SALVAGE RECORDING ON THE FRANKLEY TO NORTON LINK MAIN

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Report 482

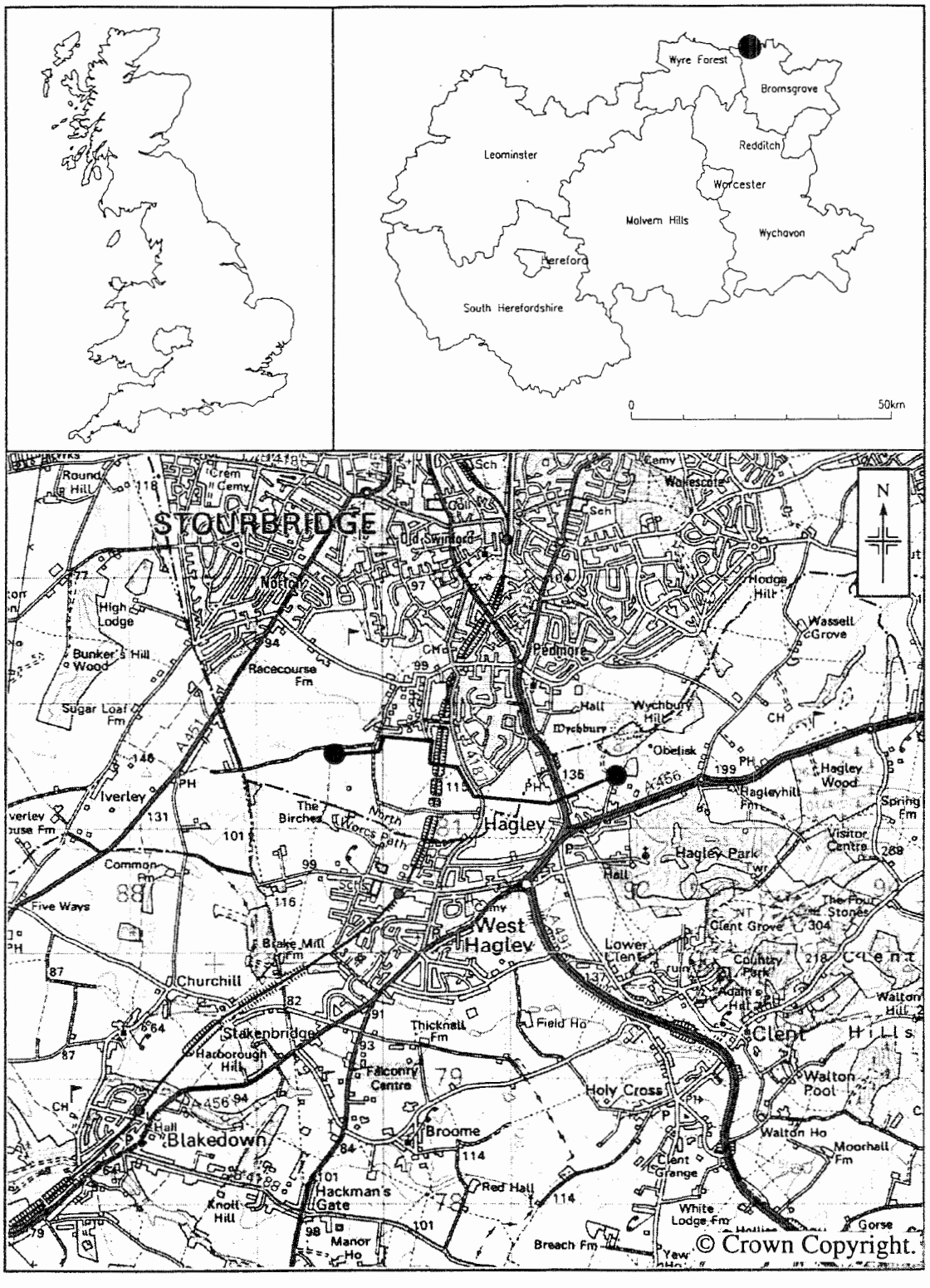

Figure 1 - Route of pipeline

Scale - 1:50 000

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1 Summary

Salvage recording was undertaken during the construction of a pipeline from Frankley to Norton. The project formed part of a series of similar projects being undertaken by the County Archaeological Service on behalf of Severn Trent Water Limited during a major programme of mains construction and upgrading in the region.

Deposits were excavated at one site to the south of Round Hill, near Hagley, and artefacts were recovered from a number of fields along the pipeline. The site to the south of Round Hill was limited in extent but has provided important information relating to Roman occupation in the area. A ditch contained a significant assemblage of Romano-British pottery and other artefacts indicative of late 2nd to 3rd century occupation. The domestic character of the assemblage allied to its composition and antiquarian reports of a hoard of Roman coins and pottery nearby suggest that this was the site of a Roman farmstead. The ditch probably forms part of a typical sub-rectangular farmstead enclosure lying below Wychbury Iron Age hillfort which is situated on higher ground to the north.

Other finds were recovered from the ploughsoil during topsoil stripping along the easement and include three flint flakes and a small quantity of post-medieval pottery.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

Salvage recording was undertaken by the County Archaeological Service on behalf of Severn Trent Water Limited on a pipeline crossing the boundary between Hereford and Worcester and Dudley Metropolitan Borough (Fig 1). The Frankley to Norton Link Main was one of a number of pipelines being constructed through a series of projects over a number of years to improve the reliability of water supplies in the region. The archaeological works on the Frankley to Norton Link Main were undertaken during September and October 1995.

The project took place within the framework for archaeological response established within a Code of Practice for Conservation, Access and Recreation issued by the Department of the Environment in July 1989, and attaching to the Water Industry Act 1991. Section 11, iv of the Code refers specifically to pipelaying and states that;

> ...where damage to features of archaeological interest is unavoidable, arrangements should be made for an appropriate level of investigation - by an appropriate conservation body, and subsequent publication of results.

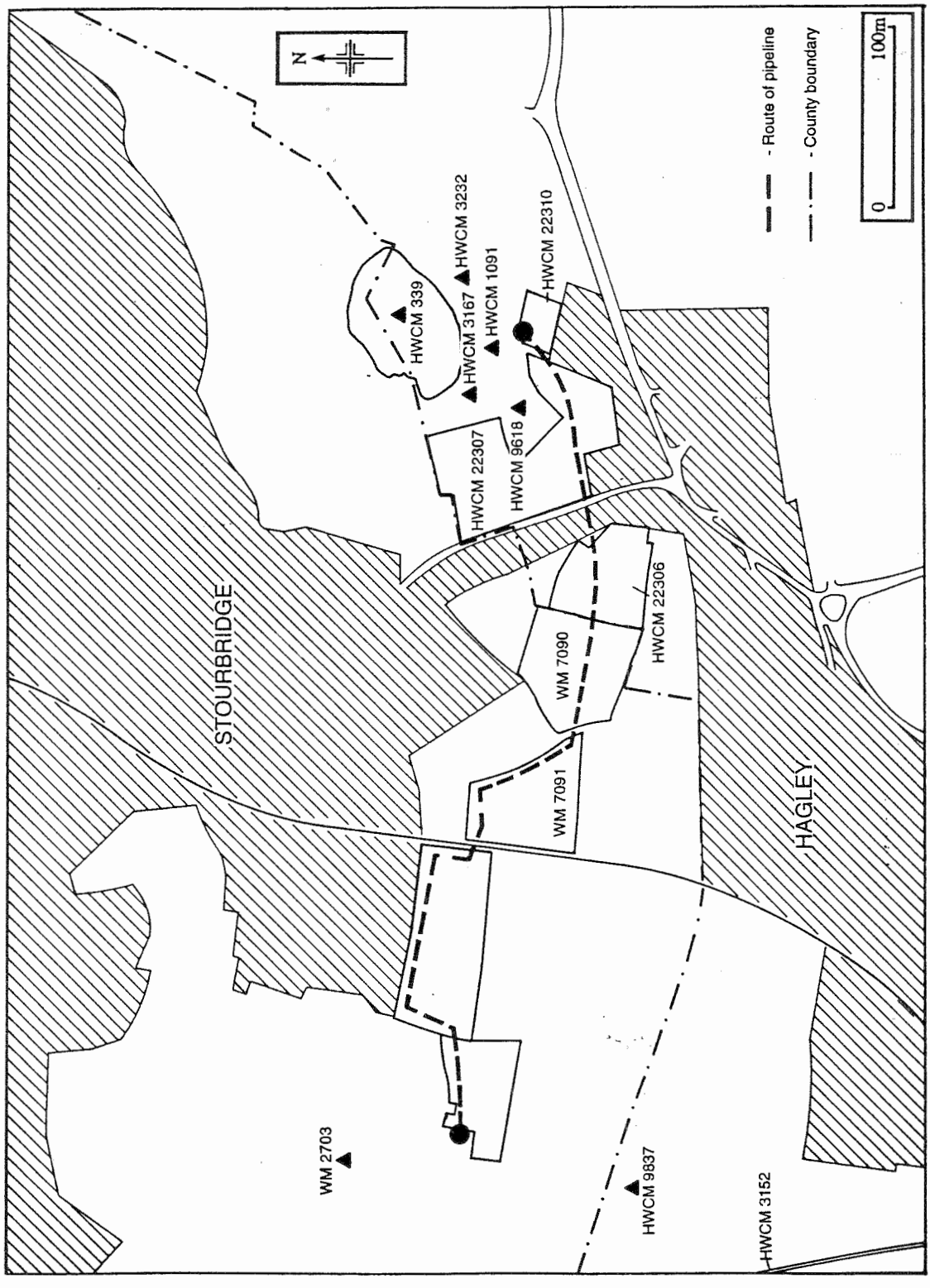

Figure 2 Sites in the vicinity and along the pipeline

The route of the pipeline ran in a broadly west to east direction from a reservoir at Bury's Hill, to the north-west of Hagley, for approximately 2.5km, to a valve house near Wychbury Hill, linking to existing lengths of main (Figs 1 and 2). An initial consultation phase had already assessed the route against existing information for the presence of known sites of archaeological interest registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record. A number of known archaeological sites were, or potentially were, to be affected (Fig 2), however, it was not felt necessary to recommend revision of the route.

Since the pipeline would affect known sites, and as there was the potential for previously unknown sites to be discovered, it was recommended that provision for salvage recording be made along the entire route of the pipeline.

Salvage recording enables identification of any new sites revealed and recovery of information about their nature. It will also usually enhance knowledge of existing sites and provide general information regarding landuse and agricultural practice around former settlement sites. In addition, through provision of a contingency team, adequate cover was provided for the salvage recording, through excavation, of any substantial significant deposits encountered.

Roman deposits were recorded at one site (HWCM 22307) but otherwise only an undated deposit and unstratified artefacts were recovered along the route. The results of such fieldwork are important, not only for enhancing our knowledge of past settlement and landuse, but also for the future management of archaeology in the county. Since only a narrow area of any one site is destroyed by the pipeline, not only is it possible to effectively preserve that area through a detailed archaeological record, but it also enables the development of effective future management of what survives to either side of the pipeline. In addition by studying the results of a series of such linear developments, simple predictive models can be produced for settlement occurrence and landuse in different parts of the region. These allow a better understanding of the potential for survival of significant archaeological deposits in cases where future development may affect them.

2.2 Geology and topography

The route of the pipeline affected a total of seven fields, crossing land which is mainly under pasture, though two fields were in arable use. The area is generally hilly, with the highest land in the area around Wychbury Hill and its outlier Round Hill, both towards the east end of the pipeline. The underlying geology of the area is of Lower Keuper Sandstone which supports soils of the Bromsgrove Association. The latter are well drained and easily worked loamy soils which provide good mixed farming land, though they are susceptible to erosion on slopes when recently ploughed or sparsely vegetated (Ragg *et al* 1984).

2.3 Historical and archaeological background

The dominant topographical feature of the area, Wychbury Hill, is also the focus of the most important known archaeological site in the vicinity, having an Iron Age hillfort on it. This strongly defended site (HWCM 339; Figs 2 and 3) is recognised as a site of national significance reflected in its status as an ancient monument scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (County Monument no West Midlands 7). On

the slopes to the south of the ramparts of the fort are further earthworks believed to represent the remains of Iron Age field systems and outlying settlements (HWCM 3167). Chance Roman finds have also been recorded in the vicinity of the hillfort, including coins and pottery and an antiquarian report of a coin hoard in a pot (HWCM 1091). Medieval features in the area comprise a ridge and furrow field system and associated earthworks to south-east of the hillfort (HWCM 3232). It has also been suggested that Round Hill, to the south-west of the hillfort, marks the site of an ancient burial (HWCM 9618).

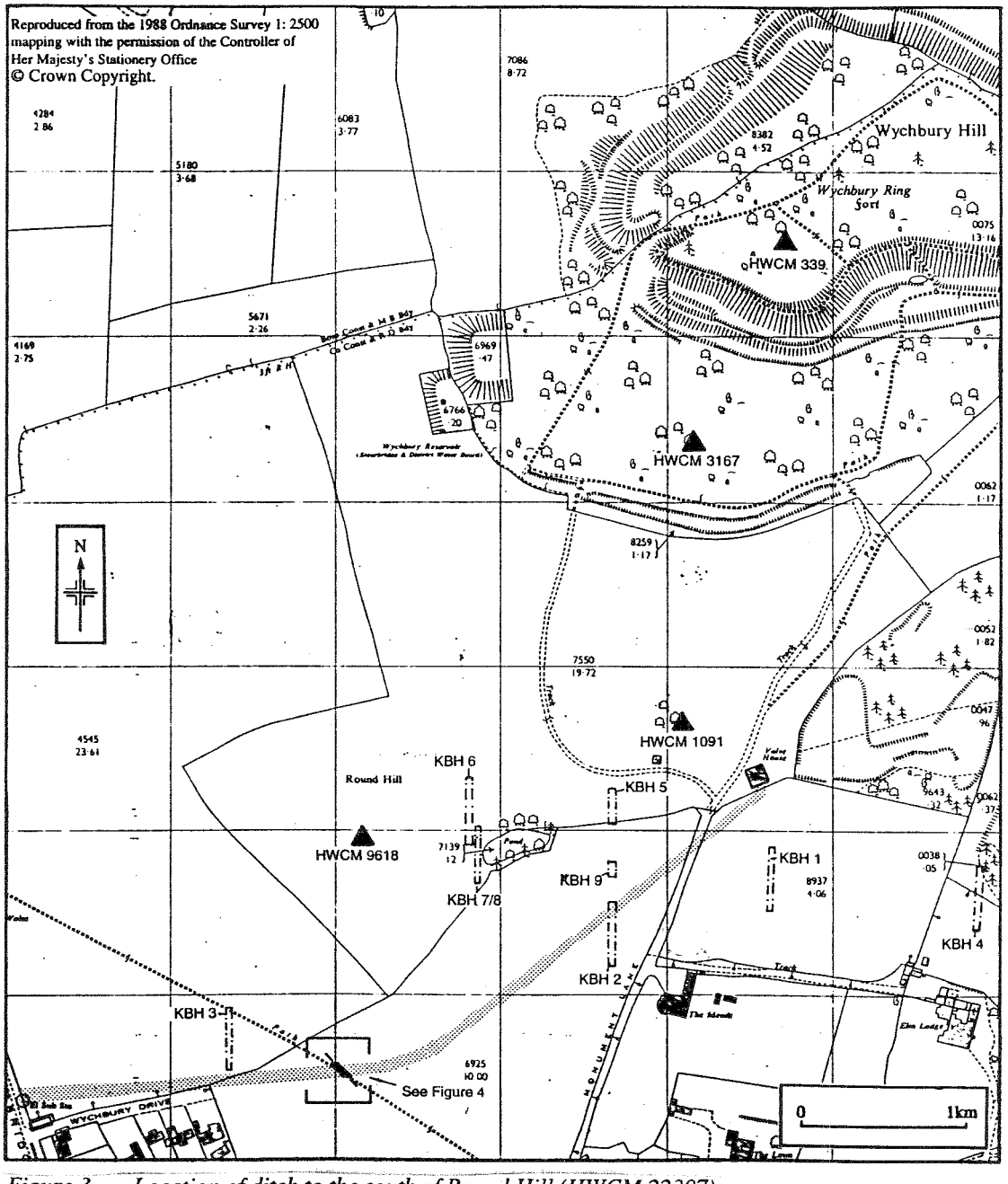

Figure 3 Location of ditch to the south of Round Hill (HWCM 22307)

Recently the area around Wychbury Hill, and including part of the pipeline route, has been the subject of archaeological investigation during the design stages for the proposed Kidderminster, Blakedown and Hagley Bypass, a potential route for which passes to the south of Wychbury Hill (Brown 1992). Evaluation trenching and augering of the fields to the south of the hill formed part of this work, however, no archaeologically significant deposits or artefacts were identified.

Two further sites are known in the vicinity of the west end of the pipeline, where an undated cropmark enclosure (HWCM 9837) lies to the south-west and where a Neolithic stone axe (WM 2703) has been recorded to the north-west (Fig 3).

3 Methodology

The design of the project and the methodology used was based on similar pipeline projects already undertaken by the County Archaeological Service on behalf of Severn Trent Water Limited. A number of these have already been completed and the results and methodology have been published (eg Dinn and Hemingway 1992).

An initial preparation period for the project allowed the collection of existing data on the archaeology, history, topography and geology of the area traversed by the pipeline. Geological maps and published survey data were used to establish the solid geology and the soils of the fields crossed by the pipeline. Ordnance survey maps provided topographical details and the pattern of modern fields and settlements. These were used to provide base maps for the recording of data in the field.

Archaeological data available for the area was studied through use of the SMR to establish the existing archaeological framework for the area through which the pipeline was to pass. Historical data was collected through primary documentary sources (eg Domesday) and through secondary sources such as the Victoria County History (VCH III). These desk-based studies provided a framework and background for the archaeological data collected.

The fieldwork was designed to fall into two clear stages, firstly recording of the stripped easement and secondly recording of the pipe trench. During the first stage the pipeline was visited during, or shortly after, removal of the topsoil. The freshly stripped area of the easement, was observed and rapidly scanned to record, locate and retain artefacts so as to enable accurate plotting of the varying locations and densities of artefacts. All modern fields were recorded using a Field Survey Record (AS22) for each Ordnance Survey land-parcel and where necessary were allocated an individual Sites and Monuments Record number for ease of recording and data manipulation (Fig 2).

Any surviving archaeological deposits were to be investigated and artefacts, if present, were collected from within them. In addition the spoil at the side of the easement was examined for artefacts. A record was also made of the current landuse and topography of each field and of soils and geological deposits revealed. Archaeological deposits were identified and excavated at one location to the south of Round Hill (HWCM 22307). Monitoring of exposed sections was subsequently maintained during trenching to ensure that

no archaeological deposits survived along the route and were masked by colluvial (hillwash) deposits.

The final phase of the project involved assessment and subsequent analysis of the data recovered and integration of the fieldwork results with the background research. A context finds record was compiled using the County context finds record sheet (AS8). This provided a basic quantification by weight (g) and count, of all finds recovered. A further study involved the recognition of fabrics and forms, with comparison with Hereford and Worcester type fabric series (Hurst and Rees 1992). The forms and fabrics identified were recorded on the County pottery recording form (AS10). This enabled the archaeological deposits to be more closely dated by providing a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) and date range for the assemblage.

This archive report presents the results of the project and summarises the background, methodology and aims of the work. Finally a short report is intended to be submitted for publication in the Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society.

4 Analysis and results

A total of seven fields were examined and Roman deposits were recorded at one location to the south of Round Hill (HWCM 22307). Otherwise only an undated layer and scatters of unstratified finds were recorded along the easement. A total of 325 sherds of Roman and post-medieval pottery, weighing 4,496g were recovered. Table 1 shows a finds summary of all the material.

4.1 **Deposits to the south of Round Hill** (HWCM 22307)

Analysis
Approximately 0.5km to the south-west of Round Hill, topsoil stripping uncovered a concentration of Roman pottery which further investigation revealed to be associated with a ditch (context 103). Sections of the ditch were recorded in the pipetrench and a length of the feature was excavated to firmly establish its alignment and state of preservation, as well as to retrieve artefacts.

The ditch was observed over a distance of about 13m running north-west to south-east across the pipeline easement. It averaged 1m across and ranged in depth from 0.30m, at the poorly defined and more heavily truncated south-east end, up to 0.75m deep to the north-west where preservation was better. In profile the ditch had moderately sloping rather concave sides breaking more sharply to the base (Fig 4). Its fill was largely naturally derived, charcoal flecked, pale reddish brown silty sand, having occasional pebble inclusions. Concentrations of large pebbles were noted central to the ditch. Investigations to either side of the ditch within the pipeline easement failed to reveal any further features, though two concentrations of unstratified finds (contexts 101 and 102) were observed near the ditch.

A total of 271 sherds of pottery, weighing 4,132g were recovered from this site (Table 2). An average sherd weight of 15.25g reflects the fragmentary nature of the assemblage, 77% of which derived from the ditch fill (103). The remainder of the assemblage came from the spoilheaps (context 100, 6%), and the two unstratified concentrations near to the ditch (101, 11% and 102, 6%).

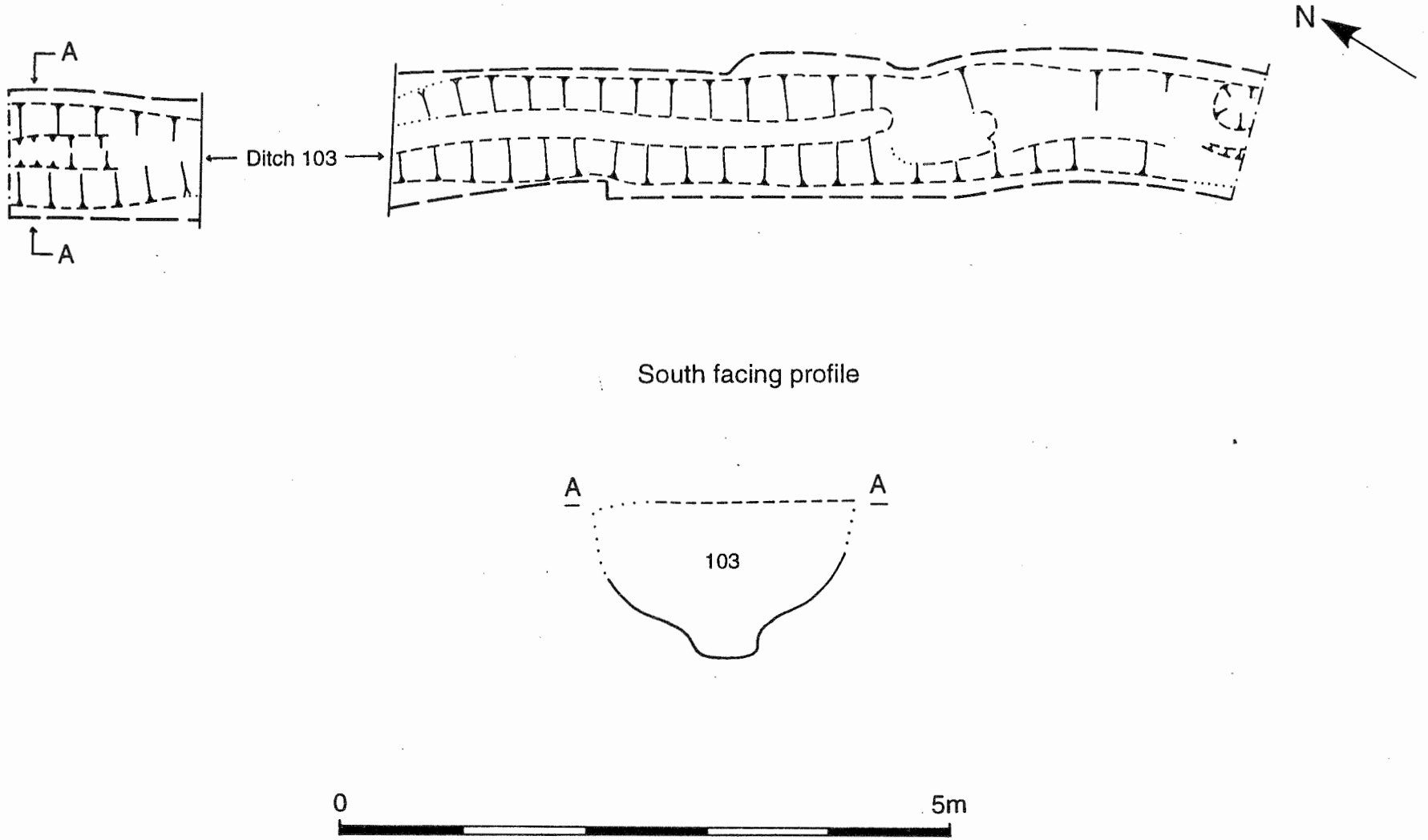

Figure 4 *The ditch (HWCM 22307)*

A total of seven Roman fabrics were identified. Recognisable diagnostic forms and fabrics within the type series and comparison with similar domestic assemblages recovered in Worcestershire (Jackson *et al* in press; Hemingway and Buteux 1992), indicate that the bulk of the assemblage has a date range of late 2nd/3rd century, although some earlier 1st/2nd century material was present within the ditch fill.

Other finds recovered were typically Roman in nature and included a saddle quern, a ceramic loomweight in a Severn Valley ware (fabric 12; context 103; Fig 5.1) a Severn Valley/South-west mortarium (context 100; Fig 5.2) and an oyster shell (context 103). A clay pipe bowl was recovered from the adjacent spoil heap (100).

Discussion

Although only a ditch was identified and recorded, some tentative conclusions can be drawn about the site. The relative abundance of pottery and its domestic character (see below) suggest that the ditch relates to occupation in the near vicinity. Previously recorded Roman finds from the Round Hill area, including a coin hoard, support this suggestion. In addition the nearby Iron Age hillfort and associated earthworks at Wychbury Hill, less than 0.5km to the north-west, indicate a history of settlement in the immediate area prior to any Roman occupation. Work at a series of sites, 10-15km to the east, has indicated a Roman settlement pattern of scattered farmstead enclosures along the River Severn near Kidderminster (Jackson *et al* in press). A number of these sites have periods of occupation spanning the Roman period, however, there is also some suggestion of an intensification of settlement during the later Roman period. The site near Round Hill appears to fit into this pattern, with the ditch probably representing the enclosure of such a farmstead. Unfortunately in the absence of deposits beyond the ditch little more can be deduced.

Another area of interest, and a possible factor behind the absence of further features, is the state of preservation of the ditch. This was very poor to the south-east, and even to the better preserved north-west end of the excavated section, the ditch was only 0.75m deep. This suggests a considerable degree of truncation, probably through a combination of ploughing and downslope erosion (hillwash) of the light sandy soils (a characteristic for which these soils are already known; Ragg *et al* 1984). Survival of deposits may therefore be variable and localised, a factor emphasised by the absence of Roman deposits or even unstratified artefacts from the investigations previously undertaken in the vicinity (Fig 3; Brown 1992, 9-15).

The pottery assemblage recovered from the ditch comprised locally produced domestic coarsewares, no finewares were retrieved. The most significant fabric recovered was Severn Valley ware (fabric 12), comprising 46% by count and 42% by weight (g) of the total assemblage (Table 2). The most common form was that of wide mouthed jars (Fig 5.3; after Webster 1976, fig 4, 21-22). This establishes the domestic nature of the assemblage and the late 2nd/3rd century date range. It also reflects the regional nature of the finds assemblage, the exceptions being eight sherds of Oxford mortaria and black burnished ware (BB1), only four sherds of which were identified. The paucity of these other wares highlights the influence of local regional wares like Severn Valley ware and also Malvernian fabrics (fabrics 3 and 19; Fig 5.4). Malvernian forms identified included the common tubby cooking pot forms, (Fig 5.6; after Peacock 1968, fig 1, 5, 17) which are known to be early in date,

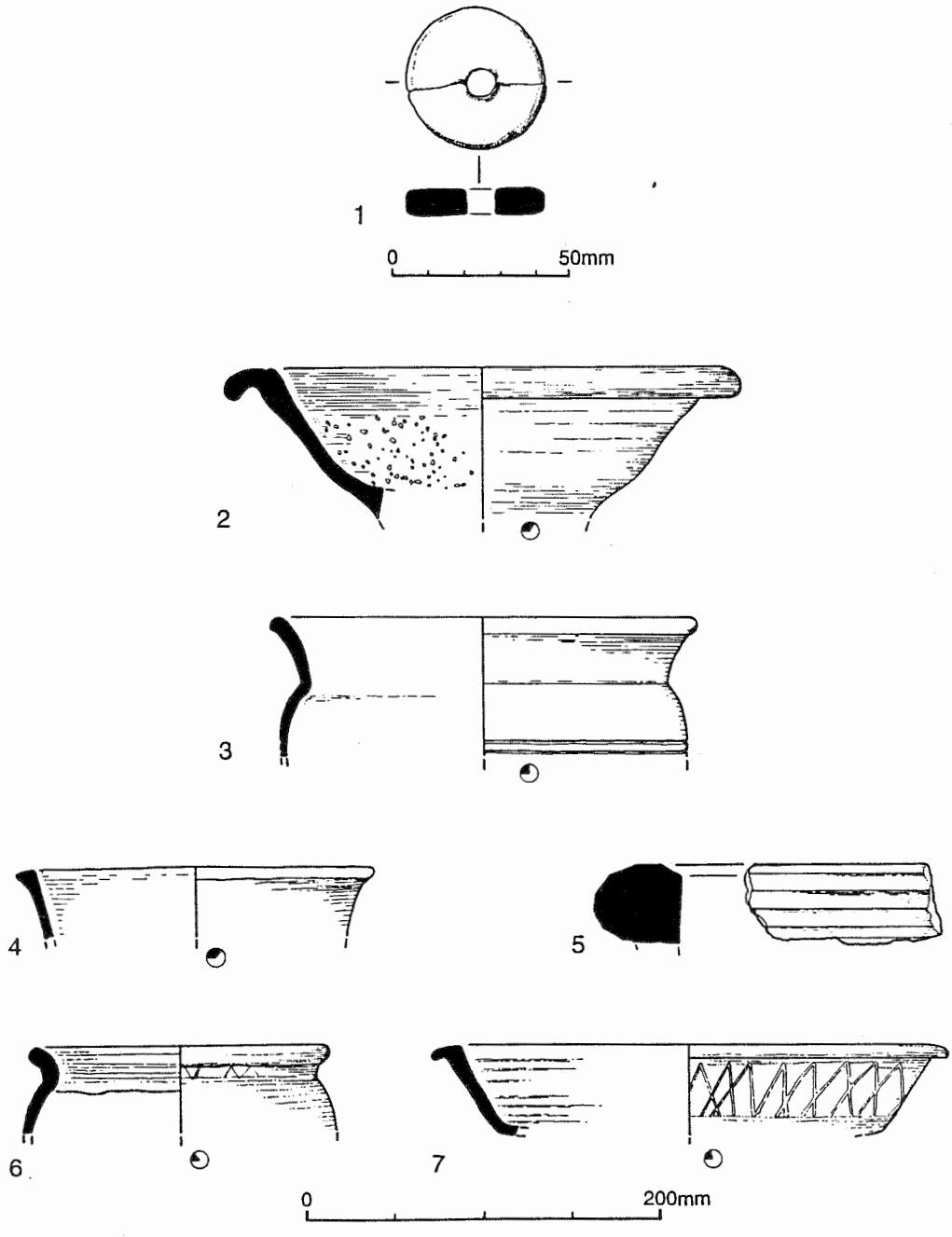

Figure 5: Ditch assemblage from HWCM 22307.
1 Loomweight; 2 SW Mortarium; 3 Severn Valley Ware wide mouth jar;
4 and 5 Hand made Malvernian Ware; 6 and 7 Wheel thrown Malvernian Ware.
(loomweight scale 1:2, pottery scale 1:4).

the rim of a slab-built or bee-hive vessel (Fig 5.5; after Hurst and Woodiwiss 1992, fig 46.1-3, 64) and BB1 imitation bowls (Fig 5.7; after Williams 1977, fig 3, 5 and 7, 174). This reflects the reliance on locally made Severn Valley products (Table 3) and may be an explanation of the number of black burnished ware imitations in fabric 19. The dominance of both Severn Valley and Malvernian wares appears to be in stark contrast to other Roman rural domestic sites in Worcestershire, such as Hoarstone Farm, a 3rd/4th century Romano-British farmstead enclosure only some 13km distant (Jackson *et al* in press).

4.2 The remainder of the pipeline

Beyond the site to the south of Round Hill only an undated layer (HWCM 22310; Fig 2) and unstratified finds (WM 7091, WM 7090 and HWCM 22306; Fig 2) were recorded during rapid scan fieldwalking of the easement and trenching operations.

The undated layer was observed at a depth of about 1m in the section of pipetrench. This was about 0.30m thick and was a charcoal flecked, pale grey, silty clay, however in the absence of associated deposits or artefacts its character and date could not be established.

A small number of flint flakes (3), represent the only prehistoric material recovered (WM 7091, 1 flake; WM 7090, 2 flakes; Fig 2). These possibly indicate prehistoric occupation in the locality but in the absence of diagnostic tools, associated deposits and previous finds in this vicinity the date, character and location of any such activity remains unknown.

Otherwise all rapid scan material, with the exception of the unstratified Roman finds from the site south of Round Hill discussed above, dated to the post-medieval period. The date of the finds was consistent with this material representing manuring of arable land with refuse (see Table 1).

5 Conclusions

To conclude the ditch identified to the south of Round Hill probably represents the enclosure ditch of a Romano-British farmstead similar to other sites recorded in the north of Hereford and Worcester and forming part of a general settlement pattern of scattered farms in this area.

The associated pottery assemblage highlights the dominance of regional Severn Valley and Malvernian domestic products, thus demonstrating that local markets could produce wares on an equal footing with other well established regional industries, such as that of the black burnished ware industry. This point appears to be illustrated by the fact that all fabric 19 sherds recovered were black burnished ware imitations and probably accounts for the lack of black burnished ware in the assemblage. The emphasis on local products combined with recognised forms and decoration confirm the late 2nd/3rd century date range for the assemblage. The limited range of fabrics and forms recovered appears to be consistent with other known rural assemblages in Worcestershire and may reflect the independence of the Malvernian pottery industry during the Roman period.

Beyond the Roman site, no further deposits of interest were located and unstratified flint flakes and post-medieval finds recorded on the pipeline easement probably represent prehistoric activity in the general area and manuring scatters respectively.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Severn Trent Engineering and their staff, especially to John Bridgeman (Project Engineer) and Gary Baker (Resident Engineer) for their kind cooperation and assistance. Thanks must also go to Iain Ferris of Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, Severn Trent's archaeological consultant; and to the staff of the pipeline contractors for all their help on site.

Peter Boland (Borough Archaeologist, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council) is also thanked for providing information relating to the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record.

7 Personnel

The project was coordinated by Robin Jackson, BA AIFA.

Nigel Topping PIFA coordinated much of the fieldwork, assisted by Paul Godbehere and Dave Wichbold.

Finds identification and reporting was undertaken by Annette Hancocks MA PIFA.

The report was produced by Robin Jackson and Annette Hancocks. Illustrations for the report were undertaken by Paul Godbehere and Laura Templeton, BA MAAIS.

The report was edited by Simon Woodiwiss BA AIFA.

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9 Abbreviations

Numbers prefixed with "HWCM" are the primary reference numbers used by Hereford and Worcester County Sites and Monuments Record.

Numbers prefixed with "WM" are the primary reference numbers used by the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record.

HWCC - Hereford and Worcester County Council

VCH - Victoria County History

10 The archive

The archive consists of:

1	Context record (AS1)
10	Fieldwork progress records (AS2)
1	Context number catalogue (AS5)
7	Field survey records (A22)
8	Field/route plans
12	Colour slides
16	Black and white prints
1	Plastic wallet of assorted documents and annotated plans
2	Boxes of finds
7	Context finds records (AS8)
7	Fabric recording sheets (AS 10)

It is intended that all primary records and finds will be deposited at:

Hereford and Worcester County Museum
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Nr Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

A security copy of the archive will be retained at:

County Archaeological Service
Hereford and Worcester County Council
Tolladine Road
Worcester WR4 9NB

Tel Worcester (01905) 611086

WM/HWCM	7091 (R/S)		7090 (R/S)		22306 (R/S)		22307		TOTAL	
	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)
Pottery	36	256	8	34	10	74	271	4132	325	4496
Shell	1	6					1	28	2	34
Quern							1	318	1	318
Loom weight							1	14	1	14
Clay pipe	5	6	1	2			1	8	7	16
Tile	5	102			5	70			10	172
Bone	1	26							1	26
Flint	1	6	2	4					3	10
Slag			1	18					1	18
Glass			3	14					3	14
Total	49	402	15	72	15	144	275	4500	354	5118

Table 1 Finds summary from Frankley to Norton Link Main Phase II

Context	100		101		102		103		Total	
Findtype	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)	Count	Wt (g)
Pottery	16	180	29	748	17	144	209	3060	271	4132
Shell							1	28	1	28
Saddle Quern							1	318	1	318
Loom Weight							1	14	1	14
Clay pipe	1	8							1	8

Table 2 Finds summary for HWCM 22307

Fabric	Count	%	Weight (g)	%
Roman				
3	42	15	680	17
12	125	46	1702	41
12.1	7	3	102	2
19	28	10	350	9
22	5	2	42	1
33	23	8	308	7
37.3	29	11	748	19
Post-medieval	13	5	166	4
Total	272	100	4098	100

Table 3 Proportion of fabrics in assemblage from HWCM 22307