

Event: ERM1054
Sance: SKM13904.

T H A M E S

V A L L E Y

(File: Y)

MRM16150

MRM16358

MRM16359

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Early Roman settlement and landscape features at
Mere oak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Excavation

by Danielle Milbank

Site Code: MLG07/102

(SU7100 6785)

**Early Roman settlement and landscape features at
Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire**

**Excavation report
for CgMs Ltd**

by Danielle Milbank

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MLG07/102

List of Figures

- Figure 1** **General location of site in Reading and other Roman findspots**
- Figure 2** **Location of site on Mere oak Lane**
- Figure 3** **Plan of Excavation Area showing all features, southern part**
- Figure 4** **Plan of Excavation Area showing all features, northern part**
- Figure 5** **Plan of Excavation Area showing all features, extreme northern end**
- Figure 6** **Sections of features from excavation**
- Figure 7** **Sections of features from evaluation**
- Figure 8** **Pottery**

**Early Roman occupation and landscape features at Mere oak Lane,
Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire
An Archaeological Excavation**

by Danielle Milbank

With contributions by Ceri Falys, Joanna Pine, Jane Timby and David Williams

Report 07/102

Summary

Excavation prior to construction of a construction compound and A33 road widening scheme, revealed Roman occupation deposits probably representing a farming settlement with Roman landscape features nearby. The site was in use from the middle of the 1st century AD, or perhaps slightly earlier, through the 2nd century when occupation and other activity apparently ceased until some very slight activity in late Roman times.

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out on land to the east of Mere oak Lane (SU 7100 6785) (Fig.1). Planning permission for improvements to the M4 junction 11 and A33 had been granted by Wokingham and Reading Borough Councils. As a part of this scheme, a works compound and groundwork for the road widening were required. The planning permission included a condition which required a programme of archaeological works and as a result of the archaeological deposits encountered at the evaluation stage (Cass 2007), a further phase of fieldwork was proposed to comply with the condition. This comprised a watching brief carried out on the topsoil removal for the contractor's compound, monitoring of the laying of a terram layer to seal the archaeological horizons below the formation layer for the new compound, and a strip, map and record excavation on the area of road widening. This follows the guidance in *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990) and Wokingham Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The project was commissioned by Mr Paul Chadwick of CgMs Consulting on behalf of the Borough Councils and the archaeological work was carried out to a written scheme of investigation approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils. The finds and archive will be deposited in Reading Museum with accession number REDMG:2008.478.

The fieldwork was undertaken by the author, assisted by Vanja Blomqvist, Dan Bray, Marta Buczek, Simon Cass, Aidan Colyer, James Earley, James McNicoll-Norbury and Gemma Watson between 2nd June and 1st October 2008 and the site code is MLG07/102.

Topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of Mere oak Lane, just to the south of Reading, on the west side of the A33 and to the south of the M4 motorway. Mere oak Lane leads out of Three Mile Cross towards the villages of Grazeley and Mortimer (Fig. 1). The site lies within the valley of the Foudry Brook which is a part of the Kennet Valley watershed and is generally flat, with a very slight slope upwards to the north from 40.7m to 41.9m above Ordnance Datum. The site lies on the junction of Valley Gravel and London Clay (BGS 1946), and these deposits were observed across the site. The land was previously three fields used for grazing. The site is low-lying with the water table close to the surface in autumn 2008. This waterlogging may be a seasonal effect as none of the excavated features contained preserved organic remains but it may also reflect a rise in the water table since Roman times with post-Roman deposition of alluvium, as at Reading Business Park to the north (Robinson 1992, 5) making previously dry, occupied areas, unsuitable for use except for grazing.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from its location on the margins of the Kennet Valley/Foudry Brook. Extensive archaeological deposits, of both prehistoric and Roman dates, have been found a short distance to the north at Green Park and Reading Business Park (Brossler *et al.* 2004; Moore and Jennings 1992) and field survey and aerial photography have indicated the presence of further remains in the vicinity (Lobb and Rose 1996; Gates 1975). Fieldwork at Green Park and Reading Business Park revealed extensive later Bronze Age occupation set amongst an organized landscape of field systems. Late Neolithic and early Bronze Age occupation and burial were also recorded. Roman field boundaries/ enclosures of 2nd- to 3rd-century date were also recorded but without the nucleus of an occupation area being discovered (Moore and Jennings 1992).

Evaluation at Little Lea Farmhouse also to the north revealed occupation of early Roman date along with medieval deposits (Howell and Ford 1994). The extent of that site is not known, although evaluation on Whitley Wood Lane to its east did not reveal any further archaeological deposits in that direction (Milbank 2008). In addition, evaluations of land immediately adjacent, on the eastern side of the A33, revealed an area of Iron Age deposits (Hindmarch 2003), a medieval gully (Hammond 2005) and further Roman deposits at Hartley Court Farm to the north-west (Moore and Jennings 1992, 124).

The Evaluation

Evaluation of the site took place in 2007 and comprised 39 trenches between 6.5m and 28m long. This fieldwork identified several ditches and gullies dating to the late Iron Age and early Roman period (1st century BC to 2nd century AD), indicating the likely presence of Roman occupation (Cass 2007). The complete absence of finds from other periods suggested that the features undated in the evaluation are likely to be broadly contemporary and part of the same late Iron Age/Roman landscape.

The Watching Brief

Several areas were stripped of topsoil for site access and the contractor's site compound prior to the laying of temporary stone surfaces (Fig. 2). The compound area measured 225m (SW-NE) by 50m (SE-NW) and was stripped of topsoil, by a 360°-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. Topsoil 0.20m thick was removed, exposing the upper horizon of the grey brown silty clay subsoil. A strip to the south of the compound formed the initial site access, and road splays were stripped by the same method. As intended, the archaeological supervision was precautionary only, as this overburden removal was not deep enough to expose the archaeologically relevant level. No archaeological deposits or features were therefore encountered in this phase of the fieldwork.

The Excavation

The excavation comprised a rectangular area c.550m in length and 22.5m wide, aligned parallel to the existing A33 (SW-NE), and a separate drainage channel excavated to the west of the rectangular area (Fig. 2).

The drainage channel was excavated first by 360° machine fitted with a 0.70m wide ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision, and all possible archaeological features were hand cleaned and excavated.

The rectangular area was stripped of topsoil and subsoil under constant archaeological supervision by 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This revealed a range of cut archaeological and modern features. All of the datable pre-modern features recorded were of late Iron Age and Roman date. Four phases of Roman activity are suggested, though several features cannot be attributed to a specific sub-phase within the broader Roman period.

A further strip (26m long and 1.6m wide) was excavated at the south of the site (Fig. 2, Trench A), which did not contain any archaeological deposits or features.

Phase 1: Late Iron Age (early-mid 1st century) (Figs 3–5)

Features assigned to this phase entirely lack Romanized pottery, but it is possible that this phase overlaps with Phase 2 to some extent, as dating of these features depends partly on what is *not* present and the pottery groups from this phase are much smaller than some of those in Phase 2. Most of the Phase 2 features contain pottery (often a majority) that would be placed in this phase if unaccompanied by more obviously 'Romanized' wares, so the absence of that material from some features with smaller pottery groups need not necessarily be an indication of a chronological difference.

Ditch 1000 was aligned SE–NW, continuing beyond the excavation area in both directions, and a total of 26m of the ditch was exposed. It narrowed from 1.7m at the north-west to 0.6m at the south-east. The ditch was 0.69m deep at the north-west, becoming very shallow (0.14m deep) at the south-east end. It was excavated in three slots: 25 (in evaluation trench 43), 100 and 209. Four sherds of flint and grog tempered pottery were recovered from this ditch, with a date range of early- to mid- 1st century AD.

Ditch 1004 was aligned SE–NW, with a total of 24.5m exposed. It was 1.05m wide and 0.50m deep, with regular, steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. At its southern end, the ditch was truncated by ditch 1005 though the relationship was far from clear, and at the north-east end, the ditch was truncated by an area of modern disturbance. It was excavated in three slots (120, 121 and 126) which, combined, contained 101 sherds of early to mid-1st-century AD pottery, and a fragment of possible loomweight.

Gully 1007 This was a shallow, ephemeral gully aligned roughly east-west, with 7m in length exposed in the excavation. It was 0.38m wide and 0.14m deep, petering out to the west, with shallowly sloping sides and a concave base. It was excavated in slots 201 and 143. It was truncated by pit 133/134, and its relationship with 1008 was unclear. A single tile fragment and five pottery sherds were retrieved, which suggest a mid-1st century or later date for the gully.

Gully 1010 was a short (2.4m) segment of gully, aligned SW–NE, and excavated in two slots (145 and 202). It was 0.60m wide and 0.18m deep, and at the south-west, it merged, with no identifiable relationship, with 1008. To the north-east at its junction with 1011 it became deeper (0.55m), but here its relationship was equally unclear. A fragment of daub, and 27 sherds of pottery of early to mid-1st-century date, were recovered from the gully.

Ditch 1011 was aligned west–east, parallel to 1007, and was excavated in two slots, 203 and 210. It was 1.8m wide, 0.69m deep, and extended beyond the excavation area to the east. Its relationship with 1010 could not be established. To the west it merged with a large silt patch and could not be identified. Slot 203 contained 51 sherds of pottery of early to mid-1st-century pottery.

Ditch 107 was 1m wide and 0.3m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flattish base. It was aligned approximately east-west, and truncated ditch 108 (or represented a recut of the ditch). It contained three sherds of pottery of likely mid-1st-century date, although this dating must be regarded as very tenuous.

Ditch 108 was aligned east-west and was 1.10m wide and 0.45m deep, and was truncated on its northern side by ditch 107. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature but its stratigraphic relationship places it in this earliest phase of activity on the site.

Ditches 1, 18 and 24, encountered during the evaluation phase, also contained small amounts of phase 1 pottery.

Phase 2: Early Roman (1st century) (Figs 3–5)

Ditch 1005 was aligned ESE to WNW, and was excavated in four slots (122, 127, 200 and 206). It extended beyond the excavation area to the west, where it separated into two separate cuts, recorded as ditches 7 and 8 in evaluation trench 11. It also extended beyond the excavation area to the east. At its widest at the west (122) it was 2.8m wide, and it narrowed considerably towards the eastern limit of excavation, where it was 1m wide. The sides were fairly steep and irregular, the base concave, at the west it was 1.12m deep and at the east it was 0.95m deep. It was infilled with several clayey deposits, which contained 375 sherds of early Roman (1st century) pottery, with another 396 from slot 8 and 140 from slot 7. The ditch is likely to have truncated ditch 1004, and although this relationship was unclear in section the pottery recovered from both features confirms 1005 was later. The ditch was in turn truncated by ditch 1003.

Ditch 118 was a very short ditch segment, aligned SW–NE and truncated by modern disturbance at its southwest end. At its junction with a large silt patch to the northeast, it could not be discerned. It was 2m wide and 0.85m deep, with evenly-sloping sides and a concave base. Its fills produced 45 sherds of pottery, of 1st century date.

Pit 133/134 was 1.13m in diameter and 0.43m deep, and was roughly circular in plan. The sides were fairly regular and steep, and the base concave. It truncated 138 (a possible terminus) and gully 1007, and contained 59 sherds of pottery, of 1st century date, and some fragments of fired clay.

Gully 21, and ditches 9 and 10 were encountered during the evaluation and appear contemporary with these phase 2 features. Ditch 9 yielded 39 sherds of pottery, ditch 10, 33 sherds and ditch 21 produced 15 sherds.

Phase 3: Early-mid 2nd century Roman (Figs. 3 and 4)

Ditch 1003 was aligned SSW–NNE. It varied in width from 0.8m to 1.2m, and in depth from 0.55m to 0.75m, overall becoming deeper at the south. It was excavated in four slots (119, 142, 207 and 208), and contained a large assemblage of pottery (458 sherds) with a date range of later 1st century and 2nd century, and some crumbs of fired clay. It truncated ditch 1005.

Ditch 102 was aligned roughly SE–NW. It was 3.4m wide and 0.22m deep at its deepest point. The sides sloped very shallowly and the base was even and flattish. Sixteen pottery sherds and four large tile fragments were recovered from this feature.

Ditch 103 was fairly shallow and uneven, with sloping sides and a flattish but irregular base, and was 1.8m wide and 0.45m deep, broadly parallel to 102. It contained a small quantity (13 sherds) of pottery dating to the later 1st and 2nd centuries.

Pit 117 was a small, elongated pit with steep sides and a concave base, and measured 1.20m (north-south) and 0.70m (east-west). It was 0.20m deep and was infilled with a clay silt deposit containing just six sherds of pottery.

Ditch 211 was aligned south-southeast by north-northwest, and was 2.3m wide and 0.70m deep. The sides were shallow sloping, becoming steep, and the base was overall concave but very irregular. It contained the largest quantity of pottery recovered from a single feature on the site, which comprised over 600 sherds, dating to the later 1st and 2nd centuries.

Hollow 1008 was excavated in four slots (140, 144, 146 and 215) and was initially thought to be a large pit. It was shallow (0.35m at its deepest, at the western limit of excavation, and typically 0.15m deep overall), with ill-defined, shallowly-sloping sides and an undulating base. It was infilled with a fine, slightly orange grey mottled clay with occasional to moderate flint gravel inclusions, which were concentrated toward the edges and base. It contained a total of 33 sherds of pottery of 1st and 2nd century date, and a small fragment of possible loomweight. It is likely to represent a pond or drainage pool, which appears to have silted up during the earlier phase of Roman activity on the site. However, it is possible that this occurred later and the pottery was redeposited from elsewhere on site.

Phase 4: 3rd–4th century Roman (Figs 3–5)

Just a single feature contained later Roman pottery.

Ditch terminus 116 was aligned SSE to NNW, and was 1.3m wide and 0.63m deep. The sides were fairly steep and the base concave. The 23 sherds of pottery recovered from this feature mainly date from the same periods as above but included one sherd dating from the late 2nd or 3rd century and one sherd of the later 3rd or 4th.

Unphased Roman features (generally later 1st/2nd century)

Gully 1012 was a short segment of gully aligned roughly east-west, and parallel to 1005. It was excavated in two slots (204 and 205), and was shallow and ephemeral. It measured 0.18m at its deepest, and 0.31m wide, with a v-shaped profile. It contained 15 sherds of pottery.

Ditch 114 was aligned southwest-northeast and was 1.14m wide, 0.35m deep, and had sloping sides and a concave base, and contained just a single sherd of Roman pottery.

Pits 123 and 124 were fairly small (1.2m to 1.4m long and 0.7m to 0.8m wide) and were 0.08m deep, both with shallow sloping sides and concave bases. Pit 123 contained six sherds and pit 124 just one sherd of likely 1st – 2nd century pottery. Pit 23 also produced a fragment of quernstone.

Ditch 1006 was irregular, aligned approximately ESE to WSW, and terminated at its junction with 1008. It was 1.40m wide and 0.45m deep, with steep (stepped in on the northern side) sides and a concave base. It was excavated in four slots, 135, 137, 139 and 141, and truncated pits 136 and 138. Only slot 135 contained finds, just a single sherd of Roman pottery, which need not date it.

Posthole 2, ditches 13, 27 and 28 encountered during the evaluation, also contained very small amounts of Roman pottery.

Undated features (Figs 3 and 4)

The following contained no datable finds.

Ditch 1001 was aligned north-south and was 1.40m wide and 0.50m deep overall. It was excavated in three slots; 26, 104 and 128, and was fairly even-sided and regular. The sides sloped evenly and the base was concave.

Ditch 1002 was aligned north-south, and continued beyond the limit of excavation to the north. At the south, it terminated (130). Five slots were excavated through the ditch: 17; 105; 129; 130 and 132. The ditch was v-shaped, and measured 1.10m to 1.90m wide and 0.40m deep. A sample (40 litres of sediment) was taken of the terminus slot and processed for finds and environmental evidence, however none was obtained. Ditches 1001 and 1002 probably marked the edges of a trackway or droveway.

Ditch 101 was aligned roughly east-west and was 0.98m wide and 0.43m deep, with sloping sides and a concave base. It was infilled with a single deposit.

Ditch 106 was aligned SE–NW and was 1.23m wide and 0.36m deep. It was infilled with two deposits, of which a 5 litre sample was processed for finds and environmental evidence, though none was recovered.

Ditch 109 was aligned roughly north-south and was 1.25m wide and 0.33m deep, with sloping sides and a flat base. It did not contain any finds or dating evidence.

Ditch 110 was aligned southeast-northwest and was 1.1m wide and 0.5m deep. The sides were steep and the base flattish. A 5 litre sample contained no finds or environmental evidence.

Gully 111 was aligned east-west and was 0.60m wide and 0.19m deep. A 5 litre sample of the infilling deposit (163) was processed but no environmental evidence or artefacts were recovered.

Gully 112 was aligned south-southwest by north-northeast, and was 0.65m wide and 0.24m deep. It was infilled with a single deposit (164), and a 5-litre sample was processed for finds and environmental evidence, however none was obtained.

Ditch 113 was aligned east-west and was 1.2m wide and 0.49m deep. The sides sloped gently to a concave base, and though a sample of the fill (166) was processed for finds and environmental evidence, none was obtained.

Ditch 115 was aligned roughly east-west and was 1.25m wide and 0.50m deep, with irregular sides and a concave base. No finds or dating evidence was recovered from the infilling deposits 170 and 171.

Gully 131 was a very short segment of gully, 2.6m long and aligned roughly east-west. To the west it petered out, and to the east it was truncated by ditch 1002. It was excavated in a single slot at its junction with ditch 1002, and was 0.82m wide and 0.42m deep, becoming shallower to the west.

Gully 212 was aligned east-west, continued beyond the excavation area to the east, and was truncated by modern disturbance to the west. It was 0.66m wide, 0.19m deep, with gently sloping sides and a concave base, and did not produce any dating evidence.

Gully 213 was aligned east-west, continued beyond the excavation area to the east, and was truncated by modern disturbance to the west. It was 0.56m wide and 0.11m deep, with a single fill which did not contain any dating evidence.

Ditch 214 was aligned east-west and continued beyond the excavation area to both east and west of the limits of excavation. It was 0.98m wide and 0.34m deep, with steep sides and a concave base.

Pit 125 was oval in plan, and measured 0.90m long, 0.80m wide and 0.05m deep. It was infilled with a single deposit (182) which did not contain any finds or dating evidence.

Pit 136 was 0.70m long (east-west) and 0.45m wide (north-south), with shallow sloping sides and a concave base, and was 0.28m deep. It did not contain any finds or dating evidence, but was truncated by ditch 1007.

Pit 138 was elongated, measuring 0.98m long and 0.50m wide. It was 0.60m deep, with sloping sides and a concave base. It did not contain any dating evidence. It was truncated by ditch 1007.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 2421 sherds of pottery weighing 24.85kg largely dating to the 1st–2nd centuries AD, with a small amount of later Roman material. Most was recovered from linear features with a small quantity from pits. The assemblage was fairly fragmented with abraded sherds, partly a reflection of the nature of the fabrics, many of which are not highly fired. The overall average sherd weight is 10g.

The assemblage was sorted into broad fabric groups based on inclusions present, the frequency and grade of the inclusions and the firing colour. Known regional or traded wares were coded following the system advocated for the National Roman reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). Where relevant some fabrics are cross-referenced to the Silchester fabric series (SIL) (Timby 2000). Miscellaneous local fabrics represented by three or fewer sherds are not described in detail but are summarized in Table 2. The sorted assemblage was quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel (rim) equivalence (EVE) for each recorded context. Very small sherds or crumbs were not classified but grouped as code OO. The data were entered onto an MS Excel spreadsheet a copy of which is deposited with the site archive.

Description of fabrics and associated forms

Continental imports

Cadiz amphora (CAD AM) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 87). Four bodysherds from a *Camulodunum* type 186 amphora traditionally used to transport fish sauce.

Samian (LGF SA; LEZ SA) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 28–32). Seven sherds of South Gaulish samian and a single sherd of Central Gaulish samian are present. Two of the South Gaulish pieces are stamped; one from ditch 1003 with an eight-petalled rosette; the other, a dish from gully 57 with OFNGRI. This is one of the dies of the pottery Niger who was working at La Graufesenque c AD 55–65. The other South Gaulish sherds include a dish Dr 18 and a fragment of a bowl or cup Dr 35/6. The only Central Gaulish sherd is from a decorated Dr 37 bowl.

?North Gaulish white ware (NOG WH) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 77). Eleven fragments from a single ring-necked flagon were recovered from ditch 1003.

Regional imports

Abingdon oxidized ware (ABIN OX) (SIL S16) (Timby 2000, 253). Sixty-four very fragmented sherds from two contexts and probably representing just three vessels, butt beaker and a necked jar. One sherd is decorated with finely incised cross-hatching. A hard, thin-walled sandy oxidized ware dating to 2nd half of the 1st century AD. The source for this material probably lies in the Abingdon area.

Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 127). A small group of seven sherds, from 2nd-century jar. Two sherds, a grooved rim bowl and a flanged-rim conical bowl came from the later ditch 116.

Oxfordshire white ware (OXF WH) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 174). Three sherds from a flanged hemispherical bowl, a variant of Young (1977), type O39, in a white ware (Fig. 8. 8).

Verulamium white ware (VER WH) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 154). A small group of 27 sherds from ditches 8 and 142; mainly flagon.

Local or unknown wares

Alice Holt ware (ALH RE) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 138). Wares allocated to this group account for 41.5% of the whole assemblage. The material is quite diverse in firing colour and texture, reflective of the less standardized wares of the earlier phases of the industry but possibly including other 'local' sandy wares. The assemblage is dominated by jars which account for 94.5% estimated vessel (rim) equivalence (EVE). Forms include beaded-rim and everted rim type, bevelled or flat-rim types with cordons or carinated shoulders (cf Lyne and Jefferies 1979, classes 1, 3A, 3B and 4) (Fig. 8. 2, 4, 9, 11-12). The remaining 5.5% relate to single examples of a flat-rim bowl (Fig. 8.7), a 'Surrey'-type bowl, platter and beaker.

Calcareous wares (?SIL C1) (Timby 2000, 250f). A small group of six sherds from a single handmade jar. Dark brown, moderately soft ware with fine voids from leached out calcareous inclusions

Silchester ware (SIL F1) (Timby 2000, 239f). A moderately large group of material accounting for 20.8% of the total assemblage by count. Forms are exclusively handmade jars with either beaded or internally thickened rims or everted rims (Fig. 8.5, 10). The substantial part of a complete, but broken jar came from pit 122.

Other flint-tempered wares. Other flint-tempered wares include a slightly sandier variant of Silchester ware with sparser flint inclusions, a very fine calcined flint-tempered fabric (SIL F2) and a thinner wheel-made sandy ware with sparse flint (SIL SF1).

Grog-tempered wares. Various grog-tempered wares are present with both hand and wheel-made vessels. Of particular note are Silchester fabrics G1 and G4 (Timby 2000, 225f) which account for just 1.6% and less than 1% of the assemblage respectively. Mainly oxidized, handmade grog-tempered storage jar (GRSJ) is better represented at 7%. Vessels are mainly jars forms (Fig. 8. 1, 6) with a small number of lids and beakers. Grog and flint-tempered wares (SIL GF1) contribute a further 1.6%.

Fine grey ware (GYF). A small group of 15 sherds which includes a flat-rim bowl and a sharply everted-rim beaker.

Fine oxidized ware (OXIDF). A slightly larger group of mainly unfeatured sherds but including a necked jar and a lid.

Oxidized sandy wares (OXID). A small group from probably just two vessels in ditches 8 and 9 including a wheel-made dish (Fig. 8. 3) not very competently thrown.

Handmade sandy wares (SA). A handmade, mainly reduced sandy ware contains a common frequency of fine-medium quartz sand with sparse iron grains. Possibly an early, or pre-Roman, forerunner of the Alice Holt kilns. Vessels include a beaded rim jar and other closed forms.

Site phasing and distribution

The pottery has been divided into four ceramic phases (CP) with a fifth group for unspecified 'Roman' where the quantities recovered are too small or undiagnostic to be able to phase. The earliest, CP 1 probably dates to the early to mid 1st century AD. It is largely characterized by handmade vessels in either flint-, or grog-tempered, wares. Roman wares proper and imports are completely absent. Features which appear to belong to this early phase include ditches 1000, 1004, 1007, 1010, 1011 and ditches 1, 18, 24, 107 and 114. In total these features yielded just 195 sherds of pottery weighing 1603g and with 0.57 EVE. Grog-tempered wares make up 56.8% by weight, flint-tempered wares 28.1%, grog and flint-tempered ware 13.7% with calcareous wares just 1.1% and crumbs 0.6%. All the featured sherds are from jars.

Ceramic phase 2 probably dates to the early Roman period. A much more diverse range of material is present with imports and a marked presence of Alice Holt and other sandy wares. Imports include two sherds of Cadiz *amphora*, five sherds of South Gaulish samian, and vessels from the Abingdon and *Verulamium* industries. Flint-tempered ware accounts for 42.7% by weight, and ALH RE for 23.4%. Grog-tempered wares have dropped away to 18%. Features which appear to belong to this phase include gullies 7 and 21, ditches 1005, 9, 10 and 118 and pits 133 and 134. Collectively these yielded 1028 sherds weighing 11205g and 5.16 EVE.

Ceramic phase 3 includes pottery dating to the early to mid 2nd century. The proportion of ALH RE has increased to form 45% of the assemblage by weight with flint-tempered wares at 11.5% and grog-tempered wares at 34.3%. This latter category mainly comprises storage jar sherds typical of the later 1st–2nd century rather than the earlier fabrics. New fabrics include Central Gaulish samian, Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1), Oxfordshire, *Verulamium* and possible North Gaulish white ware with two further sherds of Cadiz *amphora*. Features falling into this group include ditches 102, 103, 1003 and 211 and pit 117. Ditch 211 had a particularly large assemblage of 613 sherds (although 80 of these were crumbs), 56.7% of the pottery from CP3 which produces a total 1091 sherds weighing 10,543 g, 5.28 EVE.

Ceramic phase 4 was restricted to pottery from a single feature, ditch terminal 116. This produced 23 sherds weighing 974g mainly comprising three fabrics, ALHRE 19.2%, DOR BB1 20.9% and grog-tempered storage jar 60.3% by weight. The DOR BB1 includes examples of a grooved-rim bowl of late 2nd–3rd century date and a conical flanged-rim bowl typical of the later 3rd–4th century.

The remaining pottery was recovered from between ditch 1012 and hollow 1008 and from features with very few sherds. This amounted in all to a further 84 sherds, 796g, which mainly comprise Alice Holt reduced ware, flint-tempered and grog-tempered wares similar to the range found in CPs 2 and 3 and suggesting a similar date in the later 1st and 2nd century. There were no imports in this material.

Looking at the overall range of forms, jars dominate throughout and account for 83.8% by EVE. This is followed by bowls/ dishes at 9%, beakers at 5%, lids at 1.3% and platter at less than 1%. *Mortaria* were completely absent and the flagon and *amphora* present did not include rims.

Discussion

This is a fairly modest assemblage of pottery from a rural settlement probably dating to the pre-Roman period and continuing through to the 2nd century AD. There then appears to be a hiatus of activity with some slight reuse of the site in the later 3rd century. This would place the activity at this settlement contemporary to that at the nearby *oppidum* at Silchester but there is a great contrast in the nature of the assemblages between the two. The site at Mere oak Lane has negligible imports by which to refine the dating, the assemblage being mainly composed of locally made pre-Roman native wares which continue well into the Roman period. The flint- and grog-tempered wares are identical to those found in the earlier pre-Roman levels at Silchester, and at both sites Alice Holt and sandy wares show a marked increase from at least the Flavian period, if not slightly earlier.

The form repertoire at Mere oak Lane, dominated by jars, is also more typical of a rural agricultural settlement with a moderately high number of large storage jars perhaps for storing/ processing agricultural produce. This site joins a number of similarly dated sites known in the hinterland of Silchester, for example, Aldermaston Wharf (Cowell *et al.* 1980), Ufton Nervet (Manning 1974), Reading Business Park (Moore and Jennings 1992), Pingewood (Bowden and Johnson 1985) and Theale (Raymond 1997), Northcourt Avenue, Reading (Timby 2009) and Remenham (Timby 2005). At all these sites the range of exotic imports seen at Silchester are absent and the assemblages appear quite low status and rural. This may have been a cultural or economic choice but serves to emphasize the unusual character and function of settlements such as Silchester.

Catalogue of illustrated sherds (Fig. 8)

1. Wheel-made, necked, cordoned jar. Fabric: GR. Ditch 1011, 203 (278).
2. Wheel-made black sandy ware jar with burnished line decoration. Fabric: ALH RE. Ditch 8 (68).
3. Wheel-made, flat-rim dish. Orange, sandy ware. Fabric: OXID. Ditch 8 (68)
4. Large beaded-rim jar in quite a coarse sandy fabric. Fabric: ALH RE. Gully 7 (58).

5. Large handmade coarse flint-tempered jar. The rim has become detached as a coil join with a series of finger depressions visible in the break. Fabric: Silchester ware. Ditch 1005, 122 (178/186).
6. Wide-mouthed handmade jar with a slightly beaded rim. Blackened on the interior and outer upper rim zone; oxidized below. Fabric: GRSA (sandy with grog). Ditch 1005, 122 (178/186).
7. Squat, flat-rim bowl. Fabric: ALH RE. Ditch 1003, 142 (254).
8. Dropped flanged-rim carinated bowl. Fabric: OXF WH. Ditch 1003, 142 (254).
9. Small necked, cordoned jar/bowl, slightly carinated. Fabric: ALH RE. Ditch 1003, 142 (254).
10. Handmade flint-tempered jar with an internally thickened rim. Fabric: Silchester ware. Ditch 211 (287).
11. Bevelled rim jar. Fabric: ALH RE. Ditch 211 (287).
12. Small globular bowl with a flaring, everted rim. Fabric: ALH RE. Ditch 211 (287).

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A moderate amount of animal bone was recovered from 29 contexts across the excavation area, one of which was a natural deposit (147). A total of 665 fragments were present for analysis, weighing 2570g (Table 3). Overall, surface preservation of the remains was good, although frequent fragmentation of long bone elements was noted.

As expected, the high degree of fragmentation hindered identification. A great proportion of the remains were able to be attributed to a size category, although not all were able to be confidently assigned to species. The most well preserved elements were teeth, as all axial and appendicular elements were subject of much fragmentation.

The minimum number of individuals present within the assemblage was determined to be five: two horses, one cattle, one sheep/goat and one pig. The horses were identified through the duplication of two right proximal ulna fragments from contexts 85 and 178. Other horse remains present were a single horse tooth in (263), two metatarsals (a left and a right foot bones) in context 176. Cattle were represented solely through numerous loose teeth. A left cattle humerus was also identified (in 267), as well as several fragments of horn core in 120 (174). Both the sheep/goat and pig individuals were also represented by teeth fragments.

Several cut marks were observed, resulting from butchery practices, primarily on horse bones, notably transversely across the mid-shaft of a left metatarsal, as well as both of the right proximal ulna fragments. No further information could be derived from these skeletal remains.

Brick and Tile by Danielle Milbank

A total of 8 fragments of brick and tile were recovered, with a total weight of 836g. Many of the fragments were too small to enable identification. Exceptions to this were two fragments, both from late Roman context 116 (172) which were small pieces of tegula, and both were parts of the flange, or lip, along each side of a tegula. The fragments differed in the colour and texture of the fabric: one piece was a harder fabric and darker red with signs of reduction; the other was an orange-red colour and a softer fabric. As such, they represent two separate tegulae.

A flat, plain piece of tile was recovered from ditch 1007, context 143 (259), in an orange red fabric with frequent darker red inclusions. It was 19mm thick and though it could not be closely dated, is broadly Roman.

A piece of tile recovered from 102 (152) was of a hard, pale red/buff surface on one side and grey on the other (probably underside) surface. It was 19mm thick and though it could only be broadly dated by appearance, is likely to be early to mid 2nd century in date by context.

Burnt Clay by Danielle Milbank

A total of 94 fragments of burnt clay weighing 2053g were obtained during the excavation, which ranged in size from small crumbs to pieces 75mm x 55mm x 45mm. The majority were small fragments which could not be identified by form or by straw impressions. The fabric present ranged from hard and evenly fired to softer, with some reduction. In colour, they ranged from pale buff and pinkish red to bright orange red fragments with frequent black and occasional dark grey patches.

A piece of burnt clay from 202 (276) weighing 42g was mid, slightly buff red with a dark brown and grey showing on the broken sides, and one side was flat and unbroken. On the broken surfaces were frequent impressions of straw or other plant fibres, so the piece may be a daub fragment.

A burnt clay fragment from 146 (263) was small, weighing 57g, with one flat side and the trace of a hole on one broken edge. This suggests it may have been part of a loomweight but due to the small size of the fragment this is not certain. A piece from 120 (174) was also fairly small, with a reduced core, and a hole was evident on one side, indicating it may have formed part of a loomweight.

Quern by David Williams

A small, thick, segment from the lower stone of a rotary quern (249g) was recovered from pit 123 (180). The stone used is from the Lower Greensand. This type of stone was the most important used for rotary querns at nearby Silchester, though some 60% were thought to come from the quarry site at Lodsworth, West Sussex (Wooders, 2000, 385-387). However, it is clear that the Mere oak Lane quern is not from the cherty, Hythe Beds Greensand at Lodsworth and that it has a different source. Lower Greensand formations have a fairly wide distribution in the Reading region and it is difficult to pinpoint a particular origin for the Mere oak example: the Farnham area on the Hampshire/Surrey border is probably the nearest source.

Macrobotanical plant material and charcoal by Jo Pine

Fourteen samples of sediment, measuring between 2 and 40 litres in volume were taken from a range of deposits which date from the late Iron Age and Roman periods. Flots were wet-sieved, floated over a 0.2mm mesh and

then assessed in the laboratory for the content of preserved plant macrofossils. The flots were sorted under a low-power (x10-x20) binocular microscope. Plant macrofossils were all picked out and identified by examination at x10-x20 magnification. Charcoal was present, however, the fragments were too small for species identification. Seed survival was particularly poor and only sample (213, 294) from an undated gully contained a single seed of *Onopordium acanthium.L* Scotch or cotton thistle.

Conclusion by Danielle Milbank

The excavation has revealed occupation and landscape features of early Roman date which add to the data set for the location within the context of the development of rural settlement in the hinterland of the Roman town of Silchester. Apart from modern and undated features, almost all other dated deposits belong to the latest Iron Age or Early Roman period. The first phase is represented by features containing pottery from the early 1st century through to the mid 2nd century (ceramic phases 1, 2 and 3), with just a single ditch representing a later phase (late 3rd to 4th century). Although pottery deposition at the early site can be divided into three ceramic phases, the nature of the site itself shows little change. The start date is open to question, as the 'earliest' (CP1) pottery assemblages differ little from the 'native component' of the 'later' (CP2 and 3) groups. It is possible this was a late Iron Age farm which continued into the Roman period; it could just as easily be a post-conquest foundation with a strong local tradition influencing its pottery.

The excavation has necessarily only revealed part of the area containing archaeological deposits. It seems though, to have uncovered two components of rural Roman settlement. In the central portion of the site, a cluster of deposits including linear features, pits and postholes, all producing moderate to large quantities of pottery, animal bone and other cultural debris, is mostly likely to indicate the core of an occupied area. The occupied area was unenclosed though several of the linear features present will relate to enclosures such as paddocks and animal pens. Clearly, due to the limits of the excavated areas, there is some doubt as to the extent of the settled area to west and east and these areas could include the sites of the actual habitation structures: such a lack of below-ground structural evidence is typical of many rural sites (Booth 2005, 289). However, the quantity of pottery in particular, must indicate occupation on the site.

A second component of this excavation has revealed additional landscape features. Mostly to the north-east, a series of linear features are probably all related. They are not well dated with few artefacts present but would appear to indicate areas of Roman fields. The spatial organization of these boundaries with respect to each other cannot be determined from the limited extent of the plans uncovered. Two pairs of parallel ditches (1001, 1002 and 106, 110) could indicate trackways.

The site appears to be a farm of, at best, modest prosperity in the early Roman period. Apart from the negative evidence from an absence of structural or artefactual indicators of wealth, the principal indicator of this is the relative scarcity of fineware pottery, in comparison to the assemblages expected from sites such as the urban centre of nearby Silchester, or villa sites. Metalwork was entirely absent, although this could be on account of survival factors rather than an original absence. The pottery recovered from features reflected a range of locally-made wares, with very few imports. In both composition and date the assemblage is similar to that recorded at Northcourt Avenue, Reading to the north-east (Milbank 2009) where the pottery forms were dominated by storage jars, in the same proportion of jars to other forms, which is a trait typical of rural settlements (Evans 2001, 26–9). Sieving for charred plant remains was singularly unsuccessful but a modest collection of animal bone was recovered, indicating a typical range of domesticated species.

There was then a hiatus in the development of the site with the pottery repertoire indicating that the core of the site had gone out of use by the mid 2nd century AD. Late Roman activity is represented only by a single ditch which terminated in the excavation area, and even this is dated to the later period by just two sherds of pottery. This single ditch's role in the late Roman landscape cannot yet be understood, but it need not imply a contemporary occupation area close by, and some mid-Roman dislocation is certainly implied.

In broader regional context, the effective end of the use of this site at this time may be a part of a widespread hiatus in the development of rural settlements in the 2nd century AD, which has been noted for the Upper Thames Valley (Booth *et al.* 2005, 43; Henig and Booth 2000, 106; Holbrook 2006, 102). For example, the settlements at Thames Valley Park, (Barnes *et al.* 1997, 30), Pingewood, (Bowden and Johnson 1985) and Northcourt Avenue (Milbank 2009) went out of use during the 2nd century AD, though for the latter some late Roman re-use occurred. Earlier studies had observed that for sites on the river gravels founded in Late Iron Age/Early Roman times, these often continued throughout the Roman period, in marked contrast to those founded in Early or Middle Iron Age times, which did not (Fulford 1992), whilst new foundations post-dating the conquest were surprisingly rare. This broader picture must now be nuanced somewhat, with this locality at least, seeing an as yet unexplained disruption even to new establishments, in the 2nd century.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank all who participated on site and behind the scenes. The project was set up and managed by Mr Paul Chadwick of CgMs Consulting on behalf of the Borough Councils with advice provided by Berkshire Archaeology. The excavation team consisted of Vanja Blomqvist, Daniel Bray, Marta Buczek, Simon Cass, Aiden Colyer, Ceri Falys, James Earley, Jennifer Lowe, James McNicoll-Norbury and Gemma Watson. Pottery illustrations are by Jane Timby. Other illustrations are by the author and Andrew Muddin.

References

- Barnes, I, Butterworth, C A, Hawkes, J W and Smith, L, 1997, *Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire, 1986–88*, Wessex Archaeol Rep 14, Salisbury
- Bowden, M and Johnston, J, 1986, 'Excavations at Pingewood', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 72 (for 1983–5), 17–52
- Fulford, M, 1992, 'Iron Age to Roman: a period of radical change on the gravels', in M Fulford and E Nicols (eds), *Developing landscapes of lowland Britain: the archaeology of the British gravels: a review*, Soc Antiq London Occas Pap 14, 23–38
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Booth, P, Dodd, A, Robinson, M and Smith, A, 2007, *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: The early historical period AD1–1000*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes monogr 27, Oxford
- Brodribb, G, 1987, *Roman Brick and Tile*, Gloucester
- Brossler, A, Early, R and Allen, C, 2004, *Green Park (Reading Business Park), Phase 2 excavations 1995 – Neolithic and Bronze Age sites*, Oxford Archaeology, Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr 19, Oxford
- Cass, S, 2007, 'Meroak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, An Archaeological Evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 07/102, Reading
- Cowell, R W, Fulford, M G and Lobb, S, 1980, 'Excavations of prehistoric and Roman settlement at Aldermaston Wharf 1976–77', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 69, 1-35
- Evans, J, 2001, 'Material approaches to the identification of different Romano-British site types', in (eds) S James and M Millett, *Britons and Romans: advancing an archaeological agenda*, CBA Res Rep 125, York, 26–35
- Barnes, I, Butterworth, C A, Hawkes, J W and Smith, L, 1997, *Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire, 1986–88*, Wessex Archaeol Rep 14, Salisbury
- Fulford, M, 1992, 'Iron Age to Roman: a period of radical change on the gravels', in M Fulford and E Nicols (eds), *Developing landscapes of lowland Britain: the archaeology of the British gravels: a review*, Soc Antiq London Occas Pap 14, 23–38
- Fulford, M G, and Timby, J R, 2000 *Silchester Forum Basilica*, Britannia monogr 15
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 1, Reading
- Hall, M, 1998, 'The prehistoric pottery', in J Moore and D Jennings, *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age landscape*, Thames Valley landscapes: the Kennet Valley, 1, 61-72, Oxford
- Hammond S, 2005, 'Land adjoining Milestone Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 05/104 Reading
- Hawkes, C F C, and Hull, M R, 1947, *Camulodunum: First report on the excavations at Colchester 1930-1939*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London, 14
- Henig, M and Booth, P, 2000, *Roman Oxfordshire*, Stroud
- Holbrook, N, 2006, 'The Roman period', in N Holbrook and J Jurica (eds) *Twenty-five years of Archaeology in Gloucestershire: a review of new discoveries and new thinking in Gloucestershire, south Gloucestershire and Bristol*, Cirencester, 97–131
- Howell, I and Ford S, 1994, 'Little Lea Farmhouse, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 08/94, Reading
- Hindmarch, E, 2003, 'Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 03/01 Reading
- Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep 9, Salisbury
- Lyne, M A B, and Jefferies, R S, 1979 *The Alice Holt / Farnham Roman pottery industry*, CBA Res Rep 30, London
- Manning, W H, 1974, 'Excavations at late Iron Age, Roman and Saxon sites at Ufton Nervet, Berkshire in 1961–63', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 67, 1–62
- Milbank, D, 2008, 'Horseman Coach Depot, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading, Berkshire: an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 08/94, Reading
- Milbank, D, 2009, 'Excavation of Late Iron Age/Early Roman and later Roman occupation deposits at 68-72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, Berkshire', Thames Valley Archaeological Services draft publication report 07/93, Reading
- Moore, J, and Jennings, D, 1992 *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age landscape*, Thames Valley landscapes: the Kennet Valley Vol 1, Oxford
- Robinson, M, 1992, 'Soils sediments and hydrology', in J Moore and D Jennings, *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age landscape*, Thames Valley landscapes: the Kennet Valley 1, Oxford
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

- Raymond, F, 1997, 'The investigation of Roman and Medieval settlements found during the construction of the Theale to Bradfield pipeline', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 75 (for 1994–7), 41–73
- Timby, J, 2000, 'The Pottery', in M G Fulford M G and J R Timby, *Late Iron Age and Roman Silchester: Excavations on the site of the Forum-Basilica 1977, 1980–86*, Britannia monogr 15, London, 180–312
- Timby, J, 2005, 'The pottery from Remenham Park Place, Berkshire', unpubl rep for Archaeological Project Services
- Timby J 2009, 'The pottery' in D Milbank, 'Excavation of Late Iron Age/Early Roman and later Roman occupation deposits at 68-72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, Berkshire', Thames Valley Archaeological Services draft publication report 07/93, Reading
- Tomber, R and Dore, J, 1998, *The National Roman fabric reference collection: a handbook*, London
- Wooders, J, 2000, 'The stone artefacts', in M Fulford and J Timby, *Late Iron Age and Roman Silchester*, Britannia Monograph Series 15, 385-391

TABLE 1. Pottery Quantification

	Fabric	Description	No	No %	Wt (g)	Wt %	EVE	EVE %
Import	CAD AM	<i>Camulodunum</i> type 186 <i>amphora</i>	4	*	222	0.9		
	SG SAM	South Gaulish samian	7	*	157	0.6	20	1.6
	CG SAM	Central Gaulish samian	1	*	4	*		
Regional	NOG WH	North Gaulish whiteware <i>mortarium</i>	11	*	178	0.7		
	ABINOX	Abingdon oxidized ware	64	2.6	124	*	48	3.8
	DOR BB1	Dorset black burnished ware	7	*	497	2.0	53	4.1
	OXF WH	Oxfordshire white ware	3	*	39	*	15	1.2
	VER WH	Verulamium white ware	27	1.1	203	0.8		
Local/ unknown	ALH RE	Alice Holt sandy wares	1004	41.5	7835	31.5	586	45.8
	BUFFSY	buff sandy	1	*	2	*		
	CA	calcareous	6	*	19	*	5	*
	FL	miscellaneous flint-tempered	47	1.9	497	2.0	53	4.1
	FL1	Silchester ware	503	20.8	5869	23.6	148	11.6
	FL2	fine flint-tempered	4	*	50	*	3	*
	GR1	Silchester grog-tempered fabric G1	38	1.6	244.5	1.0	20	1.6
	GR4	Silchester grog-tempered fabric G4	14	0.6	88	*	8	0.6
	GR	miscellaneous grog-tempered	197	8.1	1666	6.7	96	7.5
	GRFL	grog and flint-tempered	39	1.6	360	1.4	25	2.0
	GRSA	sandy grog-tempered	26	1.1	157	0.6	15	1.2
	GRSJ	grog-tempered storage jar (hm)	172	7.1	5159	20.8	22	1.7
	GYGR	grey grog-tempered	3	*	25	*	5	*
	GREY	grey sandy wares	2	*	30	*	15	1.2
	GYF	fine grey ware	15	0.6	206	0.8	43	3.4
	OXIDF	fine oxidized ware	28	1.2	169.5	0.7	32	2.5
	OXID	sandy oxidized ware	13	0.5	152	0.6	45	3.5
	PNKSY	pink sandy ware	2	*	4	*		
	SA	hm sandy ware	22	0.9	387	1.6	10	0.8
	SAOR	sandy ware with organic inclusions	1	*	5	*		
SF	sandy with sparse flint	14	0.6	378	1.5	12	0.9	
WSOXID	white-slipped oxidized ware	1	*	2	*			
OO	small pot crumbs/fired clay	145	6.0	126	0.5			
TOTAL			2421		24855		1279	

* = less than 0.5%

EVE values all x100

TABLE 2 – Inventory of animal bone

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Small</i>
1	50			-	2 (sheep/goat tooth)	
7	58	18	32	-	1 (pig tooth)	-
9	60	2	11	1	-	-
8	68	11	49	5	-	-
27	82	4	10	4 (cattle teeth)	-	-
28	85	6	226	6 (horse right ulna)	-	-
116	172	6	29	6 (cattle teeth)	-	-
120	174	3	75	2 (cattle mandible)	1	-
119	176	55	373	25 (horse metapodia, cattle horn core)	-	-
121	177	26	122	10	1 (sheep/goat teeth)	-
122	178	19	196	5 (horse right ulna)	-	-
118	179	1	5	-	-	-
122	186	6	48	6 (cattle teeth)	-	-
126	189	36	99	15 (cattle teeth)	-	-
127	191	30	60	-	1	-
133	199	21	49	21 (cattle teeth)	-	-
142	254	295	690	200 (including cattle teeth)	-	-
145	261	2	7	-	2 (sheep/goat tooth)	-
146	263	1	32	1 (horse tooth)	-	-
200	266	11	9	-	-	-
200	267	10	125	10 (cattle humerus)	-	-
(147)	(268)	11	23	11 (cattle teeth)	-	-
202	275	6	62	6	-	-
202	276	11	58	7 (cattle teeth)	-	-
203	277	40	109	5 (cattle teeth)	1	-
206	281	24	48	24 (cattle teeth)	-	-
207	283	2	7	-	-	-
208	285	5	11	-	-	-
211	287	1	1	-	-	-
Total / MNI		665	2570	MNI = 2 horse 1 cattle	MNI = 1 sheep/goat 1 pig	MNI = 0

Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, 2008

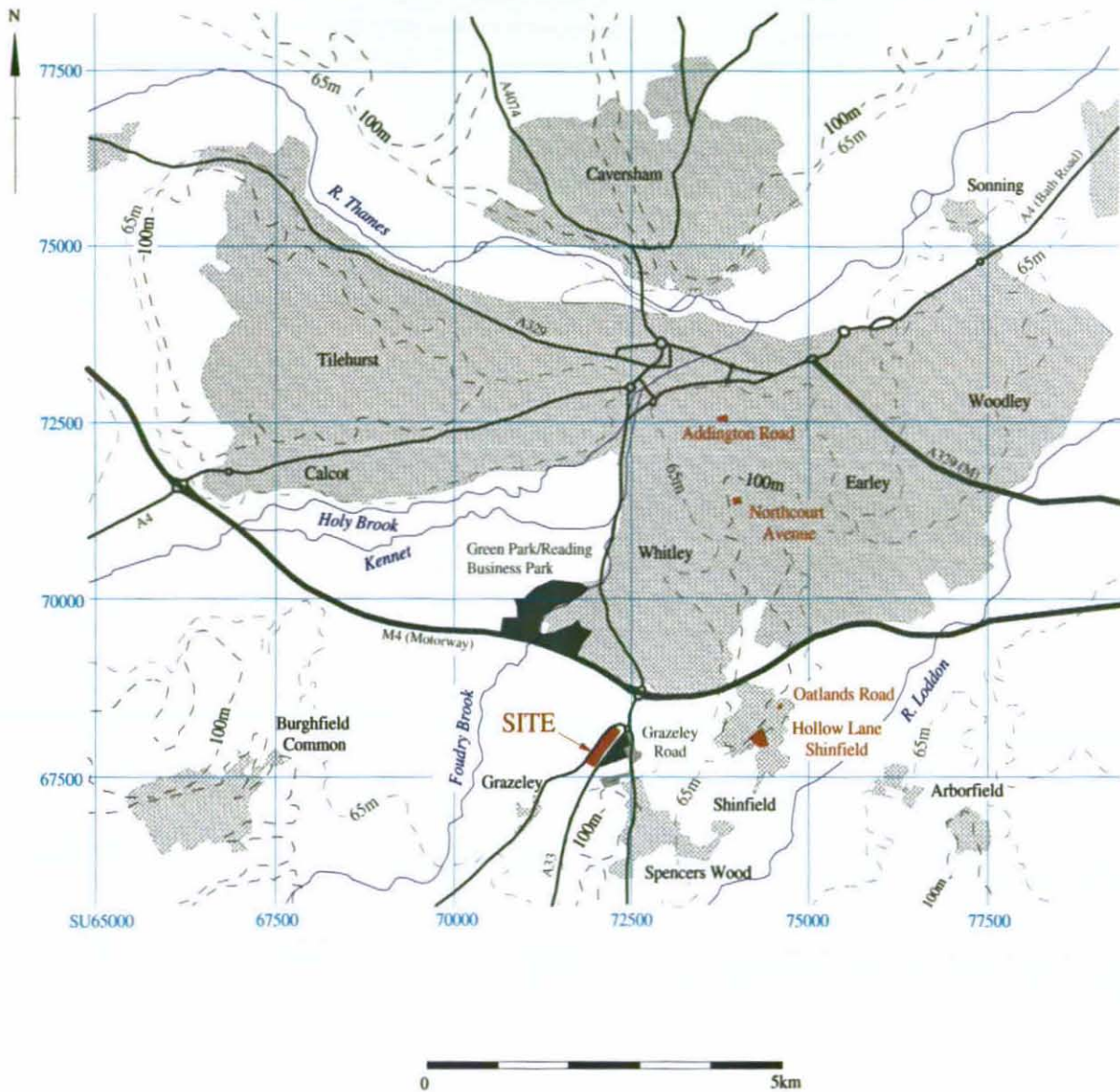


Figure 1. Location of sites in the immediate environs of Reading.

Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, 2008

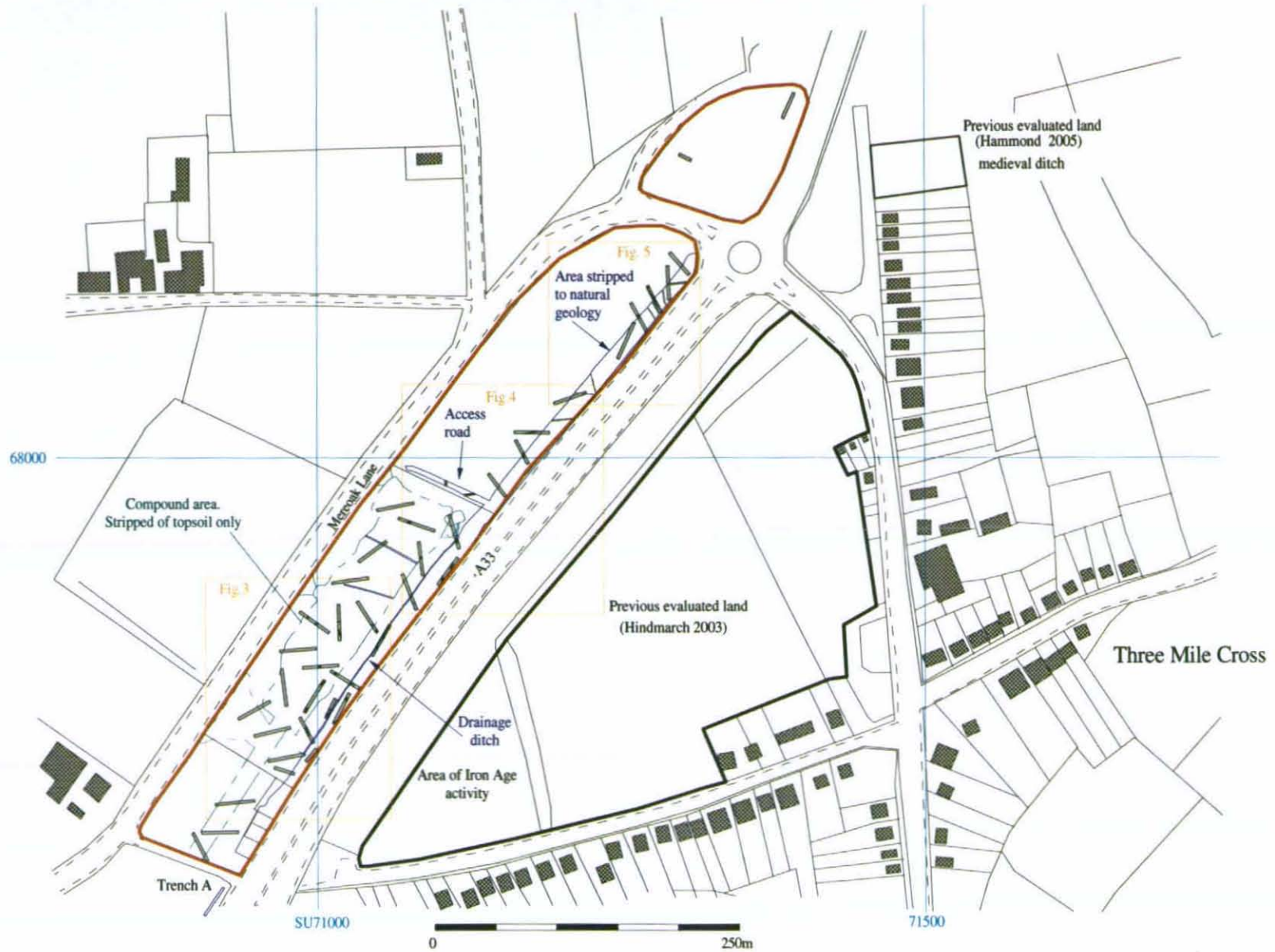


Figure 2. Overall groundwork detail, with evaluation trenches; topsoil strip in green and temporary pipe trenching in blue

Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, 2008

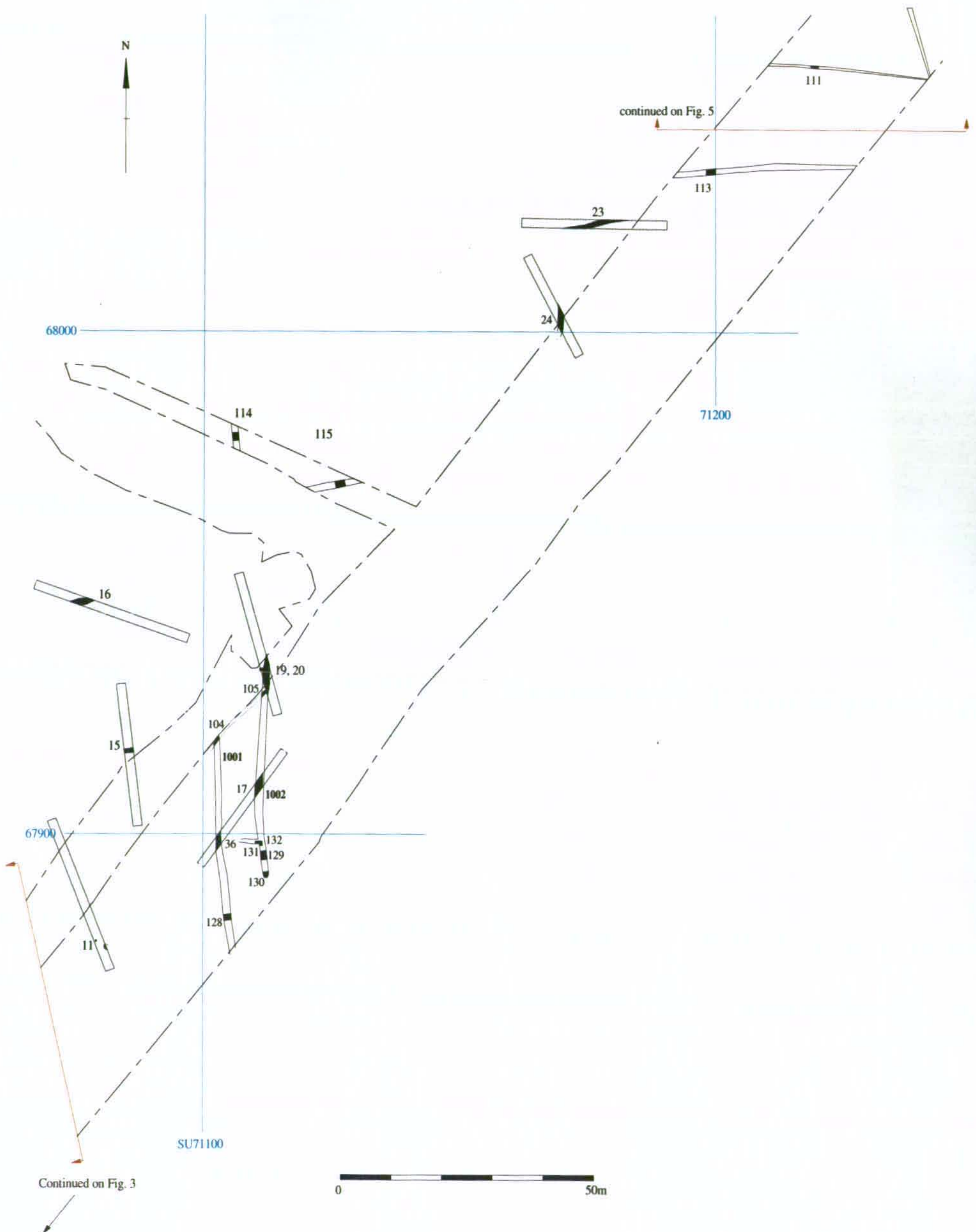


Figure 4. Detailed location of features (northern end of site).

Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, 2008

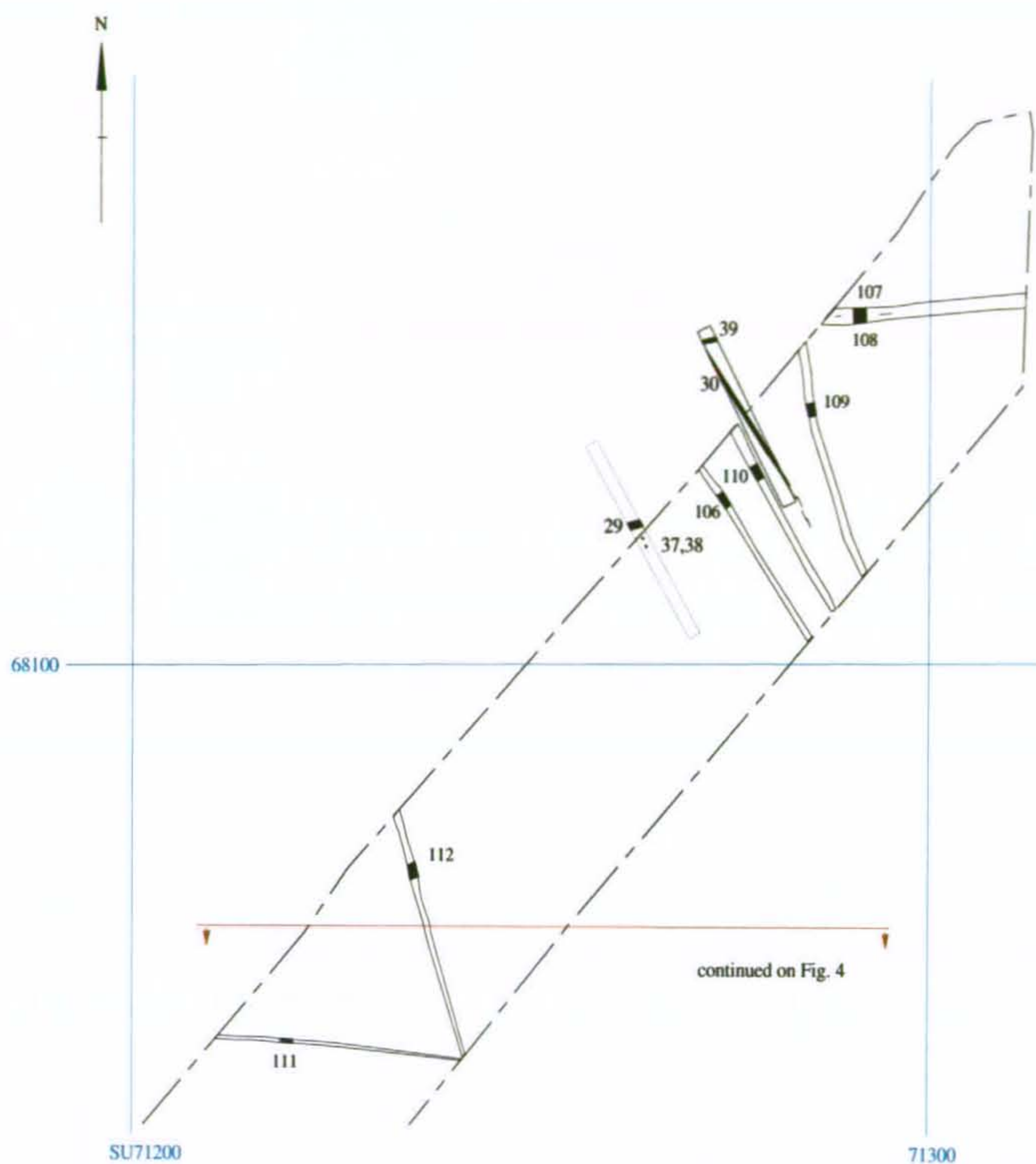


Figure 5. Detailed location of features (extreme northern end of site).

Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, 2008

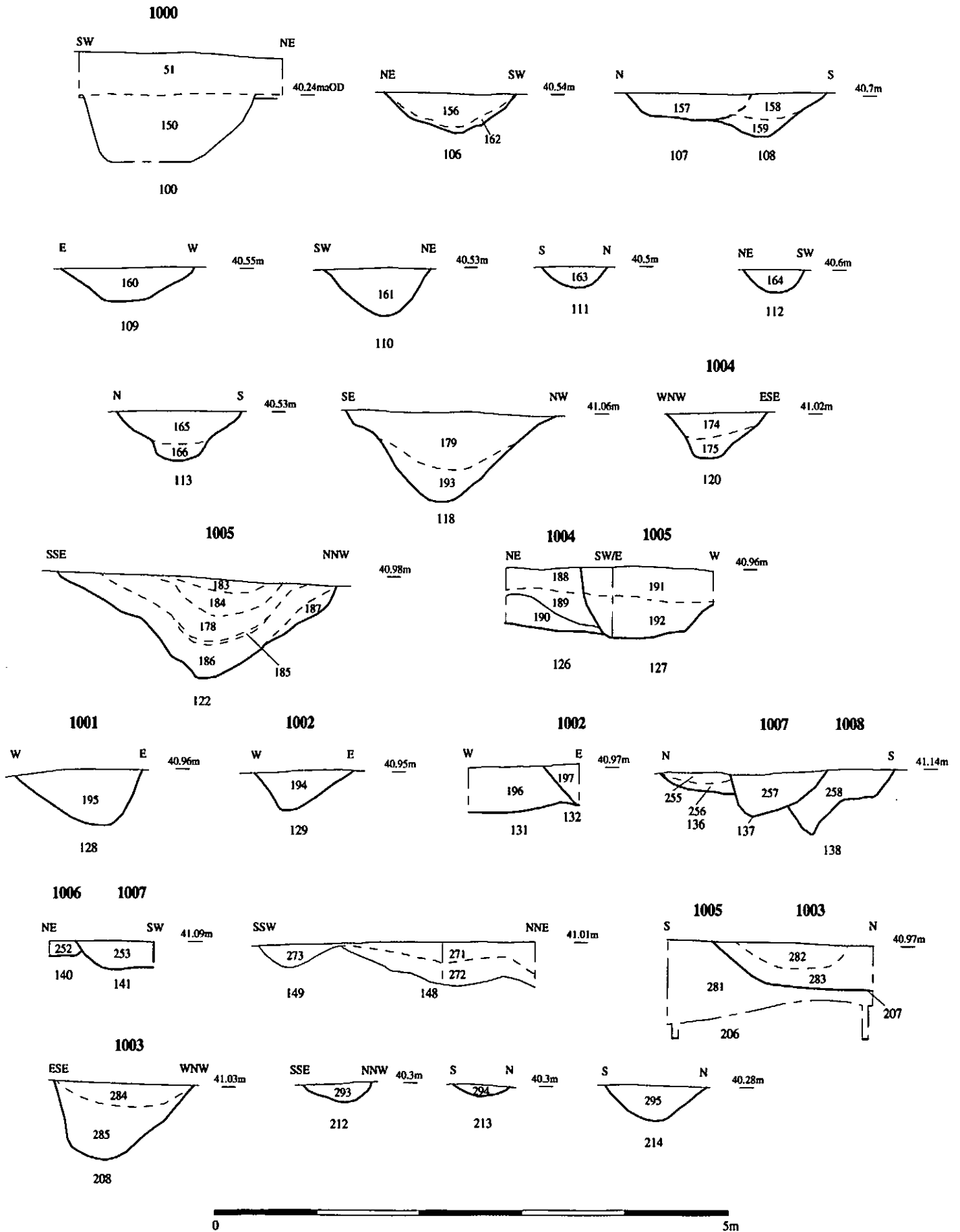


Figure 6. Sections

Mereoak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Reading, Berkshire, 2008

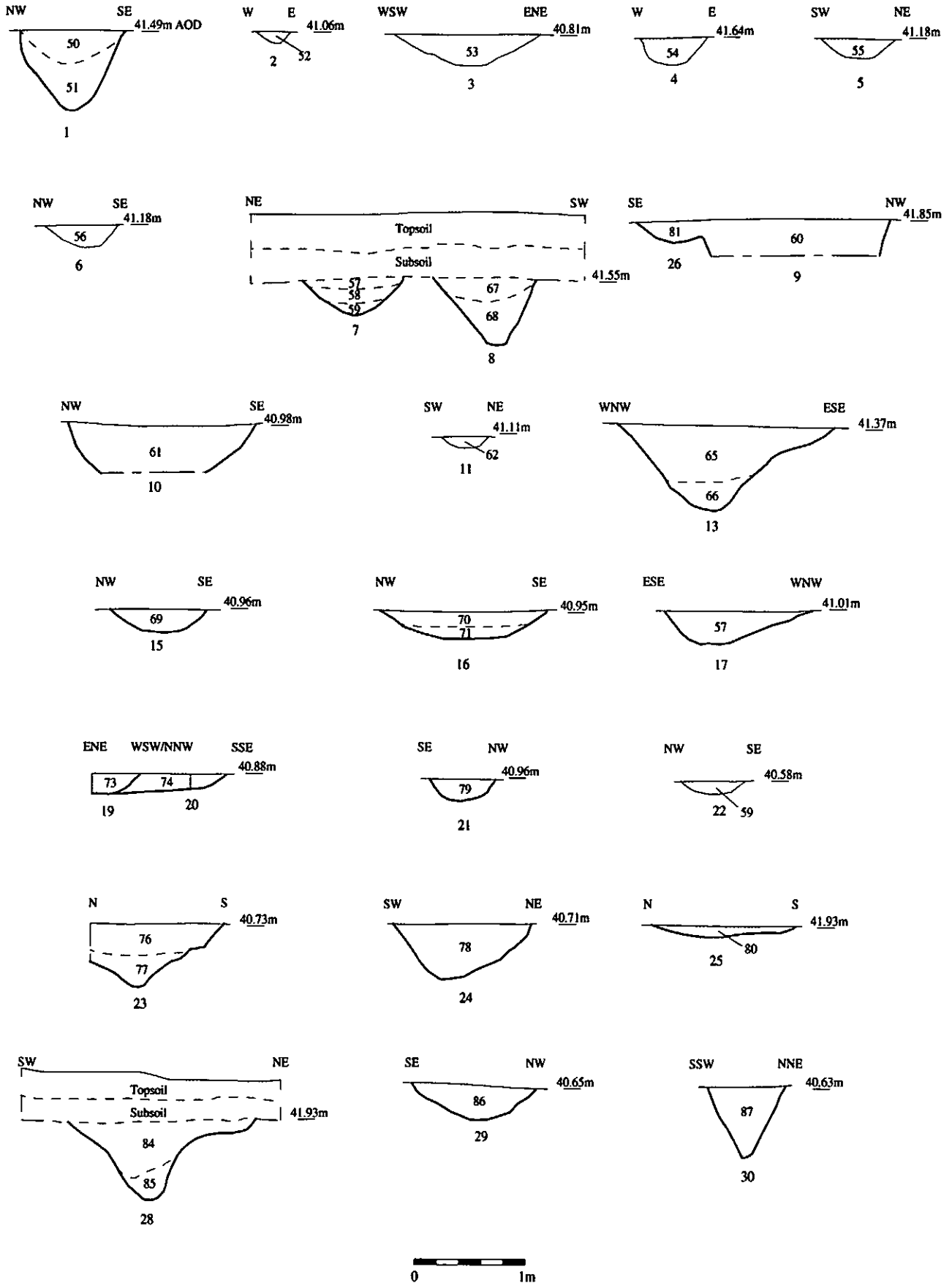


Figure 7. Sections of features from evaluation.

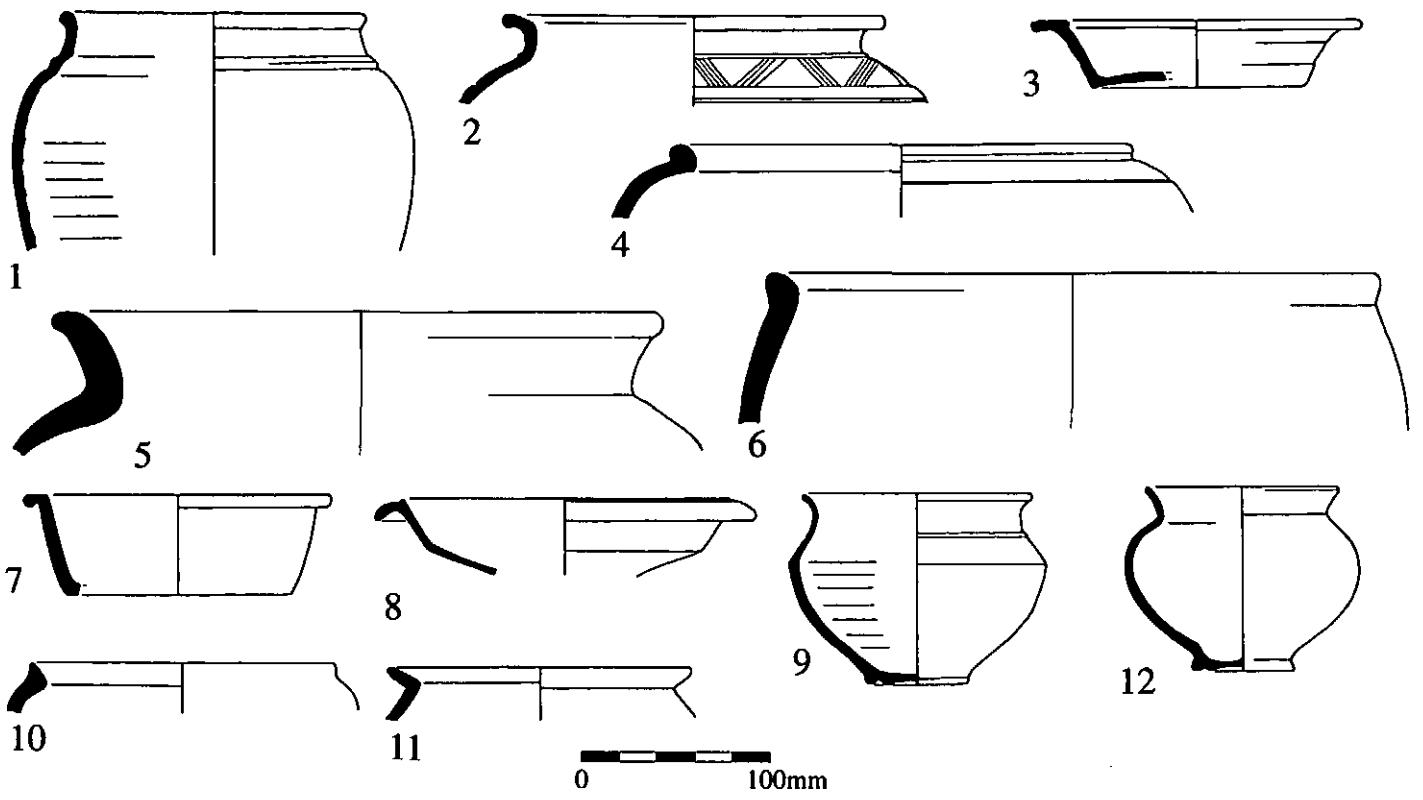


Figure 8. Pottery (see text for details)



Plate 1. General shot of drainage trench, looking north-west.



Plate 2. Ditch 106, looking south-east; scales, horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.1m

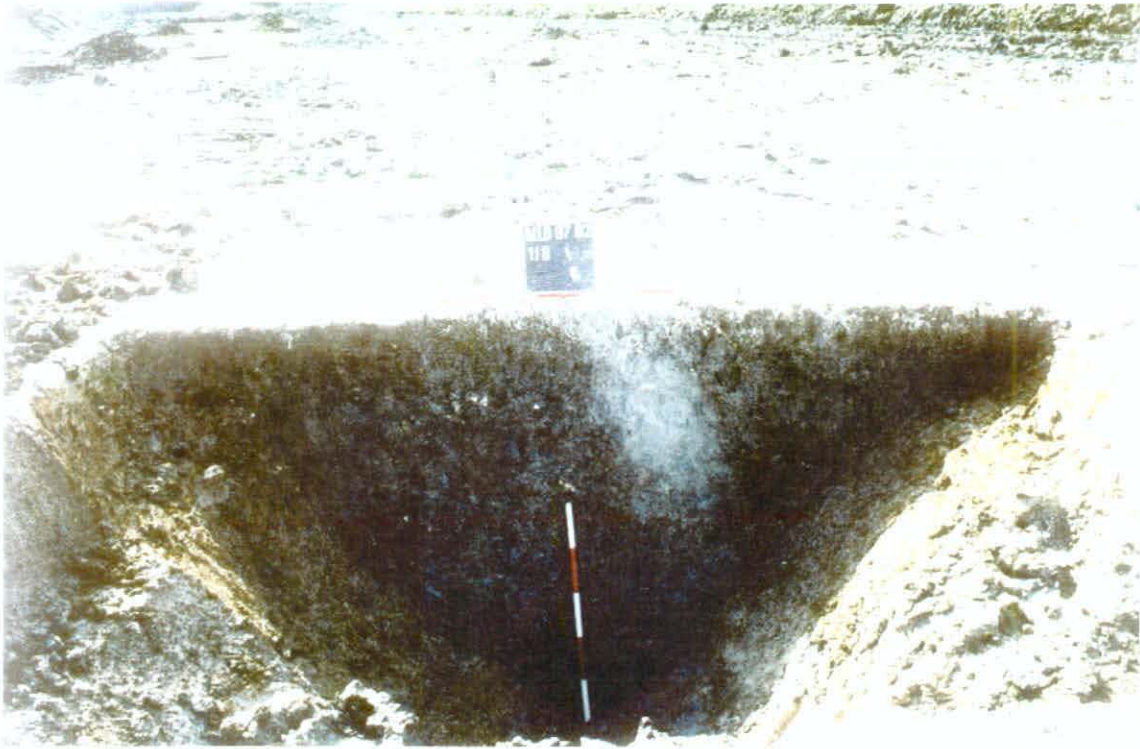


Plate 3. Linear 118, looking south south-west; scales, horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Relationship between ditch 1004 (126) and ditch 1005 (127), looking south east; scales, horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.5m.

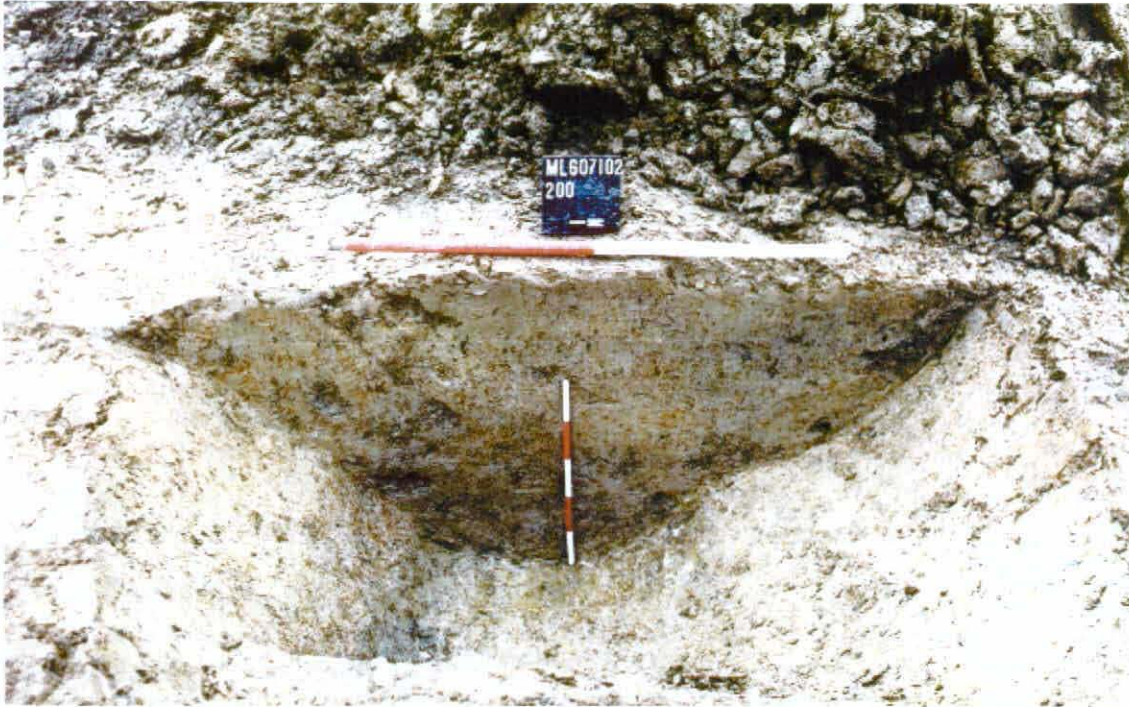


Plate 5. Linear 1005, slot 200, looking east south-east; scales, horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.5m.

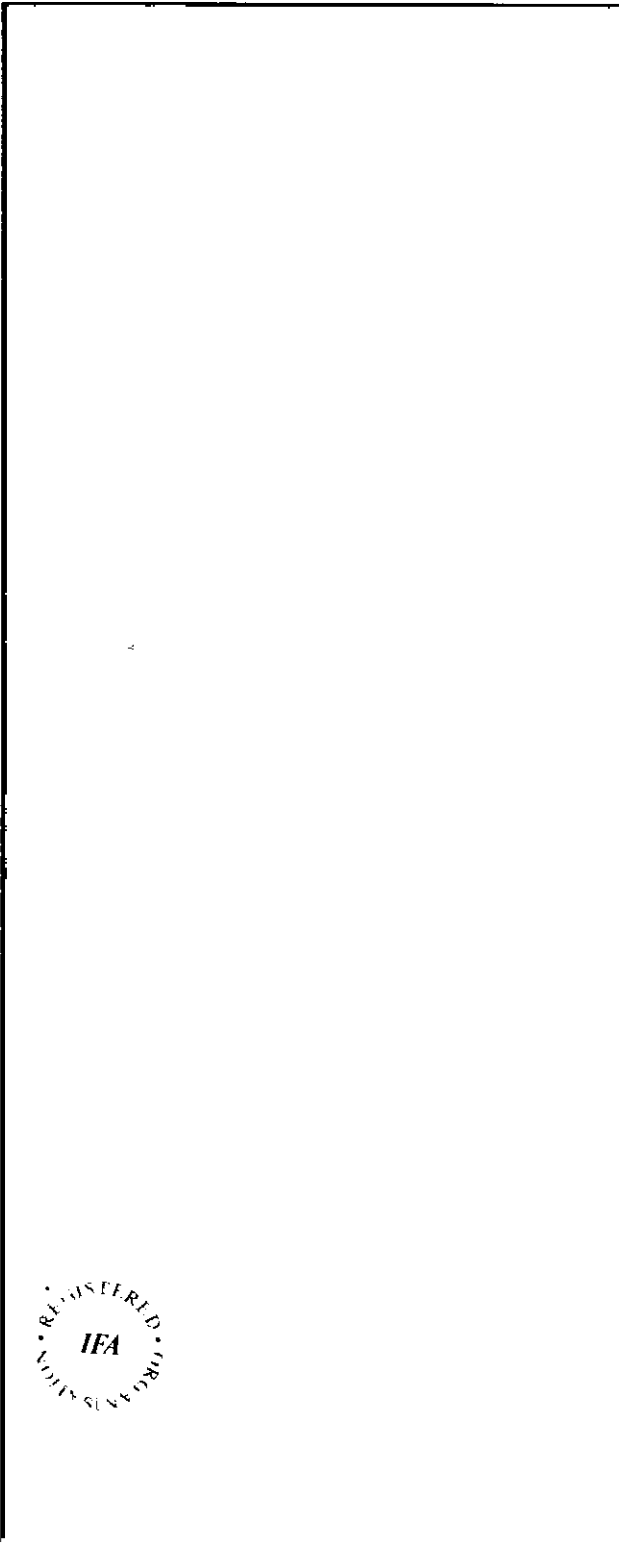
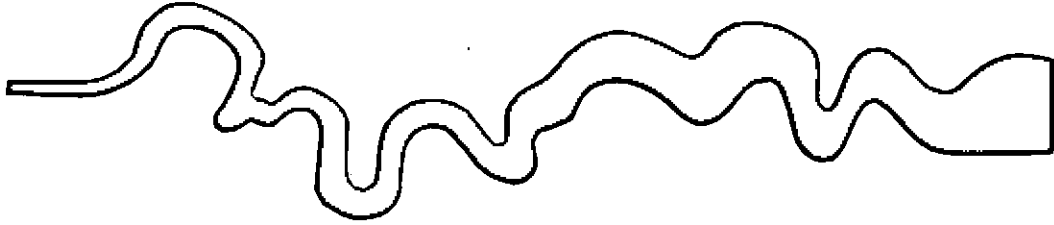


Plate 6. Relationship 1008 (202) and ditch 203, looking south east; scales, horizontal 1m, vertical 0.5m.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**