



**Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
on land east of Buckingham Road
Steeple Claydon
Buckinghamshire
April 2015**

Report No. 15/80

Author: Claire Finn

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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Project Manager: Anthony Maull
Site Code: AYBCM:2015.80
NGR: 470450 227142

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-212709	
Project name	Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on land east of Buckingham Road, Steeple Claydon, Buckinghamshire, April 2015		
Short description	Archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by MOLA Northampton on land east of Buckingham Road, Steeple Claydon, Buckinghamshire. The evaluation targeted geophysical anomalies, which were identified as two circular enclosures, two pits and a series of field boundary ditches. A large quantity of Roman pottery recovered from the ditches and pits may indicate that these are peripheral remains associated with a Roman settlement.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Dindol 2015)		
Current Land use	Arable		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type/ period	Roman circular enclosure ditches and pits, undated field boundaries, ridge and furrow		
Significant finds	Roman pottery and building materials		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Buckinghamshire		
Site address	Buckingham Road, Steeple Claydon		
Study area	c4ha		
OS Easting & Northing	470450 227142		
Height OD	c90m – 100m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Buckinghamshire CC Senior Archaeological Planning Officer		
Project design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull		
Sponsor or funding body	Manor Oak Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	20 April 2015		
End date	29 April 2015		
ARCHIVES		Location (Accession no.)	Content
Physical	MOLA Northampton Archive Store AYBCM:2015.80		Pot; tile; animal bone; Fe object; pipe
Paper			Site records; background data, photographs; plans and sections on permatrace
Digital			Survey data; reports; digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report			
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land east of Buckingham Road, Steeple Claydon, Buckingham, April 2015		
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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	
2	BACKGROUND	
	2.1	Location, topography and geology
	2.2	Archaeological and historical background
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	
4	METHODOLOGY	
5	EVALUATION RESULTS	
6	THE FINDS	
	6.1	The pottery by Rob Perrin
	6.2	Roman ceramic tile by Pat Chapman
	6.3	Querns by Andy Chapman
	6.4	Other finds by Tora Hylton
	6.4	The animal bone by Adam Reid
7	DISCUSSION	
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	
	APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY	

Tables

Table 1: Pottery quantification

Table 2: Pottery fabrics

Table 3: Pottery forms

Table 4: Pottery from fill (211) of curvilinear ditch [212]

Table 5: Pottery from pit [206]

Table 6: Pottery from pit [210]

Table 7: The taxa present

Figures

Front cover: General view of site, looking north-east

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Steeple Claydon trenching

Fig 3: Trench 1, plan and ditch sections

Fig 4: Trench 2, plan and pit sections

Fig 5: Trench 2, pit 210 and pit/ditch 212

Fig 6: Trench 3, plan and ring ditch sections

Fig 7: Trench 3, ring ditch sections

Fig 8: Trench 4, plan and ring ditch sections

Fig 9: Trench 5, plan and sections

Fig 10: Illustrated pottery, 1-5

Fig 11: Overview of trench 1, looking east

Fig 12: Overview of trench 2, looking east

Fig 13: Overview of trench 3, looking north

Fig 14: Overview of trench 4, looking north-east

Fig 15: Overview of trench 5, looking south-west

Fig 16: Overview of trench 6, looking south

Fig 17: Overview of trench 7, looking west

Fig 18: Overview of trench 8, looking south

Fig 19: Overview of trench 9, looking north

Fig 20: Overview of trench 10, looking west

Back cover: General view of site after backfilling, looking north-west

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on land east of Buckingham Road Steeple Claydon, Buckinghamshire April 2015

Abstract

Archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by MOLA Northampton on land east of Buckingham Road, Steeple Claydon, Buckinghamshire. The evaluation targeted geophysical anomalies, which were identified as two circular enclosures, two pits and a series of field boundary ditches. A large quantity of Roman pottery recovered from the ditches and pits may indicate that these are peripheral remains associated with a Roman settlement.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by Manor Oak Homes to conduct a trial trench evaluation on a c4ha area of arable land to the east of Buckingham Road, Steeple Claydon (NGR SP 705 272; Fig 1). The Buckinghamshire County Council's Senior Archaeological Planning Officer (BCCSAPO) had advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation, comprising geophysical survey and trial trenching, should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological levels or dated environmental levels within the site in advance of proposed development. This work was carried out in order to further inform decisions regarding the potential impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource. A detailed magnetometer survey was undertaken on the 9 April 2015 (Dindol 2015). The second phase of works, comprising the trial trench evaluation was subsequently undertaken between 20th-29th April 2015.

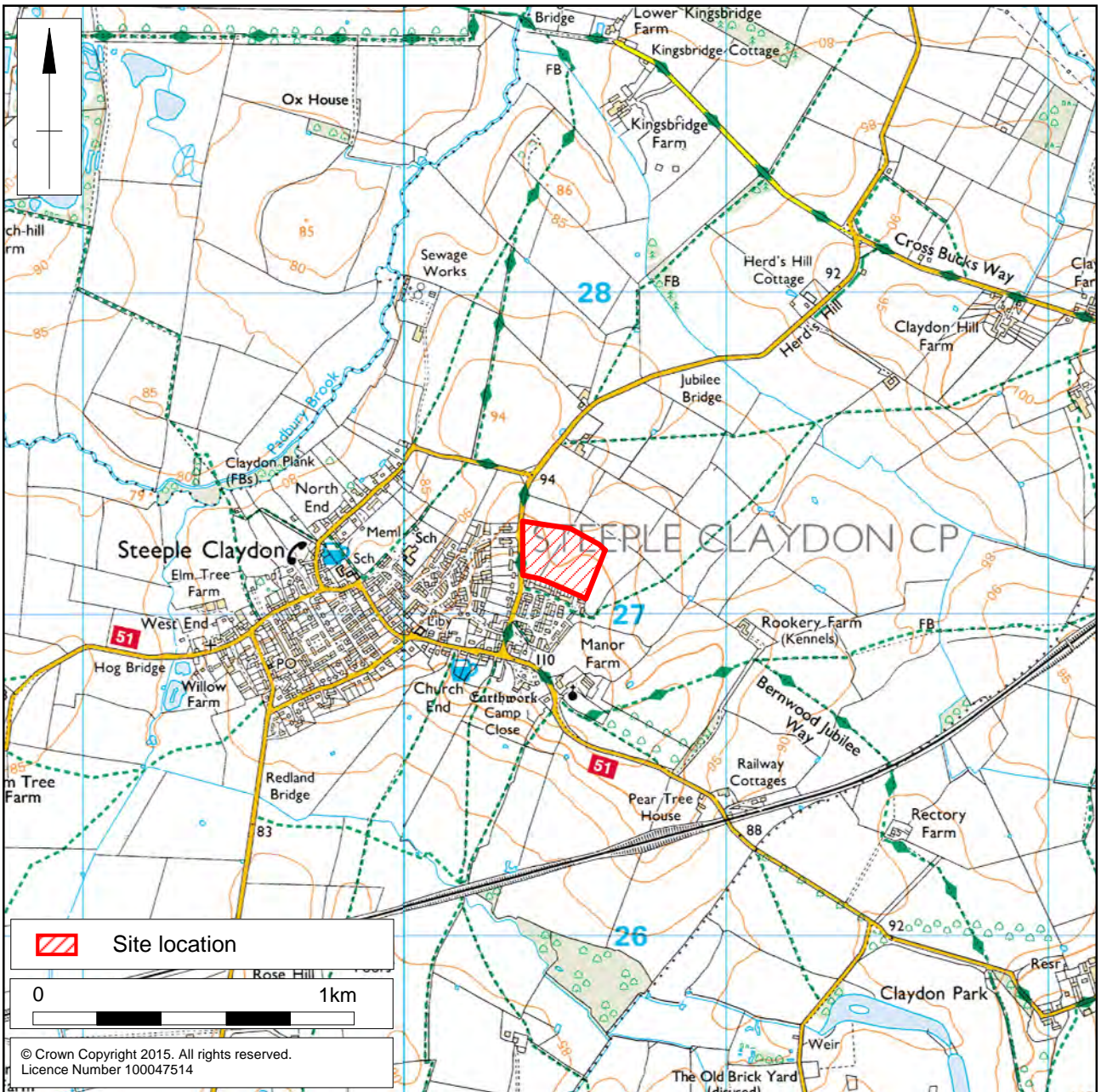
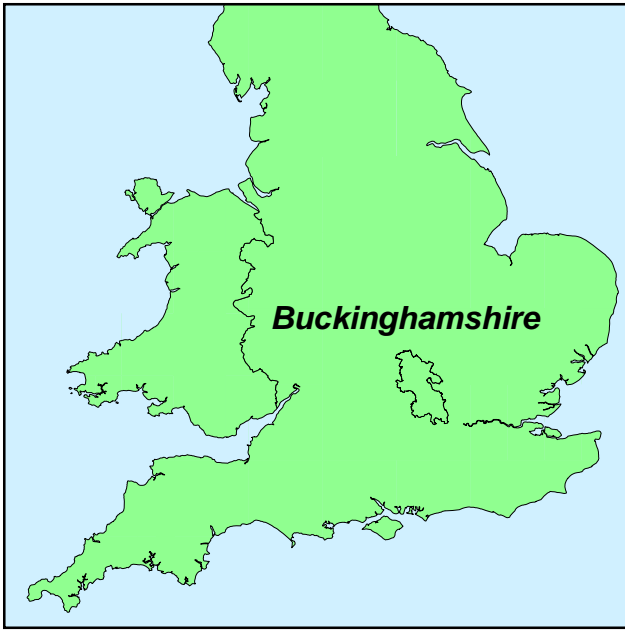
All works were undertaken in accordance with the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service's brief for trial trench evaluation (BCAS 2014), the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA (Simmonds and Dindol 2015). The evaluation was carried out according to the ClfA's *Code of Practice* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014b), and the MOLA *Fieldwork Manual* (2014).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The proposed development area (NGR SP 705 272), comprising c4ha of arable land, is situated on the north-eastern edge of Steeple Claydon. It is bounded to the west by Buckingham Road and to the south by modern residential buildings. Open fields lie to the north and east, with hedgerow boundaries. The site encompasses the southern unbounded portion of two rectangular fields.

The village is situated on top of a hill overlooking Claydon Brook to the north. The site occupies a gentle, south-west-facing slope at an elevation of c85m – 95m aOD. Its geology comprises mudstone, overlain with Pleistocene sands and gravels (BGS 2015).



Scale 1:20,000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

A 500m search radius of the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record data (HER) was undertaken as part of the WSI. There are no known designated heritage assets within the proposed development area, and listed buildings are the only assets identified within the wider 500m radius.

In terms of prehistoric archaeology, the HER records no evidence of any find spots within several kilometres. Roman archaeology is also fairly sparse, with the only evidence within the immediate area being two rim sherds of Roman pottery which was recovered just to the south of the village in allotments (Farley 1975, 139), and some 3rd-century AD coins recovered in the 17th century (Downs 1904, 2, 208). A single undated inhumation was reportedly found to the south of the site during sewer works at Manor Farm (MBC2145/ EBC10319).

Steeple Claydon settlement predated the Norman Conquest. The manor (MBC2431) was held at the time of the Conquest by Queen Edith. In the Domesday survey of 1086, the manor was held by Alric the cook after which it reverted to the crown. The manor was situated in Lamua Hundred and there are records of a Hundred court (MBC7904) being located on a hill near the church. Earthworks defining an encampment which may relate to the Hundred court are still in existence. The medieval village core (MBC2382) was centred on St Michael's church and the manor. Originally the village was larger; earthworks at Manor Farm (MBC2433 and 2434) and to the south-east of the churchyard (MBC7905) comprising house platforms were visible on RAF aerial photographs. House platforms and trackways were also visible on more recent aerial photographs at North End Farm (MBC6953 & 6954).

St Michael's Church is recorded as having a 14th-century chancel with 15th-century and post-medieval additions and alterations. It is not known if there was an earlier Saxon foundation. Archaeological work in the churchyard (MBC2530) taking place in advance of service trench installation and the construction of a new meeting room (EBC17137, 17146 & 16051) recovered a number of undated and post-medieval inhumations (Richards 2008). They are thought to date from the medieval and post-medieval periods. St Michael's Church also has WWI and WWII memorials in the form of a stained glass window and a wooden Roll of Honour (MBC3305).

The medieval open field system ensured that ridge and furrow cultivation was taking place around the village on all sides. Records held by BCC HER indicate the proposed development area was under cultivation in the medieval period. Aerial photographs from 1945 indicate that the strips in the western field were aligned south-east to north-west, and the strips in the eastern field were aligned north-east to south-west. However, the earthworks in the development area do not seem to be visible in present day satellite photography, while extant cultivation earthworks immediately to the north of the site are in good condition. Documentary records suggest that there was a vineyard within the manor in the 13th century (MBC2435).

The village was the location of a parliamentary encampment during the English Civil War. In 1644 Cromwellian forces camped near the manor in advance of the skirmish at Hillesden Hall to the north-west. The hall was on one of the routes between Newport and Oxford which King Charles I had made his base of operations. The parliamentary forces were successful in taking and then destroying Hillesden Hall (Page 1927). The

encampment at Steeple Claydon was centred on Camp Barn (MBC5965/ DBC4387). Extant earthworks at Camp Close (MBC2145) and Camp House (MBC5964) are said to indicate the defensive works defining the encampment.

Agriculture continued to be the main economy into the post-medieval period. Although parliamentary enclosure did not take place until 1795 (Page 1927), there are small areas which were enclosed from the medieval period (HBC1949). A new manor house (MBC2432/ DBC2833) was constructed in the 18th century. The majority of the historic standing buildings in the village date from the 17th century and include timber-framed structure at Foxgloves (DBC3630), a timber and thatch public house 'The Phoenix' (DBC4736) and three timber and brick structures on Queen Catherine Road (DBC4734, 3676 & 4049). In 1656 a brick school building (MBC1276/ DBC3631) was constructed by Sir Thomas Chaloner. The buildings forming 'Chaloner's School' are now the village library and village hall.

Historic Ordnance Survey maps show that little has changed in within the proposed development area within the past century. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1878-1880 shows that the footpath which crosses the far south-eastern corner of the area was already in existence by this date. A field boundary aligned north-west initially joined the north-north-west field boundary at the top of the eastern field to Buckingham Road, dividing the western field in half. This boundary disappeared between 1982 and 2003. By 1923, adjacent field to the south was in use as allotments. Development in the area around the site had begun by 1952, when a line of residences with narrow gardens were constructed along the west side of Buckingham Road. Between 1959 and 1977, this row of houses was extended to the north, and the field adjacent to the south of the site was developed as a housing estate, with properties up to the field boundary.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource, and to inform further planning decisions regarding the site. The trial trench evaluation was designed to gather information regarding the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of important archaeological remains within the application area:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any archaeological levels or dated environmental levels present;
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present;

- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

Specific research objectives were drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (English Heritage 1991; Hey and Hind 2014).

4 METHODOLOGY

Nine trenches measuring 50x1.8m and one measuring 55x1.8m were excavated. The location of the trenches was informed by the results of the geophysical survey in order to sample possible archaeological features, along with potentially 'blank' areas. This trenching strategy provided a 4% sample of the proposed development area.

The trenches were plotted on the ground prior to the commencement of work using Leica Viva GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey. All site levels were related to Ordnance Datum.

The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed by a mechanical excavator to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these are absent, the natural substrate. The machined surface was cleaned by hand sufficiently to identify and establish the extent of archaeological features. Trenches containing archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50. Complex features will be planned at scales of between 1:20 to 1:10, as appropriate. The work was carried out under continuous archaeological supervision, by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All archaeological features were given a separate context number. Deposits were described on pro-forma trench sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Unstratified animal bone and modern material was not retained. The trenches and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. Section drawings at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, site plans at a scale of 1:50, monotone negatives, and high resolution digital photographs formed the main part of the visual record of the works. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

Once the evaluation was completed and the site signed off by BCCSAPO, the trenches were backfilled, with the topsoil replaced uppermost and lightly compacted.

Scale 1:2000 (A4)

Steeple Claydon, trenching

Fig 2



5 EVALUATION RESULTS

Features of archaeological interest were located in the western of the two fields. The trenches in the eastern field were numbered 7, 8, 9, and 10, and produced consistent soil types and horizons. The natural geology in this area comprised mixed clays, mainly orange sandy clay changing to grey-blue clay (703, 803, 903, 1003). Trenches 7, 8 and 9 contained subsoil, formed of mid orange-brown sandy silted clay with occasional gravels and chalk (702, 802, 902). The topsoil in this area was mid grey-orange sandy silt with moderate gravel, flint and chalk inclusions (701, 801, 901, 1001). No archaeological features or finds were identified in the trenches in the eastern field.

Trenches 1 to 6 were located in the western field. The natural geology in this area was highly mixed, and variation was seen across the trenches. In trench 1, the natural was yellow-grey sandy clay with pockets and bands of mixed orange sandy gravels and blue clay (103). In trench 2, the natural comprised mixed orange-brown sandy clay with frequent large cobbles and gravels with some reddish sandy patches (203). To the east, in trenches 3, 4 and 5, the natural clay was grey-green in colour with yellow-orange gravels (303, 403, 503). The natural in trench 6 contained a higher proportion of silt due to the flooding in this part of the site (603). Despite this variation in the natural geology, the upper soil horizons were more uniform. The subsoil in trenches 1-5 was a grey-brown sandy clay with frequent flint, stone and chalk inclusions, with a depth between 0.02m - 0.10m (102, 202, 302, 402, 502). In trench 6, the subsoil comprised dark orange-brown sandy silty clay with moderate gravels, flint and chalk (602). The topsoil across trenches 1-6 was a dark grey-brown sandy silty clay plough soil, of a depth between 0.15-0.30m.

Trench 6 contained no archaeological features.

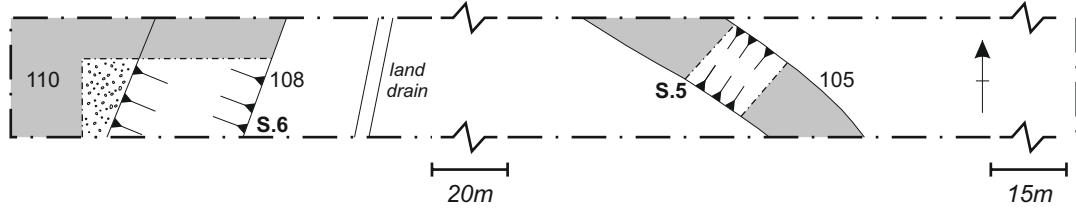
Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned east-west, and was positioned to sample linear features identified through the geophysical survey (Fig 2). There were two ditches, each of which contained small quantities of Roman pottery (Fig 3). Ditch [105] was aligned north-west by south-east, similar to the orientation of former ridge and furrow in this area (as seen on aerial photos from 1945). The ditch was 0.95m wide and 0.30m deep, cut with a steep south-west side, a flat base, and a more gradual slope up to the north-east. The fill was grey-brown mottled silty clay, containing Roman pottery (104) (Fig 3, S.5). The ditch was probably for drainage of the field.

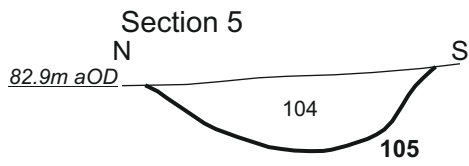
The second ditch [108] was aligned north-east by south-west, and had gradually sloping sides and an uneven base (Fig 3, S.6). A shallow fill (107) at the base of the ditch was comprised of mottled blue-orange clay 0.12m thick. A possible recut [110] which widened the ditch was filled with silted sandy clay of mottled grey-orange colour, containing frequent stones, gravel and flint. A greater concentration of gravel mixed with sandy loam on the west side of the trench has been identified as a possible surface (Fig 3, S.6, 109). The gravel material is aligned north-south spread on a flat cut in the ditch [110], and may represent a trackway running parallel to the present day alignment of Buckingham Road.

Trench 1 also contained a modern field drain.

Trench 1

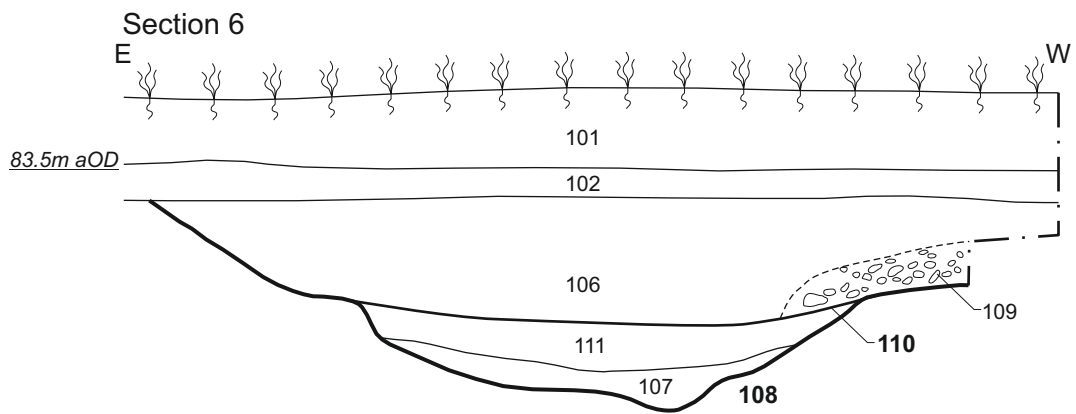


Ditch 105

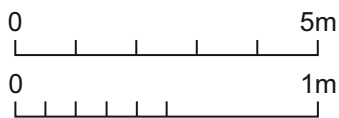


Ditch 105, looking east

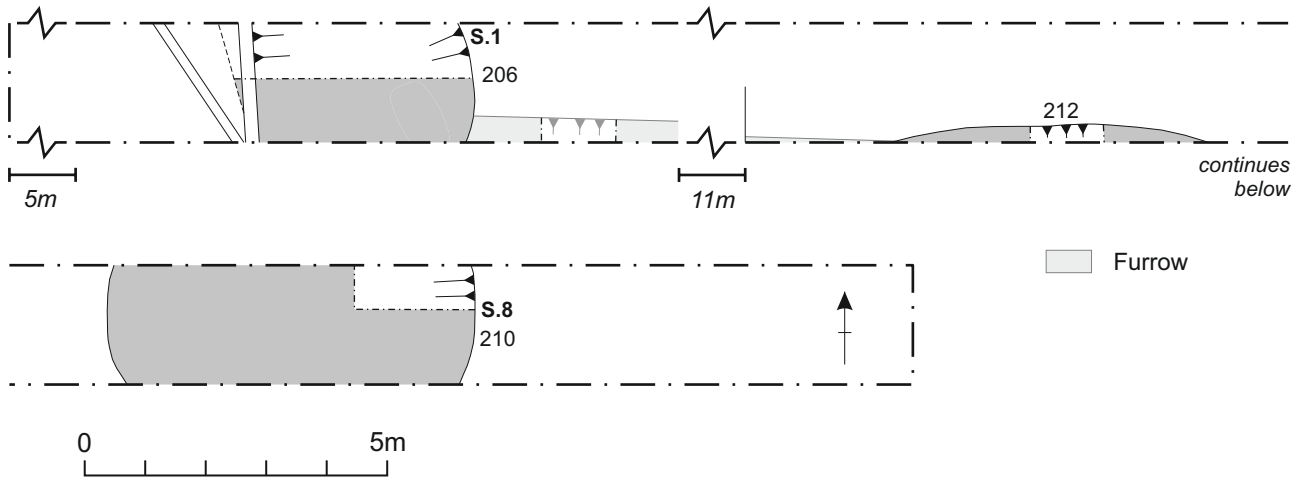
Ditch 108 and surface 110



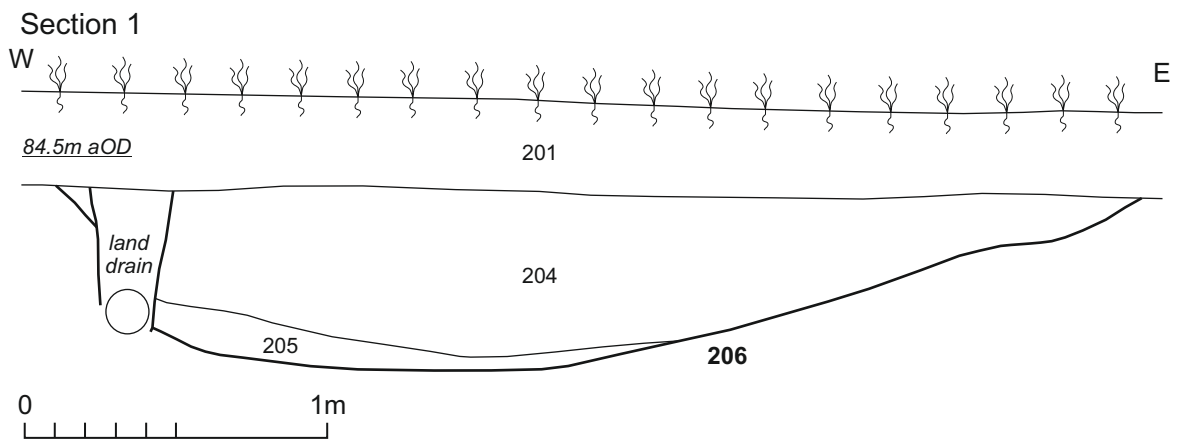
Ditch 108, looking south



Trench 2



Pit 206



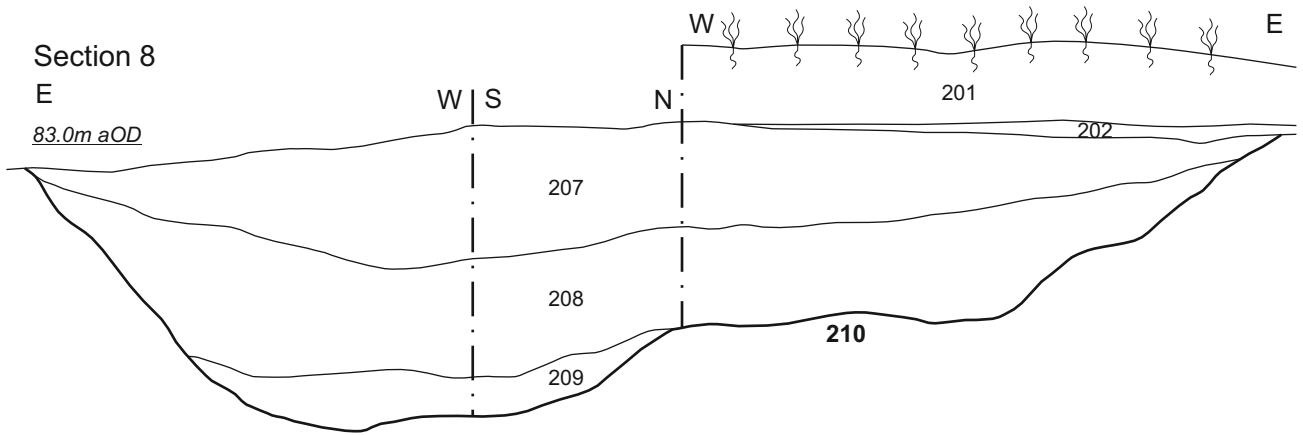
Ditch 206, looking north-west

Pit 210

Section 8

E

83.0m aOD



Pit 210, looking north



Pit/ditch 212, looking west

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned west-north-west by east-south-east, and was positioned to sample anomalies identified through the geophysical survey (Fig 2). These anomalies were shown to be two pits, both containing large quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone, as well as pieces of Roman floor and roof tile. The first pit [206] was probably circular, and was cut with gently curved and sloping sides and a broad flat base. The pit was towards the west end of the trench at the top of the slope. As with ditch [108] in trench 1, the pit contained a shallow fill of mottled grey-orange sandy clay, 0.18m deep (205), containing pottery and animal bone (Fig 4, S.1). The pit seems to have been left open for a long period of time, as a homogeneous layer of slowly accumulated light grey-orange mottled sandy clay built up in the pit to a depth of 0.54m (204). This layer also contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

The second pit [210] was at the east end of trench 2 (Fig 5, S. 8). The feature was large with steep sides and an irregular base, probably in excess of 5m wide and 0.98m deep. The fills were mixed grey-orange or grey-blue silty clay, containing occasional pieces of animal bone and pottery (208, 209). The upper fill (207) was 0.46m deep and contained a large quantity of mixed Roman pottery.

On the southern edge of the trench cut feature [212] was just to be observed (Fig 5). This feature was probably curvilinear and seemed to be aligned east-west, although it may also have been a circular pit, cut with steep edges. The pit or ditch was filled with dark grey-brown silty clay which contained gravel and Roman pottery (211).

A truncated furrow was seen at the west end of the trench.

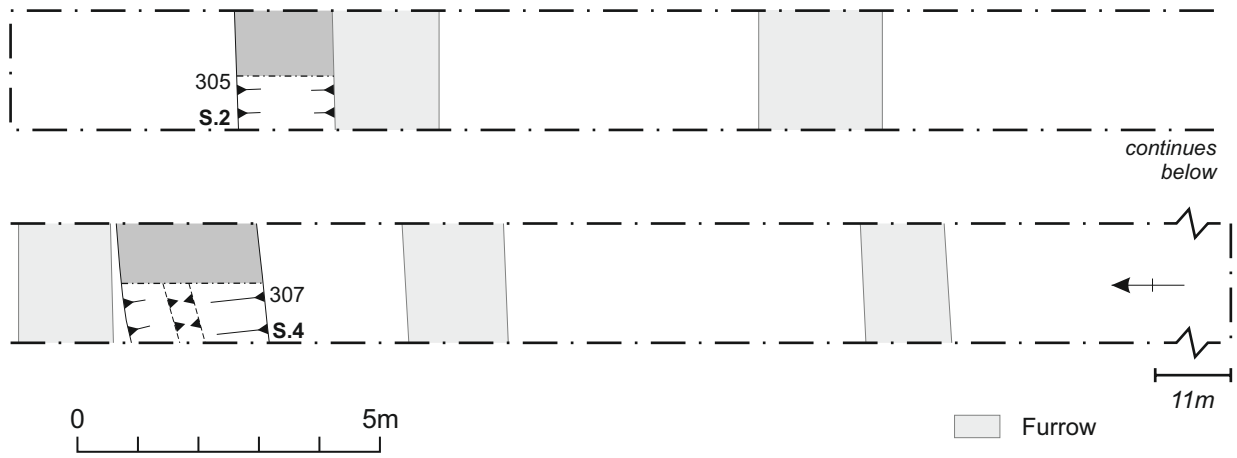
Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned north-north-east by south-south-west. It was positioned to sample one of two circular anomalies towards the north of the field (see Fig 2). The circular feature, or ring ditch, was seen within the trench as two curvilinear ditches, both with gently curving sides and a flattish U-shaped base. Ditch [305] was 1.60m across and 0.34m deep (Fig 6, S.2). Although it is likely to belong to the same circular feature as [307], it was slightly narrower due to truncation by a furrow. The fill comprised light grey-red mottled sandy clay (304). Animal bone and a few sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from this ditch.

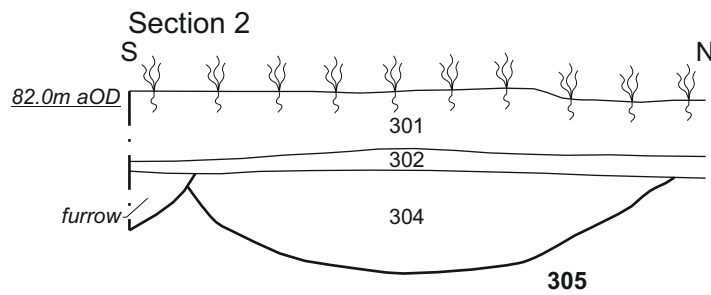
The second curvilinear ditch [307] measured 2.46m wide and 0.24-0.42m deep (Fig 6, S.4). It is possible that a recut could be observed in the unevenly cut base, although no difference was seen in the fill of mottled grey-brown silted sandy clay (306). This side of the circular ditch also contained a small amount of Roman pottery.

At least six furrows crossed the trench on an east-west alignment.

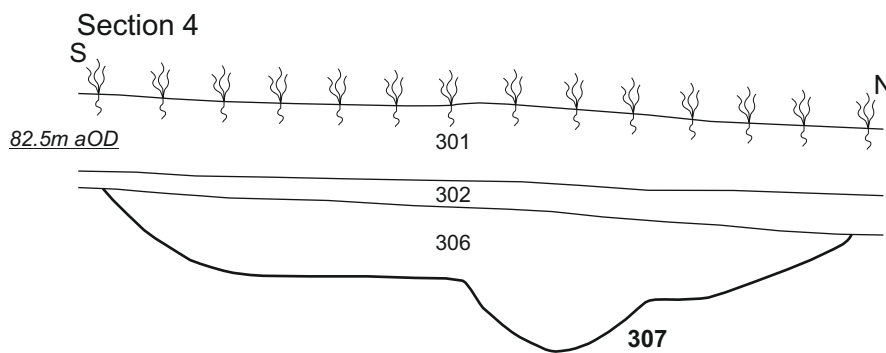
Trench 3



Ditch 305



Ditch 307





Section 2 of ring ditch [305], looking south-west



Section 4 of ring ditch [307], looking south-west

Trench 4

Trench 4 was situated on the eastern edge of the first field, parallel to the north-east by south-west boundary between the two fields. This trench was positioned to sample the second ring ditch identified during the geophysical survey (Fig 2). The ditch had a U-shaped profile, and the northern part [406] was 0.92m wide and 0.32m deep. The primary fill of the ring ditch was grey-orange silted clay with patches of orange sandy gravel, around 0.08m thick (405). The upper fill was very similar in composition with mottled orange-brown and grey silty clay with gravel and flint, 0.24m thick (404) (Fig 8, S.9).

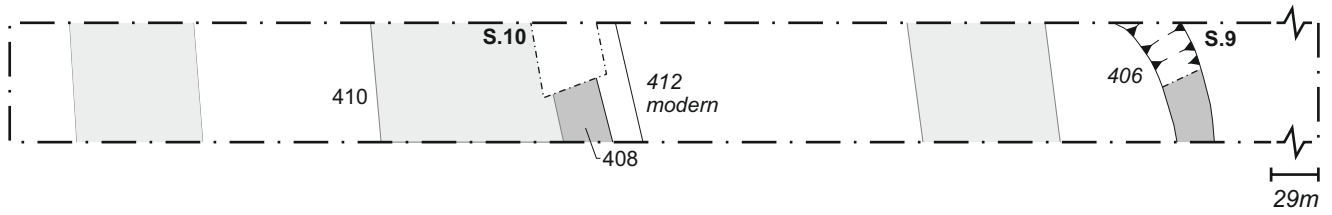
The southern curve of the ditch as it passed through the trench was numbered [408]. This was partially cut by furrow [410] to the south and a modern field drain [412] (Fig 8, S.10).

At least five, possibly seven, furrows crossed the trench on an east-west alignment.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was positioned on the same alignment as trench 4, following the field boundary to the south. A linear feature was seen in this location on the geophysical survey. Excavation revealed this to be a ditch [506], aligned north-west by south-east, parallel to a number of furrows which were observed in this trench. The ditch was cut with steep sides and a U-shaped base 1.10m wide and 0.50m deep. Several fill events took place in the ditch, at least partially caused by silting. The primary fill was a 0.10m depth of blue-yellow clay with orange mottling. Roman pottery, animal bone, gravel and flint were all included in the layer (505). Upper fills were more sterile silted clay with stone, gravel and chalk, but no artefacts (Fig 9, S.3, 504).

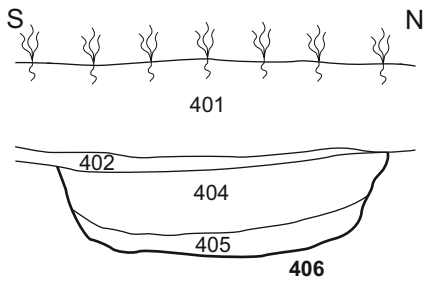
Trench 4 →



Ditch 406

Section 9

81.2m aOD

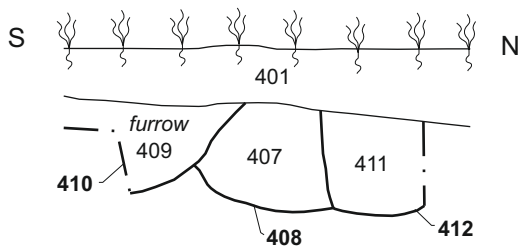


Ditch 406, looking west

Ditch 408

Section 10

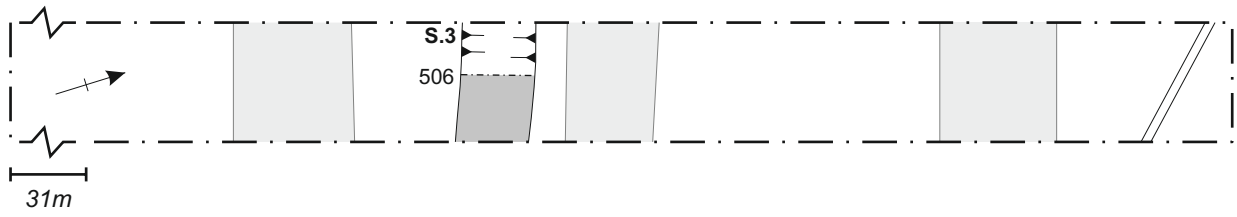
81.6m aOD



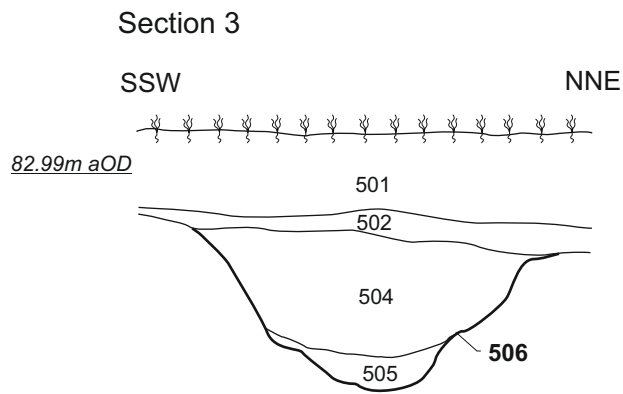
Ditch 408, looking west



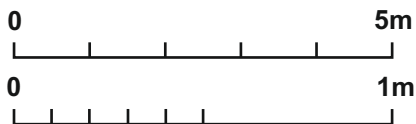
Trench 5



Ditch 506



Ditch 506, looking west



6 THE FINDS

6.1 The pottery by Rob Perrin

A significant quantity of pottery, amounting to 476 sherds weighing 7.7kg and with an estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), based on rims, of nearly 5.8, was recovered from 11 contexts in eight features in four trenches. Six of the contexts are from ditches and five from two pits (Table 1). Colours in the illustration catalogue refer to the Munsell Soil Color Chart, 1971 edition.

Table 1: Pottery quantification

Feature	Number of sherds	Weight (g)	Rim EVE
Curvilinear ditch 212	77	777	92
Ditch 105	5	72	8
Ditch 108/110	4	199	27
Ditch 305	3	27	6
Ditch 307	3	17	-
Ditch 506	6	46	10
Pit 206	154	4501	213
Pit 210	224	2067	221
Total	476	7706	577

Fabrics

The most common fabric is grog-tempered ware, followed by sand-tempered reduced and oxidised wares and shell-gritted ware. There is also a significant amount of samian ware (SGS, CGS), some Lower Nene Valley colour coated ware (NVCC) and some sherds with limestone-temper (Table 2). The grog-tempered ware occurs in various colours (buff-cream, pink, reddish-yellow, reddish-brown, brown, dark brown and grey).

Table 2: Pottery fabrics

Fabric	Number of sherds	%	Weight (g)	%	Rim EVE	%
Grog	208	43.7	4979	64.6	238	41.2
Limestone	2	-	12	-	3	-
Shell	28	5.9	397	5.2	66	11.4
Grey	73	15.3	802	10.4	90	15.6
Dark grey	31	6.5	158	2.1	24	4.2
Dark brown, coarse	5	-	39	-	6	-
Reddish-yellow	35	7.4	208	2.7	20	3.5
Reddish-brown	4	-	5	-	8	-
Pink	9	-	126	1.6	17	3
Buff	4	-	27	-	-	-
Cream	3	-	36	-	11	1.9
Ver?	37	7.8	428	5.6	29	5
NVCC	2	-	14	-	-	-
SGS	2	-	2	-	-	-
CGS	33	6.9	473	6.1	65	11.3
Total	476	-	7706	-	577	-

Forms

A minimum of 52 vessels were identified, based on rims and other diagnostic sherds. Jars comprise two-thirds of these, but various other forms are represented (Table 3). The grog-tempered jars include one with diagonal slashes on its rim, a storage jar with a horizontal band of incised lattice decoration, a jar with an undercut rim and a horizontal band of burnished diagonal lines, a corrugated vessel with burnished diagonal lines between the cordons (Fig 10.4) and a neckless globular vessel with an inturned bead rim. The grog-tempered jar or bowl is of barrel-type form and also has burnished diagonal lines between cordons (Fig 10.5).

Table 3: Pottery forms

Fabric	Jar	Jar/ Bowl	Jar/ Beaker	Bowl	Dish	Cup	Beaker	Flagon	Mortarium	Total
Grog	15	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Limestone	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Shell	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Grey	8	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	9
Dark grey	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Dark brown, coarse	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Reddish yellow	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Reddish brown	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pink	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cream	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Ver?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	4
NVCC	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
CGS	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	-	-	5
Total	35	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	3	52

The jars in the other fabrics mainly have simple curved rims, together with some bead, everted and square rims. The jar in the limestone-tempered fabric and one in shell-gritted ware have lid-seated rims. The dark grey ware jar or beaker is from an indented form and the reddish-yellow ware jar or beaker is a small globular vessel. The NVCC sherds are from a beaker with thick white overslip painted decoration. The grey ware dish has a flat-topped rim while the CGS dishes comprise forms 18/31 and 31. The CGS bowls are forms 37 and 38 and the cup is probably a form 33. The latter has a maker's stamp and the form 37 has part of its moulded decoration surviving (Fig 10.3; see below). The cream mortaria comprise only part of possible downturned flanges and these may be from the same vessel. The other mortarium sherd is a spout from a flanged type with traces of a linear stamp (Fig 10.2). Other decoration occurring on the jars are girth grooves and cordons and rouletted decoration occurs on a pink ware vessel of uncertain form.

Sources

The nearest known Roman kiln sites to Steeple Claydon are at Brixworth, about 45km to the north and Stowe near Buckingham, around 11km to the north-west. The Brixworth

kilns produced mainly grey wares, while those at Stowe appear to have been one source for pink grog-tempered ware (Taylor 2004, 63). Steeple Claydon would appear to be located within the heartland, if not the core, distribution zone for this ware (*op. cit.* 63, fig. 3). A number of kilns in the Milton Keynes area, about 50km to the north-east produced a range of grog-tempered, reduced and oxidised wares (Marney 1989, 58ff). Flagons and a mortarium in a gritty buff ware have been attributed to the kilns in the Verulamium region while the cream ware mortaria may be from the Mancetter-Hartshill kilns in Warwickshire. The NVCC beaker was produced in kilns near Peterborough and the samian ware is from South and Central France (SGS, CGS). The limestone-tempered and shell-gritted wares are likely to have been locally produced and there may be as yet undiscovered Roman kiln sites in the area producing a range of wares and vessel types. Steeple Claydon is not far from the presumed route of possible Roman road Margary 162 and this could have provided a route for various goods. Equally, pottery could have been obtained from markets in the larger towns or settlements such as *Magiovinium*, Alchester or Towcester.

Date

The main date range is mid-1st to 2nd century, with a few of the coarse dark brown, grog and limestone-tempered sherds possibly dating to the late Iron Age and the NVCC beaker sherds and the possible Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria more likely to be of 3rd century date.

Individual features: Curvilinear ditch [212]

The pottery is all from fill 211 (Table 4). The grog-tempered ware includes a pink coloured square rimmed jar and a reddish-brown bead rim jar. The grey wares include bead and curved rim jars, a small everted rim jar and an indented jar or beaker. The cream ware is a mortarium of possible Mancetter-Hartshill origin, while the CGS comprises a large proportion of a form 38 bowl and a rim from a form 31 dish. The CGS is of second-half of the 2nd century date and the cream mortarium and the indented vessel are likely to date to the 3rd century. The limestone-tempered sherd and some of the grog-tempered ware are earlier in date. The presence of a large part of a CGS bowl suggests some higher status activity associated with or in the vicinity of this feature.

Table 4: Pottery from fill (211) of curvilinear ditch [212]

Fabric	Number of sherds	Weight	Rim EVE
Grog	17	226	28
Limestone	1	8	-
Shell	2	5	-
Grey	10	70	9
Dark grey	16	85	12
Reddish yellow	9	30	-
Cream	2	20	-
CGS	20	333	43
Total	77	777	92

Pit 206

The pottery is from fills (204) and (205), but all bar two sherds, weighing 3g, are from fill 204. Pink, cream-yellow and brown grog-tempered wares are the most common fabrics, followed by grey wares and shell-gritted ware (Table 5).

Table 5: Pottery from pit [206]

Fabric	Number of sherds	Weight	Rim EVE
Grog	86	3431	75
Shell	20	345	48
Grey	22	376	52
Dark grey	6	22	12
Reddish yellow	4	29	12
Reddish brown	1	3	8
Pink	7	64	-
Buff, grey core	2	15	-
NVCC	2	14	-
Ver?	3	189	6
CGS	1	13	-
Total	154	4501	213

There are six grog-tempered jars, two each with curved or undercut rims and two of storage type of which one has a thickened flat topped rim. One of the curved rim jars has diagonal slashes on its rim and two of the other jars have a horizontal band of incised lattice decoration or burnished diagonal lines, respectively. Two shell-gritted ware and three grey and dark grey ware jars have curved rims and another grey ware jar has a bead rim. Two other jars occur in reddish-yellow and reddish-brown wares and a NVCC beaker has thick white overslip painted decoration. Two vessels in the possible Verulamium fabric are a flagon and a mortarium with traces of a linear stamp (Fig 10.2) and the stamped base of a probable form 33 cup occurs in CGS (Fig 10.1).

The samian stamp probably dates to the Antonine period (cAD 140-70) and much of the other pottery is of 2nd century date, though the NVCC beaker will be of 3rd century date.

Pit 210

Most of the pottery in pit [210] comes from fill (207), with fill (208) having 20 sherds and fill (209) five sherds. Pink, reddish-yellow and reddish-brown grog-tempered wares are the most common fabrics, but there is a larger proportion of grey wares, reddish-yellow wares and possible Verulamium region ware (Table 6).

Table 6: Pottery from pit [210]

Fabric	Number of sherds	Weight	Rim EVE
Grog	95	1084	110
Shell	5	44	18
Grey	41	356	29
Dark grey	8	41	-
Reddish-yellow	21	144	8
Reddish-brown	3	2	-
Buff	2	12	-
Cream	1	16	11
Ver?	34	239	23
SGS	2	2	-
CGS	12	127	22
Total	224	2067	221

The grog-tempered ware includes two curved rim and one square rimmed jars, but also a barrel-type jar (Fig 10.5) and a jar or beaker with a thick cordoned, corrugated profile (Fig 10.4); the fabric of the latter is more sand-tempered with some grog. Both these vessels have burnished decoration between cordons, lattice on the former and diagonal lines on the latter. There are three shell-gritted ware jars, two with curved rims and one with a lid-seated rim and four grey ware jars, three with curved rims and one with a square rim; a dish with a flat topped rim also occurs in grey ware. A globular jar or beaker with an everted rim occurs in a reddish-yellow ware and there are two possible Verulamium region ware flagons and a cream ware, possibly Mancetter-Hartshill, mortarium. A form 31 dish and a form 37 bowl occur in CGS. Part of the decoration on the latter survives (Fig 10.3).

The CGS form 37 bowl can be dated to cAD 120-45 and the possible Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium is of 2nd and perhaps even 3rd century date. The grey ware dish with a flat topped rim is likely to date to the second half of the 2nd century but the barrel-type jar and the jar or beaker with a thick cordoned, corrugated profile are both mid-1st century types.



1



2



3



4



5

Illustrated Roman pottery, 1-5 (Scale 20mm) Fig 10

Illustrated pottery, Fig 10

- 1 Part of the base from a flat-bottomed cup with a chipped footring – probably Drag 33, Central Gaulish (Lezoux) (4g). Stamped Romanus ii, die 1a, Lezoux, Drag 33. **[ROM]ANIM**. A stamp from a potter with few records (Hartley and Dickinson 2011, 398-9), hence the uncertain date: cAD 140-70? (204/206).
- 2 Sand-tempered ware, white (10YR8/2) to pinkish-white (7.5YR8/2). (204/206). Two linear (5cm) stamps next to the spout. The characters are badly worn, preventing the identification of the potter. Probably Verulamium region. First half of the 2nd century
- 3 Three joining sherds from the base of the decorated zone of a Drag 37 bowl from Central Gaul (probably Lezoux). The decoration is not crisply moulded, and has also suffered from abrasion. The style, however, is characteristic of the work of Silvio II/X-5 with wavy panel dividers with small striated cigar-shaped motifs at the terminals and a single line delineating the lower edge of the decoration. The single identifiable figure type is Victory (O.809) which is on a bowl from London with the panel dividers and small 'cigars' attributed to potter X-5 (Stanfield and Simpson 1990, pl. 67, 6). cAD 120-45. (207/210)
- 4 Sand and grog-tempered, light brown (7.5YR6/4) with a dark grey (N4) core and a very pale brown (10YR7/3) slip. (207, 208/210). Form similar to Marney 1989, fig. 36, 73; Waugh *et al* 1975, fig. 4, 17-19. Mid - 1st century AD
- 5 Grog-tempered, reddish-yellow (5YR6/6) with a grey (5Y5/1) core and surface in places. (207, 208/210). Form similar to Marney 1989, fig. 36, 76; Waugh *et al* 1975, fig. 10, 97. Mid - 1st century

6.2 Roman ceramic tile by Pat Chapman

There are eight tile sherds, weighing 2014g, seven from pit [206]; with six in fill (204) and one in fill (205); and one sherd from fill (106) of ditch [110]. These contexts included Roman pottery assemblages.

Roof tile

There are two joining sherds of flat *tegula* roof tile, from fills (204) and (205) of pit [206]. The body is 25mm thick and the flange is 45mm high with a flat top inclined upwards from the back. The fabric is a fine sandy orange with a broad medium grey core and pale orange surface, with rare angular flint up to 5mm wide and occasional voids. Two joining sherds from fill (204), 25mm thick, and made from hard fine orange-brown silty clay with a medium grey core, are probably from the body of a *tegula* roof tile.

A sherd of *imbrex* tile, 20mm thick with a broad curve, comes from fill (106) of ditch [110]. The fabric is hard fine silty orange clay with occasional small buff patches and angular flint 15mm long. The top surface has the worn remains of a black slip/paint. The thickness and broad curve of this tile might indicate it is a ridge tile rather than a curved *imbrex* linking the *tegula* tiles.

Floor tiles

Four tile sherds in fill (204) are most likely from floor tiles of various types. Three are 30mm thick, two made from hard orange-brown silty clay and one from dark reddish-brown silty clay, both with a dark grey core of variable thickness.

The other sherd, 50mm thick, is mainly a hard black vesicular core with patches of a hard silty dark red on one surface, the other surface being lost. The sherd is very worn and may originally have been a paving tile.

Fired clay

A small fragment of fired clay from fill (209) in pit [210], sub-rectangular and made from hard sandy orange-brown clay, weighs 18g. One small angular piece of hard brown-buff to black sandy fired clay, weighing 9g, comes from fill (306) of ditch [307].

6.3 Querns by Andy Chapman

From the fill (204) of pit [206] there is a small fragment from a rotary quern. It is manufactured in a conglomerate containing dense larger rounded pebbles of quartz, from 3mm to 30mm long, most probably Upper Old Red sandstone from the Forest of Dean. The stone is 45mm thick and probably comes from the edge of a lower stone, with part of the grinding surface surviving, but too little remains to estimate the diameter. Use of Old Red Sandstone for the manufacturing of rotary querns only became widespread in the early Roman period, and the pottery from this pit is dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD.

6.4 Other finds by Tora Hylton

Iron object

Despite a metal detector survey being undertaken of both trenches and spoil heaps, only a single hand-forged nail was recovered from the fill of a curvilinear ditch [307]. The nail is incomplete; it has a square-sectioned shank which tapers to a point (now missing), the head is small, flat and sub-rectangular in shape (8 x 6mm); it measures 29mm in length.

Clay tobacco-pipe

A clay tobacco-pipe stem, measuring 34mm long, was recovered from a furrow in Trench 2. The stem fragment displays signs of excessive ware and abrasion, indicating that it has been lying in disturbed soil deposits for some time. The bore of the stem measures 5/64ths of an inch, suggesting a late 18th/19th-century date.

6.5 The animal bone by Adam Reid

Introduction

A total of 3kg of animal bone was hand collected from ten different contexts during the course of excavation. This material was assessed to determine the level of preservation, the taxa present, and to inform on the potential for further work.

All material was washed prior to analysis. Identifiable bones were noted, and were examined for signs of butchery and the state of epiphyseal fusion. Identifications took place with the aid of the MOLA Northampton reference collection and Hillson (1992) and France (2009) were also consulted. Specimens that could not be positively identified were attributed, where possible, to categories including Large Mammal (Cattle, Horse), Medium Mammal (Sheep/Goat, Pig, Large Dog), and Small Mammal (Small Dog, Cat, Rabbit). No microfaunal specimens were noted. The English Heritage Guidelines for Best Practice for Animal Bones and Archaeology (2014) were followed, where possible.

Identification and quantification

The moderately fragmented nature of the assemblage made identifications difficult and a presentation of the results can be seen below (Table 7). Positive identifications were made for 40 specimens; 20% of the total assemblage. The majority of the material (86%) was recovered from pit fills, with cattle the most commonly identified taxon. A large number of fragments of large mammal cranium were recovered from pit [206], which may be either cattle or horse.

Table 7: The taxa present

Fill/cut type	Cattle <i>Bos</i>	Sheep/ goat <i>Ovicaprid</i>	Pig <i>Sus</i>	Horse <i>Equus</i>	Medium Mammal	Large Mammal	Indet.	Total
106/110 ditch	2	-	-	-	-	14	-	16
204/206 pit	6	1	1	-	14	8	5	35
205/206 pit	-	-	1	4	6	43	41	95
207/210 pit	9	-	-	2	10	1	1	23
208/210 pit	-	2	-	-	3	-	-	5
209/210 pit	5	-	-	-	6	2	1	14
211/212 ditch/gully	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
304/305 ditch	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	3
306/307 ditch	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
505/506 ditch	-	3	1	-	2	-	2	8
Total	22	8	4	6	43	68	50	201

Preservation and taphonomy

The state of preservation of the material was moderate to good, with moderate surface abrasion and a high degree of fragmentation. No clear evidence of butchery or carnivore gnawing was noted on any of the specimens.

Conclusions

The small nature of the assemblage makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions, other than to say that the main domestic taxa were utilised at the site, and the material

appears to derive from domestic material, with no suggestions of industrial activity. The presence of well-preserved identifiable material from several of the excavated features indicates the possibility for future faunal analysis, should any further work take place.

7 DISCUSSION

Trial trench evaluation was undertaken on two fields to the north of Steeple Claydon village. A number of archaeological features were identified in the west of the area, and confirm the geophysical survey results. A number of ditches, [506], [105], and [108], which lie parallel to the former medieval ridge and furrow alignment, are likely to be former field boundaries or drainage ditches. A small quantity of Roman pottery was found in these features, but it is possible that this is residual and a medieval or post-medieval date for these ditches cannot be ruled out. A possible trackway formed of a loam and gravel surface was also seen (109), potentially with a parallel alignment to the present day north-south road, although this could not be dated.

To the north of the western field, two circular features seen on the geophysical survey were shown to be curvilinear enclosures. Two large circular pits were located on the western edge of the area near to Buckingham Road. The sparse distribution of features and the small quantity of tiles and building material suggests that these features may represent peripheral remains associated with a Roman settlement. However, the large quantities of Roman pottery and animal bone recovered from the fills of the ditches and pits may indicate that this more significant settlement was located in the near vicinity. No Roman material has previously been recorded in the HER from the near area, and only a single findspot of pottery has previously been noted (Farley 1975, 139).

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MOLA

03 June 2015

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
1	1.8mx 50m, E-W			0.20 – 0.35m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy silty clay plough soil.	0.18-0.25m	-
102	Subsoil	Grey-brown sandy clay frequent flint, stone and chalk	0.05-0.10m	-
103	Natural	Yellow-grey sandy clay with pockets and bands of mixed orange sandy gravels and blue clay		-
104	Fill of 105	Hard grey-brown silted clay frequent gravels and flint	0.95m wide 0.30m deep	Pottery
105	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE asymmetrical in profile	0.95m wide 0.30m deep	-
111	Fill of 108	Dark grey-orange silted sandy clay frequent stone, gravel and flint	3.00m wide 0.12m deep	-
106	Fill of 110	Firm grey-orange silted sandy clay frequent stone, gravel and flint	3.00m wide 0.33m deep	Pottery
107	Fill of 108	Firm blue clay with orange mottling rare gravel	1.30m wide 0.12m deep	-
108	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned N-S gently curving sides and a broad base	3.00m wide 0.56m deep	-
109	Surface	Firm mixed sandy gravel loam	At end of trench	-
110	Cut of surface	Linear in plan aligned N-S flat base	At end of trench	-



Overview of trench 1, looking east Fig 11

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
2	1.8mx 50m, W-E			0.20 – 0.25m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy silty clay plough soil.	0.15-0.20m	-
202	Subsoil	Dark brown sandy clay frequent gravels and stone	0.05m deep	-
203	Natural	Mixed orange-brown sandy clay with frequent large cobbles and gravels some reddish sandy patches	-	-
204	Fill of 206	Firm grey silted sandy clay with orange mottling occasional gravels and large cobbles	3.20m + wide 0.54m deep	Pottery and bone
205	Fill of 206	Firm light grey-orange sandy clay frequent gravels and flint	1.60m wide 0.18m deep	Pottery and bone
206	Pit	Possible pit gently curving sides and a broad base cut with 3 ceramic land drains on the western edge	3.20m + wide 0.62m deep	-
207	Fill of 210	Hard dark grey-blue silted clay frequent gravels	5m+ wide 0.46m deep	Pottery and bone
208	Fill of 210	Firm blue-grey silted clay with orange mottling occasional gravels	5m + wide 0.39m deep	Pottery and bone
209	Fill of 210	Firm mixed orange-blue blue-grey silted clay occasional stone and gravels	0.20m deep	Pottery and bone
210	Pit	Possible pit eroded eastern side not fully excavated	5m + wide	
211	Fill of 212	Hard dark brown silted clay frequent gravels	On edge of trench	Pottery
212	Cut	Curvilinear feature on edge of trench	On edge of trench	



Overview of trench 2, looking east Fig 12

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
3	1.8mx 50m, N x S			0.20 – 0.23m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy silty clay plough soil.	0.20-0.23m	-
302	Subsoil	Shallow dark brown sandy clay	0.02m	-
303	Natural	Grey-green clay with patches of gravel		-
304	Fill of 305	Firm orange-grey silted sandy clay occasional stone and gravel	1.60M wide 0.34m deep	Pottery and Bone
305	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned W-E gently curving side and a broad base	1.60m wide 0.34m deep	-
306	Fill of 307	Firm grey-brown silted sandy clay with orange mottling frequent gravel and flint	2.46m wide 0.24-0.42m deep	
307	Ditch	Curvilinear ditch aligned E-W gradual slopping side with a U-shape base	2.46m wide 0.24-0.42m deep	



Overview of trench 3, looking north Fig 13

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
4	1.8mx 50m, SW-NE			0.20 – 0.27m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Brown silted clay frequent stone, flint and chalk flecks	0.20-0.23m	-
402	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silted clay moderate gravel, flint and chalk	0.05-0.07m	-
403	Natural	Mixed clay green-grey changing to yellow-orange moderate gravels, flint and chalk	-	-
404	Fill of 406	Compact brown-grey silted clay with orange mottling frequent gravel, stone and flint	0.92m wide 0.24m deep	-
405	Fill of 406	Firm grey-orange sandy clay frequent gravel and flint	0.92m wide 0.08m deep	-
406	Ditch	Curvilinear ditch aligned E-W gradual slopping side concave base	0.92m wide 0.32m deep	-
407	Fill of 408	Fill of ditch 408	Not excav.	-
408	Ditch	Curvilinear ditch, truncated by furrow and land drain (Ring Ditch feature)	Not excav.	--
409	Fill of 410	Fill of furrow	Not excav.	-
410	Furrow	Cut of furrow	Not excav.	-
411	Fill of 412	Fill of field drain (modern)	Not excav.	-
412	Field drain	Cut of field drain (modern)	Not excav.	-



Overview of trench 4, looking north-east Fig 14

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
5	1.8mx 50m, NE-SW			0.20 – 0.30m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
501	Topsoil	Brown silted clay frequent stone, flint and chalk flecks	0.18-0.22m	-
502	Subsoil	Grey-brown sandy silty clay occasional gravels	0.05-0.10m	-
503	Natural	Mixed clay green-grey changing to yellow-orange silted sandy clays moderate gravels, flint and chalk	-	-
504	Fill of 506	Compact grey-brown silted clay with orange mottling frequent stone, gravel and flint	1.10m wide 0.40m deep	-
505	Fill of 506	Firm blue-yellow silted clay occasional gravel and flint	0.55m wide 0.10m deep	Pottery and bone
506	Ditch	Linear aligned E-W U-shape in profile	1.10m wide 0.50m deep	



Overview of trench 5, looking south-west Fig 15

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
6	1.8mx 50m, S-N			0.35 – 0.55m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy silted clay moderate gravel and flint. area prone to flooding	0.20-0.30m deep	-
602	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown changing to dark orange -brown sandy silty clay moderate gravels, flint and chalk	0.20-0.25m deep	-
603	Natural	Mixed natural silted bands of clay and sandy clay area prone to flooding and bands are of dirty naturals	0.40m wide	-



Overview of trench 6, looking south Fig 16

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
7	1.8mx 50m, E-W			0.18 – 0.38m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Mid grey-orange sandy silt moderate gravel, flint and chalk	0.16-0.25m	-
702	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown sandy silted clay occasional gravels and chalk	0.08m	-
703	Natural	Mixed clays orange sandy clay changing to grey-blue clay	-	-



Overview of trench 7, looking west Fig 17

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
8	1.8m x 50m N-S			0.28 – 0.38m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
801	Topsoil	Mid grey-orange sandy silt moderate gravel, flint and chalk	0.18-0.38m	-
802	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown sandy silty clay occasional gravel and flint	0.08-0.12m	-
803	Natural	Mixed mottled orange-grey sandy clay changing to green-grey clay	-	-



Overview of trench 8, looking south Fig 18

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
9	1.8m x 50m N-S			0.24 – 0.37m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
901	Topsoil	Mid grey-orange sandy silt moderate gravel, flint and chalk	0.15-0.22m	-
902	Subsoil	Mid orange-brown sandy silty clay frequent gravels, and flint	0.07-0.15m	-
903	Natural	Mixed mottled orange-grey sandy clay changing to blue-grey clay frequent gravels and flint	-	-



Overview of trench 9, looking north Fig 19

BUCKINGHAM ROAD, STEEPLE CLAYDON

Trench No	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
10	1.8m x 50m E-W			0.18 – 0.24m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1001	Topsoil	Grey-brown sandy silty clay moderate gravels and flint	0.18-0.24m	-
1002	Natural	Green-grey clay mottled with orange sandy clay with pockets and bands of blue and yellow-orange sandy clays	-	-



Overview of trench 10, looking west Fig 20



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