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IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND ROMANO-BRITISH ENCLOSURES AT COVENTRY ROAD, HINCKLEY LEICESTERSHIRE

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IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND ROMANO-BRITISH ENCLOSURES AT COVENTRY ROAD, HINCKLEY LEICESTERSHIRE

Abstract

A middle Iron Age settlement and Romano-British enclosures were excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology ahead of development at Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, in 2001.

The middle Iron Age settlement comprised a sub square enclosure with a well-defined eastern entrance, but with no surviving boundary to the west. A principal roundhouse with two subsidiary roundhouses lay within the enclosure with four further roundhouses around the eastern entrance. A single large pit contained deposits of cattle bone, pottery, a rubbing stone and a worked bone implement, but in general there was a paucity of finds. Three radiocarbon dates place the settlement between 400 and 200 BC, although the simplicity of the site plan suggests that it may have been occupied for only a generation or two within this date range, perhaps most probably during the third century BC.

About the middle of the 2nd century AD a small enclosure and linear boundary ditch was set over the area of the Iron Age enclosure. To the east there was a large rectangular enclosure of the same date, divided into two by a north-south ditch. Within the eastern half there was a small trapezoidal enclosure, and an area to its south of shallow scoops and hollows contained pottery dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The enclosures continued beyond the excavated area so the main focus of occupation may have been further to the north. The pottery evidence suggests that this site had been deserted by the end of the 3rd century AD. The small pottery assemblage contained a high proportion of mortaria from the nearby Mancetter-Hartshill production centre.

1 INTRODUCTION

Crest Nicholson Residential (Midlands) Ltd have developed 14ha of land lying south of Coventry Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 405 930; Fig 1). The development comprises residential housing and community facilities with associated access roads and landscaping.

The development area lies between the Coventry Road, to the north, and the A5 Trunk Road, (Roman Watling Street) to the south (Fig 2). It is bounded to the south-east by Hinckley Stadium and to the east by the Ashby de-la Zouch canal.

As the site lies close to the line of Roman Watling Street Roman Road it was considered to be an area of archaeological interest by the Leicestershire County Council Museums, Arts and Records Service; Archaeology Section (LMARS). As a consequence, prior to determination of the planning application (99/00047/OUT/4) an Archaeological Impact Assessment was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in 1999.

The Impact Assessment comprised a geophysical survey, which revealed no significant archaeological anomalies (Butler 1999), and trial-excavation across the entire area. In the northern part of the development area the trial excavation located linear ditches, gullies and possible pits as well as remnant furrows from the medieval ridge and furrow field system of (Thomas 1999). Although no direct evidence for structures was recovered, the presence of

ceramic roof tile suggested Roman settlement lay in the vicinity. The finds assemblage indicated that the site was occupied in the early to middle Iron Age and the Roman period.

Due to the presence of the archaeological features, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council applied a condition to the planning consent requiring the applicant to mitigate against the loss of archaeological information. This was to be achieved by implementing a programme of works to ensure the satisfactory investigation and recording of all archaeological remains within the development area. Accordingly, Crest Nicholson Residential (Midlands) Ltd commissioned Northamptonshire Archaeology to carry out the necessary archaeological work.

A detailed archaeological approach to the mitigation was prepared following discussions between Northamptonshire Archaeology, and LMARS, advisors to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The works were to comprise an open area excavation in the northern part of the development area where the features had been located and a watching brief in the surrounding areas (NA 2001). The open area excavation was between March and June 2001.

A watching brief was carried out in July 2002 during the first stage of development over the excavated site and the immediately adjacent areas. A second watching brief was carried out in 2003/4 to cover the development of areas further to the south and east (Fig 2). An area to the south-east of the Roman enclosures, and adjacent to the canal, was subject to an intensive watching brief during soil stripping prior to piling, but the only features located were of post-medieval to recent date. An extensive area to the south of the Iron Age enclosure was subject to a general watching brief during soil stripping. The western half of this area was also subject to watching brief during subsequent works on access roads and house plots. Three undated ditches were found 50m to the south of the Iron Age enclosure. Over much of the remaining area to the east it was difficult to make systematic observations as a result of the wet ground conditions and the consequent damage to the clay natural from plant movements, and the watching was not continued.

The excavation, the watching brief and the post-excavation reporting has been funded by Crest Nicholson Residential (Midlands) Ltd. The excavation was supervised for Northamptonshire Archaeology by Tim Hallam with Mark Holmes as project manager. The analysis and report preparation has been by Pat Chapman with Andy Chapman as project manager and editor. Thanks are also due to the excavation team who had to endure the problems of unseasonable heavy rain and localised flooding on a clay site.

The watching briefs were carried out by Chris Jones, David Stacey and David Leigh. Analysis of the finds and environmental evidence was carried out by Roy Friendship-Taylor, Dennis Jackson, Tora Hylton, Andy Chapman, Karen Deighton and Rowena Gale. Thanks are also due to the illustrators Jacqueline Harding, Roy Friendship-Taylor, Carol Simmonds, Hari Anne Jacklin and Andy Chapman.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Previous archaeological work

Although there is no other known Iron Age occupation in the immediate area, within the surrounding region there has been a recent increase in the recovery of evidence of Iron Age settlement. These have comprised both large densely occupied settlements and individual farmsteads. Of the former the most extensive was at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) in Northamptonshire, 20km to the south-east of Hinckley. This comprised several hectares of extensive and intensive Iron Age occupation including both unenclosed and enclosed elements, and some 70 roundhouses, giving a picture of a complex, long-lived development (Chapman 1994, BUFAU 1998, AMS 1999). A similarly extensive and dense

settlement has been recovered more recently in Leicestershire at Humberstone, 20km to the east of Hinckley (Charles et al 2000). An unenclosed settlement at Coton Park, Rugby, Warwickshire, 16km south-east of Hinckley, although much less extensive, displayed a similar complex and long-lived sequence of development (Chapman 1998).

An example of a smaller enclosed settlement that appears to comprise individual farmsteads has been excavated at Enderby, Leicestershire, 14km east of Hinckley (Clay 1992). A further small settlement of middle Iron Age date has been seen at Wanlip, Leicestershire, 22km to the north-west of Hinckley, comprising a small enclosure with an external roundhouse and associated structures and pit groups (Beamish 1998). Another was recently excavated at Huncote, only 12km east of Hinckley, and comprised a late Iron Age enclosure surrounding two roundhouses on gravel (ULAS 2000). In the opposite direction, there were the middle Iron Age enclosures of Ryton on Dunsmore and Barford (Hingley 1996), and a polygonal enclosure containing a principal roundhouse and two ancillary roundhouses has been excavated at Meriden in Warwickshire, 20km south-west of Hinckley (Stevens 2002).

Evidence of other Roman occupation has been found much closer to the Coventry Road enclosure. The adjacent section of the Watling Street Roman Road lay only 350m to the south. This section ran between the vexillation fortress at Mancetter, later an important pottery manufacturing centre, just 5km to the north-west of Hinckley, and the fort at Wigston Parva, where the Fosse Way Roman Road joined Watling Street, only 8km to the south-east. A hoard of between 200 and 1000 Roman coins were found nearly a kilometre away to the north-west in 1871 during the construction of the Ashby to Nuneaton railway (JSAC 2001).

2.2 Topography and geology

Hinckley lies on high ground that forms the watershed of several major river systems (Fig 1). To the north-east the River Soar flows through Leicester on its way to join the River Trent. To the west tributary streams flow to the River Anker, which also joins the Trent. Further to the south-west various streams feed into the Warwickshire Avon. To the south-east the Welland flows eastwards towards the North Sea. The nearest watercourses to the Iron Age and Roman settlements are Sketchley Brook, 1.6km to the south, and Harrow Brook, 2km to the east, both of which flow into the Anker.

The underlying geology is Glaciolacustrine Deposits; yellow to brown stoneless clay and silt of the Western Glacial Drift, late Quaternary, commonly known as Boulder Clay (BGS 1994). The Soil Survey (1983) details this particular area as Beccles 3 soil association, of stagnogleyic soils, a surface-water gley soil, seasonally waterlogged and slowly permeable fine loamy over clayey soils, prominently mottled above 0.40m depth.

The ground occupied by the sites is generally flat and marshy and prone to flooding. At the time of the excavation the land was given over to rough grazing, but it had previously been under arable cultivation. It lies between 92.5m and 93.5m aOD.

3 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

3.1 Objectives and methodology

The objectives of the excavation, as set out in the approved specification, comprised:

- establishing the date and character of the archaeological deposits
- recovering evidence of settlement/land use
- establishing the chronological development of the site, including spatial and functional change. Particular attention was to be paid to the potential for structural and environmental data.

Since the evaluation had apparently recovered pottery dating from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age to middle Iron Age and early Romano-British periods, it was thought that the site offered the potential to examine the following points:

- evidence of the later Bronze Age/early Iron Age; a period for which comparatively few sites are known
- the progression from Iron Age to Romano-British activity, including an examination of the impact of the conquest and the effect of the proximity of a major Roman road
- the effect of the Roman 'small town' of Mancetter, which lies 5km further along Watling Street, with regard to trading relationships
- the date of the demise of the settlement, as many Boulder Clay settlements appear to go out of use in the second and third centuries AD
- environmental evidence for the range of activities present and the agricultural regimes in place.

The excavated site covered an area of *c* 2.5ha, measuring 315m east to west by up to 90m north to south (Fig 2). The easternmost end of the site was opened towards the end of the excavation in order to locate the full extent of a small Roman enclosure.

Topsoil and subsoil were removed using a 360° excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket. Due to severe weather conditions the original strategy of employing dumper lorries to remove the soil had to be revised, since this would have caused too much disturbance to the archaeology. Instead an alternative strategy was devised whereby three 360° excavators were utilised. The first machine stripped the topsoil and subsoil whilst the remaining two machines moved the spoil into separate bunds around the site. By working backward across the width of the site, no damage was caused to the underlying archaeology. The unseasonable heavy rainfall continued sporadically throughout the project and, coupled with a naturally high watertable, caused continual problems including localised flooding. The features were not always immediately obvious and many required the site to weather before they became visible and they all tended to flood during excavation (Plates 1 and 5). The site was traversed by the remnant furrows of a medieval ridge and furrow cultivation system and earlier features usually only survived in the areas between them. Given the factors listed above, it must be recognised that some features may have been missed, and some elements of the settlement plans may not be represented in their full complexity.

The excavation was carried out in accordance with the approved specification (NA 2001). The works followed the guidelines set out in the procedural document issued by Leicestershire Museums Arts and Records Service (1999) and the *Code of Conduct, Standards, Guidelines and Practices of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1995).*

All discrete features were 50% excavated or where appropriate fully excavated, while 20% of linear features related to settlement were excavated. Plans were drawn at 1:100; sections were

drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 and levelled to Ordnance Datum. Archaeological deposits were individually described on *pro forma* context sheets and included details of the individual context, its relationships, interpretation, and a check-list of associated finds. A photographic record was kept of the general site as well as specific deposits, comprising both black and white negatives with related prints, and colour slides.

Metal detecting was conducted across the site, but only medieval and post-medieval finds were found.

The site archive comprises 610 *pro forma* context sheets, 30 site plans, 176 section drawings, and a photographic record of 132 colour sides and 109 black and white negatives. The artefactual archive comprises two boxes of pottery, half a box of ceramic tile and half a box of animal bone, charcoal fragments and 35 finds of stone, bone and metal. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Environment and Heritage Services under the accession number X.A69.2002.

3.2 Summary of chronology

Table 1: Summary of site chronology

Period	Structure/description
Middle Iron Age (400-200 BC)	Enclosure with associated internal and external roundhouses
Romano-British (2^{nd} – mid 3^{rd} century AD)	Regular rectangular enclosure system, linear boundary and small enclosure
Medieval	Ridge and furrow field system
Post-medieval/modern	Field drains

The presence of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age occupation is uncertain. The recovery in the evaluation of two rim sherds with fingernail decoration and a body sherd with impressed decoration was considered evidence of a possible early phase (Thomas 1999, 6 and appendix 1). However, the open area excavation failed to find further evidence of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery or features. It is therefore suggested that these may be decorated pottery sherds of middle Iron Age date.

A ditched enclosure with associated roundhouses occupied the western half of the excavated area during the middle Iron Age, between 400 BC and 200 BC. The site may have been occupied for only a generation or two within this date range as the only complication in the plan form was a relocation of the enclosure entrance, and a third century BC date may be most likely.

From the early to middle 2^{nd} century AD until just after the mid 3^{rd} century, there was a well organised Roman settlement based on a rectangular enclosure on the eastern side of the site, although only part of this lay within the excavated area. To the west a small irregular enclosure and linear boundary ditch lay over the deserted Iron Age settlement. The main focus of Roman settlement may have lain within the northern part of the enclosure system.

No Saxon or medieval occupation was present, but there was medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. Post-medieval to modern features predominantly comprised field drains.

3.3 The middle Iron Age settlement

The middle Iron Age settlement comprised a ditch system forming the eastern (D5) and southern (D1) arms of an enclosure (Fig 3). There were few surviving features to define the western half of the enclosure and the northern side lay outside the excavated area. However, the location of the eastern entrance suggests that it was probably sub rectangular in plan, measuring 50m east to west and a minimum of 60m north to south, enclosing an area of at least 0.3ha. Within the enclosure there was a central principal roundhouse, RD2, with an adjacent smaller roundhouse, RD1, and a sub rectangular or oval enclosure to the south, RD3, against the southern perimeter ditch, D1, that may have enclosed a further roundhouse or other structure. Outside the enclosure to the east there were four further roundhouses; a large one abutting the enclosure ditch, D1, south of the entrance, a pair to the north-east of the entrance, and an eastern roundhouse just south of the end of the extended entrance ditch (D2).

There were two phases to the eastern entrance. The original entrance was 5m wide and had a southern arm, D2, that extended eastwards for some distance, forming an approach similar to a classic Wessex stlye "banjo" enclosure. No post-pits forming a gate structure were located. The later entrance was broader, 12.5m wide, and lay further to the north. It involved a complete relocation of the ditch forming the northern arm of the enclosure (D4 replacing D5). The affect would have been to slightly enlarge the enclosure, and possibly included the provision of an internal partition (D3), that separated a new pit group from the roundhouses.

The enclosure ditches

Ditch 1 (D1)
The ditch that formed the southern and eastern boundary varied in profile between a V- and U-shape, typically 0.40m deep and between 1.20m and 1.60m wide. To the east it flanked the southern side of the original entrance and was contiguous with a linear ditch that continued eastward (D2).

There was a butt end to the west. Beyond this there was a single short length of gully that may have been the remnant of a much shallower western ditch, largely lost. The western butt end was 0.50m deep with a 0.20m deep shelf along the inner edge, perhaps indicative of a recut. The western end of the southern ditch probably fell out of use at the time when the entrance was relocated.

A large pit (Fig 5, 54), 1.20m deep and *c* 1.20m wide, cut the outer edge of the ditch immediately south of the butt end, but there were no associated finds. Further south there was a wide shallow pit [243] with a fill containing dense comminuted charcoal and two horizontal bands of compact burnt stones measuring between 50-100mm. This may have been a cooking pit or a pit containing the debris from such a feature.

Ditch D1 and structure RD3 had a complex relationship. A shallow gully, [72], (Fig 5, section 9) predating the enclosure ditch may have been the original western arm of RD3, suggesting that the enclosure boundary may have originally terminated east of RD3. The earliest enclosure [70] and a later recut [67], cut through this arc but the curve of the ditch indicates that it still respected an internal structure. Finally, the enclosure ditch was shortened, crossing RD3 just below its southern terminal (Fig 5, section 43, 154). This last alteration could be associated with the refurbishment of the eastern entrance, with it involving a complete recutting of ditch D1. The fills of ditch D1 were typically orange brown sandy clays mottled with grey and sparse charcoal flecks, small stone and burnt stone inclusions typically measuring 10mm.

The original entrance was blocked by extending enclosure ditch (D1) across it. This formed the southern side to a new, broader entrance passage that (Figs 3 & 6). The new eastern terminal of D1, [284] & [401], had a broad U-shaped profile, 1.20m wide and 0.45m deep. It had a distinctive secondary fill containing comminuted charcoal, burnt stone, animal bone, and a few sherds of Iron Age pottery (Fig 6, section 119).

Ditch 5 (D5)
The northern arm of the enclosure ditch had a varied profile, being 1.70m wide with a flat bottom 0.55 deep at the north-western end, but only 0.60m wide and 0.20m deep at the eastern terminal (Fig 6, section 119). There was half of an early/middle Iron Age jar near the northern end, in ditch length [186] (Figs 4 and 12.1).

The fills of ditch D5 were grey brown silty clays with charcoal flecks and some small stones, and orange brown sandy clays with a mixture of burnt and unburnt stone, measuring 10-100mm, and blue grey clay with sparse large stones, measuring 100mm, at the terminal.

Ditch 2 (D2)
The ditch flanking the southern side of the entrance continued eastwards for 55m (Fig 6, section 89, Plate 2). The ditch was typically 0.40m deep and between 1.20m and 1.60m wide with a variable profile, and it had a single recut. The fills were grey clay with yellow mottles and frequent, mainly burnt stone inclusions up to 30mm. The fills contained some middle Iron Age pottery with a similar fabric, with granitic inclusions, to pottery from ditch D5, which formed the northern side of the entrance (Fig 12.1).

Ditch 4 (D4)
With the provision of a new entrance, the original northern arm of the enclosure was abandoned and a new ditch was dug on a parallel alignment further to the north (D4). The new northern enclosure ditch, D4, was generally broad and shallow but was deepest at the northern end, from 1.90m wide by 0.40m deep to 1.10m wide and 0.20m deep at the terminal. The ditch fills in the deepest point to the north included part of a well-used granite saddle quern and a fragment of briquetage (Fig 4, 307).

Ditch 3(D3)
Ditch D3 branched off from the northern enclosure boundary (D4) at an abrupt angle (Figs 3 and 4). This has been interpreted as possibly indicating that D3, rather than an enclosure boundary ditch, was an internal partition that divided off the roundhouses from a separate northern area that contained the pits. The ditch typically had a steep-sided V-shaped profile, about 1.0 wide and 0.45-0.65m deep. The fills along the length opposite the gap between RD1 and RD2, ditch [136], contained several large rounded cobbles, measuring 300-400mm, and at least one about 700mm in size. They had been closely packed together, maybe to consolidate a crossing point or causeway. There were also less dense layers of small burnt stone, measuring between 40 and 100mm, in the fills to the east of this, ditch [138]. A few sherds of Iron Age pottery and a fragment of bone were found in the length of D3 opposite RD1.

Internal roundhouses
There were three roundhouses within the enclosure. The largest, RD2, was centrally placed, and was probably the principal roundhouse. A smaller roundhouse to the north, RD1, was immediately adjacent to the enclosure ditch D5. A small sub rectangular or oval enclosure to the south, RD3, may have surrounded a further structure.

Roundhouse 2 (RD2)
The ditch formed a large, slightly flattened circle with an internal diameter of 16m north-south and 15m east-west. The entrance faced just south of east with the ditch straightening

out slightly as it approached the terminals, which formed an entrance 4.0m wide (Fig 4). It may have surrounded a roundhouse with a diameter of 12-13m diameter.

Both ditch terminals had a steep-sided V-shaped profile, between 1.05 and 1.20m wide and 0.70m deep. There was a possible recut defined by a slight ledge in the inner side of the ditch (Fig 4, section 4). The remaining circuit of the ditch was a little narrower and shallower, but retained the same V-shaped profile. A recut was also visible on the inner south-east side in one northern section of the ditch.

The ditch fills were typically grey brown clays with comminuted charcoal and small fragments of stone, while on the southern side the ditch fills contained scattered burnt stone, measuring 50-150mm. The north terminal contained stones measuring between 50 and 100mm in the primary fill.

There were a small number of pottery sherds from both terminals and the north-eastern section [123], including scored ware from the northern terminal. Most sections contained small amounts of animal bone, more than was usual from most features on the site. Wood identified from charcoal in the southern terminal was of oak and the hedgerow species of hazel, blackthorn and the hawthorn group. Charcoal from the primary fill (31) of the southern terminal [29] has been radiocarbon dated to 380-350 and 300-220 cal BC (68% probability, 2250+/- 40 BP, Beta 184129) (Table 9).

There were two shallow internal gullies, but these may not have been contemporary with RD2.

Roundhouse 1(RD1)
This roundhouse lay just 2m to the north of RD2 and was perhaps an ancillary building. It was circular with an internal diameter of *c* 9.5m. The entrance faced slightly south of east and was 4.50m wide. There was a 1.5m wide break in the northern part of the circuit (Fig 4).

Both terminals showed evidence of recutting. The successive northern terminals diverged considerably; the westerly terminal [129] was 0.30m deep, but the eastern one was only 0.10m deep. The southern terminal was steep-sided and had been recut along the internal northern side by a steep-sided shallow gully [117], 0.18m deep, that stopped 0.70m short of the original terminal [119], which 0.25m deep (Plate 3).

There was also a separate east-west length of gully on the northern side [164], which ran into enclosure ditch D5 and may have been a drainage ditch branching off the northern side of the roundhouse. The ditch was typically shallow with a V-shaped profile.

There was a pair of postholes, [125] and [127], each 0.55m wide and 0.25-0.35m deep. They lay only 1.0m apart, centre to centre, just inside the entrance. They may have been doorposts for the roundhouse itself, indicating a diameter of *c* 6.5m. A further smaller circular posthole [324] lay to the north.

The fills of the ditch and the postholes were typically grey brown sandy clay and occasional orange clay with charcoal flecks, although posthole [125] contained very frequent comminuted charcoal, and occasional small stone and burnt stone inclusions. The northern terminal contained a few scattered burnt stones, measuring 50-100m.

A later middle Iron Age bipartite jar with irregular scoring came from the ditch on the southern side, [111], (Fig 12.2). There was also some pottery from the northern terminal, the western side [332] and gully [164].

Roundhouse 3 (RD3)
Roundhouse RD3 was sub rectangular or oval and may have enclosed a small structure, or formed a small enclosure. Its southern boundary had a complex relationship with successive phases of the enclosure ditch D1, as already discussed (Fig 5, sections 9 and 43). It measured 15.5m north to south and the width narrowed from 11.5m to 9m by the entrance (Fig 5). The entrance faced south-east and was 4m wide. The south terminal [282] had a narrow V-shaped profile, 0.70m wide and 0.55m deep, with the step of a possible recut on the inner, western side (Fig 5, section 78). The northern terminal had been lost under a furrow.

The southern terminal fill was grey sandy clay with dense comminuted charcoal, occasional small stones and one very large burnt cobble, measuring 200mm by 150mm, in the centre of the fill. The remaining ditch fills were typically orange sandy clay with grey mottles and sparse inclusions. There were no finds. There were no internal features, but the way enclosure ditch D1 swung outward suggests that it may have been avoiding a standing structure.

External roundhouses
There were four roundhouses to the east of the enclosure. Roundhouse RD4 was attached to the boundary ditch south of the entrance. A pair of roundhouses, RD5 and RD6, were north of the original entrance, while roundhouse RD7 was just beyond the end the southern entrance arm.

Roundhouse 4 (RD4)
This roundhouse was comparable in size and form to RD2 with the ditch forming a similar slightly flattened circle. The internal diameter was 15m north to south by 14m east to west, only 1m less than RD2. The south-east facing entrance was 5m wide (Fig 6). It may have surrounded a roundhouse about 12m in diameter.

The northern terminal, [112], had a V-shaped profile, 1.0m wide and 0.55m deep (Fig 6, section 27). The south terminal [132] was also V-shaped, but narrower and shallower, similar to most of the circuit. However, where the ditch shared a common course with the enclosure ditch (D1), it was flat-bottomed and up to 1.55m wide and 0.40m deep. No relationship was established between the two ditch systems.

Within the fills of both terminals there was comminuted charcoal and dense burnt stone with pieces measuring up to 150mm. The fills elsewhere were typically grey clays with orange mottles, and contained less charcoal and fewer and smaller burnt stones, measuring up to 80mm. Within the primary fill of the northern terminal were the base and body sherds from a cylindrical vessel *c* 120mm in diameter characterised as briquetage. The other finds came from the northern side of the circuit, [160] and [188] and comprised a few sherds of pottery and small quantities of animal bone. Animal bone from the southern terminal could not be radiocarbon dated due to insufficient collagen, probably as a result of leaching in the wet ground conditions.

There was a posthole [178] in the middle of the entrance and a short length of V-shaped gully [180].

Roundhouse 5 (RD5)
This was the most northerly roundhouse. The internal diameter was 9.0m and it had a narrow eastern entrance, 2.5m wide (Fig 7).

The northern terminal [19] had a V-shaped profile 0.80m wide and 0.70m deep, steep-sided on the east, but with a step probably caused by recutting along the western inner side [12] (Fig 7, section 13). The southern terminal was similar, but with the step from recutting in the

outer southern side. The remainder of the ditch was considerably shallower, but also with some indications of a recut.

The ditch fills were dark grey silty clay with charcoal flecks and some stone occasionally burnt. Within the primary fill of the northern terminal a large burnt stone, 200mm wide, was overlain by a thin layer of dense comminuted charcoal and frequent burnt stone.

Finds comprised animal bone and some fired clay from the northern terminal. In the southern terminal (Fig 7, section 14 [21]) was a fragment of briquetage. Charcoal from the southern terminal has been radiocarbon dated to 350-300 and 220-170 cal BC (68% probability, 170+/- BP, Beta-182767) (Table 9). The charcoal has been identified as wood from the hedgerow trees of hazel, the hawthorn group and blackthorn, as well as the larger trees of alder, ash and oak.

There was one small posthole 1.5m west of the northern terminal. It was steep-sided and flat bottomed, 0.27m in diameter and 0.25m deep. Within the blue grey clay and burnt stone fill were large packing stones 100mm x 50mm. If this was an entrance post on the wall line the roundhouse would have had a diameter of 5.5m.

Another posthole outside the northern terminal was wide, but shallow and filled with the same blue grey clay and burnt stone as the internal posthole.

Roundhouse 6 (RD6)
This enclosure was an oval with a flattened north-western side. The internal dimensions were 11.5m north to south and up to 7.0m east to west. The southern terminal had been truncated by a medieval furrow (Fig 7). An earlier north-west terminal [141] was superseded when the ditch was extended north and sharply east. The ditch was typically narrow and shallow, 0.35m-0.40m wide and 0.14m deep (Fig 7, section 84).

Four internal postholes lay around the periphery of the central space within 0.50m and 1.50m of the ditch. Posthole [84] was the largest at 0.50m wide and 0.30m deep, steep-sided and flat-bottomed. The fill included frequent stones, measuring 50mm, and a few at 180mm, perhaps packing stones. The nearby postholes were shallow and flat-bottomed with sloping sides. The posthole by the northern terminal, [82], was similar in size and shape to [84] with steep sides and a flat bottom.

The fills of the ditch and the postholes were of dark grey brown silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks and some stones, although the earlier northern terminal also contained burnt stone. There were no finds.

Roundhouse 7 (RD7)
This roundhouse was the most easterly and lay about 2m south of the end of the extended entrance ditch (D2) (Fig 7). It was defined by a curving gully open to the east and with the northern arm extended further eastwards. The north-south diameter was 9.0m.

To the north-west the ditch was 2.10m wide, but it narrowed abruptly to 0.60m wide and 0.40m deep (Fig 7, section 142). The ditch narrowed again to 0.18m in the south, although the southern terminal had been destroyed by a north-south furrow. The fills were typically red brown silty clay, and the only finds comprised a few sherds of Iron Age pottery.

The pit (37)

This pit lay to the immediately north of ditch (D3), and had eroded back into the ditch fills. It was perhaps deliberately set aside from the rest of the settlement (Fig 4).

The pit was sub-square, measuring *c* 6.0m by 6.0m, and was 2.10m deep (Fig 8, Section 3 and Plate 4). Unfortunately, the extremely wet condition of the site meant that only the north-west quadrant could be fully excavated as rising water and collapsing sides halted excavation of the opposing quadrant (Plate 5).

The sequence of pit fills is tabulated below. They contained a few deposited objects. Given the incomplete excavation it is difficult to interpret these, but objects such as partial pottery vessels, rubbing stones, worked bone implements and the presence of a quantity of animal bone, are among the items that have been noted as occurring in structured pit deposits (Hill 1995). In this case, the loss of the other three-quarters of the fill is unfortunate, as it would have helped to clarify the scale and nature of the processes of deposition in this pit.

The primary pit fill (36) was grey clayey sand, containing dense charcoal flecks and sparse fragments, some stone and burnt stone, and sparse fragments of unworked waterlogged wood.

PIT 37		
FILL		**(2.10m deep)**
(13)	light grey sandy clay with sparse stone	0.22m thick
(14)	dark grey sandy clay with some stone and burnt stone **PART OF A MIDDLE IRON AGE SCORED WARE VESSEL (Fig 12.3)** **BRIQUETAGE SHERDS** **RUBBING STONE (SF1)**	0.40m
(15)	greyish orange mottled clayey sand, occasional charcoal flecks sparse stone and burnt stone	0.30m
(35)	dark grey clay, charcoal flecks, stone and burnt stone	0.36m
(38)	mottled greyish orange clayey sand, sparse charcoal flecks, occasional burnt stone	0.20m
(28)	dark grey sandy clay, dense charcoal flecks and sparse fragments, some stone and burnt stone **CATTLE SKULL, MANDIBLE AND LONG BONES FROM TWO OR MORE ANIMALS** **WATERLOGGED UNWORKED WOOD (radiocarbon dating sample)** **POTTERY SHERDS** **WORKED BONE – (SF6, Fig 12.4)**	0.50m
(36)	grey clayey sand, dense charcoal flecks and sparse fragments, some stone and burnt stone, and sparse waterlogged wood fragments	0.56m

Immediately above the primary fill there was a deposit of animal bone comprising complete or semi-intact long bones and tarsal and carpal bones and skull fragments. This group was dominated by cattle bone from two or perhaps three animals. It included the frontal bone from a young animal displaying well-marked cuts from butchery (Plate 8). There was also a horn core from another animal and a compete mandible. In addition, there was a cattle femur, two scapula from different animals, two metatarsals from different animals and a metacarpal. The group therefore includes bones representing both meat consumption and butchery waste. The group

also included a near complete horse tibia and a third phalanx, and a small quantity of sheep/goat bone.

The only worked bone artefact from the site (Fig 12, 4) was found in the same layer together with some pottery. A substantial quantity of waterlogged unworked wood (197g dry weight) was also present in this layer. It was dominated by oak, represented by both large wood, including burrwood, and also smaller roundwood, and smaller quantities of small roundwood from blackthorn and hawthorn was also present. The thickness of the bark on some pieces suggested that it had come from a mature tree. The wood appeared to be no more than fallen tree debris. A sample of the wood has given a radiocarbon date of 385-195 cal BC (68% probability, 2230+/-60 BP, Beta-182668) (Table 9).

A later fill (14), contained half of a large well worn rubbing stone; part of a middle Iron Age scored ware jar (Fig 12.3), and seven small fragments of briquetage. Soil samples from the waterlogged fills only produced small amounts of wood debris.

Other features

There were three small pits, west of the large pit [37], lying in a 4.0m long north-south line (Fig 4). The northerly pit [62] was the most substantial, 0.60m in diameter and 0.42m deep, and contained a large rubbing stone (SF2), measuring 290mm by 170mm, as well as many small pieces of burnt stone within the orange and grey clay fill. The other pits were less substantial.

Date and duration of the Iron Age settlement by Andy Chapman

Radiocarbon dates were obtained from charcoal from the principal roundhouse, RD2, the external roundhouse, RD5, and from wood recovered from pit [37] (Table 9). The dates are quite closely consistent but, given the nature of the calibration curve in the middle Iron Age, there is a double intercept. As a result, the calibrated dates span a broad period from 410 cal BC to 90 cal BC at the 95% confidence level and 390-160 cal BC at the 68% confidence level (Table 10).

As no roundhouses underwent a shift in location and although the settlement was in use long enough for its entrance to be relocated, it seems most likely that it was occupied for a relatively short period, perhaps only a generation or two. On this basis, a combined date (R-Combine) was calculated for the three dates. This gives a result of 380-200calBC at 95% confidence. However, this calculation assumes the dates are related to a single event, which is not true in this case. An alternative view could be to consider the two calibrated date ranges deriving from the double intercept. This would suggest that the settlement was either in use during the fourth century BC or during the third century BC but possibly continuing into the early second century BC.

There is no certain means of discriminating between the two date ranges, although the provisional dates attached to the better preserved pottery vessels may be of some assistance in this respect. One spans both periods but Jackson has ascribed the other vessels to the later middle Iron Age, which would favour the third century date. However, the date range of 150BC – 30AD given to one vessel (Fig 12, 2) appears too late to be consistent with the radiocarbon dating.

3.4 The Roman enclosures

The main focus of occupation was the large rectangular enclosure to the east, with a small irregular enclosure and linear boundary ditch to the west, overlying the Iron Age settlement. The pottery dating suggests that all the enclosures and the linear boundary ditch were in use during the second and third centuries AD.

The western enclosure

This was an irregular oval enclosure aligned east-west and overlying the former Iron Age enclosure. It measured approximately 30m east to west and up to 15m north to south (Fig 9). The enclosure ditch (D6) narrowed in towards the eastern entrance, which was a narrow opening only 1.0m wide. The northern terminal had been truncated by a medieval furrow (Fig 9, section 148). The southern terminal [194] was 1.40m wide and 0.70m deep, with a steep-sided slot, 0.35m wide, running along its northern edge (Fig 9, section 55). In general, ditch D6 was broad and shallow, typically 0.70m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig 9, section 148).

The ditch fills were typically grey brown silty sandy clay with burnt stone and sparse charcoal flecks. Within the southern terminal a thin layer (191) with dense charcoal flecks overlaid the primary fill. A compact layer of clay (193) along the outer edge may have been the deliberate packing, with the slot perhaps holding some form of timber setting. Charcoal from context (191) included twigs of the hedgerow species hawthorn and blackthorn and oak and hazel roundwood.

The dating of the enclosure comes from a single deposit of Romano-British pottery in the northern arm of the ditch, [351], (Fig 13, 1 and 2).

Western boundary ditch

A linear ditch (D7) ran eastwards for a length of *c* 83m, although some sections were not well defined (Figs 3 and 9). It was typically U-shaped, 0.60 – 0.70m wide and *c* 0.30m deep (Fig 6, section 89, context 321 & Plate 2).

Charcoal from ditch length [321] was from the hedgerow trees of blackthorn, hazel and the hawthorn group as well as oak, birch and willow or poplar; and the latter two species were only recorded in this feature.

Charcoal from this ditch was submitted for radiocarbon dating in the belief that it had come from the adjacent ditch of Iron Age date, due to confusion in the context numbering. The date of 100-220 cal AD (68% probability, 1860+/-40BP, beta-84130) is consistent with the pottery dating for the Roman settlement in general.

Finds from this ditch comprised pottery of the second century AD; they came from the same context as the dated charcoal.

The eastern enclosure system

The main Roman enclosure was sharply rectilinear in plan form, but only parts of the western and southern boundaries lay within the excavated area (Figs 2 and 10). It appears to have measured at least 120m east-west by more than 70m north-south. A north-south linear ditch divided the enclosure in two. The western half was 40m wide east to west and the eastern half at least 80m wide, and included most of the Roman activity.

The enclosure ditches

The southern boundary ditch was traced for a length of 110m. The eastern end was not located due to flooding during stripping which made the area unavailable for excavation. No eastern

boundary lay within the area of excavation. The western half of the enclosure contained little evidence of domestic occupation, while there were numerous features to the east.

The western arm of the main enclosure was V-shaped and only 0.20m deep and 0.40m wide. It was twice this width at the south-western corner, but the U-shaped southern arm was no deeper until the junction with the internal north-south ditch. To the east of this the southern boundary ditch was slightly more substantial, at 0.40- 0.60m wide and 0.40m deep (Plate 6). The north-south internal dividing ditch was U-shaped and wider and deeper than the main ditch, at 1.10m wide and 0.40 deep at the junction, but slightly smaller further north.

The fills of the enclosure ditches were typically dark grey brown silty clays to the west and yellow grey sandy clays to the east, all with occasional small stone inclusions. There was a little pottery in the ditch fills, with more from the eastern half of the southern boundary ditch.

Internal gullies

In the western half of the enclosure, a north-south gully (Fig 10, [544]) ran for 17m parallel to, and 5.0m east of, the division ditch. It was shallow, only 0.18m deep, with a U-shaped profile and was 0.60m wide. The fill was, unusually, a reddish brown clay with grey mottles and occasional stones and contained a few pottery sherds.

A gully ran eastwards for 8m [541]. It was V-shaped, 0.55m wide by 0.30m deep, with a dark grey mottled orange fill with frequent comminuted charcoal and occasional stones.

Two wide shallow circular hollows south of gully [541] were no more than 0.10m deep, with grey brown sandy fills. Further east there was another wide shallow circular hollow. These features all contained a few sherds of Roman pottery.

The small enclosure

In the eastern half of the main enclosure there was a small enclosure with a trapezoidal plan, measuring internally 20m west to east and doubling in width from 5m in the west to 10.5m in the east. There was a 1.20m wide entrance towards the western end of the southern arm (Fig 11).

The western terminal [262] had a U-shaped profile, 0.45m wide and 0.35m deep. There was a 0.20m diameter posthole at the end cut 0.20m deeper. A recut [265] on its outer, southern side had the same dimensions at the terminal, but became shallower as it extended back for 3m. It may have held a post as part of an entrance structure (Fig 11, section 71). The eastern terminal was V-shaped, 0.90 – 1.10m wide and 0.50m deep.

The enclosure ditch was generally U-shaped. The western and northern arms were typically 0.45 – 0.55m wide and between 0.23 – 0.30 m deep. The southern arm was 0.90-1.10m wide and 0.50m deep, but its southern edge had been obscured by the fills of the hollows to the south. The eastern arm had been almost lost under the north-south field boundary.

The ditch fills were typically grey sandy clay, but east of the entrance the fills were blue grey clay becoming yellow further east. The fills of the western terminal included two large stones measuring 300 by 100 by 80mm. From the fills of the west boundary ditch [237] there were small quantities of tile and pottery (Fig 13, 4).

South of small enclosure

To the south of the enclosure there was an irregular sunken area measuring approximately 29m east to west, between 4m and 9m wide and up to 0.30m deep.

The fill of this area, layer (220), was typically a blackish brown sandy clay with very frequent comminuted charcoal and small areas of sticky orange brown clay and inclusions of rounded pebbles, measuring up to 300mm, and some burnt stone. The fill partially obscured the southern edge of the small enclosure ditch, indicating that it post-dated the construction but not necessarily the use of the adjacent enclosure. At the easternmost end the fill was stonier [610].

Opposite the enclosure entrance there were numerous shallow, bowl-shaped and more elongated hollows up to 0.10m deep (Fig 11, section 169, Plate 7). In hollow [219] the fill was grey orange brown sandy clay with small areas sticky orange brown clay, and containing frequent comminuted charcoal and frequent rounded pebbles, measuring 10-150mm.

The finds from this area comprised the majority of the Romano-British pottery from the site and half the ceramic tile. Two hollows in particular, [213] and [219], included 62% of the pottery and the majority of the mortaria sherds (Fig 13).

Just beyond the south-westerncorner of the small enclosure there were two irregular gullies partially overlain by layer (220). The primary fills of [513] were dark grey silty clay that contained some Roman pottery (Fig 13, 11 and 17). A shallow hollow to the south of the larger area had a similar fill [198].

3.5 Medieval and post-medieval features

The Iron Age and Roman features had all been truncated by a regular system of furrows aligned north-south (Fig 2). The ploughed down furrows were *c* 2m wide, up to 0.20m deep and typically 8-9m apart centre to centre. They are the remnants of a ridge and furrow field system presumably of medieval origin, although the wide spacing might suggest a later date perhaps even early post-medieval.

The furrow fills were not generally excavated as where they were investigated it was shown that they had completely destroyed the shallow Iron Age and Roman features (Fig 9, section 148).

Numerous ceramic field drains inserted over the last 150 years crossed the site. The earlier drains ran along the furrows, indicating that the ridge and furrow had survived as an earthwork at least until the early 19th century, when the earlier ceramic drains were probably inserted. Some later drains cut across the furrows indicating that ploughing had diminished the surviving earthworks. Local information suggests that post-medieval boundary ditches and hedges had been back-filled and grubbed-out only within the last decade or so, creating the large open field extant at the time of excavation.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 The Iron Age Pottery by Dennis Jackson

The assemblage comprises a total of 217 sherds, including 30 small fragments, of handmade Iron Age pottery, weighing 2929g.

The pottery comes from a series of enclosure ditches, one pit and several roundhouse gullies. Of the 25 contexts containing pottery some 13 produced three sherds or less, with the majority of the sherds (66% by weight) deriving from three vessels that came from three separate contexts (pit 37, fill 14; roundhouse RD1 gully, 111; northern boundary ditch D5, 186; Fig 4). There are only four rim sherds in the assemblage, but a diagnostic rim to shoulder profile came from each of the three contexts referred to above.

Fabrics

Many of the sherds contained stone grits that may have occurred naturally in the clay matrix. The following inclusions are assumed to have been added as temper:

A Small and angular pieces of granitic rock.
B Pieces of softer rounded off-white granitic rock up to 5mm in diameter.
C Sand/quartz
D Grog

In addition to the above there are grits of red sandstone in a few sherds and also small flint pebbles (gravel).

Five fabric groups were defined from the examination of the assemblage and these have been equated, where possible, to the fabric types defined for the Iron Age pottery from other Leicestershire sites (e.g. Marsden 1998).

Fabric 1: Acid Igneous Rocks (Local)
(Probably equals Leicestershire Fabric RQ1)
The sherds contain common or moderate amounts of granitic temper (inclusion A above) and sparse amounts of inclusion B. Similar rim form to a vessel from Wanlip (Marsden 1998, fig 25, 3).

Fabric 2: Acid Igneous Rocks (Local)
(Probably equals Leicestershire Fabric Q2)
The principal inclusion in this fabric is fine angular-rounded quartz with sparse amounts of inclusion B.

Fabric 3: Organic-Tempered
(Probably equals Leicestershire Fabric V)
Sparse quartz (inclusion C) with rare other inclusions, some voids with indications of plant remains.

Fabric 4: Quartz Sand Temper (Local)
(Probably equals Leicestershire Fabric Q1)
Sand/quartz (inclusion C) is the dominant inclusion in this fabric.

Fabric 5: Acid Igneous Rocks (Local)
(Probably equals Leicestershire Fabric RP
Grog (inclusion D) occurs in some sherds, but generally in association with sand/quartz (inclusion C) or other fine grits (inclusion A).

It is of interest that the pottery with granitic inclusions (Fabrics 1 & 2) occurs in the earliest stratified features, particularly from enclosure ditch D5 (183)/[186] and entrance ditch D2 (458)/[459], whereas the pottery from the rest of the features is mainly tempered with sand/quartz and occasional grog.

Table 2: Quantification of Iron Age pottery fabric

Fabric	Sherds	Weight (g)	Ave. sherd weight (g)
1	96	1057	11.01
2	24	312	13.00
3	33	1102	33.39
4	48	367	7.65
5	16	91	5.69

Form, decoration and finish

There are no obvious fine wares or sherds with burnished surfaces in the assemblage and the majority of the pottery clearly derives from coarse ware jars. Some 26 sherds of scored ware were recovered from the features, but 22 of the sherds came from one vessel (Fig 12, 3). This vessel also had shallow thumb impressions on the neck, and there were shallow thumb impressions on the rim of the larger scored ware jar (Fig 2, 2). The three vessels with surviving rim to shoulder profiles are illustrated

Catalogue of illustrated pottery *(Fig 12)*

1 Jar with a fairly long everted neck. Fabric 2. This form is unlikely to date to a period later than the early-middle Iron Age (450-250 BC). Context 183, ditch [186], early northern enclosure ditch D5

2 Bipartite jar with little neck. Spaced scoring with orange coloured surfaces, Fabric 4. Probably later middle Iron Age (150BC – 30AD). Ditch [111], roundhouse RD1

3 A slack sided jar with long everted neck with shallow finger impressions. The vessel is deeply scored vertically and this gives the surface a corrugated appearance. Fabric 3. General middle Iron Age type (250-50 BC). Upper fill 14, large pit 37

Discussion

The poor quality of the assemblage, with only three vessels capable of being reconstructed and only four rim sherds in total, provides little material for comparison with other assemblages.

The presence of granitic tempered wares may be paralleled on several sites in the region, such as: Wanlip, Leicestershire (Beamish 1998); Coton Park, Rugby, Warwickshire (Blinkhorn and Jackson forthcoming), and at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT), Northamptonshire.

4.2 The Briquetage by Andy Chapman

The presence of a small quantity of Cheshire Plain Briquetage has been confirmed by comparison to a similarly small assemblage from a middle Iron Age enclosure at Meriden Quarry, Solihull, Warwickshire, some 20km south-west of Hinckley, as identified by Elaine Morris (Hancocks forthcoming, Fabric QUVV/ ROVV).

The fabric is soft and sandy, with fine quartz inclusions, with orange surfaces and a pale brown to light grey brown core. The material is characterised by the additional presence of very common, very coarse angular quartz (>3mm) and very common, very coarse, angular ryolite (>3mm).

The material from Hinckley comprises a total of 16 sherds (weighing 187g). The majority of these are small, abraded sherds from 20-35mm diameter. However, a single context, (115) from the north terminal [112] of RD5, produced both larger base and body sherds from a cylindrical vessel *c* 120mm in diameter. The body sherd is 10mm thick, while immediately above the base the body is 14mm thick and the base is *c*15mm thick.

This assemblage provides further evidence for the presence of regionally traded salt from Cheshire in the Central Midlands, and adds to previous evidence from the counties of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (Morris 1979) and also Warwickshire (Hingley 1996, 20).

Table 3: Quantification of briquetage

Context/feature	Feature group	Sherds	weight (g)
14 /37	Large pit	7	49
20 /19	RD5 north terminal	2	12
140 /139		3	16
305 /307	Ditch D4	1	6
total		**16**	**187**

4.3 The Iron Age finds

The excavated artefacts comprise a bone implement, a small piece of ferrous metal, two rubbing stones and a quern fragment.

Bone implement *by Tora Hylton*

A bone implement was found within the large pit 37. It had been made from a bovine distal tibia and the shaft has been cut obliquely and shaped to a rounded point. Extensive wear is evident, both on the point and on the shaft, the latter indicating how the tool was held. Similar implements are usually identified as gouges (Sellwood 1984, 382).

Illustration *(Fig 12)*

4 Bone implement: 143mm long, pointed end 50mm long, oval section diameter 39mm by 13mm. context 28, pit 37

The Querns and rubbing stones *by Andy Chapman*

Two large rubbing stones, presumably for use with saddle querns, are fashioned from similar sized glacial erratics. The complete example (SF2) is 290mm long by 170mm wide and 63mm thick and comes from context (14) pit 37; the other comes from posthole [62] close to pit 37, and both have well-worn convex surfaces. A fragment from a saddle quern from the northern enclosure ditch D4, [307], comprises one corner from a sub-rectangular block of granite, with a well-worn concave surface.

Fired clay *by Tora Hylton*

There are 11 fragments of fired clay weighing 61g from two contexts. The fired clay from the ditch terminal of roundhouse RD5, context 11, ditch [19] is hard and dark grey fading to brown in colour as a result of exposure to high temperatures. There are no diagnostic features. The fired clay from (317)/[319], the entrance ditch D2, is oxidised and silty with no diagnostic features.

4.4 The Roman Pottery by Roy Friendship-Taylor

The assemblage comprised 373 sherds weighing 4.6kg. The general condition of the pottery was extremely poor, due to the high acidity of the soil. The Samian and coarsewares were especially affected by severe degradation, and all inner and outer surfaces and surface treatment and decoration that may have been present had been lost. The only coarsewares to have survived much of this degradation were the few fragments of Black Burnished Ware category 1 (BB1), which did exhibit traces of a burnished surface and a burnished arcaded decoration on the external surface of a plain rim dish (Fig 13,7).

Two of the most common forms of BB1 pottery were present; a 'cavetto rim' jar and a plain rim dish. However, the flanged bowl in this fabric, the other very common form which is often found together with the two forms noted above, was not present in this assemblage.

The mortaria seemed to have escaped much of this acid degradation, although there was a little 'pitting' present on some surfaces. Unusually, there was a fairly high incidence of mortaria compared with similar sites. However, it should be borne in mind that the mortaria came from the large mortaria and pottery production centre at Mancetter-Hartshill, which lies only 5km to the west along Watling Street.

The overall date range of the assemblage, including the mortaria and Samian, was probably not much more than 150 years, spanning the earlier second century until just after the mid third century. There was no evidence of any fourth century pottery in this assemblage. It seems likely, based on the nature of this assemblage, that the site was peripheral to a principal focus of occupation.

Fabrics

Table 4: Roman pottery fabric types

Number	***Type***	***Description***
1a	Grey	Silty, with fragments of grog
1b	Grey	Quartz very coarse fabric
1c	Grey	Smooth, burnished silty medium fired
1d	Grey	Very soft brown/grey
1e	Grey	Grog/quartz
1f	Grey	Grey/brown very sandy
2a	Oxidised	Silty/chalky
2b	Oxidised	Quartz and grog - generally poorly fired
3		Organic inclusions
4a	White ware	Fine/silty with grog
5a	Fawn	Very soft and silty
5b	Fawn	Soft and silty but harder than 5a and with quartz
5c	Fawn	Coarse sandy
5d	Fawn	Similar to 5b but with a cream slip
6	Mortaria	Mancetter/Harts Hill production centre
7	Black	Very sandy
7a	Black	Little sandy
8	BB1	Black Burnished category 1 - hand made
9	White ware	Miscellaneous fabric
10	Building materials	
11	Fawn	Smooth hard fired - sparse flint
12	LNVCC	Lower Nene Valley Colour Coat - white fabric
13	SPG	Soft Pink Grog ware
14	Samian	Unidentifiable form
16	CCOXB	Oxford Colour Coat (Brown col. coat)

Catalogue of illustrated pottery *(Fig 13)*

1 dish, rim sherd, fabric 7, 2nd – 3rd century, context 351, western enclosure ditch (D6)

2 neckless jar, rim sherd, fabric 1e, 2nd century, context 351, western enclosure ditch D6

3 small jar, rim sherd, fabric 1b, late 2nd century, context 262, western terminal small enclosure ditch

4 jar, rim sherd, fabric 7a, context 237, small enclosure ditch

5 jar, rim sherd, fabric 1a, context 219, hollow

6 channel rim jar, rim sherd, fabric 1e, early 2nd century, context 219, hollow

7 dish, rim sherd, fabric 8, black burnished ware with arcading decoration, late 2nd century,context 219, hollow

8 jar, rim sherd, fabric 1a, 2nd century, context 198, hollow

9 jar, rim sherd, fabric 1b, context 213, hollow

10 jar, rim sherd, fabric 8, black burnished ware, 3rd century, context 213, hollow

11 flanged dish, rim sherd, fabric 5b, 2nd – 3rd century, context 225, gully,

12 bowl, rim sherd, fabric 1e, 2nd – 3rd century, context 220, layer

13 mortaria, rim sherd, fabric 6, late 2nd - 3rd century, context 213, hollow

14 mortaria, rim sherd, fabric 6, early 3rd century, context 216, hollow

15 mortaria, rim sherd, fabric 6, 120-150 AD context 219, hollow

16 mortaria, rim sherd, fabric 6, late 2nd century, context 220, layer

17 mortaria, rim sherd with spout, fabric 6 3rd century, context 513, gully

18 mortaria, rim sherd, fabric 6, 3rd century,context 213, hollow

19 mortaria, rim sherd, fabric 1a, late 3rd century, context 213, hollow

4.5 Ceramic Building Material

by Tora Hylton

The excavation produced 2427g of Roman ceramic building material, comprising forty individual fragments from seven stratified deposits. The entire assemblage was recovered from the Roman features in the north-eastern part of the site, with the exception of two fragments of imbrex found in the Roman boundary ditch D7 (Fig 6, section 89). The analysis of the tile included, count, weight, fabric type and, where possible, tile type:

Table 5: Ceramic building materials

Context/ Feature	Tile types: number/weight									
	Tegula		Imbrex		Box flue		Structural		Unspecified	
	No	Wgt (g)	No	Wgt (g)	No	Wgt (g)	No	Wgt (g)	No	Wgt (g)
207/205 small enclosure ditch							2	800		
212/213 hollow					1	69			5	256
218/219 hollow	4	418							17	184
222/223 hollow									1	1
220 layer									3	291
D7 boundary			2	139						
342/340 small enclosure ditch									1	91
343/340 small enclosure ditch									3	177
525/524 hollow									1	1
Total	**4**	**418**	**2**	**139**	**1**	**69**	**2**	**800**	**31**	**1001**

Three fabric types were identified:

Fabric 1 Sand tempered clay with moderate grit and sparse grog and mica; oxidised throughout; almost soapy to touch. Colour: yellow/brown - B5 (R/B pottery chart).

Fabric 2 Sand tempered clay with abundant sand, sparse large grits; oxidised fabric fired to a dark orange colour (throughout); hard fired and hard to touch. Colour: yellow/brown - B4 (R/B pottery chart).

Fabric 3 Sand tempered clay with moderate grit and occasional flint; oxidised fabric fired to a pinkish colour (throughout). Colour: red/brown - B4 (R/B pottery chart).

Much of the assemblage comprises small, undiagnostic and abraded fragments; identifiable pieces include fragments of tegulae (4) and imbrex (2), the former identified by the presence of an upright flange and the latter by its distinct curvature. In addition there is one fragment of box-flue tile with horizontal and vertical keying lines.

Although there is no evidence for a building on the site, the presence of structural debris relating to roof furnishings and an internal heating system suggest that there may have been a substantial structure close by. The abraded nature of this material reinforces the impression of activity peripheral to main settlement focus.

4.6 The Roman finds

by Tora Hylton

The only non-ceramic Roman find from the site is a tapered iron fragment, possibly a tang from a tool, from (218) the fill of hollow [219] south of the small enclosure.

4.7 Medieval and post-medieval finds

by Tora Hylton

All the metal detector finds are unstratified and were retrieved from either the topsoil or the subsoil. A small number of the objects are medieval in date, however, the majority appear to be post-medieval.

The medieval objects include a small buckle with a "figure-of-eight" frame, dating to *c* 1350-1500, and a lead cloth seal stamped with "G L" in a field of small stars and rings which most probably dates to the 14th - 15th centuries.

The earliest post-medieval find is a rowel spur of 16th - 17th century date. In addition there are two copper alloy coins (including one George II halfpenny), nine metal alloy buttons, two buckles, a lead musket ball, together with a selection of lead weights and miscellaneous fragments. Other finds include two fragments of clay tobacco pipe stems and modern drain pipe.

5 THE FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 The animal bone

by Karen Deighton

Animal bone from 20 contexts of Iron Age date was examined to determine the species present, the state of preservation and any features indicating human or other activity directly affecting the skeletal material. As the assemblage was of poor quality and quantity no detailed analysis is possible.

The species present comprise cattle, horse, sheep/goat and possibly pig. Cattle dominate the assemblage, but the poor state of preservations precludes any definitive statements. The state of preservation was poor, largely due to the acidic soil conditions, and only 30-40% of the material was identifiable; this was largely teeth and more durable bone elements such as the astragulus. With the exception of context 28, from the large pit 37, heavy fragmentation and surface abrasion were present on most of the remaining assemblage. However, a low frequency of burning and canid gnawing was noted on the material from all the contexts.

The assemblage from fill (28) of pit [37] comprised skull fragments, horn cores, left mandible, scapula, radius, metacarpals, distal femur, tibia and metatarsals from two or more cattle. A frontal bone from a young animal displayed cuts marks as evidence of butchery (Plate 8), as did some of the other bones. This group also included a tibia and a third phalanx from a horse and some sheep/goat bones. Staining due to waterlogging and/or contact with organic matter was also noted on this material.

Table 6: Animal bone by context

Context /Feature	Description	*Equus* (horse)	*Bos* (cow)	*Sus* (pig)	*Ovicaprid* (sheep/goat)	Large ungulate
11/19	RD5, north terminal		1			
14	Pit 37		1		1	
20/21	Rd 5, south terminal		1			
28/37	Pit 37	1	2		3	2
30/29	RD2, south terminal	1				
34/32	RD2, north terminal	2	1			
52/51	RD2, ditch west	1				
113/112	RD4, north terminal		1			
122/123	RD2 north-east ditch		1			
134/132	RD4 south terminal		1			
161/160	RD4 east ditch		1			
163/160	RD4 east ditch		2			
250/251	D1 adjacent to RD4			1		
255/253	RD4 adjacent to D1		1			
284/286	D1 eastern terminal		1			
300/299	Enclosure ditch D1		1			
303/304	Unlocated ditch		1			
306/307	Enclosure ditch D4		1			
317/319	Entrance ditch D2		1		1	
488/489	D4 eastern terminal	1				
Total		**6**	**18**	**1**	**5**	**2**

5.2 The charred plant remains

by Karen Deighton

Fourteen 20 litre samples were hand collected from a range of features across the site. Twelve of the samples were Iron Age and two were Roman. These were assessed by processing ten litre sub-samples using a siraf tank fitted with a 500-micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots and residues were scanned for ecofacts.

Table 7: Summary of frequency of ecofacts

Ecofact	*Frequency*		
	Low	*Moderate*	*High*
Seed	1-14		
Charcoal		6,8,10,12,14	1,2,3,4,5,7,9,11,13

All the samples produced flots. However, the presence of roots in most flots suggests modern contamination. All the samples produced a few weed/wild seeds. Species included Fat Hen (*Chenopodium album*), dock (*Rumex sp*) and the pink family (*Caryophallaceae*). A single abraded cereal grain was noted (possibly Barley) in sample 6 from [317], Iron Age enclosure ditch D2. A single indeterminate wheat chaff fragment (glume base) was noted in sample 2, from context (28) pit 37. All samples contained charcoal over 5mm in size.

The environmental evidence is very poor due in part to the poor soil conditions, but this also may reflect the middle Iron Age economy and the peripheral nature of the Roman site. The weeds present are all indicative of disturbed ground, suggesting land clearance, which was extensive during the late 1st millenium BC (Clay 2001).

Since only two ecofacts were recovered from cultivated plants as part of the initial assessment, there was very limited potential for further study and further processing of the samples has not been carried out

5.3 Charcoal and waterlogged wood by Rowena Gale

Introduction

This report includes the analysis of charcoal recovered from the middle Iron Age settlement and from the hollow to the south of the Roman enclosure. The charcoal was often associated with pottery sherds and probably represents domestic fuel debris. Waterlogged wood recovered from a large Iron Age pit is more likely to have accrued from natural or windblown deposits. Species identification was undertaken on material from six contexts with the following objectives:

1. To indicate the type of wood used as domestic fuel
2. For environmental evidence
3. For evidence of woodland management

Methodology

Bulk soils samples were processed by flotation and sieving. The charcoal was poorly preserved and a high proportion was badly contaminated with silty deposits which had permeated throughout the woody tissues. Fragments measuring >2mm in radial cross-section were considered for species identification. Intact radial segments of roundwood were relatively infrequent. Waterlogged wood (context 28, pit 37) consisted mostly of narrow roundwood although largewood was also present; the sample had dried out in the post-excavation stage and the collapsed structure was difficult to examine. Standard methods were used to prepare the charcoal for examination (Gale and Cutler 2000); the same method was used to prepare the dried wood. The anatomical structures were examined using incident light on a Nikon Labophot-2 microscope at magnifications up to x400 and matched to prepared reference slides of modern wood. When possible, the maturity of the wood was assessed (i.e. heartwood/sapwood) and stem diameters and the number of growth rings recorded. It should be noted that charred stems may be reduced in volume by up to 40%.

Results and discussion

The taxa identified are presented in Table 8 and discussed below. Classification follows that of *Flora Europaea* (Tutin, Heywood *et al* 1964-80). Group names are given when anatomical differences between related genera are too slight to allow secure identification to genus level. These include members of the Pomoideae (*Crataegus, Malus, Pyrus* and *Sorbus*) and Salicaceae (*Salix* and *Populus*). When a genus is represented by a single species in the British flora this is named as the most likely origin of the wood, given the provenance and period, but it should be noted that it is rarely possible to name individual species from wood features, and exotic species of trees and shrubs were introduced to Britain from an early period (Godwin 1956; Mitchell 1974). The anatomical structure of the charcoal was consistent with the following taxa or groups of taxa:

Betulaceae. *Alnus glutinosa* (L.) Gaertner, European alder; *Betula* spp., birch
Corylaceae. *Corylus avellana* L., hazel
Fagaceae. *Quercus* sp., oak
Oleaceae. *Fraxinus excelsior* L., ash
Rosaceae. Subfamilies:

Pomoideae, which includes *Crataegus* sp., hawthorn; *Malus* sp., apple; *Pyrus* sp., pear; *Sorbus* spp., rowan, service tree and whitebeam. These taxa are anatomically similar; one or more taxa may be represented in the charcoal.
Prunoideae – *Prunus spinosa* L., blackthorn

Salicaceae. *Salix* sp., willow, and *Populus* sp., poplar. In most respects these taxa are anatomically similar.

Middle Iron Age (400 – 200 BC)

Charcoal examined from roundhouse ditches and other features associated with the middle Iron Age occupation of the site probably originated mainly from domestic hearths.

Charcoal may either have been deliberately dumped in roundhouse ditches or, alternatively, could represent the gradual accumulation of charcoal scattered from the hearth. The charcoal recovered from the fill of the southern terminal [21] of roundhouse RD5 on the north-east edge of the site had briquetage and pottery recorded in the same context. The charcoal (sample 1) consisted of fragments up to 40mm in length and included a mixture of alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group (Pomoideae), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and oak (*Quercus* sp.), with narrow roundwood from both oak (e.g. diameter 8mm, 2 growth rings) and alder (e.g. diameter 5mm), and oak heartwood, probably from largewood.

Sample 11, from the southern terminal fill of [29] of the more centrally located roundhouse RD2, was particularly poorly preserved and it was not possible to examine the whole sample. The taxa identified included hazel, the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group, blackthorn and oak.

A large pit (37, context 28) on the northern boundary of the excavated site was located in close proximity to the roundhouses. Material recovered from the fill of the pit included pottery, worked bone, the skull fragments and long bones from two or more cattle, and waterlogged wood. The wood included short lengths of both narrow roundwood and largewood. Roundwood included oak, blackthorn and hawthorn/*Sorbus* group, oak largewood was also recorded and sometimes included burrwood. The large dimensions of a thick scale of bark suggested an origin from a fairly mature (unidentified) tree. There was no evidence to suggest that the wood was artefactual in origin and it is probable that it represents a collection of fallen tree debris that accumulated while the pit was open.

Roman settlement (2nd – 3rd centuries AD)

Charcoal was also examined from fill (191) of the southern terminal of the Romano-British western enclosure ditch (D6) and fill (320) the western boundary ditch D7, (Fig 9, section 55 and Fig 6, section 89). Sample 4, from the enclosure ditch, consisted of relatively narrow fragments, mainly from the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group and blackthorn, but also including oak roundwood and possibly hazel. Charcoal from the enclosure ditch appeared to differ slightly in species content to samples from the other features included in this study, with an apparent emphasis on hedgerow species, i.e., hawthorn and blackthorn. The charcoal was too fragmented to indicate whether it derived from narrow roundwood, but it is feasible that the deposit may represent either the burnt remains of hedge prunings or the clearance of scrub, perhaps disposed of on a bonfire or used to fuel some local (but unknown) activity. Thorny species such as these provide effective stock-proof hedges.

Charcoal from soil samples 6 and 7, recovered from the linear boundary D7 (320), was also very degraded, with silty deposits coating surface details in the wood structure. The origin of the charcoal is uncertain. The taxa identified included birch, hazel, the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group, blackthorn, oak and possibly willow or poplar. Blackthorn roundwood measured 10mm in diameter.

Within the eastern enclosure system was a small trapeziodal enclosure, south of which was an irregular sunken area which included a large shallow hollow, 216 (context 215), from which charcoal and pottery were recovered (Fig 11, section 169). The charcoal was degraded and permeated with silty deposits. It consisted mainly of oak heartwood and sapwood but also

included blackthorn, birch, ash and, probably, hazel. Although the charcoal probably represents fuel debris there was no evidence to indicate the function of the fuel, i.e. domestic or industrial. The range of taxa was comparable to that from the middle Iron Age contexts.

Fuel resources

From the evidence available it would seem that charcoal deposits at the middle Iron Age settlement were predominantly domestic in origin. Wood fuel appears to have been readily available and, apart from deposits in the western Romano-British enclosure ditch D6, context 191 (see above), firewood from contexts across the site consisted principally of oak (both roundwood and largewood), blackthorn, hazel and the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group. There was insufficient evidence to assess the use of coppiced wood but, if the population of the settlement was relatively small during the middle Iron Age, the demand for fuel and building timber would have been correspondingly slight.

Environmental evidence

The settlement was sited on land between two streams on acidic clay soils. The range of species identified from the charcoal deposits undoubtedly reflects a bias towards those preferred or selected for use as firewood – probably leaving the best quality wood/timber for other functions. The taxa identified included alder, birch, hazel, ash, the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group, blackthorn, oak and probably willow or poplar. It may be significant that wetland species, such as alder and willow, were sparse in the fuel debris. Neither taxon is noted for producing high calorie firewood but, probably more importantly, both provide a source of fast-grown stems which are ideal for hurdles and other structures. Most of the species identified, e.g., birch, oak, hazel and ash, tolerate damp rather than waterlogged soils and are unlikely to have grown on seasonally flooded land. Shrubby pioneer species such as blackthorn and hawthorn quickly colonize cleared areas to form dense scrub; both have a long history of use for hedging (Edlin 1949) and may have been used in this context to provide stock-proof barriers at the settlement. Although the woodland environment was clearly capable of supporting the settlement, there was insufficient evidence to infer woodland management.

Conclusion

The analysis of charcoal deposits from the middle Iron Age and the 2nd – 3rd century Roman contexts identified a more or less similar range of taxa and indicated a more frequent use of oak, hazel, blackthorn and the hawthorn/*Sorbus* group than alder, birch, ash and willow or poplar. The charcoal is attributed to fuel debris from domestic hearths.

Although wetland species were represented in the charcoal they were relatively sparse. Fuel reserves appear to have been gathered mainly from taxa preferring drier soils; there was insufficient evidence to indicate the use of managed woodland.

Table 8: Charcoal and waterlogged wood

Sample	Context	Description	*ALNUS* (alder)	*BETULA* (birch)	*CORYLUS* (hazel)	*FRAXINUS* (ash)	*POMOIDEAE* (hawthorn,etc)	*PRUNUS* (blackthorn)	*QUERCUS* (oak)	*SALICACEAE* (willow)
Middle Iron Age										
1	20/19	RD5 northern terminal	2	-	2	1	2	4	2h, 6r	-
11	31/29	RD2 southern terminal	-	-	1	-	3	1	3h	-
-	28/37	Pit 37 – waterlogged wood	-	-	-	-	3r	3r	10h,6r	-
Roman, 2nd – 3rd century										
4	191/194	D6 enclosure south terminal	-	-	?1	-	22	19	1r	-
5	215/216	Shallow hollow	-	1	*cf.*1	1r	-	8	21h, 11s	-
6	320	D7 linear boundary ditch	-	-	1	-	-	1	3h, 1s	-
7			-	1	1	-	1	1r	11h/u,3s	*cf.*1

Key: h = heartwood; r = roundwood (diameter <20mm); s = sapwood; u = unknown maturity (oak only)
The number of fragments identified is indicated

6 RADIOCARBON DATING

A programme of radiocarbon dating was carried out in an attempt to more precisely date the origin and duration of use of the Iron Age settlement. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained from samples of charcoal and wood taken from the fills of features associated with the settlement. These comprised the principal roundhouse, RD2, and one of the four external roundhouses, RD5, and the large pit [37]. Selection was limited, as survival of organic material was poor, with only five small charcoal samples available. Two animal bone samples submitted could not be dated as they lacked collagen due to the leaching caused by the long-term presence of wet ground conditions.

The sample from the Romano-British boundary ditch, which overlay the Iron Age enclosure, has confirmed the date indicated by the presence of 2nd century pottery. However, due to a mis-numbered context, this had been submitted on the mistaken assumption that it had come from an Iron Age feature.

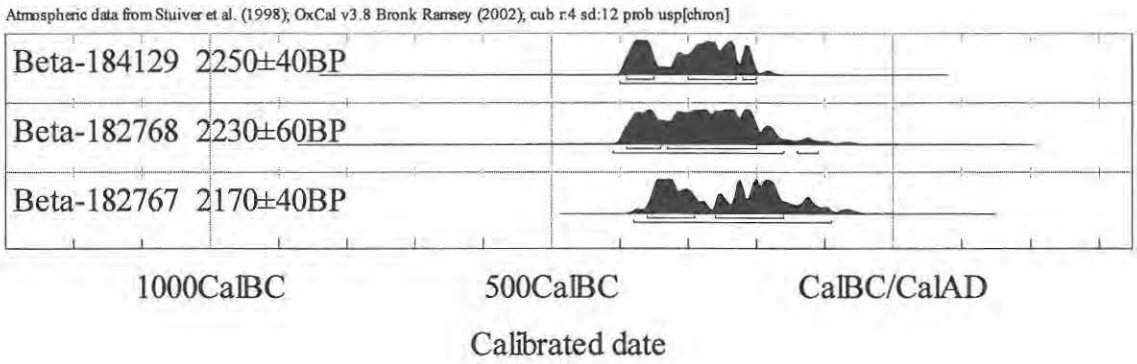
The results are tabulated below, Table 9, and the individual calibration curves are shown, Table 10, to illustrate how the double intercepts on the calibration curve produce broad calibrated date ranges. The implications of this for the chronology of the enclosure have been previously discussed.

Table 9: Radiocarbon determinations

Laboratory Number (Technique)	**Context details**	**Sample Details**	**Conventional radiocarbon age BP C13/C12 ratio**	**Cal BC/AD 68% confidence 95% confidence**
Beta-184129 (AMS)	31/29 fill, south terminal, roundhouse RD2	Charcoal (hazel, hawthorn family, blackthorn)	2250 +/- 40 -26.6 o/oo	BC 390-350} 300-200} 400-200
Beta-182768 (radiometric)	28/37 lower fill, large pit	Wood (Oak roundwood)	2230 +/- 60 -25.0 o/oo	BC 390-200} 410-110
Beta-182767 (AMS)	20/21 fill, south terminal, roundhouse RD5	Charcoal (alder, hazel, hawthorn family, blackthorn, ash)	2170 +/- 40 -24.9o/oo	BC 360-290} 260-160} 380-100
Beta-182770	163/163 fill, north terminal roundhouse RD4	Bone collagen	Undated	Undated
Beta-182769	34/32 fill, ditch, roundhouse RD4	Bone collagen	Undated	Undated
Beta-184130 (AMS)	317 (320/321), fill Romano-British boundary ditch D7	Charcoal (birch, hazel, hawthorn family, blackthorn, willow)	1860 +/- 40 -24.5 o/oo	AD 100-220} 70-240

Laboratory: Beta Analytic Inc., Miami, Florida, USA
Calibration: Oxcal v.3.8

Table 10: Radiocarbon calibrations



7 DISCUSSION

The middle Iron Age settlement

The middle Iron Age settlement comprised a sub-rectangular ditched enclosure, with an eastern entrance, enclosing about 0.3ha. The emphasis with the ditches was on the eastern side, and the presence of a short length of shallow gully to the west suggests that there may have been a ditch on that side which was so insubstantial that it had been lost to ploughing. The enclosure itself contained a principal roundhouse with smaller ancillary structures to the north and south. The main roundhouse may have been 12m in diameter, and is therefore at the top end of the diameters for middle Iron Age roundhouses. There were also three small external roundhouses, and another of comparable size to the principal internal roundhouse. This roundhouse also produced a small amount of briquetage, perhaps suggesting that it had specific functions in relation to the whole settlement.

The material culture was sparse with too little evidence to determine the economic basis of the settlement, beyond a probable mixed agricultural system. The fragment of quern and the rubbing stones indicate some presence of arable cultivation, while the lack of charred seed remains is most likely to be a product of poor survival. Animal bone preservation was very poor due the waterlogged nature of the site, but cattle were the dominant animal species, with horse, sheep/goat and possibly pig also present, providing a pastoral element to the economy that comprises only domesticated species.

Most of the wood species identified tolerate damp soils but would not have grown on seasonally flooded land. The presence of hawthorn and blackthorn show that the land had been cleared long enough for scrub to have formed, but they can also be utilised as hedging for stock control. Wetland species were sparse, indicating that the wet nature of the site occurred well after the demise of the settlement, maybe as late as the post-medieval period given the presence of the remnant medieval ridge and furrow cultivation system.

As described by Patrick Clay (2001), since 1990 and the advent of PPG16 led surveys and evaluations ahead of development, many Iron Age sites have been located in the Midlands, mainly on the Boulder Clay previously believed to be barren of settlement. This has started to correct the imbalance of known settlement and the previous apparent concentration on the lighter soils and along the river valleys. In Leicestershire and Rutland alone more than 20 sites have been found and some have been the focus of larger scale fieldwork. To the south,

in Northamptonshire, many sites have been discovered on low and high ground on Boulder Clay, as at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) (Chapman 1994, BUFAU 1998 & AMS 1999). There is less evidence from Warwickshire, due to less archaeological work, but the majority of enclosure sites are of middle Iron Age date or later.

Small, enclosed settlements, such as that at Hinckley, suggest occupation by a single family group, and the lack of relocation of roundhouses suggests they were living here only for a generation or two before moving on. Similar settlements comprising individual farmsteads have been excavated in Leicestershire at Enderby (Clay 1992), and Wanlip (Beamish 1998), the latter comprising a small enclosure with an external roundhouse and associated structures and pit groups. Another was recently excavated at Huncote, a late Iron Age enclosure surrounding two roundhouses (ULAS 2000). Enclosed settlements in Warwickshire such as those at Park Farm, Barford and Ryton on Dunsmore were of a similar size (Hingley 1996). A polygonal ditched enclosure at Meriden, Warwickshire has similar internal dimensions and arrangements, with a principal roundhouse and smaller ancillary roundhouses to the north and north-east, but here the ditch was on a much more substantial scale, at up to 3.0m wide by 1.5m deep (Walker 2002). The scale of the ditch may have been largely a response to the sandy soils, with perhaps enclosures of similar form and function having very different surviving plan forms only as a result of necessarily varying responses to the local geology.

In complete contrast, are the extensive and complex sites covering several hectares such as those at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) in Northamptonshire (Chapman 1994, BUFAU 1998 & AMS 1999) and a similarly extensive and dense settlement in Leicestershire at Humberstone (Charles et al 2000). An unenclosed settlement at Coton Park, Rugby, Warwickshire, although much less extensive, displayed a similar complex sequence of development (Chapman 1998). At all of these sites the numerous examples of overlapping house and enclosure plans also suggest they have much longer periods of occupation. However, these settlements did not necessarily possess a material culture of any greater magnitude than that of the smaller settlements and the DIRFT sites were at a similarly impoverished level to the site at Hinckley.

The broad contemporaneity of the diverse enclosure and settlement forms hint at a cultural diversity. Perhaps the small family enclosure at Hinckley represented a family group striking out on their own on an independent basis into hitherto uncultivated land, or possibly these small enclosures helped to extend local tribal territory. It is also possible that these small settlements are migrant families from other areas, not initially attached to the local tribes.

The economy of these settlements must have been based upon self sufficient subsistence agriculture, perhaps with an emphasis on pastoral farming including the horse, as cereal remains tend to be consistently low on these middle Iron Age sites and there was little in the way of quern remains at Hinckley. The presence of briquetage fragments is an indicator that trade was taking place. Briquetage occurs in small quantities in sites in Leicestershire and Warwickshire, including the enclosure at Meriden (Hancocks 2002), but has not been recovered further to the south-east on the Northamptonshire site.

Whether these sites represented an increase in population, or groups of people moving from place to place, at Hinckley the enclosure had certainly been deserted by the earlier second century BC at the latest. There is therefore no evidence for continuity of occupation into late Iron Age/early Romano-British period, and a similar pattern has been seen at many of the contemporary sites.

The Roman settlement

The Roman occupation seems to have lasted for nearly two centuries according to the pottery evidence, and in particular the mortaria, dated from the early 2nd to the late 3rd centuries. This, together with the tile, suggests that buildings lay nearby. The difference in enclosure styles are interesting, with the sharply rectilinear enclosures in the east while the more irregular enclosure occupied the area of an earlier Iron Age settlement. The eastern enclosure system was clearly the main focus of occupation, while the small irregular enclosure may have been an associated minor enclosure, perhaps a stock pen.

The close proximity of Watling Street must have had an influence on the location of the Roman occupation, and the convenience of trading along a main road, as shown by the mortaria. Pottery workshops were set up in Mancetter, five kilometres to the north-west, around the beginning of the second century by potters from the Verulamium region (Tyers 1999). The early mortaria have similar styles to the Verulamium style, for example rim sherds that display the hooked flange typical of that region (Fig 14, 13-16). After about 160 AD, however, the workshops developed their own hammerhead style, which is also present on the site (Fig 14, 17-19).

The Roman site at Hinckley appears to follow the pattern noted by Liddle (2002), in which Roman rural settlements were generally abandoned in the second and third centuries AD, which seems to be the period when 'villas' appear.

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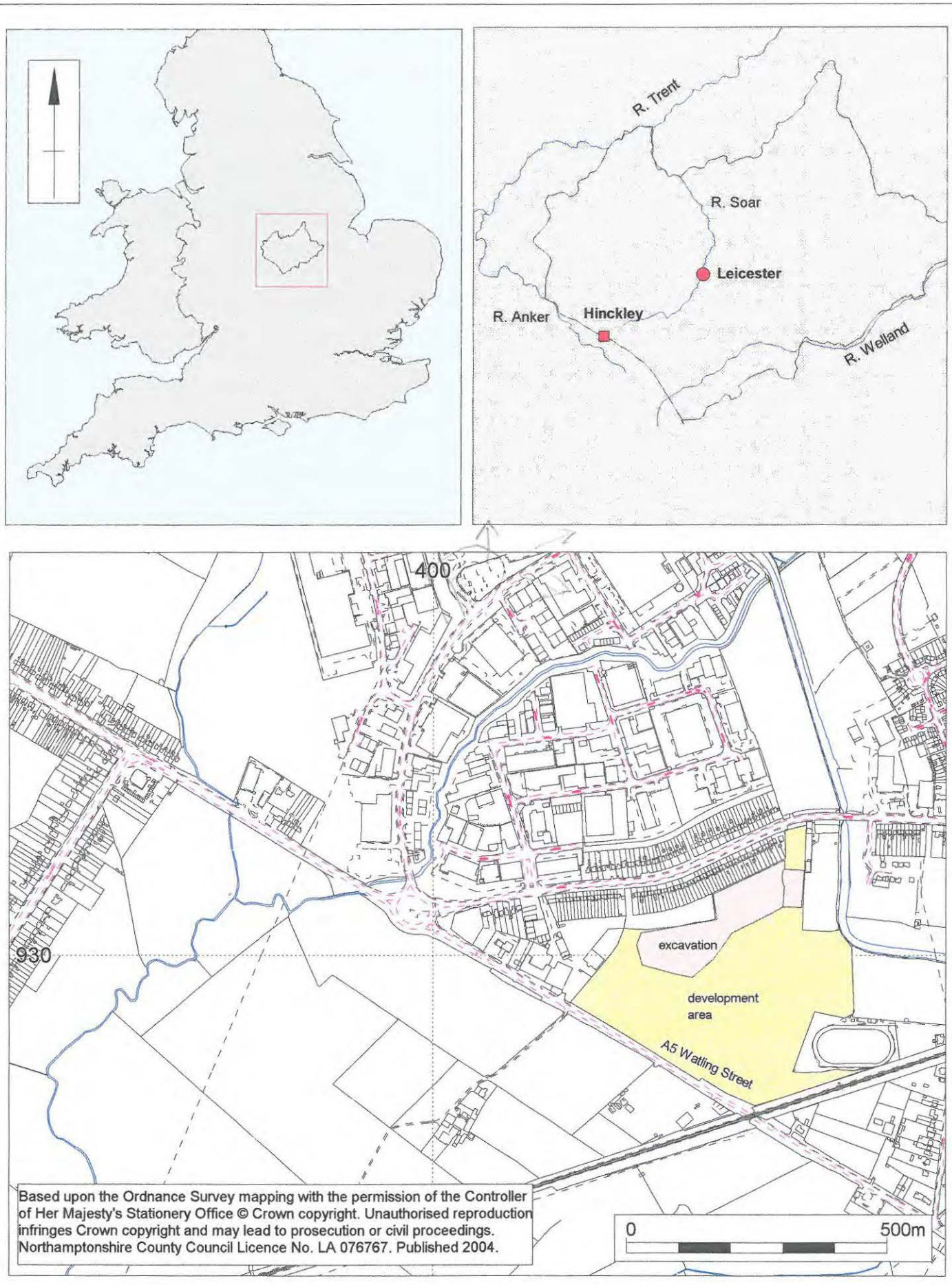

Fig 1

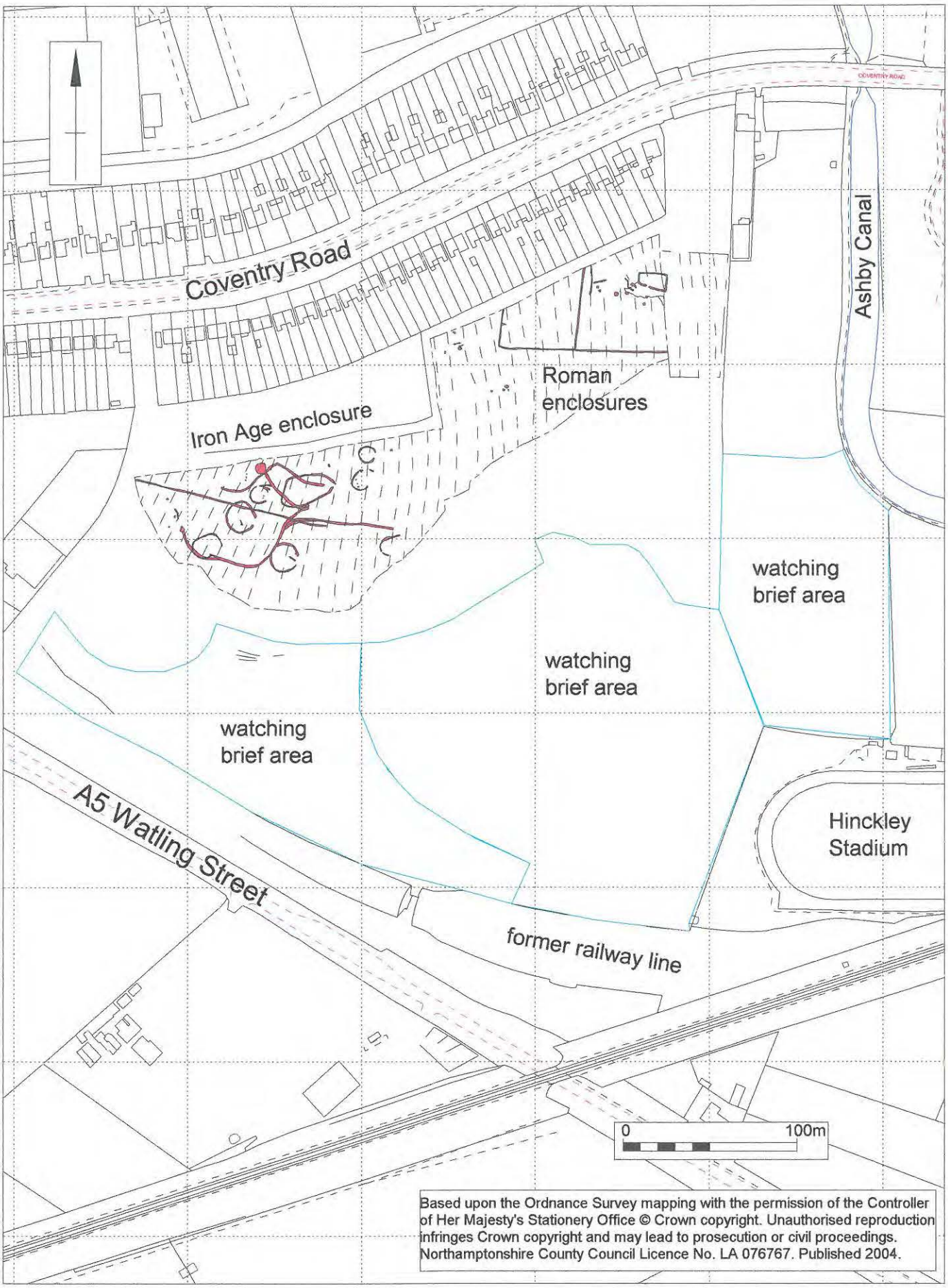

Fig. 2

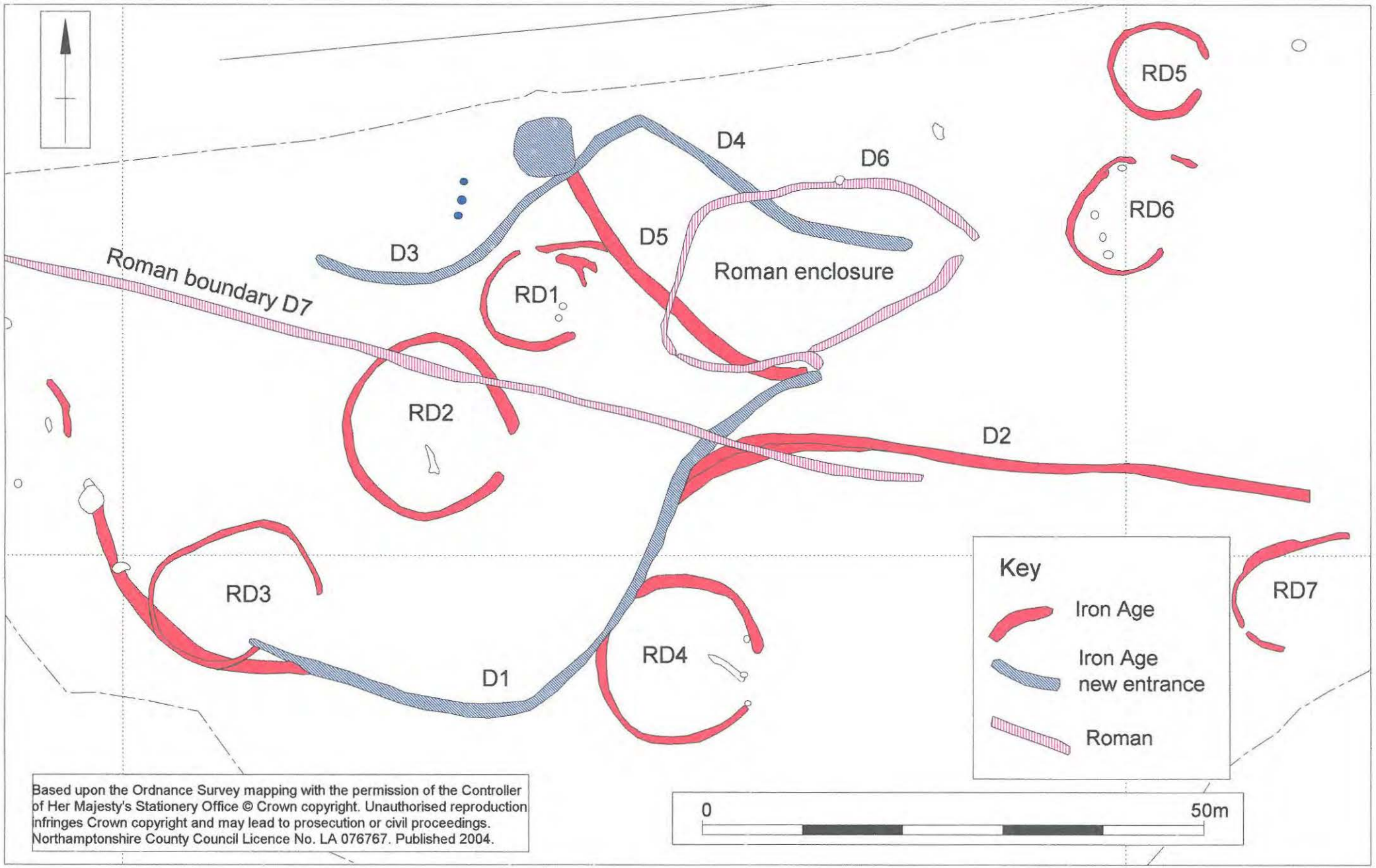
RD5
D4
D6
RD6
D5
D3
Roman enclosure
RD1
Roman boundary D7
RD2
D2
RD3
RD4
D1
RD7
Key
Iron Age
Iron Age
new entrance
Roman
0
50m
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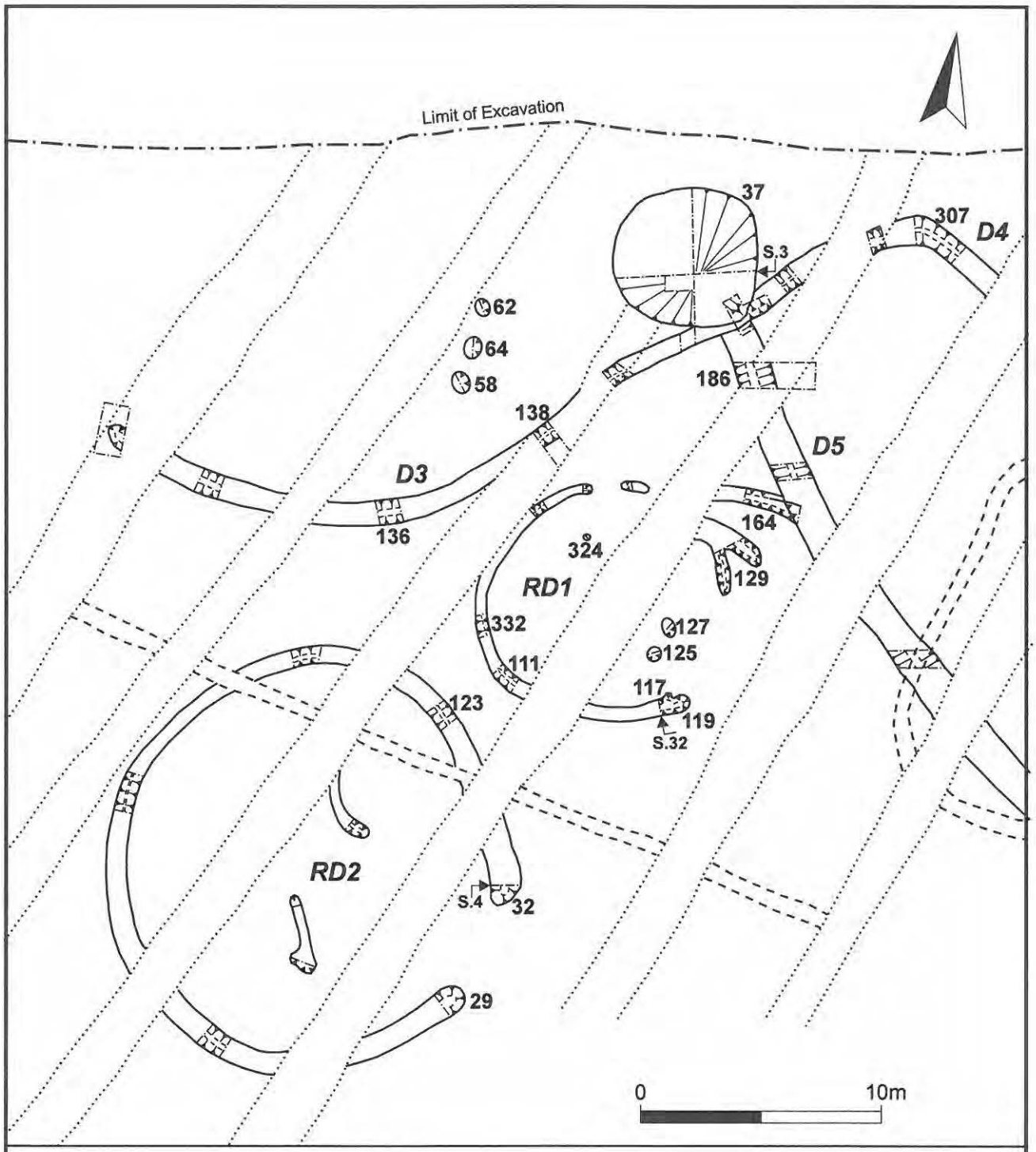
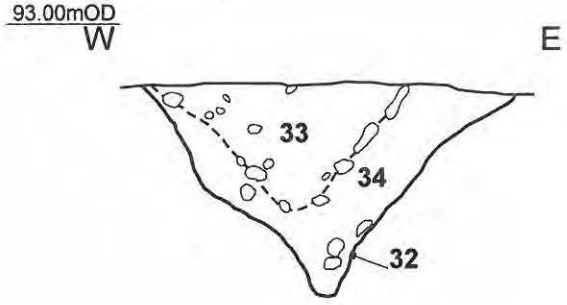
Fig. 3



Section 4 - RD2



Section 32 - RD1

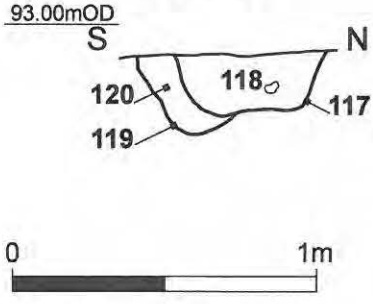
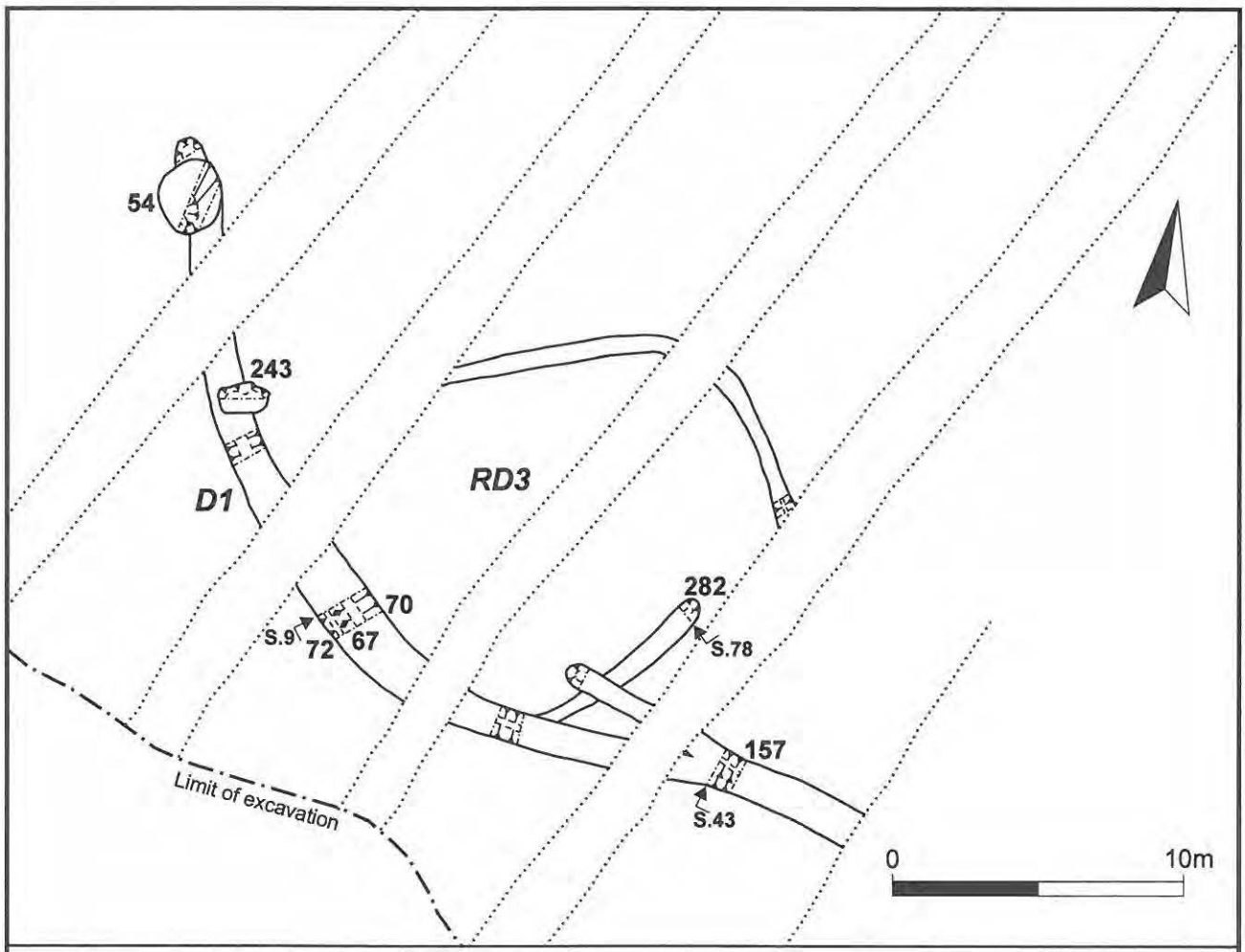
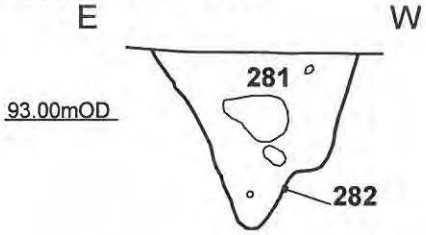


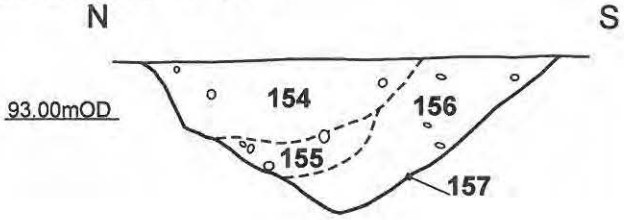
Fig. 4



Section 78 - RD3



Section 43 - D1



Section 9 - RD3 & D1

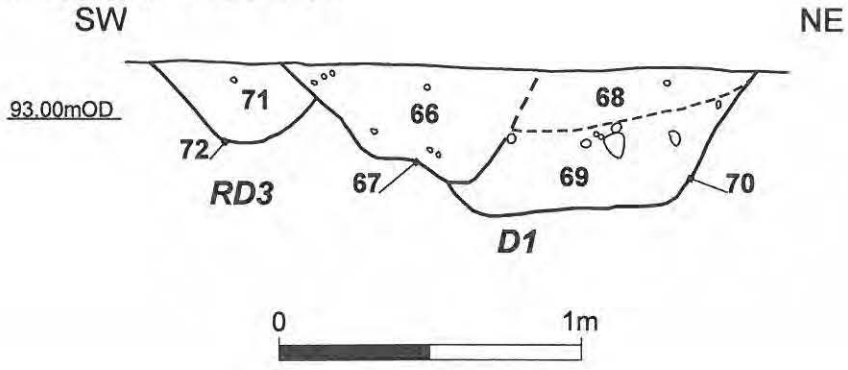
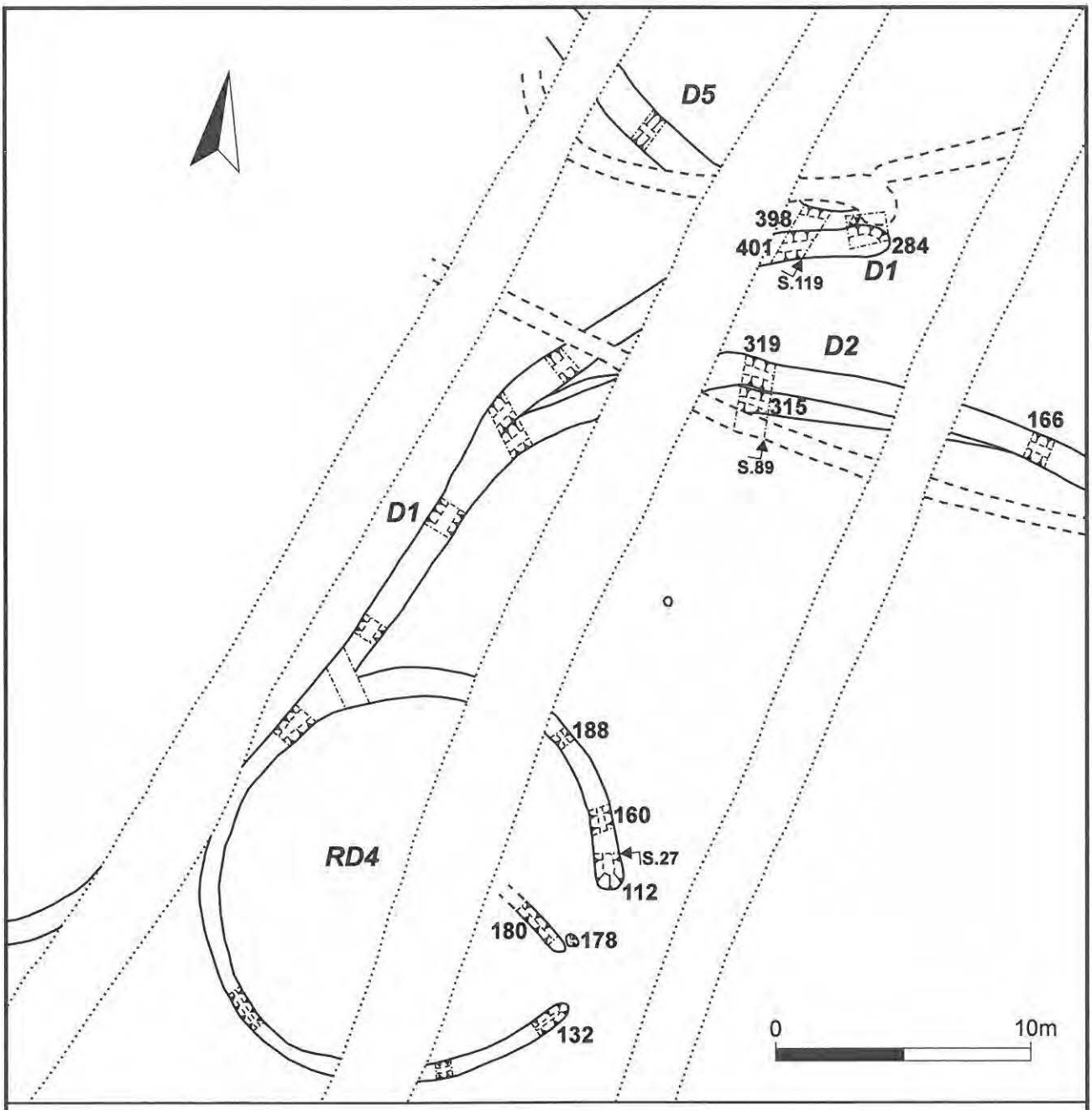


Fig. 5


D5
398
401
284
D1
S.119
319
D2
315
166
S.89
D1
188
160
S.27
RD4
112
180
178
132
0
10m

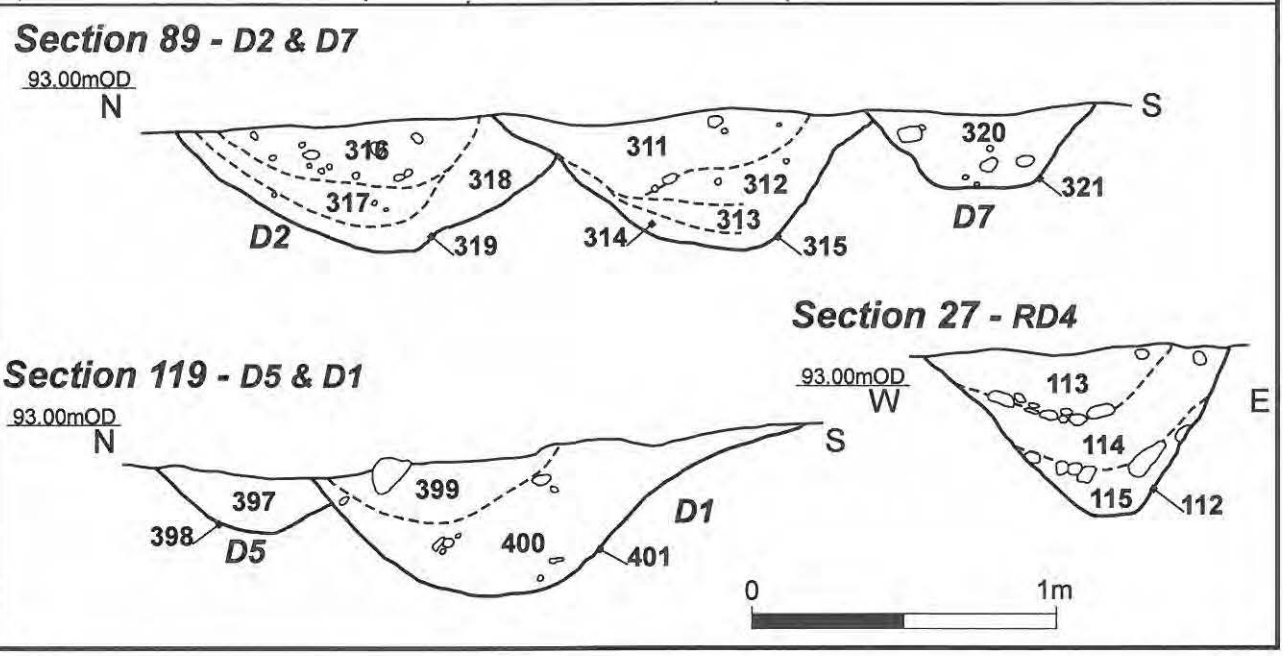
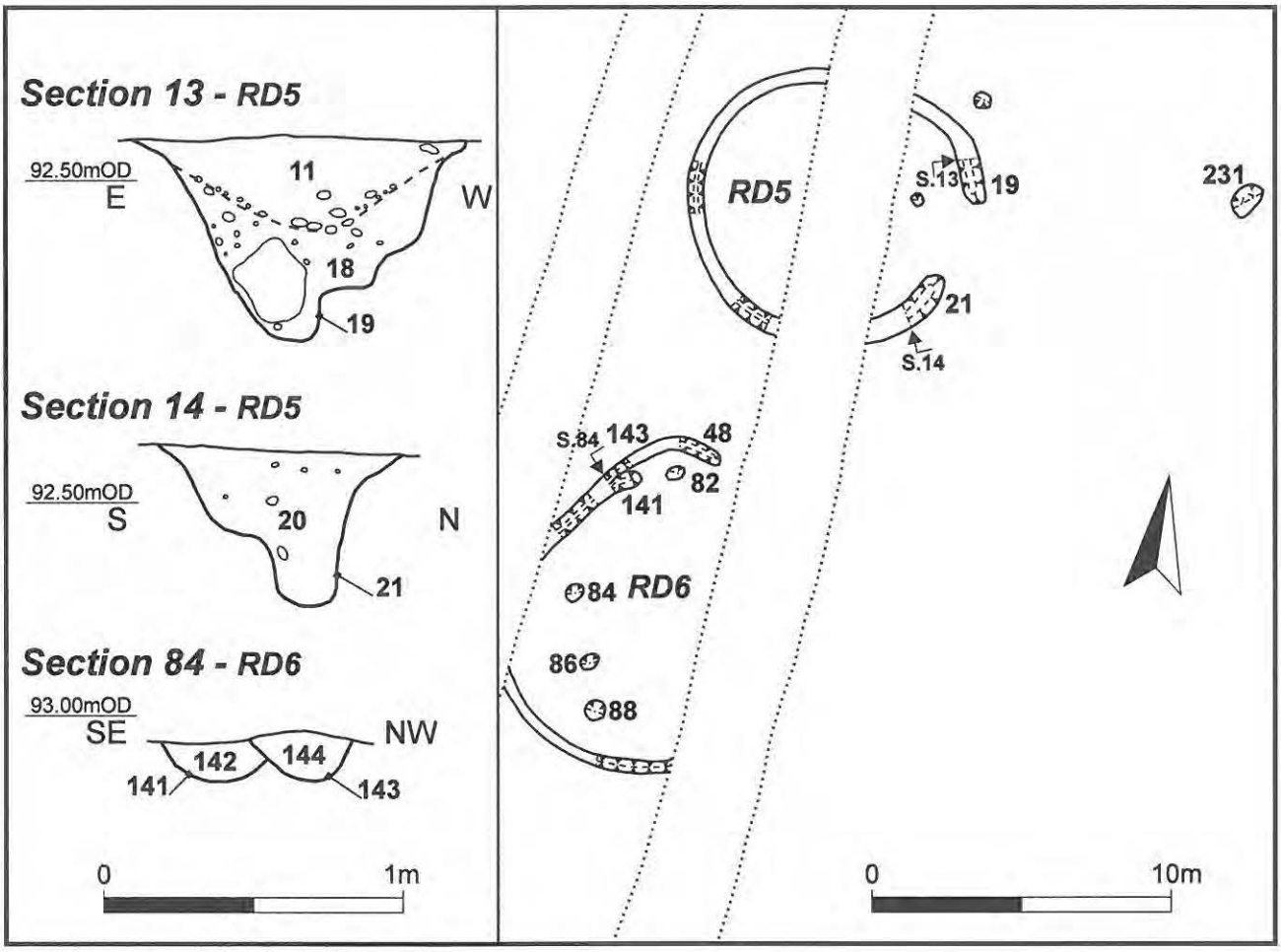

Section 89 - D2 & D7
93.00mOD
N
S
316
318
317
D2
319
311
312
313
314
315
320
321
D7
Section 27 - RD4
93.00mOD
W
E
113
114
115
112
Section 119 - D5 & D1
93.00mOD
N
S
397
398
D5
399
400
D1
401
0
1m

Fig. 6


Section 13 - RD5
92.50mOD
E
W
11
18
19
Section 14 - RD5
92.50mOD
S
N
20
21
Section 84 - RD6
93.00mOD
SE
NW
142
144
141
143
0
1m
RD5
S.13
19
231
21
S.14
S.84
143
48
82
141
84
RD6
86
88
0
10m

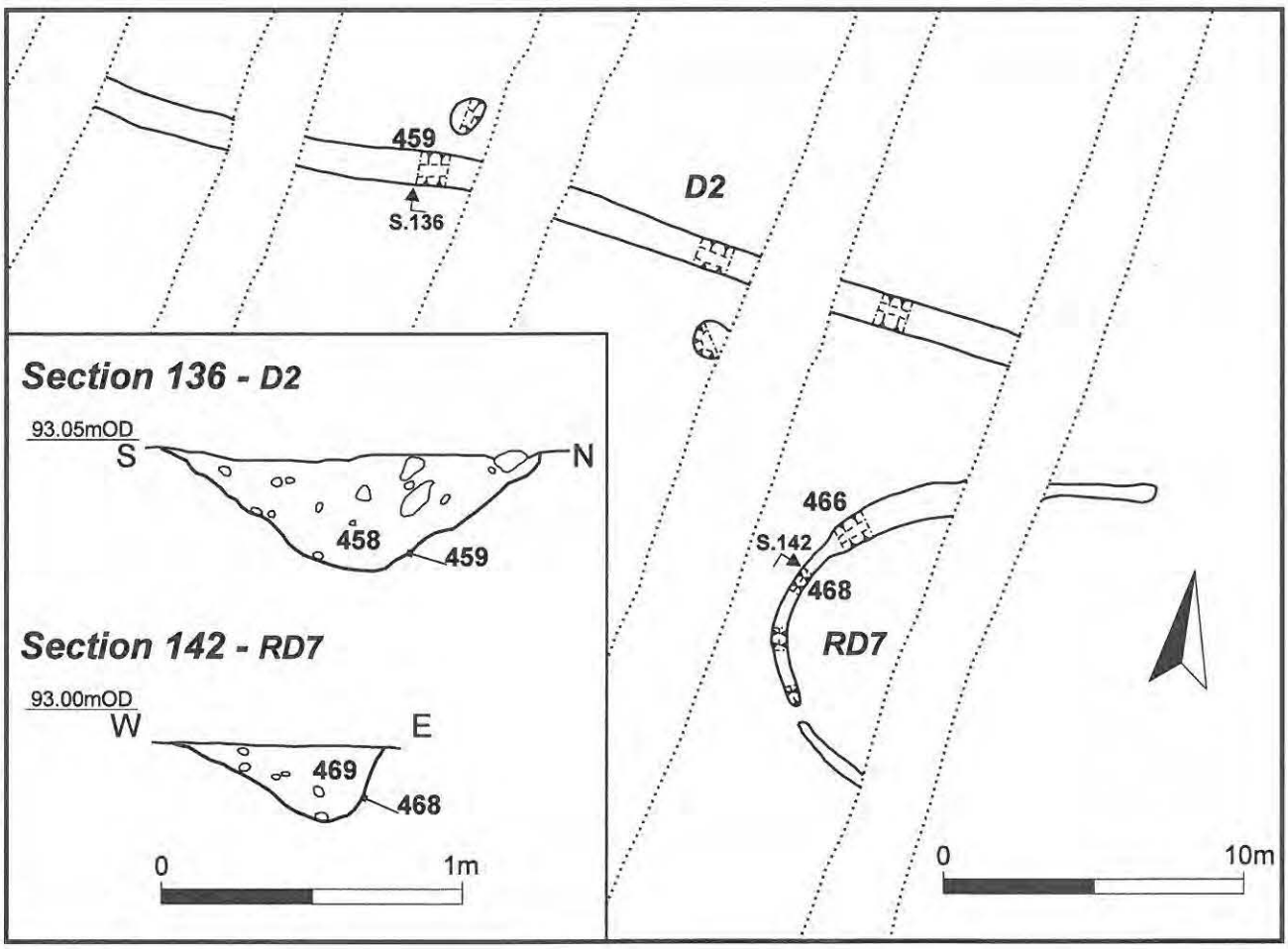

459
S.136
D2
Section 136 - D2
93.05mOD
S
N
458
459
Section 142 - RD7
93.00mOD
W
E
469
468
0
1m
466
S.142
468
RD7
0
10m

Fig. 7

Section 3

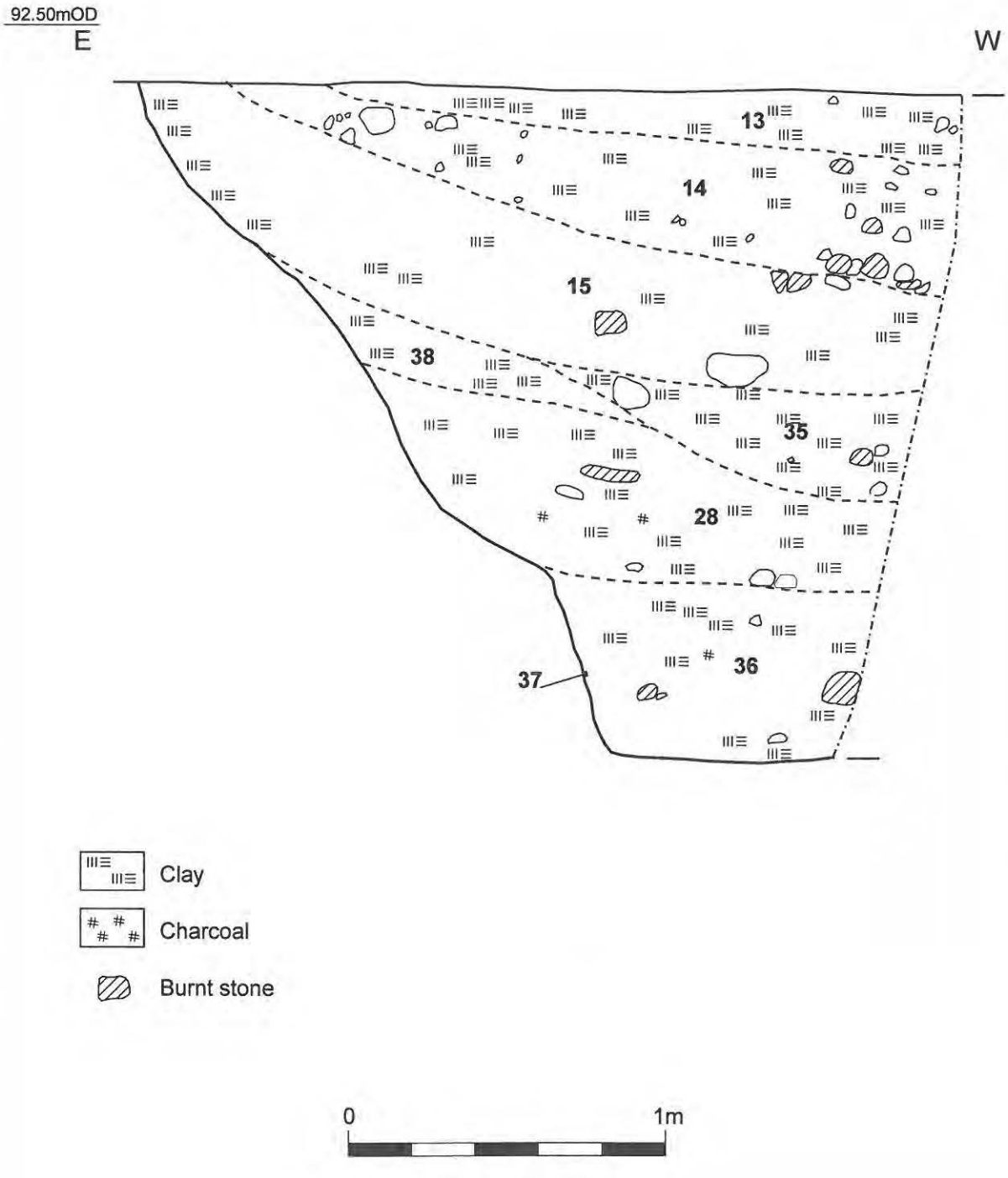
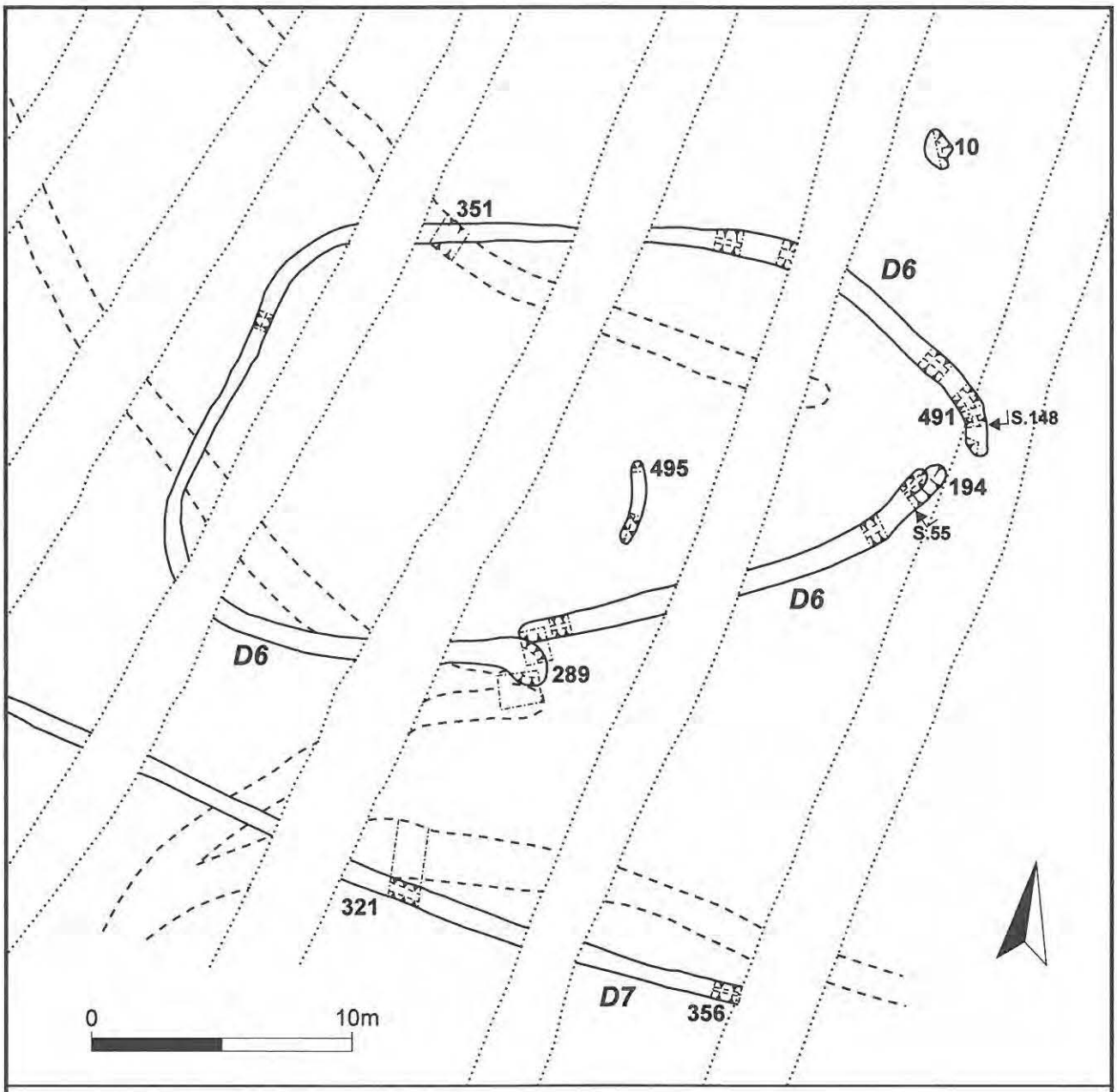
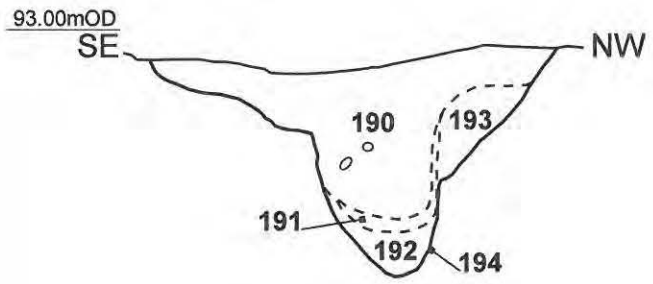


Fig. 8



Section 55 - D6



Section 148 - D6

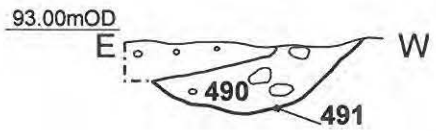


Fig. 9

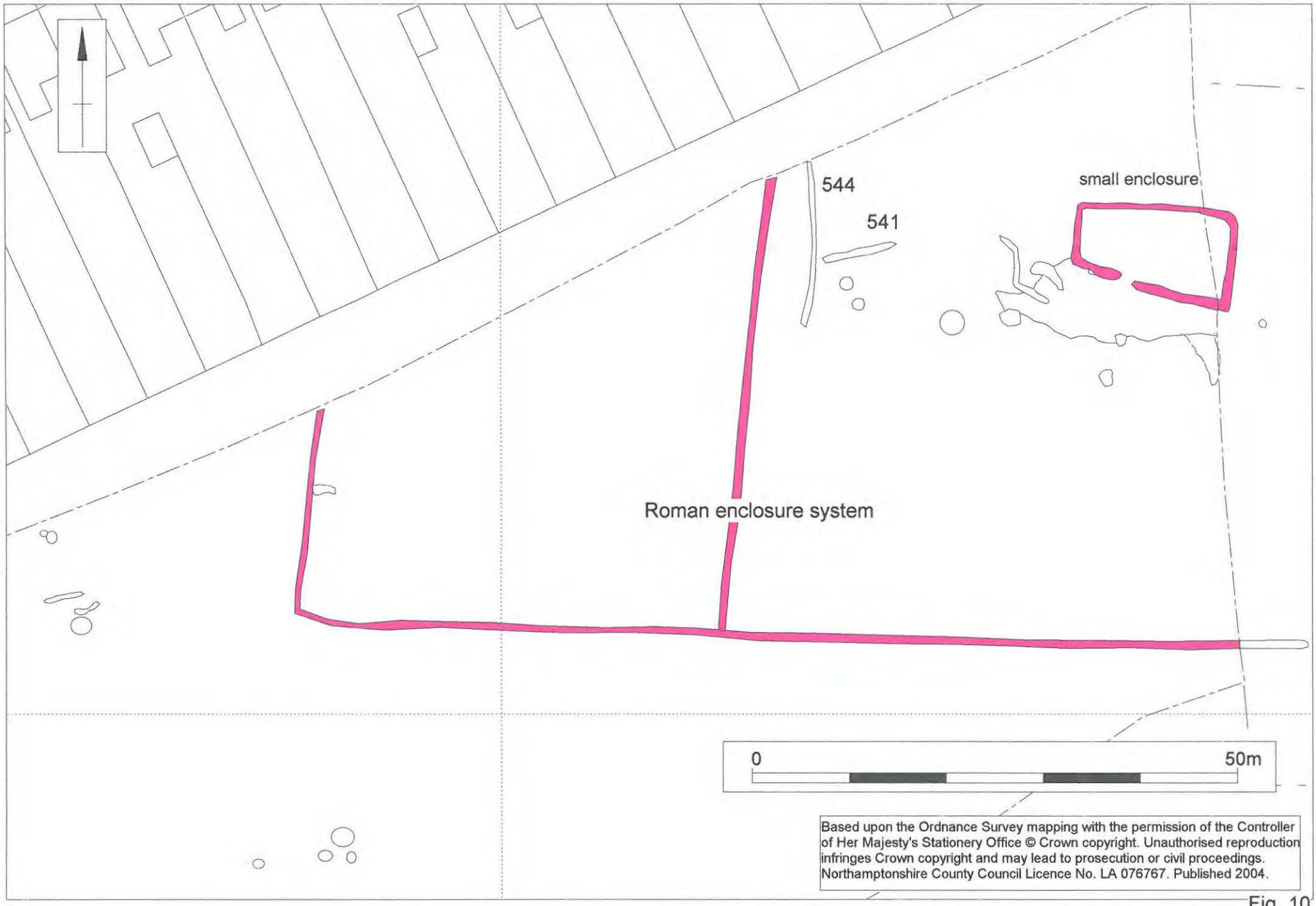
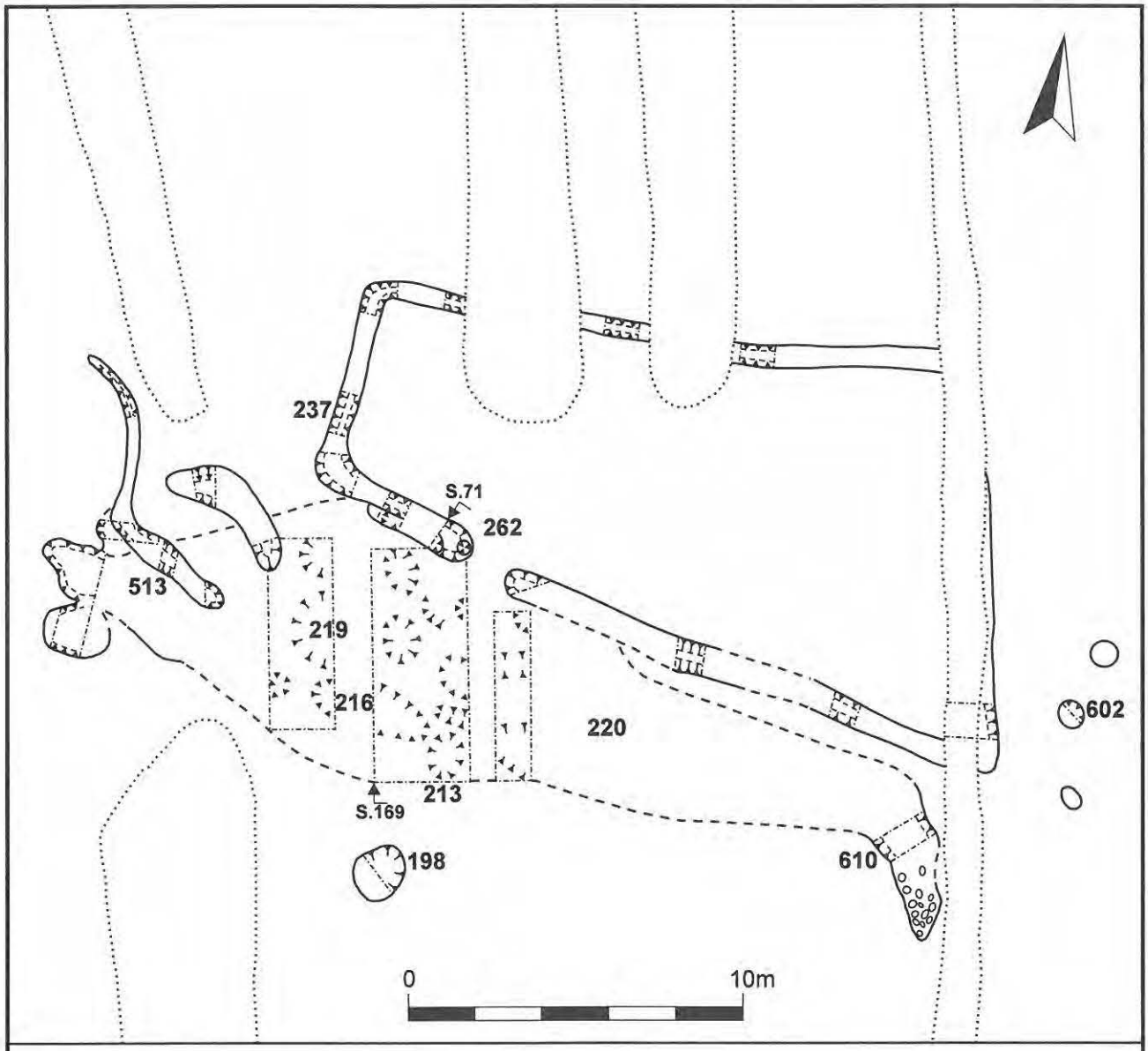
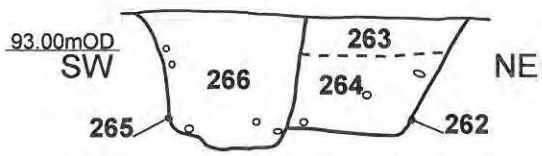


Fig. 10



Section 71



Section 169

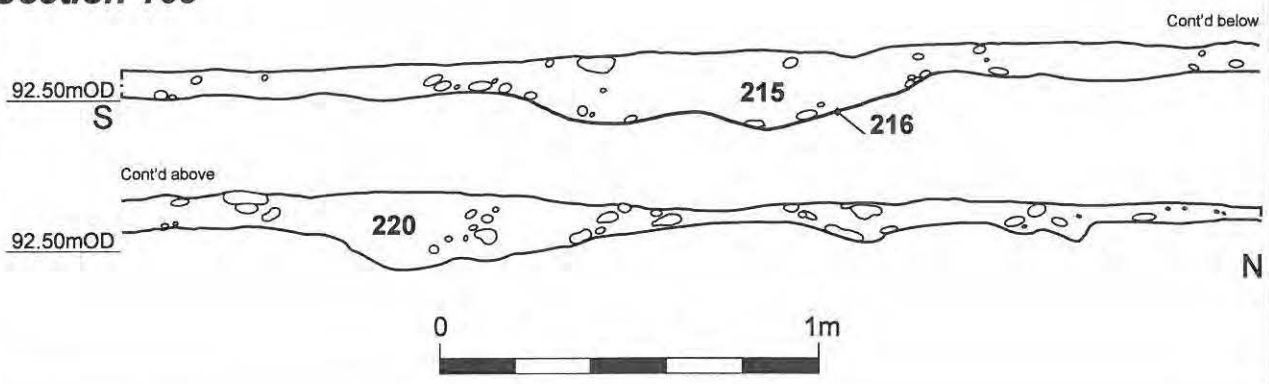


Fig. 11

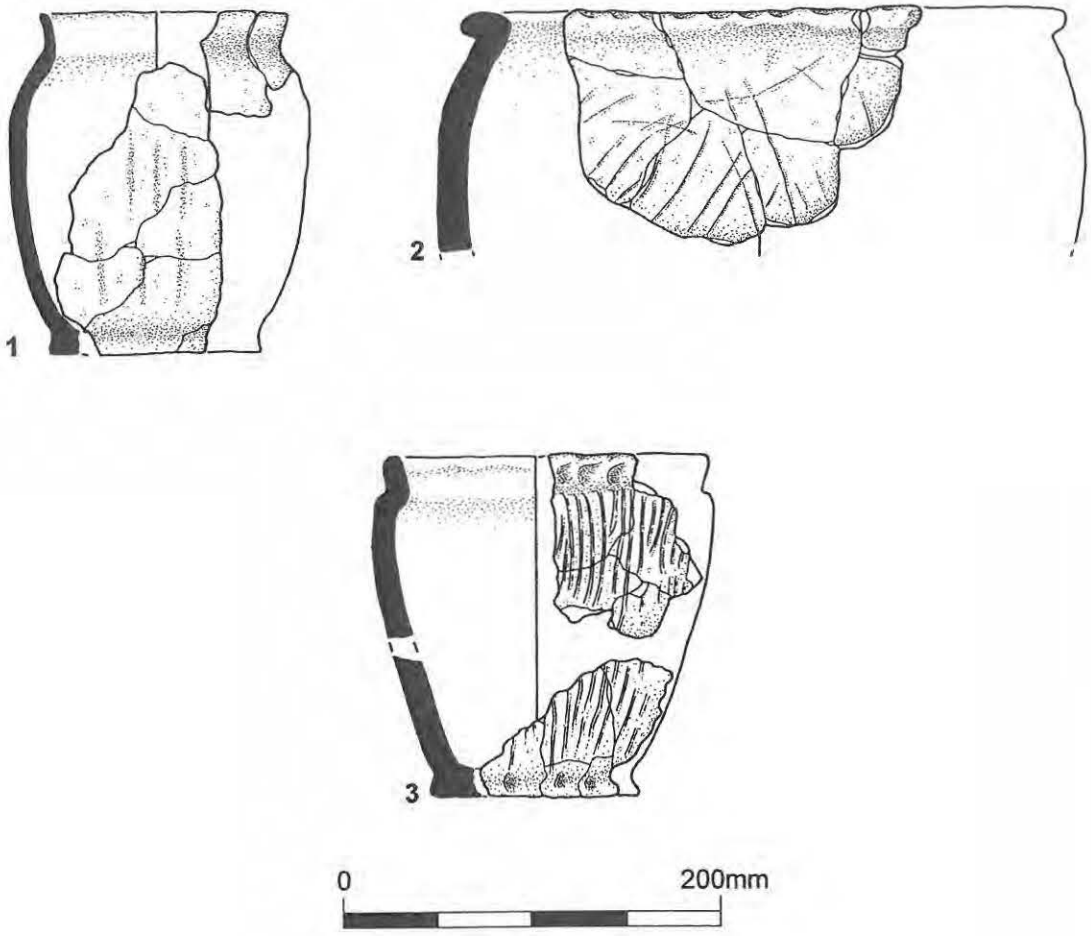


Fig. 12

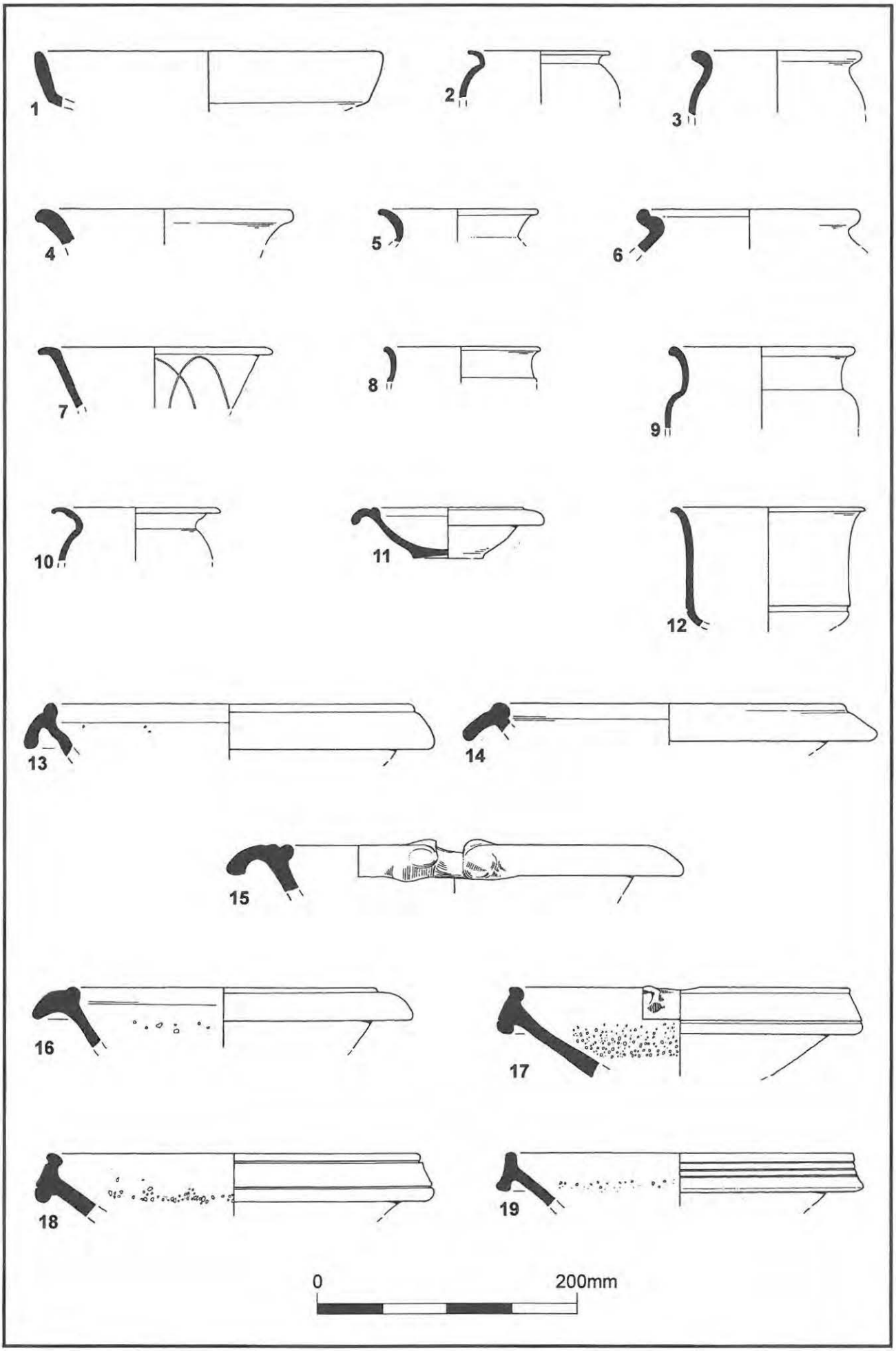


Fig. 13

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6

Plate 7

Plate 8