

# IRON AGE AND ROMAN SETTLEMENT AT BOULTON MOOR, EAST OF CHELLASTON LANE, DERBY

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Oxford Archaeology (OA) evaluated a site at Boulton Moor (NGR 440025 331550) by trenching in 2017 (Gorniak and Allen 2017; Davies 2018) and excavated two areas, A and B, in 2018 in advance of housing development by Persimmon Homes (Fig. 1; Evans and Allen 2018). The work was directed and supervised for OA by T. Allen and G. Evans respectively,

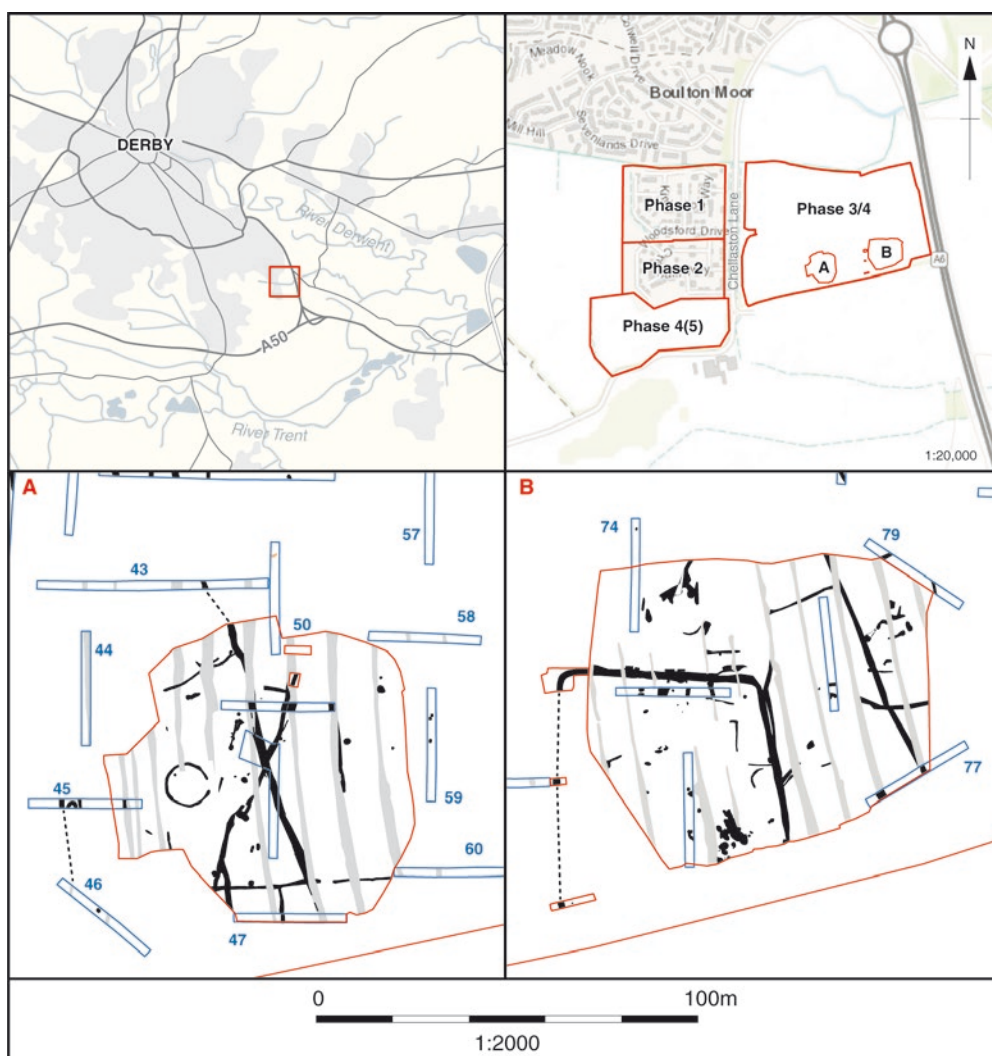


Fig. 1: Site Location

and was overseen by M. Dawson of CgMs Consulting and S. Baker of Derbyshire County Council. This report is a summary of the discoveries; full reports of the evaluation and excavation results, including the finds and environmental reports, can be found in the Derbyshire HER and on OA's digital library and the Archaeological Data Service.

Area A contained a system of ditches surrounding a penannular ditched enclosure 12m in diameter with an entrance 2.6m wide on the east, but no internal structure. The penannular enclosure ditch was up to 1m wide and 0.4m deep, and hazel charcoal from the terminus provided a radiocarbon date of 365-200 cal BC at 95% confidence (SUERC-87581;  $2204 \pm 24$  BP). The ditch system was of two phases, aligned first NNW and then NNE, and the ditches were up to 1.8m wide and 0.67m deep. An assemblage of 365 sherds of middle and later Iron Age pottery weighing 9kg was recovered from the penannular ditched enclosure and the surrounding ditches, together with a small assemblage of animal bones, principally cattle. Charred plant remains and charcoal were present but were sparse. A small selection of the Iron Age pottery was illustrated (*ibid.*, fig. 8).

Area B exposed part of a rectangular enclosure, whose north-west side was later traced by machine stripping, showing that it measured 62m east-west by at least 60m north-south. The enclosure ditch, which had two phases, was up to 1.95m wide and up to 0.6m deep with a V-shaped profile. An assemblage of 640 sherds of Roman pottery weighing nearly 13kg came from the site, almost all from the enclosure ditch and internal features in Area B. The ditch contained an assemblage of later 2nd century date in the first phase, and of the first half of the 3rd century for the later phase. Within the enclosure a scatter of shallow pits, a stone-based hearth and short lengths of ditch or gully were found. The large potsherds from the internal pits suggest domestic occupation contemporary with the later phase of the enclosure ditch.

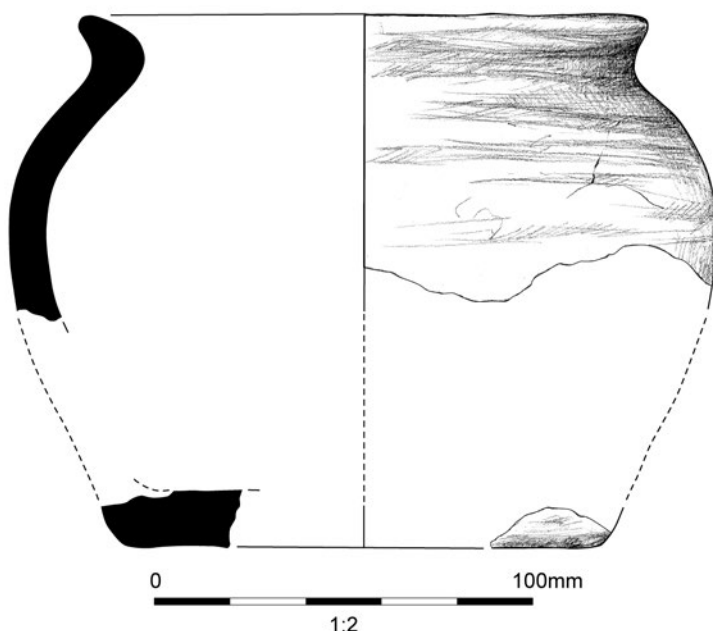


Fig. 2: Iron Age vessel from which carbonised residue gave a date of 175-40 cal BC at 95% confidence.

There were also a couple of features of late 3rd century date. No animal bones were found, but several of the pits and other internal features contained rich assemblages of charred plant remains, some including chaff from crop processing. Ditches east of the enclosure suggest that a further system of fields or paddocks was laid out in the later Roman period.

The Roman enclosure in Area B cut smaller ditches running east-west, and other ditches further east on a similar alignment produced sherds of Iron Age pottery, including much of a later Iron Age vessel (Fig. 2; Evans and Allen 2018, fig. 8 no. 1), perhaps indicating a further area of Iron Age activity beyond the limits of the site. Carbonised residue on this vessel gave a radiocarbon date of 175-40 cal BC at 95% confidence (SUERC-87318; 2084 ± 24 BP).

The Iron Age activity may well represent a small pastoral settlement managed by a single family or individual, though the limits of the Iron Age activity were not definitely established either to the north or south. Earlier work west of Chellaston Lane (Hunt 2014; Gorniak and Allen 2017) had revealed Iron Age pit alignments and scattered ditches (Fig. 1, Phases 1, 2 and 4); a radiocarbon date from one of the pits indicated an early Iron Age date of 760-420 cal BC at 95% confidence (UBA-34326; 2460 ± 28 BP) but the ditches were later, and may have been associated with the settlement in Area A reported upon here.

As only part of the Roman enclosure lay within the site it is difficult to establish its overall character with confidence. The pottery suggests settlement, although no structures were found; the other finds consisted predominantly of fragments of quernstones. In contrast to the Iron Age features, the Roman features produced no animal bones, while charred plant remains were much more abundant. This may indicate a change from pastoral to arable farming, despite the relatively low-lying location of the site. The nearest significant focus of Roman activity is 3.2km to the south-west (Hunt and Thomas 2018), although scattered evidence of Roman features had been found in Phases 1, 2 and 4 to the west of Chellaston Lane (Fig. 1; see also Hunt 2014).

## REFERENCES

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