

Archaeological observation of the  
Alcester Flood Alleviation Scheme,  
Area 1: Oversley Bridge and  
Area 3A: South of Stratford Road, Alcester



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## Summary

Archaeological observation of desilting work around Oversley Green Bridge, part of the Alcester Flood Alleviation Scheme (Area 1) revealed no remains associated with the Roman river crossing. However, additional observation during topsoil stripping and repair work on the flood banks (Area 3A) revealed significant archaeological deposits in an area to the south of the Stratford Road. These consisted of the wall foundations of a possible 2nd-century strip building and a possible road surface along with several areas of rubble. A large amount of Roman pottery and building material was recovered from around the walls and from adjacent spoil heaps. A metal detector survey of the spoil heaps produced over 40 Roman coins and a few medieval and post-medieval finds.

## 1. Introduction

1.1. In summer 2001 the Environment Agency carried out a programme of desilting work around Oversley Bridge (Area 1) and repair of existing flood defences in Alcester as part of the Flood Alleviation Scheme. The Alcester Flood Alleviation Scheme involved a programme of repair and enhancement of existing flood banks and construction of new flood banks. The scheme included work in four areas around the town (Fig 1) including Oversley Bridge (Area 1), Colebrook Close and Gas House Lane (Area 2, Warwickshire Museum 2001), south of Stratford Road (Area 3A) and Newport Drive (Area 3B, Warwickshire Museum forthcoming) and behind School Road (Area 4, Warwickshire Museum 2006). Many of these areas coincided with parts of the Roman town of Alcester and the works might potentially have had an impact on the buried archaeological remains. The works to the south of the Stratford Road and the east of Bleachfield Street (Area 3A, Fig. 1) were within an area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Warwickshire 128, Alcester Roman Town, which contains deposits associated with Roman settlement regarded as being of national importance. It was therefore possible that archaeological deposits associated with the settlement might have been disturbed. The Environment Agency sought advice from English Heritage and Warwickshire County Council prior to the commencement of the work. The County Planning Archaeologist produced an Archaeological Brief for the work and Scheduled Monument Consent was granted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for this part of the scheme (Ref: HSD9/2/241b pt31). It was a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

1.2. A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of stripping of topsoil, in accordance with the Brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist and subsequent agreed limited excavation was commissioned from the Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology Projects Group and carried out in July and August 2001. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code AL71.

## 2. Location

2.1. The site of the main area of flood bank repair renewal work (Area 3A) was located south of Stratford Road and west of Bleachfield Street and centred around SP 092 579 in the parish of Alcester, Warwickshire. The desilting work was carried out in the River Arrow by Oversley Bridge (Area 1) at SP 4093 2569 (Fig. 1).

2.2. The underlying geology of the site is Alluvium or Terrace Gravels (British Geological Survey 1974).

2.3. The site lay within open pasture fields at the time of the work.



Fig. 1: Alcester Flood Alleviation Scheme and Roman Alcester

### 3. Methodology

3.1. In Area 3A the initial phase of archaeological fieldwork involved observation of the removal of topsoil along the line of the proposed flood bank repairs. An archaeologist was present to observe the work associated with the existing flood banks. In order to facilitate the differentiation of survey areas and the location of finds or features the flood banks were allocated separate numbers: Bank 1 extended south-westwards from Stratford Road, Bank 2 extended west to east for approximately 100m and Bank 3 extended southwards and parallel with Bleachfield Street (Fig. 2).

3.2. As a result of Romano-British wall foundations being revealed during the movement of machinery a revised strategy was agreed to record the revealed archaeological remains. This involved a small team of archaeologists cleaning up the affected area of approximately 25m long and 6m wide. No further archaeological excavation was undertaken in this area, but the revealed extent of remains were recorded. The archaeological remains were subsequently covered with a protective layer of sand and geotextile fabric.

3.3. Several coins were recovered during the initial work and permission was sought to undertake a limited metal detector survey of the stripped areas and flood banks. Consent for the use of a metal detector was granted, but due to the state of the works the subsequent survey was limited to spoil heaps and the top of existing flood banks.

3.4. A unique sequence of context numbers was allotted to the recorded deposits and features during the archaeological investigation. The general topsoil deposit was recorded as (300); however suffixes were added (300A (Bank 1), 300B (Bank 2), 300C (Bank 3)) to allow finds to be more easily located. A full list of finds is contained in Appendix A and a list of context numbers is provided in Appendix B.

### 4. Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1. Alcester (*Alauna*) was the major Roman town in the region and the excavated evidence has been summarised in a number of publications (Booth 1980; Cracknell 1996, Booth and Evans 2001). Evidence for pre-Roman activity is so far restricted to a single Neolithic (c.3500bc - 1800bc) pit and a few isolated features and residual pottery of mid-late Iron Age date (c.400bc - AD43). There is, as yet, no suggestion of Pre Roman-Iron Age occupation on the site of the later Roman town.

4.2. It is possible that the town evolved around a mid 1st-century fort located in the Bleachfield Street area, which replaced a short lived fort, indicated by a cropmark at Lower Oversley Lodge on a high ridge that overlooks Alcester from the south (Booth & Evans 2001). The town probably grew from a small scale settlement (*vicus*), around the later fort and was situated on the junction of two important roads (Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record WA 4495, Fig 1), Ryknild Street (SMR WA 445) and the Droitwich Salt Way and its continuation westwards towards Stratford and the Fosse Way (WA 446). Part of the town, to the north of the present Stratford Road, was a defended area that was enclosed by a rampart and ditch in the 2nd century. The town defences were enhanced and extended by the construction of a circuit wall in the later 4th century (Fig. 1).

4.3. A large area of land to the south of the modern Stratford Road and west of Bleachfield Street formed an extra-mural suburb of the Roman town and was probably quite densely occupied during the Romano-British period. The area crossed by the flood defences forms part of the legally protected area of Alcester

Roman town (Warwickshire Scheduled Ancient Monument Number 128). Cropmarks visible on aerial photographs including the site show a curving Roman road (SMR WA 525) to the south of the modern Stratford Road and Oversley Road

Fig. 2: Site location and areas observed (Area 3A)



(Fig. 2). This road probably formed a street with buildings on either side. A small street can be seen on an aerial photograph linking this road with the line of a major Roman Road to Stratford (SMR WA 446), which is also clearly visible. Other cropmarks clearly show property boundaries or enclosures aligned on the main Roman road.

4.4. A geophysical survey in 1975 (SMR WA 4757) in close proximity to the site (Poulton 1975), revealed the course of streets to the south of the Roman road to Stratford (SMR WA 446). The survey demonstrated that the area had undergone considerable development with buildings aligned on these streets (SMR WA 525) and indicated that the suburb extended towards the river. This field was ploughed in 1985 and subsequent fieldwalking revealed spreads of Roman pottery, tile and building rubble in the area previously subject to geophysical surveys (Parker-Pearson 1985).

4.5. Another geophysical survey in 1990 to the north and west of the site showed some anomalies, which were likely to represent Roman occupation (SMR WA 7186), along with some modern features (Geophysical Surveys 1990).

4.6. The construction of the flood barrier in 1970, to the south-west of WA 446, revealed a Roman road WA 454 aligned north-east to south-west. This was thought to be a spur from Ryknild Street that may have bypassed the southern part of the town. This road was previously known from cropmark evidence and two phases of early timber buildings were found on the western side of the road. These were apparently replaced by later buildings with stone footings situated along either side of the street. The eastern buildings were succeeded by further late timber structures (SMR WA 520).

4.7. To the east the construction of the flood barrier south of the Stratford Road in 1973 revealed extensive occupation deposits, primarily at the south end. These



Fig. 3: Detail of Eyre's map of 1760 (WRO/Z120(u))

included 2nd-century timber buildings succeeded by a substantial 3rd-/4th-century stone building, which produced large quantities of decorated wall plaster (Taylor 1973). A final phase included a rubble platform with timber slots at the edges (SMR WA 518).

4.8. At the entrance to the modern football ground an area of herringbone pattern pavement (SMR WA 515) has been uncovered.

4.9. To the north of Bank 2 excavations were undertaken in 1982-3 in advance of the construction of light industrial units south of Stratford Road (SMR WA 3787) and a 2nd-century gravel surface and gully were revealed. Few of the other features encountered such as a posthole, a foundation slot and a clay floor could be dated (Cracknell 1989, 40-5). The area was also investigated in 1989 (SMR WA 7196 and 7290), but little more was revealed.

4.10. Immediately to the north-west of the site of Bank 2, B. W. Davis opened a series of trenches in the Bleachfield Street Allotments in 1925 (SMR WA 521). P. Chatwin recorded that during these excavations Davis found a gravel road aligned parallel to Bleachfield Street (SMR WA 516). The trenches within this area also encountered at least two major buildings although insufficient information survives regarding their exact locations. H. V. Hughes seems to have excavated in this area after noticing the poverty of the crops at the south end of the Allotments. No plan showing Hughes' trenches survives, but the published description implies considerable excavations (Hughes 1960, 10-18). A 1st-century road was built over by a large building suspected of being a fourth century winged corridor type villa, complete with hypocaust (SMR WA 3884), which was probably part of the same one mentioned earlier by Davis.

4.11. Further to the north of the allotment, amateur excavations at 18 Bleachfield Street (SMR WA 4899), in 1985 and 1986 revealed traces of stone walled buildings possibly of 1st- to 2nd-century date.

4.12. The occupation of this part of the Roman town clearly extended to the west of the site and to the east and west of Bleachfield Street itself as sites have frequently revealed plenty of evidence for successive periods of occupation from the 1st to 4th centuries. Excavations undertaken in the mid 1960s (SMR WA 514) to the north-west of the site revealed a sequence of 1st- and 2nd-century timber structures replaced by later masonry buildings aligned on Roman road WA 446 including pre-Flavian (AD 68-96) timber buildings recorded in 1981 (SMR WA 3791) (Booth 1989). Foundations of a stone building (SMR WA 7205) recorded during construction of new houses in 1987 (Cracknell 1987).

4.13. Romano-British pottery was recovered some 70m to the west of the flood bank at 68 and 72 Bleachfield Street (SMR WA 7270 and 8372), (Warwickshire Museum 1994). In the allotments just to the south of this area two Roman brooches were also found (SMR WA 3881).

4.14. A former course of the Arrow has been suggested to the east of the flood banks. Notes by W. A. Seaby of work in 1927 suggested the site of an old ford (SMR WA 522) possibly some 50m west of the present course of the river. The river is shown immediately adjacent to the old Stratford Road on maps as late as 1946.

4.15. Burials have been found alongside the River Arrow (SMR WA 442 and 522). It was illegal to bury the dead within the limits of a Roman town and these burials probably represent the limits of the settlement at the time of burial. Burials were also reportedly found in 1958 in an area east of Bleachfield Street (SMR WA 447), but this is less than certain.

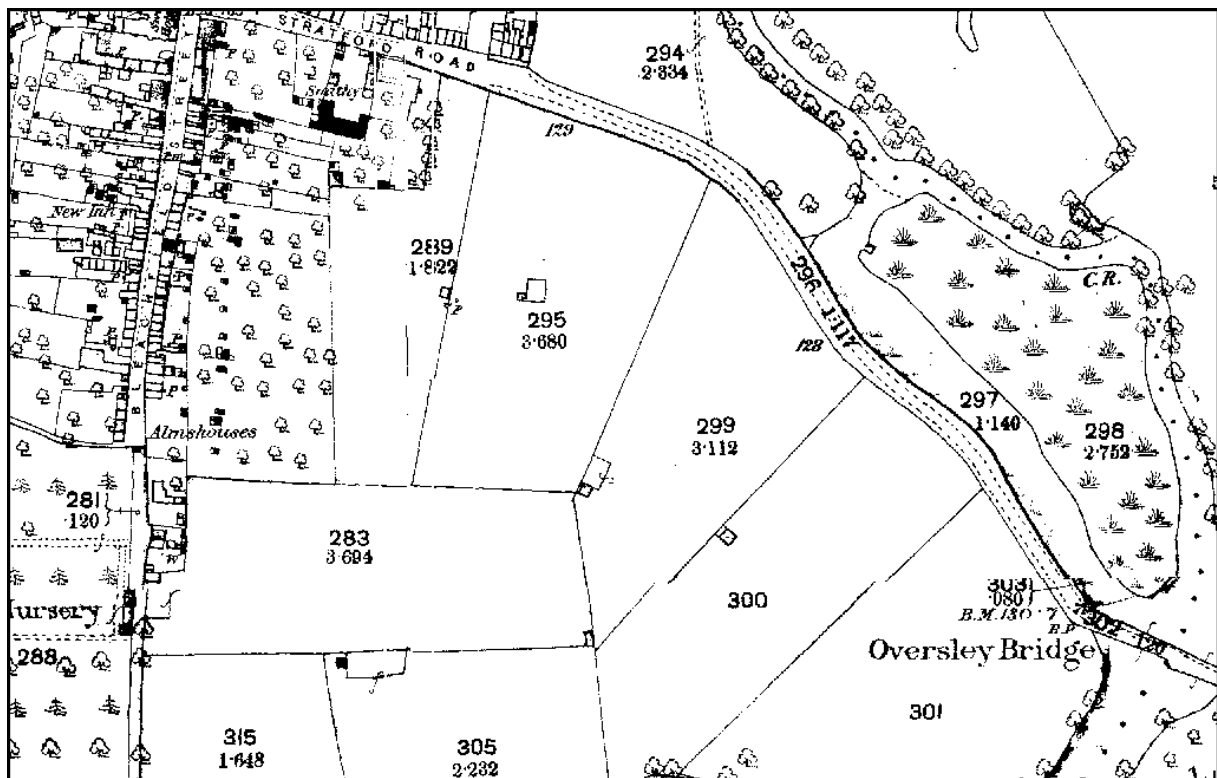


Fig. 4: Detail of First Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1887

4.16. There is insufficient evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation in Alcester to suggest how the town progressed in the centuries immediately following the Roman period. By the medieval period Alcester was an established market town and this is largely responsible for the modern shape of Alcester. Bleachfield Street was probably a medieval development although it is uncertain how far south the medieval buildings and their associated garden plots spread. Medieval foundations associated with the street frontage (SMR WA 7175) were recorded at the north end of Bleachfield Street in 1995 (Warwickshire Museum 1995). Medieval and post-medieval pottery was also found (SMR WA 5599) in the same vicinity.

4.17. Photographs of a map (now lost), possibly dating from 1752 clearly depict the area around the site including allotments and recreation ground as open fields by the mid-18th century. This also appears to be the case on W. Sutton's map of 1754 and Eyre's map of 1760 (WCRO DR360/170, Fig. 3). The area immediately to the west of the flood bank and south of the Stratford Road was called Blacklands Close, undoubtedly due to the colour of the topsoil resulting from Roman occupation debris, which is still in evidence today. The area appears largely as fields on the First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1887 (Fig. 4), but with several agricultural outbuildings and small stock enclosures. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1905 shows a similar land use across the area.

## 5. Observation and recording

### Area 1

#### Oversley Bridge

5.1. The area of desilting works included the river banks on either side of the River Arrow at Oversley Bridge and silt banks within the river. As the bridge lies close to the suggested site of the Roman river crossing an archaeologist was present to observe the work and record any revealed Roman remains or other archaeological

Fig. 5: Location of desilting work at Oversley Bridge (Area 1)

deposits. Observation was carried out during topsoil stripping, the removal of accumulated deposits against the bridge structure and within the river channel of the river (Fig. 5).

5.2. Silts were removed by machine and either temporarily dumped or transferred directly to lorries for removal. No significant archaeological deposits were observed during this work. The only find was a large fragment of pottery from an 18th- or 19th-century Nottingham salt glazed stoneware vessel. Gravel deposits were revealed in the eastern river banks; however there was no evidence to suggest these were not naturally occurring river gravels.

5.3. The work also involved the stripping of some topsoil from the banks adjacent to the bridge as well as the removal of silt from the river channel (Fig. 6). However, no Roman finds or archaeological deposits were revealed in these areas.

### **Area 3A**

#### **South of Stratford Road**

5.4. The area observed consisted of a long stretch of the existing flood bank, to the south of the Stratford Road (Area 3A), which required topsoil stripping. It was approximately 430m long and dog-legged across the fields until it reached the allotments at the south-east end of Bleachfield Street (Fig. 2). The method of soil stripping involved the topsoil being rotivated by a tractor-towed machine. The remaining topsoil on the flood bank was then removed by a bulldozer down to the clay core. This depth of deposit removed varied from 0.15m up to 0.9m.

5.5. Observation close to Stratford Road initially recorded a recent topsoil deposit (300A) containing 19th- and 20th-century pottery and imported clay for the core of the bank.



Fig. 6: Removal of silt deposits at Oversley Bridge (Area 1)

5.6. To the south numerous finds of Roman material were made during the stripping of the flood bank. Almost all of the finds dating to earlier than the 19th century were recovered from an area consisting of the southernmost 50m of the first stretch of north-south flood bank (Bank 1) and the whole length of the east west flood bank (Bank 2). The finds consisted of large amounts of Roman pottery as well as glass, building material, including roof tile, flue tile, concrete and occasional mosaic tesserae. Fragments of medieval pottery were also found along with a few sherds of 17th- to 19th-century pottery.

5.7. At a point 148m south of the Stratford Road an area of rubble was partially exposed beneath the flood bank. At this point the removal of the topsoil began to reveal archaeological deposits rather than the clay core of the flood bank. It became apparent that the original bank did not extend this far southwards and a bank had not previously been constructed at this point. The topsoil stripping was therefore affecting previously undisturbed areas of ground. Further south of this the bank turned at 90 degrees and continued for 114m to the west (Bank 2). Again, it was rotivated before the excess topsoil was removed by a bulldozer. However, the topsoil varied in depth on this stretch of soil stripping. It was approximately 0.15m deep at the eastern end where the machines passed through an existing gap in the hedge, but at a point 25m to the west had already reached its maximum stripped depth of 0.9m. No clay core was again revealed and it was apparent that there was no existing flood bank along this west-east stretch.

5.8. The bank was made up of black silty loam topsoil (300B), which contained frequent small pebbles and fragments of Romano-British pottery and tile. This layer covered the whole of this stretch of new flood bank and also the exposed area of rubble to the north. Vehicle movement associated with the topsoil stripping caused areas of wall foundation and gravel spreads (301, 303, 306 and 307) to be partly exposed. As the construction work was beginning to cause damage to important archaeological deposits it was agreed that activity would be temporarily suspended.

5.9. A mitigation strategy was devised by the County Planning Archaeologist and the Regional English Heritage Inspector with the agreement of the Environment Agency. This involved the cleaning of the walls already exposed along and recording of all revealed archaeological deposits and remains in the affected area. The area adjacent to the football pitch was then covered with *Terram* sheeting and a layer of topsoil prior to importation of the clay core and the raising of a new flood bank.

5.10. Continued observation was conducted on the southern end of the flood bank, which extended north to south for 130m (Bank 3). The topsoil deposit (300C) was similarly reduced and several sherds of 13th- to 15th-century pottery were recovered. A clay core was evidence of the construction of the bank and there was no impact on undisturbed archaeological remains in this area.

#### **Area of detailed recording adjacent to football pitch**

5.11. Two separate wall foundations probably belonging to the same building were revealed in an area close to the existing field boundary adjacent to the football pitch (Fig. 9). Wall (301) extended from the northern edge of the stripped area in a south-east to north-west direction for 7m before a return at the possible north-west end of the building extended for 2.6m to the south. The wall was constructed mostly of limestone blocks with occasional pieces of sandstone (Fig. 8). It was up to 0.61m wide and the stones were laid with the flat faces outwards in order to form a straight edge (Fig. 7). The wall appeared to not be mortared and may have been simply soil-bonded. The wall was at least 2 courses deep where it was recorded in the northern section, at which point it was only 0.15m below the modern ground surface. Only a short length of the wall was revealed and the foundations were not further exposed beyond the area initially affected. It is almost certain that the wall did continue further in this direction.

5.12. On the southern side of 301 a layer of very dark grey silty loam was partially exposed during cleaning. This lay beneath layer 300B and within the interior of this building (or room?). Sherds of 2nd- to 4th-century Roman pottery were recovered from this layer and it appeared to be the uppermost sealed archaeological layer to be exposed.

5.13. Approximately 5m to the west of wall 301, a second stretch of wall (302) was partially exposed (Fig. 10). This was 4.8m long and up to 0.8m wide and was made of large sandstone facing blocks with a core made up of a mixture of sandstone and limestone fragments (Fig. 9). At the western end of the wall there were two possible indentations, opposite to each other, in the faces of the wall. These may simply be caused by the state of preservation of the wall or could possibly represent post slots for a timber framed superstructure to the wall. The southern face of the wall was abutted by a layer of black silty loam, which contained at least 50% small to medium rounded pebbles (303). On the northern side of wall 302 a layer (304) butted up against the wall. The layer comprised of very dark grey silty loam containing occasional small pebbles and charcoal flecks. A small sondage was dug within layer (304) against wall (302). This was excavated an additional 0.45m deep before revealing and stopping at a layer of hard packed gravel (308). As with the small area around 301, the area around (302) was also very limited in the amount of excavation carried out. However, wall (302) undoubtedly continued at least a short distance to the east, as a small section was partially visible prior to the construction of a new clay flood bank core.

5.14. Less than 3m north-east of wall (301) were two more small areas of wall foundation or rubble (306 and 307). These features were recorded, but not subject to further archaeological investigation. However, wall 306 was recorded as having an approximate north-east to south-west alignment and consisted of a narrow,

limestone wall surrounded by rubble. Only a single section, 1.2m long and 0.25m wide was visible (Fig. 11). Just to the south-east of this was a second area of limestone rubble (307) (Fig. 9). This possibly incorporated a further fragment of wall running approximately east-west and surrounded by rubble. It seems likely that this may have been part of a right-angled return of wall 306.

5.15. A short distance to the north of wall 306 was a large area of rubble (Fig. 2, 309) that was initially interpreted as being derived from a post-medieval agricultural building, possibly an animal pen or similar structure. A building is shown in this approximate position on the 1887 (Fig. 4) and 1902 Ordnance Survey maps (Ordnance Survey 1887, 1902). However, the rubble did contain fragments of freshly broken Roman pottery and occasional fragments of painted wall plaster. There were no 18th- or 19th- century finds recovered from this layer.

5.16. During recording adjacent to wall 301 a single Roman coin (Coin 10) was recovered. As another had already been found in the topsoil of the north-south flood bank 1 (Coin 14) it was decided to seek permission from English Heritage to carry out a metal detector survey of the stripped area and the associated spoil heap. In practice this covered only the spoil heaps, as the stripped and the recorded areas had already been covered by clay before permission was gained. The spoil heaps were examined on two separate occasions, firstly prior to redeposition on the new flood bank and secondly after. Results were better than expected producing 42 Roman coins, one 16th-century coin/token, a medieval strap end, a medieval animal bell and a number of 20th-century coins and objects (see Section 6 below and Appendix A). A large number of lead fragments were also recovered.

## **6. Finds by Nicholas Palmer**

6.1. The finds from Area 3, south of Stratford Road, included 44 Roman and two later coins, copper alloy, iron, lead, jet, bone and glass objects, as well as pottery, tile, plaster, slag and clay tobacco pipe. For a full list see Appendix A below.

6.2. Apart from a *dupondius* of Trajan (103-11) and an uncertain 2nd-century *as/dupondius* (1-2), all the Roman coins (3-44) dated to the late 3rd or 4th century, spanning the range between Tetricus I (270-3) and the House of Valentinian (376-8). This is a fairly typical group similar to many others from the Roman town. Most of



the coins came from the central east-west section. The two 2nd-century coins (1-2) came from its western end, while there was a concentration of the late 3rd-century coins (3 and 6-10) towards its eastern end over the partly excavated building, but whether this is significant is uncertain. The 4th-century coins were more evenly distributed.

6.3. The copper alloy objects from the same area were however virtually all medieval/post-medieval or modern rather than Romano-British. A decorative strip terminal (47) could have been Romano-British or later, but a bell fragment (49), vessel fragments (48, 52), a strap end (50) and a buckle fragment (51) were of medieval/post-medieval types.

6.4. The leadwork included a vessel handle fragment (58) and three plugs of different sizes (59-62), probably for repairing holes in pottery. These are probably Romano-British, but the other strips, offcuts and solidified molten waste could be of any date.

6.5. A tanged iron gouge/chisel (71) is probably post-medieval, but a strip fragment (72) and two timber nails could be Romano-British or later. Fragments, probably from the head of a jet pin (73), from a bone pin shaft (74) and two of vessel glass (75-6), were all familiar Romano-British artefacts.



Fig. 7: Area 3A: Wall foundation (301) and layer (305)



Fig. 8: Area 3A: Corner of Roman building (wall 301)



Fig. 9: Area 3A: Walls (301) and (304)



6.6. Although there was Romano-British pottery from layers 304 (16 sherds, 2nd- to 3rd-century(?)) and 305 (29 sherds, 2nd- to 4th-century), the bulk of the pottery came from the topsoil (300). The topsoil pottery from the southern section (300C) was all medieval (15th-century) or later. That from the central (300B) and northern sections (300B) contained some post-Roman pottery, but consisted mainly of residual Romano-British material suggesting occupation in these areas from the early 2nd century to the mid 4th century. The range of ware types was typical for Alcester in this period, including largish amounts of Seven Valley type wares, less greyware, samian, Black Burnished ware (BB1), Oxfordshire, Nene Valley and other colour-coated wares, and Oxfordshire, Mancetter and other mortaria.

6.7. There was both Romano-British roof and flue tile to suggest the presence of substantial buildings in the vicinity, evidence reinforced by the finding of a few red-painted plaster fragments and a fragment of mortar containing crushed tile. Five rough cubes of Lias limestone may have been tesserae from a tessellated pavement or the plain surround to a mosaic floor, although none had a convincing worn surface and they might have been natural fragments.

## 7. Conclusions

7.1. The existing flood defences were located in an area of high archaeological potential and finds made during their construction in the 1970s clearly illustrate this. The methodology for increasing the height of the flood banks was considered unlikely to cause damage to undisturbed buried remains and although it might uncover finds that had been disturbed during the original construction. This proved to be the case where existing flood banks were present and the results were similar to work undertaken on Area 2 on the other side of Stratford Road (Warwickshire Museum 2001).

7.2. The archaeological strategy in part of Area 3A had to be changed when stone wall foundations were revealed and significant quantities of Romano-British finds were recovered along the east-west stretch of earthwork bank (Bank 2). Soil stripping from the top of this apparent bank showed that the bank was made up entirely of a black silty loam (300). Aerial photos from the 1970s show that the adjacent field still had ridge and furrow (subsequently ploughed flat) running approximately north-south across it at that time. The bank at the north end of this field would therefore appear to be a medieval headland subsequently incorporated into and utilised as part of the flood defences.

7.3. Aerial photos also show that the new east-west flood bank ran for much of its length along the line of a major Roman road (SMR WA 446). This road could be seen running towards the site of the Roman river crossing close to Oversley Bridge. Other Roman streets can be seen on these photos, but none appear to be as wide. The causeway (agger) for this road, recorded on the Sutton map of 1754, could almost certainly still be seen as a low mound in the field to the south of 301. The recorded gravel layers, including 303 and 308, may represent metalled surfaces of this road, which may survive extensively beneath the topsoil.

7.4. Two of the walls (301 and 304) may form part of three sides of a single building. The full extent or exact form of the building was not revealed but it may have formed a 2nd-century building, fronting on to the road. The evidence from wall 302 suggested that the building might have had a timber framed superstructure. The narrowness of wall 301 supports this suggestion. Several other small segments of wall and rubble (306 and 307) were revealed and these may have been part of another building.



Fig. 10: Area 3A: Wall foundation (302)

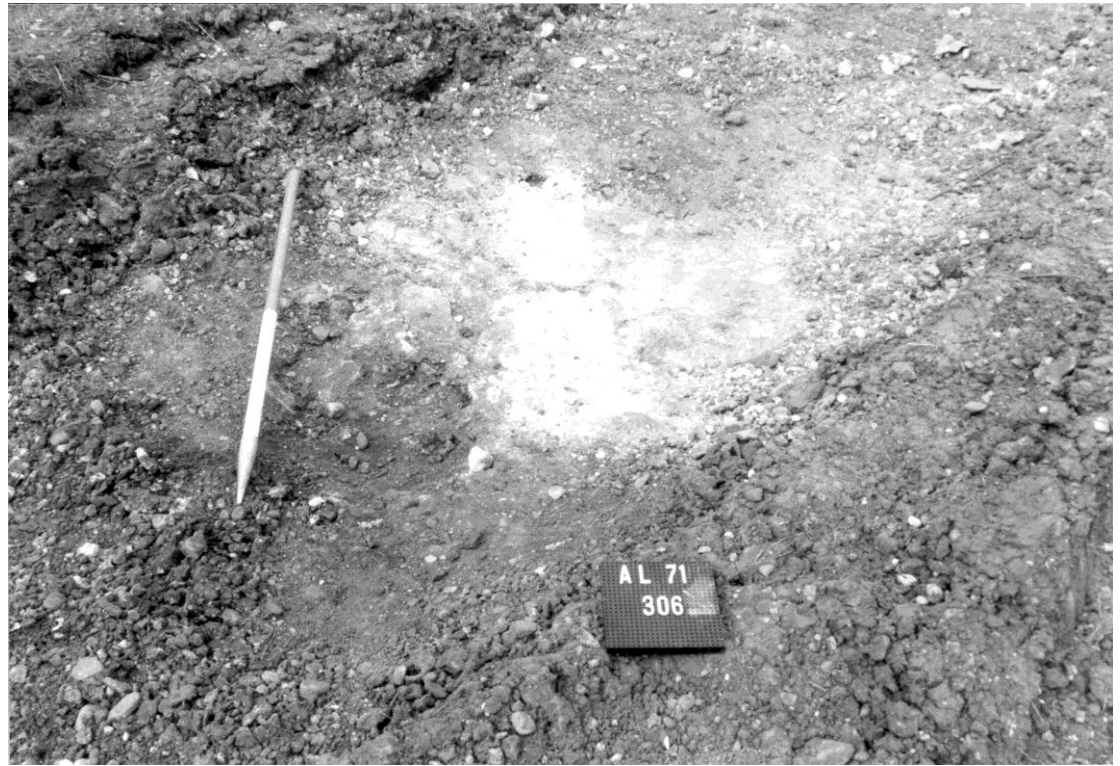


Fig. 11: Area 3A: Wall foundation (306)





7.5. It is possible that the evidence for a further building to the north might have been associated with the former 19th-century animal pen shown on the Ordnance Survey maps (Fig 2). The rubble identified to the north may be the remains of this enclosure; however, the rubble occurred at the same level as the other Roman walls and did contain much Roman debris, including fragments of painted wall plaster. No 19th-century finds were recovered and it is therefore possible that rubble from a Romano-British building had been reused as a hard surface for the footings and the yard of the former animal pen.

7.6. The presence of a more complex or higher status 2nd- to 4th-century building in the vicinity is suggested by finds of ceramic roof tiles, fragments of flue tile from a hypocaust and a few possible mosaic tesserae and fragments of painted wall plaster, possibly derived from high quality decorated rooms.

7.7. The recorded medieval finds consisted of a few sherds of 12th- to 14th-century pottery and may be explained as having got into the medieval field system through manuring or by domestic dumping from the nearby medieval Bleachfield Street. This may also explain the presence of a few fragments of 17th-century pottery. A single medieval strap end was also found and a large fragment of an animal bell (Appendix A). A Nuremberg jetton by Hans Krawinkel of between 1580 and 1610 (Symons 1990) was also found. The jetton was probably reused as a jewellery item, possibly a pendant, as it had a hole drilled in it. The 18th- and 19th-century pottery is fairly typical of such finds within most fields whilst some of the 20th century finds such as coins may be associated with a fair that used to be held in the field by the Stratford Road. Two .303 rifle cartridges (not kept) dated to the early 1940s suggest that the area was used for shooting practice during World War II.

7.8. The observation and recording provided a record of the revealed archaeological remains and supervised the preservation of *in situ* structural remains within the Scheduled Ancient Monument. The results correspond with the evidence from previous work in the area south of Stratford Road, which has indicated a series of timber and masonry buildings within an irregular street pattern between the 2nd and 4th centuries.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendix A: List of Finds

### Area 1 Oversley Bridge

Unstratified Pottery 1 19th-century stoneware jar

### Area 3A South of Stratford Road

(For topsoil finds context 300 indicates general/unlocated, 300A northern section [Bank 1]; 300B, central section [Bank 2]; and, 300C, southern section [Bank 3])

### 1-46 Coins

#### Roman

Issuer	Denom	Date	Mint	Reverse type	RIC Ref	Context
1. Trajan	Dup	103-11?		Roma seated l	2 490?	(300B, SF 43)
2.	As/Dup	2nd cent				(300B, SF 36)
3. Tetricus I	Ant	270-3		Standing figure l		(300B, SF 49)
4. Tetricus I/II	Ant	270-3		Spes Aug?		(300B, SF 44)
5. Tetricus I/II	Ant	270-3		Standing figure l		(300, SF. 8)
6.	Ant	Late 3rd cent				(300B, SF 52)
7.	Ant irreg?	Late 3rd cent		Standing female fig l		(300B, SF 29)
8.	Ant minim irreg	Late 3rd cent		?Sacrificial implements		(300B, SF 54)
9.	Ant minim irreg	Late 3rd cent		?Altar/Sacrificial implements		(300B, SF 23)
10.	Ant minim	Late 3rd cent				(300B, SF 17)
11. Probus	Ant	276-8	Ticinum	Concord Milit	5/2 332	(300, SF 15)
12. Carausius?	Ant	287-93		Standing figure l		(300, SF 9)
13. Constantine I	Follis	310-6	?Trier	SIC		(300, SF 5, lost)
14. Constantine I	AE3	318/9	Trier	2 Victories VLPP	7 Tr 209	(300B, SF 1)
15. House of Constantine	AE3	318-20	?	2 Victories VLPP		(300B, SF 30)
16. Crispus Caes	AE3	320	Trier	Virtus exercit VOT XX	7 Tr 270	(300B, SF 47)
17. Constantine II Caes	AE3	322-3	Trier	BT Globe on altar	7 Tr 382	(300, SF 11)
18. Constantine II Caes	AE3	330-1	Trier	GE 2 standards	7 Tr 520	(300, SF 7)

<b>Issuer</b>	<b>Denom</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Mint</b>	<b>Reverse type</b>	<b>RIC Ref</b>	<b>Context</b>
19. Constantine II Caes	AE4	330-1	Trier	GE 2 standards	7 Tr 520	(300B, SF 34)
20. Constantine II Caes	AE3	330-1	Lyons	GE 2 standards	7 Ly 244	(300, SF 26)
21. Constantine II Caes	AE3	330-4	?	GE 2 standards		(300B, SF 22)
22. Constantinopolis	AE3	330-1	Trier	Victory on prow		(300B, SF 42)
23. Constantinopolis	AE3/4	333-4	Lyons	Victory on prow	7 Ly 266	(300B, SF 24)
24. Constantinopolis	AE3	330	Arles	Victory on prow	7 Ar 344	(300B, SF 45)
25. Constantinopolis	AE4	330-7	?	Victory on prow		(300B, SF 41)
26. Urbs Roma	AE3	330-1	Trier	Wolf and twins	7 Tr 522	(300, SF 10)
27. Urbs Roma	AE3	330-1	Trier	Wolf and twins	7 Tr 529	(300B, SF 35)
28. Urbs Roma	AE3	332-3	Trier	Wolf and twins	7 Tr 542	(300B, SF 48)
29. Urbs Roma	AE4	335-7	?	GE 1 standard (Mule)		(300B, SF 46)
30. Constantius II Caes	AE4	335-7	?	GE 1 standard		(300B, SF 16)
31. Constantius II/ Constantine II	AE3	337-41	?	GE 1 standard		(300B, SF 31)
32. House of Constantine	AE4	335-41	?	GE 1 standard		(300A, SF 33)
33. Constans	AE4	347-8	Trier	2 Victories VDDAQN	8 Tr 196	(300B, SF 21)
34. Constantius II/ Constans	AE3/4	347-8	Trier	2 Victories VDDAQN	8 Tr 193-6	(300A, SF 19)
35. Constantius II	AE4 irreg	350+	?	FTR Fallen horseman		(300, SF 50)
36. Magnentius	AE2 irreg? Denom	350-3	Trier	Felicitas Reipublicae as	8 Tr 204	(300B, SF 32)
37. Magnentius?	AE2	350-3	Trier	GR Emp spearing barbarian	8 Tr 269	(300, SF 14)
38. Valens	AE3	364-7	Arles	GR Emp dragging captive	9 Ar 7(d)	(300, SF 12)
39. Valens	AE3	367-75	Arles	GR Emp dragging captive 9 Ar 16(b))		(300B, SF 28)
40. Gratian	AE3	367-75	Lyons	GR Emp dragging captive	9 Ar 20(c)	(300B, SF 53)
41. House of Valentinian	AE3/4	364-78	?	GR Emp dragging captive		(300B, SF 51)
42. Valentinian I/ Valens	AE3	375-8	Arles	SR	9 Ar 19(a)or (c)	(300, SF 27)
43. Valentinian I?	AE3	364-78	?	SR		(300B, SF 40)
44.	AE4	4th cent				(300B, SF 18)

Issuer	Denom	Date	Mint	Reverse type	RIC Ref	Context
<b>Post Roman</b>						
45. Krauwinckel	Jetton		Nurem burg			(300B, SF 37)
46. George V	Penny	1920				(300B, SF 55)

#### Abbreviations

*Denominations:* Ant Antoninianus, Dup Dupondius. *Reverse types:* BT Beata tranquillitas, FTR Fel temp reparatio, GE Gloria exercitus, GR Gloria Romanorum, SIC Soli invicto comiti, SR Securitas reipublicae, VDDAQN Victoriae Dd Auggq Nn, VLPP Victoriae Laetae Princ Perp

#### 47-57 Copper alloy objects

47. Decorative strip terminal, tapering to collar and rounded point with nail hole through centre. ?Romano-British or later. Max L 30mm, W 12.7mm. (305, SF 2)
48. Vessel rim (or possibly foot) fragment, thin-walled; cast and turned. Medieval/post medieval. Diam 40mm, Th 0.8mm. (305, SF 4)
49. Bell fragment, globular, with cast decoration and rectangular suspension loop. Medieval/post-medieval. Original diam c.32mm. (300, SF 13)
50. Strap end, three-piece composite with forked spacer with terminal knob, scalloped attachment edges, grooved oval apertures, two rivets through one plate. Medieval/post-medieval. L 26.5mm, W 14mm. (300, SF 25)
51. Buckle hoop, rectangular, curved, with traces of loop of iron pin. Post-medieval. L 28.5, W 25mm. (300, SF 6)
52. Lid from small vessel, collar with overhanging top plate, decorated with incised circle with three perforations within, and iron knob. ?Post-medieval. Diam of collar 26mm, diam of top 42.4mm, Ht (inc knob) 15.3mm. (300, SF 73)
53. Wheel with four curved spokes, and iron axle pin. Post-medieval/modern. Diam 24.2mm, Th 3.3mm. (300A, SF 70)
54. Ball finial with socket in one side. Post medieval/modern. Diam 17.2mm, socket diam 7mm. (300A, SF 38)
55. Looped belt terminal. Post medieval/modern. L 28.2mm, W 42.7mm (300B, SF 72)
56. Buckle hoop, rectangular, with black paint. Modern. (300A, SF 69)
57. Solidified molten waste (300, SF 62)

#### 58-70 Lead objects

58. Vessel handle fragment. W 30mm. (300, SF 20)
- 59-62. Three plugs, probably for filling holes in pottery vessels. (59. 50mm x 35mm, 300, SF 65; 60. 20mm x 18mm, 300, SF 59; 61. 18.5mm x 14mm, 300, SF 64)

62. Folded strip fragment. W 22.5mm. (300, SF 56)
63. Strip of thin folded sheet. W 19mm. (300A, SF 67)
64. Fragment of circular rod. Diam 10.5mm, surviving L 12.7mm. (300A SF 39)
- 65-68. Offcut/fragments. (65. 300, SF 57; 66. 300, SF 58; 67. 300, SF 61; 68. 300, SF 63)
- 69-70. Solidified molten waste (69. 300, SF 60; 70. 300A, SF 68)

#### 71-72 Ironwork

71. Tanged chisel/gouge with collar. Post-medieval/modern. Total L 150mm, tang L 49mm. (300, SF 71)
72. Strip fragment. W 22mm. (300B, SF 66)

There were also two timber nails (305, SF 3; 300) which could be Romano-British or later.

#### 73-76 Jet, Bone and Glass

73. Jet pin head fragment, Romano-British. (300A, SF 77)
74. Bone pin shaft fragment, burnt, diam 6.5mm, surviving L 25mm, Romano-British (300B, SF 76)
75. Vessel glass fragment, light green, Romano-British. (300A, SF 75)
76. Bottle rim fragment, blue green, Romano-British. (300B, SF 74)

#### Other finds (not individually catalogued)

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Dating/comments</i>
305	Animal bone	4	
300	Clay pipe	1	Stamped base (star/asterisk)
300A	Clay pipe	1	Stem with leaf decoration
300	Clay pipe	1	Bulbous bowl, Oswald 1975 Type By
<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Dating/comments</i>
300	Pottery	71	3 (1660-80) RB (63, 2nd- to 4th-century), post-medieval/modern (8)
300A	Pottery	125	RB (117, 2nd- to 4th-century), medieval (1), post-medieval/modern (7)
300B	Pottery	89	RB (77, 2nd- to 4th-century), medieval (3), post-medieval/modern (9)
300C	Pottery	9	Medieval (13- to 15th-century), post-medieval/modern(6)

304	Pottery	17	RB (2nd- to 3rd-century)
305	Pottery	29	RB (2nd- to 4th-century)
300	Mortar	1	Tile inclusions
300A	Plaster	3	Painted (red)
300	Slag	1	
300A	Slag	1	
300	Stone	2	Possible tesserae
300B	Stone	3	Possible tesserae
300	Tile	4	RB (Tegulae 1, flue 2), Post-med 1
300A	Tile	3	RB (Flue 1, uncertain 2)
300B	Tile	6	RB (Imbrex 1, tegulae, 2, flue 3)
305	Tile	11	RB (Flue 1, uncertain 10)

## Appendix B: List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type/Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
300	Topsoil	General (300A northern section- Bank 1, 300B central section- Bank 2, 300C southern section- Bank 3)
301	Wall foundation	
302	Layer	
303	Layer	
304	Wall foundation	
305	Layer	
306	?Wall foundation	
307	Limestone rubble	possible foundation
308	Gravel layer	? road surface
309	Rubble layer	