Middle to late Iron Age settlement on land at Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley Leicestershire October-November 2013

Accession number: X.A160.2013

Report No 14/89

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Illustrator: James Ladocha

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Project Manager: Adam Yates
Site Code:X.A160.2013
NGR: SP 5297 9165

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**Oasis No: molanort1-182392**	
Project title	Middle to late Iron Age settlement on land at Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley Leicestershire. October to November 2013	
Short description	In October and November 2013, an archaeological excavation was carried out by MOLA, formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of CgMs Consulting, on land at Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire. The works identified a middle to late Iron Age settlement, comprising two principal roundhouses, an ancillary structure and a small D-shaped enclosure bounded to the east by a ditch. To the west of the boundary was an isolated structure that was superseded by a ditch. The site produced a small pottery assemblage that included some briquetage. The site was traversed by remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. To the east was a post-medieval field boundary that probably went out use when the midland railway was built near by in the 1840s.	
Project type	Excavation	
Previous work	Geophysical survey, trial trench evaluation	
Current land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Middle Iron Age	
Significant finds	Pottery	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley	
Easting Northing	SP 5297 9165	
Area (sq m/ha)	5.5 ha	
Height aOD	94mAOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke (MOLA)	
Project Manager	Mike Dawson (CgMs) and Adam Yates (MOLA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Mr Ivan Crane	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	09/10/2013	
End date	08/11/2013	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	X.A160.2013	Flint, pottery, animal bone
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Middle to late Iron Age settlement on land at Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire, October to November 2013	
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Author(s)	Jason Clarke	
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Abstract

In October and November 2013, an archaeological excavation was carried out by MOLA, formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of CgMs Consulting, on land at Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire. The works identified a middle to late Iron Age settlement, comprising two principal roundhouses, an ancillary structure and small D-shaped enclosure bounded to the east by a ditch. To the west of the boundary was an isolated structure that was superseded by a ditch. The site produced a small pottery assemblage that included some briquetage. The site was traversed by remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. To the east was a post-medieval field boundary that probably went out use when the midland railway was built near by in the 1840s.

1 INTRODUCTION

In October and November 2013, an archaeological excavation was carried out by MOLA, formally Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land at Crowfoot Way, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 5297 9165 Fig 1). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Mr I Crane, and was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning permision for the proposed residential development of the land.

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA, formally Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013) and was approved by Leicestershire County Council on behalf of the local planning authority.

Excavation was undertaken in 3 discrete areas (1-3) located on areas of archaeological interest identified from previous geophysical survey and trial trenching (Clements and Simmonds 2010 and Flavell 2011).

The objectives of the excavation were to mitigate the impact of development upon features or deposits within the area of the development through preservation by record.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

Location and topography

Broughton Astley is located 13km south-west of Leicester. The development occupies a total area of 5.5ha to the south of the village. Its eastern edge is defined by a dismantled railway which was formerly part of a branch line between Rugby to Leicester. To the west is Hallbrook Primary School and to the north lies a modern residential development. The land to the south comprises open fields.

The development area lies in the northern part of a field which had previously been used for arable farming.

The site lies on ground at 94m aOD sloping down to the north.

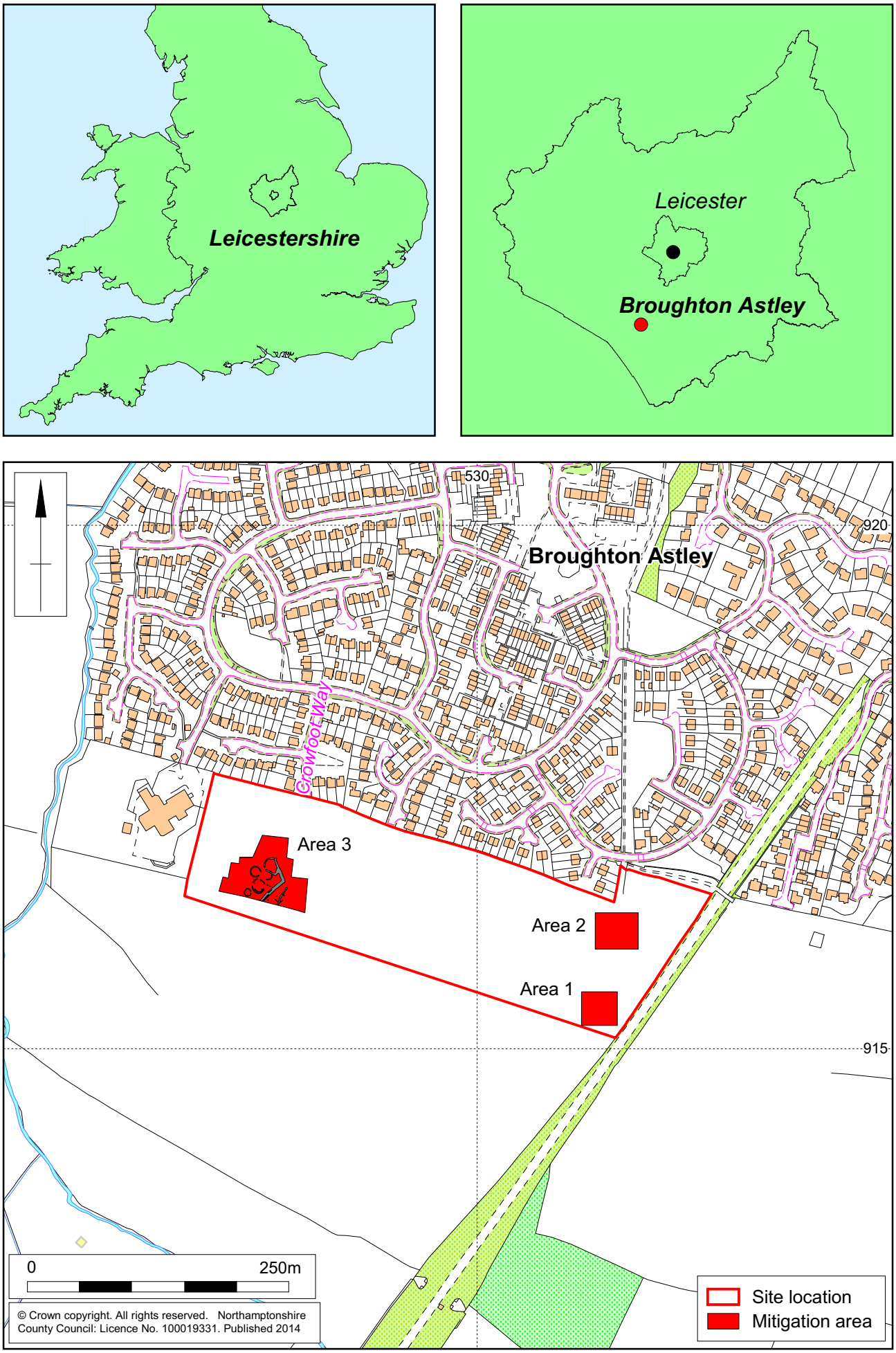
Geology by Steve Critchley

The geology of the site represents a complex mixture of glacial deposits. There has been much new work done in recent years in Leicestershire and adjacent counties to redefine the Pleistocene geology. In the past all the Tills in the Midlands for example, were generally assigned to the Anglian Tills Formation with no attempt at differentiation. The Anglian tills are in fact made up of a series of regional and local till deposits laid down by differing parts of the main ice sheet. The latter was in fact composed of coalescing ice sheets from the east, north, north-east and north-west and each producing tills of differing composition depending upon the rock types and superficial sediments it had crossed/reworked. There was also limited mapping of areas of Glacial sands and gravels as opposed to Glacio-Fluvial sands and gravels as well as general periglacial deposits and former glacial lake deposits.

Areas 1 and 2 lie on the Thrussington Tills which have a reddish ting due to a clast and fines content derived from the Triassic rocks of the northern areas of Leicestershire. The area marked on the site location map as being made up of disturbed ground (the hill) coincides with a residual deposit of Glacial gravels belonging to the Woolston Member and Area 3, lies on clays belonging to the Bosworth Clay Member which are classed as glaciolacustrine deposits from a lake formed at the ice sheet margin. All are intermixed at surface due to periglacial action making it difficult to define individual formations in some areas. All probably overlie the Thrussington Tills which in turn overlies a solid geology composed of clays and mudstones of the Triassic Mercia Mudstones Group.

The sorted gravel areas are probably the result of the natural ground ice sorting of the gravel component of the periglacial active zone under seasonal freeze thaw cycles. This would be added to by slumping/ solifluction of sediment lobes down slope on the permafrost interface from the Glacial gravel deposits and the whole lot mixed via cryoturbation and then ploughed to homogenise to order.

Glacial gravels are characterised by rounded clasts (sometimes of large size) of resistant rock types such as quartzites and quartz arenites because of their depositional environment being high energy and reworking many times over a long time period. All the softer rocks such as limestones get a good trashing to fine fragments and are washed out. There are termed mineralogically and texturally mature sediments and are generally distinctive in contrast to Glacio-Fluvial gravels which are deposited in seasonal fluvial regimes where large amounts of sediment are deposited in one events often as part frozen rafts of sediment buoyed along by melt-waters.



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

Previous work on the site comprises geophysical survey (Clements and Simmonds 2010). This identified no potential archaeological features other than possible remnants of ridge and furrow ploughing. The principal recorded signals related to modern disturbance following the demolition of the structures that may have been a block of modern 20th-century pig sheds.

Subsequent evaluation by trial trenching identified features of probable Middle Iron Age and medieval to post-medieval date (Flavell 2011).

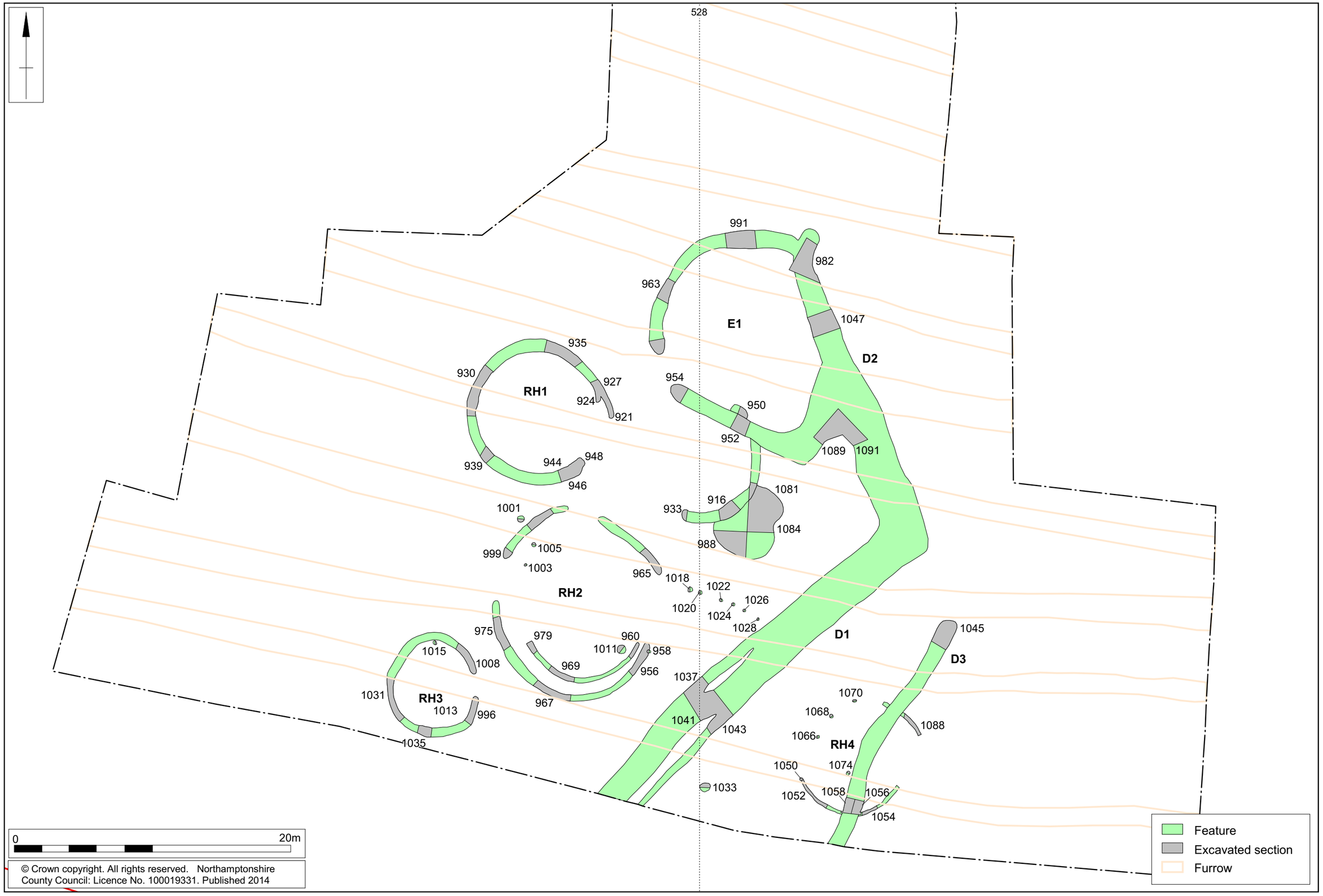
3 METHODOLOGY

Three areas were excavated in accordance with a specification for a programme of archaeological excavation works prepared by MOLA (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology) and approved by Theresa Hawtin (Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council) (Fig 2).

A 360^{o} tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The areas were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. A hand-drawn plan of all archaeological features was made at scale 1:100 and was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature according to the provisions of the WSI (NA 2013). Recording followed standard procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Context sheets were cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs. Photography was with 35mm black and white film, supplemented with digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and related to Ordnance Survey datum. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (IfA 2008).

Each area was originally 20m x 20m. Area 3 was subsequently expanded as archaeological remains continued beyond its original limits. In its final form it measured approx 0.34ha in area, and afforded for a 20m wide buffer zone around the area of archaeological remains with the exception of the southern edge which formed the limit of development.



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Scale 1:250 (A3)

General plan Fig 2

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 General stratigraphy

Underlying geology

The underlying geology of clay was between 0.3-0.6m below the modern ground surface, in Area 3 it was 0.2-0.5m below the surface. The natural occurred as mid reddish-brown and light red-brown clay with occasional angular to sub-angular pebbles, although it was mid grey-brown in Area 3. The subsoil was light grey-brown sandy clay and the topsoil was mid greyish-brown sandy clay, both soils contained occasional ironstone and flint pebbles.

Remnant furrows from the medieval cultivation system and a post-medieval field boundary were present within both areas.

The remnants of a Middle to late Iron Age settlement, consisting of a principal roundhouse and three ancillary structures, a watering hole, and D-shaped enclosure, bounded to the east by an L-shaped ditch were present as well as remnant furrows from the medieval cultivation system.

Table 1: Summary of chronology

Period (Date)	Features
Middle to late Iron Age (Phase 1) (2nd century to 1st century BC)	Roundhouses (RH1-4) Watering hole and C-shaped gully
Middle to late Iron Age (Phase 2) (2nd century to 1st century BC)	L-shaped boundary ditch D1 and D2. RH4 goes out of use, superseded by ditch D3. Fenceline between RH2 and boundary ditch D1
Medieval	Furrows from the open field cultivation system (Areas 1-3)
Post-medieval (18th century)	Boundary ditch (Areas 1 and 2)

4.2 Earlier prehistoric activity

A total of six flints, including four waste flakes, one waste blade and one retouched fragment were recovered. It is largely residual material broadly dating from the Neolithic to early Bronze Age.

4.3 Middle to late Iron Age settlement (Area 3)

The Iron Age settlement occupied a north facing slope to the south of Broughton Astley and comprised four structures, a principal roundhouse, (RH1) and three probable ancillary structures (RH 2-4) to its south. A large inter-cutting pit, probably a watering hole, and a C-shaped gully were located to the east of the principal roundhouse.

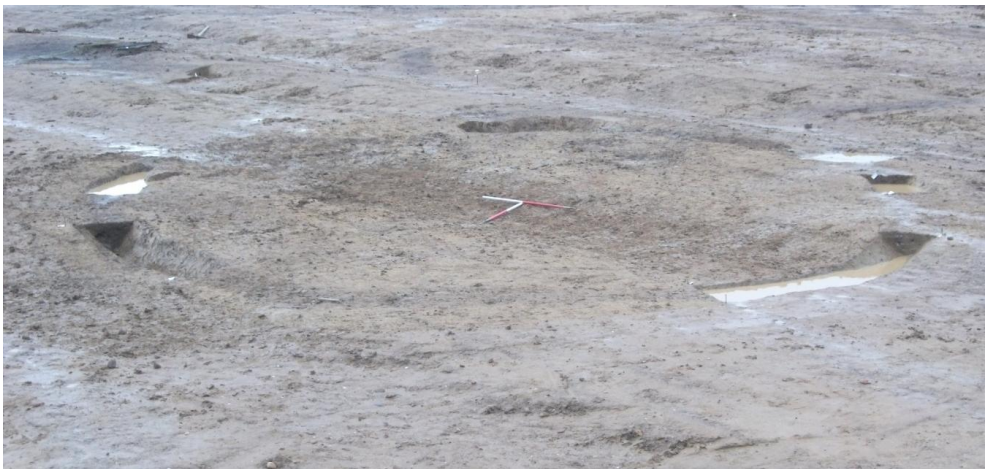
A possible second phase in the development of the site was the excavation of an L-shaped ditch system forming the southern and eastern arm of a boundary along with a D-shaped enclosure or pen which was attached to the boundary ditch. With the excavation of the boundary ditch Roundhouse RH4 went out of use and was superseded by a ditch.

Roundhouses and pit

The principal roundhouse was probably RH1, with the three other structures forming ancillary buildings.

Roundhouse RH1

A ring ditch formed a circle with an internal diameter of 9m north to south and 10m east to west (Figs 2-4). The entrance faced south-east with the ditch straightening out slightly towards the terminals, which formed an entrance 4.50m wide (Fig 4). It may have enclosed a roundhouse 7-8m in diameter but no structural features had survived.

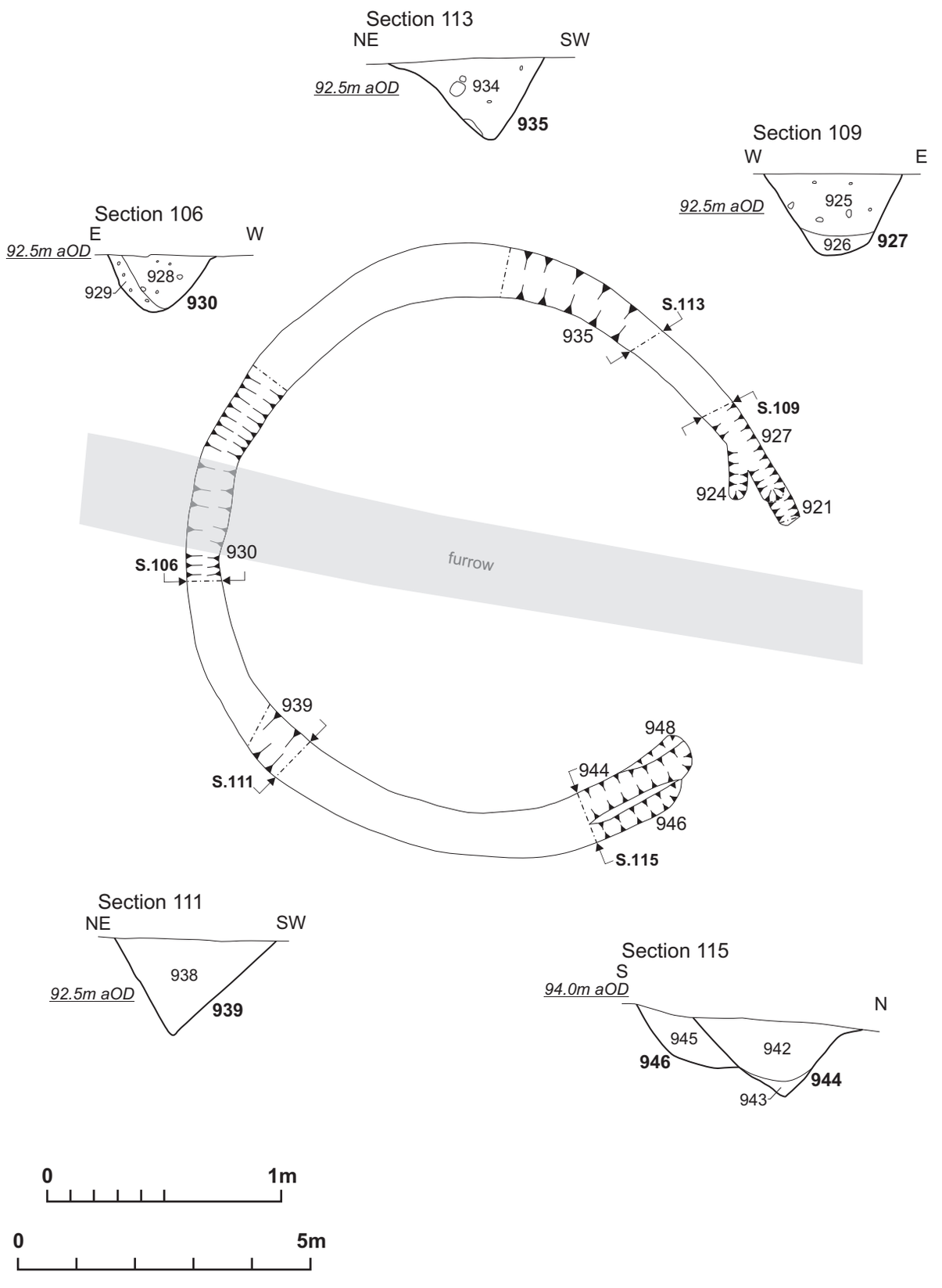


Roundhouse RH1 following excavation, looking south-east Fig 3

Both ditch terminals were re-cut, with the southern terminal modified at least twice and possibly three times. Ditch [946] had a U-shaped profile, 0.24m wide and 0.18m deep, a fill of mid grey-brown silty clay (945), contained Iron Age pottery. It was re-cut on its northern side by ditch [944], slightly extending the length of the gully. This had a V-shaped profile, 0.73m wide and 0.31m deep, with a fill of grey-brown silty clay (942), containing no finds. It was overlain with yellow-brown clay (943) containing Iron Age pottery, animal bone and a moderate amount of burnt stone and charcoal. A small shelf on the southern side [948] suggested a second re-cut. The pottery included scored ware jars with a vessel with a triangular or kite-shaped incised decoration that may have been an owners or makers mark ()see Fig 17).

The northern terminal was modified on three occasions. The primary ditch [924], 0.28m wide and 0.27m deep with a V-shaped profile and a fill of mid grey silty clay (923) was overlain with dark grey-black silty clay with moderate stone and charcoal inclusions (922). It was cut on its southern side by ditch [921] which extended the ring ditch by 1.50m to the south-east. This had a narrow V-shaped profile, 0.29m wide and 0.30m deep, with a fill of mid grey silty clay (921) overlain with dark grey-black silty clay with moderate charcoal inclusions (919). The ditch was then modified again [927] by being shorted by 1m. It had a U-shaped profile, 0.59m wide and 0.35m deep, with a fill of mid grey silty clay (926) overlain with dark grey-black silty clay (925), which contained Iron Age pottery and 11 sherds of briquetage, probably from a cylindrical container used to transport salt, possibly from Cheshire.

The remaining circuit of the ditch was a little narrower and shallower and changed from a V-shaped profile around the terminals [935] [939] to a U-shaped profile [930]. The fill was consistently mid grey-brown silty clay, (934) (938) (929), which contained Iron Age pottery. Pottery recovered from the ring ditch of Roundhouse (RH1) accounted for around a third of the sites total pottery assemblage with a high concentration within the terminals.



Scale 1:100 & 1:25

Roundhouse RH1 Fig 4

Roundhouse RH2

Roundhouse RH2 comprised a wall slot surviving on the south side only and an external gully comprising an interrupted circle, 13m diameter north to south and 12m diameter east to west, with opposing entrances on the eastern and western sides, 5m wide to the east and 3m wide to the west. There may have been a third entrance to the north, but this is uncertain due to disturbance caused by a later furrow (Figs 2, 5 and 6).

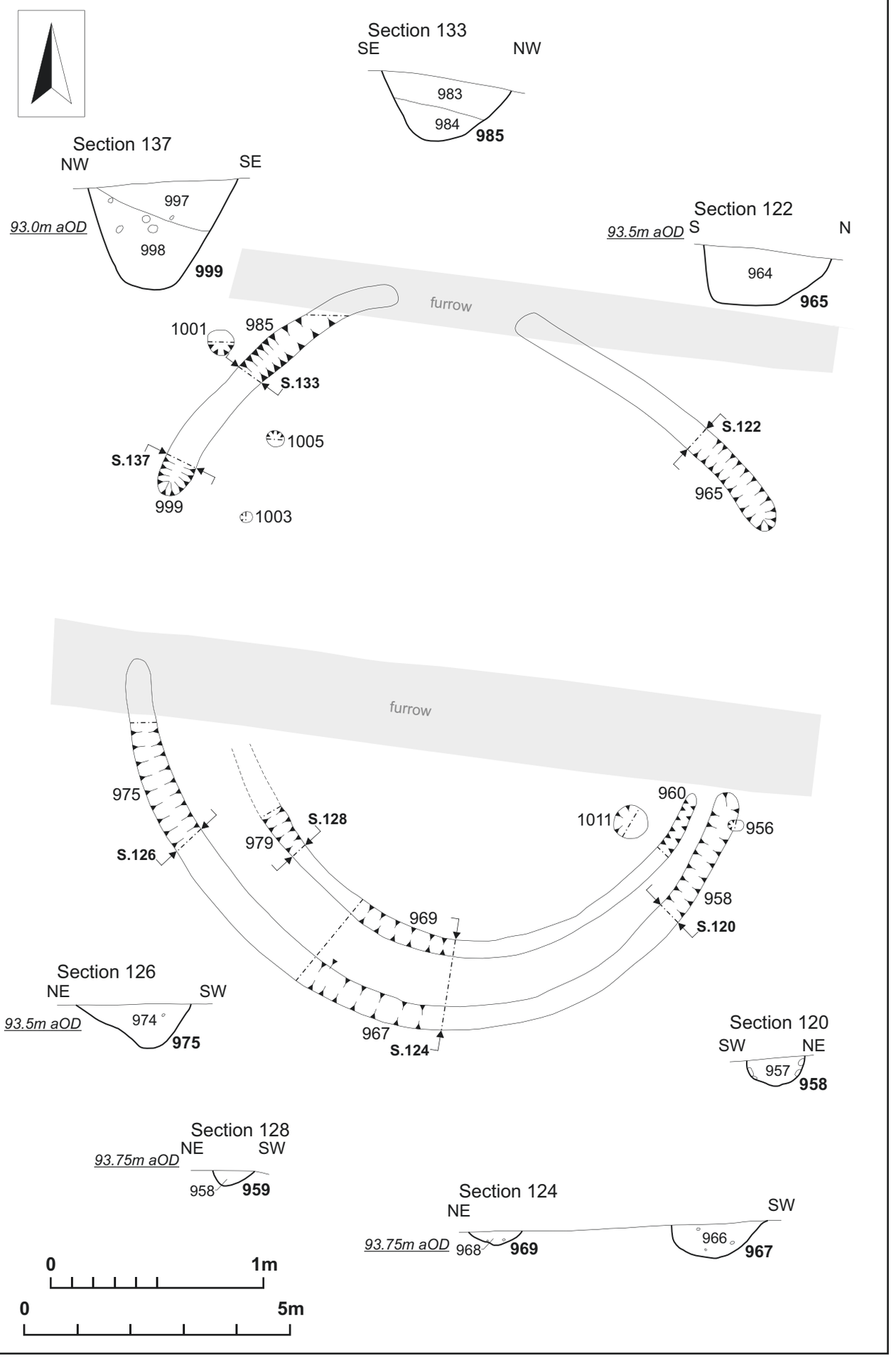
Roundhouse RH2, following excavation, looking south Fig 5

The southern arc of the ring ditch [958] [967] [975] was 0.40m wide and 0.20m deep with a U-shaped profile. The fill, (957) (966) (974), of mid brown-grey sandy clay contained later middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone.

The northern arc of the ring ditch [999] [985] [965] was 0.50-0.70m wide and 0.30-0.50m deep with a U-shaped profile. The fill, (998) (984) (964), of mid brown-grey sandy clay contained Iron Age pottery.

A wall slot, [960] [969] [979], survived on the southern side concentric to the external gully. The gap between the wall slot and external gully varied from 0.30m at the southern terminal to 1.0m to the west, suggesting the roundhouse was 10-11m in diameter. It had a shallow U-shaped profile, 0.20-0.25m wide and 0.10m deep, its fill (959) (968) (978) of mid grey-brown contained burnt animal bone deposited in the eastern terminal.

Within the roundhouse were three postholes/pits. Located just north of the wall slot's eastern terminal was a circular pit [1011], 0.65m in diameter and 0.20m deep, with a fill of mid brown silty clay (1010) overlain with mid brown-black sandy clay with frequent charcoal and burnt stone inclusions (1009). To the north-west were two small postholes just north of the western entrance. Circular posthole [1003] was 0.15m wide and 0.16m deep; 2.0m to its north was a circular posthole [1005], 0.30m wide and 0.15m deep. On the western side, but external to the ring gully, was a single circular posthole [1001], 0.55m wide and 0.19m deep. The postholes were filled with mid grey-brown sandy clay that contained no finds.



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Roundhouse RH2 Fig 6

Roundhouse RH3

Roundhouse RH3 comprised a circular gully with an internal diameter of 6.60m north to south and 5.80m east to west. The entrance faced east with the ditch straightening out slightly towards the terminals, which formed an entrance 1.70m wide (Figs 2, 7 and 8). It may have enclosed a small roundhouse, with a diameter of 4-5m, which probably functioned as an ancillary building.

Roundhouse RH3, following excavation, looking west Fig 7

The ring gully [946] [1008] [1031] [1035] had a V-shaped profile, 0.60m wide and 0.25m deep at the terminals and slightly narrower and shallower to the west. The fill was mid grey-brown sandy clay which contained no finds.

Two postholes [1013] and [1015] were located within the ring gully, they had an average diameter of 0.25m and were 0.07m deep, the fills of mid grey-brown sandy clay contained no finds.

Section 144

N S

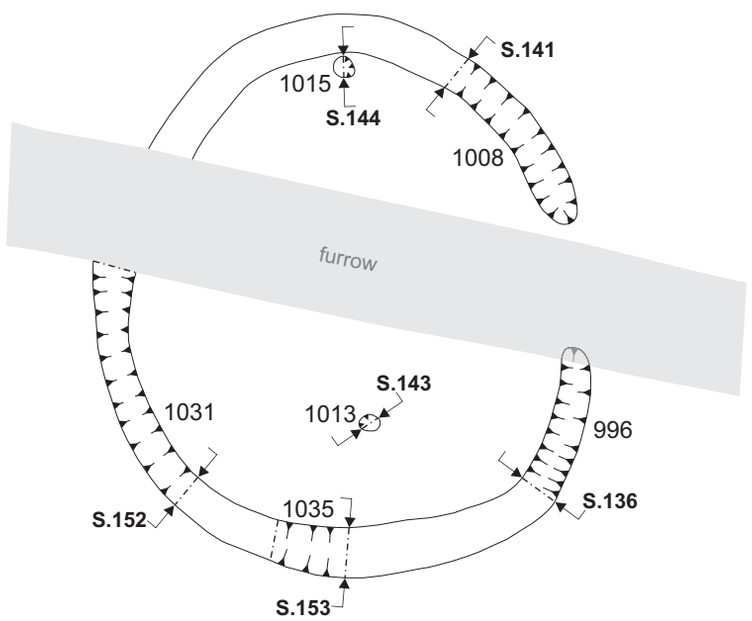
1014 **1015**

Section 141

SW NE

1006

1007 **1008**



Section 152

N S

93.5m aOD

1030

1031

Section 136

SE NW

93.5m aOD

994

995 **996**

Section 153

N S

93.5m aOD

1034

1035

Section 143

NE SW

1012 **1013**

0 **1m**

0 **5m**

Scale 1:100 & 1:25

Roundhouse RH3 Fig 8

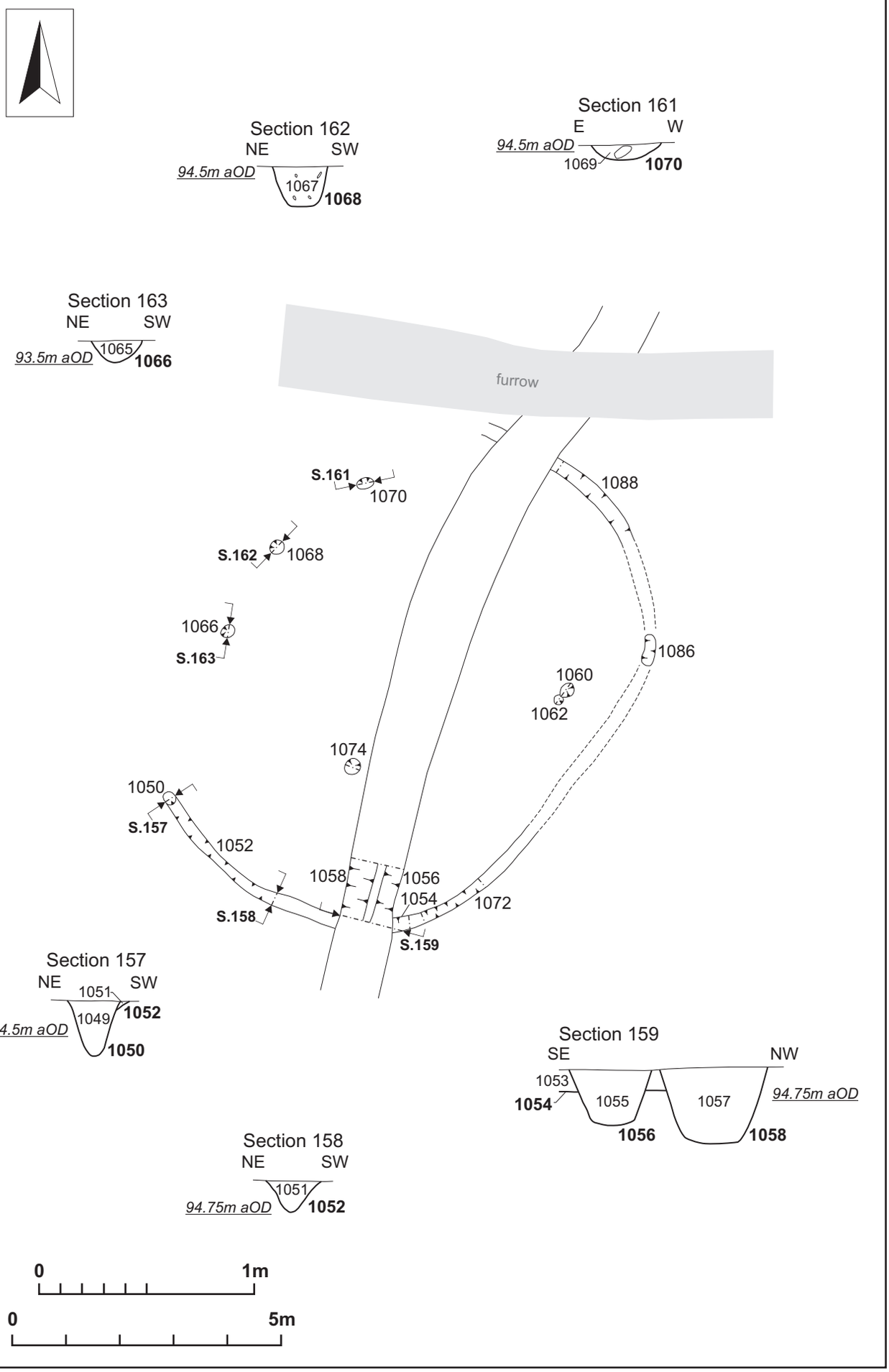
Roundhouse RH4

This structure comprised a ring gully or wall slot, [1052] [1056] [1088], partially surviving, with an arc of postholes possibly defining the western side (Figs 2, 9 and 10). It was oval in plan, 9.5m long north-east to south-west, and 6.6m wide. It seems more likely to have defined a small pen or enclosure, perhaps defined by a timber fence, rather than a roofed structure.

The gully was 0.20m wide and 0.10-0.20m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile and a fill of mid grey-brown sandy clay contained frequent amounts of charcoal but no artefacts.

At the north-west side were four postholes [1066] [1068] and [1070] that formed a partial arc, 1.50m apart that was probably structural. A fourth posthole [1050] was cut into the ring gully and was part of the same structural element. Two isolated postholes [1074] and [1060]/[1062] were located within the ring gully.

Roundhouse RH4, following excavation, looking north-east Fig 9



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Roundhouse RH4 Fig 10

Pit and C-shaped gully

A large pit was located 10m to the south-east of Roundhouse RH1, opposing its entrance (Figs 2 and 11). The pit [988] [1084] was sub-circular, 4.0m in diameter and 0.55m deep with a broad U-shaped profile. Its primary fill of mid grey-brown sandy clay (987) (1083) was overlain by dark grey-brown sandy clay (986) (1082). Both fills contained pottery, animal bone and heat-affected stones. It was cut on its northern side by a sub-circular pit [1081], 1.65m in diameter and 0.19m deep, with a broad U-shaped profile. Its fill of dark grey sandy clay contained animal bone (1080).

Large pit 988 1084, probably a watering hole, looking west Fig 11

Cutting the northern side of the pit was a C-shaped gully [933] [916] [1078], with a U-shaped profile 0.90m wide and 0.30m deep. The fill (915) (932) (1077) of mid grey-brown silty clay contained Iron Age pottery.

The boundary ditch and enclosure

Boundary ditch (D1 and 2)

The settlement was bounded on its eastern side by an L-shaped boundary ditch (Figs 2 and 13). This appears to have occurred late within the development of the settlement. Roundhouses RH1-3 continued in use but Roundhouse RH4 was abandoned. The south-eastern arm (D1) was aligned north-east to south-west, [1037] [1039] [1041] [1043]. The western ditch [1037] had a shallow U-shaped profile, 0.57m wide and 0.18m deep. Its fill of mid red-brown sandy clay was derived from natural in-washing and contained no finds (1036). To the east of ditch [1037] was a sequence of three inter-cutting ditches. The earliest ditch within the sequence [1041] had an undulating U-shaped profile, 0.99m wide and 0.32m deep. Its fill of mid red-brown sandy clay was derived from natural in-washing and contained later Middle Iron Age pottery. It was re-cut on its western side by a ditch [1039] with a shallow U-shaped profile, 0.70m wide and 0.18m deep. Its fill of dark brown-grey silty clay was derived from natural in-washing and contained no finds (1038). Re-cutting the eastern side of ditch [1041] was a U-shaped ditch with eroded sides [1043], 1.20m wide and 0.33m deep. Its fill of mid brown-grey was derived from natural in-washing and contained no finds (1042).

The sequence of re-cutting was possibly due its use for drainage, funnelling water down the slope away from the settlement and feeding into the more substantial ditch defining the southern arm of the boundary therefore silting quickly.

The north-eastern arm of the boundary (D2) was 23m long and was defined by a single ditch [982] [1047] [1091] with a broad V-shaped profile, 2.0m wide and between 0.70-0.90m deep. Its primary fill of mid grey-brown silty clay was derived from natural in-washing with a deliberate deposition of animal bone and later Middle Iron Age pottery in the middle and northern end of the ditch, it was overlain by mid grey-brown sandy clay, also derived from natural in-washing containing animal bone, later Middle Iron Age pottery and burnt stone (980) (1046). The eastern arm of the boundary was 23m long, terminating at the south.

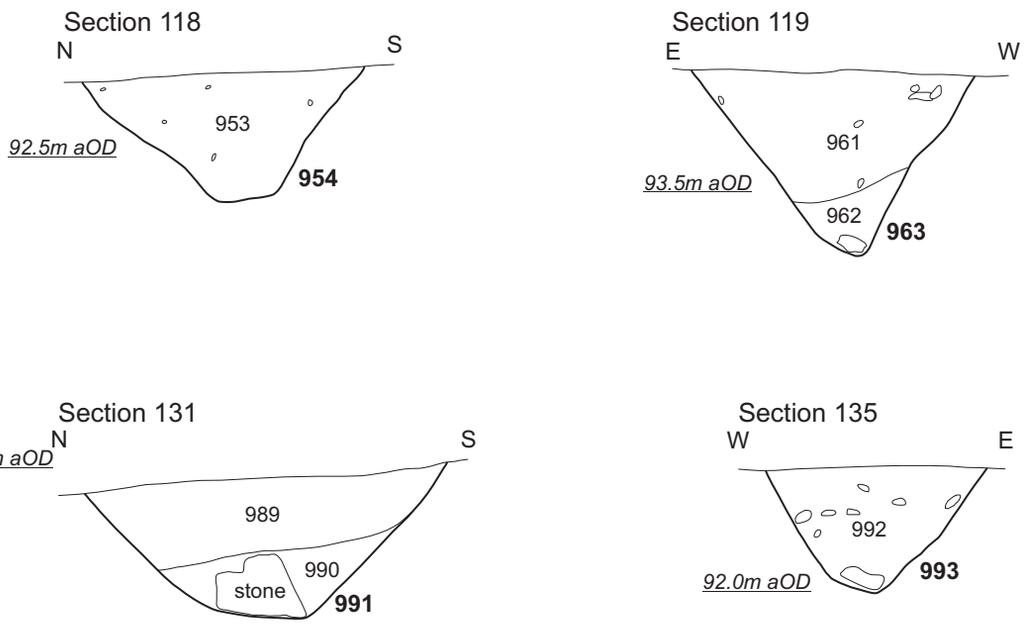
Enclosure (E1)
Attached to the northern end of the boundary ditch was a small D-shaped enclosure or pen (Figs 2, 12 and 13), located at the north of the settlement, 14m north to south and 11meast to west, enclosing a space of 114m^2, with a south-west facing entrance, 2.50m wide.

The southern arm, [954] [952] [1089], was aligned north-west to south-east, 0.94-1.06m wide and 0.45-0.66m deep, with a U-shaped profile. The fill of mid brown-grey sandy clay was derived from natural in-washing and contained pottery and animal bone. At the south-east it turned to a north-east to south-west alignment, merging with the ditch that formed the eastern side of the enclosure.

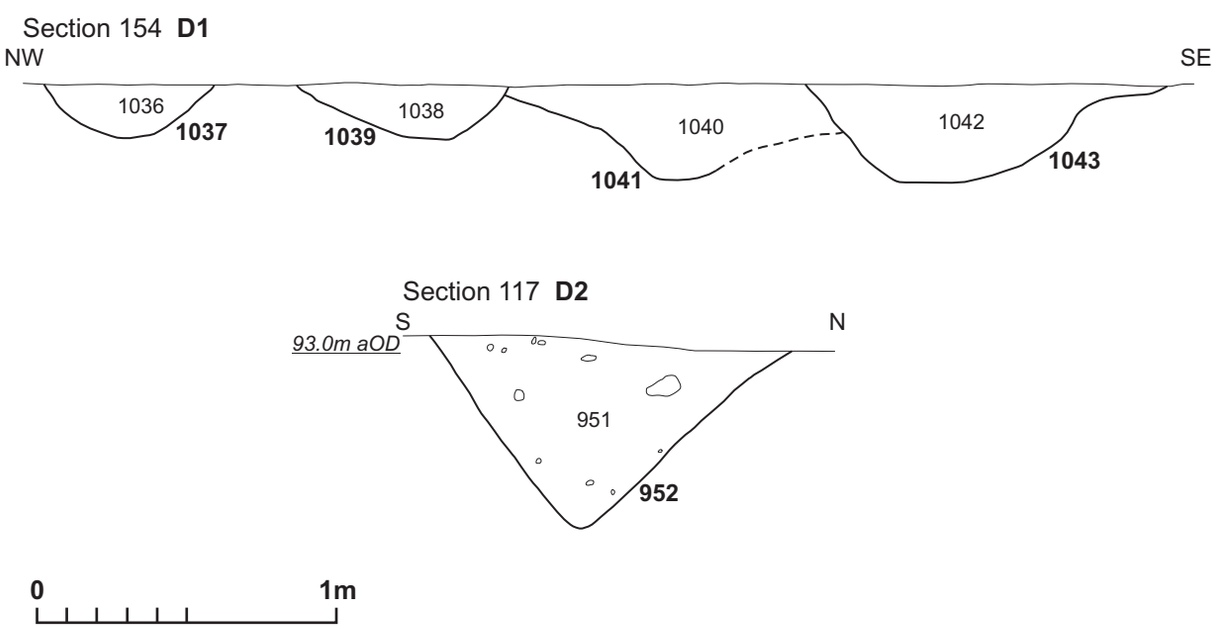
The curving northern arm, [933] [963] [991], was between 1.20m and 65m wide and 0.40m to 0.65m deep with a U-shaped profile. The primary fill of mid brown-grey silty clay containing Iron Age pottery and animal bone (932) (962) (990), was overlain by dark brown-grey silty clay which contained Iron Age pottery (931) (961) (989). Both fills were derived from natural in-washing. To the east it merged with the boundary ditch D2.

D-shaped enclosure (E1), following excavation, looking east Fig 12

Enclosure E1



L-shaped boundary D1 and D2



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Enclosure and L-shaped boundary sections Fig 13

Fenceline
Six small postholes, aligned north-west to south-east, formed a fenceline between Roundhouse RH2 and ditch D1 [1018-28] (Fig 2). They were between 0.12m-0.30m in diameter and 0.06m-0.15m deep with similar fills of mid grey-brown sandy clay, which contained no finds. They were spaced between 0.70m-1.0m apart except for a slightly larger gap of 2.0m between postholes [1020] and [1022], although this may be due to a posthole being lost through truncation. The fenceline, along with the boundary ditch, appeared to form a small yard area outside the eastern entrance to Roundhouse RH2. It also formed a barrier from the large pit to the north and seemed to restrict the route into and out of the roundhouse, letting people only approach and leave the entrance from the south.

Ditch D3
Ditch D3 was aligned north-east to south-west and ran for *c* 21m. The ditch comprised two contemporary parallel gullies, the eastern gully [1056] had a shallow U-shaped profile, 0.30m wide and 0.20m deep. The western gully [1058] had U-shaped profile 0.45m wide and 0.26m deep. The gullies merged into a single ditch to the north, 1.0m wide and 0.25m deep, where it terminated [1045]. No finds were recovered from the mid grey-brown sandy fill. The ditch continued beyond the limit of excavation. It cut Roundhouse RD4 and probably formed a similar function to ditches D1/D2, funnelling run-off away from the settlement.

4.4 Medieval cultivation

Remnant furrows from a medieval ridge and furrow cultivation system were present in all three excavation areas, aligned north-west to south-east. The furrows were spaced 7.0-8.0m apart and were 1.0-2.0m wide, although they were highly truncated by subsequent agricultural activity.

4.5 Post-medieval field boundary

A post-medieval ditch [905] [909] [913], aligned north to south, was present in Areas 1 and 2 and also in Trench 1 of the evaluation. It was 0.60m wide and 0.30m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. It was cut on its western side by a ceramic land drain. Its fill of orange-brown sandy clay (904) (908) (912) contained three sherds of 18/19th-century post-medieval pottery, a pre 19th-century copper alloy button and an 18th-century copper alloy shoe buckle. This ditch is probably part of a post-medieval enclosure boundary which went out of use when the midland railway line was built through the area in 1840. It was probably part of the same boundary seen to the north on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map and currently preserved as a boundary within the modern housing estate.

Post-medieval field boundary [905] [909] [913] Fig 14

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Worked flint by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Six pieces of worked flint were recovered as residual finds in Iron Age contexts. The flint comprised four waste flakes, one waste blade and one retouched fragment. Table 1 provides a summary.

Table 2: Summary of worked flint

Context (SF)	Flake/Blade (portion)	Period	Material	Cortex	Comments
902 (1)	Flake (medial)	--	vitreous light grey-brown	-	abrupt retouch
1069 (3)	Blade (whole)	Early Neolithic	vitreous light grey-brown	-	edge damage
1083 (6)	Flake (distal)	-	honey	-	possible blade fragment
1082 (7)	Flake (whole)	-	mid brown	-	
1082 (8)	Flake (Proximal)	-	vitreous dark grey	dark brown	edge damage
1082 (9)	Flake (Proximal)	-	vitreous light grey	white	possible blade fragment

The condition of the assemblage is good with the flints showing post-depositional edge damage in the shape of occasional nicks on the edges.

The raw material is a vitreous flint, mid grey and brown coloured, and more granular light brown coloured flint. Cortex is dark brown and white in colour and had a smooth, rolled and weathered surface. The raw material was likely to have originated from local gravel deposits.

The assemblage comprised four waste flakes, of which three were broken, and one waste blade. One flint fragment showed abrupt retouch, which may have been part of the working edge of a scraper.

The blade may be of an early Neolithic date. The remainder of the worked flint is not directly dateable but its technological characteristics suggest a broadly Neolithic to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date.

5.2 Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman

A total of 156 sherds, weighing 1145g, of hand-built pottery is dated to the later Middle Iron Age, the 2nd century BC and probably continuing into the 1st century BC, but no later than 50BC. A small quantity of briquetage, a salt container from Cheshire, was also present.

The average sherd weight is 7.3g, which reflects the mixed nature of the assemblage with a few small groups of well-preserved sherds from a limited number of vessels, but many smaller groups of highly fragmented pottery.

Table 3: Quantification of Iron Age pottery

Fabrics Fill/cut	Group	Sherds	F1 Sandy	F2 sand+ granite	F3 Quartz	F4 Shelly	Weight (g) (%)	Sherd groups
980/982	D2	2	0	0	2	0	14	1
981/982	D2	6	6	0	0	0	19	1
1040/1041	D1	1	0	0	1	0	5	1
1048/layer	E	8	0	0	8	0	25	1
951/952	E1	13	1	0	12	0	85	4
961/ 963	E1	2	2	0	0	0	2	1
990/991	E1	7	7	0	0	0	47	1
992/993	E1	1	1	0	0	0	5	1
E & D		**40**	**17**	**0**	**23**	**0**	**202 (18%)**	
925/927	RH1	18	3	15	0	0	93	3
934/935	RH1	21	0	21	0	0	188	1
936/937	RH1	2	2	0	0	0	5	1
942/944	RH1	20	20	0	0	0	320	1
945/946	RH1	25	0	25	0	0	179	3
RH1		**86**	**25**	**61**	**0**	**0**	**785 (69%)**	
966/967	RH2	3	3	0	0	0	9	1
983/985	RH2	3	3	0	0	0	1	1
998/999	RH2	1	0	0	0	1	2	1
RH2		**7**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**12 (1%)**	
1082/1084	PIT	6	6	0	0	0	28	1
914/916	C	3	3	0	0	0	74	1
915/916	C	14	14	0	0	0	44	1
PIT & C		**23**	**23**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**146 (13%)**	
Total		**156**	**71**	**61**	**23**	**1**	**1145**	
%			**46%**	**39%**	**15%**	**1%**		

C=C-shaped gully; PIT=pit1084

Fabrics

F1: sandy *(ULAS/Leicestershire Museums Fabric Q1-Q5)*
Hard with a coarse surface, containing fine sand but only sparse, small rounded quartz. 71 sherds, 46%

F2: sandy with granite *(ULAS/Leicestershire Museums Fabric R2);*
As F1 but also containing angular fragments, up to 4mm diameter, of soft crumbling granite. 61 sherds, 39%

F3: quartz *(ULAS/Leicestershire Museums Fabric Q1-Q5)*
Hard, sandy, containing angular pieces of quartz, 3mm, sometimes projecting through the surface, 23 sherds, 15%

F4: shelly *(ULAS/Leicestershire Museums Fabric S1)*
Containing moderate finely crushed shell. 1 sherd (2g), <1%

From all parts of the site there are sherds of pottery in a hard sandy fabric, forming the most common fabric type, 46% by sherd count. Two variations occurred in discrete areas, suggesting that they derive from a limited number of vessels. All of the sherds containing inclusions of angular granite, forming 39% of the total assemblage, are from roundhouse RH1 and specifically from the eastern half of the ring ditch close to the ditch terminals flanking the entrance. The sherds containing angular pieces of quartz are all from either the main ditch system (D1 & D2) or the ditches forming the abutting D-shaped enclosure (E1). There is only a single small sherd containing shell.

Pottery distribution

More than 2/3 of the assemblage (68% by sherd count) is from the eastern half of roundhouse RH1, with a particular concentration in the southern entrance terminal, [944] and [946]. There is also a scatter of pottery through the fills of the ditch D1/D2 and the D-shaped enclosure (E1), which makes up 18% of the total, but there are no groups of any size. There are also small groups of pottery from pit 1084 and the fills of the C-shaped gully that cuts the pit. Roundhouse RH2 produced only seven sherds. Overall, the pottery clusters in the eastern half of Roundhouse RH1 and in the various ditches, gully and the pit directly to the east of RH1.

The pottery

The pottery is highly fragmented, but based on the available body sherds the assemblage appears to comprise a mixture of medium-sized jars and thicker-walled vessels, 10-12m thick, probably tall storage jars. Of the 19 contexts that produced pottery, six contain scored ware sherds, indicating that scored ware vessels formed a significant proportion of both the smaller and larger jar forms. In a majority of cases, the scoring had been boldly incised (Fig 14).

Rims are generally simple rounded or flat-topped rims, rising straight from the body with no discernible neck, although a single vessel from pit 1084, had a simple rim above an elongated neck, 25mm long.

There are a small number of sherds from better-finished, thin-walled vessels, including a single sherd from ditch 952 and a burnished body sherd from ditch 993, both from the D-shaped enclosure (E1), and a burnished flat-topped rim, black throughout, from roundhouse RH1, ditch 937.

Scored ware body sherd from ditch 935, Roundhouse RH1
(Scale 10mm) Fig 15

A few groups are worthy of further description.

The fill (915) of C-shaped gully [916] contained body sherds from a thick-walled (12mm thick) jar, with deeply incised scoring, and includes a flat-topped rim sherd, probably from the same vessel. The core is dark grey-black but both surfaces are of variable colour ranging from brown to grey-black. There is also a simple, upright rounded rim from a small thin-walled vessel

The fill (934) of ditch [935], roundhouse RH1, also produced a large sherd and fragments from a similar thick-walled jar with deeply incised scoring (Fig 15).

The fill (942) of ditch [944], roundhouse RH1, contained the rim and upper body of a small scored ware jar, with some joining sherds (Fig 16). The vessel was 150mm in diameter at the rim, which was a simple and unevenly fashioned bead rim. The body sherds are 7-8mm thick, and the core is dark grey but the surfaces are largely orange brown with grey-brown patches. The body has scored decoration, worn through usage. Immediately below the rim there are intermittent vertical incisions in groups of three. There is also an unusual triangular or kite-shaped motif, and it might be suggested that this was perhaps added as a makers or owners mark (Fig 17). The rim of this vessel has also separated from the body along an original oblique join, illustrating how the rim and upper body was formed on a single broad coil or slab of clay, with the lower body drawn up over the neck to seal the join.

The fill (951) of ditch [952], enclosure E1, produced a small group from three distinct vessels but all in a hard sandy fabric containing angular quartz with the pieces erupting through the surface. Despite this, one of the vessels was thin walled, with smoothed to burnished surfaces and a grey core and inner surface and a brown outer surface. There is also a single sherd in a finer sandy fabric, uniformly dark gray with a burnished outer surface.

Rim of small scored ware jar from ditch 944, the southern terminal of Roundhouse RH1 (Scale 10mm) Fig 16

Close up showing the unusual triangular or kite-shaped motif incised below the rim of the small jar from ditch 944 (Scale 10mm) Fig 17

A single small abraded sherd, weighing 4g, of Roman pottery, in a soft pink fabric in the fill (945) of ditch [946], roundhouse RH1, can be regarded as intrusive.

The briquetage

From the fill (925) of ditch [927], the northern terminal of roundhouse RH1, there are 11 sherds, weighing 105g, of briquetage. The fabric is soft, light brown with a light brown to pale orange inner surface and a pale orange outer surface, and contains a range of large angular mineral inclusions, up to 8mm, some calcareous, often erupting through the surface. The mixed mineral inclusions are characteristic of salt containers from Cheshire (Morris in Cumberpatch *et al* 2005: http://www.mellorarchaeology-2000-2010.org.uk/archaeology/finds/briquetage.htm, accessed 11 February 2014).

The sherds are slightly curved, 10mm thick, and there are three joining sherds from a stepped, finger-impressed rim, with an internal chamfer (Fig 18). The sherds may have come from a large cylindrical salt container, perhaps 250mm in diameter.

Uneven, finger-impressed stepped rim of a briquetage vessel, inner surface with protruding mineral inclusions (Scale 10mm) Fig 18

Chronology

The presence of quantities of scored ware, often with boldly incised decoration and a predominance of darker colours, with many sherds having dark brown to grey-brown or dark grey surfaces is characteristic of later Middle Iron Age assemblages, although the presence of some finer vessels, some black throughout and with burnished surfaces may suggest that there is also a later element in the assemblage. The suggested date range is the 2nd century BC with a continuation into the 1st century BC, but probably not beyond 50BC.

5.3 **The post-medieval pottery** by Tora Hylton

Three sherds of post-medieval pottery with a combined weight of 168g were recovered from the fill of a post-medieval boundary ditch [905]. The sherds comprise earthenware coarsewares dating to the 18th/19th century. There are two sherds of glazed red earthenware with an internal iron rich slip, the vessel appear to be part of a straight-sided storage jar. The other undiagnostic bodysherd is unglazed, but has a dark red slip on the internal surface.

Table 4: Quantification of post-medieval pottery

Fabric	**context number** 906 **No/Wgt (g)**	
Glazed red earthenware	2	154
Unclassified PM earthenware	1	14

5.4 **Other finds** by Tora Hylton

Two copper alloy small finds were recovered from the fill (904) of a post-medieval boundary ditch [905]. Part of a cast rectangular shoe buckle (SF2) is decorated with a beaded edge framing a separate lateral groove and it dates to *c* 1720-1790. A plain button with curved profile and a cone shank (SF5) also dates to the 18th century.

6 FAUNAL AND ENVIROMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Animal bone by Philip Armitage

Introduction

The hand-collected material totalled 243 specimens of which 35 elements (14.4%) are identified to species and anatomy (Table 6). This very low proportion of identified bones may be explained by the presence in the submitted samples of quantities of highly fragmented material of indeterminate species and anatomy, which nevertheless appears to derive from mammalian bones. No birds, fish, amphibians or reptiles appear to be represented.

In the sieved samples there is again a disproportionate amount of unidentified fragments and only four specimens could be identified to species/anatomy. A precise quantification of the unidentifiable fraction from each sieved sample submitted proved unfeasible owing to the very high degree of fragmentation/pulverisation. Data in Table 5 must therefore be viewed with caution.

Overall, five mammalian species are represented: horse *Equus caballus* (domestic); cattle, *Bos* (domestic); sheep, *Ovis* (domestic); pig, *Sus* (domestic); and dog, *Canis* (domestic).

Methodology

Basic NISPs (Number of identified specimens) data were collected with species/taxon and anatomical determinations in each of the excavated assemblages carried out using the author's modern comparative collections and with reference to standard published osteological/zooarchaeological works (including Schmid 1972 and Getty 1975). Wherever possible, sheep and goat bones and teeth were differentiated following Boessneck *et al'*s (1964) and Payne's (1985) criteria. Although no positive identifications of goat were made and all elements with diagnostic features proved to be sheep, it remained a possibility there may have been a few unrecognised goats among the broken elements. All ovicaprid material in this report is therefore referenced as sheep/goat, except where specific mention is made to positively identified sheep elements. Measurements (in mm) were taken on selected elements using a Draper dial calliper (graduated 0.02 mm); following the system of von den Driesch (1976). Determinations of age and stature estimates were made using standard zooarchaeological formulae (see below).

Deposition and Preservation

Taphonomy and condition of the bone

The general condition/state of preservation of the hand-collected bones is assessed as poor/ fair (moderate) with some reasonably well preserved bone. Alternate episodes of wetting and drying whilst buried appeared to have rendered many of the bones brittle resulting in fragmentation *in situ* in antiquity and/or breakage during excavation/post-excavation handling. None of the bones examined appeared to have been dog-gnawed. Evidence of chopping and knife cuts are seen in only two of the cattle bones and the animal bone assemblage from the site therefore offers limited insight into butchering techniques.

Table 5: Cattle bones showing evidence of butchery (removal of meat from the bone)

Context	Feature	Element	Evidence
981	enclosure ditch 982	humerus	knife cut marks on shaft (above trochlea)
1046	ditch 1047	mandible	chopping and knife cut marks

Burnt bones are present in both the hand-collected and the sieved samples, but cannot be accurately quantified in the sieved material owing to the degree of fragmentation. Apart from a single charred cattle/horse long-bone shaft fragment from (945) fill of ring gully [946] and three charred fragments from (951) fill of ditch [952], all other burnt material comprises extremely small calcined fragments. Notably this calcined material derives entirely from gullies [946, 956, 960, 991 and 1031], and may represent the raked/removed debris from cooking fires in the roundhouses, in which unwanted meat scraps/defleshed bones from meals had been thrown.

Descriptions of the species identified

Horse - A small, pony-sized animal is represented by the innominate bone from (981) fill of enclosure ditch [982].

Cattle – All the cattle bones derive from the typically very small animals encountered in assemblages from other Iron Age sites. The diminutive stature of these cattle is illustrated with reference to the humerus from fill (981) enclosure ditch [982]. Based on the greatest length of this specimen (240.0mm) the withers height in the living animal is estimated to have been just under 1 metre (method of Matolsci 1970; referenced in von den Driesch and Boessneck 1974). The age at death of three of the cattle can be established from the dental eruption and wear in their jawbones: two were between 3 to 5 years and one unlikely to have been less than 5 years nor older than 8 years (criteria of Simonds 1854, 73 – 74; Bond and O'Connor 1999, 346 – 347).

Sheep - The sheep appear to have been small, slender-legged animals. The age at death of two of the sheep can be established from the dental eruption and wear in their jawbones: both aged 1 to 2 years (category D of Payne 1973).

Pig – Represented by a jawbone from (1083) pit [1084] identified as an adult domestic animal.

Dog – A small dog is represented by a femur shaft (epiphyses missing/anciently broken) from (986) pit [988].

Conclusions

Anatomical distributions of the main domesticates (food animals) is indicative of the disposal of waste from local slaughtering, butchering and consumption of the cattle, sheep and pigs. Overall, the animal bone evidence points to the existence of a local pastoral economy, which was based principally on sheep and cattle, with pig of minor importance. There is no evidence among the submitted animal bones for the exploitation of wildfowl, aquatic resources (freshwater fish) or wild game. However, these conclusions must be viewed with a degree of caution given the limited size of the animal bone assemblage available for analysis.

Table 6: Summary counts of number of identified specimens (NISP) by species and anatomies

Element/species	cattle	cattle	sheep/ goat	sheep/ goat	pig	horse	dog
	Hand	Sieved	Hand	Sieved	Hand	Hand	Hand
skull	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
mandible	4	-	1	-	1	-	-
upper cheekteeth	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
lower cheekteeth	2	-	1	1	-	1	-
indet.vertebral frag.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
rib	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
scapula	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
humerus	3	-	1	-	-	-	-
innominate	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
femur	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
tibia	3	-	3	1	-	-	-
metatarsus	1	-	2	-	-	-	-
phalanx II	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
long bone shaft frag.	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Totals	**18**	**1**	**12**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**1**

6.3 Charred plant materials by Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

The samples were bulk floated by MOLA and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 7. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots, seeds, chaff, leaf fragments and thorns were also recorded.

Results

Plant macrofossils, including charcoal/charred fragments, are generally scarce. Wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are recorded, but most are quite poorly preserved and fragmentary. However, of the complete grains, all are of an elongated 'drop' form typical of spelt (*T. spelta*), and spelt glume bases are also recorded. Seeds are particularly scarce, with all occurring as single specimens within an assemblage. All are of common segetal weeds, with taxa noted including brome (*Bromus* sp.), goosegrass (*Galium* sp.) type, wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*) and dock (*Rumex* sp.). Individual sedge (*Carex* sp.) nutlets are recorded within the assemblages from sample 3, ring gully [944] of Roundhouse RH1, and sample 10, ring gully [1031] of Roundhouse RH3. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are present throughout, but rarely at a high density.

Other remains are also relatively scarce. The fragments of black porous material are all probable residues of the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures. Comminuted bone fragments (some of which are burnt/calcined) are also recorded along with small pellets of burnt or fired clay. The small pieces of coal, which occur within five of the assemblage studied, are all probably intrusive within the features from which the samples were taken. Such contamination is common where features have

suffered a degree of subsequent disturbance via root penetration or similar bioturbation.

Conclusions

In summary, the assemblages are all small and sparse, and the few plant remains which are recorded are quite poorly preserved. It would appear most likely that the few remains which are recorded are derived from domestic detritus which was swept out from the interiors of the round houses and subsequently incorporated into features across the excavated area. Such low densities of material are often noted within such contexts, as the houses appear to have been kept relatively clean, probably as a means of preventing accidental fires. The presence of cereal chaff within domestic assemblages is commonly seen, as cereal processing waste was frequently used as tinder, kindling or fuel.

Table 7: Charred plant macrofossils

Sample	**1**	**3**	**7**	**8**	**10**	**11**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**9**
Context	**925**	**942**	**966**	**959**	**1030**	**1051**	**951**	**989**	**986**	**1009**
Feature	**927**	**944**	**967**	**960**	**1031**	**1052**	**952**	**991**	**988**	**1011**
Feature type	**RG RH1**	**RG RH1**	**RG RH2**	**RG RH2**	**RG RH3**	**RG RH4**	**Ditch**	**Gully**	**Pit**	**Pit**
Cereals										
Triticum sp. (grains)	x	x	-	xcffg	-	-	-	-	xfg	-
(glume bases)	x	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
T. spelta L. (glume bases)	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cereal indet. (grains)	x	x	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Herbs										
Bromus sp.	x	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Fabaceae indet.	xcf	-	-	-	-	xcf	-	-	-	-
Galium sp.	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Persicaria maculosa/lapathifolia	-	-	-	-	x	=	-	-	-	-
Raphanus raphanistrum L. (siliqua)	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rumex sp.	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wetland plants										
Carex sp.	-	x	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Other plant macrofossils										
Charcoal <2mm	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xxxx	xxx	x	xx	xxx
Charcoal >2mm	x	x	x	x	x	xx	x	-	-	x
Charcoal >5mm	-	x	-	-	-	x	-	-	x	-
Charcoal >10mm	-	-	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	-
Charred root/stem	x	x	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Indet.seeds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x
Other remains										
Black porous 'cokey' material	x	x	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Bone	x	-	-	-	x	-	x xb	x	x	-
Burnt/fired clay	x	xx	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-

Sample	**1**	**3**	**7**	**8**	**10**	**11**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**9**
Context	**925**	**942**	**966**	**959**	**1030**	**1051**	**951**	**989**	**986**	**1009**
Feature	**927**	**944**	**967**	**960**	**1031**	**1052**	**952**	**991**	**988**	**1011**
Feature type	**RG RH1**	**RG RH1**	**RG RH2**	**RG RH2**	**RG RH3**	**RG RH4**	**Ditch**	**Gully**	**Pit**	**Pit**
Burnt stone	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Small coal frags.	x	-	-	x	x	-	x	-	x	-
Sample volume (litres)	**40**	**40**	**40**	**20**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**30**	**40**	**40**
Volume of flot (litres)	**0.1**	**<0.1**	**0.1**	**<0.1**	**0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**	**<0.1**
% flot sorted	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Key to Table
x = 1–10 specimens; xx = 11– 50 specimens; xxx = 51–100 specimens; xxxx = 100+ specimens
cf = compare; fg = fragment; b = burnt; RG = ring gully, RH = roundhouse

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Mesolithic to early Bronze Age

The presence of worked flint, residual in later features, indicates some Neolithic to early Bronze Age activity in the vicinity, although no features belonging to this period were identified.

7.2 Late middle to late Iron Age settlement

Analysis of the pottery suggests a late middle Iron Age date, the 2nd century BC, and probably continuing into the 1st century BC but no later than 50BC. The two phase, but near contemporary, plan would suggest that the site was not in use for many generations.

Site development and morphology

Settlement at Crowfoot Way began during the late middle Iron Age with the establishment of three roundhouse structures, a large pit, probably a watering hole and a D-shaped internal enclosure bounded to the east by an L-shaped ditch. To the south-east of the boundary ditch was a further roundhouse structure which was superseded by a ditch.

The settlement's probable principal roundhouse, Roundhouse RH1 may have been 8m in diameter. The entrance faced south-east and the ring gully terminals had been re-modelled on three occasions. It was from these re-modelled terminals that a majority of the material culture was recovered.

Opposite the entrance was a large pit that probably functioned as a watering hole, it was re-cut at least once suggesting it was maintained. A C-shaped gully cut its western side which may have acted as drain to the watering hole, taking any excess water away from the front yard space of Roundhouse RH1.

A second roundhouse, RH2, had its wall slot preserved on the southern side which indicated that the roundhouse would have been 10-11m in diameter and is at the upper end of the diameters for middle Iron Age roundhouses. The roundhouse had a different form to Roundhouse RH1 with opposing east and west entrances. A fenceline aligned from its north-eastern terminal to the boundary ditch suggests that the entry and exit of the roundhouse was controlled, with the eastern entrance only accessible from the south, it may have also been a barrier to the watering hole to the north.

Two further roundhouses, RH3 and RH4, probably formed ancillary buildings.

The form of the settlement was modified shortly after its foundation. Roundhouse RH4 was abandoned and two parallel ditches (D1/2 and D3) were constructed to channel run-off. away from the settlement. A small animal pen or enclosure was appended to Ditch D1/2.

It is not known if the settlement continued to the south beyond the limits of the development area, the eastern L-shaped boundary continued south but for how far is not known. The settlement was not bounded to the north and west.

Economy

It was the eastern side of Roundhouse RH1 from which the highest proportion of the pottery and animal bone assemblage recovered from site was deposited, with small groups recovered from the enclosure ditches and C-shaped gully. The assemblage

from RH1 also included briquetage sourced from Cheshire, indicative of long distance trade. Other evidence to establish the economy of the settlement is sparse. It is interesting to note that the distribution of the material culture was focused on RH1 with very little recovered from Roundhouse RH2 and none from Roundhouses RH3 and 4. This suggests that the main domestic focus was within Roundhouse RH1 with other activities taking place within the other buildings.

Cereal grains of wheat and spelt glumes with wheat chaff are recorded at low volumes and it has been suggested that they are from domestic detritus swept out of the houses, with the wheat chaff used as kindling in domestic fires. The absence of any archaeological evidence for grain storage (four-post structures) or processing (querns) indicates that arable farming or crop processing was not taking place near the site and crops were not being processed in the immediate vicinity.

The animal bone assemblage is sparse but shows a pastoral economy based on cattle and sheep. Pigs, horse and dog were also recorded. The assemblage indicates that slaughtering, butchery and consumption of sheep, cattle and pig was taking place locally.

It is unclear if the site was self sufficient on its own, it may have formed one part of a wider mixed economy

The wider context

Many Iron Age sites have been located in the Midlands on the Boulder Clay which was previously believed to be barren of settlement, adding to the previously known settlement on the lighter soils and along the river valleys (Clay 2001).

Contemporary clayland sites at Enderby, to the south-west of Leicester and Humberstone, to the east of Leicester, 13 miles north-east of Broughton Astley were larger settlements. At Enderby there were several roundhouses both within and outside an enclosure, suggesting a possibly extended family settlement (Clay 2004) or possibly a hierarchical society, with those of higher status living within an enclosed space and the lower-status people outside. At Humberstone, to the east of Leicester, a significantly larger settlement, covering at least 8ha, shows a sequence of phases from a small farmstead to a large settlement in the late Iron Age, demonstrating a successful expansion from a small family farmstead to an extended settlement (Thomas 2011).

At Airfield Farm, Market Harborough, 15 miles to the south-east, two small farmsteads, comprising a single roundhouse and internal enclosure within irregular rectangular enclosures, linked by a trackway were contemporary with the site at Broughton Astley (Clarke 2009). Further survey of the surrounding area revealed a shift of settlement focus to the south in the Romano-British period (Clarke 2010).

At Coventry Road, Hinckley in Leicestershire a Middle Iron Age settlement comprised an irregular enclosure with three internal and four external roundhouses. As at Broughton Astley, the settlement was only occupied for a generation or two during the middle Iron Age. Unlike Broughton Astley, the site was reoccupied during the Roman period (Chapman 2004).

The site lies in the territory of the Iron Age tribe of the *Corieltavi* (formally *Coritani*), whose tribal capital was in Leicester (*Ratae Corieltauvorum*), although other suggestions are Sleaford, Lincolnshire or Medbourne, Leicestershire, which became a Roman small town (Clay 2001). It is likely that the people living in and around Broughton Astley would have been part of an extended family network firstly, and part of the larger tribal group secondly.

Disuse

The site appears to have been abandoned no later than the mid 1st century BC and certainly did not continue into the Romano-British period. Why the site was abandoned is unknown, the site was located on a north facing slope on geology prone to waterlogging, settlement may have relocated to a nearby location outside the development area or changes to the organisation of the landscape and economy may have made the site unsustainable.

No further identified activity occurred at the site until the area was put under the plough in the medieval period.

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