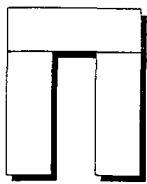
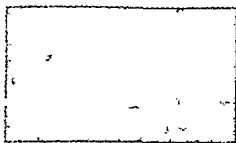


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# Hollow Banks, Scorton, North Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation  
Report 2 Fields 3 and 4

*Wessex Archaeology*

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Reference 44338c

March 1998

**HOLLOW BANKS, SCORTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**REPORT 2 FIELDS 3 & 4**

**Reference 44338c**

prepared for

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on behalf of

**Tilcon (North) Ltd**

by

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**March 1998**

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## SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by Wessex Archaeology for ENTEC UK Ltd on behalf of Tilcon (North) Ltd, who have been granted planning permission for an extension to Scorton Quarry, Scorton, North Yorkshire. This document presents a summary of the results of an archaeological evaluation of two of the four areas within the proposed development area (Fields 3 and 4 from Fields 1-4). The results from Field 2 have been summarised elsewhere (Wessex Archaeology 1998b). Field 1 was not investigated in this particular scheme of archaeological works.

In Fields 3 and 4, five evaluation areas totalling 550m<sup>2</sup>, and eight evaluation trenches totalling 420 m<sup>2</sup>, were investigated, representing a c 144% sample (by area) of Fields 3 and 4 combined. A metal detector survey was also undertaken across Field 3. A geophysical survey and desk-based assessment of the proposed development area have previously been completed by GeoQuest Associates.

The proposed development area (centred on NGR SE 229 998) is located between Brompton-on-Swale and Scorton in the district of Richmondshire, North Yorkshire and includes an area of the River Swale floodplain and the gravel terraces to the north of the river. The wider area is known to contain extensive prehistoric remains, including components of a ritual/funerary landscape dating to the later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, as well as Iron Age settlement evidence. The Roman town of *Cataractonium* to the south of the site was an important military site and staging post on Dere Street, the road from York to the northern frontier.

The archaeological features are generally sealed below the subsoil, although localised colluvial deposits at the base of a natural hollow in Field 3 have sealed archaeological features and deposits up to 0.71m below the present ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded within or below the c 0.80m thick alluvium recorded in the two trenches in the River Swale floodplain (Field 4).

Ephemeral Late Mesolithic (c 5000-4000 BC) activity is represented by a microlithic bladelet recovered from a tree-bole fill in the mid-south of Field 3.

A ring-ditch, a double-row pit alignment, an unmed cremation burial associated with a contiguous double-entrance, ring-ditch feature, all point to an extensive 'ritual' landscape dating to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (3000-1500 BC). These features probably represent part of a wider 'ritual' landscape of similar date which includes the Scorton Cursus, and associated barrows at its north-west and south-east ends c 1.3km to the north-east of the site, barrows to the north of Scorton Road and at Howe Hill, and a large stone cairn monument with multiple cist burials at Catterick Racecourse.

Possible prehistoric settlement activity in parts of Field 3 is represented by ring-ditches recorded in the south-west, close to two concentric square enclosures linked to a double-ditched trackway/droeway, and an earlier group of linears aligned perpendicular to the axis of the trackway/droeway. All these features, although undated, would seem to indicate an extensive agricultural landscape. A similar

alignment of land divisions of 6<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC date re-used in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD was recorded to the north-east of the site at The Grange Farm, and a number of enclosures with internal and external ring-ditch features have been recorded from geophysical and aerial photographic surveys between Catterick Village and the site. The late prehistoric/Romano-British agricultural landscape recorded on the site may be associated with settlements of these periods to the south rather than within or peripheral to the site itself.

The military origins and continuing importance of the Roman town of *Cataractonium* to the south-west of the site are well attested in the archaeological record. A Flavian and later Antonine fort are known in the town, and a marching camp is known to be located to the south of the site, to the east of Catterick Racecourse. A military base was also constructed to the north of the River Swale c. AD 130, possibly as a bridgehead defence constructed during a possible Brigantian rebellion.

A ditch in the north-west of Field 3 contained Romano-British pottery of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date. The ditch was recorded during the geophysical survey, as part of a large, sub-rectangular enclosure, parts of which lie within the north of Field 2 (see earlier report, Wessex Archaeology 1998b) and 3, with a rounded corner evident in the north-west of Field 3. The enclosure displays a marked 'playing card' shape in plan, typically associated with Roman military installations.

The medieval period saw the formation of an open field agricultural system, the boundaries of which were partially preserved until recently. The poorly-defined ridge-and-furrow earthworks in Field 3 are probably of pre-17<sup>th</sup> century date.

The metal detector survey recovered almost exclusively material of post-medieval/modern date. The exceptions were a Roman 4<sup>th</sup> century AD copper alloy coin from the west and a fragment of Bronze Age<sup>?</sup> copper alloy wire from a linear feature in the mid-south, of Field 3. All the other metal detector finds were of no archaeological importance.

The archaeological evaluation carried out in Fields 3 and 4 has confirmed the results of the geophysical survey, and only a small number of minor archaeological features were recorded in the evaluation which were not identified during the geophysical survey. Although only negative (i.e. cut) archaeological features were recorded in Field 3, these were well preserved. Archaeological features are preserved relatively close to the surface (only 0.22m depth) on the higher ground bordering a north-south aligned hollow in Field 3. These features, including possible further cremation burials in Field 3, are likely to be vulnerable to damage from continuing agricultural use of the land and/or any topsoil stripping. The amount of artefactual evidence from stratified contexts was poor.

The evaluation in Field 3 has recovered a large quantity of cremated bone, and six samples which contain significant quantities of charred plant remains and charcoal. It is recommended that further analysis of these materials be undertaken, in conjunction with any further investigations which may be undertaken on the site.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Chris Moore It was supervised in the field by Chris Ellis (Project Officer) and Isca Howell (Project Supervisor) with the assistance of Tobin Rayner, Julie Draper and Jamie Wright

This report was compiled by Chris Ellis and Chris Moore with contributions from Michael J Allen and Sarah F Wyles (palaeoenvironmental), Lorraine Mepham (finds) and Jacqueline McKinley (human remains) The illustrations were prepared by S E James

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# HOLLOW BANKS, SCORTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### REPORT 2 FIELDS 3 & 4

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1 1 This report has been prepared by Wessex Archaeology for ENTEC UK Ltd on behalf of Tilcon (North) Ltd, who have been granted planning permission for an extension to Scorton Quarry, Scorton, North Yorkshire
- 1 2 The proposed development area (hereinafter called 'The Site') comprises four fields (centred on NGR SE 229 998) located between Brompton-on-Swale and Scorton in the district of Richmondshire, North Yorkshire (Figure 1) The Site extends over a total area of c 15.4 hectares, which includes an area of the River Swale floodplain and the gravel terraces to the north of the river The planning authority required an archaeological evaluation of the Site in order that an informed discussion regarding the scope of further investigations could be held, prior to the commencement of development
- 1 3 An archaeological evaluation consisting of the excavation of trial trenches and areas, together with a metal detector survey of part of The Site, was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design (Wessex Archaeology 1997) approved by the County Archaeological Officer for North Yorkshire Previous archaeological investigation on the site comprises a desk-based study and geophysical survey (GeoQuest Associates 1997)
- 1 4 This report summarises the results of the archaeological evaluation of two of the four areas (Fields 3 and 4 from Fields 1-4), and should be read in conjunction with report ref no Wessex Archaeology 1998 44338b, which presents the results of archaeological evaluation in Field 2 Fields 3 and 4 cover a c 6.72 hectare area, comprising c 43.6% (by area) of the proposed development area Evaluation of Field 1 was not undertaken as part of this programme of works

#### 2 THE SITE

##### 2 1 Location, geology, topography

- 2 1 1 The Site is located c 200m north of the River Swale (Figure 1), and comprises four areas (Fields 1-4) bounded by Scorton Road to the north, Gatheley Road to the west and Howe Hill Lane to the south with the property boundary of Hollow Banks farm delineating its eastern extent At the time of the fieldwork Fields 2-4 were in agricultural use as rough pasture and Field 1 was arable



- 2 1 2 The Site includes areas of the river floodplain (Fields 1 and 4), and the gravel river terrace which forms a generally level plateau further to the north (Fields 2 and 3) Fields 3 and 4 are divided by a c 5m high steep, straight, formerly wooded scarp slope orientated east-northeast/west-southwest This scarp is both steeper and straighter than the gentler natural river terrace slope in Field 2, suggesting that it has been artificially cut to its present alignment and slope in recent times
- 2 1 3 The river terrace 'plateau' above the scarp (Field 3) is relatively level at c 65 00 - 66 50m (AOD), with a distinct wide, shallow hollow of presumably natural origin, aligned north-south in the middle of the field, which continues in very shallow relief in Field 4 Field 4 is relatively flat with a slight slope down from the east at c 60 80m to c 59 30m (AOD) in the west
- 2 1 4 The Site is located at the boundary of two basal geologies, the Triassic deposits of Keuper Sandstone and Bunter Sandstone, Pebble Beds and basal breccias to the east, and Carboniferous Limestone Series to the west (BGS 1957) The drift geology is comprised of soils consistent with the Brickfield Series of slight to moderate stoney loams (argillic brown earths) c 0 30-0 35m deep, derived from glacial drift and boulder clay deposits (BGS 1965)

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3 1 The archaeological and historical background to the area is summarised in Wessex Archaeology 1998b, and will not be repeated here

### **4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 4 1 The aims of the evaluation were (as far as practicable and within the limits of the specified techniques and trench layout) to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality, location and date of archaeological features within the proposed development area A more detailed discussion of the aims and objectives is presented in Wessex Archaeology 1998b

### **5 METHODOLOGY**

#### **5 1 Introduction**

- 5 1 1 The Methodology employed is presented in detail in Wessex Archaeology 1998b, and will not be repeated here

#### **5 2 Excavation**

- 5 2 1 A total of five evaluation areas totalling 550 m<sup>2</sup> and eight trenches totalling 420 m<sup>2</sup> were excavated as outlined in the Project Design (Wessex Archaeology 1997), representing a c 1 44% sample (by area) of Fields 3 and 4 The location of trenches and areas was specified in the Brief (Figures 1 and 2 Areas 4-8 and Trenches 4-11)

### 5 3 Recording

5 3 1 For ease of reference during the fieldwork the sequence of area and trench numbers and letters ascribed in the Project Brief (ENTEC UK Ltd 1997) and the Project Design (Wessex Archaeology 1997) was amended as follows (Figures 1, 2)

<u>Specification</u>	<u>This report</u>
Areas 1-4	Fields 1-4
Evaluation areas 1-8	Same
Evaluation trenches A-K	Evaluation trenches 1-11

5 3 2 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded by Wessex Archaeology using *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system A gazetteer in Appendix 1 provides a summary of all natural and archaeological deposits recorded during the evaluation

5 3 3 The artefacts, palaeoenvironmental materials and accompanying documentary records from the evaluation have been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition, English Heritage 1991) The archives are currently stored at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire, under the project code W4338 The contents of the archive are listed in Appendix 2

## 6 RESULTS

### 6 1 Introduction

6 1 1 A full gazetteer of evaluation areas and trenches, containing OS grid references and ground levels (mAOD) and stratigraphic/geological descriptions of deposits and features is presented in Appendix 1

6 1 2 The text below summarises the significant data from the evaluation areas and trenches, and the metal detector scanning survey carried out across Fields 3 and 4 Reference is made to the geophysical survey (GeoQuest Associates 1997) where necessary The artefactual and ecofactual assemblages from the evaluation are discussed in The Finds and Environmental Analysis sections of the report (see below)

### 6 2 Natural deposits and soil sequence

6 2 1 Topsoil was characterised by a 0.25-0.35m thick deposit of dark greyish-brown sandy loam across Fields 3 and 4, the topsoil in Trenches 6 and 11 was only 0.20m thick Beneath this, a subsoil was recorded across Field 3 but was absent in Field 4 trenches

6 2 2 Subsoil was characterised by a c. 0.25m thick deposit of dark yellowish-brown sandy silt containing small-large (<0.10m) sub-rounded and rounded gravel

Shallower subsoils encountered in Area 7 (only 0.10m thick) and Trench 8 (only 0.12m thick) probably reflect the slightly higher position of these areas, lying along the crest of the rise on the western and eastern sides respectively of the hollow in Field 3

- 6.2.3 Alluvium was only recorded in Trenches 6 and 11 (Field 4) which were located within the river floodplain. The alluvium, which was located directly below the topsoil in these trenches, was characterised by a c. 0.60-0.80m thick deposit of dark yellowish to reddish-brown sandy silt with occasional, large, sub-rounded gravel inclusions (0.20m)
- 6.2.4 In Area 6 a colluvial (hillwash) deposit was recorded below the subsoil (at a depth of 0.59-0.71m) in the southernmost extent of the area, sealing a natural hollow 2318 which contained 37 sherds of a Bronze Age vessel (bucket-shaped jar). This deposit was characterised by a mid greyish-brown sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions. The location of Area 6 within a north-south aligned ?glacial hollow in the topography of Field 3, would suggest an accumulation of material in the base of the hollow, perhaps a buried soil (palaeosol) horizon of Bronze Age (or later) date
- 6.2.5 Natural gravel was encountered at varying depths in all the evaluation areas and trenches in Fields 3 and 4, dependent upon the palaeotopography. It was encountered at 0.39m depth in Trench 7, but more generally at c. 0.40-0.55m depth. It was encountered at a maximum depth of 1.08m in Trench 11 (at the base of the terrace slope) in the river floodplain due to the increased thickness of the overlying alluvial deposits. Variations in the natural gravel in the form of patches of sand were noted in a number of trenches
- 6.2.6 In Area 5 and Trench 9 a greyish brown/reddish-brown sandy clay or loam was recorded (c. 0.23m thick) above the natural gravel and below the subsoil, lying in natural hollows within the natural gravel. This deposit may represent a palaeosol horizon, subsequently buried by subsoil build-up, the dark colour reflecting a possible humic content originally

### 6.3 Excavation

#### 6.3.1 *Trench 4*

This trench was 20m long, aligned west-northwest/east-southeast, and targeted on a possible ditch feature 'd11' comprising the east side of a large rectilinear enclosure in the north of Field 3. A section was also excavated across the south side of the same enclosure (1307) in the north of Field 2, which was undated (Wessex Archaeology 1998)

In the mid-point of this trench (Figure 3) a well-defined, north-east/south-west aligned ditch feature 405 was recorded, cutting natural gravel 402 and sealed by the subsoil 401. Excavation revealed a steep V-shaped profile 1.79m wide and 0.52m deep. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the 1.uest fill 403. These are of 'London type' ware, dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (see FINDS below)

6 3 2 *Trench 5*

This trench was 10m long, aligned north-south, and was located in the south-west of Field 3 to investigate a 'blank' area in the geophysical survey. No archaeological features or deposits were found within this trench. No artefacts were recorded from the spoil.

6 3 3 *Trench 6*

A 20m long trench, aligned west-north-west/east-north-east, was excavated in the north-west of Field 4 and positioned to investigate any continuation of trackway 'd10' from Field 3 onto the floodplain, and to assess the alluvial sequence in the floodplain. There were no archaeological features or deposits found within this trench. No artefacts were recorded from the spoil.

The natural soil sequence in the trench recorded the absence of any subsoil below the topsoil 600. Below 0.20m of topsoil there was a 0.82m thick deposit of dark yellowish-brown sandy silt alluvium (601) with occasional sub-rounded, small (20mm) gravel, before natural gravel (602) was encountered. The lack of a developed subsoil horizon would support the idea of localised truncation of the soil sequence related to a recent 'cutting back' of the natural gravel terrace of the river valley.

6 3 4 *Trench 7*

This trench was 70m long, aligned north-east/south-west, located in the middle of Field 3 within an area of geophysical anomalies of probable geological origin. There were no archaeological features or deposits found within this trench. No artefacts were recorded from the spoil.

At the south end of the trench, a 9.60m wide linear band of deeper subsoil 701 was investigated, and found to fill a wide, shallow hollow in the underlying natural gravel. This feature corresponds with a geological anomaly recorded in the geophysical survey (Figure 2 overlay).

6 3 5 *Trench 8*

This trench was 10m long, located in the north-east of Field 3 in a 'blank' area in the geophysical survey. There were no archaeological features or deposits found within this trench. No artefacts were recorded from the spoil.

6 3 6 *Trench 9*

This trench was 50m long, aligned south-west/north-east in the north-east of Field 3, and targeted on a geophysical anomaly of probable natural origin. Towards the north-eastern end of the trench there was a c. 8.60m wide natural deposit 904 filling a wide, shallow hollow in the natural gravel (Figure 4), corresponding approximately with a geological anomaly identified in the geophysical survey.

To the immediate south of 904 an east-west aligned, narrow linear feature 908 was recorded which cut the natural gravel 903 and was sealed by subsoil 901. It was 0.56m wide and 0.27m deep with a steep, square profile. In the south end of the trench, a similar narrow linear feature 906 was recorded (Figure 4),

which cut the subsoil 901. No finds were recovered from either feature. These features were not recorded on the geophysical survey.

#### 6 3 7 *Trench 10*

This trench was 10m long, aligned north-south in the south-east of Field 3 in a 'blank' area of the geophysical survey. There were no archaeological features or deposits found within this trench. No artefacts were recorded from the spoil.

#### 6 3 8 *Trench 11*

A 20m long trench was aligned north-northwest/south-southeast in the north-east of Field 4, positioned to investigate any continuation of an unnumbered linear feature visible on the geophysical survey in Field 3, and to assess the alluvial sequence of the floodplain. There were no archaeological features or deposits found within this trench. No artefacts were recorded from the spoil.

The natural soil sequence in the trench recorded the absence of any subsoil below the topsoil 1100. Below 0.20m of topsoil there was a 0.88m thick deposit of mid reddish-brown sandy silt alluvium (1101) with rare to occasional gravel inclusions, before natural gravel (1102) was encountered. The lack of a developed subsoil horizon, exactly like Trench 6, would support the idea of localised truncation of the soil sequence related to a recent 'cutting back' of the natural gravel terrace of the river valley.

#### 6 3 9 *Area 4*

A 10m by 5m area aligned north-east/south-west in the north-west of Field 3, targeted on an annular geophysical anomaly 'f7'. This area contained a small diameter ring-ditch, cut by a later, small pit feature, against the western edge of the area.

Approximately 40% of a ring-ditch 1903 was exposed (Figure 5), with an external diameter of c. 8m and an internal diameter of c. 6.50m. The ring-ditch appeared to cut the subsoil 1901 and was sealed by the topsoil 1900. It was filled with 1904-1906, the uppermost fill 1906 containing a single sherd of Early Bronze Age date. The ring-ditch was 0.81m wide and 0.69m deep with a square profile and near vertical sides. The fills provided no evidence for any original 'internal' or 'external' earthen bank of material. The ring-ditch 1903 corresponds with 'f7' in the geophysical survey.

A small circular pit feature 1909 (Figure 5) cut the uppermost fill of the ring-ditch, and was discernible because of a markedly reddened upper fill 1911, possibly due to burning. The pit was filled with 1910-1912 and was 0.70m diameter with a moderate/steep 'U-shaped' profile. No artefacts were recorded from the fills.

#### 6 3 10 *Area 5*

Area 5 was a 20m by 10m area aligned north-northeast/south-southwest in the north-west of Field 3, targeted upon possible pit alignments 'f6' and an anomaly of geological origin. This area contained a number of pit features, apparently forming part of a double-row pit alignment with some internal features. The pit alignment(s) comprised a northern line of three large (c. 2m

diameter) circular features (Group 2114), and a parallel southern line of three further circular features (Group 2115) of similar dimensions (Figure 6) A small pit feature 2117 was located between them in the west of the area One pit from each alignment was selected for full excavation 2118 (Group 2114) and 2124 (Group 2115)

Pits 2124 and 2128 (Group 2115) cut a c 3m x 2m oval feature 2121 in the east of the area, the fill of which was very similar to a natural deposit 2113 to the south, suggesting that the feature might be the result of an animal burrow or tree-bole

Pit 2118 (Group 2114) was sub-circular in plan with steep, slightly convex sides and a flat base (Figure 6) The pit was 2.30m in diameter and 0.86m deep, and cut natural gravel 2102 No artefacts were recorded from the fills The primary fill, a fine gravel 2120, was discernible only on the north side of the cut, and probably represents the initial weathering and collapse of the sides of the open feature The secondary fills are characterised by very common large (<0.15m) rounded gravel 'boulders' distributed evenly throughout the deposits, and represent the rapid backfilling of the features

A similar sequence of fill deposition was evident in pit 2124 (Group 2115) The pit was oval in plan, measuring 2.88m by 2.32m and 1.17m deep with steep, convex sides and a flat base A small piece of burnt, worked flint was recovered from the latest fill 2110 (Object 5003) The pit cut natural feature 2121 to the north-east

A small pit feature 2117 (Figure 6) was recorded in the west of the area, located between the two pit alignments The feature cut the natural gravel 2103 and was oval in plan (1.48m by 0.87m), with steep, slightly concave sides and a flat base Two sherds of Early Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC) pottery and a Late Neolithic (3000-2400 BC) *tranchet* tool were recovered from upper fill 2108 and an undiagnostic broken flake from primary fill 2116

A c 2m wide natural deposit 2113 was recorded along the south side of the area (Figure 6), lying in a natural hollow within the gravel and sealed by the subsoil 2101 This deposit was recorded in the geophysical survey as a geological anomaly lying to the immediate south of pit alignments 'f8'

#### 6.3.11 Area 6

This was a 15m by 5m area aligned north-east/south-west in the mid-south of Field 3, targeted on two unnumbered north-west/south-east orientated linear features in the geophysical survey This area contained three inter-cutting linear features, a tree-bole and a small posthole

In the north of the area (Figure 7) an irregular oval posthole feature 2312, 0.62m by 0.42m and 0.17m deep, cut the natural gravel 2303 The posthole had a steep 'U-shaped' profile with a flat base No artefacts were recorded from the fill

To the south of the posthole were two east-west aligned inter-cutting linear features (2316, 2317) The northernmost linear 2316 which cut natural gravel 2303 was filled with 2306 The cut was 0.41m wide and 0.17m deep with a U-shaped profile No finds were recovered

Linear feature 2317 cut the upper fill of 2316 and natural deposit 2305 and was filled with 2307 The feature was 0.80m wide with a U-shaped profile, 0.25m deep This feature was cut by linear 2320 to the east A single sherd of Early Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC) pottery and a (Bronze Age?) copper alloy wire fragment (Object 5006) were recorded from the fill 2307 The feature was sealed below the subsoil 2301

Both linears 2316 and 2317 were recorded on the geophysical survey as one large west-northwest/east-northeast aligned linear continuing to the west and the east

A large irregular hollow 2318 (Figure 7) was recorded in the south-east of the area The hollow contained a natural colluvial deposit 2310 which was only present at the south end of the area The fill contained 37 sherds (some large) from a single Bronze Age (2400-700 BC) vessel, and was cut by linear feature 2320=2313

A north-south aligned, irregular linear feature 2320=2313 cut features 2318, 2316 and 2317 in the eastern extent of the area The feature was 8.50m(+) long, 0.25m wide and 0.29m deep with a steep, 'U-shaped' profile The feature was not discernible in the eastern section of Area 6 An undiagnostic, small, flint waste flake was recovered from the single fill 2308 This feature was not recorded in the geophysical survey

To the immediate north-west of 2318 a large tree-bole 2315 cut the natural gravel 2303 The primary fill 2314, which was deposited against the west side of the cut, contained occasional flecks of charcoal and a microlithic bladelet of Late Mesolithic date (c. 5000-4000 BC)

### 6.3.12 Area 7

This was a 35m by 5m area located in the mid-west of Field 3, aligned north-east/south-west, targeted on two concentric square enclosures 'f3' and an annular anomaly on the geophysical survey This area contained two east-west aligned ditches in the north of the area In the south of the area a ring-ditch cut an earlier linear feature Two possible heavily truncated postholes were recorded towards the north-east of the ring-ditch The archaeology in this area was only 0.22m below the present surface at the south end of the area This is due to the area lying on the western ridge of a natural north-south hollow in Field 3 and has probably led to the truncation of the local soil sequence (only 0.10m of subsoil)

At the extreme north end of the area (Figure 8) an east-west aligned, linear ditch 2515 was recorded which cut the subsoil 2501 and was sealed by the topsoil 2500 The ditch was 0.68m wide and 0.34m deep with a square profile A few fragments of animal bone were recovered from the fill 2514 This

feature was recorded on the geophysical survey as 'f3' a possible 'internal' square enclosure within a larger square enclosure

To the south another east-west aligned ditch feature **2520** (Figure 8) cut the natural gravel **2502** and was sealed below a thin lens (50mm) of subsoil **2501**. The ditch was 1.24m wide and 0.60m deep with a steep U-shaped profile. No artefacts were recorded from the feature, which was recorded on the geophysical survey as 'f3', a possible 'external' square enclosure enclosing a smaller 'inner' square enclosure. The ditch showed a slight change of alignment in plan from east-west to west-northwest/east-southeast, which was also apparent in the geophysical survey. The realigned section of ditch appears to link the enclosure to a double-ditched possible trackway feature 'd10' recorded on the geophysical survey immediately to the east (see Figure 2 overlay). This might represent a later addition to an original south-eastern terminus of the enclosure ditch, although no evidence for such a terminus was found.

At the south end of the Area 7, linear **2523** (Figure 8) was an east-west aligned feature cutting the natural gravel **2502**. This feature was 1.06m wide and 0.24m deep with a moderate, U-shaped profile. The primary fill **2521** from initial weathering, was deposited against the north side predominantly. No artefacts were recorded from the fills. This feature was recorded as an east-west aligned linear continuing to the east of the ring-ditch in the geophysical survey. The feature was cut by ring-ditch **2517**.

Ring-ditch **2517=2518** was c 70% exposed during excavation with a gap (entrance?) to the north-east. It was a c 7m (external) diameter feature cutting linear **2523** with moderate, 'U-shaped' profile. The ditch was 0.73m wide and 0.26m deep. No finds were recorded from the fill **2516**. A second section of the ring-ditch **2518** to the north comprised a terminus, which was filled with **2508** and contained no artefacts. This cut was 0.52m wide and 0.36m deep with a similar profile to **2517**. Both sections were sealed below the topsoil **2500**, and **2518** cut the subsoil **2501**.

The ring-ditch was recorded to the south of square enclosure 'f3' in the geophysical survey, and a second annular anomaly was also recorded to the immediate south-east of the ring ditch.

Towards the north-east of the ring-ditch two heavily truncated postholes **2525**, **2527** were recorded. Posthole **2525** was a sub-circular 0.28m diameter feature, 0.10m deep, cutting the natural gravel **2502**. Posthole **2527** was an oval 0.30m by 0.25m cut only 40mm deep. Neither of the posthole fills contained artefacts.

### 6.3.13 Area 8

This was a 10m by 5m area aligned east-west, located in the mid-east of Field 3 and targeted on the possible south-eastern entrance of a substantial annular anomaly 'f4', possibly a ring-ditch or hengiform enclosure. This area contained a large curvilinear ditch with terminus, in the south-west. Lying to the east, an unmed cremation burial and a small pit were recorded.



In the south-west of the area (Figure 9) a substantial curvilinear ditch 2713 (north-east/south-west aligned) c 4.40m long, 1.80m wide and 0.45m deep with a moderate, U-shaped profile cut the natural gravel 2703, sealed by subsoil 2701. The ditch ended in a rounded terminus to the north-east. No artefacts were recorded from the fills. This feature was recorded in the geophysical survey as 'f4', a large, discontinuous ring-ditch, c 15m diameter, with two opposed entrances to the north-west and the south-east. This was the only feature within the area to have been recorded in the geophysical survey.

To the north-east of the terminus of the ditch a well-defined double-pit feature was recorded, the later, smaller pit of which contained an unmed cremation burial. The larger, earlier pit 2710 was an oval feature 1.17m long by 0.92m wide and 0.30m deep. The cut had moderate/steep, concave sides and a shallow, concave base which cut the natural gravel 2702 and sand 2703. The primary fill 2709, containing abundant fine/medium gravel, represents the initial weathering of the feature after excavation. The second fill 2708 contained a large amount of charcoal (and rare [burnt?] bone flecks) and possibly represents deposition of pyre material prior to deposition of the cremation urn and accessory vessel in pit 2712. The second fill 2708 was cut by later pit 2712.

Pit 2712 was located to the immediate north of pit 2710. This feature was sub-circular in shape, 0.78m long and 0.68m wide (aligned east-west) and 0.33m deep with steep, concave sides and a concave base, which cut the northern extent of 2710. It was filled with 2711, containing cremated bone fragments and charcoal flecks which appear to be derived from the cremation urn.

The pit contained a tripartite, Collared Urn of Early Bronze Age date (Object 5004) with twisted cord decoration, lying slightly on its side with the vessel mouth to the north. The vessel had been crushed slightly flat. On the east side of the urn, and slightly lower down, a miniature Collared Urn accessory vessel (Object 5005) was discovered with less ornate twisted cord and fingemal decoration. During excavation of the fill of the miniature Collared Urn, the base and other fragments of a small cup with incised decoration were discovered (Object 5007) - see FINDS section for further discussion of the cremation vessels and the cremated human remains.

Pit feature 2712 would seem to represent the cutting of a small pit after the partial backfilling of 2710, for the deposition of the unmed cremation and accessory vessels. The final fill 2707 of this small pit group comprised a dark brown sandy loam with abundant large (0.10m) rounded gravel 'cobbles'. This deposit would seem to represent a deliberate 'sealing' of the unmed cremation burial.

In the east of Area 8 a small, sub-circular pit was recorded 2714 which was 0.60m diameter and 0.28m deep with a near-vertical 'U-shaped' profile. The feature cut the natural gravel 2702 and was filled with 2706 which contained occasional charcoal flecks but no artefacts.

## 6 4 Metal Detector Scanning

6 4 1 The general scanning of Field 3 recovered a total of 54 objects. All except one (Object 3010) were of post-medieval/modern date and are not of archaeological importance. The objects are discussed in more detail in the **FINDS** section below and are listed in Appendix 3.

6 4 2 Only one artefact was recovered from the scanning of the evaluation areas and trenches, or the spoil derived from these excavations. A copper alloy wire fragment (?Bronze Age – 2400-700 BC) was recovered from linear feature **2317**.

## 7 THE FINDS

### 7 1 Introduction

7 1 1 A small quantity of finds was recovered from the evaluation trenches and areas. These have been cleaned (with the exception of the metalwork) and quantified by material type within each context, this information is summarised in Table 1 below. Finds have subsequently been scanned in order to ascertain their nature, potential date and condition. This information is summarised by material type below.

**Table 1 All finds by context - Number/weight(g)**

NB Quantities are presented by number/weight in grammes except metalwork (numbers only)

CBM = ceramic building material Fe = iron Pb = lead Cu = copper  
MD = metal detector survey \* sieved finds

Context	Description	Animal Bone	Human Bone	Flint	Prehist. Pottery	R B pottery	Metal
403	Ditch 402					3/10	
1906	Ring ditch 1903				1/6		
2108	Pit 2117				2/8		
* 2108				7/35			
2110	Pit 2124			1/1			
2116	Pit 2117			1/20			
* 2116				3/1			
2116					3/1		
2307	Linear 2317				1/14		1 Cu
2308	Linear 2313			1/1			
2310	Nat hollow 2318				37/1026		
* 2314	Tree-bole 2315			1/1			
2514	Ditch 2515	1/2					
2711	Pit 2712		2 indiv		55/4725		
Unstrat Field 3	MD survey						20 Fe 14 Cu 10 Pb
Unstrat Tr 4	MD survey						4 Fe
Unstrat Tr 5	MD survey						4 Fe
Unstrat Tr 7	MD survey						1 Fe
	<b>TOTAL</b>	1/2	2 indiv	14/59	96/5779	3/10	29 Fe, 15 Cu, 10 Pb

## 7 2 Flint

7 2 1 Worked flint comprised a microlithic bladelet (2315), one small waste flake (linear 2313), a broken flake and *tranchet* tool and some 'chips' (pit 2117), and a burnt?, worked flake fragment (pit 2124)

7 2 2 The microlithic bladelet recovered from the primary fill 2314 of tree bole 2315 was retouched along one edge, and is dated technologically to the later Mesolithic (c 5000-4000 BC) A '*tranchet*' tool with retouch along two sides was recovered from the uppermost fill 2108 of 2117 and is dated typologically and technologically to the Late Neolithic (3000-2400 BC) A sherd of Early Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC) pottery was also recovered from this context

7 2 3 The other flints fragments are not closely datable, but are of prehistoric date

## 7 3 Pottery

With the exception of three Romano-British sherds, all of the pottery is of prehistoric date

### 7 3 1 Prehistoric

A large proportion of the prehistoric pottery consists of sherds of four vessels, three of them comprising the Early Bronze Age, large Collared Um and accessory vessels from pit 2712 All three are in grog-tempered fabrics The large Collared Um (Object 5004) is a tripartite vessel of Longworth's Secondary Series (Longworth 1984), with twisted cord decoration inside the rim (chevrons), on the collar (multiple rows of chevrons) and between collar and shoulder (multiple rows of 'horseshoes') This vessel is in relatively good condition, although fragmentary, it had survived complete, although crushed laterally Surfaces have survived well, although broken edges are friable

The second vessel is a miniature Collared Um (Object 5005) (c 150 mm in height) This vessel has not survived so well, surfaces are quite heavily abraded, which has obscured much of the detail of the decoration The vessel is largely in one piece, with one joining rim sherd (an ancient break), one section of the rim is missing Decoration on this vessel comprises twisted cord cross-hatching on the collar, and two rows of fingernail impressions between collar and a rudimentary 'shoulder'

Inside this miniature vessel, about halfway down the fill, were found four sherds of a third vessel (Object 5007) These sherds form part of a small cup, their position within the miniature um might suggest that the cup was originally deposited in an inverted position on top of the um, subsequently fragmenting and falling in The cup has a slightly convex base with a small central depression on the underside Most of the vessel walls are missing, but one fragment indicates that the cup had an inverted profile perhaps similar to an example illustrated by Longworth (1984, pl 134, no 1221) There is

incised decoration above the base (lattice and chevrons) and, unusually traces of small, pre-firing perforations at the junction of base and body wall

The fourth vessel is represented by 37 sherds from the fill 2310 of natural hollow 2318. These are thick-walled body and base sherds in a coarse fabric with prominent quartz inclusions. Vessel form is uncertain but is likely to be a large, slightly convex or bucket-shaped jar, probably of Bronze Age date.

Other prehistoric pottery comprises five small body sherds, all in grog-tempered fabrics and presumed to be of Early Bronze Age date although undiagnostic (ring-ditch 1903, pit 2117, linear feature 2317).

### 7.3.2 Romano-British

The three Romano-British sherds (403) are all from the same vessel, a 'London-type' ware hemispherical bowl with incised decoration (Marsh 1978, type 42, fig 6.18). The term 'London-type' ware is used here to differentiate between an 'imported' London ware, and a possibly locally made copy of a London ware example.

### 7.4 Metalwork

7.4.1 The metalwork largely derives from the metal detector survey carried out across Field 3 (Objects 3002-3039, 3057-3061), with other objects recovered from unstratified contexts in trenches 4, 5 and 7. This collection comprises 29 iron, 15 copper alloy and 10 lead objects. With the exception of a single Roman coin (Object 3010), these objects are all either undateable or of diagnostically post-medieval type.

7.4.2 The iron objects consist mainly of nails, with two buckles, one tanged blade, one horseshoe, one boot-heel and a washer ring. Other objects are unidentifiable and include miscellaneous sheet and strip fragments.

7.4.3 The copper alloy includes seven coins: one Roman 4<sup>th</sup> century AD issue, four post-medieval (George III penny, two Victoria halfpennies and one illegible penny), and two unidentifiable. Other objects include a spoon/fork handle, a spoon bowl, two buttons, one buckle, one tack and miscellaneous fittings.

7.4.4 The lead consists entirely of waste fragments.

7.4.5 A single copper alloy object (Object 5006), a thin ?wire fragment, of uncertain origin, came from linear feature 2317 and was found during a metal detector survey of Area 6. A single sherd of prehistoric (?Bronze Age) pottery was also recovered from the same feature.

### 7.5 Human bone

#### 7.5.1 Cremation burial

The complete large Collared Urn (Object 5004) contained the cremated remains of two individuals. This vessel was emptied by the osteoarchaeologist in a series of 20mm spits numbered from the rim down. Spits 1-3 were

removed as a single spit, spits 4-9 were removed in quadrants (a-d) due to the great density of bone spits 10-12 were removed in joined quadrants (a+b and c+d) due to the reduced size of the area and spit 13 was removed as a single spit

- 7 5 2 Bone was encountered in all spits though in spits 1-3 it was confined to one quarter of the vessel From spit 4 downwards the bone was present in all areas From spit 5 down there was a noticeable reduction in the amount of soil within the matrix and a substantial increase in bone density
- 7 5 3 The bone is well preserved A total weight of 2699 g was recovered from the vessel The preliminary scan made during the emptying of the vessel indicates that the burial contained the cremated remains of a minimum of two adults, one of which was between 18-25 yr , and one of which was female There are also fragments (metapodia and phalanges) from a sheep-size animal No pathological lesions were observed during excavation
- 7 5 4 The bone is all well cremated, as indicated by the universal buff-white colour of the bone There is no indication of deliberate fragmentation of bone prior to burial, fragments of up to 120mm surviving in the vessel All areas of the skeleton were noted in excavation, and fragments of animal bone were recovered from most levels Further analysis is recommended and should aim to ascertain whether there is any pattern in the horizontal and/or vertical distribution of bone fragments from the two individuals (deposited together or separately), skeletal elements or animal and human remains

## 8 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

### 8 1 Bulk samples

- 8 1 1 Six bulk samples were taken for the recovery of charred plant remains and charcoals to assess their preservation and potential archaeological significance Five of these bulk samples were also taken for the recovery of human cremated bone and their associated charcoal/charred plant remains relating to pyre debris
- 8 1 2 All bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods, the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh and the residues fractionated into 4 mm, 2 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried The coarse fractions (4-mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded

Table 2 Summary of the charred plant remains and charcoal

KEY A\*\* = exceptional, A\* = 30+ items A = ≥10 items B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (h) = hazelnuts, smb = small mammal bones

NOTE <sup>1</sup>flot is total, but flot in brackets = ml of rooty material <sup>2</sup>unburnt seed in lower case to distinguish from charred remains

Feature type/ No	Context	Sample	size hue s	Flot								Residue Charcoal >5 6mm
				flot ml	size	Grain	Chaff	Weed uncharr ed	Seeds Charre d	Charcoal >5 6mm	Other	
Natural/ ? Mesolithic												
Area 6 Tree Bole (?Mesolithic)												
hollow 2315	2314	4013	15	40	8		-	a	C	A	-	c 10
Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age												
Area 5 Pit Alignment												
Pit 2117	2108	4007	10	30	7 5	C	-	a	C(h)	B	-	2 + h frag
Pit 2117	2116	4008	15	15	4	C	-	a	C(h)	B	-	4 + h frag
Area 8 Cremation related material												
Pit 2710	2707	4009	15	240	24	-		a	A	A*	-	-
Pit 2710	2708	4010	15	500	100	C	-	a	A	A*	-	c 10
Pit 2712	2711	4012	15	60	12	C	-	a	C	A	-	c 15

## 8 2 Recovery of Cremated Human Bone and Charred Plant Material/Charcoal

8 2 1 Samples were taken from pits 2712 and 2710 for recovery of both cremated human remains and charred plant remains These samples are those from pottery vessels associated with cremated bone where the deposits were removed in 13 spits of 20 mm by the osteoarchaeologist from both the Collared Um (Object 5004) and one of the accessory vessels (Object 5005)

8 2 2 The charred remains from these samples were recovered by flotation and the human bone by sieving All samples were processed by standard laboratory flotation methods and the residues fractionated to 4 mm, 2 mm 1mm fractions and dried All fractions were air, or gently oven, dried The coarse fraction (4 mm) was sorted and human bone, charred materials and artefacts removed, and the residue weighed and discarded

8 2 3 The dried 2 mm and 1mm fractions will be retained to be sorted/scanned for bone by the osteoarchaeologist All fracuons will be retained to be sorted/\canned for charred remains if selected for analysis following assessment

## 8 3 Assessment of the Charcoal and Charred Plant remains

8 3 1 The flots were scanned under a x10 - x30 stereo-binocular microscope and presence of charred remains and were quantified (Table 2), in order to present data to assess the preservation and nature of the charred plant and charcoal remains and determine the potential of the charred plant and charcoal remains for detailed analysis and to make suggestions for any analysis programme

#### 8 4 Charred plant remains

8 4 1 Two of the samples from the pits in Area 8 produced large flots, although all the remaining four samples produced small flots (average flot size for 10 litres is 60 ml) All samples contained between 10 - 25% rooty material and high numbers of uncharred weed seeds, which can be indicative of stratigraphic movement Both samples from pit 2117 (Area 5) contained a few charred grain fragments and low numbers of charred weed seeds, including charred hazelnut fragments The three samples from pits 2710 and 2712 (Area 8) generally produced small quantities of charred gram fragments and high numbers of charred weed seeds The sample from tree throw 2315 (Area 6) only contained a few charred weed seeds

8 4 2 The two samples from the collared um, 2716, and accessory vessel, 2717, produced flots of varying sizes, with that from 2717 being of above average size, with 10-20% rooty material and large numbers of uncharred weed seeds A few charred grain fragments and low numbers of charred weed seeds were observed in the collared um sample Molluscs were also present in 2716

#### 8 5 Charcoal

8 5 1 Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in Table 2 Moderate quantities of charcoal fragments of greater than 5.6mm were retrieved from the two samples from pit 2117, while those samples from the other pits and tree throw all contained large amounts of charcoal pieces High numbers of charcoal fragments were present in both the accessory vessel 2717 and collared um 2716 samples The charcoal pieces were mainly large wood fragments

#### 8 6 Potential of the charred plant and charcoal remains

8 6 1 The presence of the few charred cereal grains, despite the low quantities and albeit without chaff, from every sampled Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age feature is significant The remains from the pit alignment (Area 5) also included hazelnuts from which there is the potential to examine both the local farming (or horticultural) economy in conjunction with exploitation of wild, natural resources The presence of weed seeds here may help in determining the nature of the fields/arable plots or the nature of the exploited woodland resources The presence of material in the cremation related features provides evidence of accidental incorporation and again alludes to some Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age cultivation which can be defined through the analysis of the grain and weed seeds

8 6 2 The high presence of charcoal provides the opportunity to examine the woodland resources exploited. The cremation related features may enable the determination of specific selection of species for pyres, and may contrast with the domestic burning debris which is likely to be a more representative selection of the natural woodland. Identification of both may therefore provide information on species selection and upon the nature of the natural exploited woodland.

8 6 3 Both charcoals and weed seeds are present in the ?Mesolithic tree-bole 2315, and again provide the potential to examine the natural woodland (and sub-canopy flora -weed seeds-) and provides a good contrast to the later, Neolithic, assemblages.

## 8 7 Summary

8 7 1 Although only six samples are reported here, the remains are significant and analysis of charcoals and charred weed seeds is recommended. However, the full selection of samples is best and more effectively undertaken in review with samples from any further proposed fieldwork.

## 9 DISCUSSION

### 9 1 Introduction

9 1 1 The results of the evaluation have confirmed the archaeological interpretation based upon the results of the earlier geophysical survey. Archaeological features identified were generally well preserved, and were encountered at varying depths across Field 3, reflecting the date of the features, the nature of the underlying palaeotopography, and the effects of agricultural practices and colluvial processes in creating soil movement and deposition. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded in either of the trenches in Field 4. Only negative (i.e. cut) archaeological features were encountered during the evaluation in Fields 3 and 4.

### 9 2 Natural deposits and soil sequence

9 2 1 Topsod was 0.25-0.35m thick across Fields 3 and 4, the topsoil in Trenches 6 and 11 was only 0.20m thick. Beneath this, a subsoil was recorded across Field 3 but was absent in both Field 4 trenches. This suggests, along with the sharp discontinuity of alignment and slope of the terrace in Field 4, in relation to the terrace in Field 2, that localised truncation of the natural soil sequence has taken place, probably during 'cutting back' of the terrace in Field 4.

9 2 2 The subsoil was generally a c. 0.25m deposit, although in Area 7 and Trench 8 it was only 0.10-0.12m thick. This probably reflects a localised truncation of the soil sequence from ploughing and colluvial processes. In both areas are located on slightly higher ground, lying along 'ridges' on the western and eastern sides respectively a natural (north-south aligned) hollow in the mid-south of Field 3. In Area 7 (south) archaeological features were recorded only 0.22m below the present surface. These features are likely to be vulnerable to



damage from continuing agricultural use of the land and/or any topsoil stripping

9 2 3 Alluvium was only recorded in Trenches 6 and 11 (Field 4) which were located within the river floodplain. The alluvium, which was located directly below the topsoil in these trenches, was c 0.60-0.80m thick. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded within or below the alluvium in Field 4.

9 2 4 In Area 6 a colluvial deposit was recorded below the subsoil (at a depth of 0.59-0.71m) in the southernmost extent of the area, filling a natural hollow 2318 which contained 37 sherds of a Bronze Age vessel (bucket-shaped jar). This deposit was characterised by a mid greyish-brown sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions. The location of Area 6 within a north-south aligned glacial? hollow in the mid-south of Field 3, would suggest an accumulation of material in the base of the hollow, perhaps a buried soil (palaesol) horizon of Bronze Age (or later) date.

9 2 5 Natural gravel was encountered at varying depths in all the evaluation areas and trenches in Fields 3 and 4, dependent upon the palaeotopography. It was encountered at 0.39m depth in Trench 7, but more generally at c 0.40-0.55m depth. It was encountered at a maximum depth of c 1.08m in Trenches 6 and 11 (at the base of the terrace slope) in the river floodplain due to the increased thickness of the overlying alluvial deposits. Variations in the natural gravel in the form of patches of sand were noted in a number of trenches.

9 2 6 In Area 5 and Trench 9 a (c 0.23m thick) greyish brown/reddish-brown sandy clay or loam was recorded (at 0.55m and 0.23m respectively) above the natural gravel and below the subsoil, lying in natural hollows within the natural gravel. This deposit may represent a palaesol horizon, subsequently buried by subsoil build-up, the dark colour reflecting a possible humic content originally. No artefacts were recovered from these deposits.

### 9 3 Metal Detector Survey

9 3 1 The metal detector survey recovered an assemblage of fifty-four iron, copper alloy and lead objects of mostly post-medieval/modern date. Only one object (Object 5006) was recovered from an archaeological feature (2317). This was a fragment of thin copper alloy wire, possibly of Bronze Age date. A copper alloy Roman coin (Object 3010) of 4<sup>th</sup> century AD date was found in the west of the field. The survey overall suggests that there are no significant distributions of metal artefacts of archaeological interest within the topsoil across Field 3.

### 9 4 Archaeological Features

9 4 1 The geophysical survey in Field 3 identified an archaeological landscape consisting of several groups of features. A double-ditched probable trackway ('d10') (not investigated) was recorded running north-south across the field, following a slight hollow of presumably natural origin. A pair of concentric

rectilinear enclosures were apparently appended to this trackway to the west, with at least two possible ring-ditch features to the south of the enclosures. Further ring ditches of widely differing dimensions were identified in the north-west ('f7') and east ('f4') of the field, the latter having two opposed possible entrances.

- 9 4 2 At the north of the field, two probable double-pit alignments were recorded. Alignment ('f6'), consisting of a double row of pits together with possible 'internal' pits, extended for about 50m on a roughly east-west orientation to the west of, and perpendicular to, the trackway. Alignment ('f5') (not investigated), apparently consisting of a smaller number of pits of greater dimensions than ('f6'), extended for about 15m on a roughly north-west/south-east alignment to the east of the trackway. Finally, a rectilinear enclosure displaying a rounded 'playing card' corner ('d11'), was identified in the north-west of the field. The discussion below reviews the features investigated, in chronological order where possible, and discusses the position of features within this landscape.
- 9 4 3 The earliest evidence of human activity in Field 3 was a microlithic bladelet of Late Mesolithic date (c 5000 – 4000 BC), which was recovered during sieving of the primary fill of a tree bole 2315 in Area 6. All features in this Area were sealed by a colluvial deposit, suggesting that the tree bole is of some antiquity, as other features are dated by artefactual evidence to the (Early)Bronze Age. This feature also contained quantities of charcoal and weed seeds, giving the potential to provide comparative data with samples from a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (3000-1500 BC) pit in Area 5.
- 9 4 4 Two large pits, one circular and one oval, from the double-row pit alignment in Area 5, were excavated. The oval pit, from the 'southern' pit alignment (2124), was aligned along the axis of the pit alignment itself. Only one piece of undiagnostic worked and burnt flint was recovered from the latest fill of large pit 2124. However, a small pit feature 2117 located between the two large pit alignments contained a flint *tranchet* tool of Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age date (3000-1500 BC) and a sherd of Early Bronze Age pottery (2400-1500 BC) in its uppermost fill 2108. The pit alignment is orientated perpendicular to the possible trackway, the relationship of the alignment to the trackway was not investigated and remains unclear.
- 9 4 5 The opposed entrance ring-ditch 2713 excavated in Area 8 contained no artefacts, and no evidence for any original 'internal' or 'external' earthen bank was found.
- 9 4 6 The apparently associated Early Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC) urned cremation burial located immediately outside the south-east entrance of the ring-ditch indicates a funerary or ritual function for the ring-ditch. The urned cremation burial (2712=2710) also contained two accessory vessels and possible pyre debris material. The tripartite Collared Urn contained two adult individuals, one of which was aged 18-25 years, and one identified as female. Fragments of bone of sheep/goat were also present. The urned cremation may represent a

satellite burial as it is located outside the ring-ditch feature. It is possible that further burials may survive both inside and outside the ring-ditch.

- 9 4 7 The dating from pit 2117 in Area 5 and the urned cremation from 2712=2710 in Area 8 would seem to date these feature groups to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze (3000-1500 BC). The geophysical survey has identified a second double-pit alignment 'f5' (not investigated) to the east of the trackway, consisting of a group of pits of apparently more substantial dimensions, aligned with the north-west entrance to the ring-ditch 'f4'/2713. It is possible that this pit alignment may be associated with the ring ditch.
- 9 4 8 A small, but relatively deep (0.69m) ring-ditch feature 1903 in Area 4 contained a sherd of Early Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC) pottery and probably represents the ring-ditch of a burial monument rather than a secular structure. The fills of the ring-ditch did not confirm the existence of an original 'internal' or 'external' earthen bank.
- 9 4 9 The evaluation has also recovered evidence of possible prehistoric settlement activity in parts of Field 3. A linear ditch 2523 in the mid-south of Field 3, cut by ring-ditch 2517=2518, is part of a group of linear features aligned perpendicular to the axis of the double-ditched trackway/droeway 'd10' and parallel with at least two phases of similar ditches ('d5', 'd6') recorded across the gravel terrace in Field 2. The ring-ditch 2517=2518 was close to two concentric square enclosure ditches (2515, 2520) ('f3') linked to the trackway. The trackway utilised a wide and shallow, north-south aligned hollow in the prevailing topography along the middle of Field 3. The sharp discontinuity of this feature towards the south may be due to the artificial cutting of the river cliff to the south of Field 3, no evidence for any continuation of the trackway was found in Field 4 (Trench 6).
- 9 4 10 Ditch 404 in Trench 4 contained three sherds of 'London type' ware pottery, of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date, recovered from the latest fill 403. The ditch 'd11' was also recorded during the geophysical survey, as part of a large, sub-rectangular enclosure, parts of which lie within the north of Field 2 (Wessex Archaeology 1998b) and 3, with a rounded corner evident in the north-west of Field 3. The enclosure displays a marked 'playing card' shape in plan, typically associated with Roman military installations.
- 9 4 11 Two 'gullies' (906, 908) recorded in the north-east of Field 3 may represent fencelines, which were sealed below the subsoil, but were of uncertain date.

## 10 OVERVIEW (ALL FIELDS)

- 10 1 The archaeological evaluation carried out in Fields 2, 3 and 4 has confirmed the results of the geophysical survey (GeoQuest Associates 1997), and only a small number of minor archaeological features were recorded in the evaluation which were not identified during the geophysical survey. Although only negative archaeological features were recorded in Fields 2 and 3, these were well preserved. The amount of artefactual evidence from stratified contexts was poor. Archaeological features are preserved relatively close to the surface.

(c 0.35 – 0.45m depth) at the top of the gravel terrace in Field 2 and on the higher ground bordering the north-south aligned hollow in Field 3 (only 0.22m depth). These features including possible further inhumations in Field 2 and cremation burials in Field 3, are likely to be vulnerable to damage from continuing agricultural use of the land and/or any topsoil stripping.

- 10.2 The archaeological features of importance are generally sealed below the prevailing subsoil, although localised colluvial deposits at the base of the gravel terrace in Field 2 and in the hollow in the middle of Field 3, have sealed archaeological features and deposits up to c 1.25m and 0.71m respectively, below the present ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded within or below the c 0.80m thick alluvium recorded in the two trenches in the River Swale floodplain (Field 4).
- 10.3 Ephemeral Mesolithic/Neolithic (8500-2400 BC) activity is recorded on The Site in a flint from a single pit in the west of Field 2 and a Late Mesolithic (c 5000-4000 BC) nucleolithic bladelet in a tree-bole fill in the mid-south of Field 3. Both features were sealed below localised colluvial deposits.
- 10.4 In Field 3, a ring-ditch, a double-row pit alignment, an urned cremation burial associated with a contiguous double-entrance, ring-ditch feature all point to an extensive ritual landscape dating to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (3000-1500 BC). These features probably represent part of a wider ritual landscape of similar date which includes the Scorton Cursus, and associated barrows at the north-west and south-east ends c 1.3km to the north-east of The Site (Topping 1982, Harding 1996, FAS 1997), barrows to the north of Scorton Road and at Howe Hill, and a large stone cairn monument with multiple cist burials at Catterick Racecourse (Moloney 1996).
- 10.5 Possible prehistoric settlement activity in parts of Fields 2 and 3 is represented by ring-ditches recorded in the south-west of Field 3, close to two concentric square enclosures linked to a double-ditched trackway/droeway, and an earlier group of linears aligned perpendicular to the axis of the trackway/droeway and parallel with at least two phases of similar ditches recorded across the gravel terrace in Field 2. All these features, although undated, would seem to indicate an extensive agricultural landscape. A similar alignment of land divisions of 6<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC date and re-used in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, was recorded to the north-east of The Site at Grange Farm (FAS 1996-1997), and a number of enclosures with internal and external ring-ditch features have been recorded from geophysical and aerial photographic surveys between Catterick Village and The Site (North Yorkshire SMR). The late prehistoric/Romano-British agricultural landscape recorded on The Site may be associated with settlements of these periods to the south rather than within or peripheral to The Site itself (Wilson 1984, 1997).
- 10.6 A single inhumation was recorded in the middle of Field 2, possibly indicating the presence of a small number of further inhumations in the immediate area. Although undated, its position cutting one of the linear features discussed above might suggest a later Roman settlement-edge burial.

- 10 7 The military origins and continuing importance of the Roman town of *Cataractonium* to the south-west of the Site are well attested in the archaeological record. A Flavian and later Antonine fort are known in the town (Bumham and Wacher 1990), and a marching camp is known to be located to the south of The Site, to the east of Catterick Racecourse. A military base was also constructed to the north of the River Swale c AD 130, possibly as a bridgehead defence constructed during a possible Brigantian rebellion (Jarrett 1976). It is possible that the enclosure at the north of Field 2 may be a military enclosure.
- 10 8 The medieval period saw the formation of an open field agricultural system, the boundaries of which were partially preserved until recently. The poorly-defined ridge-and-furrow earthworks in Fields 2 and 3 are probably of pre-17<sup>th</sup> century date (Rackham 1986).
- 10 9 The metal detector survey recovered almost exclusively material of post-medieval/modern date. The exceptions were a Roman 4<sup>th</sup> century AD copper alloy coin from the west and a fragment of ?Bronze Age copper alloy wire from a linear feature in the mid-south, of Field 3. All the other metal detector finds within Fields 2 and 3 were of no archaeological importance.

## 11 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANALYSIS

- 11 1 It is recommended that the cremated bone recovered from the cremation vessel and associated deposits be subjected to further analysis prior to deposition of the archive. Such analysis may allow further elucidation of the nature of the cremation rite, with reference to the place of cremation and the number of episodes of cremation. Such analysis might be most productively undertaken in conjunction with any further work, which may result in the recovery of further cremation burials.
- 11 2 In view of the significant quantities of charred plant remains and charcoal recovered from the bulk samples taken from Field 3, it is recommended that further analysis of this material be undertaken. Again, such analysis might best be undertaken in conjunction with analysis of samples from any further work undertaken in order to provide a broader range of comparative data.

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