 11mm, weight: 7 grams. Context 2001. Not illustrated.

Core fragment with small flake detachments, exhausted Dark brown translucent flint. Length: 24mm, width: 20mm, thickness: 7mm, weight: 5 grams. Context 2001 Not illustrated.

Scraper, side and end form Medium-brown translucent flint, with some white recortication Length: 32mm, width: 24mm, thickness: 12mm, weight: 10 grams. Context 1020. Not illustrated

Waste Flakes: 1002 x 1 (2 grams), 1014 x 1 (4 grams), 1026 x 1 (4 grams), 1038 x 1 (under 1 gram), 1042 x 1 (8 grams), 1062 x 1 (under 1 gram), 2001 x 1 (2 grams), 3001 x 1 (4 grams).

References

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