Archaeological Recording at

Grove Fields Farm Cottages,

Hampton Lucy, Warwickshire

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Summary

Archaeological evaluation, excavation and salvage recording at Grove Fields Farm Cottages, within the cropmark of a large, rectangular enclosure, revealed a significant Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pit group and ditch, and a scatter of Iron Age and Romano-British features including pits, a ditch and postholes. Several undated field boundary gullies and a large steep sided hollow of unknown date or function were also examined. The enclosure ditch was sampled but remained undated except by a few later Iron Age and Romano-British pottery sherds in the upper fills. The possible date of this feature is discussed.

The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pit group yielded an important assemblage of pottery, querns, rubbing stones and charred plant remains; these are described in detail and their significance discussed.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council for the construction of two replacement dwellings at Grove Fields Farm Cottages, Hampton Lucy, Warwickshire (Ref 07/02540/FUL). Because the development site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, within a known later prehistoric and Romano-British settlement complex, a condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological fieldwork before the development commenced. An archaeological brief for a field evaluation was prepared by the Planning Archaeologist (dated January 2008), after some initial groundworks had already been undertaken by the development.

1.2 Warwickshire Museum Archaeology Projects Group undertook an evaluation in January 2008, involving ten trial trenches. This revealed a considerable quantity of later prehistoric features across the development area, including a significant pit group in Trench 3, at the east end of the western of the proposed new buildings.

1.3 In order to expedite the western part of the development, at the developer's request, a short interim note on the evaluation was produced which summarised its results and a specification was produced for the excavation of an open area at the east end of Trench 3 and the observation of groundworks associated with the western building. This report presents the full results of the evaluation, the excavation of the expanded Trench 3, and the observation of the groundworks associated with the western part of the development. Further archaeological works will be required in the eastern part of the development which will be subject to a separate report.

2. Location

2.1 Grove Fields Farm Cottages lie on the west side of the former Grove Fields Farm at National Grid Reference SP 2625 5949 in the parish of Hampton Lucy (Fig 1).

2.2 Grove Fields Farm and its associated buildings lie within a broad meander, on the west bank of the River Avon. The underlying geology of the area is 2nd Terrace River Gravels (British Geological Survey 1984), the land-surface falling gently to the south and east to the 1st Terrace before dropping still further onto a crescent of floodplain inside the meander. To the west the land rises sharply onto a ridge of Mercia Mudstone that is capped in places with remnant 3rd and 4th Terrace deposits that form low hillocks.

3. Archaeological and historical background

3.1 The gravel terraces of the Avon valley are replete with cropmarks (Fig 1), the majority of which can be ascribed on morphological grounds to the prehistoric and Romano-British periods. Field survey, excavation and chance finds have largely corroborated these dates, demonstrating the valley's importance in the development of the region. In the Neolithic (c4000BC – 2500BC), the period in which farming was first practised, great ceremonial monument complexes developed along the Avon valley, with nearby examples at Barford, Longbridge, Wasperton and Charlecote (Palmer forthcoming a). The evidence to date suggests that people at this time were largely mobile, ranging with their domesticated livestock over a wide area, perhaps only visiting these sites periodically. Flint tools and waste products from their manufacture are found all along the valley and across the wider landscape. Such finds were made in 1995 whilst observing the excavation of foundation trenches to the east of Grove Fields Farm (Fig 2; Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 7185). In some, perhaps significant, locations flints were deliberately deposited in shallow pits along with broken pottery and ashes from hearths and these actions are thought to have been invested with meaning: propitiatory rights or symbolic fertility rituals seem possible explanations. Nearby, such pits were excavated at Wasperton during the 1980s (Hughes & Crawford 1995).

3.2 The monument complexes attracted additional activity in the early Bronze Age (*c*2500BC – 1600BC) when large burial mounds were constructed. One example was excavated at Wasperton (ibid). The middle Bronze Age though (*c*1600BC – 1200BC) remains something of an enigma in this region as very little evidence for activity of this period has been found. It is possible that local communities migrated away from the valley at this time to settle in more upland locations, although a pit containing Deverel-Rimbury style pottery, probably of this date has recently been excavated on the Barford Bypass (Palmer forthcoming b).

3.3 During the later Bronze Age (*c*1200BC – 800BC) the local valley landscape was increasingly divided by linear boundary features, although the settlements of this date appear fairly ephemeral. An early boundary excavated at Wasperton radiocarbon dated to between 1300BC and 850BC, sealed off a loop in the river (Palmer forthcoming c).

3.4 By the Iron Age (c800BC - AD43) cropmark evidence suggests that farming settlements were widespread along the valley. Several were excavated at Wasperton, enclosed within rectilinear ditches, although considerable activity occurred outside the enclosures (ibid). Some of the cropmark enclosures in the fields surrounding Grove Fields Farm (HER MWA 957) are likely to have originated at this time (Fig 2) although, as at Wasperton, not all will have been occupied at once (ibid). At Grove Fields Farm it may be significant that the majority of the small annular and penannular cropmark features which almost certainly represent individual buildings and structures, lie outside the large enclosures. Some of these could also be small shrines or temples; a local tradition for such buildings has recently been suggested (Palmer forthcoming d). Dotted amidst these cropmarks are large groups of pits. Some of these are conceivably storage pits that were used as silos for storing seed corn over winter. At Wasperton and other local sites some disused storage pits were backfilled with pottery, quern stones and ashes from hearths in a similar manner to those in the Neolithic. Occasionally humans and animals were buried in the pits although it is not always possible to determine if this was a mark of respect or an act of sacrifice (Palmer 2008b).

3.5 Some elements of the Grove Fields Farm complex (Fig 2) are undoubtedly Romano-British (AD43 – 410). Small-scale excavations within one of the enclosures by the Stratford-upon-Avon Archaeological Research Group in 1964 (Dyer 1964) recovered burnt tile and pottery of this date, although the exact location of this work

is no longer known (HER MWA 5155). Archaeological observations made during the conversion of The Barns at Grove Fields Farm in 2006 revealed a number of Iron Age and Romano-British features of uncertain function due to the narrow width of the service trenches. A trench across the fields to the south-east towards the river revealed a considerable quantity of remains but again it was not possible to determine their functions (HER EWA 7657; Warwickshire Museum 2006). At Wasperton a Romano-British enclosure was excavated along with parts of a field system, two wells and a cemetery.

3.6 The Romano-British cemetery at Wasperton continued in use into the early Anglo-Saxon period suggesting that settlement of this date was nearby but there is no indication at Grove Fields Farm for a similar continuation of occupation in this elusive period. The earliest medieval evidence known from the area is a Knights Templar cross found carved on a stone at Grove Fields Farm (HER MWA 7466). Nearby Sherbourne was a subsidiary Knights Templar manor and it may have derived from there.

3.7 The low escarpment to the west of Grove Fields Farm forms the boundary of the 17th-century Fulbrook deer park, an extended version of that created *c*1421 by the Duke of Bedford (HER MWA 850).

3.8 Grove Fields Farmhouse (HER MWA 3849) was built *c*1770 and is listed Grade II (LB 482472) and the adjacent brick-built barns, recently converted into private residences, are of a similar age. Recent OS maps depict a number of farm buildings and other structures within the farmyard which have recently been demolished.

4. Aims and methods

4.1 The evaluation was designed to discover the date, nature and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits which might be present within the area of the proposed development scheme.

4.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of historical map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area, local historical journals and other publications, and the Warwickshire Museum aerial photograph collection. This was followed by a programme of trial trenching.

4.3 The location of the trial trenches (Fig 3) was specified in the Brief prepared by the Planning Archaeologist (dated January 2008).

4.4 In the light of the evaluation and the production of a summary report (dated 4th February 2008), a Written Scheme of Investigation was produced which proposed the excavation of an area initially measuring 9m x 9m over the eastern end of Trench 3. This area was to be extended into the footprint of the main house if significant archaeological deposits were found, continuing until a 2m buffer zone without deposits was established.

4.5 The digging of foundation and service trenches was only to be undertaken once the 2m buffer zone has been established. The foundation trench excavations would be observed by an experienced archaeologist who would have the authority to halt the machining in order to excavate and record any significant deposits should they be uncovered. In the event the 2m buffer zone was established and the various foundation and service trenches were observed during the course of the excavation of the 9m x 9m area.

5. Results

5.1 The archaeological deposits recorded have where possible been divided into phases based on the datable artefacts recovered from their fills. The preliminary phases are outlined in Table 1. The date range described in phases 3, 4, 5 and 6 have a degree of overlap because the ceramics themselves are not precisely datable and it is therefore possible that both phase 3 and phase 4 date to the end of the Iron Age or that phase 4 is entirely Roman and therefore equivalent to phase 5. The phasing will be supplemented with a programme of radiocarbon dating at a later date.

Table 1: Excavated phases

Phase	Date	Features
1	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Residual flint
2	Late Bronze Age/Early	Pit group and ditch 325 in Trench 3 and pits in Trench 9
	Iron Age	
3	Middle to Late Iron Age	Pits 309 and 323 in Trench 3 and pit 702 in Trench 7
4	Late Iron Age/Early	Pit 604 and ditch 602 in Trench 6
	Roman	
5	Roman	Pit 354 in Trench 3
6	Undated	Pit 340 in Trench 3, pits 802, 804 and 806 in Trench 8,
		gully 208 in Trench 2, gullies 502 and 504 in Trench 5
		and gullies 908, 912 and 914 in Trench 9
7	Modern	All trenches

GEOLOGICAL NATURAL

5.2 The uppermost geological layer across most of the development area was *c*0.50m of reddish-brown clayey sand and gravel (**105**, **206**, **320**, **405**, **506**, **608**, **725**, **811**, **911**, **1004**), although a band of red clay (Mercia Mudstone) outcropped in the south-west part of the site (**207**), on the southern side of the enclosure ditch. The gravel capped a deposit of reddish-brown sand which was more than 0.70m deep.

TREE ROOT HOLES

5.3 Evidence for the former presence of trees on the site was revealed in a number of locations, and in no instance could the trees be seen to be later than any of the prehistoric features. In Trench 3 a very large tree hole was cut by pit **323** and similar features were observed in the foundation trenches to the west, in the centre of Trench 6, at the southern end of Trench 7, and at the northern end of Trench 9 (none shown on plan).

RELICT SOIL/FORMER LAND SURFACE

5.4 A thin layer of brown/greyish-brown sandy clay loam (**314**, **357**, **507**) through which all the features were cut, was evident across Trenches 3, 5, 6, 7. This same layer was recorded as yellowish-brown sandy clay loam (**810**) in Trench 8. No finds were recovered from this layer. It was not evident in Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 10, either because it had been removed for the construction of the ditch, or more likely because it was not recognised as different from the overlying soils during ground reductions because discrete features were not cut through it.

PHASE 1: RESIDUAL EARLIER PREHISTORIC (NEOLITHIC/BRONZE AGE)

5.5 This phase was only evident as residual finds of flint recovered from later features.

PHASE 2: THE LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON PIT GROUP AND DITCH

Trench 3

5.6 A small group of six pits found at the eastern end of Trench 3 (Fig 4) and the subsequent open area aligned on it contained distinctive Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery (**305**, **352**, **342**, **330**, **307**, **326**). Two further pits (**338**, **333**) contained undiagnostic prehistoric pottery but were earlier than pit **305** and have therefore been assigned to this phase, whilst three other pits (**334**, **328**, **336**) which also contained undiagnostic prehistoric pottery have been grouped with them by type and association. Full descriptions are given in Table 2 where the pits have been grouped into five types (A – E):

- A Large pits over 0.60m diameter and 0.70m deep with vertical or undercutting sides and flat bases
- B Shallow pits with vertical/near vertical sides and flat bases
- C Large pits with sloping sides
- D Small pits with sloping sides
- E Small pits/postholes

5.7 Some repeated use of the area was suggested by a group of intercutting pits. The earliest stratigraphic pit in the group was pit **338**, which was cut by pits **333** and **352**; pit **333** being cut by pit **305**, whilst pit **352** was cut by Phase 3 pit **309**. Pit **307** cut down the edge of the earlier pit **326** (Plate III) which seems to have had a clay lining, and this, along with an overlying charcoal-rich fill slumped into the partially filled **307** (Plate IV). The remaining pits in the group were dotted around the eastern side of the opened area.

5.8 Pits **342** and **326** had sufficient red clay packed against their side walls to suggest the remains of clay lining. Many of the other pits contained some red clay mixed throughout their fills which perhaps also derived from collapsed linings (see Table 2).

5.9 Ditch **325** was aligned NNE/SSW across the eastern end of the extended Trench 3 (Fig 4; Plate VI), across the top or cutting many of the pits in that area (**342**, **352**, **338**, **383**). It had a slightly sinuous course, possibly as a result of being cut through the tops of the earlier, backfilled pits, which would have eroded more readily than the surrounding gravel. The ditch profile varied between a shallow V-shape and a flared U-shape between 1.20m and 1.35m wide and was 0.50m deep (Figs 5/O, 7/U). It was filled with brown sandy clay loam (**332**) in which was found considerable quantities of pottery, with a concentration suggestive of a dump, towards its northern end.

Trench 9

5.10 Two Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pits were also recorded in Trench 9 (Fig 7). Pit **902** had an uncertain relationship with gully **914** and pit **904** (Plate V) had an uncertain relationship with gully **908**.

Table 2: Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pit group

Pit No	Type & Section No	Dia.	Depth	Description	Fills	Finds	
Trench 3	;						
338	A	1.50 x	0.80	Oval with vertical sides and flat base truncated by ditch	339 brown sandy loam with occasional red clay lumps	Pottery and animal bone	
333	5/A A	1.10		Circular with vertical sides and flat base	359 very dark greyish-brown loam over	Pottery, charred cereals, weed	
	7/0				360 brown sandy loam	seeds Pottery quern	
305	A	0.94	0.90	Circular with undercutting sides and a flat base with	306 very dark greyish-brown sandy clay loam with charcoal	rottery, quem	
	5/B, 7/U			central depression which possibly represented a 0.04m deep posthole 315	over 311 very dark brown sandy clay loam with charcoal over 312 very dark greyish brown sandy clay loam with red clay lumps over	Pottery, fired clay and flint Feasting set and burnt bone, charred cereals & weed seeds	
					313 dark brown silty loam		
342	А	1.40	1.20+	Circular with vertical sides and flat base	343 brown loam with greenish- grey mottles and red clay	Pottery and animal bone	
	5/C				patches over 351 very dark grey silty clay loam with greenish (cess-like)	Pottery, bone, charred cereals &	
					350 solid red clay lining	weeu seeus	
326	А	0.75	0.70	Sub circular with	318 red sandy clay over	Quern	
	5/D, E	x 0.60		base	reddish-brown clay loam with lumps of red clay over	bone, 3 querns	
					345 near solid red clay packed around edge with large flat stones over 346 brown sandy loam		
307	A	1.20	0.75	Circular with undercutting sides and flat base	308 very dark greyish-brown loam with red clay flecks over	Pottery, burnt bone, fired clay	
	5/E, F				317 very dark greyish-brown sandy clay loam with red clay lumps over 362 lens of red clay over	and flint Pottery, bone, fired clay & flint	
					361 brown sandy loam		
352	B	1.10	0.34	Circular with steep sloping sides and flattish base	353 dark greyish-brown loam with red clay banded lenses in	Pottery	
328	5/G B	0.80	0.22	Circular with vertical sides	329 dark grevish-brown sandy	Potterv	
010	2	0.00	0	and flat base	loam with occasional red clay	1 ottory	
224	5/H	0.00	0.44	Cub since and the stars	flecks	Detterre LICD	
334	5/I	0.98	0.44	sloping sides and shallow v- shaped base	with red clay lumps in upper part of fill	degraded animal bone, burnt bone	
336	Ċ	1.60	0.95	Sub-circular with irregular stepped sides and flat base	337 brown/dark brown sandy clay loam over	Pottery, bone, flint Pottery	
	5/J				344 slumped red clay capping over	Pottery and bone	
330	C 5/K	2.15	0.70	Circular with steep sloping sides and flat sloping base	331=319 very dark greyish- brown loam with red clay flecks	Pottery, HCP, animal bone, fired clay and flint	
Trench 9	5/ K					city and min	
904	A	1.07	0.75	Circular with near vertical sides and slightly rounded	905 dark greyish-brown silty clay loam with red clay flecks over	Pottery	
	5/M			base	906 reddish-brown silty loam over 907 greyish brown silty clay	3 querns and 4 rubbers Pottery	
					910 reddish-brown silty clay	Pottery	
902	C/D? 5/N	1.26	0.44	Circular with moderately sloping sides and flattish base	ioam 903 reddish-brown silty clay loam	Pottery and flint	

PHASE 3: MIDDLE TO LATE IRON AGE PITS

5.11 This phase is represented only by three pits (details in Table 3 along with type codes). In Trench 3 pit **309** cut Phase 2 pit **352** and pit **323** cut a large tree hole, was cut by a modern drain and contained fired clay most likely derived from an oven or kiln. A single pit **702** was recorded in Trench 7.

Pit No	Type & Section No	Dia.	Depth	Description	Fills	Finds
Trench 3						
309	В 8/Р	0.49	0.21	Oval with vertical sides and flat base	310 greyish-brown sandy clay loam	Pottery, burnt bone
323	B? 5/L	0.80	0.53	?Circular with near vertical sides and flat shelved base	324 very dark grey sandy loam	Pottery and fired (kiln) clay
Trench 7						
702	C/D? 8/Q	1.25	0.41	Circular with steep sloping sides and flattish base	703 brown sandy loam	Pottery & bone

Table 3: Middle to Late Iron Age pits

PHASE 4: LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMANO-BRITISH

5.12 Evidence dated to this phase included a small oval pit **604** at the south end of Trench 6 that may have been a posthole (Fig 6). Two large pottery sherds found upended within the fill (Plate VII) seem likely to have been used as post packing (see Table 4).

5.13 Ditch **602** was aligned east to west at the north end of Trench 6 (Plate VIII). It was 1.10m wide with steep, irregular sloping sides and a narrow rounded base 0.72m deep (Fig 8/S). A shallow depression on its southern side may have been caused by root action. It was filled with charcoal rich, dark grey sandy silt loam (**603**) with pottery fired clay and animal bone.

Table 4: Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British pit

Pit No	Type & Section No	Dia.	Depth	Description	Fills	Finds
Trench 6 604	E 8/R	0.70 x 0.46	0.36	Oval with near vertical sides and sloping base	605 brown sandy clay loam with two large pottery sherds as post-packing	Pottery

PHASE 5: ROMANO-BRITISH

5.14 Direct evidence for activity in this phase is restricted to a single pit in Trench 3 (pit **354**) which produced a greyware sherd (see Table 5). Some of the other features may well have been open during this phase but their construction and use dates remain unknown.

Table 5: Romano-British pit

Pit No	Type & Section	Dia.	Depth	Description	Fills	Finds
Trench 3 354	D	0.63	0.24	Circular with rounded profile	355 red clay capping over	Pottery

8/T 358 brown sandy loam PHASE 6: UNDATED BUT PROBABLY PHASES 2-5

5.15 Several undated pits were scattered about the site (see Table 6). Pit **340** in Trench 3 had an uncertain relationship with Phase 2 ditch **325** but is likely to date to Phase 2 or 3. Trench 8 (Fig 7) revealed three discrete undated pits **802** (Plate X), **804** and **806**, the latter possibly being a posthole.

5.16 Undated gullies were found in Trenches 2, 5 and 9. Gully **208** in Trench 2 was aligned east to west (Fig 6) on the south side of enclosure ditch **201**. It had moderately sloping sides 0.64m wide, a rounded base 0.27m deep and was filled with reddish-brown sandy clay loam (**209**).

5.17 Gullies **502** and **504** were aligned east to west 0.20m apart at the southern end of Trench 5 (Fig 6). Gully **502** had a U-shaped profile 0.50m wide by 0.18m deep (Fig 9/AB) and was filled with greyish-brown sandy clay loam (**503**). Gully **504** had a more rounded profile 0.4m wide by 0.05m deep (Fig 9/AB) and was filled with greyish-brown sandy clay loam (**505**).

5.18 East to west aligned ditch **722** at the north end of Trench 7 (Fig 7) may have conjoined with ditch **602** although it was slightly differently aligned and appeared to be much narrower (0.60m wide). It remained unexcavated but its upper fill was very dark grey sandy silt loam (**723**).

5.19 Gullies **912** and **914** were aligned north to south along Trench 9 (Fig 7), although their respective extents were not certain as they faded in depth to the north and were not excavated. Gully **908** appeared to extend north-east from pit **904** although the relationship was not established. It had sloping sides 0.40m wide, a flattish base 0.10m deep and was filled with brown/reddish-brown clayey sandy loam.

Pit No	Type & Section No	Dia.	Depth	Description	Fills	Finds
Trench 3 340	D 8/U	0.50	0.24	Circular with very steep sloping sides and rounded base	341 brown sandy clay loam	
Trench 8 802	D 8/V	0.70	0.35	Circular with moderately sloping sides and flattish base	803 red clay over 808 greyish-brown sandy clay loam over 809 brown sandy clay loam	Fired clay
804	D 8/W	0.60	0.10	Circular with irregular sides and flat base	805 brown sandy loam	Thea eauy
806	Е 8/Х	0.35	0.30	Circular with near vertical sides and flat base	807 dark greyish brown sandy silt loam	

Table 6: undated pits

The Cropmark Enclosure in Trenches 1, 2, 4 and 10

5.20 The presumed rectangular enclosure, *c*100m long by 75m wide, extends to the north and west of the Grove Fields Farm complex; the south-east corner obscured by the associated farm buildings. Only the south-west corner lies within the present development area (Fig 3).

5.21 Four evaluation trenches intersected the cropmark (T1, T2, T4 and T10) with only two (T1 and T2) being excavated (Fig 6). Both were machine excavated in 50mm spits so that finds could be retrieved, although only in T2 was the section recorded in

detail because of the rapid influx of groundwater and the great depth of the ditch. 5.22 Ditch **201** was V-shaped, 5.4m wide with a narrow rounded base 2.10m deep (Figs 6 & 9/AA; Plate IX). It was backfilled with a largely homogenous sandy clay loam mixed with gravel, which was broadly divided into three contexts, although finer resolution may have been possible if it were not for the rapid ingress of groundwater from a depth of *c*1.7m from the surface. The lower half of the ditch was filled with greyish-brown silty sand and gravel (**205**). This was overlaid by a narrow band of greyish-brown loamy gravel (**204**), which along with the underlying layer, appeared to be derived from the north and thus from an inner bank. Layer **203** comprised of dark grey loam filled the remaining hollow in the ditch and contained a single sherd of prehistoric pottery.

Table 7: Enclosure ditch in Trenches 1, 4 and 10

Trench	Cut	Context	Description
1	101	102	Dark grey loam with Roman pottery, fired clay and animal bone
4	402	403	Dark grey loam with later Iron Age pottery and querns, over 404
		404	Greyish-brown loam
10	1002	1003	Dark grey loam

Trench 7

5.23 Trench 7 was excavated through what appeared to be a large hollow **724** of uncertain size but in excess of 8m square (Figs 7 & 8/Z; Plate XI). The base of the hollow, which was flattish, was *c*1.20m below the current surface level and 0.50m into geological natural. The base was penetrated by three small unexcavated pits **704**, **707** and **709**. To the north-east a series of gullies aligned north-west to south-east appeared to form the edge of the hollow. The earliest **713**, was a small V-shaped cut 0.30m wide, some 1.1m below the geological natural and filled with brown sandy loam (**714**). This feature seems to have been truncated by a shallower cut **711**, which had irregular sloping sides 0.80m wide and was filled with brown sandy loam (**712**). Overlying layer dark brown sandy loam (**720**) also spread across the base of the hollow 0.15-0.35m thick. At its north-east end it was cut by **715**, which was over 1.70m wide with an irregular base 0.60m below geological natural. A shallow groove **717** in the base of the cut may have formed the end of an earlier gully although its fill (**716**) was indistinguishable from the fill of **715**. The remaining hollow was filled with dark grey sandy silt loam (**719**) which was also 0.30m above the level of the geological natural and contained Romano-British pottery.

PHASE 7: MODERN

5.24 The archaeological deposits were sealed by a layer of plough soil (**202**, **300**, **401**, **501**, **601**, **701**, **801**, **901**, **1001**), which was between 0.25m and 0.40m thick. It varied across the site but was generally dark yellowish-brown or reddish-brown sandy clay loam.

5.25 Three modern features were found in Trench 3 including a 1.8m wide service trench aligned north to south, a 0.30m wide, recently inserted, electricity cable duct and a posthole **303**. A new electricity cable crossed the northern end of Trench 4 as well as a foul drain. A water pipe **706** was aligned east to west across Trench 7 whilst a drain crossed north-west to south-east. Water pipes crossed the southern end of Trench 8. A dog was buried at the southern end of Trench 9.

5.26 Topsoil across the site was brown sandy clay loam (**100**, **200**, **400**, **500**, **600**, **700**, **800**, **900**, **1000**).

OBSERVATION OF FOUNDATION AND SERVICE TRENCHES

5.27 The foundation trenches for the new building were excavated under archaeological supervision using a 0.60m wide toothless bucket. Topsoil and modern overburden was removed to expose the geological natural gravel, which in places was cut by tree root holes. No archaeological features were recorded (Plate XII). A 2m x 2m hole was excavated for the septic tank along with a 0.30m wide service trench. No archaeological features were recorded (Plate XII). A 0.60m wide trench was excavated 0.40m deep for the foundations of a dividing wall on the east side of the westernmost building. The trench was insufficiently deep to encounter any archaeological deposits (Plate XIV). A 0.70m wide by 0.70m deep trench was excavated along the southern boundary of the development for the foundations of a new boundary wall at the foot of an established belt of trees. The ground along the entire length of the trench was extremely dry and contained innumerable roots which had to be cut through and which prevented the definition of contexts. No finds were recovered.

6. Flintwork by Stuart Palmer

6.1 A total of only 13 flints were recovered during the excavations. Three of these were natural chunks, six were burnt pieces and the remaining four were unretouched flakes (see Table 5). This is a very low incidence of material from an Avon gravel terrace, albeit with a relatively high incidence of burnt pieces, and the assemblage resists further analysis.

Context	Flake	Burnt piece	Natural	Total
300	1			1
308	1		1	2
311	1	1		2
317	1	2	1	4
331		2		2
703		1		1
903			1	1
Totals	4	6	3	13

Table 8: Flintwork

7. Pottery by Annette Hancocks

INTRODUCTION

7.1 This report details the nature, character and extent of pottery recovered from four phases of ceramic activity and has been prepared in accordance with the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group guidelines for analysis and publication of prehistoric pottery (PCRG 1997). A total of 632 sherds (*c*4.86kg) of pottery with an average sherd weight of 6.9g was recovered. The majority of the assemblage dated from the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age (496 sherds (78.5%), with 51 sherds (8%) of middle/late Iron Age date; 52 sherds (8%) late Iron Age/early Roman and 33 sherds (5%) Romano-British. This report details analysis of the pottery derived from 33 contexts. The majority of the pottery derives from pit (49%) and ditch fills (47%); with the remaining 4% from ploughsoil, posthole and hollow fills.

7.3 A total of 35 diagnostic rim forms were identified. These comprised principally ovoid and globular jar forms with the occasional rounded shoulder, cylindrical, ellipsoidal and carinated profiles. Decorative motifs and techniques comprised largely of finger-tipping and finger-marking located on rims and shoulders. These decorative techniques and motifs are diagnostically of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age date.

METHODOLOGY

7.4 The material was recorded and coded according to a system devised by David Knight (1998) and in conjunction with the PCRG guidelines (PCRG 1997). The minimum variables for the recording of later prehistoric pottery were adhered to. The assemblage was quantified in full by sherd count, weight (g), fabric, form, surface treatment and decoration. Only rim equivalents (EVEs) are published, but percentages for bases are recorded in the archive. The level of abrasion was recorded for individual sherds.

FABRICS

7.5 The fabrics were not thin-sectioned and were recorded to general fabric type, such as quartz, grog or shell-tempered, using a x8 hand lens. Where possible the assemblage was cross-referenced to the existing Warwickshire Museum Iron Age and Romano-British type fabric series. A full list of the fabrics recorded can be found in the archive.

7.6 The dominant fabric group within the assemblage is quartz-tempered fabric P11, with shell-tempered P53 the next largest. The small size of the assemblage and lack of large quantities of diagnostic rim forms, base angles and decorative sherds have hindered any detailed analysis and interpretation. For instance it has not been possible to analyse form and fabric correlation due the lack of diagnostic rim forms.

SURFACE FINISHES

7.7 A total *c*99% of the sherds with surface finishes showed smoothed internal and external surfaces, with a further 1% showing burnishing on the external surface. These techniques occurred only on the quartz-tempered fabrics P11, P12 and P15.

FORMS

7.8 A minimum number of 35 vessels were recognised within the assemblage. Several vessel form types were recorded which include ovoid and globular jars. Forms present are listed in the catalogue of the illustrated forms by period and fabric below.

7.9 Most of the diagnostic rim forms (77%) can be found in the phase 2 assemblage. Globular and ovoid jar forms with upright neck and rounded direct rims in combination with finger-tipping on rim and shoulder are of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date.

Phase	Fabric	Number of sherds	% Qty	Weight (g)	% Weight (g)
2	P11	239	38	1537	32
2	P12	6	1	170	3
2	P15	72	11	492	10
2	P44	1	0	4	0
2	P47	18	3	127	3
2	P53	142	22	762	16
2	P64	6	1	76	2
2	P65	6	1	56	1
2	P81	6	1	24	0
Subtotal		496	78	3248	67
3	P11	12	2	144	3
3	P15	4	1	25	1
3	P47	4	1	14	0
3	P53	27	4	130	3
3	P65	1	0	8	0
3	P85	3	0	60	1
Subtotal		51	8	381	8
4	P11	37	6	244	5
4	P12	1	0	16	0
4	P15	12	2	32	1
4	P53	1	0	212	4
4	P67	1	0	52	1
Subtotal		52	8	556	11
5	P11	24	4	426	9
5	P15	4	1	40	1
5	P16	1	0	16	0
5	P34	1	0	18	0
5	P53	2	0	150	3
5	SVW	1	0	26	1
Subtotal		33	5	676	14
Total		632	100	4861	100

Table 9: Pottery by fabric and phase

Catalogue of illustrated forms (Figs 9 & 10)

- 1. Handmade, decorated body sherd with finger-nail and finger-impressed decoration on shoulder. Smoothed oxidised surfaces. Phase 2, pit **307**, fill **308**.
- 2. Handmade, decorated body sherd with finger-tip and finger-nail decoration on shoulder. Smoothed oxidised surfaces. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill **312**.
- 3. Handmade, ovoid jar with upright neck and with rounded direct rim. Smoothed surfaces with external sooting. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill **312**, diameter indeterminate.
- 4. Handmade, cylindrical cup with upright neck and with rounded direct rim. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill **312**, diameter indeterminate.
- 5. Handmade, cylindrical with upright neck and with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Burnished external surface. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill **312**, diameter 170mm (3%).

- Handmade, globular jar with upright neck and flattened lip; rim slightly expanded externally.
 Finger-tipping on neck and shoulder with internal and external sooting. Phase 2 pit 305, fill
 312, diameter 400mm (5%). Large cauldron vessel with expanded rim cf Wasperton Vessel E.
- 7. Handmade, ovoid neckless jar with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill **312**, diameter 260mm (5%). Finger-tipping on rim exterior and external sooting. Large cauldron vessel with expanded rim cf Wasperton Vessel E and Broom Vessel 1.
- 8. Handmade, globular neckless jar with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Phase 2 pit **904**, fill **910**, diameter 130mm (5%). Smoothed surfaces with finger-tipping on shoulder and external sooting.
- 9. Handmade, globular neckless jar with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Phase 2 pit **904**, fill **910**, diameter 100mm (10%). Smoothed surfaces with finger-tipping on shoulder and external sooting.
- 10. Handmade, globular neckless jar with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Smoothed surfaces with finger-nail decoration on rim with circular motifs on shoulder. Phase 3 pit **323**, fill **324**, diameter 350mm (13%).
- 11. Handmade, ovoid jar with upright neck flattened lip; rim slightly expanded internally. Smoothed surfaces with finger-tip decoration on rim exterior. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill **311**, diameter 200mm (3%).
- 12. Handmade, ovoid neckless jar with rounded direct rim. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 2 pit **305**, fill 311, diameter 100mm (5%).
- 13. Handmade, ellipsoid, upright neck with rounded direct rim. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 2 pit **309**, fill **310**, diameter 120mm (15%).
- 14. Handmade, globular, neckless jar with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Smoothed surfaces with external sooting. Phase 4 ditch fill **603**, diameter 100mm (6%).
- 15. Handmade, globular, neckless jar with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Smoothed surfaces with external sooting. Phase 4 ditch fill **603**, diameter 150mm (14%).
- 16. Handmade, round-shouldered, upright neck with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 4 ditch, fill **603**, diameter 200mm (6%).
- 17. Handmade, ovoid jar with upright neck and rounded lip; rim pinched out externally. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 4 ditch, fill **603**, diameter 100mm (6%).
- 18. Handmade, neckless with rounded direct rim, with sharp internal angle at base of rim. Smoothed surfaces. Phase 4 ditch, fill **603**, diameter 220mm (3%).

DECORATION

7.10 Within the assemblage less than 2% of the pottery showed any decoration. Four decorative techniques were observed: finger-nail; finger-tip, incised and finger-incised. The most common techniques, finger-tipping and incised decoration occurring on 36% of the decorated body sherds, consisted of finely incised linear scoring on the external surfaces of body sherds and finger-tipping on both rim and shoulder. Finger-tipping was recognised on several rims from ovoid and globular jars. It wasn't possible to demonstrate any correlation between rim profile and

decorative technique. All examples are of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date. TAPHONOMY

7.11 Some 88% of the assemblage comprises plain body sherds, less than 2% decorated body sherds, 0.63% shoulder sherds, 2.69% base sherds and 6.96% rims. The majority of the assemblage derives from pit and ditch fills which are likely to have been in use for short periods of time.

7.12 Generally the whole assemblage was very well-preserved as is reflected in the fact that the assemblage showed little abrasion. The overall average sherd weight for the assemblage is 6.9g. This figure, like the abrasion data is very low and would appear to support the theory that features were not in use over a long period of time, even though the pottery is fragmentary in nature implying that deposition in the pits represents secondary deposition.

7.13 Some allowance must be made for the density and coarseness of the fabrics in the production of the handmade vessels. The larger coarse inclusions make the pottery denser and less likely to fragment and this will have affected the degree of insitu survival.

VESSEL SIZE AND FUNCTION

7.14 The greatest number of globular and ovoid vessel forms occurred in the 100mm and 200mm diameter range. However, the majority of the measurable diameters cluster between 100mm to 150mm, with one vessel with a diameter of 400mm.

7.15 It is probable that vessels of the 100mm size were associated with food preparation and cooking. Some confirmation of this came from the fact that 43% of the sherds had traces of external/internal sooting upon them. However, the small number of rims represented (35) does not provide enough quantifiable data to interpret the correlation between vessel size (diameter) and function (use).

7.16 Of note is the assemblage from pit fill **312**, which may represent a 'feasting set' with parallels at both Wasperton and Broom, Salford Priors (Woodward 1999; pers comm). This pit contained sherds belonging to a couple of fabric groups, P15 and P53, the former a quartz-tempered fabric and the latter a fine shell-tempered fabric. Both fabrics are thin-walled, in the range of 6-9mm, with some exceptional sherd thicknesses of 100mm and diameters in the range 260-400mm. The possible feasting set included at least six vessels: an exceptionally large vessel with an expanded rim with external sooting (Fig 10/6), that is paralleled by the large cauldrons from Broom (Woodward 1999) and Wasperton (Vessels 1 and E) and may represent a communal container (Woodward 1998, 6), and a number of medium-sized vessels (Fig 10/2, 3, 5), and a possible cup (Fig 10/4). Some of the diagnostic decorative motifs and techniques have affinities with decorative elements identified on material from Broom – oblique decoration (Vessels 1, 3 and 4); multiple rows (Wasperton Vessels C and H) and finger-tipping on Wasperton Vessels C, G and H (Woodward 1998, forthcoming).

Fired clay from phase 3 pit 323 context 324

7.17 Two lumps of fired clay from pit fill **324** have wood impressions on their underside. These may have been used in the superstructure of an oven or kiln.

DISCUSSION

Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

7.18 The majority of the assemblage was assigned to this period and it appears to have close affinities and some parallels with assemblages recorded from the Warwickshire sites at Broom (Salford Priors) and Wasperton.

7.19 The forms are typically globular and ovoid jars and appear to be wholly utilitarian and domestic in function based on external sooting and patterns of ware and abrasion. The site would appear to be a low status, rural settlement. The functional range of the assemblage is constant, but no comparative analysis of form can be considered due to the low numbers of vessels within the assemblage. A greater range of diagnostic forms amongst the assemblage would help to refine more closely the chronological sequence.

7.20 The vessel forms and fabrics in the Grove Fields Farm assemblage seem to be widely represented amongst later prehistoric ceramic assemblages recovered from sites in the Avon Valley and to the north of the county of Warwickshire.

7.21 The most significant and interesting feature is pit **305**, contexts **311** and **312**. This material is of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date and would appear to represent a 'feasting set'.

8. Querns and rubbing stones by Nicholas Palmer (Geological identifications by Jon Radley, Warwickshire Museum)

8.1 A group of fourteen stone artefacts and fragments came from the excavation, ten of saddle quern and four of rubber. The exact number of genuine rubbers is uncertain. The wear on some of them was quite subtle; four other possibles were collected but discounted on closer examination, and other genuine ones may have been discarded on site.

Feature Context Phase Date	Pit 326 327 2 LBA/EIA	Pit 307 318 2 LBA/EIA	Pit 904 906 2 LBA/EIA	Pit 333 360 2 LBA/EIA	Ditch 402 403 6 LIA/RB
Quern nos	1, 2, 3	4	5, 6, 7	8	9, 10
Rubber nos	-	-	11, 12, 13, 14	-	-
Total	3	1	7	1	2

Table 10: Querns and rubbers

8.2 Of the querns, one fragment was Millstone Grit (no 8) and two possible Millstone Grit (nos 9-10). These may represent traded items imported from the Derbyshire area, but the material does occur in the local drift and could have been collected locally. The two possible Millstone Grit fragments came from the upper fill of the enclosure ditch by which period trade in querns may have been more prevalent. Most of the others, including a fragment of dark grey igneous rock (no 3) with a probable origin in Central England, could have come from the gravel terraces of the River Avon. Although they are rather larger than normal material from the terraces,

the rounded, water-worn or weathered edges of most of them suggest they were probably collected locally.

8.3 Quern nos 1-6 have shapes and dimensions (210-260mm long x 125-175mm wide) which would make them quite convenient for two-handed use as the upper stones of saddle querns. The linear wear striations evident on nos 1, 2, 3 and 5 would also be consistent with this. Nos 1, 3 and 6 had flat grinding surfaces, nos 2, 4 and 5 concave ones. Apart from their grinding surfaces they are more or less unworked. No 7 with a flat grinding surface with linear wear was probably a fragment of lower stone. No 8 with concave wear on both sides, looks like a small fragment of rotary quern, but its LBA/EIA context is felt to be secure and it is therefore more likely to have been from the lower stone of a saddle quern. No 10 a small unworked fragment is identified as from a quern solely on the basis of its rock type.

8.4 The rubbers (nos 11-14) were smaller stones with small patches of wear or polish on their top sides probably resulting from use as palettes for small-scale grinding. All these were water-worn or weathered and probably also obtained from the local drift.

Catalogue

(Max. dimensions given)

Querns (Fig 12/1 - 8)

- 1. Large, sub-rectangular upper/rubbing stone, hard, medium- to coarse-grained sandstone, water-worn, rounded upper surfaces, and flat grinding surface with linear striations. 210mm x 175mm x c.98mm thick. (Pit **326**, fill **327**, SF 1)
- 2. Pointed-oval upper/rubbing stone, hard, medium- to coarse-grained sandstone similar to SF 1, with rounded, water-worn upper side, and concave grinding surface with linear striations. 255mm x c.155mm x c.70mm thick (Pit **326**, fill **327**, SF 2)
- 3. Sub-D-shaped upper/rubbing stone (+ small joining fragment), very dark grey coarsegrained, basic igneous rock, flat with water-worn rounded top side, one jagged edge, and worn, flat grinding surface with slight linear striations. 255mm x c.125mm x c.40mm thick (Pit **326**, fill **327**, SF 3)
- 4. 'Kidney'-shaped upper/rubbing stone, coarse-grained sandstone, with sub-rounded, weathered upper side, and concave, worn grinding surface. 245mm x c.125mm x c.80mm thick (Pit **307**, fill **318**, SF 4)
- 5. Sub-D-shaped upper/rubbing stone, coarse-grained sandstone, with rough weathered upper surfaces and concave grinding surface with linear striations. 260mm x 155mm x c.58mm thick. (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 10)
- 6. Two joining fragments from incomplete D-shaped upper/rubbing stone, medium-hard sandstone, heat-cracked, water-worn upper side with flat grinding surface. 210mm x 135mm x 85mm. (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 9, SF 13)
- 7. Irregular, flattish fragment, probably from saddle quern, coarse-grained sandstone, possibly Arden Sandstone, sub-angular ?lower side and flat grinding surface with linear striations and polished patches towards one side. c.147mm x c.110mm x c.50mm thick. (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 11)
- 8. Triangular fragment, Millstone Grit, with two areas of concave wear on opposing sides. 153mm x 93mm x 55mm thick. Superficially looks like a small fragment from the upper stone of a rotary quern, but in this context more likely to be from a saddle quern. (Pit **333**, fill **360**, SF 14)

- 9. Sub-rectangular fragment, probably from saddle quern, possibly Millstone Grit, with small area of sloping grinding surface. 145mm x 117mm x 73mm thick (Ditch **402**, fill **403**, SF 16)
- 10. Small irregular unworked fragment, very coarse grained sandstone, Carboniferous, possibly Millstone Grit. 90mm x 50mm x 40mm. Geological type suggests a fragment from a quern. (Ditch **402**, fill **403**, SF 15)

Rubbers (Fig 13/11 - 14)

- 11. Irregular cobble fragment, medium to hard sandstone, possibly Triassic Bunter quartzite, rounded, water-worn, heat cracked, with wear/polish on uneven top side. 110mm x over 100mm x 50mm thick (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 7)
- 12. Large, irregular cobble fragment, medium to hard sandstone, possibly Triassic Bunter quartzite, rounded, water-worn, heat-cracked, possible wear on top side. 160mm x over 145mm x 77mm thick (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 12)
- 13. Irregular, flattish fragment, medium-hard sandstone, Carboniferous, Permian or Triassic, possibly from Warwickshire Coalfield, weathered, sub-rounded, with probable wear on top side. 125mm x 90mm x c.43mm. (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 6)
- 14. Irregular, flat fragment, medium-hard sandstone, Carboniferous, Permian or Triassic, possibly from Warwickshire Coalfield, with water-worn edges and area of conceivable wear on top side. 120mm x 93mm x 40mm thick (Pit **904**, fill **906**, SF 8)

9. Carbonised plant remains by Mark Robinson

INTRODUCTION

9.1 Extensive sampling was undertaken for charred plant remains. Sub-samples of 5kg were taken from eight samples from contexts in which charcoal had been observed and which contained much pottery. These samples were floated onto a 0.5mm mesh to recover the carbonised remains and the flots air dried. The flots were analyzed in order to give information on plant usage, to establish the potential for analysis of the remainder of the samples and to isolate suitable material for radiocarbon dating. One sample (**312**) was found to have the potential for detailed analysis so the full sample of 36.3kg was analysed.

9.2 The flots were sorted at up to x20 magnification under a binocular microscope to recover charred plant remains. Any grain, chaff and weed seeds were identified and quantified. The results are listed in Table 11. A representative range of charcoal fragments from each flot was broken so that transverse sections could be examined under a binocular microscope at x50 magnification. This enabled firm identifications to be made of the ring-porous taxa and tentative identifications of the diffuse-porous taxa. The diffuse-porous charcoal was then broken in the appropriate places and the identifications up to x400. Estimations of the quantities of the taxa identified are given in Table 11 for each sample.

RESULTS

The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pits

9.3 Charred cereal remains are present in four of the five samples from the pits and were abundant in the sample from context **312**. The most numerous identifiable grains were of hulled wheat particularly *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat). A couple of grains of *T. dicoccum* (emmer wheat) were also identified from context **312**. The only other cereal represented by grain was hulled *Hordeum* sp. (hulled barley) with a very slight presence from context **312**. Around half the grain was unidentifiable. Cereal chaff in the form of glumes of hulled wheat was found in three of the samples. Almost all of them could either be attributed to *T. spelta* or most closely resembled *T. spelta*. However, context **312** also contained a couple of glumes which were possibly of *T. dicoccum*. The only other food plant remains were some nut shell fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel) again from context **312**. Context **312** produced many weed seeds particularly of *Chenopodium album* (fat hen). Seeds of *Bromus* cf. *secalinus* (brome grass) were present in the samples from three of the pits.

9.4 The flots from all six pits included much charcoal, mostly *Quercus* sp. (oak), with high concentrations of *Quercus* charcoal in contexts **312** and **314**. There was also a presence of charcoal from thorn scrub such as Pomoideae (hawthorn etc). A piece of *Ulmus* sp. (elm) charcoal was found from context **359**.

The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age ditch

9.5 Carbonised remains are sparse in **332** although they include a grain and a glume of *Triticum dicoccum* or *spelta*.

Table 11: Charred Plant Remains

	Period	LBA /EIA	LBA /EIA	LBA /EIA	LBA /EIA	LBA /EIA	LBA /EIA	LIA
	Feature	Pit 305	Pit 307	Pit 326	Pit 342	Pit 333	Ditch 325	Pit 323
	Context	312	317	327	351	359	332	324
	Sample weight (kg)	36.3	5	5	5	5	5	5
	No. items/kg	7.6	1.0	0.0	5.4	3.8	0.6	0.2
	(excluding charcoal)							
CEREAL GRAIN	1 .	0						
I rificum dicoccum	emmer wheat	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Schubel.	1, 1, ,	15				1		
I. spelta L.	spelt wheat	15	-	-	-	1	-	-
1. <i>aicoccum</i> Schubel. or	emmer or spelt	32	-	-	2	4	1	-
spelta L.	1 .	0			4			
I'riticum sp.	wheat	9	-	-	1	-	-	-
Hordeum sp hulled	hulled barley	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hordeum sp.	barley	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cerealia indet.			4	-	7		-	
Total cereal grains		113	4	0	10	10	1	0
Chaff								
Triticum cf. dicoccum								
Schübel glume	emmer wheat	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Г. spelta L glume	spelt wheat	23	-	-	2	2	-	-
Г. dicoccum Schübel. or	emmer or spelt	53	-	-	9	4	1	-
<i>spelta</i> - glume								
Total chaff items		78	0	0	11	6	1	0
NUTS								
Corylus avellana L. nut								
shell frags.	hazel	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
WEED SEEDS								
Thlaspi arvense L.	field pennycress	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chenopodium album L.	fat hen	45	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vicia or Lathyrus sp.	vetch or tare	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cornus sanguinea (L.)	dogwood	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Fouc.	0							
Polygonum aviculare	knotgrass	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
agg.	0							
Rumex sp.	dock	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Solanum cf. nigrum L.	black nightshade	1	-	-	-	-	-	_
Plantago lanceolata L.	ribwort plantain	2	-	-	-	-	-	_
Galium anarine L	goosegrass	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carex sp	sedge	4	1	-	1	-	-	-
Bromus cf secalinus I.	brome grass	6	-	_	5	3	_	_
cf Avena sp	(wild) oats	-	_	_	-	-	1	_
Gramineae indet	grass	7	_	_	_	_	-	_
Weed seed indet	81033	7	_	_	_	_	_	_
Total weeds seeds		, 84	1	0	6	3	1	1
Cuan weeus seeus		04	1	0	0		1	1
CHAKCOAL	alaa ata							
riunus sp. Domoidoan indat	SIDE EU.	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
r omoideae maet.	nawmorn, apple etc.	++	Ŧ	-	Ŧ	+	Ŧ	-
<i>uimus</i> sp.	eim	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>zuercus</i> sp.	оак	+++	++	+	+	+	+	+++

+ present, ++ some, +++ much

INTERPRETATION

9.6 The late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits **305**, **342** and **333** all contained waste from the de-husking and cleaning of crops of hulled wheat along with some grains which were accidentally incorporated in the waste. Most of the non-cereal seeds in the samples were of annual plants which readily grow as weeds of cultivation. The quantity of cereal remains from pit **305** was sufficient to show that they were from the processing of spelt wheat. The few emmer wheat and barley grains need only have represented occasional plants growing as volunteers in a field of spelt although it is likely that both were also important crops in the region around the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age. The remains from pits **351** to **359** could also have been from the processing of spelt wheat crops although the quantity of remains was too low to be certain.

9.7 The high proportion of seeds of *Chenopodium album* (fat hen) in the sample from context **312** along with a few seeds of *Thlaspi arvense* (field penny cress) and *Solanum* cf. *nigrum* (black nightshade) suggested that the cereals were grown on a relatively fertile soil. One of the weeds, *Gallium aparine* (goosegrass), tends to be associated with autumn-sown crops but it was only represented by a single seed.

9.8 The hazel nut shells from context **312** showed that there was also at least limited exploitation of wild food plants. The single stone of *Cornus sanguinea* (dogwood) from Late Iron Age pit context **324** was likely from a branch used for fuel which had fruit on it. The sample also contained much charcoal.

9.9 The charcoal from the five late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits was largely unexceptional with evidence for the exploitation of oak and thorny scrub such as hawthorn. However, the record of elm from context **359** was unusual although it is very likely that elm was a minor component of oak woodland in the region. The large quantity of charcoal in late Iron Age pit context **324** could plausibly have been derived from a nearby oven or kiln.

10. Animal bone by Catherine Coutts

10.1 The small assemblage of animal bone was generally in very poor condition, the harder elements such as teeth making up a relatively high proportion of that recovered. This is probably a reflection of the acidity of the soils. A number of contexts have produced burnt fragments of bone but these are generally very small (less than 10mm) and are therefore not identifiable to species. Cattle and sheep/goat predominated although unidentifiable fragments represented a large proportion of the assemblage.

11. Discussion

PHASE 1: EARLIER PREHISTORIC

11.1 The occurrence of Neolithic or Bronze Age flint on a site essentially of later prehistoric date in the Avon valley is neither surprising, nor given the low incidence of finds in question, is it particularly significant. The gravel terraces on the eastern side of the Avon contain extensive earlier prehistoric evidence in the form of ceremonial and funerary monuments and the valley itself seems to have been an important route-way as well as ceremonial focus in the 2nd and 3rd millennia BC.

Table 12: Animal bone

Phase	Context No	Context type	Quanti ty	Species	Element	Comments
2	308	Fill of pit 307	1 1	Unident	unknown	small burnt fragment
2	312	Fill of pit 305	1	Cattle	molar	moderate wear
			2	Unident	unknown	small bone fragments
2	317	Fill of pit 326	1	Pig	molar	little wear
			1	Sheep/ goat	molar	burnt fragment
2	327	Fill of pit 326	2	Unident	ribs?	Burnt fragments
2	332	Fill of ditch 325	1	Cattle	molar	made up of 7 fragments
			1	Unident	unknown	part of an epiphysis or process
2	337	Fill of pit 326	1	Unident	unknown	small burnt fragment
2	339	Fill of pit 328	1	Cattle	Calcaneum	3 fragments fit together
			3	Cattle?	?Calcaneum	3 fragments likely to be from
						same calcaneum as above
2	347	Fill of pit 336	1	Cattle	molar	4 fragments of same tooth
			3	Sheep	1 premolar 2 mandible	
2	251	Eill of wit 242	2	Unidant	iragments	
2	551 702	Fill of pit 342	۲ 1	Choon	molor	extremely magnemary
3	310	Fill of pit 309	1	Unident	long bono	hurnt fragmont
4	603	Fill of ditch	1	Cattle	pre-molar	built hagment
1	000	602	1	Cuttle	pre motu	
			2	Cattle	mandible	fragments
			3	Cattle	molars	
			1	Cattle	Unident	ankle bone fragment?
6	102	Enclosure ditch fill	1	Unident	long bone	large mammal bone fragment, part of an epiphysis
7	701	Plough soil	1	Cattle	metapodial	shaft and part of proximal Epiphysis
			1	Cattle	rib	cattle-sized
			1	Unident	long bone	shaft fragment of small long bone

PHASE 2: THE LATER BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE

11.2 The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pit group is a significant find within Warwickshire producing an important and rare assemblage of ceramics from a little understood period in the region.

11.3 Pit groups are a significant feature on many later prehistoric sites in the region and the pit types, based on their diameter, profile, cubic capacity and respective fills can often be used to establish their functions. However, given that such features may have been dug, used and re-used for a number of purposes, such determinations are very often speculative: a hole in the ground could after all be useful or a hindrance.

11.4 Seven type A pits were examined, six in Trench 3 and one in Trench 9. These features fall within the size and shape range conventionally ascribed to storage pits or grain silos (cf Reynolds 1974). Remnant red clay linings were evident in all but pits **333**, **338** and **904** in Trench 9. Pits **338**, **333** and **305** were intercut. This is a relatively unusual but not unknown aspect in the region's pit groups, which mostly include discretely positioned pits thought likely to be marked somehow at surface level. The inference here is that the area was re-used for storage purposes, and that the pits represent more than a single year's use. Whether this was because space was at a premium or because it was a convenient location, or even perhaps because pits in

this location had proven to be successful storage facilities remains unknown. Pits **326** and **307** were certainly open at the same time, which presumably means that the stored grain was removed in the same season.

11.5 Once the pits had been emptied they appear to have been repositories for what has often been construed as domestic rubbish. However, as in many such instances the detritus may have been specifically selected (Hill 1993, 1995). Of particular note is the unusually high incidence, for this region, of querns; three each from pits **326** and **904**, which also contained four rubbers, and the inclusion of a ceramic feasting set in pit **305**. These items were buried along with ashes and food products, perhaps in a propitiatory process (Cunliffe 1995, 100) whereby the objects were transformed through decay into new sources of fertility (Giles 2008, 343), probably during or after one of the celebrations and festivals which punctuated the annual cycle which were developed during this time (Harding 1974, 97; Williams 2003). The storage of cereal seeds in pits to be sown and reaped and stored again is a metaphor for this unending cyclicity and such rituals probably developed a sense of security for the inhabitants of agricultural settlements.

11.6 Similar storage pit groups have been excavated in the Avon Valley: a late Bronze Age example at Wasperton (Crawford 1983, 17; Ann Woodward pers comm); and Late Iron Age examples at Barford Bypass (Palmer forthcoming b), Ryton-on-Dunsmore (Palmer forthcoming d) and King's Newnham (Palmer 2003). Early Iron Age storage pits were excavated at Burton Dassett (Booth 1989), whilst middle to late Iron Age examples were recorded at Walton in the Dene Valley (Palmer 2008b) and suitably sized pits were recorded at Long Itchington in the Itchen Valley (Palmer 2008a).

11.7 At Grove Fields Farm, pit **342** contained a green tinged fill (**351**). The green tinge could have been caused by mosses or algae but in this instance it is more likely that it is derived from Vivianite, a mineral formed in calcium and phosphorous rich deposits which is normally blue in colour, but appears greenish in a yellowish or brownish soil (James Greig pers comm). This is a common phenomenon on Warwickshire sites and is thought most likely derived from high levels of faecal matter. This is a curious aspect of the site since it is difficult for us to reconcile sewage in the same vicinity as food storage. However, it is clear from the huge, monumental midden sites such as Potterne in Wiltshire (Lawson 1994), and Whitchurch in Warwickshire (Kate Waddington pers comm), that later prehistoric peoples had no such qualms, as on these sites there is clear evidence to show that people lived on top of what must have been malodorous rubbish heaps which contained faecal material. A latrine function for a disused storage pit at Grove Fields Farm then may be have connotations connected with fertility as much as convenience.

11.8 The two type B pits in Trench 3 (**352**, **328**) although of similar form, had entirely different fills. Pit **352** in particular was bowl-shaped and had a nearly solid, banded, red clay fill. This feature could have been used to retain a liquid and was repeatedly relined with unfired clay. Similarly dimensioned later prehistoric pit groups are known from King's Newnham, Barford Bypass, Copston Magna (Palmer forthcoming e), Stockton (Palmer forthcoming f) and Marsh Farm Quarry, Salford Priors (Palmer 2000, forthcoming g). Often it is supposed that this kind of feature is merely a truncated form of a type A pit, yet they appear to survive in close association with the latter type. The prevalence of this type on some sites suggests that an alternative explanation should be sought and given the close association with grain silo pits, either storage or process would seem the most likely answer.

11.9 Four type C pits were identified, three in Trench 3 and one in Trench 9. The sloping sides of these features do not lend themselves to storage and the retrieval of any materials inside, yet pit **336** appeared to have a slumped clay capping layer in the top. As with all the pit types, it is possible that these pits were lined with

temporary or organic materials which have left no trace but there is little else to suggest to what purposes they were put. This type of pit is rare on settlement sites in the region.

11.10 Only two/four type D pits were encountered. This is a low proportion for a type that is common on most sites, particularly those which do not have types A, B or C such as Ling Hall Quarry (Palmer 2002, forthcoming h, forthcoming i) Park Farm, Barford (Cracknell & Hingley 1994), Coton Park, Rugby (Northants Archaeology 1998), Meriden (Stevens 2005) and Brandon Grounds (Bateman 1978). Ascribing a function to this kind of pit is highly speculative and generally pointless.

11.11 Ditch 325 cut along the top and therefore post-dated at least some of the pit group. It is difficult to interpret the function of this feature given the relatively small amount exposed but it bears comparison with a number of similar features on local There appears to be a strong correlation between pit digging and linear sites. boundaries in the region. Pit groups have been found aligned alongside boundary ditches at Wasperton, Barford Bypass, Ryton on Dunsmore, Walton and Southam and alongside enclosure ditches at Marsh Farm, Barford Bypass and Long Itchington, although the relationship between the features has been unknown at all these sites with the exception of Ryton on Dunsmore where boundary gullies were cut through the tops of the pits. Clearly some importance was attached to the digging of pits or the storage of grain along boundary features and it is therefore possible that the location of pits or stored grain could influence the creation of a boundary. At Grove Fields Farm it remains possible that an existing boundary lay outside the confines of the site prior to the construction of the pits, but equally the boundary may have been deliberately created across the location where grain was formerly stored. One reason for this might be related to the partition of a landholding within the settlement. Just as it was important to maintain the favoured location for storage, so may it have been essential that if tenure or ownership of the property was divided, the providence or fortuity of the storage location might well then have also been divided. Partible inheritance (Smith 1997, 275-277) is thought likely to have been practised by later prehistoric societies (Hingley 1996) and has recently been posited as an explanation for the land divisions on the Dunsmore plateau (Palmer forthcoming h).

11.12 The occurrence of what were most likely dumps of pottery in ditch **325** is paralleled at Walton in the Dene Valley, and the practice may well be connected with the re-affirmation of the boundary in a formalised ritual (Palmer 2008a).

THE ENCLOSURE

11.13 The principal feature on the site is the large enclosure ditch which shows as a cropmark to the east and north of Grove Fields Farm Cottages. Despite this feature remaining undated, close examination of the cropmark complex reveals a number of interesting points with the necessary caveat that cropmarks may only represent a fraction of the underlying features (see Fig 12). Firstly it is immediately apparent that the main complex can be divided into three broadly north to south axially aligned groups of features defined by the broad alignments of the north to south enclosure ditches. In this way the groups can be seen as linear strips some 100m wide. Each of the three strips contains or includes a number of ditched enclosures, Grove Fields Farm Cottages and its attendant enclosure lying within the western strip with a further two enclosures to the south. The central strip includes at least three axially aligned enclosures with a further lozenge shaped example to the south, possibly aligned along the edge of an old river channel. The lozenge shaped enclosure at the southern end of the complex appears to lie within two strips. The eastern group has at least three large enclosures, although the easternmost arms do not show as cropmarks.

11.14 It is also apparent that each strip includes distinct groups of circular buildings: the western group unenclosed to the north of Grove Fields Farm Cottages; the central group unenclosed and to the south of Grove Fields Farm, with the eastern group probably represented by the cropmarks enclosed in the north-east of the complex. The arrangement has the appearance of having been three distinct land-units, in which settlement translocated over time, but constrained by defined boundaries.

11.15 Land division in the later Bronze Age and Iron Age is now a widely recognised development in Warwickshire, albeit perhaps somewhat later than in other regions (Field 2008). Boundaries were defined by natural features such as watercourses (Palmer 1999) or by manmade constructions such as ditches or pit alignments (Palmer 2002). At Ling Hall Quarry at least three individual but parallel strips some 200m wide were defined by short lengths of closely set posts which stretched for at least 100m (Palmer forthcoming h). These were later subsumed into a much larger complex of pit alignment defined land-units which are known to extend for at least 1.8km across the centre of Dunsmore. The implications at Grove Fields Farm are difficult to ascertain without corroborative dating of the cropmarks, but it would seem plausible that the land-units were defined in the later Bronze Age as linear tracts which constrained the development until the site was abandoned in the Roman period.

11.16 It is commonly assumed that the floruit of prehistoric enclosure construction in the midlands was during the middle Iron Age (*c*400 – 100BC) (Hingley 1989, 1996). However, at Wasperton three large rectilinear enclosures are dated 650 – 550BC (Ann Woodward pers comm). These features were preceded by four small, 'house sized' enclosures and linear pit groups, all dated 850 – 650BC and constructed either side of an earlier 'territorial' boundary dated 1300 – 850BC (Palmer forthcoming c). If Wasperton is used as a comparison, and its morphological similarity and proximity suggests that it should be, the implications for the Grove Fields Farm enclosure might then be that it was constructed within an existing land-unit and that the Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit group formed part of an earlier settlement. This model of development is given further credence in that each of the 'tracts' includes at least one 'house sized' rectangular enclosure comparable to those at Wasperton: at the southern end of the western strip, slightly to the north in the central strip and at the northern end in the eastern strip.

PHASES 3 - 5: MIDDLE/LATER IRON AGE – ROMANO-BRITISH

11.17 These phases are represented by a few pits and gullies which. The pits would seem to imply that certain settlement type activities were taking place in the centuries either side of the Roman invasion, but are too few to give a clear picture of occupation at that time. The material from pit **323** certainly suggested that an oven or kiln was in the area. One can imagine a scenario whereby the enclosure was divided into plots or paddocks for gardening and stock control, particularly if the gullies in Trenches 5 and 9 are contemporary. A Middle Iron Age enclosure at Marsh Farm Quarry, Salford Priors was probably used as a field during the early Roman period (Palmer 2000, forthcoming g). The phase 3 features confined to Trench 6 conceivably relate to a discrete area of settlement activity. In any event the relative dearth of material of this date on this part of the site could suggest that it was not intensively occupied after the early Iron Age.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The archaeological evaluation, excavation and salvage recording at Grove Fields Farm Cottages has uncovered clear evidence for the intensive use of the site during the later Bronze Age/earlier Iron Age with limited use between the middle Iron Age

and Romano-British periods. A significant pit group has yielded important information regarding the material culture, ritual practices and the agricultural economy of a farming community, settled within a loop of the River Avon some 3000 years ago (+/- 300yrs). This is rare evidence for a period that is little understood in Warwickshire and the analyses have provided invaluable data about the development of the local and regional agricultural landscape.

12.2 The work has demonstrated that the deposits at Grove Fields Farm are of a very high quality and that they survive immediately under the topsoil. Given that the significant pits were found both in Trench 3 and Trench 9, it appears likely that others will lie in between.

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Appendix: List of Finds

Context No	Context Type	SFNo	Material	Туре	No
102	enclosure ditch fill		Pottery		2
102	enclosure ditch fill		Fired Clay		1
102	enclosure ditch fill		Animal bone		1
106			pottery	IA	1
107			potterv	IA	1
108			potterv	IA	2
203	enclosure ditch fill		Pottery		9
300	old plough soil		Flint	Burnt	1
300	old plough soil		Pottery	Duint	13
308	nit fill of 307		Bone	hurnt	10
308	pit fill of 307		Pottory	buint	14
208	pit fill of 307		Flint	1 hurat	14
208	pit fill of 307		Find clay	1 buint	2
210	pit fill of 200		Characel		3
210	pit fill of 200		Para	Promote scores and all find of	ے 1
310 210	pit fill of 200		Done	burnt, very small frag	10
510	pit fill of 309		Fottery		10
311	pit fill of 305		Flint	2 burnt, 1 thumb hall scraper	3
311	pit fill of 305		Fired clay		1
311	pit fill of 305		Pottery		32
312	pit fill of 305		Bone	Burnt bone and teeth	3
312	pit fill of 305		Pottery	Decorated rims and body sherds	23
317	pit fill of 326		Animal bone	tooth	1
317	pit fill of 326		Fired Clay	Possible pottery	1
317	pit fill of 326		Charcoal		1
317	pit fill of 326		Flint	2 burnt	4
317	pit fill of 326		Pottery		73
318	pit fill of 326	4	Stone	Quern, coarse grained SS	1
319	=331		Pottery		3
324	pit fill of 323		Fired Clay		3
324	pit fill of 323		Pottery	2 joining	8
324	pit fill of 323		Pottery		13
327	pit fill of 326		Bone	burnt	1
327	pit fill of 326	3	Stone	Quern, igneous, pos erratic	1
327	pit fill of 326		Pottery		5
327	pit fill of 326	2	Stone	Quern, coarse grained SS	1
327	pit fill of 326	1	Stone	Quern, coarse grained SS	1
329	pit fill of 328		Pottery		1
331	pit fill of 330		Pottery	Some with burnt residue	41
331	pit fill of 330		Fired Clay		3
331	pit fill of 330		Bone	Burnt bone, probably animal	1
331	pit fill of 330		Flint	Burnt	2
332	ditch fill of 325		Pottery		18
332A	ditch fill of 325		Bone	Probably animal, small frag	7
332A	ditch fill of 325		Pottery		160
332A	ditch fill of 325		Fired clay	Possibly daub	1
332A	ditch fill of 325		Slag	5	1
332B	ditch fill of 325		Pottery		69
332C	ditch fill of 325		Potterv		12
332C	ditch fill of 325		Fired clav		1
335	pit fill of 334		Potterv		4
337	pit fill of 336		Bone	Burnt	1
337	pit fill of 336		Potterv		4
337	pit fill of 336		Flint		3
339	pit fill of 338		Animal Bone		6
339	pit fill of 338		Potterv		12
000	Pre min or 550		i Otter y		14

343	pit fill of 342		Animal bone	???????? May not survive washing	2
343	pit fill of 342		Pottery		6
344	pit fill of 336		Pottery		1
347	pit fill of 336		Animal bone		7
347	pit fill of 336		Pottery		1
351	pit fill of 342		Animal bone	teeth, frags	2
351	pit fill of 342		Pottery	decorated	3
353	pit fill of 352		Pottery		3
358	pit fill of 354		Pottery		1
359	pit fill of 333		Pottery		4
360	pit fill of 333		Pottery		1
360	pit fill of 333	14	Stone	Quern frag, possibly rotary, MG	1
403	enclosure ditch fill		Pottery		3
403	enclosure ditch fill		Pottery		3
403	enclosure ditch fill	15	Stone	Quern, pos Millstone grit	1
403	enclosure ditch fill	16	Stone	Quern frag, pos Millstone grit	1
405			pottery	RB greyware	1
603	ditch fill		Fired Clay		2
603	ditch fill		Animal bone		8
603	ditch fill		Pottery	Some with burnt residue	24
605	posthole fill		Pottery	base and body sherds	2
701	plough soil		Animal bone		3
701	plough soil		Pottery	T. (1	11
703	pit fill of 702		Animal bone	leeth	1
703	pit fill of 702		Flint	Burnt	1
703	pit fill of 702		Pottery		9
719	hollow fill		Slag	Declarge suciely for a	1
719	hollow fill		Pottory	ros loom weight frag	1
719 800	nonow nin		Fined clay		1
009	pit fill of 902		Flied Clay		1
903	pit fill of 902		Pottory		3
905	pit fill of 904		Pottory		7
906	pit fill of 904	12	Stone	Quern	1
906	pit fill of 904	12	Stone	Quern	1
906	pit fill of 904	8	Stone	Quern or rubber	1
906	pit fill of 904	11	Stone	Quern	1
906	pit fill of 904	10	Stone	Quern or rubber	1
906	pit fill of 904	9	Stone	Quern or rubber	1
906	pit fill of 904	6	Stone	Quern or rubber	1
906	pit fill of 904	7	Stone	Quern or rubber	1
906	pit fill of 904	5	Stone	Quern or rubber	1
907	pit fill of 904	5	Potterv		3
910	pit fill of 904		Potterv		12
U/S	1		Flint	scraper	1
-				-	



Plate I: Trench 3 during evaluation



Plate II: Excavation in progress after the widening of Trench 3



Plate III: Phase 2 pits **307** (prior to the removal of **361**) and **326**



Plate IV: Phase 2 pit **904** with large stone placed over a quern



Plate V: Phase 2 ditch 325 and trench for boundary wall



Plate VI: Phase 3 pit 604 with upended pottery



Plate VII: Phase 3 pit **323** during excavation



Plate VIII: Phase 4 ditch 602





Plate IX: Ditch 201 in Trench 2 viewed from the east

Plate X: Phase 6 pit 802





Plate XI: Trench 7 viewed from the east

Plate XII: Foundation trenches viewed from the west



Plate XIII: Hole for septic tank