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Wessex Archæology

AVON VALLEY GAS PIPELINE

Summary Excavation Report

Report No W413

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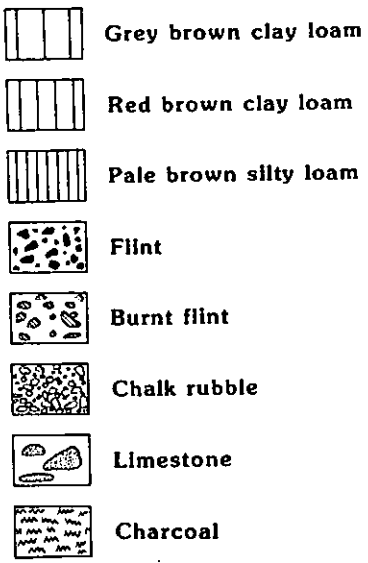
Contents

KEY TO SECTIONS



Acknowledgements

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1 Summary

Wessex Archaeology were invited by the Ministry of Defence Land Agency to excavate and observe four trenches sited along the line of a proposed gas mains between Durrington and Netheravon. The first trench, A, revealed evidence of prehistoric activity, in addition to substantial evidence for a rural Roman settlement contained within a late prehistoric enclosure. The second trench, B, was sited across an Iron Age enclosure, known as the Packway Enclosure. The remaining two trenches, C and D, revealed little or no archaeological evidence.

2 Introduction.

During late January and February 1991, excavations took place ahead of the laying of a Southern Gas mains pipe, to the south of Netheravon, Wiltshire. The excavations were carried out by Wessex Archaeology, according to a brief set by the County Archaeological Officer for Wiltshire, and were funded by the Ministry of Defence Land Agency, through the Property Services Agency.

2.1 Location and Geology

The pipeline route extends across areas of Upper Chalk, from the existing gas mains close to the Durrington roundabout on the A345 (SU152441), northwards along the western side of the Avon Valley to a point just south of the army camp at Netheravon (SU148477), a distance of c 4km (Fig. 1). The 10m wide easement, within which the pipe was to be laid, lies broadly parallel to the A345 and a short distance to the west of it. Between Durrington and Netheravon the pipeline crosses the eastern ends of a number of relatively high ridges overlooking the western side of the Avon valley, and which form extensions of Alton and Netheravon Downs.

At Netheravon the pipeline divides. One branch runs eastwards across the valley floor, before turning north to Netheravon airfield, a distance of c 1.25km; the other branch going north-westwards to residential quarters on the western side of the camp, a distance of c 700m. A separate stretch of pipe, joining existing gas mains, was also laid on the eastern side of the Avon valley, along a ridge of chalk south-east of Bulford (SU175432). From Bulford, for a distance of c 1.25km, the pipeline runs eastward following the line of the A3028 immediately to the south.

2.2 Archaeological Background

Both pipelines lay within areas of high archaeological potential, close to many known monuments. Originating in the Neolithic period (c. 4,000-2,500 BC), there is the henge monument of Durrington Walls (SU150438) (Wainwright and Longworth, 1971), which lies to the south of Trench B. From the Bronze Age (c. 2,500-800 BC) there are numerous round barrows extant on the ridges between Durrington and Netheravon. Opposite Figheldean the line of the trench crossed the site of a tumulus marked by the Ordnance Survey (SU150470), which is part of a small group of five barrows. To the south-east of Bulford, the pipeline is sited to the north of an extensive spread of tumuli.

At Durrington, the pipeline begins by crossing the Packway Enclosure, a ditched enclosure of the late pre-Roman Iron Age (Wainwright 1971, 316-318), taking its name from the adjacent road. It is situated to the north of the neolithic henge of Durrington Walls. A scatter of finds along the ridge to the north of the group of tumuli opposite Figheldean, suggested the presence of a probable Romano-British settlement (SMR No SU14NW302). A Romano-British building is known to have existed beneath the army camp at Netheravon, though not on the line of the proposed pipeline.

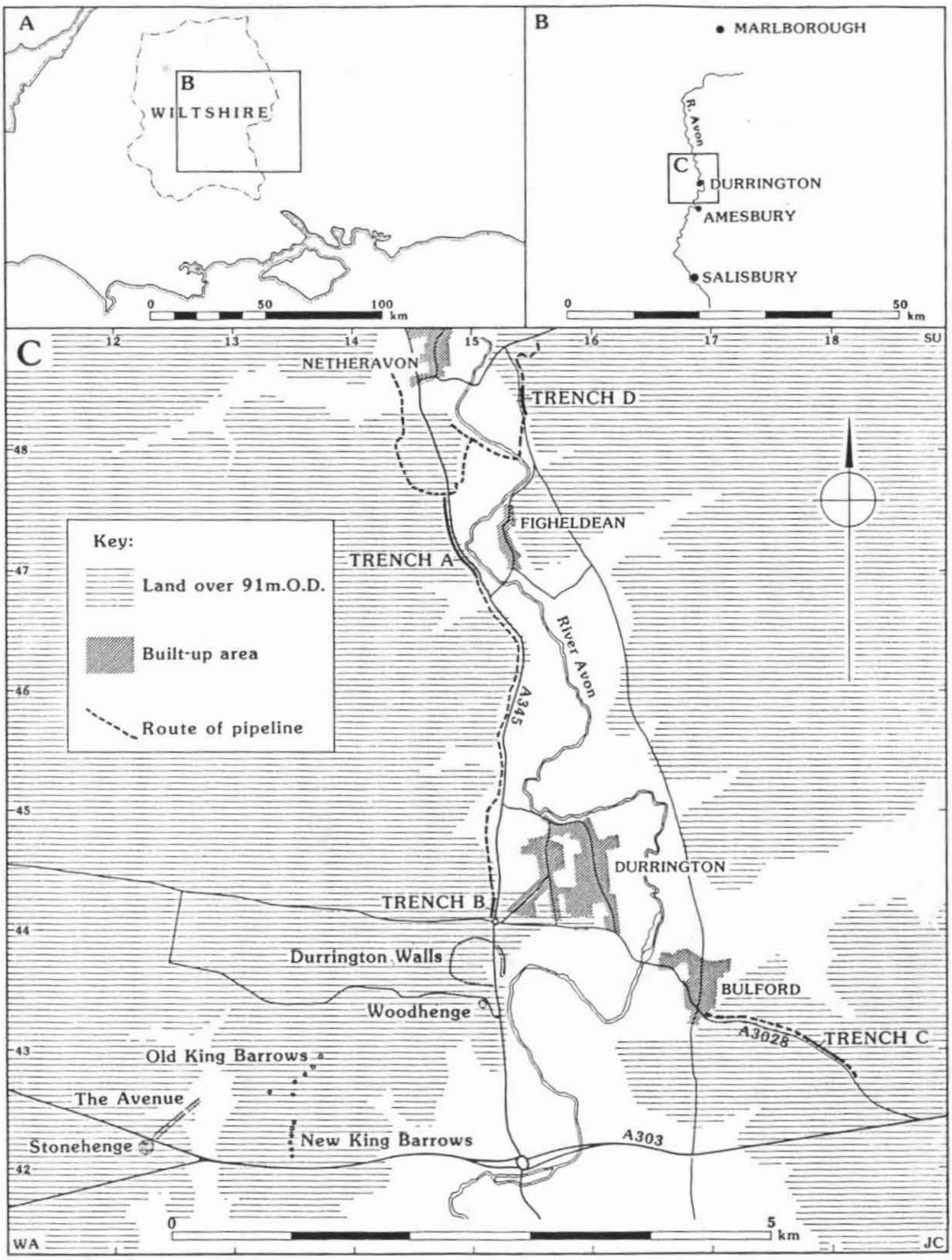


Fig. 1 Location plan

2.3 Methodology

The proposed method of pipe-laying (which involves laying the pipe as the trench is excavated, and immediately back-filling) would not allow for any observation of the trench during the construction work. Following negotiations between Wiltshire County Council, Wessex Archaeology, the Property Services Agency and Southern Gas, it was agreed that a period of four weeks should be allowed for the excavation of selected areas in advance of the pipeline construction. The chosen areas were to take the form of a 4m wide machine trench along the line of the easement. All features were recorded within the 4m width, but only those occurring within a 2m wide section, precisely on the line of the proposed pipe, were to be excavated. Three areas of the Durrington-Netheravon pipeline were agreed (Fig.1): Trench A $\subseteq$ 800m long across the ridge opposite Figheldean and extending across the dry valley to the north; Trench B $\subseteq$ 150m long extending north from the Durrington roundabout; and Trench D $\subseteq$ 200m long on the eastern side of the valley, south-east of Netheravon. Proposed archaeological work along the Bulford pipeline was to be confined to the observation of a single Trench, C, 2m wide and $\subseteq$ 350m long at the eastern end of the route.

Work began on January 28th 1991, and was completed within the four week schedule, despite the severe and frequently sub-zero, weather conditions of the last three weeks. Two tracked excavators were used; the larger to strip topsoil from Trenches A and B, where it was thought that most work would be needed; and a smaller machine for Trenches C and D. The excavation of Trench B was completed by the end of the first week, as the density of archaeological features encountered was low. Excavation work was concentrated in Trench A where a high density of features was encountered in the southern half of the trench. Excavation continued in this trench throughout the four weeks. Trenches C and D proved relatively unproductive, and their excavation and backfilling was completed within a few days.

The detailed description of the excavations which follow are arranged in Trench order. Trench A contained the majority of the archaeological deposits, dating to more than one period. Most of the features belonged to the Roman settlement, and there appeared to be two phases of occupation, early and late Roman. The section on Trench A, therefore, has been divided into evidence for activity which pre-dates the Roman settlement (section 3.2 Pre-Enclosure Features), and into the evidence for the early and late phases of Roman occupation (sections 3.3 Early Enclosure Features, and 3.4 Late Enclosure Features, respectively). To the north of Trench A was a dry chalk valley, from which environmental samples were taken. This has provided important information on the early prehistoric landscape and the evidence for this has been included at the end of the section on Trench A.

3 Trench A: Figheldean (SU15054690 to SU46974760)

3.1 Introduction

This trench was approximately 800m long, running parallel to the A345, on the western side of the Avon valley, opposite the village of Figheldean (Fig. 1). Its southerly part lay across the end of a ridge, above the 91m contour, which formed a broad eastern extension of Netheravon Down, sloping gently down to the line of the A345, before dropping steeply to the river. The bedrock was Upper Chalk, overlain by c 0.3m of ploughsoil. The only exception to this was in the base of the dry valley, where colluvial deposits were encountered above the chalk, to a maximum depth of 1.5m.

Once topsoil had been stripped to reveal the surface of the chalk bedrock, archaeological features were immediately apparent, as were furrows in the bedrock from recent ploughing. In the dry valley at the northern end of the trench, parts of two negative lynchets were located on the valley's sides. In the bottom of the valley, a machine-dug section was made through the layers of colluvium. The main concentration of features, however, lay on the fairly level ridge top in the southern part of the trench. They extended over a distance of c 360m, and almost without exception were contained within an area defined between two substantial enclosure ditches.

The high density of features meant that, although efforts were concentrated in this trench for the last three weeks of the project, one area of features had to be left unexcavated. Within the central 2m of the trench, sections were excavated across at least 75% of the features visible. These demonstrated evidence for the prehistoric landscape, and for two main periods of occupation, late Iron Age/early Romano-British and late Romano-British. Excavated features included ditches, pits, postholes and building platforms, but within the confines of the narrow trench, no sense of the wider pattern of the settlement could be obtained. There were also a number of graves, which appeared to be associated with the later Romano-British settlement.

3.2 The Pre-Enclosure Features

Several parts of the trench provided evidence for features and developments within the prehistoric landscape. These were lynchets, pits, sections through a ring ditch, two inhumation burials and a machine-dug section through layers of colluvium in the bottom of the dry valley (see section 3.5).

3.2.1 The Lynchets

Sections were cut across two negative lynchets, 317 and 494 (Fig. 2). Of these, 317 was the larger and deeper, and ran along the southern slope of the dry valley at c 93m above OD (Fig. 2). It appeared as a sloping shelf cut into the hillside to a depth of c 0.7m, and a surviving width of c 10m. Two periods of formation were apparent, and sherds of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British pottery were found in its infill.

The other lynchet, 494, lay along the northern slope of the dry valley, and was a shallow, level shelf c 7m wide and 0.4m deep. It had a single homogeneous fill, 493, of fine brown loam,

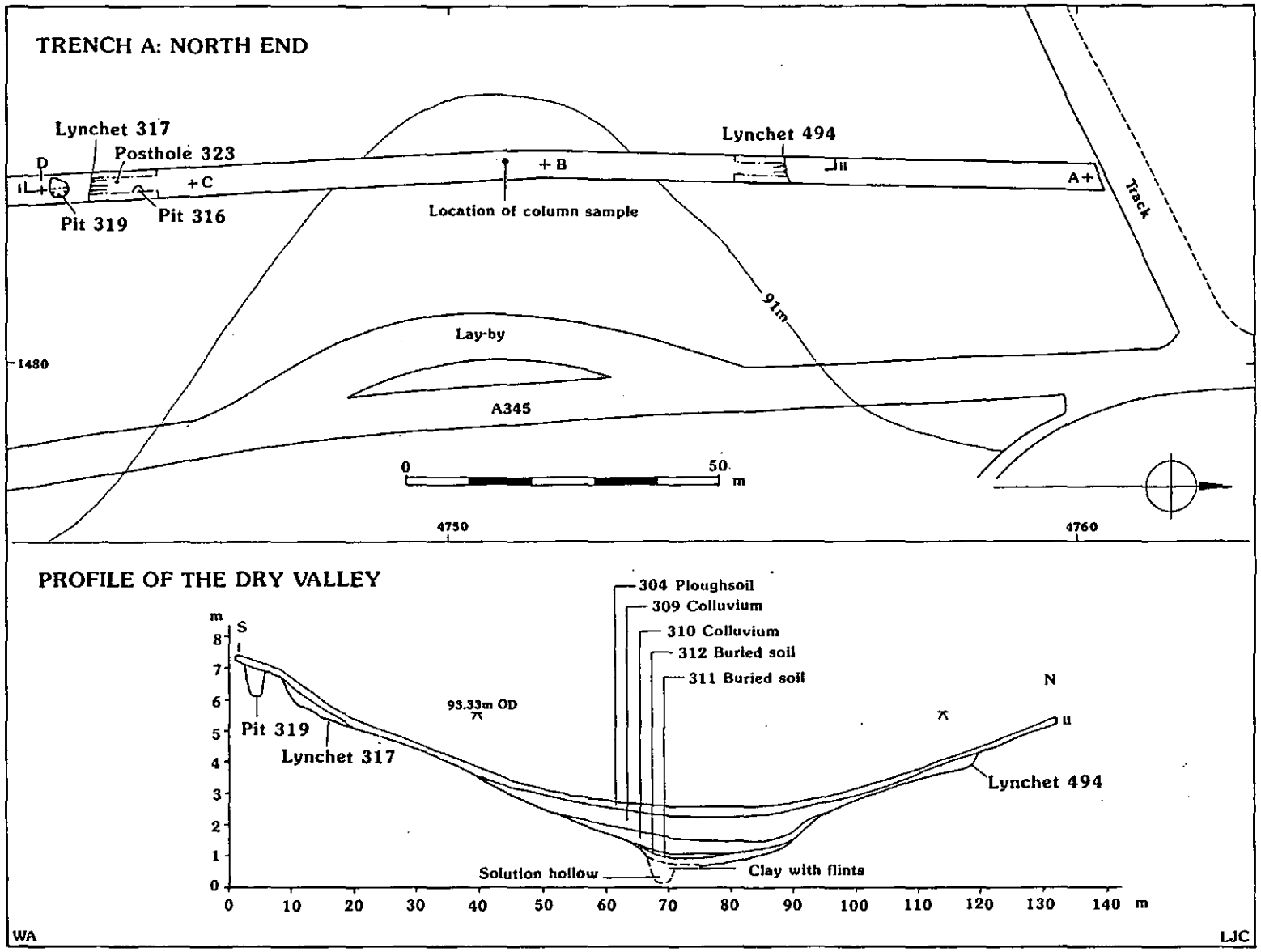


Fig. 2 Plan and profile of dry valley

and contained no artefacts.

Slight traces of three negative lynchets were recorded on the south side of the ridge at the south end of the trench, spaced c 9m apart. No dating evidence was found, and they may be comparable to the post-medieval lynchets excavated in Trench B (see section 4.3.2).

3.2.2 The Pit

At the top of the slope on the southern side of the dry valley, was a rounded pit, 319, c 1m deep with an uneven, slightly stepped profile (Fig. 2). It was filled with weathered chalk rubble and red-brown chalky loam: layers 318, 320 and 321. It contained only flint flakes and fragments of bone, but may be early in the prehistoric sequence, perhaps Neolithic, on the basis of the species of the land snails found within its fills, which are indicative of a relatively wooded environment.

3.2.3 The Ring Ditch

In the southern part of the trench, the ring ditch of a ploughed-out Bronze Age round barrow was located and sectioned (Fig. 3) (SMR No SU14NW614). The barrow had an external diameter of c 27m and lay a short distance to the north-east of another barrow which is still visible as a low mound (SU14NW612). The two barrows lie close to the south-eastern end of the ridge, c 40m from the top of the steep scarp down to the River Avon. Three other round barrows (SMR Nos SU14NW613, SU14NW615 and SU14NW616) are known to lie adjacent to these, but none came within the line of the trench, or were observable as mounds.

Two sections (64 and 77, Fig. 3) were excavated across the ring ditch, on the north and south-east sides of the barrow. The ditch was 3.2m wide, 0.9m deep and was steep-sided with a flat base, and in both excavated sections large quantities of flint-knapping debris were recovered from layers immediately above chalk rubble weathering in the base and sides of the ditch (see section 7.5). Other finds included a barbed and tanged arrowhead and a relatively large sherd of Deverel Rimbury type pottery, which dates to the middle Bronze Age and may have had a funerary function.

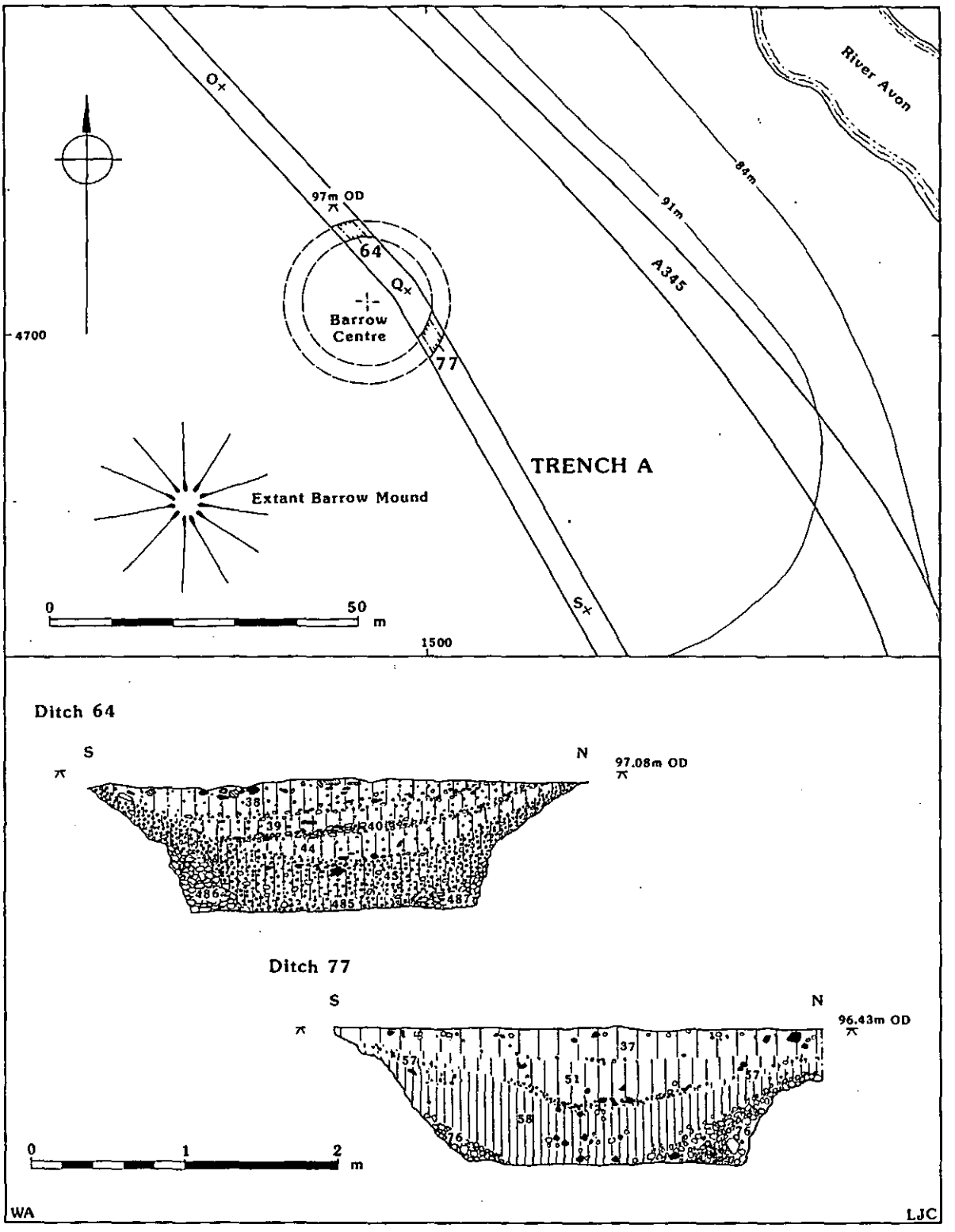
No evidence of internal features was found on the area of chalk bedrock within the circumference of the ring ditch, with the exception of a few stakeholes. These may or may not have been contemporary with the barrow.

3.2.4 The Burials

About 300m to the north-west of the barrows the remains of two inhumation burials were found (Fig. 4). No direct dating evidence was found with the burials, but they pre-dated the later prehistoric enclosure (see below section 3.3.1), and could date to the Bronze Age, although they were not associated with any recognised form of Bronze Age funerary monument.

SU14 NW 155

The skeletons lay immediately below the ploughsoil, in what remained of a shallow cut into the chalk, no more than 0.15m deep. Although parts of two skeletons were found, it was not possible to determine whether they were contained within two separate graves and they may have been placed within the same grave cut. Both skeletons were tightly crouched, with the knees drawn up to the chest, and they may have been bound into this position. The legs, pelvis and parts of the spine and arms



SU14NW 612

Fig. 3 Plan and sections of Bronze Age ring ditch

survived for one skeleton (402), and the other (404) had only the legs in situ. The remainder of the bones had been cut away by the enclosure ditch, 328, and human bone fragments were found in the lower fills of that feature.

3.3 The Early Enclosure Features

Most of the recorded features in Trench A lay between two ditches which formed part of a large enclosure, which was also evident on aerial photographs. The features could be dated to two periods; late Iron Age/early Romano-British (1st century BC - 1st century AD) and later Romano-British (3rd-4th century AD) (Figs. 5 and 7). Excavated features of the earlier of these periods were concentrated in the northern part of the enclosure, though some of the unexcavated features in the southern part could be of this date. They included pits, small ditches and traces of structures in the form of slots and, probably, postholes.

3.3.1 The Enclosure

An aerial photograph taken by O.G.S. Crawford in the 1920s (Crawford APs, 3544, 4439, 4452, 4482), shows the north-west corner of a substantial ditched enclosure on the ridge across the end of which the trench ran (Fig. 4). Until recently, this parchmark had been included as part of an extensive field system to the west of the trench (SMR No SU14NW1230). Within the line of the pipeline, sections of two substantial ditches, 328 and 95, were encountered (Fig. 4) which appear to mark the line of the north and south sides of this enclosure respectively. With its fourth side probably lying against the steep scarp above the river to the east, overall dimensions for the enclosure can be suggested as $\subseteq$ 360m north-south and $\subseteq$ 300m east-west, an area of approximately 11 hectares.

The ditches were substantial, $\subseteq$ 3m deep and $\subseteq$ 5.5m wide, with a steep, slightly rounded, V-shaped profile. The section of the northern ditch, 328, was excavated by hand to a depth of 1.9m, but from the depth of the similarly-shaped southern ditch, it can be postulated that its total depth was about 3m. Its infilling layers had been tippped in from the south side, suggesting an internal bank which may have been levelled by throwing the material from it into the ditch. The southern ditch, 95, was fully sectioned by machine to a depth of 3m and a width of 7m.

The enclosure was located along the top of the relatively steep slope on the south side of the ridge, and the northern side of the enclosure overlooked gently sloping ground. The enclosure appears to have been positioned to make use of the steep scarp along the west side of the river valley at this point. Within the trench there was no clear evidence for an entranceway, though observed anomalies in the infill of the excavated section of the southern ditch suggested it may have been close to a butt end, west of the line of the trench. An entranceway at this point would have coincided with the gap between the two barrows, which lay within the line of the enclosure on this side of the ridge, and it is not impossible that they were somehow incorporated into a defended entranceway to the enclosure. The aerial photograph, however, does indicate the presence of a possible inturned entrance on the enclosure's north-west side (Fig. 4).

The enclosure was obviously a major feature of the landscape,

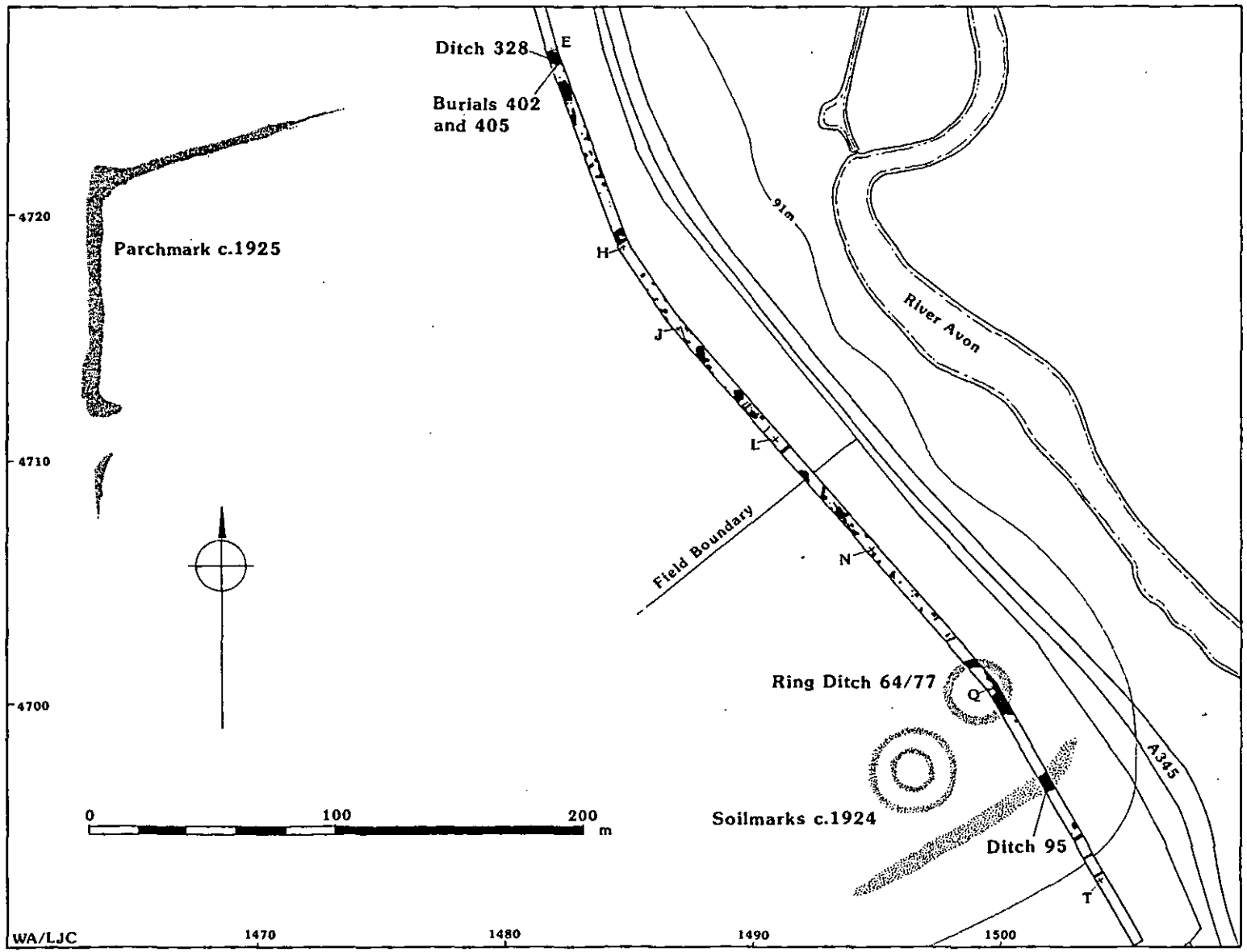


Fig. 4 South end of Trench A, with all features, in relation to the enclosure

but the precise date of its construction is unclear. The sequence of fills within the ditches shows that, after the initial period of fairly extensive weathering of both the bank and ditch, the profile became stable, with a rounded U-shaped ditch profile $\subseteq$ 1.60m deep. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the top of the weathering layers, immediately beneath the clayey loam of the stabilisation horizon; one late Iron Age, the other Romano-British. A construction date in the later Iron Age seems therefore possible. Fills of chalk rubble overlay the layers which contained the pottery sherds. Such fills indicate deliberate infilling rather than weathering, and it is likely that the material was tipped in from the bank. A small group of early Romano-British pottery sherds was recovered from the upper fills of the ditch, overlying the chalk rubble, which suggests that the ditches were filled in no earlier than the early Roman period.

3.3.2 The Pits

Along the excavated line, between the Ditches 238 and 95, a number of pits were recorded (Fig. 5). Of these, four pits (346, 352, 367 and 470/471) were excavated which, on the basis of pottery, can be assigned to the 1st century AD. There was no demonstrable grouping of pits, though some of the six unexcavated pits close to pit 367 may have been contemporary with it.

Only pit 346 was possibly pre-Roman. This was a shallow, sub-rectangular pit, $\subseteq$ 0.60m deep beneath the surface of the chalk bedrock. Partially truncated by the overlying, later Romano-British platform 342, its infill was a red-brown loam containing some large flint nodules, 334. Two sherds of pottery were found in the layer, probably of late Iron Age date.

Pits 346 and 352 were circular, or oval, with curving, undercut sides and flat bases. The pottery from the fills dated to the 1st century AD. Finally, pit 470/471 was probably a single, elongated, oval pit with sloping uneven sides. Its fill contained both Iron Age and 1st century Romano-British pottery. It was cut across a slot, 428, which is described below (section 3.3.4).

2.3.3 The Ditches

Two parallel ditches were excavated, 459 and 472 (Fig. 5), aligned north-east to south-west, $\subseteq$ 22m apart. Both were approximately 1.2m wide, ditch 459 had a sharp, v-shaped profile, $\subseteq$ 0.65m deep, and ditch 472 had a rounded profile and was $\subseteq$ 0.5m deep. The upper fill of both ditches contained sherds of Romano-British pottery dated to the 1st-2nd century, but the lower fills of Ditch 459, the deeper of the two, contained late Iron Age pottery. The ditches could have been contemporary, representing parts of a small enclosure dating to the 1st century and perhaps spanning the period of the Roman conquest. To the north the butt-end of a third ditch, 333, was excavated, which contained pottery dating to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. This was aligned east-west and had a U-shaped profile, $\subseteq$ 1.15m wide and 0.35m deep.

2.3.4 The Structures

Evidence for timber structures was found in most parts of the trench, in the form of post-holes and slots, but many of the features cannot be dated, and the extent of the trench was too

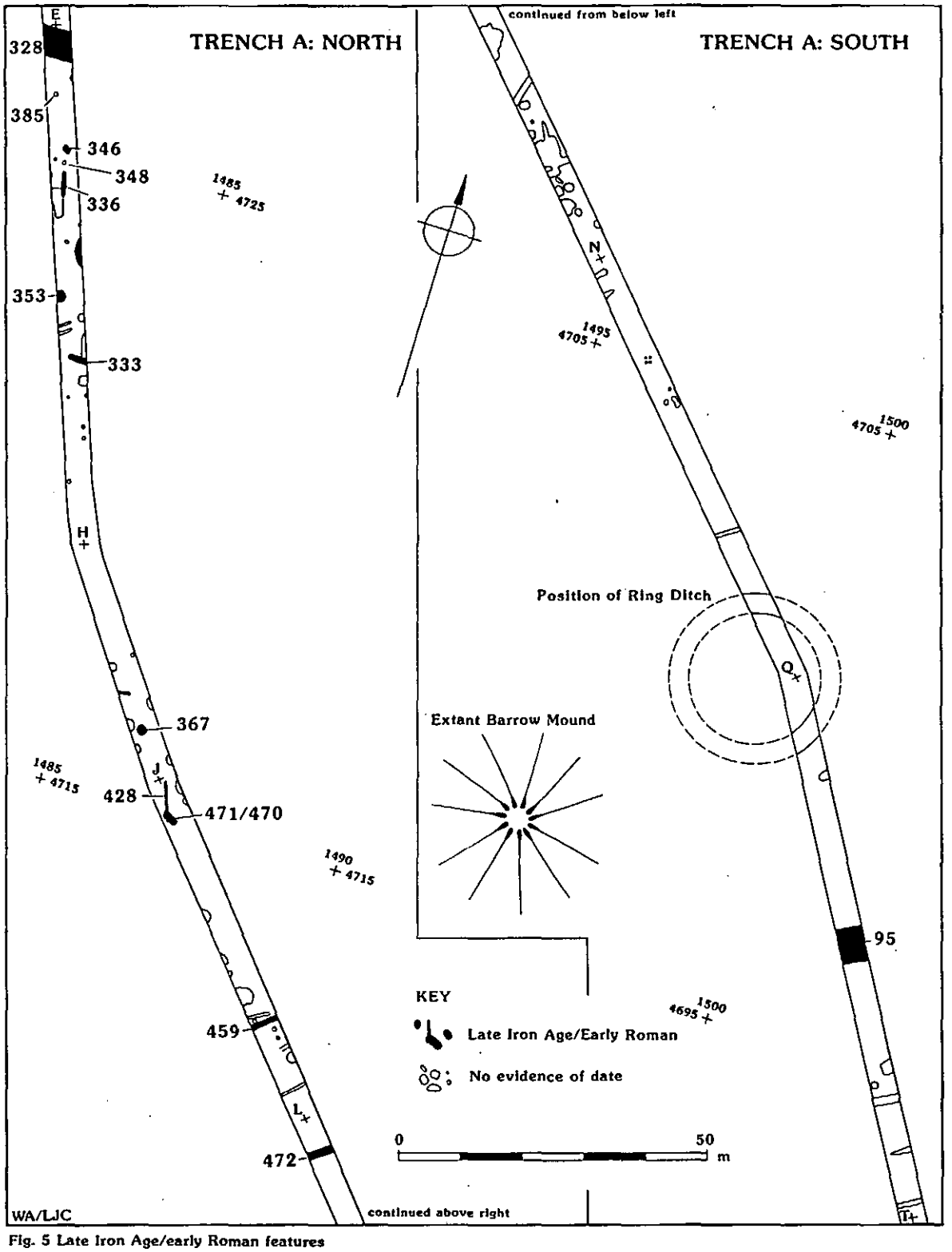


Fig. 5 Late Iron Age/early Roman features

limited for the recognition of structure plans (Fig. 5).

The nature of the excavated slots suggested two types of structure, one apparently using a horizontal sillbeam, the other more substantial, vertical timbers. Without a wider plan, however, no conclusions can be offered as to the nature of the buildings, though no evidence was found for circular hut-platforms, and most of the features appear to have dated to the early post-conquest period from the pottery found within them.

Slot 336 is an example of a straight-sided slot $\subseteq$ 0.55m wide and $\subseteq$ 0.60m deep which would have held vertical timbers. Aligned approximately north-south, it was 4m long with rounded butt-ends. Though the feature is likely to have held substantial vertical timbers, there was no evidence within its fill for individual post positions. The infill of the feature contained Romano-British pottery dating to the 1st or 2nd century. This slot stood in isolation within the trench, and any structure of which it formed a part could not be identified. It did, however, line up with posthole 348, 1.50m to the north of it. This posthole was $\subseteq$ 0.55m in diameter and 0.20m deep. It contained a single large flint nodule, perhaps a packing stone. It was very similar in character to posthole 385, 11m to the north. Their positions relative to slot 336 suggests the presence of a substantial building, and it is possible that they were part of the same structure, however, there is no evidence for the date of either posthole.

Slot 428 was a narrow, square-cut slot, aligned approximately north-south and cut by Pit 471/470. It was $\subseteq$ 0.40m wide and 0.20m deep, and extended for a distance of $\subseteq$ 7m, from a butt-end in the south to a point where it had been completely ploughed out. Similar shallow slots or gullies were recorded in other parts of the trench, but cannot be dated.

3.4 The Late Enclosure Features

Features dated to the 3rd-4th centuries AD lay specifically within the line of the two ditches, 328 and 95 (see above, section 3.3.1), spread over a distance of $\subseteq$ 270m along the line of the trench (Fig. 5). It is probable that a number of the unexcavated features are of this date (see above, section 3.1). and in plan, some of these features are comparable with the excavated pits and platforms of other parts of the trench (Fig.6). The evidence for the settlement of this period included structures, represented by platforms in the hillside, pits, ovens and a number of graves. The limited nature of the excavations, and the plan of features recovered, again prevents any understanding of the wider layout and nature of the settlement.

3.4.1 The Structures

Parts of four structures were excavated (Fig. 6), all of which consisted of some form of shallow terrace dug into the slope of the hillside. The platforms all contained pottery of a late Roman date (see section 7.6.2). With one exception (443), the plans of the structures were too incomplete for any reconstruction to be suggested, but it is likely that the platforms would have been used as the bases to buildings of timber construction. In two cases (342 and 373) postholes were found cut into the surface of the platform, and in the case of

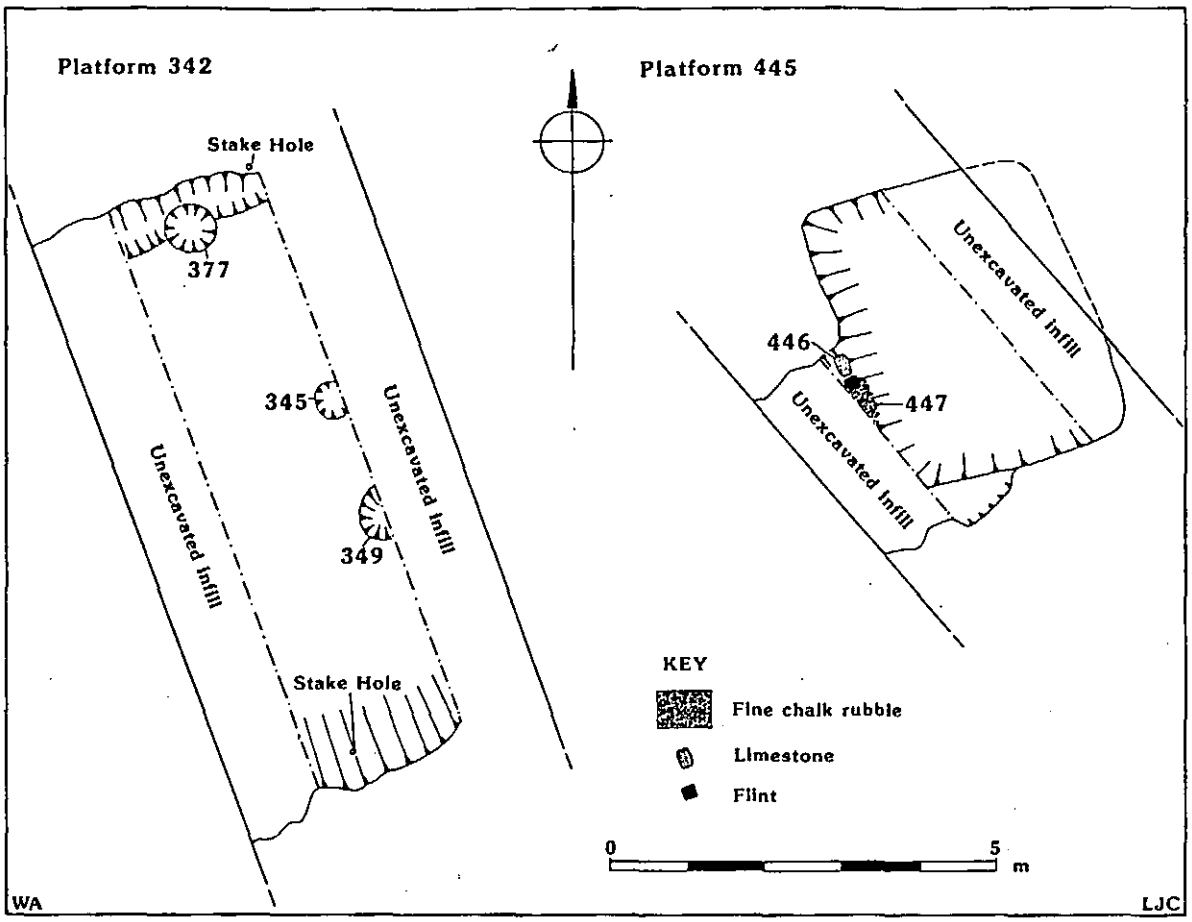


Fig. 6 Roman building platforms

platform 342 there was also a shallow gully cut into the northern edge. Along one edge of platform 72, which was an extensive terrace, parts of a flint wall were revealed. It was not possible, however, to recover the full plan of this platform.

The only relatively complete structure plan recovered was of platform 445 (Fig. 6). This appeared to have been a rectangular structure with a sunken internal area, measuring c 4m by 3m. Traces of the base of a flint and sarsen rubble wall (446 and 447) remained in situ along its western side. This may have formed the base for a timber superstructure, which elsewhere could have rested upon the surface of the chalk bedrock.

3.4.2 The Pits

Parts of four rectangular, or sub-rectangular pits were excavated, in addition to one group of intercut, rounded, fairly shallow hollows, which could all be dated to the later Romano-British phase of settlement (Fig. 7). A specific function could not be ascribed to any of these features.

Pits 480 and 490 contained earlier Romano-British pottery, as well as sherds dating to the 3rd/4th century. Pit 473 contained fairly large amounts of pottery of the 3rd to 4th centuries, as well as animal bone, whereas pit 374 contained only a small number of 3rd to 4th century pottery sherds.

The pit group, 351/357/359/361, consisted of a group of at least four conjoining hollows in the northern part of the settlement area. These were rounded features c 0.45m deep, the fills of which had spread from one to the other, demonstrating that they were open at the same time and filled as one. Their function is unclear and their fills consisted of brown loams containing scattered flint and limestone rubble, including probable tile fragments, as well as animal bone and pottery. The pottery can be dated to the 3rd-4th century.

3.4.3 The Ditch

A small ditch (355), aligned approximately east-west, had been cut through the infill of the southern edge of the group of pits described above (351/357/359/361). This was c 1m wide and 0.25m deep, with a rounded, U-shaped profile. Its fill, 354, contained sherds of 3rd/4th century pottery, and the ditch was probably a property division within the area of settlement.

3.4.4 The Ovens

Two ovens were found and excavated: one was a double horseshoe-shaped oven, 457, and the other a T-shaped oven, 50 (Fig. 6). The infill of both can be dated to the later Romano-British period, and though their form differs they may both have served as corndriers.

Oven 457 lay in the northern part of the settlement area and comprised two horseshoe-shaped, subterranean elements, each c 0.65m deep c 1.30m long and 0.80m wide with vertical sides; the northern half being lined with flint and chalk rubble, and a single course of fired brick fragments had been laid on the base. Grave 456 had been dug though the junction of the two parts of the oven, and the fills in the southern half could not be related to those in the north. Each half of the oven contained a thick black layer over the base. That in the southern half (482) contained numerous burnt grains, and that in the northern half

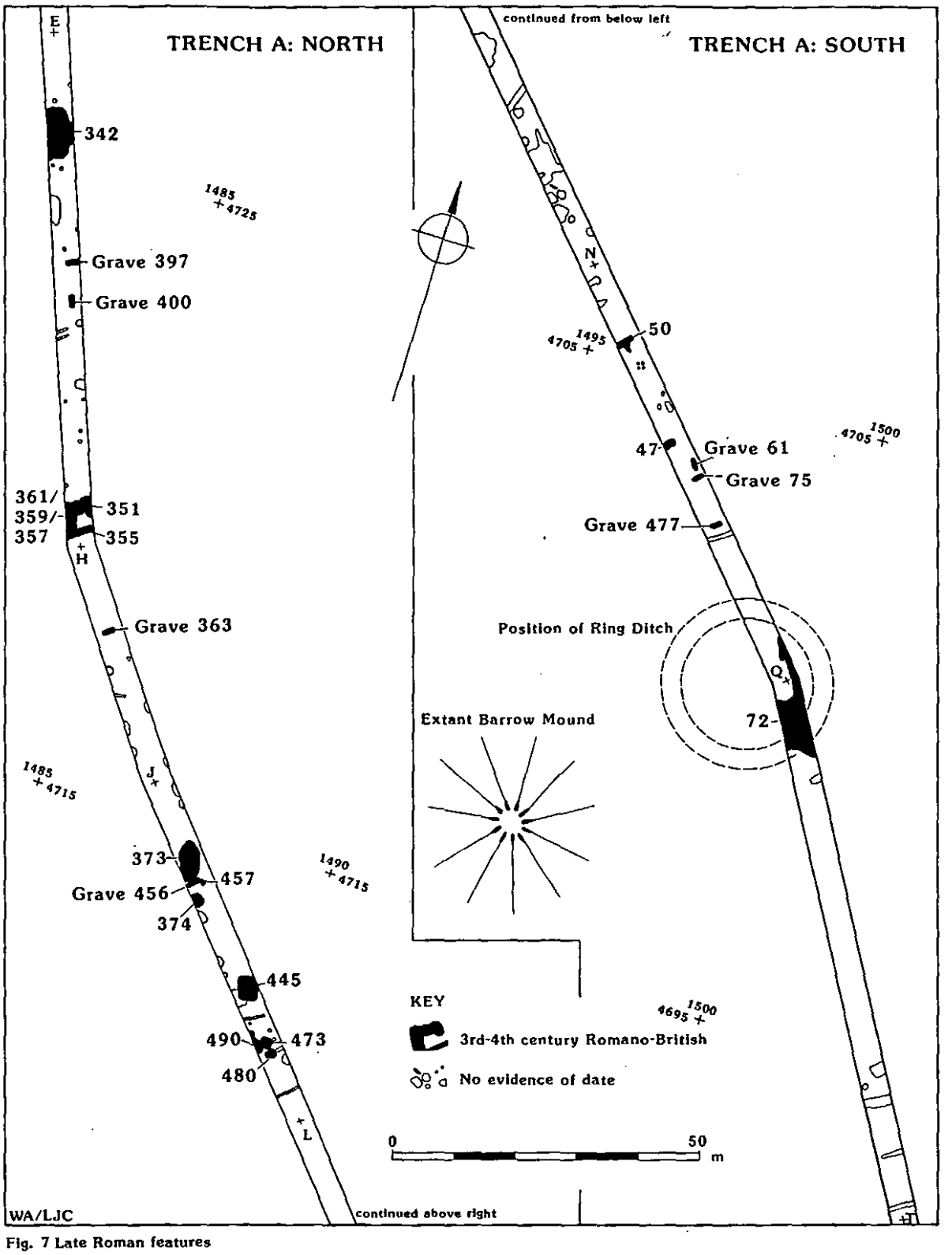


Fig. 7 Late Roman features

(483) consisted of burnt twigs and weed seeds. A band of flint and chalk rubble and chalk cob, 481, was probably the remains of the collapsed lining and superstructure. It was found in the southern half of the oven and contained pottery dating to the 3rd-4th century AD.

The other oven (50) was a T-shaped structure with axial arms of equal length (Fig. 8). The arms of the T were relatively shallow, $\subseteq$ 0.20m deep, with sloping sides, against which was the remnants of a lining of flint nodules, 48. The body, or flue, of the T was deeper, $\subseteq$ 0.55m, and its southern part was lined with fragments of brick and tile, 43 (see section 7.3). Only the eastern half of the feature was excavated, so any comparable linings in the western half, which lay outside the line of the pipe trench, were not exposed. There was no burnt deposit in the base of the oven, and indeed little charcoal in any of the layers of fill. The primary fill was a grey-brown loam, 53, which lay along the base of the upright of the T. In the southern end of the feature this was sealed by large limestone slabs, 56, perhaps rooftiles re-used in the superstructure of the oven and which had subsequently collapsed into it. Pottery from the upper layers (41 and 49) included sherds of the 3rd-4th century AD. An iron knife blade was recovered from layer 41, and in the eastern arm of the oven was a large fragment of a quernstone.

3.4.5 The Graves

A total of seven graves were excavated, of which four were spaced within the northern part of the area of settlement over an area of $\subseteq$ 105m, and three within a limited area of the southern part (Fig. 7). The graves shared common traits, and were all probably elements of the late Romano-British phase of the settlement, though there was little direct evidence to date them.

The four northern graves were deeper and larger than the group to the south. One grave, 456, could be dated to the 4th century or later on the basis of its having been dug through an oven, 457, described above. Though the alignment of the graves varied, one north-south and three east-west, they were all deep, square-cut features. The location of iron nails in graves 456 and 363 indicated the presence of wooden coffins.

A group of three burials was located in the southern part of the settlement area. These were in general smaller and shallower than those graves to the north, and there was no evidence of the use of wooden coffins. In grave 477, however, large flint nodules had been placed around the head and torso of the corpse.

Iron hobnails were recovered from all seven graves; this revealed that five individuals had been buried wearing hobnailed boots, and a cluster of hobnails adjacent to the head of the sixth suggested that the boots had been placed in the grave. The hobnails in the seventh grave were very scattered and their significance is unclear. Evidence for burial ritual was found in the upper part of grave 61. Above the human skeleton was the skeleton of a dog, lying in a crouched position. The tail of this animal appears to have been cut off, and placed within the grasp of the corpse.

Dating evidence for any of the burials is slight. The presence of hobnails, however, puts the likely date-range as

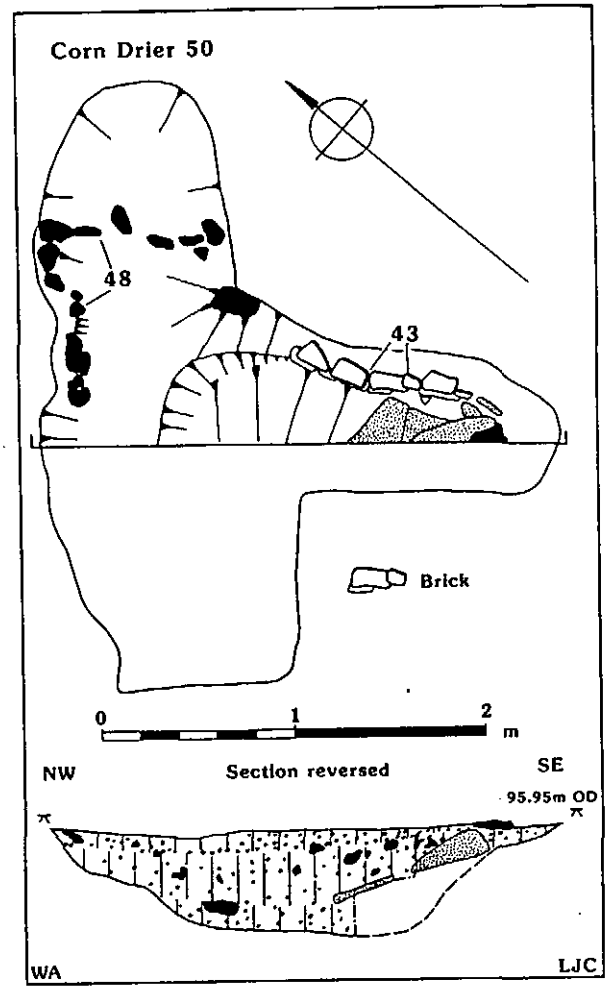


Fig. 8 'T'-shaped corn drier

later 2nd to 4th century AD, as shown by evidence of burials with hobnails from other cemeteries (McWhirr 1982 and Clarke 1979). This is supported by the grave (456) which had been cut through the fill of the horseshoe-shaped oven (457).

3.5 The Dry Valley

The valley is c 180m wide and c 5m deep, with a smooth concave profile (Fig. 2). At the base of the valley, the chalk bedrock was buried beneath a sequence of colluvial and other deposits, up to 1.5m deep. This sequence reflects a long period of erosion and deposition, resulting from the activities of Man and his effect on the environment.

The chalk was covered by a 0.3m thick band of red-brown, weakly calcareous soil, 311, which extended over an area c 25m wide in the base of the valley. Above this was a band of fine, stone-free, worm-sorted soil, 312, up to 0.1m deep, the remnants of a former land surface. This lay below a deep layer (110 and 109), up to 1.1m thick, of pale brown clayey-loam, which became progressively paler and chalkier towards the top.

A soil column was taken through these layers, and although there was no direct evidence of the date of deposition in the form of artefacts, the environmental evidence provided an interpretation of the landscape and possible dates of deposition. The earlier layer, 311, appeared to be the base of a deep woodland soil, which possibly relates to the same period to which the pit, 319, (see section 3.2.2) belongs. This soil had elsewhere been eroded away, following clearance of woodland during the Neolithic period. It was overlain by the remnants of a Bronze age soil, 312, reflecting the open nature of the landscape. The upper part of the sequence showed the gradual filling in of the valley with material washed from the tops and slopes of the surrounding ridges in the later prehistoric and possible Romano-British periods. The chalkiness of these upper deposits suggests that the surface of the chalk bedrock itself was being eroded. The lynchets on the sides of the valley (see section 3.2.1) probably belong to this period, as they are evidence for cultivation.

4 Trench B: Durrington (SU15154410)

Su14SE

4.1 Introduction

Trench B was situated at the southern end of the Durrington to Netheravon pipeline, and comprised a trench 4m wide, beginning just inside the fence on the north-west side of the Durrington roundabout, and running downslope to the north for a distance of c 150m (Fig.1). The trench was located on the north side of a ridge, running approximately east-west, falling to the north from c 110m to c 95m above sea level. Just below the crest of this ridge, a late prehistoric enclosure, known as the Packway Enclosure, is located, and parts of it were excavated in 1968 (Wainwright 1971, 307). This work took place during the construction of the roundabout at the junction of the A3028 and A345, and excavation did not begin until a considerable amount of the basal chalk had already been removed. It was thought that this was possibly the reason for the paucity of features within the enclosure (limited to two pits in an area of c 1,800m^2).

The pipeline presented the opportunity of examining an area of undisturbed ground within the enclosure. The Trench was opened up by machine on January 28th, 1991, beginning within the southern half of the enclosure. It crossed the line of the defining ditch c 45m further to the north, allowing the examination of an area of c 140 square metres within the enclosure. To the north of the enclosure, two small pits of uncertain date were excavated, as well as sections across the fill of three negative lynchets. In the lower part of the slope, the machine was used to dig a section through colluvium in the base of the valley. Work in this trench was completed by the end of the first week of the project.

4.2 The Packway Enclosure

Su14SE208

161

The enclosure is kite-shaped approximately 65m by 65m, its four sides defined by a deep, steep-sided ditch, with an entranceway in its southern side (Fig. 9). During the 1968 excavations it was dated to the later, pre-Roman Iron Age (Wainwright 1971, 317-318), on the basis of pottery from the upper fill of the ditch sections and the contents of the two excavated pits which lay within it. A smaller ditch to the east of the enclosure contained earlier material, dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

Excavations along the pipeline confirmed the line of the northern side of the enclosure, and the excavated section of the ditch, 35, was identical to those of the earlier excavations. There were, however, few features within the enclosure, and besides a scatter of possible stakeholes with a dark grey infill. Only a single, flat-bottomed pit c 0.80m deep, and a small post-hole were found. The surface of the chalk bedrock on the upper part of the slope, within the line of the enclosure, was characterised by areas of weathering and disturbance which appeared to have been caused by tree-roots.

4.2.1 The Enclosure Ditch

The line of the enclosure ditch, 35, crossed the trench at a slight angle, and a 2m wide section was excavated across it. At

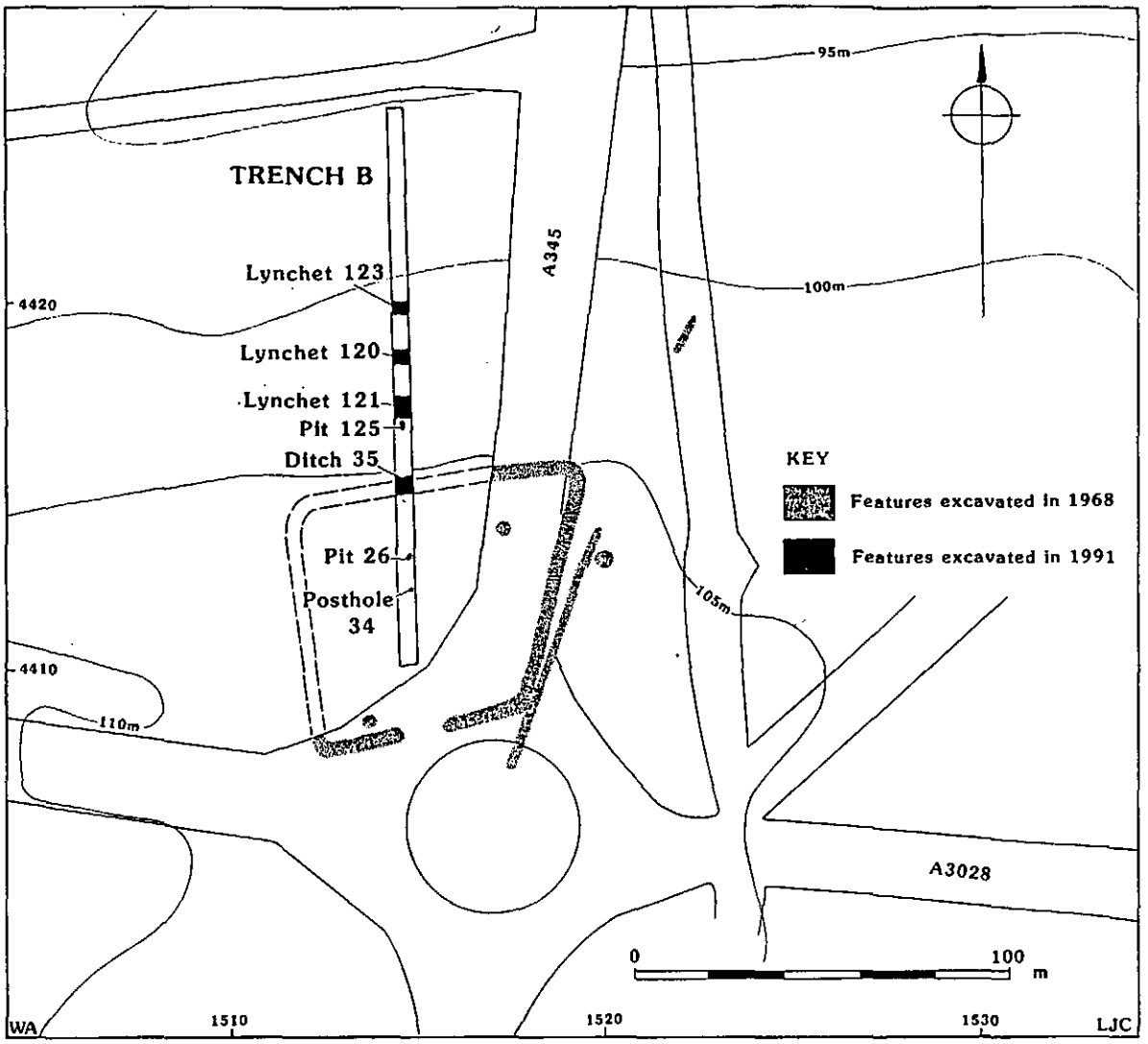


Fig. 9 Packway enclosure and Trench B

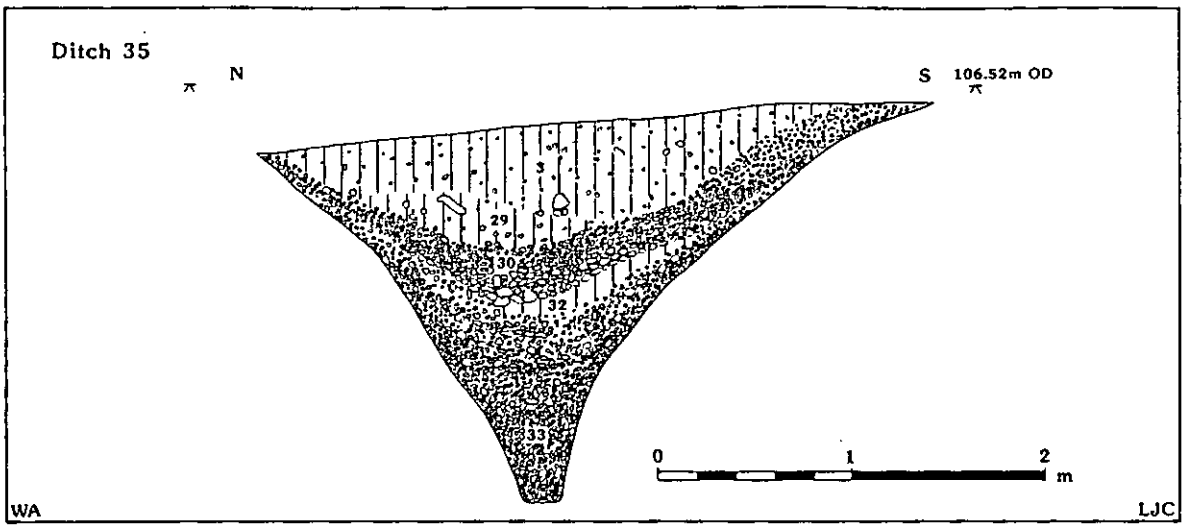


Fig. 10 Section through Packway enclosure ditch

the top it was c 3.50m wide, with a shallower slope on its inner, southern side than on the northern side (Fig. 10). Lower down, the sides were considerably steeper, however, plunging down to a flat base c 0.20m wide, making the ditch almost 2m deep, and similar in profile to the ditch excavated by Wainwright. The steepness of the ditch prompted the suggestion, in 1968, that it had held a palisade of vertical timbers, though no evidence of individual post positions could be found, even when sought in the larger-scale excavations of that time (Wainwright 1971, 308 and Fig. 100, I and II). The lowest fill of the feature was coarse and fine chalk rubble (33) representing initial, and probably rapid, weathering of the upper parts of its sides. Above this, and confined to the southern side of the feature was a band of friable, red-brown loam, 32, above which was a later band of chalk rubble and loam, 30, perhaps derived from the erosion of an internal bank. In the top of the ditch, a linear hollow c 0.60m deep was infilled with red-brown loam (29) containing flint nodules at the base, and overlain by a finer, less stoney soil above (3). Fragments of struck flint were found in the lower fill of the ditch, but animal bone and pottery were only found within layer 30. The pottery dated from the middle to late Iron Age.

4.2.2 The Pit

Pit 26 was circular with a diameter on the surface of the chalk of c 1.10m (Fig. 7). Its sides were slightly undercut, and it had a flat base c 0.80m deep. With the exception of a chalk rubble layer 25, deposited around the sides of the feature and halfway up the sequence of fill, the pit had been filled with layers of dark, red-brown loam, with some chalk rubble. Layer 25, which lay between the upper and lower fills, probably derived from a period of weathering of the sides of the pit, suggesting a period when the pit remained open after its initial infilling. Finds from the pit were sparse, consisting of a few fragments of flint and animal bone, but in form it was broadly comparable to the two pits excavated within the enclosure in 1968 (Wainwright 1971, Fig. 100, VI and VII).

4.2.3 The Posthole

A small circular posthole, 34, about 0.5m in diameter and 0.08m deep was also found (Fig. 7). There was no evidence with which to date this feature.

4.3 Features to the north of the Enclosure

Beyond the line of the enclosure to the north, was a single small pit and three negative lynchets (Fig. 9).

4.3.1 The Pit

Pit 125 lay c 13m north of the Packway Enclosure, and was an elongated oval shape with sloping sides, 2.05m long, 0.75m wide and c 0.25m deep. The red-brown loam and chalk rubble fill contained several sherds of Romano-British coarse pottery.

4.3.2 The Lynchets

The lynchets (120, 121 and 123) were shallow ledges in the slope of the hill to the north of the Packway Enclosure. Their surviving width was c 4-5m, and their depth c 0.40m maximum. Produced by ploughing along the slope, their grey loam infill included sherds of post-medieval pottery.

5 Trench C: Bulford
(SU17654320-SU18054185)

5.1 Introduction
Trench C was sited on a section of pipeline that was to run from a point just south-east of Bulford village, on the eastern side of the Avon valley, along the northern side of the A3028, for a distance of c 1250m (Fig. 1). The archaeologically excavated trench was limited to a width of 2m and ran along the eastern part of the proposed pipeline, for a distance of c 350m. The trench was opened by machine, and was situated on a fairly level ridge at a height of c 110m above sea level.

5.2 Results
This trench lay just to the north of an extensive scatter of tumuli (centred at SU172429), but no archaeological features were observed and the trench was backfilled without further work.

6 Trench D: Netheravon
(SU15404825-SU15404855)

6.1 Introduction
The trench lay on the eastern side of the Avon valley, and was sited along a north-eastern extension of the Durrington to Netheravon pipeline, leading up to Netheravon airfield (Fig. 1). Archaeological work was confined to one part of the proposed route, where the line led up the slope on the eastern side of the valley, along the scarp at the end of one of the ridges of Figheldean Field. Trench D was located along the edge of a field on the eastern side of the minor road which runs along the east side of the Avon valley. It was 4m wide and c 200m long. The line of the trench crossed the south-west end of a visible lynchet on the northern side of a dry valley running down to the River Avon. The trench was opened up by machine, removing only topsoil.

6.2 Results
Apart from modern service trenches the lynchet was the only feature encountered. It remained as a shallow ledge in the hillside, c 4m wide and 0.40m deep with a fill of pale brown loam. No artefacts were recovered from it. Following the recording of the lynchet section, the trench was backfilled.

7 Finds Summary

Details of quantification, by feature, for all finds retained from the Avon Valley Gas Pipeline can be found in Tables A and B. Finds were recovered only from Trenches A (Figheldean) and B (Durrington).

7.1 The Animal Bone (1758 pieces: 13388g)
Trench B produced only 15 fragments of animal bone, none of which were subject to detailed analysis. The remainder of the assemblage was recovered from Trench A, and of this 37% was identifiable, mainly from the early and late Roman phases.

Due to the nature of the site, and the relatively small quantity of bone recovered, it is difficult to make detailed statements on economy, or the representativeness of the collection. It is possible to note, however, that the importance of sheep lessened considerably from the early to later Roman periods.

7.2 The Human Bone
The number of human skeletons recovered was small, only nine persons were represented in the assemblage. It is therefore not possible to generalise about the settlement's population, but they appear to be typical of the remains of Romano-British people found elsewhere. This can be demonstrated by the typically poor dental health in all skeletons and the occurance of osteoarthritis in three out of the nine individuals.

7.3 The Ceramic Building Material (61 frags; 3928g)
Roughly half of this total (29 pieces) could be identified as Romano-British, including fragments of box flue tile and roof tile. Most of this material consisted of a sample taken from a tile wall within the T-shaped oven (50) in the southern part of Trench A; it is likely that this material, and the other Romano-British fragments, were reused from another nearby source, and may indicate the former presence of a substantial structure in the vicinity.

The remainder of the ceramic building material comprised fragments of medieval or post-medieval brick and tile, all from lynchets in Trench B.

7.4 The Fired Clay (57 frags; 1484g)
Amongst the fragments of fired clay recovered was a group of fragments apparently deriving from flat slab-like objects of circular shape, all but one fragment recovered from contexts in Trench A. Thicknesses ranged from 14-22mm, and the original diameter of the objects was approximately 200mm. These slabs are of uncertain function. Similar objects on other sites have been interpreted as components of oven floors, or kiln furniture, and have been dated to the Late Iron Age/early Roman period. However, these examples are generally perforated with single or multiple holes, which are not evident in the Avon Valley slabs.

Apart from a single fragment which may have derived from a loomweight, the remaining fired clay is featureless and undiagnostic.

7.5 The Flint (1952 pieces: 31016g)
The largest quantity of flint from Trenches A and B was found in association with the round barrow ring ditch. The barrow ditch appears to have been used as a dump for flint-knapping waste in the later Bronze Age. The assemblage from the lower fills of the ditch probably represent waste from a late Neolithic/Bronze Age industry producing flakes. The flint from the rest of Trench A was small and undiagnostic. the flint from Trench B was also small in quantity and has not been analysed in detail.

7.6 The Pottery (946 sherds: 17287g)
The pottery assemblage ranges in date from prehistoric to post-medieval.

7.6.1 Prehistoric pottery (48 sherds)
The prehistoric pottery has a potential date range of early Bronze Age to middle/late Iron Age. The early Bronze Age material is represented by two body sherds in a grog-tempered fabric. Flint-gritted fabrics of middle/late Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury type are also present as body sherds only. Both these and the early Bronze Age sherds derived from contexts within the ring ditch.

Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age material consists of sherds in flint-gritted, sandy and oolitic fabrics; diagnostic sherds in these fabrics indicate the presence of slack-shouldered jars or bowls of various types. Middle/late Iron Age material is represented by sherds in flint-gritted and sandy fabrics, often with burnished surfaces, in similar slack-shouldered vessel forms. This late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery was found in features throughout Trench A. Only three sherds were recovered from Trench B, from upper fills of the Packway ditch.

7.6.2 Late Iron Age/Romano-British pottery (867 sherds)
This material could be divided into two groups: fine wares and coarse wares. Coarse wares make up the bulk of the assemblage, and consists of sherds in flint-gritted, grog-tempered and sandy fabrics. These were found in a variety of vessel forms, including bead rim and everted rim jars, carinated, shouldered and dropped flange bowls, butt beakers, flagons and 'dog dishes'. The date range of these vessel forms covers the whole Romano-British period; indeed, some of the material, particularly the handmade bead rim jars in grog-tempered fabrics, could date from the immediate pre-Conquest period, i.e. early 1st century AD.

The sources of much of this pottery remains uncertain, although grog-tempered wares from the Savernake kilns, and Black Burnished ware (BB1) from the Poole Harbour area, could be distinguished. Other wares may derive from the industries of North Wiltshire, which were producing coarse grey wares from the 2nd century AD.

Fine wares include sherds of samian and Terra Rubra, both of early Roman date; and various wares deriving from the industries of the New Forest and Oxfordshire. The latter two types include white ware mortaria and painted bowls, and colour-coated beakers, flagons and bowls of various forms, all dated to the late Roman period. Other fine wares of unknown source were also identified, including some sherds of colour-coated wares

which may also be products of the North Wiltshire industries.

The late Iron Age/Romano-British pottery was recovered from contexts throughout Trenches A and B. No real concentrations could be defined within such small excavated areas, but it can be noted that much of the fine ware of Oxford and New Forest type was recovered from contexts associated with building platforms 72, 342, 373 and 445.

The range of both fabrics and forms within the late Iron Age/Romano-British assemblage is typical of rural sites of this date in southern England, and there is nothing to suggest that the site represents anything other than a farming community of relatively low status.

7.6.3 Medieval and post-medieval pottery (31 sherds)

The small quantity of medieval pottery (10 sherds) included sherds in coarse sandy fabrics previously recognised in Salisbury, considered to be products of the Laverstock kilns just outside the city, and dated late 12th/13th century. One sherd of Surrey white ware, of 13th/14th century date, was also present.

Post-medieval wares consisted mainly of coarse earthenwares; stonewares, and fine white wares of 19th/20th century date were also present. All but four of the medieval/post-medieval sherds were recovered from contexts in Trench B.

7.7 The Stone (92 frags)

This group of material included six quern fragments, four from small hand-querns with a diameter of less than 0.5mm, and two from large mill-stones with a diameter of c.0.7mm. Other diagnostic stone fragments consisted of building material, including flat slabs, probably tiles, in both ferruginous sandstone and limestone; and three blocks, two limestone and one greensand, probably architectural fragments. As was suggested for the ceramic building material, this stone is likely to have been reused from a nearby source.

7.8 The Metal Objects (1 coin; 1 Cu alloy obj; 765 iron objs)

One copper alloy coin was recovered: a sestertius of Antoninus Pius, dated AD 138-161. One other copper alloy object was recovered: a broken ring of uncertain date.

The iron objects consist largely of nails deriving from the seven graves in Trench A which are assumed to be of late Roman date. These can be divided into hobnails and coffin nails. Hobnails were recovered from all seven graves; in five cases, their position at the feet of the skeletons indicates their use in the soles of boots or shoes buried with the individuals; cleats were also present in two cases. In the remaining two graves, hobnails placed at the head of the skeleton (Grave 400), or randomly distributed in the grave fill (Grave 456) may have had a different function.

Large groups of nails, all of the same square-sectioned, flat-headed type, were found in two graves (363 and 456). Their position, distributed around the edges of the graves with concentrations in the corners, indicates that they derive from coffins. In many cases, traces of mineralised wood were preserved with the nails.

Other iron objects include a knife blade of late Roman type, from corndrier 50; shank fragments from a large pin, possibly a shroud pin, from Grave 397; and four unidentified fragments.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Although few features of early prehistoric date were found, the pipeline has provided an important source of information on the prehistoric landscape in this part of the Avon valley. The section of the pipeline which cut through the dry valley, at the northern end of Trench A, contained a truncated buried soil which indicated a change from a wooded, or well-shaded environment, probably of the Neolithic period, to a more open, arable landscape in later prehistory. The only evidence for activity in this period was a pit, which also contained shade-loving species of mollusca, and therefore it probably dates to early in the sequence of activity.

8.2 Evidence for activity in later prehistory, prior to the Iron Age, is limited. In Trench A, it includes the Bronze Age ring ditch, which contained pottery of middle Bronze Age date, and two crouched burials of unknown date. The evidence from the lower layers of colluvium, which overlay the buried soil in the dry valley at the northern end of Trench A, suggests that the landscape had become more open with the onset of an arable regime. This is supported by the presence of lynchets on either side of the dry valley, which may be Bronze Age in origin.

The Packway Enclosure dates to the Iron Age, however the information recovered from the excavated evidence was limited, as so few features were found. The excavation of Trench B added little to the evidence from Wainwright's earlier excavation (Wainwright, 1971), other than to suggest that the paucity of features encountered in Wainwright's excavation may not have been attributable to prior destruction, but may reflect the nature of the site.

8.3 The enclosure ditches in Trench A probably originated in the late Iron Age, however, the two small sections excavated provide little in the way of dating evidence. No occupation evidence of definite Iron Age date was recovered, though the evidence did suggest that these ditches had been infilled in the early Roman period. It is possible that remnants of the earthwork enclosure survived as a low bank which still functioned as the boundary of the late Iron Age/early Roman settlement.

8.4 It appears that the settlement continued throughout the Roman period. The excavated material can be attributed to two phases: 1st-2nd centuries AD and 3rd-4th centuries AD, with the earlier occupation perhaps having continued on from the Iron Age. It is not possible to shed much light on the earlier phase, due to the limited nature of the excavation. Evidence for structure types was not recovered in the earlier phase the use of platforms for timber structures seems to have appeared in the later Roman period, however, without wider-scale excavations it is not possible to be conclusive on this or similar points.

8.5 The burials appear to belong to the last phase of activity (see section 3.4.5). They do not appear to have been part of an organised cemetery, as they are spread sparsely over 270m of trench. It is likely that occupation on this part of the hilltop had ceased, the settlement having shrunk or shifted, and the vacant areas were then used for burial. This occurred at other Roman sites, for example Ilchester where the suburbs went out of

use in the 4th century AD, and burials were then placed amongst the ruins (Leach 1982). Without wider excavation of the hill-top these conclusions must remain tentative, and the results so far, though promising, pose more questions about the nature of the settlement than they answer.

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TABLE 1: Trench A, All Finds by Feature

Feature	A.BONE		H.BONE		CBM		F.CLAY		FLINT		POT		SHELL		SLAG		STONE	METAL
	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	No.
47	3	8g							1	3g	5	44g					2	
50	68	570g			20	2609g					38	921g	1	25g			31	4
61	134	242g	471	3493g							1	2g						204 *
64	125	1100g							1188	17232g	9	202g						
72	24	97g							6	58g	13	135g	2	15g				
75	10	9g	843	1348g							6	112g						29
77	209	1934g	1	150g					532	10738g	51	739g	2	18g			5	
91	2	57g																
95	4	52g									6	74g						
319	12	85g							11	46g								
328	78	1005g	44	144g					9	135g	36	893g						
329																		1
333	3	170g	1	174g					2	68g	7	35g						
336	26	221g							9	86g	53	1212g						
342	54	955g			4	430g			1	44g	47	906g					4	1*
345	1	3g									1	3g						
346	4	98g							1	11g	6	96g						
351	21	266g							1	63g	11	158g					2	1
353	70	380g	1	2g							16	655g					1	
355					1	6g			4	132g	7	132g						
357	3	4g									3	10g						
359	9	34g							1	38g	5	454g					1	1
363	5	30g	448	2587g							2	12g			1	19g		148
367	407	1474g	1	2g					72	755g	29	2814g			4	74g	2	1
373	100	707g					6	140g	9	175g	69	1080g	3	51g			2	
374	32	139g									24	297g	2	21g			7	
381	1	3g							3	74g	3	54g						
397	16	23g	455	2290g							6	84g						155
400	1	12g	295	2649g					1	11g	1	6g						30
403			188	1434g														
445	19	274g					16	505g	1	11g	102	1900g					2	
448											1	9g						
449	7	9g																
456	62	851g	372	3680g			2	171g	1	11g	172	2718g	8	60g			25	40
457	2	8g									51	818g					1	
459	26	188g									14	166g						
470	29	216g									2	21g						
471	88	572g									3	35g						
472	26	70g					10	25g			21	317g						
473	18	248g					17	468g			125	3227g						
477			272	3256g														144
479																		1
480	5	50g	1	2g	1	3g	3	112g			40	591g					1	1**
488	24	911g							15	132g								1
490	3	25g					1	45g			10	206g						
-	22	254g	27	87g					53	679g	43	706g	1	3g			1	
TOTAL	1743	13354g	3420	21298g	26	3048g	54	1450g	1923	30515g	1039	21844g	19	193g	5	93g	95	762

NB. Table A: Metalwork consists of iron, except for (*) = copper alloy object; (**) = copper alloy coin.

Worked bone objects are included in the totals of animal bone for contexts 45 (1 cut tooth); 51 (1 needle, spindlewhorl), 350 (1 piece worked antler), and 370 (1 piece worked antler).

TABLE 2: Trench B, All Finds by Feature

Feature	A.BONE		H.BONE		CBM		F.CLAY		FLINT		POT		SHELL		SLAG		STONE	METAL
	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	No.
26	4	4g							2	10g								
35	2	5g					1	18g	22	435g	5	69g						
120	3	10g			10	262g	1	13g	3	35g	17	127g						1
121	1	2g			5	38g					4	37g						1
123	5	13g			9	408g			2	21g	21	200g						3
125											3	10g						
TOTAL	15	34g			50	708g	2	32g	29	501g	50	443g	0	0	0	0	0	5

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