

EXCAVATION OF A
ROMANO-BRITISH AND MEDIEVAL
SETTLEMENT AT STRENSHAM:
ARCHIVE REPORT

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Sites and Monuments Record

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Field Section
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Tetbury Drive, Warndon,
Worcester WR4 9LS

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Report 384
Project 963

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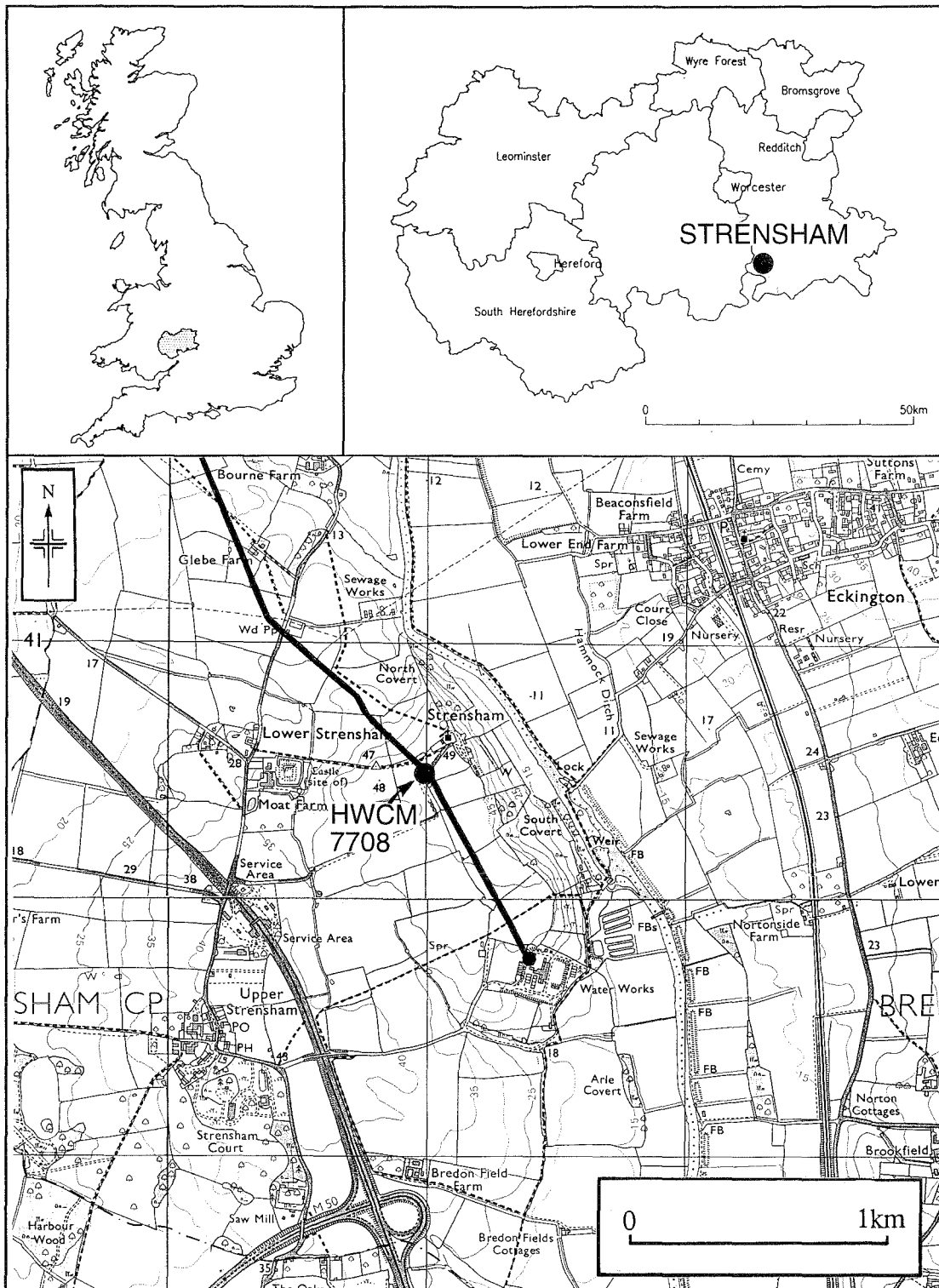


Figure 1: Location of site

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Excavation of a Romano-British and medieval settlement at Strensham: archive report

Robin Jackson, Elizabeth Pearson and Stephanie Ratkai with illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

1 Summary

Excavation of Roman and medieval deposits was undertaken to the south-west of the Church of St John the Baptist at Strensham, in the south of Worcestershire. Part of the site, which was previously known from earthworks and fieldwalking, was excavated in advance of construction of a pipeline running from Strensham to Worcester. This formed an element of one of a series of similar projects being undertaken by the County Archaeological Service on behalf of Severn Trent Water Limited during the construction of a major new water main running north to south across the County. Initial negotiations had explored the possibility of re-routing the pipe, however, engineering considerations meant that it was not possible to divert the pipeline sufficiently to avoid the site. Consequently, an agreed programme of works was devised comprising evaluation and then excavation to record the area which would be disturbed during pipelaying. Following the excavation, a geophysical survey was undertaken of areas to either side of the pipe in order to enable the results to be better understood in relation to the site as a whole.

The excavation has revealed a long history of occupation, from the late Iron Age or early Roman period through until the 15th century, though there was an apparent break in occupation from the 4th century until the 12th. A small quantity of flint recovered from the site and from fields along the pipeline indicates that Bronze Age or earlier activity was also present in the area although no features of such date were identified.

Evidence for late Iron Age and early Roman activity was limited, comprising enclosure ditches but no clear structures or patterns of features. The finds assemblage for these phases was also limited though two environmental samples dated to the early Roman phase were rich in charred cereal crop remains. This limited activity suggests that the area may have primarily been in agricultural use on the fringes of a settlement, however, this be a distorted image, especially for the early Roman phase, since truncation was extensive and artefacts of this date were present as residual material in many later features.

In the later 2nd to early 3rd century the presence of a timber building and the large volume of finds, particularly from one of the ditches, indicates that domestic occupation had spread or moved into the area of the excavation. One large ditch was a recut of an earlier ditch and would appear to have formed the north side of a rectilinear enclosure recorded by the geophysical survey. Its backfilling towards the end of this phase is seen as representing a reversion to predominantly agricultural activity on the fringes of a settlement, during the 3rd to 4th centuries. Although during this later period a building was constructed, the presence of a cremation and the limited artefactual assemblage associated with the deposits suggests that domestic occupation was not present within the excavated area. However, occupation is again likely to have been present to the north in the zone of intensive activity identified through the geophysical survey. Environmental evidence supported

this pattern, with charred cereal remains best represented in the phases associated with agricultural activity and generally poorly represented in the period of domestic occupation.

The Roman activity is felt to be consistent with a rural settlement, probably a hamlet or farmstead, at which occupation dated from the 1st through to the late 3rd or early 4th century with a possible peak in occupation in the later 2nd to 3rd centuries.

Despite documentary evidence indicating that there was settlement at Strensham in the 10th century, it is uncertain where this was located and there was no evidence of activity at the site from the end of the Roman occupation until the 12th to 13th century when enclosure ditches and a fence associated with a small finds assemblage suggest that the site was on the edge of the settlement area of a medieval village. As with the Roman period the area appears to have been on the limits of the main focus of occupation.

Finally in the 14th to 15th century, a trackway and a number of enclosure ditches and an absence of obvious structures again suggest that the site remained on the edge of the settlement. However, a number of indeterminate cut features, a pit or posthole and a number of isolated structural features, along with a fairly large finds assemblage suggest that it may be on the immediate fringes of occupation.

Beyond the 15th century settlement must have moved away from the vicinity of the site as no later features or finds were present with the exception of those of modern date. It can be suggested from documentary and other evidence that the focus of settlement at Strensham probably moved away from the church to the area around a moated site at Lower Strensham some 0.5km to the west. The excavated area appears to have remained in agricultural use from the 15th century onwards, a function it retains to the present day.

2

Introduction

2.1

Background

A programme of archaeological work was undertaken at Strensham in the south of the County of Hereford and Worcester during June, July and August 1992. This formed an element of a larger project, which was one of a series of similar projects undertaken by Hereford and Worcester County Council, County Archaeological Service on behalf of Severn Trent Water Limited during a major programme of works to improve water supplies.

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."

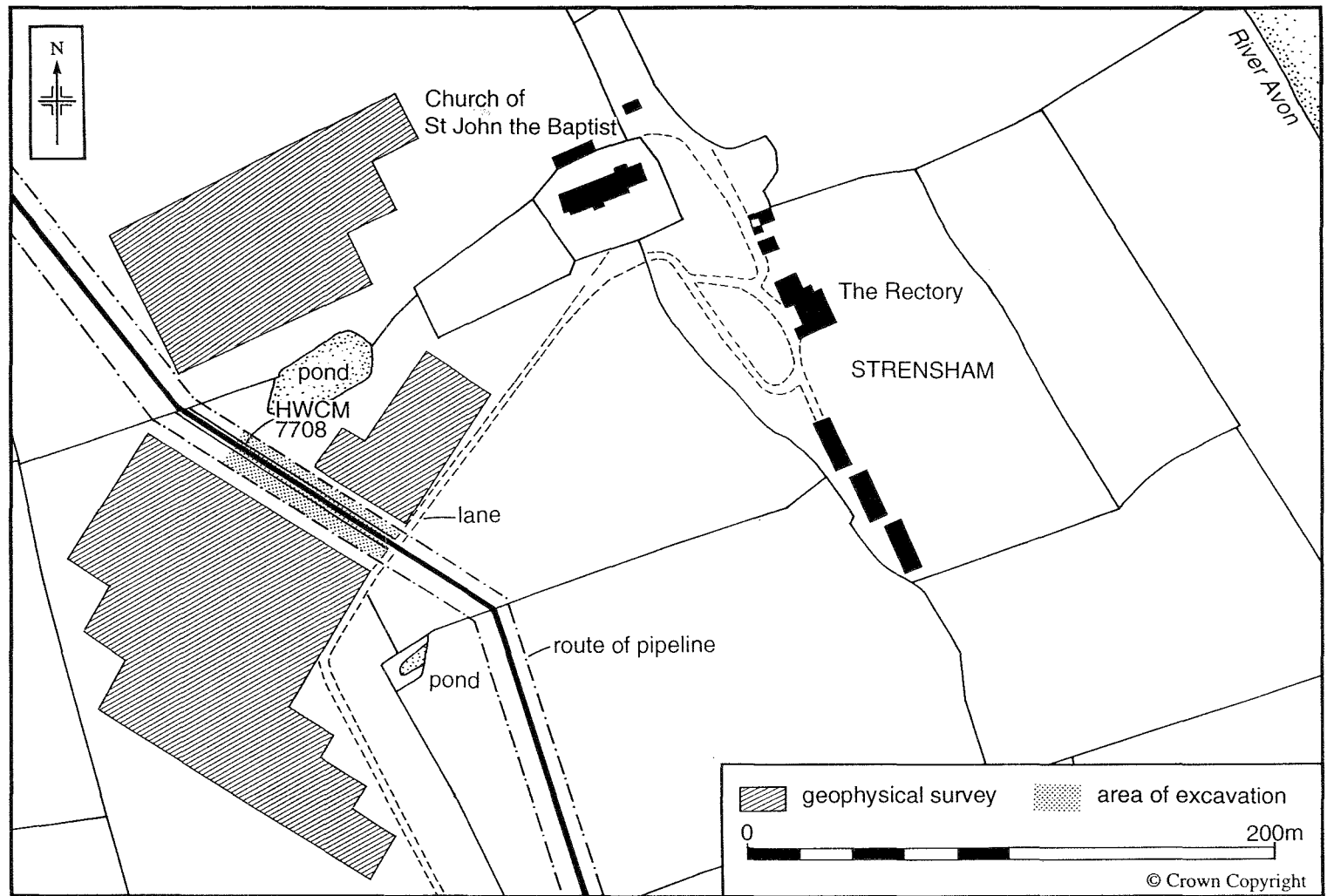


Figure 2: Location of pipeline, excavated area and geophysical survey

Methodology on the pipeline was based upon practice established during previous projects which formed part of this overall programme (Dinn and Hemingway 1992; Dalwood 1992; Jackson and Hurst 1994). A watching brief was maintained by a core team during the stripping of topsoil from an easement up to 12m wide along the whole of the pipeline, and also during parts of the subsequent pipe-trenching. In addition to this, a contingency team was available to facilitate more detailed salvage recording of any significant deposits which could not be undertaken through the watching brief.

Archaeological deposits were recorded at a number of sites along the pipeline and artefacts recovered from the many of the fields which were examined. The overall results of the project are reported elsewhere (Jackson *et al* 1995a), while this report details the results of investigations at one particular site (HWCM 7708; NGR SO 910 406; Fig 1) lying to the south-west of the Church of St John the Baptist at Strensham.

An initial programme of consultation between Severn Trent and the Service had ensured that the pipeline largely avoided sites of known or potential archaeological importance. However, at Strensham it was not possible to route the pipe to avoid one potentially significant site recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record as a site of archaeological interest (Statutory Instruments 1988, no 1813; reference number HWCM 7708). This was the site of a deserted medieval village associated with the nearby Church of St John the Baptist, to the north-east, and ridge and furrow earthworks, to the south, east and west. Apart from surviving earthworks at the site, in the form of hollows and banks indicating the presence of such a settlement, fieldwalking supervised by Dr C Dyer in the 1960s had produced medieval and Roman pottery from the field through which the pipeline was to pass. Consequently a programme of work was devised to allow an appropriate archaeological response to be made.

2.2 **Geology and topography**

The site is situated at the north-east corner of a generally flat-topped hill, above the 45m contour, and west and slightly to the south of the highest point of the hill on which stands the Church of St John the Baptist (HWCM 7704; Fig 2). To the east of the church the land falls away sharply to the River Avon while to the north, south and west the land slopes more gently from the hilltop, down to the floodplains and terraces of the River Avon and a small tributary, the Bourne Brook. The hill rises well above the surrounding landscape to the south, west, north and north-east, but is itself dominated by Bredon Hill and the edge of the Cotswold scarp to the south-east.

The soils are of the Bishampton Association (*Legend for 1:250,000 soils map of England and Wales, sheet 3*, Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983) which are deep fine loamy and fine loamy over clayey brown soils (Ragg *et al* 1984). These have slowly permeable subsoils and are subject to slight seasonal waterlogging. Slight droutiness means that they are not good for intensive pasture, however they are easily worked and, although in wet years spring cultivation can be limited, they are able to support a wide range of crops including cereals, root crops and horticultural crops.

Underlying these soils are drift deposits of gravels representing the Avon Terrace Number 5 (Tomlinson 1925). The gravels at Strensham Church are 5-6ft deep (1.5-2m) and well bedded. The terrace material consists of yellow,

earthy, almost ferruginous sands, and gravels containing flints, quartz and quartzite pebbles, and numerous ironstone pellets. These overlie solid geology of Jurassic lower lias consisting of grey silty mudstones and argillaceous limestones (Worssam *et al* 1989).

2.3

Archaeological and historical background

Archaeological background (Figs 3 and 4)

The deserted medieval settlement at Strensham (HWCM 7708) was first identified by Mr Symonds in 1961. The visible remains of the site comprise a group of earthworks lying to the west of the Church of St John the Baptist (HWCM 7704). The association of these earthworks with a virtually isolated church dating to the medieval period indicated that part of the medieval settlement documented at Strensham was likely to have been at this location. The site was first recorded in any detail by Dr Christopher Dyer of the School of History at Birmingham University prior to ploughing in 1963. The site was not believed to have been previously ploughed and a sketch of the earthworks was produced showing a number of hollows and banks (Fig 3). These have now been largely levelled by ploughing, but still survive to some degree.

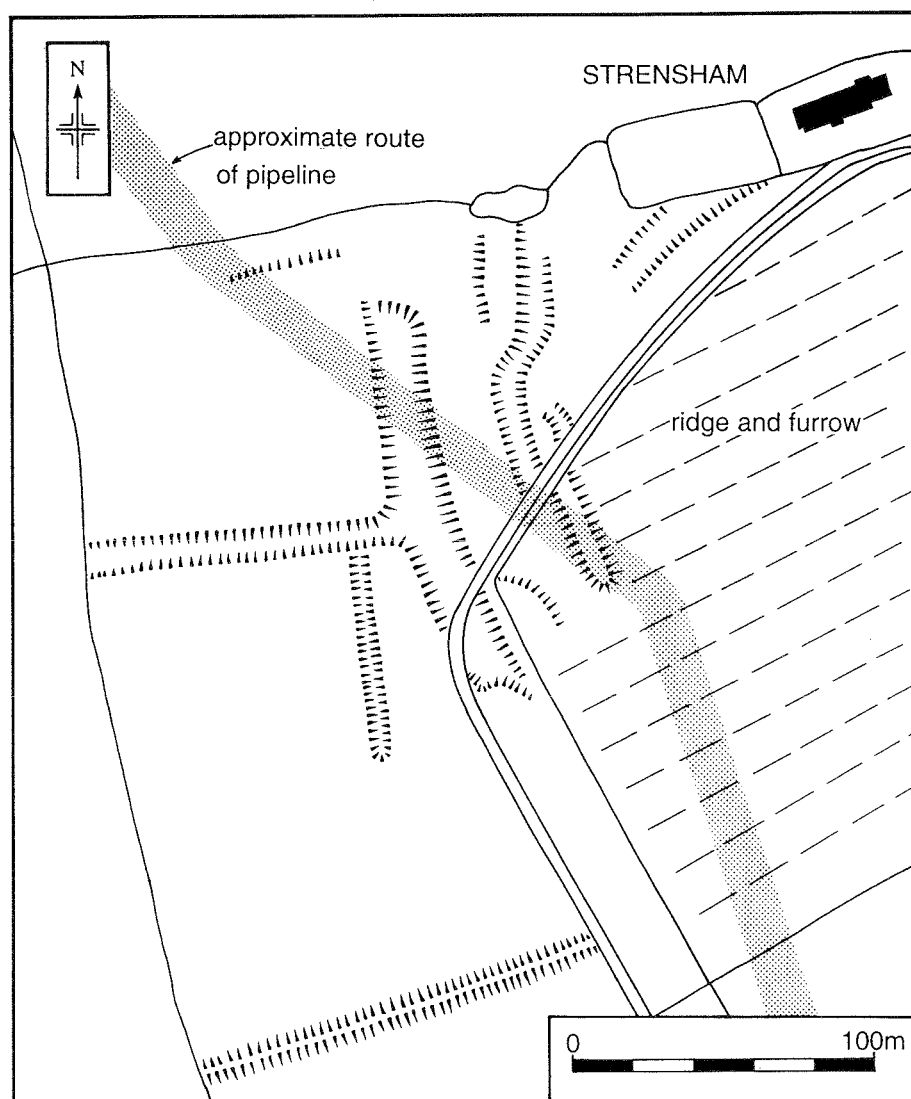


Figure 3: Plan of the earthworks in 1963 and relationship of the pipeline to them (based on Dr C Dyer's sketch)

These earthworks mainly lie to the south-west of the church and extend across the area traversed by the pipeline and slightly to the west of it. Fieldwalking of the area of these earthworks was undertaken by Dr Dyer in the 1960s and medieval pottery of 13-14th century date was recovered along with a number of decorated tiles and a late medieval arrowhead. A quantity of Roman pottery was also recovered.

The church has a few 13th century elements but is mostly 14th-15th century in date. Many of the Russell family are buried there, with the earliest Russell memorials dating to 1375 (Sir Robert Russell) and 1405 (Sir John Russell), and the latest dating to 1734.

Existing aerial photographic coverage of the immediate area of the site is limited (University of Cambridge Aerial Photographic Collection, refs BRL 090 and BRL 091). These two photographs show the earthworks but no cropmarks are present around the church, though this may reflect crop cover and other conditions, particularly since the area in which the earthworks are focussed is under pasture.

A number of hollows extend westwards from this deserted medieval settlement towards a moated site known as Strensham Castle (HWCM 287; Fig 4). This site, at Lower Strensham, has two concentric moats and appears to have been quite strongly defended though no masonry is visible. The moat is associated with the earthworks of a further deserted medieval settlement (HWCM 7707; Fig 4). Many of the fields surrounding both of these former settlements contain ridge and furrow earthworks which are a highly characteristic feature of the medieval rural landscape and open field system (Astill 1988).

Limited artefact scatters of prehistoric, Roman and medieval material have also been recovered in the area. The prehistoric artefacts may represent stray finds or be indicators of settlement, however the Roman and medieval scatters probably result from the practice of manuring arable land with midden material incorporating domestic refuse. This was clearly a widespread practice in the past and large-scale, systematic surveys (eg Gaffney and Tingle 1989) have shown that the patterns of manuring around settlements are highly complex. High manuring activity does not necessarily occur in proximity to settlements and low levels do not necessarily indicate that settlement is at some distance. However, manuring scatters have regularly been observed on other pipeline projects (Dinn and Hemingway 1992; Dalwood 1992; Jackson and Hurst 1994; Jackson *et al* 1994) and generally tend to be in areas around identified settlements. Two previous pipeline projects have been undertaken in the vicinity of the site at Strensham. The Upton to Strensham Raw Water Main and the Strensham to Mythe Main have both produced such material (Jackson and Hurst 1994; Charles Parry pers comm; Fig 4), as has the Strensham to Worcester Main of which the excavations at Strensham only formed one part. These scatters indicate that much of the higher land around Strensham was in arable use from Roman times. A more extensive find was reported in the last century from Eckington (HWCM 7724; Fig 4) where "Romanized British or early Saxon" artefacts and "ancient building foundations" were discovered during the construction of the railway (Allies 1840).

Apart from the Roman site reported in this project a further Roman settlement is known at Bredon Fields (HWCM 10015; Fig 4). This site was first identified through aerial photography showing as a series of cropmarks

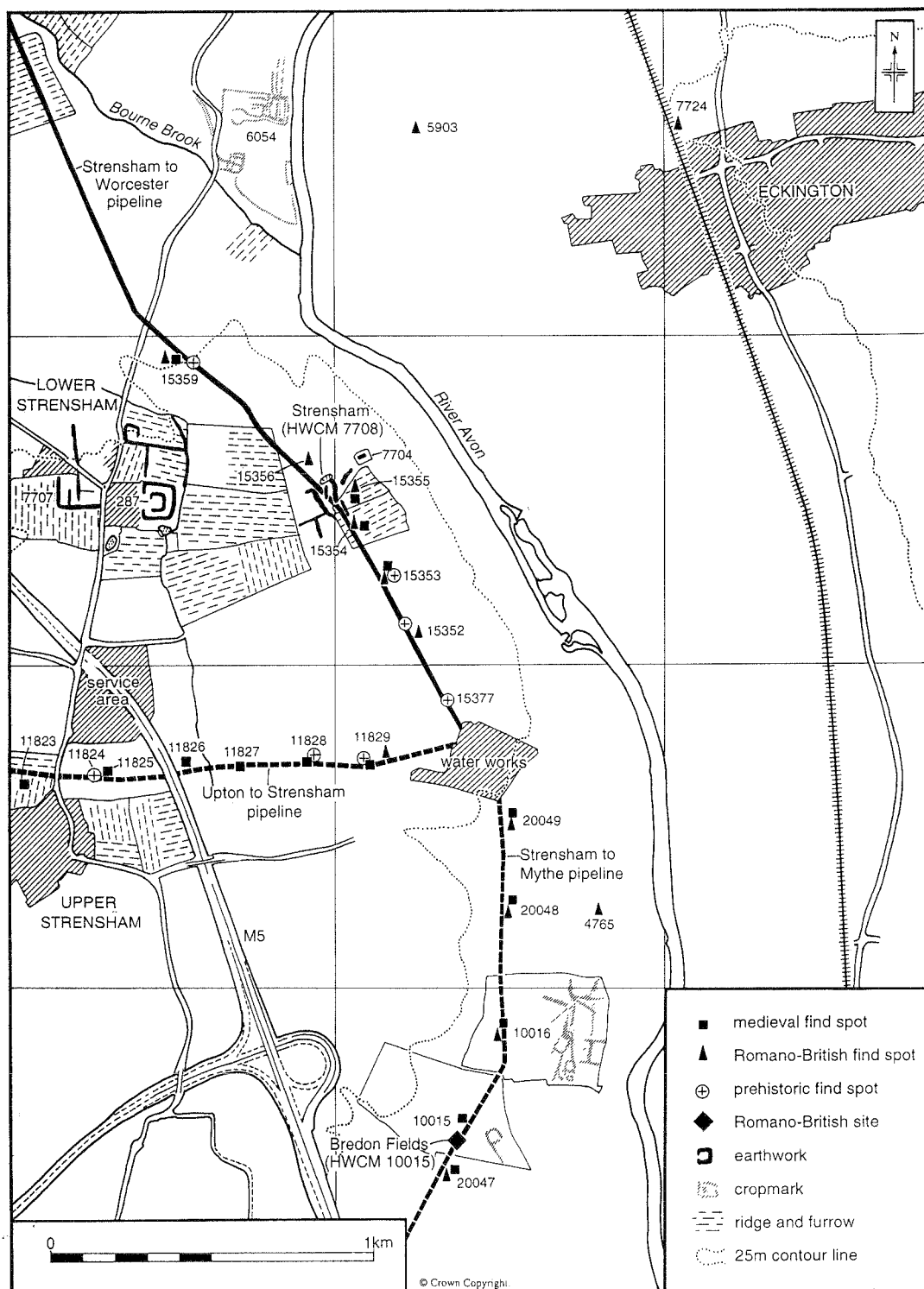


Figure 4: Sites in the area

representing enclosures, field boundaries, a possible trackway and a pit alignment (HWCN 10015 and 10016). The more southerly of these cropmarks (HWCN 10015) was further investigated during the Strensham to Mythe pipeline project which recorded Roman occupation of later 2nd-4th century date (Annette Hancock pers comm). Finally to the north, near Bourne Farm, further cropmarks are likely to represent Iron Age or Roman occupation (HWCN 6054; Fig 4).

Historical background

The name Strensham derives from Old English *Strengsho* meaning Strong's homestead (Mawer and Stenton 1927, 229) and is first recorded when 10 manse, originally granted to the Abbey at Pershore by King Coenwulf but subsequently lost, were returned in 972 to the Abbey by King Eadgar (VCH IV, 203). Strensham was granted to the Abbey of Westminster by Edward the Confessor as part of the manor of Pershore. It is not recorded in Domesday (1086), however, it was probably still held by the Abbey at Westminster since another survey of 1086 (Evesham Cartulary A) lists it as a *berewick* (outlying settlement) of the manor of Comberton, which was itself held by Pershore (VCH IV, 203). The manor, known as Nether Strensham, was held of Westminster by a number of persons and for a time was held in demense by the Abbots.

By 1283 the Russell family held part of the manor and in 1298 James Russell acquired further land there and the family were to remain the principal landowners at Strensham until the 18th century. In 1388 Sir John Russell was granted a licence to crenellate a mansion house at Strensham (VCH IV 1924) and this almost certainly related to the moated site (HWCN 7707) described earlier. Strensham Castle probably survived until the English Civil War, when it is believed to have been dismantled. At about this time the Russells moved their residence to Strensham Court at Over Strensham (now Upper Strensham) to the south and it is around that site that settlement is now focussed.

At some point the manor had been divided into two, Nether and Over Strensham, but was amalgamated to form one manor again in 1624 (VCH IV 1924). The presence of two deserted settlements, one by the church and one by the moated site, along with the two named medieval settlements of Nether and Over Strensham causes some confusion over the settlement pattern at Strensham. This is further confused by the modern names of Lower and Upper Strensham which can probably be equated respectively with Nether and Over Strensham. In conclusion it would appear that the settlement at Nether Strensham had two foci, one by the church and one at the moat, although these are not necessarily contemporaneous.

Turning to the evidence regarding the nature of medieval settlement, while two places are named, and at least two can be identified from earthworks, it cannot be assumed that both represent villages, they may have been isolated farms. More reliable indications of population centres, although not of density of population, can be derived from the Lay Subsidy Rolls. These assess the value of movable wealth for taxation purposes and although the Rolls are not a full record of the population of any settlement, they can be a useful indicator. Unfortunately the Rolls offer confusing evidence in this case since all the figures are entered under "Strensham" and no division is made between Nether and Over Strensham. The Subsidy for 1280 lists 39 persons at Strensham (Willis Bund and Amphlett 1893) and this number, along with the level of the tax assessment (£5/3/6), suggests a fairly large and wealthy

population, and although no lesser separate manors are indicated, it is unlikely that all of these persons occupied one village. Subsequent Roll figures suggest fluctuating fortunes or population at Strensham. In 1327, 24 persons paid £1/9/1, in 1334 the subsidy was £2/8/- and in 1523, 38 persons paid £46/13/4. However beyond this general observation no further conclusions can be drawn about the size of any settlement or settlements present.

3 **Methodology**

3.1 **General methodology**

Project design

The project design and methodology was based on similar pipeline projects already undertaken by the Service on behalf of Severn Trent. A number of these have already been completed and the results and methodology have been published (Dinn and Hemingway 1992; Dalwood 1992; Jackson and Hurst 1994). The general methodology and approach are described in detail in the first of these publications and only details of the particular approach used for the site at Strensham are given here.

Preparation

An initial preparation period for the whole of the Strensham to Worcester pipeline allowed the collection of existing data on the archaeology, history, topography and geology of the area traversed. 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 was studied through use of the Sites and Monuments Record (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 SMR and publications such as the Victoria County History for Worcestershire. Tithe maps and apportionments were studied including those for Strensham. In addition the results from an earlier pipeline in the vicinity running from Strensham to Upton were particularly useful. This had produced a suggested reconstruction of the medieval field and settlement patterns of the area using a combination of existing and new archaeological data allied to cartographical, topographical and historical evidence (Jackson and Hurst 1994).

Fieldwork

The programme devised for the site at Strensham involved two stages. The first of these comprised field evaluation, lasting two weeks, and aimed to establish the presence, or absence, of archaeological deposits within the width of the pipeline corridor, and to assess their nature, level of preservation, extents and survival. This would then allow, if necessary, a second stage comprising excavation to preserve, by record, any significant surviving archaeological deposits.

A corridor (with a maximum width of 11.00m) within the easement was stripped of topsoil across the area of the known site (HWCN 7708). This was undertaken under archaeological supervision using a 360° excavator with a

toothless ditching bucket. Spoil was stored along the north-east side of the easement. This revealed features in plan extending across about two thirds of the stripped length and a number of areas across the width of the easement were selected for cleaning and more detailed investigation. Pre-excavation plans were drawn and selected features were excavated to establish the character, range, date, survival and extent of deposits.

The results of the evaluation were assessed in the field and, due to good survival and the clear significance of deposits, an eight week programme of excavation was agreed and initiated.

The site was divided into a number of areas, and specific areas were targeted for intensive excavation and others for sample excavation. Work concentrated along one side (north-east) of the easement leaving vehicle access for the contractors along a 3.5m wide corridor. During the final week of the excavation access was transferred to the south-west side to enable salvage excavation and recording of deposits in that area. This was intended to answer outstanding questions of relationship and alignment posed by deposits excavated to the east and continuing into this area. In the event these deposits provided only limited additional information due to a combination of poor weather allied to a higher level of disturbance by plant operating along this strip than had been anticipated.

The aim throughout was to excavate, as far as possible, a range of deposits across the site sufficient to establish the sequence of deposition along with the nature and extent of activities within the excavated area. Recording was undertaken following standard Service practice (County Archaeological Service Recording System 1988 as amended). All artefacts of whatever class or date were collected and have been retained for analysis.

Following the excavation a watching brief was maintained as the construction of the pipeline was undertaken.

Assessment

Following completion of the fieldwork, preliminary processing of the data was undertaken. All records were checked and a provisionally phased matrix was produced. All artefacts were washed, marked, quantified and provisionally dated. Selected environmental samples were sieved, their residues were sorted and their flots scanned. Assessment of the results indicated that they were of sufficient importance to warrant further analysis. Consequently a programme of more detailed post-excavation analysis leading to report production was proposed (County Archaeological Service 1993) and accepted by Severn Trent.

Geophysical survey

One outcome of the assessment was the recognition that the effective understanding of the results was limited by the excavation being restricted to the stripped corridor and therefore only representing a narrow band across the archaeological site. As a result Severn Trent were approached for additional funding to enable non-intrusive survey of the area to either side of the pipeline corridor. This would allow the results of the excavation to be more fully understood in the context of the overall site. Although this was beyond any commitment that Severn Trent were obliged to fulfil, they recognised the importance of undertaking this work and agreed to fund a survey of the area around the site to which the landowners kindly gave access.

This area is currently under pasture and geophysical survey was chosen as the preferred approach for the survey. Geophysical Surveys of Bradford were contracted to undertake the work, which they carried out in January 1995. Three areas were surveyed, one to either side of the excavated strip and one to the west of the church (Fig 2). The report on the survey (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995) is included in the project archive.

Report and archive

The final stage of the project has involved the completion of the archive and the production of this archive report resulting from the excavation and post-excavation analysis. The report also incorporates the results of the geophysical survey. A more concise report on the project has been produced for publication in the Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society for 1996. The project archive (Appendix 6) is held at the Service.

3.2 **Structural methodology**

The site was phased through analysis of the stratigraphic and structural sequence in combination with artefactual dating evidence. This resulted in the production of a phased matrix. The site plans were digitised using a CAD system (AutoCAD) and these were used to analyse the structural sequence and draft phase plans.

Groups of associated features were identified and linked to form Context Groups (eg CG 23). These generally comprise separately recorded sections of a ditch and its fills, or groups of apparently associated postholes or pits. Although fills are mostly representative of disuse of features the stratigraphic sequence and dating evidence were not sufficiently complex to warrant division of use and disuse except in a few cases which are dealt with on a case by case basis in the analytical text. In addition the generally sandy nature of many of the fills suggests that features left open would have filled rapidly through silting and the absence of such deposits in the majority of linear features indicates that many features on site were probably short-lived, though of course cleaning-out and recutting should be allowed for.

A matrix was produced of the Context Groups to illustrate the broad structural and relational sequence of the site (Appendix 1). The text and illustrations in the report mostly relate to the Context Groups and an index of these and concordance to context number is included as an appendix (Appendix 2) as well as an abbreviated description of each Context Group (Appendix 3). Detailed records of individual contexts are held in the project archive.

The site has been divided into a number of phases, each of which is described individually in Section 4 of the report. Some further sub-division could have been attempted for Phases 3 and 4 using stratigraphic evidence, however dating was not sufficiently good to warrant this approach and only seven broad phases have been identified; prehistoric, early Roman, middle Roman, later Roman, early medieval, medieval, and post-medieval and modern.

3.3 **Artefactual methodology**

All the Roman and medieval pottery was divided into fabric types using the County type series (Hurst and Rees 1992). The pottery was quantified by sherd number and sherd weight. All pottery data (eg vessel form, sherd type, decoration etc) was recorded on a Service *pro forma* (recording sheet AS10). All data was subsequently inputted into a database (DBase IV).

The pottery fabrics

The occurrence of pottery fabrics by phase can be seen in Tables 1 and 2. All the fabrics with the exception of fabric 55.1, a West Country base, have been found on other Worcestershire sites. Full descriptions of the fabrics can be found in Hurst and Rees (1992) and Darlington and Evans (1992). For clarity, a list is appended of the fabric numbers with the common name for the fabric or generic title if no common name exists. The list is in numerical order.

<i>Fabric number</i>	<i>Fabric name/description</i>
03	Malvernian metamorphic (Peacock Group A)
04.1	Palaeozoic limestone (Peacock Group B1)
05.6	Ironstone and sand
12	Severn Valley ware
12.1-12.4	Severn Valley ware
14	Fine sandy grey ware
15	Coarse sandy grey ware
16	Grog tempered ware (wheelthrown)
16.2	Hand-made grog tempered ware
17	Mudstone tempered ware
19	Malvernian ware (wheelthrown)
22	Black burnished ware (BB1)
23	Shell gritted ware
24	Shell and ironstone tempered ware
32	Mancetter/Hartshill mortarium
37.3	South-west England mortarium
43	Samian ware
55	Worcester type unglazed ware
55.1	West Country base (see below)
56	Malvernian unglazed ware
64.1	Glazed Sandy ware
69	Oxidized Glazed Malvernian ware
98	Miscellaneous Roman wares
122	Miscellaneous prehistoric pottery

NB Fabrics 98 and 122 have been used only for sherds too small for accurate identification.

Fabric 55.1

This is a newly defined fabric and accordingly a full fabric description is given.

Colour: core 10YR 4/6, int margin 10YR 4/6-5/6, ext margin 10YR 4/6, int surface 10YR 3/2, ext surface 10YR 3/2-3/3.

Inclusions:

Mod-abundant, poorly sorted, round and sub-round quartz, 0.1-0.75mm (mainly less than 0.25mm).

Sparse, poorly sorted, sub-round, red ferruginous inclusions, 0.25-0.5mm.

Sparse, poorly sorted, rounded, black ?ferruginous inclusions, up to 0.25mm.

Sparse golden mica mainly visible on the surfaces.

Sparse irregular voids, up to 0.5mm, probably from burnt out organic material.

The fabric is hard fired and the surfaces have been smoothed or wiped and are smooth to the touch. The vessel appears to have been hand formed, possibly of coil construction.

Other artefact classes were recorded on a Service *pro forma* (recording sheet AS12) and dated where possible. Comments on these have been incorporated into the text where relevant and the occurrence of these other artefact classes is shown in a series of tables; Table 3 (samian), Table 4 (metal objects), Table 5 (flint) and Table 6 (other finds).

The aim of the pottery and other artefactual reports was threefold. Firstly dating evidence for the site was to be provided. This was done mainly by recourse to the samian and black burnished wares and to a lesser extent by the Severn Valley wares. Secondly a rather more detailed description of the pottery from ditch fill 169, which appeared to represent a more or less contemporary group with supporting non-ceramic dating evidence, would be given. Thirdly the site would be compared to similar small rural sites in the County.

3.4 Environmental methodology

Sampling strategy

The environmental sampling policy was largely as defined in the Service Recording System (1988 as amended) though additional on site advice was provided by the Environmental Archaeologist (Clare de Rouffignac). Large animal bone was hand-collected during excavation and samples of 5 litres taken from 32 contexts of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date. Following assessment, eighteen samples were selected for post-excavation analysis (Table 7).

Processing and analysis

The samples were processed by flotation followed by wet-sieving using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 500µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flots were fully sorted using a low-power EMT light microscope and remains identified using modern reference specimens housed at the County Archaeological Service. Results of the analysis are summarised in Table 8 which only shows those contexts which contained significant assemblages.

Aims

The assessment indicated that although preservation of animal bone was poor, charred cereal remains were abundant in a number of samples. Subsequent analysis aimed to establish the main cereal crops in use, from which stages of crop processing the debris originated, and whether there had been any changes in the types of crop used from the prehistoric to medieval periods.

General observations

Although little animal bone was retrieved from the wet-sieved samples, charred cereal crop debris was present in many contexts, and particularly in abundance in those of Roman date. However, as preservation of these remains was not particularly good, precise identification of a large proportion of the remains was not possible. Many of the cereal grains were poorly preserved and distorted, allowing only a few to be identified to species level. Moreover, it was not possible to distinguish between emmer or spelt wheat chaff in many cases, as a large proportion of the glumes bases were broken very close to the base of the spikelet fork, leaving few diagnostic characteristics.

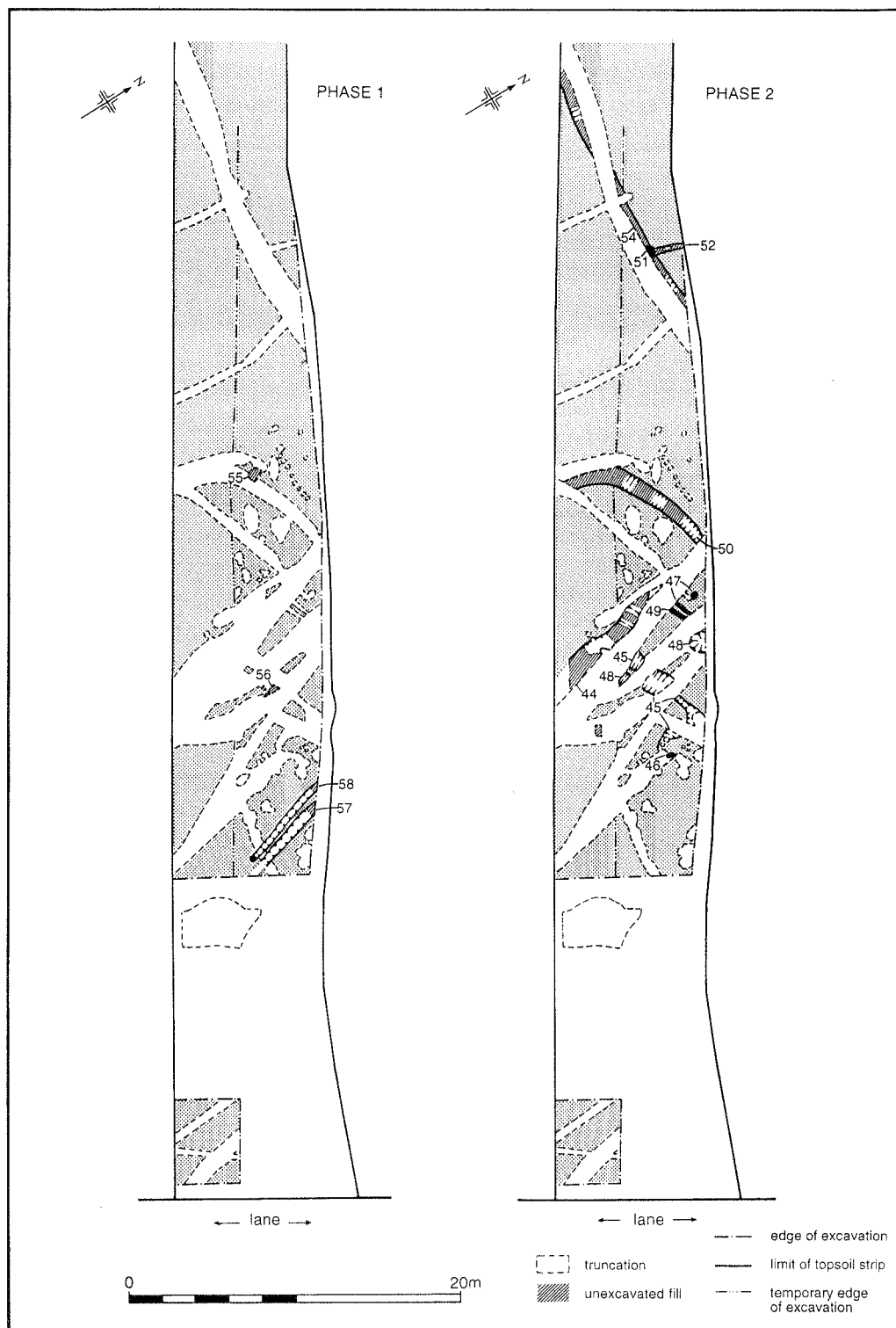


Figure 5: Plan of Phases 1 and 2 (numbers refer to context groups)

4 Results and analysis

4.1 Phase 1: Prehistoric/early Roman (Fig 5)

Context Groups 55, 56, 57 and 58

This phase indicates only a low level of activity within the immediate area of the trench. Environmental and artefactual assemblages were limited.

4.1.1 Structural analysis

The principal features are a slot, possibly structural in origin (CG 58) and a parallel gully (CG 57), the former being the only feature to produce datable material.

Apart from these, only heavily truncated features representing parts of ditches or pits survived (CG 55 and CG 56). No obvious structures or patterns are evident although the alignment of the ditch and slot reflect the later alignments of structures and more particularly boundary ditches across the site.

Certain later features, in particular the undated earlier cut of the curvilinear enclosure ditch (Phase 2; CG 45) may have Phase 1 origins, however heavy truncation and the absence of early dating material associated with them preclude any firm conclusions as to their origins.

4.1.2 Artefactual analysis

The pottery from this phase was undiagnostic. The inclusions from the four sherds of Palaeozoic limestone tempered ware, fabric 4.1, had completely leached out. It is possible that there may have been some stabbed decoration but the poor quality of the sherds made this difficult to determine. Fabric 4.1 is mainly an Iron Age fabric, although there is some evidence for its use into the earlier Roman Period (see below). The remaining five sherds of pottery were little more than crumbs and may have been daub rather than pottery fragments.

Flint artefacts

Flint was recovered from a number of features as well as unstratified material (Table 6). In total 41 fragments were recovered of which over half (25) were unworked, naturally occurring, gravel flint. With one exception the remainder were residual in Phase 2 or later contexts. The one flint recovered from a Phase 1 feature is likely to be residual as well since this feature also contained pottery of the type discussed above.

The total assemblage was too small for any detailed analysis and consequently only a few observations have been made about the material. Only 4 tools were identified, 2 scrapers and 2 notched tools, along with 7 flaked lumps and 5 flakes. The flint was variable in quality ranging from good quality dark grey/black and honey coloured flint, some possibly imported, to locally occurring poor quality brown and grey gravel derived flint. Due to the small size of the assemblage dating cannot be established, except in that they clearly relate to Bronze Age or earlier activity. The small quantity and absence of associated features also suggests that while a settlement must be in the general vicinity, it is unlikely to be particularly close to the excavated strip.

4.1.3 **Environmental analysis**

Three samples were taken from this phase, producing only small flots. One of these was taken from the fill (context 337) of the slot (CG 58) and contained only occasional unidentifiable cereal grain, grass grain and a possible legume seed. The other two samples only contained a very small quantity of material.

4.2 **Phase 2: Earlier Roman** (late 1st-mid 2nd century; Fig 5)

Context Groups 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54

The main features dated to this phase are a number of boundary ditches probably representing enclosures or other boundaries. The associated artefactual assemblage was generally undiagnostic but suggested a late-1st to mid-2nd century date. Environmental samples were rich in charred cereal remains.

4.2.1 **Structural analysis**

To the north, a major east to west aligned ditch (CG 54), subsequently recut in Phase 3 (CG 42), crossed the site and formed the northern limit of activity. This ditch was cut on its north side by a short length of north to south ditch or gully (CG 52) which did not extend to the south of the main ditch. This may be largely contemporary with the main ditch since it was only observed to affect the ditch fill at its very edge and the relationship was not clear. This was in turn cut by a posthole (CG 51) which was itself clearly truncated by the recut of the main ditch (CG 42). This sequence suggests that the earlier ditch may have been backfilled or fully silted up prior to its re-cutting. The fills are not particularly helpful in this case since although there was a shallow, sterile lower fill representing primary silting, the upper fill contained little material and could not be clearly identified as a deliberate backfill. Whatever the case, the line of the ditch must have remained demarcated in some way for it to be recut in Phase 3 on such a close alignment to the earlier feature. This may perhaps suggest that the posthole represents the only surviving element of a fence along this line which maintained the boundary.

To the south-east was a curving ditch (CG 50), probably representing part of the north side of an enclosure, though no south side was identified. This may represent the recut of an earlier and similarly aligned ditch (CG 53; not illustrated) which survived as a series of slightly irregular and heavily truncated patches of fill. This earlier feature (CG 53) may be Phase 1 in origin but dating evidence was poor and was not clearly able to support this argument, though one section only contained prehistoric material.

To the south-east of this lie a series of heavily truncated features (CG 45) which may represent the line of a rather irregular ditch or alternatively a series of pits. Also to the south were two pits of indeterminate function (CG 48), an east to west aligned gully (CG 49) running parallel to a slot and a posthole (CG 47), and also an isolated posthole (CG 46). The latter had no dating evidence but stratigraphically would appear to belong to this phase or the earlier one.

Finally a larger, though much truncated, ditch (CG 44) ran north to south, probably terminating to the north where it did not extend beyond a truncating feature. This ditch may be somewhat later than the other features as its fill dates mid to late 2nd century and has been assigned to Phase 3 (CG 43).

However, although its alignment does not suggest that it was contemporary with other features, stratigraphically it appears more probably to be Phase 2 in origin. It can be concluded that this may have been a relatively short-lived feature, probably a boundary that was deliberately backfilled in Phase 3 prior to the cutting of a further enclosure ditch (CG 38, see 4.3.1).

4.2.2 Artefactual analysis

The dominant pottery type was Severn Valley ware (fabric 12) followed by Malvernian ware (fabric 3). The Severn Valley wares outnumbered the Malvernian wares by 2:1 both by sherd weight and sherd count. Only three other fabrics were present, fine grey ware (fabric 14), South-west England mortarium (fabric 37.3) and a grog tempered ware (fabric 16.2). It is possible that the grog tempered ware is intrusive, caused by a later ditch (Phase 3; CG 37) cutting into 352, the fill of one element of the possible ditch (CG 45). The dating for this ware is uncertain. Other grog tempered wares (eg Booth and Greene 1989) seem to occur in the 3rd-4th century, although they note earlier occurrences in an early 2nd century phase at Tiddington, Warwickshire.

There was a small quantity of residual prehistoric pottery.

The pottery from this phase was generally undiagnostic and there were only three rim sherds. It was therefore difficult to assign forms to many of the sherds. Identifiable forms were Severn Valley ware jars and Malvernian cooking pots/jars. Two other forms were identified, a carinated beaker in fine sandy grey ware and a mortarium in a Mancetter-Hartshill fabric (fabric 32). One rim sherd in fabric 3 (from context 347; Fig 6:1) is unusual and has been interpreted as part of a lid although no exact parallel is known for it. The carinated beaker is of 1st or 2nd century date. The remaining fabrics and forms could fit with this date.

Illustrated vessels

Fig 6:1 Context 347 CG 47 Fabric 3, ?lid

4.2.3 Environmental analysis

Two samples were rich in charred cereal crop remains (contexts 192 and 360) which represented respectively the fills of one of the gullies (CG 49) and the possible ditch (CG 45). Both samples contained moderate numbers of cereal grains, some of which could be identified as barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) or emmer/spelt wheat (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) and moderate to abundant quantities of emmer/spelt wheat chaff. The chaff component was particularly predominant in the possible ditch (CG 45; context 360) and, in the gully (CG 49; context 192) a proportion could be specifically identified as spelt wheat. Only a small number of weed seeds were present in either sample, comprising unidentified grass grains, rye grass (cf *Lolium perenne*), bristle grass (cf *Setaria* sp) and mallow (*Malva* sp). Occasional charred cereal and grass grains were also present in contexts 175, 209 and 258 (fills within CG 48, CG 50 and CG 45 respectively).

4.3 Phase 3: Middle Roman (late 2nd/early 3rd century; Fig 8)

Context Groups 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43

The Phase 2 northern boundary ditch was recut and to the south of it an enclosure and a timber structure were built. At some point, possibly after the

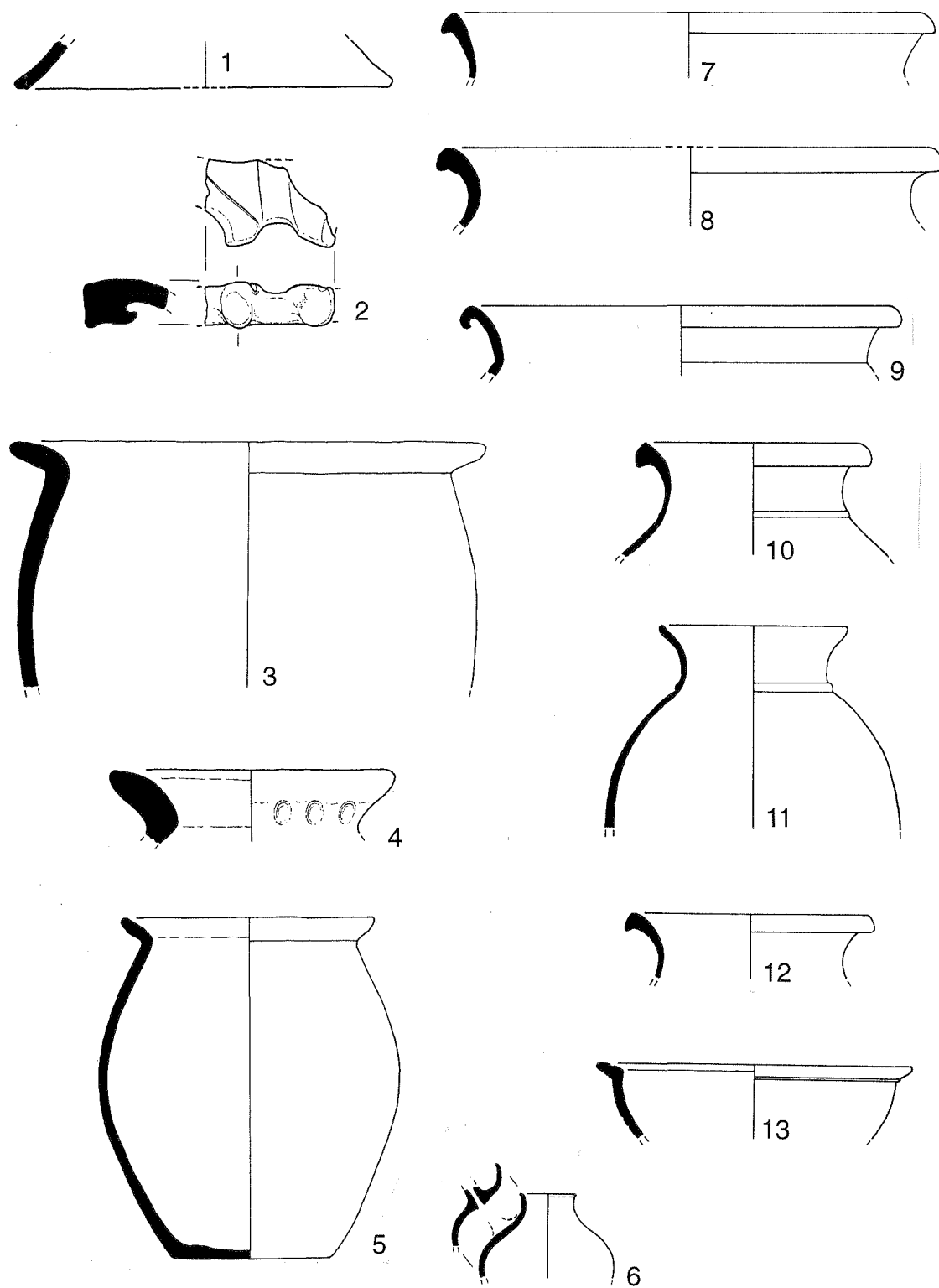


Figure 6: Phase 2: 1, Malvernian ware; Phase 3: 2, SW mortarium; 3-5, Malvernian ware; 6-13, Severn Valley ware (scale 1:4)

abandonment and demolition of the building, a new enclosure ditch was cut and the northern boundary ditch was deliberately backfilled with domestic refuse. The artefactual assemblage was considerably larger than for previous phases and included an important group of material from the backfill of the main boundary ditch.

4.3.1 **Structural analysis**

The major Phase 2 ditch (CG 54) was recut (CG 42) and again formed the northern boundary of excavated activity. A clearly defined silt (context 178) developed in this ditch which then appears to have been deliberately backfilled (context 169), possibly as a result of a major phase of change at the site (see below and 4.3.2).

To the south-east of this, a slightly curving gully (CG 38) terminated to the south where there appeared to have been a posthole, perhaps indicating that this represents part of an enclosure with an entrance on its western side. Further to the south-east a group of postholes (CG 39) probably represent a building contemporaneous with the main ditch (CG 42) and the curvilinear gully (CG 38). The form of this timber structure could not be determined within the excavated area, though a number of north to south alignments can be discerned. There is possibly an entrance facing west and aligned with the putative entrance of the curvilinear enclosure. A pit of indeterminate function was also recorded (CG 40).

To the south of the main excavated area, a large north-east to south-west aligned ditch was rapidly recorded (CG 41) over a distance of about 4.00m. This was 2.10m wide and 1.43m deep, and probably extended across the pipeline corridor and beyond. This is felt to represent part of a major boundary and was the southernmost feature of Roman date present.

Finally, a further ditch (CG 37) may represent part of another enclosure, however although also dated to this phase, its location suggests that it was not contemporary with the features described above. This ditch had, at one end, an area of fill which was later in date (Phase 4; context 378, CG 36) and this indicates that it was not filled in one operation and also suggests that the ditch represents activity towards the latter end of Phase 3. This is supported by the fact that it also closely reflects the line of a later ditch (Phase 4; CG 32).

It is proposed that the cutting of this later ditch may reflect a period of change at the end of Phase 3, a change which is also marked by the infilling of the main boundary ditch, the curvilinear enclosure ditch and the demolition of the building.

4.3.2 **Artefactual analysis**

The majority of the pottery from this phase (77% by sherd count, 80% by sherd weight) came from the fill of the major boundary ditch (CG 42, fill 169). The fill of this feature contained the largest single group from the site and is therefore discussed separately.

Ditch fill 169

The backfilling of the ditch was of particular interest as it seemed to mark a change in site use. For this reason it was studied in detail. In addition to the pottery discussed below, there were also non-ceramic finds. These included a

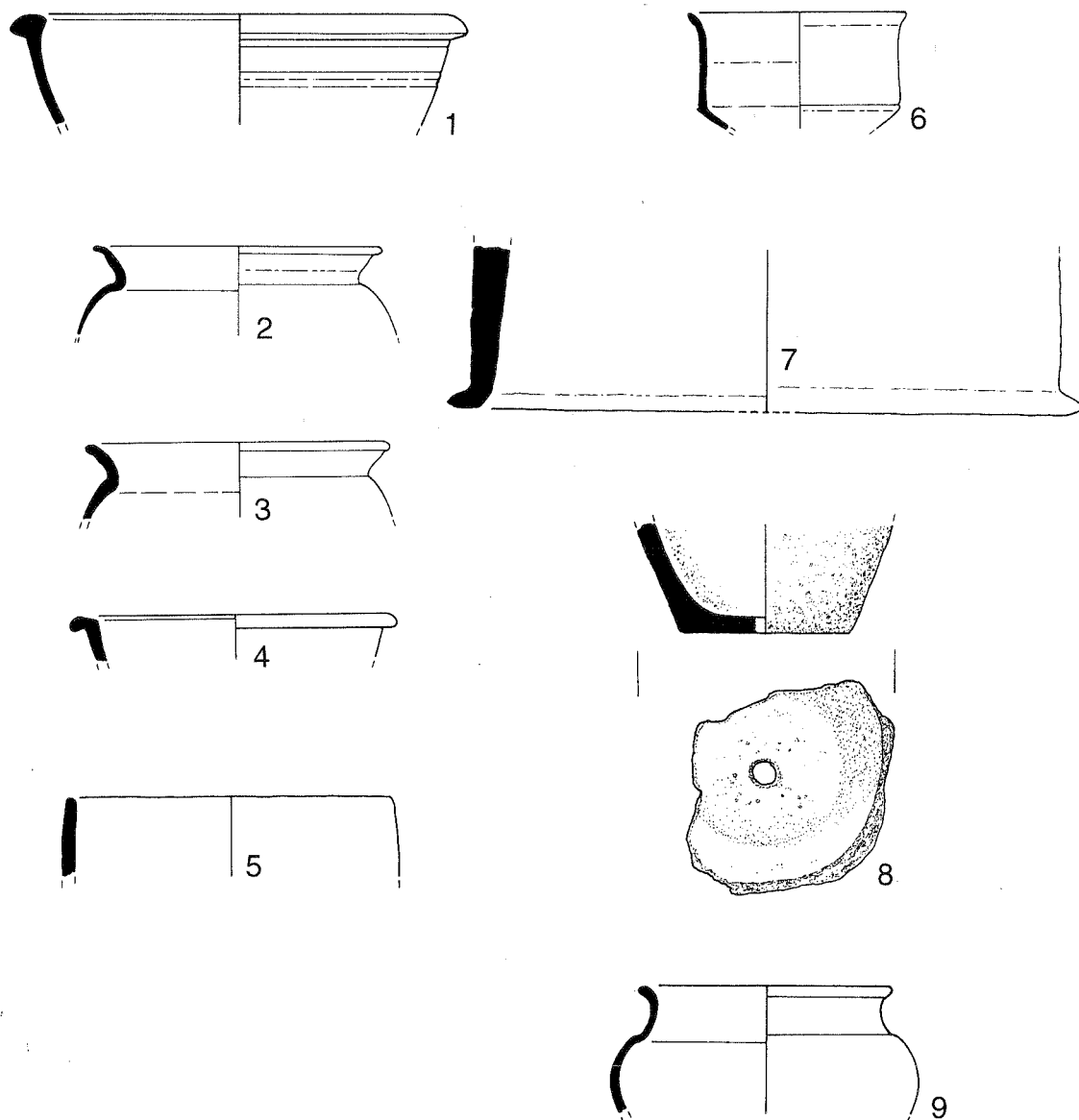


Figure 7: Phase 3: 1, Severn Valley ware; 2-4, Black Burnished ware;
Phase 4: 6, Severn Valley ware; 7, Malvernian ware; 8, Palaeozoic limestone tempered ware;
Phase 5: 9, Black Burnished ware (scale 1:4)

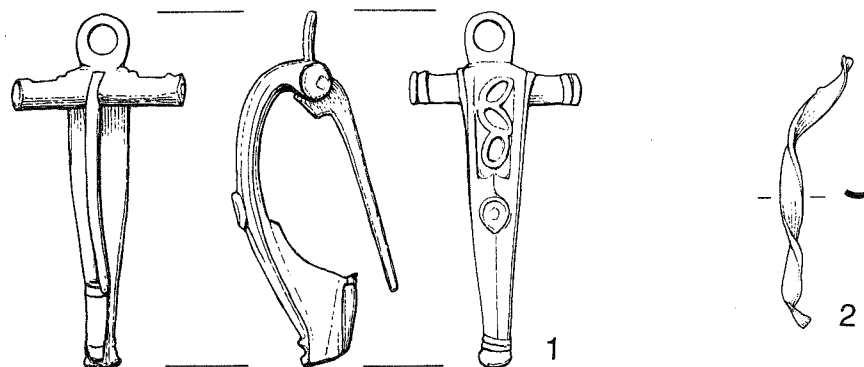


Figure 9: Phase 3: 1, Colchester derivative brooch; 2, Twisted copper alloy strip (scale 1:1)

Colchester derivative brooch (Fig 9). It is dated to the mid-late 2nd century AD (see below). The other non-ceramic finds were an iron nail, two corroded iron lumps and one piece of iron working slag.

Colchester derivative brooch (D F Mackreth)

The pin of the brooch is hinged, its axis being housed in wings with circular sections and each has a pair of mouldings at its end. On the head is a cast-on loop. The bow is broad at the top with a step down each side. At the top is a panel with three lenticular cells for enamel, arranged as two interlocking peltas. Beneath the panel is a stud, round above and pointed below, recessed for enamel round a reserved dot. The foot-knob has two cross-mouldings above. The return of the catch-plate has a groove at top and bottom.

A hybrid brooch borrows the enamelled panel from one type, frequently with the same style of wings (eg Jarrett and Wrathmell 1981, 183, fig 70, 18), and the stud from another, which often has an enamelled panel at the top (eg Mackreth 1985, 293-4, fig 128, 33). A brooch of the latter group from Cirencester has the same enamelled pattern on its head as the present example (Corinium Museum C205). The second type has a date range running from the later 1st century to 150-75. The first type is more definitely 2nd century in its range and, as the present piece owes more to that than the other, a similar floruit is suggested: the late 1st century to 150-75. The grooves on the catch-plate, however, should point to the earlier part of the period.

The pottery

The pottery was mainly made up of large unabraded sherds many of which joined together to form substantial sections of vessels. Many of the sherds could be joined together to form complete rim circumferences. This was not replicated in the base sherds which were much more fragmentary. The reason for this is not clear. It is possible that the imbalance is caused by the sampling procedure since only a section of the ditch was excavated. However it could

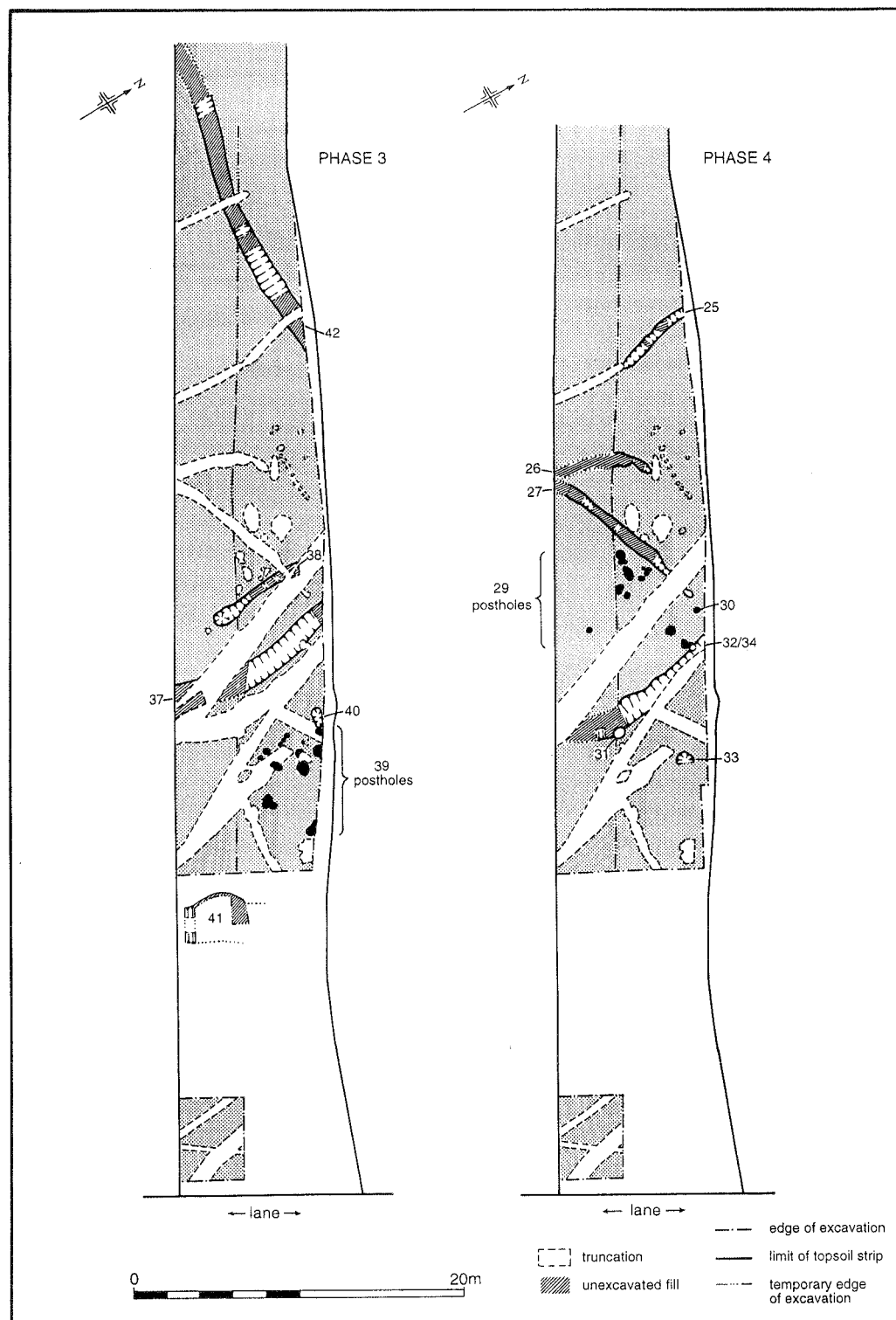


Figure 8: Plan of Phases 3 and 4 (numbers refer to context groups)

also reflect that the base and lower body of some vessels were reusable and therefore not discarded so readily. The nature of the pottery suggested that it was a primary deposit and that the ditch was backfilled in one deliberate action. It seems, therefore, highly likely that the pottery represents a selection of pottery vessels in use more or less contemporaneously.

Malvernian ware (fabric 03)

Of the 124 sherds recovered, all were from storage jars. A minimum of eight vessels were represented (calculated by the minimum number of rims present). All but one had a diameter of 160mm and were similar to Peacock nos 20-28 (1968). One of these vessels although badly broken was virtually complete. The remaining vessel was very much larger with a diameter of 300mm (cf Peacock 90).

Palaeozoic limestone (fabric 4.1)

This fabric was almost certainly residual within the ditch fill. There are only two sherds weighing nine grammes.

Severn Valley ware (fabric 12-12.2)

There were 160 sherds in total. Of these 130 were in fabric 12.0, 27 were in fabric 12.2 and three were in fabric 12.1. Several vessel types were represented. Unfortunately few of the vessels were closely datable. However three wide-mouthed jars were paralleled on the Deansway excavation, Worcester, in a phase dating to AD 120-240 and from Droitwich (Woodiwiss 1992, fig 29:1, 2) in phases dating from the mid 1st-late 4th centuries. In addition all of the tankards were fairly straight sided, suggesting an earlier rather than a later date. The most unusual form was a small spouted flask or "baby feeder" (Fig 6:6). These are sometimes also described as lamp fillers. They are not common in this area.

Fine sandy grey ware (fabric 14)

Only two joining body sherds from a cooking pot/jar (10g) were found.

Coarse sandy grey ware (fabric 15)

Only a single body sherd (3g) from a cooking pot/jar was present.

Mudstone tempered ware (fabric 17; Pink grogged ware, Booth and Greene 1989)

A single body sherd (19g) was recovered.

Black burnished ware (fabric 22; BB1)

This was the third best represented fabric in the ditch fill group. There were 18 sherds (261g). Three of the vessels were datable using Gillam's typology (Gillam 1976) and they have been illustrated (Fig 7:2,3 and 4). They date respectively to the late 2nd century AD, the late 2nd-early 3rd century AD and the mid-late 2nd century AD.

Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium (fabric 32)

There was a single body sherd in this fabric.

Samian ware (fabric 43)

There were three body sherds of mid-late Antonine date (Brenda Dickinson pers comm; Table 3).

fabric	3	4.1	12.0	12.1	12.2	22
jar		1	?1			3
Peacock 20-28	7					
Peacock 90	1					
Webster 1			2			
Webster 4			1		1	
Webster 5			1			
wmjar			3			
bowl				?1		2
bowl Webster 46			1			
seg bowl Webster 66			1			
flask/baby feeder			1			
tankard			6			
	8	1	17	1	1	5

Occurrence of definable forms by fabric from ditch fill 169

The range of vessel forms is primarily concerned with the preparation, storage and cooking of food. Tablewares are not well represented.

The dating of the fill is crucial in the understanding of the history and use of the site. The datable pottery seems to fit into the late 2nd-early 3rd century date range. The dating of the brooch (see above) also concurs with this. One sherd alone may be problematic, the mudstone tempered ware, Booth's pink grogged ware (HWCM fabric 17). Booth and Greene (1989) see this primarily as a later 3rd-4th century ware. However they cite 2nd century occurrences at Tiddington. There are therefore two possible interpretations. The first is that there is some evidence for disturbance of the fill of the ditch, in which case the sherd could be intrusive. The second, is that, as at Tiddington, this ware also occurs in Worcestershire in the 2nd century. The second possibility finds some support in as much as Tiddington and Strensham are both sites situated near the Avon, which may have acted as a conduit for trade and hence are more likely to share a similar early occurrence of this ware.

The remainder of the Phase 3 pottery is similar in composition to the ditch fill. Datable BB1 and samian from this phase fall into the mid-late 2nd century. Some Severn Valley forms, such as the wide mouthed jars are paralleled at Deansway, Worcester and are dated AD 120-240, although parallels from Droitwich (see above) occur from the mid 1st century onward. This phase marks the first appearance of Severn Valley variants fabric 12.1 and fabric 12.3. There is a small amount of residual prehistoric pottery and the two sherds from a Severn Valley ware mortarium (fabric 37.3), from the fill of a ditch (CG 37, context 164), are part of the vessel which occurred in an earlier slot fill (Phase 2; CG 47, context 343). According to Hartley these mortaria were manufactured "from the Antonine period to the second half of the 4th century" (Hartley 1993, 415).

Other finds

This phase also included the most fired clay fragments, three fragments of a triangular loomweight (Table 6) and a twisted wire strip, possibly a fragment of a handle (Fig 9).

Illustrated vessels

Fig 6:2	Context 164	CG 37	Fabric 37.3, mortarium
Fig 6:3	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 3, large jar, some external soot
Fig 6:4	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 3, large jar, soot on external rim
Fig 6:5	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 3, jar
Fig 6:6	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, baby feeder/oil lamp filler
Fig 6:7	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, wide mouthed jar
Fig 6:8	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, wide mouthed jar
Fig 6:9	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, wide mouthed jar
Fig 6:10	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, jar
Fig 6:11	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, jar
Fig 6:12	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, jar
Fig 6:13	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, segmental bowl
Fig 7:1	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 12, bowl
Fig 7:2	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 22, jar
Fig 7:3	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 22, jar
Fig 7:4	Context 169	CG 42	Fabric 22, jar
Fig 7:5	Context 204	CG 37	Fabric 3, tubby cooking pot

4.3.3 Environmental analysis

Charred plant remains were present in all three samples studied. The fills of the major boundary ditch (context 169, CG 42) of a posthole within the timber structure (context 365, CG 39), contained only occasional cereal grains, chaff and weed seeds. However, a fill within the late Phase 3 boundary ditch (context 164, CG 37) contained moderately abundant charred cereal grains (including barley and unidentified wheat), and a higher proportion of cereal chaff. The latter included emmer/spelt wheat glume bases, spikelet fork and rachis fragments. A number of weed seeds were also present including unidentified grasses, bristle-grass (*Setaria* sp), sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) and water-pepper (*Polygonum hydropiper*).

The relative paucity of charred cereal remains in the samples from features associated with occupation in this phase, and their moderate abundance in the ditch associated with the end of this phase, reflects the suggested changing activities in the excavated area.

4.4 Phase 4: Later Roman (3rd-4th century; Fig 8)

Context Groups 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36

This phase again includes a number of boundary ditches and a timber structure, however, there is no clear northern boundary in this phase. Artefacts and environmental remains were consistent with agricultural activity adjacent to an occupation area.

4.4.1 Structural analysis

At the north end of the site two ditches (CG 25 and CG 26), one butt-ending to the south and the other to the east, represent property or field boundaries.

Centrally, a linear feature (CG 27), probably a construction slot for a timber cill-beam, is associated with a group of postholes and stakeholes on broadly east to west, and north to south alignments (CG 29). These represent part of a sub-rectangular timber building, although its plan cannot be clearly defined.

To the east of the slot was a cremation. This had been placed in a small pit (CG 30). The similarity of the fill of the cremation pit to that of the earlier ditch into which it was cut suggests that the pit was backfilled with the excavated material soon after it was excavated. This argues in favour of the pit having been specifically dug for the cremation, rather than being a reused posthole or pit. The cremation itself was of a middle-aged person, probably female, of indeterminate stature (Appendix 4). The cremation was accompanied by at least 50 hobnails.

South-east of this, the western end of the later Phase 3 ditch (CG 37) was backfilled (CG 36; not illustrated) and a similarly aligned ditch (CG 34) was cut slightly to the south-east of it. This was also subsequently recut (CG 32). This ditch and its recut probably formed a boundary, possibly the southern side of an enclosure since only one feature lay beyond it, a partially excavated feature (CG 33), probably a pit, of indeterminate function.

The southernmost observed extent of the boundary ditch (CG 34/CG 32) had a shallow hollow (CG 31), cut into its upper fill, containing oven or hearth material. This appeared to be redeposited material and possibly originated from the adjacent timber building. It is possible that the infilling of the ditch and the dumping of this material coincide with the end of use of the building.

Two further deposits are also assigned to this phase, a gully (CG 28) and two patches of soil (CG 35). Of the two patches of soil (CG 35), one sat in a hollow formed through slumping of fills of an earlier ditch and the other was an amorphous spread of material occupying a slight depression. These may represent the remnants of a Roman soil which has only survived truncation by recent ploughing due to occupying these slightly deeper depressions.

4.4.2

Artefactual analysis

By this phase the range of fabrics had increased slightly. Shell gritted (fabric 23) and shell and ironstone (fabric 24) tempered wares appear for the first time as does a Severn Valley ware variant (fabric 12.4), although this single sherd is presumably residual, and another grog tempered ware (fabric 16). In this phase for the first time Malvernian wares outnumber the Severn Valley wares both in sherd number and sherd weight. The reason for this is unclear but the small quantity of pottery from this phase precludes definitive statements, particularly as there seems to be a marked residual element within the group (see below). Both Severn Valley wares and Malvernian wares far outnumber BB1 sherds. This is in marked contrast to the assemblage from Hoarstone Farm (Jackson *et al* 1994).

Unfortunately this phase did not produce many identifiable sherds in terms of vessel form and chronology. Indeed many of the identifiable vessels were clearly residual, such as a perforated base in fabric 4.1 (context 248, CG 32; Fig 7:8), a Malvernian "tubby cooking pot" (context 109, CG 27), and two Severn Valley ware carinated beakers (context 182, CG 27; eg Fig 7:6). The perforated jar is paralleled at Beckford. Here they were noted with early Severn Valley ware forms and appeared to occur in late Iron Age-early Roman contexts (J Evans pers comm; Darlington and Evans 1992, 51). A square glass bottle base of 2nd-3rd century date recovered from context 248 (CG 32) may also be residual material from Phase 3 occupation. The presence of residual material, particularly when little had been noted in earlier phases, suggests a relatively high degree of disturbance in this phase.

Only two vessels could be said to be late; a Severn Valley tankard from the backfill (CG 36, context 378) of one end of an earlier ditch (Phase 3; CG 37), and a Malvernian slab-built vessel from a further ditch fill (CG 32, context 248). This latter form has only been found in a very fragmentary state and so precise details of form and function are lacking (see Darlington and Evans 1992; Hurst and Rees 1992) although Evans suggests they may be used as portable ovens or as bee-hives.

The lack of later material may indicate a change of focus in the settlement so that the 3rd and 4th century material is concentrated away from the excavated area. This suggested change in focus may be connected with the infilling of the enclosure ditch (CG 42) in the previous phase.

Illustrated vessels

Fig 7:6	Context 182	CG 27	Fabric 12, carinated beaker
Fig 7:7	Context 248	CG 32	Fabric 3, slab-built vessel
Fig 7:8	Context 248	CG 32	Fabric 4.1, jar with perforated base

4.4.3 Environmental analysis

Charred plant remains were present in all six samples studied containing variable quantities of cereal grain (including barley, emmer/spelt wheat and one possible rye (*Secale cereale*)). In association with these grains were emmer/spelt wheat chaff and occasional weed seeds.

One sample (context 111), from the fill of a pit (CG 33), was rich in oat grains (*Avena* sp). However, it is not possible to distinguish whether this is a wild or cultivated species, and hence whether this represents a weed of a crop, or grain grown deliberately for human or livestock consumption.

The fill of the southern boundary ditch (context 320, CG 34) was particularly rich in charred remains and like other samples, contained moderately abundant cereal grains and a relatively higher proportion of cereal chaff. However, there were also a large number of brome grass and other unidentifiable grass grains.

4.5 Phase 5: Early medieval (12-13th century; Fig 10)

Context Groups 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24

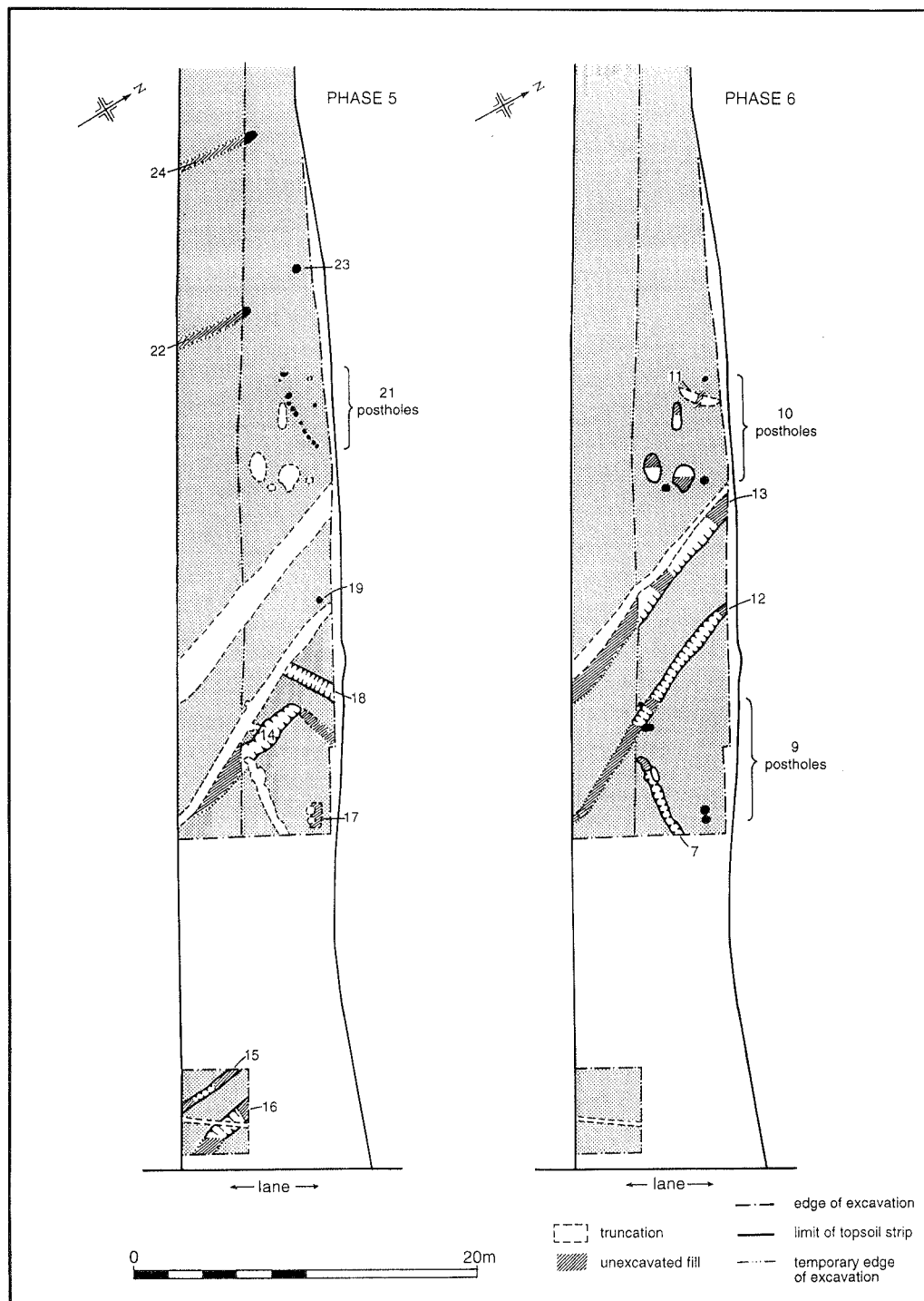
There was little activity from this phase with only a fence, a number of boundaries and a few isolated features suggesting that the excavated area was peripheral to any settlement. Finds and environmental evidence were limited.

4.5.1 Structural analysis

This phase had little activity beyond a number of enclosure or boundary ditches (CG 15, CG 16, CG 18, CG 22 and CG 24), several of which butt-ended within the excavated area.

The only structural evidence comprised a north-west to south-east aligned fence (CG 21), with a possible gate/entrance at its north-west end.

A possible furrow (CG 14), representing ridge and furrow, two isolated postholes (CG 19 and CG 23), an indeterminate feature (CG 17) and two pebble and cobble rich spreads (CG 20; not illustrated) are also dated to this



phase either artefactually or stratigraphically. The furrow appeared to turn to run east at its north end, however, may have been disturbed here by recent ploughing and originally have terminated at this point. The cobble rich spreads probably represent material dumped to form a rough surface, in one case consolidating the area over an earlier ditch fill (CG 37)

4.5.2 **Artefactual analysis**

As with the Roman pottery, the medieval material was typical of the region. It consisted of Malvernian and Worcester sandy type ware cooking pots/jars, with the former predominating. These pottery types were current in the 12th-13th centuries. However, there was little medieval pottery and the majority of the group was made up of residual (1st-3rd century) Roman pottery (eg BB1 jar, Fig 7:8).

Illustrated vessels

Fig 7:8 Context 239 CG 23 Fabric 22, jar

4.5.3 **Environmental analysis**

Two samples were taken (from contexts 138 and 156), both containing only occasional cereal and grass grains. Although a number of uncharred weed seeds were present in context 138, the fill of a ditch (CG 15), they are considered to be intrusive as the context was not waterlogged, and contained many root fragments.

4.6 **Phase 6: Later medieval (14-15th century; Fig 10)**

Context Groups 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

A pair of ditches possibly defined a trackway, to the south of which was a field boundary, and to the north of which was a group of features the function of which was not established. Artefactual and environmental evidence was again rather limited.

4.6.1 **Structural analysis**

Two parallel ditches (CG 12 and CG 13) ran north to south across the site and possibly defined a trackway. To the south of this, an east to west aligned ditch (CG 7) butt-ends a couple of metres short of the trackway. This probably represents a field or property boundary with an entrance by the trackway. This interpretation is reinforced by the presence of a pair of features, possibly gateposts, and forming part of a small group of postholes in this vicinity (CG 9). Three small features (CG 7; not illustrated) revealed in the base of the ditch may represent a fence line pre-dating it or marking it out.

To the north of the trackway, a group of features (CG 10) included a pit or large posthole, a short somewhat linear feature, an irregular hollow and two postholes. These represent a focus for limited activity but the nature of this activity remains uncertain.

Finally a small spread of soil (CG 11) has been dated to this phase and has no obvious origin but probably represents a surviving remnant of an otherwise truncated medieval soil layer.

Artefactual analysis

The majority of the medieval pottery consists of Malvernian wares. A large part of them is made up of residual cooking pot/jars in fabric 56, a 12th-13th century material. Fabric 69 the wheelthrown oxidised Malvernian ware dates to the 14th-15th century and dates this phase. There is corroborative evidence for late medieval activity on the site in the form of an early 15th century rowel spur from an unstratified context (Fig 11).

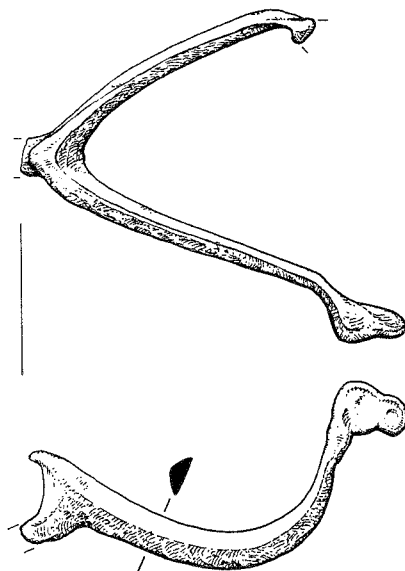


Figure 11: Phase 6: Iron rowel spur (scale 1:2)

The most interesting find from this phase (Fig 12) is part of a West Country base (fabric 55.1; McCarthy and Brookes 1988). As the name suggests this form is not normally found in this area, the main areas being Gloucestershire, Somerset and Devon and South Wales. However isolated examples have been noted in Pershore (Vince 1977) and also in south Warwickshire at Burton Dassett (Ratkai forthcoming) and Alcester (Ratkai 1995). Vince's example is in a Malvernian fabric. In the other three examples the fabric appears to be the same but is not Malvernian. The source of this fabric is not yet known. It is a brown sandy fabric with mid-dark grey or black surfaces, sometimes slightly lustrous. The fabric does not contain a distinct range of inclusions, although it does resemble other pottery fabrics recorded in Warwickshire (eg Ratkai 1990, fabric 121).

Illustrated vessels

Fig 12 Context 241 CG 11 Fabric 55.1, West Country base

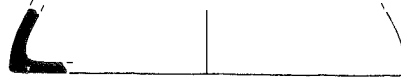


Figure 12: Phase 6: West Country base (scale 1:4)

4.6.3 Environmental analysis

One sample was taken from a pit or large posthole within a group of similar features (context 305; CG 10), in which preservation of environmental remains was poor. This contained only occasional cereal and grass grains, including wheat (*Triticum* sp) and brome grass (*Bromus* sp).

4.7 Phase 7: Post-medieval (16th-20th century; not illustrated)

Context Groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

This phase is represented by a number of land drains (CG 3, CG 4 and CG 5), a dumped soil (CG 6) and a spread of possibly natural material (CG 2), all of which were sealed by the modern ploughsoil (CG 1).

Artefacts (including unstratified material)

The dominant fabric was Severn Valley ware, which greatly outnumbers the Malvernian wares and every other type of pottery both Roman and modern. This may lend weight to the suggestion that the pronounced dominance of Malvernian wares in Phase 4 is a result of the smallness of the group, ie it is unrepresentative and the figures do not reflect actual pottery ratios in use on the site in that period. The medieval wares were not well represented and it seems apparent that there was never very substantial medieval occupation in this area.

No environmental samples were taken from features of this date.

4.8 The geophysical survey (Fig 13)

Three areas were surveyed. Area A lay west of the church and produced a concentration of archaeological type anomalies, which were generally stronger towards the south end of the area, perhaps indicating that the core of settlement activity extends towards the excavated area. There was no clear settlement pattern, however a number of linear anomalies were identified, generally aligned north to south and east to west and these reflect the general pattern of alignment observed for ditches in the excavated area.

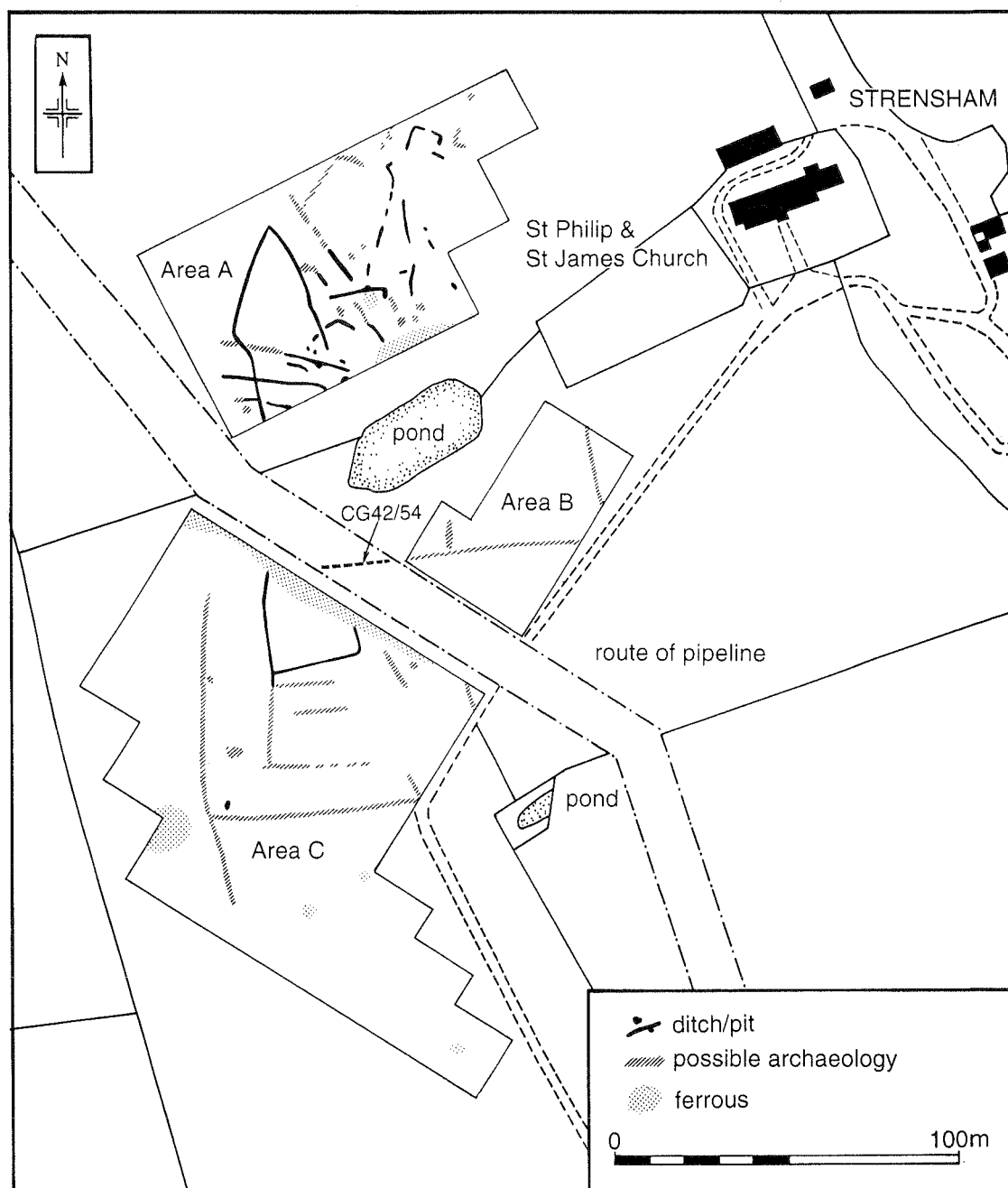


Figure 13: Summary of results of the survey by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford (1994)

Area B was a small area to the north-east of the pipeline. Weak linear anomalies, on north to south and east to west alignments again appeared to reflect those of excavated features.

Area C lay to the south-west of the pipeline and once again linear anomalies reflecting those elsewhere were present. These appeared to form large enclosures suggesting a field system associated with the settlement core to the north. Closest to the pipeline were three sides of a rectilinear enclosure and these produced the most distinct archaeological anomaly in this area.

The features identified through the geophysical survey have provided information regarding the extents and general layout of the site, confirming that excavated enclosure and boundary ditches form a small part of a more extensive site. These boundaries are consistently on similar north to south and east to west alignments but unfortunately the variations in alignment are not sufficiently diverse to allow phasing of the features identified by the geophysics. It has been possible to positively identify only one feature from the excavated area continuing into the areas of geophysical survey, the major Phase 2 and 3 boundary ditch (CG 54 and recut CG 42). This represented the northernmost activity in the excavated area, and appears to form the north side of the rectilinear enclosure indicated on the geophysical survey in Area C. This was a more substantial feature than the other ditches observed and is thus most likely to have produced a strong geophysical response.

The survey has however indicated that the focus of the settlement may lie to the north around Area A, since Area B contained few anomalies and Area C appeared to mainly contain field boundaries. The survey has suggested that the occupied area has not at any time extended much further west than the excavated area. Since no features were found on the pipeline running west of Area A it would seem likely that the features observed within there represent the west limits of occupation. This supports the excavated evidence which indicated that generally deposits represented were consistent with an area on the fringes of occupation. Activity also appears to tail off to the north, though it may extend further north-west, behind the church. Although a couple of features were observed across the lane, this would appear to roughly delineate the southern extent of activity and so only the eastern limit of activity remains unclear, though it cannot extend far beyond the church since the ground falls away steeply to the river.

The animal bones (S Pinter-Bellows)

The excavation at Strensham (HWC 7708) produced a total of 431 animal bones and bone fragments. As the number of bones is quite small, interpreting them should be attempted with caution. The following mammal and bird species were identified: horse (*Equus caballus*), cow (*Bos taurus*), pig (*Sus scrofa*), sheep (*Ovis aries*), dog (*Canis* sp domestic), rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and chicken (*Gallus* sp). Bones which could not be identified to species were assigned to higher order categories: sheep/goat, rabbit/hare, large mammal (cow-, red deer-, or horse-size) and small mammal (dog-, cat-, fox-size).

A selective detailed record was made for the assemblage, with further work undertaken only where it appeared to add substantially to the results. For a full description of the methods used see Davis (1992). In brief, all mandibular

teeth and a restricted suite of articular ends/epiphyses and metaphyses of the girdle, limb and foot bones were always recorded and used in counts. Other parts of the skeleton were only noted selectively, for instance when a scarcer species could be identified, or when the bone was of particular interest. In order to be able to calculate the proportion of the bones which were unidentified fragments, a count was kept on the number of unrecorded identifiable skeletal elements. Because of the condition bone, no butchery marks or pathologies were observed.

Tooth eruption and wear data, fusion data, and a limited range of measurements were recorded systematically for the selected parts of the skeleton; pathology and butchery data were noted where present, but counts of bones affected and not affected were not made for non-selected parts of the body. All the material was recorded following the Ancient Monument Laboratory Osteometry Data Capture Manual (Jones *et al* 1979). Dental eruption and attrition data were recorded using the wear stages defined by Grant (1982) for cattle and pig, and the stages defined by Payne (1973, 1987) for sheep/goat. Epiphysal union data follow Silver (1969). Measurements follow von den Driesch (1976) with additions as described in Davis (1992). Withers height was calculated following von den Driesch and Boessneck (1974).

Of the 431 bones (Table 9), 14 come from Phase 1 (late Iron Age-earliest Roman), 54 from Phase 2 (earlier Roman, 1st-2nd century), 245 from Phases 3 and 4 (middle and later Roman, late 2nd-early 4th century) grouped together as at this time the site falls within the occupation area of the settlement, 21 from Phase 5 (early medieval, 12-13th century), 51 from Phase 6 (later medieval, 14-15th century), and 46 from Phase 7 (post-medieval and modern). It must be noted that because of the small number of bones being studied, the data can only be used to discuss the contexts which were excavated and cannot be extrapolated to give information about the entire site.

Preservation of the bone in most contexts was fair. The bones are typically firm but brittle and most shafts were missing both ends. The bones from the ditches retained sharply angular margins; those from structures had rounded edges. Rounded edges are usually interpreted as meaning that the bones spent a longer time above ground and being kicked and trampled more. Burnt and gnawed bones were found only within the Roman phases. In Phase 2, two bones (4%) had been gnawed or swallowed (context 160; CG45) and five bones (9%) had been burnt (contexts 228, 258 and 343; CG50, 45 and 47). In

Phases 3 and 4, five bones (2%) had been gnawed (contexts 169, 186, 111; CG42, 37 and 33) and three bones (1%) had been burnt (contexts 169 and 149; CG42 and 29).

The species identified are listed in Table 9. During Phases 3 and 4, the majority of the identified bones are from cattle, followed by pig, with a few bones of sheep/goat (only sheep were positively identified) and horse. Cattle are usually found to be the most numerous species on Roman sites (King 1984). Beside the selected dog and chicken element found in Phase 2, a non-tabulated dog bone was noted in Phase 3 and a chicken bone in Phase 4.

Measurements which could be taken are in Table 10. Maltby (1981) has shown that the greatest lateral length (GLI) of the astragalus is the measurement most commonly taken on prehistoric and early historic cattle limb bones from

British sites. The mean for the two Strensham cattle astragalus of 59.4mm is in the middle of the tight Romano-British range, which for a variety of sites runs from 57.1mm to 61.6mm. One complete long bone, a cow metacarpal, survived to have a withers height calculated. The cow, with a withers height of 1121mm, is at the bottom end of heights found on Roman urban and military sites (1117-1189mm) and larger than many rural and un-romanized sites (1055-106mm; Luff 1982).

6 Discussion

6.1 Prehistoric

No firm evidence was recorded for prehistoric occupation. A number of features were of potentially prehistoric date and some of the pottery was possibly of later Iron Age date. However, the evidence was inconclusive due to the truncated nature of the features, the small size of many of the sherds recovered, and the fact that the identifiable material was of a fabric which may have remained in use into the early Roman period.

The assemblage of flint, although almost wholly residual, is indicative of Bronze Age or earlier settlement in the area and this is likely to have focussed somewhere on the hilltop around the church or to its south. Since the assemblage was small it would seem likely that any such settlement does not lie particularly close to the excavated strip, however, the limited scatters of flint from the remainder of the pipeline and from the Upton to Strensham pipeline (Fig 4) do not facilitate identification of any settlement areas.

6.2 Roman settlement (Phases 2-4)

The settlement evidence

Roman settlement at the site dated from the 1st century through to the 3rd or 4th century, though dating of both the earliest and latest activity was not clear. It remains uncertain whether the earliest occupation represented by Phase 1 was of late Iron Age date and, if so, whether it extended into the Roman period with continuity of settlement, or, if there was a short break in occupation. The main period of occupation appears to fall in the later 2nd to 3rd centuries and the site appears to have been abandoned in the 4th century, though how far into that century also remains uncertain.

Three phases of activity were clearly identified, during none of which was occupation intensive. The main characteristic of all three phases was the presence of boundary and drainage features in the form of ditches or gullies. These were mainly linear and on north to south alignments, though east to west features were also recorded. Curvilinear ditches were also present in the earlier and middle Roman phases (Phases 2 and 3). These features clearly demarcated a series of enclosures and geophysical survey has identified further enclosures and boundaries in the vicinity, especially to the north of the excavated area. Although these remain undated some of them are likely to be associated with the Roman settlement.

There was limited evidence of occupation within the excavated area during the earlier Roman phase (Phase 2) for which dating was poor. The isolated postholes and slot indicate some timber structures were present however artefactual and environmental evidence were not consistent with domestic

occupation within the excavated area. However, residual material of Phase 2 date was present in many later features and truncation was considerable so it is possible that the absence of evidence for occupation in this phase is misleading.

Despite this, it seems likely that the focus of any occupation during this phase, and subsequent ones, was to the north where the geophysical survey indicated a greater level of activity. Thus the excavated area seems most likely to have been associated with the margins of any settlement, perhaps during this phase representing agricultural activity in the form of stock enclosures or arable plots. The most significant feature at this time may be the northernmost ditch, which was subsequently recut in Phase 3. This ditch was fairly substantial and the subsequent geophysical survey has suggested that this ditch may form the north side of a rectilinear enclosure.

This major boundary ditch was recut in Phase 3 (middle Roman) and thus the rectilinear enclosure appears to have continued into this phase. However, during this time occupation clearly extended into the excavated area. A gully may have enclosed a timber building, and both of these may have lain within the larger rectilinear enclosure, though their position in relation to the probable east side of this enclosure (identified through the geophysical survey) was somewhat ambiguous. Furthermore no feature comparable to the north side ditch was located to form the east side of the enclosure, though the late Phase 3 ditch (CG 37) should not be wholly excluded.

The principal evidence for occupation came from the backfill of the large enclosure ditch which contained an important domestic pottery assemblage as well as a range of other artefacts. This material clearly suggests domestic occupation within the excavated area in the late 2nd-early 3rd century and thus the timber building is felt to be domestic. The infilling of the ditch probably marks the end of this occupation phase and is likely to have coincided with the demolition of the building. A period of change at the site is further reflected by the excavation of a new set of boundary features such as CG 37, at the end of Phase 3, and of its infilling (CG 36) and replacement (CG 32) in Phase 4.

In Phase 4 though there was evidence for a further building the artefactual evidence does not indicate occupation within the excavated area. Thus the area may again have been marginal to any settlement and associated mainly with agricultural activity. The marginality is further indicated by the presence of a cremation since it was not usual practice to place burials in occupation areas.

The timber building identified might therefore be a barn or byre. This was of some interest as a structure as it appeared to have been rectilinear in plan as opposed to round and thus can be said to be of a "romanised" rather than "native" building tradition. However, roundhouses have been more commonly observed in Worcestershire, as at Norton and Lenchwick (Jackson *et al* 1995b) and at Larford (Walker 1958). Where rectilinear structures of the type found here have been identified in the area previously, as at Tiddington (Palmer 1983) and Bidford Grange (Hart *et al* 1991) to the east in Warwickshire, they have been associated with mid to later 2nd century activity and replace the native roundhouse tradition. At Areley Kings (HWCM 1136), in north Worcestershire, an aisled building, of rectilinear plan was identified and may have been associated with late 3rd to 4th century occupation (Dinn and Hemingway 1992). There would therefore seem to be a trend towards rectilinear buildings, generally associated with activity of later 2nd century onwards in the area and this seems to be reflected here at Strensham.

Artefactual evidence

The pottery was generally in good condition and there was little sign of abrasion. There was one exception to this which was the black burnished ware. Many of the sherds completely lacked the burnished surfaces and were instead rough and sandy to the touch. A similar phenomenon was observed at the nearby site of Bredon Fields (HWCM 10015, Annette Hancocks pers comm) and it is suggested that this may be caused by soil conditions rather than by use.

Although there was some residuality as would be expected on most archaeological sites it did not appear to be great. This made the assemblage a particularly useful one for study. In particular the pottery from the fill of the large Phase 3 boundary ditch (CG 42) was very interesting, apparently marking a period of change at the site and forming the largest single feature assemblage. It is likely that the pottery in the ditch was associated with the timber building.

The range of pottery fabrics and forms was limited but this is consistent with other small rural sites in Worcestershire. The sources of supply are mainly very local. It is also true to say that even urban sites in Worcestershire have a restricted range of fabrics, although nothing like as restricted as the small rural sites. This may be due in part to a much larger quantity of pottery from the urban sites. Interestingly this pattern of limited fabrics, forms and sources of supply in Worcestershire in general and in rural areas in particular, is repeated in the medieval period suggesting a certain degree of economic isolation for much of the County's history. This may be largely the result of geographical factors affecting communications and transport systems. However, Evans also postulates tribal factors as major influences in ceramic assemblages in the Roman period, with the dominance of the Severn Valley wares corresponding to the northern territory of the Dobunni, with a "sharp fall off in Severn Valley wares to the East of Alcester (which) coincides remarkably with the putative boundary between the Dobunni and the Corieltauvi" (Evans 1994, 149)

The nearest comparable site is at Bredon Fields (HWCM 10015). This is another small rural settlement of late 2nd-4th century date. The pottery assemblage is also compared below with Hoarstone Farm, Kidderminster Foreign (Jackson *et al* 1994), with the urban site at Sidbury, Worcester (Darlington and Evans 1992) and also with the rural settlement at Norton-Juxta-Kempsey investigated further north on the Strensham to Worcester pipeline (Jackson *et al* 1995c).

Site	Strensham	Sidbury	Bredon Fields	Hoarstone	Norton
Fabric					
3	28.0%	3.5%	17.0%	4.0%	8.0%
12	32.0%	54.0%	67.0%	75.0%	73.0%
12.2	<1.0%	7.0%	3.0%	na	1.0%
22	7.0%	12.0%	4.0%	17.0%	6.0%
56	8.0%		2.0%	na	na

Table comparing main Roman and medieval fabric groups by site (quantification by sherd count) NB Fabric 3 for Hoarstone Farm includes fabric 19 (wheelthrown Malvernian Ware).

na - figures not available

Site	Strensham	Sidbury	Bredon Fields	Hoarstone	Norton
Fabric					
3	30.0%	7.0%	28.0%	4.0%	16.0%
12	32.0%	51.0%	61.0%	80.0%	71.0%
12.2	<1.0%	4.0%	4.0%	na	2.0%
22	4.0%	8.0%	2.0%	14.0%	3.0%
56	6.0%		<1.0%	na	na

Table comparing main Roman and medieval fabric groups by site (quantification by sherd weight) NB Fabric 3 for Hoarstone Farm includes fabric 19 (wheelthrown Malvernian ware)

na - figures not available

Unfortunately no very clear or convincing pattern emerges (see table above). There is no doubt that Severn Valley wares were an important part of every Roman assemblage in the area. It is also true that the Severn Valley variants never form a significant part of any of the assemblages and that, of these minor groups, the most important is fabric 12.2 an organic tempered ware. It seems likely that the variants do not continue in use in this area late into the Roman period. At Strensham it may have gone out of use by the end of Phase 3 (early 3rd century) and almost certainly had during Phase 4 (3rd-4th century). Such a chronology would be in agreement with Darlington and Evans (1992). Reduced Severn Valley variants are very infrequent on the rural sites but rather better represented at Sidbury. However this may just reflect the much greater quantity of material recovered from the site. Most surprising is the much larger quantity of Malvernian ware from the Strensham site. As the neighbouring site at Bredon Fields has very much less Malvernian ware it cannot be explained by simple marketing models such as: the closer to the centre of production the greater the quantity of pottery from the production site. It is possible that it reflects a chronological difference or is influenced by residual material but as yet there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove these theories. There are also differences in the amount of BB1 present on these sites. There is a greater quantity at Strensham than at Bredon Fields but less than at Hoarstone Farm and Sidbury. Hurst has suggested that BB1 took over some of the Malvernian market in the later Roman period (Jackson *et al* 1994) but this pattern is not revealed at Strensham which has a greater quantity of BB1 and Malvernian wares in comparison to Bredon Fields.

The Roman pottery from Strensham has added to the small but increasing pool of knowledge about small rural settlements in Worcestershire. Further work is still needed to add to the existing body of evidence, when it will then be possible to synthesise the data and reappraise these sites and consider in more detail the use and supply of pottery in Roman Worcestershire.

Environmental evidence

This study has provided evidence of cereal crop debris in many features of Romano-British date. However, little debris of this nature has been found from prehistoric or medieval deposits. Other environmental remains such as animal bone are moderately preserved while organic remains are poorly preserved. The preservation of these is affected by the acidic soil conditions and lack of waterlogged deposits respectively, at this location.

Several samples of Roman date which are rich in charred cereal remains, are characterised by moderately abundant cereal grains of a mixture of wheat (in some cases identifiable as emmer or spelt wheat) and barley. Emmer or spelt wheat chaff is also abundant, and generally predominant in these assemblages, while weed seeds are present in low numbers.

On account of the abundance of emmer or spelt wheat chaff, it is possible that this was the major crop in use. Although many of the chaff remains were poorly preserved, the better preserved chaff remains were identifiable as spelt wheat, and it is therefore assumed that the majority of the wheat chaff derives from this crop. However, it is difficult to determine the importance of barley as the chaff waste of this crop which is scarce in these samples, is easily destroyed by fire, and rarely leaves much trace in the archaeological record. Moreover, as many of the cereal grains were unidentifiable, it was difficult to assess the importance of each crop from this component of the assemblage.

As these assemblages have a much higher proportion of glume bases than grain, they are most likely to be the by-product of fine-sieving, a process undertaken to separate the grain from the chaff. Such waste may have been used as fuel and thus exposed to fire. In particular, this may represent waste from a corn-drying oven where either clean grain, or grain within spikelets has become mixed with crop waste fuel. Such a process would have been undertaken on both settlements producing the crop, and those importing it from elsewhere. It is therefore difficult to determine in which role the settlement was involved.

Environmental remains have been studied from few Romano-British settlements in this county. However, comparable assemblages have been found at Norton and Lenchwick (HWCM 2848; Jackson *et al* 1995b) and Norton-Juxta-Kempsey (HWCM 15350; Jackson *et al* 1995c). At the former site, debris from processing of emmer/spelt wheat was found widely scattered over the site in low concentrations, with only one sample from an oven feature containing an assemblage sufficiently rich to determine the activity from which it originates. This sample, although evidently representing debris from crop processing waste rather than a cleaned product, contained a much higher concentration of cereal grain than the richer assemblages from Strensham. This may have been a result of the mixing of grain from the drying chamber of the oven with cereal chaff fuel, or more directly, the remains of burnt spikelets containing grain. Further analysis of samples from similar sites in the future may clarify whether the distinct character of this oven assemblage is commonplace. At Norton, the pattern of dispersal of glume wheat debris was similar to that found at Strensham, showing a thin scattering over the site with occasional concentrations similar in composition to fine-cleaning residues.

The range of animal bone present was consistent with most Roman sites, cattle being the most abundant. There was little of note in the assemblage with the exception that measurement on a single complete cow metacarpal indicated that the animal had been of larger size than is typically found on rural and un-romanised sites.

Overview

Roman occupation at Strensham appears to have been fairly long-lived with a suggestion of continuity from the late Iron Age through to the 3rd or 4th century. Due to the absence of dating for the activity identified through geophysical survey, it is uncertain whether the site represents a single farmstead or a small settlement with a number of farms clustered to form a small hamlet.

However, it clearly comprised a number of enclosures (or compounds) containing at times at least one building and also forming small fields or stock enclosures, with larger fields surrounding it. There was no indication of a single main enclosure ditch encompassing the settlement.

The site has an absence of any indicators of wealth, a predominance of locally produced wares and a paucity of non-local items. These factors along with the post-built character of the buildings identified make it typical of most non-villa settlements in lowland England as described by Hingley in his survey of Roman rural settlement in Britain (1989, 23-4).

The presence of artefacts in many of the fields to the south probably reflects manuring of arable land around this settlement and also around the site to the south at Bredon Fields. The soils immediately around the site, and to its south and west, are suited to such activity and environmental evidence from the excavation indicates that arable farming was probably being undertaken, with barley, wheat, oats and rye identifiable as crops in use at the site. In contrast, to the north around the Bourne Brook, soils are generally more clayey and are more suited to pasture. The absence of any Roman dated material from the fields observed near the Bourne Brook would suggest such use in the Roman period and the presence of cattle bone at the site supports this. The agricultural regime at the site was probably mixed, though local soil types and finds scatters perhaps suggest a bias to arable farming.

The settlement at Strensham can possibly be linked to a number of other sites along the river, although their contemporaneity cannot be demonstrated. These include Bredon Fields to the south (which does appear to have been occupied for about the same period; Annette Hancocks and Charles Parry pers comm), the probable settlement at Eckington (HWCM 7724), and possibly the cropmark site to the north at Bourne Farm (HWCM 6054), though the latter remains wholly undated. Together these may suggest a fairly regular settlement pattern during the Roman period along this part of the Avon valley. This can tentatively be identified as reflecting a pattern falling between the fairly mixed and intensive settlement recognised along the Avon and its tributaries to the east of Evesham (Jackson *et al* 1995c) and the more scattered isolated farmstead pattern suggested in north Worcestershire along the River Severn (Dinn and Hemingway 1992; Jackson *et al* 1994). However, caution must be exercised with such models since in the County as a whole relatively few Roman rural settlements have been investigated and the evidence remains highly fragmentary. In addition there has been little opportunity for synthetic studies. Elsewhere when extensive surveys have been undertaken the patterns of Roman landscape and settlement have been demonstrated to be complex and considerable regional variation has been observed (Miles 1989). As a result, conclusions are necessarily tentative except in that it is clear that rural settlement was extensive and that land was fairly intensively exploited in many parts of the County. However, considerably more work is required before an understanding can be developed of the local patterns of rural settlement and land use in this region.

6.3 Medieval and post-medieval settlement

Following the Roman period there was no direct evidence for activity until the 12th to 13th century (Phase 5). The historical evidence for Strensham discussed earlier suggests that there was a settlement at Strensham in the 10th century, however, its location is uncertain and no deposits of such an early date have

been recorded in the parish. Despite this absence of direct evidence, there was a marked continuity of alignment from Roman to medieval boundary features, particularly in the centre of the site where there was an apparent slight shift of alignment in a series of intercutting features dating from the Roman through to the medieval period. This was suggestive of successive recuts, each slightly differing for some reason from the former but basically maintaining the boundary. This general continuity of alignment of enclosure ditches may reflect a largely stable field pattern with little change from Roman to medieval. However, this cannot be proven and may simply result from the natural topography as any field system would be affected by the north to south aligned scarp above the river which forms the east side of the hilltop.

The settlement evidence

Evidence for activity at the site resumes in the 12th to 13th century (Phase 5) when enclosure ditches and a fence associated with a small finds assemblage suggest that the site is lying on the edge of a settlement area, but away from the main occupation area. The earliest elements of the Church of St John the Baptist also date to this period.

In Phase 6 the archaeological evidence, comprising a trackway and a number of enclosure ditches and an absence of obvious structures, again suggests that the site is not within the main occupation area. However, a number of indeterminate cut features, a pit or posthole and a number of isolated structural features suggest that the site may be on the immediate fringes of the occupied area. As with the Roman occupation it is possible that the higher levels of activity identified through the geophysical survey to the north represent the main focus for any occupation around the church. The earliest memorials to the Russells in the church, as well as the bulk of the fabric of the church date to this period.

Beyond the 15th century the absence of features and associated and datable artefacts further indicate that occupation had moved away from the vicinity of the excavated site which remained in agricultural use, a function it retains to the present day. Only the church can be identified as surviving from the medieval period although a number of houses have been built since.

Artefacts

As noted above the medieval pottery shares many of the characteristics of the Roman pottery. All of the pottery with the possible exception of the West Country base (see above) are of local manufacture. The average sherd weight is 11.5g reflecting the small size of the sherds. However, given that the date range of the pottery covers a possible 400 year time span, there does not appear to have been much activity in this area.

It is likely that the material represents the remnants of manuring of arable land, and this is supported by the presence of ridge and furrow earthworks and small scatters of medieval pottery to the south and west of the site (Fig 4). However the limited quantities from the site suggest that this activity was occasional and the area may have been under pasture for parts of the medieval period.

Environment

The analysis has shown infrequent charred cereal remains in the medieval period. It is most likely that this is a result of the small number of samples available for assessment from these periods, and the location of such features in areas of lower activity, perhaps on the edge of the main settlement area. However, other factors may have contributed to such a distribution. For

example, there may have been a change in the agricultural economy towards the use of free-threshing bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) in the medieval period (a change widespread across the country). As the chaff of this wheat is easily destroyed by fire and less often exposed to it, the chances of large amounts of debris from the crop remaining on the site are slight. A pastoral based agricultural economy could also result in a scarcity of charred cereal remains.

Overview

It is uncertain what the pattern and development of medieval settlement was at Strensham, and the evidence from the excavation has provided limited information to add to the historical evidence, however, it is worth postulating a model. It could be suggested that the settlement around the church represents an early focus in the medieval period and the presence of features dating from the 12th to 15th centuries at the site would appear to support this, even if the settlement focus was not clearly identified through the excavation. There is also a distinct absence of activity dating to any later than the 15th century which suggests desertion by the end of the 15th century. The only evidence for the site between the 15th century and the 20th century comes from the 19th century tithe map of Strensham which shows only the church and the parsonage. These remain to the present day, though a number of other properties have now been built during this century.

No dating is available for the nearby deserted medieval settlement at Lower Strensham, however the associated moated site, Strensham Castle, was probably in existence by the later 14th century. Both sites (the one at the church and the one at the moat) could represent the documented settlement of Nether Strensham with an early focus around the Church shifting to a later focus on the moated manor. The absence of features and artefacts of later than 15th century date from the excavation seems to support this model, indicating that while the church still may have retained its importance it was not a focus for settlement any later than that date. The site adjacent to the moat seems likely to have remained the focus of settlement until the Civil War when Strensham Castle was destroyed and the Russells moved to Strensham Court at Upper Strensham. An isolated farm is all that now survives at Lower Strensham.

The settlement to the south at Upper Strensham may have had medieval origins and be the site of Over Strensham but no clear evidence of medieval occupation survives in or around the current village. However, a scatter of medieval finds discovered on an earlier pipeline project appeared to concentrate around the village and these have been interpreted as resulting from manuring fields around a settlement with domestic waste (Jackson and Hurst 1994).

Naturally any one of these settlements would not have totally replaced another, except perhaps over a period of several generations, and all three may have been occupied together at certain times. Indeed all three still have a degree of settlement, perhaps suggesting that none were ever fully deserted. One factor behind the move away from an early focus at the church may be economic since both Strensham Castle and its associated settlement and the site of Upper Strensham are located on or near major roads and thus have good communications. In contrast the site of the church is relatively isolated, being at the end of what is now only a small lane leading only to the church and the few houses around it.

Conclusions

The excavation has revealed a long history of occupation at Strensham. A small quantity of flint recovered from the site and from fields along the pipeline indicates that Bronze Age or earlier activity was present in the area although no features of such date were identified through the excavation. The earliest occupation of the site seems to date from the late Iron Age or early Roman period and activity continued through until the 15th century, though there was no evidence of occupation in the period from the 5th to the 12th century.

Overall the site, and its surroundings, suggest that the area has formed a focus for occupation for a considerable period of time. This undoubtedly is a reflection of its topography. The site occupies a fairly flat-topped hill which represents one of the highest points between the Cotswolds to the south-east and the Malverns to the north-west. It has clear views across the Severn and Avon plains and lies above the Avon and thus has a ready water supply. The land around the hilltop is generally well drained, fertile arable land and lies above the river flood plains which would have provided pasture.

The results indicate that the excavated area probably lies on the edge of the main settlement in both the Roman and medieval periods, and that domestic occupation only spread into the excavated area in the later 2nd-3rd century. Otherwise the excavation mainly seems to fall within an area occupied by small enclosures with a predominantly agricultural use but lying adjacent to the settlement. The excavation has suggested that the settlement was deserted from the 5th to the 9th century, and following re-occupation from the 12th to 15th centuries, was deserted again in the 15th century. This latter desertion probably occurred as a result of the focus of occupation shifting to around the moated site at Lower Strensham, some 0.5km to the west.

The impression of marginality to settlement during most phases of activity at the site is supported by the geophysical survey of the surrounding area. This suggested a settlement focus to the north of the excavated strip and occupying an area to the north, west and probably east of the pond. There is little evidence to suggest whether the area defined by the geophysical survey was occupied in both the Roman and medieval period, however, it would seem likely that much of the activity identified relates to Roman occupation and that the medieval focus lay closer to the church. This suggestion is borne out by the relative paucity of medieval activity within the excavated area. The varying levels of activity at the site through time probably reflect the fluctuating fortunes and extents of the settlement, which today is limited to a couple of houses and the church.

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9 **Personnel**

The pipeline project was led and co-ordinated by Robin Jackson (Assistant Project Officer).

The evaluation and excavation at Strensham were led by Derek Hurst (Project Officer) with the assistance on site of Tony Clark, Dave Coombes, Clare de Rouffignac, Paul Godbehere, Charlie Miller, Louise Muston, Mike Napthan, Nigel Topping, Andy Towle and Dave Wichbold.

Luke Fagan assisted with the production and checking of the site archive. Paul Godbehere checked and digitised the site plans.

Environmental strategy was devised by Clare de Rouffignac (Environmental Archaeologist) who also undertook the preliminary assessment.

Structural analysis and reporting was undertaken by Robin Jackson.

Artefactual analysis and reporting was undertaken by Stephanie Ratkai (Finds Officer) with specialist analysis and reporting on the samian by Brenda Dickinson, on the brooch by Don Makcreth and on the flint by Robin Jackson.

Environmental analysis and reporting was undertaken by Elizabeth Pearson (Environmental Archaeologist) with specialist reporting and analysis on the animal bone and the cremation by Stephanie Pinter-Bellows.

The report illustrations were produced by Carolyn Hunt (Illustrator).

Simon Woodiwiss (Principal Field Archaeologist) set up the project and edited the report.

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11 **Abbreviations**

HWCM Hereford and Worcester County Museum

HWCC Hereford and Worcester County Council



Appendix 2 **Context to Context Group concordance**

na - not applicable

nr - not recorded sufficiently to allow grouping or phasing

<i>Context</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Phase</i>
100	1	Ploughsoil	7
101	10	Fill	6
102	10	Posthole	6
103	10	Fill	6
104	10	Posthole	6
105	12	Fill	6
106	12	Ditch	6
107	9	Fill	6
108	9	Posthole	6
109	27	Fill	4
110	27	Slot	4
111	33	Fill	4
112	33	Pit?	4
113	na	Natural	2
114	14	Fill	5
115	14	Furrow	5
116	39	Fill	3
117	39	Posthole	3
118	39	Fill	3
119	39	Posthole	3
120	29	Fill	4
121	29	Posthole	4
122	29	Fill	4
123	29	Posthole	4
124	29	Fill	4
125	29	Post/stakehole	4
126	13	Fill	6
127	13	Ditch	6
128	39	Fill	3
129	39	Posthole	3
130	9	Fill	6
131	9	Posthole	6
132	12	Fill	6
133	6	layer	7
134	39	Fill	3
135	39	Posthole	3
136	39	Fill	3
137	39	Posthole	3
138	15	Fill	5
139	na	Natural hollow	na
140	31	Fill	4
141	31	Indet cut	4
142	5	Fill	7
143	5	Drain cut	7
144	15	Fill	5
145	29	Fill	4
146	29	Posthole?	4
147	29	Fill	4
148	29	Posthole	4

<i>Context</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Phase</i>
149	29	Fill	4
150	29	Posthole	4
151	15	Ditch	5
152	39	Fill	3
153	39	Stakehole	3
154	39	Fill	3
155	39	Stakehole?	3
156	18	Fill	5
157	18	Ditch/gully	5
158	16	Ditch	5
159	na	Natural	na
160	45	Fill	2
161	45	Ditch?	2
162	40	Fill	3
163	40	Pit	3
164	37	Fill	3
165	48	Indet cut	2
166	12	Fill	6
167	4	Fill	7
168	54	Fill	2
169	42	Fill	3
170	42	Ditch	3
171	40	Fill	3
172	4	Drain	2
173	29	Fill	4
174	29	Posthole?	4
175	48	Fill	2
176	na	Layer (nr)	na
177	4	Drain	7
178	54	Ditch	2
179	42	Fill	3
180	25	Fill	4
181	25	Ditch	4
182	27	Fill	4
183	27	Slot	4
184	27	fill	4
185	37	Ditch	3
186	37	Fill	3
187	39	Fill	3
188	39	Posthole	3
189	39	Fill	3
190	na	Fill (nr)	na
191	na	Cut (nr)	na
192	49	Fill	2
193	49	Gully	2
194	54	Fill	2
195	na	Fill (nr)	na
196	na	Cut (nr)	na
197	27	Fill	4
198	na	Natural	na
199	3	Fill	7
200	3	Drain	7
201	3	Drain cut	7

<i>Context</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Phase</i>
202	2	Layer	7
203	35	Layer	4
204	37	Fill	3
205	28	Fill	4
206	28	Gully	4
207	37	Fill	3
208	10	Fill	6
209	50	fill	2
210	50	Ditch	2
211	37	Fill	3
212	39	Posthole	3
213	53	Fill	2
214	53	Ditch	2
215	10	Hollow	6
216	29	Fill	4
217	29	Posthole	4
218	55	Fill	1
219	55	Indet cut	1
220	20	Layer	5
221	10	Fill	6
222	10	Pit/posthole	6
223	20	Layer	5
224	na	Natural	na
225	32	Fill	4
226	32	Ditch	4
227	50	Fill	2
228	50	Fill	2
229	50	Ditch	2
230	38	Fill	3
231	38	Ditch	3
232	13	Fill	6
233	Not used		
234	27	Fill	4
235	27	Slot	4
236	13	Ditch	6
237	31	Fill	4
238	31	Fill	4
239	23	Fill	5
240	23	Posthole	5
241	11	Layer	6
242	22	Fill	5
243	22	Ditch/gully	5
244	37	Fill	3
245	45	Fill	2
246	45	Fill	2
247	45	Ditch?	2
248	32	Fill	4
249	32	Ditch	4
250	19	Fill	5
251	19	Posthole	5
252	52	Fill	2
253	52	Ditch/gully	2
254	24	Fill	5

<i>Context</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Phase</i>
<hr/>			
255	24	Ditch/gully	5
256	51	Fill	2
257	51	Posthole	2
258	45	Fill	2
259	45	Ditch?	2
260	29	Fill	4
261	29	Posthole	4
262	34	Fill	4
263	34	Ditch	4
264	29	Fill	4
265	29	Posthole/pit	4
266	17	Fill	5
267	30	Cremation	4
268	9	Fill	6
269	9	Fill	6
270	9	Posthole	6
271	9	Posthole	6
272	17	Indet cut	5
273	18	Fill	5
274	32	Fill	4
275	32	Ditch	4
276	30	Cremation	4
277	10	Fill	6
278	10	Posthole	6
279	30	Fill	4
280	45	Fill	2
281	45	Ditch?	2
282	21	Posthole	5
283	21	Fill	5
284	21	Posthole	5
285	21	Fill	5
286	21	Posthole	5
287	21	Fill	5
288	21	Posthole	5
289	21	Fill	5
290	21	Posthole	5
291	21	Fill	5
292	21	Posthole	5
293	21	Fill	5
294	21	Posthole	5
295	21	Fill	5
296	21	Posthole	5
297	21	Fill	5
298	21	Posthole	5
299	21	Fill	5
300	21	Posthole	5
301	21	Fill	5
302	21	Posthole	5
303	21	Fill	5
304	32	Fill	4
305	10	Fill	6
306	10	Pit/posthole	6
307	na	Fill (nr)	na

<i>Context</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Phase</i>
308	na	Cut (nr)	na
309	na	Fill (nr)	na
310	na	Cut (nr)	na
311	32	Fill	4
312	21	Fill	5
313	21	Posthole	5
314	50	Ditch	2
315	53	Fill	2
316	21	Fill	5
317	21	Posthole?	5
318	21	Fill	5
319	21	Posthole	5
320	34	Fill	4
321	53	Ditch	2
322	na	Natural	na
323	26	Fill	4
324	26	Ditch/gully	4
325	39	Fill	3
326	39	Posthole	3
327	39	Fill	3
328	39	Posthole	3
329	7	Fill	6
330	7	Ditch	6
331	58	Fill	1
332		Gully/slot	1
333	8	Fill	6
334	8	Posthole	6
335	8	Fill	6
336	8	Posthole	6
337	58	Fill	1
338	58	Gully/slot	1
339	43	Fill	3
340	44	Fill	2
341	57	Fill	1
342	57	Ditch/gully	1
343	47	Fill	2
344	47	Slot	2
345	45	Fill	2
346	45	Ditch?	2
347	47	Fill	2
348	47	Posthole	2
349	35	Layer	4
350	39	Fill	3
351	39	Stakehole	3
352	45	Fill	2
353	8	Fill	6
354	8	Posthole	6
355	48	Fill	2
356	48	Indet cut	2
357	39	Fill	3
358	39	Posthole	3
359	45	Ditch?	2
360	45	Fill	2

<i>Context</i>	<i>CG</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Phase</i>
361	34	Ditch	4
362	45	Ditch?	2
363	56	Fill	1
364	56	Indet cut	1
365	39	Fill	3
366	39	Posthole	3
367	na	Sondage	na
368	56	Fill	1
369	56	Indet cut	1
370	39	Fill	3
371	39	Posthole	3
372	46	Fill	2
373	46	Posthole	2
374	9	Fill	6
375	9	Posthole?	6
376	na	Sondage finds	na
377	41	Fill	3
378	36	Fill	4
379	50	Fill	2
380	41	Ditch	3
381	27	Fill	4
382	37	Fill	3
383	na	Unstrat finds	na
384	na	Unstrat finds	na
385	29	Fill	4
386	29	Posthole	4

Appendix 3 **Context group index**

Context Group	Type	Contexts
<i>Phase 7</i>		
1	Ploughsoil	100
2	Layer: spread	202
3	Drain	199/200/201
4	Drain	167/172/177
5	Drain	142/143
6	Layer: dump	133
<i>Phase 6</i>		
7	Ditch	329/330
8	Structure: fence	333/334, 335/336, 353/354
9	Indeterminate structure/s	107/108, 130/131, 268/270, 269/271, 373/375
10	Indeterminate cuts	101/102, 103/104, 208/215, 221/222, 277/278, 305/306
11	Layer: dump/spread	241
12	Ditch	105/106/132/166
13	Ditch	126/127/232/236
<i>Phase 5</i>		
14	Furrow	114/115
15	Ditch	138/151
16	Ditch	144/158
17	Indeterminate cut	266/272
18	Ditch/gully	156/157/273
19	Indeterminate structure	250/251
20	Layer: dump/spread	220, 223
21	Structure	282/283, 284/285, 286/287, 288/289, 290/291, 292/293, 294/295, 296/297, 298/299, 302/303, 312/313, 316/317, 318/319
22	Gully/ditch	242/243
23	Indeterminate structure	239/240
24	Ditch/gully	254/255
<i>Phase 4</i>		
25	Ditch	180/181
26	Gully/ditch	323/324
27	Slot	109/110/184/381, 182/183/197, 234/235
28	Gully	205/206
29	Structure	120/121, 122/123, 124/125, 145/146, 147/148, 149/150, 173/174, 216/217, 260/261, 264/265, 385/386
30	Cremation	267/276/279
31	Indeterminate cut	140/141/237/238
32	Ditch	225/226/304, 274/275, 248/249/311

Context Group	Type	Contexts
33	Pit?	111/112
34	Ditch	262/263, 320/361
35	Layer: accumulation	203, 349
36	Backfill	378
<i>Phase 3</i>		
37	Ditch	164/185/186/204/207/211/244/382
38	Ditch	230/231
39	Structure	116/117, 118/119, 128/129, 134/135, 136/137, 152/153, 154/155, 187/188, 189/212, 325/326, 327/328, 350/351, 357/358, 365/366, 370/371
40	Pit	162/163/171
41	Ditch	377/380
42	Ditch	169/170/179
43	Fill	339
<i>Phase 2</i>		
44	Ditch	340
45	Ditch?	160/161, 245/246/247, 258/259, 280/281, 345/346, 352/362, 359/360
46	Indeterminate structure	372/373
47	Indeterminate structure	343/344, 347/348
48	Indeterminate cuts	165/175, 355/356
49	Gully	192/193
50	Ditch	227/229, 228/314, 209/210, 379
51	Indeterminate structure	256/257
52	Ditch/gully	252/253
53	Ditch	213/214, 315/321
54	Ditch	168/178/194
<i>Phase 1</i>		
55	Indeterminate cut	218/219
56	Indeterminate cuts	363/364, 368/369
57	Ditch/gully	341/342
58	Gully or slot	331/332, 337/338

Appendix 4 **Cremated human bone** (Stephanie Pinter-Bellows)

The cremated human bone (CG30, context 267) from the upper fill of a ditch (CG37) of Roman date was examined. The cremated bone consists of 1242.5 g. The maximum length of a fragment was 48 mm. The fragment size and anatomical distribution is shown below. The bone appears to come from one individual, a middle-aged probable female. The sex was identified from the lower half of the left pubic symphysis which appears to have a ventral arc. The age was also estimated from the pubic symphysis, which has a smooth, filled-in surface. Aging and sexing was accomplished using the criteria of the Workshop of European Anthropologists (1980). No pathologies were noted. It was not possible to estimate a stature.

The colour of bones varies from neutral white to medium blue. The surface of the shaft fragments are full of fissures. The fragments identifiable to skull and lower limb are mostly neutral white, with some light blue; the axial and upper limb fragments are a more equal mixture of neutral white and medium blue. The neutral white to light blue colour is suggestive of a burning temperature of between 645- $<940^{\circ}\text{C}$; the medium blue suggests a lower temperature, probably between 525- $<645^{\circ}\text{C}$ (Shipman *et al* 1984). The colours indicate a less than thorough firing of the body, possibly caused by a lack of stirring of the pyre.

The weight and the identified fragments reveal that a fair representation of the entire skeleton was collected, including smaller bones and bone fragments such as tooth roots and hand and foot phalanges. The quantity of bone recoverable from a modern adult cremation is between 1600-3600g; and archaeological adult cremations usually range from 200g to almost 2000g with an average of $\approx 800\text{g}$ (McKinley, 1989).

Fragment size and anatomical distribution of Cremation 267

Fragment size distribution

>10mm	475.0g	38%
> 5mm	457.5g	37%
> 2mm	310g	25%

Anatomical fragment distribution

Unidentified	852.5 g	69%	of total
Skull	137.5 g	35%	of identified frags
Axial	120.0 g	31%	of identified frags
Upper limb	45.0 g	12%	of identified frags
Lower limb	87.5 g	22%	of identified frags

Appendix 5 Assessment of significance

The significance of the deposits revealed through excavation at Strensham can be assessed using the *Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments* (DoE 1990, Annex 4; Appendix 3). This information can be used to facilitate future management of the site beyond the area within the easement removed through pipe trenching and salvage excavation. This information is supported by that from the geophysical survey.

The deposits have also been considered in accordance with the descriptions provided for Romano-British rural settlements and for medieval rural settlements by the Monuments Protection Programme: single monument class descriptions (1989) for Romano-British linear villages and farmsteads, and for medieval villages.

Period

The site is considered to have two main periods of occupation, Roman and medieval.

The Roman occupation probably represents a typical farmstead or small rural settlement with occupation focussed to the north of the excavated area and comprising a number of enclosures, some containing buildings, but mainly representing small fields or stock enclosures on the margins of a settlement. The main focus of occupation as represented within the excavated area appears to have been later 2nd-3rd century in date though both 1st and later 3rd-4th century activity have also been identified. Although there was a degree of residuality this was not severe and thus the pottery assemblage is probably representative of this area.

Medieval activity was less well represented and there was no evidence of domestic occupation in this period within the excavated area. A trackway, a fence and field boundaries represent agricultural activity however, 12th through to 15th century material recovered from a number of pits and ditches suggests that medieval occupation was in the near vicinity. This material and associated activity, allied to documentary evidence, the presence of the medieval church of St John the Baptist and the ridge and furrow systems in the surrounding fields supports the existing identification of the site as that of a deserted medieval settlement though clearly the focus of this did not lie in the excavated area.

As few environmental remains have been studied from rural multi-period sites in this county, these results have added significantly to the environmental database of these periods, particularly the Roman period. Should further excavation be undertaken on this site as a result of development in the future, it would be useful to study more samples of prehistoric and post-Roman date. Of particular interest would be evidence of any change in the agricultural economy relating to change in the type of cereal crops in use, or variable emphasis on arable or pastoral economy.

Rarity

Nationally Roman farmstead enclosures and other small rural settlements are a relatively common site type as are deserted medieval villages, which are well represented in the Midlands. In consequence, nationally the site should not be regarded as having any great rarity value.

However, in regional terms the site has a fairly high value. Great variations have been observed of Roman rural settlements where studies have been undertaken (Miles 1989). The site at Strensham represents one of only a small number of such sites to have been investigated in the south of the County and consequently is of significance to the development of an understanding of this type of settlement, the general settlement pattern and the varieties of settlement present in the region.

Of the estimated potential total of 400 Romano-British rural sites within the County, only about 120 have been identified and of these only about 10% have had even limited archaeological excavation on them (figures based upon recent Monument Protection Programme assessment for the County and associated documentation - English Heritage 1989). It is therefore the case that in the County it is not known at present what the common Romano-British rural site types are and consequently what the rarity value of this site is.

The medieval settlement is also important in regional terms, representing one of the few medieval settlement areas to have been investigated through excavation in the County. Unfortunately the investigated area was peripheral to any occupation and thus the interest mainly lies in the artefactual and environmental assemblages, which though small have provided important information regarding the rural economy.

Documentation

Medieval Strensham is well documented historically, though the use of this is limited by the fact that much of the documentation refers simply to Strensham and thus does not indicate which of the settlements at Strensham is being referred to.

The site is documented through this report. This site is one of only a few Romano-British and medieval rural settlements to have been investigated in this County in recent years and to have a full site archive and report, consequently documentation of the site is good.

Group value

The importance of the site is enhanced by its association with the enclosures and field boundaries identified through the geophysical survey lying to the north. The medieval site can also be directly associated with the Church of St John the Baptist which served the population.

Slightly further afield Roman and medieval pottery scatters, areas of ridge and furrow earthworks, the moat and deserted settlement at Lower Strensham, and the Roman sites at Bredon Fields and Eckington represent further elements of the Roman and medieval landscape and settlement pattern. Flint scatters indicative of Bronze Age or earlier settlement in the area provide further evidence of former exploitation of the area.

The group value of the site is therefore considered to be high.

Survival/Condition

Survival of deposits was generally good, however only a few small areas of horizontal stratigraphy survived. No deeply stratified deposits were recorded but

this reflects the nature of the site rather than truncation of deposits. Although a degree of plough damage was recorded the survival of postholes, stakeholes and numerous intercutting ditches and gullies indicate that preservation of deposits is good. This is supported by the survival of earthworks which though gradually being ploughed out are still visible as slight features in the area.

The intercutting of features, whilst leading to truncation of many areas of the earlier features and problems of residuality in associated artefactual and ecofactual assemblages, provides a sequence of occupation which is relatively complex for a rural settlement. Since the excavated area apparently lies on the fringes of the main areas of occupation there is a good potential for similar, or greater, complexity elsewhere on the site.

Preservation of pottery was generally good. Preservation of charred seeds, although quantities were limited and preservation was variable, included well preserved material capable of providing information relation to function of structures and crop regimes. Waterlogged remains were not encountered due to ground conditions. Bone preservation was

Although the deposits within the width of the pipetrench itself no longer survive and those within the wider stripped area of the pipeline easement have been affected by the construction of the pipeline, deposits beyond this area have not been affected by this work and the geophysical survey has indicated that these extend over a wide area to the north and north-east of the excavation.

The survival of elements of field systems and evidence relating to manuring practices in the form of artefact scatters in the surrounding fields increases the importance of the site since they indicate that there is survival of evidence relating to the wider landscape within which the settlement was located.

Fragility/Vulnerability

Archaeological deposits were revealed at a depth of between 0.25-0.30m below the modern ground surface. The presence of Roman and medieval pottery within the ploughsoil, and the scoring of some deposits with plough-furrows indicate that ploughing will gradually continue to erode the site, however this is limited by the fact that the land is not currently regularly ploughed.

Any activity affecting the ground to a greater depth than the current ploughsoil will, depending upon the depth of that activity, cause either considerable damage or complete destruction of archaeological deposits.

Potential

The area of the site investigated was limited to the south-west part of a wider site demonstrated by the geophysical survey to extend to the north and north-east over a considerable area.

Potentially deposits survive within the whole of this area identified which are similarly preserved. It is likely that such deposits would include elements relating to domestic and agricultural buildings and other activities of both Roman and medieval date, as well as potentially of earlier Iron Age or earlier date. These, along with associated artefactual and ecofactual remains would be of great importance to our understanding of the chronological development of the site and the changing nature of rural settlement and economy through time.

Conclusion

Although sites of this type are relatively common nationally, the site is of considerable significance particularly within a local context where sites of both Roman and medieval date have been little investigated. Its importance lies in the fair survival and condition of deposits along with associated artefacts and charred plant remains. The importance of these is enhanced by the longevity of occupation and due to the stratigraphic sequence present and the associated artefactual and ecofactual assemblages. Despite the problems of residuality for the artefactual and ecofactual assemblages and the truncation inherent in such sites with a long history of occupation these provide an opportunity to study the changing character of the rural economy and environment within and across different historical and archaeological periods.

Appendix 6 The archive

The project archive comprises:

Fieldwork

284	Context records (AS1)
57	Fieldwork Progress reports (AS2)
21	Photographic record sheets (AS3)
3	Drawing number catalogue sheets (AS4)
10	Context number catalogue sheets (AS5)
116	Context finds records (AS8)
206	Fabric recording forms (AS10)
3	Non ceramic finds records (AS12)
17	Environmental sample records (AS17)
79	Scale drawings
240	Colour slides
350	Black and white negatives (and contact sheets)
9	Boxes of artefacts
1	Sealable plastic container of copper alloy and iron objects
1	Sealable plastic container of environmental flots and residues

Post-excavation

8	Computer discs
17	Environmental assessment records
1	Draft phased matrix
1	Phased matrix
1	Archive report
1	Publication report
Miscellaneous drafts, notes, text sections and annotated plans (1 x A4 file, 2 x A3 plan wallets and 2 x large rolls of drawings)	

Table 1

Occurence of pottery fabrics by sherd number by phase

Phase	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	us	total
fabric									
4.1	4	2	5	7	3	5	.	.	026
122	5	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	007
3	.	16	140	84	2	34	4	6	286
12	.	24	173	49	10	16	12	45	329
12.2	.	7	31	6	.	.	3	23	070
14	.	3	4	2	.	1	.	.	010
16.2	.	1	.	.	.	6	.	2	009
19	.	1	4	1	.	1	.	2	009
37.3	.	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	003
98	.	1	.	4	.	1	.	.	006
12.1	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	003
15	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	001
17	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	001
22	.	.	33	10	21	2	.	5	071
32	.	.	2	.	.	2	1	.	005
43	.	.	4	1	.	.	2	1	008
5.6	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	1	002
12.3	.	.	1	.	1	2	.	.	004
12.4	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	001
23	.	.	.	7	.	.	.	.	007
16	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	003
24	.	.	.	1	.	5	.	.	006
55	6	.	.	1	007
56	9	68	2	2	081
64.1	5	.	1	006
69	51	7	7	065
55.1	2	.	.	002
total	9	57	405	177	053	202	31	96	1030

Table 2

Occurrence of pottery fabrics by sherd weight by phase

Phase	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	us	total
fabric									
4.1	23	8	17	241	11	6	.	.	306
122	1	7	.	6	.	.	.	.	14
3	.	224	2162	748	20	1382	64	6	4606
12	.	227	3302	415	47	118	100	705	4914
12.2	.	286	653	76	.	.	97	942	2054
14	.	88	27	05	.	3	.	.	123
16.2	.	13	.	.	.	63	.	56	132
19	.	6	36	1	.	1	.	62	106
37.3	.	7	.	.	.	.	.	.	7
98	.	4	.	1	.	3	.	.	8
12.1	.	.	11	.	.	.	.	.	11
15	.	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	3
17	.	.	19	.	.	.	.	.	19
22	.	.	304	71	206	9	.	27	617
32	.	.	102	.	.	7	8	.	117
43	.	.	15	1	.	.	2	8	26
5.6	.	.	17	.	.	.	.	.	17
12.3	.	.	10	.	5	21	.	1	37
12.4	.	.	.	24	.	.	.	.	24
23	.	.	.	62	.	.	.	.	62
16	.	.	.	14	.	.	.	.	14
24	.	.	.	7	.	6	.	.	13
55	18	.	.	12	30
56	82	770	23	16	891
64.1	99	.	4	103
69	551	127	123	801
55.1	46	.	.	46
total	24	870	6678	1672	411	3090	421	1962	15128

Table 3

Occurrence of samian by context (Brenda Dickinson)

Context 100 CG 1 Phase 7

Form 18/31, Central Gaulish, from Les Martres-de-Veyre. Trajanic.
Dish or bowl, Central Gaulish. Hadrianic or Antonine.

Context 111 CG 33 Phase 4

-, Central Gaulish. Hadrianic or Antonine.

Context 169 CG 42 Phase 3

Form 30 or 37. Central Gaulish. Hadrianic or Antonine.
Form 33 (2 adjoining sherds), Central Gaulish. Antonine.

Context 367 - U/S

Form 18/31R, Central Gaulish. Antonine.

Context 377 CG 41 Phase 3

-, Central Gaulish. Hadrianic or Antonine.

Table 4 **Occurrence of metal objects by period**

Phase	Roman	Medieval	Modern/us
Iron objects			
corroded and unidentifiable	25	2	
nails	53	3	3
spur			1
Copper Alloy			
brooch	1		
twisted strip ?handle	1		
unidentifiable		1	1

The quantity of metal objects was small. Of interest were at least 50 hobnails from context 267 (CG30; phase 4) which were recovered from an environmental sample. The hobnails were associated with a cremation burial. The unstratified spur was a medieval type and is of early 15th century date.

Table 5 **Occurrence of flint by context**

Context	Context Group	Phase	Type	Comment
314	57	1	Notched tool?	
209	50	2	Flake	broken
352	45	2	Flaked lump	
230	38	3	Gravel flint	
382	37	3	Flake	broken
382	37	3	Gravel flint	
111	33	4	Gravel flint	
205	28	4	Scraper	
205	28	4	Flake	broken
237	31	4	Gravel flint	
238	31	4	Notched tool?	
238	31	4	Gravel flint	
248	32	4	Gravel flint (x3)	
320	34	4	Gravel flint	
320	34	4	Flaked lump	
323	26	4	Gravel flint	
126	13	6	Flaked lump	
100	1	7	Scraper	
100	1	7	Flakes (x2)	
100	1	7	Flaked lumps (x3)	
100	1	7	Gravel flint (x10)	
367	.	u/s	Gravel flint (x4)	
376	.	u/s	Gravel flint	
384	.	u/s	Flaked lump	

Table 6

Occurrence of other finds by phase*Occurrence of finds by phase (number of objects)*

Phase	1	2	3	4	5	6	7/us	total
Fired clay	1	1	15	3	1	2	1	24
slag		1						67
flint		1			2			3
burnt stone/pebbles		1	3	9		2	3	18
tile		2	1				35	38
loomweight			1	1				2
mortar				3				3
glass				1				1
brick					1			1
stone roof tile							1	1

Occurrence of finds by phase (weight of objects in grams)

Phase	1	2	3	4	5	6	7/us	total
Fired clay	21	4	259	65	14	27	285	2675
slag	14						1180	1194
tile		74	1				668	743
loomweight			192	16				208
mortar				9				9
glass				30				30
brick					328			328

There was no marked distribution pattern for the finds and there was no convincing artefactual evidence for the destruction/demolition of buildings ie no concentrations of nails, burnt clay etc. None of the tile or brick fragments were diagnostic. The clay loomweights came from two contexts, 164 and 111. Neither was complete. The vessel glass came from context 248. It was a square bottle base in a pale blue-green metal and probably dates to the 2nd-3rd century AD.

Table 7 **List of environmental samples**

Context no	Context group	Type	Phase
337	58	gully	1
175	48	indeterminate	2
192	49	gully	2
209	50	ditch	2
258	45	ditch?	2
360	45	ditch?	2
164	37	ditch	3
169	42	ditch	3
365	39	posthole	3
111	33	pit?	4
140	31	indeterminate	4
237	31	indeterminate	4
264	29	posthole	4
267	30	cremation	4
320	34	ditch	4
138	15	ditch	5
156	18	ditch	5
305	10	posthole	6

Table 8

The plant remains from selected samples

			Ph 1	Ph 2		Ph 3		Ph 4		Ph 5		Ph 6
botanical name	common name	habitat	337	192	360	164	169	111	267	320	138	305
Charred plant remains												
<i>Triticum cf dicoccum</i> grain		F			2			1			1	
<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i> grain	emmer/spelt wheat	F		7						1		
glume base		F		30	92	166			1	343		
spikelet fork		F		1	28	4				16		
rachis		F		8	2	16				10		
<i>Triticum spelta</i> glume base		F		4		40				135		
spikelet fork		F								3		
rachis		F										
<i>Triticum cf spelta</i> grain	spelt wheat	F							1			
<i>Triticum</i> sp. grain	wheat	F		5	2	4		2	1	9		1
<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> grain	barley	F			2	2			2	5		
rachis		F			5					3		
<i>cf Hordeum vulgare</i> grain	barley	F		1	2	5				1		
<i>Triticum/Hordeum</i> sp	wheat/barley	F										
<i>cf. Secale cereale</i>	rye	AF							2			
Cereal sp. indet. grain	cereal	F	2	30	11	57	3	12	20	31		4
culm node									1			
<i>cf Lolium perenne</i>	rye-grass	A			1							
<i>Bromus</i> sp	brome grass	AF								148		1
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oat	AF								2		
<i>cf Avena</i> sp								15				
<i>Setaria</i> sp	bristle grass	AF			1			2				
<i>Graminae</i> sp. indet. grain	grasses	AF	3	10	3	24	5	5		90		1
culm node												
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i> pod	wild radish	AB				3						
<i>cf Cruciferae</i> sp indet										1		
<i>Silene</i> sp	catchfly	ABCD							19			
<i>Malva</i> sp	mallow	A			1		10					
<i>Pisum sativum</i>	cultivated pea	AF										
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp	vetch/vetchling/pea	AB						1				
Leguminosae sp indet	legume		1				4					
<i>cf Polygonum hydropiper</i>	water-pepper	AE				1						
<i>Rumex acetosella</i> agg	sheep's sorrel					1	1					
<i>cf Mentha</i> sp	mint	ABCD						1				
<i>cf Labiatae</i> sp indet						1						
<i>Plantago major</i>	plantain	AB						1				
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	elderberry	BC					4					
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	stinking mayweed	AB						1				

Habitat key

A = cultivated ground

B = disturbed ground

C = woodlands, hedgerows and scrub etc.

D = grasslands, meadows, and heathland

E = aquatic/wet habitats: ditches, streambanks etc.

F = cultivar

Abundance key

+ = 1-10

++ = 11-50

+++ = 51-100

++++ = 100+

Table 9

List of Animal Species

Phases	1	2	3-4	5	6	7
<i>Species</i>						
Horse	1	-	3	-	3	1
Cow	1	1	17	-	-	3
Pig	2	-	5	1	-	-
Sheep	-	-	1	-	-	-
Sheep/Goat	-	2	2	1	1	-
Dog	-	1	-	-	-	-
Rabbit	-	-	-	-	3	-
Rabbit/Hare	-	-	-	-	1	1
Chicken	-	1	-	-	-	-
Large Mammal	-	-	2	-	-	-
Small Mammal	-	1	-	-	-	-
Identifiable Mammal*	2	19	73	6	12	9
Unident. Mammal	8	27	141	13	31	32
Unident. Bird	2	1	-	-	-	-
Total	14	54	245	21	51	46

*While a selected record was made, in order to be able to calculate the proportion of the bones which were unidentified fragments, a count was kept on the number of unrecorded identifiable skeletal elements.

Table 10

Bone measurements

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Element</i>	<i>Measurements</i>		
1	HOR	ACE	LA - 51.9	LAR - 46.5	
	COW	APH	Bd - 27.1		
2	S/G	AST	GLI - 27.5	GLm - 26.5	Bd - 17.4
	CHI	TIB	Did - 9.8		
3	HOR	APH	SD - 30.0	Bd - 37.1	
	HOR	RAD	Bd - 66.1	BFd - 56.0	
	COW	AST	GLI - 60.9	DI - 33.8	Bd - 35.2
	COW	AST	GLI - 57.8	GLm - 51.9	DI - 32.7
	COW	MC	Dm - 28.0	Bd - 37.3	
			GL - 183.0	Bp - 50.9	SD - 30.7
			DD - 19.0	B at F - 49.0	Bd - 52.7
			Ddm - 29.2	l - 21.7	BFdm - 24.8
4	COW	AST	GLI - 55.8	GLm - 52.2	DI - 30.8
			Dm - 28.0	Bd - 35.9	
	COW	APH	GLpe - 52.0	Bp - 27.7	SD - 21.8
			Bd - 24.3		
	COW	HUM	Bd - 74.3	BT - 60.0	HTC - 30.9
5	S/G	TIB	Bd - 25.2		
7	COW	MC	GL - 198.0		