

On behalf of:

The Tetley Pub Company Limited  
PO Box 142  
The Brewery  
Leeds  
LS1 1QG

Prepared by:

Simon Atkinson

Illustrations by:

Simon Atkinson  
Andrea Burgess  
Stacey Hallet  
Guy Holman

Timing:

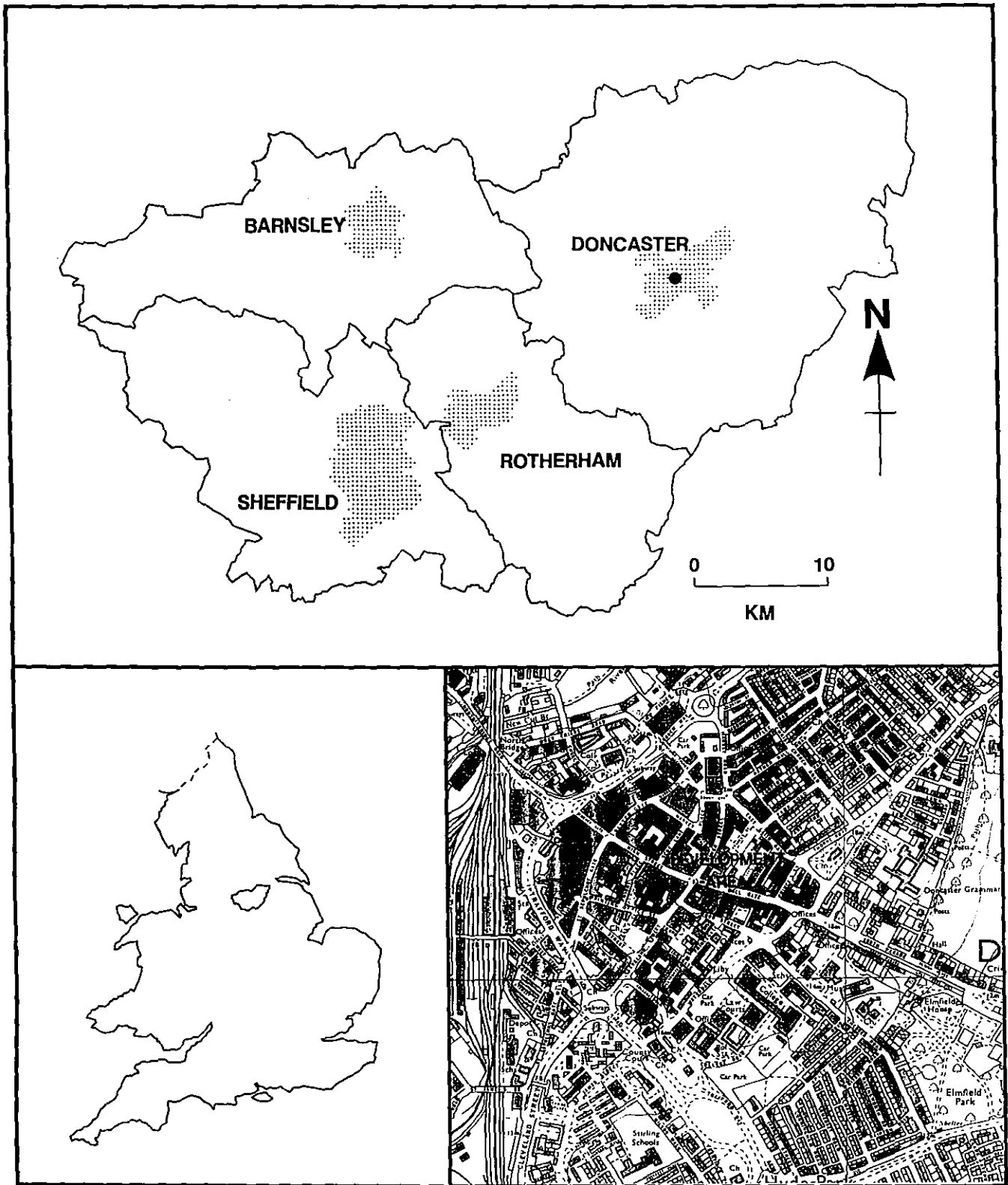
Fieldwork  
*3rd-14th October 1994*

Report Preparation  
*17th-26th October 1994*

Queries to:

South Yorkshire Archaeology  
Field and Research Unit  
Libraries and Museums Building  
Ellin Street  
Sheffield  
S1 4PL

Tel (0742) 734234  
Fax (0742) 736920



1) Site Location

## **1) SUMMARY**

*An archaeological field evaluation has been carried on the site to the rear of 53 Hallgate and 9 Wood Street by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Field and Research Unit. This is in advance of the development of the site for use as a public house. The excavation of three trial trenches has revealed a series of archaeological remains representing a multi-phase occupation of the site.*

## **2) INTRODUCTION**

The following is a report on an archaeological evaluation completed on behalf of the Tetley Pub Company Limited in advance of the development of a site for use as licensed premises. All work reported on was completed by staff of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Field and Research Unit.

### **2.1) Site Description**

The area of the evaluation measures approximately 18 metres by 30 metres and is fully enclosed by buildings fronting onto Wood Street and Hallgate (fig. 1) as well as the brick walls of adjacent properties. Prior to the start of the evaluation the area was occupied by a number of single storey structures which had previously been used as offices. These were demolished in advance of the archaeological evaluation. The floor surfaces of these buildings were removed but with the foundations and drains being left intact. The ground surface at the start of the fieldwork therefore consisted of a mix of silty clay mud, cinder and rubble as well as an amount of brick and concrete debris. Brick wall footings were visible at various points throughout the site. Access was available from Wood Street.

A slight slope was visible leading downwards in a northerly direction. It appeared that some sort of terracing had been carried out in order to level the floor surfaces of the buildings. This is likely to have implications for the depth of deposits overlying the upper archaeological layers.

### **2.2) Archaeological Context**

The scheme provoked the interest of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (County Sites and Monuments Record) as a result of the location of the site in relation to the historic core of the town of Doncaster. Hallgate is located on the route of the main street through the Roman and medieval towns. As a result of this the area of interest was in a position where archaeological remains are liable to be surviving. This is despite the fact that the site is a little way outside of the main area of settlement in that the medieval town ditch followed the route of what is now Cleveland Street. It is known that there was a degree of suburban development, which was of a domestic as well as industrial nature.

A recent archaeological evaluation was completed by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Field and Research Unit elsewhere on Wood Street. This revealed the existence of Roman features which included three ditches and a pit. They were dated by the presence of an assemblage of Roman pottery. The pit also contained a fragment of quernstone, suggesting that the occupation may have been domestic.

## 2.3) Planning Background

This project was initiated as a result of a proposal to develop the site for use as a public house (planning application no. 93/05/1030/OTL). This scheme involves the conversion of the buildings fronting onto Wood Street and Hallgate as well as the construction of new rooms in the intervening space. Only a narrow area on the eastern side of the property is to be left as open access and garden area.

Given these circumstances a recommendation was made by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service that provision be made for an archaeological investigation of the site prior to any development. This was accepted by the Doncaster Planning Authority and an appropriate condition included in the planning permission.

In order to comply with the condition of the planning permission the South Yorkshire Archaeology Field and Research Unit were commissioned by the Speight Simpson Partnership, on behalf of The Tetley Pub Company Ltd, to carry out an archaeological field evaluation of the site. A *Field Evaluation* is defined as "...a programme of intrusive and/or non-intrusive fieldwork designed to supplement and improve existing information to a level of confidence at which planning recommendations can be made" (Association of County Archaeological Officers 1993). All fieldwork carried out was planned to satisfy the requirements of a brief supplied by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service. In accordance with this the work was aimed at establishing the "... presence/absence, character, state of preservation and date of any archaeological deposits within the areas of proposed development" (South Yorkshire Archaeology Service 1994). The South Yorkshire Archaeology Service was also responsible for monitoring the progress of the fieldwork in order to ensure work was carried out to an adequate standard and to be aware of the nature of the results.

## 3) METHODOLOGY

### 3.1) Project Design

Given the nature of the site it was clear that it was not suitable for any non-intrusive investigative methods. A programme of trial trenching was chosen as the most suitable method of evaluating the area. Three trial trench locations were selected to provide an adequate coverage of the site. The following criteria was used in the design of the trench plan (fig. 2).

#### *Trench A*

This trench was located to investigate any features which may have been fronting onto Wood Street. Experience has shown that this is best achieved by locating the trench at a right angle from the street with the near end located as close as possible. In this case the position of the trench was determined by the need to avoid blocking the access into the site from Wood Street.

#### *Trench B*

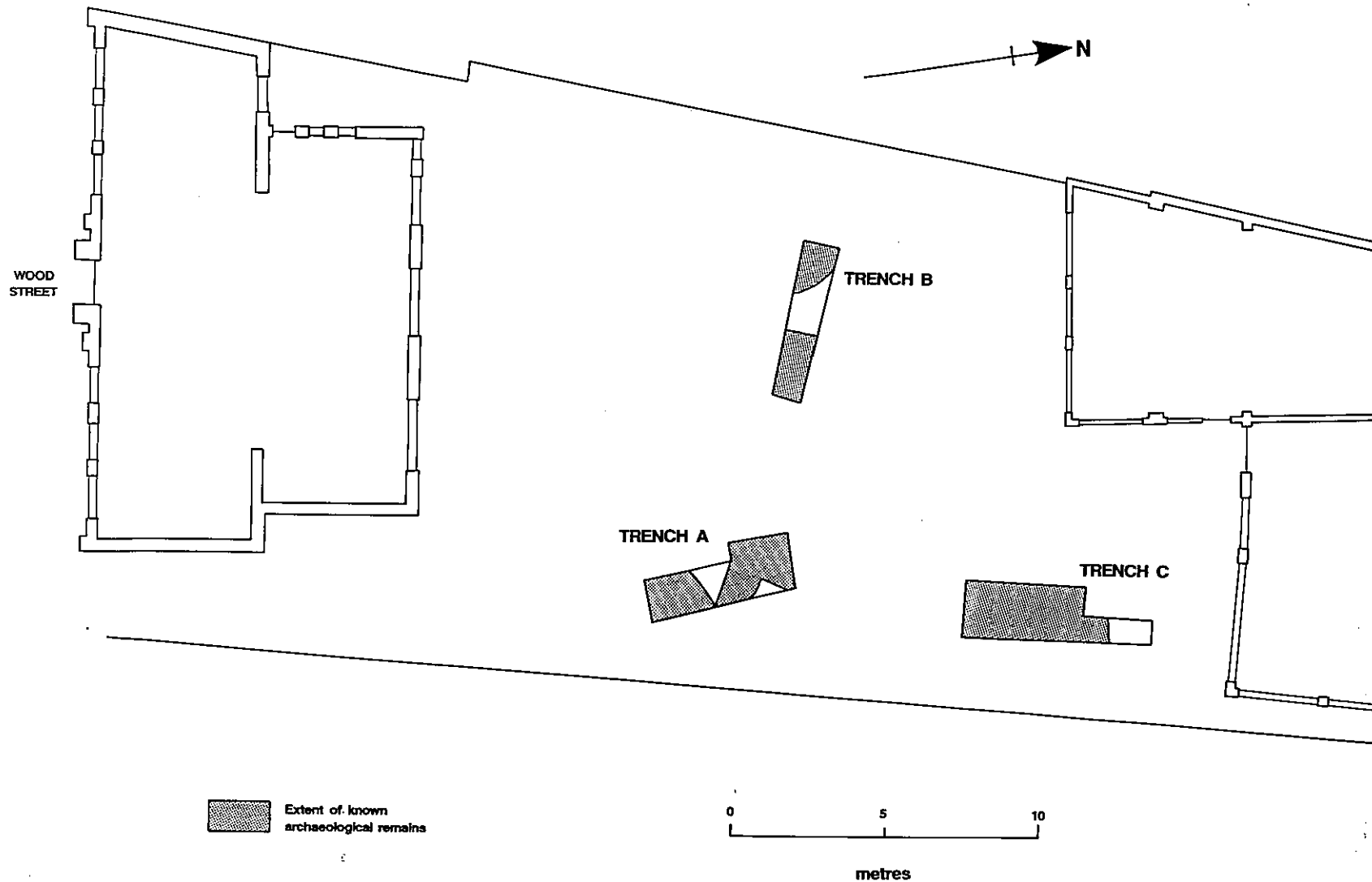
Trench B was located in order to investigate the western part of the site. Its axis was determined by the need to excavate at right angles to trenches A and C, which were located along the length of the property. This provides the maximum chance of locating any linear features on the same alignment.

#### *Trench C*

This was located to identify any features in the rear of any buildings fronting onto

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Ellin Street, Sheffield S1 4PL  
Tel: (0742) 734234. Fax: (0742) 736920*



**TITLE**  
**2) Trench Location**

**SITE**  
**Hallgate, Doncaster**

<b>CODE</b> <b>DHG 94</b>	<b>DATE</b> <b>Oct. 1994</b>
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<b>SCALE</b>	<b>DRAWN</b>
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Hallgate. Any medieval buildings on Hallgate would be located underneath the present structure, but remains of interest are often found within the rear yard areas.

In all cases where possible, the edges of excavation were located to coincide with the position of modern foundations. This was in order to provide a secure trench edge and to allow an assessment of the depth of such foundations and their impact on any archaeological remains.

### **3.2) Excavation**

Initial excavation was carried out using a mini-excavator down to the upper archaeological deposits. All subsequent excavation was completed by hand. The recognition of archaeological features can be achieved as a result of the presence of soil colour variation. Such features were excavated by the removal of the fill material in order to recover full structural information.

Bulk soil samples were collected from selected deposits within trench C. These were floated and sieved in order to extract any environmental evidence, such as carbonised seed remains.

Standard South Yorkshire Archaeology Field and Research Unit recording procedure was followed throughout. This involves the completion of written record sheets for each deposit, cut or structure. Scale drawings were made of each feature in both plan and section. Section drawings were also made of the trench edges in order to demonstrate the depth of deposits. The height (m.A.O.D.) was recorded on the drawings. This was achieved by transferring the level from a bench mark located on Municipal offices on Wood Street (NGR SE 571 037). A full photographic record was also maintained, using colour slide as well as black and white print film.

On completion of the excavation a survey was made to locate the positions of the trenches onto a plan at a scale of 1:200. A Zeiss Elta 4 EDM was used to do this.

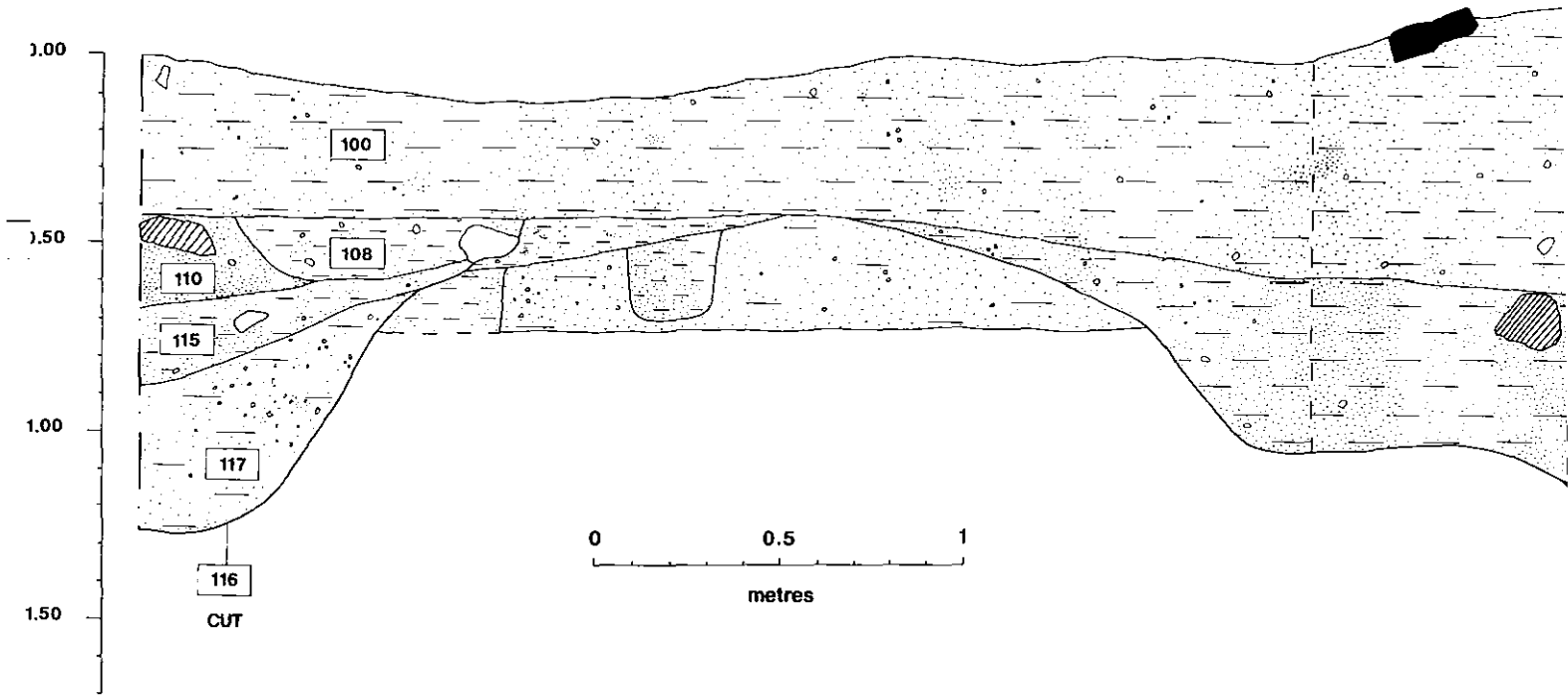
## **4) RESULTS**

Excavation of the trial holes established the presence of archaeological remains throughout the full extent of the evaluated area. It was possible to identify the nature and significance of much of these remains as well as to establish the depth of overlying deposits. This showed that the upper archaeological deposits were located at a surprisingly shallow depth below the present ground surface. This contrasts with nearby sites excavated by the author (e.g. Wood Street and Cleveland Street Car Park) and is likely to be as a result of truncation of upper deposits involved in later building work. Despite this there appears to have been little disturbance of the archaeological deposits which have remained in good condition and well stratified.






### *4.1) Trench A*

Trench A measured 5 metres long by 2 metres at its widest point and was machine excavated to a depth of 0.60-0.70 metres below the present ground surface (fig. 3). As a result of the poor clarity of horizon of the deposits at this depth this machining truncated the upper archaeological material. An examination of the section demonstrated the minimum depth of archaeological deposits to be 0.32 metres below the present ground surface. An extension to the trench was excavated by hand at the southern end at which archaeological features were located at a depth of approximately

section 14

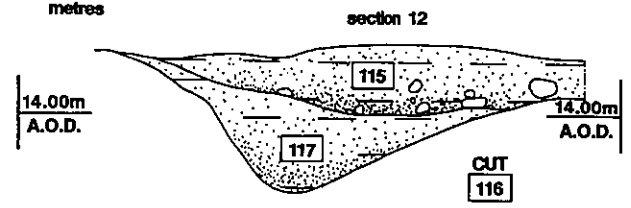
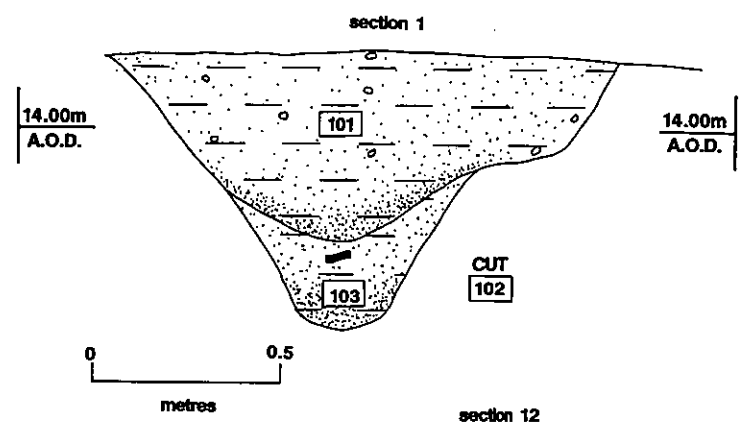
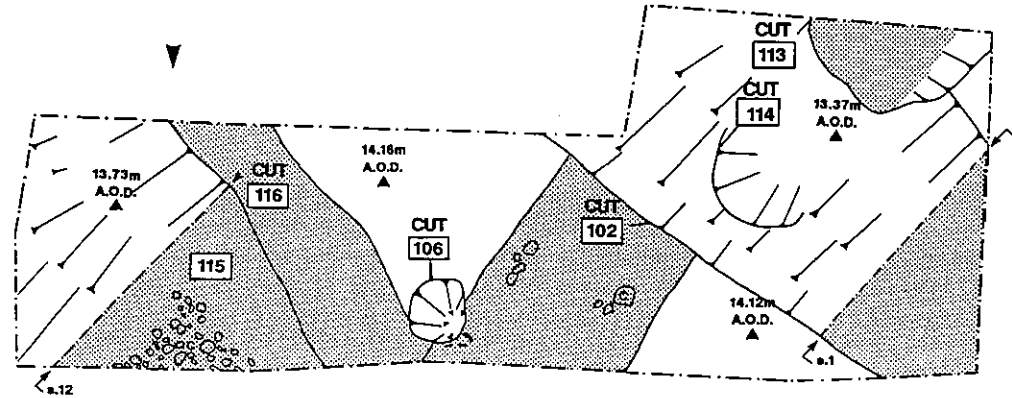
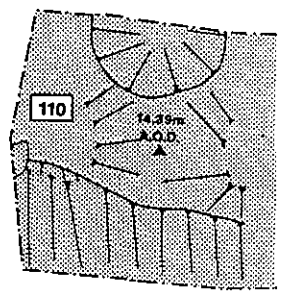
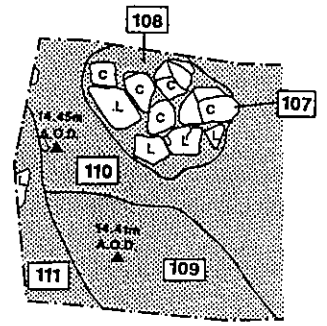






metres (below  
ground surface)



- |   |       |   |           |
|---|-------|---|-----------|
|  | sand  |  | limestone |
|  | silt  |  | brick     |
|  | stone |   |           |

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-  sand
-  gravel
-  gravel
-  bone

-  limestone blocks and river cobbles
-  unexcavated fill

TITLE	
<b>4) Trench A, Plan</b>	
SITE	
<b>Hallgate, Doncaster</b>	
CODE	DATE
<b>DHG 94</b>	<b>Oct. 1994</b>
SCALE	DRAWN



0.35 metres below the present ground surface.

The latest feature in the stratigraphic sequence at the southern end of the trench was a bowl-shaped depression containing a sand silt fill (108, fig. 4) and an area of limestone blocks and cobbles (107). There was no facing or arrangement of courses visible in this structure and so a description of the function at this stage is rather problematic. One possibility is that it is a post-base or similar structure. In appearance, this structure seems to be characteristically medieval in date. However, the sand silt material of 108 contained a number of sherds of Romano-British greyware and so a date of this period is suggested.

The cut for the above feature truncated an earlier ditch feature (116) on its northern edge. This was a V-shaped ditch with a slightly rounded base. The sides were even and sloping with a gradient of approximately 2 in 1. This ditch contained two fills visible in the section. The upper of these (115) consisted of grey brown sand silt with a few small fragments of red burnt clay. This material was underlain by a yellowish brown silty sand basal deposit (117) with occasional charcoal flecks. A number of sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the fill of this ditch strongly suggesting a date from this period. The pottery was mostly locally produced greyware which appeared to be 2nd or 3rd century in date.

To the north of this ditch was a small post-hole (106) measuring 0.30 by 0.35 metres at the surface. This post-hole had a depth of 0.25 metres with the base being slightly off-set from the centre of the feature.

The largest feature within the trench was located at the northern end (102). This was a substantially sized ditch measuring 1.50 metres wide at the surface and with a depth of 0.75 metres at the centre. An examination of the section shows a stepped profile on the south-eastern edge and a smooth profile on the north-western side. This suggests that if this is an enclosure ditch then the space being enclosed lies on the north-western side. The fill of this ditch consisted of two separate deposits (101 and 103). The upper of these (101) filled the bulk of the feature and consisted of dark brown silt sand with occasional charcoal flecks. This contained a wide range of artefactual material including pot, bone, brick, tile, and metal objects. The pottery recovered Romano-British greyware, indicating a date for the feature. The basal fill (103) was of brown silt sand with a low proportion of gravel. Upon completion of the excavation of this feature it became clear that it had been cut through a number of earlier features. Two of these were investigated (113 and 114) and both of these proved to be grave cuts. Cut 114 consisted of a half circular feature in the south-eastern edge of ditch 102. It contained part of the skeleton of one human individual (104, fig. 9). The surviving portion of this skeleton consisted of the skull with the mandible, laid on its side, and part of the thoracic vertebrae and four of the ribs from the right hand side. The condition of these bones found *in-situ* was generally good and once removed from the ground they dried to a hard state. The body had been laid out with the head pointing south-east. The construction of ditch 102 had cut through this burial and removed the remainder of the body. The location of the spine could be seen in the form of a stain in the sand at the base of the ditch.

Cut 113 was a slightly later grave cut visible in the north-western section of ditch 102. This was not fully excavated though the presence of part of one human skull was recorded. From the shape of the grave cut and the location of the skull this body appeared to have been placed on the same alignment as 104.

There was no dating evidence recovered from either of these grave cuts so all dating for these must be relative. They are known to predate ditch 102 which was dated to the 2nd or 3rd century. By how much they predate it is not known. There are two factors which can be considered in this. The fact that ditch 102 has been dug across the location of a series of burials suggests that the site had gone out of use as a cemetery. This is of interest in itself as an indicator of changing land use over time, but also

implies a certain amount of elapsed time in between. The other point is that the spine of burial 104 had left a stain on the undisturbed sand at the base of grave cut. The survival of the vertebrae where it has not been affected by cut 102 suggests that the absence of the remainder of the bones is due to their physical removal by the excavation of the ditch. This phase must therefore have taken place sufficiently late to allow time for the decay of the bone to a point where it stained the sand. The rate of decomposition can vary greatly dependent on local conditions, but clearly it does not occur overnight!. A final point worth noting in this respect is that a minimal amount of excavation of the graves was carried for reasons summarised below. This provided a corresponding opportunity for collecting artefactual remains. Given the abundance of the ceramic assemblage from other deposits it would be expected that a fuller excavation would provide adequate dating evidence.

In summary it is suggested that the presence of the grave cuts represents the use of the site as a cemetery and that it would appear that this was during the early Roman period at the latest. At some point thereafter the land use pattern has changed and ditch 102 was excavated truncating existing burials.

A further cut was visible within the central part of the site. This was also truncated by ditch 102 and was filled by dark brown silt sand. It was positioned on the same alignment and grave cuts 113 and 114 and fragments of bone were visible at the surface of the fill. Based on these observations it seems reasonable to suggest that this also represents a grave cut. It was decided not to excavate this feature for a number of reasons. The restrictions of space caused by working in a trial trench are unsuitable for excavating human burials and the restrictions on time in a field evaluation context compound this. In addition it was judged that the recognition of the presence of a cemetery known to be early Roman at the latest was sufficient to satisfy the criteria of the brief in this instance.

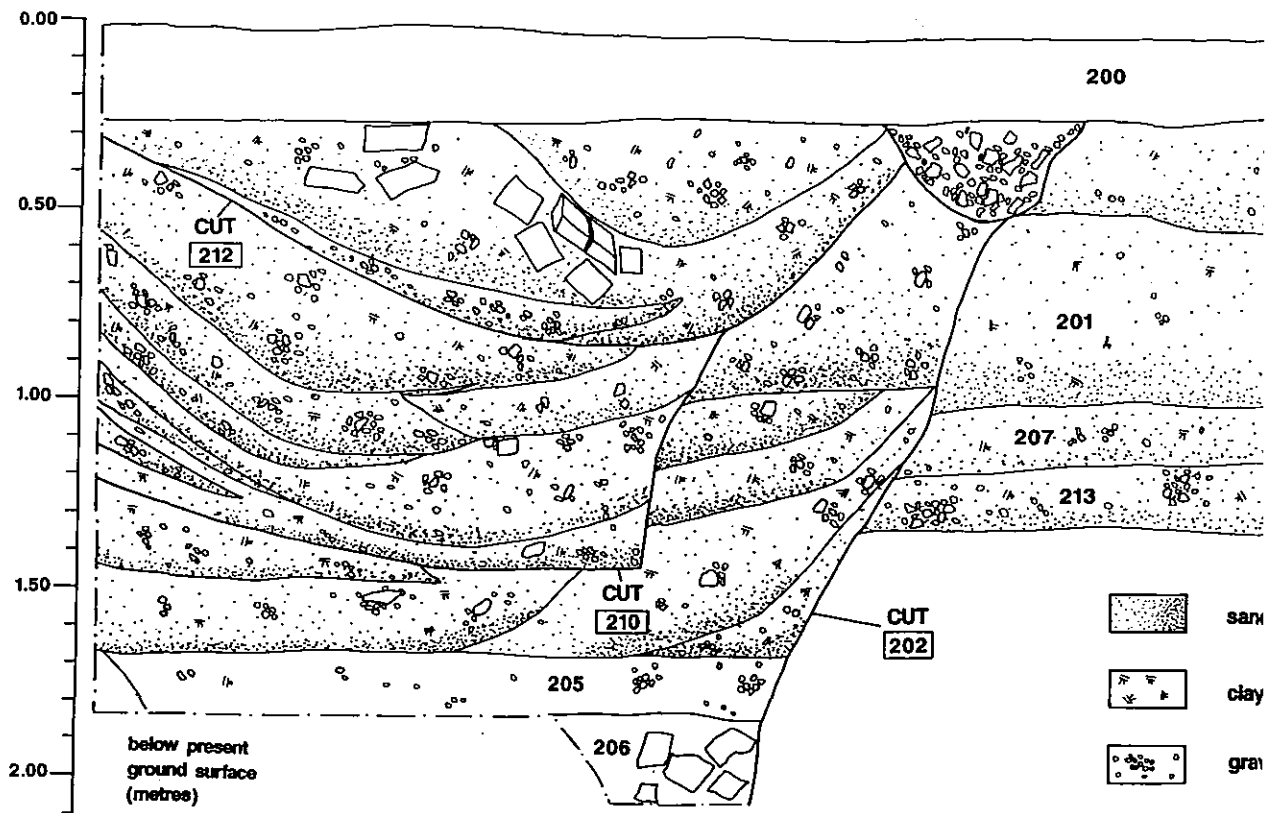
#### *4.2) Trench B*

Trench B was excavated by machine to a depth of 0.95 metres below the present ground surface (fig. 5), with all subsequent excavation carried out by hand. The final section of this trench shows this part of the site to consist of a series of clay sand deposits containing a variable amount of gravel. The pottery recovered from successive deposits showed that the layers were well stratified with little or no mixing of material. Deposit 207 containing only medieval pottery while the immediately underlying deposit (213) contained only Romano-British material.

Cutting through all of the deposits at this point was ditch 202 (figs. 5 and 6), the largest feature located during the evaluation. Given the restrictions of working within a trial trench, it was not possible to recover a full profile of this ditch, though judging from the trench section a width of at least 3.7 metres seems likely. The depth of the feature is also unknown as excavation had to be stopped for health and safety reasons at a depth of 2 metres below the present ground surface.

The chronology of this feature is confusing given our present knowledge of it, but it appears to be unique in the experience of the author. The western edge of the ditch is cut from immediately below the made up ground layer (200). This clearly dates this cut to the post-medieval period as it places it stratigraphically later than deposits containing early post-medieval material (201). A continuous cut line can be traced down to 2 metres below the present ground surface where a ditch has been excavated into undisturbed natural ground. At the lowest point the feature is filled by deposit 206. This is a dark clayey sand layer containing exclusively Romano-British pottery and a high proportion of masonry remains. This clearly represents a Romano-British ditch, which may have had a rampart on the western edge. Visible within the section is a recut of the ditch (210). All pottery found from above this cut was post-medieval in date while all material from below was medieval. The implication is that this feature

section 8



may represent a boundary or similar ditch which was in use from the Roman period through until the post-medieval period. Unfortunately, the lack of a full section available made it impossible to test this theory within the context of the evaluation. This is clearly a significant find and worthy of a full and detailed investigation. The presence of cut 212 shows the modern episode in relation to the feature. A scoop has been removed to be filled by a large number of bricks. Perhaps this was necessary to produce firm ground during the last episode of building on the site. The presence of such a large ditch over a long period of time could be expected to have left the ground softer than elsewhere on the site.

At the western end of the trench a single excavated feature (208) was located at the base of the machine cut trench, cutting into deposit 207. This was a shallow sub-square feature with a depth of 0.10 metres. The pottery found within it suggests an early post-medieval date.

Deposit 218 was found to underlie 213. Two features of Romano-British date were located at this level (214 and 216). 214 was a narrow ditch cut across the base of the trial trench with a noticeable curve. This gives it an impression of enclosing an area to the south-west of the excavated part of this ditch. The feature had a width at the surface of 0.50 metres and a maximum depth of 0.60 metres. The profile shows a sharp break of slope and a very rounded base. The pottery recovered from it was mainly of locally produced greyware, though two small fragments of Samian ware were also found.

The other feature (216) was a circular post-hole with a surface diameter of 0.40 metres. Assuming that 214 does represent an enclosure then this post-hole would be lying immediately inside it.

#### *4.3) Trench C*

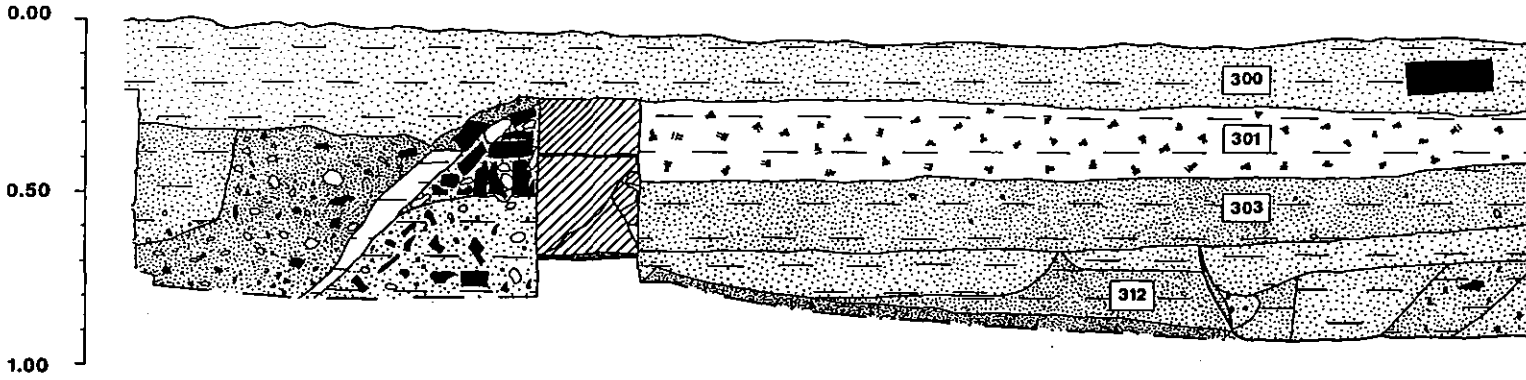
Within trench C, the upper archaeological deposits were located at a depth of 0.55 metres below the present ground surface (fig. 7). An initial machine cut trench was excavated with a width of 0.60 metres, but at one point the machining was noted to have partly truncated an archaeological feature (302). The trench was then widened by hand up to the modern brick wall. This produced a trench with a width of 1.7 metres.

The archaeological features within the trench represent two main phases of occupation. The first of these phases was during the Romano-British period, represented by a shallow pit (302) containing a complete cremation urn and a possible inhumation at the south-eastern end of the trench. Cut 302 was found to have a depth of 0.60 metres and a width of 1.00 metres. It could not be fully exposed in plan because of the edge of the trial trench and so its shape is not known at this stage. It was filled by a series of silt sand deposits, some of which contained charcoal and fragments of burnt bones. The pottery assemblage recovered from this feature consisted mostly of Romano-British greyware, but with a single and probably intrusive sherd of medieval pottery. The Roman pottery found within this feature included a complete and fine greyware urn containing fragments of cremated bone. The presence of this piece, together with the charcoal and other fragments of cremated bone clearly indicate this as a Roman cremation pit. A bulk soil sample collected from this feature was passed through a flotation tank and sieved. No carbonised seed remains were recovered, though the residue contained a significant amount of cremated bone fragments.

Further cuts could be seen to be present in the vicinity of this feature. However, the poor clarity of horizon at the surface made them indistinguishable at the surface. Given this problem, and the confines of working within a trial trench, it was clear that these features could not be competently excavated in stratigraphic order without extending the area to be examined. For this reason there was no attempt to fully excavate all archaeological features, but their presence is noted. As in the case of trenches A and B

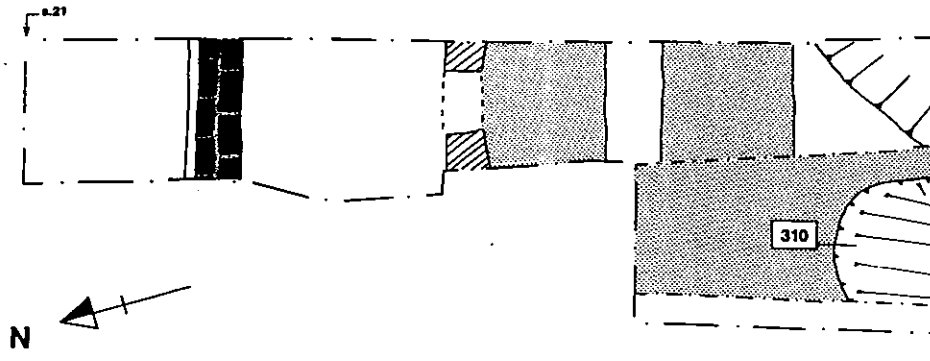
NW

section 21



metres (below ground surface)

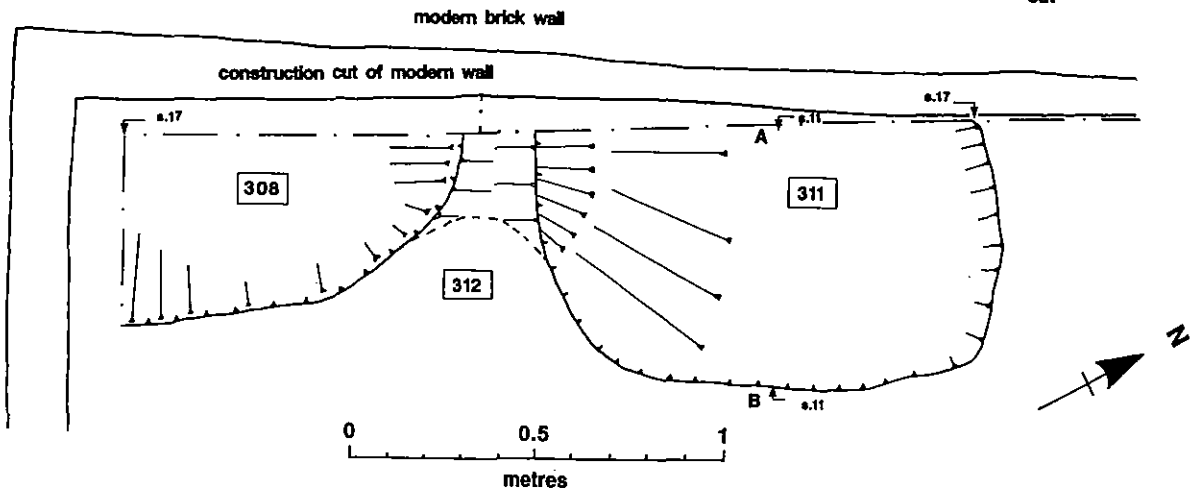
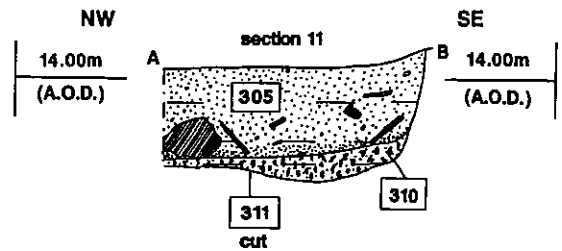
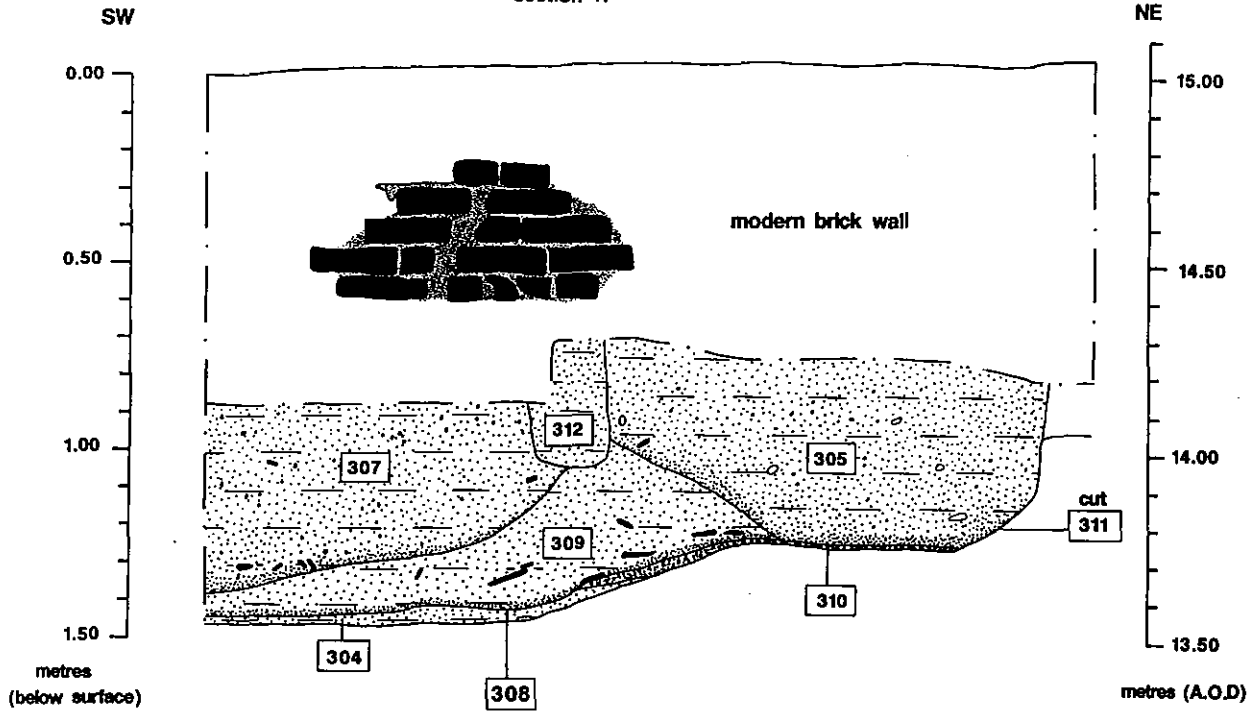
- |   |      |   |       |   |                |   |            |
|---|------|---|-------|---|----------------|---|------------|
|    | silt |    | clay  |    | stone          |    | burnt bone |
|  | sand |  | brick |  | limestone wall |  | charcoal   |



0 1 2  
metres

 areas of unexcavated fill

section 17



TITLE	8) Trench C, Kiln	
SITE	Halgate, Doncaster	
CODE	DHG 94	DATE
SCALE		Oct. 1994
		DRAWN

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**FIELD &**  
**RESEARCH UNIT**  
*Elmwood and Museums Building,*  
*Elm Street, Sheffield S1 4PL*  
 Tel: (0742) 734234, Fax: (0742) 736920

it was judged that the requirements of the brief had been met and that ground disturbance should therefore be kept to a minimum. However, it was also noted that the edge of cut 308, part of a medieval feature discussed below, had truncated an earlier feature. A number of bone fragments were visible in this material, suggesting the presence of an inhumation at the south-eastern end of the trench.

The Romano-British cemetery found on this site is therefore represented both by a cremation and inhumations. It is not known whether these are contemporary or whether they show a change in burial practice. However, given the comparative lack of post-depositional disturbance noted it is to be expected that this could be determined by a fuller excavation.

The medieval phase of this trench was represented by a pottery kiln (figs. 8 and 9) consisting of two cuts (308 and 309). 308 was a sub-circular cut that was excavated only in a quarter section because it had been truncated by the modern brick wall. It had a very sharp break of slope, steep sides and a flat base. Extrapolating from what was visible in plan, a reasonable estimate of the full size of this feature would suggest a width of 1.00 metres (approx.) and a length of 1.8 metres (approx.). The maximum depth was 0.80 metres below the top of the cut. A greater proportion of cut 311 was visible within the trial trench. This also had a sharp break of slope, steep sides and a flat base. The length of this cut was 1.30 metres and the width approximately 1.00 metres. This cut was more shallow than the other, at 0.50 metres below the top of the cut. These cuts were joined at the base, as they were part of a single kiln. For a fuller discussion on the date and use of the kiln, see the pottery report by Dr. C.G. Cumberpatch (appendix i).

The fill of this feature consisted of four separate deposits (305,307,309 and 310). Of these, 307 was the upper deposit of cut 308 and 305 was the upper deposit of cut 311. 309 was a basal fill underlying both of these deposits. 310 consisted of a thin charcoal layer at the base of cut 311. A thin layer of burnt sand (304) lined the edges of cut 308. This was not a deliberately placed lining to this cut but represents the burning of the ground caused by a *in-situ* fire. With the exception of layer 310, all of the fills of this feature consisted of sand silt material. A very large number of pottery sherds were recovered from this feature. This was particularly marked in the lower part of 305 and 309, where the pottery consisted of up to 50% of the fill in places. A description of this material is included in the summary pottery report produced by Dr. C.G. Cumberpatch (appendix i).

Bulk soil samples from deposits 309 and 310 were found to contain a small number of carbonised seed remains. The presence of such a small amount of material is probably not significant.

A further two features were identified, but not excavated, towards the north-western end of the trench. The furthest of these was immediately adjacent to (and presumably truncated by) a post-medieval limestone wall of unknown date. This appeared to be the south-eastern wall of a cellared area and marks the edge of the area containing Roman and medieval archaeology at this point.

## 5) DISCUSSION

The excavations described above represent a limited investigation, aimed at producing an assessment of the nature of the archaeology with the minimum amount of disturbance. This approach has been successful in identifying the presence of significant archaeological remains representing a multi-period occupation of the site.

The earliest deposits are from the Romano-British period and indicate the presence the

use of the site as a cemetery. This is shown by the presence, within a limited area, of a single cremation, and at least two inhumations. The preservation of the bone, both cremated and uncremated, has been seen to be generally good. The juxtaposition of the Roman features has shown that the land use during this period was dynamic rather than static. This was most clearly demonstrated by the presence of ditch 102, cutting through burial cuts 113 and 114.

The importance of the presence of these remains can be seen from two viewpoints. Firstly, there is the delicate nature with which we may regard the presence of human remains. The second point of view is from an academic research into the Roman Civil settlement of Doncaster. Doncaster developed as a settlement after the establishment of a fort on the site presently occupied by St. Georges Church. Very little is known on the

layout of this settlement, though it has been suggested (Buckland 1986) that it was centred on land now bordered by Baxtergate, Market Place, Scot Lane and High Street. It was common practice for Roman towns (J. Wachter 1974) to locate their cemeteries alongside a road leading out of the town. This is the sort of area occupied by the area of concern here. Hallgate is on the route of the Roman road leading to Lincoln. A very few finds of human remains, probably from the Roman period, have been found from within this area. However, these have only been in the form of scattered individuals, and mostly not located recently enough to have been subject to scientific excavation and analysis. In 1902 a mound was levelled in Corporation Paddock and several Roman cremations recovered (Buckland 1986). Other Roman burials are noted from Christ Church (1887) and Hallgate and Hall Cross Hill (1793). The only human remains from this period and area which were found under conditions of an archaeological investigation were from the site of the Law Courts and Police Station between Waterdale and College Road. In this case, though, there were only a few pieces of cremated bone. Elsewhere in Doncaster, a single cremation was recovered from a site on Barnsley Road, though this may not have been related to the Roman settlement of Doncaster.

There has therefore been no investigation of a collection of burials related to the Roman civil settlement at Doncaster, and certainly not under the controlled conditions of a modern archaeological excavation. This sort of work can make an important contribution to the understanding of a past society. This may take the form of attitude to death and social ranking, which may be reflected in the manner of burial and presence of grave goods. A paleo-pathological approach can also provide information on the health and diet of the population, as well as the pattern of death in terms of age and sex.

The second phase represented is the medieval occupation of the site. This appears to have been characterised by the production of pottery. The Hallgate pottery industry of medieval Doncaster is a recognised production centre (Buckland et al 1979, McCarthy and Brooks 1988) with examples of its products being found throughout the region and from as far away as York and Hedon (Humberside). The industry was named from a kiln site located on the opposite side of the Hallgate to the site under discussion here. A single kiln was excavated there and described by Mr J. Musty (in Buckland et al 1979) as being of type 2a, with opposed flues and no internal structure. It was dated to a period from the late 12th to early 14th century.

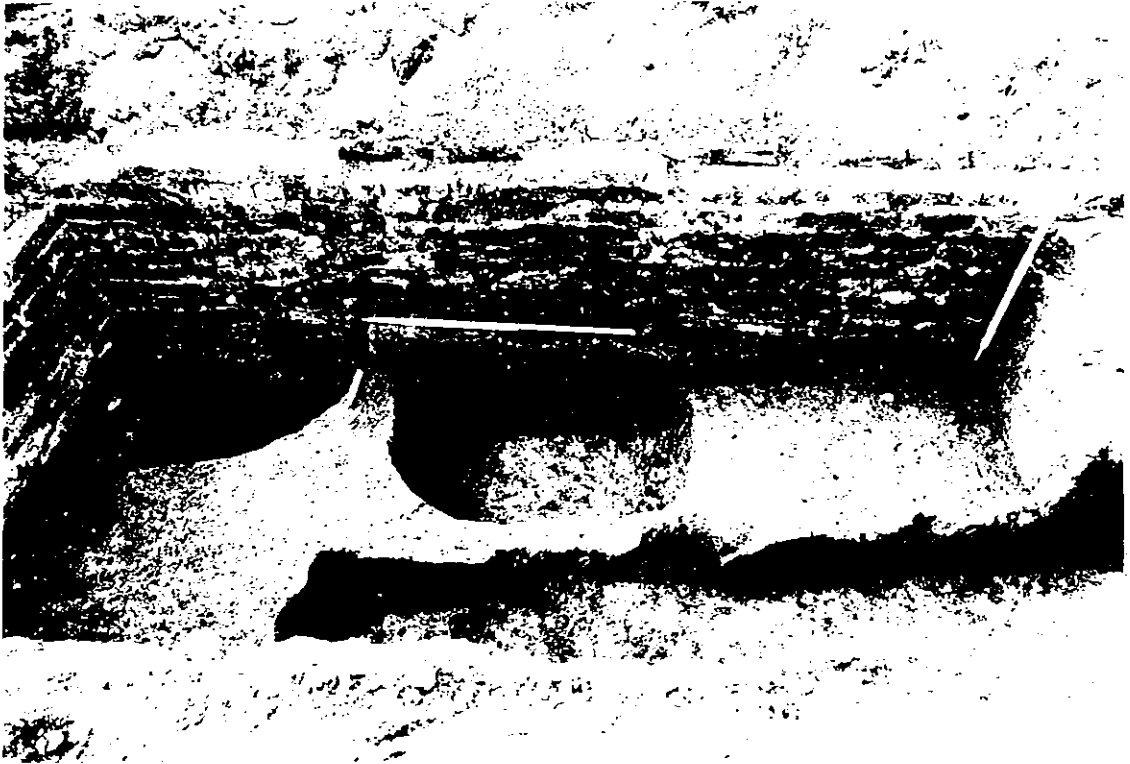
In contrast to this Dr. C.G. Cumberpatch (appendix i) has suggested that the kiln found on the site in question here is of the structurally simpler type 1a. He has also tentatively dated it to the 11th to early 12th century period. The implications of the above are clear in that this site may represent an early phase of the production of the dominant medieval pottery industry of the region. A study of this is vital in terms of research into medieval production and trade within South Yorkshire.

In examining a pottery production site, it is important to be aware that the kiln is not the only structure associated with production (J. Bosworth 1982). Other structures



almost certainly to be located within the site would be for clay preparation and storage, fuel storage and the forming of the pots themselves. An identification and spatial analysis of these areas could provide a good deal of information on the scale and methods of the pottery production which cannot be deduced from just the kiln.

The final component of the site to be noted in this discussion is the large ditch located at the eastern end of trench B. As stated in section 4.2, this appeared to be a multi-period feature, with finds dating from the Roman to the post-medieval periods. Such a continuity in use of a boundary away from a main street is unique in the experience of the author, and makes this feature of considerable interest.



Medieval  
kiln  
(above)

Burial  
remains  
(right)



Fig. 9

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APPENDIX i

Pottery Report

Dr. C.G. Cumberpatch

# **Roman and Medieval Pottery from Excavations in Hallgate, Doncaster 1994**

C.G. Cumberpatch BA PhD  
Archaeological Consultant

## **1.0 Introduction**

The pottery from the evaluative excavations in Hallgate, Doncaster was examined by the author on October 18th 1994. The intention was to assess the nature, quality and potential of the assemblage and to comment on its wider significance rather than producing a full catalogue or detailed report.

## **2.0 The Roman Pottery**

The principal importance of the Roman element of the site is clearly the cemetery, but the pottery assemblage, though small, is not without significance. The bulk of the pottery is clearly of local manufacture, probably from the potteries known to exist in the Cantley and Rossington areas. From our knowledge of the products of these potteries, and their appearance in a number of well dated contexts, it should be possible to date the burials, particularly the cremation found in the complete fineware rusticated vessel. The investigation of the types of vessels associated with the burial may allow some insight into the nature of the burial rites.

The connections maintained by the inhabitants of the Roman town with other parts of the Empire are represented by imported pottery, notably the Samian ware and amphora sherds. Pottery from elsewhere in Britain includes mortaria (probably from the Midlands) and colour coated ware (probably from the Nene Valley).

Of particular interest are the sherds of coarse shell tempered ware, particularly the upper body and rim of a jar and the pedestal base. Although occurring in contexts dating to the period of Roman occupation, it is probable that these sherds represent a continuation of earlier, native traditions of pottery production. In view of the fact that Iron Age rural sites in South and West Yorkshire are notorious for their lack of pottery, the potential identification of an indigenous tradition is of the highest importance to our understanding of the nature of pre-Roman society and of the formation of a distinctive Romano-British society in the region.

## **3.0 The Medieval Pottery**

The medieval pottery assemblage shows, at first sight, a considerable degree of homogeneity. The pottery is red, oxidised and fine to sandy in texture. The bulk of the identifiable vessels are jugs or pitchers with simple pulled lips and strap or rod handles. Two of the handles have been formed from twisted

rods. Glaze is patchy and varies in colour from clear to green. It displays the typical pitted character of so-called 'splash glaze', normally thought to have been applied as a powder and vitrified during the firing process (Hayfield 1984, but cf. Barton 1990)

Closer inspection of the sherds shows that there is a degree of regular variation within the group, most notably in the fabrics. These range from a fine homogeneous type with few visible inclusions to a coarser, sandy textured type containing fine quartz grains. A number of sherds also contained rounded, red inclusions, most probably grains of haematite. This is of considerable significance because of the connection with the fabrics identified by Buckland, Dolby, Hayfield and Magilton in their publication of the pottery from earlier rescue excavations in Hallgate (1979). Amongst the pottery from these excavations (which will be referred to as Hallgate I), three distinct fabric types were identified, Hallgate A, B and C. Only fabric A has a direct parallel amongst the vessels at the sherds from the recent excavation, in the finer of the fabric types. The presence of the red ferrous grit in the coarser sherds recalls fabric C, the rarest and earliest of the fabrics found at Hallgate I.

The majority of the sherds were undecorated, but a small number had wavy combed decoration externally. The glaze varied in colour from clear to a variety of shades of green. Some sherds showed the effects of poor firing in the quality of the glaze. The significance of the fact that the glaze was of the 'splashed' type will be discussed in section 6.0 below.

The presence of the kiln (discussed in section 5.0) prompted the examination of the sherds with a view to the identification of kiln 'wasters'. A number of sherds were noted with glaze covering the broken edges while others had become fused together during the firing process. It was notable however that there were no examples of vessels which had failed spectacularly during the firing process, although such material is to be expected in the vicinity of a kiln. It would seem probable that, because of the small scale of the excavations, the dumps of such material were missed. Future excavations on the site, should they take place, might be expected to locate such dumps.

A number of other types of pottery were noted amongst the red oxidised jug fragments. These included the rim of a fine Gritty ware vessel with some similarity to examples from West Yorkshire. A sherd in an unidentified fabric contained abundant grains of what appeared to be limestone, a rare inclusion in pottery from South Yorkshire.

#### **4.0 Later and post-medieval pottery**

An important aspect of the pottery assemblages (both Roman and medieval) was the absence of later material mixed with them. There appears to have been little in the way of disturbance and little intrusive or residual pottery was noted.

Later deposits contained pottery of recent character, but late medieval and post-medieval pottery was conspicuous by its rarity. This is an unusual situation in Doncaster and would appear to indicate a relative lack of later disturbance on the site.

## 5.0 The kiln

As described in the excavation report the kiln consisted of a firing chamber and stoke pit. There was no evidence of any internal structure, and it appeared to have only a single flue, although the truncation related to the insertion of the later brick wall may have removed the evidence for others. In his classification of kiln types Musty (1974) has termed such kilns 'type 1A', citing examples from Cassington, Torksey, Ipswich and Grimston. In his discussion of the kiln from Hallgate I he has noted that type 1 kilns are unknown in Yorkshire whereas double flued kilns have been found on the 14th century site Upper Heaton in West Yorkshire. In a more recent survey McCarthy and Brooks (1988:42) have noted that type 1 kilns are commonest in eastern England, first appearing in the pre-Conquest period. Their occurrence in the later medieval period is relatively rare and by the later 13th century multi-flued kilns (type 3) were becoming established in the Midlands and Yorkshire. While the proposal of a simple technological progression from simple to complex kiln types is unsustainable on both philosophical and practical grounds, there does seem to be a case for arguing that if the Hallgate kiln is a single flued type (as seems likely) then it probably belongs to the earlier post-Conquest period. The wider issue of the dating of the pottery will be addressed in the next section.

## 6.0 The date of the medieval pottery

A full and detailed examination of the pottery from Hallgate and its comparison with material of known date from other excavations will ultimately allow a reasonably accurate date for the assemblage to be determined. For the present a number of less precise indicators can be used to suggest a broad date range for the material.

The pottery from Hallgate I (described by Buckland *et al.* 1979) was decorated with suspension glaze (lead based glaze compounds in a clay slurry), a technique which was adopted in the Yorkshire and Humberside region during the third quarter of the 12th century (Hayfield 1984). Prior to this splash glazing had predominated, probably beginning during the 11th century. An early medieval kiln, excavated in Doncaster Market Place in 1977, contained sherds of splash glazed pottery in a coarse gritty fabric (Hayfield 1984:41). On the basis of comparison with the material from Hallgate I and other sites in the region, Hayfield has suggested that this pottery was active during the later 11th and early 12th centuries. The pottery from Hallgate clearly differs from that from the Market Place kiln in a number of respects, but the character of the glaze suggests

a similar date for the industry. Taken together with the relatively simple nature of the kiln (albeit acknowledging the questionable status of a techno-chronological scheme applied to kilns) this would suggest that the pottery found in Hallgate is of 11th or early 12th century date.

## 7.0 Conclusions

The excavations in Hallgate, though small, have produced two important groups of material. The Roman pottery offers the opportunity to date the burials (notably the cremation), to contribute to an understanding of the burial rites and to provide some insight into the continuation of earlier craft traditions beside those properly defined as 'Roman'.

The medieval assemblage, derived from the first medieval kiln to be excavated in Doncaster under scientific conditions, will provide a crucial insight into the establishment of craft production in the early medieval town. Further excavation and full analysis of the material will contribute notably to our understanding of the organisation, location and technology of early medieval industry in the region. The characterisation of the products will have an impact throughout South and West Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North Nottinghamshire, and will contribute to our understanding of the nature of the early medieval economy of these areas.

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